



Looking at *suu*:

Applicative Morphosyntax in Nujta Zophei

By Gabriel Gilbert | 24 November 2020 | LING 035: Field Methods

Introduction

I

General overview of applicatives within Nujta Zophei and a broad overview of where *suu* occurs.

II

Insight into *suu*'s primary functions and associated phenomena.

III

Final comments and direction for future research.

Applicative Inventory

- ▷ **sii 'to go'** 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoomaudio.wav
- ▷ **sii-suu 'to go towards'** 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoomaudio.wav
- ▷ **sii-hnuu 'to go towards'** 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoomaudio.wav
- ▷ **sii-pui 'to take someone somewhere'** 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoomaudio.wav
- ▷ **sii-seng 'to leave'** 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoomaudio.wav
- ▷ **sii-koo 'to go back'** 10292020_LX35F2020_B_zoomaudio.wav

Primary Functions



Spatiality

Provides a sense of proximity between the verb's participants, along with destination and targeted action



Transitivity

Enables participants to be marked on the verb stem and transitivizes some verbs



Malefaction

Provides a sense of malefaction to the verb, adding negative intent to the action

Where does *suu* occur?

- ▷ Both canonically transitive and intransitive verbs
- ▷ Verbs that end in open or closed syllables
- ▷ Verbs that describe physical action

Forms illustrating these environments will be shown throughout the presentation.

1.

SPATIALITY

How suu encodes spatiality within the verb complex

Spatiality

Through use of *suu*, for both transitive (1a, 1b) and intransitive (1c) verbs, the verb adopts a sense of proximity:

1a) ai 'to eat' → ai-**suu** 'to eat in front of someone'

1b) ding 'to drink' → din-**suu** 'to drink in front of someone'

1c) lang 'to dance' → lan-**suu** 'to dance in front of someone'

All forms can be found in 11122020_LX352020_B_zoomaudio.wav

Spatiality (cont.)

Forms (2a) and (2b) demonstrate expanded examples of (1a) and (1b):

(2a) ka-tsa-ai-**suu**
1SG.A-2SG.P-EAT-APPL
'I eat in front of you'

(2b) tui=∅ ka-tsa-din-**suu**
water=ABS 1SG.A-2SG.P-drink-APPL
'I drink water in front of you'

Forms (3a) and (3b) can be found in 11152020_LX352020_B_zoomaudio.wav

Spatiality (cont.)

The forms below demonstrate how *suu* is realized with verbs that already describe motion:

(3a) IND=lang kaa-va-sii-bang
IND=LAT 1SG.S-VEN-go-NEG.HAB
'I used to come to IND'

(3b) va-pa-sii-súú*
VEN-1SG.P-go-APPL
'You come towards me'

(3c) kaa-seng
1SG.S-run
'I run'

(3d) ka-tsa-sen-suu
1SG.A-2SG.P-run-APPL
'I run towards you'

Form (3a) can be found in 11022020_LX352020_B_zoomaudio.wav, (3b) in 11012020_LX352020_B_zoomaudio.wav, and the rest in 11152020_LX352020_B_zoomaudio.wav

Spatiality (cont.)

In some forms, *suu* demonstrates specific allative-malefactive constructions, covered in Section III on Malefaction.

2.

TRANSITIVITY

How the addition of suu results in a transitive verb paradigm

Transitivity

Through use of *suu*, as seen, intransitive verbs can be rendered with the transitive paradigm. More examples of non-motion verbs are seen below:

4a) *nui* 'to laugh' → *nui-suu* 'to laugh at'

4b) *oi* 'to yell' → *oi-suu* 'to yell at'

4c) *sah* 'to sing' → *sa-suu* 'to sing to'

Form (4a) can be found in 11152020_LX352020_B_zoomaudio.wav, and forms (4b) and (4c) can be found in 11122020_LX352020_B_zoomaudio.wav

Transitivity (cont.)

The forms below demonstrate expanded examples of forms (4a) and (4b):

(5a) ka-tsa-nui-**suu**
1SG.A-2SG.P- laugh-APPL
'I laugh at you'

(5b) a-pa-oi-**suu**
3SG.A-1SG.P-yell-APPL
'He/she yells at me'

Form (5a) can be found in 11152020_LX352020_B_zoomaudio.wav and form (5b) can be found in 11032020_LX352020_CLASS_zoomaudio.wav

Transitivity (cont.)

When *suu* is applied to verbs that are already transitive, the verb remains transitive.:

(6a) tui-bia ‘to water’ → tui-bia-**suu** ‘to pour water on’

(6b) tii ‘to kick’ → tii-**suu** ‘to kick something at’

(6c) vaa ‘to throw’ → vaa-**suu** ‘to throw something at’

For forms (6b) and (6c), the addition of *suu* necessitates an additional participant, possibly marked on the verb.

All forms can be found in 11132020_LX352020_CLASS_zoomaudio.wav

Transitivity (cont.)

The forms below demonstrate how *suu* allows for an additional animate participant marked on the verb:

(6a) boolung ka-tsi#
 BALL 1SG.A-KICK
 ‘I kick the ball’

(6b) boolung ka-tsa-tsi#-SUU
 BALL 1SG.A-2SG.P-KICK-APPL
 ‘I kick the ball at you’

Whereas the verb *tsi#* ‘to kick’ was already transitive, the addition of *suu* enables direct targeted action towards the P-marked participant – in a malefactive context, as the consultant described the *suu* form as actively trying to hit the P-marked participant.

Forms (6a) and (6b) can be found in 11132020_LX352020_B_zoomaudio.wav

3.

Malefaction

How the addition of suu results in a malefactive context

Malefaction

Previous literature on related language Hakha Lai denotes *-hnoʔ* as the malefactive applicative (Peterson 1998), which is clearly related to the other applicative *hnuu* in Nujta Zophei.

In all recorded cases, the two are interchangeable. For the examples recorded, both *suu* and *hnuu* are valid in either's place – no exceptions have been thus elicited.

Malefaction (cont.)

Through use of *suu*, the verb may additionally demonstrate a malefactive nature. See previously recorded form (1a):

- (1a) ka-tsa-ai-**suu**
1SG.A-2SG.P-eat-APPL
'I eat in front of him/her'
'I eat to make the other person want to eat'

Form (1a) can be found in 11132020_LX352020_CLASS_zoomaudio.wav

Malefaction (cont.)

In the following example, the intransitive verb *pheh* ‘to arrive’ appears to adopt a subtle malefactive sense:

- (7) naa-men hlen=tah ka-tsa-phe-**suu**
 2SG-ready before=ERG 1SG.A-2SG.P-arrive-APPL
 ‘I arrived before you were ready’

Form (7a) can be found in 11132020_LX352020_CLASS_zoomaudio.wav

Malefaction (cont.)

In the following forms, the verb *tsii* ‘to kick’ is shown, demonstrating the malefactive nature of *suu* again in form (8b):

- | | | | |
|------|---|------|---|
| (8a) | boolung ka-tsiï
BALL 1SG.A-KICK
‘I kick the ball’ | (8b) | boolung ka-tsa-tsiï- suu
BALL 1SG.A-2SG.P-KICK-APPL
‘I kick the ball at you’ |
| (8c) | boolung ka-peh
BALL 1SG.A-GIVE
‘I pass the ball’ (to someone) | (8d) | ka-tsa-tsiï
1SG.A-2SG.P-KICK
‘I kick you’ |

All forms can be found in 11132020_LX352020_CLASS_zoomaudio.wav

Malefaction (cont.)

In the following forms, another three-way contrast is demonstrated:

- (9a) kaa-oi
1SG.S-SCREAM
'I scream'
- (9b) a-pa-oi
3SG.A-1SG.P-CALL
'He/she calls me'
- (9c) a-pa-oi-suu
3SG.A-1SG.P-SCREAM-APPL
'He/she screams at me'

All forms can be found in 11032020_LX352020_CLASS_zoomaudio.wav

Malefaction (cont.)

In the following forms, a specifically allative and seemingly malefactive context is demonstrated:

(10a) ka-tsa-tshoo-**suu**
1SG.A-2SG.P- step-APPL
'I step on you'

(10b) toi 'to sit' → toi-**suu** 'to sit on'

Conclusion

Final remarks, and what next for *suu*?

Possible Related Form

The forms below represent a notable example of *suu* occurring in a seemingly non-applicative context (see the use of *hnuu* to fulfill the typical role of *suu* in form (11c):

(11a) *khua* 'rain'

(11b) *kuhasuu* 'to rain'

(11c) *khua=tah* *a-pa-suu-hnuu*
rain=ERG **3SG.A-1SG.P-rain?-APPL**
'I am being rained on'

All forms can be found in 11152020_LX352020_B_zoomaudio.wav

Future Research

- ▷ Participant Marking
- ▷ *suu* vs *hnuu*
- ▷ Further semantic nuance?
- ▷ Tonal properties?
- ▷ More applicatives?

Thank you!

Questions?

You can find me at:

gabriel.h.gilbert.23@dartmouth.edu