THE EXPRESSION OF POSSESSION IN SOME LANGUAGES OF THE EASTERN LESSER SUNDA ISLANDS

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Abstract

The possessor-possessed, or "preposed possessor" syntactic order, has long been considered a typological feature common to many Eastern Lesser Sunda Islands, labelled either "Central-Malayo Polynesian languages" or "East Nusantara languages", although these groupings do not exactly coincide. In this paper, the syntax and semantism of possession in some languages of the Eastern Lesser Sunda Islands are described. There is a wide variety of possession marking systems in the Eastern Lesser Sunda Islands, from purely analytic languages such as Lio to highly flexional languages such as Lamaholot. The morphological contrast between alienable and inalienable possession is widespread among the languages of this area. The study focuses on Lamaholot, spoken at the eastern-most end of Flores, and the three neighbouring islands of Adonara, Solor and Lembata. This language has a complex possessive system, involving suffixes, free morphemes, a specific preposition, and possessive pronouns, along with person agreement and morpho-phonological features. Lamaholot can be considered a highly representative example of East Nusantara languages.

Keywords: *East Nusantara, Central-Malayo Polynesian, possession*

Abstrak

Urutan sintaktis "pemilik"-"yang dimiliki", atau dapat disebut juga "pemilik letak kiri" sejak lama dianggap sebagai ciri khas sebagian besar bahasa Nusa Tenggara Timur, yang tergolong dalam rumpun bahasa MalayoPolynesia Tengah atau "bahasa Nusantara Timur", meskipun kedua pengelompokan ini tidak persis sama. Dalam makalah ini dibahas sintaksis dan semantik dari kepemilikan pada sejumlah bahasa Nusa Tenggara Timur. Keanekaragaman yang luas menyangkut sistem pemarkahan kepemilikan terbentang pada bahasa-bahasa Nusa Tenggara Timur, dari yang murni bertipe analitik seperti bahasa Lio sampai bahasa yang murni bertipe fleksi seperti bahasa Lamaholot. Di antara bahasa-bahasa di wilayah ini terhampar perbedaan yang mencolok dari segi morfologi antara kepemilikan terasingkan dan kepemilikan tak terasingkan. Pembahasan dalam makalah ini berfokus pada bahasa Lamaholot, yang dituturkan di ujung timur Flores serta tiga pulau yang berdekatan: Adonara, Solor dan Lembata. Untuk mengungkapkan kepemilikan, bahasa ini mempunyai sistem yang rumit, dengan menggunakan sufiks, morfem bebas, preposisi khusus, dan pronomina posesif, disertai persesuaian persona dan ciri-ciri morfo-fonologi. Oleh sebab itu, bahasa Lamaholot patut dipandang sebagai contoh yang dapat mewakili bahasa-bahasa Nusantara Timur.

Kata kunci: *Nusantara Timur, bahasa Malayo-Polynesia Tengah, kepemilikan*

INTRODUCTION

The expression of possession has long been considered a major typological characteristic of the Austronesian languages spoken in the Eastern Lesser Sunda Islands. It is not my intention to enter into ongoing typological debates, but in view of the significance of the possessor-possessed order, widely accepted for over a century as a major criterion, I shall investigate the means of expressing the possessive in some Austronesian languages of the Eastern Lesser Sunda Islands. Although the possessor-possessed, or "preposed possessor" order is largely the rule, certain syntactic constraints may reverse that order, and these languages show significant morphological diversity.

The first section of this article reviews some typological remarks on "preposed possessor languages", while the second section deals with the opposition between analytical and flexional languages in the East Nusantara area. The third section focuses on Lamaholot, which owns a particularly rich morphology, giving rise – in some dialects at least – to certain morpho-phonetic features, namely vowel alternation, epenthesis and metathesis. The fourth section discusses the coexistence in Lamaholot of two paradigms of possessive markers (suffixes and free morphemes), as well as a preposition expressing possession described in fifth section. The sixth section describes a specific possessive preposition, *ne*. The seventh section argues that East Nusantara languages broadly differ in semantic terms from West-Malayo-Polynesian languages such as Indonesian. For example, Lamaholot deals with the categories of alienability (the possibility of breaking up the possessor-possessed relation) very differently from Indonesian, which is a further typological feature common to several East Nusantara languages. Finally, the last section gives insights into the possible influence of non-Austronesian languages over the expression of possession on East Nusantara languages.

TYPOLOGICAL REMARKS: THE POSSESSOR-POSSESSED ORDER

Linguistic investigation into the languages of the Eastern Lesser Sunda Islands (*Nusa Tenggara Timur*) is recent[1] and still incomplete. Eastern Indonesia is linguistically extremely diverse, which can be explained both by the geography of this vast archipelagic region and by complex prehistoric[2] and historic migrations. The group of Central-Malayo-Polynesian (CMP) languages has traditionally been located in south-eastern Indonesia (Eastern Lesser Sunda Islands, Moluccas), but there is disagreement as regards their definition both as a linguistic area (*Sprachbund*) and a typological group. A different grouping has recently been suggested, that of "East Nusantara languages" (Klamer 2008, Klamer & Ewing 2010), which does not cover exactly the same geographical area.

One of the most obvious typological features defining East Nusantara languages is the "preposed possessor" (possessor-possessed order). This particular syntactic order was observed as early as the late nineteenth century (Brandes 1884) and became the main defining criterion of CMP languages, themselves a sub-grouping of Central-East-Malayo-Polynesian (CEMP). Indeed Himmelman (2005:113, 175) even suggested labelling this group "Preposed Possessor Languages", as opposed to "symmetrical voice languages", found mainly in the western part of insular South-East Asia, for instance Indonesian. Extensive typological research has been carried out in recent years, using the "preposed possessor" feature as an essential criterion (Donohue & Musgrave 2007).

In East Nusantara languages, Klamer and Ewing (2010) also mention the morphological distinction between alienable and inalienable possession, as well as the clause-final position of negation morphemes. Though less systematic, one also observes a tendency towards metathesis (both lexical and morpho-syntactic) and split intransitivity. Lamaholot is remarkable in that it exhibits all five of these characteristics: preposed possessor, alienable *versus* inalienable possession, metathesis, final negation and split intransitivity. To my knowledge, no other East Nusantara languages include all these features, though the linguistic description of this vast region is still too fragmentary to be able to claim this with certainty. Nevertheless, the coexistence of all these "prototypical" criteria makes Lamaholot a particularly interesting language. Only one of the features can be dealt with within the limits of this article: the expression of possession.

What is meant by "preposed possessor"? In the possessor-possessed order, the head noun of the noun-phrase (referring to the "possessor") precedes a noun that is its complement, as in example (1), whereas in the possessed-possessor order, the complement noun (referring to the "possessed") comes before the head of the noun-phrase,[3] as it does in Indonesian – see example (2).

(1) *guru   sa'o*
     teacher   house   Lio (East Nusantara / CMP)
     'teacher's house'

(2) *rumah   guru*
     house   teacher   Indonesian
     'teacher's house'

It would appear that although the possessor-possessed order is found in virtually all the East Nusantara languages, it is usually only considered acceptable when the possessor is referred to by a noun. Indeed, "if a language has a possessor morpheme, it is generally a suffix/enclitic, not a prefix/proclitic" (Klamer 2002:372). In other words, in most of those languages, if the head of the noun phrase is a pronoun, the order can be reversed and become, as in Indonesian, possessed-possessor. This is the case in Lamaholot:

(3) *lango   goen*
     house   1SG.POSS   Lamaholot, Adonara dialect
     'my house'

(4) *rumah   saya*
     house   1SG.POSS   Indonesian (WMP)
     'my house'

Furthermore, in Lamaholot the noun referring to the "possessed" bears a compulsory possessive suffix, which agrees in person with the head of the noun phrase – see below in the section on the morphology of possessives.
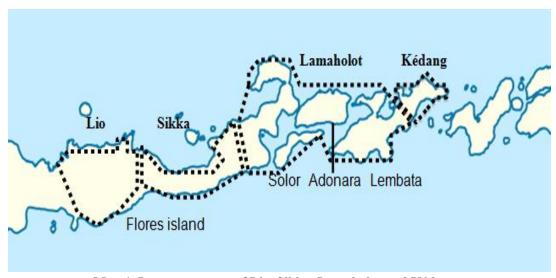
(5) *guru   langu   -n*
     teacher house   -3SG.POSS   Lamaholot, Adonara dialect
     'teacher's house'

The possessive suffix is compulsory, whether the head is a noun or a pronoun. The possessed-possessor order is always possible in Lamaholot, and in order to say *my house*, the speaker can choose between (3), (6) and (7).

(6)   *go*   *langu*   *-k*
      teacher   house   -1SG.POSS   Lamaholot, East Adonara dialect
      'my house'

(7)   *langu*   *-k*
      house   -1SG.POSS   Lamaholot, East Adonara dialect
      'my house'

Example (6) illustrates the possibility of cross-reference to the person, for instance 1SG, while the possessive is marked by the suffix 1SG.POSS. In this type of structure, the personal pronoun *go* (1SG) is optional and does not fulfill its usual function as subject. It would seem inappropriate to claim the possessor-possessed order for this pattern.

       In short, then, in Lamaholot and probably in many other East Nusantara languages, the preposed possessor criterion does not actually correspond to a compulsory set pattern, and the reverse order is possible when the possessor is referred to by a pronoun. It would, therefore, be more accurate to say that what characterizes most East Nusantara languages and distinguishes them from WMP languages is the possibility, under certain conditions, of placing the possessor before the possessed.

Map 1. Language areas of Lio, Sikka, Lamaholot and Kédang

ANALYTICAL VERSUS FLEXIONAL LANGUAGES

Some languages are clearly "analytical", such as Lio (Central-Malayo-Polynesian – CMP), spoken in the centre of Flores island, which has no specialized morpheme to express possession.

(8)   *guru*   *sa'o*   *nua*   *aku*
     teacher   house   village   1SG   Lio (East Nusantara / CMP), Flores
     'teacher's house'   'my village'

Other languages tend rather to be "flexional"; the further one moves from the centre of Flores towards the east, the higher the chances of encountering languages in which the genitive is expressed by means of flexional morphemes. One example is Sikka, spoken in an area immediately to the west of the Lamaholot-speaking region – see Pareira and Lewis (1998): the paradigm of possessive determiners is formed by adding the suffix -*ng* to the personal pronoun.

(9) *ama*   *a'u*   -*ng*   *oring*   *'ita*   -*ng*
     father 1SG -POSS   village 1PL.INCL -POSS   Sikka (East Nusantara / CMP), Flores
     'my father'   'our house'

     In Lamaholot, the possessive entails fairly complex morphological changes:

(10) *ama*   -*k*   *(kamé)*   *langu*   -*kem*
      father -1SG.POSS   (1PL.EXCL)   house -1PL.POSS   Lamaholot, East Adonara dialect
      'my father'   'our house'

     Following the Lesser Sunda Islands towards the east, after the chain of Lamaholot dialects one comes to the linguistic area of Kedang, on the Island of Lembata – see Sawardo and Allii (1989:38, 50). In Kedang, subject pronouns *ei* 1SG, *o* 2SG and *nuo* 3SG differ from the paradigm of possessive determiners.

(11) *ko'*   *epu*   *ne'*   *tene*
     1SG.POSS   grand-father   3SG.POSS   pirogue   Kedang (East Nusantara / CMP), Lembata
     'my grandfather'   'his pirogue'

MORPHOLOGY OF POSSESSIVES IN LAMAHOLOT

Lamaholot is highly dialectalized. Keraf (1978) conducted a lexicological study identifying 33 languages or dialects with a common vocabulary, as shown in the Swadesh list, that could be as low as 44 percent and no higher than 89 per-cent. The linguistic area of Lamaholot consists of a "chain of dialects" along which, to put things simply, speakers of neighbouring dialects understand each other, but not speakers of dialects at the two extremities of the chain.[4] In the latter case, we are talking about two distinct languages.

     My field of inquiry is the eastern part of Adonara Island, to the north and west of Ile Boleng volcano. This area corresponds to the very close "Dulhi" and "Kiwangona" dialects described by Keraf (1978); I shall provisionally call it "Adonara dialect". Even within a single dialectal area there can be many phonological variants. For example, in the morphology of the verb agreement particle, the onset consonant can vary, from one place to another, between /n/, /j/ or /r/.[5] Some phonological differences are also due to metathesis. For instance, in Lamablawa, the enclitic genitive marker of 2PL is -*kem* [kəm], while in Sandosi (an hour's walk away), it is -*kme* [kmə]. In Lamablawa, "it is drying" translates as *na pahéna*, but is *na phaéna* in Balaweling (twenty minutes away). Between dialectal areas that are further away from each other, especially if they are separated by the sea, differences are of course greater, not only as regards the lexicon (cognates, false friends, registers) but also with respect to morpho-syntax.

     The semantic range of the use of possessive morphemes in Lamaholot is very wide, including not only possession (for instance, a human possessing an inanimate object), but also adnominal genitive and partitive. This distinction is discussed below, under "semantic observations".

Two paradigms of possessive determiners are used in Lamaholot: free and enclitic, as illustrated in examples (12) and (13); furthermore, the word *lango* 'house' undergoes vowel alternation (/o/ > /u/) when a possessive suffix is added.

(12) *Go   hulin   lango   goen.*
     1SG   look   house   1SG.POSS
     'I am looking at my house.'

(13) *Go   hulin   (go)   langu   -k.*
     1SG   look   (1SG)   house   -1SG.POSS
     'I am looking at my house.'

Subject pronouns are included in the table below in order to highlight the morphological features they share with the possessives.

Table 1. Personal Pronouns and Possessive Determiners in Lamaholot, Adonara Dialect

	Subject Pronouns	Free Possessive Determiner (Postposed to "Possessed")	Possessive Suffix
1SG	*go*	*goen* [goɛ̃]	*-k*
2SG	*mo*	*moen* [moɛ̃]	*-m*
3SG	*na*	*naen* [naɛ̃] or [naɛn]	*-n*
1PL.INCL	*tité*	*tit'en* [titʔɛ̃]	*-ket / -t*
1PL.EXCL	*kamé*	*kam'é* [kamʔe]	*-kem / -nem*
2PL	*mio*	*mion* [miõ]	*-ké / -né*
3PL	*ra*	*raen* [raɛ̃]	*-ka / -na*

Variants of the singular and 3PL persons are found in other regions: *goé, moé, naé*, and *raé*, as in Kiwang Ona and Boleng (south east of Adonara Island) or at the eastern point of Flores (Mandiri Island).

Table 2. Examples of Possessive Noun Determiners

Person	Free Possessive Morpheme	Bound Morpheme (Suffix)	Translation
1SG	*lango goen* [laŋo goɛ̃]	*(go) languk* [laŋuk]	my house
2SG	*lango moen* [moɛ̃]	*(mo) langum* [laŋum]	your house
3SG	*lango naen* [naɛ̃] or [naɛn]	*(na) langun* [laŋun]	his/her house
1PL.INCL	*lango tit'en* [titʔɛ̃]	*(tité) languket* [laŋukət]	our (+ you) house
1PL.EXCL	*lango kam'é* [kamʔe]	*(kamé) langukem* [laŋukəm]	our (– you) house
2PL	*lango mion* [miõ]	*(mio) languké* [laŋuke]	your house
3PL	*lango raen* [raɛ̃]	*(ra) languka* [laŋuka]	their maison

The suffix form is compulsory in the case of inalienable possession (see below). According to our informers there is no difference in register between the paradigms of possessive determiners. However, it would seem that Lamaholot speakers tend to prefer the enclitic form, whatever the register.

AGREEMENT RULES

Within a Noun Phrase (NP), a possessive relation can be embedded inside another possessive relation. For instance, if ___ means "owns", the object NP in example (14) can be represented as: (you ___ cousin (cousin ___ sarong)):

(14) *Go   senan   bine   -m   kewatek   -en.*
     1SG   be.pleased   cousin -2SG.POSS   sarong   3SG.POSS
     'I like your cousin's sarong.'

The head noun of the object NP is *kewatek-en* 'her sarong' and it must agree with the head noun of the NP referring to its possessor, *bine* 'cousin', thus 3SG. This rule holds even if both the NP head noun and its complement have the same "possessor" in semantic terms; in other words, there is no agreement-raising towards the NP higher up in the hierarchy. Therefore, in example (15), *leg* seems, grammatically at least, to be the "possessor" of *hairs*.

(15) *Mo   lei -m   rawu   -ken   aya-aya.   / *rawu   -kem*
     2SG   leg -2SG.POSS   hair   -3SG.POSS   many   / hair   -2SG.POSS
     'Your legs have a lot of hairs (are very hairy).'   /*'your hairs'
     litt. : 'Your leg its hair are many.'

We also saw that a person marker preposed to the head noun could optionally occur together with the paradigm of possessive determiners in suffix form, as in *(go) languk* 'my house', example (13). Even though the person marker has the form of a subject pronoun, it merely expresses emphasis, as in "my own house", and of course does not have subject function. Example (16) offers an illustration of such an emphatic turn of phrase.[6]

(16) *Buah yang   ra   re-   kan   né   ra   guté*
     fruit   REL   3PL   3PL.AGR- eat   DET   3PL   take
     *si   **na**   keranjang   **naen**   onen.*
     PREP   3SG   basket   3SG.POSS   in
     'The fruit they are eating, they took it from his own basket.'

The prepositional phrase *si keranjang naen onen* 'in his basket' would be perfectly acceptable. But the fact that several baskets were mentioned in the story that example (16) is taken from, prompted the narrator to specify that he was referring to the basket belonging to the main character, hence the preposed pronoun *na*. Emphasis can also be expressed by taking up the "possessor" noun phrase by means of a pronoun, as in (18):

(17) *Ni   guru   Yohanes   langu   -n.*
     dét   teacher house   NP   -3SG.POSS
     'It is teacher Yohanes's house.'

(18) *Ni   guru   Yohanes   langu   -n   **naen**.*
     DET   teacher PRN   house   -3SG.POSS   3SG.POSS
     'It is teacher Yohanes's house and no-one else's / It is teacher Yohanes's own house.'

In some languages, use of the existential construction entails that of the genitive. In Lamaholot, this constraint only applies to negative sentences. Thus rather than saying "I don't have a tree" or "her husband does not work", one has to say "my tree is not" or "her husband his work is not".

(19) *Go karuk také.*

    Go   karo -k   také.
    1SG   tree -1SG.POSS NEG
    'I don't have a tree / I don't have any wood.'

(20) *Ina Benedikta lakhen olhan také, han pauro.*

    Ina   Benedikta   laké   -n   olha -n   také ha -n   pau -ro.
    lady PRN   husband -3SG.POSS work -3SG.POSS NEG   wife -3SG.POSS feed -3SG.OBJ
    'Mrs Benedikta's husband doesn't work, his wife supports him.'

MORPHOPHONOLOGY

There are many phonological variants in the Lamaholot dialect chain but the morpho-syntax of the possessive remains basically the same. Here are a few examples of such variants in Lamaholot:

    Lewoingu (Flores): *mata-ken* [matakən] 'my eye'[7]
    Witihama (Adonara): *mata-k* (eye-1SG.POSS) 'my eye'
    Witihama (Adonara): *lango goen* 'my house'; *go atin-ek* 'my earring'
    Sandosi (Adonara)[8]: *lango goek* 'my house'; *go atin-k* 'my earring'

Such minor variations can be observed even between the Witihama valley and the villages on its slopes, although they are barely ten kilometers away from one another. Lamaholot speakers on Adonara understand each other perfectly but can tell where they come from by these subtle differences. Such diversity may be explained by a history of conflict between the different clans on Adonara, as suggested by Barnes (1987:2005).

    The possessive suffix for plural persons usually starts with /k/. However, with words ending with a nasal vowel, the possessive starts with /n/, as in *kenatan* [kənatãn] 'a bed' – see table below.

Table 3. Variations of Possessive Suffix

	lango 'house'	*kenatãn* 'bed'
1SG	*(go) languk* [laŋuk]	*(go) kenatanek* [kənatanək]
2SG	*(mo) langum* [laŋum]	*(mo) kenatanem* [kənatanəm]
3SG	*(na) langun* [laŋun]	*(na) kenatan* [kənatan]
1PL.INCL	*(tité) languket* [laŋukət]	*(tité) kenatanet* [kənatanət]
1PL.EXCL	*(kamé) langukem* [laŋukəm]	*(kamé) kenatanem* [kənatanəm]
2PL	*(mio) languké* [laŋuke]	*(mio) kenatané* [kənatane]
3PL	*(ra) languka* [laŋuka]	*(ra) kenatana* [kənatana]

Furthermore, for some words with an open final syllable, the speaker may choose between /k/ and /n/ as the initial consonant of the possessive suffix in the following persons: 1PL.EXCL, 2PL and 3PL. For instance with *kawi* 'fish-hook' (also subjected to /h/ epenthesis, discussed below):

    kamé kawhi-nem or *kawhi-kem* 'our fish-hook'
    mio kawhi-né or *kawhi-ké* 'your fish-hook'
    ra kawhi-na or *kawhi-ka* 'their fish-hook'

    We saw earlier, for instance with *lango* 'house', that the enclitic possessive morpheme entailed the following vowel alternations for words ending with the vowels /o/ or /e/:

/o/ > /u/	/e/ > /i/
lango > langun 'his/her house'	*kenubé > kenubik* 'my machete'
aho > ahuk 'my dog'	*wawé > wawhik* 'my pig'
karo > karuket 'our (incl.) tree'	*apé > aphikem* 'our (excl.) fire'
pao > pauk 'my mango'	
lewo > lewuka 'their village'	

This rule only affects disyllabic words; *kenubé* 'machete' is the only exception to my knowledge. Vowel alternation from /e/ to /i/ may be found together with epenthesized /h/ (see below), but not, it would seem, the glottal stop /ʔ/.

Possessive suffixes also lead to epenthesis, through the insertion either of vowels (modifying the suffix) or of consonants, affecting the word itself. Vocalic epenthesis consists in the insertion of a [ə] in the suffix, on words ending with a consonant, thus avoiding the formation of consonant clusters (two successive consonants). This can be illustrated with the 1SG possessive suffix -*k*:

manu' [manuʔ] + -*k* 1SG.POSS > *manuk-ek* [manukək] 'my rooster/hen'
maan [maːn] + -*t* 1PL.INCL.POSS > *maan-et* [maːnət] 'our garden'
kenatan > kenatan-ek 'my bed'
lamak > lamak-ek 'my plate'
bal > bal-ek 'my ball/balloon'
glas > glas-ek 'my glass'

With open final syllables having an occlusive onset consonant (/p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/), the possessive suffix leads to epenthesis of /h/ as onset of the final syllable.

kuda + -*k* 1SG.POSS > *kudhak* 'my horse'
bunga + -*m* 2SG.POSS > *bungham* 'your flower'
pita + -*nem* 1PL.EXCL.POSS > *pithanem* 'our door'

This rule also applies to recently borrowed words:

oto > othom 'your car'
speda > spédhãn 'his bicycle', *spédhak* 'my bicycle'
lampu > lamphuk 'my lamp'
honda > hondhak 'my moped'

Very few exceptions were noted:

wato > watuk 'my stone'
mata > matak 'my eye'

The extent to which this epenthesis is realized is more or less marked depending on the speaker, and opinions on this issue may vary within a single village. In Sandosi, probably under the influence of the Lembata Lamaholot dialect, the /h/ is placed between the two syllables:

(21) *tapo*   'coconut'

    mo   *taphu* *-m*   Lamaholot, East Adonara dialect

    mo   *tahpu* *-m*   Lamaholot, East Adonara dialect, Sandosi variant

    2SG   coco   -2SG.POSS

    'your coconut'

Finally, again in the Sandosi variant, metathesis can be observed.

manu' 'chicken' + *=t* 1PL.INCL.POSS >
manuket [manukət] 'our chicken'
manukte [manuktə] 'our chicken' in Sandosi variant
manu' 'chicken' + *=k* 1SG.POSS >
manukek [manukək] 'my chicken'
manuke [manukə] 'my chicken' in Sandosi variante

Metathesis has also been noted in other Lamaholot dialects (Lamalera, Lewotobi).

POSSESSIVE PREPOSITION *NE*

There is evidence that when several possessive relations are embedded, speakers can use a possessive preposition, *ne* [nə] (not to be mistaken for the definitive determiner or demonstrative *ni* or *né*). This preposition is not compulsory and most probably serves to disambiguate an utterance. For instance, in the following example, my informer considered the first *ne* optional, but deemed the second one necessary.

(22) *Ni*   *go*   *ari*   *-k*   *(ne)*   *haa* *-n*   *ne*   *langu* *-n.*

    DET   1SG brother -1SG.POSS PREP.POSS wife -3SG.POSS PREP.POSS house -3SG.POSS

    'It is my younger brother's wife's house.'

The preposition *ne* may be related to the 3SG subject pronoun *na* in Lamaholot (East Adonara dialect). Such use of a possessive preposition derived from or morphologically close to the 3SG pronoun is fairly common. Engelenhoven (2009:337, 355) notes that in accordance with "the pattern found elsewhere in the Timor Sprachbund, Fataluku also uses the third person singular marker *i* as a possessive marker between possessor and possession nouns."

(23) *ocava* ***i***   *pala*

    master 3SG field   Fataluku (Engelenhoven 2009:355)

    'the master's field'

(24) *mane* ***nia*** *xapeu*

    man   3SG hat   Tetum (Engelenhoven 2009:337)

    'the hat of the man'

In Western Pantar (or Lamma), geographically speaking the closest non-Austronesian language to Lamaholot, "an adjunct noun phrase referring to the possessor may optionally precede the possessive pronoun." (Holton 2007)

(25) *aname* ***gai*** *bla*
    person 3SG.POSS house   Western Pantar (Holton 2007)
    'the man's house'

This is also the case in Alor (*bahasa Alor*), an East Nusantara language clearly derived from Lamaholot (Klamer 2011).

(26) *Ama* *kali* *n-* *ei* *nong* ***ni*** *kafae.*
    father that 3SG go with POSS wife   Alor (Klamer 2007:52)
    'That person went with his wife'

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

A free possessive determiner may be used as a possessive pronoun when asking – or answering – a question about the owner of an object.

(27) *Tapo* *lali* *watã Sagu* *né* *héku* *raen ?* *Né* *(go)* *goen.*
    coconut downhill beach NP DET INTERR 3PL.POSS DET (1SG) 1SG.POSS
    'Who do the coconuts on Sabu beach belong to? – They are mine.'

In this type of question – literally "who theirs?" – the 3PL.POSS pronoun *raen* is used by default. In the reply to the question in (27), the optional pronoun *go* expresses emphasis. This pattern is found in paradigm I of possessive pronouns shown below.

It is also possible to use an independent possessive pronoun that refers back anaphorically to a noun and can occupy the functions of a noun. In fact, this is compulsory in all other cases than replying to a question. Previous research on Lamaholot only mentions the existence of independent possessive pronouns in the Lamalera dialect (Lembata Island) – see Keraf (1978:125). One can assume that possessive pronouns are only used in the eastern part of the chain of dialects making up the linguistic area of Lamaholot, on the islands of Adonara, Solor and Lembata.

Table 4. Independent Possessive Pronouns in the Adonara Dialect of Lamaholot

	Paradigm I	Paradigm II	
1SG	*gogoen* [gogoɛ̃]	*goének* [goɛnək]	mine
2SG	*momoen* [momoɛ̃]	*moénem* [moɛnəm]	yours
3SG	*nanaen* [nanaɛ̃]		his/hers/its
1PL.INCL		*titénet* [tit/enət]	ours (incl.)
1PL.EXCL		*kaménem* [kam/enəm]	ours (excl.)
2PL		*mioné* [mione]	yours
3PL	*raraen* [raraɛ̃] *raraéna* [raraena]		theirs

Two synonymous forms are used in 1SG and 2SG persons. There is no evidence of a difference in register, and they appear to be free variants. Two "competing" paradigms can be identified as regards the formation of possessive pronouns:

Paradigm I

For example: *go* 1SG + *goen* 1SG.POSS > *gogoen* PRO.1SG.POSS. It is not possible to form 1PL and 2PL persons on this pattern.

subject pronoun + possessive determiner > possessive pronoun

Paradigm II

Here the formation rule is unclear. I would suggest that it is derived from lexicalisation of the possessive preposition *ne*.

subject pronoun + possessive preposition + posessive enclitic > possessive pronoun

For example:

   goé 1SG + *ne* PREP.POSS + *-k* 1SG.POSS > *goének* 'mine'

   moé 2SG + *ne* PREP.POSS + *-m* 2SG.POSS > *moénem* 'yours'

   tité 1PL.INCL + *ne* PREP.POSS + *-t* 1PL.INCL.POSS > *titénet* 'ours (incl. you)'

   kamé 1PL.EXCL + *ne* PREP.POSS + *-m* 1PL.EXCL.POSS > *kaménem* 'ours (incl. you)'

   mio 2PL + *ne* PREP.POSS + *-é* 2PL.POSS > *mioné* 'yours'

SEMANTIC OBSERVATIONS

Lamaholot does not mark any difference between the relation of possession as such (most commonly a human being who owns an inanimate object) and the adnominal genitive.

(28)   *Rizal   otho   -n*
         PRN   car   -3SG.POSS
         'Rizal's car'

(29)   *Ama   Niko   no'on   Ina   Pulo   langu   -ka*
         Mr   PRN   with.3SG   Mrs   PRN   house   -3PL.POSS
         'Mr Niko's and Mrs Pulo's house / the house of Mr Niko and Mrs Pulo'

Examples of adnominal genitive:

(30)   *Kursi   lei   -n*
         Chair   leg   -3SG.POSS
         'chairleg'

(31)   *sepatu   wutu   -n*
         shoe   end   -3SG.POSS
         'toecap'

     The distinction between alienable and inalienable possession is widespread among the Lesser Sunda Island languages, and more generally in East Nusantara languages. The distinction is common to both Austronesian and non-Austronesian languages in the region and applies to different domains depending on the language; parts of the body and members of a family are usually considered inalienable. In Alor, alienable 3SG *ni* stands in contrast to 3SG inalienable *no* ; see Klamer (2007).

     In Lamaholot, inalienable possession is compulsorily expressed by the paradigm of enclitic possessive morphemes, while to express alienable possession, the paradigms of free possessives or of suffixes can be used indifferently. In examples (32) to (34), *sal* 'scarf' can

receive possessive determination by means of a free morpheme or a suffix, whereas with *wuli* 'neck', clearly inalienable, possession can only be expressed by a suffix.

(32) *Na   puin   sal   na'en   Si   wuli   -n.*
3SG   ties   scarf 3SG.POSS PREP   neck   -3SG.GEN   Lamaholot, East Adonara
'He ties his scarf round his neck.'   dialect

(33) *Na   puin   sal   -nen   si   wuli   -n.*
3SG   ties   scarf -3SG.POSS   PREP   neck   -3SG.GEN
'He ties his scarf round his neck.'

(34) **Na   puin   sal   na'en   si   wuli   na'en.*
3SG   ties   scarf 3SG.POSS PREP   neck   3SG.GEN
'He ties his scarf round his neck.'

Nouns referring to parts of the body, which are *per se* inalienable, never appear in their bare form, without a possessive enclitic. Thus *lei 'leg' is unacceptable, and can only be found in the forms *lei-k* 'my leg', *lei-m* 'your leg', *lei-n* 'his/her leg' and so on. Lexicographers need to take this fact into account. Comparison of vocabulary lists (Swadesh lists) may also lead ill-informed observers to believe they have come across lexical differences; some Swadesh lists include the nouns *leik*, *lein* and *leim* as meaning *leg*, clearly reflecting the way in which the linguist collected her or his data. For instance, if I point to my leg asking "what do you call that?", the chances are that the reply will be *leim* 'your leg'.

INFLUENCE OF NON-AUSTRONESIAN LANGUAGES

Klamer (2002:377) stress the reciprocal influences of Austronesian and non-Austronesian languages (Trans-New Guinea Phylum languages, also known as Papuan langages). It is likely that Papuan languages gave the Austronesian languages of insular Southeast Asia three main features: possessor-possessed order, alienable-inalienable distinction and sentence-final negation. One or several of these features can be found in East Nusantara languages – see Klamer (2008:74, examples 69 and 70).

In many languages of the region, whether Austronesian or not, possessive pronouns can be proclitic. In Western Pantar, a non-Austronesian language – see Holton (2008:176) – they are indeed proclitic ("possessive construction") but are also found postposed ("genitive construction").

(35)   *n=   iu   n=   iaku   i=   ga=   aulang*
1SG.POSS mother 1SG.POSS sibling   PROG   3SG   bathe   Western Pantar (Holton
'my mother is bathing my brother [but I can't see it]'   2008:176)

(36) *gai   bla   bla   ga'ai*
3SG.POSS   house   house   3SG.POSS   Western Pantar (Holton
'his house'   'the house of his'   2008:176)

In Lamaholot, the possessive determiner, whether free-standing or enclitic, is always postposed. Lamaholot's emphatic construction (preposed pronoun + noun + enclitic possessive determiner) can be found in some Papuan languages, for instance in Moi (West Papuan Phylum) – see Staden and Reesink (2008:57) – or in Mangga Buang (North New Guinea Cluster), to express inalienable possession – see Payne (1997:106).

(37) ta= laagi =m t =a
1SG.POSS woman 1SG.POSS 1SG POSS Moi (Staden & Reesink 2008:57)
'my wife'

(38) sa nama =ngg o nama =m
1SG hand 1 2SG hand 2 Mangga Buang (Payne 1997:106)
'my hand' 'your hand'

The alienable-inalienable contrast is widespread in the East Nusantara languages, although it takes different forms. According to Klamer, Reesink, and Staden (2007:119), in Teiwa (Tidore Island), both alienable and inalienable possession are expressed with the same paradigm of morphemes; this is also the case in Lamaholot. However, in Teiwa the possessive proclitic is optional for nouns referring to the "possessed", but compulsory for inalienable "possessed objects", while in Lamaholot it is the possessive enclitic that is compulsory for the latter. In Blagar, Steinhauer (1993:150-151) has observed a free form for possessive determiners of nouns with subject function, and a proclitic form for those of nouns with object function.

In view of the wide variety of forms (proclitics or enclitics; compulsory or optional) it seems difficult and even virtually impossible to trace the history of the mutual influences between the Austronesian languages of the Eastern Lesser Sunda Islands and the TNGP (Trans New-Guinea Phylum) languages, which are also extremely diverse.

The "newcomer" to the region is the Malay language, which emerged from the sixteenth century, and probably long before that, as the vehicular language of maritime trade. The various Malay dialects of eastern Indonesia bear witness to the *lingua franca* that Malay represented for the whole of insular South-East Asia during and before the colonial era – see Paauw (2008). For example, Larantuka Malay adopted the possessor-possessed order, using the verb *puN* [pun], [puŋ], [puɲ], [puɲa], meaning 'to own', as a preposition (40).

(39) *Rumah saya rumah -ku Saya punya rumah.*
house 1SG house 1SG.POSS 1SG to own house Malay/Indonesian
'my house' 'my house' 'I have a house.'

(40) *saya puN rumah.*
1SG PREP house Larantuka Malay
'my house'

A similar structure can be found in various Malay dialects, in Kupang and in the Moluccas. Although Larantuka Malay is spoken in the very centre of the Lamaholot linguistic area, it is unlikely that the "N(POSSESSOR) *pun* N(POSSESSED)" structure was borrowed from Lamaholot; on the other hand, it may have been borrowed from one or several East Nusantara languages, in which use of the possessive preposition is widespread.

In Alor, according to Klamer (personal communication), the "possessive ligature" *ning* probably comes from the grammaticalisation of the verb *-eing / -ing* 'to have'.

(41) *(Bapa John) ni ning uma*
(father NP) 3SG POSS house Alor (Klamer, p.c.)
'his (father John's) house'

There is a striking similarity with the *puN* construction in Larantuka Malay but no certainty as regards the direction in which the borrowing took place. Some Timor languages

may have influenced Larantuka Malay.[9] Another hypothesis, though less likely, is that the vehicular Malay of traders and seafarers plying the eastern Indonesian sea routes might in its turn have influenced popular Malay, or *bahasa Melayu pasar*, and led to its adopting this pattern.

CONCLUSION

Typological classification of the Eastern Lesser Sunda Islands languages is no easy task, especially in view of the presence in this vast area of several non-Austronesian languages. On the basis of the likely reciprocal influences that shaped them, through what are still little-known contacts between Austronesian and non-Austronesian languages, it is possible to define a group of East Nusantara languages (Klamer 2008, Klamer & Ewing 2010:121) that share one or several major typological features: preposed possessor, alienable *versus* inalienable possession, metathesis, final negation, and split intransitivity.

Lamaholot may be the only language in which the five features are found together, making it a particularly exciting and representative example of East Nusantara languages. The expression of possession in Lamaholot is characterized by a very rich morphology: two paradigms of possessive markers (suffixes and free morphemes), agreement rules that take into account not only syntax but also semantics (alienable/inalienable contrast), a preposition that specifically marks possession and two paradigms of possessive pronouns. Various morpho-phonological features (vowel alternation, epenthesis and metathesis) can also be observed, reflecting a wide variety of dialects and sometimes even found within a single one, as in the Adonara dialect. As a result, the study of the possessive system in Lamaholot probably raises more questions than it answers: apart from the well-established criterion of "preposed possessor" in East Nusantara languages, how do we identify the features that probably come from one or several non-Austronesian languages, and those that can be accounted for by a "local" morphological complexification reflecting the long history of the Lamaholot language?

NOTES

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[1] It was not until the 1970s that detailed documentation work, using the tools of modern linguistics, was carried out in the Eastern Lesser Sunda Islands; its pioneers were Wim Stockhof and Hein Steinhauer (1993), as well as Gorys Keraf (1978) for Lamaholot.

[2] Recent archeological finds (Galipaud & Simanjuntak, personal communication) date the arrival of Austronesians on East Flores between 2500 and 2000 BP.

[3] Glossing abbreviations: AGR: agreement morpheme; NEG: negation; OBJ: object; PREP: preposition; PRN: proper noun; POSS: possessive; PREP: preposition; SG: singular ; PL: plural; INCL: inclusive; EXCL: exclusive; NP: noun phrase

[4] Only two Lamaholot dialects have been described to date, by Keraf (1978) and Nishiyama & Kelen (2007); to which should be added the dictionary compiled by Pampus (2001) and several articles by Nagaya (2009 ; 2010).

[5] Lamaholot spelling has not been normalized. The transcription used in this paper is: [e] = é ; [ɛ] = è ; [ə] = e ; [ʔ] = '.

[6] *Pear Story* oral corpus – informer : Pak Yakobus 'Obi' Dewaraja Lamablawa, November 2009.

[7] Example quoted from Nishiyama and Kelen (2007: 11) [matakən] 'eye-my'

[8] It would appear that the Lamaholot dialect of Sandosi is close to that of Lamahera, on the neighbouring island of Lembata, which can be seen from the village of Sandosi, built on high ground. Sandosi may have been founded by a group coming from Lamahera, or at any rate been strongly influenced by speakers from Lamahera; further historical investigation is called for on this matter.

[9] It is well-known that Larantuka, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was considered by the Portuguese as a kind of barrier that was supposed to protect Timor and its highly-coveted sandalwood – see Barnes (1987). Relations with Timor were frequent, well before the colonial period. In one of the Timor languages, Tetum, the structure using a possessive preposition is similar to that found in the Malay dialects of eastern Indonesia. When the Dutch took control of Malacca in 1641, most of the Portuguese and their allies took refuge on Larantuka, thus probably bringing with them linguistic influence from peninsular Malay.

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