
**Multivariate typology and field linguistics: a
case study on detransitivization in Kiranti
(Sino-Tibetan)**

Balthasar Bickel

Proceedings of Conference on
Language Documentation & Linguistic Theory 3

Edited by Peter K. Austin, Oliver Bond, Lutz Marten &
David Nathan

19-20 November 2011 School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project
Department of Linguistics
School of Oriental and African Studies
Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square
London WC1H 0XG
United Kingdom

Department of Linguistics:
Tel: +44-20-7898-4640
Fax: +44-20-7898-4679
linguistics@soas.ac.uk
<http://www.soas.ac.uk/academics/departments/linguistics>

Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project:
Tel: +44-20-7898-4640
Fax: +44-20-7898-4349
elap@soas.ac.uk
<http://www.hrelp.org>

© 2011 Balthasar Bickel

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, on any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the author(s) of that part of the publication, except as permitted by UK copyright law.

ISBN: 978-0-7286-0398-1

This publication can be cited as:

Balthasar Bickel. 2011. Multivariate typology and field linguistics: a case study on detransitivization in Kiranti (Sino-Tibetan). In Peter K. Austin, Oliver Bond, Lutz Marten & David Nathan (eds) *Proceedings of Conference on Language Documentation and Linguistic Theory 3*, 3-13. London: SOAS.

or:

Balthasar Bickel. 2011. Multivariate typology and field linguistics: a case study on detransitivization in Kiranti (Sino-Tibetan). In Peter K. Austin, Oliver Bond, Lutz Marten & David Nathan (eds) *Proceedings of Conference on Language Documentation and Linguistic Theory 3*. London: SOAS. www.hrelp.org/eprints/ldlt3_02.pdf

Multivariate typology and field linguistics: a case study on detransitivization in Kiranti (Sino-Tibetan)

BALTHASAR BICKEL

University of Zürich

1. INTRODUCTION¹

Field-linguistics has an intrinsic affinity to the idea of analyzing languages ‘in their own terms’. This has traditionally clashed with analytical metalanguages (‘theories’) that assume universal, cross-linguistically applicable categories. In the second half of the last century, field linguists increasingly adopted universalist metalanguages, however more recently there has been a move away from this, at least in principle (cf. Haspelmath 2010 for a recent statement), though perhaps less in practice. The current dissatisfaction with universalist metalanguages comes from the observation that their categories often hide substantial cross-linguistic diversity and do not capture well the particularities of individual languages. However, without universally applicable categories, field linguistics becomes unable to contribute to generalizations about language, and, conversely, this insulates linguistic theory and typology from the empirical challenges posed by individual languages. The basic problem therefore is how we can reconcile the need for universally applicable categories with the challenge of particular systems.

In this paper I illustrate the problem with a construction that is frequently found in the Kiranti subgroup of Sino-Tibetan and that seems to escape received notions within traditional, universal metalanguages. I will argue that the construction is sufficiently different from language to language to represent the same cross-linguistic category. However, rather than giving up on a universalist metalanguage, I will argue for an alternative that combines full coverage of language particulars with the goal of developing a universal metalanguage that allows empirically responsible comparisons.

2. DETRANSITIVIZATION IN KIRANTI

The Kiranti family is a subgroup of Sino-Tibetan and includes about 30 languages spoken in Eastern Nepal. A key characteristic of many languages in this family is that their two-argument and three-argument predicates can usually alternate between a transitive and an intransitive frame.² Consider the following example:³

¹ The research reported here was made possible by Grants No. II/79092 and II/83393 from the Volkswagen Foundation and Grant No. BI 799/5-1 from the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*. I would like to thank Martin Haspelmath and Nathan Hill for discussing with me some of the theoretical issues raised here, and Robert Schikowski for checking some of the Chintang data and for comments on an earlier draft.

² I have not done a complete survey but limit myself to the languages of the Kiranti family that I am most familiar with.

(1) Belhare (ISO639-3:byw; Eastern Kiranti; Bickel 2006)

- a. *ina-ŋa wa khui?-t-u.*
 DEM-ERG chicken[-NOM] [3sA-]steal-NPST-3sO
 ‘That one steals / will steal the chicken.’
- b. *ina wa khu?-yu.*
 DEM[-NOM] chicken[-NOM] [3sS-]steal- NPST
 ‘That one steals chicken.’ (‘S/he is a chicken-stealer’)

In (1a), the verb *khutma* ‘to steal’ is inflected transitively and the A argument (*inaŋa* ‘that one’) appears in the ergative case. In (1b), which I label here a ‘detransitivized’ construction, the same verb is inflected intransitively. The A argument is treated like an intransitive S argument and is therefore assigned nominative case. The semantic difference is that the transitive version implies a specific and quantifiable P referent while the intransitive version suggests a generic or non-quantifiable P referent. Instead of the P argument, also T (theme) or G (goal) arguments of three-place predicates can be the target of detransitivization, depending on the verb class. I will refer to the targeted arguments collectively as ‘objects’.⁴

The basic structure is the same in other languages of the family, but there are important differences. For example, Belhare does not allow modification of the object in the detransitivized construction.

(2) Belhare (Bickel 2006)

- a. [_{NP} *khaĩ=kha* *cece*] *n-cai-t-u.*
 [3sS-]good[-NPST]=NMLZ meat[-NOM] 3nsA-eat-NPST-3sO
 ‘They eat (the) good meat.’
- b. *_{[NP} *khaĩ=kha* *cece*] *n-ca-yu.*
 [3sS-]good[-NPST]=NMLZ meat[-NOM] 3nsS-eat-NPST
Intended: ‘They eat good meat.’
- c. [_N *cece*] *n-ca-yu.*
 meat[-NOM] 3nsS-eat-NPST
 ‘They eat meat.’

Thus, a detransitivized object lacks the phrase-structural properties of a full-fledged NP. The same constraint holds for Limbu (ISO639-3:lif; Angdembe 1998), a language from the same Eastern subgroup as Belhare.

³ Interlinear glossing follows the Leipzig Glossing Rules, with the addition of the abbreviations *d* ‘dual’, *i* ‘inclusive’, *ns* ‘non-singular’, and *s* ‘singular’.

⁴ I use S, A, P, T, G as symbols for generalized semantic roles in the sense of Bickel (2011). Unlike in Dixon’s (2010) approach, A and P are semantic roles and are maintained under (anti-) passivization. S is the sole argument of a one-place predicate.

However, another language from the same subgroup, Chintang does allow modification of detransitivized objects:

(3) Chintang (ISO639-3:ctn; Eastern Kiranti; elicited data, 2008)

- a. *huĩsa-ŋa* [_{NP} *the=go khim*] *copt-o-ko*.
 DEM-ERG big=NMLZ person[-NOM] [3sA-]look-3sO-NPST
 ‘He looks at the big house.’
- b. *hun̄go* [_{NP} *the=go khim*] *cop-no*.
 DEM[-NOM] big=NMLZ house[-NOM] [3sS-]see-NPST
 ‘He looks at big houses.’

In both Belhare and Chintang it is possible to drop the detransitivized objects, given a suitable context. The following data from Schikowski (in preparation) provide a minimal pair from our corpus (Bickel et al. 2011):

(4) Chintang

- a. *theke kham a-tad-o-ko utti?* [CLLDCh2R06S02.1402]
 why soil[NOM] 2sA-bring-3sO-NPST that.much
 ‘Why do you bring that much soil?’
- b. *hunci-jhani=yaj ta?-no=naj*. [CTN_Fut_Pln.493]
 3dPOSS-family[-NOM]=ADD [3sS-]bring-NPST=but
 ‘But their family also brings (some dowry into marriage).’

(4a) represents a fully transitive sentence, with a quantified object (‘that much soil’, represented by a discontinuous constituent [*kham... utti*]). In (4b), the construction is detransitivized, and this implies a non-quantifiable object. This argument is not overt, but the wider context of the utterance makes it clear that it must be the dowry that a women’s family is expected to pay.

In other Kiranti languages, detransitivized objects are obligatory, however. This is the case in Puma, where we have not found examples with a dropped argument in our corpus (Bickel et al. 2009):

(5) Puma (ISO639-3:pum; Central Kiranti; Bickel et al. 2007)

- a. *ŋa ređio en-ŋa*.
 1s radio hear-1sS.NPST
 ‘I do radio-hearing.’
- b. **ŋa en-ŋa*.
 1s hear-1sS.NPST
Intended: ‘I hear something.’

3. POSSIBLE ANALYSES

In the preceding section I labelled the construction ‘detransitivization’, but that is clearly too wide a term. Can we analyze the construction as an instance of a more specific category? Various possibilities offer themselves (and have indeed been proposed by various authors).

A first option is to analyze detransitivization as an instance of **optional** (differential) **object agreement**, similar to what is known for example from Bantu languages: in one variant, the verb agrees with the object, in the other it doesn’t. However, this misses the effect on case assignment: under detransitivization, the A argument is not assigned the same case (ergative) as in the intransitive version, but it is consistently assigned the nominative case. This is unexpected if the difference between the constructions lies only in the agreement pattern. One could of course claim that nominative case assignment is a side-effect of intransitive agreement or indeed licensed by intransitive agreement (which always assigns nominative case in the Kiranti languages surveyed here). However, an analysis in terms of optional object agreement would leave unexplained why the object not only loses its ability to trigger agreement, but that in some languages it also becomes obligatorily overt (Puma) or that in other languages it no longer constitutes a full-fledged NP (Belhare, Limbu). The changes in object properties suggest that detransitivization involves a more fundamental construction than just optional agreement.

One hypothesis is that the construction involves **antipassivization** (Weidert & Subba 1985: 106). Immediate support for this comes from the fact that the A argument is treated like an S argument in terms of case and agreement, i.e. it appears to become more similar to what one might think of as a canonical ‘subject’. However, this analysis is in conflict with the properties of the object. Under an antipassive analysis, one would expect the object to lose not only some but all object properties, or at least the most important ones. However, while some properties indeed get lost, other key properties are retained. Most importantly, object case-marking stays the same under detransitivization: the detransitivized object is assigned the same nominative case that objects are also assigned in fully transitive clauses. The only exception to this is Puma, where detransitivization constrains the case-marking possibilities of the object: while in transitive clauses, the object appears in the dative under specific conditions, detransitivization does not allow datives (Bickel et al. 2007). Crucially, however, the constraint does not lead to the assignment of, say, a locative case. This is unlike what one would expect from an antipassive.

Two other important properties are fully retained by detransitivized objects, and they behave in these regards like all other objects of these languages: detransitivized objects can be moved to various positions and, consistent with this, they can be relativized on. The following data show this for Puma; the same is true of all other Kiranti languages where I had the opportunity to check this (Chintang, Belhare):

- (6) Puma (Bickel et al. 2007)
- a. *[[uŋ-yoŋn khip=ku] kitap] [novel]*.
 1SPOSS-friend [3sS-]read=NMLZ book novel
 ‘The kind of book my friend reads is novels.’
- b. *[[uŋ-yoŋni-a khipd-i=ku] kitap] [novel]*.
 1SPOSS-friend-ERG [3sA-]read-3sO=NMLZ book novel
 ‘The (specific) book my friend reads is a novel.’

These data also call into question an alternative analysis of the constructions in terms of **compounding** (Weidert & Subba 1985:107) or **incorporation** (Angdembe 1998). Incorporation is also an unlikely option because all inflectional material (prefixes, suffixes) surround the verb stem alone. In none of the languages surveyed here is the detransitivized object inserted inside the inflectional word. This is in contrast with verb compounding, a widespread pattern in Kiranti (e.g. Belhare *ŋŋ-u-ukt-he* ‘they fried it and brought it down’, where the stems *u(r)*- ‘fry’ and *ukt*- ‘bring down’ are flanked by the agreement prefix *ŋŋ*- ‘3nsA’ and the past tense suffix *-he*).

Another possibility consists in analyzing detransitivization in terms of a lexical alternation, similar to such alternations as English *to eat an apple* vs. *to eat*, i.e. to what is known as **ambitransitivity** or **lability** (van Driem 1987). To some extent, there are parallels to canonical ambitransitivity examples, as in the contrast between the transitive example (7a) and the detransitivized example (7b). But the fact that the object argument is often overt under detransitivization (as in 7c), limits the parallelism (Schikowski et al. 2010).

- (7) Chintang
- a. *Io, ba=go khoŋ-c-o.* [CLLDCh3R08S01.0159]
 okay PROX=NMLZ[NOM] play-[1]dA-3sO
 ‘Okay, let’s play (with) this one.’
- b. *anci khoŋ-ce o!* [CLDLCh3R05S04.041]
 1dinOM play-[1]dS okay
 ‘Let’s play, okay?’
- c. *agga, hun-ce gucca u-khoŋ-ce-ke!* [CLLDCh1R09S07.0411]
 wow 3-ns[NOM] marble[NOM] 3nsS-play-d-NPST
 ‘Wow, they’re playing (with) marbles!’

The problem is even more severe in other languages, such as Puma, where objects are always overt (cf. the data in (5)). In addition, an analysis in terms of a lexical ambitransitive class is in conflict with the observation that, unlike ambitransitivity in other languages, detransitivization is not limited to a lexically enumerable class. There are only specific exceptions of verbs that do not allow detransitivization, such as small lists of deponent and some experiencer verbs.

The preceding discussion suggests that the Kiranti detransitivization construction is a kind of its own: it does not seem to fit any of the categories that traditional analytical metalanguages define as universally applicable. In response, one could posit a new category, say, ‘**object detransitivization**’ and add it to the inventory of universally applicable categories. This new category would be instantiated so far only by Kiranti languages, but it is obviously possible that other languages will have the same category. Good candidates are similar constructions in many other Sino-Tibetan languages (e.g. from the Kuki-Chin family: Bickel 2006) or biabsolute constructions in Nakh-Daghestanian languages (Forker in press). There are probably quite a few more candidates in other parts of the world. However, it is difficult to define such a new category because there is substantial variation within Kiranti (and no doubt even more variation if we include similar constructions in other languages). The variation affects key properties of the constructions: in some languages, the detransitivized object is obligatorily present (Puma), in others it can be dropped (Chintang, Belhare); in some languages, the object is a full-fledged NP (Puma, Chintang), in others it is a bare noun that cannot be modified (Limbu, Belhare). The variation cross-cuts languages, and this precludes the possibility of positing two subtypes, e.g. one combining full NP status and the possibility of dropping, and one combining bare nouns with obligatory presence.

One could of course declare one property as necessary and the other as incidental, e.g. define ‘object detransitivization’ by a pattern of intransitive case and agreement. The fact that Belhare and Limbu do not allow objects to be modified would then be an accidental additional property. But unlike such notions as antipassivization, analysis of a construction as ‘object detransitivization’ would not be very interesting because it would not make any predictions about additional properties. In response, one could try and add the reduced NP status as a necessary property, assuming Belhare and Limbu to represent canonical ‘object detransitivization’. But this would of course be arbitrary: one could just as well take the Puma and Chintang patterns as canonical and assume that normally, object detransitivization assigns objects full NP status. The same issue arises when one tries to take either the obligatory or the optional presence of overt object arguments as a defining property of ‘object detransitivization’: again, the choice is arbitrary.

In summary, the Kiranti detransitivization constructions cannot be subsumed under any received concept and positing a new universal category forces one to make arbitrary choices when defining the category.

4. PARTICULARS AND UNIVERSALS

To solve the problem that we noted in the preceding section, some typologists advocate a strict separation of the metalanguage of language-specific analysis and the metalanguage of comparative research. Under this approach, each language needs its own metalanguage, while the metalanguage of typology operates with broad terms that deliberately gloss over language-specific details (Dryer 1997, Croft 2001, Lazard 2006, Haspelmath 2010): terms like ‘antipassive’ then receive a universal definition

that need not match the criteria one needs for describing the facts of particular languages. For example, antipassivization could be defined as a type of detransitivization that either suppresses objects or realizes them as an oblique complement (Polinsky 2005). Any additional properties, such as the phrase-structural status of or positional constraints on objects are then irrelevant for identifying the construction in a language. In order to better accommodate the Kiranti data, one might posit a typological category of ‘object downgrading’ including any construction that strips objects of at least one property they normally have in transitive constructions of the language. Any further details would again be irrelevant.

Independently of this, one would posit language-specific categories: Puma Object Detransitivization, Chintang Object Detransitivization, Limbu Object Detransitivization etc., and there would be no expectation that these constructions should instantiate the same category. As Haspelmath (2010) points out, the capitalized initials signal that the labels are proper names: just like we don’t expect London in Canada to be the same as London in the UK, we don’t expect Puma Object Detransitivization to be the same as Chintang Object Detransitivization. Or, perhaps more in line with actual practice in the field, one would expect at best Wittgensteinian family resemblances (i.e. the proper names would be more like family than city names). Either way, language-specific categories of this kind are different from the cross-linguistically recurrent categories that are the basis of typological databases and generalizations.

This approach allows one to go on with typology and language-specific analysis, but it cuts all ties between the two. Yet typological notions are often of critical help in language-specific analyses, and it is one of the great steps of progress that typological and theoretical knowledge increasingly informs descriptive ground-work: for example, without the publication of Comrie (1976), descriptive grammars wouldn’t have analyzed aspect in as detailed a manner as they did (and as witnessed by the hundreds of references to Comrie’s book). Without the publication of Foley & Van Valin (1984), the issue of illocutionary scope properties would have had little chance of ever being addressed in descriptive grammars when analyzing clause linkage. In fact, as many early descriptions in the American structuralist tradition testify, any attempt at describing languages purely ‘in their own terms’ risks missing important analytical questions. In short, no analysis can proceed out of a theoretical vacuum.

Also, separating typological from language-specific analysis moves typology and theory ever further away from the empirical facts of individual languages. Thus, theories could go on assuming that a universal inventory including antipassivization, differential object agreement, ambitransitivity and incorporation is sufficient for analyzing all patterns in which object agreement is optional. The details of the Kiranti facts would simply be irrelevant. This creates the illusion of finding more uniformity in the languages of the world than is empirically warranted, and it robs linguistics of a unique chance to explore, measure and explain one of the most basic facts of our species, its unique cognitive flexibility and adaptivity (cf. Evans & Levinson 2009).

5. MULTIVARIATE TYPOLOGY

An alternative solution to the problem of reconciling language particulars and universals is what I call ‘multivariate typology’ (Bickel 2010). The basic idea is that any similarity between two structures (between or within languages) means that the two structures are identical in some regards and different in other regards. For each relevant ‘regard’, one develops a variable (parameter of comparison, *tertium comparationis*) and determines the values (properties) that individual constructions have on these variables in a survey of languages. The variables and their values can be defined in terms of universally applicable notions because they only capture a specific aspect of a construction at a time. This is radically different from traditional universal metalanguages for linguistic analysis. In traditional metalanguages, saying that a particular phenomenon instantiates a given category is expected to capture more than one specific property, e.g. saying that something instantiates antipassivization lets us expect a whole range of properties (with regard to case assignment, agreement structure, syntactic behavior of arguments, etc.).⁵ Indeed, if a traditional concept were to capture only one specific property, it would be uninteresting (and rejected): it would simply label a phenomenon.

A tentative system of variables for capturing the constructions surveyed above is given in Table 1. The symbols S and A stand for generalized semantic roles: S for the sole argument of a one-place predicate and A for the most agentive argument of a predicate that entails more than one semantic role. The symbol O in the table has a different status: it is used here as an abbreviation for the specific grammatical relation that is targeted by the construction. This opens up another complex system of variables, including the range of semantic roles entailed by predicates, the referential status of the argument participating the grammatical relation, the lexical predicate (valency) class that the argument belongs to, and much else beside. A survey of the space of variation is beyond the scope of the present paper, but an analysis is available for Chintang (Bickel et al. 2010); Bickel (2011) and Witzlack-Makarevich (2011) discuss the relevant variables in theoretical perspective.

Another system of variables that is not included in Table 1 concerns the semantics of the construction. Bickel et al. (2007) suggests that the relevant feature for Puma is that detransitivization cuts all possible entailments to the cardinality of the set of object referents. It remains to be seen how well this carries over to other languages. At any rate, the development of a system of semantic variables requires more detailed analyses of the constructions in more languages.

⁵ An important terminological consequence of this is that one can speak of ‘diagnostics’ or ‘tests’: whether a specific phenomenon instantiates a given universal category can be ‘diagnosed’ via the range of properties that are expected from the category.

Table 1.

A multivariate typology of the syntax of some Kiranti detransitivization constructions

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Limbu</i>	<i>Chintang</i>	<i>Belhare</i>	<i>Puma</i>
O-agreement	no	no	no	no
S-case (nominative) on A	yes	yes	yes	yes
Regular O-cases on O	yes	yes	yes	no
O is obligatorily overt	no	no	no	yes
O is a full-fledged NP	no	yes	no	yes
Relativization on O	?	yes	yes	yes
O is positionally free	yes	yes	yes	yes
O and verb form one inflectional word	no	no	no	no

More generally, a table such as the one presented here, only ever reflects a given state of our progress in understanding a particular phenomenon. Most notions that appear in the variables open up new systems of variables (‘NP’, ‘inflectional word’, ‘case’, etc.). But this is simply an invitation for cumulating ever-more precise analyses. It does not mean that the table misses the nature of the constructions it covers (in the way a traditional analysis of the constructions as, say, differential agreement can be said to miss the nature of the constructions).

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

What is the benefit of a multivariate typology of the kind sketched above? The most obvious benefit is for the analysis of individual languages: having a set of variables at our disposal allows one to ask the relevant questions so that the description will cover not only the most apparent properties (like the case and agreement pattern) but will also give information about the phrase structural status of NPs, relativizability, etc. Another benefit is that unlike the classical approaches discussed in Section 3, multivariate typology does not force one to squeeze a construction into a predefined set and instead allows one to capture all relevant properties. Each language-specific construction consists of the vector of values in the typology, the ‘yes’ and ‘no’ responses in the columns of the table. This vector can be named for practical purposes (e.g. the Puma Detransitivization Construction), but in contrast to the approach proposed by Haspelmath (2010) and others, the construction is still defined in terms of universally applicable notions. Similarities can be stated in exact terms (viz. in terms of ‘yes’ and ‘no’ responses that the constructions have across variables), rather than only via vague appeals to family resemblances.

But at the same time as it facilitates language-specific analysis, multivariate typology offers new perspectives for typological research, probing into universal or areal trends. For example, the fact that the Puma Detransitivization construction requires overt object arguments possibly correlates with the fact that in this language, there is an alternative detransitivization strategy which bans overt object arguments (marked by *kha-* and discussed in Bickel et al. 2007). For this correlation to be a

genuine explanation of the relevant properties it needs to be a universal correlation. As such, we need a theory that predicts the correlation (e.g. by assuming that obligatory presence of an element entails obligatory absence of the same element in an alternative construction with the same function). But, equally importantly, the correlation needs statistical support from a large sample of languages and language families. This is what multivariate typology offers directly: the system of variables in Table 1 can be filled by detransitivization constructions in many languages (including constructions called antipassivization, optional agreement or whatever). The resulting database then allows statistical evaluation of the hypothesis.

Further, the database can be mined for recurrent patterns: patterns that recur universally or patterns that are specific to a linguistic area. In this way, multivariate typology allows one to search for large-scale generalizations and at the same time to conduct language-specific analysis with full respect for the diversity that we encounter in every fieldwork project. This reconciles the demands of field linguistics and of comparative research and ensures much needed cross-fertilization between these two domains of linguistic inquiry.

REFERENCES

- Angdembe, Tej Man, 1998. Antipassive via noun incorporation: future of the Limbu object agreement. *Journal of Nepalese Studies* 2, 17-25.
- Bickel, Balthasar, 2006. Clause-level vs. predicate-level linking. In Bornkessel, Ina, Matthias Schlesewsky, Bernard Comrie, & Angela D. Friederici (eds.) *Semantic role universals and argument linking: theoretical, typological and psycholinguistic perspectives*, 155-190. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Bickel, Balthasar, 2010. Capturing particulars and universals in clause linkage: a multivariate analysis. In Brill, Isabelle (ed.) *Clause-hierarchy and clause-linking: the syntax and pragmatics interface*, 51-101. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Bickel, Balthasar, 2011. Grammatical relations typology. In Song, Jae Jung (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Language Typology*, 399-444. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bickel, Balthasar, Martin Gaenszle, Arjun Rai, Prem Dhoj Rai, Shree Kumar Rai, Vishnu S. Rai, & Narayan P. Sharma (Gautam). 2007. Two ways of suspending object agreement in Puma: between incorporation, antipassivization, and optional agreement. *Himalayan Linguistics* 7, 1-18.
- Bickel, Balthasar, Martin Gaenszle, Arjun Rai, Shree Kumar Rai, Vishnu S. Rai, & Narayan P. Gautam (Sharma). 2009. Audiovisual corpus of the Puma language (ca. 150,000 words). *DOBES Archive*, <http://www.mpi.nl/DOBES>.
- Bickel, Balthasar, Manoj Rai, Netra Paudyal, Goma Banjade, Toya Nath Bhatta, Martin Gaenszle, Elena Lieven, Iccha Purna Rai, Novel K. Rai, & Sabine Stoll. 2010. The syntax of three-argument verbs in Chintang and Belhare (Southeastern Kiranti). In Malchukov, Andrej, Martin Haspelmath, & Bernard Comrie (eds.) *Studies in ditransitive constructions: a comparative handbook*, 382-408. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

- Bickel, Balthasar, Sabine Stoll, Martin Gaenszle, Novel Kishore Rai, Elena Lieven, Goma Banjade, Toya Nath Bhatta, Netra Paudyal, Judith Pettigrew, Ichchha P. Rai, & Manoj Rai. 2011. Audiovisual corpus of the Chintang language, including a longitudinal corpus of language acquisition by six children (ca. 500,000 words). *DOBES Archive*, <http://www.mpi.nl/DOBES>.
- Comrie, Bernard, 1976. *Aspect*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Croft, William, 2001. *Radical Construction Grammar: syntactic theory in typological perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dixon, Robert M.W., 2010. *Basic linguistic theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- van Driem, George, 1987. *A grammar of Limbu*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Dryer, Matthew S., 1997. Are grammatical relations universal? In Bybee, Joan, John Haiman, & Sandra A. Thompson (eds.) *Essays on language function and language type dedicated to T. Givón*, 117-143. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Evans, Nicholas & Stephen C. Levinson, 2009. The Myth of Language Universals: language diversity and its importance for cognitive science. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 32, 429-448.
- Foley, William A. & Robert D. Van Valin, Jr., 1984. *Functional syntax and universal grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Forker, Diana, in press. The biabsolutive construction in Nakh-Daghestanian. *Folia Linguistica* 46.
- Haspelmath, Martin, 2010. Comparative concepts and descriptive categories: consequences for language description and typology. *Language* 86, 663–687.
- Lazard, Gilbert, 2006. *La quête des invariants interlangues: la linguistique est-elle une science?* Paris: Champion.
- Polinsky, Maria, 2005. Antipassive constructions. In Haspelmath, Martin, Matthew S. Dryer, David Gil, & Bernard Comrie (eds.) *The world atlas of language structures*, 438–441. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schikowski, Robert, in prep. *Object-conditioned differential marking in Chintang and Nepali*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Zürich.
- Schikowski, Robert, Netra P. Paudyal, & Balthasar Bickel, 2010. Fluid transitivity in Chintang. Paper presented at the workshop on Valency Classes, MPI for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, 21 August 2010 [<http://www.spw.uzh.ch/schikowski/work/2010-fluid-transitivity.pdf>].
- Weidert, Alfons & Bikram Subba, 1985. *Concise Limbu grammar and dictionary*. Amsterdam: Lobster Publications.
- Witzlack-Makarevich, Alena, 2011. *Typological variation in grammatical relations*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Leipzig.