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Himalayan Linguistics

A free refereed web journal and archive devoted to the study of the
languages of the Himalayas

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Review

Functional-Historical Approaches to Explanation. In Honor of Scott DeLancey

Edited by Tim Thornes, Erik Andvik, Gwendolyn Hyslop and Joana Jansen

Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins 2013

ISBN 9789027206848

Xviii + 294 pages

Reviewed by Linda Konnerth

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This festschrift for Scott DeLancey has fittingly appeared in the *Typological Studies of Language* series by John Benjamins, which is dedicated to careful descriptive analyses in the context of their typological implications. The festschrift is co-edited by four of DeLancey's former PhD students, Tim Thornes, Erik Andvik, Gwendolyn Hyslop, and Joana Jansen, who among themselves represent the two regions in the world that have been the focus of DeLancey's research: the extended Himalayan area, specifically the home of the Tibeto-Burman language family, and native North America. Among the thirteen articles in total, six concern Tibeto-Burman languages, making this festschrift an important contribution to Himalayan linguistics.

The volume does a wonderful job of involving a number of DeLancey's areas of long-standing interest and expertise. Among the papers in the volume, we find represented: a paper that emphasizes the inductive approach to language description, promoting a careful analysis of the language in its own terms (Frajzyngier); research on space and location (Hagege); a case study of grammaticalization (Givón); research on verb agreement paradigms that are reconstructable to Proto-Tibeto-Burman (van Driem) and on historical phonology with implications for Proto-Tibeto-Burman (Matisoff); a case study of the phenomenon termed in different publications as "conjunct-disjunct", "egophoricity", or, as the author puts it, "person-sensitive TAME marking" (Post); split ergativity (Beavert & Jansen); clause-chaining and serial verb constructions (Hyslop; Nguyen); the development of tense-aspect morphology from nominalization (Genetti); a discourse study of reference forms (Chelliah); causative constructions in Northern Paiute (Thornes); and, an analysis of the multifunctionality of an 'away' marker in Maa (Payne).

Being a festschrift for DeLancey, the thematic diversity of this volume successfully mirrors the thematic diversity of DeLancey's research, spanning topics from historical reconstruction to multi-clause syntax to alignment systems; spanning language families from native North America and Southeast Asia, additionally including Africa; and containing articles both from colleagues of DeLancey's as well as from his former students. The common thread, however, always stands out, and that is the clear portrayal of what it takes to understand linguistic diversity and how it develops, offering functionally and historically motivated explanations.

This review summarizes the contents of the volume, specifically the thirteen articles, which are organized into five sections: 1) Typological studies; 2) Contributions to historical linguistics; 3) TAME and case alignment; 4) Multi-clause constructions; and 5) Functional motivation and extension. At the end, a discussion of the formal editing of the volume is provided. Finally, the contents of the volume as a whole are reconsidered, exploring possible audiences.

The first section of the book is dedicated to typological studies and includes contributions by Zygmunt Frajzyngier, Claude Hagege, and T. Givon. In the first paper, Frajzyngier discusses the importance of what he calls 'non-aprioristic typology'. This approach is defined in opposition to 'aprioristic typology', which is the traditional approach in the cross-linguistic study of functional categories. 'Aprioristic typology' is based on categories that are per definition external to linguistic categories, specifically semantic or cognitive in nature. The idea behind the aprioristic approach is to create cross-linguistic correlations with the external categories. Frajzyngier criticizes that a major problem with this approach is that it is often based on pseudo-external categories, i.e., categories that are intended to be external but are actually established on the basis of linguistic analysis. More significantly according to Frajzyngier, what happens as a result of this approach is that interesting categories and cross-linguistic variation are overlooked. To exemplify this problem, Frajzyngier draws from his research on Chadic languages and discusses the shortcomings of 'aprioristic' typology in the domains of possession and definiteness, and provides an alternative 'non-aprioristic' approach to locative predication in those languages. Frajzyngier thus promotes an inductive approach to the analysis of linguistic phenomena, arguing for the necessity to discuss the structural characteristics of a particular language or language family in its own terms.

In the next paper, Claude Hagege contributes to research on how space and location are expressed in language - also one of the areas of DeLancey's expertise. Hagege discusses the category of 'chorophorics', which are markers that refer "to the place, and to its constituting parts, as portions of space" (p.39). In 'lococentric' languages that have such 'chorophorics', there are two types of locative nouns: those that refer to a place or space as an entity, and those that refer to place "as a position in space". An illustrative example of the difference between a chorophoric and a non-chorophoric construction from Russian is the difference between *v lesu šumit* '(in) the forest is rustling' and *les šumit* 'the forest is rustling'. The former, chorophoric sentence identifies the forest as a position in space, whereas the latter, non-chorophoric sentence identifies the forest as an entity.

T. Givon's paper in the volume examines the diachronic development of ethical dative (ED) constructions and suggests that it constitutes evidence against the notion of *grammaticalization chains*. Historical records of Hebrew and Spanish allow tracing the ED constructions through time. In both languages, the development of the construction spans three grammatical domains: first, case, where the development is allative > dative > benefactive > reflexive-benefactive > ED; second, speech act, where it goes from imperatives to declaratives; and third, transitivity, where ED is first associated with intransitives having to do with sudden departure and change of state to transitives that mark the completion of an event. A third language Givon then discusses is Tamil. The case of Tamil is of interest because it provides counter-evidence to the supposed grammaticalization chain in case markers from allative to the ED (see above). Specifically, while Tamil has a marker that has grammaticalized from allative to dative to benefactive, an ED construction is actually developing out of an entirely different construction based on an auxiliary verb construction. Givon argues this to be evidence that grammaticalization occurs strictly locally, from one step to the next, and that grammaticalization chains are merely epiphenomenal.

The second section of the festschrift is dedicated to historical linguistics, with contributions from George van Driem and James A. Matisoff. van Driem's paper offers an overview of the tremendously complex verb agreement system of Gongduk, a Tibeto-Burman language of south central Bhutan that was unknown to the linguistic community before van Driem's research on it, which began in 1991. With a number of cognate forms, the Gongduk system offers instances of Proto Tibeto-Burman person marking reflexes. As such, this paper represents a case study of high

interest to students of Tibeto-Burman historical linguistics and contributes to a topic DeLancey has written on extensively over the last several decades (1980, 1989, 2010, among others).

James A. Matisoff's paper forms another contribution to historical linguistics, mostly centered in Tibeto-Burman. Focusing on historical phonology, Matisoff discusses instances of the interchange between the lateral liquid /l/ and the voiced stop /d/. This interchange is found both in synchronic alternation and in diachronic sound change, which Matisoff illustrates with Tibeto-Burman data and case studies from other language families. He finds that frequently, the interchange between the two consonants is sporadic, and recognizing the /l-/d/ alternation makes it possible to refine Proto-Tibeto-Burman lexical reconstruction.

In the third section 'TAME and case alignment', we find a paper by Mark W. Post and one co-authored by Virginia Beavert and Joana Jansen. Post discusses what he calls 'person-sensitive TAME marking' in Galo (Tani, Tibeto-Burman), a phenomenon along the same lines as 'conjunct/disjunct' or 'egophoricity'. Specifically, Post finds that there are four "egophoric" and "alterphoric" constructions in Galo that span the domains of the direct perfective, inflected clausal nominalization, intention and prediction, and the experiential perfect. The function of these constructions is to respectively mark two opposites in an assertor's knowledge state, i.e., internal vs. external knowledge. While in other Tibeto-Burman languages such as Kathmandu Newar and Kaike, agency and volitionality have been found to play a role in this kind of system (Hargreaves 2005; Watters 2006), this is not the case in Galo. Regarding the historical dimension in Galo, Post asserts that it is not entirely clear how to reconstruct the system to Western Tani. While copulas and auxiliaries offer typical candidates for some of the predicate inflections that seemingly are the precursors to egophoric marking, the actual system appears to have in part developed on a language-internal basis.

Beavert and Jansen discuss case alignment in Sahaptian, which includes two languages: Ichishkiin/Sahaptin and Nez Perce, spoken in the Pacific Northwest in the USA. The Sahaptian languages exhibit a split ergative system, whereby only third person A arguments take ergative case. Speech act participants (SAPs) functioning as A arguments never take ergative case. In Ichishkiin but not in Nez Perce, there are actually two ergative case markers whose use depends on the O argument: in the case of an SAP, the form is different compared to a proximate or topical third person argument, and in the case of an obviative or non-topical third person O argument, the A argument remains unmarked for case. A further split in the ergative system in Ichishkiin (and again not in Nez Perce) concerns number of the A argument: only singular third person A arguments are case-marked, never plural third persons. In an attempt to reconstruct the development of the systems in the two languages, Beavert and Jansen suggest that a more general ergative may have its origins in an inverse construction.

Part IV of the volume concerns multi-clause constructions, with three contributions respectively from Gwendolyn Hyslop, Tam Nguyen, and Carol Genetti. Hyslop investigates a non-final construction in Kurtöp (East Bodish, Tibeto-Burman) involving the suffix *-si*. The final verb following the *-si* marked non-final verb may be a lexical verb, an auxiliary, or a copula. The nature of the final verb has functional ramifications, which Hyslop uses to explore the terminological network of concepts such as 'non-final', 'converb', and 'clause-chaining'. If there is a final lexical verb, the converb is interpreted as being temporally or causally linked to the final verb. The more grammaticalized constructions involve an auxiliary or copular final verb. Here we find the fully monoclausal durative aspect construction as well as an apparently nascent serial verb construction, as part of an ongoing development of a single clause out of a biclausal construction. Kurtöp thus

offers further illustration of the pathway from clause-chaining to serial verb constructions outlined in DeLancey (1991).

Nguyen discusses multi-clause constructions in Ede (Chamic). Ede has a clause-chaining construction that is not very grammaticalized: functionally, each clause expresses a separate event, and structurally, arguments may be shared or not, and verbal markers such as negation or adverbials may equally be shared or not. The clause-chaining construction serves as the background against which Nguyen discusses the Ede serial verb construction, in which four verbs that mean ‘pick up/hold,’ ‘finish,’ ‘give,’ and ‘sit’ have grammaticalized into auxiliaries. Nguyen illustrates how the Ede serial verb construction has exerted functional pressure towards clause union, analogous to what DeLancey (1991, 2004) discusses.

Carol Genetti’s article is a case study of the development of tense aspect morphology from nominalization constructions in Newar, a group of Tibeto-Burman languages spoken in Nepal. The grammaticalization pathway in Newar mirrors similar developments in other Tibeto-Burman languages discussed by DeLancey (2011). Genetti offers a careful comparison of inflectional suffixes across two branches of the Newar family as well as with Classical Newar. While finite verb constructions deriving from nominalizations may involve copulas, the Newar data show that copulas need not be involved. Instead, the innovative past anterior and present tense markers in Eastern Newar are shown to be directly derived from nominalizers. Similarly, the future tense marker found in both Eastern and Kathmandu Valley Newar also goes back to a nominalizer. Since copulas were not part of the historical development, the syntactic mechanism by which this change came about is argued to be non-embedded nominalization. With the documentation of nominalizers developing into tense-aspect morphology in Newar, Genetti thus offers further illustration for DeLancey’s notion that “nominalization is the primary engine driving Tibeto-Burman syntax and syntactic change” (2011:357).

The fifth and final section of the volume, ‘Functional motivation and extension,’ contains articles by Shobhana L. Chelliah, Tim Thornes and Doris L. Payne, respectively. Chelliah’s article adds another dimension to the thematic diversity of the festschrift: the domain of discourse. By examining a Meithei (also known as Manipuri or Meiteiron; Tibeto-Burman; Northeast India) corpus of seven retellings of the Pear Story (Chafe 1980), Chelliah investigates patterns in reference form, i.e., lexical NP vs. non-lexical (pronoun or zero anaphor). Specifically, she finds correlations between this lexical vs. non-lexical distinction and both semantic and pragmatic factors, such as animate agents, animate non-agents, and inanimates, also considering variable statuses of old vs. activated information. Besides the lexical vs. non-lexical distinction, Chelliah also discusses the morphological marking of lexical NPs. The study illustrates the interplay between animacy, thematic role, and information status in the resulting reference form.

Tim Thornes explores the concept of a “functional sink” (DeLancey 2001) with respect to causation constructions in Northern Paiute (Numic, Uto-Aztecan). Thornes suggests that there are three components to the analysis of Northern Paiute causation as a functional sink: 1) losing an ancient morphological causative, 2) having constructions available that can grammaticalize and perform causative functions, 3) functional motivations for the new constructions to serve the causative function in a complementary way. There are two causation constructions in Northern Paiute: one that employs an instrumental prefix and an applicative construction. The instrumental prefix construction, on the one hand, involves a semantically specific component that typically represents the means or manner by which the action of the verb is carried out, e.g., a prefix ‘hand’ that with the intransitive verb ‘bounce’ results in the transitive stem ‘bounce (something).’ The

applicative construction, on the other hand, typically occurs with stative intransitive roots and lexically reflexive or middle roots, such that, for example, a verb 'be hot' or 'be dry' is transitivity as an agent is added.

Finally, the concluding article of the volume is by Doris L. Payne on the multifunctional *AWAY* morpheme in Maa (also known as Maasai; Eastern Nilotic). Arguing that the andative or translocative semantics are at the center of the functional range, Payne first identifies separate motion and direction components involved in *AWAY*, and shows that both are present. Then, Payne lays out the additional functions marked by this morpheme. First, she discusses plurality-related functions. The *AWAY* morpheme has strong associations with plural S, A, and O arguments, occurs in the contexts of multiple actions and situations, and in certain dialects can even be elicited in plural forms of the verb paradigm. Second, *AWAY* is linked to continuous aspect, which is related to but different from the marking of 'multiplicity of action/situation.' Third, Payne shows the applicative-like effect *AWAY* has with "AGENT-SOURCE" verbs. An example of such a verb is *purr* 'steal (from somebody/something)', which includes an agent and a source from whom or where something was stolen. While *AWAY* does not increase the valence, it may change the semantic argument frame of these verbs such that the theme is profiled (e.g., 'steal (something)'). Fourth, *AWAY* may in a few cases result in detransitivization, and fifth, Payne discusses lexicalized combinations involving *AWAY*.

Overall, the volume benefits from consistent and uniform formal editing. A very helpful feature is the inclusion of abstracts at the beginning of each article in this volume of thematically diverse contents. There are occasional typographic errors, but the overall level of formal editing meets the reader's expectations. In addition to an introduction by the editors that sketches out the contents of the volume, there are further included a bibliography of Scott DeLancey's work, as well as - in the back of the book - three separate indices: a name index, a language index, and a subject index, which make it easy to find various types of specific information.

In terms of the contents, the volume does a nice job of representing the breadth and depth of DeLancey's research, which results in a range of topics covered, spanning language families of Southeast Asia (particularly Tibeto-Burman as well as Austronesian) and native North America (Sahaptian and Uto-Aztecan), and even including Africa (Afro-Asiatic and Nilo-Saharan). Underlying this thematic diversity is the unifying approach to linguistic analysis that characterizes DeLancey's work: careful and rich inductive descriptions of phenomena that contribute to our understanding of how language systems work and how they develop, taking recourse to functional motivations that are recognized to drive the developments and changes in grammatical systems of languages around the world. As such, with the wide thematic diversity and shared methodological approach towards linguistic analysis, this volume represents an exciting contribution to the field of functional-typological linguistics. With half the articles in the collection representing the Tibeto-Burman language family, it is of particular interest to those focused in the greater Himalayan region. In addition to being a fascinating read for scholars invested in the same functional-typological approach to linguistic analysis, the book would also serve to give a well-rounded example of this approach, and individual chapters would make great additions to a reading list for graduate-level courses, for example on typology or functional syntax.

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