Abstract

This thesis focuses on kiya and haniyan in Mayrinax Atayal, an ergative Formosan language (Huang 1994; Starosta 1999; Aldridge 2004), and their dual identity as lexical adpositions and progressive auxiliaries. I propose that grammaticalization links their adposition and auxiliary identities. To know more about their dual usages, I also provide syntactic analyses to related constructions—existential, predicative locative, predicative possessive, and progressive construction. In discussing their adposition use, I first argue that kiya and haniyan are not one-place existential verbs by providing counterexamples to the verbal criteria and account proposed by Huang (1995, 2000, 2002) and Zeitoun et al. (1999). As they should not be treated as verbs, I give further morphosyntactic and semantic evidence justifying kiya and haniyan as two-place lexical adpositions, following Dermirdache and Uribe-Etxebarria (2000), Svenonius (2007, 2008), and den Dikken (2010).

As adpositions, kiya and haniyan are involved in three constructions: existentials (EXTs), predicative locatives (LOCs), and predicative possessives (POSSs). According to Freeze (1992), cross-linguistically the three derive from an adpositional locative structure, with derivation conditioned by nominal semantics. In this thesis I also unify the three in Mayrinax Atayal but in a way unlike Freeze’s: the proposed derivation is conditioned by morphosyntactic factors—categorical EPP, NP-DP distinction (Laka 1993), nuclear scope (Diesing 1992), casemarking (Lestrade 2008), and TP movement (Aldridge 2004). Semantic differences, in this way, fall out as an epiphenomenon.

This thesis also studies kiya and haniyan as progressive auxiliaries in Mayrinax Atayal. Evidence shows that they are lexicalized Aspect heads that take infinitive vP complement. Progressive clauses (PROGs) in Mayrinax Atayal also manifest functional restructuring (Cinque 2001; Wurmbrand 2003), showing monoclusalidity and monoeventuality. In a bird’s eye view, the adposition-progressive usages of kiya and haniyan in Mayrinax Atayal receive cross-linguistic echoes (cf. Bybee et al. 1994; Dermirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria 2000; Higginbotham 2002; Laka 2006). I propose that in Mayrinax Atayal adpositional kiya and haniyan grammaticalize into their progressive counterparts, evinced by category change and semantic erosion, supporting Laka’s (2006) grammaticalization account.