

**Semantically non-canonical possessive marking  
and hierarchies of possession**

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**Abstract**<sup>\*</sup>

In Oceanic languages the relations that hold between a noun and the noun or NP expressing its possessor are encoded by a number of distinct head marking constructions in which the possessum noun is marked to index features of the possessor. Each possessor-indexing strategy has a semantically canonical function. However, each also occurs with a range of semantically non-canonical functions that appear superficially to be incompatible with their canonical function.

This paper investigates this phenomenon in 22 Oceanic languages. Its findings have implications for notions of inalienability and for distinct semantic types of alienable relations. The findings confirm crucial aspects of Nichols' (1988) inalienability hierarchy, but add several revisions to the hierarchy. They further demonstrate that inalienability is not necessarily a lexically category as assumed by Nichols but can be a relational property, but that Nichols' hierarchy is applicable to relational inalienability as well as lexically specified inalienability, thus strengthening its typological adequacy as a component of a theory of inalienability. In addition two further new implicational hierarchies are proposed capturing the relationship between various canonical and non-canonical alienable relations evident in the data. The findings also provide counter-evidence to previous analyses of this phenomenon, in particular previously proposed unitary notions of 'subordinate possession' and 'passive possession', and the paper proposes a new, narrower definition of passive possession emerging from the data.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 The significance of semantically non-canonical possessive marking in Oceanic**

In Oceanic languages the relations that hold between a noun and the noun or NP expressing its possessor are encoded by a number of distinct head marking constructions in which the possessum noun is marked to index features of the possessor. Each possessor-indexing strategy has a semantically canonical function. However, each also occurs with a range of semantically non-canonical functions that appear superficially to be incompatible with their canonical function.

This paper investigates this phenomenon in 22 Oceanic languages. Its findings have implications for notions of inalienability and for distinct semantic types of alienable relations. The findings confirm crucial aspects of Nichols' (1988) inalienability hierarchy, but add several revisions to the hierarchy. They further demonstrate that inalienability is not necessarily a lexically category as assumed by Nichols but can be a relational property, but that Nichols' hierarchy is applicable to relational inalienability as well as lexically specified inalienability, thus strengthening its typological adequacy as a component of a theory of inalienability. In addition two further new implicational hierarchies are proposed capturing the relationship between various canonical and non-canonical alienable relations evident in the data. The findings also provide counter-evidence to previous analyses of this phenomenon, in particular previously proposed unitary notions of 'subordinate possession' and 'passive possession', and the paper proposes a new, narrower definition of passive possession emerging from the data.

### **1.2 Possession in Oceanic**

With the exception of Polynesian languages, which have almost entirely lost the formal distinction, almost all Oceanic languages display two basic dedicated nominal possessor-indexing constructions. In one, referred to as the 'direct' construction in the Oceanist literature, a possessor-indexing suffix or enclitic attaches directly to the possessum noun or NP (as in (1)a.). In the other, the 'indirect' construction, a possessor-indexing suffix attaches to a set of one or more host particles separate from the possessum noun ((1)b.):

- (1) a. **ulu-gu<sup>i</sup>** (Standard Fijian)  
 head-1SG.PSSR<sup>ii</sup>  
 ‘my head’
- b. **no-gu**           βale  
 GEN-1SG.PSSR house  
 ‘my house’

The direct construction is prototypically associated with inalienable possessive relations, and the indirect with alienable relations. The precise syntactic status of the indirect host forms varies from language to language, and they have been called in the literature a ‘possessive marker’, ‘possessive base’, ‘relational noun’, ‘preposition’ or commonly, ‘possessive classifier’. There are reasons to not regard these as classifiers in most Oceanic languages, but as generic nouns.<sup>iii</sup> (Brown & Palmer 2007) However, for the purposes of the present discussion they will be referred to with the neutral term ‘possessor-indexing host’, as their syntactic status is not relevant to the issues at stake here.

The direct and indirect constructions, and the various indirect indexing hosts, are employed to encode semantic distinctions in the possessive relations that hold between possessor and possessum. Each has a semantically canonical function. However, each occurs across Oceanic with a number of apparently incompatible semantically non-canonical functions. The present paper investigates this phenomenon in 22 Oceanic languages representing every first-order subgroup and most major second-order subgroups and considers the findings’ wider implications.

### 1.3 Oceanic indirect possessor-indexing hosts

Oceanic languages vary in the number of indirect possessor-indexing hosts that occur. Some, such as Yapese and Kiribati have a single invariant indirect host employed regardless of the semantics of the possessive relation:

- (2) a. waay **roo-k'** tAmAg (Yapese)  
 basket POSS-3SG.PSSR Tamag  
 'Tamag's basket'
- b. ææ ggAAAn **roo-k'**  
 ART food POSS-3SG.PSSR  
 'its food'
- c. ææ raan **roo-k'**  
 ART water POSS-3SG.PSSR  
 'his water (to drink)'

However, most Oceanic languages have two or three such hosts. In languages with two hosts one host encodes possession of items that have been, are being, or will be eaten or drunk or consumed in some other way, such as smoked or consumed by fire, while the other host encodes a general residual default category of possessive relations that do not qualify for the CONSUMED host or the direct construction:

- (3) a. **no-na** suga bili (Kokota)  
 GEN-1SG.PSSR house Billy  
 'Billy's house'
- b. **ye-mai** tege  
 CONSM-1EXCPL.PSSR turtle  
 'our turtles (to eat)'
- c. **ye-gu** bia are  
 CONSM-1SG.PSSR beer DEM  
 'my beers (to drink)'



c. ani      **emo-n**  
 coconut DRINK-3SG.PSSR  
 ‘his/her coconut (to drink)’

d. ani      **ese-n**  
 coconut DOMESTICATED-3SG.PSSR  
 ‘his/her coconut (growing on his/her land)’

A minority of Oceanic languages have a large number of indirect possessor-indexing hosts that form true classifier systems. These are largely confined to the St Matthias, Micronesian and New Caledonian subgroups.

As the examples in (5) demonstrate, these hosts do not function as noun class markers. Nouns do not belong to classes corresponding to the available hosts. Instead, in most Oceanic languages most nouns may occur in a direct or indirect construction and with any indirect host, subject to restrictions of semantic compatibility not syntactic permissibility. (Seiler 1983:12) In many Oceanic languages, for example, a rock may be possessor-indexed using a FOOD host if it occurs in a legend in which it is eaten by an ogre, or directly if it is possessed by the mountain of which it is an integral part. In (6)a., for example, the leg is part of the possessor’s body. In (6)b. it is a leg, perhaps of a chicken, that the possessor will eat. In (6)c. the leg is intended for some other purpose by the possessor, such as the leg of a demolished table intended to be used as timber by the possessor:

(6) a. nene-**gu**      ine      (Kokota)  
 leg-1SG.PSSR DEM  
 ‘my leg (of my body)’

b. **ye-gu**      nene ine  
 CONSM-1SG.PSSR leg DEM  
 ‘my leg (to eat)’

- c. **no-gu**                    nene ine  
 GEN-1SG.PSSR leg    DEM  
 ‘my leg (for some other purpose)’

Oceanic possessor-indexing constructions, and the various indirect possessor-indexing hosts employed, therefore encode the semantics of the possessive relation that holds between the possessor and possessum, and not the semantics of the possessum noun itself. (Lichtenberk 1983a, 1985) Semantic distinctions expressed by the various possessive constructions in Oceanic are not lexical properties of nouns, but dynamic and manipulable properties of relations between nouns.

#### 1.4 Canonical and non-canonical semantic functions of possessor-indexing strategies

Each possessor-indexing strategy in Oceanic languages has a canonical semantic function. Direct possessor-indexing has the canonical semantic function of encoding canonical inalienable relations in which the possessum is an inalienable part of the possessor, such as some kin terms and most body parts.<sup>iv</sup> Indirect possessor-indexing using a FOOD host has the canonical semantic function of encoding alienable possessive relations where the possessum has been, is being, or will be eaten. Indirect possessor-indexing using a DRINK host has the canonical semantic function of encoding alienable possessive relations where the possessum has been, is being, or will be drunk.<sup>v</sup> Indirect possessor-indexing using a CONSUMED host has the canonical semantic function of encoding alienable possessive relations where the possessum has been, is being, or will be eaten or drunk. Indirect possessor-indexing using a GEN host has a semantic function of encoding a general default category of relations.

However, in a widespread phenomenon, each of these possessor-indexing strategies may occur with a non-canonical semantic function apparently incompatible with its canonical function. For example, in Standard Fijian the FOOD host occurs with instruments such as weapons when the possessor is the entity on whom the instrument will be used, rather than its owner (as in (7)a.); with cultural artefacts where the possessor is the subject matter of the artefact ((7)b.); and with certain characteristics of certain kinds of possessors ((7)c.):

- (7) a. **ke-na** malumu (Standard Fijian)  
 FOOD-3SG.PSSR club  
 ‘his club (he will be killed with)’
- b. **ke-na** Bosa  
 FOOD-3SG.PSSR speech  
 ‘his talk (about him)’
- c. **ke-na** leBu  
 FOOD-3SG.PSSR big  
 ‘his size’

The semantically non-canonical use of possessor-indexing strategies has been treated as a unitary type of possessive relation referred to as ‘subordinate possession’. (Pawley 1973:162-163; Lichtenberk 1985:106-107) The defining characteristic of subordinate possession is that “the possessor has no control (...he is the patient, target or involuntary experiencer)”. (Pawley 1973:162) Subordinate possession encompasses what may be regarded as four semantic subtypes, three of which are shown in (7): possession of an instrument used on the possessor, possession of a cultural artefact where the possessor is the subject matter, and possession of characteristics. Pawley (1973:163) also notes that subordinate possession may encompass a fourth type: possession of “intimate property” such as intimate garments, a position accepted by Lichtenberk (1985:107).

Subsequent work determined that possession of characteristics and intimate property is not necessarily treated in the same way as possession of instruments, leading to the proposal of a narrower category termed ‘passive possession’. (Lynch 1996, 2001) This encompasses possession of instruments used on or entities that act on the possessor and possession by the subject matter of cultural artefacts, but excludes possession of characteristics and intimate property. (Lynch 2001:205-208)

Lynch (2001:195) defines passive possession as: possession by the logical object of a nominalised verb (eg. ‘my being hit’); and possession of nouns referring to things done to or about the possessor (eg. ‘my wound (I received)’),



This hypothesis splits one of Lynch's definitional types of passive possession, separating the possession of nouns referring to things done to the possessor from the possession of nouns referring to things about the possessor. On the basis of that hypothesis, the following narrower definition of passive possession is now proposed here:

- (10) *Passive possession is the distinctive formal treatment of possessum-possessor relations in which: a) the possessum acts on, is used on, or directly affects the possessor; or b) the possessor has no control over the possessum.*

In this definition relations where the possessor is the subject matter of the possessum do not represent passive possession but a separate semantic relation.

The present paper tests Palmer's (2007) hypothesis and the definition of passive possession proposed here in (10) against the empirical facts of semantically non-canonical possessor-indexing in 22 Oceanic languages. Possessor-indexing in each language is investigated for four non-canonical types of semantic relation between possessor and possessum: a) passive possession as defined here; b) possession of intimate property; c) possession of characteristics; and d) possession by subject matter.

Palmer (2007) briefly surveyed the possessor-indexing of nominalised verbs in a representative sample of 7 Oceanic languages. His findings suggest that nominalised verbs are possessor-indexed following a different pattern to that of underived verbs, typically directly possessor-indexing the absolutive argument or the intransitive subject only.

Subsequent investigations suggest that in some languages that situation pertains, while in others nominalisations are treated in the same way as underived nouns. However, the apparent complexity of the facts of the possession of nominalisations in the languages investigated in the present paper, coupled with the lack of significant data on or discussion of the possession of nominalisations in descriptions of the languages investigated, and the difficulty for many of the languages in determining whether certain possessed roots are verbs zero derived as nouns or precatagorical roots that function as verbs or nouns depending on the semantic frame in which they occur, mean that considerable further work is needed on that aspect of the phenomenon. For that reason, only underived nouns are included in the discussion here.

The languages investigated here, with their first-order, and where significant, their second-order subgroup affiliation, along with data sources used, are:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (11) Yapese (isolate) <sup>vi</sup>                        | Anon, 1978a, 1978b, 1999; Ballantyne et al 2002; Jensen 1977a, 1977b; Yifthege 1978 |
| Loniu (Admiralties)  | Hamel 1994  |
| Mussau (St Matthias)                                       | Brownie p.c.; Ross 2002   |
| Manam (Western Oceanic, North New Guinea)                  | Lichtenberk 1983a, 1983b, 1985; Turner 1986, 1992                                   |
| Mangap-Mbula (Western Oceanic, North New Guinea)           | Bugenhagen 1995   |
| Keapara (Aroma dialect) (Western Oceanic, Papuan Tip)      | Craig 1980, p.c.  |
| Gapapaiwa (Western Oceanic, Papuan Tip)                    | Blust 2003-2005; McGuckin 1992, 2002  |
| Motu (Western Oceanic, Papuan Tip)                         | Lawes 1896; Lister-Turner & Clark, n.d.a, n.d.b., Taylor 1970                       |
| Kiriwina (Kilivila dialect) (Western Oceanic, Papuan Tip)  | Senft 1986  |
| Kuanua (aka Tolai) (Western Oceanic, Meso-Melanesian)      | Mosel 1984; Rinderknecht, 1987  |
| Kokota (Western Oceanic, Meso-Melanesian)                  | Palmer n.d., 1999, 2002, f.c.   |
| Gela (Southeast Solmonic)                                  | Codrington 1885; Crowley 2002; Fox 1941, 1955; Ivens 1937; Miller 1974              |
| Arosi (Southeast Solmonic)                                 | Capell 1971; Fox 1978   |
| Paamese (Southern Oceanic, North-Central Vanuatu)          | Crowley 1982, 1996  |
| Lewo (Southern Oceanic, North-Central Vanuatu)             | Early 1994; Lynch 2001  |
| Iaai (Southern Oceanic, New Caledonian)                    | Ozanne-Rivierre 1976, 1984; Tryon 1968  |
| Ponapean (Micronesian)                                     | Rehg 1981; Regh & Sohl 1979   |
| Puluwat (Micronesian)                                      | Elbert 1971, 1972, 1974   |
| Kiribati (Micronesian)                                     | Cowell 1951; Groves et al 1985; Jacobs 1984; Lynch 2001; Sabatier 1971              |
| Eastern Fijian (Standard Fijian dialect) (Central Pacific) | Geraghty 1983, p.c.; Lichtenberk 1985; Lynch 1973; Pawley 1973; Schütz 1985         |
| Eastern Fijian (Lauan dialect) (Central Pacific)           | Geraghty 1983, p.c.; Lynch 2001   |
| Western Fijian (Nadrogā dialect) (Central Pacific)         | Geraghty 1983, 2000, 2002, p.c.   |

## **2. Semantically non-canonical possessive relations by possessor-indexing strategy**

Each semantically non-canonical possession type is now examined by possessor-indexing strategy across the 22 languages investigated.

### **2.1. Passive possession**

Thirteen of the languages investigated treat distinctively the possession of some nouns referring to items that conform to the definition of passive possession in (10), with possible distinctive treatment in one further language. In 10 of the 22 languages, such items are possessor-indexed using a FOOD or CONSUMED host. In one a ‘semi-consumable’ host is used, in one a dedicated classifier, and in one a special indirect PART host. In two further languages possible direct indexing occurs. In the remaining languages relations conforming to the definition are not treated distinctively, in the sense that the relation is marked using the default host, and therefore ‘unmarked’.

Unmarked here indicates that although the possessive relation itself is marked and the possessor indexed, items in a passive possessive relation are not marked in a different way to ordinary alienable belongings, so a passive possessive relation is not distinctively marked.

#### **2.1.1 Passive possession with FOOD or CONSUMED host**

In 10 languages investigated passive possession as defined in (10) is marked using a FOOD or CONSUMED host.

This occurs with a range of semantic subtypes of relations in which the possessor is acted upon or affected, or is in a non-controlling relation with the possessum.

##### **2.1.1.1 Instruments used on the possessor**

A FOOD/CONSUMED host occurs with relations where the possessum is a weapon or some other instrument, physical or otherwise, that does not (necessarily) belong to the possessors in terms of actual ownership, but which is used to kill, strike, or act on him/her/it in some similar way. This contrasts with such items when they are belongings owned by the possessor.



e. siiho **aa-m**  
 mask FOOD-2SG.PSSR  
 ‘your mask (I will frighten you with)’

- (14) a. ...**ra-na** ram  
 CONSM-3SG.PSSR club  
 ‘its [the pig’s] club (they hit it with)’
- b. **ka-dia** rumu (Kuanua)  
 GEN-3PL.PSSR spear  
 ‘their spears (they own)’
- c. ...**ra-na** kankan  
 CONSM-3SG.PSSR anger  
 ‘his anger’ (ie. ‘[their] anger towards him’)
- d. **kau-gu** varmari  
 GEN-1SG.PSSR love  
 ‘my love [towards you]’

In (14)c. the possessor of the anger is the person to whom the anger is directed, not the individuals experiencing the anger.

### 2.1.1.2 Potentially dangerous personal relationships

Possessive relationships with individuals where the possessum or the relationship itself is potentially dangerous to the possessor may be encoded using a FOOD/CONSUMABLE host. This occurs commonly with terms meaning ‘enemy’, but may also occur with other “unfortunate” (Bugenhagen 1995:102) personal relationships. This contrasts with other personal relationships, which are possessor-indexed using the direct construction of the default host depending on the nature of the relationship:

- (15) a. **ko-ŋ** koi bizin  
 CONSM-1SG.PSSR enemy PL  
 ‘my enemies’
- b. **toro-ŋ** (Mangap-Mbula)  
 close.associate-1SG.PSSR  
 ‘my close associate’

- c. **ka**                      moori                      d. kusi-**ni**  
 CONSM.3SG.PSSR woman                      spouse-3SG.PSSR  
 ‘his mistress’                      ‘his wife’

### 2.1.1.3 Possessums making possessor ‘who they are’

Relations with entities whose actions or existence brought about the existence or nature of the possessor may be marked with a FOOD/CONSUMED host, such as ancestral spirits, or histories of how the possessor or possessor’s community came into being:

- (16) a. na    **⊗a-gua**                      na    tutugu    b. na    tutugu-**gu**                      (Gela)  
 ART CONSM-1SG.PSSR ART story                      ART story-1SG.PSSR  
 ‘my traditional story (about how we                      ‘my story (about me)’  
 got to be where we are today)’
- c. na    **⊗a-gua**                      na    tidalo  
 ART CONSM-1SG.PSSR ART ancestral.spirit  
 ‘my ancestral spirit’

### 2.1.1.4 Other possessums negatively affecting possessor

Relations with a range of other participants that bring about a negative affect on the possessor may be encoded using a FOOD/CONSUMED host, including unpleasant emotional and physical states, and aspects of events that are unpleasant:

- (17)    **ko-ŋ**                      mianj                      (Mangap-Mbula)  
 CONSM-1SG.PSSR shame  
 ‘my shame’

(18) a.  $\text{\textcircled{a}}$ -dira na vahagi (Gela)

CONSM-3PL.PSSR ART sickness

‘their sicknesses’

b. na  $\text{\textcircled{a}}$ -dira na mate

ART CONSM-3PL.PSSR ART death

‘their deaths’

(19) ipu aa-m (Paamese)

loss FOOD-2SG.PSSR

‘your loss or disadvantage (in playing a game)’

#### 2.1.1.5 Relationships beyond control of the possessor

In addition to relations with possessums that act on, are used on, or affect the possessor, the definition of passive possession in (10) includes possessums that are beyond the control of the possessor. In some instances human possessors may be treated as in a non-controlling relationship where the relation exists as a result of some external factor over which the possessor has no control, such as their place in a kinship system:

(20) ahol aa-m (Paamese)

intended.spouse FOOD-2SG.PSSR

‘your intended spouse (reserved for you at birth because of your place in the kinship system)’

(21) na  $\text{\textcircled{a}}$ -na kema (Gela)

ART CONSM-3PL.PSSR clan

‘his clan’

In most instances, however, human possessors are assumed to be in controlling relationship with alienable possessions. The same is not true of inanimate or non-human possessors, which are typically not regarded as being in

control of a possessum. In (22)a. the chickens, while animate, are not treated as in a controlling relationship with their house, while in (22)c. and (23) the village and the bulldozer are not treated as in a controlling relationship with their inhabitants or operators, by virtue of their inanimacy. Human possessors, however, are normally treated as potentially controlling their ordinary possessums and these relations are marked using the default host, as in (23)b.:

- (22) a. man **ko-n** ruumu b. **le-ŋ** ruumu (Mangap-Mbula)  
 bird CONSM-3PL.PSSR house GEN-1SG.PSSR house  
 ‘a house for the chickens’ ‘my house’

- c. zin moori kar **ka-n**  
 they woman village CONSM-3PL.PSSR  
 ‘the women of the village’

- (23) **ka-na** yaru (Lewo)  
 FOOD-3SG.PSSR man  
 ‘its (the bulldozer’s) operator, driver, expert user’

The FOOD/CONSUMED marking of relations with inanimate possessors may be extended to alienable parts of inanimate wholes. Possessums in a part-whole relation with their possessor are typically treated as inalienable and directly possessor-indexed, as in (24)b. However, a FOOD/CONSUMED host may occur with “[p]arts of complex manufactured items like canoes and houses, which had existence prior to their incorporation in the manufactured item”. (Bugenhagen 1995:100-101) This also raises the possibility that such components are seen as ‘consumed’ by the larger structure into which they are incorporated.

- (24) a. ruumu **ka** kitiibi b. ke zoŋo-**ono** (Mangap-Mbula)  
 house CONSM.3SG.PSSR post tree fork-3SG.PSSR  
 ‘house posts’ ‘fork of a tree’

- c. woogo **ka** saama

canoe CONSM.3SG.PSSR outrigger

‘outrigger of a canoe’

- (25) a. **ka-na** wi FOOD-3SG.PSSR water  
‘its (the battery’s) water’
- b. **mŌa-na** wi (Lewo) DRINK-3SG.PSSR water  
‘his/her (drinking) water’

- c. **ka-na** kausu FOOD-3SG.PSSR washer  
‘its (the tap’s) washer’

- d. **ka-na** wil FOOD-3SG.PSSR wheel  
‘its (the truck’s) wheel’

### 2.1.2 Passive possession with a ‘semi-consumable’ host

In addition to a CONSUMED host, one language investigated, the Kilivila dialect of Kiriwina, has a unique ‘semi-consumable’ host. This is used with items such as food plants when they are growing in a garden (as opposed to when they are eaten), garden land and other items associated with the production of food, and items that are consumed in an unusual way, such as tobacco which is smoked rather than eaten or drunk:

- (26) a. **a-gu** tetu SEMICONSM-1SG.PSSR yam  
‘my yams (plants in garden)’
- b. **ka-gu** tetu (Kilivila) CONSM-1SG.PSSR yam  
‘my yams (to eat)’

- c. **a-gu** k<sup>w</sup>abila  
 SEMICONSM-1SG.PSSR large.garden.plot  
 ‘my large garden plot’
- d. **a-gu** tobaki      e. **ula** tobaki  
 SEMICONSM-1SG.PSSR tobacco      GEN.1SG.PSSR tobacco  
 ‘my tobacco (I intend to smoke)’      ‘my tobacco (I will give away)’

This host also occurs with a range of semantically non-canonical relations. These include physical and psychological states that affect the possessor negatively, similar to those in (17) and (18):

- (27) a. **a-gu** daka      b. **daka-la** (Kilivila)  
 SEMICONSM-1SG.PSSR dryness      dryness-3SG.PSSR  
 ‘my thirst’      ‘it’s dryness’
- c. **e-geda** [a-la leya]  
 3SGS-bite SEMICONSM-3SG.PSSR anger  
 ‘He is very angry.’ (lit. ‘His anger bites him.’)

It also occurs with the possession of inheritance and other uncontrolled relations with human possessors, similar to those in (20) and (21):

- (28) a. **a-gu** k<sup>w</sup>abu (Kilivila)  
 SEMICONSM-1SG.PSSR heritage  
 ‘my inheritance, my heritage’
- b. **a-gu** kumila  
 SEMICONSM-1SG.PSSR clan  
 ‘my clan’

### 2.1.3 Passive possession with dedicated classifier

One language investigated, Iaaï, has a large number of indirect possessor-indexing hosts forming what is probably a true classifier system. One of these classifiers encodes the relation between a possessum instrument and the possessor event the instrument is used to effect. This is an uncontrolled relation where the possessor event cannot be thought of as controlling the instrument that effects it. In (29)a., for example, the spear is passively possessed by the fighting in which it is used, while in (29)b. it is possessed using a shape-specific classifier host when it is in the ownership of the possessor:<sup>vii</sup>

- (29) a.  $\leftrightarrow\leftrightarrow$  **nɔɔɔ-n** ykyc                      b. **dɔɔ-n**  $\leftrightarrow\leftrightarrow$  (Iaaï)  
 spear PASS-3SG.PSSR fight                      POINT-3SG.PSSR spear  
 ‘spear for fighting’                                      ‘his spear (that he owns)’
- c. y/i **nɔɔɔ-n** wia kɔnɔ  
 thing PASS-3SG.PSSR turn.over ground  
 ‘plough’ (lit. ‘thing for turning over ground’)
- d. ke xum $\leftrightarrow$ ɲ **nɔɔɔ-n** he ka yhyne  
 ART song PASS-3SG.PSSR go PURP farewell(v)  
 ‘a song to finish’

The classifier *nɔɔɔ*- has the function of distinctively marking passive possession. However, this does not represent non-canonical marking, as the classifier has precisely the canonical function of marking passive possession. In Iaaï, therefore, passive possession is distinctively marked, but it is not semantically non-canonical.





possessive relation in some other Oceanic languages are directly possessor-indexed in Kiribati. Nonetheless, few are unequivocal examples of the direct marking of passive possession. In (34) *aia* ‘enemy’ is directly indexed, but so is *rao* ‘friend’:

- |      |    |                |  |    |                 |  |            |
|------|----|----------------|--|----|-----------------|--|------------|
| (34) | a. | <b>aia-m</b>   |  | b. | <b>rao-m</b>    |  | (Kiribati) |
|      |    | enemy-2SG.PSSR |  |    | friend-2SG.PSSR |  |            |
|      |    | ‘your enemy’   |  |    | ‘your friend’   |  |            |

Both, along with several other close personal relationships, are treated in the same way as kin terms. This is common in Oceanic, including in languages with no distinctive marking of passive possession, and corresponds to Seiler’s (1983:13) semantic grouping of “social relationships” treated as inalienable.

Another noun, *mani* ‘animal’ could be interpreted as directly possessed when it acts on or affects the possessor:

- |      |    |                  |  |    |                           |            |            |
|------|----|------------------|--|----|---------------------------|------------|------------|
| (35) | a. | <b>mani-m</b>    |  | b. | <b>a-m</b>                | <b>man</b> | (Kiribati) |
|      |    | animal-2SG.PSSR  |  |    | POSS-2SG.PSSR             | animal     |            |
|      |    | ‘your parasites’ |  |    | ‘your animals, your pets’ |            |            |

However, as with the Kuanua ulcer in (32), the ‘animals’ in (35)a. could be interpreted as a part of the possessor’s body, placing them in a part-whole relation parallel to that in (36).

- |      |                             |            |             |            |
|------|-----------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| (36) | <b>mani-n</b>               | <b>apa</b> | <b>tera</b> | (Kiribati) |
|      | animal-3SG.PSSR             | land       | what        |            |
|      | ‘specimen of what country?’ |            |             |            |

However, one clearer instance of direct passive possessor-indexing in Kiribati occurs with *kai*, a semantically nebulous noun translated by Sabatier (1971:138) as ‘defeat, victory, punishment, vengeance, revenge, chastisement’. The data suggests that the form expresses a relationship in which one participant prevails over another in some way.





Table 1: Passive possessive marking strategies and attested possessum types.

	indexing strategy	attested non-canonical inclusions
Yapese	unmarked	
Loniu	unmarked	
Mussau	FOOD	instruments used on possessor
Manam	unmarked	
Mangap-Mbula	CONSUMED	'unfortunate' personal relationships, shame, alienable items with nonhuman possessors, parts of manufactured items
Aroma	unmarked	
Gapapaiwa	CONSUMED	sickness
Motu	CONSUMED	enemies, generation
Kilivila	'semi-consumable'	physical and emotional states (typically negative), clans and heritage
Kuanua	CONSUMED/ ?direct	instruments used on possessor, negative emotions directed at possessor / firewood warming possessor, parcel possessor wrapped in
Kokota	unmarked	
Gela	CONSUMED	enemies, danger, sickness, death, ancestral spirits and legends, clans, individuals in uncontrolled relationship with possessor
Arosi	CONSUMED	instruments used on possessor
Paamese	FOOD	instruments used on possessor, defeat, spouse assigned to possessor
Lewo	FOOD	individuals in uncontrolled relationship with possessor, alienable items with nonhuman possessors, parts of manufactured artefacts
Iaai	dedicated classifier	Instruments and agents effecting possessor predicate
Kiribati	?direct	defeat suffered by possessor
Ponapean	unmarked	
Puluwat	unmarked	
Standard Fijian	FOOD	enemies, instruments used on possessor, alienable items with inanimate possessors, parts of manufactured items
Lauan	unmarked	
Nadrogā	PART	instruments used on possessor, sickness

## 2.2.1 Intimate possession with direct possessor-indexing

### 2.2.1.1 Possession of items in close physical contact with possessor's body

Intimate property the possession of which is treated distinctively includes items that are in immediate physical contact with the possessor's body. This includes garments, in some languages confined to traditional garments. In some languages garments are distinctively treated as intimate property in most contexts. In other languages it is confined to garments when worn, in contrast with the same garments possessor-indexed using the default indirect host when not worn:

- |         |                              |    |                                  |              |         |
|---------|------------------------------|----|----------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| (40) a. | baligo- <b>gu</b>            | b. | baligo                           | <b>ne-gu</b> | (Manam) |
|         | grass.skirt-1SG.PSSR         |    | grass.skirt                      | GEN-1SG.PSSR |         |
|         | ‘my grass skirt (when worn)’ |    | ‘my grass skirt (when not worn)’ |              |         |

In Paamese direct possessor-indexing of apparent intimate items is confined to a single lexical item, surely as intimate a garment as it is possible to imagine, although Crowley (1996:412-413) speculates on a possible formal explanation for this sole instance of direct marking of an intimate item in that language:

- |      |                       |           |
|------|-----------------------|-----------|
| (41) | tinivuse- <b>n</b>    | (Paamese) |
|      | penis.sheath-3SG.PSSR |           |
|      | ‘his penis sheath’    |           |

In many of the languages, other items in close physical contact with the possessor's body may also be directly possessor-indexed, such as items of bedding and other items to hold the possessors body:

- |      |                                 |         |
|------|---------------------------------|---------|
| (42) | beŋa- <b>mu</b>                 | (Arosi) |
|      | bed-2SG.PSSR                    |         |
|      | ‘your bed, your sleeping place’ |         |

- (43) a. a kuba-na (Kuanua)  
 ART sleeping.place-3SG.PSSR  
 ‘his sleeping mat’
- b. a rakiraki-m  
 ART catafalque-2SG.PSSR  
 ‘your catafalque (platform for corpse)’

Other items may be directly possessor-indexed when in close contact with the possessor’s body, but marked using an appropriate indirect host when in a different relationship with the possessor. In Puluwat, for example, water is possessed using the DRINK host when drunk, but directly indexed when it is bathwater. Similarly, a box is possessor-indexed using the default host when it is an ordinary belonging, but directly marked when it is a coffin:

- (44) a. pΩ□ro-y b. yææ-y pΩ□□r (Puluwat)  
 box-1SG.PSSR GEN-1SG.PSSR box  
 ‘my coffin’ ‘my box’
- c. rani-y d. w)n)mæ-y raan  
 water-1SG.PSSR DRINK-1SG.PSSR water  
 ‘my bath water’ ‘my drinking water’

### 2.2.1.2 Possession of items an integral part of the possessor’s daily domestic life

More in accord with Nichol’s “culturally basic items” are items that play a central role in the possessor’s daily domestic life. In some languages a very small number of nouns referring to items integral to the possessor’s daily life occur with direct possessor-indexing, typically terms for home or personal possessions in general:

- (45) ʃ\*aabaa-n (Iaai)  
 home-3SG.PSSR  
 ‘his/her residence’
- (46) fea-n (Yapese)  
 possessions-3SG.PSSR  
 ‘his possessions, his belongings, his personal property’

In others a wider variety of personal goods are treated in this way. In Loniū, for example, direct possessor-indexing occurs with a range of items including land, houses and various man-made objects. These can be directly or indirectly possessed, depending on the “mutability of the relationship between possessor and possessed”. (Hamel 1994:48) “One can... buy and sell houses, and so forth... [but] family holdings... are long term... [P]ossessions [such] as land, houses, tools and canoes... seldom leave the family.” The less ‘mutable’ relationships are expressed with direct possessor-indexing:

- (47) a. umwE-w b. um a yo<sup>x</sup> (Loniū)  
 house-1SG.PSSR house LOC I  
 ‘my house’ (family holding) ‘my house’ (residence)
- c. k□h□na u d. k□ a u  
 land weDLEXC land LOC weDLEXC  
 ‘our land holding’ ‘our land’
- e. tɛɛ-m f. tun a suʔu  
 canoe-2SG.PSSR canoe LOC they  
 ‘your canoe’ ‘their canoe’

- g. tapwa-**m**  
basket-2SG.PSSR  
'your basket'
- h. t□p a w□w  
basket LOC youSG  
'your basket'

### 2.2.2 Intimate possession with CONSUMED host

A similar range of items may be possessor-indexed using a CONSUMED host in some languages:

- (48) a. **ka-na** gara  
CONSM-1SG.PSSR clothing  
'her clothing (to wear)'
- b. **i-na** gara (Gapapaiwa)  
GEN-1SG.PSSR clothing  
'her clothing (to sell at the market)'
- (49) a. o ra mal **a-i** ra tutana  
DEM ART dress CONSM-PSSR ART man  
'the man's dress (he is wearing)'
- b. **ka-n** ta mal (Kuanua)  
GEN-3SG.PSSR some dress  
'any dress of his (he owns)'

### 2.2.3 Intimate possession with DRINK host

The only semantically non-canonical use of a DRINK host occurs with intimate possession in two languages investigated, both belonging to the North-Central Vanuatu subgroup within Southern Oceanic. A similar range of items to those marked with direct possessor-indexing or a CONSUMED host occur in the data:

- (50) a. aim **ma-k**  
house DRINK-1SG.PSSR  
'my house'
- b. aim **ona-k** (Paamese)  
house GEN-1SG.PSSR  
'my house'
- c. aisin **ma-k**  
clothing DRINK-1SG.PSSR  
'my clothes'



d. **taŋ-en**                      **taŋ**  
 CONTAINER-3SG.PSSR basket  
 ‘his/her basket’

e. **hoo-n**                      **hu**  
 BOAT-3SG.PSSR boat  
 ‘his/her boat’

As with the use of the dedicated passive possessive classifier in (29), the use of classifiers such as those in (52) does not represent non-canonical marking, as in each instance the classifier is occurs with its canonical function.

However, unlike the distinctive marking of passive possession in (29), examples like those in (52) do not represent distinctive marking of intimate possession. Instead, each classifier is used with its own set of shape or functionally specified items, regardless of whether the item is in close contact with the possessor’s body or a feature of the possessor’s daily life. The HOUSE classifier in (52)a., for example, is used with houses that are the daily residence or family holding of the possessor, or houses that are simply stayed in temporarily or owned but not lived in by the possessor. The classifiers therefore encode function or shape, without reference to the notion of intimate property. Intimate possession is therefore not distinctively marked in Iaaí, beyond the directly indexed example in (45). The same is true of Ponapean and Puluwatese, with similar classifier systems: relations with a small number of items of intimate property are directly possessor-indexed, while other items treated distinctively as intimate property in some other languages are marked with dedicated function or shape classifiers.

In four other languages investigated, no items of intimate property are distinctively possessor-indexed. In these languages, items corresponding to those distinctively marked in (40)-(52) are possessor-indexed using the default host in the same way as any other alienable belonging:

(53) a. **na no-gu**                      **malo**    (Standard Fijian)  
 ART GEN-1SG.PSSR loincloth  
 ‘my loincloth (worn or not)’

b. na **no**-gu            ituutuBi<sup>xi</sup>  
 ART GEN-1SG.PSSR blanket  
 ‘my blanket’

c. na **no**-na            Bale  
 ART GEN-3SG.PSSR house  
 ‘his house’

### 2.2.5 Intimate possession summary

A full listing of attested distinctively marked items of intimate property is presented, with marking strategy employed, in table 2.

## 2.3. Possession of characteristics

In all but two of the languages investigated the possession of characteristics is treated distinctively using semantically non-canonical possessor-indexing.

### 2.3.1 Possession of characteristics with direct possessor-indexing

#### 2.3.1.1 Possession of physical and psychological characteristics

In most of the languages investigated, the possession of inherent physical characteristics is distinctively marked, typically using direct possessor-indexing. This includes aspects of physical appearance, as well as characteristics such as dimension, strength or physical power, and characteristics perceived non-visually such as aroma and sound.

Table 2: Possessor-indexing strategies with intimate property and items attested.

	indexing strategy	attested non-canonical inclusions
Yapese	direct	'personal possession'; dwelling places
Loniu	direct	land; dwelling places; canoe; personal goods
Mussau	direct	dwelling places; canoe; tree; personal goods
Manam	direct	traditional garments when worn
Mangap-Mbula	unmarked	
Aroma	direct	dwelling places; place; some personal possessions
Gapapaiwa	CONSUMED	garments when worn
Motu	direct	traditional garments when worn
Kilivila	direct	traditional garments when worn; bedding; 'personal possession'
Kuanua	CONSUMED/ direct	garments when worn/ bedding; sleeping places; catafalque
Kokota	direct	bedding
Gela	direct/ CONSUMED	bedding; dwelling places; village/ traditional items of personal adornment
Arosi	direct	bedding
Paamese	DRINK/ direct	clothing; bedding; dwelling places; house parts/ penis sheath
Lewo	DRINK	most garments; bedding; dwelling places; some house parts
Iaai	direct	homes
Kiribati	direct	garments; bedding; dwelling places; land; canoe; personal adornment
Ponapean	direct	dwelling place; seat; land
Puluwat	direct	coffin; bathwater; sandals; some buildings; land
Standard Fijian	unmarked	
Lauan	unmarked	
Nadrogā	unmarked	

- (54) na volapa-**na** na tiola (Gela)  
 ART width-3SG.PSSR ART canoe  
 ‘the width of the canoe’
- (55) bura-**ana** (Mangap-Mbula)  
 strength-3SG.PSSR  
 ‘his/her strength/power’
- (56) neme-**Ø** (Ponapean)  
 flavour-3SG.PSSR  
 ‘its taste’

Psychological characteristics may also be directly possessor-indexed, typically inherent or permanent characteristics in contrast with transient characteristics possessor-indexed using the default host:

- (57) a. vamayi-**ku** b. **ye-ku** vamayi (Aroma)  
 thought-1SG.PSSR GEN-3SG.PSSR thought  
 ‘my permanently held principles and opinions’ ‘my passing thoughts’
- (58) ErEnEʔi-**m** muwan (Loniū)  
 attitude-2SG.PSSR bad  
 ‘your bad attitude’
- (59) aonega-**na** (Motu)  
 wisdom-3SG.PSSR  
 ‘his wisdom’



### 2.3.2 Possession of characteristics using a FOOD host

In two languages surveyed distinctively marked possession of characteristics employs a FOOD host, while in three others some characteristics are directly possessor-indexed and others are marked with a FOOD host. In two of these five languages direct marking appears to be confined to the possession of age:

- (65)     **ane-m**                 ninamanama   (Mussau)  
           FOOD-2SG.PSSR year  
           ‘your age’

In Paamese, characteristics which are ‘particularising’, in the sense that they distinguish the possessor from other entities or individuals, are possessor-indexed using the FOOD host. This includes items that are unique to the possessor. (Crowley 1982:217)

- (66)     haiali     **aa-n**                 uiit   (Paamese)  
           sucker   FOOD-3SG.PSSR   octopus  
           ‘an octopus’ suckers (no other thing having such suckers)’

It also includes “sores and other temporary bodily afflictions” (Crowley 1982:217), such as sores, boils, lice, disease, ringworm, warts, scabies, cold sores and so on, where “the affliction or bodily exusion is particularly noticeable, or that it is something which is characteristic of a particular individual.” (Crowley 1996:396) This may overlap with the use of the FOOD host to mark passive possession in Paamese (see §2.1.1)

- (67) a.   manu   **aa-n**   b.   manu   **ona-n**   (Paamese)  
           sore    FOOD-3SG.PSSR   sore    GEN-3SG.PSSR  
           ‘his/her (unusually large or numerous) sores’     ‘his/her (ordinary unremarkable) sore’

- |    |     |              |       |               |   |
|----|-----|--------------|-------|---------------|---|
| c. | out | <b>aa-n</b>  | louse | FOOD-3SG.PSSR | ‘his/her (characteristic) lice’         |
| d. | out | <b>ona-n</b> | louse | GEN-3SG.PSSR  | ‘his/her lice (living in his/her hair)’ |

In Standard Fijian uncontrollable characteristics are possessor-indexed using the FOOD host. This includes characteristics that are uncontrolled because the possessor is inanimate, in contrast with the same characteristics indexed with the default host when the possessor is human and may be thought of as potentially in control of the characteristic:

- |                   |              |          |               |            |                      |
|-------------------|--------------|----------|---------------|------------|----------------------|
| (68) a.           | <b>ke-na</b> | yaŋa     | FOOD-3SG.PSSR | usefulness | ‘its usefulness’     |
| b.                | <b>no-na</b> | yaŋa     | GEN-3SG.PSSR  | usefulness | ‘his/her usefulness’ |
| (Standard Fijian) |              |          |               |            |                      |
| c.                | <b>ke-na</b> | kaukauwa | FOOD-3SG.PSSR | strength   | ‘its strength’       |
| d.                | <b>no-na</b> | kaukauwa | GEN-3SG.PSSR  | strength   | ‘his/her strength’   |

It also includes characteristics that are uncontrollable because they are innate, regardless of the animacy of the possessor:

- |      |              |      |               |     |             |                   |
|------|--------------|------|---------------|-----|-------------|-------------------|
| (69) | <b>ke-mu</b> | levu | FOOD-2SG.PSSR | big | ‘your size’ | (Standard Fijian) |
|------|--------------|------|---------------|-----|-------------|-------------------|

### 2.3.3 Possession of characteristics using the PART host

In Nadrogā the PART host is used to possessor-index uncontrolled characteristics:

- (70) a. **gu**                      yabaki                                      (Nadrogā)  
           PART.1SG.PSSR age  
           ‘my age’
- b. **mu**                      levu  
           PART.2SG.PSSR big  
           ‘your size’

#### 2.3.4 Possession of characteristics not distinctively marked

In Iaaï the possession of some characteristics involves direct possessor-indexing, while two attested items are possessor-indexed using semantically appropriate possessor-indexing host classifiers. As with the possession of intimate property, this not represent non-canonical marking, as in each instance the classifier occurs with its canonical function. This also does not represent distinctive marking of characteristics, as items marked in this way need not be characteristic of the possessor but may be in a relation with the possessor on a transient, momentary or ad hoc basis:

- (71) a. **mani-k**                      man                                      (Iaaï)  
           STRENGTH-1SG.PSSR strength  
           ‘my strength’
- b. **w8a-n**                      ho-fuuc  
           SOUND-3SG.PSSR oral-speak  
           ‘his/her speech’

In two of the languages investigated characteristics are possessor-indexed using the default host. No distinctive marking of the possession of characteristic therefore occurs in these languages:



Table 3: Possessor-indexing strategies with characteristics and items attested.

	indexing strategy	attested non-canonical inclusions
Yapese	direct	age; physical characteristics; smell; sound; customary ways & behaviour
Loniu	direct	psychological characteristics; flavour
Mussau	FOOD	age
Manam	direct	physical & psychological characteristics; smell
Mangap-Mbula	direct/ FOOD	physical characteristics; responsibilities; sound; luck/ age
Aroma	direct	age; physical & psychological characteristics; customary ways & behaviour
Gapapaiwa	FOOD	physical characteristics; responsibilities; customary ways & behaviour
Motu	direct	physical & psychological characteristics
Kilivila	direct	physical characteristics; customary ways & behaviour
Kuanua	direct	physical & psychological characteristics; customary ways & behaviour; secrets; taboos
Kokota	direct	age; sound; customary ways & behaviour; handwriting
Gela	direct	physical characteristics; responsibilities; customary ways & behaviour
Arosi	direct	characteristic idioms; responsibilities
Paamese	FOOD	particularising characteristics, especially characteristic afflictions
Lewo	unmarked	
Iaai	direct	some physical characteristics; responsibilities
Kiribati	direct	physical & psychological characteristics; customary ways & behaviour
Ponapean	direct	physical & psychological characteristics; flavour; responsibilities; customary ways & behaviour
Puluwat	direct	age; customary ways & behaviour
Standard Fijian	FOOD/ direct	innate physical characteristics; characteristics of inanimate objects/ colour; shape
Lauan	unmarked	
Nadrogā	PART	physical characteristics; age



### 2.4.2 Possession by subject matter using a FOOD host

In Mangap-Mbula, while subject matter possessors of pictures and news are directly indexed, the subject matter possessor of ‘talk’ is indexed using the FOOD host. In Standard Fijian all subject matter possessors are indexed using the FOOD host:

- |         |               |                                  |    |                |                                   |                   |
|---------|---------------|----------------------------------|----|----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| (76) a. | <b>ke-na</b>  | Bosa                             | b. | <b>no-na</b>   | Bosa                              | (Standard Fijian) |
|         | FOOD-3SG.PSSR | speech                           |    | GEN-3SG.PSSR   | speech                            |                   |
|         |               | ‘his talk (about him)’           |    |                | ‘his speech, utterance, language’ |                   |
| c.      | <b>ke-na</b>  | meke                             | d. | <b>no-na</b>   | meke                              |                   |
|         | FOOD-3SG.PSSR | dance                            |    | GEN-3SG.PSSR   | dance                             |                   |
|         |               | ‘his dance (concerning him)’     |    |                | ‘his dance (which he owns)’       |                   |
| e.      | <b>ke-na</b>  | yagona                           | f. | <b>me-na</b>   | yagona                            |                   |
|         | FOOD-3SG.PSSR | kava                             |    | DRINK-3SG.PSSR | kava                              |                   |
|         |               | ‘his kava’ (drunk in his honour) |    |                | ‘his kava’ (which he drinks)      |                   |

### 2.4.3 Possession by subject matter using the PART host

In Nadrogā the PART host is used to indexing subject matter possessors:

- |         |               |                  |    |              |                    |           |
|---------|---------------|------------------|----|--------------|--------------------|-----------|
| (77) a. | <b>e</b>      | lawata           | b. | <b>le-a</b>  | lawata             | (Nadrogā) |
|         | PART.3SG.PSSR | poem             |    | GEN-3SG.PSSR | poem               |           |
|         |               | ‘poem about him’ |    |              | ‘poem he composed’ |           |



Table 4: Possessor-indexing strategies with subject matter possessors and items attested.

	indexing strategy	attested non-canonical inclusions
Yapese	direct	pictures; songs
Loniu	direct	stories
Mussau	direct	stories
Manam	direct	pictures; songs; stories; letters; books
Mangap-Mbula	direct/ FOOD	pictures; news/ talk
Aroma	direct	pictures
Gapapaiwa	direct	stories
Motu	direct	stories; talk
Kilivila	direct	pictures; songs; talk
Kuanua	direct	pictures
Kokota	direct	pictures; books; history
Gela	direct	pictures; stories; songs; news; bell signifying something
Arosi	direct	pictures
Paamese	unmarked	
Lewo	unmarked	
Iaai	direct	stories
Kiribati	direct	pictures; songs; words
Ponapean	direct	pictures; news; books
Puluwat	direct	pictures; stories; thoughts
Standard Fijian	FOOD	talk; anything interpretable as having a subject matter; anything done in honour of possessor
Lauan	unmarked	
Nadrogā	PART	poem

languages. The use of each other strategy, including the use of a dedicated classifier, does constitute distinctive marking of the relation. Marking with a dedicated classifier is distinctive but canonical. Marking using the remaining strategies is distinctive and non-canonical.

The distribution of distinctive marking strategies across non-canonical semantic types in the 22 languages investigated is summarised in table 5. Each non-canonical possessive relation is represented by a column, flanked by columns representing three major canonical semantic types: canonical body parts representing canonical inalienable possession, marked with direct possessor-indexing in all languages except Nadrogā, where the PART host is used; the possession of items eaten, marked with a FOOD or CONSUMED host, and the possession items drunk, marked with a DRINK or CONSUMED host.

## **2.5.1 Distribution of indexing strategies across semantic types**

### **2.5.1.1 Marking of possession by subject matter**

Nineteen of the 22 languages investigated (86%) distinctively mark possession by subject matter. The data displays an overwhelming tendency for subject matter possessors to be marked in the same way as possessors of canonical inalienable body parts. In total, of the 19 languages distinctively marking possession by subject matter, 18 (95%) do so using direct possessor-indexing or the PART host (in Nadrogā) also used for canonical inalienable body parts in those languages. Two languages (11%) use a FOOD or a CONSUMED host.<sup>xii</sup>








### **2.5.1.2 Marking of possession of characteristics**

Twenty of the 22 languages investigated (91%) distinctively mark possession of characteristics. The data displays a strong tendency for the possession of characteristics to be marked in the same way as the possession of canonical inalienable body parts. In total, of the 20 languages distinctively marking possession by subject matter, 17 (85%) do so using direct possessor-indexing or the PART host (in Nadrogā) also used for canonical inalienable body parts. However, five languages (25%) mark the possession of characteristics in the same way as the possession of items eaten, using a FOOD or a CONSUMED host.<sup>xiii</sup>

Table 5: Overview of possessor-indexing strategy by semantic type.

	canonical body parts	possession by subject matter	possession of characteristics	possession of intimate items	passive possession	items eaten	items drunk
<i>Yapese</i>							
<i>Loniu</i>							
<i>Mussau</i>							
<i>Manam</i>							
<i>Mangap- Mbula</i>							
<i>Aroma</i>							
<i>Gapapaiwa</i>							
<i>Motu</i>							
<i>Kilivila</i>							
<i>Kuanua</i>							
<i>Kokota</i>							
<i>Gela</i>							
<i>Arosi</i>							
<i>Paamese</i>							
<i>Lewo</i>							
<i>Iaai</i>							
<i>Kiribati</i>							
<i>Ponapean</i>							
<i>Puluwat</i>							
<i>Standard Fijian</i>							
<i>Lauan</i>							
<i>Nadrogā</i>							

**Key**

	Direct possessor-indexing.		Indirect possessor-indexing with CONSUMED host.
	Indirect possessor-indexing with PART host.		Indirect possessor-indexing with SEMI-CONSUMABLE host (Kilivila) or dedicated classifier (Iaai).
	Indirect possessor-indexing with FOOD host.		Unmarked.
	Indirect possessor-indexing with DRINK host.		

### 2.5.1.3 Marking of possession of intimate property

Eighteen of the 22 languages investigated (82%) distinctively mark possession of intimate property. The data displays a strong tendency for the possession of intimate property to be marked in the same way as the possession of canonical inalienable body parts. In total, of the 18 languages distinctively marking possession of intimate property, 16 (89%) do so using direct possessor-indexing also used for canonical inalienable body parts. However, five languages (28%) mark the possession of intimate property in the same way as the possession of items drunk, using a DRINK or a CONSUMED host.<sup>xiv</sup>

It is noteworthy that a pattern emerges from table 5 in which direct possessor-indexing extends to varying degrees on a language by language basis from left to right across the table, while the use of a FOOD or CONSUMED host extends to vary degrees from right to left, suggesting a semantic hierarchy. This, however, does not apply consistently across the intimate property column, where other marking strategies intervene in that distribution in Mussau, Mangap-Mbula, Paamese, Lewo, and the three varieties of Fijian. It appears that the possession of intimate property does not participate in a hierarchy in which the other three non-canonical semantic types stand between canonical inalienability and the marking of items eaten.

### 2.5.1.4 Marking of passive possession

While a majority of languages investigated do distinctively mark passive possession, a significant minority of languages, eight of the 22 languages investigated (36%) do not. Of the 14 languages (64%) that do mark passive possession there is a strong tendency for it to be marked in the same way as the possession of items eaten, with 10 (71%) using a FOOD or CONSUMED to do so, and one (7%) using a 'semi-consumable' host to mark passive possession. However, three languages (21%) mark passive possession using direct or PART marking in the same way as the possession of canonical inalienable items. One further language (7%) uses a dedicated classifier.<sup>xv</sup>

### 3 Implications of empirical findings

#### 3.1 Reappraising previous analyses

The two previous analyses of semantically non-canonical possessor-indexing in Oceanic, Pawley's (1973) notion of subordinate possession and Lynch's (1996, 2001) broader definition of passive possession, along with Lynch's (2001) claim that direct possessor-indexing is basic for passive possession, may be re-examined in the light of the empirical findings above.

##### 3.1.1 'Subordinate possession'

Pawley (1973:162-163) and Lichtenberk (1985:106-107) treat the four semantically non-canonical types of possessive relations discussed in §2 as instances of a single unitary category of possessive relation termed 'subordinate possession'.

This hypothesis is not supported by the data once the four semantics types are examined separately. These four non-canonical semantics types are not marked alike in any of the languages investigated, with the possible partial exception Kiribati, where a small number of passive relations may be directly possessor-indexed in the same way as characteristics, intimate property and possession by subject matter.

A unitary notion of 'subordinate possession' is not supported even if the somewhat anomalous marking of possession of intimate property is removed from the sample. Possession by subject matter, possession of characteristics, and passive possession are only exhaustively marked in the same way in Standard Fijian and Nadrogā Fijian, as well as in the partial example of Kiribati. The notion of 'subordinate possession' appears therefore to be an artifact of the primacy of Fijian data in earlier research.<sup>xvi</sup>

### 3.1.2 Lynch's broader 'passive possession'

Lynch (2001:205-208) regards the possession of characteristics and of intimate property as distinct from the possession of items that act on or are used on the possessor and possession by the subject matter of cultural artefacts. He therefore excludes characteristics and intimate property from a type of possessive relation he terms passive possession.

However, passive possession and possession by subject matter themselves are treated differently in all languages investigated here except Standard Fijian and Nadrogā and partially in Kiribati and Mangap-Mbula. The data shows an overwhelming tendency for the languages investigated to directly index subject matter possessors, but to FOOD/CONSUMED mark or not distinctively mark passive possession. The data demonstrates that a notion of passive possession encompassing possessums that act on, are used on, or affect the possessor, or are uncontrolled by the possessor, must exclude possession by subject matter. This supports the narrower definition of passive possession proposed in (10).

### 3.1.3 Direct marking of passive possession

Early literature on passive and subordinate possession in Oceanic held that the basic and diachronically reconstructable distinctive marking strategy involved was FOOD marking, and that direct possessor-indexing is a deviation from this norm. (Pawley 1973:162-163) Lynch (1996:102, 2001:204-205) argues on the basis of data from his wider notion of passive possession that encompasses possession by subject matter and possession of nominalisations that although passive possession is marked by either direct possessor-indexing or by a FOOD/CONSUMED host across Oceanic, direct marking is more widespread than, and therefore diachronically prior to, FOOD marking, a position since accepted as standard in the Oceanist literature. Lynch et al (2002:41), for example, treat the possession of "abstract nouns denoting things done to or said of the possessor" as a form of inalienability because it is marked by direct possessor-indexing in Oceanic. The data presented in the present paper demonstrates that while this may be true of possession by subject matter, it is not the case for the narrower notion of passive possession proposed here, and that earlier assumptions that FOOD marking of passive possession is more widespread are correct.

## 3.2 Non-canonical uses of possessive marking strategies

### 3.2.1 Non-canonical use of direct and PART possessor-indexing: extending inalienability

#### 3.2.1.1 Semantic extensions and an inalienability hierarchy

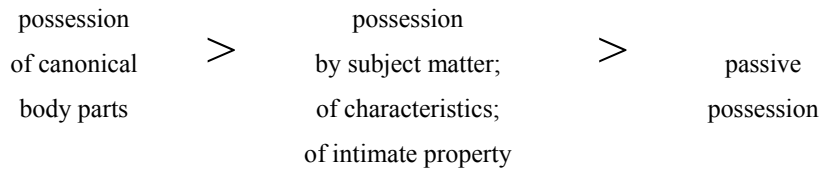
All languages investigated employ direct possessor-indexing with canonical body parts, with the exception of Nadrogā, which uses a unique PART host. Direct marking, and in the case of Nadrogā PART marking, have the canonical semantic function of encoding inalienability.

All but four of the languages investigated use the same strategy to mark possession by subject matter, at least in part (relations with one item, meaning ‘talk’, are FOOD marked in Mangap-Mbula), and in all but four languages direct or PART marking is also used to mark possession of characteristics, at least in part. It can be concluded, therefore, that possession by subject matter and possession of characteristics may, but need not, be marked in the same way as canonical inalienable relations. Similarly, in all but six of the languages, direct marking is used with relations with items of intimate property, suggesting that possession of intimate property may, but need not, be marked in the same way. This suggests an implication hierarchy in which these three semantic types of relations may be direct (or PART) marked if canonical inalienable body parts are. However, within these three types there is no clear hierarchical ordering.

The somewhat inconclusive data from Kuanua, and somewhat stronger data from Kiribati, suggest that passive possession as defined in (10) may also be directly possessor-indexed, and therefore treated in the same way as canonical inalienable body parts.<sup>xvii</sup> However, here an implication ranking is evident: passive possession may be marked by direct possessor-indexing only if all three other non-canonical semantic types, possession by subject matter, possession of characteristics, and possession of intimate property, are also directly possessor-indexed.

An implicational hierarchy in the marking of semantically non-canonical possessive relations in the same way as canonical inalienable body parts is therefore:

(80) Implicational hierarchy 1: direct/PART marking.



Relations involving the possession of characteristics cannot be ranked higher than possession by subject matter, as in two languages, Mussau and Gapapaiwa, subject matter possessors are directly indexed while characteristics are FOOD or CONSUMED marked. There is, therefore, a tendency to mark the possession of characteristics in the same way as canonical inalienable body parts only if subject matter possessors are also marked in the same way. However, this is not a strict implicational relationship between relations with characteristics and relations with subject matter possessors, as relations with some characteristics (colour and shape) are directly possessor-indexed in Standard Fijian, but relations with subject matter possessors are FOOD marked. The partial case of Standard Fijian demonstrates that relations with characteristics as possessum and those with subject matter possessors are ranked equally in the hierarchy.

The possession of intimate property also cannot be ranked higher than possession by subject matter, as subject matter possessors are directly or PART marked, at least in part, in Mangap-Mbula, Gapapaiwa and Nadrogā, while relations with intimate property are FOOD marked or unmarked in those languages. However, the possession of intimate property does not appear to be ranked lower than possession by subject matter either, as in Paamese one item of intimate apparel is directly possessor-indexed (shown in (41)). However, this absence of hierarchical ranking between possession by subject matter and possession of intimate property depends solely on possession of this one item in this one language, and Crowley (1996:412-413) speculates on a possible formal explanation for this. However, the possession of intimate property also cannot be ranked higher than the possession of characteristics, as the possession of intimate property is directly marked in Gapapaiwa, while characteristics are FOOD marked, although this also rests on a single example, the FOOD marking of a term meaning ‘age’ in Gapapaiwa. There is, therefore, a tendency for characteristics to be treated in the same way as canonical inalienable body parts in a language only if subject matter possessors are, and for intimate property to be also treated in the same way only if characteristics and subject matter possessors are, a hierarchy of tendencies in which possession of body parts

outranks possession by subject matter, which in turn outranks possession of characteristics, which in turn outranks possession of intimate property. Nonetheless, in the absence of evidence of the direct possessor-indexing of characteristics in Gapapaiwa, and of the formal basis for the direct possessor-indexing of ‘penis sheath’ in Paamese, the implicational hierarchy proposed in (80) stands.

The hierarchy in (80) agrees with Nichols’ (1988:572) implicational hierarchy of inalienability:

(81) Nichols’ (1988:572) implicational hierarchy of inalienability:

kin terms	>	part-whole	>	culturally
and/or		and/or		basic
body parts		spatial relations		items

The hierarchy in (80) supports the implicational ranking of “culturally basic possessed items” below body parts.<sup>xviii</sup>

Nichols’ “culturally basic items” corresponds to Seiler’s (1983:13) “implements of material culture” that includes items such as ‘bow’, ‘arrow’, ‘bed’ and ‘clothes’. These notions correspond to the type of intimate property described as ‘items an integral part of the possessor’s daily domestic life’ in §2.2.1.2 and exemplified by Loniu in (47). However, the Oceanic data shows that ‘inalienably’ possessed ‘culturally basic’ material objects are not restricted solely to items essential for the possessor’s livelihood, as Chapell & McGregor (1996:4, adopting Lévy-Bruhl’s (1914) categorisation) suggest. Instead, Oceanic languages may treat as inalienably possessed: items essential for possessor’s livelihood; or items in close physical contact with the possessor’s body (clothing when worn; bedding etc); or both.

Although it is beyond the overall scope of the present paper, Oceanic languages in general and the languages investigated here in particular conform to a ranking that places “culturally basic items” below spatial terms and items in a part-whole relations as represented in Nichols’ hierarchy. Oceanic languages typically encode many spatial relations by lexemes often termed ‘local nouns’, or occasionally ‘prepositional nouns’ or ‘relational nouns’, which may best be translated with phrases such as ‘the front of’, ‘the underneath of’ and so on. These are directly possessor-indexed to the relatum in a referent-relatum spatial relation, and thus treated in the same way as canonical inalienable body parts. (Lynch et al 2002:41) Similarly, parts of physical objects are typically treated in the same direct possessor-indexing way as human body parts, sometimes with the same lexical items, such as a term for

human skin also referring to tree bark. The relationship between the first two levels of Nichols' hierarchy is complex, and Oceanic data does not support a ranking distinction between kin terms and body parts on the one hand, and part-whole relations and spatial terms on the other. On the basis of similar findings elsewhere Chappell and McGregor (1996:8) suggest that part-whole relations and spatial terms may need to be placed in a disjunctive relationship with kin terms and body parts at the top of the hierarchy. The Oceanic data is in accord with that proposal. However, this does not mean the hierarchy is no longer useful, as Chappell & McGregor (1996:9) suggest, as all four semantically non-canonical possessive types under discussion here do fall below relations with all possessums types included in Nichols' first two levels, regardless of whether those first two levels should be conflated.

The result of all this is a version of Nichols' implicational hierarchy that incorporates three revisions. The first is the revision of the notion of "culturally basic items" to incorporate items that have an intimate relationship with the possessor's body, forming a larger category of intimate property. The data also shows that this is not restricted solely to items essential for the possessor's livelihood, as assumed by Chappell & McGregor (1995:4), adopting Lévy-Bruhl's categorisation. Instead, Oceanic languages may treat as inalienably possessed: items essential for the possessor's livelihood, or items in close physical contact with the possessor's body, or both. The second revision is the addition of possession by subject matter and possession of characteristics to the level in the hierarchy containing "culturally basic items", with the caveat that closer investigation of the small number of examples supporting this equal ranking may result in a division into three separate levels ranked possession by subject matter, then possession of characteristics, then possession of intimate property. The third revision to Nichols' hierarchy is the addition of a level for passive possession below that of "culturally basic items".

### **3.2.1.2 The inalienability hierarchy and relational inalienability**

Nichols' hierarchy of inalienability shown in (81) is intended to represent a hierarchy of inalienability as a lexical property of nouns. For Nichols, the grammatical encoding of inalienability is the formal representation of the membership of a closed lexical class, typically a small one. (1988:562, 568-576) Inalienability is therefore a lexical category not a semantic property, and speakers cannot freely choose whether to treat a noun as inalienable or alienable. (1988:574) It is most akin to valency with verbs, in the sense that inalienable nouns are lexically specified to take one kind of dependent possessor, while alienable nouns are specified to take another. (Nichols 1988:576)

Because inalienability is lexically specified, “[t]he semantics of the possessive relation follows automatically from the semantics of the nouns in the ‘inalienable’ class”. (Nichols 1988:575) Nichols does find that in some languages certain nouns that appear with ‘inalienable’ marking may also appear with ‘alienable’ marking, allowing speakers to express a semantic opposition. (1988:565-566) However, in all instances these are a closed subset of nouns belonging to the closed ‘inalienable’ lexical class, and in all instances there is inalienable marking as well as alienable, allowing an unspecified inalienable possessor. (Nichols 1988:565-566, 574)

Possession across Oceanic provides counter-evidence to these claims. As mentioned in §1.3, Lichtenberk (1983b) presents extensive evidence that in Oceanic languages the choice of possessive construction is largely dynamic and semantically driven, and that the various possessive constructions therefore encode the semantics of the relation that holds between the possessor and possessum, rather than the semantics of the possessum noun, as illustrated above by the Paamese data in (5). Pawley and Sayaba (1990) argue that the lack of lexical specification for morphological and syntactic behaviour in possessive construction type in Oceanic has been somewhat overstated. Nonetheless, most nouns in the overwhelming majority of Oceanic languages may appear in more than one possessive construction depending on the semantics of the relation between the possessor and possessum as perceived by the speaker. Participation in direct constructions, therefore, is not confined to a small closed class of nouns, and it is noteworthy that Nichols’ only “partial counterexample” to the notion of a closed lexical class of inalienable nouns is the Polynesian subgroup of Oceanic. (Nichols 1988:562, 577) It is clear from Nichols’ evidence that in some languages inalienability is lexically specified. The Oceanic data shows that it need not be, and that the grammar of possession allows both lexical and relational inalienability.

However, although the Oceanic data provides counter-evidence to the notion of inalienability as a lexical category rather than a semantic property, the fact that at the same time the same data does support Nichols’ hierarchy of inalienability demonstrates that the hierarchy applies to both relational and lexical inalienability, supporting the proposed hierarchy and strengthening its crosslinguistic applicability and therefore typological adequacy as a component of a theory of inalienability.

### 3.2.1.3 Semantic extensions of inalienability

The revision of Nichols' hierarchy proposed in §3.2.1.1 above is based on the distribution of marking strategies associated with canonical inalienable body parts to other semantic types of possessive relation. However, implicit in this is the claim that the semantic notion of inalienability may be extended to each of these semantic types, and that languages vary in how far inalienability can be extended into these semantic types. The latter claim is, of course, not new (see Chappell and McGregor 1996:9), but the Oceanic data confirms that in a striking way.

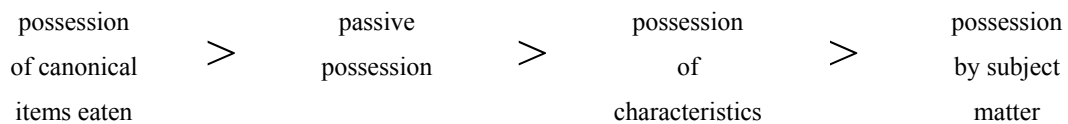
What is new, however, is the notion that passive possession may be an extension of inalienability. It is not difficult to understand the treatment of characteristics or personal attributes as non-physical 'parts' of the possessor, and similarly that stories and histories recounting the acts or thoughts of the possessor and pictures depicting the image of the possessor are in some way in a part-whole relation with the possessor. Indeed, in several Oceanic languages the term translated as picture also may mean shadow, or reflection, or image in general. It is also reasonably easy to understand the extension of inalienability to items that are in immediate physical contact with the possessor, or to the interpretation of inalienability as a categorisation of a "personal domain" that includes items of personal property and accoutrement, as found in Indo-European. (Bally 1926 [1996]) However, it is less easy to understand a relation with items that are used on, affect or act on the possessor as a plausible extension of inalienability. The crucial semantic component seems to be lack of control over the possessum by the possessor. Although an individual may be thought of as in control of their arm or leg, they cannot be thought to be in control of the fact of their relationship with their arm or leg. It is therefore not surprising that in the rare instances where grammatical structures with a canonical semantic function of expressing possession of body parts are extended to apply to passive possession, this occurs in Oceanic languages, where it is the semantics of the relation, rather than the possessum itself that is encoded by the grammatical structure.

### 3.2.2 Non-canonical use of FOOD/CONSUMED possessor-indexing: passive possession and beyond

All but two of the languages investigated mark possession of items eaten with an indirect possessor-indexing construction employing a distinct FOOD or CONSUMED host.<sup>xix</sup> Of these 20, 10 use the same host to possessor-indexing passively possessed items. Of these 10, five also use the same host to possessor-indexing characteristics, at

least in part. In turn, of these five, two use the same host to indexing subject matter possessors, at least in part. There is, therefore, a strict implicational hierarchy evident in the data involving the extension of marking with a canonical semantic function of encoding possession of items eaten to various non-canonical semantic types: languages only mark possession of characteristics in the same way as possession of items eaten if they also treat passive possession that way, and languages only mark possession by subject matter in the same way as possession of items eaten if they also treat possession of characteristics and passive possession that way:

(82) Implicational hierarchy 2: FOOD/CONSUMED marking.



Possession of intimate property does not participate in this hierarchy. In no language investigated is intimate property possessor-indexing using a FOOD host. Although a CONSUMED host is used with this function in some languages, this corresponds to the use of a DRINK host in languages which have separate FOOD and DRINK hosts. This therefore appears to be a separate semantic extension.

The hierarchy in (82) represents the functional extension of a formal marking strategy. However, implicit in this is an apparent semantic extension comparable to that in the inalienability hierarchy in (81). The semantic basis of an extension from the possession of items eaten to the possession of items that act on, are used on or affect the possessor is less immediately apparent than the semantic extension of inalienability discussed above. However, a relevant semantic extension is attested for Oceanic verbs of eating, in which the subject ‘suffers’ the object rather than consumes it in the familiar narrower sense. (Lynch 2001:211-212) In Standard Fijian, for example, the subject of *kana* ‘eat’ may not ingest the object, as in (83)a., but may ‘suffer’ it, as in (83)b.-d. (Geraghty 1983:249-250)

- (83) a. *kana ma<sup>n</sup>rai* (Standard Fijian)  
       eat bread  
       ‘eat bread’

b. kana i-Δage

eat NOM-kick

‘get kicked’ (lit. ‘eat kick’)

c. kana Bosa

eat talk

‘get told off’ (lit. ‘eat talk’)

d. kana uΔa

eat rain

‘get drenched by rain’ (lit. ‘eat rain’)

The data suggests that an alternative subcategorisation exists for *kana* in which the subject maps on to the semantic role of patient rather than agent, and the object maps on to another semantic role, perhaps cause. Similar semantics have been reported for the Bislama dialect of Melanesian Creole (Lynch 2001:211 citing Crowley p.c.):

(84) a. kakaē laplap

(Bislama)

eat pudding

‘eat pudding’

b. kakaē han

eat hand

‘get punched’ (lit. ‘eat hand’)

b. kakaē kalabus

eat prison

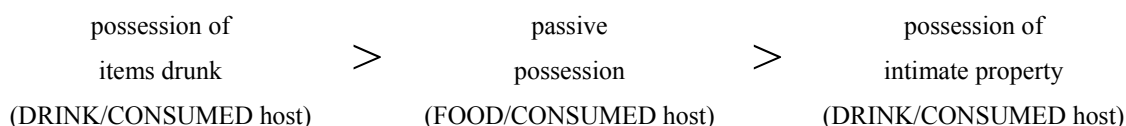
‘receive a prison sentence’ (lit. ‘eat prison’)

The semantic extension of the possession of items eaten to passive possession is therefore consistent with the semantics of the relation that holds between an eater and the thing eaten in the relevant languages, in which the eater is seen as affected by what they eat (in addition, presumably, to being in control of the eating process, although perhaps not the need to eat itself). No additional data has been reported that casts light on the further semantic extensions to the possession of characteristics and possession by subject matter represented in the hierarchy in (81). However, it may be that the semantics of the uncontrolled nature of passive possessive relations then becomes the motivating factor in these subsequent extensions: a chain of semantic associations in which an association between eating and undergoing motivates an extension to relations undergone and not controlled, in turn motivating an extension to uncontrolled relations with no undergoer component. This hypothesis awaits empirical testing.

### 3.2.3 Non-canonical use of DRINK/CONSUMED possessor-indexing: intimate property

All but two of the languages investigated mark possession of items drunk with an indirect possessor-indexing construction employing a distinct DRINK or CONSUMED host.<sup>xx</sup> Of these, five use the same host to possessor-indexing the possession of intimate property. However, there is an odd complication. In every one of the languages in which intimate property is possessor-indexed using a CONSUMED host, passive possession is marked using the same CONSUMED host. However, in languages where intimate property is possessor-indexing using a DRINK host, passive possession is marked using a FOOD host. No obvious semantic explanation for this presents itself. However, the facts of this data support a strict implicational hierarchy in which the possession of intimate property may be marked in the same way as the possession of items drunk, but only if the language also marks passive possession in the same way as items eaten:

(85) Implicational hierarchy 3: DRINK/CONSUMED marking.



#### 4. Conclusions

Oceanic languages display several possessor-indexing constructions that each have a semantically canonical function of encoding a particular relation that holds between a possessor and a possessum. However, these constructions are also employed to encode non-canonical semantic relations. The four most common and clearly identifiable types of non-canonical relation display clear patterns of distribution across possible marking strategies in 22 Oceanic languages investigated here.

One of these patterns displays semantic extensions of inalienability, in which marking strategies canonically encoding possession of canonical inalienable body parts are extended to possession of characteristics and personal attributes, possession of intimate or close personal property, and possession by the subject matter of cultural artefacts. It also displays extension to the possession of items that act on, are used on, affect, or are at least beyond the control of the possessor, defined as ‘passive possession’ here. These extensions demonstrate an implicational hierarchy of inalienability that agrees with Nichols’ (1988) hierarchy, but elaborates it with additional types of possessive relations and an additional level for passive possession. The fact that Oceanic possessive constructions encode possessive relations rather than lexically specified features of the possessum demonstrates that Nichols’ hierarchy in its revised version proposed here applies to the semantics of relational possession as well as to lexically specified possessive semantics, and therefore is strengthened as a typologically and observationally adequate component of a theory of inalienability.

The patterns of distribution of marking strategy by non-canonical semantic type found here also reveal two additional implicational hierarchies. In one, marking strategies with a canonical semantic function of encoding the possession of items eaten may be extended to passive possession, then to the possession of characteristics, then to possession by subject matter, an extension of a semantics of eating in which the eater is affected by the items they consume, leading to a subsequent extension in which items affecting the possessor are uncontrolled. In the other, with no as yet evident semantic explanation, marking strategies with a canonical semantic function of encoding the possession of items drunk may be extended to the possession of intimate property, but only if the language also encodes passive possession in the same way as the possession of items eaten. These findings extend an

understanding of the functional distribution of possessive marking strategies and the semantics of possession that they encode.

The findings of the present paper also demonstrate that a unitary category of subordinate possession encompassing passive possession, possession of characteristics, possession of intimate property, and possession by subject matter as previously proposed is not supported by the data; that a broader notion of passive possession that encompasses possession by subject matter is also not supported by the data; and, more locally, that the most widespread and basic marking strategy for passive possession in Oceanic is not direct possessor-indexing as previously proposed, but an indirect construction with the canonical semantic function of encoding possession of items eaten.

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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> All data is presented on a phonemic basis, not in the local orthography or other orthography employed in the original descriptions. Long vowels are represented by double symbols. In several languages investigated, including Standard Fijian, voiced plosives are prenasalised. However, as prenasalisation is a regular realisational phenomenon in these languages it is not represented in the data unless it has phonological status distinguishing otherwise identical phonemes.

<sup>ii</sup> Glossing abbreviations conform to the Leipzig glossing rules with the exception of the following:

CONSM	An indirect possessor-indexing host with the canonical semantic function of encoding possession of items eaten or drunk in a language that does not have distinct FOOD and DRINK hosts.
DRINK	An indirect possessor-indexing host with the canonical semantic function of encoding possession of items drunk.
FOOD	An indirect possessor-indexing host with the canonical semantic function of encoding possession of items eaten.
GEN	An indirect possessor-indexing host encoding a general residual default category of possessive relations not eligible for marking by any other possessor-indexing strategy in the language.
PASS	An indirect possessor-indexing host with the canonical semantic function of encoding possession of items that act on, are used on, affect, or are beyond the control of the possessor.
POSS	A single invariant indirect possessor-indexing host in a language with only one indirect host.
PSSR	Possessor indexing.

<sup>iii</sup> This has implications for the apparently logically exhaustive claim that possessive marking can only be located in one of two places: as head marking on the possessum noun, or as dependent marking on the possessor noun. (Nichols 1988:558-559) In Oceanic indirect constructions, possessive marking in the form of possessor-indexing is located on possessor-indexing hosts, not the referential possessum noun. However, despite this, these constructions do display head marking. Brown & Palmer (2007) argue that these hosts themselves satisfy criteria for headhood, and are therefore the head of the phrases in which they occur, with the referential possessum nouns functioning as modifiers expressing the precise nature of the possessum. If this hypothesis is correct, possessor-indexing is attaching to the syntactic head. However, even if the referential possessum noun were the head, this would still represent head marking, as the possessor-indexed indirect hosts would function to modify the possessum noun by identifying its possessor, which need not be present if its identity is recoverable from the discourse (see (3)b.-c.). Moreover,

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possessor-indexed hosts syntactically form a single larger constituent with the possessum noun, not with the possessor NP, as shown in examples such as (3)a., where the possessum noun intervenes between the indexed host and the possessor NP. On that basis, Nichols (1988:567) is incorrect in identifying Hawaiian and other Polynesian languages as dependent marking, as they employ a disjunctive set of two indirect head marking possessor-indexing hosts comparable to those in the data presented here. Nichols' rare pattern of possessive marking in which only dependent marking occurs and no head marking is found becomes rarer still: present only in Northern Pomo in Nichols' sample.

<sup>iv</sup> In most Oceanic languages some kin and body parts are directly indexed and therefore treated as inalienable, while others are not. For example, in some languages terms for younger kin are directly indexed while terms for most older kin are not, perhaps because older kin are likely to predecease the possessor while younger kin are not. In others 'acquired' kin such as in-laws are not directly indexed. Similarly, in many languages terms for visible body parts are directly indexed, while terms for some internal organs normally only seen when removed from a slaughtered animal are indirectly indexed.

<sup>v</sup> In descriptions of Oceanic languages the FOOD and DRINK hosts are often treated as referring to edible or drinkable items. However, this implies that the relevant semantic distinction is a lexical property of the noun. The semantic distinction encoded is not whether or not the referent can be eaten or drunk, but whether the possessor has been, is, or will be eating or drinking the possessum in the situation expressed by the utterance.

<sup>vi</sup> Yapese is an isolate in the sense that it appears to form a first-order subgroup of Oceanic on its own.

<sup>vii</sup> Lynch (2001:197) presents an example with an apparent noun as the possessum: *n8ɔɔ-n aat* 'his/her wound'.

However, data elsewhere (Ozanne-Rivierre 1984:61) suggests that *aat* may be a nominalised verb meaning 'be wounded', rather than a noun. This agrees with data elsewhere in Ozanne-Rivierre (1976, 1984) showing verbs in this syntactic frame. This is consistent with passive possession, but as nominalisations are excluded from the present discussion, examples of that type are not presented.

<sup>viii</sup> The generalisation about the direct possessor-indexing of body parts does not apply to languages of the Polynesian branch of Central Pacific, which have lost direct possessor-indexing almost completely, retaining it only in residual or fossilised constructions with a handful of kin terms. (Wilson 1982) Nadrogā, areally and genetically close to Polynesian, appears to be part way down the same diachronic path.

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<sup>ix</sup> Geraghty (1983:221-226; 2002:836) and Lynch (1997:237; 2000:238-239; 2001:202-203) describe these PART possessor-indexing forms as prefixes, with Lynch (2000:239) in particular treating this as a form of direct possession. However, Geraghty (2000:245) has demonstrated that they occur in an indirect construction and are not affixes, but instead occupy the same syntactic position as other indirect possessor-indexing hosts, as illustrated by the possible intervention of particles between these indexing forms and the possessum noun in (30).

<sup>x</sup> In Loniū noun roots occur in a long and short form depending on their participation in various morphological and syntactic constructions.

<sup>xi</sup> The form *ituutuBi* is a fossilised nominalisation but synchronically a monomorphemic noun.

<sup>xii</sup> The total of 20 in this calculation arises because one of the languages, Mangap-Mbula, marks relations with some subject matter possessors directly and others using a FOOD/CONSUMED host.

<sup>xiii</sup> The total of 22 in this calculation arises because two of the languages, Mangap-Mbula and Standard Fijian, mark relations with some characteristics directly and others using a FOOD/CONSUMED host.

<sup>xiv</sup> The total of 21 in this calculation arises because three of the languages, Kuanua, Gela and Paamese, mark relations with some intimate property directly and others using a FOOD/CONSUMED host.

<sup>xv</sup> The total of 15 in this calculation arises because one of the languages, Kuanua, possibly marks passive possession directly as well as using a FOOD/CONSUMED host.

<sup>xvi</sup> Pawley (1973:163), the originator of the notion of ‘subordinate possession, acknowledges that at the time he was writing Standard Fijian (as ‘Bauan’) “is the only language for which really detailed data have been collected” on functional extensions of the FOOD host.

<sup>xvii</sup> It is perhaps significant that in Kiribati items eaten or drunk are not distinctively marked, Kiribati being one of the Oceanic languages that displays a single invariant indirect possessor-indexing host, in effect a default for relations not marked by direct possessor-indexing. The sole possessor-indexing strategy available to distinctively mark a relation is therefore direct possessor-indexing in that language.

<sup>xviii</sup> It also supports the ranking of “culturally basic items” below kin terms, as kin terms in all languages investigated here are directly possessor-indexed. It should be noted that the Oceanic data could be taken to support a ranking in which body parts fall below kin terms, since in one language investigated, Nadrogā, most kin terms are directly possessor-indexed, while body parts are indirectly possessor-indexed using the PART host. This accords with some of the Amerind languages surveyed by Nichols, but is the opposite ranking to others Nichols surveyed. (1988:572-

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573) This disjunction found by Nichols motivates the equal ranking of kin and body part terms in her hierarchy.

However, Nichols (1988:573) observes that although in implication terms this disjunction applies, kin terms are more strongly represented at the top of the hierarchy than body part terms. The evidence of Nadrogā supports this observation, although at least one other Oceanic language, Kusaie, cited by Seiler (1983:13), shows the opposite pattern.

<sup>xix</sup> The remaining two, Yapese and Kiribati, have a single invariant indirect possessor-indexing host which does not distinguish items eaten or drunk from a default category.

<sup>xx</sup> Yapese and Kiribati, have a single invariant indirect possessor-indexing host which does not distinguish items eaten or drunk from a default category.