

The Juncture Morpheme in Naro

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Abstract

This paper explores the different positions in which the juncture morpheme occurs in the verbal complex and its possibility to co-occur with different verbal extensions. The paper also tries to find out if the juncture morpheme is compulsory in any given verbal construction and when exactly it should appear. It has been noted that on a synchronic level the juncture morpheme has no recognizable meaning and does not serve any grammatical function. The paper further notes that the juncture morpheme links two verbal extensions as well as verbs in a serial verbal construction. Preliminary findings suggest that, in any given verbal construction, the juncture morpheme is compulsory and attaches to the first verb. A general pattern observed about the juncture morpheme in serial verbal constructions is that when it is left out it gives an ungrammatical structure. Furthermore, this morpheme indicates direction from the verb to the grammatical element that is involved.

Keywords: *juncture morpheme, verbal construction, verbal extensions, grammatical function*

Introduction

Naro speakers are found mostly in Botswana, but there would be very few encountered in eastern Namibia. A lot of Naro speakers now live and work in the Ghanzi Farms. The number of Naro speakers in Botswana, mainly in Ghanzi District, is estimated to be between 6,000 and 8,000 (Hasselbring, 2000). Visser (1998) estimates the number at 10,000, while Andersson and Janson (1997) put the figure at 9,000 (5,000 in Botswana and 4,000 in Namibia). The Naro language has been studied by many scholars, including Barnard (1982), Bleek (1942), and Visser (1998, 2001). The Dutch Reformed Church at D'Kar farm in partnership with the Kuru Development Trust has contributed to the documentation of Naro through a Bible translation project; a New Testament was published in 2012. These efforts have led to the codification of the language and the development of literacy materials that are used in informal education. These achievements and activities make Naro one of the most dynamic khoesan languages in Botswana.

This paper discusses the occurrence of the juncture morpheme in Naro. It is divided into five sections. Section 1 provides the introduction, while section 2 gives the background information on Naro. On the other hand, section 3 looks at the juncture morpheme in relation to derived verbs. Furthermore, section 4 discusses the juncture morpheme in serial verbal constructions. The conclusion is provided in section 5. The paper explores the different positions in which the juncture morpheme occurs in the

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verbal structure and its possibility to co-occur with different verbal extensions. Furthermore, the paper tries to find out if the juncture morpheme is compulsory in any given verbal construction and when exactly it must appear in it. Preliminary findings suggest that in any given verbal construction, the juncture morpheme is compulsory and it attaches to the first verb.

Data Collection

The data discussed in this paper was collected in 2012 in the months of June/July when the researcher embarked on a field work excursion in the Ghanzi area. Specifically, the data was collected in the village of D'Kar involving four different informants: three females and three males aged between 28 – 35. All the informants are indigenes of and live in D'Kar. All are educated and can speak Setswana, the national language of Botswana, and English, the language used in the education system as a medium of instruction. This made the data collection process much easier as I could communicate easily with the informants using either Setswana or English. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured in question-answer form and so the informants worked in pairs, with one asking the questions and the other answering them. For example, for any given verb type, say, a verb such as 'sweep', one of the informants would ask questions such as 1) Who swept the house? 2) What did Qasa sweep? 3) Who did she sweep it for? The informants were required to use both full lexical categories like nouns and pronouns in their responses to these questions. For example, the two responses to question (1) above would be a) Qasa swept the house, b) She swept the house. And c) She swept the house for the visitors. Since my objective was to find out the different positions in which the juncture morpheme occurs in the verb and its possibility to co-occur with different verbal extensions, I created sentences that would elicit responses involving different verb types, that is, the copula, intransitive and transitive sentences, and different verbal extensions such as the dative, the reflexive, the directive, the repetitive, the causative, and the reciprocal. Notice that this method of data collection is a rather artificial way of collecting data because the data is collected out of context. However, the method allows the investigator to focus on the aspects of language that are of interest at the time of investigation and to obtain the results needed.

Background on Naro

There are several characteristics of this language that are worth commenting on; these include the role played by gender in the grammar of the language, tone, and the pronominal clitic system. Naro is a grammatical gender language. There are three genders that are recognized in this language: feminine, masculine, and common gender. These are illustrated in examples (1 – 3) below. The masculine and feminine suffixes *-ba* and *-sa* signify more than just 'maleness and 'femaleness'; the masculine suffix conveys the notions of strength, tallness or slenderness, while the feminine suffix express the notions of smallness, weakness, or roundness. The same thing applies to objects; those that are long and/or strong are male, while those that are round and/or weak are female.

	Example	Gloss	Example	Gloss	Example	Gloss
(1)	<i>khòèba</i>	‘man’	<i>khòèsa</i>	‘woman’	<i>khòène</i>	‘people’
(2)	<i>híiba</i>	‘tree’				
(3)	<i>suusa</i>	‘pot’				

The examples in (1) show the three genders: masculine, feminine, and common gender. The example in (2) shows an object that is marked with masculine gender. The tree is regarded as masculine because of its shape; it is tall and strong. Furthermore, example (3) is marked with feminine gender mainly because of its shape and size; a pot is roundish and small and it is mostly used by women and therefore takes the feminine gender marker.

Naro, like other Khoesan languages, is a tone language. The language has a three way tonal distinction, namely low, mid, and high (Visser, 2001:2). High tone is indicated by an acute accent, as in: /ó/, while mid tone is not marked, as in: /o/. On the other hand, low tone is indicated by a grave accent, as in: /ò/. The tone system in this language is distinctive. For example, we get a different meaning of the lexical item *dao* depending on whether the tone on the vowels ‘a’ and ‘o’ is high, low, or mid, as illustrated in examples (4 – 5).

	Example	Gloss
(4)	<i>dào</i>	‘burn’
(5)	<i>dàò</i>	‘custom’

Another interesting grammatical characteristic of Naro is its tense marking system. The tense marker in this language is completely independent of the verb; that is, it is its own morpheme which can occur in proximity to the verb. Consider the three examples below:

- (6) a. *Pirí ba xu ko cg’òo ncēe cámká*
Goat 3MASC.SG. 3MASC.PL. PRST kill this day¹
‘They are killing the goat today.’
- b. *Qasa sa gha gabà zi xg’aa*
Qasa 3FEM.SG. future plates PL. wash
‘Qasa will wash the plates.’
- c. *Qasa sa kò Kacgae koe qòo ncēe nqáéam nxoemka*
Qasa 3FEM.SG. PST Kacgae at go this previous month
‘Qasa went to Kacgae last month.’

¹ Abbreviations:

AUX _{VERB}	auxiliary verb	PGN	person gender number	1SG	first person singular
PRST	present tense	FUT	future tense	FEM	feminine
MASC	masculine	adv	adverb	JUNC	juncture
DAT	dative	REC	reciprocal	REFL	reflexive
CAUS	causative				

(1985:76), who points out that in !Ani and Buga, the juncture morpheme can never be employed if the verb contains an object marker, in which case there is no marking of active voice (cf. Vossen 1985 for !Ani). Bernd Heine (1986:14) and Derek Elderkin (1986:228) came to the same conclusion that the juncture morpheme was the result of grammaticalisation. While Heine (1986:14) related it to the still existing copula ‘-a’, Elderkin (1986:228) identified the juncture with a conjunction ‘-a’. Unlike, Heine and Elderkin, I argue that the juncture morpheme has different roles depending on the types of verbs it is used in. However, it does not perform the role of an active voice in the language as observed by Hats (2008:13).

Heine (1986:13) identified various forms of grammaticalisation of the copula in Khoe. He also attempted to demonstrate that the copula served as an element of the nominal paraphrase, which being marked for gender and number in agreement with the subject of the sentence, was placed after the verb and separated it from the following auxiliary verb, giving the structure: verb-a. GN.AGR-AUX_{VERB}.

In Kalahari Khoe, on the other hand, the copula developed into a verbal nominaliser, thereby losing its original meaning. In this context, Heine (1986:15) spoke of desemanticisation, thus: verb + a-AUX_{VERB}. Preliminary findings suggest that in Naro and other Khoe languages, the auxiliary verb, which originally was a full verb in its own right, was subsequently remodelled into a tense-aspect marker and was also desemanticised just like the copula as indicated here: verb ‘lift’+ a + AUXverb ‘will’ → verb *dcãò* ‘lift’ + juncture ‘-a’ + tense aspect marker *gha* ‘will’. Preliminary findings suggest that the element ‘-a’ first combined more closely with the verb before it became a morpheme linking the main verb to the auxiliary verb.

The Juncture Morpheme on Derived Verbs

Having looked at the juncture morpheme in the context of finite verbs where it connects the non-derived verb to the following tense-aspect marker, I will now look at how it occurs between the verbal base and a derivative. The juncture morpheme can also appear between two verbal extensions.

Simply Derived Forms

It has been observed that in Naro the most widely used juncture morpheme is ‘-a’. The examples that fall within this category take the syllable type CVN, and CVV. The juncture morpheme is placed between the verbal base and the derivative suffix, as illustrated in examples (8 – 13).

	Example	Gloss
(8)	Reflexive	
	<i>kóm</i>	‘to hear’
	<i>kóm-a-se</i>	‘to hear oneself’
	<i>xhài</i>	‘to chase’
(9)	Directive	
	<i>ntcõo</i>	‘sit’
	<i>ntcõo-a-síí</i>	‘to sit ahead’
	<i>qhãe</i>	‘to crawl’
	<i>qhãe-a-síí</i>	‘to crawl ahead’

- (10) **Dative**
ts'aò 'to milk'
ts'aò-a-máá 'to milk for'
xgai 'to sweep'
xgai-a-máá 'to sweep for'
- (11) **Repetitive**
tc'óó 'to eat'
tc'óó-a-chōo or *tc'óó-n-chōo* 'to keep on eating'
kg'ae 'to cry'
kg'ae-a-chōo or *kg'ae-n-chōo* 'to keep on crying'
- (12) **Terminative**
dàò 'to burn'
dàò-a-gom 'to burn down'
tc'óó 'to eat'
tc'óó-a-xgãa 'to eat up'

I did not come across any of CVCV verbs which take on the juncture base form. Most verbs take the shape CVV. The data shows that under the repetitive, the juncture morpheme occurs as the base form '-a', and also takes the allomorph '-n'. Trying to put '-n' in other extensions gave ungrammatical structures.

The insertion of /-r/ after the final vowel /-a/ has been noted in a couple of cases in Naro unlike in !Ani where only a few cases were noticed by Vossen (1985:77).

- | | Example | Gloss |
|------|----------------------|---------------|
| (13) | <i>qaa</i> | 'to look' |
| | <i>qaa-raa-máá</i> | 'to look for' |
| | <i>xg'aa</i> | 'to wash' |
| | <i>xg'aa-raa-máá</i> | |

The examples in (13) indicate that, when the /-r/ is inserted after the final vowel /-a/, the juncture morpheme doubles up, as indicated by *raa*.

Multiple Derived Forms

This section discusses the juncture morpheme in the context of multiple derived forms. It has been observed that, in such a context, the juncture morpheme occurs predominantly in its base form '-a' before the dative or terminative marker, as shall be seen in the examples that follow.

- | | Example | Gloss |
|------|--------------------------------|--|
| (14) | a. <i>nxááè-ku-a-máá</i> | 'to sing for one another'
sing-REC-JUNC-DAT |
| | b. <i>tsāagu-kagu-ku-a-máá</i> | 'to cause to cook for'
cook-CAUS-REC-JUNC-DAT |

In the examples in (14), the verbs are marked for dative and the dative marker is connected to the element before it by the juncture morpheme. In (14a), the element before the dative is the reciprocal, whereas in (14b) the causative and the reciprocal come before the dative and are connected by the juncture morpheme. The examples above clearly show that the dative marker plays a crucial role with regard to the occurrence of the juncture morpheme on derived verbs. It should, however, be noted that there are certain instances where the dative does not trigger the occurrence of the juncture morpheme, as indicated in the examples that follow.

Example	Gloss
(15) a. <i>ntcāa-xg'ae-máá-ku</i>	'to dance together for each other'dance together DAT-REC as opposed to:
b. <i>nxàè-ku-a-máá</i> sing-REC-JUNC-DAT	'to sing for one another'
c. <i>ntcāá-tee-máá</i>	'to pour tea for'pour-tea-DAT as opposed to:
d. <i>ntcāá-tee-a-máá-se</i>	'to pour tea for oneself' pour-tea-JUNC-DAT-REFL

In example (15a), the dative marker follows the comitative and no juncture comes between them. The same thing holds for example (15c), where the dative marker follows the noun *tee* 'tea'. However, in example (15b), the occurrence of the reciprocal morpheme before the dative triggers the presence of the juncture morpheme. Furthermore, the occurrence of the reflexive morpheme after the dative allows the juncture morpheme to appear before the dative.

Serial Verbal Constructions

As for the serial verbs, all of them make use of the juncture morpheme 'a' to connect to one another; leaving out the juncture morpheme will give an ungrammatical structure as will be shown later.

Example	Gloss
(16) a. <i>xhàà-a-úú</i> pull-JUNC-take	'pull'
b. <i>xg'am-a-tcāà</i> beat-JUNC-put	'drive in'
c. <i>kg'ui-a-xháé</i> talk-JUNC-struggle	'stutter'
d. <i>kom-a-q'āa</i> listen-JUNC-know	'understand'
e. * <i>kom q'āa</i> listen know	'understand'

In Naro, the juncture morpheme is used to connect two verbs in a serial verbal construction. When the juncture morpheme is left out in a serial verbal construction, the construction becomes ungrammatical, as indicated by example (16e). The data indicates that even if the serial verbal construction is used within a sentence, the juncture morpheme will always attach to the first verb regardless of the fact that the second verb is further away from the first verb. Note that in a serial verbal construction verbs are not always adjacent to each other. That is to say, a person-

gender-number marker, an object, a past tense marker, and a juncture morpheme can be put between the two verbs, as indicated in the examples in (17).

- (17) a. *q'ǎe-a tcāà kg'oo-a sa ne (q'ǎe-a-tcāà 'cut')*
 cut-JUNC put meat-JUNC 3FEM.SG. 1SG.
 'I cut the meat.'
- b. *cóá ba ko piri ba xg'ám-a tc'ǎà (xg'ám-a-tc'ǎà 'drive')*
 boy 3MASC.SG PRST goat 3MASC.SG. beat- JUNC put
 'The boy is driving the goats into the kraal.'
- c. *qgòó-a kúbí sa ghùì (qgòó-a ghùì 'lift')* hold-JUNC
 cup 3FEM.SG lift 'She picks up the cup.'
- d. *dquì -a ne-m ncàà qáé-a xg'ae (qáé-a xg'ae 'bind')*
 ropes-JUNC 1SG-PGN adv tie-JUNC add
 'I am binding the ropes together.'
- e. **qgòó kúbí sa ghùì (*qgòó-ghùì 'lift')*
 hold cup 3FEM.SG lift 'She picks up the cup.'

In Naro, it seems that in all cases it is possible to add the juncture morpheme '-a' to verbs. On the other hand, nouns that are followed by the first person pronoun always make use of the juncture morpheme '-a', as indicated in examples (17a and 17d). Example (17e) shows that the juncture morpheme is obligatory in a serial verbal construction, and that if it is left out the construction becomes ungrammatical.

Conclusion

One of the conclusions that can be drawn about the juncture morpheme is that it plays many functions that have a bearing on the verb. The juncture morpheme acts as a connection between the verbal base form and the verbal extensions in simply derived verbs and between the extensions in multiply derived verbs. Up to now it is not totally clear when the juncture morpheme appears and when it does not. The informants have told me that it can often be left out, but on other occasions they insist that it must be present. For example, '*kgòó -a ne*' can mean 'their meat'. If so, the juncture morpheme '-a' must be present; but if it means 'the meat' it may or may not be present. In multiple derived verbs, the juncture morpheme occurs before the dative or the terminative. In other words, the dative marker is connected to the element before it by the juncture morpheme.

One other conclusion that can be drawn about the juncture morpheme is that, where two verbs are combined indicating two or more actions that are seen as one, the juncture morpheme is not used. But it is used where two verbs indicate a sequence of two actions, as in: *qgòó-a ghùì* 'hold and (then) lift'. Since this shows two actions, holding and then lifting, the juncture morpheme is obligatory. The data clearly indicate that all serial verbs make use of the juncture morpheme and that it usually attaches to the first verb, leaving it out gives ungrammatical structures. The conclusion that can be drawn from all these is that the juncture morpheme may indicate different relationships, depending on the types of verbs it is used in. It has also been observed that the nouns that are followed by pronouns make use of the juncture morpheme to connect to the following element.

A conclusion that can be drawn from all the observations made above is that when a verb is followed by a complement, a directional morpheme is used to conjoin the two. This morpheme indicates the direction from the verb to the grammatical element that is involved. It could be reflexiveness, dativeness, terminativeness, etc. The two (the verb and the grammatical element) cannot give meaning without the involvement of this element. This has given me more reason to believe that it is indeed a morpheme and not a phonological element since it has the role or function of indicating the direction from the verb to the grammatical element involved and of linking the verb to the element that follows in order for the two to be meaningful. On the other hand, this element cannot be a phonological place holder because when looking at the examples that are given, there is no phonological rule that is motivating its occurrence. For this element to be a phonological place holder it has to be motivated by a phonological rule, but in this case there is nothing phonological that is motivating it.

More research is needed to see how the juncture morpheme behaves in CVCV verbs and how it behaves when it is used together with other extensions, apart from those used in this article.

Naro Orthography

The representation of the common click sounds in the Naro orthography differs from the conventional IPA one in the following way:

Naro	IPA
c	
q	!
tc	‡
x	

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