

Introduction

This issue grew out of a thematic session held at the *46th Poznan Linguistic Meeting* conference in September 2016. It brought together scholars interested in various aspects of valency-changing operations, including their origin and development, their place in the grammar of individual languages, and their potential in research on language family history and linguistic typology. The presentations and discussions at this session showed that the topic is of significant interest to both linguistic typologists and specialists of individual languages and language families. The workshop included studies on Algonquian, Baltic, Bantu, Nakh-Dagestanian, Slavic, and Uralic languages. This issue contains extended versions of six papers presented during the session and two independent contributions on the topic. It aims to broaden our insight into universal and language-specific aspects of valency-change and voice in various ways; these include typologically informed descriptions of data from lesser documented languages, using new methods for language comparison, and testing hypotheses and drawing general conclusions from the growing body of empirical findings.

The papers have been arranged into two sections. The first four articles study causative and anticausative markers from a comparative point of view, while the four papers in the second section explore voice and valency-changing mechanisms in individual languages or groups of genetically related languages.

Three papers in the first section are concerned with the typological parameter of causative vs. anticausative marking, or transitivizing vs. detransitivizing preferences in languages. This line of research was initiated by Vladimir Nedjalkov and has been further developed especially through the work of Johanna Nichols and Martin Haspelmath, whose contributions to this issue show the fruits of many years of research. An overview of the issue and its research history is contained in the paper by Nau & Pakerys. In their paper *Transitivizing/detransitivizing typology and language family history*, RIHO GRÜNTAL & JOHANNA NICHOLS demonstrate the usefulness of this typological parameter in modelling genetic and areal relatedness with NeighborNet trees. MARTIN HASPELMATH in *Universals of causative and anticausative verb formation and the spontaneity scale* explains recurrent patterns of causative and anticausative marking as universals that follow from the general principle of form-frequency correspondence. NICOLE NAU & JURGIS PAKERYS (*Transitivity pairs in Baltic: between Finnic and Slavic*) show that the Baltic languages Latvian and Lithuanian are more similar to Finnic with respect to causative marking, but closer

to Slavic with respect to anticausative marking. A more detailed study of the typology of causative marking alone is provided by NATALIA LEVSHINA, who discusses the correlation of the semantic distinction between direct and indirect causation with various formal parameters and tests which of these correlations are statistically significant in a sample of languages from 46 families (*What causes causatives? A typological study of competing explanations*).

The four studies in the second section concern various types of voice and valency-changing operations, exploring data from languages spread across four continents. SEBASTIAN DOM, LEONID KULIKOV & KOEN BOSTOEN (*The middle as a voice category in Bantu: setting the stage for further research*) show that Bantu languages may have up to five “quasi-middle” markers which cover different parts of the semantic domain of the middle, as well as notions lying outside of this category. Their paper thus provokes questions for the assessment of the notion of middle in general. KATARZYNA JANIC (*Synchronic and diachronic aspects of valency reducing devices in Oceanic languages*) explores the functions and developments of reflexes of two specific Proto-Oceanic affixes: the prefix **paRi-* and the suffix **-akin[i]* within the valency domain. The author argues that one of the functions performed by these morphemes has not been fully reported by Oceanists and is best described as antipassive. The language investigated by GERSON KLUMPP (*Functions of valency operators in Kamas*) is an extinct Samoyedic (Uralic) language of Siberia. Based on texts and glossaries from the 19th and the early 20th century, the author gives a detailed description of the functions of valency-increasing and valency-decreasing morphemes in Kamas. Fernando Zúñiga (*A survey of semitransitive constructions in Algonquian*) gives an in-depth account of three understudied constructions in Algonquian languages: passive, antipassive, and the transitivity discord construction, where a verb is morphologically marked as monovalent but may nevertheless have two syntactic arguments.

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