

Applicative(-like) uses of spatial markers: methodological challenges

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Outline

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1. Introduction

What are applicatives?

(1) San Lucas Quiaviní Zapotec (Zapotecan; Munro 2000: 285–286 cited in Zúñiga & Creissels 2024: 4)

a. *B-ìi'lly Gye'eihlly cēhnn Jwaany.*
PFV-sing M. with J.

Base Construction = BC

b. *B-ìi'lly-nèe Gye'eihlly Jwaany.*
PFV-sing-APPL M. J.
'Mike sang with John.'

Applicative Construction = AC

Applicatives: morphological verb markers that increase the valency of verbs (= the number of arguments), by allowing “the coding of a thematically peripheral argument or adjunct as a core-object argument” (Peterson 2007: 1).

Broader definition from Zúñiga & Creissels (2024: 4): introduced argument (applied phrase) need not be a core argument

Previously established sources

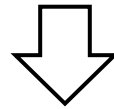
Traditionally two independent (direct) sources for applicatives: **adpositions** and **verbs** (Peterson 2007:125)

New sources:

+ **nouns** (as direct source) (Nordlinger 2019: 423; Arkadiev 2021: 50)

+ **classifiers** (Rose 2019)

+ **spatial verb morphology** (e.g. Pakendorf & Stoyanova 2021, Payne 2021, Van linden 2022)



This study: only spatial markers (e.g. spatial adpositions or associated motion markers (Guillaume & Koch 2021)) with applicative uses

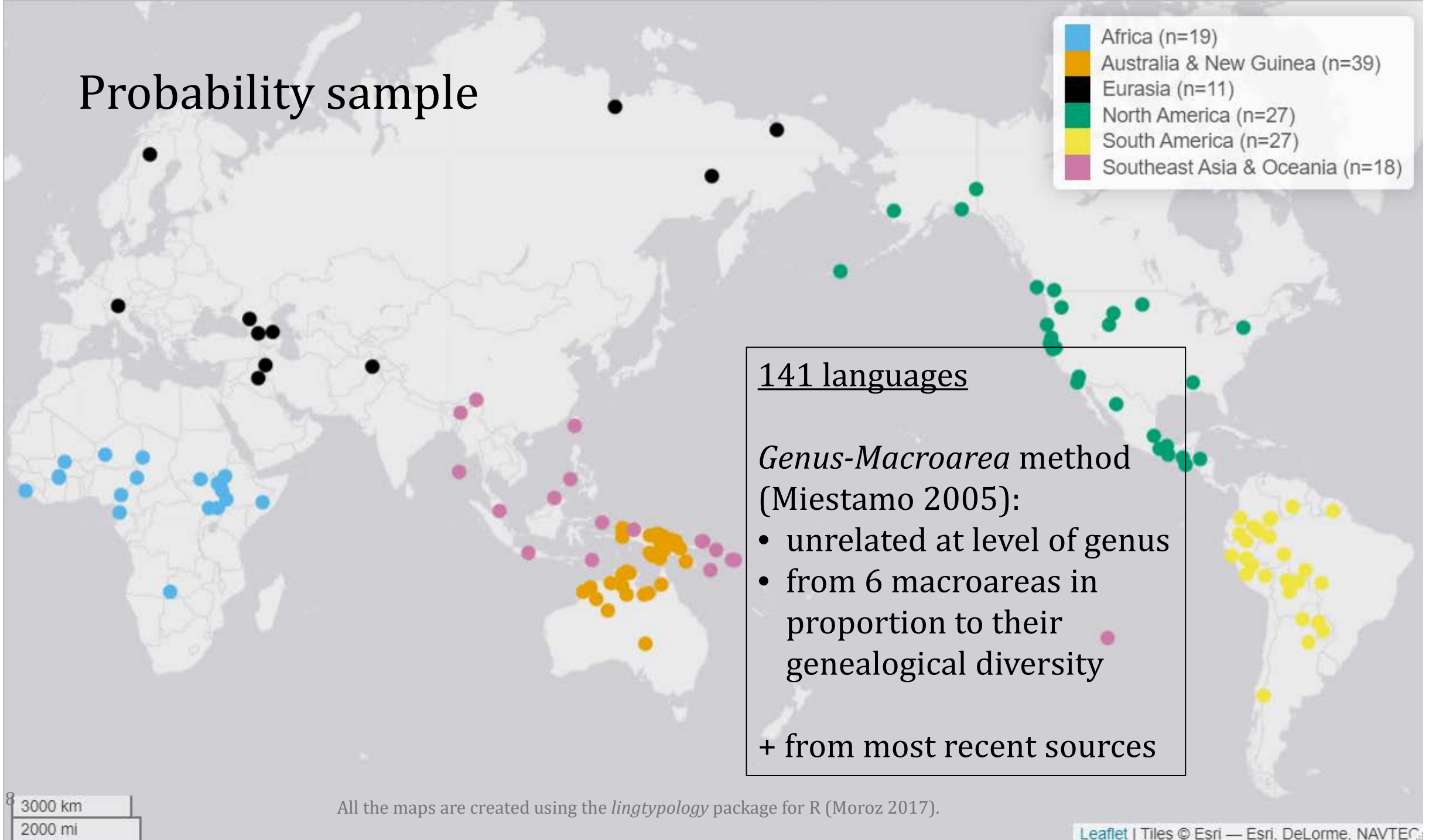
Research questions

RQ1: *How widespread are markers with spatial and applicative uses in the world's languages? Any areal/genetic patterns?*

RQ2: *What methodological challenges are involved in identifying markers with spatial and applicative uses across languages and how do they contribute to defining the phenomenon?*

2. Sample

Probability sample



3. Markers with spatial & applicative uses

Relevant markers

(2) Nivacle (Matacoan; Fabre 2013: 19, 11, 21)

a. *ja-ʔvan=ch'e* *na* *necjôôc*
 1A(>3P)-see=**AM** D child
 'I see the/a child **going away**.'

AC b. *lhja* *yi-peso-ji* *n-at=ch'e* [*lhja* *t'itsech*]
 D 1.POSS-money-container 3S-fall=**AM** D well
 'My wallet fell **into a/the well**'

BC c. *y-afalh* *na* *vôôs*.
 3S-fall D sky
 'The sky fell.'

Relevant markers: no valency change

(3) Kalamang (Greater West Bomberai; Visser 2022: 180, 273)

a. *ma bakul kon bol-un=ko melelu*
 3SG basket one mouth-3.POSS=**LOC** sit
 ‘He sits **on** the rim of a basket.’

AC b. [*mingtun=at bolon-i*] **ko**=*yuon*
 *coconut.oil=OBJ little-OBJQNT APPL=*rub
 ‘Rub (the sore body part) **with** a little coconut oil.’

BC c. *kaden-un=at mu yuon*
 body-3.POSS=OBJ 3PL rub
 ‘His body they rub.’

→ No change
in the number
of arguments
(redirecting
applicative)

Direct object = Patient in (3c) → Direct object = Means/Instrument in (3b)

Relevant markers: non-transparent semantic change

(4) Qaqet (Baining; Hellwig 2019: 292)

BC

- a. *kia=at* *met=ara=rlua-ka*
3SG.F.SBJ=fall *in*=3SG.F.POSS=friend-SG.M
'She fell/bumped *into* her friend.'

AC

- b. *un=atmet-[na]* *men=ama=is-ka*
1DU.SBJ=fall:*in-each.other* *at*=ART=path-SG.M
'We *met* (lit. fall into) *each other* on the road.'

→ Increase in the
number of arguments
BUT inconsistent
semantic change due
to metaphorical shift

Markers with spatial & applicative uses

Languages with relevant markers (n=141)

- relevant marker (n=34)
- uncertain (applicative of unknown origin) (n=43)
- no relevant marker (applicative of non-spatial origin) (n=11)
- no relevant marker (no applicatives) (n=53)

→ **Not rare** (24% languages of the sample) + found across **all macroareas** in **genealogically diverse** languages

4. Methodological challenges: identifying applicative uses

Lookalikes: to be included or not?

“(Morphological) **lookalikes**” (Zúñiga & Creissels 2024) (or “non-prototypical” applicatives (Zúñiga & Kittilä 2019)): constructions whose morphological make-up corresponds to that of an applicative construction, but some other features of which (e.g. systematicity or syntax) do not

- (i) Applicative deponent (no unmarked predicate)
 - (ii) Oblique registration (no valency change, semantic effect)
 - (iii) Lexicalized applicative (non-compositional meaning)
 - (iv) Syntax-neutral intensification (no valency change, pragmatic effect)
- }

Found in the
sample

Applicative deponents

(5) Mocoví (Guaycuruan; Juárez forthcoming: 16–17)

→ (5a) = **lookalike**
(no clear syntactic effect)

“AC”

- a. $\emptyset$ -paʔa:-ta-ge [ra lai]
3.II-be-DUR-LOC DET side
'She/he is **on the other side** (of this place).'

AC

- b. tres naga-ri s-we:-ta-ge [ra villa angela]...
three year-PL 3.II-exist-DUR-LOC DET villa angela
'I've been **in Villa Angela** for three years...'

BC

- c. qaj-ra ra we ra n-aʔa:tfik $\emptyset$ -we:-ta i-na ni
nothing-DET DET exist DET 1.POSS-thankfulness 3.II-exist-DUR i-DET DET
i-jaxle- $\emptyset$
1.POSS-descendent-M
lit. 'My gratitude exists today, my son is here.'

The base construction does not exist: verb in (5a) cannot occur without the marker *-ge*.

Oblique registration

(6) Gumuz (Nilo-Saharan; Ahland 2012: 228)

- “AC” a. *nga* *b-ár-sá-gá-an* [*ná=sááníá*]
 food AFF-1SG.TR-eat-NFUT-**ABL** **ABL=plate**
- “BC” b. *nga* *b-ár-sá-gá* [*ná=sááníá*]
 food AFF-1SG.TR-eat-NFUT **ABL=plate**
 ‘I ate food **from** a **plate**.’

→ (6a) = **lookalike**
(no clear syntactic effect)

The marker does not affect encoding of the Source: it is oblique both with (6a) and without the marker (6b).

Lexicalized applicative

(7) Harakmbut (isolate; Van linden 2022: 130, 142, 148)

“AC”

a. *e-ma-ti-on-ka*

NMLZ-VPL-**SPAT:up-SPAT:on**-do
'to hunt'

→ (7a) = **lookalike**
(valency-neutral
lexicalized use)

AC

b. *o-wedn-ato* *ãñĩ* [*bisikleta*] *o-n-kot*

3SG.IND-lie-AM FILLER **bicycle** 3SG.IND-**SPAT:on**-fall

'He falls (literally: 'moves and lies down'), eh, he falls **onto his bike**.'

c. *ken-ta?* *ãrĩ-tẽ* *kuru-te* *on-niŋ-on-tuk-po...*

DIST-LOC filler-LOC patio-LOC 3PL.IND-BEN.APPL-**SPAT:on**-plant-DEP

'Then, eh, they planted her **on** the patio for him [i.e. the jaguar]...'

Inconsistent semantic change due to metaphorical shift and no clear syntactic effect in (7a): 'hunt' (tr) < 'do' (tr) + 'on'.

Lexicalized applicative: two types

(8=4) Qaqet (Baining; Hellwig 2019: 291–292)

- AC a. *un=atmet-[na]* *men=ama=is-ka*
1DU.SBJ=fall:IN-each.other at=ART=path-SG.M
'We **met** (lit. fall into) **each other** on the road.'
- BC b. *kia=at* *met=ara=rlua-ka*
3SG.F.SBJ=fall in=3SG.F.POSS=friend-SG.M
'She fell/bumped into her friend.'

→ (8a) = **relevant marker** (valency-increasing lexicalized use)

Inconsistent semantic change **and clear syntactic effect**: 'meet' (tr) (8a) < 'fall' (intr) + 'into' (8b).

Unclear which semantic role to assign to the applied phrase: Theme (8a) or Goal (8b).

5. Methodological challenges: beyond Zúñiga & Creissels's lookalikes

Semantic role converter

(9) Lower Kolyma Even (Tungusic; Stoyanova p.c.)

?AC

noŋan [*Jakutskaj-la*] *tege-t-ne-ri-n*
 he Yakutsk-LOC sit-RES-AM-PST-3SG
 'He **moved** to Yakutsk **to** live (there). /
 He **moved** (to Yakutsk) **to** live **in** Yakutsk.

→ (9) = ?lookalike or
 relevant marker

(10=3) Kalamang (Greater West Bomberai; Visser 2022: 180, 273)

AC

a. [*mingtun=at* *bolon-i*] *ko=yuon*
coconut.oil=OBJ *little-OBJQNT* *APPL=rub*
 'Rub (the sore body part) **with** a little coconut oil.'

BC

b. *kaden-un=at* *mu* *yuon*
body-3.POSS=OBJ *3PL* *rub*
 'His body they rub.'

No clear syntactic effect in (9) BUT semantic effect is similar to **redirecting applicatives**: locative-marked participant = Location → Goal

What are applicatives?

	P	D	X	Lexicalized appl.	Appl. Deponent	Oblique registrat ion	Sem. Role converte r
Zúñiga & Kittilä 2019	Prototypical applicative	Non-prototypical applicative	—				
Zúñiga & Creissel s 2024	Applicative			Lookalike			—
Mukhin et al	Applicative				Lookalike		?

6. Conclusion

Markers with spatial & applicative uses

RQ1: Co-expression of spatial and applicative functions is **geographically and genealogically widespread**

RQ2:

- Markers posing methodological challenges (lookalikes) were identified
- Two types of lexicalized applicatives: valency-neutral & valency-increasing
- A previously unreported type of marker: a semantic role converter – lookalike or not?

One issue: finding relevant data

Absence of relevant examples $\neq$ absence in language

→ Let me know about any similar cases

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Thank you!

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