CONSTRUCTIONS INVOLVING SMALL-LIST WORD CLASSES IN WITU

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In Witu there are two major open classes of words, verbal and nominal. There are additionally several small-list classes of words, which are either predicate lists, or lists closely associated constructionally with the predicate of the sentence type in which they occur. This paper deals primarily with the small-list word classes and the constructions into which they enter.

Verbal Aspect

Verbal aspect is indicated by a construction homogenous constructional with same subject common action medial constructions.

Verbal Aspect Constructions
ka ludu yaw.ane me.ku road long wander.1-med sit.1-pres. I keep wandering along the road tigini pa pi.a ka.oo body still lie.1-med stand.1-fut The body will lie indefinitely. pupu to.a ka.ko work do.he-med stand.he-pres He works very hard i to.a pi.ko this do.he-med lie.he-pres He has done this to completion.

Same Subject Common Action Medial Constructions
modo weti.ane mo.tu.ku kawkaw dig.1-med get.sf.
I-pres I dig up and collect sweet potatoes. ate kawa.ane nu.ku up-to-there stand. I-med come. I-pres I have been up to there and come back. ate kawa no.ko up-to-there stand. he-med come. he-pres He has gone up to there and come back.

The two homo constructions can be differentiated as follows:

1. The verbal aspect construction functions as a single predicate filler whose nucleus is the medial first verb. The final verb is dependent on the medial verb, and cannot expand. No other category can stand between it and the medial first verb. In common action constructions both verbs are predicate verbs, and other categories can be interpolated between them.

2. Common action constructions are derivable by binary transformation of two independent active sentences, which may be transitive or intransitive. The aspect verb is a transformation constant which may appear with an active verb.

3. The list of verbs functioning in either predicate position of common action medial constructions is very little restricted, and is virtually an open list. In verbal aspect constructions the list of verbs manifesting the aspect verb is a small closed list, /pi-/, /ka-/, /me-/.

The shift in structural function from nuclear predicate
role to subordinate verb aspect role is accompanied by a shift in lexical function indicated in the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nuclear Predicate</th>
<th>Aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/pi-/</td>
<td>to lie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/me-/</td>
<td>to sit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ka-/</td>
<td>to stand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wene Toko Constructions

There is a construction represented by wene toko (he understands). Wene represents a grammatical category manifested by a small-list class of free roots whose function in this construction is neither verbal nor nominal. Toko represents a predicate category manifested by a very restricted list of verbs, which may be another closed sublist of open verbal class. This sublist includes, among other verbs, those already listed as aspect indicators.

\[
\text{wene tu.ku wene } \overset{4}{\text{do.I-pres}} \text{ I understand wene to.ko wene do.he-pres He understands wene ka.ku wene stand.I-pres I feel strongly, I yearn for wene pi.ku wene lie.I-pres I feel ill disposed to wene pi.ki wene lie.they-pres They feel ill disposed wene me.ka.ku wene lie.transitiser.I-pres I love} \]

\[
\text{pupu to.ko work do.he-pres He works hard yau ti.ki humour do.they-pres They are amused.}\]
The verbal constructions of which the wene category is a part may be either intransitive or transitive. They are usually intransitive, but may be shifted to transitive function by affixation of an appropriate verbal affix such as -ka, or -tv.

yau toko humour do.he-pres He is amused
yau to.to.ko humour do.tv.he-pres He is amused at someone or something
yau ta.ka.ko humour do.ka.he-pres He makes someone amused.

The roots /to-/ /pi-/ /me-/ /ka-/ are the most common stems of toko category verbs. There is a pronounced shift in lexical function of these roots from that already noted for active constructions, and verbal aspect.

Keda Toko Constructions

There is a construction represented by keda toko (it is heavy) in which the predicate verb list contains only one or two roots, which inflect only with the singular impersonal suffixes, -ko and -anea. The list may be limited to the root /to-/ which in active usage means to make or to do. In this construction it is a stative verb with lexical function more or less equivalent to the verb 'to be' in English. The root /ni-/ which in active usage means to come, may also function in this construction with the meaning to become.

The list of roots represented by keda is non-verbal
and non-nominal in function. It is a small list, and consists primarily of roots not found in either open verbal or open nominal lists. The category manifested by this small list will be defined as predicative adjective. A number of roots manifesting category are unique to the category.

The construction manifested by keda toko will be defined as impersonal stative construction.

piti toko there is fear, I am afraid  ela toko there is sorrow, it is sad, I feel sad  kobu toko there is hunger, I am hungry  kugu toko it is rotted  agene toko it is covered with side shoots (agene functioning as a noun means sideshoot)  lodo toko it is smoky (lodon functioning as a noun means smoke)  tele toko it is strong, there is strength

6 yau noko someone becomes amused  niti noko it becomes cold (literally: cold comes).

This type of construction is a kernel construction in which the keda category is an obligatory component.

Kedame Tuko Constructions

There is a construction manifested by such examples as keda.me tu.ko heavy.source feel-ill.he-pres He feels ill from being weighed down. The two grammatical categories represented by kedame and tuko respectively are
manifested by small-list classes. However no root found in either list to date is unique to the particular grammatical category it manifests.

The tuko lists includes the following root stems which in active (open verbal) usage have the following lexical function, /tu-/ to feel ill, to die, /wi-/ (base of the stem /wi.ti-/ ) to strike, /to-/ to make or to do. In kedame tuko constructions these roots have basically stative connotation.

Among the roots of the kedame category are many from the keda category of the previous construction. A few of the roots are also found in open nominal list e.g., lou sun, and agene side shoot. Roots from either the keda category or from the open nominal class exhibit no obvious shift in lexical function when they manifest the kedame category.

There are three possible interpretations of kedame tuko constructions.

1. kedame tuko is an optional expansion of an active kernel construction (transitive or intransitive) by addition of a primitive adjunct represented by kedame.

2. kedame tuko constructions result from a binary transformation of two different kernel sentences, one stative (keda toko) the other active (tuko).

3. kedame tuko constructions are kernel constructions.

If kedame tuko is an optional expansion of the intransitive sentence tuko (he is feeling ill) we have to account
for the following facts. 1. Why by the addition of a primitive adjunct does the lexical function of /tu-/ shift. When tuko occurs without kedame it means either to die, or to feel ill. But with kedame it can only mean to feel ill. 2. If kedame is a primitive adjunct to an intransitive predicate how do we account for the severe limitation in the list of verb roots which function in the predicate when kedame is added to an intransitive predicate. The list in simple intransitive constructions is an open list. In kedame construction the predicate list includes only three or so verbs.

In light of these facts it seems best to regard kedame as something other than a primitive adjunct, and the construction as other than an expanded intransitive construction.

We may attempt to account for kedame tuko by a binary transformation of a stative sentence and an active sentence (transitive or intransitive). The probable process of such a transformation is indicated by the predominantly stative connotation of the verbs in kedame tuko constructions, and by the rather limited list of roots which may function as predicate stems of such constructions.

The base of the transformation is a stative sentence of the type keda toko (it is heavy). Into this base construction at the clause rather than the phrase level
enters an active sentence (transitive or intransitive) to produce a derived mono-clause sentence. In the process the active verb replaces the stative verb, acquires stative connotation, but retains its capacity to inflect like an active verb. The keda category word shifts from predicative adjective function without a marker to source function indicated by the marker suffix -me. me-characteristically marks the source (actor or instrument or both) of transitive constructions.

Such a derived construction is essentially an active state construction.

This explanation of the origin of kedame tuko constructions however is possibly challenged by the occurrence of the following two examples, loume tuko he is ill from the sun, and agename toko it bursts into side shoots. For the first example loume tuko there is no stative base sentence such as lou toko. It may however be possible to interpret lou ka.ko sun stand.sit-pres the sun is standing as a stative sentence. Lou kako means the sun is hot, rather than the sun is standing.

For the second example agename toko no binary transformation involving a stative and active sentence is necessary. It can be accounted for by an internal reordering of the function of the elements of a single stative sentence agene toko. Thus agene toko it is side-shoted,
it has side-shoots transforms to agename toko it develops
dsideshoots simply by the addition of the source suffix -me
to agene. A morphophonemic change produces agename.

We may perhaps postulate agename toko as being a
different construction from kedame tuko. If we identify
it as the same as a kedame tuko construction the definition
of kedame tuko constructions given above will need to be
modified, or voided.
FOOTNOTES

1 Witu is a language spoken by some 15,000 people living in the Pangia subdistrict of the Southern Highlands District Papua.

2 Open verbal list is composed of active predicate verbs, intransitive and transitive. Nominal words are those which may function as subject of intransitive constructions or subject and object of transitive constructions.

3 In common action medial constructions the verbal sequence indicates either a single complex action, or an immediate sequence of actions.

4 Wene can be given no specific meaning in such constructions. As a unit of a nominal phrase however it indicates emphatic or deliberate one wene.me to.ka he himself.source do.he-pt he himself did it, he did it deliberately.

5 -tV is an affix with several phonologically predictable allomorphs.

6 Niti appears to be a nominal word in this sentence. Since however it never occurs as subject or object of a transitive construction this tends to confirm that it is not a nominal word, but a predicative adjective.
PHONEMES OF WITU

The following is a very brief statement of the phonemes of Witu.

Vowels
/a/ pronounced as the u in hut when occurring in short syllables, but as the a in father in long syllables.
/i/ pronounced mostly as the i in elite
/e/ pronounced mostly as the e in pet
/u/ pronounced mostly as the u in put

Consonants

Nasals and l pronounced much the same as English equivalents.

There are two stop series, a prenasalised, and a non-prenasalised series.

/b/ is pronounced mb, /d/ is pronounced nd,
/g/ is pronounced ngg

The non-prenasalised stops have the following allophones

/p/ pʰ word initial b most common allophone intervocalically

/t/ tʰ word initial ɬ intervocalically between the following vowels, i preceding and any other vowel than i following, e preceding and a following ŋ intervocalically between all other vowel sequences

/k/ kʰ word initial k, g̊ g intervocalically
Nasalisation is emic and all vowels following a nasalised vowel in a word are nasalised.

Tone is emic. The tone analysis is not yet complete. It would seem that tone is emic at the word rather than the syllable level.