

## Associated motion as an applicative in Nuer

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Cross-linguistically, *associated motion* (AM) does not usually affect the valence of the verb (Belkadi 2016, Guillaume and Koch 2021); when it does, it is sporadic and lexically restricted (e.g. Payne 2021). Yet in the West Nilotic language Nuer, AM introduces an applied phrase with argument properties.

Example in (1) shows that the locative noun *rēj* ‘inside’ is an optional adjunct (as signalled by the brackets) of the transitive verb *lèp* ‘open’. By contrast, in (2) it is an obligatory constituent that indicates the goal of the motion co-event. AM in (2) is signalled on the verb stem by changes in vowel quality and tone, as compared to the transitive verb in (1).

(1)      *ć́*      *t́́t́́t́́*      *lèp*      (*rēj*)  
PFV.1SG    door.SG      open.TR.NF      inside(LOC)  
‘I opened the door (inside).’

(2)      *ć́*      *t́́t́́t́́*      *lèap*      *rēj*  
PFV.1SG    door.SG      open.AM.NF      inside(LOC)  
‘I opened the door whilst going inside.’

When antipassive-like morphology is applied to AM verbs, the motion co-event is retained, and the goal is demoted to an oblique PP, as is evident from (3a). Yet, this goal has the properties of an argument, as evidenced by the facts that (i) omitting it renders the sentence ungrammatical, as shown in (3b), and (ii) because it cannot invert with the adjunct, as shown in (3c). The verb derivation in (3) is known as the *associated motion oblique* (AM.OBL).

(3) a.      *ć́*      *t́́t́́t́́*      *lèp*      *ḱ́*      *rēj*  
PFV.1SG    door.SG      open.AM.OBL.NF    PREP    inside(LOC)  
‘I opened the door whilst going inside.’

b.      \* *ć́*      *t́́t́́t́́*      *lèp*  
PFV.1SG    door.SG      open.AM.OBL.NF  
‘I opened the door whilst going.’

c.      \* *ć́*      *t́́t́́t́́*      *lèp*      *kè*      *ɟ̀̀b̀̀*      *ḱ́*      *rēj*  
PFV.1SG    door.SG      open.AM.OBL.NF    PREP    Juba    PREP    inside(LOC)  
‘I opened the door in Juba whilst going inside.’

In this paper we provide an overview of this typologically unusual system of AM, comparing it to the valence-changing operations observed in the literature on applicatives and antipassives. We conclude that the AM in Nuer is an applicative derivation and the AM.OBL is a special type of valence-decreasing operation whereby the oblique retains some argument properties.

**References:**

- Belkadi, Aicha (2016). Associated motion constructions in African languages. *Africana Linguistica* 22: 43-70.
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- Payne, Doris L. (2021). The extension of associated motion to direction, aspect and argument structure in Nilotic languages. In Antoine Guillaume and Harold Koch (eds.), *Associated motion*. (Empirical Approaches to Linguistic Typology 64), Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. pp. 695-746.