

Spatial orientation in Western Pantar (Lamma)

This paper describes spatial orientation in Western Pantar (also known as Lamma). Four different subsystems are involved: deictic pronouns, deictic adverbs, locational nouns, and directional verbs. The structural properties of these subsystems are fairly straightforward and reflect similarities with systems in neighboring Alor-Pantar languages, however, the semantics of the WP orientation systems are somewhat unique. These subsystems interact to orient referents with respect to: (i) a three-way distinction in elevation (up, down, same level); (ii) visibility; and (iii) identifiability. These three dimensions are most fully reflected in the deictic pronouns. For each, deictic level there is a contrast between visible (VIS), non-visible definite (DEF), and non-visible indefinite (INDF). Examples of this contrast for the same level terms are given below.

- (1) hai saiga tabba kalla odong hai **smaugu**
 boat this more small than boat LEVEL.VIS
 ‘this boat is smaller than that boat’
- (2) **smaume** ta pi-mia
 LEVEL.DEF before 1INC.PL-ascend
 ‘let’s ascend from that (precise) place over there’
- (3) gang mittlung si **maume** bukkus me
 3SG.AGT first this LEVEL.INDF room be.located
 ‘at first she stays in [her] room’

Example (1) is uttered while both speaker (S) and addressee (A) are in the presence of the referent (‘boat’). Example (2) is uttered while S and A are walking along the beach and S wishes to indicate the location at which he wants to turn into the forest to follow a trail inland. The trail is not yet visible but S knows well the location of the trail and assumes it sufficiently identifiable by A. Example (3) is uttered in a context where the referent (‘room’) is not identifiable and not where the precise location is not relevant to the narrative.

This paper begins with a summary of the structural properties of the WP orientation system. Following this the semantic properties of the system are described, with copious examples from field work currently in progress. Finally, the WP orientation system is compared to other systems in both the Alor-Pantar languages and the non-Austronesian languages of Halmahera. It is concluded that the WP systems contrasts markedly with the water-based systems in Halmahera. The latter oppose up-down the coast with toward-away from the water, resulting in two orthogonal axes. In contrast, the WP system is essentially one-dimensional.