

Plural marking as new substrate evidence in Lamaholot:

Data from Central Lembata

In this paper, I discuss Lamaholot, an Austronesian language in eastern Indonesia, focusing on its non-Austronesian ('Papuan') substrate. My data consists of a corpus of narratives collected during recent field research. Lamaholot is commonly seen as a dialect chain, and different varieties of it have been described (Nagaya 2011; Nishiyama & Kelen 2007; Keraf 1978). To the east, we find non-Austronesian languages belonging to the Timor-Alor-Pantar group. Lamaholot shows morpho-syntactic patterns that are atypical for Austronesian languages in general (cf. Himmelmann 2005), so the suggestion of a non-Austronesian substrate has been made (Klamer 2012:104). In the nominal domain, Lamaholot has diverging word order ('reversed genitive') as well as a formal distinction between alienably and inalienably possessed nouns, which has been previously diagnosed as Papuan substrate influence in Lamaholot (Klamer 2012:78;81–82). A rather more intriguing possible substrate influence in the nominal domain is the plural suffix *-a* illustrated in (1), and the existence of two functionally distinguished singular forms of frequent nouns, a consonant (C) final form, as *aor* 'dog.C' in (2), and a vowel (V) final form, as *au* 'dog.V' in (3).

- (1) Aoj-**a** jadi maluw-i.
dog-PL become hungry-3PL
The dogs got hungry.
- (2) **Aor** gike na.
dog.C bite 3SG
The dog bit him.
- (3) Pa kopong-u di sog-a-nga **au**.
then child-DEF also hold-3SG.OBJ dog.V
Then the child also holds the dog.

The presence of a plural marker like *-a* in (1) may be contact-induced as non-Austronesian languages in the area have plural number marking, Alor-Pantar languages have post-nominal plural words (Klamer, Schapper & Corbett 2014) and many non-Austronesian languages on Timor have plural suffixes or enclitics (Heston 2015:21; Huber 2011:236–237; Huber 2008:14). For the singular forms in (2) and (3) two observations can be made: (i) the C-final form appears on nouns in subject position, and (ii) the final consonant /r/, as in *aor* 'dog.C', does not seem to be inherited (PMP **asu* 'dog') and does not appear in related languages described. Therefore, I suggest that the final /r/ is a historic suffix. It may be innovated in this variety of Lamaholot. It remains unclear if this historic suffix equally points to a non-Austronesian substrate, as suggested for the plural number suffix in (1).

The substrate evidence presented in this paper implies that there must have been a stage where the Lamaholot speakers on Lembata were in contact with speakers of a non-Austronesian language that had morphological means to mark nominal plural. This new evidence for Lamaholot's non-Austronesian substrate presents a basis to reveal a language contact scenario that took place in the history of the Lamaholot speakers.

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