

Editorial

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This issue of SPiLPlus is dedicated to the fourth annual Southern African Microlinguistics Workshop (SAMWOP-4), held from 27-29 November 2015 at Rhodes University, Grahamstown. As was the case with the previous three SAMWOP workshops, the Rhodes workshop was an exhibition of state-of-the-art microlinguistic research being conducted in Southern Africa and/or on Southern African languages. The current special issue is no different. Since then, SAMWOP-5 has been held at the University of the Free State (24-26 November 2016) and SAMWOP-6 is due to be held in late 2017 at Stellenbosch University. It is my hope that the SAMWOP workshop and special-issue series will continue to flourish and provide a useful outlet for linguists working in Southern African microlinguistics.

This special issue begins with two complementary articles by Adri Breed (North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus), which investigate the development and use of the postular progressive as a subjective or interpretative construction. The first article proposes a development route for the evolution of the Afrikaans subjective postular progressive into a fully-fledged modal. In the second article, a corpus investigation is conducted to examine the subjective use of this progressive in a non-standard, informal, spoken or conversational language variety of Afrikaans, namely "Zefrikaans". In the next article, Stefan Savić (Rhodes University) investigates the semantics of the perfective/imperfective opposition in Xhosa. The results show that there is a strong correlation between the use of the imperfective aspect and the ability of an eventuality to hold true at more than one point in time. However, the study also shows that the choice of aspect depends on (1) whether or not an eventuality is factual, (2) on the focused part of the proposition, as well as (3) on time moving forward in sequenced eventualities. Remaining with Xhosa, the paper by Eva-Marie Bloom Ström (Rhodes University & University of Gothenburg) then discusses the use of a number of inversion constructions in Xhosa, with data taken from a corpus of natural spoken language. It proposes that there is agreeing inversion in Xhosa, a core inversion construction whereby the verb agrees with the post-verbal subject. This subject is not dislocated, in contrast with another inversion construction discussed in this paper. In addition, it shows that phonological phrasing is not always a reliable indicator of dislocation of the post-verbal subject. In the next paper, Winfrid Mkochi (University of Cape Town & University of Malawi) argues that reduplication in Malawian Tonga (Bantu) can be partial prefixal, total suffixal, or partial suffixal. He also argues that the relevant unit of (reduplicative) prosodic stem analysis is not the mora as previously suggested, but the syllable, like in many Bantu languages.

South African Sign Language (SASL) is an understudied and underrepresented language in microlinguistics. In their paper, Mikhaela Köhlo, Ian Siebörger and William Bennett (Rhodes University) investigate the phonological constraints found at the coda of SASL syllables. They find that SASL allows changes in body region within the syllable, a finding that challenges existing sign language phonological theory. Seunghun Lee (University of Johannesburg & International Christian University) and Crous Hlungwani (University of Venda) then present the distribution of the conjunctive and disjunctive forms in Xitsonga. While verbs in the conjunctive form are followed by some elements, the disjunctive is used when no element follows the verb. In their article, Xitsonga data is examined in the light of three major approaches that have been proposed: the constituency approach, the focus-based approach, and the information packaging approach. Xitsonga supports but also provides counterevidence to all of these approaches. This article also re-examines the claim that the presence of conjunctive/disjunctive distinctions only exists in the present tense. Lastly, Alyssa Vratsanos and Maxwell Kadenge (University of the Witwatersrand) examine the interaction of glide formation, secondary articulation, elision, and coalescence in Xitsonga, using optimality theory. The article demonstrates that when glide formation is blocked by syllable structure constraints, secondary articulation occurs. The main trigger for elision, the least preferred repair strategy, is the Obligatory Contour Principle (OCP). Coalescence occurs, but in very limited contexts. They demonstrate that a single constraint hierarchy is responsible for these seemingly disjointed repair strategies.

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