

LOCATION

A Linguistic and Cultural Focus in Samo

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O. Introduction:

Samo is spoken by approximately 650 individuals living in the Nomad Sub-District of Western District, Papua New Guinea. It is one of four dialects spoken on the Strickland Plain (Shaw, 1973). Material for this paper has been collected since February, 1970 while living among the Samo at the village of Kwobi.

This paper presents the importance of location as a linguistic and cultural focus and shows how it functions as an aspect of the language. In a word count from several short texts on various topics, 22% of the words were of a locative nature. Though this percentage in itself is not particularly high, 81% of all sentences in the same material contained locatives demonstrating that it is difficult for a Samo speaker to make an utterance without including locational references.

1. Setting:

The Strickland Plain is located in the heart of Papua New Guinea, being equi-distant from the north and south coasts. Lying on the south side of the central ranges, the Nomad region is over 600 miles by river from the Gulf of Papua, yet the altitude varies between only 300 feet and 500 feet in elevation. The vegetation is dense tropical rain forest watered by over 200 inches of rain per year.

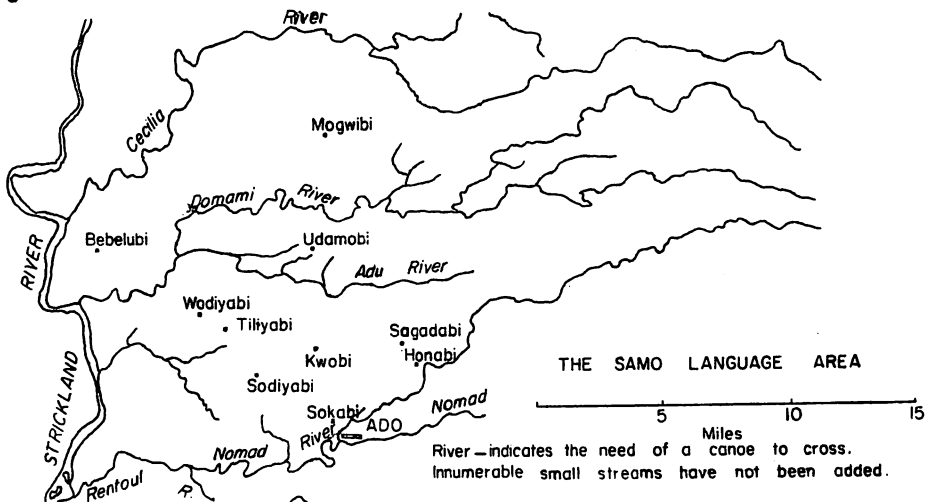
The land under the forest canopy consists of parallel ridges rising between innumerable streams and small rivers which generally run from east to west and empty into the Strickland

River. Thus when walking on the north-south axis one is continually crossing streams and traversing ridges.

Each long-house, inhabited by an extended family, is built along a ridge top which is the highest point in an immediate area. Gardens are built immediately around the house, providing a ready supply of food as well as protection for the occupants, since anyone approaching can be easily seen as they traverse the maze of tree trunks and limbs which tangle the ground as a result of garden making.

In close proximity to the long-house are the sago stands upon which the people depend for their livelihood. These stands of sago are in the swampy area at the base of the ridge and thus are always 'down' in relation to the house on the ridge. Beyond the sago lies the vast rain forest which each Samo knows intimately from his subsistence activity. Further gardens are planted and maintained at varying distances from the main house and if these are more than a half-hour walk away a small garden house is usually built, again at the top of the ridge and in the center of the garden. These satellite gardens and houses are placed linguistically with respect to the main house by indicating whether they are 'upstream' or 'downstream' if on the east-west axis, and 'down' if on the north-south axis.

This latter emphasis upon things being 'down' is necessary since anyone leaving the long-house in this direction must first descend the ridge and then proceed up and down across ridges until he finally ascends the final ridge which is his destination, going 'up' to the house. This same reasoning applies when going to other major long-houses, but frequently these lie across a major stream crossable only by canoe, in which case the place is referred to as being 'across.'



Thus a person 'descends' northward to Udamobi but 'crosses over' to Mogwibi, also to the north but across the Domami River. One also 'descends' southward to Sokabi, but 'crosses over' to Nomad, which lies on the south bank of the Nomad River. On the other hand, Sagodobi and Honobi are spoken of as being 'upstream' from Kwobi, while Sodiyobi, Tiliyabi and Wodiyobi are all 'downstream' but Bebelubi is 'across' since the Domami River must be crossed to get there (see map).

To say a place is 'across' also implies that it is at a considerable distance, necessitating several hours of walking as well as crossing a major stream. This term is sometimes used to refer to people outside of one's sphere of alliances, so that they are 'across' not only geographically but socially as well. Such people were the object of cannibalistic raids until government intervention in the past ten years brought this activity to a halt.

This use of location, then, geographically places each community with respect to others, indicating what people must do to get from one to the other. Thus the geography of the region appears to have an effect on the use of terms and, in fact, determines the semantic nature of the terms.

Beyond the use of words to locate people, places and events, the Samo employ their intimate knowledge of the forest to assist in description. Thus virtually every stream is named and each ridge has a history which is well known to everyone in the area. For example the ridge next to Odun stream is where the Sokabi people once built a long-house and the ridge continues to bear that name. Another ridge is where Waso killed a pig, and the ridge is associated with that event. This intimate acquaintance with their surroundings allow the Samo to weave locational details into their discussions with great precision, placing individuals and events with respect to all that has happened upon the land. Once the locational setting is clearly established by the use of names or events known to everyone, locational words may be used within that context to assist in graphic description.

This emphasis upon location, or where things are in relation to the speaker, is by no means unique to Samo (Clayre, 1973; Cook, 1967; Lawrence, 1972; Litteral, 1972), but each society seems to develop its own focus which reflects not only a certain semantic orientation but a cognitive perspective as well. For the Samo, direction (with respect to the riverine topography) and distance from the speaker or his point of reference (often a specific long-house) explicates the environmental setting in which the narrative unfolds. This placement of things in relation to an individual appears to be a great concern,

manifesting itself through the use of locational words and affixes and a relatively complex grammatical organization of these.

2. Locationals:

Samo speakers express location in three basic ways: locative words, verbs which indicate location or direction of motion, and phrase-level clitics. We now turn to a description of each of these.

2.1 Locative words:

Locative words locate people, places, and things with respect to each other and the surrounding environment. These words are:

- ki² - here (specific)
- kou - there (non-specific)
- bu - there (upstream)
- dou - up there
- moun - down there

Selected examples of usage in texts include the following:

An ki huga-bo

Ist
sing. here come-past 'I came here'
subj.

Holulwage ilo obuse monsoun kou bu-lobe

durative 3rd office house there sit-continued
time dual
subj.

'They two continued sitting over there at the government office
for awhile'

A-di bu genlongou-lo-delo sougou tiga lan-bo

road-on up- gather-coor-past tobacco tie eat-past
stream

'Having gathered on the upstream (east) road (we) smoked tobacco'

Monmanbi en homen he-man dou

Name 3rd tree cut-nom- up there
sing. inalizer
poss.

Each of these locative words may be suffixed by -ya 'from' indicating a reverse direction.

Ousou kou-ya huga-bo

man there-from come-past 'The man came from there'

Ki-ya hen ya-man

here-from focus go downstream-past

'(We) went downstream (west) from here'

2.2 Motion Verbs

Several verbs in the language are used to indicate the direction of motion. These are:

fo-da	-	to go up, ascend
mun-la	-	to go down, descend
to-la	-	to go upstream (east)
ya-la	-	to go downstream (west)
sou-la	-	to cross over
huga-la	-	to come
i-la	-	to go

Each of these verbs indicates direction. Though not locatives in the true sense, the final two indicate the direction of the action by providing a point of reference. Examples of these from texts include the following:

Yondovo fo-da

3rd breadfruit go-indef.
sing tree
subj

'He will climb the breadfruit tree'

Oi holulwage i-man hen tu-man tu-lin

1st durative go-past focus go upstream-past go upstream- loc
pl time
subj

Howe-be monsoun-men bu

Name-poss house - to upstream

'After awhile we (all) went, went upstream (east) to the upstream place where Howe's house is there upstream'

Hwon fenyan en ade-mon i-bo
 child small 3rd father-to go-past
 sing
 poss

'The baby went to its father'

Yon³-man i

3rd - to go (imperitive) 'Go to him'
 sing
 obj

Yon dobu-li yobou-li

3rd bush-in remain-past progressive
 sing
 subj

'He remained in the forest'

An monsoun kawu-men i-linyon

1st house big - to go - pres. 'I am going to the big house'
 sing
 subj

Yon monsoun kawu-li yobou-linyon

3rd house big- in remain-pres. 'He is remaining in the big house'
 sing
 subj

The clitics can only mean to, at, in, or on. In order to form more complex and therefore more specific locations or positions (as the English prepositions), it is necessary to combine the clitic -li or -le 'at, in, on' with nouns which refer to a specific location (locational noun). These derived words we shall call relator words. They act just like the simple clitics, i.e. the entire relator word fills the relator slot of a relator-axis phrase and provides a greater range of specific possibilities. Some examples are:

<u>kuli</u>	'innards'	+	-li	=	<u>kudi</u>	'inside of'
<u>huli</u>	'external'	+	-li	=	<u>hudi</u>	'outside of'
<u>tobu</u>	'top'	+	-li	=	<u>tobuli</u>	'on top of'
<u>fen</u>	'edge'	+	-le	=	<u>fenle</u>	'next to'
<u>hai</u>	'bottom'	+	-li	=	<u>hali</u>	'underneath'

Examples from texts include the following:

An bibi bokisi ku-di dou sa-bo

1st thing box innards-in up put-past
sing
subj

'I put the things in the box up there'

Yon houn fen-le tofou-bo

3rd water edge-at stand-past
sing
subj

'He stood next to the stream'

Boyi homen ha-li yobou-li

snake tree bottom-at remain-past

'The snake was underneath the log'

Finally a locative emphasizer du may be used for emphasis, filling the periphery slot of a locative phrase. There is no exact English equivalent for this word, but it has the idea of completely, all the way, or right there.

yon monsoon ku-di du sou-bo

3rd house innards-in emphasis enter-past
sing
subj

'He entered completely into the house'

These three means by which location is indicated all act differently and are controlled by different grammatical rules. Generally speaking the locative words indicate location, the verbs show the direction of motion, and the relationals give the position of things in relation to each other.

3. Grammatical Analysis:

Having described the locatives and how they can be formed, we turn now to a brief analysis of how they fit into the grammatical structure of the language.

The locative slot of any clause may be filled either by a single locative word or a locative phrase.

Cl = + Subj + Loc:loc word/loc ph. +Pred: vb/motion vb⁴

Considerable variation may occur in the locative phrase, which is composed of an obligatory head and an optional periphery.

Loc. Ph = +Head:R-A Ph + Periph:loc wd/emph. (du)

The head of a locative phrase is filled by a relator-axis phrase, which is either a noun or a noun phrase (axis) plus a locative clitic (relator).

R-A Ph. = +Ax:Noun ph/noun +Rel:loc. clitic/rel. wd

An monsoun-men i-bo

1st house - to go-past

sing

subj

'I went to the house'

Here the relator -men 'to (inanimate object)' is added to the noun 'house' and tells where the person went.

Yon monsoun kawu-li hobou-linhon

3rd house big-in dance-pres

sing

subj

'He is dancing in the big house'

Here the locative clitic -li is added to the phrase 'the big house' modifying the entire phrase and indicating where the dance is taking place.

While the relator in these examples is a simple clitic, it may be more complex being composed of a relator word which in section 2.3 was described as a locational noun plus the specific locative clitic -li or -le.

Rel word = +nucl:locational noun +rel: -li -le

fen-le

edge-at 'next to'

Yon monsoun ku-di hobou-bo

3rd house innards-in dance-past 'He danced inside the house'

sing

subj

An example of the minimum phrase without a periphery would be :

monsoun-men i-bo
house - to go-past
'(He) went to the house'

The periphery actually modifies the head and is either a locative word or the emphatic word du.

An mousoun-men kou i-bo
1st house - to there go-past
sing
subj
'I went to the house over there'

The periphery kou, 'over there' modifies the head of the locative phrase, 'to the house.'

Yon monsoun ku-di du do
3rd house innards-in emph is
sing
subj
'He is right inside the house'

Here, du modifies the whole head of the phrase 'inside the house.'

The locative word which fills the periphery may be described by the formula:

Loc. word = +nucl: locative stem + reverse: -ya

Ousou kou-ya huga-bo
man there-from come-past
'The man came from there'

koyabi holo sigi ko-di dou-ya mun-bo
cassowary egg like sky-in down-from fall-past
'A (thing) like a cassowary egg fell down from the sky'

At this juncture we must also include the following locational words which function in the language as modifiers.

helofou - across, opposite
sunlin - close
sago - long, tall

These words do not behave in the same way as locational words previously described since they cannot take the -ya added to locative words, nor the other clitics added to form relationals. Rather these must be combined at the phrase level with nouns, the entire construction taking on a locative meaning.

Bebelubi monsoun ali sago do
 Name house road long is
 'It is a long road to Bebelubi'

Here the phrase 'long road' combines to mean a 'long way' or simply 'far':
 'Bebelubi is far.'

Monlinbo houn Kwobi sunlin hen do
 Name water Name close focus is
 'Monlinbo water (stream) is near Kwobi'

An example of the most complex type of locational slot would be the following:

Yon Lwu houn kawu fen-le kou-ya huga-bo
 3rd Name water big edge-at there-from come-past
 sing
 subj
 'He came from next to (the bank of) the big Lwu (Strickland) river
 over there'

In this clause the locative phrase is:

Lwu houn kawu fen-le kou-ya
 Name water big edge-at there-from
 'from next to the big Lwu river over there'

The head of the locative phrase is the relator-axis phrase

Lwu houn kawu fen-le
 Name water big edge-at 'next to the big Lwu river'

The axis of this is the noun phrase

Lwu houn kawu
 Name water big 'big Lwu river' (Strickland River)

The relator is the relator word

fen-le
edge-at 'next to'

This itself is composed of the locational noun fen, 'edge' plus the locative clitic -le, 'at, in, on.'

The periphery of the phrase is the affixed locative word

kou-ya
there-from 'from there'

This tells where the big river is. This entire construction may be diagrammed as follows:

<u>Yon</u>	<u>Lwu houn kawu fenle</u>	<u>kouya</u>	<u>hugabo</u>
Subj	Locative Phrase		Pred
	<u>Lwu houn kawu fenle</u>	<u>kouya</u>	
	Head	Periphery	
<u>Lwu houn kawu</u>	<u>fenle</u>	<u>kou</u>	<u>ya</u>
Axis	Relator	loc. wd	reverse wd
	<u>fen</u>	<u>le</u>	
	stem	relator	

4. Conclusion :

The locational system described here is based on the way in which the Samo themselves describe their environment and use it to their advantage. We feel it is largely a product of the riverine topography. In order to get from one place to another people must move through the rain forest by either following the streams and ridges or cutting across them. The terms used describe which axis is in focus. Once a specific location has been pinpointed with the use of names then locational words, verbs and relators can be used to describe the relationship between the environment and things in it to the actor and the resultant action.

Thus when describing a hunt, the narrator described how he and his dogs followed a certain stream which he named. The rest of the narrative described the hunt and subsequent kill with respect to that specific stream. The listeners knew exactly where the stream was located and could thus minutely follow the movements of the hunt, re-living the experience

with the hunter.

If we can assume with Burling (1970), Hymes (1964), Pike (1967), and others that language is an integral part of culture, then the importance of location in the linguistic structure of the language may indicate an area of cognition that extends to other areas of the culture as well. An analysis of the kinship system and social structure of the Samo strongly suggests this. Terms used for kin can be interpreted as terms of locational placement rather than kinship terms in the usual genealogical sense. The term for 'mother's brother' (babo) includes in its sphere of meaning all men, except the very old, who live in mother's natal long-house. The term for 'father' (ade) includes all men of parental age who live in the same long-house as the speaker. Rather than speaking of lineages and clans, the vernacular terms mon monsoon 'my house' (village) and mon ousou buwoman 'my sit with people' (allies) reveal an indigenous social classification of considerably greater meaning. These terms place individuals locationally with respect to where they live and the alliance patterns extant at the time (Shaw, forthcoming). This, however, is a tentative analysis and remains the object of a continuing study.

Location, then, is an important descriptive device in the Samo language. Various words give the location of persons, places and things. Verbs show the direction of the action. Relationals give the position of things in relation to each other. By using this locational semantic feature, an individual specifically relates to the topography of the land upon which he depends for his existence.

NOTES

1. The authors hereby gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the New Guinea Research Fund in carrying out the research necessary for this paper.
2. In accordance with the goals of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, a detailed phonological analysis of Samo has been carried out and a practical orthography, used in literacy materials, has been established. The orthography is used throughout this paper.

There are six vowels	i, e, a, u, ou, o
five stops	b, t, d, k, g
three fricatives	f, s, h
two liquid nasals	m, l
two semi-vowels	w, y

All vowels have nasalized counterparts symbolized by an 'n' following the vowel.

For the most part all these letters have phonic values approximate to those usually associated with them in English. When 'l' occurs word initial it is pronounced as 'n.'

'w' may occur in a consonant cluster with all consonants except 'l.'

Thus a complex sound approximated by 'rw' is symbolized by 'lw.'

3. The pronominal system is quite complex employing three classes of pronouns which variously function to indicate subject, object, or possession dependent upon the absence or presence of other pronouns in the utterance. This is detailed in K. Shaw (1973).
4. When the locational affix -len -lin -men is added to motion verbs, the locational slot permutes to after the predicate and is filled by an embedded clause.

Cl = + Subj +Pred:loc verb + Loc: embedded clause

loc vb = +nuc:motion vb stem + loc: -len -lin -men

See Section 2.2 for examples.

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