

Two Pluractional Constructions in Mi'kmaw

Arlene Stevens (Ta'n L'nuey Etl-mawlukwatmumk, stevensa44@msn.com),
Yvonne Denny (Eskasoni Band, Yvonne_Denny@hotmail.com),
Barbara Sylliboy (Ta'n L'nuey Etl-mawlukwatmumk, sylliboybarbara@hotmail.com),
 and **Dianne Friesen** (UVIC, friesend@uvic.ca)

Mi'kmaw has at least two pluractional (cf. Newman 2012) constructions. We ask, what are the syntactic and semantic differences between the two forms? Verb stems with the morpheme sequence *-o'-t-u* express a pluractional where the subject performs the same event on many different objects. The clauses in (1) only differ in that the stem contains *-o'* in (a) and *-a'* in (b).

1(a) <i>kut-o'-t-u-∅</i>	<i>p̄itewey kaps-iktuk</i>	(b) <i>kut-a'-t-u-∅</i>	<i>p̄itewey kaps-iktuk</i>
pour-v-AGRo-Voice-1s	tea mug-LOC	pour-v-AGRo-Voice-1s	tea mug-LOC
'I am pouring tea into the mugs.'		'I am pouring tea into the mug.'	

The stem *kut-* 'pour' with *-o'* expresses a pluractional event of pouring tea into many mugs (a); with *-a'* (b), the verb stem expresses the single event of pouring tea into one mug. Inglis (1986) proposed that *-o't* indicates 'do something bit by bit' as opposed to *-a't* which indicates 'do something in one continuous motion'. We propose (following Authors 2019) that the sequence *o'tu* is composed of the little *v* morpheme *-o'* that indicates pluractional aspect, the AGRo morpheme *-t* that indicates the internal argument is inanimate, and the Voice morpheme *-u* where the *-t-u* combination expresses active voice. Similarly, (2) shows the verb root *ke's-* 'put in the fire' with *-o'* in (a) and with *-a'* in (b). The clauses are otherwise identical.

2(a) <i>ke's-o'-t-u-∅</i>	<i>kmu'j</i>	(b) <i>ke's-a'-t-u-∅</i>	<i>kmu'j</i>
put.in.fire-v-AGRo-Voice-1s	stick	put.in.fire-v-AGRo-Voice-1s	stick
'I am putting wood into the fire.'		'I am going to put a stick into the fire.'	

The single action of putting one stick of firewood into the fire is expressed in (b), while (a) expresses the same action distributed over many pieces of firewood. Our corpus of over 150 verb roots in over 1200 clauses includes 14 more pairs of the same type.

In contrast to *-o'-t-u*, verb stems with *-o'-t-m* express events where the subject performs many different actions on the same object. (3) illustrates two different roots.

3(a) <i>ank-o'-t-m-∅</i>	<i>wasuek</i>	(b) <i>nuj-o'-t-m-∅</i>	<i>amakkaltimk wlo'nuk</i>
care-v-AGRo-Voice-1s	flower	manage-v-AGRo-Voice-1s	dance tonight
'I am taking care of the flower.'		'I am going to look after the dance tonight.'	

The subject in (3a) puts the flower in an appropriate place, repeatedly waters it, takes off dead leaves – the overall event of caring for the flower. Likewise, the subject in (3b) is in charge of the MC, the band, the caterers, and is chaperone at the event to make sure everything runs well. Our data includes seven stems with the same character. Note that **-a'-t-m* is ungrammatical.

In conclusion, pluractional aspect is indicated by the little *v* morpheme *-o'* (consistent with being lexical aspect, cf. Mattiola 2019). The difference in the two pluractional events is achieved by the two different Voice morphemes (*-u* and *-m*): *-o'-t-u* expresses the *same* activity on *different* objects while *-o'-t-m* expresses *different* activities on the *same* object. This is in contrast to some other Algonquian languages where repeated actions are encoded by reduplication (Junker 1994, Dahlstrom 1997, Conathan 2005). The fact that the *v* and Voice morphemes work together to express the type of pluractional and also that *-a'* with *-m* is an ungrammatical combination indicates a dependency between little *v* and Voice. Future work investigates the *v*-Voice connection that controls aspectual contrasts without regard to the intervening AGRo and the AGRo-Voice combination that controls grammatical voice without regard to little *v*. The fact that only one root in our corpus (*tel-* ‘thus’) collocates with both *-o'-t-u* and *-o'-t-m* (*tel-o'-t-u* ‘I do thus...’ and *tel-o'-t-m* ‘I think thus...’) suggests that features of the root correlate with voice and pluractionality.

References

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