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Clause-typing and evidentiality in Ecuadorian Siona

Ecuadorian Siona is a Western Tukanoan language spoken in eastern Ecuador. One of its remarkable features from a cross-linguistic perspective is its clause-typing system. Ecuadorian Siona has a special clause type for reports: the reportative. In the majority of the world's languages, the reportative is considered to be an evidential category rather than a clause type. The reportative expresses the speaker's access to the uttered information, namely, that it was obtained from someone else.

The Ecuadorian Siona reportative is mutually exclusive with three other classical clause types that are part of its grammatical inventory: assertions (assertive clauses), questions (interrogative clauses) and orders (imperative clauses). The reason that the reportative can be considered as a separate clause type is that it has distinct subject agreement paradigms like the other clause types. Moreover, it exhibits clause-typing semantics.

This dissertation presents an in-depth study of the clause-typing system in Ecuadorian Siona. The morphology and the semantics involved in it are discussed from both a synchronic and a diachronic perspective. The study also contains a phonological sketch and an overview of the main nominal morphology, which are crucial for a reconstruction of the historical process underlying the Siona clause-typing system. Finally, the dissertation provides novel insights in the nature of both evidentiality and clause-typing.

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