

LEXICAL RESTRICTIONS:  
AN UPDATE

Eva van Lier

11 February 2022

# OVERVIEW

- Highlights of RG presentations since June
- Update Vidi project
- Overarching themes / challenges
- Next steps

# HIGHLIGHTS SINCE JUNE

<https://lexicalrestrictions.com/research-group/>

# KAMANG DIFFERENTIAL INDEXING (Katherine)

- Kamang: person/number of S/P can/must be indexed; variation in terms of
  - ❖ Which prefix series? (/a/, /o/, /e/)
  - ❖ Which verb class (alternating or not)?
  - ❖ Properties of indexed argument: role, animacy, topicality, independent expression
- Method: quantitative corpus study
- Results (roughly):
  - ❖ /a/-series: animate, topical P
  - ❖ /o/-series: inanimate, non-topical P
  - ❖ /e/-series: animate, topical S
- Update:
  - ❖ paper submitted to Studies in Languages
  - ❖ Second, qualitative paper on other factors: aspect, affectedness, volitionality

# AUXILIARIES IN SPANISH (Hella)

- Some auxiliaries retain some lexical properties → constructional constraints in terms of:
  - ❖ Predicates
  - ❖ Referent properties
  - ❖ Aktionsart
- Example: *tener* + participle → transitive predicate + animate A:
  - ❖ *Tiene escrito un manifiesto.* ('S/he has written a manifest.'). but not:
  - ❖ \**Tiene llorado.* (intended: 'S/he has cried.')
  - ❖ \**La película me tiene gustado.* (Intended: 'The film pleased me.')
- Example: *cesar de* + infinitive → dynamic/atelic predicate
  - ❖ *La pianista cesó de tocar.* (The pianist stopped playing.), but not:
  - ❖ \**Cesó de ser comunista.* (Intended: 'S/he stopped being a communist.')

# COMPLEMENT-TAKING PREDICATES IN RSL and NGT (Jenia)

- Clauses introduced by WANT, TRY, LOVE, BEGIN in RSL
  - ❖ Can be center-embedded (BOY [HELP FRIEND] WANT)
  - ❖ Cannot have an overt subject in the embedded clause
  - ❖ Can show agreement with 1<sup>st</sup> person only
- In NGT, WANT(WILLEN)-clauses
  - ❖ Show no center-embedding
  - ❖ Can have an overt subject in the dependent clause ('I don't want them to think that...')
- Work in progress:
  - ❖ Agreement in NGT?
  - ❖ Other complement-taking predicates in NGT?
  - ❖ In general: coherent class of control predicates in NGT (like in RSL)?
  - ❖ Comparison between control predicates and e.g. modal predicates?

## TWO PASSIVES IN DANISH (S u n e)

- Older periphrastic *blive* passive and ‘new’ (ME) inflectional *s*-passive
- *S*-passive: not possible in past tense with most strong verbs:
  - ❖ *Skuddet hortet* / *blev hort*. (‘The shot was heard.’)
  - ❖ *Brevet \*skreves* / *blev skrevet*. (‘The letter was written.’)
- Explanation for restriction?
  - ❖ Overview of historical grammars and texts from different genres shows:
  - ❖ Diachronic instability
  - ❖ Effects of literacy/standardization

# LIGHT VERBS IN PERSIAN/AZERBAIJANI (Pegah, Monique, Eva, Elisabetta, Lala)

- Background: collocations and inverse priming effect
- Persian:
  - ❖ Few simple lexical verbs; verbal lexical mostly NOUN+lightVERB
  - ❖ Lexicalization effects, e.g. *harf zadan* ('talk hit') but *sohbat kardan* ('talk do')
  - ❖ Alternation, e.g. *telefon zadan/kardan* ('telephone hit/do')
  - ❖ Statistical preferences? And if so: priming effects?
  - ❖ Experimental results t.b.c.
- Azerbaijani
  - ❖ Similar light verb constructions, including alternations and morpho-syntactic properties
  - ❖ Contact?
  - ❖ T.b.c. 11 March



# DIFFERENTIAL ARGUMENT MARKING IN COPTIC (E w a)

- Differential marking of A, P, and R
- Possible scenarios: shift to semantic alignment and/or contact with Greek?
- Method: corpus study
- Example: DOM
  - ❖ Head marking, with (inherently topical) pronouns vs.
  - ❖ Dependent marking, with nouns
  - ❖ But also: lexical restrictions on head-marking: not possible with certain verbs and only in ‘durative’ tenses
  - ❖ Also: different prepositions used in dependent marking, based on semantically defined verb-classes
- Conclusion: contact less plausible scenario (valency patterns of Greek verbs are not borrowed into Coptic)

# UPDATE VIDU-PROJECT

<https://lexicalrestrictions.com/about/>

# WORK IN PROGRESS

- Kamang:
  - ❖ 2<sup>nd</sup> paper on differential indexing in Kamang (*Linguistic Vanguard*)
  - ❖ Presentations at MMM13, SLE55
  - ❖ Publication of GRAID corpus (<https://multicast.aspra.uni-bamberg.de/>)
  - ❖ Fieldwork??
- Persian:
  - ❖ Experiments on light verbs
  - ❖ Differential subject indexing
- Chechen:
  - ❖ Bi-absolutive constructions, affected by animacy of A and predicate classes (two corpora and elicitation → presentation *Grammar and Corpora* June)
  - ❖ Publication of GRAID corpus
- Typology:
  - ❖ Survey differential argument indexing; variables: lexical and referential
  - ❖ Corpus-based typology based on GRAID-corpora?

## OTHER OUTPUT / ACTIVITIES

- In press: special issue of *STUF* on *Lexical restrictions on voice and valency constructions* (eds. Eva & Maria Messerschmidt)
- Special issue of *Open Linguistics* (eds. Katherine and Pegah):  
*Lexical restrictions on grammatical relations* (based on SMART workshop, March '21))
- Thematic session on Differential Argument Indexing (with Erika Just, Zürich)  
at ALT14 (Austin, Texas, December 2022)
- Local workshop Theoretical perspectives on Lexical Constraints  
3 March, with Sterre Leufkens (<https://lexicalrestrictions.com/events/>)

OVERARCHING THEMES /  
CHALLENGES

# THEMES & CHALLENGES (1)

- Interaction between lexical restrictions and other factors:
  - ❖ Referential properties of arguments, including discourse factors
  - ❖ Predicate/clause-level factors (e.g. aspect)
- Origins of (lexical) restrictions?
  - ❖ Alignment shift (differential → fixed and/or vice versa?), cf. Haig 2018
  - ❖ Grammaticalization
  - ❖ Contact
  - ❖ Genre, standardization

## THEMES & CHALLENGES (2)

- Methodology
  - ❖ Corpus-based (but challenges, esp. ‘smaller’ languages, but cf. historical Danish): verb-specific patterns are impossible to measure →
  - ❖ Experiments
  - ❖ Fieldwork / elicitation
  - ❖ Grammar-mining
- Linguistic diversity
  - ❖ Comparison between spoken languages, between sign languages (NGT/RSL), between spoken and signed languages
  - ❖ Comparison between unrelated languages (Kamang, Chechen, typology)
  - ❖ Comparison within small genetic groups (Alor Pantar languages)
  - ❖ Comparison of areally related languages (Coptic/Greek, Persian/Azerbaijani)?
  - ❖ Comparison across dialects / sociolects of the same language (Danish, Persian)

# NEXT STEPS

<https://lexicalrestrictions.com/research-group/>



# UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS

- 25 February: Typological corpus (Sterre)
- 11 March: Azerbaijani (Elisabetta & Lala)
- 25 March: Slavic delimitatives (Paula Kyselica)
- 8 April: NGT reduplication (Cindy)
- April-June:
  - ❖ Jenia & Katherine: differential indexing across modalities
  - ❖ Pegah, Zarina, Eva: Bi-absolutives in Chechen
  - ❖ ...???

THANK YOU 😊

... and keep up the good work!