The Morphosemantics of Locative Focus ‘-an’ in Amis

This presentation aims to explore the uses of the locative focus marker -an as a highly productive nominalizer in Amis, a Formosan language spoken on the south-east coast of Taiwan. As a member of the Austronesian language family, Amis is endowed with the infamous ‘voice’ or ‘focus’ system characteristic of Philippine-type languages. However, our understanding of how the voice system is manifested and utilized in the individual languages is far from complete. While the Amis voice system as a whole has been well researched (Wu 2006, 2007, 2016) the morphosemantics of the Amis locative ‘voice’, specifically its nominalizing, lexicalizing, and prepositional functions, are as yet not adequately understood.

While acceptable in the main clause, where it marks the beneficiary or goal rather than a location per se (1), or attached to nouns in a prepositional phrase to contribute locative definiteness (2), -an appears most frequently in dependent clauses, together with the fossilized prefix mi-, to nominalize the action undergone by the theme (3).

Additionally, however, -an is also prodigious in lexical formation - pairing with a series of prefixes to form sets of circumflexes that each correlate to the generation of a specific noun type. Three of said circumflexes will be identified and discussed: Ta-...-an for what I will call instrument nouns (ta-nanum-an ‘water bottle’ < mi-nanum ‘to drink’ < nanum ‘water’), pi-...-an for nouns of concrete time and place (pi-tilid-an ‘school’ < mi-tilid ‘to read/write’ < tilid ‘book’), and ka-...-an for abstract nouns of state and ‘adverbal nouns’ (ka-orad-an ‘when it rains (abstract)’ < ma-orad ‘to rain’).

Finally, following Huang’s (2005) method of semantic mapping of voice, this presentation will also show the ways in which locative -an takes its semantic core of location and extends it out to other syntactic structures, resulting in a rich and variegated morphosyntactic system of structures conceptually derivative of location.

1) Pafari-an ni Takiyu ku ina tu sapakaulah
Give-LOC GEN Takiyu NOM mother OBL present.
‘Takiyu gave mother a present.’

2) Lalu mihacean ma-rinah kaku tay-ni i busun(-an)
Last year AF-move 1SG.NOM come-here PREP Taitung(-LOC)
‘Last year I moved to (a specific place in) Taitung.’

3) Cuwa ka-‘aredet ku mi-tangtang-an ni Fotol a dateng
NEG AF-delicious NOM MI-cook-LOC GEN Fotol CONJ vegetables
‘The vegetables that Fotol cooked were not good.’

Proposed semantic map:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locative –an</th>
<th>contact with location</th>
<th>recipient of object</th>
<th>demarcation</th>
<th>containment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recipient of action</td>
<td>Place of action</td>
<td>time of action</td>
<td>state/manner of action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrument of action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Wu, Jing-Lan. 2006. Verb Classification, Case Marking, and Grammatical Relations in Amis: ProQuest Dissertations Publishing