Even/also', concessive (conditional), and indefinite expressions in Asian languages

Isao Honda
Nagoya College
State University of New York at Buffalo

1. Introduction

It is known that a number of linguistic similarities exist in Asian languages. Some of them were discussed in Masica (1976), who attempts to delimit geographical areas characterized by those similarities. Although he investigates only 5 features\(^1\), he also lists many other linguistic features that exist in more than one Asian language group (cf. Masica 1976: 190, Appendix A).

One of them is a linguistic feature manifested by the Sanskrit *api and the Dravidian *-um, which were discussed in Emeneau (1974). According to Emeneau, these two morphemes equally have the following 4 usages:

(1)

Usage 1: "also', i.e., this as well as, in close connection with, the previously stated noun, non-finite verb, predication, etc. (Emeneau 1974: 94).
Usage 2 'and'. When they are repeated, they signify the sense of 'both ... and ...'. With a negated predicate, they mean 'neither ... nor ...'.
Usage 3 'even', 'although', 'even if', 'even though', etc.
Usage 4 With interrogative words, they form indefinite expressions; e.g., 'somebody, anybody, whoever'; with a negated predicate those indefinites serve as negative indefinites; e.g., 'nobody'.

In this paper, I will deal with morphemes whose semantic structures are relatively similar to the Sanskrit *api and the Dravidian *-um. The purpose of the study is to examine in what language groups this type of morpheme exists, and to investigate to what extent the semantic structures of those morphemes are similar.

Since this study is exclusively based on the language descriptions previously written by other linguists, the information that will be provided will

---

\(^1\) The 5 features are 1) word order - SOV, 2) "causative verb", 3) "conjunctive particle", 4) "explicator compound verb" and 5) "dative construction".
probably not be new to Asian language specialists. But, by collecting together information from different language groups, I would like to add a cross-linguistic perspective to this issue.

2. Sanskrit *api and Dravidian *-um

As mentioned above, Emeneau (1974) points out that there is a surprising similarity between the Sanskrit *api and the Tamil -um with respect to their semantic structures; i.e., they equally have the above mentioned 4 usages. In addition, both morphemes are used with numerals to signify the sense of 'totalizing' or 'summing'; e.g., Sanskrit: sarve 'pi 'all of them' (sarva 'all' + *api), dvāv *api 'both' or 'the two of them' (dvāv 'two' + *api); Tamil: ellārum 'all (persons)', ellām 'all (animals or things)' (ellā 'all' + -um or -m < -um) - Emeneau (1974: 94).

According to Emeneau (ibid), all of these 5 usages for the Tamil -um (including 'totalizing') are found in the earliest Tamil records. Cognates of this suffix still survive in other South Dravidian languages, and in two other branches of Dravidian; namely North Dravidian (including Brāhui) and Central Dravidian. On the basis of this, Emeneau reconstructs the Proto-Dravidian *-um.

Observing the similarity between the Sanskrit *api and the Dravidian *-um with respect to their semantic structures, Emeneau concludes that "The Sanskrit usages are essentially a calque of Dravidian *-um by Sanskrit *api". This conclusion is primarily based on the following observations. First, the 5 usages for *api are not of Indo-European origins but are "unique and proper to Sanskrit alone" (94). Second, while usages 1 and 2, i.e., 'also' and 'and', is found in the earliest records of Sanskrit, i.e., Vedic, other usages are found only in much later texts, i.e., classical.\(^2\) On the other hand, all of the 5 usages for the Tamil -um are "found in the earliest Tamil record", which are "roughly as early as the beginning of the classical Sanskrit records" (111). Third, since language contact between Indo-Aryan and Dravidian is well attested, the semantic similarity between the Sanskrit *api and the PDr. *-um is unlikely to be accidental. It is also improbable that this semantic structure is universal, for it is "of so specific and complex a nature" (111).

\(^2\) Emeneau (ibid: 95) notes that although the meaning of 'even' for *api is found in Vedic, the use of *api with yady 'if', i.e., yady *api 'even if, even though', is not found before the Brāhmaṇa texts.
Emeneau's investigation on the Sanskrit *api and the Dravidian *-um is very thorough, and his argument is well grounded. Thus, there is little doubt that the 5 usages for the Sanskrit *api have resulted from the influence of Dravidian languages, and I do not have anything to add to this conclusion. What I would like to do in this study is to call attention to the fact that morphemes whose semantic structures are similar to those of the Sanskrit *api and the Tamil -um are found in a number of other Asian languages and language groups; namely, Mongolian, Tungus, Turkic, Korean, Japanese, Ainu, Tibeto-Burman and North Caucasian. In what follows, I will examine this class of morphemes, and compare their meanings and distribution.

3. Japanese, Korean, Tungus, Turkic and Mongolian

In Japanese, there is a postpositional particle *mo, which can signify all of the 4 meanings listed in (1). In Modern Japanese, the use of *mo for the meaning 'even if' is obsolete, and this meaning is mainly expressed by *temoidemo (< *te/ded *gerundive ending of a verb + *mo). It has often been pointed out that the semantic structure of the Japanese *mo is quite similar to that of the Korean postpositional particle *to/do, which can also signify the above mentioned 4 meanings (cf. Ramstedt 1968: 50, 166).

Despite the similarity between these two particles, they have usually been thought as etymologically unrelated, for they have quite different phonological shapes. Martin (1990: 494), for instance, states that "The morphemes [the Japanese *mo and the Korean *to/do] are not cognate with each other, but it is possible to find other morphemes in each language ...". He then suggests that the Korean *to/do is possibly related to two other particles in Japanese, *to and *do.

At earlier stages of Japanese, the particle *to was used with a predicate to signify the senses of 1) conditional 'if' or 'when', 2) concessive conditional 'even if, even though', and 3) 'and', 'then'. The particle, still extant in Modern Japanese, has all of these usages. It should be noted that in Japanese the form *to is also found as a comitative 'and' or 'with'. This morpheme occurs after a nominal, and in this respect, differs from the particle *to mentioned above, which occurs after a predicate. For this reason, they are usually regarded as distinct entities.
However, it has often been speculated that they are historically related. On the other hand, the particle *do was used at earlier stages of Japanese to signify the sense of concessive 'although', or concessive conditional 'even though' or 'even if'. Although this particle still survives in Modern Japanese, it is used primarily in written (or literary) language, and in colloquial (or spoken) language its use is found mainly in some idiomatic expressions.3

The Korean particle to/da is also possibly related to several Altaic forms. Ramstedt (1968: 166) suggests that 'to/da 'also', 'too' (North Korean tu/du) corresponds to the particle da, dā in the Tungus, Mongol and Turkish languages". The Tungus da referred to by Ramstedt is probably the enclitic *-dā 'und, auch' reconstructed by Benzing (1955a: 1095). In Even, a Northern Tungus language, there exists an enclitic -dā/dā, which also means 'und, auch' (cf. Benzing 1955b: 156-7). It is also used to form indefinite words; e.g., jak-ta 'etwas' < jak 'was, welcher' + -dā (cf. Benzing 1955b: 79).

On the other hand, Itabashi (1988) considers that the Japanese mo is related to the Japanese accusative wo, and that both have developed from the Proto Japanese *ba. He then suggests that this reconstructed particle is related to the Proto Tungus *ba4, the Old Turkish mā/ma and to the Mongolian ba. According to Itabashi (ibid: 223-5), the Old Turkish mā/mā can signify the meanings of 'also' and 'both-and'. It is also used to form indefinite words; e.g., nāgū-mā 'something, anything' < nāgū 'what (?)' - cited from Temir (1956: 255).

The Mongolian ba is found in both Written Mongolian and Middle Mongolian.5 The meaning of this morpheme is discussed in Itabashi (ibid: 214-18), Street (1981: 162-3), Poppe (1974: 52) and Grønbech & Krueger (1976). According to them, the morpheme has the following usages; 1) a conjunction 'and',

3 In Old and Middle Japanese, there also exist the particles tomo 'even if', 'even though' and domo 'although', 'even though'. Although the relations between to and tomo on the one hand, and do and domo on the other, are not totally clear, it has often been suggested that tomo has derived from to and mo, and that domo has derived from do and mo.

4 The Tungus *ba was reconstructed in Benzing (1955a) as an accusative case marker. Note that in Manchu, a modern Tungus language, the particle ba has, according to Itabashi (1988: 202), the following 5 functions; 1) a definite direct object marker, 2) a dative marker, 3) a subject marker in indirect discourse, 4) a possesive case marker, and 5) an instrumetnal marker.

5 Although cognates of the Written Mongolian ba may also be used in modern colloquial languages, its use is probably rare. In Briat, a modern Mongolian language, for instance, there exists a 'conjunction' ba 'and', but, according to Poppe (1960: 126), "This conjunction is a borrowing from Written Mongolian and is rarely used".