

【Forum】

Workshop on *The World Atlas of Language Structures* and Typological Analysis

Introduction

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Recent years have witnessed increasing awareness of the needs (i) to preserve and record endangered languages (see Miyaoka and Sakiyama 2002 (eds.), Tsunoda 2005, among others), and (ii) to accumulate and assemble various typological datasets in order to arrive at a better understanding of typological and areal distribution of grammatical phenomena (see Stassen 1997, Yamamoto 2003, among others). Typologists at Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology at Leipzig, Germany have initiated various projects relating to the first objective (i). They recently accomplished a challenging task directly relating to the second objective (ii), through the cooperation and assistance of an international panel of typologists and field linguists. Haspelmath et al. (eds.) (2005), *The World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS)* is the final product of this collective endeavor.

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The forum papers to follow, which were originally presented at the workshop organized by the current author at the spring meeting of LSJ (June 20, 2006; the University of Tokyo, Komaba campus), are intended to bring this important typological research tool to the attention of the Japanese linguistic community, particularly those linguists who pay close attention to typological universals and areal variation.

Though not included in the current issue, the LSJ workshop featured a demonstration of *WALS* by Martin Haspelmath (Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology), one of its four editors, under the title “The World Atlas of Language Structures: Visualization of Linguistic Diversity and Indispensable Research Tool”. *WALS* was portrayed by Haspelmath as giving a comprehensive overview of phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical structural patterns in the world’s languages. As demonstrated by Haspelmath, *WALS* contains 142 world maps, with on average 400 languages per map, showing between two and nine values per feature. It represents a milestone in the study of patterns in world-wide linguistic diversity, placing research in language typology on a new foundation. In addition to the printed book, the *WALS* database is made available in electronic format together with a user-friendly map-generating and search tool (on CD-ROM). The main features of the interactive electronic version were introduced, and examples of its use as a research tool for comparative linguists were demonstrated.

In the second part of the LSJ workshop, two case studies were presented by Prashant Pardeshi and Masahiko Nose that illustrate the potential of *WALS* for typological analysis. The two presentations are included as forum papers in the current issue. The paper by Prashant Pardeshi et al. entitled “Toward a Geotypology of EAT-expressions in Languages of Asia: Visualizing Areal Patterns through *WALS*” pays attention to the areal distribution of expressions in which a Janus-faced verb meaning ‘eat’ takes as its subject a noun phrase bearing an agent as well as patient role, referred to as EAT-expressions, in selected languages of West Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia and Central Asia. Preliminary

results from listing and mapping EAT-expressions in these languages point to the patterns of areal distribution similar to those uncovered by Masica (1976). They further indicate that there is a particular metaphoric extension of EAT involving the subject as undergoer of a quasi-passive act performed by someone or something and this type of semantic extension seems to be characteristic of Central Asia, South Asia, and to some extent also of Northeast Asia. *WALS* proves itself to be an effective tool in the visualization of such an areal phenomenon.

The paper by Masahiko Nose entitled “Diversity of Cases: Using the World Atlas of Language Structures” takes up one feature, namely “number of case” (described under feature no. 49 in *WALS*), and investigates why some languages have a rich morphological case system. With respect to number of cases, *WALS* shows that there are 24 languages that have more than 10 cases. This study discusses two points regarding rich morphological case systems: (i) which kinds of cases the 24 languages have, and (ii) reasons why they have so many cases. It presents the claim that the languages with a rich case system are in fact rich in a particular case, namely the locative case and poor in terms of the diversity of cases.

The current issue also includes the commentary by Tasaku Tsunoda, who led the discussion in the LSJ workshop.

As demonstrated by the two case studies included in this issue, *WALS* provides a linguist with a valuable interactive research tool to investigate geographical distributions of various structural properties of the world’s languages. However, *WALS* is not almighty as the editors are fully aware. For instance, the majority of linguistic features represented in *WALS* are morpho-syntactic properties (e.g. word order, case marking, relative clause), reflecting the concentration of typologists’ interest on morpho-syntactic phenomena. Phonological properties are less well represented and lexical properties like ‘eat’-expressions are clearly underrepresented. Therefore, the linguistic information given in *WALS* should not be taken as a complete and invariable reference, but as a currently most successful approximation of the rich structural diversity of the world’s languages.

It is our collective hope that the forum papers included in this issue will engender interest in *WALS* among linguists in Japan.

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《要 旨》

*The World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS)*と類型論的分析

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近年、言語類型論の分野においては、危機言語の記録・保存・再活性化と類型論的データベースの共有化という二つの目標に向けた様々な取り組みが行われている。後者に関して、マックスプランク発達人類学研究所の言語学部門の類型論研究者が世界の類型論研究者の協力を得て、2005年に *The World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS)* を刊行した。これは、世界の言語の音韻、語彙、形態、統語的特徴の地理的分布を、視覚的な理解しやすさに対して様々な配慮のなされた142枚の世界地図によって示した書籍とCD-ROMからなるデータベースであり、今後の類型論研究にとって非常に重要な貢献を果たすものと期待される。本論は、WALSを用いた類型論研究の可能性を示す二つの論文およびそれらの論文に対するコメントからなるフォーラムの序論をなすものである。

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