**SUMMARIES**

**Kees Hengeveld**

**Parts-of-speech system as a basic typological determinant**

This contribution provides an overview of evidence, accumulated in typological research carried out by Kees Hengeveld and his colleagues over the past two decades, showing that extensive flexibility at the lexical level correlates with a number of properties at various other levels of grammatical organization.

In particular, Hengeveld shows that languages with highly flexible lexemes ensure the functional identifiability of this lexical material through rigid marking of syntactic slots. This ties in with the observation that these languages allow not only single lexical items to appear in multiple functions, but also more complex phrasal and clausal constituents. In addition, Hengeveld shows that lexemes that are flexible in their functional distribution must be stable in other respects: they are not divided into form-based (morphologically or phonologically conditioned) or meaning-based subclasses, and there are also no irregular or suppletive forms of individual lexical items.

What emerges from the conglomerate of data presented by Hengeveld is a structural profile that is typical for languages with flexible word classes. The pervasiveness of this profile correlates with the specific degree of flexibility displayed by the lexical organization of a particular language.

**Jan Don and Eva van Lier**

**Derivation and categorization in flexible and differentiated languages**

Jan Don and Eva van Lier focus on Evans and Osada’s criterion of compositionality: What is the semantic interpretation of formally identical lexical forms used in different syntactic contexts, and what does this imply in terms of the presence or absence of categorial distinctions in the lexicon of specific languages?

Don and Van Lier compare descriptive data of three prominent candidates for flexible languages – Kharia (Munda, India), Tagalog (Malayo-Polynesian, Philippines), and Samoan (Oceanic, Samoa) – with Dutch, the authors’ native language, which displays distinct lexical classes of verbs and nouns. The data show that compositional and non-compositional semantic shifts are attested in all four languages.

The crucial difference between “flexible” and “differentiated languages”, according to Don and Van Lier, resides in that the latter typically combine lexical and syntactic categorization into a single operation, while in former language type they are separated. More specifically, while in differentiated languages roots must combine with a categorical label before they can be further processed by the morphology and syntax, flexible languages can (zero-)derive and combine roots without affecting their distributional freedom. Categorization takes place only at the level of syntactic slots.

The proposal by Don and Van Lier adopts Peterson’s analysis of Kharia (as presented in this volume and previous publications, see e.g. Peterson 2005, 2011), and is also broadly in line with Gil’s analysis of Riau Indonesian, Nordhoff’s analysis of Sri Lanka Malay, Rau’s analysis of Santali, and Bisang’s analysis of Late Archaic Chinese (all this volume). In all these languages that are claimed to display a class of flexible lexemes, the interpretation of lexical material at the syntactic level is shown to be semantically compositional. In addition to this, there may be non-compositional shifts, accompanying non-categorizing (zero-) derivational processes.

**David Gil**

**Riau Indonesian: a language without nouns and verbs**

Gil’s contribution starts out with a general assessment of the suspicious way in which flexible parts of speech are often approached in the (descriptive and theoretical) literature. Indeed, he argues, the term ‘flexibility’ in itself suggests a departure from the assumed default scenario: the presence of distinct lexical categories, in particular of nouns and verbs. Comparing these with a category like dual number, Gil emphasizes that we should assume a newly to be described language *not* to have nouns and verbs until we find evidence to the contrary, rather than following the reverse practice.

The empirical contribution of Gil’s work is an analysis of Riau Indonesian (Malay, Sumatra) and consists of two parts: Firstly, he shows that there are no differences in the behaviour of object-denoting and action-denoting lexical items, with regard to their ability to be used in a set of ten different syntactic construction types. Secondly, Gil demonstrates that Riau Indonesian meets the three criteria for flexibility as proposed by Evans and Osada (2005): compositionality, bidirectionality, and exhaustiveness. To assess the latter criterion Gil randomly selects a set of content words and tests their acceptability in a number of different syntactic constellations.

Gil rounds off with a typological proposal, which views flexibility as a scalar phenomenon that may apply independently to the levels of morphology, syntax, and semantics. This perspective is in accordance with other proposals expressed in recent literature on flexibility (discussed in the previous section), including our own proposal (Section 4.2) and other contributions to the present volume.

**John Peterson**

**Parts of speech in Kharia: a formal account**

This is the first of two case studies on Munda languages, i.e. languages that are closely related to Mundari (see section 3).

The first part of John Peterson’s study is devoted to a general introduction to Kharia (South Munda, India), demonstrating that any combination of lexical material (be they single items or complex phrases) can be used in predicative, referential, and attributive functions, with compositional semantic results.

In the second part, Peterson provides a mono-stratal theoretical account of the Kharia data in terms of two structural categories: TAM/Person-syntagmas and Case-syntagmas. The former consist of a lexical or phrasal ‘content head’ in combination with enclitic markers for TAM and Person, while the latter involve combinations of ‘content heads’ with case markers.

Peterson shows that formally analyzing Kharia as a language without lexical categories of nouns and verbs is not only possible, but also the most economic, adequate, and theory-neutral way of describing this language.

**Felix Rau**

**Proper names, predicates, and the part-of-speech system of Santali**

Felix Rau’s analysis of Santali (another language of the Munda family) starts with a brief outline of the formal properties of predicates and arguments in this language. In the remainder of his investigation, he concentrates on the predicative function, showing that virtually every lexeme can fulfill this function, taking the same set of inflectional distinctions, and receiving compositional semantic interpretations. As a specific test case for this claim, Rau then examines the acceptability of proper names in predicate function. While in some context these items, whose semantics strongly tends towards the referential function, need copula support to be used as main predicates, there are other contexts in which they behave flexibly and compositionally.

The case of proper names in Santali is especially interesting in view of Hengeveld and Rijkhoff’s (2005) critique of the Mundari data as presented by Evans and Osada (2005). As mentioned above in Section 3.2.3, Hengeveld and Rijkhoff argue that Mundari uses a copula with phrasal predicates, but not with bare object-denoting lexemes, presumably because the latter are typically used in property-assigning contexts.

**David Beck**

**Unidirectional flexibility and the noun-verb distinction in Lushootseed**

David Beck’s contribution is unique in the present volume in arguing explicitly in favour of a universal noun-verb distinction. In his view, such a distinction is present not only in the particular language analyzed in the current volume, Lushootseed (a moribund Salishan language of Washington State), but also in languages such as Tongan, which have been proposed as candidates for ‘true’ flexibility (see Broschart 1997). Following Evans and Osada (2005) and Croft (2000, 2001, 2005), Beck argues that semantic shifts associated with the use of formally identical lexemes in different functions – even if these shifts appear to be very regular – must be memorized by speakers as separate, categorically specified items.

With regard to Lushootseed, Beck shows that the noun-verb distinction is only effectively neutralized in a single functional context, namely predication. This means that Lushootseed does *not* satisfy Evans and Osada’s criterion of equivalent combinatorics: while object words can be used as predicates, action words can function as arguments only if they take the form of headless relative clauses or overtly derived action nominals. At the same time, Beck’s careful argumentation takes issue with the long-standing idea that Salish languages are *omni-predicative*, meaning that arguments would always take the form of verbal expressions in these languages.

**William B. McGregor**

**Lexical categories in Gooniyandi**

William McGregor’s chapter on the Western Australian language Gooniyandi provides another illustration of the intricate distributional details that descriptive linguists are faced with when describing the part of speech system of an individual language. Moreover, this case study broadens the range of types of lexical flexibility comprised in the present volume: in addition to languages with a single flexible class of content lexemes (Riau Indonesian, Kharia), and languages that display fully flexible categories alongside functionally specialized verbs and/or nouns (Lushootseed, Sri Lanka Malay – see further below), Gooniyandi displays a class of flexible object- and property-denoting lexemes, which can be used as heads and modifiers in referential expressions (cf. Hengeveld and Van Lier 2010a, 2010b; Van Lier 2009).

McGregor considers the theoretical implications of the Gooniyandi data from various perspectives. Firstly, he compares the frameworks of Functional Discourse Grammar and Semiotic Grammar, taking into account the problem of cross-linguistic comparability of word classes. A second point of interest, mentioned already in Sections 3.2.1 and 3.3, concerns McGregor’s assessment of the semantics of Gooniyandi flexible lexemes. In particular, he proposes a vagueness analysis that is fully compatible with compositional semantic shift, and as such differs from the one advocated by Rijkhoff and Hengeveld (2005; see also Hengeveld et al. 2004).

**Sebastian Nordhoff**

**Jack-of-all-trades: the Sri Lanka Malay flexible adjective**

This study demonstrates that the presence of a class of fully flexible lexemes does not preclude the presence of functionally specialized classes of nouns and verbs. In particular, Nordhoff shows that Sri Lanka Malay has nouns, verbs, and a class that he calls Flexible Adjectives – the latter containing property-denoting lexemes, which are usable not only as modifiers, but also as predicative and referential expressions. As Nordhoff points out, this analysis ties in neatly with recent work on the Hengeveldian typology of part of speech systems, which accounts for a range of cross-linguistic variation that is wider than in earlier work (Hengeveld and Van Lier 2010b; see also Van Lier 2009 and Hengeveld and Van Lier 2010a).

Another important focus of Nordhoff’s investigation concerns his diachronic account of the development of the Sri Lanka Malay system, which he shows to be co-determined by a combination of external and internal factors: language contact with Sinhala and Tamil on the one hand, and the optional application of categorizing derivational morphology on the other hand.

**Walter Bisang**

**Word class systems between flexibility and rigidity: an integrative approach**

The diachronic development of part of speech systems and the influence of language contact on the course of that development are also emphasized by Walter Bisang. His contribution takes as its point of departure the typology of flexibility presented in Section 4.2 above. Bisang explores the empirical limits of this typology by means of case studies of Late Archaic Chinese, Khmer, Classical Nahuatl, and Tagalog.

For the first language, he shows that there is no principled distributional difference between object and action-denoting lexemes, and that the interpretation of these lexemes in non-prototypical functions is semantically regular. Bisang proposes that the Late Archaic Chinese system, in which the function of lexemes is signaled solely by the syntactic slots in which they appear, developed through the loss of morphological devises that were used in an earlier stage of the language.

For Khmer, it is shown that while derivational morphology in this language is flexible to the extent that the same morpheme can be used to derive verbs and nouns, the output forms involving individual lexical bases are clearly categorized as noun or verb, with semantic interpretations that range from very systematic to rather idiosyncratic. Bisang suggests that the Khmer derivational morphemes have not undergone further functional specialization due to the adoption of alternatives strategies from Thai.

More evidence that flexibility can – and should – be attributed to specific grammatical subsystems comes from the analyses of Nahuatl and Tagalog. In particular, while both languages have just a single word class for the purposes of syntactic distribution, distinct lexical categories are relevant at the level of inflectional and derivational morphology.