



Universiteit Leiden

Texts and Tellings: A Combined literary and linguistic analysis of Iraqw tales, Tanzania

Applicants

Supervisor Name	Discipline
Dr. Annachiara Raia	African Literature LUCAS / ASCL
Prof. Dr. Maarten Mous	African Linguistics LUCL - African Languages and Cultures

Project description (285 words)

Based on earlier projects (*Texts and Society 1* and *2*) and the resulting annotated audio and video collection,¹ this project consists of a multiple-perspective approach involving both linguistic and literary analysis studying variation building upon the literary notion of *mouvance*.² In addition we strive for re-enactments via photo exhibition and short film.³

The following research questions will be addressed and worked into one or two research articles:

- The constitution of diegesis in Iraqw tales

The Iraqw narrators make a lot of use of reported direct speech (e.g. “he said; she said”). Furthermore the narrator’s voice and perspective can change within the tale implying changes in the constitution of the diegesis. Which is the difference between the dialogue parts and the framing parts in Iraqw tales and how is this linguistically encoded? What is the narrative effect of this strategy. Is this used for leading to the peak? As it will be shown, the presence of dialogue parts affects also the time and rhythm in the stories⁴. Time moves quicker and slower in stories, creating narrative ups and downs corresponding to crescendo and decrescendo. Sometimes children grow up in one sentence -so that the story may result temporally condensed-, sometimes a lot of mimetic scenes unravel in the same day and a huge narrative space is allotted for them.

- Modes of deliverance and interaction

A second theme concerns the expression of emotions/pathos and its impact on the telling process as well as on the story teller and the audience. Along this line, it will reveal useful to take in account the use of tag questions, but also interventions of the narrator and appeals to the audience and more broadly to the living community.

Research Trainee Profile

We are looking for two research trainees, one with a literary and one with a linguistic profile from BA Afrikaanse talen en Culturen or from other programmes such as media and literary studies, linguistics (BA or MA) provided they have a strong interest in folk tales and Africa. Knowledge of Swahili is an advantage, as well as willingness to visit Tanzania in the summer and practical experience in photography/film. The

¹ See www.verbafricana.org/iraqw and <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSrsky5vAe3uV-vOY3Eq4IA>.

² Paulme, Denise 1976 *La mère dévorante essai sur la morphologie des contes africains*. A heuristic issue to address will be: Which linguistic and diegetic components allow us to mark boundaries between Iraqw stories?

³ Inspired by the current exhibition on Congo tales in Museum De Fundatie <https://www.talesofus.com/>

⁴ In linguistics, this is named as “aspectuality” and described in Bernard Comrie, *Aspect: An Introduction to the Study of Verbal Aspect and Related Problems* (1976).

existent collection of tales is transcribed (Iraqw) and translated (English and Swahili). A crash course on Iraqw language structure and oral genres will be provided.

Collaboration

The project is close cooperation and intrinsically interdisciplinary linguistics-literary studies and establishes close cooperation between the newly appointed specialist of African literature (Raia) and her linguist colleague (Mous) sharing interest in East Africa. This strengthens the current restructuring of the BA Afrikaanse Talen en Culturen programme with a common integrated multidisciplinary approach,

Deliverables

Enumerate intended project results: papers, research proposals or otherwise. (max 200 words)

1. A joint article on text and variances in Iraqw tales potentially to be published in *Fabula – De Gruyter*
2. Add literary annotation to the extensive corpus of annotated Iraqw texts established in earlier projects, to render them usable for future research in a number of disciplines and for teaching
3. A paper presentation at the The International Society for Folk Narrative Research conference in Zagreb, Croatia from 21-26 June, 2020

And if we can organize student internships in Iraqw area in Tanzania as with the research trainees of last years:

4. A photo exhibition on the Iraqw tales potentially hosted at the Taalmuseum in Leiden
5. A short film of an enacted Iraqw tale to be presented in the courses on Communication and media as well as Research in Living tradition

Planning (137 words)

January	search for student trainees, selection Research visit MM to the Iraqw inpreparation
February	Acquaintance with back ground literature on Iraqw literature, language and culture
March	Approach the textual analysis on variances
	Searching for modes to display and present narrative entanglements of selected stories
	Analysing the speech components
	Focussing on characters
	Analysing the story teller's perspectives and his audience
	Develop more (automated?) tagging
April	Continue with earlier activities
	Defining topic for a scientific article
	Compare oral deliverances of the same story
May	Write first draft of article
	Prepare for conference presentation
June	Prepare for a conference and conference participation
	Prepare field visit to Tanzania
July-August	Research visit to Iraqw area
	Prepare for an exhibition at the Taalmuseum in Leiden
	Make a short film of one selected tales
	Finalise article and submit
	Present at final Research trainee conference

Student Application

Interested students should send an electronic motivation letter to the following email applicants' addresses: m.mous@hum.leidenuniv.nl; a.raia@hum.leidenuniv.nl