

## **A typology of empty categories (ECS) in Kikuyu**

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### **Abstract:**

This study is an attempt to investigate how adequately Chomsky's theory of G.B. can predict and account for the phenomena of ECs in Kikuyu sentences. After providing some background information on the language, the problem of study, a brief discussion of the analytical tool (theory) and the methodology used in chapter one, the study proceeds on to give a pre-theoretical description of Kikuyu NPs, question words and verbal morphology in chapter two. This is an important foundation stone for the data analysis in chapters three and four in which the study investigates ECs as either movement generated (by move ~ ) or base generated. Their major properties, distribution and reference are analysed. The study identified the following ECs in Kikuyu namely; NP=trace, variables PRO and pro. These ECs are also shown to be essentially NPs (they occupy argument positions). A classification of the ECs using some principles of the binding theory is also carried out demonstrating that the binding theory can be used to express relationships between not only overt NPs but also ECs as well. The study tested the validity of G.B. and it reveals that ECs in Kikuyu can to a large extent be accounted for by the G.B. theory.