

Towards the theory of diathesis in Swahili. Transitivity, Transmittivity, Causativity.

At the foundation of the general theory of diathesis developed by Jerzy Bańczerowski (1993, 2001, 2006) and continued by his students (Kordek 2000, Bielecki 2005, Stroński 2011, Schönhof-Wilkans *in prep.*) lies the assumption that sentences designate events, states of affairs. Thus, the morpho-syntactic structures of sentences refer to the semantic structures of events. The arguments of the predicate represent event participants, while the predicate itself represents the interparticipant relation.

Within the framework of the general theory of diathesis it is assumed that there exist common, or, at least, relatively comparable, categorical semantic schemata for all natural languages. Those schemata are determined by such diathetic meanings as Transitivity, Intransitivity, Stativity, Transmittivity, Causativity, Reciprocity, Reflexivity, Possessivity, and others. Each diathetic meaning consists of its submeanings (e.g. Transitivity is comprised of Agentivity, Patientivity and Transificatority).

Semantic categories relevant to diathesis (Agent, Patient, Emittor, Recipient, etc.) can be mapped onto the syntactic organization of a sentence (Subject, Direct Object, Indirect Object, etc.). As a result we obtain categorical semantic schemata called **symptoses**. Similarly, categorical morpho-syntactic schemata can be distinguished that integrate the category of voice with the category of case. These are called **concasions** in our theory. Symptoses are more of a universal nature, in contradistinction to concasions, which are more language-specific.

Sentence	<i>The boy</i>	<i>ate</i>	<i>the apple.</i>
Sentence Structure	Subject	Predicate	Object
Symptosis	Agent	Agentive Transificator	Patient
Concasion	Nominative	Active Verb	Accusative

The presentation will provide an overview of the possible symptoses for Transitivity, Transmittivity and Causativity both generally and specifically, that is in a particular language. It will be shown how diathetically rich is Swahili, an African Bantu language.

The linguistic data come from fieldwork with Tanzanians to whom Swahili is either a mother tongue or a second language used on a daily basis. The fieldwork was conducted in the city of Dar-es-Salaam and on the island of Zanzibar in July and August 2014.

References

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