Possession and nominalization in Lamaholot

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The Lamaholot language

- A Central Malayo-Polynesian language of the Austronesian language family (Blust 1993)
  - See Donohue and Grimes (2008)

- Spoken in eastern part of Flores island and in Solor and Adonara islands in eastern Indonesia

- There are 33 dialects in the Lamaholot language (Keraf 1978).
  → Dialect chain

This presentation focuses on the Lewotobi dialect.

Typological characteristics of Lamaholot

- Lamaholot is nearly an isolating language.

- Lamaholot is a typical instance of “preposed possessor languages” (Himmelmann 2005)
  - Shows an array of typical eastern Indonesian features (Klamer 2002).
  - The basic word order is SVO.
    go gute muko.
    1SG get banana
    'I got a banana.'
  - A lexical possessor precedes its possessum.
  - A noun precedes the adjective modifying it.
Inalienable and alienable possession

- Possessive constructions in Lamaholot:
  - A possessor NP precedes a possessum NP
  - Possessum NPs are marked with a possessive marker.

- Inalienable construction (\(-N\)):
  - \(-N\) is realized as nasalization of the final vowel
  - Hugo  leĩ (lei \(-N\))
    Hugo  foot-POSS
    ‘Hugo’s foot’

- Alienable construction (\(=kə\)):
  - Hugo  laŋo?=kə (laŋo\(=kə\))
    Hugo  house-POSS
    ‘Hugo’s house’
  - \(=kə\) is realized as \(=nə\) after a nasalized vowel.

To be more specific

- The possessive constructions with the two possessive markers can be used in noun-modification by adjectives and verbs, too:

  Possessive construction:
  \([\text{NP} \text{Possessor N} \quad \text{Possessum N-POSS}]\)

  Noun-modifying construction:
  \([\text{NP} \quad \text{N-modifying V/Adj-POSS}]\)

- Other issues:
  - Syntactic ergativity
  - Extended functions of \(=kə\)

Findings and claims

- The usage of the two possessive markers is:
  - Cross-categorical
    - They can be used across different lexical categories (nouns, “adjectives”, and verbs)
  - Multi-functional
    - They can serve not only as possessive markers but also as nominalizers.
  - Classificatory
    - Nouns, “adjectives”, and verbs are divided into two classes depending on which marker they can occur

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Word classes in Lamaholot
3. Nouns and possessive markers
4. “Adjectives” and possessive markers
5. Verbs and possessive markers
6. Extended uses of \(=kə\)
7. Conclusions
Word classes in Lamaholot

- Lamaholot word classes are divided into the nominal and the verbal classes.

- **Nominal classes** can occur in an argument position **without additional morphological modification**.
  - Nouns
  - Pronouns
  - Numerals
  - Adjectival nouns \(\leftarrow\) Not discussed in this talk

Word classes in Lamaholot (cont’d)

- **Verbal classes** need additional morphological modification (i.e., nominalization) to occur in an argument position.
  - Verbs
  - Adjectival verbs (or simply “adjectives”)

- Both nominal and verbal classes can be employed as predicates.
Nouns and possessive markers

- Possessive markers indicate possessive relations when they occur with nouns.

- *N* for inalienable possession:
  - \( \text{ra} \text{ sepa} \text{ Nia keko} \) (keko-*N*)
  - 'They kicked Nia’s back.'

- \(=k\) for alienable possession:
  - \( \text{Nia gute Ika doi}=k\)\
  - 'Nia got Ika’s money.'

Inalienably-possessed vs. Alienably-possessed

- The choice between the two possessive markers depends on the distinction between inalienably-possessed and alienably-possessed nouns.

  - Inalienably-possessed nouns (*N*):
    - Secretion nouns: tae ‘excrement’, meke ‘urinate’, tuho ‘breast milk’

  - Alienably-possessed nouns (=k)

- Nouns are divided into the two groups with regard to the two possessive markers.

More on possessive constructions (1/2)

- Possessor nouns can be omitted:
  - A third person singular possessor is implied.
    - go gute possessor tale?=k\)
      1SG get rope=POSS
      ‘I got his/her rope.’

- Possessor pronouns follow (not precede) possessum nouns.
  - \( \text{ra hope oto go}\)\
    3PL buy car 1SG.POSS
    ‘They bought my car.’

More on possessive constructions (2/2)

- Complex possessive relations:
  - lka ba=k\) oto=k\)
    Ika father=POSS car=POSS
    ‘Ika’s father’s car’
  - guru kama?=ana?=k\)
    teacher 1PL.EXC.POSS child=POSS
    ‘our teacher’s child’
Adjectives and possessive markers

- Possessive markers express noun-modifying relationship when they occur with adjectives.
  - Should not be labeled as “possessive”

- Noun-modification with –N:
  - go hope honda beləʔ.
    1SG buy motorcycle big-POSS
    ‘I bought a big motorcycle.’

- Noun-modification with =kə:
  - go hope kursi blega=kə.
    1SG buy chair wide=POSS
    ‘I bought a wide chair.’

The choice between the two markers

- The choice between the two possessive markers is lexically determined.
  - Adjectival verbs that go with –N:
    bloloʔ ‘tall’, lereʔ ‘short’, sana ‘beautiful’, makoʔ
    etc.
  - Adjectival verbs that take =kə:
    krubu ‘dull’, waʔi ‘next’, wəʔu ‘stinky’, etc.

- There seems to be no semantic motivation for the distinction between the two classes.

More on noun-modification (1/2)

- Head nouns can be omitted when they are recoverable from the context.
  - ~N and =kə work as nominalizers.

- Noun-modification with –N:
  - go hope ø beləʔ.
    1SG buy big-POSS
    ‘I bought a big one.’

- Noun-modification with =kə:
  - go hope ø blega=kə.
    1SG buy wide=POSS
    ‘I bought a wide one.’
More on noun-modification (2/2)

- Complex example:
  - Hugo laŋo? =kə  belə?
  Hugo house =POSS big-POSS
  ‘Hugo’s big house’

- Parallelism between possessive and noun-modifying constructions:
  Possessive construction:
  \[\text{NP Possessor N Possessum N-POSS}\]
  Noun-modifying construction (adjectives):
  \[\text{NP N N-modifying Adj-POSS}\]

Ross’s (1998) observation

- Oceanic languages in northwest Melanesia
  - “the default attribute construction […] is one whose morphosyntax looks like that of a possession construction: the attribute occupies the (possessed) head slot, the noun the (possessor) modifier slot […]” (Ross 1998: 234)

- Mangap-Mbula (WOC):
  - ke pakaa -na
    tree piece -3SG.POSS
    ‘a piece of wood’
  - oge ambai-ŋa-na
    pig be.good-NMLZ-3SG.POSS
    ‘a good pig’ (‘a good one of a pig’)

Similar situation found in Lamaholot

- “the opposite of the cross-linguistic norm and a rare phenomenon worldwide” (Ross ibid.)
  - Interestingly, a similar construction pattern is found in Lamaholot.

- Lamaholot:
  - Possessive construction:
    Hugo mata-N ([matə])
    Hugo eye-POSS
    ‘Hugo’s eye’ (an eye of Hugo)
  - Possessive-like attributive construction:
    mata meʔa-N (meʔə)
    eye red-POSS
    ‘a red eye’ (a red one of an eye)
Verbs and possessive markers

- The possessive markers indicate noun-modification relationships when they occur with verbs.

- Noun-modification with -N:
  - Ika brea n-əʔə̃ ikə̃ go tunâʔ.
    Ika like 3SG-do fish 1SG grill-POSS
    ‘Ika liked the fish I grilled.’

- Noun-modification with =kə̃:
  - Ika brea n-əʔə̃ buku go basa=kə̃
    Ika like 3SG-do book 1SG read=POSS
    ‘Ika liked the book I read.’

Again, we see the same pattern!

- The possessive constructions can be used not only for noun-modification by adjectives but also by verbs (i.e., relative clauses):

  Possessive construction:
  \[ [\text{NP Possessor N}] \quad \text{Possessum N-POSS} \]

  Noun-modifying construction (verbs):
  \[ [\text{NP N}] \quad \text{N-modifying V-POSS} \]

- Noun-modification by verbs = relativization

The choice between the two markers

- The choice between the two possessive markers is partially phonologically determined and partially lexically specified.

- -N is the default possessive marker for verbs.

- =kə̃ is used in the following cases:
  - (i) Verbs with a nasalized final vowel: mari ‘say’, kriʔə̃ ‘work’, etc.
  - (iii) Borrowed verbs: basa ‘read’, aja ‘teach’ urus ‘manage’
  - (iii) Lexical blocking: mala ‘steal’ (vs. malaʔ)

Head nouns can be omitted

- Noun-modification with a head noun:
  - go kə̃ lama ra bihöʔ.
    1SG eat.1SG rice they cook-POSS
    ‘I ate the rice they cooked.’
  - Hugo pake doi Ika nei=ŋa.
    Hugo use money Ika give=POSS
    ‘Hugo used the money father gave.’

- Noun-modification without a head noun:
  - go kə̃ ø ra bihöʔ.
    1SG eat.1SG they cook-POSS
    ‘I ate the one they cooked.’
  - Hugo pake ø Ika nei=ŋa.
    Hugo use Ika give=POSS
    ‘Hugo used the one father gave.’

\[ \rightarrow \text{-N and =kə̃ work as nominalizers.} \]
Syntactic ergativity

- In Lamaholot noun-modification (=relativization) constructions, only S and P can be relativized on.
  - Exceptions: E and location
- To be more specific, A cannot be relativized on.
  - *go brea k-aʔã'ə̃' ata dikə̃'ə̃ biho lama=kə̃.
  - 1SG like 1SG-do person cook rice=POSS
  - Intended for ‘I like the person who cooked rice.’
- To relativize on such arguments, other strategies are employed:
  - na pe relativization construction
  - yang-relativization construction (Indonesian)

More examples

- S can be relativized on:
  - go brea k-aʔã'ə̃' ata dikə̃'ə̃ dẽ=nə̃.
  - 1SG like 1SG-do person stand=POSS
  - ‘I liked the person who is standing (there).’

- E can be relativized on:
  - go harũ'ə̃' gblakĩ'ə̃ mo gehiʔ.
  - 1SG meet man 2SG hate-POSS
  - ‘I met the man you hate.’
  - E is a stimulus argument of psych-predicates (e.g., brea ‘like’, taku ‘afraid’, etc)

Double nominalization

- =kə̃ can appear after –N to express exclusivity, contrastiveness, and even exclamavity.

- Exclusivity/contrastiveness:
  - mo gute gula kreʔ=naʔ.
  - 2SG get candy small-POSS=POSS
  - ‘Get the small candy (not the large candy)’

- Exclamavity:
  - Hugo laroʔ=kə̃ beləʔ=naʔ.
  - Hugo house=POSS big-POSS=POSS
  - ‘How big Hugo’s house is!’
with other pronominals

- can be employed with other pronominals, too, to indicate exclusivity and contrastiveness.

Pronoun:
- teʔẽ oto goʔe=nə̃.
  here.POSS car 1SG.POSS=POSS
  ‘This is my car (not anyone else’s).’

Demonstrative:
- go to gula peʔe=nə̃.
  1SG want candy there.POSS=POSS
  ‘I want that candy (not this candy).’

Summary (1)

- The usage of the two possessive markers is:
  - Cross-categorical
    - They can be used across different lexical categories (nouns, “adjectives”, and verbs)
  - Multi-functional
    - They can serve not only as possessive markers but also as nominalizers.
  - Classificatory
    - Nouns, “adjectives”, and verbs are divided into two classes depending on with which marker they can occur

Summary (2)

- Parallelism between possessive and noun-modifying constructions:
  - Possessive construction:
    \[ [\text{NP Possessor N Possessum N-POSS}] \]
  - Noun-modifying construction:
    \[ [\text{NP N N-modifying V/Adj-POSS}] \]
- Other issues:
  - Syntactic ergativity
  - Extended uses of =kə: exclusiveness, contrastiveness, and exclamativity
Etymology of \(-N\) and \(=kə\)

- The origin of the two possessive markers remains to be investigated:
  - Most likely, \(-N\) came from the PMP pronoun \(*-ña\) ‘3SG.GEN’ (Bowden and Ross 2003:145)
  - The source for \(=kə\) is unknown. Some other dialects of Lamaholot don’t have the marker that corresponds to \(=kə\).
  - The double nominalization pattern, among others, tells us that \(=kə\) developed more recently than \(-N\).

Adjectival nouns

- Adjectival nouns can occur in an argument position with any morphological modification.

- Adjectival nouns and verbs are similar in that both express a property concept, can be used as postnominal modifiers, and appear in comparative and superlative constructions.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Argument position</th>
<th>Postnominal modification</th>
<th>Comparative (=a)?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nouns</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectival nouns</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectival verbs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verbs</td>
<td>NMLZ</td>
<td>NMLZ</td>
<td>No</td>
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</tbody>
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Adjectival nouns

- Noun-modification:
  - \(\text{go} \hspace{1em} \text{hope} \hspace{1em} \text{honda} \hspace{1em} \text{wuʔu}.\)
  \(1SG \hspace{1em} \text{buy} \hspace{1em} \text{motorcycle} \hspace{1em} \text{new} \)
  ‘I bought a new motorcycle.’
  - \(\text{go} \hspace{1em} \text{hope} \hspace{1em} \emptyset \hspace{1em} \text{wuʔu}.\)
  \(1SG \hspace{1em} \text{buy} \hspace{1em} \text{new} \)
  ‘I bought a new one.’

- Double-nominalization (\(?)\):
  - \(\text{go} \hspace{1em} \text{hope} \hspace{1em} (\text{honda}) \hspace{1em} \text{wuʔu}=kə.\)
  \(1SG \hspace{1em} \text{buy} \hspace{1em} (\text{motorcycle}) \hspace{1em} \text{new}=\text{POSS} \)
  ‘I bought the new motorcycle (not the old one).’