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Honorific possession: Power and language in Pohnpei, Micronesia

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ABSTRACT

Mental categorization schemes, such as noun classification systems, can be productive sites for examining how experience is meaningfully and culturally structured through metaphorical and metonymic associations. Pohnpeian possessive classifiers not only constitute cultural categories of rank and power relations, but dynamically re-sort or re-classify these categories through honorific speech. Linguistic and interactional data are here combined with ethnographic data about Pohnpeian society and cultural beliefs, particularly notions about the meaning and construction of ranked social relationships, to show how micro-interactions which index status are linked both to larger cultural ideologies about power and, metaphorically, to the experiential domain. (Pohnpei, Micronesia, honorifics, status, metaphor, possessive constructions)*

Speakers of Pohnpeian – Pohnpei is an island nation of Micronesia, formerly written Ponape – organize relationships of possession into different categories using an elaborate system of noun classifiers. This overt arrangement of entities into classes, expressed by what are called "possessive classifiers," affords us a view of how Pohnpeians constitute their world – which properties of entities, and which relations between them, are constituted as meaningful. In classifying, some features are noted for similarities and differences, while others are ignored. I argue that these classifiers provide data for understanding the importance of rank to schemes of cognitive organization in Pohnpei, as well as cultural ideologies of the interdependent relationship between low and high status. When speakers shift into honorific or status-indexing speech, different possessive classifiers are used than in common speech; the categories expressed by the possessive classifiers are then reshaped, including the usual part/whole relationships for the body. I discuss differences between common speech and honorific speech here, and between the two levels of honorific speech, e.g. how Pohnpeians constitute the two status levels not only as being asymmetrical, but as having different prop-

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erties of control. Some metaphorical connections of the honorific possessive classifiers with the experiential base of the human environment are also examined here, particularly regarding the harvesting of food from the land; and these are related to other cultural practices which connect food and land with rank.

I first discuss Pohnpeian possessives in general, then honorific possessives, including implications of semantic properties shared between classifiers and the entities classified. It will be seen how Pohnpeians construct a relationship between low status and high status through metaphorical connections suggested in the honorific constructions. After a brief discussion of possession in common speech, I examine honorific speech patterns, noting that the changes which occur when speakers move from one register to another are significant in terms of structure and meaning.[1] I distinguish (a) common speech vs. honorific speech, and (b) within honorific speech, low status-indexing (humiliative) vs. high status-indexing (exaltive) types.

ETHNOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

Pohnpei has historically been divided into five independent chiefdoms, called *wehi*.[2] Each has a paramount chief (*Nanmwarki*) and chieftess (*Likend*),[3] and a secondary chief *Nahnken* and chieftess *Nahnken Iai*. Although today the island is united under a democratic form of government, the chiefdom organization is vital and remains an important organizing principle in the practices of the island (see Petersen 1982, Pinsker 1997). Pohnpeians think of the five chiefdoms as quite separate. The chiefdom in which I have done the majority of my fieldwork is Madolenihmw, which traditionally is thought of as the highest-ranking chiefdom; i.e., if all the chiefs come together for an important event, the chief and chieftess of Madolenihmw will occupy the symbolically highest place in the feast house. Oceanic chiefdoms exhibit a characteristic redistribution of goods from the top of the rank hierarchy, and a tendency toward decreasing participation of high-ranking individuals in the primary productive labor of the society (Sahlins 1958). However, variation is noted in that the highest-ranking persons might need to be the hardest-working, in order to fulfill their obligations to show generosity (Firth 1939, Fried 1967). There is necessarily a collaborative construction of leadership in a ranked society, where few instruments for forcing compliance are available (Fried 1967). This dialogic nature of the "chiefly contract" (Johnson & Earle 1987:209) is important for an understanding of the role of language in constructing social asymmetries (see also Duranti 1994). In this article, I show how possessive classifiers can contribute to constituting the dependent relationship between the chiefs and the people.

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The morphological and semantic changes which occur in the way that possession is signified, when a shift from common speech to honorific register occurs, are made significant by local ideologies about *manaman* 'power', which resides in high-status persons and is transferred to their possessions. *Mana*, a term with cognates throughout the Pacific (*manaman* on Pohnpei), describes the sacred and dangerous power which flows from the deities through the chiefs to the people (see Shore 1989 for a comprehensive discussion of this concept). Specifically, *mana* flows matrilineally to descendants within chiefly clans. The belief that *mana* extends to possessions makes possessive constructions a meaningful category in status-marked relations.

POHNPEIAN HONORIFIC SPEECH

Status-indexing (honorific) speech is appropriate in Pohnpei for all interactions where chiefs are present, and in Christian church services. Radio announcements are also typically delivered in honorific speech, since a chief, chieftess, or other high-status individual could be listening. Pohnpeian honorific speech constructs basically two statuses, one high and one low, according to actual use of honorific speech recorded on videotape. Status-lowering speech is here termed "humiliative" (as has been done for other honorific systems), and status-raising speech is called "exaltive." Pohnpeian speakers thus, through their speech, can either lower their own or another's status, or raise another's. (Raising one's own status is considered inappropriate, but it can be done in conjunction with raising that of others, as shown below.) Status-indexing is mainly expressed in the choice of verb and of possessive classifier. There are also nouns which index high status (e.g. referring to the chief's body), but none which index low status – except that a low-status word for food and a nominalized form of the low-status verb 'speak' have been noted in transcripts of interaction. Pronouns can be expressed as exaltive, but not as humiliative; thus common-speech pronouns are used for low-status persons in contexts where honorific speech is used.

Honorific speech clusters specifically around three domains: (a) movement and location in space (as expressed in verbs of motion or stasis); (b) the acts of knowing and speaking; and (c) possessive constructions, the focus of this article (see Keating 1994 for a fuller discussion of Pohnpeian honorific speech). The excerpts below show how Pohnpeian status-indexing speech constructs either low-status or high-status levels of location in space or possession. In ex. 1, of status-indexed verbs, S calls to Id to come sit by the chief (in excerpts of transcripts I note exaltive terms with EXAL in the interlinear gloss, and use HUM for humiliative). Honorific verbs in Pohnpeian are quite polysemous; a single root or stem is used for multiple ways of construing

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location or movement in space. Thus the low-status verb *pato-* plus directional suffixes can indicate a wide range of manners of motion described by different verbs in common speech (e.g. 'run', 'slide', 'walk', 'come/go', 'drive'); or without a directional suffix (as in ex. 1) *pato* can mean 'stay' or 'be'. Because of the polysemy of these verbs I have translated them as "LocVerb" in the interlinear gloss, or as "TranVerb" in the case of the stem *patohwan*, a transitive verb which can refer to a wide range of actions such as 'take', 'bring', and 'know'.[4]

(1) Drinking *sakau* at the chief's home[5]
01 S: *Id! pato pahn kupwur*[6] *me*
Id! LocVerb[HUM] under.of desire/heart[EXAL] here.by.me
'Id! be [come] under the exalted heart [chief] here
02 *pwe kumwan (< kumwa en) poapoangoak.*
because you(D) to talking[EXAL]
in order that you two can talk.'

The first verb referring to Id's action is in humiliative form (*pato* in line 01); the second verb, referring to the mutual talk of S and the chief (and most importantly the chief's talk) is in exaltive speech (*poapoangoak* in line 02). S lowers Id, but raises the chief (and in conjunction, Id).

In ex. 2 I show just one instance of how possessive classifiers mark status in Pohnpeian, before moving on to a more detailed discussion of this phenomenon. In honorific speech, possession is marked either as exaltive or humiliative; in this example, a speaker characterizes some others' food as low-status or humiliative.

(2) Conversation at a feast
WM: *mie ara tungoal sali de sohte?*
there.is their(D) Ps.Cl.[HUM] meat or not
'Is there meat for those two or not?'

Tungoal is the general classifier for low-status possession; here it is used to indicate that two peoples' meat is of low status. It occurs with the general classifier *a-* inflected for person (3rd person, dual in this instance). I discuss below how *tungoal* links low status to other semantic domains. However, before discussing honorific possessive classifiers in more detail, I discuss common-speech possessive classifiers, and the semantic relationships constituted therein.

Classifiers are an important feature of many languages (e.g. Chinese, Vietnamese, Mayan); they mark lexical items as belonging to the same semantic class based on such attributes as shape, size, color, animacy, and status. Classifier systems categorize nouns into different and/or additional classes beyond the grammatical classes of the nouns themselves (Denny 1976), and they encode additional data within the noun phrase. Besides possessive classifiers, Pohnpeian has a system of numeral classifiers, organized for the most part by physical attributes of the noun – primarily shape, but not status. In this article, I limit my discussion to possessive classifiers.

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POLARITIES OF CONTROL AND NON-CONTROL

Through the use of different classifiers, possessive constructions can express multiple relationships in Pohnpeian. These relations include dominance vs. non-dominance (degrees of control), temporality (temporary vs. permanent), locative associations, and status – as well as, of course, ownership. Grammarians have noted that possessives often express locative relationships, such as spatial proximity or attachment (e.g. 'my village'), rather than possession (Lyons 1977:473). Many Polynesian languages (cf. Samoan, Hawaiian, Tongan, and others) also distinguish possessive categories of control vs. non-control in possessive constructions, marking relationships initiated with and without a possessor's control, and specifying more precisely some relationships of the former, such as possession (as drink or source of food), personal kin, and certain artifacts for personal use (see Wilson 1982:123).

The contrast between relationships initiated with or without a possessor's control, as well as special distinctions for food/drink and certain kin, are important in the following discussion of Pohnpeian possessive classifiers and status-marked possessive construction. I examine the significance of changes which occur in status-indexing speech in terms of the polarities of control vs. non-control, as these relationships are altered in a shift to honorific register. Pohnpeian expresses the idea of control vs. non-control in possessive marking with classifiers, and one meaning encoded in the humiliative or low-status speech classifier is non-control and non-permanence.

A part/whole relationship (e.g. body parts) can be expressed by directly suffixing possessive morphemes to nouns in Pohnpeian (i.e. without using a classifier); however, in most cases of possession, possessive classifiers (to be discussed in more detail below) are used. Possession can also be expressed by adding *n* to the 3sg. possessed form, e.g. *mese-n liho* 'face-of woman'. In a survey of three taped interactions among men and women, formal and informal, possession with classifiers occurs in 89% of the cases; the remaining 11% is made up of part/whole possessive constructions. Whereas some Micronesian languages might have between 15 and 20 possessive classifiers (Harrison 1988), Pohnpeian has 29, counting the honorific ones. The spectrum of possessive classifiers in COMMON (non-status-indexed) speech, and examples of each, are given in Table 1.

A close morphological and semantic relationship between the classifier and the objects classified can be seen in Table 2, based on data from Rehg 1981 and interactional data. For example, the verb 'to drink' is *nim*, and the possessive classifier for things to drink is *nime-* as in *nimei uhpw* ('my drinking coconut'; see literal meanings in the right-hand column). This is not unusual in the phenomenon of noun classification across languages; as Craig and others have observed, "the forms used as classifiers come from words used as names of concrete, discrete, moveable objects" (Craig 1986:6) – or, as in the

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TABLE 1. *Common speech possessive classifiers*

Classifier (3sg.)	Category	Example of 3rd Person & Noun	Translation
ah	general	*ah pwoud*	'his/her spouse'
nah	general, dominant	*nah seri*	'her/his child'
kene	edible things	*kene uht*	'his/her banana'
nime	drinkable things	*nime uhpw*	'his/her drinking coconut'
sapwe	land	*sapwe deke*	'his/her island'
imwe	buildings	*imwe nahs*	'her/his feasthouse'
were	vehicles	*were sidohsa*	'her/his car'
kie	sleeping pads	*kie lohs*	'her/his mat'
ipe	sleeping covers	*ipe tehi*	'his/her sheet'
ulunge	pillows	*ulunge uluhl*	'her/his pillow'
rie	siblings	*rie serepein*	'her/his sister'
kiseh	relatives	*kiseh ohl*	'his/her male relative'
ullepe	maternal uncles	*ullepe ohl*	'her/his maternal uncle'
wahwah	nieces, nephews	*wahwah serepein*	'his/her niece'
sawi	clan members	*sawi pwutak*	'her/his boy clansmember'
pelie	peers, opponents	*pelie ohl*	'his/her male peer'
seike	catch	*seike ah*	'his/her catch of mullet'
pwekidah	share of feast food	*pwekidah pwihk*	'her/his share of pig'
mware	name, title, garland	*mware mwaramwar*	'her/his garland'
ede	names	*ede aditik*	'his/her nickname'
tie	earrings	*tie kisin kohl*	'her/his earring'
dewe	location	*dewe ser*	'his/her chair'

Source: Adapted from Rehg 1981.

case of the Pohnpeian *nime-*, from verbs. The implications of this semantic relationship between classifier and classified in the cases of the honorific classifiers *sapwellime* and *tungoal* are a focus of this article.

The common (non-status-marked) possessive classifiers appear to fall into three main groups: (a) relatives or kin (e.g. maternal uncle, child of one's sister), (b) items for personal use, and (c) edibles and drinkables. The organization of these categories is, of course, culturally specific; e.g., siblings, nieces, clan members, and maternal uncles could be subsumed in the class of relatives for Americans, but they are constituted as distinctive categories in the Pohnpeian world. Additional information is coded with the nouns in Table 2 when they are expressed in possessive relationships; thus a person's catch of fish and her share at a feast are classified differently from other food. The sense relations common to many noun classifiers (Lyons 1977:332) appear not to be salient here for encoding distinctions. The Pohnpeian NUMERAL classifiers fit the paradigm of the most common principle of sortal classification, i.e. shape (Lyons, 464); but the POSSESSIVE classifiers appear to express a different principle, which I believe is connected to rank, power

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TABLE 2. *Possible sources of classifiers*

Classifier	Translation	Possible Lexical Source
Food/drink		
kene	'food'	possibly from causative prefix *ke/ka-* + *ne* 'to be divided'
nime	'drink'	*nim*, lit. 'drink'
seike	'catch'	*sei*, lit. 'paddle'
pwekidah	'share'	*pwekpwek*, lit. 'to formally distribute food at feast'
People/relatives		
sawi	'clan member'	*sawas*, lit. 'help'; *sou* lit. 'clan'
pelie	'peers, opponents'	*pelie*, lit. 'member of a matched pair'
rie	'siblings'	*rie*, lit. 'two'
kiseh	'relative'	*kiseh*, lit. 'relative'
ullepe	'maternal uncle'	*ullap*, lit. 'maternal uncle'
wahwah	'niece, nephew'	*wahwah*, lit. 'man's sister's child'; *wah*, lit. 'offspring'
Items for personal use		
mware	'title/garland'	*mwar*, lit. 'title'
ede	'name'	*ahd*, lit. 'name'
tie	'earrings'	*tie*, lit. 'to wear earrings'; *ti*, lit. 'spirit'
imwe	'buildings'	*ihmw*, lit. 'home, dwelling'
kie	'sleeping pads'	–
ipe	'sleeping covers'	*ipir*, lit. 'to blow at, as the wind'
ullunge	'pillows'	*ulung*, lit. 'to use a pillow'
sapwe	'land'	*sahpw*, lit. 'land'
were	'canoe/vehicles'	*wahr*, lit. 'canoe'
Location/position		
dewe	location	*dehu*, lit. 'rank, station, area or location'
Honorific, humiliative		
tungoal	all possessions	lit. 'food, eating'
Honorific, exaltive		
sapwellime	general	*sahpw*, lit. 'land' + *lime*, lit. 'hand[EXAL]'
nillime	land	*ni* lit. 'at'; *lime*, lit. 'hand[EXAL]'
tehnpese	dwellings	*tehnpahs*, lit. 'empty nest'
tehnwere	vehicles	*tehn*, lit. 'empty'; *wahr*, lit. 'canoe'
moatoare	sleeping gear	lit. 'mat, sleeping place[EXAL]'
koanoat	food, drink	lit. 'food, eat[EXAL] for paramount chief'
pwenieu	food, drink	lit. 'food, eat[EXAL] for paramount chieftess'
sahk	food, drink	lit. 'food, eat[EXAL] for secondary chief'

transfer, or conduits of *mana*. For example, MATERNAL relatives have specific classifiers (*ullap* 'maternal uncle', *wahwah* 'man's sister's child'), but paternal relatives do not. Rank is inherited matrilineally on Pohnpei; traditionally, a man's rank passed to his sister's son. Thus, in the case of the *Nanmwarki* (the paramount chief), his sister's son – not his own – is in line to become the next *Nanmwarki*. Matrilineal genealogy entitles an individual not only to rank but to lands; traditionally, a title and the land it represented passed

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from *ullap* to *wahwah*. Maternal relatives, land, and titles, all represent relationships to power.

Edibles and drinkables are also related to rank – since, on Pohnpei, food share is determined hierarchically according to rank, both within the family and at community events. One's catch, for example, should be shared hierarchically: the best presented to the chief, and others of higher status. One's share at a feast is also linked to one's status. In addition, personal items can be conduits of power, especially those which are often close to the body, such as pillows, sheets, sleeping mats, and earrings. Errington has noted for Javanese (1988:164–65) that possessions which come in close contact with high-status individuals, such as pillows and blankets, are marked with honorific language. It appears that linkages to rank and power are organized by Pohnpeian classifiers genealogically through relatives, physically through contact with the body, and through food.

These categories are transformed, however, in the honorific register, and the organization of high-status possession is different from the organization of low-status possession. In the presence of the chiefs and chieftesses, different classifications of possessive relationships are constituted. As I show, there is a reclassification of common power relations – between people, and between people and things – and a specific relation (in addition to status) is encoded by the honorific classifiers between the chief and the people. The chief is linked to land, and the people to food or the product of the land.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COMMON AND STATUS-MARKED POSSESSION

The examples below serve as an introduction to the specifics of differences in Pohnpeian possessive construction between COMMON (non-status-marked) speech and the status-marked HUMILIATIVE honorific and EXALTIVE honorific speech. All three examples below, from interactional data, show the relationship of a person to his/her son. Ex. 3 shows the exaltive form of this relationship (the possessor is a very high-status man); ex. 4 shows the humiliative form of possession (the possessor is of lesser rank than another person present, in this case the paramount chief); and ex. 5 is from a common speech discussion between several women, in which no honorifics are used (underlining indicates possessive forms).[7]

(3) Exaltive honorific speech
01 *dene* *Linda oh* *sapwellimen* *Noahs pwutak*
it.is.said Linda and Ps.Cl.[EXAL].of Noahs boy
'They say that Linda and Noahs' boy [are]
02 *kin* *patpato* *rehra* (< *re ira*).
habitually LocVerb[HUM].there location.of.them(D)
always staying with the two of them.'

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(4) Humiliative honorific speech
01 *en Saudepe ah tungoal pwutako*
of Saudepe Ps.Cl.3S Ps.Cl.[HUM] boy.there
'Saudepe's boy [is]
02 *me ale ira.*
the.one take them(dual).
the one who took the two of them.'

(5) Common speech
01 *liho pahn kin kadarado*
woman.there will habitually send.here
'That woman always sends
02 *nah kisin pwutako en kohdo en peki.*
Ps.Cl.3S small boy.there to come to ask
her small boy over here to come and ask.'

A summary of these differences is shown below:

(1) *sapwellimen Noahs pwutak*	(exaltive, high status)	'Noahs' boy'
(2) *ah tungoal pwutak*	(humiliative, low status)	'his/her boy'
(3) *nah pwutak*	(common speech, unmarked for status)	'her/his boy'

There are significant differences between humiliative (low status) and exaltive (high status) possessive constructions. They constitute these two status domains as not only asymmetrical, but as having different properties of control and temporality, and as linked to different experiential domains. These differences are discussed in more detail below.

HUMILIATIVE POSSESSIVE CONSTRUCTION (*a-/e- tungoal*)

Humiliative possessive construction (i.e. references to the possessions of low-status persons) is different from both common speech and exaltive honorific possessive constructions: only one category of possession is observed, and two classifiers are used simultaneously. The correct person form of the general classifier *a-* (or its phonological variant *e-*) is followed by the humiliative classifier *tungoal*. Those nouns which usually take a specific classifier, such as a food classifier, are reclassified, e.g. *kene mwahng* 'her taro' becomes *ah tungoal mwahng*:

COMMON SPEECH	HUMILIATIVE SPEECH	
kene mwahng	*ah tungoal mwahng*	'her taro'
nah pwihk	*ah tungoal pwihk*	'her pig'
were sidohsa	*ah tungoal sidohsa*	'her car'

These examples show that the categorizations observed in common speech between a vehicle and food are not observed in humiliative honorific speech. (They ARE observed in exaltive honorific speech, as I discuss in more detail shortly.) COMMON classifiers distinguish between food that is about to be eaten and food that is in the tree; but the humiliative classifier does not:

COMMON SPEECH		HUMILIATIVE SPEECH
nah kehp	'her yam, unharvested'	*ah tungoal kehp*
kene kehp	'her yam, to eat'	

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Even nouns that would normally not take a possessive classifier, i.e. body parts (usually possessive morphemes are directly suffixed to body parts), are reclassified in low-status constructions as non-dominant, general (not fitting any category), and temporary when they are expressed in humiliative speech with the general classifier *a-* (or its phonological variant *e-*) plus *tungoal*;[8] see ex. 6.

COMMON SPEECH		HUMILIATIVE SPEECH
moahng-ei	'my head'	*ei tungoal moahng*
ngihl-ei	'my voice'	*ei tungoal ngihl*

(6) Body part expressed as non-control and humiliative
01 Woman: *ma i patohwante i pahn wiada*
if I TranVerb[HUM].only I will do.up
02 *ei tungoal moange.*
Ps.Cl.1S Ps.Cl.[HUM] hair
'If I had only known, I would have done up my hair.'

In humiliative talk, therefore, part/whole classifications (possessive suffixed to noun) are reconstituted. However, in exaltive speech part/whole constructions are retained, since exaltive nouns – e.g. for chiefs' and chieftesses' body parts – can index status (there are only two humiliative nouns, and none for body parts).

One of the consequences of the differences between humiliative and exaltive possessive classifiers is that humiliative classifiers for low-status possession are less semantically rich than classifiers used in common and exaltive speech (for high-status possession), and they lose the potential for expressing gradations of meaning. Humiliative speech is restricted to a single possessive construction, *a- tungoal*, with the general classifier for person and the humiliative classifier. In contrast, exaltive speech offers a wider range of semantic choices because it has a larger set of possessive classifiers than humiliative speech, i.e. eight; see Table 2 (but this is smaller than the range of 22 common speech classifiers). As will be seen, the use of *tungoal* links all low-status possessions semantically with food and eating. The implications of linking low status with food are a focus of this article.

Although the humiliative construction is impoverished in terms of the categories it can delineate (e.g. a difference between control and non-control), it is enriched in its status-indexing potential: because of the *a- tungoal* formation, it can index more than one level of status in the same construction. Two lexemes are used in series; hence, with this double, concurrent classifier construction, one can express two different levels of status simultaneously, targeting two interactional participants (but this is possible in the 2sg. form only). Thus an addressee and a bystander can be indexed as having two different statuses, as well as a referent and an addressee: one status level is expressed with the first classifier, the other with the second classifier. In (a) below, the suffix of the general classifier (*owmw/ahmw* 'your [S]') contains an honorific form, the suffix *-i*, which signifies exalted status, while the

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humiliative classifier *tungoal* signals low status. In (b), the first classifier is in common form (unmarked for status) and the second is humiliative.

(a) *omw-i* *tungoal* *moahng* 'your (S.) head'
high[EXAL] low[HUM]
(b) *ahmw* *tungoal* *moahng* 'your (S.) head'
common low[HUM]

An example from interactional data of this phenomenon is shown below. One low-status man is offering a cigarette to another, in the presence of the chief. Both the speaker and the man whom he is addressing are of lower status than the chief.

(7) High and low status in the same construction
01 *Nanihdpei.* *omwi* *tungoal* *sikah*
Nanihdpei. your(S)[EXAL] Ps.Cl.[HUM] cigarette
'Nanihdpei. Your cigarette (offering him a cigarette).'

Deference is being shown to the addressee (Nanihdpei); yet the status of another higher-status person is acknowledged by the added use of *tungoal*. The status of the person is separated from the status of his/her possession/body part in (a) above, and from his cigarette in ex. 7. Thus two noun classifiers can place nouns into two additional (and contrasting) informational classes. In the case of ex. 7, two classifiers simultaneously communicate relative rank of speaker and addressee, addressee and bystander, and speaker and bystander.

In the same interaction with the highest chief, shown below, the classifier *tungoal* is used in 8:03 for a low-status speaker's house, in and 8:06 for a referent's in-law (*mwah* 'opposite-sex sibling of one's spouse' or 'spouse of one's opposite-sex sibling').

(8) Conversation during *sakau*
01 Chief: *ia* *Nankakas eh?*
where Nankakas eh?
'Where's Nankakas, eh?'
02 L: *i sohte i sohte patohwan* *mwein e*
I don't I don't TranVerb[HUM] maybe she
03 *patopato* *ni aht* *tungoal*
LocVerb[HUM].there at Ps.Cl.1P(EXCL) Ps.Cl.[HUM]
04 *ihmwo.*
house.there
'I don't, I don't know, maybe she is at our house.'
(...)
05 Chief: *Petsin ia?*
Petsin where?
'Petsin from where?'
06 L: *en Soumakaka ah* *tungoal* *mwah.*
of Soumakaka Ps.Cl.3S Ps.Cl.[HUM] in-law
'Soumakaka's in-law.'
07 M: *Petsin e kohsang* *Uhke.*
Petsin he comes.from Uhke
'Petsin, the one who comes from Uhke.'
08 Chief: *oh! Petsin.*
'oh! Petsin.'

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TABLE 3. *Exaltive possessive classifiers*

Exaltive Classifier	Common Classifier	Classifier Type
sapwellime	*ah, nah*	general, dominant
nillime	*sapwe*	land
tehnpese	*ihmwe*	dwellings
tehnwere	*were*	vehicles
moatoare	*kie*	things to sleep on
koanoat	*kene, nime*	food/drink
pwenieu	*kene, nime*	food/drink
sahk	*kene, nime*	food/drink

In the above examples, both location ('at our house') and kin relationships ('his in-law') are in the humiliative possessive construction. The speaker, L, refers to his own house and to another man's relative; both these relationships are classified as general, temporary, and low-status. Use of an exclusive pronoun form (*aht*) in the first instance (line 03) excludes the chief from the low-status marking of 'our'.

EXALTIVE POSSESSIVE CONSTRUCTION

When speaking of something owned by the chief or another high-status individual, a special set of classifiers is used. Table 3 shows the EXALTIVE classifiers I have noted in interactional data (plus one from Rehg's list, *moatoare*), along with the common language classifiers to which they correspond. Note that *sapwellime* is used in place of both the general and dominant classifiers *ah* and *nah*. Thus in exaltive speech, referring to possessions of the highest-status people, no distinction is made between items over which they are dominant vs. those they are not, or temporary vs. permanent states of possession. *Sapwellime* is the most frequently used exaltive classifier.

As mentioned by Rehg, an exaltive possessive construction without classifiers can be formed by suffixing the possessive pronouns *-mwi* 'your' or *-ihr* 'your/his/their' to the noun denoting the thing possessed, e.g. *kahlape-mwi* 'your body[EXAL]' and *sihleng-ihr* 'their (your) face-[EXAL]'.[9] This is similar to the part/whole construction of common speech. Some of Rehg's consultants reported that nouns referring to chiefs do not normally take possessive suffixes at all, since the honorific noun itself would make clear who the possessor is. Thus the terms *kahlap* 'body[EXAL]' and *sihleng* 'face[EXAL]' could theoretically occur without possessive marking, because these nouns are honorifically marked already (the common terms being *paliwar* and *mese,* respectively). However, interactional data show that the body of the chief and other high-status participants is often expressed with both the classifier and the honorific noun:

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(9) A man begins a public prayer at a feast
01 *maing* *samaht* *Koht* (. . .)
honored.one father.our(EXCL) God
'Our honored father God,
02 *iangaki* *sapwellimomwi* *kahlap* *Isipahu,*
join.with Ps.Cl.2S[EXAL] body[EXAL] paramount.chief
'join with your body the paramount chief,
03 *IsoNahnken,* *Likend*
secondary.chief paramount.chieftess
'the secondary chief, the paramount chieftess.'

Here, instead of the predicted *kahlapihr* or *kahlap*, a speaker has used *sapwellimomwi kahlap*. This actual speech example also suggests that more than just literal possession is being communicated. Choice may be related to issues of agency – since, in suffix-possessed nouns, the possessor is typically the patient or theme (see Harrison 1988), whereas agents or controllers are usually marked by the possessive article. By using the classifier *sapwellimomwi* with *kahlap*, a higher degree of agency is indicated for the possessor, in this instance God. In addition, the double honorific denotation increases the marking of the utterance as status-raising of the possessor. Use of the possessive classifier, by its very redundancy, emphasizes the high status of the possessor. Note also the construction *maing samaht Koht* in line 01: the congregation's possession of God is unmarked for status; it is a common-speech part/whole construction, where the possessive morpheme *-aht* 'our EXCL' is suffixed to the noun *sahm* 'father' (or classificatory father). This is a highly conventionalized usage in prayer openings.

Redundant exaltive marking, as in 9:02, can also be seen in a speech in which a medium-ranking woman refers to two different statuses of spouses by choice of exaltive vs. humiliative classifier and by choice of exaltive vs. common noun. This occurs among those in attendance at a *kamadipw en kousapw*, or celebratory feast for a small community, in November 1992:

(10) Speech by a medium-ranking woman at a feast
01 *patpato* *tikitikieng ohng eh*
LocVerb[HUM].there small.to for uh
'Talking a little bit (i.e. nicely) to uh
02 *sapwellimatail* *werek* *kan de*
Ps.Cl.2P.INCL[EXAL] spouse[EXAL] those or
'our high-status spouses or
03 *atail* *tungoal* *pwoud kan*
Ps.Cl.2P.INCL Ps.Cl.[HUM] spouse those.by.you
'our low-status spouses'

In line 02, the speaker uses an exaltive construction, and in line 03 a humiliative one. In the exaltive, both noun and classifier are indexed for status; in the humiliative, only the classifier is indexed for status.

Tehnpese and *tehnwere,* expressed as nouns in interactional data in the forms of *tehnpas* 'dwelling[EXAL]' and *tehnwahr* 'vehicle[EXAL]', do appear to operate as Rehg's consultants predicted, i.e. without possessive marking, since they specifically indicate the chief's possessions already:

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(11) *Sakau* at the home of the paramount chief
01 Chieftess: *ien* *sidohsa, ien* *tehnwaro.*
there.by.you car there.by.you vehicle[EXAL].there
'There's a car, there's the chief's car.'
02 N: *oh* *Nan Kirou.*
(exclamation) Nan Kirou (man's title)
'Oh, it's Nan Kirou.'

In summary, exaltive classifiers offer more choices for categorization than humiliative classifiers, although the general classifier *sapwellime* is the one used most frequently. However, humiliative classifier construction can differentiate two statuses within the noun phrase. The exaltive general possessive classifier makes no distinction between control and non-control, whereas the humiliative classifier constitutes all relationships as temporary and non-control. In the following section, I show how metaphorical connections between honorific possessive classifiers and the experiential base of the human environment, particularly regarding the harvesting of food from the land, provide further insights into Pohnpeian ideologies about low and high status.

METAPHORICAL CONNECTIONS AND COGNITIVE TRACKS

Work by semanticists investigating cognitive organization patterns (e.g. Bolinger 1965, Lakoff 1973) has shown that metaphorical extensions are among the essential processes at work in language (cf. Givón 1986). Scholars in linguistics, anthropology, and psychology (e.g. Berlin & Kay 1969, Lakoff 1973, Rosch 1975, M. Johnson 1987) have convincingly argued that human conceptual systems grow at least partly out of bodily experience. This process involves polysemy, metaphor, and metonymy (Lakoff 1987); and as Quinn 1987 has demonstrated, is constituted in culturally specific ways. I am concerned in the following discussion with metaphoric and metonymic relations which are constituted in Pohnpeian honorific speech through the possessive classifiers. It is seen that high and low status are constituted – not as polarities, and not necessarily as asymmetrical – but as different and yet dependent meaningful fields of relations. Some of the properties of food are associated with low status, while properties of land and distribution are associated with high status. I investigate these relationships by analyzing the semantic relationship between classifier and classified in the cases of *sapwellime* (the general exaltive possessive classifier) and *tungoal* (the humiliative possessive classifier); and by looking at what I take to be significant metaphorical connections between domains, as well as relevant semantic contrasts, to understand the probable relationship of food to low status on the one hand, and of land to high status on the other. Relevant here is work on grammaticalization processes, which has shown that metaphorical associations between semantic fields is a key aspect of the development of language. Thus Heine 1986 has observed that metaphorical connections may have implica-

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tions for the evolution of grammatical categories, e.g. turning nouns into prepositions or adverbs, based on connections between "things" such as body parts and "abstract" concepts such as relative location in space. According to Heine, abstract phenomena are conceptualized in terms of concrete, perceptual-motor experiences: "The noun 'hand' has become a marker of POSSESSION in a number of African languages in accordance with the metaphorical equation 'what is in my hand belongs to me'" (1986:5).

In Pohnpeian, the honorific noun for 'hand/arm' is *lime*, and a similar analogy is made in the case of the exaltive possessive classifier for possession of land, *nillime*, literally 'at his/her hand' (*ni* 'at,' *lime* 'hand'). The general, most frequently used exaltive possessive (*sapwellime*) is a combination of (*sahpw*) 'land' and (*lime*) 'hand'; this connection is discussed later. In contrast, the low-status possessive classifier *tungoal* is the same as the term for eating and food. It is this relationship between low status and food that I discuss here.

TUNGOAL AND *SAPWELLIME*

The noun for low-status food is *tungoal*; the verb for low-status eating is *tungoal* (intransitive form *tungoale*); and the classifier used to mark possessions of low status is *tungoal*. An example of *tungoal* used as a classifier and as a verb in the same utterance is shown in ex. 12.

(12) Conversation during *sakau*
01 *ngehi patohwandı* *eı* *tungoal*
I TranVerb[HUM].downward Ps.Cl.1S Ps.Cl.[HUM]
02 *peh powe duwe me*
hand above like this
'I take it down in my hand, above like this,
03 *iapw ı sohte kak tungoale mwahl ı sohte kak*
then I not can eat[HUM] common I not can
04 *patohwansang* *eı* *tungoal* *pehkan* *powe.*
TranVerb[HUM].from Ps.Cl.1S Ps.Cl.[HUM] hand.those above
'but I can't just drink it (*sakau*) any old way, I can't take it with my hands above it.'

Here *tungoal* is used as a possessive classifier for hand and hands (lines 01 and 04), and as the verb 'to eat' (line 03; 'eating' is always used to refer to *sakau*, which Americans classify as a drink). The polysemous *tungoal* thus ranges between grammatical categories within honorific contexts, often in the same speaker's utterance, creating a relation of similarity between these domains. The connection between food/eating and low-status possession suggests that the activity (eating), the entity (food), and the state (low status, possession) share common features in the Pohnpeian scheme of cognitive organization; i.e., low-status possession is in some way analogous to food or eating.

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Food is an important index of status on Pohnpei; it is shared according to rank in all eating contexts. However, in possessive constructions, food is not linked to high-status possession in general in the same way that it is linked to low-status possession in general. Although *tungoal* ('food/eating') is used for all classes of possessives in low status, the most general and widely used classifier for high status is not semantically connected to food, but entails the concepts of 'land' and 'hand'. There is a separate possessive classifier for the food of high-status persons; it is the same term as the verb for high-status eating and the noun for high-status food. Thus noun, verb, and classifier for food are polysemous in exaltive construction as in humiliative; but the food classifier is restricted to the domain of food and drink in the exaltive, and is not extended to exaltive possession in general. The terms *koanoat*, *pwenieu*, and *sak* distinguish food, eating, and possession of food by the paramount chief, the paramount chieftess, and the secondary chief, respectively.

In suggesting that people of low status are being constructed as analogous to low-status food (through *tungoal*), let me offer the following evidence of the way those who are closest in rank to the chief are literally called "high-status food." The explicit connection of persons with both food and rank can be seen with the term *koanoat*, which refers not only to the chief's food, but also to that of people called *koanoat* title-holders, those who hold a title in line to be paramount chief. *Koanoat* is thus used to describe rank as well as food or eating; it differentiates rank between those title-holders in the paramount chief's line and others. Such a person is often referred to as FOOD ITSELF, i.e. *koanoat* 'high-status food', when what is meant is *koanoat* TITLE-HOLDER (entitled to *koanoat* food through rank). An example of the use of the verb, noun, and classifier *koanoat* to denote rank is shown in ex. 13.

(13) *Koanoat* and rank
01 N: *mware Lepen Medewen Seu Nahleng*
title.3S Lepen Medewen Seu Nahleng
'His title is Lepen Medewen Seu Nahleng,
02 *koanoat* (1.5) *eh title.*
food.for.paramount.chief[EXAL] his title
'it's *koanoat* (1.5) his title (in line to be chief).'

Food constructs rank also through the order of serving food or *sakau* (considered food), and through the quality and quantity of food one receives. Food belonging to the chief or chieftess is identified with the power of their office, and is highly prized. If one is invited to share this food, one's portion is referred to with the term *kepin*: *kepin koanoat*, *kepin pwenieu*, and *kepin sak*. Thus a plate of food sent to me by the paramount chieftess, as I stood by the video camera filming a feast, was announced to the gathering as *Elizabet, kepin pwenieu!*

These leftovers can be thought of as shares of sacred food or sacred power, and constitute rank. The highest-ranking person present eats first, even in

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casual family settings, and is followed in order by lower-status persons. The highest family member is served all the food, then other members of the family in turn eat what is conceptualized as the weaker part or leftovers. At community events, those with the highest rank receive the choicest and largest shares. A sense of "whole" vs. "part" underlies this practice; the chiefs must always be served, e.g. an unopened box of crackers or an unopened drink, whereas everyone else typically shares from a single plate or container. Leftovers are called *luwen*, from the adjective *luwet* 'weak', showing the relationship of food to power. In the following example, speaker NE is offered some leftovers to take home, but she indicates that these high-status remains (of the chieftess) are more rightfully someone else's.

(14) Conversation at a feast
01 NK: *NE* (name) *ien* *nekidala*
NE (name) there.by.you save.it.up
'NE, save the food there (take it home).'
02 NE: *ah soh komwi men.*
but no you(S)[EXAL] that.one.by.you.
'But no, that is yours.
03 *luwen pwenieu kan*
remains.of chieftess.food[EXAL] those.by.you
'That is remains of the chieftess's food.'

Thus status is relevant in all eating contexts, and status and food are always linked.[10]

However, the exaltive expressions for eating and food – *koanoat*, *pwenieu*, and *sak* – are not used as GENERAL classifiers (in contrast to the humiliative term for food), but only as SPECIFIC food classifiers, pertaining to food and drink, or to acts of eating and drinking:

(15) *pwenieu* food and drink
01 NE: *Likend mwein pahn ketla rapaki*
chieftess maybe will LocVerb[EXAL].there find
'Maybe the chieftess is going to find some water?'
02 *pwenieu pihl*
Ps.Cl.[EXAL].food.for.chieftess water
03 M: *ser*
'Hey.'
04 NE: *ketla ketki pwenieu pihl*
LocVerb[EXAL].there take[EXAL] Ps.Cl.[EXAL] water
'[She] went to get water.'
05 W: *sohte pwenieu saida?*
no Ps.Cl.[EXAL].food.for.chieftess soda
'[There is] no soda for the chieftess?"

Pwenieu is used here as a possessive classifier specifically for food and drink.

Rather than relating to food, the exaltive general classifier *sapwellime* is semantically composed of the morphemes (*sahpw*) 'land' and the exaltive form of (*lime*) 'hand/arm'. Thus most possessions of chiefs or chieftesses are categorized through this classifier as having some of the same attributes as 'land' and 'hand' – as well, I believe, as what is constituted by the two

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notions in a compound relationship, i.e. a relation of land and ownership/distribution. There are other specific exaltive classifiers (for vehicles, dwellings, food, land, sleeping gear; see Table 2); however, by far the most frequently used classifier in transcripts of interactions is *sapwellime*. Thus, in the transcript of a feast, *sapwellime* is used in over 95% of the cases of exaltive possession. Since this is the general classifier used most frequently for such possessives as body parts, emotions, and children, as well as small items, the link between the chief/chieftess and the land is made in almost every possessive utterance. Just as *tungoal* is used with the derivational suffix (*-niki*), which indicates 'to own' or 'to have', in order to express low-status 'having' (*tungoaleniki*), so also *sapwellime* is used with *-niki* to construct the high-status verb 'have' (*sapwellimaniki*), again showing the close relation between these two terms. The link between the chief and the land is also made by members of Pohnpeian society, who attest to the chief's ownership of the entire island (at least in traditional times). Traditionally, the bestowing of a title carried with it rights to use a certain piece of land, thus also linking land with high rank.

Many imported items and concepts are used with *sapwellime*, as the following example shows for the chieftess' bank book:

(16) Conversation during *sakau* at the chief's home
M: *nan sapwellime pwuhko nan bank*
in Ps.Cl.3S[EXAL] book.that in bank
'In her book in the bank (bank book)."

We can look now at some of the implications of the relationships constituted through polysemy and shared semantic domains: high status is linked with the land (the source of nourishment), while low status is linked with food (nourishment itself), the product of the land. High status, I believe, is linked with generativity, and low status with consumption. In honorific speech, when different categories of the world are created from those in common speech, the status-relevant categories extend some of the properties of land analogically to the chief, and some of the properties of food to the people. Properties of land on Pohnpei include sacredness, bountifulness, and permanence, as well as a link with the spiritual world and the world of the ancestors. Some of the properties of food include perishability, sustenance, rank-indexing, obligatory networks, and pleasure. The humiliative expression *tungoal* and the exaltive expression *sapwellime* can also be seen in a metonymic relation – a link in terms of a relationship between land and food. Food is the product of land ('fruit' or agricultural produce is *wahn sahpw* in Pohnpeian, literally the 'offspring' [*wah*] 'of' [*-n*] 'the land' *sahpw*); it is as part to whole, where land (the chief) is the whole and genitor (recall that the chief is always served an unopened box, while others receive parts).

The two constructed domains of low- and high-status possession, *sapwellime* and *tungoal*, can also be seen in terms of a model of distribution

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vs. consumption, with the chief as the archetypical agent (or energy source, i.e. land) and the lower-status people as the archetypical patient (consuming or receiving energy). Support for this model is provided by the morphology of the honorific verbs. Those referring to the chief and chieftesses' actions begin with the same morpheme used for the causative prefix *ke-* (or *ka-*), e.g. in *ketdo*, the exaltive verb for motion toward the speaker such as 'come', and *ketki*, the exaltive verb for transitive actions such as 'give'. Conversely, verbs for low-status peoples' activities begin with *pa-*, as in *patohdo* for low-status movement toward the speaker such as 'come', and *patohwan* for low-status transitive actions like 'give'. Low-status verbs have been linked to *pe-*, a passivizing morpheme, by Fischer 1969, who observed a relationship between exaltive forms and causatives in Pohnpeian, as well as between humiliative forms and passives (note that Fischer uses the term *honorific* to mean both exaltive and humiliative):

> ... interestingly there are honorific forms of some verbs which appear analogous to forms of other verbs which are causative or a sort of passive, e.g. the verb *idek* 'to ask', which has both a pseudo-causative honorific form *ke-idek* 'to ask' and a pseudo-passive honorific form *pe-idek* 'to ask' (also used as a nominalized form meaning 'a question'). (1969:420).

The chief as the active energy source, with the people as the passive energy goal, is a formulation which I believe can be useful heuristically in trying to understand the dynamics of Pohnpeian honorific speech and status relations, as well as the place of the terms *tungoal* and *sapwellime* in constituting a universe of hierarchical relations. All possessions of low-status people are metaphorically like food; they depend on and flow from the original source of energy: the land, i.e. the chief. Food is ephemeral, while land is eternal. A relation of both nurturance and dependence is created.

This relation is further supported through practice, specifically feasting, where the connection between land and rank is further developed and materialized, and is unified with the connection between food and rank. During feasting (which takes place at least once a week) just-harvested food and other contributions are amassed and pooled under the authority of the chief, who symbolically and literally redistributes them to the people who consume them.

The dominance of the chief's possessions is continually construed in semantic relationships expressed by the possessive classifiers, where low-status ownership is categorized as a relationship of non-control (through the general, non-dominant, low-status possessive classifier *ah*, which appears in a series with *tungoal*), and through feasting practices where the chief accepts as his all the fruits of the land, and then redistributes them according to rank. The models provided in honorific speech create figurative relationships which link the shared experience of harvesting fruit from the land, and subsequently

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relinquish control of it, with consumption and nourishment. Through honorific speech, speakers generalize and humble the ownership of commoners (through the use of a general classifier and a humiliative one), and contrastively particularize and elevate that of chiefs (through more classifiers, through the incorporation of dominant and non-dominant possession in one classifier, and through the use of exaltive classifiers). Honorific language can be seen as a language of allocation through possessive constructions that classify the world in specific ways. The people are classified as consumers – both symbolically, in the redistribution by the chief of the goods at feasts, and by their own and others' use of the humiliative classifier *tungoal*, whereby they are linked to food as that which is distributed and consumed. They are constituted as low-status, non-dominant, and temporary (perishable).

CONCLUSION

Mental categorization schemes, such as noun classification systems, can be productive for examining how experience is meaningfully and culturally structured through metaphorical and metonymic associations. Pohnpeian possessive classifiers not only constitute categories of rank and power relations, delimiting types – but also, through honorific speech, they dynamically reorganize or reclassify these categories, providing data for understanding the importance of certain domains of power transfer, and the importance of rank to cognitive organization schemes.

Metaphorical connections between honorific or status-marked possessive classifiers and the experiential base of the human environment, particularly regarding the relationship between food and the land, provide insights into Pohnpeian ideologies about low and high status. Analyzing which relationships are mapped analogically from the human experiential base to possessive indicators of status reveals the ways in which micro-interactions that index status are linked to larger cultural ideologies about power, and about the relationships of chiefs to the people. High and low status are constituted, not as polarities, and not necessarily as asymmetrical, but as different and yet dependent meaningful fields of relations.

NOTES

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[1] See Rehg (1981) for a more detailed discussion of Pohnpeian possessive marking.

[2] My description here is necessarily brief. For further descriptions of Pohnpeian society, the reader is referred to Bascom 1948, Garvin & Riesenberg 1952, Riesenberg 1968, Fischer 1969,

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Petersen 1982, and Shimizu 1982. In the conventional orthography used here (cf. Rehg 1981), *oa* = [ɔ], *Vh* = [V:].

[3] *Likend* is the name for the paramount chieftess of Madolenihmw; but in some of the other chiefdoms, this rank has a different title.

[4] The following abbreviations are used:

D = dual	Ps.Cl. = possessive classifier
EXAL = exaltive term	S = singular
EXCL = exclusive pronoun	TranVerb = transitive verb
HUM = humiliative term	1.5 = seconds elapsed
INCL = inclusive pronoun	1, 2, 3 = person
LocVerb = locative verb	(...) = portions left out
P = plural	

[5] *Sakau* is a soporific beverage made from the pounded roots of the pepper plant (*Piper methysticum*) and water. It is called *kava* in many Pacific societies.

[6] *Kupwur* is difficult to translate into English. It can refer to a chief's heart or desire in particular, or to the panoply of powers and manifestations that chiefly or spiritual power has. *Pahn kupwur* has been translated by consultants as 'under the chief's authority' (*pah* is 'below').

[7] The basic possessive markings for person are as follows:

Singular	1st	*-i*	'my'
	2nd	*-mw*	'your'
	3rd	-0	'his, her, its'
Dual/plural	1st excl.	*-t*	'ours' (excl. you)
Dual	1st incl.	*-ta*	'ours' (incl. you)
	2nd	*-mwa*	'your (two)'
	3rd	*-ra*	'their (two)'
Plural	1st incl.	*-tail*	'our (pl.)'
	2nd	*-mwail*	'your (pl.)'
	3rd	*-rail*	'their (pl.)'

[8] The form *ei* is a phonological variant of *ai*, the 1sg. form of the general classifier *ah*.

[9] In Pohnpeian honorific speech, as is common in other honorific registers cross-culturally, 3pl. forms are sometimes used to indicate the singular person of the chief.

[10] It is not only Pohnpeians who link concepts of status and food. A correspondence between status and food has been noted in India by Brown & Levinson (1987:45), where social inequality is marked by differences in the use of familiar pronouns and in exchanges of cooked food.

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