

What about the imperative plural in Cerma?

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In Gur languages, in sharp contrast to Bantu, the imperative can be expressed in a great variety of ways. As long ago as 1968, Gabriel Manessy tried to describe this situation in his comparative article 'Remarques sur l'expression de l'injonction directe dans les langues voltaïques'. On the basis of the available data, which was very meagre, he wrote also a section on the formation of the imperative plural in Cerma (Kirma), to which Rev. Father P. André Prost had drawn his attention. The latter saw a connection with corresponding Moore forms, which Manessy discusses at length. It does indeed seem strange that in Cerma, while the singular is formed with the 'imperfective' verb stem, the 'perfective' is used to form the plural. This phenomenon is discussed in this paper on the basis of new data. It also looks at Cuuramma, the only language that is closely related to Cerma, where similar formations could provide a key to understanding this remarkable constellation.