Verbal extensions in Idu - Bantu in the flanks of the Himalayas?

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Verbal extensions/applicatives I

- The use of verbal extensions to modify the meaning of a core verb is found in various language phyla across the world, but particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa.

- Extensions follow the verb stem and are morphologically bound to it. They are most typical of Bantu (Guthrie 1962) but also occur across much of Niger-Congo (Hyman 2014) and are usually identified as present in Nilo-Saharan (Lamoureaux 2004) and some branches of Afroasiatic.

- In other continents, the term 'applicative' is used to describe analogous phenomena. 'Applicative' apparently derives from Spanish and was used as early as the seventeenth century to analyse Nahuatl (Carochi 1983).

- Although clearly present in the Asia-Pacific region, it would be fair to say they are underdescribed, but they seem to be characteristic of some branches of Trans-Himalayan (Tibeto-Burman).

Verbal extensions/applicatives II

■ Peterson (1998, 2007) lists a large number of 'applicatives' in Hakha Lai, a Kuki-Chin language of Bangla Desh.

■ Foley (1997) describes the applicative system of Yimas, a Papuan language. Extensions may or may not be productive, as in some languages lexical forms are largely fixed.

■ A feature of African languages is the stacking of extensions; a Bantu language may have as many as four in sequence (Givón 1971; Baker 1990).

■ This seems to be uncommon in the East Asian region, although this may be a consequence of the descriptive model.

■ Some branches of Tibeto-Burman, such as Qiangic and Kiranti have extensive post-verbal morphology.

The Idu language and its extension system

- The Idu language, spoken in northeast Arunachal Pradesh, resembles Trans-Himalayan typologically, although any genetic relationship is yet to be demonstrated.
- An unusual feature of the language is the elaboration of its system of verbal extensions or applicatives, which in terms both of their number and semantics are exceptional.
- This paper presents an overview of Idu verbal extensions, focusing on their semantics as well as advancing hypotheses on their origin.
- Typologically speaking, the Idu system presents three remarkable features, at least for its region. These are;

  - ❖ a) the large number of extensions and their often restricted distribution
  - ❖ b) the complex and highly specific semantics of these extensions
  - ❖ c) the potential to stack extensions in a fashion similar to Bantu

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  Work on this paper was conducted in the Roing area 2015-2018 and by email, in conjunction with the Idu Language Development Committee (ILDC)
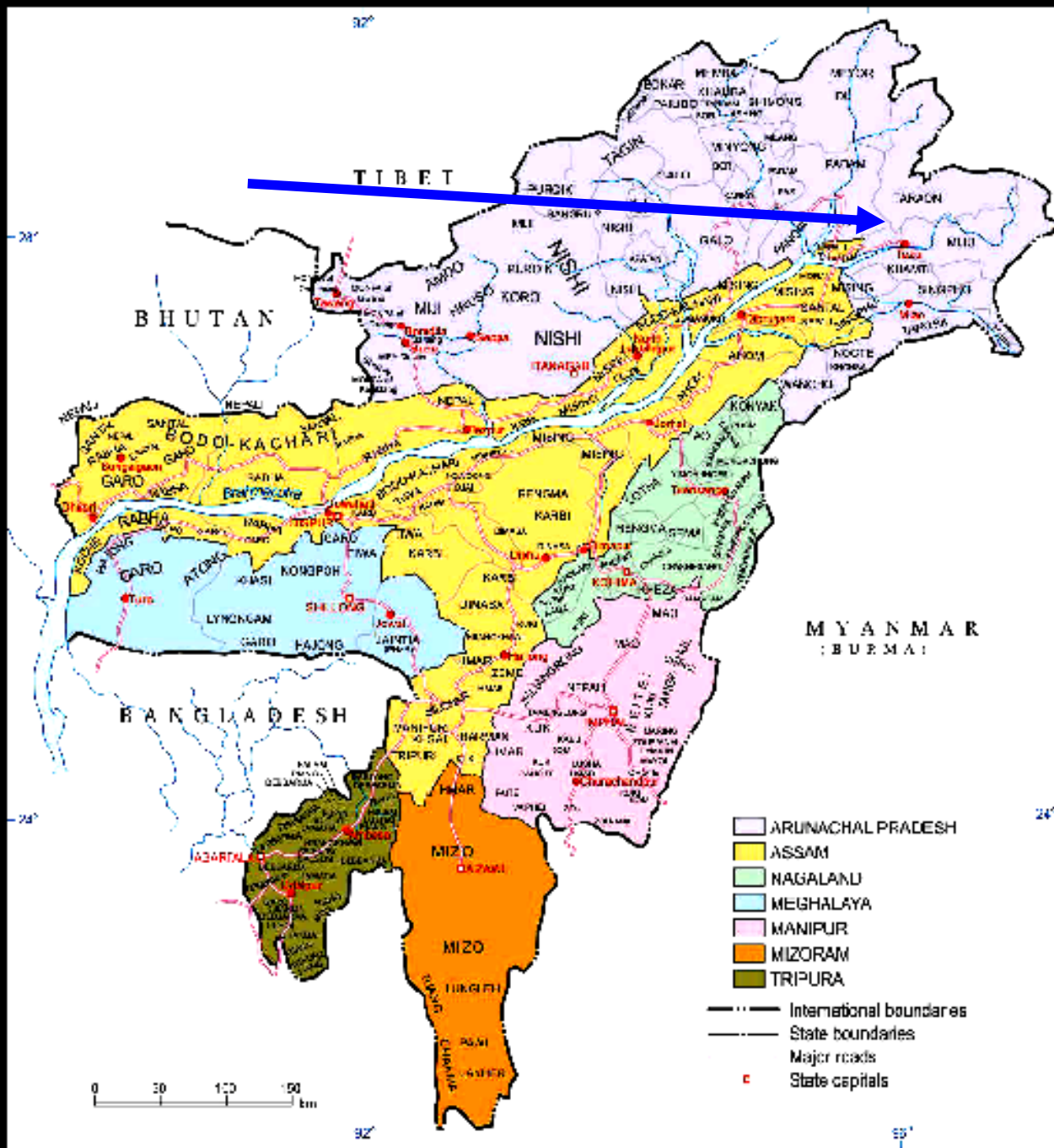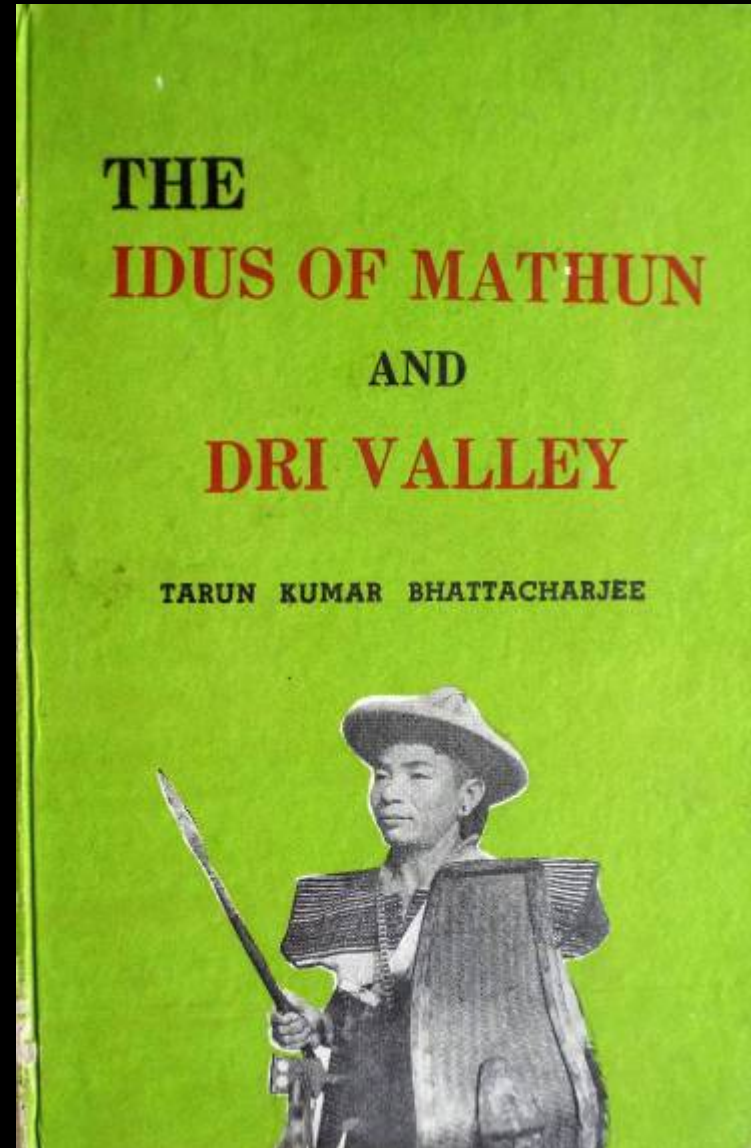
Ethnolinguistic map of NE India

The Mishmi peoples

Anthropology of the Idu: existing publications

The IDU MISHMIS

TAPAN KUMAR M. BARUAH

THE IDUS OF MATHUN AND DRI VALLEY

TARUN KUMAR BHATTACHARJEE

ILDC hard at work

Idu Dictionary

Presented to the community, February 1st, 2017
Latest version February 2019

A DICTIONARY OF IDU

ANGA AZOPÕ

ROGER BLENCH

MITE LINGI
YONA MELE
APOMO LINGGI
HINDU MEME

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The Idu basic verb structures

❖ Idu can be considered as having a relatively small set of canonical forms for basic verbs

Idu	Structure	Gloss
ī	V	to live
ōō	VV	to shoot
dá	CV	to feel
cèè	CVV	to tease
āwū	VCV	to scoop out water
ànōō	VCVV	to beat s.o. severely

Idu post-verbal morphology

❖ Verb roots can have up to three CV extensions in addition to TAM marking, and be compounded with secondary verbs. All Idu verbal morphology follows the stem verb.

❖ The approximate ordering of the suffixed morphology is as follows;

❖ Verb stem + EXT1/2/3 + Pronominal number agreement + TA marker(s) + [Compound element] + Evidential

❖ Some evidentials can be considered bound morphology but others are clearly free elements.

❖ This structure provides a consistent means of distinguishing phrasal verbs, where the compounded element follows the TAM and agreement markers, from verbal extensions, where this morphology is appended to the extended form

Categories of extended verbs

Idu strategies for extension of verb semantics

No.	Category	Description
1.	Serial verbs	Two or more distinct core verbs follow one another. The sequence is not lexicalised
2.	Phrasal verbs	A core verb is followed by a noun, adjective or locative which can stand as an independent word
3.	Compound verbs	Two core verbs are compounded and lexicalised. Post verbal morphology follows the second verb
4.	Verb plus one or more extensions	A core verb is followed by a CV(CV) extension, with further extensions permissible. The extension elements cannot stand alone
5.	Paired collocations	Two verbs are conjoined in an idiomatic echo expression. Sometimes their phonology or tonology is adjusted for euphony. Both verbs take tense/aspect morphology independently

Distinguishing outputs

❖ As an example of the analytic problems these verbs raise, the table gives the example of *cè* 'to cut'. All the forms are evidently related to the CV stem, but some are bound morphologically, some are compounds with existing verbs with an independent existence. Some of the elements which follow *cè* can be etymologised, while others seem to be specific to this verb.

Idu	Gloss
cè	to cut
cēbrə̄	to cut down a tree
cējì	to cut uniformly
cēkù	to cut and clear jungle
cēnggērē	to cut all over the place
cēpə̄	to cut and make a hole
cēsà	to make a mark on trees made while cutting a jungle path
cēsù	to slash wildly
cētā	to cut into pieces

Phrasal verbs

❖ Phrasal verbs are verbs where a core stem, in the case of Idu (V)CV, is followed by another element which may be a noun, adjective or locative and which extends the meaning in a not necessarily predictable manner.

❖ Thus in English, 'wash' + 'up' creates an expression whose semantics are idiosyncratic, while 'go' + 'around' is entirely predictable.

ālū	to revenge, avenge	ālū sàsà	to insult severely
bā	to touch softly, pat	bā shà	to feel around, grope
cằ	to fall on top of s.t.	cā̃ mbūtū	to have s.t. fall on you and have your body swell up
cẽ̄	to tie, knit	cế tútè	to tie up with a rope
dò	to jump	dò māgá	to jump competitively
èná	to observe taboo	èná cȭ	to break a taboo
gè̱̀	to carry on the back	gè̱̀ ùpā	to carry and throw away
hã̂²	to give	hã̂ ágè̱̀	to give s.t. to s.o. to deliver
ī	to live, be in	ī pàgā	to live separately (i.e. in different places).
jò	to be woven in a pattern	jò ūtè	to design

Compound verbs

❖ As in many languages with a large set of CV verbs, sequences of two or more verbs can be lexicalised.

❖ Two (or more) core verbs are compounded, though only bound morphologically when the second verb has a deleted V- prefix. These are compound verbs.

Verb	Gloss	Etymologies
ānōnjī	to scold and chase away	ānō 'scold' + njī 'chase away'
ànyúbà	to deceive, trick, confound	ànyú 'cheat' + bà 'whisper'
cã̄lā	to fall on and kill	cà̃ 'to fall on' + là 'be killed by s.t. falling'
cã̄tú	to fall on and break	cà̃ 'to fall on'+ tú 'break'
cēlā	to cut and fall down dead	cè 'cut' + là 'be killed by s.t. falling'
cēpə̄	to cut and make a hole	cè 'cut' + pə̀ 'to reach'
cēsē	to cut and kill	cè 'cut' + sē 'kill'
chíkà	to split s.t. in two lengthways (bamboo)	chí 'divide' + kà 'tear off'

Verbal extensions overview I

❖ The meanings of core verbs in Idu can be extended by up to four suffixed CV elements.

❖ Extensions might be described as semi-productive; it is possible to add them to a variety of verbs, but in practice, many are lexicalised, having developed specialised semantics (especially in the case of 'speak', 'sleep', 'eat' and 'drink').

❖ A small number of core verbs carry the burden of extended forms. Many less common verbs, especially VCV forms, do not usually take extensions.

❖ Speakers are not consciously aware of the sense of many extensions, which have to be inferred from the synchronic meanings of the verbs.

Verbal extensions overview II

❑ As the number of extended forms is very large, the initial difficulty is in distinguishing between true extensions and verbal compounding. Three criteria can be applied;

    ❑ Extensions are bound to the verb stem, as –(n)do, -(a)pa

    ❑ Extensions are not bound morphologically, but TAM marking follows the extension, not the stem

    ❑ The element following the core verb is otherwise unattested

❑ Once they are pointed out, more examples of the same extension can usually be cited.

Verbal extensions basic forms I

Idu	Category	Approximate gloss
-acà̰	additive	denotes doing s.t. extra
-àdé	ignoro-irritative	to ignore in an irritating way
-àndā	penetrative	denotes entering with verbs of physical force
-(à)pà	sequential	denotes sequential action completed
-athà	expectative	denotes expecting a result
-dò	passative	denotes passing on s.t.
-hā	errative	denotes doing s.t. in error
-hí	causative	
-hī	indirect imperative	denotes telling someone else to do something

Verbal extensions basic forms II

Idu	Category	Approximate gloss
-hímìcīcīī	negative conative	Denotes doing s.t. multiple times and not succeeding
-jì	imitative	denotes acting like s.t. or s.o.
-kà	incompletive	denotes partly doing s.t.
-kō	incapacitative	to be unable to do s.t.
-kōlòtò	patient	denotes being the victim or passive object of an action
-kù	funditive	denotes doing s.t. thoroughly
-là		marks valency change
-lāhā	errative	denotes doing s.t. in error
-lako	incapacitative	to be unable to do s.t.
-lāmpā	repetitive	denote doing s.t a second time
-lyū	replacive	denotes replacing s.o.
-mànétò	temporo-negative	denotes purposelessness, time-wasting
-mbrɛ̀	participative	denotes taking part in s.t.
-mbūtū	tumescive	denotes swelling or fitting s.t. tightly
-mì	negative	denotes not doing or being s.t.

Verbal extensions basic forms III

Idu	Category	Approximate gloss
-mīmù	expectative	denotes strong expectation, tendency
-mīsī	desiderative	denotes wanting to do s.t.
-mū	perseverative	denotes doing s.t. continuously
-mūjì	occupative	denotes being busy doing s.t.
-mūthrúyì	occupative	denotes being busy doing s.t.
-ndò	completive	denotes completion of an action
-ŋgē̄rē̄	incauto-repetitive	denotes careless repeated action
-ŋgó	provocative	denotes dare s.o. to do s.t.
-ŋgō	politeness	denotes request s.o. to do s.t. politely
–nū	evitative	denotes an actor is avoiding or refusing to do s.t.
-pòmì	negative actant	denotes experiencing something never previously experienced
-rē̄	anti-purposive	denotes s.t. done aimlessly
-rè	provocative	denotes s.t. done to provoke or irritate
-tá	incompletive	denotes s.t. partly achieved
-tà	incompletive	denotes being stopped halfway through
-te	intensifier	denotes intensification of an action

Stacking of extensions

❖ As with Bantu, Idu permits stacking of extensions. This does not seem to be a highly productive system but nevertheless, verb roots with up to three extensions have been recorded. As an example of this, consider;

   ❖ pīkōlòtòto   hurt oneself while using a tool

❖ This is composed of a root and then a composite extension composed of three elements, interpreted as follows;
   ❖ píto bite, hit-
   ❖ ko   incapacitative suffix
   ❖ lò?   no known meaning
   ❖ tò   reflexive
❖ Since other verbs can take a *–kōlòtò* extension, this can be regarded as a lexicalised composite.

Core verbs attracting extensions

❑ there is a small core of verbs to which most extensions are attached. These include;

Idu	Gloss
dò	to jump
è	to do
hā	to eat
hī	to have
jì	to sleep
là	to fall
lā	to speak
tő	to drink

Verbal extensions: analytic issues

➢ Where the extension has a prefixed nasal it is usually preserved, while nasalisation on a verb stem is then assimilated. Whether the final vowel of the verb stem assimilates to first vowel of the extension in ca VCV structures is highly variable. Outcomes are noted under the description of individual extensions.

➢ An analytic problem with Idu extensions is why the tone appears to be stable in some and is mobile in others. For the present, tone is considered underspecified on some extensions and not marked in the table.

➢ In terms of the global typology of verbal extensions, Idu has a remarkably high number of attested forms, by comparison with Bantu, for example, the language family it most resembles. Verbal extensions are found across much of Niger-Congo as well as in some branches of Afroasiatic.

Verbal extensions: analytic issues

➢ The likely reason for this is that extensions have arisen historically in Idu by a quite different route from Bantu. Many extensions in Idu have a transparent etymological origin and were originally Verb + Verb compounds, where the second verb has been grammaticalised and its meaning extended.

➢ Extended verbs can identified, because they have been lexicalised, i.e. they are now treated by speakers as indivisible lexical units, and TAM markers thus follow the extended stem.

➢ A significant problem in the tonology of extensions is the problem is their impact on the tone of the core verb to which they are attached. In some cases, the tone of the verb is preserved, but in others it is raised.

➢ The example of *cè* 'to cut' shows that when compounded, the low tone is raised to mid. Other verbs, such as *lā* 'speak, say' maintain their citation tone.

How extensions work

- -àdé denotes acting to ignore others in an irritating way
- Used when the person who is the object of an action ignores the intention of the actor with an intention to irritate

Idu	Gloss	Idu	Gloss
āhrṹ	to hear	āhrṹàdé	to listen and ignore
āthú	to see	āthúàdé	to look but pay no attention
chì	to walk	chīàdé	to walk and ignore with intention to irritate. For example, you order someone to go somewhere, but they ignore you and go in their own time
è	to do	ēàdé	to act but ignore, in practice to irritate
lā	to speak	lāàdé	to speak but pay no attention, i.e. in an irritating way
njò	to work	njōàdé	to do s.t. sloppily with intention to irritate

Verbal extensions in context

➢ Verbal extensions in sentence context behave exactly like core verbs; no exciting syntactic differences

➢ For example the *–(a)pà* sequential extension

nyu	shi.apa.go	nga	shi.we
you	die.EXT.PERF	I	die.FUT

After you have died, I'll die

➢ The incompletive suffix -tá

nga	õ	ājītá	mu	kha.ga
I	house	be incomplete	still	lie.PERF

my house is still incomplete

Verbal extensions: conclusions

➢ Idu has a variety of strategies for extending the meanings of core verbs, including serialised verbs, phrasal verbs, lexicalised verb strings, and verbal extensions

➢ Verbal extensions are identified when the suffixed element(s) have no standalone meaning

➢ The verbal extensions are very numerous and permit a wide variety of nuances in meanings

➢ Verbal extensions typically modify a core set of verbs although they can be added to unexpected verbs as part of lexical creativity

➢ Verbal extensions can be stacked

➢ Most commonly the tone of the basic verb and the extensions are conserved but not in all

➢ This system is highly unusual in the region, though something similar though less extensive appears in neighbouring Tawrã

THANKS

Replica of the stone pillar, now in Guwahati Museum, dating to 1675, which records a treaty between the Ahom and the Mishmi, basically saying each will leave the other alone, on payment of baskets of arrow poison