

The Semantics of the Verbal Complex, with Particular Reference to Saaroa (Taiwan)

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Saaroa, an Austronesian language spoken in Kaohsiung Prefecture, Taiwan, exhibits a multitude of prefixes which contribute varied semantics to the verbal complex. Interestingly, in Saaroa verbal complexes, it is often the PREFIX which encodes the generic action such as 'eat', 'say', 'sleep', 'make', and 'think', while the *main* portion of the verb encodes the *manner* of the action. However, although similar sorts of prefixes have been investigated in some extra-Formosan Austronesian languages (e.g., Capell 1943, Ezard 1976, Lichtenberk 1983) and some Formosan languages such as Tsou (Tsuchida 1989) and Siraya (Adelaar 2004), there has yet to be a study of them in Saaroa. In this paper, I first describe the structure and semantic composition of the verbal complex in Saaroa; then I locate Saaroa in a wider typological context after comparing its polymorphemic verbs to those in several other language families, including Indo-European, Hokan, and Algonquian.