The extension of structure to discourse: Chitimacha participles in discourse and diachrony

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Discourse Structure (Halliday & Hasan 1976)

- **cohesion** – relations of meaning between two points in a text, where the interpretation of one element depends on another
  - Cohesion distinguishes a text from a random collection of utterances
  - e.g. anaphor, repetition, pitch reset, transitional prosodic contours

- **tie** – a single instance of a cohesive pair

- Structure is always cohesion-forming
Cohesion & Information Flow

• Speakers continually need to indicate when they are transitioning from one discourse topic to the next

• Transition points signal that everything which comes before can be treated as a cohesive unit

• Speakers continually background old information, against which new, foregrounded information is set (Chafe 1994)
How does discourse structure arise?

• Any diachronic process that creates dependencies between segments of discourse

• Ergative (intra-clausal syntax) (Gildea 1992)

• Extension of clausal dependency markers (insubordination) (Mithun 2008)

• Relativization (with prosodic integration) (Givón 2012)

• Verb serialization (Nguyen 2013)
Extension of structure to discourse in Chitimacha

- Series of changes in scope and function for locative enclitic $=k$
  - locative > participle > discourse marker

- Interacted with the topic marker -š to structure clause chains

- When it escaped into discourse, it brought its structure with it, adding hierarchical structure to the discourse
Outline

1. About Chitimacha
2. About Chitimacha participles
3. Clausal level: Participles
4. Clausal level: Participles + Topic marking
5. Discourse level: Participles
6. Discourse level: Participles + Topic marking
7. Conclusion: Clause level structure → Discourse level structure
INDIAN TRIBES
OF THE
LOWER MISSISSIPPI
AND ADJACENT GULF COAST

LINGUISTIC FAMILIES
- CADDIAN
- SIOUAN
- MUSKHOREAN [HOPIE]
- ATAKAPA

NOTE:
The names of tribes whose linguistic position is not beyond question, are underlined.

By

JOHN R. SWANTON
1909
Locative $= k$, $= tk$, $= nk$ with nouns

We kap mahc n ey$= k$ tišt’uw-i.
the comet ground $= \text{LOC}$ fall.down-3sg
‘The comet fell to the ground.’

[Namu hi kuti]$= nk$ namki-ːk’ hi-ʔuy-i.
country DIST end $= \text{LOC}$ live-PTCP be-IPFV-3sg
‘He lived at the end of the country.’
Localative = $k$, = $tk$, = $nk$ with verbs

\[ \text{Wetk} \quad \text{we} \quad ?a\text{šinč’at’aš} \quad \text{hus} \quad [\text{hi-}?i] = nk \quad \text{kas} \quad \text{cuy-i.} \]

then the old man his be-3sg = LOC back go-3sg

‘The old man went back home.’

\[ \text{?unk’uš} \quad [\text{kap} \quad \text{tey-t’i-na}] = nk \quad \text{hup} \quad \text{hi} \quad \text{tey-pi-}?i. \]

one STAT arrive-FUT-3pl = LOC to DIST stand-CAUS-3sg

‘One he placed near the end.’
## Locative > Participle

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<tr>
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<th>Locative</th>
<th>Participle</th>
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<tr>
<td>N__</td>
<td>-tk</td>
<td>-t’k</td>
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<td>V__</td>
<td>-nk</td>
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<td>C__</td>
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Participle -k, -k’, -ːk’, -t’k

2,700 sentences (out of 3,490) contain some form of this participle
• Many different functions

[Kap     kamčin  ten-t’k]     šuš     hup     hi     tut-naʔa.
STAT   deer     become-PTCP   woods   to   DIST   go-3pl
‘Turning into deer they went into the woods.’

[ʔišk   kap     k’et-ki-ːk’]     ʔoːš     hup     hi     tiškint-ki-nan.
1sg    PUNC   kill-1sg.P-PTCP   buzzard   to   AND   throw-1sg.P-3pl
‘When they killed me, they threw me to the buzzards.’
Simultaneity, Causation, Purpose

Hus kaːcpank wok-mi-i k’ hus tep c’ismam ?uka-iš-i.
his stick feel-PLACT-PTCP his fire pieces count-PROG-3sg
‘Feeling with his stick, he counted his pieces of fire.’

Waʔaš kunuk’u ney kin pokti kin ?apš neht-k kap t’em-i.
other QUOT earth with sky with together trap-PTCP PUNC kill-3sg
‘The earth and sky struck together and killed the others.’

Hi t’ut-naʔa tep ?oːksne-pi k’iht-k.
DIST go-3pl fire steal-GER want-PTCP
‘They went to steal the fire.’ [Lit. ‘They went wanting to steal the fire.’]
Towards Discourse: Interclausal Structure

The old man crossed behind the youths, went to his rotten wood, prepared his rotten wood, then went and hid.

‘The old man crossed behind the youths, went to his rotten wood, prepared his rotten wood, then went and hid.’
Interactions with Topic Marking

- Participle + topic marker = more significant narrative break

Wetkš ni k’ast-k k’asmank ?am ?omak nopi-ːk’-š,
then INTR plant-PTCP corn everything make.crop-PTCP-TOP

weytenk’enkš t’utnaʔa hesik’en.
only.then they.went again

‘Then they planted, made a crop of corn and so forth, and after that went on again.’
Interactions with Topic Marking

• Topic marker is more likely to occur when there is a change in the action being performed, the participants involved, or the location where the event occurred.

• Suggests that the function of -š is, in part, to signal the conceptual relatedness or cohesion between prior and upcoming discourse.
Towards Discourse: Generic Tail-Head Linkage

• Some participles don’t share a participant with the main clause
  • absolute adverbials (Thompson, Longacre, & Hwang 2007:264)

• wey DEM + (-t ANA) + -k LOC > wetk ‘at that time; then’
  • Most frequent use of -k in the corpus
  • 1,008 of 3,490 sentences begin with wetk
  • Frequently co-occurs with the topic marker -š

• tuut- ‘finish’ + -k PTCP > tutk ‘that finished; then’

• Creates a cohesive tie to the prior unit of text
‘We got ready. Then we went. When we went, we took corn and seed and so forth and went. About a hundred of us went. Wherever our food ran out, we would plant and hunt something and when we had thus produced something to eat we went on. Sometimes when (one of) our people died we would go on after having buried him.’
Sometimes when (one of) our people died we would go on after having buried him.

‘Then we got to where the land and the sky beat together.’

‘But we had lost about half of our people when we got there.’

‘The minister told us, […]’
Towards Discourse: Interclausal Structure

*Wetk* we ʔašinč’at’aš *we haksik’aśank* nuk’us hi *nenšwi-ːk’,*
then the old man the youths behind DIST cross.water-PTCP

*hus šuš ʔuč’in* hup hi *ču-ːk’,*
his rotten wood to AND go-PTCP

*hus šuš ʔuč’in* kas *nučmi-ːk’,*
his rotten wood back work-PTCP

*wetk* ču-ːk’ *tusiʔi.*
then go-PTCP he.hid

‘The old man crossed behind the youths, went to his rotten wood, prepared his rotten wood, then went and hid.’
If you drink it for your head, you mix it with *kimigunatkin*, mix with black vine, then mix it with black wood, boil it in water, and drink it as you drink your water.
Extending Structure to Discourse

- At the clausal level, -k creates sequences of clauses
- At the discourse level, -k (on wetk) creates sequences of discourse topics

- At the clausal level, -š groups clause chains into cohesive units
- At the discourse level, -š groups discourse topics into cohesive units
Extending Structure to Discourse

Clausal level: $[[\text{clause PTCP}] [\text{clause PTCP}] \text{ TOP}]$

Discourse level: $[[\text{topic DM}] [\text{topic DM}] \text{ TOP}]$
Conclusion

• When morphological structure takes on discourse-level functions, it brings its structural relations with it, adding structure and cohesion to the discourse.

• Gradual diachronic change in the scope of morphology makes a clear distinction between grammar and discourse impossible.

• Discourse is well-structured in the same way as morphosyntax, and therefore should be considered part of grammar proper.
References


