Transitivity in Fijian: All arguments are severed from the root

Summary. Much recent work on argument structure examines the question of whether internal arguments, like subjects and indirect objects, should be severed from the root (e.g. Borer 2005; Londahl 2012; Merchant 2018), and introduced instead by a dedicated functional head. This talk investigates transitivity in Fijian, which is known for its rich inventory of transitive suffixes (e.g. Arms 1974; Foley 1976; Dixon 1988; Schütz 2014). Many Fijian verbs can combine with a range of transitive suffixes, marking different types of objects, as in (1a–c).

(1)   a.   au   a   qalo-**va**   na   yanuyanu.
          1SG PST swim-TR.N ART.N island
          'I swam to the island.'
      b.   ko   Eroni e   a   qalo-**vaka**   na   koli.
          ART.PR Eroni 3SG PST swim-TR.LONG.N ART.N dog
          'Eroni swam with the dog.'
      c.   iko qalo-**taka**   na   cava?
          2SG swim-REAS.N ART.N what
          'Why did you swim?'

We demonstrate that some of these suffixes involve a high applicative structure, like (1c), in the sense of Pylkkänen (2008), but argue that the suffix in (1b) instantiates a functional head responsible for introducing thematic objects, which we take to be *v*. In this way, Fijian provides direct evidence for the idea that all arguments are severed from the root.

Short transitive suffixes in Fijian. Fijian transitive verbs are usually formed by combining the verb root with what is called the *short suffix*, a monosyllabic suffix of the form *-Ca/Ci*, such as *-va* in (1a). (The consonant is idiosyncratic, determined by the root. The final vowel marks a type of object agreement, see Aranovich 2013, Van Urk 2019.) We analyze the short suffix as a realization of a Voice head that hosts object agreement, since it appears whenever a root has two DP arguments and does not track thematic structure. Short suffixes are omitted in noun incorporation (2a). In addition, the short suffix appears when a causer is added to an intransitive root (2b).

(2)   a.   au   a   gunu-yaqona.
          1SG PST drink-kava
          'I drank kava.'
      b.   e   a   vaa-gunu-**vi**   au   na   marama.
          3SG PST CAUS-drink-TR.PR 1SG ART.N woman
          'The woman made me drink.'

Long transitive suffixes: Reason -*taka*. Many Fijian verbs also combine with a *long suffix*, a disyllabic suffix of the form *-Caka/Caki*. We show that the long suffix, unlike the short suffix, is always the realization of an argument-introducing functional head. The first example is the long suffix *-taka*, which combines with most intransitive verb roots to introduce a reason DP (3a–b).

(3)   a.   iko a   gunu-**taka**   na   leqa.
          2SG PST drink-REAS.N ART.N problem
          'You drink because of a death.'
      b.   na   cava iko a   sa-kure-**taka**?
          ART.N what PST 2SG SPONT-shake-REAS.N
          'Why were you shaking?'

We analyze this suffix as a high Appl head in the sense of Pylkkänen (2008), as in (4).

(4)   [$_{\text{VoiceP}}$ [$_{\text{DP}}$ *iko*] Voice [$_{\text{ApplP}}$ [$_{\text{DP}}$ *na leqa*] Appl [$_{vP}$ *v* $\sqrt{\text{DRINK}}$]]]

However, reason *-taka* is syntactically restricted to intransitive verbs and always appears in place of the short suffix. We attribute this effect to a ban on multiple DP objects in Fijian. Fijian lacks double object ditransitives, for example, and only allows causers to be added to intransitives. Further evidence for a single-object restriction comes from the fact that reason *-taka* can be added to a verb with an incorporated object (5), surfacing after the bare object.

(5)   na   cava iko a   soko-wasa-**taka**?
       ART.N what 2SG PST sail-ocean-REAS.N
       'Why did you sail oceans?'

On the assumption that the short suffix hosts object agreement on Voice, the presence of a lower suffix that can realize object agreement as well will bleed its realization.

Long transitive suffix: Secondary objects. With a number of verbs, a long transitive suffix can also be used to express a secondary direct object (Foley 1976; Dixon 1988). With *viri* 'throw', the short suffix transitive has a goal object, but the long suffix introduces a theme (6a–b).

(6)   a.   au a   viri-**ka**   na   tagane.
            1SG PST throw-TR.LONG.N ART.N man
            'I threw at the man.'
       b.   au a   viri-**taka**   na   polo.
            1SG PST throw-TR.LONG.N ART.N ball
            'I threw the ball.'

With *qalo* 'swim', the short suffix marks a goal, and the long suffix accompaniment (1a–b).

This use of the long suffix is different from the reason applicative *-taka*. On the morphological side, the initial consonant of such long suffixes varies idiosyncratically, like the short suffix, with no systematic relation between the short and long suffix (e.g. *lua-ca* 'vomit on' vs. *lua-raka* 'vomit out'). In addition, the long suffix contributes different thematic roles depending on the root (at least theme, accompaniment, and instrument) and each use is found only with a handful of verbs. Finally, such secondary objects can undergo noun incorporation (7a–b), unlike reason objects.

(7)   a.   au a   viri-**taki**-polo.
            1SG PST throw-TR.LONG-ball
            'I threw balls.'
       b.   na   cava iko a   qalo-**vaki**-koli-**taka**?
            ART.N what 2SG PST swim-TR.LONG-dog-REAS.N
            'Why did you swim with dogs?'

These examples show that long suffixes for secondary objects are positioned *lower* than applicative *-taka* (5), inside the incorporated noun. In fact, reason *-taka* can be added (7b), allowing two long suffixes on one verb. Unlike the short suffix, the long suffix is *preserved* in noun incorporation.

Like reason *-taka*, we analyze such long suffixes as argument-introducing heads, but as instantiations of a head introducing "internal" arguments, which we identify as *v*, as in (8). (All long suffixes could also be analyzed as versions of one abstract argument-introducer, Wood and Marantz's (2015) *i**, attached at different heights.)

(8)   [$_{\text{VoiceP}}$ [$_{\text{DP}}$ *au*] Voice [$_{vP}$ [$_{\text{DP}}$ *na polo*] *v* $\sqrt{\text{THROW}}$]]

Since *v* is closer to the root, it is in the domain of idiosyncrasy, allowing its thematic role to vary by root. Finally, if the root moves to *v* before incorporation, the long suffix's position inside incorporated objects follows (8a–b). The facts of Fijian transitivity then provide evidence that at least some direct objects are introduced by functional heads also.

2