

The anticausative prominence in Afrikaans

Abstract for presentation of 20 minutes

This paper focuses on the anticausative prominence in Afrikaans. The anticausative prominence is related to the causative/inchoative alternation [Subj V Obj] vs. [Subj V], e.g. *Jan smelt die botter* ('Jan melts the butter') vs. *Die botter smelt* ('The butter melts'). The causative verb refers to an agent which causes the situation, while the inchoative counterpart refers to a situation where there is no explicit causing agent (Haspelmath 1993). The formal relation between the causative and inchoative can vary. The causative can be based on the inchoative, e.g. *Die skip sink* vs. *Hy laat die skip sink*, which is called a causative derivation. However, the inchoative can also be based on the causative, e.g. *Die masjien verloor energie* vs. *Energie gaan verlore*, which is an anticausative derivation (Haspelmath 1998). Van Olmen & Breed (2015) suggest that Afrikaans has a preference for anticausative derivations, though they argue that the set of test verbs was too small to make valid statements. Therefore further research is necessary. Based on the existing literature on the causative/inchoative alternation, I will set up a broader set of test verbs. Using the online corpora of ViVA, I will try to find the evidence needed to underpin Van Olmen & Breed's hypothesis that there is anticausative prominence in Afrikaans.

References

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- Van Olmen & Breed 2015 - D. Van Olmen & A. Breed, 'Afrikaans as Standaard Gemiddelde Europees: Wanneer 'n lid uit sy taalarea beweeg'. In: *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 33 (2015), pp. 227-246.