Similarity and Dissimilarity between the Coding Patterns for Core Arguments in Burushaski and Domaaki

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The aim of this presentation is to show how the argument-coding patterns in Burushaski, a language isolate, and Domaaki, a central Indo-Aryan language, are similar. These languages are extremely distant from each other in terms of phylogeny, yet they are spoken in adjacent regions; in fact, the former is a superordinate language within the latter's spoken area. They exhibit common flagging patterns for core arguments in all situations except for the realisation of split ergativity, ranging from standard patterns to exceptional patterns, within their available case systems. This presentation is based primarily on the presenter's own fieldwork data.

Most ergative languages in South Asia show a different tendency of split ergativity. Some are in accordance with nominal characteristics like of the Dixon's (1979) hierarchy according to the 'potentiality of agency', while some are sensitive to the TAM of predicates. As might be expected, Burushaski, Domaaki, and also Urdu show different split patterns (Yoshioka 2014). Among them, the most complex one is for Burushaski. Domaaki minds only whether the person of an agent is third or non-third, which is a threshold feature in the hierarchy. On the contrary, the split system in Urdu is solely affected by TAM, whether the aspect of a main verb is perfect or imperfect. The Burushaski split is based on both the person and TAM.

Meanwhile, unlike Urdu, both Burushaski and Domaaki prove discrepancy between the flagging and indexing systems. Their systems are asymmetric and not connecting. On the one hand, the Urdu-type coding—namely flagging-indexing—system is detected both on the sides of flagging on argument nominals and indexing on predicates equally. On the other hand, Burushaski and Domaaki prepare different logics for them. Their flagging systems are motivated by both (semantic roles of) arguments and (meanings of) predicates, whereas their indexing ones are driven solely by (grammatical categories of) arguments to which a grammatical role (SUBJECT) in Domaaki, and adding to it, depending on the predicate, a macro role (UNDERGOER) are assigned in Burushaski. The latter, undergoer indexing system in Burushaski also serves as a means to distinguish the intentionality of subjects in intransitive clauses. It is a manifestation of active-inactive difference, to use (at least 'early-') Klimov's (1974) terminology; thus Burushaski can be classified as a split-S language.

References:

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