Two pluractional constructions in Mi’kmaw

Arlene Stevens, Yvonne Denny, Barbara Sylliboy, and Dianne Friesen

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Barbara Sylliboy    Arlene Stevens
Curriculum builders at Ta’n L’nuey Etl-mawlukwatmumk

Yvonne Denny
Language mentor
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• Mi’kmaw has at least two plurational (cf. Newman 2012) constructions.

• This is in contrast to some other Algonquian languages where repeated actions are encoded by reduplication (Junker 1994, Dahlstrom 1997, Conathanan 2005).

• We ask, what are the syntactic and semantic differences between the two forms?
• Two pluractional constructions
• -o’-t-u multiple actions of the same type on multiple internal arguments
• -o’-t-m multiple different actions on one internal argument
• -o’ (little v) is pluractional aspect
• -u and -m (Voice) together with -o’ produce different types of pluractionals and illustrate a dependency between the two categories
• This dependency occurs despite an intervening animacy agreement morpheme
'I am putting wood into the fire.'

- **Little v**: aspect (-o’ pluractional)
- **AGRan**: animacy of the internal argument (-t inanimate internal argument)
- **Voice**: subject and object restrictions (-u non 3 prox subject, inanimate object)
- **AGRan+Voice**: work in combination; together they map semantic roles onto grammatical roles (-t-u active voice)
- **Inflection** (-Ø 1s)
Three categories

**Little v**: aspect

**AGRan**: animacy of the internal argument

**Voice**: subject and object restrictions

**AGRan+Voice**: work in combination; together they map semantic roles onto grammatical roles

```
ke’s-o’-t-u-Ø  kmu’j
put.in.fire-v-AGRan-Voice-1s wood(IN)
‘I am putting wood into the fire.’
```
Two pluractionals

-o’-t-u same type of action on multiple internal arguments

-o’-t-m many different actions on one internal argument

Little v-Voice combination influences type of pluractional in spite of intervening AGRan category

ke’s-o’-t-u-Ø  
put.in.fire-v-AGRan-Voice-1s wood(IN)
‘I am putting wood into the fire.’
Methodology

• Research on verbs done in the context of developing curriculum for Mi’kmaw immersion program and Friesen’s language learning
• We use the Indigenist research paradigm (Wilson 2007).
• We considered about 150 verb roots; eliciting different sentences using the same root.
• Entered 1200+ sentences in Excel. Used these as a base for discussions about the morphology and sentence structure.
• Investigated the functions of the morphemes in the verb.
**-o’-t-u** pluractional

Same type of action on plural internal arguments

The clauses only differ in that the root contains -o’ in (a) and -a’ in (b).

(a)  
\[kut-o’-t-u-Ø\]  
Pitewey  
Kaps-iktuk  
Pour-v-AGRan-Voice-1s  
Tea(IN)  
Mug-LOC  
‘I am pouring tea into the mugs.’

(b)  
\[kut-a’-t-u-Ø\]  
Pitewey  
Kaps-iktuk  
Pour-v-AGRan-Voice-1s  
Tea(IN)  
Mug-LOC  
‘I am pouring tea into the mug.’

- **kut-** ‘pour’ with -o’ expresses a pluractional event of pouring tea into many mugs (a)
- **kut-** with -a’ expresses the single action of pouring tea into one mug (b)
`kut-o’-t-u-Ø`  `pítewey`  `kaps-iktuk`  

pour-ν-AGRan-Voice-1s  tea (IN)  mug-LOC  

‘I am pouring tea into the mugs.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Little ν</th>
<th>AGRan</th>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Inflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><code>kut-</code></td>
<td><code>o’</code></td>
<td><code>t</code></td>
<td><code>-u</code></td>
<td><code>-Ø</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pour sth into sth</td>
<td>pluralactional</td>
<td>inanimate internal argument</td>
<td>non-3 prox subject, inanimate object</td>
<td>1s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

`AGRan + Voice` work in combination; together they map semantic roles onto grammatical roles.

- `-t-u` active voice
-o’-t-u pluractional

Same type of action on plural internal arguments

(a)  ke’s-o’-t-u-Ø   kmu’j
    put.in.fire-v-AGRan-Voice-1s  wood(IN)
    ‘I am putting wood into the fire.’  pluractional

(b)  ke’s-a’-t-u-Ø  kmu’j
    put.in.fire-v-AGRan-Voice-1s  wood(IN)
    ‘I am going to put a stick into the fire.’  single action

• The clauses are otherwise identical.
• Our corpus of over 150 verb roots in over 1200 clauses includes 20 roots of the same type.
### -o’ pluractional

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Localizer</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tep-o’-t-u-Ø</td>
<td>mijipjewey</td>
<td>n-utapaqn-k</td>
<td>load-ν-AGRan-Voice-1s food(IN)</td>
<td>1s-car-LOC</td>
<td>‘I am putting groceries into my car.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tew-o’-t-u-Ø</td>
<td>puksuk</td>
<td></td>
<td>out-ν-AGRan-Voice-1s firewood(IN)</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘I am taking out the firewood.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### -a’ single activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Localizer</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tep-a’-t-u-Ø</td>
<td>kutputi</td>
<td>n-utapaqn-k</td>
<td>load -ν-AGRan-Voice- 1s chair(IN)</td>
<td>1s-car-LOC</td>
<td>‘I am putting the chair into my car.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tew-a’-t-u-Ø</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>out -ν-AGRan-Voice- 1s chair(IN)</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘I am taking out the chair.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
-o’-t-m pluractional
Different actions on the same internal argument

(a) ank-o’-t-m-Ø wasuek
care-v-AGRo-Voice-1s flower(IN)
I am taking care of the flower.’

(b) nuj-o’-t-m-Ø amakkaltimk wlo’nuk
manage-v-AGRo-Voice-1s dance(IN) tonight
‘I am going to look after the dance tonight.’

- Two different roots are illustrated.
- The subject in (a) puts the flower in an appropriate place, repeatedly waters it, takes off dead leaves – the overall event of caring for the flower.
- Likewise, the subject in (b) is in charge of the MC, the band, the caterers, and is chaperone at the event to make sure everything runs well.
- Our corpus includes eight roots with the same character.
### Contrasting the two pluractionals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>-o’-t-u</strong> Same action on multiple internal arguments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wiaq-(o’-t-u)-Ø pe’kn powder, salawey, aqq sismoqn mix-v-AGRan-Voice-1s baking powder, salt, and sugar ‘I am mixing in baking powder, salt and sugar.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amal-(o’-t-u)-an-n kun’ta-l sam’qwan-iktuk various-v-AGRan-Voice-1s-p rock(IN)-p water-LOC ‘I am tossing rocks in the water for fun.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pesk-(o’-t-u)-an-n wapkwan-n pluck-v-AGRan-Voice-1s-p grey.hair(IN)-p ‘I am plucking grey hairs.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>-o’-t-m</strong> Multiple actions on the same internal argument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wel-(o’-t-m)-Ø wasuek good-v-AGRan-Voice-1s flower(IN) ‘I am taking good care of the flower.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwes-(o’-t-m)-Ø n-pitn favour-v-AGRan-Voice-1s 1sPOSS-hand(IN) ‘I am favouring your hand.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tek-(o’-t-m)-Ø alames participate-v-AGRan-Voice-1s mass(IN) ‘I participate at mass.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Summary**: Syntactic and semantic differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ν\Voice</th>
<th>-u</th>
<th>-m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-a’</td>
<td>*Single action on <em>one</em> internal argument</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-o’</td>
<td>*Same action on <em>multiple</em> internal arguments</td>
<td><em>Multiple different actions on <em>one</em> internal argument</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*\wel-a’-t-m-Ø wasuek*

Intended: ‘I did a good thing to the flower.’
Remaining questions

- What is the role of animacy?
- What is the role of the root?

\( ke's-o'-t-u-\emptyset \quad kmu'j \)
put.in.fire-v-AGRan-Voice-1s wood(IN)
‘I am putting wood into the fire.’
The role of the root (for further study)

• only one root in our corpus collocates with both -o’t-u and -o’t-m

\begin{align*}
{\text{tel-o’-t-u}} & \quad {\text{tel-o’-t-m}} \\
{\text{thus-v-AGRan-Voice-1s}} & \quad {\text{thus-v-AGRan-Voice-1s}} \\
{\text{‘I do thus…’}} & \quad {\text{‘I think thus…’}}
\end{align*}

What is the nature of the dependency between \( v \) and Voice?
- Together, they express the type of pluractional
- The ungrammaticality of \(-a’\) plus \(-m\) indicates another type of dependency

\[
\text{ke’s-o’-t-u-Ø} \quad \text{kmu’j}
\]
\[
\text{put.in.fire-v-AGRan-Voice-1s wood(IN)}
\]

‘I am putting wood into the fire.’
Wela’lioq
wel-a’-l-Ø-ioq
good-v-AGRan-Voice-2p>1s

‘You (p) are benefitting me (thank you).’

friesend@uvic.ca
References


• Inglis, Stephanie. (1986). The fundamentals of Micmac word formation. MA thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. Johns.


The Indigenist research paradigm (Wilson 2007:195)

- Respect for all forms of life as being related and interconnected.
- Conduct all actions and interactions in a spirit of kindness and honesty; compassion.
- The reason for doing the research must be one that brings benefits to the Indigenous community.
- The foundation of the research question must lie within the reality of the Indigenous experience.
- Any theories developed or proposed must be grounded in an Indigenous epistemology and supported by the Elders and the community that live out this particular epistemology.
- The methods used will be process-oriented, and the researcher will be recognized and cognizant of his or her role as one part of the group in process.
- It will be recognized that transformation within every living entity participating in the research will be one of the outcomes of every project.
- It will be recognized that the researcher must assume a certain responsibility for the transformations and outcomes of the research project(s) which he or she brings into a community.
- It is advisable that a researcher work as part of a team of Indigenous scholars/thinkers and with the guidance of Elder(s) or knowledge-keepers.
- It is recognized that the integrity of any Indigenous people or community could never be undermined by Indigenous research because such research is grounded in that integrity.
- It is recognized that the languages and cultures of Indigenous peoples are living processes and that research and the discovery of knowledge is an ongoing function for the thinkers and scholars of every Indigenous group.