Concessive conditionals, indefinite pronouns, and the semantic map of additivity

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In this paper, I propose an improvement to Forker's (2016) semantic map of additivity, shown in Figure 1 below. Additive markers (ADD), e.g. Wolaytta (Omotic, Ethiopia) *-kka* 'also' in (1), express that there is at least one alternative value for their associate, i.e. the linguistic element in their scope (Forker 2016: 71). In many languages, additive markers are highly polyfunctional, Wolaytta *-kka* being a case in point. Forker's semantic map shows the functions most commonly expressed by additives in the languages of the world.

The improvement I propose is concerned with the dotted line between the 'scalar additive' and 'indefinite' nodes. According to Forker (2016: 87), this line indicates a "significant semantic link", but she does not elaborate on this any further. Based on a convenience sample of ca. 100 languages from all macro-areas, I will show that there is clear cross-linguistic evidence that indefinites should not be connected to scalar additives, but to the 'concessive' node, more specifically to "universal concessive conditionals" (UCCs, term coined by Haspelmath & König 1998). UCCs are equivalent to English 'WH-ever / no matter WH', cf. (3) for an example from Wolaytta. The previously proposed "link" between indefinites and scalar additives, by contrast, is simply brought about by the fact that additives which occur in UCCs invariably have a scalar-additive reading (Forker 2016: 87).

Forker (2016: 77) notices that indefinites sometimes occur in UCCs, but this connection is not shown on her map, presumably because she subsumes concessive conditionals and concessives proper ('although *p*, *q*') under the same node. The 'indefinite' node, too, is complex, comprising specific, universal, negative, and free-choice indefinites (FCIs) (Forker 2016: 79). Once disentangled, it becomes clear that UCCs are connected to FCIs. In Wolaytta, for example, both FCIs (2) and UCCs (3) are formed by adding the additive marker *-kka* to a question word or a conditional clause containing a question word, respectively. Similar patterns are found in other languages, like Mbosi (Bantu, Republic of the Congo), Tamil (Dravidian, India), and Huallaga Quechua (Quechuan, Peru), among others.

Having demonstrated this, I will briefly discuss the diachrony of this connection, i.e. whether FCIs introduce UCCs (as Forker 2016: 77 implies, cf. above) or whether FCIs develop out of UCCs (cf. Haspelmath 1997: 159–163), with tentative evidence pointing towards the latter scenario.

References

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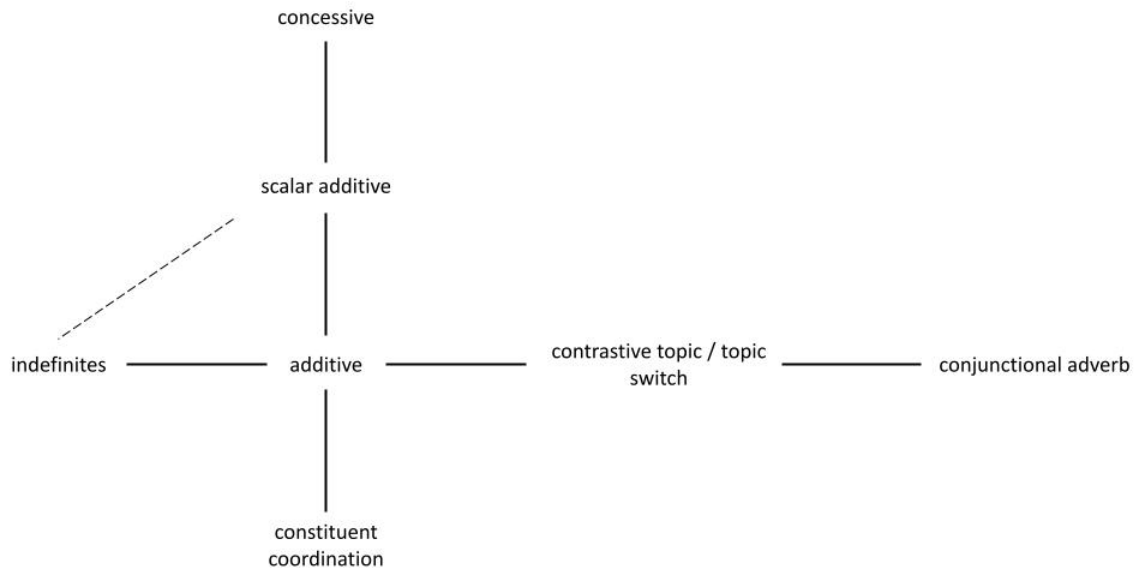
Figure 1: Semantic map of additivity by Forker (2016)

(1)   Wolaytta (Wasaka 2008: 696)

        ta-kan-áa   *súnt-ai*   *Sarká*

        my-dog-OBL.M.SG   name-NOM.M.SG   Sarka

        ha   *bitán-iya*   *súnt-ai-kka*   *Sarká*

        this   man-OBL.M.SG   name-NOM.M.SG-ADD   Sarka

        'My dog's name is Sarka. This man's name is also Sarka.'

(2)   Wolaytta (Wasaka 2008: 435)

        Ɂóóní-kká   *he*   *wott-áa*   *danday-ées*

        who-ADD   that   running-ABS.M.SG   can-IMPF.3M.SG

        '<u>Anyone</u> can run that.'

(3)   Wolaytta (Wasaka 2008: 897)

        táání bír-aa   [*Ɂóóní*   *Ɂimm-í-kkó-kká*]   *Ɂekk-aná*

        I   Bir-ABS.M.SG   [who   give-SUBORD-COND-ADD]   take-FUT

        'I will receive Bir [i.e. Ethiopian currency], <u>whoever</u> gives (it to me).'