

Mawng lexicalized agreement in typological perspective

Lexicalized agreement is the exploitation of the verbal morphology usually used to cross-reference core arguments to encode lexically-specified syntactic or semantic properties of the verb. Lexicalized agreement is not well known as a typological feature but occurs with small numbers of verbs in languages such as Navajo (Young et al. 1992), Ket (Vajda 2003), Gaagadju (Harvey 2002) and Limilngan (Harvey 2001). Less than thirty verbs have been described as having lexicalized agreement in these languages. This talk reports on recent research on the non-Pama-Nyungan Australian language Mawng in which lexicalized agreement can occur with a quarter of all verb roots. Canonical verbal agreement with third persons distinguishes five genders and it is this third person agreement which can become lexicalized.

Lexicalized agreement is the freezing of verbal agreement so that although a verb appears to cross-reference a third person argument of a particular gender there is in fact no corresponding participant. For example when the verb root *-arlukpa* means 'kick' it cross-references two arguments in the expected fashion. When it is used to mean 'dance' it always inflects as if cross-referencing a third person masculine gender argument, which does not in fact exist.

Lexicalized agreement has been described as the encoding of *pseudo-actants* by Vajda (2003) and *pseudo-objects* or *pseudo-subjects* by Corbett *et. al.* (2005) but these terms are misleading when applied to Mawng. There is a cline between more and less argument-like types of lexicalized agreement in Mawng (Evans 2004). Argument-like lexicalized agreement seems to encode a real argument but the agreement is not productive. In effect these verbs strictly subcategorize for a third person argument of a particular gender. At the other end of the cline, lexicalized agreement effectively introduces a dummy-argument.

There are morphosyntactic parallels to lexicalized agreement in Georgian version in which verbal morphemes also alternate between two very different functions (Gurevich and Anderson 2005). There are semantic parallels with the incorporation of generic nouns into verbs - this is also a way to specify a particular sense of a verb root via the properties of a participant.

CORBETT, GREVILLE, BAERMAN, MATTHEW, BROWN, DUNSTAN AND ANDREW HIPPISEY (2005)

Surrey morphology group Deponency project. Online:

<http://www.surrey.ac.uk/LIS/MB/Deponencymain.htm> accessed 31/10/05.

EVANS, NICHOLAS. 2003. *Bininj Gun-Wok : a pan-dialectal grammar of Mayali, Kunwinjku and Kune*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.

—. 2004. Experiencer objects in Iwaidjan languages (Australia). *Non-nominative subjects*, ed. by Peri Bhaskararao and Karumuri Venkata. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. pp.77-100.

GUREVICH, OLYA and ANDERSON, GREGORY. (forth). *Towards the Typology of Version: Formal and Functional Perspectives*. *Proceedings of the 41 st Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*.

HARVEY, MARK. 2001. *A Grammar of Limilngan: A language of the Mary River region, Northern Territory*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.

—. 2002. *A Grammar of Gaagudju*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

VAJDA, EDWARD J. 2003. Ket verb structure in typological perspective. *Sprachtypologie und Universalienforschung (Language Typology and Universals)*, 26.55-92.

YOUNG, ROBERT W., MORGAN, WILLIAM and MIDGETTE, SALLY. 1992. *Analytical lexicon of Navajo*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.