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Sa'a Event Structures: Variations on a 'Thematic' C
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ABSTRACT
Many Oceanic languages have two suffixes which attach to transitive verbs before an object marker is added: -(C)i and -(C)akini, where C is a variable consonant chosen from a limited set. Historical studies refer to these consonants as 'thematic', explaining the variation as a reanalysis of original root-final consonants. However, such an explanation does not adequately account for roots occurring with more than one C variant in the same language. These examples indicate that the consonants are more than just empty fossils. Several attempts have been made to explain the variants in terms of semantic groupings, but the proposed groups are limited in scope and do not serve to explain why close synonyms can occur in different semantic groups with different consonants. While there is evidence in Polynesian languages that the consonants are gradually shifting towards a single default consonant, other Oceanic languages have no single consonant that is statistically dominant.

In the Sa'a language the consonants also occur in nominalizers with the form -Ca. In the nominalizer environment there are many sets of minimal pairs and even triplets which allow clear meaning differences to be discerned. I show that while these differences are subtle, they carry over to the verbal environments, where they often distinguish changes in the structure or lexical aspect of the event from what is indicated by the bare root. The resulting derived verbs are frequently applied in culturally specific ways, which may result in glosses which do not seem to overtly indicate a change in event structure or aspect.

In this paper I show that the consonants should be considered as separate morphemes, each with a unique meaning indicating event structure, aspect, and/or participant involvement. If the consonants are morphemes in their own right, both of the so-called suffixes should more properly be called suffix sequences. The Sa'a consonant meanings have explanatory value for constructions cognate to puzzling examples from other Oceanic languages. Perhaps the results found in Sa'a will prompt other researchers in the Oceanic family to consider aspectual and event structure functions for the 'thematic' consonants in the verbal suffix sequences.

Examples
(1) Caused achievement: ha'a-siho 'to cause to descend
Oto kire dau huni ha'a-siho=a iiola aa-na haka,
then 3PL do to CAUS-descend=3S canoe PREP-3S ship
'Then they tried to lower the ship's canoe.'

(2) Caused activity: ha'-siho-l=i 'to do the activity of causing something to descend
Oto ko ha'a-siho-l=i=e mola mwala na mo ola ikire
then IMPV CAUS-descend-ACT=LOC=3S merely people and PL.ART things
3PL.POSS
'So it (the ship) was just unloading the people and their things.'

(3) Activity: uusu-l-e-'i-n=i 'to do the activity of pushing to'
E uusu-l-e-'i-n=i=e mola iiola ingeie.
3S push-ACT-NMLZ-ATTR-APPL=LOC=3S merely canoe 3SG.POSS
‘He just poled his canoe.’
Achievement: uusu-ng-e-'i-n=i 'to do a pushing event to'
Pwaapwaa e uusu-ng-e-'i-n=i=e kele mwela huni toli
dunge.
Grandma 3S push-EV-NMLZ-ATTR-APPL=LOC=3S DIM child to bring fire
‘Grandma sent a little child to bring fire.’

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Typological Rara (and Rarissima) in Khevsur and Tush
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ABSTRACT

Khevsur and Tush are endangered highly divergent dialects (perhaps separate languages) of Georgian spoken in eastern Georgia near the border with Chechnya and Ingushetia in the Russian Federation. They are interesting for a number of reasons, not least among which the intimate and not fully understood contact they have long had with Nakh-Daghestanian languages that lie north of the Caucasus Mountains. However, in this talk we will show from a new dialectological corpus being produced that this question of language contact is also connected to a number of highly unusual grammatical features: unusual forms of question formation, ditropic (aka Klavans type five) clitics, degrammaticalization and case-stacking.

In terms of question formation, Standard Georgian [SG] is relatively well-behaved: a dedicated preverbal focus position operates for both single (1a) and multiple (1b) wh-questions. Also unexceptional is the animacy restriction in (1c): animates usually precede inanimates (Harris 1981). It has been claimed (e.g. Chomsky 1973 and many in that tradition) that question formation is subject to a .superiority condition., under which this generalization is a hard and fast rule. Khevsur and Tush texts show this is only a statistical truth even within Kartvelian: as in (2), taken from a corpus, inanimates can indeed precede animates even in triple wh-formations

Much more interesting than statistical rara are true rarissima such as ditropic clitics (Cysouw to appear) which have actually degrammaticalized from their original word internal position as prefixes situated between the preverb and verb root and now can freely suffix to preceding material serving as focal particles, even though they grammatical modify the following material, as in (3). Because we have access to Old Georgian texts, we know exactly what was possible in the ancestral dialect of Khevsur and Tush: as with modern SG, the prefixes could not separate from the verb. What is most interesting is that these clitics show similarities to Udi endoclitics (Harris 2002) and some constructions in Chechen (Good 2003) and Ingush (Peterson 2001). Such constructions have also been claimed not to exist (Marantz 1988) and are certainly cross-linguistically much harder to find. This fact suggests that the local clustering of ditropicity might be an areal feature.

Another construction that shows possible influence from Nakh-Daghestanian languages is the particular kind of case-stacking seen in Khevsur and Tush is as in (4). Although Old (and to a limited extent modern) Georgian did show Suffixaufnahme in which genitival nouns must agree with their head noun, such genitives rarely if ever functioned as arguments of verbs. In Khevsur and Tush, on the other hand, Suffixaufnahme properly speaking has been lost, but instead semantically recipient arguments may be marked with both genitive and adverbial case. The interest here lies in the fact that Nakh-Daghestanian languages often build oblique cases on particular oblique stems of the form [ROOT]-[OBL]-[CASE] . the .obliqueness. can actually be segmented out, as in Lak. This talk will argue that centuries of bilingualism resulted in rather deep contact of ND languages on Khevsur and Tush using indigenous morphological resources.

(1) a. ra-s a-k.et-eb-s (*ras)
   what-DAT PRV-do-TH-3SG
b. vin ra-s a-k.et-eb-s
   who.NOM what-DAT PRV-do-TH-3SG
“Who is doing what?”
c. *ra-s vin a-k.et-eb-s
   what-DAT who.NOM PRV-do-TH-3SG
   “Who is doing what?”

(2) .em-tan-it ro c.a-xv-av, rom ra-s vin vis
   1SG-with-INST if PVB-roll.up-TH that what-DAT who.NOM who.DAT
   s-tx-ov-d-as=av
   3-ask-TH-IMPF-3SG=QUOT
   “If you will roll it up for me so that whatever anyone asks of anyone…”

(3) .em-s ga-mdidr-eb-ul-eb-s m-txov-ar-a-eb-s=tana=.
   my-DAT PVB-rich-TH-PART-PL-DAT PART-ask-PART-?-PL-DAT=at=2
   c.a-vid-a=v
   PVB-go.OPT-OPT2=QUOT
   “You should come to those who have asked [to be?] among those made wealthy.”

(4) peqh-t ra-s .a-v-i-c-om-d-i=v?” u-tkv-am-is
   foot-DAT.PL what-DAT PVB-1-PRV-fall-TH-IMPF-1/2IMPF=QUOT PRV-say-TH-3SG
   memcxvar-is-ad
   shepherd-GEN-ADV
   “How could I fall flat on my feet?” he says to the shepherd.”

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Syntactic Deviation in Partially Schematic Constructions: A corpus-based approach to COME/GET to V₂ constructions in English
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ABSTRACT
This paper examines two English polyverbal constructions, COME to V₂ and GET to V₂, as exemplified in (1) and (2), respectively.

(1) The senator came to know thousands of his constituents
(2) Little Johnny got to eat ice cream after every little league game

Previous studies considered these types of constructions (though come and get as used here have not been sufficiently studied) as belonging to a special class of complement constructions, in which the infinitive is regarded as having what may be termed OBJ status (in the sense that it heads an embedded predicate hierarchically subordinate to the matrix verb, whose null subject PRO is an anaphor of the matrix NP_SUB or NP_DO, and which as a whole behaves similarly to NPs) (e.g. Rudanko, 2002; McCawley, 1988), or alternatively, as being instances of RAISING (e.g. McCawley, 1988). These constructions in particular are of interest because they represent atypical instances of complementation -- neither come nor get is construed as a paradigmatically centric example of complement taking verbs (as perhaps say or expect might be). The present paper examines these constructions more closely from an ultra-fine-grained, quantitative corpus-linguistic approach. Using the concordance software AntConc, 1126 examples of GET to V₂ and 975 of COME to V₂ were retrieved with regular expressions from the American National Corpus, 2nd edition. Manual weeding-out of false hits yielded 597 and 478 true hits, respectively. For the purpose of statistically comparing these data sets to a reference sample, an additional 82,427 examples of V₁ to V₂ were retrieved (where V = any lemmatized verb, including COME and GET), of which 68,982 (reduced later to a random sample of 1000) were identified as true hits. These results were then cleaned up with R (a programming and statistics environment) and manually coded for V₁ and V₂ lemmas, tense/mood/person/number of V₁, aspect/voice of V₂, and separately labeled for clause type (whether V₁ is a complement, infinitive, or the object of a modal, and if so, of what species). In order to discover the productivity of these partially filled constructions, the distinctive, determinant morpho-syntactic elements of COME/GET and V₁ to V₂ were identified using a logistic regression. Preliminary results indicate that both constructions exhibit non-compositonal semantic features, which in turn correlate with morphological and lexico-syntactic choices statistically associated with their realization.
References


A corpus-based examination of repluralized pronouns in Tuvan
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ABSTRACT
In the Tuvan language of south Siberia, certain personal and demonstrative plural pronouns can be marked with an extra plural morpheme /LAIR/ and are therefore called repluralized pronouns (RPs).

Table 1: Tuvan plural and repluralized pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>plural</th>
<th>DPP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 ‘we’</td>
<td>bis, bis-ter</td>
<td>bis-ter-ler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 ‘you’</td>
<td>siler</td>
<td>siler-ler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ‘they’</td>
<td>olar</td>
<td>olar-lar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEM ‘these’</td>
<td>bo-lar</td>
<td>bolar-lar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pronominal repluralization as a cross-linguistic phenomenon was first noted by Head (1978), who proposed that RPs function as extra-honorifics, i.e., speakers use RPs to indicate a greater degree of respect for hearers or a greater degree of social distance from them than that which is indicated by normal honorific plural pronouns. Thus, RPs supplement Brown and Gilman’s (1960) original division of pronouns into T and V forms with a ‘super V’ category (as designated by Brown and Levinson (1987)).

While at first glance, this seems to be an accurate generalization of Tuvan RPs, one can also find Tuvan utterances in which the RP forms do not easily fit as honorifics. This paper describes how an electronic corpus of Tuvan texts was constructed in order to research the possible functions of Tuvan RPs, and how corpus findings were assessed by native speakers of Tuvan. The tentative conclusion is that besides serving as extra-honorifics, Tuvan RPs can also have two functions that are not directly related to social deixis: 1) to ascribe a special status to referents, and 2) to characterize plural referents as constituted by a plurality of internal subgroups. These findings show that some of Head’s (1978) proposed universals dealing with social deixis in pronominal reference need to be tweaked in order to be able to account for the Tuvan pronominal system.

References


First Conjunct Agreement: A Feature-Driven Analysis
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Abstract
In this paper, I investigate the phenomenon of First Conjunct Agreement, with the aim of devising a mechanism by which this agreement discrepancy can be accounted for under a uniform theory of agreement in natural language grammar. The proposed analysis is based on the relation between availability of unvalued features and locality of domains.

First Conjunct Agreement (FCA) poses a challenge to a uniform theory of agreement in Minimalist syntax. The verb tends to display different patterns of agreement with a conjunction phrase depending on two factors: i) word order, i.e. whether the conjunction phrase precedes or follows the verb; and ii) the type of DPs that are conjoined, i.e. whether they are pronominal or non-pronominal.

There have been efforts to devise a mechanism through which FCA facts can be accounted for, starting with clausal coordination with gapping and across-the-board extraction (Aoun, Benmamoun, and Sportiche, 1994, 1999), late-merge (Soltan, 2006), and government (Munn, 1999). However, no adequate and satisfactory mechanism has been proposed to account for the FCA facts in Standard Arabic.

In this language, when conjoined DPs precede the verb in SV order, no instance of First Conjunct Agreement (FCA) arises and the verb fully agrees with the conjunction phrase:

(1) at-tullaab-u wa t-taalebaat-u jaa?-uu
    the-students-m-nom and the-students-f-nom came-3.p.m
    ‘The (male) students and the (female) students came’

FCA context arises when the conjoined subjects follow the verb, i.e. in VS order:

(2) jaa?-a t-tullaab-u wa t-taalebaat-u
    came-3.s.m the-students-m-nom and the-students-f-nom
    ‘The (male) students and the (female) students came’

(3) jaa?-at at-taalebaat-u wa t-tullaab-u
    came-3.s.f the-students-f-nom and the-students-m-nom
    ‘The (female) students and the (male) students came’

In FCA contexts, the verb partially agrees with the first conjunct in (person) and (gender) if the first conjunct is a non-pronominal DP. The (number) feature is usually set to a default singular value. However, if the first conjunct is a pronominal DP, full agreement is established with the verb:

(4) Je?-na hunna wa aabaa-u-hunna
    came-3.p.f they-f and fathers-nom-their
‘They/f and their fathers came’

In this paper, I argue against the clausal analysis of conjunction and claim that it is phrasal. Further, I argue for a certain structure for conjunction phrases in Standard Arabic; one in which both conjuncts are in the local domain of the head T. Furthermore, I take AGREE to be the right syntactic relation for establishing agreement and propose a feature-driven mechanism for First Conjunct Agreement in Standard Arabic and similar languages.

**Selected references**


The Role of Givenness in Swahili Reciprocal Constructions
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ABSTRACT

This paper demonstrates how pragmatic factors of given versus new information help language users determine syntactic structures that best represent the rhetoric value of their utterances (Prince 1981). In Swahili the participants of Reciprocal verbs are expressed via two different syntactic frames namely, the Simple Reciprocal (SR), and the Discontinuous Construction (DC). In SR, the participants occur as a conjoined subject NP while participants of a DC occur in different syntactic positions: one participant in subject position and the other participant in a postverbal position after the preposition 'with'.

(1) Simple Reciprocal

\[ \text{NP}_1 \text{conj NP}_2 \ [V_{rec}] \]

(2) Discontinuous Construction

\[ [\text{NP}_1] \ [V_{rec}] \ [PP \text{[P}_na\text{]} \ [\text{NP}_2]] \]

\[ [\text{NP}_2] \ [V_{rec}] \ [PP\text{[P}_na\text{]} \ [\text{NP}_1]] \]

Notice that the participants can be reordered in terms of which participant precedes the other in both the SR and DC, hence, the (a) and (b) variants for each.

I present evidence to demonstrate that the syntactic positions of the participants in the four variants of reciprocal constructions can be best explained in terms of which referent ranks higher in the scale of givenness as demonstrated by (3) (sentences adopted from Said 1976: 93).

(3a) Na-i-tafuta nyumba ya bwana mmoja aitwaye Sulubu.
1Sg,PRT-9ObjM-look for 9house of man one named Sulubu
‘I am looking for the house of a man named Sulubu.’

b. [NP1 Sulubu Ngufumali] [v a-me-kosana] [PP[P na] [NP2 tajiri mwenye shamba]]
1Sulubu Ngufumali 1Agr-Perf-disagree with richman owner field
‘Sulubu Ngufumali disagreed with the landlord.’

c. #[NP2 tajiri mwenye shamba] [v a-me-kosana] [PP[P na] [NP1 Sulubu Ngufumali]]
“The landlord has disagreed with Sulubu Ngufumali.”

(3a) is a request for information about the whereabouts of a character in the source novel, Sulubu Ngufumali. Notice that Sulubu is explicitly mentioned in (3a). (3b) is the hearer response implicating that Sulubu had disagreed with his landlord and therefore had moved. While it is syntactically possible to have either the NP Sulubu Ngufumali or tajiri mwenye shamba, or both occupy the subject position, the discourse-given NP, Sulubu Ngufumali, is preferred, hence, the infelicity of (3c).

To explore the role of participants’ information asymmetry in the choice of reciprocal constructions by language users in a coherent manner, two verb categories have been selected: conversation verbs, and marry verbs (Levin 1993). Sentences involving reciprocal conversation verbs and marry verbs from eight Swahili pieces of literature and five newspaper articles, as well as the Helsinki Corpus of Swahili are analyzed based on the ‘given/new principle’ (Birner & Ward 2009). Earlier studies have discussed derivation of the SR and DC (Vitale 1981, and
Dimitriadis & Seidl 2002). This paper, thus, presents a different perspective on the understanding of the semantically equivalent but pragmatically distinct variants of reciprocal constructions in Swahili.

References


The Problem of the Second Person Plural Pronoun in English
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ABSTRACT

This presentation explores the syntax of substitutions for the second-person-plural pronoun (abbreviated here as [2plu;pro]) in English. Specifically, it focuses on the substitution “you all” “all of you” and “ya’ll.” I test whether or not these substitutions act as phrases or as phrasal pronouns through the use of constituency tests. Thus, I explore the possibility that these substitutions behave as true [2plu;pro] or that these are only constructions of independent words used together to convey the meaning of [2plu;pro].

In the presentation, I compare these constructions in English to a language with a regular [2plu;pro], Russian. I also compare English to a language with a semi-regular [2plu;pro], Spanish. Spanish is interesting in that it allows for multiple ways to convey a [2plu;pro] depending on the speaker’s relationship to those addressed. Though it has a regular [2plu;pro], the presence of a respectful form in Russian also adds this complication.

I have consulted five style manuals listed below of which two recommend the use of “you” as both the second-person-singular pronoun and the [2plu;pro]. These were Understanding English Grammar and The Writer’s Harbrace Handbook, both of which are specifically about grammar. The remaining three do not comment on the issue at all. However, this allows for ambiguity and the use of “you all” and “you guys” in discourse indicates the need for a regular [2plu;pro]. My research, therefore, has the potential to make “you all” “all of you” and “ya’ll” more acceptable as regular [2plu;pro]s.

Bibliography

Circumscribing Matched Guise Technique’s potential: geographical origin as a prejudice trigger
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ABSTRACT

The matched guise technique (MGT), in its prototypical form, as established by Lambert and colleagues in 1960, and in various modifications (see, for example, Graff, Labov, and Harris 1986), has allowed researchers to collect underlying reactions to different languages and varieties of the same language. It is substantially aimed at investigating linguistic attitudes of individuals toward a given social group.

Typically, the participants in the experimental group express evaluations of the socio-economic, cultural, and personality characteristics of other people, only on the basis of listening to their recorded voices. In other words, the informants assess people whom they have never seen either in person, or in a photograph, or on video; about whom they have no information; the only available element for the assessment is their voice recorded while reading a text.

Our hypothesis is that in a MGT survey, once an informant connects the voice s/he hears to a geographical origin, it is on this last attribution that the assessments on the other dimensions (social, cultural, and economic status and personality features) are based.

We have conducted a meta-analysis of two different surveys carried out in Italy (Di Ferrante 2007) and Switzerland (Catricalà and Di Ferrante 2010)—expanding a previous investigation in Italy (Volkart Rey 1990). The objective was to identify the variable that triggers informants’ evaluations and their implicit or explicit prejudices. On one hand, we statistically confirmed that the MGT is a valuable tool to measure listener skills in connecting a voice to a specific geographical origin. On the other hand, using Rank Correlation Tests of some of the scales of assessment, we also statistically demonstrated that once an informant attributes a geographical origin to a voice, the trigger of the prejudice switches from the voice to the attributed geographical origin.

These results suggest that MGT is still a formidable and, in this new perspective, ever more powerful methodological tool to elicit attitudes and prejudices towards different geographic groups. However, its power to measure linguistic attitude and prejudice is subordinate to the effect of other dimensions, namely geographic origin. In this sense the necessity to rethink the techniques and methodologies to measure linguistic attitudes emerges.
References


Speech Acts or the prototypes of speech acts. An application of the Total Cognitive Response (ToCoRe) to TESOL

Sergio Pizziconi
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ABSTRACT

Speech Act theory, in the way it was unfolded by Austin and Searle, proved to have several general theoretical weaknesses, as demonstrated in the short discussion in Levinson (1983, pp. 246-82). Moreover, the literature about the use of speech acts in language teaching/learning (Nelson et al., 2002; Beebe & Cummings, 1995; Boxer & Pickering, 1995) has demonstrated practical hardships in collecting genuine, authentic forms to be ascribed to each speech act and in using them in the classroom.

Nevertheless, the theory is retained as an underlying theoretical framework in all the SL or FL teaching/learning methodologies that work with functional curricula. Not only is the use of terms like request, apology, promise a direct legacy of the theory, but also the opposition between direct and indirect speech acts, on one hand, and the relevance given to context and co-text information, on the other, make clear reference to the distinction between locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts and to the felicity conditions, respectively.

A prototypical approach to the definition of each speech act type is presented here to configure an alternative approach to the teaching/learning of speech acts and confine the quest for the genuine spontaneous forms to a marginal relevance in the issue. At the same time, the methodological suggestion can shed a different light onto the dim theoretical areas of the general theory of speech acts.

This theoretical framing has been tested in a pilot survey in which native speakers were asked to recognize some possible formulations of the speech act of bragging/showing-off. The results of this survey tend to confirm the plausibility of the proposal. A synthetic representation of the variables affecting the modifications to the central prototype to generate different realizations of the speech act is then presented through a functional equation. A more or less extended version of the functional equation becomes the object of study of the specific speech act.

The method presented here is aligned to a teaching methodological constellation that I have dubbed Total Cognitive Response (ToCoRe), according to which teaching/learning materials and activities are designed to activate a widespread interaction within and between different cognitive and perceptual areas.
References


From knowing “one” to “two”: evidence for self-initiated early correct use of “two”  
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In early number development, it is a slow and mysterious process for a one-knower child to become a two-knower, a process that takes an entire 6 months (e.g., Wynn, 1992). These findings represent a gap between the experimental results and the diary studies (e.g., Mix, 2009), which suggest that children are able to produce correct uses of “two” much younger than the typical two-knower age (36 months). In order to examine this discrepancy, we look at when exactly children become able to use two correctly in daily uses. Furthermore, are such early correct uses merely coincidental (Clark & Nikitina, 2009)?

We analyzed the CHILDES corpus Manchester (Theakston et al., 2002). In this corpus, twelve children were recorded twice every month between ages two and three. The word “two” was searched using CLAN (MacWhinney, 2000), and five sentences before and after each utterance were included for analysis. We looked for cardinal two uses, which could mean “exact two”, or “more than two”. Only uses of two explicitly confirmed or corrected by parents were included. Any two appeared in a counting list was excluded, so were repetitions from the preceding five sentences and uses without confirmation from parents. Age information was eliminated during coding, and a second coder coded 20% of the data with 93% agreement.

We found 224 cardinal uses of two under such stringent inclusion criterion, 190 of which are correct uses (85%). Eleven children had more than three correct uses (Figure 1). The onset of correct use was determined by the age of first use (26.2 months) and age of repeated use (27.5 months), and two measures highly correlate ($r=.91, p<.001$) (Stromswold, 1989). The frequency of correct use of two is very much significantly predicted by age of the child (Figure 2).

Some children never over-generalize two as more than two, while other children infrequently over-generalize, which happen with and without plural markings ($p>.05$, Fisher’s exact test). Some children started correct use of two with no plural markings, similar to Spence (Mix, 2009), and other children started to use two with pluralized nouns. For most children, cardinal uses occur with a pluralized noun in a NP (86.6%).

Interestingly, correct uses are predominately spontaneous. Production of correct use is not limited to nouns that often come with pairs (e.g., eyes, shoes), indicating uses are novel/productive. In contrast, children almost never respond an NP construction alone to a “how many” question from parents. A preliminary examination of 67 answers from two children of this sample for “how many” questions shows that children either recite the count list in whole or in part (24%), or they simply do not answer with numbers (39%), indicating that they have no idea what the question means. When they do answer with a number word or an NP, the answer is mostly wrong (88%). Together, these results have implications for how we should elicit “two” uses from toddlers in the future, and how this trajectory of correct use foreshadows the conceptual leap from one-knower to two-knower.
Figures

Figure 1. Total number of cardinal uses of two between two and three years of age

Figure 2.1 Relations between number of correct uses of two and age (in months)

References


The Acquisition of English Past Tense by Junior High School Students in Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this current study is to investigate the effect of lexical aspect on L2 acquisition of English past tense by junior high school students in Taiwan in terms of the Aspect Hypothesis proposed by Andersen and Shirai (1996). The subjects in this study were 113 ninth graders (36 for Low group, 39 for Mid group, and 38 for High group) at a junior high school in the middle of Taiwan. The study employed a cloze test to elicit data from the subjects’ responses and explored the research topics: (1) the prediction of the Aspect Hypothesis on simple past, (2) L1 influence on the use of simple past, and (3) the relation between learners’ L2 proficiency and their simple past use among the categories of lexical aspect. Based on the statistic outcomes, the results of the study supported the prediction of the Aspect Hypothesis on simple past. That is, simple past initially associated with telic verbs, then spread to activities, and finally extended to states. Meanwhile, the present study found the perfective marking –le in Mandarin Chinese might result in a positive transfer effect on the use of simple past in English. In addition, as learners’ general English proficiency increases, the effect of the Aspect Hypothesis will become weakened on learners’ use of simple past. At last, through the study, the researcher provided some suggestions and implications for future directions of studies and English instruction.

Keywords: the Aspect Hypothesis, lexical aspect, simple past, L2 acquisition

Selected References


The Aspect Hypothesis and the Acquisition of L₂ Japanese Tense and Aspect by English Native Speakers
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ABSTRACT
This study examined the research question how English speakers acquire tense and aspect in L₂ Japanese. It reports on findings on how native speakers of American English produced and processed, under various experimental conditions, the Japanese imperfective –te iru- tense and aspect markers in verbs of different classes.

The Aspect Hypothesis, as formulated Baldovi-Harlig (2000), states that lexical aspectual classes (e.g., stative, active) influence the distribution of verbal inflections and the way the bound morphemes are acquired. Two specific predictions were tested in the study: (a) Learners initially use past tense with achievements and accomplishments and then extend it to activity verbs at a later developmental stage; (b) Progressive morpheme starts with activities and is then extended to accomplishments and achievements. Research on the Aspect Hypothesis has adduced conflicting results. Klein (2004), for example, found that the difficulties second-language learners of L₂ English were confronted with in acquiring tense and aspect systems lie beyond syntax. In this study I followed Klein’s reasoning and examined a combination of morphosyntactic and semantic variables in influencing the acquisition of Japanese tense and aspect by American high school students and the way positive evidence affected the acquisition process. The primary investigation was English native speakers’ acquisitions of the Japanese aspect marker, –te iru- form, which denotes both progressive meaning and resultative meaning. Resultative meaning is often captured by the English present perfect form, have V-ed as it refers to a state resulting from an event.

The participants of the current thesis project are 16 high school students who are taking Japanese classes as a foreign language at private high school in Los Angeles. Five of the 16 subjects were in their fourth year and the rest (11 students) were in their third year. All subjects were between the ages of 15 and 18. Data will be collected through two tasks: a cloze test and a truth-value judgment test. In order to measure the L₂ learners’ present knowledge of Japanese tense and aspect, a pre-test was administered to the subjects prior to the input. The input consisted of sentences that include the –te iru- form with resultative meaning. Finally, several weeks after the instruction, a post-test was administered. Data collected from both tests was analyzed to ascertain the extent to which verb classes control the development patterns of Japanese tense and aspect of English learners.

In conclusion, we have not found evidence that indiscriminately confirms the validity of the Aspect Hypothesis. But we found that the proficiency levels of the learners have played a significant role, such that those at the intermediate level behaved more akin to the native controls. In addition, we also found that subjects attended more to the proper use of verbs or predicates rather than to aspect. The present study suggests that instructional input and lexical/semantic cues of verbs aids English-speaking learners in interpreting the –te iru construction.
References


The effect of computer-mediated communication (CMC) interaction on L2 vocabulary acquisition: A comparison study of CMC interaction and face-to-face interaction
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ABSTRACT
This study investigates the differential effects of CMC interaction (both text-chat and voice-chat) and face-to-face interactions on university level of ESL students’ vocabulary acquisition. More specifically, this study examines (a) whether learners engage in negotiated interaction when they encounter new lexical items, (b) whether CMC interaction help learners acquire new lexical items productively, (c) whether there are any special features related to negotiation routines in the most acquired words and the least acquired words, and (d) whether ESL students find CMC interaction helpful for their English learning.

The participants consisted of 12 (6 male, 6 female) international students and visiting scholars at Iowa State University. The research design included a pre-test, a treatment activity, an immediate post-test, and a 1 week delayed post-test. The pre-test containing 24 vocabulary whose referents were auto parts items was given to choose the target lexical items. The type of treatment activity used in this study was an information-gap activity in which the students were required to request and obtain information from each other to complete the task. Two post-tests (immediate and delayed) were administered to assess the acquisition of new lexical items. The immediate and delayed post-tests were offered to students on the treatment day and 1 week after the initial treatment. Finally, a follow-up survey from each participant in CMC interaction group was also used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) task and the drawbacks or advantages of using such activities for language learning.

The results showed that all ESL learners in both CMC and face-to-face interaction negotiated to complete their tasks, and all of the twelve target lexical items prompted negotiation for all of the dyads. Moreover, the results revealed that the students in all three groups recalled more than half of the previously unknown target lexical items in the immediate post-test and delayed post-test. For both productive oral and written acquisition, the results revealed that all three conditions seem to facilitate the acquisition of L2 words, as well as to ensure a good level of retention. However, there were no statistically significant differences between groups and posttests. Thus, meaning negotiation during computer-mediated and face-to-face interaction seems to promote both oral and written acquisition of L2 vocabulary.

In addition, the results indicated that students tended to acquire new lexical items when they had some background knowledge about the target words or they were negotiating both form and meaning with their partners. A follow-up survey data showed that most of the students in both text-chat and voice-chat CMC interaction group had a positive attitude towards this type of activity in online, and they found synchronous chat as an interesting and helpful way of English learning.
References


Investigating the Missing of the Indefinite Article and Copula be in the production skills of Iraqi Learners of English
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ABSTRACT
There is no one-to-one relation between English and Arabic so areas where the two languages differ are expected to constitute problems to the non-native speaker. The concentration in this paper is on using the indefinite article a/an and the copula be.

The researcher finds out through her teaching English as a foreign language that a great number of Iraqi learners of English make a grammatical mistake by missing the indefinite article and the copula be in uttering such a sentence: Ahmed teacher instead of: Ahmad is a teacher. Such mistakes are made because there is no one-to-one relationship between English and Arabic. The interference of Arabic is behind the production of such a sentence because Arabic does not have an indefinite article or a copula be corresponding to them in English. Indefiniteness and copula be are expressed in Arabic in different ways.

At early stages of language acquisition, English children produce sentences like Here book and Paula good girl (Cook and Newson, 1997: 274-277). So, Iraqi learners of English and English children express their ideas through the choice and order of vocabulary rather than through syntax. Their sentences may be acceptable but ungrammatical.

The articles have no lexical meaning nor function independently of the noun they precede. They are used solely to give grammatical status to the following noun which needs this status (Quirk et al., 1987:255). Yet, the articles are considered separate words because, as Hall (1960:98-99) thinks, English grammars use writing not spoken language as their point of departure. He suggests that the articles should be counted as bound forms like prefixes and suffixes. For example, the indefinite article a/an and the suffix -s in the following nouns have the same grammatical role a book, books. The indefinite article a is used with the singular count noun to individualize the object book, so it indicates singularity, whereas the suffix -s is used to indicate plurality. This point emphasizes the historical origin of the indefinite article in English. It is derived from the numeral one (Strang 1970: 272; Halliday & Hassan 1987: 70).

Articles are only needed for structural and grammatical purposes not semantic ones. The noun itself carries the feature of indefiniteness in the deep structure, and the article is introduced in the intermediate syntactic structure (Postal 1966; cited in Master 1987: 167).

Copulative is a term used in grammatical description to refer to a linking verb i.e. a verb which has little independent meaning, and whose main function is to relate other elements of clause structure, especially subject and complement. In English the main copulative verb is be as: she is a doctor (Crystal, 1998 copula (tive)).
It can be concluded that:

1. The physical linguistic manifestation that exists in the surface structure of a language cannot be considered a ground to make comparison between languages because there is no one–to–one relation between them. So, the further one abstracts from the physical aspect of language towards its conceptual content, the nearer one gets to a common core of linguistic universal (Leech 1978: 232).

2. Missing the words which have no independent meaning such as the indefinite article and the copula be does not affect acceptability but grammaticality.

References


Wh-domains and optional wh-movement in Jarai
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ABSTRACT

Overview & Goals: This study investigates the prosody of wh-questions in Jarai (Austronesian, Vietnam; SVO) in light of Richards’s (2010) proposal that wh-in-situ is licensed in just those languages that are able to create a wh-domain, a prosodic constituent which extends from the complementizer (null or overt) to the wh-phrase. Languages that cannot create wh-domains resort to wh-movement to place the wh-phrase as close as possible to the complementizer. I argue that Jarai, an optional movement language, does create wh-domains, thus licensing wh-in-situ; however, movement in Jarai cannot be motivated by a need to place the wh-phrase next to the complementizer.

Background on Jarai Prosody: Phonological phrases (φ) in Jarai typically correspond to syntactic phrases, and like syntactic phrases, they can be recursive. Every φ that is not dominated by another φ (a φ_{max}, Selkirk 2009) is the domain for the distribution of a high pitch accent. Thus, a typical clause with a DP subject and VP predicate will have two φ_{max}’s, with a high pitch (H*) in each, as in Figure 1.

Evidence for Wh-Domain: Figure 2 shows a wh-question derived from a ditransitive declarative clause (S-V-DO-IO; see Figure 1). In this question, the final constituent, the indirect object, is questioned and remains in situ. Although there is a slight high pitch on the wh-word, the basic prosody of the clause is unchanged: the clause’s two highest pitches—both to the left of the wh-word—indicate that the prosodic constituency of two φ_{max}’s is still in place. However, when the wh-phrase fronts, as in Figure 3, the words that previously had the highest pitches show pitch compression, and the wh-phrase has the only high pitch accent in the clause. This redistribution of the high pitches suggests a change in the prosodic structure: instead of two φ_{max}’s, there is now only one, extending from the wh-phrase to the end of the clause. Thus the following generalizations hold, not just for questioning the indirect object, but for any questioned argument:

i. Boundary erasure: If a wh-phrase occurs in a non-final φ_{max}, any φ_{max} boundaries between the wh-phrase and the end of the clause are erased, creating a single φ_{max}.

ii. Pitch accent attraction: A wh-phrase attracts the pitch accent of its φ_{max} just in case that pitch accent would not otherwise occur to the left of the wh-phrase.

Analysis & Conclusion: As we have seen, the phonological impact of the wh-phrase does not extend leftwards; it only extends rightwards. If this rightward pitch compression is taken as evidence of a new prosodic constituency—a wh-domain—then Jarai wh-domains extend from the wh-phrase to the end of the clause. Under Richards’s account of wh-domains, this is evidence that Jarai is complementizer-final. However, this leaves wh-movement in Jarai unmotivated from a prosodic standpoint: by fronting, the wh-phrase moves away from rather than toward the complementizer.

Jarai is consistent with one of Richards’s central claims: because Jarai can create wh-domains, wh-in-situ should be (and is) possible. But Jarai constituent questions leave open the question of why wh-movement is also possible. Thus, Richards’s proposal, while providing a prosodic account of wh-in-situ, leaves open the question of what motivates wh-movement.
Figures

**FIGURE 1:** Declarative Clause

![Declarative Clause Diagram](image1)

**FIGURE 2:** Questioning the Indirect Object, in situ

![Questioning the Indirect Object, in situ Diagram](image2)

**FIGURE 3:** Questioning the Indirect Object, moved

![Questioning the Indirect Object, moved Diagram](image3)

References


The Intonation of Declarative and Interrogative Sentences in Akan

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ABSTRACT

Intonation is an indispensable part of the utterances of every spoken language in the world. It can provide cues to both linguistic and paralinguistic meanings in communication in our daily lives. This means that when we communicate with people, intonation helps us to identify the speaker's message, their emotional state or their communicative intent. Once the intonation of the utterance is changed, the meaning of the utterance is also changed. This paper looks at the intonation of declarative and interrogative sentences in Akan. It seeks, among other things, to identify differences and similarities between the intonation of declarative and interrogative sentences.

Results from majority of studies in intonation have shown that the $F_0$ curve of question intonation is higher than that of statement intonation (Haan, 2002; Ho, 1977; Shen 1990; Yuan et al., 2002). These studies are all on tone languages, and thus are relevant to Akan, which is a tone language. Intonation studies in Akan have not received any attention as far as instrumental work is concerned. As such, this paper aims to be the first step at the acoustic analyses of intonation in Akan. It also aimed at helping readers to be able to interpret the intention of the people they communicate with.

A corpus of 10 pairs of sentences was designed. The two sentences in each pair were identical except that one ends with a period, which indicates declarative intonation, and the other with a question mark, indicating interrogative intonation. The 20 sentences were written one by one on a card and presented to every speaker. These speakers are five males and five females from the two main dialect areas of Akan in Ghana.

The speakers were asked to read the sentences five times in a very quiet environment, paying attention to naturalness and the intonation of their utterances. Only the last three sentences of the recordings in each case were used. The recordings were then transferred onto the Computerized Speech Laboratory (CSL) Model 4500 and analysed. $F_0$ curves of the sentences were extracted. The syllabic boundaries as well as the tone category of each syllable were also labelled.

Discussion, conclusions and suggestions regarding both the structure and teaching of Akan are made based on the results of the study.

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1 Akan is a Kwa language of the Niger-Congo family, spoken in Ghana. It is spoken by almost 50% of the Ghanaian population both as a first and as a second language, and also spoken by some ethnic groups in Cote d’Ivoire. Akan has two main dialects; namely Twi and Fante. It has attained literary status and is the most widely researched and most studied language in Ghana. It has two tone levels; low and high.
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Nonnative Speakers and Conventional Expressions within the Apology Speech Act

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ABSTRACT

It is generally accepted that pragmatic considerations effect speech act realization among both native and non-native speaker communication (Coulmas, 1981; Granger, 1998). Cross-cultural comparisons have also been emphasized in the body of research focusing on the importance of sociopragmatic speech act conventions and second language learning and usage. Specifically, Bardovi-Harlig, Marda, & Edelmira (2008) researched cultural conventions and speech acts of differing illocutionary forces (apologies, refusal, and thanking) in order to investigate the conventional expressions by comparing L2 learner’s output (Bardovi-Harlig et al., 2008). This study replicates the Bardovi-Harlig et al. (2008) example on a smaller scale in order to test the conclusions, and also to examine the effects in another NNS population. Their methodology utilized to gather sample speech acts, a computer-delivered aural DCT, is administered to various proficiency levels of the NNSs. The transcribed responses are analyzed to determine appropriate assessment by the NNS of the sociopragmatic identification of the speech act as an apology, and the NS conventions expected. The purpose of this study is to further explore the potential correlation between higher L2 proficiency and the frequency of association with pragmatic conventions. With this data, conclusions regarding what the inclusion of apology conventions for a more effective speech act and possible avoidance of pragmatic misfires are discussed, along with the suggestion this information be made available when teaching speech acts to English language learners. In the classroom, the current trend is to ignore the pragmatic contexts, yet research is showing with increased frequency how remiss this policy is when preparing NNSs for interaction among inner-circle NSs.

References


Orthographic choices for Lamkang
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ABSTRACT
The Lamkang of northeast India (3,000 to 6,000 speakers) want to encourage younger speakers to read and write in their native language Lamkang instead of only in English and/or other local vernaculars. A few speakers write Lamkang using the Roman alphabet but spelling rules differ from writer to writer (Thounaojam and Chelliah 2007). Speakers need a standardized writing system and dictionary to encourage literacy. This poster illustrates some of the practical problems in devising a standardized writing system for Lamkang. Comparing three different written instances of the same text, I will illustrate four particular problems:

1. There are several consonant clusters in word initial position in normal speech which make the language look quite different from English, e.g. kb,kt,kp,tl,dl. Speakers tell us that early missionaries recommended breaking these clusters up by representing them with vowels, so that the words wouldn’t look quite so “odd” in writing. So, for example, kb would be written as kab. Older translations of the New Testament are written with no clusters at all. This convention is confusing since the clusters are pronounced.

2. Since there is no detailed grammatical description of Lamkang, speakers are not clear and have not been taught about word boundaries. It is not clear for the Lamkang where to make breaks in words. For example, the word avathungbingngi ‘and then’ is written in the following ways:

   av thung bing ngi
   ava thung bingi
   av thung bing -i
   ava thungbi ngi

   Also, since English does not have such long words or doubled consonant sequences such as ngng, the Lamkang have been taught to avoid long words and not represent doubled consonants. They, therefore, break words up at arbitrary points.

3. Lamkang has a retroflex [t] sound (produced with the tongue curled to the roof of the mouth). This should be written with a dot under the t but that diacritic is often omitted.

4. Words in Lamkang change meaning depending on the tone of the word or syllable in a word. Tone is not always indicated although sometimes a final h is added to show falling tone.

References
“A shroe! A shroe! My dingkome for a shroe!”:
Compensation strategies for comprehension in an unconventional speech of Monty Python
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ABSTRACT
In an episode of Monty Python’s Flying Circus, a guest appearing on a talk show speaks entirely in anagrammed and scrambled speech. To further complicate comprehension, the language itself was scrambled based on the orthographic constituents rather than phonetic, but presented orally. For example, the word that is pronounced as if the written word were taht, which is scrambling the order of the graphic letters, hence, losing the interdental phoneme present in the original word. Based on the assumption that the meaning of the scrambled speech still comes across, regardless of disruptions, this analysis aims to identify the clues that allow for comprehension, and consider the compensation strategies used by the listener on levels of context, prosody, syntax, and morphology. The results indicate that prosodic cues are working as the framework of each utterance, and are most heavily relied upon to obtain a meaningful understanding of the language. When the prosodic information is insufficient, the listener is able to compensate by processing additional clues on levels of morphology and syntax. The results of this analysis, along with studies of other types of strains, can be used to define the extreme terms of a benchmark against which we can describe the processes of language comprehension in normal, natural situations. Such a benchmark would allow the assessment of the degree of resiliency of language comprehension and processing strategies used to compensate multiple inferences. Additionally, an adjustment to this benchmark can also provide insights about the way non-native English speakers would compensate for the differences in prosodic systems between their L1 and English, and in what ways they may compensate when those differences interfere with comprehension.
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ABSTRACT
An interest in gender arose in the 1960’s; fields such as sociolinguistics, psychology, and anthropology were saturated with gender discussion throughout the 1970’s and 1980’s. The interest in understanding the ‘other’ spread outside of academia, appearing in such pop psychology books as Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus (Gray 1992), intended for readers in the larger culture. As a result, members of today’s mainstream Western society are accustomed to a more candid discussion of gender roles, norms, differences, similarities and performances than the society that existed before the rise of feminism and the aforementioned interest in gender construction. Over the years, this societal awareness has been attested in numerous comedy sketches; generally, it is men performing women.

This article uses discourse analysis to compare indexical features of four comedy sketches in which men are parodying the performance of the female gender, beginning in 1970 with Monty Python’s depiction of the ‘Pepperpots’ and ending with Harvard Sailing Team’s ‘Boys Will Be Girls’ sketch released in 2010. It is important to note that these skits all involve 2, 3 or 4 ‘women’ speaking to each other; there are no male interlocutors. The focus will be on paralinguistic features such as facial expressions, body language and prosodic features such as intonation and vocal pitch range. Indicators of politeness such as agreement, cooperative speech and turn taking (as opposed to disagreement and insult in stereotypical male speech) are examined, as well as the use of standard (or close-to-standard) English and the avoidance of cursing. The earliest sketches examined indicate all of the features which have been attributed to feminine discourse yet in the comedy sketches of the last twenty years, the performance is increasingly nuanced and lacking some of these supposedly feminine attributes – for example, no more dressing in drag and speaking in high pitched voices.

By examining examples of gender performance in its most exaggerated form – comedic parody - perspectives regarding gender can be examined in varying socio-historical contexts to reveal possible change over time. There is no way for these men to ‘be’ women outside of performing practices that the culture in which they live define as ‘womanly’ or feminine in the socio-historical time period in which they are performing.
References


The Proto-form of Bagobo (Tagabawa), Mandaya, Manobo, Sama and Davao Sebuano
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ABSTRACT
This paper rationally shows the relationship of languages and the degree of their affinities. Through intellectual guess, this paper attempted to explicate the changes the morphemes of the five studied languages underwent—from their proposed proto-forms to their respective present forms. All these are shown or presented in phonetic notations that proposed rationalized environments or condition to account for the changes that took place.

This study presents the proto-form of the five studied languages having four common vowels namely [α], [I], [o], and [u]. This study used 100 commonly used words from the Swadesh list comprising of the 200-word list which was formulated by the Swiss linguist Morris Swadesh. These words, which were subjected to translation in the five studied languages, include the five senses, weathers in the Philippines and other common words.

The study limited in the comparative reconstruction, pursuing the technique on subgrouping of the languages being studied.

Arriving with the proto-forms through comparative reconstruction was done through the employment of two known strategies namely: Phonetic Plausibility Strategy (PPS) and Majority Rules Strategy (MRS). The reconstruction of the morphemes was the heart of the study as it tries to propose the proto-form behind plausible and possible paths of their evolution that considers dimensions of sound changes and geographical location, and careful respondent selection.

Further, lexico statistics was employed to quantify the relationships among and between the studied languages. The results showed Bagobo having the most number of shared lexemes (based on core vocabularies shared) with the four other languages, and is further closest to Manobo. In addition, there were other clusters of languages proposed that showed certain degree of affinity (based on their shared core vocabularies) such as Davao Sebuano and Mandaya, and distant relationships as well, since peripheral vocabulary was seen strong among the studied languages—such in the case of the language Sama. Though the percentage of their affinity may seem too small, it is never rational to conclude that there is no relationship among these languages.

Finally, the correspondences exhibited by the sample lexemes among the languages could not be just ignored.

(Please refer to the figure on the next page)
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Term paper:

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