

Argument marking patterns in South American languages

South American indigenous languages show an incredible diversity in the ways that they mark arguments in independent clauses. This dissertation presents the first in-depth study of argument marking patterns in South America across a sample of 74 different languages.

The languages are approached from a typological perspective and the major parameters of variation are encoded into a structural questionnaire. The study primarily focuses on verbal argument indexation, case marking and valency change. The different argument marking features are analyzed for the typological patterns that they display and also for their geographic distribution. The analysis presented in the study identifies a number of areal linguistic features for specific regions of the continent. The results suggest a significant East versus West distinction in the distribution of the argument marking features examined. This study contributes to our understanding of the linguistic diversity of South America and serves to highlight the different patterns that can be observed in the data.

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