



Panel title: **Consecutive in West-African languages: between finite and non-finite**

Panel coordinators: Nina Sumbatova, RSUH (Moscow)
Valentin Vydrin, INALCO — LLACAN — St. Petersburg State University

Many languages have some special grammatical constructions designed to encode sequences of events. In the African linguistic tradition, such constructions are labeled consecutive, or sequentative (Creissels 2006, vol. 2: 186). In other publications, such constructions may be referred to as clause-chaining (Haspelmath 1995: 20-27; van der Auwera 1998: 276).

Most European languages have no special consecutive constructions: clauses expressing sequential events are simply coordinated. In the Altaic, Ethiosemitic, Nakh-Daghestanian and many other languages, the final verb of a consecutive chain is normally finite, whereas the preceding actions are expressed by non-finite clauses headed by converbs (cf. the discussion of their status in (van der Auwera 1998)). In many West African languages, verbs in consecutive constructions also appear in non-finite or some special forms, which cannot be used in independent clauses ("medial verbs"). Clauses expressing subsequent actions are often formally subordinate or have a status intermediate between coordinative and subordinative, i.e. "co-subordinative", in Haspelmath's (1995: 25-26) terminology (cf. also Foley & Van Valin 1984).

Three most frequent types of consecutive constructions are as follows:

- 1) the first verb appears in a finite form (the first clause is formally independent), the subsequent verbs are specially marked (posterior clause-chaining);
- 2) the last verb appears in a finite form (the last clause is formally independent), the preceding verbs are specially marked (anterior clause-chaining);
- 3) all the verbs in a chain are specially marked (directionless clause-chaining).

The aim of the panel is to inventory morphological and syntactic techniques of encoding consecutive events, which are used in West African languages, and to trace typological and areal divergences and similarities between these languages.

The participants of the panel are invited to discuss the following questions:

— which of the three abovementioned strategies is found in the language(s) you are working on? Does your language follow a strategy different from all those listed here?

— what are the special verbal forms used in consecutive constructions (if any): do they appear elsewhere as non-finite (infinitives, converbs, participles, others) or finite; in what other contexts can they be used (if at all)?

— what are the relations between the clauses in the consecutive constructions? Can these constructions be characterized as subordinate, coordinate, cosubordinate?

If the consecutive constructions in your language display some remarkable properties that are not mentioned in this short questionnaire, your suggestions are most welcome.

References

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