first group of the classification, whereas modern Slavic languages belong to the second, it is tempting to regard this type with WH-pronoun + relativiser as a transitory one between two main classes.

Reference

Andrej A. Kibrik (Institute of Linguistics, Moscow)

**A typologically oriented portrait of the Athabaskan language family**

“It often appears as if any generalization that one draws about morphosyntax is falsified by the verb in some Athapaskan languages” (Rice 2000: 1).

1. Genealogical and geographical information
Na-dene (=Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit)
   - Tlingit
   - Eyak-Athabaskan
     - Eyak
     - **Athabaskan** (about 40 languages)
       - Northern: Slave, Chipewyan, **Upper Kuskokwim** and other Alaskan…
       - Pacific: **Hupa**, **Tolowa**…
       - Southern (Araphean): **Navajo**, Western Apache…

2. Why Athabaskan languages are special
   - have a reputation of being very different from other North American languages
   “The Nadene languages, probably the most specialized of all…” (Sapir 1929)
   Greenberg 1987; Cf. Mithun 1999
   - typologically exceptional in many ways
very intricate structure: “hopeless maze of irregularities” (Young and Morgan 1972:40)
poorly understood in typological literature due to opaque traditional descriptive terminology

3. Morphosyntactic features
(★ marks typologically unusual features, ★★ typologically very unusual features)

NB: Most of these features are shared by all Athabaskan languages, but some may be represented to a different degree (e.g. Navajo is most polysynthetic)

3.1. Basic morphosyntactic features
among the most morphologically complex languages of the world (syntactic structure is quite simple); just about everything that can be coded morphologically (rather than lexically or syntactically) in a human language is coded so in the Athabaskan verb
polysynthetic expression of grammatical meanings
consistent head-marking
accusative alignment
verb-final word order

(1) Navajo (Young and Morgan 1943)
gátbáhí maʔii-yéę₃ tsé y-ee-yl-aa-da-dzi-s-neʔ
grey.rabbit coyote,i--Encl rock, i-by--he,at--Pref-Distr-Pref-Pf-throw.SCO
‘The grey rabbits threw rocks at that coyote (stoning him to death)’

3.2. ★★ (Almost) exclusively prefixing
“Standard average Athabaskan” verb template

18 proclitic
17 (b) Oblique +
(a) preverb
16 various derivational
15 reflexive Accusative pronoun
14 iterative
13 distributive
3.3. **Prefixation is combined with postpositions and verb-final word order**

(cf. Konstanz Universals Archive, universals #506, 892; in the sample of Bybee, Pagliuca, and Perkins 1990 Slave is the only genuine counterexample to the tendency that V-final entails suffixing.)

(2) Upper Kuskokwim Athabaskan (henceforth: UKA)

dul koʔ di-zi-s-do ‘I am sitting on a log’

3.4. **Grammatically accusative without evidence for syntactic relations**

- Non-promotional passive
- No inter-clausal syntactic processes referring to the syntactic statuses "subject", "direct object"...

See Kibrik 1992, 1996

3.5. **For some languages (Navajo), internal ("pronominal") argument type**

Jelinek 1984; Van Valin 1977, Boas 1911, Duponceau 1819
most frequently (62% cases in Navajo spoken discourse) full NPs are not there, so there is nothing to agree with

Navajo represents privileged, as well as less privileged participants on the verb, and in that sense does not differentiate between them

(3) Navajo

\[
y-e-i-o-nilööz\quad ‘He led it to her’\]


different pronominal elements on the verb can cooccur with the same full NP

(4) Navajo ‘My older brother is sitting’

a. shínaaí ø-sidá
   1Sg.Poss:older.brother 3.Nom-sit

b. shínaaí dzi-zdá
   1Sg.Poss:older.brother 4.Nom-sit


more conservative Athabaskan languages are not exactly like Navajo in that respect: UKA is pronominal-internal/nominal-external

(5) UKA

a. dish ʔilt’as b. y-ilt’as c. *dish y-ilt’as
   chicken he.is.frying it-he.is.frying chicken it-he.is.frying

See Saxon 1989

3.6. ★ Poor correspondence between semantic categories and template positions

one semantic category in more than one alternative position
   nominative

one semantic category simultaneously in more than one position
   transitivity
   aspect — see 3.7 below
   negation

multiple cases of obviously inexplicable homophony and allomorphy in grammatical morphemes
15 synchronically different *d*-morphemes in Navajo in the same part of the verb form
1Sg.Nom prefix is *sh-* except in the perfective form non-detransitivized verbs it is *y-*

3.7. ★★ Affix ordering is not governed by semantic scope/relevance

Bybee (1985: 34-35): the most common ordering of grammatical categories:

[for prefixation]: (D) person – (C) mood – (B) tense – (A) aspect – ROOT

An example of a well-behaved scope-observing language:

(6) Central Alaskan Yup’ik (Eskimo-Aleut, Mithun 1999: 407)

ROOT | DERIVATION | INFLECTION
--- | --- | ---
LWHU | QJQDTHUUDDU | W X U OOUX X T
enter- | try.to-first- | repeatedly- Past- Indic- 3Sg
aspect | tense | mood | person

‘he always wanted to enter first’

Bybee 1985: 35: “in one language [in the sample – A.K.], Navaho, the person markers occur closer to the stem than tense markers”.

(7) Navajo

nihideestsil ‘I will move on the buttocks to a point’

DERIVATION | INFLECTION | ROOT
--- | --- | ---
iter- | nqaq-rraar- tur- IiIru- u- q
enter- | try.to-first- | repeatedly- Past- Indic- 3Sg
aspect | tense | mood | person

See Rice 2000

3.8. ★★ Extreme concern for expressing aspectual meanings

(8) Navajo

-tsaald/-tsáád/-tsi?/-tsil ‘move sitting ’ (Young and Morgan 1987d: 628)
See Kari 1979, Axelrod 1993

3.9. ★ Bizarre morphophonemics

3.10. ★ Rich system of transitivity marking

Pre-stem morphemes: Transitivity indicators (TIs, traditional term: “classifier”): $\varnothing$, $l$, $d(i)$, $l$-

(9) Navajo

3.11. **Verb lexical semantics: strikingly unusual patterns of conceptualization**

4. Towards lexical typology:

A case study in conceptualization of motion, or was Einstein the first to discover relativity?

4.1. Classificatory verbs

(10) UKA, as well as all further examples

‘I carry it’ ghi-s-ROOT
Prog-1Sg.Nom-ROOT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rock</th>
<th>gun</th>
<th>gloves</th>
<th>water in a bucket</th>
<th>baby</th>
<th>…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ghi-s- Uol</td>
<td>ghi-s-te</td>
<td>ghi-s-[d-]la</td>
<td>ghi-s-kol</td>
<td>ghi-[s-]ta</td>
<td>…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Same roots are used for series of verbs meaning ‘bring’, ‘give’, ‘wash’, ‘find’, ‘lose’, etc., etc.

Classificatory verb are based on class membership of the Absolutive

4.2. Consider 4 stereotypical meanings of classificatory verbs

(i) ‘lie’
(ii) ‘move (intr)’/‘fall’
(iii) ‘throw’/‘drop’
(iv) ‘carry’

4.3. Different roots for ‘lie’ (i) and ‘move’/‘fall’ (ii)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stiff compact (rock)</th>
<th>Stiff diffuse (gun)</th>
<th>Multiple (gloves)</th>
<th>Animate (baby)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) ‘lie’</td>
<td>-ninh</td>
<td>-to</td>
<td>-la</td>
<td>-ta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) ‘move’ / ‘fall’</td>
<td>-ninh</td>
<td>-ghel</td>
<td>-dak</td>
<td>-yo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The classifications of objects are similar but not identical; there are more classes for ‘move (intr)’/‘fall’ verbs; apparently the construal of movement requires more relevant distinctions than being at rest.
4.4. ‘Throw’/‘drop’(iii) verbs are causatives from ‘move’/‘fall’ (ii):
causative formation

(11) a. dichinh no-di-ghe-o-ghil ‘the stick fell down’
    stick    down-Pref-Md-NormVal-SDO.move.Pf

   b. dichinh no-di-ghi-l-ghil ‘I dropped the stick’
    stick    down-Pref-Md-[1Sg.Nom-]Caus-SDO.move.Pf

4.5. ‘Carry’ (iv) verbs’ roots coincide with those of the ‘lie’ (i) verbs

(12) a. tudzile zi-o-tonh ‘the ice pick lies’
    ice.pick  Md-NormVal-SDO.lie.Pf

   b. tudzile di-ghi-s-o-tel ‘I carry an ice pick’
    ice.pickPref-Prog-1Sg.Nom-NormVal-SDO.lie.Prog

• NB: There is no increase in transitivity in the ‘carry’ verbs compared
to ‘lie’ verbs

• Reason: In carrying, unlike throwing/dropping, the patient moves
together with the agent. In carrying, the patient remains at rest
relative to the agent.

4.6. Athabaskan Einsteins

“The theory of relativity says that all laws of physics are the same in
all inertial frames of reference. An inertial frame of reference is a frame
of reference which is moving at a constant velocity relative to an
observer. The observer’s frame of reference is generally considered to be
“at rest”, although this does not mean the same thing as Newton’s
absolute rest. A person making an observation about something else that
is in motion can consider himself at rest relative to the object he is observing. If any two people observed each other as they moved in different directions, each person could consider himself at rest, and the other person moving. Both points of view are equally valid, according to special relativity.”

(Popular Internet introduction to the Special theory of relativity; http://www.rpnet.net/~bart/frames.phtml?general)

- Athabaskans have known for a long time before Einstein and Galileo: object location/motion is different depending on the frame of reference
- Carrying and dropping may seem similar actions of movement causation, from an objective perspective. But these types of movements are conceptualized differently, in a relativist fashion, in the Athabaskan languages
- Carrying is conceptualized as a subcase of being at rest, because when X is carried its frame of reference moves together with X, and relative to the Agent, X (=the Absolutive) is at rest.
  - ‘A carries X’ essentially means ‘X is at rest within the frame of reference of moving A’.
  - The idea of movement is rendered not by the root but by derivational or inflectional affixes.
- On the contrary, throwing or dropping is conceptualized as causing independent movement relative to the Agent’s frame of reference.
- So in reporting such motion events Athabaskans take the perspective of the agent, not of an external observer (speaker).

4.7. Animacy against relativity: carried animate patients are not treated as being at rest

(13) a. to-ɔ-tal
   Fut-NormVal-An.lie.Prog
   ‘he will lie down’

b. si-gh-e-l-tal
   1Sg.Acc-Md-2Sg.Nom-Caus-An.lie.Prog
   ‘you carry me’
Animate Absolutives have their own frame of reference and their physical movement is understood as linguistic movement as well, even when they are at rest relative to the agent.

So in the Atabaskan conceptual system relativity of motion can be overruled by animacy.

5. Conclusion

I am exploring the hypothesis that:

- A better understanding of the system of event conceptualization, as realized in the Athabaskan verb root, can help to tackle the most intricate problems of Athabaskan grammar, such as:
  - non-scope-governed morpheme order
  - excessive aspectual marking
  - apparent irregularity and typological exceptionality
- From this one can proceed with a lexical typology of languages, i.e. a cross-linguistic comparison of conceptualization profiles in certain lexical domains.

Non-obvious abbreviations in glosses

- Acc – accusative
- An – animate entity
- Dat – dative
- Distr – distributive plural
- Encl – enclitic
- Fut – future
- Inc – inceptive
- Indf – indefinite
- Md – one of mode (tense-aspect-modality) affixes
- Nom – nominative
- NormVal – normal valence
- Pf – perfective
- Pref – prefix of irrelevant function
- Prog – progressive
- SCO – stiff compact object
- SDO – stiff diffuse object
- TI – transitivity indicator
- Val – valence marker

References


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**The natural usage of verbal and nominal adjectives in Japanese: a quantitative analysis**

One of the typologically interesting features of the Japanese language is the coexistence of two classes of adjectives: verbal (*takai* ‘high, expensive’, *furui* ‘old’ *samui* ‘cold’ etc) and nominal (*kantan* ‘simple’, *shizuka* ‘quiet’ etc). Unlike the verbal adjectives (VA), nominal ones (NA) do not inflect but take a copula for predication. The question of their semantic and grammatical differences has gained growing attention in recent literature. Nevertheless there was made no attempt, to my knowledge, to investigate the natural usage of these two classes in discourse and narration. In this paper I will try to fill this lacuna.

My data consists of eight separate interviews, comprising 52958 characters of transcription of informal spoken Japanese with a total of 241 NA tokens and 297 VA tokens. The adjectives in my corpora have three essential pragmatic functions: adverbial, attributive and predicative. Following Thompson (1988) I considered adjectives, which modified a semantically empty or an anaphoric head noun in a predicative position,