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Contrastive linguistics as pilot typology

The case of concessive conditionals

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While contrastive linguistics and linguistic typology are distinct disciplines (König 2012), one purpose of contrastive linguistics is to serve as pilot typology (van der Auwera 2012). In our contribution, we demonstrate how contrasts among a small sample of genetically unrelated languages generate testable hypotheses for a large-scale typology of concessive conditionals (= CCs). CCs are a variety of conditionals in which the consequent is presented as true under a whole set of antecedent conditions: if $\{p_1, p_2, p_3, \dots, p_n\}$, then q (König 1986). Since the set needs to be quantified, concessive conditionals both within and across languages display an unusual diversity of forms which can be grouped into three types of strategies (Haspelmath/König 1998): a single, contextually extreme value that implies a scale of other, less extreme values (English *even if*); a disjunction of maximally distinct values along some semantic parameter (English *whether ... or*); and free-choice quantification over instantiations of a variable (English *wh-ever, no matter wh-*).

Our paper begins with a survey of the methodology of contrastive linguistics as pilot typology (including the preference for three rather than two languages, van der Auwera 2012) and an introduction to CCs. Next, we offer a contrastive comparison of CCs in three genetically unrelated languages: English, Japanese and Samoan (cf. data below). It gives rise to three working hypotheses: (a) the marking of CCs varies along a scale between uniform marking of the three strategies (Japanese, Samoan) and differential marking (English), with English representing the Standard Average European pattern; (b) actual marking strategies are the result of competing motivations such that they reflect either the basic meaning of CCs, i.e. conditionality (Japanese *-te*, English *if*), or the quantificational feature that distinguishes CCs from 'if'-conditionals, with quantification often expressed by interrogative-like forms (cf. the Samoan interrogative particle *pe/po* and the various *wh*-expressions of English); (c) the marking of CCs reflects a distinction between primary and secondary marking strategies and an associated typological asymmetry such that primary conditional marking tends to combine with secondary quantificational marking (cf. Japanese *-te mo*, English *even if*) whereas quantificational marking does not require secondary conditionality marking to serve its purpose of expressing concessive conditionality (Samoan *tusa ... pe/po* 'be.the.same ... INT', English *whether ... or, wh-ever, no matter wh-*).

We then present preliminary results, taken from the grammars and other descriptive studies of an original worldwide sample of 55 languages, of an on-going typological research project designed to test these hypotheses. They largely confirm hypotheses (a)-(c), but with important refinements. As to (a), if in a given languages only two of the three strategies are marked uniformly (as e.g. in English), they tend to be 'even if' and 'whether ...or' strategies or the 'whether ... or' and 'wh-ever/no matter wh-' strategies. The resulting semantic map is matched by the observation, relevant for hypothesis (b), that the 'wh-

ever/no matter wh-' strategy is least often marked for conditionality crosslinguistically. As to (c), we find that languages like Japanese and also e.g. Turkish which uniformly mark CCs for conditionality also tend to have alternative, quantification-based CC constructions, whereas the reverse is rarely ever the case. (English, e.g., does not have conditionality-marked alternatives for 'whether ... or' and 'wh-ever/no matter wh-' CCs.) This is in turn matched by the observation that conditional marking is optional in the 'even if' strategy in some languages like Buwal, where quantificational marking ('even') is mandatory. However, there are also languages like Mauwake where this type of CC has the form of a single-antecedent conditional and any quantification must be inferred from scalarity effects in the respective context.

Our paper ends with a survey of methodological challenges and the overall role of fine-grained comparisons of pilot samples of languages in our project. Consequences for the status of pilot typology vis-à-vis other applications of contrastive linguistics are also highlighted.

Examples

English – maximally differential marking

- (1) **Even if** it rains, we'll go outside. (primary conditional, secondary quantificational marking)
- (2) **Whether** it rains **or not**, we'll go outside. (interrogative-like quantificational marking)
- (3) **Whatever** the weather is like, we'll go outside. (interrogative-like quantificational marking)

Japanese – uniform, primary conditional marking with secondary quantificational *-te mo*

- (4) *Benkyoo si-te mo doose dame daroo.*
 study do-COND even anyway bad MOD
 'Even if we report this, there will be no result.' (Fujii 1994: 196)
- (5) *Benkyoo si-te mo si-naku-te mo onazi daroo.*
 study do-COND even do-NEG-COND even same MOD
 'Whether I study or not, it will be the same.' (ibid.)
- (6) *Doko o sagasi-te mo mitukara-na-i yo.*
 where ACC Look-COND even find-NEG-NPST PTL
 'No matter where you look, you won't find it.' (ibid.: 199)

Samoan – uniform quantificational marking with *tusa ... pe/po*

- (7) *E leai se ala e tatau ai ona*
 GENR not.exist ART reason GENR appropriate ANAPH CONJ
ma le ola filemu e tusa lava pe
 1.EXCL.DU not live peaceful GENR be.the.same PTL INT

na te soli l-o-u togalaau
3SG GENR trespass ART-POSS-1SG garden

'There is no good reason why we shouldn't live in peace, even if he steps into my garden.'
(Mosel & Hovdhaugen 1992: 664)

- (8) *'Ole'ā fai-a e tusa lava pe timu pe leai*
FUT do-ERG GENR be.the.same PTL INT rain INT not.exist

'It will be done whether it rains or not.' (ibid.)

- (9) *Tusa lava po o a ni faafiafianga*
be.the.same PTL INT PRS what ART entertainment
malie e le ata
funny GENR not laugh

'Whatever funny entertainment is done, she does not laugh.' (ibid.: 665)

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