

Complementation strategies in Ruuli (Bantu)

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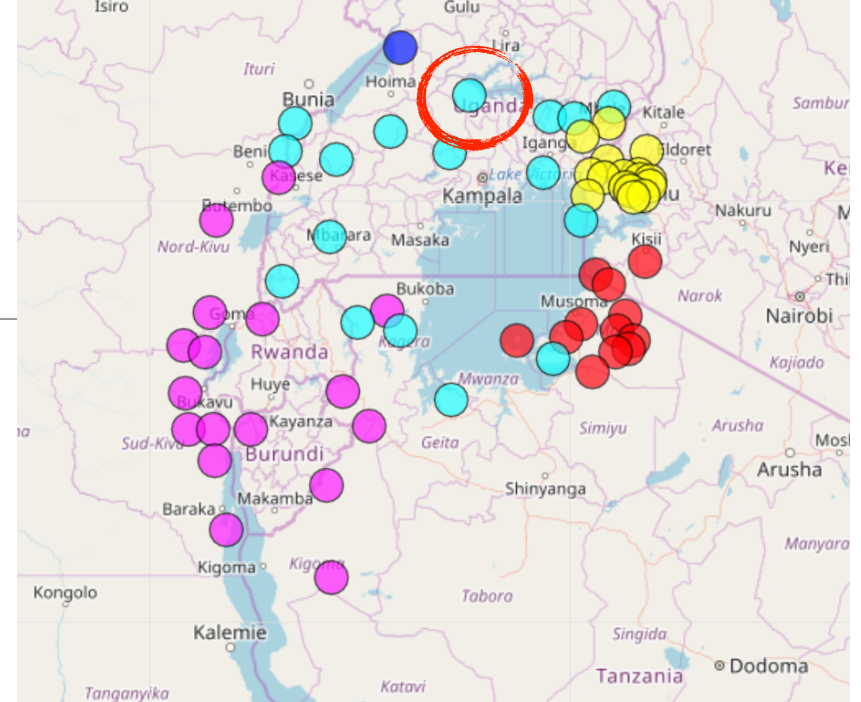
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Talk outline

- The Ruuli language and its speakers
 - Complementation: some terminology
 - Goals and research questions
 - The corpus and annotation
 - Complementation strategies in Ruuli and causes of variation
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- The article draft is available on request

The language and its speakers

- Ruuli (ISO 639-3: ruc)
- Two closely related varieties
- Other names: Luruuli/Lunyara, Luduuli, ...
- Great Lakes Bantu (Narrow Bantu, Niger-Congo) group of languages
- Previously underscribed
- Mainly in Nakasongola and Kayunga districts of central Uganda
- Up to 190,000 speakers



The language and its speakers



- Since January 2017:
A comprehensive bilingual talking Luruuli/Lunyara-English dictionary with descriptive basic grammar for language revitalisation and enhancement of mother-tongue based education
- funding: Knowledge for Tomorrow – Postdoctoral Fellowships in the Humanities in Sub Saharan Africa and North Africa (Volkswagen Foundation, 2017–2020, PI Saudah Namyalo)
- a corpus of over 200,000 words, primarily naturalistic dialogues

Morphosyntactic profile

- Primarily SVO with a lot of variation
- Synthetic verbal inflectional morphology: Seven prefix slots, five suffix slots
- Obligatory subject indexing (person, number, nominal class)
- Differential object indexing
- For phonotactic reasons verb stems are often followed by the so called *final vowel* (FV) *-a*, unless there is a vowel-final suffix (not glossed later)

a) *nje n-li-a nkodole.*
1sg **1sgS-eat-FV** francolin(9)
'I eat a francolin.'

b) *Naye nje eisumu n-a-li-zw-ire=ku*
but 1sg spear(5) **1sgS-PST-5O-abandon-PFV=17.LOC**
'But I abandoned the spear.'

Complementation: some terminology

- **Syntactic** definition: “certain verbs can take a **clause**, instead of an NP, as a **core argument**. This is called a complement clause.” (Dixon 2006)
- **Semantic** definitions:
A biclausal syntactic constructions in which “a *notional* sentence or predication is an argument of a predicate” (Noonan 1985: 52)
“Complement relations link *two SoAs* such that one of them (the main one) entails that another one (the dependent one) is referred to” (Cristofaro 2003: 95)
→ *complement clauses proper* vs. *complementation strategies* (i.e. not complement clauses, Dixon 1995, 2006)

Complementation: some terminology

- In this study *complementation strategies* is used in the semantic sense and includes both complement clauses proper and other constructions
- similar to *functional domain of complementation* in Deutscher (2000)
- similar to *complementation pattern* in Schmidtke-Bode (2014)

Research questions

- What complementation strategies are available in Ruuli?
- Do individual complement taking predicates (CTPs)/groups of CTPs have a preference for a specific strategy?
- Which semantic and structural conditions determine this preference?
- If a complement taking predicate can be used with several strategies, what determines their distribution?

The corpus and annotation

- A sample of over 1500 complement clauses annotated for
 - complement-taking predicate and its type
 - the form of the verb in the complement clause:
finite indicative or subjunctive vs. infinitive
 - the presence of the complementizer: *nti*, *nga*, others
 - direct or indirect speech
 - coreference of arguments in the two clauses:
same subject vs. different subject
 - illocutionary force (with utterance predicates)
 - proposition vs. state-of-affairs distinction
 - polarity of the two clauses

Research questions

- What complementation strategies are available in Ruuli?
(focus on object complementation only)

Complement strategies in Ruuli: An overview

- **Main complement types** (based on the verb form):
 - infinitive complements *(o)ku-* ‘INF’
 - indicative complements *-a* ‘FV’ (not in the gloss) or *-ire* ‘PFV’
 - subjunctive complements *-e* ‘SUBJ’
- **Complementizers**
 - *nti*
 - *nga*
 - *oba*
- **Position:** Object complements almost always follow the complement-taking predicate, but it is possible to let complement clauses precede or surround the verb.

Infinitive complements

- Marked by the class 15 prefix *ku-* and often the respective augment prefix *o-*.
- INF do not show subject indexing and do not take TAM marking
- S/A argument cannot be expressed overtly, P argument is ok:
 - a) *Tu-tandik-ire [ku-lia **bisolo** **bya** **bajungu**].*
1plS-start-PFVINF-eat animal(8) 8.GEN European(2)
“We have started to eat animals of Europeans (i.e. pigs).”

Indicative and subjunctive complement clauses

- The **indicative** obligatorily indexes S/A and optionally P arguments

Same TAM-marking as in the independent clause

b) *N-lowooza* [*ba-ku-funa=mu* *kidooli*].

1sgS-think 3pIS-PROG-get=LOC little

‘I think they benefit little.’

Indicative and subjunctive complement clauses

- The **subjunctive** is marked by the suffix *-e*, which replaces the final vowel *-a* of IND
No other TAM-marking

c) *Omwana tu-ku-taka [a-kul-e].*
child(1) 1pIS-PROG-want 3sgS-grow.up-**SUBJ**
'We want the child to grow up (while it is calm).'

- The form and the function (hortative, optative, modal meaning) of this suffix are similar to the cognate ones in closely related Great Lakes Bantu languages (Nurse & Muzale 1999)

Indicative complement, complementizer *nti*

- The most common complementizer *nti* optionally introduces indicative complements, but never subjunctives or infinitives

d) *Ti-n-ku-loleera* [*nti* *a-li=wo*
NEG-1sgS-PROG-see **COMP** 3sgS-be=16.LOC

ekintu *e-ki-yinza* [*oku-bbaa* *ki-zibu*]].
thing(7) REL-7S-may INF-be 7-difficult
'I don't see that there is something which may be difficult.'

Indicative complement, complementizer *nti*

- The form *nti* is also used as a quotative marker to introduce direct report without any complement taking predicates:

a) ***Nti*** “Bugerere”. b) ***Nti*** “Mu Banyala?”

QUOT Bugerere

‘(I say) “Bugere.”’

QUOT 18.LOC Banyala

‘(They ask) “From Banyala?”’

c) ***Nti*** “Yee!”

QUOT yes

‘(I say) “Yes!”’

- *Nti* is used both with indirect reported speech and with various CTPs that do not necessarily report speech
→ another example of an item where the distinction between a quotative and a complementizer is blurred (see Güldemann 2008)

Complementizers *oba*

- Less frequent complementizers *oba* ‘whether’ and *nga* ‘when, while’, other marginal complementizers, e.g. *ati*
- *oba* ‘whether’ with IND complements expresses doubt/uncertainty towards the proposition
 - e) *Ti-maite* [*oba* *ki-kola*].
NEG.1SSG-know **COMP** 7S-work
‘I don’t know whether it works.’
- *oba* is otherwise used with the meaning ‘or’ to coordinate two noun phrases, verbs, and other units of the same type

Complementizers *nga*

- Less frequent complementizers *oba* ‘whether’ and *nga* ‘when, while’, other marginal complementizers, e.g. *ati*
- *nga* marks complements expressing direct perception (possibly other functions), also used as a conjunction ‘when, while’

f) *M-puura* [*empewo nga e-ku-nya-kala-ku*].
1sgS-hear 9.wind **COMP** 9S-PROG-1sgO-pass-LOC
‘I hear the wind passing over me.’

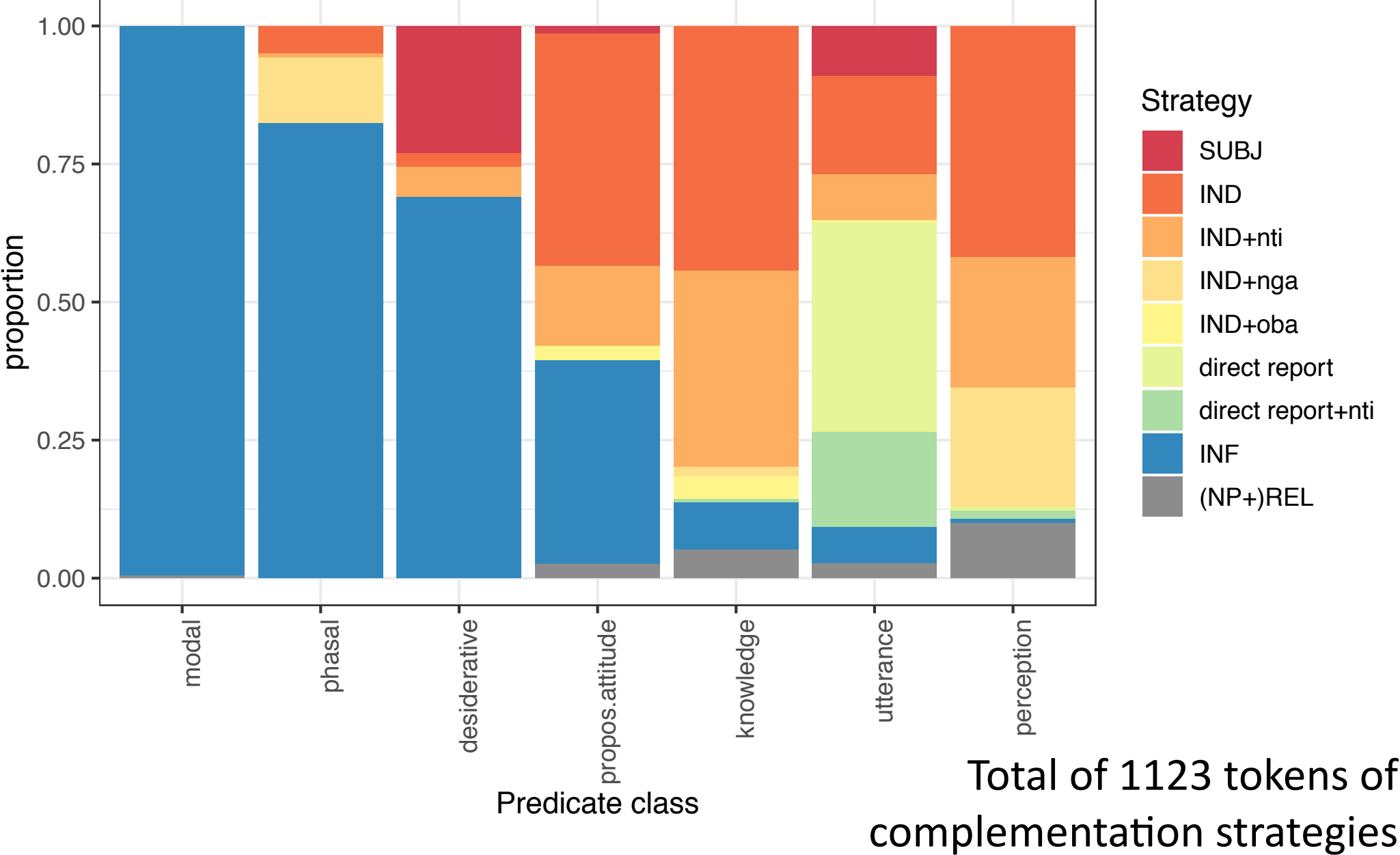
Goals and research questions

- ✓ What complementation strategies are available in Ruuli?
- Do certain complement taking predicates have a preference for a specific strategy?

Complement taking predicates

- over 60 complement-taking predicates recur in the sample of 1500 complement constructions we annotated
- further complement-taking predicates were identified in the lexicon of Ruuli (10,000 items, Namyalo et al. in progress) and in elicitations, they are not included into this study
- CPTs were first grouped into 7 classes for convenience: modals, phasals, desideratives, knowledge, prop.attitude, utterance and perception predicates
- the most frequent CTPs: *okukoba* 'say, tell' (utterance), *okutandika* 'start' (phasal), *okubona* 'see' (perception), *okwendya* 'like, need, want' (desiderative, modal), ...

Complementation strategies: frequent classes



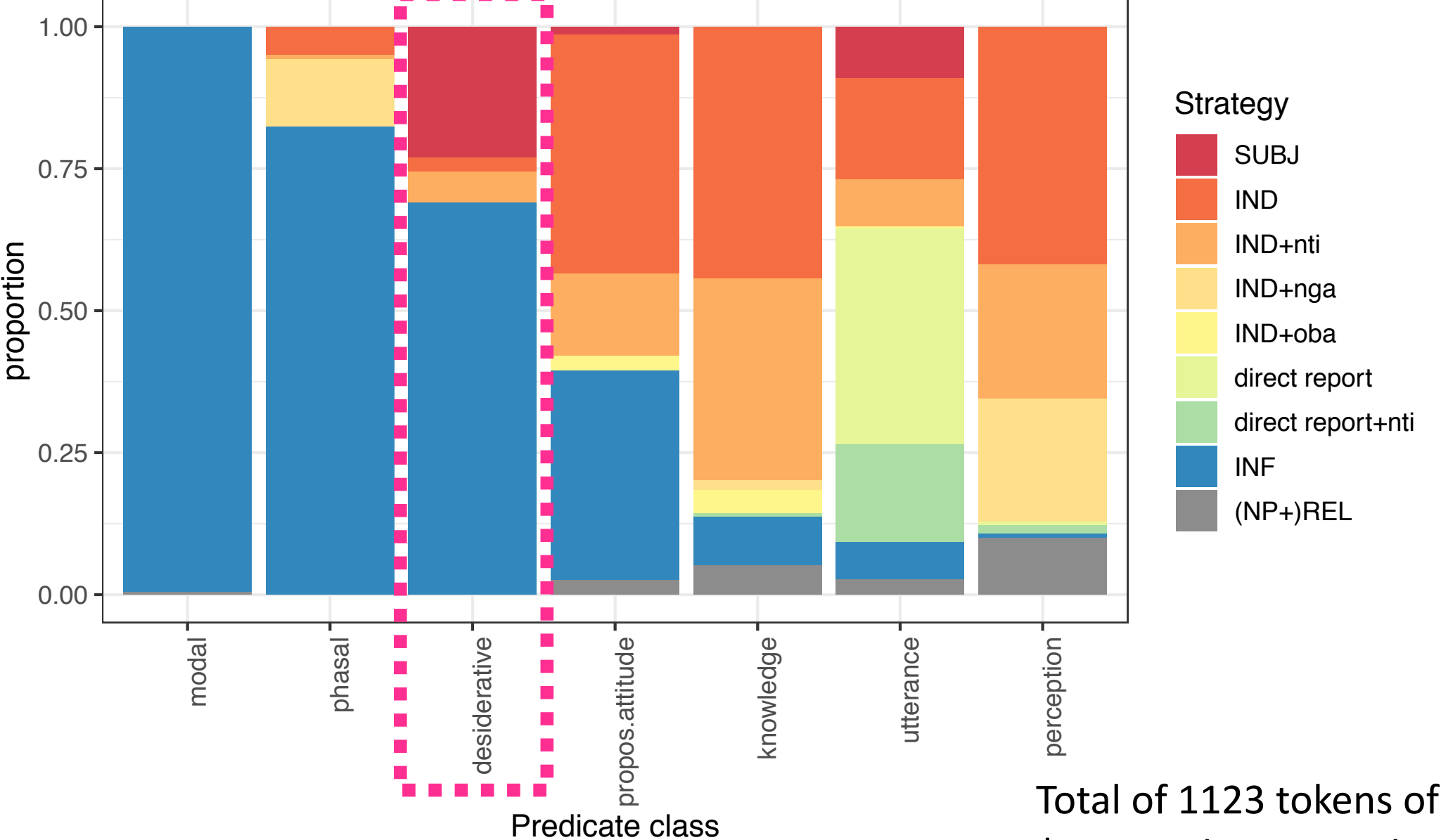
Goals and research questions

- Do certain complement taking predicates have a preference for a specific strategy?
 - Some predicate classes (modals and phasals) are rather homogenous, whereas other show a lot of variation
 - The infinitive is the most widely used construction, but its frequency varies between predicate classes

Goals and research questions

- ✓ What complementation strategies are available in Ruuli?
- ✓ Do certain complement taking predicates have a preference for a specific strategy?
- Which semantic and structural conditions determine this preference?
- If a complement taking predicate can be used with several strategies, what determines their distribution?

Complementation strategies: frequent classes



Total of 1123 tokens of complementation strategies

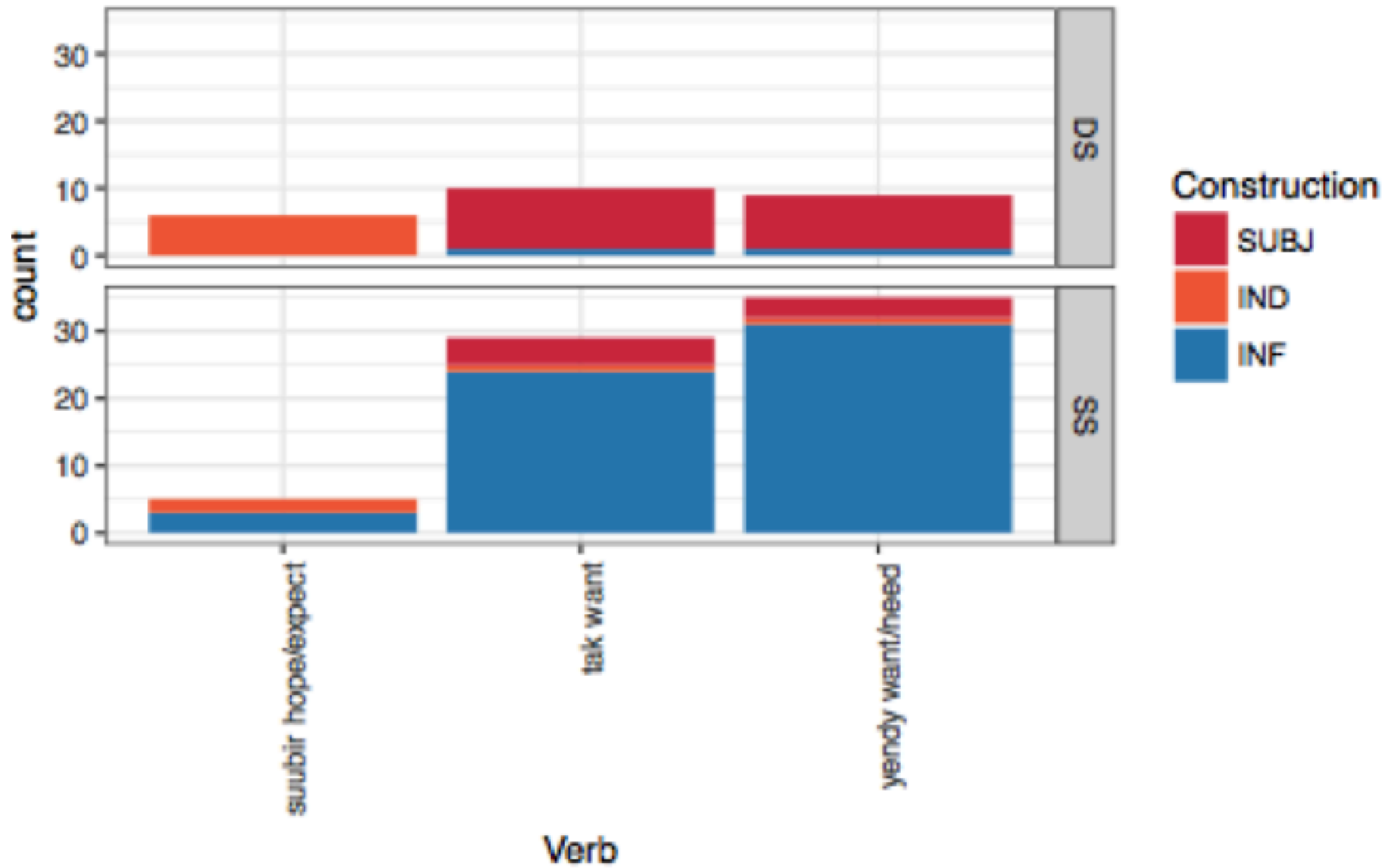
The subjunctive

- Desideratives are most often used with INF and SUBJ
- The (not) sharing of participants between matrix and complement clauses matters

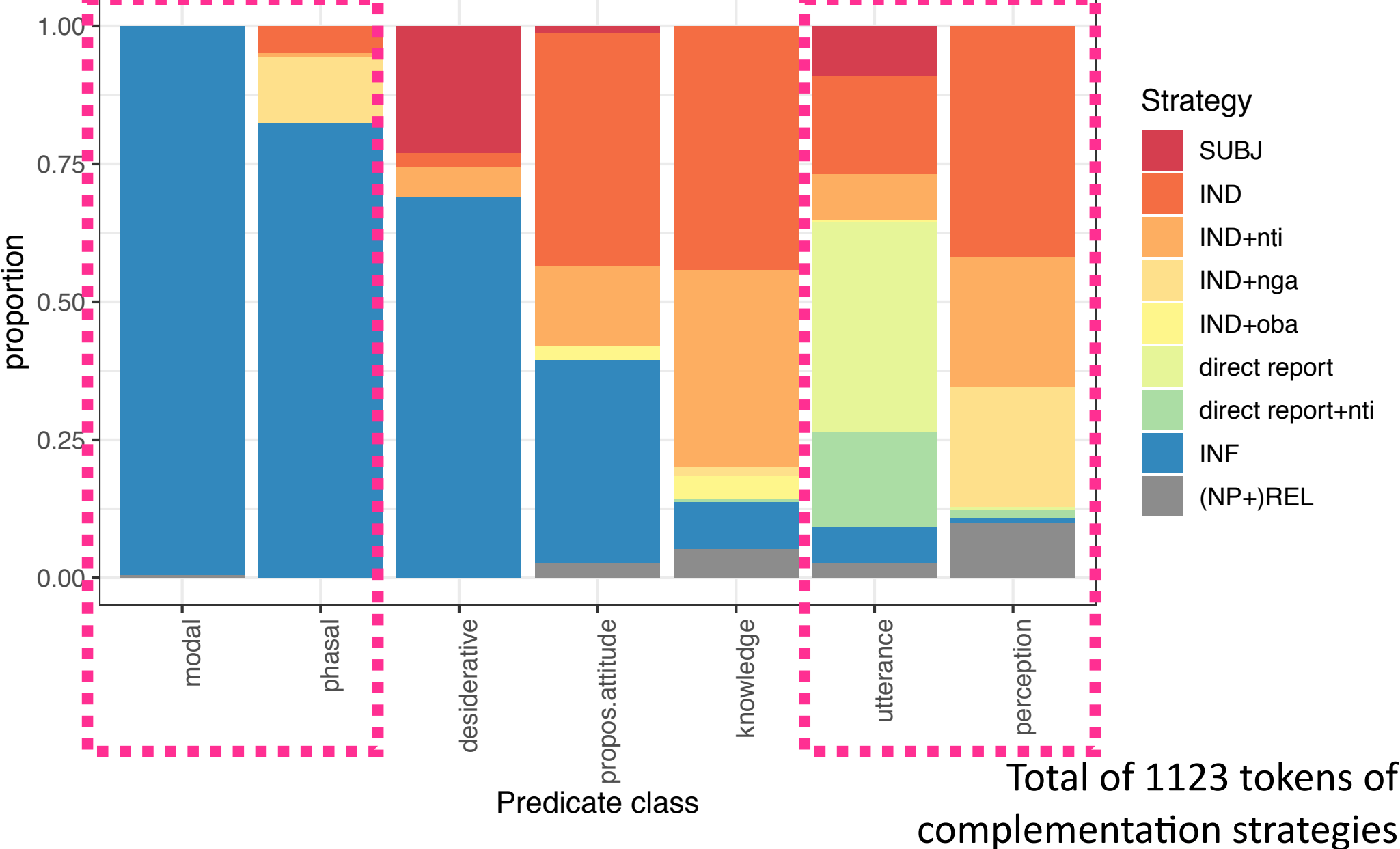
• Same subject a) *Tu-ku-taka* [*ku-ki-yindula*].
 1pIS-PROG-want INF-7O-change
 ‘We want to change it.’

• Different subject
b) *Tu-ku-taka* [*mu-ta-e=wo* *elesoni...*].
 1pIS-PROG-want 2pIS-introduce-**SUBJ**-LOClesson(9)
 ‘We want you to introduce a lesson.’

Desiderative predicates by construction (all)



Complementation strategies: frequent classes



Causes of variation: State-of-affairs and propositions

- Which semantic and structural conditions determine this preference?
- A hypothesis: the contrast between states-of-affairs and proposition might play a role in the choice of complementation strategies
(cf. Lyons 1977; Hengeveld 1990; Dik and Hengeveld 1991; Cristofaro 2003; Boye 2012)
 - **states-of-affairs**/actions/events,
i.e. non-truth valued meaning units
vs.
 - **propositions**, i.e. truth valued meaning units

Causes of variation: State-of-affairs and propositions

- Complement contrasts (Boye 2012: 188-194; Boye & Kehayov 2016):

1. a. *I know [(that) he was writing a letter].* → proposition

b. *I know [how to write a letter].* → state-of-affairs

2. a. *I told her [(that) he was writing a letter].* → proposition

b. *I told her [to write a letter].* → state-of-affairs

3. a. *I saw [(that) he was writing a letter].* → proposition

b. *I saw [him write a letter].* → state-of-affairs

Utterance predicates

- Reported assertion (proposition) with indicative complement

a) *o-a-kobere [nti byona oKanca niye a-li aiguru]*

2sgS-PST-say **COMP** 8.all 1.god COP.1 3sgS-be above

‘You said that it is God that is above everything.’

- Reported directive (state-of-affairs) with subjunctive or infinitive complement

b) *tu-a-a-mu-kob-ire [a-tu-weery-e=yo omusaayi]*

1pIS-PST-3sgO-say-PFV 3sgS-1pIO-give-**SUBJ**-LOC 3.blood

‘We told him to give us some blood.’

Perception predicates

- Indirect perception/acquisition of knowledge (proposition) with IND

a) *m-puura [a-zwamu alubaawo]*

1sgS-hear 3sgS-produce 11.timber

‘I hear it produces timber.’

- Direct perception (state-of-affairs) with *nga*-complement

b) *m-puura [empewo nga e-ku-n-yakala=ku]*

1sgS-hear 9.wind COMP 9S-PROG-1sgO-pass=LOC

‘I hear the wind passing over me.’

Further generalizations

- The absence or presence of the complementizer *nti* with indicative complements does not appear to be correlated with any semantic contrast, nor does *nti* disambiguate direct reported speech from indirect reported speech

Conclusions

- Complement taking predicates vary as to which complementation strategies they can be combined with
- Variation with some classes can be explained by the difference between state-of-affairs vs. propositions and by the contrast between same-subject/different-subject constructions

Conclusions

- IND complements (optionally with *nti* and *oba*) occur in constructions where the complement is arguably **propositional**.
- INF and SUBJ generally express **states-of-affairs**:
Non-epistemic modals as well as phasals, desideratives and directive utterance-predicates, which have been related to state-of-affairs, occur with INF and/or SUBJ and do not occur with complementizers.
- No one complement type appears to be completely polyfunctional between the two readings as is the case in some languages
(Boye 2010).
- On the other hand, there is tendency for complement-taking predicates to be polyfunctional and take more than one type of complement.

Thank you!
