Animate pronoun attraction in Vera'a three-participant constructions

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Vera'a (Austronesian, Oceanic) has two types of construction expressing three-participant events that involve an AGENT, THEME/PATIENT and GOAL/RECIPIENT/BENEFICIARY: in the indirective construction (cf. Malchukov et al. 2010), two different prepositions are employed to encode either inanimate GOALS (locative preposition lē, cf. (1)) or animate RECIPIENTs/BENEFICIARIES (dative preposition mē, cf. (2)) respectively. While all other PPs occur only in the clause periphery, dative PPs with a topical bare pronoun as complement may intervene between verb complex and object NP (cf. (3)). Where the complement is a focal pronominal NP, the dative PP nevertheless follows the object NP (4).

In the adnominal construction (cf. Malchukov et al. 2010; Margetts & Austin 2007), a possessive classifier is used to express an animate RECIPIENT/BENEFICIARY. A RECIPIENT/BENEFICIARY interpretation of the possessor is implied where a possessive NP functions as the object of verbs of transfer, obtaining or creation and a common possessor follows the possessed noun (cf. Margetts 2004, 2002) (cf. (5)). Where the possessor is pronominal, the possessive classifier expressing the RECIPIENT/BENEFICIARY may form a NP on its own preceding the possessed NP, hence occupying a position analogous to that of dative PPs (cf. (6)). In this case, the possessor is invariably interpreted as a RECIPIENT/BENEFICIARY rather than a possessor and hence we deal with a specific three-participant construction here.

A bare possessive classifier with a pronominal possessor also occurs within the verb complex, as in (7). Its predicate-internal position is evidenced by the lack of the article and by the position of the directional particle ma 'hither' that constitutes the right boundary of the verb complex if present (cf. (8)). Predicate-internal pronominal possessors parallel object pronouns expressing a THEME/PATIENT that also occur inside the verb complex (cf. (9) & (10)). Note that inanimate discourse participants are left implicit rather than being realised by a pronoun in such contexts.

To summarise, the constructional variation found in three-participant constructions in Vera'a is to attributed to animacy (human – animal - inanimate) and referentiality / form of referential expression (Pro – proper name – common NP) (cf. Croft 2003; Comrie 1981): the marking of G arguments in indirective constructions (preposition choice) is determined by the animacy of its referent. Furthermore, the adnominal construction is only possible with animate G arguments. Pronominal animate G arguments are attracted by the verbal predicate and are thus realised in position that are typically occupied by animate P/T arguments. However, where pronominal G arguments are focal and hence take a demonstrative to form a pronominal NP they nevertheless follow the T argument. Hence, pragmatic roles also determine the position and the form of G arguments.
Examples:

(1) mom sur suwên [ën wōnir] /lē=n ma’a- wovinqa/
put downwards down ART leaf LOC=ART eye-coconut.shell
‘… put a leaf down onto the opening of the shell.’
JKP.008

(2) di ne le [=n sis] [mē =n tētē anē]
3SG TAM give ART breast DAT =ART infant DEM
'She gave the breast to the baby [i.e. breastfed the baby].'
ASB.055

(3) no =k le [mē di] [=n buluk]
1SG TAM give DAT 3SG =ART cattle
'I will give him a piece of cattle.'
1.NO.035

(4) di ne le [=n qe’e] [mē di anē]
3SG TAM give =ART taro DAT 3SG DEM
'Then she gave a taro to him here (not him over there).'
ASMS.106

(5) di ne dada [=n gie mo ’uvusmēl]
3SG TAM RED:make =ART kava CLF.POSS chief
'(Now) he is preparing kava for the chief.'
JJKT.001

(6) n=lumgay anē ne da [=n mo-gi]
ART=young.man DEM TAM make =ART CLF.POSS-3SG
[=n gie]
=ART kava
'This young man will prepare kava for him.'
JJKT.049

(7) n=reiñe anē [ne mōn go-ru] =n dom
ART=woman DEM TAM roast CLF.POSS-3DL =ART yam
'Then this woman roasted yams for (the two of) them.'
ANV.050

(8) nik [e le go-k lik ma] =n ’ilise
2SG TAM give CLF.POSS-1SG more hither =ART almonds
'Give me (some) more almonds!’
ISGG.032
(9)  

\[ \text{duru} \quad [=m \quad 'ō \quad \text{kal} \quad (eh) \quad \text{gēdē} \quad \text{ma}] \quad lē \quad =n \]

3DL =TAM carry upwards 1PL.INCL hither LOC =ART

\text{vunu}

village

'They brought us up here into the village.'

GMV.021

(10)  

\[ \text{n=lumgav} \quad \text{anē} \quad \text{di} \quad [\text{me} \quad \text{van} \quad 'ō \quad \text{ma}] \quad =n \]

ART=young.man DEM 3SG TAM go carry hither =ART

\text{sava}

what

'This young man, what will he bring?'

JJKT.020

References:


