

Case marking in Kurripako (Arawak) Asymmetries among core and oblique Arguments¹

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0. Introduction

Kurripako, also known as Baniwa, is an Arawak language spoken by around 10,000 people in the Northwest Amazon between Colombia Venezuela and Brazil. There has been little work done on this language. In this paper, I present the asymmetries between and among core and oblique arguments in terms of case marking and agreement based on data collected by the author.² A previous version of the stative-active split was presented

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² Fieldwork was carried out in June-July 2000, June-July 2001 and January-December 2004 in the villages of Victorino, Pavoni, La Esperanza and Saron in Venezuela.

in Granadillo (2006) and a comparison between Kurripako and Baure agreement in Danielsen and Granadillo (2008).

1. Agents of transitive sentences

Agent is encoded through verbal pronominal agreement as a person marker prefix. This prefix is obligatory and it agrees in person, number, and gender (for 3S) with A. Examples (1-11) exemplify this.

- (1) **nu-ira-ka patsiaka**
1.S-drink-T/A manioc drink
 I drink manioc drink.
- (2) **pi-ira-ka patsiaka**
2.S-drink-T/A manioc drink
 You drink manioc drink.
- (3) **li-ira-ka patsiaka atsinali**
3.S.NF-drink-T/A manioc drink *man*
 The man drinks manioc drink.
- (4) **ru-ira-ka patsiaka iinaro**
3.S.F-drink-T/A manioc drink *woman*
 The woman drinks manioc drink.
- (5) **atsinali i-ira-ka patsiaka**
man 3.S.FOC-drink-T/A manioc drink
 The man (emphatic) drinks manioc drink.
- (6) **iinaro i-ira-ka patsiaka**
woman 3.S.FOC-drink-T/A manioc drink
 The woman (emphatic) drinks manioc drink.
- (7) **wa-ira-ka patsiaka**
1.PL-drink-T/A manioc drink
 We drink manioc drink.
- (8) **i-ira-ka patsiaka**
3.S.FOC-drink-T/A manioc drink
 The woman (emphatic) drinks manioc drink.
- (9) **na-ira-ka patsiaka**
3.PL-drink-T/A manioc drink
 They (masc or fem) drink manioc drink.
- (10) **atsina na-ira-ka patsiaka**
men 3.PL-drink-T/A manioc drink
 The men (emphatic) drink manioc drink.

- (11) ***inapeda na-ira-ka patsiaka***
women 3.PL-drink-T/A manioc drink
 The women (emphatic) drink manioc drink.

These last two sentences can also have the agent in a non-focused position as in (12-13) without a change in cross-referencing prefixes.

- (12) ***na-ira-ka patsiaka atsina***
3.PL-drink-T/A manioc drink men
 The men drink manioc drink.
- (13) ***na-ira-ka patsiaka iinapeda***
3.PL-drink-T/A manioc drink women
 The women drink manioc drink.

There is also an impersonal prefix that marks the agent when it is unknown as in (14).

- (14) ***li-uma pa-wenta-ka tirulipi***
3.S.NF-want IMP-sell-T/A manioc squeezer
 He wants *someone* to sell [him] a manioc squeezer.

Table 1 summarizes the cross-referencing prefixes. These prefixes also appear on nouns in possessive constructions as in (15).

Person	Singular	Plural
1	nu-	wa-
2	pi-	i-
3 NF	li-	na-
3 F	ru-	
3 FOC	i-	
IMP	pa-	

Table 1. Cross-referencing prefixes

- (15) ***nu-kaapi***
1.S-hand
 My hand

Agent pronouns are only included when they are emphatic and they appear in the focused position as in (16).

- (16) **hnua nu-kapa-ka phia**
I.S 1.S-see-T/A 2.S
 I (emphatic) saw you

Independent pronouns are presented in Table 2.

Person	Singular	Plural
1	hnua	faa
2	phia	shaa
3 NF	hlia	hnaa
3 F	srua	

Table 2. Independent pronouns

To summarize, agents can be expressed in different ways. They must have a cross-referencing prefix on the verb that agrees in person, number and gender. When the nominal is focused, a special prefix is used. Pronouns are only used for emphasis and they appear in focused position. Patients, on the other hand, have a post-verbal position and will be addressed in the next section.

2. Patients of transitive sentences

First and second person singular and plural patients have no cross-referencing affixes on the verb. The independent pronouns presented in Table 2, which are not marked for case, are used. Example (17) shows a first person patient and (18) a second person one.

- (17) **li-kabena hnua**
3.S.NF-pay I.S
 He pays me.
- (18) **li-kapa phia**
3.S.NF-see 2.S
 He saw you.

Third person patients however are more complicated since there are several different ways of expressing them. In examples (19) the patient is a noun marked by position, following the verb. Gender in this case is not

relevant but it will be for the following examples and is thus exemplified exhaustively.

- (19) a. **nu-heema kalaka**
 1.S-barbeque *chicken*
 I barbeque the chicken (fem).
- b. **nu-heema kuphee**
 1.S-barbeque *fish*
 I barbeque the fish (nfem).
- c. **nu-heema aati**
 1.S-barbeque *chili*
 I barbeque the chili (plural not marked but understood).

The examples presented in (20) have the patient expressed by independent pronouns. Since these are not marked for case, it is only the position which expresses the function of patient.

- (20) a. **nu-heema srua**
 1.S-barbeque 3.S.F
 I barbeque it (fem).
- b. **nu-heema hlia**
 1.S-barbeque 3.S.NF
 I barbeque it (nfem).
- c. **nu-heema hnaa**
 1.S-barbeque 3.PL
 I barbeque them.

In examples (21) there is one more way of expressing the patient. There are suffixes (-**ni** for singular non feminine, -**no** for singular feminine, and -**na** for plural) that sometimes appear on the verb. Examples in (21) are the same as above with the suffixes.

- (21) a. **nu-heema-no**
 1.S-barbeque-3.S.F
 I barbeque it (fem).
- b. **nu-heema-ni**
 1.S-barbeque-3.S.NF
 I barbeque it (nfem).
- c. **nu-heema-na**
 1.S-barbeque-3.PL
 I barbeque them.

The usage of these suffixes seems to be discourse determined but further research is needed to ascertain this. All three types are exemplified in (22) first showing a suffix on the verb, followed by a noun and finally using an independent pronoun.

- (22) **li-dzaana-ni** **li-pheko** *li-hiwida* **li-pheko** **li-hiipa**
 3.S.NF-cook-3.S.NF 3.S.NF-throw 3.S.NF-head 3.S.NF-throw 3.S.NF-foot
- hnete** **li-gidza** **ka** *hlia*
 DM 3.S.NF-to stew-T/A 3.S.NF

He cooks him, he throws out his head, he throws out his feet and then he stews him.

Reflexive patients can be expressed in two different ways depending on the inherent reflexivity of the verb. If the verb is inherently reflexive, it is an intransitive verb and does not require a patient as in example (23).

- (23) **nu-uma** **nu-ito-ka** *nu-pita*
 1.S- want 1.S-go-T/A 1.S-bathe
 I want to go bathe [myself].

In order for this verb to have a transitive reading and a patient it needs the valency changing suffix **-ita** as in example (24).

- (24) **nu-pita-ita-ka** *hmapeni*
 1.S-bathe-VCA-T/A child
 I am bathing the child.

Transitive verbs, on the other hand, have a reflexive suffix that is on the verb. Contrast example (25) with (26).

- (25) **nu-kapa-ka** **phia** (26) **nu-kapa-aka-ka**
 1.S-see-T/A 2.S 1.S-see-RF-T/A
 I see you. I see myself.

To summarize, patients can be expressed in different ways. As nominals they directly follow the verb. As pronominals they use the independent person marking forms and they follow the verb. For the third person there are also cross-referencing suffixes that are attached to the verb after T/A markers. As reflexives, they are not marked if the verb is inherently reflexive and they are marked on the verbal root as a reflexive/reciprocal suffix when the verb is not inherently reflexive. Note that the position is different from the position of the object suffixes. The

reflexive marker precedes tense/aspect marker, whereas the object marker follows tense/aspect. However, there is variation in the position of the patient when a dative is present as is presented in the next section.

3. Datives in ditransitive sentences

In ditransitive sentences, the recipient is marked by a dative marker **-sru** and must precede the patient. This marker can only be suffixed to a cross-referencing prefix as in (27). This precludes the use of accusative cross-referencing affixes on the verb and the patient must therefore be a nominal or pronominal following the dative as in examples (28) and (29).

- (27) **apa-wali hekuapi dzaawi i-kaite conejo i-sru**
 one-time day tiger 3.S.FOC-to.say rabbit 3.S.N-DAT
 One day the tiger tells the rabbit.
- (28) **wa-a-pia li-sru peethe**
 1.PL-give-T/A 3.S.NF-DAT manioc bread
 We gave him manioc bread.
- (29) **niini nu-kaite li-naku ru-sru hliahni**
 DM 1.S-to.say 3.S.NF-LOC 3.S.F-DAT DEM
 So, I tell her this.

To summarize, when there is a dative, the patient must then follow it as a nominal or pronominal precluding the use of verbal suffixes.

4. Subjects of intransitive sentences

Subjects of intransitive verbs take two kinds of markings. Example (30) presents a subject with the same marking as A and example (31) one with the same marking as P.

- (30) **nu-dia-ka-wa panti-liku**
 1.S-return-T/A-INTR house-LOC
 I am returning into the house.
- (31) **haamaa-ka hnua**
 be.tired-T/A 1.S
 I am tired.

Mithun (1991) argues that what defines the different case markings for S are conditions that are semantically based. This has been presented in

detail in Danielsen and Granadillo (2008) providing evidence that Kurripako has a semantic alignment system of the stative-active type.

Other forms of marking give rise to unacceptable sentences as in (32) and (33).

(32) ***dia-ka-wa** **hnua panti-liku**
 return-T/A-INTR 1.S house-LOC
 I am returning into the house.

(33) ***nu-haamaa-ka**
 1.S-be.tired-T/A
 I am tired.

Subjects of stative verbs, which are expressed with the same markings as P, can be presented in three forms: as nominals as in examples (34)-(36), as pronominals as in examples (37)-(39) and as cross-referencing suffixes as in examples (40)-(42).

(34) **matsia-ka** **atsinali**
 be.handsome-T/A man
 The man is handsome.

(35) **matsia-ka** **iinaro**
 be.beautiful-T/A woman
 The woman is beautiful.

(36) **matsia-ka** **iinapeda**
 be.beautiful-T/A women
 The women are beautiful.

(37) **matsia-ka** **hlia**
 be.handsome-T/A 3.S.NF
 He is handsome.

(38) **matsia-ka** **srua**
 be.beautiful-T/A 3.S.F
 She is beautiful.

(39) **matsia-ka** **hnaa**
 be.beautiful-T/A 3.PL
 They are beautiful.

(40) **matsia-ka-ni**
 be.handsome-T/A-3.S.NF
 He is handsome.

- (41) **matsia-ka-no**
 be.beautiful-T/A-3.S.F
 She is handsome.
- (42) **matsia-ka-na**
 be.beautiful-T/A-3.PL
 They are beautiful.

To summarize, intransitive verbs use two strategies to mark the subjects. For active verbs (Sa) the same markings as A is used and for stative verbs (So) the same markings as P is used. There is one more type of marking for a core argument that is discussed in the next section.

5. Dative subject

There are three verbs, 'to be hot', 'to be cold' and 'to be hungry', that provide evidence for dative subject as in (56).

- (43) **hape-ka no-sru**
 be.cold-T/A I.S-DAT
 I am cold.

This can be considered a dative subject and not an oblique argument of an impersonal because impersonal agents are indeed marked on the verb as presented in (14).

6. Asymmetries among core arguments A, S, P

When the inventory of cross-referencing affixes presented in Table 3 is taken into account, there are gaps that lead to asymmetries in representing the core arguments.

	A, Sa		P, So	
person	singular	plural	singular	plural
1	nu-	wa-		
2	pi-	i-		
3 m	li-	na-	-ni	-na
3 f	ru-		-no	
3 FOC	i-			
IMP	pa-			

Table 3. Kurripako cross-referencing affixes

Agents and active subjects are obligatorily marked by cross-referencing prefixes. Patients and stative subjects may be marked by either cross-referencing prefixes or position. Datives are marked by a suffix on bound pronominal forms and must follow the verb. There is some evidence for dative subjects.

7. Oblique arguments

In terms of oblique arguments, locatives are marked by the use of suffixes as exemplified in (44), even allowing combinations of them.

- (44) **hliaha aatsinali hnete sruaha inaro na-ito uuni-liko-hle**
 DEM man CON DEM woman 3.PL-go river-LOC-ALL
 The man and the woman went into the river.

So far, all of the locatives (in **-liku**, on/about **-nako**, from **-hite**, to **-hle**) are attached directly to nouns. However, not all oblique arguments are like this.

Comitative (**-inai**, **-apidza**) and instrumental (**-yo**) must be used with cross-referencing prefixes as in (45), unlike the locatives.

- (45) **Nu-ino kalaka matseeta i-yo**
 1S-to.kill chicken machete 3.S.FOC-COM
 I kill the chicken with the machete.

8. Assymetries among oblique arguments

Some oblique arguments are marked with suffixes attached to nominals, while others are only allowed with cross-referencing prefixes. It has been suggested³ that the commitative and instrumental markings may be better analyzed as relational nouns, as is common in Mesoamerican languages. This may be what Ramirez (2001: 27) means when he describes them as 'relacionador'.

9. Conclusions

Though most Arawak languages rely on cross-referencing affixes to mark core grammatical relations, in Kurripako both cross-referencing and position is used to mark grammatical relations. Position is especially crucial for objects (P) and intransitive stative subjects (S_o) because of the few cross-referencing suffixes. All Arawak languages have peripheral case suffixes, and Kurripako is no exception. Two peripheral case morphemes often combine in one word. Only locatives use suffixes to mark the oblique case, commutative and instrumental seem to rely on relational nouns.

³ I wish to thank Jane Hill for this suggestion.

Abbreviations

ABL	ablative	LOC	locative
ALL	allative	NF	non-feminine
COM	commutative	NOM	nominalizer
DAT	dative	PL	plural
DEM	demonstrative	PURP	purposive
F	feminine	REL	relativizer
FOC	focus	RF	reflexive
IMP	impersonal	S	singular
INS	instrumental	T/A	tense/aspect
INTR	intransitive	VCA	valency changing affix

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