

Multiple verb constructions and Event Structure in Mbum

Abstract:

Mbum is a language spoken on the Adamawa-Plateau of the Republic of Cameroon, in the cities of Ngaoundéré, Ngan-Ha, Mbang Mboum and Tibati and their surrounding villages. The language though, with an average of 50.000 speakers, is menaced to extinction by the prestige of the great lingua franca Fulfulde, which is spoken in the North of Cameroon and Nigeria and which has a great influence both linguistically and culturally.

Mbum belongs to the Kebi-Sanaga-subgroup (Elders 2006; former Mbum-subgroup) of the Adamawa family which is itself part of the Adamawa-Gur Continuum of the North Volta-Congo branch of Niger-Congo. Its typological profile is an isolating-analytic type with an SV/AVO structure and four distinctive tones (high, low, falling, rising), plus polar tone-patterns. As a typical isolating language, Mbum exhibits a high amount of multiple verb constructions (MVC), especially serial verb constructions (SVC), thus giving interesting insight in different types of complex event structure in that language.

In presenting event structure in Mbum, I will first give a short description of Mbum verb structure before examining different MVCs expressing motion and manner. In doing this I will give an explication for the connection with the inflectional Paradigms of perfective (unmarked verb) vs. imperfective Aspect (verb marked as verbalnoun), which influences the application of the verbform chosen in a MVC.

Literature:

- Aikhenvald, Alexandra. 2006. Serial Verb Construction in Typological Perspective. In: Aikhenvald, A. Y. und Robert M. W. Dixon (Hrsg.). 2006. *Serial Verb Constructions: A Cross-linguistic Typology*. (Explorations in Linguistic Typology, Bd. 2) Oxford: Oxford University Press. S. 1-68.
- Elders, Stefan. 2006. Issues in comparative Kebi-Sanaga (Adamawa). *Africana Linguistica* 12.
- Givón, Talmy. 2009. Multiple routes to clause union: The diachrony of complex verb phrases. In: Givón, T. und M. Shibatani (Hrsg.), *Syntactic Complexity: Diachrony, acquisition, neuro-cognition, evolution*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publ. S. 81-118.
- Hagège, Claude. 1970. *La langue Mbum de Nghanha, Vol. 1 + 2*. SELAF, Paris: Klincksieck.
- Markgraf, Holger W. 2011. Von Seriellen Verben und Auxiliaren. Die Grammatikalisierung von Bewegungsverben in Adamawasprachen. In: Kramer, R., Tröbs, H. und R. Kastenholz, (Hg.) *Afrikanische Sprachen im Fokus*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. S. 189-208.