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Selected and Unselected OBJs in Thetogovela Moro:
The OBJ* Parameter
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Following Dowty 1991; Ackerman and Moore 1999,2001,2011; Primus 1999, 2002; Beavers 2011) semantic arguments of a predicator are construable as lexical entailments that are set in correspondence with an independent array of syntactic functions: cross-theoretically the entities participating in these correspondences are given the status of arguments (ARGs), with different languages displaying different grammatical strategies for marking these arguments. This yields an ensemble of alignable and independent dimensions of information in terms of semantic roles, grammatical functions and surface encoding. There is also a common cross-theoretical assumption concerning the uniqueness of functions: any given syntactic function of an argument can appear only once within the domain defined by a governing predicate. This means that a verb can have only a single SUBJ, OBJ etc. Various theories are designed to reflect this putatively universal constraint. We will refer to this as Functional Uniqueness (FU). There is another class of syntactic elements that is standardly distinguished from ARGs: ADJs, of whatever semantic role, are not semantically entailed by the lexical semantics of predicators, can appear multiple times within a clausal domain, and are syntactically optional elements. This simple division between ARGs and ADJs is known to be problematic on the basis of cross-linguistic research. In this presentation we explore perplexing issues relating to the ARG and ADJ distinction in a single language, specifically, Thetogovela Moro, a Kordofanian language spoken in Sudan. We argue, following earlier research on multiple objects in Bantu languages, that FU has no privileged status in grammar, but is simply the limiting case of OBJ encoding in which a language permits only a single OBJ per clause. This represents one, familiar end of what we will refer to as the Functional Expression Continuum where the opposite end is occupied by languages which permit multiple selected and unselected OBJs.

La présentation aura lieu dans le cadre du **LingLunch Paris Diderot**, organisé chaque jeudi à l'UFR de Linguistique de l'Université Paris Diderot.
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