NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Alienable and in Alienable Possession in Dholuo

BY
EMESE LANG

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Translation Studies

JULY, 2007

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July, 2007

Student's declaration

ALIENABLE AND INALIENABLE POSSESSION IN DHOLUO

I declare that this is my original work and has not been
submitted to any other College or University for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical
Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners.

(Signed) _____

Emese Lang

July, 2007

ABSTRACT

In his book *A Grammar of Kenya Luo (Dholuo)* (1993) Tucker explores the different types of genitives he found in the language. He attempts to differentiate between alienable and inalienable genitive constructions, basing his argument on the different forms of genitive head noun in Luo. However, after thorough investigation, it can be said that Luo does not have the semantic distinction of alienable and inalienable genitives. It does have two different forms of genitive construction but these have no difference semantically. The difference between Tucker's findings and those in this document may be due to recent language change, but this would need further investigation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABBREVIATIONS

C	consonant
NP	noun phrase
obs	obstruant
son	sonorant
V	vowel
PST	past tense
PRF	perfect aspect

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Language Background

Luo (or Dholuo) belongs to the Nilo-Saharan greater language family and in descending order to the following sub-families: Eastern-Sudanic, Nilotic, Western, Luo, Southern, Luo-Acholi. The most closely related languages to it are under the Luo subcategory, many of them from Sudan. Northern Luo: Anuak, Bor, Jur, Burun, Maban, Shilluk, Thuri, Päri – these languages are all found in Sudan; and Southern Luo: Adhola, Kuman, and three Alur-Acholi languages, all in Uganda. Dholuo is the only language in the Luo family that is found in Kenya. There are a substantial number (280,000) of Dholuo speakers in Tanzania as well. (Gordon 2005).

Adhola is the most intelligible to Dholuo speakers, and according to Tucker (1993, 12) it can even be considered a dialect of Dholuo. The other related languages in Sudan are not intelligible to Dholuo speakers (Tucker 1993, 12).

The Luo people live mainly on the coast of Lake Victoria, in Nyanza province, Kenya. Their primary livelihood is fishing (Gordon 2005). There is also a large Luo community in the Kibera slum area in the middle of Nairobi.

1.2   Sources of Data

Since I am not a native speaker of the language I had to obtain my data from other sources. I used Tucker's *A Grammar of Kenya Luo (Dholuo)* as a written resource. For the oral data I relied mainly on Elizabeth Adhiambio, a native Luo speaker, who has been my primary language helper in writing this project. She is 21, was born and grew up in Kombewa, near Kisumu. Both her parents were native speakers of Luo. I got some help from Elly Gudo, my colleague and his wife Caroline, both speakers of Luo. Caroline is 31, she was born and grew up in Kisumu, and both her parents were native Luo speakers. Elly is 35, was born and grew up in the Nandi hills, which is a Kalenjin area in Rift Valley Province. His parents were also mother tongue Luo speakers. These language consultants use the Kisumu dialect.

The data I used is mostly elicited because of the nature of my topic, where I had to systematically compare constructions of possessive genitives in strictly specified categories of the language.

1.3   Previous Works

Unfortunately very little has been done on alienable and inalienable possession in

Dholuo, or any of the Nilotic languages for that matter. Tucker writes about it in his

discussion of the genitive construction (Tucker 1993, 189), with a substantial amount

of data, but focusing more on the phonological characteristics of the constructions.

For the purposes of my research I had to do a more systematic analysis of the

phonological data than Tucker. I also wish to concentrate more on its semantic

aspect, which Tucker does not deal with in depth.

1.4   Statement of the Topic

Certain languages make a distinction between possessions that are close to the possessor and usually can't even exist without the possessor, (i.e. dependent possessions), and possessions that can exist without a possessor (independent possessions) and are further removed from it. This distinction is commonly called inalienable versus alienable possession in the literature. I assumed, based on Tucker's findings, that Dholuo had this distinction - as it also has two types of genitive construction which are distinguished phonologically for most nouns - and I set out to attempt to prove my hypothesis in this paper. Furthermore, since the different languages with this distinction have different semantic categories for inalienable possessions, upon proving this distinction in Dholuo I was going to endeavor to distinguish the different categories of inalienable possessions in this language. However when I was able to obtain more and more data I started to have doubts whether this distinction is still there in Dholuo even if it has been in the past. So as I examined the data I had (keeping in mind that it came from quite restricted resources), I saw that I would not be able to prove my original hypothesis. So in this paper I am going to present the data I found and show that Dholuo does not have the distinction of alienable and inalienable possession. There is only one category,

kinship terms, where there is obligatory possession: kinship terms cannot stand alone without the possessor.

Because of limited time and resources I was not able to do further research into the historical development of the language. However this would be a very interesting and useful investigation to discover how Dholuo changed over time in its structure. It would be particularly informative to find out whether there has ever been the distinction of inalienable and alienable possessions in other categories of the language, or the change in form of the possessum is due to some other phonological or morphological reasons. For this, one would have to examine proto-Dholuo to see how possessive constructions were formed a long time ago.

1.5   Significance of the Topic

Looking at Tucker's data from 1993 and comparing it with the data I gathered I can see some significant differences in the way possessive constructions are formed. It is hard to decide whether the differences are due to language change or my restricted resources. But my speculation is that the language is going through change and it is seen even in the possessive constructions, particularly in regards to inalienable and alienable possessions, as I am going to show in this paper.

1.6   Content

After the introduction, in chapter 2, I present a general overview of the idea of

alienable and inalienable genitives drawing primarily on the literature I have

surveyed. At the end of the chapter I give a short description of Luo genitives

regarding form and semantic orientation, according to both Tucker's findings and

my own.

In chapter 3, I describe in detail the phonological changes that occur in some of the

genitive constructions in Luo. I also describe the phenomena in some of the

borrowed words in the language, pointing out that they behave in the same way as

other (older) words of the language. I also mention the plural possessum in the

genitive construction and the reason for its phonological non-change.

In chapter 4, I make a comparison between my findings and those of Tucker's,

especially examining words that could have both alienable and inalienable function

in different contexts, according to Tucker.

In chapter 5, I present the results of my investigation into the cross-linguistically

typical categories of inalienable nouns in genitive constructions. I attempt to show

that the change or lack of change occurs in all or most of these categories, and they

are not exclusive in one or another category.

Chapter 6 is the conclusion of my findings.

1.7 Orthography Used

I have used the standard Luo orthography in my work. I didn't see the need to use the IPA symbols, since the distinctions in form are clear even with the conventional Luo orthography. However this orthography doesn't use tone marks, so where tone made a difference in the grammar I indicated it by the tone marks normally accepted and used in linguistic works.

2 THE CONCEPT OF INALIENABLE AND ALIENABLE POSSESSION

2.1 General Overview of the Topic

In linguistics we talk about possession as an asymmetric relationship between possessor and possessum. In this relationship the possessor owns (rules over, is related to, connected to, etc.) the possessum. There are two noun phrases in the genitive construction and one (that of the possessor) is embedded in the main noun phrase. The possessor NP is modifying the possessum noun. In other words, the possessum is the head noun of the genitive construction.

Possession is expressed in different ways in different languages, and sometimes more than one way is used, depending on the communication, focus, relevance, among other reasons. Possession can take the form of juxtaposition, where the possessor follows the possessum in order, but no other marker is used. In a number of languages there are case marker affixes on either the possessor or possessum, or both. Other languages, such as English, have a possessive clitic, like - 's, or a preposition, like *of*.

Certain languages differentiate between alienable and inalienable possession. Inalienable possession is often intrinsic. Alienable possession requires a possessor that does the acquiring, but in inalienable possession the possessum is often already part of the possessor, or the relationship is such that the idea of acquiring is missing (Alexiadou 2003). According to Haiman (1985, 130) the conceptual distance between the possessor and the possessum is different depending on whether we talk about alienable or inalienable possession. The distance is greater with alienable possession and closer with inalienable.

Manoliu-Manea (1996, 711) observes concerning Romanian, that

> …inalienable possession is not a simple reflection of a 'state of affairs' dealing with inseparable terms, but rather an expression of a certain interpretation of the world we talk about in which the part and the whole are presented as being linked by an intrinsic relation of solidarity rather than possession.

Thus the concept of inalienability must be examined from a semantic and pragmatic point of view in each language. The boundary between alienable and inalienable possession and the categories of inalienable possession differ from language to language. They depend largely on cultural views of the personal domain and culture-specific conventions. The concept of personal domain can be defined as anything

related in "an habitual, intimate, organic way" to the person. It is mainly a socio-

cultural idea (Chappell and McGregor 1996, 8). "[I]t varies not only from language

to language, but even within a single language, according to the way in which a

particular real-world phenomenon is constructed from among the possible

alternatives" (Ibid).

There are several ways of creating and grouping categories of inalienable possession.

There are also different ways of differentiating them from alienable ones.

> Superficially, the distinction is a straightforward one: Items that cannot
> normally be separated from their owners are inalienable, while all others are
> alienable. Thus, items belonging to any of the following conceptual domains
> are likely to be treated as inalienable:

> (a)   Kinship roles
> (b)   Body parts
> (c)   Relational spatial concepts, like 'top', 'bottom', 'interior', etc.
> (d)   Parts of other items, like 'branch', 'handle', etc.
> (e)   Physical and mental states, like 'strength', 'fear', etc. …
> (f)   Nominalizations, where the 'possessee' [possessum] is a verbal noun, for
> example 'his singing', 'the planting of bananas'.

> In addition there are a number of individual concepts in a given language that
> may also be treated inalienably, such as 'name', 'voice', 'smell', 'shadow',
> 'footprint', 'property', 'home', etc. (Heine 1997, 10).

The speaker has little choice or control over the possession of classic types of inalienable possessions.

A different grouping of the semantic categories is Chappell and McGregor's relational categories:

(a)   a close biological or social bond between two people (e.g. kin)

(b)   integral relationship (e.g. body-parts and other parts of a whole)

(c)   inherent relationships (e.g. spatial relations)

(d)   essential for one's livelihood or survival (Heine 1997, 11).

Here we can see that body-parts and part-whole relationships have been grouped together, and another type, possessions that are 'essential for one's livelihood or survival' has been added, and even some of the items people use, for example for fishing and hunting, are inalienable.

The cultural view is very important in examining the concept of inalienable and alienable possession. A basic assumption is that the inalienable idea is strongly related to the part-whole relations, where the possessum cannot be separated from the possessor. This is however not the case in many languages. Sometimes items mentioned above, for example for livelihood (spears, clothes, etc.) that are clearly

not part of the person can be inalienable, while parts of the body, like hair and

fingernails are alienable possessions.

> The range of conceptual and/or linguistic variation that the
> inalienable/alienable distinction exhibits is in fact considerable, and a number
> of alternative taxonomic contrasts have been pointed out. Rather than between
> inalienable and alienable categories, for example, the distinction may be one
> between what Lébikaza (1991) calls intrinsic and non-intrinsic possession and
> what, following Seiler (1983, 13), we will refer to, respectively, as *necessary*
> and *optional* relationship (Heine 1997, 20).

A necessary item automatically requires a possessor; the possessor cannot be

envisioned without it. However not every possessor requires an item that the culture

considers optional (Heine 1997, 20).

Another way of looking at the concept of inalienability is the idea of 'identity

sensitive' possession. In inalienable possessions the possessum is essential to the

person's identity and whole existence, in alienable ones it is not (Chappell and

McGregor 1996, 12).

In examining inalienable and alienable possession we may also consider the three

factors that can determine alienability or inalienability: "degree of connectedness of

entity to possessor; degree of association with possessor; and degree of salience

apart from possessor" (Chappell and McGregor 1996, 21).

2.2   Dholuo Possessive Constructions

For this paper I only considered nominal possessives. All possessive constructions

are formed by juxtaposition of the possessum and the possessor.

(1)   *Law   dhako.*
      dress   woman
      A woman's dress.

      dhako   *law*
      woman   dress

Dholuo does not differentiate between definite and indefinite nouns, so definiteness

does not play a role in the structure of possessives. As I have mentioned before,

Tucker has written extensively about the phonological aspect of possessive

constructions, including the differences in form between alienably and inalienably

possessed nouns, according to his analysis. The simplest way of describing the

difference in form, according to Tucker, is to say that with alienable possessions the

original form of the nouns (both possessum and possessor) does not change, but with

inalienables the possessum does, often by dropping a vowel or changing the final

consonant. However, it is not that simple, because sometimes (especially short stem)

words do not change their form even in constructions that must be considered

inalienable from a semantic point of view. In other cases the only difference is tonal.

Occasionally there is tonal change in the possessor. My data, however, contradicts

Tucker's. There are indeed two ways of forming genitive constructions, but there is

no difference between them semantically. People normally only use one type of

genitive for any given pair of words, so it either has a distinct possessum form or it

does not, and this has to be learned for each word—that is, it is a lexical

morphological fact about the word, with no semantic content. The analytical problem

is that the words that change do not fall into any discernable semantic category, and

in no semantic category are there exclusively either words that change or words that

do not. Interestingly the plural forms of inalienable nouns don't seem to change their

form. Occasionally there is tone change. For further details on form see Tucker

(1993, 189-204).

3   PHONOLOGICAL CHANGES

3.1   About the Changes Generally

Looking through the data I saw that my first assumption, that there is a clear distinction of inalienable and alienable possessions by form, was proven wrong. For example, leaving out the compound words, half of the words I collected for body parts change and half of them do not when standing as possessum of a genitive construction. So we cannot say that one is more dominant than the other. In the following table the Change column has the original form of the noun first followed by the changed form. In the No change column the 'x' after the word indicates that phonologically there could be change but it does not happen.

Change	No change
bat - bad arm	*tik* x chin
dhok - dhog mouth	*tok* x back
lep - lew tongue	*chuny* liver/heart

lwedo - lwet hand	*it* x ear
ondhundho - ondhuth (bone) marrow	*chieth* excrement
chogo - chok bone	*lach* x urine
del - dend body	*pel* x navel
tielo - tiend foot	*lemb* cheek
ogwalo - ogwand calf of leg	*wang'* face/eye
remo - remb blood	*ombong'* ankle
bam - bamb thigh	*chund* penis
thuno - thund breast	*lak* x tooth
obuongo – ombuong brain	*adundo* x kidney
okumbo – okumb elbow	*nungo* x waist
ring'o - ring flesh/meat	*sianda* x bottock
wich - wii head	*um* x nose
ich - ii stomach	*chong* knee
oboo - oboch lungs	*ng'ut* x neck
olao - olap saliva	*ombich* x intestine

Table 1. Body parts: change/no change list

The phonological changes of most of the data I gathered are the following:

Voicing:

C   (V)#   →   C#

[+obs]   [+obs]

[-voice]   [+voice]

p,ch,t,k,

p → w (plus vowel shortening)

(2) *iip – iw*   *(Pl. ipe)*   (3) *lep/lew – lew (Pl. lepe, lewe)*
    tail   tongue

ch → j

(4) *rech – rej (Pl. reyni)*   (5) *tich – tij (Pl. tije)*

    fish   work

t → d

(6) *bat – bad*   *(*Plural: *bede)*   (7) *sati – sad (Pl. sede)*
    arm   shirt

(8) *jaot – jaod*   (9) *ot – od*   *(Pl. ute)*
    spouse ti → d   house

k → g

(10) *dhok – dhog*   *(Pl. dhoge)*   (11) *tik – tig (Pl.tige)*
    mouth   smell

Devoicing:

C   V#   → C#

[+obs]   [+obs]

[+voice]   [-voice]

d,dh,g

do → t

(12) *lwedo – lwet*   *(Pl. lwete)*   (13) *tado – tat*
     hand   roof

du → t

(14) *ogudu – ogut*   *(Pl. ogute)*
    hat

dho → th

(15) *puodho – puoth* *(Pl. puothe)*
    farm

ndho → th

(16)   *ondhundho – ondhuth*   *(Pl. ondhondhe)*
    bone marrow

go → k

(17) *chogo – chok*   *(Pl. choke)*   (18) *tigo – tik(Pl. tike [sets])*
    bone   necklace (bead[s])

Plosive insertion:

C   (V)#   →   prenasalized plosive#

[+son]

m,n,l, (-r)

mo → mb

(19) *remo – remb*
    blood

                                   (20) *romo – romb*
                                        size

(21) *chiemo – chiemb*   (Pl. *chiembe*)
    food

no → nd

(22) *thuno – thund*   (Pl. *thunde*)
    breast

na → nd

(23) *sigana – sigand* (Pl. *sigendni*)
    story

n → nd

(24) *yien – yiend*   (Pl. *yien*)
    tree

l → nd

(25) *del – dend*   (Pl. *dende*)
    body

                                   (26) *duol – duond*   (Pl. *duonde*)
                                        voice

lo → nd

(27) *tielo – tiend*   *(Pl. tiende)*   (28) *ogwalo – ogwand*   *(Pl. oguende)*
     leg/foot/root   calf of leg

Different changes:

r → ch

(29) *ler – lech*   (30) *bur – buch*   *(Pl. buche)*
     light   hole (e.g. snake's hole)

ro → ch

(31) *anguro – anguch*
     pig

Elision:

V# → 0

(32) *oboke – obok*   *(Pl. obokni)*   (33) *obuongo – ombuong*
     page   brain

(34) *soko – sok*   (35) *okumbo – okumb*
     well   elbow

(36) *nyakwaro – nyakwar* *(Pl. nyikwayo)*   (37) *kendo – kend*
     grandchild   fireplace

(38) *diere – dier*   (39) *tipo – tip (Pl. tipni)*
     middle   shadow

(40) *ring'o – ring'*   *(Pl. ring'e)*
     flesh

Processes involving *ch*:

V   C# → V# (lengthened) or *re*#
      [+obs]
      [-voice]

ch → 0 (plus compensatory lengthening of the final vowel)

(41) *wich – wii* *(Pl. wiye)*   (42) *ich – ii* *(Pl. iye)*
  head   stomach

ch → re

(43) *asech – asere* *(Pl. aserni)*
  arrow

V# → ch#

(44) *saa – sach* *(Pl. seche –hours, sache –* (45) *oboo – oboch* *(Pl. oboye)*
  time   *clocks)*   lungs

We can see that these changes are ones that occur cross-linguistically in other languages, too. They fit into common phonological rules.

There are a few more that seem to be more unique, and these are the following:

0 → ch

(46) *dwe – dwech*   *(Pl. dweche)*
  month

o→ p

(47) *olao – olap*   *(Pl. olepe)*

       saliva

0→ gi

(48)   *ner – nergi*   *(Pl. nere)*
       uncle

yo → gi

(49)   *dayo – dagi*   *(Pl. deye)*
       grandmother

0 → dh

(50)   *yie – yiedh*
       boat

Significant changes:

(51)   *dhiang' – dher(Pl. dhok)*
       cow

I added the plural form of some of the nouns, so that it can be seen how

systematically the changes occur. Quite a number of changes in the genitive

construction appear in the plural form as well.

If we compare these changes with the table of the body parts above we can see that not all the words change that could change. I put an 'x' next to the unchanged forms in the table that could change according to the phonological rules in the language, but they do not change. By this I wanted to show that the reason for some words not to change is not phonological restriction. So, clearly the words in the right-hand column have a different reason for not changing. If the distinction between inalienable and alienable possessions would be the change in form of the inalienable noun, then only words restricted by phonological rules would be left in the 'No change' column.

3.2   Borrowed Words

I have also looked at some borrowed words to see how they behave in genitive constructions and what their plural forms are. The interesting thing about these words is that apart from being borrowed – and therefore recent words – in the language, they also represent things that are not classically considered inalienable cross-linguistically. Of the eleven examples only one does not change its form in genitive constructions. They also follow the normal rules of formation of the plural form in the language.

The first example in the list does not change in the genitive construction, and all the

rest do.

(52)   **Singular**   **Plural**

bag   *bege*
bag   bags

bag   *Okelo*   *bege*   *Okelo*
bag   Okelo   bags   Okelo
Okelo's bag   Okelo's bags

V# → 0

(53)   **Singular**   **Plural**

mtoka   *mtokni*
car   cars

mtok   *dichwo*   *mtokni* *dichwo*
car   man   cars   man
the man's car   the man's cars

(54)   **Singular**   **Plural**

machunga (Swahili: *machungwa)*   *machungni*
orange   oranges

machung *nyako*   *machungni*   *nyako*
orange   girl   oranges   girl
the girl's orange   the girl's oranges

(55)   Singular   Plural

mesa   *mesni*
table   tables

mes   *ot*   *mese*   *ot*
table   house   tables   house
the table of the house   the tables of the house

0# → ch#

(56)   Singular   Plural

saa   *seche*
watch   watches

sach   *dhako*   *sech*   *dhako*
watch   woman   watches   woman
the woman's watch   the woman's wactches

C#   →   C#

[+obs]   [+obs]

[-voice] [+voice]

(57)   Singular   Plural

buk   *buge*
book   books

bug   *nyako*   *buge*   *nyako*
book   girl   books   girl
the girl's book   the girl's books

(58) Singular   Plural

    skat   *skede*
    skirt   skirts

    skad dhako   *skede dhako*
    skirt woman   skirts woman
    the woman's skirt   the woman's skirts

C   (V)#   → prenasalized plosive#

[+son]

n,m,l, (-r)

(59) Singular   Plural

    kalam   *kalembe*
    pen   pens

    kalamb wuoyi   *kalembe wuoyi*
    pen boy   pens boy
    the boy's pen   the boy's pens

(60) Singular
                                             Plural

    besen   *besende*
    basin   basins

    besend dhako   *besende dhako*
    basin woman   basins woman
    the woman's basin   the woman's basins

(61)   Singular   Plural:

  jikon   *jikonde*
  kitchen   kitchens

  jikond   mama   *jikonde   mama*
  kitchen mama   kitchens   mama
  mama's kitchen   mama's kitchens

ri → ch

(62)   *sukari*
        sugar

        sukach mama
        sugar   mama
        mama's sugar

These examples show that the kind of phonological changes we have observed in
other genitive constructions are still occurring today and it is not just an old
phenomenon. Also, it is not restricted to any particular category in the language, as
we will see in the following chapters as well.

3.3   Plurals

It is interesting to observe that, with very few exceptions, genitive constructions with plural possessa do not change the form of the possessum. The reason might be that, as I have said, many of the changes that occur in making a noun plural reflect the changes that happen when the singular noun is used in genitive construction. For example:

(63)   *tiend*   *nyako*   *tiende*   *nyako*
        foot   girl   feet   girl
        the girl's foot   the girl's feet

        tielo   *tiende*
        foot   feet

The singular genitive form of *tielo* is *tiend* and the plural is *tiende*. The change from a [+sonorant] to a prenasalized plosive at the end of the word is already in place in the singular genitive construction. *Tiende* has the same or very similar phonological change as the genitive singular form, so there is no reason to change any further when occurring in a plural genitive construction.

Sometimes there is a tonal change from the original form to the plural genitive, for example:

(64)   *wúòch nyathi*   *wùóch*
       shoes child   shoes
       the child's shoes

4 TUCKER'S NON-INTIMATE AND INTIMATE
SEMANTIC PAIRS OF GENITIVE CONSTRUCTION

One of Tucker's main arguments for alienable and inalienable possession (Non-intimate and Intimate is his phraseology) was that certain nouns take a different form when they are the possessum in an alienable construction than when they are in an inalienable one (1993, 198-203). He lists pairs of examples showing this claim.

However, according to my informants there is no difference in form between nouns whether they appear in 'intimate' and 'non-intimate' semantic construction. Some of the possessed nouns change their form and some do not. But if they change their form they always change it and if they do not they never change it, no matter what the relationship is between possessum and possessor. Most of the following examples were based on those of Tucker's, but were produced by the language consultant from which I received data. The two meanings indicated can both come from the same form in all the examples.

(65) Singular   Plural

    chogo   *choke*
    bone   bones

    chok   guok   *choke   guok*
    bone   dog   bones   dog
    the dog's bone   the dog's bones

- The one he is eating (from another animal)
- Part of his body.

(66) Singular   Plural:

    lwedo   *lwete*
    hand   hands

    lwet   jajuok   *lwete   jajuok*
    hand   witch   hands   witch
    the hand of the witch   the witch's hands

- The hand (of a dead man) belonging to a witch.
- Witch's own hand.

(67)   *ombich*
         intestine

     ombich   *ng'ato*
     intestine   person
     a person's intestine

-   From an animal.

-   Person's own.

(68)   *mbala*
         scar

     mbala ruoth   *mbala lweny*
     scar   chief   scar   battle
     the chief's scar   battle scar

(69)   *ura*
         spell

     uch   *nyathi*   *uch*   *jabilo*
     spell   child   spell   magician
     the spell of the child   the spell of the magician
     (that was cast on him)   (that he cast on somebody)

(70)　　*kor*
　　　　chest

　　　　kor　　*dhiang'*
　　　　chest　　cow
　　　　the cow's chest
　　　　or: the chest of the beef

(71)　　**Singular**　　　　　　　　　　　　**Plural**

　　　　bam　　　　　　　　　　　　　　*bambe*
　　　　thigh　　　　　　　　　　　　　　thighs

　　　　bamb　*dichwo*　　　　　　　　*bambe*　　*dichwo*
　　　　thigh　man　　　　　　　　　　　thighs　　man
　　　　the man's thigh　　　　　　　　　the man's thighs

- That he is eating (from an animal).

- His own body part.

(72)　　**Singular**　　　　　　　　　　　　**Plural**

　　　　bur　　　　　　　　　　　　　　*buche*
　　　　boil　　　　　　　　　　　　　　boils

　　　　buch　*jathieth*　　　　　　　　*buche*　　*jathieth*
　　　　boil　doctor　　　　　　　　　　boils　　doctor
　　　　the doctor's boil　　　　　　　　the doctor's boils

- That he is attending to.

- His own boil on his own body.

(73)   *adundo*
       kidney (gizzard)

adundo	*gweno*		*adundo*	*guok*
gizzard	chicken		gizzard	dog
The chicken's gizzard.			the dog's gizzard (that it is eating)	

So we can see, that even if this distinction existed in the language before, – and that is what we can see from Tucker's examples, - the most recent evidence that I have been able to acquire shows that it is not there anymore. One reason we can think that it existed some time ago is that Acholi for example, which is another closely related Southern Luo language, has this distinction in some areas of the language. However, the difference in form of the two types of genitives is much more distinct in Acholi (Bavin 1996, 842).

5 SEMANTIC CATEGORIES

5.1 Kinship Terms

We have seen from the general overview of literature that kinship terms are always a separate category of inalienable possession. Crosslinguistically we can observe that some languages put it in the inalienable category, when they put body parts in the alienable, and vice versa. It is not really a possession in the strict sense of the word. The 'possessor' is related to the 'possessum', but does not own it. It is a relational concept between people who are connected to each other most often by blood, sometimes through marriage.

In the Luo kinship system there is a distinction between some of the relationships on the father's side and on the mother's side. The maternal uncle is called differently from the uncle on the father's side, for example. 'Cousin' has several different terms depending on whether it is on the mother's side or father's, whether it is a male or female cousin, and whether it's the uncle's or the aunt's child. The names of

cousins, nephews and nieces are compound and quite complex, but they behave the same way as a single term for family ties.

The main characteristic of the kinship terms is that they cannot stand on their own. They must be always somebody's relation. So although the form of the possessum doesn't always change, they cannot exist in isolation.

Some of the relations where the form clearly changes are the following:

(74) *nyakwar*   *dichwo*   *nyakwaro*
      grandchild   man   grandchild
      the man's grandchild

(75) *jaod*   *dichwo*   *dichwo*   *jaot*
      spouse   man   man   spouse
      the man's wife

(76) *nergi*   *dichwo*   *ner*
      uncle   man   uncle
      the man's uncle (on mother's side)

(77) *owadgi* *baba*   *nyako*   *nyako*   *owadgi babau*
      uncle   on.father's.side girl   girl   uncle on father's side
      the girl's uncle (on father's side)

(78) *dagi*   *dichwo*   *dayo*
      grandmother   man   grandmother
      the man's grandmother

Other constructions where the head noun doesn't seem to change:

(79)   *owadgi wuoyi*   *owadgi*
         brother   boy   brother
         the boy's brother

(80)   *min   dichwo*   *dichwo*   *min*
         mother   man   man   mother
         the man's mother

(81)   *wuon   dichwo*   *wuon*
         father   man   father
         the man's father

(82)   *nyar   dichwo*   *nyar*
         daughter   man   daughter
         the man's daughter

(83)   *mar   dichwo*   *mar*
         mother-in-law man   mother-in-law
         the man's mother-in-law

We can also observe from the above that not only relationships through blood but even through marriage belong to this category, for example wife, husband and in-laws, are considered relations, too.

5.2   Part-whole Relations

5.2.1   Physical part-whole

The physical part-whole relation is the most obvious subcategory of this main group.

Things that are an integral part of another object belong here. So again, as with

kinship relations, the part is not a possessum of the whole, but they are, most of the

time, inseparably connected, or at least associated. The notion of 'optional' and

'necessary' relationship can be relevant in the physical part-whole relations.

Interestingly, the head noun in all the examples I found for this category changes its

form. Let us look at some examples:

(84)   *bad*   *yien*   *bat*   *yien*
       branch   tree   branch   tree
       the branch of the tree

(85)   *tat*   *ot*   *tado*   *ot*
       roof   house   roof   house
       the roof of the house

(86)   *obok*   *buk*   *oboke*   *buk*
       page   book   page   book
       the page of the book

(87)   *bad*   *sati*   *bat*   *sati*
       sleeve   shirt   sleeve   shirt
       the sleeve of the shirt

(88) *tiend* *otanda*   *tielo*   *otanda*
      leg   bed   leg   bed
      the leg of the bed

(89) *ramak* *ndowo*   *ramaki*   *ndowo*
      handle   bucket   handle   bucket
      the handle of the bucket

The tree is not a tree without branches, the house is not complete without the roof

and the book is not a book without pages. These are all necessary parts of the whole.

Similarly we cannot talk about branches without thinking of the tree, nor of roof

without a house, nor of pages without a book. We associate these with each other.

We can think of a bucket without a handle, but that would be a dysfunctional bucket.

There are a few other examples with slightly different senses:

(90) *lech*   *misuma*
      light   candle
      the light of the candle

      ler   *misuma*
      light   candle

We can have an unlighted candle and even if we light it the light is not strictly part

of the candle. But a burning candle cannot be imagined without its light. So light is a

functional concept here.

5.2.2 Body-parts

The connectedness is the strongest concept in the body-parts subcategory of the part-whole relations. While we can remove the roof of the house, and cut off the branches of the tree, typically we cannot imagine a body without its parts, whether external or internal parts. So we can also say that body parts are not optional for the person or animal. They are integral parts of the body. The 'owner' cannot sell them nor get rid of them. The question arises about who or what is the possessor here. We cannot look at a human being simply as a body, but as a person. So although this category is called body-parts and the parts are clearly attached to the body, the real possessor is the person himself. For we don't normally say 'the head of the body'. Instead we say 'the boy's head'.

Some typical examples of external body parts are the following:

(91) *bad*   *nyako*   *bat*
      arm   girl   arm
      the girl's arm

(92) *wii*   *nyako*   *wich*
      head   girl   head
      the girl's head

(93) *tiend*   *nyako*   *tielo*
      foot   girl   foot
      the girl's foot

(94) *lwet*   *nyako*   *lwedo*   *lwete*
      hand   girl   hand   hands
      the girl's hand

(95) *tiend*   *dhiang'*   *tielo*   *dhiang'*
      leg   cow   leg   cow
      the cow's leg

Some of the internal body parts:

(96) *ii*   *nyako*   *ich*
      stomach   girl   stomach
      the girl's stomach

(97) *chuny*   *Okelo*   *chuny*
      heart   Okelo   heart/soul
      Okelo's heart

A more uncommon one is the following:

(98) *olap*   *guok*   *Olap*   *guok*   *nyulo*   *ting'o*   *kute.*
      saliva   dog   saliva   dog   able   to.carry   infections
      a dog's saliva   A dog's saliva can carry infections.

      guok   *olao*
      dog   saliva

For an extensive list of body-part terms that change their form in genitive

constructions and one those that don't see the following Table. (I left out the

compound words, since they repeat other parts of the body that are already included

in this Table).

Change	No change
bat - bad arm	*ringre* corpse
wich - wii head	*tok* back
tielo - tiend foot	*chuny* liver/heart
lwedo - lwet hand	*it* ear
ich - ii stomach	*chieth* excrement
oboo - oboch lungs	*lach* urine
del - dend body	*pel* navel
olao - olap saliva	*lemb* cheek
remo - remb blood	*wang'* face/eye
thuno - thund breast	*ombong'* ankle
lep - lew tongue	*chund* penis
chogo - chok bone	*lak* tooth
bam - bamb thigh	*adundo* kidney

ondhundho - ondhuth (bone) marrow	*nungo* waist
ring'o - *ring* flesh/meat	*sianda* bottock
ogwalo - *ogwand* calf of leg	*um* nose
obuongo – *ombuong* brain	*chong* knee
dhok - *dhog* mouth	*ng'ut* neck
yweyo – *ywech* breath (respiration)	*ombich* intestine
okumbo – *okumb* elbow	*tik* chin

Table 2. Body parts: change/no change list

6 CONCLUSION

From the evidence of data I gathered it is obvious that the inalienable – alienable

distinction in Dholuo does not exist. In the most obvious cross-cultural categories for

inalienable possession there is nothing to indicate morphological distinction that

would mark inalienability. The categories that I have examined are kinship terms,

body parts and part-whole relations. All these categories have both forms of genitive

construction that the language has: juxtaposed genitive with changed or unchanged

form of possessum. I also examined borrowed words where the formation of

genitives would be recent. They behave the same way as any other nouns in the

language, and more importantly, they are, semantically, not typical inalienable

words. Looking at semantic pairs where the same possessum is used in 'inalienable'

and 'alienable' senses I saw no difference in form. I also examined all the

phonological changes I found, concluding that the changes in the head noun of a

genitive construction are not consistent in the language: some of the nouns that

could change phonologically, do not change. So there seems to be no phonological

nor semantic explanation for the two different kinds of genitives at this stage of the

development of the language. There might have been a distinction in the past, though it would not explain the change in more recent, e.g., borrowed words. Further research would be needed to ascertain the reason for the two kinds of genitive formation.

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APPENDIX

Awuor awuor

Chon gilala ne nitiere nyako moro ma-nyinge   Awuor awuor.
long ago   PST lived   girl   who   was-called   Awuor awuor
Long ago there lived a girl who was called Awuor awuor.

Ne   en   nyako ma   o-hero   timo   gik.moko mos.
PST she   girl   who PRF-like doing things   slowly
She was a girl who liked doing things slowly.

Sama   jo-wetene   oaa   omo.pii, en koro eka   o-chiew.
when   her-friends come.from the.river she when the.very.time PRF-wake.up
When her friends are coming from the river with water that is when she wakes up.

Chieng'.moro ne gi-winjore   ni gi-dhi   kado wigi e thim   kuma
one.day   PST they-agreed that they-go plait hair   in forest where

bet   ochwalore
seems very.far
One day they agreed that they should go to plait in the forest very far.

Mano ne o-miyo nyiri-gi   ochwew chon mondo gidhi   chon kendo
that   PST it-made girls-these woke.up early   so.that they.go   early   then

gi-dwog   chon.
they-come.back   early.
That made those girls wake up very early so that they can go and come back early.

48

Chieng'-no ne o-chopo.
day-that　　PST　it-arrive
That day arrived.

E saa mane nyiri-gi oa omo.pii mar adek Awuor awuor
that time that girls-these come.from the.river for third Awuor awuor

eka ne dhi marariyo.
the.very.time　　PST　go　for.the.second
The time these girls were from the river for the third time Awuor awuor was going for the second time.

Kane gi-luokore en eka ne o-dok mar adek.
when they-bathe she the.very.time PST PRF-go for third

When those girls were bathing that is the very time she was going for the third time (for water).

Kane gi-wuok gi-dhii en eka ne o-luokore.
when they-come.out they-go she the.very.time PST PRF-bathe
When they were coming out and going that is the very time she was bathing.

Bang'e ne osiepe-ne-gi o-nyise ni gi-wuok.
after her friends-her-those her-told that they-come.out
Before they went they told her that they were going.

Ne o-penjo gi kaka ne.o-nyalo yudo-gi to ne.gi-dwoke ni
PST PRF-ask those how PST.PRF-will find-them then they-answer that

gi-dhi bolo oboke kama yore ariyo orade.
they-going put leaf where paths two meet

She asked them how she will get there and they answered her that they will throw a leaf where to turn.

Ne gi-wuok kendo ma.gi-dhi.
PST those-come.out then they-go
They came out and went.

Ka   Awuor awuor ne o-tieko   ne o-chako wuoth.
when Awuor awuor PST PRF-finish PST PRF-start journey
When Awuor awuor finished she started the journey.

No-chopo   kuma yore ariyo orade ma   o-yudo   oboke.
PST.PRF-reach where paths two   meet   then PRF-find leaf

When she reached the place where she had to turn she found a leaf.

Ne   o-luwo   yor-no.
PST   PRF-follow path-that
She followed that path.

Ne   o-dhi   adhia   to   kane.pok o-chopo,   no-rado   gi   ngato
PST   PRF-go keeping.on but before   PRF-reach PST.PRF-meet with somebody

ma   o-penjo kabe   o-neno   nyiri   moko.
then PRF-ask whether PRF-see girls   some

Then she kept on going but before she reached she met somebody and then asked
him whether he had seen some girls.

Ne   o-dwok-e   ni   pok   o-neno.
PST   PRF-answer-her that not   PRF-see
He answered that he had not seen anyone.

Awuor awuor ne   o-chako   paror-e   ni   koso   ne o-luwo   yoo
Awuor awuor PST PRF-start wonder-she that whether PST PRF-follow path

marach
wrong

Awuor awuor started wondering maybe she took the wrong path.

No   dhi   mbele   gi   wuoth   to   kane   o-chopo   mbele ne   o-
PST.PRF go   forward with journey but before PRF-reach far   PST PRF-

neno *ng'ielo* *maduong'* *ka.o-nindo* *gi* *nyithinde*
see snake big PRF-sleep with children

She went on with the journey, but before she reached far she saw a very big snake sleeping with her children.

Ne *o-buok* *kane* *o-nene.*
PST PRF-got.scared when her-see
She got scared when she saw her.

Ng'ielo *ne* *o-luong-e* *ma* *o-wacho-ne* *ni* *kik* *o-luor.*
snake PST PRF-call-her then PRF-tell-her that should.not PRF-be.scared
The snake called her and told her not to be scared.

Ne *o-dhi* *machiegni* *kod-e.*
PST PRF-go near from-her
She went near her.

Bang'e *ne* *o-penj-e* *gima* *o-dwaro.*
then PST PRF-ask-her what PRF-want
Then she asked her what she could do for her.

Ne *o-nyis-e* *ni* *ne* *gi-dhi* *kado* *wigi* *gi* *osiepe-ne* *to* *ne*
PST PRF-say-her that PST they-go plait hair with friends-her but PST

gi-kuongo *wuok.*
they-come.fast come.out
She told her that they were going to plait their hair with her friends but they left before her.

Ne *gi-kon-e* *ni* *gi-dhi* *keto* *ne-oboke* *kama* *yore* *ariyo* *o-rade.*
PST they-tell-her that they-going put a-leaf where paths two it-meet

mondo *o-luu*
so PRF-follow

They told her that they were going to put a leaf where she has to turn so that she could follow them.

Kane o-luwo to ne o-poo ka.o-chopo
when PRF-follow then PST PRF-find.herself.where.you.shouldn't.be PRF-reach

kanyo.
there

When she followed that path she found herself there.

Ng'ielo ne o-kon-e ni kik o-luor o-biro kado-ne
snake PST PRF-tell-her that should.not PRF-be.afraid she-will plait-her

wiye maber
hair nicely

The big snake told her not to be afraid she will plait her hair nicely.

Awuor awuor ne o-luor ahinya makata saa mane i-kad-e
Awuor awuor PST PRF-be.afraid so.much so.that time specific PASS-plait-her

nyithi ng'ielo ne dhi malag-e.
children snake PST go swirl-her

Awuor awuor was so afraid that when she was being plaited the snake's children would swirl around her.

Kane wiy-e ose-rumo, Ngielo ne o-kon-e ni kik
when hair-her has-been.finished the.snake PST PRF-tell-her that should.not

o-nyis ng'ato ang'ata maka o-fulo to o-biro neg-e.
PRF-tell anybody somebody that PRF-tell then she-will kill-her

When her hair was finished the snake told her that when she tells anybody she will kill her.

Awuor awuor   ne   o-dok   dala.
Awuor awuor   PST   PRF-go.back   home
Awuor awuor went back home.

Wiy-e   ne   o-kad   maber   moloyo nyiri   mokogo.
hair-her PST   PRF-plaited beautifully more   girls those.other
Her hair was plaited more beautifully than those of the other girls.

Bang'e   nyiri-gi   ne   o-penj-e   ng'ama   ne   o-kad-e   to   ne
afterwards girls-those PST   they-ask-her   who   PST   PRF-plait-her but   PST

o-tamor-e   wacho.
PRF-refuse-her   tell

Afterwards these girls asked her who plaited her hair but she refused to tell them.

Min-gi   gi   wuon-gi   ne   o-penj-e   bende to   ne   o-tamor-e
mother-her with father-her PST   PRF-ask-her   also but   PST   PRF-refuse-her

wacho.
tell
Her mother and father also asked her but she refused to tell.

Kajo-gi   ne   koro penj-e ahinya   ne   o-wacho ni   mondo oluong
people-these PST   were ask-her too.much PST   PRF-say that then   call

neren-e   gi   weden-e   tee mondo o-bi   gi   opengni, runge
uncles-her with relatives-her all then   they-come with   pangas,   clubs

kod tonge   eka   bang'e   to   o-biro   wacho.
and spears that.very.time after   then she-will   tell

When these people were consistently asking her she told them that they should call her uncles and all her relatives to come with pangas, clubs and spears, after that she will tell.

Jo-gi   *kane*   *o-biro*   *ne*   *gi-chokore*   *bang'e*   *ne*   *o-penj-e*
people-these   when   they-come   PST   they-gather.together   after   PST   they-ask-her

ni   *Awuor awuor*   *ngama*   *ne*   *o-kado-ni*   *wiyi?*
that   Awuor awuor   who   PST   PRF-plait-her   hair
When these people came and gathered together they asked, "Awuor awuor who plaited your hair?"

Awuor awuor: *"Tond*   *bungu*   *ema*   *ne*   *o-kado-na*   *wiya."*
Awuor awuor   rope   forest   that   PST   PRF-plait-my   hair
Awuor awuor: "The rope of the forest plaited my hair."

Seche   *mane*   *o-tiek-o*   *wacho*   *kamano*   *jii*   *ne*   *o-neno*
immediately   that   PRF-finish-her   say   that.way   people   PST   they-see

ng'ielo   *maduong'*   *ka.wuok*   *e.rangach*   *kochomo*   *kuma*   *Awuor awuor*   *ne*
snake   big   come.out   gate   directly   where   Awuor awuor   PST

nitier-e.
was-she

Immediately as she finished saying that people saw a big snake coming from the gate directly to where Awuor awuor was.

Ne   *o-tem-o*   *kagima*   *o-dhi*   *kayo*   *Awuor awuor*   *to*   *jii*   *ne*
PST   PRF-try-she   as.if   PRF-go   bite   Awuor awuor   but   people   PST

o-baye   *gi*   *tonge*   *jomoko*   *bende*   *ne*   *goy-e*   *gi*   *arunge*   *to*
PRF-pierce   with   spears   some.others   also   PST   beat-her   with   clubs   and

moko   *tong-e*   *kod*   *opengni*   *mi*   *o-thoo*   *kendo*   *o-wang'-e.*
others   cut-her   with   pangas   then   PRF-die   then   they-burn-her

She tried to bite Awuor awuor but some people pierced her with spears, others beat with clubs and others cut her with pangas until she died and they burnt her.

Tinda

The End