Chapter 9

Bound markers

This chapter focuses on the syntactic distribution and the semantic-pragmatic function of various bound markers. Bound markers comprise (a) argument markers, (b) predicate markers and (c) discourse markers.

9.1. Overview of bound markers

Bound markers are all clitics (§3.2 for the distinction between clitics, words and affixes). As defined in §3.3, bound markers occur phrase- or clause-finally and encode various grammatical functions of the phrase or clause to which they syntactically attach. In what follows, all bound markers will be described in detail except for case markers, which have been collectively discussed in §4.3.

9.2. Conjunction markers

A conjunction marker typically marks coordination of a clause headed by a finite predicate without a dependency or embedding relationship to a matrix clause (§11.2). There are three conjunction markers: temporal =*kja(a)* 'when', 'But' conjunction =*suga*, and 'So' conjunction =*(ss)iba*.

9.2.1. Temporal =*kja(a)*
The conjunction marker =*kja(a)* is a temporal conjunction 'when' or 'while'. The bracketed phoneme is optional, though =*kja* is preferred when another clitic follows.

(9–1) *uja=nu*   *sïn-Ø=kjaa=du*   *ffa-mmi=nu*
        parent=NOM   die-NPST=when=FOC   child-DIM=FOC
        av-Ø.
        make.quarrel-NPST
        'When a parent dies, the children quarrel.'

(9–2) *tida=nu*   *agar-Ø=kja=du*
        sun=NOM   rise-NPST=when=FOC
        fïm-i-i   *ik-i+u-tar.*   *miz=zu=baa.*

      get-THM-NRT   go-THM+PROG-PST   water=ACC=TOP
      'When the sun rose (I) would go and get, (I mean) water.'

(9–3)   *ba=ga*   *munu=u*   *fa-i+ur-Ø=kjaa*
         1SG=NOM   thing=ACC   eat-THM+PROG-NPST=when
         maccja=nkai   *ik-i-i*   *kuu-Ø.*
         shop=ALL   go-THM-NRT   come-IMP
         'While I am eating, go to the shop and come back.'

In texts I found several examples in which =*kja(a)* apparently expressed 'until' rather than 'when' or 'while', as shown in (9–4).

(9–4)   *patarak-ai-r=kjaa,*   *sjuumun=nu*   *kacï+kai-Ø*
         work-POT-NPST=until   invoice=ACC   write+change-NRT
         ntsi-i   *par-i=tii*   *asï-tarjaa...*
         put-NRT   leave-IMP =QT   say-PST.CND
         'Until (I) am able to work, refresh (the due date of) the invoice
         and put it and come again, said (the man), then...'

However, a later elicitation revealed that this is a shortened version of =*kja=gami*, as in (9–5) below, where =*gami* (limitative case) expresses 'until'.

(9–5)   *kai=n*   *idjav=kja=gami=a,*   *munužž-a-da*
         3SG=DAT   meet=when=until=TOP   speak-THM-NEG.NRT
         ur-i.
         PROG-IMP
         'Keep silent until (you) see him.'

This may suggest that =*kja(a)* was a formal noun, since the =*gami* here can be considered a case marker expressing its case relation 'until; as far as'. If so, then =*kja* has almost lost its status as a formal noun in that it cannot carry any other case, and it is even possible for =*gami* to be unexpressed, as in (9–5).

9.2.2. 'So' conjunction =*(ss)iba*

The conjunction marker =*(ss)iba* expresses the 'so; therefore' causal relation. The initial /ss/ is present when =*(ss)iba* attaches to a host that ends in a CV, as in the finite irrealis intentional form (9–6).

(9–6)   *uku+nam=mu*   *jar-ah-a-di=ssiba,*

big+wave=ACC   send-CAUS-THM-INT=so
ur-i-i   *kuu-Ø=juu!*
descend-THM-NRT   come-IMP=UPDT
'(I) will cause a big wave, so come down with the wave!'

The initial /ss/ is deleted when attaching to the past unmarked suffix *-tar*
(9–7).

(9–7)   *ubaa=ja*   *akjaada=mai   as-i+u-ta=iba,*
         old.woman=TOP   merchant=too   do-THM+PROG-PST=so
         uma+kuma   maar-i+u-tar.
         there+here   wander-THM+PROG-PST
         'The old woman was a merchant, so (she) visited here and there.'

In all other contexts only the first /s/ is deleted, i.e. we have the form *=siba*
(9–8). In very old speakers' speech, /s/ in *=siba* is subject to another
morphophonemic process in which it is assimilated to a preceding /n/ (see
(9–9) as opposed to (9–8)).

(9–8)   *ba=a*   *ss-a-n-Ø=siba=gami=du*
         1SG=TOP   know-THM-NEG-NPST=LMT=FOC
         ažž-i+ur-Ø.
         say-THM+PROG-NPST
         'I don't know, so I am asking.'

(9–9)   *uku+tagu   muc-ai-n-Ø=niba,*   *bakecï-gama=n*
         big+basin   carry-POT-NEG-NPST=so   bucket-DIM=DAT
         ir-i-i   *unu*   *kuba-gama*   *ka=tti.*
         put-THM-NRT   that   betel.palm-DIM   ONM=QT
         '(I) couldn't carry a big basin, so (I) put (water) in the betel palm,
         like this.'

9.2.3. 'But' conjunction *=suga*

The conjunction marker *=suga* expresses the adversative 'but' relation.
This clitic probably developed from *=su(u)* (formal noun 'man; thing') +
=ga (archaic conjunction 'but'?), but in the synchronic grammar of Irabu
=suga is a single morpheme that cannot be broken up. The initial /s/ is sub-
ject to the characteristic morphophonemic process of *=su(u)*: /s/ assimilates
to a preceding /r/ (§2.7.7.2), as illustrated in (9–12).

(9–10)   *dzin=nu*   *ar-Ø*   *ujaki+munu-mmi=gami=a*