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Keynote address

From lexical amplifier to aspectual alternant: A descriptive typology of South Asian verbal extension

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Nearly all the languages spoken in the South Asian linguistic area differ from English and other west European languages by featuring an alternation between a basic and an extended form of the same lexical verb for many, sometimes nearly all verbs. The semantic and pragmatic conditions on the alternation vary from language to language. The forms the alternation takes also vary.

Ways in which the verb in South Asian languages may be extended include

1. By prefix and/or accentual shift: Pashto: *taaraá* 'tie!' ***wá.taaraa*** 'tie up!'
2. By adverb [often homophonous with 'away']: Rajasthani, Bhili, Dhatki, Himachali.

(2) *ai in sāl em eḍ kar parā-r āyā hai* (Rajasthani)
they this year M. Ed. do AWAY.Mpl-Ger come have
'They have completed the M. Ed. (degree) this year.' [Bahl (1980: 120)]

3. By pairing of full form of vector and main verb: N. Dravidian, Austroasiatic, T-B

(3) *mi ne-gaʔ-ru ne-laʔ-ru* (Gorum, South Munda)
I 1sg-eat-Pst 1sg-STRIKE-Pst
'I ate it up.'

4. By past tense form of main verb plus vector: Austroasiatic, Dravidian, MIA

(4) *so jā.u jji mu.u* (Apabhramsha, MIA)
he WENT Particle died
'He died.' [paumačariu 36.5.9 (as cited in V. Bubenik 1998:113)]

5. By conjunctive participle of main verb plus vector: Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, T-B?

(5) *aši tsuki-či samadzut kar-un ghe-un dzā-u nako* (Marathi)
such mistake-Gen understanding do-Ger TAKE-Ger go-Inf Neg
'Don't leave with such a misunderstanding!' [www.mimarathi.net]

6. By bare stem of main verb plus vector: Indo-Aryan (Hindi-Urdu and Panjabi)

(6) *puruṣ-ne strī-ko apnī kaṭh.putlī samajh liy-ā hai* (Hindi-Urdu)
man-Erg woman-Acc self's puppet understand TAKE-n has
'Man has understood woman (to be) his puppet.' [www.hindi.mkgandhi.org]

Methods 2 through 6 feature extenders that are semantically bleached counterparts of full verbs or adverbs and that can be said to alternate with their absence with little, sometimes hardly any change in meaning. The extenders are independent of [and do not express] tense and mood. They can appear in either finite or non-finite clauses.

South Asian languages not having verbal extension include: Burushaski, Dari, Sanskrit, and some dialects of Shina.

In the keynote I will address issues of definition, distribution, evolution and function.

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