

Differential argument marking and clause types

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Differential argument marking (DAM) refers to the phenomenon that languages use different morphological means (case/adposition marking or agreement) to code the same argument role (S, A, P, etc.) depending on the properties of the argument and/or its grammatical context. A very common, but not well understood type of differential argument marking is the one in which a particular kind of marking is found in one type of clause, whereas in some other type of clause the relevant argument is marked differently. This can be illustrated with the data from the Tupian language Guajá (Magalhaes 2007, p. 16, 267):

- (1) a. *jahá* *a-xá*
 I 1-see
 'I saw him.'
- b. *a-jú* *ha-xak-á*
 1-come 3-see-GER
 'I came to see him.'

The first sentence marks the A argument of the verb 'to see', the second one marks the P argument. The contrast between these two examples is part of a more general pattern where main clause argument indexing and thus alignment of indexing is characterized by co-argument sensitivity (in combination with a split-intransitive system), whereas dependent clauses are characterized by an ergative indexing system, marking the absolutive participant on the verb.

Though there are some accounts of clause-based differential argument marking in individual languages or groups of languages (most notably Dixon 1994: 101–104, but also Gildea 1998 on Cariban languages), clause-type-based DAM and resulting alignment splits are not sufficiently well understood. There may be several reasons for this. First, there may be a problem of *data availability*: clause-type-based DAM is infrequently reported even in extensive language descriptions, possibly due to the often main-clause-focused nature of grammatical descriptions.

Second, there may be a *variability* problem: the variation in patterns may be too great to readily reveal meaningful or generalizable patterns, or less so than with other types of DAM (as suggested e.g. by Harris & Campbell (1986: 243) who claim that, in contrast to other types of alignment splits, there is no universal distribution for splits based on main versus subordinate clauses. This in turn may have to do with the fact that clause-type-based alignment splits are the result of the often assumed differential pace of change in main and subordinate clauses leading to discrepancies between main and subordinate clauses (e.g. Ross 1973, Bybee 2002), and that different patterns simply reflect different moments in genealogical histories.

A third challenge that may have inhibited finding clear patterns is to do with *granularity*, in that commonly-used categories, such as "main" and "subordinate", are too broad. Depending on the language, "main clauses" are a cover term for a collection of potentially very different clause types, e.g. based on illocution, information structure, predicate type, etc. Likewise and even more so, "subordinate" or "dependent" clauses potentially comprise many different structures: in addition to differences between complement clauses, relative clauses, and adverbial clauses and semantic distinctions within these groups, this may include nominalizations versus finite clauses, compact constructions (control structures, multi-verb constructions) vs. elaborate constructions, referentially restricted versus referentially unrestricted clauses, etc. These different constructions may have arisen via different diachronic scenarios, and therefore behave in different ways e.g. with respect to argument marking.

Our aim in this workshop is, therefore, to try and come to cross-linguistic generalizations on clause-type based splits by taking a more fine-grained perspective. We therefore invite potential

contributors to send in an abstract that highlights differences in alignment systems in (subtypes of) main clauses and (subtypes of) subordinate clauses. We invite case studies on individual languages, but emphatically also comparative studies either within or across language families, as well as studies with an areal focus.

We are interested in contributions presenting i) cross-linguistic studies of synchronic patterns of differential marking based on clause types and ii) diachronic studies investigating the emergence of clause-type based differential argument marking, iii) studies of individual languages with clause-type-based splits that increase the empirical basis for generalizations.

We would like the contributions to explore one or more of the following questions:

- How different diachronic sources result in clause-type triggered DAM synchronically?
- Do certain types of clauses gravitate towards specific alignment patterns? Is there a functional explanation for such a drift?
- Are what seem to be clause type-based cases of differential marking better captured in terms of the morphological form of the verb (e.g. nominalized verbs, participles, converbs, etc.)?
- How stable is clause type-based DAM, both within language families and within linguistic areas? Does clause-type-based DAM diffuse easily from one language to the other?

Abstracts of no more than 300 words (excluding references) should be sent, before **November 17 2019** to e.van.gijn@hum.leidenuniv.nl.

If accepted, the workshop will be held during **the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Societas Linguistica Europaea in Bucharest, Romania, 26-29 August 2020**. The submission process of the SLE takes place over several rounds:

20 November 2019: submission of workshop proposals (description + short abstracts)

15 December 2019: notification of acceptance/rejection workshop

15 January 2020: individual submission of extended abstracts

References:

- Bybee, Joan L. 2002. Main clauses are innovative, subordinate clauses are conservative. In: J. Bybee & M. Noonan (eds.), *Complex sentences in grammar and discourse: essays in honor of Sandra A. Thompson*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 1-17.
- Dixon, Robert M. W. 1994. *Ergativity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gildea, Spike. 1998. *On Reconstructing Grammar: Comparative Cariban Morphosyntax*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harris, Alice C. & Lyle Campbell. 1986. *Historical syntax in cross-linguistic perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Magalhaes, Marina Maria Silva. 2007. Sobre a morfologia e a sintaxe da língua Guajá (Família Tupí-Guaraní). Doctoral dissertation, Universidade de Brasília.
- Ross, John R. 1973. The penthouse principle and the order of constituents. In C.T. Corum, T.C. Smith-Stark and A. Weiser (eds.), *You Take the High Node and I'll Take the Low Node: Papers from the Comparative Syntax Festival*. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society, pp. 397-422.