'Give' constructions in Timor-Alor-Pantar: variation and diachronic change

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This paper describes the grammatical variation in the expression of 'give' constructions in a geographical sample of Papuan languages spoken on this islands of Timor, Alor and Pantar (TAP), in eastern Indonesia. By studying the synchronic variation we reconstruct (i) a single basic pattern from which the various 'give' constructions in the TAP family have developed, and (ii) three diachronic changes that occurred.

We discuss data from **Kam**ang in central Alor (Schapper field notes 2010), **Bla**gar as spoken in the straits between Alor and Pantar (Steinhauer, p.c.), **Tei**wa on west Pantar (Klamer 2010), **Mak**alero in eastern East Timor (Huber 2011) and **Bun**aq in central Timor (Schapper 2009), see Map below.

'Give' constructions involve an agent (A), a recipient (R) and displaced theme (T). Treating R like the patient (P), the TAP languages show 'secundative alignment' (Malchukov et. al. 2010: 3, Dryer 1986). Without exception, they index an animate R on the verb 'give' with a prefix. As TAP 'give' is typically a two-place predicate, the third participant T is introduced with its own verb: *me/met/mei* 'take'(1) & (2), *ma* 'come' (3), or the compound *met-ma* 'take-come' (4). Together with 'give', the verbs form a serial verb construction (SVC) to express a three-participant event. TAP languages are verb final. Thus, T and R, where explicit, precede the verbs which introduce them, (V1) and (V2) respectively.

(1)	A	T	V1	R-V2
Kam	*Maria*	*falak*	*me*	*ne-n*
	Maria	cloth	take	1SG.GEN-give

'Maria gives me a cloth' (Schapper, field notes)

(2)	A	T	V1	R-V2
Mak	*Ani*	*osan*	*mei*	*m-ei-ini*
	1SG	money	take	m-2SG-give

'I give you money' (Huber 2011: 425)

(3)	A	T	V1	R	R-V2
Tei	*Mama*	*te*	*ma*	*bif*	*g-an*
	mother(IND)	tea(IND)	come	child	3s-give

'Mum gives the child tea' (Klamer, field notes)

(4)	A	T		V1	R	R-V2
Bla	*Na*	*vet*	*nu*	*met-ma*	*n-oʔal*	*ʔ-enang*
	1SG	coconut	one	take-come	1SG-child	3SG-give

'I give a coconut to my child' (Steinhauer, p.c. 2010)

Bunaq in central Timor shows exceptional behaviour in three respects. Firstly, the Bunaq 'give' construction does not involve a SVC but is expressed as a single ditransitive verb; secondly, the T is postverbal rather than preverbal, and thirdly, the R index on 'give' marks an animacy distinction (5), (6).

(5)   *Nei*   *Markus*   *g-ege*   *tumel*
Bun   1PL.EXCL   Markus   3.AN-give   money
       'We gave Markus money' (Schapper 2010: 127)

(6)   *Nei*   *gereja*   *h-ege*   *tumel*
Bun   1PL.EXCL   church(IND) 3.INAN-give   money
       'We gave the church money' (Schapper 2010: 127)

In the paper we present arguments to reconstruct the proto-TAP 'give' construction in (7):

(7)   NP$_A$ *take* NP$_T$ [NP$_R$] pro$_R$-*give*

Today, this construction is still robustly attested throughout Alor. We discuss the diachronic changes that gave rise to the innovative constructions attested in Pantar and Timor:
(i)   In Teiwa, the handling verb 'take' that introduces T was replaced by the deictic verb *come*. We show how this may have happened.
(ii)   The Makalero verb 'give' has a grammaticalised verb 'take' as initial consonant *m-* , followed by a pronominal index of R, see (2). We present an account of this reanalysis on the basis of Huber (2011: 422-428), and discuss the alternative encoding that developed subsequently, see (8).

(8)   A   R-V1   T   V2
Mak   *Mu'ani=ni*   *ei-asu*   *faru* *meini*
       who.SUBJ=CONTRASTIVE   2SG-be.for shirt give.to.you
       'Who gave this shirt to you?' (Huber 2011: 426)

(iii)   The exceptional word order and ditransitivity of the Bunaq 'give' verb are contact-induced. We show how the Bunaq construction represents a mediation between the TAP pattern and the Austronesian pattern of its neighbours.
This comparative study of the TAP languages thus provides us with information on the varieties of ways in which languages that lack ditransitive verbs express 'give' constructions; the original pattern from which their constructions developed; and the diachronic changes that led to the synchronic variation attested today. (~475 words)

References

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Map: The languages of the Timor-Alor-Pantar family (from Schapper 2010:21)