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Review of: Changing Valency: Case Studies in Transitivity

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& Strauss), but often end up creating their own analytical frameworks to better meet their needs (Couper-Kuhlen & Thompson). In any case, the success of the cooperation between cognitive linguists and discourse/interactive linguists has important implications for the future of our field.

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R. M. W. Dixon & Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald (eds.), *Changing valency: case studies in transitivity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp. xvi+413.

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In languages that contain them, verb-internal subject/object agreement affixes are normally a purely grammatical affair. But the morphological patterns that create distinctive transitive and intransitive verb stems are derivational. The dependence of a verb's grammatical properties on derivational processes of stem creation is particularly interesting when valency-changing mechanisms are considered cross-linguistically. This is precisely the aim of this volume, which compares techniques used to build passives, deagentives, causatives, applicatives and other valency-related stem types in a range of languages deliberately chosen for their genetic and typological diversity.

Divided into twelve substantial chapters, the book actually consists of two complementary portions. The first is the editors' introduction, which serves as chapter 1, together with the following chapter on causatives, by R. M. W. Dixon. These chapters offer a major typological synthesis of valency-changing processes, and draw on comparative data from dozens of languages. The remaining contributions are in-depth case studies of valency-changing operations in specific languages (or, in the case of Keren Rice's chapter on

Athapaskan, on an entire family of fairly closely related languages). All are written by specialists in the particular genetic or geographic linguistic discipline and incorporate the results of original fieldwork. Uniting these two aspects of the book are copious comments by the editors (in the first two chapters) that touch on the broader typological significance of the material presented in each case study. The individual studies themselves are written from the same broad, cross-linguistic perspective rather than in theoretical isolation from one another or detached from previous general treatments of transitivity, such as Comrie & Polinsky (1993), Kemmer (1993) and Fox & Hopper (1994). As should be expected in a work of this kind, the book closes with useful general indexes of authors (404–406), languages and language families (407–410) and subjects (411–413).

Chapter 1, entitled simply 'Introduction' (1–29), by R. M. W. Dixon & Alexandra Aikhenvald exceeds a simple prefacing of the book's contents. In summarizing the contents of each case study, Dixon & Aikhenvald take issue with certain positions adopted by the individual contributors. This provides a more accurate snapshot of the existing dynamicity of approaches to the material than would be gained from a neutral recapitulation of the book's contents. More importantly, in surveying the formal and semantic range of valency-increasing and valency-decreasing derivational types across languages, the authors stress the need for a holistic approach to transitivity. They urge future researchers to look beyond morphology to consider the syntactic, semantic and discourse/pragmatic ramifications of each language's transitivity-related constructions with an eye toward uncovering typological trends not appreciated in more atomistic studies. Suggested avenues of inquiry begin with the need to investigate why transitivity-increasing constructions (applicative, comitative) appear to be more prevalent across languages than transitivity-decreasing ones (passive, reflexive, antipassive, reciprocal). Other tasks include documenting the various types of diachronic stimuli capable of giving rise to each type of construction, and exploring possible dependencies between valency-changing derivations and the expression of other, seemingly unrelated grammatical categories such as aspect. Above all, the editors stress the need for in-depth typological surveys of each major valency-changing type.

This challenge is taken up by Dixon himself in the next chapter, 'A typology of causatives: form, syntax, and meaning' (30–83). A broad typological study reveals five formal mechanisms for marking causatives: morphological, lexical, periphrastic, using two verbs in the predicate, and exchange of auxiliaries. Particular attention is paid to languages with two formally different types of causatives, which always differ semantically. Dixon finds nine parameters upon which these differences manifest themselves. This chapter, although preliminary and subject to revision as data from more languages are considered, could serve as a model for similar investigations of other valency-changing types such as applicatives –

something the editors themselves strongly urge. By way of balance, it would have been ideal if a similarly general chapter on valency-decreasing mechanisms could have been added to the book. An alternate possible inclusion might have been a chapter on valency-decrease in Russian using the particle *sja*, which yields a rich array of meanings which strongly parallel those produced by other mechanisms in completely unrelated languages, such as the D-element of Athapaskan. The only exhaustive study published on this topic (Janko-Trinitskaja 1962) was purely descriptive in nature and did not appraise the robust valency-decreasing morphology of the Russian verb from a cross-linguistic typological perspective.

The remaining ten chapters contain the individual case studies from which the editors draw many of their observations. Except for Amharic, all of the languages examined are spoken by relatively small minorities or local indigenous populations. Some, like Tariana (Arawakan, Amazonia), are seriously endangered. These languages also represent genetically unrelated, geographically disperse, and typologically quite diverse families, which lends an additional dose of validity to theoretical generalizations based on comparisons of them. Including a study of Russian valency-decrease, or of a similarly intricate formal distinction in another Indo-European language, could have further enhanced the scope of the volume. Russian, in fact, may prove to be 'exotic' in that its morphological preference seems to favor valency decrease over valency increase.

Chapter 3, 'Valency-changing derivation in Central Alaskan Yup'ik' (84–114), by Marianne Mithun, describes several formally diverse means of valency-increase and decrease. These are particularly interesting in that both the verbal and nominal morphology are sometimes affected, and some of the derivational processes have inflectional ramifications. Mithun describes Yup'ik valency-changing mechanisms as 'numerous, pervasive and often highly productive' (113), though many of the forms created have been lexicalized to varying degrees. She also goes on to include a discussion of their discourse functions, showing that these derivations are not simply automatic mechanical processes based on lexical morpheme selection or syntactic choice. Instead, a full understanding of them requires a more holistic approach that considers all levels of language structure.

Masayuki Onishi's 'Transitivity and valency-changing derivations in Motuna' (chapter 4, 115–144) describes a similarly rich, yet quite different, assortment of structures in one of the non-Austronesian languages spoken on the island of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea. Valency-increasing derivational processes in Motuna appear to be richer than valency-decreasing ones because the language has a high percentage of basic intransitive stems (nearly 50%, with the remaining half being ambitransitive).

Chapter 5, 'Transitivity in Tariana' (145–172), by Alexandra Aikhenvald, describes four valency-increasing and two valency-decreasing mechanisms in a North-Arawak language spoken in northwestern Brazil. Once again, the

preference for formal valency-increase appears to manifest itself. Tariana, however, is typologically noteworthy in having four different causative derivations, and for using the same causative morpheme on transitive and intransitive stems, as well as to specify that ambitransitive stems are transitive and require a peripheral constituent to be stated, something Aikhenvald describes as 'extremely rare cross-linguistically' (170).

As stated above, 'Voice and valency in the Athapaskan family' (chapter 6, 173–235), by Keren Rice, is the only chapter to consider valency-changing operations across a whole family of languages. Rice contrasts the Athapaskan classifiers – or at least their L- and D-components, since the meaning of the third, vocalic component remains unclear – with morphological valency properties in other, unrelated language families, as well as among a group of languages related at a relatively shallow time depth. While not suggesting any diachronic origin for the valency-increasing L-component, Rice supports Thompson's (1996) assessment that the D-component is pronominal in origin, deriving from a 3rd person clitic incorporated into the verb to block or lower transitivity. Although the use of both classifier components can be idiosyncratic and highly lexicalized (cf. the presence of the D-component in the transitive verb meaning 'drink liquid'), Rice succeeds in typologizing the basic meanings added by the classifier elements in their various combinations across nearly a dozen individual Athapaskan languages. One extremely interesting suggestion she offers is the possibility that the perfective prefix /ŋ/ is blocked in stems derived using the D-element (230). Previous studies suggested various phonological rather than semantic explanations for the failure of the perfective prefix to appear in such stems. Formal constraints stemming from a semantic correlation between atelicity and low transitivity (either derived or inherent) can be found in other languages as well. In Russian, for example, lexically non-derived intransitives use finite forms to express past or future, while verbs of high transitivity use participial periphrasis: *Gorod pal* 'The city fell' (*pal* = past perfective of a non-derived intransitive), but *Gorod byl vzjat* 'The city was taken' (*byl* linking verb + *vzjat* past passive participle) instead of **Gorod vzjalsja*. Since *vzjal* 'take' is a highly transitive verb, it resists passivization by *-sja*. Here it is perfectivity that appears to block the addition of a valency-decreasing derivational morpheme – the mirror opposite of the Athapaskan situation. The use of imperfective verbs passivized with *-sja* is unrestricted in Russian, even for highly transitive verbs. Past and future perfective forms of verbs containing valency-decreasing *-sja* are possible only if their meaning has been lexicalized in some way that functionally distinguishes them from the regular grammatical passivization of a transitive stem. One example would be *Gorod okazalsja bol'shim* 'The city turned out to be large' (*okazalsja* = a lexically agentless verb).

Lyle Campbell's 'Valency-changing derivations in K'iche'' (chapter 7, 236–281) discusses a Mayan language spoken in highland Guatemala, but

also includes comparative material from other Mayan languages. Special emphasis is placed on the interaction of K'iche' verb classes with valency-altering derivations, which include two distinct passives and an instrumental applicative. The latter derivation, sometimes called 'instrumental voice' in earlier studies, is interesting in that it operates only on transitive stems. This correlates with the editors' comment (15) that if an applicative-deriving affix is restricted to transitive stems, its semantic effect is normally instrumental. In chapter 8, 'Valency-changing derivations in Dulong/Rawang' (282–311), Randy LaPolla describes a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in an area straddling the border between China (where this language is called Dulong) and Myanmar (where it is known as Rawang). Rawang valency-related morphology is unusually rich for a Tibeto-Burman language and interesting functionally in light of a constraint requiring all verbs in the same complex to have the same degree of transitivity.

In 'Valency-changing and valency-encoding devices in Amharic' (chapter 9, 312–332), Mengistu Amberber discusses morphological valency derivations in a Semitic language. He employs a useful distinction, first suggested by Haspelmath (1993), between valency-encoding (where transitive and intransitive forms are derived from a stem otherwise undifferentiated for voice) and valency-changing devices (where a primary transitive stem is detransitivized or vice versa). By contrast, Nicholas Reid's 'Complex verb collocations in Ngan'gityemerri: a non-derivational strategy for encoding valency alternations' (chapter 10, 333–359) considers morphosyntactic techniques (the addition of coverbs), which largely replace morphological means of expressing valency alternations. Ngan'gityemerri is an Aboriginal language spoken in two dialectal varieties by about 150 people in Australia's Northern Territory.

Chapter 11, 'Valency-changing derivations in Tsez' (360–374), by Bernard Comrie, discusses a North-East Caucasian language, also known as Dido, spoken in Russia's Daghestan Province. Unlike other Daghestanian languages, Tsez appears to lack labile verbs (i.e. identical forms that can be used transitively or intransitively, such as English 'freeze'). Instead, many basic stems are intransitive, and a single valency-increaser, the causative suffix *-r*, may modify a stem of either voice and can be added iteratively. Tsez is also interesting for its combination of accusative-type syntax with ergative-type case marking. Finally, in 'Creek voice: beyond valency' (chapter 12, 375–403), Jack Martin discusses a Muskogean language representing the active type of argument coding, where such semantic roles as agent and patient are encoded in ways rather independent of purely syntactic parameters. Martin attempts to obviate the formal notion of subject and object by describing Creek voice/valency distinctions in terms of marked vs. unmarked types of 'event view'. His avoidance of traditional metagrammatical actant categories is challenged by the editors (24–25), who correctly point out that Martin's description still relies on such syntax-

oriented terms as 'passive' and 'transitivity'. Both approaches appear capable of contributing to an understanding of Muskogean valency.

Dixon & Aikhenvald have succeeded in amassing a wealth of new descriptive data from a diverse scattering of languages, many of which have been hitherto little represented in the general literature. This task alone should be recognized as being of paramount importance to linguistics today. Perhaps more importantly, the editors compare languages that have never before been considered together typologically, tracing a thread of commonality among morphological structures that might otherwise fail to attract concerted attention. And they have presented this data in such a way as to convince the reader of its importance to future inquiries into universal properties in the design of language systems. This may encourage others to publish works similarly rich in original description yet squarely aimed at addressing basic issues in linguistic theory. Volumes of a similarly ambitious breadth and scope are sorely needed on many other key aspects of language structure.

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Heinz J. Giegerich, *Lexical strata in English: morphological causes, phonological effects* (Cambridge Studies in Linguistics **89**). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pp. ix+329.

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Giegerich declares this book an attempt to complete the agenda begun by Mohanan (1986) on the theory of Lexical Phonology (3). Giegerich in fact considers Mohanan's undertaking an unfinished work, not a failure, pace Gussmann (1988).