

TOWARDS A THEORY OF THE ORIGIN OF THE OCEANIC POSSESSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

John Lynch

0. INTRODUCTION

The notion that, in Oceanic (OC) languages, the nature of the possessive construction was determined by the 'gender' of the possessed nominal was finally dispelled in 1973 in Lynch (1973) and Pawley (1973). As Pawley summarised the discussion at that stage:

In these languages we are not dealing with a true gender system, but with a system which marks several kinds of possessive relationships, and which allows a noun to occur as head with as many different kinds of possessive markers as makes sense to the speakers of the language. The grammar of the system is thus more comparable to that governing verb-object relationships than to a gender system (Pawley 1973:167).

However, the analysis proposed (especially in Lynch 1973) failed in at least one important respect to provide an adequate alternative theory: no real attempt was made to account for the *morphology* of the possessive constructions in OC. This paper is an attempt to begin to remedy that deficiency.¹

Even when regarding the Polynesian and Micronesian systems as recent, isolated developments, there are still problems in beginning a description of the morphosyntax of possession in Proto-Oceanic (POC). One such problem is that, although there appears to be a common super-system, there are many morphosyntactic variations on this common theme. Another, interrelated, difficulty is that the first-order subgrouping of OC is still ill defined, which makes reliable reconstruction difficult. A third problem area concerns the possibility that what has already been reconstructed for POC may reflect the peculiarities of the better-known languages, and may not necessarily be identical with a system reconstructed when other languages in the area become better known. These difficulties force us to be somewhat tentative in morpho-syntactic reconstruction in Oceanic.

Because of these difficulties, the reconstruction of the POC system is beyond the scope of this present paper; hence the title "*Towards a theory ...*". Rather, I will try to develop (more formally than has been done before) the idea proposed by Lynch (1973) and Pawley (1973) that possessive constructions in POC derive in some way from verb-object relationships. I will attempt to explain the morphological similarities between object and possessive suffixes in many OC languages, and will try to account for the *forms* of the so-called 'possessive markers' in terms of this verb-object relationship. I will use as a framework for discussion Pawley's (1973) reconstruction of the POC possessive system, and will concentrate most heavily on the

Amran Halim, Lois Carrington and S.A. Wurm, eds *Papers from the Third International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics*, vol.1: *Currents in Oceanic*, 243-268. *Pacific Linguistics*, C-74, 1982.

© John Lynch

243

system as it operates in a number of OC languages, particularly Motu (Lister-Turner and Clark n.d.a, n.d.b), Lenakel (Lynch 1978a), and Fijian (Milner 1972, Geraghty 1978);² these three languages have been chosen partly because of relative genealogical distance, and partly because of my familiarity with them.

1. BACKGROUND

The POC possessive system has been most clearly summarised by Pawley (1973, esp. 153-169). In POC,

contrast between types of possession was marked primarily by a 'possessive particle' or 'possessive marker'. Three particles which can be definitely attributed to POC had the basic shapes **na*-, **ka*-, and * $\emptyset$ (zero). Since these markers may have had alternants in POC, as their reflexes do in certain contemporary languages, it will be convenient to sometimes use **na*, **ka*, and zero as abstract representations of the cognate forms in discussing both POC and contemporary Oceanic languages (Pawley 1973:154).

In this section of the paper, I will present Pawley's analysis with little or no modification, and will show the modern correlates of the various reconstructed POC constructions. I will also introduce the terminology that will be used in the remainder of this paper, justifying it in those areas where it differs from the more generally used terminology.

1.1. *Zero-marking: direct possession

This is the construction-type most generally referred to in the literature as inalienable possession: "the majority of Oceanic languages have a type of possession in which the possessor is marked by a pronoun suffixed directly to the head noun" (Pawley 1973:154). The form of this suffixed pronoun is usually different from that of the free/focal pronoun - cf. POC **au* 'I', but *-*ŋku* 'my'. I feel in sympathy with Geraghty (1978:229), however, when he suggests that "the term 'inalienable' be used to refer to all nouns with which an expressed possessor is obligatory - a class considerably larger than the class of directly possessed nouns" which, in Fijian at least (the language Geraghty was concerned with), are those nouns which take a suffix marking the person and number of the possessor. I will thus use the term 'direct possession' to refer to Pawley's *zero-marked construction. Some examples are given below from Fijian (FIJ), Motu (MTU), and Lenakel (LEN):³

- FIJ (1) *na tama-qu*
 art *father-1sg*
 '*My father*'
- MTU (2) *ima-na*
 hand-3sg
 '*His/her hand(s)*'
- LEN (3) *nelu-m*
 tooth-2sg
 '*Thy tooth/teeth*'

Note that in these examples (where the possessor is a pronoun), the possessive marker is zero, the possessive pronoun being suffixed directly to the head nominal.

1.2. *na-marking: active manipulative possession

This construction-type often goes under one of the names 'alienable', 'general', or 'neutral' in the literature on OC languages; or again, "**na*-marking indicates what can loosely be called 'dominant possession'" (Pawley 1973:158). I prefer the term 'active manipulative' (suggested to me by Terry Crowley): 'active' because it not only implies the idea of dominance that Pawley is talking about, but also because it contrasts nicely with 'passive' possession (see 1.3.2. below); and 'manipulative' because it contrasts the kind of dominance expressed in this construction-type with the more specialised kinds of dominance expressed in active *eating* and active *drinking* possession (see 1.3.1. and 1.4. below). In **na*-possession, suffixes are attached to this possessive marker and not to the head noun, e.g.

- FIJ (4) na no-qu vale
 art poss.lsg house
 'My house'
- MTU (5) e-gu ruma
 poss-lsg house
 'My house'
- LEN (6) nimwa taha-k (or taha-k nimwa)
 house poss-lsg
 'My house'

1.3. *ka-marking

Constructions with the possessive marker **ka* are similar in structure to those with the possessive marker **na*. However, in the case of **ka*-marking, Pawley reconstructs two quite distinct kinds of relationship which are marked by the same marker.

1.3.1. Active eating possession

One relationship marked by POC **ka* is that the referent of the possessed noun has been, is being, or is to be eaten by the referent of the possessor:

- FIJ (7) na ke-mu dalo
 art poss-2sg taro
 'Thy taro (to eat)'
- MTU (8) a-gu gwarume
 poss-lsg fish
 'My fish (to eat)'
- LEN (9) nuw niki-k (or niki-k nuw)
 yam poss-lsg
 'My yam (to eat)'

Note that the important thing in these constructions is the fact or intention of eating, not the edibility of the referent of the head nominal, and hence the name *eating* rather than *edible* possession. Thus constructions like (7) through (9) are only used if the possessor is eating the food, or is intending to do so, or is viewing it as a food item (and not, for example, as something to be sold, traded, etc.).⁴ (See section 1.5. below for an elaboration).

1.3.2. Passive possession

The other relationship marked by *ka in POC is possibly best termed 'passive': "actions over which the possessor has no control (where he is the patient, target, or involuntary experiencer) were evidently marked as such by the use of *ka-" (Pawley 1973:162). This kind of construction is also marked by ke in Fijian:

FIJ (10) na ke-mu itukutuku
 art poss-2sg story
'Thy story (the one told about thee)'

The construction is rarely, if ever, used in Motu.⁵ The construction-type appears in Lenakel, but a different possessive morpheme is used from that used in active eating possession (see section 4 for clarification), e.g.

LEN (11) nouanage in io
 story poss I
'My story (the one about me)'

1.4. *ma-marking: active drinking possession

Various OC languages (or groups of languages) show a variety of other kinds of possession marking. With one exception, none of these can be attributed to POC (Pawley 1973:163-165). The exception involves constructions marked by *ma, which behaves syntactically like *na and *ka. This construction-type, which indicates the fact or intention of drinking the possessed nominal, does not occur in Motu, which uses *ka-possession for both eating and drinking; but it "is reflected in the Fijian languages, in Mota and most other Northern New Hebrides languages, ...and in Vanikolo and Utupua of the Santa Cruz group" (Pawley 1973:164), as well as in the languages of Tanna and Aneityum of Southern Vanuatu (formerly New Hebrides).

*ma-marking in Fijian and Lenakel is illustrated below:

FIJ (12) na me-qu yagona
 art poss-1sg kava
'My kava (to drink)'

LEN (13) nikava nɪmwɪ-n (or nɪmwɪ-n nikava)
 kava poss-3sg
'His kava (to drink)'

The question of whether *ma-possession actually occurred in POC is a moot one; Pawley (1973:164) notes that it "has a long history and is possibly POC". For the sake of argument, I will assume that *ma-marking is in fact assignable to POC; but even if this is incorrect, it makes no real difference to the hypothesis I am putting forward here.

1.5. Relations, not gender

It should be clear from the above, and also from Lynch (1973) and Pawley (1973), that the various possessive constructions in POC and in Fijian, Motu, and Lenakel mark semantic relations between two nominals in a possessive construction, and not the gender of the possessed nominal (an earlier interpretation). Fijian is typical of most OC languages in allowing many nouns to occur as possessed nominals with more than one kind of possessive marking, depending on the relationship involved; compare (14) and (15), and also (16), (17), and (18) which are taken from Pawley (1973:168):

- FIJ (14) na yaca-qu
 art name-1sg
 'My name (the name I bear)'
- (15) na no-qu yaca
 art poss-1sg name
 'My namesake', 'My name (which I bestow)'
- (16) na ke-na maqo
 art poss-3sg mango
 'His mango (for eating) - green mango'
- (17) na me-na maqo
 art poss-3sg mango
 'His mango (for drinking/sucking) - ripe mango'
- (18) na no-na maqo
 art poss-3sg mango
 'His mango (as property, e.g., which he is selling)'

Recall now Pawley's statement that the grammar of the possessive system of POC is "more comparable to that governing verb-object relationships than to a gender system" (Pawley 1973:167). The analysis proposed in Lynch (1973) attempted to exploit this idea, but on reflection it seems to me that, although I showed clearly enough that POC possession was not a gender-based system, the analysis I proposed did not in any real way account for the morphology of POC possession, and only superficially scratched the surface of the underlying syntax. In the sections which follow, I will try to remedy this deficiency by accounting for the structure and the morphology of the possessive system of POC and the systems of the languages under discussion here.

2. DIRECT POSSESSION

There are grounds for assuming that POC made a distinction between two types of direct possession: reciprocal and non-reciprocal. Reciprocal possession involves a relationship between possessor and possessed which may be re-expressed as another directly possessed construction with the roles reversed: thus if X is A's father, A is X's child, the italicised phrases being examples of what I call reciprocal possession. Non-reciprocal constructions do not allow this reversal of roles. Thus reciprocal constructions generally involve kinship terms or terms expressing a similar kind of relationship, while non-reciprocal constructions are generally partitive, the relation of possessed-possessor being that of part-whole.

There is a considerable amount of evidence which suggests that reciprocal and non-reciprocal constructions were distinct in POC. First, languages of western Fiji show a contrast between kin nouns (reciprocal), which take suffixed possessive pronouns, and other directly possessed nouns (non-reciprocal), which take prefixed possessive pronouns. Compare the standard (eastern) Fijian examples (19) and (20) with their equivalents in Wayan, a western dialect, given in (21) and (22) (all examples from Pawley and Sayaba 1971:422):

- FIJ (19) na tina-mu
 art mother-2sg
 'Thy mother'
- (20) na ulu-mu
 art head-2sg
 'Thy head'

- WAYAN (21) o mna-m
art mother-2sg
'Thy mother'
- (22) m-ulu
2sg-head
'Thy head'

Second, in Kwamera (of Tanna, Vanuatu), the third person singular possessive suffix occurs as -ni after a noun in a reciprocal construction but as -n after a noun in a non-reciprocal construction;⁶ thus:

- KWAMERA (23) rem-ik 'my father'
rem-ni 'his father'
mwipw-ik 'my grandchild'
mwipw-ni 'his grandchild'

but:

- (24) neram-ik 'my tongue'
neram-in 'his tongue'
nite-k 'my blood'
nite-n 'his blood'

Third, some relics of this distinction are still preserved in (West) Futuna-Aniwa (WFU), a Polynesian Outlier language of Southern Vanuatu (Capell 1960). Some kin terms still take direct suffixation:

- WFU (25) ta mupu-ku 'my grandchild'
tama-u 'thy father'
šina-na 'his mother'

Three other kin terms (and no other words in the language) are possessed by the possessive marker te plus pronoun suffix:

- (26) te-ku tama 'my child'
ta-u nofune 'thy wife'
te-n nuane matua 'her husband'

A few kin terms, however, behave like some other directly possessed (non-reciprocal) terms, prefixing ta plus pronoun suffix (with ta-u 'thy' > to, and other morpho-phonemic changes in other environments); compare:

- (27) tu-ku soa 'my sibling of same sex'
to kave 'thy sibling of opposite sex'
ta-no safe 'his wife's brother'

with:

- (28) tu-ku rima 'my hand'
to vae 'thy leg'
ta-no mata 'his face'

(Note that non-direct possessive constructions in WFU suffix possessive pronominal forms to the possessive markers ti-o- (passive) or ti-a- (active):

- (29) ti-i-ku hlava 'my loin-cloth'
ti-a-ku pakasi 'my pig').

Fourth, in Maisin (of the Northern Province, Papua New Guinea), all nouns take a possessive prefix:⁷

- MAISIN (30) au-teiti
lsg-son
'My son'

- MAISIN (31) ari-vaa
3pl-house
'Their house'

Only body parts (i.e. non-reciprocals) have the option of showing *in addition* a pronoun suffix:

- (32) ai-isu-ŋ (also ai-isu)
2sg-nose-2sg
'Thy nose'
- (33) ari-isu-u (also ari-isu)
3pl-nose-3pl
'Their noses'

This option is denied kin terms (reciprocals):

- (34) *ai-teiti-ŋ
2sg-son-2sg

The evidence presented above is, I feel, sufficient to allow us to at least hypothesise that POC made some kind of distinction between reciprocal and non-reciprocal direct possession. Accordingly, I will discuss each of these subtypes of direct possession separately in beginning my analysis of the POC possessive system.

2.1. Reciprocal

There is considerable similarity between reciprocal possessive constructions and transitive verbal constructions in OC languages. In many of these languages — for example, Motu — possessive suffixes to nouns and person/number-of-object suffixes to transitive verbs are formally similar or, in many cases, identical, e.g.

- MTU (35) tama-gu
father-lsg
'My father'
- (36) (ia) lau e-ita-gu
(he) I 3sg-see-lsg
'He sees/saw me'
- (37) sina-mu
mother-2sg
'Thy mother'
- (38) (lau) oi na-ita-mu
(I) you.sg lsg-see-2sg
'I see/saw thee'

Fijian and Lenakel, unlike Motu, have no object suffixes to verbs which are radically different in form from focal pronouns. However, there are other similarities between reciprocal possessive constructions and transitive constructions in Fijian. Firstly, appropriate transitive verbs may participate in the reciprocal construction, which is marked by the prefix *vei-* and the object-marking suffix *-i*:⁸

- (39) keirau sa vei-kila-i
we.excl.dual aspect recip-know-obj
'We two (exclusive) know each other'
- (40) erau sa vei-yawak-i
they-dual aspect recip-far-obj
'They are far away from each other'

Nouns which may occur as the head of a reciprocal possessive construction may also occur as heads in this essentially verbal construction. Thus beside such constructions as:

- (41) na wati-qu
art spouse-lsg
'My spouse'
- (42) na gane-na
art sibling.opp.sex-3sg
'His sister', 'Her brother'

we can also find:

- (43) erau vei-watin-i
they.d recip-spouse-obj
'They are husband and wife'
- (44) erau vei-ganen-i
they.d recip-sibling.opp.sex-obj
'They are brother and sister'

The intrusive *n* in forms like *vei-watin-i*, *vei-ganen-i*, etc., admits of a ready explanation. The alternation *-a/-i* is a grammatically conditioned one in Fijian verbs (e.g. *yawak-a*, *yawak-i*, *vei-yawak-i*). It is not difficult to imagine that this alternation was extended to reciprocally possessed nominals, so that beside 'nominal' *wati-na* 'one' finds 'verbal' *vei-watin-i*.

Secondly, proper possessives in reciprocal constructions and proper objects of transitive verbs both undergo a process which Geraghty (1978) calls 'proper noun incorporation'. While common objects belong to a NP distinct from the VP (as in (45)), proper NPs are incorporated into the VP (as in (46)); the diagonal slash marks a phrase boundary:⁹

- FIJ (45) au sã raic-a oti / na gone ogõ
I aspect see-obj already / art boy this
'I have already seen this boy'
- (46) au sa raic-i Seci oti /
I aspect see-obj Seci already /
'I have already seen Seci'

Proper nominal possessors are also incorporated into the preceding phrase:

- (47) na tamo i Seci
art father poss? Seci
'Seci's father'

Further, it will be noted that proper objects and proper possessives are marked by *i*, either as a suffix to the verb or in a position following the head. (Note here that the fact that *i* in (47) is written separately from the preceding noun does not necessarily imply that it is not a suffix; however, I have no evidence as to whether this *i* is better treated as a suffix or as a separate particle).

Although there is little evidence to be adduced from Lenakel in support of this hypothesis, the data from languages like Fijian and Motu suggest that there is more than a passing resemblance between transitive constructions and reciprocal possessive constructions. These formal similarities lead me to propose the following hypothesis. Reciprocal possessive constructions are nominalisations of sentences in which (i) the verb carries the semantics of the relationship, (ii) the subject is co-referential with the possessed nominal, and (iii) the object is co-referential with the possessor nominal. Thus in POC the structure of the sentences underlying such possessive phrases as 'my father' or 'this woman's father' would be:

(48)	Possessed S	Relationship V	Possessor O	
a)	(he)	father	me	= 'my father'
b)	(he)	father	this woman	= 'this woman's father'

What is meant by saying that these structures *underlie* the possessive constructions in OC languages? I do not mean to imply that such structures are part of the deep structure of modern OC languages, although that case could well be argued. What I do mean is that there is good evidence that modern reciprocal possessive constructions derived from nominalisations of sentences in POC (or in pre-POC) which were something like (49a, b) in form:

- POC (49) a) *** (ia) / tama-i-ŋku / (au)*
 (he) / father-transitive-me/ (I)
- b) *** (ia) / tama-i-ña / pine DEM*
 (he) / father-transitive-her / woman this

There is evidence, first of all, that POC did allow/require both transitive suffix and objective suffix following the verb, although most of its daughter languages have opted for the less redundant transitive suffix only, or objective suffix only. Part of the evidence comes from a Motu paradigm:

- MTU (50) a) *e-utu-gu 'he cut/cuts me'*
 e-utu-mu 'he cut/cuts thee'
 e-utu-a 'he cut/cuts him/her/it'
- b) *e-bota-gu 'he hit/hits me'*
 e-bota-mu 'he hit/hits thee'
 e-bota-ia 'he hit/hits him/her/it'

The Motu third person singular objective suffix is -a. However, after verbs ending in -a, the suffix is -ia. I agree with Pawley (1973:121) that the i in the form -ia is historically the close transitive suffix (POC *-i), which is now retained in Motu only in the environment a _____ -a. In most other contexts,

when a word ending in a is followed by a word beginning in a or e, the first a is elided There is one important exception to this rule of elision When the second person particle *ba* (or *a*) is followed by a verb beginning with a, the two a's are not elided, as in other similar cases, but a *v* is inserted; e.g., *ba atoa* becomes *bavatoa*. This is the exception to the rule of elision referred to. (Lister-Turner and Clark n.d.a:9,11).

Since it cannot be argued that the i in forms like *e-bota-ia* in (53b) is a regular Motu device to break up geminate clusters of low vowels, we can safely interpret this i as a relic of the transitive suffix *-i.

There is good reason to reconstruct for POC a set of object suffixes formally similar, if not identical, to the suffixes used in direct possession, but radically different from the free/focal pronouns. For POC, the singular forms are:

POC (51)	Free/focal	Objective/possessive
1sg	*au	*-ŋku
2sg	*ki(e)	*-mu
3sg	*ia	*-ña

Most Oceanic languages, however, have not retained both the transitive suffix and the objective suffix. Some, like Motu have retained the objective suffixes, but have dropped the transitive suffix (except in the environment mentioned above). Others, like Lenakel, have retained the transitive suffix but lost the objective

suffixes; Lenakel uses free/focal pronouns in both (emphatic) subject NP and object NP positions. Still others, like the Eastern Oceanic (EO) languages, show retention of the transitive suffix and a *drift* towards loss of the objective pronouns. Pawley (1972) reconstructs the following singular pronouns for PEO:

PEO	(52)	Free/focal	Possessive	Objective
	1sg	*i-nau	*-ŋku	*-au, *nau
	2sg	*i-koe	*-mu	*iko, *koe
	3sg	*ia, *i-nia	*ña	*-a, *-nia

However, certain EO languages retain the OC objective pronoun forms, sometimes in alternation with the EO-type objectives, sometimes not. Three languages of the San Cristobal-Malaita region – Arosi, Lau, and Oroha – retain OC-type objective pronouns (Pawley 1972). I will illustrate from Arosi only; (I have not been able to discover the conditioning factor in the alternations in the objective forms):

AROSI (53)	Free/focal	Possessive	Objective
1sg	inau	-gu	-gu
2sg	i'oe	-mu	-'o, -mu
3sg	ia	-na	-a, -na

The simplest explanation of forms like those in Arosi and other EO languages is that PEO (itself a more immediate ancestor of Fijian than POC) retained the OC-type suffixed objective-possessives, but that the system was undergoing change whereby the suffixed pronouns were being replaced by the free pronouns when used as objects of verbs. These pronouns subsequently underwent reduction in a number of EO languages.

According to the hypothesis being presented here, then, possessive structures like '*my father*', '*this woman's father*' should have the same underlying structure as 'true' verbal structures like '*he sees me*', '*he sees this woman*'. The underlying forms of the hypothesised possessive structures, given above as (49), are repeated for convenience here as (54):

- POC (54) a) ***(ia)* / tama-i-ŋku / (au)
 (he) / father-transitive-me / (*I*)

 b) ***(ia)* / tama-i-n̄a / pine DEM
 (he) / father-transitive-her / woman this

The underlying forms of the 'true' verbal structures would be something like those in (55):

- (55) a) **ja / kite-i-ngku / (au)
 he / see-transitive-me / (I)
 b) **ja / kite-i-ña / pine DEM
 he / see-transitive-her / woman this

Let us now examine the structures of the three modern languages being used in this paper.¹⁰ In Fijian, the structures are:

- FIJ (56) a) na tama-qu 'my father'
 b) na tama ni yalewa ogō 'this woman's father'
 c) e raic-i au 'he sees me'
 d) e raic-a na yalewa oqō 'he sees this woman'

The pairs (56a, c) show that, under nominalisation, the transitive suffix is lost and the objective suffix is retained, whereas in a 'true' verbal construction the reverse obtains. Presumably, this difference of treatment of transitive + objective occurred at an early stage in the history of Fijian – quite possibly in a pre-PEO stage. Note also that the free pronoun *au* is deleted in the possessive (56a), presumably under identity with the suffix, but is not deleted in the verbal (56c).

The pairs (56b, d), however, show two important differences: first, the possessive (56b) shows a marker *ní* which is, in surface terms, neither the transitive *i* nor the possessive/objective suffix *-na*; and second, the verbal (56d) shows a transitive suffix *-a* which differs from the suffix *-i* found in (56b). I will attempt to account for both of these below.

Firstly, the marker *ní* might be explained as follows. In PEO, the POC objective suffix **-ña* had become something like **-nia* (cf. (52) above). This development means that, in pre-Fijian, the equivalent of (54b) might have been something like (57):

Pre-FIJ (57) ***na tama-nia na yalewa oqo*
 art *father-3sg* art *woman this*

(presuming that by this stage the transitive suffix had been lost). It is at least conceivable that phonological reduction of the sequence *nia na* yielded the form *ní*, particularly since this corresponds phonologically to a considerable extent with a similar case — the incorporation of proper objects and possessors discussed in relation to (45)-(47) above.

Secondly, the form *-a* in (56d) admits of an even readier explanation. The rule of objective suffix deletion applies to sentences like (55b), but this then leaves the number of the object unspecified. Modern Fijian specifies non-singular NP objects by incorporating into the VP a non-singular third person object pronoun of the appropriate number:

FIJ (58) *e raic-i ira / na yalewa oqo*
 aspect *see-transitive 3pl / art woman this*
 '*He sees these women (pl)*'

I suggest as a possibility that singular NP objects were marked in this way as well; i.e. that the third person singular pronoun *ia* (possibly in the form *ya* — cf. Fijian *koya*) was incorporated into the verb phrase. Thus the singular equivalent of (58) in Pre-Fijian would have been:

Pre-FIJ (59) ***e raic-i ia / na yalewa oqo*
 aspect *see-transitive 3sg / art woman this*

Phonological reduction would then have applied to *raic-i ia* yielding (by way of *raic-ia*) the modern form *raic-a*.¹¹

The hypothesis therefore explains the form of the Fijian reciprocal constructions, providing that we accept the initial assumption — that, in a language ancestral to Fijian, an early distinction was made between nominalised and 'true' verbal sentences, with the former then undergoing loss of the transitive suffix and the latter loss of the objective suffix.

In Motu, the structures which correspond to the underlying sentences (54) and (55) are:

MTU (60) a) *(lau) tama-gu* '*my father*'
 b) *hahine ina tama-na* '*this woman's father*'
 c) *(ia) (lau) e-ita-gu* '*he sees me*'
 d) *(ia) hahine ina e-ita-ia* '*he sees this woman*'

Motu loses the transitive suffix in all cases (except between verb-final a and objective a), and retains the suffix in all cases. In addition, Motu fronts the object to a pre-verbal position in both types of construction; i.e. objects of 'true' verbal constructions appear before the verb, and nominal possessors appear before the possessed noun. This is important, since it provides yet another significant parallel between 'true' verbal and possessive constructions. In fact, with one exception the only difference between the possessive (60a, b) and verbal (60c, d) is the fact that the verbal structures show person-of-subject and tense/aspect affixes;

and if the possessive structures are again conceived of as nominalisations of verbal structures, this difference is not in the least unexpected.

The exception noted above refers to that fact that, in Motu, the third person singular possessive is *-na* while the third person objective is *-a*. (Something similar occurs in a number of OC languages). In the context of the hypothesis I am presenting, this is an important difference, and needs to be accounted for. For although there are some similarities with the Fijian case discussed above (cf. (58) and (59)), the two cases are not identical, since Motu retains objective suffixes in all other persons and numbers as well, whereas Fijian does not.

A possible explanation is as follows. In many OC languages, third person singular is treated as the unmarked category, so much so that the suffix for third singular possessive or third singular object is zero.¹² In such languages, after the loss of the transitive suffix before the object suffix, the third singular suffix was then itself lost. Thus an underlying sentence like:

- (61) *** (ia) / kite-i-ña / ia*
 (he) / see-transitive-3sg.obj / him
 'He sees him'

would have first lost its transitive suffix:

- (62) *** (ia) / kite-ña / ia*

and then, according to this hypothesis, substituted a zero morpheme for the third singular object suffix:

- (63) *** (ia) / kite-∅ / ia.*

Since the third person singular free pronoun object would have very often occurred immediately after the verb, it is distinctly possible that it merged phonologically with the verb, as a suffix *-ia*; but, since most POC verbs in any case end in *i*, the sequence *XYZi-ia* would very quickly have become *XYZi-a*; thus (63) would have developed into:

- (64) *** (ia) / kite-a / (ia)*

which then explains the suffix in Motu and other languages with the same distinction.

The Lenakel structures which correspond to the underlying sentences (54) and (55) are:

- | | | | |
|-----|---------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| LEN | (65) a) | <i>rĩmĩ-k</i> | <i>'my father'</i> |
| | b) | <i>rĩmĩ peravĩn uk</i> | <i>'this woman's father'</i> |
| | c) | <i>r-am-aamh io</i> | <i>'he sees me'</i> |
| | d) | <i>r-am-aamh peravĩn uk</i> | <i>'he sees this woman'</i> |

Like Fijian, Lenakel loses the transitive suffix in the nominalised constructions but retains the objective suffix; in the verbal constructions, on the other hand, the objective suffix is lost and, in verbs which are obligatorily transitive (like *aamh 'see'*) the transitive suffix is also lost. (However, verbs which are optionally transitive, like *ĩgn 'be afraid'*, retain the transitive suffix when used transitively). Thus Lenakel may be seen to have undergone rules which are similar to, though perhaps not as complex as, Fijian: the original order is retained in both possessive and verbal structures.

I have shown in this section how the reciprocal direct possessive constructions may be seen as deriving from underlying sentences, and I have attempted to account for the morphology of these constructions. This analysis has the advantage of explaining why pronoun suffixes used in reciprocal direct possession are formally related to, and often identical with, the suffixes used to mark the objects of transitive verbs in many OC languages.

2.2. Non-reciprocal

Apart from the few examples given earlier, where I drew the distinction between the two types of direct possession, non-reciprocal possessive constructions in most OC languages are generally formally identical with reciprocal possessive constructions. However, while it makes some kind of semantic sense to derive '*my father*' from a structure like (66), it makes rather less sense to derive '*my hand*' from (67):

- | | | | |
|------|---------|--------|--------|
| (66) | (he) | father | me |
| | Subject | verb | Object |
| (67) | ? | hand | me |
| | Subject | verb | Object |

Further, if there are indeed differences between these two types of possessive constructions in OC languages, and if we are prepared to accept the suggestion that these differences go back to POC, then we would need to require that the original structures were different — i.e. the hypothesis would be that, if the reciprocal/non-reciprocal dichotomy is acceptable, and if (66) is the structure which underlies structures like '*my father*', then (67) can not underlie '*my hand*'. There is, I believe, a fairly simple resolution of this problem which explains the formal similarities between reciprocal and non-reciprocal constructions in most OC languages but which, at the same time, allows us to posit a different syntactic/semantic origin for each construction-type.

Pawley (1973:142) reconstructs for POC a preposition $*(q)i$ which he glosses '*stationary position, in, at, on*'. I suggest that non-reciprocal constructions derive from noun phrases in which the head and the possessor are joined by this preposition, and also that the appropriate objective pronoun was suffixed to this preposition. Thus parallelling the structures in (49) above which underlie the reciprocal constructions, I would posit the structures in (68) as underlying the non-reciprocal constructions.

- POC (68) a) $**lima (q)i-nku au$
hand on-me I
- b) $**lima (q)i-nā pine DEM$
hand on-her woman this

The equivalents in the modern languages are:

- FIJ (69) a) *na liga-qu*
 art *hand-lsg*
 '*My hand*'
- b) *na liga ni yalewa oqō*
 art *hand poss woman this*
 '*This woman's hand*'
- MTU (70) a) *ima-gu*
hand-lsg
 '*My hand*'
- b) *hahine ena ima-na*
woman this hand-3sg
 '*This woman's hand*'
- LEN (71) a) *nelmi-k*
hand-lsg
 '*My hand*'
- b) *nelm† perav†n uk*
hand woman this
 '*This woman's hand*'

The formal similarities between reciprocal and non-reciprocal constructions will be obvious: compare (56) with (69) in Fijian, (60) with (70) in Motu, and (65) with (71) in Lenakel. What is more interesting is the phonological similarity between the structures in (49) underlying reciprocal constructions and the structures in (68) which underlie non-reciprocal constructions. In the former case, we find *NP + pronoun suffix + i + NP*, while in the latter *NP + (q)i + pronoun suffix + NP*. This formal near-identity could well explain why both construction-types underwent the same changes in a large majority of OC languages.

There is one potential difficulty with this hypothesis: Pawley states that POC **(q)i* did not take pronominal suffixes. However, let us examine Pawley's argument a little more closely. He first reconstructs none "prepositions and preposition-like forms" for POC (Pawley 1973:142). Three of these, he says, "appear to have occurred only in nominal possessive constructions in POC" — i.e., the aforementioned **na* and **ka*, which I will account for below, and also **ni* (illustrated in examples (56) and (69) above, and which I have already attempted to account for). Most of the others are reconstructible as "prepositional verbs":

The term "prepositional verb" was first used by Codrington and other early grammarians of certain disyllabic forms which connect a verb with its grammatical object. ... such forms are always followed by an object pronominal suffix. (Pawley 1973:142)

In fact, "only one true preposition with case-marking functions is reconstructible on the available data" (Pawley 1973:143). And while he does not clearly state there and then what the one "true preposition" is, its identity is clear from his later discussion; for in the section on prepositions (as distinct from prepositional verbs) we find two forms discussed: **ta* 'of a place (or person?)', and **(q)i*. Further, "evidence from Kuanua, Roviana, Babatana and Nggela [and probably also the Tanna languages:JL] suggests that **ta* differed from **(q)i* in occurring with object pronominal suffixes" (Pawley 1973:149). I interpret this, I believe correctly, as stating that the "one true preposition" in POC which could not take pronominal suffixes was **(q)i*.

It seems somewhat unusual that POC had a (comparative) wealth of prepositions which could take pronominal suffixes, and only one preposition which could not take such suffixes — not impossible, of course, but unusual. I would like to propose an alternative analysis: that **(q)i*, like the other POC prepositions, did in fact take pronominal suffixes; that these suffixes occurred in constructions like (68); that, because of the morphological similarity between these constructions and transitive constructions like (49) which underlie reciprocal possession, the two types underwent the same development; and that, subsequent to this change, other cases of **(q)i + pronoun suffix + NP* underwent the same change as cases of *transitive suffix + pronoun suffix + NP* — i.e. loss of pronoun suffix — again due to phonological identity. This explains why there are now no cases of reflexes of **(q)i* taking suffixes, and at the same time it allows us to posit a single set of POC prepositions whose morphological behaviour is identical.

This hypothesis has a number of advantages. In particular, it both accounts for the underlying differences between reciprocal and non-reciprocal constructions and yet explains why such structures are similar, often identical, in OC languages. As well as this, it also allows us to make a rather broader set of generalisations regarding the POC prepositions.

3. ACTIVE POSSESSION

3.1. Manipulative

In the previous section, I accounted for the formal similarity between possessive pronoun suffixes and object suffixes in many OC languages by suggesting that the possessor was in fact the object in the underlying construction – either the object of the verb (in reciprocal constructions) or the object of a preposition (in non-reciprocal constructions). It is difficult, however, to see how this idea can be extended to active manipulative or *na-possession, since the essence of this construction-type is generally agreed to be the active or dominant role exerted by possessor over possessed – a role not normally associated with direct objects.

An examination of the common morphemes used to mark active manipulative possession gives us a clue to a possible hypothesis. It appears that three such morphemes are widespread enough to be reconstructed with some antiquity:

(a) *na. This is the form that Pawley (1973) chose to represent the active manipulative marker in POC. With considerable (assimilatory?) variation in the vowel, reflexes of this form are found in Fiji, in Northern Vanuatu (e.g. Mota), in the Solomons (Kia, Roviana, Babatana, Sa'a), and in New Guinea (Manam, Gedaged). The form often has a preceding vowel: e.g. Paamese eno, ono (Terry Crowley personal communication).

(b) *qa. This form is found mainly in New Guinea Oceanic (e.g. Kuanua, Wedau); in many of these languages, the vowel is raised (e.g. Motu and other Central Papuan languages have e, ɛe). The form is also found in Utupua, and as an alternate to na in Roviana.

(c) *ta. This form has already been referred to. Pawley (1973) reconstructed it as a preposition meaning '*of a place (or person?)*' and noted that it possibly had possessive function. It is found in many languages of Northern Vanuatu, possibly in Lenakel of Southern Vanuatu, and "in Roviana, some New Britain languages, and possibly Nada" of Milne Bay (Pawley 1973:166).

The interesting thing about all three forms is their close resemblance to articles reconstructed for POC or inter-stage languages. The form *na has been reconstructed as a common article for POC by Blust (1973), and for PEO by Pawley (1972). Pawley also reconstructs PEO *a as a common article, and PEO *(q)a as a personal article (Pawley 1972:58). The form *te has been reconstructed as a Proto-Nuclear Polynesian article (Biggs, Walsh and Waqa 1970). Thus a tenable hypothesis is that the first part of Fijian no-qu, Motu e-gu, and Lenakel taha-k, all meaning '*my*' (active manipulative), is an historical article and not (as Pawley suggests (1973:142)) a preposition.

But why is the objective pronoun suffixed to the article? I believe that in this case the suffix represents, not the direct object, but the *indirect* object of some stative/active verb which does not appear in the modern possessive constructions. It is distinctly possible that, when a POC sentence contained two objects, it was the indirect object which was marked as the suffix to verbs. This is the case in a number of OC languages; for example, Motu:

- MTU (72) sivarai ta me-mero e-hamaoro-dia
 story one pl-boy 3sg-tell-3pl
 '*He told the boys a story*'
- (73) tau ese buka e-heni-gu
 man subj book 3sg-give-lsg
 '*The man gave me a book*'

and Banoni (Lincoln 1976:201ff):

- BANONI (74) ke man-a vai nna borogho toom
complete give-lsg it 3sg pig two
'He gave me two pigs'
- (75) ke vake-nobe-ria
complete work-again-3pl
'She made it for them again'

Thus assuming that this was indeed the case in POC, we might suggest that active manipulative constructions like Fijian *na no-qu vale*, Motu *e-gu ruma*, and Lenakel *taha-k nimwa*, all meaning '*my house*', had as their origin a sentence with unspecified subject like (76):

- POC (76) *() / X-iŋku / au / { (pale)
 (sub)j / X-intransitive-me / I / house

in which the pronoun suffix -ŋku is co-referential with the indirect object *au* and not the direct object (*pale* or *Ruŋmaq*), and in which the constituent 'X' represents some kind of stative verb which I will not further specify just yet.

I will show in a moment how this proposal accounts for the morphology of the active manipulative possessive constructions in POC. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to justify the relationship of indirect object with active possessor. The connection between a noun marked with dative/benefactive case and a (non-direct) possessor is fairly close in many languages (e.g. English '*It is for me*' and '*It is mine*'). In Lenakel both benefactive (77) and active manipulative possession (78) are marked by the same form, *taha*:

- LEN (77) a) r-im-ol taha in-i-n
3sg-past-do benefactive mother-3sg
'He did it for his mother'
- b) r-im-asumw taha-k
3sg-past-garden benefactive-lsg
'He gardened for me'
- (78) a) nimwa taha in-i-n
house poss mother-3sg
'His mother's house'
- b) kuri taha-k (or taha-k kuri)
dog poss-lsg
'My dog'

In addition to this connection, the hypothesis explains why it is that, although the possessor cannot be equated with the direct object in the underlying construction, the objective forms of the pronoun are nevertheless used.

Now let us attempt to account for the morphology of the OC active manipulative constructions. Assuming that 'X' was deleted upon nominalisation — and this may be a preposterous assumption, but assume it anyway for the moment! — then nominalisation of (76) would give us one of the following forms:¹³

- (79) a) **na-i-ŋku / au / pale
 b) **qa-i-ŋku / au / Ruŋmaq
 c) **ta-i-ŋku / au / Ruŋmaq

The transitive suffix *i* was deleted by general rule before the pronoun suffix (but possibly not before having some effect on the preceding vowel — e.g. raising *qa* to *qe* in languages like Motu and other Central Papuan languages, for example); also, the indirect object pronoun *au* was optionally or obligatorily deleted under identity with the suffix. Although various idiosyncratic changes took place in the phonology

Thus the system as proposed seems eminently natural, except, of course, for the major imponderable: the nature of 'X' in the underlying construction (76). What was the verb in a sentence like (76)? Was there in fact a verb at all? Can we posit a zero verb? If not, can we posit a verb which is deleted wholesale when the sentence it occurs in is nominalised? Whatever the form of the verb, what were its semantics? These are difficult questions. I will try to give an answer here, but I feel that further research and further thought is necessary before we fully understand what underlies this construction-type.

LEN (80) in uk Natou
he this Natou
'He/this is Natou'

(81) in uk r-is-ol-aan Natou
he this 3sg-neg-do-neg Natou
'He/this is not Natou'

MTU (82) asi-na-gini
neg-1sg.nonfuture-stand
'I don't stand'

(83) ai na asi e-mai ira
we.exc art? not poss.1.exc are
'We (exc) have no ares'

Remembering that Lenakel uses a form of the verb *'do'* in the negative copula, one aspect of Fijian is also of interest in this regard. Fijian has a verb *ia* *'to do, to perform, to carry out'*, with transitives *ia* and *ia-taka* (Capell 1968:73). What is especially interesting about this verb is its phonological form; Geraghty (personal communication) notes probably only one other Fijian verb of the form *VV - ua-ca*, *'to beat with a stick'*. A possible interpretation is that *ia* is historically not a verb at all, but a transitive suffix attached to a zero verb.¹⁴ That is, there was a transitive verb $\emptyset$ *'do, have'* which in the environment of a singular common object in pre-Fijian, had the form $\emptyset$ -*i ia* NP. Although other verbs reduced the -*i ia* to -*a* (cf. the discussion concerning (58) and (59) above), this zero verb may well have reduced -*i ia* only to *ia*.

POC (84) ** () / $\emptyset$ -i-ŋku / au / {
 Ruŋmaŋ
 (subj) / *be/have-transitive-me* / I / *house*

The underlying sentence (84) would mean something like '*There is to me a house*'. If

this hypothesis is acceptable, then the POC system is explained very easily, since once again the same set of rules which applied to the transitive and object suffixes in direct constructions will apply again here; if it is not acceptable — i.e. if we need to posit a non-zero verb which was first reduced, then wholly deleted, in this environment — then the hypothesis is less acceptable, because it is more contrived. However, I am loath to reject the whole proposal out of hand at this stage, since it applies very neatly to the other two types of active possession, to which I now turn.

3.2. Eating and drinking

These are subtypes are similar in many ways, which is why I want to discuss them together here: they both imply control for a specific purpose by possessor over possessed; unlike *na-possession, there is much greater consistency in the forms of the morphemes used throughout OC; and the forms of these morphemes bear a phonological resemblance to the verbs 'eat' and 'drink'.

The first point — specific control by possessor over possessed — suggests that both types of possession should be treated roughly in the same way as active manipulative possession which, although less specific, implies the same kind of control. I therefore tentatively suggest that, in OC eating and drinking possession, the possessor was originally the indirect object, in the same way as the possessor was derived from the underlying indirect object in *na-possession.

The second and third points should be taken together, since I feel that the similarity between the possessive markers and the semantically corresponding verbs explains the relative phonological uniformity of shape of the markers in OC languages. That is, I am suggesting that the possessive markers derive from the verbs 'eat' and 'drink'. With the former there is little difficulty: possessive marker *ka and verb *kani 'eat' are very similar — more so if the verb is interpreted as *kan-i, for which there seems to be considerable evidence which I will not detail here.

The formal relationship between what has been reconstructed as possessive marker *ma and verb *inum 'drink' is less obvious at first sight. However, the following facts suggest that both reconstructions should be modified, and it will be seen that the relationship between the modified forms is much closer.

a) First, Lynch (1978b:769) suggests that, on the basis of forms like Lenakel nɪmw- (better, nɪmwɪ-) 'marker for drinkable possession', the form *ma should be modified as *ɣma. Note also that Tangoa shows ɣa for this marker.

b) Second, there are also grounds for reconstructing a POC form *ɣminum 'drink' which would either replace *inum or be reconstructed as a doublet. Besides Malay minum, we find in Tanna forms such as Lenakel amnumw, Whitesands amɪm (where the a is a fused prefix). Fijian has gunu (where the vowel of the first syllable is irregular but may be due to assimilation). Now in many cases, Fijian shows the velar nasal g < POC *ɣm: e.g. *ta-ɣmane > tagane 'man', *li(ɣ)ma > liga 'hand'; *ɣmata > gata 'snake', and so on.¹⁵

If these two reconstructions are accepted, then the phonological connection between the 'new' possessive marker *ɣma and the 'new' verb *ɣminum seems considerably closer than the phonological connection between *ma and *inum.

Eating and drinking possessive constructions can thus be accounted for in an almost identical way as active manipulative constructions. The possessor in an eating construction derives from the indirect object in a sentence with *kan-i as the verb. Thus Fijian na ke-mu dalo, Motu a-mu taro, and Lenakel nɪki-m nite 'thy taro' would all derive from a sentence with unspecified subject like (84), which would mean something like 'There is for thee to eat the taro':

- POC (84) ** () / kan-i-mu / ko(e) / ntalos
(subj) / *eat-transitive-thee / thou / taro*

Exactly the same deletions and movement transformations apply to this sentence as applied to the various other underlying sentences that have been postulated in this paper. Given the loss of *i* before the object suffix, the consonant cluster in the resultant form *kan-mu would reduce to *ka-mu. Other further changes are language specific (e.g. loss of *k* in Motu, *a* > *e* in Fijian, fusion of article *nɪ* and *a* > *ɪ* in Lenakel).

Similarly, an active drinking construction like Fijian *na me-mu wai*, Lenakel *nɪmwɪ-m nu*, '*thy water*', would derive from a sentence like (85):

- POC (85) ** () / ɲminum-i-mu / ko(e) / waiR
(subj) / *drink-transitive-thee / thou / water*

Again, the same rules apply. The verb *ɲminum undergoes considerable phonological reduction, but on the analogy of *na/*qa/*ta and *ka one can easily imagine its being reduced to *ɲma.

We are on slightly shaky ground with both these suggestions, and also with the suggestions posed in the previous section. However, I feel that they have some merit in that they explain a number of features of Fijian and OC possession which have not so far been adequately accounted for: (i) the formal similarity of the possessive pronouns in active and direct possessive constructions, and the formal similarity of both to the objective pronoun suffixes; (ii) the formal similarity between the morphemes marking eating and drinking possession and the semantically appropriate verbs; and (iii) the relation between indirect objects and possessors. Whatever the validity of the hypothesis proposed in this section, I feel that it at least explains more of the facts of active possession than other analyses.

4. PASSIVE POSSESSION

In Fijian, passive possession is marked in exactly the same manner as active edible possession, with the possessive marker *ke*; compare the active edible construction (86) with the passive construction (87):

- FIJ (86) *na ke-na dalo*
art poss-3sg *taro*
'*His taro (to eat)*'
- (87) *na ke-na itukutuku*
art poss-3sg *story*
'*His story (the one told about him)*'

This is so in quite a number of OC languages. The following examples are taken from Pawley (1973:161-162):

- MOTA (88) *ga-na o nam*
'*his yam (as food)*'
- (89) *na-ga-na o gatia*
'*his arrow (intended for him, with which he was shot)*'
- NGGELA (90) *na ga-na beti*
'*his (drinking) water*'
- (91) *ga-dira na vahagi*
'*their sicknesses*'

The general impression, then, is that active edible and passive possession were, at the very least, formally identical construction-types in POC. Some writers go

even further, suggesting (either by implication or more directly) that the two constructions may have been semantically/structurally identical in POC. Geraghty, for example, states that, in eating possession,¹⁶

the possessor eats or suffers the head nominal. ... The 'suffer' meaning ... is important because it constitutes the middle ground between passive and eat possession, and helps explain why the two types are usually marked in the same way. It would be reasonable to consider the following as examples of passive possessed deverbal nouns:

S[tandard] F[ijian]

kemu i-cage	'your kick'	(you are kicked)
kemu i-roba	'your slap'	(you are slapped)

were it not for the fact that they appear to be somehow related to the verb *kana* 'eat, suffer', as exemplified below in these attested sentences:

kana i-cage	'suffer kicking, get kicked'
kana i-roba	'suffer slapping, get slapped'

(Geraghty 1978:236-237; emphasis mine).

Pawley, however, is more cautious about this relationship between active edible and passive possession:

*ka- marked other relationships which are difficult to connect semantically with the edible one. ... We are perhaps dealing with two independent formatives, *ka₋₁ (edible) and *ka₋₂ (subordinate or uncontrolled). ... It is tempting to postulate a common meaning uniting all the uses of *ka-, but it is doubtful whether this can be justified. (Pawley 1973:162-163).

There are two kinds of evidence which suggest that passive and eating possession derive from different underlying structures, and which also suggest an alternative historical analysis. The first comes from languages like those of the Central Province of Papua New Guinea; I will use Aroma rather than Motu as an example of these, since some of these data have already appeared in print elsewhere (Lynch 1973). Aroma shows the normal Central Papuan contrast between active manipulative (92) and active eating (93) constructions:

- AROMA (92) a) (goi) ge-mu vanua
(thou) poss.2sg village
'Thy village'
- b) (goi) ge-mu pae
(thou) poss.2sg pig
'Thy pig'
- (93) a) (goi) ga-mu ganigani
(thou) poss-2sg food
'Thy food (to eat)'
- b) (goi) ga-mu pae
(thou) poss-2sg pig
'Thy pig (as food)', 'Thy pork'

However, passive possession in Aroma is not structurally identical with eating possession but, rather, with direct possession. Compare the following pairs of constructions:

- (94) a) (thau) valavu-ku
(I) idea-lsg
'My opinions (relatively fixed)'

- (94) b) (thau) ge-ku valavu
(I) poss-1sg idea
'My (passing) thoughts'
- (95) a) (goi) rauparaupa-mu
(thou) picture-2sg
'Thy picture (the picture taken of thee)'
- b) (goi) ge-mu rauparaupa
(thou) poss-2sg picture
'Thy picture (the one in thy possession)'

In Aroma and its congeners, then, passive possession is formally identical with direct possession (cf. Aroma thau ama-ku 'my father', goi ama-mu 'thy father') and not with active edible possession.

The second piece of evidence comes from the languages of Tanna. I will take Lenakel as typical, again since it has been documented elsewhere (Lynch 1973). Lenakel shows the distinction between direct (96), active eating (marked by niki) (97), and active manipulative (marked by taha) (98):

- LEN (96) nelu-k
tooth-1sg
'My tooth'
- (97) nuw niki-k
yam poss-1sg
'My yam (to eat)'
- (98) nimwa taha-k
house poss-1sg
'My house'

Passive possession (termed 'semi-alienable' in Lynch (1973)), however, is marked in none of these three ways; rather, it is marked by the locative preposition le or by the transitive suffix in. The status of in as a transitive suffix is first of all established below:

- LEN (99) r-am-ign
3sg-continuous-fear
'He is afraid'
- (100) r-am- gn-in io
3sg-continuous-fear-trans I
'He is afraid of me'

Now examine the contrast between active manipulative possession (in the (a) sentences) and passive possession (in the (b) sentences):¹⁷

- LEN (101) a) nouanage taha-k
story poss-1sg
'My story (which I tell)'
- b) nouanage in io
story trans I
'My story (the one about me)'
- (102) a) nau taha-m
blade poss-2sg
'Thy knife'
- b) nau in iik
blade trans you.sg
'Thy shoulder-blade(s)'

This use of transitive-type constructions in both Central Papua and Tanna to express passive possession is interesting, especially if one considers (a) the relationship between possessed and possessor in such constructions, and (b) the difficulty of trying to fit such constructions into sentences where the possessor was object/indirect object of the verb *kani 'eat'. The evidence from these two groups of languages, which almost certainly belong to different first-order groups of Oceanic, also suggests that POC must have marked passive possessive constructions differently from all other possessive-types, including active eating. I will suggest here that passive possessive constructions in OC do indeed derive from transitive sentences; but whereas active constructions derive from ditransitive sentences where the possessor is the indirect object, and direct constructions derive from transitive sentences where the possessor is the direct object and the verb takes the 'short' or 'close' transitive suffix *-i, passive possessive constructions, I suggest, derive from transitive sentences where the possessor is the direct object but where the verb takes the 'long' or 'remote' transitive suffix *-aki ~ *-akini. In other words, what I am suggesting is that, for example, a Fijian passive possessive construction like na ke-mu itukutuku 'thy story (the one told about thee)' derives from a sentence with unspecified subject like (103):

- (103) () / tukutuku-akini-mu / ko(e)
 (subj) / tell.story-transitive-thee / thou

which underwent subsequent nominalisation and, in the process, underwent many of the changes that other possessive constructions have undergone.

What evidence is there for this speculation? I put forward the following. First, nouns possessed passively are in many cases deverbal — i.e. derived (or at least logically derivable) from verbs which are, of course, capable of taking a transitive suffix. Second, the form of the morpheme which marks passive possession in the Tanna languages appears to be cognate with POC *-akini (that form of the long transitive suffix which is used before an object suffix (Pawley 1973:120)): e.g. Nivhall and South-west Tanna kin, Lenakel in.¹⁸ Third, POC *-akini is lost in Aroma, which provides an explanation for the identical treatment of passive (remote transitive) and direct (close transitive) possessive constructions. Fourth, and perhaps most important, the underlying form of the markers of passive and edible possession are phonologically very similar. From (84) above, 'thy edible' would have been something like *kan-i-mu; according to the hypothesis presented here, 'thy passive' in (103) would have been something like *akini-mu. With both of these forms undergoing the kinds of phonological reduction natural in this environment, it does not seem surprising that both merged as **ka-mu in a very large number of OC languages.

It is difficult to pin down the semantics of POC *-akini. Pawley attempts to do so, and assigns to *-akini such roles as concomitant, cause, instrument, and beneficiary (as opposed to the roles of place, goal, stimulus, experiencer, patient, product which he assigns to POC *-i) (Pawley 1973:128). However,

no simple correlation of semantic relation with case form is possible, ... so that a simple gloss for each suffix, such as 'patient' marker for *-i and 'instrument' marker for *-aki [~ *-akini:JL] would be misleading. Each suffix marks several different semantic relations. (Pawley 1973:125-126).

Thus while the investigation of the roles of *-i and *-akini does not throw a great deal of light on the topic, neither does it invalidate the present hypothesis.*

* See Harrison in this volume for further discussion.

5. CONCLUSION

What I have attempted to do in this paper is to put forward a set of hypotheses which go rather further into the semantics, the syntax, and especially the morphology of the possessive constructions in OC languages than previous studies of OC possession (e.g. Lynch 1973, Pawley 1973) had done. In other words, rather than merely stating that there seems to be 'something verbal' about OC possession, I have tried to show rather more exactly what that 'something verbal' might have been, and have attempted to account for the morphological structure and the forms of the morphemes which appear in the various construction-types.

In particular, I feel that this hypothesis accounts for two facts which I have always considered striking, but which have never really been satisfactorily explained. One is the similarity between possessive suffixes and object suffixes in most of those OC languages which show both sets of pronominal forms, and the fact that, although the role of the possessor varies from one construction-type to another, the same set of possessive suffixes is usually used. The other fact is the formal similarity between the transitive suffix, the verb 'eat', and the verb 'drink' on the one hand, and various morphemes marking particular possessive construction-types on the other. The set of hypotheses presented here attempts to account for these facts.

There are, of course, a number of areas which may seem somewhat suspect — perhaps most notably the analysis of active manipulative possession in section 3.1. — but as a coherent whole I feel that the hypothesis is worth consideration. There are also a number of questions left unanswered at this stage, such as the manner of the development of Polynesian and Micronesian-type systems from this proposed POC system, and the relationship of this system to any system reconstructed or reconstructible for Proto-Austronesian. Answers to these must await further research.

NOTES

1. This paper began to take shape in 1976 when Peter Lincoln paid an extended visit to University of Papua New Guinea. I am grateful to him for many insights, a number of which have been incorporated here; to Terry Crowley and Paul Geraghty, for perceptive comments on an earlier draft; and to members of both Departments of Linguistics at the Australian National University for comments on a seminar on this topic which I presented there in October, 1979.
2. References simply to 'Fijian' imply Standard Fijian. Other Fijian 'languages' will be mentioned specifically by name (e.g. Wayan Fijian).
3. Examples will be kept to a minimum in this section, on the assumption that readers have at least a passing familiarity with the structure of possession in OC languages. The English forms 'thee' and 'thy' will be used for second person singular forms.
4. Eating (and also drinking — cf. section 1.4.) are culturally defined in most OC languages. For example, tobacco in Fijian is possessed with an eating construction: na ke-na tavako '*his tobacco (to smoke)*'. Oysters are possessed by a drinking construction: na me-qu dio '*my oysters (to eat)*'.

5. But cf. the following examples from Lister-Turner & Clark (n.d.a), where the same morpheme as is used for eating possession (a-) is also used for passive possession: a-gu inai 'my enemy/enemies', a-na uru 'his generation'. This construction-type, however, is quite uncommon in modern Motu.
6. Data are from my own field notes. The vowel /i/ is obligatorily inserted between the two members of what would otherwise be a word-final consonant cluster: thus the underlying forms of the first and third examples in (23) are /rem-k/ and /mwipw-k/; similarly, the underlying forms of the first two examples in (24) are /neram-k/ and /neram-n/.
7. Data are again from my own field notes. While there is some question about the genetic status of Maisin, Lynch (1977) argues that Maisin is in fact an Austro-nesian (and therefore Oceanic) language, although it has been subjected to heavy Papuan influence. The distinction between reciprocal and non-reciprocal possession in Maisin is not paralleled, to my knowledge, in any of the Papuan languages which are likely to have influenced Maisin, and can not therefore be attributed to borrowing or to Papuan substratum influence.
8. Most of the examples (39) through (44) are taken, either directly or with some slight modification, from Milner (1972:111-113).
9. I have not tried to differentiate the suffixes -i and -a in Fijian transitive constructions, nor have I attempted to be specific in glossing them. I have also followed recent practice in analysing, for example, raica in (45) as raic-a and not as rai-ca or rai-c-a; although in its free form the verb is rai and not *raic, it is now customary to treat the so-called 'thematic consonant' as part of the underlying form and not as part of the suffix.
10. The fact that, for example, Fijian yalewa 'woman' is not cognate with POC *pine 'woman' need not concern us here; we are more interested in structural comparisons.
11. This may also help to explain the notorious -Cia suffix in Polynesian languages.
12. Eromangan is one OC language which shows zero for third singular object, while Gitua is an example of an OC language which has a zero third singular possessive suffix.
13. I have simplified matters slightly in (79) by choosing that reconstructed etymon for 'house' which is reflected in each of the three languages. That is, Fijian, which has vale < *pale, uses the form of the possessive morpheme which derives from *na(79a); Motu has ruma < *Ruŋmaq, and uses that form of the possessive morpheme which derives from *qa (79b); while Lenakel, with nimwa < *Ruŋmaq, has a possessive morpheme deriving from *ta (79c).
14. There should be no intrinsic difficulty with accepting the concept of a zero verb. Such verbs are found in the New Guinea area: e.g. ϕ = 'go' in Maisin (Austronesian), ϕ = 'be' in Gahuku (Papuan), etc.
15. Why, then, one might ask, is the Fijian drinking possession marker me and not ga or ge, if the POC form is *ŋma and if POC *ŋm > FIJ g? There appear to be at least some cases of *ŋm > m as well: *taŋmata > tamata 'person', *li(ŋ)ma > lima 'five', and so on. These suggest that both m and g in Fijian can be considered as reflexes of POC *ŋm. The whole area of the POC labiovelars is still poorly understood.
16. Geraghty has subsequently pointed out to me (personal communication) that his remarks are not intended as making any historical claim. However, statements such as that being made by Geraghty have been made as historical claims in the past, and I thus present Geraghty's remarks here unaltered.

17. For convenience, I ignore the structure with *le*. Note also that Lenakel has no object suffixes; free form pronouns occur as objects in (100), and in the possessive constructions (101b) and (102b).
18. POC *k is sporadically lost in Lenakel. Thus besides *kani > kin 'eat', *kapika > ni/kivik 'Malay apple', and *ñamuk > mu/muk 'mosquito', we also find *kali > il 'dig', *makumpu > mwipwi- 'grandchild', and *tansik > tehe 'sea'. Thus the absence of k in the reflex of *akini, though unpredictable, is not unexpected in Lenakel. Nor, in fact, is the presence of k any more predictable or expected in the Nivhaal reflex of *akini; the Nivhaal reflexes of the six POC forms above are respectively *kani > aan, *kapika (no reflex), *ñamuk > mu/muk, *kali > kil, *makumpu > mukupu-, and *tansik > tahik. (See Lynch 1978b for further details).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIGGS, Bruce, D.S. WALSH and Jocelyn WAQA

- 1970 *Proto-Polynesian reconstructions with English to Proto-Polynesian finder list. Working Papers, Department of Anthropology* (Auckland).

BLUST, Robert A.

- 1972 Additions to 'Proto-Austronesian addenda' and 'Proto-Oceanic addenda with cognates in non-Oceanic Austronesian languages'. *Working Papers in Linguistics, University of Hawaii* 4/8:1-17.
- 1978 The Proto-Oceanic palatals. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* Memoir No. 43.

CAPELL, A.

- 1960 *Anthropology and linguistics of Futuna-Aniwa, New Hebrides. Oceania Linguistic Monographs* 5. Sydney.
- 1968 *A New Fijian dictionary*. 3rd edition. Suva: Government Printer.

GERAGHTY, Paul

- 1978 Topics in Fijian language history. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawaii.

GRACE, George W.

- 1969 A Proto-Oceanic finder list. *Working Papers in Linguistics, University of Hawaii* 1/2:39-84.

LINCOLN, Peter C.

- 1976 Describing Banoni, an Austronesian language of Southwest Bougainville. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hawaii.

LISTER-TURNER, R., and J.B. CLARK

- n.d.a *A grammar of the Motu language of Papua*. 2nd edition, edited by Percy [ca 1954] Chatterton. Sydney: Government Printer.
- n.d.b *A dictionary of the Motu language of Papua*. 2nd edition, edited by [ca 1954] Percy Chatterton. Sydney: Government Printer.

LYNCH, John

- 1973 Verbal aspects of possession in Melanesian languages. *Oceanic Linguistics* 12/1&2:69-102.
- 1977 Notes on Maisin — an Austronesian language of the Northern Province of Papua New Guinea? Paper presented to the 11th Annual Congress of the Linguistic Society of Papua New Guinea.
- 1978a *A grammar of Lenakel*. PL, B-55.
- 1978b Proto-South Hebridean and Proto-Oceanic. In: S.A. Wurm and Lois Carrington, eds *Second International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics: proceedings*. PL, C-61:717-779.

MILNER, George B.

- 1972 *Fijian grammar*. 3rd edition. Suva: Government Press.

PAWLEY, Andrew

- 1972 On the internal relationships of Eastern Oceanic languages. In: R.C. Green and M. Kelly, eds *Studies in Oceanic culture history*, vol.3. Pacific Anthropological Records 13:1-142. Honolulu: Bishop Museum.
- 1973 Some problems in Proto-Oceanic grammar. *Oceanic Linguistics* 12/1&2:103-188.

PAWLEY, Andrew and Timoci SAYABA

- 1971 Fijian dialect divisions: Eastern and Western Fijian. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 80/4:405-436.

TRYON, D.T.

- 1973 Linguistic subgrouping in the New Hebrides: a preliminary approach. *Oceanic Linguistics* 12/1&2:303-351.

WURM, S.A. and B. WILSON

- 1975 *English finderlist of reconstructions in Austronesian languages (post-Brandstetter)*. PL, C-33.