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1 Editors' introduction

The papers in this volume all originated during a seminar in Navajo morphology, taught by Dr. Mary Willie and Dr. Amy Fountain at the University of Arizona in the spring of 2006. The active participants in the seminar soon discovered that their interests—while including morphology—also stretched out in various directions and subfields of linguistics and the Navajo language. The projects that participants were working on included themes from semantics, syntax, phonology, morphology, and computational linguistics, and it was soon decided that this was a unique opportunity for each of us to contribute to a printed volume of studies in the Navajo language.

We are very grateful to Dr. Willie and Dr. Fountain for their support of this effort, and for the endless patience they displayed when confronted with numerous questions about the Navajo language. In this seminar, we could always anticipate the forbearance and good spirits with which our simplest questions would be met.

During the preparation of this volume, we were saddened by the news of the passing of Robert W. Young, whose writings—far more often than anyone else's—we turned to for guidance during the seminar. Through his monumental works regarding the Navajo language he has set an example of depth, rigor, and level of scholarship in linguistics and language documentation that we all aspire to reach.

July, 2007
Tucson, Arizona

Mans Hulden
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2 Abstracts

Introduction to Navajo Language Studies

Amy V. Fountain

This chapter briefly describes traditional approaches to the grammatical structure of Navajo, and is intended to provide definitions and examples of important and basic terms and concepts used (and perhaps argued against) in the rest of the papers in this volume. Readers who are unfamiliar with the Navajo language, or with the linguistic literature about Navajo, are encouraged to read this chapter before delving into the subsequent articles in this volume.

An Optimality-Theoretic Analysis of Navajo Sibilant Harmony

Stacey Oberly

This paper presents an Optimality-Theoretic analysis (Prince and Smolensky, 1993) of sibilant harmony in Navajo. This Optimality-Theoretic (OT) analysis uses correspondence theory (McCarthy and Prince, 1995) to account for changes in the [\pm anterior] feature in coronal segments in the verbal conjunct domain. Specifically, the place of articulation of the rightmost coronal fricative segment determines the place of articulation of all other coronal fricatives in the verbal conjunct domain via IDENT, AGREE and MAX constraints. This OT analysis is innovative in that it posits a constraint that protects pronominal-argument morphemes from deletion.

Tone, Intonation, Stress and Duration in Navajo

Emily Kidder

The phenomena of tone, intonation, stress and duration interact on the phonetic level due to their shared use of the acoustic cues of pitch and segment length. The Navajo language, in which the existence of intonation and stress has been questioned by native speakers and scholars (McDonough, 2002), provides a unique system for studying this interaction, due to the presence

of both phonemic tone and phonemic segment length. The variable nature of stress and intonation, as well as their status as linguistic universals has been debated among scholars of prosody (Connell and Ladd, 1990; Laniran, 1992; McDonough, 2002; Hayes, 1995). This paper discusses the interaction between these prosodic elements in Navajo, arguing that stress and intonation cannot be concretely identified, and positing a causal relationship between the presence of contrastive tone and length, the lack of stress and the lack of intonation.

Evidentiality in Athabaskan

Ferdinand de Haan

This paper is a typological survey of grammatical evidentials across the Athabaskan language family. It is shown that expressions of evidentiality differ widely from language to language. There are languages in which evidentiality is poorly grammaticalized (such as Chiricahua) to very full evidential systems (in Hupa and San Carlos Apache). Explanations for this difference must be sought in the area of contact features and general typological development, rather than trying to look for genetic explanations for the difference in evidential systems between languages. This is exemplified with two cases, (a) the morpheme /la/ 'inferential', which may be traced back to a verb 'to be', a well-known grammaticalization source; (b) the origin of visual evidentials, which derive from deictic sources.

A Unification of Indo-European Aktionsart and Navajo Verb Theme Categories

Sumayya Racy

In this paper, I explore verb theme categories in Navajo in general, and their relation to Indo-European Aktionsart in particular. Midgette (1995) argues that we should not consider Navajo verb theme categories to be the same sort of property as Indo-European Aktionsart, both because there are more verb theme categories than there are Aktionsarts, and because Aktionsart is part of the lexical semantics of a verb, while verb theme categories are derived through morphological processes. I suggest, however, that we may in fact view these as related phenomena. In making the case for a unified treatment of Navajo verb themes and Indo-European Aktionsart, I appeal

to arguments from Distributed Morphology (Halle and Marantz, 1993), from non-lexical Aktionsart (Harley, 1999), and from varied approaches to word building (Marantz, 2001; Arad, 2003).

An Experiment in Computational Parsing of the Navajo Verb

Mans Hulden and Shannon T. Bischoff

This paper presents preliminary research on a computational parser for core Navajo morphology where any inflected verb is automatically decomposed, together with the inflectional and derivational structure of the verb. The grammatical implementation largely follows Faltz (1998) and Young and Morgan (1987); Young et al. (1992). We also report some proposals for reducing the amount of allomorphy and phonological rules in the description of Navajo verbal morphology, and potential uses of such a parser.

Abstracts
