

Workshop proposal ALT 2026 (Lyon, 1-3 July 2026)

Crosslinguistically rare phenomena in verbal morphology

Convenors: Anton Antonov & Guillaume Jacques

In recent years, crosslinguistically rare phenomena in general, often referred to as *rara* or rarities, have become the object of scholarly interest both from a typological/descriptivist (Antonov 2015, Grossman 2016, Grossman et al. 2018, Round 2019, Kuznetsova et al. forth.) and formal/generative perspective (Baker, forth.). Indeed, despite the fact that it is not straightforward to define what a *rarum* is (cf. Plank 2000, Cysouw & Wohlgemuth 2010, Wohlgemuth & Cysouw 2011), especially if we take into account the fact that ‘rarity’, as it were, ‘is in the eye of the beholder’ (cf. Cysouw 2011 on the ‘rarity’ of Northwestern European languages), typologically rare features or patterns both fire the linguists’ imagination and challenge some of their most overarching assumptions—in the form of universals or universal grammar—about what is possible in a human language.

While previous studies on the subject have mostly dealt with specific *rara* in individual languages across different linguistic domains, the present workshop will focus on *rara* in verbal morphology alone. Our goal is to bring together researchers working on this or on related topics, but who may not have been previously aware of each other's research. We wish to better understand the limits of what can be encoded in verbal morphology in the documented world's languages and hope that this workshop will contribute to enhancing our current knowledge of what can be in a verb, an inductive inquiry which may help us to later infer new types of implicational universals.

We welcome abstracts dealing with, among other possible topics, the following types of verbal rarities:

- 1) Unusual patterns of argument or non-argument indexation (Antonov 2015)
- 2) Unusual TAM encoding (for instance, periodic tense, Jacques 2023)
- 3) Encoding of action manner, including various semantic parameters such as speed (celerative, Jacques 2024), stealth (furtive), duration etc.
- 4) Encoding of associated action (other than associated motion). For instance, the ‘consecutive’ suffixes in Awtuw describing an action occurring after that of the main verb (Feldman 1986:79-80): *-lakna* ‘V and put down’, *-prik* ‘V and throw away’, *-newta* ‘V and hide’ and *-ukla* ‘V and get up’ (1)

(1) Awtuw (Feldman 1986: 80: 89d)

tey yilmæt d-il-lakn/prik/newt/ukl-e

3FSG string REALIS-twist-put.down/throw.away/hide/get.up-PST

She twisted string and put it down/threw it away/hid it/got up.

If you are interested in participating, we kindly ask you to send us a title and, ideally, a short abstract (up to 300 words) by April 25:

Anton Antonov (INALCO-CRLAO-CNRS-EHESS) : anton.antonov@inalco.fr

Guillaume Jacques (CRLAO-CNRS-INALCO-EHESS): rgyalrongskad@gmail.com

References

- Antonov, Anton. 2015. "Verbal allocutivity in a crosslinguistic perspective". *Linguistic Typology*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 55-85. <https://doi.org/10.1515/lingty-2015-0002>
- Baker, Mark. Forthcoming. Complementizers Relating to Noun Phrases: Rare Constructions within a Theory of Universal Grammar. <https://sites.rutgers.edu/mark-baker/wp-content/uploads/sites/199/2024/10/ch1-introduction-forelimbs-review.pdf>
- Cysouw, Michael. 2011. "Quantitative explorations of the worldwide distribution of rare characteristics, or: the exceptionality of northwestern European languages". *Expecting the Unexpected: Exceptions in Grammar*, edited by Horst J. Simon and Heike Wiese, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton, pp. 411-432. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110219098.411>
- Cysouw, Michael and Wohlgemuth, Jan. 2010. "The other end of universals: theory and typology of rara". In *Rethinking Universals: How Rarities affect Linguistic Theory*, edited by Jan Wohlgemuth and Michael Cysouw, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton. pp. 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110220933.1>
- Feldman, Harry. 1986. *A grammar of Awtuw*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.
- Grossman, Eitan, Antonov, Anton and Jacques, Guillaume. 2018. "A cross-linguistic rarity in synchrony and diachrony : Adverbial subordinator prefixes exist" *STUF - Language Typology and Universals*, vol. 71, no. 4, 2018, pp. 513-538. <https://doi.org/10.1515/stuf-2018-0020>
- Grossman, Eitan. 2016. "From rarum to rarissimum: An unexpected zero person marker " *Linguistic Typology*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2016, pp. 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1515/lingty-2016-0001>
- Jacques, Guillaume. 2023. Periodic tense markers in the world's languages and their sources. *Folia Linguistica* 57(3). 539-562. doi :10.1515/flin-2023-2013.
- Jacques, Guillaume. 2024. Celerative : the encoding of speed in verbal morphology. *STUF* 77(2). 261-282. doi :10.1515/stuf-2024-2006.
- Jacques, G. and Antonov, A. 2014. "Direct/Inverse Systems." *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 8: 301-318. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12079>
- Kuznetsova, Natalia, Anderson, Cormac & Easterday, Shelece (eds.). Forthcoming. *Rarities in phonetics and phonology: Structural, typological, evolutionary, and social dimensions. (Topics in Phonological Diversity)*. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- Plank, Frans. 2000. *Das grammatische Raritätenkabinet*. <https://typo.uni-konstanz.de/rara/rara-intro/>
- Round, Erich. 2019. "17 Rara and Theory Testing in Typology: The Natural Evolution of Non-canonical Agreement". In *Morphological Perspectives: Papers in Honour of Greville G. Corbett*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press pp. 414-446. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781474446020-019>
- Wohlgemuth, Jan and Cysouw, Michael. 2011. *Rara & Rarissima: Documenting the Fringes of Linguistic Diversity*, Berlin, New York: De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110228557>