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Towards a comparative description of the Adamawa languages of Mumuye-Yendang and Leko-Nimbari groups: A preliminary analysis of the field data

The paper presents an attempt of comparative analysis of some Adamawa languages of Mumuye-Yendang (Yendang, Waka, Maya (Bali) and Leko-Nimbari (Nyong) groups. All these languages are very scarcely documented (some word lists and articles on specific topics, eg. numeral systems). The data were collected during linguistic expedition to Eastern Nigeria in January-February 2012. During the expedition the following work was done: phonetic and tonal analysis with Speech Analyzer, vocabulary lists of various size, thematic vocabularies, sociolinguistic questionnaire, basic grammar questionnaire, systematic morphosyntax questionnaire

The following comparative results are going to be presented:

- Basic sociolinguistic information: names of the languages and ethnic groups, dialectal varieties
- Collection, checking and correction of wordlists
- Basic phonological peculiarities
- Means of forming plural forms
- Pronominal systems
- Nominal predication: constructions of qualification, identification, locative and presentative constructions.
- Verbal constructions: with active, stative intransitive verbs, transitive and ditransitive verbs
- Elements of noun phrase syntax
- Elements of kinship terms systems.

As an example of data which are going to be presented we show below the comparative analysis of three valence verbs argument structure in Maya (Mumuye-Yendang group) and Nyong (Leko-Nimbary group).

The following combinations were checked:

Object	Addressee
Noun	Noun
Noun	Pronoun
Pronoun	Noun
Pronoun	Pronoun

Maya

- Object (Noun) + Adressee (Noun):

ŋb idan toŋne bàadaŋ-ŋe men nsedaŋ

The man show the child-Obj to the woman

- Addressee (Pronoun) + Object (Noun):

A toŋne-m bàadaŋ-(ŋe)

He show-(to)me the child

- Object (Pronoun) + Adresse (Noun):

A toŋne-m men bàadaŋ

He show-me to the child

- Object (Pronoun) + Adressee (Pronoun):

A toŋne-m mèn-é

He show-me to-you(sg)

The rules for Maya:

- When Object is equal or higher in animacy hierarchy than Addressee: O + men + A
- When Addressee is higher in animacy hierarchy than Object: A + O
- Both Object and Addressee pronouns can be an Object marker in the verb
- *Men* “to” can have a sort of “agreement” with pronominal addressee

Nyong

- Addressee (Noun) + Object (Noun):

NEVE nk [□] *isi* *nEkenk* [□] *wàk* [□]

The man show to the woman the child

- Addressee (Pronoun) + Object (Noun):

Yo isi-n *wàk* [□]

He show-(to)me the child

- Addressee (Noun) + Object (Pronoun)

Yo isi *wàk* [□] *má*

He show to the child me

- Addressee (Pronoun) + Object (Pronoun)

Yo isi-m *má*

He show-(to)you(sg) me

The rules for Nyong:

- Addressee always occurs before Object
- Only pronominal Addressee can appear as agreement marker in the verb
- No special mark for “to”
- Roles are determined by word order

Comparative table of three valence constructions in Maya and Nyong

Object (O)	Addressee (A)	Maya	Nyong
		Word order	Word order
Noun	Noun	S+V+O+men+A	S+V+A+O
Noun	Pronoun	S+V-A+O	S+V-A+O
Pronoun	Noun	S+V-O+men+A	S+V+A+O
Pronoun	Pronoun	S+V-O+men-A	S+V-A+O

Main conclusions:

- 1) In Nyong the constructions can be called ditransitive.
- 2) In Maya animacy (deictic) hierarchy is influencing the surface syntactic structure along with role functions.
- 3) In Maya we can see a specific pronominal agreement on the preposition *men* “to”.