

Lesson 17 Handout

Week 11: 14 November 2023

1 Terminal Converb *-tala/tele/tolo*

The terminal converb *-tala/tele/tolo* (following vowel harmony) is used to express “until”. It is used to express that an action marked by the main verb continues *until* the end of the action of the converb.

- (1) *bucetele hūsun tucike*
He worked hard until he died — (*hūsun tucimbi* = to exert oneself)

By extension it is often translated as “to the point that” or “up to”, to denote that the action denoted by the main occurred to such an extent that the action denoted by the converb occurred as well.

- (2) *silhi meijetele gelehe*
They were afraid to the point that they lost their nerves — (*silhi meijembi* = to lose one’s nerves, lit. to shatter one’s gallbladder)

The form *otolo* — from *ombi*, is frequently used to refer to the passage of a certain amount of time.

- (3) *emu biya otolo, bi yali jeterakū*
Until one month had passed, I refrained from eating meat.

2 Instrumental Converb *-tai/tei/toi*

The instrumental converb *-tai/tei/toi* (following vowel harmony), is used to denote the point that an agent is willing to go perform the action denoted by the main verb. In this way, it is similar to the terminal converb, but typically denotes a *potential* extent, rather than an actual one.

- (4) *bucetei daharakū*
to resist to the death, lit. to not surrender *even* to the point of death.

This form is most commonly used with *bucetei*, denoting an agent’s willingness to do something to the point of them being willing to die. Because of the specificity of its use, it is rare to see it used in other words.

- (5) *ejen be weilerede, beyebe waliyatai ome mutere amban kai!*
When serving the emperor, (one) is an official who is able to go to the extent of sacrificing oneself. — (*waliyambi* = to throw, to sacrifice)

Sometimes, *-tai/tei/toi* will be used similarly to an adverb.

- (6) a. *cohombi* = to make a special selection (typically used when picking someone for a vacancy)

- b. *coohai urse be urebume tacibure baita cohotoi suwende akdahabi.*
 I have especially (lit. to the point that I would specially select this) entrusted this matter of drilling and teaching the soldiers to you

3 Prefatory Converb *-nggala/nggele/nggolo*

The prefatory converb *-nggala/nggele/nggolo* (following vowel harmony) is used to express that the action denoted by the converb has not been completed when the action denoted by the main verb occurs.

- (7) *booci tucinggele buda jefu!*
 eat a meal before you leave the house! — (*jefu* is the imperative form of *jembi*)

The form *onggolo* ‘before, previous’, is the prefatory form of *ombi*, and is used to denote an action that has come before the main action.

Other than the use of *onggolo*, the prefatory converb is exceedingly rare.

4 Apprehensive Converb *-rahū*

The apprehensive converb *-rahū* (no vowel harmony) denotes a sense of worry or fear that an action is going to happen. It is often translated as “I am afraid that”, or “I worry, lest”. Like the optative, the ‘worrier’ denoted by *-rahū* is always the speaker in matrix clauses, and the subject of an attitude verb in embedded clauses.

While this form is called a converb, it can be used as the main verb, suggesting it is actually a finite form.

- (8) a. *banuhūn heolen ojarahū.*
 I am afraid lest [he] should become lazy and negligent. — (*banuhūn* = lazy, *heolen* = negligent)
- b. *tana ame eme nimerahū seme jobombi.*
 Tana worries that her mother and father might become ill. — (*nimembi* = to be ill, to fall ill; *jobombi* = to worry; in this sentence, *-rahū* itself is not translated directly, but reflects that the embedded clause is a worry that Tana has).