Argument marking in Harakmbut: Looking for referential transparency
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1. Introduction
- Harakmbut is a language from the Peruvian Amazon, spoken in ‘native communities’ in the departments of Madre de Dios and Cusco
- Genetic affiliation:
  - Formerly classified as an Arawakan or Maipuran language by McQuown (1955) (see Hart 1963: 6) and Matteson (1972); but this has found little acceptance (Adelaar 2007: 39).
  - Wise (1999: 307) states that Harakmbut is commonly accepted to be a (single language) isolate (cf. WALS; Fonseca 2002; Vergara 2007)
  - Adelaar (2000, 2007) proposes that it is genetically related to the Brazilian Katukina family (included in the Guaporé-Mamoré linguistic area), which may be further linked to Macro-Ge
  - Some grammatical features are shared with Ese Eja (Tacanan family) (Poizzi-Escot 1998: 93), which is proposed to belong to the Guaporé-Mamoré linguistic area in southwest Brazil and eastern Bolivia, close to the border with Peru (Crevels & van der Voort 2008)
- Previous linguistic work: focus on Amarakaeri dialect (Hart 1963; Helberg 1984, 1990; Tripp 1976ab, 1995)
- Orthographic conventions: <'>: glottal stop; <¨>: nasal vowel; underlined sounds carry word stress
- Agglutinating language
- Synthetic verbal morphology, especially with respect to mood and argument marking

2. Mood marking
- Argument marking interacts with mood marking: Harakmbut distinguishes between three mood types: indicative, dubitative and imperative mood, each of which has a distinct set of argument markers (cf. Tripp 1995: 206-215)
  - Indicative: declarative clauses (but some epistemic markers are excluded)
  - Dubitative: interrogative clauses; some epistemically modalized declarative clauses (e.g. verbs marked by suffix -et (cf. (1)), or -ipot)
  - Imperative (including hortative and jussive): in commands, requests, and a set of dependent clauses (e.g. complement clauses of manipulative verbs)
- Interaction between mood, argument and past tense marking
  - Evidential distinction between witnessed (non-marked) and non-witnessed: marked by -(a)te suffixed to past tense markings -me (REC)/-uy (DIST.PST), or by portmanteau -tuy (DIST.PST.INDIR.EVD) (cf. Tripp 1995: 222)
  - Non-witnessed endings seem to be in complementary distribution with indicative mood suffixes (see Tripp 1976a: 18, 1995: 208), cf. (2)

(1) i-wek-m(e)-et=pi     wakuchipo
  1SG(→3).DUB-pierce-REC.DIR.EVD-MOD=‘ish’ upper.leg
  ‘Maybe I pierced it in the upper leg.’
  - Imperative (including hortative and jussive): in commands, requests, and a set of dependent clauses (e.g. complement clauses of manipulative verbs)

(2) On-a   i-ma-ning-to-wa-me-te(*-ne)     waknda ken-tewapa
  2SG-NOM  2SG(→3).VPL-BEN-SOC-go-REC-INDIR.EVD  egg  3-BEN
  ‘You (sg) took along eggs for them.’ [elicitation on personal pronouns]

3. Argument marking
- Cross-referencing markers on finite verb; optional case marking on overt (nominal/pronominal) NPs
- 2-slot system: prefix + suffix (based on Tripp 1995 and own data)
- Primary object system: cross-referencing of (applied or direct) O-argument in transitive contexts or Goal-argument in ditransitive contexts (Tripp (1995: 206): ‘direct and indirect object’) (in addition to A)
- Person hierarchy effects: {1, 2} > 3, scenario/configuration-based
- Accusative alignment in mixed and non-local configurations: A(→3)-markers = S-markers
3.1 Local configurations: interaction between speech act participants (SAPs; 1↔2)

- Harakmbut shows considerable **pragmatic skewing** in 1↔2 pronominal combinations, corresponding to the cross-linguistically attested tendency to avoid transparent 1↔2 combinations, which are pragmatically sensitive (cf. Heath 1991 on Australian lgs; 1998 on native American lgs)

(a) Indicative and dubitative mood (basic system) (Tables 2 and 3)

- indicative vs. dubitative mood is marked by the presence or absence of suffixes; shared prefix slots
- 1↔2 combinations are expressed by unanalysable portmanteaus: 1↔2SG vs. 1↔2PL (so, just 2 forms for 8 combinations)
- neutralization of number marking of 1st person in 1→2 and 2→1
  (strategy 4 in Heath 1998; in Kalispel neutralization of number marking of 2nd person, Vogt 1940: 25-26)
- homophony/syncretism of the 1↔2SG form with 1PL(→3) inclusive IND form (prefix + suffix)
  (strategy 8 in Heath 1998, cf. Southern Sierra Miwok, Zoque of Francisco León, Carib)
- disambiguation possible through case-marked free pronouns, cf. Table 1

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Person/number</th>
<th>Root form</th>
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<tr>
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<td>ndo-ta</td>
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<td>1PL (incl/excl)</td>
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<td>oro'-a</td>
<td>oro-ta</td>
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<td>on-ta</td>
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<td>opudn</td>
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<td>opudn-ta</td>
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<tr>
<td>3SG/PL</td>
<td>ken</td>
<td>ken-a</td>
<td>ken-ta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Case-marked free pronouns (cf. also Helberg 1984; Tripp 1995)

(3) On **ō-ning-to-chak-me-ne** purak
2SG 1↔2SG-BEN-SOC-come-REC.DIR.EVD-IND cacique
‘You (sg) brought me a cacique (type of passerine bird).’ [elicitation on personal pronouns]

(4) Kate-apo **ō'-pak-∅**?
What-REAS 1↔2SG-want-DUB
‘Why do I love you (sg)?’ [elicitation on interrogatives]

(5) Meneng-a **ō-chokkawe-∅**?
how.many-times 1↔2SG-forget-REC.DIR.EVD-DUB
‘how many times have you (sg) forgotten me?’ [elicitation on interrogatives]
Equally possible: ‘how many times have I forgotten you (sg)?’
‘how many times have we forgotten you (sg)?’
‘how many times have you (sg) forgotten us?’

(b) Imperative mood: different subsystem concerning {2, 3} →1 within basic system (Table 4)

- person neutralization of A-arguments in prefix slot (2→1 = 3→1)
  (strategy 5 in Heath 1998, cf. Biloxi, Karuk, Zoque of Francisco León)
- however, ambiguity of the A-argument is resolved by the markers in the suffix slot (1: -i/-y; 2: ∅; 3:-e), compare (6) with (8)
- neutralization of number marking of A-arguments for 2→1PL and 3→1PL (homophony), cf. (7)
  ➔ also pragmatic skewing in 1↔2 combinations, but 2=3→1 in prefix slot as a different strategy for the imperative mood (yet more transparency than IND and DUB system)

(6) **mb-e-chaway-∅!**
2/3SG→1SG-see-2.IMP
‘Look at me!’ [elicitation on imperatives]

(7) **Mbg’-yok-∅** siro!
2/3→1.IMP-give-2.IMP machete
‘Give us the machete!’ (addressee: 2SG or 2PL) [elicitation on imperatives]

(8) **Mbg’-yok-e’** tare
2/3SG→1SG-give-3.IMP manioc
‘He should give me manioc!’ [elicitation on imperatives]
3.2 Mixed configurations (3→ (1, 2))

(a) Indicative and dubitative mood (basic system) (Tables 2 and 3)

- (1, 2) → 3: only subject is encoded, marked for person & number; A-markers = S-markers
- 1SG > {1PL, 2} hierarchy: 1SG object gets distinct prefixes with all person subject categories
- Also obscuring of referential transparency:
  - 3→ {1, 2}: portmanteau forms cross-referencing subject and (primary) object
  - 3→ {1, 2}: number neutralization of A-arguments with plural O-arguments; person neutralization of plural O-arguments
  - 3SG→ {1, 2}: person neutralization of O-arguments
  - 2PL→ 3 = 3→ 2PL, cf. (9)
  - disambiguation possible through case-marked free pronouns

(9) menpa ä’-(ë)-ïpot mo-n-a-ne
   how 3.SG.DUB-be-EPIST 3→1/2PL-APPL-say-IND
   'She is telling us how it would be' [spontaneous dialogue: 'family problems' story (Evans)]
   [in other contexts: 'She is telling you (pl) how it would be'
    'You (pl) are telling her/him/them how it would be']

(10) ken-a men-tuk-tuk-me-ne ut-anda
    3-NOM 3PL→1SG-hit-hit-REC.DIR.EVD-IND fierce-INTF
    'They hit me severely.' [elicitation on personal pronouns]

(11) i’-pak-me-γ apik
    1SG→3-want-REC.DIR.EVD-1.IND sugar.cane
    'I wanted sugarcane' [elicitation on paradigm of the verb 'want']

(12) Oro kate o’-pak-∅?
    1PL what 1PL→3-want-DUB
    'What do we want?' [elicitation on paradigm of the verb 'want']

(b) Imperative mood (Table 4):

- Also obscuring of referential transparency:
  - 3→ {1, 2}: portmanteau forms cross-referencing subject and (primary) object
  - 3→ {1PL, 2PL}: number neutralization of A-arguments with plural O-arguments; some degree of person neutralization of plural O-arguments (1PL.O has additional prefix men-)
  - 3SG→ {1SG, 2SG}: person neutralization of O-arguments
  - 1DU(→3).IMP = 2/3→1.IMP-...-2.IMP, cf. (13)
  - disambiguation possible through case-marked free pronouns

(13) achi nang, inpa mbo’t-ka
    soon mother this.way 1DU(→3).IMP-do
    'Wait, mom, let (the two of) us do it this way!' [spontaneous dialogue: 'family problems' story]
    [in other contexts: 'Do me, you all'! (?)]
    'Do us, (you all)!' (?)

3.3 Non-local configurations (3→3) (Tables 2-4):

- In all mood types, only subject is encoded, marked for number (prefix); A-marker = S-marker
- No referential opacity in terms of neutralization of values or portmanteaus
- Optional case marking on (nominal/pronominal) NPs

(14) Kate yand-a ken?
    What 3PL.DUB-say 3
    'what are they saying?'

(15) Ka’-grak-e’!
    3SG→3.IMP-kill-3.IMP
    'He must kill it/him/her!'
3.4 Really portmanteaus? Hypothesis on singular/plural contrast in prefixes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Configuration</th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>o’/-o-...-ne</td>
<td>1→2SG ...-IND on-...-ne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>mbe()-/me()-...-ne</td>
<td>3SG→1/2SG...-IND men-...-ne</td>
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<td>o’...</td>
<td>3SG(→3).IND-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-local</td>
<td>a’/ya’...</td>
<td>3SG(→3).DUB-...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ka’/-ka...-e</td>
<td>3SG(→3).IMP-...-3.IMP kan-/kan’...-e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: number contrast in the cross-reference system

- Singular is unmarked option; plural marker: -n(d)

3.5 Distribution of allomorphs: phonetic conditioning, cf. Table 6

mbe()-/me()-/më(): 2SG→1SG.IMP or 3SG→1/2SG.IND (cf. also Tripp 1995: 206-215)
- mbe-/mbe’ [oral]: only in completely oral environment
- me-/me’ [nasal co-articulation]: nasal prefixes preceding oral stems; only with nasalized bases
- më-/më’ [fully nasal]: always with nasal vowel stems; nasality spreads to vowel of the preceding prefix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cross-reference prefix; obligatory</th>
<th>onset second prefix; optional</th>
<th>onset third prefix; optional</th>
<th>onset verbal stem; obligatory</th>
<th>example</th>
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<tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>plosive</td>
<td>(16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>glide</td>
<td>(17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(18)</td>
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<td>me-/me’</td>
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<td>(19)</td>
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<td>(20)</td>
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<td>(22)</td>
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<td>më-/më’</td>
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<td></td>
<td>plosive</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>nasal vowel</td>
<td>(24)</td>
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</table>

Table 7: Phonetically conditioned distribution of cross-reference allomorphs

(a) Examples of mbe-/mbe’

(16) Curaca ndo’-ta mbe-to-ka-ne canoa chief 1SG-ACC 3SG→1/2SG.IND-SCF-make-IND canoe
‘The chief is making a canoe with me (telling me how it has to be made)’

(17) Luis’a mbe’-wadn-a-ne cocina-yo Luis-NOM 3SG→1/2SG.IND-sit-CAUS-IND kitchen-LOC
‘Luis makes me sit in the kitchen’

(18) Luis mbe-ta-wadn-ne cocina-yo Luis 3SG→1/2SG.IND-APPL-sit-IND kitchen-LOC
‘Luis is sitting with me in the kitchen’

(b) Examples of me-/me’

(19) Jonas o-n-a gringo-ta me-ning-ka’-z wa-wedn Jonas 3SG(→3).IND-say foreigner-ACC 2SG→1SG.IMP-BEN-make-2.IMP NMLZ-lie
‘Jonas has a bed made by the foreigner’ (Lit. ‘Jonas says to the foreigner: ‘Make me a bed!’’)

(20) Luis’a me-n-a-ne ya-wadn cocina-yo Luis-NOM 3SG→1/2SG.IND-APPL-say-IND 2SG(→3).IMP-sit kitchen-LOC
‘Luis tells me to sit down in the kitchen’

(21) Herman o-n-a Bernardo-ta me-ning-amba-ka-e’ piyä Herman 3SG(→3).IND-say Bernardo-ACC 2SG→1SG.IMP-BEN-VPL-make-DUR arrow
‘Herman has arrows made by Bernardo’ (Lit. ‘Herman says to Bernardo: ‘Make arrows for me!’’)

(22) Lupe o-n-a-me Ana-ta me-ta-mba-tuk-e’ tare Lupe 3SG(→3).IND-say-REC.DIR.EVD Ana-ACC 2SG→1SG.IMP-APPL-VPL-plant-DUR manioc
‘Lupe made An plant manioc’ (Lit. ‘Lupe said to An: ‘plant manioc with me!’’)

Examples of më-/më'

(23) Sobra më'-ë-ne wenu
   be.left 3SG→1/2SG.IND-be-IND string.bag
   ‘I have one string bag left’

(24) sobra më-tä-ë-në nong-chi-henpu-nda
   be.left 3SG→1/2SG.IND-APPL-be-IND one-string.bag-INTF
   ‘I have one string bag left’

4. Conclusions
   - Non-local configurations: no more referential obscurity than in many other languages; only A/S is
     marked (cross-linguistically recurrent); clues from semantics of the verb & optional case-marking on
     NPs
   - In local configurations, all three mood types (IND, DUB, IMP) show considerable referential obscurity,
     although different strategies are used (IND & DUB vs. IMP)
     ⇒ pragmatic skewing: transparency is avoided for pragmatic reasons (e.g. politeness) (Heath 1998)
   - However, mixed configurations also show some degree of referential obscurity in all mood types
     (cross-linguistic parallels?); clues from semantics of the verb & optional case-marking on NPs
     ⇒ can this referential opacity still be regarded as a form of pragmatic skewing? Or do we rather have
     to conclude that Harakmbut hardly tolerates referential transparency with regard to SAPs in any
     configuration, especially not when A or P (or both) are plural?

Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st person</th>
<th>2nd person</th>
<th>3rd person</th>
<th>INCL</th>
<th>IND</th>
<th>INDIR.EVD</th>
<th>INS</th>
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My sincere thanks go to the Arakbut people, who welcomed me in their communities, kindly hosted me, and patiently taught me their beautiful language.

Dakichi!
<table>
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<tr>
<th>IND</th>
<th>1SG.O</th>
<th>1PL.O</th>
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**Table 2:** Transitive and intransitive cross-reference markers in the indicative mood (Tripp 1995: 209; own fieldnotes)

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**Table 3:** Transitive and intransitive cross-reference markers in the dubitative mood (Tripp 1995: 212; own fieldnotes)

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</table>

**Table 4:** Transitive and intransitive cross-reference markers in the imperative mood (Tripp 1995: 215; own fieldnotes)

**References**