

Re: why the -s in English verbs?

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"ekkilu" == ekkilu
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writes:

ekkilu> I am not fully happy, but my take is:

ekkilu> (a) Third-person verbal forms are the primary goal of a
ekkilu> language (since a language like Vietnamese shows that 1st
ekkilu> and 2nd persons are unnecessary.)

Well? Does Vietnamese really have that concept of "persons"? It
doesn't even have real pronouns. The pronouns can be regarded as very
frequently used nouns, and you use different ones w.r.t. familiarity,
social/family ranking, etc.

Does Vietnamese really have a 3rd person? As far as I remember,
concepts like "he" and "she" are rendered literally as "that
you(mas.)" and "that you(fem.)", respectively.

BTW, Vietnamese is isolating. Does its verb take different forms
depends on person?

ekkilu> (b) English may have fewer markers than other
ekkilu> languages. (Reminds me of the book titled "Eats, Shoots
ekkilu> and Leaves.")

But still notably more than Vietnamese, Thai, Chinese, Malay.

ekkilu> Parsing verbs from nouns would be difficult (statistically
ekkilu> speaking) without the -s ending for 3Sg.

I don't think so. Tell me how the -s helps me tell "means" (v. =>
signifies) from "means" (n. => method), "stops" (v. => terminates
motion) from "stops" (n. pl. => a place where a bus loads or unloads
passengers), "senses" (v. => feels via an organ) vs. "senses"
(n. pl. => meanings), etc.

Re: why the -s in English verbs?

ekkilu> (3Pl is less a problem because subject nouns are already
ekkilu> marked with -s.) English chooses to mark verbs, instead
ekkilu> of nouns (e.g: the case of Spanish, where articles like
ekkilu> "el/la" are ubiquitous.)

Time *flies* _like_ an arrow.
Fruit *flies* _like_ a banana.

Tell me how the 3Sg ending -s help me parse the above two sentences.

ekkilu> I guess other languages come in from other angles. So,
ekkilu> they focus on a verb as an entity separate from its
ekkilu> neighborhood nouns in sentences, and hence choose the
ekkilu> simplest form for 3Sg.

I'd say "most compact" rather than "simplest". (Have you defined what
"simpler than" means in this context?)

It's a general rule that the more frequently used expressions get the
more compact forms as a language evolves. But compactness has nothing
to do with simplicity.

ekkilu> Anyway, I think English's 3Sg -s ending will never
ekkilu> disappear. It cannot disappear, because the language would
ekkilu> become too confusing.

Then, how could isolating work at all? Remember every 1 person out of
5 in this world speaks an isolating language!

ekkilu> That is, the primary role of the -s ending is a "verb
ekkilu> marker," not conjugation.

Hm... what does "conjugation" mean?

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