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Mermaid construction in Ainu

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1. Introduction

The present chapter presents a very brief summary of the mermaid construction ('MMC') of Ainu. (To be precise, it deals with the dialects of Saru and Chitose of Southern Hokkaido.) Ainu has the SOV order. Arguments in Ainu (either nouns or pronouns) are not marked for case. Grammatical relations are distinguished by (i) the relative position of A and O in the clause, and also (ii) obligatory verbal cross-referencing, which employs mainly proclitics, with the exception of two enclitics. The third person is zero.

Ainu has mixed alignment. Pronouns, though usually omitted, show neutral alignment: A=S=O. In contrast, there are distinct verbal cross-referencing markers, i.e. tripartite alignment, for A, S and O — at least in '1PL.EXC' and 'IND'. The indefinite form ('IND') has three functions: (i) the indefinite person proper, (ii) the first person plural inclusive ('1PL.INC'), (iii) the second person singular/plural honorific, and (iv) logophoric or the so-called person of the protagonist which is very common in folktales.¹ There are also elements of the nominative-accusative (1SG.S) and neutral alignment (2nd and 3rd persons) in the verbal cross-referencing.

Adjuncts are followed by postpositions. All modifiers are prepositive. There is no separate word class of adjectives. The concepts that may be expressed by adjectives in some other languages are expressed by intransitive verbs in Ainu.

Common nouns in Ainu may take 'conceptual' forms, which are free and unmarked, and 'possessive' forms, which are bound and derived from 'conceptual' forms with an allomorphic possessive suffix (-POSS). Possessive forms of nouns can be marked for the person and number of the possessor by one of pronominal prefixes of the **A** (= transitive subject) series: *sik* 'an eye' – *sik-ih*i (eye-POSS) 'the eye of; his/her eye' – *ku=sik-ih*i (1SG.A=eye-POSS) 'my eye'. Not all common nouns have possessive forms in Southern Hokkaido Ainu (see Tamura (2001 (1964, 1966))), unlike those of Sakhalin Ainu (Murasaki 1979).

¹ Folktales in Ainu have the structure of reported discourse with the whole story being a quote. Most examples in this summary are from folktales, hence a high frequency in the use of the indefinite person. For convenience, the indefinite form with the logophoric function is translated as 'I', although it is glossed as 'IND'.

2. Nouns

The following ten nouns can occur in the ‘Noun’ slot of the MMC. They can be classified into the following types: (i) evidential, (ii) modal, and (iii) aspectual. Where possible, the meanings that these nouns have when used outside the MMC, are shown too.

- (i) Evidential:
 1. *ru-w-e* (trace/footprint-EP-POSS) ‘the trace of’ – inferential, also used as a modality marker of certainty
 2. *haw-e* (voice-POSS) ‘the voice of’ – reportative
 3. *sir-i* (sight-POSS) ‘the sight of’ – visual
 4. *hum-i* (sound-POSS) ‘the sound of’ – non-visual sensory
- (ii) Modal:
 5. *kus-u* (reason-POSS) ‘the reason of’ – intentional
 6. *kun-i-p* (obligation?-POSS- thing/person) ‘should’ – deontic
 7. *pe/p* ‘thing/person’ – assertive/pragmatic imperative
 8. *kat-u* (shape-POSS) ‘the shape/manner of’ – assertive
 9. *hi* ‘place/time/thing’ – assertive
- (iii) Aspectual:
 10. *us-ke* (place-POSS) ‘the place of’ – progressive

Most of these nouns are independent words which can be used as common nouns in their lexical meanings outside the MMC, as shown above, and even when used within the MMC they retain such an important nominal property as the possessive marking.

Some nouns, i.e. *pe* ‘thing/person’, *hi* ‘place/time/thing’, and *us-ke* (place-POSS) ‘the place of’, belong to a small class of bound nouns which are peculiar in that they cannot occur on their own and must be modified by a determiner, noun or adnominal clause, e.g. *tan pe* ‘this thing/this person (pejorative)’, but not **pe* ‘a thing/person’. Most bound nouns do not take possessive suffixes, and some can employ a different possessive suffix, namely *-ke* (< ‘place’). Outside the MMC, the bound nouns can be used as derivational nominalizing suffixes in lexical nominalizations and as subordinating conjunctions.

And finally, there is the deontic noun *kun-i-p* (obligation?-POSS-thing/person) which is most strongly grammaticalized and is not used outside the MMC. It consists of two nouns but the original meaning of the first is no longer transparent.

3. Examples of the mermaid construction

In declarative MMCs, the nouns in the ‘Noun’ slot are preceded by a clause and followed by the equative copula *ne* ‘be(come) sth/sb’, so this construction is traditionally viewed as biclausal. See, for example, the description of evidentials in (Tamura 2000: 227): “The expressive

nominalizers *ruwe* eEVD, *hawe* eSAID, *siri* eSEEN, and *humi* eFELT can be placed after sentences that end with verb phrases, where they **nominalize** the sentence, and the copula *ne* is placed afterwards to complete the phrase” and “external **relative clause analysis**” in Okuda (1989) and Satoo (2008: 175) (emphasis by Anna Bugaeva).

Here, I suggest a minor clarification: at least originally, the MMC consisted of a **copula complement clause**: **[[Clause]_{NP} Noun-POSS]_{NP} COP**, in which the **copula** should be analyzed as the matrix clause predicate, the Noun as the **copula complement** (the copula subject is left unexpressed, since it is a dummy), and the clause preceding the Noun as a **nominal complement clause** functioning as modifier of the Noun.

However, in the course of time, the nouns in the ‘Noun’ slot of the MMC constructions became considerably grammaticalized and the biclausal construction in question is in the process of turning into a **monoclausal complex-predicate construction** in which the erstwhile Noun and Copula function as a new Noun+Copula auxiliary verb. In fact, the auxiliary analysis is implicitly taken in Kindaichi (1993 (1931): 326-336) and M. Chiri (1974 [1936]: 132–133, 155–157), see their use of the term *joshi* ‘auxiliary particle’ and hyphen in *ruwe/hawe/siri/humi-ne*, which is suggestive of such analysis. In the present summary, I will try to show that the truth is intermediate between Tamura’s biclausal nominalized clause (or my nominal complement clause) analysis and Kindaichi’s and Chiri’s monoclausal analysis. In fact, in most cases, the reanalysis of ‘Nouns’ as auxiliaries is still incomplete, which is one of major reasons to distinguish the MMC in Ainu. For convenience, in examples below, the adnominal part (‘Clause’) is put in brackets; it does not necessarily imply embedding. In free translations, the part corresponding to the ‘Noun’ is underlined and, in literal translations, it is bold-faced.

- (1) [*tane aynu kotan hanke*] *ru-w-e* *ne*
 already Ainu village be.close trace-EV-POSS COP
 ‘I infer that an Ainu village is already nearby.’ – inferential evidential
 Lit. ‘It is the **trace** (that) Ainu village is already close.’ (AB 254)
- (2) [*pirka uepeker* *ne*] *haw-e* *ne* *wa*.
 be.good folktale COP voice-POSS COP FIN
 ‘It is said to be/based on what you said I assume that it is a good folktale.’ (N 54) – reportative evidential
 Lit. ‘It is the **voice** (that) the folktale is good.’
- (3) [*a=kor* *húci* *a=kor* *ekasi*
 IND.A=have grandmother IND.A=have grandfather
a=imekkar] *sir-i* *ne*.
 IND.A=give.presents.to sight-POSS COP
 ‘Grandmother, grandfather, look, this is for you.’ (K7803231UP.219) – visual evidential
 Lit. ‘It is the **sight** (that) I am giving presents to my grandmother and grandfather.’

- (4) [*atuyesatsaci ta ray=an hum-i ne...*
 shallow.stream LOC die.SG=IND.S sound-POSS COP
 ‘I felt (that) I was going to die in the shallow stream.’ (N 11) –
 non-visual sensory evidential
 Lit. ‘It was the **feeling** (that) I was going to die in the shallow
 stream.’
- (5) [*a=uk wa a=e kus-u ne*
 IND.A=take.SG and IND.A=eat reason-POSS COP
 ‘(If you offer some hard wine lees), I will accept that and eat.’
 (K7807151KY.180) – intentional modal
 Lit. ‘It is the **reason/intention** (that) I will accept that and eat.’
- (6) [*eci=ki kun-i-p ne na.*
 2PL.A=do obligation?-POSS-thing/person COP FIN
 ‘You should do (this).’ (KK 341) – deontic modal
 Lit. ‘It is the **obligation** (?) (that) you (will) do this.’
- (7)a. [*nupuri kes un puri wen*
 mountain end attach.to habit be.bad
kur a=ne p ne kusu,
 person IND.A=COP thing/person COP because
 ‘Because I am surely the demon from the end of the mountains...’
 (K8106233UP.134) – assertive modal
 Lit. ‘It is the **thing/fact** (that) I am a person (who) belongs to the
 end of the mountains.’
- b. [*isepo ka cironnup ka tap neno tap*
 rabbit even/also fox even/also this as this
neno a=hopun-pa-re p ne na.
 as IND.A=rise-PL-CAUS thing/person COP FIN
 ‘Send (to the heaven) rabbits and foxes in the same way (as bears
 and deer).’ (K7708242UP.064) – pragmatic imperative reading
 Lit. ‘It is the **thing/fact** (that) rabbits and foxes are sent in the
 same way (as bears and deer).’
- (8) [*a=kar ayne aynu u-w-as-te*
 IND.A=make finally human REC-EP-stand.SG-CAUS
kat-u ne
 shape/reason-POSS COP
 ‘(The gods) made (this and that), so finally humans reproduced
 (and became so numerous).’ (T3 36) – assertive modal
 Lit. ‘It is the **shape** (that) humans grew in number.’
- (9) [*kamuy renkayne e=pa wa e=siknu-re*
 gods thanks 2SG.A=find and 2SG.A=be.alive-CAUS
hi ne aan.
 place/time/thing COP ADM
 ‘You must have found (that girl) with the help of the gods and
 revived her!’ (K8106233UP.156) – assertive modal
 Lit. ‘It is the **thing** (that) you found (that girl) with the help of gods
 and revived her.’

- (10) [*tane* *ipe=an*] *us-ke* *ne*
 already eat=IND.S place-POSS COP
 ‘I’m eating right now.’ (KS #1849) – progressive aspect
 Lit. ‘It is the **place** (that) I am eating now.’

In (10), the MMC contains a noun with the meaning of ‘place’ and the entire sentence has the meaning of progressive. A parallel phenomenon is observed with the MMC in Japanese when it contains the noun *tokoro* ‘place’. See Tsunoda (this volume-b: (2) in Section 2).

4. ‘Nouns’ or ‘Noun+COP auxiliary verbs’?

In the MMC of Ainu, different nouns show different degrees of grammaticalization into Noun+COP auxiliary verbs, which should be investigated in detail in the future.

To my current state of knowledge, evidentials (type (i) in §2) seem to be less grammaticalized than aspectual and modal ‘Nouns’. They show the following nominal properties. Namely, they:

- (a) prosodically, in declarative sentences, take a standard ‘modifier+noun’ pattern in which the noun loses its accent while the main clause predicate (COP) retains its accent, i.e. Noun and COP do not constitute one phonological unit (Osami Okuda, p.c.);
- (b) retain possessive suffixes with an associative anaphoric function providing reference to a larger situation encoded in the clausal nominalization;
- (c) may be followed by nominal restrictive particles, e.g. *ka* ‘even/also’ and focus particle *he*;
- (d) formally function as arguments of the main clause predicates, i.e. complements of the equative copula *ne* in declarative sentences, subjects of the locative copula *an* in content question and exclamation clauses etc.;
- (e) allow for some variability of the main clause predicate, i.e. not only the equative copula *ne* ‘be(come) sth/sb’, but also verbs *an* ‘exist.SG’, *isam* ‘not exist’, and *as* ‘stand.SG’ have been attested in this position, and;
- (f) may fall under a separate scope of negation, modality, and aspect.

Nevertheless, even evidentials are considerably grammaticalized, for they:

- (g) do not allow for other modifiers (demonstratives, determiners) in addition to the nominal complement clause, which distinguishes them from non-grammaticalized nouns in a position of the head of a relative clause, and;
- (h) can be used with any subject of the modifying clause, and most importantly, in equative clauses, as in (1), where subjects are clearly not identical with the evidential noun in question, which shows that they

have ceased to subcategorize for a specific semantic category, and thus have become semantically “empty” (Heiko Narrog, p.c.).

Generally, among the ten nouns employed in the ‘Noun’ slot of the MMC, *ru-w-e ne* (trace-EP-POSS COP) with the epistemic meaning extension of certainty (not as inferential evidential proper), intentional *kus-u ne* lit. (reason-POSS COP), deontic *kuni-p ne* (obligation?-thing/person-COP), and assertive/pragmatic imperative *pe ne* (thing/person COP) are more advanced in grammaticalization into Noun+COP auxiliary verbs than the other nouns. These ‘Nouns’ are much more semantically bleached and allow the greatest syntactic combinability with modal, aspectual and evidential markers, which can also be encoded with other ‘Nouns’ and thus the construction can turn into a double MMC, e.g. (11)-(13), and even a triple MMC, e.g. (14).

- (11) [[*i-tura=an* *kus-u* *ne*] *haw-e* *ne*
 APASS-follow=IND.S reason-POSS COP voice-POSS COP
 ‘It is said that we shall go together.’ (N 282)
 Lit. ‘It is the **voice** (that) it is the **reason/intention** (that) we go together.’
- (12) [[*e=ray-ke* *ru-w-e* *ne*] *kus-u* *ne yakun*
 2SG.A=die-CAUS trace-EV-POSS COP reason-POSS COP if
 ‘If he is going to kill you anyway...’ (KI 206)
 Lit. ‘If it is the **reason/intention** (that) it is **trace** (that) he (will) kill you.’

The context for (13) is as follows: A few years ago a hero fought a sword battle against a man from another village. Later he was told that the man was his cousin and then he finally realized why the man had been such a brave warrior.

- (13) [*a=irwak-ih* *ne*] *haw-e* *ne wa kusu*
 IND.A=sibling-POSS COP voice-POSS COP and because
rametok-kor] *sir-i* *ne anan ru-w-e* *ne*
 bravery-have sight-POSS COP ADM trace-EP-POSS COP
 ‘(Now, I realize that) he had looked so undoubtedly brave because it was said that he was my cousin!’ (N2 303)
 Lit. ‘(Now, I realize that) it had been the **trace** (that) it had been the **sight** (that) he had been so brave because it was the **voice** (that) he was my cousin!’

Note that (13) contains three evidential nouns in one sentence: one in the first clause and two in the second.

- (14) [[[*a=ekas-i* *i=resu* *hi* *ne*]
 IND.A=grandfather-POSS IND.O=raise place/time/thing COP

haw-e *an]* *ru-w-e]* *ne*
 voice-POSS exist.SG trace-EP-POSS COP
 ‘(“You must say, “This and this happened, and) it is surely said that,
in fact, grandfather raised me,” (said grandfather.)’
 (K7807151UP.051)
 Lit. ‘(“You must say, “This and this happened, and) it is the **trace**
 (that) [=surely] it is the **voice** (that) it is the **thing/fact** (that)
grandfather raised me.” (said grandfather.)’

No noun in the ‘Noun’ slot of the MMC seem to allow the clefting of the subject/object, which indicates that the erstwhile copula complement clause has not been completely reanalyzed as the main clause and the erstwhile ‘Noun’ as the auxiliary verb.

Similar MMC developments are found in Japanese (Takahashi 1979, Tsunoda 1996, this volume-a, 5.4) and a few Tibeto-Burman languages (DeLancey 2011: 243), and it would be interesting to find out to what extent ‘Noun COP’ > Noun+COP auxiliary verb grammaticalization path is common crosslinguistically and to what extent the target has been reached in particular languages, and also what are the other possible scenarios attested in the world’s languages.

Abbreviations

= = inflectional boundary in the morphemic line, - = derivational boundary in the morphemic line, A = transitive subject, ADM = admirative, APASS = antipassive, CAUS = causative, COP = copula, EP = epenthetic consonant, FIN = final particle, IND = indefinite, KY = *kamuy yukar* ‘songs of gods’, LOC = locative, O = object, PERF = perfect, PL = plural, POSS = possessive, REC = reciprocal, REFL = reflexive, S = intransitive subject, sb = somebody, sth = something, SG = singular, UP = *uwepeker* ‘prosaic folktales’.

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