

5. (20 points) Possessed in Vanuatu

Vanuatu is a South Pacific country with 74 populated islands and more than 100 languages belonging to the Oceanic language family made up of languages spoken from Papua New Guinea to Hawaii to Easter Island. In Vanuatu, speakers of these languages have developed interesting ways of saying that something belongs to someone. You are invited to examine some examples from the language spoken on the island of Tanna. Take a look at the examples of how possession is expressed in this language (given on the next page) and then answer the questions which follow.

Pronunciation notes: [ə] represents a sound like the last sound of 'the' in 'the book'. [ŋ] represents a velar nasal sound as in 'singing'.

1	ralah neŋow	their canoe
2	rahan nasumien	his garden
3	raham nima	your house
4	nepikə kahaw	rat's tail
5	nəməm nəkawə	your (sg) kava (a drink)
6	netetamlaw	your child (speaking to mother and father of child)
7	niŋlaw nahwel	their laplap pudding (a food) (for both of them)
8	nenien raha enteni	Tanna's speech (<i>enteni</i> 'earth' = Tanna)
9	ratah naŋhatien	our language (=yours (sg) and mine)
10	narmen	his image
11	rahak nien	my coconut (that I'm selling)
12	rahak sot	my shirt
13	narfu tem	man's belly
14	neiwok mil	my two female cousins
15	pukah asoli	big pig
16	niŋək nien	my coconut (for eating)
17	nelkak	my leg
18	piam	your (sg) same-sex sibling
19	nisiməteliŋəm	your (sg) ear-wax
20	narunien raha tjotam	Jotham's knowledge

21	niŋlah kuri	their dog (for eating)
22	niŋən nawanien	his food
23	nepiken	his tail
24	ratalaw jow	their turtle (belonging to both of them)
25	rahak jerehi	my lobster
26	nisin	his excrement
27	nentowi jow	turtle's neck
28	nerow raha jow	the turtle's spear
29	nelka pukah	pig's leg
30	nakale naw mil	the two edges of the knife OR the two knives' edges
31	nisi kunget	louse excrement
32	nəmtalaw nəkawə, ian mwamnəm	As for the kava (drink) belonging to you two, go and drink it!
33	ratamlaw kuri ije?	Where is your dog (belonging to the two of you)?
34	niŋək kuri u, ojakawan	My dog here, I'm going to eat (it).
35	rahak nima takaku	My house is small

5.1. (5 points) Translate each of these five expressions into the Tanna language.

- rat's ear
- my two dogs (that I own)
- their bellies
- a brother of those two (men)
- our child (= yours (sg) and mine)

5.2. (5 points) Translate these five expressions into the Tanna language.

- Jawkelpi's house
- the pig's canoe
- my picture of you (=the one that I own that is an image of you)
- The house belonging to you two is big
- Where is my lobster (that I am going to eat)?

5.3. (5 points) There are several ways of saying 'their' in Tanna. On the answer sheet, list those found in the Tanna examples and explain any differences in the meaning they express.

Solutions

5.1 a mətaliŋə kahaw	5
b rahak kuri mil	
c narfulah	
d pialaw	
e netetah	

5.2 a nima raha Jawkelpi/Tjawkelpi	5
b neŋow raha pukah	
c rahak narmem	
d ratamlaw nima asoli	
e niŋək jerehi ije?	

5.3 The Tanna form is used when	5
-law	a. two possessors of something very close to them such as a body part or close relative	
-lah	b. more than two possessors of something very close, as in a.	
niŋlaw	c. two possessors of something to eat	
niŋlah	d. more than two possessors of something to eat, as in c.	
ratalaw	e. two possessors of something not covered by a or c.	
ralah	f. more than two possessors of something not covered by b or d.	