



In the next sentences, the suffixes added to the verb are *-ta* and *-va*. The first one is added to the verb *dre* ‘pulling’, and the second one to the verb *lako* ‘go’:

- (3) a. [e <sup>n</sup>dʒe na ðaulaβau] ‘the youth is pulling’  
 b. [e <sup>n</sup>dʒe<sup>ta</sup> na wa<sup>n</sup>ga na ðaulaβau] ‘the youth is pulling the boat’  
 c. [e lak<sup>h</sup>o na maɟama] ‘the woman is going’  
 d. [e lak<sup>h</sup>o<sup>βa</sup> na suk<sup>h</sup>a na maɟama] ‘the woman is going for sugar’

In these sentences the transitive subject and the intransitive subject are the same. In (3a), *na caulavau* ‘the youth’ is the intransitive subject, and in (3b) also *na caulavau* is the subject, even though it is a transitive subject. The same situation occurs with *na marama* in (3c) and (3d). According to the Lexibase framework, “(...) an accusative language has a system in which Nom (the Nominative case form) coincides with the [actr] (actor) of the verb.” (Kikusawa, 2002:16). In these sentences, the actor coincides with the nominative.

Considering (3), Fijian is an ergative language, but if sentences in (3) are analyzed Fijian is an accusative language. In terms of Dixon (1994), this is a case of ergative split.

### 3 Verbal Suffixes

This section shows that Fijian verbal suffixes differ depending on the type of objects. In Japanese or English, verbs do not change its forms based on the following objects.

- (4) a. Mary saw a book.  
 b. Mary saw them.
- (5) a. Mary-ga hon-o mita.  
 Mary-Non book-Acc saw  
 b. Mary-ga karera-o mita.  
 Mary-Non them-Acc saw

(4) and (5) demonstrate examples of English and Japanese respectively. Both of them show that the verb forms are consistent. However, in Fijian, those verb endings depend on what type of nouns is the object of a verb as shown in (6).

- (6) a. He saw it e ɟaiða:  
 b. She saw them (pl.) e ɟaiði iɟa  
 c. He saw it e a: ɟaiða:  
 d. They (pl.) were seen eɟa ɟaiði  
 e. He saw it e sa: ɟaiða:  
 f. He will see it e sa: na ɟaiða:

One of the main difference between (6a) and (6b) is the type of objects. (6a) shows the verb has a suffix “a” when the object is “it”, whereas (6b) indicates the verb gets a suffix “i” when the object is “them”. The same pattern can be observed in (6c,d). Based on these observations, the basic patterns are as follows;

- (7) a. when the object is pronoun (him, her, them, etc...) → the suffix is “i”  
 b. when the object is other elements → the suffix is “a”

Next, patterns in (7) are applied to the examples in (8).

- (8) a. She saw water \*e ɟaiði na wai  
 b. She saw them (pl.) \*e ɟaiða iɟa  
 c. She saw them (tr.) e ɟaiði iɟa<sup>h</sup>ou

- |    |                            |   |
|----|----------------------------|---|
| d. | She saw this               | e ɬaiða ŋgo                                     |
| e. | She saw this               | *e ɬaiði ŋgo                                    |
| f. | She saw Tai                | e ɬaiði (*o) ɬai                                |
| g. | Tai saw something          | e ɬaiða o ɬai (“o” marks the following subject) |
| h. | Someone saw them           | ɬaiði iɬa                                       |
| j. | Did you see him yesterday? | o a: ɬaiði k <sup>h</sup> oja e na noa?         |

The examples in (8) have several types of objects other than pronouns. For instance, a general noun, a demonstrative noun and a proper noun. (8a) indicates that the general noun *wai* “water” cannot be marked by a suffix “i”. However, the proper noun *ɬai* “Tai” in (8f) cannot be marked with “a”. This implies that different suffixes are used for referring to general nouns and proper nouns. Moreover, when the object is a demonstrative noun this as shown in (8e, f), the verb has a suffix “a”. Based on the findings from (8), the patterns in (7) can be improved as follows;

- (9)
- when the object is pronouns or general nouns → the suffix is “i”
  - when the object is proper nouns or demonstrative pronouns → the suffix is “a”

This section has shown that there are two types of verbal suffixes. These suffixes depends on the object of a verb.

#### 4 Tense and Aspect

According to Fijian Grammar by G.B. Milner (1972) Fijian has a past and a future tense. These tenses are realized with the use of *a* and *na* respectively. These tense markers always appear before the verb and in the case of *na* it will always appear immediately before the verb. The following provides an example for the past and future tenses as provided in Milner (1972).

- (10)
- Eratou a lako.*  
they PAST go  
'They went.'
  - Eratou na lako.*  
they FUTURE go  
'They will go'

Meanwhile if *sa* is used with either tense, the meaning changes to included a connotation of having the action be completed and as an emphazier. This is also described in Milner (1972) as an emphatic element in which the meaning of the verb is stressed and therefore this paper will use this categorization of *sa* as emphatic.

- (11)
- E a lako i vale.*  
He PAST go to home  
'He went home (but we don't know whether he arrived).'
  - E a sa lako i vale.*  
He PAST emphatic go to home  
'He went home (and arrived home).'
  - E na lako.*  
He FUT go  
'He will go.'

- d. *E sa na lako.*  
 He emphatic FUT go  
 'He will be going.'

The use of *sa* is generally used for the completion of an action or for emphasis. Meanwhile when neither *na* nor *a* appear in the phrase, it is not necessarily the present tense, but regarded as indefinite (Cammack, 1962). Therefore the sentence, *e lako* can be translated into the present tense 'he goes' but this may not only be the present tense.

An aspect in Fijian is the progressive aspect using the word *tiko*. *Tiko* is defined as to be, with the meaning of to be situated, to stay, or to reside in Milner (1972) and is used in situations where a verb is on-going or has been on-going. The example below is provided by elicitation made by speaker FIJ001.

- (12) a. *E ra lako tiko i rara.*  
 They go -ing to park  
 'They are going to the park.'

- b. *E ratou a moce tiko.*  
 They PAST sleep -ing  
 'They were sleeping.'

The example above indicates that the action continues and stays within its state of doing and thus is a possible reason as to why the word *tiko* is used to expressive the progressive aspect.

While the tenses and progressive aspect are important to understand, there are many tenses and aspects that are yet to be explored.

## 5 Conclusion

This report has described three points on Fijian verb system.

First, Fijian is one of the languages that manifests ergative split. In the data set analysed, sentences with the same verb can change from an accusative to an ergative system and vice versa. In Fijian, there are transitive particles, and when this particles, generally suffixes, are added to a verb it is possible to have an object in the sentence. There are not a rule to determine what particle is related with a specific verb. In the sentence [e <sup>n</sup>dʒe<sub>ta</sub> na wa<sup>o</sup>ga na ðaulaβau] 'the youth is pulling the boat', the suffix [ta] is added to the [<sup>n</sup>dʒe] 'pulling', and in this way it is possible to have the object [na wa<sup>o</sup>ga] 'boat'. This is an example of an accusative language, but in Fijian it is also possible

Second, unlike English and Japanese, Fijian verbs have different suffixes when they refer to different types of nouns. Verbs have a suffix "a" when the object is proper nouns or demonstrative pronouns, while they have a suffix "i" when the object is pronouns or general nouns.

Third, Fijian uses a past and a future tense. These tenses are realized with the use of *a* and *na* respectively. These tense markers always appear before the verb. Moreover, if *sa* is used with either tense, the meaning changes. Fijian also has the progressive aspect using the word *tiko*.

## 6 References

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