

Title of Paper: Demonstratives in Oksapmin
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Abstract:

In this presentation, I will discuss the features of a subset of demonstratives (as defined by Himmelmann (1996)) in the Papuan language Oksapmin (TNGP isolate). This subset of demonstratives may occur in two distinct positions within a single noun phrase as shown in the schema below:

NP = Demonstrative N' Demonstrative Article

This demonstrative consists of a proximal or distal demonstrative plus an optional location word (up, down, straight/flat, or across e.g. river). Where a noun phrase contains two demonstratives, these must agree with each other as shown in the examples below.

(1) *mə=xət=ma* *lat* *mə=xət=ox*
DEM.PRX=up=N'.FOLLOWS tree **DEM.PRX=up=3snf**
 The tree(s) up here.

(2) *i=so=ma* *misin* *ap=si* *kət* *dəx*
DEM.DST=across= N'.FOLLOWS mission(Eng) house=COM place down

i=so=x
DEM.DST= across=3snf
 Over there down behind the mission house.

In particular, I discuss the following issues related to this demonstrative construction in Oksapmin: related constructions in Oksapmin; possible language-internal motivations for the double occurrence of the demonstrative within the noun phrase; mechanisms of syntactic theory which can be drawn upon to license the agreement of the two demonstratives within the noun phrase; and examples of similar phenomena in other languages.

References:

Himmelmann, Nikolaus P. (1996). "Demonstratives in Narrative Discourse: A Taxonomy of Universal Uses". In Babara Fox (Ed.) Studies in Anaphora Amsterdam, John Benjamins.