A0038

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Person Forms Across Time and Space: Divergence or Convergence

This workshop focuses on the linguistic evolution of person forms in a wide range of languages, especially beyond the realms of European languages. Many previous studies —particularly contrastive studies of English and Japanese (e.g. Sugamoto 1989)—have emphasized diverging points between person forms in European languages and those in non-European languages, often analyzing lexical origins, lexical modification, word order, and discourse frequency. However, once we enlarge the corpus to include cross-linguistic or dialectal variations, some converging patterns observed through diachronic pathways may come into view.

This workshop has a preference for the following themes, ideally focusing on languages beyond the European language families. However, this it will also deal with other interesting themes related to person forms, particularly those that have an important bearing on the themes outlined below. Note that the underlining theoretical assumption in this workshop is that grammatical categories and functions are best defined in terms of how they behave in discourse, synchronically and diachronically.

(1) Referential shifting e.g. from first to second person, as in Japanese, Thai,Vietnamese, etc.;

(2) Derivation of newer person forms by combining first and second person forms (i.e. inclusive) and first and third person forms (i.e. exclusive), as in Dravidian languages;

(3) Derivation of independent forms out of dependent forms, e.g. Jacaltec, Tzutujil and Warekena;

(4) Semantic change from more honorific to less honorific, as in Japanese;

(5) Functional change e.g. from person to nominalizer as in Ainu, Okinawan, some Tibeto-Burman languages, etc.

(6) Construction-based functional change, e.g. from person to sentence-final particle as in Chinese, Japanese, Okinawan and some other Asian languages.

(7) Reconstructing pronominal paradigms in particular areas, e.g. Central Pacific, Philippine, Formosan and other areas.

(8) Rethinking person forms as part of 'functional categories' from different theoretical points of view, e.g. generative vs. functional.