INTRODUCTION

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This Special Issue is a product of the conference "The semantics of verbal morphology in under-described languages", which took place 2–3 June 2017 at the University of Gothenburg. The conference was organized as part of the research project "The semantics of verbal morphology in central Tanzanian Bantu languages: a comparative study". Both the conference and the research project were funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (F17-0970:1 and P15-0341:1 respectively). The central goal of the conference was to provide a forum for the discussion and dissemination of research focused on the encoding of tense, aspect, and mood (TAM) in the verbal domain, their meanings, and their interaction with the lexical aspectual categories of the verbal stem.

The conference was the first of its kind to bring together researchers working on areas within the study of TAM specifically in under-described languages. The conference gave researchers from across the world an opportunity to discuss their research findings, address challenges that arise in research of this type, and offer solutions regarding data collection strategies and data analysis in this complex area of grammar. While we have made significant advances in this field, some questions remain unanswered, many of which rely on the essential addition of data from across the world's languages, and, crucially, from those languages for which there is a dearth of information.

This Special Issue continues the discussion of TAM in under-described languages.[1] The core data upon which the papers are based stem from fieldwork, including questionnaires, elicitations, structured interviews, and oral and written texts; some other sources, such biblical translations and introspective data, were also used. The topics covered in the papers span several categories, including temporal constructions, actionality, grammatical aspectual morphology, subjunctive mood, counterfactuality, evidentiality, and the interactions between these categories. Of the seven contributions chosen for this volume, six focus on data from Bantu languages and one on data from a Northwest Caucasian language. What follows is a brief summary of the contributions.

The paper "Actionality, aspect, tense, and counterfactuality in Kuban Kabardian" by Peter Arkadiev explores the role played by grammatical and lexical aspect in determining how counter-factual conditional clauses are marked. The data presented in the paper are based on a question-naire with field data from the Kuban dialect of Kabardian, a polysynthetic Northwest Caucasian language primarily spoken in Russia. The author argues that temporal reference does not play an

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important role in determining counterfactual marking, but that it is aspectual distinctions and actionality that restrict the morphological expression of counterfactionality. Both the Pluperfect and the Preterite can be used in the counterfactual protases, while the Imperfect is used in imperfective counterfactuals. The author argues that the most productive contrast can be found by comparing the simple Imperfect in imperfective contexts and the Pluperfect or Preterite in perfective contexts for telic verbs. Arkadiev concludes that while Kuban Kabardian is similar to Romance languages in marking counterfactual conditionals with the Imperfective Past, an analysis of counterfactuality must take into consideration a range of potential actional classes and aspectual viewpoints.

Rasmus Bernander's contribution, "On the 'atypical' Imperative verb form in Manda", is a study of the formal and functional pathway of change of the suffix *-ayi* in Manda, a Bantu language spoken in southern Tanzania. The author argues that the suffix *-ayi* is, at least partly, a reflex of the reconstructed Proto-Bantu imperfective morpheme *-a(n)g-*. Bernander suggests that this suffix is prototypically aspectual but that it is also used to mark intensity and exclamation in Bantu languages. Based on synchronic variation, historical data, and comparisons with micro-variation in neighbouring languages, Bernander argues that at some point in time, the sense of intensity associated with this morpheme was neutralized in Manda. The author further argues that the loss of the Imperative construction, which is unique within the Bantu language family, paved the way for the construction containing *-ayi* to be used as a marker for second person directive speech acts. Bernander concludes that despite the seemingly "atypical" function of the suffix, today's usage can be explained by a typologically generalizable pathway of change, highlighting the value of examining the absence of expected constructions.

The interaction between lexical and grammatical aspect and other aspectual morphology, such as the conjoint/disjoint distinction and penultimate lengthening, is explored in the paper "Constituency, imbrication, and the interpretation of change-of-state verbs in isiNdebele" by Thera Crane and Axel Fanego. IsiNdebele is a Nguni Bantu language spoken mostly in the Mpumalanga and Gauteng provinces of South Africa. The data in this paper are based on fieldwork. The focus of the paper is on the interpretation of the aspectual suffix *-ile*. The authors analyse this morpheme as a marker of Perfective aspect in isiNdebele. They argue that the interpretations of the cognate suffix in the closely related Zulu language show semantic regularity: merged ("imbricated") forms express current state readings while unmerged ("non-imbricated") forms express state changes. However, the authors demonstrate that imbrication, along with morphological and phonological constructions expressing different constituents in isiNdebele, is not so straightforward. Crane and Fanego suggest that the two languages have undergone two different paths of grammaticalization which have resulted in different selectional capacities (that is, how aspectual markers interact with lexical aspect and other elements of the sentence). The authors conclude that such historical developments are not frequently highlighted in studies of grammaticalization processes, and are examined even more rarely in studies of interactions between lexical and grammatical aspect. Crane and Fanego's study also highlights the importance of comparing the behaviour of Bantu specific constructions across languages of the family in order to better understand how these categories interact.

The next contribution, "A discourse analysis of three past TAM forms in Vwanji", by Helen Eaton, examines three past TAM constructions in Vwanji, a Bantu language spoken in southwestern Tanzania. The data are taken from a corpus of narrative and non-narrative written and oral texts. The author demonstrates that the three TAM forms (Near Past/Anterior, Near Past,

and Near Past Habitual) have several discourse functions which are not always deductible based on their position in the language's TAM system. A comparison with these constructions in five neighbouring languages suggests that Vwanji may be at an earlier stage of development. The paper also highlights the importance of taking natural discourse data into account in order to understand the functions of TAM constructions. Relying on elicited data alone may obscure the varying discourse functions of TAM constructions. Eaton concludes that a variety of different types of data is necessary in order to adequately understand the full range of functions a single verb form may express.

The paper "Evidential strategies in Nyamwezi" by Ponsiano Kanijo explores the ways in which evidentiality is encoded in Nyamwezi, a Bantu language spoken in central Tanzania. The data were collected in the area using questionnaires and extensive interviews. The author shows that while there is no single grammatical morpheme that signals evidentiality, the language exhibits two main evidential strategies: (i) tense and aspect constructions, namely the Hodiernal Past, Imperfective aspect, and stative construction, and (ii) lexical items, namely verbs of saying and perception, and epistemic expressions. The author demonstrates that these strategies differ from each other based on the information source, that is, the source of the knowledge expressed in a proposition, and on the speaker's attitude and view concerning that knowledge. Kanijo concludes that there are two ways of encoding evidentiality in this language: one set of tense and aspect forms (the Hodiernal Past and Imperfective aspect) is used if the speaker has evidence to support the proposition asserted, while the stative construction is used if the speaker's evidence for the proposition asserted is grounded on inferences (conjectures/speculations).

"The Subjunctive mood in Giryama and Tanzanian Nyanja" is a contribution by Nancy Jumwa Ngowa and Deo Ngonyani. This paper focuses on the Subjunctive in two Bantu languages: Giryama, spoken in eastern Kenya, and Nyanja, spoken in southwestern Tanzania. The data were gathered through introspection as well as fieldwork. The authors show that, as is typical in other Bantu languages, the Subjunctive in Giryama and Nyanja is marked morphologically in three ways: (i) a verbal suffix, (ii) obligatory person morphology, and (iii) the absence of tense morphology (with the exception of the Future in Nyanja). The authors demonstrate that the Subjunctive occurs in independent clauses that express exhortation or suggestion, independent clauses introduced by certain modals, and sentences marked with the Future tense. The Subjunctive occurs in subordinate clauses that are selected by directive, desiderative, and causative verbs, or triggered by adverbial clauses. While the distribution of the Subjunctive in the two languages is consistent with prototypical irrealis environments, the authors demonstrate that the Subjunctive is used in clauses that are not irrealis, but in which some "non-fact" is involved. For example, *hangu ugite* 'ever since you cooked' expresses an assertion that something happened in the past, and yet the Subjunctive is used. Ngowa and Ngonyani conclude that a binary opposition of features is not sufficient to define the Subjunctive and instead suggest a prototype approach.

Finally, "An analysis of the verbal marker *tsa* in Luguru" by Malin Petzell examines the usage, form, and frequency of *tsa*, an under-described verbal marker on the verb, in Luguru, spoken in central Tanzania. The data in the paper are primarily based on fieldwork, and are supplemented by email conversations, different drafts of Bible translations, and traditional stories. The marker refers to an already established point of reference (typically temporal or, more rarely, locational) and gives rise to meanings such as 'at a specific time', 'at that place', 'as we know', or even 'for that reason'. The marker *tsa* is never obligatory, and it cannot be

used in out-of-the-blue contexts without some sort of "anchor". The author suggests that *tsa* has probably developed from the verb *kutsa* 'to come'. However, the fact that it is not found in older Luguru sources and has no cognates in other Bantu languages suggests that this is likely to be a more recent innovation. The author further speculates that this innovation may be a result of the scarcity of other TAM markers in the language. Petzell concludes that the marker *tsa* encodes shared knowledge, reference, or expectation in a broad sense.

We hope that the papers in this Special Issue will motivate other researchers working on languages across the world and within any theoretical framework to look closely at the morphosyntactic and semantic properties of TAM in languages both documented and under-documented. The more data that we can share, the closer we will be to an understanding of the limits of TAM systems across the world's languages. The more varied our methodologies are, the more robust our comparative work can be.