

On Subject and Object Marking in Laki

Based on the canonical approach of morphology, there is a one-to-one correspondence between form and content. In this ideal model, distinct contents are expressed by distinct morphological forms, and same contents are expressed by the same morphology. However, there are recurrent deviations from a canonical morphology in world languages. This study investigates polyfunctionality as one sort of deviation from a canonical inflectional marking. Ackerman and Bonami (to appear: 1) define Polyfunctional markers as the same class of grammatical markers that can assume related but different functions in different grammatical contexts. Building upon this idea, I examine object and subject agreement markers in Laki. This language based on Windfuhr (2009) and Anonby (2004) belongs to the Northwestern branch of Iranian languages. In this language there are three sets of person and number markers. One is a set of clitics (hereafter group A) that marks {1 and 2 sg} and {1-3 pl}. The other one is a set of suffixes (hereafter group B) that marks {1 and 2 sg} and {1-3 pl}. The third one is the suffix *-i*, that marks {3 sg}. The distribution of these markers is what is remarkable. Clitics in group A are the subject agreement markers of the preterite transitive verbs, and pronominal object in present tense. Suffixes in group B are subject agreement markers in present tense, and pronominal object in preterite transitive verbs. They also mark subject agreement in preterite intransitive verbs. Suffix *-i* marks subject agreement of {3sg} in preterite transitive and present verbs. It serves as the pronominal object for present verbs as well.

Table 1. Group A. {subj trans pret} \wedge {obj prs}

<i>=em</i>	{1sg}
<i>=et</i>	{2sg}
<i>=man</i>	{1pl}
<i>=tan</i>	{2pl}
<i>=an</i>	{3pl}

Table 2. Group B. {subj prs} \wedge {obj trans pret} \wedge {subj intrans pret}

<i>em</i>	{1sg}
<i>in</i>	{2sg}
<i>imen</i>	{1pl}
<i>inan</i>	{2pl}
<i>en</i>	{3pl}

-i: {3sg subj trans pret} \wedge {3sg obj trans prs} \wedge {3sg subj prs}

In this study, the association of form and content of these polyfunctional agreement markers is viewed from a realizational angle, in which exponents (morphological forms) are associated with the morphosyntactic properties via the application of rules of exponence, ordered into rule blocks (Anderson: 1992 and Stump: 2001). I examine these markers through the consideration of the morphotactics of this language. To reach this aim, following Stump's analysis (to appear) of Swahili verbal concords, I consider two distinct types of content for these agreement markers: intrinsic content is an invariable core content which remains intact regardless of the position of the inflectional marker in rule blocks. Polyfunctional markers in Laki all realize the invariable content that is τ { α PER β NUM}. τ subsumes the person and number properties of the subject and object. On the other hand, the affix position of these markers in rule blocks determines the positional content they realize. Their positional content is what the morphotactics of the language determines. That said, functioning as either subject or object is determined by affix position of these markers. On the other hand, the distinction between intrinsic and positional exponence suggests that rules of exponence should actually consist of two independent parts: Exponence Declarations which specify intrinsic content and Sequencing Rules which specify an exponent's linear ordering and its positional content (Stump: to appear). By sequencing rules, we are able to account for polyfunctional markers and the positional content they realize based on the slots they occupy in word forms. Considering other inflectional markers (mood, polarity, aspect, etc.) in the morphology of this language, I propose the following affix positions. Before looking at the table, consider two sentences that follow:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. di-m=et
 see.PRET.OBJ.1SG=SUB.1SG
 "You saw me."</p> | <p>2. m-own-em=et
 IND.see.PRS-SUB.1SG-OBJ.2SG
 "I see you."</p> |
|---|---|

Table 3. Verbal morphotactics of Laki

-1	-2	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
Subj <i>be-</i>	habitual <i>ma-</i>		voice <i>-ya</i>	past perf <i>-u</i>	prs obj <i>-em</i>	pret sub <i>=em</i>	prs perf <i>-a</i>
Neg <i>na-</i> <i>ne-</i>				past subj <i>-a</i>	<i>-et</i>	<i>=et</i>	<i>-asi</i>
				prs sub <i>-em</i>	<i>-i</i>	<i>=i</i>	<i>-iya</i>
				<i>-in</i>	<i>-man</i>	<i>=man</i>	
				<i>-i</i>	<i>-tan</i>	<i>=tan</i>	
				<i>-imen</i>	<i>-an</i>	<i>=an</i>	
				<i>-inan</i>	pret obj <i>-em</i>		
				<i>-en</i>	<i>-in</i>		
					<i>-imen</i>		
					<i>-inan</i>		
					<i>-en</i>		

The intrinsic exponence declaration and sequencing rules of subject and object markers in particular, are as follows:

x.

[[<i>em</i> , {1 sg}]]	[[<i>man</i> , {1 pl}]]	Group A
[[<i>et</i> , {2 sg}]]	[[<i>tan</i> , {2 pl}]]	
	[[<i>an</i> , {3 pl}]]	

[[*i*, {3 sg}]]

[[<i>em</i> , {1 sg}]]	[[<i>imen</i> , {1 pl}]]	Group B
[[<i>in</i> , {2 sg}]]	[[<i>inan</i> , {2 pl}]]	
	[[<i>en</i> , {3 pl}]]	

Block +2.

Where $[[B, \{\tau\}]]$ is an exponence declaration in x, the block +2 sequencing rule is $\text{Suff}([[B, \{\{\text{sub prs}\} \sqcup \tau\}]])$.

Where $[[\neg i, \{\tau\}]]$ is an exponence declaration in x, the block +2 sequencing rule is $\text{Suff}([[\neg i, \{\{\text{sub prs}\} \sqcup \tau\}]])$.

Block +3.

Where $[[A, \{\tau\}]]$, is an exponence declaration in x, the block +3 sequencing rule is $\text{Suff}([[A, \{\{\text{obj prs}\} \sqcup \tau\}]])$.

Where $[[B, \{\tau\}]]$, is an exponence declaration in x, the block +3 sequencing rule is $\text{Suff}([[B, \{\{\text{obj pret}\} \sqcup \tau\}]])$.

Where $[[\neg i, \{\tau\}]]$, is an exponence declaration in x, the block +3 sequencing rule is $\text{Suff}([[\neg i, \{\{\text{obj prs}\} \sqcup \tau\}]])$.

Block +4.

Where $[[A, \{\tau\}]]$, is an exponence declaration in x, the block +4 sequencing rule is $\text{Suff}([[A, \{\{\text{sub pret}\} \sqcup \tau\}]])$.

Where $[[\neg i, \{\tau\}]]$, is an exponence declaration in x, the block +4 sequencing rule is $\text{Suff}([[\neg i, \{\{\text{sub trans pret}\} \sqcup \tau\}]])$.

References

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