Attributive possessive constructions in Oceanic

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1. Introduction

A feature characteristic of the Oceanic languages[1] is the existence of more than one type of attributive possessive construction. As a rule (there are a few exceptions), Oceanic languages have two basic types of possessive construction, one of which usually has two or more subtypes. Examples (1)–(3) from Manam illustrate. In (1) the possessive suffix, which indexes the PR, is attached to the PM noun, while in (2) and (3) the possessive suffixes are attached to two different possessive classifiers:[2]

(1) *ara-gu*
     name-1SG:POSS
     'my name'   (Lichtenberk 1983a: 282)

(2) *pera   ʔana-gu*
     house   POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS
     'my house'   (Lichtenberk 1983a: 292)

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[1] Oceanic is a subgroup within Austronesian. Oceanic languages are spoken in mainland New Guinea and neighbouring islands, Island Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia, but not all of the indigenous languages of New Guinea, Island Melanesia and Micronesia are Oceanic. For a detailed overview of the Oceanic family see Lynch *et al.* (2002).

[2] Besides the Leipzig Glossing Rules, the following abbreviations are used in glossing the examples: CONSTR – construct; NONSG – non-singular; NUM – numeral marker; PC – paucal; REAL – realis; SV – stem vowel; THC – thematic consonant.

   The glossing conventions are – by and large – those of the sources. In some cases the glosses have been adjusted for the sake of uniformity. The inclusive forms are not considered here a subtype of the first person but a category of its own (Daniel 2005; Lichtenberk 2005a), hence the absence of specification of person. Stress marking has been omitted from the Manam examples. The Toqabaqita data come from my own field notes.

(3)   *asi   ne-gu*
    bushknife   POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS
    'my bushknife'   (Lichtenberk 1983a: 401)

As discussed in section 3, the formal differences among the possessive construction types are associated with semantic/pragmatic differences: they signal different types of relation between the PM and the PR, although there are language-specific exceptions.

The terms "PM" and "PR" will be used here in two senses: first, they will signify the two constituents in a possessive construction: the PM is the head and the PR its modifier; and second, they will signify their referents. Context will make it clear which of the two senses is intended on a given occasion.

The paper is concerned primarily with the semantic/pragmatic aspects of the Oceanic possessive systems. However, to set the stage, some formal aspects will have to be considered first. This is the subject of section 2. Section 3 is concerned with the kinds of semantic/pragmatic distinctions expressed by the different types and subtypes of possessive construction. The phenomenon of fluidity, the ability of one and the same noun to occur in the PM position of more than one type or subtype of possessive construction, will be discussed in section 4. The existence of exceptions to the general patterns will be considered in section 5. Section 6 is concerned with two views of the Oceanic possessive systems, as a noun-class system and as a relational system, and it will be argued there that the Oceanic possessive systems are basically relational in the sense that, by and large, the choice of a possessive construction depends on the nature of the relation between the PM and the PR entities. Section 7 will offer some remarks on the motivation behind the development of a system with multiple types and subtypes of possessive construction, and the last section provides a summary.

The languages referred to here and their (approximate) locations are given in Table 1; cf. Map 1.

Table 1. Languages referred to and their locations

Language	Location
ʼAlaʼala	Papua New Guinea
Anejom̃	Vanuatu
Araki	Vanuatu
Bali-Vitu	Papua New Guinea
Banoni	Papua New Guinea
Cèmuhî	New Caledonia
Erromangan	Vanuatu
Fijian (Standard)	Fiji
Gapapaiwa	Papua New Guinea
Hawaiian	Hawaiʼi (Polynesia)
Hoava	Solomon Islands
Houaïlou	New Caledonia
Iaai	New Caledonia
Kairiru	Papua New Guinea
Kilivila	Papua New Guinea
Kokota	Solomon Islands
Kosraean	Kosrae (Federated States of Micronesia)
Kwaio	Solomon Islands
Labu	Papua New Guinea
Lenakel	Vanuatu
Lenkau	Papua New Guinea
Lolovoli	Vanuatu
Lou	Papua New Guinea
Manam	Papua New Guinea
Mussau	Papua New Guinea
Nalik	Papua New Guinea
Niuean	Niue (Polynesia)
Paamese	Vanuatu
Pohnpeian	Pohnpei (Federated States of Micronesia)
Pukapukan	Pukapuka (Polynesia)
Puluwatese	Puluwat (Federated States of Micronesia)
Rotuman	Rotuma (Fiji)
Tamambo	Vanuatu
Tobati	Papua (western New Guinea, Indonesia)
Toqabaqita	Solomon Islands
Ulithian	Ulithi, Fais (Federated States of Micronesia)
Vinmavis	Vanuatu
Wayan	Fiji
Zabana	Solomon Islands
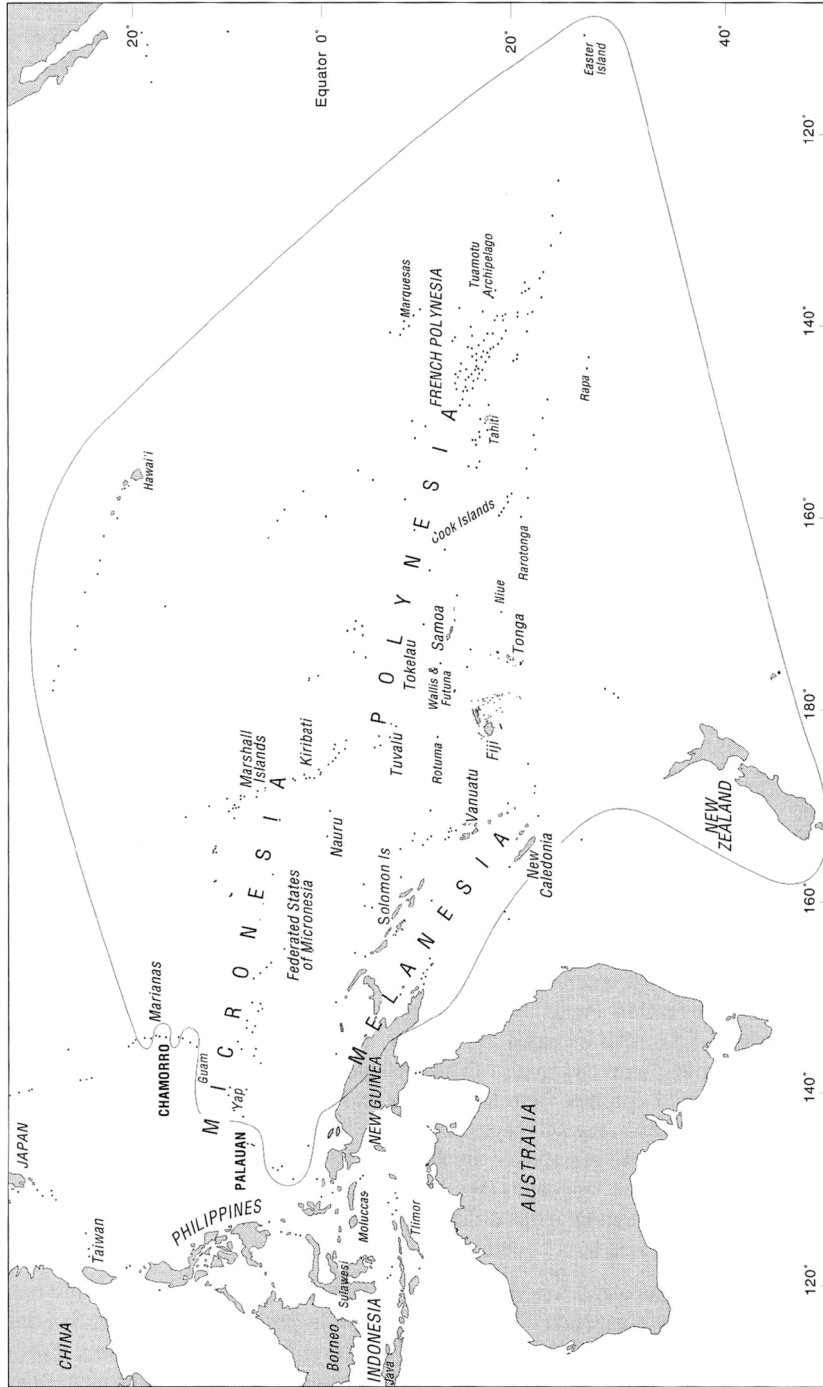
Map 1.   The boundaries of the Oceanic subgroup. (From: *The Oceanic languages*, John Lynch, Malcolm Ross and Terry Crowley, 2002, p. 5 [Map 1.2 there], Richmond, Surrey: Curzon. Reproduced by permission of Taylor & Francis Books UK.)

2.   The formal aspects of Oceanic possessive constructions

With over 400 languages in the Oceanic group, it is impossible to do full justice here to the possessive systems found there, and the discussion will be restricted to the major patterns.

2.1.   The typical Oceanic patterns

2.1.1. Direct and indirect possessive constructions

The typical system consists of two basic types of possessive construction, direct and indirect. In the direct type, the PM noun carries a possessive affix encoding or cross-referencing the PR:

     Lolovoli
(4) *hava-da*
     family-NONSG(INCL):POSS
     'our family'   (Hyslop 2001: 169)

See also (1) from Manam in section 1.
    In the indirect type, it is a possessive classifier[3] rather than the PM noun that carries a possessive affix:

     Lolovoli
(5) *no-da*   *hala*
     POSS.CLF-NONSG(INCL):POSS   visitor
     'our visitor'   (Hyslop 2001: 180)

See also (2) and (3) from Manam in section 1.

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[3] Considering the elements that carry possessive suffixes in indirect possessive constructions to be (possessive) classifiers is the usual approach adopted in recent descriptive work. However, Palmer and Brown (2007) argue that in the Kokota language and possibly some other languages those elements are, in fact, "generic nouns" (p. 208), and that it is these nouns that head possessive constructions. However, this analysis is not without problems. Here, the standard analysis is retained, considering those elements to be classifiers. Since the present study is concerned primarily with the semantic/pragmatic properties of Oceanic possessive constructions, the question of whether in a given language those elements form a morphosyntactic category of their own or whether they are perhaps a subcategory within the category of nouns is not of primary importance here.

With very few exceptions, the possessive affixes are suffixes, as in (1)–(5) above. A few languages have possessive prefixes. However, the prefixes normally exist in addition to possessive suffixes and their use is restricted in various ways. For example, in Western Fijian dialects the possessive prefixes are used only in direct possessive constructions and only when the PM–PR relation is other than kinship, such as 'my blood' (Geraghty 1983). It should also be noted at this point that the "possessive" affixes have, in some languages, functions other than indexing the PR in a possessive construction. For example, in Toqabaqita the same set of suffixes is used with one class of transitive verbs to index the direct object, and with certain verb-phrase internal particles to index the subject.

The PR may be encoded by a noun phrase, in which case the typical pattern is for the PR noun phrase to be cross-referenced by means of a possessive affix either on the PM noun if the possessive construction is of the direct type, or on the possessive classifier if the possessive construction is of the indirect type (see section 2.1.2 for discussion of cross-referencing). Examples (6) and (7) from Hoava illustrate:

(6) *sa*   *bele-na*   *sa*   *boko*
     ART:SG tail-3SG:POSS ART:SG pig
     'the pig's tail'   (Davis 2003: 98)

(7) *a-na*   *napo* *sa*   *koburu*
     POSS.CLF-3SG:POSS drink   ART:SG child
     'the child's drink'   (Davis 2003: 102)

The ordering of the expressions of the PM, the PR and the possessive classifier varies from language to language: for example, (classifier) PM (PR) (Hoava), (PR) PM (classifier) (Manam), PM (classifier) (PR) (Anejom̃).

2.1.2. Cross-referencing of the PR

With respect to PR phrases that are lexical (rather than pronominal; but see the Vinmavis example (24) in section 2.1.3), three basic types of cross-referencing can be distinguished: full, partial and construct. In full cross-referencing the possessive affix cross-references the PR both for person and for number. Besides singular and plural, many Oceanic languages also have a dual number, and some also have a trial or paucal number. A singular/plural/dual/paucal system with full cross-referencing is found in (Standard)

Fijian. This is illustrated in the two pairs of examples in (8)–(11) for the singular and the paucal numbers. In each pair, the same possessive suffix is used whether or not there is a PR phrase present.

(8) *na   no-na   vale*
ART POSS.CLF-3SG:POSS house
'his house'   (Milner 1972: 22)

(9) *na   no-na   vale   na   tūraga*
ART POSS.CLF-3SG:POSS house ART chief
'the chief's house'   (Milner 1972: 23)

(10) *na   no-dratou   waqa*
ART POSS.CLF-3PC:POSS canoe
'their (few) canoe'   (Milner 1972: 22)

(11) *na   no-dratou   waqa   na   cauravou*
ART POSS.CLF-3PC:POSS canoe ART young.man
'the (few) young men's canoe'   (Milner 1972: 22)

Of the three types of cross-referencing systems, the full cross-referencing system is the most common one in Oceanic.

In partial cross-referencing, the PR is cross-referenced only for person, not for number. Partial cross-referencing is found in, for example, Kwaio. When there is no PR noun phrase, there is a singular–plural (and dual) distinction in the third person:

(12) *'i'i-na*
tail-3SG:POSS
'its tail'   (Keesing 1985: 113)

(13) *falai-ga*
head-3PL:POSS
'their heads'   (Keesing 1985: 113)

However, when there is a PR noun phrase present, the "singular" possessive suffix must be used even if the PR is plural, as explicitly stated by Keesing (1985: 107):

(14) *lata-na   wela*
name-3SG:POSS   child
'the child's name'   (Keesing 1985: 107)

(15) *lata-na   ta'a*
      name-3SG:POSS   people
      'the people's names'   (Keesing 1985: 107)

The system of partial cross-referencing is not common. It is found in a group of closely related languages spoken in the southeast Solomon Islands; but see also further below for Erromangan.

  In construct cross-referencing, a special "construct" affix is used on the PM noun or on the possessive classifier to cross-reference the PR, but only if there is a PR phrase present. This is illustrated by the following set of examples from Anejom̃. In (16), without a PR phrase, the possessive classifier carries the third person singular possessive suffix -*n*, while in (17), with a PR phrase, the possessive classifier carries the construct suffix -*i*:

(16) *neto   lida-n*
      sugarcane   POSS.CLF-3SG:POSS
      'his/her sugarcane'   (Lynch 2000: 60)

(17) *nade-n   lida-i   inhalav*
      breast-3SG:POSS   POSS.CLF-CONSTR baby
      'the baby's breast'   (Lynch 2000: 60)

(In [17] the possessive suffix -*n* on *nade* 'breast' indexes the baby's mother, not the baby; the breast is "a source of milk to be sucked by the baby", hence the possessive classifier *lida*, "used with nouns whose referents are things one sucks the juice out of, but without consuming the flesh in any way" [Lynch 2000: 60].)

  The same construct suffix is used when the PR noun phrase is plural.

(18) *injap̃ um̃a-i   elpu-Uje*
      sea   POSS.CLF-CONSTR PL-UJE
      'the Uje people's sea'   (Lynch 2000: 61)

The construct suffix is also used on the PM noun in direct possessive constructions:

(19) *risi-i   di?*
      mother-CONSTR   who?
      'whose mother?'   (Lynch 2000: 58)

Construct cross-referencing systems are common in languages of Vanuatu and Micronesia. It should be noted, however, that the term "construct" pos-

sessive affix is interpreted in different ways by different analysts. Thus, for example, Crowley (1998) uses the term to refer to a possessive suffix in Erromangan that functions as the third person singular possessive suffix when there is no PR phrase, as in (20) below, but which is also used to index the PR when there is a PR phrase, regardless of the grammatical number, as in (21) and (22). This is comparable to the system referred to further above as partial cross-referencing with respect to Kwaio.

(20)   *retpo-n*
     wife-3SG:POSS
     'his wife'   (Crowley 1998: 52)

(21)   *nompu-n*   *natmonuc*
     head-CONTR/3SG:POSS chief
     'the chief's head'   (Crowley 1998: 172)

(22)   *nompu-n*   *ovatmonuc*
     head-CONSTR/3SG:POSS PL:chief
     'the chiefs' heads'   (Crowley 1998: 172)

In the present study, the term "construct" possessive affix is restricted to cases either where the form of the affix is unique, unlike that of any of the other possessive affixes, as in Anejom̃ ((17)–(19) above), or where the suffix need not index any of the features of the PR phrase, for which see (24) from Vinmavis in section 2.1.3.

    Finally, in at least one language PR phrases are not cross-referenced at all, even though possessive affixes are used on PM nouns and on possessive classifiers in the absence of a PR phrase. This is the case in Cèmuhî (Rivierre 1980).

2.1.3. Type of PR phrase

The type of possessive construction required may depend on the type of PR phrase. In a number of languages possessive constructions with pronominal PR phrases exhibit idiosyncratic properties, although this need not apply to pronouns of all numbers and persons. For example, Vinmavis has a possessive suffix that functions specifically to index third person singular PRs, but it also functions as a construct suffix with all the other pronouns as PRs:

(23) *netal-n*
    leg-3SG:POSS
    'his/her leg'   (Crowley 2002: 642)

(24) *netal-n   get*
    leg-CONSTR 1PL(INCL)
    'our legs'   (Crowley 2002: 643)

The same suffix is also used with lexical PR phrases:

(25) *netal-n   matoro*
    leg-CONSTR old.man
    'the old man's leg'   (Crowley 2002: 642)

Similar use of the third person singular possessive suffix as a construct suffix with plural independent pronouns as PR phrases is found in Lou and Lenkau (Ross 1988: 332).

In some languages independent personal pronouns cannot form a PR phrase. The PR can be indexed only by means of a possessive affix. Bali-Vitu[4] is one such language: example (26a) without a pronominal PR phrase is grammatical, while (26b) with a pronominal PR is not:

(26) a. *a   lima-ma*   b. **a   lima-ma   oho*
     ART hand-2SG:POSS   ART hand-2SG:POSS 2SG
     'your hand'   ('your hand')   (Ross 2002a: 370)

In a few languages there are differences in the structure of possessive constructions depending on whether the PR noun phrase is common or proper. In Iaai, a common-noun PR in a direct possessive construction is cross-referenced on the PM noun by means of a possessive suffix, but there is no cross-referencing of proper-noun PRs (Ozanne-Rivierre 1976). And in Fijian, constructions with singular proper-noun PRs are different from those used with common-noun and plural proper-noun PRs (Milner 1972).

This concludes the survey of the typical pattern of Oceanic possessives constructions with a distinction between direct and indirect constructions, with relatively minor variations on the basic pattern in some languages.

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4 Ross (2002a) calls the language "Bali-Vitu", but van den Berg and Bachet say in a grammar of Vitu that "Ross's sketch is primarily a description of the Bali variety" (2006: 2).

Next we will briefly consider some possessive systems that are different from the typical pattern in more significant respects.

2.2. The Polynesian pattern

In the Polynesian languages the direct-indirect system of possessive constructions has been replaced by a different binary pattern. This is also, to some degree, true of the Rotuman language, a sister of the Polynesian group. For convenience, I will refer to the pattern discussed in what follows as the "Polynesian pattern". In the Polynesian pattern, the direct possessive construction type is absent, apart from some lexical exceptions. Instead, there is a binary system that is customarily referred to in Polynesian linguistics as A-possession and O-possession on the basis of the vowels found in the two sets of possessive marking. Discussions of possessive constructions in several Polynesian languages (and in Rotuman) can be found in Fischer (2000), together with an overview of the Polynesian pattern by Clark (2000). The semantic/pragmatic aspects of the Polynesian pattern are briefly discussed in section 3.4 below.

Examples (27) and (28) from Hawaiian illustrate A-possession and O-possession, respectively:

(27) *ka   pahi   a   Kimo*
     ART knife POSS Kimo
     'Kimo's knife'   (Wilson 1976: 29)

(28) *ka   hale   o   Kimo*
     ART house POSS Kimo
     'Kimo's house'   (Wilson 1976: 29)

Within the basic A-O constrast, each Polynesian language has a number of subtypes of possessive construction. In the Hawaiian examples above, the possessive markers are formally prepositions. In another type of construction, the possessive markers are fused with an article; see (29) and (30) from Pukapukan:

(29) *t-a-ku*   *tama*
     ART-POSS-1SG:POSS child
     'my child'   (Salisbury 2002: 172)

(30) *t-o-ku*   *vaka*
     ART-POSS-1SG:POSS canoe
     'my canoe'   (Salisbury 2002: 171)

The article *t-* signifies definiteness and singular number of the PM.

Another subtype of possessive construction is usually referred to as "irrealis possession": "the intention or anticipation that something will be possessed" (Clark 2000: 262). The possessive marker is added to an element *m-*, which, according to Clark, continues an earlier irrealis or optative marker.

The variety of possessive constructions even in a single Polynesian language can be quite considerable, and the discussion above is no more than basic. The collection of articles edited by Fischer (2000) is a useful reference where more detail on some of the Polynesian languages can be found.

2.3.   Absence of the indirect system of possessive classifiers

In the Polynesian languages it is the direct possessive type that is absent. There are also languages where it is the indirect type that is absent. This is the case in Toqabaqita and its close relatives. The possessive construction in (31) corresponds to the direct type in other languages, but for reasons to become clear presently, it can also be referred to as suffixing, because the PR is cross-referenced on the PM noun by means of a possessive suffix:

(31)   *qaba-na*   *wela*
       hand-3SG:POSS child
       'the child's hand(s)'

In the other type, there is no possessive classifier and no indexing of the PR on the PM noun. This type of construction can be referred to as bare.

(32)   *fanga*   *wela*
       food   child
       'the child's food'

The semantic/pragmatic aspects of Toqabaqita possessive constructions are discussed in sections 3.4 and 5.

A possessive system with a contrast between a direct/suffixing construction and a bare construction is also found in Kairiru (Papua New Guinea) (Wivell 1981). For some remarks on Kairiru see section 5 below.

2.4. Some other types of possessive system

There are some other types of possessive system found in Oceanic, but as these will not figure in the discussion of the semantics/pragmatics of possessive constructions, they are mentioned here only very briefly. In some languages prepositions are used in possessive constructions, the complement of the preposition being the PR noun phrase. Discussion of possessive prepositions in some Oceanic languages can be found in Hooper (1985). The usual case is for possessive prepositions to be part of a larger system of possessive constructions. Possessive prepositions are found in Polynesian languages (see section 2.2 for Hawaiian), where they are part of the overall A–O possessive contrast and have a classificatory function, not unlike the possessive classifiers found in the typical Oceanic pattern.

Finally, there are a few Oceanic languages that have only one basic type of possessive construction: there is no contrast comparable to those between direct and indirect, suffixing and bare, or A and O types of construction. Labu is one such language (Siegel 1984), and Tobati is another (Donohue 2002). Niuean, a Polynesian language, also has basically just one type of possessive construction, although, according to Massam and Sperlich (2000), traces of the Polynesian A–O possessive contrast do exist there.

3. The semantics/pragmatics of possessive systems with multiple types of construction

3.1. Introduction

We can now turn our attention to the vast majority of Oceanic languages that have possessive systems of multiple construction types and subtypes, and consider their use. Is their use governed strictly lexically, each noun having to be specified for which type of possessive construction it occurs in the PM position? Or are there some general patterns that determine the use of the various types? Once again, given the large number of languages involved, the answer is not simple. There are clear patterns, but there are also exceptions to these patterns. In this section and in section 4, the focus will be on the patterns; the existence of exceptions will be considered in section 5. The basic, overall pattern is that the choice of a possessive construction depends on *the relation between the referents of the PM and the PR phrases*. Since the notion of relation is central to the understanding of how the systems of Oceanic possessive constructions (normally) operate, some discussion of the notion is in order.

3.2.   Different kinds of the notion of relation with respect to possessive constructions

There are (at least) three different types of the notions of "relation" and "relational" that are relevant to the present discussion. One is the idea that possessive constructions are relational. There are two entities which stand or are put in a certain relation to each other, one as PM and the other as PR. As is well known, the number of possible relations expressed by possessive constructions, while not open-ended, is quite large. Besides ownership (PR owns PM: 'my money', the money that belongs to me), some other relations are: use (PR uses PM without necessarily owning it: 'my bus', the bus I will take), control (PR has control over PM without owning it or using it: 'my office', the office I am in charge of), manufacture (PM is made by PR: 'my cake', the cake I baked), kinship (PM is a kin of PR's: 'my sister'), part of a whole (PM is part of PR: 'my head', the head which is part of my own body), and many others (see, for example, Langacker 1995: 56–57). This I take to be an uncontroversial sense of the notion of relation.

Another sense of the terms "relation" and "relational" has to do with the fact that certain concepts are inherently relational. Nouns that express inherently relational concepts are sometimes referred to as "relational nouns", such as *mother* (see, for example, Barker 1995; Partee 1997; Partee and Borschev 2003). When inherently relational nouns occur in the PM position in a possessive construction, the type of relation usually expressed involves inalienable possession, as in *my mother*. When a noun that is not inherently relational occurs in the PM position, the type of relation usually expressed involves alienable possession, as in *my knife*. Relational nouns tend to strongly favour a certain kind of relation between the PM and the PR. The relation is *intrinsic* to the meaning of a relational noun. Barker (1995) also uses the term "lexical possession" for this. Thus with *my mother* (with the core meaning of *mother*) there is an intrinsic relation of kinship. With non-relational nouns, on the other hand, there is typically no intrinsic relation between the PM and the PR, and a variety of relations are freely available. Thus with *my knife* the relation may be one of ownership (the knife I own), use (the knife I use without owning it), manufacture (the knife I made), etc. In such cases, the relations can be said to be "extrinsic" (Barker 1995). The notions of inalienable and alienable possession and intrinsic and extrinsic relations will be relevant in later discussion. I take the notions of inherently relational concepts and relational nouns also to be uncontroversial.

It is the third sense of "relation(al)" that has enjoyed some controversy in Oceanic linguistics with respect to possessive constructions. This is the

idea that the choice of a possessive construction is determined by, or sensitive to, the nature of the relation between a PM entity and its PR. In principle, it is possible to recognize two views concerning the choice of possessive constructions in Oceanic, which will be referred to as "noun-class based" and "relation-based", respectively. A useful discussion of the two views can be found in Pawley and Sayaba (1990), and I will consider their views in more detail in section 6. On the noun-class based view, the nouns of a language with multiple types of possessive construction fall into a number of classes depending on which of the possessive constructions they select when occurring in the PM position. For example, Milner (1972: 65) speaks of "gender" in Fijian, "a grammatical category of four classes", which he terms "neutral", "edible", "drinkable" and "familiar": a given noun (or "base" in Milner's system of morphosyntactic categories) belongs in a certain class depending on which type of possessive constructions it selects. At the same time, however, Milner makes it clear that the classes have a semantic underpinning. For example, of the "edible" class he says (p. 66) that it includes nouns that denote "[a]rticles of solid food considered from the point of view of consumption (i.e. as distinguished from planting, selling, etc.)". Furthermore, he notes that there are nouns that belong in more than one class, or in our terminology that they exhibit fluidity (section 4). François (2002) says about the Araki language that it has two basic categories, inalienable nouns and alienable nouns, although his classification has also partly to do with whether a given noun takes a possessive suffix (in a direct possessive construction) or not. However, François also notes that the assignment of nouns to classes is not always straightforward and that "most nouns can almost freely shift from one pattern to the other" (François 2002: 48). And for Gapapaiwa, McGuckin (2002: 303) identifies three classes of nouns, "each with its own set of possession markers", but then goes on to say (p. 304) that "[t]hese possession classes do not correspond to fixed noun classes, as the same noun can occur in more than one possessive category". A common theme that emerges from those studies that postulate noun classes on the basis of possessive constructions is that the languages in question exhibit fluidity, the ability of a noun to occur in the PM position of more than one type of possessive construction.

On the relation-based view, the choice of a possessive construction depends on the kind of relation that holds between the PM and the PR. (For discussions of the relation-based view see Pawley 1973; Pawley and Sayaba 1990; Lynch 1973, 1982; Lichtenberk 1983b, 1985.) For example, if the PM is part of the PR's own body, the direct possessive construction is (typically) used; if the PM is an article of food for the PR, an indirect possessive

construction with a certain possessive classifier is used; if the PM is an item of drink for the PR, an indirect possessive construction with a different possessive classifier is used; and so on. (It is for this reason that the possessive classifiers are termed "relational classifiers" in Lichtenberk 1983b.) Some of the detailed studies of possessive constructions in individual languages that adopt the relation-based view do, however, mention the existence of exceptions.

We can now consider the semantic/pragmatic properties of the different types of possessive construction.

3.3.   Direct possessive constructions

In direct possessive constructions, the PM noun carries an affix that indexes the PR. Direct possessive constructions are overwhelmingly used to express inalienable possession, where the PM noun is inherently relational. This does not mean, however, that all types of inalienable possession are expressed by means of the direct construction (see section 5). There are several subtypes of inalienable possession that are normally expressed by the direct construction. These are discussed in A–I below.

A.   *Parts of a whole, body parts*. Included here are also concepts such as body and integral contents of a PR, such as blood (in the PR's body) and juice (e.g. of fruit):

Paamese
(33) *vati-n*
      head-3SG:POSS
      'his/her head'   (Crowley 1996: 389)

Toqabaqita
(34) *suul-a   fa   qota*
      juice-3SG:POSS CLF   areca.nut
      'juice of an areca nut (being chewed)'
      (*fa* is a "numeral" classifier used in noun phrases referring to fruit
      and certain other entities, not a possessive classifier)[5]

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5   As (34) shows, the use of the classifier *fa* is not dependent on the presence of a numeral in the noun phrase.

B. *Natural bodily products that emanate from the PR's body, and other products of physical bodies*: for example, 'tears', 'sweat', 'urine', 'faeces', 'semen', 'voice, sound' (produced by the PR), 'breath', 'smell/scent' (exuded by the PR); and also 'shadow, shade' (cast by the PR), 'reflection (of the PR, e.g. in water), 'picture' or some other representation of the PR, all of which are often part of a polysemy:

Manam
(35) *boro taʔe-di*
pig   faeces-3PL:POSS
'pigs' excrements'   (Lichtenberk 1983a: 279)

Tamambo
(36) *nunu-ku*
photo/reflection/picture/shadow-1SG:POSS
'my photo/reflection/picture/shadow' (a likeness of me)
 (Jauncey 1997: 229)

C. *Entities, matter on the surface of the PR's body.* Included here are concepts such as sores, dirt, tattoes, clothing (especially, though not necessarily, when being worn by the PR), and parasites such as lice:

Banoni
(37) *kipi-na-i   moono*
dirt-3SG:POSS-ART girl   (Lynch and Ross 2002: 445,
'the girl's dirt'   from Lincoln 1976)

Lolovoli
(38) *tatai-ne*
tattoo-3SG:POSS
'her tattooes'   (Hyslop 2001: 171)

D. *Mental organs, states, and products of mental processes*:

Kilivila
(39) *nano-gu*
mind-1SG:POSS
'my mind'   (Senft 1986: 45)

Lolovoli
(40) *domi-mu*
thought-2SG:POSS
'your thoughts'   (Hyslop 2001: 172)

E.   *Attributes such as the PR's shape, size, name and age*:

Nalik
(41) *a   nounau-naande*
ART   shape-3PL:POSS
'their shape' (also 'their interest in something')   (Volker 1998: 130)

Puluwatese
(42) *yiiŕ-e-mw*
age-SV-2SG:POSS
'your age'   (Elbert 1972: 283)

F.   *Spatial and temporal relations*. The possessive affixes are added to spatial (and temporal) prepositions or to what is sometimes referred to as relator nouns. Such prepositions and relator nouns usually derive historically from nouns that designate spatial aspects of objects, especially human bodies, and certain of their parts (such as the face or the back) (Bowden 1992).

Toqabaqita
(43) *qi ninima-ku*
at beside-1SG:POSS
'beside me'

Lolovoli
(44) *Lo   tagu-i   bongi gai-vesi ….*
LOC   behind-CONSTR day   NUM-four
'After four days ….'   (Hyslop 2001: 176)

G.   *Kinship categories and certain other categories of social/cultural relations*. The latter categories include concepts such as 'friend' and 'partner' (e.g. trading partner).

Kilivila
(45) *ina-si*
mother-3PL:POSS
'their mother'   (Senft 1986: 140)

Iaai
(46) *ihumwi-ɲ*
friend-3SG:POSS
'his/her friend'   (Ozanne-Rivierre 1976: 157)

H.   *The PR is a Patient, Theme or Stimulus (of emotion or of sensory perception)*. In a number of languages the direct construction is used when the PR has one of these roles in a transitive situation: Patient or Theme acted on by Agent, or Stimulus perceived by Experiencer. Often in such cases the PM phrase is, or contains, a nominalization of the corresponding verb. Such possession is sometimes referred to as "passive" (see, for example, Lynch 2001), as opposed to "active" possession (section 4 below).

Manam
(47) *udi   tanom-a-di*
banana plant-NMLZ-3PL:POSS
'the planting of the bananas'   (Lichtenberk 1983a: 251)

Toqabaqita
(48) *riki-la-na   wane baa*
look.at-NMLZ-3SG:POSS man   that
 'that man's appearance/look/mien' (i.e., the way the man appears to
 be to others, how others see him) (lit.: 'that man's looking-at')

The PM need not be a nominalization; nevertheless, the PR has the role of a Patient, Theme or Stimulus in the associated event:

Kokota
(49) *mereseni-na   mheke*
medicine-3SG:POSS dog
'medicine for dogs'   (Palmer 2002: 506)

In some other languages passive possession is expressed by means of an indirect possessive construction, using a classifier (see [53] in section 3.4).

I.   *Emphatic pronominal forms*. Such forms often carry the significance of 'by oneself', 'on one's own':

Paamese
(50) *Inau nakanian   sāso-k.*
1SG   1SG:REAL:eat self-1SG:POSS
'I ate by myself.'   (Crowley 1996: 407)

Manam

(51) *Rube-gu   u-yalale.*
    alone-1SG:POSS 1S:REAL-go
    'I went alone, by myself.'   (Lichtenberk 1983a: 307)

3.4. Classifier systems (indirect possessive constructions)

As also mentioned in section 7, it is generally assumed that Proto Oceanic had (at least) three formally distinct possessive classifiers, and we can take the tripartite system as our starting point. Some languages have a tripartite system; in some, the number of classifiers has been reduced to two, or one, or none; and in some others it has been expanded beyond three, sometimes considerably. (Standard) Fijian has three possessive classifiers: a "food/passive" classifier *ke-*, used when the PM is an item of food for the PR (but see below) or another entity metonymically related to food (such as places where food is grown, and containers of food for the PR to eat), and it also signals passive possession, where the PR is a Patient, Theme or Stimulus, rather than an Agent or Experiencer in the associated situation (see category H in section 3.3, and examples (85)–(88) and the accompanying discussion in section 4); a "drink" classifier *me-*, used when the PM is an item of drink for the PR (but see below) or another entity metonymically related to drink (such as containers of drink for the PR to drink); and a "general" classifier *no-*/*ne-*, used when none of the other classifiers nor the direct construction are called for. Note that the food category subsumes only solid food; food that is runny, mushy, juicy, suckable is included in the drink category (see Pawley and Sayaba 1990 for Wayan, one of the Fijian languages). However, tobacco (for smoking) is in the food category. Examples (52) and (53) illustrate food and passive possession, respectively:

(52) *na   ke-da   vei-niu*
    ART POSS.CLF-PL(INCL):POSS group-coconut
    'our coconut plantation (which we eat from)'   (Pawley 1973: 162)

(53) *ke-mu   i-roba*[6]
    POSS.CLF-2SG:POSS NMLZ-slap
    'your slap (you are slapped)'   (Geraghty 1983: 249)

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6   Geraghty (1983) calls the *i-* prefix a "preformative".

Example (54) illustrates the drink classifier and (55) the general one:

(54) *na*   *me-munī*   *tī*
      ART   POSS.CLF-2PL:POSS   tea
      'your tea'   (Milner 1972: 66)

(55) *na*   *no-mu*   *waqa*
      ART   POSS.CLF-2SG:POSS   canoe
      'your canoe'   (Milner 1972: 65)

In Manam the number of possessive classifiers has been reduced to two. This is due to the merger of the food and the drink categories into one "alimentary" category. The classifier *ʔana-* (also *ʔan-* and *ʔanan-*) is used when the PM is an item of food or drink for the PR or an entity metonymically related to such, for example, gardens where food is grown, implements used to obtain or eat food, containers of food and drink for the PR (including personal baskets used to hold tobacco, areca nuts, lime and betel pepper for chewing, and bottles). The other classifier is a general one, used in all cases other than those that call for the alimentary one or for the direct construction. Examples (56) and (57) illustrate the alimentary classifier, and (58) the general one:

(56) *ʔulu*   *ʔana-miŋ*
      breadfruit   POSS.CLF-2PL:POSS
      'your breadfruit (to eat)'   (Lichtenberk 1983a: 291)

(57) *botoli* *ʔana-gu*
      bottle   POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS
      'my bottle' (drink container)   (Lichtenberk 1983a: 293)

(58) *tamoata* *asi*   *ne-ø*
      man   bushknife POSS.CLF-3SG:POSS
      'the man's bushknife'   (Lichtenberk 1983a: 294)

There are languages that have only one possessive classifier. In one respect, such forms are unlike possessive classifiers in other languages, because they do not contrast with other classifiers. Nevertheless, the term "classifier" is retained here for two reasons. First, systems with single classifiers are historical reductions of systems with multiple classifiers. And second, constructions with a simple classifier do contrast with direct possessive constructions, without a classifier.

Houaïlou is one language with a contrast between a direct possessive construction and a single indirect one. The sole possessive classifier is used whenever the direct construction is not appropriate (and vice versa). It is used even with some (but not all) kinship terms. Examples (59) and (60) illustrate the classifier:

(59) *dɔʔvɔʔ* *ɣi-vu*[7]
    garden POSS.CLF-1DU(EXCL):POSS
    'our garden'   (Leenhardt 1932: 192)

(60) *pəvaa* *ɣi-ɲa*
    father POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS
    'my father'   (La Fontinelle 1976: 300)

A possessive system with an opposition between a direct construction and an indirect construction with only one possessive classifier is also found in 'Ala'ala (Ross 2002b).

A sole possessive classifier contrasts only with the direct possessive construction, and so, strictly speaking, is not necessary, provided the contrast is made in some other way. This is the case in Toqabaqita, which has no possessive classifiers whatsoever. The contrast is between a direct/suffixing construction, where the PM noun carries a possessive suffix, and a bare construction, where there is no indexing of the PR on the PM noun. In some of its aspects the bare construction is analogous to the system of indirect constructions in other languages (but see section 5).

(61) *fanga* *nia*
    food   3SG
    'his/her food'

(62) *biqu* *wane* *baa*
    house man   that
    'that man's house'

(*Nia* in [61] is the third person singular independent pronoun.)

A different kind of reduction in the number of possessive classifiers has taken place in the Polynesian languages, with their binary systems of A-possession and O-possession (and no direct possessive construction). The

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7 Leenhardt (1932) gives the form as *dovō xivu*; the representation *dɔʔvɔʔ ɣi-vu* is in accordance with La Fontinelle (1976).

details of the use of the two constructions vary from language to language. Wilson (1982) has put forward an "Initial Control Theory" to account for the uses of A- and O- possession in Polynesian: the choice of a possessive construction is determined by whether or not the PR has control over the initiation of the relation. If the PR does have control, A-possession is used; if the PR does not have control, O-possession is used. This is illustrated for Hawaiian in the next pair of examples. In (63) the PR initiates the relation by having the child, and so A-possession is used. On the other hand, in (64) the PR does not initiate the relation to his parent, and so O-possession is used.

(63) *k-ā-na*   *keiki*
      ART-POSS.CLF-3SG:POSS child
      'his child'   (Wilson 1982: 19)

(64) *k-o-na*   *makua*
      ART-POSS.CLF-3SG:POSS parent
      'his parent'   (Wilson 1982: 19)

We can now turn to languages in which the number of possessive classifiers is greater than the three-member system with a food–drink–general contrast. Moderate expansions are found in some of the languages of Vanuatu. Lolovoli has a food classifier, a drink classifier, a general classifier and a classifier for "natural or valued object possession" (Hyslop 2001: 176). The latter classifier, whose form is *bula*, is mainly used to express ownership of animals and crops:

(65) *bula-na*   *boe*
      POSS.CLF-3SG:POSS pig
      'his pig'   (Hyslop 2001: 178)

A more complex classifier system exists in Lenakel, which has a food classifier, a drink classifier, a plant classifier (for plants planted by the PR), a general classifier, and a classifier for locations (occupied by the PR). The latter classifier is only optional, and the general one may be used instead. The location classifier is illustrated in (66):

(66) *tɨn*   *iimwa-nil-lau*
      land   POSS.CLF-3NONSG-DU
      'their homeland'   (Lynch 1978: 81)

In some languages the original classifier system has undergone great expansion. This is the case in most Micronesian languages. (Lee 1975: 111) gives a list of 19 "commonly used classifiers" for Kosraean. The list includes classifiers for transportation; land and shelters; plants; tools, pets and toys; drink; several classifiers for food; several classifiers for kinship relations; and several classifiers for decorations. And there is a general classifier. Example (67) contains the tool/pet/toy classifier:

(67) *mos*   *nuhti-k*
      breadfruit   POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS
      'my breadfruit for toy'   (Lee 1975: 117)

For Pohnpeian, Rehg (1981) gives a list of 21 classifiers, which is not exhaustive. In fact, Rehg (1981: 179) says that "how many [possessive classifiers] there are in Ponapean [Pohnpeian] is difficult to determine".

Quite a few of the classifiers in the Micronesian languages are transparently related to nouns, and one finds cases of repeaters (Aikhenvald 2000), where a classifier is used with a noun from which it has developed through grammaticalization. The classifier and the source noun have identical or very similar forms. For example, Ulithian has a vehicle classifier of the form *waa*, which is used when the PM serves as a means of transportation, such as a ship, a bicycle, a plane or a canoe, for the PR. The word for 'canoe' too is *waa*:

(68) *waa-yire*   *waa*
      POSS.CLF-3PL:POSS   canoe
      'their canoe'   (Sohn and Bender 1973: 268)

Outside of Micronesia a large system of possessive classifiers (including repeaters) is found in Iaai (New Caledonia). Besides a general classifier, there are classifiers for food, drink, chewable food, game killed or caught in hunting or fishing, voice and sounds, land and various products, boats, and so on. According to Ozanne-Rivierre (1976: 189), the set of Iaai possessive classifiers is open, and a comprehensive list is difficult, if not impossible, to establish.

Mussau (Papua New Guinea) too has a relatively large set of possessive classifiers. Ross (2002c) lists nine of them, but the list is not necessarily exhaustive.

4.   Fluidity in the possessive systems

A feature of Oceanic possessive systems regularly commented on in grammars is the fact that some nouns can occur in the PM position of more than one type of possessive construction. The phenomenon is sometime referred to as "overlap" (following Lynch 1973). Here the term "fluidity" will be used (*pace* Nichols [1992]). How fluid a possessive system is varies from language to language, but fluidity is by no means uncommon. There is fluidity between the direct possessive construction type and an indirect/classifier construction type, and there is fluidity between different indirect/classifier constructions. Sometimes the fluidity has to do with different senses of a noun. Such cases are illustrated first, starting with fluidity between the direct and the indirect construction types. In (69), from Tamambo, *nunu* has, among others, the sense of 'pictorial representation of (the PR)', while in (70) it has the sense of 'object that carries a pictorial representation of something (not necessarily of the PR)':

(69)   *nunu-ku*
     photo/reflection/picture/shadow-1SG:POSS
     'my photo/reflection/picture/shadow' (a likeness of me)
                                (Jauncey 1997: 229)

(70)   *no-ku*   *nunu*
     POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS photo/picture
     'my photo(s)/picture(s) that belong(s) to me'   (Jauncey 1997: 229)

The different senses of a noun may also call for the use of different possessive classifiers, as in (71) and (72) from Araki. In (71), where the sense of the PM noun is 'pig', it is the "economic possession" classifier *pula-* that is used, while in (72), where the sense of the same PM noun is 'pork', it is the food classifier *ha-* that is used:

(71)   *pula-ku*   *po*
     POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS pig
     'my pig (I breed)'   (François 2002: 100)

(72)   *ha-ku*   *po*
     POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS pig
     'my piece of pork (to eat)'   (François 2002: 100)

And in (73) and (74) from Lolovoli there is a contrast between the food and the drink possessive constructions, depending on whether the PM noun has the sense of citrus fruit to eat or citrus juice to drink:

(73) *ga-ku*   *moli*
    POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS   citrus
    'my orange/pomelo (for me to eat)'   (Hyslop 2001: 185)

(74) *me-ku*   *moli*
    POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS   citrus
    'my orange/pomelo juice'   (Hyslop 2001: 185)

However, there is fluidity even when polysemy is not involved. In some cases, the use of different possessive constructions has to do with different referents or different kinds of referents. Examples (75) and (76) from Fijian illustrate. In both cases the PM noun has the sense of mango as fruit, but when a mango is green, unripe, it is "eaten" and the food classifier is called for, but when a mango is ripe and juicy, it is "sucked" when being consumed, and the drink classifier is called for:

(75) *na*   *ke-na*   *maqo*
    ART   POSS.CLF-3SG:POSS   mango
    'his mango for eating (i.e. green mango)'   (Pawley 1973: 168)

(76) *na*   *me-na*   *maqo*
    ART   POSS.CLF-3SG:POSS   mango
    'his mango for sucking (i.e. ripe, juicy mango)'   (Pawley 1973: 168)

And in (77)–(79) from Manam there is a three way contrast with the noun 'head' in the PM position, and in each case the sense of the noun is that of a body part. However, in (77) the head is part of the PR's own body and so the direct construction is used; in (78) the head is food for the PR and so the alimentary classifier construction is used; and in (79) the head is neither part of the PR's own body nor food for him/her, and it is the general classifier construction that is used:

(77) *paŋana-gu*
    head-1SG:POSS
    'my head (part of my body)'   (Lichtenberk 1983a: 302)

(78) *paŋana ʔana-gu*
     head   POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS
     'my head to eat (e.g. a fish head)'   (Lichtenberk 1983a: 302)

(79) *paŋana ne-gu*
     head   POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS
     'my head (e.g. a head I found, cut off, or a head I will give my dog to
     eat)'   (Lichtenberk 1983a: 302)

Fluidity is found even if the PM referent is one and the same entity but is conceptualized differently. As shown in (75) and (76) above from Fijian, the noun 'mango' can occur in the PM position with the food or the drink classifier. However, one and the same mango can serve a purpose other than being for the PR's consumption, for example as something to be sold, in which case the general possessive classifier is required, and the distinction between a mango as food and a mango as "drink" disappears:

(80) *na   no-na   maqo*
     ART POSS.CLF-3SG:POSS mango
     'his mango (as property, e.g., which he is selling)' (Pawley 1973: 168)

In Manam the noun for 'grass-skirt' occurs as PM in the direct construction when a grass-skirt is being worn by the PR at the relevant time, but when the same grass-skirt is not being worn, it is the indirect construction with the general classifier that is called for:

(81) *baligo-gu*
     grass.skirt-1SG:POSS
     'my grass-skirt (when I am wearing it)'   (Lichtenberk 1983a: 301)

(82) *baligo   ne-gu*
     grass.skirt POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS
     'my grass-skirt (when I am not wearing it)' (Lichtenberk 1983a: 301)

In the examples just given, the PR is (or may be) one and the same person. There is a different kind of fluidity, where one and the same entity is referred to by means of different possessive constructions because of different perspectives due to different PRs. For example, one and the same woman may be one person's wife and another person's sister. In Kosraean, two different classifiers are used:

(83) *muhtwacn kiyuh-k*
      woman   POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS
      'my wife'   (Lee 1975: 118)

(84) *muhtwacn wiyuh-k*
      woman   POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS
      'my sister'   (Lee 1975: 118)

Kosraean, which has a large set of possessive classifiers (section 3.4), has several kinship classifiers. Example (83) contains the classifier for mothers and wives, and (84) one of the classifiers for siblings.

Fluidity having to do with PR perspective is common in the opposition between passive and active possession. In passive possession the PR is a Patient, Theme or Stimulus in the relevant situation (section 3.3), and correspondingly in active possession the PR is an Agent or Experiencer. One and the same state of affairs can be encoded from the perspective of the Patient/Theme/Stimulus or that of the Agent/Experiencer. This is the case in (85) and (86) from Fijian, with the food/passive and the general classifiers, respectively:

(85) *ke-mu*   *i-vacu*
      POSS.CLF-2SG:POSS   NMLZ-punch
      'your punch (you receive)'   (Schütz 1985: 462)

(86) *no-mu*   *i-vacu*
      POSS.CLF-2SG:POSS   NMLZ-punch
      'your punch (you give)'   (Schütz 1985: 462)

In the Fijian examples the formal contrast is between two indirect constructions. In (87) and (88) from Manam the contrast is between a direct construction and an indirect construction. The PM in the direct construction is a nominalization of the verb *nanari-t-aʔ* 'tell a story about'.

(87) *nanari-t-aʔ-a-gu*
      tell.story-THC-TRANS-NMLZ-1SG:POSS
      'my story (story about me)'   (Lichtenberk 1983a: 303)

(88) *nanari ne-gu*
      story   POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS
       'my story (e.g. one that I invented, told or like)'
                                               (Lichtenberk 1983a: 303)

5. Exceptions in the use of possessive constructions

As discussed in sections 3 and 4, there are clear semantically/pragmatically based patterns in the use of the possessive constructions. However, descriptions of some languages, especially more detailed descriptions, also mention cases where the choice of a possessive construction for a given PM does not follow the general patterns in that language. (Exceptions, or apparent exceptions, to the use of classifiers are not unusual in classifier systems in general; see the quote from Aikhenvald 2000: 82 in section 6.) Some of these cases are genuine exceptions, in the sense that there is no explanation available for their existence. In other cases, however, the exceptions are systematic, and their existence can be accounted for. In the discussion that follows, the focus will be on cases that involve distinctions between the direct and the indirect possessive constructions, specifically cases where the direct construction would be expected but is not used. The cases will be divided into two broad categories, one having to do with kinship terms, and one having to do with body-part terms and terms for concepts having close association with the body.

In Anejom̃ some kinship terms, such as 'father', 'grandparent' and 'wife', occur in the direct construction, while others occur in one of two indirect constructions: for example, 'husband' takes the general classifier, and 'sister' and 'brother' take the passive-possession classifier. Lynch (2000) does not attempt to provide an explanation for the use of the indirect constructions. In Houaïlou the term for 'mother' occurs in the direct construction, but the term for 'father' occurs in the only type of indirect construction. La Fontinelle (1976) offers no explanatory comment.

On the other hand, in some languages the use of more than one type of possessive construction is said to be (at least partially) pragmatically motivated. In Kairiru, of the 18 kinship terms recorded by Wivell (1981) one half occurs in the direct/suffixing construction and the other half in another, bare construction, where the PM carries no indexing of the PR. The latter construction is also used to express alienable possession. Wivell (1981: 54) characterizes the distinction thus: "Those terms that were inalienable were the ones that expressed important kin relations within the social structure, while the alienable ones were those that expressed fairly unimportant roles." The former category includes the terms for 'father', 'mother' and 'child', and the latter category the terms for 'mother's brother's wife, husband's sister's daughter' and 'great grandparent, great grandchild'.

In Gapapaiwa, according to McGuckin (2002: 304), "[k]in terms for persons who are peers or subordinates are possessed in direct constructions,

while terms for persons in authority over ego require an indirect alienable construction", for example, 'spouse' and 'mother', respectively.

In some languages the exceptional treatment of some kinship terms is due to lexical replacement. In such cases, terms that are relatively new to the language do not (necessarily) select the direct construction. For example, in Toqabaqita the term for 'mother' occurs in the direct construction but the term for 'father' does not:

(89) *thaina-ku*
      mother-1SG:POSS
      'my mother'

(90) *maka nau*
      father 1SG
      'my father'

Thaina continues Proto Oceanic **tina* 'mother',[8] while *maka* is a lexical innovation. There is an archaic term for 'father', *thaama*, which continues Proto Oceanic **tama* 'father', and it occurs in the direct construction. Similarly, the term for 'child', *wela*, is a lexical replacement (cf. Proto Oceanic **natu*) and occurs in the bare/non-suffixing construction, not in the direct/suffixing construction.

In Wayan there are two types of possessive construction in which kinship terms occur as PMs, and, according to Pawley and Sayaba (1990: 158), "[t]here are no clear semantic grounds for the split". However, Pawley and Sayaba point out that one of the two structures is an innovation unique to Western Fijian. It was originally used for part-of-whole terms, some of which later acquired kinship meanings. It is this class that is open, admitting new kinship terms, while the other class is closed.

Exceptions are also found in some languages with body-part terms and terms having to do with the body. In a detailed study of inalienable possession in Paamese, Crowley (1996) concludes that the choice of a possessive construction is not fully predictable on semantic grounds. Most nouns that refer to internal organs occur in an indirect construction, and Crowley (1996: 398) offers an explanation: "Internal organs are the kind of things that would normally only be directly observed when there is a dead body that has been opened up. The possession of these items by the butcherer of the animal is clearly transferrable and so there is an alienable relationship

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8   The Proto Oceanic reconstructions are from Lynch *et al*. (2002).

between him and the body parts, in contrast to the formerly inalienable relationship between the animal and the body parts when it was still alive." Note, however, that the indirect construction is also used when the internal organ is part of the PR's, for example, an animal's, own body, and so the implication in what Crowley says is that the use of the indirect construction expressing the alienable nature of the relation between an animal's internal organ and the butcherer has been extended to the relation when the organ is part of the PR's own body. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the noun that refers to a bird's crop occurs in the direct construction, not the indirect one, and there is no obvious explanation for that. Outside of the area of internal organs, there is no explanation for the fact that the noun for 'shin' occurs in the indirect construction although the noun for 'lower leg' occurs in the expected direct construction.

A different kind of exceptional behaviour of body-part terms is found in Toqabaqita. Such nouns occur in the direct/suffixing construction unless they are in the scope of a modifier other than the PR, such as a verb,[9] a numeral or a demonstrative. Compare (91), where the noun 'eye' occurs in the direct/suffixing construction, and (92) and (93), where the same noun occurs in the bare/non-suffixing construction:

(91) *maa-ku*
      eye-1SG.POSS
      'my eye(s)'

(92) *maa   mauli   nau*
      eye   be.on.left.side 1SG
      'my left eye'

(93) *maa   nau   naqi*
      eye   1SG   this
      'this eye of mine'

The bare/non-suffixing construction is also used to express alienable possession; see (61) and (62) in section 3.4.

There is no difference in inalienability between 'my eye(s)' on the one hand and 'my left eye' and 'this eye of mine' on the other. As argued in Lichtenberk (2005b), the relevant factor is that of PM individuation. When the PM is not in the scope of a modifier other than the PR, it is not individu-

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[9] In Toqabaqita, verbs can directly modify nouns.

ated vis-à-vis the PR; it is viewed basically as an aspect of the PR. On the other hand, through specification the PM is individuated, given more identity with respect to the PR, and there the same construction is used that serves to express alienable possession, where the PM is always individuated with respect to the PR.

6. The relational basis of the Oceanic possessive systems

In a detailed study of the system of attributive possessive constructions in Wayan (a Western Fijian language) Pawley and Sayaba (1990) ask the following question: with respect to possessive marking, is the system one of noun classes or is it relational? The conclusion they reach is that it is a mixture of both: "Certain nouns belong to strict and semi-arbitrary noun classes, for purposes of possessive-marking, others show marking consistently following semantic principles." (p. 168). They suggest that their findings apply in their basics also to (Standard) Fijian. And the conclusions they reach with respect to Wayan and Fijian may be of relevance to Oceanic in general.

In the present study, on the other hand, it has been argued that the Oceanic systems are, on the whole, based on semantic/pragmatic principles, the crucial factor being the nature of the relation between the PM and the PR, even though there are also genuine exceptions. There is then some arbitrariness, but such cases are exceptions against the backdrop of semantically/pragmatically motivated systems.

While certain of Pawley and Sayaba's conclusions concerning Wayan are applicable to other Oceanic languages, there is some clarification that is in order. They use the term "relational analysis" (or "hypothesis") to identify an approach to Oceanic possessive constructions in which the choice of a construction type is viewed as having to do with the nature of the relation between the PM and the PR. (They mention the existence of several variants of the relational analysis.) They contrast the relational analysis with a noun-class analysis, according to which each noun belongs to a certain class depending on the type of possessive construction it selects, and characterize it in this fashion:

> We take the relational hypothesis to entail not only the claim that: (i) possessive marking is determined by the semantic relation holding between possessed and possessor, but that (ii) this relation is not constant for all situations. That is, for any noun, speakers have some choice of possessive marker, constrained only by their imaginations or belief systems. Any constraints which can not be readily accounted for in these terms must be regarded as grammatical not semantic constraints.   (Pawley and Sayaba 1990: 169)

In the present study, the Oceanic possessive systems have been character-
ized as basically relational in nature: exceptions apart, the choice of the
type of possessive construction depends on the nature of the PM–PR rela-
tion. This corresponds to point (i) in the quote from Pawley and Sayaba.
Their point (ii) has to do with fluidity. Fluidity is, of course, evidence of the
relational nature of the system: one and the same noun occurs in the PM
position of different types of possessive construction depending on the na-
ture of the relation between the PM and the PR. Pawley and Sayaba say that
according to the relational hypothesis "for *any* noun, speakers have some
choice of possessive marker, constrained only by their imaginations or be-
lief systems" (see the quote above; emphasis added here). I am not aware of
any such strong version of the relational analysis, according to which any
noun in a given language exhibits, in principle, fluidity. (See also further
below on fluidity and rigidity.)

Importantly, Pawley and Sayaba's point (i) is independent of their point
(ii). Fluidity is not necessary for a system to be relational. Even if no noun
exhibited fluidity, where each noun occurred in only one type of possessive
construction and so could be said to belong in a certain noun class, the over-
all system could still be relational if each noun class was defined by the na-
ture of the relation between the PM and the PR. An unstated assumption in
Pawley and Sayaba's approach is that noun classes are essentially arbitrary.
This, however, is not the case. As Aikhenvald (2000: 21) points out: "There
is always some semantic basis to the grouping of nouns into classes, but
languages vary in how much semantic transparency there is." And: "In lan-
guages with purely semantic assignment the class of a noun can be inferred
from its meaning." (p. 22). Thus, noun classes are semantically motivated to
various degrees, even though in a noun-class system "[e]ach noun…belongs
to one (or occasionally more than one) class(es)" (Aikhenvald 2000: 21).
Classifier systems (for example, numeral-classifier systems) too are based
on semantic/pragmatic principles. Sometimes there is fluidity, but there are
also exceptions: "The choice of a classifier is usually semantically trans-
parent; in some cases, however, the semantic link between a noun classifier
and a noun is not obvious." (Aikhenvald 2000: 82).

It is not lack of fluidity that counts as an exception. Only those nouns
that require a possessive construction that goes against the general pattern
are exceptional. Such exceptions apart, the Oceanic possessive systems are
basically relation-based, regardless of the degree of fluidity they permit.

One more remark on fluidity is in order. Descriptions of Oceanic lan-
guages that do comment on fluidity (and most of them do), say explicitly or
imply that certain nouns do not have fluidity, that they can occur only in one

type of possessive construction. The question that needs to be asked is to what extent such lack of fluidity is lexical/grammatical and to what extent it is semantic/pragmatic. It may be that certain kinds of fluidity do not occur because the kind of semantic/pragmatic relation that a given type of possessive construction expresses would be highly implausible or even absurd for a certain pairing of a PM and its PR. Thus, it is unlikely that the noun for 'father' would occur in the PM position in the food or the drink possessive construction. But is this a grammatical constraint or a matter of pragmatics? On the other hand, less than one-hundred-percent fluidity does not in itself mean that (genuine exceptions apart) the possessive system in a given language does not have a relational basis.

At present, we have mostly only brief comments on creativity with respect to possessive fluidity in individual languages; what is needed is in-depth studies. It may turn out that there is more fluidity than meets the eye.

7.   Emergence of the possessive classifier system

It is generally agreed that Proto Oceanic had a direct possessive construction and (at least) three possessive classifiers used in indirect constructions: a food, a drink and a general one (Lichtenberk 1985, Lynch *et al.* 2002). Lynch *et al.* (2002) suggest that Proto Oceanic may have had other possessive classifiers, including another, large-member set of classifiers, not unlike those found in most of the Micronesian languages, Iaai and Mussau (section 3.4). However, although such large-member systems are found in different primary subgroups of Oceanic, it is quite likely that those are later, independent developments from the more restricted, probably tripartite, system. This kind of development is quite natural.

Possessive classifiers may have begun to develop shortly before the Proto Oceanic stage, but the historical evidence is unequivocal that earlier there had been only one basic type of possessive construction, which was of the direct/suffixing type. The following question then arises: why did a system of possessive classifiers develop for alienable possession but not for inalienable possession? I have discussed this issue elsewhere (Lichtenberk 2005b) and so only a brief synopsis will be given here, together with new, albeit indirect evidence. In inalienable possession there is typically a highly salient relation between a PM and its PR: a kinship relation, a part-whole relation, or some other kind of intrinsic relation (for example, Barker 1995). The interpretation of the relation as the salient one is quite stable across different contexts (although it can be overridden). In alienable possession,

on the other hand, there is often no such strongly salient, context-stable relation, and correspondingly the referents of one and the same PM phrase can stand in various relations to their PRs. This was illustrated in the discussion of fluidity in section 4, in particular by the "mango" examples (75), (76) and (80) from Fijian: a mango as an item of food, or as an item of "drink" or as property to be sold. In alienable possession, the interpretation of the relation between a PM and its PR is highly variable across contexts.

Possessive classifiers specify more closely the nature of the PM–PR relation. The development of possessive classifiers for alienable possession is well motivated because of the variability in the PM–PR relation. On the other hand, in inalienable possession there is no such strong motivation because of the presence of a highly salient, default relation between the PM and the PR. The default interpretation of linguistic constructions needs no overt marking (cf. Haiman 1985; Dixon 1994; Croft 2001 [2002]). On the other hand, there is motivation for there being an overt marker of a non-default interpretation. For possessives, this is illustrated by the next pair of examples from Manam. The default interpretation of 'X's skin' is for the skin to be part of the PR's own body, as in (94), where the direct construction is used. However, if the intended interpretation is not the default one, this is signalled by means of a classifier, as in (95), in this case the alimentary classifier:

(94) *ʔusi-gu*
　　　skin-1SG:POSS
　　　'my skin (the skin of my body)'　　　　　Lichtenberk, field notes

(95) *ʔusi　ʔana-gu*
　　　skin　POSS.CLF-1SG:POSS
　　　'my skin (for me to eat, e.g. chicken skin)'　　Lichtenberk, field notes

To test the hypothesis that there is a difference in the presence of a highly salient, context-stable interpretation in inalienable possession, with intrinsically relational nouns, on the one hand, and in alienable possession with nouns that are not intrinsically relational, on the other, a set of experiments was performed with native speakers of English (Lichtenberk *et al*. 2004). Early in the history of Austronesian there was only one type of attributive possessive construction, without a distinction between inalienable and alienable possession. Similarly, English does not have a formal distinction between inalienable and alienable possession in its attributive possessive constructions, and so provides a good testing ground for the hypothesis.

In the experiment the subjects were presented with several sets of possessive noun phrases, some of which had inherently relational nouns as PMs, for example *his children*, and others had nouns as PMs that are not inherently relational, such as *her cookies*. For each stimulus the subjects were asked to give one interpretation of the relation between the PM and the PR. The results of the study convincingly demonstrated the existence both of a *PM effect* and a *PR effect*.

The PM effect has to do with the fact that the relational nouns as PMs elicited a restricted range of interpretations of the PM–PR relations, while the non-relational nouns elicited a broader range of interpretations. Furthermore, with the relational nouns there was always one interpretation that was clearly dominant, while such strong dominance was not found with the non-relational nouns. Thus, the interpretation of *his children* was in terms of a kinship relation, while *her cookies* elicited a variety of interpretations: the cookies she owns, the cookies she made, the cookies she bought, the cookies she will eat.

The PR effect has to do with the fact that the nature of the PR had a greater effect on the interpretation of the PM–PR relation with PMs that are not inherently relational, while with the inherently relational nouns as PMs the interpretations were quite stable. Thus, for example, both for *the soldier's legs* and for *the general's legs* the interpretation was uniformly that of the legs being part of the soldier's or the general's own body. On the other hand, for *the soldier's regiment* the dominant interpretation was that of the regiment the soldier is a member of, while for *the general's regiment* the dominant interpretation was that of the regiment the general is in charge of. The PR effect is stronger with non-relational nouns than with relational nouns because with non-relational nouns there is typically no intrinsic, salient relation between the PM and the PR. It is true that a certain kind of PR is likely to favour a certain kind of interpretation, but such contextual factors are absent or attenuated with "neutral" PRs, such as possessive determiners, for example, *her cookies*.[10]

Although the study was done on English, the assumption is that very much the same cognitive factors operate in other languages and that they operated in the history of Austronesian, when the system of possessive classifiers began to develop. Obviously, a system of possessive classifiers does not have to develop (after all, they are not common in the languages of

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[10] William B. McGregor has suggested (pers. comm., 11 August 2007) that the gender of the PR might be relevant in some cases; cf. *her cookies* and *his cookies*. The study discussed here did not take gender into account.

the world), but if they do develop they are more likely to develop, at least initially, for alienable possession, with PM nouns that are not inherently relational, than for inalienable possession, with PM nouns that are inherently relational. (Some Micronesian languages do have possessive classifiers for different kinship categories, as mentioned and illustrated for Kosraean in section 4 above), but those languages have large sets of possessive classifiers, which are later developments, postdating the emergence of the first, restricted set.)

8.   Summary and conclusion

With very few exceptions, Oceanic languages have more than one type of attributive possessive construction. In the typical system, there is a distinction between a direct possessive construction, where the PM noun carries affixes that index the PR, and more than one subtype of indirect construction, where the possessive affixes are attached to a possessive classifier. The direct construction type is strongly associated with inalienable possession, where there is an intrinsic link between the PM and the PR. There are, however, also language specific exceptions where certain PMs take an indirect construction rather than the direct one.

With some exceptions, the choice of a possessive construction depends on the nature of the relation between the PM and the PR. This relational nature of the choice of possessive construction is particularly strongly evidenced by fluidity in the possessive systems. Sometimes such fluidity is due to the polysemy of a noun, but in some cases there is fluidity without polysemy, and the choice of a possessive construction depends on the pragmatics of the situation (for example, whether or not an article of clothing is being worn at the relevant time).

When there is no fluidity, one can say that the given noun belongs in a certain class (the classes being established on the basis of the type of possessive construction used), but such classes are themselves by and large semantically/pragmatically grounded in the nature of the PM–PR relation.

To say that the Oceanic possessive systems are relational in nature and semantically/pragmatically motivated does not mean that the choice of a possessive construction is always predictable, even disregarding genuine exceptions. As pointed out in section 3.4, the type of possessive construction that a noun selects may be based on metonymy. Thus, in Manam the noun for 'garden' selects the alimentary (food and drink) possessive classifier, because gardens are places where food is grown (Lichtenberk 1983a).

However, not in all languages does the noun 'garden' select the food or alimentary classifier. For example, in Anejom̃ it selects the general classifier or the customary-possession classifier, even though the language has a food classifier (Lynch 2000); and in Zabana it selects the general classifier, even though the language has an alimentary classifier (Fitzsimons 1989). Metonymy is language/culture specific. A system may be sematically/pragmatically motivated, but that does not mean that everything is predictable.

In Oceanic, possessive classifiers are used (again with some exceptions) to express alienable possession. The development of possessive classifiers for alienable possession was motivated by the fact that with nouns that are not inherently relational there is typically no highly salient, context-stable, relation between the PM and the PR. A classifier specifies more closely the type of the relation. There are specific classifiers, such as food and drink. There is also a general classifier (provided a language has more than one classifier), which only signifies that the relation is not any one of the more specific types. In inalienable possession, where the PM noun is intrinsically relational, there is normally a highly salient, context-stable kind of relation between the PM and the PR, and the development of classifiers there is much less motivated.

While the development of a system of possessive classifiers for alienable possession was motivated, it is also a fact that the original system of (at least) three classifiers has been simplified in some languages or has disappeared altogether. While cognitive factors may motivate the existence of a grammatical construction or contrast, they do not determine their existence, and such factors may be overridden by other kinds of development.

Acknowledgement

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