Wolof Predicative Constructions: a typological and constructional approach
Plan

① Wolof verbal predication
② Constructional approach
③ Network of predicative constructions
④ Explaining irregular forms
⑤ Typological sketch
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1. Wolof verbal predication
2. Constructional approach
3. Network of predicative constructions
4. Explaining irregular forms
5. Typological sketch
Wolof language

- Classification:
  - Niger-Congo
  - Atlantic

- Agglutinative morphology

- Spoken in Senegambia
- Vehicular in Senegal
Wolof verbal predication

- Based on phrasal patterns
  Predicative constructions

- Predicative Constructions $\approx$ Conjugations
tense, aspect, mood, information structure

- Complex predicates

- Verb + Predicative Marker
  - Verb
    - lexical meaning
  - Predicative Marker
    - grammatical information + subject affix
Wolof Predicative Constructions

- **Subject Focus**
  
  \[ \text{ma-}a \quad \text{liggéey} \]
  
  PM-1SG  work

- **Presentative**
  
  \[ \text{ma-angi} \quad \text{liggéey} \]
  
  PM-1SG  work

- **Complement Focus**
  
  \[ \text{fii} \quad \text{la-}a \quad \text{liggéey} \]
  
  PM-1SG  work

- **Verb Focus**
  
  \[ \text{da-ma} \quad \text{liggéey} \]
  
  PM-1SG  work

- **Perfect**
  
  \[ \text{liggéey} \quad \text{na-a} \]
  
  PM-1SG  work

- **Future**
  
  \[ \text{dina-a} \quad \text{liggéey} \]
  
  PM-1SG  work

- **Optative**
  
  \[ \text{na-a} \quad \text{liggéey} \]
  
  PM-1SG  work
Other grammatical categories

- Suffix on lexical verb

**Past**
- `da-ma liggéey-oon`
- PM-1SG work-PST
- 'I had worked'

**Negation**
- `da-ma liggéey-ul`
- PM-1SG work-NEG
- 'I haven't worked'
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Construction grammars

- Family of theories
  - Cognitive linguistic approach to syntax
  - Divergent from the mainstream generative approach

- Some shared characteristics
  - Constructions are the basic units of grammar
  - Architecture is non-modular and monostratal
  - Grammar is a network of constructions
  - Performance shapes Competence (usage-based approach)
    - explain language use, acquisition, change
What are constructions?

- Pairings of form & meaning
- All levels of description involve constructions
  morphemes, words, idioms, syntactic patterns...

![Diagram showing the relationship between construction and meaning]

**Construction**

- Meaning
  - semantic
  - pragmatic
  - discourse-functional

- Form
  - syntactic
  - morphological
  - phonological
Schematic constructions & Instances

- Uniform representation of all grammatical knowledge
  - All levels of description involve constructions
  - No strict division between lexicon and syntax

- Each construction is an instance of a more schematic construction

```
schematic construction

  instantiation

  specified construction
```
The organisation of constructions

- Constructions form a structured inventory
- Grammar = network of constructions
  - Inheritance links
  - Construction inherits form and meaning features

```
Negation       V-ul
Verb Focus     da(fa)-S V
Past           V-oon
```

```
da-ma liggéey-ul-oon
PM-1SG work-NEG-PST
'I hadn't worked'
```
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③ **Network of predicative constructions**
④ Explaining irregular forms
⑤ Typological sketch
Constructional approach to Wolof predication

- An unified and coherent approach
  - Analyse all aspects
  - Descriptive & Explanatory

- Predicative Constructions
  - Not only an unstructured list
  - Form a network of constructions
General network of Wolof Predicative Constructions

- **Aux Verb**
  - Aux-S V

- **Perfect**
  - V na-S

- **Future**
  - dina-S V

- **Optative**
  - na-S V

- **Focus**
  - Foc Aux-S V

- **Subject Emphasis**
  - S-Aux V

- **Complement Focus**
  - O la-S V

- **Verb Focus**
  - da(fa)-S V

- **Subject Focus**
  - S-a V

- **Presentative**
  - S-angi V
Inheritance links

- **Aux Verb**: Aux-S V
- **Focus**: Foc Aux-S V
- **CFoc**: O la -S V

Form and meaning inheritance

Syntactic inheritance + specific position

Instantiation
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Irregular forms?

- **Aux Verb**: Aux-S V
  - **Perfect**: V na-S
  - **Future**: dina-S V
  - **Optative**: na-S V
  - **Focus**: Foc Aux-S V
    - **Subject Emphasis**: S-Aux V
    - **Complement Focus**: O la-S V
      - **Verb Focus**: da(fa)-S V
    - **Subject Focus**: S-a V
    - **Presentative**: S-angi V
Diachronic explanation
"Perfect" & "Verb Focus"

former state: layering
(several constructions for the same function)
Diachronic explanation "Perfect" & "Verb Focus"

- **Aux Verb**
  - Aux-S V

- **Verb Focus**
  - V na-S

- **Perfect**
  - V na-S

- **Focus**
  - Foc Aux-S V

- **Verb Emphasis**
  - def-a V

The bleaching process (loss of focus features) → frequency effect
Diachronic explanation
"Perfect" & "Verb Focus"

Aux Verb
Aux-S V

Focus
Foc Aux-S V

Verb Focus
V na-S

Verb Emphasis
def-a V

Verb Focus
dafa-S V

Perfect
V na-S

morphologization + decategorialization
Diachronic explanation
"Perfect" & "Verb Focus"

actual state: reorganisation of the network
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Auxiliary Verb Constructions

Features
- Phrasal patterns
- Mono-clausal structure
- Minimally consist in lexical verb + auxiliary
  - Lexical verb $\rightarrow$ lexical content
  - Auxiliary $\rightarrow$ some grammatical or functional content
- Finite set of auxiliaries

Wolof Predicative Constructions
- Auxiliary Verb Constructions

$\text{démb}$ $\text{la-a}$ $\text{liggéey-ul-oon}$
yesterday CFOC-1SG work-NEG-PST
'it's yesterday that I didn't work'
West African Sprachbund

- Similar to Mande
  - Moodle *dina nelaw*
  - Mǎdù bénà sù̀ncọ̀
  - Modou PM.FUT sleep
  - 'Modou will sleep'

- Links to
  - Macro-Sudan Belt
  - Split Predicate Sahel Belt

- Prospects
  - Language contact
  - Comparative linguistics
Conclusion

- An unified and coherent approach
  - Analyse all aspects
  - Descriptive & Explanatory power
  - Cognitive adequacy

- Wolof Predicative Constructions
  - Not only an unstructured list
  - Form a network of constructions
  - Usage-based approach can explain irregular forms

- Typological prospects
  - Language contact
  - Comparative syntax


