

# **!INTERJECTIONS**

**Alexander Andrason  
Michael Karani**

**!nterjection research cluster at Stellenbosch**

**emotive interjections in Maasai (Arusa)**





# !Interjections research cluster

---

Semitic: Aramaic, Biblical Hebrew, Canaano-Akkadian, Ugaritic

Indo-European: Greek, Latin, Polish

(African languages)





# Semitic

---

Andrason, Hornea & Joubert 2020. The structure of interjections in Biblical Hebrew: Phonetics, morphology, and syntax. *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*.

Andrason & Hutchison. 2020. Interjections in Biblical Aramaic: A radial model. *Aramaic Studies*.

Andrason. 2020. Primary interjections in Ugaritic. *Aula Orientalis*.

Andrason & Vita. forthcoming. A contribution to the study of interjections in Canaano-Akkadian. *Die Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*.





# Indo-European

---

Andrason. forthcoming. The form of laughter interjections in Polish. *Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft*.

Andrason & Durán Mañas. under review. The syntax of interjections: Evidence from New Testament Greek.

Andrason & Žak. in progress. The form of laughter: The morphology and phonetics of laughter interjections in Balto-Slavic languages.

Andrason. in progress. The Syntax of Interjections in Latin – The Corpus of Plautus. PhD dissertation.





# African languages

---

Bantu            isiXhosa

Khoe(san)      Tjwao

Hadza and Sandawe

Nilotic            Maasai (Arusha)





# isiXhosa

---

Andrason & Matutu. 2019. The syntax of interjections in isiXhosa – a corpus-driven study. *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics PLUS*.

Andrason & Dlali. 2020. The (crucial yet neglected) category of interjections in Xhosa. *STUF – Language Typology and Universals*.

Andrason. under review. HA! TEE HEE! HOO! HI! YHA! – Laughter interjections in Xhosa.

Andrason. in progress. Conative animal calls in Xhosa: Testing the prototype.





# Tjwao, Hadza, Sandawe

---

The Other Grammar of Eastern Kalahari Khoe –  
The Documentation and Analysis of Interjections,  
Onomatopoeias, and Ideophones in Tjwao  
(Stellenbosch & Vairão)

Feeling and Depicting the World: Interjections and  
Ideophones in Hadza and Sandawe (Stellenbosch,  
& Dar es Salaam)

Andrason, Fehn & Phiri. 2020. Interjections in  
Tjwao. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and  
African Studies*

Andrason & Phiri. in progress. Onomatopoeias in  
Tjwao.





# Maasai

---

EXGRAM | The EXpressive GRammar of Arusa  
Maasai: Interjections, Ideophones, and Gestures  
(Stellenbosch & Dar es Salaam)

Andrason & Karani. in progress. Conative animal  
calls in Arusa Maasai: Towards a cross-linguistic  
prototype.

Andrason & Karani. to be submitted. Emotive  
interjections in Maasai (Arusa).





# emotive interjections in Maasai

---

Alexander Andrason Stellenbosch

Michael Karani Dar es Salaam





# rationale

---

marginalization in research

Hollis (1905)

Tucker & Mpaayei (1955)

Payne & Ole-Kotikash (2008)

Karani (2018)





# framework

---

prototype typologically-driven approach to interjectionality  
(Ameka 1992, Nübling 2004, Stange 2016, Andrason & Dlalali 2020)

prototype/radial categories (Janda 2015)

canonical typology (Brown & Chumakina 2013)

testing emotive interjections for the formal and non-formal  
properties associated with the cross-linguistic prototype





# fieldwork

---

September 2020

Arusha region (Tanzania)

82 tokens





# evidence/results

---

semantics

pragmatics

phonetics

morphology

syntax





# semantics

---

65 tokens (79%) communicate emotions

positive

negative

neutral





# semantics

---

positive emotions

joy / admiration > happiness > euphoria

*(aaku, dede, eetaa, entito, entito-eyeyio, sere, tejo, yie)*





# semantics

---

negative emotions

displeasure / discontent > annoyance > anger > rage / fury

*(agh, enkerai, entito, ilmuran, iltwati, orid, fie)*

worry / concern > anxiety > dread / fear

*(aitiño, kiru, oyie, syombe, fie, uui, woi, yoope)*

sadness > sorrow / grief

*(aif, jamani, kilome, ooi, pasinai, sogo, uufo, woj)*

surprise > astonishment > shock

*(ai, aisee, aaku, dede, eji, enkai, hee, hoo, kibo)*





# semantics

---

17 tokens (21%) communicate sensations

heat (*iufo*) and cold (*haa, ss*)

good (*mm, aah*) and bad smell (*fiu, piu, rmm*)

good (*mm, x*) and bad taste (*eif*)

pain (*ai, aif, eif, ooi, uui woj*)

tiredness > fatigue > exhaustion (*agh, iufo, oo, uui*)





# pragmatics

“stimulus-bound”: instinctive semi-automatic reflexes

“didactic” and “discursive” functions: deliberate

*Eif, kapoo ena!*

INTJ what this

‘*Eif*, what a mess!’





# pragmatics

reflexive and non-referential

Ss. (A-nin-ito e-n-kijape)

INTJ 1SG-feel-PROG SG-F-cold

'Ss. (I am cold)'

semi-referential

A: Keiyiaa e-n-kijape?

How SG-F.cold

'How is the weather?'

B: *lufo!*





# pragmatics

monological

dialogical

A: *I-to-niŋ-o ajo e-twa koko ino?*

2-PERF-hear-PERF that 3-die.PERF grandmother your

‘Have you heard that your grandmother has passed away?’

B: *Woj! Ooi! A-twa!*

INTJ INTJ 1-die.PERF

‘Woj! Ooi! I am finished!’





# pragmatics

12 tokens (15%) are gender-sensitive

men:

*(enkerai, entito, entito-eyeyio, ilmuran, lelaa-kake)*

women:

*(iltwati, kibo-chandesesi, nombees, olkila, ooi, uui, yoope)*





# pragmatics

polysemous

all degrees of feelings in a domain

more than one domain (*fi* – sadness-grief, displeasure-rage, worry-fear)

positive and negative feelings (*enti* – joy-euphoria and displeasure-rage)

feelings and sensations (*ai* – sadness-grief, surprise-shock, and pain)

context-sensitive (intonation/phonation, gestures)

monosemous and context-insensitive

sensorial interjections (*ss* – cold)





# phonetics

## anomalous sounds

[ɕ] (*c, ccc*), [ɬ] (*x*), [ɣ] / [x] (*agh*)

## anomalous phonotactics

[-] vocalic nucleus      *ss* [sɔ̃↓], *zz* [zɔ̃↓], *mm* [mɔ̃↓], *c* [ɕ], *ccc* [ɕ.ɕ.ɕ]

ingressive realization      *mm* [mɔ̃↓], *ss* [sɔ̃↓]

extralong vowels      *hoo* [hɔ̃:] > [hɔ̃:]

extralong consonants *ss* [sɔ̃↓]





# phonetics

simplicity

32x (39%) – one syllable

primary

31x (38%) – two syllables

primary > secondary

14x (17%) – three syllables

2x – four syllables

secondary

1x – five syllables

(6%)

2x – six syllables





# phonetics

---

vocalic nature

correlated with simplicity / primacy

monosyllabic      V(V) or AV(V)

disyllabic        mixed profile

> more            consonantal material





# phonetics

---

onsets

48x non-consonantal element

31x – vowel

17x – approximant, especially [h]

tendency correlated with simplicity / primacy





# phonetics

---

harmonious patterns are rare

reduplication      *dede* [dede], *hoo-hoo* [hó:hó:]

triplication      *ccc* [ʃ.ʃ.ʃ]

vocalic harmony      *sogo* [sógó], *sumu* [súmú]





# phonetics

---

tones

phonemic

*aif* [aɪf] surprise vs. *áif* [áɪf] sympathy

no specific tonal pattern

HL *biris* [bíris], HH *orid* [órid], LH *aisee* [aisé:], LL *syombe* [sjombe]

disyllabic tokens exhibit a high tone on the first syllable

*biris* [bíris]





# morphology

---

simplicity

lack of inflections and derivations

54 tokens are primary (66%)

49 of them (60%) are mono-morphemic





# morphology

---

5 primary tokens are divisible into more basic segments

*hee-he, hoo-hoo, hoo-taa, ccc, kibo-chandes*

built around

primary interjections (*hee, he, hoo, c, kibo*)

diachronically independent morphemes (*taa, chandes*)





# morphology

---

23 tokens (28%) are secondary

multimorphemic structure

inflections, derivations, and compounding

reflexes of nominal, pronominal, verbal, and phrasal origin





# morphology

---

13 secondary tokens derive from nouns (etc. *enkerai*, *ilmuran*, *kuade*)

nominal morphemes (SG *e-/o-*, PL *i-*, FM *-n*, MS *-l*)

possessive affixes (1SG *-ai*)

vocative particle (*le* 'o!')

genitive relationship (*entito-eyeyio* lit. '(the) girl of (the) mother')

bare nominal roots





# morphology

---

4 tokens derive from verbs (*aitiŋo*, *edwaa*, *mikijoki*, *tejo*)

person-number and TAM morphemes (*a-itiŋ-o* 'I am finished')

2 tokens derive from deverbal particles (*aku*, *dede*)

2 tokens derive from conative/phatic forms (*pasinai*, *ero*)

1 token derives from a pronoun (*ŋoo*)





# morphology

---

inflections and derivations are not property of interjections

no inflection or derivation is specific to interjections

no interjectivizers





# morphology

---

5 tokens are borrowed from Swahili

*(aisee, jamani, kumbe, maskini, maskini-ya-Mungu)*





# morphology

---

anomalous morphology

lexical opacity

*oo* or *c* (primary)

*entito-eyeyio* or *mikijoki* (secondary)

*maskini-ya-Mungu* (borrowed)





# syntax

---

holophrasticity – non-elliptical complete utterances

A: *E-twa o-l-akwi lai*

3-die.PERF SG-M-uncle SG.M.my

‘My uncle is dead’

B: *Ooi!*

INTJ

‘*Ooi!*’





# syntax

---

parts of utterances

lack of syntactic integration

cannot function as predicates

never projected by the verb (internal/external arguments)

do not (*usually*) modify the predicate, arguments, adjuncts





# syntax

---

primary tokens may rarely modify verbs, adjectives, adverbs

emphasis / intensification

*E-ŋu    piu    ene!*

SG-stink INTJ here

'It stinks *piu* here!'

*A-ar    abaraki    orid!*

1SG-beat thoroughly INTJ!

'I will beat you thoroughly *orid!*'





# syntax

---

holophrastic uses

not susceptible to syntactic operations

cannot be negated, interrogated, and (medio-)passivized

non-holophrastic uses

unaffected by a negative, interrogative, or (medio-)passive form of the sentence





# syntax

---

usually do not enter into constructions with other words

common exceptions:

other interjections

vocative nouns / pronouns

*Hee le payian, koree nkera?*

INTJ VOC man where children

'Hee man, where are children?'

*Σie iyie, ka-ḡoo i-ta-maḡ-ie ena aji?*

INTJ you what-thing 2-PERF-live-INSTR this house

'Σie you, why did you move in into this house?'





# syntax

---

peripheral positions (initial > final)

sentence-internal placement is constrained

between two clauses

following/preceding an interjection / vocative noun

*A-ta-dua e-n-dara kitok, iufo kilome!*

1SG-PERF-see SG-F-python big INTJ INTJ

'I saw a big python, *iufo*, *kilome*!'

regular clause-external position





# syntax

---

autonomous prosodic units

separated from the rest of the sentence by a pause

*Fiu, e-ŋu!*

INTJ 3-stink

'*Fiu*, it stinks!'





# conclusion

Interjections may comply with prototypical features, especially:

extensive polysemy and context sensitivity

exclamatory/expressive phonation

phonological detachment

clause-external position

lack of interjectivizers

incompatibility with syntactic operations

resistance to clause-grammar integration





# conclusion

---

however, this compliance is not uniform

the least pervasive:

extra-systematicity of sounds and their combinations

harmonious patterns

non-constructionality (cf. interjections and vocatives)

monological uses (dialogical ones are very common)





# conclusion

---

violations under certain conditions

(a) didactic/discursive uses: [-] semi-automaticity

(b) modifier uses (particles?):

[-] syntactic non-integration

[-] non-constructionality

[-] sentence-peripheral and clause-external position

[-] phonological separation





# conclusion

---

(c) sensorial interjections:

[-] polysemy

[-] context dependency

[-] reflexivity/non-referentiality

(d) secondary interjections:

[-] phonetic and morphemic anomaly and simplicity

[-] vocalic nature

[-] lack of inflections, derivations, and compounding





# conclusion

---

prototypical features and motivated violations  
jointly determine the boundaries and variation  
of the interjective category in Arusa Maasai





# conclusion

---

contribution to theory

A/O onsets and #AV or #V syllables – typical / salient

(cf. Polish (Andrason forthcoming), Xhosa (Andrason & Dlaki 2020), Tjwao (Andrason, Fehn & Phiri 2020), Biblical Hebrew (Andrason, Hornea & Joubert 2020), Ugaritic (Andrason 2020), Canaano-Akkadian (Andrason & Vita 2020), and Biblical Aramaic (Andrason & Hutchison 2020))





copy of the article?  
collaboration?

andrason@sun.ac.za  
karanim@udsm.ac.tz

