CALL FOR PAPERS

Workshop: Case and agreement between grammar and information structure

Date: January 12, 2014

Place: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Organizing committee: Eitan Grossman (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and Giorgio Iemmolo (University of Zurich)

Deadline for abstracts: 10 December 2013

Notification of acceptance: 20 December 2013

Invited speaker: Mira Ariel (Tel Aviv University)

Workshop description:

Both case-marking and agreement (‘indexation’) are traditionally considered to code grammatical relations. However, it is well known that agreement (or lack thereof) has much to do with information structure, both synchronically and diachronically (Ariel 2000, Givón 1976, Siewierska 2004, among others).

It is also becoming increasingly apparent that there are situations in which case-marking is also motivated by information-structural properties of referents. For example, Differential Object Marking is often associated with topical objects (Dalrymple and Nikolaeva 2011, Iemmolo 2010, 2011, among others); in ‘marked nominative’ languages of Africa, case and linear order interact to code marked information-structural statuses such as topic, focus, and antitopic (König 2008, Creissels 2005). Similarly, in languages with ‘optional ergative case’ focus is one of the main parameters (see the papers in McGregor and Verstraete 2010 and Chelliah and Hyslop 2012, among others).

All in all, this is unsurprising, since – like linear order – both case and agreement are means used to encode grammatical relations (Frajzyngier and Shay 2003, Güldemann 2007, Siewierska and Bakker 2009, among others). However, there are important differences between these coding strategies. Apart from obvious formal ones, it has been repeatedly noticed in the literature that case and agreement are associated with different functions at the discourse level, such as indicating topic discontinuity (as in the case of DOM, Iemmolo 2011, 2013), or topic-continuity (as in the case of agreement).
The goal of this informal workshop is to address synchronic, diachronic, and typological aspects of the interaction of case, agreement, and information structure. Issues to be discussed may include (but are not limited to):

- Descriptive studies of languages in which case or agreement is motivated by information structure;
- The role of information structure in the diachronic development of agreement or case markers;
- Cross-linguistic (either global or areal) studies dealing with the interaction of case, agreement, and information structure.
- Theoretical problems involved with current conceptualizations of information-structurally motivated case or agreement. For example, is the term ‘case’ even appropriate for situations in which a particular overt marker is associated with a pragmatic function rather than a grammatical relation?

1-page abstracts (for a 30-minute talk) are to be sent to eitan.grossman AT mail.huji.ac.il or giorgio.iemmolo AT uzh.ch by 10 December, 2013. Notification of acceptance will be sent by 20 December, 2013.

References


Chelliah, Shobhana and Gwendolyn Hyslop. 2012. Introduction to Special Issue on Optional Case Marking in Tibeto-Burman. Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area 34.2:1-7


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