

The resolution of implicit possessors of body part expressions in Yaminawa (Pano, Peru)

In Yaminawa, body part terms are not grammatically required to occur with an explicit possessor, but semantically they are inalienably possessed and are always understood to be possessed by some entity.

As the head noun of a possessive noun phrase, the possessor is readily evident, as seen in (1).

- (1) a. *ẽwẽ* *wero kecho* *nĩnĩ-di*.
 1SG.POS eye edge stretch-REM.PST
 'A long time ago, they stretched out my eyelids.' (MRR.0141)
- b. *wẽnẽ* *bapo ado,* *iska-xõ*.
 man.GEN head LOC, be.like.this-SS.SE
 'The man's head was here, (sitting) like this.' (MML.0204)

As simple noun phrases with no explicit possessor, the interpretation is invariably that the possessor is the absolutive argument, as seen in (2).

- (2) a. *xobaya* *rawe-ri=mẽ* *bapo* *xoa-i-wo*
 teen.girl two-also=INTERR head scratch-IMPRF-PL
 'The two girls_i, was it?, were also scratching their_j heads.' (MRR.0043)
- b. *bia* *nawã* *poko* *pochi-nõ*
 2SG.ACC mestizo.ERG guts pull.out.string-PURP
 '(I wish) that you would have your guts taken out by a mestizo!' (MML.0183)

In the case of body part terms that have been phonologically reduced to prefixes, there is some variation. In most cases, and like other Panoan languages (see Zariquiey 2011:664 and Valenzuela 2003:360), a body part prefix on a transitive verb will be interpreted as being possessed by the object (3a), and a body part prefix on an intransitive verb will be interpreted as being possessed by the subject (3b).

- (3) a. *basharo-nẽ* *ato* *o-xte-pake-ki*
 jaguar-ERG 3PL.ABS foot-cut-fall-because
 '... because the jaguar cut their_j feet off of them_i.' (MLGA.157)
- b. *ñõshãwo-xta* *shiki wõtsẽ-ki* *we-tõko-be-a*
 old.woman-affect corn heap-INSTR face-strike-REFL-PRF
 'The old woman_i bumped her_j face on the heap of corn.' (MRR.0043)

In a minority of cases, however, the possessor of a body part prefix may be interpreted as the ergative or nominative argument, as in (4). This is distinctly unlike what it found in other Panoan languages.

- (4) *wari-ti-wi* [ẽ] *bia* *pewe-pe-we-tia-di*
 sun-all-also 1SG.NOM 2SG.ACC REDUP-back-carry-always-REM.PST
 'All these years, I've constantly carried you on my back.' (not 'your back') (MRR.0043)

This talk presents original data from both elicitation and a corpus of Yaminawa narratives to explore the ways that Yaminawa speakers identify the possessor of a body part expression when it is not grammatically explicit. This data ultimately bears on larger questions in the study of Yaminawa such as the degree of syntactic ergativity and the status of body part prefixes as noun incorporation.

REFERENCES:

- Valenzuela, Pilar M. 2003. Transitivity in Shipibo-Konibo Grammar. PhD thesis, University of Oregon.
- Zariquiey, Roberto. 2011. A grammar of Kashibo-Kakataibo. PhD thesis, LaTrobe University.