Towards a *Valency Dictionary of Ladakhi Verbs*: challenges in analysing a 'non-configurational' language

A grammática é um instrumento, e não uma lei.
Fernando Pessoa

1. Some background information

The Ladakhi dialects roughly fall into two dialect groups: Shamskat (the dialects of Lower Ladakh) and Kenhat (the dialects of Leh and Upper Ladakh), which do not only differ in pronunciation (± initial clusters, ±tone), but also, and more importantly, in their grammar. The most conspicuous difference is that the Shamskat dialects discriminate between an agent (*ŋa-s, kho-s*) and a possessor (*ŋ+i, kho-e*), while the Kenhat dialects don't (*ŋ+e, kho-e ~ kh+e*).

2. The Problem

Some of the challenges in linguistic fieldwork on minority languages lie in mainstream conceptions of what kind of syntactic structures might be relevant for the general discussion, and hence what is discussed. Languages in general, and minor languages in particular, vary a lot in the minor details, but these minor details are usually excluded from a discussion that aims at setting up universal features, making all languages rather look alike.

In compiling a Valency Dictionary of Ladakhi Verbs, my challenge was thus to decide, more or less on my own, what to count as a relevant element, an argument or something close to an argument, and what not.

With respect to syntactic subcategorisation frames of verbs and alignment patterns, there is a common understanding that one needs to specify the two most important arguments or proto-roles (Dowty 1991), the so-called 'actor' and 'undergoer'. There is less unanimity whether one needs to specify the recipient of *give* verbs. E.g. Tournadre (2009) and Van Valin (2009) think this to be superfluous.

Locations of position verbs, such as *stay*, and goals or origins of motion verbs, such as *go* or *come*, are typically not regarded as syntactically relevant arguments, but as mere adjuncts, even if they are required by the verb meaning, and the same holds for other *oblique* arguments. Oblique case markers like the dative may be treated as merely 'lexical' case in contrast to the more 'syntactical' case as used for the two proto-roles.

The binary scheme of proto-roles already poses a problem for ergative languages, where the 'sole argument' ('actor' or 'undergoer') of intransitive verbs is treated differently from the first argument ('actor') of transitive verbs (which receives ergative case marking), but like the second argument ('undergoer') of transitive verbs (both receiving no case marker).

Languages where the 'category' of 'actor' is subdivided between agents (actors in the strict sense, taking ergative case) and experiencers (taking aesthetive = dative or allative case) or where the second argument might be treated differently are typically not considered at all.

The Tibetic languages belong to such typologically neglected languages. Not only do they show some kind of ergative alignment, but also a multiple differentiation of (obligatory) second arguments. Being part of the South-Asian linguistic area (as defined by Masica 1976), Ladakhi further systematically differentiates between transitive intentional agents and non-intentional experiencers (a differentiation only marginally developed in other Tibetic languages).

Some of the Ladakhi dialects, like so many other Tibetic languages, also allow pragmatic up- and downgrading, that is case alternations with the first or second argument (DSM, DOM) or even other arguments (Zeisler 2012). Many Tibetic languages further allow the demotion of an agent by representing it as an origin (with ablative marking, sometimes taken as a passive construction, as by Chr.I. Beckwith, p.c., sometimes only seen as an alternative agent marking, as by Tournadre 1994, 2009). Such possibilities lead to a large set of sentence patterns or *Satzbaupläne*: 11 basic patterns and about 100 additional more or less marginal patterns in Ladakhi (see Zeisler 2007 for a first overview).

Case markers in Tibetan or Ladakhi do not primarily serve to distinguish the syntactic roles of subject and object or to assign individual syntactic relations, nor do they primarily specify particular semantic roles. What the case markers do, however, by their particular combination (and position) is to contrastively put on scene a particular action or event type (see Zeisler 2012), as can be shown in examples (1) to (4).

Examples (1) to (4) show different bivalent sentence patterns, which Tournadre (2009, see below) would subsume under a single monovalent pattern S(a). Note that all four sentences would be considered transitive in English. Examples (1) to (3) demonstrate how sentence patterns can vary for a single verb (Shamskat *biŋ* is replaced by *ton* in the Kenhat dialects), within and between the dialects.

| (1) | *dorʒe* | *lampo* | *ton.* | pattern | 02 |
| GYA | Dorje-ABS | road-ABS | get.out.PA | | |

'Dorje crossed the road.' (Double ABS: holistic perspective)

| (2) | *dorʤe* | *lampo-a* | *biŋ.* | pattern | 03a |
| DOM | Dorje-ABS | road-ALL | get.out.PA | | |

'Dorje crossed the road.' (ALL: focus on the starting point.)

| (3) | *dorʤe* | *lamp+ikana* | *biŋ.* | pattern | 04a |
| DOM | Dorje-ABS | road-PP.ABL | get.out.PA | | |

'Dorje crossed the road.' (ABL: focus on the end point.)

| (4) | *aŋmo* | *tshiriŋ-daŋ* | *pe.* | pattern | 05 |
| GYA | Aŋmo-ABS | Tshiriŋ-COM | separate.PA | | |

'Aŋmo separated from Tshiriŋ.' (COM: contact *with* 2ⁿᵈ argument.)

Tournadre (2009) approaches the problem from a rather narrow syntactic perspective and suggests to discriminate between three types of first arguments (S, A, R)

and two types of second arguments (P, B), yielding altogether 6 *syntactically rele-vant* sentence patterns, ignoring a valency higher than 2:[1]

Table 1. Syntactic patterns (from Tournadre 1996, 2009)

valency	±volitional	type	'subj.'	'obj.'	case	my patterns
1	–		S(p)		ABS	01
1	+		S(a)		ABS (ERG)	01 (13)
2	–	benefactive	R	P	DAT + ABS	06
2	–	affective	S	B	ABS + DAT	03a
2	±	ergative	A	P	ERG (ABS, ABL) + ABS	08 (02, 103)
2	+	mixed	A	B	ERG (ABS, ABL) + DAT	07 (03a, 104)

While this is, in fact, an improvement with respect to Dowty's proto-roles, I shall demonstrate with an overview of the more 'exotic' or unexpected Ladakhi sentence patterns that this approach is not sufficient for documenting and understanding the functioning of the Tibetic languages in general and of the Ladakhi dialects in particular.

3. From the zoo of sentence patterns

Not accounted for by Tournadre are the admittedly rare and idiomatic instances of verbs with a sole argument in an oblique case: AES/ALL (12), INSTR/GEN/ERG (13), COM (101), or ABL (102), and usages with zero arguments (00).

(5)   *ɦoɣo*   *tʃha-na,*   *ø gjal.*   pattern 00
GYA   we.incl-ABS   go-CD   be.good
      'ø [= It] might be better, if we go.'

(6)   *ɦoɣo*   ~ *ɦoɣ₊e*   *le̠*   *tʃē-na,*   *ø gjal.*   pattern 00
GYA   we.incl-ABS   we.incl₊ERG   work-ABS   do-CD   be.good
      'ø [= It] might be better, if we do the work.'

(7)   *ŋataŋ-a*   *ta,*   *kho-s*   *do*   *tʃo-na-raŋ,*   *ø rgjal.*   pattern12
DOM   we.excl-AES   now   s/he-ERG   that-ABS   do-CD-only   be.good
      'ø [= It] would be better for us now, if s/he only would do this.'

(8)   … *mi̠*   *maŋb₊e*   *ṣok /*   *ṣok-taŋ*   */ ṣog-ne*   *t̠al.*
GYA   …   people   many₊GEN   life-ABS   life-COM   life-ABL   separate.PA
      'A lot of people lost their life in (lit: due to) the flood in India.' Lit.:
      'Many people's life got separated' (ABS = pattern 01)
      'There was separation 'with' the life of many people' (COM = 101)
      'There was separation from the life of many people' (ABL = 102)

[1] In Tournadre's terminology 'S' stands for the 'sole argument', although S appears with a second argument in the case of the bivalent 'affective' verbs. The indexes 'p' and 'a' indicate a more patient-like or a more agent-like S. 'R' stands for a 'recipient', here a 'subject' argument. 'B' stands for 'beneficiary' or what might otherwise be termed a recipient (the indirect object of *give*-verbs).

(9)   *pitse(:)*   *ṣok-na*   *tʃhet.*   *bila(:)*   *ɦjaŋspa*   *joŋ-et.*
DOM   <mouse-GEN   life>-ABL   go₊PRS   cat-AES   fun-ABS   come-PRS
      'The mouse is going to die. [But] the cat is having fun.' Lit.:
      'There was going from the mouse' life.' (ABL = 102)

As already mentioned, Tournadre's sole argument – in the absolutive – often doesn't come all alone.

E.g., if we want to state that something separated then the meaning of the verb implies that there is an item that separates or gets separated, but there is also an-other item or place from which it separates or gets separated, otherwise the mean-ing of the verb might be something else.

I have collected 22 different sentence patterns that would fall under Tourna-dre's absolutive 'sole argument', solely pattern 01 and 03a (but only for the 'affec-tive' verbs: S B) are accounted for by Tournadre's system.

Table 2. Tournadre's 'Sole Argument' and its associates

01	Abs			
02	Abs	Abs		
03a	Abs	~Loc		
04a	Abs	Abl		
05	Abs	Com		
14	Abs	Instr/Gen		
23	Abs	Abs	Abs	
23	Abs	Abs	~Loc	
24	Abs	Abl	Abs	
25	Abs	Com	Abs	
26	Abs	Instr/Gen	Abs	
27	Abs	~Loc	~Loc	
28	Abs	Abl	~Loc	
29	Abs	Abl	Abl	
30	Abs	Com	~Loc	
31	Abs	~Loc	Instr/Gen	
32	Abs	Abl	Instr/Gen	
49	Abs	~Loc	Abs	Abs
50	Abs	Abl	Abs	Abs
51	Abs	Abs	Com	Abs
52	Abs	~Loc	~Loc	Abs
55	Abs	Com	~Loc	Abs

Similarly, Tournadre accepts only one construction with an aesthetive/ dative sub-ject – which, in most Tibetic languages, is quite restricted and typically appears only with verbs related to gaining or losing possession, pattern 06: AES – ABS.

In Ladakhi, however, aesthetive subjects are very frequent. Apart from gaining or losing possession, they appear with perceptions and all kind of abilities. Fur-thermore, they appear in valency-raising experiencer constructions, expressing the

notion that one happens or manages to have something done (see the last ergative constructions 114–117, which are, however, rare).

Table 3. Constructions with an aesthetive subject

06	Aes	Abs		
12	Aes			
15	Aes	Instr/Gen		
16	Aes	~Loc		
17	Aes	Abl		
18	Aes	Com		
33	Aes	Abs	Abs	
34	Aes	Abs	~Loc	
35	Aes	Abl	Abs	
36	Aes	Abs	Com	
37	Aes	Abs	Instr/Gen	
38	Aes	~Loc	~Loc	
39	Aes	~Loc	Com	
40	Aes	~Loc/	Instr	
41	Aes	Abl	~Loc	
58	Aes	Abs	~Loc	Abs
59	Aes	Abl	Abs	Abs
60	Aes	Abs	Com	Abs
61	Aes	Abs	Instr	Abs
62	Aes	Abl	Instr	Abs
63	Aes	~Loc	~Loc	Abs
64	Aes	Abl	~Loc	Abs
65	Aes	~Loc	Com	Abs
66	Aes	~Loc	Instr	Abs
67	Aes	~Loc	~Loc	Com
68	Aes	~Loc	~Loc	Instr

114	Aes	Erg	~Loc	
115	Aes	Erg	Abs	
116	Aes	Erg	Abl	
117	Aes	Erg	~Loc	Abs

You may have observed that I have included what appear to be merely adverbial phrases, constructed with the comitative and the instrumental or genitive case. However, the comitative is needed in several cases. E.g., one has to specify *with whom* one met, *with whom* one exchanged something, '*with whom*' one separated, and while in such cases a collective expression is always available: *A & B met, exchanged sth, separated*, it is nevertheless necessary to specify also the asymmetric alternative: *A met with B, exchanged sth with B, separated 'with' B*, etc.

Similarly, if we talk about an event of filling, we need at least a container (e.g., a pot) and the content or medium (e.g. water), possibly also an actor.

Now, one might simply state *the pot filled* or *A filled the pot*, even though we might like to know *with* what. But it does not seem to be feasible to state *the water filled* or *A filled the water*. That is, when focusing on the medium as an undergoer, we necessarily have to specify the container, that is, we have a valency of 2 (inagentive) or 3 (agentive).

If this is the case, does the valency of the verb necessarily decrease, if we focus on the container as the undergoer while specifying the medium: *the pot filled <u>with</u> water*, *the pot was full <u>of</u> water*, or *A filled the pot <u>with</u> water*? Is the medium argument of the previous construction automatically demoted to a mere adverbial phrase, because it is so in English?

In Ladakhi, the neutral construction goes with an instrumental (formally identical with the genitive) *tʃui* in the Kenhat dialects of Ladakh, but with a genitive *tʃui* or, less commonly, with an instrumental *tʃus* in the Shamskat dialects. The comitative *tʃuna(ŋ) ~ tʃuraŋ* appears when the relation between container and medium is somehow non-standard or unexpected. If, e.g. the 'container' is a shoe filled unexpectedly with rain water, a pond filled with unusable dirty water, a pot or granary completely filled with insects (instead of grain), the comitative construction can be used.

(10)   *papu*   *tʃhartʃhu-s*   / *tʃhartʃhu-na*   *gaŋ-sok*.
DOM   *papu*   rain.water-INSTR   rain.water-COM   fill[–ctr]-INF
   'The *papu* (traditional woollen shoes) got filled with rain water.' (In the first case, the speaker had taken the risk, when putting the shoes outside, although it was going to rain. In the second case, s/he just sees this disaster for the first time.)

Syntacticians like Tournadre would probably say that these constructions are special features of special verbs, and as such stored in the lexicon. They are not rule based and hence not predictable, but have to be learned with the usage of the verb.

But the same, actually holds for the case assignment of the core elements: Whether the first argument receives ergative, aesthetive, or no case marking (absolutive) – or even an idiomatic ablative or comitative case marker, is not predictable by general rules, but depends largely on verb semantics, not on formal properties, such as the number of arguments.

4. Non-obligatory elements

Some time ago, an evaluator replied to my application that my notion of facultative or non-obligatory arguments would be a logical contradiction. But what about such verbs as *eating*, *drinking*, *writing*, *reading* in English or German?

They may or may not be realised with an undergoer argument, and are thus usually analysed as being ambivalent, that is, having a valency of 1 or 2, depending on whether the undergoer appears in the sentence or not. One could equally well say that the undergoer argument is not obligatory with such verbs.

From the perspective of Tibetan, where all contextually given arguments can be deleted in a sentence or where one can defocus from any argument in a generic

context, the traditional approach, which assumes a different valency, depending on whether an argument is spelled out or not, does not seem to be very intuitive.

According to this approach, a Tibetan sentence with the verb *give* would switch between 8 patterns and between a valency of 0 to 3:

V3: ERG – ALL – ABS
V2: ERG – ALL —, ERG — ABS, — ALL – ABS
V1: ERG — —, — ALL —, — — ABS
V0: — — —

In languages like Tibetan, *eating* and *drinking* should then be treated as having a valency of 2, particularly if the undergoer argument is hardly ever dropped, except in clause chaining (in Ladakh, one is not just eating, but always eating *something*).

Writing could be treated as having a minimal valency of 2 with a facultative argument for the recipient, in the case of *writing a message* or *letter*. But what about the content? Can or should this be counted as a (facultative) argument?

My approach is to treat all elements as possible arguments if they are licensed by the verb meaning.

Hence, locations are usually not arguments, except with location-sensitive verbs:

position (*stand*, *sit*, etc.
intransitive motion (*go*, *come*, etc.)
transitive movement (*push*, *take along*, *bring*, etc.)
deposit (*put*, *plant*, *inject*, etc.)

and similarly for the *origo* of all motions and movements.

My main problem, however, is how to decide, which argument is obligatory in the sense that,

if no further context (including generic context) is given, the sentence would be incomplete without this argument.

The native speakers' sentence productions or their judgements are usually not very helpful for this decision. They either declare a sentence with a missing argument to be complete – because they have a certain situation in their mind, where this argument is already contextually given. Or, when pressed hard to make a sentence completely 'out of the blue', they might insist on the specification of time and location, and sometimes also of purpose or reason.

While the specification of time and reason can usually be ruled out as not being licensed by the verb meaning, there are plenty of verbs where the location would be licensed at least as a facultative argument. E.g. when talking about planting trees, informants typically want a specification: in the garden, along the river, in front of the house, etc. But when talking about planting flowers or vegetables, the garden is typically implied and hardly ever specified. Is the location thus an obligatory or only a facultative argument?

Of course, I would not have any such problem, if I had simply ignored all location and origo elements. After all, they are only mere adjuncts, aren't they?

5. Collocations

Admittedly, many 'exotic' patterns and particularly patterns with a valency of 4 (or higher) are due to collocations, where many scholars, and especially the syntacticians, would argue that the last absolutive element is incorporated in the verb.
I have argued elsewhere (Zeisler 2008), however, that there are several arguments against incorporation:

– Negation is prefixed to the verb or the TMA auxiliaries, not to the collocation partner. When negation is prefixed to the verb in constructions without auxiliaries, it thus intervenes between the collocation partner and the verb.

– Similarly, adverbs still intervene between the collocation partner and the verb.

– Often the bound collocation partner is the only absolutive element; it is thus needed to support an ergative pattern, cf. the first part of (11) – would it then be incorporated in the second part? And what about an alternation as in (12)?

(11) *daŋ   gergan-is   ṭhugu-un-la   … jat   ṣoks.*
DOM   y.day   teacher-ERG   child-PL-ALL   memory-ABS stir.PA

tene   ṭhugu-ŋun   gergan-la   jat   droks.
then   child-pl-ABS   teacher-all   memory-ABS   be.stirred.up.PA
'Yesterday, the teacher frightened the children because of their lack of studying. Then the children were afraid of the teacher.'

(12) *kūnma   maŋbo-ʒik   pūlur₊a   jat   drok-ʧe-man.*
GYA   thief   many-LQ-ABS   police-ALL   memory-ABS   be.stirred=FUT

kūnma   maŋbo-ʒig-a   pūlur₊a   jat   drok-ʧe-man.
thief   many-LQ-AES   police-ALL   memory-ABS   be.stirred=FUT
'Many thieves won't be afraid of the police.'

– The collocation partner is not always in the absolutive case, sometimes there can be variation as in (14).

(13) *gaŋnal-e   pomo-ʒik   gjapa ʧo-a   ɲīŋ-a   ʧha₊a-ɦo-kanak.*
GYA   G.-GEN   girl-LQ-ABS   Gyapa co-ALL heart-ALL   affect₊NLZ-be-DST
'A girl from the Gaŋñal [house] must have left a deep impression on Gyapa co (the ruler of Gya).'

(14) *mi̱-ɦun   ɦu   ~ ɦu-a   thuk.*
GYA   people-PL-ABS   frustration-ABS   ~ frustration-ALL   meet.PA
ʧia zer-na,   kānsalar-e …   zer-ʃe   ma̱ne   mā-ʧe-fasaŋ.
because   Councillor-ERG   say-GRD   except   NG-do-NLZ&
'The people were really frustrated, because, except for promising that he would bring development to the village, the councillor did not do anything.'

– Collocation partners can easily be dropped in clause chaining: (15), (16) or when contextually implied: (17), (18).

(15) *kho-a   ɲit   thoms-en·uk.*
DOM s/he-AES   sleep-ABS   doze-CNT·VIS
     'S/he is dozing.'

(16) *ɲit   joŋ-se,   khoa   ø   thoms-en·uk.*
DOM sleep-ABS   come-LB   s/he-ABS   doze-CNT·VIS
     'Having become sleepy, s/he is dozing.'

(17) *daŋ   gergan-la   phrugu-ɲun-la   (ɲit)   thips·ok   lo.*
DOM y.day teacher-AES   child-pl-AES   (sleep-ABS) get.dull·INF   QOM
     tʃiba zerna,   tshatpa maŋbo   joŋ-sok   lo.
     because   heat   much-ABS   come-INF   QOM
     'It happened to the teacher yesterday that all children were getting sleepy,
     [s/he] said, because it was getting (too) hot, [s/he] said.'

(18) *khe   ʒaktaŋ "ɲa̱ <(_ɲare)   ṣok>   kjāl-in"   lo̱.*
GYA s/he-ERG ev.day I-ABS <(I.self.GEN) life>-ABS send.FUT QOM
     tẹne ŋe   zefen:
     then I-ERG say.PA-RM
     "ø kjāl-na, ø kjōl!   ø mā-kjal-na, ø mā-kjal! khjöraŋ thad."
       send-CD   send.IMP NG-send-CD   NG-send   you-ABS like
     'Each single day s/he said: «I am going to end my life.» Then I said: «If you
     (want) to end ø [= your life], end ø [= it]! If you don't (want) to end ø [=it],
     don't end ø [= it]! As you like.»'

– Some collocation partners can enter into a compound.

(19) *api-a   ro-ɲit   thips-e-nak   lo.*
DOM grandmother-AES   corpse-sleep-ABS get.dull-LB-NVIS   QOM
     'The grandmother is /was getting bloody sleepy, [s/he] says'

– Some collocation partners can take a definiteness marker (with or without slight
  changes in meaning).

(20) *aŋmo-s   rigdzin-la   mik   rgyaŋs-pasaŋ,   …*
TYA Aŋmo-ERG   Rigdzin-ALL   eye-ABS   fill-NLZ&
     'Because Aŋmo was staring at Rigdzin, …'

(21) *… apis   ŋa(:)   mik-po   rgyaŋ-se-duks.*
DOM grandmother-ERG   I-ALL   eye-DF-ABS   fill-LB-stay.PA
     '…, an old lady was staring at me.'

– Some collocation partners can be modified by adjectives. Sometimes, this is
  more or less obligatory as in (22), in other cases, it is optional as in (23).

(22) *khos   <miŋ   trakpo / rhtsokpo> phiŋs.*
DOM s/he-ERG <name strong   bad>-ABS   bring.out.PA
     'S/he set a splendid / bad example.'

(23) *daŋ   khoŋ·un phrug·iskorla <spera (riŋmo)> soŋ-sok.*
DOM y.day they·PL-ABS child·PPOS   speech (long)>-ABS go.PA
     'They got into a (long) discussion yesterday about the(ir) child(ren).'

– Some collocation partners can be modified by numerals.

(24) *aba-s   luktsak   ~ luktsag-a   po   tʃats.*
DOM father-ERG   sheep-PL-ABS   sheep-PL-ALL   part-ABS cut.PA
     'The father divided the sheep (into several groups).'

(25) *aŋmo-s   lug-ŋun-la   <po   ɲis-sum> tʃats.*
DOM Aŋmo-ERG sheep-PL-ALL   <part 2-3>-ABS cut.PA
     'Aŋmo divided the sheep into two, three groups.'

– Some collocation partners can be modified by possessor constructions.

(26) *aba-s   ʒiŋ maŋboa lok   tʃaks.*
DOM father-ERG   field many-ALL surface(?)-ABS break.PA
     '[Our] father did the winter ploughing on/ for many fields.'

(27) *aba-s   <khaŋb·i   lok>   tʃaks.*
DOM father-ERG   sec.household·GEN surface(?)-ABS break.PA
     '[Our] father ploughed up the fields of the secondary household for the
     winter.'

(28) *ŋ·e   <mi̱-se   (ṭa̱h·e)   tshir>   tʃāt-pen.*
GYA I-ERG <people-GEN (number-GEN) order>-ABS cut.PA-RM
     'I counted the people.'

– The collocation partner can change its position, especially when embedded into a
  possessor construction.

(29) *riŋzin   tʃhulog-ehane tshe   thar.*
GYA Riŋzin-ABS   flood-PPOS:ABL life-ABS   get.free.PA
     'Riŋzin saved him/herself from the flood.'

(30) *<riŋzin-e   tshe>   tʃhuloge-hane   thar.*
GYA <Riŋzin-GEN life>-ABS flood-PPOS:ABL get.free.PA
     'Riŋzin was saved from the flood.'

– In chained sequences, the possessor may have scope also over a following collocation partner, tied to another verb.

(31) *oho,* *<ŋ·i* *rhpe>* *ʒak-se-nak,*
DOM Intj I·GEN example-ABS put.down-LB-NVIS=PERF
    <ø *miŋ>* *bor-e-nak.*
    name-ABS keep-LB-NVIS=PERF

'Oho, [I] really must have set up an example, [I] feel [I] am getting famous!'

Lit.: '[I] feel that my example has been set down, '[I] feel that ø [= my] name has been kept.' (Said when realising that one has done something wrong.)

The collocation partners are thus at best only very loosely connected with the following verb. Quite a few behave like ordinary arguments. While the degree of their connection may vary, there is no cut-off point from which onward it would be justified to talk about a syntactically relevant incorporation. Up to a valency of 3, all sentence patterns formed by collocations are also found with non-bound combinations. If I thus cannot get rid of a collocation partner in constructions with a valency of 2 or 3, how am I justified to disregard it in constructions of higher valency?

6. Conclusion

If syntax or "grammar is a tool", what is it used for?

According to Hock (1986: 250) "[t]he formulation of rules helps to reduce th[e] burden of memorization" of facts and forms.

"die wenigsten sätze, die wir aussprechen, [sind] als solche auswendig gelernt […], […] vielmehr [werden] die meisten erst im augenblicke zusammengesetzt […]. … Bei dem natürlichen erlernen der muttersprache wird […] nur eine anzahl von mustern gegeben. Wir hören nach und nach eine anzahl von sätzen, die auf die selbe art zusammengefügt sind und sich deshalb zu einer gruppe zusammenschliessen. (Herman Paul 1880: 69f.)

From this perspective, the 'unruliness' of Ladakhi sentence patterns leads to some principled questions, which, as I should think, are interesting from both a more general typological perspective and a more particular psycho-linguistic or socio-linguistic perspective.

Case assignment in Ladakhi is not (fully) predictable, but has to be learned with the various usages of each verb.

Sure, with some acquaintance, I am now able to predict the more common usages fairly well, and being exposed to the most common usages is certainly also the way Ladakhi children acquire these patterns in the first place.

However, unlike in the case of most irregular verbs in English or German, the most 'exotic' patterns are restricted to very few verbs or idioms that are hardly used in everyday communication.

How then do children acquire these quite particular 'lexical' properties. Is there thus a 'hidden syntax', and if yes, where is it hidden? In the semantics of the case markers? But why then can't we predict all sentence patterns? Or why do speakers of different dialects or also idiolects differ sometimes? How do they, nevertheless, unlike me, know what is wrong?

Furthermore, while Tibetan or Ladakhi case marking is much more driven by semantics and pragmatics than in, say, English, the Tibetan and Ladakhi case markers are used for more of the more peripheral functions or conceptualisations, where, English, e.g., would use purely semantic means such as adverbs. It almost looks as if these two features were inversely proportional.

I should think that such questions would be as important for the general linguistic discussion as the quest for universal rules and that, therefore, typology and syntax theory should no longer neglect the 'unruly' aspects of minor languages.

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