Searching for insubordination: An analysis of *labo* in Lamaholot

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In this paper, we present a description and analysis of *labo* ‘although’ in Lamaholot of eastern Indonesia, which is a subordinating conjunction that expresses a concessive relation between main and subordinate clauses. Although clause-initial conjunctions are predominant in this SVO language, the conjunction *labo* appears in clause-final position. Interestingly, subordinate clauses headed by *labo* can stand alone without a main clause, conveying the speaker’s irritation or blame toward the hearer or an undesirable event. By providing synchronic evidence of different kinds, this paper proposes that this construction involves insubordination, the independent use of constructions exhibiting prima facie characteristics of subordinate clauses (Evans 2007).

1. Lamaholot, an eastern Indonesian language

Lamaholot is an Austronesian language of eastern Indonesia. It is a Central Malayo-Polynesian language of the Austronesian language family and is spoken in the eastern part of Flores Island and neighboring islands of eastern Indonesia (Map 1). Before the arrival of Malay/Indonesian, this language served as the lingua franca of the region (Grimes et al. 1997, Klamer 2012). As is often the case with languages of eastern Indonesia, Lamaholot constitutes a dialect chain with enough substantial differences between some of the dialects to make them mutually incomprehensible (Keraf 1978, Bowden 2008, Grangé 2015). At present, almost all speakers of this language are bilingual with Indonesian and local varieties of Malay (e.g., Larantuka Malay). In this paper, we present data from the Lewotobi dialect, the most westerly dialect in the chain, which is spoken by approximately 6,000 speakers in Kecamatan Ile Bura.

Map 1. Flores Island and the islands of Indonesia

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Lamaholot displays two typological features that characterize this language as a typical eastern Indonesian language (Nagaya 2013). First, Lamaholot is a strongly isolating language. Flores languages are known for having little morphology (Himmelmann 2005), and Lamaholot is no exception to this tendency. It has few grammatical affixes, except for agreement markers and possessive markers. Information about tense, aspect, and mood is expressed by separate words (see (2) and (3)).

Second, Lamaholot and other Austronesian languages of eastern Indonesia display word order features that are not found in Austronesian languages of the Philippines and western Indonesia (Klamer 2002, Himmelmann 2005, Donohue 2007). As summarized by Himmelmann (2005:141ff), eastern Indonesian languages tend to have an SVO word order, clause-final negator and auxiliaries, a possessor-possessum order, and a noun-numeral order. To illustrate, consider examples from Lamaholot. The basic word order of this language at the clause level is SVO, as in (1).

(1)  
\[
g{1}{SG} \text{buka} \ k\text{naweʔ}.
\]
\[\text{[SVO]}\]
\`I opened the door.\`

The negator and other TAM markers occur in clause-final position. For instance, the negator \textit{halaʔ} and the imperfective marker \textit{mor̃} appear clause-finally in (2) and (3), respectively.

(2)  
\[
g{1}{SG} \ k\text{-enu} \ k\text{opi} \ h\text{alaʔ}.
\]
\[\text{[V-Neg]}\]
\`I don’t drink coffee.'

(3)  
\[
n\text{a} \ t\text{uru} \ m\text{or̃}.
\]
\[\text{[V-Aspect]}\]
\`(S)he is still sleeping.'

Turning to the structure of noun phrases, a possessor precedes its possessum when it is realized as a lexical noun, as in (4), and a numeral follows the head noun, as in (5).

(4)  
\[
H\text{ugo} \ l\text{agoʔ} =k\text{aś}
\]
\[\text{[Possessor-Possessed]}\]
\`Hugo’s house’

(5)  
\[
\text{a} \ t\text{ua} \ r\text{ua}
\]
\[\text{[Noun-Numeral]}\]
\`two persons’

These word order features contrast sharply with those in western Indonesian languages, where the opposite tendencies are observed except they follow an SVO pattern in addition to a VXS one.\(^2\) Compare Indonesian examples in (6) through (9) with Lamaholot examples in (1) through (4), respectively.

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\(^2\) The term “VXS” is employed by Himmelmann (2005:141) to refer to a predicate-initial word order, with a tendency to be also subject-final.
The fact that Lamaholot and other eastern Indonesian languages show different word order tendencies from other Indonesian languages is understood as the result of their long-term and extensive interactions with Papuan languages (Klamer 2002, 2012; Himmelmann 2005, Donohue 2007). Speakers of Papuan languages were in this region even before the arrival of Austronesian speakers, and the two groups coexisted there for thousands of years. As a result, Austronesian languages of eastern Indonesia have obtained these word order features, among others, under the influence of Papuan languages. Indeed, the influence of Papuan languages in Lamaholot is so intensive that such influences can be recognized even in the basic vocabulary. For example, the word for ‘banana’ is muko in Lamaholot, which was obviously borrowed from a Papuan language (*muko ‘banana’; Denham & Donohue 2009).

It is in this context that Lamaholot subordinate constructions become interesting. This language has both clause-initial and clause-final subordinate conjunctions: although clause-initial conjunctions are predominant among subordinate constructions in Lamaholot, there is one exceptional subordinate conjunction ləbo that unexpectedly appears in clause-final position. For instance, consider (11).

(11) go turu morə ləbo, mo ître go.  
1SG sleep IPFV although 2SG wake.up 1SG  
‘Although I am still sleeping, you woke me up.’

The sentence in (11) consists of a subordinate clause and a main clause that follows it. The subordinate clause is headed by the conjunction ləbo ‘although’ in the clause-final position, followed by a pause. It indicates a concessive relationship between the main clause and the subordinate clause.

Even more interestingly and importantly, main clauses in this subordinate construction can often be absent, resulting in what Evans (2007) refers to as insubordination, namely,
“the conventionalised main-clause use of what, on prima facie grounds, appear to be formally subordinate clauses” (Evans 2007:367). Look at (12) for an illustration.

(12) go turu moṛ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣ moṛ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣.
    1SG sleep IPFV although
    ‘I am still sleeping.’

The example in (12) is a stand-alone grammatical sentence by itself. Literally, it simply means that the speaker is sleeping, but it also has an interactional meaning conventionally associated with it: it conveys the speaker’s irritation towards the hearer, who, for example, is trying to wake up the speaker. Note that the symbol “↑” refers to rising intonation (see Section 3.2).

In this paper, we look into this insubordinated ləbo-construction. It will be shown that this construction type is not a mere elliptical utterance but has its own place in Lamaholot grammar. We also address how it is distinguished from other similar elements/phenomena, such as sentence-final particles.

This paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, we present a general description of subordination and coordination constructions in Lamaholot. Section 3 looks into the insubordinated ləbo-construction in detail, paying attention to both formal and semantic characteristics. Lastly, this paper concludes in Section 4.

2. Subordination and coordination in Lamaholot

This section presents an overview of clause linking in Lamaholot, to be more specific, subordination (Section 2.1), coordination (Section 2.2), and complementation (Section 2.3). It is shown that, reflecting its isolating nature, this language does not have rich morphology for indicating clause linking. In addition, it is emphasized that certain conjunctions were borrowed from Malay/Indonesian.

2.1 Subordination

Subordinate clauses in Lamaholot are indicated simply by means of subordinating conjunctions, as shown in (13), (14), (15), and (16) below.

(13) waktu go səga pi, ra kri̱̣̣̣̣̣̣̣̣ moṛ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣.
    when 1SG arrive here 3PL work IPFV
    ‘When I arrived here, they were still working.’

(14) kalo mo pana, go di dore.
    if 2SG walk 1SG also follow
    ‘If you leave, I will follow (you).’

(15) go teḍ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣ ia laŋoʔ, sape ra səga.
    1SG wait PREP house until 3PL arrive
    ‘I will wait in the house until they arrive.’

(16) go səga pi muri, ṇ̣̣̣̣̣̣̣ pe: go libur.
    1SG arrive here again when 1SG vacation
    ‘I will visit here again when I am on vacation.’
There are three important characteristics of Lamaholot subordinated clauses. First, the subordinating status of subordinated clauses is only indicated by the existence of subordinating conjunctions. Verbs in subordinated clauses can take the same set of morphosyntactic properties as those in main clauses. There are no morphological devices that indicate finiteness, unlike Indo-European languages. There is no syntactic difference, either. The word order is the same between main and subordinate clauses. The subordinated clauses in (13), (14), (15), and (16) can be used as main clauses when subordinating conjunctions are left out.

Second, borrowing conjunctions from other languages is quite common in Lamaholot. Indeed, waktu ‘when’ in (13), kalo ‘if’ in (14), and sape ‘until’ (15) were borrowed from Malay/Indonesian waktu ‘when’, kalau ‘if’, and sampai ‘until’, respectively. This is easily understood when the fact that this language is spoken in contact with Malay/Indonesian is taken into account. 4

Lastly, it is possible to change the order of main and subordinate clauses without change in meaning. For example, consider (17), where the main clause and the subordinate clause appear in the reverse order from (13). Still, the sentence remains grammatical and conveys the same meaning as (13).

(17) ra kri̊ə̃ morə̃, waktu go sə̃ga pi.
3PL work IPFV when 1SG arrive here
‘They were still working when I arrived here.’

Another example with a reversed subordinated clause is given in (18). Compare (16) and (18). The subordinated clause headed by the complex subordinator nəʔə̃ pe: ‘when’ occurs after the main clause in (16) but before it in (18).

(18) nəʔə̃ pe: go libur, go sə̃ga pi muri.
when 1SG vacation 1SG arrive here again
‘When I am on vacation, I will visit here again.’

2.2 Coordination

By clausal coordination, we refer to structures where two clauses are semantically and syntactically independent of each other but combined to express a single integrated conceptual unit as a whole. For this purpose, linking adverbs are often employed in Lamaholot. 5 Consider kũ ‘but’ in (19), kədiʔ ‘so’ in (20), and kia gə ‘and then’ in (21).

(19) go majə̃ mo, kũ mo m-õi hə̃la?.
1SG call 2SG but 2SG 2SG-know NEG
‘I called you, but you didn’t notice.’

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4 It seems that borrowing conjunctions is not an exceptional phenomenon in Indonesian languages. For example, Malay/Indonesian waktu ‘when’ and kalau ‘if’ by themselves were borrowed into this language from Arabic (Haspelmath & Tadmor 2009).

5 The term “linking adverb” is adopted from Haspelmath (2007), by which he refers to those linking devices (e.g., then and however in English) that are less grammaticalized than coordinators (e.g., and). In our description of Lamaholot, we employ this term to distinguish kũ ‘but’, kədiʔ ‘so’, and kia gə ‘and then’ from the genuine coordinator ə̃ʔə̃ ‘and’. Unlike kũ, kədiʔ, and kia gə, ə̃ʔə̃ cannot constitute a single utterance by itself.
There are two important characteristics in Lamaholot coordinated clauses. First, an intonation break is regularly placed right before a linking adverb, as in the examples above. Second, unlike subordinate clauses, changing the order of two coordinated clauses results in change in meaning. For example, when the order of the two clauses connected by *kia go* ‘and then’ in (21) is reversed, a sentence with a different meaning is obtained. See (22).6

(20) *go kria wahə, kədiʔ go gwali.*
1SG work finish so 1SG go/home
‘I finished working, so I went home.’

(21) *mo həbo, kia go go həbo.*
2SG bathe later then 1SG bathe
‘You take a bath, and then I will take a bath.’

2.3 Complementation

In addition to subordination and coordination, there is another kind of clause linkage, namely, complementation. Complementation refers to the syntactic configuration in which a clause serves as an argument of a predicate. For this purpose, Lamaholot does not have any special marker (i.e., complementizer) or need any overt morphological modification. Complement clauses simply appear where an argument is supposed to occur. Consider (23) and (24) for an illustration.

(22) *go həbo, kia go mo həbo.*
1SG bathe later then 2SG bathe
‘I will take a bath, and then you take a bath.’

(23) *Ika tutu koda teʔə.*
Ika tell story this
‘Ika told this story.’

(24) *Ika tutu Nia gwali kaeʔ.*
Ika tell Nia return PFV
‘Ika told that Nia already returned.’

In (23), the noun phrase *koda teʔə* ‘this story’ appears as an argument of the verb predicate *tutu* ‘tell’. In contrast, in (24), this position is occupied by the full clause *Nia gwali kaeʔ* ‘Nia already returned’.

3. Insubordination with *ləbo*

In this section, we look into the concessive conjunction *ləbo*. In Section 3.1, a basic description of this conjunction is presented. In Section 3.2, we present an analysis of insubordination with *ləbo*. Then, attention is paid to sentence-final particles in Section 3.3. They look similar to, but are different from, *ləbo* insubordination.

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6 As one of the reviewers suggested, there is another way of word order change for (21): *kia go mo həbo, mo həbo*. But this sentence is ungrammatical. In any event, word order change behaves differently in coordination and subordination.
3.1 Subordination with *ləbo*

As mentioned in Section 1, *ləbo* is a concessive conjunction that appears in the clause-final position. In (25), for instance, *ləbo* leads the subordinate clause *kame koda kə moṛə* ‘we are still talking’.

(25)  
\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{1PL.EXC talk} = \text{1PL.EXC IPFV although} \quad \text{candle die PFV} \\
&\text{‘Although we are still talking, the candle burned out.’}
\end{align*}
\]

The analysis that the conjunction *ləbo* is attached to the preceding clause rather than the following one is borne out by the fact that an intonation break falls right after *ləbo*. This fact becomes clearer when *ləbo* is compared with linking adverbs mentioned in Section 2.2. For instance, the intellectual content conveyed in (25) can also be expressed by means of the linking adverb *kũ* ‘but’; however, as in (26), an intonation break falls before it, not after it.

(26)  
\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{1PL.EXC talk} = \text{1PL.EXC IPFV but} \quad \text{candle die PFV} \\
&\text{‘We are still talking, but the candle burned out (i.e., we cannot talk any longer).’}
\end{align*}
\]

According to Lamaholot speakers’ description, the sentences in (25) and (26) have the same truth-conditional meaning in spite of the fact that different kinds of conjunctions are employed. They also provide the Indonesian conjunction *tetapi* ‘but’ as a translation equivalent of both conjunctions and even report that there is no noticeable difference in meaning between them. But the position of an intonation break relative to *ləbo* and *kũ* indicates that the former is a subordinating conjunction, while the latter is a linking adverb. Putting an intonation break in (25) and (26) in a wrong place makes these sentences sound unnatural.

Another piece of evidence for the analysis of *ləbo* as a subordinating conjunction is reversibility. According to native speakers of Lamaholot, the word order where the subordinate clause precedes the main clause is favorable. But the reverse word order is also possible, as in (27).

(27)  
\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{1PL.EXC talk} = \text{1PL.EXC IPFV} \quad \text{but} \quad \text{candle die PFV} \\
&\text{‘The candle burned out, but we are still talking.’}
\end{align*}
\]

A last piece of evidence for our analysis of *ləbo* as a clause-final subordinator comes from deletion test. See (29), (30), and (31).

(29)  
\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{1PL.EXC talk} = \text{1PL.EXC IPFV although} \quad \text{candle die PFV} \\
&\text{‘Although we are still talking, the candle burned out.’}
\end{align*}
\]

(30)  
\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{1PL.EXC talk} = \text{1PL.EXC IPFV but} \quad \text{candle die PFV} \\
&\text{‘Although we are still talking, the candle burned out.’}
\end{align*}
\]

(31)  
\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{1PL.EXC talk} = \text{1PL.EXC IPFV} \\
&\text{‘Although we are still talking, the candle burned out.’}
\end{align*}
\]
When we leave out the clause that precedes ləbo from (25), it is ungrammatical, as in (29). The particle ləbo never appears clause-initially. On the contrary, it is possible to delete the clause that follows ləbo, as in (30). In addition, omitting both ləbo and the preceding clause is fine, as in (31). These facts show that ləbo and the preceding clause form a single constituent of subordinate clause.

To summarize, clause-final ləbo demonstrates the same syntactic behaviors as those subordinating conjunctions discussed in Section 2.1 in terms of the position of an intonation break, reversibility, and deletion test. These three pieces of evidence show that ləbo is a subordinating conjunction that appears in clause-final position. This characterization of ləbo makes it stand out among subordinating conjunctions in Lamaholot: only ləbo appears in clause-final position, while the other subordinating conjunctions in this language occur in clause-initial position.

3.2 Insubordination with ləbo

The most important feature of the above-mentioned subordinating conjunction ləbo ‘although’ is that it can be used without a main clause. In other words, it can introduce an insubordinated clause in the sense of the independent use of constructions exhibiting prima facie characteristics of subordinate clauses. There are two significant features characteristic of this insubordinated use of ləbo. First, the insubordinated ləbo clause conveys an interactional meaning. To be more specific, it expresses the speaker’s irritation toward the hearer or an undesirable event in the context of the current situation described by the ləbo clause. Second, an acute rise in pitch is observed on ləbo, which is not necessarily observed when it is used as a subordinating conjunction. Let us take (32) for an illustration.

(32) kame koda =kə morš ləbo↑.
1PL.EXC talk =1PL.EXC IPFV although

‘We are still talking.’

The example in (32) consists of a single clause followed by the subordinator ləbo with an acute rise in pitch on it. It literally means ‘we are still talking’, but when situated in the actual speech environment, it also indicates that some event that will potentially prevent the speakers from continuing to talk is happening at the time of utterance. It was produced by one of my language consultants when the candle burned out during our elicitation session. With this specific sentence, the language consultant expressed his irritation toward the fact that we could not continue to work because there was no light available.

The insubordinated ləbo-construction is a conventionalized and well-established construction type in Lamaholot. Indeed, this use of ləbo is far frequent than the subordination use of it on the basis of the present author’s observation of naturally-occurring conversation. Let us observe more examples from conversations. See

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7 Ləbo-subordinate clauses without the main clause, as in (30), will be discussed in Section 3.2.

8 Of course, it does not mean that this is the only situation where the example in (32) can be felicitously uttered. According to the very language consultant who produced (32), it can be employed, for example, when someone asked speakers to leave as soon as possible and it made them stop talking.

9 Native speakers of Lamaholot agree with this description, but we cannot show how frequent the insubordinated ləbo-clauses are by means of text counts at this stage.
examples in (33) through (37). Note that the present author has collected the following examples while overhearing conversations among Lamaholot speakers during his stay in the Nurri village of Kecamatan Ile Bura. All of them have subsequently been checked with the speakers. The contexts that are not overtly encoded in the sentences are given in parentheses.

(33) $gõ=no$ kia $ləbo\uparrow$.
  eat.2SG=2SG PROS although
  ‘(You should) eat.’
  ‘Although (you should) eat (e.g., you are still working).’

(34) na isəʔ kbako bisa həla $mərə$ $ləbo\uparrow$.
  3SG suck tobacco can NEG IPFV although
  ‘He (or she) cannot smoke cigarettes.’
  ‘Although he (or she) cannot smoke cigarettes (e.g., you offered him/her a cigarette).’

(35) $gõ=no$ $mərə$ $ləbo\uparrow$.
  eat.2SG=2SG IPFV although
  ‘You are still eating.’
  ‘Although you are still eating (e.g., they asked you to leave).’

(36) $mər$ pi məko n-əʔəʔ teʔ $ləbo\uparrow$.
  life here ugly 3SG-do this although
  ‘Life here is ugly like this.’
  ‘Although life here is ugly like this (e.g., you still came here).’

(37) go notə $=rə$ $ləbo\uparrow$.
  1SG watch =3SG although
  ‘I am watching it.’
  ‘Although I am watching it (e.g., you turned off the TV).’

It is important to remark that $ləbo$ in the examples above cannot be analyzed (yet) as a sentence-final particle that conveys hearer-oriented meanings, although it might appear as such. In Section 3.3, we discuss syntactic properties that distinguish $ləbo$ from sentence-final particles.

As mentioned in Section 2.1, there is no formal distinction between main and subordinate clauses in Lamaholot, except for the presence of a conjunction in the latter. Thus, insubordinated $ləbo$-constructions can remain grammatical even if the conjunction $ləbo$ is left out. But if $ləbo$ is not present, interactional meanings disappear, too. For example, when we delete $ləbo$ in (32), we will get the example in (38). This sentence is simply a statement of the fact that speakers were talking at the time of utterance, and it is not implied that something that prevented their conversation happened. No sense of irritation is conveyed, either.

(38) $kame$ $kəda$ $=kə$ $mərə$.
  1PL.EXC talk =1PL.EXC IPFV
  ‘We are still talking.’

As a final remark, in the literature on insubordination, it is not uncommon that concessive subordinators are used for expressing irritation. An example in (39), for example, shows that the concessive subordinating conjunction $noni$ ‘although’ in Japanese has an
Insubordination use of expressing speaker’s irritation (cf. Ohori 1997). Observe the formal and semantic parallelism between Lamaholot (32) and Japanese (39).

(39)  \textit{mada hanasi=si-tetu }\textit{=noni.}
still\hspace{1em}talk=ACC\hspace{1em}do-IPFV\hspace{1em}=although

‘We are still talking.’

‘Although we are still talking (e.g., the candle burned out).’

According to one of the reviewers, the insubordination use of \textit{lobo} in Lamaholot (as well as \textit{=noni} in Japanese) looks similar to the sentence-final use of \textit{padahal} ‘although’ in Indonesian. For example, \textit{padahal} can mark a concessive subordinate clause, as in (40) (cf. Sneddon et al. 2010:354); it may also work as an indicator of speaker’s attitude of some sort, as in (41).

(40)  \textit{Mereka tidak mem-bantu, padahal mereka orang kaya.}
3PL\hspace{1em}NEG\hspace{1em}ACT-help\hspace{1em}although\hspace{1em}3PL\hspace{1em}person rich

‘They didn’t help, although they are rich.’ (Daniel Hariman Jacob, pers. comm.)

(41)  \textit{Mereka kaya padahal.}
3PL\hspace{1em}rich\hspace{1em}although

‘They are rich, though.’ (provided by one of the reviewers)

But the resemblance is only superficial. In the case of \textit{padahal}, it appears in different positions with different uses: the subordinator \textit{padahal} appears in a clause-initial position, as in (40), while the discourse particle \textit{padahal} occurs in a clause-final position, as in (41). Moreover, the latter use cannot be obtained simply by deleting the main clause in the former. There is no room for the insubordination analysis here.

In contrast, \textit{lobo} does not change its position even in insubordinated clauses. Compare \textit{lobo}-subordination in (42) and \textit{lobo}-insubordination in (43). One can get the latter just by omitting the main clause from the former. The conjunction \textit{lobo} remains in the same position with or without the main clause. This is a case of insubordination.

(42)  \textit{ra doi adʒə̃ lobo, ra bantu go həlaʔ.}
3PL\hspace{1em}money\hspace{1em}many\hspace{1em}although\hspace{1em}3PL\hspace{1em}help\hspace{1em}1SG\hspace{1em}NEG

‘Although they have a lot of money, they didn’t help me.’

(43)  \textit{ra doi adʒə̃ lobo↑.}
3PL\hspace{1em}money\hspace{1em}many\hspace{1em}although

‘They have a lot of money.’

‘Although they have a lot of money (e.g., they didn’t help me).’

\textbf{3.3 \textit{lobo} and sentence-final particles}

Lamaholot has several sentence-final particles that express discourse-manipulating or inter-subjective meanings, such as asking questions and making excuses. For example, consider examples in (44), (45), and (46).

(44)  \textit{mo gə=no kae? ta?}
2SG\hspace{1em}eat.2SG=2SG\hspace{1em}PFV\hspace{1em}Q

‘Have you eaten yet?’
In (44), the sentence-final particle *ta* is used to indicate that the sentence in question is an interrogative sentence. In (45), another sentence-final particle *di* is employed to tell the hearer that the speaker is making an excuse. For example, (45) can be used when the speaker is telling the hearer to stop bothering him or her because he or she is still eating. In a similar way, *ka* in (46) adds an emphasis to the imperative sentence.

Importantly, no two of these sentence-final particles can occur together. For instance, examples in (47) are ungrammatical: the two particles *ta* and *di* cannot be employed in the same sentence. Examples in (48) illustrate that *ka* and *ta* cannot appear in the same sentence.

This characteristic of sentence-final particles becomes another piece of evidence for our analysis of *ləbo* in subordinated clauses as a subordinating conjunction, rather than a sentence-final particle. If we analyze *ləbo* as a sentence-final particle, we would expect it not to occur with another sentence-final particle. But *ləbo* can co-occur with some sentence-final particles, as in (49).

The example in (49) clearly shows that *ləbo* is not a sentence-final particle in terms of its position in the clause. Indeed, *ləbo* is the only word that can be employed between aspect/mood particles and sentence-final particles in the entire Lamaholot lexicon. According to our hypothesis, this idiosyncratic property of *ləbo* is a result of insubordination.

4. Conclusions

This paper presents a description and analysis of *ləbo* in Lamaholot, an Austronesian language of eastern Indonesia. In our analysis, it is a clause-final subordinate conjunction that expresses a concessive relation between main and subordinate clauses. The most significant characteristic of this conjunction is that it also heads insubordinated clauses: subordinate clauses headed by *ləbo* can stand alone without a main clause, conveying the speaker’s irritation or blame toward the hearer or an undesirable event. The fact that...
Lamaholot is a typical eastern Indonesian language makes _ləbo_-insubordination an interesting but difficult object of inquiry, as _ləbo_ is the only clause-final subordinating conjunction in this SVO language that involves little formal marking of finiteness.

Needless to say, even if our hypothesis is correct, the question remains as to how Lamaholot has got the subordinating conjunction _ləbo_, which unexpectedly appears in the clause-final position. At this stage, we simply do not know the answer. But if we take into account the fact that Lamaholot has been heavily influenced by Papuan languages (Section 1), we might be able to speculate that _ləbo_ might have been borrowed from a Papuan language in this region. As a matter of fact, in contact with Papuan languages, this Austronesian language has acquired the possessor-possessum word order, clause-final aspect/mood markers, and some basic vocabulary (e.g., _muko_ ‘banana’), among others. It seems not unrealistic that old Lamaholot may have borrowed _ləbo_ from a certain Papuan language in exactly the way modern Lamaholot borrowed conjunctions from Malay/Indonesian.

**Abbreviations**

1  first person  
3  third person  
ACT  active  
EX  excuse  
IMP  imperative  
NEG  negator  
PL  plural  
PREP  preposition  
SG  singular  
2  second person  
ACC  accusative  
EMP  emphatic  
EXC  exclusive  
IPFV  imperfective  
PFV  perative  
POSS  possessive  
PROS  prospective  
Q  question

**References**


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10 We cannot find _ləbo_ and phonologically similar words in dictionaries of other Lamaholot dialects, either (e.g., Pampus 1999).


