

# **-CV Suffixes in Central Malukan Languages: Problems of Form, Distribution, and Function**

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The languages of Central Maluku have various suffixes of the general form -CV and these have a range of meanings and functions. In this paper we concentrate on one suffix of this type which most commonly attaches to nouns, as seen in the following examples:

1. Allang (Ambon Island)  
Imi lulu utanu  
2.PL harvest vegetable-CV
2. Alune (Seram Island)  
Imi 'eu bori utane  
2.PL go uproot vegetable-CV
3. Haruku (Haruku Island)  
Esi oi kana utane  
2.PL go harvest vegetable-CV
4. Rutah (Seram Island)  
Mi yoi mi kana u'ano  
2.PL go 2.PL harvest vegetable-CV
5. Souw Amana Teru (Ambon Island)  
Imi oi tete utane  
2.PL go cut vegetable-CV  
  
'You (all) go and harvest vegetables.'

The preceding examples show that the actual form of the suffix varies across languages, and in fact the form varies within languages also. Each language tends to use a characteristic vowel in the suffix, and various consonants are possible in each language.

Although it seems intuitively clear that the suffixes are similar in these various languages, a range of problems arise in considering the form of the suffixes, their distribution and their function. The questions which arise include: what is the range of forms within and across languages? How much intra-language variation can be accounted for on phonological or other grounds, and how plausible is it to relate the different forms to a common source? In terms of distribution, the suffixes typically attach to the right of nouns, as seen above, but they also sometimes attach at the right edge of some larger constituent projected from a noun:

6. Souw Amana Teru (Ambon Island)  
Yau a'a malonae tula eng  
1.SG older.sibling male- with 3.SG.POSS  
  
mahinae nasi wa'ene marinu ea.  
female- PRED- LOC- garden already

'My older brother and his wife were already at the garden.'

They can even be attached to other lexical categories such as predicates:

7. Allang (Ambon Island)

Aku        na    ei        hitinu  
1.SG.POSS POSS leg    hurt-CV

'My leg hurts.'

Such data raise the question of whether these suffixes should be analyzed as a single item in each language, or as several homophonous items. Finally, the function of the suffixes is not clear. Although they most commonly attach to N or one of its projections, the function of these suffixes is not obviously that of one of the common nominal markers. They do not mark number, although they do interact with number marking in some languages such as Allang. The suffixes do not mark definiteness or specificity and they can co-occur with demonstratives and classifiers. Nor do they seem to track the discourse status of referents. All the occurrences of the suffix in examples 1 to 5 are attached to nouns being mentioned for the first time, but the following two clauses show a first mention and a following reference both marked with the suffix:

8. Souw Amana Teru (Ambon Island)

Yau    larehuisi: "Imi    lapun            na    wa'a    pe'e?"  
1.SG   ask-3.PL    2.PL   shirt-C(V)   PRED   LOC    where  
  
Isi    tana    isi    lapune        uma    ami    reu'amu  
3.PL   take   3.PL   shirt-CV    then   1PL.E   return-1PL.E

'I asked them: "Where are your clothes?"'

'They got their clothes and we went home.'

The suffixes are phonologically simple, morphologically bound elements which should certainly be included among the closed lexical classes of these languages, but their precise function is mysterious.

In this paper, we present cross-linguistic data and preliminary analysis from Allang, Wakasihu, Souw Amana Teru (Ambon Island), Alune, Rutah, Sepa (Seram Island), and Haruku (Haruku Island) and address the problems outlined above.