

**Global African Diaspora Studies (GADS)  
Research Platform Presents**

**The Conjoint-Disjoint Alternation in Dagbani**

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Venue: University of Vienna, Department of African Studies – Seminar room 1  
Spitalgasse 2 Hof 5, 1090 Wien

**Brief summary of the presentation**

The talk presents an analysis of the conjoint-disjoint dichotomy in Dagbani (Mabia) adducing other Mabia languages for comparison. It is shown that this dichotomy is firmly anchored in the morphological system of Dagbani. I argue that the conjoint and disjoint markers overtly express a functional head above the Aspectual Phrase. The distinction between conjoint and disjoint marking is syntactic and not focus-related, thus conjoint marking occurs if the verbal phrase is not yet completed, whereas disjoint marking marks the right edge of a completed VP. In the second part of the talk, I show that movement of the perfective verb to this functional head is blocked in operator constructions (wh-questions, focus constructions, relative clauses, and negation) to the effect that the disjoint marker cannot appear on the perfective verb. The blocking effect follows from the assumption that the operator constructions are all focus related inducing a focus specification on the head hosting the conjoint and disjoint markers. This feature specification is incompatible with the perfective verb. Progressive verbs, on the other hand, are shown to be inherently focal, hence may access the conjoint / disjoint head also in focal contexts.

**Prof. Katharina Hartmann** is a professor for theoretical syntax at the Goethe University Frankfurt in Germany. She is the acting head of the Linguistics Department at the GUF. She also is the general secretary of the German Linguistics Society. Before she came to Frankfurt in 2015 she was a professor at the *Institut für Germanistik* of the University of Vienna. Her research interests include the syntax of coordination, the representation and interpretation of ellipsis, dislocation phenomena, focus and information structure, the grammar of Chadic languages, and recently also of Mabia languages. She has published in major international journals and edited several books on different aspect of theoretical syntax.