

SOME LAMANI SENTENCE TYPES:  
AN EXPERIMENT IN PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH

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I. INTRODUCTION

There seem to be two near polar philosophies about education. Both are aimed at eventual independent creative work on the part of the student. Both give thorough theoretical orientation prior to practical field work. They differ however, in the means used to transfer the student from dependence to independence. The one expects the student to begin work immediately after theory with little, if any, orientation as to method or heuristic. The other not only gives a thorough orientation on method, but requires the student to work side by side with the instructor on practical field problems before being asked to do independent work. It is this latter technique which has been used in the work reported in this paper. Our purpose is to report on our experiment by recording our procedures and results with the hope that others doing similar research will find it useful.

In early 1974 I was asked to teach a course in sentence analysis to a class of students in the Linguistic Training Course of the Institute of Nepal and Asiatic Studies and the Summer Institute of Linguistics of Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal. As I had other work to do besides the teaching, it was necessary to find a way of teaching that would require a minimum of time of outside class preparation on

the part of the instructor. It occurred to me that if we could use class time for research and write-up as well as instruction, we could accomplish this goal. I had been wanting to do some work on the sentence structure of Lamani<sup>1</sup>, and saw that it would be instructive for the students to watch and participate in actual sentence-level procedures in action. If the students could not only be oriented as to theory and method, but could also watch and participate in actual language analysis, their learning would be much more complete and I could finish some much needed analysis as well as teach the course.

The following then were the ground rules used in the course. Class was held for two hours daily and consisted of four students, one Lamani language assistant, and the instructor. All six have been listed as co-authors of this paper. Our class room research procedure is given in eleven steps listed below. Our purpose was to familiarise ourselves with sentence as a semantico-grammatical level, and then to research and write up *in class* as many sentence types in Lamani as course time would permit. It was understood that initially the instructor would carry the main load of research until the class felt sufficiently familiar with the method to assist, but that from the beginning class would be informal and open to suggestions, comments, and questions by the students.

Class was begun with presentation of a survey of sentence types to be expected in any language and instruction in a means of formulaic display for each type via a four-box tagmeme system (see Trail 1973b. Notes on sentence structure). Time allowed us to cover four sentence types using the following research procedures on each:

- 1) Decide on the sentence type to be investigated.
- 2) Read in the literature about any theoretical discussions of that type and any practical work done on that type in related languages.
- 3) Look for examples of the sentence type in text and/or ask the language assistant to give examples. (If the assistant lacks the sophistication required to do this, other methods of elicitation will be necessary such as asking the assistant to translate examples of the sentence type from national language examples, or making up hypothetical situations which would naturally involve the use of that sentence type, and asking him to retell it in his language.)
- 4) After sufficient examples have been collected (five to ten for a beginning), divide each sentence into its constituent parts and arrange the examples with translation in a systematic manner so as to facilitate observations. That is, if the sentence has three

- constituents, arrange the examples so that similar constituents from example to example fall into the same column.
- 5) Make observations about the sentence recorded, meticulously writing out these observations. These will later provide material for further investigation and final write-up. Typical observations have to do with number of constituents, form of verbs, deletion patterns, form of links or relators, mood restrictions, tense-aspect pairing patterns across the bases, and so on.
  - 6) From the observations and the data, form hypotheses about the structure of the type and then proceed to confirm or disprove these by checking with other data and asking questions of the language assistant.
  - 7) After all observations have been made about the data, the following check list of questions was found useful to make sure we had covered all important areas of possible fruitful investigation. (Some of these will overlap with observations already made.)
    - a) Can we permute (change the order of) the constituent parts? Does the meaning change or remain the same? Are other structural changes necessary in order to permute?
    - b) Must we have same Subject or Actor in both bases? Must we have the same Predicate or same terms in both bases?
    - c) What happens if we add negative to one base?
    - d) Can we make the sentence interrogative?
    - e) Can we make the sentence imperative?
    - f) Can the verb forms of the bases change? If so, what restrictions are there on which forms can occur?
    - g) Are there any cross-referencing particles occurring across the bases like '*if...then*', or '*although...yet*'.
    - h) Are there any discernible deletion patterns?
    - i) Are there any restrictions on the clause type which may fill either of the bases?
    - j) Are there other ways of expressing the same relationship between the bases?
  - 8) Make a workchart of one or two examples according to the pattern given in Notes on Sentence Structure p. 7. (This step may be merged with 9) if it is not found necessary as a separate step.)
  - 9) From the workchart or data make a formula or formulae which adequately represent the data covered.
  - 10) Write up the results drawing on your observations and examples. (For the write-up format that we found useful, see the four Lamani sentence types given below.)

- 11) Pass out a draft copy of your write-up to interested scholars for their comments before proceeding to make polished copies.

Using this procedure we examined in class four Lamani sentence types: Conditional, Antithetical, Alternative, and Conjunctive. We present them below largely as they were written up in class and later discussed and polished.

One further note should be made. In this paper we are viewing a sentence as a distinctive semantic relationship which exists between two propositions or groups of propositions, correlated with a grammatical relationship – coordinate or subordinate – which exists between two clauses or groups of clauses, and which has definite phonological boundaries of aperture and closure. This means that the traditional simple sentence consisting of only one proposition or clause is beyond the scope of our study.

## II. SOME LAMANI SENTENCE TYPES

### A. CONDITIONAL SENTENCE

#### 1. Contrast

##### a. Formula

DB	AR Cl -to	+	IB	I CL
Cond Prop	<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 2px;">pos</div> * <div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 2px;">neg</div>		Conseq Prop	<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 2px;">pos</div> * <div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 2px;">neg</div>
	P---->			Q

\* This notation refers to the deep structure only and therefore to the value system of the language. Underlying it is the assumption that positive causes give only positive results and vice versa. For the surface structure rules regarding the positive and negative interplay between the bases, see the last paragraph under this type below.

##### b. Description

In Lamani the conditional sentence is composed of just two bases the first of which is dependent and the second independent. The first base is made dependent by the obligatory presence of the relator to 'if'. For the pairing of aspect and tense across the bases see Figure 1 below. Semantically the first proposition stands as a conditional cause of the hypothetical result or consequent proposition. The whole sentence is therefore hypothetical or unreal and in this area it