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**THE MORPHEME ADI AS A MARKER OF EXISTENTIAL CLOSURE IN BURA
(CENTRAL CHADIC)**

In this talk, I discuss the semantic contribution of the morpheme *adi* in Bura (Central Chadic), which is traditionally glossed as an existential predicate *there is* (Hoffmann 1955). Syntactically, *adi* occurs only in a limited set of – at first sight – heterogeneous environments, namely in (i.) most negative clauses, including negated clefts (*it is not x that ...*); (ii.)thetic constructions used for introducing new discourse referents (*there is x ...*); and (iii.) existential clefts (*there is some x that ...*); but never in affirmative clauses with full verbal predicates. I propose a unified semantic-based account of the distribution of *adi*, on which *adi* is an overt indicator of existential closure over event and individual variables. *Adi* is introduced as a last resort operation when alternative means of existentially closing a variable fail: In the default case, the existential force observed with Bura indefinite NPs such as *mda* ‘a/ some man’ is contributed by the meaning of the lexical verb, but *adi* can step in to take over this function in verbless clauses, or if an event variable needs to be closed under negation.

The discussion of Bura *adi* has repercussions for semantic theory as a whole, for it shows that apart from the indefinite NP itself (Montague 1973), the mapping from syntactic structure to logical form (Diesing 1992), or the meaning of the verb (van Geenhoven 1998), there are yet other means of introducing existential force into a clause. Furthermore, the overt occurrence of *adi* provides insight into the syntactic locus of existential closure.