

Adverbial clauses and subordination strategies in Tuwari and in some other papuan languages

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Outline

Introduction

A typical subordination strategy in the Tuwari language

Some structural properties of subordination in papuan languages

The interplay of nominal morphology and topical status

Introduction

- ▶ This talk is mainly devoted to the discussing of data from papuan languages
- ▶ Papuan languages are interesting for the theory of subordination because they often exhibit in their overt structure the underlying similarity between subordinates :

[Subordinate clauses] may function as one of three types of constituents, arguments (core), adjuncts (oblique) or modifiers of these two, corresponding to the traditional categories of complement, adverbial subordinate clause or relative clause. The close interrelationships of these three types of embedded clauses is strongly brought out in many Papuan languages, in that all three have the same structures [...]

(W. A. FOLEY 2010 : 27 + 6)

- ▶ This talk relies heavily on (W. A. FOLEY 2010) and (W. A. FOLEY 2017)

Outlines

- ▶ A typical subordination strategy in the Tuwari language
- ▶ Some structural properties of subordination in Tuwari and some other papuan languages
- ▶ An explanation of some syntactic effect of this subordination strategy using LFG

Outline

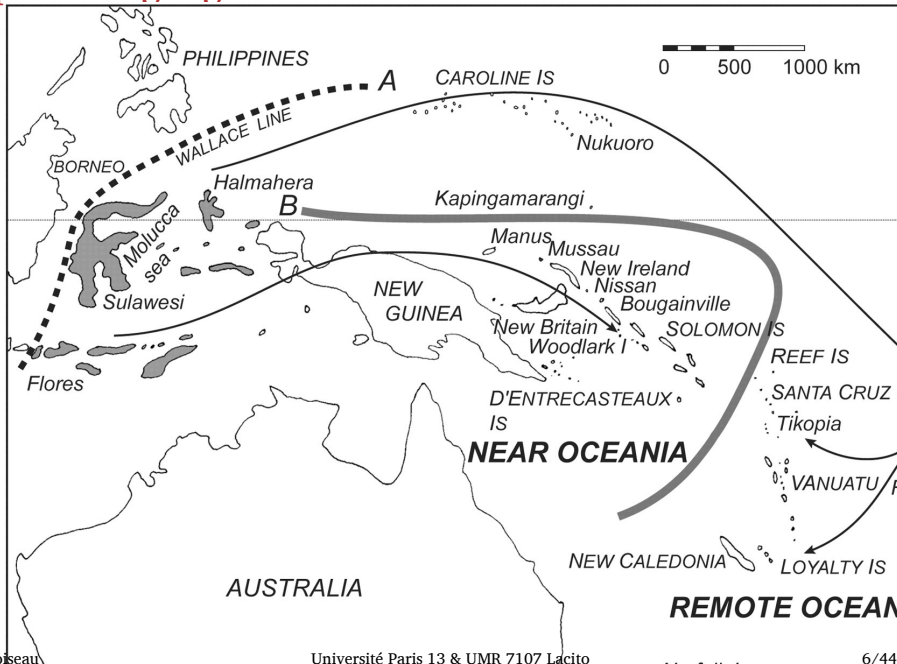
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Papuan languages



Tuwari

- ▶ One of the ~5 members of the supposed walioic language family, all of which are undocumented;
- ▶ spoken by ~200 individuals in Sandaun Province, on a tributary of the Upper Sepik;
- ▶ data collected during four field trips in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2019; analysis still in progress.

Tuwari gender system

- ▶ Tuwari has no switch reference but a gender system triggering agreement on several targets such as the verb (where it references the subject) and article.

(1) a mami ne = **mo** iafi = **m-we-i**
1SG(M) pig(IV) DEM = **ART.IV** shoot\PST = TOP-M-PRED
'I (M) killed that pig.'

Tuwari GN structure

- ▶ As with some other Papuan languages (e.g. Kalamang (VISSER 2020) or Nalca (WÄLCHLI 2018)), the domain of nominal morphology is the nominal phrase rather than the noun.
- ▶ Tuwari makes a strong distinction between two types of noun phrases :
 - ▶ clause-level noun phrases (i.e. argument of the predicate or adjunct);
 - ▶ non-clause-level noun phrases (modifier).

- ▶ One of the clear manifestations of this distinction is the behaviour of the article : it appears once per clause-level noun phrase (with a specific reading).

(2) **me** [**o** **mami** = **sapo**] **ano-li-no**
2SG.M house(IX) pig(III) = IX.SG build-?-Q
'Are you building a pigsty?'

- ▶ It is therefore a 'complement article' (HIMMELMANN 2001 : 835)
 - ▶ as opposed to 'NP articles' that appear at both clause-level and in nominal phrases modifying another head noun (as it is the case with the English article : '**the** end of **the** dictator').

- ▶ On clause-level nominal expressions, the article appears at the right boundary, while the head noun appears at the left boundary.
- ▶ These nominal expressions can be analysed as DPs, with the article as its head
 - ▶ consistently with the overall right branching character of the language.
 - ▶ The article is not concurrent with the demonstratives, that are added as any modifiers inside the nominal expression.

- ▶ The article plays a key role in delimiting constituents.
- ▶ The segmental contrast between the following two examples is mostly the presence of the article *mo*.
 - ▶ This contrast produces two different segmentations and thus two readings of the homophonic *a* ('1SG' and 'go').

(3) a. [*mami* *o* *a* = *mo*]-io
 pig(III) young 1SG = III.SG-PRED
 'it is my young pig.'

b. [*mami* = *mo*] *a* = *mo*-i
 pig(III) = III.SG go = III.SG-PRED
 'a pig come.'

- ▶ There is no article with unspecific or indefinite noun phrase, but those noun phrases also tend to have no modifiers and hence the absence of the article is not a difficulty for the identification of constituent boundaries.

The unequivocal delimitation of the NP by the head noun on the left and the article on the right allows for the enrolment of various types of noun modifiers in between : proper noun (a), adjective (b), demonstrative (c), adverbial (d), noun (e) or numeral (f).

- (4) a. [ule sotila =se]
 girl(F) PN = F.SG
 ‘Satila’ (lit. ‘the girl Satila’)
- b. [o ilo kali =sapo]
 house(IX) old big = IX.SG
 ‘an old big house’
- c. [o ne =sapo] upemi iolua-i
 house(IX) DEM = IX.SG ladder(III) two\II-PRED
 ‘This house has two ladders.’
- d. [o wafe no =sapo]
 house(IX) downstream DEM = IX.SG
 ‘this house downstream’
- e. me [o mami =sapo] ano-li-no
 2SG.M house(IX) pig(III) = IX.SG build-?-Q
 ‘Are you building a pigsty?’
- f. [no waai =mo]
 week(III) one = III.SG
 ‘one week’

- ▶ The unequivocal delimitation of the NP by the head noun and the article also allows for the inclusion of more complex material between the head and the article, such as proto clauses, having argument structure (transitive in (a), intransitive in (b)) :

- (5) a. [o otue-le o-u =sapo]
 house(IX) food-PL cook-? = IX.SG
 ‘a cooking house’
- b. [o kowale u =sapo]-i
 house(IX) only sleep = IX.SG-PRED
 ‘It’s a house for sleeping only.’

Clause chaining (1/2)

- ▶ As many papuan languages, Tuwari has two main strategies for complex sentences : clause chaining and subordination.
- ▶ In a clause chain, only the verb of the last clause (the *final verb*) is fully inflected.
- ▶ All preceding verbs (*medial verbs*, gloss : MED) received an partial inflection, and inherit the features not expressed from the last verbs

- (6) a sane-pe ate-ne, wafe-ma m-io-ne,
1PL bow-ART.VIII hold-MED, downstream-DIR ?-go-MED,
 mami = mo iefi-nai-m-w-i
 pig = ART.IV shoot-IRR-TOP-M-PRED
 ‘I will take a bow, go down and shoot a pig.’

Clause chaining (2/2)

- ▶ clause chains are (mainly) used when there is no topical contrast between the clauses (?)
- ▶ best analyzed as coordination strategy, where the inflectional category of the final clause does not belong to it but to the structure as a whole.
 - ▶ more on this latter

Subordination

- ▶ Tuwari has a single subordination strategy, for two types of subordinate (adverbial, relative), which are marked with *-mo*.
 - ▶ the exact function of this marker is still unclear; it is one of the article forms and a building block of pronouns

- (7) a. [a mami o =mo] no-mo
1SG pig(III) child =III.SG there-III.SG
'my pig is there.'
- b. mo fa f-uaflo-ne
3SG yet NEG-dead-NEG
'It [the pig] is not dead yet'
- c. a mo=sapo miali
1SG ?-IX.SG like
'I like it [a house]'

Adverbial clause

- ▶ The semantic relation between the adverbial clauses and the matrix clause covers a large range of values (consecutivity, purpose, cause, condition, habituality...);
 - ▶ In (a), the subordinate clause indicates the cause for the event described in the matrix clause,
 - ▶ whereas in (b) it may indicate (be translated as) a condition, or an habitual :

- (8) a. **teto** =se **otei-na-no** =**mo** **m-we**
sibling = F.SG fight-?-PURP =**SUB** TOP-3SG.M
m-olu-ne **i-i**
?-run-MED do-PRED
'His sister was willing to fight him so that he ran away.'
(lit. 'Given that his sister was willing to fight him, he ran away.')
- b. **a** **heifo** =**mo** **m-otei** =**mo** **hale** **mosi-io**
1SG dog =ART ?-fight =**SUB** shout bark-PRED
'When (if, ...) I fight a dog, it barks.'

Relative clause

► Relative

- (9) [ia-le meli = **mo**] f-efafe-ne mwe kesia-le-i
speech-PL say = **SUB** NEG-hear-NEG 3SG play-do-PRED
'He does not hear (obey) to the word that are told and plays.'
(Lit. 'Given what is told to him, he does not hear and play')

Verbs of perception and “complement clause”

- ▶ Verbs of perception are often backgrounded in the subordinate
 - ▶ rather than having the subordinate expressing the complement of the verb of perception.
 - ▶ cf. Hua, Tauya (MACDONALD 1990)

(10) [a hefafe =mo] mami o =mo m-olu-ne-io
1SG hear =SUB pig(III) young =III ?-run-?-PRED
'I hear a young boar running away.' (lit. 'Given that I heard, a boar ran away.')

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The Tuwari data illustrate four interplaying properties

1. formal similarity of subordination types (core, oblique, modifier)
2. marked with nominal morphology
3. expressing backgrounded information
4. associated with distinction between clause-level (argument or adjunct) and non-clause level nominals

I will illustrate those properties with data from more languages and stress how they interplay

1. Formal similarity of subordination types

- ▶ formal (morphological) similarity of the three subordination types :
 - ▶ core argument (complement clause);
 - ▶ adjunct (adverbial clause);
 - ▶ modifier (relative clause).

- ▶ In Fore, (Scott 1978) (quoted in Foley 2017 : 926) :
 - ▶ The subject markers of the subordinate clauses are drawn from a single set used only for subordinate clauses.
 - ▶ The subordinate clauses take nominal morphology (either case suffixes like *-ka* REF, e.g. ‘concerning,’ *-ti* ‘allative’ and *-sa* ‘ablative’ or the topic marking suffix *-pa*.)

(11)

Fore (Scott 1978)

- a. Core argument (complement clauses)

[na-ʔkib-éʔ-ka-na]

i-i-e

eat-LIKELY-**3PL.SBJ.SBD**-REF-3SG.SBJ talk-3SG.SBJ-DECL

‘He talks about how they will eat.’

- b. Adjunct (adverbial (conditional) clauses)

[a-ka-ʔkib-iʔ-pa]

m’ae-ʔki-i-e

3SG.OBJ-see-LIKELY-**3SG.SBJ.SBD**-TOP get-LIKELY-3SG.SBJ

‘If he sees it, he will get (it).’

- c. Headless relative clauses

[a-egu-ʔt-óʔ-ti]

w-a :n-‘o

3SG.OBJ-hit-NR.PST-**1SG.SBJ.SBD**-ALL go-2SG.SBJ-Q

‘Are you going to where I hit him?’

- d. Headed relative clauses

[mi-nt-i]

ʔkuma :ʔ-ta-sa

be.at-REM.PST-**3SG.SBJ.SBD** village-LOC-ABL

kana-i-e

come-3SG.SBJ-DECL

‘He came from the village in which he stayed.’

In Hua, the verb in both adverbial and relative clauses obligatorily occurs with the subordinating suffix *-ma* :

(12) Hua (Haiman 1980) (quoted by Foley 1986 : 201-202)

a. Adverbial clause

[fu-mo d-mi-**ma**-da]

u-gu-e

pig-TP 1SG.U-give-**SUB**-3SG.A go-UNREAL-DECL.OTHER
“after he gives me pork, I will go”

b. Relative clause

[hefi-**ma**] za

break.3-**SUB** wood
'wood which is broken'

2. Subordinate clauses are marked with nominal morphology

- ▶ In many papuan languages, subordinate clauses take the same inflection as **(definite) nominals**
 - ▶ a nominal category (case, gender, determiner, topic marker) is most often the functional head of the subordinate clause, which function as a NP, DP, or PP.

3. backgrounded information

- ▶ The content of subordinate clauses is presupposed/topical/backgrounded information (“given that...”) (John HAIMAN 1978), (G. P. REESINK 1994)

([repeated]) Usan

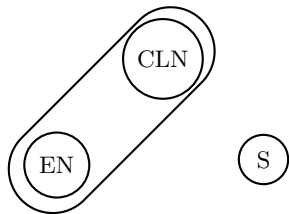
[munon emi bau-ori [eng] ye
man bow take-3SG.SBJ.FR.PST DET 1SG
me ge-au
NEG see-NEG

‘I didn’t see the man who took the bow.’ (lit. ‘Given that the man took the bow, I don’t see it’)

4. Strong distinction of clause-level nominals and other nominals

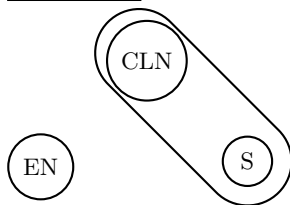
- ▶ Two alignments of
 - ▶ embedded nominal (EN)
 - ▶ Clause level nominal (CLN)}
 - ▶ Subordinate (S)

NP article : $\boxed{\text{EN} = \text{CLN}} \neq \text{S}$



Complement article : $\text{EN} \neq$

$\boxed{\text{CLN} = \text{S}}$



- ▶ complement articles « also tend to occur after subordinate clauses expressing presupposed information. » (HIMMELMANN 2001 : 837).
- ▶ Complement article are widespread in papuan languages, and associated with subordination strategy, for instance :
 - ▶ Usan (G. P. REESINK 1994), (G. REESINK 2014)
 - ▶ Hua (J. HAIMAN 1977 : 58)
 - ▶ Nalca (WÄLCHLI 2018 : 70)

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Those structural properties are interplaying :

- ▶ the subordinate type are formally similar and are functionally similar;
- ▶ topical information, as well as subordinates, “set the frame of reference for the rest of the sentence” (W. FOLEY 1986 : 203);
- ▶ definite nominal morphology in general is mostly used for topical information
 - ▶ topicalizing suffix to mark subordinate clauses (Hua, Barai, Imonda, ...)
 - ▶ determiner used for instance in Usan often have a topical reading.

- ▶ The relation between topical status and nominal morphology can be better explained using a framework, like Lexical Functional Grammar (Bresnan 2001)
 - ▶ where function categories like I (verbal inflections of tense, aspect or mood) D (for Determiner) or K (for Case) can project phrases like IP, DP or KP.
 - ▶ functional categories like I can be the heads of phrases (e.g. IP) as much as lexical categories such as N can function as the heads of NPs

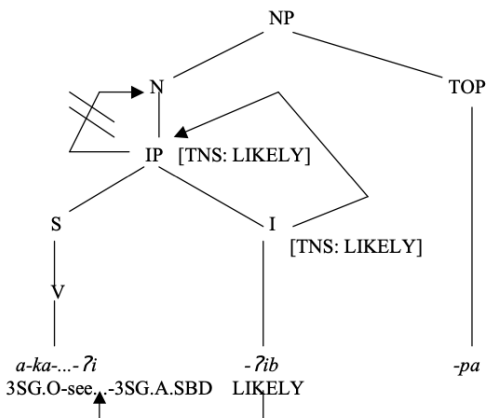
(14) Fore adverbial clauses (repeated)

[a-ka-ʔkib-iʔ-pa]

m'ae-ʔki-i-e

3SG.OBJ-see-LIKELY-3SG.SBJ.SBD-TOP get-LIKELY-3SG.SBJ

‘If he sees it, he will get (it).’



- ▶ the subordinate clause is essentially an island : neither can its features percolate up to the level of the matrix clause nor can the I features of the matrix clause move down into it through the mismatching NP node
- ▶ accounts for the fact that subordinate clauses are typically impervious to the illocutionary force of their matrix clauses ; they are usually presupposed statements (topic).

clause chaining vs subordination

- ▶ This model explains the contrast in the spread of features such as negation (or illocutionary force) observed between clause chain and subordination

(15)

Usan

- a. **ye** **nanimun** **gumat-em** **eng** **big-ine** **me**
1SG letter write-1SG.FP TOP put-1SG.DR NEG

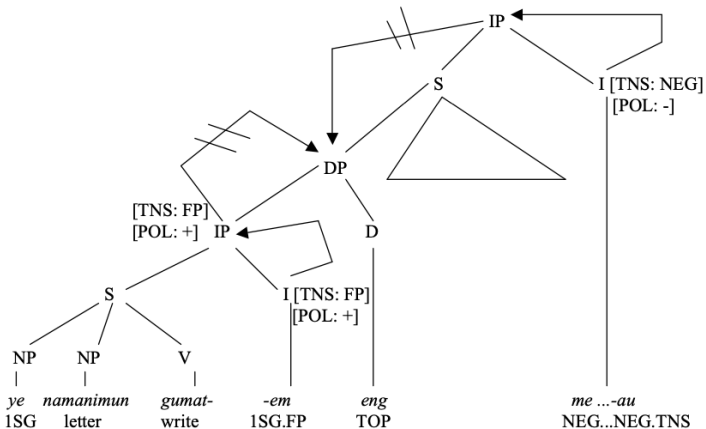
is-au

go.down-NEG.TNS

‘I didn’t mail the letter that I wrote’

- b. **ye** **nanimun** **gumat** **big-ine** **me** **is-au**
1SG letter write put-1SG.DR NEG go.down-NEG.TNS

‘I didn’t write and mail a letter’ = ‘I didn’t send a letter’



the negation does not spread into the subordinate clauses : the dominating phrasal node DP provides a barrier to the spread of any I features like tense, mood or polarity from one clause to the other.

Conclusion

- ▶ A quick survey of issues of subordination strategy in Papuan languages
- ▶ In many Papuan languages, the underlying similarity between adverbial clauses, complement and relative clause are overtly expressed, which make them interesting for syntactic theory
- ▶ Some common structural properties are interplaying :
 - ▶ the topical status of the subordinate
 - ▶ the nominal morphology of the subordinate
 - ▶ the specific morphology of clause-level nominals



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