Semantic functions of the Kampan applicative -ako (Arawak) in a typological perspective

Oral

Abstract

Typical applicative derivation is a transitivizing operation whereby an applicative verb is overtly marked for the semantic role of an added direct object (Payne 1997:186; Peterson 2007:1-2). Unlike simple transitivization which adds central (theme or patient) participants, applicative formation normally increases the number of object arguments by incorporating peripheral (local and non-local arguments such as beneficiary, instrument, etc.) participants into the argument structure of the applicative verb (Polinsky 2005:45). Applicative systems in Kampan languages include generalized, semantically unspecified applicatives, conveying a cluster of thematic roles, and morphologically distinct applicative markers, each referring to a single thematic role. The present study is concerned with the Kampan generalized applicative -ako and addresses the following issues: (1) What participant roles does the ako-applicative assign to the applied objects? (2) What is a possible motivation for their assignment? (3) Are the attested semantic functions of -ako idiosyncratic, compared with those assigned by semantically unspecified applicatives in other languages?

This study reveals that the semantic functions associated with applied objects encoded by the generalized Kampan applicative -ako include both central and peripheral participants (theme, patient, place, goal, source, recipient, addressee, human source, beneficiary, comitative, instrument, purpose, stimulus). For example, -ako marks the central patient participant on the verb in the following sentence: i=qonk-ako-we-t-a=a=ri [3m.A.-finish-APPL-PRF-REAL-REAL-3f.O] ‘He finished in vain with him.’ (Ashéninka Pichis; Payne 1994:83); the ako-coded peripheral stimulus participant is shown in the next example: i=ki=ak-ako-ak-i=ro [3m.A=be.angry-APPL-PRF-REAL-3n.m.O] ‘He is angry about her.’ (Nanti; Michael 2008:288).

This analysis uses the cognitive/diachronic approach to account for the selection of semantic roles coded by the applicative -ako. The proliferation of semantic functions of the applicative *-ako is explained here in the context of the suffix’s historical development, grounded in the mapping of its basic ‘container’ meaning from a spatial domain onto non-spatial domains of speakers’ conceptualized experience with the world. The diachronic evolution of the original local ‘container’ sense of the generalized applicative *-ako in ten Kampan languages has spawned multiple semantic extensions, evolving from local to grammatical functions, e.g. n=a=ree-go-t-an-ê=ni [1.S=fly-APPL-EP-DIR-EP=3.O] ‘I arrived on the plane.’ (Nomatsiguenga; Wise 1971:225); o=tse-ako-t-av-ak-e=ri [3n.m. A-loosen-APPL-EP-DIR-PRF-REAL-3m.O] ‘Ella desató el paquete [she untied the bundle].’ (Machiguenga; Grosh 1996:77).

The synchronic uses of the generalized applicative -ako in Kampan languages are placed in the context of typological studies on generalized applicatives in other languages (Gerdzs & Kiyosawa 2005; Peterson 2007; Wise 2002). Circumstantial (stimulus) and grammatical functions of the generalized Kampan applicative -ako turn out to be a cross-linguistically rare phenomenon.

REFERENCES


