Additive and associative plural constructions in Papuan Malay

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"Papuan Malay" denotes the variety of Malay spoken in coastal Papua (eastern Indonesia). This paper discusses additive and associative plural constructions in Papuan Malay as spoken along Papua's north-east coast. This description is based on recordings of narratives and spontaneous conversations between Papuan Malay speakers.

Papuan Malay noun phrases are very commonly modified with personal pronouns in post-head position, such that 'N-PRO'. Encoding the number and person of their referents, adnominal pronouns have determining function, hence "personal determiners" (Lyons 1999: 141). Focus of this presentation are N-PRO constructions in which a plural pronoun modifies a singular noun phrase. In these constructions, the plural pronoun signals the plurality of its referent: additive plurality with indefinite singular NPs and associative plurality with definite singular NPs. Both plural constructions can be formed with the first, second, and third plural pronouns.

N-PRO constructions in which a plural pronoun modifies an indefinite singular NP signal additive plurality. That is, such constructions denote referentially homogeneous sets in that "every referent of the plural form is also a referent of the stem" (Daniel and Moravcsik 2011: 1) as illustrated in (1).

(1) Additive plural constructions (indefinite singular head nominal and plural personal pronoun)

    a. [Context: Conversation about bride-price customs]

jadi	**lak-laki**	**kitong**	harus	bayar	sepulu	juta	sama	orang	Serui
so	man	1PL	have.to	pay	one-tens	million	with	person	Serui

       'so **we men** have to pay ten million to the Serui people' [Lit. '**we man**']

    b. [Context: Narrative about hunting a wild pig]

sa	lari	suda	mendakati	babi	di	mena	**anjing**	**dong**	gong-gong
1SG	run	just	close.in	pig	LOC(at)	which	dog	3PL	bark.at

       'I just ran closing in on the pig where **they dogs** were barking' [Lit. '**they dog**']

N-PRO constructions in which a plural pronoun modifies a definite singular NP signal inclusory associative plurality. These constructions convey the meaning "'X and X's associate(s)', where all members are individuals, X is the focal referent, and the associate(s) form a group centering around X" (Moravcsik 2003: 471). In Papuan Malay, the focal referent is always a noun or noun phrase heading the phrasal inclusory associative plural construction, while the "associates" are encoded in a modifying postposed plural pronoun as illustrated in (2).

Cross-linguistically, inclusory associative plural constructions are characterized by two distinct semantic properties which also apply to Papuan Malay: (1) "referential heterogeneity", and (2) "reference to groups" (Daniel and Moravcsik 2011: 1–3). The semantic property of "referential heterogeneity" implies that "the associative plural designates a heterogeneous set" (Daniel and Moravcsik 2011: 1). In ***bapa Yuli dong*** 'father Yuli and them' in (2a), for example, the plural pronoun encodes a heterogeneous set of associates centering around the focal referent. The semantic property of "reference to groups" refers to a high degree of internal cohesion within the plural construction. That is, the focal referent and the associates form "a spatially or conceptually coherent group" (Moravcsik 2003: 471) as for example ***Siska torang*** 'Siska and we' in (2b).

(2) Associative plural constructions (definite singular head nominal and plural personal pronoun)

    a. [Context: Narrative about pig hunting during a long journey]

bapa	**Yuli**	**dong**	bunu	babi
father	Yulius	3PL	kill	pig

       '**father Yuli and the others** killed a pig' [Lit. '**they father Yuli**']

b. [Context: The speaker quotes his niece]

itu	yang	**Siska**	**torang**	bilam	begini,	…
DEM.DIST	REL	Siska	1PL	say	like.this	

'that's why **Siska and we companions** said like this, …' [Lit. '**we Siska**']

References

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