Grammaticalization Paths of Auxiliary Verb Constructions in Two Lower Sepik-Ramu Languages: Iatmul & Yimas

Papua New Guinean languages are a barely taped source for studies of grammaticalization and diachronic shift. Using available data (Foley, 1986, 1991), this paper examines the complex predicate types that yield AVCs in two neighboring languages, Iatmul and Yimas. It is argued that in Iatmul AVCs develop from medial dependent verb constructions (MDVCs), whereas in Yimas the source of AVCs is a serial verb construction (SVC). Due to source constructions, Iatmul and Yimas develop AVC patterns of different types. Anderson (2006) classifies AVCs as Aux-Headed, Lex-Headed, Doubled, Split and Split-Doubled constructions where the head is determined by morphological grammatical marking. Additionally, AVC constructions differ in the order of AUX and V, degree of AUX and V fusion and phonological reduction. In Iatmul (Ndu) the MDVCs result in an Aux-Headed, V Aux structure, familiar in Indo-European languages.

Below is an example of the grammaticalized form using the residential existence verb 'stay.'

1 klə-kə   **lɨ̱-**kə-wɨn
  get-DEP   **stay**-PRES-1SG
 'I am getting it' (Foley 1986:144 citing Staalsen 1972)

Additionally, is an example of 'say,' grammaticalized to express the desiderative:
2 klə-vat   **wə**-ntɨ
  get-PURPOSE   **say-**3SG.M
 'He wanted to get' (Foley 1986:157 citing Staalsen 1972)

In contrast, SVCs are the source for AVCs in Yimas (Pondo). Because of its particular morphological complexity, AVCs in Yimas have grammaticalized in a variety

of forms and the presence of the variety of patterns is unusual in the typology of AVCs.

Below is a SVC in which *tal* 'hold' is used lexically:

3 pu-ŋkl-cra-awl-**tal-kaprapi**-k
  3PL.O-3PC.A-about-get-**hold-gather**-IRR
  'Those few grabbed them while collecting them' (Foley 1991:323)

In (4) *tal* has grammaticalized to a causative auxiliary in this Aux-V, split pattern (S/O

vs. TAM). Additionally, it is a *de facto* fused AVC structure.

4 na-ka-**tal**-kwalcac-t
  3SG.O-1SG.A-**hold**-rise-PERF
  'I woke him up' (Foley 1991:333)

In (5), *tɨmi* 'say' has grammaticalized into a causative auxiliary, but here the AVC, while

still Aux-V, is Aux-Headed with all the morphological marking on the auxiliary.

5 na-ka-**tɨmi**-wapal
  3SG.U-1SG.A-**say**-climb
  'I caused him to climb up' (Foley 1986:153)

Finally, in (6) is another example of a S/O v. TAM split, but the AVC is V-Aux where

tay 'see' has grammaticalized as conative modality:

6 na-mpɨ-kwalca-**tay**-ntut
  3SG.U-3DL.A-arise-**see**-RM.PST
  'they both tried to wake him up' (Foley 1986:152)

This paper presents AVCs of the patterns above as well as others and projects

future potential paths of grammaticalization as well as a typology of the synchronic

systems and diachronic developments of complex predicates in these two Lower Sepik-

Ramu languages.