

Diachronic issues in a map of case functions

The semantic map approach has recently gained a wider currency in typological studies, but in many areas substantial research that established the basis for semantic maps preceded its emergence. One of these areas is case functions.

Currently, there are two major manners of representation in semantic maps. One, as favored for example by Croft (2001 etc.), puts the emphasize on degree of similarity represented through degree of spatial adjacency. The logical continuation of such an approach is the conceptualization of the relationship between two meanings or functions on the basis of their statistical frequency of co-occurrence in the same linguistic form. The other approach, as favored saliently by Haspelmath (2003 etc.), pursues the possibility of specific connections between individual meanings to the exclusion of other connections which are in principle possible in terms of similarity as well, but supposedly do not actually occur, for cognitive-conceptual or other reasons. In other words, the latter approach posits the existence of various constraints on configurations on a semantic map, while the former in principle does not. While it is not at all clear yet which approach comes closer to linguistic 'reality', the author of this abstract assumes it to be more profitable to pursue the latter approach (the 'individual connection approach') as far as it can be supported by the data, simply because more constraints also mean more informativeness. Especially, individual connections, if dynamicized, can also be related relatively easily to a diachronic dimension and to grammaticalization research.

Thus, this paper seeks to explore the interrelation between the connection between case functions on a semantic map of this area, and the diachronic relationships between case functions that have been posited in grammaticalization research already relatively early (Heine et al. 1991, Lehmann 1983; 2002). The focus is on the area of instrument-comitative, already treated earlier by the author (Narrog&Ito (to appear)) and the related area of agent-ablative. It is shown that some connections in this area are almost universally acknowledged and relatively unproblematic (e.g. comitative > instrument) while others are controversial and even have the potential to contradict seemingly universal tendencies of grammaticalization (e.g. instrument <> agent). The primary goal of this presentation will be to clarify the directionality of controversial connections in this area on the basis of a 200-languages sample.