

Datooga directionals

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The verbal derivational system of the Datooga branch of Southern Nilotic includes three directional suffixes with a solid etymology in Nilotic, i.e. the itive (IT) *-d*, the ventive (VEN) *-(u)n*, the allative (ALL) *-s*. The present talk aims at unfolding their semantic particularities in two closely related Datooga varieties, Barbayiiga and Gisamjanga. In doing so, it diverges in two respects from previous analyses (Rottland 1982, 1983: 232, Kießling 2007, Griscom 2019: 159-162, 220-228).

First, it claims that all three extensions actually form a directional paradigm within the verbal derivational system, as based on morphotactic as well as semantic grounds. In morphotactics, the three markers are in complementary distribution and share a similar combinatory profile in that they are the only ones which combine with the associated motion (AM) marker *-aa* in compound suffixes *-aad* (AM.IT), *-aan* (AM.VEN) and *-ees* (AM.ALL), e.g. in *buus-εed / buus-εen / buug-ees* ‘sweep while moving away / hither / towards a specific goal’ (< *buus* ‘sweep’) and *gadgad-εed / gadgad-εen / gadgad-ees* ‘lift and move away / hither / towards a specific goal’ (< *gadgad* ‘lift, help standing up’).

Semantically, they are distinct from all other verbal extensions by their character as directionals, i.e. they refer to an inherent path in a motion event, “the course or trajectory taken by the moving entity” (Schaefer & Gaines 1997: 194) with a spatial orientation relative to a reference point which may be the deictic center or some other anchor. In concrete terms, the functional contrast of the three extensions is based on two parameters, i.e. the specificity of the goal and the alignment with the deictic center. Thus, the itive (or centrifugal) extension *-d* typically adds the notion of directionality to the basic meaning of the verb without specifying any goal, as in *sareen-d* ‘carry away (to some non-specific place)’, whereas the other two extensions express an orientation towards a specific goal. They differ with respect to the alignment of the goal with the deictic center, i.e. the goal introduced by the allative (or terminative) extension *-s* is deictically neutral as in *sarees-s* ‘carry to a specific place’, while the ventive (or centripetal) extension *-(u)n* encodes an orientation towards the deictic center, as in *sareen-un* ‘carry hither’.

The second point of digression from previous analyses is in the recognition of a clear semantic asymmetry in the directional subsystem with the itive extension *-d* standing out as the most general (or least marked) category, contrasting with the semantically much more specialized ventive and allative extensions. This is manifest in (i) its much more elaborate range of functions (altrilocative, instrumental), correlating with (ii) a wider distribution across different verb classes extending well beyond the domain of motion events.

Keywords: verbal derivation, direction, deixis, morphology, semantics, Datooga, Southern Nilotic

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