



CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF INDIAN LANGUAGES

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Lecture 20

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Switch Reference in South Asian languages



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Hans Henrich Hock is Professor Emeritus of Linguistics and Sanskrit, of the Classics, of Germanic Languages and Literatures, and in the Campus Honors Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA. His research interests include General historical and comparative linguistics, Comparative and diachronic syntax of Indo-European languages (especially Sanskrit / Indo-Aryan, Germanic, Latin); Sanskrit linguistics (synchronic and diachronic, syntax, phonology, language contact, sociolinguistics; Vedic, modern spoken Sanskrit); convergence phenomena; clitics, prosody, and the phonology /syntax interface; “identity” movements and linguistic, textual, and archeological evidence. He has several noteworthy publications including *Principles of historical linguistics*; third edition, revised and updated. Berlin/ Boston: de Gruyter Mouton, 2021.

Switch Reference is a type of clause chaining with different morphological marking for same subject (SS) and different subject (DS) structures. The phenomenon has been widely recognized in Native American, Australian, and New Guinea languages (e.g. Jacobsen 1983, Austin 1981, Roberts 1997). Anderson (2007) is the first scholar to have observed Switch Reference in South Asia, namely in South Munda languages. The phenomenon has also been found in several Tibeto-Burman languages, on the northern periphery of South Asia (e.g. Haller 2009, Watters 2013). This talk demonstrates that Switch Reference is more widespread in South Asia. Possible examples occur in some of the Dravidian languages, where SS is marked by the conjunctive participle (CVB) and DS by the infinitive (INF). Clear examples are found in Sanskrit with CVB for SS and ta-participle for DS; but the situation is less clear in Modern Indo-Aryan. Switch Reference, thus, is not limited to South Munda and some Tibeto-Burman languages but may be found in all of the South Asian language families and may even be a characteristic feature of “India as a Linguistic Area”. At any rate, this talk shows that it is a phenomenon that deserves further research, in all of the South Asian languages.

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