

Studies in African Linguistics

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Michael Cahill: *Tone Polarity in Kɔ̀nni Nouns*

Since Kenstowicz *et al*'s analysis of Mooré (1988), a widespread view is that tone polarity does not exist; apparent polarity is actually dissimilation. This paper shows that an OCP-based dissimilation analysis cannot account for the full range of Kɔ̀nni data, and presents a morpheme-specific **POLAR** constraint referring to the Noun Class 1 plural suffix. **POLAR** is satisfied in two or possibly three ways: the polar tone may be inserted, be already present in the input, or possibly spread from the definite suffix. The polar tone is not always on the word's edge, and for some words may even be floating. The analysis here thus supports the assertion of Newman (1995) that tone polarity is a natural pattern of language.

Ursula Drolc: *A Diachronic Analysis of Ndut Vowel Harmony*

Ndut is spoken in Senegal and belongs to the Cangin languages, a subgroup of the (West-)Atlantic languages (Sapir 1971). Unlike the other Cangin languages Noon, Laala and Saafi, Ndut, as well as closely related Palor, exhibits apparently bidirectional vowel harmony. However, a phonological analysis suggests that there are two independent phenomena that have to be kept separate: regressive vowel assimilation, which is probably a very archaic feature of the Atlantic languages, and progressive root-controlled harmony, which may be a contact-induced innovation. In Senegal, the dominant language is Wolof, a Senegambian language that is part of a different subgroup of Atlantic languages. As Wolof is the major medium of interethnic communication, most Ndut speakers are Wolof-bilingual. Consequently, contact-induced language changes are likely to appear in Ndut.

Flavien Gbeto: *Esquisse de la tonologie synchronique du wemɛgbe, dialecte gbe du Sud-bénin*

In this paper I show that Wemɛgbe, a language spoken in southern Benin, has two underlying tones, H and L, and that the surface tones M, LH and HL are derived by phonological rules. A H tone is inserted after an initial prevocalic voiceless obstruent (occurring in non verbals), creating a HL contour tone, when the vowel of the syllable is L toned. The LH tone is derived through a right-spreading rule from a L' prefix tone, which is postulated for all verbs in their imperative forms and for all nouns. Of particular interest is the fact that the rightward spreading rule for L' is blocked by a voiceless obstruent. Finally, the M tone is derived through a L-Raising rule. This analysis shows that not only can vowels be TBUs in the world's languages, but also initial root consonants can be.

Rose Letsholo: *Clausal And DP-Internal Agreement In Ikalanga*

This paper investigates the controversial morphemes that occur both at the clause level and within the DP in Bantu languages such as Ikalanga, which have been analyzed as “agreement morphology” by some (Baker 2002, Demuth and Harford (1999) and as resumptive/incorporated pronouns by others (Bresnan and Mchombo 1987, Zwart 1997). The paper proposes a unified analysis of this phenomenon, analyzing both clausal and DP-internal occurrences of these morphemes as agreement morphology which holds between the head of an XP and its predicate, or between the head of an XP and its modifiers. In both instances, the agreement relation is instantiated after movement of the relevant category from its base position to a specifier position which enables the moved category to enter into a checking relation (i.e. a spec-head configuration) with another category that has matching features (Chomsky 1995).