



## **Phasal Polarity in Languages of the Wider Lake Chad Area From “First” to “Yet”**

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During the past decade the study of geographical typology and linguistic areas attracted more and more attention in African Studies. On the one hand some scholars have claimed that Africa as a whole can be considered a linguistic area, i.e. Africa can be defined as a linguistic area vis-à-vis the rest of the world. On the other hand several scholars reject the idea of Africa as a single linguistic area, but identify smaller linguistic areas on the continent.

Against this background we coined a linguistic micro-area which we labelled the Wider Lake Chad Area (WLCA), and which is characterized by mutual contact phenomena across genealogically unrelated languages. Besides borrowing of content and function words, convergence of typological structures constitutes a major clue for the justification of our linguistic area at issue.

When it comes to the expression of phasal polarity in the languages of the WLCA establishing clear genealogical patterns across Chadic, Saharan, and other languages of the region appears to be difficult. On the one hand insufficient information on phasal polarity in the various grammars and dictionaries do not allow us to draw hard-and-fast conclusions. On the other hand certain strategies for the expression of phasal polarity crisscross genetic boundaries, e.g. Kanuri as well as several Chadic languages may use a verb meaning “precede, be first at, arrive before, etc.” in order to express the notion of “have already done”. Last but not least, it turns out that several languages of the WLCA borrowed the Kanuri adverbial adjunct *duwô* ‘first, (not) yet, etc.’ for the expression of concepts like “still, first, (not) yet”.

In my presentation I will give a brief overview of the various strategies found in the languages of the WLCA to express phasal polarity, before I concentrate on grammaticalization processes of Kanuri *duwô* ‘first’ into various grammatical domains. Suffice it to say at the moment that over the past hundred years probably no other grammatical marker attracted more attention in Kanuri studies than the so called adverbial adjunct *duwô*.