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Sommario/riassunto

Over the last two decades, focus has become a prominent topic in major fields in linguistic research (syntax, semantics, phonology). Focus Strategies in African Languages contributes to the ongoing discussion of focus by investigating focus-related phenomena in a range of African languages, most of which have been under-represented in the theoretical literature on focus. The articles in the volume look at focus strategies in Niger-Congo and Afro-Asiatic languages from several theoretical and methodological perspectives, ranging from detailed generative analysis to careful typological generalization across languages. Their common aim is to deepen our understanding of whether and how the information-structural category of focus is represented and marked in natural language. Topics investigated are, among others, the relation of focus and prosody, the effects of information structure on word order, ex situ versus in situ strategies of focus marking, the inventory of focus marking devices, focus and related constructions, focus-sensitive particles. The present inquiry into the focus systems of African languages has repercussions on existing theories of focus. It reveals new focus strategies as well as fine-tuned focus distinctions that are not discussed in the theoretical literature, which is almost exclusively based on well-documented intonation languages.
