24. Afrikanistentag

Panel 1

GOETHE UNIVERSITÄT FRANKFURT AM MAIN

Commands, blessings and warnings: Grammatical and ethnolinguistic aspects of directives in African languages

Organisers:
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Our workshop would like to bring together researchers working on the description and documentation of African languages to discuss grammatical and ethnolinguistic aspects of directives and related speech acts. Apart from descriptions of the grammar and use of commands ('VERB!') and prohibitions ('Don't VERB!'), we are **especially** interested in analyses of the morphology, syntax, lexicon and/or usage contexts of blessings and curses ('May you VERB!'), congratulations ('Congratulations for having VERBED!'), warnings of imminent dangers ('Take care not to VERB!') and threats ('Don't dare to VERB!') – which are to date still little or not at all studied in African languages. In the following we provide an (incomplete) list of aspects that we believe merit closer attention.

Commands and prohibitions

- Morphology of imperative verbs (in comparison to indicative verbs)
- Negation of imperatives (prohibitives): morphological (a)symmetries (see e.g. Miestamo 2007)
- (High-frequency) imperative-only verbs (see e.g. Cohen 1984)
- Commands in reported speech
- Expression of commands to 1st and 3rd-persons, e.g. dedicated hortative and jussive forms
- Non-command meanings of imperatives
- Expression of commands and prohibitions beyond imperatives: "command strategies" (Aikhenvald 2017), "veiled commands" (Henry 2017) and "whimperatives" (Wierzbicka 1991) such as *Would you open the door?*
- Directive (conative) interjections (Ameka 1991) and other verbless directives, see e.g. interjectional German *psst* 'Be quiet!' and Kambaata animal-directed commands, e.g. *sú* 'Catch!' (directed to a dog)

Blessing and curses

- Morphology of benedictive/maledictive verbs (compared to other verbs)
- Morphology and syntax of blessings/curses in comparison to speech formulas for greeting, thanking, apologizing and congratulating
- Lexicon and idiomatic expressions
- Dedicated (introductory) particles
- Usage context and cultural background

Congratulations

- Morphology of verbs in congratulations (compared to other verbs), see e.g. the use of perfective verbs in Ethiopian languages
- Lexicon and idiomatic expressions
- Dedicated (introductory) particles
- Usage context and cultural background

Warnings and threats

- Morphology of apprehensive verbs (Faller & Schultze-Berndt 2018, Vuillermet 2017), see e.g. the dedicated apprehensive paradigm in Kambaata (Treis 2018)
- Syntax of warnings and threats, see e.g. the dedicated apprehensive construction in Gban (Fedotov 2018) and the insubordinated apprehensives in Amharic *ɨnd-a-t-räsa* (COMP-NEG-2SM-forget\IPFV) 'Take care not to forget!' (lit. 'So that you don't forget.')

We invite contributions on individual languages (based on fieldwork data or written corpora) or comparative studies of languages of one genetic grouping or area, either from a synchronic or a diachronic perspective. Form-to-function approaches (exploring the array of functions of a certain morpheme, paradigm, particle, interjection etc.) and function-to-form approaches (exploring the different means of expressing commands, blessings, warnings etc.) are equally welcome. We accept abstracts in German, English and French.

It is planned to edit a joint publication after the workshop if there is enough interest.

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Colleagues who have already expressed their interest to participate

- Klaudia Dombrowsky-Hahn (U Bayreuth) on Bambara blessings (Mande)
- Anne-Maria Fehn (U Frankfurt) on Khwe and Ts'ixa (Khoe)
- Angelika Jakobi (U Köln) on Dongolawi or Tangle (Nubian)
- Raija Kramer (U Hamburg) on Fula (Atlantic)
- Alice Mitchell (U Köln) on Datooga imperatives and prohibitives (morphology, syntax, discourse patterns)
- Rebecca Voll (CNRS-LLACAN) on Mundabli (Bantoid) reported commands

References and selected readings

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Faller, Martina & Eva Schultze-Berndt 2018. The semantics and pragmatics of apprehensive markers in a cross-linguistic perspective. Introduction to the workshop "The semantics and pragmatics of apprehensive markers in a cross-linguistic perspective" of the 51st Annual Meeting of the SLE, 29 August-1 September 2018, Tallinn.

Fedotov, Maksim 2019. The apprehensive construction in Gban. Paper presented at workshop "The semantics and pragmatics of apprehensive markers in a cross-linguistic perspective" of the 51st Annual Meeting of the SLE, 29 August-1 September 2018, Tallinn.

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Pakendorf, Brigitte & Ewa Schalley 2007. From possibility to prohibition: A rare grammaticalization pathway. *Linguistic Typology* 11: 515-540.

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Vuillermet, Marine 2017. Questionnaire on apprehensional morphology. Laboratoire Dynamique Du Langage, Lyon, ms.

Wierzbicka, Anna 1991. *Cross-cultural pragmatics. The semantics of human interaction*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.