Mojave k and m: It Ain't Necessarily So

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The use of the Yuman switch-reference suffixes -k and -m and the homophonous tense/aspect suffixes (which I have argued (Munro 1976a,b) to be historically related) in the languages of the River branch of the family is quite confusing. In Yuma, although most verbs take the suffix -k, there is a small number of verbs (just 21) which are always used with -m (Halpern 1947). In Maricopa, nearly half the verbs in the language are "-m verbs", as Gordon (1980) calls them, which are suffixed with -m in all the contexts when normal "-k verbs" take -k -- both in same-subject switch-reference contexts and for neutral tense/aspect marking. In Mojave, the situation has appeared messier -- according to my description (1976a), the tense suffixes -k and -m are in virtual free variation, although some verbs prefer one marker or the other. (1) Recently, however, I had the opportunity to test the degree to which some of Gordon's claims concerning the behavior of Maricopa -k and -m verbs were operative in Mojave, with startling results. In this note, then, I present a preliminary description of my current view of these Mojave suffixes, which now seem to me to be more complicated, and yet more regular, than I had previously perceived them.

I do not believe that I could easily have reached the conclusions I am about to describe without having Gordon's description of the simpler (I believe) Maricopa facts before me. Another factor which blinded me to certain incongruities in the Mojave data I collected during my dissertation research was my assumption (shared by numerous earlier researchers) that the suffix -k on (indirect? -- cf. Langdon 1981) quotation complements of the verb 'say' was an (aberrant) instance of the same-subject switch-reference marker. The occurrence of this -k, which Gordon (1980) has insightfully shown to differ in systematic ways from the same-subject marker, and that of other k-initial suffixes, on what appear to be Mojave "-m verbs" had convinced me that the occasional (!) failure of switch-reference observable with such verbs was just an arbitrary fact which might be explained later within some larger (possibly discourse-oriented) study.

Two other problems with my own description have helped to muddle the facts. First, since Mojave complements may frequently be postposed, I was able to analyze many defective instances of -m marking as main clauses. Consider the following sentence pattern: VERB-m VERB-k, where the two verbs have the same subject. I have assumed up till now that such sentences had the main clause (marked with "variant" -m) first, and the dependent same-subject clause second -- an analysis which avoids the problem of switch-reference failure. (Such an analysis was not available to Gordon, for Maricopa allows postposition of only a very restricted group of switch-reference-marked clauses.) Secondly, I did not pay sufficient attention to the difference between the plain suffix -k and the "augmented" suffix -ka or -ks (also -k'e).

For my brief investigation of the use of these suffixes, I checked the behavior of Mojave cognates to 21 Maricopa -m verbs and 8 Maricopa
-k verbs, using primarily those exemplified in Gordon (1980: 97), with my principal Mojave teacher Nellie Brown, with whom I intend to pursue this research further as soon as possible.

Now for the facts. My original claim that any Mojave verb may take either a -k or an -m suffix is substantiated, but in a rather surprising way. It seems that Mojave, unlike Yuma and Maricopa, has at least three groups of verbs, according to their behavior with the suffixes under discussion. Also, it appears that we must distinguish very carefully between Mojave plain -k and augmented -ka/-ke/-k'e. It also seems that there may very well be at least two different -m suffixes in Mojave.

I checked each verb in "neutral" form, learning that all the cognates to Maricopa -m verbs took -m in this form in Mojave, but finding that Mrs. Brown first cited a number of the Mojave cognates of Maricopa -k verbs with -m as well (it is just this kind of occurrence which proved so discouraging to my attempts to "explain" the use of Mojave -k and -m in the past!). After recording the one or more "neutral" forms Mrs. Brown volunteered, I asked for her judgment on variants using the other tense suffixes. In addition, I checked each verb in one or more same-subject contexts, and I checked for progressive versions of active verbs. On the basis of the data collected, the verbs considered fall into three distinct groups:

(A) Non-adjectival -m verbs (idu 'be', a'wii 'do', i'ii 'say', upaa 'lie down', upam 'fall/be tired', isma 'sleep', iv'aw 'stand', suupaw 'know', chaqaw 'eat raw fruits', ama 'eat', ithii 'drink', a-ay 'give', akya 'shoot', kuvwaw 'lift', and tapuy 'kill' — each of these corresponds to a Maricopa -m verb). These verbs, like the Maricopa -m verbs, take -m (never -k), as their neutral tense/aspect marker, and are suffixed with -m in same-subject switch-reference contexts:

(1) iv'aw-m isvar-m 'He stood up and sang'
(2) suupaw-m suupaw-ke 'He knows that he knows'
(3) chaqaw-m vi-iva-ke 'He's eating an apple'
(4) nya-tapuy-m apar-m 'When he killed it, he yelled'

As in Maricopa, same-subject may be indicated for such verbs when certain non-final suffixes intervene between the -m verb and the same-subject marker:

(5) 'inyep ny-aay-p-k iyem-ch 'He gave it to me and left'

Just as in Maricopa, quotation complements of 'say' and related verbs like 'think' are generally followed by -k, even with verbs whose neutral marker is -m:

(6) ama-k e-p-t-ch 'He says he ate it'
(7) '-suupaw-k 'aly'ii-m 'I think I know it'
However, in contrast to the situation in Maricopa, verbs of this group may be followed by an "augmented" -k suffix, -ka, -ke, or -k'ë, as in (2) above, or

(8) iv'aw-k'é 'He stood up'

(9) 'a-myam-t-k -a'wii-ka 'I did it any old way'

(10) ny-aay-ke 'He gave it to me'

(Notice that such sentences have a definite past translation.) The same set of suffixes may also follow verbs of this group in same-subject switch-reference contexts, it appears (though this needs more checking):

(11) ithii-ke 'ich ama-nti-ke 'He drank and ate'

Also, the connective suffix -kt (to whose importance Judith Crawford has drawn my attention) may also follow such verbs:

(12) isma-kt Ipuy-p-t-ch 'He died in his sleep'

(13) iv'aw-kt inak-m 'He stood up and then sat down'

(B) Adjectival -m verbs ('aqwaath 'be yellow', 'oya'oy 'be spherical', valytay 'be big', 'ahay 'be wet', 'ahwat 'be red', and 'ath'ilîy 'be salty' -- all of which are cognate to Maricopa -m verbs). Like their Maricopa cognates and the Mojave verbs of the previous group, these verbs are normally suffixed with -m in neutral contexts:

(14) 'aqwaath-m 'It's yellow'

Like the verbs of Mojave group (A), these verbs may also take augmented -k suffixes:

(15) valytay-m / valytay-ke 'It's big'

Note that for these stative verbs there is no restriction to past reference for the augmented -k suffix.

However, the normal same-subject marker volunteered for such verbs is not -m but an unaugmented -k:

(16) 'aqwaath-k 'ahoot-taahan-m 'It's yellow and pretty'

(17) valytay-k humii-k ido-p-ch 'He's big and tall'

(18) 'ahay-k hapel-k iduu-ke 'It's wet and dirty'

(19) 'oya'oy-k ich'aw-k 'It's round and little'

(C) -k verbs (isay 'be fat', isvar 'sing', iima 'dance', inak 'sit', iuy 'die', iyuu 'see', ithoo 'eat meat', ichoo 'make', and iyem 'go', all of which are cognate to Maricopa -k verbs), regardless of
semantic type. As in Maricopa, these verbs take -k marking in all expected contexts. Their neutral tense marker is (or can be) -k, as in

(20) isay-k 'He is fat'

(21) isvar-k 'He sings'

-k is the only suffix I have recorded on these verbs in same-subject contexts:

(22) iima-k suupaw-m 'He knows he danced'

(23) isvar-k vi-iva-m 'He is singing'

Such verbs also occur with an augmented -k tense marker, as in

(24) iyem-ke 'He went'

As with the examples above, in the cases I have examined recently these augmented -k suffixes always have a past translation (for active verbs, at any rate).

This group of verbs also may occur with the -kt connective and -k complementizer suffixes exemplified above:

(25) isvar-kt inak-m 'He sang and then sat down'

(26) ichoo-k i-m 'He said he made it'

Like the verbs of the two previous groups, Mojave -k verbs may be followed by an -m "tense marker", too, as in the main clauses of sentences (1), (4), (13), and (25) above, all of whose verbs are in this group, and sentences like

(27) isay-m 'He is fat'

(28) ithoo-m 'He ate it'

(29) ichoo-m 'He made it'

It appears that these -m forms have much the same semantics as do the augmented -k forms exemplified above: for active verbs at least, they have a definite past-tense interpretation (actually, the interpretation seems similar to that of the complex Mojave aspectual suffix -p-ch -- cf. Munro 1976a).

Thus, the original description of Mojave verb marking I presented in 1974 is largely correct -- any Mojave verb can be suffixed with some sort of -k suffix or some sort of -m suffix when it is used in a main clause. However, straightening out what exactly these suffixes are and how they are used presents a clearer picture of how Mojave usage compares to that in the other River languages.

I believe that the semantic and distributional evidence presented
above is sufficient to justify our distinguishing the plain Mojave -k same-subject and tense/aspect suffixes (which I have claimed to be related, historically at least; cf. Munro (1975a-b)) from the various augmented suffixes.

It seems further that there are at least four -m suffixes which must be recognized: the normal different-subject switch-reference suffix -m of song and story, the neutral -m tense/aspect marker of groups (A) and (B) above (still more conservatively, we might call this two -m's, but I won't go that far at this point), the (same?) -m in switch-reference contexts for group (A), and the past/perfective -m exemplified in (27)-(29). It is clear that more investigation is needed before we can determine how much overlap there is between these different -m's, even synchronically. For instance, I am not sure whether it is possible to determine if the "past" -m of (27)-(29) may account for some of the -m's on -m verbs of either group, or not. It may be that for some speakers this perfective -m has a different phonetic realization than the other -m's mentioned, since both J. P. Harrington and Judith Crawford have recorded "past" suffixes of the shape -m in Mojave. The Maricopa evidence suggests strongly that the second and third -m's above are somehow "the same", and Gordon (1980) presents additional evidence suggesting that these two are treated like the normal different subject -m (the first of the four -m's above) in Maricopa -- for instance, certain Maricopa evidential suffixes lose their initial -k just in those contexts where they would underlyingly be preceded by either different-subject -m or the -m of an -m verb.

There remain two questions to be raised here. One concerns the origin of the augmented -k suffixes described above, and the second the meaning of these Mojave facts for the larger Yuman problem referred to in the first paragraph.

Since the augmented -k's have been argued above to have a distribution distinct from that of the plain -k, we may wonder what their origin was. The occurrence of these suffixes on -m verbs, plus the occasional appearance of a ' in the augment, suggests the possibility that these suffixes might reflect the "complementizer" -k plus some form of the verb 'say', whose only consonant (in some forms) is a glottal stop (I think that a 'say' origin for the -e augment at least was suggested to me by Judith Crawford). The semantics and motivation for such a development are not completely clear to me, but this does seem like the most likely suggestion at present. (Note, though, that 'say' never has any vowel other than i in final position.) A way of testing the extent of the connection of augmented -k's with the plain same-subject -k would be to see if augmented -k's on dependent verbs (as in (11) above) could occur in different-subject contexts. I have not yet investigated this interesting question.

Yumanists have wondered for some time whether the Maricopa -k/-m distribution described by Gordon (1980) was innovative or archaic. Yuma, with a somewhat more restricted case of what seemed to be the same thing, could represent (on the one hand) an extensive levelling of distinctions preserved in Maricopa, or (on the other) an incomplete development along Maricopa's innovative lines. The problem, of course,
is that nowhere other than in the River languages is there a comparable interruption of switch-reference or any kind of alternation between -k and -m as main-verb suffixes. The Mojave evidence described above may be of some help in unravelling the directionality of these developments.

At first glance, I find that the Mojave evidence suggests Maricopa to have innovated. If the Mojave situation is indeed as I describe it above, it seems most likely to me that the adjectival -m verbs of group (B) represent an incomplete stage of the evolution of active/transitive -m verbs like those in group (A) or like Maricopa -m verbs. One of the reasons the (B) verbs appear conservative is that -k appears on these verbs only in subordinate clauses, never in main ones: it is a truism of recent diachronic theory that subordinate clauses tend to be syntactically more conservative than main clauses. However, sentences like the following remain to be interpreted:

(30) 'oya'oy-m valytay-taahan-m 'It's round and real big'

This was the only such sentence (containing an apparent failure to mark same-subject switch-reference with a verb of group (B) -- note that the same verb allows same-subject marking in sentence (19) above) in my recently gathered data. In earlier days I would doubtless have allowed myself to believe that (30) contained two independent sentences, but this seems like too easy a cop-out now. It suggests to me that (if the "first glance" hypothesis above proves correct) the Mojave verbs of group (B) may be becoming more like the verbs of group (A) and that, perhaps, they may eventually, like the verbs of group (A), refuse to allow the marking of switch-reference at all. Obviously, a more extensive study is necessary to determine exactly what is going on.

Several other things need to be mentioned. First of all, it is not true that there is no trace of "funny -m's" outside of River, since the incompletive suffix on the Yavapai existential auxiliaries ju 'be', wi 'do', and i 'say' has exactly that shape (cf. Hardy 1979, Kendall 1976), and these three verbs are the most salient members of the River -m group. This seems like sufficient evidence to suggest a more remote origin for the obligatory -m on the existentials, at least. This in turn suggests the hypothesis that such a reconstructable -m marking on existentials (perhaps originally only in their "auxiliary" use) may have been extended to some other set of verbs. However, defining how that set of verbs was chosen will have to await a later explanation.

Footnotes

1. I am grateful to Lynn Gordon for helpful discussions of some of the background for this note.

2. Lynn Gordon has told me in strictest confidence that Maricopa -m verbs may sometimes be suffixed with -ka in texts. This matter deserves further investigation, doesn't it?
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Addendum


Occasional Papers On Linguistics

Proceedings of the 1980 Hokan Languages Workshop, Held at the University of California, Berkeley, June 30-July 2, 1980.

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PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
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Held at
University of California, Berkeley

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Copies of the 1980 HOKAN Languages Workshop proceedings are still available from the Department of Linguistics, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901. The volumes for the 1978 and 1979 workshops, which appeared in the UCIC series, University Center for International Studies, are now out of print, but copies may be obtained on microfiche or hard-mounted volumes from UCIC Viewlinguistics Services and Linguistics, Comi, for Applied Linguistics, 1329 F Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20004.

The 1981 HOKAN Languages Workshop will meet jointly with the 1981 Korean Languages Conference at Korean State University, Pusan, South Korea, June 28-July 3, 1981. The proceedings of the 1981 workshop will appear in occasional papers on linguistics in early 1982. For the first time, the program of the Korean Language Conference will be published in the same volume as the HOKAN papers. Copies may be ordered from the Department of Linguistics, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901.

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PREFAE

Unfortunately, everyone who presented a paper at the 1980 Hakan Languages Workshop was not able to prepare a final version for inclusion in this volume. All papers in this volume except two were presented in an earlier version at the 1980 workshop. The papers are arranged in the order they appeared on the program.

The paper by Birgitte Bendixen was presented at the 1979 Hakan Languages Workshop. The camera-ready manuscript for her article arrived at the editor’s office more than three months before the publication deadline. The editor is so used to having to call up contributors and begging them to get their manuscripts in that he totally forgot Dr. Bendixen’s paper was in his files and left it out of the 1979 volume. The editor humbly apologizes for this oversight. The second paper by Pamela Munro was discussed in part at the 1980 workshop, and the editor asked her to include it in this volume.

The participants of the 1980 Hakan Languages Workshop gratefully acknowledge all the work done by Leanne Hinton and several of her students, which made the workshop run so smoothly and enjoyably. We also wish to thank the College of Letters and Sciences at the University of California, Berkeley, for a grant to help defray the costs of holding the workshop.

Copies of the 1977, 1978, and 1979 workshop proceedings are still available from the Department of Linguistics, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901. The volumes for the 1975 and 1976 workshops, which appeared in the SIU-C series, University Museum Studies, are now out of print, but copies may be obtained in microfiche or hardbound volumes from ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, Center for Applied Linguistics, 3250 Prospect St., N.W., Washington, DC 20007.

The 1981 Hakan Languages Workshop will meet jointly with the Penutian Language Conference at Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California, June 29 to July 2, 1981. The proceedings of the 1981 workshop will appear in Occasional Papers On Linguistics in early 1982. For the first time, the papers of the Penutian Language Conference will be published in the same volume as the Hakan papers. Copies may be ordered from the Department of Linguistics, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901.

James E. Redden
Carbondale, June 1981
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