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Lexical Aspect of Verb + *pinis*

Joyce Wood, SIL PNG
Malinda Ginmaule, SIL PNG

Malinda
Ginmaule



Joyce Wood

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Introduction

- Tok Pisin has verbs *Pinis*, *Pinisim*
- This study examines *pinis* as a verbal marker:
go pinis, *kam pinis*, *wokim pinis*, *lukim pinis*,
sanap pinis, *belhat pinis*
- This study does not examine the use of *pinis* in a
Sequence: V + *pinis*, *na* ...

Introduction

- Tok Pisin, Solomons Pijin, Bislama in Vanuatu
- Crowley (2004):

“In addition to functioning as an intransitive verb on its own, meaning ‘finish, end’, *finis* also functions as a verbal post-modifier expressing the idea that the action has been completed or that a state has come about.”

Note the two different meanings.

Terminology

Lexical Aspect (Aktionsart) or Predicate Classes

(Pavey 2010: 94-100)

- **State** (properties, locations, feelings)
be, exist, have, etc.
- **Activity** (actions, movement, doing)
go, swim, march, dance, etc.
- **Achievement** (change-of-state that happens in an instant)
pop, break, etc.
- **Accomplishment** (change-of-state over time)
become dry, recovered, etc.

Terminology

- Stative (state versus event)
- Durative (does it take time)
- Telic (does it have an endpoint)
- Aspectual Coercion
(when additional info/words cause a predicate to become a different lexical aspect)

Sequential *pinis*

We are Not studying this use of *pinis*, between sentences:

Jon i katim gras (pinis) na...
J. PRED cut grass CPL and
'Jon mowed the grass and...'

- 'After Jon mowed the grass, he rested in the shade of a tree.'
- *Katim pinis, em i malolo long as bilong diwai.*

Achievements + pinis

Ol i brukim pinis dispela bikpela wara
3PL PRED break CPL this big river

‘They have crossed the big river.’

Ol i brukim dispela bikpela wara pinis
3PL PRED break this big river CPL

‘They have crossed the big river.’

Completed Action

- not stative/static
- no duration
- yes endpoint

**Ol i no brukim pinis dispela bikpela wara*
3PL PRED NEG break CPL this big river

Not Attested: ‘They have not crossed the big river.’

Ol i no brukim dispela bikpela wara
3PL PRED NEG break this big river

‘They have not crossed the big river.’

Activity + pinis

Pater i kam pinis

father PRED come PERF

'The (Catholic) Father has arrived.'

'The (Catholic) Father is here.'

Kam

- Event (not state)
- Yes duration
- No endpoint

Tait wara (i) kam pinis

high water PRED come PERF

'The flood is here.'

Tait wara (i) pinis nau

high water PRED finish now

'The flood is over.'

Tait wara (i) go daun

high water PRED go down

'The flood went down.'

Kam + pinis

- Event (not state)
- Yes duration
- Yes Endpoint
(Aspectual Coercion to Accomplishment)

Activity + pinis

Mipela kam insait (pinis) lo dispela mupela yia.
1PL.EXCL come inside PERF PREP this new year

‘We have entered this new year.’

Mipela kamap pinis long mupela yia.
1PL.EXCL arrive PERF PREP new year

‘We have arrived to the new year.’

‘We have entered the new year.’

Activity + pinis

Yu wokabaut pinis!

2SG walk PERF

'You're walking now!'

'You're able to walk now!'

wokabaut

Event (not state)

Yes duration

No endpoint

*Aspectual Coercion to
Accomplishment:*

Event (not state)

Yes duration

Yes endpoint

Activity + pinis

Bebi i slip pinis.

baby PRED sleep CPL

‘The baby fell asleep.’

‘The baby has fallen asleep.’

‘The baby is (now) sleeping.’

slip

Event (not state)

Yes duration

No endpoint

*Aspectual Coercion to
Accomplishment*

Event (not state)

Yes duration

Yes endpoint

Accomplishments + pinis

klos i drai pinis
clothes PRED dry PERF

‘The clothes are dry (after drying in the sun).’

- Event (not state)
- Yes duration
- Yes endpoint

Ren na ol klos hangamap long lain i wet pinis!
Rain and PL clothes hang PREP line PRED wet PERF

‘It’s raining now and the (almost dry) clothes (which are hanging on the line) are more wet again!’

‘It rained so the (almost dry) clothes got (fully) wet!’

Accomplishments + pinis

Pisin i dai.

bird PRED die

‘The bird is dying.’

‘The bird died.’

Pisin i dai pinis

bird PRED die PERF

‘The bird died.’

‘The bird is dead.’

Dai

- Event (not state)
- Yes duration
- No endpoint

Dai + pinis

- Event (not state)
- Yes duration
- Yes endpoint

- “Non-culminating accomplishments” (Kroeger 2022: 391)

States + pinis

Aiyo, mi sik pinis!
exclamation 1SG sick PERF

‘Oh no, I’m sick too!’
‘Yikes, I’m really sick.’

Sik, Sotwin

- Yes state
- Yes duration
- No endpoint

Mi no wokabout long maunten, na mi sotwin pinis!
1SG not walk PREP mountain and 1SG short-wind PERF

‘I didn’t go uphill and yet I’m out of breath!’
‘I didn’t go up the mountain but I’m already out of breath!’

State + *pinis*

- Yes state
- Yes duration
- Endpoint:

*Change-of-state:
entering the result
state*

States + pinis

Neks mun bai mi stap long Japan.

Next month FUT 1SG be PREP Japan

‘Next month I’ll be in Japan.’

Neks mun bai mi stap pinis long Japan.

Next month FUT 1SG be PERF PREP Japan

‘Next month I’ll already be in Japan.’

Yes state
Yes duration
No endpoint

Summary & Conclusions

- If you understand Tok Pisin, have you considered how to express the meanings of Verb + *pinis* in English?
- When verbal marker *pinis* is added to Achievement predicates and Accomplishment predicates, it can be glossed as ‘completive’.
- When verbal marker *pinis* is added to Activity predicates, it coerces the predicate to become an **Accomplishment**.
- When verbal marker *pinis* is added to descriptive/property State predicates, it can mean “become V,” “entering the State.”
- When verbal marker *pinis* is added to existence/locative State predicates, it can be translated into English with the modifier *already*.

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