

ku- Verb Phenomena in Kayapó

(ne and kute clauses)

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2009*

* This paper is essentially the same as the 1975 version made available as No. 125 of the Arquivo Linguístico (Summer Institute of Linguistics, Brasília, DF); only the page size and numbering have been changed, and a few minor typographical errors corrected.

ku- Verb Phenomena in Kayapó¹

"Ku- verbs"¹ are a class of transitive verbs characterized by the indefinite pronoun prefix ku- (and its second person form, a-) which acts as a morphemic object place-holder in the verb form which is unmarked by final consonant, or by overt object preceding the verb.

The morphotactic arrangements of the ku- verb are specified in figure 1.

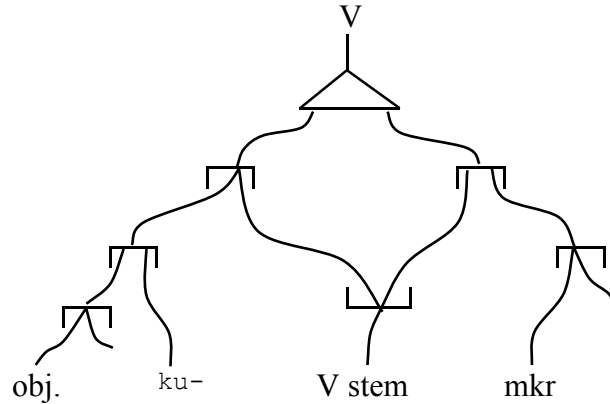


figure 1

Another tactic level is added to the description of the ku- verb when it is modified, giving three different syntactic patterns, as seen in the following examples.²

I. Unmodified

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Mimi ne <u>kukrẽ</u> . | 'Mimi eats/ate (it).' |
| | eat | |
| 2. | Mimi ne <u>bay</u> krẽ. | 'Mimi eats/ate corn.' |
| | corn | |

II. Modified by the Progressive, o nhy.

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3. | Mimi ne <u>krẽn</u> o nhy. | 'Mimi is eating.' |
| | eat | |
| 4. | Mimi ne bay <u>krẽn</u> o nhy. | 'Mimi is eating corn.' ³ |
| | eat | |

III. Modified by the Negative

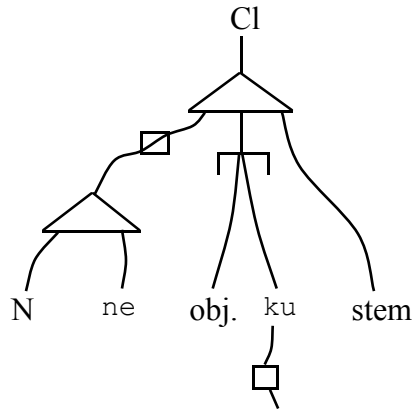
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|----|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 5. | Mimi kute krẽn ket. | 'Mimi doesn't/didn't eat (it).' |
| | 3p-s eat-mkr not | |
| 6. | Mimi kute bay krẽn ket. | 'Mimi doesn't/didn't eat corn.' |
| | corn eat-mkr not | |

Examples:

15. Kute kur. 'One eats (this)! / 'He eats.'
 3p-s eat+mkr.

15. Kute mar. 'He knows.'
 hear+mkr.

The tactic pattern of the simple, unmodified clause, using ne, is shown in figure 2.



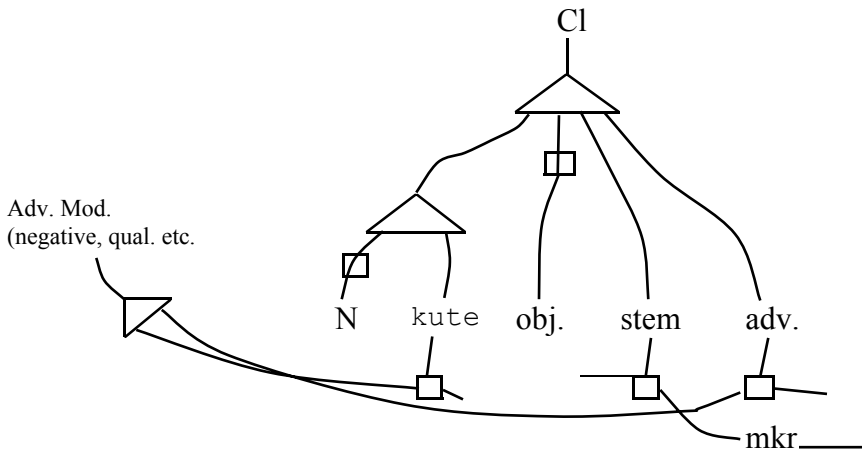
Mimi ne kukrē and

Mimi ne bay krē

are examples of sentences which follow the above tactic pattern.

Figure. 2

The tactic pattern of the adverbially modified clause, using kute, is shown in figure 3.



Mimi kute bay krēn ket is an example of the above tactic pattern.

Figure. 3

On the semantic level, the modifiers which require kute include the following:

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Negative
Kute krên ket. | (He) didn't eat (it).' |
| 2. | Purposive A.
Kute krên-mã | '(He) is going to eat (it).' |
| 3. | Purposive B.
Kute krên kajy. | '(He's) going to eat (it).'
'It is for him to eat.' |
| 4. | Imminent
Kute krên 'ÿr. | '(He's) just about to eat(it).' |
| 5. | Similarity
Kute krên pyrāk. | 'It's as if he were eating (it).' |

The only modifier, which always requires ne rather than kute clause is the Progressive. Action in process is specified by a form of the positional verbs "stand," "sit," "lie". Since there is no apparent lexotactic reason for two clause types in these cases we may conclude that the semotactics reflect a dichotomy in the thinking of the Kayapó between events actually taking place and seeming happenings, events which are presumed will happen, and events which simply did not occur.

The integrated patterns showing the lexotactics of the clause types, the morphotactics of the verbs, and the semotactics of the utterances discussed in this paper are shown in figure 4 (insert).

There is an interesting merge between lexotactics and semotactics seen in the following pairs of examples with clauses of kute plus the consonant marker on the verb contrasted with ne clauses.

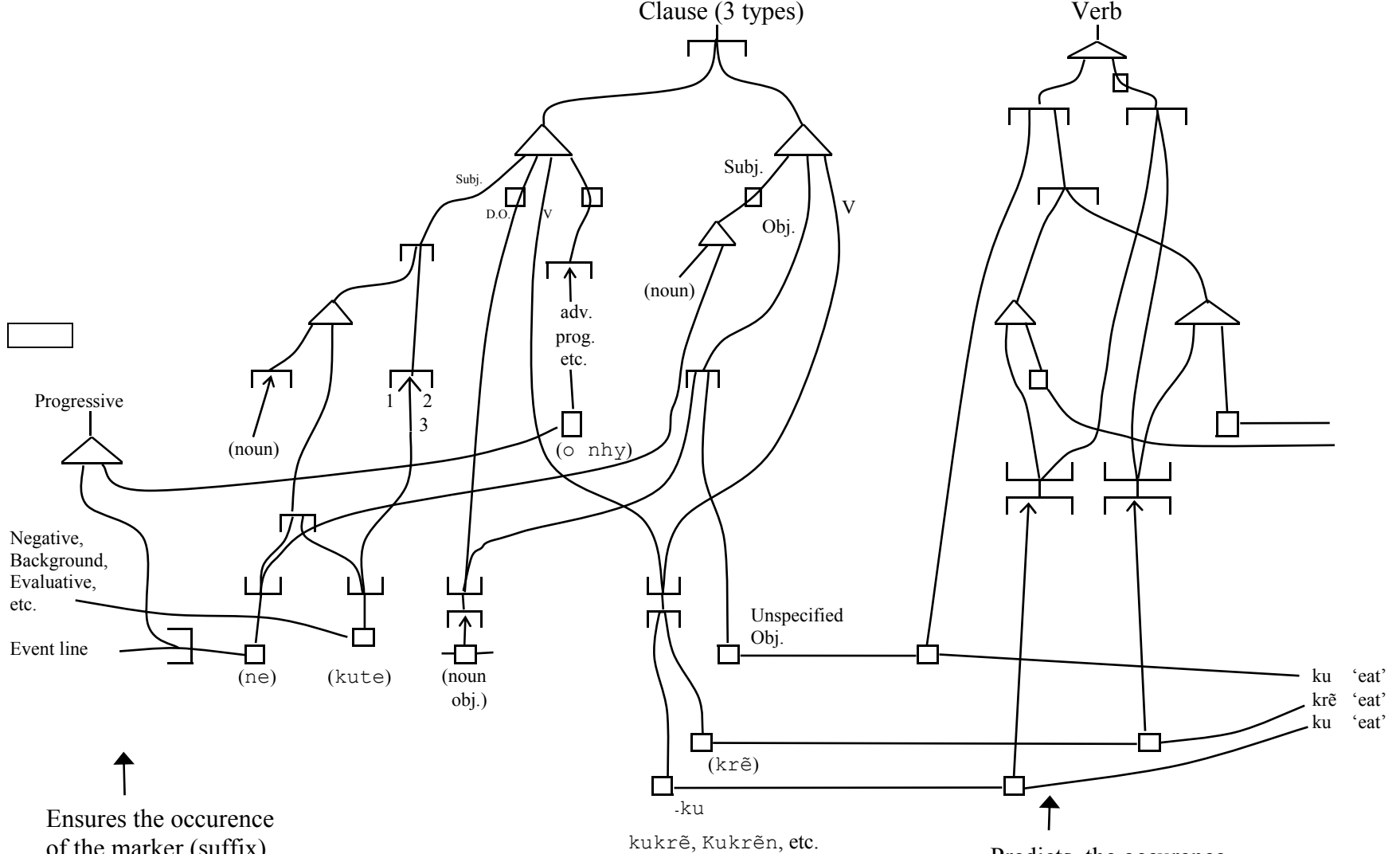
- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 16. | Kute mar.
kuma.
ma, | '(He) knows (it).' (from learning, hearing)
'(He) hears (it).'
"hear" |
| 17. | Kute omõnh.
omũ.
omũ/-pumũ/ omũnh-, | '(He) knows (it).' (from observation)
'Look.'
"See" |
| 18. | Mimi kute me kayr pumũnh.
the weave see/know
Mimi ne me kayr pumũ. | 'Mimi knows how to weave.'
'Mimi sees the weaving.' |

The verb "see" used in examples 17 and 18 is one of a set of transitive verbs, which in the phonotactics has a stem change from o to -pu following an object. The point here is not to compare verb sets, but to note the similarity in semantic change between the two clause types in each example.

Semotactics

Lexotactics
Clause (3 types)

Morphotactics
Verb



↑
Ensures the occurrence of the marker (suffix) and of the ne with the progressive.

Figure 4

↑
Predicts the occurrence and shape of the suffix marker.

Recent discourse studies⁴ indicate that there is probably a regular semantic difference such that in narratives, kute clauses do not express the flow of action, as do the ne clauses, but rather the evaluative parts, background, and collateral information. A further study of semantics and clause types should include the hortatory discourse type, which uses neither kute nor ne.

FOOTNOTES

1. This paper was written as a partial fulfillment of requirements for a Stratificational Theory class at the Linguistic Institute, University of South Florida.

The Kayapó language is spoken by approximately 2000 people in eight or ten small villages in the Amazon basin area of Central Brazil. Through the kindness of the National Indian Foundation of this country, I have been able to collect data for this paper during several visits to four of these villages during the last ten years.

2. The phonemic statement of Kayapó is to be found in the 4th issue of "Série Lingüística", S.I.L., Brasilia, D.F., Brazil.

3. Whichever positional verb is used for the progressive, that particular verb meaning is incidental. The following are examples of the singular forms.

Mimi ne krēn o nhy.	'Mimi is sitting there eating.'
Mimi ne krēn o ja.	'Mimi is standing there eating.'
Mimi ne krēn o nō.	'Mimi is lying there eating.'

4. "Kayapó Discourse" in IJAL, 1970 by Stout and Thomson has a few examples of this.