



Recursion of postpositional and possessive phrases in Kawaiwete (Tupi-Guarani, Tupi)

Suzi Lima - University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Pikuruk Kaiabi - Professor and indigenous researcher /ProDocLin

Introduction In this paper we explore the properties of recursive postpositional and possessive phrases in Kawaiwete (Kaiabi), a number-neutral Tupi language. Kawaiwete is characterized by: (i) bare arguments (nouns do not generally bear number morphology or markers of definiteness) (1); (ii) optional and restricted to [+human] nouns plural morphology (2). In constructions with numerals and nouns that denote substances, a container unit must be included. In Kawaiwete there are two ways to refer to containers: container constructions may be similar to pseudopartitives in English ('The nurse brought three tubes of blood', 3a) or to locative constructions ('The nurse brought three 'blood' in tubes', 3b). In other words, container nouns may or may not be followed by postpositions in this language; the recursive cases we will analyze include postpositions. Semantically, container nouns not followed by postpositions derive individuation and measure interpretations. Container nouns followed by postpositions (identical to locatives in the language) derive only locative interpretations.

Recursion recursive constructions in Kawaiwete, such as recursion of possessive phrases (4) and recursion of postpositional phrases (5 and 6) are characterized by a sequence of nouns (recursion of possessives) or a sequence of postpositional phrases (recursion of postpositions). Container nouns followed by postpositions can be recursive in two possible different scenarios: one possible scenario involves one action over a recursive container construction and it involves a single event (5). Another possible scenario involves a series of unrelated events (6). These two scenarios were tested in a drawing/sentence production task. The consultants saw 6 drawings (three drawings described scenario 1 and three drawings described scenario 2) and they had to provide a sentence to describe each of them.

Semantics of container nouns followed by postpositions In this paper based on elicitation sessions and experimental studies, we will analyze the structural and semantic differences between the sentences provided for each of the scenarios used in order to test recursion of postpositional sentences. Based on Selkirk (1977), Partee and Borschev (2012) Rothstein (2012) we will also explore the different truth-conditional meanings of pseudopartitive container constructions and postpositional container constructions in Kawaiwete.

References

Partee, B., Borschev, V. Sortal, relational and functional interpretations of nouns and Russian container constructions. In *Journal of Semantics*, 2012.

Rothstein, S. To appear. Numericals: counting, measuring and classifying. In A. Aguilar-Guevara, A. Chernilovskaya & R. Nouwen (eds.) *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung* 16.



Selkirk, Lisa. 1977. Some remarks on noun phrase structure. In *Studies in formal syntax*, ed. P. Culicover, T. Wasow, and A. Akmajian, 285–316. New York: Academic Press.

Examples

Kawaiwete (bare arguments)

1. kuima'e-a moja ajuka
man-A snake kill
'The/a man killed a/the snake(s)'

Kawaiwete (plural)

- 2a. Kuima'e-fera ngã moja ajuka 2b. *kuima'e-a moja-fera ajuka
man- PL 3pl snake kill man-A snake-PL kill
'(The) men killed (a/the) snake(s)'

3a. *Kawaiwete Container nouns followed by postpositions:*

- Morofuangara muapyr-a wy-a werup yrũ pype
nurse three-a blood-a bring tube in
'The nurse brought three tubes of blood'
(lit: the nurse brought three 'blood' in tubes)

3b. *Kawaiwete Container nouns not followed by postpositions:*

- Morofuangara muapyr-yrũ wy-a werup
Nurse three-tube blood-a bring
'The nurse brought three tubes of blood'

Kawaiwete (recursion of possessives)

- 4a. Maran te Maria jai'yweyyga pira? 4b. Maran te 'yweyyga pira Luka jeko'ty'aawa ma'ea?
What Maria ball color what ball color Luka friend 3s.poss
'What color is Maria's ball?' 'What color is Luka's friend's ball?'

- 4c. Maran te João ywatyra pira? 4d. Maran te ywotyra pira Maria kywyrma'ea?
What João ball color? what ball color Maria brother 3s.poss?
'What color is João's ball?' 'What color is Maria's brother's ball?'

5. Kawaiwete

Scenario ('matryoshka doll'): someone put flour inside a cup, and this cup is inside a bowl, and this bowl is inside a pan and this pan is above a chair:

- Ywotyra je amyĩ kanekũ pype, y'a pype, japepo pype, kanawa 'arimũ
flour 1s put cup inside bowl inside pan inside chair above



6. Kawaiwete

Scenario: someone put flour inside a cup, and inside a bowl, and inside a pan and these three different containers filled with flour are above a chair:

Ywotyra je omongy y'a pype, kanekũ pype, japepo pype, kanawa 'arimũ
flour 1s put.pl bowl inside cup inside pan inside chair above