

Introduction —Transitivity and its related phenomena—

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The papers collected in this volume were presented at an International Workshop on Transitivity and Its Related Phenomena as part of the joint research project ‘Comparative Study on the Languages of the North from Typological Perspective’, held at ILCAA, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies on 2-3 December, 2011. During the workshop, we discussed transitivity and verbal valency changes in the native languages of Alaska, Siberia, Hokkaido (Japan), and Central Asia.

The theme of the workshop was the nature of the relationship between transitive and intransitive verbs and the morphological and syntactic means of increasing or decreasing the valency of verbs (Dixon et al 2000, Kittilä 2011: 346-267). The papers in this volume present the result of research from the field on a number of issues about transitivity and changes in verbal valency from different theoretical perspectives.

Berge very intensively discusses valency-decreasing processes in Aleut. She claims that there are three types of object reduction or removal: a valency-decreasing suffix, simple omission, and reflexivization. As we know, one of the ways of decreasing the valency of the verb is with an antipassive construction. In the distantly related Eskimo languages, there are both passive and antipassive constructions for decreasing verbal valency. The Eskimo antipassive constructions have intransitive marking on the verb, and instrumental case marking (in Inuit) or ablative case marking (in Yupik) on the demoted object. But Aleut does not have antipassives. So she suggests that although the origin of differences in the use of the antipassive between Eskimo and Aleut may be related to prehistorical changes in ergative case marking in Aleut, the lack of antipassives in Aleut may have a different explanation altogether. The change in ergativity is just one of several factors that has affected valency in Aleut, and certainly does not by itself account for the lack of antipassive constructions in Aleut.

Sasaki examines the range of anticausativization processes in the Hokkaido dialect of Japanese. The Hokkaido dialect of Japanese employs a spontaneous suffix /rasar/ for morphological anticausativization, which is not found in Standard Japanese. Sasaki claims that the spontaneous suffix /-rasar/ has three usages: unintentionality, potential (middle), and anticausative. Based on his fieldwork on the Hokkaido dialect, the range of the lexical transitivity alternation is the same as that in Standard Japanese, but the

semantic domain of anticausativization with /-rasar/ is wider than that of lexical anticausativization. He points out that the differences between lexical transitivity alternations and morphological anticausativization with /rasar/ can be summarized as follows: the semantic conditions for anticausativization are determined at the phrasal level for the anticausativization with /rasar/; but they are determined on the basis of lexical specification of the meaning for lexical transitivity alternations.

Kuribayashi examines the relationship between transitive and intransitive verbs in Turkish by comparing Old Turkic (Orkhun script) and other Turkic languages spoken in Central Asia. In particular, he focuses on the direction of verbal derivation of transitive and intransitive verbs. He also carries out a statistical analysis of the relationship between transitive and intransitive verbs in Turkish with the help of the Turkish-Japanese dictionary.

Ebata's paper focuses on a particular type of Sakha nominalization known as "syntactic derivation". Traditionally, derivational action nominals and inflectional action nominals are distinguished. Ebata distinguishes three types of Sakha nominalization: lexical derivation, syntactic derivation, and verbal noun, and he further subcategorizes syntactic derivation into action, actor and potential nominalizations.

Shiraishi's paper is partially related to transitivity. He discusses a case of allomorphy in a subset of transitive verbs in Nivkh that contain a pronominal prefix *i-*. Previous descriptions have failed to identify the precise conditions of the allomorphy. While some authors claim that the allomorphy of the pronoun is phonologically conditioned, Shiraishi argues that it is the allomorphy of transitive verbs which is phonologically conditioned, not that of the pronoun. He also discusses the related issue of whether the pronominal prefix *i-* on a stranded verb should be regarded as an agreement marker. This analysis eliminates arbitrary stipulations that were inevitable in previous descriptions in order to account for the distribution of allomorphs. Several supporting arguments for the current analysis will be provided, especially with respect to the pronominal nature of *i-*, which is suppressed in several contexts.

In conclusion, the papers collected in this volume elucidate various aspects of transitivity and valency-changing mechanisms from a typological approach to the study of linguistic. During a three-year period, our joint research project conducted comparative research on various grammatical phenomena of the languages distributed over the area from Siberia to North America. This collection of research papers forms one of the results of our joint research project. I would like to thank those who agreed to have their papers included here, as well as those who have had their papers from our Workshop published elsewhere.

References

- Dixon, R. M .W and Alexandra Aikhenvald (eds.), 2000 *Changing valency: case studies in transitivity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press
- Kittilä, Seppo. 2011. "Transitivity typology". In Jae Jung Song (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Typology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 346-367