

Information structure and the verb system of Oti-Volta languages

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In a number of Oti-Volta languages, different postverbal particles (YA, MV and LA) are attested that are neither part of the aspectual or modal system of the language nor can be analyzed as derivational morphemes. The range of functions ascribed to them encompasses

purely grammatical functions, such as the positive indicative or the perfective aspect (YA), the expression of affirmation but with insisting value (Manessy 1975), and the indication of term focus (LA) (inter alia Kropp-Dakubu 2000, Schwarz 2009).

Based mainly on data from Yom, the presentation attempts to clarify the function of some of the particles by proving that their use is strongly biased by information structure as they do not change the propositional content of an utterance. It will be shown that these particles built two paradigms (besides the unmarked assertive paradigm) for unambiguously indicating the information status of the predicate.

References

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