Chapter 13
Possession and possessive constructions

13.1 Introduction

Possessive constructions in Tukang Besi refer to a difference between alienable and inalienable possessed items, as is commonly found in many languages. Unlike the common situation of a morphological difference emerging between the two categories when they are phrasally possessed, Tukang Besi only distinguishes them in clausal possession, and leaves phrasal possession as one unified category. There is, however, an inalienable/plural marker, m(e)ai, that can be used in conjunction with the normal phrasal possessive morphology to indicate that the possessed is inalienable or plural (or both).

13.2 Phrasal possession

In this section I will deal with possessive constructions on a phrasal level, both the pronominal possessive suffixes and the genitive phrase. These are typically used to show the following range of concepts:

° ownership of objects (canoes, ships, clothes) and land (gardens, land for houses);
° kin relations (mother, father, child, in-laws) and social relations (friend, slave);
° body part relationships to the whole (tail of a dog; hair of the head (of a friend));
° general part-whole relationships (fruit of a tree, door of a house);
° qualities of an object (distance, ability, stupidity);
° spatial relation (where something is located with respect to another referent);
° mental activity or actions (decision of a group, terror of an individual)

13.2.1 Pronominal possession

In chapter 5 the forms of the possessive suffixes were discussed. The information relevant to possession that was presented there is repeated here. The form of the possessive suffix varies for person and number, and the different forms are as follows:
Examples (39) - (45) from chapter 5 are repeated here as (1) - (7), illustrating the use of the different suffixes:

(1) Ku-laha te handu ki’iki’i[-su]POSS._
1SG-search CORE towel small-1SG.POSS
‘I am looking for my small towel.’

(2) No-mohoo na mata[-’u]POSS.
3R-sick NOM eye-2SG.POSS
‘Your eye is sore?’ (WI:6)

(3) Jari o-waa-’e-mo te raja na and[-no]POSS iso.
so 3R-tell-3OBJ-PF CORE king NOM child-3POSS yon
‘So the King told his son:…’ (WI:33)

(4) Kaatu’e na wunua[-mami]POSS.
PRES-there NOM house-1PA.POSS
‘There is our house.’

(5) To-rame-rame-ako te tuha[-nto]POSS mai.
1PL.R-RED-noise-APPL CORE family-1PL.POSS INAL
‘We make it very lively for our families.’ (Ram:2)

(6) Ane ke doe[-miu]POSS?
exist and money-2PL.POSS
‘Do you have any money?’

(7) Te bahasa[-no]POSS te pogau[-no]POSS no-po-sala ’uka.
TOP language-3POSS TOP speech-3POSS 3R-REC-fault also
‘Their languages, their speeches, also differ.’ (TB:2)

13.2.2 Genitive article nu

Non-pronominal possession is shown by the independent genitive article nu (with variants no and u) appearing between the possessed and the possessor. Structurally, nu is the head of its own case phrase, which is composed of the article and a sister NP, the possessor. The order of constituents is thus Head-(GEN-Dependent). This article, or rather its allomorph u, may be cliticised onto the preceding noun; this u often replaces the final vowel of the word. This is most common with words ending in a back vowel, a, o or u, but can occur with any vowel. For example,
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This genitive article may also be used governing pronouns instead of the normal use of possessive suffixes. This has the additional pragmatic force of emphasising the contrastive identity of the possessor compared to other possible possessors. Compare (9a), using the regular possessive suffixes, with (9b), employing a pronominal possessor in a separate genitive phrase to mark the contrastive sense:

(9) a. Te kolikoli[-'u]POSS.  
   CORE canoe-2SG.POSS  
   'your canoe'

b. Te kolikoli [nu iko'o]_{KP}.  
   CORE canoe GEN 2SG  
   'your canoe'

Additionally, the free pronouns are used when the possessed entity has exclusive reference in the conceptual world. In this case, there is neither a genitive article nor a possessive suffix, and the free pronoun is simply placed immediately following the possessed object:

(10) a. Te doe[-su]POSS.  
   CORE money-1SG.POSS  
   'my money.'  
   (usual way to refer to the possession of money)

b. Te doe [nu iaku]_{KP}.  
   CORE money GEN 1SG  
   'My money.'  
   (emphasis on the contrastive identity of the possessor; the possessor has X, and no other possible possessors own it)

c. Te doe [iaku]_{N}.  
   CORE money 1SG  
   'My special money.'  
   (referring to an American $1 bill, not the normal unit of exchange; the possessor owns the possessed to the exclusion of other possible possessors)

d. * Te doe[-su]POSS [(nu) iaku]_{KP}.  
   CORE money-1SG.POSS GEN 1SG

In (10c) the reference is to a one-of-a-kind item of money; no article is used. This construction can be used to express semantically different concepts as well as to achieve
pragmatic effects such as in (10c). Note that it is not grammatical to have both a free pronoun and a possessive marker on the noun, as in (10d).

Compare the very different interpretations of (11a) and (11b):

(11)  
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{Te pogau-nto.} \\
& \text{CORE speak-1PL.POSS} \\
& \text{‘The way we talk.’} \\
& ( > \text{our language}) \\
\text{b. } & \text{Te pogau ikita.} \\
& \text{CORE speak we} \\
& \text{‘Our language.’} \\
& (\text{and not that spoken by anyone else}) \\
& * \text{‘The way we talk.’}
\end{align*}
\]

Here (11a) is an unmarked, ‘normal’ way to refer to ‘our language’, whilst (11b) presents the information with a greater sense of individuation, rather like ‘our own special language, and no-one else’s.’ The structure of a genitive case phrase is the same as the structures seen in chapter 3, and an example is as set out in (12):

(12)  
\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{KP} \\
\text{GEN ART \textit{nu}} \\
\text{NP}
\end{array}
\]

Unlike the core articles \textit{te} and \textit{na}, or the oblique article \textit{i}, the genitive article \textit{nu} has no predicative function. Compare the following non-verbal clauses with core and oblique predicates in (13) and (14), and the phrase involving the genitive \textit{nu} in (15):

(13)  
\[
\begin{align*}
[\text{Te ia}]_{\text{KP}} & [\text{te mori}]_{\text{KP}}. \\
& \text{CORE 3SG CORE student} \\
& \text{‘She is a student.’}
\end{align*}
\]

(14)  
\[
\begin{align*}
[\text{Te ia}]_{\text{KP}} & [\text{di ito}]_{\text{KP}}. \\
& \text{CORE 3SG OBL there:higher} \\
& \text{‘She is up there.’} \\
& (\text{or ‘She who is up there.’, with the structure } [\text{Te [ia [di ito]_{\text{KP}}]_{\text{NP}}} ]_{\text{KP}}))
\end{align*}
\]

(15)  
\[
\begin{align*}
[\text{Te ia}]_{\text{KP}} & [\text{nu tuha-su}]_{\text{KP}}. \\
& \text{CORE 3SG GEN family-1SG.POSS} \\
& * \text{‘She is in my family.’} \\
& \text{? ‘She, of my family.’}
\end{align*}
\]

Whilst both (13) and (14) have clausal interpretations (though (14) can also be interpreted as a phrase modifying within an NP), this is not a possible option for (15), which can only be interpreted as a KP containing a pronominal head modified by the genitive case phrase.

A genitive KP cannot serve as an adjunct in a main verbal clause (though it may serve as such in some relative clause types; see chapter 15 for details and examples), a characteristic of oblique KPs and PPs. Compare (16) and (17):
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(16) \([Te \, i\dot{a}]_{\text{KP}} \, [\text{no-tinti}]_{\text{VP}} \, [di \, ito]_{\text{PP}}\]
CORE 3SG 3R-run OBL there:higher
‘She is running up there.’

(17) * \([Te \, i\dot{a}]_{\text{KP}} \, [\text{no-tinti}]_{\text{VP}} \, [nu \, tuha-su]_{\text{KP}}\]
CORE s/he 3R-run GEN family-1SG.POSS

These characteristics lead us to assume that \(nu\) is an article, but with different distributional restrictions from both core and oblique articles. The form of the genitive article is most typically \(nu\) (or its allomorph \(u\)); it can, however, especially in the speech of people from the south western coast of Wanci, and those areas in the court of Lia, or those with associations with Buton, be heard as \(no\), probably modelled after the suffix -\(no\) that is found in the languages of Muna and Buton (with the exception of Wolio, the Sultanate language). For example, we find sentences such as (8)’ in Muna (van den Berg 1989:86):

(8)’ \(\begin{array}{lll}
\text{roo-no} & \text{sau} \\
\text{leaf-POS} & \text{tree}
\end{array}\)

‘leaf of a tree; vegetable’

In these languages, however, it is clear that it is actually the possessive suffixes that are used, and not a separate genitive case marker. Compare example (10b) with the following Muna phrase (van den Berg 1989:85):

(10) e. \(\begin{array}{lll}
guru-ku & \text{inodi} \\
teacher-my & I
\end{array}\)

‘MY teacher’ (not yours).’

Clearly the genitive construction is treated differently in Tukang Besi, compared to the Muna possessive construction. The genitive case marker is independent of person and number of the possessor, and is not suffixed onto the head noun (Tukang Besi would require \(te \, guru \, nu \, iaku\) as a translation of (10), and not allow * \(te \, gurusu \, iaku\)). This is also discussed in chapter 5.

13.2.3 Internal structure of a genitive phrase

From the examples above it can be seen that the appearance of a genitive phrase (or possessive suffix) serving to modify a noun is obligatorily within a noun phrase. It can be shown, however, that the NPs that may appear in genitive KPs are non-nominative, and do not display the internal structure associated with nominative NPs. This can be corroborated by the lack of ambiguity in strings that might be naively thought to be ambiguous. Examine the KP containing a genitive case phrase in (18):

(18) \(\begin{array}{llllllll}
Jari & \text{no-mohoo} & \text{na} & \text{pa'a} & \text{no} & \text{bonto} & \text{iso} & \text{ba'i}.
\end{array}\)
so 3R-sore NOM thigh GEN ruler yon PREV
‘So the thigh of that mentioned ruler was sore.’
* ‘So that mentioned thigh of the ruler was sore.’

Here it might appear to be the case that the demonstrative string \(iso \, ba'i\) occurs modifying a nominative noun phrase, not allowed by the rules governing NP structure (see chapter 12).
In fact this interpretation is not allowed, and the demonstrative can only be taken to be referring to the NP inside the genitive phrase, and not the NP outside the genitive phrase. This provides evidence that NPs within a genitive phrase are non-nominative, regardless of the case of the KP in which they are found. This can be represented in the structure seen in (18)', which is contrasted to (18)″, not a possible constituent structure representing (18), since it assigns a demonstrative choice that is only available to a non-nominative NP to the nominative NP that is part of the outermost KP.

Thus the ba'i is part of the N' containing the embedded bonto, and is not modifying the head of the NP, pa'a.

Compare this clarity with the ambiguity that can result when a demonstrative is used in a non-nominative KP containing a genitive phrase:

(19)  No-ala te rapo-rapo nu ana-'u atu ba'i.
3R-fetch CORE peanuts GEN child-2SG.POSS that PREV
‘She took those peanuts that were there by you that belong to your child.’
‘She took the peanuts that belong to that child of yours there by you.’

Since the NP possessor in (19) is non-nominative, the demonstrative string atu ba'i is grammatical when taken to refer to raporapo as well as ana'u, and so ambiguity results. The constituent structures representing the two alternative readings of (19) are given in (19)' and (19)″. Note that these are identical structures to (18)' and (18)″, yet both are grammatical when the KP is non-nominative, because of the different internal structures allowed to non-nominative NPs.
The position of the possessive suffixes within an NP is not necessarily immediately following the head noun, as might be deduced from the above, but the positioning is dependent on the article that begins the NP. The relevant portion of the NP structure rules is the following two explications, repeated here from chapter 12:

\[
\begin{align*}
N'_{\text{non-NOM}} & \quad \rightarrow \quad te \quad N \quad (\text{ADJ}) \quad (-\text{POSS}) \quad \ldots \\
N'_{\text{NOM}} & \quad \rightarrow \quad na \quad N \quad (-\text{POSS}) \quad (\text{ADJ}) \quad \ldots 
\end{align*}
\]

As can be seen, in a nominative NP the possessive suffix occurs immediately following the head. In another NP such modification occurs after any adjectival modification. Examples of these differing patterns can be seen in (20) and (21):

(20) *Ku-’ita te honda to’oge-'u.*
1SG-see CORE motorbike big-2SG.POSS
‘I can see your big motorbike.’

\[
[ku’ita \ [te \ [honda \ to’oge] \ -’u]]
\]

(21) *Ku-’ita-'e na hondan-'u to’oge.*
1SG-see-3OBJ NOM motorbike-2SG.POSS big
‘I saw your big motorbike.’

\[
[ku’ita’e \ [na \ [honda \ -’u] \ to’oge]]
\]

Further complications of NP structure and possessive/genitive placement are dealt with in chapter 12.

Examples of genitive phrases indicating different relationships are given in (22) - (33):

(19)'

![Diagram](1)

(19)"

![Diagram](2)
ownership

(22) *Te kolikoli nu ama-su.*

CORE  canoe  GEN  father-1SG.POSS

‘My father’s canoe.’

kin/social relation

(23) *Te ana nu raja iso.*

CORE  child  GEN  king  that

‘The King’s son.’

(24) *Te kene nu Wa Inggi.*

CORE  friend  GEN  Wa Inggi

‘Wa Inggi’s friend.’

body part/ body whole

(25) *Te ate nu komparu.*

CORE  liver  GEN  fish sp.

‘the komparu’s liver’ (SA:47)

part/whole

(26) *Te onga nu soha.*

CORE  rung  GEN  ladder

‘rungs of a ladder’

quality/possessor

(27) *Te pe’i nu mia.*

CORE  stupidity  GEN  person

‘stupidity of a person’ (Oen:38)

spatial / locational relation

(28) *Te lai u Sentani kene Kota raja, ane-ho kirakira dua-hulu kilo labi.*

TOP  distance  GEN  Sentani  and  Kota raja

exist-yet roughly 20 kilometres better

‘The distance between Sentani and Abepura is the better part of 20 kilometres.’ (Kota raja is a suburb in Abepura) (J:15)

(29) *I tonga nu sala.*

OBL  middle  GEN  road

‘in the middle of the road’ (Oen:28)

(30) *Di wor(u) u meja.*

OBL  under  GEN  table

‘under the table’

action/agent

(31) …*na kiki’i no, nu beka-su.*

NOM  hold.in.teeth  GEN  GEN  cat-1SG.POSS

‘my cat’s grip in his teeth’ (Oen:21)
mental activity/action

(32) Te ma’ek(a) u La Adi.

CORE fright GEN La Adi

‘The scare of La Adi’ (the scare that La Adi got)

(33) Te keputusa u po-’awa-’awa no ndoke mai iso.

Core decision GEN meeting GEN monkey

INAL yon

‘the decision of the meeting of those monkeys mentioned’ (SA:54)

13.2.4 Embedded genitive phrases

The genitive phrase may itself contain another genitive phrase; usually not many more than two linked phrases, with or without a final possessive suffix, are found. Examples of this include:

(34) Kambeda [te apata-mo [nu pe’i [nu mia]KP ]KP ]NP

fact CORE extreme-PF GEN foolish GEN person

na iko’o.

NOM you

“Oh, it is such an incredibly stupid person that you are!” (Oen:38)

(34)’

(35) Ako to-s[um]lawi [i kolikoli [nu mi(a)

PURP 1PL.R-board.Si OBL canoe GEN person


GEN neighbourhood-NL GEN mother-1SG.POSS

‘Let’s go in the canoe of my aunt’s neighbours.’

[i [kolikoli [nu mia [nu wulumba’a [nu inasu]]]]]

13.2.5 Possession without an overt article

Often possession of a kin term, or the ‘possessive relation’ expressed between a person and their village, island or ethnic group is expressed without an article. Examples of this can be seen in (36) - (38), using pronouns as the nominal heads, although it is equally possible with other nouns referring to sentient beings:
Nominal/Place of Origin: village

(36) Te amai (Ø) Tindoi ito no-mai j[um]o'a-ako
CORE 3PL GEN Tindoi that:higher 3R-come pray.SI-APPL
Te karia'a.
CORE festival
‘Those Tindoi people came to pray for the festival.’

(36)'

(37) Buntu te avana amai (Ø) Tomea…
as.for TOP manner 3PL GEN Tomea
‘And as for the way they (do it) on Tomea,…’
(TB:15)
(Lit., ‘As for the manner of them of Tomea…’)

Nominal/Ethnic group

(38) Te mia di Mola iso te amai (Ø) Wajo.
CORE person OBL Mola yon CORE 3PL GEN Bajau
‘The people in Mola there are the Bajau.’
(D:13)

13.2.6 The ‘inalienable’ / plural marker mai

The marker mai is mentioned here because it usually occurs in conjunction with a possessive suffix. This is probably diachronically analysable into me- ‘stative prefix’ and -ai ‘anaphoric reference deictic’, but the pronunciation meai is heard nowadays only rarely on Wanci, from elderly speakers from the east coast villages. The inalienable relation expressed by mai refers to one’s close family (excluding in-laws, but including ‘half’ relations (half brother, step-mother, etc.), which are classificatorily the same as in-laws in Tukang Besi, both using the prefix ko- on the basic kin term), or those of the same village group, but can be extended to include objects intimately associated with the possessor, such as houses, people or groups or canoes (for men), but in this case it has the added interpretation that there is more than one of the object mentioned. When used with inalienable objects, which are not marked as such phrasally (though see section 13.2 for a discussion of clausal possession), the mai serves only to emphasise the inalienability of the object. When used with alienable things, such as in (39), the effect is to emphasise the plurality of the object. For this reason mai cannot be described as simply a marker of inalienability or plurality; rather, it interacts with the concept ‘inalienable’ to be interpreted as either inalienable or plural.
(39) **O-mosega ala'a na ana-su mai iso la.**

3R-naughty just NOM child-1SG.POSS INAL yon ILL.FORCE

‘My kid is nothing but naughty!’

(40) **Te kalambensala-no mai eak(a) o-mandawulu.**

CORE young.girl-3POSS INAL not 3R-beautiful

‘The young girls (of the village) aren’t beautiful.’ (Pat:8)

(41) **Sa-kampo sa-kampo i Buru (o-)leama karn(a)**

1-village 1-village OBL Buru 3R-good because

o-koruo a tuha mai.

3R-many NOM family INAL (J:7)

‘All the villages on Buru are good because we have a lot of family there.’

(42) **Te wowine mai, e, no-he-'uranga di wunua.**

CORE woman INAL ah 3R-VRB-stay OBL house

‘As for the(ir) women, they stay at home.’ (TB:9)

13.2.7 Other uses of the possessive construction

In addition to marking possession, possessive suffixes are also used to index the subject of a verb in combination with the temporal nominalising prefix sa- (see chapter 18), to index the subject of an object relative clause (see chapter 15); to index the experiencer subject of a non-active experiential verb (see chapter 5); to indicate the object of kene. With these verbs the experiencer-subject may be indexed on the verb by means of the possessive suffixes if there is no subject prefix on the verb. This practice was universally proscribed by the speakers I queried, but use of this marking pattern was just as universally used in casual conversation. See chapter 7 for more details. Examples of each of these are presented in (43) - (46):

(43) **Sa-anu-no (o)-waliako-mo.**

when-thingy-3POSS 3R-return-PF

‘When she had done that, she returned.’ (Sab:12)

(44) **Te ia te mia i-'ita-su i aba.**

CORE 3SG CORE person OP-see-1SG.POSS OBL PREV

‘S/he is the person who I saw earlier.’

(45) **Nini-'u?**

cold-2SG.POSS

‘Are you cold?’ (G:66)

(46) **Mbeaka 'u-hada w[um]ila kene-su?**

not 2SG.R-want go.SI and-1SG.POSS

‘Don’t you want to go together with me?’

13.3 Clausal possession

In this section we see how Tukang Besi handles possession at a clausal level. This typically deals with such concepts as ownership, kin and social relationships; body parts and part/whole relationships are not dealt with in detail, and it cannot really be argued that
locational clauses represent a kind of possessive relationship; they are dealt with in Chapter 15.

Ownership can be expressed with the verb *hoto*. This takes the object of possession as its obligatorily incorporated predicate, and the possessor is expressed by means of subject prefixes. The incorporated nature of the object is evident by the lack of an article before the nominal following the verb, and the possibility for aspectual marking to follow the nominal (see chapter 7 for details of VP-internal structure). Verbs unmarked by object suffixes normally mark their objects with the non-nominative core article *te*, but this is not an acceptable paraphrase for the object of *hoto*: * Ku-hoto te wunua to'oge.* The verb *jari* ‘become’ is another verb that often appears with an incorporated nominal, but in the case of *jari* a paraphrase with a non-incorporated nominal is also possible, which is not the case with *hoto*—unless that nominal is nominative.

This construction is most commonly used with third person possessors, though that is by no means a restriction on the grammaticality of a sentence.

(47)  
Ku-hoto wunua to'oge.  
1SG-have house big  
‘I have a big house.’

(48)  
No-hoto kabali leama.  
3R-have machete good  
‘He has a good machete.’

(49)  
? / # Ku-hoto ana.  
1SG-have child  
‘I have children.’

(50)  
* Ku-hoto lima (mohoo).  
1SG-have hand sick  
‘I have a (sore) hand.’

(51)  
* Te wunua iso, no-hoto ato (molengo).  
TOP house yon 1SG-have roof old  
‘That house, it’s got an (old) roof.’

Whilst examples (47) and (48) are perfectly acceptable, (49) - (51) are less so; speakers acknowledge that ‘you could say it that way’, but are hesitant to use the construction themselves, or flatly reject it as being ungrammatical Tukang Besi (as is the case with (50) and (51), even though they are both easily parsed and interpreted).

There appears to be a dividing line for acceptability of use of *hoto* to introduce the possessed item: if it is a kin term, body part, or part-whole relation, a construction with the verb *hoto* is less likely to be used, such as seen in (49), and also in (48). Kin terms referring to family related by marriage (ie., not cosanguinal kin) are much more acceptable as objects of a *hoto* construction:

(52)  
Mbeaka ku-hoto sanggalapa.  
not 1SG-have WZH  
‘I don’t have a brother-in-law-in-law.’

(the Tukang Besi term *sanggalapa* refers to the husband of the sister of ego’s own wife; thus, the in-law of an in-law)
In (52) and (53) we can also see the use of the predicate negator *mbea(ka)* with *hoto* (the -*ka* is frequently omitted before other aspect marking; *mbea-ho* 'not yet', *mbea-mo* 'not any more', *mbea-do* 'certainly not yet'. For emphatic use, the -*ka* may be preserved). The verbal identity of *hoto* is clear; object suffixes can be used on the verb to emphasise the identity of the possessed, as seen in (54):

(54) Te *wunua* to'oge, *ku-hoto-*'e.
    TOP house big 1SG-have-3OBJ
    'I have a big house.'
    (not something else, like just a little hut in the gardens)
    (Note that the nominal object here is NOT incorporated; the object suffix
    occupies the object position in the verbal complex, and the nominal is a
    nominative adjunct to this pronominal representation. See chapter 5 for a
    discussion of the status of verbal indexing.)

An alternative to this verbal means of indicating possession at the clause level is the use of a variant of the existential clause, using the semi-verb *ane* 'have, be, exist'. The nominal governed by this semi-verb is present in an oblique phrase, and is suffixed by possessive suffixes, or a genitive phrase, and these show the identity of the owner:

\[
\text{ane ke X-POSS} \\
\text{exist and X-POSS} \\
\text{‘POSS has an X.’}
\]

The *ane* construction is in near-complementary distribution with *hoto*, with respect to the person of the possessor and the identity of the possessed. Constructions with *ane* tend not to be used so much with third person possessors. They may be used for all manner of possession: kin (including cosanguinal kin), body parts, or run-of-the-mill objects and things). The equivalents of the *hoto*-constructions in (47) - (51) are presented in sentences (55) - (59):

(55) *Ane ke wunua to'oge-su.*
    exist and house big-1SG.POSS
    'I have a big house.'

(56) *Ane ke kabali leama-no.*
    exist and machete good-3POSS
    'He has a good machete.'

(57) *Ane ke ana-su.*
    exist and child-1SG.POSS
    'I have children.'
(58)  Ane ke lima mohoo-su.
exist and hand sick-1SG.POSS
‘I have a sore hand.’

(59)  Te bangka ana, ane ke lepelepe wo’ou-no.
TOP ship this exist and guard.rail new-3POSS
‘This ship has a new guard rail.’

We can show that the NP is not nominative, despite being the sole argument in the clause, as evidenced by the adjective - possessive order. Nevertheless, neither te nor na may appear in place of ke, unless the possessed is topicalised, as in (55):

(55)'  Te wunua to'oge-su, ane.
TOP house big-1SG.POSS exist
‘As for my big houses, (it) exists’

The structure of the above sentences is the same structure as the general existential construction (chapter 14). A more literal translation of (55) might be ‘My big house exists.’ Compare the formal similarities of (55) with those in (55b), below:

(55)  b.  Ane ke wunua to'oge i iwo.
exist and house big OBL that:lower
‘There is a big house down there.’

Emphatically, ane may also take object suffixes:

(60)  Ane-'e na wunua-su!
exist-3OBJ NOM house-1SG.POSS
‘I do so too have a house!’
(more commonly, as a reply: ane'e!)

Here too we see the nominative article being used on the object of emphatic possession, despite the lack of applicative morphology that would make the oblique comitative argument marked by ke(ne) a core one. The grammatical status of the nominatively marked existant is, however, somewhat problematic, and is not the same as a nominative verbal argument (see chapter 20 for a fuller discussion of the issues).

The nominative article is also used when a numeral phrase or other adverbial expression is used immediately after the verb, thus intervening between ane and the existant. In this case the comitative preposition ke(ne) is replaced by the nominative article na:

Ane NUM-CLASS na X-POSS
exist NUM-CLASS NOM X-POSS
‘POSS has NUM Xs.’

The difference between this and the basic ownership expression using an existential clause is in the emphasis: here we see an emphasis on the number of entities. An example of this construction is (61):
Possession and possessive constructions

(61) Ane gana-mia na ana-su.
exist 4-CLASS NOM child-1SG.POSS
‘I have four children.’

The formal differences between this ‘focussed’ construction (it presents more and detailed information about the predicate) and the neutral construction can be seen in (62a) and (62b):

(62) a. Ane ke loka-su dua-’asa.
exist and banana-1SG.POSS 2-CLASS
‘I have two pieces of (fried) banana.’

b. Ane dua-’asa na loka-su.
exist 2-CLASS NOM banana-1SG.POSS
‘I have two pieces of (fried) banana.’

In (53) we saw that the verb hoto uses the normal verbal negator mbea(ka). In order to present a negated version of a possessive clause using ane, the negative existential mbea’e is used:

(63) Mbea’e na mo’ane-su.
not.exist NOM man-1SG.POSS
‘I don’t have a husband.’

(it is worth noting in passing that the -’e ending on mbea’e is identical to the third person object marker, and may well reflect a historical origin in that morpheme, given the other morphosyntax associated with the construction. Synchronically, however, it is not separable)

The only article that may be used with an NP that has not been fronted in this construction is na; contrastive focus is automatically present with any NP that has its existence denied. Just as a more literal translation of the ane sentences is existential, such as for (55) ‘My house exists’, so too is mbea’e, as in (63), more literally translated as ‘My husband does not exist.’ Compare (55b) with the negative existential clause in (64):

(64) Mbea’e na wunua to’oge i iwo.
not.exist NOM house big OBL that:lower
‘There aren’t any big houses down there.’

The hoto construction only permits a numeral phrase to appear outside the verb, ie., following the noun that it modifies, and does not allow it to float:

(65) a. Ku-hoto loka dua-’asa.
1SG-have banana 2-CLASS
‘I have two pieces of (fried) banana.’

b. * Ku-hoto dua-’asa (na) loka.
13.4 Summary

We have seen in this chapter that there is no distinction made between different types of possession at the phrasal level. The concepts of alienable versus inalienable, part/whole, etc., are not directly relevant to the operation of possession at that level of grammar. At the clausal level, however, there is a strong preference towards using one form of possession, the *ane* construction, with certain ‘inalienables’, namely cosanguineal kin terms, body parts, and part-whole relationships, which are less acceptably possessed with the incorporating verb *hoto-* . Thus we can say that the categories alienable / inalienable are relevant to a description of the possessive construction in Tukang Besi, but not at the phrasal level. Also interesting is the marker *mai*, that either (optionally) indicates inalienability, or indicates plurality of inalienable objects.

The salient features that distinguish these different modes of expression of clausal possession can be summarised in table 27:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORM OF CLAUSAL POSSESSION</th>
<th><em>hoto</em></th>
<th><em>ane</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used on kin terms?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used with in-laws?</td>
<td>MAYBE</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common object use</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use verbal negator?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>floating numerals?</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take subject prefixes?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take object suffixes?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The semi-verb *ane* also has an auxiliary use, to specify a continuing action; this is dealt with in chapter 7.