

The system of spatial reference in Kadorih

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Abstract

The goal of this presentation is to describe the system of spatial reference in Kadorih by illustrating the lexical items and the morphosyntax of the following elements: directionals, intrinsic parts of objects, relative locations/directions, and demonstratives. Kadorih is a dialect of Ot Danum, an Austronesian language which is spoken in the upper reaches of Kahayan River in Central Kalimantan and belongs to the Barito languages. Spatial reference systems in Barito languages have been hardly described to date. This presentation attempts to look into the spatial reference system of one of these languages.

In Kadorih, there are two distinct types of directional systems: one is based on the main river, the other is based on the movement of the sun. The river flows along the intrinsic axis of upriver-downriver. This line is used to indicate locational/directional concepts in reference to upriver and downriver position, and it makes further spatial reference in combination with knowledge about the location of a village, ‘up away from (the river)’ and ‘down towards (the river)’. Any description of a position or movement within a confined geographical area along a river involves the river as a reference point. On the other hand, the system involving the movement of the sun makes use of the intrinsic axis of sunrise-sunset. It is mainly used when working the field or finding one’s way in the jungle.

The language name *ot danum* ‘head waters’ illustrates the intrinsic part of an object, that is, *ot* ‘source (of a stream)’ is part of a river. In order to express the intrinsic parts of objects, body-part terms like ‘mouth’ or ‘back (anat.)’ and relational nouns like ‘inside’ or ‘end/tip’ are commonly used. In contrast, in order to express the relative locations/directions, relational nouns, prepositions, verbs, and adjectives can be used. Among these, two notionally different pairs of terms for ‘up’ and ‘down’ are described in detail in reference to relative locations/directions.

The dialect name *kadorih* ‘like that’ is a kind of manner demonstrative with anaphoric function. This presentation mainly discusses the forms and morphosyntax of exophoric demonstratives. Proximal *ih-* ‘this’ and distal *a-* ‘that’ refer to objects within the immediate sight/reach. In contrast, locational demonstratives (‘here’ or ‘there’) must be used when referring to objects or locations out of sight/reach.