A functional approach to the quotative verb HAN in Siwkolan Amis and its implications for the evidential system in some Formosan languages

Wei-Cherng Sam Jheng (wcsamjheng@nttu.edu.tw)
Dept. of English, National Taitung University

Abstract In this talk I investigate morphosyntactic properties of HAN in Siwkolan Amis, which has been claimed to be a quotative verb in the literature, and defend a lexical split of HAN (Robert and Roussou 2003), one being a lexical category with full-fledged argument structure and the other a functional category merging to Voice⁰. In particular, I argue that the functional HAN cannot be analyzed as a quotative verb or a PV-inflected verb proposed in the literature, given my novel findings that HAN (i) is permitted to occur in patient voice, instrumental voice and locative voice constructions, (ii) represses the presence of voice affixes, (iii) must stand immediately adjacent to the lexical verb and (iv) encodes the non-inferential evidentiality. I follow Cinque’s (2004) functional approach to restructuring predicates in treating HAN as a functional category of Voice⁰ and Shih and Lin’s (2011) voice Agree system in which voice morphology is a reflex of thematic relations. In these lights, when the NP with the PATIENT, the INSTRUMENTAL or the LOCATIVE role raises to [Spec, vP], it serves as a Goal with the [iθ] feature targeted by an active Probe on Voice⁰ to value the [uθ] on Voice⁰ as its corresponding voice value. This analysis, in addition to providing a more principled account of the noted properties, fares well with Wu’s (2006) system of undergoer voices in Amis, which subsumes patient, instrumental and locative voice. Moreover, as the lexical verb moves to Voice_vv⁰, the [iθ] feature is spelt out as HAN surfacing as an affix attached to the verb. Several issues involved in dealing with the Amis voice system and implications for the evidential system in some Formosan languages are discussed.

Keywords  quotative verbs, Amis, evidentiality, undergoer, clitic climbing