Some Notes on Possessive Constructions in Palikur (Arawak, Brazil)[1]

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1. Introduction

This study presents a preliminary survey and an analysis of possessive constructions in the Palikur language. "Possession" is taken as a universal concept due to the fact that languages usually show conventionalized ways to express it (Heine 1997). The category of possession can be manifested in languages in different ways, reflecting a wide variety of construction types. It also shows a range of senses that are not restricted solely to possession or ownership. This study presents a semantic and morphosyntactic analysis of some possessive constructions observed in Palikur (Arawák), focusing in particular on: (i) the semantic distinction between alienable and inalienable possession, expressed morphologically with the presence or absence of suffixes relating to alienability; (ii) possessive constructions with certain type of verbs, with the attached prefixes *ka-* and *ma-*, respectively, 'positive' and 'negative' attributive; and (iii) constructions with the postpositions *-dahan* 'to' and *-kak* 'with', showing types of relationships such as 'benefactive', 'means', and 'comitative'. The data for this presentation is drawn mainly from my fieldwork[2] undertaken among the Palikur communities living in the Urucawá river, in the Oiapoque Basin, in the Uaçá Indigenous Land, Oiapoque, Amapá State, Brazil. Other sources consulted were Launey (2003), Aikhenvald and Green (1998), Green and Green (1972). The language is spoken by approximately 1,000 people in Brazil. This language is also spoken in French Guyana.

The aim of this paper is threefold. First, it aims to describe the range of constructions that encode the relationship of possession in the Palikur language, that is, constructions having possession as a generic or umbrella label (cf. Heine 1997). Secondly, this study highlight, in a preliminary fashion, how these constructions can help to elucidate the conceptualization or semantic structure that is relevant to the description of these encoded relationships, the morphosyntactic and semantic mechanisms used to express these relationships, and how these mechanisms can also contribute to our understanding of the typology of possessive expression. Thirdly, the analysis involves the application of some assumptions of the theoretical framework and methodology of Cognitive Linguistics, *i.e.*, applying the notions of schemas, construal and conceptualization to possessive constructions in Palikur grammar and to the way these constructions express relationships between entities. It is understood that a description does not mean only a list of terms and rules assigned to them, but rather, description involves searching for semantic relations among senses. The results of this search can be revealing about how the basic conceptual system of a language can be understood in relation to the experiences of speakers and their use of the language.

What follows here is organized in two parts. Section 2 introduces the theoretical approach underlying the proposed analysis. Sections 3 and 4 outline the methods of the

empirical analysis and the findings of the study. The terminology used throughout the paper reflects an analysis of the language within a cognitive framework.

The semantic relations between the two arguments can vary including, among other relationships, kinship, body parts, and ownership (Heine 1997a, 1997b; Croft 2003). In the analysis of Palikur possessive constructions in section 3, one of the arguments in each construction is assigned the semantic role of possessor, i.e. denoting the element (entity) that establishes relationship, and is the head; the other that of possessee, *i.e.*, denoting the element (entity) that establishes relationships and is the modifier. The head of the construction realizing the possessor (hereafter X) is referred to as "possessor," and the head of the phrase realizing the possessee (hereafter Y) "possessee" (Heine 1997a). For the purpose of this study, terms such as "possessive construction", "possessor" and "possessee" were adopted for all constructions that are surveyed, and the constructions–the form and meaning pairing–cover different structures that we can characterize as possessive constructions, *i.e.*, predicative possessive, nominal attributive possessive, pronominal attributive possessive and many others, regardless of what semantic relations are involved.

In Section 3, I also briefly review the ways in which possession is treated in Arawák languages. Section 4 provides a summary of the semantics of possessive constructions in Palikur, and Section 5 presents the concluding remarks.

2. The Theoretical Foundation of this Study

Possession can be manifested in a language with different types of constructions according to the devices available to speakers when using their languages to encode such concepts. The focus on possession in linguistic studies is based on the assumption that possession is a universal phenomenon, as stated by Heine (1997 a:1), "any human language can be expected to have conventionalized expressions for it."

It is not easy to establish a domain within which a description of possession can be undertaken. Heine (1997) presents a review of the various definitions of possession that appear in the literature. For example, one of the concepts related to possession is 'control,' implying that there is some type of control of the possessor over the possessee. Another concept is related to 'sphere of influence,' which appears in Langacker (1987, cited by Heine 1997) and also 'schema of interest of involvement' in Brugman (1988, cited by Heine 1997). Note that the domain of possession was discussed at some length by Chappel and McGregor (1996).

For all the definitions presented for possession, some questions have been raised by Heine (1997): how can we account for the variety of manifestation of the notions associated with possession in languages? Should our definition be in linguistic or extralinguistic terms? For some authors any definition strictly linguistically-based would not account appropriately for the definition (Seiler 1983, Taylor 1989, as cited by Heine 1997).

Typological studies of possession include that by Croft (2002) who proposes a typology of the possessive that exemplifies the range of morphosyntactic strategies used cross-linguistically. Nichols (1988) presented a typological account of possessive

constructions by examining different North American languages and proposing implicational parameters, according to whether alienable and inalienable nouns belong to open or closed classes of nouns, respectively. Nichols states, for example, that if a language has nouns other than kin and body parts terms as its inalienable nouns, usually it will have kin and body parts terms as well. She uses inalienable possession more in terms of morphosyntactic mechanisms than primarily a distinction that is semantically-based. She conceives of possessive affixes as related to head-marked possession. Specifically focusing on the grammar of inalienability, Chappel and McGregor (1996) emphasized domains such as kinship, body parts and spatial relations and how they are treated differently among languages and also that languages show "many complexities in the formal means of expressing inalienability, in the different nuances of its expression and in the semantic domains encompassed by the various languages under investigation" (p. 26).

The theoretical assumptions underlying the study presented in this paper come specifically from cognitive approaches in current cognitive and functional linguistic theories. Specifically, a definition and some explanations of these assumptions are in order. Construal is defined as a conceptual organization of events (Langacker 2001; Heine 1997; Croft and Cruse 2004). This notion within cognitive grammar refers to the human being's "ability to conceive and portray the same situation in alternative ways" (Langacker 2001:3). Schemas are seen as stereotypical descriptions of basic human beings' experiences, related mainly to action, location, accompaniment and, existence (Heine 1997a, 1997b). Finally, conceptualization can be taken as the residence of meaning, where conceptual content is tied to the particular way of construing it. It refers "to any facet of mental experience, including apprehension of the physical, linguistic, social, and cultural context" (Langacker 2001:3).

Heine (1997a) uses a grammaticalization-paradigm-base to explain his concerns about possession having the following assumptions: (1) grammatical categories structures are predictable once we know the range of possible cognitive structures from which they can be derived; (2) grammatical categories can be traced back to semantically concrete source concepts; (3) a small pool of possible source concepts will be mapping each grammatical category; (4) while the choice of sources is determined primarily by universal ways of conceptualization, it is also influenced by other factors–especially by areal forces.

Heine (1997a) not only relies on an explanation in accordance with grammaticalization and typological traditions, but also claims that "language structure is derivative of the cognitive forces that gave rise to it." (p.7). In addition, he proposes primarily extralinguistic explanations to the linguistic structures. In fact, his main explanatory parameters bring together cognition and diachrony. For him, cognition relates to acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of knowledge. He explores the notion of conceptual transfer, conceived as a cognitive process, in which different concepts and the way they are linguistically shaped can also be extended to refer to other concepts (p.7). He does this specifically in the context of possessive constructions. In his own words, "our task will be to identify and describe salient processes of conceptual transfer relating to the domain of possession and, by doing so, to understand why possessive constructions are formed the way they are" (p. 7).

3. Alienability and Inalienability in Arawák Languages

The relevance of alienable and inalienable distinction for categories and subcategories in Arawak (Maipuran) languages has been recognized by previous comparative studies (Payne 1991, 1987, Aikhenvald 1999). In Payne's study (1987) of the morphological elements of Maipuran Arawak–specifically in the agreement affixes and the genitive construction–a characterization of the affixes common in Arawak languages is presented. Similarly, the difference between alienable and inalienable in nouns in Arawák languages is recognized as relevant.

Payne (ibid) also proposed affixal cognates for Maipuran languages to argue for the probable Proto-Maipuran forms for the agreement affixes and the affixes of the genitive construction. He concludes that "agreement prefixes which normally agree with the subject of the verb or denote the possessor in the genitive construction are posited as *nu- 1SG, *pi- 2SG, *ri- 3SG MASC, *tu-3SG FEM, *wa-1PL, *xi-2PL, and *na- 3PL. Verbal agreement suffixes are of the same shapes and normally agree with the object or stative subject" (p.57). Similarly, he states that the documentation from a wide range of Maipuran languages substantiates a suppletive suffix with the probable proto-allomorphs *-ni, *-te, *-re, *i > -e and -∅ as Maipuran possessive markers which delineate noun classes. He also posits *-tsi as the form of an "absolute" suffix, *i.e.,* one which indicates the abnormal unpossessed or detached form of inalienably possessed nouns.

Aikhenvald (1999), like Payne (1987), also emphasizes that Arawák languages make the distinction between alienable and inalienable possession, and also that body part and kinship possessions are crucial parameters to the understanding of possession in these languages.

Traditionally, studies of Arawak languages use the terms "inalienable nouns" vs. "unpossessed nouns" and "alienable nouns vs. possessed nouns" interchangeably, as in Facundes' analysis of Apurinã unpossessed and possessed nouns (Facundes 1995). Studies of aspects of possession in Palikur in particular appear in Launey (2003), and in more general terms, in Aikhenvald and Green (1998) and Green & Green (1972).

My analysis of possessive constructions in Palikur includes seven types of constructions that encode relationship between entities taken as *X* and *Y,* following the proposed event schemas by Heine (1997). Each type of constructions investigated here will be presented in the next sections. A summary of the constructions to be analyzed in each of the following sections can be seen in Table 1:

Possessive Constructions in Palikur	Proposed Schemas (Preliminary account)
Possessive pronominal prefix (with inalienably possessed nouns)	*X's Y* exist –*Genitive Schema*
Possessive suffix –a, -ni/-n, -pe, -ra, -i, and forms presenting irregular suffixes and/or suppletive forms (with alienably possessed nouns)	*Y* is *X*'s property–*Equation Schema)* *X ,Y* exists–*Genitive Schema)* *Y* exists for *X*–*Existence (goal) Schema*
ka-/ma- 'positive'/'negative' to have/attributive	*Y* exists for *X*–*Existence (Goal) Schema)*
-daha plus *-ni*	*Y* exists for *X*–*Existence (Goal) Schema)*
ka- plus *-daha* plus *–ni*	*Y* exists for *X*–*Existence (Goal) Schema)*
Postposition *-kak*	*X* is with *Y*–*Companion Schema* *X* is located at *Y*–*Companion Schema*
Possessive classifier (*Pref–N N*) with obligatorily non-possessed noun	(As for) *X, X*'s *Y*–*Topic Schema*

Table 1: Palikur Possessive Constructions and Mapping of Schemas based on Heine (1997)

3.1 Possessive pronominal prefix (with inalienably possessed nouns)

The possessive pronominal prefix construction uses the mechanism of concatenation of affixes. In these constructions we have a pronominal prefix that is obligatory before an inalienably possessed noun, *i.e.,* body parts and kinship terms. The pronominal prefixes can seen in Table 2. The constructions are of the type *X's Y,* which implies a Genitive Schema. Let us observe examples (1) and (2), where body part nouns and kinship terms, respectively appear. These kinds of nouns never occur alone, as single uttered root forms. They obligatorily take the unpossessed forms such as in the examples, with the discontinuous morpheme: *i-........-ti/-t* (prefix *i-* '*INDEF*' and the suffix *-ti*–allomorphs: *-ti* and *-t*) or they can take the possessed forms. The examples in (1a) and (2a) show the unpossessed forms for body parts and kinship terms, respectively: an overview of the set of forms for the person markings in Palikur can be seen in Table 2, (where ~ = in variation with):

(1) Body parts terms
Unpossessed Forms   Possessed Forms
a₁.   a₂.
   piwokna iwakti   ig pidik giwak
   pi-wok-na   i-wak-ti   ig   pidik gi-wak
   two-NUM.CL-two INDEF-hand-NON.POSS   3SGm   shake 3SGm-hand
   'Two hands'   'He shook his hands'

b₁.   b₂.
   iyaknit   punahmna giyakni
   i-yakni-t   punahmna gi-yakni
   INDEF-heart-NON.POSS   alligator   3SGm-heart
   'Heart'   'Alligator's heart'

(2) Kinship terms

Unpossessed Forms   Possessed Forms

a₁.   a₂.

  igit   ig awayg gig
  i-ig-it   ig   awayg gi-ig
  INDEF-dad-NON. POSS   3SGm man 3SGm-dad
  'Father'   'The man is my father'

b₁.   b₂.

  ikamkayhti   eg nukamkayh
  i-kamkayh-ti   eg   nu-kaamkayh
  INDEF-daughter-NON.POSS   3SGf 1SG-daughter
  'Daughter'   'She is my daughter'

Person	Number		Gender		Set of Forms for Person Markings		
					Set 1: Prefixes	Set 2: Suffixes	Set 3: Independent Forms
1	SG				nu- ~ n- ~ nu-**…**-uh ~ n- **…** –uh	-un	nah
2	SG				pi- ~ p-	-pi ~ - ep	pis
3	SG		m		gi- ~ g-	-gi ~ -ig	ig
			f		gu- ~ g-	-gu ~ ig	eg
			n	DEF	ga- ~ g-	-ni ~ -in	in
				IND	a- ~ ar- ~ Ø-		
				ANA	-ni ~ n-		
1	PL	1 2 (X)			u- ~ u- ~ w-	-u ~ -wi	wis
		1 2 (3)			u- **…**-wiy ~ u- **…**-wiy ~ w- **…** –wiy		
		1 3			u- (**…**-uh) ~ u- (**…**-uh) ~ w- (**…**-uh)		
2	PL	2 2 /3			yi- ~ y-	-yi ~ -ey	yis
3	PL	3 3	m		-gi **…** -kis ~ -g **…** kis	-gi…kis ~ -ig …kis	igkis
		3 3	f		-gu **…** -kis -g **…** -kis	-gi …kis ~ -ig …kis	egkis

Table 2: Palikur Person Markings–based on Launey (2003) and Aikhenvald & Green (1998)

3.2. Possessive suffixes -a, -ni/-n, -pe, -ra, -i, and forms presenting irregular suffixes and/or suppletive forms (with alienably possessed nouns)

Possessive suffix constructions appear with alienably possessed nouns. They contrast with the previous type of construction because the root of the nouns in these constructions can occur without any kind of affix when the noun is not possessed. In addition, the forms that are possessed cannot take the pronominal prefix and the possessive suffixes   *-a, -ni/-n, -pe,*

-ra, -i. The pronominal suffixes that appear with these forms are the same of the previous constructions. (See Table 2).

The meaning of each one of these suffixes is still under investigation. Green& Green (1972) present the forms of these suffixes and their distribution with no semantic description of them as can be seen in the examples (2) through (7) below. There are not any other analyses correlating these suffixes to their semantic characterizations. According to Green (p.c), these suffixes no longer carry meanings. My ongoing fieldwork with Palikur speakers includes investigation of all of these suffixes and I hope that further investigation will tell us more about the meaning and use of these suffixes.

(2) gubukun
   gu-buku-n
   3SGf-skirt-POSS
   'Her skirt'

(3) pisekewpe
   pis-sekew-pe
   3SGf-skirt-POSS
   'Your cook'

(4) yiunra
   yi-un-ra
   2PL-water-POSS
   'Your water'

(5) gikakwa
   gi-kakw-a
   3SGm-money-POSS
   'His money'

(5) gepwi
   gi-epw-i
   3SGm-bench-POSS
   'His bench'

(7) gikukir
   gi-kuki-r
   3SGm-flour-POSS
   'His flour'

3.3. *ka-/ma-* 'positive/negative to have/attributive' and verbalizing prefix

The prefixes *ka-* 'Positive Attributive' and *ma-* 'Negative Attributive' appear before noun stems to form constructions that can function as predicates, with adjectival phrase function, encoding 'possessive' relationship. Examples of these possessive constructions are shown in (8) through (10), where the pronominal set 3 is used (see Table 2):

(8)

a₁. *ka-* 'positive to have/attributive'
   nah kahayo
   nah   ka-hayo
   1SG   PosATT-wife
   'I am not single or I have wife'

a₂. *ma-* 'negative to have/attributive'
   nah mahayo
   nah   ma-hayo
   1SG   NegATT-wife
   'I am single or I do not have wife'

b₁. *ka-* 'positive to have/attributive'
   nah   kabiha
   nah   ka-biha
   1SG PosATT-quantity
   'I am full or I do not have hunger'

b₂. *ma-* 'negative to have/attributive'
   nah   mabiha
   nah   ma-biha
   1SG NegATT-quantity
   'I am not full or I have hunger'

c₁. *ka-* 'positive to have/attributive'   c₂. *ma-* 'negative to have/attributive'
    nah kabivwiye   nah mabivwiye
    nah   ka-bivwi-ye   nah ma-bivwi-ye
    1SG PosATT-willigness-CONT:m   1SG NegATT-willigness-CONT:m
    "I am not lazy or I have willingness   "I am lazy or I do have willingness
    to do things'   to do things'

The preceding examples show that these constructions function as stative verbal phrases and it also as adjective phrases, attributing some kind of quality to the subject (predicative). They must be considered verbs as they receive the set of person marking and other suffixes that verbs take, as in example (10), where the aspect 'continuative–masculine form' appears.

3.4. *-daha* plus *-ni*

Constructions with *-daha* plus *-ni* are formed with the same pronominal prefix of the set 1 (See Table 2) as the constructions of section 3.1 and 3.1 plus a noun that can be subject to ellipsis when it has already been mentioned in the discourse. Let us examine example (11), where the elements X (*nudahani*) and Y (*im*) in the construction can change their orders. It is even possible for Y to be elliptical, which is the case of (11c). The set 1 of the pronominal forms appears with this construction (see Table 2):

(11)
(a)   (b)
nudahani im   im nudahani
nu-daha-ni   im   im nu-daha-ni
1SG-for-POSS fish   fish 1SG-for-POSS
'My fish'   'The fish is mine, my fish'

 (c)   (d)
nudahani   nima
nu-daha-ni   nu-im-a
1SG-for-POSS   1SG-fish-POSS
It's mine' (my fish)   'My fish'

This construction implies a Goal Schema. This fish would be a fish someone had bought or got from somebody else. The construal made through construction (11b) differs from one in which the prefix is used, such as *nima* 'my fish'. This is the fish that someone got in the river. Also, the form *daha* can appear in constructions like the following, in example (12), showing a benefactive semantic role:

(12) eg awna ataknamu hapis nudahan kwekwe
     eg   awna atak-na-mu   hapis   nu-daha-n   kwekwe
     3SGf speak go-IMP-FAM   shoot   1SG-for-POSS parrot
     'She said: 'go, my dear, [and] shoot the parrot for me (or my parrot)'

3.5. *ka-* plus *-daha* plus *-ni*

The *ka-* plus *-daha* plus *-ni* construction seems to be similar to the ones already mentioned. Although both take the noun *daha*, they differ formally in person marking. The construction *-dahan* seem to be *daha* plus *-ni*–where the structure has a Pref + N ('*thing*+POSS) and it has to take the specific set 1 of person marking, whereas the construction "*ka-* plus *daha* plus *-ni*" takes the set of 3 of person marking. The set of forms for the person markings in Palikur can be seen in Table 2.

      Recall the *ka-/ma-* 'positive/negative attributive morphemes that relates to have possessive construction in Section 3.3. We can observe this *ka-* is similar to the one that occurs in the construction presented in example (13), however, *kadahan ~ kadahani*, as a construction it is already a result of the concatenated elements that function as a verb that means 'have' and 'exist'. The distribution of the nouns in relation to this form will give the following readings: if *kadahan* comes before a nominal (noun or personal pronoun) it will be coded as an existential meaning verb (as in example 17) and if it comes after the nominal it will be read as possessive meaning. Similarly, the morpheme *ka-* seems to have the positive attributive meaning only and the negative morpheme *ka-* 'Neg' can co-occur to negate the predicate, as can be seen in (14):

(13)
ka+daha+ni (PosATT+N:thing+POSS)

(14)
na kakadahan bugut ay
na   ka-ka-daha-n   bugut ay
1SG   Neg- PosATT -N:thing-POSS bread here
'I do not have bread here'

Some of the crucial properties of this construction include the specific type of prefixes it takes–which are the ones of set 3 of the independent forms of person for marking from Table 2. On the other hand, this construction can only appear with the noun *daha* 'thing'. Observe the examples (15) and (16) where we can see the construction functioning to establish relationships among entities of the possessive type.

(15)
ig kadahani pahat ah
ig   ka-daha-ni   paha-t   ah
3m   PosATT-thing-POSS one-NUM.CL:VERTICAL stick
'He had a stick'
(Aikhenvald & Green 1998:444)

(16)
nah kadahani pahakti pilatno
nah   ka-daha-ni   pahak-ti   pilatno
1SG PosATT-thing-POSS   one-NUM.CL:PLANT   banana
'I have a banana'

(17)
kadahan hiyeg ay
ka-daha-ni   hiyeg   ay
PosATT-for-POSS   hiyeg   people
'There are people here'

3.6. Postposition -*kak*

The construction with the presence of -*kak* 'comitative' embodies possessive relationship as the example (18) can show. In this example represents X and Y, where Y (*atit* 'peper') is with X (*giwtrik* [literally 'inside his eyes'])and then have X implying that X is with Y, and it represents the Companion Schema. This construction also implies the Location Schema: Y (*atit* 'peper') is located at X *(giwtrik)*:

(18)
giwtrik akak atit
gi-ut-riku   a-kak   atit
3SGm-eye-POSP:inside 3n-POSP:with   pepper
'His eyes have hot pepper (inside)'

This postposition can also be observed in examples in (19), and (20), taking also the sense of 'means' and 'comitative,' respectively, without any sense of possession:

 (19)
nah   ay ig aymuhun akak parasu
nah ay   ig   aymu-nu a-kak   parasu
1SG here 3SG nurture-? 3n-Adp:with yam
'[When] I [was] there, he raised me with/by means of yam'

(20)
Ig tipik gikaka ig danuh atere gut gihayo
Ig   tipik gi-kak-a   ig   danuh ay-ta-re   gu-t   gi-hayo
3SGm leave 3SGm-Adp:with-? 3SGm arrive   here-DIR-AN 3SGf-DIR 3SGm wife
'He left with him and arrived there to his wife'

3.7. Possessive Classifier

Nouns that cannot be used in the type of construction with a pronominal possessive prefix enter in into another other type of construction, such as the following (21):

(21) Pref–N_1 N_2

In this construction N_1 functions as a classifier and N_2 as a noun that cannot be possessed by possessive prefix. An analysis of possessive classifier in Palikur appears in Aikhenvald & Green (1998), and it also was reported in Green & Green (1972) using the tagmemic approach to grammar. In Launey (2003) there is a discussion related to these forms that appear with some nouns. Here it is considered that these forms of nouns–here called N_1 takes the pronominal possessive prefix and this form relates to the second one–here called N_2. This second noun N_2 cannot appear in constructions of the type that take the pronominal possessive prefix. This is illustrated in examples (22a) and (22b); Table 3 brings the overview of the forms of possessive classifiers in the language:

(22)
a.   b.
numutra   numana pilatno
nu-amutr-a   banana   nu-mana   pilatno
1SG-plant   banana   1SG-food banana
 'my banana' 'that I planted and took care of'   'My banana' 'that I can eat'

Forms of the Possessive Classifiers in Palikur		
-pig	'pet'; used with domesticated animals	a. gipig pewru b. gipig mutom gi-pig pewru gi-pig mutom 3SGm-pet dog 3SGm-pet sheep 'his dog' 'his sheep'
-mana	'food'; used with fruit and vegetables	a. pimana uwas b. pimana pilatno pi-mana uwas pi-mana pilatno 2SG-food orange 2SG-food banana 'your orange' 'your banana'
-mutra	'plant'	numutra pilatno nu-mutra pilatno 1SG-plant banana 'My banana' (i.e. the one I planted)
-win	'catch, animal caught to be eaten'	nuwin arudiki nu-win arudiki 1SG-catch tapir 'The tapir I caught'
-kamkayh	'child'	pikamkayh awayg pi-kamkayh awayg 1SG-child boy 'my son'

Table 3: Possessive Classifiers in Palikur (from Aikhenvald and Green [1998])

4. Senses, Construal and Conceptualization

The relationship among entities and events requires us to observe the meanings that are brought through the selection of specific constructions, which will be invoking the correspondence of relationships between entities.

Constructions can show relationships that will lead us to infer other meanings that can only be understood in generating other propositional forms which were not uttered all but that relate with the way the speaker can build up the meaning, as part of the cognitive construal of the that particular meaning. So, the schemas and the construal that are involved may reveal to us the nature of these relationships and show us that these relationships are, already a part of the language's conventionalized meaning.

Some constructions showing the construal made by the speaker about the relationship among entities differ significantly. Let us see some examples, first, with *im* 'fish' in (22); second, with *pilatno* 'banana' in (24); and, third with *payt* 'house' in (25).

im
(23)

a.			b.	
nudahan im			nima	
nu-daha-n	im		nu-im-a	
1SG-thing-POSS	fish		1SG-fish-POSS	
'My fish'			'My fish'	

Observing these two examples in (23), we can say that the difference I have found, after confirming with native speaker consultants that example (23a) implies that someone got the fish from somebody else. It could be the case of buying the fish belonging originally to someone else and that fish became the person's fish. In this case, the construction used was the one with *-daha plus -n*. On the other hand, the example in (23b) was the case of someone's who got the fish in the river: it was her/his fish that she/he has gotten herself/himself.

In the examples (24a) and (24b), it can be seen that different constructions are serving different construal. In this case, the way the conceptualization of *pilatno* 'banana' can be realized: I have the banana as it is in my possession (23a); the banana that is the banana from my plantation (23b); or I have a banana, which implies that I have a single banana' (24c).

pilatno
(24)

a.		b.	
nudahan	pilatno	numutra	pilatno
nu-daha-ni	pilatno	nu-mutri-a	banana
1SG-thing-POSS	banana	1SG-plant-POSS	banana
'My banana'		'My banana'	

c.

na	kadahan	pilatno
na	ka-daha-n	pilatno
1SG	PosATT-thing-POSS	banana

'I have banana'

In the examples below, (25a) implies that the person has a house that is already built and belongs to him. On the other hand, (25b) can read that the house belongs to him but it is a case of a house that he will be building in a specific place, i.e. it has not been built, yet. The house is destined for the person. In Palikur culture, when a couple marries, they are given a place to have their house built. Note that *payt* 'house' is the unpossessed form and the possessed form appears in (25a):

payt
(25)

a.

pivinu
pi-vinu
2SG-house
'Your house'

b.

pidahan payt	
pi-daha-n	payt
2SG-thing-POSS	house

'Your house'

5. Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, I have shown that, concerning the constructions presented in this study–specifically in relation to the noun categories and its subcategories, the grammar of possession in Palikur resembles that of the other Arawak languages (Payne 1987, Aikhenvald 1999, Facundes 1995). The study presented here differs from the previous ones because it is based on assumptions of cognitive linguistics including notions such as construal, schemas and conceptualization. This study reveals how complex possessive constructions in Palikur are, taking possession as an umbrella, following Heine (1997a). Similarly, the use of the assumptions of cognitive linguistics enabled me to present a description about a part of Palikur language grounded on a substantial body of culture-specific knowledge, *i.e.*, in a system of conceptualization and interactions among speakers and their world. Such an analysis presumes social, cultural and historical complexities that involve human beings and their language use. Departing from an analysis on how the scenes could be portrayed differently reflecting language convention; I presented a description of the constructions' types and their senses in Palikur. It was observed that a very important distinction between alienability and inalienability can be of great relevance in languages, such as the studies on typological perspective of Nichols' (1988) for North American languages, Payne's (1987) and Aikhenvald's (1999) for the Arawák languages–a linguistic family that Palikur language belongs to. In this way, one can make explicit to what extent applying assumptions of Cognitive Linguistics can highlight in-depth understanding of the similarities and differences among the possessive constructions in Palikur, presented in section 3.

Moreover, the analysis developed here revealed not only the nature of what I call language-specific characteristics, *i.e.*, the Palikur language's own characteristics–grounded in Palikur people's own experience in their world and reflecting their knowledge, society and culture, but also the cognitively based characteristics, which are claimed to be universal properties of the expression of possession. The findings in this study shed light on Palikur possessive constructions as they relate to: (i) different relationships between entities; (ii) different senses that the constructions may show, and (iii) how these senses reflect different construals of the same scene in the conceptualization of different situations of communication and use of language.

Notes

Abbreviations

ANA= Anaphoric
ATT = Attributive
CL = Classifier
CONT = Continuative
DEF = Definite
DIR = Directional
INDEF = Indefinite
N = Noun
Neg = Negative
NUM = Numeral
Pos = Positive
POSS = Possessive marking
POSP = Postposition
SG = Singular
PL = Plural
m = Masculine
f = Feminine
n = Neuter

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