Valency Decreasing Derivations and Middles in Limbum

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General Introduction

➢ Eastern Grass-fields Bantu;

➢ Isolating language;

➢ Verbs prefixes seen only with infinitives;

➢ Adding a suffix yields a basic verb structure: Root + Suffix;

➢ Roots generally monosyllabic or disyllabic : (V/CV/CVV/CVC/CCV/CCVV) (CVCV/CCVCV/CVCCV).

Overview

➢ Six valency-decreasing derivation suffixes;

➢ Five always modify argument structures;

➢One derives a transitive stem with reflexive and/or reciprocal meaning;

➢ Focus: two valency-decreasing derivations:

–ti and *–ŋger.*

Valency-decreasing devices

➢ Permit the omission of an agent or patient;

➢ Function as anticausatives, antipassives, reflexives, and diminutives;

➢ Specified semantically as; bifurcation or separative, iterative (repetitive), distributive and serial;

➢ Reference made to number of subjects or objects;

➢ Mapped in the domain of the middle voice?

Agent omission

1. (a) **Pità à tee kṳ̀.**
Peter CL1.SM cut rope
Peter has cut the rope.

   (b) **Kṳ̀ à teeti i.**
CL1.Rope CL1.SM cut-ANTICAUS echo vowel.
The rope has been cut off.

2. (a) **Pità à teeshi bkṳ̀.**
Peter CL1.SM cut-PLU.CAUS CL2-ropes
Peter has cut the ropes

   (b) **Bkṳ̀ bvi teeŋger e.**
CL2-Ropes CL2.SM cut-ANTICAUS echo vowel
The ropes have cut off.

Patient omission

3(a) **Jôn   à   zhe   bzhee.**
      John   CL1.SM   eat   CL2.food
      John has eaten some food.

  (b) **Jôn   à   zheŋger   e.**
      John   CL1.SM   eat-ANTIP   echo vowel
      John has eaten (food).

  (c) **Jôn   ce   no   mrù'.**
      John   ASP.PROG   drink   wine
      John is drinking wine.

  (d) **Jôn   ce   noŋger   e.**
      John   ASP.PROG   drink-ANTIP   echo vowel
      John is drinking (alcohol).

Reflexives

(a)	**Jôn	ce	de'	e**
John	ASP.PROG	speak	vowel echo
John is talking.

(b)	**Jôn	à	m	de'ŋger	e**
John	ASP.PROG	PST3	speak-REFL	vowel echo
John was talking to himself.

(b)	**Ŋgwagùu	ce	bòoŋger	e**
Bride	ASP.PROG	humble-REFL	echo vowel
The bride is humbling herself.

Middle Voice

4(a)   **Mɛri   à   bʉ'   yàa   ntʉŋ.**
Mary   CL1.SM   break   CL1.1SG.POSS   CL1.pot
Mary has broken my pot.

 (b)   **Ntʉŋ   à   bʉ'ti   mɛ̀.**
CL1.Pot   CL1.SM   break-ANTI.CAUS   1SG.PRO
My pot is broken.

 (c)   **Bkaŋ   bvi   bʉ'ŋger   ye.**
CL2.Pans   CL2.SM   break-ANTI.CAUS   3SG.PRO
His pans are broken.

Diminutive

5 (a**) Mɛrì   à   tòo   kò'.**
   Mary   CL1a.SM   roast   cocoyam
   Mary has roasted a cocoyam.

 (b) **Kò'   zhi   she.**
   Cocoyam   CL7.SM   burn
   The cocoyam has burnt.

 (c) **Kò'   zhi   sheŋger   e.**
   Cocoyam CL7.SM   burn-DIM   echo vowel
   The cocoyam has burnt on several spots.

Conclusion

➢ Agent omission: *–ti* and the *–ŋger* suffixes function as anticausatives.

➢ Semantic range covers iterative (repetitive) and serial action when *-ŋger* is used and bifurcation or separative when *–ti* is used.

➢ The *–ti* suffix marks singular logical subjects and the *–nger* marks plural subjects or objects.

➢ Patient omission, the antipassive is derived from the transitive predication with the use of the suffix *–ŋger* only;

➢ The derived reflexive as observed with the *-ŋger* suffix encodes repetitive meaning ;

➢ The diminutive functions as observed only with the *-ŋger* suffix encodes distributive meaning;

➢ All the derivations appear to be mapped in the domain of the middle voice and the context of the middle usage as in 4a and 4b is the same with the Greek traditional sense of "middle voice".

The End!