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## 12. Nonverbal clauses

This chapter discusses different types of nonverbal predicate clauses in Papuan Malay.

In nonverbal predicate clauses the main semantic content is not conveyed by a verb or verbal phrase. Instead, the “semantic predicate is expressed by a word or phrase of some other category” (Kroeger 2005: 48). In Papuan Malay verbal clauses, the predicate typically follows the subject and, in transitive clauses, precedes the direct object. In negated verbal clauses, the negator precedes the predicate.

Papuan Malay has three syntactically distinct types of nonverbal predicate clauses, namely, nominal, numeral/quantifier, and prepositional predicate clauses. Nominal predicates have ascriptive or equative function and also encode possession. Numeral and quantifier predicates have attributive function. Prepositional predicates encode locational or nonlocational relations between a FIGURE and the GROUND. Before discussing the three types of nonverbal clauses in more detail, §12.1 explores which constituents can fill the subject slot in nonverbal clauses. Nominal predicate clauses are described in §12.2, numeral and quantifier clauses in §12.3, and prepositional clauses in §12.4. The main points of this chapter are summarized in §12.5. (Negation of nonverbal clauses is discussed in §13.1.)

### 12.1. Nonverbal clause subjects

In nonverbal clauses, the subject can be a noun or noun phrase, a personal pronoun, or a demonstrative, as shown in (1) to (6). Alternatively, the subject can be elided if it is understood from the context, as shown in (7) and (8).

In the nominal clause in (1) and the quantifier clause in (3), the subject is a noun phrase or a noun, respectively. In the nominal clause in (2) and the prepositional clause in (5) the subjects are encoded as personal pronouns. And in numeral clause in (4) and the prepositional clause in (6), the subjects are expressed with demonstratives. (For a nominal clause with a demonstrative subject see (12) in §12.2, for a numeral clause with a personal pronoun subject see (19) in §12.3, and for a prepositional phrase with a noun phrase subject see (24) in §12.4.)

Subjects in nonverbal clauses

- (1) **orang ini** muka baru  
person D.PROX face be.new  
'**this person** is a new person' [080919-004-NP.0079]
- (2) **ko** prempuang Jayapura, de bilang, **ko** prempuang Demta  
2SG woman Jayapura 3SG say 2SG woman Demta  
'**'you'**re a Jayapura girl', he says, '**'you'**re a Demta girl' [081006-025-CvEx.0014]
- (3) ... **picaang** juga banyak  
splinter also many  
'[at the beach] there are also lots of **splinters**' (Lit. '**the splinters** (are) also many') [080917-006-CvHt.0008]

- (4) **itu** satu saja blum brapa ...  
 D.DIST one just not.yet how.many  
 [Conversation about cloths as a bride-price:] ‘**that** is just one (cloth and) not yet several (cloths) ...’ [081006-029-CvEx.0011]
- (5) baru Sarles ini **de** di blakang bapa  
 and.then Sarles D.PROX 3SG at backside father  
 ‘but then Sarles here, **he** was behind father’ [081025-009b-Cv.0014]
- (6) a **itu** di Wakde sana  
 ah! D.DIST at Wakde L.DIST  
 ‘ah, **that**’s in Wakde over there’ [081006-016-Cv.0030]

If the subject can be inferred from the context it can also be elided. This is illustrated with the two nominal clauses (7) and the prepositional clause in (8). In the two nominal clauses in (7), the predicates *kitong pu ana* ‘our child’ and *tong punya dara* ‘our blood’ are co-referential with *de* ‘3SG’. As the subject was already introduced at the beginning of the utterance, it is omitted in the nominal clause. In the prepositional clause in (8), the elided subject is *ko* ‘2SG’, that is the addressee.

#### Elision of subjects in nonverbal clauses

- (7) **de** minta apa, kitong kasi karna Ø kitong punya ana  
 3SG request what 1PL give because 1PL POSS child  
 ... Ø masi **tong punya dara**  
 still 1PL POSS blood  
 ‘**she** requests something, we give (it to her), because (**she**’ s) our child, ... (**she**’s) still our blood’ [081006-025-CvEx.0020/0022]
- (8) wa, sa pikir Ø masi di Arbais?  
 wow! 1SG think still at Arbais  
 [Addressing a guest:] ‘wow!, I thought (**you**) were still in Arbais’ [081011-011-Cv.0044]

## 12.2. Nominal predicate clauses

In nonverbal clauses with nominal predicates, a noun or a noun phrase conveys the main semantic content.

In Papuan Malay, nominal clauses have three functions: (1) to describe the subject, (2) to identify the subject, and (3) to express possession of an indefinite possessum. Nominal predicates always receive a static reading.

Nominal predicates conveying a description of the subject are also referred to as “ascriptive predications” (Hengeveld 1992: 101), as they describe a particular entity that is denoted by the subject of the clause such that ‘S is a member of N/NP’. That is, an ascriptive clause asserts that this entity belongs to the class of entities specified in the nonreferential nominal predicate. By contrast, nominal predicates expressing identification are “equative predicates”. They are referential and equate the particular entity denoted by the subject of the clause to the entity specified in the predicate such that ‘S is N/NP’. (See Hengeveld 1992: 101, and Payne 1997: 105.) In

nominal clauses conveying the notion of possession the subject embodies the semantic role of possessor while the predicate functions as indefinite possessum such that ‘POSSESSOR has a POSSESSUM’.

While ascriptive, equative, and possessive nominal predicates are semantically different, Papuan Malay does not distinguish them in terms of their syntactic or intonational features; all three predicate types are formed by juxtaposition of two noun phrases with the subject preceding the predicate. This is illustrated with the ascriptive clauses in (9) and (10), the equative clauses in (11) and (12), and the possessive clauses in (13) to (16).

In the ascriptive clause in (9), the subject *saya* ‘1SG’ is asserted to belong to the class of *manusia* ‘human being’. In the ascriptive clause in (10), the subject *ko* ‘2SG’ is part of the class of *prempuang Demta* ‘Demta girls’. The equative clauses in (11) identify the predicate *ade* ‘younger sibling’ with the subject *dia* ‘3SG’. This example also shows that nonverbal predicates can be modified with adverbs. Along similar lines, the equative clause in (12) identifies the predicate *klawar* ‘cave bat’ with the subject *itu* ‘D.DIST’.

#### Ascriptive clauses

- (9) misalnya saya manusia biasa  
for.example 1SG human.being be.usual  
[About humans and evil spirits:] ‘for example, I **am a normal human being**’ [081006-022-CvEx.0025]
- (10) ko prempuang Demta, ko pulang ke Demta  
2SG woman Demta 2SG go.home to Demta  
‘you **are a Demta girl**, go home to Demta!’ [081006-025-CvEx.0014]

#### Equative clauses

- (11) dia masi ade  
3SG still ySb  
‘she’s still (my) **younger sister**’ [080927-009-CvNP.0038]
- (12) o, itu klawar  
oh! D.DIST cave.bat  
‘oh, that **was a bat**’ [081023-001-Cv.0041]

The nominal clauses in (13) to (16) express possession of an indefinite possessum.<sup>225</sup> In (13), the subject *saya* ‘1SG’ has the semantic role of possessor, while the predicate *empat ana* ‘four children’ functions as the possessum. In (14), the possessor *de* ‘3SG’ is juxtaposed to the possessum *ana kecil* ‘small child’. The possessive clauses in (13) and (14) encode inalienable possession relations. The clauses in (15) and (16), by contrast, denote alienable possession relations, namely between a human referent and animate nonhuman *ikang* ‘fish’ in (15) and inanimate *glang puti* ‘silver/tin bracelets’ in (16).

<sup>225</sup> Alternatively, possession of an indefinite possessum can be encoded by an existential clause with *ada* ‘exist’ (for details see §11.4.2). Possession of a definite possessum is encoded by an adnominal possessive construction (for details see Chapter 9 and §11.4.1).

Possessive clauses: Possession of an indefinite possessum

- (13) saya **empat ana**  
1SG four child  
'I **(have) four children**' [081006-024-CvEx.0001]
- (14) baru de **ana kecil** lagi  
and.then 3SG child be.small again  
'moreover, she **(has) a small child** again' [081010-001-Cv.0070]<sup>226</sup>
- (15) de **satu** | sa **satu**  
3SG one 1SG one  
[Joke about two fishermen:] 'he **(has) one (fish)**, I **(have) one (fish)**'  
[081109-011-JR.0008]
- (16) orang Biak kang **glang puti**  
person Biak you.know bracelet be.white  
[About bride-price customs:] 'you know, the Biak people **(have) silver/tin bracelets**' [081006-029-CvEx.0007]

These examples also show that the predicate of a nominal clause can be a noun such as *kaka* 'older sibling' in (11), or *klawar* 'cave bat' in (12), or a noun phrase, such as *manusia biasa* 'normal human being' in (9) or *empat ana* 'four children' in (13).

If speakers want to emphasize the predicate, they can front it as for instance *orang pintar* 'smart person' in (17). The predicate is set-off by a boundary intonation in that the stressed penultimate syllable of the verbal modifier *pintar* 'be clever' is marked with a slight increase in pitch ("´"). In the second clause in (17) the speaker repeats his statement, this time however returning to the canonical subject-predicate word order.

Fronted nominal predicates

- (17) trus **orang pintar** dia, dia orang pintar  
next person be.clever 3SG 3SG person be.clever  
'and then **a smart person** he is, he's a smart person' [081029-005-Cv.0169]

### 12.3. Numeral and quantifier predicate clauses

In numeral and quantifier clauses, a numeral or quantifier conveys the main semantic content; again, these predicates receive a static reading. As in nominal clauses, the subject precedes the predicate. Structurally, numeral and quantifier predicates are identical to noun phrases with postposed numeral or quantifier (see §8.3). Semantically, numeral and quantifier clauses have attributive function in that they express specific properties of the subject, namely those of number and quantity, such that 'S is NUM/QT' as illustrated in (18) to (21).

In (18), a husband relates that in a neighboring village a woman gave birth to a snake. His wife contradicts this statement, asserting that it was not one snake but that the *ular* 'snake' were *dua* 'two'. The analysis of the *dua* 'two' as a numeral

<sup>226</sup> In a different context, *de ana kecil* also receive the equative reading 'she is a small child'.



## 12.4. Prepositional predicate clauses

Nonverbal clauses with prepositional predicates convey information about the relation between a figure and a ground, such that 'FIGURE is in relation to GROUND'. The figure is encoded by the clausal subject and the ground by the complement of the prepositional phrase. This phrase is juxtaposed to the subject and functions as the clausal predicate. Semantically, two types of prepositional predicate clauses can be distinguished: locational clauses (§12.4.1), and nonlocational clauses (§12.4.2). The precise semantic relation between figure and ground is defined by the preposition that heads the prepositional phrase. (See Talmy 2000: 312.) (For a detailed discussion of prepositions and prepositional phrase see Chapter 10).

### 12.4.1. Locational prepositional clauses

Locational predicate clauses typically express information about the locational relation, both spatial and figurative, between figure and ground, as shown in (22) to (26). In addition, locational predicates can have presentative function, as shown in (28). In Papuan Malay the specific kind of relation is conveyed by prepositions encoding location, namely locative *di* 'at, in', elative *dari* 'from', or allative *ke* 'to' (see also §10.1). The ground can be encoded by a common (proper) noun or a noun phrase. Unlike prepositional phrases in verbal clauses, locative *di* 'at, in' and allative *ke* 'to' cannot be omitted from prepositional clauses with nominal complements as this would result in nominal clauses with unacceptable semantics (for more details on the omission of prepositions encoding location, see §10.1.5); the exceptions are preposed prepositional clauses with locative complements, as in (28).

Locational spatial predicates denote static or dynamic relations between a figure and the ground, depending on the semantics of the preposition. In (22), locative *di* 'at, in' expresses the spatial location of the figure *dia* '3SG' at the ground *kampung* 'village'. In (23), elative *dari* 'from' conveys the motion of the figure *sa* '1SG' away from the source *Sawar*.<sup>227</sup> In (24) allative *ke* 'to' signals the motion of the figure *dep mama* 'her mother' towards the goal *Pante-Barat*.<sup>228</sup>

Static and dynamic spatial relations between figure and ground

- (22) memang dia **di kampung**  
indeed 3SG at village  
'indeed, he was **in the village**' [080918-001-CvNP.0014]

<sup>227</sup> More frequently, however, motion away from a source is encoded by a verbal phrase such as *kluar dari ruma* 'left home' in the example below:

sa **kluar dari ruma** sa punya orang-tua  
1SG go.out from house 1SG POSS parent

'I left home, my parents' (Lit. 'went out from the house') [081115-001b-Cv.0045]

<sup>228</sup> While this kind of prepositional predicate is not possible in English, it does occur in other languages such as colloquial German. Hence, (24) easily translates into *ihre Mutter ist nach ... Pante-Barat*.

- (23) sa **dari** **Sawar**  
 1SG from Sawar  
 ‘I (just returned) **from Sawar**’ [080927-004-CvNP.0003]
- (24) dep mama **ke** ini **Pante-Barat**  
 3SG:POSS mother to D.PROX Pante-Barat  
 ‘her mother (went) **to**, what’s-its-name, **Pante-Barat**’ [080919-006-CvNP.025]

Locational predicates also express figurative locational relations between figure and ground. In (25), locative *di* ‘at, in’ conveys a figurative locational relation between the figure *saya* ‘1SG’ and the ground *IPS satu* ‘Social Sciences I’. Along similar lines, relative *dari* ‘from’ conveys a figurative relation in (26). This example is part of a conversation about a building project that was put on hold due to the lack of funding. The figure *smua itu* ‘all that’ refers to the delayed project while the ground *uang* ‘money’ denotes the nonspatial source from which this delay originates. Figurative predicates with allative *ke* ‘to’ are unattested.

Figurative locational relation between figure and ground

- (25) sa **di** **IPS** **satu**  
 1SG at social.sciences one  
 [About course tracks in high school:] ‘I am **in Social Sciences I**’ [081023-004-Cv.0020]
- (26) smua itu **dari** **uang**  
 all D.DIST from money  
 ‘all that (depends) **on the money**’ (Lit. ‘**from the money**’) [080927-006-CvNP.0034]

If speakers want to emphasize the predicate, they can front it. The present corpus, however, includes only three utterances with fronted prepositional predicates, which are presented in (27) to (29). In each case the locative preposition *di* ‘at, in’ is omitted and the complement is a locative such as proximal *sini* ‘L.PROX’ in (27), or medial *situ* ‘L.MED’ in (28) and (29). Fronted prepositional predicates with distal *sana* ‘L.DIST’ are also possible, but unattested in the present corpus. (For more details on the omission of prepositions encoding location, see §10.1.5.)

Fronting of prepositional predicates

- (27) Ø **sini** **bua~bua** **banyak**  
 L.PROX RDP~fruit many  
 ‘**here (EMPH)** are many different kinds of fruit (trees)’ [080922-001a-CvPh.0418]<sup>229</sup>

<sup>229</sup> Alternatively, the utterance in (27) could be interpreted as a numeral predicate clause with a locational adjunct, with *bua~bua* ‘RDP-fruit’ as the subject, *banyak* ‘many’ as the predicate, and *sini* ‘L.PROX’ as a preposed locational adjunct, giving the literal reading ‘here the various fruit (trees) are many’.



- (28) sebla tida ada ruma Ø situ alang-alang  
 side NEG exist house L.MED cogongrass  
 ‘on that side aren’t (any) houses, **there (EMPH)** (is only) cogongrass’  
 [081025-008-Cv.0149]
- (29) ... Ø situ Natanael Ø situ Martin Ø situ Aleks  
 L.MED Natanael L.MED Martin L.MED Aleks  
 [Choosing among potential candidates for the upcoming local elections:]  
 ‘[Burwas (village can have) two candidates,] **there (EMPH)** is Natanael,  
**there (EMPH)** is Martin, **there (EMPH)** is Aleks’ [080919-001-Cv.0117]

#### 12.4.2. Nonlocational prepositional clauses

Clauses with nonlocational predicates convey information about the nonlocational, static relation between figure and ground. Overall, this type of prepositional clause does not appear to be very common; the present corpus contains only few examples.

One type of nonlocational predicate is an “associative” or “comitative predicate” (Dryer 2007a: 24). This predicate type is formed with prepositions encoding accompaniment/instruments or goals, namely comitative *deng(an)* ‘with’ and goal preposition *sama* ‘to’ (see also §10.2). In (30), *deng(an)* ‘with’ denotes the accompaniment of the figure *Roni* by the ground *de pu temang~temang* ‘his friends’. In (31), *sama* ‘to’ signals the association of the implied figure *ana* ‘child’ with the ground *saya* ‘1SG’.

Comitative predicates

- (30) Roni masi **deng de pu temang~temang**  
 Roni still with 3SG POSS RDP~friend  
 ‘Roni is still **with his friends**’ [081006-031-Cv.0011]
- (31) hanya tiga saja **sama saya**  
 only three just to 1SG  
 ‘just only three (of my children) are **with me**’ [081006-024-CvEx.0001]

Another type of nonlocational predicate is the “simulative predicate” (Dryer 2007a: 248), which is formed with prepositions encoding comparisons, that is, simulative *sperti* ‘similar to’ and *kaya* ‘like’ and equative *sebagey* ‘as’ (see also §10.3.1 and §10.3.2). In (32) *sperti* ‘like’ establishes a simulative relation between the figure *de* ‘3SG’ and the ground *Sofia*. In (33), *sebagey* ‘as’ expresses equatability between the figure *sa* ‘1SG’ and the ground *kepala acara* ‘as the head of the festivity’.

Simulative predicates

- (32) de **sperti Sofia**  
 3SG similar.to Sofia  
 ‘she’s **similar to Sofia**’ [081115-001a-Cv.0283]

- (33) paling sa tra kerja, sa **sebagey kepala acara**  
 most 1SG NEG work 1SG as head festivity  
 [About organizing a festivity:] ‘most likely I won’t (have to) work, I’ll be  
**the head of the festivity**’ (Lit. ‘**as the head ...**’) [080919-004-NP.0068]

A third type of nonlocational clauses is the “benefactive predicate” (Dryer 2007a: 248), which is formed with the benefactive preposition *untuk* ‘for’ (see also §10.2.3). In (34), for instance, *untuk* ‘for’ conveys a benefactive relation between the figure *itu* ‘D.DIST’ and the ground *masarakat* ‘community’. In the present corpus, however, benefactive predicates are rare.

#### Benefactive predicates

- (34) uang besarnya itu **untuk masarakat** tapi pejabat  
 money be.big: 3POSSR D.DIST for community but official  
 yang makang banyak  
 REL eat many  
 ‘most of that money, that’s **for the community** but (it’s) the officials who  
 take most (of it)’ [081029-004-Cv.0002]

## 12.5. Summary

Papuan Malay employs three syntactically distinct types of nonverbal predicate clauses, namely nominal, numeral/quantifier, and prepositional predicate clauses. These clauses are formed by juxtaposition of the two main constituents; no copula intervenes. The three clause types also have distinct semantic functions. Nominal predicates have ascriptive or equative function and also encode possession. Numeral and quantifier predicates have attributive function. Prepositional predicates encode locational or nonlocational relations between a FIGURE and the GROUND.

