

Proprial articles in a cross-linguistic perspective.

Thomas Stoltz & Nataliya Levkovych

Bremen/Germany

The cross-linguistic distribution and further aspects of common nouns have been subject to thorough investigations already (Becker 2021) whereas so-called proprial articles are still terra incognita for typologists although there possibly seem to be hundreds of languages worldwide that attest to this class of determiner. The phenomenon is common not only in many Austronesian languages such as Fijian (1) but also in indigenous languages of the Americas such as Hoocák (2).

- (1) Fijian [Austronesian, Fiji] (Schütz 2014: 198)

Sā vaka-yakavi tiko o Jone

TMA MAN-evening CNT PROP Jone

‘Jone is having supper.’

- (2) Hoocák [Sioux, Wisconsin/USA] (Heidenkummer/Helmbrecht 2017: 23)

Virgil=ga Virgil Pettibone=ga Minneapolis ‘eeja cii=šunų

Virgil=PROP Virgil Pettibone=PROP Minneapolis there live=HABIT

‘Virgil, Virgil Pettibone used to live in Minneapolis.’

In these languages, the proprial article contrasts with a common article (=*ra* in Hoocák) or, in Fijian, with a common article *na* and a toponymic article *ko*. Neither do we know how common systems of this kind are outside the Austronesian context nor has it been determined under which structural/functional conditions the systems take what shape. The talk explores the hitherto understudied attestations of proprial articles beyond Austronesian. At the same time, we inquire into the relation between common and proprial articles in our convenience sample of fifty languages from the Americas, Papuasia, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. The orientation is synchronic, the methodology predominantly qualitative (with additional simple frequency counts). Our approach is functional-typological.

Abbreviations

CNT = continuative, HABIT = habitual, MAN = manner, PROP = proprial, TMA = tense-modus-aspect marker,

References

- Becker, Laura. 2021. *Articles in the world's languages*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter.
Heidenkummer, Alexandra & Johannes Helmbrecht. 2017. Form, Funktion und Grammatikalisierung des Eigennamenmarkers =*ga* im Hoocák (Sioux), In Johannes Helmbrecht, Damaris Nübling & Barbara Schlücker (eds.). *Namengrammatik*. 11-32. Hamburg: Buske.
Schütz, Albert J. 2014. *Fijian reference grammar*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.