

Paradigms and rules

Reflections on word-like properties of complex phrases

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Intro

We know that syntactically complex structures can be part of morphological paradigms:

morphological paradigm

strong
stronger
strongest

periphrastic forms

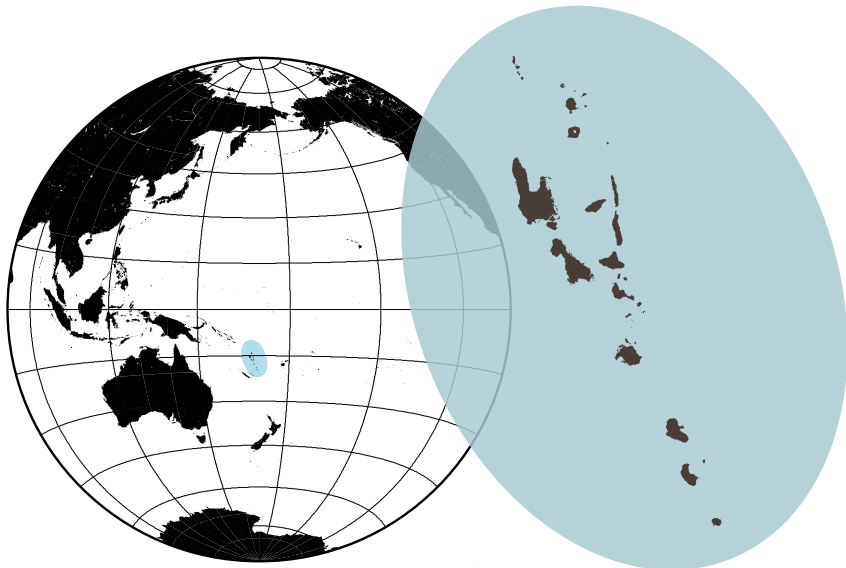
interesting
more interesting
most interesting

syntactic structure

tall tree
green tree
old tree

- In descriptions of lesser known languages, complex phrases are often not described in terms of their paradigmatic organization.
- I will discuss two phenomena from the Oceanic language Daakaka in this context:
 - ① possessive structures (as in *my blood*);
 - ② psycho-collocations (as in *my heart is heavy*).

About Daakaka



Intransitive nouns: alienable vs. inalienable

- (1) a. *bura=ne* *vyanten en=te*
blood=TRANS person DEM=MED
'this person's blood' (body part reading)
- b. *bura* \emptyset -*e* *vyanten en=te*
blood CL2-LINK person DEM=MED
'this person's (animal) blood' (ownership reading)

Deriving the alienability distinction

I have argued in von Prince (2016) that the semantic distinction between alienable and inalienable structures can be characterized in terms of ...

- x permanence,
- x lexical determination,
- ☞ control.

Caveats

- No current account of the alienability distinction can fully account for the cross-linguistic variation that we see (e. g. Hawaiian).
- Moreover, within Daakaka, the choice between possessive structures is largely determined by:
 - properties of the possessed noun;
 - properties of the possessor;
 - these two are highly correlated with each other;

Possession in Daakaka: inflected nouns

Inflectional paradigm of *nat*- “child”

	SINGULAR	DUAL	PAUCAL	PLURAL
1EX	<i>netuk</i>	<i>natenmaa</i>	<i>natemsi</i>	<i>netinyem</i>
1IN		<i>nateda</i>	<i>natensi</i>	<i>nater</i>
2	<i>natom</i>	<i>natoma</i>	<i>natomsi</i>	<i>natomi</i>
3	<i>naten</i>	<i>nateyaa</i>	<i>natesi</i>	<i>nate</i>

Uninflected transitive nouns

- (2) a. *na=m esi amu *(lebekuu)*
1SG=REAL see beard.of palmtree
“I see the fringes/old leaves of the palmtree”
- b. *amu-sye*
beard.of-3POSS
“its fringes/old leaves”

Possessive classifiers

- (3) *em* *m-e* *Louis*
house CL1-3SG.POSS L.
“Louis’ house”
- (4) *dom* *∅-e* *Bong*
age CL2-3SG.POSS B.
“Bong’s age”
- (5) *atuwo* *s-e* *Bong*
basket CL3-3SG.POSS B.
“Bong’s basket”

Possessive paradigms

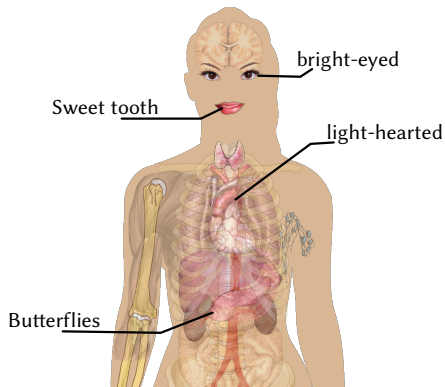
		Human possessor		Non-human possessor	
		Nominal	Pronominal	Nominal	Pronominal
tr.		<i>kus-un</i> <i>Bong</i> nose.of=3SG.POSS Bong “Bong’s nose”	<i>kus-un</i> nose.of=3SG.POSS “his nose”	<i>we</i> <i>tuwu</i> fruit.of almond “almond”	<i>we-tye</i> fruit.of-3s.POSS “its fruit”
inal.	itr.	<i>ur-ne</i> <i>vyanten</i> louse=TRANS person “human louse”	<i>bura-ne</i> <i>nge</i> blood=TRANS 3SG “his blood”		
		Singular	Plural		
m-		<i>em</i> <i>m-e</i> <i>Louis</i> house CL1-ALS L. “Louis’ house”	<i>em</i> <i>m-an</i> <i>yaapu</i> <i>nyoo</i> house CL1-AL.P big.man 3P “The chiefs’ house”	<i>m-ok</i> <i>em</i> CL1-1SG.POSS house “my house”	<i>mubuo-ane</i> <i>tyu</i> flesh=TRANS chicken “chicken meat”
ali.	∅-	<i>dom</i> <i>∅-e</i> <i>Bong</i> age CL2-ALS B. “Bong’s age”	<i>dom</i> <i>∅-an</i> <i>yaapu</i> <i>nyoo</i> age CL2-AL.P big.man 3P “The chiefs’ age”	<i>∅-ok</i> <i>dom</i> CL2-1SG.POSS age “my age”	<i>mubuo-an</i> flesh=TRANS.3POSS “its meat”
	s-	<i>atuwo</i> <i>s-e</i> <i>Bong</i> basket CL3-ALS B. “Bong’s basket”	<i>atuwo</i> <i>s-an</i> <i>yaapu</i> <i>nyoo</i> basket CL3-AL.P big.man 3PL “the chiefs’ baskets”	<i>s-ok</i> <i>atuwo</i> CL3-1SG.POSS basket “my basket”	

The alienability distinction is only relevant for the highlighted part of the paradigm.

Interim

- Possessive structures in Daakaka can be well described by a **paradigm** consisting of several, **partially dependent** dimensions.
- The alienability distinction applies productively only to a limited set of cells within that paradigm.
- Cross-linguistic differences may be due to differences in the paradigm, not differences in the semantics of alienability.

Psycho-collocations



- Languages differ in how they assign **emotion terms** to **lexical classes**.
- Some languages do not assign them to a specific lexical class at all, but express them with **psycho-collocations**.
- These consist of **body-part terms** as subjects or incorporated nouns in combination with specific predicates as in *her heart is heavy/she is light-hearted*.

Psycho-collocations in cross-linguistic comparison

- All languages appear to have at least some psycho-collocations.
- However, authors such as (Ameka, 2002: 29) stress that psycho-collocations in English are not necessarily comparable to psycho-collocations in languages like Ewe:

“English tends to use bodily expressions as subordinate to other basic level terms for specific emotions. In Ewe, by contrast, bodily expressions tend to be basic level expressions.”

- Psycho-collocations are often not described in terms of their paradigmatic properties, although these could help understand differences between **basic** psycho-collocations and **subordinate** psycho-collocations within and across languages.

Psycho-collocations as primary expressions of emotion

Walman (Torricelli; Papua New Guinea):

- (6) *To kum won n-o kisiel.*
 so 1SG heart 3SG.M.SUBJ-be fast
 “Then I got angry.” (lit. “My heart was fast.” Matt Dryer, p. c.)

Japhug (Sino-Tibetan):

- (7) *w-sni nurzduɣ*
 3SG.POSS-thought/heart SENS-painful
 “He feels sad.” (lit. “His heart is painful.”, Guillaume Jacques, p. c.)

Mandinka (Niger-Kongo):

- (8) *À jùsôo láatá lè.*
 3SG liver.D lie.down.CPL FOC
 “He/ she is happy.” (lit. “His/her liver lied down.” Denis Creissels, p. c.)

Psycho-collocations in Daakaka

- (9) *ny-un mwe lili*
 face.of-3S REAL drunk
 ‘she/he is drunk’ (lit. “her face is drunk”)
- (10) *yu-on mwe kyes-kyes(=ane nge)*
 inside/feeling-3S REAL REDUP-be.sweet(=TRANS 3S)
 ‘she/he is in love (with her/him)’ (lit. ‘his/ her feeling is sweet for her/him’)
- (11) *met-an mwe nyup*
 eye-3S REAL doze.off
 ‘she/he is dozing off’ (lit. “her/his eyes doze off”)

Nominalizing psycho-collocations

Japhug:

- (12) *tɕhemɣpɯnnu rca, [u-sni u-tuɣzduɣ]*
 little.girl DEM FOC:UNEXP 3SG.POSS-thought/heart 3SG.POSS-NMLZ:DEGREE-painful
pjɣ-sɣre ʒo
 IFR:IPFV-be.funny/be.extreme EMPH
 ‘The little girl was extremely sad (lit. the pain of the little girl’s heart was extreme).’
 (Jacques 2015)

Mandinka:

- (13) (*à lá*) *jùsù-lâa*
 3SG GEN liver-lying.D
 ‘(his/ her) happiness’ (Denis Creissels, p. c.)

In Walman, psycho-collocations are apparently not nominalized (Dryer, p. c.)

Nomninalizing psycho-collocations in Daakaka

Term	Gloss	Meaning
<i>bip mer-mer</i>	body REDUP-dead	‘exhaustion’
<i>bip erér</i>	body hot	‘fever’
<i>kus lip-lip</i>	nose REDUP-drip	‘nosebleed’
<i>myar nyup-nyup</i>	eye REDUP-doze	‘drowsiness’
<i>kor yas-yas</i>	head REDUP-strong	‘obstinacy’
<i>yuo yaa-yaa</i>	feeling REDUP-hurt	‘anger’
<i>yuo maru</i>	feeling glad	‘gladness’
<i>vyaa boo</i>	arm deformed. by.elephantiasis	‘elephantiasis affecting the arms’
<i>myar bwii</i>	eye blind	‘blindness’

- (14) [*s-am yas barar=an*] *to vu*
 CL3-2SG steal pig=NM NEG.REAL good
 ‘your (habit of) stealing pigs is not good’

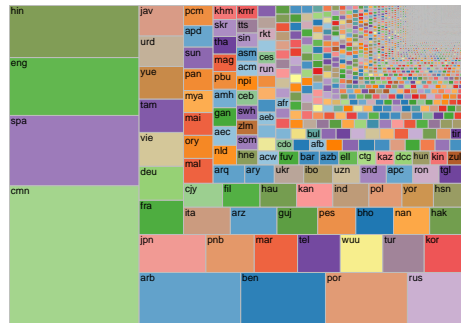
Conclusions

- In language description and typological comparison, paradigmatic properties of complex phrases are often neglected, even though they can probably help us understand their behaviour.
- In the case of possessive structure, both language-internal and cross-linguistic variation may be governed by paradigmatic contrasts.
- In the case of psycho-collocations, the intuition that they have a more basic status in some language as opposed to others can be substantiated by their paradigmatic properties.

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- Our knowledge about cross-linguistic variation is mostly based on **grammatical descriptions** of a limited set of languages, which is biased towards **large, official, literate** languages (Dahl, 2015).
- Descriptions are informed by **dominant grammatical theories**.
- My impression is that they systematically underestimate **word-like properties of syntactically complex phrases**.



Problems with this picture I: limited scope

Naturally occurring minimal pairs that instantiate the alienability distinction only involve **internal organs**.

There are two only other cases of intransitive nouns with human possessors and inalienable marking:

(15) *syetantan=ane nye*

grave=TRANS 1s

‘my grave’ (sto09:010)

(16) *ur=ane vyanten*

louse=TRANS person

‘human louse’ (exp08:110)

In one case, the human possessor is dead; in the other one, generic.

Problems with this picture: Cross-linguistic variation

Hawaiian (Lichtenberk, 1983):

- the **non-control** possessor is used for the relation between a chief and his subjects;
- the **control** possessor is used for the relation between a person and their descendants.

- (17) a. *nā kānaka o ke ali'i*
 ART people NCONT ART chief
 'the people of the chief'
- b. *nā mamo a ka mea make*
 ART descendant CONT ART thing dead
 'the descendants of the deceased'