

Grammatical voice and valency change in Ṭuroyo: synchronic description, comparative data, and methodology.

My talks are focused on the grammatical categories of voice and valency change in the Neo-Aramaic language Ṭuroyo. I intend to touch on the two main aspects:

1. Overview of various grammatical devices that Ṭuroyo uses to code grammatical meanings related to voice and valency (change).
2. Investigation of methods suitable for a finer description of verbal semantics and application of these methods to describing Ṭuroyo.

One of the key structural considerations of my PhD is distinguishing three main blocks, or, how I call them, *dimensions*:

1. Root-and-pattern morphology (i.e. verbal stems) and how they contribute to the grammatical categories of voice and valency change.
2. Grammatical constructions other than stem morphology used to signal a shift in diathesis or valency.
3. Interaction of #1 and #2.

For my first presentation I intend to provide a general overview for points **1** and **2**. This entails examining the system of verbal stems in Ṭuroyo — the so-called active stems I, II, and III, and their derived mediopassive counterparts — I<sub>p</sub>, II<sub>p</sub>, and III<sub>p</sub>, as well as a short excursus into the development of the verbal stems in earlier Aramaic.

The second talk will be focusing on the methodology, namely how can we describe the semantics of various verbal constructions. For this presentation I will be treating the derived mediopassive stems I<sub>p</sub>, II<sub>p</sub>, and III<sub>p</sub> as a singular mediopassive construction. The central question is as follows: grammatical and typological descriptions often use labels such as ‘passive’ or ‘mediopassive’ or ‘anticausative’. But how do we determine if a given example is ‘passive’ or ‘anticausative’ provided that we agreed on the definition of PASSIVE and ANTICAUSATIVE in advance. What are the factors and the criteria for such a task? Can we find some objective criteria for delineating the grammatical and semantic space? I will demonstrate two methods that I am using in my PhD research in attempt to answer this question:

1. A more traditional, lexicographical approach favored by the Moscow School of Semantics (Apresjan, Melčuk) and by the proponents of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach (Wierzbicka, Goddard), relying on analytical definition, or reductive paraphrases.
2. A data-driven method of behavioral profiles: annotating the data according to a number of variables, both formal and semantic. The annotated data set is then submitted to exploratory or confirmatory data analysis.