

## A Grammar of Neverver

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# A Grammar of Neverver

by

Julie Barbour

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Julie Barbour  
Hamilton, New Zealand  
June 2012

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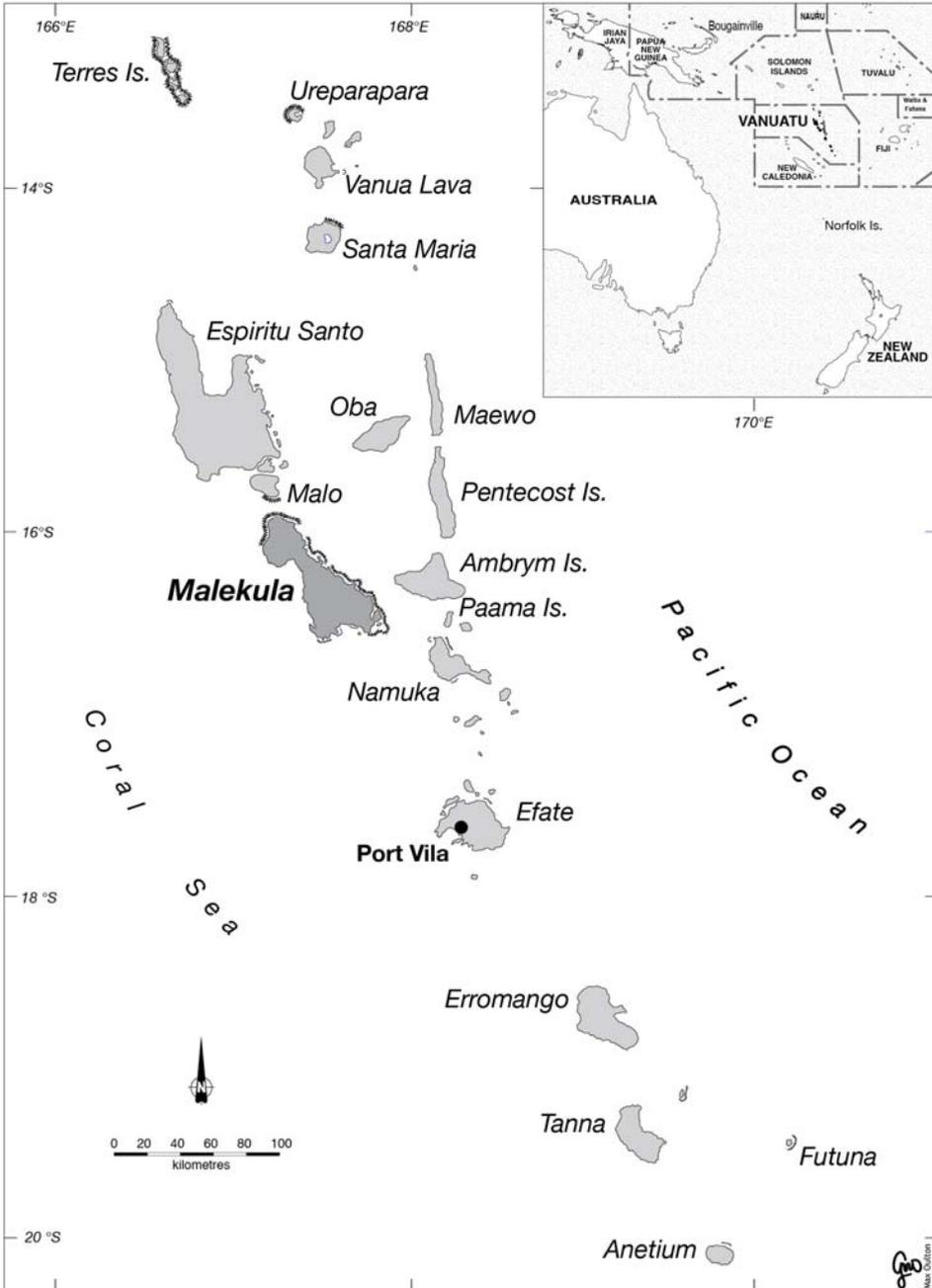
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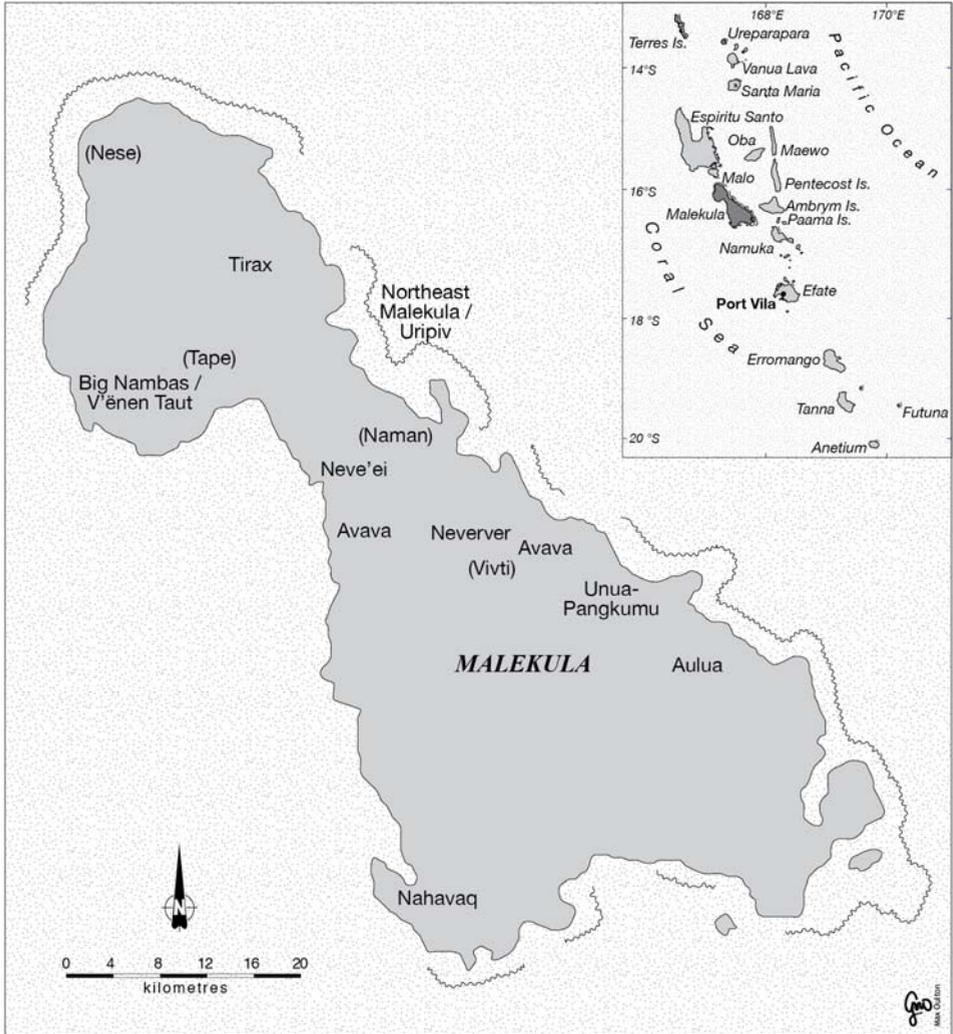
## Abbreviations

,	pause
[NV...]	data reference
↗	rising intonation
→	level/falling intonation
↘	falling terminal intonation
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ANA	anaphoric demonstrative
ANT	anterior tense/aspect
APPL	applicative suffix
AUGCO	augmentative coordination
BENE	benefactive
CAUS	subordinator of cause
COMP	complementizer
COMPL	completive aspect
CONT	continuative aspect
COP	copula
DEF	definite
DEMSPN	demonstrative pronominal-noun
DU	dual
DUP	reduplication
EMPH	emphatic marker
EXCL	exclusive
EXCLAM	exclamatory marker
FREQ	frequentative aspect
IMM	immediate tense/aspect
IMPS	impersonal subject
INCL	inclusive
INDF	indefinite
INDF.PN	indefinite pronoun
IRR	irrealis mood
k.o.	a kind of
LOC	general locative preposition
LOC.ON	locative preposition 'on'

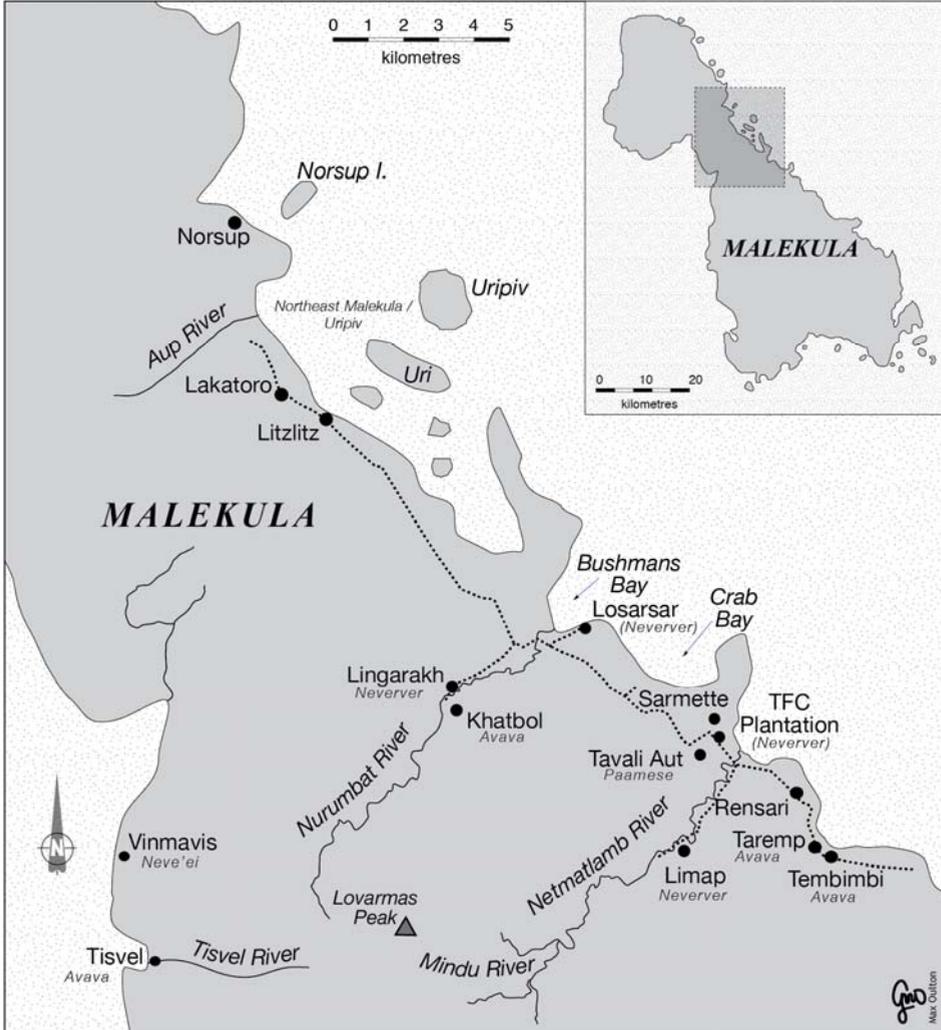
LOC PN	locative pronominal-noun
LOC PSN	locative personal preposition
n.	noun
NEG	negative particle
NMOD	nominal modifying particle
NPR	nominalizing prefix
NSF	nominalizing suffix
NSG	non-singular
PART	partitive aspect
PERF	discourse perfect aspect
PL	plural
PROG	progressive aspect
POSS	possessive
POSSDT	possessive determiner
PSNPR	personal prefix
POSSPN	possessive pronominalizer
PTLY	partly complete aspect
PURPOSE	subordinator of purpose
REAL	realis mood
RMT	remote tense/aspect
RSPN	resumptive pronoun
s.o.	someone
s.t.	something
SG	singular
ST	stative prefix
TEMP	temporary aspect
TEMPPROX	marker of temporal proximity
TMPPN	temporal pronominal-noun
v.	verb



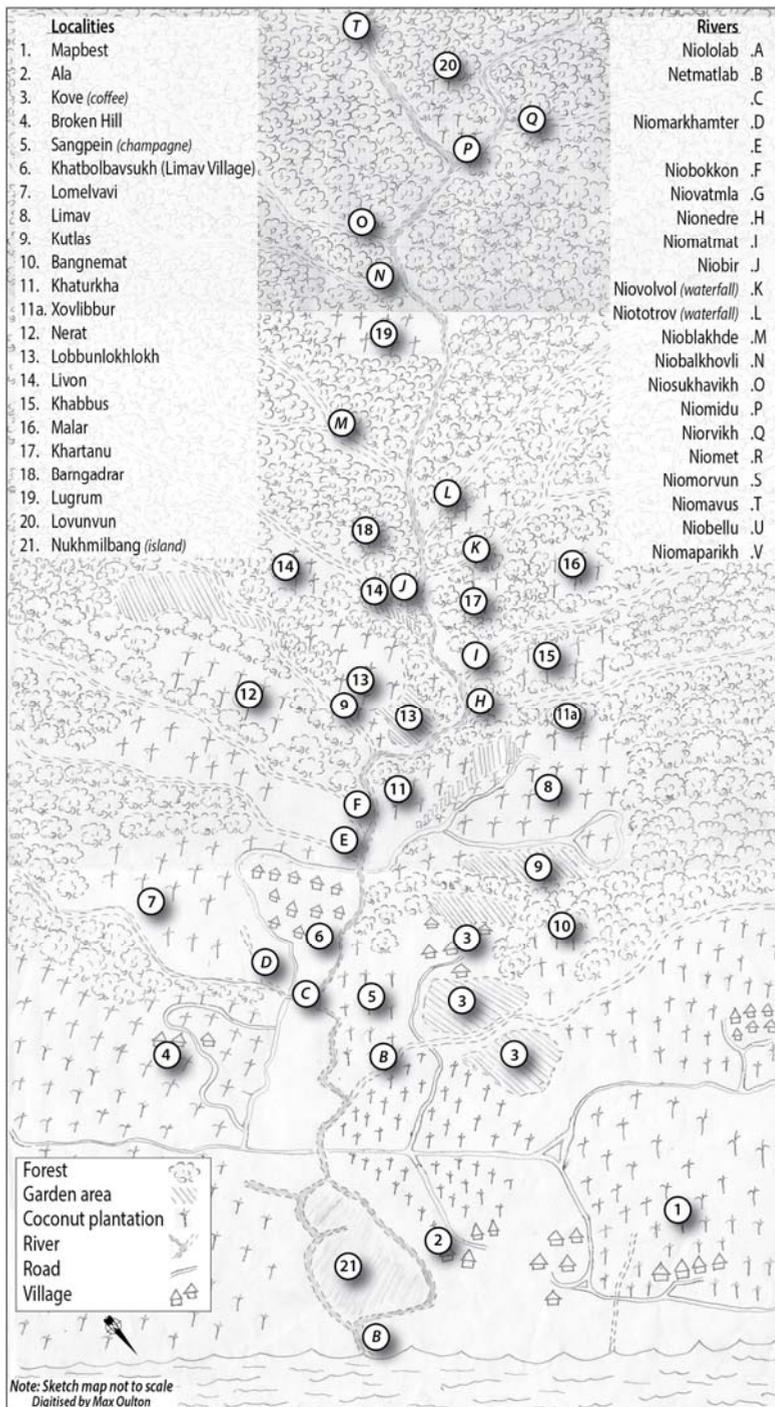
Map 1. Malekula Island in Vanuatu



Map 2. Location of Malekula languages that have been the subject of recent linguistic study. Moribund languages in parentheses.



Map 3. Location of Neverver speakers in North-Central Malekula. Non-dominant languages in parentheses.



Map 4. Hand-drawn map of the Netmatlab River Valley. Prepared by Song-Be Peni-yas, with Limav village elders, for the Neverver Documentation Project.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Neverver, the language of the Mindu and Sakhan people, is spoken on Malekula Island in Vanuatu by some 560 people. The speech community is located primarily in the villages of Lingarakh and Limap on the eastern side of north-central Malekula. Neverver survives in a context of extraordinary linguistic diversity, being surrounded by indigenous Malekula languages as well as the introduced languages English, Bislama, and to a lesser extent French. Prior to the current study, this Southern Oceanic language (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002: 113–115) was virtually unknown to the academic world.

Despite the very small speech community and a range of pressures on the language, intergenerational transmission has continued and the language is not yet moribund. A language documentation project, initiated in August 2004, aims to provide a lasting record of Neverver as it is used by members of the speech community. Conducted in collaboration with a team of Neverver speakers, the language documentation project has already produced multiple outputs.<sup>1</sup> This descriptive grammar is one further output, targetted at a linguistic audience.

### 1.1. Geographic and linguistic context

Malekula Island, home to the speakers of the Neverver language, is the second largest of more than eighty islands that make up the Vanuatu archipelago. More than one hundred indigenous languages are thought to be spoken on the islands of Vanuatu, and at least eighty of these are still actively used (Lynch and Crowley 2001: 4). Malekula Island alone boasts some twenty-four actively-spoken indigenous languages, along with a further fifteen languages that have been

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1. Major outputs of the documentation project comprise the development of a community orthography and literacy materials prepared in the orthography, including multiple copies of: an illustrated alphabet booklet; a numeral booklet; illustrated primers; flash cards; hymn booklets; and a collection of traditional and contemporary stories told by Neverver speakers. Most of the literacy materials have been prepared by community members. A draft wordlist has been compiled and is currently being developed into a dictionary. Visual images of community members collected during field work have been printed. Visual images of flora are being collated in a database with ethnobotanical documentation. A draft of this last output will be prepared in hard copy for community members to develop further.

identified as either extinct or moribund (Lynch and Crowley 2001: 68, 85). This extraordinary number of indigenous languages is spoken by a population of around 27,000, including residents both of the main island of Malekula, and those of the surrounding small islands (Vanuatu National Statistics Office 2009: 13). The two largest languages are North East Malekula/Uripiv and Big Nambas/V'ënen Taut, with an estimated 12,000 speakers in total (Lynch and Crowley 2001: 68). The remaining twenty-two actively spoken languages boast very small populations.

According to local history, the Neverver speech community was traditionally located in the interior of Malekula, where it was spoken by the Mindu and Sakhan peoples. An account of traditional death ceremonies and beliefs features the central Lovarmas Peak as the point of departure of souls to *Labbu*, the spirit world (Lerakhsil Moti and James Bangsukh, pers. comm.). On a locally drawn map, the Mindu River is identified as an inland stream that feeds into the Netmatlamb River. The Netmatlamb River runs from inland Malekula past one of the present-day village sites, down to the eastern coast. Linguistic evidence supports local history, with a survey of the Neverver lexicon revealing none of the rich coral reef vocabulary typically used by coastal dwellers in the tropics.

Population movements towards the eastern coast are still recalled by older community members. Following the arrival of Christian missionaries on Malekula in the 1880s, the villagers report a gradual migration from the interior of Malekula towards Bushman's Bay and Crab Bay. The Mindu and Sakhan peoples settled together in Limap village in the Netmatlamb River Valley and in Lingarakh village in the Nurumbat River Valley. A few community members have moved further towards the eastern coast since that migration.

Malekula underwent severe depopulation in the early 1900s, primarily caused by the introduction of European diseases (cf. Crowley 1990: 98–100; Deacon 1934: 18–22). Traditional ways of life were interrupted by this depopulation and in the 1930s visiting anthropologist A. Bernard Deacon believed that the Malekulan people as a whole were unlikely to survive, commenting that 'the natives are the last survivors of a dying people' (Gardiner 1984: 33). Undoubtedly, the Neverver speech community was affected by depopulation also. The variety of Neverver spoken today is said to be based on the Mindu dialect. While some community members are still identified as being of Sakhan descent, any historical dialectal differences have been lost as the speakers have migrated and regrouped.

In early 2005, the total population of the Neverver speech community was calculated to be fewer than 600. This figure was based on a house-to-house head count that was carried out with language consultants in the community. When defined by Neverver speakers, the speech community consists of the members of all households where at least one parent speaks Neverver as their dominant language. Almost all such households are located in the villages of Limap or

Lingarakh, or in family hamlets surrounding these two villages. Lingarakh village is home to nearly 350 community members; Limap village is home to around 160 Neverver speakers. Around fifty more speakers live in coastal plantation settlements located up to three kilometres away from the main villages. Near the Limap access road is the locally-owned TFC<sup>2</sup> plantation and further north near the Lingarakh access road is the plantation settlement of Losarsar. Both plantation settlements are home to a small number of Neverver-speaking families. There are some non-community members in neighbouring villages who speak a little Neverver, but these people do not have direct family ties to the community and are not included by the community in their count of speakers. Even if such non-dominant speakers were to be included, it is unlikely that an estimated population would be significantly over 700 speakers.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.1.1. Limap village

Limap is the smaller of the two Neverver villages. It is geographically rather isolated. Foot roads into the deep interior that traditionally traversed the island have been abandoned and Limap can only be reached by a single access road from the eastern coast. A consequence of the isolation of Limap village is that villagers tend to be occupied with matters close to home. The cultivation of giant yams is the primary occupation of men, while women cultivate a wide range of tropical fruit and vegetables. Villagers also participate in the cultivation of coconuts and cacao trees, as harvesting copra and cacao is the main means of raising cash. Travel to other villages, including Lingarakh, is only undertaken for business or on special occasions.

Linguistically, Neverver is the dominant language of communication in Limap, with 88% of households reporting themselves to be Neverver-dominant. For families in which Neverver is not dominant, Bislama (a dialect of Melanesi-

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2. The meaning of the acronym TFC could not be identified.

3. In *Languages of Vanuatu: A new survey and bibliography* (Lynch and Crowley 2001: 79), it was estimated that Nevverver (correctly Neverver) was spoken by approximately 1250 people. These speakers were thought to be distributed through the villages of Limap and Lingarakh, as well as Sarmet. Lynch and Crowley (2001: 4–6) stress that their figures are approximations and note that the actual figures could be considerably different (2001: 4–6). The estimated population was extrapolated from census data collected in 1989 and the assumption was made that a sizable number of people in surrounding villages are also competent Neverver speakers. Sarmet (or Sarmette) is in fact a plantation settlement rather than a local village, and is not the permanent home of any Neverver speakers. Unofficial figures from the 2009 census record 525 residents of Limap and Lingarakh villages (Harry Nalau, pers.comm.).

an Pidgin which is the national language of Vanuatu and regional *lingua franca* (Crowley 1990)) is the dominant language of communication between children and their parents. Outside of the home, Neverver is the most commonly heard language, although Bislama also occurs. Its use is triggered by the presence of non-community members, or by communication in domains where Bislama is employed rather than Neverver (see §1.3.2).

Many Limap residents, particularly members of the older generations, are multilingual. They speak up to three indigenous languages alongside Neverver and Bislama. There are two or three first-language speakers of the moribund Vivti language, and several Neverver speakers in the older generations can also speak some Vivti. In the village context, however, any individual multilingualism is rather inactive, as knowledge of other local languages is seldom required for day-to-day communication.

#### 1.1.2. Lingarakh village

Lingarakh village, home to more than half of the Neverver speech community, is far less isolated than Limap. Lingarakh is located across the Nurumbat River from the Avava-speaking village of Khatbol. As Lingarakh and Khatbol have grown, the physical and social boundaries between the two villages have become indistinct. Additionally, community members regularly traverse the island to Vinmavis and Tisvel villages on the western coast. Daily transportation is available from Lingarakh into Lakatoro, the provincial centre of the Malampa (Malekula-Ambrym-Paama) province. 'Going to town' is undertaken for entertainment as well as business. There are employment opportunities in the government offices and businesses in Lakatoro for those with appropriate skills, and young men can find casual employment on coastal plantations between Lingarakh and Lakatoro. The traditional activity of gardening is now balanced with income-earning employment for Lingarakh residents.

While Neverver is still the dominant language of most people in Lingarakh, it is found in only 75% of households. Around 17% of households are Bislama-dominant and just over 8% of households make use of another local language as the dominant language of communication. In contrast to the reported, though largely inactive multilingualism in Limap village, the residents of Lingarakh village are more actively multilingual. Bislama is used regularly for a variety of daily interactions, alongside other vernacular languages and occasionally English. A consequence of the active multilingualism in Lingarakh is that some younger speakers of Neverver lack the wealth of lexical knowledge displayed by their peers in Limap.

### 1.1.3. Multilingual interactions

Malekula, with its large number of indigenous languages, has long been multilingual; however, the recent migration of people towards coastal settlements has brought Neverver speakers into daily contact with speakers of numerous other languages. Today, Neverver speakers interact with speakers of the related Avava language located in Khatbol, Taremp, Tembimbi, and Tisvel villages. There is regular contact with speakers of the Neve'e language, in Vinmavis village. Neverver speakers also have contact with speakers of the Northeast Malekula/Uripiv language who live on the north-east coast of Malekula, as well as the remaining speakers of the moribund Naman, Vivti and Tape languages who are dispersed through north-central Malekula.

In addition to increasing contact with speakers of other indigenous languages, the movement of the Neverver speech community towards the eastern coast of Malekula has brought Neverver speakers into regular contact with Bislama and English, two dominant written languages. Bislama, Vanuatu's constitutionally recognized National Language (Vanuatu 1980), has been the *lingua franca* in the wider Malekula context for many generations now. All Neverver community members can speak this language and most have some literacy skills in Bislama. English and French were asserted as the languages of education and government in Vanuatu during the joint French-English colonial rule. Following Independence in 1980, English and French were named the languages of formal education in the Vanuatu constitution (Vanuatu 1980). English and French were also named the Official Languages of Vanuatu along with Bislama (Vanuatu 1980). Of these three languages, Bislama is the most widely spoken on Malekula. English and French remain prestigious because of their ties to education, administration and increasingly, financial success. Although there are Franco-phone areas in Malekula, the Neverver region is Anglophone and members of the Neverver speech community have not been observed to speak French.

## 1.2. Historical origins

Speakers of Neverver are hypothesized to be one of many groups of people who are descendants of the sea-faring travellers who made a style of ceramics known as 'Lapita'. The Lapita people are thought to be the single source of all early Oceanic settlement (cf. Kirch 2000). While archeological investigation in Vanuatu has been limited, it has supported the claim that the Lapita people were the initial settlers in the region, arriving around 3000 years ago (Kirch 2000: 135–138). Evidence from excavations on Malekula does not indicate any pre-Lapita settlement (cf. Bedford 2006: 259; Bedford et al. 1998: 185).

The current inhabitants of Malekula speak languages belonging to the Oceanic branch of the Austronesian language family (cf. Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002). It has been speculated that all the languages of Malekula may eventually be classified as part of the Oceanic subgroup named the ‘Central Vanuatu Linkage’, along with languages spoken on the islands of southern Pentecost, Ambrym, Epi, the Shepherd Islands, Nguna, and the northern parts of Efate (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002: 112–113).

Tryon’s (1976) classification of the languages of Vanuatu (then the New Hebrides) is the earliest comprehensive attempt to explore the relationships between the vernacular languages of this region. This work was based largely on lexicostatistical principles, and is of rather limited reliability (see Lynch and Crowley (2001: 2–3) for a critique). Tryon includes the language of ‘Lingarak’ (after the village Lingarakh where Neverver is spoken today) in his survey. Using word lists to establish percentages of cognate forms, Tryon classifies Lingarak/Neverver as belonging to the Malekula Central Sub-group, along with Katbol/Avava, Vinmavis/Neve‘ei, Litzlitz/Naman, Big Nambas/V‘ënen Taut and a small number of other languages (Tryon 1976: 87–88). In 1976, when Tryon published his findings, none of these languages had been fully described.

Lynch (n.d.), working with data collected during new descriptive and documentary projects on Malekula,<sup>4</sup> proposes that Neverver’s closest known genetic relative is the moribund Naman language. Lynch (n.d.) places Neverver and Naman in a sub-group of Malekula languages spoken on the western coast of the island. This placement appears at odds with the current location of the Neverver speech community on the eastern coast of Malekula but it aligns well with the oral history described in §1.1. that locates the speech community in the interior of the island. Although Lynch (n.d.) has begun to propose relationships between the languages spoken on Malekula, the detailed description of individual languages in this region needs to be completed before firmer sub-grouping hypotheses can be established.

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4. A number of linguistic projects have been undertaken on Malekula Island in the last decade. The linguists working on these projects are mostly based in New Zealand, and include: Terry Crowley, who had described Avava (Crowley 2006a) and Naman (2006b), and had begun work on Nese (2006c), and Tape (2006d) before his death in 2005; Martin Paviour-Smith, who has been working with the Aulua community for nearly a decade; Elizabeth Pearce who has studied Unua-Pangkumu; Laura Dimock (2009) who has completed a description of Nahavaq; and Marie-France Duhamel, who is beginning a PhD on Atchin. Ross McKerras, formerly of SIL, has compiled a grammar sketch of Northeast Malekula/Uripiv, Amanda Brotchie (2009) of Melbourne University (Australia), has completed a study of Tirax, and Lana Takau of the University of Newcastle is beginning an extended description of Matanvat/Nese for her PhD. Kanauhea Wessels begins work on Malua Bay in late 2012 under my supervision.

### 1.2.1. Early work on Neverver

Before the current project began in August 2004, there had been very little research carried out on Neverver. The first published material on the language took the form of a short list of kinship terms under the name of Nesan in A. Bernard Deacon's anthropological volume titled *Malekula: A vanishing people in the New Hebrides* (Deacon 1934: 125). Bernard Deacon, a novice British anthropologist, spent around fourteen months on Malekula and its neighbouring islands in 1926 and early 1927, before his death from Blackwater fever on 12 March 1927 (Deacon 1934: xxvii). During this time, Deacon stayed with Ewan Corlette, a British planter who had a residence in Bushman's Bay. Bushman's Bay is no more than a day's walk from the Neverver villages, and it is possible that Deacon had contact with speakers of Neverver. The language name *Nesan* probably derives from the Neverver word *nessan* 'gut', which suggests the interior location of the speech community. On Deacon's hand-drawn maps, he identifies a group of people called the Mindu (Deacon 1934: 2). He locates these people in the south-west of Malekula rather than in north-central Malekula, but given that Deacon never spent time in inland central Malekula, the Mindu people on his map may well be the Neverver-speaking Mindu. He does not make the connection between Mindu and Nesan however.

Today, Deacon's field notes are stored in the Royal Anthropological Institute's manuscript collection in London, and in the Haddon Files at the Cambridge University Library archive. Among the field notes held in the Haddon Files, a word list of some one hundred and thirty lexical items from Nesan has been identified (Deacon 1926–1927).<sup>5</sup> This vocabulary list is clearly related to the Neverver language spoken today and even includes items with geminate consonants, which are a distinctive characteristic of Neverver (see §2.3.10). A number of interesting observations emerge from a comparison of Deacon's Nesan data and Neverver data collected in recent field trips. These are summarized in Table 1 below.

---

5. I came across Deacon's unpublished Nesan vocabulary list during a research trip to London in 2006. The aim of the research trip was to examine Deacon's field notes for data related to languages being investigated as part of a larger project titled 'Threatened languages on Malekula: Lessons for linguistic theory'. The complete vocabulary list is reproduced in Appendix I, with equivalents from the more recently collected Neverver material.

Table 1. Features of Neverver from data recorded by Deacon (1926–1927)

Observation	Deacon (1926–1927)	Barbour (2004–2008)
Evidence of geminate consonants	<i>mmap</i> ‘heavy’	[m:aɸ]
	<i>-llag</i> ‘seek’	[l:aŋ]
Evidence that the shift from [ʰdʒ] to [ʰs] was underway in the 1920s	<i>nitugʰans</i> ‘mosquito’	[nituyaʰs]
Evidence of labio-velar consonants [ʰbʷ] and [pʷ] that are no longer present	<i>nağambwir</i> (probably [naɣaʰbʷir]) ‘dog’	[naɣaʰbir]
	<i>pwis</i> ‘smart’	[p:is] ‘hurt’
	<i>nambwer</i> ‘mushroom’	[neʰber ~ neʰbeʰdʰr]
No evidence of [ʰd] in the alveolar trill [ʰdʰr]	<i>nenre</i> ‘blood’	[neʰdre]
Evidence of front rounded vowels that are now very rare	<i>nivüs</i> (probably [niβys]) ‘bow’	[niβis]
	<i>tōlas</i> (probably [tølas]) ‘undo’	[tɿlas] ‘untangle’

There can be no definitive explanation for the differences in the data collected by Deacon in the 1920s, and the data produced by native speakers of Neverver today. It is entirely likely that the language has undergone some phonemic change over the last century. Equally however, the data could have been provided by a speaker of some no-longer-spoken dialect (such as the Sakhan dialect) of Neverver, or by a fluent non-native speaker. Unfortunately, Deacon did not record any metadata with his word lists so we can do no more but speculate on his sources.

Much later, and without reference to Deacon’s linguistic records of Malekula languages, Darrell Tryon orchestrated a survey of the languages of Vanuatu. He identified Neverver as Bushman’s Bay (Tryon 1972), and then later as Lingarak (Tryon 1976). A Lingarak word list of around 180 items was published in Tryon’s (1976) comparative study of the languages of the New Hebrides (described in §1.2 above). A list of tree names for the Bushman’s Bay language was later collected by S. Gowers, and these are scattered through a volume on common trees of Vanuatu (Wheatley 1992). The paucity of information about Neverver led to it being described as both undocumented and unwritten in Lynch and Crowley’s (2001: 18) bibliographic survey of the languages of Vanuatu.

### 1.3. An evaluation of language vitality<sup>6</sup>

In 2004, when the current project began, very few specific details were known about the Neverver language or its speakers. The current project has shed light on both topics. In this chapter, sociolinguistic matters are considered; linguistic matters are dealt with in chapters two to thirteen.

Prior to the current investigation, the vitality of Neverver had not been considered. It became a matter of interest when interacting with the speech community. In evaluating the vitality of the Neverver language, I employ the Language Vitality Assessment framework proposed by the UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (2003). In their article *Language Vitality and Endangerment* (UNESCO 2003), the Expert Group propose a set of nine factors for evaluating the vitality of an individual language. These factors are intended to be used as a tool for identifying the most urgent needs of a language community. The nine factors of the language vitality assessment include factors relating to the basic vitality of the language, the domains in which it is used, the current levels of linguistic documentation and literacy, and attitudes towards the language (UNESCO 2003: 7). A summary of the language vitality assessment for the Neverver speech community is presented here. The complete evaluation can be found in Appendix II.<sup>7</sup>

#### 1.3.1. Language statistics and transmission patterns

In the language vitality assessment (UNESCO 2003), factors one to three deal with the numbers of people who speak the language and its transmission patterns. As noted in §1.1 above, the total population of the Neverver speech community is less than six hundred. This figure includes the members of all households where at least one parent speaks Neverver as their dominant language.

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6. The material presented in sections 1.3 and 1.4 is used by permission of Oxford University Press, appearing previously in:

Barbour, J. 2010. Neverver: A study of language vitality and community initiatives. In Margaret Florey (Ed.). *Endangered Languages of Austronesia*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press. 225-244.

7. Statements made about the vitality of the Neverver language are based almost entirely on my own 'outsider's' observations of the speech community, although comments made to me by community members have shaped my interpretation of the context.

The language is being transmitted to children in almost all households, although there are a small number of households with young children where Bislama, or another local language, is the dominant tongue. Thus, while the absolute number of speakers is extremely small, transmission is still taking place in most households.

### 1.3.2. Domains of use

Factors four and five of the UNESCO (2003) language vitality assessment concern domains of language use. The vitality of a language can be evaluated not only in terms of the number of domains in which it is used, but also in its capacity to make the transition into new domains. In the Neverver speech community, the domains in which Neverver is spoken have decreased. Traditional cultural practices have gradually succumbed to Western cultural practices. New communicative domains have emerged in both Limap and Lingarakh, but there have been few attempts to expand Neverver into these domains. Speech events concerning the church and public ceremonies, as well as regional politics and education, take place in Bislama or English rather than Neverver. Neverver is thus excluded from a number of domains that have become central to contemporary life.

#### 1.3.2.1. Religion

In the domain of religion, Presbyterian beliefs and practices are now the centre of community life. Superficially, church events and the church hierarchy appear to have replaced many traditional events and social structures; however, the reality is that traditional beliefs and practices correspond well with Presbyterianism. There is evidence of local interpretations in the practice of Presbyterianism and at the same time, traditional practices have been incorporated into the contemporary religious system. For example, many traditional rituals associated with gardening have been absorbed into church rituals. Linguistically, however, religion is a domain dominated by Bislama. There are no religious materials in Neverver as yet. Hymn books are printed in Bislama, and personal Bibles are available either in Bislama or English. Services are conducted in Bislama, with occasional Bible readings in English. Neverver is used for a small number of hymns that community members have learnt, but it is not used for prayer or teachings. Rather, people use Neverver for more secular matters such as community notices at the end of the church service, for the children's story told during the service, for gossip, and for disciplining children.

### 1.3.2.2. Education

In the domain of education, community members report a traditional process whereby boys and girls were initiated separately into the roles and responsibilities of society. This has been replaced by English-medium formal education. There is no formal instruction either in the medium of Neverver or with Neverver as a subject. Neverver is used for basic organizational purposes in the local kindergartens, but even at the pre-school age, there is an emphasis on teaching English to prepare children for primary school. This is carried out mostly through the medium of Bislama rather than Neverver. In Lingarakh, Bislama is used by necessity in the kindergarten as there are a number of children in the village who do not speak Neverver. Formal education is offered in English at the area primary school in Lingarakh and also at Rensari primary school to the south of Limap. French-medium education is also available at Rensari, but very few Neverver-speaking children are admitted to the French-medium programme. This appears to be because of the Anglophone orientation of the region where Neverver is spoken. Both Rensari and Lingarakh primary schools are staffed by teachers from different parts of Vanuatu and the teachers interact in English and Bislama. The schools cater for children from the linguistically diverse villages of central Malekula. The children board with local families during the week, and they generally interact in Bislama with their host-families and with each other. The communication pattern of using Bislama in any multilingual context is well-established at this age in the linguistically heterogeneous primary schools.

### 1.3.2.3. Media

In the domain of media, with respect to radio, newspapers and television, there are no Neverver-based new media available at present. English, French and Bislama are the languages of these new media in Vanuatu, but these are accessed rather rarely in the villages of Malekula with lack of electricity and poor transmission being significant barriers. Newspapers can be purchased in Lakatoro, but few families read newspapers regularly. Television has not reached the villages as yet, though DVDs and videos are played during special events and workshops. Bislama-medium educational films are extremely popular, as are English-language movies. In the future, it is likely that access to media technology will continue to increase, even in the more remote villages of Malekula. Given the cost of producing television, radio, and newspaper materials, the domain of new media is more likely to be dominated by English, French or even Bislama than in any of the indigenous languages of Vanuatu. At present, new media are less important in the Neverver-speaking region than the traditional oral networks used for distributing information. These oral networks function

effectively in Neverver, in other local languages, and in Bislama, depending on who is passing on information to whom. Education and religion are another matter, as Neverver is marginalized in these domains.

### 1.3.3. Language support

Factors seven and eight of the language vitality assessment (UNESCO 2003) consider support for the language at both local and national levels. Positive attitudes towards endangered languages can signal an interest in and support for language maintenance activities. While local support is weakly articulated but clearly present, national support is enshrined in the constitution, but more difficult to see in practice.

#### *1.3.3.1. Local support*

Concerning local support for Neverver, it was my observation that a conscious awareness of language endangerment was present among older community members and community leaders. The awareness of potential language loss was more strongly articulated in Limap village than in Lingarakh. The following statements were made on numerous occasions in Bislama during the fieldwork periods:

- *Young people say this (...) wrongly; they should say it like this (...).*
- *People in Lingarakh don't speak as well as we do here in Limap.*
- *People today don't understand the deeper meanings of words; their understanding is like the leaves on trees rather than the tree trunk itself.*

These comments show an awareness that Neverver is undergoing change and is perhaps weakening. In terms of language attitudes, the comments indicate that people consider contemporary changes to be undesirable. A further comment was made to me on many occasions in the context of discussions about my role as a language documenter and collector of rarely used vocabulary items:

- *It is good that you've come to write down our language, Julie. Now you can teach it back to us.*

While over-estimating my role in language revival, this comment signals that community members believe their linguistic knowledge has gaps and that it would be good to do something about these gaps.

Although community members did express concern about language change and erosion, not many expressed the belief that Neverver is in any danger. In

general, when language was discussed, attitudes were expressed with respect to the role of various languages in the formal education system. Strong local support was expressed for the continued use of English in the education system. Bislama was regarded as an essential means of communication within the wider Malekula region and Vanuatu in general, although many people expressed the view that it was not a suitable language for education. The use of Neverver in kindergartens was generally thought to be a good idea, although not at the expense of preparing children for their English-medium primary education. Because intergeneration transmission is continuing, it is difficult for Neverver speakers to see that there is any immediate threat to the language.

### 1.3.3.2. Official support

In terms of official support for vernacular languages, the constitution of Vanuatu offers protection for local languages, but it is English, French and Bislama that are declared the official languages of the country and English and French that are declared the languages of education (Vanuatu 1980: 3(1)–(2)). Official protection for indigenous languages has meant that the Vanuatu National Cultural Council and the Vanuatu Immigration Service support foreign researchers, particularly those invited by local communities, in the provision of research permits and visas. Attempts are currently underway at a national level to provide more comprehensive support for indigenous languages. In November 2005, the draft *Vanuatu National Language Policy* was presented for public comment (Vanuatu National Language Council 2005). This policy is explicit in its support for the indigenous languages of Vanuatu, as Article 5.4 reveals:

#### 5.4 The Local or Indigenous Languages

With over 100 different indigenous languages, Vanuatu is linguistically very diverse. These languages are vital expressions of Vanuatu's social and cultural identity, expressing the intimate relationship of ni-Vanuatu to their land and traditions. There is an urgent need to preserve, and where appropriate revitalise, some of these languages that are on the verge of extinction. Viable indigenous languages – those languages which a significant number of children continue to acquire as their first language – should be promoted for the use of future generations. Vanuatu has an obligation to use, document, promote and protect our indigenous languages. (Vanuatu National Language Council 2005: 4)

Since Vanuatu gained independence in 1980, there has been discussion of the introduction of indigenous languages into the lower levels of schooling in Vanuatu (cf. Crowley and Lynch 1986; Regenvanu 2004). This matter is explicitly addressed in the National Language Policy in Article 5.4.1, where it is stated that “as much as possible, indigenous languages are to be used as the language of instruction in early childhood learning up to primary level”. There is a

more generally expressed desire to see vernacular literacy develop, with Article 5.4.3 stating that “indigenous language are to be promoted for use in adult and childhood literacy acquisition programs” (Vanuatu National Language Council 2005: 4).

The Vanuatu National Curriculum Unit has recently launched its first curriculum statement (Ministry of Education Vanuatu 2010). This statement makes explicit reference to the inclusion of indigenous knowledge and indigenous languages in the formal curriculum. The curriculum statement is an important step towards the implementation of vernacular education in Vanuatu as it serves as a government endorsement of the use of indigenous languages in the formal education system.

#### 1.3.4. Literacy development and language documentation

Factors six and nine of the language vitality assessment (UNESCO 2003) measure the availability of resources for literacy projects, and the type and quality of documentation that exists. Neverver scores rather poorly in relation to these factors. Neverver was thought by the linguistic world to be an unwritten language. In fact, a large number of hymns have been translated into Neverver by an elderly community member. At the beginning of the current project, however, this material had not been distributed through the community and literacy skills were limited to just this one community member.

Prior to 2004, only brief word lists in Neverver had been published. Now that the documentation project is drawing to a close, the type and quality of documentation for Neverver is improving rapidly; however, much of the data collected so far has not yet been distributed among community members. The body of the materials that form the documentation corpus is held in digital form at the University of Waikato in New Zealand. Access for community members to this digital material is not yet possible, although hard copies of some texts and lexical material have been returned to the community and more materials are in preparation.

The language vitality assessment presents a picture of Neverver as a language with a small and rather vulnerable speech community that is beginning to show signs of language shift. This is particularly the case in Lingarakh village, where languages other than Neverver are making inroads into the home domain. Intergenerational transmission is likely to be interrupted in affected households, as the next generation of children grow up more confident in languages other than Neverver. Neverver has not yet transitioned into any new domains. Education, religion, and financial success are all seen as prestigious and are all associated with literacy skills in English and/or Bislama. These domains, and the skills associated with them, are likely to continue to grow in importance. As this

happens, the traditional domains in which Neverver still plays a central role may become less relevant. The larger Neverver community does not appear to be terribly concerned about the vitality of the language. While there is a general awareness that the language is in some way being eroded, this awareness has not yet translated into an articulated desire for *language maintenance*.

#### 1.4. Emerging vernacular literacy practices

Literacy has a rather marginal role in daily life of many villagers living on Malekula. Paviour-Smith (2008: 11) observes of the Aulua community in central Malekula, that “proficiency in writing and knowledge of various genres is distributed unevenly across the population, [and] writing to get things done requires the pooling of literacy (and the associated material) resources”. The same comment is true of Neverver. The literacy skills that are present in the Neverver speech community are practised in Bislama and English, and are confined to religious and commercial matters among adults and to educational matters among children. Added to the uneven distribution of literacy skills in the community is an uneven distribution of knowledge of the vernacular, with some older community members in particular displaying a much broader, and at the same time more detailed lexical knowledge compared to the language knowledge of younger speakers. As noted above, younger speakers in Limap tend to display a greater depth of Neverver knowledge than those in the more linguistically diverse Lingarakh village.

Despite the limited role of literacy in village life, vernacular literacy is seen as desirable. Locally motivated vernacular literacy practices are beginning to emerge in the domains of religion and early childhood education in the Neverver speech community.

##### 1.4.1. Literacy in religion

In the domain of religion, one community member has worked extensively on developing an orthographic system for Neverver, for the purpose of translating hymns from English and Bislama into Neverver. Over a period of 25 years, Chief Jacob Naus has developed an orthographic system for Neverver and translated more than 300 hymns from English and Bislama. His goal was to introduce vernacular literacy to the wider community so that community members could sing hymns in Neverver. Chief Jacob's work eventually stalled as his writing system did not gain currency with the community. Only those hymns that were taught orally were successfully learned by community members.

Chief Jacob faced many linguistic and personal problems while working alone; he has been able to address these problems through me, in my role as visiting linguist. In consultation with community members, I have developed a draft orthography for use in the larger language documentation project. This orthography has been used to produce a standardized version of Chief Jacob's hymns. Hymn booklets have now been distributed among community members.

Because of the significance of religion to contemporary community life, and the enthusiasm for singing as entertainment, the hymn booklets have proven very popular.<sup>8</sup> Both the Limap and Lingarakh communities have instituted weekly singing sessions to learn new songs. These weekly sessions have followed a community-led literacy workshop for youth, where the written form of the language was introduced. Community members report positive feedback both from speakers of Neverver, and from speakers of other local languages whenever Neverver songs are sung at multilingual events.

There is also a growing interest in the activity of Bible translation. The launch of the *Uripiv New Testament* on Uripiv Island in late 2005 attracted attention throughout Malekula. In Lingarakh and Limap, interest in Bible translation is most commonly expressed by community leaders who hold positions within the church hierarchy. Despite their interest, they have not initiated Bible translation yet. One reason for this is that the current community leaders are aware that their knowledge of Neverver is not as extensive as the knowledge of their parents' generation. Older community members, now in their 60s and 70s, can display considerable differences in their lexical knowledge with gaps in some areas and a wealth of knowledge in others. On one occasion, during my second field trip, a church elder in Limap brought me a carefully preserved copy of Pastor Bill Camden's (1977) Bislama-English dictionary. He leafed through the text with me, saying that a Neverver dictionary would be highly valued by the community. The idea of a single source of lexical information, represented in a dictionary, is immediately appealing to those considering translation work. Such a document has the obvious advantage of outliving its contributors. Not only that, it can offer a standardized set of spellings, and a record of the attested usages of words.

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8. Paviour-Smith (2008: 5–7; 16–17) provides a comparable description of the role of the Church in the Aulua community of central Malekula, and a justification for the introduction and support of vernacular literacy in this domain.

#### 1.4.2. Literacy in entertainment

As a language with a very short history of writing, narratives in Neverver belong to an oral tradition. Few people read for entertainment, and what reading does take place is most often for religious purposes. In the oral tradition, however, stories that describe the origins of Neverver cultural practices and that capture historical events stand alongside contemporary ‘made up’ stories as well as translations of Bible stories and secular material. Stories play an important role in the speech community. They are used for the dual purposes of entertainment and education and are told during Sunday school, in the story segment of the formal church service, and during kindergarten classes, as well as in private family gatherings.

Given the lack of vernacular literacy skills in the community, it is not surprising that community members had not attempted to make permanent records of their stories. Today however, story-tellers are keen to be recorded ‘performing’ their stories and are interested in seeing their stories printed in booklets. Language consultants working with me on the documentation project took on the task of editing a number of stories that I had recorded and they are now working on translations into Bislama. The language consultants lack resources to reproduce the stories on paper within their speech community; with external support however, they are developing reading materials targetted at older and younger audiences for entertainment and pedagogic purposes.

#### 1.4.3. Literacy in education

Vernacular literacy is beginning to emerge in pre-school education. Both Limap and Lingarakh villages have locally-run kindergartens. These are ostensibly vernacular kindergartens, established in order to introduce children to formal education through the medium of their indigenous language. The establishment of the kindergartens is in line with the Vanuatu government’s ten-year Education Master Plan (Republic of Vanuatu 1999), whereby the kindergartens are to be established and maintained by the local community with little or no government support. Until recently, the kindergartens have focussed on introducing the children to basic English, through the medium of Bislama. As part of the language documentation project, two community members made the journey from Limap village in Malekula to Hamilton in New Zealand to work with me at the University of Waikato. The two young women who came have both been involved with the Limap kindergarten and they also participated as language consultants on the documentation project during my field trips. Over a five week period, we completed the editing and translation of a set of stories and further developed the Neverver-English word list, which will eventually be a Neverver-

Bislama-English dictionary. In addition, the women spent time developing a range of literacy resources for use in the Limap and Lingarakh kindergartens including a Neverver alphabet booklet, a counting booklet, large-print stories with pictures, and laminated flash cards to familiarize children with the written form of the language. The women have taken multiple copies of these resources back to the villages.

### 1.5. Documenting Neverver

The current work is one output of a larger documentation project on the Neverver language.<sup>9</sup> This particular output is aimed at a linguistic readership rather than a community readership, and it stands alongside other outputs that have a community focus including images, sound recordings, Chief Jacob's hymn collection (§1.4.1), and literacy materials for children and adults (§1.4.2–§1.4.3).

Linguistic fieldwork has traditionally been conducted with the aim of investigating an unknown language, preferably in some remote locale, and producing a description of the structural systems of that language. Himmelmann (n.d.: 9) summarizes the aims of describing a language as follows: “a language description aims at the record of a language, with ‘language’ being understood as a system of abstract elements, constructions and rules which constitute the invariant underlying structure of the utterances observable in a speech community”. The methodology associated with language description often involves researcher-led interviews, where a speaker of the language provides information about his/her language as the researcher requests. Publications on field methodology contain lists of items and structures that might be used as a guide for the researcher (cf. Bouquiaux and Thomas 1992; Vaux and Cooper 1999). Descriptive work may also involve the analysis of existing text materials such as religious works. Equally, it can involve the analysis of newly collected text materials from members of the speech community. Such a methodology is assumed rather than made explicit in descriptive grammars, and any community-oriented activities that a descriptive linguist might engage in tend to be unacknowledged. The aims of language documentation are rather different from those of traditional language description, although for many linguists, the activities overlap considerably in practice.

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9. In his seminal article “Documentary and descriptive linguistics”, Nikolaus Himmelmann (1998) proposes that field linguists engage in “language documentation” rather than simply data collection for descriptive ends. Quotations and figures from an expanded version of “Documentary and descriptive linguistics” (Himmelmann n.d.) are presented in this work.

In a language documentation, there is an explicit acknowledgement of collaboration with a given speech community. Community-oriented outputs that result from collaboration are considered just as important as the obligatory descriptive grammar. Himmelmann (n.d.) defines the aims of language documentation as follows:

The aim of a language documentation then, is to provide a comprehensive record of the linguistic practices characteristic of a given speech community. Linguistic practices and traditions are manifest in two ways: 1) the observable *linguistic behavior*, manifest in everyday interaction between members of the speech community, and 2) the native speakers' *metalinguistic knowledge*, manifest in their ability to provide interpretations and systematics for linguistic units and events. (Himmelmann n.d.: 9)

In documenting a language, a linguist makes linguistic behaviour the heart of the project and the collection of this linguistic behaviour is the central focus of the field experience. Descriptive generalizations will likely arise from the data collected in a language documentation, but it is conceivable that any number of other outputs might also eventuate, including pedagogic materials, ethnographic statements, image collections, documentary-type films, sociolinguistic commentary and enhanced typological understandings.

The overt acknowledgement of the centrality of the speech community in linguistic field research has been motivated in part by the increasing awareness of the need to conduct research in an ethical manner. The idea that fieldwork should be more than simply 'on' a language (Cameron et al. 1992: 22–24) has increasingly gained strength. Grinevald (2003) advocates fieldwork that is carried out on a language, for the language community, with speakers of the language community, and where and whenever possible, by community members themselves. In this view, a field linguist would “combine doing fieldwork with teaching, training, and mentoring native speakers for sustainable documentation projects” (Grinevald 2003: 60).

Dwyer (2006) proposes five core ethical principles to guide language documentation. Although the Neverver documentation project predates the publication of these principles, they accurately reflect the ethical spirit of the current project.

- Principle 1: Do no harm (including unintentional harm)
- Principle 2: Reciprocity and equity
- Principle 3: Do some good (for the community as well as for science)
- Principle 4: Obtain informed consent before initiating research
- Principle 5: Archive and disseminate your data and results  
(Dwyer 2006: 38–40)

The shift of linguistic field work from research ‘on’ to research ‘for’, ‘by’ and ‘with’, requires new approaches to data collection, manipulation and analysis. In collaboration with the speech community, the field linguist now needs to develop a large corpus of linguistic behaviour. Woodbury (2003) encourages linguists to develop a documentation corpus that is diverse, large, ongoing, transparent, preservable, and portable, as well as being ethical. The characteristics of diversity, size and duration are of immediate concern to the field linguist as the definition of these terms will impact on the field research goals of the linguist.

Himmelman (n.d.) offers some very general suggestions about the composition of a documentation corpus, identifying communicative events, lists, and analytic matters as being basic linguistic elements of a language documentation.

General Information	Documents of Linguistic Behavior and Knowledge		
Speech Community Language Fieldwork Methods	Communicative Events (with translation and commentary)	Lists (paradigms, folk taxonomies)	Analytic Matters

*Figure 1.* Basic format of a language documentation (reproduced from Himmelman n.d.: 13)

Himmelman’s analytic matters in Figure 1 above align closely with the traditional activity of carrying out field research with the aim of describing a language. Lists relate to the development of phonological descriptions. They also relate to dictionary development, although this task has traditionally been seen as distinct from grammatical description. The collection of communicative events is at the core of language documentation but a rather unacknowledged aspect of traditional grammatical description.

In documenting Neverver, a wide range of materials have contributed to the documentation corpus. The full digital corpus is tabulated in Appendix III; below are the main categories of materials.

Table 2. Summary of the Neverver documentation corpus

Communicative Events (sound recordings with transcribed and annotated text files)	Traditional stories Contemporary stories Descriptions of traditional cultural practices Descriptions of activities in modern daily life Conversations Traditional and contemporary songs
Lists	Lexical items Inflected verbs with example sentences
Analytic matters	Sets of elicited constructions arranged by structure or function
General Information	Survey of language practices Digital images including indigenous flora, cultural events, members of the speech community

### 1.5.1. Working with the Neverver speech community

The current project was initiated by the Neverver community members. After years of working on an orthography that failed to gain currency with the speech community, Chief Jacob Naus sent out a request for a linguist to visit the community and provide support. The request reached the late Professor Terry Crowley, who regularly visited Malekula Island to visit friends and conduct his own research. Crowley, knowing of my interest in linguistic field research, proposed that I work with the Neverver speech community. In preparation for the project, Crowley found me a Bislama tutor and in the months prior to beginning the project, I acquired a working level of Bislama which would subsequently prove indispensable in the field.

In early August 2004, having secured a graduate studentship from the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Documentation Project, ethical approval from the University of Waikato (my host institution), and approval from the Vanuatu National Cultural Council, I departed for Malekula Island for the first of two periods of field work. Altogether, I spent nearly nine months in Lingarakh and Limap villages. In addition to this, I arranged a five-week workshop in the summer of 2008 at my university. Two language consultants made the journey to New Zealand, to work on the documentation project, and experience life here.

*Table 3.* Field research with the Neverver speech community

Time frame	Activity	Primary Location
August 04–January 05	Field trip	Lingarakh village, Malekula
September 05–November 05	Field trip	Limap village, Malekula
January 08–February 08	Collaborative workshop	Hamilton, New Zealand

In the field, I worked with a large group of people. This was partly because of the different strengths that individuals were able to bring to the project. Equally important however, was the fact that any contributions that people made to the project took them away from their other duties and responsibilities in the community. The key language consultants and their most significant contributions to the language documentation are recorded below. Many other people contributed to the corpus of recorded texts, to the lexical database, and to the task of hosting a foreign researcher.

Chief Jacob Naus of Lingarakh village developed the Neverver hymn collection and contributed to story telling, lexicography, ethno-botanical documentation, and cultural documentation. Chief Jacob made the initial request for a linguist to come and work with the Neverver community. Chief James Bangsukh of Limap village shared traditional stories and information on traditional cultural practices. He also contributed to lexicography, and ethno-botanical documentation, and was a key consultant on analytic matters. His wife Lydia is one of the last surviving speakers of the Vivti language. Lerakhsil Moti, resident of TFC plantation, and regular visitor to Lingarakh and Limap, is the oldest speaker of Neverver at over eighty years. Lerakhsil shared many traditional stories and also contributed to lexicography and cultural documentation. She was a key contributor to ethno-botanical documentation. She and her ailing husband Moti have an extraordinary knowledge of indigenous plants and their traditional uses.

Emma, Nellie, and Peter Vatdal of Lingarakh village assisted with the rather arduous task of transcribing and translating recorded texts while I was a novice in the field. Helen-Rose Peniyas, Emlina Simo, Limei Simo, and John-Jilik formed a team who worked in rotation with me in Limap village in the 2005 field trip, assisting with the transcription and interpretation of recorded texts and contributing to the corpus of contemporary stories and conversations. They also assisted with the expansion of the Neverver lexicon. We spent many hours working through the Neverver word list, and they provided positive and negative evidence for all manner of syntactic constructions. Cousins Helen-Rose and Emlina made the journey to New Zealand in 2008 to work on the documentation project. Helen-Rose is the current kindergarten teacher in Limap village; Emlina assisted her older sister Limei in the kindergarten prior to Helen-Rose's appointment.

My host family in Lingarakh were Douglas Vatdal and his wife Lewia from the Avava-speaking Khatbol village. They provided a safe and comfortable environment in their beautiful home near Khatbol village during my first extended field trip. My host family in Limap were Peniyas Bong and his wife Lina. They were keen participants in the second shorter field trip. Despite their many personal and community obligations, Peniyas and Lina actively facilitated the documentation project by arranging language consultants and guiding the contributions that I made to the community. Lina was very supportive of my language-learning efforts and is a natural lexicographer.

### 1.5.2. Describing Neverver

The current work is a descriptive grammar of the Neverver language based on data collected in the field, including approximately twenty hours of recorded communicative events. As far as possible, I have based the analysis on material extracted from the corpus of communicative events, using elicited material only sparingly to fill in gaps. In the analysis, I employ linguistic terminology that is in general use by Oceanic linguists. In places I make reference to the developing literature of linguistic typology where this is useful to frame and support my analysis of Neverver. Work on mood-prominent languages (Bhat 1999, Elliot 2000, Palmer 2001) and verb serialization (Aikhenvald and Dixon 2006; Alsina, Bresnan and Sells 1997; Crowley 2002a) has permitted a rather more thorough treatment of these topics than would have been possible previously.

The following analysis represents the understanding that I have reached of the way that Neverver is typically used by its speakers, in the range of spoken contexts to which I had access. Reflecting both my interests and my limitations as a researcher, it purports to be neither a definitive nor a complete account of the language. It is however, a beginning, and in the words of a seasoned Neverver story teller:

- (1) *Ni-tbbukh*            *no-ssor-ian*            *lele*            *i-skham*  
 1REAL:SG-have      NPR-speak-NSF            small      3REAL:SG-one  
*il*                      *nim-sisir*.  
 PURPOSE      1IRR:SG-discuss  
*No-ssor-ian*            *lele*            *ang*            *i-gang*.  
 NPR-speak-NSF      small      ANA            3REAL:SG-like.so  
 ‘I have a short story to tell. The short story goes like so...’  
 [NVCT06.02-03: 9.797-13.437]

# Chapter 2

## Phonology

### 2.0. Introduction

Neverver has nineteen consonant segments and a basic five-vowel inventory, with another two vowels attested in a small number of lexical items. Allophonic variation primarily involves the de-voicing of word-final consonants. Descriptions of the consonants and vowels are presented in §2.1. to §2.4. The language permits sequences of consonants, both geminate and heterogeneous. Vowels can also form heterogeneous sequences. Constraints on syllable structure, described in §2.5., play a central role in the form of attested lexical items as well as in prefixation processes discussed in subsequent chapters. A small number of phonological processes, outlined in §2.6., apply in the language. The most important processes are neutralization and epenthesis. Stress (§2.7.) is not contrastive and has a rather minor role in the articulation of words, while intonation patterns (§2.8.) are far more important, and enable speakers to distinguish between certain types of constructions. The phonemic contrasts identified in Neverver are represented in a draft community orthography, presented in §2.9.

### 2.1. The consonant inventory

*Table 4.* The Neverver consonant inventory

		bilabial	alveolar	palatal	velar	labio-velar
Nasals		m	n		ŋ	
Plosives	Plain	p	t		k	
	Prenasalized	b	d		g	
Fricatives	Plain	β	s		ʃ	
	Prenasalized			ʄ		
Trills	Plain		r			
	Prenasalized	B	D			
Approximants			l	j		w

Neverver has nineteen consonant segments. Prenasalization is a prominent feature of the inventory. In the central Malekula region, Neverver is known for its trills, particularly the prenasalized bilabial trill which appears with considerable frequency in the corpus. The bilabial trill segment is also found in related Malekula languages including Avava (Crowley 2006a: 25), Unua (Elizabeth Pearce, pers. comm.) and Northeast Malekula (Ross McKerras, pers. comm.).

Noticeably absent from the consonant inventory is a series of labio-velars. These sounds are found in some of Neverver's neighbours including Neve'e (Musgrave 2007) and Avava (Crowley 2006a). The lack of labio-velars is shared with the moribund Naman language (Crowley 2006b), as well as V'ënen Taut (Fox 1979). Pearce (pers. comm.) identifies just one or two lexical items in Unua with a labio-velar consonant. Unusually for Malekula languages, Neverver has a prenasalized affricate segment. This voiced segment has also been identified in the Espiegle's Bay variety of Malua Bay on Malekula, where it contrasts with a plain voiceless affricate (author's own fieldnotes).

## 2.2. Distinctive features for Neverver consonants

When describing consonants in Neverver using distinctive features, we must distinguish between plain segments and prenasalized segments. Plain segments are characterized by single values associated with each distinctive feature. A simple matrix can be produced for each segment. Eight features are employed to distinguish between the thirteen plain segments, displayed in Table 5. The features employed in this analysis follow Katamba (1989, based on Chomsky and Halle 1968).

Table 5. Distinctive features for plain segments

	m	n	ŋ	p	t	k	β	s	ʃ	r	l	j	w
±sonorant	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+
±continuant	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
±nasal	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
±voice	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
±labial	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+
±anterior	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	-	-
±strident								+		-	-		
±lateral										-	+		

The description of a complex segment using distinctive features requires a complex matrix displaying the feature values for the different elements in each segment, displayed in Table 6. The multi-tiered autosegmental analysis employed to describe Neverver syllable structure (§2.5.) handles the separation of these complex segments into their component parts on the segmental tier. The component parts are united on the CV tier, where each complex segment counts as one consonant or C slot in the application of phonotactic processes. Barbour (2011a) presents a detailed justification of this analysis.

Table 6. Distinctive features for complex segments

	<sup>m</sup> b		<sup>m</sup> b <sub>B</sub>			<sup>n</sup> d		<sup>n</sup> dʒ			<sup>nd</sup> r			<sup>n</sup> g	
	m	b	m	b	B	n	d	n	d	ʒ	n	d	r	ŋ	g
±sonorant	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	-
±continuant	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-
±nasal	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	-
±voice	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
±labial	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
±anterior	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
±strident						-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-		
±lateral															

Although the feature [+voice] is generally associated with prenasalized plosives, there is a regular process of devoicing which applies. In particular, this affects word-final segments. The prenasalized plosives are more consistently distinguished from the plain plosives on the basis of their prenasalization rather than their voicing. For example, the segment /p/ always has the feature [-nasal] and is also [-voice]; the segment /b/ always has the feature [+nasal], although it may be realized as the [+voice] allophone [<sup>m</sup>b] or the [-voice] allophone [<sup>m</sup>p].

## 2.3. Consonant contrasts

### 2.3.1. Nasals /m, n, ŋ/

There are three nasal phonemes, contrasting at the bilabial, alveolar, and velar places of articulation. Contrastive sets are displayed below for these segments in morpheme-initial and final positions:

- (1) [mam] 'be ripe'  
 [nan] 'seep pus'  
 [ŋas] 'go for circumcision'
- (2) [mis:um] 'hail s.o.'  
 [nisi<sup>m</sup>b] 'knife'  
 [ŋis] 'smile'
- (3) [mol] 'rest'  
 [nolo<sup>ŋ</sup>k] 'laplap'  
 [ŋot] 'be broken'
- (4) [<sup>n</sup>dram] 'bleed'  
 [<sup>n</sup>dan] 'set (of the sun)'  
 [<sup>n</sup>daŋ] 'breach (a dam)'
- (5) [<sup>n</sup>dloŋ] 'swallow'  
 [lon] 'LOC'  
 [<sup>m</sup>broŋ] 'be common'
- (6) [<sup>n</sup>ɕem] 'chew'  
 [men] 'sweat'  
 [<sup>n</sup>deŋ] 'step'

### 2.3.2. Plain plosives /p, t, k/

The three plain plosives, contrasting at bilabial, alveolar and velar places of articulation, are voiceless and have minimal aspiration. Word-finally, these segments are generally unreleased. A set of three well-established plosives is shared by Avava (Crowley 2006a), although other central Malekula languages do not exhibit such contrasts. For example, neither Naman (Crowley 2006b) nor Neve'e (Musgrave 2007) has a /p/ segment, and the /k/ segment has a limited distribution in these two languages.

Contrastive sets are displayed below for the plain plosive segments in morpheme-initial position. The second set of items displays morpheme-initial geminate consonants. These are articulated with audibly delayed release. Geminate consonants are described in detail in §2.3.10.

- (7) [papak] ‘piggy’  
 [tata] ‘promise’  
 [kaka] ‘hang (decorations)’

- (8) [p:is] ‘be sore’  
 [t:is] ‘be sacred’  
 [k:is] ‘peel (by hand)’

### 2.3.2.1. *The /p/ segment*

The phoneme /p/ is well-established as a segment in morpheme-initial position. It appears most commonly as the first member of a heterogeneous consonant cluster or as a geminate consonant with noticeably delayed release. Elsewhere, it occurs with rather low frequency.

- (9) [panyo] ‘steal’  
 [papak] ‘piggy’  
 [pres] ‘neat, great’  
 [prok] ‘listen’  
 [p:ar] ‘fall out (of teeth)’  
 [p:is] ‘sore’  
 [p:ek] ‘wind (of yam vines)’  
 [p:on] ‘cover over’

The /p/ segment is found after the /nV/ common noun prefix (discussed in §3.3.1.).

- (10) [nepaŋalam] ‘k.o. banyan’  
 [nipejan] ‘weaving’  
 [nepra] place name  
 [nep:ar] ‘cross-beams (in a house)’  
 [nip:er] ‘fern’

Two words are attested with medial geminate /p/ segments. Both of these are from closed word classes.

- (11) [lap:an] ‘under’  
 [sup:ak ~ sup:ax] ‘nearly, almost’

Word-final /p/ is restricted to loan words. In this environment, the final /p/ alternates with the voiceless allophone [ɸ] of the bilabial fricative /β/.

- (12) [kap ~ kaɸ] ‘metal, iron’ (Bis. *kapa*)  
 [sop ~ soɸ] ‘soap’ (Bis. *sop*)  
 [stap ~ staɸ] ‘stop’ (Bis. *stop*)

The segment /p/ has a trilled allophone [ɓ] before the high back vowel. The distribution rule can be stated as follows:

/p/ :	[ɓ] / ___ u
	[p] / elsewhere

The voiceless bilabial trill allophone is attested in the following morphemes:

- (13) [ɓu] ‘allergic swelling’  
 [ɓus] ‘squeeze (sap from a leaf, to make custom medicine)’  
 [ɓut] ‘dry’ of coconuts in [naniɓut] ‘dry coconut’  
 [ɓun] ‘grow bushy’  
 [neɓun] ‘thicket of vines trained over tall stakes’  
 [siɓusel] ‘drop accidentally’  
 [laɸɓux] ‘commit sibling incest’

The lexical items [ɓu] ‘allergic swelling’ and [naniɓut] ‘dry coconut’ are still regularly used by speakers. Elsewhere, the allophone [ɓ] is mostly attested in low frequency lexical items, many of which have fallen out of use. Overall, the phonemic sequence /pu/, realized phonetically as [ɓu], is rare.

A prenasalized voiced trill [ᵐɓ] also occurs in the corpus. Rather than being in allophonic distribution with the prenasalized voiced plosive [ᵐb], the prenasalized trill is contrastive (see §2.3.4.).

#### 2.3.2.2. The /t/ and /k/ segments

The plain voiceless plosives in alveolar and velar position both occur in initial as well as final positions. Initially, these segments may also occur in geminate and heterogeneous sequences.

(14)	[kut]	‘the place, LOCPN’	[tur]	‘stand up; wake up’
	[koko]	‘hunt (with spear, club)’	[tox]	‘exist’
	[k:or]	‘make funeral house’	[t:or]	‘rotten (of tubers)’
	[krax]	‘hunt (birds)’	[tra <sup>h</sup> k]	‘cluck (of hens)’
	[krut]	‘together’	[trus]	‘leak’
	[p:ek]	‘wind’	[βet]	‘weave’
	[prok]	‘listen’	[slot]	‘give gift’

Like the neutralization between the /p/ segment and the bilabial fricative /β/, the contrast between /k/ and the velar fricative /ɣ/ is neutralized in some morphemes in the word-final position. The corresponding neutralization between /t/ and /s/ does not occur.

(15)	[mrek ~ mrex]	‘raw’
	[sup:ak ~ sup:ax]	‘nearly, almost’

### 2.3.3. Prenasalized plosives /b, d, g/

The plain plosives presented above contrast with a prenasalized plosive series. The prenasalization is homorganic at the labial, alveolar and velar points of articulation. As noted in §2.2. above, although plain and prenasalized plosives generally contrast in terms of voicing, the presence of prenasalization (the feature [+nasal]) is the more salient distinctive feature that separates the two series of plosives. This is particularly noticeable in word-final position where prenasalized plosives undergo a regular process of devoicing. As well as devoicing, in word-final position these plosives are typically unreleased in the speech of younger community members.

The three prenasalized plosives /b/, /d/ and /g/ contrast in the initial position in the following morphemes:

(16)	[ <sup>m</sup> bor]	‘tasteless’
	[ <sup>n</sup> dor]	‘burp’
	[ <sup>ŋ</sup> gor]	‘block’
(17)	[ <sup>m</sup> ba]	‘when’
	[ <sup>n</sup> da]	‘PART’
	[ <sup>ŋ</sup> ga]	‘after’

- (18) [ʰbiᵐbi] 'maternal uncle'  
 [ᵐdiᵐdi] 'dip (laplap)'  
 [ᵐgis] 'squeeze'

- (19) [ᵐberᵐber] 'be long'  
 [ᵐder] 'pull apart'  
 [ᵐgel] 'slice'

The prenasalized plosives contrast with the plain plosives:

- (20) [ᵐbroŋ] 'common'                      [proŋ] 'think'  
 [ᵐbar] 'be blind'                      [papak] 'piggy'  
 [ᵐda] 'PART'                      [ta] 'show, exemplify'  
 [ᵐgun] 'sit (with knees up)'              [kut] 'LOC PN'

When a prenasalized plosive follows a plain nasal, the prenasalization is dropped.

- (21) [nimdan] 'eye'  
 [ᵐgungun] 'crouch'  
 [ᵐdiŋdiŋba] 'kneel'

In word-final position, there is considerable social variation in the articulation of the prenasalized segments. In the speech of older community members, word-final plosives are generally voiceless. Among younger speakers, word-final prenasalized plosives are generally both voiceless and unreleased. In the speech of some younger community members, the contrast between the prenasalized plosive and the word-final nasal is being neutralized. This variation can be heard in the articulation of bilabial and velar plosives.

- (22) [laᵐblaᵐp ~ laᵐblaᵐp̚ ~ laᵐblam] 'be big'  
 [nuwaᵐk ~ nuwaᵐk̚ ~ nuwan] 'canoe, boat'

In contrast to the segments /b/ and /g/, the segment /d/ does not appear word-finally, although the sequence [n] followed by [d] does occur in the lexical item *man*, which is a post-verbal emphatic marker. This item varies in articulation:

- (23) [maᵐd ~ maᵐd̚ ~ man] 'EMPH'

In discussions with younger speakers on the articulation of this item, the ‘correct’ pronunciation was asserted as [man]. This is echoed by preferences for the orthographic representation of this item as *man* rather than *mad*, suggesting that at least for younger speakers, this item ends with a nasal. Older speakers, articulating the word in connected speech, produce a final plosive quite consistently when the following morpheme is vowel-initial. We can hypothesize then, that the final plosive in this item is an epenthetic consonant which appears before vowel-initial morphemes. Epenthetic consonants are discussed in §2.6.3. below.

A parallel process has been observed in data from the Unua language. Pearce (pers. comm.) reports the reanalysis of the word-final prenasalized alveolar plosive as a nasal. In Unua, the prenasalized velar plosive is beginning to reduce in the same environment.

#### 2.3.4. The prenasalized bilabial trill /B/

The status of [ᵐB] as a distinct phoneme /B/ deserves some consideration. In the case of the plain bilabial plosive /p/ (discussed in 2.3.2.1 above), there is a trilled allophone that occurs before the high back rounded vowel /u/. Supposing that such a distribution pattern was also relevant to the prenasalized bilabial plosive, we might hypothesize that both bilabial plosives are subject to a regular allophonic change of the following kind:

Hypothesis: bilabial plosive : bilabial trill /      u

This analysis is suggested by a number of verb stems in the corpus. The verb stems listed in (24) all have a morpheme-initial [ᵐb] segment. Because these stems must carry a subject/mood marker in actual usage, [ᵐb] is never word-initial when these items are articulated.

- |      |            |                        |
|------|------------|------------------------|
| (24) | [ᵐbar]     | ‘blind’                |
|      | [ᵐberᵐber] | ‘long’                 |
|      | [ᵐbirᵐbir] | ‘argue’                |
|      | [ᵐbor]     | ‘maybe’                |
|      | [ᵐBu]      | ‘be swollen’           |
|      | [ᵐBun]     | ‘full, high (of tide)’ |
|      | [ᵐBut]     | ‘step; stop crying’    |

The personal noun [ᵐbuᵐbu] ‘grandfather’ provides an unambiguous instance of the bilabial trill in a word-initial position before [u]. The phonetic form of the [ᵐbuᵐbu] suggests an analysis of reduplication; however there is no evidence in the corpus of a simplex form [ᵐbu] with a related meaning.

The hypothesis of an allophonic relation between plosive and trill is not sustainable in all cases. There are also morphemes in the corpus with a prenasalized plosive preceding [u]. All attempts to articulate these morphemes with a trill were corrected to the plosive articulation on a number of separate occasions, by a number of different language consultants.

- (25) [ᵐbuskat] ‘cat’ (Bis. *buskat*, *puskat*)  
 [ᵐbuluk] ‘cow’ (Bis. *buluk*)  
 [ᵐbuk] ‘book’ (Bis. *buk*)  
 [ᵐburum] ‘broom’ (Bis. *brum*)  
 [niᵐbutuan] ‘hill’  
 [niᵐbutriri] ‘hilltop’  
 [ᵐbutuanya] ‘place name’  
 [ᵐburum] ‘sweep’ (Bis. *brum*)

The first four items listed are common nouns that have been borrowed into Neverver from Bislama. The Bislama items presented here, and throughout this work, are glossed from Crowley’s (2003) dictionary. In each case, there is a word-initial plosive rather than a trill. The next two items are indigenous common nouns that carry the common noun prefix *n(V)-*. Finally, there is an indigenous place name beginning with the prenasalized bilabial plosive, and a borrowed verb beginning with the bilabial plosive. In each case, the prenasalized bilabial plosive is followed by [u]. This is precisely the environment where we have hypothesized that a bilabial trill should occur.

There is further evidence that the prenasalized bilabial trill segment is distinct. The prenasalized bilabial trill contrasts with the prenasalized bilabial plosive in word-final position. Both the trill and the plosive are generally voiced in slower speech, but voiceless in rapid speech at the end of words. These examples provide further evidence of a segmental contrast between the prenasalized bilabial trill and the plosive.

- (26) [nayaᵐᵔ] ‘fire, firewood’ [yaᵐp] ‘crack, explode’  
 [t:aᵐᵔ] ‘defecate’ [laᵐblaᵐp] ‘be big, fat’  
 [reᵐbreᵐᵔ] ‘spread (coconut cream)’ [leᵐp] ‘give birth’

In spite of its somewhat limited distribution, the bilabial trill is a salient sound for speakers of Neverver. Evidence of contrastive pairs for /b/ and /B/ word-finally and before /u/, and the absorption of borrowings that maintain a contrast between these sounds, rather than aligning the articulation of words to fit a pattern of complementary distribution, suggest that the prenasalized bilabial trill is best treated as a distinct segment in this analysis, rather than simply an allophone of /b/.

The bilabial trill appears consistently in one further environment, which is worth mentioning at this stage. Verb stems that begin with the bilabial fricative [β] all have allomorphs that begin with the bilabial trill when the stem is inflected with an irrealis mood marker of the shape [m-]. A number of high-frequency lexical items begin with the bilabial fricative, including the movement verbs [βu] ‘go’, [βlem] ‘come’, [βlat] ‘go (to a person)’, [βeϕ] ‘go to (a location)’, [βaβu] ‘walk’, and [βaβaβuk] ‘walk towards’. Verbal allomorphy is discussed in §6.2.

### 2.3.5. Plain fricatives /β, s, ɣ/

Three plain fricatives contrast in Neverver. The bilabial and velar fricatives are devoiced word-finally and before voiceless segments. The alveolar fricative is always voiceless. The following contrastive sets illustrate the fricatives in morpheme-initial position. Contrasts are also presented between the plain fricatives and the plain and prenasalized plosive series at the same points of articulation.

- (27)
- |                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| [βor]               | ‘sit’           |
| [ <sup>m</sup> bor] | ‘maybe’         |
| [poŋ]               | ‘be guilty’     |
| [sorsor]            | ‘lie’           |
| [ <sup>n</sup> dor] | ‘burp’          |
| [toriet]            | ‘crow’          |
| [ɣo]                | ‘scrape out’    |
| [ <sup>ɰ</sup> gor] | ‘bang together’ |
| [kor]               | ‘block’         |

- (28)
- |                        |              |
|------------------------|--------------|
| [βan]                  | ‘bear fruit’ |
| [ <sup>m</sup> banban] | ‘strongly’   |
| [panyo]                | ‘steal’      |
| [saβsaϕ]               | ‘be loose’   |
| [ <sup>n</sup> das]    | ‘go down’    |

[tas]	‘remove’
[ɣalɣal]	‘strike (target)’
[ <sup>n</sup> gal]	‘be stuck’
[kaka]	‘hang (decorations)’

The fricatives also contrast in final position:

(29)	[βuɸ]	‘blow’
	[βus]	‘carry on shoulder/ head’
	[βux]	‘unwrap/open (of food cooked in leaves)’

There are examples of contrasts between fricatives and prenasalized plosives word-finally; however, these are limited to bilabial and velar places of articulation. The contrast between the bilabial fricative and plain plosive is neutralized in word-final position, with both articulations being possible in the borrowed items that contain these sounds.

(30)	[ <sup>n</sup> ɕoɸ]	‘cough’
	[lo <sup>m</sup> p]	‘go off (of coconut milk)’
	[sop~soɸ]	‘soap’ (Bis. <i>sop</i> )

(31)	[saɸ]	‘dance’
	[la <sup>m</sup> p]	‘be plenty’
	[kap~kaɸ]	‘metal’ (Bis. <i>kap</i> )

As noted in §2.3.3. above, the prenasalized alveolar plosive does not occur morpheme finally. The plain fricative and the plain plosive contrast in final position.

(32)	[naus]	‘rain’	[naut]	‘place’
	[noŋos]	‘charred garden area’	[ŋot]	‘be broken’
	[βras]	‘climb (to pick fruit)’	[ratrat]	‘be dry, burnable’

In morpheme-final position, the plain velar fricative [ɣ] and prenasalized velar plosive [<sup>n</sup>g] contrast clearly, as do the prenasalized velar plosive and plain plosive [k]. The contrast between the plain velar fricative and the plain velar plosive is sustained in some cases, but not in all, with the velar plosive/fricative contrast being neutralized in some items.

- |      |                       |                          |  |  |
|------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| (33) | [krax]                | ‘hunt (birds)’           |  |  |
|      | [tra <sup>n</sup> k]  | ‘dry (of leaves)’        |  |  |
|      | [ <sup>n</sup> dak]   | ‘fall down’              |  |  |
|      | [sup:ak~sup:ax]       | ‘close, nearly’          |  |  |
| (34) | [lox]                 | ‘strip (bark off trees)’ |  |  |
|      | [nolo <sup>n</sup> k] | ‘laplap’                 |  |  |
|      | [lolok]               | ‘mumble’                 |  |  |
|      | [βrok~βrox]           | ‘hold’                   |  |  |

### 2.3.6. The prenasalized affricate /ɖʒ/

There is one prenasalized affricate attested in the corpus. It has a number of different allophones which vary from a clear prenasalized alveo-palatal affricate, to a voiceless alveolar fricative. The allophones are articulated as [<sup>n</sup>ɖʒ, <sup>n</sup>ʒ, <sup>n</sup>ʃ, <sup>n</sup>s, s]. Individual speakers vary in their articulation of this phoneme, even when producing different instances of the same morpheme. Morpheme initially and inter-vocally, the voiced allophones are more common than the voiceless alternatives although some speakers devoice quite consistently in all environments. The most commonly occurring allophones are [<sup>n</sup>ɖʒ] and [<sup>n</sup>s].

The prenasalized segment contrasts with the plain alveolar fricative in the initial position. In this position, the prenasalized segment is most commonly realized as an affricate. The segment also contrasts word-finally with the plain fricative:

- |      |                      |                  |         |         |
|------|----------------------|------------------|---------|---------|
| (35) | [ <sup>n</sup> ɖʒal] | ‘sick’           | [sal]   | ‘float’ |
|      | [ <sup>n</sup> ɖʒeɸ] | ‘separate’       | [ses]   | ‘rub’   |
|      | [ <sup>n</sup> ɖʒol] | ‘heal (of yams)’ | [solix] | ‘hide’  |
| (36) | [i <sup>n</sup> s]   | ‘ANT’            | [is]    | ‘bad’   |
|      | [nau <sup>n</sup> s] | ‘pawpaw’         | [naus]  | ‘rain’  |

Although the prenasalized affricate is commonly realized as a prenasalized voiceless fricative [<sup>n</sup>s] word-finally, for some younger speakers of Neverver, the contrast between /s/ and /ɖʒ/ has been neutralized. Thus, older speakers pronounce the word ‘banana’ more often as [naβu<sup>n</sup>s], while young speakers more commonly say [naβus]. For younger speakers then, word-final /ɖʒ/ is merging with word-final /s/. Through this process of neutralization, the prenasalization

that allows us to distinguish between the pair of sounds in word final position is being lost.

The neutralization of the contrast between /s/ and /ʒ/ can be compared with the neutralization of the word-final prenasalized plosive /d/ with a nasal /n/ at the same point of articulation. In the case of the prenasalized plosives and nasals, the neutralization is resulting in a plain alveolar nasal segment word-finally. In the case of fricative and prenasalized affricate, the neutralization is resulting in a plain alveolar fricative.

### 2.3.7. Liquids /r, l/

The liquids /r/ and /l/ have a wide distribution in the Neverver lexicon. The /r/ segment is clearly trilled and particularly in story-telling, can be strongly emphasized for dramatic effect. The segments /l/ and /r/ contrast in initial position. They occur in both simple CV stems and geminate CCV stems, as well as forming the second member of morpheme-initial heterogeneous sequences.

(37)	[lu]	‘shoot’	[ru]	‘two’
	[las]	‘occasion’	[rasras]	‘become dark’
	[l:aϕ]	‘go for food’	[r:aϕ]	‘laugh’
	[l:iβix]	‘pour out (water)’	[r:iϕ]	‘fart’
	[βlax]	‘flower (of taro)’	[βras]	‘climb (to pick fruit)’
	[mler]	‘clear’	[mrex]	‘raw’

The two liquids also contrast in final position.

(38)	[nial]	‘sun’	[niar]	‘fence, garden’
	[ <sup>m</sup> bel]	‘chase’	[ <sup>m</sup> ber <sup>m</sup> ber]	‘long’
	[βel]	‘shake’	[βer]	‘say’

### 2.3.8. The prenasalized alveolar trill /D/

The final prenasalized segment that is included in the phoneme inventory is also pre-stopped, before releasing into a trill. This segment has been identified in a small number of Oceanic languages including the closely related Avava language (Crowley 2006a), the South Efate language of Vanuatu (Thieberger 2004: 52) and the rather more distant Fijian language (Schütz 1985).

Crowley (2006a: 30) describes the Avava trill as “a prenasalised alveolar trill, which involves a clearly audible excrescent voiced alveolar stop” but also

goes on to note that the same sound might equally be described as “a prenasalised voiced alveolar stop with a trilled release, i.e. [ʰdʳ]”. Crowley (2006a: 30–32) represents this trill as ‘dr’ in the orthography, and justifies his inclusion of this segment on the basis of phonotactic constraints that disallow morpheme-initial and final consonant clusters.

In Neverver, the prenasalized alveolar trill fits with a general definition of complex segments, where these are defined as segments that “have more than one specification either for place of articulation or a manner feature” (Gussenhoven and Jacobs 2005: 176). The complex segment is articulated as [ʰᵈr], with each of the components sharing the alveolar [-labial] [+anterior] place of articulation. However, manner of articulation is specified differently for the three parts, moving from nasal, through plosive, to a trilled release. The resulting phoneme /D/ is in contrast with the prenasalized alveolar plosive /d/ and the plain alveolar trill /r/. Word finally, /D/ is devoiced as is the case with other word-final prenasalized segments. The segments /D/, /d/, and /r/ are contrasted in (39) to (41).

- |      |            |                        |
|------|------------|------------------------|
| (39) | [ʰᵈrᵈrᵈrᵈ] | ‘roll’                 |
|      | [ʰᵈrᵈᵈrᵈ]  | ‘dip in coconut cream’ |
|      | [rᵈ]       | ‘escape’               |
|      |            |                        |
| (40) | [ʰᵈrus]    | ‘shuffle’              |
|      | [ʰᵈrum]    | ‘run’                  |
|      | [rus]      | ‘wear, put on’         |
|      |            |                        |
| (41) | [ʰᵈrom]    | ‘thirsty’              |
|      | [ʰᵈro]     | ‘retch’                |
|      | [rot]      | ‘feel’                 |

Given that both the prenasalized plosive /d/ and the trill /r/ are well established segments, we might consider treating sequences that are articulated [ndr] as simply involving a consonant cluster /d/ + /r/. However, there is significant phonotactic evidence that [ndr] sequences involve a single consonant rather than a CC sequence. This evidence is outlined in the following sub-sections.

### 2.3.8.1. *Consonant sequences and the inflection of verb stems*

In the construction of words, verb stems are inflected with a subject/mood prefix that varies in form. One factor that shapes the prefix form is whether the stem begins with a consonant sequence or a single consonant (see §6.1.). Different forms of the realis prefix apply to stems with a single consonant initially

(CV stems), and to stems with initial heterogeneous sequences as well as geminates (CCV stems).

- (42) CV stem [at-<sup>m</sup>bay<sup>m</sup>bax] ‘they hid’  
 CCV stem [ati-<sup>m</sup>brasal] ‘they were comfortable/confident’

When inflected, verb stems beginning with the [<sup>nd</sup>r] sequence take a CV stem prefix rather than a CCV stem prefix.

- (43) CV stem [at-<sup>nd</sup>rom] ‘they were thirsty (for something)’  
 CCV stem [\*ati-<sup>n</sup>drom]

### 2.3.8.2. Consonant sequences and reduplication

A second piece of evidence for the analysis of [ndr] as a complex sequence involves reduplication processes. When CCV stems undergo reduplication, only the first consonant of a sequence is reproduced in the reduplicative affix. When stems begin with the sequence [<sup>nd</sup>r], the full segment is reduplicated, following the pattern for CV stems. (The forms and functions of reduplication are presented in detail in chapter eight.)

- (44) CV stem [<sup>m</sup>bir-<sup>m</sup>bir] ‘argue’ from [<sup>m</sup>bir] ‘break’  
 CCV stem [po-prok] ‘listen carefully’ from [prok] ‘listen’  
 CV stem [<sup>nd</sup>ri-<sup>nd</sup>ri] ‘roll’ from [<sup>n</sup>dri] ‘turn around’  
 CCV stem [\*<sup>n</sup>di-<sup>n</sup>dri]  
 CV stem [<sup>nd</sup>rom-<sup>d</sup>rom] ‘thirsty’ from [<sup>n</sup>drom] ‘thirsty for s.t.’  
 CCV stem [\*<sup>n</sup>do-<sup>n</sup>drom]

### 2.3.8.3. Syllable-final consonant clusters

Syllable-final consonant clusters are disallowed in Neverver; however, there are a number of morphemes that end with [<sup>nd</sup>r]. Rather than treating [<sup>nd</sup>r] as a permissible complex coda [<sup>nd</sup>r], and an exception to the basic constraint on syllable structure, a simpler phonotactic statement can be achieved by treating [<sup>nd</sup>r] as a single, though complex, segment. Two examples of final [<sup>nd</sup>r] are presented in (45).

- (45) [ŋo<sup>nd</sup>r] ‘snore’  
 [ko<sup>nd</sup>r] ‘gurgle (of stomachs, esp. after eating island cabbage)’

In some words, final [ʰᵐᵈᵣ] alternates with the plain alveolar trill. This alternate articulation is particularly common among younger speakers, suggesting that the prenasalized alveolar trill is beginning to merge with the plain alveolar trill in this position.

- (46) [a<sup>nd</sup>ᵣ ~ ar]                    ‘they’  
       [<sup>n</sup>ɕa<sup>nd</sup>ᵣ ~ <sup>n</sup>ɕar]            ‘to pass’  
       [ne<sup>m</sup>be<sup>nd</sup>ᵣ ~ ne<sup>m</sup>ber]       ‘mushroom’

To summarize, evidence for treating the sequence [ʰᵐᵈᵣ] as a distinct complex phoneme lies in the phonotactic constraints on Neverver and the realisation of these constraints in the formation of subject/mood and reduplicative prefixes, as well as simple codas. Morpheme-finally, the complex segment /D/ is better established in the phonologies of older speakers though it is well established for all speakers in the morpheme-initial position.

### 2.3.9. Non-lateral approximants /j, w/

There is evidence of two further approximants /j/ and /w/ in addition to the lateral approximant /l/. The distribution of these segments is rather limited with no evidence of morpheme final /j/ or /w/. The palatal approximant /j/ occurs in stem-initial position in verbs, preceding the non-high vowels /a/, /e/ and /o/. In some cases, it appears internally in words displaying inherent/fossilized reduplication. It also appears internally in the local noun [aijem] and initially in a grammatical morpheme. Examples of verbs are displayed in (47), along with the local noun, the grammatical morpheme, and the Bislama borrowing [jes] ‘yes’.

- (47) [jal]                    ‘fly’  
       [ja<sup>n</sup>s]                ‘be ripe (of tubers)’  
       [jer]                ‘sing’  
       [jel]                ‘scoop out (coconut flesh)’  
       [joŋ]                ‘throw out (food)’  
       [joβjoϕ]            ‘white’  
       [aijem]            ‘home, dwelling’  
       [je~e]              ‘RSPN’  
       [jes]                ‘yes’ (Bis. *yes*)

The labio-velar approximant occurs stem-initially in both indigenous and borrowed verb stems. It appears morpheme-internally in instances of inherent/fossilized reduplication, and in the word [noyowit] ‘octopus’. It also occurs

in what appears to be a fossilized nuclear serial construction. The verb [ʰduwel] ‘nod off’ is likely to be a fossilized nuclear serial construction, containing the morpheme [wel] ‘lever’. A separate morpheme [ʰdu] is not attested in the lexicon. (See §10.2 for a description of nuclear serialization.)

(48)	[wakor]	‘cheer’
	[wakwak]	‘scream’
	[warwarat]	‘screech’
	[wel]	‘lever’
	[ʰduwel]	‘nod off’
	[was]	‘wash’ (Bis. <i>was</i> )
	[wet]	‘wait’ (Bis. <i>wet</i> )
	[waet]	‘be white’ (Bis. <i>waet</i> )

The segment /w/ occurs stem-initially in a small number of items belonging to other word classes, particularly in borrowings.

(49)	[wi]	‘wow!’
	[was]	‘day after tomorrow’
	[wallas]	‘thank-you’
	[wailu]	‘k.o. yam’
	[wik]	‘week’ (Bis. <i>week</i> )
	[wiʰdo]	‘window’ (Bis. <i>windo</i> )
	[wel]	‘well’ (Bis. <i>well</i> )
	[wenesdei]	‘Wednesday’ (Bis. <i>Wenesdei</i> )

The segment /w/ is also attested as the second member of a CC sequence in both verbs and nouns. In almost all cases, the approximant follows a bilabial consonant. Cognates have been identified for three of the items in Avava (Crowley 2006a). One of the Avava cognates involves an intervocalic labio-velar approximant; the other two have labio-velar nasals.

(50)	[mwit]	‘peck’
	[ʰgwas]	‘cross’ (Avava [kawat])
	[tata <sup>m</sup> bwet]	‘target-shoot’
	[lal:a <sup>m</sup> Bwix]	‘gnaw’
	[nemwel]	‘k.o. vine (Avava [im <sup>w</sup> il])
	[ni <sup>m</sup> Bwas]	‘male pig’
	[ni <sup>m</sup> bwet]	‘point (in a game)’
	[nimwet]	‘traditional knife’ (Avava [em <sup>w</sup> et])

[ni <sup>m</sup> bwetuv]	‘yam lean-to’
[ni <sup>m</sup> bwiliŋ]	‘body, log’
[nipwis]	‘k.o. coconut epiphyte’

The verb [ɲgwas] ‘to cross’ displays the clearest evidence that these series involve a sequence of two consonants rather than a labialized consonant, or a consonant followed by the high back rounded vowel [u]. When the subject/mood prefix is attached, it takes the form associated with CCV stems rather than CV stems:

(51)	CCV stem	[niti-ɲgwas]	‘we (INCL) crossed’
	CV stem	*[nit-ɲg <sup>w</sup> as] *[nit-ɲguas]	

Sequences of approximant followed by vowel (CV) syllabify as a single syllable. This contrasts with sequences of two vowels (VV), where the first is high such as [ie]. Such VV sequences form two separate syllable peaks. Syllabification is discussed further in §2.5.

### 2.3.10. Geminates

A number of sonorant consonants, comprising the liquids [l, r], and the nasals [m, n], along with the plain voiceless fricative [s], and the three plain voiceless plosives [p, t, k], are attested in geminate sequences. Contrastive pairs can be found for singletons and the corresponding geminate sequences. Geminate sequences are treated in the same way as heterogeneous sequences by the phonotactic rules of the language. For instance, subject/mood prefixes have different allomorphs when attached to verb stems beginning with either a geminate or a heterogeneous sequence of consonants.

(52)	[papak]	‘piggy’	[p:ar]	‘fall out (of teeth)’
	[pis]	‘wear (headband)’	[p:is]	‘be sore’
	[tox]	‘exist’	[t:ox]	‘grab, yank’
	[kakao]	‘cacao’	[k:an]	‘eat’
	[nemasikian]	‘tiredness’	[sik:i]	‘be lost’
	[mas]	‘be dead’	[m:as]	‘be dry’
	[nunun]	‘dive’	[nun:un]	‘spirit’
	[leŋ]	‘remove husk’	[l:eŋ]	‘hang, droop down’
	[rax]	‘clear ground’	[r:ax]	‘hunt in fresh water’
	[saϕ]	‘dance’	[s:aϕ]	‘sharpen’

Geminate plosives are articulated with an audibly delayed release while geminate continuants are held for a longer duration than singletons. In each case, the geminate takes considerably longer than the singleton consonant to pronounce. The following tables display a comparison of the length of geminate and singleton consonants. The careful speech tokens measured in Table 7 were extracted from a recording session. In this session, two language consultants provided their own illustrative sentences for a word list containing items with singleton and geminate consonants. The spontaneous tokens measured in Table 8 were extracted from text recordings, where there was a focus on content rather than form. No data is provided for the alveolar nasal, which forms a geminate sequence only rarely. The velar nasal is not attested as a geminate in the corpus.

*Table 7. Consonant length in careful speech (standard deviations shown in parentheses)*

	Number of careful speech tokens	Average length in milliseconds	Average increase in duration of geminates
[p]	11	55(28)	
[p:]	11	206(44)	x3.7
[t]	8	75(27)	
[t:]	7	191(58)	x2.5
[k]	9	42(27)	
[k:]	10	157(37)	x3.7
[m]	16	88(19)	
[m:]	10	195(34)	x2.2
[l]	17	70 (14)	
[l:]	14	171 (44)	x2.4
[r]	5	71(13)	
[r:]	5	165(32)	x2.3
[s]	16	91(25)	
[s:]	13	222(28)	x2.4

*Table 8.* Consonant length in spontaneous speech (standard deviations shown in parentheses)

	Number of spontaneous tokens	Average length in milliseconds	Average increase in duration of geminates
[p]	7	85(30)	
[p:]	16	153(32)	x1.5
[t]	12	67(21)	
[t:]	10	161(35)	x2.4
[k]	10	71(24)	
[k:]	13	173(31)	x2.4
[m]	15	73(22)	
[m:]	6	114(50)	x1.6
[l]	16	56(23)	
[l:]	13	143(36)	x2.5
[r]	12	43(14)	
[r:]	16	121(43)	x2.8
[s]	18	93(19)	
[s:]	12	172(21)	x1.8

A clear difference can be seen in the lengths of singleton and geminate consonants. In careful speech, the average length of a geminate is more than double the average length of a singleton. In more spontaneous speech, the average length of a geminates is at least one and a half times the length of a singleton, and in most cases is considerably longer.

#### 2.4. The vowel inventory

*Table 9.* The Neverver vowel inventory

	Front	Back
High	i (y)	u
Mid	e (ø)	o
Low	a	

The vowel inventory of contemporary Neverver contains five contrasting segments. There is no evidence of contrastive vowel length (a feature that is found in neighbouring languages, including Naman (Crowley 2006b: 29) and Avava (Crowley 2006a: 18) and no evidence of a phonemic schwa (a segment that is

found in Naman (Crowley 2006b: 29), V‘ënen Taut (Fox 1979: 1) and North-east Malekula (McKerras, pers. comm.). Among the older speakers in the community, there is evidence of two further phonemic contrasts in the vowel inventory, with a pair of non-low front rounded vowels. These contrastive segments are indicated in parentheses in Table 9 above. Pearce (pers. comm.) describes a similar phenomenon in Unua, with younger generations contrasting five vowel segments and older speakers displaying up to eight vowels, although the phonemic status of these additional vowels remains unclear in Unua.

#### 2.4.1. Distinctive features for Neverver vowels

Table 10. Distinctive features for Neverver vowels

	i	(y)	e	(ø)	a	o	u
±back	–	–	–	–	+	+	+
±high	+	+	–	–	–	–	+
±round	–	+	–	+	–	+	+

#### 2.4.2. Contrastive sets for the contemporary vowel segments

The five vowel segments that contrast in contemporary Neverver can be established through the following contrastive sets:

- (53) [mil] ‘again’ [ᵐbir] ‘argue’  
 [melmel] ‘deeply’ [ᵐberᵐber] ‘long’  
 [malmal] ‘naked’ [ᵐbar] ‘blind’  
 [mol] ‘rest’ [ᵐbor] ‘shy’  
 [mul] ‘change, renew’ [ᵐburum] ‘sweep’

#### 2.4.3. Contrastive front rounded vowels /y/ and /ø/

The high front rounded vowel /y/ is attested in just one or two lexical items. One example is [βyl] which means ‘debone (meat)’. Older community members believe the form and meaning of this word to be indigenous; younger speakers are unfamiliar with the word. The commonly occurring word ‘moon, month’ is attested with both the high back rounded vowel [naβul] and the high front rounded vowel [naβyl]. Because of the limited data available for /y/, it is not

possible to establish consistent minimal pairs with [y] and [i], although there is a minimal pair for [y] and [u].

- (54) [βyl]                    ‘debone’  
       [naβyl~naβul]       ‘moon, month’  
       [βul]                   ‘buy’  
       [βili]                  ‘place name’  
       [βilβal]               ‘sacred’

As the only lexical item that is exclusively articulated with the vowel [y], we might hypothesize that [βyl] ‘debone (meat)’ is a borrowed item, although a brief scan of the available lexicons of neighbouring languages has not produced a cognate form. Interestingly, younger speakers did not hear /y/ as distinct from /u/ and when hearing [βyl], reproduced it with a back rounded vowel as [βul].

The non-high front rounded vowel /ø/ is only attested in the speech of community members aged around 40 years and above. Younger speakers use /e/ in all instances. In those speakers aged 40 to 60 years, we find [ø] apparently in free allophonic variation with [e] in some items. In speakers over 60 years old, /ø/ occurs consistently in the verb [βør] ‘work’, providing a contrast with [βer] ‘say, want’:

Table 11. Articulation of the front mid vowels

	Younger Speakers	Aged 40+	Aged 60+
‘work’	βer	βør~βer	βør
‘say, want’	βer	βør~βer	βer
‘do, make’	βe	βe	βe

#### 2.4.4. Realizations of the high front vowel /i/

In the Neverver speech community, older community members often realize the high front vowel as a schwa [ə] in rapid speech. The schwa appears particularly in words with adjacent syllables that contain /i/ such as *irvix* [ərβəx] ‘Good!’. In contrast to older speakers, the rapid speech of younger speakers tends towards a higher and more forward, though still lax, articulation of the high front vowel. Therefore, among younger speakers we find the same word *irvix* ‘Good!’ articulated both as [irβix] and [rβix].

## 2.4.5. Realizations of the high back vowel /u/

The high back vowel /u/ is also commonly pronounced with lax articulation as [ʊ]. This is more noticeable when the vowel follows a non-labial consonant, though it is not exclusively limited to this environment. The tense [u] articulation is more noticeable following labial sounds and word finally, but again it is not exclusively limited to this environment and we find the allophones [u] and [ʊ] alternating rather freely.

- |      |  |                       |  |
|------|--|-----------------------|--|
| (55) | [βu ~ βʊ]                                    | ‘go’                  |  |
|      | [ <sup>m</sup> βurβur ~ <sup>m</sup> βʊrβʊr] | ‘completely, totally’ |  |
|      | [nimɣut ~ nimɣʊt]                            | ‘man, person’         |  |
|      | [lux ~ lʊx]                                  | ‘live, stay’          |  |

## 2.4.6. Diphthongs

Three two-vowel sequences, [au], [ei], and [ai], are consistently articulated as diphthongs in the corpus. The sequence [au] is the most common diphthong, occurring in a number of nouns and verb stems. The status of these vowels as diphthongs is considered in §2.5.4. Examples of common nouns are given in (56), along with attested local nouns and verbs.

- |      |                        |                     |              |
|------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| (56) | [nau]                  | ‘cane’              | Common nouns |
|      | [naur]                 | ‘fresh water prawn’ |              |
|      | [naut]                 | ‘place’             |              |
|      | [naus]                 | ‘rain’              |              |
|      | [ni <sup>n</sup> daut] | ‘bush man’          |              |
|      | [aut]                  | ‘ashore’            | Local noun   |
|      | [maur]                 | ‘live’              | Verbs        |
|      | [raus]                 | ‘seek exchange’     |              |

The diphthong [au] forms a contrastive set with [a] and [u].

- |      |        |                 |
|------|--------|-----------------|
| (57) | [raus] | ‘seek exchange’ |
|      | [ras]  | ‘be overripe’   |
|      | [rus]  | ‘wear’          |

- (58) [maur] 'live  
 [maran] 'tomorrow'  
 [nemar] 'hunger  
 [mur] 'shed leaves'

The diphthong [ei] has a very limited distribution. Contrastive sets cannot be established with other vowels. It does however, occur very commonly in the corpus in the third person singular pronoun, and in a small number of other items, including borrowings.

- (59) [ei] 'he' Pronoun  
 [ei] 'hey!' Vocative  
 [limei] 'woman's name' Personal nouns  
 [mei] 'May' (Bis. *mei*)  
 [eibel] 'Able'  
 [wenesdei] 'Wednesday' (Bis. *Wenesdei*) Temporal noun

The diphthong [ai] also has a very limited distribution and does not form contrastive sets with other vowels. It occurs in one local noun. It also occurs in a number of personal nouns, which may have been borrowed into Neverver.

- (60) [aijem] 'home, dwelling' Local noun  
 [maiija] 'woman's name' Personal nouns  
 [aila] 'woman's name'  
 [dʒosaija] 'man's name'  
 [wailu] 'k.o. yam'  
 [nais] 'k.o. traditional dance'

#### 2.4.7. Multi-vowel sequences

Almost all stems in Neverver are consonant-initial. One exception is the verb [is] 'be bad'. The nominalized form /ni-is-ian/ is treated as having four syllables in the hymn corpus, as in [ni.i.si.an]. This supports the analysis of /is/ as vowel-initial. When inflected with the third person singular realis prefix [i-], a V<sub>1</sub>V<sub>1</sub> sequence forms, as in /i-is/. This monosyllabic word is stress-bearing, so it is difficult to discern whether the form involves a stressed 'long' vowel that occupies two V positions on the CV tier [i<sup>h</sup>is], or a stressed degeminated vowel that occupies just one position on the CV tier [i<sup>h</sup>is]. Given the lack of other V<sub>1</sub>V<sub>1</sub>

sequences in the language, we might propose that the sequence /i-i/ is in fact degeminated and is articulated as [i̠is].

A further example of a vowel-initial stem is /ul/ 'atone'. When this verb is inflected for the third person singular realis prefix /i-/, it is articulated as a bisyllabic sequence, although the text example displays a centralizing of the front vowel, and a lax articulation of the back vowel, as in [ə.ʊl] rather than \*[i.ʊl].

A small number of two-vowel, apparently tautomorphemic, sequences are attested in the corpus. These sequences are bisyllabic. Sequences involving [+high][-high] pairs are found in morphemes that are commonly used in contemporary Neverver. Other sequences are restricted to single lexical items and are either archaic or borrowed.

(61)	[i.e]	[toriet]	'crow'
		[nies <sup>h</sup> ]	'fluid'
	[i.a]	[m-mial]	'ST-red'
		[-i.an ~ -jan]	'NSF'
	[o.a]	[lo.a]	'high ranked man (archaic)'
	[o.e]	[ni <sup>m</sup> bet-loetuŋ]	'k.o. breadfruit (local borrowing)'
	[e.u]	[ni <sup>m</sup> bet-leus]	'k.o. breadfruit (local borrowing)'

When the nominalizing suffix [-ian] attaches to a vowel-final stem, the high front vowel of the suffix undergoes glide replacement, resulting in a monosyllabic articulation. Elsewhere, the nominalizing suffix is bisyllabic.

(62)	/u-ian/	[ne.βa.βu.jan]	'journey'
	/a-ian/	[ne.ta.ta.jan]	'promise'
	/o-ian/	[net.las.yo.jan]	'forgiveness'
	/e-ian/	[nep.e.jan]	'weaving'

## 2.5. Phonotactic constraints

In the description of phonotactic constraints on Neverver, a framework of autosegmental phonology is employed, principally following the work of Clements and Keyser (1983) and Goldsmith (1990). Autosegmental phonology involves the separation of different types of phonemic information onto tiers. The three-tiered model of Clements and Keyser (1983) is sufficient to describe the phonological structure of words in Neverver. Linear sequences of phonemes, which can also be described as sets or matrices of distinctive features, are ordered on the segmental tier. The components of these linear strings are assigned to vowel positions (V slots) and consonant positions (C slots) on the CV tier. V

slots form the peak of syllable nodes on the syllable tier. There are strict limitations on the number of C slots that may be associated with each V slot in the formation of syllables. The MAXIMUM ONSET PRINCIPLE (Khan 1976, cited in Gussenhoven and Jacobs 2005) applies, ensuring that onsets are formed before coda consonants are assigned to syllables.

When looking at linear sequences of segments, we can observe multiple instances of contiguous consonants. The term ‘cluster’ is avoided when describing such sequences of consonants. Cluster is reserved exclusively for those sequences of consonants that form complex syllable onsets or codas.

Contiguous consonants occur particularly in verb stems, many of which begin with geminate or heterogeneous consonant sequences. Importantly however, when we examine the syllabification of words, we observe that in almost all cases, syllables are formed with onsets and codas that are simple. Syllables with the structures V, CV, CVC and VC are attested in the corpus. Based on these syllable structures, we can formulate a simple phonotactic constraint:

Syllable Constraint: The basic syllable structure in Neverver is (C)V(C).

### 2.5.1. One-to-one association

Segments may be associated with C slots and V slots in a one-to-one relationship. This type of association is exemplified in (63), where the four realizations of the canonical syllable in Neverver are displayed.

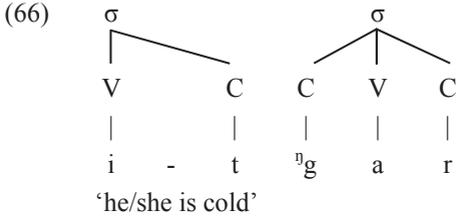
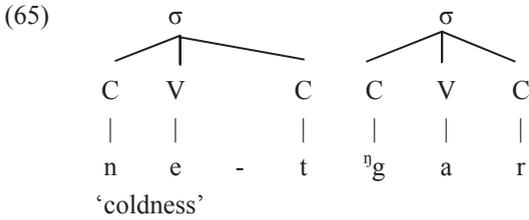
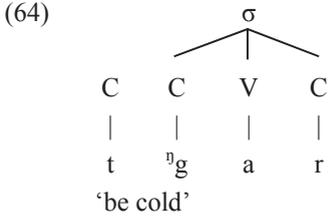
(63)	$\sigma$   V   i 3REAL:SG	$\sigma$ / \ C V     β u 'go'	$\sigma$ / \ / \ C V C       ŋ i s 'smile'	$\sigma$ / \ V C     i l 'PURPOSE/CAUS'	Syllable tier  CV tier  Segmental tier
------	--	--	---	--	--

### 2.5.2. Unassociated C slots

The contrast in the behaviour of stems that have the shape CV and stems that have the shape CCV is central to the formation of words. When a stem has the form CCV, the first C is unassigned to the syllable structure of the stem. In the formation of nouns, it occupies the available coda slot in the syllable structure of the common noun prefix /n(V)/. It associates with the syllable node immediately preceding the initial stem syllable. In the formation of verbs, it occupies an

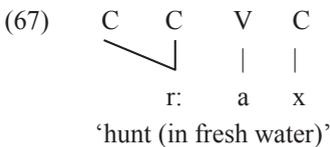
available coda slot in the obligatory subject/mood prefix and again, it associates with the syllable node immediately preceding the initial stem syllable.

The examples below display a stem that, with the addition of appropriate affixal morphology, may form either a noun or a verb. In each case, the unassociated stem consonant attaches to the syllable structure of the prefixed material.

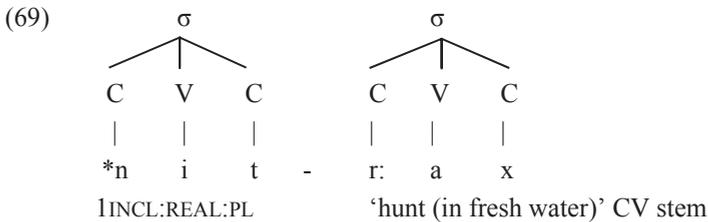
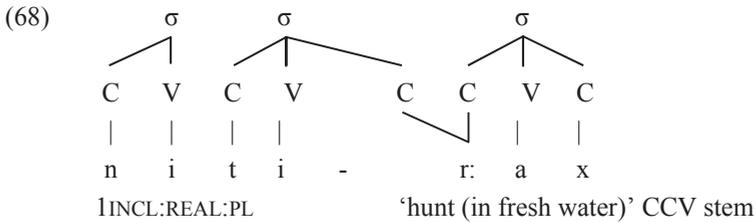


### 2.5.3. Type A simultaneous association

In Type A simultaneous association, one segment is associated with two positions on the CV tier. This is the case with geminate consonants. A geminate consonant occupies one segmental position, but is associated with two C slots on the CV tier.



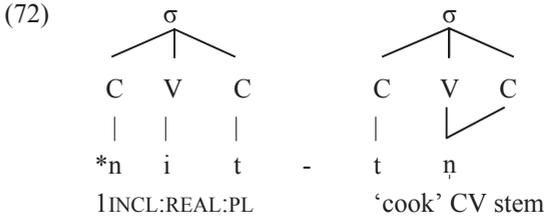
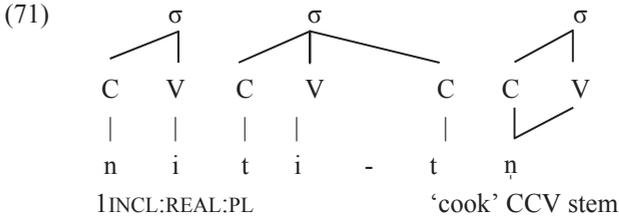
Evidence for this analysis is displayed in the behaviour of morpheme-initial geminate consonants. Initial  $C_1C_1$  sequences in verb stems behave like heterogeneous  $C_1C_2$  sequences when combining with subject/mood prefixes. Example (68) shows the formation of the inflected verb which assumes a CCV stem; example (69) displays the unacceptable construction based on an analysis of [r:ax] ‘hunt (in fresh water)’ as a CV stem.



Syllabic consonants also display Type A simultaneous association. Consonants that syllabify belong to a sub-set of sonorant segments that contains the nasals /m/ and /n/ and the liquid /l/. Syllabic consonants may appear stem-initially before another consonant segment, or stem-finally after another consonant segment. Examples of morphemes with final syllabic consonants include:

- (70)
- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| [t̩]                  | ‘three’           |
| [s <sup>m</sup> bas̩] | ‘walk with stick’ |
| [t̩]                  | ‘cook’            |
| [βrat̩]               | ‘true, real’      |

Syllabic consonants occupy two slots on the CV tier. The syllabification of inflected verbs provides evidence that syllabic consonants are assigned to a CV string on the CV tier, rather than the inverse VC string. Verb stems like [t̩] ‘cook’ take the subject/mood prefix that is associated with CCV stems rather than CV stems. Example (71) displays the attested form of the verb [t̩] with the first person inclusive plural prefix in realis mood. The prefix takes the form associated with CCV stems. Example (72) displays a logically possible but unacceptable construction containing the prefix associated with CV stems.



There is a tendency in rapid speech for the alveolar nasal to be pre-stopped in the transition from the plain fricative [s] to the nasal [n], as indicated in the alternations presented in for the items in (73).

- (73) [m<sup>h</sup>bis.ɲ ~ m<sup>h</sup>bis.<sup>h</sup>ɲ]      ‘downward, down’  
 [mas.ɲ ~ mas.<sup>h</sup>ɲ]              ‘half’  
 [ni.es.ɲ ~ ni.es.<sup>h</sup>ɲ]          ‘body fluid (of plants, animals, humans)’  
 [nus.ɲ ~ nus.<sup>h</sup>ɲ]              ‘penis’

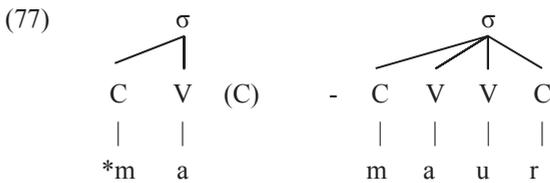
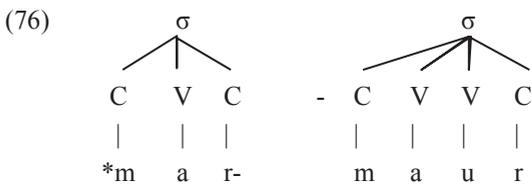
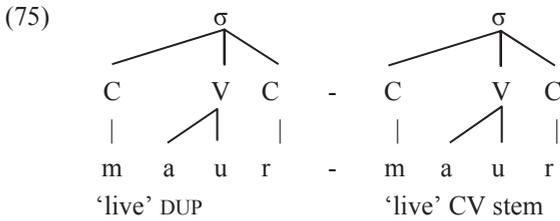
When stem-initial consonant sequences involve a nasal followed by a consonant, we find that initial nasals also syllabify. This only occurs in lexical items where the syllable is preceded by another syllable which has a coda-consonant. Otherwise, the nasal is simply assigned to the available coda position of the preceding syllable. Syllabic nasals are not attested word-initially.

- (74) [kut.ɱ.la]                      ‘clearing’ from ‘LOCPN’ + ‘open (i.e. not forested)’  
 [nolo<sup>ɰ</sup>g.ɱ.rix]                      ‘chicken with multi-colored feathers’

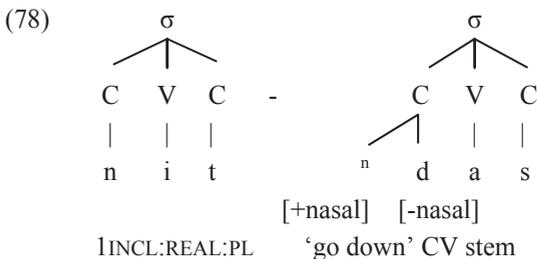
#### 2.5.4. Type B simultaneous association

In Type B simultaneous association, one position on the CV tier is associated with two segments on the segmental tier. This is the case with two-vowel sequences articulated as diphthongs (identified in §2.4.6). A diphthong occupies two segmental positions, but is associated with just one V slot. Evidence for this analysis comes from the verb [maur] ‘live’ when it is reduplicated. The redupli-

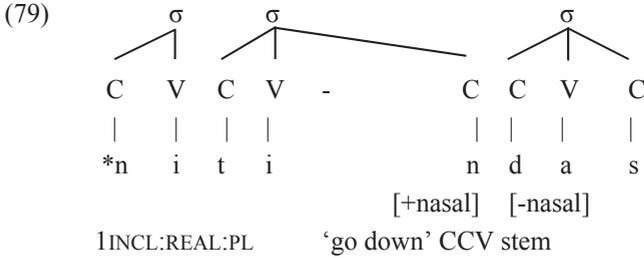
cative prefix has the form CV(C), with just one available V slot. The reduplicative affix for [maur] is [maur-] rather than [mar-] or [ma-] which we would predict if each vowel in the diphthong occupied a separate V-slot.



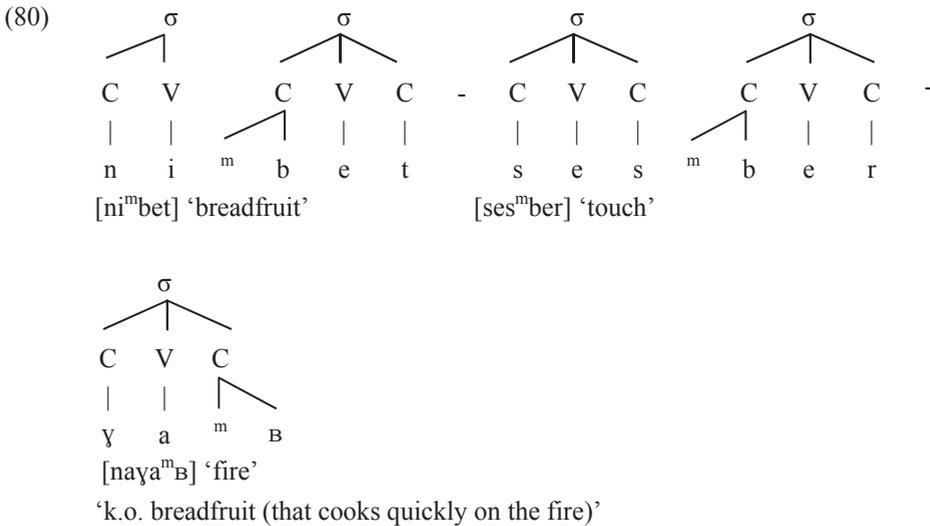
In claiming that two segments are associated with a single slot on the CV tier, we are actually claiming that two segmental feature matrices are associated with the same CV tier position. As well as accounting for the behaviour of diphthongs, this analysis allows us to account for the numerous prenasalized segments in Neverver. Prenasalized segments occupy one C slot on the CV tier but display both positive and negative values for the feature [±nasal], as displayed in the attested form of [ᵐdas] ‘go down’ in (78), which inflects as a CV stem.



The values [+nasal] and [-nasal] would normally be distributed over two phonemically distinct segments, occupying two C positions on the CV tier, as displayed in the unacceptable inflection of the verb [<sup>n</sup>das] ‘go down’ in (79), which assumes a CCV stem.



The multi-morphemic name for a kind of breadfruit /nibetsesberyab/ displayed in (80) contains several prenasalized consonants. By analysing prenasalized consonants as occupying just one slot on the CV tier, all five syllables conform to the canonical (C)V(C) syllable structure.



The prenasalized affricate [<sup>n</sup>ɕ] and the prenasalized alveolar trill [<sup>nd</sup>r] involve three sets of features associated with a single C slot on the CV tier. The salient distinctive feature assignments for these two sounds are reproduced here from Table 6 above.

(81)

	C			C		
	/		\	/		\
	n	d	ʒ	n	d	r
[±nasal]	+	-	-	+	-	-
[±continuant]	-	-	+	-	-	+
[±strident]	-	-	+	-	-	-

### 2.5.5. Violations of the phonotactic constraint

In general, syllables must conform to the structure (C)V(C), a structure which disallows consonant clusters as onsets or codas. There are a small number of positions where the constraint on the basic syllable structure is violated. In almost all cases, the deviant forms are clearly multi-morphemic, with the phonotactic constraint being violated through word formation processes. The first involves items with initial /tC/ sequences. The second involves the boundaries between compounded morphemes. In each case, a complex onset must form. When we examine the complex onsets in the examples below, we find that the consonant segments display increasing sonority. This sonority-increase conforms to the SONORITY SEQUENCING GENERALIZATION which in one form states: “In any syllable, there is a segment constituting a sonority peak that is preceded and /or followed by a sequence of segments with progressively decreasing sonority values” (Selkirk 1984: 116).

The sonority sequencing generalization implies that sonority is a scalar notion. Katamba (1989: 158) models the sonority hierarchy with vowels having the highest sonority, followed by glides, liquids, nasals, voiced obstruents, and finally voiceless obstruents, which have the lowest sonority. In the cases where Neverver’s language specific syllable constraint is violated, we find that the more universal sonority sequencing generalization applies instead.

#### 2.5.5.1. Initial /tC-/ sequences

A small number of items in the corpus begin with an initial /tC-/ sequence. Possessive determiners are derived from the personal pronouns (see §3.1.) by attaching the possessive prefix /t-/ to the stem of a personal pronoun. This possessive prefix has a zero allomorph, which occurs when the preceding word is n-final. Possessive allomorphy is discussed in §3.1.2 and §5.1.1.

Regarding a subset of three personal pronouns, the pronominal stem begins with a vowel. The personal prefix is dropped and the possessive prefix may then attach to the stem. This happens with [t-ox] ‘your’. In the other two cases of vowel-initial pronouns [ei] and [a<sup>n</sup>d<sup>r</sup>], irregular /tV-/ forms occur. The posses-

sive pronouns displayed in (82) below observe the phonotactic constraint on syllable structure and are not problematic.

- |      |                        |               |                     |          |
|------|------------------------|---------------|---------------------|----------|
| (82) | [tox]                  | 'your (SG)'   | [(i)ox]             | 'you'    |
|      | [titi]                 | 'his/her/its' | [ei]                | 'he/she' |
|      | [titi <sup>nd</sup> r] | 'their'       | [a <sup>nd</sup> r] | 'they'   |

In the case of the four remaining personal pronouns, the pronominal stem begins with a consonant. The attachment of the possessive prefix [t-] produces an initial cluster. The four /tC/ constructions in (83) are monosyllabic and clearly violate the phonotactic constraint on syllable structure.

- (83)
- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">σ<br/>C C V<br/>     <br/>t- n a<br/>'my'</p>               | <p style="text-align: center;">σ<br/>C C V C<br/>       <br/>t- ʰg i t<br/>'our (INCL)'</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">σ<br/>C C V C<br/>       <br/>t- m a m<br/>'our (EXCL)'</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">σ<br/>C C V C<br/>       <br/>t- ʰg a m<br/>'your (PL)'</p> |   |  |

Two of the three local demonstrative nouns begin with a consonant cluster. The forms [t<sup>n</sup>ɕax] 'here' and [t<sup>n</sup>ɕiŋ] 'there' comprise the verb stems [nɕax] 'be here' and [nɕiŋ] 'be there' and a prefix [t-]. The alternative proximal form [tnax] 'here' also displays an initial cluster; however, the [t-] appears only inconsistently in the corpus. In particular, when the preceding morpheme ends with a [+nasal] segment, the [t-] prefix is typically suppressed.

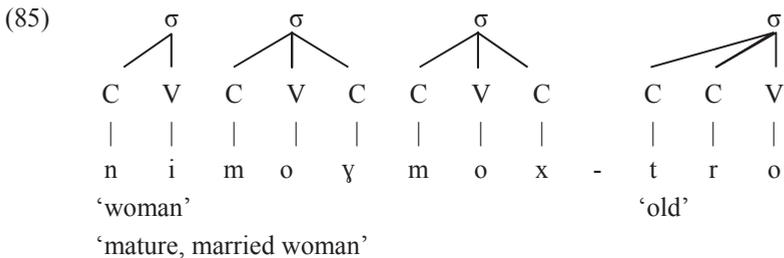
- (84)
- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">σ<br/>C C V C<br/>       <br/>t- nɕ a x<br/>'here'</p> | ~ | <p style="text-align: center;">σ<br/>C C V C<br/>       <br/>(t-) n a x<br/>'there'</p> |
|---|---|---|

As we have seen with the possessive determiners described in §2.5.5.1. above, the attachment of the prefix [t-] to a CV stem of any kind produces an initial cluster. The third demonstrative noun [taŋ] ‘there (not visible)’, comprising the prefix [t-] and the anaphoric demonstrative [aŋ], does not violate the phonotactic constraint on syllable structure.

Further, the modifier /tle/ ‘another’ comprises an initial /t-/ followed by another consonant. Unlike the other t-initial forms discussed above, there is no evidence that /tle/ is a complex morpheme.

### 2.5.5.2. *The formation of compounds*

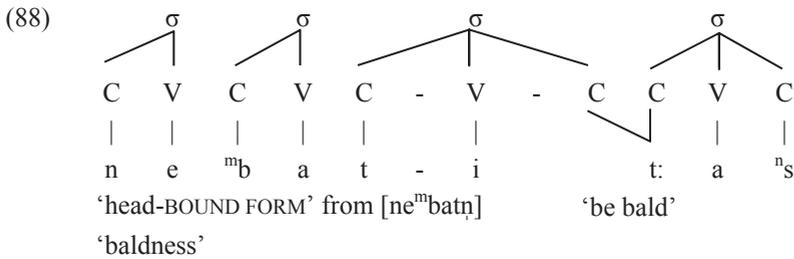
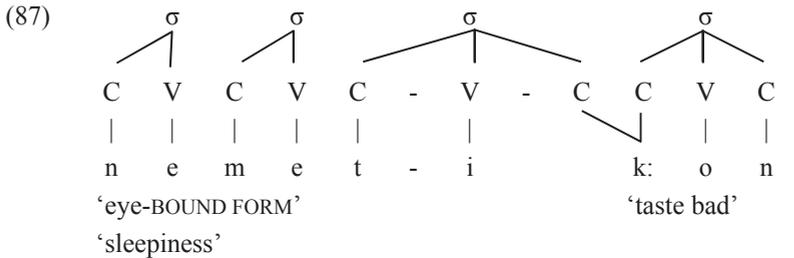
Another position where the phonotactic constraint on syllable structure is violated is in the formation of various types of compounds. When a stem is compounded, it may attach to another stem that has a coda consonant. If the compounded morpheme is a CV stem, there is no possible violation of the phonotactic constraint on syllable structure; however, when the compounded morpheme is a CCV stem, and the morpheme that it attaches to already has a word-final consonant, the unassigned stem-initial C must associate with its own syllable node.



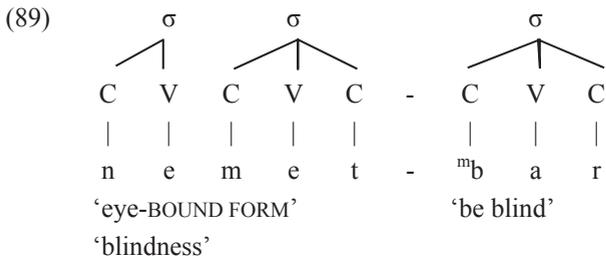
A range of compounded structures that display CCV stems are displayed in (86) below.

(86)	Noun-verb	[ <sup>m</sup> baŋ-ssor]	man’s name from [ <sup>n</sup> baŋ] ‘banyan’; [ssor] ‘talk’
	Noun-noun	[ni <sup>n</sup> ɕʒal-tmas]	‘k.o. tree’ from *[ni <sup>n</sup> ɕʒal]; [netmas] ‘devil’
	Verb-noun	[ɣil- <sup>ɳ</sup> gren-ix]	‘dig to end of a tuber with s.t.’ from [ɣil] ‘dig’; [ni <sup>ɳ</sup> gren] ‘end of long object’
	Verb-verb	[ <sup>ɳ</sup> gol <sup>ɳ</sup> gol- <sup>m</sup> b-jal]	‘gossip’ from [ <sup>ɳ</sup> gol <sup>ɳ</sup> gol] ‘chat’; [m-jal] ‘ST-fly’

Interestingly, there are also items in the corpus involving Noun-Verb compounds that display evidence of resyllabification in order to adhere to the basic syllable constraint in Neverver. In the two examples presented below, the noun terminates with a plain plosive, and the compounded CCV verb stem begins with a geminate plain plosive. C<sub>1</sub>C<sub>1</sub> sequences display level sonority and thus it is not surprising that they are dis-preferred clusters. The epenthetic vowel [i] breaks up the C-CC sequence to allow for syllabification that adheres to the phonotactic constraint (see §2.6.3.5. for further occurrences of epenthetic [i]).



When the compounded verb stem has an initial CV structure, the epenthetic vowel does not occur.



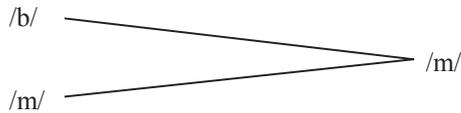
## 2.6. Phonological processes

### 2.6.1. Neutralization

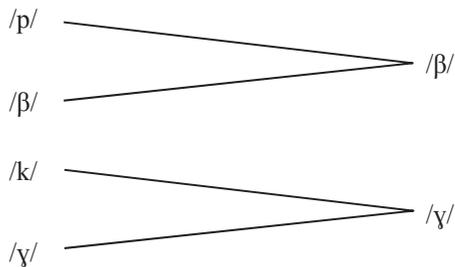
The neutralization of phonemic contrasts has been discussed above with respect to a number of word-final phonemes. At present, the segments contrast in other positions, but are in relatively free variation in word-final position.

The contrast between two of the three complex alveolar segments, and plain alveolar equivalents is being neutralized in the direction of the plain segment. The contrast between /ɖʒ/ and /s/ is being neutralized to /s/ word-finally (see §2.3.6.); the contrast between /D/ and /r/ is being neutralized to /r/ word-finally (see §2.3.8.3.).

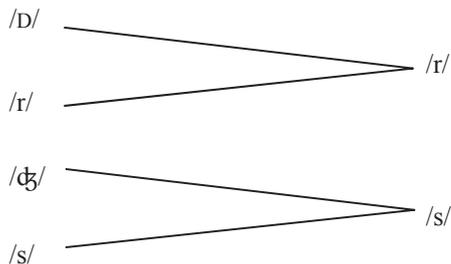
- (90) Word-final neutralization of bilabial nasal and prenasalized bilabial plosive for younger speakers



- (91) Word-final neutralization of plain plosives and fricative segments at the bilabial and velar places of articulation

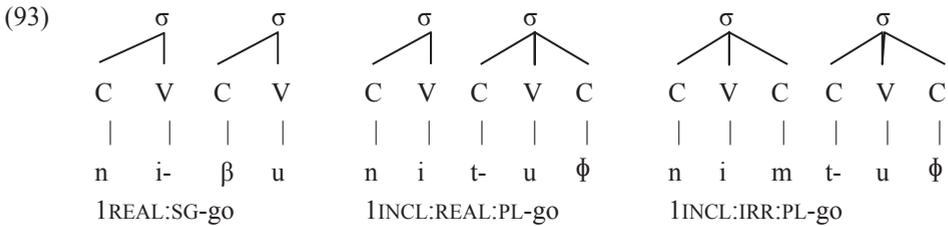


- (92) Neutralization of complex and plain alveolar segments



## 2.6.2. Metathesis

Metathesis can be seen to apply to a small number of items in the corpus. One example is the high-frequency motion verb /βu/ ‘go’. When this verb stem is attached to a subject prefix complex that ends with the dual morpheme /r/ or the plural morpheme /t/, the verb is articulated as [uϕ].



Arguably, this process might also be treated as one in which the two segments that comprise the morpheme ‘go’ are underlyingly unspecified for C or V. When the morpheme is inflected as a verb, C or V status is assigned depending on the shape of the subject prefix complex.

Metathesis also occurs in the serial verb [<sup>m</sup>butax] ‘too much’ and in the verb [βrox] ‘hold’. The serial verb displays the word-final sequence /aɣ/ which is attested as both [ax] and [ɣa] with no difference in meaning. The verb ‘hold’ is rather more complicated. It is attested as [βrox] and [rɣoϕ]. The same consonant segments /β, ɣ, r/ are found in each articulation, but the order appears to rotate. Like the ‘too much’ lexeme, there is no difference in meaning between the two forms.

- (94) [<sup>m</sup>butax ~<sup>m</sup>butɣa] ‘too much’  
 [βrox~rɣoϕ] ‘hold’

The variant forms of these two items are socially distributed, with older speakers producing [<sup>m</sup>butɣa] and [βrox] more consistently, and younger speakers producing [<sup>m</sup>butax] and [rɣoϕ] more consistently.

## 2.6.3. Epenthesis

Epenthetic sounds appear commonly in Neverver. There are two rather different types of epenthetic sounds. The first type, described in §2.6.3.1. to §2.6.3.4., involves the insertion of a transitional sound in a highly specified phonological environment. As such, it tends to be a product of rapid speech, although it has resulted in well-established allomorphy in some cases. Such transitional sounds

are not reflected in the orthographic representation of the language. The second type, described in §2.5.3. above and in §2.6.3.5. below, involves the insertion of a phoneme to break up consonant sequences. This is a strict phonotactic process and is preserved in the orthographic representation throughout this work.

### 2.6.3.1. *Epenthetic schwa*

In rapid speech, the transition between certain sounds is made with an epenthetic schwa. The environment in which the schwa occurs is where one syllable ends with a velar fricative and the next begins with a liquid or nasal. This transition involves an increase in sonority, as liquids and nasals are more sonorant than fricatives.

(95)	[lux]	‘live, stay’
	[luɣəlux~luɣlux]	‘wait’
	[rax]	‘clear ground’
	[raɣərəx~raɣrax]	‘do weeding’
	[nelaɣələx]	‘purple swamphen’
	[naɣələn~naɣalen~naɣlen]	‘leg’
	[naɣəmal~naɣamal~naɣmal]	‘house’

In the items that display reduplication in (95), the schwa tends to be a product of rapid speech. Schwa-less articulations are produced in careful speech styles. Younger speakers may pronounce ‘leg’ and ‘house’ with a medial [a] rather than [ə], although again, in careful speech the medial vowel is generally not articulated at all. A diachronic analysis suggests that two competing processes may be at work in the articulation of some of these words. The final item ‘house’ derives from Proto Oceanic *\*kamali(R)* ‘men’s meeting house’ (Green and Pawley 1998: 50), and arguably illustrates vowel elision ([naɣamal] to [naɣmal]). Thus, an historical process of elision may stand alongside the rapid speech phenomenon of epenthesis ([naɣmal] to [naɣəmal]).

When a stem ends with a velar fricative but begins with a consonant that is not a liquid or nasal, the schwa does not occur.

(96)	[tuxtux]	‘beat ITERATIVE’ from [tux] ‘strike’
------	----------	--------------------------------------

### 2.6.3.2. Epenthetic plosives [d] and [g]

In rapid speech, an epenthetic plosive appears where a morpheme with a final nasal is followed by a morpheme beginning with a vowel. The plosive is homorganic with the preceding nasal.

- (97) [an<sup>d</sup> i-rβix] ‘that/who is good’  
 [netan<sup>d</sup> is] ‘something bad’  
 [ei an<sup>g</sup> iŋ] ‘that’s it!’

The examples given above involve alveolar and velar nasals, both of which are [-labial]. In slower speech, the epenthetic plosive is absent.

### 2.6.3.3. Epenthetic plosive [b]

A similar kind of process can be seen in the rapid articulation of the bilabial nasal /m/ although in the examples below, the following environment involves a liquid rather than a vowel. In this context, a homorganic labial plosive is inserted between the bilabial nasal and following liquid.

- (98) [em<sup>b</sup>lina] ‘woman’s name’  
 [nem<sup>b</sup>laŋ] ‘pool’

Neither of these examples involves a particularly clear morpheme boundary; however, the intrusive plosive still appears to be a function of rapid speech, at the transition point where the closure of the oral cavity, formed for the articulation of the [-continuant] bilabial nasal is released into the [+continuant] liquid. In careful speech, the plosive is absent. Intrusive plosives of this kind are also present in other languages including English, where we have borrowed the lexicalized pronunciation of words like *number* from French *nombre* (originally Latin *numerus*).

### 2.6.3.4. Established allomorphy for the irrealis nasal /m/

Instances of a sound that might also be categorized as an epenthetic [b] appear in complex lexical items. Verbs that take a singular subject and that are inflected for irrealis mood take a subject prefix that ends with the irrealis morpheme *m-*. When the associated verb stem begins with a liquid, the approximant /j/, or a vowel, we find the irrealis morpheme is articulated as [mb] rather than [m]. This established allomorphy is represented as [ᵐb], contrasting with the intrusive plosive [ᵇ] described in §2.6.3.3.

- (99) [i<sup>m</sup>b-laϕ] ‘(s)he will get it’  
 [i<sup>m</sup>b-rax] ‘(s)he will clear the ground’  
 [i<sup>m</sup>b-jal] ‘(s)he will fly’  
 [i<sup>m</sup>b-is] ‘it will be bad’

Among older speakers, there are some instances in the corpus of a plain nasal being articulated in this environment; however, most speakers consistently use the plosive articulation. It is interesting to note that speakers prefer the morpheme to be written as ‘b’ in this context rather than as the plain nasal ‘m’. This suggests that what was perhaps originally an epenthetic sound has become an allomorph of the irrealis nasal.

Irrealis nasal /m/ : [m <sup>b</sup> ] / ___ r, l, j, V
---

This same sound is beginning to appear in the speech of some younger community members, preceding verb stems beginning with the velar fricative /y/. In this context however, the [b] is still very much epenthetic and a product of rapid speech, alternating with the plain nasal in careful speech styles. Speakers prefer the irrealis morpheme to be realized as the plain nasal in this environment in orthographic representations.

- (100) [im-yan~im<sup>b</sup>-yan] ‘(s)he will eat (something)’  
 [im-yitl~im<sup>b</sup>-yitl] ‘(s)he will recognize (something)’

The unproductive stative prefix /m-/ follows a similar pattern, being articulated as [m<sup>b</sup>] when it precedes the palatal approximant /j/. /m-jal/ ‘be flying about’ is articulated as [m<sup>b</sup>jal]. The stative prefix is also articulated as a prenasalized plosive before some liquids, though not all. For example, /m-rey/ ‘be raw’ is articulated as [mrex] while /m-rar/ ‘be numb’ is articulated as [m<sup>b</sup>rar]. The presence of the prenasalized plosive or simple bilabial nasal appears to be lexically determined.

Above, we observed that a homorganic epenthetic plosive occurs between a nasal and a vowel. The bilabial nasal is also realized as a prenasalized homorganic plosive when followed by a vowel in the formation of subject prefixes which are attached to verb stems.

- (101) [ni<sup>m</sup>bit-] ‘we(INCL:IRR)-’  
 [a<sup>m</sup>bir-] ‘they(IRR:DU)-’

The plosives that appear in these subject prefixes are obligatory. The irrealis morpheme in the examples above is never articulated as a plain nasal; it must be realized as a prenasalized plosive when it is followed by a vowel (see §6.1.).

### 2.6.3.5. Epenthetic [i]

The most pervasive process of epenthesis in Neverver can be observed in the formation of inflected verbs. This process is mentioned in §2.5.3. and described in detail in §6.1. on verbs; however, a brief summary is presented in this section to introduce this important process. In the formation of inflected verbs, a prefix marking person, mood and number is attached to the verb stem. Depending on the person and number of the subject, and the mood of the proposition being encoded, the subject/mood prefix may involve final consonants. Should the verb stem begin with a consonant sequence, the resulting inflected form would produce a sequence of up to four consonants. When an inflected form is syllabified, these consonant sequences are broken up by the insertion of an epenthetic [i], in order to observe the syllable constraint. Indigenous and borrowed items behave in the same manner.

(102)	/ni-βlem/	[niβ.lem] CVC.CVC	‘I came’
	/nit-βlem/	[ni.tiβ.lem] CV.CVC.CVC	‘we(INCL) came’
	/nimt-βlem/	[nim.tiβ.lem] CVC.CVC.CVC	‘we(INCL) will come’
	/kat-stoβ-da/	[ka.tis.toβ. <sup>n</sup> da] CV.CVC.CVC.CV	‘you paused’
	/nat-pripe/	[na.tip.ri.pe] CV.CVC.CV.CV	‘we(EXCL) prepared’

When syllabified, each word displays syllables with simple onsets and codas, preserving the required (C)V(C) structure of syllables. In chapter six we consider the formation of subject/mood prefixes, and we hypothesize that wherever consonant sequences may potentially form clusters, an epenthetic vowel is inserted to ensure that the basic syllable constraint is observed.

### 2.6.4. Apocope and syncope

In the rapid speech of many community members, nasals are dropped when they are simultaneously morpheme-final and phrase-final. This is an example of apocope.

(103)	/niβlem/	[niβle]	‘I came’
	/kumbulem/	[kumbule]	‘come!’
	/aŋ/	[a]	‘ANA’

In a small number of complex items, a stem-internal vowel is present that is absent in associated simple lexical items. These pairs may illustrate either apocope, with an underlying medial vowel dropped in certain contexts, or syncope, with a medial vowel inserted in certain contexts.

- (104) [neɣel-βas] ‘four-legged creature’  
           from [naɣlen~naɣəlen~naɣalen] ‘leg’; [βas] ‘four’  
       [niliβ-maβus] ‘tusk growth stage’  
           from [nilβun] ‘tooth’; [maβus~maβis] ‘white’

The simple nouns presented in (104) are likely to reflect historically complex morphemes, as the final /n/ in [naɣlen] and [nilβun] looks very much like the third person singular Proto Oceanic possessor suffix *\*-ña* which is associated with direct possession (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002: 76). This point is discussed further in chapter five.

## 2.7. Stress

Stress is not phonemically contrastive. A purely auditory analysis suggests that primary stress is assigned to the penultimate syllable of polysyllabic lexical stems and falls on the single syllable of monosyllabic stems. When lexical items contain more than one stem, stress is assigned separately to each stem.

### 2.7.1. Stress assignment in nouns

The basic stress-assignment pattern presented above is illustrated in the following items:

- (105) [ˈnaʊs]           ‘rain’  
       [ˈniː.ɔ]         ‘water’  
       [ˈna.βuːns]     ‘banana’  
       [ˈnaɣ.len]      ‘leg’  
       [ni.ˈte.rix]     ‘child’

In each item in (105) above, the common noun prefix is counted in the assignment of stress.



In the articulation of imperative constructions, stress is placed both on the initial subject/mood prefix and then again on the initial syllable of the verb stem according to the stress assignment pattern described above:

- (109) [ˈkam.ˈtuɸ]      ‘go away!’  
           [ˈkum.ˈɣan]     ‘eat up!’  
           [ˈkum.ˈbu.lem]   ‘come!’

This distinctive patterning allows for a contrast between ‘Go away!’ as an imperative construction and ‘You will go’ as, for example, a construction with future time reference.

## 2.8. Intonation patterns

Intonation in Neverver is a simple but crucial marker of the relation that phrases and clauses bear to one another. The most important intonational distinction that we can observe in the text corpus is between terminal and non-terminal intonation. Terminal intonation involves falling pitch over at least the final constituent of a clause, while non-terminal intonation is prototypically restricted to the final syllable of a phrase or clause and varies between slightly rising pitch, and level or slightly falling pitch. Polar interrogatives have a distinct intonation pattern that involves rising pitch on the penultimate syllable, and falling pitch on the final syllable.

A small number of examples are presented in the sections below, illustrating different intonation patterns. Further examples are distributed throughout this work as relevant.

### 2.8.1. Terminal intonation

Terminal intonation (indicated by ↘) is a fall in pitch that often encompasses an entire clause, but minimally involves the final constituent of given clause. Terminal intonation signals the completion of an idea, and at the same time, the termination of a structural unit. Terminal intonation is generally followed by a pause and is associated with:

- simple declarative clauses;
- content questions with interrogative lexemes (constituent interrogatives) (see §9.3.);

- clauses with complex nuclei, including incorporated objects and nuclear serial verbs (see chapter ten);
- clauses with complex cores as in core serial verbs (see chapter eleven).

A simple declarative clause with inherent negative polarity is presented below.

- (110) [netas     ang         at-rosix↘]  
 fish       ANA        3REAL:PL-not.want  
 ‘The fish didn't want to (carry him).’ [NVKS04.22: 134.526]

### 2.8.2. Non-terminal intonation

Non-terminal intonation typically involves a small rise in pitch (indicated by ↗). It may also involve level/falling intonation (indicated by →) in the articulation of the final syllable in a phrase. The key characteristic of non-terminal intonation is that the pitch of the final syllable is always comparatively higher than the pitch level that is reached in subsequent terminal intonation. Non-terminal intonation has a range of functions including marking:

- boundaries of clause-internal noun phrases with modification, including relative clauses and possessive/associative constructions (see chapter five);
- the boundary of a fronted phrase (see §9.7.);
- boundaries of clause-internal temporal phrases and pre-posed adverbial subordinate clauses (see §13.3.);
- the boundary of the repeated tail in tail-head linkage (see §13.4.);
- the boundary of a clause or phrase overtly conjoined to another (see §13.5.);
- the boundary of a clause or phrase juxtaposed to another (see §13.6.).

Example (111) shows rising intonation on both a subject and an object noun phrase where the head noun is modified.

- (111) [ale     ni<sup>n</sup>da         titi                 niterix-moymox     lele↗]  
 so     mother     3POSS:SG     child - female     small  
 [i-βer-ix                 niterix-moymox     lele↗,     i-βer]  
 3REAL:SG- say -VI     child - female     small     3REAL:SG- say  
 ‘Then the small girl's mother told the small girl...’ [NVKS20.28: 142.915]

Both non-terminal rising and level/falling intonation function to mark the boundary of any non-final clause in a series of juxtaposed clauses that display inter-propositional semantic relationships. Multiple examples of this pattern are presented in chapter thirteen.

### 2.8.3. Polar interrogatives (§9.3.2.)

The intonation pattern for polar interrogatives differs from the falling intonation associated with constituent interrogatives. Polar interrogatives are uttered with a slight rise in pitch on the penultimate syllable, and a fall in pitch on the final syllable.

- (113) [noyowit    ku-roŋil            ku<sup>m</sup>b-le<sup>m</sup>b↗    na↘]  
 octopus    2REAL:SG- can    2IRR:SG- carry    1SG  
 ‘Octopus! Can you carry me?’ [NVKS04.24: 143.101]

## 2.9. Orthographic conventions

In the remainder of this work, a practical orthography is employed. Phonetic detail is added only where relevant. The practical orthography, using italics, is displayed in Table 12 below.

*Table 12.* A practical orthography for Neverver

Contrastive Segments	Orthographic Representation
a	<i>a</i>
e	<i>e</i>
i	<i>i</i>
o	<i>o</i>
u	<i>u</i>
(ø)	<i>(ě)</i>
(y)	<i>(ü)</i>
m	<i>m</i>
n	<i>n</i>
ŋ	<i>ng</i>
p	<i>p</i>
t	<i>t</i>

Contrastive Segments	Orthographic Representation
k	<i>k</i>
<sup>m</sup> b	<i>b</i>
<sup>m</sup> B	<i>bb</i>
<sup>n</sup> d	<i>d</i>
<sup>nd</sup> r	<i>dr</i>
<sup>n</sup> g	<i>g</i>
β	<i>v</i>
<sup>n</sup> ʄ	<i>j</i>
s	<i>s</i>
ʎ	<i>kh</i>
r	<i>r</i>
l	<i>l</i>
j	<i>y</i>
w	<i>w</i>

The vowel sounds in brackets (described in §2.4.) represent contrasts that are no longer found in the contemporary speech of younger community members. The use of diacritics will however, allow the preservation of these distinct sounds in written records.

The representation of the prenasalized alveolar trill has been achieved with the digraph *dr* (as we find in Fijian (Schütz 1985)). This digraph makes use of *d* and *r*, symbols that are used elsewhere to represent the separate segments /d/ and /r/. In terms of auditory perception, there is no practical way to distinguish between the articulation of the complex segment [<sup>nd</sup>r] and any potential instances of the sequence [<sup>n</sup>dr].

The velar fricative is represented with the digraph *kh*, as in *Lingarakh*, the name of one of the Neverver speaking villages. Crowley uses the same digraph in his orthography of Naman (2006b) and Musgrave (2007) follows this convention in her Neve‘ei orthography.

Finally, it must be pointed out that the use of the digraph *bb* to represent the bilabial trill [<sup>m</sup>B] differs from the use of other double consonants to represent geminates. This inconsistent solution nonetheless leads to no confusion as prenasalized segments (including the bilabial trill) may not form geminate sequences. The representation of the bilabial trill with *bb* is employed in the orthographies of other Malekula languages, including Avava (Crowley 2006a) and Uripiv (McKerras pers. comm.).

# Chapter 3

## Nominals

### 3.0. Introduction

A range of pronominal and nominal forms are attested in Neverver. Independent personal pronouns encode basic person and number contrasts; prefixes derive possessive determiners and possessive pronouns from the basic pronominal stems (§3.1.). Three main noun classes are attested, consisting of common, personal, and local nouns (§3.2.–§3.5.). A fourth pronominal-noun category blends the features of the pronominal system with the properties of the major noun classes (§3.6.). Nouns can be derived through the processes of nominalization (§3.7.) and compounding (§3.8.).

### 3.1. Pronouns

#### 3.1.1. Independent personal pronouns

Neverver has a set of independent pronouns that contrast first, second, and third person forms for singular and non-singular referents. In the non-singular series, there is a distinction between inclusive and exclusive first person pronouns. A separate dual, trial, or paucal series, attested in neighbouring languages including Avava (Crowley 2006a: 38) and Naman (Crowley 2006b: 56) is not reflected in the set of independent pronouns in Neverver although it is attested in verbal prefixes (see Table 14 and §6.1.).

Table 13. The independent pronoun paradigm

	Singular		Non-singular
First person	<i>(i-)na</i>	Inclusive	<i>(i-)git</i>
		Exclusive	<i>(i-)nam ~ (gu)mam</i>
Second person	<i>(i-)okh</i>		<i>(i-)gam</i>
Third person	<i>ei</i>		<i>adr</i>

The initial *i-* occurs optionally with the first and second person forms and is likely to be a remnant an earlier pronominal article, reconstructed for Central Eastern Oceanic as *\*i* (Pawley 1972: 32, 58). This initial *i-*, glossed as a person-

al prefix, also occurs on the personal interrogative *i-sikh* ‘who’. Although optional with the pronouns, it is obligatory with the personal interrogative.

The independent pronouns, with the optionally articulated *i-*, may serve as grammatical subjects, objects, or objects of prepositions. They also serve as reflexive pronouns in the object position, cross-referencing the person and number of the grammatical subject. Independent pronouns typically refer to animate entities; however, it is possible for a pronoun to refer to a topical inanimate entity that serves as the grammatical object, or as part of a reflexive construction, again with the pronoun in object position. This is a point of contrast with the possessive determiners discussed in §3.1.2., which can only be used to refer to animate possessors.

All subjects (pronominal and nominal) of verbal constructions are cross-referenced in a subject/mood prefix which is attached to the verb stem. There are no pronominal affixes associated with grammatical objects on the verb. A significant point of contrast can be seen between the independent pronouns and the subject/mood prefixes. The independent pronouns make a simple two-way number contrast between singular and non-singular while the subject/mood prefixes encode a three-way distinction between singular, dual and plural. This means that the non-singular independent pronouns carry less information than their bound counterparts. Table 14 presents the paradigm of subject/mood prefixes that we find when a verb is marked for realis mood. The presence of the optional vowel (*i*)- is conditioned by phonotactic constraints (see §2.6.3.5. and §6.1.).

Table 14. The realis paradigm of subject/mood prefixes

	Singular		Dual	Plural
First person	<i>ni-</i>	Inclusive	<i>nir(i) -</i>	<i>nit(i)-</i>
		Exclusive	<i>nar(i)-</i>	<i>nat(i)-</i>
Second person	<i>ku-</i>		<i>kar(i)-</i>	<i>kat(i)-</i>
Third person	<i>i-</i>		<i>ar(i)-</i>	<i>at(i)-</i>

Combinations of independent pronouns and their associated subject/mood prefixes are almost all articulated as indicated by the forms in Table 13 and Table 14. The second person singular forms differ in that they are often contracted in rapid speech, and the high vowel of the subject/mood prefix lowers. The combination of *i-okh* ‘2SG’ and *ku-* ‘2REAL:SG’ is realized as [oɔo-] or even simply [ɔo-]. The high vowel of the first person singular subject/mood prefix *ni-* also lowers to [e], particularly (although not exclusively) in environments where the following syllable has the vowel /e/ as its peak.

In addition to the bound pronominal forms listed in Table 14, there is also an impersonal form of the subject/mood prefix. This form *ar(i)-* is a homophone of

the third person dual realis prefix. The irrealis forms differ however, with the impersonal prefix being *am-* or *abi-* while the third personal dual irrealis prefix is *abir-* or *abr(i)-*. The impersonal construction is discussed in full in §9.5. Of relevance here is the fact that the impersonal prefix may not co-occur with an independent pronoun.

Subject/mood prefixes are obligatory in all verbal constructions in Neverver. When a subject argument can be retrieved from the surrounding context, the subject/mood prefix is likely to be the only overt encoding of that argument. In contrast, independent pronouns are not obligatory. The distribution of independent pronouns is quite restricted. In narrative texts for example, third person singular pronouns occur most often in the following environments:

- as reflexive objects, co-indexing the person and number of the subject argument (obligatory);
- as resumptive pronouns in subject or object position when a topical human argument has been fronted (optional);
- when there are two human participants, and one is expressed with a gender-coded form, the other may be coded with the gender-neutral *ei* (optional).

In example (1), the object pronoun *ei* is used reflexively; this use is determined by the verb *dak* ‘fall down, land’, which requires a reflexive object to be structurally complete.

- (1) *Ba iskham i-vlem mil i-dak*  
 when INDF.PN 3REAL:SG-come again 3REAL:SG-fall.over  
*ei aran nivkho ang...*  
 3SG LOC.on k.o. tree ANA  
 ‘When one (bird) came again and landed on the Nivkho tree...’ [NVKS06.100]

In example (2), the subject pronoun *ei* is used resumptively, repeating the person and number of the topicalized noun phrase *niterikh mokhmokh ang* ‘the girl’.

- (2) *Be niterikh mokhmokh ang ei i-ka -kkan si*  
 but child female ANA 3SG 3REAL:SG-DUP-eat NEG  
 ‘But the girl, she couldn’t eat.’ [NVKS11.38]

In example (3), there are two human participants of contrasting gender. The female is expressed as the grammatical subject of the first clause, encoded by the subject/mood prefix *i-*. When the grammatical subject shifts to the male participant in the next clause, he is represented with the male pronominal-noun *mang* to distinguish him from the previous female subject (see §3.6. for a full description of pronominal-nouns). The female is the grammatical object of this

clause, but rather than being represented with the female pronominal-noun *vinang*, she is simply encoded with the gender-neutral third person pronoun *ei*. This encoding is successful because of the two logically possible referents, the male has already been unambiguously expressed. This leaves the female participant as the only available referent for the gender-neutral *ei*.

- (3) *I-vlem, mang i-lav ei*  
 3REAL:SG-come man:ANA 3REAL:SG-get 3SG  
 ‘She came and the man married her.’ [NVKS10.112]

Although (2) and (3) demonstrate that pronouns can be used to encode human participants, the gendered pronominal-nouns *vinang* ‘the (previously mentioned) woman’ and *mang* ‘the (previously mentioned) man’ are common in both narrative texts and conversational interactions.

### 3.1.2. Possessive determiners

The first and second person possessive determiners are derived from the independent personal pronoun series; they differ in that they may begin with the possessive prefix *t-* rather than the personal *i-* marker, which is attached to independent pronouns. The prefix *t-* has a zero allomorph that occurs when the preceding possessed nominal (or noun phrase) is *n*-final. In other environments, the *t*-form occurs.

The third person forms display some irregularity. A contrast is made between *t*-forms and bare forms; however, this contrast is achieved through suppletion rather than allomorphic variation in the third person. The *t*-form of the third person possessive determiner is *titi*. *Titi* is suffixed with the plural marker *(a)dr* to indicate a non-singular possessor. The plural marker takes the form of the third person non-singular pronoun. When following an *n*-final word, the bare form of *titi* is not *\*iti*, but rather *ei*, or *adr* in the plural. Like the regular first and second person forms, the bare possessors take the form of the independent pronouns.

Table 15. The possessive determiner paradigm

	Singular		Non-singular
First person	<i>(t-)na</i>	Inclusive	<i>(t-)git</i>
		Exclusive	<i>(t-)nam ~ (t-)mam</i>
Second person	<i>(t-)ox</i>		<i>(t-)gam</i>
Third person	<i>titi-ei</i>		<i>titi-dr ~ adr</i>

Possessive determiners refer exclusively to human (or anthropomorphized) possessors. Non-human possessors are expressed by means of a different construction involving the nominal modifying particle *an*. Possessive constructions are discussed fully in §5.1.

### 3.1.3. Possessive pronouns

Possessive pronouns are also derived from the independent pronoun paradigm. Possessive pronouns comprise a nominalizing prefix *at-*, and the *t-* possessive prefix, attached to the base pronominal morphemes.

Nominalizing Prefix + Possessive Prefix + Independent Pronoun

When the nominalizing prefix is attached, the possessive pronoun can stand alone as the head of a noun phrase. The third person possessive pronoun forms make use of the supplet *titi* morpheme rather than the independent personal pronoun forms. Thus, we find *at-t-na* ‘mine’ and *at-titi-dr* ‘theirs’.

Table 16. The possessive pronoun paradigm

	Singular		Non-singular
First person	<i>at-t-na</i>	Inclusive	<i>at-t-git</i>
		Exclusive	<i>at-t-nam</i>
Second person	<i>at-t-okh</i>		<i>at-t-gam</i>
Third person	<i>at-titi</i>		<i>at-titi-dr</i>

## 3.2. Noun classes

Nouns can be analysed as belonging to three main classes: Common Nouns, Personal Nouns, and Local Nouns. These three noun classes are found commonly in Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002: 37) and have been reconstructed for Proto-Oceanic (Pawley 1972: 32–33; Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002: 69). The noun classes, and their associated sub-classes in Neverver can be summarized as follows:

- (4) Common Nouns    Indigenous items  
    Borrowed items
- Personal Nouns    Proper Names  
    Kin Terms



The *n(V)*- sequence most likely derives from an historically earlier morpheme associated with non-human common nouns. The morpheme has been reconstructed for Proto Eastern Oceanic as *\*na* (Pawley 1972) and for Proto Oceanic as either *\*na* or *\*a* (Crowley 1985). The antecedent of Neverver's common noun prefix is thought to have been associated with the specificity or definiteness of the noun phrase being marked.

Crowley (1985) notes that the reconstructed article is reflected in different ways in Eastern Oceanic Languages. Of particular relevance to Neverver, he observes that there are languages in Malekula which display the following type of common noun marking:

Productive marking on many or most (but not all) common nouns, with a reflex of *\*na* or *\*a*. The form of the marker is a prefix that is regularly separable from the noun in a fairly wide range of clearly definable grammatical contexts. (Crowley 1985: 161)

This description of the behaviour of common noun marking fits data in the Neverver corpus reasonably well; however Neverver appears to be in a transition phase at present, with a previously productive prefix becoming fused with, and thus inseparable from, many nominal stems. In Neverver, the reflex of the earlier article has the form *n(V)*-. Rather than being associated with definiteness, it functions simply to mark a morpheme as a common noun. Speakers of Neverver do not perceive the *n(V)*- morpheme to be distinct from the noun itself, and nouns are always cited with *n(V)*- attached. If one were, for example, to record a noun stem without *n(V)*-, this would be considered an error by a native speaker.

In terms of linguistic analysis, there are many cases in which the common noun marker can be treated as a prefix as it is separable in predictable contexts. Particularly, *n(V)*- is removed when the noun in question is incorporated as a verbal object. It also is removed when the noun forms the second part of a nominal compound. There are a small number of noun-verb pairs distinguished only by the presence of *n(V)*- marking the noun, or a subject/mood prefix marking the verb. Finally, *n(V)*- is part of a productive simulfix used to derive nouns from verb stems. The processes of object incorporation and nominal compounding are illustrated with the common noun *nevat* meaning 'stone':

- |     |                     |  |
|-----|---------------------|--|
| (6) | <i>ne-vat</i>       | n. 'stone'   |
|     | <i>dang-vat-ikh</i> | v. 'remove stones from a cooked laplap (with s.t.)'          |
|     | <i>sukhsukh-vat</i> | v. 'lift out stones'   |
|     | <i>niar-vat</i>     | n. 'stone wall'  |
|     | <i>nisal-vat</i>    | n. 'coconut cream (traditionally boiled with heated stones)' |

Some pairs of noun and verb are distinguished only by the presence of the common noun prefix or subject/mood prefix. The attachment of the common noun prefix serves as a simple nominalization process. Verb stems are listed in their common citation form, with the impersonal subject/mood prefix *ar(i)-*. A small number of the noun-verb pairs attested in the corpus are presented in data set (7):

(7)	<i>ar-bbut</i>	‘step’	<i>na-bbut</i>	‘footprint’
	<i>ar-lu</i>	‘shoot’	<i>nu-lu</i>	‘arrow’
	<i>ari-ssamu</i>	‘sweep’	<i>ni-ssamu</i>	‘broom’
	<i>ari-tgar</i>	‘be cold’	<i>ne-tgar</i>	‘coldness’
	<i>ari-vkhal</i>	‘fight’	<i>ne-vkhal</i>	‘fight’
	<i>ar-khavakh</i>	‘plant (yams)’	<i>na-khavakh</i>	‘yam mound’
	<i>ari-slot-ikh</i>	‘make a ceremonial yam heap for s.o.’	<i>no-slot</i>	‘ceremonial yam heap’

Finally, a nominalizing simulfix, the first part of which involves the initial *n(V)-* prefix, is attested frequently in the corpus. A small number of nominalized verb stems are displayed in (8), including a borrowed stem undergoes the same nominalization processes.

(8)	<i>jal</i>	‘sick’	<i>ni-jal-ian</i>	‘sickness’
	<i>kkan</i>	‘eat’	<i>ni-kkan-ian</i>	‘food’
	<i>maur</i>	‘live’	<i>ne-maur-ian</i>	‘life’
	<i>sav</i>	‘perform dance’	<i>ne-sav-ian</i>	‘a dance’
	<i>kuk</i>	‘cook’	<i>ni-kuk-ian</i>	‘cooking’

The common noun prefix is not an obligatory marker of common noun membership. This means that there are a number of lexical items that behave as common nouns but are not marked with an initial *n(V)-* sequence. Peripheral members of the common noun class, including personal nouns and local nouns which are used as common nouns, do not take the prefix. Recent borrowings also do not take this prefix, although they do behave in other ways like common nouns.

As well as finding common nouns without the common noun prefix, we also find the prefix appearing outside the common noun class. This happens in particular when personal proper nouns and proper place names are derived from common nouns and continue to bear the common noun prefix despite functioning as personal or local nouns. An example of a personal proper noun shaped like a common noun is *Nokho-an-mial* (a man’s name meaning ‘vine of red’); an example of a proper place name shaped like a common noun is *Nio-sal* (the name of a hamlet near a swampy area, literally ‘water’ + ‘float’).

It was noted above that the status of the  $n(V)$ - sequence is in transition at present. As such, there are a large number of common nouns for which the boundary between the common noun prefix and nominal stem cannot be established. There is no evidence of these morphemes occurring without the common noun prefix. We must rely on reconstructions of an earlier stage of the language to establish that these nouns were historically complex.

- (9)  $nVC$  nouns
- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| <i>nakhut</i>   | ‘louse’   |
| <i>nibbsen</i>  | ‘saliva’  |
| <i>nelemen</i>  | ‘tongue’  |
| <i>nokhowit</i> | ‘octopus’ |
| <i>nur</i>      | ‘dew’     |

The form *khowit* does not occur independently of *no* in the corpus; nor does the form *khut* appear without *na*. Although these forms may have been separable in the past, there is no evidence that they are separable in the corpus of contemporary Neverver.

### 3.3.2. The form of the common noun prefix

The common noun prefix has the basic form  $n(V)$ -. In this section, conditions related to the presence and form of the prefix vowel are considered.

The examples of common nouns that clearly carry a prefix in §3.3. almost all display nominal stems which are consonant-initial. This is the environment in which we find the common noun prefix attested as  $nV$ -. When noun stems have an initial syllable of the shape CV, and the V segment is [+back] (that is, /a, o, u/), the prefix vowel may be subject to a form of distance assimilation, harmonizing towards the articulation of the second vowel. This process is illustrated by the forms *na-khavakh* ‘yam mound’, *nu-lu* ‘arrow’ and *no-slot* ‘ceremonial yam heap’ in (7) above. Vowel harmony is not obligatory and a single speaker will vary in his/her articulation of nouns. For example, the noun *nobo* ‘song’ has been attested in this harmonized form as well as the non-harmonized forms [ni<sup>m</sup>bo] and [nə<sup>m</sup>bo]. Likewise, the noun *na-glat* ‘nettle’ has been attested in this harmonized form, as well as [ni<sup>ɔ</sup>glat] and [ne<sup>ɔ</sup>glat]. Not all [+back] stems are attested with harmonized noun markers. *Nidam* ‘yam; year’ is one such example, attested only as [ni<sup>ɔ</sup>dam] and [ne<sup>ɔ</sup>dam] but never the harmonized form \*[na<sup>ɔ</sup>dam].

Based on the data in the corpus, it appears that the shape of the common noun prefix before consonants is determined by at least two separate conditioning factors. As noted above, potential sites for vowel harmony involve CV-

initial stems where the V segment is [+back]. This accounts for [+back] vowels in the prefix. The distribution of [-back] vowels including [ni~nə] and [ne] before CV stems appears to be socially conditioned. Younger speakers perceive the ‘correct’ form of the common noun prefix to be [ni] with [ne] and [nə] (as well as any harmonized vowels) belonging to a more relaxed speech style. Such ‘relaxed’ forms are considered inappropriate in written records and *ni-* is the preferred orthographic representation. In contrast to the view point of younger speakers, older speakers have expressed the view that [ni] forms sound overly formal. For older speakers, it is more appropriate for the written form to reflect either a harmonized vowel or the [ne] variant.

When considering the shape of the common noun prefix, we find that there are a number of items in the corpus where it is difficult to separate the prefix from the noun stem itself. Potentially, some noun stems in the corpus could be vowel-initial. In such cases, the common noun prefix would be realized as *n-*. Evidence for vowel-initial stems is rather difficult to identify and it is likely that only a very small number of nominal morphemes fall into this category. Such evidence as can be identified is presented in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, there are a small number of words that are attested in compound nouns or as the incorporated objects of verbs with an initial vowel.

- (10) *niber-avuj* ‘banana fungi’ from *niber* ‘fungi’; *n-avuj* ‘banana’  
*ni-ribrib-io* ‘dragonfly’ from *\*rib(rib)*; *n-io* ‘water, river’  
*sisir-io* ‘follow a river’ from *sir* ‘follow, fetch’; *n-io* ‘water, river’

Secondly, one common noun forms a pair with a vowel-initial local noun.

- (11) *n-aut* ‘place’ *aut* ‘ashore’

A contemporary minimal pair *navul* ‘moon, month’ and *navul* ‘sago palm grater’ also suggests a stem-initial vowel analysis. If the nominal stem was *vul*, we would predict vowel harmony to apply in both cases; however, it does not occur in the case of *navul*. One explanation for this could be that the initial vowel in *navul* is part of the nominal stem *n-avul* rather than the common noun prefix *na-vul*. A further observation of interest is that the [u] in *navul* ‘moon, month’ is commonly articulated as the front rounded vowel [y] by older speakers. An older stem might thus have been *\*[aβyl]*.

- (12) *navul* ‘sago palm grater’ *\*nivul*; *\*navul*; *\*nevil*  
*navul* ‘moon, month’ *\*nivul*; *\*navul*; *\*nevil*  
 [naβul~naβyl] POc *\*pulan* ‘moon, month’ (Osmond 2003: 158)

The rather limited evidence presented here for vowel-initial stems suggests that the presence of the vowel in the common noun prefix is rule-governed: when a nominal stem is vowel-initial, the common noun prefix takes the shape *n-*; elsewhere the prefix has the shape *nV-*. The difficulty is of course, in determining which stems are vowel-initial. Prefixed nouns with the segmental sequence *nVV* seem good candidates for vowel-initial stems.

- (13) *nVV* nouns
- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <i>naur</i> | ‘fresh water prawn’<br>POc <i>*quray</i> ‘prawn’ (Pawley 1996: 140)   |
| <i>naus</i> | ‘rain’<br>POc <i>*qusan</i> ‘rain’ (Ross 2003: 141)   |
| <i>nial</i> | ‘sun’<br>PMP <i>*qajaw</i> ; <i>*qalejaw</i> ‘sun, daylight’; POc <i>*qaco</i><br>(Osmond 2003: 154, after Blust) |
| <i>niat</i> | ‘sago palm, thatch’<br>POc <i>*qatop</i> ‘thatch, roof’ (Green and Pawley 1998: 52)                               |

Reconstructions of these items suggest that an initial consonant may have been systematically lost from the beginning of each item, leaving a vowel-initial stem. Lynch (n.d.) hypothesizes that Proto Oceanic *\*q* is lost in most environments in Neverver. It must be acknowledged however, that there is no synchronic evidence that the boundary between common noun prefix and stem is salient in these lexical items in Neverver today.

Because the identification of the boundary of the common noun prefix is problematic, nouns are only marked for this prefix (signalled by a hyphen) in this particular chapter and only in some cases where there is clear evidence of prefixation. Such evidence is largely synchronic, although in cases diachronic evidence is taken into consideration to illustrate particular points. Elsewhere, the common noun prefix is not separated from the noun stem.

### 3.3.3. A note on the syllabification of segmental vowel sequences

Unlike the harmony we observed in non-adjacent vowels, when a common noun is formed with the segmental sequence *nV<sub>1</sub>V<sub>2</sub>*, the two adjacent vowels remain dissimilar. In the corpus, nouns of this shape include [+high][−high] combinations which are articulated as disyllabic:

- (14) *niat* [ni.<sup>h</sup>at] ‘thatch’  
*n-io* [ni.<sup>h</sup>o] ‘water’

In nouns that have the segmental shape  $nV_1V_2$ , where the vowel combination involves rising transition [+low][-low], a diphthong is formed. The following nouns are monosyllabic.

- (15) *n-aut* 'place'  
*naus* 'rain'  
*nauj* 'pawpaw'  
*nais* 'k.o. dance'

### 3.3.4. Non-prototypical common nouns

A small sub-category of indigenous common nouns are marked by the prefix *le-* rather than  $n(V)-$ . For some members of this sub-class of common nouns, there are also stems carrying the common noun marker  $n(V)-$  in the corpus. Examples are given in (16).

- (16) *le-bbwas* 'castrated pig'  
*ni-bbwas* 'boar'  
*le-tvur* 'fallow garden'  
*ni-tvur* 'garden currently being harvested'  
*le-bat* 'little finger, little toe'  
*ne-bat* 'last born'

Many of the nouns in this non-prototypical sub-class clearly display the semantic characteristics of female gender, smallness, and/or light colouring. The inherently reduplicated stative verb stem *lele* 'small' may well be related to this prefix. The same prefix, attested as both *le-* and *li-* is also employed in the formation of the traditional names of women listed in example (26).

- (17) FEMALE  
*lebblat* 'hen'  
*lemari* 'wild hen'  
*lebbwas* 'castrated pig'  
*leturjar* 'spinster'  
*letvur* 'fallow garden'  
*lebrot* 'thin sow (after birthing)'

#### SMALL; LIGHT COLOURED

- levrivras* 'hornet'  
*levatvat* 'fantail'  
*lerikhrikh* 'k.o. vine (small, stinging leaves)'  
*lemang* 'white fruit bat'  
*lekhuliang* 'k.o. lizard (light coloured)'  
*lesevsev* 'wild man (mythical, reportedly small and long-haired)'

<i>lemrukh</i>	‘big toe, thumb’
<i>leskhus</i>	‘index finger, second toe’
<i>lesbo~lesibo</i>	‘middle finger, third toe’
<i>letakh</i>	‘ring finger, fourth toe’
<i>lebat</i>	‘little finger, little toe’

Numerous borrowings have been absorbed into Neverver. Borrowings from Bislama, with English and French origins, are quite easily identifiable. Some borrowings from indigenous Vanuatu languages have also been identified by Neverver speakers. It appears that historically, borrowings into the common noun class took on the morphological characteristics of indigenous common nouns in that they were marked with the common noun prefix. Thus, we find the following borrowed items in Neverver:

- (18) *navoka* ‘avocado’ (Bis. *avoka*; French *avocat*)  
*nawolwolu* ‘hermit crab’ (reported Uripiv borrowing)  
*nidaro* ‘taro’ (Bis. *taro*)

More recently however, items have been borrowed into the common noun class without the addition of the common noun prefix. These direct borrowings follow the same pattern as personal and local nouns that can be used as common nouns without the addition of the common noun prefix.

- (19) *buk* ‘book’ (Bis. *buk*)  
*buluk* ‘cow’ (Bis. *buluk*)  
*klas* ‘glass’ (Bis. *glas*)  
*maret* ‘marriage, wedding’ (Bis. *mared*)  
*siv* ‘ship’ (Bis. *sip*)  
*sukul* ‘school, church’ (Bis. *skul*)  
*susut* ‘chayote’ *Sechium edule* (Bis. *susut*)

### 3.3.5. Common nouns with temporal meanings

A small set of common nouns express temporal meanings. These include the word for ‘day’, ‘month’, two words for ‘year’ (20), and the traditional names of the months or moon cycles (25). These nouns carry the common noun prefix *n(V)-*. The words for ‘month’ and ‘year’ are also attested with non-temporal senses. The overlap between the calendar notion of the year, and the gardening cycle of yams is encoded in the Neverver lexicon.

- (20) *nabbung* ‘day’  
*nimdan nial* ‘time’ from *nimdan* ‘eye’; *nial* ‘sun’  
*nibbung(an)* ‘occasion’  
*navul* [naβul ~ naβyl] ‘1. month, 2. moon’  
*nidam* ‘1. year, 2. yam’  
*nisikha* ‘year, age’; cf. also *khamasikha* ‘yam master’

When common nouns are used to express temporal locations, they are preceded by the locative preposition *lon*. Temporal nouns can be modified by relative clauses to express the meanings of ‘last year’ and ‘next year’.

- (21) *Ei i-vlem ma ij lon nidam an*  
 3SG 3REAL:SG-come RMT ANT LOC year NMOD  
*i-vu ij.*  
 3REAL:SG-go ANT  
 ‘He came ages ago, last year.’ [NVE01.10] (lit. in the year that has gone)

- (22) *Ei im-bbulem lon nidam an im-bbulem ang.*  
 3SG 3IRR:SG-come LOC year NMOD 3IRR:SG-come ANA  
 ‘He will come next year.’ [NVE02.10] (lit. in the year that will come)

When common nouns are used to express temporal spans, a common temporal noun is modified with a post-posed number clause. Prepositions are not used to introduce these temporal expressions. As such, these common nouns are behaving like local nouns with temporal meaning (see §3.5.4).

- (23) *Ni-sil nabbung i-skham.*  
 1REAL.SG-burn day 3REAL.SG-one  
 ‘I roast it for one day.’ [NVDL02.12]

- (24) *Mil nat-lukh nabbung i-ru i-tl...*  
 again 1EXCL:REAL:PL-live day 3REAL:SG-two 3REAL:SG-three  
 ‘Again, we were there for two or three days...’ [NVDL04.29]

The traditional names for the cycles of the moon have fallen out of use. English lexemes, borrowed into Bislama and then into Nenever, are used instead to refer to calendar months. Although some of the older speakers of Nenever are able to recall names for the months of the year, there is some inconsistency in the sequencing and labelling of months.

The series of month names that is generally thought to reflect traditional usage is reproduced below. Local interpretations of the names are provided where available and related morphemes are identified. The year (*nidam* ‘yam; year’) begins in May, with the official start of the yam harvest. Twelve month names are listed although there is no one-to-one relationship between moon cycles and

the solar calendar year, and it is possible that some of the named phases may have been longer than a single moon cycle.

- (25) a. *Niblongmur* ‘May’ from *mur* ‘shed leaves (of yam vines)’; the time when the leaves wither and fall from the yam vines, signalling the beginning of the harvest.
- b. *Nekkanbor* ‘June’ from *kkan* ‘eat’; *bor* ‘tasteless, unseasoned’; the time when yams are eaten in abundance.
- c. *Nekkanbrokhari* ‘July’ from *kkan* ‘eat’; the time when leaves of the *Nakhari* plant (*Cordyline* variety) are gathered and cooked as *laplap* wrappings.
- d. *Navulbrongnaj* ‘August’ from *navul* ‘month, moon’; *brong* ‘common, ordinary, useless’; the time before gardening preparations begin.
- e. *Nisuda* ‘September’ from *su* ‘meet’; *da* ‘PART’; the time when a few yams have started to sprout(?) or more likely the time when a few yams are being planted.
- f. *Nelavlav~Nilavda* ‘October’ from *lav* ‘get’; *da* ‘PART’; the time when some planter yams are carried to gardens to be planted.
- g. *Nelavlavlab ~ Nelavlavran* ‘November’ from *lav* ‘get’; *lab* ‘many’; the time when most yams are planted.
- h. *Nilavlavarikh* ‘December’ from *lav* ‘get’; *varikh* ‘insufficient’; the time when yam planting is almost finished, just a few late yams are put in.
- i. *Nibongvkhhal* ‘December/January’ from *vkhal* ‘fight’; the time of illness, when malaria is common.
- j. *Nibilkhenbet* ‘January/February’ from *khan(?)* ‘eat’; *nibet* ‘breadfruit’; the time when a particularly large variety of breadfruit is ripe for eating.
- k. *Navulbrang* ‘February/March’ from *brong(?)* ‘common, ordinary, useless’; the time when there is little to do, yams are growing, some vines are beginning to die.
- l. *Nepraskha* ‘April’ from *Nepra(?)* place name; *nisikha* ‘yam; year’; the month when the yam master (*Khamasikha*) inspects the yam gardens prior to harvest and makes sacrifices, including the sacred burning of the first yams of the new season; yam vines are beginning to die.

### 3.4. Personal nouns

The category of Personal Nouns includes the personal proper names of individuals as well as kin terms when they are used to refer to specific individuals. In many Oceanic languages, personal nouns can be distinguished by their occurrence with a personal article. Hyslop (2001: 74), for example, partly characterises the class of Proper Nouns in the Lolovoli dialect of Ambae as being those nouns that occur after the personal article *i*. Personal pronouns also take this personal article in Ambae. A reflex of this article is present in the pronominal system of Neverver, but it is not attested in relation to personal nouns. It appears that the related Malekula languages of Naman, Avava and Neve‘ei do not mark personal nouns in this way either (cf. Crowley 2006a, 2006b; Musgrave 2007). Thus, we find that personal nouns are characterized in other ways in Neverver.

Semantically, personal nouns are used to refer to specific, known, and generally human individuals. Syntactically, this noun class can be described as exhibiting the following set of characteristics. The first three characteristics relate particularly to the semantics of personal nouns as uniquely identifying expressions in that each point disallows modification of the personal noun:

- Personal nouns may not appear as the head of a relative clause;
- Personal nouns may not be followed by a quantifier or numeral;
- Personal nouns may not be determined by a demonstrative determiner;
- Personal nouns select the interrogative *isikh* ‘who’;
- Personal nouns take the personal preposition *tuan*.

#### 3.4.1. Personal proper names

Personal proper names in Neverver derive from several sources. One traditional method of forming women’s names is the use of a prefix of the shape *IV-*. As noted in §3.3.4. above, the prefix *le-* marks a number of non-prototypical common nouns that exhibit the semantic features of female gender, diminution, and light colouring. When marking women’s names, the prefix is most commonly realized as either *le-* or *li-* and there is a minimal pair of women’s names [lina] and [lena] in contemporary use. The prefix combines with various morphemes including many which can be identified as verb stems.

- (26)
- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <i>Lerakhsil</i> | from <i>rakh</i> ‘clear ground’; <i>sil</i> ‘burn’      |
| <i>Lerakhbel</i> | from <i>rakh</i> ‘clear ground’; <i>bel</i> ‘chase’     |
| <i>Lemelsas</i>  | from <i>mel</i> ‘deeply (of sleep)’; <i>sas</i> ‘hurry’ |
| <i>Libel</i>     | from <i>bel</i> ‘chase’                                 |

<i>Limel</i>	from <i>mel</i> ‘deep (of sleep)’
<i>Levkhaling</i>	from <i>vkhal</i> ‘fight’; <i>ling</i> ‘leave’
<i>Livanu</i>	from <i>nevanu</i> ‘region’
<i>Lena</i>	from <i>na</i> pronoun 1SG
<i>Lina</i>	from <i>na</i> pronoun 1SG

Not all traditional women’s names are formed in this way. *Anies*, *Anjon*, *Ana-Aki*, *Ela* and *Meli* are also traditional names that do not bear the *IV-* morpheme. Given the long-established practice of exogamy among the Mindu people however, it is plausible that at least some of these names derive from other local languages.

Most girls are given a traditional name by one of their older female relatives at birth. As well as these traditional names, it is fashionable for women to be given a ‘modern’ name of (typically) English origin. Such names include Helen-Rose, Emma, Cinderella and Nellie. Many young women prefer to be known by their modern rather than traditional name.

Unlike traditional women’s names, there is no identifying morpheme associated with traditional men’s names. Men’s names appear to derive simply from compounded stems of various kinds or from phrases. In some cases, compounded common nouns retain their common noun prefix; in other cases the common noun prefix is dropped when the personal proper name is formed.

(27)	<i>Vatdal</i>	from <i>nevat</i> ‘stone’; * <i>dal</i>
	<i>Nokhoanmial</i>	from <i>nokho</i> ‘vine’; <i>mial</i> ‘red’
	<i>Bernio</i>	from <i>ber</i> ‘long’; <i>nio</i> ‘river’
	<i>Bangsukh</i>	from <i>nebang</i> ‘banyan’; <i>sukh</i> ‘rise’

Compounding is also an important process in the formation of contemporary names. In one family, the sons were named Peter [pita], Eric [erik], and Jason [ɕesen]. Their recently born nephews have been named Peter-son [pitasen] and Eric-son [eriksen], after the maternal uncles.

Local oral history describes the renaming of men each time they took a new rank. Today, only one living community member has a traditional rank. Chief James of Limap began the process of moving through the male ranks as a boy. Today, his traditional name is taboo although exactly why the name is taboo has not been made clear. Chief James has used his English name for most of his life. The traditional ranking system has been replaced by hierarchies associated with the Presbyterian Church. The system of renaming as men rise through social ranks has been revived within the Presbyterian Church hierarchies. Men are renamed with biblical names when they are designated as Elders in the Church hierarchy. For example, Peniyas Bong was renamed Elder Jethro when he became an Elder in the Church. Perhaps because this rank was assigned quite recently, most people continue to refer to this individual as Peniyas, except on

religious occasions. Elder Seth, who has held his rank for a longer period of time, is only referred to by his rank name. His indigenous name, Setakhar, is known by community members but not used. Today, many men are given names of English origin at birth. Biblical names such as Luke, Philemon and Jacob are particularly popular.

### 3.4.2. Personal kin terms

A small set of kin terms are used in everyday conversations. Of most interest in the kinship terminology for Neverver is the term *bibi* ‘maternal uncle’. While paternal uncles, along with both paternal and maternal aunts, are referred to using the terms *mama* ‘father’ and *nida* ‘mother’, the maternal uncle has a special kin term. This kin term corresponds with the central role that the maternal uncle plays in the lives of his nieces and nephews.

In the community today, maternal uncles are responsible for negotiating the marriages of their nieces and nephews. Historically, if the maternal uncle died, his sister’s son would have the right, or perhaps even obligation, to marry his (the maternal uncle’s) widow, thus becoming the adoptive father of his cousins. Today, this special relationship remains encoded in the kinship system. The children of a maternal uncle continue to address their cousins (their paternal aunt’s children) as ‘mother’ and ‘father’. These relationships are displayed in Figure 2. An expanded family tree is displayed in Figure 3.

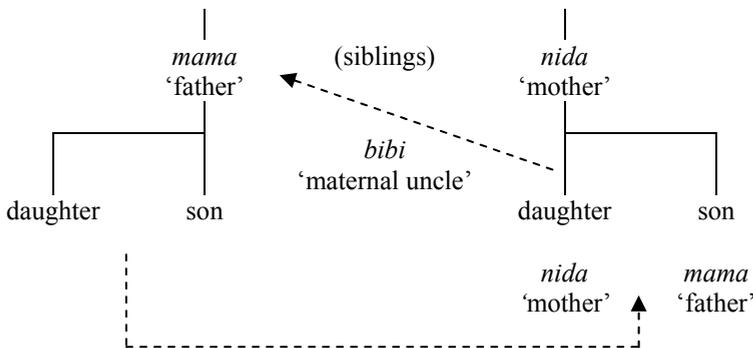


Figure 2. Kinship address terms employed by cousins

Kin terms commonly combine with personal proper names to refer to individuals who bear a particular relation to the speaker such as *Nida Lina* ‘Aunty Lina’ and *Bbubbu Douglas* ‘Grandfather Douglas’. Strict name taboos apply to parents, and to all in-laws. In order to avoid using a taboo name as an address

term, people can be referred to by a social position, such as *nida titi Helen* ‘mother of Helen’ rather than a kin relationship *Nida Lina* ‘Aunty Lina’.

Another name-avoidance strategy involves the assignment of a nickname by those to whom the name taboo applies. Kin terms combine with words from other classes to allow the identification of specific individuals according to physical characteristics. *Bbubbu Berber* ‘Grandfather Long (Legs)’ names an older man who always wears long trousers. This example displays a kin term followed by an uninflected stative verb stem *ber(ber)* ‘be long, tall’. *Nibbua Nemetvas* ‘Grandmother Glasses’ displays a kin term followed by a compound common noun which derives from the bound form *nemet-* ‘eye’ and the stem *vas* ‘four’. *Nibbua Lekkot* ‘Grandma Lekkot’ is the avoidance name for *Lerakh-sil Moti*, the oldest living community member. *Kkot* is a stem meaning ‘be talkative’; here it combines with the prefix *le-* to form a female name.

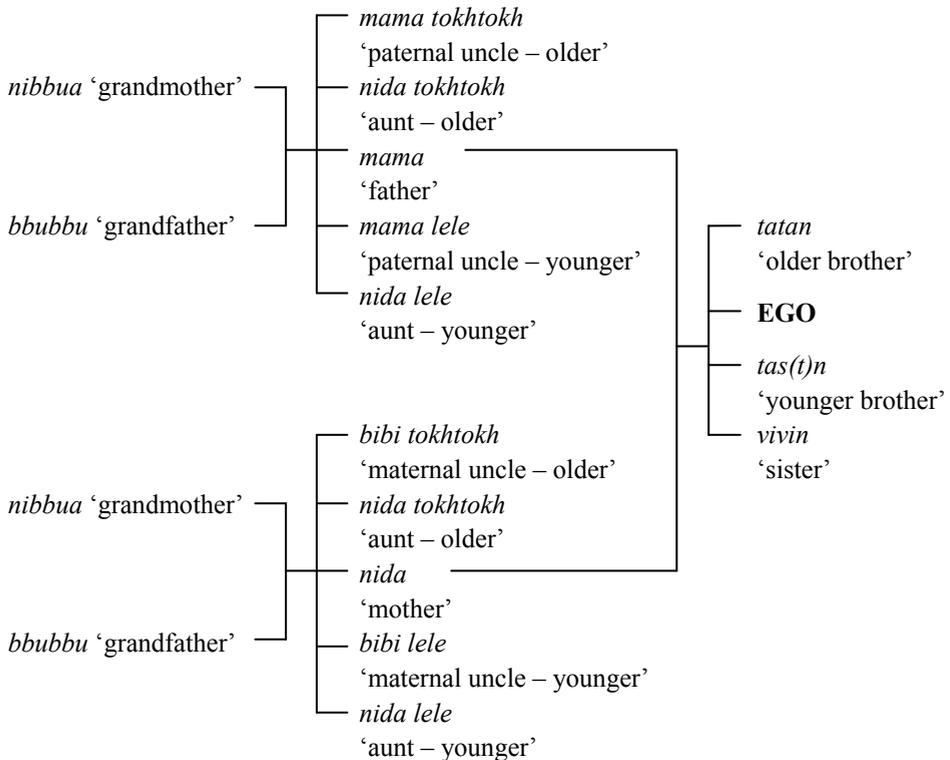


Figure 3. Kinship address terms in an extended family

Kin terms can be used as both personal and common nouns. This type of flexibility in class membership is observed by Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002: 69) in their description of Proto-Oceanic: “kin nouns evidently fell into both the

personal and the common human categories. If they referred to identifiable individuals and were equivalent to a proper name, e.g. ‘my father’, they were treated as personal nouns; otherwise they were common human.” Considerable overlap between the categories of personal and common noun is evident in data set (28), often with a possessive determiner being employed to personalize an otherwise common noun.

(28)	Common nouns	Personal nouns
	<i>nimokhmokh</i> ‘woman’	
	<i>nimokhmokh tro</i> ‘mature woman, spouse’	<i>nimokhmokh (tna)</i> ‘(my) wife’
	<i>nimukhman</i> ‘man’	---
	<i>khavut tro</i> ‘mature man, spouse’	<i>khavut (tna)</i> ‘(my) husband’
	<i>niterikh mukhman</i> ‘boy’	
	<i>nimkhut</i> ‘man’	<i>nimkhut (na)</i> ‘(my) son’
	---	<i>tatan (na)</i> ‘(my) older brother’
	---	<i>tas(t)n (na)</i> ‘(my) younger brother’
	<i>niterikh mokhmokh</i> ‘girl’	---
	<i>niviturtur</i> ‘adolescent girl’	<i>nivin (na)</i> ‘(my) daughter’
	<i>nividro</i> ‘post-adolescent girl’	<i>vivin (na)</i> ‘(my) sister’
	<i>nesal</i> ‘friend’	<i>salan (na)</i> ‘(my) cousin/same generation relative’
	<i>nakhabbun</i> ‘grandchild’	<i>nakhabbun (na)</i> ‘(my) grandchild’
	<i>nimkhudan</i> ‘family, blood relative’	<i>nimkhudan (na)</i> ‘(my) family, blood relative’
	<i>nelakh</i> ‘male in-law’	<i>nelakh (tna)</i> ‘(my) brother-in-law’
	<i>nivilakh</i> ‘female in-law’	<i>nivilakh (tna)</i> ‘(my) sister-in-law’

When a kin term is used as a common noun, it may be followed by a numeral as in *nida i-skham* ‘a mother’, a quantifier as in *bibi turien* ‘some uncles’, or a demonstrative *nida ang* ‘the mother’. This is disallowed when the same item is used as a personal noun.

### 3.5. Local nouns

The third category of nouns is the class of Local Nouns. The members of this noun class subdivide into local nouns with spatial meanings, and local nouns with temporal meanings. Spatial local nouns include proper place names, nouns denoting familiar places, named parts of the physical environment, and locative part nouns. Temporal local nouns include parts of the day, and time counters. Local nouns have the following characteristics:

- Local nouns may not occur as the object of a preposition; instead, local nouns occur in unmarked locative adjunct phrases.
- Local nouns of space select the interrogative form *abi* ‘where’; local nouns of time select the interrogative form *angas* ‘when’.

### 3.5.1. Proper place names

The sub-class of proper place names is characterized by the ability of member items to occur in a construction of the form *nemakh* ‘denizen’ + proper place name. No other noun, local or otherwise, may modify *nemakh* in this way. The locational interrogative *abi* ‘where’ may be used to question where a particular person or group of people is from (see §9.3.1. on constituent interrogatives).

- (29) *nemakh Marin*            ‘the people of Marin’  
*nemakh Malbit*            ‘the people of Malbit’  
*nemakh abi?*                ‘the people of where?’; ‘Where are they from?’

Examples of proper place names are displayed below. Many places are named for their physical characteristics and comprise recognizable stems. Other place names are used exclusively to refer to particular locations, with no related forms in the contemporary corpus. The following list displays some place names that have the shape of compound nouns (see §3.8.), some that appear to have the shape of traditional women’s names, and others that share their shape with traditional men’s names. The initial sequence *lo-* appears on a number of place names and is likely to be related diachronically to the locative preposition *lon*.

- (30) *Niosal*                    ‘place of the swamp’ from *nio* ‘water, river’; *sal* ‘float’  
*Nigrinio*                    ‘place where the river ends’ from *nigrin* ‘end of long object’; *nio* ‘water, river’  
*Lingarakh*                the village of Lingarakh  
*Limav*                        the village of Limav  
*Lomelvavi*                ‘place of the abundant Melvavi plant’ from *melvavi* ‘k.o. plant’  
*Lonirolele*                ‘place of the small river’ from *nio* ‘water, river’; *lele* ‘small’  
*Lovan-midang*            ‘place of the abundant Nemidang fruit’ from *nevan* ‘fruit’; *nemidang* ‘kind of tree’  
*Vatokhas*                the hamlet of Vatokhas from *nevat* ‘stone’ and *khas* ‘bite’  
*Ala*                            the hamlet of Ala  
*Vili*                            the hamlet of Vili  
*Kove*                        the hamlet of Kove from *kove* ‘coffee’ (Bis. *kofe*)

### 3.5.2. Local nouns denoting familiar places

Three local nouns in the corpus fit into the category of morphemes denoting familiar places. Like the English word *home*, the meaning of each item is dependent on the individual who utters it. A central part of what it means to be a member of the Neverver speech community is to have possession of a home, located in a village or hamlet, and land where one is able to cultivate crops.

- (31) *aiyem*        '(one's) home'  
       *lokhavre*     '(one's) village'  
       *lakha*        'the bush (where one gardens)'

Both *aiyem* and *lokhavre* may also behave as common nouns, taking common noun modifiers including numerals and quantifiers. They may also be possessed. The third item *lakha* 'the bush (where one gardens)' is interesting in that there is a corresponding common noun of the shape *nakha* which means 'tree, wood'. This is the only pair in the corpus to encode a common-local contrast in this way.

### 3.5.3. Local nouns denoting significant features of the physical environment

#### 3.5.3.1. *The absolute frame*

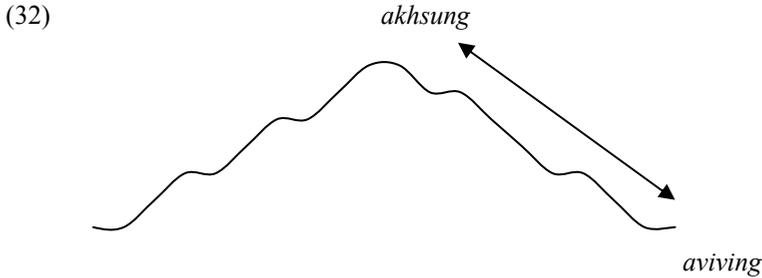
A small set of local nouns refers to parts of the physical environment. The terms have absolute reference in that they have "axes fixed in geographic space" (Foley 1997: 216). Levinson (2003), in his investigation of linguistic encodings of spatial thinking, observes that:

Many languages make extensive, some almost exclusive, use of ... an absolute frame of reference on the horizontal. They do so by fixing arbitrary fixed bearings, 'cardinal directions', corresponding one way or another to directions or arcs that can be related by the analyst to compass bearings. (Levinson 2003: 48)

The absolute frame is employed in Neverver to describe physical locations that are some distance apart. Thus, it is most frequently used for orienting events and participants on the island of Malekula, or within the larger Pacific region. Absolute local nouns are distinct in that they may not be followed by any nominal modifiers or by demonstrative adverbs. They stand alone in locative adjunct phrases.

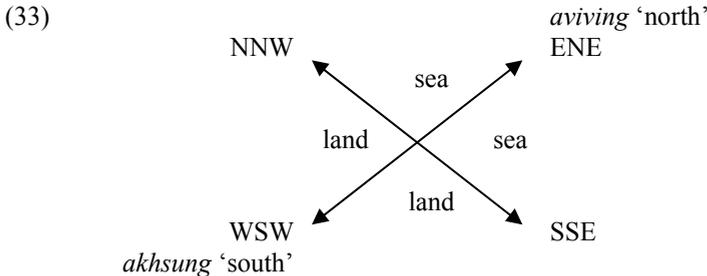
On the horizontal plane, a contrast is made between the words *akhsung* 'inland' and *aviving* 'seaward'. *Akhsung* and *aviving* do not refer to points, but to arcs which extend almost 180°. Rather than forming a north-south or west-east

axis, the horizontal plane follows the lay of the land. Thus, inland is also uphill and upriver, while seaward is also downhill and downriver.



If a direction is transverse, or across a slope rather than up or down, the absolute/deictic form *atl* is used (see §3.5.3.2.). This form is not distinguished for left or right, but is instead accompanied by a gesture or eye-gaze from the speaker to indicate the intended direction.

The Neverver speech community is almost entirely located on the eastern coast of Malekula. The coast line runs in a north-north-west [NNW] / south-south-east [SSE] direction and the rivers along which the Neverver speakers are settled run perpendicular to the coast line. In Neverver, *akhsung* ‘inland’ has been extended to express the compass direction of ‘south’, while *aviving* ‘seaward’ has been extended to express the compass direction of ‘north’. Like transverse directions, east and west are not distinguished in the lexicon.



On the vertical plane, a simple contrast is made between up and down.



A plausible explanation of the derivation of *arkha* ‘up’ is the fusing of the locative preposition *aran~ar* ‘LOC.on’ and the stem of the common noun ‘tree’ *na-kha*. This may have meant something like ‘up a tree’ historically, and today the item can be used in this sense to refer to the top of a tree; it is used more generally to refer to ‘up’ on the vertical axis. *Bisn* is not demonstrably related to any other item.

### 3.5.3.2. *The absolute/deictic frame*

A set of items that are morphologically related to the absolute local nouns form the class of Absolute/Deictic local nouns. Hyslop (2002) identifies a complex set of absolute/deictic directionals in the Lolovoli dialect of Ambae. In the Lolovoli dialect, “the primary distinction made by the directionals is an absolute distinction, and these forms are marked to specify direction relative to the participants in the speech act” (Hyslop 2002: 52). In Neverver, absolute/deictic local nouns are absolute in the sense of referring consistently to a particular direction; they are deictic in that they are bound to the speaker’s point of view. The points of view of other participants are not encoded in Neverver.

The absolute/deictic frame can be used for objects that are right beside the speaker, as well as those that are out of sight; however, it tends not to be used for larger scale distances as the basic absolute frame is used for that purpose. The first two items below are identical to the absolute local nouns used for the vertical plane. The next two items are morphologically related to the absolute nouns in §3.5.3.1. above. A morpheme of the shape [(V)ŋ] is dropped when these absolute nouns are used deictically and we can observe rather inconsistent changes to the non-initial vowels.

(35)	Absolute Local Nouns	Absolute/Deictic Local Nouns
	<i>arkha</i> ‘up’	<i>arkha</i> ‘above’
	<i>bisn</i> ‘down’	<i>bisn</i> ‘down, on the ground’
	<i>akhsung</i> ‘inland’	<i>akhus</i> ‘inland’
	<i>aviving</i> ‘seaward’	<i>avev</i> ‘seaward’
	---	<i>atl</i> ‘over, transverse’

Unlike absolute local nouns, absolute/deictic nouns may be followed by one of three demonstrative local nouns, which allow the speaker to identify the distance of some object or event inland, seaward, or in a transverse direction from him or herself. For example, while *akhsung* means ‘inland’ generally, *akhus* means ‘further inland than the speaker’. The demonstrative forms that combine with the absolute/deictic local nouns signal the distance of an object with respect to the speaker. A three way contrast is made between proximal, intermediate/visible, and distal/not visible. Some irregularity can be seen in the transverse

forms, with the transverse marker being dropped in the proximal form, and fusing with the absolute/deictic marker in the intermediate form.

- (36) a. *akhus tjakh* ‘inland (of me) here’  
*akhus tjing* ‘inland (of me) within eyesight’  
*akhus tang* ‘inland (of me) out of sight’  
 b. *avev tjakh* ‘seaward (of me) here’  
*avev tjing* ‘seaward (of me) within eyesight’  
*avev tang* ‘seaward (of me) out of sight’  
 c. *tjakh/tnakh* ‘over here (by me)’  
*atling* ‘over there within eyesight’  
*atl tang* ‘over there out of sight’

### 3.5.3.3. *Locative part nouns*

The final sub-class of spatial local nouns includes locative part nouns. These items allow the speaker to orient events and participants relative to some specified object (the whole) such as a house or village. Islands, rivers and fires are considered to possess edges and these edges are denoted by the word *aut*. Although the Neverver lexicon includes a lexeme for ‘ashore’, there is no specific local noun to refer to the culturally undesirable location of being ‘in’ locations like the ocean. This meaning is expressed in a preposition phrase *lon nutusu* ‘in the sea’.

- (37) *bbukhut* ‘inside’  
*vere* ‘outside’  
*aut* ‘ashore, edge’  
*lile* ‘nearby’  
*ale* ‘far away’  
*son* ‘somewhere’

Like the Absolute/Deictic nouns listed in the previous section, these local nouns may be followed by a demonstrative local noun as in *bbukhut tang* ‘inside there (out of sight)’. They are distinct in that they may also be followed by the nominal modifying particle *an* in expressions such as *vere an Lavni* ‘outside Lavni’.

### 3.5.4. *Temporal local nouns*

Temporal local nouns fall into two semantic sub-classes. These are parts of the day and time counters. Temporal reference, like spatial reference, may be absolute or relative.

## 3.5.4.1. Parts of the day

The diurnal span is divided into three segments: morning; afternoon; and night. When unmodified, the parts of the day refer to the current diurnal span. This may involve an absolute temporal reference as in ‘this morning’, ‘this afternoon’, or ‘tonight’. Alternatively it may involve a temporal reference where some other diurnal span serves as the reference point, as in ‘in the morning’, ‘in the afternoon’, or ‘at night’ of some established diurnal span. Realis mood marking signals that the relevant temporal location precedes the reference time. Irrealis mood marking signals that the relevant temporal location follows the reference time.

- (38) *mitabbukh* ‘morning’  
*livkhat* ‘night’  
*livrav* ‘afternoon’
- (39) *i-ver* *im-bbulem* *nakh* *mitabbukh* *lon* *Fraede?*  
 3REAL:SG-want 3IRR:SG-come here morning LOC Friday  
 ‘He wants to come here on Friday morning?’ [NVCV10.83]
- (40) *Ba* *i-tur* *mitabbukh,* *i-ver-ikh*  
 when 3REAL:SG-get.up morning 3REAL:SG-say-APPL  
*ni-mokhmokh titi...*  
 NPR-female 3PS:SG  
 ‘When he got up in the morning, he told his wife...’ [NVKS02.47]
- (41) *I-tukhtukh* *nimdali* *livkhat* *dran* *i-skham.*  
 3REAL:SG-strike door night TMPPN 3REAL:SG-one  
 ‘He knocked on the door at night one time.’ [NVCT03.8: 39.981]

A fourth item, *lonial* ‘lunchtime’ is also encoded in the lexicon. *Lonial* is used for the time when people stop work to eat their midday meal. It can also be used as a common noun in the same form to refer to the midday meal itself. *Lonial* ‘lunchtime’ is not attested in the text corpus, but does occur in everyday speech and in elicited data. It is likely to comprise the locative preposition *lon* and the common noun *nial* ‘sun’.

The parts of the day may be modified. Specific modifiers are used with each item.

- (42) *mitabbukh lala* ‘early morning, dawn’  
*lonial savsav* ‘midday’  
*livrav sese* ‘late afternoon/dusk’  
*livkhat mastang* ‘midnight (archaic)’  
*livkhat tattang* ‘midnight’

The modifier *lala* ‘early’ can also follow the time counter *tue* ‘long ago, of the past’ in the phrase *tue lala nisid* (long ago + early + thing:INDF). This phrase occurs at the beginning of some traditional stories meaning ‘once upon a time’, literally ‘something from long ago’. The modifiers, *sese*, *savsav* and *tattang*, all three of which display inherent reduplication, are not attested elsewhere in the corpus. The form *masn* (which is likely to be related to the temporal modifier *mastang*) is used to mean ‘half’.

Parts of the day can take the frequentative marker *sakhsakh*, which also functions independently as an adverbial meaning ‘all the time’.

- (43) *Mitabbukh sakhsakh, mang i-tur.*  
 morning           FREQ           man:ANA       3REAL:SG-get.up  
 ‘Every morning, the man got up.’ [NVKS02.3]

When speakers want to establish more clearly a particular diurnal span as the temporal location of an event, they can combine parts of the day with time counters. Either the part of the day or the time counter can serve as the head in this construction.

- (44) *mitabbukh barnakh ~ barnakh mitabbukh*   ‘this morning’  
*mitabbukh maran ~ maran mitabbukh*       ‘tomorrow morning’  
*livrav barnakh ~ barnakh livrav*           ‘this afternoon’

Parts of the day appear frequently in narrative texts to signal the location of events within the narrative time frame. In such texts, temporal local nouns often occur in phrases marked by the adverbial subordinator *ba* ‘when’. In this context, the temporal noun may be followed by the nominal modifying particle *an*, optionally accompanied by *mil* ‘again’, to indicate the next occurrence of that particular part of day in the narrative sequence.

- (45) *ba livrav, mama blev bbubbu ar-uv mil.*  
 when afternoon father with grandfather 3REAL:DL-go again  
 ‘When it was afternoon, Dad and Granddad went again.’ [NVKI03.60]
- (46) *ba mitabbukh an mil ba i-vlem*  
 when morning NMOD again when 3REAL:SG -come  
*i-khit ar-khavukh nokhos ang.*  
 3REAL:SG-see IMPS:REAL-plant garden ANA  
 ‘When it was the next morning, when he came, he saw the garden had been planted.’ [NVKS10.27]

## 3.5.4.2. Time counters

The second set of temporal nouns comprises the sub-class of time counters. Like the basic parts of the day, these items may have either absolute or relative temporal reference.

(47)	<i>barnakh</i>	‘today, now’
	<i>barikh</i>	‘today, now’
	<i>maran</i>	‘tomorrow’
	<i>was</i>	‘the day after tomorrow’
	<i>tiil</i>	‘three days from now’
	<i>tivas</i>	‘four days from now’
	<i>tilim</i>	‘five days from now’
	<i>muran</i>	‘next year’
	<i>abbung</i>	‘yesterday’
	<i>nanas</i>	‘the day before yesterday’
	<i>nabbung itl</i>	‘three days ago’
	<i>tue</i>	‘long ago, of the past’ (also a nominal modifier ‘old’)
	<i>sakhsakh</i>	‘all the time’ (also post-verbal aspect modifier)
	<i>baskham</i>	‘forever’ (not attested in a text)
	<i>mamrakh</i>	‘suddenly’ (not attested in a text)
	<i>las</i>	‘occasion:INDF’ (requires a quantifier or numeral modifier)

Speakers of contemporary Neverver generally make use of the English names for the days of the week, which (like the names for months) have been borrowed into Bislama and from there into Neverver. Of the items listed above, the words for ‘today’, ‘tomorrow’, ‘yesterday’, and ‘long ago’ are commonly used; the others have fallen out of use. To refer to days in the future, the expression *nimdan nial iblim* (eye + sun + 3IRR:SG-five) ‘in five days time’ is used rather than *tilim* by younger speakers. To refer to days past, the expression *nabbung itl* (day + 3REAL:SG-three) ‘three days ago’ is used.

Time counters can be marked overtly for relative temporal reference. Again, we find the relative subordinator *an* (and optionally *mil* ‘again’) to signal ‘the next’ or ‘that’.

(48)	<i>Maran</i>	<i>an,</i>	<i>ba</i>	<i>i-vu,</i>	<i>i-khit...</i>
	tomorrow	NMOD	when	3REAL:SG-go	3REAL:SG-see
	‘The next day, when he went, he saw...’ [NVKS11.24]				

The behaviour of the lexeme *barnakh* ‘now, today’ is somewhat distinct from the other members of the subclass of time counters. As well as functioning as a modifier of the parts of day in expressions such as *mitabbukh barnakh* ‘this morning’, *barnakh* may also appear with the deictic demonstrative determiners

*anjing* ‘that’ or *anjakh* ‘this’. The addition of *anjakh* does not appear to alter the meaning of the temporal expression, except perhaps to add emphasis:

- (49) *Barnakh anjakh, nida t-okh i-mas.*  
 now this mother POSSDT-2SG 3REAL:SG-dead  
 ‘Right now your mother is dead.’ [NVKS20.60: 281.123]

*Anjing* requires a relative interpretation when combined with a time counter. The form *anjing* alternates with the base form *jing* in this context as in *barnakh anjing* ~ *barnakh-jing* ‘right then, at that time’.

- (50) *Barnakh anjing, ar-ver ar-rot i-is.*  
 now that 3REAL:DU-say 3REAL:DU-feel 3REAL:SG-bad  
 ‘At that time, they said they felt bad.’ [NVKS02.83]

### 3.6. Pronominal-nouns

Alongside the noun classes described above, there is also a small set of pronoun-like nominals in Neverver. These items typically behave like pronouns in their semantics; however, syntactically, they function as common nouns and they permit certain types of modification. Crowley (2006b: 62) identifies similar items in the Naman language:

These are pronoun-like in that they do not freely accept the full range of noun phrase modifiers. They are further pronoun-like in that they have no fixed reference and can only be used when the linguistic or non-linguistic context provides sufficient clues to enable their particular referents to be determined. (Crowley 2006b: 62)

Rather than classifying the forms as pronominal, Crowley categorizes these items as demonstrative nouns. This is primarily because the Naman items are obligatorily bound to post-posed demonstrative determiners. In Naman, they make a three-way contrast, referring to human entities, non-human entities and places. Neverver has forms that make a slightly different contrast. The form *an* ‘the one’ relates to entities that can also be encoded with common nouns; the forms *kut* ‘the place’ relates to spatial expressions encoded as local nouns and *dran* ‘the time’ relates to temporal expressions encoded as local nouns. *Vin* relates to entities that can be encoded with female personal nouns and *man* relates to entities that can be encoded as male personal nouns.

Syntactically, pronominal-nouns differ from the gender-neutral third person singular pronoun *ei* in terms of the modifiers that are permitted to occur with them. Apart from the limiters *me*, *lume* ‘only’, the third person singular pronoun does not permit post-modifiers. In contrast, the pronominal-nouns *an* ‘the one’

and *kut* ‘the place’ must be followed by either a deictic demonstrative or a relative clause introduced by the nominal modifying particle *an*. When *an* (functioning as a pronominal-noun) is followed by a deictic demonstrative, it is not overtly expressed.

- (51) Common pronominal-noun  
*an an...* ‘the one that...’  
*Ø anjing* ‘that one’  
*Ø anjakh* ‘this one’
- (52) Local pronominal-noun (space)  
*kut an...* ‘at the place where...’  
*kut anjing* ‘at that place’  
*kut anjakh* ‘at this place’
- (53) Local pronominal-noun (time)<sup>10</sup>  
*dran an...* ‘at the time when...’  
*dran anjing* ‘at that time’

The pronominal-noun *an* can be used to refer to both human and non-human entities, with non-human referents being rather more common. It is also used to refer to an event as a whole, rather than a particular participant within an event. Human entities are more frequently encoded with the gendered pronominal-nouns described below, or independent pronouns, than with *an*. The form *kut* is restricted to referring to physical locations while *dran* is restricted to temporal locations.

In addition to the neutral pronominal-nouns, there is also a pair of gendered pronominal-nouns. *Vin* refers to female entities and *man* refers to male entities. Like the neutral pronominal-nouns, the gendered pronominal-nouns are also obligatorily modified by either a post-posed demonstrative, or a relative clause. In addition to the deictic demonstratives, the gendered items also take the anaphoric demonstrative, which is fused with the pronominal-nouns as *vinang* ‘the woman’ and *mang* ‘the man’.

---

10. The form *dran* ‘the time’ generally behaves in the same way as *an* ‘the one’ and *kut* ‘the place’, but it is distinct in that it cannot be modified by *anjakh* ‘this/now’; instead, the lexical item *barnakh* ‘now’ is used to express this meaning. *Dran* can be modified by the indefinite numeral relative clause *i-skham* ‘one’ and it can function as a temporal subordinator ‘when’ and a conditional marker ‘if’ (see §13.3).

- (54) Female pronominal-noun
- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <i>vin an i-ve...</i> | ‘the woman who made...’ (elicited construction) |
| <i>vinang</i>         | ‘the woman’                                     |
| <i>vin anjakh</i>     | ‘this woman’                                    |
| <i>vini-akh</i>       | ‘this woman’ (rare)                             |
| <i>vin anjing</i>     | ‘that woman’                                    |
- (55) Male pronominal-noun
- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>man an i-rongrok...</i> | ‘the man who wanted...’                             |
| <i>man an i-ru</i>         | ‘the two men’                                       |
| <i>mang</i>                | ‘the man’   |
| <i>man-jakh</i>            | ‘this man’  |
| <i>mini-akh</i>            | ‘this man’ (rare)                                   |
| <i>man-jing</i>            | ‘that man’  |
| <i>man(d)-ikh</i>          | ‘that man’ (2 <sup>nd</sup> male participant; rare) |

The pronominal-nouns can be marked for plural. *Man* is attested regularly in the corpus with a plural marker. This follows the fused anaphoric demonstrative in the construction *mang adr* ‘the men’. In this construction, an epenthetic velar stop appears between the velar nasal and the initial vowel of *adr* as in [maŋ<sup>g</sup>-a<sup>nd</sup>r]. The equivalent female construction is not attested in any naturally occurring texts, but *vinang adr* ‘the women’ (also with an epenthetic [g]) was considered to be an acceptable construction by language consultants.

The gendered pronominal-nouns can serve as possessors. The possessed entity is followed by the third person singular possessive demonstrative, and then the possessor. The possessor can also precede the possessed entity. An intonation break separates possessor and possessed and in such cases, we find the pronominal-noun only or we find the third person singular pronoun form that occurs in environments following segments other than /n/.<sup>11</sup>

---

11. We can speculate that the purpose of this possessor fronting is topicalization. The present work is essentially a study of sentence grammar and a detailed study of topicalization will form part of a separate investigation into discourse, as Givón (2001b) observes that:

In spite of being grammatically manifest at the clause level, topicality is *not* a clause-level property of referents, but rather a discourse-dependent one... What makes [...] participants topical is *not* the fact that they are grammatically coded as topical (subject, object) in the self-contained clause. Rather they are so coded grammatically because they are topical across a certain span of *multi-propositional discourse*. Their topicality is thus due to their being recurrent referents in some larger discourse. (Givón 2001b: 254)

- |      |                          |                           |
|------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| (56) | <i>mama titi vin-ang</i> | ‘the father of the woman’ |
|      | <i>vin-ang, neman</i>    | ‘the woman’s brother’     |
|      | <i>aiem titi mang</i>    | ‘the home of the man’     |
|      | <i>mang, ni-batn</i>     | ‘the man’s head’          |
|      | <i>mama titi</i>         | ‘his/her father’          |
|      | <i>ei, no-llon</i>       | ‘his/her heart’           |

The morphemes employed in the gendered pronominal-nouns also appear in a number of gendered human nouns, including the related common noun *ni-mukhman* ‘man’. The female common noun *nimokhmokh* ‘woman’ is unrelated to the pronominal-noun *vin*.

- |      |                          |                   |                          |           |
|------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| (57) | Female nouns             |                   | Male nouns               |           |
|      | <i>ni-vin</i>            | ‘daughter’        | <i>ni-mukhman</i>        | ‘man’     |
|      | <i>natn na-vin</i>       | ‘daughter’        |                          |           |
|      | <i>vivin</i>             | ‘sister’          | <i>ne-man</i>            | ‘brother’ |
|      | <i>ni-terikh vin-dro</i> | ‘adolescent girl’ | <i>ni-terikh mukhman</i> | ‘boy’     |
|      | <i>(ni)mokhmokh vino</i> | ‘widow’           | <i>ni-druman(?)</i>      | ‘body’    |
|      | <i>ni-villakh</i>        | ‘female in-laws’  |                          |           |

### 3.7. Nominalization processes

Nouns can be derived by two nominalization processes in Neverver. Simple nominalization involves the attachment of the common noun prefix *n(V)-* to a stem. Simulfix nominalization involves the combination of the common noun prefix *n(V)-* and a nominalizing suffix with the shape *-ian*.

#### 3.7.1. Simple nominalization

The simple process by which a noun can be derived from a verb stem was introduced in §3.3.1. on the common noun prefix. This process is not productive and verb-noun pairs such as those previously listed are not abundant in the corpus. The data set is duplicated below to illustrate simple nominalization:

- |      |                     |  |                   |                       |
|------|---------------------|--|-------------------|-----------------------|
| (58) | <i>ar-bbut</i>      | ‘step’                                   | <i>na-bbut</i>    | ‘footprint’           |
|      | <i>ar-lu</i>        | ‘shoot’                                  | <i>nu-lu</i>      | ‘arrow’               |
|      | <i>ari-ssamu</i>    | ‘sweep’                                  | <i>ni-ssamu</i>   | ‘broom’               |
|      | <i>ari-tgar</i>     | ‘be cold’                                | <i>ne-tgar</i>    | ‘coldness’            |
|      | <i>ari-vkhal</i>    | ‘fight’                                  | <i>ne-vkhal</i>   | ‘fight’               |
|      | <i>ar-khavakh</i>   | ‘plant (yams)’                           | <i>na-khavakh</i> | ‘yam mound’           |
|      | <i>ari-slot-ikh</i> | ‘make a ceremonial<br>yam heap for s.o.’ | <i>no-slot</i>    | ‘ceremonial yam heap’ |

## 3.7.2. Simulfix nominalization

A far more productive nominalization process in Neverver is that involving the simulfix comprising the common noun prefix *n(V)-* and the nominalizing suffix *-ian*. The simulfix is most commonly attached to an intransitive verb stem; however, a range of other verb stems as well as other parts of speech may undergo nominalization.

3.7.2.1. *Nominalizing intransitive verb stems*

The basic and most commonly occurring nominalization process involves intransitive verb stems of the kind illustrated in (59).

- (59)
- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <i>ne-maur-ian</i>  | ‘life’ from <i>maur</i> ‘live’                   |
| <i>ne-sav-ian</i>   | ‘a dance’ from <i>sav</i> ‘perform dance’        |
| <i>ne-tang-ian</i>  | ‘grief’ from <i>tang</i> ‘grieve’                |
| <i>ni-jal-ian</i>   | ‘sickness’ from <i>jal</i> ‘sick’                |
| <i>ni-kkan-ian</i>  | ‘food’ from <i>kkan</i> ‘eat’                    |
| <i>ni-lukh-ian</i>  | ‘birth place’ from <i>lukh</i> ‘live’            |
| <i>ni-mas-ian</i>   | ‘funeral’ from <i>mas</i> ‘die’                  |
| <i>ni-tokh-ian</i>  | ‘place where one lives’ from <i>tokh</i> ‘exist’ |
| <i>ni-tur-ian</i>   | ‘place of work’ from <i>tur</i> ‘stand up’       |
| <i>ni-vtakh-ian</i> | ‘the end/afterwards’ from <i>vtakh</i> ‘be last’ |

Borrowings from Bislama follow this same pattern in the corpus, as the example of the borrowed item *kuk* in (60) illustrates. The Bislama form *storian* is often used as a noun without further modification in Neverver. This is most likely possible because the word itself shares the shape of a nominalized stem. The fully nominalized form *no-storian* is very similar to the indigenous form *no-ssor-ian* ‘talk, story’ and the two are used interchangeably by many speakers.

- (60)
- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <i>ni-kuk-ian</i>   | ‘cooking’ from <i>kuk</i> ‘cook’ (Bis. <i>kuk</i> )         |
| <i>(no)-storian</i> | ‘a story’ from <i>storian</i> ‘chat’ (Bis. <i>storian</i> ) |

3.7.2.2. *Nominalization and reduplication of intransitive stems*

A small number of intransitive stems appear in a reduplicated form when nominalized. In the case of *gon* ‘meet’, the reduplication may be associated with a large number of participants.

- (61)
- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <i>ni-gon-gon-ian</i> | ‘meeting; gathering’ from <i>gon</i> ‘meet’ |
| <i>ni-bit-bit-ian</i> | ‘a mistake’ from <i>bit</i> ‘be wrong’      |

## 3.7.2.3. Nominalizing transitive verb stems with experiencer subjects

Transitive stems that encode a human experiencer in the subject grammatical relation may also be nominalized.

- (62) *no-rong-rok-ian* 'love' from *rongrok* 'want'  
*no-rokamsuk-ian* 'belief' from *rokamsuk* 'believe'  
*no-rongil-ian* 'knowledge' from *rongil* 'be able; know'

## 3.7.2.4. Nominalizing prototypical transitive stems

When prototypical transitive stems are nominalized, these stems are generally reduplicated. The reduplication of such stems is a general detransitivizing process, and does not only occur in nominalizations (see chapter eight). The use of reduplication to detransitivize is characteristic of Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002: 44). The examples in (63) display the nominalization of detransitive reduplicated stems on the left, and simplex transitive stems on the right. The nominalizations are often lexicalized.

- (63) *ni-lav-lav-ian* 'harvest' from *lav* 'get s.t.'  
*ni-bir-bir-ian* 'competition' from *bir* 'argue with s.o.'  
*ni-tos-tos-ian* 'writing' from *tos* 'mark s.t. or s.o.'  
*ni-vul-vul-ian* 'bride price' from *vul* 'buy s.t.'  
*ni-div-div-ian* 'an example' from *div* 'measure s.t.'  
*ni-ti-tn-ian* 'a meal' from *tn* 'roast s.t.'

## 3.7.2.5. Nominalizations involving other word classes

A common noun and a verb stem can nominalize together. The common noun prefix *nV-* remains attached to the initial noun and the nominalizing suffix *-ian* attaches to the verb stem.

- (64) *n-aut-met-ian* ~ 'night time, pre-Christian times' from *n-aut*  
*n-aut-met-met-ian* n. 'place'; *met* v. 'be dark'  
*n-aut-ran-ian* 'day time, Christian times' from *n-aut* n. 'place'; *ran*  
'be light'

There are some instances of verb-verb compounds with the nominalizing simulfix. In example (65), both stems are attested independently in nominalizations in the corpus.

- (65) *ni-vuvam-bratn-ian* ‘the first real one’ from *vuvam* ‘be first’; *vratn*<sup>12</sup> ‘be true, real’  
*ni-vuvam-ian* ‘before, the first’  
*ni-vratn-ian* ‘the truth’

In example (66), only the first stem is attested in a nominalized construction. The second stem, meaning ‘block’, does not nominalize.

- (66) *ne-tata-gor-ian* ‘engagement/marriage’ from *tata* ‘promise’; *gor* ‘block’  
*ne-tata-ian* ‘a promise’  
*\*ne-gor-ian*

There is one instance in the corpus of a personal noun and verb stem being compounded and nominalized. In this case, the common noun prefix is not attached to the personal noun; however, the nominalizing suffix is present. This nominalization is distinct in that it creates a human agent or ‘doer’ rather than a more abstract ‘thing’.

- (67) *khamas-ver-ian* ‘a hard worker’ from *khamas* n. ‘master’; *ver* v. ‘work’

There is also one example of a verb stem and local noun nominalization. This involves the stem *is* ‘be bad’, which itself is attested in a nominalized construction. When it combines with the local noun, the common noun prefix is attached to the verb stem. The final nominalizing suffix is not attached to the local noun. The verb *\*is-arkha* ‘punish, to exact retribution’ is not attested in the corpus.

- (68) *ni-is-arkha* ‘punishment, retribution’ from *is* v. ‘be bad’;  
n. *arkha* ‘up’  
*ni-is-ian* ‘evil’

One nominalization involves a verb stem *\*khakho* that is not attested independently in the corpus. This is the form *na-khakho-ian* ‘possessions’.

The post-nominal quantifier *ngatian* ‘all, every’ undergoes nominalization, with the common noun prefix attaching to the quantifier base. The form *na-ngatian* is used very generally to refer to ‘everyone’ and is distinct from other pronoun-quantifier sequences including *git ngatian* ‘all of us’ and *adr ngatian* ‘all of them’.

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12. As a verb stem, the form of this lexeme is always [βratn]; as a nominal modifier, it takes the form [ᵐbratn].

Perhaps the most unusual nominalization in the corpus involves the locative pronominal-noun and a verb stem. This nominalization is unusual because the common noun prefix is attached to the locative pronominal-noun. The nominalization in (69) was produced by one of the oldest speakers; however, younger language consultants recognized the noun as an acceptable lexical item.

- (69) *nu-kut-lab-ian* ‘everywhere’ from *kut* ‘LOCPN’ ‘the place’; *lab* v. ‘many’

### 3.8. Compound nouns

#### 3.8.1. Noun-noun compounds

Nouns can form compounds with other nouns. Generally, the second member of the compound loses the common noun marker *n(V)-*. This first set of compounds involves the creation of common nouns.

- (70) *niterikh-mukhman* ‘boy’ from *niterikh* ‘child’; *nimukhman* ‘man’  
*niterikh-mokhmokh* ‘girl’ from *niterikh* ‘child’; *nimokhmokh* ‘woman’  
*noron-batn* ‘hair’ from *noron* ‘leaf’; *nibatn* ‘head’

There is evidence that some local nouns are formed from noun-noun compounds, as example (71) illustrates. In this example, the initial *n(V)-* marker is replaced by the marker *lo-* which is associated with some place names and is probably related to the locative preposition *lon*.

- (71) *Lo-van-midang* ‘place of abundant nemidang fruit’ from *nevan* ‘fruit’;  
*nemidang* ‘k.o. tree’

Other local nouns form noun-noun compounds without the loss of either common noun marker.

- (72) *Nio-nevat* ‘the stony river’ from *nio* ‘water, river’; and *nevat* ‘stone’

## 3.8.2. Noun-verb compounds

A number of local nouns are formed from noun-verb compounds. In such cases, the noun precedes the verb and the verb stem is not inflected.

- (73) *Nio-sal* 'place of the swamp' from *nio* 'water'; *sal* 'float'  
*Netmat-lab* 'place of peace' from *netmat* 'peace'; *lab* 'many'  
*Nias-var* 'place of the nias tree' from *nias* 'k.o. tree'; *var* 'pick'  
*Lonio-lele* 'place of the small river' from *nio* 'water, river' and *lele* 'small'  
*Lakha-tro* 'the old forest' from *nakha* 'tree'; *tro* 'old'

It appears that a number of strategies are used in the formation of local noun compounds. The last two examples displayed above show different patterns in their morphology. *Loniolele* comprises a marker of the shape *lo-* which is associated with some place names, followed by a common noun with its common noun prefix still attached, and then an uninflected stative verb stem. *Lakhatro* comprises the local noun for 'bush' (related to the common noun *nakha* 'tree') followed by an uninflected stative verb stem. In this case, the common noun marker is replaced by *la-*.

Common nouns can also be formed from noun-verb compounds. The examples in (74) display nouns encoding body parts in combination with verb stems. We can observe that in each case, the final *-n* is dropped when the compounded verb is attached. In chapter six, we consider the origin of the final *-n*, suggesting that it derives from an earlier possessive suffix.

- (74) *nebat-kher* 'a stubborn person' from *nebatn* 'head'; *kher* 'be strong'  
*nekhel-vas* 'four-legged creature' from *nakhlen* 'leg'; *vas* 'four'  
*nidling-mut* 'marked ear' from *nidlingan* 'ear'; *mut* 'short(?)'

## Chapter 4

### The noun phrase

#### 4.0. Introduction

The Neverver noun phrase is head-initial. A range of lexical items can stand as the noun phrase head (§4.1.). Noun phrases are attested in different syntactic positions in the clause (§4.2.). Along with lexical post-nominal modifiers, the noun phrase contains several other modifier positions (§4.3.). Nouns may be entirely unmodified (§4.4.), or carry intensifying, quantifying, limiting and demonstrative modifiers, as well as phrases expressing possession, and clauses expressing number and more complex delimiting information (§4.5.). Noun phrases can be conjoined in a number of different ways, with the most important structure involving an inclusory pronoun (§4.6.).

#### 4.1. Noun phrase heads

A number of different types of words are able to function as the head of the noun phrase in Neverver. The most frequently occurring noun phrase head in the corpus is the common noun. Such nouns may stand alone in the noun phrase (1) or may be modified (2). Personal nouns, including personal names (3) and kin terms when referring to specific individuals (4), may serve as the head of a noun phrase. Personal names and kin terms often combine to identify individuals who have a taboo relation (parent, in-laws) to the speaker (5). Local nouns, including proper place names (6), nouns denoting familiar places (7) and locative part nouns (8) may function as the head of the noun phrase. Noun phrases with local nouns as heads are restricted in distribution, almost exclusively occurring in unmarked locative adjuncts (6) – (8). There are a few occurrences in the corpus of local nouns occurring as the subjects of non-verbal clauses (9). Some motion verbs permit local nouns to stand alone as their direct objects (10). The local pronominal-noun *kut* ‘the place’ can also serve as the direct object of these motion verbs (11).

- (1) Unmodified common noun  
*Niat*            *i-tokh*            *si.*  
Sago.Palm    3REAL:SG-exist    NEG  
‘There wasn’t any Sago Palm thatch.’ [NVKS02.32]

- (2) Modified common noun  
*Niterikh-mukhman ang i-tur.*  
 child-male ANA 3REAL:SG-get.up  
 ‘The boy got up.’ [NVKS02.04]
- (3) Personal noun  
*Nepi i-vu lakhlakh me.*  
 Nepi 3REAL:SG-go quiet just  
 ‘Nepi just went quietly.’ [NVCV01.30: 448.206]
- (4) Kin term (personal usage)  
*Nida i-vor man(d) akh.*  
 mother 3REAL:SG-sit EMPH here  
 ‘Mum is sitting right here.’ [NVKS02.62]
- (5) Modified kin term (personal usage)  
*Bbubbu Nokho-an-mial i-ver te “Neskhan?”*  
 grandfather vine-NMOD-red 3REAL:SG-say COMP what  
 ‘Grandfather Nokhoanmial said “What?”’ [NVKI03.56]
- (6) Proper place name  
*Ale nimkhut turien at-uv Vorkha.*  
 then man some 3REAL:PL-go Vorkha  
 ‘Then, some men went to Vorkha.’ [NVKI03.91]
- (7) Noun denoting familiar place  
*Ave, na nida t-na im-bbulem si aiyem.*  
 No, 1SG mother POSSDT-1:SG 3:IRR:SG-come NEG home  
 ‘No, my mother won’t/can’t come home.’ [NVKS01.17]
- (8) Locative part noun  
*I-vu i-vor man bbukhut.*  
 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-sit EMPH inside  
 ‘She went and actually sat down inside.’ [NVKS01.26]
- (9) Proper place name: non-verbal clause  
*Nepanglab, aiyem titi nemat, nibutriri i-skham*  
 Nepanglab home 3POSS:SG snake hill.top 3REAL:SG-one  
*ing.*  
 EXCLAM  
 ‘Nepanglab, the home of the snake, was a hill top!’ [NVKS12.56: 411.781]
- (10) Absolute local noun  
*Ale i-vu i-sber akhsung*  
 then 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-reach inland  
 ‘Then, he went inland.’ [NVKI07.42]

- (11) Modified local pronominal-noun  
*Ba i-vu i-vev kut anjing*  
 when 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-go to LOC PN that  
 ‘When he went to that place...’ [NVKS02.08]

Members of the set of independent personal pronouns (12) may serve as the head of the noun phrase. The demonstrative determiners *anjakh* ‘this’ (13) and *anjing* ‘that’ (14) serve as noun phrase heads. In this position, the demonstratives function as pronouns.

Quantifiers typically modify common nouns and independent pronouns. They may also stand alone as noun phrase heads when the noun to which they refer is retrievable from the preceding context. In (15) below, the first instance of *turien* serves to modify the noun, while the second appears on its own. The number ‘one’ frequently appears as the head of the noun phrase, with a fused third person singular subject/mood marker. We find this numeral functioning as a noun in verbal clauses, illustrated in (16) and (17). It also functions as a noun in non-verbal clauses, illustrated in (18). The final group of words that may serve as the head of the noun phrase involves a nominalized intransitive verb *kkan* ‘eat’ functioning as the object of the main transitive verb *khan* ‘eat’ (19).

- (12) Independent pronoun  
*Ei i-khab-ikh me nodongon Nakhabatekh.*  
 3SG 3REAL:SG-full-APPL just sap k.o. tree  
 ‘She was just full of Nakhabatekh sap.’ [NVKS11.43]
- (13) Demonstrative determiner (functioning as pronoun)  
*Anjakh i-ver te i-nam nabr-uv.*  
 this 3REAL:SG-say COMP PSNPR-1EXCL:NSG 1EXCL:IRR:DU-go  
 ‘This one said we should go.’ [NVKS18.75: 372.065]

In (13), *anjakh* refers to the speaker’s older brother; the speaker blames his older brother for their disobedience.

- (14) Demonstrative determiner (functioning as pronoun)  
*Anjing me na ni-ver nim-bbuer-da.*  
 that just 1SG 1REAL:SG-want 1IRR:SG-say-PART  
 ‘That is all I wanted to mention.’ [NVKS16.110: 477.836]
- (15) Quantifier (functioning as indefinite pronoun)  
*Bibi abit-lav nokhon nidam turien, mama*  
 maternal.uncle 3IRR:PL-get face yam some father  
*abir-lav turien.*  
 3IRR:DU-get some  
 ‘(Her) maternal uncles would get some yam tubers, (her) paternal uncles would get some (yams).’ [NVKI06.111]

- (16) Numeral (functioning as indefinite pronoun)  
*Nat-dum, iskham i-vrokh nevrán na...*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-run INDF.PN 3REAL:SG-hold hand 1SG  
 ‘We ran, one held my hand...’ [NVKI03.39]
- (17) Numeral (functioning as indefinite pronoun)  
*I-ver “I-skhen, ni-tbbukh iskham”.*  
 3REAL:SG-say 3REAL:SG-not.so 1REAL:SG-have INDF.PN  
 ‘He said “On the contrary, I have one.”’ [NVKS06.31]
- (18) Numeral (functioning as indefinite pronoun)  
*Iskham nevas met, iskham nevas mavis.*  
 INDF.PN wild.yam dark one:INDF wild.yam white  
 ‘One is black wild yam; one is white wild yam.’ [NVKS01.74]
- (19) Nominalization  
*Nat-khan me ni-kkan-ian an i-mrekh.*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-eat just NPR-eat-NSF NMOD 3REAL:SG-raw  
 ‘We just ate food that was raw.’ [NVKS07.4: 22.154]

#### 4.2. The syntactic functions of the noun phrase

Noun phrases function in a number of distinct syntactic positions in the clause structure of Neverver. These positions are illustrated below.

- (20) Subject of a verbal clause  
*Niterikh lele ang i-vlem aiyem.*  
 child small ANA 3REAL:SG-come home  
 ‘The small child came home.’ [NVKS06.59]
- (21) Object of a verbal clause  
*I-na ni-somda niterikh lele t-na*  
 PSNPR-1SG 1REAL:SG-discover child small POSSDT-1SG  
*i-ru.*  
 3REAL:SG-two  
 ‘I found two of my small children.’ [NVKS18.122: 639.254]
- (22) Fronted subject  
*Be niterikh mokhmokh ang ei i-ka-kkan si.*  
 but child female ANA 3SG 3REAL:SG-DUP-eat NEG  
 ‘But the young woman, she couldn’t eat.’ [NVKS11.38]

- (23) Object of a preposition  
*Nat-jik arkha ar nakhmal.*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-put up LOC.on house  
 ‘We put (them) up, on the house.’ [NVDL01.06]
- (24) Subject of a non-verbal predicate (common noun)  
*Nikhijan na Miriam.*  
 name 1SG Miriam  
 ‘My name is Miriam.’ [NVCT06.1: 0.0]
- (25) Predicate of a non-verbal clause (common noun)  
*Ei tastn nibbuas lele ang.*  
 3SG young.brother male.pig small ANA  
 ‘His younger brother was the small boar.’ [NVKS08.64]

*Aiyem* ‘home’ in (20) and *arkha* ‘up’ in (23) further illustrate local nouns as noun phrase heads in unmarked locative adjunct positions.

The distribution of noun phrase heads according to their functions is summarized in Table 17. Common nouns, nominalizations, personal nouns and personal pronouns occur in most positions while local nouns are more strongly constrained. Gaps in the table indicate functions that are not attested in the corpus, and that could not be elicited from language consultants.

Table 17. Functions of the noun phrase according to noun phrase head type

	Subject of a verbal clause	Object of a verbal clause	Extra Clausal Topic	Object of Preposition	Unmarked Locative Adjunct	Subject of Non-Verbal Clause	Predicate of Non-Verbal Clause
Common Noun	y	y	y	y		y	y
Nominalization	y	y	y	y		y	y
Personal Noun	y	y	y	y		y	y
Personal Pronoun	y	y	y	y		y	y
Local Noun		y			y		y
Quantifier	y	y					
Demonstrative	y	y	y			y	y
Numeral (as indefinite pronoun)	y	y				y	y

### 4.3. The structure of the noun phrase

The noun phrase is head-initial. When an argument is overtly encoded in a noun phrase, the element functioning as the nominal head is the only obligatory element. A head noun may stand alone in the noun phrase or it may be modified by a number of different types of post-modifiers. The basic order of constituents in the noun phrase can be summarized as follows:

Nominal Head	(Lexical Modifier)	(Intensifier)	(Possessive)	(Quantifier)	(Demonstrative)	(Plural)	(Relative clause)	(Limiter)
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Figure 4. Structure of the noun phrase

There are no instances in the corpus of a noun phrase with all the modifier positions filled. It is not unusual however, for a head noun to take two or three modifiers. Noun phrases with four modifiers also appear in the corpus. The main restriction that applies is that quantifiers are semantically incompatible with number relative-clauses and thus are never attested in the same construction.

- (26) Head + possessive

*Nida t-na i-vlem ij.*  
 mother POSSDT-1SG 3REAL:SG-come ANT  
 ‘My mother has come.’ [NVKS01.25]

- (27) Head + possessive + quantifier

*Bibi abit-lav nokhon nidam turien.*  
 maternal.uncle 3IRR:PL-get face yam some  
 ‘(Her) uncles would get some yam tubers.’ [NVKI06.111]

- (28) Head + quantifier + plural

*Nar-lem me nisin ngatian edr.*  
 1EXCL:REAL:DU-carry just thing:INDF many PL  
 ‘We carried many things.’ [NVKI20.11]

- (29) Head + possessive + demonstrative  
*Vinang i-vu i-sir nida titi*  
 woman:ANA 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-fetch mother 3POSS:SG  
*ang i-vlem.*  
 ANA 3REAL:SG-come  
 ‘The woman went and brought her mother back.’ [NVKS01.21]
- (30) Head + possessive + relative clause (number)  
*I-na ni-somda nisidan t-na*  
 PSNPR-1SG 1REAL:SG-discover thing:INDF POSSDT-1SG  
*i-ru.*  
 3REAL:SG-two  
 ‘I found two things of mine.’ [NVKS18.120: 629.408]
- (31) Head + possessive + plural  
*Baga nimkhudan na at-lem nisidan*  
 then family 1SG 3REAL:PL-carry thing:INDF  
*t-na edr, nimaling t-na edr...*  
 POSSDT-1SG PL bed POSSDT-1:SG PL  
 ‘Then my family carried my belongings, my bedding...’ [NVDL05.10]
- (32) Head + demonstrative + plural  
*At-lav nibarbar ang adr.*  
 3REAL:PL-get pig ANA PL  
 ‘They got the pigs.’ [NVKI06.59]
- (33) Head + possessive + relative clause (number) + limiter  
*Nakhmal t-nam i-skham me*  
 house POSSDT-1EXCL:NSG 3REAL:SG-one just  
*i-tokh man.*  
 3REAL:SG-exist EMPH  
 ‘There is just one of our houses/rooms.’ [NVCT05.30: 389.971]
- (34) Head + possessive + plural; head + relative clause  
*Nimkhudan na er abit-lav-lu noslot*  
 family 1SG PL 3IRR:PL-get-COMPL ceremonial.yam.heap  
*an adr at-jik.*  
 NMOD 3NSG 3REAL:PL-put  
 ‘My family was going to take away the yam heap that they (the other family) put (there).’ [NVDL05.16]
- (35) Head (compound) + lexical modifier + relative clause  
*khavut-tro lele an i-vlem ang*  
 husband-old small NMOD 3REAL:SG-come ANA  
 ‘the little old man who came’ [NVCT05.47: 487.098]

#### 4.4. Unmodified nouns

Unmodified nouns occur frequently in the corpus. Such nouns appear to serve three functions in connected text. These are firstly, the encoding of indefinite non-referring expressions; secondly, the encoding of definite referring expressions; and thirdly, the encoding of generic expressions. Christopher Lyons (1999) distinguishes between definite and indefinite as hearer-centered notions, and between referring and non-referring as speaker-centered notions. The contrast between these notions is summarized in Table 18:

Table 18. Contrasting definite and indefinite expressions

Indefinite Expressions...	signal the speaker's belief that the hearer is unaware of the intended referent	are associated with referring or non-referring expressions = speaker may/may not have particular referent in mind
Definite Expressions...	signal the speaker's belief that the hearer is aware of the intended referent	are associated with referring expressions = speaker has particular referent in mind

##### 4.4.1. Encoding indefinite non-referring expressions with zero modification

A noun with zero modification can be used to encode an entity that the speaker conceives of as indefinite and non-referring. The bare noun is usually the first and only mention of such an entity in the text. This sub-set of expressions with no modifiers are indefinite in the sense that the speaker assumes the hearer will not identify a particular referent. They are non-referring as the speaker does not have a particular referent in mind, but any member of the category or type of referent mentioned.

In example (36) below, the noun *nibarbar* 'pig' encodes a type of entity rather than a specific animal. The noun is the first and last mention of pigs in the narrative, which is a traditional account of the arrival of the coconut and sago palm on Malekula.

- (36) *Niterikh-mukhman*    *ang*    *i-tur*    *i-vu*  
 child-male            ANA    3REAL:SG-get.up    3REAL:SG-go  
*i-raus*                            *i-tnga-kh*                            *nibarbar*.  
 3REAL:SG-see.exchange    3REAL:SG-search(visually)-APPL    pig  
 'The young man got up and went and looked for pigs/a pig to exchange.'  
 [NVKS02.04]

## 4.4.2. Encoding definite referring expressions with zero modification

A noun with zero modification can be used to encode an entity that the speaker perceives to be definite and referring. In this case, a previously introduced or contextually available entity is reiterated with the bare noun phrase. In example (37) the bare noun *nisib* ‘knife’ can be interpreted as a definite referring expression. It is in fact the first overt encoding of ‘knife’, but it occurs in a text about copra production. Copra production is specified as the topic of the text in the opening statement of the recording. Copra production, by association, includes the tools needed to carry out this process. A knife is one of these tools and as such, becomes contextually available.

- (37) *Ba ni-tur mitabbukh ni-vrokh nisib*  
 when 1REAL:SG-get.up morning 1REAL:SG-hold knife  
*ni-vu ni-rukhrukh.*  
 1REAL:SG-go 1REAL:SG-gather.coconuts  
 ‘When I get up in the morning, I grab (the/my) knife and go and gather coconuts.’ [NVDL02.01]

In the same text, we find the unmodified noun *nani* ‘coconut’ used to encode the coconut which is being processed. This is the first overt encoding of *nani*, but again this entity is evoked in the introductory statement of the recording. A number of events are encoded in verb forms which refer specifically to things that are done to coconuts, including the detransitive *rukhrukh* ‘gather coconuts’ in the previous example.

- (38) *Ni-vus-vus nani i-vlem sur nesal.*  
 1REAL:SG-DUP-carry coconut 3REAL:SG-come near road  
 ‘I carry the coconut to the road.’ [NVDL02.08]

The lack of modification of the referring noun phrase in (37) might be explained in terms of non-salience as the knife receives no further mention in the text. The same cannot be said of the coconut in (38) however, as *nani* ‘coconut’ is mentioned explicitly in subsequent clauses in this text which is all about copra production.

## 4.4.3. Using unmodified nouns to encode generic expressions

Example (1) in §4.1 above illustrates the use of a bare noun to encode a generic expression. In that example, *niat* ‘Sago Palm’ or ‘Sago Palm thatch’ is referred to as a generic entity. Example (39), an elicited construction, confirms this

analysis. We can observe the use of the singular subject/mood marker with generic nouns in these examples.

- (39) *Netas i-tokh lon nitusu.*  
 fish 3REAL:SG-exist LOC sea  
 ‘There are fish in the sea.’ [NVKW10.12]

Generics can be distinguished from other definite referring expressions in that no antecedent expression or association with a previously mentioned entity is required for their successful reference. In Neverver, they can be distinguished from indefinite non-referring expressions in that subsequent mentions of a particular member of the generic category can be treated as definite, whereas there are no subsequent mentions of indefinite non-referring expressions.

#### 4.5. Nominal modification

##### 4.5.1. Lexical modifiers

Members of the sub-class of stative verbs may serve as modifiers of a head noun. In this position, the verbs are uninflected. Not all stative verbs are attested in this position in the corpus, but those listed below occur frequently.

- (40) *ber(ber)* ‘long, tall’  
*bratn* ‘true, real’  
*lele* ‘small, young’  
*mer* ‘left’  
*siasu* ‘holy’  
*ttaj* ‘bald’  
*ttis* ‘sacred’  
*tro* ‘old’  
*met(met)* ‘dark, black’  
*yovyov* ‘white’  
*mial* ‘red’  
*yangyang* ‘yellow’

A sequence of two stative verbs in the post-nominal position was produced in an elicitation session but this kind of sequence is not attested in the corpus of natural speech.

- (41) *nakhatkhat metmet lele* (basket + black + small) ‘small black basket’  
*nibarbar yovyov tokhtokh* (pig + white + big) ‘big white pig’

Noun-verb compounds followed by stative modifiers display the same structural organization as sequences of noun followed by stative modifiers. The compounds can be distinguished from sequences because of their lexicalization. *Nivis-bratn* ‘traditional bow’ and *khavut-tro* ‘mature man, husband’ are two compounds which may take further post-nominal lexical modifiers as in (42).

- (42) *nivis-bratn lele* (bow-real + small) ‘small traditional bow’  
*khavut-tro lele* (husband-old + small) ‘little old man’

#### 4.5.2. Intensifiers

Three intensifiers serve adjectivally. Members of this class are distinct from lexical modifiers in that they are not attested as independent verbs in the corpus. *Tokhtokh* ‘huge, important’ generally modifies human and anthropomorphized entities. *Vor* ‘huge’ generally modifies inanimate entities. There is some overlap in the distribution of these two items and they can also combine to emphasize the size and significance of a particular entity. *Metesa* ‘excellent’ modifies inanimate entities and is rather rare in the corpus. *Tokhtokh* and *metesa* can also modify an inflected verb.

- (43) *nimkhut* ‘man’                      *nimkhut tokhtokh* ‘leader, Pastor’  
*nebang* ‘banyan tree’                *nebang vor* ‘huge banyan tree’  
*nolog* ‘laplap’                         *nolog tokhtokh vor* ‘large ceremonial laplap’  
*nio* ‘water, river’                      *nio metesa* ‘excellent water/juice’  
*lablab* ‘be big’                        *i-lablab tokhtokh* ‘he grew up/became big’  
*rvikh* ‘be good’                        *i-rvikh metesa* ‘it is really good, great’

#### 4.5.3. Possessives

Possessors follow the nominal head and any stative or intensifying modifiers associated with that nominal head. Other types of nominal modifiers associated with the nominal head follow the possessor. Possession in Neverver is noteworthy in that it does not display the directly marked inalienable construction, which is characteristic of many Oceanic languages (cf. Lichtenberk 1985; Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002). Possession constructions are formulated on the basis of the sentience of the possessor. Human possessors are encoded in a different construction from non-human possessors. Among non-human possessors, a distinction is made between inherent possession, where there is a natural or inalienable relationship between possessum and possessor, and associative possession, where the relationship between possessum and possessor is constructed. In associative possession, the nominal modifying particle [NMOD] *an*

signals the possessive relationship. Types of possession are summarized below in Table 19 and illustrated in the following examples; a full description is presented in §5.1.

Table 19. Possessive constructions in Neverver

Human possession	possessum + possessive determiner + (personal noun)
Non-human inherent	possessum + possessor
Non-human associative	possessum + NMOD + possessor

- (44) Human possession  
*bibi titi niterikh ang*  
 maternal.uncle 3POSS:SG child ANA  
 ‘the maternal uncle of the child’ [NVKI02.10]
- (45) Non-human inherent possession  
*nivilun noto ang*  
 feathers chicken ANA  
 ‘the feathers of the chicken’ [NVKI16.23]
- (46) Non-human associative possession  
*nokho an nibarbar ang*  
 vine NMOD pig ANA  
 ‘the rope of the pig’ [NVKI21. 35: 165.463]

#### 4.5.4. Quantifiers

Another category of simple post-nominal modifiers involves members of the small set of quantifiers. This category comprizes the following items:

- (47) *balian* ‘all, every’ from *bal* ‘fill’  
*ngatian* ‘many, every’ from *nangat* ‘hundred’  
*turien* ‘some’  
*tle* ‘another’

The quantifiers *balian* and *ngatian* appear to derive from other morphemes. *Balian* most likely derives from the verb stem *bal* ‘fill’ and could be analysed as carrying the nominalizing suffix *-ian*, though clearly this suffix does not function as a nominalizer in this context. *Ngatian* may derive from a common noun with the form *na-ngat* ‘hundred’. *Ngat* is not attested independently as a verb stem; however, there is a relationship between the meanings of the noun ‘hun-

dred’ and the quantifier ‘many, every’. The use of large numbers as quantifiers is attested in other Oceanic languages, including Maori with *rau* meaning ‘hundred, multitude, another’ (Williams 1971: 328), and *mano* meaning ‘thousand, indefinitely large number’ (Williams 1971: 176). Like *bal*, *ngat* carries the suffix *-ian* when it functions as a quantifier. *Ngatian* can be fully nominalized as the noun *na-ngat-ian* ‘everyone’.

Although in most cases where a noun is quantified, the quantifier is the only modifier in the noun phrase, it is possible for a quantifier to appear in sequence with other post-nominal modifiers. In a small number of noun phrases, the quantifier is followed by a plural marker which functions to emphasize the plurality of the head noun (see (28) above).

Another commonly occurring construction involves a pronominal noun phrase head followed by a quantifier. This construction functions to select one, some or all of a group of entities involved in a particular event. A pronominal head modified by a quantifier can also copy the person and number of a lexical head that immediately precedes it. This allows for several contrasts in meaning to be expressed.

- |      |                            |  |
|------|----------------------------|--|
| (48) | <i>nida turien</i>         | (mother + some) ‘some mothers’               |
|      | <i>adr turien</i>          | (3NSG + some) ‘some of them’                 |
|      | <i>nida adr</i>            | (mother + PL) ‘the mothers’                  |
|      | <i>[nida] [adr turien]</i> | (mother + 3NSG + some) ‘some of the mothers’ |
|      |                            | lit. ‘mother(s), some of them’               |

The noun *nisin* ‘thing:INDF’ is used when the lexical content of an expression is unknown. This item frequently occurs in the corpus with modification in the form of a number relative clause, or a quantifier.

- |      |                                    |               |
|------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| (49) | <i>nisin-skham ~ nisin i-skham</i> | ‘something’   |
|      | <i>nisin turien</i>                | ‘some things’ |
|      | <i>nisin ngatian</i>               | ‘many things’ |
|      | <i>nisin balian</i>                | ‘anything’    |

The quantifier *tle* does not occur with *nisin* ‘thing:INDF’ because ‘another’ implies that the addressee is already familiar with the class of object being referred to. Instead, this quantifier may follow the definite form *niten~netan* ‘thing:DEF’ in the phrase *netan tle* meaning ‘another one (of the things just mentioned)’.

When the unknown entity is human, the common noun *nimkhut* ‘male, human’ modified by a number relative clause is used in the singular. In the plural, *ngatian* modifies *nimkhut*, or the fully nominalized form *na-ngatian* ‘everyone’ is used instead.

- (50) *nimkhut i-skham* ‘someone’  
*nimkhut ngatian* ‘everyone’  
*na-ngatian* ‘everyone’

The construction *nimkhut ngatian* ‘everyone’ occurs just twice in the corpus, with the nominalized *na-ngatian* form being preferred.

As noted previously, pronouns can be followed by quantifiers. They can also be followed by a number relative clause. Quantification of a pronoun allows the speaker to identify one, some or all of a group of entities as participants in a particular event. Pronouns can also be modified by the limiter (*lu*)*me*.

- (51) *adr i-skham* ‘one of them’  
*adr turien* ‘some of them’  
*adr balian* ‘all of them’  
*git ngatian* ‘all of us, everyone’  
*git mokh* ‘all of us’  
*ei lume* ‘only he/him’  
*git me* ‘only we/us’

*Balian* and *mokh* are rare as pronominal modifiers. *Balian* is generally a post-nominal modifier, while *mokh* is a post-verbal quantifier. In (52), *mokh* is illustrated as a quantifier, but it is separated from the argument that it is modifying and it is located in the structural position of a post-verbal modifier. Semantically, it is modifying the single argument of the intransitive verb *kkan* ‘eat’.

- (52) *Ba nati-kkan mokh lu i-suvsuv, ...*  
 when 1EXCL:REAL:PL-eat all PERF 3REAL:SG-be.finished  
 ‘When we all had finished eating, ...’ [NVCV09.29: 180.747]

#### 4.5.5. Demonstratives

Head nouns can be followed by a Demonstrative Determiner. Three post-nominal demonstrative determiners are used in Neverver. Two of the demonstratives are deictic in function, contrasting the proximal form *anjakh* ‘this’ (53) and the medial/distal form *anjing* ‘that’ (54). The third demonstrative is anaphoric in function. The demonstrative *ang* ‘the’ (55) signals that an entity has been previously mentioned or is extractable from the speech situation or from shared generic-lexical knowledge.

- (53) *Kum-bbu kubi-tn nidam anjakh kum-khan adr.*  
 2IRR:SG-go 2IRR:SG-roast yam this 2IRR:SG-eat 3NSG  
 ‘Go and roast these yams and eat them.’ [NVKS15.36]

- (54) *Be ne-mmang-ian anjing, nimokhmokh turien.*  
 but NPR-make.noise-NSF that female some  
 ‘But that noise, it was some women.’ [NVKS18.05: 24.502]
- (55) *Ale, niterikh ang ar ar-ver “ale”.*  
 then child ANA PL 3REAL:DU-say all.right  
 ‘Then the (2) children said, “All right.”’ [NVKS18.48: 251.226]

The forms *anjakh* ‘this’ and *anjing* ‘that’ derive from the fusing of the nominal modifying particle *an* NMOD, which introduces relative clauses, and the verb stems *jakh* ‘be here’ and *jing* ‘be there’. The full relative clause constructions also occur in speech with the same meaning (see §5.2.7.), although the fused forms are more common.

As well as the commonly used demonstrative determiner *anjakh* ‘this’, the rare form *akh* is attested as a post-nominal modifier with the same meaning. The form *ing* also occurs in the corpus, but it functions as a clausal modifier with an exclamatory function (see §9.9.1.), rather than as a nominal modifier.

There is evidence in the corpus that the anaphoric demonstrative *ang* is in the process of weakening to *a*. This particularly occurs when the demonstrative determiner is the only post-nominal modifier. Should this weakening continue, we might predict that the anaphoric demonstrative will eventually become a simple definite article, perhaps a suffix or enclitic associated with a nominal head. This diachronic process is widespread, with Lyons (1999: 116) reporting that “definite articles in nearly all languages that have them are descended historically from demonstratives. It is in fact usually a deictically unmarked demonstrative, or a non-proximal or non-first-person one, which provides the source of the definite article”.

As noted in §4.1., the three demonstrative determiners can all function as pronouns and serve as noun phrase heads. The distinction between demonstrative determiner and demonstrative pronoun is not morphologically marked. The lack of distinction between determiner and pronoun has been noted as common of Oceanic languages (Ross 2004: 179). Ross (2004: 177) also notes that a widespread pattern in Oceanic languages is for a three-way distinction to be encoded in demonstratives. This distinction may be based on person, contrasting first, second, and third person, or it may be based on distance from the speaker as the deictic centre, contrasting proximal, medial and distal. In Neverver, a three-way distance-based contrast is preserved in the set of independent demonstrative local nouns.

- (56) Contemporary demonstrative local nouns  
*tjakh/tnakh* ‘here’  
*tjing* ‘there (visible)’  
*tang* ‘there (non-visible)’

The use of the two non-proximal forms appears to be based either on visibility, contrasting visible and non-visible entities, or on actual distance, contrasting medial and distal (including visible) entities. The three-way contrast found in the local nouns has been reduced to a binary distinction of proximity in the demonstrative determiners, with *anjakh* ‘this’ indicating entities proximal to the speaker and *anjing* ‘that’ indicating entities non-proximal to the speaker.

#### 4.5.6. Number

The overt signalling of the number of a head noun within the noun phrase is not obligatory; however, there are three strategies of post-nominal modification that can be employed to indicate that a nominal head is non-singular. Number modification can take the form of a general plural marker (§4.5.6.1.), or a number relative clause (§4.5.6.2.). The third strategy involves the use of a quantifier (discussed above in §4.5.4.).

##### 4.5.6.1. *The plural marker*

Common nouns can take a plural marker of the form *adr~edr*. In the speech of younger people, this marker is generally realized as *ar~er*. The alternate *a-/e-* forms of this marker appear to be in free variation, with no distribution pattern identified. Human and non-human nouns take either form; either form may occur in a subject or object noun phrase; two or three entities as well as large groups of entities take either form. The *adr* allomorph of the post-nominal plural marker has the same shape as the third person non-singular independent pronoun. *Edr* is not attested with a pronominal usage.

- (57) *Mang adr at-uv at-uv at-uv.*  
 man:ANA PL 3REAL:PL-go 3REAL:PL-go 3REAL:PL-go  
 ‘The men went on and on.’ [NVKS17.119]

- (58) *I-trasil nakhavakh edr.*  
 3REAL:SG-stake yam.mound PL  
 ‘He staked the yam mounds.’ [NVKS16.55: 235.036]

##### 4.5.6.2. *Number relative clauses*

Numbers are typically encoded in relative clauses. When the hearer is assumed to be unfamiliar with the referent of an expression, number marking is simply post-posed in an unmarked relative clause; when the hearer is assumed to be familiar with the referent of an expression, number is encoded in a relative clause introduced by the nominal modifying particle (NMOD) *an*.

- (59) *nevan nani-pput ib-ru*  
 fruit coconut-dry 3IRR:SG-two  
 ‘two dry coconut fruit’ [NVKS12.54: 400.845]
- (60) *nimokhmokh-tro an i-ru ang*  
 female-old NMOD 3REAL:SG-two ANA  
 ‘the two old women/wives’ [NVCV07.72: 656.241]

#### 4.5.7. The limiter (*lu*)*me* ‘only, just’

The right-most noun phrase modifier position contains the limiter (*lu*)*me* ‘only, just’. This particle can modify a range of phrase types (see §9.8.). When serving as a nominal modifier, the limiter may follow pronominal heads, human nouns and non-human nouns.

- (61) *Bibi me i-vor i-prok no-ssor-ian*  
 maternal.uncle just 3REAL:SG-sit 3REAL:SG-listen NPR-speak-NSF  
*an.*  
 NMOD  
 ‘Only uncle sat and thought about the story.’ [NVKI06.36]
- (62) *Be mang me i-lav nakhabb ang.*  
 but man:ANA just 3REAL:SG-get fire ANA  
 ‘But that (particular) man got the fire.’ [NVKS07.32: 201.125]
- (63) *Nibbwaw lume ar-khan.*  
 male.pig only IMPS:REAL-eat  
 ‘Only male pigs were eaten.’ [NVKI08.6]

#### 4.5.8. Summary of noun phrase modification

Table 20 summarizes types of post-nominal modification according to the category of noun phrase head being modified. Common nouns take the widest range of post-nominal modifiers. Personal and local nouns are more restricted in the modifiers that they permit.

Table 20. Modifiers of personal and common nouns

	Lexical modifier	Intensifier	Possessor	Quantifier	Demonstrative	Plural	Numeral	Relative Clause	Limiter
Personal Pronouns				y		y	y	y	y
Common Nouns	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y
Pronominal-Nouns <i>an</i>					y			y	
Personal Names									
Kin terms (personal)			y						
Pronominal-Nouns <i>vin, man</i>					y	y	y	y	
Place Names/Familiar Places									
Absolute/(Deictic)									
Locative Part Nouns			y						
Temporal nouns			y		y				
Pronominal-Nouns <i>kut, dran</i>					y		y	y	

#### 4.6. Noun phrase coordination

There are a number of strategies employed in Neverver to signal that two entities are functioning as joint participants in an event. Conjunctive coordination can be signalled by the prosodic listing strategy, a prepositional construction, and the inclusory pronominal construction. Disjunctive coordination is signalled by the disjunctive coordinator.

##### 4.6.1. Prosodic listing

The most basic means of conjoining two noun phrases involves a prosodic strategy, where there is a brief intonation break, marked by a comma in the examples below, between nouns. Non-terminal noun phrases have slightly rising intonation, while the terminal noun phrase has falling intonation.

- (64) *I-khavukh*            *maniok*,    *i-khavukh*            *nidaro*↗,    *nidam*↘...  
 3REAL:SG-plant    manioc    3REAL:SG-plant    taro            yam  
 ‘He planted manioc, he planted taro and yam...’ [NVKS05.7: 26.604]

Another example of this prosodic listing strategy can be seen in the following commemorative song. In this song, the founding members of the Lingarakh Presbyterian Women's Union are listed by name as joint participants in the creation of their coconut plantation:

- (65) *Adr nevan i-jovas me,*  
 3NSG fruit 3REAL:SG-nine just  
*Ana-Aki, Lenaus, Ela, Letang, Lerakhsil, Lerakhbel, Lemeldan, Mary Alice,*  
*Lemelue*  
*at-khavukh nani.*  
 3REAL:PL-plant coconut  
 'Just the nine of them, Ana Aki, Lenaus, Ela, Letang, Lerakhsil, Lerakhbel,  
 Lemeldan, Mary Alice, and Lemelue, planted coconuts.' [NVE42.1-3]

#### 4.6.2. The comitative preposition *blev*

In the speech of younger community members, the comitative preposition *blev* is now being used as a conjunction to coordinate two noun phrases, like *and* in English, or *mo* 'and' in Bislama (Crowley 2004: 70). Noun phrases conjoined by *blev* share semantic roles, and are adjacent. When serving as the grammatical subject of the clause, the subject/mood prefix on the verb agrees with the total number of participants, rather than just the first participant or last. This agreement suggests that for some speakers at least, *blev* can function as a simple coordinating conjunction.

- (66) *Ba livrav mama blev bbubbu ar-uv mil.*  
 when afternoon father with grandfather 3REAL:DU-go again  
 'When it was the afternoon, Dad and Granddad went again.' [NVKI03.60]

The form *bitev* is also attested as a means of conjoining noun phrases. This alternative form may be a borrowing from the related Naman language, as Crowley (2006b: 97) identifies an "accompanitive preposition" [ʰbətɛv] as a means of coordinating noun phrases in this language. *Bitev* is also listed as an alternate form in Avava for [ʰbilep], again the "accompanitive preposition" (Crowley 2006a: 65).

Although *blev* can be used as a nominal coordinator by some speakers, it typically introduces a non-core argument in an adjunct position following the main clause. When the comitative participant is acting with the participant encoded as the subject noun phrase (rather than object), the subject/mood prefix agrees only with the number of the subject noun phrase, and the comitative participant is excluded. In the example below, the subject is encoded as the dual subject/mood prefix *ar*, which refers to two boys. The third participant, ex-

pressed as *tata titi-r* ‘their father’, is encoded as an optional adjunct and is not included as part of the subject number.

- (67) *Ar-ver*            *te*            *ar*            *ar-lukh*            *blev*    *tata*  
 3REAL:DU-say    COMP    3NSG    3REAL:DU-live    with    father  
*titi-r*.  
 3POSS-PL  
 ‘They(2) said that they(2) lived with their father.’ [NVKS18.123: 642.098]

An instrumental interpretation is also possible when *blev* is used as a preposition to mark a non-core argument. Although there is potential for ambiguity in the comitative/instrumental use of *blev* (just as we find in the use of ‘with’ for arguments with comitative and instrumental semantic roles in English), the semantic properties of the participants allow us to disambiguate. An example of the instrumental use of *blev* is illustrated below (see §9.1.4.5. for a full description of the prepositional uses of *blev*).

- (68) *Amti-vlem*            *abit-vul*            *na*            *blev*    *nevat*.  
 3IRR:PL-come    3IRR:PL-buy    1SG    with    money  
 ‘They were going to come and pay for me with money.’ [NVDL05.04]

The preposition *blev* is related to a verb stem of the same shape meaning ‘be with’. Examples of *blev* marked with a subject/mood prefix occur in the corpus. The verbal usage is rather limited, with the prepositional usage being far more common.

- (69) *Ati-blev*            *mej*            *vinang*            *at-uv*.  
 3REAL:PL-be.with    IMM    woman:ANA    3REAL:PL-go  
 ‘They went with the woman.’ [NVKI21.71: 289.889]

Irrealis constructions are also attested with the verb *blev*. When marked for irrealis, the verb stem is sometimes articulated as *bbulev*.

- (70) *Noah*,            *kubi-blev*            *niterikh*            *t-okh*            *an*  
 Noah    2IRR:SG-be.with    child            POSSDT-2SG    NMOD  
*i-tl*            *tjing*            *kam-tuv*            *kabit-sakh...*  
 3REAL:SG-three    there(visible)    2IRR:PL-go    2IRR:PL-go.up  
 ‘Noah, you and your three children there go up together...’ [NVCT07.14]
- (71) *I-vu*            *i-bakhbakh*            *im-bbulev*            *me*  
 3REAL:SG-go    3REAL:SG-hide    3IRR:SG-be.with    just  
*nimukhman*    *adr*    *lume*.  
 male            PL            only  
 ‘He goes and hides just with the men only.’ [NVKI02.4]

## 4.6.3. Inclusive pronominal constructions

The third method of signalling joint participation involves the use of inclusive constructions. Lichtenberk (2000) presents a basic typology of constructions that involve inclusive pronominals. His typology identifies a distinction between explicit and implicit marking of the inclusive construction as well as a distinction between phrasal and split noun phrase formulations. Lichtenberk (2000: 4) defines explicit inclusive constructions as those in which ‘there is a marker of the relation between the inclusive pronominal and the included noun phrase’ while implicit inclusive constructions are those in which there is no such overt marker. Phrasal inclusive constructions are those in which “the inclusive pronominal and the included noun phrase together form a phrase”, while split inclusive constructions are those in which “the inclusive pronominal is typically (though not necessarily) some kind of dependent pronominal, such as an affix or a subject-marking particle” (Lichtenberk 2000:3). Two inclusive constructions have been identified in Neverver. These are an explicit phrasal inclusive construction and an implicit split inclusive construction.

## 4.6.3.1. The explicit phrasal inclusive construction

In Neverver, the explicit phrasal inclusive construction is the most common type of inclusive construction. An inclusive pronominal conjoins the noun phrases, taking its number from the sum of entities expressed in the inclusive phrase. The pronoun carries the suffix *-ikh*. This suffix shares its form with the applicative suffix that we find attached to verb stems and is thus also glossed APPL as it signals an increase in participants. The applicative suffix also attaches to some post-verbal modifiers signalling transitivity concordance.

Participants conjoined with the inclusive pronoun must be adjacent and are thus part of a single phrase. In example (72), two conjoining strategies are used, these being the inclusive pronoun (with the inclusive noun phrase in bold) and the prosodic listing strategy (with conjoined noun phrases underlined).

- (72) *Nemakh* *Nevnakh* ***adr-ikh*** *nemakh* *Viar* *nemakh*  
 denizen Nevnakh 3NSG-APPL denizen Viar denizen  
*Vorkha* *nemakh* *Gara* *at-tokh* *Khatbol*  
 Vorkha denizen Gara 3:REAL:PL-exist Khatbol  
 ‘The people of Nevnakh and the people of Viar, the people of Vorkha and the people of Gara are in Khatbol.’ [NVKI07.53]

When the referent of the first head noun phrase is contextually available, it may be encoded only as the inclusive pronoun.

- (73) *Nam-ikh*                      *mama*    *nari-vlem*                      *mil*    *lon*  
 1EXCL:NSG-APPL    father    1EXCL:REAL:DU-come    again    LOC  
*aiyem*    *t-nam*.  
 home    POSSDT-1EXCL:NSG  
 ‘My father and I came home again.’ [NVDL04.25]

In example (74), the woman is not overtly encoded in this inclusory construction; however, she is the agent of the immediately preceding clauses.

- (74) *Adr-ikh*                      *khavut*                      *titi*                      *ar-vus*                      *nolong*                      *ang*.  
 3NSG-APPL    husband    3POSS:SG    3REAL:DU-carry    laplap    ANA  
 ‘She and her husband carried the laplap.’ [NVKS03.62]

#### 4.6.3.2. *The implicit split inclusory construction*

In the case of implicit split constructions, there is no overt marking of inclusion. The joint participants are not contained within a single noun phrase. Rather, we find the inclusory information encoded in the subject/mood prefix attached to the verb stem. Thus, the encoding of the inclusory participants is ‘split’ between the noun phrase and the VP. This second type of inclusory construction in Neverver is restricted to subject arguments as only subjects are cross-referenced on the verb.

- (75) *Lesien*    *at-uv*                      *lon*    *nokhos*.  
 Lesien    3REAL:PL-go    LOC    garden  
 ‘Lesien and them went to the garden.’ [NVKS09.62]

The subject of this construction is a personal noun, identifying a girl who is one of the characters in the story being told. The subject/mood prefix in this example is marked for plural. The inclusory construction in this example indicates that the girl *Lesien* was accompanied by some other unspecified participants. Culturally, this is expected as a young woman would not go off on her own; however, the details of whoever accompanied the girl are irrelevant to the story itself and these participants remain unidentified.

The implicit split inclusory construction is rather rare in the corpus. It appears to be restricted to contexts in which some unspecified participant (or participants) takes part in an event along with a more salient and overtly expressed participant. As noted above, this construction is only possible for arguments that fill the subject position of the clause.

## 4.6.4. Disjunctive coordination

Disjunctive coordination between noun phrases is signalled with the disjunctive coordinator *si*. As well as conjoining noun phrases, this coordinator also conjoins clauses that stand in a disjunctive relation (see §13.5.3.).

- (76) *Abir-lav*      *ibiskham*      *abir-lik*      *bibi*  
 3IRR:DU-get      INDF.PN      3:IRR:DU-pass      maternal.uncle  
*si*      *bbubbu.*  
 or      grandfather  
 ‘They were going to give one to their maternal uncle or grandfather.’  
 [NVKI06.139]

- (77) *Abr-uv*      *abir-khit*      *khavut-tro*      *an*      *Litslits*  
 3IRR:DU-go      3IRR:DU-see      husband-old      NMOD      Litzlitz  
*si*      *Ramav*  
 or      Ramav  
 ‘They were going to go to see the man of Litzlitz or Ramav.’ [NVKI25.76:  
 464.414]

- (78) *Neman*      *ang*      *iskham*      *nevebbun*      *si*      *nivigaum.*  
 bird      ANA      INDF.PN      k.o.bird      or      k.o.bird  
 ‘The birds, one was a (green) Nevebbun bird, or a (yellow-headed green)  
 Nivigaum bird (*Ptilinopus tannensis*).’ [NVKS06.98]

# Chapter 5

## Possession, relativization, and number

### 5.0. Introduction

Among the types of post-nominal modification discussed in the previous chapter, brief descriptions of possessive phrases, and number relative clauses were presented. Along with general relative clauses, these constructions are characterized by the presence of the nominal modifying particle [NMOD] *an*, which introduces sub-types of each construction. Within the sub-types of possession (§5.1.), associative possessive constructions take NMOD. Relative clauses (§5.2.) with definite heads, including number clauses (§5.3.) modifying definite heads, also take NMOD. The essential contrasts dealt with in this chapter are presented in examples (1) to (7). In addition, the quantifier *tle* ‘another’ can take NMOD (§5.4.).

- (1) Human possession
- a. *nida t-na*  
mother PSDT-1SG  
‘my mother’
- b. *nevran na*  
hand 1SG  
‘my hand’
- (2) Inherent possession without NMOD
- noron nani adr*  
leaf coconut PL  
‘coconut leaves’
- (3) Associative possession with NMOD
- wido an nakhmal ang*  
window NMOD house ANA  
‘the window of the house’ [NVCV05.33: 1428.143]
- (4) Relative clause without NMOD
- Ar-lav nibbuang i-skham ar-ver*  
IMPS:REAL-get swamp.taro 3REAL:SG-one IMPS:REAL-say  
*nibrar.*  
k.o.taro.  
‘They got a kind of swamp taro called Nibrar.’ [NVKI03.35]

- (5) Relative clause with NMOD  
*I-rrik*                    *nisib*    *an*            *i-vrok*                    *ang.*  
 3REAL:SG-throw    knife    NMOD    3REAL:SG-hold    ANA  
 ‘She threw down the knife that she held.’ [NVCV02.77: 490.638]
- (6) Number relative clause without NMOD  
*niterikh-mukhman*    *lele*            *i-ru*  
 child-male                    small    3REAL:SG-two  
 ‘two small boys’
- (7) Number relative clause with NMOD  
*nimokhmokh-tro*    *an*            *i-ru*                    *ang*  
 female-old                    NMOD    3REAL:SG-two    ANA  
 ‘the two old women/wives’

## 5.1. Describing possession

The domain of possession is biocultural (Seiler 1999: 277). In describing possession in Fijian, Schütz (1985: 226) observes that “there are a number of different relationships that may hold between the referents of the possessor and the possessed... the meaning of this construction is broader than just legal ownership”. The same can be said of possession in Neverver. A wide range of relations hold between the possessor and possessum. Some are more prototypical, involving inherent human possession and ownership; some are less prototypical, involving for example the relation between an object and its material of composition, or a text and its content area.

Possessive systems in Oceanic languages are generally organized in terms of the semantic parameter of alienability, where alienability is a feature of the relationship between a possessor and the item that is possessed. This relationship frequently determines the formal structure of the possessive construction. Inalienable relations are typically encoded in a direct construction comprising (i) the possessum and (ii) the possessor (either in the form of a possessor suffix or a possessor noun phrase or pronoun). In contrast, alienable relations are typically encoded in an indirect construction comprising (i) the possessum, (ii) the possessor and (iii) a classifier which may identify the possessum as being an item of food, an item of drink, or a general item belonging to the possessor. (cf. Lichtenberk 1985; Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002)

The distribution of possessive systems organized on the basis of alienability is widespread in Oceanic languages, with Lichtenberk (1985: 103) commenting that “the distinction between alienable and inalienable possession is crucial for the understanding of the use of the possessive construction in most Oceanic languages”. After nearly two decades of further research, this understanding has

become firmly established in the literature of Oceanic languages, with Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002: 40) commenting in their typological survey of Oceanic languages that “the semantic distinction between alienability and inalienability lies at the core of the main structural differences in all systems”. Based on the widely distributed features of possessive systems outlined here, we might expect to find a suffix system for inalienable possessive relations in Neverver. We might also expect to find some kind of contrasting construction for alienable possessors.

Among Neverver’s relatives on Malekula, there is some divergence from the typical Oceanic pattern of possession. Classifiers of alienable possession have been lost in Avava, Naman and Neve’ei (Crowley 2006b: 74–75). Not only that, there is some question as to how well alienability serves as the primary organizing parameter. For instance, Crowley (2002b: 643) notes that in Vinmavis/Neve’ei, the possessive form *nen*, which is neither possessor suffix nor classifier, “expresses a semantic relationship that can be viewed in general terms as a part-whole or a purposive relationship”. The part-whole relationship in particular is one that is typically treated as semantically inalienable (cf. Lichtenberk 1985; Chappell and McGregor 1995; Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002), yet in Neve’ei it is expressed through a kind of prepositional construction. The prepositional construction with the form [Possessed + Preposition + Possessor] occurs widely in Oceanic languages; however, it tends to be associated with alienable rather than inalienable possession (Lichtenberk 1985).

A set of singular possessor suffixes associated with inalienable possession has been reconstructed for Proto-Oceanic. Cognates are attested in Neve’ei, Avava and Naman as well as in the Neverver corpus.

*Table 21.* Reflexes of the Proto Oceanic singular possessor suffixes

	1sg	2sg	3sg
Proto Oceanic (Lichtenberk 1985: 124)	*-ŋku	*-mu	*-na/*-ña
(Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002: 76)	*-gu	*-mu	*-ña
Neve’ei (Musgrave 2007: 34)	-(u/i)ŋ	-(u/i)m	-n
Avava (Crowley 2006a: 46)	-ŋ	-m	-n
Naman (Crowley 2006b: 70)	- <sup>ŋ</sup> g	-m	-n
Neverver	- <sup>ŋ</sup> g	-m	-n

The possessive suffixes exhibited by Malekula languages are clearly related to the suffix system reconstructed for Proto Oceanic. In Neverver, however, although these forms are attested in the corpus, the distribution of the suffixes is highly restricted. All instances occur in hymns translated from English and

Bislama into Neverver.<sup>13</sup> Text recordings of speech provide no evidence for these suffixes being a part of the possessive system of Neverver. While younger language consultants indicate an understanding of the meanings of nouns carrying these endings, it is unclear whether the forms are genuinely (and intentionally) archaic or borrowed from other Malekula languages. They are not used in speech. Contemporary Neverver then, does not have a productive suffixing system encoding inalienable possession.

An examination of possessive constructions in Neverver reveals that the formation of possessive constructions is sensitive to three parameters. The first parameter concerns the sentience of the possessor, where different constructions are used for human and non-human possessors. The second parameter concerns the phonological realisation of the possessum. When a possessum is *n*-final, its possessor is encoded in one way; when the possessum is non-*n*-final, its possessor is encoded differently. The interaction between constructions with human possessors and the *n*-final parameter is considered in §5.1.1. Non-human possessors are considered in §5.1.2.

The third parameter concerns alienability – the type of relationship that holds between possessum and possessor. This parameter, central in the possessive systems of many other Oceanic languages, is relevant insofar as we can observe that many *n*-final nouns are inalienably possessed. We argue that this is a result of an historical fusing of the third person singular POc possessor suffix *\*-na* (or *\*-ña*), which is reduced to *\*-n* in Malekula languages, with many inalienably possessed nouns. This type of possession is described as *Inherent Possession* and is considered in §5.1.2.1. Most nouns that are not *n*-final are alienably possessed and occur in a construction called *Associative Possession*, considered in §5.1.2.2.

### 5.1.1. Human possessors

When a possessor is human or sentient, it is encoded with a possessive determiner. The category of sentient beings extends to include anthropomorphized creatures; however, animals are prototypically classified as non-human. In Neverver, human possessors may inherently possess items, such as their body parts, names, and kin; they may own items, such as their tools and animals; or they may display an intimate association with items, such as their clothing or bedding. Human possessors are most commonly encoded as possessive determiners in a construction of the following shape:

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13. See §1.4.1. for a discussion of the Neverver hymn corpus.

NP<sub>POSSESSUM</sub> + Determiner<sub>POSSESSOR</sub> + (Personal Noun<sub>POSSESSOR</sub>)

When the referent of a third person singular possessive determiner can be extracted from context, the possessor is not named overtly; when the referent cannot be extracted, the possessor is named and the possessive determiner remains, cross-referencing the person and number of the possessor.

As described in §3.1.2., the series of possessive determiners is morphologically related to the series of independent pronouns. First and second person possessive determiners are regularly formed from the bare independent pronouns and the prefix *t-*. Each possessive determiner exhibits two allomorphs, one beginning with *t-*, and the other being a bare form. The third person possessive determiners involve a suppletive form *titi* in the singular and *titi-dr* in the non-singular. The irregular third person forms alternate between the suppletive *t-* initial forms and the expected independent pronouns (*ei* ‘3SG’, *adr* ‘3NSG’) which function as bare possessive determiners. The distribution of the two series of allomorphs is complementary, determined by the phonological parameter introduced in the previous section. According to this parameter, bare possessive determiners occur after *n*-final nouns; *t*-possessive determiners occur elsewhere.

Returning to the issue of alienability briefly, one might expect the allomorphs of the possessive determiners to be distributed on the basis of alienability. Synchronically, the final *-n* that is attested in numerous common nouns is an inseparable part of the noun stem. In possessive constructions, the final *-n* does not alternate with other endings when person and number vary. Final *-n* occurs in a range of constructions other than the possessive construction, and the citation form of these nouns is *n*-final. Diachronically however, the final *-n* is likely to derive from the Proto Oceanic third person singular possessive suffix. Reflexes of this suffix are evident in the three central Vanuatu languages listed in Table 21 above.

A small number of noun-verb compounds in the corpus support the hypothesis that final *-n* was once separable from noun stems. The nouns lose final *-n* when a verb stem is attached. The following compounds are highly lexicalized and this compounding process does not appear to be productive today.

- (8) *nebat-kher* ‘a stubborn person’ from *nebatn* ‘head’; *kher* ‘be strong’  
*nekhel-vas* ‘four-legged creature’ from *nakhlen* ‘leg’; *vas* ‘four’  
*nidling-mut* ‘marked ear’ from *nidlingan* ‘ear’; *mut* ‘short’(?)

In contemporary Neverver, the parameter of alienability is no longer relevant to the formulation of human possessive constructions. All of the *n*-final nouns listed in the first column of data set (9) below are semantically inalienable; however, the same comment applies to several of the nouns in the second column that are not *n*-final, including one’s mother and one’s breast. Alienability

does not explain the difference in the form of the possessive determiners that occur with these nouns. Phonology alone accounts for the distribution of bare possessive determiners and *t*-possessive determiners.

(9)	Items taking the bare possessive determiner	Items taking the <i>t</i> -possessive determiner
	<i>nevran</i> 'hand'	<i>nasus</i> 'breast'
	<i>neman</i> 'brother, cousin'	<i>nida</i> 'mother'
	<i>nimkhudan</i> 'family'	<i>bibi</i> 'maternal uncle'
	<i>nisidan</i> 'belonging'	<i>nibarbar</i> 'pig'
	<i>nikhijan</i> 'name'	<i>nakhatkhat</i> 'basket'
	<i>nilivkhan</i> 'body'	<i>nesal</i> 'friend'

Examples of first person singular possessor constructions are presented in (10) and (11). These display the contrast between the bare possessive form and the *t*-form.

(10) *Nikhijan na Miriam.*  
 name 1SG Miriam  
 'My name is Miriam.' [NVCT06.1: 0.0]

(11) *Nida t-na i-vlem ij.*  
 mother PSDT-1SG 3REAL:SG-come ANT  
 'My mother has already come.' [NVKS01.25]

When a possessor is encoded by a personal noun, the possessive determiner is followed by the personal noun. If the possessive determiner is removed, a different meaning is produced or the construction is semantically odd.

(12) a. *Nabit-bel noto titi Pierre*  
 1EXCL:IRR:PL-chase chicken 3POSS:SG Pierre  
 'We were going to chase Pierre's chicken.' [NVCV02.58: 359.458]

b. *\*noto Pierre*  
 chicken Pierre

(13) a. *nida titi Limel*  
 mother 3POSS-SG Limel  
 'Limel's mother'

b. *nida Limel*  
 mother Limel  
 'Aunty Limel'

Layered human possessive constructions are displayed in (14). The head noun of the first larger construction is *mama* ‘father’; the head of the second larger construction is *nimdali* ‘door’. In each structure the head of the possessor phrase *khavut* ‘husband’ also serves as the possessum of *tna* ‘my’.

- (14) *Mama titi khavut t-na i-vlem*  
 father 3POSS:SG husband POSSDT-1:SG 3REAL:SG-come  
*lon nimdali titi khavut t-na.*  
 LOC door 3PS:SG husband POSSDT-1SG  
 ‘My husband’s father came to my husband’s door.’ [NVDL004.18]

A human possessor may be copied to the front of the larger noun phrase. When the possessor is encoded only with a possessive determiner, it is copied as an independent pronoun. When the possessor is encoded with a personal noun, the personal noun is fronted and the possessive determiner may be omitted.

Pronoun <sub>POSSESSOR</sub> + NP <sub>POSSESSUM</sub> + Determiner <sub>POSSESSOR</sub>
Personal Noun <sub>POSSESSOR</sub> + NP <sub>POSSESSUM</sub> + (Determiner <sub>POSSESSOR</sub> )

- (15) *i-na nikhijan na*  
 PSNPR-1:SG name 1SG  
 ‘my name’ [NVKS31.1]
- (16) *i-na nida t-na*  
 PSNPR-1:SG mother POSSDT-1SG  
 ‘my mother’ [NVKS02.23]
- (17) *Joseph Bak nimokhmokh titi*  
 Joseph Bak female 3POSS:SG  
 ‘Joseph Bak’s wife’ [NVCV05:24]
- (18) *nida tokhtokh nibatn*  
 mother huge head  
 ‘auntie’s head’ [NVCV06.1]
- (19) *nida titi nimdan*  
 mother 3POSS:SG eye  
 ‘her mother’s eye’ [NVKS18.118]
- (20) *nimkhut nomngon*  
 man mouth  
 ‘a man’s mouth’ [NVKI03.35]

When a possessum carries other post-nominal modification, the position of the possessive determiner is dependent on the structure of the noun phrase. Possessors precede certain post-nominal modifiers and follow others. When the possessive determiner follows a modifier, the phonology of the modifier determines the form of the possessive pronoun, with *n*-final modifiers taking the bare possessor, while other items take the *t*-possessor. Again, this shows that alienability is not relevant to the formation of human possessive constructions.

- (21) *n*-final head noun with bare possessive determiner

*nibatn okh*  
 head 2SG  
 ‘your head’ [NVKS04.43]

- (22) Non-*n*-final modifier with *t*-possessive determiner

*nibbulun lele titi*  
 seed small 3POSS:SG  
 ‘his small seeds’ [NVKS15.38]

Quantifying expressions follow the possessor. In example (23), the quantifying phrase *adr turien* refers back to the possessed entity *salan*; it is not logically possible for the phrase to modify the possessor *okh* ‘you (sg)’.

- (23) *Kubi-kke-kh salan okh adr turien.*  
 2IRR:SG-call-APPL friend 2SG 3NSG some  
 ‘Call some friends of yours.’ [NVDL010.13]

The anaphoric demonstrative *ang* also follows the possessor, rather than being attached to the possessed noun itself.

- (24) *Nida titi ang nemat tokhtokh ing.*  
 mother 3POSS:SG ANA snake huge EXCLAM  
 ‘Her (previously mentioned) mother was a huge snake!’ [NVKS02.29]

#### 5.1.1.1. Exceptions

The distribution of bare and *t*-possessors is predictable for most possessed nouns. There are some exceptions when head nouns or noun phrases are *n*-final, and *t*-possessors occur rather than the predicted bare possessors. In almost all the exceptions, we find that the final *-n* does not derive from the third person singular possessor suffix, but has a different source.

As described in §3.7., almost all nominalizations end with the nominalizing suffix *-ian*. Although this suffix is *n*-final, we find that nominalizations consistently take *t*-possessors rather than bare possessors.

- (25) *ni-ver-ian*      *t-na*      ‘my work’  
*ni-kkan-ian*      *t-okh*      ‘your food’  
*ni-rvikh-ian*      *titi nida*      ‘mother’s goodness’  
*ni-sisien-ian*      *titi*      ‘his idea’

Borrowed nouns with a final *n*-also take the *t*-possessor.

- (26) *plan*              *titi*              ‘his plan’  
*pen*                  *t-na*              ‘my pen’

The noun *nivis-bratn* ‘traditional bow’, with its stative verb modifier that happens to be *n*-final, takes the *t*-possessor.

- (27) *nivis-bratn*      *titi*              ‘his bow’

Finally, some *n*-final nouns are attested with both the *t*-possessive and the bare possessive. Contextual factors cannot explain the alternation between forms, and this apparently free-variation may indicate further changes to the parameters guiding human possessive constructions.

- (28) *nokhoren*      *titi~ei*      ‘its tail’  
*nimdan*          *titi~ei*      ‘his/her/its eye’

### 5.1.1.2. *Human possession and definiteness*

The relationship between definiteness and human possession in Neverver is rather complex. Possessive determiners occur in a separate slot from both the definite demonstrative determiners and also relative clauses. In the relative clause position, we often find the numeral ‘one’, which can be used to express indefiniteness. This means that the following constructions are possible, and attested in the corpus:

Table 22. Human possessors and definiteness of the possessum

head noun + possessor	+ <i>ang</i>	referring definite
	+ <i>i-skham</i> (3REAL.SG-one)	referring indefinite
	+ zero	non-referring indefinite
		referring definite

A possessive construction which is unmarked for definiteness is potentially ambiguous. It could be an instance of zero-modification used to encode an entity conceptualized as non-referring and indefinite; equally it could be an instance of zero-modification used to encode an entity conceptualized as referring and

definite. The following example constructions contrast the four possible interpretations listed above.

- (29) Referring definite expression  
*nesal titi ang*  
 friend 3POSS:SG ANA  
 ‘his friend (previously mentioned)
- (30) Referring indefinite expression  
*niterikh mokhmokh t-nam i-skham*  
 child female POSSDT-1:EXCL:NSG 3REAL:SG-one  
 ‘a girl of ours’ (I know which one, but you don’t)
- (31) Non-referring indefinite or referring definite expression  
*nesal titi*  
 friend 3POSS:SG  
 ‘his friend’ (he has many, it could be any one of them OR his previously mentioned friend)
- (32) Referring definite expression  
*khavut t-na*  
 husband POSSDT-1SG  
 ‘my husband’ (there is only one possible referent)

In order to resolve the ambiguity of (31), the hearer must make use of contextual information. The phrase in (32) is less problematic as cultural knowledge today dictates that a woman has one and only one husband.

### 5.1.2. Non-human possessors

The encoding of non-human possession is distinct from that of human possession. Two non-human constructions are attested. In the inherent construction, a possessum is directly followed by a non-human possessor noun. In the associative construction, the relationship between possessum and non-human possessor is marked by the nominal modifying particle NMOD *an*.

#### 5.1.2.1. Inherent possession

A common noun possessum can be directly followed by an inherent possessor. Inherent possession is associated with a variety of naturally occurring part-whole relations and can be described as encoding an inalienable relation between a non-human possessor and a possessum. Inherent possessive constructions differ from noun-noun compounds. In inherent possession, both posses-

sum and possessor retain their common noun prefix; in a noun-noun compound, the second compounded noun loses its common noun prefix.

Looking at the following examples of inherent possession, we can observe that each common noun possessum is *n*-final. We can hypothesize once again that the final *-n* derives from the third person singular possessive suffix reconstructed for Proto Oceanic. Reflexes of the suffix are evident in neighbouring Malekula languages; in Neverver, the suffix has fused with the noun.

- |      |                                |                |               |                                  |
|------|--------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| (33) | Naman<br>(Crowley 2006b: 223)  | <i>mete-n</i>  | <i>nenge</i>  | ‘new shoots of native<br>almond’ |
|      | Neve’ei<br>(Musgrave 2007: 34) | <i>nebat-n</i> | <i>nemwat</i> | ‘head of the snake’              |
|      | Avava<br>(Crowley 2006a: 48)   | <i>bas-n</i>   | <i>bala</i>   | ‘tusk of pig’                    |
|      | Neverver                       | <i>nebatn</i>  | <i>neman</i>  | ‘head of bird’                   |

Examples of different semantic sub-types of inherent possessive constructions are presented below. In each case, a part-whole type of relation can be understood.

- |      |                               |                 |  |                            |
|------|-------------------------------|-----------------|--|----------------------------|
| (34) | Flora                         |                 |  |                            |
|      | <i>niviskhon</i>              | <i>nidam</i>    |  | ‘flesh of yam’             |
|      | <i>nilivkhan</i>              | <i>nakha</i>    |  | ‘trunk (body of a tree)’   |
|      | <i>nivin</i>                  | <i>nakha</i>    |  | ‘bark (skin of a tree)’    |
|      | <i>nukhutn</i>                | <i>nani</i>     |  | ‘trunk of a coconut’       |
|      | <i>netavran</i>               | <i>kakao</i>    |  | ‘branch of cacao’          |
|      | <i>nivin</i>                  | <i>nani</i>     |  | ‘husk of coconut’          |
| (35) | Fauna                         |                 |  |                            |
|      | <i>nulvun</i>                 | <i>nibarbar</i> |  | ‘tusk (tooth of pig)’      |
|      | <i>niviskhon</i>              | <i>nibbwas</i>  |  | ‘pork (meat of boar)’      |
|      | <i>natn</i>                   | <i>nibarbar</i> |  | ‘piglet (child of pig)’    |
|      | <i>natn</i>                   | <i>buluk</i>    |  | ‘calf (child of cow)’      |
|      | <i>nigovin</i>                | <i>noto</i>     |  | ‘egg of chicken’           |
| (36) | Human body parts and products |                 |  |                            |
|      | <i>nemrusn</i>                | <i>nimdan</i>   |  | ‘lash of eye’              |
|      | <i>noron</i>                  | <i>nevran</i>   |  | ‘palm of hand’             |
|      | <i>noron</i>                  | <i>nakhlen</i>  |  | ‘sole of foot’             |
|      | <i>niesn</i>                  | <i>nimdan</i>   |  | ‘tears (fluid of eye)’     |
|      | <i>nustn</i>                  | <i>nakhlen</i>  |  | ‘heel (end of leg)’        |
|      | <i>norgon</i>                 | <i>nevran</i>   |  | ‘fingers (digits of hand)’ |

- (37) Parts of natural/traditionally constructed entities
- |                                |  |                                   |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| <i>nijiglen nemlang</i>        |  | ‘side of deep pool (in a river)’  |
| <i>nibokhtan nevanu</i>        |  | ‘back wall of house’              |
| <i>nimilngan nokhos</i>        |  | ‘area of garden’                  |
| <i>nimdan nolong</i>           |  | ‘eye (centre) of laplap’          |
| <i>nitabatn nasal tnam ang</i> |  | ‘the beginning of our friendship’ |
| <i>nomngostn nossorian</i>     |  | ‘end of the story’                |
- (38) Object – material of composition
- |                             |  |                              |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| <i>nievin niat</i>          |  | ‘ashes of thatch’            |
| <i>nievin nibbua titi-r</i> |  | ‘ashes of their grandmother’ |
| <i>nevlan nakha</i>         |  | ‘charcoal of wood’           |

#### 5.1.2.2. Associative possession

The term ‘associative possession’ is used to describe a range of possessive relations that are encoded with the nominal modifying particle [NMOD] *an*. *An* functions as a connective between possessum and possessor but it does not exclusively encode a single semantic type of possessive relation. Relationships between possessum and possessor that are encoded in the associative construction include the relation between a location and its name, local spatial or positional relations, and temporal relations. In many of these cases, the relationship between possessor and possessum is established by NMOD. It is not a naturally occurring relationship, but rather one that is constructed and this is reflected in the presence of an overt connective. There are also examples of associative constructions where the possessor is non-specific, and the expression encoded in the possessor noun phrase refers to a class of objects rather than an individual entity. At the same time, there are examples of associative constructions where the possessor is specific and referring.

Prototypically, *n*-final possessums occur in the inherent construction described in §5.1.2.1., while other possessums occur in the associative construction. The term ‘associative’ is a useful way of classifying these constructions as they formally resemble associative constructions introduced by *ni* in Oceanic languages such as Longgu (Hill and Goddard 1997) and Fijian (Schütz 1985) and marked by *-(n)i* or *-gi* in the Vanuatu language Lolovoli (Hyslop 2001).

Examples of the associative possessive construction are presented below.

- (39) Locations and their names
- |                 |                   |                          |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>nevanu</i>   | <i>an Vanuatu</i> | ‘the country of Vanuatu’ |
| <i>lokhavre</i> | <i>an Limav</i>   | ‘the village of Limav’   |
| <i>aiyem</i>    | <i>an Lavni</i>   | ‘the dwelling of Lavni’  |

- (40) Spatial associations  
*vere*            *an Lavni*            ‘outside Lavni’  
*lile*             *an Nioblikh*        ‘near Nioblikh’
- (41) Temporal associations  
*nida*            *an tue*                ‘mother(s) of the past’  
*mama*          *an tue*                ‘father(s) of the past’  
*nibbwās*        *an tue*                ‘boars of the past’  
*aiyem*          *an tue*                ‘dwellings of the past’

We can compare examples of object-material of composition in the inherent construction, with those in the associative construction. In the inherent construction, we find that ashes and charcoal are treated as inherently belonging to the entity that has been burned. In the associative construction, we find that objects such as houses, laplap and cloth may be composed of a range of different materials. Abstract nouns such as stories and songs are also ‘composed of’ or ‘about’ different content.

- (42) Object – material of composition  
*nakhmal*        *an nuvudumni*        ‘grass house’  
*nolong*          *an navuj*                ‘laplap made of banana’  
*nolong*          *an nidam mial*        ‘laplap made of red yam’  
*nakha*            *an nivinbbu*            ‘bamboo stick’  
*nitval*            *an nedram*             ‘pandanus cloth’  
*nemkhat*        *an nedram*             ‘pandanus wrap’  
*nossorian*      *an Lemanvukh*        ‘story of Lemanvukh’  
*nossorian*      *an noto*                ‘story of chickens’  
*nimitl*            *an nibisbokh*        ‘folktale of the rat and kingfisher’  
                          *adrikh nasikh*

Part-whole relations in borrowed items or recently developed items are encoded with associative possession rather than inherent possession. Traditionally, houses didn’t have windows and doors, and floors were earth rather than concrete or wood.

- (43) New part – whole relations  
*fored*            *an trak ang*            ‘front of the truck’  
*wido*             *an nakhmal ang*        ‘window of the house’  
*tael*              *an nakhmal ang*        ‘tiles of the house’  
*nimdali*          *an nakhmal ang*        ‘door of the house’  
*nimdali*          *an nuwag*                ‘door of ship’  
*nakhajang*      *an nakhmal ang*        ‘floor of the house’  
*niar*              *an nokhos*             ‘fence of garden’

Certain associative constructions appear to encode an inalienable relationship between possessor and possessum. In fact, these relationships are normally implied by speakers rather than explicitly expressed. The word *nilatlat* refers to a stake used to prop up large and bushy yam plants. *Niat* means both the sago palm tree, and roofing thatch made from the leaves of this tree. *Nakhalmas* ‘shin’ can only belong to a leg. It is possible that in each case, the speaker has used an associative construction both to explain the meaning of the head noun and to draw attention to a normally unstated relationship for benefit of the audience, in my case, the culturally naïve linguist. The possessor noun phrase in these constructions can be interpreted as encoding a non-specific entity, rather than a specific possessor.

(44)	Informative associative constructions		
	<i>nilatlat</i>	<i>an nidam edr</i>	‘yams stakes’
	<i>nakhas</i>	<i>an nidam ang</i>	‘yam marker’
	<i>niat</i>	<i>an nakhmal</i>	‘house thatch’
	<i>nidongdong</i>	<i>an nebang</i>	‘banyan glue (sap)’
	<i>nibelbel</i>	<i>an neman</i>	‘bird rope/leash’
	<i>nibial</i>	<i>an nimitvin nibisbokh</i>	‘rat excrement hole (anus)’
	<i>nibarbar</i>	<i>an nilivtev</i>	‘pig with Nilivtev tusks’
	<i>nakhalmas</i>	<i>an nekhlen okh</i>	‘the shin of your (a person’s) leg’

The informative function of the associative construction is occasionally employed to highlight or establish a relationship between a human possessor and possessum; however, such examples are rare in the corpus. Importantly, the examples in (45), which express inalienable relationships, demonstrate that the parameter of alienability is no longer the primary parameter by which possessive constructions are organized. Also in (45), the possessor noun phrases encode specific and referring entities, as in each case the human possessor is a previously introduced character in a text.

(45)	<i>nimkhut</i>	<i>an nimokhmokh</i>	‘son of the woman’
	<i>nimokhmokh tro</i>	<i>an natn</i>	‘mother of the child’

The associative construction is used to express non-prototypical possessive relations. This includes inalienable possessions that become alienable. In one traditional story, a snake sheds its skin. Having been abandoned by the snake in the ocean, the skin is expressed with the associative construction. This contrasts with an inalienably possessed ‘skin’ in the inherent construction’.

(46)	<i>nimilun</i>	<i>an nemat</i>	‘(shed) snake skin’
	<i>nimilun</i>	<i>nemat</i>	‘snake skin (on a snake)’

In another traditional story, a rat and fruitbat are two protagonists. They regularly plunder a garden. The gardener, a minor participant in the story, is encoded as a possessum, and the garden as an associated possessor. Prototypically, we would expect the human to be the possessor.

- (47) *nimkhut*            *an nokhos*            ‘man of the garden’

Other non-prototypical possessive relations involve a borrowed possessor or possessum, or an introduced rather than indigenous concept. The associative construction is used to establish the relationship between these entities.

- (48) Borrowed associative constructions
- |                     |                             |  |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <i>nivulian</i>     | <i>an meresin</i>           | ‘cost/price of medicine’               |
| <i>kas</i>          | <i>an mani</i>              | ‘money box’                            |
| <i>nesal</i>        | <i>an nemaurian</i>         | ‘way of life’                          |
| <i>nidre</i>        | <i>an Yesu</i>              | ‘the blood of Christ’                  |
| <i>nesal</i>        | <i>an norongrokian</i>      | ‘way of love’                          |
| <i>kastom stori</i> | <i>an Malekula</i>          | ‘traditional story of Makekula’        |
| <i>mining</i>       | <i>an stori lele anjing</i> | ‘the meaning of that short story’      |
| <i>nobo</i>         | <i>an kastom</i>            | ‘traditional song (song of tradition)’ |

Nominalizations, which are typically *n*-final, were identified in §5.1.1.1. above as forming a group of exceptions when possessed by human possessors. They also occur in the associative (rather than inalienable) construction with non-human possessors.

- (49) *nemaurian*    *an tue*            ‘life of the past’  
*nivtakhian*    *an nilangrav*    ‘after the hurricane’  
*nivuvamian*    *an nisin*        ‘first of all (first of a thing)’

### 5.1.3. Semantic irregularities

Semantic irregularities occur in the corpus. One construction which is semantically irregular as well as being formally unexpected involves the possessed noun *niar* which can mean ‘fence’. In the following examples, it refers to the generation which one belongs to, to one’s ‘siblings’. This form is irregular because it involves both NMOD and a possessive determiner. The first three examples come from texts produced by the oldest community member. The final example, which follows the predicted pattern for human pronominal possessors with non-*n*-final possessed nouns, was produced by a much younger speaker and probably represents a simplification of this older irregular construction.

(50)	<i>niar</i>	<i>an mam</i>	‘our (EXCL) siblings’
	<i>niar</i>	<i>an git</i>	‘our (INCL) siblings’
	<i>niar</i>	<i>an okh adr</i>	‘your (SG) siblings’
	<i>niar</i>	<i>tgam</i>	‘your (PL) siblings’

A different type of exception concerns the word *nolog* ‘laplap’. This word is not *n*-final, yet it is attested in both the inherent and associative constructions. The contrast appears to relate to the way in which the laplap is perceived. When it is under construction, the associative construction is used, highlighting the material of composition. When it has been cooked, or is being consumed, the inherent construction is used, referring to the resulting type of laplap. In both cases, we might consider that the material of construction has generic rather than specific reference.

(51)	<i>nolog</i>	<i>an navuj</i>	‘laplap made of banana’
	<i>nolog</i>	<i>an nidam</i>	‘laplap made of yam’
	<i>nolog</i>	<i>an nidam mial</i>	‘laplap made of red yam’
	<i>nolog</i>	<i>navuj</i>	‘banana laplap’
	<i>nolog</i>	<i>nibarbar</i>	‘pork laplap’

## 5.2. Relative clauses

Common nouns and pronominal-nouns may be modified by a relative clause. There is no structural distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses in Neverver, and attempts to elicit non-restrictive constructions met with some confusion in the field. As such, the focus of this section is on restrictive relative clauses. Andrews (2007) provides a useful definition: “a relative clause (RC) is a subordinate clause which delimits the reference of an NP by specifying the role of the referent of that NP in the situation described by the RC” (Andrews 2007: 206).

Relative clause constructions are governed by a basic semantic condition: “A relative clause codes a state or event one of whose participants is *co-referent* with the head noun modified by the clause” (Givón 2001b: 176). From a typological perspective, a relative clause can be described as being either external-headed, where the head noun is located outside the relative clause, or more rarely internal-headed, where the head noun is located inside the relative clause. The relative clause itself can be described as being pronominal or postnominal according to its position in relation to the head noun (Song 2001: 212).

Like other nominal modifiers in Neverver, relative clauses are postnominal. The external head of the relative clause is always the first constituent of the noun phrase. When the head noun is definite, a subsequent relative clause is

introduced by the invariant particle *an* ‘NMOD’. This morpheme appears in the left-most position of the relative clause, and serves to signal the beginning of the relative clause. Relative clauses that modify indefinite nouns do not require NMOD (see §5.2.9. and §5.3.1.1.).

When the head noun is definite, the terminal boundary of the relative clause is generally marked by the anaphoric demonstrative *ang* or its reduced form *a*. Additionally, when a relative clause modifies a definite noun phrase that plays the grammatical role of subject, *ang* functions to separate the entire modified noun phrase from the remainder of the main clause. When the relative clause is clause-final, *ang* is optional. If the modified noun phrase is indefinite, and/or the relative clause is marked for irrealis mood, *ang* does not occur.

The co-referential noun phrase in the relative clause is deleted. The argument structure of the verb in the relative clause is the primary means of understanding the semantic role of the deleted argument. Neverver does, however, make use of two strategies that allow the grammatical role of the deleted argument to be recovered, and that assist with the identification of the semantic relation of that argument.

Keenan and Comrie (1977), in their cross-linguistic study of relative clause constructions, have found that languages make use of a Primary Relativization Strategy, which applies to the relativisation of the subject position of the relative clause. The primary relativization strategy may also apply to the relativisation of other positions; however, this is thought to be determined by the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy – the strategy must apply to consecutive positions from the left on the Hierarchy. At the point where the primary relativisation strategy ceases to apply, other strategies may be used to allow relativisation, or relativisation may not be permitted.

#### Accessibility Hierarchy

Subject → Direct Object → Indirect Object → Oblique → Genitive → Object of Comparison (After Keenan and Comrie 1977: 66).

In Neverver, it is possible to relativise all positions on the Accessibility Hierarchy with the exception of object of comparison, as Neverver does not have a morphological comparative. (See §9.6 for a description of the analytic comparative.) The primary relativization strategy is gapping, which is also described as the “obliteration strategy” (Song 2001: 217), or “omission” (Andrews 2007: 222). This strategy applies to noun phrases in all relativizable positions on the hierarchy. In the case of one subcategory of obliques, we find that the second relativization strategy applies. This is the resumptive pronoun strategy, described in §5.2.6.2.

## 5.2.1. Relativizing the subject position

In constructions where the co-referential argument is the subject of the relative clause, the relativisation strategy involves a combination of gapping and subject-verb agreement. NMOD introduces the relative clause. In the subject position within the relative clause, there is a gap. In the verb phrase within the relative clause, the person and number of the co-referential argument remain marked by the obligatory subject/mood prefix on verb.

- (52) Subject of main; subject of relative  
*[Niterikh [an im-ngar nakh]<sub>RC</sub>]<sub>NP</sub> i-tokh si.*  
 child NMOD 3IRR:SG- cry here 3REAL:SG- exist NEG  
 ‘There is no child who is crying here.’ [NVKS8:16]
- (53) Object of main; subject of relative  
*Nim-somda [nimkhut [an i-ve nokhos*  
 1IRR:SG-discover man NMOD 3REAL:SG-make garden  
*nakha]<sub>RC</sub> ang]<sub>NP</sub>.*  
 wood ANA  
 ‘I will discover the person who made the garden stakes.’ [NVKS10.40]
- (54) Nominalized object of main; subject of relative  
*Nat-khan me [ni-kkan-ian [an i-mrekh]<sub>RC</sub>]<sub>NP</sub>.*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-eat just NPR-eat-NSF NMOD 3REAL:SG-ST:raw  
 ‘We just ate food that was raw.’ [NVKS07.4: 22.154]

## 5.2.2. Relativizing the object position

When the co-referential argument functions as the object of the relative clause, we find NMOD marking the beginning of the relative clause. The primary relativisation strategy of gapping also applies; however, there is no verbal morphology marking the object. Properties of the verb, namely the number and type of obligatory arguments, must be used to recover the semantic role of the gapped object.

- (55) Subject of main; object of relative  
*[Niterikh [an adr at-lem duvakh*  
 child NMOD 3NSG 3REAL:PL-give.birth first  
*ang]<sub>RC</sub>]<sub>NP</sub> i-vu*  
 ANA 3REAL:SG-go  
 ‘The child that they bore first went.’ [NVCT02.33: 161.509]

- (56) Object of main; object of relative

*Ar-khil*                    *[nevas*            *[an*            *nam*                    *nabit-lem]*<sub>RC</sub>]<sub>NP</sub>.  
 3REAL:DU-dig.up    wild.yam    NMOD    1EXCL:NSG    1EXCL:IRR:PL-carry  
 ‘They(2) dug up the wild yam that we were going to carry home.’  
 [NVCV02.23:116.382]

- (57) Prepositional object (oblique) of main; object of relative

*Ku-rongil*                *kum-bbue*                *nakhavakh*                *ibi-skham*  
 2REAL:SG-can    2IRR:SG-make    yam.mound    3IRR:SG-one  
*lon*    *[nokhos*            *[an*                *ku-sil*                    *ij]*<sub>RC</sub>]<sub>NP</sub>.  
 LOC    garden    NMOD    2REAL:SG-burn    ANT  
 ‘You can make a yam mound in the garden that you’ve burned clear.’  
 [NVDL08.31-32]

- (58) Object of main; object of sentential complement in relative

*Mang*                *i-lav*                    *[nimokhmokh*                *[an*  
 man:ANA    3REAL:SG-get    female                    NMOD  
*i-na*                *ni-ver*                    *[nib-lav*                    *ang]*<sub>COMP</sub>]<sub>RC</sub>]<sub>NP</sub>.  
 PSNPR-1SG    1REAL:SG-want    1IRR:SG-get    ANA  
 ‘The man married the woman who I wanted to marry.’ [NVE14.4]

### 5.2.3. Relativizing the second object position

The gapping strategy also applies to co-referential arguments that function as second objects in the relative clause. In example (59), the common argument *nokho* is the object and patient of the main clause, but in the relative clause, it has the semantic role of instrument, realized as the second object, and marked by the applicative suffix *-ikh* on the verb. The patient semantic role of the action *ga* ‘tie something’ is realized as the direct object *nakhmal*. Thus, we have an example of the co-referential argument relativizing the second object position.

- (59) *Ni-vu*                    *ni-vev*                    *lakha,*                *ni-te*  
 1REAL:SG-go    1REAL:SG-go.to    bush                1REAL:SG-cut  
*[nokho*            *[an*                *nim-gak-ikh*                    *nakhmal]*<sub>RC</sub>    *ang]*<sub>NP</sub>  
 vine                NMOD    1IRR:SG-tie.up-APPL    house                ANA  
 ‘I went to the bush and cut the vines that I was going to bind the house with.’  
 [NVDL06.21]

## 5.2.4. Relativizing the oblique – objects of prepositions

When the co-referential argument functions as the object of a preposition, the noun is gapped, but the preposition itself remains as a marker of the oblique position and an indicator of the semantic role of the gapped noun. In the following examples, the head nouns are gapped in the relative clause, but their prepositions remain stranded in the right-most position.

- (60) *I-trokh*            *si*        *[nibial*        *[an*        *ei*        *im-bbu*  
 3REAL:SG-see    NEG    hole        NMOD    3:SG    3IRR:SG-go  
*im-bakhbakh*    *aran]<sub>RC]</sub><sub>NP</sub>.  
 3IRR:SG-hide    LOC.on  
 ‘He didn’t see a hole that he could go and hide in.’ [NVCT01.20: 106.531]*
- (61) *Ni-malu*            *ni-sibrik*            *[nakhabb*        *[an*        *nida*  
 1REAL:SG-go.out    1REAL:SG-let.go    fire            NMOD    mother  
*i-ti-tn-ikh*                            *na*        *lon]<sub>RC]</sub><sub>NP</sub>.  
 3REAL:SG-DUP-cook-APPL    1SG    LOC  
 ‘I left the fire that my mother cooked for me on.’ [NVKI003.21]*
- (62) *I-ve*                    *[nebelkha*            *titi*            *[an*        *i-jik*  
 3REAL:SG-make    yam.platform    3POSS:SG    NMOD    3REAL:SG-put  
*nidam*    *titi*            *aran]<sub>RC]</sub><sub>NP</sub>.  
 yam    3POSS:SG    LOC.on  
 ‘He made his yam platform that he put his yams on.’ [NVKI006.102]*

## 5.2.5. Relativizing the genitive – possessors

Clauses in which a noun phrase playing a genitive or possessive role is relativized are rather rare in the corpus. As with other relative clauses discussed so far, the gapping strategy is used in place of the co-referential argument.

- (63) *I-te*                    *[nibbwas*        *[an*        *nulvun*            *i-kkel]<sub>RC]</sub><sub>NP</sub>.  
 3REAL:SG-hit    male.pig    NMOD    front.tooth    3REAL:SG-curled  
 ‘He killed a pig whose tusks curled around.’ [NVKS12.29: 205.343]*

## 5.2.6. Relativization and pronominal-nouns

Independent pronouns may not occur as the head of a noun phrase which is modified by a relative clause. Instead, we find pronominal-nouns functioning as highly referring pronominal heads of relative clauses. In fact, these pronominal-nouns appear almost exclusively with either a relative clause or a demonstrative determiner, which itself appears to derive from a relative construction.

5.2.6.1. *Relative clauses with an as the head*

The pronominal-noun *an* serves as an anaphor to human and non-human referents, as well as to situations. In the following examples, previously introduced entities and situations are encoded with *an*.

- (64) *[An [an i-vtakh]<sub>RC</sub> ang]<sub>NP</sub> mej i-vu.*  
 DEMSPN NMOD 3REAL:SG-last ANA IMM 3REAL:SG-go  
 ‘Next, the one who was last born went.’ [NVCT2.34: 167.899]

- (65) *[An [an i-skhen avev tnakh]<sub>RC</sub>]<sub>NP</sub>*  
 DEMSPN NMOD 3REAL:SG-not.exist seaward here  
*be [an [an akhus]<sub>RC</sub>]<sub>NP</sub>.*  
 but DEMSPN NMOD inland  
 ‘The one which is not down here but the one which is inland (of a certain bamboo plant).’ [NVCV06.6: 465.123]

- (66) *I-vu i-sber [an [an im-sil*  
 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-reach DEMSPN NMOD 3IRR:SG-burn  
*nokhos ang]<sub>RC</sub>]<sub>NP</sub>.*  
 garden ANA  
 ‘It (time) went on until the occasion that he was going to burn the garden (of a gardening phase).’ [NVKS11.012]

5.2.6.2. *Relative clauses with kut as the head*

When a previously mentioned place is modified by a relative clause, the anaphoric pronominal-noun *kut* appears in the main clause. Location relative clauses with *kut* as the head differ from other relative clauses in that the co-referential noun phrase is encoded as the resumptive pronoun (*y*)*e* inside the relative clause, in the position where the local noun occurs in a simple sentence. This resumptive pronoun is restricted to relative clauses with *kut* as the head noun. It only occurs in clauses where *kut* refers to the location of an event, as in (67) and not relative clauses that provide the name of a location, as in (68).

- (67) *Ar-uv*            *ari-sber*            *kut*            *an*            *ar-ver*  
 3REAL:DU-go    3REAL:DL-reach    LOCPN    NMOD    3REAL:DU-want  
*abir-rakh*                            *ye,*            *ar-rakh.*  
 3IRR:DU-clear.ground    RSPN    3REAL:DU-clear.ground  
 ‘They went all the way to the place where they wanted to clear the ground,  
 and they cleared it.’ [NVCT001.07: 31.615]
- (68) *I-vu*            *i-vev*            *lon*    *nokhos*    *titi*  
 3REAL:SG-go    3REAL:SG-go to    LOC    garden    3POSS:SG  
*kut*    *an*            *ar-ver*            *Arakhalav.*  
 LOCPN    NMOD    IMPS:REAL-say    place.of.clay  
 ‘He went to his garden, the place that they call Arakhalav.’ [NVKS02.50]

### 5.2.6.3. Relative clauses with *dran* as the head

The third relativizable pronominal head is *dran*. It functions to specify the temporal location of an event.

- (69) *At-lukh-lukh-lukh*            *i-sber*            *dran*            *an*  
 3REAL:PL-DUP-DUP-stay    3REAL:SG-reach    TMPPN    NMOD  
*nidam*    *i-yaj.*  
 yam    3REAL:SG-ripe  
 ‘They waited until the time when the yams were ready.’ [NVKS12.7: 34.578]

The temporal pronominal-noun commonly occurs with a relative clause that is marked for irrealis mood. In such constructions, a conditional relationship is expressed between the temporal expression and the main clause (see also §13.3.4.).

- (70) *Dran*    *an*            *i-okh*            *kubi-tbbukh*    *nokhos,*  
 TMPPN    NMOD    PSNPR-2:SG    2IRR:SG-have    garden  
*kum-khavukh*    *nidam.*  
 2IRR:SG- plant    yam  
 ‘If you had a garden, you'd plant yams.’ [NVKI04.43]
- (71) *Dran*    *an*            *na*    *nibi-tbbukh*    *nitvilam,*    *ni-rongil*  
 TMPPN    NMOD    1SG    1IRR:SG-have    mat            1REAL:SG-can  
*me*    *nib-lav*            *nitvilam*    *ang*    *nib-lik*            *i-okh.*  
 just    1IRR:SG-get    mat            ANA    1IRR:SG-pass    PSNPR-2SG  
 ‘So, if I had a mat, I could just give the mat to you.’ [NVKI04.45]

## 5.2.7. Relative clauses with demonstrative predicates

Relative clause constructions with demonstrative predicates provide a means of determining head nouns. In such constructions, the verbal predicate expresses demonstrative meaning. In the corpus, the co-referential noun only ever functions as the subject of the relative clause. This is in keeping with the intransitive nature of the demonstrative predicates. The verb in the relative clause construction has obligatory realis mood, in agreement with the definiteness of demonstratives, and carries third person singular subject morphology. Demonstrative relative clauses do not terminate with the anaphoric demonstrative *ang* as they already encode demonstrative meaning.

- (72) *Nida an i-jing at-ve*  
 mother NMOD 3REAL:SG-be.there 3REAL:PL-COP  
*nimokhmokh ttis.*  
 female holy/sacred  
 ‘The mothers that are there/those mothers are sacred women.’ [NVKI06.213]

Both common and local nouns are able to be determined by a demonstrative relative clause.

- (73) *Niterikh-mokhmokh i-skham i-malu lokhavre*  
 child-female 3REAL:SG-one 3REAL:SG-go.out village  
*an i-jing.*  
 NMOD 3REAL:SG-be.there  
 ‘A young girl came from the village that was there/that village.’ [NVKS14.05]

The demonstrative relative clause construction appears occasionally in the speech of older community members; however, for most speakers today, NMOD and the demonstrative verb have fused, producing the simplified form *anjing* meaning ‘that/those’. The property which marks *jing* as verbal – taking an obligatory subject prefix – has been lost. The following locative clause displays the use of the simple demonstrative determiner.

- (74) *kut an ne-mmang-ian anjing i-vu*  
 LOCPN NMOD NPR-make.noise-NSF that 3REAL:SG-go  
*ye i-vlem.*  
 RSPN REAL:SG-come  
 ‘the place where that noise came from’ [NVKS18.08: 37.637]

There is a tendency for the voiced affricate to be pronounced as a voiceless fricative also, so the form [ansij] is a common articulation of this construction.

While *anjing* is the most common fused demonstrative, we also find occurrences of *anjakh* [anjax~ansax] meaning ‘this/these’. Like *anjing*, the demonstrative may modify a noun:

- (75) *Nias*                      *anjakh*    *i-tur*                      *nomngon*  
 Tahitian.chestnut    this            3REAL:SG-stand    mouth  
*nakhmal*    *t-mam*                                      *aiyem.*  
 house            POSSDT-1EXCL:NSG    home  
 ‘This chestnut stands at the front of our house at home.’ [NVKS14.34]

### 5.2.8. Pronominal-nouns and demonstrative predicates

The spatial pronominal-noun *kut*, and the temporal pronominal-noun *dran* can also be determined by a demonstrative relative clause, or a simple demonstrative modifier.

- (76) *Kut*            *an*            *i-jing,*                      *ni-te*                      *nibbwaw*    *tang.*  
 LOCPN    NMOD    3REAL:SG-be.there    1REAL:SG-hit    male.pig    there  
 ‘At that place, I killed a pig there.’ [NVKI03.29]

- (77) *Ba*            *i-vu*                      *i-vev*                      *kut*            *anjing*  
 when    3REAL:SG-go    3REAL:SG-go.to    LOCPN    that  
*i-khitrokh*            *niviturtur*                      *i-skham.*  
 3REAL:SG-see    adolescent.girl    3REAL:SG-one  
 ‘When he went to the place there, he saw a young woman.’ [NVKS02.08]

- (78) *Dran*            *anjing,*            *at-ve*                      *mokh*            *nimkhut.*  
 TMPPN    that            3REAL:PL-COP    all            man  
 ‘At that time, they were all men.’ [NVKS11.68]

While the corpus contains examples of *dran anjing* ‘at that time, that time then’, there are no examples of *\*dran anjakh* ‘at this time, this time here’. This is most likely to be because this meaning is encoded in a separate lexical item *barnakh* meaning ‘now, today’, which functions as the head of a temporal adverbial phrase.

Although there are examples of *kut* and *dran* being modified by demonstrative relative clauses and the fused demonstrative determiners, there are no examples of the pronominal-noun *an* being modified in this way. Instead, we find only *anjing* and *anjakh* standing alone as noun phrase heads. It is perhaps the case that the sequences *\*an anjing* and *\*an anjakh* have simplified, with the pronominal-noun head being suppressed.

## 5.2.9. Relative clauses and indefinite heads

As noted in §5.2. above, when the head of a relative clause is indefinite, the relative clause is not introduced by NMOD. Number clauses that modify indefinite heads also do not take NMOD (see §5.3.1.1.). In addition, when the head noun is indefinite, relative clauses cannot end with the anaphoric demonstrative *ang*.

- (79) *Barnakh* *nim-ta* *ni-divdiv-ian* *mil* *aran*  
 now 1IRR:SG-show NPR-measure-NSF again LOC.on  
*nimokhmokh-tro* *i-skham* *i-mas.*  
 female-old 3REAL:SG-one 3REAL:SG-dead  
 ‘Now, I’ll give an example again about an old woman who is dead.’  
 [NVKI26.36:193.192]

- (80) *Ni-khit* *nisid* *i-skham* *mo* *si*  
 1REAL:SG-see thing:INDF 3REAL:SG-one CONT NEG  
*ibi-rvikh* *ar* *nevanu.*  
 3IRR:SG-good LOC.on region  
 ‘I no longer see a single thing that is good in this place/on earth.’  
 [NVCT07.13: 52.231]

## 5.3. Number

The form of a noun does not vary to indicate number in Neverver. The number of a subject noun phrase is encoded in the obligatory subject/mood prefix in the verb phrase. Nouns that are used in a collective, mass, or generic sense are almost always cross-referenced to a third person singular subject/mood prefix on the verb.

- (81) Plural subject noun phrase marked for plural  
*Niterikh* *ang* *at-lukh* *i-gang.*  
 child ANA 3REAL:PL-live 3REAL:SG-like.so  
 ‘The children lived like that.’ [NVKS03.14]
- (82) Mass noun phrase marked for singular  
*Ni-leb* *nani* *ang* *i-vu*  
 1REAL:SG-carry coconut ANA 3REAL:SG-go  
*lon* *nebelkha*  
 LOC copra.burner  
 ‘I carry the coconut onto the copra burner.’ [NVDL02.11]

Number marking on all arguments can be optionally signaled by post-nominal modifiers. In the previous chapter, general markers of quantity were described (§4.5.4.). A post-nominal plural marker of the shape *adr ~ edr* was illustrated (§4.5.6.1.), along with the use of a post-nominal numeral clauses (§4.5.6.2.). Details of numeral clauses will be presented in the following subsections, including a contrast between numerals introduced by NMOD, and those that simply follow the head noun.

### 5.3.1. Cardinal numbers

Numerals appear inside the noun phrase as post-nominal modifiers, in the same position as other relative clauses.

#### 5.3.1.1. Cardinal numbers one to nine

Lexemes referring to the numbers one to nine are encoded as verbs. They carry a subject/mood prefix, although the prefix is exclusively marked for third person singular. Numerals can take either realis or irrealis mood marking, depending on the mood characteristics and polarity of the main clause.

The numerals one to nine follow a quinary pattern. The numbers six to nine comprise the morpheme *jo-* and one of the stems one to four. We can observe that the allomorph of *vas* [βas] ‘four’ is *bbwas* [<sup>m</sup>B<sup>w</sup>as] following the irrealis *m-*.

(83)	Realis	Irrealis	
	<i>i-skham</i>	<i>ibi-skham</i>	‘one’
	<i>i-ru</i>	<i>ib-ru</i>	‘two’
	<i>i-tl</i>	<i>ibi-tl</i>	‘three’
	<i>i-vas</i>	<i>im-bbwas</i>	‘four’
	<i>i-lim</i>	<i>ib-lim</i>	‘five’
	<i>i-jo-s</i>	<i>im-jo-s</i>	‘six’
	<i>i-jo-ru</i>	<i>im-jo-ru</i>	‘seven’
	<i>i-jo-tl</i>	<i>im-jo-tl</i>	‘eight’
	<i>i-jo-vas</i>	<i>im-jo-vas</i>	‘nine’

Number relative clauses follow lexical modifiers, possessives and demonstratives, and can be followed by a further relative clause.

(84)	HEAD	LEXICAL	POSSESSIVE	NUMBER
	<i>Ari-rkhov</i>	<i>nivis-bratn</i>	<i>lele</i>	<i>titi-dr</i>
	3REAL:DU-hold	bow-real	small	3POSS-PL
				<i>i-ru</i>
				3REAL:SG-two
	‘They held two small bows of theirs’ [NVKS01.56]			

A key distinction is made in Neverver in the encoding of number with definite and indefinite noun phrase heads. Recall that definiteness is associated with a speaker's belief about a hearer's ability to establish the referent of a given expression (see Table 18). The referents of definite noun phrase heads have number marking that is introduced by NMOD; indefinite noun phrase heads have number marking that simply follows the head noun (and any associated modifiers). In (84), the head noun *nivis-bratn* 'bow' is mentioned for the first time by the speaker. This contrasts with (85), where the head noun *nevan nani* 'coconut fruits' is a previously mentioned entity.

- (85) *Nemat at-bel nevan nani an*  
 snake 3REAL:PL-chase fruit coconut NMOD  
*i-ru ang.*  
 3REAL:SG-two ANA  
 'The snakes chased the two coconut fruit'. [NVKS12.69: 524.904]

### 5.3.1.2. Cardinal numbers ten and over

Higher numbers (including ten) take the shape of nouns rather than verbs and carry the common noun prefix. The numeral system from ten on is decimal.

- (86)  $10^1$  *nangavul* 'ten'  
 $10^2$  *nangat* 'hundred'  
 $10^3$  *netar* 'thousand'  
 $10^4$  *namul* 'ten thousand' (also 'citrus fruit')

Nominal numerals occur as post-nominal modifiers in the same number position as the verbal numerals. Unmarked relative clauses occur with indefinite heads (87); NMOD constructions occur with definite heads (90).

- (87) *Ib-lav nibarbar nangavul ib-lik nesal*  
 3IRR:SG-get pig ten 3IRR:SG-pass friend  
*titi*  
 3POSS:SG  
 'He'll give ten pigs to his friend.' [NVKI05.64]

Precise numbers above ten are expressed in a complex number phrase that contains the expression *nangavul nidruman*. *Nidruman* is attested elsewhere with the meaning of 'body' but most commonly it appears in the expression of higher numerals.

- (88) *nangavul nidruman i-skham* 'eleven'  
*nangavul nidruman i-ru* 'twelve'  
*nangavul nidruman i-tl* 'thirteen'  
*nangavul nidruman i-vas* 'fourteen'  
*nangavul nidruman i-lim* 'fifteen'  
*nangavul nidruman i-jo-s* 'sixteen'  
*nangavul nidruman i-jo-ru* 'seventeen'  
*nangavul nidruman i-jo-tl* 'eighteen'  
*nangavul nidruman i-jo-vas* 'nineteen'  
*nangavul i-ru* 'twenty'  
*nangavul i-ru nidruman i-skham* 'twenty one'  
*nangat i-skham nangavul i-ru nidruman i-vas* 'one hundred and twenty four'
- (89) *Bor nisikha t-na im-bbue nisikha*  
 maybe age POSSDT-1SG 3IRR:SG-COP age  
*nangavul nidruman ib-ru si ibi-skham.*  
 ten body 3IRR:SG-two or 3IRR:SG-one  
 'Maybe my age was twelve or eleven years.' [NVKI03.08]

In (89), the irrealis marking on the numeral agrees with the marker of epistemic modality *bor* 'maybe', as does the copular verb which is also marked for irrealis mood, despite its past-time reference.

The indigenous numeral system has been replaced to a large extent by the use of the English-based counting system. The largest complex indigenous number attested in the spoken corpus is 'fifteen'.

- (90) *Ba i-sber nabbung an nangavul*  
 when 3REAL:SG-reach day NMOD ten  
*nidruman i-lim ang...*  
 body 3REAL:SG-five ANA  
 'When it reached the fifteenth day...' [NVKI03.90]

Chief Jacob of Lingarakh village provided written constructions for much larger numbers. In these constructions, he uses the phrase *i-tur aran* which literally means 'it stands on (it)'. In the expression of number, this phrase can be interpreted as meaning 'more'. Chief Jacob's construction for the figure '2,105' is as follows:

- (91) *netar i-ru, nangat i-skham,*  
 thousand 3REAL:SG-two hundred 3REAL:SG-one  
*i-lim i-tur aran*  
 3REAL:SG-five 3REAL:SG-stand LOC.on  
 'two thousand, one hundred and five' [NVE60.01]

## 5.3.2. Ordinal numbers

Two strategies have been identified for the expression of ordinal meanings. The most common of these allows a contrast between ‘first’ and ‘last, after’ to be expressed. These meanings are expressed through verb forms. Like numbers, these ordinal verbs are only attested with the third person singular subject prefix. The verb forms for ‘first’ and ‘last’ are unrelated to the number morphemes.

In the following construction, the cardinal number ‘two’ contrasts with the ordinals ‘first’ and ‘last’.

- (92) *Niterikh ang i-ru ar-yang. Niterikh*  
 child ANA 3REAL:SG-two 3REAL:DU-be.born child  
*mokhmokh i-vuvam, niterikh mukhman i-vtakh.*  
 female 3REAL:SG-first child male 3REAL:SG-last  
 ‘Two children were born. The girl was first; the boy was last.’ [NVKS02.97-98]

The second strategy for expressing ordinal meanings is found in the speech of older community members; among younger Neverver speakers, the construction is not productively employed. An uninflected numeral stem is followed by NMOD (with an apparently associative function). The ordinal appears to fill the same post-nominal position as the cardinal numbers illustrated above. A similar means of expressing ordinals has been observed in Naman by Crowley (2006b: 84) for the ordinal numbers from three to ten.

- (93) *Ale ni-malu lon nakhabb t-na*  
 then 1REAL:SG-go.out LOC fire POSSDT-1:SG  
*ru an, sori tl an.*  
 two NMOD sorry three NMOD  
 ‘Then, I left my second fire (of the series), sorry, the third (of the series).’  
 [NVKI03.27]

## 5.3.3. Indefinite referring expressions

The use of the numeral ‘one’ is widespread as a marker of indefiniteness.<sup>14</sup> In Neverver, the numeral *i-skham* ‘one’ is frequently used as an indefinite referring expression. As with other indefinite expressions, *i-skham* is not introduced by NMOD. *I-skham* signals that the speaker has in mind a particular entity but that the hearer is not expected to be aware of it.

Givón (2001a: 455–458) notes that marked referring indefinite noun phrases are associated with pragmatic information. In particular, we find that indefinite reference markers are associated with entities that display cataphoric topicality.<sup>15</sup> That is, when the indefinite marking occurs, it signals the importance of the referent of the indefinite noun phrase in the subsequent discourse. This means when the specific referential identity of an entity matters, a Neverver speaker can encode the entity with *i-skham* to signal that the entity will be topical and will feature in subsequent text.

- (94) *I-lav*                    *nakha*    *i-skham,*                    *blang*  
 3REAL:SG-get    wood    3REAL:SG-one    timber.plank  
*i-skham.*  
 3REAL:SG-one  
 ‘He got a piece of wood, a plank.’ [NVCV01.16: 401.761]

In Neverver texts, we find nouns marked with *i-skham* in the opening lines of narratives, when the narrative context (including time, place and person) is established.

- (95) *Dran*    *i-skham,*                    *niterikh*    *mukhman*    *i-skham,*  
 TMPPN    3REAL:SG-one    child    male                    3REAL:SG-one  
*i-malu*                    *lokhavre*    *i-skham.*  
 3REAL:SG-go.out    village    3REAL:SG-one  
 ‘One time, a young man came from a village’ [NVKS02.01]

14. Lyons (1999:95) lists German, Albanian, Turkish, Basque and Tagalog among others as languages that employ this device; Givón (2001a: 451) adds Mandarin Chinese, Hebrew, Sherpa and Creole languages to this list of languages exhibiting the numeral ‘one’ as a marker of indefiniteness. Harlow (pers. comm.) has commented that this also occurs in Polynesian languages.

15. The notion of topicality in this work follows that proposed by Givón (1992: 12). Topicality is said to involve two aspects: referential accessibility or the availability of a referent in the broader context; and thematic importance or the mention of the entity in subsequent discourse. These two notions have been quantified in Walker, Joshi, and Prince’s work on Centering Theory (1998).

#### 5.4. NMOD and the quantifier *tle* ‘another’

As well as introducing associative possessors, relative clauses with definite heads, and definite number clauses, NMOD post-modifies the quantifier *tle*. This construction allows the speaker to refer to an additional member of the group of entities (or type) that is specified by the head noun. The following examples contrast the use of *tle* as a simple quantifier with its use as a contrastive marker.

- (96) *nimkhut tle* ‘another man’ from man + another  
*nimkhut tle an* ‘another of the men’ from man + another + NMOD  
*nimkhut tle an mil* ‘another of the men again ~ the next one of the men’ from man + another + NMOD + again

We find similar meanings expressed in noun phrases that appear to have two contrasting heads. The final construction in the following series appears to be more emphatically contrastive than the first example.

- (97) *nabbung tle* ‘another day’ from day + another  
*nabbung tle an mil* ‘the next day’ from day + another + NMOD + again  
*[nabbung ang] [tle an]* ‘the day, another of (it) ~ a different day’ from day + ANA + another + NMOD

Further examples of the same contrastive construction are attested in the corpus; each identifies an individual entity that is similar in characteristics to one previously described.

- (98) *[nakhabb ang] [tle an]* ‘a different fire (from the first one I was talking about)’  
*[nakhmal ang] [tle an]* ‘a different house (from the ones women use)’  
*[nibarbar ang] [tle mil]* ‘the next different pig (from the one just described)’  
*[nossorian ang] [tle an mil]* ‘the next different story (of the ones I am telling)’  
*[niterikh ang] [tle an ang]* ‘the next child of them (of the group involved in a ceremony that I am describing)’

The final example in this chapter comes from a conversational text. We can observe the multiple functions of NMOD in this sequence, alongside the demonstrative determiner *an*, which has the same phonological form. Complex referencing techniques are used to tell a story without naming the participants involved. The larger noun phrases are marked by square brackets.

- (99) *Ba* [*an an tle an ang*] *i-rodruk*  
 when DEMSPN NMOD another NMOD ANA 3REAL:SG-hear  
*[an an kav ang i-tokh i-mmang*  
 DEMSPN NMOD iron ANA REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-make.noise  
*bbukhut]* *i-vlem i-sukh lakhlakh mil*  
 inside 3REAL:SG-come 3REAL:SG-lift.up quiet again  
*wido, ga [an an i-tokh*  
 window then DEMSPN NMOD 3REAL:SG-PROG  
*i-mmang bbukhut tang] i-jam*  
 3REAL:SG-make.noise inside there 3REAL:SG-jump  
*i-das vere.*  
 3REAL:SG-go.down outside

‘When the other one (the person) heard how (the situation whereby) the iron was making noise inside, he came and lifted up the window quietly again and then the one (the person) who was making noise inside jumped outside.’

[NVCV05.44: 1483.854]

# Chapter 6

## Verb classes

### 6.0. Introduction

Members of the class of verbs can be identified by a single morphological criterion. All independent verbs are able to carry a subject/mood prefix (§6.1.). Certain verbs alternate in form depending on the morphological content of the subject/mood prefix (§6.2.). Verbs can be subcategorized according to the number of obligatory arguments that they take (§6.3.). Morphological processes apply to alter the basic argument structure of verbs. The applicative suffix *-ikh* adds an additional argument to a verb; while reduplication (discussed in detail in chapter eight) can serve a detransitivizing function. Homonymy is found throughout the sub-classes of verbs (§6.4.).

### 6.1. The subject/mood prefix

Verbs carry an obligatory subject/mood prefix. This prefix encodes distinctions in person, number and mood. First, second and third person are contrasted, and in the first person non-singular, a contrast is made between inclusive and exclusive reference. The subject/mood prefixes display a three-way contrast between singular, dual, and plural number. A contrast is also made between realis and irrealis mood.

The subject/mood prefix is composed of four positional slots, each containing morphology that signals a specific type of information. The four slots are:

- Person, contrasting 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> person;
- Number (1), contrasting singular/non-singular number, and inclusive/exclusive;
- Mood, contrasting realis/irrealis;
- Number (2), contrasting singular/dual/plural.

Number is expressed in two different ways. In the first number position, there is a simple contrast between singular and non-singular, as well as an inclusive/exclusive distinction made in the first person. In the second number position, finer number contrasts are made between singular, dual, and plural. In total, there are twenty-two logically possible semantic combinations for the

subject/mood prefix, all of which are attested in the corpus. Table 23 presents the morphology associated with each position in the subject/mood prefix.

Table 23. Morphology of the obligatory verb prefix

1	2	3	4
Person	Number (1) Inclusive/Exclusive	Mood	Number (2)
<i>n-</i>	1 <i>i-</i> 1 <sup>st</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> singular 1 <sup>st</sup> inclusive non-singular		$\emptyset$ - singular
<i>k-</i>	2 <i>u-</i> 2 <sup>nd</sup> singular	$\emptyset$ - realis <i>m-</i> irrealis	<i>r-</i> dual
$\emptyset$ -	3 <i>a-</i> 2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> non-singular 1 <sup>st</sup> exclusive non-singular		<i>t-</i> plural

The dual and plural number morphemes in the second number position are related to the numeral stems *ru* ‘two’ and *tl* ‘three’.

Tables 24 and 25 display the combinations of the underlying morphemes in the subject/mood prefixes.

Table 24. Underlying forms of the subject/mood prefix – first person

		First person									
		Inclusive				Exclusive					
		Person	Number(1)	Mood	Number(2)	Person	Number(1)	Mood	Number(2)		
Singular	Realis	---				<i>ni</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>i</i>	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	
	Irrealis	---				<i>nim</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>m</i>	$\emptyset$	
Dual	Realis	<i>nir</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>i</i>	$\emptyset$	<i>r</i>	<i>nar</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>a</i>	$\emptyset$	<i>r</i>
	Irrealis	<i>nimr</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>namr</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>r</i>
Plural	Realis	<i>nit</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>i</i>	$\emptyset$	<i>t</i>	<i>nat</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>a</i>	$\emptyset$	<i>t</i>
	Irrealis	<i>nimt</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>namt</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>t</i>

Table 25. Underlying forms of the subject/mood prefix – second and third person

		Second person				Third person				
		Person	Number(1)	Mood	Number(2)	Person	Number(1)	Mood	Number(2)	
Singular	Realis	<i>ku</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>u</i>	$\emptyset$	$\emptyset$	<i>i</i>	$\emptyset$	<i>i</i>	$\emptyset$
	Irrealis	<i>kum</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>m</i>	$\emptyset$	<i>im</i>	$\emptyset$	<i>i</i>	<i>m</i>
Dual	Realis	<i>kar</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>a</i>	$\emptyset$	<i>r</i>	<i>ar</i>	$\emptyset$	<i>a</i>	$\emptyset$
	Irrealis	<i>kamr</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>amr</i>	$\emptyset$	<i>a</i>	<i>m</i>
Plural	Realis	<i>kat</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>a</i>	$\emptyset$	<i>t</i>	<i>at</i>	$\emptyset$	<i>a</i>	$\emptyset$
	Irrealis	<i>kamt</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>amt</i>	$\emptyset$	<i>a</i>	<i>m</i>

## 6.1.1. Accounting for regular allomorphy in the subject/mood prefix

The form of the subject/mood prefix varies. Although there are twenty-two possible semantic realizations of the subject/mood prefix, there is considerable allomorphy with fifty-two phonetic realizations of the subject/mood prefix attested in the corpus. These realizations are presented in Table 26.

Table 26. Realizations of the subject/mood prefix

		First person	
Singular	Realis	[ni]	
	Irrealis	[nim ~ ni <sup>m</sup> b(i)]	
Dual	Realis	Inclusive [nir(i)]	Exclusive [nar(i)]
	Irrealis	[ni <sup>m</sup> bir ~ ni <sup>m</sup> br(i)]	[na <sup>m</sup> bir ~ na <sup>m</sup> br(i)]
Plural	Realis	[nit(i)]	[nat(i)]
	Irrealis	[ni <sup>m</sup> bit ~ nimt(i)]	[na <sup>m</sup> bit ~ namt(i)]
		Second Person	Third Person
Singular	Realis	[ku]	[i]
	Irrealis	[kum ~ ku <sup>m</sup> b(i)]	[im ~ i <sup>m</sup> b(i)]
Dual	Realis	[kar(i)]	[ar(i)]
	Irrealis	[ka <sup>m</sup> bir ~ ka <sup>m</sup> br(i)]	[a <sup>m</sup> bir ~ a <sup>m</sup> br(i)]
Plural	Realis	[kat(i)]	[at(i)]
	Irrealis	[ka <sup>m</sup> bit ~ kamt(i)]	[a <sup>m</sup> bit ~ amt(i)]

The allomorphy in the irrealis morpheme *m-* can be explained by a simple rule. When the irrealis morpheme *m-* is followed by a segment with greater sonority, it dissimilates to plosive articulation. Thus, when the irrealis morpheme is followed by a vowel, a liquid or an approximant, it is realized as the prenasalized bilabial plosive.

Irrealis *m-* : <sup>m</sup>b- / \_\_\_\_ greater sonority

This rule does not apply to all instances of the phoneme /m/, but it applies consistently to the irrealis morpheme which happens to have the shape /m/.

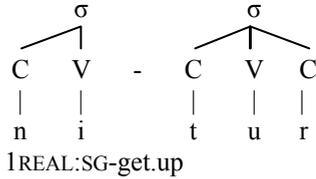
The presence or absence of the prefix-final vowel *i-* is determined by the general phonotactic constraint in Neverver which governs syllable structure. This constraint prohibits consonant clusters within syllables by requiring all syllables to conform to a (C)V(C) structure. A simple three-step process accounts for the syllabification of most inflected verbs. Vowels are assigned to syllable nodes first, then onset consonants are associated. Coda consonants are associated last. When there is only one C candidate for the single coda consonant position, this C is associated with the preceding V. When more than one C remains to be assigned, additional rules apply to ensure that the syllable constraint is adhered to.

Syllabification rules for inflected verbs Neverver

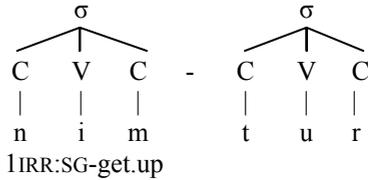
- i. Peak formation  
Assign each V to a syllable node.
- ii. Onset formation  
Associate one C with each right-hand V (in accordance with syllable constraint).
- iii. Coda formation  
Associate any single remaining C with a left-hand V (in accordance with syllable constraint).
- iv. Outstanding CC sequences  
Insert medial epenthetic *i* to serve as syllable peak; syllabify according to steps i. to iii.
- v. Outstanding CCC sequences  
Treat as a single C, followed by a CC sequence and syllabify according to steps i. to iv.

Examples are given below to illustrate the basic inflection and syllabification processes. The first verb, *tur* ‘stand, get up’, has a single initial consonant (a CV stem).

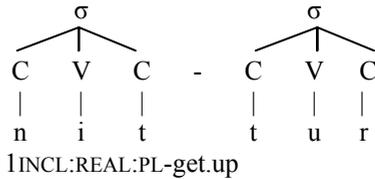
- (1) CV stem: singular realis prefix *ni-tur*



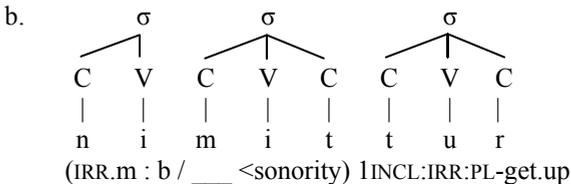
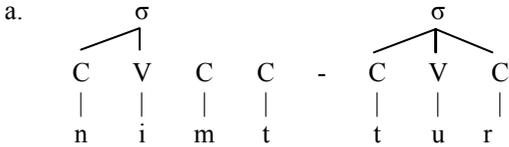
- (2) CV stem: singular irrealis prefix *nim-tur*



- (3) CV stem: non-singular realis prefix *nit-tur*

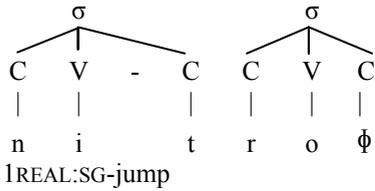


- (4) CV stem: non-singular irrealis prefix *nibit-tur*

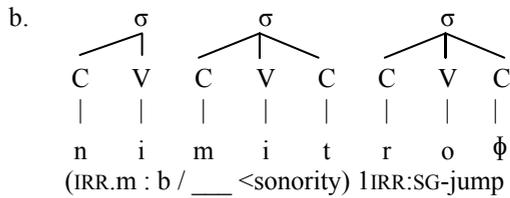
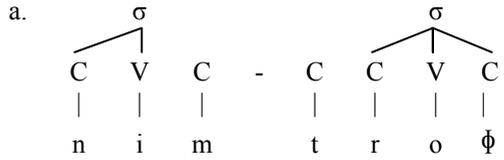


The second verb, *trov* ‘jump’, has an initial heterogeneous consonant sequence (a CCV stem).

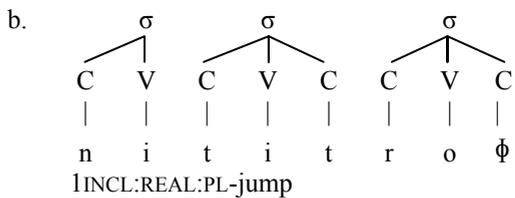
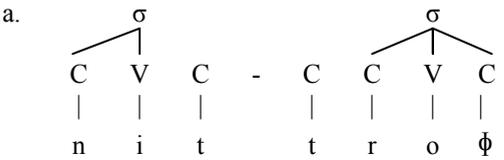
- (5) CCV stem (heterogeneous): singular realis prefix
- ni-trov*



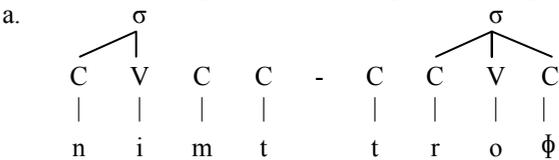
- (6) CCV stem (heterogeneous): singular irrealis prefix
- nibi-trov*

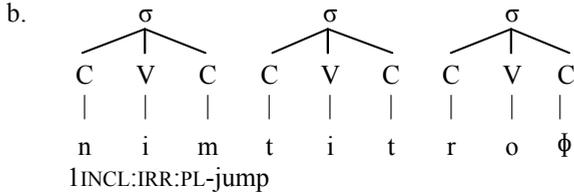


- (7) CCV stem (heterogeneous): non-singular realis prefix
- niti-trov*



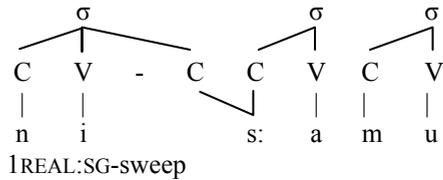
- (8) CCV stem (heterogeneous): non-singular irrealis prefix
- nimti-trov*



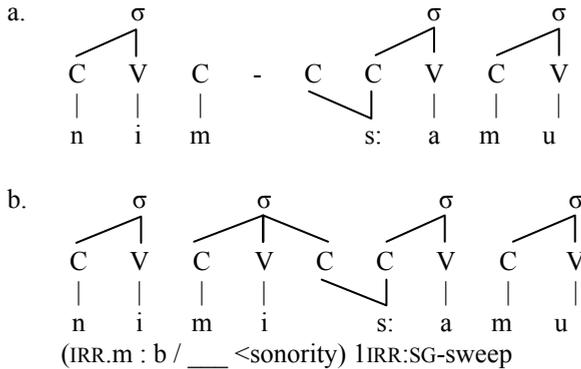


The third verb, *ssamu* ‘sweep’ has an initial geminate consonant sequence (also a CCV stem). We can observe that heterogeneous and geminate consonant sequences are treated in the same way in syllabification.

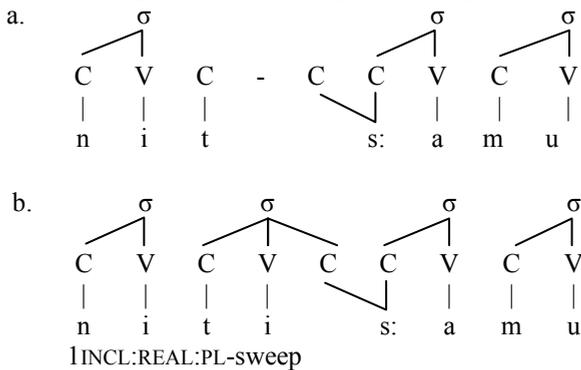
- (9) CCV stem (geminate): singular realis prefix *ni-ssamu*



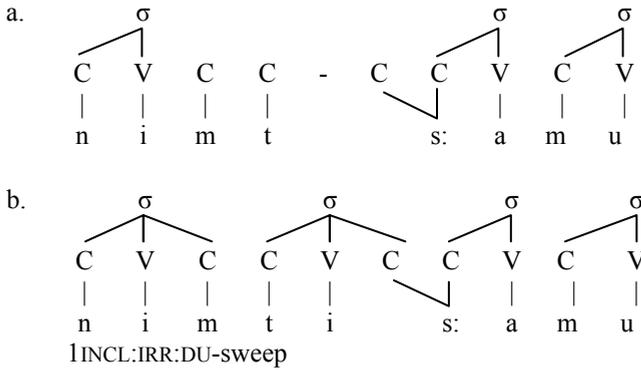
- (10) CCV stem (geminate): singular irrealis prefix *nibi-ssamu*



- (11) CCV stem (geminate): non-singular realis prefix *niti-ssamu*

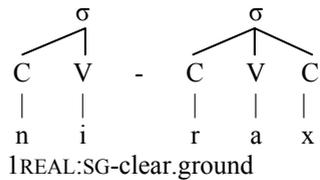


- (12) CCV stem (geminate): non-singular irrealis prefix
- nimti-ssamu*

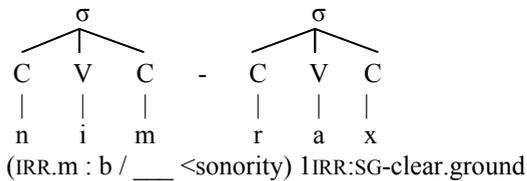


The next example *rakh* ‘clear ground’ is a CV stem with an initial liquid. This segment requires the irrealis nasal to dissimilate when the two are contiguous in (14). The irrealis nasal also dissimilates in (16) when followed by the epenthetic vowel *i*.

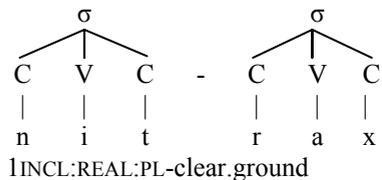
- (13) CV stem: singular realis prefix
- ni-rakh*



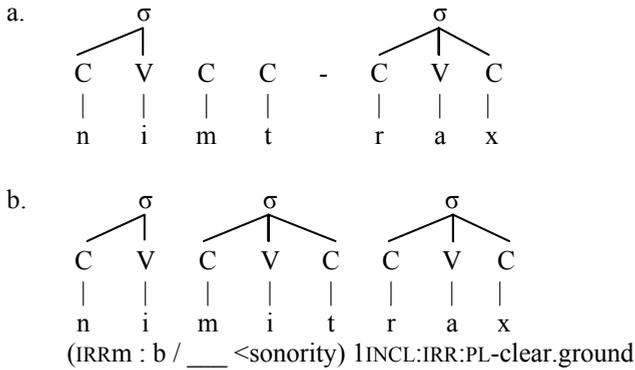
- (14) CV stem: singular irrealis prefix
- nib-rakh*



- (15) CV stem: non-singular realis prefix
- nit-rakh*

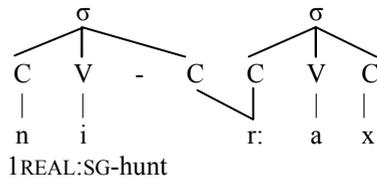


(16) CV stem: non-singular irrealis prefix *nibit-rakh*

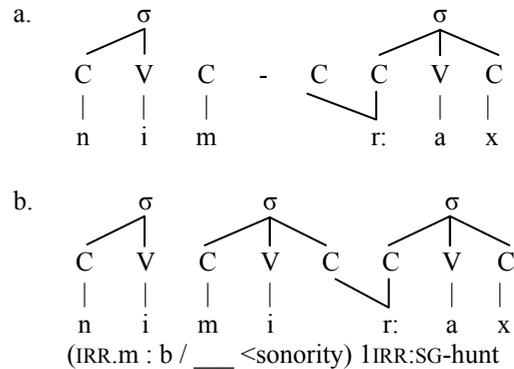


The verb *rrakh* ‘hunt (in fresh water)’, with an initial geminate sequence, inflects and syllabifies differently from *rakh* ‘clear ground’ with an initial singleton consonant.

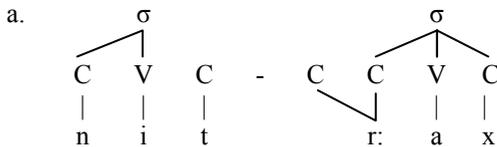
(17) CCV stem (geminate): singular realis prefix *ni-rrakh*

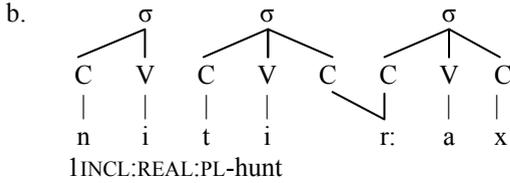


(18) CCV stem (geminate): singular irrealis prefix *nibi-rrakh*

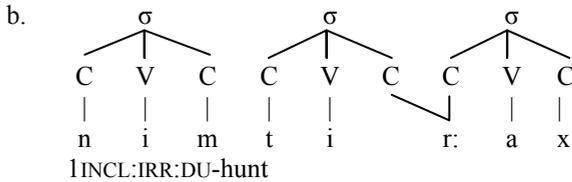
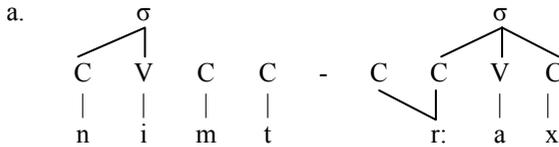


(19) CCV stem (geminate): non-singular realis prefix *niti-rrakh*





(20) CCV stem (geminate): non-singular irrealis prefix *nimti-rrakh*



### 6.1.2. The impersonal subject/mood prefix

In addition to the subject/mood prefixes presented above, there is an impersonal prefix which has separate realis and irrealis forms. The realis form is a homophone of the third person dual prefix, but the irrealis form is distinct. The impersonal construction is discussed in §9.5.

- (21) Impersonal prefix  
 Realis *ar(i)*  
 Irrealis *am ~ ab(i)*

Allomorphs of the impersonal subject/mood prefix form according to the syllabification process outlined in §6.1.1.

### 6.1.3. Representing the subject/mood prefix

In this work, the subject/mood prefix is presented in its surface realization rather than in the underlying form. Each subject/mood prefix is glossed as a combination of person, mood and number marking, in that order, to reflect the sequence of underlying morphemes. The underlying Number (1) morpheme is

only glossed when an inclusive/exclusive distinction is relevant. Thus, inflected verbs are glossed as follows:

- (22) *ni-yal*      1REAL:SG-fly  
*nib-yal*      1IRR:SG-fly  
*nibir-yal*      1INCL:IRR:DU-fly

## 6.2. Morphophonemic stem alternations

Verb stems beginning with the bilabial fricative alternate in form when they carry an irrealis mood morpheme of the form *m-*. The combination of irrealis *m-* and stem-initial *v-* /β/ produces an allomorph of the verb root beginning with the voiced bilabial trill [ᵐB]:

- (23) *i-vu*      [iβu]      3REAL:SG-go  
*im-bbu*      [imBu]      3IRR:SG-go

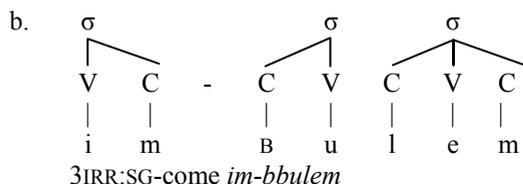
In cases where the verb stem has the underlying structure /βV/, and /V/ is any vowel other than /u/, a natural process of labialization occurs in the transition from trill-to-vowel articulation.

- (24) *i-vavu*      /iβaβu/      [iβaβu]      3REAL:SG- walk  
*im-bbuavu*      /imβaβu/      [imᵐaβu]      3IRR:GO- walk

In cases where the verb stem has the underlying structure /βC/, and is inflected for irrealis mood, we would expect an epenthetic vowel to appear in the inflected verb, to separate outstanding CC sequences. Instead, an epenthetic vowel /u/ is inserted inside the verb stem, rather than in the prefix.

- (25) 
$$\begin{array}{c} \sigma \\ \diagdown \quad \diagup \\ V \quad - \quad C \\ | \quad \quad | \\ i \quad \quad \beta \\ \text{3REAL:SG-come } i\text{-}vlem \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c} \sigma \\ \diagdown \quad \diagup \\ C \quad V \quad C \\ | \quad | \quad | \\ l \quad e \quad m \end{array}$$

- (26) a. 
$$\begin{array}{c} \sigma \\ | \\ V \quad C \quad - \quad C \\ | \quad | \quad \quad | \\ i \quad m \quad \quad \beta \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c} \sigma \\ \diagdown \quad \diagup \\ C \quad V \quad C \\ | \quad | \quad | \\ l \quad e \quad m \end{array}$$



The alternation between [βC] and [BuC] appears to occur before consonant association, overriding the process of epenthesis and subsequent syllabification described in §6.1.1., which would produce a predicted but unacceptable form [\*i<sup>m</sup>biβlem].

### 6.2.1. Allomorphy in the irregular verb *vu* ‘go’

The verb *vu* ‘go’ is irregular. The initial voiced bilabial fricative appears when the verb stem combines with vowel-final singular realis subject/mood prefixes. It becomes the voiced bilabial trill when combined with irrealis mood allomorph *m-*, as illustrated in (23) above. Elsewhere, the phonological units in the verb stem undergo metathesis, with the /βu/ [βu] sequence becoming /uβ/ [uβ]. Thus, the verb takes the surface form *uv* in a particular set of environments. The stem ‘go’ is the only verb in the corpus to alternate in this way.

The allomorphs and conditioning environments for *vu* ‘to go’ can be expressed as follows:

<i>vu</i>	→ <i>vu</i> / V-___
	→ <i>bbu</i> / IRR. <i>m</i> -___
	→ <i>uv</i> / other consonants ___

Table 27. Phonetic realizations of the inflected verb *vu* ‘go’

		First person		Second person	Third person
Singular	Realis	[ni- βu]		[ku- βu]	[i- βu]
	Irrealis	[nim- bu]		[kum- bu]	[im- bu]
Dual		Inclusive	Exclusive		
	Realis	[nir- uβ]	[nar- uβ]	[kar- uβ]	[ar- uβ]
	Irrealis	[nibr- uβ]	[nabr- uβ]	[kabr- uβ]	[abr- uβ]
Plural	Realis	[nit- uβ]	[nat- uβ]	[kat- uβ]	[at- uβ]
	Irrealis	[nimt- uβ]	[namt- uβ]	[kamt- uβ]	[amt- uβ]

### 6.3. Verb classes

Having described the defining characteristic of verbs, this being the subject/mood prefix, in some detail, we now consider verb classes in Neverver. In classifying verbs, the most important characteristic is their inherent valency. Evans (2003) in her study on valency in Proto Oceanic observes that:

The valency of clauses and their predicates is usually defined in terms of the number of core arguments required within the clause. Thus, intransitive predicates and clauses have a single core argument and transitive predicates and clauses have two core arguments. (Evans 2003:11)

Evans (2003: 12) goes on to comment that “the majority of verbs in most Oceanic languages are unmarked when used intransitively and marked by a valency-changing device and/or object marker when used transitively”. Neverver differs somewhat from this general pattern in that verb stems can be described as being either inherently intransitive (having a single core argument) or inherently transitive (having two core arguments). In a small number of cases, we find distinct lexical items encoding transitive and intransitive versions of the same event. The examples in (27) below display a contrast in the initial consonant, with the intransitive form taking a geminate /k/ while the transitive form takes the velar fricative /ɣ/.<sup>16</sup>

(27)	Intransitive		Transitive
	<i>kkan</i>	‘eat’	<i>khan</i> ‘eat s.t.’
	<i>kkil</i>	‘dig’	<i>khil</i> ‘dig s.t.’

Also in a small number of cases, the same stem can be used both transitively and intransitively without additional morphology. Thus, these ambi-transitive verbs are able to take either one or two arguments. The verbs *min* ‘drink’ and *gris* ‘splash’ have the same agent argument serving as the subject whether intransitive or transitive. The verb *khalkhal* means ‘be in a closed state’ when intransitive and ‘close s.t.’ when transitive.

Generally, a verb denoting a state, event, or action inherently belongs to either the transitive or intransitive verb class. A verb’s inherent valency can be changed by morphological processes which apply to increase or decrease the number of core arguments that a verb has. More rarely, the same processes can alter the semantic roles of core arguments, with or without changing valency.

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16. Historically, the geminate /k/ might have arisen through reduplication of an earlier k-initial verb stem, as in Proto Oceanic *\*kani-* ‘eat s.t.’ (Ross 1998: 25). An analysis of reduplication in this context fits with the more general analysis of reduplication as marking low or reduced transitivity in Neverver, as described in chapter eight.

In presenting the details of verb classes, a descriptive framework is employed that makes use of Andrews's (2007) notion of a *primary transitive verb* and Van Valin's (2001) distinctions between verb-specific semantic roles, thematic relations, and semantic macro-roles. A primary or prototypical transitive verb has two core arguments, one of which has the semantic role of agent, and the other of which has the semantic role of patient (Andrews 2007). Agent arguments of primary transitive verbs have the grammatical function A and are coded distinctly from patient arguments which have the grammatical function P. There is also the single core argument of an intransitive verb with the grammatical function S (Andrews 2007). In Neverver, A and S are associated with the grammatical relation of subject, while P is associated with the grammatical relation of object. The coding properties of the three grammatical functions are explored in chapter nine.

Not all transitive verbs are prototypical or primary. In Neverver for example, the transitive verb *khitrokh* 'see' has an argument with the grammatical function A but it does not have the semantic role of agent. It also has an argument with the grammatical function P but this argument does not have a patient semantic role. Van Valin (2001) makes a distinction between verb-specific semantic roles, more general thematic relations (which are simply referred to as 'semantic roles' in this work), and semantic macroroles. The A argument of 'see' (the 'see-er') has the semantic role of experiencer, while the P argument (the entity 'seen') has the semantic role of stimulus. Because A arguments are only prototypically agents, and P arguments are only prototypically patients, Van Valin's (2001: 31) semantic macroroles 'actor' and 'undergoer' are useful to characterize the sets of arguments associated with A and P respectively.<sup>17</sup> The single S argument of an intransitive verb may display one of a range of semantic relations. When considering sub-classes of verbs, and the effects of valency change, the semantic roles of obligatory arguments are important.

### 6.3.1. Inherently transitive stems

Inherently transitive verbs have two obligatory arguments with the grammatical functions A and P. The arguments of prototypical transitive verbs play the semantic roles of agent/actor and patient/undergoer. The argument structure of most prototypical transitive verbs can change. The applicative suffix *-ikh*

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17. A list of the semantic roles employed in this description is presented in Appendix V. Many of the roles used follow Van Valin's (2001: 31) thematic relations (Andrews's semantic roles). A few additional semantic roles have been added to describe other participants. The additional terms largely follow Givón (2001a: chapter three).

‘APPL’ adds a third argument. The applicative suffix in Neverver is likely to derive from Proto Oceanic *\*akin[i]*, which is described by Evans (2003: 235) as having ‘a participant role marking function, denoting different types of participants with different classes of verbs’. The third argument that is added to an inherently transitive stem is almost exclusively instrumental but in some cases, an associative or benefactive argument may be added. When the applicative suffix is attached to the verb stem, the basic meaning of the verb stem does not undergo significant change.

Examples in (28) illustrate prototypical transitive verbs and display their related ditransitive forms with an additional instrumental argument. (The order of arguments is considered in chapter nine.)

- |      |                    |  |
|------|--------------------|--|
| (28) | [A, P]             | <i>ppon</i> ‘cover s.t.’                             |
|      | [A, P, Instrument] | <i>ppon-ikh</i> ‘cover s.t. with s.t.’               |
|      | [A, P]             | <i>rebreb</i> ‘make s.t. level/smooth’               |
|      | [A, P, Instrument] | <i>rebreb-ikh</i> ‘make s.t. level/smooth with s.t.’ |
|      | [A, P]             | <i>khil</i> ‘dig s.t.’                               |
|      | [A, P, Instrument] | <i>khil-ikh</i> ‘dig s.t. with s.t.’                 |
|      | [A, P]             | <i>khros</i> ‘butcher s.t.’                          |
|      | [A, P, Instrument] | <i>khros-ikh</i> ‘butcher s.t. with s.t.’            |
|      | [A, P]             | <i>yel</i> ‘shell out s.t.’                          |
|      | [A, P, Instrument] | <i>yel-ikh</i> ‘shell out s.t. with s.t.’            |
|      | [A, P]             | <i>yes</i> ‘scoop up (liquid)’                       |
|      | [A, P, Instrument] | <i>yes-ikh</i> ‘scoop up (liquid) with s.t.’         |

When verb stems end with a vowel, an epenthetic [k] is typically inserted between the verb-final vowel and the suffix vowel.

- |      |                    |  |
|------|--------------------|--|
| (29) | [A, P]             | <i>ga</i> ‘tie s.t.’                     |
|      | [A, P, Instrument] | <i>ga-k-ikh</i> ‘tie s.t. with s.t.’     |
|      | [A, P]             | <i>te</i> ‘hit/cut s.t.’                 |
|      | [A, P, Instrument] | <i>te-k-ikh</i> ‘hit/cut s.t. with s.t.’ |
|      | [A, P]             | <i>ve</i> ‘make s.t.’                    |
|      | [A, P, Instrument] | <i>ve-k-ikh</i> ‘make s.t. with s.t.’    |

Some transitive stems in the corpus display the same morphological properties as prototypical transitive verbs, but are somewhat less prototypical in their semantics. *Sisir* ‘discuss s.t.’ has a theme P rather than a patient, and takes an additional experiencer argument when suffixed.

- |      |                     |   |
|------|---------------------|---|
| (30) | [A, P]              | <i>sisir</i> ‘discuss s.t.’               |
|      | [A, P, Experiencer] | <i>sisir-ikh</i> ‘discuss s.t. with s.o.’ |

The verb *ver* ‘say’, another less proto-typical transitive verb, does not increase its valence when suffixed; rather, the semantic role of the P argument changes. *Ver* ‘say s.t.’ has a theme P when bare, and an experiencer P when suffixed. These two forms combine in a serial construction to express the meaning ‘say s.t. to s.o.’ (see chapter eleven).

- (31) [A, P(Theme)]            *ver* ‘say s.t.’  
       [A, P(Experiencer)]    *ver-ikh* ‘tell s.o.’

### 6.3.1.1. Non-prototypical transitive stems

Many transitive stems do not permit valency change. These transitive verbs are non-prototypical. One semantic sub-category includes verbs that have a non-prototypical experiencer/actor (rather than an agent). The verb stems have in common an initial *ro-* sequence; however, this sequence is not attested independently and it cannot productively attach to stems. The verbs in this sub-class are all complement-taking predicates (see chapter twelve), though some permit nominal as well as sentential objects.

- (32) *rokamsukh*                    ‘believe s.t.’  
       \**rokamsukh-ikh*  
       *rongrong*                    ‘want s.t. (generally)’  
       \**rongrong-ikh*; \**rong*  
       *rongrokh*                    ‘want to possess s.t.’  
       \**rongrokh-ikh*  
       *rosikh*                        ‘not want s.t.’  
       \**rosikh-ikh*  
       *rot*                            ‘feel/hear s.t.’  
       \**rot-ikh*

A small number of other verb stems are also not attested with suffixed counterparts. Attempts to elicit suffixed forms have not met with success.

- (33) *didi*                        ‘dip s.t. (of laplap in coconut milk)’  
       \**didi-kh*  
       *lav*                        ‘take/get s.t.’  
       \**lav-ikh*  
       *rus*                        ‘open s.t.; to put on/wear s.t.’  
       \**rus-ikh*  
       *ssir*                        ‘light (of fire, from an existing flame)’  
       \**ssir-ikh*

Other non-prototypical transitive stems have fused suffixes. The suffix has been reanalyzed as a part of the verb stem and now is inseparable from it.

Where phonologically-related bare forms occur, there is no obvious relationship between the meaning of the suffixed verb and the meaning of the plain stem.

- (34) *bel* 'chase s.t.'  
*belikh* 'weave (of bamboo)'  
*yer* 'sing s.t.'  
*yerikh* 'foster (a child)'  
*kkon* 'taste bad'  
*kkonikh* 'burn s.t. up'  
*kkar* 'be abundant'  
*kkarikh* 'dig lateral hole (for yam)'  
*\*sol*  
*solikh* 'hide s.t.'

### 6.3.1.2. Detransitive morphology

Transitive verb stems can be detransitivized through reduplication of the verb stem. Detransitivization results in the loss of the P argument. We can distinguish between unspecified object deletion, and inherent object constructions. In unspecified object deletion, the semantic content of the suppressed P argument is deemed irrelevant to the discourse and as such, overt expression of the suppressed argument is considered unnecessary. In inherent object deletion, the suppressed P argument can only be of a single referent type. The overt expression of the object argument is disallowed and considered unnecessary, with language consultants indicating that reduplication is sufficient to specify the referent in inherent object constructions. The forms and argument structures of transitive verbs are presented in Table 28.

Table 28. Logical forms of prototypical/primary transitive stems

	Valence	Prototypical Semantic (macro)roles
V (bare stem)	2	– agent/actor – patient/undergoer
V-APPL (suffixed form)	3	– agent/actor – patient/undergoer – instrument
DUP-V (reduplicated form)	1	– agent/actor
[[DUP-V]-APPL] (reduplicated; suffixed)	2	– agent/actor – instrument

Because transitive stems can also carry the applicative suffix, there are thus four logical possibilities for the forms of each verb, and four contrasting argument structures. Some of the verb stems occur in all four forms in the corpus; most however, are only attested in two or three different forms.

- |      |                      |   |
|------|----------------------|---|
| (35) | <i>tuv</i>           | ‘throw (a round object) at s.t.’                      |
|      | <i>tuv-ikh</i>       | ‘throw (a specified round object) at s.t.’            |
|      | <i>tvtuv</i>         | ‘throw (round objects)’                               |
|      | <i>tvtuv-ikh</i>     | ‘throw (specified round objects)’                     |
| (36) | <i>vus</i>           | ‘carry s.t.’  |
|      | * <i>vus-ikh</i>     |   |
|      | <i>vusvus</i>        | ‘carry a load’  |
|      | <i>vusvus-ikh</i>    | ‘squeeze coconut milk on s.t.’                        |
| (37) | <i>tn</i>            | ‘roast s.t.’  |
|      | * <i>tn-ikh</i>      |   |
|      | <i>titn</i>          | ‘cook a meal’   |
|      | <i>titn-ikh</i>      | ‘cook a meal for s.o.’                                |
| (38) | <i>vul</i>           | ‘buy s.t.’  |
|      | <i>vul-ikh</i>       | ‘buy s.t. with s.t.’                                  |
|      | <i>vulvul</i>        | ‘go shopping’   |
|      | <i>vulvul-ikh</i>    | ‘sell s.t.; be a buyer (wholesaler) of s.t.’          |
| (39) | <i>leb</i>           | ‘carry s.t.’  |
|      | <i>leb-ikh</i>       | ‘carry s.t. in s.t.’                                  |
|      | <i>lebleb</i>        | ‘carry a load of garden produce’                      |
|      | <i>lebleb-ikh</i>    | ‘carry a load of garden produce for s.o.’             |
| (40) | <i>yel</i>           | ‘to scoop out the insides of s.t.’                    |
|      | * <i>yel-ikh</i>     |   |
|      | <i>yelyel</i>        | ‘shell out coconuts (for copra production)’           |
|      | <i>yelyel-ikh</i>    | ‘shell out coconuts (for copra production) with s.t.’ |
| (41) | <i>rakh</i>          | ‘clear ground’  |
|      | <i>rakh-ikh</i>      | ‘clear ground with s.t.’                              |
|      | <i>rakhrakh</i>      | ‘pull weeds’  |
|      | <i>rakhrakh-ikh</i>  | ‘pull weeds with s.t.’                                |
| (42) | <i>rukhh</i>         | ‘pick up s.t.’  |
|      | * <i>rukhh-ikh</i>   |   |
|      | <i>rukhrukhh</i>     | ‘gather coconuts’                                     |
|      | <i>rukhrukhh-ikh</i> | ‘gather coconuts with s.t.’                           |

- (43) *leb* 'give birth to s.o. (an infant)'  
 \**leb-ikh*  
*lebleb* 'give birth to lots of babies, to give birth to a large litter'  
 \**lebleb-ikh*

The ambi-transitive verb *min* 'drink' never occurs with the applicative suffix; however, it can be reduplicated. The result is an intransitive verb with a single agent/actor argument. The inherent object 'kava, alcohol' is understood.

- (44) *min* 'drink (s.t.)'  
 \**min-ikh*  
*minmin* 'drink kava, alcohol'  
 \**minmin-ikh*

### 6.3.2. Inherently intransitive stems

Intransitive verbs require a single argument. This argument has the grammatical function S. Like transitive stems, many intransitive stems can increase in valence with the addition of the applicative suffix *-ikh*. The suffix generally adds a core argument of lower agency than that of the subject argument. The new argument is typically not a patient/undergoer, but rather a theme, stimulus, or experiencer.

The semantic role of the new argument is the main semantic distinction between transitive verbs derived from intransitive stems and prototypical transitive stems. By definition, the second argument of a prototypical transitive stem is a patient.

- |      |   |   |
|------|---|---|
| (45) | [S (Agent)]<br><i>jadr</i> 'pass'<br><i>kke</i> 'call out'<br><i>riv</i> 'run away'<br><i>rrav</i> 'laugh'<br><i>rrakh</i> 'hunt (in fresh water)'<br><i>ver</i> 'work'               | [A (Agent), P (Theme, Stimulus)]<br><i>jadr-ikh</i> 'pass s.o.; to beat s.o.'<br><i>kke-kh</i> 'call s.o.; to name s.t.'<br><i>riv-ikh</i> 'run away from s.t.'<br><i>rrav-ikh</i> 'laugh at s.t.'<br><i>rrakh-ikh</i> 'hunt s.t. (in fresh water)'<br><i>ver-ikh</i> 'work on s.t.'                |
| (46) | [S (Experiencer)]<br><i>jal</i> 'be sick'<br><i>lis</i> 'be afraid'<br><i>mjakh</i> 'have fever'<br><i>sian</i> 'be pregnant'<br><i>vang</i> 'be fascinated'<br><i>khab</i> 'be full' | [A (Experiencer), P (Stimulus)]<br><i>jal-ikh</i> 'be sick with/from s.t.'<br><i>lis-ikh</i> 'be afraid of s.t.'<br><i>mjakh-ikh</i> 'have fever with/from s.t.'<br><i>sian-ikh</i> 'be pregnant to s.o./with s.o.'<br><i>vang-ikh</i> 'be fascinated by s.t.'<br><i>khab-ikh</i> 'be full of s.t.' |

In some cases, when an intransitive verb increases in valency, the intransitive S argument becomes the P argument, and the new argument, an agent, functions as A.

(47)	[S (Theme, Experiencer, Patient)]	[A (Agent), P (Patient, Theme)]
	<i>sar</i>	<i>sar-ikh</i>
	‘hang’	‘hang s.t.’
	<i>matmat</i>	<i>matmat-ikh</i>
	‘be careful’	‘look after s.o.’
	<i>(suv)suv</i>	<i>suv-suv-ikh</i>
	‘be finished’	‘finish s.t.’

A small set of intransitive verbs that encode human actions may undergo reduplication to become stative in meaning. Like other intransitive verbs, the reduplicated forms may also be suffixed to increase valency. When suffixation occurs, a regular change to the semantics of the verb stem, and the semantic roles of the obligatory participants can be observed:

(48)	<i>tur</i>	‘stand up’
	<i>turtur</i>	‘stand’
	<i>tur-ikh</i>	‘stand s.t. up’
	<i>turtur-ikh</i>	‘stand waiting for s.o.’
(49)	<i>vor</i>	‘sit down’
	<i>vorvor</i>	‘sit’
	<i>vor-ikh</i>	‘sit s.t. down’
	<i>vorvor-ikh</i>	‘sit waiting for s.o.’
(50)	<i>lukh</i>	‘stay/live (of humans)’
	<i>lukh-lukh</i>	‘stay (of humans)’
	* <i>lukh-ikh</i>	
	<i>lukh-lukh-ikh</i>	‘stay/be waiting for s.o.’

### 6.3.2.1. Bare intransitive stems

Certain intransitive verb stems are not permitted to take *-ikh*, the applicative suffix, in either a simplex or reduplicated form. The verbs in this category are predominantly stative, but some events and actions are also restricted to the bare form.

Stative intransitive stems have single undergoer-type arguments. The members of this subclass of intransitive verbs, exemplified in (51), can occur independently, and can also serve as post-nominal modifiers, or as the second verb in a nuclear serial construction (see chapter ten). There is no morphological encoding of a contrast between stative and inchoative verb meanings in Neverver; however, in certain contexts, an inchoative interpretation can be made.

(51)	<i>(ber)ber</i>	‘be long, tall’
	<i>kkon</i>	‘taste bad’
	<i>lab</i>	‘be plentiful’
	<i>lablab</i>	‘be big, fat’
	<i>lele</i>	‘be small’
	<i>lolngo</i>	‘be open (of eyes)’
	<i>masik</i>	‘be tired’
	<i>mav</i>	‘be flat’
	<i>meser</i>	‘be torn’
	<i>met</i>	‘be dark; darken’
	<i>mial</i>	‘be red’
	<i>ngot</i>	‘be broken; to break’
	<i>ras</i>	‘be tough (of cooked root crops)’
	<i>salgar</i>	‘be glad’
	<i>si(k)ki</i>	‘be lost’
	<i>siasu</i>	‘be holy’
	<i>tis</i>	‘be sacred’
	<i>tro</i>	‘be old’, ‘be ripe (of nuts)’
	<i>vakhvakh</i>	‘be short; shorten’
	<i>vlavul</i>	‘sparkle’
	<i>vratn</i>	‘be true’ (adj. form <i>bratn</i> )

Among the category of stative verbs is evidence of a stative prefix *m-*. Related prefixes appear in other Oceanic languages (cf. Evans 2003: 267–268). Pawley (1970: 352) reconstructs *\*mA* as a stative prefix in Proto Samoic Outlier based on evidence from languages that exhibit stativizing prefixes of the form *ma(a)-* ~ *mA-*. The prefix varies in productivity, being semi-productive in Bauan Fijian, and a fossilized relic in Māori (Pawley 1970). Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002: 82) reconstruct an earlier prefix *\*ma-* in Proto Oceanic, which “formed neutral O-verbs from transitives”. Evans (2003: 268) observes that the Proto Oceanic prefix “is reflected in modern Oceanic languages in two ways: a) as a semi-productive valency-decreasing prefix; and b) as a fossilized prefix occurring as the initial segment of Undergoer subject verbs denoting properties.” In Neverver, *m-* is not a productive detransitive affix as we do not find related unprefixated (transitive) verbs. It does however, appear with stems of stative-type meaning that describe the attributes of entities. Examples are presented in (52).

(52)	<i>m-be</i>	‘be senile’
	<i>m-da</i>	‘be wet’
	<i>m-ler</i>	‘be clear, transparent’
	<i>m-les</i>	‘be weak’
	<i>m-limlan</i>	‘be clear, simple’
	<i>m-ma</i>	‘be domesticated’
	<i>m-mang</i>	‘be noisy’

<i>m-mas</i>	‘be dry’
<i>m-mav</i>	‘be heavy’
<i>m-mel</i>	‘be sour’
<i>m-mial</i>	‘be red; reddened’
<i>m-rasal</i>	‘be easy’
<i>m-rekh</i>	‘be raw’

A number of stative stems that carry the prefix *m-* display reduplication. These are presented in (53). In most cases the reduplication is fossilized, with no simplex form attested in the corpus. In a small number of cases, however, we can identify a related simplex form. The simplex forms show that the verbs can, or at least could, be separated from the stative prefix.

(53)	<i>m-rasras</i>	‘be light (ant. heavy)’; also ? <i>rasras</i> ‘sing (of cicadas)’
	<i>m-roro</i>	‘be withered’
	<i>m-sirsir</i>	‘be frilled (of leaves, petals, dresses)’; also ? <i>sir</i> ‘follow’
	<i>m-turtur</i>	‘be spotted’; also <i>vakh-dur</i> ‘smear ashes on one’s face (CAUS-spotted)’ <sup>18</sup>
	<i>m-kherkher</i>	‘be difficult’ from <i>kher</i> ‘hard, difficult’
	<i>m-khiskhis</i>	‘be shattered, be sure’
	<i>m-yevyev</i>	‘be soft’
	<i>m-yolyol</i>	‘be baggy, loose’
	<i>m-yovyov</i>	‘be plain’ from <i>yovyov</i> ‘white, light’

A small set of bare intransitive stems, listed in (54), encode events rather than states. Some license a non-human, inanimate argument, although the stem *don* ‘sink, drown’ may license either an inanimate or animate argument.

(54)	<i>dan</i>	‘set’
	<i>don</i>	‘sink, drown’
	<i>rus</i>	‘grow’
	<i>ssol</i>	‘flower (of coconuts)’
	<i>tar</i>	‘creak’
	<i>khab</i>	‘explode’

Some of the intransitive verbs encoding events license a human or animate argument. These action verbs, listed in (55), are either movement verbs, or encode physical actions that can only be undertaken by animate beings.

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18. The verb *vakh-dur* ‘smear ashes on one’s face’ displays a causative prefix *vakh* which is also found in *vakh-sus* ‘breastfeed’. This prefix, derived from POC \**pa[ka]* (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002: 83), is no longer productive and the complement-taking predicate *ve* ‘make, do’ has replaced it as a means of expressing the causative (see §12.4.3).

- (55) *das* 'descend'  
*javi* 'sneeze'  
*jov* 'cough'  
*mlili* 'turn back'  
*mul* 'change, shed'  
*rriv* 'fart'  
*sa(k)ka* 'climb up (a tree, a stick)'  
*sakh* 'ascend (a hill)'  
*susus* 'suckle, nurse (of babies)'  
*vlem* 'come'  
*vu* 'go'

One interesting intransitive stem is *bal* 'be beaten'. This stem takes a patient/undergoer as its single argument. It can increase in valency with the applicative suffix, adding an instrument argument. The verb *bal* can be described as a lexical passive (cf. Payne 1997: 204) because of its basic intransitivity and single patient/undergoer argument. The argument structure of the verb cannot involve an agent, even though an agent is implied. In the examples below, the transitive stem *te* 'hit, cut' contrasts with the intransitive verb *bal* 'be beaten'.

- (56) *Ku-rot*                      *nim-te*                      *okh?*  
 2REAL:SG-want      1IRR:SG-hit      2SG  
 'Do you want me to hit you?' [NVE017.03]
- (57) *I-okh*                      *ku-rot*                      *kum-bal*                      *ing?*  
 PSNPR-2SG                      2REAL:SG-want                      2IRR:SG-be.beaten                      EXCLAM  
 'Do you want to be beaten?' [NVE017.01]
- (58) *Ar-bal-ikh*                                      *naglat.*  
 3REAL:DU-be.beaten-APPL                      devil.nettle  
 'They were beaten with nettles.' [NVKI03.38]

In (56), the verb *te* 'hit' encoded a prototypical two-argument proposition, with an agent/actor and a patient/undergoer. Examples (57) and (58) have no overt agent/actor. Instead, the patient occupies the single argument position in (57). In (58) when the applicative suffix is attached, the second argument is instrumental.

Table 29 displays a summary of the main sub-categories of intransitive stems in Neverver, and valency change or rearrangement that may occur.

Table 29. Summary of intransitive stems

	Valence	Prototypical semantic (macro)roles			
V (bare stem)	1	–	Agent/Actor	–	Undergoer
V-APPL (suffixed form)	2	–	Agent/Actor	–	Agent/Actor
		–	Theme/Stimulus/Experiencer	–	Theme/Experiencer/Patient/Instrument
DUP-V (reduplicated form)	1			–	Undergoer
m-(DUP)-V (stative form)	1			–	Undergoer

## 6.4. Homonymy

A noteworthy characteristic of the class of verbs in Neverver is homonymy. Multiple and apparently unrelated meanings can be associated with a single phonetic sequence. Additionally, as illustrated in the examples above, forms that are candidates for analysis as reduplication may actually bear no identifiable semantic relationship to any simplex verb stem in the contemporary corpus. This is particularly the case with CV(C) stems, which are subject to full reduplication. Further examples of homonymy, along with apparent reduplications are illustrated in (59) to (62) below.

- (59) Meanings associated with the phonetic sequence [rus]  
*rus* 'grow strongly, produce new growth'  
*rus* 'open (of doors, windows) TRANSITIVE'  
*rus* 'wear (of clothing)'
- (60) Meanings associated with the phonetic sequence [ras]  
*ras* 'be overripe (of root crops)'; 'be tough (despite being cooked for a long time, of root crops)'  
*ras* 'scoop up (with hands)'  
*ras* 'be weak, tired (of eyes)'  
*rasras* 'become dark'
- (61) Meanings associated with the phonetic sequence [ʰgar]  
*gar* 'scale (a fish)'  
*gar* 'swim'; 'paddle'  
*gargar* 'clean (a laplap grater)'  
*gargar-ikh* 'covet'

- (62) Meanings associated with the phonetic sequence [<sup>m</sup>bar]
- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| <i>bar</i>    | ‘be blind’      |
| <i>bar</i>    | ‘slap’          |
| <i>barbar</i> | ‘cheat on s.o.’ |

# Chapter 7

## Expressing temporal, modal, and aspectual information

### 7.0. Introduction

Clauses can encode expressions of temporal, modal and aspectual meaning. Of these three notional categories, only mood is obligatorily grammaticalised in Neverver. One of the two mood markers is realised as zero, so it is therefore possible for a clause to have no overt grammatical expression of any temporal, modal, or aspectual information. Alternatively, each meaning type may be encoded overtly within a clause.

In this grammatical description, the clause is analysed as having a layered structure, following Foley and Van Valin (1984), Foley and Olsen (1985), and Van Valin (1993; 2001). In the layered clause structure, there is a nucleus, a core, and a periphery. The nucleus of the clause contains the predicate; the core of the clause contains the predicate and its core arguments; and the periphery contains non-core arguments. Van Valin (2001) models the layered structure of the clause as follows:

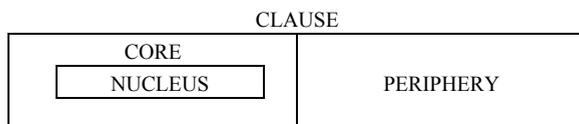


Figure 5. Layered structure of the clause (Van Valin 2001: 206 Figure 6.34)

In Neverver, clausal elements occur in fixed positions in relation to the nucleus:

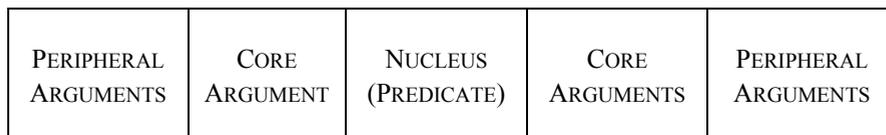
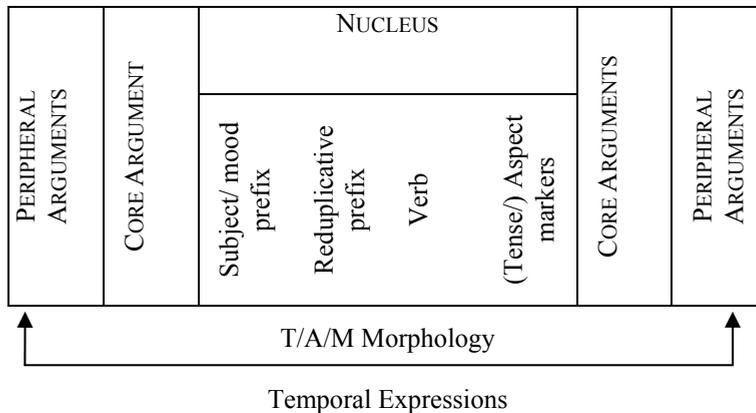


Figure 6. Ordering of the clausal elements in Neverver

Multiple strategies are available to express temporal, modal and aspectual meanings in Neverver. Temporal meanings can be overtly expressed in the pe-

riphery of the clause with temporal nouns (§3.5.4.) and temporal subordinate clauses (§13.3.1). There is also a post-verbal tense/aspect position where remoteness can be encoded (§7.3.1.2). The most pervasive temporal contrast however, is expressed with the obligatory subject/mood prefix.<sup>1</sup> The subject/mood prefix functions to express the notional contrast of nonfuture/future time, and at the same time, expresses the notional contrast of actual/nonactual status of a situation. Evidence will be presented in §7.2 to support the selection of ‘mood’ over ‘tense’ as the label for this morphological category. Aspectual meanings cluster around the verb. The reduplicative affix precedes the verb (§8.1), and aspectual serial verbs both precede and follow the verb that functions as the semantic head of a verb phrase (chapter 10 and 11). Other aspectual meanings are encoded in post-verbal positions (§7.3.).

In a declarative clause with a simple nucleus, the location of temporal, aspectual and modal meanings in Neverver can be summarised as follows:



*Figure 7.* The distribution of temporal, aspectual and modal meanings in the clause

19. In some analyses (cf. Bresnan and Mchombo 1987; Thieberger 2004), pronominal affixes encoding information about core arguments in the nucleus are treated as instantiations of the core arguments themselves. For example, in Thieberger’s analysis of South Efate (2004: 267), the subject argument is obligatorily encoded as a proclitic while the object argument may be encoded either as an object suffix or as a lexical object. In the case of the subject, the obligatory proclitic is treated as a core argument and any independent nominal is analysed as co-indexing this argument. In the case of the object, either the object suffix or the independent nominal is treated as the core argument. In Neverver, only subject arguments are encoded as verbal affixes; object arguments are encoded as independent nominals, independent pronouns, or zero. The lack of object affixes suggests that there is less of a case for the affix-as-core analysis in Neverver than in the other languages where this analysis is proposed.

## 7.1. Expressing temporal contrasts

Temporal information may be expressed in a number of different ways in Neverver. Temporal nouns and temporal subordinate clauses provide options to encode quite precise temporal information. These semantically rich forms of encoding interact with a small number of morphological contrasts that are found in pre-verbal and post-verbal positions. The most important contrast is found in an obligatory prefix on the verb. The contrast is binary, with the following options available to speakers:

- (1)  $\emptyset$ -  
*m*- [m-, <sup>m</sup>b-] (see §6.1.1.)

In simple declarative and interrogative clauses, the choice between  $\emptyset$ - or *m*- is driven by the temporal location of the situation being expressed, where the term ‘situation’ is used here to include states, events, and actions (cf. Comrie 1985: 5). Situations which have (or have not) taken place prior to or at a specified moment in time are marked with  $\emptyset$ - (henceforth, the unmarked clause); situations which are thought likely (or unlikely) to take place after a specified moment in time are marked with *m*- (henceforth, the *m*-clause).

The (non-)occurrence of a situation in time is established in relation to a reference time. Givón (2001a: 285–87) describes the default reference time as the time of speech, but notes that the reference time may in fact be either prior to or following the time of speech. For example, the point that events have reached in a narrative may serve as the assigned temporal centre, or reference time.

The reference time in Neverver need not be simultaneous with the speech time. This means that the system by which unmarked clauses and *m*-clauses are distributed is a relative system rather than an absolute system of temporal reference. Unmarked declarative and interrogative clauses are associated with relative nonfuture temporal reference while declarative and interrogative *m*-clauses are associated with relative future time reference. The basic distribution of unmarked and *m*-marked clauses is illustrated in the sub-sections below.

### 7.1.1. Events which happened (or did not happen) prior to the reference time

Events prior to the reference time are always expressed in an unmarked clause. They may be marked lexically for absolute past time (2), or have relative past time reference because they are associated with a previously introduced past time frame. Example (3) displays a negative construction with relative past time reference from a narrative text.

- (2) Reference time = speech time  
*Julie, abbast nat-uv Tavali Aut.*  
 Julie yesterday 1EXCL:REAL:PL-go Tavali Aut  
 'Julie, yesterday we went to Tavali Aut.' [NVCV01.1: 373.423]
- (3) Reference time  $\neq$  speech time (reference time is prior to speech time)  
*Be at-te bburvur si.*  
 but 3REAL:PL- hit completely NEG  
 'But they hadn't killed him.' [NVCT4.9:45.429]

### 7.1.2. Events which are happening at the reference time

In the case of events happening at the reference time, the unmarked clause combines with progressive aspect, signalled by the serialised verb *tokh*, which can also be used independently as an existential/locational verb.

- (4) *Nida adr-ikh mama ar-tokh ar-khil*  
 mother 3NSG-APPL father 3REAL:DU-PROG 3REAL:DU-dig.up  
*nidam.*  
 yam  
 'Mother and father were digging yams.' [NVKS12.10: 56.397]
- (5) *Ei i-tokh i-kkan.*  
 3SG 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-eat  
 'He is eating (now).' [NVE1.18]
- (6) *Vinang i-tokh i-tev-tev*  
 woman:ANA 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-DUP-begin.to.grow  
*nivanbev.*  
 Chinese yam  
 'The woman was cultivating Chinese yams.' [NVKS02.12]

When a clause is marked for negative polarity, as in the negative response to a polar interrogative, the clause is typically not marked for progressive aspect. Language consultants accepted the combination of negative polarity and progressive aspect, but they did not produce such constructions themselves. Note in example (7) that the interrogative structure has nonfuture temporal reference and is an unmarked clause.

- (7) Translation equivalent produced by language consultants  
*Julie i-tokh i-kkan ing?*  
 Julie 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-eat EXCLAM  
*No, Julie i-kkan si, i-tokh i-ver.*  
 No Julie 3REAL:SG-eat NEG 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-work  
 ‘Is Julie eating now? No, she isn’t eating, she is working.’ [NVKW09.01]
- (8) Construction produced by linguist and accepted by language consultants  
*No, Julie i-tokh i-kkan si,*  
 No Julie 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-eat NEG  
*i-tokh i-ver.*  
 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-work  
 ‘No, Julie isn’t eating; she’s working.’ [NVKW09.02]

### 7.1.3. States that existed (or did not exist) prior to or at the reference time

States that existed, or did not exist, at any time up to and including the reference time, are expressed in an unmarked clause. In (9), the reference time is the point that the narrative has reached. This time is prior to the speech time. In (10), the state took place prior to the reference time, which is again the moment that the narrative has reached.

- (9) *Nidam ang ar-lele we ar-lele*  
 Yam ANA 3REAL:DU-small AUGCO 3REAL:DU-small  
 ‘The two yams were really small.’ [NVKS15.37]
- (10) *Tue nimjal i-tokh si.*  
 before meat 3REAL:SG-exist NEG  
 ‘Before there was no meat.’ [NVKS2.171] (Where ‘before’ is in relation to the narrative timeline.)

In (11), the reference time is the character’s moment of speech, rather than the moment of speech for the story teller.

- (11) *Na ni-maur man(d) ing!*  
 1SG 1REAL:SG-live EMPH EXCLAM  
 ‘I’m alive!’ [NVKS15.69]

## 7.1.4. Relative future events

*M*-clauses most generally encode events which are unrealised at the reference time but which may (or may not) be realised following the reference time. Such events may be imminent, as in (12), or coming up in the near future, as in (13).

- (12) *Barnakh nim-gav nokhos t-na.*  
 now 1IRR:SG-rake garden POSSDT-1SG  
 ‘Now I’m going to rake my garden.’ [NVKS16.8: 43.437]

- (13) *Na nim-bbu nim-das lon nokhos,*  
 1SG 1IRR:SG-go 1IRR:SG-go.down LOC garden  
*nibi-llang ni-kkan-ian lon nokhos.*  
 1IRR:SG-look.for.s.t. 1REAL:SG-eat-NSF LOC garden  
 ‘I’ll go down to the garden and I’ll forage in the garden.’  
 [NVKS20.11:55.822]

*M*-clauses are also used to express events predicted to happen in the more distant future.

- (14) *Ei im-bbulem lon nidam an im-bbulem ang.*  
 3SG 3IRR:SG-come LOC year NMOD 3IRR:SG-come ANA  
 ‘He will come next year.’ [NVE02.10]

Events which are predicted not to happen in the future are *m*-marked, as are interrogative clauses querying future events.

- (15) *Ave! Na nida t-na im-bbulem si aiyem.*  
 No! 1SG mother POSSDT-1SG 3IRR:SG-come NEG home  
 ‘No! My mother won’t come home.’ [NVKS01.17]

- (16) *I-okh me kum-bbu abi?*  
 PSNPR-2SG just 2IRR.SG-go where  
 ‘Where will you go?’ [NVKS04.18:115.996]

When a past time frame has been established as the temporal centre or reference time, situations encoded with *m*-clauses have a future-in-the-past interpretation. One pattern that can be observed in connected text is a future-in-the-past event immediately followed by a second proposition in an unmarked clause, encoding the actual occurrence of the event.

- (17) *Nimt-uv*            *nibit-vor*            *bbukhut*    *mil*  
 1INCL:IRR:PL-go    1INCL:IRR:PL-sit    inside    again  
*nit-uv*                    *nit-vor.*  
 1INCL:REAL:PL-go    1INCL:REAL:PL-sit  
 ‘We were going to go and sit inside again; we went and sat (down).’  
 [NVKI28.38-39:133.069-135.035]

#### 7.1.5. Events marked by *suppakh* or *lile* ‘nearly, soon’

When an event is marked by *suppakh* or *lile* ‘nearly, soon’, an *m*-clause is obligatory. Events with *suppakh* or *lile* are imminent at the reference time although as-yet unrealised. Thus, such events have a relative future time reference. This pattern is also attested in the neighbouring Avava language (Crowley 2006a: 74).

- (18) *Nial*    *suppakh*    *im-dan.*  
 sun    nearly    3IRR:SG-set  
 ‘The sun nearly set.’ [NVKS16.78: 336.137]
- (19) *Ar-uv*            *gaga-gaga*            *ba*    *suppakh*    *me*  
 3REAL:DU-go    DUP-on.and.on    when    nearly    just  
*abir-sakh*            *aut...*  
 3IRR:DU-go.up    ashore  
 ‘They went on and on and on and when they were nearly going ashore...’  
 [NVKS4.39: 190.663]

Further temporal morphology occurs in the post-verbal external tense/aspect position, which is described in full in §7.3.1.

## 7.2. Expressing reality status<sup>1</sup>

The examples presented in §7.1 provide rather strong evidence that the binary opposition between unmarked and *m*-marked clauses is an expression of grammatical tense. The parameter of temporal location certainly explains the distribution of the morpheme *m*- in many simple declarative and interrogative constructions. Beyond these constructions however, there is evidence in Neverver

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20. Sections of this material have been published in an *Oceanic Linguistics* article ‘Exploring mood in Neverver’ (Barbour 2011: 198–220). The article offers a detailed exploration of the notional category of reality status with reference to the typological literature, and of its manifestation in Neverver as the grammatical category of mood.

that the opposition between unmarked and *m*-marked clauses expresses more than simply the parameter of temporal location. The parameter of reality status also seems relevant, with unmarked clauses encoding actual or real situations and *m*-clauses encoding nonactual or unreal situations.

Reality status is a subjective notion. It concerns a speaker's perception of, and representational choices about, the actualization of a given situation. Drawing heavily on Elliot's (2000: 66–67) characterization of this notional category, we can define the prototypical characteristics of actual and nonactual situations as follows:

- An actualized situation prototypically is one where there is a perceived certainty, on the part of the speaker, of the factuality of that situation's taking place. The situation is “an actualized or certain fact of reality” (Elliot 2000: 66);
- A nonactualized situation prototypically is one that is perceived by the speaker to exist only in an imagined or nonreal world. Such a situation “belongs to the realm of the imagined or hypothetical, and as such it constitutes a potential or possible event, but it is not an observable fact of reality” (Elliot 2000: 67).

The semantic contrast between real and unreal is thought to be encoded in the verbal morphology of many languages of the Oceanic family (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002). The phenomenon is so pervasive that it has been reconstructed as a feature of the ancestor language Proto Oceanic (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002: 84). The relevant category of verbal morphology is commonly labelled *mood* by Oceanic linguists. Where a binary contrast is present, *realis mood* describes the morphology associated with real situations, and *irrealis mood* describes the morphology associated with unreal situations. In Neverver, the unmarked clause is said to display *realis mood*, while the *m*-clauses is said to display *irrealis mood*.

It should be pointed out that the semantic contrast between real and unreal is in many ways compatible with the semantic contrast between nonfuture and future temporal reference. Nonfuture temporal location associates most easily with the notion of an actualized situation, as an event that has already happened or is currently happening can be understood as real (Mithun 1995: 378–80; Elliot 2000: 68–71; Palmer 2001: 168–70). Elliot (2000: 68), in her typological study of mood, observes that “an event which is perceived as either having taken place, or at least having been initiated, prototypically will be marked *realis*”. Future temporal location associates most easily with the notion of a nonactualized situation, as it is more difficult to assert the reality of an event that has not yet happened.

In section 7.1, temporal location provided a satisfactory explanation of the data presented; in the sub-sections below, a number of different semantic and grammatical contexts are presented. In many of these contexts, the parameter of reality status seems to offer a more convincing explanation for the distribution of unmarked clauses and *m*-clauses than is possible with the parameter of temporal location.

### 7.2.1. Habitual events, such as those described in familiar processes

There is no distinct habitual morphology in Neverver. When an habitual process is being described, the description generally begins with a statement such as “Whenever I want to make a garden...” or “Whenever I decide to build a house...”. Such statements, and the accompanying habitual descriptions, are devoid of a specific past or future time reference. Comrie (1985: 40) argues that the habitual is not itself a separate tense, but rather that “habitual meaning lies on the boundary of the three systems of tense, aspect, and mood” and that “it involves location of a situation across a large slice of time (perhaps the whole of time) rather than just at some single point”. With only two coding possibilities available in Neverver, speakers are required to select either an unmarked clause, or an *m*-clause to express the habitual. We find that habitual events are consistently encoded in the same way as events with nonfuture time reference, in unmarked clauses. A temporal analysis of habituals is somewhat problematic however. A temporal interpretation of *m*-clauses restricts temporal location to the nonfuture; yet habitual processes are arguably defined by their lack of such temporal restrictions. Reality status handles the coding of habituals more easily, as we can conceive of habitual sequences as being routinely actualized in a community, and thus marked accordingly as part of a speaker’s reality.

Examples below illustrate activities that form elements of habitual processes. These processes, involving gardening and house-building, are routinely actualized by community members.

- (20) *Las*                      *turien*    *nat-rev*                      *me*    *noron*    *nani*  
 occasion:INDEF    some    1EXCL:REAL:PL-pull    just    leaf    coconut  
*nati-rrik*                      *i-vu*                      *lon*    *nokhos*    *ang.*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-throw    3REAL:SG-go    LOC    garden    ANA  
 ‘Sometimes we just pull coconut fronds and throw them on the garden.’  
 [NVDL07.7]

- (21) *Ni-te neppar, ni-vos tata*  
 1REAL:SG-cut crossbeams 1REAL:SG-place.on.top tight  
*ar nibalbal ang edr.*  
 LOC.on house.post ANA PL  
 ‘I cut the crossbeams and place them firmly on the house posts.’ [NVDL06.7]

Actions which are habitually not carried out are marked in the same way, in an unmarked clause.

- (22) *Ni-jik si adr i-bitev an*  
 1REAL:SG-put NEG 3NSG 3REAL:SG-accompany DEMSPN  
*an ni-lav-lu il nim-khavukh adr.*  
 NMOD 1REAL:SG-get-COMPL PURPOSE 1IRR:SG-plant 3NSG  
 ‘I don’t put them with the ones that I take out in order to plant.’ [NVDL08.8]

In example (22), the *m*-clause headed by *khavukh* ‘plant’ is triggered by the purpose subordinator *il*.

A closely related use of the unmarked clauses is for the past habitual. In the following example, the verb stem is reduplicated, and carries the serialized *duvakh* ‘first’ to express the past habitual. Here, the additional serial verb is needed to signal the past temporal location of the habitual activity.

- (23) *Lon nesal an kati-le-lles-duvakh ye akhsung...*  
 LOC road NMOD 2REAL:PL-DUP-bathe-first RSPR inland  
 ‘On the road where you used to bathe inland...’ [NVCV09.14: 95.013]

### 7.2.2. Imperative and prohibitive constructions

There is no distinct imperative morphology in Neverver. Imperative constructions carry second person singular, dual, or plural morphology in an *m*-clause.

- (24) *Kabri-tn nibet t-gam lon!*  
 2IRR:DU-roast breadfruit POSSDT-2NSG LOC  
 ‘Roast your breadfruit on it!’ [NVKS7.17: 114.002]
- (25) *Okh kum-khan be kum-khankhan bbutakh si!*  
 2SG 2IRR:SG-eat but 2IRR:SG-DUP-eat too.much NEG  
 ‘Eat but don’t eat too much!’ [NVKS4.12: 82.022]

Like the general imperative construction illustrated in (24) and (25), the related instructional text, used to teach sequences of actions, involves the *m*-clause. This pattern has been observed in a number of ‘how to’ texts about processes such as laplap-making and kava-making. When these texts were record-

ed, I was the main audience. As a non-community member, it was assumed that I did not have any experience of these processes. I was however, appropriately placed to receive instruction in these common processes, and I was instructed with a sequence of *m*-clauses.

- (26) *Kum-jik*      *nolong*      *lon*      *nakhabb*  
 2IRR:SG-put      laplap      LOC      fire  
 ‘Put the laplap<sup>2</sup> on the fire.’ [NVDL11.10]
- (27) *Kub-ras*                      *niblokhlokh*      *ang*      *im-bbu*      *lon*  
 2IRR:SG-scoop.up      kava.plant      ANA      3IRR:SG-go      LOC  
*besen*      *ang*.  
 bowl      ANA  
 ‘Scoop up the kava into the bowl.’ [NVE36.2]

There is a clear functional difference between the *m*-clauses presented in this section, and the unmarked clauses described in §7.2.1 above. The *m*-clause is used when teaching the audience how to carry out a process. In contrast, the unmarked clause is employed when describing habitual processes with the simple intention of providing information about a given process.

While we might argue for a future temporal interpretation of the *m*-clause in its instructional use, and possibly its imperative use, Aikhenvald (2010: 131) has observed that cross-linguistically “the ways imperatives are used may imply present and ongoing, rather than exclusively future, reference”. It is almost certainly the case that if some action needs to be commanded, it is because it has not yet been performed. At the same time, in many contexts including for example, a parent speaking to a child, commands are uttered with the expectation of an immediate response, one that might even overlap with the utterance of the command itself. By default then, the temporal location of events expressed by imperatives needs to be nonpast, rather than simply future. This produces a lack of alignment between the nonfuture/future contrast that is evident in the temporal location of simple declarative and interrogative clauses, and past/nonpast distinction that is created by the temporal location of imperative constructions.

Reality status can account for the coding of imperatives and instructions with *m*-clauses expressing their nonactualization from the perspective of the speaker. Mithun (1995: 376) notes that “commands can easily be conceived of as expressing thoughts of actions rather than the realization or actualization of them”.

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21. *Nolong* ‘laplap’ is mentioned in numerous examples in this volume. It is a staple of ni-Vanuatu cuisine, typically made with grated yam, or banana, wrapped in leaves, and baked on heated cooking stones. The term ‘laplap’ derives from Bislama. Outside of the context of Vanuatu, laplap is often glossed as ‘pudding’ in the sense of the savoury ‘Yorkshire pudding’ rather than the sense of the sweet ‘plum pudding’.

When an activity is being forbidden, rather than commanded, we find the relevant verb in a reduplicated form, followed by the negative particle *si*. Two options are available for pre-verbal encoding. Like imperatives, prohibitives may be expressed using a second person subject marker in an *m*-clause as in (28) (see also (25)). Additionally, prohibition can be expressed using an impersonal subject marker in an unmarked clause, as in (29).

(28) *Kum-se-sber*                      *si*      *na!*  
 2IRR:SG-DUP-touch      NEG      1SG  
 ‘Don’t touch me!’ [NVKS10.66]

(29) *No,*      *ar-ver-ver*                      *si!*  
 No      IMPS:REAL-DUP-say      NEG  
 ‘No, don’t say that!’ (lit. ‘One doesn’t say that.’) [NVCV05.9: 1327.521]

Reality status can be used to explain the presence of both unmarked prohibitives and *m*-prohibitives in Neverver. Personal *m*-prohibitives command the nonactualization of a situation (Don’t do it), whereas unmarked personal prohibitives emphasize the social convention of a particular situation being nonactualized (One doesn’t do that). A temporal interpretation again generates a mismatch between the nonfuture/future contrast of simple declaratives and interrogatives, and the past/nonpast contrast of prohibitives.

### 7.2.3. Adverbial subordinate clauses

Adverbial subordinate clauses, described in detail in chapter thirteen, carry the same morphology as main clauses. Each subordinate clause is either an unmarked clause or an *m*-clause. It is not the situation in Neverver that all subordinate clauses are automatically *m*-clauses; however, there are some interesting distribution patterns for unmarked clauses and *m*-clauses in Neverver. In at least some of the patterns, reality status provides a clearer explanation for the distribution of forms than does the parameter of temporal location.

Reason and purpose clauses are both introduced with the subordinating conjunction *il*. Reasons are typically expressed in unmarked clauses, while purposes are obligatorily encoded in *m*-clauses.

(30) *Be*      *niterikh-vidro*                      *ang*      *i-ssor*                      *si*      *il*  
 but      pre-adolescent.girl      ANA      3REAL:SG-talk      NEG      ADV.SUB  
*i-rongil*                      *si*      *mang*                      *no-ssor-ian*                      *titi.*  
 3REAL:SG-know      NEG      man:ANA      NPR-talk-NSF                      3POSS.SG  
 ‘The girl didn’t talk because she didn’t know the man’s language.’  
 [NVKS14.28]

- (31) *Ati-vlem lon nidong il abit-lav nivri*  
 3REAL:PL-come LOC mangrove.swamp ADV.SUB 3IRR:PL-get crab  
 ‘They came to the mangrove swamp to get crabs.’ [NVKS17.80]

The functional distribution between clause types is consistent with Thompson, Longacre, and Hwang’s (2007: 250–51) observation that reason and purpose clauses “differ in that the purpose clauses express a motivating event which must be *unrealized* at the time of the main event, while reason clauses express a motivating event which may be *realized* at the time of the main clause event” (italics in original). With respect to the distribution of clause marking, Thompson, Longacre, and Hwang (2007: 251) go on to say that “in most languages, even those that use the same morphology for signalling purpose and reason, then, there will be different marking to signal the unrealized status of the purpose clause versus the realized status of the reason clause”. Although the terminology used by Thompson, Longacre, and Hwang (2007) is suggestive of the parameter of reality status, it must be acknowledged that temporal location could easily explain the coding of reason and purpose clauses. Purpose clauses, by definition unrealized at the time of the associated main clause activity, exhibit the property of relative future temporal location.

Condition-consequence clauses are rather more interesting. Both the main and subordinate clauses in a condition-consequence construction are *m*-clauses. Such a pattern might be expected for conditionals that are potentially realizable, or predictive, as these have the property of future temporal location.

- (32) *Besi ib-rong~rong ga im-bbu me*  
 If 3IRR:SG-DUP~want then 3IRR:SG-go just  
*ib-lukh-da tang.*  
 3IRR:SG-stay- PART there  
 ‘If he wants, then he can just go and rest there.’ [NVCT05.27. 377.093]

Example (33) uses the temporal pronoun *dran* to introduce the condition clause of the condition-consequence structure. Again, we see *m*-clauses in both parts of the construction.

- (33) *Dran am-khan i-ttokh, barnakh nitusu*  
 TMPPN IMPS.IRR-eat 3REAL:SG-rip.a.hole now sea  
*im-sakh bbukhut.*  
 3IRR:SG-go.up inside  
 ‘When it is eaten through, the sea will come inside...’ [NVKS04.12: 82.022]

The most important conditional type, in terms of the discussion of pre-verbal morphology, is the counterfactual. This is because counterfactual conditionals exhibit exactly the same morphological properties as those future referenced structures illustrated above, although with a past temporal location. Both condition and consequence are expressed in *m*-clauses. Example (34) describes an incident in which a woman was struck on the head by a falling coconut. The woman was not injured badly. The conditional construction describes what might have happened if the coconut had fallen on the base of her neck instead of glancing off her skull.

- (34) *Besi im-dak ei lon nakhsan i-gen*  
 if 3IRR:SG-fall.over 3SG LOC base.of.s.t. 3REAL:SG-like  
*kut an im-gal ei ang,*  
 LOC.PR NMOD 3IRR:SG-strike 3SG ANA  
*O im-ngot ing!*  
 Oh 3IRR:SG-be.broken EXCLAM  
 ‘If it had fallen on the base, like on the place where it struck, oh, it would have broken for sure!’ [NVCV06.36: 593.557]

A temporal interpretation of (34), which would require listeners to locate both propositions in the relative future, is inappropriate in the context of the conversation from which example (34) is drawn. Reality status, with the *m*-clause coding nonactual events for all conditional sub-types, perhaps offers a tidier explanation of the coding of conditional clauses, whereby condition-consequence relations are simply encoded in *m*-clauses to signal their non-actualization.

#### 7.2.4. Complement clauses

Complement clauses are described in detail in chapter twelve. Among the subtypes of complementation that are attested in Neverver, there are a small number where the mood of the complement clause is dependent on the mood and polarity of the main clause. Thus far, negation has had no effect on the coding of clauses, with negative and positive polarity being independent of mood marking. When it comes to the formation of complement clauses of immediate perception, knowledge, and manipulation, we find that the options for the coding of mood are very restricted. When the main clause is unmarked and has positive polarity, the complement clause is also unmarked. It seems that actualization of the situation in the main clause implies actualization of the complement situation.

- (35) *Nimkhut ttis i-ve naus i-vov.*  
 Man holy 3REAL:SG-make rain 3REAL:SG-fall  
 ‘The holy person made the rain fall (and it fell).’ [NVKI01.49]

On the other hand, when the situation expressed in the main clause is confirmed as not having been actualized, because the speaker is certain that it did not occur, the complement situation is obligatorily coded in an *m*-clause.

- (36) *Mang i-ve si naus im-bbuov.*  
 man:ANA 3REAL:SG-make NEG rain 3IRR:SG-fall  
 ‘He didn't make the rain fall (and it did not fall).’ [NVKW08.44]

Likewise, when the main clause is confirmed as non-actualized because the speaker knows that it has not happened yet, the complement situation is obligatorily coded in an *m*-clause.

- (37) *Mang im-bbue naus im-bbuov.*  
 man:ANA 3IRR:SG-make rain 3IRR:SG-fall  
 ‘He will make the rain fall (it will fall in the future, but it hasn't fallen yet).’  
 [NVKW08.48]

It is very difficult to sustain a temporal interpretation of the complement clauses presented above. Nonactualization of the complement situation offers a more plausible explanation for the occurrence of *m*-clauses.

### 7.2.5. Relative clauses with indefinite heads

Another piece of evidence for analysis of reality status as a parameter that is relevant to the distribution of unmarked and *m*-clauses comes from the coding of nominal heads with indefinite reference, described in §5.2.9. Such indefinite head nouns are modified by a number relative clause containing the numeral *skham* ‘one’. Numbers one to nine are verbal in Neverver, and like other verbs, carry an obligatory subject/mood prefix. They are restricted in their subject morphology however, and carry an invariant third person singular subject prefix. When the head noun is definite, the nominal subordinator *an* occurs to mark the beginning of the relative clause. When the head noun is indefinite, the relative clause directly follows the head noun, with no intervening subordinator.

The following series of elicited constructions displays the patterning of the grammatical category in question. In this series, most examples tolerate a temporal interpretation; however, reality status seems a more natural interpretation.

- (38) *I-khan            navuj        i-skham.*  
 3REAL:SG-eat    banana    3REAL:SG-one  
 ‘He ate a/one (nonfuture/actualized) banana.’ [NVE03.14]
- (39) *Ei        im-khan        navuj        ibi-skham.*  
 3SG    3IRR:SG-eat    banana    3IRR:SG-one  
 ‘He will eat a (future/nonactualized) banana.’ [NVE03.17]
- (40) *Ei        i-khan            si        navuj        ibi-skham.*  
 3SG    3REAL:SG-eat    NEG    banana    3IRR:SG-one  
 ‘He didn’t eat a (future/nonactualized) banana.’ [NVE03.19]
- (41) *Ei        im-khan        si        navuj        ibi-skham.*  
 3SG    3IRR:SG-eat    NEG    banana    3IRR:SG-one  
 ‘He will not eat a (future/nonactualized) banana.’ [NVE03.20]

The most problematic example for a tense interpretation is (40), where the speaker didn’t eat a banana. The relative clause modifying ‘banana’ is expressed in an *m*-clause. The banana in question is more easily understood as being non-actualized in reality (counterfactual) rather than temporally located in the future.

Although the constructions above were provided in elicitation sessions, the same patterning is found in naturally occurring text material, illustrated in (42) below.

- (42) *Niri-tbbukh                            si        nakhmal        ibi-skham...*  
 1INCL:REAL:DU-have    NEG    house        3IRR:SG-one  
 ‘We don’t have a (future/non-actualized) house...’ [NVCT05.22:350.754]

Examples (40) and (42) provide further evidence that negation has an impact on the realization of the morphological category in question (recall evidence of manipulative constructions in §7.2.4). Here again, negation in the matrix clause results in a subordinate *m*-clause. In these relative clause constructions, and particularly in examples (40) and (42), a temporal interpretation is resisted in favor of reality status, with the number subordinate clauses that modify imaginary entities being *m*-marked as non-actual.

### 7.2.6. The grammatical category of mood

In summary, the distribution of unmarked and *m*-clauses in Neverver can be explained in terms of two parameters. These are the parameters of temporal location, where a contrast is made between nonfuture and future time reference, and the parameter of reality status, where a contrast is made between real/actualized situations and unreal/nonactualized situations. In all of the examples presented in §7.1 and a number of those presented in §7.2, either parameter could be argued as serving as the basis for the distribution of unmarked and *m*-clauses. The nonfuture/future distinction of temporal location aligns well with the actualized/nonactualized distinction of reality status.

As we explore subordinate clause structures, however, an analysis of temporal location becomes difficult to sustain, and reality status is identified as a more useful way of understanding the data. Because reality status is the more widely applicable parameter in Neverver, the grammatical category in question is assigned the label *mood*, with the unmarked clause coding *realis mood*, and the *m*-clause coding *irrealis mood*. In addition to accounting for the data in an economical way, the grammatical labels selected in this work provide a convenient means of distinguishing between different types of verbal morphology. We now move away from the subject/mood prefix, to consider verbal and post-verbal encodings of aspectual and temporal meanings in §7.3. below.

## 7.3. The encoding of aspectual and temporal meanings

The mood marking of the subject/mood prefix interacts in specific ways with tense/aspect markers in Neverver. Tense/aspect markers typically appear in the nucleus of the clause, but some aspectual meanings are expressed at the level of the core.

We can identify three positions for the marking of tense/aspect that are associated with the nucleus of the clause. Any arguments encoded as grammatical objects follow these aspectual markers in the right-hand core position and the subject/mood marker precedes the reduplicative prefix. Firstly, there is an external post-verbal position where tense/aspect markers can appear. These tense/aspect markers exhibit either perfective or imperfective meanings, and encode the temporal contrasts of remote past, past and immediate. Secondly, there is an intermediate aspectual position closer to the verb stem. In this position, distributive aspect (event number) and the plurality of arguments (participant number) is encoded. Thirdly, there is a verb-internal position. Reduplicative affixes with aspectual functions can attach to the beginning of the verb stem, and serial verbs with aspectual functions can attach to the end of the verb in a nuclear layer juncture. The types of aspectual meanings expressed through

nuclear layer juncture generally involve quantificational aspect as it pertains to a single temporal location of a situation. Plurality of arguments can also be expressed in this position.

In addition to the aspectual markers associated with the nucleus, a fourth position for aspectual marking is associated with the core. Verbs expressing phasal aspect appear in the core. Such aspectual verbs each carry a subject/mood prefix. This is a point of contrast with aspectual markers in the nucleus. In the nucleus, only the main verb carries mood marking; serialised verbs, including those with aspectual functions, do not carry mood marking.

### 7.3.1. External tense/aspect markers

The external position for post-verbal tense/aspect marking accommodates a paradigm of five particles. The set of markers discussed in this section are described as external because they are the outer-most markers and the final elements of the nucleus. Any object arguments are encoded in the core position, following these markers.

A number of temporal and aspectual meanings combine in the definition of the external markers (cf. especially Bhat 1999; but also Bybee 1985; Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994; Comrie 1976; 1985; and Dahl 1985):

- Anteriority: situation occurs prior to reference time;
- Absolute past: situation occurs prior to speech time;
- Immediacy: situation immediately before/after reference time;
- Perfective versus imperfective: situation viewed as bounded whole versus situation viewed as unbounded with a focus on its internal temporal structure.

The external tense/aspect markers are also sensitive to mood. Some of the markers only occur with realis mood; others display contrasts in meaning when a situation is marked for either realis or irrealis mood. Further, the external tense/aspect markers tend to be associated with non-narrative rather than narrative events.

7.3.1.1. Anterior *ij*

Realis verb forms can be marked for anteriority with *ij* to emphasise the speaker's assertion that a situation has occurred prior to the reference time.<sup>1</sup> Example (43) illustrates a clause marked for *ij* encoding a non-narrative event. In this case, *ij* is associated with counter-sequentiality as the death of the woman by fire precedes the discovery of her body by her daughter. In example (44), from a conversational text, one speaker tells another how earlier she saw the two participants under discussion pass by with their bags, in preparation for a crabbing excursion.

- (43) *I-khit*            *nida*        *titi*            *nakhabb*    *i-khan*        *ij.*  
 3REAL:SG-see    mother    3POSS:SG    fire            3REAL:SG-eat    ANT  
 'She saw her mother, fire had consumed her.' [NVKS01.51]

- (44) *O!*    *Ar*        *ar-das*                            *ij*        *tang,*    *ar-lem*  
 Oh    3NSG    3REAL:DU-go.down            ANT    there    3REAL:DL-carry  
*ij*        *bak*    *ar-das*                            *tang.*  
 ANT    bag    3REAL:DL-go.down    there  
 'Oh! They've gone down there already, they've got their bags and gone down there.' [NVCV02.67: 428.869]

7.3.1.2. Remote anterior *ma ij*

The morpheme *ma* can be attached to *ij* to add the meaning of remoteness to the anterior marker. The construction is rather rare in the corpus and serves to encode an event as taking place a significant length of time prior to the reference time. The sequence *ma ij* is inseparable, but there is no indication of a

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22. Crowley (2006a: 101) identifies items in Avava which are cognate with tense/aspect forms in Neverver. He labels *iih/iis* and *meh* (see *mej* 'immediate' in §7.3.1.3 below) 'perfective', and glosses the example sentences in the English perfect. On two occasions, he includes 'already' in the translations, which suggests the completion of an event prior to the reference time. All of the Avava examples display the *perfective* morphemes with verbs marked for realis mood; it is not clear whether these perfective morphemes are disallowed with irrealis mood, or simply unattested in Crowley's corpus. Crowley (2006b: 128–129) also identifies an item in Naman which is cognate with the Neverver anterior marker. This is the post-verbal marker /əns/ which Crowley labels 'completive'. In Naman, this form may appear with verbs marked for either realis or irrealis mood, and the English perfect is used to translate most constructions. In Avava and Naman, Crowley notes that the perfective or completive forms are also attested as modifiers of non-verbal items such as noun phrases. When these morphemes appear in non-verbal constructions, they are glossed as 'already'.

phonological fusing as *ma ij* is pronounced as two syllables. *Ma* is not attested independently in the corpus. Again, it is non-narrative events that are marked for the remote anterior.

- (45) Remote anterior: temporal function  
*Vin-ang i-ver te "Ni-ver-ikh ma*  
 woman:ANA 3REAL:SG-say COMP 1REAL:sg-say-APPL RMT  
*ij i-okh".*  
 ANT PSNPR-2SG  
 'The woman said "I told you ages ago".' [NVKS02.71]

Remoteness cannot be quantified in terms of hours, days or other temporal spans in Neverver. The speaker's assertion that an event was remote from the reference time is more important than the physical length of time that may have passed between the event and the reference time.

The remoteness marker can also serve a metaphorically related function. As well as marking an event as temporally distant, the remoteness marker can mark an event as being more 'real'. This is a kind of emphatic function.

- (46) Remote anterior: emphatic function  
*Nesal ang ni-khitrokh ma ij i-ta-ttaj*  
 road ANA 1REAL:SG-see RMT ANT 3REAL:SG-DUP-bare  
*we i-ta-ttaj.*  
 AUGCO 3REAL:SG-DUP-bare  
 'The road, I actually saw it; it was completely bare.' [NVCV09.17: 105.747]
- (47) *Ga Seki i-salem ma ij buluk ang*  
 then Seki 3REAL:SG-sell RMT ANT cow ANA  
*i-gang.*  
 3REAL:SG-like.so  
 'Then Seki actually sold the cow like that (of a small but overpriced beast).'  
 [NVCV07.41]

### 7.3.1.3. Immediate aspect *mej* 'just'

Immediate aspect can be associated with either realis or irrealis mood marking. The combination of immediate aspect and realis mood yields past time reference, with *mej* signalling that a situation is considered to be real (i.e. to have taken place) by the reference time. The focus is on the immediacy of the situation to the reference time. Unlike *ij* and *ma ij*, we find the combination of realis mood and *mej* associated with narrative events.

When marked for irrealis mood, *mej* signals that a situation is imminent and will immediately follow the reference time. Thus, the combination of immediate

aspect and irrealis mood yields a nonpast time reference. Again, the focus is on the immediacy of the situation to the reference time.

The form *mej* may represent a phonological fusing of the limiter *me* ‘just, only’ and the anterior morpheme *ij*. Sequences of *me mej* or *me ij* are disallowed.

In the example below, three narrative events are encoded. Each is marked for realis mood. The first is *vu* ‘go’, also marked for immediate aspect. It is followed by two unmarked narrative events *lav-lu* ‘get/take out’ and *leb* ‘carry’. These three events are presented in chronological order in the text.

- (48) *Baga mokhmokh-tro ang i-vu mej*  
 then married.woman ANA 3REAL:SG-go IMM  
*i-lav-lu i-leb.*  
 3REAL:SG-get-COMPL 3REAL:SG-carry  
 ‘After that, the old woman went right away and she got him out and carried him.’ [NVKS06.50]

The next two examples display a pair of constructions from a single text. In the first construction in (49), the action *yal* ‘fly’ is unmarked for aspect, and is simply marked for irrealis mood. The second construction (50), several clauses later in the text, is marked for immediate aspect, when the same action *yal* ‘fly’ is imminent.

- (49) *Ga i-okh me i-na nib-yal, i-okh*  
 And PSNPR-2SG just PSNPR-1SG 1IRR:SG-fly PSNPR-2SG  
*kum-bbu abi?*  
 2IRR:SG-go where  
 ‘And as for you, I’ll fly but where will you go?’ [NVKS04.13: 91.802]

- (50) *Na nib-yal mej ing nim-bbu!*  
 1SG 1IRR:SG-fly IMM EXCLAM 1IRR:SG-go  
 ‘I’m going to fly away right now!’ [NVKS04.17]

We also find text examples of situations encoded with *mej*, first marked for irrealis mood, signalling the imminence of the event, and then marked for realis mood, signalling that the event has just occurred.

- (51) “*Nib-lav mej vivin na ing!*” *Ga i-lav mej.*  
 1IRR:SG-get IMM sister 1SG EXCLAM and 3REAL:SG-get IMM  
 “‘I’ll marry my sister right now!’ And he married her right then.”  
 [NVKS09.83-84]

- (52) “*I-gam kam-tuv mej.*” *Ale at-uv mej.*  
 PSNPR-2NSG 2IRR:PL-go IMM so 3REAL:PL-go IMM  
 ‘‘You go now.’’ So they went right then.’ [NVKI12.22:23]

One interesting characteristic of the immediate aspect marker is its capacity to occur outside the external post-verbal position, when the speaker wishes to signal increased immediacy of an action. *Mej* is attested at the end of a subject noun phrase as well as after temporal local nouns located in the left periphery. It cannot follow an object noun phrase however.

- (53) *I-na mej nim-bbu, nim-bbu nim-bev*  
 PSNPR-1SG IMM 1IRR:SG-go 1IRR:SG-go 1IRR:SG-go to  
*Arakhalav.*  
 Arakhalav  
 ‘I’m off to Arakhalav.’ [NVKS02.48]

- (54) *Gam mej kamti-vlem kamt-uv kabit-lav nivri.*  
 2NSG IMM 2IRR:PL-come 2IRR:PL-go 2IRR:PL-get crab  
 ‘You come right away and go get crabs.’ [NVCV02.83: 539.825]

- (55) *Khavut-tro mej i-vor blev niterikh-mokhmokh...*  
 husband-old IMM 3REAL:SG-sit with child-female  
 ‘Right then, the man sat with the girl... (as they listen to a conch shell horn being blown to announce her bride price)’ [NVKI06.57]

- (56) *Abbung mej i-git nir-te noron*  
 yesterday IMM PSNPR-1INCL:NSG 1INCL:REAL:DU-cut Leaf  
*nani ang.*  
 coconut ANA  
 ‘It was just yesterday when we cut the coconut leaves.’ [NVCV09.01: 22.460]

#### 7.3.1.4. *Discourse perfect lu*

There is a separate marker of perfect aspect in Neverver. This is the post-verbal marker *lu*. *Lu* does not co-occur with any of the other external tense/aspect markers. We find it when a number of sequential events are being described with each event leading into the next. This morpheme functions to indicate that the completion of one event is relevant to the occurrence of the next, fitting with Comrie’s (1976: 52) broad definition of perfect aspect as indicating ‘‘the continuing present relevance of a past situation’’.

*Lu* is labelled a discourse perfect because it is typically attached not to a verb encoding a narrative event itself, but to the second encoding of the event. It signals the completion of the already-introduced event prior to the mention of the next significant narrative event in the sequence. The extract in (57) below

comes from an instructional text about making laplap. In this text, and elsewhere also, the use of the discourse perfect is associated with the discourse pattern of tail-head linkage (see §13.4.).

- (57) *Ba kum-khil maniok, kum-bbulem kum-bbuavkhal,*  
 when 2IRR:SG-dig.up manioc 2IRR:SG-come 2IRR:SG-grate  
*kum-bbuavkhal lu, ale, kum-tuv nakhabb,*  
 2IRR:SG-grate PERF then 2IRR:SG-light Fire  
*kum-tuv lu nakhabb ale, kum-kho nani...*  
 2IRR:SG-light PERF fire then 2IRR:SG-scrape.out coconut  
 ‘When you dig up the maniok, come and grate it; after grating, light the fire;  
 after lighting the fire, scrape out the coconut...’ [NVDL10.4]

The next example displays the perfect marker *lu* in a narrative sequence. The narrative event of the octopus baking the girl’s mother is reported two clauses prior to the example construction displayed below.

- (58) *Nokhowit ang, ba i-yas lu nida*  
 octopus ANA when 3REAL:SG-bake.on.fire PERF mother  
*titi niterikh-mokhmokh lele ang lon nolong ang,*  
 3POSS:SG child-female small ANA LOC laplap ANA  
*i-das mil...*  
 3REAL:SG-go.down again  
 ‘The octopus, when it had baked the little girl’s mother on the fire, it went  
 down again...’ [NVKS20.49.233: 444]

The third example, also from a narrative, displays the perfect marker *lu* signalling a future perfect meaning, with the irrealis marker attached to the verb *sil* ‘burn’. The burning of tree trunks is one stage of the process of clearing ground for gardening. This stage has been mentioned at previous points in the story and the identification of a tree trunk implies that it must be burned.

- (59) *Barnakh nukhutn nakha i-skham me i-tokh*  
 now base tree 3REAL:SG-one just 3REAL:SG-exist  
*man! Nim-sil lu ga nim-bbulat.*  
 EMPH 1IRR:SG-burn PERF then 1IRR:SG-go.to.pers  
 ‘Now there is just one tree trunk! After burning it, I’ll come to you.  
 [NVKS24.17-18: 68.582-71.938]

7.3.1.5. *Continuative aspect deb(b)/mo*

The marker of continuative aspect stands in contrast to the series of markers described above all of which express perfectivity. The continuative marker encodes imperfective aspect as part of its meaning and is most commonly realised in the post-verbal marker *deb(b)*. It is variously pronounced with a final bilabial plosive or a final bilabial trill. When post-posed to a verb that encodes an event, it indicates that the event has not yet come to an end or that the agent keeps on doing it. It is not an iterative marker, as the focus is on the continuation of a single event over time rather than the repetition of an event.

- (60) *Be niterikh-mokhmokh ang i-vu deb*  
 but child-female ANA 3REAL:SG-go CONT  
*lakha titi-r.*  
 bush 3POSS-PL  
 ‘But the girl was still away in their bush.’ [NVKS18.117: 611.791]

- (61) *Khavut-tro, nollon i-sien deb niterikh titi.*  
 husband-old heart 3REAL:SG-think CONT child 3POSS:SG  
 ‘The old man, his heart still thought of his child.’ [NVKS12.41: 295.554]

When post-posed to a verb that encodes a state, continuative aspect emphasises the duration of the state. Additionally, *deb(b)* appears to express the meaning of contra-expectation when associated with states. In the first example below, a very old man, possibly the oldest community member, is described as being ‘still alive’ although he suffers from poor health. In the second example, a song composed about a fight between two groups is described as ‘still existing’ although most people no longer recall the incident. In each case below, there is some surprise that the state has continued.

- (62) *Ei i-maur man debb.*  
 3SG 3REAL:SG-live EMPH CONT  
 ‘He is actually still alive.’ (of a very old man) [NVKI03.62]

- (63) *Nobo ang i-tokh debb ing!*  
 song ANA 3REAL:SG-exist CONT EXCLAM  
 ‘The song still exists now!’ (of a traditional song that is not sung any longer [NVKI13.41.129.987])

The post-verbal marker *mo* is also used to express continuative aspect.<sup>2</sup> Its distribution in the corpus is rather limited and it is only attested with a small set

23. The form *mo* commonly appears in the corpus with the negative marker *si* (*mo-si* or *si-mo*) meaning ‘no longer’ (see §9.2.1.).

of verbs comprising (*lukh*)*lukh* ‘stay’, (*tokh*)*tokh* ‘exist’, *vorvor* ‘sit’ and *vu* ‘go’. There is a contrastive function expressed by *mo*. It appears in contexts where there are at least two actors. One of the actors is presented as remaining in a particular state or doing a particular thing, while another actor undertakes some other action.

In the first example below from a traditional narrative about winged women, the woman’s friends all put on their wings and fly away while the woman herself is forced to stay behind because someone has stolen her wings.

- (64) *Vin-ang*      *i-lukhlukh*      *mo*      *tang*      *i-ngar*.  
 woman:ANA    3REAL:SG-wait    CONT    there    3REAL:SG-cry  
 ‘The woman stayed on there and cried.’ [NVKS18.26: 128.591]

In the second example, also from a traditional narrative, a mother tells her daughter to wait at home while she goes to the garden.

- (65) *I-okh*      *kum-lukhlukh*      *mo*      *blev*      *nimjal*      *t-git*  
 PSNPR-2SG    2IRR:SG-wait    CONT    with    meat    POSSDT-1:INCL:NSG  
*tnakh*,      *i-na*      *nim-bbu*      *tetes*      *me*,      *nim-bbu*  
 here      PSNPR-1SG    1IRR:SG-go    quick    just    1IRR:SG-go  
*nim-te*      *nulkha*.  
 1IRR:SG-cut    laplap.leaf  
 ‘You wait here with our meat here; I’ll just go quickly, I’ll go and cut laplap leaves.’ [NVKS20.29: 148.224]

In (66), a father who is trying to abandon his daughter tells her to wait while he goes on. In this case, both clauses are marked for continuative aspect.

- (66) *O!*      *Kum-bbuorvor*      *mo*      *tang*,      *na*      *nim-bbu*  
 Oh      2IRR:SG-sit      CONT    there    1SG    1IRR:SG-go  
*mo*      *tnakh*”.  
 CONT    here  
 “‘Oh! You sit down and stay there, I’ll go on here’.” [NVKS17.32]

### 7.3.1.6. Summary of external tense/aspect markers

The combinations of temporal and aspectual meanings that occur in the external tense/aspect markers are summarised in Table 30 below. Values are assigned to each temporal and aspectual component. The anterior and remote anterior are distinguished primarily by degree of remoteness from the reference point, a contrast which is not captured in this table. The types of mood marking that occur with each tense/aspect marker are also indicated in Table 30.

Table 30. External tense/aspect markers

	Anterior	Remote anterior	Immediate	Discourse perfect	Continuative	
	<i>ij</i>	<i>ma-ij</i>	<i>mej</i>	<i>lu</i>	<i>deb(b)/mo</i>	
Perfectivity	+	+	+	+	-	
Anteriority (situation occurs prior to reference time)	+	+	+	-	+	
Deferred or lingering relevance (including temporal closeness)	+	+	+	-	+	
Past (restricted to temporal locations prior to speech time)	+	+	+	-	-	
Marks narrative events	-	-	+	-	-	
Mood marking	REALIS	REALIS	REALIS	IRREALIS	REALIS/ IRREALIS	REALIS/ IRREALIS

### 7.3.2. Intermediate quantificational aspect

Bhat (1999), in his typological work on major aspectual categories, identifies perfectivity (considered in §7.3.1. above), phasal aspect (described in §7.3.4. below), and quantificational aspect. Among the sub-types of quantificational aspect, Bhat (1999) includes iterative, frequentative, and habitual. He also notes that “aspectual markers may denote plurality of arguments such as the agent, patient, experiencer, location etc., in addition to (or instead of) the plurality of actions in some of their usages” (Bhat 1999: 56–57). In Neverver, we find that the intermediate post-verbal position can be occupied by aspectual markers signalling iterative and frequentative, as well as plurality of arguments. Quantificational aspect is also marked in the internal position and there is some overlap in the types of meaning expressed in the intermediate and internal positions.

In the intermediate position, there are just two aspect markers. *Sakhsakh* encodes either frequentative or iterative aspect. The quantifier *mokh* ‘all’ also appears in this position, signalling argument plurality. The two intermediate aspectual markers co-occur with semantically appropriate external aspectual markers described in §7.3.1.

7.3.2.1. Frequentative aspect *sakhsakh*

Frequentative aspect is signalled by the post-verbal marker *sakhsakh* which displays inherent or fossilised reduplication. Although *sakh* is attested in the corpus, it is a verb meaning ‘go up, go inland’, and there is no associated post-verb marker with the simplex form *sakh*. *Sakhsakh* typically encodes frequentative aspect, where an event occurs on a number of temporally distinct occasions. More rarely, it encodes iterative aspect, marking an event as occurring over and over on a single occasion. The interpretation of *sakhsakh* as a marker of iteration or frequency is dependent on the semantics of the verb that it modifies.

As a post-verbal modifier, *sakhsakh* encodes actions that have occurred prior to the reference time. It is exclusively associated with realis mood marking. Frequentative aspect is distinguished from habitual in that it is used when events have taken place on specific occasions in the past while habitual events are independent of temporal reference. Frequentative functions of *sakhsakh* are illustrated in (67) and (68) below.

- (67) *Ei i-vlem sakhsakh i-khit na*  
 3SG 3REAL:SG-come FREQ 3REAL:SG-see 1SG  
*nari-ssor.*  
 1EXCL:REAL:DU-speak  
 ‘He came frequently and saw me and we talked.’ [NVDL04.2]

- (68) *I-rot ne-mmang-ian i-tokh sakhsakh*  
 3REAL:SG-hear NPR-make.noise-NSF 3REAL:SG-exist FREQ  
*mej, mitabbukh, livrav.*  
 IMM morning afternoon  
 ‘He heard there was noise frequently, in the morning and afternoon.’  
 [NVKS18.3-4:11.859-21.158]

As example (68) shows, *sakhsakh* is compatible with the marker of immediate aspect. It also occurs with the markers of anteriority but is semantically incompatible with the continuative aspect markers. Examples of the iterative use of *sakhsakh* are displayed in (69) and (70) below. These are translated most naturally as ‘a lot’ although the meaning is iterative rather than emphatic.

- (69) *Limel i-ngar sakhsakh.*  
 Limel 3REAL:SG-cry FREQ  
 ‘Limel cried a lot.’ [NVCV09.8: 58.506]

- (70) *I-mmang sakhsakh.*  
 3REAL:SG-make.noise FREQ  
 ‘He made a lot of noise (crashing around all over the place).’  
 [NVCV05.38:1462.203]

*Sakhsakh* also functions independently as a temporal local noun meaning ‘all the time’, and as nominal modifier meaning ‘every’ in expressions such as *mitabbukh sakhsakh* ‘every morning’.

### 7.3.2.2. *Argument quantifier mokh*

The argument quantifier *mokh* ‘all’ signals the plurality of arguments belonging to the verb that it modifies. *Mokh* is most commonly attested as a post-verbal modifier; however, it can also function as a post-nominal modifier, modifying nominal heads (e.g. ‘all the men’) and pronominal heads (e.g. ‘all of them’).

*Mokh* is distinct from the frequentative aspect marker *sakhsakh* because it quantifies the participants in an event rather than quantifying the event itself. When modifying intransitive verbs, *mokh* signals that there are multiple participants with the S function. When modifying transitive verbs, *mokh* appears to signal there are multiple participants with the P function. This is suggestive of ergative patterning, which is also found where reduplication is used to signal argument plurality (§7.3.3.7).

- (71) Intransitive verb *das* ‘go down’  
*Nitavran nakha at-das mokh bistn.*  
 branch tree 3REAL:PL-go.down all downward  
 ‘The branches of the trees all fell down to the ground.’ [NVDL01.26]

- (72) Transitive verb *sar-ikh* ‘hang s.t.’  
*Ni-sar-ikh mokh nivunbbu ang.*  
 1REAL:SG-hang-APPL all bamboo ANA  
 ‘I hang all the bamboo.’ [NVDL06.12]

- (73) Transitive verb *khan* ‘eat’  
*Buluk at-khan mokh mej nidaro t-na.*  
 cow 3REAL:PL-eat all IMM taro POSSDT-1SG  
 ‘The cows just ate all my taro.’ [NVCV02.20: 101.35]

### 7.3.3. Internal aspectual markers

The third position where aspectual distinctions may be marked in Neverver is the verb stem itself. Internal aspectual markers can be verbal, forming complex verbs which encode a situation, along with aspectual information about that situation in a nuclear-layer serialisation. Following Foley and Olsen (1985: 37), a complex verb (or complex nucleus) can be defined as containing “two or more verbs joined together. This complex nucleus forms a single unit at the innermost layer, a nuclear juncture, and any nuclear layer operator must have the whole

nucleus, all the individual verbs, within its scope”. Nuclear layer juncture in Neverver is marked by the occurrence of (typically) two verb stems with just one mood marker. In addition to aspectual verb stems, internal aspectual markers also include reduplicated verbs, where a reduplicative affix that is attached to the beginning of the verb signals aspectual information (see chapter eight on reduplication).

In two other Malekula languages, Crowley (2006a, 2006b) also identifies the use of reduplication and nuclear layer juncture to signal aspectual meanings. Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994: 167), in their survey of tense, aspect and modality in the world’s languages, make the connection between reduplication and aspectual meaning, noting that “iterative is the meaning we found commonly associated with reduplication”.

Like the intermediate position, the kinds of meanings that we find expressed in the internal aspectual position relate to quantificational aspect. While quantificational aspect is commonly illustrated in terms of the number of times a situation occurs (cf. Bhat’s (1999) descriptions of semelfactive, iterative and frequentative categories of quantitative aspect), in Neverver, the focus can be on how much of an event or action has occurred, whether it be a partial and incomplete occurrence, a complete occurrence, a repetitive occurrence, or an habitual situation. In terms of states, the focus can be on whether the state is enduring or temporary.

The items that form nuclear layer juncture in Neverver and that express quantificational aspect are listed in Table 31 below, along with the aspectual functions of reduplication. The items *lu* and *da*, along with reduplication, are highly productive and are used by a number of different speakers in the corpus. *Dor* combines readily with semantically appropriate verbs, but is not a frequently-occurring item. The remaining items are low-frequency, and non-productive. There appears to be some overlap in the meanings of the very productive items with the other less productive items, suggesting that syncretism may have occurred in the speech of younger community members.

Some of the serial verbs discussed in the subsequent sections are clearly related to independent verbs; in other cases, the relationship between the aspectual markers and verbs is less clear or there are no attested independent verb forms. Additionally, some of the serial verbs are marked with the applicative suffix to signal the overall transitivity of the construction. Interestingly, the more productive items do not require transitivity concord. One possible explanation for this is that the productive serial verbs are undergoing reanalysis as post-verbal grammatical morphemes and are gradually losing their verbal properties.

Table 31. Internal aspectual markers

Internal aspectual marker	Independent verb	Aspectual meaning	Transitivity concord	Corpus status
<i>Lu</i>	‘shoot’; ‘hurry’	Completive (total)	no	Productive
<i>Dan</i>	‘set, drown’	Completive (plural)	yes	Rare
<i>Da</i>	---	Partitive	no	Productive
<i>Dor</i>	‘become thin, lean’	Partly complete	no	Semi-productive
<i>Der</i>	‘pull apart’	Temporary (of states)	(yes)	Rare
<i>Duvakh</i>	‘be first’	Past habitual	no	Productive
DUP	---	Iterative		Productive
		Durative (of states)		Productive
		Plural argument		Productive

### 7.3.3.1. Completive (total) aspect *lu*

The aspectual serial verb *lu* signals completive aspect in the sense that it marks situations where “the object of the action is totally affected, consumed, or destroyed by the action” (Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994: 57). It is most likely to be related to the independent verb stem *lu* which can mean either ‘shoot’ or ‘hurry’. As a serial verb, *lu* commonly occurs in the corpus with transitive verb stems, some of which are listed in (74) below.

(74)	Verb stem	With aspectual serial verb
	<i>der</i> ‘pull apart’	<i>der-lu</i> ‘pull down, demolish’
	<i>lav</i> ‘get, take’	<i>lav-lu</i> ‘take away, take out’
	<i>rev</i> ‘pull’	<i>rev-lu</i> ‘pull away’
	<i>vul</i> ‘buy’	<i>vul-lu</i> ‘pay off’
	<i>vuv</i> ‘blow’	<i>vuv-lu</i> ‘blow down/away/out’

The example below illustrates how completive aspect interacts with the verb *vuv* ‘to blow’.

(75)	<i>I-vuv-lu</i>	<i>nakhmal</i>	<i>i-vuv-lu</i>
	3REAL:SG-blow-COMPL	house	3REAL:SG-blow-COMPL
	<i>nakha</i> <i>edr.</i>		
	tree PL		
	‘It blew down houses, it blew down the trees.’ [NVDL01.25]		



7.3.3.3. *Partitive aspect da*

The serial verb *da* encodes partitive aspect. Actions which are marked with *da* are only partly carried out. Events which are seen as durative in Neverver, such as *ver* ‘talk’ or *kke* ‘call’, become punctual as in *ver-da* ‘mention’ or *kke-da* ‘hail’. States which are marked with *da* have a short duration. *Da* is attested with over fifty different verb stems in the corpus, making it the most productive internal aspect marker. Some of the more common examples are listed below. Although the marker of partitive aspect modifies the meaning of the verb stem to which it is attached, there is a clear relationship between the meaning of the verb stem in a simple nucleus and that found in the complex nucleus.

(80)	Verb stem	With aspectual serial verb
	<i>lukh</i> ‘live, be’	<i>lukh-da</i> ‘rest’
	<i>sber</i> ‘reach’	<i>sber-da</i> ‘touch’
	<i>sil</i> ‘burn’	<i>sil-da</i> ‘burn off (a small area of garden)’
	<i>sir</i> ‘accompany, follow’	<i>sir-da</i> ‘visit (for a short time)’
	<i>tos</i> ‘colour’	<i>tos-da</i> ‘mark’
	<i>tutn</i> ‘hot’	<i>tutn-da</i> ‘a little hot’
	<i>ver</i> ‘say’	<i>ver-da</i> ‘mention’
	<i>vor</i> ‘sit’	<i>vor-da</i> ‘rest’

(81)	<i>Khavut-tro</i>	<i>lele</i>	<i>ang</i>	<i>i-vu</i>	<i>i-lukh-da</i>
	husband-old	small	ANA	3REAL:SG-go	3REAL:SG-live-PART
	<i>lon</i>	<i>nakhmal</i> .			
	LOC	house			
	‘The little old man went and rested in the house.’ [NVCT05.33:404.498]				

7.3.3.4. *Partly complete aspect dor*

Another aspectual serial verb that signals a partitive type of meaning is the form *dor* which combines with a transitive stem and signals that a P participant has been partly affected. This partitive verb is less productive than *da* and occurs just three times in natural texts, although language consultants produced other combinations with *dor* in elicitation sessions.

(82)	Verb stem	Naturally occurring constructions with aspectual serial verb <i>dor</i>
	<i>rakh</i> ‘clear (ground)’	<i>rakh-dor</i> ‘partly clear (ground)’
	<i>khan</i> ‘eat s.t.’	<i>khan-dor</i> ‘partly eat s.t.’

- (83) Verb stem                      Constructions produced in elicitation sessions with aspectual serial verb *dor*  
*lmus* ‘wash’                      *lmus-dor* ‘wash part of s.t.’  
*khavukh* ‘plant’                      *khavukh-dor* ‘plant some of s.t.’  
*khavakh* ‘plant (yams)’                      *khavakh-dor* ‘plant some (of the yams)’  
*var* ‘harvest (cobs)’                      *var-dor* ‘harvest some (of the corn)’
- (84) *Ni-tokh*                      *ni-rakh-dor*                      *ang.*  
1REAL:SG-PROG    1REAL:SG-clear.ground-PTLY    ANA  
‘I am partly clearing it.’ [NVKS16.75:320.879]
- (85) *Na*    *ni-khan-dor*                      *ni-kkan-ian*    *na.*  
1SG    1REAL:SG-eat-PTLY    NPR-eat-NSF    1SG  
‘I partly ate my food.’ [NVE13.17]

### 7.3.3.5. Temporary aspect *der*

Related to the aspect markers that signal partitive aspect is the serial verb *der*. Reduplication of a stative verb stem can produce a temporary interpretation, the addition of *der* seems to emphasise the temporary nature of the state. In the corpus, the following states are attested with *der*. We can observe transitivity concord with the third construction which is a two-argument complex predicate.

- (86) Verb stem                      With aspectual serial verb  
*lukh*    ‘live, be’                      *lukhlukh-der*    ‘stay temporarily, wait’  
*tokhtokh*    ‘exist’                      *tokhtokh-der*    ‘exist temporarily, wait’  
*wet*    ‘wait’                      *wet-der-ikh*    ‘wait for someone/until someone comes’

In each of the examples below, the state is marked as temporary. The event that will terminate the state is predictable or known.

- (87) *Kum-lukh-lukh-der*                      *ga-gaga*                      *naut*    *i-met.*  
2IRR:SG-DUP-live-TEMP    DUP-on.and.on    place    3REAL:SG-dark  
‘Wait until it is dark.’ [NVDL10.15]
- (88) *Barnakh*    *i-lukh-lukh-der*                      *an*                      *an*                      *nidam*  
now                      3REAL:SG-DUP-live-TEMP    DEMSPN    NMOD    yam  
*titi*                      *abit-maur*                      *abit-sakka*                      *ibi-rvikh.*  
3POSS:SG    3IRR:PL-live    3IRR:PL-climb    3IRR:SG-good  
‘Now he waited (until) the occasion when his yams were going to grow and climb well.’ [NVKS16.65: 269.473]

The other verb that can be reduplicated and form a complex predicate with the temporary serial verb *der* is *ngar* ‘cry’. The action of crying has inherent duration, as compared to cry out, which is punctual. When combined with *der*, this highly lexicalised complex predicate means ‘be shocked suddenly’. This durative-punctual pairing of meanings is similar to the permanent-temporary pairing that forms when *der* combines with verbs encoding states.

### 7.3.3.6. *Past habitual with duvakh and reduplication*

*Duvakh* is a serial verb that refers to an event that took place ‘before’ or ‘at first’ when combined with realis mood as in (89), or that will take place first when combined with irrealis mood as in (90). The combination of *duvakh* with realis mood and reduplication is used to signal the past habitual ‘used to’, as shown in (91).

- (89) *Niterikh an adr at-lem-duvakh ang*  
 child NMOD 3NSG 3REAL:PL-give.birth-first ANA  
*i-vu.*  
 3REAL:SG-go  
 ‘The child that they bore first went.’ [NVCT02.33: 161.509]

- (90) *Okh kum-tos-duvakh na.*  
 2SG 2IRR:SG-paint-first 1SG  
 ‘Paint me first.’ [NVCV24.9: 49.834]

- (91) *lon nesal an kati-le-lles-duvakh ye akhsung...*  
 LOC road NMOD 2REAL:PL-DUP-bathe-first RSPN inland  
 ‘on the road where you used to bathe inland...’ [NVCV09.14: 95.013]

### 7.3.3.7. *Aspectual distinctions encoded through reduplication*

Reduplication has a wide range of functions in Neverver, described in detail in chapter eight. Three functions which are aspectual in nature are the use of a reduplicative affix to signal iterative, durative and habitual aspect. Habitual aspect is illustrated in (91). Punctual situations can be rendered iterative with reduplication, while non-punctual verbs (including states) are emphatically durative when reduplicated. When signalling iterative or durative aspect, the verb stem may be reduplicated numerous times. In the corpus, it is common for three to six reduplicative affixes to be used. Multiple aspectual reduplication contrasts with repetition for pragmatic functions (see §8.3).

- (92) *Ba i-vu, i-khit ar-te nakha ang*  
 when 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-see IMPS:REAL-cut tree ANA  
*ar-te-te-te-te i-suvsvv.*  
 IMPS:REAL-DUP-DUP-DUP-cut 3REAL:SG-be.finished  
 ‘When he went, he saw the trees had been cut, they had been cut on and on  
 (until) it was finished.’ [NVKS10.13: 80.422]

In example (93), the stative form *vorvor* ‘to sit’ (already reduplicated from the active verb *vor* ‘to sit down’) is multiply reduplicated to signal duration. In (94), the inherently durative verb *llang* ‘look.for.s.t.’ is also reduplicated to express duration. In examples (92) and (94), we can see that the P argument is not encoded explicitly in the reduplicated construction, despite the verbs being transitive in the preceding simplex constructions. The relationship between reduplication and detransitivity is explored in detail in chapter eight.

- (93) *I-vor-vor mej i-vor-vor-vor-vor-vor*  
 3REAL:SG-DUP-sit IMM 3REAL:SG-DUP-DUP-DUP-DUP-DUP-sit  
*tuan nolong titi niterikh titi var.*  
 LOCPSN laplap 3POSS:SG child 3POSS:SG unfortunate  
 ‘She just sat then, she sat for a long long time by her poor child's laplap.’  
 [NVKS03.51]

- (94) *I-llang nibarbar Ang*  
 3REAL:SG-look.for.s.t. pig ANA  
*i-la-la-la-llang.*  
 3REAL:SG-DUP-DUP-DUP-look.for.s.t.  
 ‘She looked for the pig. She looked and looked and looked.’  
 [NVCV03.16:89.451]

The reduplication of verb stems can be used to emphasise argument plurality. When a verb is intransitive, reduplication can emphasise the plurality of the only available argument encoded as S; when a verb is transitive, reduplication could emphasise the plurality of either A or P. In the text corpus, there are examples of singular A and plural P, where reduplication appears to emphasise the plurality of P. There are no examples of plural A and plural P however, where reduplication is clearly interacting exclusively with the plurality of P. Nor are there examples of plural A and singular P, where reduplication could potentially indicate the plurality of A. The emphasis of argument plurality marked by reduplication in the corpus thus appears to follow the same ergative pattern observed for the other plural argument marker *mokh*, although evidence from the text corpus is somewhat sparse.

- (95) *Ga at-uv, ni-kkol-ian ang*  
 then 3REAL:PL-go NPR-make.ceremony-NSF ANA  
*i-suvsvu at-mal-malu.*  
 3REAL:SG-be.finished 3REAL:PL-DUP-disperse  
 ‘Then they went, the ceremony finished and they all dispersed.’  
 [NVKS08.72]
- (96) *Ba i-gang nangatian ati-vle-vlem*  
 when 3REAL:SG-like.so everyone 3REAL:PL-DUP-come  
*at-dum-dum lon nemaling titi-r at-das*  
 3REAL:PL-DUP-run LOC bed 3POSS-PL 3REAL:PL-go.down  
*vere.*  
 outside  
 ‘When it was so, everyone all came running from their beds and went outside.’ [NVKS15.65]
- (97) *Ni-khit-khit nidam ang edr.*  
 1REAL:SG-DUP-see yam ANA PL  
 ‘I look at/check all the yams.’ [NVDL08.3]
- (98) *ni-vus-vus nani i-vlem sur nesal.*  
 1REAL:SG-DUP-carry coconut 3REAL:SG-come near road  
 ‘I carried all the coconut to the road.’ [NVDL02.08]

#### 7.3.4. Phasal aspect encoded in core layer juncture

The final category of aspect that is overtly encoded in Neverver is phasal aspect. Bhat (1999: 49) uses the term phasal aspect to describe aspectual marking that focuses attention on the beginning, middle or end of a situation. In Neverver, we find phasal aspect encoded in a core layer juncture, where the phasal meaning (to begin, continue or end) is encoded as a separate verb carrying its own subject/mood marker. In these constructions, mood is obligatorily matched to the mood marking of any other verbs that appear in the core – that is, the mood marking of the phasal verb is concordant.<sup>3</sup>

The ordering of the aspectual verb with respect to the event verb displays some iconicity, with the serial verb that signals ingressive aspect preceding the event verb (START-DO), and the serial verb that signals egressive aspect following the event verb (DO-STOP). Iconicity seems less relevant in the progressive construction, where the event and its continuation are simultaneous. In Neverver-

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24. Concordant mood marking is a defining characteristic of core layer juncture. Core serial constructions are described in detail in chapter eleven.

er, the serial verb signalling progressive aspect precedes the event verb (CONTINUE-DO).

#### 7.3.4.1. Progressive aspect *tokh*

The best example of core layer phasal aspect is the encoding of progressive aspect with the verb *tokh*. *Tokh* is also used as the existential/locative verb meaning ‘exist, be at’. The aspectual usage is distinct from existential and locative usages because when signalling progressive aspect, *tokh* must occur as the first element of a core layer juncture, signalling that a situation is in progress at the reference time. As an aspectual marker, *tokh* is not attested in negative constructions in connected text; simple verb forms are used instead (see §7.1.2 above). This differs from the existential/locative usage which may be marked for negative.

- (99) *Ba i-tokh i-patel i-gang be*  
 when 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-paddle 3REAL:SG-like.so but  
*nibisbokh ang tu, i-tokh i-khan nauj ang.*  
 rat ANA too 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-eat pawpaw ANA  
 ‘When he was paddling like so, the rat too was eating the pawpaw.’  
 [NVKS04.11: 77.458]

Progressive aspect is attested with irrealis mood just four times in the text corpus, signalling a situation that will be in progress at some reference point following the moment of speech. Occurrences of progressive aspect with irrealis mood are found either in traditional narratives, where one of the characters is speaking to another about something that is going to be happening, or in conversational texts. In example (100), a woman is in the process of telling her husband that she is leaving him and he will have to care for their children alone. In example (101), irrealis mood is a marker of the imperative, and a continuative interpretation seems appropriate, especially as the progressive action of ‘looking for bags’ is described with realis mood in the preceding clause.

- (100) *I-okh mej kum-tokh kum-matmat-ikh*  
 PSNPR-2SG IMM 2IRR:SG-PROG 2IRR:SG-take.care-APPL  
*niterikh t-git edr.*  
 child POSSDT-1INCL:NSG PL  
 ‘From now on, you will be looking after our children.’ [NVKS10.120]

- (101) *Gam kabir-tokh kabri-llang lakhlakh bak tang.*  
 2NSG 2IRR:DU-PROG 2IRR:DU-look.for.s.t. quiet bag there  
 ‘You keep looking/get on with looking for bags there.’ [NVCV02.70:  
 451.513]

In example (102), we can see a contrast between the stative verb *vorvor* ‘to sit’ which does not take the progressive marker, and the active verb *patel* ‘to paddle’ which is marked for progressive aspect. Again, a continuative interpretation is appropriate.

- (102) *Ale i-okh kum-bbuorvor lakhlakh, na*  
 alright PSNPR-2SG 2IRR:SG-sit quiet 1SG  
*nim-tokh nim-patel.*  
 1IRR:SG-PROG 1IRR:SG-paddle  
 ‘Alright, you sit still; I’ll keep on paddling.’ [NVKS04.10: 64.608]

#### 7.3.4.2. *Ingressive aspect tabatn~stait*

Ingressive aspect, encoded with the indigenous form *tabatn* ‘to begin’ or the borrowed form *stait(em)* from Bislama *stat* ‘to start’, also appears in a core layer juncture. The sequence of the core layer juncture is always iconic, with the verb of ingression preceding the situation verb.

The expression of ingressive aspect is rather unstable, with a number of competing patterns attested in the corpus. The same verbs (meaning ‘to begin’) are also found in complement constructions, marked with a complementiser. This is normally *il*, but can also be *an*. In addition, there is a zero-complementiser construction where the mood marking of the complement is independent of the mood of the ingressive verb (see §12.4.9. for a description of these alternative constructions). Amongst the competing constructions available to express ingression, the core layer construction, illustrated in (103) and (104), was produced by the oldest recorded female speaker of Neverver. The second of these examples illustrates ingressive aspect combined with irrealis mood.

- (103) *I-tabatn i-ve niar an nokhos ang.*  
 3REAL:SG-start 3REAL:SG-make fence NMOD garden ANA  
 ‘He started making the garden fence.’ [NVKS10.17: 108.457]

- (104) *Baga im-tabatn im-te nakha.*  
 then 3IRR:SG-start 3IRR:SG-cut tree  
 ‘Then, he was about to start cutting trees.’ [NVKS10.11: 69.355]

Among younger speakers, the borrowed form *stait(em)* is more commonly used than the indigenous form and the verb generally functions as a complement-taking predicate with the complementiser *il* rather than as the first member of a core serial construction.



# Chapter 8

## Reduplication

### 8.0. Introduction

Reduplication is understood to be a morphological process. It is generally described as type of affixation where the phonological content of the reduplicative affix is underspecified and gains content from the stem or base to which it is attached (cf. Broselow and McCarthy 1984; Marantz and Wiltshire 2000; Moravcsik 1978). Moravcsik (1978: 305) makes the early observation on reduplication that “reference is always made both to the meaning and to the sound form of the constituent to be reduplicated”. Thus, in considering reduplication, forms are analysed in §8.1. and semantic features are considered in §8.2. Reduplication is contrasted with repetition in §8.3.

Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002: 44) observe that reduplication occurs “almost universally in Oceanic verbal morphology, as well as in noun derivation”. Crowley (2006a; 2006b) and Musgrave (2007) identify reduplication in Avava and Neve’ei, Neverver’s closest neighbours, and reduplication is also widely attested in the Neverver corpus.

In Neverver, productive reduplication is associated with the verb phrase. It is a common element in detransitive constructions, including object incorporation and suppression, as well as reflexive and reciprocal constructions. Reduplication is used as a derivational process to form stative verbs and stative nominal modifiers. It is one of the means of expressing participant and event quantity. It is involved in the expression of certain negative constructions. Verbs, nouns, and members of other word classes may exhibit inherent or fossilized reduplication, where a semantically related plain stem cannot be identified in the corpus. An important characteristic of reduplication in Neverver is that it frequently occurs in conjunction with other morphological and syntactic features of the language to express particular meanings.

### 8.1. Forms of reduplication

In Neverver, reduplication prototypically involves a single reduplicative affix attached to a verb stem. There are, for example, instances of the simplex transitive stem *tukh* ‘strike’ in the semantically related reduplicated transitive construction *tukh-tukh* ‘beat ITERATIVE’.

- (1) *Baga mang at-tukh nibilkhe ang.*  
 then man:ANA 3REAL:PL-strike slitgong ANA  
 ‘Then, the men struck the slitgong.’ [NVKS17.148]
- (2) *Im-tukh-tukh nibilkhe.*  
 3IRR:SG-DUP-strike slitgong  
 ‘He was going to play the slitgong.’ [NVKI26.92: 449.510]

Although a given morpheme will typically carry only one reduplicative affix, there are forms that display up to six instances of the affix. Moravcsik (1978: 312), in her typological study of reduplication, observes that multiple reduplication is a feature of many languages, and that it is generally associated with the expression of emphasis and continuity of events. In Neverver, multiply reduplicated forms are associated with the aspectual meanings of duration and in some cases iteration, discussed in §8.2.3.3.

Reduplication applies to borrowed items as well as indigenous forms. The Bislama borrowing *nok* ‘knock’ reduplicates to *nok-nok* ‘knock ITERATIVE’. The Bislama verb *sukul* ‘learn’ reduplicates as the stative *suk-sukul* ‘be educated’. Similarly the Bislama verb *plei* ‘play’ is borrowed into Neverver as the reduplicated *ple-ple* ‘play (a game)’. Observations on the irregularity of *ple-ple* and a small number of other reduplicated forms are offered in §8.1.1.

A range of reduplicative patterns are attested in the corpus. The various forms can be united by a single phonological constraint which limits the surface realization of the reduplicative prefix to a maximum CVC shape. The constraint extends to cover instances of multiple reduplication and can be formulated as follows:

**Reduplication Constraint One:**

In a reduplicated construction, the reduplicative prefix (or prefixes) is maximally realized by the structure CVC.

Table 32 illustrates patterns of reduplication attested in the corpus for a range of stem shapes. The patterns shown in Table 32 indicate that the right-hand morpheme occurs in its full phonological form while the form of the left-hand morpheme varies. This patterning indicates that the stem is located in the right-hand position while the reduplicative affix is attached or prefixed to the left.

The application of Reduplication Constraint One results in full reduplication of monosyllabic stems with a CV(C) structure such as *te* ‘hit’ and *tas* ‘scratch’, partial reduplication of disyllable stems such as *malu* ‘leave’ and *takhtakh*<sup>25</sup> ‘damage, destroy’, and partial reduplication of stems with a CCV structure.

Table 32. Reduplication patterns in Neverver

Simple stem	Reduplicated stem
CV <i>te</i> ‘hit’ <i>dri</i> ‘turn’	<b>CV-CV</b> <i>tete</i> ‘fight REFLEXIVE’ <i>dri-dri</i> ‘roll ITERATION’
CVC <i>tas</i> ‘scratch’ <i>nok</i> ‘knock’	<b>CVC-CVC</b> <i>tas-tas</i> ‘file, sharpen ITERATION’ <i>nok-nok</i> ‘knock ITERATION’
CVCV <i>vavu</i> ‘walk’	<b>CV-CVCV</b> <i>va-vavu</i> ‘walk DURATION’
<i>malu</i> ‘leave’	<b>CVC-CVCV</b> <i>mal-malu</i> ‘disperse PLURAL ACTION’
CVCCVC <i>takhtakh</i> ‘damage, destroy’	<b>CVC-CVCCVC</b> <i>takh-takhtakh</i> ‘damage, destroy + PROHIBITION’
CCV <i>tnga</i> ‘search’ <i>kkekh</i> ‘call s.o.’	<b>CV-CCV</b> <i>ta-tnga</i> ‘search DURATION/EMPHASIS’ <i>ke-kkekh</i> ‘call s.o. PLURAL OBJECT’
CCVC <i>vkhal</i> ‘fight’ <i>sber</i> ‘reach’ <i>rrav</i> ‘laugh’ <i>lles</i> ‘bathe’	<b>CV-CCVC</b> <i>va-vkhal</i> ‘grate ITERATION’ <i>se-sber</i> ‘touch’ <i>ra-rrav</i> ‘laugh HABITUAL’ <i>le-lles</i> ‘bathe HABITUAL’

A second constraint can be observed in the realization of the reduplicated form of *vavu* ‘walk’. This constraint prohibits, as a by-product of CVC reduplication, the creation of geminate consonants that are not already in the simplex form.

25. The verb *takhtakh* ‘to damage, destroy’ exhibits inherent or fossilized reduplication. Once a form has been lexicalized, it can be subject to further reduplicative processes. See §8.2.7 for other examples of inherent reduplication.

**Reduplication Constraint Two: Degemination**

The coda consonant of the reduplicative prefix must differ from the onset consonant of the stem. Any consonant which will form a geminate sequence is omitted.

One explanation of reduplication constraint two can be found in the *obligatory contour principle*, which is formulated by McCarthy (1986: 208) as:

Obligatory contour principle

At the melodic level, adjacent identical elements are prohibited.

(McCarthy 1986: 208)

The obligatory contour principle is formulated as a universal constraint, but it does not apply in all cases in Neverver. Geminate consonants are permitted to form over the morpheme boundary between the subject/mood prefix and verb stem. They may also form between compounded morphemes. It is only in the case of reduplication then, that the language-specific tolerance for sequences of identical consonant segments would give way to the more universal obligatory contour principle.

An alternative, and perhaps more convincing language specific explanation for Reduplication Constraint Two lies in the word structure possibilities for Neverver. Initial  $C_1C_1$  sequences are found in verb stems and these geminate consonant sequences contrast with initial simplex consonants. Given a verb stem with the shape  $C_1VC_1$ , full reduplication would produce  $C_1VC_1C_1VC_1$ . This sequence creates a parsing ambiguity, with  $C_1VC_1-C_1VC_1$  (reduplication of a CV stem) and  $C_1V-C_1C_1VC_1$  (reduplication of a CCV stem) both being possible parses. The language specific solution to this parsing ambiguity is to disallow  $C_1VC_1-C_1VC_1$ . All  $C_1VC_1C_1VC_1$  strings must be parsed assuming a CCV stem as  $C_1V-C_1C_1VC_1$ .

To give concrete examples, the application of Reduplication Constraint Two means that the CV stem *sus* 'ask' reduplicates as *su-sus* 'ask REFLEXIVE'. The form *\*sus-sus* is prohibited. In contrast, the disyllabic CV stem *malu* 'leave' is not subject to this constraint and reduplicates as *mal-malu* 'disperse'. The disyllabic stem *vavu* 'walk' reduplicates as *va-vavu* 'walk DURATIVE' rather than *\*vav-vavu*, and *vuv* 'blow' reduplicates as *vu-vuv* 'blow ITERATIVE' rather than *\*vuv-vuv*.

A further mechanism is found in the language which functions to restrict parsing options. The subject/mood prefix is formulated on the basis of the phonotactic structure of the simplex verb form, rather than on the basis of the phonotactic structure of the reduplicated form, even when reduplication is present. More detail and examples are provided in §8.1.3.

As discussed in chapters two and six, when stems begin with a sequence of two consonants (either geminate or heterogeneous), the initial C cannot be assigned to the syllable structure of the stem. This is due to the syllable constraint that limits syllables to a maximal CVC shape. Stem consonants must however, be assigned and so when the reduplicative prefix is attached, the outstanding consonant associates with the prefix syllable. An outstanding stem C takes precedence over any copied Cs in the syllabification of reduplicated items (see examples (8) and (9)).

Because the reduplicative prefix has the maximal shape CVC, it always has a simple onset, regardless of the phonotactic structure of the unprefix simplex form. This coincides with Moravcsik's (1978: 310) observation that reduplication involves cluster simplification.

Some CVC stems have more than one reduplication option. The options allow for different meanings to be expressed. The transitive verb *sil* 'burn' reduplicates with the structure CVC-CVC to express duration, habituation, or complete affectedness. It can also undergo detransitivization by reduplicating to the structure CV-CVC *si-sil* 'burn INTRANSITIVE'. The single argument that is retained is the actor; the undergoer argument is obligatorily suppressed.

### 8.1.1. Non-prototypical verb reduplication

There are a small number of exceptions to the basic reduplication pattern in Neverver. These exceptions are specific to individual lexical items. One involves the high frequency motion verb *vlem* 'come'. According to the CVC pattern, we would expect the reduplicated form to take the shape *ve-vlem* and this is the form that was produced in an elicitation session (3); however, in recorded texts, this verb typically is reduplicated as *vle-vlem* (4) which violates Reduplication Constraint One.

(3) *Man-jing*            *i-ve-vlem*                            *si*            *tnakh.*  
 man-be.there    3REAL:SG-DUP-come    NEG    here  
 'That guy never comes here.' [NVE06.36.1]

(4) *Ari-vle-vle-vle-vlem.*  
 3REAL:DU-DUP-DUP-DUP-come  
 'They came closer and closer.' [NVKS18.60: 302.218]

Reduplication Constraint One is also ignored in the cases of *kruk* 'lead (of a mother hen)', which reduplicates as *kru.kruk* 'follow (of chickens)', and *bling* 'turn under, coil', which is fully reduplicated as *bling.bling* 'braid'. The bor-

rowed verb *ple.ple*, from Bislama *plei* ‘play’, which exhibits inherent reduplication, also violates Reduplication Constraint One.

We can observe that the stems that violate Reduplication Constraint One involve a syllable-initial consonant cluster where the second member is a liquid. They display the characteristic of increasing sonority from onset to peak, a characteristic which is predicted by the universal *Sonority Sequencing Generalization* (Selkirk 1984). The sonority sequencing generalization is also observed in other cases where consonant clusters form, such as in the compound structures described in §2.5.5.2. Universally then, the complex onsets in these reduplicated constructions contribute to well-formed syllables and this may override the language specific syllable constraint against complex onsets.

A further observation that can be made is that the stems that violate Reduplication Constraint One have a similar phonetic structure to the complex segment *dr* [<sup>nd</sup>r]. This segment remains intact through the reduplication process in items such as *dri-dri* ‘roll’ (rather than \**di-dri* which we would expect if *dr* represented a sequence of two separate segments) and *drom-drom* ‘be thrifty’ (rather than \**do-drom*). Stems that violate Reduplication Constraint One may be patterning as complex segments rather than as complex syllable onsets. Not all stems with liquid clusters behave in this way. *Trokh* ‘see’ and *klar* ‘burn off’ reduplicate in accordance with Reduplication Constraint One as *to-trokh* and *ka-klar*.

As we have seen in the preceding examples, the phonological content of the reduplicative prefix is derived from the phonological content of the verb stem. A small number of verbs exhibit some variation in form. This variation, referred to by Inkelas and Zoll (2005: 42) among others as *Melodic Overwriting*, results in changes to the realization of the vowel in the prefix. For the verb *prong* ‘listen’, we would predict the reduplicated form *po-prong*. Attested reduplicated forms vary between the predicted *po-prong* and unexpected *pe-prong*.

The numeral *skham* ‘one’ reduplicates with the predicted form *sa-skham* ‘individually, alone’, but it alternates with the form *si-skham*. There is no distinction in the morphological or semantic environments in which the two forms appear. For example, both *i-si-skham* and *i-sa-skham* ‘by him/herself’ are attested.

The transitive verb stem *tn* ‘cook’ [tɲ] has a syllabic nasal rather than a separate vowel segment serving as the syllable peak. When reduplicated, a vowel segment is inserted. Two contrasting reduplicated forms are attested in the corpus. The intransitive activity verb *ti-tn* ‘cook’ contrasts with the stative verb *tu-tn* ‘be (boiling) hot’. Although this is the only item in the corpus to display this kind of contrast, it provides evidence that the reduplicative prefix has a minimal realization of CV. Reduplication Constraint One can now be altered to reflect this fact:

**Reduplication Constraint One (revised):**

In a reduplicated construction, the reduplicative prefix (or prefixes) is realized by the structure CV(C).

## 8.1.2. Formalizing the process of reduplication

We can formalize the process of reduplication by making use of general steps outlined by Broselow and McCarthy (1984). These have been modified to reflect language specific constraints. Broselow and McCarthy work within the framework of CV phonology (Clements and Keyser 1983), now known as autosegmental phonology (Goldsmith 1990), which was applied in the description of general phonotactic constraints in Neverver in §2.5.

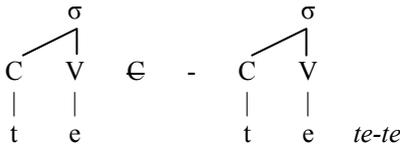
Formation and syllabification rules for reduplicated stems in Neverver

(After Broselow and McCarthy 1984: 27)

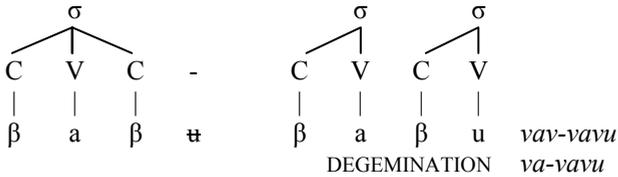
- a. Create an unassociated copy of the phonemic melody of the stem.
- b. Associate from the copied phonemic melody onto the CV-skeleton one-to-one from left to right filling the available CVC prefix positions, applying any lexical constraints.
- c. Syllabify according to the general syllabification rules for Neverver:
  - i. Peak formation: Assign each V to a syllable node.
  - ii. Onset formation: Associate one C with each right-hand V (in accordance with syllable constraint).
  - iii. Coda formation: Associate any single remaining C with a left-hand V (in accordance with syllable constraint).  
If the verb stem has an unassociated C, it takes precedence over any copied Cs and is associated with the preceding V of the reduplicative prefix.
- d. Erase all material from the phonemic melody or the CV skeleton that remains unassociated.

Examples of the formation and syllabification of reduplicated verb stems in Neverver are given below.

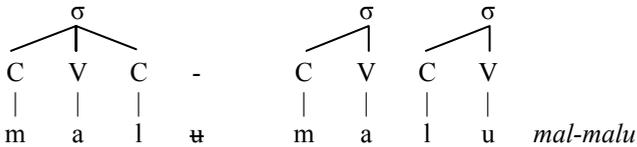
- (5) CV stem: reduplication of
- te*
- ‘hit, cut’



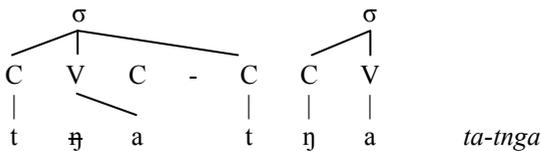
- (6) CV stem: reduplication of
- vavu*
- ‘walk’



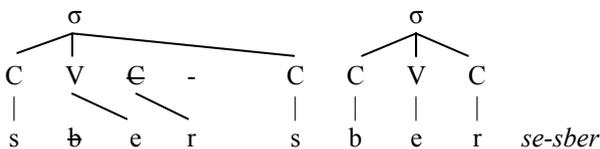
- (7) CV stem: reduplication of
- malu*
- ‘go out’



- (8) CCV stem: reduplication of
- tnga*
- ‘search (visually)’

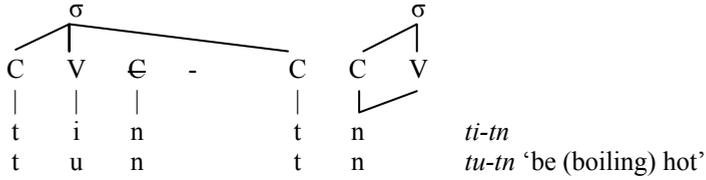


- (9) CCV stem: reduplication of
- sber*
- ‘reach’



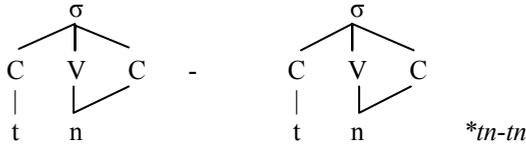
The reduplication of *tn* ‘cook TRANSITIVE’ to *ti-tn* ‘cook INTRANSITIVE’, provides evidence that the syllabic consonant occupies a pair of CV slots on the CV tier. This verb syllabifies as a CCV stem. The initial C position of the prefix is associated with the initial *t* of the copied stem. There is no available vowel in the stem and so to meet the minimal CV prefix requirement, the vowel segment /i/ (designated in the lexicon) is inserted. Of the two remaining unassociated Cs, the stem C takes precedence and is associated with the prefix V, forming the coda of the initial syllable. The unassociated copied consonant is deleted from the segmental tier and CV tier.

- (10) CCV stem: reduplication of *tn* 'cook'



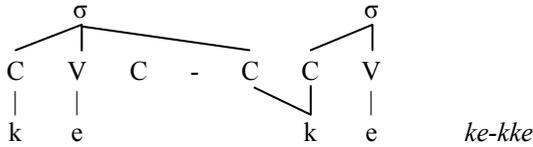
If *tn* was a CV stem, rather than a CCV stem, then we would predict that it would reduplicate as *\*tn-tn*, with the syllabic nasal filling a V and then a C slot in both the stem and the reduplicative affix. This form however, is unacceptable.

- (11) *\*CV* stem: reduplication of *tn* 'cook'

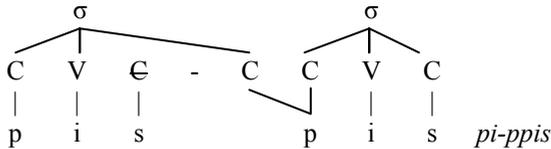


CCV stems with initial geminate consonants reduplicate in the same way as CCV stems with heterogeneous consonants.

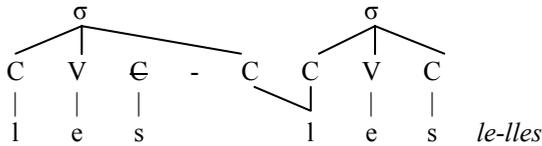
- (12) CCV stem: reduplication of *kke* 'call'



- (13) CCV stem: reduplication of *ppis* 'hurt'



- (14) CCV stem: reduplication of *lles* 'bathe'



## 8.1.3. Interaction with the subject/mood prefix

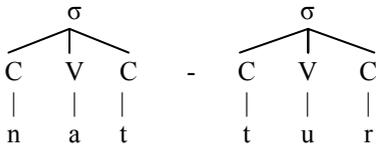
As noted in §8.1, in the formation of inflected verbs, the invariant CV structure of the reduplicative prefix is ignored; instead, the CV structure of the stem determines the shape of the subject/mood prefix. Thus, when the subject/mood prefix is attached to reduplicated verbs, the subject/mood prefix appears as it would with its simplex base.

Example (15) shows the inflected simplex verb *nati-llang* ‘we(excl.) looked for’ followed by the inflected reduplicated verb *nati-la-la-la-llang* ‘We(excl.) looked for DURATIVE’. If the reduplicated prefix was visible to the subject/mood prefix, we would expect the inflected verb to take the form *\*nat-la-la-la-llang* as happens with *nat-tur* ‘we(excl.) stood up’.<sup>26</sup>

- (15) *Ga*                      *nam*                      *ba*                      *nat-tur*  
 then                      1EXCL:NSG                      when                      1EXCL:REAL:PL-stand.up  
*nati-llang*                      *nani*                      *ang*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-look.for                      coconut                      ANA  
*nati-la-la-la-llang...*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-DUP-DUP-DUP-look.for  
 ‘Then when we stood up and looked for the coconut, we looked for it for ages...’ [NVCV06.27: 560.933]

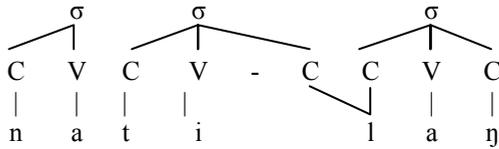
Inflection and syllabification of the simplex CV stem *tur* (16) contrasts with the inflection and syllabification of the simplex CCV stem *llang* (17).

- (16) CV stem: inflection of *tur* ‘get up, stand’ as *nat-tur* ‘1EXCL:REAL:PL-get up, stand’



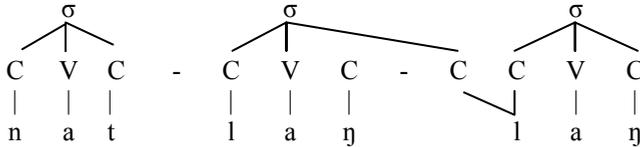
26. The realization of the subject/mood prefix is not always consistent; there are cases of a speaker producing a re-syllabified subject/mood prefix with a reduplicated verb. In a description of child development, *ibi-ra-rrav* ‘he will laugh HABITUAL’ is articulated as *ib-ra-rrav*; *ibi-ka-kkan* ‘he will eat HABITUAL’ is articulated as *im-ka-kkan*. It should be noted however, that this particular speaker resides permanently outside of the Neverver speech community and this may have affected the speaker’s productive adherence to constraints.

- (17) CCV stem: inflection of *llang* ‘look for’ as *nati-llang* ‘1EXCL:REAL:PL-look for’

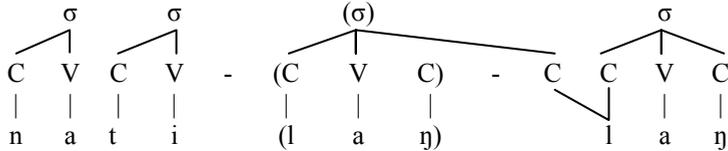


When inflected and reduplicated, the form of the subject/mood prefix is determined by the stem shape, rather than the reduplicative affix. In a very linear way, this suggests that formation and syllabification of the subject/mood prefix precedes the formation and syllabification of the reduplicative prefix.

- (18) \*CV DUP: inflection and reduplication of *llang* ‘look for’ as \**nat-la-llang* 1EXCL:REAL:PL-look for



- (19) CCV stem: inflection and reduplication of *llang* ‘look for’ as *nati-la-llang* 1EXCL:REAL:PL-look for



The same pattern is found with other simplex and reduplicated forms. Both the simplex and reduplicated forms of the CCV stem *tn* ‘cook’ appear with the subject/mood prefix *ati-* in (20).

- |      |               |                    |               |             |                   |                |
|------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------|
| (20) | <i>Ba</i>     | <i>nimokhmokh</i>  | <i>ang</i>    | <i>edr</i>  | <i>ati-ti-tn</i>  | <i>aran</i>    |
|      | when          | female             | ANA           | PL          | 3REAL:PL-DUP-cook | LOC.on         |
|      | <i>nevat</i>  | <i>ang, ati-tn</i> |               | <i>mokh</i> | <i>ij nisin</i>   | <i>ngatian</i> |
|      | stone         | ANA                | 3REAL:PL-cook | all         | ANT               | thing:INDF     |
|      | <i>anjing</i> | <i>edr.</i>        |               |             |                   |                |
|      | that          | PL                 |               |             |                   |                |

‘When the women cooked on the stones, they already cooked up many of those.’ [NVKI29.83: 925.900]

While the form \**at-ti-tn* observes the basic phonotactic constraint on the structure of syllables, it is not attested in the corpus.

#### 8.1.4. Reduplication in other parts of speech

Outside the class of verbs, most parts of speech exhibit inherent or fossilized rather than productive reduplication. The reduplicative template CV(C) is apparently observed, with no violations of Reduplication Constraint One. The notable exception to this general pattern involves two vowel-initial items which reduplicate in the corpus. The local noun *ale* ‘far away’ is also attested as *ale-le* and *ale-le-le-le-le* with greater distance emphasized. The interjection *ave* ‘no’ is also attested as the more emphatic *ave-ve-ve-ve*. In both cases, the simplex form is disyllabic. Reduplication of the vowel-initial syllable cannot be accommodated by the CV(C) template. Instead, the reduplicative affix contains phonological material from the second syllable. There is no synchronic evidence that the initial vowel (*a-*) is a separable prefix in either case. As there are only two items that behave in this way, the items are considered to be exceptions.

### 8.2. Functions of reduplication

Reduplication expresses a range of functions in Neverver. Marantz and Wiltshire (2000: 560) observe that “reduplicating affixes serve the same types of functions that any affix with its own phonological form can serve, including all derivational and inflectional functions”. Many of the functions commonly attested with reduplication are iconic in nature, in that “MORE OF FORM stands for MORE OF CONTENT” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 128; also see Kiyomi 1995); however, Inkelas and Zoll (2005: 14) observe that “reduplication, especially partial reduplication, is associated cross-linguistically with all sorts of meanings, both inflectional and derivational, whose degree of iconicity is often negligible”.

In Oceanic languages, Lynch, Ross, and Crowley (2002: 44) identify functions of reduplication which are more iconic, such as the repetition of an event and the plurality of participants, and functions of reduplication which are less iconic, such as randomness of action and de-transitivization. Similar iconic and non-iconic functions are expressed by reduplication in Neverver. In many constructions, reduplication is just one component of the construction; other affixes or morphemes may appear in conjunction with reduplication to express a given function. Table 33 summarizes the range of functions of reduplication attested in the Neverver corpus.

Table 33. Functions of reduplication in Neverver

Functions of Reduplication		In conjunction with...
Detransitive	Unspecified object deletion	
	Inherent object	
	Incorporated object	loss of noun marker <i>n(V)</i> -
	Reflexive/Reciprocal	pronominal object co-referential to subject argument
Stative modifiers	Nominalization	noun marker <i>n(V)</i> - and suffix <i>-ian</i>
	Stative verbs	(the marker <i>m-</i> )
	Verb modification	nuclear serial verb
	Noun modification	
Imperfective	Iterative	
	Durative action	
	Habitual	(progressive aspect)
	Diminutive	V2 nuclear serial verb <i>da</i>
Number	Participant number (S/P)	
	Event number	
	Non-individuated patient	
Modality (+ negation)	Prohibition	impersonal subject/mood prefix
	Inability	
	Negative condition	conditional adverb <i>besi</i> 'if'
Semantic extension of verbs		
Inherent/fossilized reduplication		

One of the most interesting observations that can be made regarding reduplication in Neverver is that it expresses functions that are associated with low transitivity. Transitivity is traditionally understood to concern the number of core arguments that are required to appear with a verb (cf. Crystal 1997: 397; Dryer 2007a: 250). The presence of a direct object argument is the defining characteristic of a transitive verb. Hopper and Thompson (1980: 251), in their seminal article on transitivity, break down the traditional argument-based notion of transitivity into a range of parameters involving the degree to which “an activity is ‘carried-over’ or ‘transferred’ from agent to patient”. While they consider the number of participants to be an important indicator of transitivity, they also regard the inherent aspectual nature of the verb (kinesis, aspect, punctuality and volitionality), mood (mode) and polarity (affirmation), and the semantic nature of the participant encoded as the object (affectedness of O and individuation of O) as indicators of transitivity (Hopper and Thompson 1980: 252–3).

Almost all of the functions of reduplication listed in Table 33 are associated with one or more low transitivity indicator. Thus, the claim can be made that the prototypical function of reduplication in Neverver is to mark low transitivity. The functions of reduplication and relevant comments on transitivity are presented in the following sub-sections.

### 8.2.1. Reduplication in detransitive constructions

Reduplication occurs in a range of constructions that are detransitive in the sense that they involve a reduction in the number of core arguments that are syntactically or semantically present. A range of transitive verb stems reduplicate to form intransitive verbs with an unspecified or inherent object. Reduplication also occurs when objects are incorporated. Reduplication is part of the formation of reflexive/reciprocal constructions and it occurs in the derivation of nouns from verbs. It is displayed in the expression of prohibition which uses an impersonal subject construction. A brief description of each detransitive construction and a selection of examples are presented in the following sub-sections.

#### 8.2.1.1. Unspecified object deletion (§6.3.1.2.)

Certain transitive verbs undergo unspecified object deletion. In unspecified object deletion, reduplication derives an intransitive stem from a transitive verb. No patient/undergoer argument may be stated and none is implied.

(21)	<i>tn</i>	'roast/cook s.t.'
	<i>tiitn</i>	'do cooking'
	<i>gav</i>	'rake'
	<i>gavgav</i>	'do raking'
	<i>vul</i>	'buy'
	<i>vulvul</i>	'go shopping'
	<i>tuv</i>	'cast (of a round object) at s.t.'
	<i>tuvtuv</i>	'cast (of round objects) at s.t. (unspecified)'
	<i>tuv-ikh</i>	'cast s.t. at s.t.'
	<i>tuvtuv-ikh</i>	'cast s.t. at s.t. (unspecific)'
	<i>khit</i>	'see s.t.'
	<i>khitkhit</i>	'to look'

8.2.1.2. *Inherent object constructions (§6.3.1.2.)*

Reduplication applies to transitive verbs which detransitivize to express an inherent object. With inherent object constructions, reduplication forms an intransitive stem. In each case, a particular patient is implied, though it is ungrammatical to encode it explicitly.

(22)	<i>leb</i>	‘carry s.t.’
	<i>lebleb</i>	‘carry a load of food’
	<i>leb</i>	‘give birth’
	<i>lebleb</i>	‘bear a large litter’
	<i>min</i>	‘drink’
	<i>minmin</i>	‘drink alcohol’
	<i>rakh</i>	‘clear (of garden area)’
	<i>rakhrakh</i>	‘do the weeding’
	<i>dev</i>	‘carry (of fire)’
	<i>devdev</i>	‘damp a fire’
	<i>gis</i>	‘cut’
	<i>gisgis</i>	‘cut hair’

8.2.1.3. *Object incorporation (§10.1.)*

In most incorporated object constructions, reduplication occurs, followed by a noun without its common noun marker *n(V)-*. Verbs with incorporated objects are formally intransitive.

(23)	<i>rev-rev-sal</i>	‘walk in single file’ from <i>rev</i> ‘pull’; <i>nesal</i> ‘road’
	<i>ver-ver-sal-ikh</i>	‘give directions to s.o.’ from <i>ver</i> ‘say’; <i>nesal</i> ‘road’
	<i>sil-sil-kha</i>	‘burn trees’ from <i>sil</i> ‘burn, roast’; <i>nakha</i> ‘tree, wood’
	<i>jal-jal-kha</i>	‘strip wood’ from <i>jaljal</i> ‘strip’; <i>nakha</i> ‘tree, wood’
	<i>sir-sir-io</i>	‘follow a water course’ from <i>sir</i> ‘follow’; <i>nio</i> ‘water, river’
	<i>lav-lav-ran</i>	‘give a hand/help’ from <i>lav</i> ‘get’; <i>nevran</i> ‘hand’

8.2.1.4. *Reflexives and reciprocals (§9.4.)*

In Neverver, reflexive and reciprocal constructions are syntactically transitive in that two argument positions must be filled, but semantically intransitive in that there is only one participant in the situation being expressed. The argument encoded in object position is co-referential with the argument encoded in subject position. The co-referential object argument is invariably encoded as a pronoun. While some verb stems are inherently reflexive, reflexive constructions can also be formed by reduplicating a transitive stem as in (24) and (25).

- (24) Plain form *khur* ‘scratch, itch’  
*I-na ni-khur-khur na.*  
 PSNPR-1SG 1REAL:SG-DUP-scratch 1SG  
 ‘I scratched/itched myself.’ [NVE08.35]
- (25) Plain form *ve* ‘make, do’, lexicalized as ‘dress up’ when used in this reflexive construction  
*I-ve-ve ei.*  
 3REAL:SG-DUP-make 3SG  
 ‘He dressed himself up.’ [NVLX21.46]

Reciprocal constructions are formed in the same way as reflexives, with reduplication of the verb stem and the coreferential object argument encoded as a pronoun.

- (26) *At-te-te adr.*  
 3REAL:PL-DUP-hit 3NSG  
 ‘They(all) fought each other.’ [NVCT07.6: 23.57]
- (27) *Ar-bir-bir sakhsakh adr.*  
 3REAL:DU-DUP-argue 3NSG  
 ‘They(2) always argued with each other’. [NVKS02.39]
- (28) *Ar-ver-ver-ikh adr ar-ver barnakh*  
 3REAL:DU-DUP-say-APPL 3NSG 3REAL:DU-say now  
*nibr-uv...’*  
 1INCL:IRR:DU-go  
 ‘They said to each other ‘Now we’ll go...’ [NVKS13.9]

In (29), reduplication occurs with both of the verbs in the core serial construction ‘give’. The reduplication of *lav* ‘get’ may be analysed both as reciprocal concordance, and as a marker of event/object argument plurality.

- (29) *Nit-lav-lav nebatn nidam nit-lik-lik*  
 1INCL:REAL:PL-DUP-get head yam 1INCL:REAL:PL-DUP-pass  
*git.*  
 1INCL:NSG  
 ‘We give yams to each other.’ [NKVI06.123]

#### 8.2.1.5. Nominalization (§3.7., §12.5.)

Nominalization may be signalled in part by the reduplication of a verb stem. Nominalized verbs prototypically carry the common noun marker *n(V)-* and the nominal suffix *-ian*. These affixes mark nominalizations as de-verbal. Nominalizations represent abstract rather than concrete concepts and they are therefore

typically inanimate. Nominalization in Neverver is detransitive in that the nominalized verb appears without any arguments, or with only a single argument encoded in a genitive construction.

- (30) INTRANSITIVE  
*ni-bit-bit-ian* 'wrong-doing, evil' from *bit* 'err'  
*ni-si-sien-ian* 'thought, decision' from *sien* 'think, consider'  
*ni-tev-tev-ian* 'growth' from *tev* 'begin to grow'  
*ni-jal-ian* 'sickness' from *jal* 'be ill'  
*ni-jal-jal-ian* 'epidemic'
- (31) TRANSITIVE  
*ni-bir-bir-ian* 'competition' from *bir* 'be angry at s.o.'  
*ni-vul-ian* 'price, payment' from *vul* 'buy'  
*ni-vul-vul-ian* 'bride price'

The examples in (30) and (31) show that both intransitive and transitive stems may be reduplicated when nominalized. In addition, for some stems there are contrasting meanings associated with simplex and reduplicated nominalizations.

### 8.2.2. Reduplication in stative verbs

The process of reduplication often applies to verb stems belonging to the stative sub-class of verbs. Reduplication occurs when stative verbs are main verbs, when stative verbs appear as V2 elements in nuclear serial constructions, and when the same verbs are used as post-nominal modifiers in the noun phrase. When stative verbs function as the heads of the verb phrase, they have a single non-agentive argument. States are by definition non-active, atelic, non-punctual and non-volitional. Combined with their single argument, this means that the transitivity associated with stative verbs is low.

#### 8.2.2.1. *Inherently stative verbs* (§6.3.2.1.)

A number of stative verbs belong to a special sub-class of intransitive verbs that carry the stative prefix *m-*. Many (though not all) of the verbs marked by the prefix *m-* display reduplication.

As noted in §6.3.2.1, the prefix *m-* is rather unproductive in the corpus. Most of the verbs in this class are fossilized, with the prefix and (reduplicated) stem being inseparable.

(32)	<i>m-roro</i>	‘be withered (of yams, limbs)’
	<i>m-turtur</i>	‘be spotted (of leaves, fabric)’
	<i>m-rasras</i>	‘be light (of objects)’
	<i>m-sirsir</i>	‘be frilled (of leaves, petals, dresses)’
	<i>m-khiskhis</i>	‘be shattered (of objects)’
		‘be sure (of one’s knowledge)’
	<i>m-yolyol</i>	‘be baggy, loose (of clothing, bellies)’
	<i>m-yevyev</i>	‘be soft (of laplap ingredients)’
	<i>m-yovyov</i>	‘be plain (of laplap)’
	<i>m-kherkher</i>	‘be difficult (of situations)’

The prefix *\*mA-* has been reconstructed as a detransitive prefix with low productivity in Proto-Oceanic, deriving ‘neutral O-verbs from transitives’ (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: 82). There is no longer evidence that *m-* is specifically detransitive in Neverver; however, the constructions in which it occurs do exhibit features of low transitivity. The single arguments of the stative verbs in this sub-class are common and inanimate or abstract, and either mass or plural. According to Hopper and Thompson (1980: 253), nouns with these semantic features are non-individuated and therefore would contribute to low transitivity in a given proposition.

The lack of transitivity associated with the arguments of this sub-class of stative verbs may explain the presence of both reduplication and the prefix *m-* in verb forms. At an earlier stage of the language, *m-* was likely to have been a more productive detransitive or stative prefix. A fossilized relic of this prefix remains in the lexicon. Given the hypothesis that reduplication is a marker of low transitivity in contemporary Neverver, the low transitivity associated with stative arguments could have triggered reduplication in a separate process.

#### 8.2.2.2. Action to state (§6.3.2.)

A rather more productive process is the use of reduplication to derive a stative verb from a verb encoding an action. The actions listed in (33) all have stative reduplicated counterparts.

(33)	<i>tur</i>	‘stand up’	<i>turtur</i>	‘stand’
	<i>vor</i>	‘sit down’	<i>vorvor</i>	‘sit’
	<i>ngot</i>	‘break’	<i>ngotngot</i>	‘be broken’
	<i>jing</i>	‘lie down’	<i>jingjing</i>	‘be lying down’
	<i>tn</i>	‘cook’	<i>tutn</i>	‘be hot’
	<i>yav</i>	‘grow bushy leaves’	<i>yavyav</i>	‘be long-haired’

8.2.2.3. *Temporary state to permanent state (§6.3.2.)*

Reduplicated forms can display a contrast in terms of permanence where the simplex stem encodes a temporary state and the reduplicated stem encodes a more permanent state:

- |      |             |                |                 |            |
|------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|------------|
| (34) | <i>bbut</i> | ‘be silent’    | <i>bbutbbut</i> | ‘be dumb’  |
|      | <i>gal</i>  | ‘be stuck’     | <i>galgal</i>   | ‘be tight’ |
|      | <i>lab</i>  | ‘be plentiful’ | <i>lablab</i>   | ‘be big’   |

The verbs listed in example (34) all encode intransitive states. We also find the transitive verb *ling* ‘put’ can be reduplicated as *ling-ling* ‘leave’, expressing an action with a more permanent result.

8.2.2.4. *State to maximal state*

A small number of stative verbs display an excessive or maximal meaning when reduplicated. The examples in (35) demonstrate similar semantic relationships of excess/maximal meaning in the reduplicated forms.

- |      |              |             |                 |                       |
|------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| (35) | <i>meser</i> | ‘be ripped’ | <i>mesmeser</i> | ‘be shredded’         |
|      | <i>bbun</i>  | ‘be full’   | <i>bbunbbun</i> | ‘be full to the brim’ |
|      | <i>sar</i>   | ‘hang’      | <i>sarsar</i>   | ‘be flowing’          |

8.2.2.5. *Permanent state to temporary state*

The contrasts between simplex and reduplicated forms of the verbs described in §8.2.2.2.–§8.2.2.4. express increased permanence or statehood in a proposition. In a rather interesting contrast, the state *lukh* ‘live, stay’, which has inherent permanent duration, reduplicates as *lukh-lukh* ‘wait’, emphasizing the temporary nature of duration. The form also appears with multiple reduplicative affixes, indicating an event of long, although temporary, duration. The examples in (36) to (39) contrast in terms of permanent and temporary duration, and in terms of long and short temporary duration.

- |      |             |  |                  |                |              |
|------|-------------|--|------------------|----------------|--------------|
| (36) | <i>Dran</i> | <i>i-skham,</i>  | <i>nibisbokh</i> | <i>adr-ikh</i> | <i>nivri</i> |
|      | TMPPN       | 3REAL:SG-one   | rat              | 3NSG-APPL      | crab         |
|      |             | <i>ar-lukh.</i>  |                  |                |              |
|      |             | 3REAL:DU-live  |                  |                |              |
|      |             | ‘One time, there lived a rat and a crab.’ [NVCT.01.3: 7.408] |                  |                |              |

- (37) Reduplicated form *lukhlukh* lexicalized as ‘wait’  
*Gam kabir-lukhlukh blev tata t-gam, i-na*  
 2NSG 2IRR:DU-wait with father PSDT-2NSG PSNPR-1SG  
*nim-bbu.*  
 1IRR:SG-go  
 ‘You wait here with your father, I’ll go.’ [NVKS18.68: 336.628]
- (38) *At-lukh-lukhlukh i-sber dran an nidam*  
 3REAL:PL-DUP-wait 3REAL:SG-reach TMPPN NMOD yam  
*i-yaj.*  
 3REAL:SG-ripe  
 ‘They waited until the time when the yams were ripe.’ [NVKS12.06]
- (39) *Baga at-lukh-lukh-lukh-lukh-lukhlukh, ba naut ang*  
 then 3REAL:PL-DUP-DUP-DUP-DUP-wait when place ANA  
*i-met...*  
 3REAL:SG- dark  
 ‘Then they waited on and on and when it was dark...’ [NVKS15.29-30]

A similar function is expressed with the reduplicated form of the existential verb *tokh* ‘exist’. When reduplicated, *tokh-tokh* also expresses the meaning of staying or waiting with temporary duration.

- (40) *Niterikh titi-dr ar-tokh-tokh, adr ar-uv lakha.*  
 child 3PS-PL 3REAL:DU-DUP-exist 3NSG 3REAL:DU-go bush  
 ‘Two of their children stayed and two went to the bush.’ [NVKS07.9: 53.356]

The use of reduplication to express a temporary rather than permanent state seems at odds with the examples of reduplication used to express increased stative-ness, and corresponding low transitivity. Reduced permanence or a focus on the temporary nature of a state is however, a feature that is compatible with the detransitive notion of imperfectivity, which is discussed in §8.2.3.

#### 8.2.2.6. Verb modification: Nuclear serial verb constructions (§10.2.–§10.5.)

Stative verbs can appear in the V2 position of a nuclear serial construction. Many verbs in this position display reduplication. These V2 elements may combine quite productively with semantically appropriate V1 elements. They contribute adverb-type meanings to the V1 element that they occur with. Some modifiers appear in fossilized reduplicated forms, with a simplex stem not attested in the contemporary corpus.

- (41) *ngis-langlang* ‘smile drunkenly’ from *ngis* ‘smile’; *langlang* ‘be drunk’  
*tur-malmal* ‘stand naked’ from *tur* ‘stand’; *malmal* ‘be naked’  
*tev-gon-gon* ‘grow together’ from *tev* ‘begin to grow’; *gon* ‘be joined, to join’  
*vrokh-tata* ‘hold tightly’ from *vrokh* ‘hold’; *tata* ‘promise’  
*sar-yel-yel* ‘hang outside of (e.g. a husk)’ from *sar* ‘hang’; *yel* ‘scoop out’  
*tur-lakhlakh* ‘stand quietly’ from *tur* ‘stand’; \**lakh*  
*vu-tettes* ‘go quickly’ from *vu* ‘go’; ?*ttes* ‘V2 EMPHATIC’  
*matur-melmel* ‘sleep deeply’ from *matur* ‘sleep’; ?*mmel* ‘be sour (of fruit)’

A further comment can be made about reduplication in nuclear SVCs. A small number of nuclear SVCs exhibit reduplication in V1 rather than V2. One example is the intransitive construction *ka-kkan-bor* ‘eat plain, without seasoning’. Another is the transitive construction *su-suv-bkhas* ‘shave/scrape clean’. Both examples were elicited from language consultants and in the elicitation context, appeared to express habitual/generic aspect. Reduplication in V1 then, may involve aspectual rather than stative meaning. The nuclear SVC *kha-khavukh si-skham-ikh* ‘plant (seedlings) individually with s.t.’ displays reduplication in both V1 and V2. In this case, V1 reduplication expresses the aspectual meaning of iteration, and V2 reduplication expresses the expected stative-type meaning, deriving ‘individually, alone’ from the numeral ‘one’. The applicative suffix *-ikh* adds a core instrumental argument.

#### 8.2.2.7. *Noun modification (§4.5.1.)*

A small number of stative verbs are reduplicated when used as nominal modifiers. Verbs such as *lele* ‘small’ and *(ber)ber* ‘long’ combine quite productively with semantically appropriate nouns and contribute a consistent quality or attribute to the noun they occur with. Verbs such as *lalleng* ‘drooping/hanging (of corn)’ and *tevtetv* ‘germinated (of coconuts)’ combine with only one noun and have more lexicalized meanings. The stative verb *lele* ‘small’ appears in a fossilized reduplicated form, with the simplex stem \**le* not attested.

- (42) *nisib lele* ‘a small knife’ from *lele* ‘be small’  
*nevas berber* ‘a long yam’ from *(ber)ber* ‘be long, tall’  
*kon lalleng* ‘corn with drooping husks’ from *lleng* ‘droop, hang down’  
*nani tevtetv* ‘a germinated coconut’ from *tev* ‘begin to grow’  
*netas yalyal* ‘a kind of fish’ from *yal* ‘fly’  
*nevat metmet* ‘a black stone’ from *(met)met* ‘be dark, black’  
*nidam sokhsokh* ‘baked yams’ from *sokh* ‘join’  
*namur dengdeng* ‘a landslide’ from *deng* ‘step’ *dengdeng* ‘be moving’

## 8.2.3. Reduplication and imperfective aspect (§7.3.3.7.)

The functions of reduplication that are discussed in this section all involve the expression of imperfective aspect. Imperfective aspect can be understood as a focus on the internal temporal structure of an event rather than a focus on a single event in its totality (cf. Comrie 1976; Dahl 1985; Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994; Bhat 1999). In Neverver, imperfective meanings include the expression of iterative, durative and habitual aspect as well as diminution.

## 8.2.3.1. Iterative

Reduplication of a verb can signal that an action is performed again and again by the same participant or participants. Iterative meaning expressed through reduplication is particularly associated with punctual actions.

- (43) *I-tukh-tukh*                      *nimdali*      *titi-dr.*  
 3REAL:SG-DUP-strike      door      3POSS-PL  
 ‘He knocked on their door repeatedly.’ [NVCT05.9: 277.678]
- (44) *Ar-vu-vuv*                      *ari-tn*                      *nibet*                      *titi-dr.*  
 3REAL:DU-DUP-blow      3REAL:DU-roast      breadfruit      3POSS-PL  
 ‘They(2) blew (on the fire repeatedly to light it) and roasted their breadfruit.’  
 [NVKS07.19: 121.334]

In example (45), the reduplicated form occurs in a progressive core serial construction. The agent was working through a pile of previously collected coconuts at the time that some other event occurred.

- (45) *Na*      *ni-tokh*                      *ni-sev-sev*                      *nani*                      *ang.*  
 1SG      1REAL:SG-PROG      1REAL:SG-DUP - separate      coconut      ANA  
 ‘I was splitting open the coconuts.’ [NVCV.06.8: 475.139]

There are a number of punctual verb stems that display an iterative meaning when reduplicated. The meaning of the reduplicated form is often somewhat lexicalized. A selection of these verbs is displayed in example (46):

- (46) *bling*                      ‘coil, tie’  
*bling-bling*                      ‘braid’  
*voj*                      ‘clap’  
*vo-voj*                      ‘applaud’  
*bing*                      ‘fold’  
*bing-bing*                      ‘roll’  
*jur*                      ‘poke’  
*jur-jur*                      ‘spread out’

<i>tas</i>	‘scratch’
<i>tas-tas</i>	‘file, sharpen’
<i>sokh</i>	‘join’
<i>sokh-sokh</i>	‘have intercourse’
<i>khas</i>	‘bite’
<i>khas-khas</i>	‘chew’
<i>tav</i>	‘spear’
<i>tav-tav</i>	‘spread out (with a stick)’

Hopper and Thompson (1980) identify punctual events as having high transitivity. When a punctual action is reduplicated to express the imperfective meaning of iteration, the transitivity of the event is reduced.

### 8.2.3.2. *Habitual*

Reduplication of a verb can signal that an action is performed habitually. Habitual meaning expressed through reduplication is particularly associated with inherently durative actions. Such actions have low transitivity according to Hopper and Thompson (1980).

Habitual reduplication is attested in descriptions of places where particular activities are commonly carried out:

- (47) *I-vlem kut ati-ka-kkan ye.*  
 3REAL:SG-come LOCPN 3REAL:PL-DUP-eat RSPN  
 ‘He came to the place where they eat.’ [NVCV05:32: 1420.252]
- (48) *Nibir-sir nesal an kati-le-lles*  
 1INCL:IRR:DU-follow road NMOD 2REAL:PL-DUP-bathe  
*duvakh ye ang.*  
 first RSPN ANA  
 ‘We’ll follow the road where you used to bathe.’ [NVCV09.14: 95.013]
- (49) *I-vu lon kut an ar-maur-maur*  
 3REAL:SG-go LOC LOCPN NMOD IMPS:REAL-DUP-live  
*ye lon hospitel.*  
 RSPN LOC hospital  
 ‘He went to the place where they/people recuperate, to hospital.’  
 [NVCT04.33:120.136]

Reduplication with habitual meaning is compatible with the progressive serial construction.

- (50) *Bor kut an adr at-tokh*  
 maybe LOC PN NMOD 3NSG 3REAL:PL-PROG  
*at-vet-vet mat e.*  
 3REAL:PL-DUP-weave mat RSPN  
 ‘...maybe at the place where they are weaving mats.’ [NVCV02.96: 654.187]
- (51) *Marlin a i-tokh i-ku-kuk duvakh*  
 Marlin ANA 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-DUP-cook first  
*Rensarie ang?*  
 Rensarie ANA  
 ‘The Marlin who used to be cooking at Rensarie?’ [NVCV08.1: 385.673]

### 8.2.3.3. Durative action

Reduplication of an action verb can emphasise the time that it takes for an action to be carried out. In contrast to punctual verbs, which reduplicate to express iterative meaning, verbs that reduplicate to focus on duration are non-punctual and therefore already low in transitivity. Duration is generally expressed with multiple reduplicative affixes. The longer that an action is perceived to continue, the more reduplicative affixes are present. Durative action clauses are typically introduced with a simplex form in a preceding clause. Termination of the action is signalled in a subsequent clause.

The action verb *dum* ‘run’ has inherent duration and when reduplicated, its inherent duration is emphasised, indicating that running takes place for a long time. In example (52), the action of running goes on and on until the agent reaches a river. His running terminates when he jumps into the water.

- (52) *Khavut-tro i-jadr i-dum;*  
 husband-old 3REAL:SG-pass 3REAL:SG-run  
*i-dum-dum-dum-dum, i-trov lon nio.*  
 3REAL:SG-DUP-DUP-DUP-run 3REAL:SG-jump LOC river  
 ‘The old man passed them running (ran past?); he ran on and on and jumped into the river.’ [NVKS12.87-88]

In the second example, a group of agents laugh for a period of time, during which individual members of the group carry out other actions. The termination of the laughter is encoded explicitly.

- (53) *Nati-vlem nat-vor lappan mago*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-come 1EXCL:REAL:PL-sit under mango  
*nati-rrav nati-ra-ra-ra-ra-rrav,*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-laugh 1EXCL:REAL:PL-DUP-DUP-DUP-DUP-laugh  
*Lucy i-rrik bak...*  
 Lucy 3REAL:SG-throw bag

*Nati-rrav*                      *lu*                      *i-sivsiv...*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-laugh    COMPL    3REAL:SG-to.be.finished  
 ‘We came and sat under the mango tree and we laughed; we laughed our  
 heads off, Lucy threw down her bag... (When) we finished laughing...’  
 [NVCV02.76-78: 485.741-499.553]

In the third example, the agents (boys returning from an initiation ceremony) dance closer and closer to their mothers.

- (54) *At-sav*                      *ati-vlem,*                      *ati-vle-vle-vle-vlem*  
 3REAL:PL-dance    3REAL:PL-come    3REAL:PL-DUP-DUP-DUP-come  
*ati-vlem*                      *tuan*                      *nida*                      *titi*                      *edr*  
 3REAL:PL-come    LOCPSN    mother    3POSS:SG    PL  
 ‘They danced and came; they came closer and closer; they came to their  
 mothers.’ [NVKS03:42]

Punctual verbs are occasionally affixed with multiple reduplicative affixes. The following examples display transitive verb stems with inherent punctuality undergoing multiple reduplication. Interestingly, the object argument of the simplex stem is suppressed in the reduplicated form. Multiple reduplication in this case serves an overtly detransitive function.

- (55) *I-te*                      *nakha*                      *ang...*                      *i-te-te-te-te-te;*  
 3REAL:SG-cut    tree                      ANA                      3REAL:SG-DUP-DUP-DUP-DUP-cut  
*salan*                      *ang*                      *i-vu,*                      *i-tokh*                      *i-te*  
 friend                      ANA                      3REAL:SG-go    3REAL:SG-PROG    3REAL:SG-cut  
*mad-ikh!*  
 EMPH-APPL  
 ‘He cut the tree... he cut on and on; his friend went but he was cutting it!’  
 [NVKS21.30-31: 213.058-217.024]

- (56) *Man-jing*                      *i-ver*                      *nabit-var*                      *kon*                      *ang.*  
 man-be.there    3REAL:SG-say    1EX:IRR:PL-pick    corn                      ANA  
*Ba*                      *nat-var,*                      *nat-var-var-var-var-var,*  
 when                      1EXCL:REAL:PL-pick    1EXCL:REAL:PL-DUP-DUP-DUP-DUP-pick  
*nat-var*                      *mokh*                      *mej*                      *kon*                      *ang.*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-pick    all                      IMM                      corn                      ANA  
 ‘That man told us to pick the corn. When we picked (the corn), we picked and  
 picked and picked; we just picked all the corn.’ [NVKW06.19]

In example (56), the clause *Ba natvar...* ‘when we picked (the corn)’ does not have a patient argument; however, it is not a detransitive construction. Instead, it involves a patient that can be retrieved from the immediately preceding clause. For this reason, the patient argument does not need to be overtly encoded. The reduplicated clause *nat-var-var-var-var-var-var* ‘we picked ITERATIVE’ also

has no overt patient. In contrast to the simplex clause however, this clause may not express a patient. Language consultants rejected a formally transitive clause with an overtly expressed patient: *\*nat-var-var-var-var-var kon*.

#### 8.2.3.4. Diminutive

Diminution of varying kinds can be signalled by reduplication in a nuclear SVC with the aspectual serial verb *da* 'PARTITIVE' in V2 position. The precise nature of diminution depends on the nature of the proposition encoded. The following four constructions were produced during a word processing session by two language consultants and illustrate the contrast between diminution of action and diminution of entity. Examples (57) and (58) concern the positioning of the cursor on a computer screen:

(57) *Kub-rev im-sakh-sakh-da.*  
 2IRR:SG-pull 3IRR:SG-DUP-go.up-PART  
 'Pull it up a bit.' [KWKW01.11]

(58) *Kub-rev im-das-das-da.*  
 2IRR:SG-pull 3IRR:SG-DUP-go.down-PART  
 'Pull it down a bit.' [KWKW01.12]

Examples (59) and (60) concern the sizing of images. In both cases, the size of the image is to be altered by a small amount. The stem *lab* 'be plenty' reduplicates to form *lablab* 'be big'. As noted previously, *lele* 'be small' is an instance of inherent or fossilized reduplication.

(59) *Kum-bbue ib-lablab-da.*  
 2IRR:SG-make 3IRR:SG-big-PART  
 'Make it a little bigger.' [KWKW01.9]

(60) *Kum-bbue ib-lele-da.*  
 2IRR:SG-make 3IRR:SG-small-PART  
 'Make it a little smaller.' [KWKW01.10]

The state *tgar* 'be cool' reduplicates to the inchoative form *ta-tgar* 'become cool/cool down'. Stative-inchoative pairs expressed through reduplication are rare in the corpus. The reduplication of *tgar* is only attested with the partitive serial verb meaning 'cool down a bit'. Example (61) is a rather complex construction combining two nuclear serial verbs in a switch subject core serial sequence:

- (61) *Kum-lav-lu im-ta-tgar-da.*  
 2IRR:SG-get-COMPL 3IRR:SG-DUP-cool-PART  
 ‘Take it out to cool down a bit (of a cooked laplap).’ [NVDL11.12]

The action *lu* ‘shoot’ is inherently punctual. As noted in §7.3.3.7, reduplication of punctual actions produces an iterative meaning; combined with the partitive serial verb, this signals repetition of the action over a short time span in (62).

- (62) *Nar-lu-lu-da niten t-nam.*  
 1EXCL:REAL:DU-DUP-shoot-PART thing:DEF PSDT-1EXCL:NSG  
 ‘We shot with our things (bows and arrows) for a bit.’ [NVKS18.111: 569.817]

A semantic property of the temporary state *mjakh* ‘have a fever’ is intensity. Reduplication, combined with the partitive serial verb, signals a lower degree of intensity.

- (63) *Ni-mjakh-mjakh-da ing!*  
 1REAL:SG-DUP-have.fever-PART EXCLAM  
 ‘I’m a bit feverish!’ [NVKS26.34: 162.383]

#### 8.2.4. Reduplication and number

Reduplication is widely associated with the expression of quantity. Languages may encode distinctions related to “participants of event [sic] or events themselves” (Moravcsik 1978: 317). Corbett (2000: 246–247), in his general discussion of verbal number, distinguishes between PARTICIPANT NUMBER, where a verb varies in form according to how many participants are involved, and EVENT NUMBER, where a verb varies in form according to how often the event it encodes occurs. Corbett (2000: 249) also observes that “some languages have both types of verbal number and may signal both using the same formal device”. In Neverver, this is precisely what we find, with reduplication encoding both event number and participant number.

With respect to imperfective aspect, we have seen that multiple reduplicative affixes mark greater iteration and duration. With respect to participant number, there is no distinction made between different quantities of participants, that is, we don’t find multiple reduplicative affixes when the number of participants is very large. A single reduplicative affix signals general plurality.

Participant number is associated with low transitivity as plural participants are non-individuated (Hopper and Thompson 1980). We might also associate event number with low transitivity on the grounds that plural events are less individuated than singular events.

## 8.2.4.1. Marking plural S/P

Reduplication can signal multiple agents, when they have the grammatical function S, performing the same action separately.

- (64) *[Nangatian ati-vle-vlem]<sub>1</sub>*                      *[at-dum-dum lon*  
 everyone            3REAL:PL-DUP-come            3REAL:PL-DUP-run            LOC  
*nemaling titi-r]<sub>2</sub>...*  
 sleeping.mat            3POSS-PL  
 ‘Everyone came, they ran from their beds...’ [NVKS15.65]

Reduplication can signal multiple patient participants, with the grammatical function P.

- (65) *Ale, i-likh-likh*                                      *neman ang edr.*  
 then            3REAL:SG-DUP-tie.up            bird            ANA            PL  
 ‘Then he tied up all the birds.’ [NVKS09.58]
- (66) *Ni-khit-khit*                                      *nidam ang edr.*  
 1REAL:SG-DUP-see            yam            ANA            PL  
 ‘I look at/check all the yams.’ [NVDL08.3]

In example (67), both clauses involve plural event number as well as encoding plural subject (and in the first clause, object) arguments. In this example, reduplication appears to reinforce the plurality of all components of the proposition.

- (67) *[At-lemlem*                                      *nidam titi-dr]<sub>1</sub>*                      *[at-mal-malu]<sub>2</sub>.*  
 3REAL:PL-DUP-carry            yam            3POSS-PL            3REAL:PL-DUP-leave  
 ‘They carried their yams and they dispersed.’ [NVKI21.68: 270.507]

## 8.2.4.2. Participant number and ergativity

With respect to the patterning of participant number in transitive constructions, Corbett (2000: 253) makes the observation that “verbal number operates on an ergative basis: if the number of participants is relevant it will be that of the most directly affected argument of the verb (the absolutive)”. An ergative pattern is suggested in the preceding data, with reduplicated transitive constructions providing information about arguments with the grammatical function P as in (65) and (66) (also see §7.3.3.7). Reduplicated intransitive constructions provide number information about arguments with the grammatical function S as in (64) and (67<sub>2</sub>). When both arguments of a transitive verb are plural in number, reduplication may serve to reinforce both event and participant number simulta-

neously. Thus, reduplication might be interpreted as modifying the entire proposition in (67).

Corbett (2000: 253) observes that “we regularly find verbal number operating on an ergative basis, while in the same language nominal number marked on the verb operates on a different basis”. This can be observed in Neverver. Nominal number can be signalled on the verb in the subject/mood prefix. The subject/mood prefix agrees with the number of nominative arguments (S and A) but not the accusative argument (P). Verbal number can be reflected through reduplication which appears to encode the participant number of absolutive arguments (S and P). The marking of participant number has been observed to follow an ergative pattern elsewhere, with respect to the argument quantifier *mokh* ‘all’ (§7.3.2.2.).

#### 8.2.4.3. *Non-individuated patients*

In addition to signalling participant and event number, reduplication can indicate the complete affectedness of the single patient participant. Affectedness is normally associated with high transitivity; however, in example (68), the patient argument is a mass noun which happens to be treated as singular. Mass nouns are non-individuated and therefore low in transitivity.

Example (68) involves the patient *nani* ‘coconut’ encoded in object position. While *nani* can refer to individual coconut fruit or trees, in this case it refers to multiple pieces of freshly harvested copra that are being transported from the coconut plantation to the copra burner. The switch-function core serial construction treats *nani* as a mass or collective noun and the verb *vlem* carries the singular subject/mood prefix.

- (68) *Ni-vus-vus*                      *nani*                      *i-vlem*                      *sur*                      *nesal*.  
 1REAL:SG-DUP-carry    coconut    3REAL:SG-come    near    road  
 ‘I carry all the coconut to the road.’ [NVDL02.8]

#### 8.2.4.4. *Reduplication and plural nouns*

In many languages that exhibit reduplication, nouns are reduplicated to express plurality. This is true of a number of Malayo-Polynesian languages surveyed by Kiyomi (1995), as well as Lolovoli (Hyslop 2001), and Maori (Keegan 1996)); however, this kind of reduplication is not found in Neverver. Instead, a range of other types of marking are used to signal noun plurality. Options include the use of post-nominal quantifiers or a plural marker within the noun phrase, the obligatory subject/mood prefix on the verb which encodes number, and the use of the post-verbal argument quantifier *mokh* ‘all’.

## 8.2.5. Reduplication, mood and negative polarity

Reduplication is associated with the expression of prohibition, inability, and negative condition. The expression of all three functions involves the post-verbal negative particle *si*. Prohibition makes use of the impersonal subject prefix and in some cases irrealis mood. Negative condition always carries irrealis mood. Negative polarity and irrealis mood are both indicators of low transitivity (Hopper and Thompson 1980).

## 8.2.5.1. Prohibition (§7.2.2., §9.5.1.)

Reduplication is used in the formation of one type of prohibitive construction. In example (69), the reduplicated verb stem carries the impersonal subject/mood marker and the post-verbal negative particle *si*. This construction is marked for realis mood.

- (69) *No, ar-ver-ver si!*  
 no IMPS:REAL-DUP-say NEG  
 'No, don't say that!' [NVCV05.9: 1327.521]

Prohibition can also be expressed through the use of the second person irrealis subject/mood prefix, as displayed in example (70).

- (70) *No! Kub-lis-lis si.*  
 no 2IRR:SG-DUP-afraid NEG  
 'No! Don't be afraid.' [NVKS06.44]

## 8.2.5.2. Inability

Reduplication can be used to express inability, with the negative particle *si*.

- (71) *Be niterikh mokhmokh ang ei i-ka-kkan si.*  
 but child female ANA 3SG 3REAL:SG-DUP-eat NEG  
 'But the girl, she couldn't eat.' [NVKS11.38]

- (72) *Ga i-yel-yel mo si i-vlem*  
 then 3REAL:SG-DUP-scoop-out CONT NEG 3REAL:SG-come  
*aiem.*  
 home  
 'Then she couldn't scoop out coconuts anymore and she came home.'  
 [NVCV06.39: 612.182]

- (73) *Na ni-ver nimt-uv-uv mo si*  
 1SG 1REAL:SG-say 1INCL:IRR:PL-DUP-go CONT NEG  
*nibit-lav nivri ang.*  
 1INCL:IRR:PL-get crab ANA  
 ‘I said we couldn't go to get the crabs anymore.’ [NVCV02.99: 684.626]

### 8.2.5.3. Negative condition (§13.3.4.)

Reduplication is used to express negative condition in clauses introduced by *besi* ‘if’. In the following constructions, speakers are lamenting the fact that the local Pastor is going to be extremely busy in the days prior to an upcoming wedding ceremony. Only the condition is encoded by the speakers; the consequence has already been discussed.

- (74) *Besi man-jakh adr abit-ve-ve si im-gang.*  
 if man-be.here PL 3IRR:PL-DUP-do NEG 3IRR:SG-like.so  
 ‘If only these men hadn’t done it like that.’ [NVCV10.87: 436.187]
- (75) *Besi abit-lav-lav si kek ang im-bbu tuan*  
 if 3IRR:PL-DUP-get NEG cake ANA 3IRR:SG-go LOCPSN  
*ei.*  
 3SG  
 ‘If only they hadn’t assigned the cake (making) to him.’ [NVCV10.90: 449.371]

### 8.2.6. Reduplication and semantic extension

There are a number of simplex stems in the corpus with semantically related reduplicated forms. The relationship between the plain and reduplicated forms is rather unpredictable. In some cases, it requires rather specific cultural knowledge to interpret the connection between a simplex and reduplicated pair. A good example of this is *bakh* ‘go for one’s circumcision ceremony’ and *bakhbakh* ‘hide’. The circumcision ceremony involves a considerable period of seclusion for young men, in a location hidden from the female members of the community.

Numerous pairs of simplex and reduplicated verbs are displayed in (76).

- (76) *skham* ‘one (NUMERAL)’  
*saskham--siskham* ‘be alone; V2 ‘individually’  
*ssor* ‘talk’  
*sorsor* ‘lie’  
*bir* ‘break’  
*birbir* ‘argue’

<i>khas</i>	‘bite’
<i>khaskhas</i>	‘be spicy’
<i>khan</i>	‘eat s.t.’
<i>khankhan-ikh</i>	‘eat s.t. with s.t.’
<i>vkhal</i>	‘fight’
<i>vavkhal</i>	‘grate’
<i>vang</i>	‘be fascinated’
<i>vangvang</i>	‘be alight (of fire)’
<i>m-mang</i>	‘be noisy’
<i>mangmang</i>	‘have an open mouth’
<i>gar</i>	‘scale (of fish)’
<i>gargar</i>	‘clean laplap grater’
<i>lel</i>	‘be wise’
<i>lelel</i>	‘listen hard’
<i>bakh</i>	‘go for circumcision ceremony’
<i>bakhbakh</i>	‘hide’
<i>vkhas</i>	‘smooth out, tidy (cooking stones)’
<i>vavkhas</i>	‘decorate’
<i>vong</i>	‘yellow on one side (of a certain leaf)’
<i>vongvong</i>	‘be pure’
<i>yang</i>	‘be born’
<i>yangyang</i>	‘be yellow’
<i>bar</i>	‘slap; be blind’
<i>barbar</i>	‘cheat’
<i>dev</i>	‘carry fire’
<i>devdev</i>	‘damp a fire’

### 8.2.7. Inherent/fossilized reduplication

Inherent or fossilized reduplication has been documented by Crowley (2006a: 89) in Avava and by Hyslop (2001: 360) in Lolovoli. In the Neverver corpus, items with inherent reduplication are found in the two major word classes – verbs and nouns.

A large number of verb stems are attested in what appears to be a reduplicated form; however, there is either no simplex form attested in the corpus, or the relationship between the simplex form and reduplicated form is unclear. Verb stems with inherent reduplication belong to a range of sub-classes.

- (77) STATIVE  
*\*mal*  
*malmal* ‘be naked’  
*\*yov*  
*yovyov* ‘be white’

<i>*ban</i>	
<i>banban</i>	‘strongly (V2)’
<i>kkis</i>	‘peel (by hand)’
<i>kiskis, khiskhis</i>	‘surely (V2)’
<i>khat</i>	‘be spoiled (of yams)’
<i>khatkhat</i>	‘be dry’
<i>bor</i>	‘be shy; tasteless’
<i>borbor</i>	‘be rough’

## (78) INTRANSITIVE ACTION

<i>*gol</i>	
<i>golgol</i>	‘chat’
<i>*gos</i>	
<i>gosgos</i>	‘grunt fearfully’
<i>*vid</i>	
<i>vidvid</i>	‘writhe (of snakes)’
<i>vivid</i>	‘pulse painfully (of aches and wounds)’
<i>vas</i>	‘four’
<i>vasvas</i>	‘be powerful; start a pandanas mat’

## (79) TRANSITIVE ACTION

<i>*reb</i>	
<i>rebreb</i>	‘make level’
<i>*tak</i>	
<i>tatak</i>	‘create’
<i>*di</i>	
<i>didi</i>	‘dip’
<i>jem</i>	‘chew’
<i>jemjem</i>	‘pick island cabbage’
<i>jir</i>	‘be sick to one’s stomach’
<i>jirjir</i>	‘comb’
<i>lov</i>	‘flood’
<i>lovlov</i>	‘beat out/flat (of walling bamboo)’

Different types of nouns also exhibit inherent reduplication. These items are commonly used and considered inseparable.

## (80) KINSHIP

<i>bbubbu</i>	‘grandfather’
<i>bibi</i>	‘maternal uncle’
<i>tatan</i>	‘brother’

## (81) PRONOUN

<i>titi</i>	‘3rd person possessive determiner’
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reduplication in both core and nuclear serial constructions. In these atypical instances of reduplication, there is only one subject-mood prefix per construction, but the constraint that applies to the formation of any reduplicative affix is ignored.

- (85) Repetition inside a core SVC  
*Ar-suka-kh*                      *ar-suka-kh*                      *ar-suka-kh*  
 IMPS:REAL-stake- APPL      IMPS:REAL-stake-APPL      IMPS:REAL-stake- APPL  
*ar-suka-kh*                      *i-suvsvuv.*  
 IMPS:REAL-stake-APPL      3REAL:SG-be.finished  
 ‘They staked (the yams) on and on to completion.’ [NVKS10.35]
- (86) Repetition and reduplication inside a core SVC  
*I-mlili*                      *lon*      *nokhos*      *i-vlem*                      *i-vlem*  
 3REAL:SG-return      LOC      garden      3REAL:SG-come      3REAL:SG-come  
*i-vlem*                      *i-vlem*                      *i-vle-vle-vle-vle-vlem*  
 3REAL:SG-come      3REAL:SG-come      3REAL:SG-DUP-DUP-DUP-DUP-come  
*i-sber*                      *aiyem.*  
 3REAL:SG-reach      home  
 ‘He returned from the garden, he came on and on and on until he reached home.’ [NVKS02.59]
- (87) Repetition + multiple atypical reduplication inside nuclear SVC  
*Baga*      *mang*                      *i-vavu*                      *i-vavu-vavu-vavu-vavu*  
 then      man-ANA      3REAL:SG-walk      3REAL:SG-DUP-DUP-DUP-DUP  
*-vavu-melmelikh*                      *kut*                      *an*                      *i-mbbu*                      *e.*  
 -walk -know.nothing.about      LOCPN      NMOD      3IRR:SG-go      RSPN  
 ‘Then, the man walked, he walked on and on not knowing where he was going.’ [NVKS17.86]

In (87), full reduplication of a bisyllabic stem is present; in (88) below, a form of bisyllabic reduplication is present. The simplex form *khavukh* ‘plant’ is reduplicated with consonants dropped at the interior morpheme boundaries. The initial and final consonants of the simplex form are preserved only at the left and right edges of the larger reduplicated form. This last example might best be understood as a product of rapid speech.

- (88) Multiple atypical reduplication inside core SVC  
*Ar-khavu-avu-avukh*                      *i-suvsvuv*                      *ij.*  
 IMPS:REAL-DUP-DUP-plant      3REAL:SG-be.finished      ANT  
 ‘They had planted on and on to completion.’ [NVKS10.28]

# Chapter 9

## Clause structure

### 9.0. Introduction

The formation of clauses with verbal and non-verbal predicates is considered in this chapter. In verbal clauses, core arguments are encoded as grammatical subjects, primary objects or secondary objects; non-core arguments are encoded as optional obliques (§9.1.). Most obliques are introduced by prepositions, which are discussed in detail in §9.1.4. Verbal clauses are negated by a simple post-verbal negative particle described in §9.2. Interrogative clauses, including constituent interrogatives, polar interrogatives, and alternation questions are described in §9.3. This is followed by a presentation of reflexive and reciprocal constructions in §9.4., impersonal constructions in §9.5., and the analytic comparative in §9.6. In the text corpus, the fronting of constituents can be observed. Fronting is considered in §9.7., followed by brief descriptions of a small number of multipurpose modifiers in §9.8., and additional markers of modality in §9.9. Non-verbal clauses are considered in §9.10. The chapter concludes with observations on common interjections in interactional texts in §9.11.

### 9.1. The structure of verbal clauses

In chapter six, the grammatical functions A, P, and S were introduced in the description of verbs and their core arguments. A is the function played by the agent/actor of a prototypical transitive verb; P is the function played by the patient/undergoer of a prototypical transitive verb; and S is the function played by the single argument of an intransitive verb. In considering ditransitive verbs in Neverver, it is necessary to expand the set of core grammatical functions already introduced as these functions can only account for the arguments of intransitive and transitive verbs. In ditransitive constructions, there is both a primary object and secondary object. Dryer (2007a) offers a useful extension to Andrew's (1985; 2007) account of noun phrase functions. Dryer (2007a) employs the grammatical functions A, P, and S in discussing transitive and intransitive clauses. In addition, he uses two further grammatical functions when considering ditransitive clauses: "we can use the label 'R' for the recipient-like argument in ditransitive clauses and 'T' for the theme argument (something which undergoes a change in location or to which a location is attributed)"

(Dryer 2007a: 254). A ditransitive clause then can be described as having arguments with the functions A, R, and T.

In this section, the encoding of arguments with core grammatical functions into the grammatical relations of subject, primary object, and secondary object is explored, along with the encoding of other arguments as obliques. In the clause, arguments that are expressed as subjects (Su), primary objects (PR) and secondary objects (SO) can be described as core arguments. They contrast with arguments that are expressed as obliques, which are peripheral (Foley and Van Valin 1984: 300–301).

Typological research has shown that grammatical relations can be encoded through word order patterns, verb-agreement morphology, and nominal or case morphology (cf. Andrews 2007; Givón 2001a; Keenan 1976; Van Valin 2001). In Neverver, all three strategies are employed in various ways to distinguish between subject, primary object, secondary object, and oblique. Subject is marked by a combination of word order and verb agreement; primary object is marked purely by word order; and secondary object is marked by a combination of word order and verbal morphology. In contrast, obliques are coded with nominal morphology in the form of prepositions.

The word order patterns for Neverver, exemplified in (1) to (3) are as follows:

INTRANSITIVE	Subject + Verb
TRANSITIVE	Subject + Verb + Primary Object
DITRANSITIVE	Subject + Verb + Primary Object + Secondary Object

- (1) [Nibisbokh ang] [i-dum].  
 rat ANA 3REAL:SG-run  
 ‘The rat ran.’ [NVKS05.17: 92.552]
- (2) [Nibisbokh ang] [i-te] [noron nidaro].  
 rat ANA 3REAL:SG-cut leaf taro  
 ‘The rat cut taro leaves.’ [NVKS05. 24: 121.014]
- (3) [Niterikh] [i-sus-ikh] [nida titi] [ni-kkan-ian].  
 child 3REAL:SG-ask-APPL mother 3POSS:SG NPR-eat-NSF  
 ‘The child asked his mother for food.’ [NVE26.06]

Arguments with the grammatical functions S and A are encoded in the grammatical relation of subject and have the following properties:

- the subject argument is pre-verbal, in the left core position;
- the person and number of the subject argument is cross-referenced in the subject/mood prefix attached to the verb.

Arguments with the grammatical function P and R are encoded in the grammatical relation of primary object and have the following properties:

- the primary object argument is post-verbal, in the right core position;
- the primary object of a derived transitive verb is signalled by the applicative suffix *-ikh* on an intransitive verb stem.

Arguments with the grammatical function T are encoded in the grammatical relation of secondary object and have the following properties:

- the secondary object follows the primary object;
- the applicative suffix *-ikh* on a transitive verb stem signals the presence of more than one object.

Using Dryer's (2007a: 257) method of labelling the arguments of intransitive, transitive, and ditransitive clauses, Neverver thus displays the following accusative system:

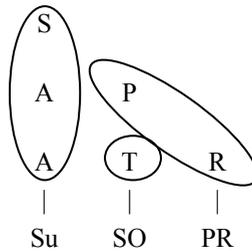


Figure 8. The treatment of arguments in Neverver (after Dryer 2007a: 257)

Non-core arguments are encoded as obliques. Obliques have the following properties:

- obliques are always optional;
- obliques are introduced by prepositions, except for spatial and temporal local nouns which form obliques without any further morphology;
- obliques may precede or follow a verb and its core arguments, in the clause periphery.

## 9.1.1. Single-argument verbs

In a clause with a single-argument (intransitive) verb, the S argument is encoded in the grammatical relation of subject, which is pre-verbal.

- (4) *Ga, mang i-vu.*  
 then man:ANA 3REAL:SG-go  
 ‘Then, the man went.’ [NVKS02.25]

- (5) *Ei i-matur.*  
 3SG 3REAL:SG-sleep  
 ‘He slept.’ [NVCT06.65: 329.448]

The subject noun phrase is readily suppressed when its intended referent can be retrieved from the context. In (6), the same participant serves as the agent/actor of each action. In the first clause, the subject noun phrase is overtly expressed; in the second clause, the subject noun phrase is suppressed and signaled only through the subject/mood marker on the verb.

- (6) *Nida t-na i-vlem ij.*  
 mother PSDT-1SG 3REAL:SG-come ANT  
*I-vu i-vor man bbukhut!*  
 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-sit EMPH inside  
 ‘My mother has come. She went and sat inside!’ [NVKS01.25-26]

Simple clauses with intransitive verbs may optionally encode non-core arguments in the oblique position. Obliques are typically introduced by prepositions (7), although local nouns appear in a bare adjunct (8).

- (7) *Mang i-das lon nutusu.*  
 man:ANA 3REAL:SG-go.down LOC sea  
 ‘The man went down to the sea.’ [NVKS017.60]

- (8) *At-das Ala.*  
 3REAL:PL-go.down Ala  
 ‘They went down to Ala.’ [NVKS15.04]

## 9.1.2. Two-argument verbs

In simple clauses containing prototypical two-argument (transitive) verbs, the agent/actor argument with the grammatical function A is encoded as the subject, preceding the verb. The patient/undergoer argument with the grammatical function P is encoded as the object, following the verb.

- (9) *Vin-ang*      *i-vet*                      *nemkhat*              *ang.*  
 woman:ANA    3REAL:SG-weave    trad.wms.wrap    ANA  
 ‘The woman wove the traditional woman’s wrap.’ [NVKI004.15]

Less prototypical transitive verbs with experiencer/actor arguments display the same arrangement of arguments. Like arguments of intransitive constructions, arguments of transitive constructions are suppressed when their referents are contextually available.

- (10) *I-khitrokh*      *niviturtur*              *i-skham.*  
 3REAL:SG-see    adolescent.girl    3REAL:SG-one  
 ‘He saw a young girl.’ NVKS002.s08]

The arguments of derived rather than basic transitive verbs are also encoded in this way. The applicative suffix *-ikh* on an intransitive stem such as *lis* ‘be afraid’ marks it as transitive (see §6.3. on verb classes and the valency increasing properties of *-ikh*).

- (11) *Nit-lis-ikh*                              *adr.*  
 1INCL:REAL:PL-afraid-APPL    3NSG  
 ‘We feared them.’ [NVKI25.25: 231.482]

### 9.1.3. Three-argument verbs

Ditransitive verbs have an agent argument with the grammatical function A, which is encoded as the subject. They have an argument with the grammatical function R which is encoded as primary object, and an argument with the grammatical function T which is encoded as secondary object.

Most ditransitive verbs are derived from a transitive verb by means of the applicative suffix *-ikh*. There are a small number of inherently ditransitive verbs; however even these appear to reflect a derived form. For example *tek~tekh* ‘strike s.o. with s.t.’ is clearly related to the alternative ditransitive form *te-k-ikh*, with an intrusive velar plosive between the stem *te* ‘hit, cut’ and the applicative suffix *-ikh*. Both forms occur in the corpus with the same meaning.

It was observed in chapter six that there is no one-to-one relationship between the grammatical functions A, P, and S, and the semantic roles of the arguments with those functions. This observation can be extended to the grammatical functions T and R also. The action GIVE, with its agent A, recipient R and theme T, is usually expressed through a core serial construction in Neverver (see §11.3.2.3.), although it can be expressed through a nuclear serial construction, with primary and secondary objects following the complex nucleus.

- (12) *Kub-lav-lik ei nio.*  
 2IRR:SG-get-pass 3SG water  
 ‘Give him water.’ [NVE16.35]

Ditransitive verbs sometimes have recipient-like arguments and theme-like arguments, as illustrated in (12), but in many cases the semantic roles of the non-agent arguments are non-prototypical. It is clear however, that a non-agent human argument, regardless of its semantic role, will take the grammatical function R over a non-human argument. This characteristic calls to mind the Animacy Hierarchy. The Animacy Hierarchy models an arrangement of arguments whereby those with higher animacy (among other characteristics) in a given situation are treated distinctly from arguments with lower animacy (cf. Silverstein 1976; Whaley 1997: 172–173).

In examples (13) to (15), the subject and A argument in each case is an agent. The primary object and R argument is a patient (with recipient-like characteristics), while the secondary object and T argument is an instrument (with theme-like characteristics).

- (13) *Ale, nimkhut an ar-tek mam naglat*  
 then man NMOD 3REAL:DU-strike 1EXCL:NSG devil.nettle  
*ar-tuv-ikh mam nibbuang.*  
 3REAL:DU-throw-APPL 1EXCL:NSG swamp.taro  
 ‘Then, the two men who struck us with nettles, threw swamp taro at us.’  
 [NVKI03.42]

It is very common in ditransitive constructions for an object to be fronted when it is particularly salient (14), or suppressed when it can be retrieved from the surrounding context (15). In the corpus, there is an observable stylistic preference, confirmed by language consultants, for no more than one core argument to appear after the verb.

- (14) *Naglat ang ar-gorgorbyakh me nimkhut.*  
 devil.nettle ANA 3REAL:DU-brush.all.over<sup>27</sup> just man  
 ‘The nettles, they brushed them all over the man.’ [NVKI03.34]

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27. A possible analysis for the morphologically complex item *gorgorbyakh* is reduplicated *gor* ‘block’, followed by an allomorph of the stative prefix *m-* and the verb *yal* ‘fly’ which has lost its final liquid. Instead, it carries the applicative suffix *-ikh* which is realised as *-kh* following a vowel. This suffix is a concordant marker of transitivity, as *gor* ‘block’ is inherently transitive, while *yal* ‘fly’ is inherently intransitive. *Ververbyakh* ‘gossip about’ has a similar structure with *ver* ‘say’. Both items are examples of nuclear serialisation (see §10.2.).

- (15) *Ar-lav*            *nibbuang*            *i-skham*            *ar-ver*  
 3REAL:DU-get    swamp.taro    3REAL:SG-one    IMPS:REAL-say  
*nibrar,*    *ar-tuv-ikh*                            *nimkhut.*  
 k.o.taro    3REAL:DU-cast-APPL    man  
 ‘They got a kind of swamp taro called Nibrar and cast it at the man.’  
 [NVKI03.35]

In the ditransitive example (16), *nigovin nakhaj* ‘rice’ is a staple in the diet and takes the role R, whereas *niviskhon nibbwas* ‘pork’ is an additional luxury and takes the role T.

- (16) *Nimkhut*    *i-kuk*                            *nigovin*    *nakhaj,*    *i-lav*  
 man            3REAL:SG-cook                            egg            ant            3REAL:SG-get  
*niviskhon*    *nibbwas*            *i-khan-khan-ikh.*  
 meat            male.pig            3REAL:SG-DUP-eat-APPL  
 ‘A man cooks rice, he gets pork and eats (rice with pork).’  
 [NVKS02.169-170]

This arrangement of arguments is reflected in an elicited construction with the same verb (17), although the alternative construction with a fronted object (18) is considered stylistically better. This time a staple R is combined with a condiment T.

- (17) *At-khan-khan-ikh*                            *nidaro*    *ang*    *nani.*  
 3REAL:PL-DUP-eat-APPL    taro            ANA    coconut  
 ‘They ate the taro with coconut.’ [NVLX16.13a]
- (18) *Nidaro*    *ang,*    *at-khankhan-ikh*                            *nani.*  
 taro            ANA    3REAL:PL-DUP-eat-APPL    coconut  
 ‘The taro, they ate it with coconut.’ [NVLX16.13b]

#### 9.1.4. Encoding non-core arguments

Non-core arguments are expressed as obliques. Prepositions serve as markers of oblique noun phrases and provide information about the semantic role of the subsequent noun phrase.

The class of prepositions in Neverver is a small closed class. Prepositions do not take affixes, although *blev* ‘with’ can function as either a preposition or a verb with the same meaning, and thus takes a subject/mood prefix in some instances. Each preposition functions to indicate a number of different, although broadly related, meanings. Because of this, the precise meaning of a preposition is assigned by the semantics of the verb and in some cases, the prepositional

object. The range of meanings associated with each preposition is presented in Table 34 below.

Prepositions take either full noun phrases or pronouns as their objects. They are not permitted to take a local noun as their object. In cases where the prepositional object is contextually retrievable, it can be gapped, although the preposition must remain. The structure of the prepositional phrase is:

$$\boxed{\text{PP} \rightarrow \text{Preposition} + (\text{NP})}$$

Table 34. Functions of prepositions

		<i>lon</i>	<i>aran</i>	<i>sur</i>	<i>lappan</i>	<i>blev</i>	<i>tuan</i>	<i>il</i>
			~ <i>ar</i>					
Spatial	in, at	y						
	on	y	y					
	source (from)	y						
	goal (to)	y						
	by, near			y				
	along, through			y				
	under				y			
Temporal	in, on, at	y						
Comitative	with (volitional)					y		
Accompanitive	with (non-volitional)			y				
Personal (combines with personal nouns)	location at a person's place						y	
	motion to a person's place						y	
	motion from a person's place						y	
	benefactive		y				y	y
Locution	about a topic to a person		y	y			y	
Reason								y

A three-way distinction between types of prepositions has been observed in Malekula languages, and in Vanuatu languages more generally. The Lolovoli dialect of North-East Ambae (Hyslop 2001), the Naman language of central Malekula (Crowley 2006b), and the V'enen Taut language of North Malekula (Fox 1979) all exhibit this three-way distinction where prepositions are either noun-like (carrying nominal possessive morphology), verb-like (carrying verbal inflections), or fully prepositional (being morphologically invariant). Contemporary Neverver, like Neve'e (Musgrave 2007) and Avava (Crowley 2006a), does not clearly reflect this three-way distinction; however, an interesting ob-

servation can be made with respect to the prepositions listed in Table 34. Two of the prepositions (*sur*, *blev*) display some verbal characteristics in certain contexts. The preposition *il* is morphologically invariant, although it is more commonly employed as a subordinating conjunction of purpose or cause. The four remaining prepositions (*lon*, *aran*, *lappan*, *tuan*) are n-final. The final *-n* may derive from the third person singular possessive suffix (described in §5.1) and it is possible that these four prepositions may have been more noun-like at an earlier stage of Neverver's history.

Prepositional phrases occur almost exclusively as clausal adjuncts. Assuming a layered clause structure, we find most prepositional phrases in the right periphery, following the verb phrase and core arguments in object positions. The preposition *blev* 'with' and *lon* 'to, at' are generally clausal modifiers, but they can also modify the head noun of a noun phrase. *Tuan* 'to (a human goal/recipient)' is also attested as a phrasal modifier. While most prepositional phrases appear in the right periphery, temporal prepositional phrases introduced by *lon* behave like other temporal adjuncts and may appear in either the right or left periphery.

#### 9.1.4.1. *lon* 'LOC'

*Lon* is the most widely occurring preposition in the corpus. A very general function of *lon* is to introduce spatial information, including location, source and goal. When introducing spatial information, the prepositional construction contrasts with an unmarked spatial adjunct construction, containing a member of the class of local nouns.

- (19) *Ale nat-uv nat-khit ei lon nebelkha.*  
 so 1EXCL:REAL:PL-go 1EXCL:REAL:PL-see 3SG LOC cacao.burner  
 'So we went and saw him at the cacao burner.' [NVCV02.30: 157.522]
- (20) *At-tokh lon nakhmal an nividumni.*  
 3REAL:PL-exist LOC house NMOD kangaroo.grass  
 'They lived in houses (made) of kangaroo grass.' [NVKS02.34]
- (21) *I-vor-ikh lon tebel.*  
 3REAL:SG-sit-APPL LOC table  
 'She put it on the table.' [NVCT06.62:312.031]
- (22) *At-uv at-ev lon nidong abit-lav*  
 3REAL:PL-go 3REAL:PL-go.to LOC mangrove.swamp 3IRR:PL-get  
*nivri.*  
 crab  
 'They went to the mangroves to collect crabs.' [NVKS15.5]

- (23) *Ar-uv ar-sakh bbukhut lon nokhos ang.*  
 3REAL:DU-go 3REAL:DU-go.up inside LOC garden ANA  
 ‘They went inside, at the garden.’ [NVKS05.9: 45.873]
- (24) *I-vu i-malu lon nokhos titi.*  
 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-go.out LOC garden 3POSS:SG  
 ‘He went out of his garden.’ [NVKS02.53]

Another function of *lon* is to introduce temporal information. Temporal adjuncts most commonly comprise unmarked temporal nouns, but in addition to this unmarked construction, temporal prepositional phrases with *lon* also occur in the corpus. These prepositional phrases are used with borrowed temporal expressions and with indigenous temporal common nouns (see §3.3.5.). Whether they comprise an unmarked temporal adverbial or a temporal prepositional phrase, temporal adjuncts may occur in either the left or right periphery.

- (25) *Lon las Satete, i-okh ku-vu abi?*  
 LOC time Saturday PSNPR-2SG 2REAL:SG-go where  
 ‘Last Saturday, where did you go?’ [NVCV02.7:12.713]
- (26) *I-sber mam lon sikis si haf-pas-faev*  
 3REAL:SG-reach 1EXCL:NSG LOC 6:00 or 5:30  
*livrav.*  
 afternoon  
 ‘It reached us at 6:00 or 5:30 in the afternoon.’ [NVDL14.5: 25.078]
- (27) *Sukul i-sber tuan git [lon*  
 church 3REAL:SG-reach LOCPSN 1INCL:NSG LOC  
*eitin-eiti-faev].*  
 1885  
 ‘The Church arrived at our place in 1885.’ [NVKI07.4]

As noted above, *lon* is generally a clausal modifier; however, there are a small number of examples in the corpus where *lon* functions as a phrasal modifier. It is interesting to note that both the examples below involve head nouns borrowed from Bislama, modified by a prepositional phrase.

- (28) *[Manasmen titi-r lon nakhmal] i-rvikh.*  
 management 3POSS-PL LOC house 3REAL:SG-good  
 ‘Their management in the house was good.’ [NVCT02.52:252.834]
- (29) *At-ve [Elda lon jej].*  
 3REAL:PL-COP Elder LOC church (Bis.)  
 ‘They are Elders in the Church’ [NVCT04.14:63.145]

9.1.4.2. *aran* 'LOC.on'

In addition to the general locational preposition *lon*, there is a preposition *aran* which has a primary function to indicate the location of one object 'on' another. Another common function of *aran* is to introduce a benefactive or a recipient role, or to indicate the topic of a discussion. With this last function, *aran* takes either a nominal object or a sentential complement.

*Aran* has a shortened allomorph *ar*. The allomorph appears commonly in the speech of younger people and has almost replaced *aran*. Among older speakers, *aran* is more common, although *ar* also is used.

- (30) *Ni-vu*            *nim-jik*            *niat*            *ang*    *aran*    *nakhmal*    *ang.*  
 1REAL:SG-go    1IRR:SG-put    Sago.Palm    ANA    LOC.on    house    ANA  
 'I go to put the thatch on the house.' [NVDL06.27]
- (31) *I-tokh*            *mej*    *i-ngar*            *arkha*    *ar*            *nibet*  
 3REAL:SG-PROG    IMM    3REAL:sg-cry    up            LOC.on    breadfruit  
*ang.*  
 ANA  
 'He was just crying up in the breadfruit tree.' [NVKS31.44:256.707]
- (32) *Mama*    *an*            *i-jing*                            *i-tnga-kh*  
 father    NMOD    3REAL:SG-be.there    3REAL:SG-search (visually)-APPL  
*si*    *aran*    *nimokhmokh*    *il*            *neskhan?*  
 NEG    LOC.on    female            CAUS    what  
 'Why doesn't that father look at the woman?' [NVKI06.205]
- (33) *Mang*            *im-bbue*<sup>28</sup>            *ni-kkol-ian*                            *im-bbu*  
 man:ANA    3IRR:SG-make    NPR-make.ceremony-NSF    3IRR:SG-go  
*aran*            *ei.*  
 LOC.on    3SG  
 'The man was going to hold the ceremony for him (lit. made the ceremony go on him).' [NVKS08.62]
- (34) *Am-bbue*            *ngosgon*            *im-bev*            *aran*            *bbubbu.*  
 IMPS:IRR-make    present    3IRR:SG-go.to    LOC.on    grandfather  
 'They were going to make a present to the grandfather.' [NVKI02.54]
- (35) *Nim-sisir*            *aran*            *nidam.*  
 1IRR:SG-discuss    LOC.on    yam  
 'I'm going to discuss yams.' [NVKI05.25]

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28. The causative is expressed in a complex structure with the complement-taking predicate *ve* 'make', followed by a sentential complement (see §12.4.3).

9.1.4.3. *lappan* ‘under’

The preposition *lappan* occurs in the corpus with the invariant meaning ‘under’. It is found only in the right periphery, introducing a clausal adjunct. As well as specifying the location of an entity ‘under’ something else, it also specifies a direction in which a human participant can look.

- (36) *Nati-vlem*                      *nat-vor*                      *lappan*    *mago.*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-come    1EXCL:REAL:PL-sit    under    mango  
 ‘We came and sat under the mango tree.’ [NVCV02.76:485.741]

- (37) *I-vlem*                      *i-tnga-kh*                      *lappan*  
 3REAL:SG-come    3REAL:SG-search(visually)-APPL    under  
*nibelkha.*  
 yam.platform  
 ‘He came and looked for it under the yam platform.’ [NVKS08.17]

9.1.4.4. *sur* ‘near, by, along’

The core meaning of the preposition *sur* is ‘near’ or ‘by’. Like *lappan*, it always occurs after the verb. There are some cases however, where it appears to behave more like a serialised verb than a preposition introducing a locational adjunct (see §10.3.1.3. for a detailed discussion of this matter).

As a locational preposition, *sur* can be used to introduce a location where something happens or a goal of motion. *Sur* can mean ‘along’ with verbs that indicate motion on or up a tree or similar vertical object. It occurs with verbs of listening and seeing, indicating the thing being listened to or looked at. *Sur* also occurs with locution verbs meaning ‘about’ to indicate the topic that is being discussed.

- (38) *Niterikh*    *ang*    *i-vu*                      *i-vor*                      *sur*    *nida*  
 child            ANA    3REAL:SG-go    3REAL:SG-sit            near    mother  
*titi*                      *adr-ikh*                      *mama*    *titi.*  
 3POSS:SG    3NSG-APPL    father    3POSS:SG  
 ‘The child went and sat by his mother and his father.’ [NVKS12.26]

- (39) *Nakha*    *i-skham*                      *i-salsal*                      *i-vlem*  
 wood    3REAL:SG-one    3REAL:SG-DUP-float    3REAL:SG-come  
*sur*    *ei.*  
 near    3SG  
 ‘A branch was floating towards him.’ [NVKS04.47: 230.608]

- (40) *Niterikh lele ang i-sakka sur nibet ang.*  
 child small ANA 3REAL:SG-climb along breadfruit ANA  
 ‘The small child climbed up the breadfruit tree.’ [NVKS31.34: 201.196]
- (41) *Ni-ver nim-sisir sur nisisienian i-skham*  
 1REAL:SG-want 1IRR:SG-discuss about thought 3REAL:SG-one  
*Yesu i-sisir.*  
 Jesus 3REAL:SG-discuss  
 ‘I want to talk about an idea that Jesus spoke of.’ [NVCT04.2:4.794]

A final meaning of *sur* is found with a set of verbs involving carrying. Here, *sur* introduces an accompanitive argument. This is a non-volitional entity that is carried ‘with’ the human agent. The verbs are *leb* ‘to carry’, *vrok* ‘to hold’ and *vus* ‘to carry (on one’s shoulder or head)’.

- (42) *Ei im-brokh sur ni-kkan-ian ibi-skham.*  
 3SG 3IRR:SG-hold near NPR-eat-NSF 3IRR:SG-one  
 ‘He’ll take a piece of food with him.’ [NVKI23.10]
- (43) *Helen i-vus sur Limel ar-uv lakha.*  
 Helen 3REAL:SG-carry near Limel 3REAL:DU-go bush  
 ‘Helen carried Limel (an infant) with her and they went to the bush.’  
 [NVLX16.05]

#### 9.1.4.5. *blev* ‘comitative’

The preposition *blev* introduces a human entity that accompanies another entity encoded as a core argument in the clause. Arguments introduced by *blev* can be expressed as clausal adjuncts, for example (44) and (45).

- (44) *I-lukh blev adr.*  
 3REAL:SG-live with 3NSG  
 ‘He lived with them.’ [NVCT02.08:27.744]
- (45) *Khavut-tro mej i-vor blev niterikh-mokhmokh.*  
 husband-old IMM 3REAL:SG-sit with child-female  
 ‘The old man sat with the girl.’ [NVKI06.57]

Arguments introduced by *blev* can also occur as phrasal adjuncts, as in examples (46) and (47). As a phrasal adjunct, *blev* performs the function of a simple nominal coordinator. This use of *blev* is found in the speech of younger community members and may be the result of contact with English *and* or Bislama *mo* ‘and’. While (46) involves a comitative phrase with human participants, (47) displays the coordination of two noun phrases encoding inanimate

entities. Thus, along with the change from preposition to conjunction, we also find a change from comitative to general coordination.

- (46) *I-na lon Satete anjing, i-na, tata*  
 PSNPR-1SG LOC Saturday that PSNPR-1SG father  
*t-na blev Limel tata titi blev nida*  
 PSDT-1SG with Limel father 3POSS-SG mother with  
*titi Limel, blev Grisi nat-uv...*  
 3POSS-SG Limel with Grace 1EXCL:REAL:PL-go  
 ‘On that Saturday, me, my father, Limel’s father and Limel’s mother and Grisi went...’ [NVCV02.15:58.68]

- (47) *I-na ni-ver nib-lav mat ibi-skham blev*  
 PSNPR-1SG 1REAL:SG-want 1IRR:SG-get mat 3IRR:SG-one with  
*nidam ibi-skham nib-lik Pierre, blev noto.*  
 yam 3IRR:SG-one 1IRR:SG-pass Pierre with chicken  
 ‘I wanted to get a mat and a yam to give to Pierre, with a chicken.’  
 [NVCV02.31.167.85]

*Blev* differs from other prepositions because it also functions as a comitative verb meaning ‘be with’. Example (48) displays a core serial construction.

- (48) *At-uv ati-blev vinang.*  
 3REAL:PL-go 3REAL:PL-be.with woman:ANA  
 ‘They went with the woman.’ [NVKI09.28]

As a verb, *blev* may also be serialised in a nuclear construction. In (49), it carries the applicative suffix *-ikh*, signalling the third argument of the complex predicate ‘hold s.t. with s.t.’.

- (49) *Nidam an ari-vrok-blev-ikh ang, nimokhmokh*  
 yam NMOD IMPS:REAL-hold-be.with-APPL ANA female  
*ang, nidam titi ing.*  
 ANA yam 3POSS:SG EXCLAM  
 ‘The yam that they held with (the pig), the woman, it was her yam.’  
 [NVKI06.71]

9.1.4.6. *tuan* 'LOCPSN' personal locational preposition

The preposition *tuan* introduces a range of non-core participants. Although varied, these non-core participants almost all share the semantic characteristic of being human. In a survey of the corpus, 96% of prepositional objects following *tuan* were either human, or referred to human abodes.<sup>29</sup>

*Tuan* differs from other prepositions in that when it has a pronominal object, the person and number features of this object can be copied into a pre-phrasal position. This is the case with both independent pronouns and possessive determiners.

- |      |                                      |                         |
|------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| (50) | <i>git</i> [ <i>tuan git</i> ]       | 'to us/our place'       |
|      | <i>na</i> [ <i>tuan na</i> ]         | 'to me/my place'        |
|      | <i>na</i> [ <i>tuan mama tna</i> ]   | 'to my father's place'  |
|      | <i>ei</i> [ <i>tuan nesal titi</i> ] | 'to his friend's place' |

*Tuan* occurs as both a clausal and phrasal modifier. The examples below illustrate arguments with a range of semantic roles that appear in the corpus as the object of *tuan*, including human destination, location, and source, as well as recipient-like arguments.

- |      |   |                      |                   |               |              |                 |
|------|---|----------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| (51) | <i>At-ver</i>   | <i>na</i>            | <i>nim-bbu-vu</i> | <i>si</i>     | <i>tuan</i>  | <i>khavut</i>   |
|      | 3REAL:PL-say  | 1SG                  | 1IRR:SG-DUP-go    | NEG           | LOCPSN       | husband         |
|      | <i>t-na.</i>  |                      |                   |               |              |                 |
|      | PSDT-1SG  |                      |                   |               |              |                 |
|      | 'They said I couldn't go to my husband.' [NVDL04.04]                    |                      |                   |               |              |                 |
| (52) | <i>kabr-uv</i>  | <i>kabir-vor-ikh</i> | <i>tuan</i>       | <i>nida</i>   | <i>t-okh</i> |                 |
|      | 2IRR:DU-go  | 2IRR:DU-sit-APPL     | LOCPSN            | mother        | PSDT-2SG     |                 |
|      | <i>adr-ikh</i>  | <i>mama</i>          | <i>t-okh.</i>     |               |              |                 |
|      | 3NSG-APPL   | father               | PSDT-2SG          |               |              |                 |
|      | 'You two go and set them down by your mother and father.' [NVKI06.133]  |                      |                   |               |              |                 |
| (53) | <i>Abir-ver</i>   | <i>te</i>            | <i>wallas</i>     | <i>im-bbu</i> | <i>tuan</i>  | <i>niterikh</i> |
|      | 3IRR:DU-say   | COMP                 | thank-you         | 3IRR:SG-go    | LOCPSN       | child           |
|      | <i>ang</i>  | <i>bibi</i>          | <i>titi-dr.</i>   |               |              |                 |
|      | ANA   | maternal.uncle       | 3POSS.PL          |               |              |                 |
|      | 'They will say thank-you to the children's maternal uncle.' [NVKI02.13] |                      |                   |               |              |                 |

29. It is interesting to note that most occurrences of *tuan* followed by a non-human object were produced by a single speaker who now resides permanently outside of the Neverver speech community.

- (54) *Im-malu i-git tuan git.*  
 3IRR:SG-go.out PSNPR-1INCL:NSG LOCPSN 1INCL:NSG  
 ‘He’ll leave from our place’ [NVKI23.10]
- (55) *I-malu tuan Neverver adr.*  
 3REAL:SG-go.out LOCPSN Neverver PL  
 ‘It originates from the place of the Neverver people.’ [NVKI30.46]
- (56) *Be ei i-ver-da si tuan mang...*  
 but 3SG 3REAL:SG-say-PART NEG LOCPSN man:ANA  
 ‘But she didn’t reveal to the man...’ [NVKS02.38]

The locution verb *sus* ‘to ask about’ can occur with a prepositional adjunct introducing a recipient-like argument (the person being asked). In (57) below, the stimulus (the thing being asked for) is a core argument, while the recipient of asking is an adjunct.

- (57) *I-vlem i-sus vinang tuan*  
 3REAL:SG-come 3REAL:SG-ask woman:ANA LOCPSN  
*mama titi.*  
 father 3POSS:SG  
 ‘He came and asked for the woman from her father.’ [NVKI09.03]

A more commonly occurring construction is where the recipient argument is encoded as a core argument, licensed by the applicative suffix *-ikh*. In most instances when the recipient occurs, the stimulus is not mentioned; however, in the example below, both occur. Where there are two core arguments following the verb, the recipient (with the grammatical function R) occurs closer to the verb than the stimulus (with the grammatical function T).

- (58) *Ku-sus-ikh na kwesten an i-jing...*  
 2REAL:SG-ask-APPL 1SG question NMOD 3REAL:SG-be.there  
 ‘You ask me that question...’ [NVKI25.17:193.667]

*Tuan* is attested as a phrasal adjunct also, modifying a head noun.

- (59) *Dran an nemakh i-git tuan git*  
 TMPPN NMOD denizen PSNPR-1INCL:NSG LOCPSN 1INCL:NSG  
*ibi-skham im-malu,...*  
 3IRR:SG-one 3IRR:SG-go.out  
 ‘Whenever one of our people leaves,...’ [NVKI23.05]

- (60) *Dran adr abit-rongrok nimkhut an git*  
 TMPPN 3NSG 3IRR:PL-want man NMOD 1INCL:NSG  
*tuan git adr abit-ve no-kkol-ian...*  
 LOCPSN 1INCL:NSG 3NSG 3IRR:PL-make NPR-make.ceremony-NSF  
 ‘Whenever they want the people of our place to make a ceremony...’  
 [NVKI25.15:125.827]

#### 9.1.4.7. *il* ‘BENE, CAUS’ Benefactive, cause marker

The adverbial subordinator *il* can function as a preposition, introducing either a benefactive participant or a nominal cause. *Il* is also commonly used to introduce sentential purpose or reason clauses (§13.3.3.).

- (61) *Ni-tokh ni-tev-tev nivanbev il*  
 1REAL:SG-PROG 1REAL:SG-DUP-begin.to.grow Chinese.yam BENE  
*nida t-na.*  
 mother PSDT-1SG  
 ‘I’m cultivating Chinese yams for my mother.’ [NVKS02.14]
- (62) *Ku-rongil kub-lem nibbuang il nimkhudan okh.*  
 2REAL:SG-can 2IRR:SG-carry swamp.taro BENE family 2SG  
 ‘You could carry swamp taro for your family.’ [NVKI20.13]
- (63) *I-ve neran il neskhan?*  
 3REAL:SG-make debt CAUS what  
 ‘Why did it make a debt?’ [NVKI05.33] (Lit. ‘It made a debt because of what?’)

## 9.2. Negation of verbal predicates

Verbal predicates are negated with the post-verbal negative particle *si*. Post-verbal negation is typologically rather unusual in SVO languages (cf. Dryer 1988: 94). In Oceanic languages, pre-verbal negation is more common (Hovdhaugen and Mosel 1999; Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002), as is the discontinuous expression of negation (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002). Discontinuous negation has been identified in Neverver’s neighbours Neve’ei (Musgrave 2007), Avava (Crowley 2006a) and Naman (Crowley 2006b). Although Neverver does not display discontinuous negation, the post-verb negative particle *si* in Neverver has the same form as the second element of the discontinuous negative construction in Neve’ei and Naman.

In clauses with negative polarity, negation is usually the only post-verbal modifier. It carries stress, although it is normally not stressed as strongly as the stress-carrying syllable of the verb that it modifies. Negation is found in clauses

marked for both realis and irrealis mood. The negative particle *si* negates imperative as well as declarative clauses (see §9.5.1 on prohibition for examples).

- (64) *Be mama i-vu si.*  
 but father 3REAL:SG-go NEG  
 ‘But the father didn’t go.’ [NVKS02.111]
- (65) *Vinang i-ver “Na nibi-kkan si in!”*  
 woman:ANA 3REAL:SG-say 1SG 1IRR:SG-eat NEG EXCLAM  
 ‘The woman said “I won’t eat!”’ [NVKS10.102]

There is no separate negative existential construction; the existential/locational verb *tokh* is simply marked for negative polarity with *si*.

- (66) *Nakhabb vangvang i-tokh si.*  
 fire be.alight 3REAL:SG-exist NEG  
 ‘There was no fire.’ [NVKS07.3: 19.822]

When a verb that is marked for realis mood is negated, subsequent sentential complements or numeral modifiers of nominal objects carry irrealis mood.

- (67) *Git nit-rongil si nimti-ssor*  
 1INCL:NSG 1INCL:REAL:PL-can NEG 1INCL:IRR:PL-speak  
*blev nimkhut.*  
 with man  
 ‘We couldn’t talk to the man.’ [NVKI28.44: 153.727]
- (68) *Ei i-khan si navuj ibi-skham.*  
 3SG 3REAL:SG-eat NEG banana 3IRR:SG-one  
 ‘He didn’t eat a banana.’ [NVE03.19]

### 9.2.1. *mosi* ‘no longer’ and *vasi* ‘not yet’

Although the negative morpheme is typically the only post-verbal modifier in a construction, negative polarity is compatible with the markers of continuative aspect. The negative particle *si* combines with the continuative aspect marker *mo* to express the meaning ‘no longer’. The order of these components may be *mo-si* or *si-mo*.

- (69) *Ga i-yel-yel mo-si i-vlem aiyem.*  
 and 3REAL:SG-DUP-scoop-out CONT-NEG 3REAL:SG-come home  
 ‘And she couldn’t scoop out coconuts any longer (so) she came home.’  
 [NVCV06.39: 612.182]

- (70) *Nimt-uv-uv*                    *mo-si*                    *il*                    *naut*                    *i-met.*  
 1INCL:IRR:PL-DUP-go    CONT-NEG    CAUS    place    3REAL:SG-dark  
 ‘We can’t go any more because it is dark.’ [NVCV02.60: 370.849]
- (71) *Git*                    *Nimt-uv-uv*                    *si-mo.*  
 1INCL:NSG    1INCL:IRR:PL-DUP-go    NEG-CONT  
 ‘We can’t go any more.’ [NVCV02.75: 477.728]

*Si* also combines with *va-* to express the meaning ‘not yet’. *Va-* is not attested independently and it is inseparable from the negative particle. The construction is usually reduced to *vas* when followed by the other continuative aspect marker *deb(b)*, although it is also attested as *vasi* in this environment (see example (153) below).

- (72) *Nabbun*    *nitan-jakh,*                    *nit-rongil*                    *vasi.*  
 smell    thing:DEF-be.here    1INCL:REAL:PL-know    not.yet  
 ‘The smell of this thing, we don’t know it yet.’ [NVKS07.24: 152.616]
- (73) *Ar*    *at-rongil*                    *vas*                    *deb*                    *nemakh*                    *Litslits.*  
 3NSG    3REAL:PL-know    not.yet    CONT    denizen    Litzlitz  
 ‘They still don’t know the people of Litzlitz yet.’ [NVCV07.56: 604.316]
- (74) *Ar*    *abit-ling-ling*                    *vasi*                    *tu*                    *nivin*                    *titi-r.*  
 3NSG    3IRR:PL-DUP-leave    not.yet    too    daughter    3POSS-PL  
 ‘They aren’t going to farewell their daughter yet either (of the occasion when woman leaves to live permanently with her new husband).’ [NVCV10.23: 220.479]

### 9.2.2. Negative verbs

There is a small set of inherently negative verbs in the corpus. These verbs have positive counterparts. The applicative suffix *-ikh* that appears on some of these verbs is fused to the verb stem.

- (75)    Positive                    Negative  
*rongrok*    ‘want’                    *rosikh*                    ‘not.want’  
*khita*    ‘like/love’                    *sre*                    ‘dislike’  
*dadikh*    ‘be sufficient’                    *varikh*                    ‘be insufficient’  
*(rongil)*    ‘know’                    *melmelikh*                    ‘know nothing about’  
*gang*    ‘be like that’                    *skhen*                    ‘be not so’
- (76) *Netas*    *ang*    *at-rosikh.*  
 fish    ANA    3REAL:PL-not.want  
 ‘The fish didn’t want to (carry him).’ [NVKS04.22: 134.526]

- (77) *Nimokhmokh im-bbuis nidam, dran im-bbuarikh,*  
 female 3IRR:SG-count yam TMPPN 3IRR:SG-insufficient  
*am-jil-bir-bir.*  
 IMPS:IRR-split-DUP-break  
 ‘The woman was going to count the yams, and whenever they were insuffi-  
 cient they would be split into pieces.’ [NVKI06.128]

In (77) the singular number marker appears on the irrealis form of the verb *varikh* ‘insufficient’, despite the plurality of the subject argument in this context. This is likely to be because of the collective nature of the argument. A similar treatment of collective entities has been observed in §8.2.4.3.

- (78) *I-tokh i-ngis-langlang i-melmelikh*  
 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-smile-drunk 3REAL:SG-know.nothing.about  
*me naut bbukhut tang?*  
 just place inside there  
 ‘Was he smiling drunkenly, not knowing where he was inside there?’  
 [NVCV05.34: 1440.596]

The negative verb *skhen* ‘be not so’ forms a pair with the high-frequency verb *gang* ‘be so, be like that’. The negative verb allows speakers to deny some piece of information, either negative or positive. It is used in a range of different semantic contexts, illustrated below.

- (79) *Kon le-lleng i-skhen ing.*  
 corn DUP-hang.down 3REAL:SG-not.so EXCLAM  
 ‘It is not droopy corn (i.e. the kind with hanging husks).’ [NVCV04.33: 352.078]
- (80) *An an i-skhen avev tnakh be*  
 DEMSPN NMOD 3:REAL:SG-not.so seaward here but  
*an an akhus.*  
 DEMSPN NMOD inland  
 ‘It is not the one down here but the one inland.’ [NVCV06.6: 465.123]
- (81) *Ni-ver nim-sir si im-bbulem be*  
 1REAL:SG-say 1IRR:SG-accompany NEG 3IRR:SG-come but  
*i-okh ku-ver ibi-skhen.*  
 PSNPR-2SG 2REAL:SG-say 3IRR:SG-not.so  
 ‘I said I wouldn’t fetch her here but you said otherwise.’ [NVKS01.30]

- (82) *Ku-tbbukh si nibarbar drong tokhtokh ibi-skham?*  
 2REAL:SG-have NEG pig common huge 3IRR:SG-one  
*I-ver "I-skhen, ni-tbbukh iskham."*  
 3REAL:SG-say 3REAL:SG-not.so 1REAL:SG-have INDF.PN  
 'You don't have a big sow? He said "On the contrary, I have one.''  
 [NVKS06.30-31]

The verb *skhen* 'be not so' can serialise to express the meaning 'do in vain'. In (83), it occurs as V2 in a core serial construction meaning 'pull in vain'. In (84), it is part of a three-part nuclear serial construction. The first verb *llang* 'look for' is reduplicated. It is followed by *dro-skhen*. \**Dro* does not have an independent meaning, although it could be related to *tro* 'old', which may reinforce the notion of duration.

- (83) *Sano lele ang i-rev i-rev i-rev*  
 Sano small ANA 3REAL:SG-pull 3REAL:SG-pull 3REAL:SG-pull  
*i-rev i-skhen mej.*  
 3REAL:SG-pull 3REAL:SG-not.exist IMM  
 'Little Sano pulled and pulled and pulled and pulled and pulled in vain.'  
 [NVCV06.11: 487.521]

- (84) *Niterikh ang adr ati-llang nibarbar ang*  
 child ANA PL 3REAL:PL-look.for.s.t. pig ANA  
*gaga ati-la-llang-dro-skhen.*  
 on.and.on 3REAL:PL-DUP-look.for.s.t.-in.vain  
 'The children looked for the pig on and on (but) they looked in vain.'  
 [NVE02.24]

### 9.3. Interrogatives

Interrogative constructions in Neverver fall into three categories. Following König and Siemund (2007), we can identify constituent interrogatives, polar interrogatives, and alternation questions. Constituent interrogatives are characterised by the presence of an interrogative lexeme; polar interrogatives are characterised by a distinctive intonation pattern; and alternation questions contain the disjunctive coordinator *si* 'or' and typically display a polar alternation between two options.

## 9.3.1. Constituent interrogatives

Constituent interrogatives are uttered with falling intonation. This is the same intonation contour that occurs in declarative clauses. Constituent interrogatives are distinguished from declarative clauses by the presence of one of the interrogative lexemes listed in (85) below. The interrogative morpheme either occurs *in situ*, or is fronted (see §9.7. below for a general discussion of fronting).

(85)	<i>niskhan</i> ~ <i>neskhan</i>	‘what’	common interrogative
	<i>il niskhan</i>	‘why’	reason interrogative
	<i>i-sikh</i>	‘who’	personal interrogative
	<i>abi</i>	‘where’	local place interrogative
	<i>tebi</i>	‘where’	local object interrogative
	<i>i-vis</i>	‘how many’	numeral interrogative
	<i>angas</i>	‘when’	temporal interrogative
	<i>i-tmakhan</i>	‘how’	manner interrogative

While interrogative lexemes function to signal questions, many are attested with additional functions also.

The common noun *niskhan* ‘what’ serves as an interrogative lexeme.

- (86) *Ga* *niskhan* *im-bbue* *nuag* *ang* *im-das*  
 then what 3IRR:SG-make boat ANA 3IRR:SG-go.down  
*lon* *nutusu?*  
 LOC sea  
 ‘Then what will make the boat go down to the sea?’ [NVCT07.16: 71.065]
- (87) *Ga* *ni-ver* *“Ei!* *niskhan* *i-ve*  
 and 1REAL:SG-say hey what 3REAL:SG-make  
*i-okh* *ang?”*  
 PSNPR-2SG ANA  
 ‘And I said, “Hey! What happened to you?”’ [NVCV01.36: 465.103]
- (88) *Nibit-khan* *niskhan* *ing?*  
 1INCL:IRR:PL-eat what EXCLAM  
 ‘What were we going to eat?’ [NVDL14.27: 158.214]

In (89), *niskhan* ‘what’ appears to introduce a headless relative clause as ‘whatever’. The corpus contains few analogous examples and the possibility of interference from English or Bislama (cf. Crowley 2004:191), where questions words can be used in this way, cannot be discounted.

- (89) *Nabit-ve* *[niskhan* *i-okh* *ku-rongrok]*.  
 1EXCL:IRR:PL-do what PSNPR-2SG 2REAL:SG-want  
 ‘We’ll do whatever you want.’ [NVDL04.24]

*Niskhan* ‘what’ combines with the causal subordinator *il* to form the question ‘why’, literally ‘because of what’.

- (90) *I-okh*            *ku-ngar*            *il*            *niskhan?*  
 PSNPR-2SG    2REAL:SG-cry    CAUS    what  
 ‘Why are you crying?’ [NVKS18.30: 142.268]
- (91) *Ku-ver*            *il*            *niskhan?*  
 2REAL:SG-say    CAUS    what  
 ‘Why do you say that?’ [NVKS02.22]

*Niskhan* can also be compounded with a common noun to mean ‘what (kind of) N’ or ‘which N’. Examples are listed in (92).

- (92) *nisib-skhan*            ‘what knife?’  
*nossorian-skhan*        ‘what language?’  
*navuj-skhan*            ‘what kind of banana?’  
*plan-skhan*            ‘what plan?’

The personal interrogative *i-sikh* ‘who’ is similar to independent pronouns in that it carries the personal prefix *i-*. Examples (93) and (94) show that the same interrogative forms are found in direct and indirect questions.

- (93) *I-okh*            *ku-tokh*            *ku-llang*            *i-sikh*  
 PSNPR-2SG    2REAL:SG-PROG    2REAL:SG-look.for.s.t.    PSNPR-who  
*ing?*  
 EXCLAM  
 ‘Who are you looking for?’ [NVDL04.16]
- (94) *Nibir-khit-khit*            *i-sikh*            *im-maur*            *i-sikh*  
 1INCL:IRR:DL-DUP-see    PSNPR-who    3IRR:SG-live    PSNPR-who  
*im-mas.*  
 3IRR:SG-dead  
 ‘We’ll see who lives and who dies.’ [NVCT01.12: 62.045]

There are two local interrogatives. *Abi* ‘where’ asks about the location of a place; *tebi* asks about the location of an object. *Abi* occurs in verbal and non-verbal interrogative constructions. *Tebi* is only attested in non-verbal constructions, although the response is generally verbal as in (97).

- (95) *Ga,*            *nibr-uv*            *nibri-llang*            *nimjal*            *abi?*  
 then    1INCL:IRR:DU-go    1INCL:IRR:DU-look.for.s.t.    meat            where  
 ‘So where will we go and look for meat?’ [NVKS20.15: 77.092]

- (96) *Ei! okh ku-vu abi ku-vlem ang?*  
 hey 2SG 2REAL:SG-go where 2REAL:SG-come ANA  
 ‘Hey, where did you come from?’ [NVKS17.97]
- (97) “*Nibbua Nansi, tebi Susian?*”  
 grandmother Nancy where Susian  
*Ga i-ver, “O! Susian adr-ikh Lesale*  
 then 3REAL:SG-say Oh Susian 3NSG-APPL Lesale  
*ar-lukh man son tang.”*  
 3REAL:DU-Stay EMPH somewhere there  
 ‘‘Grandmother Nancy, where is Susian?’ And she said, ‘Oh, Susian and Lesale are around somewhere.’’ [NVCV02.86: 585.03]

The interrogative verb *vis* ‘how many’ behaves like the numerals one to nine, carrying a third person singular subject/mood prefix. It is only attested with count nouns in the corpus, except for one structure where it asks ‘how much did they pay?’. It is likely however, that money is treated as countable. It is also attested as a transitive verb meaning ‘count’. There is no separate structure for questioning the amount of the referent of a mass noun. This gap actually aligns rather well with the coding of mass nouns in subject position with singular subject/mood prefixes.

- (98) *Okh ku-lukh nimdan nial i-vis?*  
 2SG 2REAL:SG-live eye sun 3REAL:SG-how.many  
 ‘How many days did you stay?’ [NVE07.45]
- (99) *Buluk ang, ar-vul i-vis?*  
 cow ANA IMPS:REAL-buy 3REAL:SG-how.many  
 ‘The cow, how much did they pay for it?’ [NVCT06.15: 68.945]
- (100) *Nimokhmokh im-bbuis nidam.*  
 female 3IRR:SG-count yam  
 ‘The woman is going to count the yams.’ [NVKI06.128]

The temporal interrogative *angas* ‘when’ is rather rare in the text corpus, but it occurs in daily conversation.

- (101) *Ibi-tokh angas?*  
 3IRR:SG-exist when  
 ‘When will it be (of a ceremony)?’ [NVKS17.105]
- (102) *Nibit-tokh ib-ran angas?*  
 1INCL.IRR:PL-exist 3IRR:SG-end when  
 ‘When will we be here until?’ [NVKI03.79]

Finally, the verb *tmakh(an)* occurs in clauses to ask ‘how’ something was or will be done. It carries the third person singular realis prefix *i-tmakhan* in conversation as a greeting ‘how’s it going?’, or inquiry ‘what’s happening?’. In declarative clauses, it functions to express ‘how’ something happens.

- (103) *I-ver,*                    “*O,*    *i-tmakhan?*        *Nisin-skham*  
 3REAL:SG-say    Oh    3REAL:SG-how    thing:INDF-one  
*i-bit?*”  
 3REAL:SG-make.mistake  
 ‘He said, “Oh, what’s happening? Is something wrong?”’ [NVCT03.11: 49.574]
- (104) *Ga*    *kon*    *t-gam*            *ati-tmakhan?*  
 and    corn    PSDT-2NSG    3REAL:PL-how  
 ‘And how is your corn?’ [NVCV04.12: 300.540]
- (105) *Mil*    *nim-sisir*            *i-tmakhan*        *ar-ve*  
 again    IIRR:SG-discuss    3REAL:SG-how    IMPS:REAL-make  
*nolong-mavus.*  
 plain.laplap  
 ‘Again, I’ll describe how plain laplap is made.’ [NVDL12.11]

### 9.3.2. Polar interrogatives

Polar interrogatives bear no special morphology. They have the structure of declarative clauses, but are marked by a distinctive intonation contour. While declarative clauses have falling terminal intonation, polar interrogatives are uttered with rising intonation on the penultimate syllable, and falling intonation on the final syllable. A polar interrogative may be expressed with either negative or positive polarity.

- (106) *I-na*            *ni-ver*            *ba*            *lonial*            *ang,*    *gam*  
 PSNPR-1SG    1REAL:SG-say    when    lunchtime    ANA    2NSG  
*kat-itrokh?*    *ei?*  
 2REAL:PL-see    3SG  
 ‘I say, at lunchtime, did you see him?’ [NVCV05.04: 1310.234]
- (107) *Be*    *Helen,*    *i-okh*    *ku-rodrokh*        *si*    *stori*    *an?jing?*  
 but    Helen    2SG    2:REAL:SG-hear    NEG    story    that  
 ‘But Helen, you didn’t hear that story?’ [NVCV03.64: 296.871]
- (108) *At-rev*            *net?*    *ing?*  
 3REAL:PL-pull    net    EXCLAM  
 ‘Did they use a net?’ [NVCV08.75: 508.946]

## 9.3.3. Alternation questions

Alternation questions present two alternatives to a hearer. The first option is expressed with rising non-terminal intonation, and the second option has falling intonation. The options are conjoined with the disjunctive coordinator *si* ‘or’. Often, a polar alternation is presented. When this is the case, the second option need not be stated overtly; rather, the speaker utters *si* to indicate the alternation and then pauses.

- (109) *Am-khit*      *adr*      *abir-ve*      *tnakh*↗      *si*      *abir-ve*  
 IMPS:IRR-see    3NSG    3IRR:DU-make    here      or      3IRR:DU-make  
*atling?*↘  
 over.there  
 ‘Does it appear/seem that they’ll make it here or there?’  
 [NVCV10.68: 370.296]

- (110) *I-tmakhan?*      *I-okh*      *ku-rosikh*      *i-na*↗  
 3REAL:SG-how    PSNPN-2SG    2REAL:SG-not want    PSNPR-1SG  
*si*    *ku-rongrok?*↘  
 or    2REAL:SG-want  
 ‘What’s going on? Do you not want me, or do you?’ [NVDL03.11]

- (111) *Ga*    *at-maur*      *ati-rvikh*      *we*      *ati-rvikh*↗      *si?*  
 and    3REAL:PL-live    3REAL:PL-good    AUGCO    3REAL:PL-good    or  
 ‘And are they growing really well or?’ [NVCV04.18: 314.971]

## 9.4. Reflexive and reciprocal constructions

In Neverver, reflexive and reciprocal constructions take the same form. Givón (2001b: 95) observes that “there are strong functional and syntactic parallelisms between reflexive and reciprocal clauses, to the point where in many languages they share their grammatical morphology”. Reflexives are syntactically transitive, with two structural positions filled, though semantically intransitive as only one participant is involved: “the subject and object of the event or state, regardless of their semantic roles, are *co-referent*” (Givón 2001b: 95, italics original). Reciprocal constructions involve two separate events expressed in the same clause “with the subject of the first being the object of the second, and vice versa. The two participants are thus *reciprocally co-referent*” (Givón 2001b: 96, italics original). One key difference between the two constructions is that the coreferential argument of a reflexive construction may be singular, while the coreferential argument of a reciprocal construction is necessarily non-

singular. Both reflexive and reciprocal propositions take the form of syntactically transitive constructions.

#### 9.4.1. Reflexives

Reflexive constructions have both a subject and an object grammatical relation. The coreferential object argument is invariably encoded as a pronoun. A small number of verbs are inherently reflexive and require a coreferential object argument. Example (112) with the reflexive stem *dri* ‘turn’ contrasts with (113) where the transitive verb *lerikh* ‘turn over’ is used in a situation where an agent acts on a distinct patient. The verb *lerikh* has a fused applicative suffix.

(112) *Ale nat-dri nam nat-uv.*  
 then 1EXCL:REAL:PL-turn 1EXCL:NSG 1EXCL:REAL:PL-go  
 ‘Then we turned and went.’ [NVCV02.50: 278.899]

(113) *Ni-lerikh nani ang.*  
 1REAL:SG-turn.over coconut ANA  
 ‘I turned over the coconut.’ [NVDL02.13]

Examples (114) to (116) display other inherently reflexive stems.

(114) *Nisin-skham im-dak ei aran nasus t-okh.*  
 thing:INDF-one 3IRR:SG-fall.down 3SG LOC.on breast PSDT-2SG  
 ‘Something will fall on your breast.’ [NVKS01.42]

(115) *I-duk ei.*  
 3REAL:SG- bang.into 3SG  
 ‘He banged himself.’ [NVCV05.31: 1416.980]

(116) *Man-jing i-sir ei.*  
 man-be.there 3REAL:SG-diet 3SG  
 ‘That man is on a diet.’ [NVLX19.79]

Apart from inherently reflexive verb stems, reflexive constructions occur very rarely in the corpus. The examples in (117) and (118) were both produced in elicitation sessions. In each case, the reflexive is formed with reduplication of a transitive stem. A coreferential pronoun occupies the object position.

(117) Simplex stem *khur* ‘to scratch, itch’  
*I-na ni-khur-khur na.*  
 PSNPR-1SG 1REAL:SG-DUP-scratch 1SG  
 ‘I scratched/itched myself.’ [NVE08.35]

- (118) Simplex stem *ve* ‘to make, do’  
*I-ve-ve* *ei.*  
 3REAL:SG-DUP-make 3SG  
 ‘He dressed himself up.’ [NVLX21.46]

#### 9.4.2. Reciprocals

Like the reflexive construction, the reciprocal construction is syntactically transitive and requires a pronoun in object position. The non-singular object argument is coreferential with the non-singular subject argument and the participants act upon each other. Additionally, we find that the transitive verb stem is consistently reduplicated in reciprocal constructions.

- (119) Simplex stem *te* ‘hit’  
*Niterikh ang edr ar-te-te adr.*  
 child ANA PL 3REAL:DU-DUP-hit 3NSG  
 ‘The two children are fighting/fought each other. [NVE08.24]

- (120) Simplex stem *sibrik* ‘let go’  
*Kabir-sib-sibrik gam!*  
 2IRR:DU-DUP-let.go 2NSG  
 ‘Let go of each other!’ [NVLX22.32]

- (121) Simplex stem *ver* ‘say’  
*Baga, noto ang abir-ver-ver-ikh adr.*  
 then chicken ANA 3IRR:DU-DUP-say-APPL 3NSG  
 ‘Then, the two chickens were going to talk/plan with each other.’ [NVKS23.5:33.725]

In the final example below, a ditransitive construction is presented. The direct object and second object are both animate. We can observe the placement of the reciprocal argument (with the function R) in primary object position, and the stimulus (with the function T) in secondary object position.

- (122) Simplex stem *sus* ‘ask’  
*At-su-sus-ikh adr niterikh-vidro ang.*  
 3REAL:PL-DUP-ask-APPL 3NSG pre-adolescent.girl ANA  
 ‘They asked each other about the girl.’ [NVKS14.18]

## 9.5. Impersonal constructions

Among the possible subject/mood prefixes that obligatorily attach to verbs, one option is the use of an impersonal prefix. The realis form of the impersonal prefix is *ar(i)-*. This makes it homonymous with the third person realis dual subject/mood prefix *ar(i)-*. The irrealis forms differ, however, with the impersonal irrealis form being *am-* or *ab(i)*, while the dual forms contain the dual morpheme *r-* as in *abir* or *abr(i)*. The two types of prefixes also differ in another important respect. The impersonal prefix cannot be cross-referenced to material in the pre-verbal subject position. In contrast, the third person realis dual prefix is readily cross-referenced to a nominal or pronominal argument in the subject position. There are instances of the subject slot remaining unfilled when the third person dual realis prefix is used, but these occur when the argument serving as the grammatical subject can be retrieved from the prior discourse or from the physical context in which the utterance is produced.

One important semantic constant in impersonal constructions is that the impersonal subject argument is human. When the impersonal subject prefix is used, the precise semantic details of the human subject are either deliberately underspecified as in (123) and (124), or simply unknown as in (125). It is possible for both transitive and intransitive stems to take the impersonal subject/mood prefix. Intransitive impersonal constructions are similar to constructions with *one* or the generic *they* in English; the most natural translation of transitive impersonal constructions is the English passive.

- (123) Deliberately underspecified agent/actor  
*Ar-rongil si am-tur terter.*  
 IMPS:REAL-can NEG IMPS:IRR-stand close  
 ‘One couldn’t stand nearby (of a nest of the writhing snakes).’  
 [NVKS12.59:435.085]

- (124) *Tue i-gen ar-malmal.*  
 before 3REAL:SG-like IMPS:REAL-naked  
 ‘Before, it was like, they (people) were naked.’ [NVK104.57]

- (125) Unknown agent/actor  
*Ba i-vu, i-khit ar-jal nakha ang.*  
 when 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-see IMPS:REAL-strip wood ANA  
 ‘When he went, he saw the trees had been stripped.’ [NVKS10.15: 96.129]

A common function of the impersonal subject construction is to name places and things. Locations and objects are named by the group of people who live (and have always lived) in the area and speak Neverver; any further specification of the ‘namers’ is unnecessary.

- (126) *Nolog tokhtokh adr ar-ve ang,*  
 laplap huge PL IMPS:REAL-make ANA  
*ari-kke-kh ar-ver-t nimerbbun.*  
 IMPS:REAL-call-APPL IMPS:REAL-say-COMP doubled.laplap  
 ‘The two big laplaps that are made are called ‘Nimerbbun’ laplaps.’  
 [NVKI29.05: 552.609]
- (127) *I-sakh Irakhalav im-bev aiyem an*  
 3REAL:SG-go.up Irakhalav 3IRR:SG-go.to home NMOD  
*ar-ver Marin.*  
 IMPS:REAL-say Marin  
 ‘He went up to Irakhalav to go to the dwelling that is called Marin.’  
 [NVKS08.07]
- (128) *Nikhijan nakha ang ari-kke-kh ar-ver*  
 name tree ANA IMPS:REAL-call-APPL IMPS:REAL-say  
*Nakhabatekh.*  
 k.o.tree  
 ‘The name of the tree was called Nakhabatekh.’ [NVKS011.s31]

### 9.5.1. Impersonal subjects and prohibition

In the expression of imperatives, the personal prefix *kum-* ‘2IRR:SG’ (as well as the dual and plural forms) is employed (129). It is also common to hear the impersonal *ar-* in everyday speech in prohibitive constructions (130). The impersonal prohibitive literally states ‘One doesn’t do X’, but it sends the message ‘Don’t do X!’. In the expression of prohibition, the impersonal prefix is always coded for realis mood and the construction is marked for negative polarity with the post-verbal negative particle *si*.

- (129) *Kum-bbue-ve si!*  
 2IRR:SG-DUP-do NEG  
 ‘Don’t do that!’ [NVCT07.25: 108.545]
- (130) *Ar-vu-vu si! Kum-bbuor-vor!*  
 IMPS:REAL-DUP-go NEG 2IRR:SG-DUP-sit  
 ‘Don’t leave! (lit. ‘One doesn’t go.’) Sit down!’ [NVE05.39]

Although the use of the impersonal prefix for prohibition is suggestive of a politeness strategy, speakers do not consider it to be a weaker form of command. Mothers routinely use this construction to yell orders at their children. The two constructions appear to be distributed dialectally, with speakers from Limap village using the impersonal realis prefix more for prohibition, and

speakers from Lingarakh using second person irrealis prefixes more. The impersonal prohibitive construction might be evidence of an older form of Neverver, and reflect more conservative language practices in Limap, which is geographically more isolated than Lingarakh (see §1.1.1. and §1.1.2. for sociolinguistic descriptions of Limap and Lingarakh).

## 9.6. Comparative structures

Neverver does not have a morphological comparative, and making comparisons seems to be culturally unusual for Neverver speakers. In elicitation, we find that an analytic construction can be employed. In the analytic comparative, the verb *jadr* ‘pass, beat’ forms a core serial sequence with a preceding verbal proposition. The applicative marker appears on *jadr*, signalling the transitivity of the larger comparative proposition.

- (131) *Niterikh an i-jing, i-berber*  
 child NMOD 3REAL:SG-be.there 3REAL:SG-be.tall  
*i-jadr-ikh niterikh balian lon lokhavre anjakh.*  
 3REAL:SG-pass-APPL child all LOC village DEMSDT  
 ‘That child is the tallest in the village.’ [NVE23.116]

This same analytic comparative was produced spontaneously by language consultants when developing literacy resources for children. The following statement accompanied a photograph of a young man called Dasale with two community elders.

- (132) *Dasale i-ber-ber i-jadr-ikh man an*  
 Dasale 3REAL:SG-DUP-long 3REAL:SG-pass-APPL male NMOD  
*i-ru ang.*  
 3REAL:SG-two ANA  
 ‘Dasale is taller than the two men (Lit. ‘Dasale is tall, he beats/passes the two men’).’ [NVA1phabetBooklet]

The final example in this section displays the use of *jadr* as a main transitive verb meaning ‘pass’. In this example *jadr* carries the applicative subject, but the additional applicative object is not expressed overtly.

- (133) *Baga i-jadr-ikh lakhlakh.*  
 after.that 3REAL.SG-pass-APPL be.quiet  
 ‘Then he passed him quietly.’ [NVCT04.13: 61.820]

### 9.7. Fronting of constituents

A recurring feature in the text corpus is the fronting of constituents. This is a common feature of Vanuatu languages, with Crowley (2006b) commenting:

In many Vanuatu languages, there is a highly productive pattern of movement of noun phrases to the head of the clause as a way of promoting a noun phrase from the position of verbal or prepositional object into a position of pragmatic salience. (Crowley 2006b: 204)

In the Lolovoli dialect of Ambae, Hyslop (2001: 70) associates fronting with the pragmatic notion of topicality, observing that “any constituent of the clause can be fronted to an extra-clausal position, to indicate that it is the topic”. In Neverver, fronting typically involves movement of a noun phrase to a pre-clausal position. This position appears to indicate pragmatic salience, as antecedents of fronted arguments are typically present in the immediately preceding clauses; however, this is a superficial observation and pragmatic matters are not explored in any detail in this work.

Along with the expected fronting of arguments in main clauses, we find that arguments of subordinate clauses and temporal constituents can appear in a pre-clausal position. Fronted constituents are separated from their clause or phrase by rising intonation, and often a brief intonation break.

#### 9.7.1. Fronting core arguments of a main clause

Core arguments in transitive and ditransitive clauses can be fronted. From (134) to (138) below, the fronted subject argument is separated from the remainder of the clause by rising intonation. Post-nominal modifiers are fronted along with their head noun.

- (134) *Vinang*↗      *barnakh*↗      *i-ve*                      *nimokhmokh*      *t-na*.  
 woman:ANA      now                      3REAL:SG-COP      female                      PSDT-1SG  
 ‘The woman, now she is my wife.’ [NVKS14.57]

- (135) *Nakhabb*      *anjakh*↗      *nar-somda*                      *me*      *akhsung*  
 fire                      this                      1EXCL:REAL:DU-discover      just      inland  
*Bongrari*.  
 Bongrari  
 ‘This fire, we found it up at Bongrari.’ [NVKS07.27: 164.073]

- (136) *Nivunbbu an ni-te ang↗, ni-vlem*  
 bamboo NMOD 1REAL:SG-cut ANA 1REAL:SG-come  
*ni-lovlov.*  
 1REAL:SG-beat.flat  
 ‘The bamboo that I cut, I come and beat it flat.’ [NVDL06.35]

- (137) *Nokhovas ang↗ ni-rev i-vlem*  
 k.o.vine ANA 1REAL:SG-pull 3REAL:SG-come  
*ni-ga(k)-ikh nakhmal.*  
 1REAL:SG-tie.up-APPL house  
 ‘The Nokhovas vine, I pull it home and bind the house with it. [NVDL06.25]

In (137), *nokhovas* ‘k.o. vine’ is used to bind parts of a house. As an instrument, it has the grammatical function T. It is fronted from second object position, where it would ordinarily follow *nakhmal* ‘house’ which is a patient argument with the grammatical function R.

When an impersonal construction is used, it is possible for the P argument to be fronted. Although the impersonal construction is non-promotional, fronting the P argument has a similar affect to the promotion of P to subject position that we find in prototypical passive constructions (cf. Givón 1979; Keenan 1985a). As noted above in §9.5., impersonal constructions with transitive verbs translate most naturally into the English passive.

- (138) *Nibarbar↗ ar-khan si; nibbwas lume↗ ar-khan.*  
 sow IMPS:REAL-eat NEG male.pig only IMPS:REAL-eat  
 ‘Sows were not eaten; only male pigs were eaten.’ [NVK108.05-06]

- (139) *Nidam anjing↗ ar-somda lon nial adr-ikh*  
 yam that IMPS:REAL-discover LOC sun 3NSG-APPL  
*navul.*  
 moon  
 ‘That yam, it was discovered at (the dwelling of) the sun and the moon.’  
 [NVKS15.89]

### 9.7.2. Fronting arguments of sentential complements

When an argument of a sentential complement is fronted, it may precede the entire construction as in (140), or only the complement clause as in (141).

- (140) *Plan-skhan↗ okh ku-ver git nibir-yakhsur?*  
 plan-what 2SG 2REAL:SG-want 1INCL:NSG 1INCL:IRR:DU-follow  
 ‘What plan do you want us to follow?’ [NVCT01.11: 57.662]

- (141) *At-rongil*            *nemat*↗,    *nakhabb*    *i-khan*            *ang*.  
 3:REAL:PL-know    snake            fire            3REAL:SG-eat    ANA  
 ‘They all knew that the snake, the fire consumed it. [NVKS02.82]

In most constructions with fronted arguments, any post-nominal modifiers are fronted along with the head noun. In (141) however, the anaphoric demonstrative *ang* is stranded *in situ*; only the head noun has been fronted.

### 9.7.3. Fronting core arguments of a subordinate clause

Like main clauses, core arguments of subordinate clauses can be fronted when the subordinate clause precedes the main clause.<sup>30</sup> This occurs with arguments that are shared by both main and subordinate clause as in (142) and (143). In these two examples, the fronted argument is the subject of both main and subordinate clause. With constructions such as these, there is usually a slight intonation rise on the fronted noun phrase, but no intonation break before the subordinate clause is uttered.

- (142) *Nio*↗    *ba*            *i-lab*,                            *i-deng*  
 river    when    3REAL:SG-many    3REAL:SG-pull.out.s.t.  
*nias*                            *ang*.  
 Tahitian.chestnut    ANA  
 ‘The river, when it was full, it pulled out the Tahitian chestnut tree.’  
 [NVKS14.20]

- (143) *Nokhowit*    *ang*↗    *ba*            *i-tnga*,                            *i-trokh*  
 octopus    ANA    when    3REAL:SG-search(visually)    3REAL:SG-see  
*nakha*    *i-skham*                            *i-salsal*                            *i-vlem*  
 wood    3REAL:SG-one    3REAL:SG-DUP-float    3REAL:SG-come  
*sur*    *ei*.  
 near    3SG  
 ‘The octopus, when he looked, he saw a branch floating towards him.’  
 [NVKS04.47: 230.608]

More interestingly, an argument that is only present in the subordinate clause may be fronted, as in (144). In this example, both verbs are intransitive. The

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30. While the fronting of main clause arguments is widely attested in Vanuatu languages (Crowley 2006b), the fronting of arguments of subordinate clauses is typologically unexpected. Bybee (2002: 2) observes that “subordinate clauses contain backgrounded information that is less likely to be subject to topicalization, contrast and presentative focus; such manipulations are more appropriate and more commonly occur in main clauses”.

single argument of the subordinate clause, *nemat* ‘snake’ is fronted and occurs before the subordinating conjunction *ba* ‘when’. The single argument of the main clause *khavut-tro* ‘old man’ occurs in the expected pre-verbal position in the main clause. The intonation pattern follows that described above for the fronting of arguments shared by main and subordinate clauses.

- (144) *Nemat angʹ ba i-mas, khavut-tro*  
 snake ANA when 3REAL:SG-dead husband-old  
*i-sakh aut.*  
 3REAL:SG-go.up ashore  
 ‘The snake, when it died, the old man came ashore.’ [NVKS12.93]

### 9.8. Multi-purpose modifiers

Two modifiers appear in a range of positions both inside and outside the clause. These are *mil* ‘again’ and (*lu*)*me* ‘just, only’. Both particles can modify verbs, nouns, and adverbials. In addition, *mil* modifies clauses. They usually follow the constituent that they are modifying, although *mil* can occur as a pre-clausal modifier.

- (145) *Ale, mil baga adr i-skham mil*  
 then again then 3NSG 3REAL:SG-one again  
*i-vlem.*  
 3REAL:SG-come  
 ‘Then, again, after that another one of them came.’ [NVCT04.16: 69.291]

- (146) *I-git mokh me nit-ve nimkhut*  
 PSNPR-1INCL:NSG all just 1INCL:REAL:PL-COP man  
*an i-is.*  
 NMOD 3REAL:SG-bad  
 ‘All of us just are people who are bad.’ [NVCT03.17: 79.700] Note the generic noun *nimkhut* ‘man’ takes a singular subject/mood prefix.

- (147) *Ga at-uv mil at-vul iskham*  
 and 3REAL:PL-go again 3REAL:PL-buy INDF.PN<sup>31</sup>  
*MapBest.*  
 MapBest.Plantation  
 ‘And they went again and bought one at MapBest Plantation.’ [NVCV07.48: 578.082]

31. The contrast in glossing of ‘one’ is due to the different function that the forms play; in (145), *i-skham* ‘one’ modifies the pronoun *adr* meaning ‘one of them’, while in (147) *iskham* ‘INDF.PN’, with subject/mood prefix fused, functions as the pronominal head of a noun phrase.

- (148) *Ni-lav*            *me*    *bak*    *tokhtokh*    *i-skham.*  
 1REAL:SG-get    just    bag    huge            3REAL:SG-one  
 ‘I just got a big bag.’ [NVCV02.68: 437.822]
- (149) *Ni-tur*                    *mitabbukh*    *mil*        *lon*        *nabbung*    *tle...*  
 1REAL:SG-get.up    morning            again    LOC        day            another  
 ‘I get up again on another day...’ [NVDL02.03]

## 9.9. Expressions of modality

In addition to the obligatory mood marking that is indicated in the subject/mood prefix in all verbal clauses, clauses may carry other markers of epistemic (knowledge-based) and deontic (evaluative) modality (cf. Givón 2001a: 300–329). These markers have varied distribution and function.

### 9.9.1. *ing* ‘EXCLAM’ exclamatory marker

When a speaker wishes to assert his or her belief that a proposition is particularly note-worthy, or wants to claim the hearer’s full attention, the clausal modifier *ing* is post-posed. This particle functions as an exclamation mark and is particularly common in conversational exchange. It occurs in a range of verbal and non-verbal clauses, and with both realis and irrealis mood.

- (150) *Niskhan*    *ing?*  
 what            EXCLAM  
 ‘What?’ [NVCV02.06: 11.993]
- (151) *Barnakh*    *ing?*  
 now            EXCLAM  
 ‘Now?’ [NVCV08.44: 455.234]
- (152) *Nib-lav*            *mej*    *vivin*    *na*    *ing!*  
 1IRR:SG-get    IMM    sister    1SG    EXCLAM  
 ‘I’m going to marry my sister!’ [NVKS09. 83]
- (153) *Nibet*            *ang*    *i-tro*                    *vasi*        *debb*    *ing!*  
 breadfruit    ANA    3REAL:SG-ripe    not.yet    CONT    EXCLAM  
 ‘The breadfruit still isn’t ripe yet!’ [NVKS31.18: 122.647]

9.9.2. *man* ‘EMPH’ emphatic marker

The emphatic marker *man* ‘really, actually’ occurs within the verb phrase. When combined with realis mood, it asserts the truth of the proposition encoded in the clause. When combined with irrealis mood, it asserts the speaker’s belief in the eventual truth of the proposition. As a consequence of this assertion, it can function to express the deontic modalities of obligation or necessity in irrealis constructions.

An important structural property of *man* is that it is marked for transitivity. When the main verb is intransitive, it occurs in a plain form; when the main verb has a higher valency, it carries the applicative suffix *-ikh*. An epenthetic alveolar plosive is articulated between the emphatic marker and the applicative suffix [man<sup>d</sup>ix].

- (154) *Niterikh ang i-tokh i-susus man lon*  
 child ANA 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-suckle EMPH LOC  
*nibarbar ang.*  
 pig ANA  
 ‘The child was actually suckling on the pig.’ [NVKS08.20]

- (155) *Nemat ang i-yakhsur man(d)-ikh niterikh ang.*  
 snake ANA 3REAL:SG-follow EMPH-APPL child ANA  
 ‘The snake actually followed the child.’ [NVKS12.29: 205.343]

- (156) *Nim-bbue bkhas man(d)-ikh mini-akh.*  
 1IRR:SG-clean.up clean EMPH-APPL man-this  
 ‘I have to/must clean up this man (of an injured traveller).’  
 [NVCT04.25:96.341]

9.9.3. *bor* ‘maybe’

When speakers wish to indicate that they are uncertain about the truth of a proposition or some component of it, *bor* can be pre-posed to the constituent in question.

- (157) *Ga bor at-salemsi mo, ar me*  
 so maybe 3REAL:PL-sell NEG CONT 3NSG just  
*at-khan me avev tang.*  
 3REAL:PL-eat just seaward there  
 ‘So maybe they didn’t sell it any more, they just ate it down there.’  
 [NVCV07.33: 548.810]

- (158) *Bor abir-lem abir-ve abir-salelem olbaot*  
 maybe 3:IRR:DU-carry 3IRR:DU-do 3IRR:DU-sell everywhere  
*bor lon aes atling.*  
 maybe LOC ice over.there  
 ‘Maybe they were going to take it and (butcher it) and sell it everywhere on ice (frozen) over there (of a cattle beast).’ [NVCV07.11: 510.828]

#### 9.9.4. *var* ‘unfortunately’

When speakers wish to indicate their sadness, or to express sympathy, they use the modal particle *var* ‘unfortunately’. *Var* is attested as a modifier of nouns and of verbs. It can also occur independently to mean ‘oh dear!’ or ‘that’s too bad’.

- (159) *I-ver “O! Var!”*  
 3REAL:SG-say Oh unfortunate  
 ‘He said, “Oh, dear!”’ [NVCT04.24: 95.079]
- (160) *Barnakh niterikh t-na var im-sikki mej.*  
 now child PSDT-1SG unfortunate 3IRR:SG-be.lost IMM  
 ‘Now my poor child will be lost.’ [NVKS12.33: 235.809]
- (161) *I-lele mej var we.*  
 3REAL:SG-small IMM unfortunate AUGCO  
 ‘It was so small, unfortunately.’ [NVCV07.35: 553.352]

### 9.10. Non-verbal predicates

Most predicates in Neverver are verbal. Non-verbal predicates play a relatively limited role, with their most important function being the expression of classificatory or identificational information. In conversational interactions, the non-verbal predicate is also used for presentative purposes. By definition, verbal predicates carry mood marking, while non-verbal predicates do not. Non-verbal predicates are also not marked for any of the aspectual markers associated with the verb.

Dryer (2007a: 224–225), in his typological description of clauses, identifies three clause types with non-verbal predicates: adjectival (My dog is *black*); nominal (My dog is *a cocker spaniel*); and locative (My dog is *in the house*). In English, these three clause types are all formed with the copula verb *be*. Closer to Neverver, in the Lolovoli dialect of Ambae in Vanuatu, all three can be expressed by the juxtaposition of non-verbal phrases (Hyslop 2001: 365). In Neverver itself, adjectival and locative predicates are verbal, formed with a

member of the stative verb class, or the existential/locative verb *tokh* respectively. They are negated with the post-verbal particle *si*. In contrast, nominal predicates may be verbal or non-verbal.

- (162) Adjectival predicate with stative verb  
*Buluk ang i-lele bbutakh.*  
 cow ANA 3REAL:SG-small too.much  
 ‘The cow was too small.’ [NVCV07.17: 529.759]
- (163) *Sano, nibolgon i-kher bbutkha si.*  
 Sano bone 3REAL:SG-strong too.much NEG  
 ‘Sano, his bones were not strong enough.’ [NVCV06.12: 492.458]
- (164) Existential *tokh*  
*Ni-sav-ian i-tokh.*  
 NPR-perform.dance-NSF 3REAL:SG-exist  
 ‘There was a dance ceremony.’ [NVKS03.109]
- (165) Locative predicate with existential *tokh*  
*Nemat tokhtokh i-skham i-tokh lon*  
 snake huge 3REAL:SG-one 3REAL:SG-exist LOC  
*nebang ang.*  
 Banyan ANA  
 ‘A big snake was in the Banyan tree.’ [NVKS01.4]
- (166) Existential *tokh* with negative polarity  
*Nimkhut i-tokh si aiyem ang.*  
 man 3REAL:SG-exist NEG home ANA  
 ‘There wasn’t anyone in the dwelling.’ [NVKS18.99: 494.841]

While adjectival and locative predicates must be verbal, nominal predicates with positive polarity may be either verbal or non-verbal in Neverver. In order to express negative polarity, non-verbal constructions employ the inherently negative verb *skhen* ‘be not so’, while verbal constructions negate with the post-verbal negative particle *si*. There are four semantic sub-types of non-verbal clauses with nominal predicates, these being classificatory clauses, identificational clauses, ownership clauses, and presentative clauses.<sup>32</sup> Examples of each non-verbal clause-type are presented in the sub-sections below.

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32. The terms *classificatory* and *identificational* are borrowed from Hyslop (2001: 375–380). Ownership clauses are similar to Dryer’s (2007a: 247) class of genitive predicates. The term *presentative* is taken from Crowley (2006a: 109; 2006b: 141), who uses this label to describe clauses in Avava and Naman with a similar structure and function to the sub-set of non-verbal clauses bearing this name in Neverver.

## 9.10.1. Classificatory clauses

Classificatory predicates identify the general class or category to which the subject noun phrase belongs. There are two predicate structures available for classificatory clauses. The non-verbal structure consists of two juxtaposed NPs. These clauses must be negated with the inherently negative verb *skhen* ‘not so’ (167) to (168).

- (167) *Nida titi ang nemat tokhtokh ing!*  
 mother 3POSS:SG ANA snake huge EXCLAM  
 ‘Her mother was a big snake!’ [NVKS02.29]
- (168) *Nepanglab, aiyem titi nemat nibutriri i-skham*  
 Nepanglab, home 3POSS:SG snake hill.top 3REAL:SG-one  
*ing!*  
 EXCLAM  
 ‘Nepanglam, the home of the snake, was a hill top!’ [NVKS12.56: 411.781]
- (169) *Nimukhman an i-tur bbukhut ang,*  
 male NMOD 3REAL:SG-stand inside ANA  
*nimukhman an tnakh i-skham me ing!*  
 male NMOD here 3REAL:SG-one just EXCLAM  
 ‘The man who stood inside was just a man from here!’ [NVCV05.28: 1403.873]
- (170) *Ei khabat i-skhen, ei nimkhut metmet.*  
 3SG European 3REAL:SG-not.so 3SG man dark  
 ‘He isn’t a European, he’s a black man.’ [NVLX25.14]
- (171) *Nidam i-skhen tjakh, nidaro me.*  
 yam 3REAL:SG-not.so here taro just  
 ‘It’s not a yam here, it’s just a taro.’ [NVE23.5-6]

The verbal classificatory clause consists of a verb phrase headed by the verb *ve* as in (172) to (174). In classificatory clauses, *ve* functions as a copula; elsewhere it is employed as a causative complement-taking predicate, and a lexical stem meaning ‘make s.t., do s.t.’. Verbal classificatory clauses are negated with the post-verbal particle *si* as illustrated in (172) and (174).

- (172) *Nemat i-ve mo-si nemat, i-ve*  
 snake 3REAL:SG-COP CONT-NEG snake 3REAL:SG-COP  
*nimkhut.*  
 man  
 ‘The snake was no longer a snake, it was a man.’ [NVKS17.77]

- (173) *Nividumni* *i-ve* *ni-smut-ian*  
 kangaroo.grass 3REAL:SG-COP NPR-be.laborious-NSF  
 'Kangaroo grass is laborious (i.e. to make into thatch).' [NVKS02.77]
- (174) *Ei* *i-ve* *si* *khabat,* *ei* *i-ve*  
 3SG 3REAL:SG-COP NEG European 3SG 3REAL:SG-COP  
*navong.*  
 albino  
 'He isn't a European, he's an albino.' [NVLX25.13]

## 9.10.2. Identificational clauses

Identification predicates name the subject argument, which may be a person, place or thing. This can be achieved through the juxtaposition of two NPs, as the examples (175) to (178) below display.

- (175) *Nikhijan* *Niovertavut.*  
 name Niovertavut  
 'Its name is Niovertavut (of a place).' [NVKS12.20: 141.911]
- (176) *Na* *tuan* *na* *nikhijan* *Nepra.*  
 1SG LOCPSN 1SG name Nepra  
 'My place, its name is Nepra.' [NVKS01.01]
- (177) *Na* *nikhijan* *na* *Lina.*  
 1SG name 1SG Lina  
 'My name is Lina.' [NVKS24.1]
- (178) *Niterikh* *mukhman* *ang,* *nikhijan* *John.*  
 child male ANA name John  
 'The boy, his name was John.' [NVCV01.20: 421.535]

As well as the non-verbal construction, the identity of an entity can be established in a verbal predicate with the locution verb *ver* 'say'. Verbal identity predicates are always marked with the impersonal subject/mood prefix.

- (179) *Ni-sav-ian* *ang* *ar-ver* *Arikhra.*  
 NPR-perform.dance-NSF ANA IMPS:REAL-say k.o.dance  
 'The dance, it was called the Arikhra dance.' [NVKI03.109]

- (180) *Ni-sav-ian*                      *an*            *ar-sav*                                      *lon*  
 NPR-perform.dance-NSF    NMOD    IMPS:REAL-perform.dance    LOC  
*ang*    *ar-ver*                                      *neblat*.  
 ANA    IMPS:REAL-say            k.o.dance  
 ‘The dance that they performed there was called the Neblat dance.’  
 [NVKI05.46]
- (181) *Nakhmal*    *ari-kke-kh*                                      *ar-ver*                                      *Nibarngankha*.  
 house            IMPS:REAL-call-APPL    IMPS:REAL-say            Nibarngankha  
 ‘The house was called Nibarngankha.’ [NVKI03.40]

When the entity being identified is perceived to be indefinite, verbal identificational clauses are expressed as unmarked relative clauses. This encoding strategy is also employed in the expression of number as we observe that when a head noun is indefinite, it takes an inflected (thus verbal) numeral modifier. It is not introduced by the nominal modifying particle *an* that we find with relative clause constructions where the head noun is definite (§5.2.).

- (182) *Ar-lav*                                      *nibbuang*            *i-skham*                                      *ar-ver*                                      *nibrar*.  
 IMPS:REAL-get    swamp.taro    3REAL:SG-one    IMPS:REAL-say    k.o.taro.  
 ‘They got a (kind of) swamp taro called Nibrar.’ [NVKI03.35]
- (183) *At-uv*                                      *at-sav*    *kut*            *i-skham*  
 3REAL:PL-go    3REAL:PL-perform.dance            LOC PN    3REAL:SG-one  
*ar-ver*                                      *Unua*.  
 IMPS:REAL-say    Unua  
 ‘They went and performed a ceremonial dance at a place called Unua.’  
 [NVKI05.43]

### 9.10.3. Ownership predicates

Ownership clauses, as distinct from possessive phrases, are normally expressed with the verb *tbbukh* ‘have’ as in (184) to (185), meaning OWNER HAS OBJECT.

- (184) *Nimkhut*    *an*            *Neverver*            *adr*    *tue*            *ati-tbbukh*  
 man            NMOD    Neverver.lg    PL    long.ago    3REAL:PL-have  
*nokhos*.  
 garden  
 ‘The people of Neverver, in the past, they had gardens. [NVKI30.02]
- (185) *Niterikh*    *ang*            *ati-tbbukh*            *si*            *nisin*.  
 child            ANA    3REAL:PL-have    NEG    thing:INDF  
 ‘The children didn’t have anything.’ [NVCV03.28: 130.149]

It is also possible for the object that is possessed to function as the subject of the clause. In this case, ownership is expressed in a non-verbal clause or using the copula verb *ve* meaning OBJECT BELONGS TO OWNER. The non-verbal clause becomes verbal when marked for negative polarity with the inherently negative verb *skhen* 'be not so'. The following examples were produced in elicitation sessions but they reflect conversational usage. Example (189) is a natural text example.

- (186) *Nitelmet anjakh, Henry titi i-skhen,*  
 truck this Henry 3POSS-SG 3REAL:SG-not.so  
*Sevti titi.*  
 Sefti 3POSS-SG  
 'This truck isn't Henry's, it's Sefti's.' [NVE30.10]
- (187) *Anjakh at-t-na; anjakh i-ve at-t-na.*  
 this PSPN-PSDT-1SG this 3REAL:SG-COP PSPN-PSDT-1SG  
 'This is mine.' [NVE23.12.2]
- (188) *Anjakh at-t-na i-skhen;*  
 this PSPN-PSDT-1SG 3REAL:SG-not.so  
*anjakh i-ve si at-t-na.*  
 this 3REAL:SG-COP NEG PSPN-PSDT-1SG  
 'This isn't mine.' [NVE23.12.3]
- (189) *Nakhmal i-ve nimukhman titi,*  
 house 3REAL:SG-COP male 3POSS:SG  
*nevanu i-ve nimokhmokh titi*  
 traditional.women's.abode 3REAL:SG-COP female 3POSS:SG  
 '“Nakhmal” is the man’s (dwelling), ‘nevanu’ is the woman’s (dwelling).’  
 [NVKI06.155]

#### 9.10.4. Presentative clauses

Presentative clauses are used to assert the presence or existence of an entity. Presentative clauses consist minimally of the noun phrase encoding the entity being presented, and the clausal exclamatory particle *ing*.

- (190) *Vinang i-ver “Ite! I-na ing”*  
 woman:ANA 3REAL:SG-say yes PSNPR-1SG EXCLAM  
 'The woman said, “Yes, it’s me!”’ [NVKS10.70]
- (191) *M.m.. John ing!*  
 Agreement J. EXCLAM  
 'Yes, it was John!' [NVCV01.23: 427.604]

The commonly occurring conversational expression ‘that’s it, that’s right’, illustrated in (192), also uses the presentative construction.

- (192) *Ei ang ing*  
 3SG ANA EXCLAM  
 ‘That’s it/that’s right.’ [NVKI21.108: 448.209]

### 9.11. ‘Yes’, ‘no’, and other interjections

A small set of interjections can be heard in conversation, in response to the utterances of other conversational participants, and to initiate conversation.

- (193) *ite* ‘yes’  
*ave* ‘no’  
*yes* ‘yes’ Bis. *yes*  
*no* ‘no’ Bis. *no*  
*m.mm* [mʔm:] ‘AGREEMENT’  
*e! ~ a! ~ o!* ‘SURPRISE’  
*a* ‘um’  
*wi~wei* ‘wow’  
*ei!* ‘hey!’

The indigenous negative particle *ave* ‘no’, and the Bislama borrowing *no* require some further description. Both are used to express denial, but the situation that is denied may be expressed in the positive (194) or negative (195). The particle *ave* occurs once as a reduplicated form, expressing emphatic denial.

- (194) a. *Gam ibi-skham im-te na.*  
 2NSG 3IRR:SG-one 3IRR:SG-hit 1SG  
 ‘One of you (must) kill me.’
- b. *Mang i-ver “Ave! ni-rosikh*  
 man:ANA 3REAL:SG-say No! 1REAL:SG-not.want  
*nim-te nida.”*  
 1IRR:SG-hit mother  
 ‘The man said, “No! I don’t want to kill mother.”’ [NVKS11.70, 72]
- (195) a. *Tatan okh i-ver ij i-ver te*  
 older.brother 2SG 3REAL:SG-say ANT 3REAL:SG-say COMP  
*kub-lav-lav si.*  
 2IRR:SG-DUP-get NEG  
 ‘Your brother has said, you can’t get it.’

- b. *I-ver* "No! *Nib-lav ing.*"  
 3REAL:SG-say no IIRR:SG-get EXCLAM  
 'She said "No! I'm going to get it!" [NVKS09.74-75]
- (196) a. *I-ver* "*Ku-sorsor.*"  
 3REAL:SG-say 2REAL:SG-lie  
 'He said, "You lie."'
- b. *I-ver* "No, *ni-vratn man(d) ing!*"  
 3REAL:SG-say no IREAL:SG-true EMPH EXCLAM  
 'He said, "No, I'm actually telling the truth!" [NVKS06.38]
- (197) *Ave-ve-ve-ve!* *Nim-sakh mo-si bbukhut*  
 no-no-no-no IIRR:SG-go.up CONT-NEG inside  
*an i-jing.*  
 NMOD 3REAL:SG-be.there  
 'No, no, no, no! I won't go inside that (house) any more.' [NVKS01.28]
- In the corpus, and in daily life, the borrowed particle *no* has almost fully replaced the indigenous particle. In addition to outright denial, it is also commonly used by speakers as a politeness device, to downplay the importance or intrusiveness of one's actions or opinions. Bislama *no* can function in the same way when used by the Neverver-speaking community.
- (198) a. *Ei! Ku-lukh tnakh ku-ve tnakh?*  
 hey 2REAL:SG-stay here 2REAL:SG-do here  
 'Hey! what are you doing here?'
- b. *Niviturtur ang i-ver "No! Ni-lukh*  
 adolescent.girl ANA 3REAL:SG-say no IREAL:SG-stay  
*me nakh ni-tokh ni-tev-tev*  
 just here IREAL:SG-PROG IREAL:SG-DUP-begin.to.grow  
*nivanbev il nida t-na.*"  
 Chinese.yam BENE mother PSDT-1SG  
 'The young girl said "No, I'm just here cultivating Chinese yams for my mother.'" [NVKS02.14]

# Chapter 10

## Complex nuclei

### 10.0. Introduction

In this chapter, and in chapter eleven, constructions that fall into the category of *complex predicates* are considered. The category of complex predicates broadly includes those constructions that behave in some ways as a single clause, yet which contain more than one lexical morpheme jointly expressing an action, event, or state. Using the layered clause structure described by Foley and Olsen (1985) as a starting point for this analysis, it is possible to distinguish between complex nuclei and complex cores in Neverver. A complex nucleus contains a contiguous sequence of a verb and some additional lexical material. This other material may be clearly nominal, clearly verbal, verb-like in meaning, or adverb-like in meaning. Regardless of the make-up of their component parts, complex nuclei share the feature of having just one subject/mood marker attached to the left-most element. Phonotactic rules relevant to word formation apply exclusively to the left edge of the left-most element in the complex nucleus. In this analysis, constructions that contain material that is nominal in origin are treated as instances of object incorporation. Object incorporation is discussed in §10.1. All other complex nuclei are treated as instances of nuclear serialization, and are discussed in §10.2. to §10.5.

In contrast, complex cores contain non-contiguous sequences of verbs or verb-like elements, each with their own subject/mood marker. These non-contiguous sequences nonetheless display mono-clausal properties. Complex cores are treated as instances of core serialization, discussed in chapter eleven.

### 10.1. Object incorporation

Neverver, like many Oceanic languages (cf. Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002: 46), permits the patient argument of a transitive proposition to be incorporated into the verb stem, forming an intransitive verb. In her article ‘The evolution of noun incorporation’, Mithun (1984) describes four subtypes of noun incorporation. Neverver displays the most common of these four subtypes, which Mithun labels *lexical compounding*. Lexical compounding typically involves a transitive verb stem and its associated patient argument, which would normally appear in the position of grammatical object. When the object is incorporated into, or compounded with the verb, the resulting lexical compound is an intransitive

verb. A verb form with an incorporated object is typically “the name of an institutionalized activity or state” and such forms appear “in contexts without specific, individuated patients” (Mithun 1984: 856). In Neverver, verbs with incorporated objects are used to describe actions and events that are part of daily life.

Two morphological features are associated with incorporated objects. Constructions may display one or both of these features. Firstly, the incorporated noun appears without its common noun prefix  $n(V)$ -. The item *nevat* ‘stone’ thus appears as *-vat* when incorporated. The loss of the common noun prefix is diagnostic of an incorporated object and offers some evidence of the word-hood of such constructions, as common nouns must appear with their common noun prefix when occurring as independent heads. Secondly, in prototypical cases of compounding, transitive verb stems appear in a reduplicated form. This type of reduplication functions as a valency-decreasing device, used to produce intransitive verbs from transitive stems (see §8.2.1. for a more general description of this process). The structure of prototypical object incorporation is presented below:

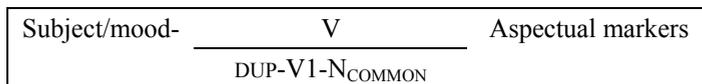


Figure 9. The structure of prototypical incorporated objects

A text example of a prototypical incorporated object construction is presented in example (1) below. It is highly lexicalized, referring specifically to the stage of readying stakes for giant yams in the process of yam gardening. The incorporated patient argument ‘wood’ from *nakha* is non-specific.

- (1) *Nat-uv*                      *nat-jal-jal-kha.*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-go    1EXCL:REAL:PL-DUP-scrape-wood  
 ‘We went and prepared stakes for the yams.’ [NVDL07.4]

### 10.1.1. Prototypical incorporated objects

Incorporated objects that are prototypical exhibit both reduplication of the verb and the loss of the common noun prefix. The data set (2) displays prototypical incorporated objects that appear in the digital corpus. The intransitive compounds listed below are mostly used to describe common domestic household, hunting, and horticultural activities.

(2)	<i>gaga-bat</i>	‘wear a head tie’ from <i>ga</i> ‘tie up, bind’; <i>nebatn</i> <sup>33</sup> ‘head’
	<i>jaljal-kha</i>	‘prepare yam stakes (Limap variety)’ from <i>jal</i> ‘scrape, strip’; <i>nakha</i> ‘tree, wood’
	<i>jamjam-kha</i>	‘prepare yam stakes (Lingarakh variety)’ from <i>jam</i> ‘scrape, strip’; <i>nakha</i> ‘tree, wood’
	<i>jirjir-bat</i>	‘comb hair’ from <i>jir</i> ‘comb’; <i>nebatn</i> ‘head’
	<i>lavlav-ran</i> <sup>34</sup>	‘help’ from <i>lav</i> ‘get’; <i>nevrān</i> ‘hand’
	<i>lulu-ka</i>	‘shoot arrows’ from <i>lu</i> ‘shoot’; <i>nakha</i> ‘tree, wood’; also <i>nilukha</i> ‘cane dart’
	<i>pupus-ran</i>	‘be branched, forked’ from <i>pus</i> ‘squeeze’ and <i>nevrān</i> ‘hand’
	<i>peppel-khabb</i>	‘wave a smoldering branch to make fire’ from <i>ppel</i> ‘shake’; <i>nakhabb</i> ‘fire, firewood’
	<i>silsil-kha</i>	‘burn trees (in garden)’ from <i>sil</i> ‘burn’; <i>nakha</i> ‘tree, wood’
	<i>sisir-io</i>	‘travel following a water course’ from <i>sir</i> ‘follow’; <i>nio</i> ‘water, river’
	<i>sukhsukh-vat</i>	‘lift stones to find fresh water prawns’ from <i>sukh</i> ‘rise’; <i>nevat</i> ‘stone’
	<i>veve-kka</i>	‘play string games’ from <i>ve</i> ‘do, make’; <i>nekka</i> ‘spider, spider’s web’
	<i>verver-vut</i>	‘work up to the boundary of another’s garden’ from <i>ver</i> ‘work’; <i>nuvut</i> ‘boundary’
	<i>khitkhit-bri</i>	‘dream’ from <i>khit</i> ‘see’; <i>nibri</i> ‘dream’

### 10.1.2. Less prototypical incorporated objects

Some examples of incorporated objects in the corpus display both reduplication and the absence of the common noun prefix, yet are rather less prototypical for various reasons. Others display just one of the characteristic morphological features.

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33. Note the loss of the final *-n* from *nebatn*; in an earlier form of the language, this *-n* is argued in chapter five to have been the 3SG suffix of direct possession, deriving from proto-Oceanic *\*ñā* (see Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002: 76) for a description of direct possession in POc). Final *-n* is also lost from *nebaun* ‘knee’ which is realised as the incorporated form *-ba* in (4), but not from *nevrān* ‘hand’.

34. The morpheme *ran* is confirmed by language consultants to mean ‘hand’ as in *nevrān*; the loss of *v-* is not regular. In the compound, we would expect *\*lavlav-rān*, producing a geminate consonant over the morpheme boundary. The language specific constraint against voiced obstruents forming geminate sequences explains the absence of *v-* in this word, but not the absence of *v-* in *pupusran* above, which is also confirmed as containing the morpheme for ‘hand’.

10.1.2.1. *verver-sal-ikh* ‘give s.o. directions’

The verb *verver-sal-ikh* ‘give directions to s.o.’ comprises the reduplicated *ver* ‘say’ and *nesal* ‘road’. It also carries the applicative suffix *-ikh* and is unattested without this suffix. When attached to the plain verb stem *ver*, this suffix licenses a recipient-like experiencer argument as in *ver-ikh* ‘tell s.o.’. Unaffixed, *ver* is transitive, requiring a sentential complement expressing what is said.<sup>35</sup> The reduplicated verb stem with an incorporated object creates an intransitive verb. The suffix *-ikh* then attaches to the end of the incorporated object form, licensing the recipient-type argument. Thus, this form undergoes both a detransitivizing process and a transitivizing process.

10.1.2.2. *jaljal-druk* ‘wear sash diagonally across chest’

The verb *jaljal-druk* ‘wear a sash diagonally across one’s chest’ appears to display the morphological characteristics of object incorporation; however, the component parts of this verb are less than straightforward. It has already been shown that in Neverver, there may be no semantic relationship between a simplex verb stem and its phonologically reduplicated counterpart. Nor is there a necessary semantic connection between a bare verb stem and the phonologically matched form carrying the applicative suffix *-ikh* (see chapter six for a detailed presentation of these points). The element *jaljal* derives from a verb *jaljal-ikh* ‘wear (a necklace)’ rather than *jal* ‘be sick’ or its homophone *jal* ‘scrape’. The suffix-bearing form *jal-ikh* is attested in the corpus with the meaning ‘be sick with/from s.t.’. We would predict that *druk* is derived from a noun of the form *\*nidruk/nudruk/nuruk* meaning ‘sash’. In fact, *\*druk* is not attested elsewhere in the corpus, either in a nominal form or compound, or as a verb. We might hypothesize that at some point in the past there was a noun with this form, but it is no longer known by contemporary speakers.

## 10.1.3. Incorporated objects with intransitive bases

Not all the examples of object incorporation in the corpus involve transitive verbs and their associated object arguments. Some comprise reduplicated verbs that are intransitive in their simplex forms. The intransitive verb *kkil* ‘dig’ has a single agent argument and contrasts with the prototypical transitive verb *khil* ‘dig s.t.’ which has both agent and patient arguments. With an incorporated

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35. The form *ver-ikh* cannot be used ditransitively; a serial construction must be used to express both the dative argument and the sentential object. This construction is discussed in full in §11.3.1.4.

object, *kkil* ‘dig’ remains intransitive but the activity is narrowed to a particular type of digging. Two examples are attested in the corpus: *kikkil-vas* ‘dig wild yams’ where *vas* derives from *nevas* ‘wild yam’; and *kikkil-vakh* ‘dig yam holes’ where *vakh* derives from *nakhavakh* ‘yam hole, yam mound’. Again, the loss of the common noun prefix and reduplication of the verb stem both occur; however, this reduplication is clearly not valency-decreasing, as the stem is already intransitive.

The form *kikkil-vakh* ‘yam hole-dig’ shows an interesting feature. In addition to losing the common noun prefix, the noun *nakhavakh* ‘yam mound’ has lost the syllable *kha*. Looking at other incorporated objects, we can observe a trisyllabic structure. The *kha* syllable may have been dropped to fit with this syllable template.

A small number of other incorporated object constructions are formed from intransitive stems. Like *kkil* ‘dig’ discussed above, these intransitive stems undergo reduplication. The full list is presented in (3) below.

- (3) *kikkil-vas* ‘wild yam-dig’ from *kkil* ‘dig’; *nevas* ‘wild yam’  
*kikkil-vakh* ‘yam hole-dig’ from *kkil* ‘dig’; *nakhavakh* ‘yam hole, mound’  
*drusdrus-mas* ‘walk backwards’ from *drus* ‘shuffle’; *nakhalmas* ‘shin’  
*turtur-kha* ‘carry firewood’ from *tur* ‘stand’; *nakha* ‘tree, wood’  
*kherkher-don* ‘stir up silt in a river’ (archaic) from *kher(?)* ‘be strong’; *nidon* ‘muddy water’

#### 10.1.4. Non-prototypical incorporated objects

There is a set of incorporated object forms where the object can clearly be identified as nominal in origin, but the verb stem either does not appear independently in the corpus or appears with an apparently unrelated meaning. The morphological features that characterize object incorporation are observable with the expected loss of the common noun prefix and verb-stem reduplication. We can add to these features the trisyllabic template in almost all cases.

- (4) *dingding-ba* ‘kneel’ from *\*ding* ‘bend, be not straight’(?); *dingber* ‘sleep crossways on mat’; *nebaun*<sup>36</sup> ‘knee’  
*kuku-bat* ‘lay head on pillow’ from *\*ku*, *\*kuku*; *nebatn* ‘head’  
*sisi-mul* ‘play orange-tossing’ from *\*si*; *\*sisi* ‘roll, turn’(?); *nemul* ‘orange’

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36. The change from the diphthong *nibaun* to the low vowel in the incorporated *-ba* is unpredictable; the loss of final *-n* has been explained in Footnote 33 above (see also §5.1.1 for an hypothesis of the derivation of *-n*).

<i>sisi-vat</i>	‘roll stones down slope’ from <i>nevat</i> ‘stone’
<i>sisi-kha</i>	‘leave a leaf/branch marker, by turning’ from <i>nakha</i> ‘tree, wood’
<i>sisi-yal</i>	‘warm up’ from <i>nial~niyal</i> ‘sun’
<i>sisi-yokh</i>	‘bow head’ from <i>iokh</i> ‘you’(?)
<i>soso-ka</i>	‘hunt with spears’ from <i>*so, *soso; nakha</i> ‘tree, wood’
<i>susu-ka</i>	‘stake (yams)’ from <i>*su; nakha</i> ‘tree, wood’
<i>tata-bwet</i>	‘play target-shooting’ from <i>ta</i> ‘show’; <i>tata</i> ‘promise’; <i>nebwet</i> ‘point’
<i>lislis-veru</i>	‘whistle by placing thumb pad under top teeth’ from <i>lis</i> ‘be afraid’(?); <i>niveruan</i> ‘juvenile coconut’(?)

The last item in (4) is the archaic verb *lislis-veru* ‘whistle’ which has the apparent structure of an incorporated object. It comprises forms that are attested as separate morphemes elsewhere in the corpus; however, it should be noted that there is no apparent relationship between the hypothesized input parts and the meaning of the resulting intransitive verb. It may be purely coincidental that the noun *niveruan* ‘juvenile coconut’ contains the phonetic sequence [βeru]. Also lacking from this rather marginal member of the incorporated object category is the tri-syllabic structure.

Other peripheral members of the set of incorporated object forms are those verbs which appear with incorporated objects but no reduplication. The basic stems are transitive and become intransitive when their patient arguments are incorporated. The last two examples undergo a transitivizing process with the addition of the applicative suffix *-ikh* which licenses a new locational argument.

(5)	<i>te-kha</i>	‘cut trees when clearing a garden area’ from <i>te</i> ‘cut’; <i>nakha</i> ‘wood’
	<i>khil-gren-ikh</i>	‘dig to the end of s.t.’ from <i>khil</i> ‘dig’; <i>nigren</i> ‘end’
	<i>dang-vat-ikh</i>	‘remove stones from laplap’ from <i>dang</i> ‘pull out’; <i>nevat</i> ‘stone’

Finally, the form *tatamat* ‘set a trap’ occurs in the corpus. It appears to display the key characteristics of object incorporation. It was reported to be a borrowed item but members of the speech community were unsure whether it had been borrowed from the Vivti or Avava language. Crowley (2006a: 170–171) records the following items in his lexicon of Avava: *tatamat*; *amat* ‘trap, sling’; and *tata* ‘hold tightly’. Crowley does not analyse this form as being bimorphemic. There is currently very little lexical information available for the Vivti language.

## 10.2. Nuclear serial verbs

In Neverver, the category of nuclear serial verbs encompasses all complex nuclei where the final element(s) is not derived from a noun and is therefore not an instance of noun incorporation. This includes sequences that are both highly productive and commonly occurring in the corpus, as well as one-off combinations.

A comprehensive account of serialization needs to be language-specific and multifaceted. Such an account is attempted in the remainder of this chapter. The analysis employs contemporary typological frameworks for the discussion of serial verb constructions [SVCs]. Aikhenvald (2006), in her typological survey on serialization draws together the range of constructions that I consider in this chapter, noting that “providing a general typological framework which encompasses multi-word and one-word SVCs helps breach the artificial (and unhelpful) terminological gap between what is traditionally known as ‘compounding’ ... and as ‘serialization’” (Aikhenvald 2006: 38).

Following Aikhenvald (2006), I adopt a broad typological framework for the analysis of complex predicates in Neverver. Like Margetts (1999) in her work on Saliba, I do not make a formal distinction between compound constructions and instances of serialization:

I propose that the term ‘compound’ does not by definition contradict an analysis as serialization. Rather, in the same way as I analyze certain noun-verb compounds as noun incorporation..., one can analyze certain verb-verb compounds as instances of verb serialization. (Margetts 1999: 101)

Prototypical SVCs contain a sequence of two (or more) verb stems that behave as a single predicate. While linguists differ in the terminology used to describe this general characteristic, most agree that SVCs have multi-verb monoclausal properties. Typological work by Sebba (1987) reflects on the use of the term ‘serial verb’. Sebba (1987: 2) says that “‘serial verb’ then has generally been used to refer to a surface string of verbs or verb-like or verb-phrase-like items which occur within what appears to be a single clause”. This usage of the term serial verb has evolved over recent decades, with linguists moving towards an understanding of SVCs as having more and less prototypical instantiations. There are no longer attempts to provide a definition that accounts for all data in all languages. The prototypical SVC is a mono-clausal construction which contains a sequence of verbs. Sebba’s (1987) ‘verb-like’ or ‘verb-phrase-like’ items account for less prototypical members of the SVC category.

Durie (1997: 289–290) describes prototypical SVCs as consisting of “a sequence of two or more verbs which in various (rather strong) senses, together act like a single verb”. Crowley (2002a) and Aikhenvald (2006) follow this definition. Crowley (2002a: 10) begins his discussion of SVCs by suggesting

that SVCs can be viewed as “syntactic constructions involving what can be analysed at the surface level as single clauses, but which are nevertheless expressed by means of multiple predicates”. Likewise, Aikhenvald (2006: 1) emphasizes the verbal nature of prototypical SVCs, saying that “a serial verb construction (SVC) is a sequence of verbs which act together as a single predicate, without any overt marker of coordination, subordination, or syntactic dependency of any other sort”.

In the case of Neverver, many SVCs fit the prototype ‘sequence of verbs’ definition; however, there are also numerous non-prototypical constructions. It is sometimes the case that both of the elements in a complex predicate are clearly verbal in origin and are attested as independent verbs elsewhere in the corpus. In other cases, either the initial or non-initial element(s) is not attested outside the complex predicate. Crowley (2002a: 85) describes this latter phenomenon as a kind of functional restriction on the serial components. The phenomenon is not unique to Neverver, having been observed in a number of Central Vanuatu languages including Lewo (Early 1993), Neve‘ei (Musgrave 2007), Paamese, Avava, and Naman (Crowley 2002a; 2006a; 2006b).

In descriptions of serial verb constructions in Oceanic languages, a distinction is frequently made between nuclear layer serialization and core layer serialization (cf. Early 1993; Hyslop 2001; Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002; Crowley 2002a). This distinction is based on the layered clause structure described by Foley and Olsen (1985). Using Foley and Olsen’s (1985) layered clause structure, I identify both NUCLEAR SVCs and CORE SVCs in Neverver.

The basic structure of the nuclear SVC is as follows:

Subject/mood-	V			(- <i>ikh</i> ) (Transitivity concordance)	(Aspectual markers)
	V1	-V2	(-V3)		

Figure 10. The structure of nuclear serial verbs

Two text examples of prototypical nuclear serial constructions are presented in example (6). Both forms are formally intransitive and lexicalized in that they refer to actions carried out on coconuts (but not other objects) during copra production. The first SVC involves morphological reduplication of the V1 stem *te* ‘cut, hit’; the second SVC comprises the unduplicated stem *te* ‘cut, hit’ and the inherently reduplicated form *jevjev* ‘separate’.<sup>37</sup> The first nuclear SVC is part of a larger egressive core serial construction (see §7.3.4.3.; §11.3.3.2.).

37. While this form appears reduplicated, the base form *jev* is not attested independently in the corpus and could not be elicited as an independent form. It is an example of inherent object reduplication (see §8.2.1.2).

- (6) *Ni-tete-bbur*                      *lu*              *i-suvsuv*,  
 1REAL:SG-DUP-cut-swell      PERF      3REAL:SG-be.finished  
*ni-te-jevjev*.  
 1REAL:SG-cut-separate  
 ‘When I finish cutting open the coconuts, I split them apart.’ [NVDL02.5]

### 10.2.1. Major properties of nuclear serial verbs

Nuclear serial verbs have a number of properties. These properties have been attested in other serializing languages (cf. Aikhenvald 2006; Crowley 2002 on Paamese; Early 1993 on Lewo; Hyslop 2001 on North-East Ambae; Lane 2007 and Pawley & Lane 1998 on Kalam; and Sebba 1987) and include the following:

- they form a single complex nucleus;
- the component parts are absolutely contiguous;
- there is only one subject argument;
- there is no morphological or intonational marking of syntactic juncture;
- they express single-scene propositions.

The behaviour of a nuclear SVC as a single nucleus is evident in the type of grammatical morphology associated with the verb stems. All verbs in Neverver are marked with a subject/mood prefix. Nuclear SVCs, despite comprising more than one verb stem, have only one inflection per construction - they display single marking of subject/mood categories, and this marking precedes the left-most element. The distinction between single and concordant marking of grammatical categories is the key morpho-syntactic difference between nuclear and core SVCs in Neverver. Nuclear SVCs are also characterized by having only one negative morpheme per construction and one set of aspectual morphology. Negation and aspectual markers follow material that serializes in the nucleus, as illustrated in the example below:

- (7) *Na*    *ni-ver*                      *te*              *ei*              *ib-lav-bir*                      *si*.  
 1SG    1REAL:SG-say              COMP    3SG              3IRR:SG-get-break/win              NEG  
 ‘I said he didn’t return it.’ [NVKI05.34]

The component parts of a nuclear SVC display absolute contiguity. This means that there can be no intervening (morpho-)phonemic material between the stems. The property of absolute contiguity is shared with incorporated object constructions where the common noun prefix is dropped to create absolute contiguity between the verb stem and incorporated noun.

A phonotactic process applies consistently to stem-initial consonant clusters when verb stems are inflected. This general process inserts an epenthetic [i] to break up consonant clusters so that a maximal CVC template is observed (see §2.5.; §2.6.3.5.; §6.1.1.). The process applies only to the left edge of the nuclear SVC. Any medial clusters that form when stems are serialized are not broken up by epenthetic vowels and complex onsets are permitted.

The contiguity of elements in the nuclear serial construction permits a single left-hand core position to be filled by a subject argument, and a single right-hand core position to be filled by an object argument, should the construction be transitive. Nuclear serial constructions then, have just one subject argument.

A key characteristic of all serial constructions is that there is no marking of syntactic juncture between elements. This means there is no subordinating or coordinating morphology in the construction. Nor is there any prosodic evidence that nuclear serial constructions contain internal word or clause boundaries. Serial constructions are articulated under a single intonation contour.

Semantically, nuclear serial verbs express propositions that involve *single scenes*. I follow Pawley and Lane (1998: 204) in defining single scene constructions as referring to “a series of acts which take place at the same scene (or site)”. For example, *ga-gor* ‘tie closed’ from ‘tie up’ and ‘block’ is single-scene as the component events take place in one location. *Sien-mmav-ikh* ‘worry about’ also expresses a proposition that is single-scene. It encodes a single event, while *ga-gor* ‘tie closed’ involves elements that encode temporally related sub-events. Temporally-related sub-events are arranged according to an iconic ordering principle, with component parts reflecting the temporal order in which the sub-events occur. The tying up, for example, of a basket which contains bundles of thatch, results in the basket being closed. The basket is not closed first and then tied – this would be very difficult for one person to achieve, given the design of the baskets in questions. Thus, we find that *ga* ‘tie’ precedes *gor* ‘block’ in the serial construction.

Pawley and Lane (1998: 205) in their discussion of SVCs in Kalam, observe that “all serial verb sequences are probably lexicalized to some degree”. Crowley (2002a: 84) makes a similar observation regarding serial verbs in Paamese, commenting that “there is often semantic unpredictability in the meaning of the verb construction as a whole”. In Neverver, it is often the case that nuclear SVCs are used with meanings that are more than simply the sum of the input parts. Nuclear SVCs often relate to highly specific, culturally significant activities.

Numerous nuclear SVCs are attested in Neverver; however, the combinatorial possibilities are not open-ended. The notion of event-salience is central in restricting combinations that count as well-formed serial constructions. Events encoded in serial constructions are argued by a number of linguists to be conceptualized as unitary by native speakers (cf. Aikhenvald 2006; Durie 1997;

Early 1993) and involve event-types “that are salient, or communicatively in demand for the speech community” (Durie 1997: 321). For example, events that take place over-night are noteworthy for Neverver speakers. In (8) below, the serial verb *dran*, which is related to the independent intransitive verb *ran* ‘be daylight’, contributes the meaning of ‘all night’ or ‘until morning’ in each nuclear serial construction.

- (8)
- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <i>ran</i>           | ‘be daylight’                                      |
| <i>sav-dran</i>      | ‘dance till daylight’ from <i>sav</i> ‘dance’      |
| <i>khas-dran-ikh</i> | ‘bite s.t./s.o. till dawn’ from <i>khas</i> ‘bite’ |
| <i>tom-dran</i>      | ‘cook overnight’ from <i>tomtom</i> ‘lay eggs’(?)  |
| <i>vov-dran</i>      | ‘rain all night’ from <i>vov</i> ‘rain’            |
| <i>jal-dran</i>      | ‘be ill all night’ from <i>jal</i> ‘be sick, ill’  |
| <i>tur-dran</i>      | ‘stand all night’ from <i>tur</i> ‘stand up’       |

The nuclear SVC *khas-dran-ikh* displays concordant transitivity marking. The applicative suffix *-ikh* agrees with the transitivity of *khas* ‘bite s.t.’.

Further examples of prototypical nuclear SVCs that occur in the corpus are presented in (9) below.

- (9)
- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <i>te-te-bbur</i> | ‘cut open (coconuts)’ from <i>te</i> ‘cut’; <i>bbur</i> ‘swell’            |
| <i>khas-bbur</i>  | ‘bite open’ from <i>khas</i> ‘bite’; <i>bbur</i> ‘swell’                   |
| <i>lav-bal</i>    | ‘get enough’ from <i>lav</i> ‘get’; <i>bal</i> ‘fill’                      |
| <i>te-bir</i>     | ‘cut down’ from <i>te</i> ‘cut’; <i>bir</i> ‘break, win’                   |
| <i>rus-dri</i>    | ‘wear inside out’ from <i>rus</i> ‘wear’; <i>dri</i> ‘turn’                |
| <i>khil-dvin</i>  | ‘loosen soil in yam hole’ from <i>khil</i> ‘dig’; <i>dvin</i> ‘bury’       |
| <i>jang-jakh</i>  | ‘add to load’ archaic, from <i>jang</i> ‘place over’; <i>jakh</i> ‘put up’ |
| <i>vavu-kkel</i>  | ‘stagger’ from <i>vavu</i> ‘walk’; <i>kkel</i> ‘bend, curve’               |
| <i>matur-ling</i> | ‘sleep through s.t.’ from <i>matur</i> ‘sleep’; <i>ling</i> ‘leave’        |
| <i>bbu-sar</i>    | ‘slip’ from <i>vu</i> ‘go’; <i>sar</i> ‘hang’                              |

A number of combinations occur in which the element in V1 position is attested as an independent verb with a related meaning, but the element in V2 position is either not attested as an independent verb with a demonstrably related meaning or is simply not attested outside of the particular serial construction. The meanings that these elements contribute to the serial construction appear to be verb-like; however, the V2 element does not productively combine with V1 stems. Such forms are small in number and are treated as peripheral nuclear serializations that have become lexicalized.

- (10) *mas-driv* 'be unconscious' from *mas* 'dead'; \**driv*  
*tang-bbul* 'mourn late' from *tang* 'grieve'; *bbulbbul* 'empty',<sup>38</sup>  
*khas-glek* 'chew to taste' from *khas* 'bite'; \**glek*  
*lav-pir* 'repay, return' from *lav* 'get'; \**pir*, *bir* 'break, win'

There are also combinations where the element in the V2 position is attested as an independent verb, but the element in the V1 position is not attested outside of the serial construction. Again, these peripheral nuclear serializations are lexicalized.

- (11) *vil-gas* 'break legs off (prawns)' from \**vil*; *vgas* 'shell (a prawn)'  
*kkur-bkhas* 'clean away waste' from \**kkur*; *bkhas* 'clean'  
*gliv-gor* 'cover (doorway with coconut branches)' from \**gliv*; *gor*  
 'block'  
*jos-gor* 'decorate (back of waistband with leaves) from \**jos*; *gor* 'block'  
*ding-ber* 'sleep perpendicular to length of a room' from \**ding* 'bend, be  
 not straight'(?); *ber* 'long'

### 10.3. Grammaticalization pathways

Nuclear SVCs appear to be a site for syntactic category change in Neverver. There is particular evidence of three major grammatical pathways from verb to membership of a different word class. Aikhenvald (2006) describes a number of typical grammaticalization paths for the second element of serial constructions in SVCs. She notes that V2 may develop into tense-aspect or mood markers, directionals, valency increasing markers, adpositions, comparative and superlative markers, or conjunctions and complementizers. In Neverver, there is evidence that grammaticalization is resulting in the development of prepositions, in the development of aspectual morphology, and in the development of a small class of adverbs. With regards to V1, there is also evidence of a category change from negation to verb.

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38. The connection between 'empty' and the serial verb meaning requires some explanation. At first displayed to mourners at home, bodies are generally buried within twenty-four hours of death. This is because of the rapid decomposition that occurs in the tropics. People who arrive late will not be able to weep over the body, thus, they grieve in an empty house.

## 10.3.1. From serial verb to preposition

Some V2 elements have prepositional characteristics. Durie (1988: 1) argues for a general “diachronic drift from serial verb to preposition” and offers a typological study of this phenomenon in Oceanic languages. Durie observes that many languages display some preposition-like forms “which bear no relation to any independently occurring verbs, and others which can occur independently as verbs” (1988: 1–2). Durie also proposes that inhibiting factors are present in languages, such as the prevalence of a particular serialized verb also occurring as an independent head, which prevent the reanalysis of certain serial verbs as prepositions. In Neverver, a number of items appear to be on the pathway from serial verb to preposition. Three key examples are presented below. The first item is at the verb-end of the pathway; the final item is much further along the pathway moving towards reanalysis as a preposition. A full description of prepositional phrases is presented in §9.1.4.

10.3.1.1. *gwas* ‘cross’, ‘over’

At the verb-like end of the cline, there are forms like *gwas*, which is a commonly occurring independent transitive verb meaning ‘cross’. It also occurs as the second part of a serial verb construction meaning ‘over’, where it follows intransitive motion and posture verbs.

- (12) *gwas*                    V1 ‘cross’; V2 ‘over’  
*tokh-gwas*                ‘cross over’ from *tokh* ‘be’  
*vu-gwas*                    ‘go over’ from *vu* ‘go’  
*vavu-gwas*                ‘walk over’ from *vavu* ‘walk’  
*yal-gwas*                    ‘fly over’ from *yal* ‘fly’
- (13) Independent use  
*Baga, i-gwas nio.*  
then    3REAL:SG-cross    river  
‘Then he crossed the river.’ [NVKS06.5]
- (14) Serialized in V2 position  
*Neman ttis ang ib-yal-gwas i-gang.*  
bird    holy    ANA    3IRR:SG-fly-cross    3REAL:SG-like.so  
‘The holy bird was going to fly over like so’ (speaker gestures overhead)  
[NVKI28.132: 452.562]
- (15) Serialized in V2 position with an object argument  
*Neman ang i-yal-gwas nio ang.*  
bird    ANA    3REAL:SG-fly-cross    river    ANA  
‘The bird flew over the river.’ [NVE21.62]

Durie (1988: 5) observes that verbs which commonly occur as independent forms are less likely to undergo reanalysis as prepositions. This seems to be the case for *gwas*. While *gwas* expresses a preposition-like meaning in serial constructions, its ability to stand independently as a verb makes it less open to reanalysis as a preposition. It occurs nine times as an independent verb in the corpus of more natural speech.

### 10.3.1.2. *delvis* 'go around'

Somewhat further along the pathway to re-analysis as a preposition is the form *delvis* 'go around'. It has no existence as an independent verb and only occurs in a small number of serial constructions in V2 position.

- |      |                    |   |
|------|--------------------|---|
| (16) | <i>delvis</i>      | V1*; V2 'around'                            |
|      | <i>sav delvis</i>  | 'dance around s.t.' from <i>sav</i> 'dance' |
|      | <i>dum delvis</i>  | 'run around s.t.' from <i>dum</i> 'run'     |
|      | <i>vavu delvis</i> | 'walk around s.t.' from <i>vavu</i> 'walk'  |
|      | <i>vor delvis</i>  | 'sit around s.t.' from <i>vor</i> 'sit'     |

Although not attested in a negative construction in the corpus, language consultants report that the correct position for the negative morpheme is in the post-verbal slot after *delvis* as in (18). If *delvis* were behaving as a preposition, we would find the negative marker preceding it as in the unacceptable (19).

- |      |  |                 |             |
|------|--|-----------------|-------------|
| (17) | <i>I-sav-delvis</i>                            | <i>nibilkhe</i> | <i>ang.</i> |
|      | 3REAL:SG-dance-around                          | slitgong        | ANA         |
|      | 'She danced around the slitgong.' [NVKS17.150] |                 |             |

- |      |            |               |           |
|------|------------|---------------|-----------|
| (18) | <i>sav</i> | <i>delvis</i> | <i>si</i> |
|      | dance      | around        | NEG       |
|      | [NVKW06.1] |               |           |

- |      |              |           |               |
|------|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| (19) | * <i>sav</i> | <i>si</i> | <i>delvis</i> |
|      | dance        | NEG       | around        |
|      | [NVKW06.2]   |           |               |

Like *gwas* 'cross', *delvis* is restricted to combinations with motion and posture verbs. Unlike *gwas*, it does not appear as an independent verb, but is restricted to V2 position. In this role, it increases the valence of the intransitive motion or posture verb in V1, adding a locational argument. The lack of an independent verb function for *delvis* means that it is potentially available for reanalysis as a preposition. However, the synchronic position of negation follow-

ing *delvis* indicates that this form is still treated as being part of a nuclear serial construction, rather than as a separate preposition.

### 10.3.1.3. *Sur* ‘near, along, by’

Compared to *gwas* ‘cross’ and *delvis* ‘around’, *sur* ‘near, along, by’ is much further along the pathway towards re-analysis as a preposition. On some occasions, *sur* is attested in the structural position of a preposition, following post-verbal modifiers and directly preceding a prepositional object. On other occasions, *sur* occurs inside post-verbal aspectual and emphatic modifiers, in the same position that V2 occurs in a nuclear serial construction.

*Sur* does not occur as an independent verb with a meaning that is demonstrably related to the prepositional meanings expressed in the constructions presented in examples below. There is a homophone *sur* which is an independent reflexive verb meaning ‘fall fatally’. It is attested twice in the corpus, always with the applicative suffix *-ikh*. With the meaning ‘fall fatally’, *sur(-ikh)* cannot fill V2 position.

Examples (20) and (23) display verb-like uses of *sur*. In (20), *sur* occurs inside the emphatic marker, which itself has concordant transitivity marking – morphology strongly associated with the nucleus. The core object argument follows this material. Durie (1988: 5) claims that ‘the extent that the oblique coding verb bears overt morphological marking of its verbal status when serialised’ will inhibit its reanalysis as a preposition. Although these examples do not display affixation, they certainly occur inside the post-verbal modifiers that define the boundaries of the nucleus and this suggests a more verbal analysis of *sur*.

- (20) *At-lem*                      *nidam*      *ang*      *at-yakh-sur*                      *mad-ikh*  
 3REAL:PL-carry      yam      ANA      3REAL:PL-follow      EMPH-APPL  
*ar*                      *mil.*  
 3NSG                      again  
 ‘They carried yams and followed after the men again.’ [NVK112.25]

- (21) *At-yakh-sur*    *si*      *ar.*  
 3REAL:PL-follow    NEG      3NSG  
 ‘They didn’t follow them.’ [NVKW06.13]

- (22) *\*at-yakh*                      *si*      *sur*      *ar*  
 3REAL:PL-follow                      NEG      near      3NSG  
 [NVKW06.14]

- (23) *Ale ar-savsav-sur nakha, ar-sakh arkha,*  
 then 3REAL:DU-climb-along tree 3REAL:DU-go.up up  
 ‘Then they climbed along the tree, they went up to the top.’ [NVKS18.90:460.499]
- (24) *At-savsav-sur si nakha.*  
 3REAL:PL-climb-along NEG tree  
 ‘They didn’t climb along the tree.’ [NVKW06.15]
- (25) *\*at-savsav si sur nakha*  
 3REAL:PL-climb NEG along tree  
 [NVKW06.16]

Examples (20) and (23) display highly lexicalized complex verbs where *sur* can be treated as part of a nuclear serial construction.<sup>39</sup> These constructions are similar to the construction in example (17) above involving *delvis*. The lack of an independent verb form suggests preposition-like behaviour, but this re-analysis is not supported by the position of negation.

Examples (26), (29), and (32) display uses of *sur* which are more preposition-like, following the action verbs *vlem* ‘come’, *sisial* ‘warm up’, and *vor* ‘sit down’. *Vlem* ‘come’ occurs frequently in the corpus as an intransitive verb, both with and without a locational adjunct. A text example of *vlem* followed by *sur* is displayed in (26), followed by the negated form provided by language consultants with the negative morpheme located between the verb and *sur* (27). Example (28) demonstrates the unacceptable placement of the negative morpheme following an hypothesized serial construction.

- (26) *Ni-vusvus nani i-vlem sur nesal.*  
 1REAL:SG-DUP-carry coconut 3REAL:SG-come near road  
 ‘I carry the coconut to the road.’ [NVDL02.08]
- (27) *Nimkhut i-vlem si sur nesal.*  
 man 3REAL:SG-come NEG near road  
 ‘The man didn’t come near the road.’ [NVKW06.4]

---

39. *Yakh-sur* ‘follow’ and *savsav-sur* ‘climb along’ share phonetic form with some other morphemes in the corpus; however, the meanings of these other morphemes are quite distinct. For example, the reduplicated form *yakhyakh* means ‘strike something (with an arrow)’. The simple form *sav* is attested with the meaning ‘dance’ and the reduplicated form *savsav* is attested with the stative meaning of ‘be loose’. Combined with the completive aspect marker, *savsav-lu* (negated as *savsav-lu si*) forms a different nuclear serial verb meaning ‘cut thatch leaves’.

- (28) \**i-vlem-sur*                      *si*      *nesal*  
 3REAL:SG-come-near      NEG      road  
 [NVKW06.7]

*Sisial* ‘warm up’ occurs just twice in the text corpus. One natural occurrence is reproduced below in (29). Example (30) below displays the position of negation according to language consultants between the verb and prepositional *sur* while (31) displays the unacceptable nuclear serial verb sequence, followed by the negative morpheme.

- (29) *I-tokh*                      *i-sisial*                                      *sur*      *nutusu.*  
 3REAL:SG-PROG      3REAL:SG-warm-up      near      sea  
 ‘She was warming up by the sea.’ [NVKS14.25]

- (30) *I-sisial*                                      *si*      *sur*      *nutusu.*  
 3REAL:SG-warm-up      NEG      near      sea  
 ‘She didn’t warm up by the sea.’ [NVKW06.8]

- (31) \**i-sisial-sur*                                      *si*      *nutusu*  
 3REAL:SG-warm-up-near      NEG      sea  
 [NVKW06.9]

The commonly occurring intransitive stem *vor* ‘sit’ can also be followed by *sur* with the prepositional meaning of ‘near’ in (32); however, the elicited data for *vor* + *sur* suggests a serial construction, with negation following a serialized sequence, and post-verbal aspectual morphology in (33).

- (32) *Nemat*      *ang*      *i-vu*                                      *i-vor*                                      *sur*      *ar.*  
 snake      ANA      3REAL:SG-go      3REAL:SG-sit      near      3NSG  
 ‘The snake went and sat near them.’ [NVKS12.23: 173.301]

- (33) *I-vor*                                      *sur*      *ij*      *si.*  
 3REAL:SG-sit      near      ANT      NEG  
 ‘It hadn’t sat near it.’ [NVKW06.11]

- (34) \**i-vor*                                      *si*      *sur*  
 3REAL:SG-sit      NEG      near  
 [NVKW06.12]

The inconsistent nature of the data presented above, particularly with respect to the placement of negation, suggests that *sur* is currently undergoing reanalysis from verb to preposition, and that this reanalysis is not yet complete.

## 10.3.2. From serial verb to aspectual marker

Aikhenvald (2006: 30) observes that “stance and motion verbs tend to develop into markers of tense-aspect and mood”. Neverver displays a number of aspectual markers that occur in the V2 position of a serial construction. Almost all are attested as independent verbs in the speech of older community members, but the productive forms *lu* ‘completive aspect’ and *da* ‘partitive aspect’ most commonly occur with a semantically bleached aspectual function in the speech of younger community members. The table below is partially reproduced from §7.3.3., and displays aspectual meanings that are expressed through nuclear layer juncture.

Table 35. Internal aspectual markers

Internal Aspectual Marker	Independent Verb	Aspectual Meaning	Transitivity Concordance	Corpus Status
<i>lu</i>	‘shoot’; ‘hurry’	Completive (Total)	no	Productive
<i>dan</i>	‘set, drown’	Completive (Plural)	yes	Rare
<i>da</i>	---	Partitive	no	Productive
<i>dor</i>	‘become thin, lean’	Partly Complete	no	Semi-Productive
<i>der</i>	‘pull apart’	Temporary (of states)	(yes)	Rare
<i>duvakh</i>	‘be first’	Past habitual (with reduplication)	no	Productive

## 10.3.3. From serial verb to adverb

In addition to the development of prepositions and aspectual markers, there is evidence in the Neverver data that some V2s in serial constructions may be developing into a separate class of adverbs. While Aikhenvald (2006) does not list the development of adverbs from serial verbs as a major pathway of grammaticalization in her typological study, Lord’s (1993) study *Historical change in serial verb constructions* contains a chapter on the development of adverbs and auxiliaries from verbs and in her account of North-East Ambae, Hyslop (2001: 92) observes that certain adverbs appear to be historically derived from serial verb constructions. Crowley (2002a: 117–119) also observes forms in Paamese that behave as serialized verbs in some instances and as post-verbal modifiers in others. In Neverver, there is a small class of items with adverbial-type meanings that productively combine with a range of semantically appropriate V1s. Some of these items are likely to be related to main verbs; others how-

ever are restricted to V2 position and bear no demonstrable relationship to any main verb in the corpus.

- |      |                          |   |
|------|--------------------------|---|
| (35) | <i>bburvur</i>           | *V1; V2 ‘totally’ (after a transitive V1)                                 |
|      | <i>bbutkha~bbutakh</i>   | *V1; V2 ‘really, very’ (after an intransitive V1)                         |
|      | <i>brong</i>             | *V1; V2 ‘ordinary’ (after mostly intransitive V1s)                        |
|      | <i>bkhas</i>             | V1 <i>vkhas</i> ‘heap up/smooth out stones’; V2 ‘clean’                   |
|      | <i>dring</i>             | *V1; V2 ‘in a line’   |
|      | <i>duvakh</i>            | V1 ‘be first’; V2 ‘first, before’   |
|      | <i>gor~kor</i>           | V1 <i>gor(?)</i> ‘bang together (of plates, dishes, cutlery)’; V2 ‘block’ |
|      | <i>khiskhis ~ kiskis</i> | *V1; V2 ‘certainly, to excess’(?)   |
|      | <i>lakhlakh</i>          | *V1; V2 ‘quietly’   |
|      | <i>tata</i>              | V1 ‘promise’; V2 ‘tightly’  |
|      | <i>tetes</i>             | *V1; V2 ‘quickly’   |

A text example of a serial verb/adverb construction is presented in example (36) below. It is lexicalized, referring to the act of strangling something through morphemes meaning ‘bite’ in V1 position and ‘tightly’ in V2 position. Like prototypical SVCs, in this adverbial-type construction there is no material intervening between V1 and the verb-like element in the V2 slot.

- |      |  |               |                |                |
|------|--|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| (36) | <i>I-rev</i>                                   | <i>i-khas</i> | <i>(-)tata</i> | <i>nidlan.</i> |
|      | 3REAL:SG-pull                                  | 3REAL:SG-bite | (-)tight       | neck           |
|      | ‘He pulled and strangled its neck’ [NVKS06.68] |               |                |                |

#### 10.3.4. From negative morpheme to serial verb

One potential lexicalization pathway from grammatical morpheme to serial verb can be observed in the data. There is evidence that the negative morpheme *si* has serialized in some verbs. Neverver is alone among the documented Central Malekula languages in having a simple post-verbal negative morpheme *si*. Discontinuous affixation is the more widely (though not universally) distributed feature of Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002: 51), with one marker occurring in a preverbal slot and a second occurring post-verbally.

In Neverver, a small number of verbs contain an initial morpheme *si* in what may be analysed as V1 position. This position may reflect an older pre-verbal negative slot, as it is precisely where we find the first negative morpheme of the discontinuous affix in other Central Malekula languages. Avava (Crowley 2006a: 82) has a pre-verbal negative morpheme *sa-*; Neve‘ei (Musgrave 2007: 51) and Naman (Crowley 2006b: 108) both have a pre-verbal negative sequence

*sV-*. The *si*-verbs in Neverver may reflect an earlier stage of the language when discontinuous negation was present.

There is a sense in which the forms in (37) below share a common semantic element of negation; however, all but one have lexicalized to the extent that it is no longer possible to analyse the component parts of the construction. *Pusel* ‘err, miss’ was produced productively in elicitation sessions as V2 in a range of serial constructions including *tuv-pusel* ‘throw (a round object at a target) and miss’ and *khab-pusel* ‘throw (a long object at a target) and miss’. The other forms only occur in these specific constructions although the form *bal* can function as an unrelated independent verb meaning ‘many, fill’.

- (37) *si-balbal* ‘be confused (not know)’ from *bal* ‘fill’  
*si-brik* ‘let go (not hold)’ from *vrok* ‘hold’(?)  
*si-btakh* ‘stumble (not walk)’ from *vtakh* ‘be last’(?)  
*si-pusel* ‘do accidentally (not do intentionally)’ from *pusel* ‘err, miss’

#### 10.4. Patterns of transitivity

An analysis of the transitivity patterns of two-part nuclear SVCs reveals that all four logically possible combinations of transitive and intransitive verbs are attested in the data. Constructions which only contain intransitive verbs are inevitably intransitive. Any construction that contains a transitive verb either in V1 or V2 position forms a transitive SVC. In one instance, a ditransitive SVC is formed.

- (38) Intransitive SVC comprising intransitive V1; intransitive V2  
*sav-dran* ‘dance till dawn’ from *sav* ‘dance’; *ran* ‘be daylight’  
*tur-yadryadr* ‘stand up straight’ from *tur* ‘stand up’; *yadr* ‘be correct’  
*tete-bbur* ‘cut open’ from *te* ‘cut’<sup>40</sup>; *bbur* ‘be swollen’  
*kher bbutakh* ‘be too hard’ from *kher* ‘be hard’; *bbutakh* ‘too much’
- (39) Transitive SVC comprising intransitive V1; transitive V2  
*vavu- gwas* ‘walk across’ from *vavu* ‘walk’; *gwas* ‘cross’
- (40) Transitive SVC comprising transitive V1; transitive V2  
*khan-bir* ‘saw’ from *khan* ‘bite’; *bir* ‘break’  
*te-bir* ‘cut down’ from ‘cut’; ‘break’  
*lav-bal* ‘get enough’ from *lav* ‘get’; *bal* ‘fill’

---

40. *Te* ‘cut, hit’ is normally transitive; it has been de-transitivised by the reduplication of the verb stem.

- (41) Transitive SVC with concordance comprising transitive V1; intransitive V2  
*mi-tan-ikh* 'drink up' from *min* 'drink'; *dan* 'V2: be all'  
*sien-mmav-ikh* 'worry' from *sien* 'consider'; *mmav* 'be heavy'  
*khitrokh-makkan-ikh* 'see properly' from *khitrokh* 'see'; *makkan* 'V2: be clear'
- (42) Transitive SVC without concordance comprising transitive V1; adverb-like V2  
*vrokh tata* 'hold tight' from *vrokh* 'hold'; *tata* 'tightly'  
*te bburvur* 'beat to death' from *te* 'hit'; *bburvur* 'completely'  
*lav dring* 'heap up' from *lav* 'get'; *dring* 'be in line'  
*sil bkhas* 'burn off' from *sil* 'burn'; *bkhas* 'clean'
- (43) Ditransitive SVC with applicative suffix comprising transitive V1; transitive V2  
*vrokh-blev-ikh* 'hold x with y' from *vrokh* 'hold'; *blev* 'be with'

Concordant marking of transitivity is signaled by the applicative suffix *-ikh* attached to V2. It appears in sequences where V1 is transitive and V2 is intransitive. Those V2 forms which carry transitivity concordance also occur as independent intransitive verbs with clearly related meanings. In contrast, there are no instances in the corpus of the suffix *-ikh* attached to V2 forms that are more adverbial in nature. That is, if a form is commonly attested in V2 position in a serial construction, and rarely (or never) functions as an independent verb, then it does not require concordant marking of transitivity.<sup>41</sup>

### 10.5. Three-part nuclear SVCs

Most instances of nuclear juncture in Neverver involve a sequence of two verbs or verb-like elements. There are a small number of three-part nuclear SVCs. A total of three elements in sequence appears to be the upper limit of elements in a nuclear serial construction. Some of these items are clearly composed of three verbs or verb-like constituents; others appear to involve sequences with incorporated objects. A number of three-part nuclear SVCs are presented below.

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41. The behaviour of adverb-like V2 elements suggests that a separate class of adverbs may be forming in Neverver. The term 'adverb' however, is used sparingly in this work as most items with adverbial-type meanings clearly belong to the major word classes of nouns or verbs.

- (44) *mam-yel-bbus* ‘spoiled before ripe’ from *mam* ‘ripe’; *yel* ‘scoop out’; *bbus* ‘unripe’  
*sakh-mul-yes-ikh* ‘grow to top’ from *sakh* ‘go up’; *mul* ‘change, moult’; *yes* ‘fetch water’(?)  
*vov-dran-jing* ‘pour’ from *vov* ‘rain’; *ran* ‘be.daylight’; *jing* ‘lie down, be there’  
*si-makh-il* ‘lose traditions’ from *si* ‘NEG’; *makh* ‘pray’; ‘be able’  
*V-dro-skhen* ‘(do) in vain’ from V (action); *tro* ‘be.old’(?); *skhen* ‘not so’  
*sas-ngar-bbur* ‘split (firewood, with axe)’ from \**sas*; *ngar* ‘tear’; *bbur* ‘be swollen’  
*rev-sur-kho* ‘escape with leash’ from *rev* ‘pull’; *sur* ‘along’; *nokho* ‘vine’  
*tokh-bbu-sal* ‘rest/sleep on a journey’ from *tokh* ‘exist’; *vu* ‘go’; *nesal* ‘road’  
*yal-da-lkha-kh* ‘jump over’ from *yal* ‘fly’; *da* ‘PART’; *lkha* ‘step over obstacle’  
*sav-bbu-sal* ‘dance along in a line’ from *sav* ‘dance’; *vu* ‘go’; *nesal* ‘road’

It was noted in §10.3.4. above that some two-part verbs display what appears to be the negative morpheme *si* in V1 position. The three-part nuclear serial verb *si-makh-il* ‘lose traditions’ also displays this same morpheme.

# Chapter 11

## Complex cores

### 11.0. Introduction

In chapter ten, complex nuclei were described; in this chapter, complex cores are considered. Most complex nuclei can be described as involving nuclear serialization. The second type of serialization found in Neverver is core serialization. While nuclear and core SVCs share a number of characteristics, they are constructed rather differently, with core SVCs exhibiting some of the structural features of multi-clause constructions. A brief comparison of the two structures is presented in §11.1. to clarify differences. This is followed by a detailed account of the properties of core serial constructions in §11.2. A description of the various sub-types of core SVCs is given in §11.3., including same-subject SVCs (§11.3.1.), switch-function SVCs (§11.3.2.), ambient SVCs (§11.3.3.), and inclusory SVCs (§11.3.4.).

### 11.1. Comparing nuclear and core serialization

Key structural differences between nuclear and core SVCs can be observed in the marking of grammatical categories and in the contiguity of elements. Aikhenvald (2006: 39–40) distinguishes between single marking and concordant marking of grammatical categories in serial constructions. In Neverver, a subject/mood marker is obligatorily attached to verbs which function as the nucleus of a clause. Nuclear SVCs have single marking as illustrated in (1), while core SVCs display concordant marking as illustrated in (2).

- (1) Single subject/mood marking  
*Ni-tete-bbur.*  
1:REAL:SG-DUP-cut-swell  
'I cut open (the coconuts).'<sup>42</sup> [NVDL02.4]
- (2) Concordant subject/mood marking  
*Na nim-bbu nim-das lon nokhos.*  
1SG 1IRR:SG-go 1IRR:SG-go.down LOC garden  
'I'll go down to the garden.' [NVKS20.11: 55.822]

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42. This intransitive nuclear SVC has an inherent object 'coconuts' and refers to a stage in the harvesting of coconuts for copra production (see §6.3.1.2 and §8.2.1.2).

While example (1) displays concordant marking of both subject and mood categories, not all core SVCs share a subject argument. When the subject argument is not shared, only concordant marking of mood occurs, as can be seen in (3).

- (3) Concordant mood marking only  
*Kum-bbus nibobo im-bbulem!*  
 2IRR:SG-carry baby 3IRR:SG-come  
 ‘Bring the baby!’ [NVKS24.56: 227.246]

Nuclear and core SVCs also contrast in the contiguity of their component parts. All nuclear layer SVCs display absolute contiguity. No phonological material may intervene between the component parts. This is illustrated in (1) above. Contiguity in core layer SVCs is never absolute. Minimally, there will be a subject/mood marker attached to the verb in V2 position which intervenes between the verb stems. There may also be aspectual markers following the verb in V1 position. In a number of subtypes of core SVCs, arguments are encoded in the object position following V1, and in other cases locative adjuncts intervene between the inflected verb stems. Such constructions, exemplified in (3) above, can be described as non-contiguous.

Core SVCs most commonly involve a sequence of two inflected verbs. This structure is illustrated in Figure 11 below.

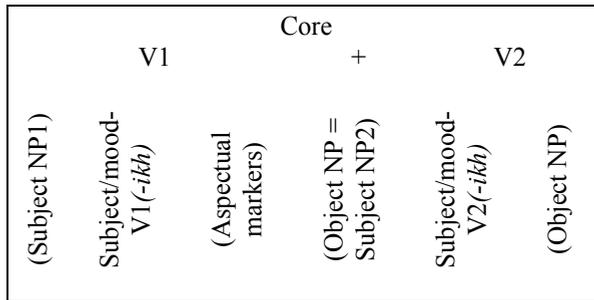


Figure 11. The structure of core SVCs

Longer strings of verbs are also attested in the corpus. These particularly involve sequences of intransitive motion verbs. Thus, we find sequences of three intransitive motion/direction verbs in the sequential SVC summarized in Figure 12, and illustrated in (4) below.

V1	+	V2	+	V3
directional		directional		directional
<i>sakh</i> 'go up'		<i>das</i> 'go down'		<i>vlem</i> 'come'

Figure 12. The structure of a three-part sequential core SVC

- (4) *Nani i-skham i-sakh arkha*  
 coconut 3REAL:SG-one 3REAL:SG-go.up up  
*i-das i-vlem.*  
 3REAL:SG-go.down 3REAL:SG-come  
 'A coconut fell down from above.' [NVCV06.01: 433.749]

Longer constructions where sub-types of different SVCs co-occur are also attested. The resulting structures are uttered under a single intonation contour. Example (5) below takes the following form:

V1	+	V2	+	V3
aspectual		utterance		simulative
<i>tokh</i> 'progressive'		<i>yer</i> 'sing'		<i>gang</i> 'be like that'

Figure 13. The structure of a mixed three-part core SVC

- (5) *Ba i-tokh i-yer i-gang...*  
 when 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-sing 3REAL:SG-like.so  
 'When she was singing like that, ...' [NVKS24.45: 179.653]

Example (6) has a sequence of four serialized verbs with the following structure:

V1	+	V2	+	V3	+	V4
sequential		cumulative		motion		directional
<i>rev</i> 'pull'		<i>blev</i> 'be/go with'		<i>uv</i> 'go'		<i>vev</i> 'go to'

Figure 14. The structure of a multi-part core SVC

- (6) *I-rev i-blev ar-uv ar-ev*  
 3REAL:SG-pull 3REAL:SG-be/go.with 3REAL:DU-go 3REAL:DU-go.to  
*aiyem titi.*  
 home 3POSS:SG  
 'He pulled her along with him to his home.' [NVKS14.29]

Sequences of more than four clearly serialized verbs that involve distinct sub-events of a larger complex event have not been identified in the corpus.

## 11.2. Mono-clausal properties of core SVCs

Because core SVCs involve a sequence of two or more inflected verbs, they are structurally rather like multi-clause constructions containing subordinate or coordinated clauses. In many ways, however, core SVCs behave like mono-clausal constructions. Core SVCs have a set of properties that allow them to be distinguished from multi-clause constructions, although no single characteristic is absolutely defining. The properties include:

- mono-clausal intonation;
- no overt marking of linkage;
- mono-clausal syntactic behaviour;
- mono-clausal semantic behaviour;
- concordant marking of mood;
- dependent marking of aspect and polarity;
- normally, some sharing of arguments.

Most core SVCs in Neverver display mono-clausal intonation. Aikhenvald (2006: 6) notes that in many languages, clause boundaries are often marked by breaks in intonation, but that SVCs often are articulated as single clauses, with no pauses between elements. Hyslop (2001: 276) observes that in the Lolovoli dialect of Ambrym, “as coordinated clauses are often merely juxtaposed, the intonation pattern is often the only means of distinguishing an SVC ... from two conjoined clauses”. In Neverver, the same observation can be made. When clauses are simply juxtaposed, the relationship between their propositions is open to various analyses. Intonational cues can help to identify the nature of the relationship between juxtaposed elements. Inside a clause, intonation never falls significantly between constituents. It does, however, rise in certain circumstances, including at the end of a relative clause that modifies a subject argument. It also rises to mark the boundary between main and subordinate clause. In core SVCs, intonation does not fall between inflected verbs, but only at the end of the entire construction. In most cases, the whole serial construction will be uttered under a single intonation contour, with no significant medial intonation peaks or troughs. An exception is found with ambient serialization; there may be (but is not always) a slight rise marking the boundary of the first core, which is then followed by a second core with an adverb-like function. Clause-finally, intonation either rises or falls to a brief pause, depending on whether the clause is a terminal clause, or part of a larger construction.

Another mono-clausal characteristic of serial constructions that sets them apart from multi-clause constructions is the lack of any overt marker of linkage or of syntactic dependency (cf. Crowley 2002a; Aikhenvald 2006). In Neverver,

the juncture between a matrix and subordinate clause, or between two coordinated clauses may be marked by a morpheme signalling the relationship between the two clauses (see chapter thirteen). SVCs in Neverver by definition display no such marking.

SVCs are treated as a single syntactic unit in various constructions. Aikhenvald (2006) identifies relativization and subordination as constructions of interest. In addition, in Early's (1993) study of Lewo serial constructions, he identifies the discourse-motivated *tail-head linkage*, a common feature of connected text in Oceanic languages, as another construction relevant to the mono-clausal syntactic analysis of SVCs. An examination of these three construction types in Neverver points to the mono-clausal syntactic nature of core SVCs.

When functioning as the predicate of a relative clause, SVCs take a single relative subordinator which precedes the construction as a whole. This is illustrated in the directional serial construction in (7) below:

- (7) *Nimkhut* [an ar-uv ar-ev Queensland  
 man NMOD 3REAL:DU-go 3REAL:DU-go.to Queensland  
 ang], *iskham nikhijan Singonmal, iskham nikhijan*  
 ANA INDF.PN name Singonmal INDF.PN name  
*Tom Nelson.*  
 Tom Nelson  
 'The men who went to Queensland, one was called Singonmal and one was called Tom Nelson.' [NVKI07.10]

Similarly, when an SVC appears in a subordinate purpose clause, the whole construction is marked only once as being subordinate:

- (8) *I-sir nesar i-vu sur Nionevat*  
 3REAL:SG-follow road 3REAL:SG-go near Nionevat  
*i-das [il im-bbu ib-lav nivri].*  
 3REAL:SG-go.down PURPOSE 3IRR:SG-go 3IRR:SG-get crab  
 'He followed the path down Nionevat River to go catch crabs.' [NVKS22.03:20.91]

In Lewo, Early (1993) observes that "the sentence-initial resumptive re-statement of the final elements of the preceding sentence" can help to establish whether a particular sequence is functioning as a serial construction or separate clauses. Early (1993) makes the following claim:

This 'tail-head' linkage structure always operates over a single stress group, the phonological unit normally associated with a single-clause utterance, and so the appearance of a potential core layer serial construction in this situation does argue for its status as a single clause. (Early 1993: 72)

Tail-head linkage is common in Neverver, and SVCs are consistently reproduced as a single unit as we see in example (9) below:

- (9) *I-vrok*            *nisib*    *lele*    *ang*    [*i-dum*            *i-das*].  
 3REAL:SG-*hold*    knife    small    ANA    3REAL:SG-*run*    3REAL:SG-*go*.  
 [*I-dum*            *i-das*],                            *i-vu*                            *i-tur*  
 3REAL:SG-*run*    3REAL:SG-*go*.*down*    3REAL:SG-*go*            3REAL:SG-*stand*  
*tuan*    *nakhmal*    *titi*                            *bibi*                            *Ati*    *tang*.  
 LOCPSN    house            3POSS:SG    maternal.uncle    Ati    there  
 ‘She took the small knife and ran down. She ran down and went and stood at Uncle Ati’s house there.’ [NVCV02.72-73: 467.16 - 469.138]

A further mono-clausal characteristic of SVCs is that there is often a difference in meaning between serialized verbs and the same verbs when occurring in separate clauses. This characteristic is observed by Foley and Olsen (1985: 20–21) in Yimas serial constructions and can be seen in Neverver also. Construction (10) below contains an SVC meaning ‘bring’ from *lav* ‘get’ and *vlem* ‘come’. In this SVC, the object of V1 is also the subject of V2.

- (10) *I-ver-ikh*                            *t-nam*                            *i-ver*  
 3REAL:SG-*say*-APPL    PSDT-1EXCL:NSG    3REAL:SG-*say*  
*nabir-lav*                            *nakhabb*    *ang*    *im-bbulem*.  
 1:EXCL:IRR:DU-*get*    fire                            ANA    3IRR:SG-*come*  
 ‘He told us to bring the firewood.’ [NVKS07.28: 171.308 ]

Construction (11) contains a subordinate clause which contrasts with the SVC in (10). *Lav* ‘get’ is in the subordinate clause (signalled by *ba* ‘when’), and *vlem* ‘come’ is in the main clause. In this example, both verbs have the same subject ‘she’.

- (11) *Ba*    *i-lav*                            *iskham,*    *i-vlem*                            *i-sisil*  
 when    3REAL:SG-*get*                            INDF.PN    3REAL:SG-*come*                            3REAL:SG-*roast*  
*i-khan*.  
 3REAL:SG-*eat*  
 ‘When she got one, she came and cooked and ate (the bird).’ [NVKS06.122]

In (11), the main clause involves a three-part core SVC comprising an intransitive directional verb, followed by the detransitivized action verb *sisil* ‘roast/cook’ and the transitive verb *khan* ‘eat (something)’.

A number of linguists working on serial constructions have proposed that SVCs encode propositions that are conceptualized as unitary by native speakers (cf. Aikhenvald 2006; Durie 1997; Early 1993). These propositions involve event-types “that are salient, or communicatively in demand for the speech community” (Durie 1997: 321). This is a rather problematic measure, as an



In (12) a purpose relationship is present between the two clauses, signalled by the change to irrealis mood in the second clause. Example (13) displays another example of aspectual morphology marked after V1, with scope over the entire serial construction.

- (13) *Ni-tvin*                    *mej*    *i-sakh*                    *i-vlem*                    *arkha*.  
 1REAL:SG-fill.up    IMM    3REAL:SG-go.up    3REAL:SG-come    up  
 ‘I just fill it up to the top.’ [NVDL08.27]

In relation to negation, an interesting observation can be made. When a verb encoded in V1 position is marked for realis mood and negative polarity, we might predict that any subsequent serialized material would carry irrealis marking as the event encoded in V2 did not actually occur. Such mood patterning would be dependent rather than concordant – the kind of mood marking that is found with many complement taking predicates (discussed in chapter twelve). The problem with such a pattern is that realis-irrealis sequences would flout the requirement for concordant mood marking in core SVCs. In fact, there are no instances of core SVCs in the text corpus where V1 is realis and marked for negative polarity. We find only non-serialized verbs marked for both realis mood and negative polarity. There are very few instances in the text corpus where we can be reasonably certain that an independent verb of negative polarity and realis mood, if positive, would be realized as a core SVC. The serial construction *vu* + *vev* ‘go to (a location, of a human agent)’ is one such instance. *Vu* + *vev* is a common core serial construction in the corpus. The verb *vev* is rarely attested independently of this serial construction, but when a speaker wishes to say that a person didn’t go somewhere, we find *vev* rather than *vu* attested as in (14):

- (14) *Nimokhmokh*    *i-vev*                    *si*.  
 female                    3REAL:SG-go.to    NEG  
 ‘Women (generic) don’t go (to the place of circumcision).’ [NVKI02.05]

The construction in example (14) was produced by one of the oldest speakers of Neverver. Younger speakers rejected (14) in elicitation sessions, claiming that it was ungrammatical. Example (15) provides their alternative, where V2 is suppressed in the first clause when the construction is negated, but reappears in the second clause which has positive polarity.

- (15) *Ni-vu*                    *si*    *Limap;*    *ni-vu*                    *me*  
 1REAL:SG-go    NEG    Limap    1REAL:SG-go    just  
*ni-vev*                    *Lamap*.  
 1REAL:SG-go.to    Lamap  
 ‘I didn’t go to Limap; (instead) I went to Lamap.’ [NVKW07.02]

Example (16) displays a parallel construction with the simple negated predicate *lav* ‘get’, followed by the serialized predicate *lav + vlem* ‘bring’.

- (16) *Ni-lav*            *si*        *noto,*        *ni-lav*            *me*        *nibarbar*  
 1REAL:SG-get    NEG    chicken    1REAL:SG-get    just    pig  
*i-vlem*  
 3REAL:SG-come  
 ‘I didn’t bring a chicken, (instead) I brought a pig.’ [NVKW07.01]

In the corpus of both naturally occurring and elicited material, negated core SVCs appear to be realized simply as a single verb followed by the negative marker *si*. For younger speakers, the single negated verb is V1 of a potential SVC and subsequent potential serialized verbs are suppressed. It seems that if the complex proposition encoded in the serial construction definitely did not occur, there is no point in presenting a complete event description.

In contrast to these potential SVCs which carry realis mood, core serial constructions in which V1 is marked for irrealis mood are readily negated. The negative morpheme *si* follows the irrealis V1. Subsequent serialized verbs also carry irrealis mood, thus meeting the requirement for concordant mood marking.

- (17) *Ni-ver*                    *nim-sir*                    *si*        *im-bbulem*        *be*  
 1REAL:SG-said    1IRR:SG-accompany    NEG    3IRR:SG-come    but  
*i-okh*                    *ku-ver*                    *ibi-skhen*.  
 PSNPR-2SG    2REAL:SG-say    3IRR:SG-not.so  
 ‘I said I wouldn’t bring her here but you said otherwise.’ [NVKS01.30]

### 11.3. Sub-types of core SVCs

Prototypical serial constructions are defined as sharing at least one core argument (Aikhenvald 2006). A number of different types of argument-sharing possibilities have been identified in languages with serial constructions. Neverver makes use of four argument-sharing patterns in the construction of core SVCs.

In same-subject core SVCs, the argument that is encoded as the subject of V1 also serves as the subject of subsequent verbs. This is reflected in the identical subject/mood prefixes that occur with the verbs. These constructions are detailed in §11.3.1. below. In switch-function core SVCs, the argument that serves as the object of V1 also functions as the subject of V2. Thus, the person/number prefixes associated with V1 and V2 contrast in reference, although not always in form. Switch-function SVCs are detailed in §11.3.2. In ambient core SVCs, the verb encoded in V2 provides modification to the entire proposition encoded in V1 (the event and its arguments). Ambient constructions are

characterized by a third person singular person/number prefix attached to V2, regardless of the person and number categories associated with V1. These constructions are detailed in §11.3.3. In inclusory core SVCs, the subject and object arguments of V1 combine to function as the subject of V2. Inclusory constructions inevitably involve a non-singular person/number prefix attached to V2 which represents the sum of the arguments associated with V1. Inclusory SVCs are detailed in §11.3.4. below. The four argument sharing patterns are displayed in Table 36.

Table 36. Argument-sharing patterns in core SVCs<sup>43</sup>

Same-subject	V1 Subject	V2 Subject
Switch-function	V1 Object	V2 Subject
Ambient	V1 Proposition	V2 Subject
Inclusory	V1 Subject, Object	V2 Subject

All core SVCs are asymmetrical rather than symmetrical. This means that at least one of the verbs that forms the serial construction belongs to a restricted sub-class of verbs (cf. Aikhenvald 2006: 21). The sub-classes of serialized components provide a useful way of classifying the range of core constructions that occur in Neverver. The sub-classes are summarized in Table 37 below, and are described and illustrated in the following sections.<sup>44</sup>

43. I make use of a combination of Crowley (2002) and Aikhenvald's (2006) terminology for describing different types of argument sharing. For comparison, Crowley (2002a) describes switch-function serialization as *switch-subject* SVCs. Aikhenvald (2006) describes inclusory serialization as *cumulative-subject* SVCs, and ambient serialization as *event-argument* SVCs.

44. In presenting the various types of core SVCs, I follow Hyslop (2001) and Aikhenvald's (2006) means of classifying structures by argument-sharing and then by the semantic sub-type of the restricted serial component.

Table 37. Sub-types of core SVCs classified by argument sharing patterns

Argument Sharing	Sub-Type of Core SVC	Restrictions on Verbs	
Same-subject	directional	INTRANSITIVE MOTION	V2 direction
	sequential	V1 motion <i>vu, vlem</i>	(Semantic Restrictions)
		V1 reflexive <i>dri</i>	V2 limit <i>sber, jadr</i>
	limit	V1 motion	V2 locution <i>ver</i>
	utterance	V1 locution	(Semantic Restrictions)
Switch-function	aspectual	V1 aspectual	(Semantic Restrictions)
	modal	V1 motion	V2 intention <i>ver</i>
	directional	TRANSITIVE	V2 direction
	existential	TRANSITIVE	V2 posture
Ambient	recipient	TRANSITIVE	V2 recipient argument
	manner	(Semantic Restrictions)	V2 stative
	aspectual	(Semantic Restrictions)	V2 aspectual
	directional	(Semantic Restrictions)	V2 directional
Inclusory	similitive	(Semantic Restrictions)	V2 similitive
	cumulative	TRANSITIVE	(Semantic Restrictions)

### 11.3.1. Same-subject constructions

Same-subject core SVCs involve a sequence of two or more verbs which share a subject argument and which behave as a mono-clausal construction. A range of same-subject SVCs occurs in Neverver. In this section, directional, sequential, limit, simultaneous, utterance, aspectual and modal constructions are presented.

#### 11.3.1.1. Same-subject directional SVCs

Same-subject directional SVCs involve an intransitive verb encoded in V1, followed by a directional verb in V2. The intransitive verb in V1 is normally a motion verb. The directional verb is a member of a small sub-class of verbs listed below and it provides the direction of the action encoded in V1 position.

The meanings that are associated with the verb's independent use and its use as a directional serial verb are clearly related and predictable in these directional SVCs.



- (24) *At-uv*            *at-ev*            *lon*    *nidong*  
 3REAL:PL-go    3REAL:PL-go.to    LOC    mangrove.swamp  
*abit-lav*            *nivri*.  
 3IRR:PL-get    crab  
 ‘They went to the mangrove swamp to collect crabs.’ [NVKS15.05]
- (25) *I-na*            *mej*    *nim-bbu*            *nim-bbuev*            *Arakhalav*.  
 PSNPR-1SG    IMM    1IRR:SG-go    1IRR:SG-go.to    Arakhalav  
 ‘I’m going to Arakhalav.’ [NVKS02.48]
- (26) *Ba*            *adr*    *at-uv*            *at-ev*            *aiyem*,  
 when    3NSG    3REAL:PL-go    3REAL:PL-go.to    home  
*naus*            *ivovov*.  
 rain    3:REAL:SG-DUP-fall  
 ‘When they went home, it rained and rained.’ [NVKS14.17]

### 11.3.1.2. Same-subject sequential SVCs

Same-subject sequential constructions involve an initial motion verb, typically *vu* ‘go’, followed by a second verb expressing an action. This construction occurs commonly in the corpus, reflecting the character of village life where people go off in the mornings to conduct their business and return home at the end of the day.

- (27) *Nat-uv*                            *nat-lav*                            *ni-kkan-ian*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-go    1EXCL:REAL:PL-get    NPR-eat-NSF  
 ‘We went and got food.’ [NVDL01.33]
- (28) *At-uv*            *at-lingling*                            *na*    *lon*    *lokhavre*    *titi*  
 3REAL:PL-go    3REAL:PL-farewell    1SG    LOC    village    3POSS:SG  
*khavut*            *t-na*.  
 husband    PSDT-1SG  
 ‘They went and farewelled me in the village of my husband.’ [NVDL05.12]
- (29) *Nim-bbu*            *nibi-llang*                            *ni-kkan-ian*            *git*.  
 1IRR:SG-go    1IRR:SG-look.for.s.t.    NPR-eat-NSF    1INCL:NSG  
 ‘I’m going to forage for our food.’ [NVKS26.06: 32.067]

The motion verb *vlem* ‘come’ is also commonly attested in the sequential construction, shown in example (30) to (32).

- (30) *Jif*            *prist*            *i-skham*                            *i-vlem*                            *i-khitrokh*.  
 high    priest    3REAL:SG-one    3REAL:SG-come    3REAL:SG-see  
 ‘A high priest came and saw him.’ [NVCT04.12: 59.676]

- (31) *Nati-vlem nat-jik aiyem.*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-come 1EXCL:REAL:PL-put home  
 ‘We came and put (the manioc) at home.’ [NVDL01.36]
- (32) *Ei i-llang kut an ei im-bbulem*  
 3SG 3REAL:SG-look.for.s.t. LOC PN NMOD 3SG 3IRR:SG-come  
*im-lukh-da e.*  
 3IRR:SG-stay-PART RSPN  
 ‘He is looking for the place where he can come and rest.’ [NVCT05.21:  
 347.676]

The verb *vlat* ‘go to (a human destination, of a human agent)’ can be encoded in the V1 position of a sequential SVC:

- (33) *I-kher il nim-bbulat nibi-ssor*  
 3REAL:SG-difficult PURPOSE 1IRR:SG-go.dir 1IRR:SG-talk  
*blev i-okh.*  
 with PSNPR-2SG  
 ‘It is difficult for me to go and talk with you.’ [NVDL03.13]
- (34) *Baga kati-stop-da, i-nam*  
 then 2REAL:PL-stop-PART PSNPR-1EXCL:NSG  
*nari-vlat nar-jang lon trak.*  
 1EXCL:REAL:DU-go.to.pers 1EXCL:REAL:DU-get.on LOC truck  
 ‘After that, then you pulled over and we went (to you) and got on the truck.’  
 [NVCV02.43: 239.071]

The verb *jadr-ikh* ‘pass s.t./s.o.’ is one of two transitive motion verbs that occur in the V1 position of the sequential SVC. The serial construction illustrated below involves two sequential SVCs. In the second of these, *jadr-ikh* is in V1 position, followed by the motion verb *vu* ‘go’. In this case, it is the agent of ‘pass’ who then ‘goes’, rather than the patient of ‘pass’, who is lying unconscious by the road at this point in the story.

- (35) *I-vlem i-khitrokh, baga i-jadr-ikh*  
 3REAL:SG-come 3REAL:SG-see then 3:REAL:SG-pass-APPL  
*lakh lakh i-vu.*  
 quiet 3REAL:SG-go  
 ‘He came and saw him, and then he passed him quietly and went.’  
 [NVCV04.15: 66.010]

The reflexive verb *dri* ‘turn’, which is formally transitive, is the second transitive verb that can form a sequential SVC. It is attested with the motion verbs *vu* ‘go’ or *vlem* ‘come’. The resulting SVC does not encode motion in a direction, as we find with both same-subject directional SVCs (§11.3.1.1.) and

switch-function directional SVCs (described in §11.3.2.1. below). Instead, it encodes two sequential actions that, due to the mono-clausal characteristics of serial constructions, are presented as sub-events of a single action.

(36) *Ale nat-dri nam nat-uv.*  
 then 1EXCL:REAL:PL-turn 1EXCL:NSG 1EXCL:REAL:PL-go  
 ‘Then we turned and went.’ [NVCV02.50: 278.899] (Not: ‘We turned away’)

(37) *Ale i-dri ei i-vu.*  
 then 3REAL:SG-turn 3SG 3REAL:SG-go  
 ‘Then, he turned and went.’ [NVKS08.24] (Not: ‘He turned away’)

(38) *I-dri mil ei i-vlem.*  
 3REAL:SG-turn again 3SG 3REAL:SG-come  
 ‘It turned around and came (back to its tree).’ NVKS19.27: 465.739]  
 (Not: ‘It turned here’)

Other formally reflexive verbs, such as *dak* ‘fall down’, do not occur in serial constructions like this one.

A number of sequential serial verb constructions associated with the goal or destination of movement have become fixed expressions in Neverver. One frequently occurring expression is used to describe returning from a particular place. This expression comprises *vu* ‘go’ followed by *vlem* ‘come’:

(39) *Nar-uv Livusvus nari-vlem.*  
 1EXCL:REAL:DU-go Levusvus 1EXCL:REAL:DU-come  
 ‘We came back from Levusvus’ [NVCV02.86: 585.03]

(40) *Ei! Okh ku-vu abi ku-vlem ang?*  
 Hey! 2SG 2REAL:SG-go where 2REAL:SG-come ANA  
 ‘Hey, where did you come from?’ [NVKS14.27]

This source-destination formula is also attested in a three-part core SVC referring to objects falling from above. The structure of this SVC is repeated from Figure 12 above.

V1	+	V2	+	V3
directional		directional		directional
<i>sakh</i> ‘go up’		<i>das</i> ‘go down’		<i>vlem</i> ‘come’

Figure 15. The structure of a three-part sequential core SVC

In the examples below, the speaker is describing an incident when a coconut fell onto a woman's head. Prior to falling, the coconut was attached to a bunch growing up in the tree. It is certainly not the case that the coconut climbed the tree, or was thrown into the air before falling. Such a situation would require a human agent, as well as the casting verb *tuv* 'throw (of round objects)'.

- (41) *Nani i-skham i-sakh arkha*  
 coconut 3REAL:SG-one 3REAL:SG-go.up up  
*i-das i-vlem.*  
 3REAL:SG-go.down 3REAL:SG-come  
 'A coconut fell down from above.' [NVCV06.01: 433.749]
- (42) *Nani, ba i-sakh arkha i-das*  
 coconut when 3REAL:SG-go.up up 3REAL:SG-go.down  
*i-vlem...*  
 3:REAL:SG-come  
 'the coconut, when it fell down...' [NVCV06.28: 569.745]

### 11.3.1.3. Same-subject limit SVCs

Same-subject limit SVCs involve an intransitive motion verb in V1, followed by the verb *sber* 'touch, reach', which serializes as the limit verb 'go all the way to', or 'until'. Crowley (2002a: 76), in his description of verbs of limit in Paamese, observes that "when these verbs are used in a serial verb construction, they express the attainment of a spatial, temporal, or metaphorical limit, or exceeding a limit". The semantic functions of attaining spatial and temporal limits are attested in Neverver, with the limit verb adding an argument that expresses the limit that is attained.

- (43) *Ar-das-das-das-das ar-uv ari-sber*  
 3REAL:DU-DUP-DUP-DUP-go.down 3REAL:DU-go 3REAL:DU-reach  
*aiyem ang.*  
 home ANA  
 'They went down on and on all the way to the dwelling'. [NVKS18.99: 494.841]
- (44) *Ba nat-lem nati-sber aiyem*  
 when 1EXCL:REAL:PL-carry 1EXCL:REAL:PL-reach home  
 'When we carried them (the boys) all the way home...' [NVCV02.57: 350.725]
- (45) *Nio i-bbunbbun i-sesber nakhalmas*  
 water 3REAL:SG-full.to.brim 3REAL:SG-DUP-reach shin  
*an nekhlen okh arkha, i-vlem*  
 NMOD leg 2SG up 3REAL:SG-come

*i-sesber*                      *nibaun*    *nekhlen*    *git.*  
 3REAL:SG-DUP-reach    knee       leg            1INCL:NSG  
 ‘The water rose all the way up to your shins; it came up to our knees.’  
 [NV14.09: 58.165]

The attainment of spatial limits is strongly associated with realis mood, as (43) to (45) illustrate. The attainment of temporal limits can be associated either both realis and irrealis mood, as (46) and (47) illustrate.

(46) *Bibi*                      *ang*        *i-lukh-lukh-lukh*                      *i-sber*  
 maternal.uncle    ANA    3REAL:SG-DUP-DUP-stay    3REAL:SG-reach  
*dran*    *an*                      *i-sisien*                      *im-bbu,*                      *i-vu.*  
 TMPPN    NMOD    3REAL:SG-decide    3IRR:SG-go    3REAL:SG-go  
 ‘Uncle stayed on and on, until the time when he decided to go, and then he went.’ [NVK106.35]

(47) *Nabit-lukh-lakhlakh*                      *bbukhut*    *im-bbu*                      *ibi-sber*  
 1EXCL:IRR:PL-stay-quiet    inside    3IRR:SG-go    3IRR:SG-reach  
*nimdanial*    *tle.*  
 time                      another  
 ‘We were going to wait inside until another day.’ [NVDL01.18]

#### 11.3.1.4. *Same-subject utterance SVCs*

The utterance SVC involves a sequence of two utterance predicates. The verb encoded in V1 position specifies the manner of utterance. This may be *ver* ‘say’, *sus* ‘ask’, *kke* ‘call out’, or *yer* ‘sing’. The first three verbs permit an experiencer argument to be attached, licensed by the applicative suffix *-ikh*. The verb encoded in V2 is always the utterance predicate *ver* ‘say’, which is typically followed by a sentential complement reporting the material that is uttered. The sentential complement is optionally introduced by the complementizer *t(e)*.

Utterance SVCs may be marked by a slight rise in intonation on the final syllable of the experiencer argument.

(48)    V1    V2                      Complement  
*ver(-ikh)* ‘say (someone)’                      *ver* ‘say’                      (t(e)) COMP  
*sus(-ikh)* ‘ask (someone)’  
*kke(-kh)* ‘call out (someone)’  
*yer* ‘sing’

(49) *I-ver-ikh*                      *khavut*    *t-na*                      *i-ver*                      *te...*  
 3REAL:SG-say-APPL    husband    PSDT-1SG    3REAL:SG-say    COMP  
 ‘He said to my husband ...’ [NVDL04.19]

- (50) *I-sus-ikh*                      *adr*      *i-ver*                      [*ar*      *amt-uv*  
 3REAL:SG-ask-APPL      3NSG      3REAL:SG-say      3NSG      3IRR:PL-go  
*abi*].  
 where  
 ‘He asked them where they were going.’ [NVKS14.49]
- (51) *Ei*      *i-vlem*                      *mil*      *i-kke-kh*                      *mil*  
 3SG      3REAL:SG-come                      again      3REAL:SG-call-APPL                      again  
*i-na*                      *i-ver*                      *te...*  
 PSNPR-1SG      3REAL:SG-say                      COMP  
 ‘He came again and called out to me again, saying...’ [NVDL03.10]

Example (51) below displays the predicate *yer* ‘sing’ in an SVC. *Yer* does not permit an experiencer argument to be incorporated into the core. The suffixed form *yer-ikh* is attested in the corpus, but with the semantically unrelated meaning ‘foster (a child)’. *Yer* ‘sing’ is further illustrated in (52) inside an aspectual SVC with *tokh* marking progressive.

- (52) *At-tokh*                      *at-yer*                      *at-ver*                      *niterikh*      *ang,*  
 3REAL:PL-PROG      3REAL:PL-sing                      3REAL:PL-say                      child                      ANA  
*ar*                      *at-khan*                      *ij.*  
 3NSG      3REAL:PL-eat                      ANT  
 ‘They were singing, saying that the child, they had eaten him.’ [NVKS03.56]

To express the meaning of ‘sing to someone’, the personal preposition *tuan* is used to mark a non-core argument. This construction was attested just once in the corpus and has biclausal intonation, with a pause following *tuan*.

- (53) *Nibo*      *titi*                      *i-yer*                      *tuan*      *i-ver...*  
 song      3POSS:SG      3REAL:SG-sing                      LOCPSN      3REAL:SG-say  
 ‘Her song, she sang to (them), she said...’ [NVKS17.s168]

Where the experiencer argument is extractable from the context, it need not be encoded explicitly with any of the utterance verbs as in (54). If the manner of utterance is not salient, the proposition is realized as a simple verb rather than a serial construction as in (55).

- (54) *Ba*      *i-vrok-tata*                      *nimokhmokh*      *ang,*      *ale*  
 when      3REAL:SG-hold-tight                      female                      ANA                      then  
*i-sus*                      *i-ver...*  
 3REAL:SG-ask      3REAL:SG-say  
 ‘When he held the woman tight, he asked (her)...’ [NVKS16.89: 389.334]

- (55) *Baga nida titi i-ver te "Lesien*  
 then mother 3PS:SG 3REAL:SG-say COMP Lesien  
*at-uv lon nokhos."*  
 3REAL:PL-go LOC garden  
 'Then his mother said, "Lesien (and her friends) went to the garden."  
 [NVKS09.62]

### 11.3.1.5. Same-subject aspectual SVCs

Two types of phasal aspectual meanings can be expressed through core SVCs. The aspectual verbs occur in V1 position and the events that they modify are encoded in V2. The most commonly occurring type of phasal aspect in the corpus is progressive aspect, encoded in the verb *tokh* which is also an independent existential/locative verb 'exist, be at'. A rather less common structure expresses ingressive aspect through the indigenous form *tabatn* 'start' or the borrowed form *stait(em)* 'start' (see also §7.3.4.2.).

- (56) *Nat-tokh natvor lappan mago ga*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-PROG 1EXCL:REAL:PL-sit under mango and  
*Limei im-tokh im-sisir-ikh i-nam-ikh*  
 Limei 3IRR:SG-PROG 3IRR:SG-discuss-APPL PSNPR-1EXCL:NSG-APPL  
*nida...*  
 mother  
 'We were sitting under the mango and Limei was about to discuss with Mum and I...' [NVCV02.81: 521.91]

- (57) *I-tabatn i-ve niar an nokhos ang.*  
 3REAL.SG-start 3REAL.SG-make fence of garden ANA  
 'He started making the fence of the garden.' [NVKS10.18]

### 11.3.1.6. Same-subject modal SVCs

Another pattern that is occasionally found in the speech of younger community members is a serial construction involving *ver* 'want' which appears to serve as a marker of intentional or premeditated action on the part of a human agent. The serial construction takes the form of a two-part core SVC and is modal in meaning. The construction is associated with realis mood and indicates that the intended or premeditated action does in fact occur. In the example below, the entire intentional construction forms the second part of a sequential SVC where *vu* 'go' is encoded in V1 position.

- (58) *Nat-uv*                      *nat-ver*                      *nat-lukh*                      *lon*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-go    1EXCL:REAL:PL-want    1EXCL:REAL:PL-stay    LOC  
*nokhos t-na, ba nat-ver nat-uv,*  
 garden PSDT-1:SG when 1EXCL:REAL:PL-want 1EXCL:REAL:PL-go  
*nat-khit...*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-see  
 ‘We went to spend time in my garden, and when we went, we saw...’  
 [NVCV02.18: 85.085]
- (59) *Ba ar-ver ar-uv...*  
 when 3REAL:DU-want 3REAL:DU-go  
 ‘When they went...’ [NVCV05.23: 1376.619]

This serial construction contrasts with the use of *ver* ‘want’ as a complement-taking predicate with the intended (and unrealized) action encoded in an irrealis complement (see §12.4.6. for a description of desiderative complement-taking predicates).

- (60) *Barnakh ni-ver nim-bbuer no-ssor-ian ang<sup>46</sup>*  
 now 1REAL:SG-want 1IRR:SG-say NPR-talk-Nsf ANA  
*tle an mil.*  
 another NMOD again  
 ‘Now I want to tell another story again.’ [NVKS09.03]

### 11.3.2. Switch-function constructions

Switch-function core SVCs involve an initial transitive verb encoded in V1. The object of this verb serves as the subject of the verb encoded in V2. Directional, existential, and recipient sub-types of switch-function SVCs are presented in this section.

#### 11.3.2.1. Switch-function directional SVCs

Switch-function directional SVCs involve an initial transitive verb in V1 position. The transitive verb is followed by an intransitive directional verb in V2. The agent argument of V1 moves the V1 patient argument. V2 specifies the direction in which the V1 patient is moved.

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46. I speculate that the anaphoric demonstrative occurs in this context because the speaker already has in mind a particular story.

- (61) *Amti-gla*                      *mini-akh*      *nitmasn*      *im-das*  
 3IRR:PL-bear.a.corpse      man-here      corpse      3IRR:SG-go.down  
*vere.*  
 outside  
 ‘They were going to bear this man’s corpse outside.’ [NVKI29.69: 233.496]
- (62) *I-jujuk*                              *nivinbbu*      *ang*      *i-das*  
 3REAL:SG-push.through      bamboo      ANA      3REAL:SG-go.down  
*bistn.*  
 downward  
 ‘He pushed the bamboo down (into the water).’ [NVKS22.10: 85.17 ]
- (63) *Ale,*      *nitlele*              *ang*      *ar-dev*                      *nakhabb*      *ang*  
 then      small.child      ANA      3REAL:DU-carry      fire              ANA  
*i-vu.*  
 3:REAL:SG-go  
 ‘Then, the small children carried the fire away.’ [NVKS07.19: 121.334]
- (64) *Kum-bbus*              *nibobo*      *im-bbulem!*  
 2IRR:SG-carry      baby      3IRR:SG-come  
 ‘Bring the baby!’ [NVKS24.56: 227.246]

The argument which has the V1 grammatical function P and the V2 grammatical function S/A need not be realized overtly when it is contextually retrievable. In example (65) below, the object argument is a hen’s egg. It is fully encoded in the immediately preceding clause.

- (65) *I-jik*                              *i-sakh*                              *bbukhut*      *lon*      *nakhatkhat*      *ang.*  
 3REAL:SG-put      3REAL:SG-go.up      inside      LOC      basket              ANA  
 ‘She put it into the basket (of a hen’s egg).’ [NVKS19.12: 341.853]

The examples above all present transitive verbs encoded in V1, followed by an intransitive directional verb in V2. It is also possible to have a reflexive motion verb in V2 position.

- (66) *I-vuv*                              *nani*                              *i-dak*                                      *ei.*  
 3REAL:SG-blow      coconut      3REAL:SG-fall.over      3SG  
 ‘It blew the coconut tree down.’ [NVDL01.28]

### 11.3.2.2. *Switch-function existential/locational SVCs*

Switch-function existential/locational SVCs involve a transitive verb in V1, and an existential/locational verb in V2. The existential/locational verb provides the position of the argument that is the patient of the verb encoded in V1. The two verbs *tokh* ‘exist, be at’ and *lukh* ‘stay, live’ occur in existential/locational

SVCs. *Tokh* generally is used with non-human arguments while *lukh* occurs with human arguments. Hyslop (2001: 302) describes a similar category of switch-function positional SVCs in Ambae, where the posture verb ‘lie’ is used in a parallel way to these existential/locational verbs in Neverver; Crowley (2002a: 70) observes the use of the existential verb in Paamese “when an action involves no motion or direction as such, and results in a state of rest”.

Example (67) appears in the bible story of Noah and the Ark. In the Neverver translation, the ark is built up in the bush, rather than down by the ocean where boats would ordinarily be crafted. There is no apparent means by which the ark will be transported down to the sea, thus it is built to stay up in the bush.

- (67) *At-ver-ikh nuag tokhtokh ang i-tokh lakha.*  
 3REAL:PL-work-APPL boat big ANA 3REAL:SG-exist bush  
 ‘They built the ark in the bush.’ [NVCT07.19: 89.128]

Example (68) involves a woman who has gone to her boyfriend’s house during the night. Once a woman takes this action, families must proceed with marriage arrangements. The woman has taken the first steps towards a permanent move into her future husband’s home.

- (68) *I-okh ku-solikh vinang i-lukh man*  
 PSNPR-2SG 2REAL:SG-hide woman:ANA 3REAL:SG-stay EMPH  
*bbukhut tang?*  
 inside there  
 ‘Are you hiding the woman inside there?’ [NVDL04.20]

### 11.3.2.3. Switch-function recipient SVCs

One very important switch-function SVC in Neverver is the expression used for the action of giving. Rather than having a ditransitive verb to express this meaning, a serial construction is used. The verb encoded in V1 supplies the agent and theme arguments, and the verb encoded in V2 supplies the recipient. The V1 position is filled by the transitive verb *lav* ‘get’ and the V2 position is filled by the transitive verb *lik* ‘pass to s.o.’.

- (69) *Ba nib-lav nidam ang nib-lik okh...*  
 when 1IRR:SG-get yam ANA 1IRR:SG-pass 2SG  
 ‘When I give the yam to you...’ [NVKI04.46]

As in other constructions with contextually retrievable object arguments, the object does not need to be overtly expressed.

- (70) *Ba*      *i-tn*                      *nidam*    *ang*    *i-lav*  
 when    3REAL:SG-roast    yam      ANA    3REAL:SG-get  
*i-lik*                      *vinang.*  
 3REAL:SG -pass    woman:ANA  
 ‘When he roasted the yam, he gave it to the woman. [NVKS10.104]

Among younger speakers, this form is undergoing change, with the following variations provided in an elicitation session:

- (71) *Dran*      *nibobo*    *lele*      *ang*      *im-ngar,*  
 TMPPN    baby      small    ANA      3IRR:SG-cry
- (a)    *kub-lav*      *nio*      *kub-lik*      *ei.*  
 2IRR:SG-get    water    2IRR:SG-pass    3:SG
- +
- (b)    *kub-lav*      *nio*      *kub-lav-lik*      *ei.*  
 2IRR:SG-get    water    2IRR:SG-get-pass    3SG
- (c)    *kub-lav-lik*      *ei*      *nio.*  
 2IRR:SG-get-pass    3SG    water  
 ‘If the baby cries, give him water.’ [NVE16.35]

We can observe that in the final and most reduced form of the construction, where a nuclear SVC is used, the arguments are sequenced so that the human recipient is closest to the verb stem (the primary object), and the theme argument is further away (the secondary object). As with other ditransitive constructions, the more animate recipient R precedes the theme (T) (see §9.1.3.).

### 11.3.3. Ambient SVCs

Ambient core SVCs differ from other SVCs in that there is no particular argument that is shared by the verbs encoded in V1 and V2. Instead, the entire proposition encoded in V1, including its arguments, is modified by V2. The verb in V2 position always carries the third person singular subject prefix. In this section, manner, aspectual, directional, and similitive ambient SVCs are presented.

#### 11.3.3.1. Ambient manner SVCs

In this category of ambient SVCs, the verb encoded in V2 provides additional information about a state encoded in V1, or some description of the manner in which an action that is encoded in V1 is carried out.

- (72) *Ba i-khatkhat i-rvikh, ale, ni-bing.*  
 when 3REAL:SG-dry 3REAL:SG-good then 1REAL:SG-roll  
 ‘When they are really dry/nice and dry, I roll them.’ [NVDL13.04]
- (73) *Ba ku-khit barnakh, at-tev mej*  
 when 2REAL:SG-see now 3REAL:PL-begin.to.grow IMM  
*i-rvikh.*  
 3REAL:SG-good  
 ‘When you see (them) now, they begin to grow well.’ [NVDL18.20]
- (74) *Ar-tokh ar-ver ni-maur-ian ang*  
 IMPS:REAL-PROG IMPS:REAL-say NPR-live-NSF ANA  
*i-vu i-is.*  
 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-bad  
 ‘They are saying life went bad.’ [NVKI02.39]
- (75) *Ni-rongil si nim-dum im-kher.*  
 1REAL:SG-can NEG 1IRR:SG-run 3IRR:SG-strong  
 ‘I couldn’t run strongly.’ [NVKI03.33]

### 11.3.3.2. Ambient aspectual SVCs

The ambient SVC is one means of encoding the aspectual category of egression. (Egressive aspect is also discussed in §7.3.4.3.) In this serial construction, the egressive verb *suvsvuv* ‘be finished’ occurs in V2 position. This order is iconic with the temporal sequence of actions: the event must be underway first in order to be completed.

- (76) *At-khan tomato t-na i-suvsvuv.*  
 3REAL:PL-eat tomato PSDT-1SG 3REAL:SG-be.finished  
 ‘They finished eating my tomatoes.’ [NVCV02.19: 92.975]
- (77) *Ku-yel nevat i-suvsvuv kum-jurjur.*  
 2REAL:SG-pick.up stone 3REAL:SG-be.finished 2IRR:SG-spread.out  
 ‘You finish picking up the stones and you spread (the remaining stones) flat.’  
 [NVKI12.06]
- (78) *Ba ari-lles lu i-suvsvuv,*  
 when 3REAL:DU-bathe PERF 3REAL:SG-be.finished  
*ari-vlem ar-rus adr.*  
 3REAL:DU-come 3REAL:DU-wear 3NSG  
 ‘When they had finished bathing, they came and dressed themselves.’  
 [NVKS24.28: 104.607]

11.3.3.3. *Ambient directional SVCs*

Verbs that encode different types of vision form ambient SVCs. A directional verb in V2 specifies the direction in which the agent argument of V1 is looking.

- (79) *Ba ni-tvis i-das, ni-khit ar.*  
 when 1REAL:SG-look.dir 3REAL:SG-go.down 1REAL:SG-see 3NSG  
 ‘When I looked down, I saw them.’ [NVCV02.70: 451.513]

- (80) *Asi kum-dri okh, kum-kaknga im-sakh*  
 if 2IRR:SG-turn 2SG 2IRR:SG-DUP-search 3IRR:SG-go.up  
*arkha lon notvo arkha tang.*  
 up LOC castor.oil.plant up there  
 ‘If you turn around, look up at the castor oil tree up there.’  
 [NVKS22.25:153.351]

A construction that is similar in function to the recipient SVC is used to express the meaning of giving thanks to someone, writing to someone, and speaking to someone. In each case, a directional verb is encoded in V2 position to indicate the movement of the activity towards another person. Unlike the switch-function recipient SVC which involves a transitive verb in V1, the verbs that can fill V1 in this ambient construction may be transitive or intransitive. Like other ambient constructions, the directional verb in V2 always carries the third person singular subject prefix.

- (81) *Nim-bbuer me wallas im-bbu tuan vinang...*  
 1IRR:SG-say just thank-you 3IRR:SG-go LOCPSN woman:ANA  
 ‘I’ll just say thanks to the woman...’ [NVKS01.77]

- (82) *Adr ar-totos i-vu tuan nimkhut*  
 3NSG 3REAL:DU-DUP-write 3REAL:SG-go LOCPSN person  
*titi-dr.*  
 3PS-PL  
 ‘They wrote to their son.’ [NVE19.18a]

- (83) *Na ni-rongil nibi-ssor im-bbu tuan khavut*  
 1SG 1REAL:SG-can 1IRR:SG-talk 3IRR:SG-go LOCPSN husband  
*t-na.*  
 PSDT-1:SG  
 ‘I was able to speak to my husband.’ [NVE27.21]

## 11.3.3.4. Ambient similitive SVCs

The similitive construction is very common in the text corpus. Two verbs occur in this construction. The first is *gang* ‘be like that’. This similitive verb is anaphoric, pointing to something previously introduced in discourse. It can also point to something that represents prior knowledge of the speaker, as we find in example (86) below. Interestingly, this expression occurs at the beginning of many stories.

- (84) *Ba i-tokh i-yer i-gang, nida*  
 when 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-sing 3REAL:SG-like.so mother  
*titi i-lukh lakha i-rodrokh.*  
 3POSS:SG 3REAL:SG-stay bush 3REAL:SG-hear  
 ‘When she was singing like that, her mother was in the bush and heard.’  
 [NVKS24.45: 179.653]

- (85) *Ba ari-ssor i-gang, mang*  
 when 3REAL:DU-talk 3REAL:SG-like.so man:ANA  
*i-tur i-prok.*  
 3REAL:SG-stand.up 3REAL:SG-listen  
 ‘When they spoke like that, the man stood up and listened.’ [NVKS15.15]

- (86) *Nossorian ang i-vu i-gang.*  
 story ANA 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-like.so  
 ‘The story went like that.’ [NVKS09.04]

The second similitive verb is *gen* ‘be like, be the same as’. This verb combines with immediate perception complement-taking predicates that are encoded in V1 position.

- (87) *Dran kubi-tvas kum-khit i-gen*  
 TMPPN 2IRR:SG-brush.off 2IRR:SG-see 3REAL:SG-like  
*i-susul.*  
 3REAL:SG-shine  
 ‘When you brush it off, it will look to you like it is glowing.’ [NVKS01.43]

- (88) *Okh ku-rot i-gen naus ang im-bbuov?*  
 2SG 2REAL:SG-sense 3REAL:SG-like rain ANA 3IRR:SG-fall  
 ‘Does it feel to you like it is going to rain?’ [NVE25.46]

## 11.3.4. Inklusory constructions

In inklusory core SVCs, the arguments that serve as the subject and object of V1 combine to serve as the subject argument of V2. The most commonly occurring verb to fill V1 position is the transitive *blev* ‘be with’, though some other semantically appropriate transitive verbs are also attested in this SVC. A change in the subject/mood prefix on V2 signals the inklusory nature of these constructions.

- (89) *Ari-blev*                    *ar*            *at-uv*                    *at-ev*                    *lakha.*  
 3REAL:DU-be.with    3NSG    3REAL:PL-go    3REAL:PL-go.to    bush  
 ‘They (parents) went with them (children) together to the bush.’ [NVKS24.08: 27.633]

- (90) *I-rev*                    *i-blev*                    *ar-uv*                    *ar-ev*  
 3REAL:SG-pull    3REAL:SG-be.with    3REAL:DU-go    3REAL:DU-go.to  
*aiyem titi.*  
 home    3POSS:SG  
 ‘He pulled her along with him to his home’ [NVKS14.29]

- (91) *I-rev*                    *mokh*    *nimkhut*                    *at-das*                    *tang.*  
 3REAL:SG-pull    all            person    3REAL:PL-go.down    there  
 ‘He persuaded all the men to go down there (and they went).’ [NVKI07.48]

In each of the examples from (89) to (91), the inklusory argument-sharing pattern interacts with directional serialization.

# Chapter 12

## Complement-taking predicates

### 12.0. Introduction

Neverver has a class of verbs which take as their object a sentence-like complement. Sentence-like complements are described from §12.1. to §12.4. Complementizers optionally introduce sentence-like complements (§12.2.). The mood of a sentence-like complement interacts with the mood of various complement-taking predicates in predictable ways (§12.3.). Semantic sub-types of complement-taking predicates which share behavioural properties can be identified (§12.4.). Along with sentence-like complements, the process of nominalization can be employed to derive a noun from a predicate. Nominalized complements are considered in §12.5.

### 12.1. Complementation in Neverver

In defining complementation, I follow Noonan's (1985: 42, 2007: 52) much quoted definition of complementation as "the syntactic situation that arises when a notional sentence or predication is an argument of a predicate". Noonan refers to predicates that take entire sentences as their arguments as *complement-taking predicates* [CTPs].

Noonan (2007) distinguishes between a number of complement types on the basis of their morphology, identifying sentence-like complements with indicative and subjunctive subtypes, paratactic complements, infinitive complements, nominalized complements and participle complements. Among these types, Neverver makes use of just two: these are the sentence-like complement; and the nominalized complement. In sentence-like complements, the syntactic structure and morphology of the complement is identical to the syntactic structure and morphology of the same clause when it functions independently. In nominalized complements, we can observe standard nominalising morphology which prototypically involves the common noun prefix *n(V)-* and the nominalising suffix *-ian*.

- (1) Independent clause  
*Nida titi i-lukh lakha.*  
mother 3POSS:SG 3REAL:SG-stay bush  
'Her mother was in the bush.' [NVKS24.45: 179.653]

- (2) Sentence-like complement  
*I-khit* [ *nida* *titi* *i-lukh* *man* ].  
 3REAL:SG-see mother 3POSS:SG 3REAL:SG-stay EMPH  
 ‘He saw her mother was actually (there).’ [NVKS09.59]
- (3) Nominalized complement  
 [ *Ne-matur-ian* *i-tokh* *si* ].  
 NPR-sleep-NSF 3REAL:SG-exist NEG  
 ‘There was no sleep (of a time when a cyclone was passing over the island).’  
 [NVDL14.17: 105.828]

As illustrated in (2) above, sentence-like complements appear in the position of grammatical object. The distribution of sentence-like complements is constrained as they are not permitted to function as grammatical subjects or as obliques. Trivially perhaps, we can make the observation that although CTPs take sentential objects, they do not require the applicative suffix *-ikh*. This supports the analysis that certain verbs are inherently complement-taking in the same way that prototypical transitive verbs inherently require a nominal argument encoded in the object position. Nominalized complements contrast with sentence-like complements in their distribution. They appear in subject position as in (3), as well as in object and oblique positions.

In the corpus, a number of verbs are attested with either a sentential complement or a nominal object. In other cases, a given CTP will only permit a sentential object. There may be a separate lexical item which takes a nominal object. The form (*rong*)*rong* ‘want’ in example (4) below only ever occurs with a sentential complement. The morphologically related form *rongrok* ‘want’ (which probably derives from *rong* ‘want’ and *vrok* ‘hold’) almost always occurs with a nominal object. This is illustrated in (5). On a small number of occasions, it is attested with a sentential complement, as in (6).

- (4) (*rong*)*rong* ‘want’ + sentential complement  
*Be* *i-okh* *ku-rongrong* [ *i-na* *nib-lav* ]  
 but PSNPR-2SG 2REAL:SG-want PSNPR-1SG 1IRR:SG-get  
*i-okh*?  
 PSNPR-2SG  
 ‘But do you want me to marry you?’ [NVKS02.20]
- (5) *rongrok* ‘want’ + nominal object  
*I-git* *nit-rongrok* *nogovin* *nakhaj*.  
 PSNPR-1INCL:NSG 1INCL:REAL:PL-want egg ant  
 ‘We want rice.’ [NVKI04.51]

- (6) *rongrok* ‘want’ + sentential complement  
*Nat-rongrok* [ *nimkhut* *i-skham* *im-bbue*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-want man 3REAL:SG-one 3IRR:SG-make  
*sukul* *tuan* *mam* ].  
 church LOCPSN 1EXCL:NSG  
 ‘We want a man to lead church services at our place.’ [NVKI07.36]

## 12.2. Complementizers

Certain sub-types of complements are introduced by a complementizer. This complementizer can be optional. Of the complementizers that are attested in the corpus, only one functions primarily to introduce sentential complements. This is the complementizer *t(e)* which most often introduces complements of the utterance predicate *ver* ‘say’. Example (7) illustrates *ver* with the complementizer *te* and (8) illustrates the same verb with no complementizer.

- (7) The CTP *ver* ‘say’ with the complementizer *te*  
*Khavut* *titi* *ang* *i-ver-ikh* *ei* *i-ver*  
 husband 3POSS:SG ANA 3REAL:SG-say-APPL 3SG 3REAL:SG-say  
*te* [“*Kum-bbu* *kum-sir* *nida* *t-okh*”].  
 COMP 2IRR:SG-go 2IRR:SG-fetch mother PSDT-2SG  
 ‘Her husband said to her “Go get your mother”.’ [NVKS02.35]
- (8) The CTP *ver* ‘say’ with no complementizer  
*I-ver-ikh* *ei* *i-ver* [“*Kum-bbulem*  
 3REAL:SG-say-APPL 3SG 3REAL:SG-say 2IRR:SG-come  
*bbukhut*”].  
 inside  
 ‘She said to him “Come inside”.’ [NVCT06.32: 150.427]

The other two forms that function as complementizers are more frequently attested introducing modifiers of verb phrases (adverbial clauses) and modifiers of noun phrases (relative clauses and certain possessive constructions). The subordinator *il* introduces adverbial purpose and reason clauses, as well as nominal benefactive arguments.

- (9) *il* as a complementizer  
*Na* *ni-setvun* *il* *nib-lav* *nakhatkhat*  
 1SG 1REAL:SG-forget COMP 1IRR:SG-get basket  
*t-na*.  
 PSDT-1SG  
 ‘I forgot to get my basket.’ [NVKW09.59]

- (10)
- il*
- as an adverbial subordinator marking purpose

*Nimkhut i-skham i-lukh tang*  
 man 3REAL:SG-one 3REAL:SG-stay there  
*il im-matmat-ikh adr.*  
 PURPOSE 3IRR:SG-take.care-APPL 3NSG  
 ‘A man stayed there to look after them.’ [NVKS03.4]

- (11)
- il*
- as a marker of a benefactive argument

*Nibir-lav nobror an ibi-skham il na.*  
 1INCL:IRR:DU-get k.o.yam NMOD 3IRR:SG-one BENE 1SG  
 ‘We will get one of those *nobror* yams for me.’ [NVKI05.20]

The nominal modifying particle *an* introduces relative clauses with definite heads, as well as a range of possessive modifiers of nouns (see chapter five for a full description).

- (12)
- an*
- as a complementizer

*Ei i-rongil an ei im-bbulem si.*  
 3SG 3REAL:SG-know COMP 3SG 3IRR:SG-come NEG  
 ‘He<sub>i</sub> found out that he<sub>i</sub> won’t/can’t come.’ [NVE05.13.1]

- (13)
- an*
- as a relative subordinator

*nimkhut an i-tokh i-ve nokhos*  
 man NMOD 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-make garden  
*t-na ang*  
 PSDT-1SG ANA  
 ‘the man who is making my garden’ [NVKS10.75]

- (14)
- an*
- as a marker of a possession

*nokho an niberyev ang*  
 vine NMOD k.o.fruiting.vine ANA  
 ‘the vine of the niberyev plant’ [NVKS22.09: 66.816 ]

The co-opting of adverbial and relative subordinators as complementizers appears to be a recent innovation in Neverver. Constructions with co-opted complementizers are observed both in the more spontaneous recorded speech of younger community members, and in elicitation sessions with younger community members. This innovation may stem from contact with English and Bislama, where complementizers are obligatory in many contexts.

### 12.3. Complementation and mood patterns

The distribution of mood marking in complement constructions is central to their description in Neverver. Like main clauses, complement clauses may be either realis, signalled with an unmarked clause, or irrealis, signalled with an *m*-clause. Noonan (2007: 98) observes that “many languages that employ tense or mood morphology restrict in various ways the tense or mood categories allowable in complements”. This is true of Neverver.

Semantically, CTPs encode one proposition, and their complements encode separate propositions. Such propositions may be temporally independent, as we find with utterance predicates and their complements. Alternatively, they may be temporally dependent. Temporal dependency between main and subordinate clause can involve simultaneity, which is present for example between predicates of immediate perception and their complements. Temporal dependency may also involve temporal sequence, which is present for example between predicates of manipulation or causation and their complements.

For most of the situations that are expressed in main and complement clauses, the correspondence between nonfuture temporal location and event actuality holds, as does the correspondence between future temporal location and event nonactuality. There are however, examples where a temporal interpretation of either a main or a complement clause is problematic. In each problematic case, clause marking can be understood more clearly in terms of the parameter of reality status, lending support to the choice of *mood* over *tense* as the most appropriate grammatical label for the contrast between unmarked and *m*-clauses (see chapter 7 for a fuller discussion).

In Neverver, we find that the marking of complements is subject to specific restrictions, depending on the CTP involved. Three patterns of mood marking are attested between main and sentence-like complement clause.

#### 12.3.1. Polarity determined complements

There is a set of CTPs where the marking of the complement clause is dependent on the marking and polarity of the matrix clause. These constructions involve the complement taking predicates listed in (15).

(15)	Semantic category of CTP	Verb	Complementizer
	Immediate perception	<i>rot</i> 'sense' <i>rodrokh</i> 'hear' <i>khit~(khi)trokh</i> 'see'	---
	Knowledge & acquisition of knowledge <sup>47</sup>	<i>rongil</i> 'know' <i>rongil</i> 'find out' <i>rodrokh</i> 'hear that'	<i>te, (an)</i> <i>an</i>
	Manipulative (causative )	<i>ve</i> 'make'	---
	Propositional attitude	<i>rokkamsukh</i> 'believe' <i>ver-bor</i> 'think' <i>rot igen</i> 'feel that'(?)	---

Polarity determined CTPs reflect a speaker's belief about the reality of the event encoded in the complement. Because of this, the polarity of the matrix clause is important. A positive matrix clause, coded for realis mood, signals the reality of the situation encoded in the matrix. At the same time, it signals that the complement situation is also real. A positive matrix clause coded for irrealis mood signals the unreality of the situation encoded in the matrix. Consequently, the complement situation must also be marked as unreal with irrealis mood. A negative matrix clause indicates that the simultaneous complement situation is unreal and thus we find the complement is coded with irrealis mood. These mood patterns are dependent patterns as the mood of the complement is determined by the mood and polarity of the matrix clause. The patterns are displayed in (16).

(16)	Polarity of matrix clause	Mood of matrix clause	Mood of complement
	Positive	$\emptyset$ -Realis	$\emptyset$ -Realis
	Positive	<i>m</i> -Irrealis	<i>m</i> -Irrealis
	Negative	$\emptyset$ -Realis	<i>m</i> -Irrealis
	Negative	<i>m</i> -Irrealis	<i>m</i> -Irrealis

The temporal relationship between most subtypes of polarity determined CTPs and their complements is dependent. Immediate perception predicates have complements that are temporally simultaneous or over-lapping. Predicates of knowledge and causation have complements that follow from or are sequential to the matrix predicate. The temporal relationships between propositional attitude predicates and their complements are more complex. Noonan (2007: 105) claims that such complements display independent time reference; however the Neverver data is rather resistant to a temporal analysis. Focusing simply on polarity determined CTPs where the complement displays temporal dependence, and considering previous discussions of the salience of temporal location

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47. *Khitrokh an* 'see that' occurs in the elicited data set but is not attested in the text corpus.

as an organizational parameter in Neverver, it is appropriate to attempt a temporal analysis of these constructions.

(17)	Polarity of matrix clause	Temporal location of matrix clause	Temporal location of complement
	Positive	$\emptyset$ -Nonfuture <i>m</i> -Future	$\emptyset$ -Nonfuture <i>m</i> -Future
	Negative	$\emptyset$ -Nonfuture <i>m</i> -Future	<i>m</i> -Future(?) <i>m</i> -Future

For the most part, a temporal analysis is tolerated; however, when we consider negated CTPs with nonfuture time reference, the associated *m*-clause in the complement is problematic. Example (18) and (19) display the manipulative predicate of causation *ve* ‘make’. A temporal interpretation would require the complement *m*-clause to be analysed as expressing future temporal location. Looking at example (19), it is clear that no such temporal interpretation is intended.

(18)	Realis + realis				
	<i>Nimkhut</i>	<i>ttis</i>	<i>i-ve</i>	<i>naus</i>	<i>i-vov</i> .
	man	holy	3REAL:SG-make	rain	3REAL:SG-fall
	‘The holy person made the rain fall (and it fell).’ [NVKI01.49]				

(19)	Negative-realis + irrealis				
	<i>Mang</i>	<i>i-ve</i>	<i>si</i>	<i>naus</i>	<i>im-bbuov</i> .
	man:ANA	3REAL:SG-make	NEG	rain	3IRR:SG-fall
	‘He didn’t make the rain fall (and it didn’t fall’; not ‘and it will/won’t fall’).’ [NVKW08.44]				

The consequence of the negation of the matrix clause in polarity determined complement constructions is that the complement situation is presented as non-actualized, with an irrealis *m*-clause.

### 12.3.2. Irrealis complements

Another subset of complement-taking predicates involves complements which are restricted to irrealis mood marking, irrespective of the mood marking or polarity of the matrix clause. This second dependent pattern of mood marking is primarily associated with situations where there is a clear temporal dependency between the occurrence of the main clause situation, and the occurrence of the complement situation. In each case, the complement situation follows from the

matrix situation. Many of the verbs in this category (optionally) take complementizers to introduce the complement clause.

(20)	Semantic category of CTP	Verb	Complementizer
	Modal	<i>rongil</i> ‘can, be able’	---
	Desiderative	<i>ver</i> ‘want/intend’	---
		<i>(rong)rong</i> ‘want’	---
		<i>rongrokh</i> ‘want/like’	---
	Anti-desiderative	<i>rosikh</i> ‘not want’	<i>(il)</i>
	Achievement	<i>sisien</i> ‘decide to’	<i>(il)</i>
		<i>setta</i> ‘remember to’	<i>il</i>
		<i>setvun</i> ‘forget to’	<i>il</i>
		<i>kretikh</i> ‘try to make’	<i>il</i>
		<i>dro-skhen</i> ‘do in vain’	(CTP?)
	Phasal	<i>tabatn, stait(em)</i> ‘start’	<i>il</i>

As shown in (21) below, regardless of mood or polarity of the matrix clause, complements are always coded with irrealis mood.

(21)	Polarity of matrix clause	Mood of matrix clause	Mood of complement
	Positive	$\emptyset$ -Realis	<i>m</i> -Irrealis
	Positive	<i>m</i> -Irrealis	<i>m</i> -Irrealis
	Negative	$\emptyset$ -Realis	<i>m</i> -Irrealis
	Negative	<i>m</i> -Irrealis	<i>m</i> -Irrealis

The consistent irrealis marking of the complement is compatible with an analysis of nonactualization of the complement situation at the reference time. For verbs like ‘be able’ and ‘want’, the situations in the complement clauses (what can be done and what is wanted) are nonactualized at the time of being able and wanting. Irrealis marking is also compatible with an analysis of temporal sequence, as the complement situations may well be anticipated to occur, or not occur, in following the reference time.

(22)	Polarity of matrix clause	Temporal location of matrix clause	Temporal location of complement
	Positive	$\emptyset$ -Nonfuture	<i>m</i> -Future
		<i>m</i> -Future	<i>m</i> -Future
	Negative	$\emptyset$ -Nonfuture	<i>m</i> -Future
		<i>m</i> -Future	<i>m</i> -Future

The phasal CTP *tabatn* ‘start’ is an interesting member of this category, because the marking of the complement suggests that for Neverver speakers, beginning an event is quite distinct from doing an event, or seeing it through to completion. Noonan (2007: 139-40) makes the claim that phasal predicates have

complements with simultaneous time reference. If that were the case in Neverver, we should find *tabatn* ‘start’ patterning as a polarity determined CTP rather than taking an irrealis complement.

### 12.3.3. Independent complements

The final category of CTPs in Neverver involves predicates where the mood of the associated complement is completely independent of the mood of the matrix clause. In a temporal analysis, we find the temporal location of the complement is independent of the temporal location of the matrix clause. In such cases, the polarity of the matrix clause also has no bearing on the mood of the complement. CTPs with independent complements belong to the category of utterance predicates.

(23)	Semantic category of CTP Utterance	Verb <i>ver</i> ‘say’ <i>rot</i> ‘sense/think’ <i>ver-bor</i> ‘think’ <i>prok~prong</i> ‘listen-think’(?)	Complementizer <i>t(e)</i>
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As noted in 12.2 above, complements of utterance predicates are commonly introduced with the complementizer *t(e)*.

Because there is no dependency between complement and CTP, either in terms of temporal location, or in terms of event actualization, this category of complementation does not contribute further evidence to the discussion of grammatical mood or tense. Rather it simply confirms that either temporal location or reality status could be used as the sole parameter to explain the relevant grammatical patterning.

### 12.3.4. Observations on mood patterning and complementation

Two rather useful observations can be made with regards to the patterning of mood in complement constructions. Firstly, mood patterning provides an empirical means of distinguishing between certain types of complement constructions and core serial verb constructions. Core SVCs require concordant mood marking on all verbs in the serial construction. CTPs with independent or dependent irrealis complements are easily distinguishable from core SVCs as there are multiple examples in the corpus where the mood of the complement differs from the mood of the CTP. In cases where multi-verb sequences exhibit matched mood marking, as in a sequence of two verbs which are both marked

for realis mood, there may be structural ambiguity between serial and complement analyses. This ambiguity can be resolved by altering the polarity of the construction. When a CTP with a polarity-determined complement is negated, the resulting mood of the complement is irrealis. One realization of this pattern is a sequence of a negative realis CTP, followed by an irrealis complement. Such sequences are disallowed in core SVCs, which permit only concordant mood marking.

In example (24), repeated from (18) above, the causative multi-verb construction with a sequence of two realis verbs is structurally ambiguous. In (25), this ambiguity has been resolved by altering the polarity of the initial verb. The resulting negative realis matrix clause followed by irrealis complement allows us to describe *ve* ‘make’ as a complement-taking predicate with polarity-determined mood marking rather than as the first verb of a core serial construction.

- (24) Realis + realis  
*Nimkhut ttis i-ve naus i-vov.*  
 man holy 3REAL:SG-make rain 3REAL:SG-fall  
 ‘The holy person made the rain fall.’ [NVKI01.49]

- (25) Negative-realis + irrealis  
*Mang i-ve si naus im-bbuov.*  
 man:ANA 3REAL:SG-make NEG rain 3IRR:SG-fall  
 ‘He didn’t make the rain fall.’ [NVKW08.44]

A second observation arising from the identification of polarity determined, irrealis, and independent complementation, is that there are three broad patterns of complementizer use. Polarity determined complements are almost never introduced by a complementizer, suggesting a tight structural bond between matrix and complement clause. Where a temporal analysis is successful, we find the tight structural bond is paralleled by the tightest temporal integration between matrix and complement situation, with complement situations being simultaneous, overlapping, or immediately following their matrix clause situations. With the exception of modal and desiderative CTPs, irrealis complements are more commonly introduced by complementizers. The grammatical separation that is achieved by complementizer use perhaps reinforces the temporal separation of the complement situation from the matrix clause situation.

Finally, utterance CTPs have a dedicated (though not always used) complementizer which allows a clear structural separation of matrix and complement clause. This dedicated grammatical strategy is available to speakers to reinforce the conceptual separation of the independent complement situation from the matrix utterance clause. The act of saying can be temporally and spatially quite

distinct, as well as distinct in terms of participants, from the event expressed in the complement.

## 12.4. Semantic sub-types of complementation

Noonan (1985, 2007) identifies numerous CTP sub-classes on the basis of their semantic features. Noonan's sub-classes have already been used in §12.3 above to label groups of CTPs in Neverver. In addition to the categories listed already for Neverver, Noonan (1985, 2007) identifies pretence predicates, commentative predicates, and conjunctive predicates as semantic sub-classes. Members of these sub-classes are not attested as CTPs in Neverver.

In the following sections, each semantic sub-class of CTP will be described. Relevant properties of reality status will be discussed, along with temporal location where of interest, and interactions with negation.

### 12.4.1. Immediate perception predicates

Immediate perception predicates involve a CTP that expresses some act of perception on the part of a human. This act of perception overlaps temporally with the perceived event that is described in the complement. Structurally, there is no overt complementizer. The complements of immediate perception CTPs have polarity-determined mood marking. When the CTP is marked for realis mood, the event that is perceived is also marked for realis. Positive realis verbs of perception presuppose the reality of the event that is perceived. When the CTP is negated, or marked for irrealis mood, the complement is always marked with irrealis mood. For CTPs located in past time, it is possible that the complement proposition did in fact take place; however, if the complement proposition was not perceived, then it may not be coded as real.

A number of immediate perception predicates are attested in the corpus. The most important distinction between lexical items is found between predicates of sight and predicates used for other senses. The most general non-sight verb of perception is *rot*, which is loosely glossed as 'sense'. This single predicate encompasses multiple sensory meanings including physical and emotional sensations of feeling. Physical sensations include hearing, smelling, and tasting things, as well as experiencing sensations of heat, cold, movement and heaviness among others. In each of these usages, mood marking is polarity-determined. This mood patterning is demonstrated in examples (26) to (29) with the meaning 'hear'. Example (26) is a naturally occurring construction while (27) to (29) are elicited constructions.

- (26) *I-rot*                    *niterikh*    *ang*        *i-ngar*.  
 3REAL:SG-sense    child            ANA        3REAL:SG-cry  
 ‘He heard the child cry.’ [NVKS08.14]
- (27) *I-rot*                    *si*        *niterikh*    *ang*        *im-ngar*.  
 3REAL:SG-sense    NEG    child            ANA        3IRR:SG-cry  
 ‘He didn’t hear the child cry.’ [NVKW08.73]
- (28) *Ib-rot*                    *niterikh*    *ang*        *im-ngar*.  
 3IRR:SG-sense    child            ANA        3IRR:SG-cry  
 ‘He will hear the child cry.’ [NVKW08.74]
- (29) *Ib-rot*                    *si*        *niterikh*    *ang*        *im-ngar*.  
 3IRR:SG-sense    NEG    child            ANA        3IRR:SG-cry  
 ‘He won’t hear the child cry.’ [NVKW08.75]

Other sensory meanings of *rot* attested in the text corpus are illustrated from (30) to (25).

- (30) *At-rot*                    *nio*        *an*        *i-llum*.  
 3REAL:PL-sense    water    NMOD<sup>48</sup>    3REAL:SG-tasty  
 ‘They felt its juice was tasty.’ [NVKS02.153]
- (31) *Ar-rot*                    *nabbun*    *nisin*        *i-skham*        *i-tokh*.  
 3REAL:DU-sense    smell        thing        3REAL:SG-one    3REAL:SG-exist  
 ‘They sensed there was the smell of something.’ [NVKS07.23: 146.861]
- (32) *I-rot*                    *nibittan*    *ang*        *i-velvel*                    *we*  
 3REAL:SG-sense    ground        ANA        3REAL:SG-DUP-shake    AUGCO  
*i-velvel*.  
 3REAL:SG-DUP-shake  
 ‘He felt the ground shake violently.’ [NVKS10.52]
- (33) *Ar-rot*                    *nemar*        *i-khas*                    *Ar*  
 3REAL:DU-sense    hunger        3REAL:SG-bite        3NSG  
 ‘They felt hungry.’ [NVKS05.08: 40.858] (lit. ‘They felt hunger bite them.’)
- (34) *I-rot*                    *i-masik*.  
 3REAL:SG-sense    3REAL:SG-be.tired  
 ‘She felt tired.’ [NVKS02.40]

48. In this construction, *an* is a nominal subordinator, marking a genitive relation between *nio* ‘water’ and the unrealised 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular pronoun ‘it’ referring to the coconut under discussion. It does not introduce a complement or a relative clause.

- (35) *Be na ni-rot i-kher.*  
 but 1SG 1REAL:SG-sense 3REAL:SG-difficult  
 ‘But I feel it is difficult.’ [NVDL03.12]

*Rot* is also used with the meaning ‘think’, where it patterns as an utterance predicate, discussed in §12.4.10. below.

Alongside the predicate *rot*, which can be used for hearing among other sensory usages, there is a separate lexical item *rodrokh* (also attested as *rodrok* and *drodrokh*) which is restricted to the aural sense. This additional sensory CTP also has polarity-determined mood marking, which is illustrated in the examples below.

- (36) *Ba nat-rodrokh [ar-ver nilangrav im-bbulem]...*  
 when 1EXCL:REAL:PL-hear IMPS:REAL-say cyclone 3IRR:SG-come  
 ‘When we heard them say the cyclone was going to come...’ [NVDL01.22]

- (37) *I-drodrok si [niterikh ang im-ngar].*  
 3REAL:SG-hear NEG child ANA 3IRR:SG-cry  
 ‘He didn’t hear the child sing.’ [NVKW08.85]

- (38) *Maran nim-rodrok [niterikh lele edr abit-yer].*  
 tomorrow 1IRR:SG-hear child small PL 3IRR:PL-sing  
 ‘Tomorrow, I will hear the young children sing.’ [NVKW08.86]

- (39) *Maran am-drodrok mo si niterikh ang*  
 tomorrow IMPS.IRR-hear CONT NEG child ANA  
*abit-yer.*  
 3IRR:PL-sing  
 ‘Tomorrow they won’t hear the children sing any longer.’ (e.g. of a cancelled performance) [NVKW08.87]

The sense of sight can be encoded in the verb *khit* or (*khi*)*trokh* ‘see (non-agentive)’, which occurs with both sentential complements and nominal objects.<sup>49</sup> The main point of difference between the various forms of ‘see’ is that when it is reduplicated, the form *khitkhit* can be used intransitively whereas forms involving *trokh* are not attested with intransitive uses. The text examples show marking of realis mood in both the CTP and the complement, emphasizing the reality for the speaker of the things which are seen. Elicited constructions confirm the polarity-determined pattern of mood marking for these items.

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49. The morphologically unrelated transitive form *tnga-kh* ‘look at (deliberate)’ takes only nominal objects.

- (40) *Ni-khit ei i-vlem mil i-kke-kh*  
 1REAL:SG-see 3SG 3REAL:SG-come again 3REAL:SG-call-APPL  
*mil i-na.*  
 again PSNPR-1SG  
 ‘I saw him come again and call out to me again.’ [NVDL03.10]
- (41) *Ar-rot i-rvikh il ari-trokh*  
 3REAL:DU-feel 3REAL:SG-good CAUS 3REAL:DU-see  
*nidam i-tev lon nokhos ang.*  
 yam 3REAL:SG-begin.to.grow LOC garden ANA  
 ‘They felt good because they saw yams beginning to grow in the garden.’  
 [NVKS13.48]
- (42) *Ni-khitrokh nakhabb ang i-tel-tel.*  
 1REAL:SG-see fire ANA 3REAL:SG-DUP-smoke  
 ‘I saw the fire smoking.’ [NVKS17.100]
- (43) *Ni-khitrokh niterikh lele ang edr ati-pleple.*  
 1REAL:SG-see child small ANA PL 3REAL:PL-play  
 ‘I saw the small children playing.’ [NVKW08.88]
- (44) *Ni-khitrokh si niterikh ang edr amti-pleple.*  
 1REAL:SG-see NEG child ANA PL 3IRR:PL-play  
 ‘I didn’t see the children playing.’ [NVKW08.89]
- (45) *Nim-khitrokh niterikh amti-pleple.*  
 1IRR:SG-see child 3IRR:PL-play  
 ‘I will see children playing.’ [NVKW08.90]
- (46) *Nim-khitrokh si niterikh amti-pleple.*  
 1IRR:SG-see NEG child 3IRR:PL-play  
 ‘I won’t see children playing.’ [NVKW08.88]<sup>50</sup>

Examples (27), (37), and (44) in this section all supply evidence of the function of the preverbal *m-* morpheme to signal the nonactualization of situations that it codes, as opposed to the future temporal location of that situation.

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50. Note the absence of the definite/anaphoric determiner with *niterikh* ‘child(ren)’ from these last two constructions, where the event in the complement is located after the speech time – the speaker does not have any particular children in mind.

## 12.4.2. Predicates of knowledge and acquisition of knowledge

The verb *rongil* is used to express both knowledge ‘know that’ and the modal meaning of ability ‘be able, can’ discussed in §12.4.5. below. When used to express knowledge, *rongil* ‘know’ takes a sentence-like complement. In the corpus, the large majority of occurrences of *rongil* in this usage are positive constructions where both the CTP and the complement are marked for realis mood. ‘Knowing’ thus strongly presupposes the reality of what is known. In example (47), both the CTP and complement are marked for realis mood. The event in the complement ‘planting’ is a completed past event.

- (47) *Be ei i-rongil na ni-khavukh nebror.*  
 but 3SG 3REAL:SG-know 1SG 1REAL:SG-plant k.o.yam  
 ‘But he knows I planted Nebror yams.’ [NVKI05.18]

In some text material and in most of the elicited constructions, the mood marking of *rongil* is polarity-determined. We find that the complements of negated CTPs and the complements of irrealis CTPs are marked for irrealis mood. In (48), the realis CTP is negated, and the complement is marked for irrealis mood. The event in the complement is unrealized at the reference time, which is located prior to the time of speech. In (49), the realis CTP is again negated, and this time is accompanied by a negated complement. ‘Not knowing’ is treated as an actual state, while ‘what they haven’t got’ is coded as nonactualized. In (50), the irrealis CTP takes an irrealis complement. Again, the event in the complement is unrealized at the reference time.

- (48) *Nitabras ang i-rongil si niskhan im-bbue.*  
 fruit.bat ANA 3REAL:SG-know NEG what 3IRR:SG-do  
 ‘The fruit bat didn't know what to do.’ [NVKS05.18: 96.544]

- (49) *Ar-rongil si abi-tbbukh si.*  
 IMPS:REAL-know NEG IMPS.IRR-have NEG  
 ‘They don’t know they haven’t got it/It isn’t known what is missing.’  
 [NVKI23.60]

- (50) *Adr abit-rongil netan abit-ve.*  
 3NSG 3IRR:PL-know thing:DEF 3IRR:PL-do  
 ‘They will know the thing to do.’ [NVKI30.36]

There are also constructions in the text corpus where negative polarity of the CTP does not produce irrealis mood in the complement. These constructions are of the ‘know why’ type, rather than the ‘know that’ type. ‘Know why’ constructions, regardless of their polarity, involve the presupposition that

‘something’ is known, thus requiring realis encoding. Example (51) has a negated CTP marked for realis mood, which is followed by a complement also marked for realis mood. In this case, the event in the complement is actually occurring at the reference time.

- (51) *Vinang i-ver “I-na ni-rongil si*  
 woman:ANA 3REAL:SG-say PSNPR-1SG 1REAL:SG-know NEG  
*nitlele ang i-ngar il niskhan ing”.*  
 small.child ANA 3REAL:SG-cry CAUS what EXCLAM  
 ‘The woman said “I don’t know why the little one cries/is crying”.’  
 [NVKS20.29: 142.848]

In the corpus, there are a small number of constructions where *rongil* takes a complementizer. This is most frequently *te*, although *rongil* is also attested with *an*. While other examples of *rongil* display a stative usage, examples with complementizers can be interpreted as more inchoative, meaning ‘come to know’ rather than simply ‘know’. The constructions in examples (52) and (53) were produced by two of the oldest speakers of Neverver while (54) and (55) were produced in an elicitation session by a much younger speaker.

Example (52) displays an irrealis CTP, and a realis complement introduced by the complementizer *te*. This mood patterning is not attested with the stative usage of *rongil*. The event in the complement, where a man brought two children fire, occurred prior to the reference time and was one of the key events in a traditional narrative. The children’s parents are absent at the time of this event, but later smell food cooking and thus find out about the discovery of fire.

- (52) *Nida titi-r abir-rongil te ei i-lav*  
 mother 3POSS-PL 3IRR:DU-know COMP 3SG 3REAL:SG-get  
*nakhabb ang i-vlem.*  
 fire ANA 3REAL:SG-come  
 ‘Their mother was going to come to know that he brought the fire.’  
 [NVKS07.36: 224.823]

Example (53) displays an irrealis CTP, and an irrealis complement introduced by *te*. The event in the complement is unrealized at the reference time and refers indirectly to a woman’s menstrual time, when she is forbidden to enter a garden area.

- (53) *Dran gam kabir-rongil te kabr-ev si*  
 TMPPN 2NSG 2IRR:DU-know COMP 2IRR:DU-go.to NEG  
*lon niar...*  
 LOC garden  
 ‘When you come to know that you won’t/shouldn’t go to the garden...’  
 [NVKS13.28]

In example (54) both the CTP and complement are marked for realis mood. This time, the complementizer *an* introduces the complement clause. In this elicited construction, *rongil* can also be interpreted as inchoative.

- (54) *Vinang i-rongil an ei*  
 woman:ANA 3REAL:SG-know COMP 3SG  
*i-lavpinokh nibissav.*  
 3REAL:SG-take.without.permission bread  
 ‘She came to know that he stole the bread.’ [NVE29.1]

In (55) the complement is marked for irrealis mood and is negated, indicating that the event ‘come’ is unrealized at the reference time and will continue to remain unrealized. The relationship between complement and CTP is similar to example (53) above.

- (55) *Ei i-rongil an ei im-bbulem si.*  
 3SG 3REAL:SG-know COMP 3SG 3IRR:SG-come NEG  
 ‘He<sub>i</sub> came to know that he<sub>i</sub> won’t/can’t come.’ [NVE05.13.1]

Because both examples (54) and (55) were produced in elicitation sessions, it is possible that the complementizer *an* is an artifact of the elicitation process itself, influenced by the use of *that* in English or *se* in Bislama. However, the spontaneous examples in (52) and (53) with the complementizer *te* lend support to the analysis of *rongil* having both a stative-knowledge function and an inchoative-acquisition of knowledge function.

The verb *rodrok* ‘hear’, described in §12.4.1. as an immediate perception predicate, is also attested as an acquisition of knowledge predicate meaning ‘hear that’ or ‘learn through talk’. In this function, it occurs with the nominal modifying particle *an* functioning as its complementizer. The unmarked sentence-like complement described above is far more common; however, this construction does appear five times in the corpus and importantly, it is a spontaneous rather than elicited construction.

- (56) *Ba i-rodrokh an Jenny i-dam bbukhut...*  
 when 3REAL:SG-hear COMP Jenny 3REAL:SG-shout inside  
 ‘When he heard (directly) that Jenny shouted inside...’ [NVCV05.33:  
 1428.143]

- (57) *Nat-rodrokh an ar-ver-da nilangrav*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-hear COMP IMPS:REAL-say-PART cyclone  
*im-bbulem.*  
 3IRR:SG-come  
 ‘We heard (indirectly) that they mentioned a cyclone was coming.’  
 [NVDL01.2]

## 12.4.3. Manipulative predicates

The form *ve* ‘make’ is a manipulative CTP and is used to encode the syntactic causative in Neverver.<sup>51</sup> A similar syntactic causative construction has been identified in other Vanuatu languages including Naman (Crowley 2006a: 203) on Malekula, and Lolovoli (Hyslop 2001: 303–304) on Ambae. In Lolovoli, non-productive morphological causatives also occur. The Lolovoli prefix *vaga-* (Hyslop 2001: 335), which appears on ten stems deriving a transitive verb, is cognate with the relic *vakh-* in Neverver which appears in just two items. The syntactic causative is the productive means of forming causative constructions in both Neverver and Lolovoli.

Mood marking in manipulative constructions is polarity-determined, as illustrated in examples (58) to (61) below. If the causing event encoded in the CTP is marked for realis mood and positive polarity, there is an implication that the caused event actually occurred. Examples (58) and (59) are repeated again from (18) and (19) above.

(58) *Nimkhut ttis i-ve naus i-vov.*  
 man holy 3REAL:SG-make rain 3REAL:SG-fall  
 ‘The holy person made the rain fall.’ [NVKI01.49]

(59) *Mang i-ve si naus im-bbuov.*  
 man:ANA 3REAL:SG-make NEG rain 3IRR:SG-fall  
 ‘He didn’t make the rain fall.’ [NVKW08.44]

(60) *Mang im-bbue naus im-bbuov.*  
 man:ANA 3IRR:SG-make rain 3IRR:SG-fall  
 ‘He will make the rain fall.’ [NVKW08.48]

(61) *Mang im-bbue si naus im-bbuov.*  
 man:ANA 3IRR:SG-make NEG rain 3IRR:SG-fall  
 ‘He won’t make it rain.’ [NVKW08.51]

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51. I follow Song (2001) in describing the Neverver causative construction as a syntactic causative; Kemmer and Verhagen (1994) use the term *analytic causative*, while Hyslop (2001: 303), in her analysis of Lolovoli, uses the term *periphrastic causative* in passing for a similar construction.

## 12.4.4. Propositional attitude predicates

Propositional attitude predicates are used to express “an attitude regarding the truth of the proposition expressed as their complement” (Noonan 2007: 124). Three items with this function are attested in Neverver. These are *rokkamsukh* ‘believe’, *ver-bor* ‘think’, and *rot i-gen* ‘feel like’. The patterns of mood marking are varied and complex in this sub-category of CTPs, reflecting the speaker’s epistemic judgement about the reality of the event in the complement.

The propositional attitude predicate *rokkamsukh* ‘believe’ is attested with complements that refer either to events that took place in the past, or to the current state of affairs. It is marked for realis mood and in each occurrence the complement is also marked for realis mood. This implies that if one believes something, then that something is real. It does not appear to be possible to encode one’s beliefs with irrealis mood, to say for example ‘I will believe...’ or ‘he will believe...’.

- (62) *Ni-rokkamsukh*    *i-vu*                    *me*    *i-gang*.  
 1REAL:SG-believe    3REAL:SG-go    just    3REAL:SG-like.so  
 ‘I believe it went like so.’ [NVKI24.57]

- (63) *Ni-rokkamsukh*    *ar-rongil*                    *si*    *abi-tbbukh*    *si*.  
 1REAL:SG-believe    IMPS:REAL-know    NEG    IMPS.IRR-have    NEG  
 ‘I believe they don’t know they haven’t got it.’ [NVKI23.60]

The CTP *rokkamsukh* also appears once in the corpus in a serial construction with the utterance predicate *ver* ‘say’. Like the other examples with positive polarity, the complement is marked for realis mood, signalling the reality for the subject of *rokkamsukh* that the proposition encoded in the complement is real. In fact in this case, the belief was false as the child in question had been swept away by flood waters. Thus, we might argue that this construction encodes quotative evidence for that which is ‘believed’ rather than some other form of evidence that might lead to a firmer belief.

- (64) *Adr*    *at-rokkamsukh*    *at-ver*                    [*niterikh*    *ang*  
 3NSG    3REAL:PL-believe    3REAL:PL-say    child    ANA  
*i-dum*                    *i-vu-vev*                    *aiyem*].  
 3REAL:SG-run    3REAL:SG-go-go.to    home  
 ‘They believed that the child ran back home.’ [NVKS14.14]

Two elicited constructions were produced with the CTP negated and with an irrealis complement; in each case a complementizer was also present even though complementizers are not attested with *rokkamsukh* in the text corpus.

- (65) *Ni-rokkamsukh si an nibarbar ib-yal.*  
 1REAL:SG-believe NEG COMP pig 3IRR:SG-fly  
 ‘I don’t believe that pigs fly.’ [NVKW08.2]
- (66) *Ni-rokkamsukh si ei il im-bbulem maran.*  
 1REAL:SG-believe NEG 3SG COMP 3IRR:SG-come tomorrow  
 ‘I don’t believe that he will come tomorrow.’ [NVKW08.11]

The CTP *ver-bor* ‘think’ is a nuclear serial verb comprising the utterance predicate *ver* ‘say’ and the epistemic modifier *bor* ‘maybe’. When used independently, *bor* occurs in the periphery of the clause, rather than in a post-verbal position. The mood of the complement of *ver-bor* is dependent on the belief of the speaker. When the speaker is describing an event that she believes to be real at the time of speech, realis mood is assigned to the complement; when the speaker is describing an event that she believes to be nonactualized at the time of speech, irrealis mood is assigned to the complement. This construction is rather rare in the text corpus, but was explored in detail with different language consultants, who confirmed the analysis that epistemic judgments motivate the marking of the mood of the complement.

In examples (67) and (68), the speakers strongly believe that the events in the complements took place, although they are not completely certain.

- (67) *Ni-ver-bor ei i-vu ij.*  
 1REAL:SG-say-maybe 3SG 3REAL:SG-go ANT  
 ‘I think/assert that she has gone.’ [NVE24.36]
- (68) *Ni-ver-bor ei i-vlem.*  
 1REAL:SG-say-maybe 3SG 3REAL:SG-come  
 ‘I think/assert that he came.’ [NVKW08.14]

In examples (69) the speaker is less certain about the reality of the event in the complement. This reduction in certainty is reflected in the irrealis encoding of the matrix clause, though the event in the complement retains its realis mood, reflecting the potential for the event to have been completed at the reference/speech time. A future time reading of the matrix clause is rather unlikely here.

- (69) *Nim-bbuer-bor ei i-vlem.*  
 1IRR:SG-say-maybe 3SG 3REAL:SG-come  
 ‘I speculate that he has come.’ [NVKW08.20]

The examples (70) to (72) involve complements that encode potential future events rather than past events. In (71) the use of the reduplicated verb stem in the complement combined with the negative morpheme is the same structure that is used to express prohibition. In this context, it seems to indicate the speaker's belief the event in the complement is undesirable. In (72) the speaker is uncertain about the future possibility of the event. This uncertainty is encoded in the irrealis mood marking on the CTP.

(70) *Na ni-ver-bor ei im-bbulem ing.*  
 1SG 1REAL:SG-say-maybe 3SG 3IRR:SG-come EMPH  
 'I think it likely/assert that he will come.' [NVE16.16]

(71) *Ni-ver-bor ei im-bbu-vu si.*  
 1REAL:SG-say-maybe 3SG 3IRR:SG-DUP-go NEG  
 'I think that he must/should not go.' [NVE24.37]

(72) *Nim-bbuer-bor ei im-bbulem.*  
 1IRR:SG-say-maybe 3SG 3IRR:SG-come  
 'I speculate that he will come.' [NVKW08.21]

The core serial verb construction *rot* + *i-gen* comprises the immediate perception predicate *rot* 'sense' and the similitive verb *gen* 'be like'. As a propositional attitude predicate, it means 'feel like/think'. When the matrix clause is marked for realis mood and carries positive polarity, it requires a realis complement, patterning in the same way as *rokkamsukh* 'believe'.

(73) *Na ni-rot i-gen ni-rodrok-da.*  
 1SG 1REAL:SG-sense 3REAL:SG-like 1REAL:SG-hear-PART  
 'I feel as though I just heard a little (of the story).' [NVCV05.14: 1349.482]

(74) *Ni-rot i-gen ar-ver nobrormet.*  
 1REAL:SG-sense 3REAL:SG-like IMPS:REAL-say k.o.yam-dark  
 'I think/feel as though they say Nobrormet.' [NVKI21.109: 452.600]

When the event in the complement refers to a potential future event, it is then marked for irrealis mood as (75) illustrates.

(75) *Ei i-jal we i-jal i-rot*  
 3SG 3REAL:SG-sick AUGCO 3REAL:SG-sick 3REAL:SG-feel  
*i-gen im-mas.*  
 3REAL:SG-like 3IRR:SG-dead  
 'He was very ill and he felt as though he was going to die.' [NVE16.08]

## 12.4.5. Modal predicates

The verb *rongil* has already been described as having knowledge-based functions: it expresses both the state of knowing, and the action of coming to know (the acquisition of knowledge). A further knowledge-based function of *rongil* is to introduce complements of ability – ‘know how’. The dual function of *rongil* to express knowledge and ability is common in central Malekulan languages, and cognate forms appear in Naman, Avava, and Neve‘ei.

- (76) ‘know, be able’
- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <i>rongil</i>  | Neverver                               |
| <i>rongdur</i> | Naman (Crowley 2006b)                  |
| <i>rokut</i>   | Avava (Crowley 2006a: 165)             |
| <i>rogulel</i> | Neve‘ei (Crowley & Musgrave 2004: 144) |

There is some evidence that historically, the verb *rongil* was a nuclear serial construction. The most plausible V1 input parts are either *rong* ‘want’ or *rot* ‘sense’. The contemporary *-il* most likely derives from *lel* ‘be wise’. It should also be observed that a homophone of *il* functions as an adverbial subordinator and sometimes as a complementizer in Neverver. An alternative analysis could be that *-il* represents a lexicalization of an older grammatical morpheme. Items in the corpus displayed in Table 38 below suggest that both analyses have some merit:

Table 38. Verbs which appear to exhibit an older nuclear serial construction

Hypothesis: <i>il</i> derived from <i>lel</i> ‘be wise’		Hypothesis: <i>il</i> derived from the grammatical subordinator <i>il</i>	
<i>rong-il</i>	‘know that, be able to’ either from <i>rong</i> ‘want’ or <i>rot</i> ‘sense’	<i>sas-il</i>	‘rush (doing something)’ also attested <i>sas-ikh</i> ‘do quickly’
<i>khit-l</i>	‘recognize (be able to see)’ from <i>khit</i> ‘see’	<i>dan-il</i>	‘want everything’ from <i>dan</i> ‘all’ which is now a V2/aspectual morpheme
<i>khan-il</i>	‘be able to eat’ from <i>khan</i> ‘eat’		
<i>ve-il</i>	‘be able to make/do’ from <i>ve</i> ‘do’		

In ability constructions, the subject of the complement is co-referential with the subject of the matrix clause. The complement is obligatorily marked for irrealis mood, regardless of the mood or polarity of the ability CTP. The irrealis

complement reflects the nonactualization of the complement at the reference time.

(77) *Ni-rongil me nib-lav nitvilam ang.*  
 1REAL:SG-can just 1IRR:SG-get mat ANA  
 ‘I could just get the mat.’ [NVKI04.45]

(78) *Ni-lele, ni-rongil si nim-dum im-kher.*  
 1REAL:SG-small 1REAL:SG-can NEG 1IRR:SG-run 3IRR:SG-strong  
 ‘I was small, I couldn’t run strongly.’ [NVKI03.33]

When the CTP is marked for irrealis mood, it readily occurs with negative polarity as illustrated in (79). Only once in the text corpus does it appear with positive polarity; language consultants were unwilling to reproduce the mood pattern exemplified in (80) below, preferring the mood pattern of (79) to refer to acts of ability located after the reference/speech time.

(79) *Ib-rongil si im-bbuv-lu niat.*  
 3IRR:SG-can NEG 3IRR:SG-blow-COMPL sago.palm  
 ‘It was not able to blow away the sago palm thatch.’ [NVDL01.08]

(80) *I-rongil im-bbuorvor im-siskham me.*  
 3IRR:SG-can 3IRR:SG-sit 3IRR:SG-individually just  
 ‘He will be able to sit by himself.’ [NVDL09.37]

#### 12.4.6. Desiderative predicates

There are three predicates that appear in the corpus with the meaning ‘want’. These are *ver*, *rongrong* and *rongrokh*. All three predicates take complements marked for irrealis mood. There are no instances of the desiderative predicates with negative polarity in the corpus. The meaning ‘not want’ is expressed with a separate lexical item *rosikh* discussed in §12.4.7. below.

The first desiderative predicate, *ver*, is also employed as an utterance predicate meaning ‘say’. A similar pairing of functions is shared with other central Malekula languages. Pearce (pers. comm.) describes the form *vra* used to express both ‘say’ and ‘want’ in Unua. Crowley (2006b) notes the form *ver* used to express both ‘say’ and ‘intend to’ in Naman. *Va* has the same dual function in Avava (Crowley 2006a: 174) and *vwer* is the cognate form in Neve‘ei (Crowley and Musgrave 2004: 158). Bill Foley (pers. comm.) notes that the same pairing of functions is common in Papuan languages also.

When *ver* is used as a desiderative predicate, it does not permit a nominal object. It is only found with sentence-like complements exclusively marked for

irrealis mood. Example (81) displays an example with separate subject arguments in the matrix clause and complement, while (82) displays a complement with a subject argument that is co-referential with the subject argument of the matrix clause.

- (81) *Ga i-ver netas abit-leb ei ing!*  
 and 3REAL:SG-want fish 3IRR:PL-carry 3SG EXCLAM  
 ‘And he wanted the fish to carry him!’ [NVKS04.21: 130.989]

- (82) *Mang i-ver me im-delmus ar.*  
 man:ANA 3REAL:SG-want just 3IRR:SG-whip 3NSG  
 ‘The man just wanted/intended to whip them.’ [NVKS05.27: 151.299]

The predicate (*rong*)*rong* is also used desideratively. This predicate is quite rare in the corpus, attested primarily in the speech of Limap community members. It is a feature of younger speakers from this village. With this meaning, the predicate (*rong*)*rong* is not attested with a nominal object and like the desiderative *ver* ‘want’, it only occurs with sentence-like complements marked for irrealis mood.

- (83) *Be i-okh ku-rongrong i-na*  
 but PSNPR-2SG 2REAL:SG-DUP-want PSNPR-1SG  
*nib-lav i-okh?*  
 1IRR:SG-get PSNPR-2SG  
 ‘But do you want me to marry you?’ [NVKS02.20]

- (84) *An an i-rong me im-das*  
 DEMSPN NMOD 3REAL:SG-want just 3IRR:SG-go.down  
*vere, i-das vere.*  
 outside 3REAL:SG-go.down outside  
 ‘The one who just wanted to go outside went outside.’ [NVKI28.30: 111.684]

The third desiderative form is *rongrok* (also attested as *rongrokh*). This form is most commonly attested with a nominal object ‘want s.t.’, although it can also occur with a sentence-like complement.

- (85) *At-rongrok abit-khitkhit netval-bratn.*  
 3REAL:PL-want 3IRR:PL-DUP-see cloth-real  
 ‘They wanted to see traditional woven cloth.’ [NVKI22.8]

- (86) *Khavut tro i-git tuan git*  
 husband old PSNPR-1INCL:NSG LOCPSN 1INCL:NSG  
*i-rongrok ib-lav nibbwas.*  
 3REAL:SG-want 3IRR:SG-get male.pig  
 ‘A man from our area/village wanted to get a pig.’ [NVKI25.74: 456.995]

## 12.4.7. Anti-desiderative predicates

The anti-desiderative CTP *rosikh* ‘not want’ is the antonym of the desiderative verbs described in §12.4.6. Like almost all of the forms marked morphologically for negative polarity, this lexical negative requires an irrealis complement. It is incompatible with overt negative morphology.

- (87) *Ave! Na ni-rosikh kub-lav na.*  
 No! 1SG 1REAL:SG-not.want 2IRR:SG-get 1SG  
 ‘No! I don’t want you to marry me.’ [NVKS02.21]
- (88) *Mang i-ver “Ave! Ni-rosikh*  
 man-ANA 3REAL:SG-say No! 1REAL:SG-not.want  
*nim-te nida”.*  
 1IRR:SG-hit mother  
 ‘The man said, “No! I don’t want to kill mother”.’ [NVKS11.72]

Although the CTP *rosikh* is not attested in the text corpus with irrealis mood, language consultants provided the following construction demonstrating irrealis mood in the matrix clause.

- (89) *Maran nib-rosikh nim-te nibarbar ang.*  
 tomorrow 1IRR:SG-not.want 1IRR:SG-hit pig ANA  
 ‘Tomorrow, I won’t want to kill the pig.’ [NVKW08.39]

The anti-desiderative CTP is most commonly attested with a sentence-like complement and no complementizer; however, it is also attested in the text corpus with the complementizer *il*, illustrated in (90) below. In this particular example, the subject of the CTP is different from the subject of the complement. Because both are third person singular, it may be that the complementizer functions iconically to separate out the arguments of the CTP and its complement and thus to avoid ambiguity. Another switch-subject construction is presented in (87) above, but in that example, there is a contrast of person which prevents ambiguity from arising.

- (90) *I-rosikh il im-khan ei.*  
 3REAL:SG-not.want COMP 3IRR:SG-eat 3SG  
 ‘He didn’t want it to eat him.’ [NVKS12.64]

## 12.4.8. Achievement predicates

The positive achievement predicates *setta* ‘remember’ and *sisien* ‘decide’, along with the negative achievement predicates *setvun* ‘forget’ and *kretikh* ‘try to make’, take an irrealis complement introduced by a complementizer. The achievement predicates in Neverver are typical of conversational language; they occur infrequently in the text corpus. The commentary below is based on elicited material.

*Setta* ‘remember’ is a positive achievement predicate that appears to share its morphology with its negative counterpart *setvun* ‘forget’. \**Set*, however, does not appear independently in the corpus and is not considered to be separable from the remainder of the verb by language consultants.

*Setta* ‘remember’ is attested only with nominal objects in the text corpus. In elicitation sessions however, language consultants produced instances of *setta* in a complement construction of the form ‘remember to do x’. Constructions with the meaning ‘remember that ...’ with past time reference could not be elicited. In elicited complement constructions, the complement of *setta* is introduced by *il*, followed by a complement marked for irrealis mood.

- (91) *Na ni-setta il nib-lav nisib.*  
 1SG 1REAL:SG-remember COMP 1IRR:SG-get knife  
 ‘I will remember to take the knife.’ [NVE21.33]

- (92) *Na ni-setta il nim-khalkhal nimdali ang.*  
 1SG 1REAL:SG-remember COMP 1IRR:SG-close door ANA  
 ‘I will remember to close the door.’ [NVE21.34]

In example (91), the CTP is marked for realis mood and the complement is marked for irrealis. According to language consultants, when the speaker utters this construction, they are not yet in possession of their knife. Likewise, in (92) the door in question is still open at the time of speech.

- (93) *?Na ni-setta si il nib-lav*  
 1SG 1REAL:SG-remember NEG COMP 1IRR:SG-get  
*nisib t-na.*  
 knife PSDT-1SG  
 ‘I did not/will not remember to take the knife.’ [NVKW08.66]

Example (93) was suggested as a way of negating *setta* in one elicitation session, but it is unclear whether this is actually a possible construction for a native speaker of Neverver. The construction was not duplicated by other speakers on separate occasions, and there is an issue of temporal ambiguity. It appears to be the case that *setta* ‘remember to’ is inherently forward-looking in temporal ref-

erence and inherently positive in meaning. Negative meanings are expressed with the antonym *setvun* ‘forget’.

Constructions with *setta* marked for irrealis mood were also proposed, although these invariably involved nominal objects rather than sentential complements as in (94) below. Example (95), with a nominal object rather than a sentential complement, readily accepts negative polarity.

- (94) *Kum-setta mad-ikh kaliko t-na!*  
 2IRR:SG-remember EMPH-APPL cloth PSDT-1SG  
 ‘Remember my cloth!’ [NVKW08.68]

- (95) *Ei i-ikkan i-setta si na.*  
 3SG 3REAL:SG-eat 3REAL:SG-remember NEG 1SG  
 ‘He ate without thinking of me.’ [NVE20.19]

*Sisien* ‘decide’ is the second positive achievement predicate in Neverver. Like *setta* ‘remember’, *sisien* takes an irrealis complement. It is attested in the text corpus both with and without the complementizer *il*. The temporal sequencing of the matrix and complement situations is particularly clear in (97), where the decided-upon event of the complement construction occurs independently in the subsequent clause.

- (96) *Baga i-sisien mej il im-bbu im-tav*  
 then 3REAL:SG-decide IMM COMP 3IRR:SG-go 3IRR:SG-spear  
*nakhavikh ang.*  
 Malay.apple ANA  
 ‘Then, she decided to go and spear the Nakhavikh fruit.’ [NVKS26.16:77.233]

- (97) *I-sisien im-bbu, i-vu.*  
 3REAL:SG-decide 3IRR:SG-go 3REAL:SG-go  
 ‘He decided to go and he went.’ [NVKI06.35]

As a CTP, *sisien* can carry irrealis mood, as (98) and (99) illustrate.

- (98) *...ibi-sber dran an... im-sisien il*  
 3IRR:SG-reach TMPPN NMOD 3IRR:SG-decide COMP  
*im-bbuer te im-bbue-bir.*  
 3IRR:SG-say COMP 3IRR:SG-do-win  
 ‘...until the time when... he will decide to say that he has to repay (the ceremony).’ [NVKI05.56]

- (99) *Kum-bbue niskhan kum-sisien kum-bbue.*  
 2IRR:SG-do what 2IRR:SG-decide 2IRR:SG-do  
 ‘Do whatever you decide to do.’ [NVKI12.77]

The negative achievement predicate *setvun* ‘forget’ is quite consistently attested with the subordinator *il* serving as a complementizer. When *setvun* has positive polarity, its complement is marked for irrealis mood.

- (100) *Na ni-setvun il nib-lem navuj ang*  
 1SG 1REAL:SG-forget COMP 1IRR:SG-carry banana ANA  
*lon nokhos ang.*  
 LOC garden ANA  
 ‘I forgot to get the bananas from the garden.’ [NVE21.01]

*Setvun* can also occur in clauses with negative polarity. Although the proposition encoded in the complement did actually occur, the complement is marked for irrealis mood.

- (101) *Na ni-setvun si il nib-lav nakhatkhat*  
 1SG 1REAL:SG-forget NEG COMP 1IRR:SG-get basket  
*t-na.*  
 PSDT-1SG  
 ‘I didn’t forget to get my basket.’ [NVKW08.60]  
 (= ‘I got my basket’)

*Setvun* ‘forget’ is attested with irrealis mood in the matrix clause in a number of elicited constructions.

- (102) *Na nim-setvun il nib-lav nakhatkhat t-na.*  
 1SG 1IRR:SG-forget COMP 1IRR:SG-get basket PSDT-1SG  
 ‘I will forget to get my basket.’ [NVKW08.62]
- (103) *Na ni-rongil si nim-setvun il nim-bbuer-ikh.*  
 1SG 1REAL:SG-can NEG 1IRR:SG-forget COMP 1IRR:SG-say-APPL  
 ‘I won’t forget to tell him.’ [NVE21.30]

The second negative achievement predicate *kretikh* ‘try to make’ fits semantically into the category of manipulative or causative predicates discussed in §12.4.3. above. The focus of *kretikh* is on failed causation while the focus of *ve* ‘make’ is on successful causation. In Neverver however, *kretikh* patterns as an achievement predicate with an irrealis complement introduced by the complementizer *il*. For this reason, it is included in the achievement sub-category.

Although *kretikh* occurs in daily conversation, there are no spontaneous text examples in the recorded material. The example constructions below were produced during separate elicitation sessions. Attempts to elicit constructions with *kretikh* marked for irrealis mood were unsuccessful. The CTP is inherently irrealis in meaning.

- (104) *Na ni-kretikh ei il im-khan nivri ang.*  
 1SG 1REAL:SG-try.to.make 3SG COMP 3IRR:SG-eat crab ANA  
 ‘I tried to make him eat the crab.’ [NVE28.38]
- (105) *Ei i-kretikh si na il nim-khan nivri.*  
 3SG 3REAL:SG-try.to.make NEG 1SG COMP 1IRR:SG-eat crab  
 ‘She didn’t try to make me eat crab.’ [NVKW08.56]

In constructions with *kretikh*, the argument that serves as the subject of the complement clause is co-referential with the object of the matrix clause. This co-referential argument is overtly expressed in the matrix clause and then encoded in the subject/mood prefix of the complement. There are no examples of an overt pronominal subject in the complement, following the complementizer. This patterning is shared with propositional attitude predicates.

#### 12.4.9. Phasal predicates (ingression)

The Bislama form *stait(em)* ‘start’ appears frequently alongside the indigenous form *tabatn* with the same meaning, to express ingression. Both forms of the ingressive CTP are attested in a complement construction with an optional complement, as well as being attested in nuclear serial verb constructions. One option is for the CTP to take the complementizer *il* with an irrealis complement. Example (106) displays the indigenous CTP in this construction, while (107) displays the borrowed form.

- (106) *Ga i-tabatn il im-bbue niar.*  
 then 3REAL:SG-start COMP 3IRR:SG-make fence  
 ‘Then, he started to make the fence.’ [NVKS10.17]
- (107) *Ba nidam i-stait il im-tokh*  
 when yam 3REAL:SG-start COMP 3IRR:SG-PROG  
*im-tev...*  
 3IRR:SG-begin.to.grow  
 ‘When the yams begin growing,...’ [NVDL07.12]

Example (108) below displays a complement construction without the complementizer *il*. Mood marking in the complement however, remains irrealis.

- (108) *Baga i-stait im-sisil.*  
 then 3REAL:SG-start 3IRR:SG-DUP-burn  
 ‘Then he started burning (his garden).’ [NVKS10.21]

The ingressive verbs are attested more frequently in core serial verb constructions with concordant mood marking, as illustrated in (109).

- (109) *Ni-ssor-ian ang i-tabatn i-gang.*  
 NPR-talk-NSF ANA 3REAL:SG-start 3REAL:SG-like.so  
 ‘The story started like so.’ [NVKS10.03]

#### 12.4.10. Utterance predicates

Utterance predicates form a distinct sub-class of CTPs in Neverver, displaying two important characteristics. Firstly, in the class of utterance predicates, the mood of the complement is completely independent of the mood of the matrix clause. The category of utterance predicates is the only CTP category with independent mood marking in the complement. All others involve dependent mood marking of some sort. Secondly, utterance CTPs optionally carry the complementizer *t(e)*. The use of the complementizer varies in the speech of individuals but there is a general tendency for older speakers to use *t(e)* more frequently than younger speakers.

The most commonly attested utterance predicate is the verb *ver* ‘say’. This predicate functions to report speech, introducing direct and indirect statements, commands and questions. In examples (110) to (113), declarative constructions with and without complementizers are illustrated. Realis mood is found in both the CTP and complement in this set of constructions.

- (110) Direct declarative statement with complementizer  
*Baga nida titi i-ver te “Lesien*  
 then mother 3PS:SG 3REAL:SG-say COMP Lesien  
*at-uv lon nokhos”.*  
 3REAL:PL-go LOC garden  
 ‘Then his mother said “Lesien and them went to the garden”.’ [NVKS09.62]

- (111) Direct declarative statement with bare complement  
*Barnakh man Vajarikh at-ver “Kat-te mokh*  
 now man Vajarikh 3REAL:PL-say 2REAL:PL-hit all  
*ij mam”.*  
 ANT 1EXCL:NSG  
 ‘Now, the men of Vansarikh said ‘You have beaten us all.’ [NVK110.18]

- (112) Indirect declarative statement with complementizer  
*Ei i-ver te i-khitrokh mang adr*  
 3SG 3REAL:SG-say COMP 3REAL:sg-see man:ANA PL  
*ati-vkhal.*  
 3REAL:PL-fight  
 ‘He<sub>i</sub> said that he<sub>i</sub> saw the men fight.’ [NVKW08.6]
- (113) Indirect declarative statement with bare complement  
*I-ver-ikh na i-ver nimokhmokh ang*  
 3REAL:SG-say-APPL 1SG 3REAL:SG-say female ANA  
*i-vu ij.*  
 3REAL:SG-go ANT  
 ‘He told me that the woman has gone.’ [NVE24.35]

In examples (110) to (112) above, there is no (recipient-like) experiencer argument encoded explicitly. In order to express an experiencer, a core serial construction is used with the form V1-UTTERANCE + EXPERIENCER + V2-UTTERANCE. This construction is illustrated in (113) above and in (114) below.

- (114) *Ga ni-ver-ikh ei ni-ver “O! Na*  
 and 1REAL:SG-say-APPL 3SG 1REAL:SG-say Oh 1SG  
*ni-rongil si”.*  
 1REAL:SG-know NEG  
 ‘Then I said to him, “Oh, I don’t know”.’ [NVDL03.05]

The utterance predicate *ver* can also be used to report direct and indirect commands. Imperative constructions have obligatory irrealis mood, independent of the mood of the CTP.

- (115) Direct imperative with complementizer  
*Ar-ver te “Kum-bbu kubi-tn nidam anjakh*  
 3REAL:DU-say COMP 2IRR:SG-go 2IRR:SG-roast yam this  
*kum-khan adr”.*  
 2IRR:SG-eat 3NSG  
 ‘They said “Go and roast these yams and eat them”.’ [NVKS15.36]
- (116) Direct imperative with bare complement  
*I-ver “Ale, kum-bbus im-bbulem!”.*  
 3REAL:SG-say alright 2IRR:SG-carry 3IRR:SG-come  
 ‘She said “Okay, you bring him!”.’ [NVKS08.41]

No example of an indirect imperative with a complementizer has been identified in the corpus as yet.

In the example below, an utterance serial construction appears, with the experiencer argument expressed as the object of V1, and the sentential complement expressed as the object of V2.

- (117) Indirect imperative with bare complement
- |                       |                   |                        |              |                        |
|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| <i>Ei<sub>i</sub></i> | <i>i-ver-ikh</i>  | <i>ei<sub>ii</sub></i> | <i>i-ver</i> | <i>ei<sub>ii</sub></i> |
| 3SG                   | 3REAL:SG-say-APPL | 3SG                    | 3REAL:SG-say | 3SG                    |
| <i>im-bbuvu</i>       | <i>si.</i>        |                        |              |                        |
| 3IRR:SG-DUP-go        | NEG               |                        |              |                        |
- ‘He told him not to go.’ [NVE24.33]

Additionally, *ver* ‘say’ is used to report direct and indirect questions. A range of realis and irrealis encodings are presented in the examples below.

- (118) Direct interrogative with complementizer
- |               |            |                  |               |              |
|---------------|------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|
| <i>I-sus</i>  | <i>adr</i> | <i>i-ver</i>     | <i>te</i>     | “ <i>Gam</i> |
| 3REAL:SG-ask  | 3NSG       | 3REAL:SG-say     | COMP          | 2NSG         |
| <i>kat-uv</i> | <i>abi</i> | <i>kati-vlem</i> | <i>ang?</i> ” |              |
| 2REAL:PL-go   | where      | 2REAL:PL-come    | ANA           |              |
- ‘He asked them, “Where did you come from?”.’ [NVKS14.41]
- (119) Direct interrogative with bare complement
- |                    |               |                 |              |              |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| <i>Nar-rodrok</i>  | <i>nida</i>   | <i>tokhtokh</i> | <i>i-ver</i> | “ <i>Ei!</i> |
| 1EXCL:REAL:DU-hear | mother        | big             | 3REAL:SG-say | Hey!         |
| <i>kabr-uv</i>     | <i>abi?</i> ” |                 |              |              |
| 2IRR:DU-go         | where         |                 |              |              |
- ‘We heard our aunty say “Hey, where are you going?”.’ [NVCV02.39: 224.325]
- (120) *I-ver* “*Ga nim-bbuer niskhan?*”
- |              |      |             |      |
|--------------|------|-------------|------|
| 3REAL:SG-say | then | 1IRR:SG-say | what |
|--------------|------|-------------|------|
- ‘He said, “Then what will I say?”.’ [NVKI06.31]

As was the case with indirect imperatives, no example of an indirect interrogative with a complementizer has been identified in the corpus. This suggests that there is a restriction that prohibits complementizers from occurring with such constructions. According to language consultants, this restriction does not extend to indirect declaratives such as that presented in (112).

- (121) Indirect interrogative with bare complement
- |                   |            |              |           |               |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| <i>I-sus-ikh</i>  | <i>adr</i> | <i>i-ver</i> | <i>ar</i> | <i>amt-uv</i> |
| 3REAL:SG-ask-APPL | 3NSG       | 3REAL:SG-say | 3NSG      | 3IRR:PL-go    |
| <i>abi.</i>       |            |              |           |               |
| where             |            |              |           |               |
- ‘He asked them where they were going.’ [NVKS14.49]

In addition to supplying the experiencer argument, the utterance serial construction can also be used to provide more information about the specific nature of the utterance. *Sus* ‘ask’, *kke* ‘call out’, and *yer* ‘sing’ can all fill the V1 position. None of these predicates is complement-taking; each must serialize in order to express direct or indirect speech. Example (121) displays a construction of this kind with *sus* ‘ask’ followed by *ver*, and an indirect question. (122) displays the verb *kke* ‘call out’ with an indirect command while (123) displays the verb *yer* ‘sing’. This final example is followed by a song in the recording.

- (122) *Ari-kke-kh*                      *ar-ver*                      *im-das*.  
 3REAL:DU-call-APPL    3REAL:DU-say    3IRR:SG-go.down  
 ‘They called him to come down.’ [NVKS27.39: 230.479]
- (123) *Ba*            *mang*            *adr*    *ati-vlem,*            *at-yer*  
 when    man:ANA    PL    3REAL:PL-come    3REAL:PL-sing  
*at-ver*                      *i-gang...*  
 3REAL:PL-say    3REAL:SG-like.so  
 ‘When the men came, they sang like so...’ [NVKI19.22: 93.665]

In addition to *ver* ‘say’, there are two other CTPs that are used to report speech. They are restricted to reporting direct internal speech or thoughts. These additional CTPs are *rot* ‘sense’ and *prok* ‘listen’. *Rot* is most commonly used as a sensory perception predicate, but can also be used to report the internal thoughts of the person who is encoded as its grammatical subject.

- (124) *At-rot*                      “*O! I-rvikh*”.  
 3REAL:PL-sense    Oh    3REAL:SG-good  
 ‘They thought “Oh! It’s good”.’ [NVKS02.158]
- (125) *I-rot*                      “*Nimbbue ibi-tmakh?*”  
 3REAL:SG-sense    1IRR:SG-do    3IRR:SG-how  
 ‘He wondered “How can I do this?”.’ [NVKS12.37]

*Prok* (also attested as the reduplicated form *poprok*) is generally used as an intransitive verb meaning ‘listen’. Like *rot* ‘sense’, it is also attested as an utterance predicate followed by a complement encoding the direct speech (or thoughts) of the speaker. Like other utterance predicates, the mood of the complement is independent of the mood of the matrix clause, with irrealis mood assigned to complements that encode events following the reference time, and realis mood assigned to complements that encode actions concurrent with or prior to the reference time.

- (126) *I-vor*            *i-prok*            “*O!*    *Mang*    *adr*  
 3REAL:SG-sit    3REAL:SG-listen    Oh    man:ANA    PL  
*ati-vlem*            *mej*    *ing!*”  
 3REAL:PL-come    IMM    EXCLAM  
 ‘He sat and thought “Oh! The men have just come!”.’ [NVKI06.57]

## 12.5. Nominalized complements

Nominalized complements, where a noun is derived from a verb stem with the addition of nominalising morphology (see §3.7.), occur in a range of positions in the clause. They contrast with sentence-like complements, which are restricted to object position.

- (127) Nominalization as subject  
*Dran*    *i-skham*            *tue,*            *ne-maur-ian*    *i-is*  
 TMPPN    3REAL:SG-one    before    NPR-live-NSF    3REAL:SG-bad  
*bbutakh.*  
 too.much  
 ‘One time before, life was terrible.’ [NVCT07.05: 18.228]
- (128) Nominalization as object  
*Nim-bbu*    *nibi-llang*            *ni-kkan-ian*    *git.*  
 IIRR:SG-go    IIRR:SG-look.for.s.t.    NPR-eat-NSF    IIN:NSG  
 ‘I’m going to look for some food for us/our food.’ [NVKS26.06: 32.067]
- (129) Nominalization as prepositional object  
*Nib-ruv*            *lon*    *ne-maj-ian*            *ang*  
 IINCL:IRR:DU-go    LOC    NPR-perform.ceremony-NSF    ANA  
*il*            *nibir-sav.*  
 PURPOSE    IINCL:IRR:DU-perform.dance  
 ‘We’ll go to the dancing ground to perform a dance.’ [NVKS23.07: 44.236]
- Nominalizations behave like other nominal heads and can take a range of post-nominal modifiers. They do not, however, nominalize with any post-verbal modifiers.
- (130) Nominalization modified by NMOD  
*ni-kkan-ian an i-mrekh*    ‘food that was raw’  
*ni-jal-jal-ian an netas*    ‘sickness of (caused by) fish’ from *jal* ‘be sick’
- (131) Nominalization modified by quantifier  
*ni-kkan-ian balian*    ‘all the food’ from *kkam* ‘eat’

- (132) Nominalization modified by number relative clause (indefinite)  
*ni-si-sien-ian i-skham* ‘an idea, decision’ from *sien* ‘think’, *sisien* ‘decide’
- (133) Nominalization modified by lexical modifier (stative verb)  
*ne-maur-ian viva* ‘new life’ from *maur* ‘live’; *viva* ‘new’  
*no-ssor-ian lele* ‘short story’ from *ssor* ‘speak’; *lele* ‘small’
- (134) Nominalization modified by demonstrative determiner  
*ne-ver-ian anjing* ‘that work’ from *ver* ‘work’  
*ne-ver-ian ang* ‘the work’

The only argument that may occur with a nominalized complement is the agent. It is expressed as a possessor, following the nominalized head. Person and number features (and where relevant gender) of the possessor are usually also copied to the front of the complement, so that the agent is expressed as a pronoun or pronominal-noun preceding the nominalization. The fronting of possessor copies is a common pattern in Neverver, noted also in §5.1.1. Examples of fronted possessors in nominalized complements are displayed in examples (135) to (137).

The examples of nominalizations presented in this section (and also in §3.7) typically involve intransitive verb stems. Transitive verb stems undergo detransitive reduplication when nominalized. Nominalization thus involves low or reduced transitivity. Patient arguments that may be associated with a transitive stem are always suppressed in a nominalized complement.

- (135) *I-rongil*            *si*        *mang*            *no-ssor-ian*        *titi*.  
 3REAL:SG-know    NEG    man:ANA    language        3POSS:SG  
 ‘She didn’t know the man’s language.’ [NVKS14.28]
- (136) *Ar-khan*            *mang*            *ni-kkan-ian*        *titi*            *er*.  
 3REAL:DU-eat    man:ANA    NPR-eat-NSF    3POSS:SG    PL  
 ‘They ate all the man’s food.’ [NVKS05.09: 45.873]
- (137) *Ei*        *ni-rongrok-ian*        *titi*            *i-ve*            *netan*  
 3SG    NPR-want-NSF    3POSS:SG    3REAL:SG-make    thing:DEF  
*i-rvikh*            *aran*            *git*            *ne-maur-ian*        *git*.  
 3REAL:SG-good    LOC.on    1INCL:NSG    NPR-live-NSF    1INCL:NSG  
 ‘He, his love makes/does good things in our lives.’ [NVCT04.43: 159.028]

# Chapter 13

## Clausal juncture and inter-propositional relations

### 13.0. Introduction

In this section, complex constructions containing two distinct clauses that bear some relationship to each other are described. The relationships that clauses may bear are explored in §13.1.; the morpho-syntactic and prosodic features of these relationships are described in §13.2. Syntactically, one clause may depend on another or it may stand independently. Subordinating constructions include adverbial subordinate clauses, presented in §13.3., and subordinating tail-head linkage, presented in §13.4. Two independent clauses may combine through coordination, described in §13.5., or through simple juxtaposition (labelled prosodic conjunction in this work), described in §13.6. The intersections between forms of juncture and meanings expressed by those forms are summarised in §13.7.

### 13.1. Relationships between clauses

Two clauses can stand in a syntactic relationship. This may involve a tight syntactic relationship between the clauses, or a looser syntactic relationship. In Neverver, three main relationships can be observed. These relationships comprise subordination, including adverbial subordination and subordinating tail-head linkage, syndetic coordination, and prosodic conjunction. The three relationships reflect a continuum of juncture between clauses.

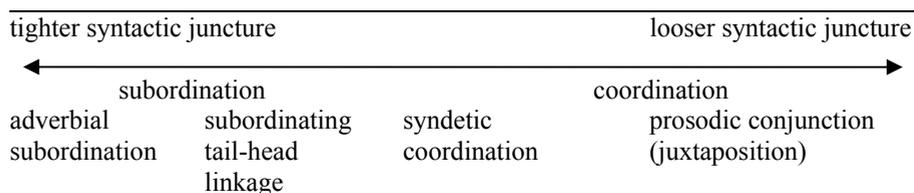


Figure 16. Continuum of syntactic juncture in Neverver

The language-specific continuum of syntactic juncture proposed for Neverver in Figure 16 above is similar to more general continua of syntactic integration proposed for example, by Payne (1997: 307; 2006: 289), and Crowley (2002a: 18). In Neverver, the continuum can be extended to include other tight syntactic

junctures. Complement constructions (chapter twelve), core serial verb constructions (chapter eleven), and nuclear serial verb constructions (chapter ten) all display increasingly tight syntactic junctures. The relative clause, another type of subordinate clause, is discussed in an earlier section on nominal modification (see chapter five).

When two clauses are joined in one of the constructions above, they are related syntactically and/or prosodically. At the same time, the propositions (events, actions, or states, and their participants) encoded in the two clauses are related semantically (cf. inter-propositional semantic relations as described by Beekman and Callow (1974) and Crombie (1985)). There is not necessarily a one-to-one relationship between syntactic structure and inter-propositional semantic relation. A given syntactic structure can be employed to express a range of inter-propositional semantic relations. For example, Thompson, Longacre and Hwang (2007, a development of Thompson and Longacre (1985)), in their typological survey of adverbial subordinate clauses, list multiple relations encoded with adverbial subordination. While many individual inter-propositional semantic relations are associated with individual subordinating morphemes, a single subordinator may also express several different inter-propositional relations.

It is equally possible for a given inter-propositional semantic relation to be encoded in a range of syntactic structures. Thompson, Longacre and Hwang (2007) also arrive at this conclusion with respect to the various relations that may be encoded in adverbial clauses cross-linguistically:

We are by no means claiming that a relationship which may be signaled by an adverbial subordinate clause in one language must be so signaled in every other language... For example, where one language may signal consecutivity by means of time adverbial clauses, another may do so by means of constructions involving not subordination but coordination or juxtaposition. (Thompson, Longacre and Hwang 2007: 240)

Longacre (1985; 2007), in his analysis of the sentence as a unit consisting of multiple clauses, describes a range of semantic notions, for example contrast, causation, and conditionality. These may be encoded by several different formal devices, including sentence-medial conjunction, juxtaposition and complementation. In Neverver, each of the syntactic constructions described in this section can encode one or more inter-propositional relations. At the same time, we can observe that there are multiple ways of encoding some of the inter-propositional relations that are expressed in the language.

In keeping with traditional descriptive approaches to language analysis, this chapter is organised around the sub-types of syntactic juncture that are evident in Neverver, these being adverbial subordination, subordinating tail-head linkage, syndetic coordination and prosodic conjunction. Each formal structure is

then analysed in terms of the inter-propositional semantic relations that may be expressed through it.

### 13.2. Morpho-syntactic features of clausal juncture and intonation

The different types of clausal juncture in Neverver can be identified by their morpho-syntactic features. Adverbial subordinate clauses are introduced by subordinating conjunctions and may be pre-posed or post-posed to their main clause. Subordinating tail-head linkage is characterised by the repetition of an entire clause, and is often augmented by the use of subordinating morphology and markers of perfect, completive, and egressive aspect. Coordinated clauses are linked by a medial conjunction. Prosodic conjunction stands apart because it lacks any overt morpho-syntactic features beyond those associated with independent clauses.

Along with the morpho-syntactic characteristics of clausal juncture, intonation plays an important role in signalling that two clauses stand in a particular relationship. In the case of prosodic conjunction, prosody is the only way of determining that two clauses are connected. Two main types of clausal intonation are relevant to the analysis of clausal juncture. Strongly falling terminal intonation (indicated by  $\searrow$ ) encompasses at least the final constituent of a given clause and signals the completion of an idea, as well as the termination of a structural unit. Terminal intonation is generally followed by a pause. Non-terminal intonation signals that a proposition encoded in a clause should be interpreted as bearing a relationship to the following clausal unit. Non-terminal intonation involves either rising non-terminal intonation (indicated by  $\nearrow$ ) or level/falling non-terminal intonation (indicated by  $\rightarrow$ ). Intonation at the end of any of the constructions discussed in this chapter depends on whether the clause in question is part of a larger set of ideas as in (1) and (2), or completes a set of propositions as in (3) and (4).

(1) Adverbial subordination

<i>Ba</i>	<i>i-tn</i>	<i>nidam</i>	<i>ang</i>	<i>i-lav</i>	<i>i-lik</i>
when	3REAL:SG-roast	yam	ANA	3REAL:SG-get	3REAL:SG-pass
<i>vinang</i> $\nearrow$	<i>vinang</i>	<i>i-khan</i>	<i>nidam</i>	<i>ang</i>	
woman:ANA	woman:ANA	3REAL:SG-eat	yam	ANA	
<i>i-skham</i> $\nearrow$ ...					
3REAL:SG-one					

‘When he roasted yams and gave them to the woman, the woman ate one of the yams...’ [NVKS10.104-5]

## (2) Subordinating tail-head linkage

*Ale ni-vu ni-vev lakha↗, ni-te*  
 then 1REAL:SG-go 1REAL:SG-go.to bush 1REAL:SG-cut  
*niat↘. Ni-te niat↗, ni-bir↗...*  
 Sago.Palm 1REAL:SG-cut Sago.Palm 1REAL:SG-break  
 ‘I go to the bush and cut sago palm leaves. I cut sago palm leaves, and then I break them...’ [NVDL06.13-14]

## (3) Syndetic coordination

*Nimkhut lele anjing i-lele me↗ be*  
 man small that 3REAL:SG-small only but  
*i-vkhal we↘!*  
 3REAL:SG-fight AUGCO  
 ‘That wee man is just little but he really fights!’ [NVCV01.28: 438.782]

## (4) Prosodic conjunction

*Nat-tav nibet↗, nat-khan↘.*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-spear breadfruit 1EXCL:REAL:PL-eat  
 ‘We speared breadfruit and ate it.’ F[NVKS07.6: 30.386]

**13.3. Adverbial subordination**

Relative clauses (chapter five), complement clauses (chapter twelve), and adverbial clauses are all types of subordinate clause in Neverver. Relative clauses occur within a noun phrase and function to modify the head noun; complement clauses function as noun phrases; and adverbial subordinate clauses function as modifiers of entire propositions (Thompson, Longacre and Hwang 2007). In terms of the layered clause structure, we find relative clauses as modifiers of nouns in either the core or the periphery, complement clauses function as core arguments themselves, and adverbial subordinate clauses function as peripheral modifiers of the proposition that is expressed in the core. Adverbial subordinate clauses may occur in either the left or right periphery of the clause.

Subordinate clauses are not marked by special verb forms in Neverver, and they are attested with the same range of aspectual and emphatic markers that occur in main clauses. There is no special word order indicating that a clause is subordinate. Instead, subordinate clauses are introduced by subordinating conjunctions which provide information about the semantic relationship between the propositions encoded in the main and subordinate clauses.

Most subordinate clauses are separated from their main clauses by a slight rise in intonation. When the subordinate clause is located in the left periphery, intonation rises on the final element of the subordinate clause and there is often a brief pause, signalled by a comma, between the subordinate and main clause. When the subordinate clause occurs in the right periphery, non-terminal intona-

tion occurs on the final element of the main clause and any pause between main and subordinate clause is usually very brief.

Subordinating conjunctions, which signal the beginning of a subordinate clause, signal a range of semantic relations between the main and subordinate clause. Thompson, Longacre and Hwang (2007) group adverbial clauses of time, place and manner together as clauses that may be replaced by an adverb and that share properties with relative clauses. In Neverver, time can be encoded in an adverbial subordinate clause, while place is encoded in a relative subordinate construction (§3.6.; §5.2.6.2.). Manner is not expressed through subordination but rather in the tighter juncture of core verb serialisation (§11.3.3.1.).

### 13.3.1. Time

There are a number of subordinating conjunctions that signal a temporal relationship between two propositions. Temporal sequence and overlap clauses are introduced with the subordinator *ba* ‘when’. Clauses introduced by *ba* are most often preposed to the main clause, although they are also attested following the main clause. Example (5) below displays a temporal adjunct with a nominal head, while examples (6) to (9) display temporal adverbial subordinate clauses.

- (5) Temporal sequence  
*Mitabbukh sakhsakh*↗, *mang i-tur*↘.  
 morning every man:ANA 3REAL.SG-wake.up  
 ‘Every morning, the man got up’ [NVKS02.3]
- (6) *Ale, ba i-vu i-khit nida titi*  
 so when 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-see mother 3POSS:SG  
*adr-ikh mama titi*↗, *nemat lele ang*  
 3NSG-APPL father 3POSS:SG snake small ANA  
*i-vu-vor sur*↘.  
 3REAL:SG-go-sit near  
 ‘So, when he went and saw his mother and his father, the small snake went and sat beside him.’ [NVKS12.17: 117.058]
- (7) *I-ver-ikh i-gang sakhsakh*↗ *ba*  
 3REAL:SG-work-APPL 3REAL:SG-like.so FREQ when  
*at-uv Letvur*↘.  
 3REAL:PL-go Letvur  
 ‘He always did that when they went to Letvur.’ [NVKS12.13: 87.475]

The temporal sequence subordinator is also attested in the sequence *ba-ver*. *Ba-ver* is optionally followed by the subordinator *t(e)*, which normally introduces complements of the utterance predicate *ver* ‘to say’. This suggests that

*ver* in the construction *ba-ver* derives from the utterance predicate, although it is no longer functioning as a verb as it does not take the obligatory subject/mood prefix. There are no obvious semantic or syntactic differences between clauses introduced by *ba* and those introduced by *ba-ver* (*t(e)*).

- (8) *Ale ba-ver-t i-gangʔ, i-rev-lu*  
 so when-say-COMP 3REAL:SG-like.so 3REAL:SG-pull-COMPL  
*nivinbbu berber angʔ...*  
 bamboo long ANA  
 ‘So, when it was so, he pulled out the long bamboo pole...’ [NVKS22.27: 168.898]
- (9) *Ba-ver-t ar-lav nudukhabb ari-ppulʔ,*  
 when-say-COMP 3REAL:DU-get burning.branch 3REAL:DU-wave  
*ar-khit nias i-jing manʔ.*  
 3REAL:DU-see Tahitian.chestnut 3REAL:SG-lie.down EMPH  
 ‘When they got a burning branch and shone it around, they saw the chestnut lying there.’ [NVKS14.33]
- (10) Temporal Overlap  
*Ba i-matur-lingʔ, niterikh ang i-vlem*  
 when 3REAL:SG-sleep-leave child ANA 3REAL:SG-come  
*lakhlahʔ...*  
 quiet  
 ‘When he was fast asleep, the child came quietly and...’ [NVCT06.47: 244.442]
- (11) *Ba i-tnga i-sakh arkhaʔ, i-khit*  
 when 3REAL:SG-search 3REAL:SG-go.up up 3REAL:SG-see  
*niterikh ang i-vor man arkhaʔ.*  
 child ANA 3REAL:SG-sit EMPH up  
 ‘When she looked up to the top, she saw the child sitting in the (tree) top.’ [NVKS25.16: 61.244]
- (12) *Nio ba i-lab→, i-deng*  
 river when 3REAL:SG-many 3REAL:SG-pull.out.s.t  
*nias ang→...*  
 Tahitian.chestnut ANA  
 ‘The river, when it was full, it pulled out the Tahitian chestnut tree...’ [NVKS14.20]

In most examples when *ba* ‘when’ introduces a subordinate clause, the main clause is unmarked. There are also some instances of the main clause being introduced by the coordinator *be* ‘but’. The morpheme *be* in such constructions seems to be associated with the description of a key narrative event, particularly

one that is unexpected or undesirable. Examples (13) and (14) come from the same story. In (13), the octopus is introduced as a malevolent character; in (14), the same octopus acts vengefully against the woman who catches it. Like other examples with the subordinator *ba*, *ba...be* constructions express the inter-propositional semantic relation of temporal sequence.

- (13)
- Ba... be...*
- for unexpected/undesirable events

<i>Nida</i>	<i>titi</i> ↗	<i>ba</i>	<i>i-ver</i>	<i>i-tvis</i>
mother	3POSS:SG	when	3REAL:SG-want	3REAL:SG-look.DIR
<i>i-yu</i> ,↗	<i>be</i>	<i>i-khitrokh</i>	<i>nokhowit</i>	<i>i-skham</i>
3REAL:SG-go	but	3REAL:SG-see	octopus	3REAL:SG-one
<i>i-tokh</i>	<i>man</i>	<i>lon</i>	<i>nitusu</i>	<i>ang</i> .
3REAL:SG-exist	EMPH	LOC	sea	ANA

‘Her mother, when she looked around, she saw an octopus right there in the sea.’ [NVKS20.22: 110.665]

- (14) *Ba nida i-ver ibi-vles lon nolong*  
 when mother 3REAL:SG-want 3IRR:SG-fill.laplap LOC laplap  
*ang*↗ *be nokhowit ang i-lav nida*↗ *i-jik*  
 ANA but octopus ANA 3REAL:SG-get mother 3REAL:SG-put  
*mej ang lon nolong*,↗ *i-yas lon nevat*↘.  
 IMM ANA LOC laplap 3REAL:SG-bake LOC stone  
 ‘When the (child’s) mother wanted to put the meat on the laplap, the octopus grabbed the mother and put her on the laplap and baked her on the stones.’  
 [NVKS20.57: 266.557]

The *ba... be* construction is associated with temporally sequenced narrative events in (13) and (14). We find that this same construction can be used with actions marked for progressive aspect, including main clause actions where duration is salient. Example (15) displays the overlap between two events presented as being underway or in progress. As with the preceding examples, there is an element of undesirability in the proposition encoded in the main *be* clause. The ongoing eating will eventually lead to the destruction of the pawpaw, which is functioning as a boat in this particular story.

- (15) *Ba i-tokh i-patel i-gang*↗ *be*  
 when 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-paddle 3REAL:SG-like.so but  
*nibisbokh ang tu*↗, *i-tokh i-khan*  
 rat ANA too 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-eat  
*nauj ang*↘.  
 pawpaw ANA  
 ‘When he was paddling like so, the rat too was eating the pawpaw.’  
 [NVKS04.11: 77.458]

Thompson, Longacre and Hwang (2007: 244) observe that time adverbial clauses, along with manner and place clauses, “tend to take the form of, or share properties with, relative clauses”. A relative clause construction with the temporal pronominal-noun *dran* ‘time’ as its head can also indicate temporal sequence and temporal overlap. In examples (16) and (17), the temporal pronominal-noun *dran* serves as the head of an adverbial phrase. In (16), *dran* is modified by a number relative clause with *i-skham* ‘one’.<sup>52</sup>

- (16) *Dran* *i-skham*↗, *nimokhmokh* *ang* *khavut* *titi*  
 TMPPN 3REAL:SG-one female ANA husband 3POSS:SG  
*i-ver* “*Ale*↗, *i-na* *nim-bbu* *nim-bev*  
 3REAL:SG-say alright PSNPR-1SG 1IRR:SG-go 1IRR:SG-go.to  
*lon* *niar*↘”.  
 LOC garden  
 ‘One time, the woman's husband said “Okay, I'm going to the garden”.’  
 [NVKS26.5: 20.629]

In (17), *dran* is modified by a relative clause introduced by the nominal modifying particle *an*. The relation of temporal sequence is evident between the subordinate relative clause construction, and the main clause.

- (17) *Dran* *an* *i-nam-ikh* *Limel* *tata* *titi*  
 TMPPN NMOD PSNPR-1EX:NSG-APPL Limel father 3PS:SG  
*nar-uv*↗ *i-daeva* *lon* *nio* *ang*↘.  
 1EXCL:REAL:DU-go 3REAL:SG-dive LOC river ANA  
 ‘At the time that/When Limel's father and I went, he dove (for freshwater prawns) in the river.’ [NVCV09.12: 79.291]

The use of non-sequential temporal order is rather rare in Neverver, but it can be signalled with the subordinating adverb of temporal proximity, in the context of the narrative in which (18) appears, it has the meaning of ‘before’.

- (18) Temporal sequence marking ‘before’  
*Varikh* *nibit-khan*↗ *git* *ngatian*  
 TEMPPROX 1INCL:IRR:PL-eat 1INCL:NSG many  
*nimti-vlem* *nibit-khit-khit* *nokhon* *git* *lon*  
 1INCL:IRR:PL-come 1INCL:IRR:PL-DUP-look face 1INCL:NSG LOC  
*mira* *an* *na* *ni-vul* *tjakh*.  
 mirror NMOD 1SG 1REAL:SG-buy here  
 ‘Just before we eat, all of us will come and look at our faces in the mirror that I bought, here.’ [NVCT02.29: 137.404]

52. An embedded amplification relation is also present in this example, in the utterance complement construction, where the reported speech amplifies the utterance predicate.

## 13.3.2. Event/state location

When the location of an event or state is expressed, a relative subordinate construction can be used. Place phrases are headed by the locative pronominal-noun *kut* ‘the place’ and display the resumptive pronoun *ye* in the position where a local noun would typically appear in a main clause. The construction is terminated with the anaphoric determiner *ang*. There is no separate adverbial subordinator of place. When the place phrase is pre-posed to the main clause, it is separated by rising non-terminal intonation. When the place phrase is post-posed to the main clause, it is uttered within the intonation contour of the main clause.

- (19) *Kut an ar ar-lukh ye ang, ↗ noto*  
 LOCPN NMOD 3NSG 3REAL:DU-live RSPN ANA chicken  
*at-ve nigovin ar.*  
 3REAL:PL-make egg PL  
 ‘At the place where they(2) lived, hens laid their eggs.’ [NVKS19.4: 283.499]

- (20) *Nar-uv kut an okh ku-ver*  
 1EXCL:REAL:DU-go LOCPN NMOD 2SG 2REAL:SG-say  
*nabr-uv-uv si ye ang.*  
 1EXCL:IRR:DU-DUP-go NEG RSPN ANA  
 ‘We went to the place where you said we mustn't go!’ [NVKS20.55: 260.351]

## 13.3.3. Reason/purpose

In Neverver, the subordinating conjunction *il* introduces clauses of reason and purpose. The dual function of *il* in Neverver fits with Thompson, Longacre and Hwang’s (2007: 251) observation that in many languages, reason and purpose share the same morphology. Beekman and Callow (1974: 300; also Crombie 1985: 19–20) suggest an explanation for this, by way of their categorisation of reason (reason-result) and purpose (means-purpose) as two subtypes of the general cause-effect semantic relation. Thompson, Longacre and Hwang (2007) claim that the main difference between reason and purpose clauses relates to their realisation:

They differ in that the purpose clauses express a motivating event which must be *unrealized* at the time of the main event, while reason clauses express a motivating event which may be *realized* at the time of the main clause event. In most languages, even those that use the same morphology for signalling purpose and reason, then, there will be different marking to signal the unrealized status of the purpose clause versus the realized status of the reason clause. (Thompson, Longacre and Hwang 2007: 250–251)

In Neverver, purpose clauses carry obligatory irrealis mood marking, while reason clauses are generally marked for realis mood.

Subordinate *il*-reason clauses are typically post-posed to their main clause. Intonation is not always a salient feature of these constructions. Some subordinate clauses are uttered within the same intonation contour as the main clause (as in example (25)); some main clauses have non-terminal rising intonation (example (26)); and other main clauses carry non-terminal falling intonation (examples (27) and (28)). When the main clause is marked with falling intonation, there are cases where the reason is clearly added as an afterthought, and terminal falling intonation on the afterthought subordinate clause involves a noticeable drop from the falling intonation of the main clause (example (28)).

- (21) Result *il*-reason  
*Niterikh lele ang i-salgar we*  
 child small ANA 3REAL:SG-be.glad AUG.CO  
*i-salgar il i-khit i-maur.*  
 3REAL:SG-be.glad CAUS 3REAL:SG-see 3REAL:SG-live  
 ‘The child was so glad because he saw it lived.’ [NVKS31.10: 64.425]
- (22) *Ei i-vus man(d)-ikh nivis-bratn titiʔ il*  
 3SG 3REAL:SG-carry EMPH-APPL bow-REAL 3POSS:SG CAUS  
*i-lis-ikh dran nevkhal im-lav ei.*  
 3REAL:SG-afraid-APPL TMPPN fight 3IRR:SG-get 3SG  
 ‘He had to carry his bow and arrow, because he was afraid if a fight would overcome him.’ [NVKS02.55-6]
- (23) *Niterikh adr-ikh nida titi ar-mas*  
 child 3NSG-APPL mother 3PS 3REAL:DU-dead  
*i-krut→ il adr ar-uv*  
 3REAL:SG-two.together CAUS 3NSG 3REAL:DU-go  
*ar-ev kut ttis ang↘.*  
 3REAL:DU-go.to LOCPN holy ANA  
 ‘The child and her mother both died, because they went to the forbidden place.’ [NVKS26.45: 206.909]
- (24) *Be niterikh-vidro ang i-ssor si↘ il*  
 but pre-adolescent.girl ANA 3REAL:SG-talk NEG PURPOSE  
*i-rongil si mang no-ssor-ian titi↘↘.*  
 3REAL:SG-know NEG man:ANA NPR-talk-NSF 3POSS:SG  
 ‘The girl didn’t talk (because she didn’t know the man’s language).’  
 [NVKS14.28]

Subordinate *il*-purpose clauses can also be post-posed to their main clause. The main clause is quite consistently marked with rising non-terminal intonation, as examples (25) to (29) below show. Examples (26) and (27) each display two subordinate *il*-purpose clauses.

- (25) Means *il*-purpose  
*Ati-vlem lon nidong↗ il abit-lav*  
 3REAL:PL-come LOC mangrove.swamp PURPOSE 3IRR:PL-get  
*nivri↘.*  
 crab  
 ‘They came to the mangrove swamp to get crabs.’ [NVKS17.80]
- (26) *Ale, at-lav mej nakharevran adr↗ il*  
 then 3REAL:PL-get IMM wing 3NSG PURPOSE  
*abit-jik↗ il abit-yal mej ing.*  
 3IRR:PL-put PURPOSE 3IRR:PL-fly IMM EXCLAM  
 ‘They got their wings to put on to fly away.’ [NVKS18.18: 87.724]
- (27) *Nida titi i-vlem mej↗ il ib-lav*  
 mother 3POSS:SG 3REAL:SG-come IMM PURPOSE 3IRR:SG-get  
*nokhowit ang↗ il ibi-vles lon nolong*  
 octopus ANA PURPOSE 3IRR:SG-fill.laplap LOC laplap  
*ang.*  
 ANA  
 ‘Her mother came to get the octopus to put it on the laplap.’ [NVKS20.41: 193.080]

In addition to *il*, Neverver also displays a distinct purpose marker *gat*. It does not have the dual reason/purpose function of *il*. It is rather rare in the corpus, with *il* being the preferred purpose marker.

- (28) Means *gat*-purpose  
*Ga i-tokh i-llang an an*  
 and 3REAL:SG-exist 3REAL:SG-look.for.s.t. DEMSPN NMOD  
*nakharevran ib-lablab gat ei ib-lav im-bbu*  
 wing 3IRR:SG-big so.that 3SG 3IRR:SG-get 3IRR:SG-go  
*im-solikh.*  
 3IRR:SG-hide  
 ‘And he was looking for the one whose wings were big so that he could get them and go hide them.’ [NVKS18.11-12: 55.816-61.981]
- (29) *I-yer nobo ang↗ gat i-gen mama*  
 3REAL:SG-sing song ANA so.that 3REAL:SG-like father  
*titi niterikh ang adr, nida titi-r abir-rongil*  
 3POSS:SG child ANA PL mother 3POSS-PL 3IRR:DU-know

*te ei i-lav nakhabb ang i-vlem.*  
 COMP 3SG 3REAL:SG-get fire ANA 3REAL:SG-come  
 ‘He sang the song so that like,<sup>53</sup> the children's father, and their mother would know that he brought the fire.’ [NVKS07.36: 224.823]

- (30) *At-ver at-ve me i-gang gat*  
 3REAL:PL-want 3REAL:PL-do just 3REAL:SG-like.so PURPOSE  
*im-khitl.*  
 3IRR:SG-recognise  
 ‘They (deliberately) did it like that so that he would realise.’ [NVKS07.36: 589.952]

#### 13.3.4. Condition-consequence

The condition-consequence relation is classified by Beekman and Callow (1974; also Crombie 1985: 19–20) as a type of cause-effect relation. It involves one proposition that serves as the causing event (the condition) for the occurrence of another event (the consequence). One subordinator functions exclusively as a conditional marker in Neverver. This is *besi* ‘if’ and the variant form *asi*. The morphology of the conditional subordinator is interesting as it involves the negative particle *si*.<sup>54</sup> We might assume that the initial *be-* derives from the adversative conjunction *be* ‘but’ (described in §13.5.2. below); however, there are conditional subordinators in related Malekula languages that display the initial sequence *bV-* so this morpheme could equally have indigenous origins. In Avava for example, the conditional subordinator is *ba(na)* ‘if’ (Crowley 2006a: 134–135).

In Neverver, the conditional subordinator *besi* ~ *asi* combines with irrealis mood in both the main and subordinate clause. This formal structure is usually employed for conditionals which are potentially realisable, or predictive; however, it is also possible to express counterfactual conditionals in the same structure. Contextual clues allow the hearer to disambiguate between these two broad types of conditional constructions.

The conditional construction can be used to express clauses with future time reference such as imperatives, and future consequences.

53. The verb *gen* ‘be like’ functions as a hedge in Neverver, just as *like* does in contemporary New Zealand English.

54. While *besi* ~ *asi* may well have indigenous origins, it is also possible that the *besi* form derives from the combination of Bislama *be* ‘but’ (from colloquial French *bais* ‘but’) (see §13.5.2.), and French *si* ‘if’. Another possible etymology is for *-si* is French *si* ‘yes’, which in that language can be used as an answer to a question with negative polarity.

- (31) Imperative  
*Besi kabir-rong-rong kabir-khan mit<sup>↗</sup>, kabir-khan me*  
 if 2IRR:DL-DUP-want 2IRR:DL-eat meat 2IRR:DL-eat just  
*nimjal an at-tokh lakha<sup>↘</sup>.*  
 meat NMOD 3REAL:PL-exist bush  
 ‘If you want to eat meat (i.e. for dinner tonight), only eat meat that is in the bush.’ [NVKS20.7: 28.621]
- (32) Future with main clause marked by *ga* ‘then’  
*Besi ib-rong-rong<sup>↗</sup> ga im-bbu me*  
 if 3IRR:SG-DUP-want then 3IRR:SG-go just  
*ib-lukh-da tang<sup>↘</sup>.*  
 3IRR:SG-stay-PART there  
 ‘If he wants, then he can go and rest there.’ [NVCT05.27: 377.093]

The same construction can also be used to express counterfactual conditionals with past time reference. The following example describes an incident where a woman was struck on the head by a falling coconut. The woman was not injured badly. The conditional construction describes what might have happened.

- (33) Past counterfactual  
*Besi im-dak ei lon nakhsan i-gen*  
 if 3IRR:SG-fall.over 3SG LOC base.of.s.t. 3REAL:SG-like  
*kut an im-gal ei ang o<sup>↗</sup>*  
 LOC PN NMOD 3IRR:SG-stuck 3SG ANA oh  
*im-ngot ing!*  
 3IRR:SG-be.broken EXCLAM  
 ‘If it had fallen on the base, like on the place where it struck, oh, it would have broken for sure!’ [NVCV06.36: 593.557]

The temporal pronominal-noun *dran*, which can be used to introduce subordinate clauses of time, serves as a marker of condition when associated with irrealis mood. The pairing of time/condition morphology has been observed in other languages, particularly when the condition clause is predictive (Thompson, Longacre and Hwang 2007: 258–259). In Neverver, *dran* introduces predictive conditions, along with habitual/generic conditions.

- (34) Imperative  
*Dran kabit-ver kamt-uv kamti-llav<sup>→</sup>,*  
 TMPPN 2IRR:PL-want 2IRR:PL-go 2IRR:PL-go.for.food  
*kam-tuv ale<sup>→</sup>...*  
 2IRR:PL-go far.away  
 ‘When you want to go gather food (today), go far away...’ [NVKS01.36]

- (35) Habitual/generic  
*Dran kabir-rot kabir-sakh si lon niar↗,*  
 TMPPN 2IRR:DU-feel 2IRR:DU-go.up NEG LOC garden  
*kabir-sakh si lon niar↘.*  
 2IRR:DU-go.up NEG LOC garden  
 ‘Whenever you feel that you shouldn't enter the garden, don't enter the garden.’ [NVKS13.30]
- (36) Predictive  
*Dran am-khan i-ttokh↗, barnakh↗ nitusu*  
 TMPPN IMPS.IRR-eat 3REAL:SG-rip.a.hole now sea  
*im-sakh bbukhut↗...*  
 3IRR:SG-go.up inside  
 ‘When it is eaten through, then the sea will come inside...’ [NVKS04.12: 82.022]
- (37) Past habitual/Generic  
*Dran ibi-ttekh nisib aran↗, abit-trokh*  
 TMPPN 3IRR:SG-strike knife LOC.on 3IRR:PL-see  
*nimokhmokh ibi-skham ibi-ttekh nisib aran↗*  
 female 3IRR:SG-one 3IRR:SG-strike knife LOC.on  
*am-te nibbwas↘.*  
 IMPS.IRR-hit male.pig  
 ‘If she struck a knife on it, (if) they saw a woman strike a knife on it, they would kill a pig.’ [NVKS11.62]

The variant form *asi* also appears as a conditional subordinator. Often however, when this subordinator is used, only the condition of a condition-consequence pair is mentioned. The consequence, which would normally be encoded in the main clause, is left unstated. In the first three examples below, the consequence is known by the speaker and will result from the conditional act of seeing by the hearer. In the fourth case, the consequence is unknown by the speaker, and will only be revealed upon the performance of the conditional event by the hearer. These condition-only clauses are translated as ‘if only’, and are the only optative constructions attested in the corpus.

- (38) *Asi kum-dri okh kum-ka-knga*  
 if 2IRR:SG-turn 2SG 2IRR:SG-DUP-search(visually)  
*im-sakh arkha lon notvo arkha tang↘.*  
 3IRR:SG-go.up up LOC Caster.oil.plant up there  
 ‘If only you’ll turn around and look up in the Caster Oil tree (you’ll see the fruit).’ [NVKS22.25: 153.351]

- (39) *Asi kum-bbulat git nibr-uv*  
 if 2IRR:SG-go.dir(2) 1INCL:NSG 1INCL:IRR:DU-go  
*nibri-tvis mo\.*  
 1INCL:IRR:DU-look.dir CONT  
 ‘If only you’ll come and we go to see them (then you’ll know they are your sons).’ [NVKS18.128: 671.985]
- (40) *Niskhan ing, asi kabir-lav-bbulem i-na*  
 what EXCLAM if 2IRR:DU-get-come PSNPR-1SG  
*nim-khitkhit\.*  
 1IRR:SG-look  
 ‘If only you’ll bring them for me to look at (then I’ll know what they are).’ [NVKS18.63: 316.292]
- (41) *Asi okh-b-yer mo nobo an nida t-okh*  
 if 2SG-IRR-sing CONT song NMOD mother PSDT-2SG  
*i-tokh i-yer\.*  
 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-sing  
 ‘If only you’ll sing the song that your mother is singing (then I’ll see what happens).’ [NVKS25.34: 139.286]

*Besi* is also attested in an optative condition-only clause. In the example below, the speaker is lamenting the burden of cake-making for an upcoming wedding that has been placed on the local Pastor. This is another counterfactual condition.

- (42) *Besi abit-lav-lav si kek ang im-bbu tuan*  
 if 3IRR:PL-DUP-get NEG cake ANA 3IRR:SG-go LOCPSN  
*ei.*  
 3SG  
 ‘If only they hadn’t assigned the cake (making) to him.’ [NVCV10.90: 449.371]

A small number of counterfactual conditionals were produced in elicitation sessions with language consultants. Like the spontaneous conditional constructions, the condition clause is introduced with the conditional subordinator *besi* or *asi*. The subordinator is then followed by an irrealis form of the verb *ver* ‘to say’, which appears to signal the counter-factuality of the entire construction. In the first example below, the conditional event (the phone call) actually did take place, as did the consequential event:

- (43) *Besi im-bbuer Julie im-ringim si nam*  
 if 3IRR:SG-say Julie 3IRR:SG-ring NEG 1EXCL:NSG  
*lon Fraede, nam nabr-uv si New Zealand*  
 LOC Friday 1EXCL:NSG 1EX:IRR:DU-go NEG New Zealand

*lon Satete.*

LOC Saturday

‘If (it is said that) Julie hadn't rung us on Friday, we wouldn't have gone to NZ on Saturday.’ [NVKW04.16]

In the second example, the person in question did not actually have any money, and was therefore unable to secure transport to attend a village event.

- (44) *Abbung, asi im-bbuer nevngan-nevas titi*  
 yesterday if 3IRR:SG-say money 3POSS:SG  
*im-tokh, ei imbbulem ij.*  
 3IRR:SG-exist 3SG 3IRR:SG-come ANT  
 ‘Yesterday, if only (it is said that) he had had some money, he would have come already.’ [NVE16.25]

### 13.4. Subordinating tail-head linkage

Tail-head linkage is a dominant feature of procedural texts, such as descriptions of the gardening process or cooking instructions. It also appears in narrative texts, linking sequential narrative events. Tail-head linkage can only be identified by looking beyond the unit of the clause, as it involves the repetition of an entire clause to signal the temporal relation of sequence to the subsequent clause. There is an initial statement of an event, followed by a restatement of that event, followed by the second event. The structural unit is thus larger than a single complex clause.

Clause 1 ↘.	Clause 1 ↗,	Clause 2.
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Intonation falls on the first occurrence of the initial clause. When the clause is repeated, it is marked with rising intonation, like an adverbial subordinate clause, to signal the juncture between subordinate and subsequent main clause.

Tail-head linkage may be simple, where a clause is repeated verbatim to indicate temporal sequence. Tail-head linkage can also be augmented. Morphology appears on the repeated clause to reinforce the completion of the first event before the second takes place. The post-verbal marker *lu*, the discourse perfect, only ever appears in tail-head linkage. The serial verb *suvsvuv* ‘be finished’ also commonly occurs in augmented constructions. Supporting the analysis of tail-head linkage as a kind of subordination, the temporal subordinator *ba* ‘when’ can introduce the tail of a tail-head linkage.

Simple tail-head linkage is displayed in examples (45) and (46) below.

- (45) *Ale*            *ni-vu*                    *ni-vev*                    *lakha*↗,  
 then            1REAL:SG-go            1REAL:SG-go.to            bush  
*ni-te*                    *niat*↘.  
 1REAL:SG-cut            Sago.Palm  
*Ni-te*                    *niat*↗,                    *ni-bir*↗...  
 1REAL:SG-cut            Sago.Palm            1REAL:SG-break  
 ‘I go to the bush and cut sago palm leaves. I cut sago palm leaves, and then I break them...’ [NVDL06.13-14] (repeated from (2 above))

- (46) *Ga*    *ale*    *ni-khilkhikh*                                    *nakhmal*    *ang*↘.  
 then    then    1REAL:SG-dig.foundations            house            ANA  
*ni-khilkhikh*                                    *nakhmal*    *ang*↗  
 1REAL:SG-dig.foundations            house            ANA  
*ni-tur-ikh*                    *mokh*    *nibalbal*            *i-suvsuv*↗...  
 1REAL:SG-stand-APPL    all            house.post            3REAL:SG-to.be.finished  
 ‘Then I dig foundations for the house. I dig foundations for the house and I finish standing up all the posts...’ [NVDL06.5-6]

Augmented tail-head linkage is displayed in examples (47) to (50) below.

- (47) Discourse perfect  
*Ale*    *ku-yas*↘.                                    *Ku-yas*  
 then    2REAL:SG-cover.with.stones            2REAL:SG-cover.with.stones  
*lu*↗    *ku-skhav*↗,                    *ku-tvin-ikh*                    *nibittan*↗...  
 PERF    2REAL:SG-cover            2REAL:SG-bury-APPL            soil  
 ‘Then you cover it with stones. Having covered it with stones, you cover it with leaves and bury it with soil...’ [NVDL12.9-10]

In example (48), the first mention of the event is the consequence of a condition-consequence relation. It then becomes the first event in a temporal sequence.

- (48) Discourse perfect *lu*; egressive serial verb  
*Ba*            *nat-ver*                                    *nabit-ve*                    *nokhos*↗,  
 when    1EXCL:REAL:PL-want            1EXCL:IRR:PL-make            garden  
*nat-uv*                                    *nat-rakh*↘.  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-go            1EXCL:REAL:PL-clear.ground  
*Nat-rakh-lu*                                    *i-suvsuv*↗,  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-clear.ground-PERF            3REAL:SG-to.be.finished  
*nat-tekha*.  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-cut.trees  
 ‘Whenever we want to make a garden, we go and we clear the ground. Having finished clearing the ground, we cut down the trees.’ [NVDL07.1-2]

- (49) Temporal subordinator *ba*; discourse perfect *lu*; egressive serial verb  
*Nat-uv nat-jaljalkha*↘.  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-go 1EXCL:REAL:PL-prepare.stakes  
*Ba nat-jaljalkha lu i-suvsuv*↗,  
 when 1EXCL:REAL:PL-prepare.stakes PERF 3REAL:SG-to.be.finished  
*nat-sil nokhos*↘.  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-burn garden  
 ‘We go and prepare stakes. When we have finished preparing the stakes, we burn the garden.’ [NVDL07.4-5]
- (50) Temporal subordinator *ba*; quantifier *mokh*; discourse perfect *lu*; egressive serial verb  
*Ni-vu ni-te nibalbal*↘. *Ba ni-te*  
 1REAL:SG-go 1REAL:SG-cut house.post when 1REAL:SG-cut  
*mokh lu nibalbal i-suvsuv*↗, *ni-vus*  
 all PERF house.post 3REAL:SG-to.be.finished 1REAL:SG-carry  
*ni-vlem aiyem*↗...  
 1REAL:SG-come home  
 ‘I go and cut house posts. When I have finished cutting all the house posts, I carry them and come home...’ [NVDL06.2-3].

The intonation pattern associated with tail-head linkage, in combination with the option to augment the repeated clause, particularly with subordinating morphology, indicates that the repeated clause is dependent on the main clause, and therefore involves a juncture of subordination. The first occurrence of the initial clause however, is syntactically independent of the second clause. The full tail-head structure then, because it encompasses more than one clause main clause, is somewhat less subordinate than the basic adverbial subordination described in §13.3.

### 13.5. Syndetic coordination

Haspelmath (2007: 1) describes “syntactic constructions in which two or more units of the same type are combined into a larger unit and still have the same semantic relations with other surrounding elements” as involving coordination. In this section, the focus is on the juncture between two independent, though semantically related clauses (see §4.6. for a description of coordination between noun phrases). Following Haspelmath (2004; 2007), I identify three main types of coordinating conjunction in Neverver, these being the ‘and’ relation of conjunctive coordination, the ‘but’ relation of adversative coordination, and the ‘or’ relation of disjunctive coordination. A fourth type of coordinating conjunction can also be seen in the Neverver corpus. Augmentative conjunction (Haspel-

math 2007: 25) involves the combination of identical elements to express emphasis.

Coordination in Neverver is distinguished from tail-head linkage and prosodic conjunction by its syndetic nature. In coordinating conjunction, the relation between two clauses is signaled by an overt coordinator which occurs between the conjoined clauses.

### 13.5.1. Conjunctive coordination

The Malekula languages Avava and Naman (Crowley 2006a; 2006b) and Neve'e (Musgrave 2007) display a single coordinating morpheme which expresses both conjunctive and adversative meanings. In Neverver, there is no basic morpheme with this joint function; however, *ga* 'and, then' is found as an inter-clausal marker of conjunctive coordination. It typically expresses temporal sequence.

The prosodic characteristics of clauses marked by *ga* vary. In some cases, the coordinator is uttered within the intonation contour of the first clause, and carries non-terminal rising intonation as in (55). Haspelmath (2007: 6) describes this pattern as medial postpositive, where the coordinator is attached to the initial clause. In other cases, non-terminal intonation is carried by the final element of the initial clause, and the coordinator is uttered with the intonation contour of the second clause as in example (56). This pattern is medial prepositive (Haspelmath 2007: 6) and it is the same pattern found in clauses introduced by the other coordinators discussed in this section.

Additionally, *ga* 'and, then' can stand alone as a clausal adjunct in the left periphery of a clause. When standing alone, it is articulated with non-terminal intonation, followed by a pause (like adverbial clauses of time §13.3.1.). In this position, it also signals a relationship of temporal sequence between the preceding and following clause, but the clauses in question are syntactically and prosodically independent. The three attested patterns are as follows:

Table 39. Conjunctive coordination structures

Medial postpositive	Clause 1- <i>ga</i> ↗	Clause 2
Medial prepositive	Clause 1↗	<i>ga</i> -Clause 2
Adjunct	Clause 1↘	<i>Ga</i> ↗/→ Clause 2

- (51) Clause 1-*ga* clause 2  
*I-vu ga<sup>↗</sup> i-khit nemat ang ati-llong*  
 3REAL:SG-go and 3REAL:SG-see snake ANA 3REAL:PL-slither  
*ati-llong ati-llong.*  
 3REAL:PL-slither 3REAL:PL-slither  
 ‘He went and then he saw the snakes slithering and slithering all around.’  
 [NVKS12.63: 474.071]
- (52) Clause 1 *ga*-clause 2  
*Ar-matmat-ikh buluk ang i-lablab<sup>↗</sup>, ga*  
 3REAL:DU-take.care-APPL cow ANA 3REAL:SG-big and  
*nida titi i-ver-ikh nimkhut titi...*  
 mother 3POSS:SG 3REAL:SG-say-APPL man 3POSS:SG  
 ‘They reared the cow, and then the mother said to her son...’ [NVCT06.6:  
 26.149]
- (53) Clause 1. *Ga*, clause 2  
*I-khitrokh vinang i-tokh i-ngar<sup>↘</sup>.*  
 3REAL:SG-see woman:ANA 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-cry  
*Ga<sup>→</sup>, i-ver-ikh vinang i-ver te*  
 and 3REAL:SG-say-APPL woman:ANA 3REAL:SG-say COMP  
 ‘*i-okh kungar il niskhan?*’<sup>↘</sup>.  
 PSNPR-2SG 2REAL:SG-cry CAUS what  
 ‘He saw the woman crying. Then he said to the woman, “Why are you cry-  
 ing?”’ [NVKS18.29-30: 136.780-142.268]

The commonly occurring adverbial subordinate clause with the similitive predicate *gang* ‘be like so’, which is used to signal temporal sequence, is uttered with the same intonation contour. The reduced form of this clause *baga* ‘then’, patterns in the same way as *ga* ‘and, then’. The verb *gang* may well be the source of both *ga* ‘and, then’ and also its reduplicated form *gaga* ‘on and on, until’ described below.

- (54) *Ba i-gang<sup>↗</sup> mang i-sakh bbukhut.*  
 when 3REAL:SG-like.so man:ANA 3REAL:SG-go.up inside  
 ‘When it was so, the man went inside (the house).’ [NVKS15.22]
- (55) *At-ver adr ati-trox si<sup>↘</sup>.*  
 3REAL:PL-say 3NSG 3REAL:PL-see NEG  
*(Ale<sup>↗</sup>) бага<sup>↗</sup> ati-llang<sup>↘</sup>.*  
 then then 3REAL:PL-look.for.s.t.  
 ‘They said they hadn’t seen (them). Then they looked (for them).’  
 [NVKS18.21-22: 109.125-111.986]

The coordinator *ga* has the reduplicated form *gaga* which can be used to emphasise the terminal boundary of one event before another takes place. When *ga* is reduplicated, it indicates that the event or state in the initial clause was of considerable duration, prior to its termination, suggesting the translation of ‘until’. Further reduplication can emphasise the duration of the first event. The initial clause is marked for non-terminal intonation and the coordination pattern is medial post-positive, with *gaga* falling inside the intonation contour of the initial clause. This position displays the same iconic positioning as the egressive serial verb *suvsuv* ‘to be finished’, which also attaches to the end of a clause to signal that the event in question has ended.

- (56) Temporal Sequence marking terminal boundary ‘until’

*Ga i-tokh i-matmat-ikh nibet lele*  
 then 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-take.care-APPL breadfruit small  
*titi ang gaga → i-maur i-lablab ↗ ...*  
 3POSS:SG ANA until 3REAL:SG-live 3REAL:SG-big  
 ‘Then he was looking after his small breadfruit until it grew big...’  
 [NVKS31.11: 71.126]

- (57)
- I-tokh i-ve sakhsakh ga-gaga ↗ nibet*
- 
- 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-do FREQ DUP-until breadfruit
- 
- ang i-tro ↘.*
- 
- ANA 3REAL:SG-ripe
- 
- ‘He was doing that all the time until the breadfruit was ripe.’ [NVKS31.15: 96.612]

- (58)
- I-ngar ga-ga-ga-ga-gaga → naut i-met.*
- 
- 3REAL:SG-cry DUP-DUP-DUP-DUP-until place 3REAL:SG-dark
- 
- ‘He cried on and on until it was dark.’ [NVKS31.38: 226.719]

- (59)
- I-lles ga-ga-ga-ga-gaga ↗ i-vu*
- 
- 3REAL:SG-swim DUP-DUP-DUP-DUP-until 3REAL:SG-go
- 
- i-trokh netas edr.*
- 
- 3REAL:SG-see fish PL
- 
- ‘He swam on and on, until he went and saw some fish.’ [NVKS04.20: 127.324]

### 13.5.2. Adversative coordination

Adversative coordination is signaled with the morpheme *be* ‘but’. This morpheme also occurs in Bislama meaning ‘but’ (Crowley 2003: 46). In Bislama, it is a borrowing from colloquial French *bais* ‘but’ (Crowley 1990: 342). With the meaning ‘but’, *be* is also attested in the neighbouring Naman language (Crow-

ley 2006b: 193) and it may be that *be* is a borrowing from Bislama in both Naman and Neverver. The semantic relation most commonly expressed by *be* ‘but’ is concession-contradiction, where *be* is used to introduce an unexpected event. It can also be used when the event is considered to be unwelcome. Intonation generally rises on the initial clause as in (57) to (60), though level/falling non-terminal intonation on the first clause is also associated with this relation as in (61).

In the first example, the speaker is looking for a small bag, the kind needed for a crabbing expedition.

## (60) Concession-contradiction

*Ni-llang bak↗ be ni-khitrokh si bak*  
 1REAL:SG-look.for.s.t. bag but 1REAL:SG-see NEG bag  
*an ib-lele ibi-skham↘ ni-lav me bak*  
 NMOD 3IRR:SG-small 3IRR:SG-one 1REAL:SG-get just bag  
*tokhtokh i-skham↗...*  
 big 3REAL:SG-one

‘I looked for a bag but I didn't see a bag that was small; I just got a big bag...’  
 [NVCV02.68: 437.822]

(61) *I-vis-lu lu nakhavakh titi-r er↗*  
 3REAL:SG-take.out-COMPL PERF yam.mound 3POSS.PL PL  
*be i-khan si nidam ang→...*  
 but 3REAL:SG-eat NEG yam ANA

‘It (an escaped pig) had dug out all their yam mounds but it didn't eat the yams...’ [NVCV03.17: 97.020]

(62) *Kabir-lukh↗ be kabr-uv-uv si lon nitusu*  
 2IRR:DU-stay but 2IRR:DL-DUP-go NEG LOC sea  
*avev tang.*  
 seaward there

‘You two stay here, (but) don't go to the ocean down there.’ [NVKS20.5: 21.996]

(63) *Git nibir-ve nolong livrav↗ be nimjal*  
 1INCL:NSG 1INCL:IRR:DU-make laplap afternoon but meat  
*an nibir-jik lon nolong ang i-tokh*  
 NMOD 1INCL:IRR:DU-put LOC laplap ANA 3REAL:SG-exist  
*si.*  
 NEG

‘You and I are going to make laplap for dinner, but there isn't any meat that we can put on the laplap.’ [NVKS20.14: 71.389]

- (64) *Ati-rkhov tata mangʔ, at-te→ be at-te*  
 3REAL:PL-hold tight man:ANA 3REAL:PL-hit but 3REAL:PL-hit  
*bburvur si.*  
 completely NEG  
 ‘They grabbed the man tightly and beat him but they didn’t kill him.’  
 [NVCT04.8-9: 40.601-45.429]

### 13.5.3. Disjunctive coordination

Disjunctive coordination is signalled by *si* ‘or’, a morpheme which shares its shape with the post-verbal negative particle. It is associated with the general semantic relation of alternation (Crombie 1985: 22–23). As well as conjoining clauses, *si* ‘or’ can conjoin noun phrases (see §4.6.4.).

- (65) Contrastive alternation (a choice between antitheses)  
*I-na nim-bbu nib-jek nim-bbuer*  
 PSNPR-1SG 1IRR:SG-go 1IRR:SG-check 1IRR:SG-say  
*nim-tuvʔ si nim-tuv si mo↘.*  
 1INCL:IRR:PL-go or 1INCL:IRR:PL-go NEG CONT  
 ‘I’ll go and check if we are going or not going anymore.’ [NVCV02.70:  
 451.513]

- (66) Supplementary alternation (non-antithetical choices)  
*Ku-llang nisib t-okh si ku-llang*  
 2REAL:SG-look.for.s.t. knife PSDT-2SG or 2REAL:SG-look.for.s.t.  
*nevat t-okh?*  
 money PSDT-2SG  
 ‘Are you looking for your knife or your money?’ [NVE07.23.1]

### 13.5.4. Augmentative coordination

Haspelmath (2007: 25) proposes the term *augmentative conjunction* for structures which involve “the combination of several identical elements to express intensity of an action or a high degree of a property”. In Neverver, emphasis can be expressed by the combination of identical predicates. The second occurrence is introduced by the coordinator *we*.

- (67) *Ba lile abr-uv autʔ, nibisbokh ang*  
 when near 3IRR:DU-go ashore rat ANA  
*i-rravʔ we i-rrav↘.*  
 3REAL:SG-laugh AUGCO 3REAL:SG-laugh  
 ‘When they were nearly ashore, the rat laughed and laughed.’ [NVKS04.29:  
 161.937]

The next example has a subordinate reason clause, for which the augmentative construction serves as the temporally-sequenced result.

- (68) *Baver nibet ang i-maur, niterikh lele ang*  
 when breadfruit ANA 3REAL:SG-live child small ANA  
*i-salgar↗ we i-salgar↘.*  
 3REAL:SG-be.glad AUGCO 3REAL:SG-be.glad  
 ‘When the breadfruit grew, the child was really glad.’ [NVKS31.10: 64.425]

- (69) *Nibatn okh i-ttaj↗ we i-ttaj↘!*  
 head 2SG 3REAL:SG-bald AUGCO 3REAL:SG-bald  
 ‘Your head is so bald!’ [NVKS02.43: 213.564]

The final example involves three occurrences of the predicate. Additional tense/aspect morphology, in the form of the anterior marker, is attached to the third occurrence. Intonation rises on the first occurrence of the predicate, falls slightly on the second and falls strongly on the third and final occurrence.

- (70) *Be nibet ang i-tro↗ we i-tro→*  
 but breadfruit ANA 3REAL:SG-ripe AUGCO 3REAL:SG-ripe  
*we i-tro ij ing↘!*  
 AUGCO 3REAL:SG-ripe ANT EXCLAM  
 ‘But the breadfruit was already really really ripe!’ [NVKS31.26: 168.284]

### 13.6. Prosodic conjunction

Asyndetic coordination, or juxtaposition, is the coordination of clauses without any overt morphological marking (Haspelmath 2007). Haspelmath (2007: 7) observes that asyndesis is widespread in the languages of the world, and that in such constructions “intonation is the only means by which the coordinated structure can be indicated”. In Neverver, juxtaposition is commonly employed to conjoin clauses and intonation is used to signal that hearers should infer a relationship between two clauses. Because intonation plays such an important role in clausal juncture in Neverver, the juxtaposition of two clauses is labeled *prosodic conjunction*.

Prosodic conjunction can be used to signal a wide range of interpositional semantic relations. Some of these semantic relations can also be signaled by overt morphology; others are only attested in constructions marked by prosodic conjunction. Two patterns of intonation are associated with prosodic conjunction. The first involves non-terminal rising intonation on the initial clause. The second involves level or non-terminal falling intonation on the ini-



- (74) Simple contrast  
*ale, i-okh kum-bbuor-vor lakhlakhʔ, na*  
 alright PSNPR-2SG 2IRR:SG-DUP-sit quiet 1SG  
*nim-tokh nim-patelʔ...*  
 1IRR:SG-PROG 1IRR:SG-paddle  
 ‘Okay, you sit quietly; I’m going to paddle...’ [NVKS04.10: 64.608]
- (75) *Niterikh titi-r ar-tokh-tokhʔ, adr ar-uv*  
 child 3POSS.PL 3REAL:DU-DUP-exist 3NSG 3REAL:DU-go  
*lakhaʔ.*  
 bush  
 ‘Two of their children stayed, and two went to the bush.’ [NVKS07.9: 53.356]
- (76) *Nida titi adr-ikh mama titi*  
 mother 3POSS:SG 3NSG-APPL father 3POSS:SG  
*ari-kke-kh ar-ver im-dasʔ,*  
 3REAL:DU-call-APPL 3REAL:DU-say 3IRR:SG-go.down  
*i-rosikh mo im-dasʔ.*  
 3REAL:SG-not.want CONT 3IRR:SG-go.down  
 ‘His mother and father called him to come down, but he didn’t want to come down any longer.’ [NVKS31.39: 230.479]
- (77) Denial-correction  
*nemat i-ve mo si nematʔ; i-ve*  
 snake 3REAL:SG-COP CONT NEG snake 3REAL:SG-COP  
*nimkhutʔ.*  
 man  
 ‘The snake was no longer a snake; it was a man.’ [NVKS17.77]

The final example displaying the reason-result relation has falling intonation on the first clause; the second clause however, is marked by a greater fall in intonation, signalling that the two clauses are related, with the second an after-thought to the first.

- (78) Reason-Result  
*Kar-rosikh kabri-po-prok no-ssor-ian an*  
 2REAL:DU-not.want 2IRR:DU-DUP-listen NPR-talk-NSF NMOD  
*na ni-ver-ikh i-gamʔ; barnakh anjakh, nida*  
 1SG 1REAL:SG-say-APPL PSNPR-2NSG now this mother  
*t-okh i-masʔ.*  
 PSDT-2SG 3REAL:SG-dead  
 ‘You didn’t want to listen to the message that I told you; so now your mother is dead.’ [NVKS20.59-60: 275.127-281.123]

## 13.6.2. Semantic relations signaled by level/falling intonation on the initial clause

In addition to the juxtaposition of two clauses with rising intonation between, two clauses can be juxtaposed with level or falling intonation on the final syllable of the initial clause. Relationships signalled by this intonation pattern include concession-contrarexpectation, statement-exemplification, and simple comparison. In example (79), the relationship of concession-contrarexpectation is illustrated. The same intonation pattern is found with concession-contrarexpectation pairs marked by a medial *be* 'but'.

## (79) Concession-contrarexpectation

*I-te nibbwas an nulvun i-kkel→,*  
 3REAL:SG-hit male.pig NMOD front.tooth 3REAL:SG-curled  
*i-ul si↘.*  
 3REAL:SG-atone NEG  
 'He killed a pig that had circular tusks, (but) he didn't atone (for the sin).'  
 [NVKS12.29: 205.343]

## (80) Statement-exemplification

*I-vavkhas niterikh ang→, i-lav nevlan*  
 3REAL:SG-dress.up child ANA 3REAL:SG-get charcoal  
*nakha↗ i-vavkhal↗, i-tos niterikh titi*  
 tree 3REAL:SG-grate 3REAL:SG-paint child 3POSS:SG  
*var↘.*  
 unfortunate  
 'He decorated the child, he got charcoal, and he ground it, and he marked his poor child.' [NVKS12.34: 244.016]

(81) *Be ar-khan mang ni-kkan-ian titi er→:*

but 3REAL:DU-eat man:ANA NPR-eat-NSF 3POSS:SG PL  
*ar-khan nauj↗, ar-khan maniok↗.*  
 3REAL:DU-eat pawpaw 3REAL:DU-eat manioc  
 'They ate all the man's food: they ate pawpaw, they ate manioc.' [NVKS05.9-10: 51.119- 45.873]

## (82) Simple comparison

*Nisib i-tokh si→; damiok i-tokh si→.*  
 knife 3REAL:SG-exist NEG axe 3REAL:SG-exist NEG  
 'There was no knife; there was no axe.' [NVKS13.24]

### 13.7. Form and meaning

In Neverver, four types of clausal juncture have been identified. Adverbial subordination, subordinating tail-head linkage, syndetic coordination, and prosodic conjunction are all ways that clauses can be combined. These four structures are employed to express a range of inter-propositional semantic relations. The inter-propositional semantic relations identified in the corpus to date, along with the ways that they can be encoded, are summarised in Table 40 below.

Table 40. Summary of inter-propositional relations and clausal juncture

	Adverbial subordination	Subordinating tail-head linkage	Syndetic coordination	Prosodic conjunction
Temporal sequence	y	y – Simple/ Augmented	y – Conjunctive	y
Temporal overlap	y			
Event/state location	y			
Reason-result	y			y
Means-purpose	y			
Condition-consequence (irrealis)	y			
Condition-consequence (counterfact)	y			
Concession- contraexpectation			y – Adversative	y
Simple comparison				y
Simple contrast				y
Contrastive alternation			y – Disjunctive	
Supplementary alternation			y – Disjunctive	
Statement-exemplification				y
Denial-correction				y

In contrast to clauses that are conjoined either by morpho-syntactic means, or by prosody, when a speaker reaches the end of a sequence of related ideas, falling terminal intonation is used. At the end of many recorded texts, particularly monologues, speakers make an overt statement of closure with strongly falling terminal intonation.

- (83) *No-ssor-ian*    *lele*    *ang*    *i-suvsv*    *me*    *tang* ʘ.  
NPR-speak-NSF    small    ANA    3REAL:SG-be.finished    just    there  
'The short story is just finished there.' [NVCT06.75: 380.355]

# Appendix I

## A. Bernard Deacon's Nesan Data (1926–1927)

### 1. Orthographic notes

A. Bernard Deacon, a British anthropology student, spent around 14 months on the island of Malekula and its neighbours in 1926 and early 1927. Deacon's field notes contain a list of the orthographic conventions that he used to record language data while travelling around Malekula. The list is by no means comprehensive; however, it does allow the linguist to decode many lexical items, and to hypothesize the probable phonetic values of many sounds that Deacon transcribed.

*Table 41.* A. Bernard Deacon's orthographic conventions (from Deacon (1926-27)) and probable IPA values

Symbol	Deacon's descriptions of sound	Probable IPA value
G	ng as in 'song'	ŋ
C	g as in 'got'	g
..	over letters after value as in German	front rounded vowels
R	guttural uvular 'r'	r (probably alveolar rather than uvular)
Ǧ	strong guttural 'gh'	ɣ
Ǧ	guttural 'ch' as in 'loch' or 'doch' (German)	x
̄B	a sound peculiar to Siniag and to a lesser extent Meaun. The lips are made to vibrate as the B is pronounced	B
č	'ch' as in 'church'	tʃ
ž	'j' as in 'jour' (French)	ʒ

## 2. Nesan and Neverver

Among Deacon's field materials stored in the Haddon Papers at the Cambridge University Library, there is a list of vocabulary that bears the title *Nesan*. It clearly resembles modern Neverver as I recorded it during my field work. In the list below, the first two columns are reproduced directly from Deacon's materials; the modern Neverver data derives from my own corpus. Additional Neverver glosses are provided where meanings differ.

<b>Nesan (1926-1927)</b>	<b>Gloss</b>	<b>Neverver (2004-2008)</b>
barmbar	'sow'	/nibarbar/
ǰalǰal	'block, obstruct'	/ɣalɣal/ 'be closed (of doors)'
ǰan	'eat'	/ɣan/
gar	'cry out'	/ɣar/
ǰas	'bite'	/ɣas/
gcinitz	'nip'	
gcis	'throttle'	/gis/ 'squeeze'
gcugc	'shrink (?)'	
ǰer	'strong, hard'	/ɣer/
ǰit	'see'	/ɣit/
ǰitil	'perceive'	/ɣitl/
gonr	'snore'	/ŋoD/ 'snore'
got	'blunt'	/ŋot/ 'break'
ǰurǰor	'scrape (yam)'	/ɣorɣor ~ ɣuryur/ 'scratch'
ǰurǰurus	'cut up'	/tebirbir / 'cut into pieces'
gus	'breathe'	/ŋaβŋaβ/ 'breathe'
havuǰ	'plant'	/ɣaβuɣ/ 'plant'
is	'bad'	/is/
kke	'call'	/kke/
livilipf	'pour'	/l:iβiy/ 'throw out (water)'
lmbas	'deceive'	/lbas / 'comfort'
malmal	'weak, weary, tired'	/malmal/ 'deeply (of sleep)'
mam	'ripe'	/mam/
mas	'die'	/mas/
matur	'sleep'	/matur/
maur	'live'	/maur/

Nesan (1926-1927)	Gloss	Neverver (2004-2008)
mbel	‘chase, hunt’	/bel/
mber	‘long’	/ber ~ berber/
mbo	‘stink’	/bo/ ‘rotten’
mbulug	‘count’	/doŋon/ ‘count’
mbur	‘swollen’	/Bur/
m <sup>̄</sup> bus	‘don’	/rus/ ‘put on, wear’; /βus/ ‘carry (on head, shoulder)’
mbwillag	‘seek’	/l:ɑŋ/ ‘look for’
mcal	‘sharp’	/mgal/
menevmp	‘level, flat’	/maβ/
millipf	‘spill’	/milmiliβ/
min	‘drink’	/min/
misag̃	‘sick’	/mɔʒay/ ‘have fever’
mlili	‘return’	/mlili/
mmap	‘heavy’	/m:aβ/
mtutağ	‘fear’	/l:is/ ‘be afraid’
muğumbağump	‘soft’	/ɣobyob/ ‘soft’
n_ğa	‘tree’	/naya/
nağamal	‘house’	/naɣmal/
nağamb <sup>̄</sup>	‘fire’	/nayaB/
nağambwir	‘dog’	/naɣabir/
nağansir	‘sugar cane’	/naɣaɔʒir/
nağonsun	‘nose’	/naɣaɔʒun/
nambuas	‘pig’	/niBwas/ ‘boar’
nambwer	‘mushroom’	/neber ~ nebeD/
nani	‘coconut’	/nani/
nasüs	‘breast’	/nasus/
naus	‘rain’	/naus/
navül	‘moon’	/naβul/
navuns	‘banana’	/naβuɔʒ/
ndag	‘extract’	/daŋlu/ ‘pull out’
ndas	‘descend’	/das/
ndölöm	‘swallow’	/dlom/

<b>Nesan (1926-1927)</b>	<b>Gloss</b>	<b>Neverver (2004-2008)</b>
ndum	'race'	/dum/ 'run'
nelag	'wind'	/nilaŋ ~ nelaŋ/
nelag	'sky'	/nilaŋ ~ nelaŋ/
neman	'bird'	/neman/
nemar	'famine'	/nemat/ 'hunger'
nembögön	'mouth'	/nomŋon/
nembuagc	'big taro'	/niBuaŋ/ 'swamp taro'
nembwittan	'earth'	/nibit:an/
nemeri	'eel'	/nimer/
nemwat	'snake'	/nemat/
nemwel	'cycas'	/nimel/
nendam	'yam'	/nidam/
nenrar	'Erythrina'	/niDar/
nenre	'blood'	/neDe/
nensans	'croton?'	/neɖʒaɖʒ/ 'k.o.plant'
nerigan	'nest'	/nerŋen/
nero	'leaf'	/noron/
netas	'fish'	/netas/
neterih	'child'	/niteriy/
netmas	'ghost'	/netmas/
nevat	'stone'	/neβat/
nevin nönnsö	'star'	/niβin nimɖʒo/
nevwillag	'fly'	/niβilaŋ ~ niβil:an/
nevwinmbwand	'owl'	/netarban/
niliwun	'tooth'	/nilβun/
nimbismboĥ	'rat'	/nibisboŋ/
nimbolgon	'bone'	/nibolgon/
nimbus nauwi	'cane'	/nau/
nindilgan	'ear'	/nidliŋan/
ninnun	'spirit'	/nin:un/
nio	'water'	/nio/
nisn	'juice'	/niesn ~ nies'n/
nituğans	'mosquito'	/nituyɑɖʒ/
nitusu	'sea'	/nitusu/

<b>Nesan (1926-1927)</b>	<b>Gloss</b>	<b>Neverver (2004-2008)</b>
niviamp	‘reed’	/niβiaB/
nivüs	‘bow’	/niβis/
niyal	‘sun’	/nial/
noğo	‘rope’	/noyo/
noğon	‘face’	/noyon/
noğut	‘louse’	/nayut/
nsavi	‘sneeze’	/ɕaβi/
nsemw	‘chew’	/ɕem/
nsin	‘put’	/ɕik /‘put’, /ɕij/ ‘be there’
nugcoviain	‘egg’	/nigoβin/
numbu	‘bamboo’	/niβinBu/
nuwagca	‘canoe’	/nuwag/
panğo	‘steal’	/panyo/
pwis	‘smart’	/p:is/
rar	‘be angry’	/rar/
rog	‘hear’	/rodroy, rot/
rogrog	‘want, desire’	/roŋ, roŋroŋ/
rongil	‘understand’	/roŋil/
rrap	‘laugh’	/r:aβ/
rvik	‘good’	/rβiy/
sağ	‘climb’	/saγ/ ‘ascend’, /sak:a/ ‘climb’
salgar	‘be flash’	/salgar/ ‘be glad’
sap	‘dance’	/saβ/
sarmbur	‘tear’	/t:er/
sian	‘conceive’	/sian/ ‘be pregnant’
sisi	‘not want’	/rosiy/
smber	‘touch’	/sber/
sor	‘speak’	/ssor/
sup	‘cease’	/suβ/
sup	‘shave’	/suβ/
tag	‘cry’	/taŋ/ ‘grieve’
tap	‘don bracelet’	/taβ/ ‘put on (of jewellery)’
te	‘strike’	/te/

<b>Nesan (1926-1927)</b>	<b>Gloss</b>	<b>Neverver (2004-2008)</b>
te	‘cut’	/te/
temburvur	‘kill’	/te Burβur/
tgis	‘bewail’	/tjis/ ‘weep in sorrow’
tigas	‘profane’	/tjas/ ‘sacred, taboo (associated with women)’
titn	‘cook’	/tn/ (TRANS); /titn/ (INTRANS)
toĭ	‘stop’	/toγ/ ‘exist, be at’
tölas	‘undo, unfasten’	/tlas/ ‘separate out (of vines); untangle’
tugtukh	‘flower’	/tuγtuγ/ ‘flower (of breadfruit)’
tuĭ	‘hit’	/duk/ ‘bang into’
tur	‘stand’	/tur/
tütñ	‘hot’	/tutñ/
vağvağ	‘short’	/βaγβaγ, mut/
vavu	‘walk about’	/βaβu/
vyuğ	‘unfold’	/βuγ/ ‘unwrap (laplap leaves)’
worwor	‘sit down’	/βorβor/
yal	‘fly’	/yal/

## Appendix II

### Neverver language vitality assessment<sup>55</sup>

#### 1. Intergenerational language transmission

Limap Village	5-. Stable yet threatened	Lingarakh Village	4. Unsafe
Neverver is spoken in most contexts by all generations with unbroken intergenerational transmission. A small number of children in Limap are dominant in another language.		Most, but not all children in Lingarakh speak Neverver as their first language, but this may be restricted to specific social domains. In some families, another local language or Bislama has become the dominant home language and Neverver is only used for communication outside the home with other Neverver speakers.	

#### 2. Absolute number of speakers (January 2005)

Limap Village	Lingarakh Village	TFC Plantation Settlement (coastward of Limap village)	Losarsar Settlement (coastward of Lingarakh village)
158	342	23	23

New raw data from the 2011 census, provided by Mr. Harry Nalau of the Vanuatu National Statistics Office, indicate that the populations of the main Neverver villages have changed somewhat. Only 95 people registered as being residents of Limap, while 435 registered in Lingarakh. It is possible that some of the TFC and Losarsar residents registered themselves as living in Lingarakh, as there are no statistics available for those two small settlements.

55. The material presented in Appendix II is used by permission of Oxford University Press, appearing previously in:

Barbour, J. 2010. Neverver: A study of language vitality and community initiatives. In Margaret Florey (Ed.). *Endangered Languages of Austronesia*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press. 225-244.

### 3. Proportion of speakers within the total population

Limap Village	4. Unsafe	Lingarakh Village	3. Definitely endangered
Nearly all speak the language.		A majority speak the language; in a number of families with small children, the children are growing up with another language as the dominant home language.	

#### 3.1. Percentage of households with differing dominant languages

	Limap	Lingarakh
Percentage of households where Neverver is the dominant language of children	88%	75%
Percentage of households where Bislama is the dominant language of children	12%	17%
Percentage of households where another local language is the dominant language of children	0%	8%

#### 3.2. Languages reported to be spoken by the Neverver speech community

	Limap Village	Lingarakh Village
Actively used indigenous languages	Neverver	Neverver Avava Neve'ei
Reported known indigenous languages	Avava Neve'ei Uripiv (Northeast Malekula) Paamese Vivti A Pentecostal language	Uripiv (Northeast Malekula) Paamese Asoruan (Maskelynes) Tape (Marakus, Tautu) Nitita (Viar)
Additional (non-indigenous) languages	Bislama	Bislama English

#### 4. Shifts in domains of language use

Limap Village	4. Multilingual parity	Lingarakh Village	3. Dwindling domains
<p>Bislama is the primary language in the official domains of government and public offices and in the church. A diglossic society has developed with Neverver associated with informal and home contexts, and Bislama associated with most official domains.</p>		<p>Neverver is used in home domains and for many functions, but Bislama is beginning to penetrate home domains. Language shift appears to be underway.</p>	

#### 5. Response to new domains and media

Neverver speech community	1. Minimal ~ 2. Coping
<p>Neverver is used in some new domains although its role is limited in these domains.</p>	

#### 6. Materials for language education and literacy

Pre-Documentation Project (2004)	1. Minimal
<p>A practical orthography is known to one or two community members.</p>	
Post-Documentation Project (2008→)	2. Limited
<p>Written materials exist but they may be useful only for some members of the community; for others, they may have a symbolic (i.e. religious) significance; literacy education in the language is not part of the school curriculum, but is beginning to be introduced at the pre-school level.</p>	

#### 7. Governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, including official status and use

Neverver Speech Community	4. Differentiated support
<p>Non-dominant languages are protected primarily as the language of the private domain. The use of the non-dominant language is prestigious.</p>	

**8. Community members' attitudes towards their own language**

Limap Village	3.	Lingarakh Village	2.
Many members support language maintenance; many others are indifferent or may even support language shift.		2. Some members support language maintenance; some are indifferent or may even support language shift.	

**9. Type and quality of documentation**

Pre-Documentation Project (2004)	1. Inadequate
Initially, there was a word list containing around 180 items published in Tryon (1976) under the name 'Lingarak'; an earlier wordlist was found among A. Bernard Deacon's (1926-1927) fieldnotes. Grammatical sketches, audio and video recordings and texts did not exist. A handwritten set of translated hymns, and two typed versions of this were held by one community member in Lingarakh village.	
Post-Documentation Project (2008→)	3.5 Fair ~ Good
There is now a detailed grammatical description and a draft dictionary containing some 3,250 items is under development. There is also a corpus containing over one hundred audio recordings, most of which have been at least fully annotated. Also in the corpus is a series of over seventy elicitation sets containing grammatical and lexical data. The set of hymns translated into Neverver has been digitised, standardised and distributed among community members, as have literacy materials including an alphabet booklet, primers, a number booklet and a story collection. Some video material has been collected, although not from the field site. There is a large collection of digital images.	

## Appendix III

### The Neverver documentation corpus

The Neverver documentation corpus is being developed for release online. A link to online materials can be found on the Mouton Grammar Library web page for this volume:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/9783110289619.fm>

#### 1. The contemporary tale collection [NVCT]

The contemporary tale collection contains recently created stories, along with interpretations of religious material, western fairy tales, and traditional tales from neighbouring communities. The speakers contributing to this collection are aged between 19 and 45 years.

Toolbox Record/ WAV file	Track Name	Speakers
NVCT01	The Crab and the Rat	Helen-Rose Peniyas
NVCT02	The Christmas story	Lina Peniyas
NVCT03	Yesu and Nikotomas	Philimon Mark
NVCT04	Good Samaritan	Philimon Mark
NVCT05	The Rich Man 1	Limei Simo
NVCT06	Jack and the beanstalk	Miriam Simo
NVCT07	Noah	Philimon Mark
NVCT08	Neglecting the Church	Peniyas Bong
NVCT09	Joseph	Philimon Mark
NVCT10	Luke 15:11	Philimon Mark
NVCT	The Lost Son	Philimon Mark
NVCT	The Widow	Peniyas Bong

#### 2. The conversation collection [NVCV]

The conversation collection contains extracts of conversational material recorded in a range of more and less organised settings. Speakers range in age from 19 to 60 years old and are predominantly female, although NVCV03, NVCV07, and NVCV10 also include a male participant.

Toolbox Record/ WAV file	Track Name	Speakers
NVCV01	The fight at Tavali Aut	Emlina and Limei Simo, Helen-Rose Peniyas
NVCV02	No more crabbing	Helen-Rose Peniyas & Emlina Simo
NVCV03	Nida Neri's missing pig	Peniyas Bong, Helen-Rose and Lina Peniyas
NVCV04	The huskless corn	Emlina and Limei Simo, Helen-Rose Peniyas
NVCV05	One night at Joseph Bak's house	Emlina and Limei Simo, Helen-Rose Peniyas
NVCV06	Miriam's coconut	Emlina, Limei and Miriam Simo, Helen-Rose Peniyas
NVCV07	The small cow	Lena, Nancy, Lina, Emlina and Jon-si
NVCV08	Collecting prawns	Group of women
NVCV09	Making Nakhadrong Mats	Emlina and Limei Simo, Helen-Rose Peniyas
NVCV10	Wedding plans	Emlina Simo, Peniyas Bong, Lina Peniyas...

### 3. The daily life collection [NVDL]

The daily life collection contains descriptions of life as Neverver speakers experience it today. Descriptions of common processes, and instructional texts combine with personal accounts of recent events in this collection. Speakers range from around 18 years old to 75 years old and include both male and female speakers.

Toolbox Record/ WAV file	Track Name	Speakers
NVDL01	Hariken	Douglas Vatdal
NVDL02	Kopra	Rali Bong
NVDL03	Courtship 1	Roslin Turia
NVDL04	Courtship 2	Roslin Turia
NVDL05	Courtship 3	Roslin Turia
NVDL06	Building local houses	Kalvau Appi
NVDL07	Gardening	Yunisa
NVDL08	More on gardening	Douglas Vatdal
NVDL09	Raising children	Tabeta
NVDL10	Nimerbbun laplap	Lerakhbel
NVDL11	Nolong nivinbbu	Lerakhbel

NVDL12	Nidam soxsox and Nolong mavus	Lerakhbel
NVDL13	Making mats	Anjong (text file only)
NVDL14	Cyclone Bola	Naling Sapla
NVDL15	Food after a cyclone	Naling Sapla
NVDL16	Kava production	Jean-Pierre Peniyas, John-Jilik (text file only)
NVDL17	Mat-making	Lerakhsil Moti (text file only)
NVDL18	Making gardens	Naling Sapla (text file only)
NVDL19	More on making gardens	Peniyas Bong
NVDL	Futbol	Peter Vatdal
NVDL	Futbol 2	Peter Vatdal
NVDL	Welcome speech	Jacob Naus

#### 4. The custom interview collection [NVKI]

The custom interview collection contains descriptions of traditional practices and beliefs of the Neverver speakers. Some texts are monologues, with a single speaker responding to a request for information on a particular topic; others are interviews, with a younger community member asking questions of an older community member. Many topics covered in this collection were prompted by the Vanuatu National Cultural Centre's fieldworker topics for men, provided by the then director, Ralph Reganvanu. With the exception of Philimon Mark, who is in his 40s, the primary speakers are all over 65 years old. A number of these texts had not been fully digitised at the time of writing.

Toolbox Record/ WAV file	Track Name	Speakers
NVKI01	Water	Lerakhsil Moti
NVKI02	Circumcision	James Bangsukh
NVKI03	Initiation rights	James Bangsukh
NVKI04	Trade & exchange 1	James Bangsukh (with Emma Vatdal)
NVKI05	Trade & exchange 2	James Bangsukh (with Emma Vatdal)
NVKI06	Marriage traditions	James Bangsukh (with Nellie Vatdal)
NVKI07	Arrival of Christianity	Philimon Mark
NVKI08	Pig's tusks	Moti
NVKI09	Marriage traditions	Moti
NVKI10	A fight	Moti
NVKI11	Death ceremonies	Moti

NVKI12	A woman who refused to marry	Moti
NVKI13	Lakhahor	Moti
NVKI14	Months of the year	Moti
NVKI15	Traditional dancing rhythms	Lerakhsil Moti
NVKI16	Painted pigs	Lerakhsil Moti
NVKI17	Siblings	Moti
NVKI18	The ship in Crab Bay	Moti
NVKI19	The ship in Crab Bay	Lerakhsil Moti
NVKI20	Trade & exchange	Lerakhsil Moti (with Nellie Vattal)
NVKI21	Marriage	Lerakhsil Moti (with Nellie Vattal)
NVKI22	Trade & exchange 3	James Bangsukh(with Emma Vattal)
NVKI23	Trade & exchange 4	
NVKI24	Trade & exchange 5	
NVKI25	Trade & exchange 6	
NVKI26	Trade & exchange 7	
NVKI27	Trade & exchange 8	
NVKI28	Death ceremony 1	Lerakhsil Moti
NVKI29	Death ceremony 2	
NVKI30	Gardening traditions	Naling Sapla (text file only)
NVKI	Yam Beliefs 1	Jacob Naus
NVKI	Yam Beliefs 2	Jacob Naus
NVKI	Trees	Jacob Naus
NVKI	Crimes 1	Jacob Naus
NVKI	Crimes 2	Jacob Naus
NVKI	Land dispute	Jacob Naus
NVKI	Incest	Jacob Naus
NVKI	Chiefly duties	Jacob Naus
NVKI	Traditions of childbirth	Lerakhsil Moti

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## 5. The traditional story collection [NVKS]

The traditional story collection contains tales of the ni-Vanuatu people, particularly those of Malekula island. The story of Lemanvukh, recorded in three different versions, is an account of the emergence of the traditional cultural organisation of the Neverver speech community, and the closely related peoples of north-central Malekula. Other stories recount historical events that have become legends in the re-telling. These stories are all described as *Nimitl* 'traditional story'.

Toolbox Record/ WAV file	Track Name	Speakers
NVKS01	Finding coconut and thatch	Jacob Naus
NVKS02	Lavni	James Bangsukh
NVKS03	Breaking the rules	Tabeta
NVKS04	How the rat got its tail	Douglas Vatdal
NVKS05	How the fruit bat got its wings	Douglas Vatdal
NVKS06	The pig's child	Jacob Naus
NVKS07	Finding fire	Lerakhsil Moti
NVKS08	The pig's child	Lerakhsil Moti
NVKS09	The Netrar custom	Lerakhsil Moti
NVKS10	Lemanvukh	Lerakhsil Moti
NVKS11	Lemanvukh	James Bangsukh
NVKS12	Outsmarting the snake	James Bangsukh
NVKS13	The Famine	James Bangsukh
NVKS14	The Flood	James Bangsukh
NVKS15	The sun and the moon	Lerakhsil Moti
NVKS16	Lemanvukh	Kalvau Appi
NVKS17	The story of Lavias	Lerakhsil Moti
NVKS18	The winged women	Emlina Simo
NVKS19	The snake eggs	Helen-Rose Peniyas
NVKS20	The octopus	Helen-Rose Peniyas
NVKS21	The foolish man and the tree	Naling Sapla
NVKS22	The foolish man and the Niberiyev fruit	Naling Sapla
NVKS23	The hen and the scrub fowl	Naling Sapla
NVKS24	The bad mother	Lina Peniyas; song sung by Emlina Simo
NVKS25	'Varmut'	Lina Peniyas
NVKS26	The forbidden fruit	Simo Saikon
NVKS27	The boy and the breadfruit	Alan of Vili
NVKS	The foolish man	Jean-Pierre Peniyas
NVKS	The stone	Lina Peniyas

## 6. The elicitation collection [NVE]

The elicitation collection contains thirty-four files of elicited material produced by language consultants on the 2005 field trip. Some of these derive from Bouquiaux and Thomas's (1992) questionnaires on the verb phrase and the noun phrase. Others are arranged by structural and functional themes suggested by

Catriona Hyslop's (2001) grammar of Lolovoli, Talmy Givón's (2001a) syntax volume, and structural matters arising from the developing Neverver corpus.

### **7. The lexical collection [NVLX]**

The lexical collection contains thirty-three files of lexical material produced by language consultants while checking the Neverver word list on the 2005 field trip. Definitions and example sentences for many verbs are recorded in this file, along with data for reduplicated and suffixed forms.

### **8. The question collection [NVKW]**

The question collection contains twelve files of material produced by language consultants during the 2008 summer workshop. There is a particular focus on negative evidence in this collection and it contains constructions produced while checking draft chapters of the Neverver grammatical description.

### **9. Songs**

The song collection contains songs performed by individuals and groups, including those that were sung as part of a narrative performance.

### **10. Digital images**

The image collection contains photographs taken on film in 2004, and images taken with a digital camera in 2005. Audio and video material collected during the 2008 collaborative workshop is also part of this collection.

### **11. Literacy resources**

Community literacy resources are being developed for use in the local kindergartens in Limap and Lingarakh Village. These include an alphabet booklet, a booklet of numbers, a collection of short stories for children, and a collection of extended stories for readers of all ages. Helen-Rose Peniyas and Emlina Simo prepared the children's resources during the 2008 collaborative workshop.

## Appendix IV

### Sample Texts

#### 1. *Nidam Sokhsokh* ‘Baked Yams’ [NVDL12]

Text one comes from the Daily Life collection [NVDL]. Lerakhbel (approximately 55 years old), daughter of Lerakhsil Moti, of Limap Village, tells the author how to make a baked yam dish known as *bunia* in Bislama. The text was recorded on 21 October, 2004, and is one of a series of short texts by Lerakhbel describing cooking processes.

There are just four units in the text that end with falling pitch (signalled by ↘); elsewhere, clausal boundaries are marked with rising pitch (↗) and a lengthy pause (;). The text begins in irrealis mood which is characteristic of such instructional texts, as well as imperative constructions. At line (1.5), however, it changes into realis mood. Realis mood is characteristic of descriptions of habitual processes. The switch may have been triggered by the description of fire-making, as instructions were given on fire-making in the immediately preceding text, and thus become part of assumed knowledge.

- (1) *Barnakh mil nim-sisir mil i-tmakhan*  
 now again 1IRR:SG-discuss again 3REAL:SG-how  
*ar-ve nidam-sokhsokh*↘  
 IMPS:REAL-make baked.yam  
 ‘Now, again, I’ll discuss again how they make the baked yam dish.’ [15.668]
- (2) *Nidam-sokhsokh, kubi-kkin nidam,*  
 baked.yam 2IRR:SG-peel.with.knife yam  
*kubi-kkin nidaro, kubi-kkin*  
 2IRR:SG-peel.with.knife taro 2IRR:SG-peel.with.knife  
*nakhbo*↗  
 k.o.yam  
 ‘About the baked yam dish, peel yams, peel taro, peel nakhbo yams;’ [21.034]
- (3) *Kum-te m-khiskhis edr*↗  
 2IRR:SG-cut ST-shatter PL  
 ‘Cut them into pieces;’ [32.862]
- (4) *Kum-tuv nakhabb*↗  
 2IRR:SG-light fire  
 ‘Light the cooking fire;’ [36.057]

- (5) *Ale, baga nakhabb ang ba ib-is,*  
 then then fire ANA when 3IRR:SG-bad  
*ku-yel*<sup>56</sup> *nevat*↗  
 2REAL:SG-pick.up stone  
 ‘Then, after that, the fire, when it has burned down, you pick up the stones;’  
 [40.755]
- (6) *Ku-yel nevat i-suvsvu, kum-jurjur*↗  
 2REAL:SG-pick.up stone 3REAL:SG-be.finished 2IRR:SG-spread.out  
 ‘Finish picking up the stones and spread the remaining stones flat;’ [49.465]
- (7) *Ku-jurjur lu ku-ttarikh nulkha*  
 2REAL:SG-spread.out PERF 2REAL:SG-lay.flat.leaves laplap.leaf  
*lon nevat*↗  
 LOC stone  
 ‘Having spread (the stones) flat, you put the laplap leaves on the stones;’  
 [54.33]
- (8) *Ku-rrik nidam sokhsokh i-vu*↘  
 2REAL:SG-throw baked.yam 3REAL:SG-go  
 ‘You throw on the pieces of root crop.’ [61.031]
- (9) *Ale ku-rrik nemjal aran*↗  
 then 2REAL:SG-throw meat LOC.on  
 ‘Then you throw meat on top;’ [65.061]
- (10) *Ale ku-yas*↘  
 then 2REAL:SG-cover.with.stones  
 ‘Then you cover it with stones.’ [70.493]
- (11) *Ku-yas lu ku-skhav*↗,  
 2REAL:SG-cover.with.stones PERF 2REAL:SG-cover  
 ‘Having covered it with stones, you cover it with leaves;’ [72.568]
- (12) *Ku-tvin-ikh nibittan*↗,  
 2REAL:SG-bury-APPL soil  
 ‘You bury it with soil;’ [78.835]
- (13) *I-suv*↘  
 3REAL:SG-finish  
 ‘It is finished.’ [81.916]

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56. The verb *yel* ‘pick up’ is also used to mean ‘scoop out’ when talking about the action of removing seeds (i.e. from a cacao seed). There is a perceived similarity between removing seeds from fruit, and removing stones from a fire pit.

## 2. *Nossorian an Krismas* ‘The Christmas Story’ [NVCT02]

Text two is a story from the Contemporary Tales collection [NVCT]. ‘The Christmas Story’ was created and told by Lina Peniyas (approximately 40 years old) of Limap village. Lina, mother of six, made up the story to teach children of their parents’ unconditional love. Text two was recorded on 30 October, 2005, when Lina performed the story at my request after dinner, to a small group of family and friends.

- (1) *Na nikhijan na Lina*  
 1SG name 1SG Lina  
 ‘My name is Lina.’ [0.000]
- (2) *Ni-rong-rong nim-sisir stori lele i-skham.*  
 1REAL:SG-DUP-want 1IRR:SG-discuss story small 3REAL:SG-one  
 ‘I want to tell a short story.’ [4.229]
- (3) *Stori ang i-gang.*  
 story ANA 3REAL:SG-like.so  
 ‘The story goes like so.’ [10.131]
- (4) *Nida i-skham adr-ikh mama i-skham*  
 mother 3REAL:SG-one 3NSG-APPL father 3REAL:SG-one  
*ar-lukh.*  
 3REAL:DU-live  
 ‘There lived a mother and a father.’ [12.191]
- (5) *Ar-lukh ga ale ari-tbbukh niterikh lele*  
 3REAL:DU-live and then 3REAL:DU-have child small  
*i-skham i-vuvam.*  
 3REAL:SG-one 3REAL:SG-first  
 ‘They lived and then, they had a small child first.’ [15.427]
- (6) *Niterikh adr ari-tbbukh duvakh ang nimukhman.*  
 child 3NSG 3REAL:DU-have first ANA male  
 ‘The child, they had a boy first.’ [19.570]
- (7) *At-matmat-ikh ga-ga-ga-ga-gaga niterikh ang*  
 3REAL:PL-take.care-APPL DUP-DUP-DUP-DUP-on.and.on child ANA  
*i-lablab tokhtokh.*  
 3REAL:SG-big huge  
 ‘They looked after the child until he was fully grown.’ [ref?]
- (8) *I-lukh blev adr.*  
 3REAL:SG-live with 3NSG  
 ‘He lived with them.’ [27.744]

- (9) *Ale, ar-lukh ga-ga-gaga mil ari-tbbukh*  
 then 3REAL:DU-live DUP-DUP-on.and.on again 3REAL:DU-have  
*mil niterikh ang i-skham.*  
 again child ANA 3REAL:SG-one  
 ‘Then they lived on and on until again they had another child.’ [30.242]
- (10) *Niterikh ang ba nida titi i-vu*  
 child ANA when mother 3POSS 3REAL:SG-go  
*i-lem, i-lem mil nimukhman.*  
 3REAL:SG-give.birth 3REAL:SG-give.birth again male  
 ‘The child, when its mother went and gave birth, she gave birth again to a boy.’ [34.870]
- (11) *Ale бага niterikh ang igen ei i-rvikh*  
 then then child ANA 3REAL:SG-like 3SG 3REAL:SG-good  
*bbutkha si.*  
 too.much NEG  
 ‘That child was, like, he was not good at all.’ [40.818]
- (12) *Ei nidruman ati-rvikh mokh at-ve nimkhut*  
 3SG body 3REAL:PL-good all 3REAL:PL-COP man  
*be nokhon lele titi ang mej i-gen*  
 but face small 3POSS ANA IMM 3REAL:SG-like  
*i-rvikh-da si.*  
 3REAL:SG-good-PART NEG  
 ‘His body parts were all good, they were human, but his small face, like, it wasn’t very good.’ [47.036]
- (13) *Nokhon i-kokngo me i-vukhle.*  
 face 3REAL:SG-appear just 3REAL:SG-different  
 ‘His face appeared different.’ [53.426]
- (14) *Ale бага i-maur ar-matmat-ikh, ar-khita*  
 then then 3REAL:SG-live 3REAL:DU-take.care-APPL 3REAL:DU-like  
*niterikh ar-matmat-ikh ga-ga-gaga,*  
 child 3REAL:DU-take.care-APPL DUP-DUP-on.and.on  
 ‘Then, he lived and they cared for him, they liked the child and they cared for him on and on.’ [57.362]
- (15) *Niterikh ang i-lablab tokhtokh.*  
 child ANA 3REAL:SG-big huge  
 ‘The child grew up.’ [63.197]
- (16) *Ale, ба dran i-skham, at-lukh i-gen*  
 then when Tmppn 3REAL:SG-one 3REAL:PL-live 3REAL:SG-like

*lile im-bbu sur krismas mej ing.*  
 near 3IRR:SG-go near Christmas IMM EXCLAM  
 ‘Then when one time, they were there and like, it was nearly Christmas now.’  
 [65.744]

- (17) *Ale, nida adr-ikh mama ar-ver “Nimt-uv*  
 then mother 3NSG-APPL father 3REAL:DU-say 1INCL:IRR:PL-go  
*lon stoa, nimt-uv nibit-vul-vul”.*  
 LOC store 1INCL:IRR:PL-go 1INCL:IRR:PL-DUP-buy  
 ‘The mother and father said “We’ll go to the store, we’ll go shopping”.’  
 [72.145]

- (18) *Ale at-uv at-vavu lon niar titi*  
 so 3REAL:PL-go 3REAL:PL-walk LOC garden 3POSS:SG  
*khabat.*  
 European  
 ‘So they went and walked to the store.’ [79.372]

- (19) *At-vavu lon niar titi khabat ang,*  
 3REAL:PL-walk LOC garden 3POSS European ANA  
*at-vavu at-khit-khit Netan an adr*  
 3REAL:PL-walk 3REAL:PL-DUP-look thing: DEF NMOD 3NSG  
*abit-vul edr.*  
 3IRR:PL-buy PL  
 ‘They walked to the store, they walked and looked at the things that they  
 could buy.’ [84.041]

- (20) *Ale, at-vul-vul ga-ga-ga-ga-ga-ga-ga*  
 then 3REAL:PL-DUP-buy DUP-DUP-DUP-DUP-DUP-DUP-on.and.on  
*at-vul-vul ati-vlem aiyem.*  
 3REAL:PL-DUP-buy 3REAL:PL-come Home  
 ‘They shopped on and on, they shopped and then they came home.’ [88.941]

- (21) *Be ba adr at-uv at-vul-vul ang,*  
 but when 3NSG 3REAL:PL-go 3REAL:PL-DUP-buy ANA  
*mama titi-dr i-vul niten, glas i-skham,*  
 father 3POSS.PL 3REAL:SG-buy thing:DEF glass 3REAL:SG-one  
*nitan i-gen abit-khit nimkhut nokhon lon.*  
 thing:DEF 3REAL:SG-like 3IRR:PL-see man face LOC  
 ‘When they went shopping, their father bought this thing, a glass, the thing  
 like, they can see a person’s face in it.’ [93.609]

- (22) *Ar-khit-khit nimkhut nimillun lon.*  
 IMPS:REAL-DUP-see man reflection LOC  
 ‘They can see the reflection of a person in it.’ [103.481]

- (23) *Ale, baga mitabbukh mej ing lile im-bbu mej*  
 then Then morning IMM EXCLAM near 3IRR:SG-go IMM  
*lon Krismas twenti-faev mitabbukh, nida i-tur*  
 loc Christmas 25 morning mother 3REAL:SG-get.up  
*i-ver-ikh kek tokhtokh i-skham.*  
 3REAL:SG-work-APPL cake huge 3REAL:SG-one  
 ‘After that, in the morning of the 25th, the mother got up and made a  
 big/special cake.’ [107.378]
- (24) *Ale, i-bbulbul niterikh lele ang ar*  
 then 3REAL:SG-shake.awake child small ANA PL  
*i-ver “Ale kabit-tur kamt-uv*  
 3REAL:SG-say well 2IRR:PL-get.up 2IRR:PL-go  
*kabit-lumlum”.*  
 2IRR:PL-wash.hands.and.face  
 ‘She shook the small children away and said “Well, get up and go and wash  
 your hands and face”.’ [115.845]
- (25) *Ale, niterikh lele ang adr ari-blev mama*  
 then child small ANA PL 3REAL:DU-be.with father  
*titi-dr at-uv at-lumlum.*  
 3POSS.PL 3REAL:PL-go 3REAL:PL-wash.hands.and.face  
 ‘The small children and their father went and washed their face and hands.’  
 [121.077]
- (26) *Ati-vlem i-ve at-rus adr.*  
 3REAL:PL-come 3REAL:SG-make 3REAL:PL-wear PL  
 ‘They came and he made them dress themselves.’ [124.648]
- (27) *Ale nida i-vus kek ang i-vu*  
 then mother 3REAL:SG-carry cake ANA 3REAL:SG-go  
*i-jik lon tebel an Adr abit-vor*  
 3REAL:SG-put LOC table NMOD 3NSG 3IRR:PL-sit  
*lon amti-kkan.*  
 LOC 3IRR:PL-eat  
 ‘Mother carried the cake and went and put it on the table where they were  
 going to sit and eat.’ [126.661]
- (28) *Ale ba-ver at-vor at-uv mej at-vor*  
 then when-say 3REAL:PL-sit 3REAL:PL-go IMM 3REAL:PL-sit  
*ga mama titi-r mej ing ibi-ssor,*  
 and father 3POSS.PL IMM EXCLAM 3IRR:SG-speak  
*i-ver,*  
 3REAL:SG-say  
 ‘Then, when they sat, they went and sat, then their father was about to speak  
 and he said,’ [131.806]

- (29) *Barnakh Krismas mej ing nibit-gel kek*  
 now Christmas IMM EXCLAM 1INCL:IRR:PL-slice cake  
*t-git, varikh nibit-khan git*  
 POSSDT-1INCL:NSG TEMPPROX 1INCL:IRR:PL-eat 1INCL:NSG  
*ngatian nimti-vlem nibit-khit-khit nokhon*  
 many 1INCL:IRR:PL-come 1INCL:IRR:PL-DUP-see face  
*Git lon an na mira ni-vul tjakh."*  
 1INCL:NSG LOC NMOD 1SG mirror 1REAL:SG-buy here  
 "Now it is Christmas and we'll cut our cake; just before we eat, all of us  
 will come and look at our faces in the mirror that I bought here." [137.404]
- (30) *Ale mama titi-dr i-staetem duvakh i-vu*  
 then father 3POSS-PL 3REAL:SG-start first 3REAL:SG-go  
*i-khit-khit nokhon.*  
 3REAL:SG-DUP-see face  
 'Then their father started first and went and looked at (his) face.' [147.810]
- (31) *I-vu i-khit-khit nokhon i-suv-suv*  
 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-DUP-see face 3REAL:SG-DUP-be.finished  
*i-vlem i-vor-vor, ale nida titi-dr*  
 3REAL:SG-come 3REAL:SG-DUP-sit then mother 3POSS-PL  
*i-vu.*  
 3REAL:SG-go  
 'He finished going to look at (his) face and came and sat down and their  
 mother went.' [152.404]
- (32) *Nida titi-dr i-vu i-khit-khit nokhon,*  
 mother 3POSS.PL 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-DUP-see face  
*ale i-vlem i-vor-vor.*  
 then 3REAL:SG-come 3REAL:SG-DUP-sit  
 'Their mother went and looked at (her) face and then she came and sat down.'  
 [157.493]
- (33) *Ale niterikh an adr at-lem duvakh*  
 then child NMOD 3NSG 3REAL:PL-give.birth first  
*ang i-vu, i-vu i-khit-khit nokhon*  
 ANA 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-look face  
*lu i-suv-suv ale i-vlem*  
 PERF 3REAL:SG-DUP-be.finished then 3REAL:SG-come  
*ivorvor.*  
 3REAL:SG-dup-sit  
 'Then the child that they gave birth to first went, and having finished looking  
 at his face, he came and sat down.' [161.509]
- (34) *An an i-vtakh ang mej i-vu.*  
 DEMSPN NMOD 3REAL:SG-last ANA IMM 3REAL:SG-go  
 'The one who was last went then.' [167.899]

- (35) *Ba i-vu i-tokh i-khit-khit nokhon lon*  
 when 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-PROG 3REAL:SG-look face LOC  
*klas ang, ga i-khit nokhon i-is we*  
 glass ANA and 3REAL:SG-see face 3REAL:SG-bad AUGCO  
*i-is, nokhon igen si var nimkhut.*  
 3REAL:SG-bad face 3REAL:SG-like NEG unfortunate man  
 ‘When he went and was looking at his face in the mirror, then he saw the face  
 was really bad, the face unfortunately wasn't like a man.’ [170.122]
- (36) *Ga i-ver-kh mama titi, i-ver “O*  
 and 3REAL:SG-say-APPL father 3POSS:SG 3REAL:SG-say Oh  
*mama! I-tmakhan okh ku-sisir si na tuan*  
 father 3REAL:SG-how 2SG 2REAL:SG-discuss NEG 1SG LOCPSN  
*na tue ij”.*  
 1SG long ago ANT  
 ‘Then he said to his father, “Oh Dad! How could you not discuss this with me  
 long ago?”’ [177.232]
- (37) *“Kum-bbuer-ikh na kum-bbuer na nokhon na*  
 2IRR:SG-say-APPL 1SG 2IRR:SG-say 1SG face 1SG  
*i-rvikh si.”*  
 3REAL:SG-good NEG  
 ‘‘You should tell me my face isn't good.’’ [184.205]
- (38) *“Il na ni-lukh i-gang, na ni-rongil*  
 CAUS 1SG 1REAL:SG-live 3REAL:SG-like.so 1SG 1REAL:SG-know  
*si se na nokhon na i-gang.”*  
 NEG COMP 1SG face 1SG 3REAL:SG-like.so  
 ‘‘Because I lived like that (but) I didn't know that my face was like so.’’  
 [187.084]
- (39) *Nollon var i-is we i-is*  
 heart unfortunate 3REAL:SG-bad AUGCO 3REAL:SG-bad  
*ga i-dri ei, idas vere.*  
 and 3REAL:SG-turn 3SG 3REAL:SG-go.down outside  
 ‘His poor heart was very bad and he turned around and went outside.’  
 [191.059]
- (40) *Ga mama titi i-ver “Kum-bbulem nakh;*  
 and father 3POSS:SG 3REAL:SG-say 2IRR:SG-come here  
*na ni-khita i-okh okh varikh na*  
 1SG 1REAL:SG-like PSNPR-2SG 2SG TEMPPROX 1SG  
*ni-rongrok we ni-rongrok okh’*  
 1REAL:SG-want AUGCO 1REAL:SG-want 2SG  
 ‘And his father said ‘Come here; I like you absolutely, I really love you.’’  
 [196.029]

- (41) *Be niterikh ang i-setta si nitan*  
 but child ANA 3REAL:SG-remember NEG thing:DEF  
*mama titi i-ver i-vu.*  
 father 3POSS:SG 3REAL:SG-say 3REAL:SG-go  
 ‘But the child didn’t remember what his father said; he went.’ [201.849]
- (42) *I-vu-vu-vu mej il im-loj lon*  
 3REAL:SG-DUP-DUP-go IMM PURPOSE 3IRR:SG-bend LOC  
*nimdali, im-das vere.*  
 door 3IRR:SG-go.down outside  
 ‘He went slowly then to bend in the door and go outside.’ [205.452]
- (43) *Mama titi mil i-kke tuan.*  
 father 3POSS:SG again 3REAL:SG-call LOCPSN  
 ‘His father again called out to him.’ [209.396]
- (44) *I-ver ‘nimkhut t-na var, kum-bbulem;*  
 3REAL:SG-say man POSSDT-1SG unfortunate 2IRR:SG-come  
*na ni-khita bburvur okh, na ni-rongrok*  
 1SG 1REAL:SG-like completely 2SG 1SG 1REAL:SG-want  
*okh we ni-rongrok okh.’*  
 2SG AUGCO 1REAL:SG-want 2SG  
 ‘He said ‘My poor son, come; I like you very much; I really love you.’’  
 [211.431]
- (45) *Ale niterikh lele ang i-dri mil ei*  
 then child small ANA 3REAL:SG-turn again 3SG  
*varikh i-vlem.*  
 TEMPPROX 3REAL:SG-come  
 ‘Then the small child turned around again and he came right away.’ [216.857]
- (46) *I-vlem ale at-uv at-vor-vor ale nida*  
 3-REAL:SG-come then 3REAL:PL-go 3REAL:PL-sit then mother  
*titi-dr i-gel kek ang at-letu lu*  
 3POSS:PL 3REAL:SG-slice cake ANA 3REAL:PL-pray PERF  
*ale ati-kkan.*  
 then 3REAL:PL-eat  
 ‘He came and they went and sat and their mother cut the cake; after they  
 prayed, they ate.’ [220.157]
- (47) *Ati-kkan lu i-suv-suv ale at-uv*  
 3REAL:PL-eat PERF 3REAL:SG-DUP-be.finished then 3REAL:PL-go  
*mej il abit-sukul ing.*  
 IMM PURPOSE 3IRR:PL-go.to.church EXCLAM  
 ‘Having finished eating, they went right away to go to church.’ [227.237]

- (48) *Stori ang i-suv-suv mej tang.*  
 story ANA 3REAL:SG-DUP-be.finished IMM there  
 ‘The story is finished there.’ [232.815]

### 3. *Nibongva* ‘The Circumcision Ceremony’[NVKI02]

Text three is an extract from the Custom Interview collection [NVKI]. In this extract, Chief James Bangsukh (approximately 65 years old) of Limap village talks about traditional circumcision practices of the Neverver speakers. The text was recorded on 20 October, 2004, and Chief James was speaking to a small group of men from Limap village, as I recorded his comments. The topic was self-selected and highlights the important role that the maternal uncle plays in the life of his nephews.

- (1) *I-na mil tjakh i-na James Bangsukh.*  
 PSNPR-1SG again here PSNPR-1SG James Bangsukh  
 ‘I, here again, I’m James Bangsukh.’ [41.445]
- (2) *Ni-tbbukh no-ssor-ian i-skham il ni-ver*  
 1REAL:SG-have NPR-speak-NSF 3REAL:SG-one CAUS 1REAL:SG-want  
*nim-sisir kumam kumam no-ssor-ian an*  
 1IRR:SG-discuss 1EXCL:NSG 1EXCL:NSG NPR-speak-NSF NMOD  
*Neverver kumam nemakh Midu.*  
 Neverver 1EXCL:NSG denizen Mindu  
 ‘I have a story because I want to talk about, I want to talk about us, us, in the language of Neverver, us, the Mindu people.’ [46.668]
- (3) *Nitan ni-ver nim-sisir ang at-ver*  
 thing:DEF 1REAL:SG-want 1IRR:SG-discuss ANA 3REAL:PL-say  
*te nibongva.*  
 COMP circumcision  
 ‘The thing I want to talk about, they called the Nibongva (circumcision) ceremony.’ [64.916]
- (4) *Nibongva, niterikh-mukhman i-yaljokh nida*  
 circumcision child-male 3REAL:SG-run.away mother  
*titi i-vu i-bakhbakh im-bbulev me*  
 3POSS:SG 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:SG-hide 3IRR:SG-with just  
*nimukhman adr lume.*  
 male PL only  
 ‘About the Nibongva ceremony, a boy left his mother and went and just hid with the men only.’ [73.148]

- (5) *Nimokhmokh i-vev si, i-khitrokh si.*  
 female 3REAL:SG-go to NEG 3REAL:SG-see NEG  
 ‘A woman couldn't go, she couldn't see (the child).’ [82.735]
- (6) *Niterikh at-ve nibongva.*  
 child 3REAL:PL-did circumcision  
 ‘The children do the Nibongva ceremony.’ [85.435]
- (7) *Nibongva, lon mam no-ssor-ian t-mam*  
 circumcision LOC 1EXCL:NSG NPR-speak-NSF POSSDT-1EXCL:NSG  
*nat-ver nibongva be no-ssor-ian an*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-say circumcision but NPR-speak-NSF NMOD  
*nimkhut balian at-rongil, ar-ver 'sekomsaes'*  
 man all 3REAL:PL-know IMPS:REAL-say circumcision  
 ‘*Nibongva* in our language, we say ‘*nibongva*’ but in the language that every-  
 one knows (i.e. Bislama), they say ‘*sekomsaes*’. [87.309]
- (8) *Il niskhan ar-ver nibongva?*  
 CAUS what IMPS:REAL-say circumcision  
 ‘Why do they say Nibongva?’ [97.173]
- (9) *Ar-ver nibongva il ar-ver te*  
 IMPS:REAL-say circumcision CAUS IMPS:REAL-say COMP  
*ar-ve-bkhas niterikh-mukhman*  
 IMPS:REAL-make-clean child-male  
 ‘They say Nibongva because they say they make the boys clean.’ [102.066]
- (10) *niterikh-mukhman ib-lukh ga-ga-gaga im-bbue*  
 child-male 3IRR:SG-live DUP-DUP-on.and.on 3IRR:SG-COP  
*nimkhut*  
 man  
 ‘A boy will stay until he is a man.’ [115.087]
- (11) *Barnakh ar-sus si niterikh-mokhmokh be*  
 now IMPS:REAL-ask NEG child-female but  
*tue, khavut-tro at-matmat-ikh me*  
 long.ago husband-old 3REAL:PL-take.care-APPL just  
*niterikh-mukhman titi-dr ba i-ve nimkhut,*  
 child-male 3POSS-PL when 3REAL:SG-COP man  
*at-uv at-khit bibi, bibi*  
 3REAL:PL-go 3REAL:PL-see maternal.uncle maternal.uncle  
*titi im-bbu niterikh ang, il bibi*  
 3POSS:SG 3IRR:SG-go child ANA CAUS maternal.uncle  
*im-sus niterikh-vidro ibi-skham tuan*  
 3IRR:SG-ask pre-adolescent.girl 3IRR:SG-one LOCPSN  
*khavut-tro ibi-skham il im-bbul il*  
 husband-old 3IRR:SG-one PURPOSE 3IRR:SG-buy BENE

*niterikh-mukhman titi.*

child-male 3POSS:SG

‘Now they don’t ask for a girl but before, the old men just looked after their boys (and) when he was a man, they went and saw the maternal uncle, the maternal uncle of the child, because the maternal uncle was going to ask for a girl from an old man to buy (her) for his boy.’ [120.477]

- (12) *Oke, ba i-gang, im-bbul lu*  
 okay when 3REAL:SG-like.so 3IRR:SG-buy COMPL  
*niterikh-mokhmokh am-lik niterikh-mukhman titi,*  
 child-female IMPS:IRR-pass child-male 3POSS:SG  
*ar-tokh.*  
 3REAL:DU-exist  
 ‘When it was so, he was going to pay off the girl, and they would give (her) to the boy, they lived together.’ [147.918]

- (13) *Be im-kharikh ei im-bbue nitan*  
 but 3IRR:SG-TEMPPROX 3SG 3IRR:SG-do thing:DEF  
*i-jing, niterikh ba i-ve nibongva,*  
 3REAL:SG-be.there child when 3REAL:SG-do circumcision  
*netan mama adr-ikh nida ar-ve i-vuvam*  
 thing:DEF father 3NSG-APPL mother 3REAL:DU-do 3REAL:SG-first  
*abir-ver te ang wallas im-bbu tuan*  
 3IRR:DU-say COMP ANA thank-you 3IRR:SG-go LOCPSN  
*niterikh bibi titi-dr, bbubbu titi-dr.*  
 child maternal.uncle 3POSS.PL grandfather 3POSS.PL  
 ‘But before he was going to do that thing, the child, when he did the Ni-bongva, the thing (his) father and mother did first, they would say thank-you to the child’s maternal uncles and grandfathers.’ [159.568]

- (14) *Wallas an i-jing adr at-ve*  
 thank-you NMOD 3REAL:SG-be.there 3NSG 3REAL:PL-do  
*il nisin man?*  
 BENE thing:INDF EMPH  
 ‘Those thanks, did they do them for something?’ [182.013]

- (15) *At-ve il, mama adr-ikh nida ar-ve*  
 3REAL:PL-do CAUS father 3NSG-APPL mother 3REAL:DU-do  
*nitan i-jing il niterikh-mukhman*  
 thing:DEF 3REAL:SG-be.there CAUS child-male  
*titi-dr i-dran, nidruman i-dran.*  
 3POSS.PL 3REAL:SG-bleed body 3REAL:SG-bleed  
 ‘They did it because, the father and mother did that thing because their son bled, (his) body bled.’ [187.545]

- (16) *Ar-tek*                    *nisib,*    *nidruman*    *niterikh*    *titi-dr*  
 IMPS:REAL-strike    knife    body    child    3POSS.PL  
*i-dran.*  
 3REAL:SG-bleed  
 ‘They cut him with a knife, the body of their child bled.’ [199.426]
- (17) *Ale,*    *nida*            *adr-ikh*            *mama*            *barnakh*            *an-jing*  
 so    mother    3NSG-APPL    father    now    that  
*ni-sisien-ian*            *i-skham*                    *i-tokh*                    *lon*            *adr*  
 NPR-decide-NSF    3REAL:SG-one    3REAL:SG-exist    LOC    3NSG  
*il*            *adr*            *mas*            *abri-rkhas*                                    *il*  
 PURPOSE    3NSG    must    3IRR:DU-make.compensation    CAUS  
*niterikh*    *ang*            *i-dran,*                                    *niterikh*    *ang*            *i-dran*  
 child    ANA    3REAL:SG-bleed    child    ANA    3REAL:SG-bleed  
 ‘So, the mother and father, at that time, a decision was in them, for they had to make compensation because their child bled, their child bled.’ [205.941]
- (18) *Nedre*    *an*            *i-jing*                                    *adr*            *abir-vul*  
 blood    NMOD    3REAL:SG-be.there    3NSG    3IRR:DU-buy  
*im-bev*                    *aran*    *nimkhudan*            *niterikh*            *ang*            *adr*            *be*  
 3IRR:SG-go to    LOC    family            child            ANA    PL    but  
*nokho*    *nimdan,*            *nimkhut*            *an*            *adr*            *abir-ve*  
 vine    eye            man            NMOD    3NSG    3IRR:DU-make  
*ngosgon*    *niterikh*            *ang*            *adr*            *im-bbuev*                    *aran,*  
 present    child            ANA    3NSG    3IRR:SG-go to    LOC  
*mej*    *bibi.*  
 IMM    maternal.uncle  
 ‘That blood, they were going to pay to all the family of the child, but the centre of the vine, the man who they would make the child's gifts go to, was the maternal uncle.’ [218.223]
- (19) *Bibi*                                    *an*            *i-m-yang*                                    *blev*            *mej*  
 maternal.uncle    NMOD    3REAL:SG-ST-be.born    with    IMM  
*nida*            *an*            *i-lem*                                    *niterikh*            *ang.*  
 mother    NMOD    3REAL:SG-give.birth    child            ANA  
 ‘The uncle who was born with the mother who gave birth to the child.’  
 [236.900]
- (20) *Kut*            *an*            *i-jing,*                                    *ar-ve*                                    *i-gang*  
 LOC PN    NMOD    3REAL:SG-be.there    3REAL:DU-do    3REAL:SG-like.so  
*il*            *bibi*                                    *ib-rongil*                                    *netan*                                    *im-bbue*  
 PURPOSE    maternal.uncle    3IRR:SG-know    thing:DEF    3IRR:SG-make  
*aran*    *khalan*            *nabbung*            *an*            *im-bbulem*                                    *deb*  
 LOC    nephew    day            NMOD    3IRR:SG-come    CONT  
 ‘That place, they did like that, so that the maternal uncle would know what to do for his nephew in the days still to come.’ [241.479]

- (21) *I-ve*                    *i-gang*                    *nida*                    *adr-ikh*                    *mama*  
 3REAL:SG-COP    3REAL:SG-like.so    mother    3NSG-APPL    father  
*ar-ve*                    *ngosgon*                    *niterikh*                    *i-vev*                    *kut*  
 3REAL:DU-make    present    child    3REAL:SG-go to    LOCPN  
*an*                    *i-jing*                    *il*                    *ang*  
 NMOD    3REAL:SG-be.there    PURPOSE    ANA  
 ‘It was like so, the mother and father made the child’s present go to that place for that purpose.’ [256.436]

#### 4. *Nakhabb* ‘Fire’ [NVKS07]

Text four is a Neverver legend from the Traditional Story (*Kastom Stori*) collection. Told by Lerakhsil Moti (approximately 75 years) of Sarmette, this legend describes how two young girls were instructed on the use of fire to cook breadfruit by a man they met in the forest. The text was recorded in Lingarakh Village on 25 September 2005.

- (1) *Na*    *nikhijan*    *na*    *Lerakhsil*    *Moti.*  
 1SG    name    1SG    Lerakhsil    Moti  
 ‘My name is Lerakhsil Moti.’ [0.0]
- (2) *No-ssor-ian*                    *an*                    *nim-bbuer*                    *ang*    *tue*                    *an*  
 NPR-speak-NSF    NMOD    1IRR:SG-say    ANA    long ago    DEMSPN  
*an*                    *man*                    *an*                    *at-tokh*                    *tue*                    *nakhabb*  
 NMOD    man    NMOD    3REAL:PL-exist    long ago    fire  
*i-vangvang*                    *si.*  
 3REAL:SG-be.alight    NEG  
 ‘The story that I’ll tell, long ago, in the time of the men who lived long ago, fire didn’t burn.’ [6.94]
- (3) *Nakhabb*    *vangvang*    *i-tokh*                    *si.*  
 fire                    be.alight    3REAL:SG-exist    NEG  
 ‘There was no fire.’ [19.822]
- (4) *Ale,*    *nat-khan*                    *me*    *ni-kkan-ian*                    *an*                    *i-mrekh.*  
 so    1EXCL:REAL:PL-eat    just    NPR-eat-NSF    NMOD    3REAL:SG-raw  
 ‘So, we just ate food that was raw.’ [22.154]
- (5) *Nat-khan*                    *nibet.*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-eat                    breadfruit  
 ‘We ate breadfruit.’ [28.383]
- (6) *Nat-tav*                    *nibet,*                    *nat-khan.*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-spear    breadfruit    1EXCL:REAL:PL-eat  
 ‘We speared breadfruit and ate it.’ [30.386]

- (7) *Ale, las i-skham, lokhavre an*  
 then occasion:INDF 3REAL:SG-one village NMOD  
*nat-somda nakhabb t-nam, lokhavre*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-discover fire POSSDT-1EXCL:NSG village  
*an nikhijan Bongrari.*  
 NMOD name Bongrari  
 ‘Then one time, the village where we found our fire, that village was called Bongrari.’ [32.593]
- (8) *Mokhmokh i-skham blev khavut titi*  
 female 3REAL:SG-one with husband 3POSS:SG  
*ari-tbbukh niterikh ang ivas.*  
 3REAL:DU-have child ANA 3REAL:SG-four  
 ‘A woman and her husband had four children.’ [42.21]
- (9) *Niterikh titi-r ar-tokh-tokh, adr ar-uv*  
 child 3POSS-PL 3REAL:DU-DUP-exist 3NSG 3REAL:DU-go  
*lakha.*  
 bush  
 ‘Two of their children stayed and two went to the bush.’ [53.356]
- (10) *Ar-das ari-vlem, ari-vlem lakha*  
 3REAL:DU-go.down 3REAL:DU-come 3REAL:DU-come bush  
*titi-dr Niobittan.*  
 3POSS.PL Niobittan  
 ‘They came down, they came to their bush at Niobittan.’ [56.044]
- (11) *Ale, ba ver-t i-gang, niterikh-mokhmokh*  
 then when say-COMP 3REAL: SG-like.so child-female  
*at-tokh-tokh, at-lukh-lukh gaga, ale,*  
 3REAL:PL-DUP-exist 3REAL:PL-DUP-live on.and.on then  
*niterikh-mokhmokh ang adr ar-uv ar-vavu*  
 child-female ANA PL 3REAL:DU-go 3REAL:DU-walk  
*lakha.*  
 bush  
 ‘Then, when it was so, the girls stayed there, they stayed for a while, and then two of the girls went walking to the bush.’ [63.284]
- (12) *Ba ar-vavu lakha titi-dr, ar-leb*  
 when 3REAL:DU-walk bush 3POSS-PL 3REAL:DU-carry  
*nakhabb, ar-rot nisin i-skham i-ngar.*  
 fire 3REAL:DU-hear thing:INDF 3REAL:SG-one 3REAL:SG-cry  
 ‘They walked to their bush, they carried firewood, and they heard something cry.’ [77.476]

- (13) *Ba i-ngar i-gang nilang ang*  
 when 3REAL:SG-cry 3REAL:SG-like.so wind ANA  
*i-vu-vuv nakha ang i-vadvadr ale*  
 3REAL:SG-DUP-blow tree ANA 3REAL:SG-rub.noisily then  
*nakhabb ang i-da-das.*  
 fire ANA 3REAL:SG-DUP-go.down  
 ‘When it cried like that, the wind blew, the wood rubbed and then the fire  
 went down.’ [85.029]
- (14) *Ba i-da-das i-gang, niterikh-*  
 when 3REAL:SG-DUP-go.down 3REAL:SG-like.so child  
*mokhmokh lele ar-tur ari-tvis*  
 female small 3REAL:DU-stand 3REAL:DU-look.dir  
*ar-khit nakhabb ang i-da-das.*  
 3REAL:DU-see fire ANA 3REAL:SG-DUP-go.down  
 ‘When it went down like that, the small girls stood and looked around and saw  
 the fire go down.’ [90.441]
- (15) *Ba ar-uv ari-sber nakhabb ang, nakhabb*  
 when 3REAL:DU-go 3REAL:DU-touch fire ANA fire  
*ang i-khan i-ttes adr.*  
 ANA 3REAL:SG-eat 3REAL:SG-emphatic 3NSG  
 ‘When they went and touched the fire, the fire burned them painfully.’  
 [96.241]
- (16) *Ba ver-t i-gang ale, ar-lav,*  
 when say-COMP 3REAL:SG-like.so then 3REAL:DU-get  
*ar-tur tuan, ale, nimkhut i-skham*  
 3REAL:DU-stand LOCPSN then man 3REAL:SG-one  
*i-vlem i-ver-ikh adr i-ver te*  
 3REAL:SG-come 3REAL:SG-say-APPL 3NSG 3REAL:SG-say COMP  
 ‘*Kabir-lav nakhabb an i-jakh, netan-jakh,*  
 2IRR:DU-get fire NMOD 3REAL:SG-be.here thing:DEF-be.here  
*kabr-uv kabir-vu-vuv aijem.*”  
 2IRR:DU-go 2IRR:DU-DUP-blow home  
 ‘When it was so, they got it and stood there and then a man came and said to  
 them, “Get this fire, this thing, and go and blow on it at home.”’ [100.201]
- (17) “*Ale, kabri-tn nibet t-gam lon.*”  
 then 2IRR:DU-roast breadfruit POSSDT-2NSG LOC  
 “‘Then, roast your breadfruit on it.’” [114.002]
- (18) “*Kabri-tn nibet ang i-mmas, kabir-khan,*  
 2IRR:DU-roast breadfruit ANA 3REAL:SG-be.dry 2IRR:DU-eat  
*kabit-khan.*”  
 2IRR:PL-eat  
 “‘Roast the breadfruit until it is cooked, then eat it, you all eat it.’” [117.446]

- (19) *Ale, nitlele ang ar-dev nakhabb ang*  
 then small.child ANA 3REAL:DU-carry.fire fire ANA  
*i-vu, ar-vu-vuv, ari-tn nibet*  
 3REAL:SG-go 3REAL:DU-DUP-blow 3REAL:DU-roast breadfruit  
*titi-dr.*  
 3POSS-PL  
 ‘Then, the small children carried the fire away and blew on it and roasted their breadfruit.’ [121.334]
- (20) *Nibet an ari-tn ang, iskham nibet*  
 breadfruit NMOD 3REAL:DU-roast ANA INDF.PN breadfruit  
*ang nikhijan nibet-tuag, iskham nikhijan nijavi*  
 ANA name k.o.breadfruit INDF.PN name k.o.breadfruit  
 ‘The breadfruit that they cooked, one breadfruit was called Nibet tuag, and one was called Nijavi. [127.623]
- (21) *Ale, ari-tn nibet ang.*  
 so 3REAL:DU-roast breadfruit ANA  
 ‘So, they roasted the breadfruit.’ [137.926]
- (22) *Ari-tn nibet ang, mama titi-dr adr-ikh*  
 3REAL:DU-roast breadfruit ANA father 3POSS-PL 3NSG-APPL  
*nida titi-dr ar-ver lakha ga-ga-gaga*  
 mother 3POSS.PL 3REAL:DU-work bush DUP-DUP-on.and.on  
*ba ver-t ari-vlem aiyem, livrav.*  
 when say-COMP 3REAL:DU-come home afternoon  
 ‘They roasted the breadfruit, and their father and mother worked in the bush on and on and when they came home, it was afternoon.’ [139.533]
- (23) *Ba ari-vlem, ar-rot nabbun nisin*  
 when 3REAL:DU-come 3REAL:DU-feel smell thing:INDF  
*i-skham i-tokh, ar-ver “Niskhan nabbun*  
 3REAL:SG-one 3REAL:SG-exist 3REAL:DU-say what smell  
*itokh ang?”*  
 3REAL:SG-exist ANA  
 ‘When they came, they sensed the smell of a thing there and they said, “What smell is there?”’ [146.861]
- (24) *“Nabbun nitan-jakh nit-rongil vasi.”*  
 smell thing:DEF-be.here 1INCL:REAL:PL-know not.yet  
 ‘“The smell of this thing, we don't know it yet.”’ [152.616]
- (25) *Ari-vlem aiyem, ar-khit nakhabb ang*  
 3REAL:DU-come home 3REAL:DU-see fire ANA  
*i-vangvang man.*  
 3REAL:SG-be.alight EMPH  
 ‘They came home and saw the fire burning.’ [155.55]

- (26) *Ba nakhabb ang i-vangvang ga ar-ver*  
 when fire ANA 3REAL:SG-be.alight then 3REAL:DU-say  
 “*Niskhan ing?*”  
 what EXCLAM  
 ‘When the fire burned, then they said, “What’s this?”’ [160.893]
- (27) *Baga niterikh lele ang at-ver te,*  
 then child small ANA 3REAL:PL-say COMP  
*niterikh- mokhmokh ar-ver “Nakhabb anjakh*  
 child-female 3REAL:DU-say fire this  
*nar-somda me akhsung Bongrari.”*  
 1EXCL:REAL:DU-discover just inland Bongrari  
 ‘The small children said, the girls said “This fire, we just found it up at  
 Bongrari.”’ [164.073]
- (28) “*Nimkhut i-skham i-vlem i-ver-ikh*  
 man 3REAL:SG-one 3REAL:SG-come 3REAL:SG-say-APPL  
*nam i-ver nabir-lav nakhabb ang*  
 1EXCL:NSG 3REAL:SG-say 1EXCL:IRR:DU-get fire ANA  
*im-bbulem nabir-vu-vuv, nabritn*  
 3IRR:SG-come 1EXCL:IRR:DU-DUP-blow 1EXCL:IRR:DU-roast  
*nibet nakh nabir-khan, nabit-khan.”*  
 breadfruit here 1EXCL:IRR:DU-eat 1EXCL:IRR:PL-eat  
 ‘‘A man came and told us to bring the fire and blow on it and roast breadfruit  
 here and eat it, and all eat it.’’ [171.308]
- (29) “*Ba nat-ve i-gang, ale*  
 when 1EXCL:REAL:PL-do 3REAL:SG-like.so then  
*nat-khan nat-rot i-rvikh,*  
 1EXCL:REAL:PL-eat 1EXCL:REAL:PL-feel 3REAL:SG-good  
*ale, at-t-gam nibet ang i-tokh*  
 and POSSPN-POSSDT-2NSG breadfruit ANA 3REAL:SG-exist  
*man tjakh kabir-khan.”*  
 EMPH here 2IRR:DU-eat  
 ‘‘When we did that, we ate it and we felt good; your breadfruit is here to  
 eat.’’ [180.325]
- (30) (*Ba ar-khan nibet ang,)* *mang adr*  
 when 3REAL:DU-eat breadfruit ANA man:ANA PL  
*at-lav mama titi-r, nida titi-r ar-khan*  
 3REAL:PL-get father 3POSS-PL mother 3POSS-PL 3REAL:DU-eat  
*nibet ar-rot i-rvikh we i-rvikh.*  
 breadfruit 3REAL:DU-feel 3REAL:SG-good AUGCO 3REAL:SG-good  
 ‘(When they ate the breadfruit,) they got their mother and their father, and  
 they ate the breadfruit and felt really good.’ [186.106]

- (31) *I-gen ni-vuvam-ian an, adr at-khan*  
 3REAL:SG-like NPR-first-NSF NMOD 3NSG 3REAL:PL-eat  
*i-mrekh me ni-kkan-an, at-khan si*  
 3REAL:SG-raw just NPR-eat-NSF 3REAL:PL-eat NEG  
*ni-kkan-ian an i-mmas lon nakhabb.*  
 NPR-eat-NSF NMOD 3REAL:SG-be.dry LOC fire  
 ‘It was like, at first, they just ate raw food, they didn't eat food that was  
 cooked on the fire.’ [192.801]
- (32) *Be mang me i-lav nakhabb ang*  
 but man:ANA just 3REAL:SG-get fire ANA  
*i-lik adr, ari-tn nibet ang lon*  
 3REAL:SG-pass 3NSG 3REAL:DU-roast breadfruit ANA LOC  
*i-mmas, ale, ar-vu-vuv at-ve-bbur*  
 3REAL:SG-be.dry then 3REAL:DU-DUP-blow 3REAL:PL-make-swell  
*nibet ang at-khan at-rot i-rvikh*  
 breadfruit ANA 3REAL:PL-eat 3REAL:PL-feel 3REAL:SG-good  
*we i-rvikh.*  
 AUGCO 3REAL:SG-good  
 ‘But the man just gave them fire and they roasted the breadfruit on it until it  
 was done, then they blew on it and split the breadfruit open and ate it and felt  
 very good.’ [201.125]
- (33) *Mama titi-dr ari-vlem, adr at-khan,*  
 father 3POSS.PL 3REAL:DU-come 3NSG 3REAL:PL-eat  
*at-rot i-rvikh we i-rvikh.*  
 3REAL:PL-feel 3REAL:SG-good AUGCO 3REAL:SG-good  
 ‘Their parents came and they ate (the breadfruit) and felt very good.’  
 [211.111]
- (34) *Ale ba vert i-gang, i-gen*  
 and when say-COMP 3REAL:SG-like.so 3REAL:SG-like  
*i-suv-suv mej.*  
 3REAL:SG-DUP-be.finished IMM  
 ‘And when it was so, like, it was finished.’ [214.467]

## Appendix V

### Semantic relations

The *semantic relations* listed in Table 42 are employed to describe participants in situations (events, actions and states) throughout the grammatical description. The list is an expansion of Van Valin's (2001:31) *thematic relations*.

Table 42. Semantic relations and semantic macroroles

Semantic Relations	Semantic Macroroles
Agent	Prototypical Actor
Experiencer (cognizer, perceiver, emoter)	
Beneficiary	
Recipient (given to, sent to...)	
Comitative (volitional)	
Associative (non-volitional)	
Instrument	
Stimulus (seen, heard...)	
Theme (located, moved, given...)	
Patient (broken, destroyed, killed...)	
	Prototypical Undergoer

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