Switch Reference in South Munda
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0 Introduction

In this paper, we present data from a range of languages of the South Munda\textsuperscript{1} group of the Munda branch of the Austroasiatic language family which suggest that a system of switch reference is an archaic, characteristic feature of intrasentential clause combining. Many languages of the world possess a system whereby clauses in complex sentences make use of special morphology to indicate whether the subject of a following clause is the same (or not) as the subject of the preceding clause. This phenomenon, first formally isolated by Jacobsen (1967) for the Hokan-Coahuiltecan languages, is called ‘switch reference’ in the literature. This feature appears to be an integral part of narrative discourse and complex sentence formation in languages as geographically and typologically diverse as Hidatsa, Chalcantango Mixtec and Chickasaw among new world languages, various Papuan languages, the Nilotic language Lango, and even the Siberian Turkic language Tuvan! See a set of representative examples in (1) – (5).

(1) Hidatsa [Siouan] (Boyle [forthcoming])
ixú xákahe:t\textsuperscript{a} hižhá:k ţ:tki o:raxpíwa a:p\textsuperscript{h}uhkaha:k itńkipi
kúra?ak še?erúha:k wa:pá:hiware:c
i-xú xáka-hee\textsuperscript{a} hiši-hee-ak ţitaki ooraxpí-wa a:p\textsuperscript{h}uhka-hee-ak
3-body move-LOC red-CAUS-SS rabbit skin-INDEF.DET hat-CAUS-SS
ita-ńkipi kúre?e-ak še?erúha-ak waa-páahi-waree\text{c}
3.POSS-pipe carry-SS doing.thus-SS INDEF-sing-NE

‘Reddening his body all over, using a rabbit skin as a hat, carrying his pipe, thus, he (Day-Sun) sang’
(2) Chickasaw [Muskogean] (Munro 1983: 223)
i. hiʔha-cha talowa  ii. hiʔha-na talowa
dance-SS.CONJ sing  dance-DS.CONJ sing
‘he, danced and (he,;) sang’  ‘he, danced and he,; sang

(3) Usan [Papuan] (Haiman & Munro 1983: vili)
i. ye nam su-ab isomei  ii. ye nam su-ine isorei
I tree cut-SS I went down I tree cut-DS it went down
‘I cut the tree and went down’  ‘I cut the tree and it went down’

i. rwɔt ð-pɔy-ð  ni^ e-ɔ-cég-ð  dɔ'go'la
   king 3-remember-PERF COMP 3ss-close-PERF door
‘the king, remembered that he, closed the door’

ii. rwɔt ð-pɔy-ð  ni^ ð-cég-ð  dɔ'go'la
   king 3-remember-PERF COMP 3-close-PERF door
‘the king, remembered that s/he, closed the door’

(5) Tuvan [Turkic] (Anderson & Harrison 1999: 85-6)
i. nom-nu nomča-aš ol kiži-niň čurttalga-zin šuptu-zun
book-ACC read-SS that person-GEN life-3.ACC all-3.ACC

   bil-ip al-di-m
   know-CV SBEN-PAST.II-1
‘I read the book and found out everything about his life’

ii. koža aal-ga ba-ar-im-ga, kiži čok bo-or-ga
next village-DAT go-P/F-1-DAT (=DS), person NEG.COP AUX-P/F-DAT (=DS)

   udu-vayn=daa čan-ip-kan men
   sleep-NEG.CV=EMPH return-PERF-PAST 1
‘I went to the next village, noone was there, so I returned home without spending the night’

From the brief survey above, it is clear that formal means of marking switch-reference are found in languages from all over the world and therefore switch-reference systems can no
longer be considered as rare/weird as the were once believed to be (Haiman 1983: 105).

In the following sections, we argue that a system of switch reference is in fact an archaic feature of complex sentence structure in South Munda connected discourse, with possible parallels in North Munda languages as well, suggesting that this particular means of tracking subject (dis)continuity may be an ancient feature of the entire Munda language family.

1 Switch Reference in Gutob-Remo-Gta?

Of the three subgroups of South Munda, Kharia-Juang, Sora-Gorum, and Gutob-Remo-Gta? (Anderson 1999), it is in the last mentioned subgroup that the system of switch reference is most salient. In fact, cognate elements marking both same subject and different subject can be straightforwardly reconstructed back to the Proto-Gutob-Remo-Gta? ancestor language. We now briefly examine the systems of switch reference in each of the three languages of this subgroup.

1.1 Gutob

In Gutob (a.k.a. Gad(a)ba), the same subject marker –su attaches to a past form of the verb, but one lacking person inflection, in line with the generally redundant nature of subject person inflection in switch reference systems; see (6) for examples of the use of the same subject marker.

(6) Same Subject (Zide n.d.)

i. mui-ro? orug diʔ-to goj-gi ui-gi-su ʔuba ʔe--gu
   one-CL young.man say-CUST die-PAST.I AUX-PAST.I-SS ghost become-PAST.I
   ‘(they say that) a young man died and became a ghost’

ii. urs? urs? niŋ ui-loŋ-niŋ, Jom-lai bu-o?-su pi-loŋ-niŋ
    well I go-FUT.I-1 Jom-DAT beat-PAST.II-SS come-FUT.I-1
    ‘well I will go, I will beat up Jom and come (back)’

The different subject marker in Gutob is –na. It also attaches to a past tense form of the verb, similarly lacking person inflection. See examples in (7).
(7) Different Subject (Zide n.d.)

i. burol-\textit{du-gu-na} kunig-u-dam goj-gi ui-gi-nen
   live-AUX-PAST.1-DS old.man-old.woman die-PAST.1 AUX-PAST.1-PL
   'they (the three of them) lived (like that) and (then) the old man and woman died'

ii. goj-gi ui-gi-na tu o\textsuperscript{3}n-lai kisi
die-PAST.1 AUX-PAST.1-DS\textsuperscript{3} that child-DAT something

\textit{milei} ura? oron+borst

to.get (<DESIA) NEG.COP food+clothing
'\begin{tabular}{l} they died and nothing was available to the boy, clothes, \\
     food\end{tabular}'

iii. ui-\textit{du-gu-na} mui-ro? saukar di?to \textit{du-gu}
go-AUX-PAST.1-DS one-CL rich.man 'they.say' be-PAST.1

'\begin{tabular}{l} he (the boy) went along and a rich man (it seems) appeared\end{tabular}'

1.2 Remo

In the closely related language Remo (a.k.a. Bonda) [Bhattacharya 1968], the corresponding markers are se$\mathcal{X}$(\textit{ta}) for same subject and $-na$ for different subject.\textsuperscript{4} Like Gutob, these attach to a tense-marked form of the verb, but one lacking subject marking. See examples in (8) for same subject and (9) for different subject.

(8) Same Subject

i. $\dot{\text{d}}\text{\textkri} \dot{\text{d}}\text{\textkran-bo}$ ui-se$\mathcal{X}$ta mayn loge to\textit{ŋ}-go
   Woman man-LOC go-SS 3sg-GEN side stand-PAST
   'the woman went up to and stood by her husband'

ii. no gosig-se$\mathcal{X}$ta bri\textit{ŋ}-bo i-ya
   you wear.cloth(by.men)-SS forest-LOC go-IMP
   'dress like a man and go to the forest'

iii. kukusag gine gij\textit{ŋ}-lo=se$\mathcal{X}$ta kirime o\textit{t}ur-\textit{ŋ}
tag in
   tiger teeth gnash-while-SS claw take.out-PAST.II that.far.off