

'Body part applicatives in Murrinh-Patha (Australia)'

Rachel Nordlinger
University of Melbourne

Murrinh-Patha (a head-marking polysynthetic language of northern Australia) allows for regular incorporation of body parts into the verbal word, with a variety of literal and metaphorical functions (see Walsh 1996). In this paper I provide evidence for an additional function for incorporated body parts: as a source for applicative markers. Although Murrinh-Patha has been previously claimed to have no applicative constructions, I provide a range of syntactic tests to show that some incorporated body parts have grammaticalised into applicative markers. While body parts as a source for applicative markers are not discussed in the general typological literature (e.g. Peterson 2007), they have been described for some other Daly River languages (e.g. Marrithiyel (Green 1989); Ngan'gi (Reid 1990)). I survey data from a range of Daly River languages arguing that the development of body parts into applicatives is a robust areal phenomenon.

References

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