Направление «Фундаментальная и прикладная лингвистика»

Решение задания № 1

This is probably the simplest solution: the watchman opens the gate he is standing next to at the initial moment (*starting* gate), then moves clockwise to the next nearest open gate while counting the gates (to remember where the starting gate is). He closes the open gate, then goes back to the starting gate and checks whether it is still open. The moment he finds it closed, he understands that he made a full circle and that the last open gate he closed was the (same as the) starting gate and that he made a full circle. All gates are closed.

Comments: All known solutions somehow involve coming back to a gate you have already seen. Some solutions suggested creating a pattern of open and closed gates so that, when the blind watchman finds the pattern again, he believes he made a full circle. However unlikely the repetition of the pattern, there is such a possibility. Such solutions were not getting any points.
Several solutions suggested proceeding in one direction, closing all the open gates that he finds; as the number of gates is finite, at some point he will close all the gates. While this is true, the problem is that, in this solution, the Blind Watchman himself will never know when it happens. Such solutions were not getting any points.
There were many variations of the correct solution above; e.g. going clockwise and counterclockwise in turn; but in essence they were all the same, coming back to a gate you know should be closed or open and finding it in a different state. More complex but correct algorithms were getting full points, but they presented more risks of faulty logic, in which case some points were deducted.

Решение задания № 2

Step 1. Suggest interlinear morphological glosses to the examples that follow (only nominals, no need to gloss verbal forms).

Interlinear glosses may look like the following:

1. kuɲař-pa lapaŋi
   dog-Nom ran

‘The dog ran.’

2. kuɲař-pa lapaŋi mana ʤaʈi
   dog-Nom ran stick with

‘The dog ran with a stick.’

3. kakaʤi-pa lapaŋi.
   goanna-Nom ran

‘The goanna* ran.’

4. ŋanpayi-pa lapaŋi yawaʈa ʤaʈi
   man-Nom ran horse with

‘The man rode a horse.’

5. mana-pa ɲaɲa ŋanpayi-ɭu
   stick-Nom saw man-Erg

‘The man saw the stick.’

6. yawaʈa-pa ɲaɲa ŋanpayi-ɭu
   horse-Nom saw man-Erg

‘The man saw the horse.’

7. kuɲař-pa ɲaɲa ŋanpayiɭu yawaʈa ʤaʈi-ɭu
   dog-Nom saw man-Erg horse with-Erg

‘The man on the horse saw the dog.’

8. ŋanpayi-pa kuřapa-pa ʤani kakaʤi-ɭu
   man-Nom hand-Nom bit goanna-Erg

‘The goanna bit the man on the hand.’

9. kuɲař-pa piɲa ŋanpayi-ɭu kuřapa-ɭu
   dog-Nom hit man-Erg hand-Erg

‘The man hit the dog with his hand.’

10. kuɲař-pa piɲa ŋanpayi-ɭu mana ʤaʈi-ɭu
    dog-Nom hit man-Erg stick with-Erg

‘The man hit the dog with a stick.’

11. ʤinal-pa kaɲʤiɲi ŋanpayi-ɭu ʤina-ɭu
    spear-Nom trod man-Erg foot-Erg

‘The man trod on the spear with his foot.’

12. ʤinal-pa kaɲʤiɲi ŋanpayi-ɭu puut ʤaʈi-ɭu
    spear-Nom trod man-Erg boot with-Erg

‘The man trod on the spear with his boot.’

- only two affixes can be identified, *-pa* Nom (or Abs) and *-ɭu* Erg. The functional morpheme (postposition) *ʤaʈi* can be glossed as ‘with’ or ‘comit’ for comitative or ‘instr’ for instrumental or ‘propr’ for proprietive, but see below on interpretational problems linked to selecting its main function.

Comment: for the concept of interlinear morphological glossing, see here. Some solutions suggested glosses for verbal forms, e.g. -ɳi and -ɲa as transitivity markers (which could not however be consistent). No points were given for this. Similarly, several participants tried to extract material responsible for definiteness or otherwise discussed this category as applied to the data; this is not justified by the data. Surprisingly many participants identified the ergative construction correctly but provided Erg and Abs glosses in the opposite way; for this, points were taken off. Some other participants were unaware of the existence of the ergative construction altogether and naturally interpreted transitive examples as passive (see here on why this is not an accepted view); this analysis is justified but not theoretically informed; points were subtracted.

Step 2. Explain the functions of all suffixes you observed (so that the explanation efficiently and economically - i.e. parsimoniously - accounts for their use in all examples).

The nominative (in many solutions - absolutive) is used to encode S and P functions, the ergative encodes A. Simple stuff ends here.

The function of the postposition *ʤaʈi* is controversial, subtly linked to the interpretation of the NP boundaries. One obvious solution is that it is a comitative/instrumental postposition, as in (2) and arguably in (4), respectively; this is certainly a possibility. But this becomes problematic at least under one analysis of ergative case doubling (see Step 3 below). Namely, if we analyze this as agreement in case within NP (see below), we do not expect instrumental marker on a dependent

within NP. In other words, we cannot ascribe instrumental function to the postposition in examples like (12) *if* we suggest that [man-Erg boot with-Erg] is a single NP with 'man' as its head.

Alternatively, one could view this as simply propietive / 'having' suffix; then, however, one must admit that its use in e.g. (4) is "implicational", a circumlocutory way to encode the instrumental function. In other words, the meaning 'Man rode on a horse' is more precisely 'Man went having a horse' (or at least this metaphor is the source of the grammaticalization of this specific construction, and the functions of the postposition are now separated). Interpretation of all other examples with *ʤaʧi-ʃu* runs into the same kind of problems

Step 3. Suggest NP boundaries; discuss alternative analyses if you find any.

The empirical challenge of the task is interpreting the apparent repetition of the nominative or the ergative suffixes in one clause (such as double nominative in (8) and double ergative in e.g. (9) and (10)). The interpretation of this phenomenon has bearings on the syntactic analysis of NPs. The main two analyses are as follows:

(a) **agreement analysis**: the case markers are repeated because this is one nominal constituent in which the dependent agrees with its head in case ("repeats its case"). Nominal dependents agreeing in case are rare but certainly not unheard of. In this analysis, it was crucial to discuss explicitly what you consider to be the head of the NP, because it brings up further controversies. Indeed, in bodypart constructions, it is natural to assume that the head of the NP is the bodypart and the possessor is the dependent. This is fully acceptable in case of the nominative agreement in (8), yielding the reading, literally, *The goanna bit man's hand*. In the case of the ergative doubling in (9), however, a similar reading *Man's hand hit goanna* leads to the conclusion that in transitive constructions provided in the examples there is no true agent, and they are not truly transitive. In the case of ergative doubling in (10), where the ergative case attaches to the postposition, this analysis becomes untenable in this simplistic form, because, if the stick is the head and man is the dependent, and man takes its ergative from the stick, the functions of 'with' itself cannot be explained anymore - what kind of NP is [man-Erg stick with-Erg], and how are its NP constituent related?.
If, however, it is the man who is the head in these constructions, (10) becomes indeed possible as a kind of implicational reading ([*Man with a stick*] *hit goanna → Man hit goanna using his stick*), but (9) and especially (8) become problematic. Even if we allow for some implicative meanings, 'man with a hand was bit by a goanna' is an unlikely linguistic encoding of the meaning 'Goanna bit the man on the hand'.

(b) **double argument realization**: in this analysis, case marking is doubled because the argument itself is "doubled": the semantic role is expressed twice in the same clause. Thus, in e.g. (8) what is literally said is "The goanna bit the man the hand." - Indeed, both the man and the hand can be viewed as patients, and in (9), both can be viewed as agents. Constructions of this kind are attested in the languages of the world, including Latin. One way to implement this analysis is suggesting this is an external possessor construction where the external possessor inherits the case of its body part because it is involved in the same way as the body part (in 8, as an affected P). The main problem is the presence of contexts where it is the postposition that carries the case marker, like in (10). It is not very clear what to make of it in this analysis. Indeed, if this is an external possessor construction, then the stick is the head, and the ergative is inherent on the prepositional phrase (and copied to the 'man' NP). Then, the agentive function is expressed already and has nothing to do with the postposition itself here, and it is unclear what does the postposition stands for in [stick with-Erg] in 10? It could be recognized as a head marking in a discontinuous (external possessor) alienable construction. However, that would make this postposition a head marking device in some contexts and dependent marking in other contexts (e.g. 2 or 4), which is very peculiar. (Apart from the fact that alienable construction is not strongly associated with external possessor construction.)

(c) **mixed analysis**: one may suggest that syntactic structures are not the same in all cases shown in the data, e.g. we deal with a single NP with the bodypart as the head in (8) but with two separate NPs with case doubling in (9) and (10). Not only this analysis is not parsimonious, but it is also not fully satisfactory in the sense that we have to posit two essentially independent phenomena that only appear to be the same on the surface, case doubling and case agreement on NPs, both of which are not typologically widespread. Unless one can argue they are related to each other diachronically, this is not very probable.
As this discussion shows, there are different analyses of the data, none of which is probably fully

satisfactory or at least needs explicit discussion rather than simply suggesting this is agreement within NP, as in (a), or case "doubling" in NPs expressing the same semantic role, as in (b). This was the kind of reasoning expected here. None of the participants exposed all problems of the analysis, but the full grades were given to those who went farthest on this way.

Step 4. Indicate all typologically unusual traits of flagging (marking of the role of the NP) that you observe in the language.

Typologically unusual traits include

(a) Nominative (absolutive) is *not* unmarked

(b) Agreement between nominal elements within what is assumed in the analysis above as NP; or, in the alternative analysis, doubling of participants

(c) Basic word order follows the very rare OVS (OVA) pattern (this point was not required, as this is not strictly speaking related to flagging; but was given points in case you mentioned this).

Other suggestions included ergativity, (in)alienability, unmarked inalienability - all these are not rare phenomena and were not graded.