Tawala Parts of Speech

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The purpose of this paper is to briefly justify the
distinction between the three open-class parts of speech
in Tawala, an Austronesian language of Milne Bay. The
three parts of speech, nouns, verbs and adjectives, will be
compared on the basis of the model presentℲin the chart
(page 2). The chart is intended to represent a thumbnail
sketch of typical universal features of nouns, verbs and
adjectives. It is recognised that the distinguishing
features of these parts of speech differ from language to
language, and accordingly, that classes must be established
on the basis of a cluster of properties. The Tawala 'clusters'
have been underlined in the chart; they are discussed and
illustrated in the text below. This does not represent a
complete listing of the morpho-syntactic features supporting
the Tawala parts of speech but merely those features which
most commonly occur in the languages of the world. The
correlation between the various distinguishing features,
and in particular between the semantic and syntactic features,
is consistently demonstrated.

	.1 SEMANTIC CRITERIA	.2 SYNTACTIC CRITERIA	.3 MORPHO-SYNTACTIC CRITERIA
	Distinguishing Notional Content	Most Common Function	Typical Categories Marked
1. NOUNS	names of persons, places and things	NP or heads of NPs	case, number, class, gender definiteness
2. ADJECTIVES	Words denoting: human propensity, value, dimension, age, colour, speed, physical property	words which modify nouns	degree, agreement (with nouns)
3. VERBS	Words that express: actions and processes	VP	tense, aspect, mood voice and polarity, agreement (with subject, agent and object)

Chart.   Typical distinguishing features

Three nuclear structures will be used in the discussion of
the Tawala data:

(1) NP + V_i (intransitive)

(2) NP_1 * NP_2 + V_t (transitive)

(3) N + Adj (topic-comment and NP)

1.1 The Distinguishing Notional Content of Nouns

a. Persons only function as nouns. These include proper names
(Mika, Yailo), referent words (lawa 'person', bada 'big man')
and relationship terms (amau 'my father', natuta 'our child')

b. Places also only function as nouns. Included here are
proper names (Diwinai, Labe) and referent words (meyagai
'village', huhuna 'bay').

c. Things are signalled by referent terms (neula 'coconut',
motamota 'worms'). These terms typically function as
nouns but often are used as other parts of speech (though
this is statistically less common).

1.2 The Most Common Function of Nouns

Proper names, places and/relationship terms typically
function as NPs.

Mika   i   nae.   'Mika went.'
name   he go

Mika_ ama-u   i gale-ya 'Mika saw my father.'
name   father-my he see-him

Other nouns typically function as NPs or the heads of NPs.

<u>Lawa</u>   <u>baneina</u> <u>e</u> <u>ne-nei</u>.   'A big man is coming.'
person big   he prog-come

<u>Meyagai</u> <u>gehouna</u> <u>e</u> <u>me-mae</u>.   'There is another village.'
village another   it prog-remain

1.3 The Typical Categories Marked on Nouns

a. <u>Number</u>: relationship and human referent terms are pluralised

by reduplication.

<u>natunatuta</u>   'our children'

<u>babada</u>   'big men'

b. Possession <u>classes</u> are distinguished:

Alienable possession - <u>Bada</u>   <u>a</u>   <u>wam</u>. 'It is the man's canoe'
                       big man his boat

Inalienable possession - <u>Bada</u>   <u>natu-na</u>. 'It is the man's child.'
                         big man child-his

c. <u>Definiteness</u>: persons, places and things are introduced into

discourse with a qualifying <u>gehouna</u> 'one, another' and there-

after referred to by a suffix -<u>na</u> 'that one'.

2.1 The Distinguishing Notional Content of Adjectives

The Tawala open-class of adjectives includes all the

universal semantic types with the exception of 'human propensity'

adjectives which are handled at the verb level.

Most adjectives form opposition sets:

<u>dewadewana</u>	'good'	<u>apapoena</u>	'bad'
<u>baneina</u>	'big'	<u>habuluna</u>	'small'
<u>odubona</u>	'old'	<u>wouna</u>	'new'
<u>bambamna</u>	'slow'	<u>sagesagena</u>	'fast'

Colour and some physical property adjectives form complementary sets:‐

> { wakewakekena 'white', waididibalena 'black',
> kayakayana 'red' etc.

> { gugouna 'sweet', waigolana 'bitter',
> tululuwana 'sour' etc.

2.2 The Most Common Function of Adjectives

Adjectives are typically used following a noun (sentence type (3)) to form a topic-comment clause which can also be used as a NP in nuclear sentence types (1) and (2). Sentence type (3) can usually be transformed into stative sentences.

(3) Gahu potopotona.　　　　　　'It was/is a thick haze.'
　　 haze thick

(1) Gahu potopotona e ne-nei.　'A thick haze is coming.'
　　 haze thick　　　 it prog-come

(2) Ama-u　　gahu potopotona i gale-ya. 'My father saw a
　　 father-my haze thick　　　 he see-it　　 thick haze.'

Topic-comment clauses can usually be transformed into stative clauses.

Gahu potopotona.　　　　　　Gahu i potopoto.
It is a thick haze.　　　　The haze is thick.

Tahaya bigabigana.　　　　 Tahaya i bigabiga.
It is a muddy path　　　　 The path is muddy.

2.3 The Typical Categories marked on Adjectives

Degree: There are various types of comparison. Although they commonly occur with stative clauses, they can occur

with topic-comment clauses or NPs.

> <u>Lawa</u> <u>apapoe</u> <u>dumana</u> <u>e</u> <u>ne-nei</u>.   'A really bad person
> person bad   very   he prog-come is coming.'

b. <u>Agreement</u>: adjectives agree with the noun they qualify in

number and person.

> <u>Tam</u> <u>lawa</u>   <u>dewadewa-m</u>.   'You are a great guy.'
> you person good-2ps

> <u>Lawa</u>   <u>dewadewa-hi</u>.   'They are good people.'
> person good-3pƿ

3.1 The Distinguishing Notional Content of Verbs

Action and processes are typically expressed by verbs

in Tawala.

> <u>nae</u>   'to go'
>
> <u>lupa</u>   'to jump'
>
> <u>lalana</u> 'to dry'
>
> <u>lata</u>   'to grow'

3.2 The Most Common Function of Verbs

Verbs typically act as VP in transitive and intransitive

nuclear structures.

> <u>Lawa</u> <u>hi</u> <u>nae</u>.   'The people went.'
> person they go

> <u>Luilui</u> <u>amaka</u> <u>i</u> <u>lalana</u>. 'The shirt is already dry.'
> shirt   already it dry

3.3 The Typical Categories Marked with Verbs

a. Tense

Past: Kiu hi memae u pitapita.   'The birds were staying in the bush.'

Present: Kiu he memae u pitapita.   'The birds are remaining in the bush.'

b. Aspect

Completed: Kedewa (amaka) i nae.   'The dog has (already) gone.'

Progressive: Kedewa i nenae.   'The dog was going.'

Intentive: Kedewa apo i nanae.   'The dog will go.'

c. Agreement is marked for person and number both in subject and object.

A gale-hi.   'I saw them.'

Hi gale-u.   'They saw me.'

4 Extending parts of speech to problematic cases.

Thus far we have only dealt with the prototypical parts of speech, and time does not permit us to go deeply into the more problematical sub-classes, however a few generalisations are in order.

a. The whole class of a part of speech has been established on the basis of a characteristic sub-set   of the whole class. Having defined the subset most characteristic of the class, we are then able to define the entire class as the class which includes the defined subset and all other words which behave in the same way as the described subset.

b. Many Tawala roots readily function as more than one part
of speech. e.g.

(1) Root <u>dewa</u> 'custom' ⇒ <u>dewadewa</u> 'customary, good'

noun: <u>Dewa</u> <u>gehouna</u> <u>naka</u> <u>luhogala</u>. 'Another custom is love.'
      custom another that love

adjective: <u>Tauna</u> <u>lawa</u> <u>dewadewana</u>. 'He is a good man.'
           He   person good

stative verb: <u>Naka</u> <u>lawa-na</u>   i <u>dewadewa</u>. 'That man is good.'
              that person-that he good

transitive verb: <u>Tau</u> <u>numa</u> a <u>dewa-ya</u>. 'I made the house.'
                 I   house i made-it

(2) Root <u>bagibagi</u> 'work'

noun: <u>Hai</u> <u>bagibagi</u> i <u>kokoe</u>. 'their work is finished.'
        their work   it finish

adjective: <u>Meyagai</u> <u>bagibagi-na</u>. 'It is the village work.'
           village work-3ps

intrans. verb: <u>Ta</u>   <u>bagibagi</u>. 'Let us work!'
               we (inc) work

trans. verb: <u>Nima-hi-yei</u> hi <u>bagibagi-yeya</u>. 'They worked it
             hand-3pp-with they work-it   with their hands.'

It does not seem possible to consider (as Lyons does)
each use as a separate lexeme (p424). Rather there is a
need for a thorough examination of all word roots in order
to ascertain the potential performance and restrictions of
each one, and accordingly assign each to a particular sub-class.

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