

## Where alienability accounts fall short: Bound nouns in Harakmbut

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# Introduction

- This talk focuses on **bound nouns** in Harakmbut
- Starting point: morphological distinction between independent and bound nouns

## Independent nouns

may occur as nominal heads without morphology

<i>pĩã</i>	<i>ndoʔ-edn</i>	<i>pĩã</i>
arrow	1SG-GEN	arrow
'arrow'	'my arrow'	

## Bound nouns

never occur as nominal heads without morphology

<i>wa-ndik</i>	<i>ndoʔ-edn-ndik</i>
NPF-name	1SG-GEN-name
'name'	'my name'

- Describe the morphosyntactic behaviour of bound nouns at word/phrase/clause levels
- Assess the explanatory power of the alienability contrast to account for this

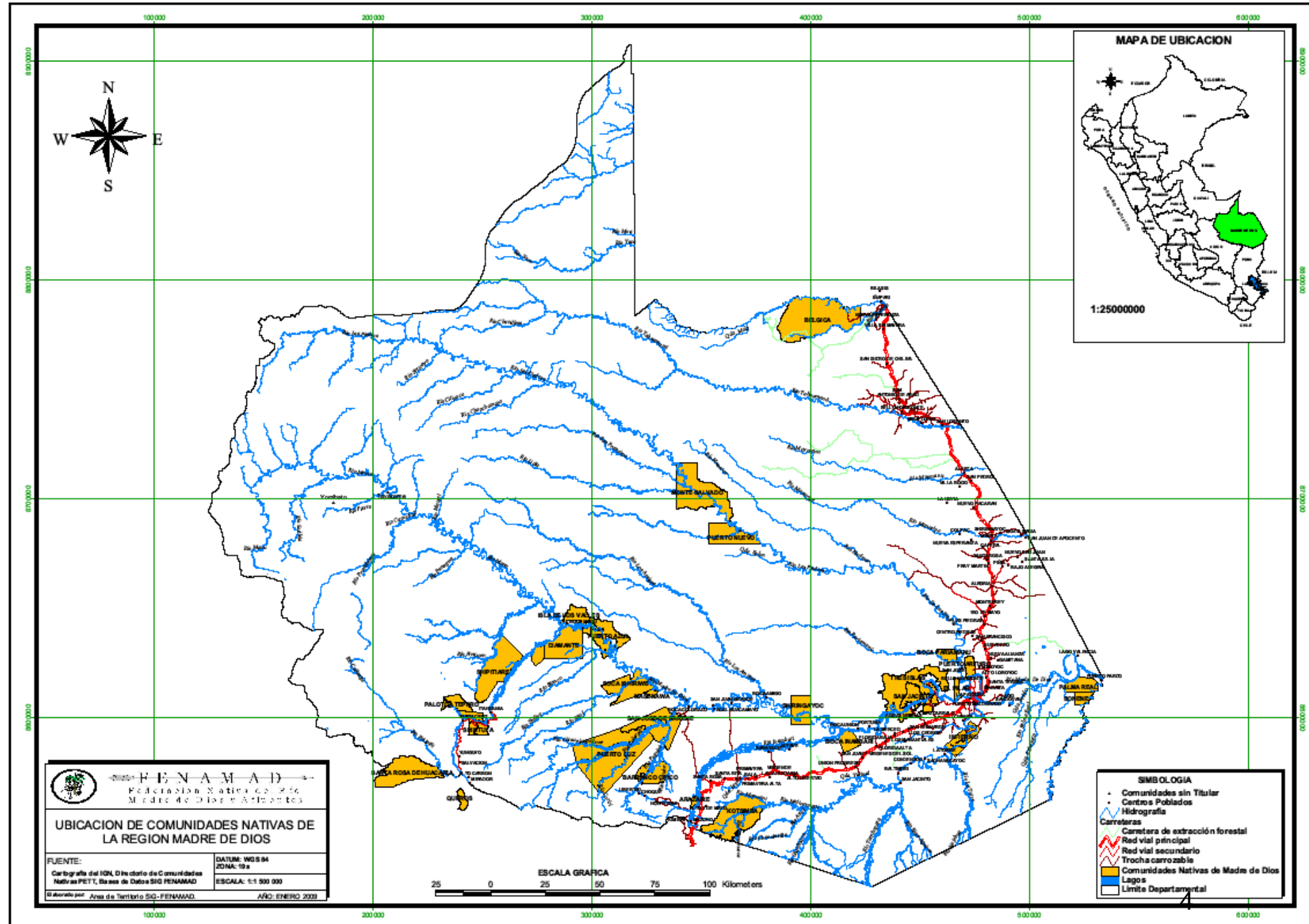
# Harakmbut and its speakers

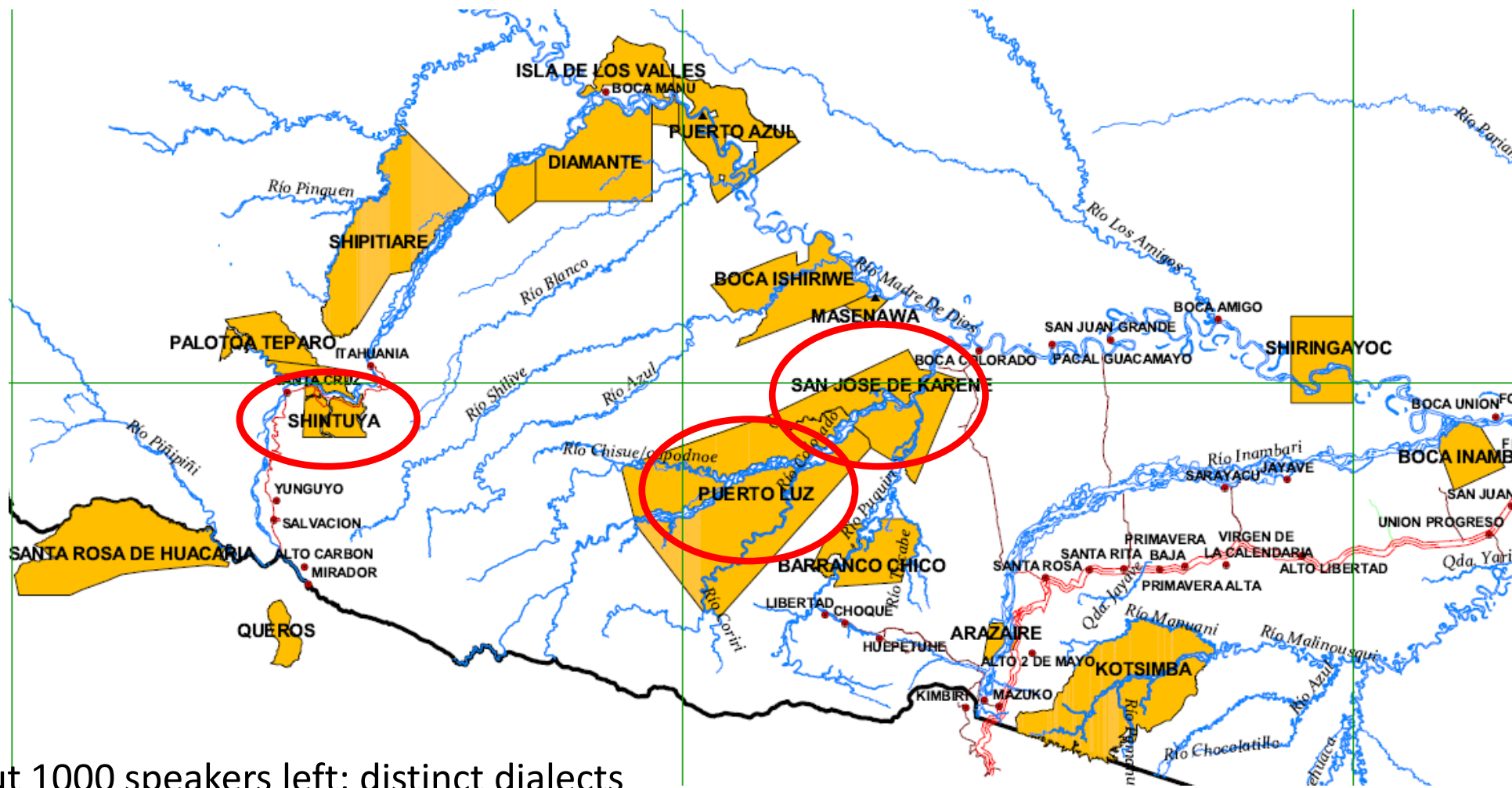
- Harakmbut is a language from the Peruvian Amazon, Madre de Dios and Cusco
- Genetic affiliation:
  - **isolate/unclassified** language (cf. Wise 1999: 307; WALS)
  - Adelaar (2000, 2007): genetically related to the Brazilian **Katukina** family
- Areality:
  - Some grammatical features are shared with languages from **Guaporé-Mamoré** linguistic area (Crevels & van der Voort 2008)





- Harakmbut live in 'native communities': patches of land entitled to them by the government
- subtropical climate
- around tributaries of the Madre de Dios River, which eventually flows into the Amazon River





- About 1000 speakers left; distinct dialects
- Previous linguistic work: focus on Arakmbut/Amarakaeri dialect (Hart 1963; Helberg 1984, 1990; Tripp 1976ab, 1995)
- 3 fieldwork stays in Puerto Luz, San Jose de Karene and Shintuya (Jul-Aug 2010, Aug-Sept 2011, Aug 2016) + [fieldwork AT A DISTANCE \(WhatsApp, 2020-2021\)](#) → Arakmbut/Amarakaeri variety

# Bound nouns

What do they look like? In their **citation form**, bound nouns either start with *wa-* or *e-*

- *wa-* and *e-* are semantically empty noun prefixes that derive independent nouns from bound ones

(REALITY: less frequent prefix *e-* has the same form and function (in noun-based nominalization) as the dummy noun prefix *e-* in Cavineña and other Tacanan languages (Guillaume 2008: 409-416); cf. also semantically empty root *e-* in Kwaza, which serves as “a noun formative to lend independent status to classifiers” (Van der Voort 2005: 397))

- Typically, one NPF per bound N root/stem (*wa-ndik*), but exceptionally also same root with with *wa-* & *e-* (2)-(3); referents of (a) & (b) show similarity in shape

(2)	(a)	<i>wa-mba?</i> NPF-hand 'hand'	(b)	<i>e-mba?</i> NPF-hand 'leaf'
(3)	(a)	<i>wa-pidn</i> NPF-rib 'rib' (Tripp 1995: 127)	(b)	<i>e-pidn</i> NPF-spine 'spine, thorn' (Tripp 1995: 51)

- *wa-* and *e-* also serve in verb-based nominalization (Van linden 2019), e.g. (4)-(5) [ $\neq$  bound nouns!]

(4)	<i>wa-wedn</i> NMLZ-lie 'bed'	(5)	<i>e-wi?</i> NMLZ-rain OR INF-rain 'rain' OR 'to rain'
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# Bound nouns

Some roots only occur in compounds, e.g. *-pih*

Bound noun root:

*wa-ayʔ*

NPF-bone

'bone'

Bound noun stem (complex BN):

*wa-mba-pih-ayʔ*

NPF-hand-digit-bone

'finger bone'

Semantically homogeneous: refer to inalienably possessed entities, e.g.

- body parts (*wa-ayʔ* 'bone')
- human attributes (*wa-ndik* 'name')
- plant parts (*e-pidn* 'thorn')
- landscape parts (*wã-wẽ* 'river'; *wa-kupo* 'hill'; *wa-ndagn* 'path')
- kinship terms (*wa-mambuy* 'same.sex.sibling'; *wã-ỹẽ* 'mother')
- shapes (*wa-po* 'something round')
- substances (*wã-wẽ* 'liquid'; *wã-õŋ* 'powder')

Distinction between bound and independent nouns in Harakmbut: similar to

- obligatorily vs. non-obligatorily possessed nouns, or
- inalienable vs. alienable nouns

→ Such nouns class systems are ubiquitous in Amazonian languages (Krasnoukhova 2012: ch. 8)

# Morpho-syntactic behaviour of bound nouns

## N-N compounding (word-level)

### N-N compounds

- N1+N2, e.g. *door + step = doorstep*
- N2 is rarely an independent nouns; N2 is typically a **bound noun**, invariably WITHOUT noun prefix
- N1 is semantically subordinate (modifier); N2 is the formal and semantic head of the compound

N1-N2

*kaimãri-mbogn*

zungaro-lip

'lip of a zungaro fish'

*wa-mbagn-pidn*

NPF-shoulder.blade-rib;spine

'tip of the shoulder blade'

**ALSO nominalizations in N2:**

*siro-mba-pe?*

metal-VPL-eat

'metal plate' (something to eat from in metal)

*arakmbut-(h)a-te*

person;people-say-LOC

'in the language of the people; in harakmbut'



# Morpho-syntactic behaviour of bound nouns

## N-N compounding (word-level)

### N-N compounds

- N1+N2, e.g. *door + step = doorstep*
- N2 is rarely an independent nouns; N2 is typically a bound noun, invariably WITHOUT noun prefix
- But, skewed distribution of N2 nouns over semantic fields
  - Typically body parts and plant parts in N2
  - landscape parts in N2 → may yield proper names (*Karene-wě*: Colorado River)
  - hardly any kinship terms in N2
- Also often shapes or substances in N2 (CLF) → ‘attribute-like’ relation (Rose & Van linden 2017, Forthc.)

<i>peraʔ-po</i>	[rubber-CLF:round]	‘plastic ball’ (Hart 1963: 5)
<i>siro-po</i>	[metal-CLF:round]	‘tin can’ (Hart 1963: 1)
<i>aymõrõ-po</i>	[honey-CLF:round]	‘bee’

# Morpho-syntactic behaviour of bound nouns

## Noun incorporation (clause-level)

- Except for *hak* ('house'), morphological boundness is the formal prerequisite for nouns to be incorporable
- But not all bound nouns are found in all 4 types of noun incorporation (Mithun 1984):

Semantic fields	Type I NI (lexical compounding)	Type II NI (manipulation of case)	Type III NI (manipulation of discourse structure)	Type IV NI (classificatory NI)
Body parts	✓	✓	(✓)	✗
Human attributes	✓	✓	(✓)	✗
Plant parts	✓	✓	(✓)	✗
Landscape parts	✓	✓	(✓)	✗
Kinship terms	'child' / ✗	✗	✗	✗
Shapes	✗	✗	✓	✓
Substances	✗	✗	✓	✓

cf. Van linden Forthc.; Rose & Van linden 2017, Forthc.

# Morpho-syntactic behaviour of bound nouns

## Noun modification (phrase-level)

Morphosyntactic behaviour in prenominal modifier constructions:

- when combined with adnominal modifiers that obligatorily precede the nominal head when fully integrated in the NP (i.e. excluding discontinuous NPs):
  - independent nouns show a single construction type: modifier and head noun form two prosodic words
  - bound nouns show two construction types:
    - (i) one in which they attach to a noun prefix and follow the modifier like independent nouns
    - (ii) one without a noun prefix, in which they form one prosodic word with the modifier
- Interrogative modifier, e.g. *Which food?*
- Numeral modifier, e.g. *two dogs*
- Quantifier, e.g. *all day*
- Demonstrative modifier, deictic adjectives 'other', 'same', ...
- Possessive modifier (genitive-marked noun or pronoun)

# Morpho-syntactic behaviour of bound nouns

## Noun modification

- bound nouns show two construction types:
  - (i) one in which they attach to a noun prefix and follow the modifier like free nouns
  - (ii) one without a noun prefix, in which they form one prosodic word with the modifier

e.g. with **interrogative modifier** *kate?*, cf. (6)-(7)

(6)     *kate*     *aypo*     *iʔ-pak-ika-∅?*  
what     food     2SG-want-HAB-DUB  
'What sort of food do you (sg) like?'

(7)     (a)     *kate*     *wa-ndik*     *ĩʔ-ẽ-∅?*  
what     NPF-name     2SG-be-DUB  
'What is your name?'

(b)     *kate-ndik*     *ĩʔ-ẽ-∅?*  
what-name     2SG-be-DUB  
'What is your name?'

# Morpho-syntactic behaviour of bound nouns

## Adnominal possession

Semantically alienable possession → possessors are independent nouns (or NMLZ)

Human possessors: genitive marked; no pronoun/noun split

(8) *Lupeʔ-edn*      *kurukuru-mbaʔ*  
Lupe-GEN      bijao-leaf  
'Lupe's bijao leaves'

(9) *ndoʔ-edn*      *kõsõ*  
1SG-GEN      pot  
'my pot'

Animal possessors: also genitive marked

(10) *apetpet-edn*      *hak*  
jaguar-GEN      house  
'the jaguar's den'

No split for **nominalized** forms in *wa-* either  
(But two-word strategy only!):

*Maribel-en*      *wa-wedn*  
Maribel-GEN      NMLZ-lie  
'Maribel's bed'

*ndoʔ-edn*      *wa-wedn*  
1SG-GEN      NMLZ-lie  
'my bed'



# Morpho-syntactic behaviour of bound nouns

## Adnominal possession

Semantically **inalienable possession** → possessors are bound nouns only

Human possessors: genitive-marked, no pronoun/noun split

- |      |  |    |  |                                 |
|------|--|----|--|---------------------------------|
| (11) | <i>Lupeʔ-<u>e</u>dn-ku</i><br>Lupe-GEN-head<br>'Lupe's head' | OR | <i>Lupeʔ-edn</i><br>Lupe-GEN<br>'Lupe's head'      | <i>w<u>a</u>-ku</i><br>NPF-head |
| (12) | <i>on-<u>e</u>n-ku</i><br>2SG-GEN-head<br>'your (sg) head'   | OR | <i>o<u>n</u>-en</i><br>2SG-GEN<br>'your (sg) head' | <i>w<u>a</u>-ku</i><br>NPF-head |

Animal possessors: N-N compounding

- (13) *mbawi-ku-pi*  
deer-[head-CLF:stick]<sub>horn</sub>  
'a/the deer's horn'

Inanimate possessors: N-N compounding

# Morpho-syntactic behaviour of bound nouns

## Adnominal possession

Semantically inalienable possession → possessives are bound nouns only

Human possessors: genitive-marked, no pronoun/noun split

(14)	<i>ndoʔ-edn-siʔ-po</i> 1SG-GEN-(peel-CLF:round) <sup>child</sup> 'my child'	OR	<i>ndoʔ-edn wa-siʔpo</i> 1SG-GEN NPF-(peel-CLF:round) <sup>child</sup> 'my child'
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But other kinship terms do not seem to allow the one-word strategy!

(15)	<i>*ndoʔ-edn-mambuy</i> 1SG-GEN-same.sex.sibling 'my sister (of female ego)'	<i>ndoʔ-edn</i> 1SG-GEN 'my sister (of female ego)'	<i>wa-mambuy</i> NPF-same.sex.sibling
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→ Not all bound nouns behave similarly in a single syntactic domain

# Morpho-syntactic behaviour of bound nouns

## Adnominal possession

ALIENABLE CONSTRUAL of semantically inalienable possession → possessors are bound nouns only  
Human possessors

- (16) *Lupeʔ-edn-ku-wih* ↔ *Lupeʔ-edn*      *wa-ku-wih*  
Lupe-GEN-head-hair      Lupe-GEN      NPF-head-hair  
'Lupe's hair, still on her head'      'Lupe's head, still on her head' OR  
'Lupe's head, cut off'
- (17) *Maribel-en-okpo* ↔ *Maribel-en*      *wa-kpo*  
Maribel-GEN-eye      Maribel-GEN      NPF-eye  
'Maribel's eye, well in place'      'Maribel's eye, well in place' OR  
'Maribel's eye, removed in an attack'

- So to refer to 'severed' body-parts (not in their normal place anymore), speakers use the only construal available for independent possessee nouns
- The construal involving fusion is dedicated to inalienable possession ('in-situ' body-parts)
- The two-word construal is ambiguous between alienable and inalienable possession

# Morpho-syntactic behaviour of bound nouns

## Adnominal possession

ALIENABLE CONSTRUAL of semantically inalienable possession → possessives are bound nouns only

Animal possessors: genitive-marked possessors vs. N-N compounding

- (18) *wadpiʔ-edn-sindak* ↔ ***wadpiʔ-sindak***      \**wadpiʔ-wa-sindak*  
ocelot-GEN-skin      ocelot-skin  
'the ocelot's skin, removed from corpse'  
(infrequent use)      'the ocelot's skin' (still on the animal, dead or alive, or removed from its corpse)
- (19) *mokas-en-kutipo* ↔ ***mokas-kutipo***      \**mokas-wa-kutipo*  
collared.peccary-GEN-thigh      collared.peccary-thigh  
'the collared peccary's thigh, removed'  
'the collared peccary's thigh' (still on the animal, dead or alive, or removed from its corpse)

Inanimate possessors: N-N compounding is only possible construal

- (20) *kumo-iwit*  
barbasco-root  
'the root of barbasco' (referentiality of possessor?)

# Morpho-syntactic behaviour of bound nouns

## Adnominal possession

Alienability cannot account for the full range of data!

“If a language has an adnominal alienability split, and one of the constructions is overtly coded while the other one is zero-coded, it is always the inalienable construction that is zero-coded, while the alienable construction is overtly coded.” (Haspelmath 2017: 199)

OK for **animal** possessors:

- N-N compounding is default for inalienable possession (‘the jaguar’s tooth’)
- genitive marking of possessor is default for alienable possession (‘the jaguar’s den’)
- genitive marking of possessor N1 in N-N compounds yields alienable interpretation of ‘inalienable’ possesseses (‘the ocelot’s skin, removed’)

But only partially OK for **human** possessors:

- genitive marking of possessor is default for alienable and inalienable possession
- one-word strategy is excluded for alienable interpretations
- but lack of dedicated strategy for inalienable interpretations
- Kin terms predominantly use independent noun construal (two-word strategy)



# Conclusion & outlook

- Distinction between bound and independent nouns: morphological phenomenon based on alienability semantics
- Distinct behaviour of bound nouns exceeds the grammatical environment of adnominal possession:
  - N-N compounding [word-level]
  - Different types of adnominal modifiers [phrase-level]
  - Noun incorporation [clause-level]
  - Diachronic source of classifiers (Rose & Van linden 2017, Forthc.)
- Work to be done: how do bound nouns behave in spontaneously produced language?
  - Transcription of recordings made in the field
  - Concordances on nouns in these texts (methods from corpus linguistics)
  - Discourse motivations for competing morphosyntactic patterns
  - ... to corroborate findings based on questionnaires

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*Ndakiti!*







The Puerto Luz people won the dance festival, Puerto Maldonado, August 2011

