Morphological and analytic stacking of voice markers from a contrastive perspective

grammatical voice; voice stacking; affix order; morphological voice marking; analytical voice marking

Introduction This talk presents a contrastive study on morphological vs. analytical stacking of voice markers. A comparison based on literature and elicitation data from Turkish and Portuguese reveals how cross-linguistic constraints independent of morphosyntactic types interact with language-specific properties of different voices.

Background Within ample research in the domain of grammatical voice, phenomena of voice marker stacking, i.e. marking of two or more valency operations on the same predicate, have received little attention (recently e.g. Alsina, 2023; Gibson et al., 2023; Creissels, 2024). But cross-linguistic stacking contrasts can inform us about the influence of the morphosyntactic type of voice marking on its syntactic function, and about comparability of concepts in the voice domain.

Voice stacking is present as the concatenation of morphological voice markers in agglutinating languages. For instance, Turkish (Turkic; nucl1301) can stack reciprocal and causative suffixes (1). In languages without morphological voice marking, voice stacking appears as nesting of analytical voice constructions. For example, in Brazilian Portuguese (Romance < Indo-European; braz1246) a reflexive-marked reciprocal construction can be embedded in an analytical causative (2), or as a combination of both types, in languages that feature both morphological and analytical voice marking: Languages such as Swedish (North Germanic < Indo-European; swed1254), which feature both morphological and analytical voice marking, constitute an intermediate type. As shown in (3), Swedish can form an analytical causative of a verb with a middle voice suffix that covers a reciprocal function. With the exception of a brief discussion in Creissels (2024: 349–355), no previous analysis takes into account both the morphological and the analytic stacking types.

Research objectives The talk compares and contrasts the morphological and analytical types of voice stacking. As representatives of these types, we focus on Turkish and Portuguese. Data from further languages are included where it is useful to establish further contrast. The primary objective is to identify and describe the possible cases of stacking, to identify and explain logically possible but actually ungrammatical stacks, such as in (4), and to carve out differences between the languages in these two dimensions.

The study tests a set of working hypotheses: Morphological and analytic stacking fulfill the same functions, just by different morphosyntactic means; general contrasts between both types exist, but are due to natural restrictions on the individual strategies. Contrasts between behavior of equivalently labeled voice markers of both types that are not due to the type of strategy can instead be explained by language-specific differences in the nature of the valency operations they mark.

Methodology Based on Turkish and Portuguese literature and original elicitation data, we conduct a systematic contrastive survey regarding which combinations of valency operation marking are theoretically possible, which of them actually occur, and which grammatical restrictions operate on such combinations.

Preliminary results The talk establishes clear contrasts in voice marker stacking behavior, but highlights cross-linguistic parallels with respect to which particular markers are compatible and which are not. The working hypotheses are generally confirmed. Finally, we discuss insights that voice stacking contrasts provide into the general nature of voice markers. For example, our results suggest that more frequent voice operations behave more similar cross-linguistically than less frequent voice operations.

Examples

(1) *Baba-ları kardeş-ler-i öp-üş-tür-dü.*
father-3PL.POSS sibling-PL-ACC kiss-RECP-CAUS-PRET
'Their father made the siblings kiss each other.'
(Turkish < Turkic; nucl1301)

(2) *O pai fez o-s irmão-s se beija-r-em.*
DEF father make.PST.3SG DEF-PL brother-PL REFL kiss-INF-3PL
'The father made the siblings kiss each other.'
(Brazilian Portuguese < Romance < Indo-European; braz1246)

(3) *Fader-n fick syskon-en att kyssa-s.*
father-DEF make.PST sibling-PL.DEF to kiss-MID
'The father made the siblings kiss each other.'
(Swedish < North Germanic < Indo-European; swed1254)

(4) **Bu toplantı birisi tarafindan düzenle-n-dir-di.*
this meeting somebody by organize-PASS-CAUS-PRET
intended: 'This meeting was caused to be organized by somebody.'
(Turkish < Turkic; nucl1301)

Abbreviations

3 = third person, ACC = accusative, CAUS = causative, DEF = definite, INF = infinitive, MID = middle voice, PASS = passive, PL = plural, POSS = possessive, PRET = preterite, PST = past, RECP = reciprocal, REFL = reflexive, SG = singular.

References

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