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There have been new theoretical and methodological advances in descriptive, typological and areal linguistics in the last ten years, and one issue is how this affects our understanding of linguistic phenomena in the Southeast Asian area. Another issue could be how the growing knowledge of SEA languages may change or refine these theoretical and methodological advances, or new frameworks.

I will illustrate this point of view by presenting the Trajectoire group’s work (Fortis & al 2011), whose aim is to analyze path within a working-typology framework (see Grinevald 2011). For instance, multi-verbal constructions in Burmese and other Asian languages (Japanese) lead us to adapt and review the framework as they question the issue of head verb in complex predicates (see also Lambert-Bretière 2009, Chen & Guo 2009). Looking at the Satellite category, defined as a grammatical Category but also as a Construction by Talmy (1985, 2000, 2009), we will see how Burmese and Arakanese serial verb constructions challenge the functional Satellite category as defined by Imbert & al (2011).

Standard Burmese and Arakanese are regarded as two dialects of the same language as they are (nearly) mutually intelligible. However, path expressions differ to a certain extent as shown by examples 1 & 2 (use of a different form for the verb ‘to go’ in the two dialects, use of different forms and patterns for the spatio-temporal marker KHA) and examples 3 & 4 (extended usage of the serial verb construction in Burmese compared to Arakanese).

1. [KKZ. 05_frog19]
   phn³ Ka¹ palin³ the³ Ka¹ ni³ Pri² Ke³ twa² ln³ kha¹ re³
   S. jar interior. be, stay SUB.seq go out AUX-GO KHA PVFR

   After being in the jar, the frog went out from it.

2. [MoMo. 05_frog2]
   khwe² ne¹ lu³ Ka³ te³ rê³.yo³ Te³ ?a.chê³.nu³ phn³-le³ Ka³
   dog with man TOP sleep RELR moment LOC frog little S.
   7epin² Ko³ twa² Ow³ Te²
   outside-DIR go out AUX-GO PVFR

   As the dog and the man [boy] were sleeping, the little frog ‘went-out’ outside.

3. [Nibu/05-Frog,14]
   a. praN³ lo³ po³ ln³ re³
   AUXreturn SUB appear become visible AUXCOME PVFR
   [After falling in the water,] (he) appears again.

4. [Kir.]
   a. pynN³ lo³ po³ ln³ Te³
   AUXreturn SUB appear become visible AUXCOME PVFR

   b. pynN³ O po³ ln³ Te³
   AUXreturn O appear become visible AUXCOME PVFR

   (He) appears again.
Our data on these two dialects will question the satellisation status of the verbs in these multi-verbal constructions: Have verbs undergone a satellisation process yet? Have the verbs already lost their verbal status? Have they already become particles or affixes? The issue of defining this Satellite category confronts the issue of defining head verb in serial verb constructions.

REFERENCES:

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