

## **Constructions and valency changing strategies in a diachronic perspective: evidence from Indo-European and beyond**

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The workshop aims at investigating valency changing strategies and changes in argument structure constructions over time. Despite the wealth of works on the synchronic syntax of verbal valency in the languages of the world, the diachronic aspects of these phenomena are most often neglected or underestimated in linguistic and typological research. We invite proposals addressing topics related to transitivity and language change from different methodological perspectives, in order to uncover and clarify the paths and mechanisms of morphological and syntactic changes in the domain of verbal valency and encoding transitivity oppositions in the languages of the world.

### **DESCRIPTION AND AIMS**

The recent decades are marked with a considerable progress in the study of the encoding of transitivity oppositions in a typological perspective (see, among others, Siewierska 1985; Geniušienė 1989; Kemmer 1993; Kittilä 2002; Nedjalkov et al. 2007, to name just a few). Impressive results are achieved in the synchronic study of the systems of voices and valency-changing derivations, such as passive, causative, reflexive, antipassive and anticausative (decausative). By now, we have at our disposal rich catalogues of the morphological, syntactic, and semantic features of these categories in the languages of the world. Thanks to these studies, our understanding of transitivity phenomena has dramatically increased. Since the seminal work by Hopper & Thompson (1980), the notion of transitivity has played a major role in the study of these and related categories. In particular, scholars have focused on how transitivity can be defined as a prototypical notion (Naess 2007), and how the transitivity parameter can explain various linguistic phenomena, chiefly the realization of verbal argument and the syntactic patterns verbs can occur in. The last decades have witnessed a growing interest in the study of the patterns of argument realization on verbs and the rules behind the alternation of individual verbs across different patterns. Studies in Construction Grammar have set out to investigate individual verbs' argument structure constructions (cf. Goldberg 1995, 2006), as well as the grouping of verbs into classes based on the constructions they occur in (Levin & Rappaport-Hovav 2005), and the productivity of different argument structure construction patterns (Barðdal 2008). Beside these language-specific usage-based approaches, which often rely on quantitative data extracted from digital corpora, valency patterns have been a topic in cross-linguistic studies as well. In linguistic typology, attention has been paid to how valency patterns are realized and how they can be compared across languages (Malchukov & Comrie 2015, ValPal). Moreover, studies in basic valency orientation (cf. Nichols et al. 2004) have attempted a typological classification of languages based on their preferred patterns of encoding valency increase and reduction.

By contrast, a systematic treatment of these categories in a diachronic perspective remains a desideratum. The rise, development and decline of these categories mostly remain on the periphery of the typological research.

It is only natural to start a diachronic typological research of the valency-changing categories and other transitivity phenomena with collecting evidence from languages (language groups) with a history well-documented in texts for a sufficiently long time. Furthermore, in the case of languages with lesser documented history, important generalizations can be obtained on the basis of comparison of genetically related languages, which can serve as a basis for reconstruction of possible scenarios of changes within the system of transitivity encoding categories.

Ideal candidates for a diachronic typological study of linguistic categories such as voice and valence-changing phenomena, include several groups of the Indo-European language family. Thus, the Indo-Aryan and Greek branches of Indo-European attest an uninterrupted documented history for a period of more than 3.000 years, starting with Old Indo-Aryan and Ancient Greek, respectively.

The aim of the workshop is to bring together scholars working on valency-changing categories and other transitivity phenomena in both (1) languages (language families) with well-documented history (such as, first of all, Indo-European as well as, for instance, Semitic) and (2) languages which furnish less historical evidence but, nevertheless, can provide us with some valuable data on the basis of comparison of daughter languages and linguistic reconstruction (as is the case with Uralic).

Possible **TOPICS** to be addressed at the workshop include (but are not limited to):

- diachronic changes within the systems of voice and voice-related categories (causative, reflexive etc.)
- changes in argument structure constructions over time;
- productivity, expansion, and decline of competing syntactic patterns over time;
- paths of development of valency changing markers in individual languages;
- the role of context in the development of valency changing markers;
- reconstructing basic valency orientation and valency changing markers in proto-languages;
- possible sources of valency changing markers and patterns of polysemy;
- changes in basic valency orientation over time;
- the role of language contacts in the development of valency-changing derivations;
- alignment change in the history of individual languages;
- markers of valency changing categories in a diachronic perspective;
- creation of digital resources for the diachronic study of argument structure construction and valency-changing categories.

## **CALL FOR ABSTRACTS**

We invite submission of **abstracts up to 300 words** (references not included) describing original, unpublished research related to the topics of the workshop. We kindly ask you to send abstracts in an editable format (e.g. .doc or .docx; no pdf will be considered) to the workshop organizers:

- [kulikovli@googlemail.com](mailto:kulikovli@googlemail.com)
- [guglielmo.inglese01@universitadipavia.it](mailto:guglielmo.inglese01@universitadipavia.it)

The **DEADLINE FOR THE SUBMISSION** of the short abstract is **NOVEMBER 5, 2017**. Abstracts will be evaluated by the convenors, and selected abstracts will accompany the workshop proposal. We will notify you of inclusion in the workshop proposal when we submit it on November 15th.

Note that if the workshop has been accepted, you will also have to prepare a full abstract and submit it to be reviewed by the SLE scientific committee. The **deadline for the submission of full abstracts is January 15, 2018**.