

Patterns of Continuous & Discontinuous Quantification in the Oceanic languages

A study of the languages of Malekula

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Universal quantification ‘all, every’

Continuous quantification of nominals – quantifier inside the noun phrase

Discontinuous quantification of nominals – quantifier inside the verb complex

(Quantifier Float in older Polynesian grammars)

All of the people have gone.

All of us were watching the game.

The people have all gone.

We were all watching the game.

Association of discontinuous quantification

What types of arguments can be associated with a discontinuous quantifier?

S-function	single argument in a clause with an intransitive verb
A-function	most agent-like argument in a clause with a prototypical transitive verb
O-function	most patient-like argument in a clause with a prototypical transitive verb
PrepO-function	object of a preposition (typically a noncore argument of a clause)

S/A association > nominative alignment

S/O association > absolutive alignment

S/A/O/(PrepO) association > neutral alignment

(cf. Haspelmath 2011: 541)

Association of discontinuous quantification in Malekula languages

Northern Malekula	S-function	A-function	O-function
Nese	(S)	-	O
Tepërav	S	-	O
Malua	S	-	O

Eastern Malekula	S-function	A-function	O-function
Atchin	S	-	O
Uripiv	S	-	O
Unua	S	-	O
Lamap	S	-	O
Uluveu	S	-	O
Ahamb	(S)	-	O

Western Malekula	S-function	A-function	O-function
V'ënen Taut	S	-	O
Tirax	S	-	O
Tape		-	O
Larevet		-	O
Naman	S	-	O
Ninde		-	O
Nahavaq	S	-	O
Avava	S	-	O
Neverver	S	-	O
Neve'ei	S	-	O

S/O Absolute Association

Association of Discontinuous Quantification in Polynesian

Samoan	S, O (restricted A)	Absolutive
Pukapukan	S, O (restricted A)	
Rapa Nui	S, A, O	Neutral (attraction to pl)
Niuean	S, A, O	
Tongan	S, A, O	
Tuvaluan	S, A, O, IO, Obl	
Māori (Cook Islands)	---	---
Māori (Aotearoa)	S, A	Nominative

Wessels, Stowers & Barbour (2023 *ms.*)

Western Malekula - Larëvet

Continuous Universal Quantifier

1. Postnominal quantification with *njel* [ntʃel]

<i>gomom njel</i>	‘we all’
<i>ar njel</i>	‘they all’
<i>mxot njel</i>	‘everyone’

<i>nem</i>	<i>s-en</i>	<i>gomom</i>	<i>ar</i>	<i>njel</i>
house	GNR-POSS	1PL.EXCL	PL	all
‘all of our houses’				

Conventions

<x> velar fricative

<j> affricate [tʃ, dʒ]

<ë> schwa [ə]

Western Malekula - Larëvet

Re-vel *njel* *aut*
3PL.R-come all edge, shore
'they all came out'
[lvtt14-01laplap ref.075 wav 224.302 227.158]

xa-sëx *njel* *noxbo*
ES.IRR-stand.up.s.t. all house.post
'you stand all the houseposts up'
[lvt_housebuilding ref.013 wav 50.825 52.822]

Discontinuous Universal Quantifier

2. Discontinuous nominal quantification

Plural S-function – all Ss

2. Discontinuous nominal quantification

Plural O-function – all Os

Western Malekula - Larëvet



<i>t-sar</i>	<i>njel</i>	<i>njëbax</i>	<i>tenve</i>
ES.R-rake	all	cooking.pit	1SG.POSS

‘I rake my whole cooking pit’

‘I completely rake my cooking pit’

[lvt14-01laplap ref.078 wav 232.265 234.75]

‘all’ < > ‘whole’

2. Discontinuous nominal quantification – singular O-function – the whole O

‘whole’ < > ‘wholly, completely’

3. Continuous verbal modification ‘do to completion’

Northern Malekula - Tepërav

Continuous Universal Quantification

1. postnominal quantifier (*pol*)*pol*

Related

➤ *pol* ‘be finished (intransitive verb)’

<i>nëmëre polpol</i>	‘everyone’
<i>geka polpol</i>	‘every year’
<i>nëmlakel polpol</i>	‘all the young men’
<i>dange polpol xor</i>	‘all those things’
<i>nakër nge (pol)pol</i>	‘all of us, yumi evriwan’
<i>kënam nge (pol)pol</i>	‘all of us, mifala evriwan’
<i>xar nge (pol)pol</i>	‘all of them, olgeta evriwan’

Northern Malekula - Tepërav

Navij xor rë-mer nenev.
banana DEM2 3PL-be.ripe all
'Those bananas are all ripe. [eb72 ref.109]

Në-to nenev xar ven rëngen nuwa xë-pas
1sg-put all 3PL go LOC water ATTR-hot
'I put all of them in the hot water' [eb14 ref.14]

Në-rongovson jëleng xar.
1SG-know COMPL 3PL
'I knew them all. [eb36 ref.092]

2. Discontinuous Quantification of plural nominal

➤ S/O Absolutive alignment

Forms

➤ *nenev, jëleng*

Related language-internal morphology

➤ *jëleng* 'completive aspect marker'

Northern Malekula - Tepërav



Ne-toxoro *nenev* *nelok* *veve* \emptyset -*pol.*
1SG-trap all laplap DUR 3SG-be.finished
'I enclose **the whole laplap** until it is finished.'

'I enclose the laplap completely, until it is finished.'

[eb02 ref.053]

Ambiguity of association

- 'the whole' of a singular nominal
- 3. event performed to completion
'completely, wholly'



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Eastern Malekula - Atchin

<i>jinub jile (rou)</i>	'everyone'
<i>nabong jile</i>	'every day'
<i>neim jile rou</i>	'all the houses'
<i>deng sak jile rou</i>	'all my bags'

<i>kami jile (rou)</i>	'all of you, yufala evriwan'
<i>kiam jile (rou)</i>	'all of us, mifala evriwan'
<i>ikir jile</i>	'all of us, yumi evriwan'
<i>inir jile</i>	'all of them, olgeta evriwan'

Continuous Universal Quantification

1. Postnominal quantification

➤ *jile (rou)*

Eastern Malekula - Atchin

2. Discontinuous S-function quantification

➤ *rou*

<i>Nei</i>	<i>mar-jūv</i>	<i>rou</i>	<i>vetan</i>
tree	3pl.r-fall	all	go.down
‘The trees all fell down.’ [Atchin_elicited June 2023]			

2. Discontinuous O-function quantification

➤ *rou-e*

<i>Me-les-i</i>	<i>rou-e</i>	<i>nato</i>	<i>re</i>	<i>nuwa</i>
1sg.r-see-tr	all-tr	chicken	loc	water
‘I saw all the chickens in the water.’ [Atchin_elicited June 2023]				

Note: Capell & Layard (1980) recorded this morpheme as *rowe*

Eastern Malekula - Atchin

mi-an-i *jile-ni* *vajin* *ko* *mar-lek*
3SG.R-eat-TR COMPL-TR now LNK 3PL.R-sit/stay
'He finished eating, and then they sat'
[upv_JB4_ref.94]

3. event performed wholly, or to completion

➤ *jile(-ni)* completive aspect

me-jaja-ni *jile-ni* *ale* *me-vunj-i* *tepjen*
1SG.R-close weaving-TR COMPL-TR LNK 1SG.r-join (weaving) side
'I close off the weaving, then I join it to the other side.'
[upv_EN1_ref.15]

Functional summary

	Continuous Nominal Quantifier	Discontinuous Nominal Quantifier	Completive Aspect V-COMPL	Verb of Completion Clause-COMPL
Larëvet (Western)	<i>njel</i>	<i>njel</i>	<i>njel</i>	<i>njel</i>
Tepërav (Northern)	<i>(pol)pol</i>	<i>nenev, jëleng</i>	<i>nenev, jëleng</i>	<i>pol</i>
Atchin (Eastern)	<i>jile (rou)</i>	<i>rou(-e)</i>	<i>jile(-ni)</i>	<i>su</i>

Larëvet (Western)	<i>njel</i>
Tepërav (Northern)	<i>jëleng</i>
Atchin (Eastern)	<i>jile</i>

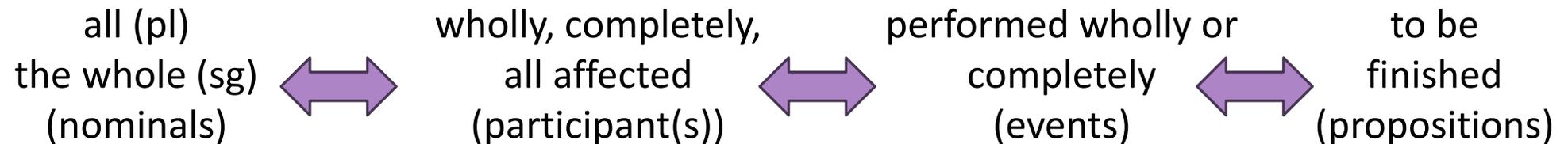
Tepërav (Northern)	<i>nenev</i>
Tirax (Western)	<i>nev</i> ‘to finish’ <i>nenev</i> ‘completive aspect’

A shared system

Isomorphism in the alignment of discontinuous quantifier association

- S/O Association

Isomorphism in the range and relationships of meanings



c.f. Alex François (2011) on structural and semantic isomorphism in Northern Vanuatu languages

Language-Specific Processes

Diverse forms maintaining structural and semantic isomorphism

➤ language internal spreading/ generalisation

e.g. *njel* in Larëvet spreads across full range of meanings

➤ language internal co-opting

e.g. *pol* ‘finish’ in Tepërav from verb to continuous quantifier

➤ language external co-opting

e.g. *nev* ‘finish’ from Tirax to Tepërav (*nenev* discontinuous quantifier)

➤ language internal innovation ?

e.g. *rou* in Atchin as discontinuous quantifier

What about Polynesia?

Language	Continuous Quantifier	Discontinuous Quantifier	Quantifier Source
Māori (Aotearoa)	<i>katoa</i>	<i>katoa</i>	PPN *katoa ‘all’
Māori (Cook Islands)	<i>kātoatoa</i>	N/A	
Tuvaluan	<i>katoa</i>	<i>katoa</i>	
Tongan	<i>kotoa</i>	<i>kotoa</i>	
Tikopian	<i>katoa</i>	(no data)	
Niuean	<i>oti</i>	<i>oti</i>	POc *qoti ‘finished, complete’ (verb) > <i>oti</i>
Pukapukan	<i>tā/katoa</i>	<i>tā/katoa</i>	PPN *katoa ‘all’
	<i>pau</i>	<i>pau</i>	PNPN*pau ‘finished, complete’ (verb)
Rapa Nui	<i>ta’ato’a</i>		PPN *katoa ‘all’
		<i>tahi</i>	PNPN *tasi ‘one, only’ (numeral/verb) > <i>tahi</i>
Samoan	<i>‘uma</i>	<i>‘uma</i>	Samoic-Outlier > Samoan <i>‘uma</i> ‘finished, complete’ (verb)
Wessels, Stowers & Barbour (2023 ms.)			

Diachronic sources of quantifiers

Limited study (Haspelmath 1995), acknowledged bias towards Indo-European

Main source

- whole [also sound, well, unbroken] > all

Our study

- verb of finishing, completion ↔ whole/all
- completive aspect ↔ whole/all

Explanations

- inheritance and maintenance of syntactic system and meanings
- localised changes to forms
- internal (localized innovation)
- externally (contact induced change)

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