

Abstract

submitted for the West African Languages Congress 2008

M.E. Kropp Dakubu

Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana

The Construction Label Project: a tool for typological study

During the past year colleagues at the Universities of Ghana and Leiden and at the Norwegian Technical University (Trondheim) have been developing a system for labelling structures in such a way as to facilitate and enhance comparison of structures between languages. In principle the system is universal, but it is also very specific, giving a fairly detailed encoding of the salient syntactic and semantic features. So far, the project has concentrated on defining structures found in the Ghana area, with particular attention to structural variation.

The paper will present and explain the general principles on which the labels are put together. It will also demonstrate the application of the technique with a preliminary comparison of constructions having the global semantic feature PROPERTY.

Comparison will be made both within particular languages (Ga and Dangme) and across languages.