



Semantic Shifts

Porquerolles
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Semantic Shifts: From lexicon to grammar. Diachronic and typological perspectives

Colexification in Africa between language contact and internal drift

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This course aims at describing and modeling different patterns of colexification across the languages of northern and sub-Saharan Africa. It will explore cross-linguistic variation in the encoding of different lexical and grammatical semantic domains and present the historical trajectory of semantic change in these domains. Seeking to identify the various factors triggering change, from internal drift to areal convergence and extreme language contact, the course will survey colexification patterns across different language phyla (i.e. Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Niger-Congo) as well as in a number of African creoles lexified by different colonial languages (English, French, Portuguese, Arabic). Based on this heterogeneous language sample, we will suggest some generalizations for the typology of polysemy networks in Africa and beyond.

The course will consist of 4 sessions:

- Session 1: Colexification in Africa: an introduction
- Session 2: Colexification and lexicon: animals, body parts, and kinship terms
- Session 3: Colexification and grammar: prepositions, auxiliary verbs, and comparative constructions
- Sessions 4: Theoretical implications and directions for future research

Recommended reading:

François, Alexandre. 2008. Semantic maps and the typology of colexification: Intertwining polysemous networks across languages. In Martine Vanhove (ed.), *Studies in Language Companion Series*, vol. 106, 163–215. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
<https://benjamins.com/catalog/slcs.106.09fra>.

Hayward, Richard J. 1991. A propos patterns of lexicalization in the Ethiopian Language Area. In Daniela Mendel & Ulrike Claudi (eds.), *Ägypten im afroorientalischen Kontext. Special issue of Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere*, 139–156. Cologne: Institute of African Studies.

List, Johann-Mattis, Simon Greenhill, Cormac Anderson, Thomas Mayer, Tiago Tresoldi & Robert Forkel (eds.). 2018. *CLICS²*. Jena: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
<https://clics.clld.org/>.

Seeger, Guillaume & Martine Vanhove. 2019. Color naming in Africa. *Lexicalization patterns in colour naming: a cross-linguistic perspective* (Studies in Functional and Structural Linguistics), 287–330. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. doi:10.1075/sfsl.78.13seg.
<https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01961288>.