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Introduction

Voice is a grammatical category commonly observed in many of the world's languages that modulates a choice of the major grammatical relations, most notably the subject. A great deal of attention has been paid to the passive voice, i.e., a grammatical voice that modulates a choice of the subject and makes a non-actor (instead of an actor) argument serve as the subject (see Siewierska 1984, Shibatani 1988, and Abraham and Leisiö 2006 for the typological diversity of passive constructions). However, relatively little attention has been devoted to the applicative voice, with the notable exception of Peterson (2007), a grammatical voice that realizes a thematically peripheral element as an object in syntactically accusative languages (i.e., objectivization) or as a subject in syntactically ergative languages (i.e., subjectivization).

The present collection of papers, all of which were presented in the meetings of the inter-university research project "A Typological Study of Voice in the World's Languages" (sponsored by the National Museum of Ethnology between October of 2006 and March of 2008), is divided into the following three interrelated parts.

The first part investigates the typological variation of the applicative voice in Austronesian (Standard Indonesian: Shiohara; Seediq: Tsukida), Ute-Aztecan (Classical Nahuatl, Tepehua, and Southeastern Tepehuan: Yasugi), Mixe-Zoquean (Sierra Popoluca: Yasugi), Mayan (Tzotzil, Ixil, and K'ichean: Yasugi), and Papua New Guinea (Tok Pisin: Nose) languages.

What the first part adds to research on the applicative voice is not only these descriptive contributions, but two theoretical contributions by Yasugi and Nakamura. Specifically, Yasugi argues that the applicative voice has more inherent affinity with head-marking languages than dependent-marking ones. Nakamura proposes to recast the traditional distinction between symmetrical and asymmetrical object languages (Bresnan and Moshi 1990; cf. Baker 1988) in terms of the distinction between unrestricted and restricted neutralization (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997) and to locate the three types of multiple object languages on the path of syntacticization.

The second part focuses attention on the variation of passive, antipassive, and middle voice in Austronesian (Kikusawa), Chukchi (Kurebito), and Tibeto-Burman (Kinnauri: Takahashi) languages and explores what is functionally equivalent to the passive voice in Upper Sorbian, a West-Slavonic language spoken in the eastern part of Germany (Sakahara). Finally, the third and last part investigates the coding properties of object in Cusco Quechua (Ebina) and Georgian (Kojima).

Taken together, these three parts make up for the relative paucity of research on the typological variation of the applicative voice as compared with the passive, antipassive, and middle voice.

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