

Language contact, language loss and ethnosyntax: reflections from the Pacific

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1 Introduction

Corbett (2001) has written eloquently from a typologist's viewpoint about the tragedy entailed in the loss of grammars when languages die. Linguistic typology sets out to define the notion of 'possible human language', i.e. 'the range of typological features that can be said to characterize language as a specific human faculty.' (Maffi 2001:15), and this requires maximal access to the world's linguistic diversity. Unfortunately it is often small, little-known, isolated languages that provide the data to overthrow an earlier generalisation, and it is many of these whose grammars are being lost through language death (Nettle and Romaine 2000:10–12, Corbett 2001).

Why should it be that typologically rare features tend to be found in the languages of small, isolated communities? Two explanations might be given. The first says that rare features develop at random and are more likely to be preserved in a community whose speakers speak no other language. The second is a putative epiphenomenon of the larger fact that a language is the repository of large parts of its speakers' culture: if a crossculturally unusual way of talking about things becomes grammaticised in that language, then the reflex of that grammaticisation may well be a typologically rare grammatical feature. Such features are the topic of §4 of this chapter.

When one looks around for a label for these features, one which springs to mind is 'ethnosyntax', coined by Wierzbicka (1979). But a little thought reveals that its referents in the literature are in a separate category (§3) from those I discuss in §4, and to avoid confusion I will use the term 'culturally induced construction' for the latter.

Before we can identify and categorise typologically rare grammatical features, we must be able to define the boundaries of morphosyntax vis-à-vis the rest of language. This definition in turn depends on our view of the architecture of language, and the view I take here is an elaboration of an analysis presented by Grace (1981) (§2). I will argue that in the terms of Grace's analysis much or most of what has been labelled 'ethnosyntax' in the literature actually falls outside morphosyntax and is thus inappropriately labelled (§3). I will then suggest that there *are* typologically rare grammatical features, namely culturally induced constructions, that might merit the label 'ethnosyntax', but that there is actually no principled way to draw a boundary between them and grammatical features that are not 'ethnosyntactic' (or not rare). 'Culturally induced' or 'ethnosyntactic' at best denotes the end of a cline, not a bounded category.

2 Contact-induced change and the architecture of language

Grace's view of the architecture of language is based on an analysis of what changes and what remains unchanged when a language undergoes contact-induced change. The boundaries between these components become particularly visible in metatypy, i.e. the restructuring of the morphosyntactic constructions of one of a bilingual community's languages on the model of its speakers' other language. A language which undergoes metatypy has already undergone a large degree of lexical and grammatical calquing (although the converse is not always true; Sasse 1985:79, Ross 2006a, 2006c), and it is important to understand why this should be.

2.1 Calquing

Discussions of language endangerment and language death often assume that when a language dies, a culture dies (cf the title of Woodbury 1993). The minimal assumption is that the lexicon is a linguistic repository of the speech community's cultural knowledge (Wierzbicka 1992, Maffi 2001). When it is lost, that knowledge vanishes too (Bernard 1992, Grenoble 2006, Hale 1992). However, as I show below, the fact that the first stage of contact-induced change in a bilingual community is lexical calquing suggests that this position is too strong.

The illustrations here are drawn from publications on Takia, an Oceanic Austronesian language spoken on Karkar Island off the north coast of New Guinea, which has undergone calquing and metatypy on the model of one or more neighbouring Papuan languages of the Trans-New Guinea family in which speakers of earlier stages of Takia have at one time or another been bilingual. One of these languages was Waskia, a Trans-New Guinea language also spoken on Karkar. Space precludes extensive exemplification, and the reader is referred to Ross (1996, 2001, 2003a, 2006a) for further examples.¹

¹ In these publications I assumed that Waskia was the only metatypic model for contact-induced change in Takia. There

Lexical calquing means that (what are perceived as) corresponding words in Waskia and Takia have come to have the same ranges of meaning. There are too many Waskia/Takia pairs whose members correspond in range of meaning to attribute this semantic correspondence to chance; for example, Waskia *iki*-, Takia *-lonj* ‘hear, listen, obey, understand, know (s.t.), know how to, perceive (except by seeing)’, Waskia *sokel*, Takia *tatu* ‘bone, strength’, Waskia *koma*, Takia *naon* ‘his/her/its face, front, payment’. Calquing also entails the creation of new words on the model of the other languages, and there are calqued derivations like Waskia *baga-ra*, Takia *mado-k* (‘stay’-NOMINALISER) ‘way of life’ and calqued compounds like Waskia *kadi-imet*, Takia *tamol-pein* (man-woman) ‘person’, Waskia *buruk-kasik*, Takia *bor-goun* (pig-dog) ‘animal’, and the distinctly idiomatic Waskia *malan-malan*, Takia *motam-motam* (his eye-his eye) ‘first of all (ADVERB)’. By ‘idiomatic’ I mean semantically non-compositional and thus unpredictable.

The lexicon consists, of course, not simply of lists of words but of terminologies which incorporate much of a community’s knowledge of its environment and of its speakers’ interactions with it. The terminology for talking about, say, the plants in the community’s environment will display some kind of taxonomic organisation. Another taxonomic terminology much loved by earlier generations of anthropologists was kinship, and the Takia kin terms given by McSwain (1977) correspond closely to the Waskia terms given by Barker and Lee (1985).

However, the lexicon is not restricted to taxonomies of words. The lexicon of every language contains a vast number of formulaic sequences, conventional combinations of lexical items that are semantically idiosyncratic (‘idioms’). Many of them are or once were metaphors. Each sequence is a complex lexical item, a pairing of form and meaning that cannot be predicted from the rest of the grammar.² In this respect complex lexical items are like single words (atomic lexical items) and each one needs to be listed in the dictionary. Listed in Table 1 are a number of complex items where calquing has fairly obviously occurred in Takia.³

Closely related to lexical calquing is what we may loosely call ‘grammatical calquing’. Grammatical calquing consists in the creation of paradigms of closed-set Takia items with meanings that match the Waskia model. An obvious case of grammatical calquing in Takia is its postpositions, shown in (1).

(1)	Takia	Waskia
location	<i>na, te</i>	<i>se, te, i</i>
location ‘in’	<i>lo</i>	<i>nuŋi</i>
location ‘on’	<i>fo, fufo</i>	<i>kuali</i>
ablative	—	<i>ko</i>
instrument	<i>nam (= na-mi)</i>	<i>se</i>
referential	<i>o</i>	<i>ko</i>
manner	<i>mi</i>	<i>wam</i>
accompaniment	<i>da</i>	<i>karo</i>

is now reason to think that Bargam (alias Mugil), which neighbours the two Takia-speaking villages on the adjacent mainland, was also a model at an earlier stage (Ross 2006d).

² The term ‘complex lexical item’ is opposed to ‘atomic lexical item’, i.e. lexical word in the terminology of Croft (2001:16–17). A complex lexical item often has compositional semantics, but is unpredictable in the sequence of its components (e.g. *bread and butter*).

³ Examples of complex lexical items can easily be multiplied, but I have eliminated those with Tok Pisin translation equivalents, as they could be a source of Takia–Waskia equivalences or, more probably, could reflect areal idioms. Pronominal forms are glossed in the format exemplified in s:1s, where s: indicates a subject-coreferencing form and 1s is ‘1st person singular’. Possessor pronominals are glossed P:, object pronominals o:. Other abbreviations used in glosses are: ABL ablative, CL classifier, DET determiner, HAB habitual, IMPF imperfect, PL plural, POSTP postposition, PRES present, SBJ subject, SG singular.

Table 1: Takia and Waskia complex lexical items

	Takia	Waskia
‘the palm of my hand’ = ‘my hand’s liver’	<i>bani-g ate-n</i> hand-P:1s liver-P:3s	<i>a-gitiŋ gomaŋ</i> P:1s-hand < P:3s > liver
‘(an) answer’ = ‘face of word’	<i>ru nao-n</i> word face-P:3s	<i>den koma</i> word < P:3s > face
‘I am waiting’ = ‘I do/put my eye’	<i>mala-g ŋu-gane</i> eye-P:1s s:1s-do	<i>motam bete-sam</i> eye do-s:3s
‘I exclude him’ = ‘I fence off his face’	<i>nao-n ŋu-futani</i> face-P:3s s:1s-fence.off	<i>koma kalo-sam</i> < P:3s > face fence.off-s:1s
‘I am dizzy’ = ‘my eye goes round’	<i>mala-g i-kilani</i> eye-P:1s s:3s-go.round	<i>motam gerago-so</i> eye go.round-s:3s
‘I obey him’ = ‘I follow his mouth’	<i>awa-n ŋa-ri</i> mouth-P:3s s:1s-follow	<i>kuriŋ karotu-sam</i> < P:3s > mouth follow-s:1s
‘I disobey him’ = ‘I cut his mouth’	<i>awa-n ŋu-tale</i> mouth-P:3s s:1s-cut	<i>kuriŋ batugar-sam</i> < P:3s > mouth cut-s:1s
‘I correct him’ = ‘I hold his ear’	<i>kukudo-n ŋ-abi</i> ear-P:3s s:1s-hold	<i>dogowa ilu-sam</i> < P:3s > ear hold-s:1s
‘He believes (it)’ = ‘(it is a) truth in his guts’	<i>ilo-n lo rumok</i> inside-P:3s POSTP:in truth	<i>gomaŋ niŋi nuŋuniŋ</i> < P:3s > liver POSTP:in truth
‘I am thinking’ = ‘I put thought’	<i>kankan ŋu-gane</i> thought s:1s-put	<i>kuamin tugu-sam</i> thought put-s:1s

An ancestor of Takia had prepositions, not postpositions, and like other Oceanic languages (Ross 2003b, In press) it probably had fewer prepositions than Takia today has postpositions. The Takia postposition paradigm matches the Waskia almost completely. In this instance, at least, remodelling has entailed the creation of new Takia items to match the Waskia paradigm rather than changing the meaning ranges of old ones. However, at least the Takia postpositions *lo* ‘in’ and *fo, fufo* ‘on’ have been created by the grammaticisation of inherited material (Ross 1996:189-190 or Ross 2001:143).

Linguistically, calquing entails reducing the cognitive load carried by a bilingual speech community by restructuring the semantic organisation of one of its members’ languages on the model of the other, so that the two languages become more readily intertranslatable. If the lexicon is a repository of the speech community’s cultural knowledge, however, calquing also entails massive cultural change comparable with that which occurs in language death. Whatever stock of lexical taxonomies and formulaic sequences Takia had before extensive calquing occurred, that stock is lost to us for ever, despite the fact that Takia remains very much alive. Instead, the lexicon of today’s Takia speakers enshrines the cultural knowledge of Waskia speakers.

The important point to which Table 1 leads is that a language’s stock of metaphors will not necessarily die with the language. If Waskia were to disappear in the next ten years (which is unlikely), the sequences in Table 1 would survive in Takia. Thus a language is not the impermeable container of a culture. The metaphor is misleading. Lexical calquing in Takia makes it very clear that a language’s organisation of meanings can be copied from one language to another. If Waskia were to vanish, its

semantic organisation would largely survive in Takia, and little would be lost. On the other hand, the semantic organisation commanded by speakers of a language ancestral to Takia before calquing and metatypy occurred is completely lost to us despite the fact that, by the canons of comparative linguistics, Takia has survived with continuous transmission from one generation of speakers to the next. The relationship between a language and its semantic organisation is not inviolable: in fact, replacement is probably a rather common event.

To say that language is culturally permeable is of course to say that speech communities themselves are culturally permeable. This is strikingly obvious on Karkar Island, where Waskia speakers and Takia speakers appear to be culturally identical (McSwain 1977). A little to the east is a culture area centred on the coast of the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea where the family membership of a community's language, whether Oceanic or one of several Papuan families, is no guide to the culture of its people (Terrell et al. 1997). The Fataluku-speaking community in East Timor is Trans-New Guinea in language but Austronesian in culture, a situation which seems to have arisen as the result of contact with speakers of Lovaia, an Austronesian language most of whose speakers have now shifted to Fataluku (McWilliam 2004).

Just as lexical calquing matches items in the model language not just by realigning word meanings but also by creating complex lexical items, so grammatical calquing may also extend the functions of an existing morphosyntactic construction or modify it to match one in the model language. An example is the modification of the resultative construction in the Mixe dialect of Basque to form a passive on the Romance model (Haase 1992:101). The resultative, formed with the combination PARTICIPLE-ARTICLE + AUXILIARY (Haase 1992:96) and illustrated in (2a) encodes a state as relevant at a discourse-related point of time. The 'passive' in (2b) and (2c) adds the participle of the verb 'be' before the intransitive auxiliary. The agent-of-passive may be expressed by a noun phrase in the partitive case, as in (2c), translating an agent adjunct with the Gascon preposition *de*. The addition of *izan*, the participle of 'be', represents a structural change, but its sequential order is determined by the existing Basque construction that places an auxiliary after the main verb. As the subscripts in the Basque of (2c) and the French of (2d) show, there has been no adoption of Romance constituent order. The Mixe Basque construction is thus a grammatical calque, but it does not entail a full-scale restructuring of the syntax of the construction.

- (2) a. *Ama han egon-a zen.*
 Mother there stay.PARTIC-ART PRET(ABS:3S)
 'Mother had been living there [when I was born].' (Haase 1992:100)
- b. *Aita salba-tü-a izan-a da.*
 Father save-PARTIC-ART **be.PARTIC-ART** PRES(ABS:3S)
 'Father has been saved.' (Haase 1992:102)
- c. *A[b]antxü [xakür bat-eta-[r]ik]₁ ausiki₂ izan₃ tzün₄.*
 almost **dog one-TRN-PART** bite.PARTIC be.PARTIC PRET(ABS:3S)
 'He was almost bitten by a dog.' (Haase 1992:132)
- d. *[Il a]₄ été₃ mordu₂ [par un chien]₁*
 he have be-PARTIC bite-PARTIC by a dog
 'He was bitten by a dog.'

2.2 Metatypy

A language which undergoes metatypy, like Takia, goes a step further by imitating not only the constituency of constructions in the model language but also their syntax. The boundary between grammatical calquing and metatypy is hard to define (Ross 2006a), but there is a clear difference in degree

between the Mixe Basque innovation illustrated in (2.1) and the Takia innovation in (3). Here the early Oceanic SVO transitive construction reflected in quite closely related Ronji in (3a) has been replaced by the Takia SOV construction in (3b) on the model of the Waskia SOV construction in (3c).⁴ Subscripts indicate how Takia constituent order imitates Waskia and differs from Ronji.

(3) a. Ronji:

*ŋa*₁ *to*₂ *ŋa-ŋaŋ*₃ *saula*₄
 I IRREALIS S:IS-eat banana
 ‘I shall eat banana’

b. Takia:

*ŋai*₁ *fud*₄ *ŋ-ani*₃ =*wa*₂
 I banana S:IS-eat = IRREALIS
 ‘I shall eat banana’

c. Waskia:

*ane*₁ *galuk*₄ *n*₃ -*ako*₂
 I banana eat -DESIDERATIVE
 ‘I shall eat banana’

It is self-evident that Takia morphemes, both lexical and grammatical, have cognates in Ronji: Ronji *ŋa*, Takia *ŋai* ‘I (free pronoun)’; Ronji *ŋa-*, Takia *ŋ-* ‘I (subject-coreferencing prefix)’; Ronji *-ŋaŋ*, Takia *ani* ‘eat’. Takia retains indigenous bound morphemes and lexicon (*fud* ‘banana’ also reflects an Oceanic root) but rearranges grammatical words in imitation of the Trans-New Guinea pattern reflected in Waskia. This is true of all Takia clausal and phrasal constructions (Ross 1996, 2001, 2003a, 2006a).

Metatypy represents a step beyond calquing in the reduction of bilingual speakers’ cognitive load by extending the restructuring of one of their languages on the model of the other. It does not, however, represent cultural change as calquing does. Whereas lexical items, both atomic and complex, carry substantive—and therefore culturally relevant—meaning, morphosyntactic constructions represent abstractions over a large number of potential phrases or clauses and have only schematic meanings. These meanings are of three kinds. Firstly, they include propositional functions ranging from reference to an entity to predication of a state or event. Thus the transitive construction typically predicates of an entity *x* that *x* acts upon an entity *y* (Croft 2001). Secondly, in many languages, at least, certain schematic constructions, like English topicalisation (*That film I haven’t seen*), have information structure functions (Lambrecht 1994). Thirdly, in many languages certain schematic constructions, like the English declarative, interrogative and imperative, encode conventionalised speech-act functions.⁵ None of these three kinds of function is culture-specific. Typologists’ assume that speakers of all languages use their morphosyntax to perform the same set of propositional functions of reference, modification and predication, and that these functions have the same subfunctions, e.g. one can predicate an action (‘*x* went’), a property (state) (‘*x* is big’), a location (‘*x* is at school’), identity

⁴ So much Oceanic comparative evidence is available that it is certain that Arop-Lokep and Ronji reflect an inherited set of syntactic patterns. The history of the Oceanic languages of the north coast of New Guinea is reconstructed by Ross (1988:120–189).

⁵ I write ‘conventionalised’ as it is clear, for example, that the English interrogative has a variety of functions besides seeking information. In appropriate contexts *Why’s the window open?* requests action, not information.

(‘*x* is my mother’) or a classification (‘*x* is a teacher’) (Croft 2001:84–104, Croft 2003:183–188).⁶ They also assume that information-structural and declarative/interrogative/imperative functions are universal, but that only some languages partially encode them with morphosyntactic constructions: others rely entirely on prosody. Indeed, without these assumptions there could be little typology, as these functions provide categories for crosslinguistic comparison.⁷

If these assumptions are correct, then metatypy does not entail cultural change in the same sense as calquing, as it does not affect the organisation of substantive meaning. Instead it alters morphosyntactic structures which encode universal functions.

Why should calquing precede metatypy? Because metatypy affects morphosyntactic constructions, and constructions are generalisations over a large number of potential phrases and clauses. Many of these phrases and clauses are stored by speakers as complex lexical items, and I infer that it is only as a large proportion of that lexical stock becomes readily intertranslatable that the way is made clear for intertranslatability at the abstract level of the construction. Some languages, of course, never make it across this barrier, apparently because the constructional differences between the speakers’ languages are too great. One such case is Mixe Basque. Another appears to be Maltese (Drewes 1994).

2.3 Calquing, metatypy and the architecture of language

On the basis of what happens to languages like Takia in extreme contact situations, Grace (1981:23) proposes a revised view of the architecture of language. His inspiration is Labov’s (1971) commentary on Gumperz’ study of the well known trilingual contact situation at Kupwar on the Indo-Aryan/Dravidian border in India (Gumperz 1969, Gumperz and Wilson 1971). In the Kupwar varieties of Urdu, Marathi, and Kannada, calquing and metatypy have led to morpheme-for-morpheme intertranslatability between them. All that distinguishes the languages is their phonological form. Their organisation of meaning and their morphosyntactic constructions —Grace calls the two together ‘content form’—match each other, seemingly completely. In the course of calquing and metatypy, phonological form has remained constant whilst content form has been replaced, and Grace argues that phonological form and content form are therefore the two primary components of language.

Grace also observes that content form falls into semantic organisation (his ‘content substance’) and morphosyntax. He does not discuss this division to the same degree as the first, but it is noteworthy that it encapsulates the distinction between what is affected by calquing (semantic organisation) and what is affected by metatypy (morphosyntax). That is, language contact processes again provide evidence for separate components.

The listing in (4) summarises Grace’s architecture:

- (4) a. phonological form
- b. content form
 - i. morphosyntax (constructions)
 - ii. semantic organisation (content substance)

⁶ This is not Grace’s view. One of his assumptions is

That no clear boundary in terms of their functions can be drawn between the ‘structure’ of a language and its vocabulary, and therefore that grammars of different languages are no more functionally equivalent to one another than are the languages a wholes. (Grace 1987:10)

⁷ As well as linguistic typology, at least two theories of grammar have been based on these assumptions, namely Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar (e.g. Halliday 2004) and Dik’s Functional Grammar (Dik 1997) .

My use of ‘morphosyntax’ here is narrower than some scholars’. Not only am I excluding phonological form, but I am using it to denote only combinatorial (syntagmatic) patterns. Morphosyntax is often treated as having a paradigmatic dimension, in that most of the positions in most constructions are filled by an item selected from a paradigm. It is self-evident that in the Takia clause in, for example, *ilo-g saen* [inside-P:IS bad] ‘my inside is bad’ (= ‘I am angry’) the subject slot could be occupied by any number of noun phrases (any NP of which one could predicate ‘badness’) and the predicate slot by one of a number of adjective (phrase)s. These are more or less open-class items. It is also obvious that the suffix *-g* ‘my’ could be replaced by any member of the class of possessor suffixes (*-n* ‘her/his’, *-d* ‘their’ etc). Here, however, an odd dichotomy arises. In the conventional grammar–lexicon model, open-class paradigms are attributed to the lexicon, but closed-class items like the Takia possessor suffixes belong to the grammar or morphosyntax.

The logic underlying this division is entirely pragmatic: open-class items must be described in the dictionary because there is no other practical way to record them. Closed-class items can be included in the grammar because they are descriptively manageable. I have no practical objection to this, but it does mask the fact that the behavioural potential morphemes denoting possessors, subjects, objects, number, gender, tense, aspect, mood and so on also encode conceptual categories, delimiting the denotation and reference of the open-class item with which they co-occur (Croft 2003:95–99). Thus behavioural potential categories belong to the semantic organisation of the language, along with open classes, rather than to the morphosyntax. What is morphosyntactic is the syntagmatic fact that the possessor morphemes in Takia are suffixes which fill the final slot of an inalienably possessed noun.

This may appear to be hairsplitting, but the treatment of members of closed-class paradigms as meaning-bearing units is borne out by the evidence of calquing, which adjusts the ranges of meaning of both open-class lexical items and closed-class items like the postpositions of Takia, as we have seen. What is more, some of the Takia postpositions reflect the grammaticisation of independent open-class lexemes (Ross 1996:189-190, Ross 2001:143) and in the grammar–lexicon framework one is left wondering when a grammaticised item ceases to belong to the lexicon and joins the grammar.

Significantly, whilst Grace arrived at his account of the components of language via the study of contact-induced change, other linguists have reached similar accounts through other subdisciplines. In Levelt’s (1992) model of what happens when a person speaks, when I decide to say something, my first act is access the relevant lexeme(s), i.e. units of semantic organisation. Next I place the lexemes I have accessed in morphosyntactic structures, giving a piece of what Grace calls ‘content form’, which I finally encode phonologically, ready for utterance. Similarly, in Langacker’s Cognitive Grammar ‘phonological structures’ are Grace’s phonological form, ‘semantic structures’ are his content substance, and ‘symbolic structures’ are morphosyntax (Langacker 1987:25–27, 35–36). In Croft’s (2001:17) Radical Construction Grammar, Grace’s content form is the ‘syntax-lexicon continuum’. The continuum varies on two parameters, according to whether units are complex or atomic and whether they are substantive or schematic.⁸ ‘Substantive’ means ‘consisting of actual morphemes’, i.e. lexical items and behavioural morphemes. ‘Schematic’ means ‘consisting of syntactic categories and constructions’: morphosyntax consists of schematic constructions, in other words, of that dimension of substantive constructions which can be schematically described.

In the remainder of this chapter I will defend the view that morphosyntax does not encode culture-specific meanings, but (in §4) I will point to ways in which morphosyntactic constructions may nonetheless be culturally induced.

⁸ Croft (2001:16–17) uses the term ‘specific’ in his table, but ‘substantive’ in his text. The latter seems a little less ambiguous.

3 The grammaticisation of culture-specific lexicon

The term ‘ethnosyntax’ received fresh currency in the title of Enfield (2002b): *Ethnosyntax: explorations in grammar and culture*. (Enfield 2002b:3, 7) writes that ethnosyntax concerns associations between ‘the cultural knowledge, attitudes and practices of speakers, and the morphosyntactic resources they employ in speech’. In its narrow sense it ‘refers to the direct encoding of cultural ideas in the semantics of morphosyntax’.⁹

Below I will examine three cases that appear to meet the criteria for ethnosyntax as they are exemplified in the volume, and the first, Rumsey (2002), is a contribution to Enfield (2002b). Rumsey, however, is rather tentative about whether his chosen case qualifies as ethnosyntax (2002:281), and at least four more of the ten contributors (Newman, Pawley, Langacker, Simpson) share this tentativeness. This suggests that there may be a problem with the ‘encoding of cultural ideas in the semantics of morphosyntax’. The problem, it seems to me, is that the contributors generally describe closed sets of items that result from the grammaticisation of open-class lexical items. Although the grammar–lexicon model regards such paradigms as a component of grammar, in its paradigmatic dimension a closed set of this kind belongs to the semantic organisation of the language, not to its morphosyntax, and the label ‘ethnosyntax’ is thus somewhat wide of the mark.

In her contribution Simpson (2002:296) comments:

I assume that grammaticalization has as a precondition frequency, especially frequency of co-occurrence [references omitted]. Why bother to grammaticalize something that you do not say very often?

She then cites Wilkins (1991:213):

[I]t is cultural interests and concerns which determine what are common topics, themes, and relevant information in discourse, and it is these factors which set the stage for, and constrain the nature of, possible grammaticalization. This is not to say such factors will definitely lead to grammaticalization, but they constitute prerequisites for it.

Essentially, Simpson’s and Wilkins’ position is that all grammaticisation is culture-driven. However, we can imagine a cline running from concerns that are common to most or all cultures to concerns that are specific to particular cultures. On this understanding, to talk about the grammaticisation of culture-specific lexicon is to talk about the grammaticisation of words at one end of the cline: these words either have no obvious translation equivalents in other languages or they divide up a region of semantic space in an unusual way or they are used in an unusual manner.

3.1 The existential and possessive constructions in Ku Waru

Rumsey (2002:263–267) offers a case in Ku Waru (Trans-New Guinea, Chimbu-Wahgi family). The clause in (5) is existential or possessive, depending on the absence or presence of the pronoun:

- (5) (na) lku-yl angaly-ilym
(I) house-DEF stand-HAB:3S
‘There is a house’ or ‘I have a house’

As the gloss indicates, in other contexts the verb means ‘stand’. There are, however, four other verbs which serve in these constructions. Some nouns typically occur with just one verb, as shown in (6), others with more than one, with contextually determined differences in meaning.

⁹ The term ‘ethnosyntax’ was coined by Wierzbicka (1979) to mean what Enfield calls ethnosyntax in its narrow sense. In Enfield’s broad sense ethnosyntax concerns culturally mediated uses or interpretations of pieces of grammar.

(6)	<i>angaly-</i>	‘stand’	<i>mong</i> ‘eye’, <i>ki</i> ‘arm’, <i>lku</i> ‘house’
	<i>mol-</i>	‘stay’	<i>no</i> ‘water’, <i>uj</i> ‘tree’, <i>yab</i> ‘people’
	<i>le-</i>	‘put in place’	<i>kupulanum</i> ‘road’, <i>on</i> ‘corpse’, <i>kumoni</i> ‘money’
	<i>pe-</i>	‘sleep’	<i>numan</i> ‘conscience’, <i>pudumong</i> ‘trouble’, <i>boni</i> ‘heaviness’
	<i>o-</i>	‘come’	<i>kumbi</i> ‘nose’, <i>kidipidi</i> ‘whiskers’, <i>kidipaim</i> ‘finger-/toenail’

It is self-evident that what we are confronted with in Rumsey’s data is the grammaticisation of five verbs into a paradigm.¹⁰ We may speak of grammaticisation insofar as these are the only verbs that can occur in the two constructions represented in (5) and they have undergone a degree of functional extension in their adoption as existential verbs. The contrasts among their meanings are subtle and clearly culture-specific. But is this morphosyntax? In terms of the grammar–lexicon model, yes, as the verbs constitute a closed class. But in the terms of §2.3, the verbs belong to the semantic organisation of the language. It is the schematic constructions instantiated in (5) that are morphosyntax, and these appear to be culture-neutral insofar as they serve, as far as I can tell, the same propositional functions as existential and possessive clause constructions in other languages: predicating the existence of something, and predicating of a possessor the fact that s/he possesses something.

3.2 Volitionality affixes in Cupeño

Tighter grammaticisations affecting culture-specific lexical items are not too hard to find. In an oft quoted paper (e.g. Langacker 1994:39–40, Enfield 2002b:9), Hill (1969) explains that a Cupeño (Uto-Aztecan, southern California) speaker must make a choice about volitionality affixation every time s/he uses a verb. If the action is ‘culturally, psychologically, or physiologically required of [the speaker], or is completely natural and expected in a given situation’, the verb does not have a volitionality affix. If the action is performed on purpose as a matter of choice, the verb has the suffix *-ine*, and if the action or state is imposed on the actor by accident or by someone else’s volition, the verb has the suffix *-yaxe*:

(7) Cupeño:

- a. *neʔen háwnen*
neʔen háwe-ne-ine
I sing-S:IS:PAST-VOLITIONAL
‘I sang (a song)’
- b. *neʔen háwneyex*
neʔen háwe-ne-yaxe
I sing-S:IS:PAST-NONVOLITIONAL
‘I sang in the only way I know’ (Hill 1969:348, 350)

An interesting fact—to which Hill draws no particular attention—is that in the past tense (but not in the present) the volitional affixes *follow* the subject coreferencing marker. This implies that they are not closely bound to the verb stem but reflect the grammaticisation of independent lexical items.

Some instances of the suffixes are lexicalised, but this does not undermine the inference of grammaticisation, since the cultural representations reflected in a grammaticisation were present at the *beginning* of the grammaticisation process. They do not necessarily hold sway now (Simpson 2002:296).

¹⁰ My view of grammaticisation is broader than the current mainstream position. I understand, with Himmelmann (1997:33), that it is constructions that are grammaticised. Much mainstream grammaticisation theory deals with the semantic bleaching and phonological erosion of words and morphemes, but these processes take place in the context of constructional grammaticisation. They are common, but not necessary, outcomes.

3.3 Possessive classifiers in Oceanic languages

There are certain morphosyntactic categories, like evidentials and noun classifiers, which are crosslinguistically quite common but far from universal. These are obvious places to look for grammaticisations of culture-specific lexicon. I will examine certain noun classifiers here.

Sortal and mensural classifiers are relatively common across the world's languages, but possessive classifiers, which specify the kind of relationship that obtains between possessor and possessum, are rather rare, and are common only in the Oceanic subgroup of Austronesian (Seiler 1983:35-39, Carlson and Payne 1989, Croft 1994, Aikhenvald 2000:133-137). All languages with possessive classifiers make a primary distinction between inalienable and alienable possession. Inalienable possession in Oceanic is usually encoded by attaching the possessor suffix directly to the possessum noun, as in (8a). Alienable possession is encoded by attaching the suffix to a classifier. Sinaugoro (Western Oceanic, Papua New Guinea) reflects a common type with a two-way distinction between consumable possession (*ya-* in 8b) and default possession (*ye-* in 8c).

(8) Sinaugoro:

- a. *au yima-gu*
D:IS hand-P:IS
'my hand'
- b. *au ya-gu dauya/nanu*
D:IS CL:FOOD-P:IS banana/water
'my banana' (= 'the banana which I eat')
'my water' (= 'the water which I drink')
- c. *au ye-gu numa/dauya*
D:IS CL:DEFAULT-P:IS house/banana
'my house/banana' (author's fieldnotes)

A distinction can be made among Oceanic languages between those with few (1–3) possessive classifiers like Sinaugoro in (8)¹¹ and those with many (eight or more), like Mussau (Oceanic, Papua New Guinea) in (9).¹²

(9) Mussau (St Matthias Islands) (Ross 2002:157) :

- a. *ane-qi paua ateba*
food-P:IS dog SG:I
'my dog (to eat)'
- b. *kie-qi paua ateba*
animal-P:IS dog SG:I
'my dog'
- c. *ai-qi ai*
tree-P:IS tree
'my (tall) tree'
- d. *ane-qi ai etea*
food-P:IS tree SG:II
'the stick that hit me'
- e. *uma-qi uri eteba*
earth-P:IS banana SG:I
'my banana plant'
- f. *ane-qi uri eteba*
food-P:IS banana SG:I
'my banana to eat'

¹¹ Languages with three classifiers divide consumable possession into food and drink. Languages with one classifier have lost the consumable/default distinction and now distinguish only between inalienable and alienable possession.

¹² SG:I and SG:II are singular markers for two sortal noun classes.

g. *ai-qi niu*
 tree-P:IS coconut
 ‘my coconut tree’

h. *ropi-qi niu*
 drink-P:IS coconut
 ‘my coconut to drink’

The Mussau classifiers include *ane-* ‘food, cause of suffering’, *ropi-* ‘drink’, *ai-* ‘tree, tall plant’, *iema-* ‘knife, cutting instrument’, *uma-* ‘soil’, *kie-* ‘domestic animal’, *qolu-* ‘juicy substance’, *kalu-* ‘gift’, and the default classifier *une-*. The first four also occur as independent nouns with a possessor suffix, each with the first of the meanings given above. The fifth, *uma-* ‘soil’, reflects Proto Oceanic **quma* ‘garden’, but is not recorded in this sense in Mussau.

The history of Oceanic possessive classifiers contains a few small puzzles. How come a majority of Oceanic languages have few classifiers, and a minority, scattered across the family, have many classifiers? And how come that the classifiers in languages with many are often not cognate? The answer seems to be that at some interstage prior to Proto Oceanic, one way of talking about semantically alienable possession was to use an appositional structure like the one in (9) and to say, for example, ‘my-food dog’ (9a), using a generic noun like ‘food’ as a quasi-classifier of the possessive relationship. This evidently reflected a strong concern with differentiating possessive relationships which in most of the world’s languages are collapsed into a single category. The structure itself became conventionalised, and at least two of the nouns occurring most frequently in the ‘food’ slot, namely ‘food’ and ‘drink’, became grammaticised as monosyllables.¹³ Other nouns continued in use in this structure in Proto Oceanic, however, and any semantically appropriate generic noun could be used as a quasi-classifier. The languages with many classifiers like Mussau have continued this situation, each somewhat narrowing the set of classifier nouns in its own way. The languages with few classifiers have generally retained only the tightly grammaticised monosyllabic classifiers.

One group of Oceanic languages, those of Micronesia, retains a large number of classifiers in many of its members. I noted above that grammaticised categories can remain long after speakers have ceased to be concerned about them. Conversely, it is a reasonable hypothesis that speakers of languages which retain many classifiers themselves retain a concern with differentiating possessive relationships. Keating (1997), in an ethnographic account of speakers of one Micronesian language, Pohnpeian, suggests that possessive classifiers are associated with rank in a chiefly society. (Classifiers are shown in parentheses in what follows.) Land (*sap^we*) is of crucial importance, as it is in all Oceanic societies. In traditional times the island belonged to the chief, but was conceived as the mother of food (*kene*) and drink (*nime*) for the whole community as well as the place where individuals built their homes (*im^we* ‘buildings’). The sharing of food (*p^wekitā* ‘shared out portion of festive food’) is determined hierarchically, both at community events and within the family (*nā* ‘one’s children, animals, trees’, *sawi* ‘clan members’, *kisē* ‘relatives’, *ullepe* ‘maternal uncles’, *wāwā* ‘nieces and nephews’). One’s fishing catch (*seike*) is shared hierarchically, the best presented to the chief and to others of higher status. Personal items, especially those close to the body, can be conduits of power: headrests (*uluŋe*), bed coverings (*ipe*), sleeping mats (*kie*), earrings (*tsie*) and other items of finery (*m^ware* ‘garlands, finery’). The examples in (10), from Rehg (1981:182–183), give a small taste of how the system is used. The default classifier is *ā*. The classifiers are in their third person singular form.

¹³ Proto Oceanic **ka-* < **kana-* ‘food’, **m^wa-* < **unuma-* ‘drink’ (Sinaugoro *ya-* reflects **ka-*). The two nouns were nominalisations of **kani* ‘eat’ and **unum* ‘drink’.

- (10) *nā ūt* 'his banana tree'
ā ūt 'his (harvested) banana'
kene ūt 'his banana for eating'
nā p^wuʃsak 'his son'
rie p^wuʃsak 'his brother'
kisē p^wuʃsak 'his young male relative'
wāwā p^wuʃsak 'his nephew'
sawi p^wuʃsak 'his young male clansman'

Wilkins (1993) argues that among the Mparntwe Arrernte of central Australia, a sortal classifier marks the place of an entity in the kin–land–totemism system. If classifier systems are genuinely meaningful, then we would expect that when one community becomes bilingual in the language of a second community and adopts its cultural representations, the classifier system would be calqued. I know of no relevant cases in Papua New Guinea, but precisely this has happened in the Vaupés area of northwest Amazonia, according to a case study by Gomez-Imbert (1996:especially p448) She shows how calquing has led to the superimposition of Baniwa (Arawakan) sortal classifier categories onto the still existing Kubeo (Tukanoan) system. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, the classifiers in both languages are encoded by bound morphemes. This is yet one more instance of cultural permeability.

4 Culturally induced constructions

To qualify as ‘cultural’ under the model in §2.3 a construction would have exclusively to encode a propositional function which was (i) demonstrably not common to languages generally and (ii) preferably relatable to other aspects of the culture of the speech community. I know of no evidence that culture-specific propositional functions occur. There is, however, another sense in which a morphosyntactic construction might be labelled culture-specific or ‘ethnosyntactic’, and this is the topic of this section.

The definition of ‘culture’ is a notoriously fraught issue in anthropological theory, and so consequently is the relationship between culture and language (Foley 1997:15–25). A school of thought which has proven attractive to linguists is cognitive anthropology. Thus Newman (2002:75) writes:

I follow Langacker (1994) in my thinking about this issue and the relationship between language, culture, and cognition in general. Cognition is seen as a necessary prerequisite for any meaningful linguistic or cultural reality. Human language and culture can only exist at all because of the human minds that bring them into existence. Thus language and culture are seen as facets of cognition rather than being totally independent of it.

For many linguists, the outcome of this position is that culture consists of the cultural representations enshrined in the lexicon of a language (§2.1). This is fine as far as it goes, but it is not the whole story. Goodenough, one of the doyens of cognitive anthropology, writes in a well known passage:¹⁴

A society’s culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members...Culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, peoples, behavior, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the form of things that people have in mind, their models of perceiving, reacting and otherwise interpreting them. (Goodenough 1957:167)

¹⁴ Cited by both Duranti (1997:27) and Foley (1997:19). For a critique of Goodenough’s position, see Foley (1997:20).

Thus knowing how to do things acceptably is a part of one's culture. Duranti (1997:37) comments that (in Western societies) standing in line to buy a theatre ticket implies knowledge about how to get a seat for a public performance; it also communicates notions of public order, individual rights and social cooperation. To refuse to stand in line communicates either an ignorance or a defiance of these norms and what they imply. Knowing how to use language in a manner acceptable to one's interlocutors is also part of one's culture, and failure to use it acceptably is liable to lead to miscommunication.

Knowing how to use language involves appropriateness, grammaticality and idiomaticity. One must also know what kind of utterance and what conventionalised way of talking is appropriate at what point in what speech situation or speech event (Pawley 2001:231–240). For example, if I meet someone coming in the opposite direction along a path in Takia country, I say *Dugo w-ao=da* (where s:2S-go = IMPF) 'Where are you going?' As well as uttering the clause correctly, I need to know that this is the appropriate greeting, and that, despite its interrogative form, a direct reply is not necessary (but is acceptable).

Eades (1996) shows how views of rights to information and questioning usage in middle-class Anglo-Celtic Australian English differ from S.E. Queensland Aboriginal English to such a degree that questioning of the latter by the former is liable to fail completely, even leading to miscarriages of justice. The use of questions as a speech-act category (and consequently of interrogative constructions) is far more limited in Aboriginal than in Anglo-Celtic English (Eades 1982). This, incidentally, is yet another instance of the cultural permeability of language, as it is reasonably certain that S.E. Queensland Aboriginals have retained their appropriateness practices from their former language(s).

I agree with Hopper, Bybee and others (Bybee 2005, Bybee and Hopper 2001, Givón 1979, Haiman 1994, Hopper 1987, 1988, 1998) that grammar 'emerges' out of patterns in discourse. Bybee and Hopper (2001:3) write:

The notion of a language as a monolithic system has had to give way to that of a language as a massive collection of heterogeneous constructions, each with affinities to different contexts and in constant structural adaptation to usage ...

Cross-cultural differences among speech events can involve ways of talking which are crosslinguistically unusual, and we can expect some of these to lead to the emergence of crosslinguistically unusual morphosyntactic constructions. When a construction continues to embody a non-universal discourse pattern, I will label it as 'culturally induced', but with the strong rider that if all constructions are shaped by discourse, then a grammar presents us with a cline running from crosslinguistically common construction types with universal functions through to the rarest construction types that have emerged from unusual talking conventions. There is really no principled way of dividing the cline into 'universal' and 'culturally induced'. To say that a construction is culturally induced is only to say that it lies nearer to the latter end of the cline. Note, too, that to say that a construction is culturally induced is not the same thing as saying that it 'carries culture' in the sense that the lexicon does.

I am aware of three mechanisms by which a culturally induced construction may come into being. In the first, practices based on views of appropriateness lead to particular distributions of constructions and eventually to changes in their forms. Eades (1982) notes that the English yes–no interrogative construction formed by subject–auxiliary inversion (*Were you very young then?*) is hardly used in S.E. Queensland Aboriginal English, but an uninverted form with rising intonation and an optional tag seeking confirmation (*You were you very young then (were you/eh)?*) is common. These generalisations seem to have been categorical for some speakers when Eades conducted her research in the 1970s. Thus the culturally mediated use of certain English constructions has led to changes in interrogative morphosyntax.

The second kind of culturally induced construction arises when what Enfield calls a 'broad sense' piece of ethnosyntax becomes, by frequency of use, a 'narrow sense' piece of ethnosyntax. That is, a morphosyntactic device which does not itself encode culture-specific meaning acquires a culturally

mediated use which skews its distribution, leading to the semanticisation of a pragmatic inference (cf Hopper and Traugott 1993:75–77):

Semantic change involves, first, a stage where a meaning *p* of an expression regularly gives rise, via pragmatic inference, to an interpretation *q*, then, secondly, a stage where *q* becomes wholly conventionalized as an alternative *meaning* of the expression ... (Enfield 2002b:13)

Culture plays a role in this process by providing the culture-specific premiss on which the pragmatic inference is based.

Two cases from the literature involving the rise of honorific forms come to mind. In Nahuatl (Uto-Aztecan) the second-person form of the reflexive causative construction ('you cause yourself to...') is used as a second-person honorific verb (Tuggy 1979, cited by Langacker 1994:37). This was already conventional usage in the Classical Nahuatl of the sixteenth century. In Japanese the use of the passive/potential as a non-passive honorific form emerged during the Heian period and became conventionalised (Sansom 1928:163).

The third mechanism which creates a culturally induced construction involves grammaticisation, such that the frequent use of a certain structural string in a particular discourse context leads to the rise of a new morphosyntactic construction. Three instances are briefly described below.

4.1 Associated path affixes in Warumungu

Simpson's contribution to Enfield (2002b) concerns the story of how (what were probably) deictic motion verb forms have been grammaticised as 'associated path' affixes in Warumungu (Pama-Nyungan, central Australia). An associated path affix, bolded in (11), appears on a verb to indicate actual or metaphorical movement in a deictic direction, concurrent with the activity or stance predicated by the verb:

- (11) Warumungu:
- a. *amanya-arnpa kiwari kakirr-**apan***
that.same-still child cry-HITHER:PRES
'That same child is coming crying.'
 - b. *ngalanya yuwaji ngunjjirr-**anta** kajunu*
this road lie-AWAY:PRES north
'This road goes north.' (Simpson 2002:297)

Specifying deictic direction in tandem with activities and stances which lack semantically inherent motion seems unusual enough to be regarded as a culturally induced construction. The diachronic argument for their grammaticisation is presented in Simpson (2001). Warlpiri, related to Warumungu, maintains a situation which probably obtained in Warumungu before grammaticisation took place. Warlpiri has a productive compounding process whereby sequences occur consisting of the participle of an activity or stance verb and the independent form of a deictic directional verb (bolded), as in (12):

- (12) Warlpiri:
- pirli ka parnta-parntarri-nja =ma =**ya-ni***
hill PRES crouch-crouch-PARTICIPLE =ALONG =GO-NONPAST
'The hills stretch out in front.' (Simpson 2001:180)

The Warumungu construction in (11) probably reflects a grammaticisation of the construction like the one in (12), and the compound in the latter in turn represents the earlier grammaticisation of a biclausal construction reflecting a narrative habit of accompanying activities and stances with a direction verb.

4.2 Spatial location constructions in New Guinea and Island Melanesia

Numerous languages have paradigms of locational and directional morphemes which express culture-specific ways of looking at one's environment, and this is certainly true of the islands around New Guinea and in Island Melanesia, where geocentric systems prevail which relate location either literally or metaphorically to the physical geography of the island. Such systems are found in the languages of Halmahera (west of New Guinea), whether Austronesian, Papuan or the local dialect of Malay (Bowden 2005), and across the Oceanic languages of Island Melanesia (François 2003, 2004). These systems have evidently been copied from Papuan languages to Austronesian (or perhaps vice versa) and into lingua franca Malay (Bowden 2005)—another example of cultural permeability. What is of particular interest here, however, is that cultural attention to spatial location has given rise to a new phrasal construction whereby a locative phrase (e.g. a prepositional phrase) must be preceded by one of a closed set of locative adverbs indicating geographic position or direction relative to the speaker. In other words, a locative phrase must contain a locative adverb, and this adverb optionally takes a prepositional or noun phrase further specifying the location referentially.

The most detailed account of such a system is Mosel (1982), writing about Tolai (Oceanic). The locative phrase in each example in (13) begins with a locative adverb from the set in (14). These adverbs are themselves the outcome of an extended grammaticisation process that has reduced phrasal expressions to words (Ross 2004), but of particular interest are the locative phrases like *ura ra pi* in (13a), where in some syntactic theories the adverb *ura* (ALLATIVE-down) would be said to 'govern' the noun phrase *ra pi* (DET ground), where the determiner *ra* has the form which it would otherwise have after a preposition. In the locative phrases in (13b) and (13c), *a-ka-nama liu ta ra pal* (LOCATIVE-far-straight.up high.above PREPOSITION DET house) and *ma-rama ra ul a davai* (ABLATIVE-up DET head LINKER tree), the locative adverb governs a longer noun phrase with a relational noun (*liu* 'region above', *ul* 'head, top') as its head.

(13) Tolai (Oceanic, northeast New Britain):

- a. *i ga bura u-ra ra pi*
 s:3S PAST fall ALLATIVE-down DET ground
 'S/he fell down to the ground.'
- b. *i ki a-ka-nama liu ta ra pal*
 s:3S stay LOCATIVE-far-straight.up high.above PREPOSITION DET house
 'S/he is on top of the house.'
- c. *i irop ma-rama ra ul a davai*
 s:3S go.out ABL-up DET head LINKER tree
 'S/he climbed down from the tree.' (Ross 2004)

(14) Tolai locative adverbs (Mosel 1982):

	locative	allative	ablative
'here'	<i>a-ti</i>	<i>u-ti</i>	<i>ma-ti</i>
'there'	<i>a-r-o</i>	<i>u-r-o</i>	<i>ma-r-o</i>
'down, seawards'	<i>a-r-a</i>	<i>u-r-a</i>	<i>ma-r-a</i>
'up, inland'	<i>a-r-ə</i>	<i>u-r-ə</i>	<i>ma-r-ə</i>
'straight up'	<i>a-r-a-ma</i>	<i>u-r-a-ma</i>	<i>ma-r-a-ma</i>
'inside'	<i>a-r-i-a</i>	<i>u-r-i-a</i>	<i>ma-r-i-a</i>
'inside and up'	<i>a-r-i-ma</i>	<i>u-r-i-ma</i>	<i>ma-r-i-ma</i>
'inside and down'	<i>a-r-i-ka</i>	<i>u-r-i-ka</i>	<i>ma-r-i-ka</i>
'beyond'	<i>a-r-ua</i>	<i>u-r-ua</i>	<i>ma-r-ua</i>

Similar phrasal constructions have been described for the Halmahera languages Taba (Austronesian, Bowden 1997, Bowden 2001:277-291), Tidore and Tobelo (West Papuan, van Staden 2000:330-

355, Holton 2003, for the Bird's Head (New Guinea) language Maybrat (West Papuan, Dol 1999), and for a scattering of Western Oceanic languages of New Britain and New Ireland (Mosel 1982, Ross 2004).

The genesis of Oceanic classifiers was described in §3 because it exemplifies the grammaticisation of a set of lexical items into a culturally determined paradigm. It will be obvious that this process simultaneously gave rise to a (culturally induced) possessive construction.

4.3 Narrative serial verb constructions in Kalam

The most dramatic instance of a culturally induced construction that I know in Papua New Guinea are the narrative serial verb constructions of Kalam (Trans-New Guinea, Madang family), described by Pawley (1987, 1991b, 1993, 2001, 2004a; also Lane 1991, Pawley and Lane 1998).

First, an introduction to some relevant features of Kalam grammar. Kalam is a language with a closed class of verbs. There are about 130, but in a 14,000-word corpus 15 verbs accounted for 89.6% of verb tokens, and 30 for 97.6%. How do Kalam speakers manage with so few verbs? Perhaps not so differently from English speakers, as less than 40 verbs in both languages make up more than 50% of verb tokens. The real question is, then, how do Kalam speakers produce their remaining verb tokens? First, a number of verbs display considerable polysemy. Second, there are many sequences consisting of a 'verbal adjunct' (a syntactically inert word) plus a verb (e.g. *bu ag-* [explosion say] 'explode, burst', *esek ag-* [false say] 'lie, deceive, pretend, joke', *gos nŋ-* [thought perceive] 'think', *gos mket nŋ-* [thought heavy perceive] 'worry', *mñmon pk-* [land hit] 'rain', *penpen pk-* [quarrel hit] 'fight, be at war') (Pawley 2004b). Third, there are serial verb constructions (SVCs) like those in (15).

- (15) Kalam:
- a. *kasek d ow-an*
quickly get come-IMPERATIVE:S:2S
'Bring it quickly!'
 - b. *nad ma-tb tk-p-yn*
you not-cut sever-PERFECT-S:2S
'You didn't cut it off.' (Pawley 1993:118)

These SVCs fall into a number of rough, overlapping semantic categories, for example:

- (16) a. motion: e.g. *d ap-/am-* [get come/go] 'bring/take' (cf 15a); *ap/am jak-* [come/go reach] 'arrive here/there'
- b. perception: e.g. *d nŋ-* [touch perceive] 'feel (by touching)'; *ñb nŋ-* [consume perceive] 'taste s.t.'; *ag nŋ-* [say perceive] 'ask, enquire, request'; *piow nŋ-* [search perceive] 'find'
- c. causation: e.g. *tb tk-* [cut sever] 'cut s.t. off' (cf 15b); *su tk-* [bite sever] 'crush s.t. with the teeth'; *ag tk-* [say sever] 'interrupt'; *tb yok-* [cut displace] 'cut s.t. away/out'; *ag yok-* [say displace] 'send s.o. away'; *pk sug-* [strike extinguish] 'put out (a fire)'

This is just a tiny sample of the serialised verbs and construction types presented by Pawley (2004b).

Collocations with a verbal adjunct are apparently lexicalised. Many, but not all, SVCs of the types in (16) are lexicalised. They can be regarded as equivalent to single verbs (or verb + particle combinations) in English (Givón 1990, 1991).

Kalam, however, has two kinds of serial verb construction that differ in function and in structure. Pawley (2004a) calls them 'compact' and 'narrative'.¹⁵ Those in (16) are all instances of the compact type, and are reminiscent of a type of SVC found all over the world (Durie 1997, Crowley 2002).

¹⁵ Pawley and Lane 1998 call them 'simple' and 'multi-scene' SVCs

Typically they describe relatively simple conceptual events whose semantic components are treated as occurring at the same time and place. For example, *su tk-* [bite sever] ‘crush s.t. with the teeth’ may be analysed as consisting of the effectively coterminous sub-events BITE, CAUSE and BE SEVERED.

Kalam has a second type of SVC, the narrative SVC. This incorporates sub-events which occur at different times and places and represent different stages of a complex episode. In this regard they violate one of the criteria that linguists standardly use to recognise a SVC (Aikhenvald 1999:470, Durie 1997:291). I said earlier that speakers need to know conventionalised ways of talking in particular speech event situations. The conventions that govern narrative SVCs are a subset of those that govern narrative discourse in Kalam. They specify what sub-events must be mentioned in order to produce a well-formed narration of an event. The sentence in (17) is a conventional response to the question, ‘What have you been doing?’.

- (17) *am wogday okok kpl g-ab-yn o-p-yn*
 go garden here.and.there weeding do-RECENT.PAST-S:IS come-PERFECT-S:IS
 ‘I’ve been weeding in the garden.’ (Pawley 1993:111)

More literally, the response means ‘Going to the garden, I did some weeding and came (back).’ It obeys the minimal specification for narrating an event, namely (i) whether the actor moved from a previous location (scene 1) to the scene of the action (scene 2), (ii) what s/he did at scene 2, (iii) whether s/he subsequently moved from scene 2 to another location (scene 3) and whether s/he carried the object obtained at scene 2; and (iv) what s/he did with the object thus obtained (Pawley 1993:111). Since in (17) no object was obtained, the answer is limited to (i) going, (ii) doing weeding, and (iii) coming back. These elements are implicit in the idiomatic English free translation: in Kalam they are stipulated.

The sentence in (18) is construed as one conceptual event, ‘came back’, in English, but in Kalam the speaker (i) went to the scene (Lae), (ii) stayed there, and (iii) came back. More literally it says, ‘Going to Lae, I stayed there, and came back yesterday.’

- (18) *mñmon lae nb am md-y, toytk ow-nk*
 place Lae place go stay-SAME.SBJ yesterday come-PAST:S:IS
 ‘I came back from Lae yesterday.’ (Pawley 1987:329)

Example (18) reflects a significant piece of Kalam (and indeed Trans-New Guinea) grammar, namely the formation of clause-chains. Chain-medial clauses have minimal marking, like *md-y*, indicating whether the subject of the next clause is the same as or different from that of the present clause, and sometimes marking the temporal relationship between the two clauses (see 20b and 21a below). Only the chain-final clause has tense/aspect and subject suffixes.

The minimal specification above is an abstraction from a number of event schemas that occur in Kalam narratives. Whilst the same sequences of verbs occur quite often, the schemas are nonetheless productive. What constrains them is ‘event typicality’ (Enfield 2002a), i.e. they encapsulate activities that are culturally recognised by Kalam speakers. Two schemas are shown in (19) (Pawley 2004a):

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------|
| (19) | (i) | (ii): | (iii) | (iv) |
| | movement to | activity: | transport of | disposal of |
| gathering: | scene of gathering | gathering goods | gathered goods | goods |
| hunting: | scene of hunting | kill named animal | game | game |

The events expressed through these schemas may be spread over separate clauses (there are two clauses each in 17 and 18), or some or all events may form a SVC within a single clause (the first clause of both 17 and 18 is a two-verb SVC). Examples (20a) and (20b) illustrate respectively the gathering and hunting schemas in (19). In each case the whole schema occurs in a single SVC (in 20b the SVC forms the clause ending in ‘eat’ and itself forms part of a larger schema):

- (20) a. *mnek am mon pk d ap ay-ak*
 next.morning go wood hit get come place-PAST:S:3S
 ‘Next morning he gathered firewood.’ (Pawley 1987:329)
 (More literally ‘Next morning going and breaking wood I brought it and put it aside.’)
- b. *kmn pak d ap ad ñb-l ap-elgp-al*
 game hit get come cook eat-SAME.SBJ:PRIOR COME-PAST.HAB-S:3PL
 ‘...and having killed, cooked and eaten the game, they used to return home.’ (Pawley 2004a)

Every verb other than the last is simply a verb root, and the last verb carries clause-final, i.e. chain-medial or chain-final, suffixes. A ‘verb root’ may also be a verbal adjunct-plus-verb sequence (*mon pk* in 20a) or a compact SVC (*d ap* in 20b). The morphosyntax of a narrative SVC is thus essentially the same as that of a compact SVC, but the fact that a narrative SVC may include four verbs (more if one of them is itself a compact SVC) reflecting the schema, is crosslinguistically unusual. Certainly, there are non-Papuan languages that do allow several verbs in a SVC, but there are often constructed by combining two or more compact SVC schemas. The exceptional feature of the Kalam schemas is that they may have four slots each fillable by one, two or more verb roots (all with the same subject) whose relationship with one another is determined by the event schema.

The Kalam narrative SVC seems an excellent candidate for the label ‘culturally induced construction’. It embodies an unusual SVC construction which reflects a Kalam-specific narrative convention, and it is almost self-evident that it reflects the diachronic loss by its verbs of chain-medial same-subject suffixes and the loss of inter-clausal pauses as the verbs were compressed into a single clause. Lane (1991:75) provides a nice pair of examples. In (21a) the gathering schema occurs as a clause chain, in (21b) as a SVC.

- (21) a. ... *ny-l yg-l pal-l dad*
 see-SAME.SBJ:PRIOR dig-SAME.SBJ:PRIOR hit-SAME.SBJ:PRIOR carry
o-p-al ...
 come-PERFECT-S:3P
 ‘...they see (it) and dig, hit (it) and carry it back ...’
- b. *bin pataj ogok am yg pak dad ap-elgp-al ...*
 woman young the:PL go dig hit carry come-PAST:HAB-S:3P
 ‘Young women used to go and dig and hit and bring back (these animals) ...’

Citing an example with the same schema and structure as (21a), Foley (1997:36–37) suggests that Kalam SVCs are simply the speaker’s response to having so few verbs to play with. This might be true of compact SVCs, but the evidence above suggests strongly that narrative SVCs like (21a) originated in Kalam storytelling conventions. If the shortage of verbs played a role in their development, then it was a very indirect role.

Kalam is not alone in manifesting this kind of construction. Kobon, Kalam’s closest relative, has a similar construction (Davies 1981). Heeschen (2001) records something similar in Eipo and Yale, and Farr (1999) provides a detailed study from Korafe. These languages lie good distances from Kalam and Kobon, and in opposite directions. I infer that this reflects an areal feature of narration that has had independent grammatical outworkings in a number of languages over time. To what extent such constructions are found in other parts of the world, I am unsure.

5 Conclusions

In this chapter I have investigated what is lost culturally when the grammar of a language is lost. In order to formulate a framework within which to answer this question, I referred to calquing and metatypy

as the outcomes of language contact in Takia. This led to the conclusion in §2.1 that languages are not impermeable so far as the cultural representations encapsulated in their semantic organisations are concerned.

This insight has implications for data-collection that cannot be allowed to pass without mention. Although this chapter is an investigation of what is lost when a morphosyntactic system dies with a language, it is abundantly clear that it is the semantic organisation of the language that encodes cultural representations. Much of this organisation consists of complex lexical items which the grammar–lexicon model has largely neglected because they fall between the grammar (they have morphosyntactic structure) and the lexicon (they consist partly or wholly of lexical items) (Pawley *In press*). In recent decades scholars from quite different subfields of linguistics have recognised the central role of complex lexical items in language and developed increasingly sophisticated approaches to them, but they have made sadly little impact on mainstream language description. These subfields include the Soviet-era ‘phraseologist’ school founded by Vinogradov (1947) and introduced to the West by Cowie (1998), the Oxford linguistic philosophers Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), English-as-a-Foreign-Language specialists pursuing the ‘notional–functional’ approach in and since the 1970s (e.g. Wilkins 1976, Ek and Trim 1998), practitioners of Construction Grammar (Fillmore et al. 1988, Kay and Fillmore 1999, Croft 2001) and a sprinkling of Western linguists: Chafe (1968), Weinreich (1969), Makkai (1972), Cowie (1981), Lambrecht (1984), Nunberg et al. (1994), Howarth (1996), Jackendoff (1997), the contributors to Cowie (1998) and Pawley (1985, 1986, 1991a, 2001, *In press* and Pawley and Syder 1983).

This means that the descriptive grammar which is the usual outcome of fieldwork needs urgently to be accompanied by an encyclopaedic dictionary which organises terms where relevant into taxonomies, explains meanings in their ethnographic context, and records complex lexical items as exhaustively as possible. For Papua New Guinea, with perhaps 800 languages, I am aware of only one such dictionary to date, Pawley and Bulmer’s (forthcoming) massive work on Kalam, and one other which approaches it, Streicher’s (1982) dictionary of Jabêm (Yabem). It follows from §4 that if the dictionary and the grammar are not accompanied by accounts of how the language is used, based on texts recording a variety of communicative events, then much linguistic behaviour will go unrecorded (cf Himmelmann 1998) as will an understanding of why and how come certain constructions exist.

The compilation of an ethnographically informed, encyclopaedic dictionary is an immense task, and one that can perhaps only be carried out for a small number of languages. This being so, it is important to choose the right languages. All too often linguists scramble to document endangered languages where the cultural representations of traditional society have already been partially replaced by those of globalisation. Precisely because language is culturally permeable, there is a period after the onset of globalising cultural change during which a language may remain seemingly intact but in fact have ceased to enshrine traditional culture, as Maffi (2001:1-3) discovered when she began her investigation of Tzeltal. If the goal is to capture languages which reflect longstanding traditions both in their semantic organisation and in their morphosyntax, then the languages we choose to document need to be from among those whose speakers’ retain their traditional economy and cultural practices. New Guinea provides an extraordinary opportunity in this regard, as parts of the island appear still roughly to reflect the situation at the end of the Pleistocene around 12,000 years ago, when the phylogenetic diversity of the world’s languages was probably at its greatest (Ross 2006b). Many of its languages which make up this diversity remain suitable for documentation.

In §2.2 evidence from contact-induced change was used to show that morphosyntax, narrowly viewed, does not share with semantic organisation in the task of carrying cultural representations. Some, at least, of the cases that have been claimed as cultural morphosyntax or ethnosyntax are simply instances where lexical items carrying cultural representations have been grammaticised (§3). Within the architecture of §2.3 these paradigms remain part of the semantic organisation of the language.

In §4, however, I showed that a culturally specific way of saying things could lead to the conven-

tionalisation of a construction which was not common among the world's languages. In such cases it is legitimate to talk about a culturally induced construction.

Two cautions need to be given. First, in the final analysis, a distinction between 'cultural' and 'non-cultural' cannot be made. All human behaviour, whether it is behaviour described by people using language or linguistic behaviour itself, is part of the culture of the language's speakers. We can only draw a cline stretching from those aspects of behaviour which are humanly universal to those which are culturally specific. This is true whether we are talking about lexicon (§3) or about constructions which emerge from linguistic practices (§4).

The second caution is that even where we do find reflections of cultural representations in a language, they are not necessarily evidence of the cognitive patterns of today's speakers. Chafe (2002:108) argues, for example, that the pronominal patterns of northern Iroquoian languages, which give prominence to the human male, reflect past but not present-day cultural representations. Similarly, patterns of metaphor are not necessarily still understood as metaphorical by their speakers.

So what is lost when a language dies and its morphosyntax is lost?

From the perspective I have adopted here, examining the relationship between morphosyntax and culture, the major loss lies in those constructions which reflect culturally specific ways of speaking: the narrative serial verb constructions of Kalam and other Trans-New Guinea languages, the associated path construction of Warumungu, the locative phrase construction in Tolai and a good many other languages of the New Guinea area, and the possessive classifier constructions of Oceanic languages that have many classifiers.

Why is this important? Because, among other things, Kalam narrative conventions and the narrative serial verb constructions make us aware that English and Standard Average European ways of narrating are, by comparison, highly metonymic. They draw our attention to the fact that there is more than one way of narrating. Without knowledge of languages like Kalam, we would not know this. Indeed, we would think that our narrative conventions were the human norm.

I began this chapter by citing the assertion by Corbett and others that linguists need descriptions of endangered languages in order to define the notion 'possible human language'. They are right, but the culturally induced constructions I examined in §4 suggest that language death costs us more than knowledge of what is a possible human language: it also costs us knowledge of the range of ways in which human beings exploit language.

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