

# Possessive constructions in Wooi

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## ABSTRACT

Possession in general refers to as a semantic relationship between two nouns in a wide range of relational concepts (Dixon, 2010:262), ranging from expressing 'belonging' or 'ownership' to other semantic relations (Dixon, 2010, Payne, 1997, McGregor, 2009, Lichtenberk, 2009). The grammatical construction used to structure such a semantic relationship is called possessive constructions. This paper aims at discussing possessive constructions in Wooi, an Austronesian of SHWNG group. Wooi has two types of possessive constructions, i.e. direct construction and indirect construction. In common, most, but not all, of body parts and kinship relations fall into the direct possessive construction. Other concrete nouns are classified into the indirect possessive construction. These two constructions are common characteristics for Austronesian languages, especially for SHWNG and Oceanic languages.

- (1) a. *nye manu* b. *tamani*  
/<ti>ne/ /tama-n-i/  
<3SG>POSS house father-3SG-SG  
'His/her house' 'his/her father'

In Wooi, although two types of possessive constructions are clear, there are various constructions occurred in the direct possessive construction. First is between singular and non-singular forms and between body parts and body products on one hand and kinship relations on the other hand. In term of person/number, singular and non-singular forms are constructed differently basing on morphological behavior as in (2) a and b.

- (2) a. *hninyamui* b. *hesinyami*  
/hninya-mu-i/ /he-hninya-m-i/  
mother-2SG-SG 3PL-mother-NSG-SG  
'your mother' 'their mother'

In term of lexical category, body parts is constructed differently from kinship terms basing on the lexical word formation as in (3) a and b.

- (3) a. *rengkami* b. *humomui*  
/re-ng-kami/ /humo-mu-i/  
see-2SG-stone aunt-2SG-SG  
'your eyes' 'your aunt'

In short, Wooi grammar shows that the semantic of possession and possessive constructions are not one-to-one relation. They vary and complex depending on lexical, phonological and morphological behaviors.

## References:

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