Semantic factors governing the order of object and verb in Walman, a language of Papua New Guinea

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Family: Torricelli
Genus: Wapei-Palai (Subgenus: West Palai)

SVO is the most common order in the majority of Torricelli languages

SVO

1. To runon n-ete-n wuel lapo-n ...
then 3SG.MASC 3SG.MASC-see-3SG.MASC pig big-MASC
‘Then he saw a big pig ...’

2. Korue to runon n-a<y>ko wuem eni y-an roltu.
but then 3SG.M 3SG.M-eat<3PL> fish REL 3PL-be.at smoking.bed
‘But he ate the fish that was smoked.’

SOV

3. ... wuem y-an roltu n-a<y>ko mpor
... fish 3PL-be.at smoking.bed 3SG.M-eat<3PL> all
‘... and eating all the smoked fish.’ (Becker 39a)

OSV vs SOV

OSV

Clauses with impersonal uses of the 3PL pronoun ri are almost always OSV:

4. Chim ngan ri y-awaro-n nyien?
2PL father 3PL 3PL-be.parent.of-3SG.M where
‘Where was your father born?’

Clauses with inanimate subjects and animate objects are almost always OSV:

5. O runon ke nyi y-a<n>ko mpor.
and 3SG.M also fire 3PL-eat<3SG.M> all
‘And he was burnt up by it too.’ (Becker 9)
Many other instances of OSV are contrastive:

6. O amungko nyie olun ru w-e<{ø}chiki w-an
and bone leg other 3SG.F 3SG.F-stick<3SG.F> 3SG.F-be.at

Ulau pie.
Ulau bush

'And the other leg bone she set upright at Ulau bush.' (Becker 32)

SVO vs SOV

SVO  -oko- 'take'

7. To n-ekiel pie n-oko-ø pla ...
then 3SG.M-go.south bush 3SG.M-take-3SG.F mud, ...
‘Then he went to the bush and got some mud and ....’ (Becker 3)

SOV -oko- 'take'

8. N-anan teyir n-oko-ø akou
3SG.M-go.down palm(sp) 3SG.M-take-3SG.F finish
‘Then he came back and got teyir palms.’ (Becker 28)

SVO  -altawro ‘look for’

9. o ri slaoi nyue w-aro-n ngan
and 3PL mouse mother 3SG.F-and-3SG.M father

y-altawro-ø nka w-ru w-aro-n
3PL-look-3SG.F baby GEN-3SG.F 3SG.F-and-3SG.M

‘and the rat parents looked for their little baby’ (Becker 51)

Data in this paper comes from Becker (1971), a collection of Walman texts collected by Father August Becker, an Austrian priest who lived among the Walman from 1907 to 1934.

10. Verbs that allow OV word order, and the numbers of OV and VO order in old texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>VO</th>
<th>OV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-apu</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-awaro</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ao</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-apaoo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-erie ~ -rakur</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
-elie ‘carve a boat’ 3 5
-ayako ‘cause’ 1 2
-etiki ‘cook’ 3 3
-orue ‘cut down (a tree)’ 5 10
-olo ‘cut’ 12 7
-okorue ‘dig’ 2 1
-ako ‘eat’ 31 7
-arie ‘hit’ 2 2
-oto ‘hold, grab, get’ 6 2
-ayako ‘make’ 12 3
-apalo ‘pull out’ 3 6
-iki ~ -ako ‘put’ 4 5
-(u)lue ‘scratch’ 3 3
-ouwrue ‘split open’ 1 3
-oko ‘take, get’ 80 36
-otoplo ‘tie’ 2 3
-aralie ‘wrap’ 1 2
-apulu ‘leave behind, drop’ 0 5
-apura ‘spread out’ 0 2

Examples of SOV order
-apao ‘blow on’, -ao ‘shoot’, -arie ‘hit’

11. Ngol n-apao-ø o w-ara n-ao-ø.
   conch.shell 3SG.M-blow.on-3SG.F and garamut.drum 3SG.M-shoot-3SG.F
   wangkul n-arie-ø, chwa w-iri, n-ara uwa,
   hand.drum 3SG.M-hit-3SG.F noise 3SG.F-stand 3SG.M-come north
   n-ara, n-ara.
   3SG.M-come 3SG.M-come

   ‘He blew the conch shell and hit the garamut drum, and beat the hand drum
   making a lot of noise as he continued on his way north.’ (Becker 38)

-olo ‘cut’

12. To y-ekiel, kreykiri y-olo-ø, ...
    then 3PL-go.south vine(sp) 3PL-cut-3SG.F ...
    ‘Then they went and cut the kreykiri rope.....’ (Becker 21)
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**-apulu** ‘leave behind, drop’

13. Akou runon tantan n-a<ø>pulu w-anan tot cha
    finish 3SG.M sand 3SG.M-spread<3SG.F> 3SG.F-go.down exactly place
    siar y-an.
    reef 3PL-be.at

    ‘Then he dropped **some sand** right on the place where the reef was.’ (Becker 16)

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**14. Verbs that do not occur with OV order**

-are
  ‘ask’
-nulue ~ -mpulue
  ‘be afraid of, not like’
-enie
  ‘call someone (something)’
-e(yie)
  ‘give (recip)’
-altawro
  ‘look for’
-ao
  ‘shoot, shoot at’
-asawro
  ‘show (the one to whom s.t. is shown)’
-asawro
  ‘show’ (the thing shown)
-nare
  ‘tell’
-an -ru
  ‘wait for’

**Examples of verbs that do not appear to allow OV order**

-enie ‘call so or sth (sth)’

15. ... to ri y-enie-ø pon nta Anyiel
    then 3PL 3PL-call-3SG.F island this Angel
    ‘... and they called **this island** Angel.’ (Becker 16)

-an -ru ’wait for’

16. Akou to ri y-an y-ru-y konungkol
    finish then 3PL 3PL-wait.for_3PL-waitfor-3PL men
    komoru, y-anan
    evening 3PL-go.down

    ‘Then they **waited for the men** to come down in the evening.’ (Becker 14)
-na-re 'tell

17. To n-anpa n-na-re-n wlapon n-a-y then 3SG.M-wait 3SG.M-speak-APPLIC-3SG.M older.brother 3SG.M-and-3PL

chu-tey ...
wife-PL

‘So he waited to tell his elder brother and his wives....’ (Becker 19)

18. Verbs that (unexpectedly) allow OV order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VO</th>
<th>OV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'call (to)'</td>
<td>6 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘see’</td>
<td>60 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-awanie- ‘call (to)’

19. Akou, may n-otoplo-ø tin, akou n-eric-ø, finish rope 3SG.M-tie-3SG.F tightly, finish 3SG.M-carry.on.shoulder-3SG.F

o pelem n-awanie-y, n-aro-y y-orou nakol and dog 3SG.M-call-3PL 3SG.M-and-3PL 3PL-go house

‘Then, he tied the rope tightly around it and heaved it onto his shoulder, and called to the dogs and they went home.’ (Becker 24)

-ete(re) ‘see’

20. Akou ri cha mon y-ete-ø tu w-o kon. finish 3PL place NEG 3PL-see-3SG.F PERF 3SG.F-be dark

‘Then they could not see the place because it was dark.’ (Becker 25)

21. Chakonu w-kipin mon m-ete-ø road GEN-1PL NEG 1SG-see-3SG.F

‘I can't see the way to our village.’ (Becker 49)

What we found for objects also holds true for (non-object) complements

Non-object complements

-ama 'resemble, be like' VComp

22. To w-na-re-n ‘Chi n-ama kaminakol’ then 3SG.F-speak-APPLIC-3SG.M 2SG 2SG-like person.PL

‘Then she said to him: ‘You are like a person,’ (Becker 16)
23. Verbs with non-object complements that only occur with VComp order

-ama ‘be like’
-rnar ‘change into’
-in ‘hear’

-rnar ‘change into’ VComp

24. Ri y-rnar wuel, ....
    3PL 3PL-change into pig ...
    ‘They (the wives) turned into pigs, ....’ (Becker 34)

-in ‘hear’ VComp

25. Akou ri y-in yikiel mnon ...
    finish 3PL 3PL-hear words 3SG.M.GEN
    ‘So when they heard his words, ...’ (Becker 2)

26. Verbs that allow both VComp and CompV order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VComp</th>
<th>CompV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-napi</td>
<td>‘speak (words)’ 10 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-aon</td>
<td>‘put on traditional clothes’ 8 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-awa</td>
<td>‘put a pot on a fire’ 3 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-napi ‘speak, say’

SCompV

27. Akou ngan yikiel mon n-napi, korue mnon mkosil
    finish father words NEG 3SG.M-speak but 3SG.M.GEN quiet

    n-an.
    3SG.M-be.at

    ‘The father did not say a word, but remained silent.’ (Becker 28)

VComp

28. To ri mon y-napi yikiel ngo-ø.
    then 3PL NEG 3PL-speak words one-F
    ‘Then they did not say anything.’ (Becker 14)

29. Korue pelen w-ri wepin y-napi yikiel
    but dog GEN-3PL before 3PL-speak words
    ‘But dogs in the old days used to be able to speak.’ (Becker 50)
-aon ‘put on clothes’

SCompV
30. Lasi Chnapeli chno y-aon akou ...
   immediately Chinapelli trad.clothes 3PL-put.on.clothes finish
   ‘The Chinapelli put on their traditional dress and ...’ (Becker 4)

VComp
31. Y-unau y-ete-y ri y-aon chno
   3PL-go.south 3PL-see-3PL 3PL 3PL-put.on decoration
   y-ak-re-n porukul ...
   3PL-sing-APPLIC-3SG.M singing ...
   ‘When they came up they saw that they were dressed for a funeral ceremony....’
   (Becker 10)

-awa ‘put a pot on a fire’

SCompV
32. To ri mei y-awa, chol y-alo-y, ...
   then 3PL pot 3PL-put.on.fire sago 3PL-fetch-3PL...
   ‘Then they put a pot on the fire and fetched the sago and ....’ (Becker 19)

VComp
33. To ru w-an, w-awa mei,
   then 3SG.F 3SG.F-be.at 3SG.F-put.on.fire pot
   ‘While she was putting the pot on the fire, she heard the sound of branches
   breaking.’ (Becker 21)

34. Verbs that do not allow OV order, but do allow both Vcomp and compV order, and the numbers of these orders that occur in the old texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VComp</th>
<th>CompV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-nare ‘tell’</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-e(yie) ‘give’</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-nare ‘tell’ CompVO

35. Runon wuel yikiel n-na-re-n kaminakol
   3SG.M pig words 3SG.M-speak-APPLIC-3SG.M person.PL
   ‘The pig spoke to the man.’ (Becker 13)
“We will see friends and tell them to give us a woman.” (Becker 26)

“So he took him to his garden and gave him bananas, taro, ....” (Becker 8)

“... to see whether they could give them a woman.” (Becker 26)

“Give the arrows to your father.” (Becker 21)

“When he'd finished, he gave him the keyre fish ...” (Becker 44)

“Then they gave him a bird-woman ....” (Becker 19)