Kanakanavu voice and its relation to tense, aspect and modality revisited

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Abstract

This presentation reports on-going research on Kanakanavu, one of the most endangered Formosan languages (Austronesian) spoken in south Taiwan, as part of a larger project carried on the so-called “Tsouic” group. It will focus on particular on Kanakanavu verbal morphology, and in particular the relation between voice, tense, aspect and mood/modality.

The Kanakanavu voice system has been described to a more or less extent in a number of studies (including Tsuchida 1976, Mei 1982, Wu 2006, 2014, Chang 2006, Ross 2009, Dorinda To appear). What transpires from these earlier studies is that Kanakanavu makes, like other Formosan languages, a basic distinction between dynamic and stative verbs, which display two verbal alternations (indicative AV form, the ‘M-stem’ in Ross’ (2012) terms and its alternant form, the ‘basic stem’). Indicative AV verbs may (or may not) be overtly marked as AV, cf. k<um>aun ‘eat (AV)’ vs. arapana ‘run (AV)’. An alternant form (or basic stem) is the form of the verb which is marked by a grammatical affix, e.g., pa- ‘Caus’, ka- ‘Stat’, or -un ‘UVP’). Both dynamic and stative verbs can take voice affixes. Two voices, AV (Actor Voice) and UV (Undergoer Voice), can be distinguished morphologically and syntactically. UV is treated as further dividing into UVP (Patient Undergoer Voice), UVL (Locative Undergoer Voice) and UVC (Circumstantial Undergoer Voice). This voice system has been shown to interact closely with mood (indicative and non-indicative) and aspect (neutral, perfective and imperfective).

The aim of the present paper is to show that to understand fully (or better) understand the voice system of Kanakanavu, a number of factors needs to be taken into account and/or reanalyzed. Two factors that need to be taken into account are: (i) negative polarity and (ii) case realization. Kanakanavu is subject to negative polarity. The indicative mood includes declarative and interrogative affirmative sentences; negative sentences are partly excluded from this category. Earlier studies have shown that GF (hereby UVP) and LF (hereby UVL) merge in most cases (Tsuchida 1976) while SF or I/BF (we refer to here as UVC) is only found in very few instances (cf. Tsuchida 1976 and Wu 2006, 2014). We believe, on the contrary, that argument structure and case realization (and in particular the (non-)marking of agentivity) help distinguish UVP marked by -un ‘UVP’ or ni- ‘UVP.Perf’ from other nominalized forms, Locative nominalization marked by ni-<in>...-an and Instrument nominalization encoded through si-, which were formerly analyzed as UVL as UVC respectively. Other factors need to be properly reanalyzed, among other things: mood and aspect. Grammatically (or non-grammatically) marked categories need to be identified properly, e.g. in Kanakanavu, the hortative is not a grammaticalized category and there is no distinction between “reals” and “irreals” as commonly found in other Formosan languages (e.g. Puyuma, Saisiyat or Paiwan, see Teng 2008, Zeitoun et al. in press, Huang 2012 to cite but a few).
REFERENCES
http://ling.nthu.edu.tw/ustwpl/vol2/vol2.htm