

## **Multifunctionality and syncretism in non-finite forms**

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This workshop aims at discussing multifunctionality in the domain of non-finite verb forms. Cross-linguistically, it is common for non-finite forms to occur in a variety of dependent clauses performing different functions. For example, as can be seen from Cristofaro's (2003) data, in the majority of cases, non-finite forms used for adnominal modification are not specific to this function, but can be found in other subordinate constructions as well (see also Hendery 2012: 171). Van Lier (2009: 206–210) shows that in a genealogically and geographically balanced sample of 50 languages all logically possible combinations of functions are attested, i.e. reference function, adnominal modification, and adverbial modification. For instance, the nominalization in *-n-* in Kayardild (Tangkic), an example of the most flexible form, can function as a predicate of a relative, a complement, or an adverbial clause (Evans 1995: 474–476). Forms that combine the function of predicate of a relative clause with that of predicate of a complement clause are especially common (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1993: 42–44; Shibatani 2009).

Thus, we believe that these phenomena merit special attention. In particular, the workshop aims to investigate to what extent the internal syntax of non-finite clauses headed by these multifunctional forms is determined by their external syntax as realized in distinct grammatical functions, and vice versa. For example, in Kalmyk (Mongolic), participles show differences in argument marking depending on the type of dependent clause in which they occur: participial relative clauses have a genitive (or in some cases nominative) subject, while complement clauses headed by the same forms require a subject in the accusative. In Muna (Austronesian), nominalizations in *ka-* behave differently in reason clauses if compared to the argument function. In reason clauses, they take a specialized non-finite negator and combine with a future marker, while in the argument function they take a constituent negator and no TAM markers whatsoever (van den Berg 2013: 144, 211).

The existence of such multifunctional forms and patterns of syncretism implies a certain degree of categorial continuity which poses serious challenges to theories postulating an inventory of discrete lexical categories (see Baker 2011; Kiparsky 2017 for similar observations), especially the most restrictive ones appealing to just two basic lexical categories of, roughly, noun and verb. On the other hand, those formal theories which dispense with lexical categories altogether by viewing categorization as a byproduct of how functional elements and acategorial lexical elements are put together seem to predict a certain amount of variability and continuity (cf. Halle & Marantz 1993, Borer 2005, Caha 2007, among others), but require additional constraints to exclude rare or unattested patterns. In this regard, multifunctional non-finite forms present an ideal testing ground when choosing between lexicalist and non-lexicalist approaches. As regards the forms themselves, their identity is frequently taken — at least in non-lexicalist frameworks — to be the result of underspecification, formalized in terms of Halle's (1997) Subset Principle or, conversely,

the Superset Principle of nanosyntax (Caha 2007; see Lundquist 2008 for an analysis of multifunctional non-finite forms in Swedish along these lines).

The questions that we plan to discuss at the workshop include the following:

- What functions are typically combined in one non-finite form? Are there constraints on multifunctionality, and if so, then what are they?
- What kind of differences can multifunctional forms show depending on the function they perform (e.g. differences in TAM expression or argument encoding)?
- What sets multifunctional forms apart in comparison to dedicated (specialized) forms, that is, participles, infinitives, converbs or nominalizations? If not all of the non-finite forms in a language show multifunctionality, which are most likely to be multifunctional? Relatedly, what, if anything, stops the remaining forms from being multifunctional?
- Can any observations be made regarding the frequency distributions of different functions for specific forms? In other words, if a form can be used in several types of non-finite dependent clauses, do the frequencies tend to be evenly distributed across contexts, or is the distribution typically skewed in favour of one function?
- Do languages with multifunctional non-finite forms tend to have any particular properties in other domains of grammar?
- Is multifunctionality of non-finite forms more common in certain geographical areas than in others, and if so, where is it most commonly attested?

We invite contributions from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives, both functional and formal. We particularly welcome submissions on understudied or underdocumented languages provided they offer an explicit and substantial theoretical contribution to the issue at hand.

Possible topics for submissions may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- In-depth case studies of multifunctional non-finite forms in individual languages;
- Typological studies on the properties and distribution of multifunctional non-finite forms;
- Formal and functional approaches to the identity of form and diversity of function;
- Quantitative studies of multifunctionality within individual languages and cross-linguistically.

We aim to develop papers presented at this workshop into a collective volume discussing different aspects of multifunctionality in non-finite forms.

Preliminary abstracts of no more than 300 words (excluding references) should be sent before November 15, 2019, to [kshagal@gmail.com](mailto:kshagal@gmail.com). Any questions or suggestions regarding the workshop are very welcome as well.

If the workshop is accepted, it will take place at the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea in Bucharest, August 26–29, 2020 (for more information on the conference see <http://sle2020.eu/>). All preliminary workshop participants will be invited to submit their full abstracts before January 15, 2020.

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