THE VERBAL PARTICLE LEU IN THE MAUMERE LANGUAGE

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Maumere is a language of central Flores. It was previously studied by Father Arndt (1931). It is the purpose of this paper to present data and a grammatical analysis of part of this language in such a way that the reader can get a feeling for the language as a living thing.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is based on the general assumption that the verb is the most powerful and influential part of the sentence. Verbal particles are particles which affect the intensity, meaning or scope of the verb. We will try to give a sketch here of the basic functions of the particle leu.

In general leu seems to function as an intensifying particle in all of its various uses. Leu has the following functions in Maumere:

1. It can be used to form the imperative with transitive or intransitive verbs.
2. It can be used to form the comparative (and also can imply a comparative meaning with some verbs - see 5.2.3.).
3. It can intensify adjectives and give them the meaning 'very'.
4. It can be used to emphasise the verb in a general sense.
5. Leu with the verb: Particular Meanings

In many but not all cases the connotation of leu is bad. The speaker has negative feelings about what is being spoken about. Leu seems to have two general functions when added to verbs than can be included in this section:
5.1. The speaker or the subject of the sentence disagrees with the action of the verb.
The reasons for the disagreement of the speaker may be:
5.1.1. The speaker or subject does not like the action.
5.1.2. The subject does not have the right to do what is mentioned.
5.1.3. It is not the proper or expected time for the action to take place.

5.2. The action of the verb is done with a specific intention (which usually involves a bad connotation or something considered undesirable by the speaker or subject of the sentence). The following interpretations may appear with this function:
5.2.1. The recipient or goal of the action should be used for another purpose.
5.2.2. The intention of the speaker or subject of the sentence is improper or bad.
5.2.3. To do something instead of someone else (this may not involve a bad intention). This may also involve a comparative idea (see example sentences).

It can be seen that 5.1. and 5.2. above are actually interrelated and not easily separable. Many of the interpretations given under 5.1. and 5.2. may occur with the same usage of a verb and seem to depend on context.

6. Extended uses of leu: Leu may affect the truth-value of an embedded sentence.
6.1. Embedded sentences may be implied to be false.
6.2. Leu may strengthen the truth-value of an embedded sentence.

1. Leu IN COMMANDS

Commands may be given without leu or any other particle, but the feeling is weaker than if the command is given with leu.

(1a) glide tali la!
pull rope that
'Pull that rope!'

(1b) glide leu tali la!
pull part. rope that
'Pull that rope!'

Sentence (1b) above with leu is stronger than sentence (1a) without leu.
Sentences (2b), (3b) and (4) below illustrate that leu may be used with transitive and intransitive verbs. Please note that the commands with leu ((2b) and (3b)) are stronger than those without.

(2a) bano! 'Go!'
(2b) bano leu!
gotopt.
'Go already!'
(3a) lëbe uhe!
closetoordoor
'Close the door!'
(3b) lëbe leu uhe!
closetopt. door
'Close the door!'
(4) due leu!
sleeppto.
'Go to sleep!'

An Aside

Another particle [sa\1.e\] (/sae/) may be used in commands in addition to leu. Saë tends to emphasise that the action commanded must be carried out at the moment of the command, whereas leu emphasises that the action of the verb must be done. For example:

(5a) bëli leu!
givetopto.
'Give it!' OR 'You must give it!'
(5b) bëli saie!
givetopto.
'Give it right now!'
(5c) bëli leu saie!
givetopto.topto.
'You must give it right now!'

Sentence (5c) in which both command/imperative particles leu and saë occur, is stronger than both (5a) and (5b).

2. Leu IN THE COMPARATIVE CONSTRUCTION

\[ \text{NOUN}_1 + (\text{VERB}) + \text{ADJ.}/\text{ADV.}_{/1} \rightarrow \text{QUANT.}_{/1} + \text{to?i leu} + \text{NOUN}_2 + \text{'-er than'} \]
The general pattern for the comparative construction is given above. It may be read as follows: 'Noun₁ does verb adj-er than Noun₂' or 'Noun₁ is more adj. than Noun₂'. Some examples are as follows:

6) Goris sEt gaga to.i leu Seve.
   name paints good looking more than name
   'Goris paints better than Seve.'

7) meja ae.i gete to.i leu meja ia.
   table this large more than table that
   'This table is larger than that table.'

8) a.u gahar to.i ?leu nimu.
   I tall more than he/she
   'I am taller than her/him.'

As is indicated in the pattern above and in example (6), the comparative construction to.i leu may be applied to VERB + ADV. or to VERB + QUANT. Some further examples follow:

9) nimu ga gawang to.i leu a.u.
   he/she eat much more than I
   'He eats more than me.'

10) rimu pano ropo to.i leu a.u.
    they walk fast more than I
    'They walk faster than I.'

11) rimu ?išbe épang to.i leu ami.
    they play good more than we
    'They play better than us.'

The superlative degree does not seem to exist in Maumere. To.i leu can be used to express the superlative degree by contrasting one item or individual with a whole group. For example:

12) Averlinus sEt gaga to.i leu morgan sawen.
    name paint good more than all all
    'Averlinus paints better than them all.' OR
    'Averlinus paints best of all.'

13) nimu gaga to.i leu (ita) mogat sawEt.
    he/she good more than we all all
    'He/she is the best of us all.'

Note: -t = personal ending for the first person plural which is attached to the quantifier.