

Theme-Goal inversion in Yakkha

This presentation gives an account on two effects of the referential hierarchy on the indexing of arguments in Yakkha ditransitive constructions.

It is crosslinguistically common for agreement to be triggered by arguments that are animate or speech act participants (Siwierska, 2003), or topical (pointed out by Givón (1976) as a diachronic tendency). In parallel to hierarchical agreement of monotransitive verbs, in ditransitives the object agreement could also be determined by the referential properties of T and G (Siwierska, 2003). Such a case of hierarchical alignment is e.g. described by Miller (2001) for Jamul Tiipay (discussed in Siwierska (2003)).

As the theme of three-argument verbs is typically less topicworthy, salient or lower on a referential hierarchy than the G argument (Haspelmath, 2005), one could expect an increase in morphological complexity when the T is higher on the referential hierarchy or when the G is lower than expected, parallel to inverse marking for A and P, as found e.g. in Algonquian languages (cf. Zúñiga (2007)). According to Haspelmath (2007), such verbal marking has not been found yet.

Both the hierarchical agreement and the inverse marking can be found in Yakkha ditransitives.

Generally, transitive verbs in Yakkha show agreement with both actor and undergoer arguments. In ditransitive constructions there are three verb classes, determined by their case and agreement behaviour. The verbs of the first class agree with T, the verbs of the second and third class agree with G, as long as the T argument is no speech act participant (SAP). If T is an SAP, it becomes an agreement-trigger. Furthermore, the dedicated marker *-na* indicates the inverse ranking of G and T with respect to the referential hierarchy. Examples of this combination of hierarchical alignment with inverse marking are illustrated by the verb *sopmepma* ‘show’ (double object class, both T and G are in the nominative).

- (1) a. *ka nda a-kamniwak sop-me?-nen=na*
 1s.NOM 2s.NOM 1s.POSS-friend.NOM look-CAUS-1>2[PST]=DECL.S
 ‘I showed you my friend.’ (T = 3, G triggers agreement)
- b. *Ka nda a-ppa a-ma*
 1s.NOM 2s.NOM 1s.POSS-father 1s.POSS-mother.NOM
sop-me?-na-me?-nen=na
 look-CAUS-TH.SAP-NPST-1>2=DECL.S
 ‘I will show you to my parents.’ (T = SAP, T triggers agreement)
- c. *nda ka m-ba m-ma*
 2s.NOM 1s.NOM 2s.POSS-father 2s.POSS-mother.NOM
sop-me?-na-me-ŋ-ga=na?
 look-CAUS-TH.SAP-NPST-1S-2S=DECL.S
 ‘Will you show me to your parents?’ (T = SAP, T triggers agreement)

Hierarchical alignment in the strict sense always results in agreement with the higher argument. This is however not the case, as the direct object verb class (with the G in the locative) always

shows object agreement with T. Still, the marker *-na* has to indicate when the theme is a speech act participant.

- (2) a. *ka khuncakhuwa pulis-ci-be tis-wa-ŋ=na*
 1S.NOM thief.NOM police-NS-LOC bring[3P]-NPST-1S=DECL.S
 ‘I bring the thief to the police.’ (T = 3)
- b. *ka nda a-konma-ga-be ti?-na-nen=na/ *ti?nenna*
 1S.NOM 2S.NOM 1S.POSS-MyZ-GEN-LOC bring-TH.SAP-1>2=DECL.S
 ‘I brought you to my auntie.’ (T = SAP)

The paper provides a detailed description of this inverse scenario and the effects on agreement, case marking and word order for all three verb classes. Semantically, these classes refer to (a) transfer, (b) transfer or benefactive and (c) (creative or destructive) impact. The occurrence of an animate or SAP theme is not equally distributed among these different verb classes. Furthermore, the marking and word order properties may also interact with animacy, number and humanness of the co-arguments. Related to the questions of co-arguments, the paper also discusses whether the marker *-na* is an instance of differential object marking, or whether it indicates the relation between G and T, i.e. inverse marking, and what happens when both T and G are equally high on a referential hierarchy. Finally, a probable diachronic source of this pattern is discussed.

References

- Givón, Talmy (1976), Topic, pronoun, and grammatical agreement, in C. N.Li, ed., ‘Subject and Topic’, Academic Press, New York, pp. 149--188.
- Haspelmath, Martin (2005), ‘Argument marking in ditransitive alignment types’, *Linguistic Discovery* 3, 1 -- 21.
- Haspelmath, Martin (2007), ‘Ditransitive alignment splits and inverse alignment’, *Functions of language* 14(1), 79--102.
- Miller, Amy (2001), *A grammar of Jamul Tiipay*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin.
- Siwierska, A. (2003), ‘Person agreement and the determination of alignment’, *Transactions of the Philological Society* 101:2, 339--370.
- Zúñiga, Fernando (2007), From the typology of inversion to the typology of alignment, in M.Miestamo and B.Wälchli, eds, ‘New Challenges in Typology’, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, pp. 199--220.