

BantuSynPhonIS:

Workshop on the Syntax/Prosody/Information Structure of Preverbal Domains

in Bantu Languages

ZAS (Berlin), November 14-15 2014

Bantu languages have been at the heart of the research on the interaction between syntax, prosody and information structure. In this workshop, we hope to deepen our understanding of the interaction of different grammatical components both in individual languages and across the Bantu family by bringing together current research on various phenomena relating to the preverbal domains.

Invited participants:

Jasper de Kind (Universiteit Gent)

Koen Bostoen (Universiteit Gent)

Laura Downing (Göteborgs Universitet)

Joseph Koni Muluwa (Universiteit Gent)

Lutz Marten (SOAS)

Marten Mous (Universiteit Leiden)

Ernest Nshemezimana (Universiteit Gent)

Lisa Lai-Shen Cheng (Universiteit Leiden) [provisional]

Martial Embanga-Aborobongui (LPP, Université Paris 3/CNRS) [provisional]

Annie Rialland (LPP, Université Paris 3/CNRS) [provisional]

Call for participation:

In SVO languages, considerable attention has been devoted to postverbal phenomena. For this workshop, we will discuss issues related to the syntax, prosody, semantics and pragmatics of the “preverbal domains” in Bantu languages, i.e. issues of Object-Verb order/Immediately Before the Verb position, subject(s) and left-periphery of the clause:

- A number of languages have been shown to display apparently clause-internal preverbal objects (a.o. in SOV, OVS and OSV in Aghem, Tunen, Mbuun, Basaa and/or Kinyarwanda/Kirundi). What are the semantic/discourse properties associated to these structures? How are they derived? What are their prosodic properties? What other properties of the languages that display OV/IBV distinguish them from the Bantu languages that do not allow it?
- Bantu languages vary as to what is preferred to be a grammatical subject. Whereas a strong dispreference against non-subject proto-agents leaves only little space to information structural considerations in the choice of a grammatical subject in Basaa, languages like Sotho/Tswana show a strong connection between the notion of Topic and the function of grammatical subject. How is this difference connected to other properties of these languages? What is the pragmatics/semantics/prosody of locative inversion or so-called subject/object reversal structures?
- Postverbal focusing strategies (e.g. Immediately After the Verb position, inversion, a subset of cleft-sentences) have received considerable attention in the recent literature. Clause-initial focusing seems to be a common focusing strategy too (a.o. Tunen, Basaa, Eton, Kîtharaka, Kinande). What is the syntactic structure of clause-initial focus sentences? Is clause-initial focusing necessarily associated to contrast/exhaustivity? What other properties of the languages that display clause-initial focusing distinguish them from the Bantu languages that

- do not allow it? Is clause-initial focusing coupled with a specific prosodic marking?
- Left-dislocation has recently been discussed in connection to phonology-syntax mapping in a subset of Bantu languages. Languages seem to differ in their ability/requirement to phrase left-dislocated items together with the associate clause. Is there a correlation between the prosody and the discourse status of left-dislocated items? More generally, what are the discourse properties of left-dislocation? In Mbuun and Bàsàa for instance, object left-dislocation is associated to a broad focus reading, and has a functional-passive value comparable to Kinyarwanda OVS. Is this pattern found in other Bantu languages? What is the connection between dislocation and topicalization? Can different types of topics be distinguished, like in Romance and Germanic languages? From a morpho-syntactic perspective, what is the connection between the left-dislocated item and the object marker/pronoun within the associate clause? What is the target position of left-dislocated items? What is the evidence for internal/external topic positions?
 - How do root-clauses compare to embedded clauses or how do declarative sentences compare to other sentence-types in relation to these phenomena?

We are welcoming a limited number of additional talks and posters. If you would like to make a contribution to this workshop, please get in touch with us at **BantuSynPhonIS@yahoo.fr** by **September 28th 2014**. Experimental, corpus-based, descriptive, comparative, typological and theoretical studies are welcome.

Organizing committee:

Fatima Hamlaoui, Tonjes Veenstra – ZAS, Berlin

Tom Güldemann, Yukiko Morimoto and Ines Fiedler – Humboldt-Universität Berlin

Selected references:

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- Hamlaoui, F. & Szendrői, K. Submitted. A flexible approach to the syntax-phonology mapping of intonational phrases. Ms. ZAS/UCL.
- Hamlaoui, F. & Makasso, E.-M. 2013. Dislocation, Topicalization and the syntax-phonology mapping of intonation phrases in Bâsâa [with a note on the connection between Bâsâa and Mbuun OSV and Kinyarwanda/Kirundi OVS pseudo-passives]. 5th International Conference on Bantu Languages. Paris. Manuscript, ZAS, Berlin.
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