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Attenuative Hopping in Hill Mari complex predicates

In Hill Mari, there exist so-called complex predicates [Bradley 2016] — constructions that consist of two verbal forms: a converb, which denotes a situation (lexical verb), and a grammaticalized finite form, which somehow modifies the situation described by the converb (light verb). You can see the opposition between the combination of two lexical verbs (1) and a complex predicate (2):

(1) *pi   opt-alal-ə̂n   ke-š*
　　dog bark-ATT-CVB   go-AOR[3SG]
　　'The dog went having barked'.

(2) *tə̂də̂   amal-ə̂n   ke-š*
　　that   sleep-CVB   go-AOR[3SG]
　　'He fell asleep'.
　　*'He went sleeping'.

There is a large set of light verbs grammaticalized in Hill Mari [ibid]. In my research, I will discuss complex predicates formed with light verbs *keäš* 'to go', *koltaš* 'to send', *šuaš* 'to throw' and *šə̂ndäš* 'to put'. These light verbs share the same grammatical function — telicization, i.e. they introduce (3) or specify (4) a telic interpretation of a lexical verb:

(3) a. *pört   vəc   minut/*minut-ə̂stə̂   jə̂l-en*
　　　　house   5   minute/minute-ILL   burn-PRF[3SG]
　　　　'The house burned for/*in 5 minutes'.

　　b. *pört   vəc   *minut/minut-ə̂stə̂   jə̂l-en   ke-š*
　　　　house   5   minute/minute-ILL   burn-CVB   go-AOR[3SG]
　　　　'The house burned in/*for 5 minutes'.

(4) a. *tə̂də̂   vəc   i/i-štə̂   kušk-en*
　　　　that   5   year/year-ILL   grow.up-PRF[3SG]
　　　　'He grew up for/in 5 years'.

　　b. *tə̂də̂   vəc   *i/i-štə̂   kušk-en   ke-š*
　　　　that   5   year/year-ILL   grow.up-PRF[3SG]   go-AOR[3SG]
　　　　'He grew up in/*for 5 years'.

In addition, Hill Mari has a set of attenuative markers. According to [Makarchuk 2018], Attenuative denotes 'entering the state for a short time' in combination with telic predicates and 'a shorter situation' in combination with atelic predicates. For example, atelic verb *šə̂laš* 'to melt' (5) forms an attenuative verb *šə̂lalalaš* 'to melt a bit' (6):

(5) *i   vəc   cäš/   *cäš-ə̂štə̂   šə̂l-en*
　　ice 5   hour   hour-ILL melt-PRF[3SG]
　　'The ice melted for/*in 5 hours'.

(6) *i   šə̂l-alal'-ə̂*
　　ice melt-ATT-AOR[3SG]
　　1. 'The ice melted a bit (but didn't become water) '.
　　2. *'The ice melted (becoming water) for a short time'.

At the same time, light verb *keäš* 'to go' in combination with lexical verb *šə̂laš* 'to melt' forms a complex predicate with telic interpretation exceptionally:

(7) *i   vəc   *cäš/   *cäš-ə̂štə̂   šə̂l-en   ke-š*
　　ice 5   hour   hour-ILL   melt-CVB   go-AOR[3SG]

'The ice melted (becoming water)'.

The key phenomenon I will discuss in my presentation is so-called Attenuative Hopping. Although attenuative suffix is located on a converb in complex predicates, semantically, it behaves as if it was located on the telicizing light verb: it always denotes 'entering the state for a short time' in such constructions, even if the lexical verb is atelic, as in (8):

(8) *i   šə̂l-alal-Ø   ke-š*
    ice melt-ATT-CVB   go-AOR[3SG]
    1. %? 'The ice melted a bit (but didn't become water)'. (TEL>ATT)
    2. 'The ice melted (becoming water) for a short time'. (ATT>TEL)

Wherein attenuative marking on the light verb is prohibited:

(9) **i   šə̂l-en   ke-ldal'-ə̂*
    ice melt-CVB   go-ATT-AOR[3SG]
    Expected: 'The ice melted (becoming water) for a short time'.

Thus, the behavior of Attenuative in Hill Mari violates the Mirror Principle [Baker 1985]: being nearer to the verbal root than the light verb, attenuative marker enters in the semantic derivation after the telicizer, as we can see in (8). In my report, I will describe in more details the semantic interaction between Attenuative and each of telicizers and offer an analysis of Attenuative Hopping within the framework of the first phase syntax [Ramchand 2008].

References.

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