

The role of interactional context in understanding Marind verb forms

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In this talk, I address the ways in which the form of the Marind verb is shaped by interactional context, and in particular by factors related to attentional states and information structuring. Marind (an Anim language of New Guinea) is unusual in the extent to which such interactional factors are reflected in verbal categories, and the proper analysis of these issues has eluded me in the more than 10 years since I started working on the language, although they are central to its grammar and instantiated in almost every utterance. I outline my current understanding, and discuss whether these phenomena are important and some of the methodological challenges involved.