

Constructions and valency changing strategies in a diachronic perspective: Evidence from Indo-European and beyond

Workshop proposal

Convenors: Michela Cennamo & Leonid Kulikov

The workshop aims at investigating valency changing strategies and encoding of transitivity oppositions 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 and theoretical perspective (see, among others, the seminal work by Hopper & Thompson's 1980; Siewierska 1985; Geniušiene 1987; Kemmer 1993 and Kittilä 2002; Luraghi 2010; Nedjalkov et al. 2007, Levin 1993; Levin & Rappaport Hovav 2005, van Gelderen, Cennamo & Barðdal 2013; Hellan, Malchukov & Cennamo 2017, among others). 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. (see for instance, Hartmann, Haspelmath & Taylor 2013 (*ValPal*); Malchukov & Comrie 2015a,b). 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 ad reduction.

By contrast, a systematic treatment of these categories in a diachronic perspective remains a desideratum (see, however, Barðdal, Cennamo & van Gelderen 2012). 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.)
- encoding of transitivity oppositions and labile verbs over time;
- mechanisms of the emergence, decline and disappearance of labile verbs;
- changes in argument structure constructions over time;
- productivity, expansion and decline of syntactic patterns over time;
- paths of development of valency changing markers in individual languages;
- 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.

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