

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The present study focuses on the role of morphosyntactic features in tense marking among the *Samor* people residing in Baringo County. The desire to study *Samor* is because this sub-dialect of Tugen has not been studied before. Dialects vary in the way in which TA is marked. This assertion is based on previous research which classified languages and dialects as follows: agglutinating, polysynthetic, fusional and isolating. Since human languages display distinct differences in tense marking, the current study sought to investigate how *Samor* speakers mark tense. The objective of the study is to examine the various morphosyntactic that mark tense. To achieve the objective of this study, one hundred *Samor* utterances were used to analyze tense marking. The research targeted *Samor* speakers from Baringo County.

Methodology: Data in form of speeches during diverse ceremonies were collected using tape recordings, interviews and natural observation. The researcher sourced 50% of speeches from tape recordings, 30% from the interviews and 20% from naturalistic observations. The study is anticipated to be a reference point in tense marking in *Samor* a sub-dialect that has not been studied. The research focused on tense which falls under the verb phrase, this means the other parts of speech were not investigated. The design in this study was cross-sectional case study of a target phenomena i.e. *Samor*. To investigate how tense is marked, Chomsky's Feature Checking Theory (FCT) and Hardley's Grounded Theory (GT) were used as conceptual frameworks. FCT identifies grammatical features in an utterance and checks each feature to ensure grammaticality. On the other hand, GT a theory in qualitative research was responsible for assigning chaotic data labels and categories. The data in this research was analyzed using GT. GT is a methodological framework in analyzing text.

Findings: The theory proposes three steps used to analyze data. These steps are open, axial and selective coding. The findings in this research show the unique tense marking strategies used in *Samor*. The paper found out that *Samor* is a verb initial sub-dialect and morpho-syntactic features such as tense and aspect are marked in the verbal stem by attaching affixes.