

## Abstract

This Ph.D. thesis is a data-oriented contrastive analysis of Kanuri oral literature. The interest lies in describing subordinate clauses in relation with the TAM system (Tense/Aspect/Mood) in Kanuri. Later on, structural similarities within related and non-related contact languages will be investigated. The identification of similar patterns concerning syntactical structures in the contact languages can lead to conclusions which contribute to a better understanding of the development of Kanuri.

In a first step, descriptive literature on Kanuri grammar and oral literature of different genres are reviewed. A central aspect of this doctoral thesis is the elaboration of TAM systems in Kanuri. As the verbal system in the other Saharan languages is not as elaborate as it is in Kanuri, the hypothesis that contact with Chadic languages caused syntactic changes can be established. The grammar related topics of interest concern: How is subordination syntactically structured and expressed in the region? How do these grammars treat subordinate clause related TAM use? How do grammars treat clausal related TAM use? The central questions which arise are: How is the relations between the TAM system and subordinate clause expressed syntactically? How are common concepts employed/verbalized in subordinate clauses in Kanuri and the Chadic languages in the Lake Chad region? How do grammaticalization processes influence subordinate clauses? As a result of the synchronic analysis of Kanuri varieties, indications about tendencies of the language development may be provided. In further steps, field research will be conducted in order to obtain contemporary materials in Kanuri. The fieldwork aims at collecting Kanuri oral literature from different genres. Further the elicited data will be compared.

The aim of this research project is to contribute to the study of the Kanuri language in the field of clausal subordination in relation with the TAM system. The relevance of this study lies in revealing the relation of the TAM system with subordinate clauses within Kanuri. Furthermore, the survey of Kanuri oral literature of different times can result in an overview of the historical development of the TAM system.