

**BECOMING A VERB, FROM ADPOSITIONS AND SUCH:
THE EASY WAY AND THE HARDER WAYS**

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1. How forms-in-constructions can vary and change

1.1. The general questions, as always:

- What are the possible and impossible combinations of elementary grammatical properties of forms-in-constructions, within and across languages? (as dictated by Timeless Implicational Laws, constraining reanalyses)
- How can successive generations of language learners/grammar acquirers differ in their representations of properties of forms-in-constructions? (as dictated by Laws of Reanalysis, constraining crosslinguistic variation, given a limited supply of source forms-in-constructions)

1.2. The Question of Unidirectionality/Irreversibility:

lexical > grammatical >>? lexical form:

full word > function word >>? full word:

NOUN/VERB/IDEOPHONE/ADVERB > ADPOSITION >>? VERB

X > Y, Y >> X: a question of (i) **whether** and, more importantly, (ii) **how**

1.3. Adpositions

- are [-N, -V], i.e., the maximally unmarked, default word class (???);
- are used for relating only rather than (also) for predicating or referring or modifying;
- have relational meanings (typically) more abstract and general than those of verbs;
- require one (sometimes omissible) NP complement, but are not in direct construction with a subject;
- project adpositional phrases (rather than clauses, VPs, NPs, AdvPs), which they head;
- do not inflect for whatever categories relational words could inflect for (except perhaps to cross-reference their complements; also perhaps suppletion depending on semantic or morphosyntactic properties of their complements); i.e., they are not involved in FINITENESS oppositions (tense/aspect/mood/ illocutionary force, agreement/cross-reference with direct subject);
- are members of a (synchronically) closed, usually smallish form class (≤ 30 , but up to some 80 seem possible, as e.g. in Athapaskan).

- (1) a. Bruce was **over** the creek first.
a. Bruce **crossed** the creek first.
- (2) a. The bottle opener is **at/with/from** Bruce('s).
b. Bruce **has/owns** the bottle opener.
- (3) a. Bruce eats peas **with** a spoon.
b. Bruce **uses** a spoon to eat peas.

1.4. The fate of adpositions — not really much for them to look forward to?:

- becoming bound relational markers, i.e. cases (preferably if postpositions);
- being reanalysed as adnumeral adverbs within NPs (not so frequent? Plank 2001).

1.5. Sources of adpositions:

- lexical words, especially (relational) nouns, (serial, non-finite, rarely finite) verbs, ideophones (rare), adverbs, within their respective types of constructions;
- grammatical words, e.g. coordinate conjunctions (?—rather the other way round);
- bound forms, e.g. case affixes, preverbs (very rare).

1.6. Mechanisms for the creation of adpositions (in adpositional phrases):

- “grammaticalization” of forms of a more lexical nature, which really subsumes a variety of individual reanalyses affecting individual properties of forms-in-constructions;
- “degrammaticalization” of forms of a more grammatical nature, ditto

1.7. Relevant ways of “degrammaticalization”, i.e., kinds of reanalyses of adpositions as something else, less “grammatical”:

easy: • conversion (“contextuals”, Adp >> V);

harder: • lexicalization of converts;
 • gradual reanalysis of adpositions-in-AdpPs as verbs-in-clauses, with marked topicalization of clause without overt copula reanalysed as unmarked clause structure and with concomitant changes of NP-relations:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & X_{NPsbj} \wedge_{COP} [at/with_{Adp} (+) Y_{NP(pro)}]_{AdpP} \\
 & \quad _ Y_{NPtop} X_{NPsbj} [at/with_{Adp} + Y_{NPpro}]_{AdpP} \\
 & \quad >> Y_{NPsbj} X_{NPobj} [at/with + Y_{pro'sbj'}]_V
 \end{aligned}$$

- resegmentation of adposition as part of the (non-zero) copula, copula and adposition being adjacent in marked word order construction, then reanalysed as unmarked, with grammatical relations reversed:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & Z_{COP} X_{NPsbj} [at_{Adp} (+) Y_{NP(pro)}]_{AdpP} \\
 & \quad _ Z_{COP} [at_{Adp} (+) Y_{NP(pro)}]_{AdpP} X_{NPsbj} \\
 & \quad >> [Z-at + Y_{pro'sbj'}]_V Y_{NPsbj} X_{NPobj}
 \end{aligned}$$

- reanalysis of word marker as phrase marker (or detachment, e.g. Germanic “group” genitives).

2. Contextual Conversion: Up and Down in English, for example

2.1. Origins: Noun, Ideophone

- a. **(i)up* IDEOPHONE ‘fast, vigorous upwards movement’ (?)
IE **upo* ADV/PREP (cf. Gk *hypo*’, Lat *sub*)
Gmc **up(a)*, **eupa* (?) ADV/PREP ‘on, up’
- a. IE **d^hisn-* ‘mound’ (?)
(cf. OInd *dhis* ≥ *n* ≥ *iya* ‘mound, altar’, Gk *thiēs*, *thiēnos* ‘heap of sand, dune’)
WGmc **duēnoē(n)* NOUN (FEM) ‘hill’

2.2. Early Metamorphoses

- a. IDEOPHONE > ADVERB/PREPOSITION
OE *uēp*, *upp* ADV/PREP, as of old in Common Germanic
- b. PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE > ADVERB/PREPOSITION
OE *of duēn-e* ‘from (the) hill (DAT.SG), downwards’
ME, ModE *aduēn* > *adown* > *down* ADV/PREP
cf. NOUNS *Down(s)* ‘hilly country’, *dune* ‘dune’

2.3. Later Metamorphoses

- verbs from adverbs/prepositions *up* and *down* (in fact, only from such adpositions as can also be used as adverbs: **to with*, **to at*, **to from*, **to ago*) with (immediately!) all general morpho-syntactic properties of full verbs;
- morphologically regular (=weak conjugation);
- if analysed as **ellipses**: selectional restrictions inherited from elided verbs;
- if analysed as **word formation**, i.e. as deadverbial/deprepositional/ delocutive verbs: “**contextuals**”, subject to general conditions on use and interpretation, like N → V conversion:
It really bugs me [*<- annoys me like bugs¹*] *when they bug my office* [*<- fit with bugs²*]
and try to Waterloo me [*<- make me experience a defeat like Napoleon experienced one at Waterloo*];
I'll never hi them again [*<- say hi to them*];
- first intransitive, later also transitive;
- semantic constraints: dynamic (as transitive verbs prototypically are), literal;
- a general typological constraint: only in languages with no or little (irregular) inflectional morphology of verbs? (But then, Old English and Old/Middle High German have it. Cf. OHG *uffoēn*, MHG *uēfen*, early MHG *aufen*, later Alemannic *aufnen*, *aufnen* ‘to cause to be upright, to raise, to increase’ <- ADV/PREP *uēf* ‘up’. See further below, Section 3.)
- actually, is anything changing?
new form classes? new construction classes? new lexical items? — hardly;
possibly new rule(s) of grammar: V-Ellipsis or Contextual Conversion.

a.	ðæt wæter ... miclað and uppað 'the water ... increases and raises' [<- goes up]	(OE)
b.	The true-bread Gamester ups a fresh [<- gets up from a sitting or recumbent position]	(17 c.)
c.	Sir Thomas up's with a Story of ... [<- comes up (with a story etc.)]	(18 c.)
d.	She ups with her brawny arm [<- up with (DELOCUTIVE)]	(18 c.)
e.	The bishop ups and tells him that ... [<- starts up to say or do something]	(19 c.)
f.	What an odd thing life is, and how it ups and downs [<- moves up and down]	(since 19 c.)

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|
| a. | The swan- <i>heard</i> shall up no swan
[<- drive up and catch in order to provide with a mark
of ownership] | (16 c.) |
| b. | an animal together blow'd ... and up'd of all the shreds of
every trade
[<- made up of] | (17 c.) |
| c. | She ups her stick
[<- raises up on her shoulder] | (since 19 c.) |
| d. | I'll up that
[<- put the bid/stake up] | (20 c.) |
| e. | Taxes will be upped on every house in the city
[<- put up, raised, increased] | (20 c.) |
| e'. | I cautiously suggested that we should make our target
135,000 houses, but Harold immediately upped me to 150,000 | (20 c.) |
| f. | Neither detective was upped to DCS
[<- promoted, put up for promotion to a higher rank] | (20 c.) |
| g. | I made a perfunctory attempt to up my image
[<- push upwards, improve] | (20 c.) |
| h. | ??They're upping a new office block over there | |
| i. | ??She upped the exam results on the notice board | |
| j. | ???They're upping their house for sale
[<- putting up]
*NON-LITERAL | |
| k. | They upped him again
[<- promoted, *kept up]
DYNAMIC, *STATIC | |

DOWN AS INTRANSITIVE VERB

- a. Let's down with swearing (17 c.)
[<- down with (DELOCUTIVE)]
- b. Prove that you value me by downing on my enemies (19 c.)
[<- coming down on]
- c. What an odd thing life is, and how it ups and downs (since 19 c.)
[<- moves up and down]

DOWN AS TRANSITIVE VERB

- a. Did you quite down her? (since 18 c.)
[<- bring, put, throw, knock down]
- b. We will have no trouble in finishing the gang after
Harriott is downed (20 c.)
[<- brought down, overthrown]
- c. I down my own need to stop him (20 c.)
[<- keep down, get the better of]
- d. I downed the sherry (20 c.)
[<- drank down]
- e. ???Let me down your telephone number
[<- put down, write down]
- f. The government is trying to down inflation
[<- bring down, *keep down]
DYNAMIC, *STATIC

3. Lexicalization of Contextual Converts: *an*, *aus*, *ohne* in German

3.1. *an*

3.1.1. Source

IE **an(a/u/o)* ADV/PREP ‘upwards, up; along’
(cf. Gk *ana* ‘on, at’, OInd *a’nu* ‘to, along, according to’, etc.)

3.1.2. Gmc *an(a)* ADV/PREP of nearness, ‘in, at, on’ German *an*, Engl *on*, Dutch *aan*

3.1.3. In the 12th century a new verb appears in German: *ahn(d)en*

(Danish and Swedish equivalents are later borrowings from Low German)

- morphology: regular (i.e., weak verb, no umlaut);
- meanings: ‘to have a vague, intuitive feeling that something is about to happen; to anticipate; to have a vague, intuitive idea of something, or of what is behind something’;
also ‘to come over, befall’ (1331)*?
also ‘disclose, report, narrate’ (15 c.)*?
- original construction: person (experiencer) in dative or accusative,
thing (stimulus) in nominative, often non-specific *es* ‘it’
or *nichts* ‘nothing’ or complement clause
- examples: *mir anet harte groeζ leit* (1190)
‘I (DAT) feel very great harm (NOM) coming’
mich andet seere, daz er siē verborgen eteswaē hie biē (1210)
‘I (ACC) feel strongly that he is hidden somewhere nearby’
wen groze not uns anet, do von Amos uns manet (1331)*
‘when great adversity befalls/us, which warns/reminds us of Amos’
doē ant mich aeventiure in dem gepirge (14 c.)
‘now I (ACC) sense (an) adventure (NOM) in the mountains’
- probable origin: *[ez] kommt mir/mich an(e)* >> *[ez] anet mir/mich*
‘[it] comes me (DAT/ACC) near (on the mind)’,
with verb ‘come’ elided, or contextual conversion
- formal variant: intrusive *-d-* owing to (i) misanalysis of 3SG ending (impersonal subject), or also weak resultative participial ending, as part of the stem, (ii) confusion with *ahnden* ‘to impose a penalty, punish (an offence), to redress’, homophonous in 3SG and resultative participle form after schwa deletion, a verb derived from the noun MHG *an-de*, OHG *an-to*, *an-ado* ‘zeal, resentment, anger’, in turn probably also derived from the preposition *an*, i.e. ‘that which gets close to one’

3.1.4. Since the 14th century also personal construction (i.e., person as subject):

*wan diu pein ant vor hin an ir naētuēr, ob der tag
sanft well sein und schoen* (1350)
‘when the bee senses in advance from its nature,
whether the day will be mild and fair’
in glechter, schimpf und schercz, wil ich die warhait

<i>anen von ainem alten hanen</i>	(15 c.)*
‘amid laughter, abuse, and jest, I want to relate the truth about an old cock’	
<i>das weib entpfunde, ante ... zuekuⁿftige ding</i>	(1533)
‘the woman felt, intuited ... future things’	
<i>Dorenberg ... hatt gar nichts von der sach geandet</i>	(1658)
‘Dorenberg ... had had no idea at all of this matter’	

- 3.1.5. Meaning of verb *ahnen* no longer transparently related to that of preposition *an*, and no longer contextually determined either, but lexically narrowly specified
- 3.1.6. Cf. also *a^hn-lich* ADJ ‘similar’
 < OHG *ana-li^h*, *ana-gili^h* < Gmc **an(a) + *(ga-)li^hka* ‘(one of) form that is close’
 Or: < MHG *ene-lich* ‘grandfather-ly, ancestor-ly’?

3.2. *aus*

3.2.1. Source

IE **ud-* ADV ‘up, from below upwards; out of, from inside out’

3.2.2. Gmc **ut(a)* ditto

PREP only in WGmc, < [*us* PREP ...] *u^t* ADV

OHG, MHG *u^ten(en)*, *u^ter* ADV/PREP ‘out of’

- 3.2.3. since MHG a weak verb *u^ten*, *u^tenen*, *iu^ten(en)*; *u^tern*, *iu^tern* originally found with a wide range of meanings, determined contextually:
 ‘to deliver up’, ‘dispose of’, ‘to make known’, ‘to expel’, ‘to exclude’,
 ‘to acquit oneself of’, ‘to give up’, ‘to make off’
 since 18th century a narrowing down of meanings to:
 ‘to display, to let be seen about oneself’
 then further limitation to feelings or other inner states and opinions:
 ‘to express in words’, ‘to manifest itself’
 with (equally lexicalized) prefixal verbs continuing some of the old meanings:
ver-a^ussern ‘to sell’, *sich ent-a^ussern* ‘to part with, renounce’

- 3.2.4. cf. English *to utter*, Dutch *uiten*

3.3. *ohne?*

3.3.1. Source

IE **eⁿu*, **ⁿeu* PREP ‘without’, perhaps containing negative **n[≤]*, **ne*

3.3.2. OHG *a^eno*, MHG *a^ene*, *a^eniu* PREP ‘without’

- 3.3.3. MHG, early MHG *a^enen* (weak verb, no umlaut)
 ‘to be deprived of’, ‘to deprive of’, ‘to rid of’, ‘to renounce’, ‘to come to an end’

- 3.3.4. then discontinued

4. Possessing in Slave: Contextual Conversion, or what?

- 4.1. When postpositions in Slave (and elsewhere in Athapaskan) are in construction with pronominal complements, these are bound to postpositions (which may themselves be incorporated in the verb), taking possessive (oblique) form:

se-ts«TM ÷*o*«*te*
1SG.POSS-from 3.is
'it is from me; it is mine'

- 4.2. A few postpositions, including *ts*«TM*h* 'from, off' and *-hot*«*e* 'because of', can be used without a verb to form a clause, with their complements, in bound possessive/oblique form when pronominal, serving as subject, and with an object unexpressed or expressed by a free NP (Rice 1989: 933-934):

se-ts«TM
1SG.POSS-from
'it is from me; it is mine'
ts«*ét*«*ú* *ne-ts*«TM
cigarette 2SG.POSS-from
'do you have cigarettes?'

Do such postpositions thereby become regular verbs ('I from it', 'Do you from cigarettes?' (i.e., 'have, own'); 'You because this' (i.e., 'This is your fault')), like contextual converts in Germanic?

Verbs in Athapaskan profusely inflect by prefixes, including for subject (with subject prefixes sometimes syncretic with possessive/oblique prefixes) and for mode/aspect. These de-postpositional "verbs" apparently don't. So, are they still postpositions? Or in fact nouns, which also take possessive prefixes? (A few nouns too can be used on their own to form clauses, with mode expressed periphrastically.)

5. Word Class Indeterminacy: Possessing in Iwaidjian

5.1. How to possess elsewhere in Australian:

5.1.1. propriative (case?), e.g. in Kayardild:

dathin-a dangka-a kiyarrng-kuru maku-wuru
that-NOM man-NOM two-PROP wife-PROP
‘That man has two wives’

5.1.2. juxtaposition: $NP_a NP_b$ ‘ NP_a has/is NP_b ’

5.1.3. transitive verb ‘to have’ (etymology?)

5.2. How to possess in Iwaidjian: The word of possession (*wuɣag*, here glossed as WITH) — verb, noun, adjective, or preposition (Evans 2000)?

e.g. in Ilgar:

a~buɣag gabala

2-WITH boat

‘you are with a boat’

- like N, A, $V_{intrans}$, unlike Prep: pronominal prefixes for subject (but from **in**transitive set);
- like Prep: strict word order, transitive

**~a-na-wuɣag gabala*

1SG-FUT-WITH boat

‘I will have a boat’

- unlike V: not marked for tense

~a-na-wuɣag-bin gabala

FUT-WITH-INCH boat

‘I will have a boat’

- like N, A, unlike V, Prep: inchoative suffix 1SG-

@aga ar-argbi a-wuɣag-ud maɰaraj

plural DEM PLUR-man 3PL-WITH-PLUR friend

‘those men have girl friends’

- like N, A, unlike V, Prep:
- but: there are no transitive N, A
- but: no strict word order with N, A

thus: *wuɣag* largely shares its morphology with N/A and its syntax and semantics with Prep and also V.

Is *wuɣag* a form in transition — from N/A/V to preposition or the other way round?

6. (Pre-)Position and Possession in Afroasiatic

- 6.1. Semitic (or indeed Afroasiatic) Origin of the comitative preposition **ʕim* ‘with’ (Hebrew *ʕimm-*, Syrian *ʕam*, Ugaritic *ʕmn*, Arabic *maʕa*, Egyptian Arabic *maʕaʕ-*; Egyptian *hʕnʕ*):

< **ʕimm=a* ‘inclusion’, accusative verbal noun of the root (Arab.) *ʕmm* (*u*) ‘to embrace’

in Hebrew also extended form *ʕimmād*TM:

< **ʕimm=a i•ad=i* ‘at the hand of’

(alternatively: < *ʕmd* (*u*) ‘to step forth, support’)

phonological and morphological development:

ʕimmaʕd- > **ʕim-d-* > **ʕind-*

to which is added the accusative suffix *-a*, as with other prepositions: *ʕinda* ‘at, with’ (Egyptian Arabic *ʕand*)

semantic development (?):

comitative WITH is supplemented by local AT (if it wasn’t there to begin with)

6.2. Classical Arabic

- a. *ʕal-xubzatu kaanat ʕinda Zayd-in*
 DEF-loaf was at Zayd-GEN
 ‘the loaf was at Zayd’
 (Topic: Locatum – Comment: Locus; V-second)

- b. *kaanat ʕinda Zayd-in xubzatu-n*
 was at Zayd-GEN loaf-INDEF
 ‘Zayd had a loaf’
 (Topic: Possessor – Comment: Possessum; V-first)

- b’. *Zayd-un kaanat ʕinda=hu xubzatu-n*
 Zayd-NOM was at=PRO.3SG.MASC loaf-INDEF
 ‘ZAYD had a loaf’
 (marked topicalization of the Possessor)

- position and possession are equally expressed by the preposition *ʕinda* ‘at’, in non-present tense in conjunction with the existential copula ‘to be’; they are only distinguished by the choice of topic (subject?) and concomitant differences in the position of the verb.

6.3. Relational and Word Class Reanalysis in Maltese

6.3.1. Position as of old with preposition

- a. *Il-baqra g_cand iz-ziju / g_cand=u*
 DEF-cow at DEF-uncle / at=3SG.MASC_{COMPL}
 ‘the cow is at the uncle’s / at his (place)’
 Subject: Locatum – Predicate: Locus)

- preposition with following NP, meaning like French *chez*;
- pronominal complements enclitic on prepositions;
- such nominal sentences in present tense without overt copula (cf. (b)).

- b. *Il-baqra kien-et g_cand iz-ziju*
 DEF-cow_{FEM} was-3SG.FEM at DEF-uncle_{MASC}
 ‘the cow was at the uncle’s’

- a’. *^tIz-ziju, g_cand=u baqra*
 DEF-uncle_{MASC} at=3SG.MASC_{TOP} cow_{FEM}
 ‘the uncle, at his (place) is a cow’

- topicalizing left-displacement of the complement of the local preposition, with this NP being resumed on the preposition (possible construction at least in Classical Arabic).

6.3.2. Possession now with verb from preposition

- c. *Iz-ziju g_cand=u baqra*
 DEF-uncle_{MASC} have=3SG.MASC_{SBJ} cow_{FEM}
 ‘the uncle has a cow’
 (Subject: Possessor – V – Object: Possessum)

- unmarked transitive clause construction (SVO);
- marking of person-number-gender of subject (Possessor) in form and position like that of complements of prepositions and direct objects of verbs, unlike that of subjects of verbs (cf. (d));
- negation as with verbs (circumfix *ma=...-x* on the first verb), unlike in nominal predications (negative circumfix on an extra subject pronoun, compare (e)/(f) with (g));
- tense and aspect is expressed suppletively,
 by *kell=u* for preterite/perfect (< *kien lil=u* be.PERF.3SG.MASC for=3SG.MASC)
 and *i-koll=u* for future/imperfect (< *i-kun lil=u* 3SG.MASC-be.IMPERF for=3SG.MASC)
 (cf. (h)/(i))

- d. *(Iz-ziju) j-oqtol=ha*
 (DEF-uncle) 3SG.MASC-kill.IMPERFECT=3SG.FEM
 ‘(the uncle) he kills her’

- e. *Iz-ziju m’=g_cand=u-x baqra*
 DEF-uncle NEG=have=3SG.MASC-NEG cow
 ‘the uncle has no cow’

- f. *Il-baqra ma=kien-et-x g_cand=u*

- DEF-cow NEG=was-3SG.FEM-NEG at=3SG.MASC
 ‘the cow was not at his (place)’
- g. *Il-baqra m’=hi-x g, and=u*
 DEF-cow NEG=PRO.3SG.FEM-NEG at=3SG.MASC
 ‘the cow is not at his (place)’
- h. *Iz-ziju kell=u baqra*
 DEF-uncle have.PERF=3SG.MASC cow
 ‘the uncle had a cow’
- i. *Iz-ziju i-koll=u baqra*
 DEF-uncle 3SG.MASC-have.IMPERF=3SG.MASC cow
 ‘the uncle will have a cow’

Thus: Overall, morphology (retention of inflectional properties of preposition; certain categorial innovations only by suppletion) is more conservative than syntax in reanalysis of preposition as verb.

6.4. Resegmentation in Coptic

6.4.1. Position as of old with prepositions, though with an overt existential verb also in present tense

- a. *uon h¶anhre¶wi ^nta=f* (Bohairic)
 be eatables at=3SG.MASC
 ‘eatables are at his (place), he has food’
 Existential Verb – Subject: Locatum – Oblique Object: Locus
 (> Possessum) (> Possessor)
- b. *wn mt≥y=f ^nh¶*
 be at=3SG.MASC life
 ‘he has life’
 Existential Verb – OblObject: Locus – Subject: Locatum
 (> Possessor) (> Possessum)

- marked word order VOS;
- reanalysis (resegmentation)
 V [Prep=NP] > [V+Prep]=NP
wn mt≥y=f > *wn t≥y=f*
- univerbation of V+Prep.

6.4.2. Possession now with verb consisting of Existential Verb + Local Preposition

- c. *u ^nte† p-jo¶t p-o¶n ^h*
 has DEF.MASC.SG-father DEF.MASC.SG-life
 ‘the father has the life’
- d. *u ^nta=f ^mmaw ^n-u-shime†*
 have=3SG.MASC thus OBJ-INDEF-wife
 ‘he has (thus) a wife’
 Possessive Verb – Subject: Possessor – Direct Object: Possessum
- personal suffixes (or enclitics) on verbs and on prepositions are identical;

- \hat{n} - marks objects if possessor is pronominal (represented by suffix/enclitic) and the object does not immediately follow the the subject;
- normal verb inflection: Tense/Mood-ProSbj-VERB=ProObj;
but with a small number of irregular verbs, among which is $u\hat{n}$ - ‘there is; have’:
VERB=ProSbj.

7. Association and Possession in Bantu

7.1. Illustrating the associative preposition/coordinative conjunction/? *na* in Swahili (in its major uses)

- (1)a. mimi na Hamisi; mimi na-ye
I ASSOC Hamisi; I ASSOC-he
‘I and/with Hamisi; I and/with him’ (*ye* being the shortened form of the independent personal pronoun *yeye*, not marked for case)
- b. Hamisi na Ali wa-li-fika
Hamisi ASSOC Ali 3PL.SBJ-PAST-arrive
‘Hamisi and Ali arrived’
- c. Hamisi a-li-fika na Ali
Hamisi 3SG.SBJ-PAST-arrive ASSOC Ali
‘Hamisi and Ali arrived; Hamisi arrived with Ali’ (note position of associate NP and SG verb agreement, suggesting PrepP status)
- (2)a. enda na Hamisi; ende na-mi
go (IMP) ASSOC Hamisi; go (IMP) ASSOC-I
‘go with Hamisi! Go with me!’ (*mi* being short for independent *mimi*)
- b. lete chai na sukari
bring (IMP) tea ASSOC sugar
‘bring tea and/with sugar!’
- (3)a. wa-li-kaa karibu na \wedge -ziwa
3PL.SBJ-PAST-live near (Adv) ASSOC IV.SG-lake
‘they lived near a lake’
- b. a-li-pig-wa na askari
3SG.SBJ-PAST-strike-PASS ASSOC soldier
‘he was struck by a soldier’ (agentive!)
- (4) m-toto a-na ki-toto / baridi
I.SG-child 3SG.SBJ-ASSOC III.SG-child / cold (N, Adv, Adj? *ki*- perhaps adverbial rather than III.SG)
‘the child is childish/cold’ (ascription of an accidental rather than an essential property; ‘the child is with childishness/cold’?)
- (5) wa-li-piga-na
3PL.SBJ-PAST-hit-ASSOC
‘they fought (each other)’
(reciprocal and similar meanings when a suffix on verbs)

7.2. Illustrating a use of *na* that looks like it is a transitive verb of possession, more or less, with possessor as subject and possessum as object (on the evidence of verb concords)

- (6)a. Hamisi a-na ki-tabu
 Hamisi 3SG.SBJ-ASSOC III.SG-book
 ‘Hamisi has a book’
- b. Hamisi a-na-vy-o vi-tabu vy-a-ngu
 Hamisi 3SG.SBJ-ASSOC-III.PL.SBJ/OBJ-REF III.PL-book III.PL-REL-1SG.POSS
 ‘Hamisi has my books’
- (7) Hamisi a-vi-soma vi-tabu vy-a-ngu
 Hamisi 3SG.SBJ-III.PL.OBJ-read III.PL-book III.PL-REL-1SG.POSS
 ‘Hamisi reads my books’

An ordinary transitive verb has an object marker (person, number, if 3rd person also class) prefixed to the stem (7), while associative *na* has the object marker suffixed, followed by the suffix *-o* highlighting referentiality (except for class I singular, where the object marker is *-ye*, which is the corresponding independent personal pronoun, unreduplicated) (6b). The use or non-use of an object marker with the verb as such, however, is regulated identically for ordinary transitive verbs and for associative *na*.

- (8)a. Hamisi h(a)-a-na ki-tabu
 Hamisi NEG-3SG.SBJ-ASSOC III.SG-book
 ‘Hamisi doesn’t have a book’
- b. Hamisi h(a)-a-somi ki-tabu
 Hamisi NEG-3SG.SBJ-read III.SG-book
 ‘Hamisi doesn’t read a book’

Negation of associative *na* is by prefix *h(a)-*, as with ordinary verbs, in the tenses of the indicative mood. However, if there is no tense prefix on a verb, the final vowel *-a* of the verb stem is replaced by *-i* under negation — which has no analogue with negation of associative *na-*. Negation of identification and property ascription clauses **without overt verb** is by *si*.

- (9) Hamisi a-li-ku-wa na vi-tabu wengi
 Hamisi 3SG.SBJ-PAST-INF-be ASSOC III.PL-book many
 ‘Hamisi had many books’

To form past (and other) tenses (or aspects) of possessive predications with associative *na* (and also infinitives), some extra morphology is required vis-a-vis tense formation of ordinary verbs: the verb *wa* ‘to be’ is added (which, like other monosyllabic verbs, retains the infinitival prefix *ku* in certain circumstances to do with the stress pattern), carrying the tense and also (subject) concordial marking.

Now, is associative *na* here again a preposition — i.e., ‘Hamisi was with many books’? It does have object concords, though.