

Expressing information structure within the conjugational system. Form and function of the Bantu conjoint and disjoint verb forms

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All languages have a way to highlight the most important or contrastive part of a sentence, the focus. English uses intonation (JOHN ate sushi) or a cleft construction (it was John who ate sushi) to indicate the focus, but other languages use morphological means. A particularly interesting system is found in southern Bantu languages, where focus can be encoded in the conjugation of the verb. In Makhuwa, for example, the form of the verb not only shows tense or aspect, but also encodes whether the following element is in focus or not. This presentation discusses the formal distinctions marking these so-called conjoint and disjoint verb forms, and their exact interpretations in terms of semantic focus.

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事前予約不要・参加費無料

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