

## MERONYMY OR PART-WHOLE RELATIONS IN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES OF LOWLAND SOUTH AMERICA

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### *1. Introduction*

An important and interesting type of semantic relation, expressed in language, 'is the relation between the parts of things and the wholes which they comprise' (Winston et al. 1987:417). Relationships which are expressed either with the term *part*, or which by their position in a part-whole expression signal *part*, are considered to be *meronymic* and to 'structure semantic space in a hierarchical fashion' (1987:418).<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, this semantic relation has been lexicalized in many languages and can be used appropriately in some contexts and not in others (Chaffin 1992:255). However, meronymy or part-whole relations turn out to be quite complex, probably because there is no single meronymic relation. Rather, there are several different ones, each having their own semantic properties.<sup>2</sup>

One type of meronymic relation discussed in this essay is that which distinguishes between 'components' and 'objects', for example, the relation between a 'wall' and a 'house'. Another way of looking at this relation is as something identifiable (part) within a larger thing (whole).

I also discuss the relation of 'portions of masses', a homeomonymous relation, such as 'a piece of pie', even though these tend to be objects which are similar to each other and to the wholes to which they belong (Winston et al. 1987:421). In this usage of 'part', we refer to a 'piece' which can not be identified until it becomes detached from the larger object, the 'whole'. Other meronymic relations are discussed briefly in Section 5.<sup>3</sup>

In order to place meronymy in perspective, one needs to know something about how languages actually express the part-whole relationship. In English, one can talk about a 'part' and one can talk about a 'whole' and one can talk about a 'part' as 'part of a whole', or a 'whole' as having many parts. One can also talk about an object, for example a hand, which is both a whole and a part simultaneously, that is, the hand

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<sup>1</sup> The term *partonomy* is the term used to differentiate part-whole taxonomies from other taxonomic relations.

<sup>2</sup> Chaffin (1992) summarizes the elements of meronymy that characterize the types of connections between parts and wholes. Briefly, they are whether the part can be separated from the whole, whether the parts are spatial or temporal, whether the part has a functional role in relation to the whole, and whether the parts are homeomonymous (parts are the same kind of thing as the whole).

<sup>3</sup> Also, I do not discuss the relation of class inclusion called hyponymy because in these South American Indian languages we can readily distinguish between 'kind of' and 'part of.' There is a considerable body of literature which deals with these issues, especially in terms of the primitive elements PART and KIND (see especially, Wierzbicka 1996).

consists of parts, such as fingers, a palm, etc. and a hand is part of an arm. But this English expression is neither universal, nor unique.

Utilizing the domain of body parts, we note that in some lowland languages a single word can cover three components of physical reality, in another, there is no single designation which covers all three. Gerzenstein (1994: 251) discusses different aspects of Maká (Mataguayan family) lexicography, noting that there is a single form [*-koy*] which indicates the portion of the body from the hand to the shoulder. However, the same section of the body in Spanish is designated by three terms: ‘mano’ (‘hand’), ‘antebrazo’ (‘forearm’) and ‘brazo’ (‘arm’) and in Resígaro by three slightly different designations (Resígaro [Arawakan] Allin 1979):

- (1) *a* a’náapí  
arm
- b* kékí  
lower arm
- c* kaphíidó  
upper arm

To reiterate, part-whole relations can be expressed in a number of different ways.<sup>4</sup> Below, I will provide examples of how these part-whole relations are expressed in eighteen languages, belonging to eleven families, all of which are found in the geopolitical areas of Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela and Peru.

## 2. *Possession and part-whole relations*

In my study of the part-whole relation, which has focused on lowland South American languages, and especially on languages of the Chaco, I have found a number of ways in which indigenous languages express the distinction between part and whole. Probably the most often utilized mechanism for making the distinction, however, is through possessive constructions. In fact, according to Wierzbicka (1996:61), the concept of ‘part’ underlies possessive constructions, which means that ‘possession’ is a grammatical concept which has no constant semantic content.

### 2.1 *Possessor/Possessed and Word Order*

Toba, a language belonging to the Guaykuran family, is the language I am most familiar with, and which exemplifies the possessive mechanism for meronymy. Nouns in Toba are divided into those which are possessed and those which are not. Possessed nouns must have personal prefixes, the others need not. Non-possessed nouns, relatively few in number, consist of proper names and of things or beings that do not usually have an owner, e.g. abstract nouns or nouns which deal with natural phenomena over which humans have no control (year, ice, rain). Possessed nouns, on the

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<sup>4</sup> An important source for much contemporary work on body-part terminology is the chapter, ‘Lexical Universals of Body-Part Terminology’ by Elaine Andersen in Greenberg (1978:III).

other hand, consist of body parts, house parts, clothes, manufactured items, and kinship terms (Klein 1973:165). Possession is expressed most typically in the syntax of compound nouns. Each member of a compound structure can occur as a single form. However, when two nouns occur together, the basic meaning reflects the relationship between the first noun, which is the possessor and the second noun, which is the possessed.<sup>5</sup> Example (2) thus reflects the ‘component-object’ meronymic relation as reflected through the word order (Toba [Guaykuruan] Klein 1973):

- (2) *a*    pike        lamo  
           arm        trunk  
           ‘upper arm’
- b*    pe                      lawe  
           bony area above eye    hair  
           ‘eyebrow’

There is a difference semantically, however, between a ‘piece of a whole’ as reflected in (2a) and (2b) and a ‘part of a whole’ as seen in (3a) and (3b). As noted in the introduction, a piece essentially refers to a sample of something that is uniform, homogeneous and not necessarily part of a whole, a homeomeronymous relation. In Toba, however, the structure of such a phrase follows the same whole-part word order as the component-object relation discussed above (Toba [Guaykuruan] Buckwalter 1980):

- (3) *a*    pan        layi  
           bread    piece  
           ‘piece of bread’
- b*    ‘ipaq    layi  
           wood    piece  
           ‘piece of wood’

Possession is also discussed analytically in another way. In compound nouns, the second noun functions as an attribute of the first noun, thereby constituting possession, and acting as a genitive. Thus for Pilagá, another Guaykuruan language, we have examples similar to Toba which show the part-whole relation also in terms of possession. But in Pilagá, the distinctions for noun markings (never possessed, always possessed, and sometimes possessed categories) are more complex (Vidal 1995:42). Thus trees are never possessed, kinship terms are possessed, while body

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<sup>5</sup> In some languages part-whole relations need to be expressed by nouns which obligatorily take possessive prefixes. Often the nouns belong to the class which refers to parts of the human body, which may also include kinship relations, as well as objects manufactured by humans: housing, decoration, and clothing. This is the case in many Chaco languages, shown for instance in (2) from Toba, where the initial ‘/’ in *lamo* and *lawe* signifies the indefinite possessive pronoun. Note that body parts are often the best examples to show meronymic relations.

parts and items of clothing are also likely to be possessed (Vidal 1995:105)<sup>6</sup>, cf. (4) (Pilagá [Guaykuruan] Bruno and Najlis 1965) and (5) (Pilagá [Guaykuruan] Vidal 1992):

- (4) *a* laka lawe  
 chin hair  
 ‘beard’
- b* cossot lawac  
 neck hole  
 ‘throat’
- (5) hen emek lae  
 the house wall  
 ‘the wall of the house’

Examples (6a) and (6b) from Eyiguayegi-Mbaya, also a Guaykuruan language, show that when one talks about parts of the body, one reiterates the whole-part word order discussed above for Toba and Pilagá (Eyiguayegi-Mbaya [Guaykuruan] Unger 1972):

- (6) *a* ligilagi nigichodi  
 throat bell  
 ‘uvula’
- b* nibaagadi liguigo  
 hand palm  
 ‘palm of the hand’
- c* niale litodi  
 tree root  
 ‘root of the tree’
- d* niale libigue  
 tree branch  
 ‘branch of the tree’
- e* ela liguocote  
 flower bud  
 ‘bud of the flower’

Note that in (6c), (6d) and (6e), the same relationship, that is, whole occurring before part, is expressed when one refers to attributes or other non body part descriptive relationships.

Abipon, the last of these Guaykuruan language examples, has the same structure as Toba, Pilagá and Eyiguayegi-Mbaya (Abipon [Guaykuruan] Najlis 1966):

<sup>6</sup> For Guaykuruan languages in general, and Pilagá in particular, ‘words are also constructed with corporeal concepts interacting. The ‘calf of the leg’ is analyzed as ‘belly/stomach of the leg.’ The word for ‘gums’ is made up of ‘tooth + flesh/meat’ (Key 1995b:355).

- (7)    nahip    eoe  
         lips    hair  
         'beard'

Turning to a different language family (Tupi-Guarani), in *Estudios Guayaki* (1974:101), Susnik discusses the genitive and its use. She also notes that the whole precedes the part in a compound form (Guayaki [Tupi-Guarani] Susnik 1974):

- (8)    kare     ambuku  
         cuati    fang  
         'fang of the cuati'

When we look at languages from other parts of lowland South America, we notice similarities in compound nouns which have the same order of possessor/possessed, reiterating the whole-part type of example. Examples (9) and (10) are from the Tacanan and Panoan families, where the whole also precedes the part, cf. (9) (Ese ejja [Tacanan] Chavarria Mendoza 1980) and (10) (Amahuaca [Panoan] Hyde 1980):

- (9) *a*    emé     takua  
         hand    bottom  
         'palm of the hand'
- b*    ehióji   takua  
         foot    bottom  
         'underside of the foot'
- c*    akui     iáa  
         tree    arm  
         'branch'
- (10) *a*    mápo    xao  
         head    bone  
         'skull'
- b*    vúro    náto  
         eye    heart  
         'pupil'
- c*    yóra    xao  
         body   bone  
         'skeleton'
- d*    jii    pónyan  
         tree arm  
         'branch'

In Iquito, a Zaporoan language, spoken in Peru, nouns are divided into possessed and non-possessed types. Some nouns belong to both types. Non-possessed nouns include items in nature that are not inherently possessed (moon) as well as some items that

are optionally possessed, such as manufactured items (cloth). Possessed nouns are body part names, kinship terms, and optionally possessed items (e.g. my clothes).

In all of the examples described so far, the whole-part relation is expressed between possessor and possessed. The possessor is usually also translated as equivalent to ‘whole’, whereas the possessed is usually translated as equivalent to ‘part.’ What is interesting, is that syntactically in some languages the ‘whole’ precedes the ‘part’, while in others the ‘part’ precedes the ‘whole.’ It also seems that this syntactic order is common to languages of a family. Thus, in Guaykuruan and other Chaco languages such as Mataguayan languages (Examples 2-7; 14-15), the whole precedes the part.

However, the part precedes the whole in many of the languages surveyed. In Mapuche (Golluscio 1988:193), the structure of a nominal expression is: Noun theme + Noun theme. Thus, in part-whole constructions, the semantics are possessed/part/matter + possessor/whole/object and we note the following example where the part precedes the whole (Mapuche [Araucanian] Golluscio 1988):

- (11) kīlen kawell  
tail horse  
‘tail of the horse’

The same order holds true for Pemon and Guajiro, both spoken in Venezuela, cf. (12) (Pemon [Cariban] Cesareo de Armellada 1943<sup>7</sup>) and (13) (Guajiro [Arawakan] Olza Zubiri and Jusayu 1978):

- (12) *a* pumoi seporii  
egg chicken  
‘egg of the chicken’  
*b* depue etinkasak  
bone shoulder  
shoulder bone
- (13) *a* jusaa aipia  
leaf tree  
‘leaf of a tree’  
*b* jupana aipia  
flower tree  
‘flower of a tree’

## 2.2 *Alienable vs. Inalienable*

Still other languages focus on the semantic qualities of alienable and inalienable as a means to categorize nouns and their semantic fields. Alienable nouns are not necessarily possessed, but may be; whereas inalienable nouns are obligatorily possessed.

<sup>7</sup> Unlike speakers of Spanish or English who may say ‘I found an egg’, or ‘I broke a bone’, that is, allowing the part to represent the whole, speakers of Pemon (Cariban family) must say, ‘I found the egg of the chicken’ or ‘I broke my shoulder bone’, as in example 12. (Cesareo de Armellada 1943:62).

These concepts are linked to the part-whole issue because inalienable possession is often based on ‘a part of a person’s body’, whereas alienable possession is a combination of both the notion of *part* plus a non-inherent part-whole relationship (Wierzbicka 1996:61).

In Mataco, parts of a whole are treated as inalienable (as are kinship terms and objects manufactured by humans). On the other hand, the elements of nature, animals and plants, more distant objects, borrowed words, human beings with whom one has no kinship relations are considered alienable.<sup>8</sup>

Inalienable	Alienable
Kinship terms	Names referring to humans that don’t imply kinship relations
Objects manufactured by humans of personal property	Other objects
Parts of a whole: Parts of the body of Animals Parts of plants Parts of objects	Elements of the physical world: Trees and Plants Animals

Table 1: the two classes of nouns and their semantic fields in Mataco ([Mataguayan] Golluscio 1994)

The inalienability of body parts is shown in the following example (Mataco [Mataguayan] Hunt 1940):

- (14) a    kwe     cho  
          hand    bottom  
          ‘palm of the hand’
- b    pa        cho  
          foot    bottom  
          ‘sole of the foot’

As can be seen from example (14), structurally there appears to be no distinction with examples (2-13). Analytically, however, a distinction does exist. Viñas Urquiza, elaborating on Mataco structure, categorizes nouns according to two categories: absolute or possessed (1974:50-51). Possessed nouns, which require a prefix, belong to the class Golluscio calls inalienable, while absolute nouns are alienable<sup>9</sup>, cf. (15) (Mataco [Mataguayan] Viñas Urquiza 1974):

<sup>8</sup> In Terena, an Arawakan language, kinship terms are normally inalienably possessed; however, when a borrowed term such as Portuguese *mae* ‘mother’ is used, it is alienably possessed (Ek Dahl and Butler 1979:71).

<sup>9</sup> In this language we also appear to have compounding, with the whole coming first and the part appearing second.

- (15)    -x<sup>h</sup>leche    tisan  
           leg        meat  
           ‘leg muscle’

An issue in some languages is that when there is a grammatical distinction between alienable and inalienable possession and there are no relational classifiers, a noun can be marked with either type of possession resulting in differences in meaning (Aikhenvald 1996:89). For example, in Paumari (Arawá family), a word which means ‘breath’ when it is inalienably possessed, becomes ‘wind’ when it is alienably possessed, cf. (16) (Paumari [Arawá] Aikhenvald 1996):

- (16)    -ka-e        breath  
           nu-ka-e     my breath  
           ka-e        wind

Furthermore, in Paumari, with only a few exceptions, all the kinship nouns and body parts are inalienably possessed. In the Guajiro language, mentioned in example (13), the focus on nominal constructions is primarily on whether the concept or object can be possessed, that is, whether they belong or not to someone. Thus, in Guajiro it is assumed in the logic of the language that a father is somebody’s father and is so marked. In the same pattern of thinking, parts of the body also belong: Guajiro doesn’t conceive of the eye or the ear by itself, rather as parts of a person and therefore one always says ‘the eye of someone or other’, ‘my eye’, ‘my ear’, etc. In other words, they are inalienably possessed.

### 3. Classifiers and identification of body parts

#### 3.1 Nominal Classifiers

Instead of independent nouns, classifiers are utilized in some languages for identifying body parts. In Piaroa, classifiers are utilized for nouns denoting man-made and/or natural objects, some but not all imaginary objects, human and animal body parts, and the parts and stages of plant life. The classifiers in these examples are reduplicated forms and are utilized overtly as the final syllables of the noun, cf. (17) (Piaroa [Saliban] Krute 1983):

- (17) *a*    chæha    -t<sup>h</sup>it<sup>h</sup>i  
           ear        bell  
           ‘earlobe’
- b*    chuhu    -kækæ  
           plant    spiny  
           ‘plant roots’

Alejandra Vidal (1995:33), discusses constructions which consist of classifying nouns and a specific noun. In (18a) and (18b), the classifying noun is in the slot of possessor/whole and the specific noun is possessed/part. In (18c) and (18d), the reverse word order holds and the classifying noun (in this case ‘insect’) follows the specific noun (Pilaga [Guaykuran] Vidal 1995):



- (18) *a* epaq lawo  
 tree flower  
 ‘flower of the tree (parasitic plant)’
- b* epaq ketele  
 tree ears  
 ‘ears of the tree (epiphyte plant)’
- c* pagela lapaGat  
 wasp insect  
 ‘wasp’
- d* piyoq lapaGat  
 flea insect  
 ‘flea’

Aikhenvald (1996:37ff) notes that for Paumari, discussed above, there is a fairly complex noun class system which consists of two coexisting systems. One class is based on feminine vs. masculine opposition, the second class, is called the *ka*- noun class. Body parts as a semantic group, belong to the *ka* class when they represent the whole (or extended) body part, e.g. hand, foot, or head as the whole, but singular parts such as a finger, toe, part of the head covered with hair belong to the non-*ka* class, cf. (19) (Paumari [Arawá] Aikhenvald 1996):

- (19) *a* ka -‘dadi  
 whole -head,  
 ‘head as the whole’
- b* ‘dadi  
 part of the head  
 ‘covered with hair’

Classifiers are also used in some Carib languages with alienably possessed nouns (Aikhenvald 1996: 96). Possessed classifiers in Baniwa and Tariana (Arawakan) and in East-Tucanoan languages, are used with both alienably and with inalienably possessed nouns.

Daw and Hupda (Maku family) have possessor classifiers which are used in alienably possessed nouns (20a); whereas inalienably possessed nouns, such as body parts, parts of plants and some kinship terms, do not have these classifiers (20b) (Daw [Maku] Aikhenvald 1996:103ff.):

- (20) *a* yam dum  
 tail dog  
 ‘dog’s tail’
- b* yud dâw- tôg -e  
 clothing human- daughter -CL:animate possessor  
 ‘the girl’s clothing’

### 3.2 *Verb Classifiers*

Another facet of the part-whole relation is the fact that body parts are dealt with not only as nominal forms, but in verbal forms as well. Verb-incorporated classifiers are the type used in Machiguenga and Mundurucu.

Machiguenga (Shepard 1997:40) utilizes the body part classifiers, *-gito* (to indicate verbal action directed to heads or skulls), *-vako* (for verbs associated with hands), and *-oki* (for verbs associated with eyes), as in (21a) and (21b) below. Furthermore in Machiguenga as well as in Mundurucu (a Tupian language), some verb-incorporated classifiers also serve as noun classifiers. *-shi*, the classifier for plant leaves occurs in verbs, nouns, adjectives, numerals, locative expressions and in a compound numeral classifier, as in example (21c) and (21d), (Machiguenga [Arawakan] Shepard 1997):

- (21) *a* i- tso- gito- take- ro  
 he- VR:to suck,finish- CL:head - aspect D.O.  
 'he finished the meat off the head of an animal'
- b* i- tsonga- vako- take  
 he- VR:to finish- CL:hand- aspect  
 'the number five, literally, the hand ran out of fingers'
- c* tsirompi- shi  
 fern- classifier:leaf  
 'fern leaf'
- d* i- tima- shi- take  
 he- VR:to stay,wait- CL:leaf- aspect  
 'he spied, hunted from a blind (made out of leaves)'

These verb classifiers are extremely productive as well as being important in understanding how the parts of both animate and inanimate nouns are produced.

### 4. *Verbs and part-whole expressions*

Perhaps the most unusual feature is to be found in Amahuaca where verbs always take a prefix whose purpose is to indicate the part of the body which is being referred to, cf. (22a). There are other verbs which carry a body part prefix when the action refers to some part of the body, cf. (22b), and there are some verbs that always carry a body part prefix which indicates the part of the body which has been affected, cf. (22c) (Amahuaca [Panoan] Hyde 1980):

- (22) *a* mu- chócaquin  
 hand (prefix) wash  
 'he washes the hands (of someone else)'

- b* ru-                    tucúhuhi  
 nose (prefix) have broken  
 ‘to have one’s nose broken’
- c* mu-                    hozahi  
 hand (prefix) some part of the body is swollen  
 ‘the hand is swollen’

### 5. *Lexical ‘part of’*

As we have already noted, in some languages one deals with part-whole relations by juxtaposing the nouns, but there are also other ways as well. Thus for Guaykuran languages, Padre Barcena (1893:35) in a very early grammar of the languages, notes that when one talks about which body part hurts, the literal translation is ‘it hurts me this or that part of the body.’ The concept of ‘part of something’ in Toba can also be expressed lexically, cf. (23) (Toba [Guaykuran] Buckwalter 1980):

- (23) na-iwaq n’attau’a                    da-i’oquiaxac  
 arm            part of something    my body  
 ‘my arm is part of my body.’

Susnik discussing Eyiguayegi-Mbaya notes that the lexical form ‘part’ can be used to express the following (24) (Eyiguayegi-Mbaya [Guaykuran] Susnik 1972):

- (24) yiboledi            niguai  
 body                    part  
 ‘part of my body’

#### 5.1 *Feature-Activity Relation*

The earlier discussion about part-whole, and the examples provided in this section thus far, essentially describe concepts which are concrete. In the Toba example below, utilizing a lexical form meaning ‘part’, an abstract ‘whole’ such as a religious service with a song as a ‘part’ is presented. This is an example of another type of meronymic relation called Feature-Activity. Here, the concept ‘part’ designates the ‘features or phases of activities and processes’ (Winston et al. 1987:427), cf. (25) (Toba [Guaykuran] Buckwalter 1980):

- (25) da-n’onaxanaxac    lya’aget                    ca-culto  
 song                            part of something    religious service  
 ‘the song is part of the service’

### 6. *Part-Whole Polysemy: Expansion of Meaning*

Naming a whole by one of its parts occurs in many languages in the Americas; in fact, it might even be a language universal.<sup>10</sup> This feature is also very important in terms of lexical change, for we find that a word with a specific referent can be expanded to another when both have some kind of meaning relation to each other. Brown and Witkowski note that underlying eye/face polysemy is a relation of part to whole (1983:72) and that the word for eye is frequently expanded to refer to the face.

Old Tupi provides additional evidence for the way in which the meaning of the whole is expanded so that the whole is used for the part. Edelweiss (1969: 178) notes that, 'in Tupi, where originally there was a word corresponding to wall (muro, parede), the Indians of the North expanded the meaning of the word to *oka* – 'house', taking the whole for the part.', cf. (26) (Tupi [Tupi-Guarani] Edelweiss 1969):

- (26) *a*    itá-        oka  
          stone-    house/wall  
          'house or wall of stone'
- b*    yby-        oka  
          earth/mud-    house/wall  
          'house or wall of earth'

There are certain semantic domains which seem to be related to the expansion of meaning and polysemy. Mary Key notes that cognate sets show among other things, extensions of meaning for the part-whole lexical arena (1995a:150). Thus, one cognate set from Tacanan includes arm and branch: another includes feather, leaf, hair. Key hypothesizes that the expansion of meaning was directional, originating from the corporeal shapes towards objects in nature to artifacts or psychological concepts, to abstract perception, and finally to prepositions. In other words, she notes the primacy of the human body is noted, and the consequent broadening of denotation.

### 7. *Metaphoric Usage*

The examples which follow deal with how part-whole relations are expressed metaphorically. In Pemon, discussed earlier, nouns for body parts are used metaphorically. Thus, the word 'eye' can be used with plants or clothes as in (27) (Pemon [Cariban] Cesareo de Armellada 1943):

- (27)*a*    yei        -yenu  
          tree        eye  
          'burl'

<sup>10</sup> For Pagago see Casagrande and Hale (1967); for Quechua see Stark (1969); and for Tzeltal see de Léon (1992). Andersen used a more universalistic approach (1978) and Wilkins (1993) provides an argument for natural tendencies of semantic change.

*b* pon -yenu  
 dress eye  
 'button hole'

In these examples, note that the whole precedes the part, as it has in so many examples cited earlier.

For Guaykuran languages, metaphoric usage is seen in two different domains in examples (28) (Toba [Guaykuran] Klein 1973) and (29) (Eyiguayegi-Mbaya [Guaykuran] Unger 1972):

(28) Imik lawak  
 nose cave  
 'nostril'

(29) dimigi loguidi  
 building stretched out wing of bird  
 'overhanging roof of house'

From a short vocabulary of Koto or Coto (Tukanoan) we get further confirmation of the relation metaphorically between body parts and nature. Thus, the particle -kã when used with words such as bird, fish, and tree, is translated as wing, fin, and branch respectively, cf. (30) (Koto [Tukanoan] Espinosa Perez 1955):

(30) sũnki -kã  
 tree body appendage  
 'branch of a tree'

### 8. Conclusion

This essay has dealt with the variety of ways in which meronymy or the part-whole relation is expressed in a sample of indigenous languages of lowland South America. Part-whole relations are expressed in these languages in the morphology, semantics, syntax or lexicon, or in a combination thereof. By far the most common expression is in morphologically derived forms where the relationship between whole and part is expressed in terms of possessor/possessed. Further work on other lowland languages as well as the highland languages, still needs to be undertaken in order to provide a more complete picture of how meronymy is expressed in Amerindian languages.

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