

*The Avava language of central  
Malakula (Vanuatu)*

## Pacific Linguistics 574

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# The Avava language of central Malakula (Vanuatu)

Terry Crowley

Edited by John Lynch



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## *Special thanks*

We wish to record our great debt to Professor John Lynch, who—at a time when his own work had increased after Terry's death—worked on all four of Terry Crowley's Malakula volumes to bring them to publication in 2006. We thank him most sincerely.

*Pacific Linguistics Board*  
Canberra, March 2006



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# Preface

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This is one of four monographs on Malakula languages that Terry Crowley had been working on at the time of his sudden death in January 2005. One of the four, *Naman: a vanishing language of Malakula (Vanuatu)*, had been submitted to Pacific Linguistics a couple of weeks earlier, and the remaining three were in various stages of completion. I have been asked by the Board of Pacific Linguistics to prepare all four for simultaneous publication, both as a memorial to Terry and because of the valuable data they contain.

The form in which I received this monograph consisted of electronic files and hard copy. The latter had some chapters quite heavily annotated in pen, while others had no such annotations at all. It was immediately apparent to me that Terry was in the process of proofreading at the time of his death, and I was able to incorporate the corrections he had made (as well as other obvious typographical errors, etc.). However, there were also some unannotated chapters. Though I was able to deal with matters of form in these, Terry had no chance to make any changes of substance which he might have wanted to make there.

Various sections of the manuscript also contained statements along the lines of ‘this needs to be checked in the field’ or ‘this needs to be checked after analysis of textual data’. Clearly, he was hoping that one more trip to the field and more time spent on going through his collected texts would sort out some minor problems, fill the occasional gap, and make his grammar as complete and accurate as possible. That last field trip will, of course, not eventuate. However, in my view the work as it is is pretty complete, and the gaps are relatively minor. Therefore, it seems desirable to publish this now, given that it is unlikely that any other linguist will work on this language in the near future, and taking into consideration also Terry’s strongly held belief that the results of field research should be made available as soon as practicable, and in a form useful to the speakers. In some cases, I have inserted a comment on something he had written, and these comments usually appear as footnotes in italics (signed ‘*JL*’).

Terry’s death was a great loss to linguistics in the Pacific, and a personal loss to his many friends and colleagues. He was probably the most active and productive publisher in the field of Pacific linguistics and, given that he was only 51 when he died, it seemed that he had many fruitful years in front of him. A full obituary appeared in *Oceanic Linguistics* vol. 44, no. 1, 2005, but a brief summary is given below.

Terry had a BA (First Class Honours) and a PhD from The Australian National University. He taught at the University of Papua New Guinea from 1979 to 1983, and was then appointed the founding Director of the Vanuatu-based Pacific Languages Unit of the University of the South Pacific. He left Vanuatu at the end of 1990 to take up a teaching post at the University of Waikato in New Zealand, where he remained for the rest of his life, being promoted successively to Associate Professor and then Professor.

His initial research interests were in Australian Aboriginal linguistics. However, his PhD research was on the Paamese language of Vanuatu—he first went to Paama in 1976—and thus began almost three decades of close and continuous association with Vanuatu and its languages and people. As well as Paama, he also had lengthy periods of fieldwork on Erromango and Malakula. He published widely on Paamese and Erromangan languages, as well as on broader comparative issues, and at the time of his death was just getting started on a series of publications on Malakula languages.

Despite this amazing productivity, he was possibly even better known for his groundbreaking work on Bislama. He published a dictionary (in a number of editions), a reference grammar, and a history of the language, as well as numerous articles on various aspects of its history, vocabulary and structure. He even produced a University-level course on Bislama—written entirely in Bislama. He was involved in committees attempting to standardise the spelling system of the language, and also in publications and activities in relation to national language and vernacular education issues.

Terry had a passion for languages and for linguistics which was evident not only in his teaching but also in many of his writings. In particular, he was concerned that the results of his research should, wherever possible, be made available not only to other professional linguists but also, in an accessible form, to speakers of the languages and to other ni-Vanuatu who might be interested. This book, his fourth lengthy description of a Vanuatu vernacular, is published at the same time as *Naman: a vanishing language of Malakula (Vanuatu)*, *Tape, a declining language of Malakula (Vanuatu)*, and *Nese, a diminishing speech variety of northwest Malakula (Vanuatu)*. He has left Oceanic linguists and the Vanuatu people an amazing legacy.

*John Lynch*  
University of the South Pacific

# *Acknowledgements*

---

While working on the Naman and Tape languages of central Malakula since the year 2000, I was fortunate enough to make social contact with a number of speakers of Avava, who were constantly passing through other villages where I happened to be staying, and I also visited the villages of Tisvel and Khatbol on a number of occasions, again for purely social reasons. These contacts almost inevitably ended up with me spending additional time in those villages gathering materials towards this description of Avava.

The person whom I have to thank most for assistance in the production of this work is Andy Sangmuru, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre fieldworker from Tisvel. As a speaker of Avava, he provided both the linguistic information that forms the basis of these materials, as well as facilitating my visits to Tisvel and Khatbol. While Andy himself provided a great deal of linguistic information, I also owe a substantial debt of thanks to the following for their assistance: Erik Sangmuru, Tom Sangmuru, Johnsi Sakul, Ati Kambong, Basil Bon Mololmel, Rion Aten and Chief Maltur Bong.

This study also includes a small amount of information on the linguistic variety of Umbbuul, which was gathered from Litok Bel Bangilmber and Lemur Vano Banggial of Tisvel village on an earlier visit to Tisvel in the year 2000. Sadly, both of these women have since died, so it is only possible to offer posthumous thanks for their contributions. Information on Viar was provided by one of its last speakers, Madeline Lakhkhmen in Khatbol village, while Chief Avia provided information on Vivti, also in Khatbol.

I would like to thank Allan Vano for providing accommodation and hospitality during my first field trip to Tisvel in 2003, and Andy Sangmuru and his family for looking after me in 2004. Others have been extremely helpful in support of the production of these materials. Benuel Lenge of the National Statistics Office provided current information about the population of Avava-speaking villages.

Gilbert Read (now of Mildura, Australia) had originally intended pursuing his own interests in the Avava language, though he had to abandon his plans to further his work on a visit to Tisvel for personal reasons. However, he very kindly provided me with copies of his own preliminary fieldnotes compiled on the basis of information provided by Neil Netaf Stevens when he was studying in Australia, and I offer him my thanks for this.

Finally, thanks are due to Ralph Regenvanu of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre and the National Cultural Council for arranging the appropriate permits, and to Fred Numa and Marshall Hoke of the Malakula Cultural Centre for support in Lakatoro.

*Terry Crowley*  
Hamilton, New Zealand  
January 2005

# *Abbreviations*

---

|        |                |      |                 |
|--------|----------------|------|-----------------|
| 1      | first person   | LOC  | location        |
| 2      | second person  | NEG  | negative        |
| 3      | third person   | NOM  | nominaliser     |
| ACC    | accompanitive  | PART | part-whole      |
| CHAR   | characteristic | PERF | perfective      |
| CONT   | continuous     | PL   | plural          |
| DEM    | demonstrative  | POSS | possessive      |
| DL     | dual           | PRES | present         |
| DUR    | durative       | PURP | purposive       |
| EXCL   | exclusive      | REAL | realis          |
| IMPERF | imperfective   | REL  | relative clause |
| INCL   | inclusive      | SG   | singular        |
| INDEF  | indefinite     | TR   | transitive      |
| IRR    | irrealis       |      |                 |

## *Conventions in citing examples*

---

Examples are glossed using the abbreviations just presented, with grammatical categories presented in small capitals and lexical glosses in ordinary type. Where there is a clear boundary between morphemes expressing separate categories, these are separated in glosses by means of a hyphen. For example:

*mata-ng*  
eye-1SG  
'my eye'

Where morphological irregularity or the existence of portmanteau forms result in unsegmentable morphologically complex forms, the categories involved are separated in glosses instead by means of a colon. Thus:

*i-sap*  
3SG:REAL-dance  
'(s)he dances/danced'

Where a lexical or morphemic gloss contains a word boundary in the English gloss, there is a joining full-stop to indicate that this corresponds to a single morpheme in the Avava original. Thus:

*bobomial*  
reef.heron  
'reef heron'

In cases where a lexically complex form in Avava is made up of items for which individual glosses cannot be provided because one of the forms has a limited distribution with no independently assignable meaning, these are presented together with an ordinary word-boundary and a single gloss is presented for both forms together. Thus, in the following, while *dilim* can be glossed as 'swallow', there is no assignable gloss for *sangi*, as this appears in just this particular collocation, so *dilim sangi* 'choke' is glossed as a single item:

*I-dilim sangi.*  
3SG:REAL-choke  
'(S)he choked.'

Since third person singular pronominal forms in Avava make no distinction for gender, these are translated into English in gender-neutral terms as ‘(s)he’, ‘him/her’ or ‘his/her’. However, where cultural or physical circumstances call for a gender-specific translation, then such gender neutrality is abandoned. Thus:

*bat-n*

head-3SG

‘his/her head’

*bbuser te*

fibre.skirt POSS:3SG

‘her fibre skirt’

*vwala-n*

penis-3SG

‘his penis’



# 1 *Introduction*

---

## 1.1 Malakula: linguistic background

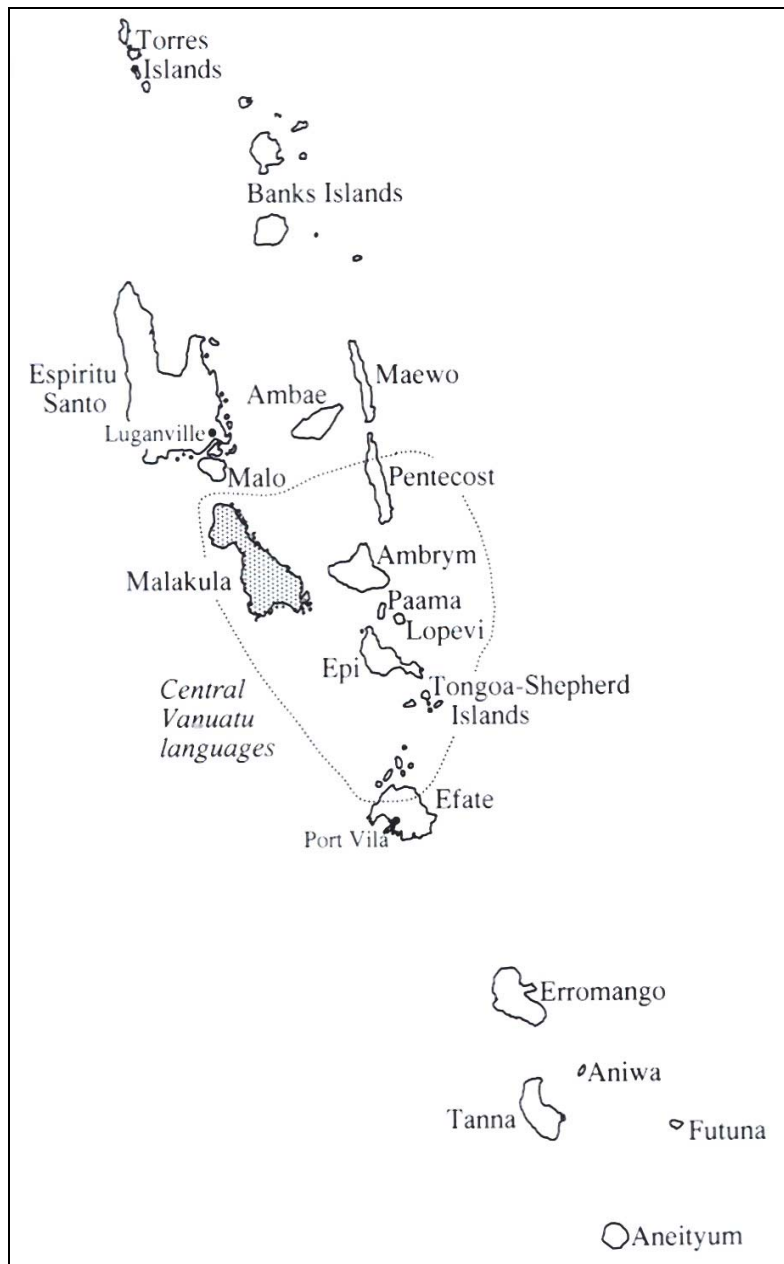
Malakula is linguistically the most diverse island within the Republic of Vanuatu (Map 1), which is the world's linguistically most diverse nation in terms of the number of languages per head of population. Lynch and Crowley (2001:67–90) indicate that an estimated 27,000 people on Malakula speak close to forty distinct languages. This means that the average-size Malakula language has just under 700 speakers. Excluding the two largest languages—V'ënen Taut<sup>1</sup> (with just under 3500 speakers) and Northeast Malakula (with about 9000 speakers)—the remaining languages have fewer than 400 speakers each, on average. Many languages are, in fact, spoken in only a small number of villages, a single village, or a handful of very small hamlets, and some are spoken only by very small numbers of people scattered around a number of locations as minorities in villages with quite different dominant languages.

The current description is part of a major effort by a number of different scholars leading towards the description of half-dozen or so languages of Malakula that were previously almost completely undocumented. Since 2000, I have been working towards the grammatical description of two moribund languages of central Malakula: Naman (of the Litzlitz–Metenesel areas) and Tape (originally of the upper Brenwei River area, but now spoken only by a handful of elderly people in the northeastern coastal village of Tautu).<sup>2</sup> A description of the Neve'e language of the Vinmavis area has also recently been completed (Musgrave 2001), though this is also not yet available in published form. Work has also recently begun on the language of Aulua by Martin Paviour-Smith (of Massey University in New Zealand), on the Unua–Pangkumu language by Elizabeth Pearce (of Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand), on the Neverver language of Lingarakh and Limap villages by Julie Barbour (of the University of Waikato in New Zealand), and on the Tirakh language of Mae village by Amanda Brotchie (of the University of Melbourne.) When all of this work is brought to completion in the next few years, we will be in the fortunate position of having detailed grammatical accounts, as well as lexical compilations of varying lengths, from almost a dozen contiguous languages in central and northern Malakula.

---

<sup>1</sup> The orthographic symbol *ë* is here intended to represent a phonemically contrastive schwa, while *v'* represents an apico-labial fricative.

<sup>2</sup> *Both of these have now been published by Pacific Linguistics in conjunction with this volume – JL*



**Map 1:** The republic of Vanuatu

Before the commencement of all of this work, the languages of Malakula as a whole were unusually poorly documented. There were reasonably detailed published grammatical descriptions of only two of these languages—Port Sandwich in the southeast (Charpentier 1979) and V'ënen Taut in the northwest (Fox 1979). Although extensive linguistic work has been carried out since the 1980s on the Uripiv variety of the Northeast Malakula language (initially by Ross McKerras and later by Kenichi and Saiko Shibusawa, all of the Summer Institute of Linguistics), as well as on the language of the Maskelynes (by David and Sue Healey, again of the Summer Institute of Linguistics), publicly available grammatical accounts and dictionaries of both of these languages have yet to appear.

Although the extent of published grammatical descriptions relating to Malakula languages has been limited, the situation has been even more grim from a lexicographical perspective. The only extensive-looking published dictionary was Capell and Layard's (1980) lexical compilation on the Atchin variety of the Northeast Malakula language, but this was based on old materials and it is difficult to use because of the phonologically uncertain status of vernacular forms (Clark 1985). For most other languages, we have little more than wordlists from individual languages of about 200 items in Tryon (1976) or, for the languages of the southern part of the island, the longer lexical collections of up to 1700 words in Charpentier (1982). However, forms in both of these sources seem to be presented in a mix of both phonemically under-differentiated and over-differentiated representations. Also, given the nature of these sources, grammatical information is minimal.

## 1.2 The Avava language today

Avava<sup>3</sup> currently falls into the category described in Lynch and Crowley (2001:14–19) as being among the most poorly documented of all languages in Vanuatu. Published documentation of this language by a linguist is restricted to two fairly short wordlists in Tryon (1976). In addition to this recent data, there is also a very small amount of published data on the Umbbuul<sup>4</sup> variety of this language that can be extracted from Deacon (1934:125), which derives from his anthropological fieldwork in the area in 1926. This data, however, is restricted to just a small number of kin terms for each variety, with no other vocabulary having been recorded.

Avava is the primary language today of four villages in central Malakula: Tisvel, Khatbol, Taremp and Tembimbi (Map 2).<sup>5</sup> In contrast to the Naman and Tape languages of Malakula that I have worked on previously, Avava is an actively spoken language which continues to be passed on to present-day generations of children in all of these villages. The populations of the four villages according to the results of the 1999 census were:<sup>6</sup>

|                 |            |
|-----------------|------------|
| Tisvel          | 134        |
| Khatbol         | 178        |
| Taremp          | 5          |
| <u>Tembimbi</u> | <u>110</u> |
| Total           | 427        |

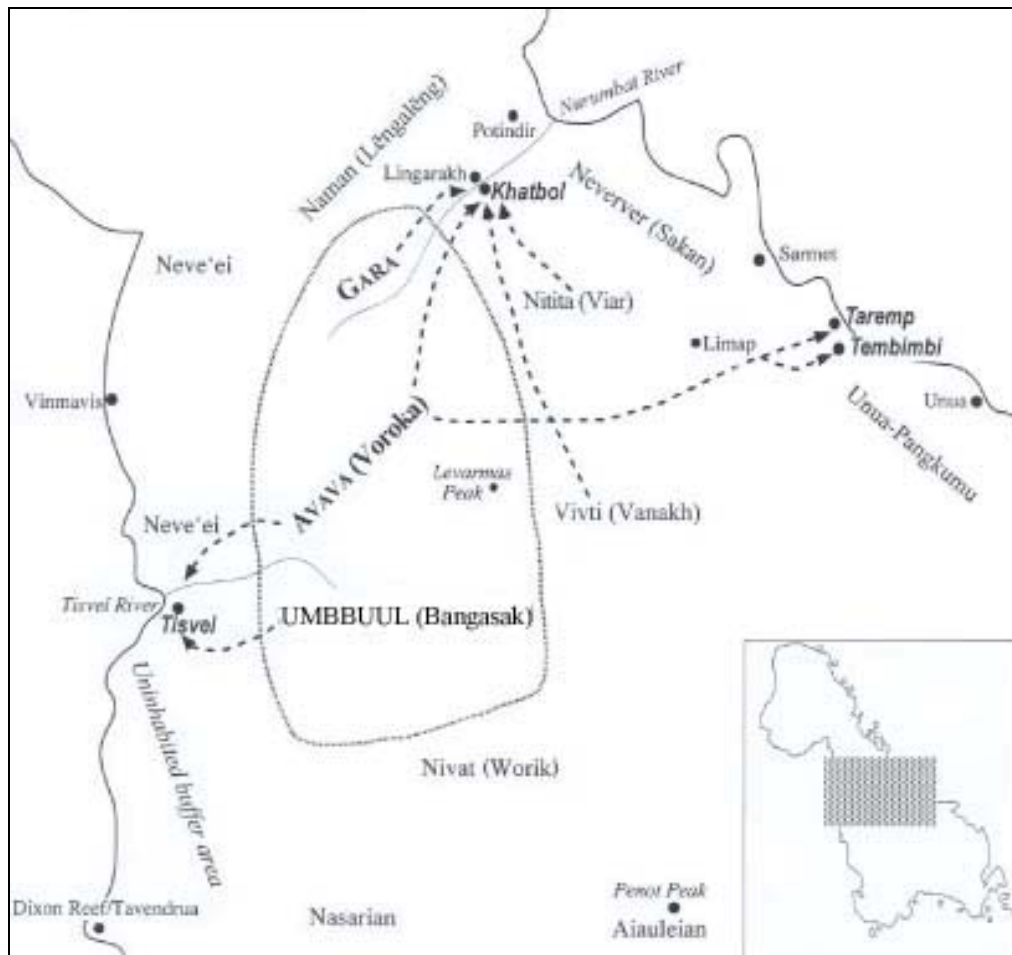
<sup>3</sup> This language was referred to in Lynch and Crowley (2001:79) as Navava. This is, in fact, the name for the language that is used by speakers of the adjacent Neve'ei language, while members of the community itself refer to their own language as Avava, this name alternating with Vava according to conditions set out in §2.1.1.3.2.

<sup>4</sup> The spelling *bb* represents a voiced bilabial trill, while the double vowel signifies contrastive length. The bilabial trill was tentatively spelt as *br* in my earlier notes, and I did not originally recognise the contrastive nature of vowel length, hence the reference to Umbrul in Lynch and Crowley (2001:86–87).

<sup>5</sup> The spelling Khatbol reflects the pronunciation [xat<sup>m</sup>bol], though this village often appears on maps and in published sources spelled either as Katbol or Hatbol. Tembimbi was referred to in Tryon (1976) as Timbembe.

<sup>6</sup> Unpublished census data supplied by the National Statistics Office in Port Vila. The census figures for 1999 show an unexplained drop in population for Taremp from 86 in 1989 to only 5. Local information indicates that this figure is clearly incorrect: the census figure must be the result of some kind of temporary departure of the population of the village on census day, so this low figure will be treated as an anomaly.

Taking into account the proportion of these populations which represent immigrants who speak other languages, as well as the fact that a certain proportion of the total community of Avava speakers lives outside these four villages, mainly in urban centres of Port Vila and Luganville, the semi-urban area of Lakatoro-Norsup, and in a variety of plantation communities, the total number of speakers of Avava is estimated in 2005 to be in the region of 700.<sup>7</sup>



**Map 2:** Avava-speaking locations past and present  
(major post-colonial population movements indicated by arrows)

Avava now has a geographically discontinuous distribution, with a substantial area of uninhabited bush separating the west coast village of Tisvel from the inland village of Khatbol, located on the other side of the main range that runs lengthwise along the island. The villages of Taremp and Tembimbi are located on the east coast, but are separated from

<sup>7</sup> This compares with the figure of 675 suggested for the year 2000 in Lynch and Crowley (2001:68), which was extrapolated from census figures from 1989. However, I would now calculate the 2000 population as having been more like 580, based on a better understanding of which population centres to count as rural villages (speaking a local vernacular) and which represent largely immigrant plantation communities.

Khatbol by the Neverver-speaking villages of Lingarakh and Limap,<sup>8</sup> as well as by numerous plantation communities in the Sarmet area, where a variety of vernaculars from other parts of Vanuatu are widely spoken, as well, of course, as Bislama.

Khatbol, Taremp and Tembimbi are all interconnected by road, as well as to the main administrative and commercial centre of Malakula, that is Lakatoro-Norsup. Tisvel, by way of contrast, is a remote community located on the west coast with no road link to any outside community.<sup>9</sup> To travel from Tisvel to other Avava-speaking villages, it is necessary to walk (or paddle in a canoe) for about an hour to the roadhead just south of Vinmavis and then to travel by car for about an hour and a half—but often more, depending on road conditions and vehicle availability—to Lakatoro-Norsup, followed by a further drive of half an hour or an hour to Khatbol, Tembimbi or Taremp. It is also possible to walk across the main divide from Tisvel to Khatbol, which involves about half a day's solid trekking.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the geographically discontinuous distribution of the Avava language, the speech community as a whole appears to be sociologically contiguous in that there is a strong sense of community between the four villages. Extensive family ties and other social networks are maintained between the Avava-speaking villages through patterns of frequent, and often extended, visits between all four villages, as well as participation in social events and traditional ceremonies.

Speakers of Avava indicate that there are some differences between the way that the language is spoken in Tisvel, Khatbol and Taremp–Tembimbi respectively, but these differences are certainly not of an order that impairs mutual intelligibility. Tryon (1976) points to lexical cognate sharing between Khatbol and Taremp–Tembimbi of over 80%. This indicates considerable linguistic closeness given that such lexicostatistical figures are often as much as 10–20% lower than they should be (Lynch & Crowley 2001:3). Tryon (1976) did not include a wordlist from Tisvel, but a comparison between my own lexical data from Tisvel and Tryon's Tembimbi list—from the geographical extremes of the language area—points to cognate sharing between the two of around 79%. This is right at the upper end of the margin of lexicostatistical error, and is entirely consistent with local statements that the two varieties are clearly mutually intelligible.<sup>11</sup>

For the most part, any geographical differences in Avava are likely to involve different lexical influences from the various languages that make up the distinct linguistic mix of each of the Avava-speaking villages. Greater detail on the nature and extent of regional variation within the speech community is not yet available, though my own corpus of textual data gathered from both Tisvel and Khatbol indicates that any geographical differences are likely to involve greater preferences for one variable over another, rather than any major and absolute dialect differences. Moreover, my impression at this stage is

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<sup>8</sup> Lynch and Crowley (2001:79–80) refer to this language as Nevwervwer. This is the form of the name that is used by Neve'ei speakers, while members of this language group refer to their own language as Neverver.

<sup>9</sup> A road extended to Tisvel in the past but it has fallen into disrepair and reverted to bush. The community is agitating strongly for it to be reconstructed.

<sup>10</sup> Given that it is often necessary to wait for much of the day to change vehicles in Lakatoro when travelling by road from Vinmavis to Khatbol, Tembimbi or Taremp, it is usually quicker, in fact, to take the overland route from Tisvel to Khatbol than it is to go by vehicle.

<sup>11</sup> A substantially lower figure for cognate sharing for these two locations was suggested in Lynch and Crowley (2001:79), though it was indicated at the time that the figure should be treated with caution, based as it was on an inadequate sample (all that was available at the time, however).

that there is greater variation between different speakers *within* each community than there is between the different communities overall.

Because Avava has always been a small language, it is important to be aware of its linguistic ‘neighbours’, that is those communities with which its speakers have had the opportunity to be in linguistic contact, possibly thereby acquiring introduced lexical material and linguistic structures. Given the geographically discontinuous distribution of Avava-speaking villages, Avava can currently be said to have a number of such neighbours:<sup>12</sup>

- About an hour and a half’s walk to the north of the Avava-speaking village of Tisvel on the west coast, we find the Neve‘ei-speaking village of Vinmavis. The Avava-speaking village of Khatbol also contains a substantial number of resident Neve‘ei speakers. A very high proportion of Avava-speaking adults from both Tisvel and Khatbol are fluent speakers of Neve‘ei, having learned this language during their school years at Vinmavis Primary School, or through close social contacts between the two communities. However, only a handful of Neve‘ei speakers know more than a few words and expressions in Avava.
- A couple of hours’ walk to the south of Tisvel is the coastal village of Dixon Reef, generally known locally just as Dixon.<sup>13</sup> People in this village speak the Aiauleian language, which was originally spoken in the interior up from the coast (§1.4). There is a considerable amount of short-term social contact between these two villages, as people often attend each other’s social functions and ceremonies. People from Dixon from time to time also walk to Vinmavis via Tisvel, where they sometimes spend the night, to catch vehicles travelling to Lakatoro.
- A short distance to the south of the twin villages of Taremp and Tembimbi is the community of Unua, where the quite distinct Unua–Pangkumu language is spoken. (There is no southerly linguistic neighbour to Khatbol village, as this area is now a large expanse of unoccupied bush.)
- The village of Khatbol is separated from the neighbouring Neverver-speaking village of Lingarakh by nothing more than a few metres of greenery and the very narrow and shallow Nurumbat River (which one can easily paddle across). Neverver is also the language of the village of Limap, which lies a short distance to the east of the twin villages of Khatbol–Lingarakh.

When considering the linguistic neighbours of Avava, it is important to note that Avava also has a couple of what we might consider ‘internal’ neighbours, that is additional languages which are spoken by people living within some of the Avava-speaking villages. In the first half of the twentieth century, there was a major demographic shift which saw the relocation of the entire population of the central Malakula bush area to coastal (or near-coastal) communities. The last movement of people coming down from the interior did not take place until the mid-1940s.

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<sup>12</sup> The traditional linguistic neighbourhood of Avava is detailed separately in §1.3.

<sup>13</sup> This village is marked on some maps as Tavendrua.

The result is that today, there are small numbers of the once more numerous Nitita- and Vivti-speaking communities living in Khatbol, though both are now very much moribund. These languages are almost completely unrepresented in the linguistic literature, and Tryon (1976) provides no data from either.<sup>14</sup> There are just a couple of elderly speakers of Nitita remaining. While Vivti has a larger number of speakers, the total number is still fewer than twenty, and it also has only a limited future. Both languages are therefore in the final stages of undergoing shift to Avava.

Avava speakers from all four villages, of course, also speak Bislama, the English-lexifier pidgin/creole that is the constitutionally declared national language in Vanuatu. Given the multilingual environment, children typically learn Bislama very early in life, in many cases almost simultaneously with Avava. The impact of Bislama is readily observable on everyday spoken Avava in that any new technology is overwhelmingly likely to be named using words from Bislama. Bislama has also intruded into some areas of the indigenous lexicon. For instance, as is commonly the case in Vanuatu languages, the traditional numerals have largely been replaced by Bislama forms, and some other items of indigenous vocabulary now alternate with competing forms of Bislama origin.

Avava can also be considered to be in contact with English, as this is the primary language of education for all Avava speakers.<sup>15</sup> However, although nearly all children undergo at least six years of formal instruction in English, people's level of confidence in English by the end of schooling is typically not high. While people frequently make use of English in its written form, it is almost never used as a spontaneous spoken language within the Avava-speaking community or, indeed, with Ni-Vanuatu from any other language community. In such situations, Bislama is the overwhelming preference, and for one Ni-Vanuatu to speak to another Ni-Vanuatu in English in any imaginable everyday context would be considered unacceptable.

### 1.3 The Avava language in the past

None of the Avava-speaking villages today is located within the traditional territory that can be attributed to this language. The area from which Avava originates lies in what is now largely unoccupied bush between present-day Tisvel, Khatbol and Limap, centred around the slopes to the north, south and west of Levarmas Peak. Unoccupied though these areas are today, people continue to make food gardens and grow cash crops in parts of their traditional territory.

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<sup>14</sup> Tryon (1972:55) listed Navava and Nevaar as alternative names for Avava. I have already indicated that Navava is the term used for Avava by members of some other language groups. Nevaar is intended to represent Niviari, which is how the same groups refer to what is referred to locally as Viar, this being the name of the geographical area in which the Nitita language used to be spoken.

<sup>15</sup> While English and French are co-equal languages of education in Vanuatu, only a very small proportion of the Avava-speaking population has attended French-medium schools. There are, however, substantial areas of Malakula where French has for some time been the dominant language of instruction, particularly around Lamap, and also along parts of the north coast.

### 1.3.1 Internal dialect diversity

This area appears to have exhibited a certain amount of internal linguistic diversity, with possibly each *amal emwet* having had its own linguistic variety.<sup>16</sup> This term—corresponding to *nasara* in Bislama—refers to the traditional hamlets which were typically much smaller than modern amalgamated villages. The four present-day Avava-speaking villages are each made up of mixtures of people from a number of different *nasara*, brought together in single locations with the abandonment of these traditional sites around the time of the epidemics that devastated Malakula in the early twentieth century.

Speakers of Avava today describe their own language as having arisen out of a *kampani lanwis*, that is a variety which arose in the early twentieth century as a result of dialect levelling associated with the formation of the modern villages. People today who are in their sixties and younger were all born in these new amalgamated villages, and it is by and large their speech which is represented in this description.

The speech of more elderly people born in ‘the bush’ is characterised by a number of distinct—and more varied—features, to which occasional reference is made in this description. However, exactly what sorts of linguistic processes were involved during this process of social and linguistic realignment will probably never be recoverable in full since so little has been documented of the original elements of the linguistic mixture. The components of this mix appear to have included an original dialect that carried the name of Avava, which I will refer to as Original Avava, as well as at least two other named dialects, that is Umbbuul and Gara. All of these varieties were mutually intelligible.

The approximate geographical locations of each of these earlier dialects is indicated on Map 2, as well as in the discussion which follows relating to each variety. It is common in central Malakula for there to be quite different names for a linguistic variety and the area where that variety was spoken.<sup>17</sup> I have resisted the urge to delineate each of these areas by means of lines on the map and have chosen instead only to indicate the relative locations of each variety. This is because, on published maps, few of the original place names that local people refer to are indicated.<sup>18</sup>

#### (i) Avava of Voroka

The modern name Avava derives directly from the name of one of the elements of this linguistic mix. Original Avava was spoken over the geographical area known as Voroka, which reportedly extended from the upper reaches of the Tisvel River to the north of Levarmas mountain as far as the headwaters of the Nurumbat River. Nothing was recorded of Original Avava, and we have no way of knowing if modern Avava represents a direct continuation of this variety or if it differs substantially from Original Avava as a result of contact with the other linguistic varieties.

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<sup>16</sup> This represents a significant point of contrast with the neighbouring Neve‘ei language, where the various original hamlets were for the most part not distinguished linguistically from their neighbours, apart from some minor linguistic differences that were associated with some of the most northerly hamlets.

<sup>17</sup> This has often caused confusion for linguists and anthropologists, leading to the use of geographical names in many cases in place of language names.

<sup>18</sup> I have little doubt that people would also be able to physically show me many of these places by visiting the sites. However, given my primary interest in linguistics over cartography, I am not confident that I would be able to make good use of this kind of sharing of knowledge. In any case, an extended geographical survey of this kind would be physically far more demanding than I would be prepared to endure.



(ii) *Gara*

Speakers of Gara occupied the western banks of the upper reaches of the Nurumbat River, to the north of the area where Original Avava was spoken. No name is known for the area where Gara was spoken. One speaker of Gara died in Vinmavis in 2004, while another reportedly lives in Khatbol. However, other people of Gara descent still produce occasional Gara features in their daily speech.

No detailed information on this variety has so far been recorded, though speakers of Avava offered the following comments about features that are seen as being characteristic of Gara:

- There were some characteristic Gara lexical items, such as Gara *ida* for Avava *atda* ‘child’.<sup>19</sup>
- Corresponding to some nouns in Avava in which there is typically no reflex of the Proto Oceanic noun marker *\*na*, we find initial *a-* in Gara, producing correspondences such as Gara *abatu-* ‘head’ and Avava *batu-*.<sup>20</sup>
- The Avava oblique preposition *i* (§5.1.2) appears as *e* in Gara.
- Of the two competing patterns for the expression of direct suffixation which we find in Modern Avava (§3.2.2.1), the construction in which a pronominal possessor is expressed by means of a pronominal suffix is regarded as a stereotypically Gara feature. On the other hand, the construction in which the possessor is expressed by means of a free pronoun is regarded as a stereotypical Avava feature. Thus:

|                |              |            |
|----------------|--------------|------------|
| Gara           | Avava        |            |
| <i>abatu-m</i> | <i>bat-n</i> | <i>ong</i> |
| head-2SG       | head-3SG     | 2SG        |
| ‘your head’    | ‘your head’  |            |

(iii) *Ummbuul of Bangasak*

Another variety known as Ummbuul<sup>21</sup>—phonetically, [u<sup>m</sup>Bu:l ~ <sup>m</sup>Bu:l]—occupied an area known as Bangasak, which extended from the headwaters of the Tisvel River to an area to the southwest of Levarmas peak. I gathered a vocabulary of just over 200 words in Umbrul from two of the last speakers of this variety living in Tisvel in 2000 (see Photograph 1).<sup>22</sup> Deacon (1934:125) lists just under three dozen kin terms from the people of Bangasak. His forms coincide closely with my own data from Ummbuul.

<sup>19</sup> Both of these words now circulate in Modern Avava, though *atda* is the more commonly encountered form.

<sup>20</sup> Again, we find some nouns circulating with and without this initial vowel, though the vowel-initial variants are more common (§2.1.1.3.2). In fact, even the language name Avava alternates with the form Vava, with the two forms apparently deriving from different original dialects.

<sup>21</sup> This variety is known by speakers of Neve‘ei and some other linguistic varieties to the north as Numbuul. Deacon (1934:125) referred to Ummbuul as Bangsa‘. More correctly Bangasak, this is the name of the geographical area in which Ummbuul was originally spoken.

<sup>22</sup> Sadly, both speakers have since died. There are, however, still unconfirmed reports of one or two other remaining speakers living in Tembimi and at Dixon Reef.



**Photograph 1:** Litok Bel Bangilember and Lemur Vano Banggial  
(Tisvel village, January 2001)

Umbbuul differs only fairly minimally from modern Avava, with over 85% cognate sharing, and most items being phonologically identical. The following illustrate some of the main lexical differences between the two varieties:

|                | Modern Avava     | Umbbuul          |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| ‘mosquito’     | <i>anam</i>      | <i>vidokhas</i>  |
| ‘perspiration’ | <i>outkirian</i> | <i>suvak</i>     |
| ‘dog’          | <i>gabwir</i>    | <i>birman</i>    |
| ‘sand’         | <i>vwinsilah</i> | <i>vulisilas</i> |
| ‘chief’        | <i>mwilip</i>    | <i>tobat</i>     |
| ‘stone’        | <i>avat</i>      | <i>bburo</i>     |
| ‘knife’        | <i>emwet</i>     | <i>amas</i>      |

There are also a number of items which differ between the two varieties in apparently idiosyncratic ways. We therefore find examples such as the following:

|           | Modern Avava  | Umbbuul                     |
|-----------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| ‘root’    | <i>gerwen</i> | <i>garwan</i>               |
| ‘four’    | <i>ivat</i>   | <i>ivas</i>                 |
| ‘dead’    | <i>mat</i>    | <i>mas</i>                  |
| ‘octopus’ | <i>koit</i>   | <i>get</i>                  |
| ‘water’   | <i>owe</i>    | <i>ewe</i>                  |
| ‘child’   | <i>atda</i>   | <i>atnida</i> <sup>23</sup> |

Finally, there is a systematic correspondence between word-final *-h* in Avava and *-s* in Umbbuul which is particularly salient in local perception. For example:

<sup>23</sup> In fact, the Gara form *ida*, Umbbuul *atnida* and Avava *atda* all circulate as synonyms for ‘child’ in my textual corpus of spoken Avava.

|                    |               |               |
|--------------------|---------------|---------------|
|                    | Modern Avava  | Umbbuul       |
| ‘uncastrated boar’ | <i>abbuah</i> | <i>abbuas</i> |
| ‘nits’             | <i>alih</i>   | <i>alis</i>   |
| ‘flower’           | <i>atah</i>   | <i>atas</i>   |
| ‘sore’             | <i>vwinih</i> | <i>vwinis</i> |
| ‘cooked’           | <i>mah</i>    | <i>mas</i>    |
| ‘tooth’            | <i>boroh</i>  | <i>boros</i>  |

### 1.3.2 Traditional linguistic neighbours

In §1.2, I described the present-day linguistic neighbours of Avava. Following the major change in the geographical location in which the language is now spoken, many features of the original linguistic ‘neighbourhood’ of Avava were disrupted. Languages which could once have been considered to have been adjacent to Avava have now been effectively removed as potential sources for the transfer of features. In the remainder of this section, I will describe the surrounding linguistic geography of Avava.

#### (i) *Nitita of Viar*

Nitita is the name of the speech variety that was spoken in the area known as Viar,<sup>24</sup> which extended into the ranges to the south of the middle reaches of the Nurumbat River, along the northeastern slopes of Levarmas Peak. Nitita is now moribund, claiming only two elderly speakers who live in Khatbol village (see Photograph 2).



**Photograph 2:** Madeline Lakhlahmen, one of the last two speakers of Nitita (Khatbol village, September 2004)

<sup>24</sup> This area is often known as Niviar to other groups, and this is the form of the name which appears in much of the related anthropological and linguistic literature, including also Lynch and Crowley (2001:79).

The only published information on this variety is a collection of about thirty kin terms in Deacon (1934:125), though in 2004 I recorded just under 500 items of basic vocabulary. A lexical comparison with my Avava corpus points to a level of cognate sharing that is well below the margin of lexicostatistical error (57.6%), which is consistent with local claims of mutual unintelligibility between Avava and Nitita.

(ii) *Neverver of Sakan and Mindu*

Sakan is the name of the area that was referred to in Deacon (1934:2) as Nesan,<sup>25</sup> and it extends from the lower reaches of the Nurumbat River south along the coast to the modern villages of Taremp and Tembimbi. Mindu is the name used to refer to another geographical area, possibly along the coast, while Sakan occupied a more inland stretch of territory.

The language of both of these areas was Neverver, and this continues to be actively spoken in the villages of Lingarakh and Limap. Work on this language has recently been commenced by Julie Barbour of the University of Waikato.

(iii) *Vivti of Vanakh*

Vivti<sup>26</sup> was spoken in the area known as Vanakh, which occupied the southeastern and eastern slopes of Levarmas peak. Although this variety is now also moribund, there are still a number of speakers still living in Khatbol (see Photograph 3). This variety is completely unrepresented in published sources, though in 2004 I was able to record approximately 500 words in these languages.



**Photograph 3:** Speakers of Vivti (Khatbol village, September 2004)

<sup>25</sup> This area is known by speakers of other languages as Sa'an, i.e. /saʔan/, or as Sakhān, i.e. /saxan/.

<sup>26</sup> This language is known as Nivivti by speakers of many of the languages of north-central Malakula.

Although Vivti is also mutually unintelligible with Avava, its status vis-à-vis Nitita is still somewhat uncertain. A lexicostatistical comparison based on my own unpublished wordlists points to cognate sharing of 73.75%, which is towards the lower end of the lexicostatistical margin of error. Since I have not yet asked speakers of Nitita and Vivti whether or not they regard the two varieties as mutually intelligible, I am unable to state definitively whether these should be regarded as two separate languages, or as divergent dialects of a single language. However, the following examples indicate that where forms in Vivti are cognate with those of Nitita and Avava, they tend to be phonologically sufficiently divergent, typically in the vocalism. This, combined with the relatively low level of cognate sharing, suggests strongly to me that Vivti should be regarded as a distinct language:

|                 |                   |                  |             |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Avava           | Nitita            | Vivti            |             |
| <i>vara-</i>    | <i>navara-</i>    | <i>nevra-</i>    | ‘hand, arm’ |
| <i>dilinga-</i> | <i>nidllinga-</i> | <i>dilnga-</i>   | ‘ear’       |
| <i>mata-</i>    | <i>nimita-</i>    | <i>nimta-</i>    | ‘eye’       |
| <i>leme-</i>    | <i>neleme-</i>    | <i>nilme-</i>    | ‘tongue’    |
| <i>wedre-</i>   | <i>newedre-</i>   | <i>nudro-</i>    | ‘gums’      |
| <i>ipso-</i>    | <i>nivsokho-</i>  | <i>nuvuskho-</i> | ‘flesh’     |
| <i>bari</i>     | <i>nibiri</i>     | <i>bari</i>      | ‘dream’     |
| <i>vwinih</i>   | <i>novoh</i>      | <i>nëvwos</i>    | ‘sore’      |
| <i>abasi</i>    | <i>nakhabah</i>   | <i>nukhubasi</i> | ‘moon’      |
| <i>owe</i>      | <i>nawe</i>       | <i>nuwe</i>      | ‘water’     |
| <i>imwil</i>    | <i>namail</i>     | <i>nëmwel</i>    | ‘cycad’     |

(iv) *The Unua–Pangkumu language*

Lynch and Crowley (2001:78) suggest that the Unua and Pangkumu areas along the coast to the south of the Neverver-speaking area involve a single language, and Elizabeth Pearce (pers. comm.) confirms the mutual intelligibility of the two varieties. At this stage, no indigenous name for the language (or its constituent dialects) is known; nor is it known if there was a name for the area where the language originated. Elizabeth Pearce of Victoria University of Wellington is currently working on the language.

The area probably bordered on the traditional territory of the inland Nivat language of Worik as well as the Vivti language of Vanakh. Based on a comparison between my own Vivti lexical materials and preliminary materials on Unua–Pangkumu gathered by Elizabeth Pearce in 2003, there is a very clear linguistic break between these two communities, with cognate sharing in the low thirties.

(v) *Nivat of Worik*

Speakers of Avava reported the existence of another variety—now extinct—which they knew as Nivat,<sup>27</sup> but they were uncertain of its precise geographical provenance. However, Deacon (1934:2) located the Worik homeland of Nivat—which he referred to as Warik or Uerik—between the area known as Bangasak (where Umbbuul, the most southerly dialect of Avava was spoken) and Penot Peak. Beyond this area to the south, the Aiuaelian language was spoken.

<sup>27</sup> This is the variety referred to in Tryon (1972:55) as Nevat.

No information has been recorded in this variety apart from just over a dozen kin terms in Deacon (1934:125). This information is insufficient to allow any kind of meaningful comparison with the other varieties referred to above, apart from the observation that vowel-initial forms in Umbbuul and modern Avava correspond to *nV-* in Nivat. All descendants of the original speakers of Nivat have completely assimilated to the Neverver language in Lingarakh village.

(vi) *Aiauleian*

Charpentier (1982:23) indicates that immediately to the southeast of Nivat in the area known as Worik, the Aiauleian language of the Nabwol people was spoken. The area has now been largely abandoned and most speakers of the language have relocated to the coastal village of Dixon Reef, or to Bamboo Bay, which is located to the south of Dixon Reef.

(vii) *Nasarian*

This language was originally spoken inland from the modern village of Dixon Reef to the southwest of the area known as Worik. This area has also been abandoned, and Nasarian has become moribund, with its few remaining speakers living in Dixon Reef (Charpentier 1982:25).

The coastal area adjacent to the Nasarian-speaking area between Tisvel and Dixon Reef has long been unoccupied. Charpentier (1982:23) reports no language group originating from that area, which appears to have constituted something of a ‘buffer zone’ between different groups.

(viii) *Neve‘ei*

From just south of Tisvel Bay as far as Lambumbu Point along the coast, and inland almost as far as present-day Khatbol and Lingarakh, the Neve‘ei language was spoken. There is no general name for the area from which Neve‘ei speakers originated.

As indicated in §1.2, the major population of speakers of the language today is found in Vinmavis village, though there are also substantial numbers of Neve‘ei speakers living in Khatbol. Traditionally, Neve‘ei bordered on the varieties known as Avava of Voroka and Gara. Neve‘ei is known primarily from Musgrave (2001).

(ix) *Naman of Lëngalëng*

The Naman language was spoken in an area known as Lëngalëng<sup>28</sup> which bordered on the Gara-speaking area inland from Lingarakh and Khatbol villages on the Nurumbat River. This language also bordered on Neverver, and the two met on the lower reaches of the Nurumbat River. Naman is known primarily from my own fieldwork.

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<sup>28</sup> Members of many other groups refer to this area as Langalang.

#### 1.4 Traditional cultural background

Much has changed in central Malakula over the last hundred years as people have incorporated Christianity, the cash economy and formal education into their lives. Mission stations and copra plantations were established along the east coast at a number of locations in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

People in many parts of the interior of central Malakula only moved to the coast in significant numbers between the First and Second World Wars, and in some villages there are people still alive today who were living traditional lifestyles in the interior in their childhood and early adulthood. The traditional cultures of much of Malakula are much better documented than for most other areas of Vanuatu, in large part because people in many areas experienced significant contact with the outside world only within living memory.

Another reason for this better documentation is the fact that the gifted anthropologist Bernard Deacon visited many parts of Malakula in 1926 and 1927, making extremely detailed ethnographic observations at a time when people were still living largely pre-contact traditional lifestyles. Deacon's main observations were centred around Southwest Bay and Lambumbu, though he did make some observations relating to the people of Viar and Bangasak.

Malakula is not only linguistically highly diverse, but there was also significant diversity in material culture and patterns of social organisation. Deacon (1934:10–16) presents an overview of the main culture areas in central Malakula, referring to a number of characteristic cultural traits which were distributed over parts of the region that is represented in this linguistic description. These features are indicated as either present (+) or absent (–) in Table 1.

- (i) Women from Larëvat- and Naman-speaking areas wore quite substantial mat headdresses (+), whereas women from other areas did not wear such woven headdresses (–).
- (ii) Men from Naman- and Neve'ei-speaking areas made use of bullroarers as part of circumcision ceremonies (+), whereas men from other areas did not (–).<sup>29</sup>
- (iii) The well-known graded societies (or *nimanggi*) were present in all areas (+) apart from those of the south, that is areas where Nitita, Nivat, Avava and Umbbuul were spoken (–).
- (iv) Women's dress in areas where Nitita, Nivat, Avava and Umbbuul were spoken, involved a 'petticoat of shredded banana leaves or of finely twisted string' (Deacon 1934:12–13), whereas in remaining areas a woman wore 'a skirt made of a mat of fine texture, fringed at both ends, stained red, and often decorated with white designs ... [w]rapped around the hips in such a way as to rest low down on the buttocks, leaving the upper part of them bare' (Deacon 1934:12). According to Deacon's map (1934:11), the Neve'ei-speaking area lay outside the mat-skirt area, though local information (backed up by Deacon's photograph of Neve'ei-speaking women in Photograph V) indicates that the mat-skirt area should be extended further south and inland. In Table 1, mat-skirt areas are marked as (+) whereas areas without mat-skirts are marked as (–).

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<sup>29</sup> The use of these bullroarers in association with circumcision continues today.

- (v) The mat-skirt area also corresponds to an area where tooth avulsion was practised as part of a women's initiation (+), whereas areas where there was no tooth avulsion (–) corresponded to fringe-skirt areas.

The distribution of these cultural features between the various linguistic groups referred to above is summarised in Table 1. This very clearly indicates that there was a major culture boundary separating the four groups which are ancestral to modern Avava from their immediate traditional neighbours, that is the speakers of Larëvat, Neve‘ei, Naman and Neverver.

**Table 1:** Traditional culture areas in central Malakula

|                               | mat<br>headdress | bullroarers | graded<br>society | mat-<br>skirts | tooth<br>avulsion |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Larëvat                       | +                | –           | +                 | +              | +                 |
| Naman (of Lëngalëng)          | +                | +           | +                 | +              | +                 |
| Neve‘ei                       | –                | +           | +                 | +              | +                 |
| Neverver (of Sakan and Mindu) | +                | –           | +                 | +              | +                 |
| Nitita (of Viar)              | –                | –           | –                 | –              | –                 |
| Nivat (of Worik)              | –                | –           | –                 | –              | –                 |
| Avava (of Voroka)             | –                | –           | –                 | –              | –                 |
| Umbbuul (of Bangasak)         | –                | –           | –                 | –              | –                 |



# 2 *Phonology*

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## 2.1 Segmental contrasts

This section outlines the segmental phonology of Avava.

### 2.1.1 Vowels

Avava has eight phonemic vowels in all: five short and three long.

#### 2.1.1.1 Short vowels

Avava has a five-way system of short vowel contrasts as set out in Table 2. It shares this feature with neighbouring Neve‘ei, Neverver and Nitita. However, neighbouring Vivti to the southeast, and other languages from further afield to the north such as Northeast Malakula, Naman and Larëvat, also have a contrastive schwa as a sixth vowel phoneme, which is lacking in Avava.

**Table 2:** Short vowels

|      | Front<br>unrounded | Central | Back<br>rounded |
|------|--------------------|---------|-----------------|
| High | i                  |         | u               |
| Mid  | e                  |         | o               |
| Low  |                    | a       |                 |

Evidence for these contrasts comes in the form of the following pairs:

|             |        |                 |
|-------------|--------|-----------------|
| /i/ and /e/ | /ti/   | ‘this, that’    |
|             | /te/   | ‘his, her, its’ |
| /e/ and /a/ | /esn/  | ‘water of it’   |
|             | /asn/  | ‘his/her jaw’   |
| /a/ and /o/ | /isal/ | ‘(s)he is sick’ |
|             | /isol/ | ‘(s)he walked’  |

|             |        |                  |
|-------------|--------|------------------|
| /o/ and /u/ | /onon/ | ‘its flesh’      |
|             | /unon/ | ‘his/her spirit’ |

The only notable allophonic variation with short vowels involves the fact that /u/ undergoes centralisation to [ʊ] in the following environments:

- in final closed syllables between a bilabial trill and a following alveolar consonant or /k/; and
- in non-final syllables between a bilabial trill and an alveolar consonant.

Note, therefore, the following:

|            |                          |                          |
|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| /iBun/     | [i <sup>m</sup> Bʊn]     | ‘it is full’             |
| /Burtan/   | [ <sup>m</sup> Bʊrtan]   | ‘his/her/its intestines’ |
| /Bulen/    | [ <sup>m</sup> Bʊlen]    | ‘its feather’            |
| /Busn/     | [ <sup>m</sup> Bʊsn]     | ‘its tail’               |
| /mataBuk/  | [mata <sup>m</sup> Bʊk]  | ‘morning’                |
| /Buten/    | [ <sup>m</sup> Bʊten]    | ‘his/her navel’          |
| /aBuŋ/     | [a <sup>m</sup> Buŋ]     | ‘day’                    |
| /Bukuma:s/ | [ <sup>m</sup> Buɣuma:s] | ‘shark’                  |
| /Bum/      | [ <sup>m</sup> Bum]      | ‘grandfather’            |
| /Buah/     | [ <sup>m</sup> Buah]     | ‘grandmother’            |

### 2.1.1.2 Long vowels

Avava differs from neighbouring Neve‘ei in that there is phonemically contrastive vowel length, though it shares this feature with its other northerly neighbour, Naman. However, this contrast in Avava is marginal in that only about 1.65% of all vowels in my lexical corpus are long. This contrast is further marginal in that there is strong evidence for the contrastive status of only the long non-mid vowels, that is /i:/, /u:/ and /a:/, as shown by the following pairs:<sup>1</sup>

|              |           |                 |
|--------------|-----------|-----------------|
| /a/ and /a:/ | /imap/    | ‘it is heavy’   |
|              | /ima:p/   | ‘it is white’   |
| /u/ and /u:/ | /ibut/    | ‘(s)he stepped’ |
|              | /bu:t/    | ‘inside’        |
|              | /mutmut/  | ‘short’         |
|              | /mu:t/    | ‘man’           |
| /i/ and /i:/ | /b̃ilisn/ | ‘its seed’      |
|              | /b̃iri:n/ | ‘arrogant’      |
|              | /isim/    | ‘(s)he leaned’  |
|              | /isi:ŋ/   | ‘wild ginger’   |

<sup>1</sup> It is possible that I may have incorrectly transcribed some long vowels as short, and further checking of lexical data is needed. However, while the phonemic representation of individual items may change, I am confident that the overwhelming preference for short vowels in the lexicon will be maintained.

With regard to the mid vowels, my corpus provides no evidence at all for the existence of long /e:/. While there is evidence for long /o:/, this vowel is so far attested in only the following three words, of which only the initial example is a reasonably high-frequency form:

|             |                  |
|-------------|------------------|
| /omo:b/     | ‘skink’          |
| /o:vi/      | ‘yam variety’    |
| /vansoko:t/ | ‘croton variety’ |

None of these words offers anything resembling a minimal pair from the lexical corpus that I have assembled to date. At best, then, vowel length is even more marginal for mid vowels than is the case with the peripheral vowels /a/, /u/ and /i/, and the contrastive status of /o:/ may turn out after further checking to be spurious. However, the preference for contrastive vowel length to be associated with the peripheral vowels is a feature which Avava shares with Naman, which also has low-frequency vowel length, though only with non-mid vowels.

### 2.1.1.3 Vowel addition and loss at word peripheries

One aspect of the vowel system of Avava that is not fully understood at this stage involves the behaviour of vowels at the beginnings and ends of words.

#### 2.1.1.3.1 Word-final diphthongisation

In §2.2 it is indicated that words in Avava end overwhelmingly in consonants rather than vowels, though any short vowel may still appear at the end of a word. However, many words ending in any vowel other than /i/ are found in my elicited corpus to alternate with corresponding diphthongs ending in /i/. Thus:

|                    |               |
|--------------------|---------------|
| /na ~ nai/         | ‘I’           |
| /aga ~ agai/       | ‘tree’        |
| /busuma ~ busumai/ | ‘flying fox’  |
| /e ~ ei/           | ‘he, she, it’ |
| /eDe ~ eDei/       | ‘blood’       |
| /oto ~ otoi/       | ‘chicken’     |
| /iru ~ irui/       | ‘two’         |

This alternation applies across all form classes, and includes lexical items such as nouns and verbs, as well forms belonging to minor word classes such as adverbials and numerals, and even grammatical items such as pronouns. It also applies with monosyllabic forms and forms that are disyllabic or longer, as well as to roots and to suffixed forms.

These accreted forms are more likely to be found utterance-finally—that is, in citation forms, and when speaking very slowly (including when dictating for a hesitant linguist). When appearing in sentence-medial position, the shorter forms are overwhelmingly, though by no means exclusively, preferred. Verb roots carrying suffixes, however, invariably appear in the unaugmented form, as this process of diphthongisation never applies in word-medial position. Compare, therefore, the following forms:

/i-ka ~ i-kai/  
 3SG:REAL-call  
 ‘(s)he called him/her’  
 /sa-ka-mu ~ sa-ka-mui ~ \*sa-kai-mui/  
 3SG:REAL:NEG-call-NEG  
 ‘(s)he didn’t call him/her’

### 2.1.1.3.2 Word-initial vowel loss

My Avava corpus provides numerous examples involving alternation between a longer form of a word and a shorter form, the forms differing in the presence or absence of an initial vowel. We therefore find examples such as:

| Longer form | Shorter form |                |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| /avaran/    | /varan/      | ‘his/her arm’  |
| /atan/      | /tan/        | ‘land’         |
| /ebet/      | /bet/        | ‘breadfruit’   |
| /isi:ŋ/     | /si:ŋ/       | ‘wild ginger’  |
| /omo:b/     | /mo:b/       | ‘skink’        |
| /uDun/      | /Dun/        | ‘his/her back’ |

In some cases, the longer and shorter forms appear to alternate freely in isolation (including forms found in elicitation), and this process affects even some high-frequency items. In fact, even the language name has been found to alternate between the shapes /avava/ and /vava/.

In other cases, the longer form is invariably found in isolation, as well as in sentences when the item is not closely linked structurally with any other item within the sentence. The shorter form, by way of contrast, may appear when the item is closely linked to some other form. The range of structural environments which appear to be involved in promoting initial vowel deletion include the following:

#### (i) *Compounds*

In nominal compounds, the initial vowel will often be lost. With the initial noun in a compound, the loss is likely to be optional. Thus, for example, we normally find invariant /atan/ ‘land’, though when this appears as the initial element in a compound with following /lele/ ‘small’, the initial segment is optionally lost, resulting in the following alternating forms:

/(a)tan lele/  
 land small  
 ‘offshore island’

However, when a noun appears as the second element in a compound, the initial element is obligatorily deleted. Thus, in the small number of VERB-NOUN compounds in Avava (§4.3.3), the nouns invariably appear without the initial vowel. Thus, from /barbar/ ‘pound (breadfruit)’ and /ebet/ ‘breadfruit’ we can derive the intransitive verb below:

/barbar-bet/  
 pound-breadfruit  
 ‘pound breadfruit’

(ii) *Prepositionally linked nouns*

When the preposition /nan/ is used to link nouns in a part-whole or a possessive construction (§3.2.2.3), the initial noun may lose its initial vowel. Thus, /atah/ ‘flower’ may appear as the initial element of such a phrase without its initial vowel, as in the following:

/(a)tah nan/  
 flower POSS  
 ‘its flower’

(iii) *Verbal subjects*

When a verbal subject consists of a single unmodified noun, and the NOUN + VERB sequence expresses an idiomatic meaning, then the subject noun may also lose its initial vowel. Thus, /amar/ ‘hunger’ is frequently used in idiomatic constructions involving the verbs /yat/ ‘bite (tr.)’ or /yatyat/ ‘bite (intr.)’. In such cases, it may lose its initial vowel, as in the following:

/(a)mar i-yat na/  
 hunger 3SG:REAL-bite 1SG  
 ‘I am hungry (lit. hunger is biting me).’

(iv) *Serial verbs*

While the loss of initial vowels is most frequently encountered with nouns, which quite commonly begin with vowels in Avava, it is certainly not restricted to nouns, as inflected verbs which begin with a vowel are also found to alternate in this way. The third person singular realis prefix /i-/ alternates with zero in ways that directly parallel the alternations just described for nouns. Thus:

/(i-)lokok i owe/  
 3SG:REAL-rinse.mouth INST water  
 ‘(S)he rinsed his/her mouth with water.’

When a verb carrying this inflection appears in a nuclear-layer serial verb construction in association with a following element (§4.4), the prefix /i-/ can be deleted even with shorter verbs which would not normally be eligible for initial vowel deletion. Thus:

/i-gon/  
 3SG:REAL-catch  
 ‘(S)he caught it.’  
 /i-)gon tata/  
 3SG:REAL-catch tight  
 ‘(S)he caught it and held it tight.’

While there is considerable evidence of alternation between initial vowels and zero, there are a number of factors which determine whether or not this process of reduction may take place, or which increase the likelihood that vowel deletion will take place. These considerations are set out below:

- (i) Reduction may take place with forms in isolation in words of three or more syllables, but not in disyllabic forms. Thus, /avaran/ ‘his/her arm’ and /ilokolok/ ‘(s)he rinsed his/her mouth’ may lose their vowels in isolation to become /varan/ and /lokolok/ respectively. However, /atan/ ‘land’ and /igoŋ/ ‘(s)he caught it’ may not.
- (ii) Reduction may take place in isolation with disyllabic forms, but only when the final syllable contains a long vowel. Thus, /uDun/ ‘his/her back’ may alternate with /Du:n/.
- (iii) Reduction may take place with disyllabic forms or longer forms, regardless of the length of the vowels of the final syllable, when the form is closely linked structurally with a following or preceding item, according to the conditions described immediately above.
- (iv) Reduction may take place with any initial vowel, but it is more strongly favoured when the initial vowel is identical to the vowel of the following syllable. This accounts for the fact that the verbal prefix /i-/ is more stable than vowel-initial nouns, as the alternating initial vowels of nouns result from diachronic vowel harmony (as will be indicated below).

Reduction may *not* take place, regardless of any of the other considerations just set out, if an initial vowel is immediately followed by a consonant cluster. This explains why the third person singular realis prefix /i-/ may undergo deletion in a form such as /i-lokolok/ ‘(s)he rinsed his/her mouth’, while other vowel-initial prefixes may not, as these all have final consonants. Thus, /at-lokolok/ ‘they (pl.) rinsed their mouths’ may not lose its initial vowel. In the same way, reduction may not take place with a noun such as /isteleh/ ‘devil’.

This process results in some considerable problems of phonological representation in the case of the very substantial number of morphologically simple nouns that have been recorded only with initial consonants. We therefore encounter forms such as:

|         |                  |
|---------|------------------|
| /bari/  | ‘dream’          |
| /duep/  | ‘canoe tree’     |
| /galat/ | ‘devil nettle’   |
| /koit/  | ‘octopus’        |
| /mari/  | ‘barrel tree’    |
| /sivir/ | ‘coconut lory’   |
| /tamap/ | ‘castrated boar’ |

The issue here is whether such forms should be treated as being underlyingly consonant-initial, or whether the consonant-initial forms that have been recorded should be regarded as being the result of the deletion of an underlying initial vowel which has simply not yet been attested.

Historically, of course, we might have expected the problematic set of nouns presented above to show evidence of the same kind of process of reanalysis and vowel harmony, as suggested by the following comparisons between cognate forms in Avava and Neve‘ei:

|         |           |                  |
|---------|-----------|------------------|
| Avava   | Neve‘ei   |                  |
| /bari/  | /nebari/  | ‘dream’          |
| /duep/  | /nuduov/  | ‘canoe tree’     |
| /galat/ | /negelat/ | ‘devil nettle’   |
| /koit/  | /noyoit/  | ‘octopus’        |
| /mari/  | /nemari/  | ‘barrel tree’    |
| /sivir/ | /nijivir/ | ‘coconut lory’   |
| /tamap/ | /netemav/ | ‘castrated boar’ |

Thus, instead of /bari/ ‘dream’ in Avava, we might have expected to find the unattested form \*/abari/, while /sivir/ ‘coconut lory’ might have been expected to appear as \*/isivir/. (The origin of this putative initial vowel is discussed in the following paragraphs.)

This analytical dilemma represents the synchronic mess arising out of historical change. This has possibly been exacerbated by recent dialect levelling, which appears not yet to have fully stabilised. In most of the other languages of Malakula—including even many of the closest neighbours of Avava such as Neve‘ei—a former noun marker with the reconstructed shape \**na* has been reanalysed as an almost completely inseparable part of the roots of most nouns, with the vowel often also harmonising with the first vowel of the historical noun root. We therefore encounter correspondences such as the following between Avava and neighbouring Neve‘ei:

|        |           |                      |
|--------|-----------|----------------------|
| Avava  | Neve‘ei   |                      |
| /abaŋ/ | /nebaŋ/   | ‘banyan’             |
| /amar/ | /nemar/   | ‘hunger’             |
| /ebet/ | /nebet/   | ‘breadfruit’         |
| /ibiŋ/ | /nibiʔiŋ/ | ‘giant turban shell’ |
| /iñil/ | /niñiyil/ | ‘cycad’              |
| /oto/  | /noto/    | ‘chicken’            |
| /otor/ | /notor/   | ‘island teak’        |
| /uvah/ | /nuvuvah/ | ‘wild yam’           |

Dialect levelling was mentioned above as a possible factor here, given what was said in §1.3.1 about one of the reported features of Gara, which was one of the dialects that originally came into contact with other dialects at the time that Modern Avava developed. In particular, local reports suggest that Gara had initial /a-/ much more regularly than earlier Avava, resulting in forms such as Gara /abatn/ ‘his/her head’ corresponding to earlier Avava /batn/. By the dialect levelling scenario, then, these competing patterns would have come into contact, resulting in a single variety in which we find the kinds of variability that are described in this section.

While the discussion presented above makes it look as if any seemingly consonant-initial form can be expected to alternate with a form with a preceding vowel which harmonises with the vowel of the following syllable, there is a major difficulty in that the historical vowel did not systematically undergo vowel harmony. This means that there is a small set of forms in Avava where the historical vowel is retained unchanged as /a/, particularly where the historical root-initial consonant was alveolar or bilabial and the following vowel was high. For example:

|        |         |                 |
|--------|---------|-----------------|
| Avava  | Neve‘ei |                 |
| /ani/  | /nani/  | ‘coconut’       |
| /aBuŋ/ | /nabuŋ/ | ‘day’           |
| /aBur/ | /nabur/ | ‘elephantiasis’ |

Thus, while we may with some confidence predict on historical grounds that attested /bari/ ‘dream’ should be analysed underlyingly as /abari/, there is no way of ascertaining, on purely language-internal grounds, whether /duep/ ‘canoe tree’ should be analysed as /uduep/ or as /aduep/, or whether /sivir/ ‘coconut lory’ should be represented as /isivir/ or /asivir/.

In the absence of convincing evidence for deciding which of these vowel-initial underlying forms are legitimate, perhaps the only viable solution would be to opt for somewhat more indeterminate representations for all consonant-initial nouns of the shape /Vbari/ ‘dream’, /Vduep/ ‘canoe tree’, /Vsivir/ ‘coconut lory’ and so on. This is, however, a treatment for which I am not willing to argue too vigorously, particularly in relation to the preparation of an Avava dictionary. I will therefore continue for the time being to represent consonant-initial nouns as such.

One other rather interesting point which arises out of the preceding discussion involves the form of the original article that has undergone morphological reanalysis as part of the noun in Avava and many of the languages with which it is related. This kind of reanalysis has taken place in many Oceanic languages (Crowley 1985). In most cases, the synchronic evidence points to an original form of the shape *\*na*, such as we find reflected in Neve‘ei and, indeed, in many other Malakula languages. However, it is not unknown for Oceanic languages to reanalyse a form that can be reconstructed as *\*a* in this way, with Paamese being the geographically closest language to Avava which shows evidence of the same kind of change (Crowley 1982).

The situation in Avava is complicated somewhat by the observation that, with at least some very old speakers, the vowel-initial longer forms of nouns are found to alternate very occasionally with forms which begin instead with *nV-*. The following forms have been found to vary in this way in my Avava corpus:

|        |         |           |
|--------|---------|-----------|
| /eñet/ | /neñet/ | ‘knife’   |
| /avat/ | /navat/ | ‘stone’   |
| /ani/  | /nani/  | ‘coconut’ |
| /adam/ | /nadam/ | ‘yam’     |

This, combined with the fact that the closest relatives of Avava all point to *\*na*, indicates that *\*a* and *\*na* must both have been retained until relatively recently. The problem then becomes one of trying to assign some kind of functional difference to these two forms at this putative earlier stage for which there is absolutely no synchronic evidence in any of the descendant languages.

It should also be noted that these correspondences between Avava /V-/ and Neve‘ei /nV-/ do not reflect any kind of general phonological change whereby word-initial /n-/ has simply been lost in Avava. This is demonstrated by the fact that /n-/ has been retained in Avava in forms where there is no question of the original noun marker having been involved, as shown by the following correspondences between the two languages:



|       |          |                       |
|-------|----------|-----------------------|
| Avava | Neve 'ei |                       |
| /na/  | /no/     | 'I'                   |
| /nan/ | /nen/    | 'part-whole'          |
| /noŋ/ | /nonoŋ/  | 'finish'              |
| /nep/ | /nev/    | 'burn down to embers' |

### 2.1.2 Consonants

The consonant inventory for Avava is set out in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Consonants

|                 | Labiovelar | Bilabial | Alveolar | Velar | Glottal |
|-----------------|------------|----------|----------|-------|---------|
| Nasals          | m̃         | m        | n        | ŋ     |         |
| Voiced stops    | b̃         | b        | d        | g     |         |
| Voiceless stops | p̃         | p        | t        | k     |         |
| Fricatives      | ṽ         | v        | s        |       | h       |
| Voiced trills   |            | B        | D        |       |         |
| Lateral         |            |          | l        |       |         |
| Rhotic          |            |          | r        |       |         |
| Glides          | w          |          | y        |       |         |

There is basically a four-way distinction made in terms of the place of articulation of Avava consonants which applies for nasals, voiced and voiceless stops, and fricatives. This inventory can be compared with the inventories of nearby languages in the following respects:

- The voiceless stops /p/ and /k/ are well-established segments in Avava. In neighbouring Naman and Neve'e*i*, however, there is no /p/ at all, and /k/ has a restricted distribution in both languages, being limited overwhelmingly to appearing in grammatical items.
- The series of labio-velar consonants is shared with surrounding Nitita, Vivti and Neve'e*i*, though Naman (and possibly also Neverver) lack these consonants.
- There is no contrasting velar fricative in Avava, although in neighbouring Neverver, Naman and Neve'e*i* /k/ and /ɣ/ contrast.<sup>2</sup>
- The prenasalised trills /B/ and /D/ are absent in Neve'e*i* and Naman. Avava appears to be the first language in a geographical area that extends to the east and the southeast, including the contiguous Nitita, Vivti, Neverver and Unua–Pangkumu languages, where the typologically unusual bilabial trill is found. This sound is also found in the Northeast Malakula language.

<sup>2</sup> The status of /ɣ/ has not yet been determined in Nitita and Viar, though a preliminary investigation suggests the possibility of a contrast between /k/ and /ɣ/ in both.

Each of the four nasals involves little in the way of noticeable allophonic variation. Thus, the segment /m̃/ is realised as a labio-velar nasal in which there is closure of the lips and simultaneous rounding of the lips and raising of the back of the tongue towards the velum. The remaining nasals /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/ have values that are suggested by the IPA values for these symbols.

The contrast between labio-velar and plain bilabial nasals is illustrated by pairs such as:

|           |                  |
|-----------|------------------|
| /amat/    | ‘trap’           |
| /am̃at/   | ‘snake’          |
| /milivin/ | ‘his/her armpit’ |
| /m̃ilip/  | ‘chief’          |

It should be noted, however, that this contrast is maintained only before the front and low vowels /i e a/, while before the back rounded vowels /o u/ we find only the plain bilabial nasal (and this distribution is also found with respect to the stops and the fricative).

There is a contrasting voiced stop corresponding to each of these four nasals. The segments /b̃/, /b/, /d/ and /g/ are each realised as voiced stops with labio-velar, bilabial, alveolar and velar articulation respectively. These are all invariably pronounced with homorganic prenasalisation initially and intervocally. Thus:

|         |                                     |                          |
|---------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| /boroh/ | [ <sup>m</sup> boroh]               | ‘tooth’                  |
| /dat/   | [ <sup>n</sup> dat]                 | ‘maternal uncle’         |
| /galat/ | [ <sup>ŋ</sup> galat]               | ‘devil nettle’           |
| /bobok/ | [ <sup>m</sup> bo <sup>m</sup> bok] | ‘beastie, creepy-crawly’ |
| /imida/ | [imi <sup>n</sup> da]               | ‘it is wet’              |
| /aga/   | [a <sup>ŋ</sup> ga]                 | ‘tree’                   |

In medial clusters, these segments are also prenasalised when they are preceded by any non-nasal consonant. For example:

|          |                                      |              |
|----------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| /dirdir/ | [ <sup>n</sup> dir <sup>n</sup> dir] | ‘earthquake’ |
| /atda/   | [at <sup>n</sup> da]                 | ‘child’      |

However, when a medial cluster involves a nasal as the initial element—keeping in mind that such clusters are always heterorganic—the following voiced stop has no homorganic prenasalisation. Thus:

|             |                           |                    |
|-------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| /mingara/   | [mingara]                 | ‘black flying fox’ |
| /lugangem/  | [lu <sup>ŋ</sup> gamgem]  | ‘bamboo roof pins’ |
| /idoŋdoŋon/ | [i <sup>n</sup> doŋdoŋon] | ‘(s)he counted it’ |
| /isiŋsiŋba/ | [isiŋsiŋba]               | ‘(s)he knelt’      |

Word-finally, while these prenasalised stops are generally voiced, an occasional voiceless variant will be heard. Thus:

|          |   |            |
|----------|---|------------|
| /aDab/   | [a <sup>n</sup> d <sup>r</sup> a <sup>m</sup> b ~ a <sup>n</sup> d <sup>r</sup> a <sup>m</sup> p] | ‘mud’      |
| /omo:b/  | [omo: <sup>m</sup> b ~ omo: <sup>m</sup> p]   | ‘skink’    |
| /liŋa:d/ | [liŋa: <sup>n</sup> d ~ liŋa: <sup>n</sup> t]   | ‘fire ant’ |

There is also a series of voiceless stops which contrast with the voiced stops just described. The existence of a phonemic contrast between these two series of consonants is uncontested, as shown by the following pairs:

|               |         |                   |
|---------------|---------|-------------------|
| /b̃/ and /p̃/ | /iḃeḌ/  | ‘it is tasteless’ |
|               | /iḃeli/ | ‘(s)he shook it’  |
| /b/ and /p/   | /iber/  | ‘(s)he is tall’   |
|               | /iper/  | ‘(s)he worked’    |
| /d/ and /t/   | /idah/  | ‘(s)he went down’ |
|               | /itah/  | ‘it flowered’     |
| /g/ and /k/   | /igoŋ/  | ‘(s)he caught it’ |
|               | /ikon/  | ‘it is bitter’    |

It should be noted that while the voiced stops are all of very high frequency in my corpus, as also are the voiceless stops /p/, /t/ and /k/, I have so far only a single attestation of a form containing the voiceless labio-velar stop /p̃/, this being the verb /ḃeli/ ‘shake’.

While this contrast is well established, there are some issues relating to the distribution of the voicing of alveolar and velar stops in word-initial position that remain to be resolved. For one thing, my data contains occasional instances of apparent free variation between initial /k-/ and /g-/, in forms such as /kiḃi- ~ giḃi/ ‘chin’, /kabat ~ gabat/ ‘European’ and /kumal ~ gumal/ ‘sweet potato’. It is difficult to decide if this kind of variability reflects real possibilities with just a random selection of individual items, or if some kind of recorder error is involved. However, there are other instances of variability between /t/ and /d/ on the one hand and /k/ and /g/ on the other which are well attested, and which appear to be rule-governed. In particular:

- (i) Initial /t/ seems to alternate optionally with /d/ when the postposed possessive pronouns described in §3.2.2.2 follow a possessed noun that ends in a nasal. Thus:

|        |                  |   |          |
|--------|------------------|---|----------|
| /mom   | te/              | → | /mom de/ |
| father | POSS:3SG         |   |          |
|        | ‘his/her father’ |   |          |

- (ii) Initial /t/ and /k/ alternate with /d/ and /g/ when they appear at the beginning of an uninflected verb that is linked to an immediately preceding inflected verb in a nuclear serial verb construction. Thus:

|               |                          |   |               |
|---------------|--------------------------|---|---------------|
| /i-vuruh      | tata/                    | → | /ivuruh data/ |
| 3SG:REAL-grab | tight                    |   |               |
|               | ‘(s)he grabbed it tight’ |   |               |

|              |                              |   |            |
|--------------|------------------------------|---|------------|
| /i-sum       | kor/                         | → | /isum gor/ |
| 3SG:REAL-sit | block                        |   |            |
|              | ‘(s)he sat in the way of it’ |   |            |

- (iii) Initial /k/ alternates with /g/ in the second person singular irrealis subject prefix /kV-/ when the preceding item is the independent subject pronoun /oŋ/. Thus:

/oŋ ki:p baŋ/ → /oŋ gi:p baŋ/  
 2SG 2SG:IRR:go where  
 ‘Where are you going?’

There is also a four-way contrast among the fricatives, though the place of articulation of the various fricatives differs somewhat from what we find with the corresponding stops and nasals. While the labial stops and nasals involve bilabial closure, the fricatives /ʃ/ and /v/ are both labio-dental. Corresponding to the alveolar stops and nasals, we find the invariably voiceless post-alveolar sibilant /s/. Finally, there is no fricative in the velar position on Table 3, though there is the glottal fricative /h/. The labio-dentals /ʃ/ and /v/ contrast as follows:

/ʃ/ and /v/      /ʃinmese/      ‘star’  
                          /vinmasal/      ‘yam variety’

The contrast between these fricatives and the corresponding voiceless stops is illustrated by the following pairs:

|              |         |                            |
|--------------|---------|----------------------------|
| /ʃ/ and /p̥/ | /iʃel/  | ‘(s)he came’               |
|              | /iḻeli/ | ‘(s)he shook it’           |
| /v/ and /p/  | /ivat/  | ‘four’                     |
|              | /ipar/  | ‘many’                     |
| /t/ and /s/  | /iter/  | ‘(s)he cut it’             |
|              | /iser/  | ‘(s)he took it’            |
| /k/ and /h/  | /irak/  | ‘(s)he cleared the garden’ |
|              | /irah/  | ‘(s)he is tired’           |

The voiceless stops /p̥/ and /t/ exhibit little notable allophonic variation, being realised invariably as voiceless lightly aspirated labio-velar and alveolar stops respectively. The segment /p/ is generally realised as a voiceless lightly aspirated bilabial stop, though when the following vowel is /u/ and the next syllable begins with /r/, this alternates occasionally with a stop that is released with a voiceless bilabial trill. Thus:

/ipura/      [ipura ~ ip<sup>p</sup>ura]      ‘(s)he spat’

The segment /k/ has a rather more complex set of realisations. Word-initially and word-finally, it is invariably realised as a voiceless velar stop. For example:

/kopm/      [kopm̥]      ‘we (pl. excl.)’  
 /itavak/      [itavak]      ‘it exploded’

It also has the same realisation word-medially when it appears as either the first or second element in a consonant cluster, as in the following:

/batiktor/      [<sup>m</sup>batiktor]      ‘warrior’  
 /birkoto/      [<sup>m</sup>birkoto]      ‘large hermit crab’  
 /kalkalat/      [kalkalat]      ‘bamboo tongs’

When /k/ appears between two vowels, there is considerable variation between the voiceless stop [k] and the voiced velar fricative [ɣ]. When the surrounding vowels are both front vowels, the realisation is invariably [k], as in forms such as:

|          |                      |                 |
|----------|----------------------|-----------------|
| /tiki/   | [tiki]               | ‘not have’      |
| /beke/   | [ <sup>m</sup> beke] | ‘sorcery’       |
| /mekian/ | [mekian]             | ‘his/her urine’ |

When the surrounding vowels are identical non-front vowels, the realisation is invariably /y/, as in the following:

|            |                          |               |
|------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| /bakamet/  | [ <sup>m</sup> bayamet]  | ‘banyan sp.’  |
| /bolokon/  | [ <sup>m</sup> boloyon]  | ‘his/her leg’ |
| /bukuma:s/ | [ <sup>m</sup> buyuma:s] | ‘shark’       |

However, when the surrounding vowels are non-like non-front vowels, we encounter variation between [y] and [k], with the former representing the more frequent variant. Thus:

|          |                   |               |
|----------|-------------------|---------------|
| /irokut/ | [iroyut ~ irokut] | ‘(s)he knows’ |
|----------|-------------------|---------------|

Finally, when the surrounding vowels represent a mix of front and non-front vowels, we generally find [k], though [y] represents an occasional possibility. Thus:

|            |  |                            |
|------------|--|----------------------------|
| /limokian/ | [limokian ~ limoyian]                          | ‘old woman’                |
| /Bukikiŋ/  | [ <sup>m</sup> Bukikiŋ ~ <sup>m</sup> Buyikiŋ] | ‘second gizzard (in bird)’ |
| /takit/    | [takit ~ tayit]                                | ‘our ( <i>pl. incl.</i> )’ |
| /sikop/    | [sikop ~ siyop]                                | ‘banana variety’           |

There is one additional observation which relates to the consonant /k/ and that involves its behaviour when it appears root-finally. When some other material follows /-k/, whether this is a suffix within a root or a following word within a phrase, this final segment is generally deleted. Thus, the verb /tavak/ ‘make loud noise’ loses its final consonant when it carries the suffixed element /-mu/ of the negative simulfix (§4.2.2):

|                          |                                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| /i-tavak/                | /sa-tava-mu/                     |
| 3SG:REAL-make.loud.noise | 3SG:REAL:NEG-make.loud.noise-NEG |
| ‘it made a loud noise’   | ‘it didn’t make a loud noise’    |

The form /rivik/ ‘good’ appears utterance finally with the final /k/ invariably present:

|               |
|---------------|
| /i-rivik/     |
| 3SG:REAL-good |
| ‘it is good’  |

However, when the postmodifier /ma/ ‘only’ is present, the final consonant is highly likely to be deleted. Thus:

|                 |      |
|-----------------|------|
| /i-rivi         | ma/  |
| 3SG:REAL-good   | only |
| ‘it is alright’ |      |

Finally, when a form such as /momok/ ‘woman’ is modified by an adjective within a compound noun construction (§3.2.1.3), the final segment of the noun is again commonly lost:

|              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| /momo        | lele/ |
| woman        | small |
| ‘young girl’ |       |

Given these comments about /-k/, as well as the observations in §2.1.1.3.1 about word-final vowels, forms which appear phonetically as [momo] or [oto] potentially reflect quite different phonemic representations, with different possibilities for alternation as a result. In fact, [momo] reflects /momok/ ‘woman’, and the final vowel in [momo] is not subject to the process of diphthongisation discussed in §2.1.1.3.1, hence \*[momoɪ]. By way of contrast, [oto] reflects /oto/ ‘chicken’, which can alternate with [otoɪ], but never \*[otok].

The labio-velar and bilabial fricatives generally have voiceless realisations word-initially, though voiced allophones are attested as occasional variants. They are invariably voiced intervocally and between a voiced consonant and a vowel. Thus:

|          |                    |                    |
|----------|--------------------|--------------------|
| /ṽilaŋ/ | [f̃ilaŋ ~ ṽilaŋ]  | ‘fly’              |
| /vinvis/ | [f̃invis ~ vinvis] | ‘wart’             |
| /levis/  | [levis]            | ‘white flying fox’ |
| /sivlen/ | [sivlen]           | ‘his/her hair’     |
| /avat/   | [avat]             | ‘stone’            |

The lateral /l/ and the rhotic /r/ are both pronounced with alveolar articulation. The latter is realised phonetically as a flap. The glide /y/ has a palatal articulation, while /w/ is labio-velar.

In addition to the alveolar flap /r/, there is also a segment which is represented in Table 3 as /D/. Phonetically, this is a prenasalised alveolar trill, which involves a clearly audible excrescent voiced alveolar stop. Alternatively, this may be described as a prenasalised voiced alveolar stop with a trilled release, i.e. [ʳdʳ]. This phonetically complex segment is treated in Avava as a unit phoneme on the basis of arguments involving phonotactic simplicity. To treat it as a phonemic cluster of /dr/ would call for a single exception to the generalisation that word-initial and word-final consonant clusters are not permitted in this language, given the occurrence of forms such as /b̃eD/ ‘tasteless, bland’.

The final aspect of the Avava consonant inventory that will be described is a feature that is immediately obvious and particularly salient to any observer, even to a non-linguist being exposed to the language for the first time.<sup>3</sup> This segment is the typologically rather unusual voiced prenasalised bilabial trill, symbolised as /B/. Sounds of this type are not encountered at all in the neighbouring Neve‘ei and Naman languages, though they are also highly salient in Neverver, and Elizabeth Pearce (pers. comm.) reports that they are also found in Unua–Pangkumu. My own preliminary data for Nitita and Viar also indicate the presence of bilabial trills in these languages. These sounds are also reported in the Uripiv variety of the Northeast Malakula language, though among younger speakers they are reportedly merging with untrilled bilabial stops.

The segment /B/ is very common in Avava. It is realised phonetically in non-final position as a prenasalised voiced bilabial stop with a bilabial trill release, which typically involves some rounding—or at least thrusting forward—of the lips. This segment is encountered overwhelmingly in my corpus with the following vowel /u/, though it is found occasionally with other following non-back vowels. Thus:

<sup>3</sup> Speakers of neighbouring Neve‘ei often comment on the presence of these sounds in Avava, which they regard as rather comical.

|         |                                      |                       |
|---------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| /aBun/  | [a <sup>m</sup> b̃ <sup>B</sup> un]  | ‘its smell’           |
| /Bel/   | [ <sup>m</sup> b̃ <sup>B</sup> eI]   | ‘(s)he will come’     |
| /Bih/   | [ <sup>m</sup> b̃ <sup>B</sup> iH]   | ‘how many (irrealis)’ |
| /suBat/ | [su <sup>m</sup> b̃ <sup>B</sup> at] | ‘coral’               |

This segment is also found word-finally after a variety of vowels, in which case its bilabial trill release is at least partially devoiced. Thus:

|        |   |                           |
|--------|---|---------------------------|
| /viaB/ | [fia <sup>m</sup> b̃ <sup>p</sup> ]                             | ‘Fijian asparagus’        |
| /eneB/ | [ene <sup>m</sup> b̃ <sup>p</sup> ]                             | ‘deep sea’                |
| /iDoB/ | [i <sup>n</sup> d <sup>r</sup> o <sup>m</sup> b̃ <sup>p</sup> ] | ‘it rotted in the ground’ |

The fact that this segment contrasts with the voiced bilabial stop /b/ is signalled by the following pairs:

|          |                           |
|----------|---------------------------|
| /a:B/    | ‘fire’                    |
| /aDab/   | ‘mud’                     |
| /iDoB/   | ‘it rotted in the ground’ |
| /omo:b/  | ‘skink’                   |
| /Buten/  | ‘his/her navel’           |
| /butuan/ | ‘hill’                    |
| /Buser/  | ‘fibre skirt’             |
| /busuma/ | ‘flying fox’              |
| /suBat/  | ‘coral’                   |
| /subat/  | ‘walk with walking stick’ |
| /Ba/     | ‘(s)he will say’          |
| /ba/     | ‘when, if’                |

The contrast between /B/ and the voiced labio-velar stop /b̃/ is suggested by the following:

|          |                    |
|----------|--------------------|
| /Bel/    | ‘(s)he will come’  |
| /b̃erap/ | ‘we (dl.) will go’ |

While /B/ is commonly encountered intra-morphemically in Avava, it also arises productively in the verbal morphology. When the third person singular irrealis prefix /b̃V- ~ bV-/ (§4.1.2) appears before a verb root beginning with /v-/, /w-/ or /ṽ-/ followed by a vowel other than /u/, the resulting sequence of prefix and root-initial consonant is systematically resolved as /B/. We therefore find derivations such as:

|                   |   |       |
|-------------------|---|-------|
| /b̃e-~el/         | → | /Bel/ |
| 3SG:IRR:come      |   |       |
| ‘(s)he will come’ |   |       |
| /bi-vi/           | → | /Bi/  |
| 3SG:IRR-COP       |   |       |
| ‘(s)he will be’   |   |       |

|                  |   |       |
|------------------|---|-------|
| /bo-vop/         | → | /Bop/ |
| 3SG:IRR-rain     |   |       |
| ‘it will rain’   |   |       |
| /ba-va/          | → | /Ba/  |
| 3SG:IRR:say      |   |       |
| ‘(s)he will say’ |   |       |

## 2.2 Phonotactics

A root in Avava can begin with any vowel as well as any single consonant other than /h/. However, while the statement just offered applies to nouns, there are some additional phonotactic generalisations which apply to certain word classes. In particular, verbs begin overwhelmingly with consonants, and vowels are relatively uncommon verb-initially. There is, in addition, a restriction on which vowels may appear at the beginnings of verbs, with only the high vowels /i/ and /u/ being attested.

Phonemic consonant clusters are prohibited word-initially in Avava for all form classes. It is the maintenance of this phonotactic generalisation that provides the main justification for treating phonetically complex consonants such as the labio-velars, the prenasalised voiced stops and the prenasalised trills as single phonemic units. To treat such segments as being phonemically complex would require substantial modification to this aspect of the phonotactics just to accommodate these segments.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to its prohibition word-initially, the consonant /h/ is further aberrant phonotactically in that it is the only consonant which does not freely appear intervocally, being limited in my corpus to the following two roots:<sup>5</sup>

|          |        |
|----------|--------|
| /maBuhi/ | ‘chew’ |
| /nahe/   | ‘who’  |

The only environment in which /h/ is at all common, therefore, is root-finally. In this position, this segment has clearly arisen as the result of a relatively recent shift from /-s/, as indicated by the following comparisons between the now-extinct Umbbuul dialect with the corresponding forms from my Avava corpus:

| Umbbuul | Modern Avava |          |
|---------|--------------|----------|
| /alis/  | /alih/       | ‘nits’   |
| /atas/  | /atah/       | ‘flower’ |
| /ous/   | /auh/        | ‘rain’   |
| /boros/ | /boroh/      | ‘tooth’  |
| /lumus/ | /lumuh/      | ‘wash’   |

<sup>4</sup> In Crowley (1998), I treated the same kinds of sequences in Nāti as phonemic clusters. This is an analysis which I now find unsustainable even in Nāti, and I am prepared to repudiate this analysis for that language in favour of one which more closely follows what is described here for Avava.

<sup>5</sup> The final /-i/ in the first example may be a transitivising suffix, in which case this involves root-final rather than intervocalic /h/. The second example, /nahe/, is attested as alternating with the form /(n)asi/, which is presumably the historically earlier form.



There is even some evidence of a synchronic paradigmatic relationship in Avava between /s/ and /h/ as a result of this shift, in the forms /onosi-/ ‘nose’ and the corresponding compounded form of this root /onoh/. Thus:

/onosi-ŋ/  
 nose-1SG  
 ‘my nose’  
 /onoh-Dap/  
 nose-?  
 ‘snot, nasal mucus’

However, despite this diachronic relationship between /s/ and /h/, the two segments clearly do contrast in Avava, as there are substantial numbers of roots in my corpus which consistently end with /s/, alongside the very large number of roots ending in /h/.<sup>6</sup> We therefore find evidence of contrast between these two segments in the following pairs:

/ibas/            ‘(s)he farted silently’  
 /abah/           ‘sugarcane’  
 /lilis/           ‘chiton’  
 /lihlih/          ‘wild yam variety’

A root in Avava can end in any vowel, though consonant-final roots represent the overwhelming preference. In addition to word-final /h/, any single consonant can appear word-finally, with the exception of the labio-velar consonants, the voiced velar stop /g/, and the two glides. While the voiced stops /d/ and /b/ are permitted root-finally in Avava, earlier instances of word-final /g/ have clearly shifted relatively recently to /ŋ/. Compare the following forms in Avava with their cognates in Naman, where all stops are permitted in final position:

| Naman   | Avava   |               |
|---------|---------|---------------|
| /muɣub/ | /omo:b/ | ‘skink’       |
| /nebag/ | /abaŋ/  | ‘banyan’      |
| /midag/ | /midəŋ/ | ‘puzzle tree’ |
| /nog/   | /noŋ/   | ‘finish’      |
| /aɣug/  | /oŋ/    | ‘you (sg.)’   |

The fact that the typologically uncommon prenasalised trills can also appear word-finally is indicated by the existence of forms such as the following:

/a:B/            ‘fire’  
 /eneB/        ‘deep sea’  
 /DoB/         ‘go rotten in ground’  
 /yaD/         ‘have an erection’  
 /b̃eD/         ‘bland, tasteless’  
 /murum̃iD/    ‘croton variety’  
 /ŋoD/         ‘snore’  
 /ikuD/        ‘fish sp.’

<sup>6</sup> However, there is a small amount of alternation between /s/ and /h/ in my Avava corpus, limited so far only to the perfective postmodifier /i:h ~ i:s/ and the noun /asih ~ asis/ ‘breast’.

There is also a distributional relationship in Avava between /v/ and /p/. While these segments clearly contrast root-initially and between vowels, the opposition between the two is effectively neutralised in syllable-final position, a generalisation which includes also word-final position. What we find is that voiceless stop segments are encountered in the following sets of environments:

- word-finally, in forms such as /sap/ ‘dance’, /esep/ ‘sugar ant’, /lip/ ‘not want’, /torop/ ‘jump’, /rup/ ‘run’;
- in a medial consonant cluster when the following segment is a nasal, a stop, or a prenasalised trill, e.g. /ipmin/ ‘ringworm’, /ipnuh/ ‘skin’, /iptak/ ‘last’, /isivsipba/ ‘prawn sp.’, /lapda/ ‘May’, /nepBun/ ‘Tanna fruit dove’; and
- in the word-final consonant cluster /pm/, e.g. /kopm/ ‘we (pl. excl.)’.

However, we find fricative segments in the following sets of environments:

- in a medial consonant cluster when the following segment is the fricative /s/, one of the liquids /l/ or /r/, or a glide, e.g. /ivsa-/ ‘chest’, /ivleh/ ‘earth oven’, /ivri/ ‘crab’, /yovyop/ ‘white’; and
- in a medial cluster immediately following any other segment, e.g. /vinvis/ ‘wart’, /vinbatvat/ ‘bird sp.’, /golvar/ ‘male lobster’.

It should be noted that when a root ending in /p/ is reduplicated, the resulting intervocalic cluster involves predictable shifting from /p/ to /v/ in line with these generalisations about the distributional possibilities for both segments. Thus:

| Root  | Reduplicated form |          |
|-------|-------------------|----------|
| /tep/ | /teptep/          | ‘sprout’ |
| /rup/ | /ruvrup/          | ‘run’    |

In addition to the single consonants indicated above as being permitted root-finally, a limited range of root-final consonant clusters is also permitted. In particular, permitted clusters involve:

- voiceless stops followed by homorganic nasals, i.e. /-pm/, /-tn/ (but not \*/-kŋ/), as in: /sapm/ ‘one’, /kutn/ ‘below’; and
- alveolar stops followed by the lateral, i.e. /-tl/, /-dl/, as in : /itl/ ‘three’, /adl/ ‘earwax’.

Directly possessed nouns ending in /t/, /s/ or /r/ followed by a high vowel lose the root-final vowel when the third person singular possessive suffix /-n/ is added, resulting in word-final consonant clusters in forms such as:

|             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| /batu-ŋ/    | /bat-n/        |
| head-1SG    | head-3SG       |
| ‘my head’   | ‘his/her head’ |
| /onos-i-m/  | /onos-n/       |
| nose-2SG    | nose-3SG       |
| ‘your nose’ | ‘his/her nose’ |

|                |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|
| /ŋorŋori-ŋ/    | /ŋorŋor-n/          |
| upper.lip-1SG  | upper.lip-3SG       |
| ‘my upper lip’ | ‘his/her upper lip’ |

There is one additional set of forms which involve exceptional word-final consonant clusters of up to four consonants, and these are the paucal pronouns set out in §3.1:

|          |                   |
|----------|-------------------|
| /gitntl/ | ‘we (pcl. incl.)’ |
| /kopmtl/ | ‘we (pcl. excl.)’ |
| /kamtl/  | ‘you (pcl.)’      |
| /iertl/  | ‘they (pcl.)’     |

However, these clearly involve historical morpheme boundaries between the corresponding plural roots /git/, /kopm/, /kam/ and /ier/ respectively, which are phonotactically unexceptional. To these forms have been added /-tl/, which is the historical root from which the numeral /itl/ ‘three’ is derived. The form /gitntl/ involves an additional intrusive /n/ between the pronominal root and the originally compounded numeral, presumably to prevent the resulting geminate cluster /tt/ from arising over this boundary. Over morpheme boundaries, the phonotactic possibilities are in general substantially greater than what has been described in this section. A quite complex word-final sequence of five consonants occurs, for example, in the following inflected form:

|                             |
|-----------------------------|
| /ar-tntn/                   |
| 3DL:REAL-cook.over.fire     |
| ‘they cooked over the fire’ |

In all of the word-final clusters just described, there is a general process whereby liquids and nasals undergo regular syllabification. Where any of these consonants appears at the end of a word, it is automatically syllabified. Thus:

|           |             |                     |
|-----------|-------------|---------------------|
| /kopm/    | [kopm̩]     | ‘we (pl. excl.)’    |
| /kutn/    | [kut̩n̩]    | ‘below’             |
| /itl/     | [it̩l̩]     | ‘three’             |
| /adl/     | [ad̩l̩]     | ‘earwax’            |
| /onosn/   | [onos̩n̩]   | ‘his/her nose’      |
| /ŋorŋorn/ | [ŋorŋor̩n̩] | ‘his/her upper lip’ |

With pronominal forms containing the more complex four-member word-final clusters, this process of syllabification applies to two such segments in the cluster:

|          |                           |                   |
|----------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| /gitntl/ | [ <sup>ŋ</sup> git̩nt̩l̩] | ‘we (pcl. incl.)’ |
| /kopmtl/ | [kop̩mt̩l̩]               | ‘we (pcl. excl.)’ |

A fairly wide range of two-member intervocalic clusters are attested in my Avava corpus, including forms such as:

|            |                      |
|------------|----------------------|
| /atda/     | ‘child’              |
| /batiktor/ | ‘warrior’            |
| /bisna:p/  | ‘ashes’              |
| /Burtan/   | ‘his/her intestines’ |
| /isteleh/  | ‘devil’              |

|             |                       |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| /mingara/   | ‘flying fox’          |
| /ivri/      | ‘crab’                |
| /apmar/     | ‘emerald ground dove’ |
| /atbutuk/   | ‘shellfish sp.’       |
| /batlaŋ/    | ‘club’                |
| /busmariri/ | ‘bat’                 |
| /golvar/    | ‘male lobster’        |

No clusters of three or more consonants, however, are attested root-medially.

For the time being, no generalisations will be offered as to what kinds of intervocalic clusters are, and are not, permitted in Avava. Based on attempts to generalise about this aspect of the phonotactics of other languages of Malakula such as Naman, Tape and Neve‘ei, it is quite possible that this is a feature of Avava that will turn out to be genuinely rather untidy, with numerous exceptions to any generalisations that may be formulated. Another problem is that at least some clusters in my corpus appear to have arisen diachronically over morpheme boundaries. There are numerous examples of forms that clearly involve diachronic reduplication resulting in two-member consonant clusters for which the corresponding unreduplicated root has not been attested. Thus:

|                |                               |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| /abulbul/      | ‘basket for carrying rubbish’ |
| /apm salsalmu/ | ‘Chinese banana’              |
| /balbalakut/   | ‘noisy’                       |
| /birbir/       | ‘sea hearse tree’             |
| /biŋbiŋ/       | ‘tell lies’                   |
| /dirdir/       | ‘earthquake’                  |
| /DokDok/       | ‘cluck to summon chicks’      |
| /duŋduŋ/       | ‘banana variety’              |

Because any resolution of the issue of establishing morpheme-boundaries will require a substantial amount of additional lexical data, I propose to defer any more detailed attempt to generalise about this aspect of the phonotactics of Avava for some time.

Roots in Avava are most commonly of one, two or three syllables in length. However, monosyllabic roots are overwhelmingly verbs—which invariably attract subject prefixes of at least one syllable in length—or uninflected grammatical items belonging to closed sets. Nouns, by way of contrast, are generally at least disyllabic, though there is a substantial number of monosyllabic forms containing a diphthong (such as /our/ ‘lobster’ or /iem/ ‘eggs of prawn or lobster’), or a long vowel (such as /a:B/ ‘fire’ or /mu:t/ ‘person’). It should be noted that a monosyllabic root need not necessarily contain a vowel, as we do find examples such as /tn/ ‘cook over fire’ in which the syllable peak consists of a syllabified nasal.

### 2.3 Stress

Stress in Avava appears to follow the pattern that is encountered in most of the neighbouring languages, with stress being attracted to the penultimate syllable where the final syllable contains just a single vowel. When a final syllable is closed and it contains a

diphthong or a long vowel, that syllable is stressed. For stress assignment purposes, one of the automatically syllabified liquids or nasals also counts as a separate syllable.

## 2.4 Spelling

In all sections of this volume apart from this chapter, forms are represented in a practical orthography rather than in phonemic script. The system of spelling that is used here is consistent with what has been adopted for my work on other languages of the area, though these proposals have yet to be tested against local opinion. This spelling system has been adopted in order to render the material on this language as accessible as possible to interested members of Avava-speaking communities.

The following particular points should be noted about the spelling of words in Avava in this volume:

- The velar nasal is represented orthographically as *ng*. In the relatively small number of instances where sequences of phonemic /ng/ are attested within a word, the consonants are separated by a hyphen to distinguish them from the digraph.
- The phoneme /v/ is written invariably as *v*.
- The prenasalised voiced stops are written with the plain stop symbols *b*, *d* and *g*.
- Labio-velars are written as digraphs with *w* as the second element, i.e. *bw*, *pw*, *vw* and *mw*.
- The bilabial trill is written as *bb* following established practice for the Northeast Malakula language.
- The alveolar trilled stop is written as the digraph *dr*.
- The long vowels are written double, i.e. *ii*, *uu*, *aa*.

Note, therefore, the following correspondences between phonemic and orthographic representations:

| Phonemic form       | Orthographic representation |                   |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| /aBuŋ/              | <i>abbung</i>               | ‘day’             |
| /a:B/               | <i>aabb</i>                 | ‘fire’            |
| /Pura/ <sup>7</sup> | <i>prura</i>                | ‘spit’            |
| /meleB/             | <i>melebb</i>               | ‘saliva’          |
| /bakamet/           | <i>bakamet</i>              | ‘banyan species’  |
| /mingara/           | <i>min-gara</i>             | ‘flying fox’      |
| /ṽinmororoBuh/     | <i>vwinmororobbuh</i>       | ‘very small ants’ |
| /m̃ilip/            | <i>mwilip</i>               | ‘chief’           |
| /Daka/              | <i>draka</i>                | ‘above’           |

<sup>7</sup> This form appears to contain a voiceless bilabial trill phoneme, which was not mentioned at all in the discussion of consonants in this chapter. This requires further investigation – JL

# 3 *Nouns and noun phrases*

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## 3.1 Pronouns

**Table 4:** Independent pronouns

|   | Singular   |                | Dual                            | Paucal                         | Plural                    |
|---|------------|----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | <i>na</i>  | Incl.<br>Excl. | <i>gitdru</i><br><i>kopmdru</i> | <i>gitntl</i><br><i>kopmtl</i> | <i>git</i><br><i>kopm</i> |
| 2 | <i>ong</i> |                | <i>kamdru</i>                   | <i>kamtl</i>                   | <i>kam</i>                |
| 3 | <i>e</i>   |                | <i>ierdru</i>                   | <i>iertl</i>                   | <i>ier</i>                |

The independent pronouns in Avava are presented in Table 4. It can be seen that the dual and paucal forms are formally similar to the plural forms, with which they differ only in the final element *-dru* and *-tl* respectively. These are clearly relatable historically to the numerals *iru* ‘two’ and *itl* ‘three’, though the shift from the rhotic *r* to the prenasalised trill *dr* in the dual is not accounted for by any regular process.

Both the dual and paucal pronouns from Table 4 are very seldom used in ordinary discourse, with both categories being freely expressed by means of formally plural pronouns. We therefore find examples such as the following in which a clearly dual meaning is signalled by the verbal subject marking, yet the forms of the associated free pronouns are plural:

*Kopm ar-ip.*  
1PL.EXCL DL:REAL-go  
‘We went.’

*Ar-tirtir ier wal atan.*  
3DL:REAL-argue 3PL CAUSE land  
‘They argued over land.’

We also find that unambiguously dual verbal referents may be expressed by means of plural possessive forms, as in the following:

*Ar-yet baladrong tier sapm.*  
DL:REAL-feed sow POSS:3PL one  
‘The two of them fed a sow of theirs.’

In fact, even where a dual meaning is overtly expressed pronominally in Avava, it is still possible for the plural pronouns to be used, with a following numeral postmodifier, as in the following:

*Livani kopm iru ar-mat iih.*  
 now 1PL.EXCL two DL:REAL-dead PERF  
 ‘Now the two of us are already dead.’

The same kind of limited distribution of dual pronouns is also a feature of neighbouring Neve‘ei, where the plural pronouns are used for most instances of dual reference, with the formal category of dual being used only when what is being signalled is that two participants are seen as acting in an event together, rather than as two different individuals.

The same pronominal distinctions are also marked inflectionally with nouns, as well as in the subject-mood prefixes on verbs, in keeping with what we find in many Oceanic languages. However, this inflectional marking of pronominal categories typically does not match the full set of distinctions that are marked on these independent pronouns. Thus:

- Subject-mood prefixation on verbs marks only a three-way number distinction between singular, dual and plural. There are no paucal subject prefixes at all corresponding to the separate paucal series of pronouns, with this pronominal category being cross-referenced on the verb by means of plural prefixes.
- Inalienable pronominal possessive suffixes on nouns are only found with singular pronominal referents, with no non-singular possessive suffixes at all.

Avava differs from many Oceanic languages in that there is no inflectional marking for any of these pronominal categories in verbal object position, with objects being invariably marked by means of independent pronouns. While verbal objects are often marked in Oceanic languages by means of pronominal suffixes, Avava shares this complete lack of pronominal object suffixes with neighbouring Neve‘ei.

There is a limited range of postmodifiers which can accompany a pronoun in Avava, of which the following have been attested:

- (i) The form *tuan*, as a nominal postmodifier, expresses an indefinite meaning (§3.2.3.2). When this form follows a non-singular pronoun, it expresses the meaning ‘one of X’ or ‘some of X’. For example:

*kopm tuan*  
 1PL.EXCL INDEF  
 ‘one of us, some of us’

- (ii) The form *(ma)mah* ‘all’ is attested in phrases such as:

*git mamah*  
 1PL.INCL all  
 ‘all of us’

- (iii) The numerals set out in §3.2.3.1 can appear after a pronoun. For example:

*ier sapm*  
 3PL one  
 ‘one of them’

*kopm iru*  
 1PL.EXCL two  
 ‘the two of us’

## 3.2 Nouns

### 3.2.1 Nominal derivation

There is not a wide range of productive derivational processes involved in the formation of nouns in Avava. Those possibilities that have been attested are described below.

#### 3.2.1.1 Nominalisation

There is just a single productive pattern of verbal nominalisation and that involves the addition of the suffix *-ian*. The following examples illustrate this pattern:

|                 |          |                     |                   |
|-----------------|----------|---------------------|-------------------|
| <i>ran</i>      | ‘dawn’   | <i>ran-ian</i>      | ‘dawning’         |
| <i>sasar</i>    | ‘teach’  | <i>sasar-ian</i>    | ‘teaching’        |
| <i>maur</i>     | ‘alive’  | <i>maur-ian</i>     | ‘life’            |
| <i>lumlumuh</i> | ‘wash’   | <i>lumlumuh-ian</i> | ‘washing’         |
| <i>ir</i>       | ‘strong’ | <i>ir-ian</i>       | ‘power, strength’ |

In some cases, the nominalised form of an apparently reduplicated verb contains the unattested unreduplicated root. For example:

|                 |           |                 |          |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|----------|
| <i>ngarngar</i> | ‘breathe’ | <i>ngar-ian</i> | ‘breath’ |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|----------|

In keeping with the observation in §2.1.2 that root-final *-k* is lost when a suffix is added, we find that verbs ending in this segment lose the consonant before the nominalising suffix. Thus:

|                |         |                   |         |
|----------------|---------|-------------------|---------|
| <i>vipinok</i> | ‘steal’ | <i>vipino-ian</i> | ‘theft’ |
|----------------|---------|-------------------|---------|

However, this does not appear to be a systematic requirement, as we find examples such as the following in which the root-final consonant is retained:<sup>1</sup>

|            |                |                |                       |
|------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| <i>rak</i> | ‘clear garden’ | <i>rak-ian</i> | ‘garden, garden work’ |
| <i>yok</i> | ‘vomit’        | <i>yok-ian</i> | ‘vomitus’             |

We also find that roots ending in *-p* systematically shift this to *v* in the resulting intervocalic position before the nominalising suffix. Thus:

|            |         |                |             |
|------------|---------|----------------|-------------|
| <i>sap</i> | ‘dance’ | <i>sav-ian</i> | ‘(a) dance’ |
|------------|---------|----------------|-------------|

Derived nouns of this type which have concrete referents behave in every way like ordinary nouns. Such abstract nouns are much less widely used in Avava than in English, though they do nevertheless appear in a range of nominal contexts, including the following:

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<sup>1</sup> It is possible that the number of the syllables in the root may have something to do with whether final *-k* is lost or retained.



- (i) They appear after the preposition *nan* in its characterising function to indicate a person who habitually engages in the activity expressed in the verb root. Thus:

*muut nan vipino-ian*  
man CHAR steal-NOM  
'thief'

*momo nan sasar-ian*  
woman CHAR teach-NOM  
'(woman) teacher'

- (ii) They can appear in nominal compounds. For example:

*vwinmese ran-ian*  
star dawn-NOM  
'morning star'

- (iii) They can appear in subject and object position in a clause, just like any other noun. For example:

*Sav-ian sapm i-tok draka.*  
dance-NOM one 3SG:REAL-exist up.in.bush  
'There was a dance up in the bush.'

There is a pattern of idiomatic constructions in Avava in which the noun *out* 'place' functions as a kind of dummy subject in relation to a following verb which expresses some kind of ambient state. For example:

*Out i-met.*  
place 3SG:REAL-dark  
'It is dark.'

*Out i-ran.*  
place 3SG:REAL-dawn  
'Dawn has broken.'

Given the close semantic relationship between *out* and a following ambient verb, it is possible for this subject noun to be incorporated into the nominalised verb, as in the following:

*out-ran-ian*  
place-dawn-NOM  
'daylight'

This construction can also be used to refer to concrete items, as in the following:

*out-met-ian*  
place-dark-NOM  
'cassia tree'<sup>2</sup>

*out-yov-ian*  
place-white-NOM  
'small holes in bamboo wall of house which sunlight comes through'

---

<sup>2</sup> So called because its leaves close up at night.

A second pattern of nominalisation is attested with just a couple of verbs. This is a pattern of simulfixation which involves the same suffixed element *-ian* as well as a prefixed element of the shape *V-*, in which the unspecified vowel takes its shape by copying the first vowel of the root. Those forms which are attested as being derived in this way are:

|            |        |                  |        |
|------------|--------|------------------|--------|
| <i>kan</i> | ‘eat’  | <i>a-kan-ian</i> | ‘food’ |
| <i>per</i> | ‘work’ | <i>e-per-ian</i> | ‘job’  |

Thus:

|             |            |                |
|-------------|------------|----------------|
| <i>muut</i> | <i>nan</i> | <i>eperian</i> |
| person      | CHAR       | work           |
| ‘worker’    |            |                |

The occurrence of these forms poses something of an analytical problem. It was mentioned in §2.1.1.3.2 that there is a real problem with nouns that are attested with initial consonants in trying to decide whether those consonants are, or are not, preceded by underlying but so far unattested vowels. Thus, forms such as these may be an indication that *all* of the nominalised forms described above should be treated as being derived in this way, but with the initial vowel being subject to widespread optional deletion. On the other hand, the two examples just presented may simply represent an irregular pattern. The irregular nominalisation of *akanian* ‘food’, for example, would not come as too much of a surprise given the partial irregularity of similar forms in a number of other nearby languages.

There is a final pattern of nominalisation which is again attested with just a handful of forms, though a similar pattern is also found sporadically in many of the neighbouring languages. This involves the addition of *V-* to a stative verb root to derive a noun referring to a person who is characterised by a physical handicap associated with that state, or to the physical condition itself. The following represents an exhaustive listing from my corpus of derivations of this type:

|             |                |                   |                    |
|-------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <i>bor</i>  | ‘deaf’         | <i>o-bor</i>      | ‘deaf person’      |
| <i>bbur</i> | ‘enlarged’     | <i>a-bbur</i>     | ‘elephantiasis’    |
| <i>bbut</i> | ‘silent, mute’ | <i>a-bbutbbut</i> | ‘deaf-mute person’ |

There are, in addition, a couple of examples of nominalisation following the same pattern about which little can be offered in the way of generalisation:

|            |                    |              |              |
|------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| <i>sil</i> | ‘go torch-fishing’ | <i>a-sil</i> | ‘torch’      |
| <i>tah</i> | ‘flower (vi.)’     | <i>a-tah</i> | ‘(a) flower’ |

Finally, there are a couple of attestations in my corpus of instrumental nominalisation being expressed by means of zero derivation:

|                |                   |                 |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
|                | Verbal meaning    | Nominal meaning |
| <i>sasamuh</i> | ‘sweep’           | ‘broom’         |
| <i>subat</i>   | ‘walk with stick’ | ‘walking stick’ |

Given the fact that such consonant-initial nouns would be eligible for initial vowel deletion by the process described in §2.1.1.3.2, it is again possible that the nominal forms of these

nouns may also involve the prefix *V-* and that the underlying forms here are *a-sasamuh* ‘broom’ and *u-subat* ‘walking stick’ respectively.

### 3.2.1.2 Place of origin

Apart from the marginal use of prefixation in the nominalisation of verbs as just noted, prefixes are not involved at all in the nominal morphology of Avava, with the single exception of a prefix that is used to derive a noun referring to a person—or a people in general—from a particular place when added to the name of that place. The prefix in question has the form *ma-*, and we find examples of this in the following forms:

|                  |             |                     |                       |
|------------------|-------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Ramap</i>     | ‘Vinmavis’  | <i>Ma-Ramap</i>     | ‘person of Vinmavis’  |
| <i>Vwiningoh</i> | ‘Pentecost’ | <i>Ma-Vwiningoh</i> | ‘person of Pentecost’ |
| <i>Viar</i>      | ‘Viar’      | <i>Ma-Viar</i>      | ‘people of Viar’      |

It should be noted that the same meaning can also be expressed phrasally, with the preposition *nan* in its characterising function (§3.2.2.3) linking the noun *muut* ‘person’ to the following place name. Thus:

|                                   |            |                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| <i>muut</i>                       | <i>nan</i> | <i>Vwiningoh</i> |
| person                            | CHAR       | Pentecost        |
| ‘person (or people) of Pentecost’ |            |                  |

### 3.2.1.3 Nominal compounds

Rather more productive as part of Avava derivational noun morphology is the process of compounding. A range of different kinds of patterns have been attested. One involves the compounding of one of the directly suffixed nouns (§3.2.2.1) with a following verbal modifier, with the two roots being linked together as a single phonological word. We therefore find examples such as the following:

|               |   |             |   |                                       |
|---------------|---|-------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| <i>mata-</i>  | + | <i>mial</i> | → | <i>mata-mial</i>                      |
| ‘eye’         |   | ‘red’       |   | ‘conjunctivitis’                      |
| <i>vwala-</i> | + | <i>mat</i>  | → | <i>vwala-mat</i>                      |
| ‘penis’       |   | ‘flaccid’   |   | ‘ <i>Mimosa pudica</i> ’ <sup>3</sup> |
| <i>basu-</i>  | + | <i>bbur</i> | → | <i>basu-bbur</i>                      |
| ‘incisor’     |   | ‘enlarged’  |   | ‘sugarcane variety’                   |
| <i>subbu-</i> | + | <i>sibo</i> | → | <i>subbu-sibo</i>                     |
| ‘finger’      |   | ‘selfish’   |   | ‘middle finger’                       |
| <i>batu-</i>  | + | <i>maap</i> | → | <i>batu-maap</i>                      |
| ‘head’        |   | ‘bald’      |   | ‘bald pate’                           |
| <i>lobo-</i>  | + | <i>bbur</i> | → | <i>lobo-bbur</i>                      |
| ‘body hair’   |   | ‘enlarged’  |   | ‘hirsute person’                      |

<sup>3</sup> This is a grass with nasty thorns with leaves that go limp as soon as someone touches them.

When directly suffixed noun roots ending in *i* enter into compounds in this way, the final vowel of the root is lost, producing examples such as:

|               |   |             |   |                            |
|---------------|---|-------------|---|----------------------------|
| <i>livi-</i>  | + | <i>bbur</i> | → | <i>lip-bbur</i>            |
| ‘tooth’       |   | ‘enlarged’  |   | ‘lobster with large claws’ |
| <i>onosi-</i> | + | <i>our</i>  | → | <i>onos-our</i>            |
| ‘nose’        |   | ‘lobster’   |   | ‘sugarcane variety’        |

Note that when *s* immediately precedes a consonant as a result of this vowel loss, the consonant shifts to *h*. For example:

|               |   |             |   |                  |
|---------------|---|-------------|---|------------------|
| <i>onosi-</i> | + | <i>drap</i> | → | <i>onoh-drap</i> |
| ‘nose’        |   | ‘?’         |   | ‘nasal mucus’    |

Free-form nouns, that is those which enter into indirect possessive constructions (§3.2.2.2), can occur in compound constructions in which the two elements of the compound retain their status as separate phonological words. The initial element in such constructions is invariably a noun, though the second element can be drawn from a range of word classes. The following illustrate the compounding of nouns with following verbs, which can be either active or stative:

|               |   |                |   |                      |
|---------------|---|----------------|---|----------------------|
| <i>asal</i>   | + | <i>subat</i>   | → | <i>asal subat</i>    |
| ‘road’        |   | ‘join’         |   | ‘intersection’       |
| <i>avat</i>   | + | <i>ivleh</i>   | → | <i>avat ivleh</i>    |
| ‘stone’       |   | ‘make pudding’ |   | ‘cooking stone’      |
| <i>muut</i>   | + | <i>levlep</i>  | → | <i>muut levlep</i>   |
| ‘man’         |   | ‘big’          |   | ‘dignitary’          |
| <i>butuan</i> | + | <i>berber</i>  | → | <i>butuan berber</i> |
| ‘island’      |   | ‘long’         |   | ‘Paama’              |

The following indicate that a noun can be compounded with another noun:

|                 |   |              |   |                            |
|-----------------|---|--------------|---|----------------------------|
| <i>alit</i>     | + | <i>bala</i>  | → | <i>alit bala</i>           |
| ‘fence’         |   | ‘pig’        |   | ‘pig fence’                |
| <i>danan</i>    | + | <i>momok</i> | → | <i>danan momok</i>         |
| ‘young person’  |   | ‘woman’      |   | ‘young woman’              |
| <i>yanga</i>    | + | <i>kabat</i> | → | <i>yanga kabat</i>         |
| ‘native almond’ |   | ‘European’   |   | ‘variety of native almond’ |

The following indicate that a noun can be compounded with an adjective in the same way:

|             |   |             |   |                            |
|-------------|---|-------------|---|----------------------------|
| <i>muut</i> | + | <i>lele</i> | → | <i>muut lele</i>           |
| ‘man’       |   | ‘small’     |   | ‘boy’                      |
| <i>mom</i>  | + | <i>lele</i> | → | <i>mom lele</i>            |
| ‘father’    |   | ‘small’     |   | ‘father’s younger brother’ |

In compounds, root-final *-k* on the initial noun is often deleted. Thus:

|              |   |             |   |                  |
|--------------|---|-------------|---|------------------|
| <i>momok</i> | + | <i>lele</i> | → | <i>momo lele</i> |
| ‘woman’      |   | ‘small’     |   | ‘girl’           |

A final, and much rarer, pattern of compounding is that in which an initial uninflected verb root is compounded with a following noun. A vowel-initial noun in such cases loses its initial vowel. Thus:

|               |   |              |   |                                    |
|---------------|---|--------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <i>siber</i>  | + | <i>avat</i>  | → | <i>siber vat</i>                   |
| ‘hold’        |   | ‘stone’      |   | ‘tongs to hold hot cooking stones’ |
| <i>yoryor</i> | + | <i>asik</i>  | → | <i>yoryor sik</i>                  |
| ‘scratch’     |   | ‘kingfisher’ |   | ‘tree sp. that causes itching’     |

In compounds in which both elements are nouns and either the first or the second element of a nominal compound begins with a vowel, that vowel is also subject to deletion, albeit optionally rather than categorically (§2.1.1.3.2). Thus:

|             |   |              |   |                    |
|-------------|---|--------------|---|--------------------|
| <i>atan</i> | + | <i>lele</i>  | → | <i>(a)tan lele</i> |
| ‘land’      |   | ‘small’      |   | ‘offshore island’  |
| <i>our</i>  | + | <i>ebet</i>  | → | <i>our (e)bet</i>  |
| ‘prawn’     |   | ‘breadfruit’ |   | ‘prawn sp.’        |

However, when nominal compounding would result in two identical vowels coming together within a single phonological word, deletion of an initial vowel is obligatory, as in the following:

|                 |   |             |   |  |
|-----------------|---|-------------|---|--|
| <i>dilinga-</i> | + | <i>avat</i> | → | <i>dilinga-vat</i>                           |
| ‘ear’           |   | ‘rock’      |   | ‘fish sp. which swims above submerged rocks’ |

### 3.2.2 Possession

As is commonly the case in Oceanic languages, nouns in Avava can be divided into two major subcategories according to how they behave in possessive constructions. We have on the one hand a larger class of free-form nouns which enter into what can be referred to as indirect possessive constructions, while on the other hand there is a somewhat smaller class of bound nouns which enter into so-called direct possessive constructions. The difference between these two subtypes of nouns can be illustrated by the following examples of possessive phrases, with the first exemplifying the indirect possessive construction and the second illustrating the direct possessive construction:

|                   |
|-------------------|
| <i>awang tana</i> |
| canoe POSS:1SG    |
| ‘my canoe’        |
| <i>mata-ng</i>    |
| eye-1SG           |
| ‘my eye’          |

#### 3.2.2.1 Directly possessed nouns

A directly possessed noun is one which, as possessum, is obligatorily associated with a series of pronominal suffixes. In Avava, as in the languages of central Vanuatu in general, this construction is basically associated with the expression of inalienable possession.

Since the distribution of this construction among nouns in Avava is more or less parallel to what we find in neighbouring languages such as Naman and Neve‘ei, I will not attempt to describe in full detail the semantic content of this subset of nouns. However, the following generalisations can be offered about the semantic content of the subset of directly possessed nouns:

- Most external human body parts, e.g. *batu-* ‘head’, *mata-* ‘eye’, *sivle-* ‘hair’, *vwala-* ‘penis’. However, there are at the same time many body parts which do not enter into this construction, e.g. *bop* ‘vagina’, *bolong* ‘bone’, *lingiling* ‘fat’. Some body parts are expressed by means of apparently synonymous forms, one of which belongs in this set while the other does not, e.g. directly possessed *livi-* ‘tooth’ vs. indirectly possessed *boroh*.
- Many internal organs, e.g. *mabwi-* ‘liver’, *bburta-* ‘intestines’, *meme-* ‘gall bladder’. However, some internal organs do not fall into this set, e.g. *vwinianga* ‘kidney’, *muut* ‘heart’.
- Some body products, e.g. *melebbusi-* ‘saliva’. However, most body products do not fall into this set, e.g. *edre* ‘blood’, *dilingapal* ‘ear wax’, *mat* ‘excrement’, *onohdrap* ‘snot’, *anan* ‘pus’.
- Many body parts and products associated with animals, e.g. *mulu-* ‘shed skin (of snake)’, *ovi-* ‘egg’. However, these can be contrasted with the following, which do not fall into this set: *imah* ‘comb (on chicken)’, *ibwil* ‘long tail feather’.
- Some kin terms, e.g. *atu-* ‘son, daughter’, *mani-* ‘(woman’s) brother’. Many kin terms, however, are not expressed by direct pronominal suffixation, e.g. *mom* ‘father’, *galu* ‘mother’, *bbum* ‘grandfather’, *bbuah* ‘grandmother’.
- Some other terms referring to things that are closely associated with people, e.g. *isa-* ‘name’, *osoko-* ‘personal possession’.
- Many parts of trees and plants, e.g. *aruu-* ‘leaf’, *irii-* ‘buttress root’, *rongo-* ‘small branch’.
- Some parts of things, or positions, e.g. *lupa-* ‘middle’, *ngalngali-* ‘top’.

In Avava, possessive suffixes are added to directly possessed nouns only for the singular pronominal categories of possessors. Both Avava and its neighbour Neve‘ei share this characteristic of having no possessive suffixes for any of the non-singular pronominal categories. The basic forms of these possessive suffixes in Avava are as follows:

|     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 1SG | -ng |
| 2SG | -m  |
| 3SG | -n  |

With roots ending in non-high vowels, as well as those ending in diphthongs or long vowels, these suffixes are simply added to the bound noun root, as illustrated by the following:

|               | 1SG             | 2SG            | 3SG            |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| ‘eye’         | <i>mata-ng</i>  | <i>mata-m</i>  | <i>mata-n</i>  |
| ‘tongue’      | <i>leme-ng</i>  | <i>leme-m</i>  | <i>leme-n</i>  |
| ‘mouth’       | <i>bongo-ng</i> | <i>bongo-m</i> | <i>bongo-n</i> |
| ‘back’        | <i>udruu-ng</i> | <i>udruu-m</i> | <i>udruu-n</i> |
| ‘elbow, knee’ | <i>bau-ng</i>   | <i>bau-m</i>   | <i>bau-n</i>   |

When these suffixes are added to roots ending in sequences of a consonant followed by either of the high vowels, some additional processes apply in association with the addition of the third person singular suffix. In particular:

- (i) The final vowel of the root is obligatorily deleted before the third person singular suffix *-n*, though it is retained intact before the first and second person singular suffixes. The resulting word-final sequences of *-Cn* are pronounced with syllabification of the final nasal.
- (ii) When the final consonant of the resulting root is *p*, the third person singular possessive suffix is *-m* rather than *-n*. In the resulting word-final sequences of *-pm*, the final nasal is also syllabified.
- (iii) When the final consonant of the resulting root is *n*, the third person singular possessive suffix has zero realisation.

The following examples illustrate each of these processes:

|                                  | 1SG                 | 2SG                | 3SG               |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| ‘head’                           | <i>batu-ng</i>      | <i>batu-m</i>      | <i>bat-n</i>      |
| ‘child’                          | <i>atu-ng</i>       | <i>atu-m</i>       | <i>at-n</i>       |
| ‘nose’                           | <i>onos-ng</i>      | <i>onos-m</i>      | <i>onos-n</i>     |
| ‘upper lip’                      | <i>ngorngori-ng</i> | <i>ngorngori-m</i> | <i>ngorngor-n</i> |
| ‘tooth’ <sup>4</sup>             | —                   | —                  | <i>lip-m</i>      |
| ‘egg’ <sup>5</sup>               | —                   | —                  | <i>op-m</i>       |
| ‘(woman’s) brother’ <sup>6</sup> | —                   | <i>manu-m</i>      | <i>man-Ø</i>      |
| ‘(man’s) sister’                 | <i>vivini-ng</i>    | <i>vivini-m</i>    | <i>vivin-Ø</i>    |

With nouns of this type, a nominal possessor is expressed by postposing the possessor noun phrase immediately after the third person singular suffixed form of the directly suffixed noun. Thus:

*onos-n*    *bbum*  
 nose-3SG    grandfather  
 ‘grandfather’s nose’

<sup>4</sup> I have been informed that *lipm* ‘tooth’ has a defective paradigm and that there are no first and second person forms.

<sup>5</sup> This noun is clearly incompatible—at least in an ordinary Avava-speaker’s world—with anything but a third person possessor.

<sup>6</sup> The expected form *\*manu-ng* ‘my brother (woman speaking)’ does not occur, as there is an irregular lowering of the final vowel of the root, resulting in the form *mano-ng*.

*bas-n bala*  
tusk-3SG pig  
'pig's tusk'

*op-m abak*  
egg-3SG turtle  
'turtle's egg'

*aruu-n aga*  
leaf-3SG tree  
'leaf of tree'

In the absence of pronominal suffixes to express non-singular pronominal possessors, the expression of all other categories of pronominal possession with such nouns is achieved by postposing the independent pronouns (§3.1) in exactly the same way as with a nominal possessor. For example:

*bat-n git*  
head-3SG 1PL.INCL  
'our heads'

*onos-n ier*  
nose-3SG 3PL  
'their noses'

With first and second person singular pronominal possessors, there are, in fact, two competing, and apparently semantically equivalent, constructions. One involves the pattern of direct pronominal suffixation that was described above. With the other pattern, the ordinary independent singular pronouns can be placed immediately after the third person singular form of the possessum in exactly the same way as just described for nominal and non-singular pronominal possession. We therefore encounter substantial variation between the following patterns:

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| <i>mata-n na</i> | <i>mata-ng</i> |
| eye-3SG 1SG      | eye-1SG        |
| 'my eye'         | 'my eye'       |

|                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| <i>mata-n ong</i> | <i>mata-m</i> |
| eye-3SG 2SG       | eye-2SG       |
| 'your eye'        | 'your eye'    |

Third person singular possessed forms that end in *-pm* do not appear to participate in the full paradigm involving direct pronominal suffixation, so the following appears to be the only option:

*lip-m na*  
tooth-3SG 1SG  
'my tooth'

With a third person singular pronominal possessor, there is only a single structural possibility and that is for the noun to be marked by means of the pronominal suffix *-n*. We therefore do not find the independent third person singular pronoun *e* being used in such constructions. Thus:



*mata-n*            \**mata-n e*  
 eye-3SG          eye-3SG 3SG  
 ‘his/her/its eye’

Of these two patterns, that which involves the use of the different pronominal suffixes is clearly the one which directly reflects the pattern of Proto Oceanic. Patterns in which independent pronouns are used in the expression of pronominal possessors, especially with first and second person singular possessors, are not widely distributed in Oceanic languages, and this clearly represents an innovation in Avava. However, Avava is not the only language of Malakula in which this feature is found, as it is also quite well established in languages such as Neve‘ei, Naman and Neverver. By way of contrast, however, this pattern is not found in languages further afield such as Tape or V‘ënen Taut, where there are full paradigms for the expression of pronominal possessors with directly suffixed nouns.

### 3.2.2.2 Indirectly possessed nouns

An indirect possessive construction involves the expression of the possessor by means of a form that is phonologically independent of the possessum, that is the possessum is expressed by means of a free-form noun that does not attract direct pronominal suffixation.

With a nominal possessor, such possessive constructions in Avava are expressed by means of the following basic pattern:

possessum *te* possessor

Thus:

*obor te oto*  
 comb POSS chicken  
 ‘the chicken’s comb’

**Table 5:** Possessive pronouns

|   | Singular    |       | Dual             | Paucal           | Plural        |
|---|-------------|-------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1 | <i>tana</i> | Incl. | <i>takitdru</i>  | <i>takitntl</i>  | <i>takit</i>  |
|   |             | Excl. | <i>tokopmdru</i> | <i>tokopmntl</i> | <i>tokopm</i> |
| 2 | <i>tong</i> |       | <i>takamdru</i>  | <i>takamtl</i>   | <i>takam</i>  |
| 3 | <i>te</i>   |       | <i>tierdru</i>   | <i>tiertl</i>    | <i>tier</i>   |

A pronominal possessor with such nouns is expressed by placing one of the possessive pronouns from Table 5 after the possessum. The forms of these possessive pronouns can clearly be related to the forms of the independent pronouns set out in Table 4. The former can be derived from the latter by the addition of *t(V)-*, along with an accompanying shift of *g* to *k* in the case of those independent pronouns which begin with voiced stops.

While indirect possessive constructions are prototypically associated with the expression of alienable possessive relationships, there are some nouns referring to body parts and kin terms—categories which are otherwise predominantly expressed by means of directly suffixed nouns—which express possession in the same way as other free-form nouns. Thus:

*mom te*  
father POSS:3SG  
'his/her father'

*bop tong*  
vagina POSS:2SG  
'your vagina'

There are no separate patterns in Avava for marking possession with any of the different categories of alienable possession that we commonly find in many other languages of central Vanuatu, including even some languages of Malakula such as Tape and V'ënen Taut to the north. Thus, the paradigm of possessive markers set out in Table 5 are used for the expression of drinkable items and items for eating. For example:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>owe tana</i><br>water POSS:1SG<br>'my water' | <i>aya tong</i><br>pudding POSS:2SG<br>'your pudding' |
|---|---|

The same is true for items associated with ownership of land or livestock. For example:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>rakian tana</i><br>garden POSS:1SG<br>'my garden' | <i>bala tong</i><br>pig POSS:2SG<br>'your pig' |
|--|--|

Finally, items that fall under the heading of 'miscellaneous' alienable possession in other languages also express possession in Avava in this way. For example:

*awang takit*  
canoe POSS:1PL.INCL  
'our canoe'

The lack of different series of possessive pronouns to express these kinds of semantic distinctions is a feature that Avava shares with neighbouring Neve'ei and Naman.

**Table 6:** Possessive nominals

|   | Singular        |       | Dual                 | Paucal               | Plural            |
|---|-----------------|-------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | <i>(na)tana</i> | Incl. | <i>(ta)takitdru</i>  | <i>(ta)takitntl</i>  | <i>(ta)takit</i>  |
|   |                 | Excl. | <i>(to)tokopmdru</i> | <i>(to)tokopmntl</i> | <i>(to)tokopm</i> |
| 2 | <i>totong</i>   |       | <i>(ta)takamdru</i>  | <i>(ta)takamntl</i>  | <i>(ta)takam</i>  |
| 3 | <i>tete</i>     |       | <i>(ti)tierdru</i>   | <i>(ti)tierntl</i>   | <i>(ti)tier</i>   |

Corresponding to the set of possessive pronouns is a separate set of what can be referred to as possessive nominals, which are set out in Table 6. The singular possessive nominals are derived from the corresponding pronouns by means of the prefixation of *tV-* (*nV-* in the first person singular, which is optional), while in the various non-singular categories, *tV-* is only optionally added.

These forms can be used to completely replace a possessive noun phrase and function effectively as noun phrases in their own right. Thus:

*Totong.*  
 POSS:2SG  
 ‘It is yours.’

They also appear in an idiomatic construction in which the initial element is a verb of feeling or wanting, followed by the sequence:

POSSESSOR + *len* ‘locative’ + POSSESSUM

This construction expresses the meaning of ‘X wishes that X had Y’ or ‘X wishes that Y were X’s’. Thus:

*Na-wah-i natana len ong.*  
 1SG:REAL-want-TR POSS:1SG LOC 2SG  
 ‘I wish that I had you (as my spouse).’

*Na-ro bana tana len vanat-n bbuah kabat.*  
 1SG:REAL-feel if POSS:1SG LOC child-3SG pig European  
 ‘I wish that the calf were mine.’

### 3.2.2.3 Prepositional possession

There is one more construction used in the expression of possession in Avava and this involves the preposition *nan* in the following pattern:

POSSESSUM *nan* POSSESSOR

Relatively few nouns enter into this kind of possessive construction, and all which do are free-form nouns referring to items which can be considered to be inalienably possessed in that they refer to body parts and products. These include the following:

- (i) Some body products which are likely to be removed if they happen to get on us. For example:

*edre nan na*  
 blood POSS 1SG  
 ‘my blood’

However, by no means all such nouns express possession in this way, as shown by the following:

*mat te*  
 excrement POSS:3SG  
 ‘his/her excrement’

- (ii) Internal organs or other body parts which are likely to be physically removed and separated when an animal is being butchered, and which would ordinarily not be available for formal presentation during a ceremony. Thus:

*muut nan bala*  
 heart POSS pig  
 ‘the pig’s heart’

*lingiling nan bala*  
 fat POSS pig  
 ‘the pig’s fat’

When there is a pronominal possessor in this construction, the independent pronoun follows the preposition, even when the body part in question is clearly not being removed during butchering. Thus, in the following, *muut nan na* refers to my own heart which is beating in my chest, rather than (say) a cow’s heart in my possession, which I have removed and intend to fry and eat:

*muut nan na*  
 heart POSS 1SG  
 ‘my heart’

However, if a third person singular pronominal possessor is being expressed, this is marked by means of zero after the preposition *nan*. For example:

*bolong nan*  
 bone POSS:3SG  
 ‘its bone’

- (iii) Some body parts or products of animals which are particularly noticeable or unusual. For example:

*ibwil nan oto*  
 tail.feather POSS chicken  
 ‘the chicken’s tail feathers’

*iem nan our*  
 egg POSS lobster  
 ‘the lobster’s eggs’

- (iv) A limited range of relationships that pertain between the referents of free-form nouns and other nouns which represent some kind of essential source for the referent of the possessum in such constructions. The nouns *isteleh* ‘spirit’, *ivleh* ‘grave’, *marup* ‘scar’ and *milier* ‘shadow’ also express their ‘possessors’ by means of this prepositional construction. Thus:

*ivleh nan muut*  
 grave POSS person  
 ‘a person’s grave’

*marup nan*  
 scar POSS:3SG  
 ‘his/her scar’

*milier nan aga*  
 shadow POSS tree  
 ‘shadow of the tree’

*isteleh nan mom tokopm sapm*  
 spirit POSS father POSS:1PL.EXCL one  
 ‘the spirit of one of our fathers’

The preposition *nan* is used in the expression of a number of other non-possessive relationships between the referents of two noun phrases. It is commonly used to express the part of a whole in a construction of the following type:

PART *nan* WHOLE

For example:

*surang nan ani*  
fibre PART coconut  
'fibre on coconut palm'

*atah nan aga*  
flower PART tree  
'the flower of the tree'

*ipnuuh nan bongo-n*  
skin PART mouth-3SG  
'lip'

*isir nan mata-n*  
sleep PART eye-3SG  
'sleep in eye'

A purposive relationship between two noun phrases is also expressed by means of this preposition. For example:

*awal nan mat*  
whole PURP excrement  
'anus'

*apak nan adam*  
mound PURP yam  
'yam mound'

Finally, this preposition indicates that something is characteristic of something else. For example:

*aya nan adam*  
pudding CHAR yam  
'yam pudding'

*malah nan rais*  
leftover.food CHAR rice  
'leftover rice'

*balaka nan tuswe*  
cottonwood CHAR sea  
'tree species found by the sea'

3.2.2.4 *Preposed possessors*

In all of the possessive constructions described above, the pattern has been one of possessum followed by possessor. However, it is quite common in the languages of central Malakula for this construction to alternate with a pattern in which the possessor appears before the possessum. For example, while indirectly possessed nouns often appear in the POSSESSUM *te* POSSESSOR construction described in §3.2.2.2, it is common, particularly it appears with human nominal possessors, for the possessor to appear before the possessum in a construction of the following type:

POSSESSOR POSSESSUM *te*

Thus:

*Erik momo te*  
 Erik wife POSS  
 ‘Erik’s wife’

This pattern is not strictly limited to nominal possessors, as my corpus even includes very occasional examples in which the possessive nominals set out in Table 6 appear before, rather than after, the possessed noun. Thus, while the following represents the dominant pattern:

*akanian tong*  
 food POSS:2SG  
 ‘your food’

we do find occasional examples such as:

*totong akanian*  
 POSS:2SG food  
 ‘your food’

Neither is the preposing of possessors limited to constructions involving indirectly possessed nouns. The possessor with a directly suffixed noun can also appear before, rather than after, the possessed noun, as in examples such as:

*Sahtep vanat-n*  
 Sahtep child-3SG  
 ‘Sahtep’s child’

*ier sapm bat-n*  
 3PL one head-3SG  
 ‘the head of one of them’

3.2.2.5 *Overlapping categories*

Nouns are generally quite strictly subcategorised for membership in the two major classes of free vs. bound in terms of how possession is expressed. However, there is a handful of nouns which exhibit two related forms which fall into two quite distinct possessive sets. While the noun *batu-* ‘head’ normally accepts direct pronominal suffixation, it occasionally alternates with the free form *bat*, which also enters into the

prepositionally expressed possessive construction described in §3.2.2.3. The following, therefore, represent a variety of different ways of expressing apparently the same meaning:<sup>7</sup>

*batu-m*  
head-2SG  
'your head'

*bat-n ong*  
head-3SG 2SG  
'your head'

*bat nan ong*  
head POSS 2SG  
'your head'

Also, the indirectly possessed noun *obor* and the directly possessed form *bori-* both mean '(chicken's) comb', and appear in the following competing possessive constructions, again with no obvious semantic difference:

*obor te*  
comb POSS:3SG  
'its comb'

*bor-n*  
comb-3SG  
'its comb'

Finally, the form *melebbusi-* 'saliva' is directly possessed, while the corresponding form *melebb* 'saliva' is not directly possessed.

Although the expression of possession by means of a direct pronominal suffix normally precludes the simultaneous marking of possession by means of an indirectly expressed possessor within the same noun phrase, we do nevertheless encounter occasional examples of such apparent redundancy in textual examples such as:

*Na-la baladrong sapm bilep vanat-n lele te*  
1SG:REAL-see cow one ACC child-3SG small POSS:3SG

*bilep bbuah nan sapm.*  
ACC bull CHAR one

'I saw a cow and her little calf and a bull.'

While it might be tempting to suggest that such forms may represent performance errors given their rarity, parallel examples are occasionally attested in textual data in neighbouring Naman and Neve'ei, which suggests that this represents a genuine structural possibility in this grouping of languages.

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<sup>7</sup> I am not aware of any semantic difference between these constructions, though further investigation may elucidate this question.

### 3.2.3 Noun phrase modifiers

A noun phrase head can be followed by a variety of postmodifiers within the noun phrase. No nominal premodifiers are found in Avava, a feature which it shares with neighbouring Naman and Neve‘ei.

#### 3.2.3.1 Numerals

##### 3.2.3.1.1 Basic cardinal numerals

One category of nominal postmodifiers is numerals. The set of basic cardinal numerals in Avava is as follows:

|    |               |
|----|---------------|
| 1  | <i>sapm</i>   |
| 2  | <i>iru</i>    |
| 3  | <i>itl</i>    |
| 4  | <i>ivat</i>   |
| 5  | <i>ilim</i>   |
| 6  | <i>sout</i>   |
| 7  | <i>souru</i>  |
| 8  | <i>setl</i>   |
| 9  | <i>savat</i>  |
| 10 | <i>langal</i> |

The use of these forms as postmodifiers within a noun phrase is illustrated below:

*Muut iru ar-luk liim.*  
 person two 3DL:REAL-stay in.village  
 ‘Two people are in the village.’

The numeral *sapm* also functions as a nominal postmodifier in the same way, as illustrated by the following:

*Na-mah eve sapm.*  
 1SG:REAL-spear stingray one  
 ‘I speared a stingray.’

However, this form differs from all of the other numerals in that it also freely functions as a verb, accepting the full range of verbal subject markers, as in the following:

*Na-sapm ma.*  
 1SG:REAL-one only  
 ‘I am by myself.’

The numerals 2–5 have forms that clearly reflect reconstructed forms in Proto Oceanic, and they are similar—in some cases identical—in shape to the corresponding numerals in many of the surrounding languages. These numerals also all begin with *i-*, reflecting a widespread reanalysis of an original third person singular realis subject marker as part of the numeral root. These historical roots appear in the forms of numerals when they enter into compounds with nouns, as in examples such as:



*boloko-* + *ivat* → *boloko-vat*  
 ‘leg’            ‘four’            ‘car’

As will be demonstrated below, these numerals still retain some vestigial verbal properties.

The numerals 6–9 all begin with *s-* followed by one or more vowels, with the shape of the vocalic element being unpredictable. The numerals 7–9 then clearly involve the historical roots of the numerals *-ru* ‘two’, *-tl* ‘three’ and *-vat* ‘four’. The numerals for ‘one’ and ‘ten’ appear to be historically morphologically simple, while the numeral for ‘six’ involves the same initial element *sV-* noted for the numerals 7–9, but with a following element that cannot be related to any of the other cardinal numerals. These kinds of comments about the historical origins of the basic numerals in Avava are substantially matched for most of the surrounding languages, even if the specific statements required for various individual languages differ in detail.

Corresponding to this set of basic numerals is a set of irrealis numerals, as set out below:

|    |                 |
|----|-----------------|
| 1  | <i>basapm</i>   |
| 2  | <i>buru</i>     |
| 3  | <i>bwitl</i>    |
| 4  | <i>bbat</i>     |
| 5  | <i>balim</i>    |
| 6  | <i>bosout</i>   |
| 7  | <i>bosouru</i>  |
| 8  | <i>bwesetl</i>  |
| 9  | <i>basavat</i>  |
| 10 | <i>balangal</i> |

In addition, the numeral interrogative *ivih* ‘how much, how many?’ and the quantifier *ipar* ‘many’ also fall into this set, having the corresponding irrealis forms below:

|             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| ‘how many?’ | <i>bbih</i>  |
| ‘many’      | <i>bapar</i> |

Just as some of the basic numerals described above show evidence of a limited amount of verbal morphology in the form of an initial *i-* which is formally identical to the third person singular realis subject marker, these irrealis numerals show evidence of an initial element that is identical in shape to the third person singular irrealis prefix *bwV-*. This is attached to the historical roots of the basic numerals, that is the form without initial *i-*. The vowel takes its shape from the first vowel of the numeral root, though in the case of the root *tl* ‘three’, *V* appears as *i*. The initial labio-velar *bw-* is retained when the following vowel is front, but it shifts to *b-* when the following vowel is *a*, *o* or *u*. An additional change involves the shift of sequences of *bwVv-* to *bb-*,<sup>8</sup> by which *bwi-vih* ‘how many?’ becomes *bbih* and *ba-vat* ‘four’ becomes *bbat*.

These irrealis forms are most frequently encountered when a numeral modifies a nominal object to a verb which carries irrealis subject marking, or when functioning alone as an object to an irrealis verb. Thus:

<sup>8</sup> Keeping in mind the orthographic conventions set out in §2.4, this involves a phonemic shift of /b̃Vv-/ to /B-/.

*Nabwe-rep momo ba-sapm.*  
 1SG:IRR-take woman IRR-one  
 ‘I will take a wife.’

*Nabwe-leh ma ba-sapm.*  
 1SG:IRR-buy only IRR-one  
 ‘I will just buy one.’

*Ong ke-ser bbih i na?*  
 2SG 2SG:IRR-give IRR:how.many GOAL 1SG  
 ‘How many will you give me?’

These forms further reflect their verbal origins in that they can also accept the negative simulfix that is associated with verbs (§4.1.2) when they appear in object position with respect to an irrealis verb. Thus:

*Nabwe-ser ma bu-ru, sa-bwi-tl-mu.*  
 1SG:IRR-take only IRR-two NEG-IRR-three-NEG  
 ‘I will only take two, not three.’

The fact that the quantifier *ipar* ‘many’ also behaves in this way is illustrated by the following examples:

*Muut ipar at-matur.*  
 person many 3PL:REAL-sleep  
 ‘Many people are sleeping.’

*Ke-ser ba-par.*  
 2SG:IRR-give IRR-many  
 ‘Give (me) lots!’

While the irrealis forms of the numerals overwhelmingly appear in object noun phrases, they are by no means obligatory in this position. We do encounter occasional examples such as the following in which an uninflected numeral postmodifier appears in such a context:

*Nabwi-tirtirsal-i mitile sapm.*  
 1SG:IRR-tell.story-TR story one  
 ‘I will tell a story.’

Also, irrealis numerals are occasionally encountered in noun phrases which function as subjects to irrealis intransitive verbs. For example:

*Sit ba-sapm bo-tok len vara-n ong.*  
 thing IRR:one 3SG:IRR-located LOC arm-3SG 2SG  
 ‘There will be something on your arm.’

### 3.2.3.1.2 Ordinal numerals

The basic numerals have a corresponding set of ordinal forms, the full set of which is as follows:

|                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup>  | <i>ipom</i>       |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | <i>ituru nan</i>  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | <i>ititl nan</i>  |
| 4 <sup>th</sup>  | <i>itivat nan</i> |
| 5 <sup>th</sup>  | <i>itlim nan</i>  |
| 6 <sup>th</sup>  | <i>sout nan</i>   |
| 7 <sup>th</sup>  | <i>souru nan</i>  |
| 8 <sup>th</sup>  | <i>setl nan</i>   |
| 9 <sup>th</sup>  | <i>savat nan</i>  |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> | <i>langal nan</i> |

The form for ‘first’ is expressed suppletively by means of the fully verbal form *pom*. For example:

*Atda ti i-yan adam nan i-pom.*  
 child DEM 3SG:REAL-eat yam REL 3SG:REAL-first  
 ‘The child is eating the first yam.’

Corresponding to this form is the verb *iptak* ‘last’, illustrated by the following:

*Galu te i-yan adam nan Ø-iptak.*  
 mother POSS:3SG 3SG:REAL-eat yam REL 3SG:REAL:last  
 ‘His/her mother ate the last yam.’

The remaining ordinals, however, are clearly related to the forms of the cardinal numerals. All are followed by the preposition *nan*, presumably reflecting its characterising function described in §3.2.2.3. The ordinals corresponding to the numerals 2–5 also involve an additional prefixed element *itV-*, which is attached to the historical numeral root.

The ordinals derived with *itV-* function as verbs (initial *i-* being the third person singular realis subject prefix), with these forms also being able to appear in core-layer serial verb constructions. In such constructions, these forms express the idea of performing the action expressed by the initial verb for the *n<sup>th</sup>* time. Thus:

*Iip i-ti-tl nan.*  
 3SG:REAL:go 3SG:REAL-ORD-three CHAR  
 ‘(S)he went for the third time.’

### 3.2.3.1.3 Multiplicative numerals

Also derived from the basic numerals is at least a partial set of multiplicatives, which express the number of times which an action is carried out. Those forms which have been attested involve the prefix *vaa-*, which is added to the historical root of the numeral. The resulting forms inflect like verbs, in examples such as:

*Ki-tir ba-vaa-ru.*  
 2SG:IRR-say 3SG:IRR-MULT-two  
 ‘Say it twice.’

*Ki-tir ba-vaa-tl.*  
 2SG:IRR-say 3SG:IRR-MULT-three  
 ‘Say it three times.’

At this stage, it is not known if this prefix is used with all numerals or with just a subset. Attempts to elicit the same meaning with other numerals produced the following periphrastic constructions based on the noun *lama* ‘time’:

*Ki-tir lama ba-vat.*  
2SG:IRR-say time IRR-four  
‘Say it four times.’

*Ki-tir lama bo-sout.*  
2SG:IRR-say time IRR-six  
‘Say it six times.’

#### 3.2.3.1.4 X Days from now

There is a final set of numeral derivatives which will be mentioned here, though these forms actually behave like temporal adverbs and are described in more detail in §5.1.3.2. There is a set of forms derived from the basic numerals *itl* ‘three’, *ivat* ‘four’ and *ilim* ‘five’ to express the meanings of three (etc.) days from now, in the past and in the future. Thus:

| Future        |                       | Past            |                           |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| <i>ititl</i>  | ‘three days from now’ | <i>bbunitl</i>  | ‘three days before today’ |
| <i>itivat</i> | ‘four days from now’  | <i>bbunivat</i> | ‘four days before today’  |
| <i>itilim</i> | ‘five days from now’  | <i>bbunlim</i>  | ‘five days before today’  |

#### 3.2.3.1.5 Higher numerals

Avava has a counting system which allows for the expression of very large numbers beyond the basic numerals described so far. Cardinal numerals from 11–19 are expressed with the numeral *langal* ‘ten’ followed by the form *druman*—which is identical in shape to the directly possessed noun meaning ‘his/her/its body’—and then one of the basic numerals from 1–9. Thus:

|    |                            |
|----|----------------------------|
| 11 | <i>langal druman sapm</i>  |
| 12 | <i>langal druman iru</i>   |
| 13 | <i>langal druman itl</i>   |
| 14 | <i>langal druman ivat</i>  |
| 15 | <i>langal druman ilim</i>  |
| 16 | <i>langal druman sout</i>  |
| 17 | <i>langal druman souru</i> |
| 18 | <i>langal druman setl</i>  |
| 19 | <i>langal druman savat</i> |

Decades from 20–90 are expressed by means of the special compounding form of the numeral *langal* ‘ten’, that is *ngal*, with one of the following basic numerals, as follows:

|    |                   |
|----|-------------------|
| 20 | <i>ngal iru</i>   |
| 30 | <i>ngal itl</i>   |
| 40 | <i>ngal ivat</i>  |
| 50 | <i>ngal ilim</i>  |
| 60 | <i>ngal sout</i>  |
| 70 | <i>ngal souru</i> |
| 80 | <i>ngal setl</i>  |
| 90 | <i>ngal savat</i> |

Intermediate numbers within each of these decades are expressed again using the form *druman* followed by one of the basic numerals. Thus:

|      |                             |
|------|-----------------------------|
| 21   | <i>ngal iru druman sapm</i> |
| 32   | <i>ngal itl druman iru</i>  |
| 43   | <i>ngal ivat druman itl</i> |
| etc. |                             |

There are also separate numerals expressing the following higher values:

|           |              |
|-----------|--------------|
| 100       | <i>angat</i> |
| 1000      | <i>atar</i>  |
| 1,000,000 | <i>amul</i>  |

Each of these forms can be followed by the basic numerals according to the same pattern described above. Thus:

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 100 | <i>angat sapm</i>                            |
| 221 | <i>angat iru druman ngal iru druman sapm</i> |

Higher numerals were traditionally used for counting yams associated with the highly elaborate grade-taking ceremonies for which Malakula is well known in the ethnographic literature, and all of the neighbouring languages appear to have had similarly elaborate counting systems. Preparations for these ceremonies often took years, and it was necessary to keep track of who had provided large numbers of yams over this period. It should be pointed out, however, that the numeral *amul* ‘million’ was traditionally not literally used in counting millions. Rather, it was used more generally simply to indicate a huge number, with the specific meaning of ‘million’ being acquired after colonial contact.

Although this quite elaborate counting system was used for culturally significant purposes, it has largely succumbed to pressure from the English-derived counting system that is used in Bislama. Younger speakers of Avava seldom use numerals higher than ten, and some even restrict themselves to the indigenous numerals for 1–5. In fact, when counting in sequence—rather than just indicating a single number of something—people will almost invariably count using numerals from Bislama right from the beginning if it is clear that the items being counted will call for numerals higher than five. Thus, people will not count as *sapm, iru, itl, ivat, ilim, sikis, seven* and so on, but they will simply count from the outset as *wan, tu, tri, fo, faef, sikis, seven*. It should also be noted that the Bislama numerals do not have corresponding realis and irrealis forms.

## 3.2.3.2 Other nominal postmodifiers

Other postmodifiers within the noun phrase include items from the small set of uninflected adjectives:

|                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>matak</i>            | ‘wild, feral’          |
| <i>lele</i>             | ‘small’                |
| <i>bolo</i>             | ‘large’                |
| <i>tele</i>             | ‘other, different’     |
| <i>bial</i>             | ‘ordinary, common’     |
| <i>rong</i>             | ‘poor, having nothing’ |
| <i>mwiir</i>            | ‘left (hand)’          |
| <i>bariin ~ bwiriin</i> | ‘right (hand), real’   |

For example:

*Atda lele ier at-balbalakut.*  
 child small PL 3PL:REAL-noisy  
 ‘The little children were noisy.’

*Oto te muut tele.*  
 chicken POSS person other  
 ‘These are somebody else’s chickens.’

When these co-occur with numerals, the numeral appears at the end of the noun phrase. For example:

*Auh bolo sapm i-vop.*  
 rain large one 3SG:REAL-rain  
 ‘A heavy rain fell.’

The demonstrative *ti ~ ki* ‘this, that’ appears as a nominal postmodifier in examples such as:

*I-tur-i aga ti.*  
 3SG:REAL-stand.up-TR post DEM  
 ‘(S)he stood up this post.’

However, this is not the only form which has a demonstrative function, as we also find examples such as the following in which *naniki* clearly expresses the meaning of ‘that’:

*Lama naniki Rocky i-tir da kopm wal kopm*  
 time that Rocky 3SG:REAL-tell little 1PL.EXCL SUB 1PL.EXCL  
*bwit-ip kopm bwit-rep mwere nan amal te.*  
 PL:IRR-go 1PL.EXCL PL:IRR-pull vine.type PURP house POSS:3SG  
 ‘At that time, Rocky mentioned to us that we should go and gather *mwere* vine for his house.’

One other form *na* which has a demonstrative-type function is illustrated in the following example, though I have no details about what the specific characteristics of this form is at this stage:

*Mitile ti iip i-ka na.*  
 story DEM 3SG:REAL:go 3SG:REAL-like DEM  
 ‘This story goes like this.’

The plural marker *ier*, which is identical in shape to the third person plural free-form pronoun (§3.1), can appear at the end of a noun phrase. For example:

*Atda lele ier at-balbalakut.*  
 child small PL 3PL:REAL-noisy  
 ‘The little children were noisy.’

Another postmodifier within the noun phrase is the form *tuan*, which expresses indefiniteness. For example:

*Komat-sak komat-siber out tuan.*  
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-ascend 1PL.EXCL:REAL-reach place INDEF  
 ‘We went up as far as a place.’

When followed by the pluraliser *ier*, this form expresses the meaning of ‘some’, as in the following:

*Na-som da abak tuan ier.*  
 1SG:REAL-find turtle INDEF PL  
 ‘I found some turtles.’

The form *tuut* ‘some of’ also appears after a noun. For example:

*Komat-yan mwiniel i moroko-n tuut ier.*  
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-eat taro INST rib-3SG some PL  
 ‘We ate the taro with some of its ribs.’

We also find *ipar* ‘many’ as a nominal postmodifier:

*Muut ipar at-matur bbuut ki.*  
 person many 3PL:REAL-sleep inside LOC  
 ‘Many people are asleep inside.’

Note that this has a corresponding irrealis form, as described in §3.2.3.1. Thus:

*Ke-ser ba-par.*  
 2SG:IRR-give IRR-many  
 ‘Give (me) lots!’

### 3.2.3.3 Relative clauses

Relative clauses follow the nominal head and are introduced by *nan*, which is the same form that links nouns in the part-whole construction (§3.2.2.3). The end of the relative clause is optionally signalled by means of the demonstrative *ti* or *ki*. With relativised subjects, we therefore encounter constructions such as:

*Komat-ip komat-siber asal nan i-sak*  
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-go 1PL.EXCL:REAL-reach path REL 3SG:REAL-ascend

*Arabanah ti.*

Arabanah DEM

‘We went as far as the path that goes up to Arabanah.’

Relative clauses can also be introduced by the general subordinator *det* (§5.2.3.2). Thus:

*I-ling edre nan galu te det i-songon*  
3SG:REAL-pour.out blood POSS mother POSS:3SG REL 3SG:REAL-put.in

*len vwinibbuh.*

LOC bamboo

‘(S)he poured out his/her mother’s blood that (s)he had put into the (length of) bamboo.’

It is also possible for a pronoun to function as the head of a relative clause. For example:

*Kopm nan at-luk rasan at-robot gabwir.*

1PL.EXC. REL PL:REAL-located other.side PL:REAL-hear dog

‘Those of us who were on the other side heard the dogs.’

When a noun phrase is relativised from the position of prepositional object, the preposition can be stranded. We therefore find examples of the spatial preposition *len* stranded in the following examples as a result of the relativisation of the object of the preposition:

*Amal tana i-tok sikile-n amal nan ar-sasar*  
house POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-located side-3SG building REL IMP:REAL-teach

*atda len ti.*

child SP DEM

‘My house is beside the building that the children are taught in.’

*Abwit-tur amal nan ar-ma-tntn len ivsak i til.*

PL:IRR-tie house REL IMP:REAL-HAB-cook.food LOC up.there INST vine.type

‘They will tie the house that food is cooked in up there with the *til* vine.’

*At-lingling ier bitep muut nan a-sol bitep ier.*

PL:REAL-leave 3PL ACC person REL PL:REAL-walk ACC 3PL

‘They separated from the people who they were walking with.’

### 3.2.3.4 Constituent order

In the preceding sections, a number of different kinds of NP-internal constituents have been described, and a number of the examples that have been presented indicate that a single noun phrase can contain more than one of these types of modifiers. These modifiers are subject to the following generalisation regarding their ordering with respect to each other:

**NOUN** + ADJECTIVE + NUMERAL + { DEMONSTRATIVE }  
RELATIVE CLAUSE }



The following illustrate these ordering possibilities:

*owe lele sapm*  
stream small one  
'one small stream'

*ida lele ki*  
child small DEM  
'that small child'

### 3.3 Coordinate noun phrases

There are several strategies for expressing noun phrase coordination in Avava.

#### (i) *Bilep*

The accompanitive preposition *bilep* (§5.1.2) is often used to link noun phrases in a coordinate construction. Thus:

*Na-la baladrong sapm bilep vanat-n lele te bilep*  
1SG:REAL-see cow one ACC child-3SG small POSS:3SG ACC

*bbuah nan sapm.*  
bull CHAR one

'I saw a cow and her little calf and a bull.'

Note that with those speakers who use the occasional alternants *bitep* and *bineri* to express the accompanitive, these forms can also be used to express nominal coordination.

#### (ii) *Ma*

An alternative pattern involves the form *ma*. This can function as an inflected transitive verb meaning 'accompany, go with, be with'. For example:

*Ka-ma asi?*  
2SG:REAL-accompany who  
'Who are you with?'

However, the uninflected form of the root can also be used to link two noun phrases in a coordinate structure. For example:

*Lama sapm itian sapm ma limokian sapm ar-luk.*  
time one old.man one and old.woman one 3SG:REAL-live  
'Once, an old man and an old woman lived together.'

*Itian ti ma limokian ti ar-mat.*  
old.man DEM and old.woman DEM DL:REAL-die  
'The old man and the old woman died.'

(iii) *Inclusory pronouns*

The patterns just described are those which are used when noun phrases which are headed by nouns are coordinated. When a pronoun enters into a coordinate construction, non-singular pronouns which include the initial set of pronominal referents as well as the other entities involved in the coordinated noun phrase appear initially within the noun phrase. This is then linked to a following phrase with the coordinator *ma*. Thus:

*kopm ma William*  
 1PL.EXCL. and William  
 ‘me and William (and some others)’

(iv) *Juxtaposition*

Finally, noun phrases are sometimes simply juxtaposed, particularly when a longish list is being presented. In the following example, each of the possibilities described in this section are illustrated within a single coordinated noun phrase:

*Kopm ma William bilep Sema Etipoi komat-yong kopm*  
 1PL.EXCL and William ACC Sema Etipoi 1PL.EXCL:REAL-leave 1PL.EXCL  
*Tarem.*  
 Taremp  
 ‘Me, William, Sema and Etipoi left Taremp.’

# 4 *Verbs and the verb complex*

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In contrast to the limited amount of inflectional morphology on nouns, which is entirely suffixing, there is a substantially greater amount of inflectional morphology to be found on Avava verbs, most of which is expressed as prefixes. There is, however, a limited amount of verbal suffixation as well, though this largely involves clitics of various types. Avava exhibits the same kind of morphotactic simplicity with regard to its verbs that we find in neighbouring Neve‘ei, as both languages allow for only an initial obligatory subject-mood marking prefix, along with prefixed negative marking. There are, therefore, no further mood-aspect categories marked by prefixes in Avava similar to some of the additional morphotactic positions that we find to some extent in Naman, but in a much more highly developed way in languages such as Tape and V‘enen Taut.

## 4.1 Subject and mood marking

Verbs in Avava mark a two-way inflectional distinction between realis and irrealis mood by means of two different sets of subject markers. This is a feature which Avava shares with the neighbouring Naman and Neve‘ei languages and, it appears, with a substantial number of other Malakula languages as well. As with most other Malakula languages—and in marked contrast to central Vanuatu languages outside Malakula—there is no change in the shape of the verb root itself in line with this distinction of mood.

### 4.1.1 *Realis*

The distinction between realis and irrealis in Avava directly mirrors the range of functions that are associated with these two categories in the various neighbouring languages. Thus, verbs marked with realis prefixes express the following kinds of events:

- Those which take place in the present or the past. For example:

*Na-tih*                      *bwisian.*

1SG:REAL-write    word

‘I am writing words.’

*Kopm*                      *ar-ip.*

1PL.EXCL    DL:REAL-go

‘We went.’

- General statements about the world for which no specific time reference is expressed. For example:

*E-ma i-sungsung meh abbu-n akanian.*  
 3SG:REAL-CONT 3SG:REAL-smell just smell-3SG food  
 ‘(S)he would just smell the food (rather than eating it).’

#### 4.1.1.1 Short prefixes

There are two sets of realis prefixes, just as there are two sets of irrealis prefixes, which I will refer to as the ‘short’ prefixes on the one hand and the ‘long’ prefixes on the other. The short prefixes, which will be discussed first, are those which are attested on the vast majority of verb roots. In a very real sense, these are also the ‘default’ prefixes in that these are the forms which are attached to words of Bislama origin.

**Table 7:** Short realis subject prefixes

|   | Singular      |       | Dual       | Plural     |
|---|---------------|-------|------------|------------|
| 1 | <i>na-</i>    | Incl. | <i>ar-</i> | <i>at-</i> |
|   |               | Excl. | <i>ar-</i> | <i>at-</i> |
| 2 | <i>o(ng)-</i> |       | <i>ar-</i> | <i>at-</i> |
| 3 | <i>i-/e-</i>  |       | <i>ar-</i> | <i>at-</i> |

The underlying forms of the short realis subject markers for the various pronominal categories of subjects are set out in Table 7. It can be seen that these prefixes express only a three-way number distinction, in contrast to the four-way number distinction that is marked by independent pronouns (§3.1). When a verb is associated with a paucal subject, this is invariably marked inflectionally on the verb by means of the plural subject prefixes. We therefore find examples such as:

*Na-bas.*  
 1SG:REAL-fart.audibly  
 ‘I farted audibly.’

*Auh i-vop*  
 rain 3SG:REAL-rain  
 ‘It is raining.’

One notable feature of this paradigm of subject prefixes is the fact that while the non-singular prefixes obligatorily distinguish between dual and plural, there is no formal distinction between any of the categories of person. While there are some confluences of categories of person in both neighbouring Neve‘ei and Naman, neither language shows the same pattern of complete conflation for all categories of person that we find in Avava. A form such as the following, therefore, is multiply ambiguous between the readings presented below when there is no overtly expressed subject:

*At-val.*

PL:REAL-fight

‘We (pl. incl.) fought.’

‘We (pl. excl.) fought.’

‘You (pl.) fought.’

‘They (pl.) fought.’

Commonly, however, either the linguistic or the non-linguistic context clearly indicates which of these interpretations is legitimate so the verb can still appear without a preceding subject noun phrase of some kind, as in the following:

*At-ip at-yoryor laka.*  
 PL:REAL-go PL:REAL-hunt in.bush  
 ‘They went hunting in the bush.’

Where contextual clues are not provided, an overt subject must be present, as in the following:

*Atda lele ier at-balbalakut*  
 child small PL PL:REAL-noisy  
 ‘The little children were noisy.’

In common with many Vanuatu languages, a distinction between singular and plural nominal subjects is normally marked on the verb only with highly animate subjects. Thus, we find that the plurality of *atda* ‘children’, even though this is not formally signalled in the noun phrase itself, is marked on the verb in the following:

*Atda at-balbalakut.*  
 child PL:REAL-noisy  
 ‘The children were noisy.’

However, a subject referring to a plural inanimate object (even when there is overt plural marking within the noun phrase) is likely to be cross-referenced on the verb by means of the singular subject marker *i-*. Thus:

*Vat-n ier i-sir.*  
 stomach-3SG 3PL 3SG:REAL-full  
 ‘Their stomachs are full.’

Regarding the phonologically conditioned allomorphs of these prefixes, the points below should be noted:

(i) *Na-* 1SG

This form is invariant in shape with consonant-initial roots, as well as monosyllabic roots beginning with a vowel. Thus:

*Na-rokut.*  
 1SG:REAL-know  
 ‘I know.’

*Na-ip.*  
1SG:REAL-go  
'I went.'

*Na-ul*                      *na.*  
1SG:REAL-shed.skin    1SG  
'I shed my skin.'

However, with non-monosyllabic vowel-initial roots, the initial vowel of the root is lost after this prefix. Thus, from the root *ivleh* 'make (pudding)', we encounter the following:

*Totong*    *akanian*    *na*    *na-vleh*                      *man*    *i*    *lawal.*  
POSS:2SG food        1SG    1SG:REAL-make    other    LOC    hole  
'I have made some other food for you in the hole.'

(ii) *O-* 2SG

The second singular prefix appears as *o-*, alternating with *ong-*, with both consonant-initial and vowel-initial verbs. Thus:

*O-vwel*                      *kesan*    *len*                      *arup?*  
2SG:REAL-come    when    SOURCE    garden  
'When did you come from the garden?'

*O-ul*                              *ong*    *ong-vwel*                      *o-vi*                      *momo turtur.*  
2SG:REAL-shed.skin    2SG    2SG:REAL-come    2SG:REAL-COP    young.woman  
'You have shed your skin and become a young woman.'

*Ong-ip*                      *ba?*  
2SG:REAL-go    where  
'Where did you go?'

(iii) *I- ~ e-* 3SG

Third person singular realis subjects are most commonly marked with *i-* when the verb root is consonant-initial. Thus:

*I-ber.*  
3SG:REAL-tall  
'(S)he is tall.'

In my textual corpus, this prefix not infrequently alternates with *e-*. We therefore also find examples such as:

*E-solsol*                      *e-vwel*                      *e-kan.*  
3SG:REAL-walk    3SG:REAL-come    3SG:REAL-eat  
'(S)he walked over here and ate.'

However, each of these verbs is much more commonly attested with the *i-* variant of this prefix, that is:

*I-solsol*                      *i-vwel*                      *i-kan.*  
3SG:REAL-walk    3SG:REAL-come    3SG:REAL-eat  
'(S)he walked over here and ate.'

This variability appears to be a result of levelling between an original Avava and Umbbuul prefix *i-* and a Gara prefix *e-* (§1.3.1).

With monosyllabic verb roots beginning with either of the vowels *i-* or *u-*, the *i-* prefix is expressed as lengthening of the root-initial vowel. Thus, from *il* ‘dig up’ and *ul* ‘shed skin’, we find the following:

|                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>il</i>                  | <i>adam.</i>           |
| 3SG:REAL:dig.up            | yam                    |
| ‘(S)he dug up the yam.’    |                        |
| <i>Amwat uul</i>           | <i>e.</i>              |
| snake                      | 3SG:REAL:shed.skin 3SG |
| ‘The snake shed its skin.’ |                        |

However, when a non-monosyllabic verb root begins with one of these vowels, the third person singular prefix has zero realisation. Thus:

|                             |
|-----------------------------|
| $\emptyset$ - <i>Ihman.</i> |
| 3SG:REAL-unripe             |
| ‘It is unripe.’             |

Note that the *e-* variant is also found with *i*-initial verbs, resulting in free variants such as:

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| <i>iip</i>   | <i>e-ip</i>  |
| 3SG:REAL:go  | 3SG:REAL-go  |
| ‘(s)he went’ | ‘(s)he went’ |

However, the *e-* variant has not been attested with *u*-initial verbs. Thus:

|                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| <i>uup</i>      | <i>*e-up</i>  |
| 3SG:REAL:blow   | 3SG:REAL-blow |
| ‘(s)he blew it’ |               |

It will be remembered from the discussion in §2.1.1.3.2 that third person singular realis can also be marked by means of zero when the verb appears as the first verb in a nuclear-layer serial verb construction, as in the following:

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| $\emptyset$ - <i>Gong</i>              | <i>tata.</i> |
| 3SG:REAL-catch                         | tight        |
| ‘(S)he caught it and held it tightly.’ |              |

(iv) *Ar-* and *at-* ‘non-singular’

Before vowel-initial roots and roots beginning with most consonants, these are simply added before the root with no change. Thus:

|                                  |                  |              |
|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <i>At-ip</i>                     | <i>at-yoryor</i> | <i>laka.</i> |
| 3PL:REAL-go                      | 3PL:REAL-hunt    | in.bush      |
| ‘They went hunting in the bush.’ |                  |              |

When the plural prefix *at-* is added to a root beginning with *t*, and the dual prefix *ar-* (as well as the homonymous impersonal prefix described in §4.1.5) is added to a root beginning with *r*, geminate sequences result. Thus:

*Nahe ier at-tur teki?*  
 who PL PL:REAL-stand over.there  
 ‘Who are standing over there?’

*Galu tana ar-riit sur asal.*  
 mother POSS:1SG IMP:REAL-kill along road  
 ‘My mother has been killed along the road.’

With some speakers the plural prefix *at-* optionally loses the final *t* before verb roots beginning with *s-* to become *a-*, resulting in variation between the following:

|                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| <i>at-solsol</i> | <i>a-solsol</i> |
| PLREAL:walk      | PLREAL:walk     |
| ‘they walked’    | ‘they walked’   |

The invariant *at-* form of this prefix before *s-* is typical of the speech of younger speakers, while speakers in their fifties and above are more likely to use the reduced variant *a-*.

#### 4.1.1.2 Long prefixes

**Table 8:** Long realis subject prefixes

|   | Singular      |       | Dual        | Plural      |
|---|---------------|-------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | <i>na-</i>    | Incl. | <i>ari-</i> | <i>ati-</i> |
|   |               | Excl. | <i>ari-</i> | <i>ati-</i> |
| 2 | <i>o(ng)-</i> |       | <i>ari-</i> | <i>ati-</i> |
| 3 | <i>i-/e-</i>  |       | <i>ari-</i> | <i>ati-</i> |

In addition to the short realis markers described above, there is a second set of prefixes which involve an accretive prefix-final vowel in the dual and plural, resulting in the prefixes set out in Table 8. It can be seen, however, that the prefixes in the singular for both sets are identical. The shorter prefixes are found with all roots of two or more syllables, all vowel-initial monosyllabic roots, and a majority of consonant-initial monosyllabic roots. These longer prefixes, by way of contrast, are attested only with a subset of consonant-initial monosyllabic roots. The following lists show the attested membership of the two subsets of consonant-initial monosyllabic verb roots:

| Long prefixes |                        | Short prefixes |                     |
|---------------|------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| <i>per</i>    | ‘work’                 | <i>tur</i>     | ‘stand’             |
| <i>ka</i>     | ‘call’                 | <i>va</i>      | ‘do, make, say’     |
| <i>sil</i>    | ‘go torch-fishing’     | <i>yor</i>     | ‘chase, grate’      |
| <i>kin</i>    | ‘peel (tuber, banana)’ | <i>val</i>     | ‘fight’             |
| <i>song</i>   | ‘cook in bamboo’       | <i>vwel</i>    | ‘come’              |
| <i>kan</i>    | ‘eat (intr.)’          | <i>yan</i>     | ‘eat (tr.)’         |
| <i>tem</i>    | ‘step’                 | <i>la</i>      | ‘see’               |
| <i>pih</i>    | ‘tie’                  | <i>luk</i>     | ‘stay, live’        |
| <i>pom</i>    | ‘go ahead’             | <i>tok</i>     | ‘be located, exist’ |
|               |                        | <i>riit</i>    | ‘punch’             |
|               |                        | <i>lik</i>     | ‘tie’               |



|             |                    |
|-------------|--------------------|
| <i>yet</i>  | ‘feed’             |
| <i>dah</i>  | ‘descend’          |
| <i>sap</i>  | ‘dance’            |
| <i>sak</i>  | ‘ascend’           |
| <i>yeng</i> | ‘remove (pudding)’ |
| <i>tn</i>   | ‘roast’            |

The different prefixing behaviour of forms from these two sets is illustrated below:

*Git ati-per.*  
 1PL.INCL PL:REAL-work  
 ‘We worked.’

*Ari-sil len tuswe.*  
 DL:REAL-go.torch-fishing LOC sea  
 ‘(S)he went torch-fishing in the sea.’

*I-ka ier at-vwel.*  
 3SG:REAL-call 3-PL 3PL:REAL-come  
 ‘(S)he called them over.’

While the distribution of verbs between these two sets is fairly rigidly determined, we do find occasional textual examples where a verb which, with most speakers, accepts the short prefixes, is attested occasionally with long prefixes. The only two verbs which have so far been attested as behaving in this way are *vwel* ‘come’ and *va* ‘do, make’. It is difficult to offer generalisations at this stage, though the longer prefix variants of these verbs are only encountered in the speech of older speakers, while younger speakers systematically use the short prefixes with these two verbs. This may be an indication that a slight realignment of membership between the two categories of verbs is currently in progress.

The fact that the larger set of short prefixes should be seen as the unmarked option is suggested by the behaviour of verbs incorporated into Avava from Bislama, as these are associated overwhelmingly with the short prefixes. However, this appears not to be an absolute requirement, as we do find occasional examples such as the following in which a loanword accepts prefixes from the second set:

*Kobiti-ple balong Tisman.*  
 1PL.EXCL:IRR-play football Tisman  
 ‘We were going to play football at Tisman.’

The existence of two sets of largely similar subject prefixes, with one set of forms being associated with a relatively small subset of verbs, is not a feature that is unique to Avava. In neighbouring Naman, there is also a subset of monosyllabic verbs which call for an accreted set of subject prefixes. There is also a set of accreted subject prefixes in Neve‘ei, and although in this language there is a somewhat larger subset of verbs which are associated with these prefixes, even so this still represents a minority of verbs overall.

4.1.2 *Irrealis*

Irrealis prefixes, by way of contrast, are associated with the following kinds of events:

- Those which will, or might, take place in the future.

*Bwit-rivripbet.*

PL:IRR-pound.breadfruit

‘We will make pounded breadfruit.’

- Those which are expressed in association with the immediately preceding adverbial *supak ~ lile* ‘nearly, almost’, even if the verb refers to an event in the past.

*Supak ong ku-wam.*

nearly 2SG 2SG:IRR-fall

‘You nearly fell.’

- Events set in the past that were not realised at the time of reference, expressing, therefore, the future in the past. Thus:

*Kobwiri-tem tata mwi-ding lalak.*

1DL.EXCL:IRR-step tight 3SG:IRR-lie.down quietly

‘We were going to step down hard on it so it would lie down quietly (but we couldn’t).’

*Kobiti-ple balong Tisman.*

1PL.EXCL:IRR-play football Tisman

‘We were going to play football at Tisman.’

- The imperative, prohibitive and hortative. For example:

*Ke-vwel.*

2SG:IRR-come

‘Come here.’

*Bwir-sol-sol bwir-sadri owe.*

DL:IRR-REDUP-walk DL:IRR-REDUP-pass river

‘Let’s walk past the river.’

- Those which are encoded with a preceding auxiliary that carries realis marking (§5.2.1.2). For example:

*Na-rokut nabwi-yal.*

1SG:REAL-able 1SG:IRR-sing

‘I can sing.’

**Table 9:** Short irrealis subject prefixes

|   | Singular       |       | Dual            | Plural          |
|---|----------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 | <i>nabwV-</i>  | Incl. | <i>(a)bwir-</i> | <i>(a)bwit-</i> |
|   |                | Excl. |                 | <i>(a)bwit-</i> |
| 2 | <i>kV-</i>     |       |                 | <i>(a)bwit-</i> |
| 3 | <i>(e)bwV-</i> |       | <i>(a)bwir-</i> | <i>(a)bwit-</i> |

**Table 10:** Long irrealis subject prefixes

|   | Singular       |       | Dual             | Plural           |
|---|----------------|-------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | <i>nabwV-</i>  | Incl. | <i>(a)bwiri-</i> | <i>(a)bwiti-</i> |
|   |                | Excl. | <i>(a)bwiri-</i> | <i>(a)bwiti-</i> |
| 2 | <i>kV-</i>     |       | <i>(a)bwiri-</i> | <i>(a)bwiti-</i> |
| 3 | <i>(e)bwV-</i> |       | <i>(a)bwiri-</i> | <i>(a)bwiti-</i> |

The irrealis is marked by the prefixes with the basic forms set out in Tables 9 and 10. The prefixes set out in Table 10 are those which are associated with the same subset of consonant-initial monosyllabic verbs noted in §4.1.1 as taking the longer forms of the realis prefixes, while the prefixes in Table 9 are found with all other verbs. Thus:

|                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| <i>bwit-kan</i>     | <i>bwiti-per</i>     |
| PL:IRR-eat          | PL:IRR-work          |
| ‘we (pl.) will eat’ | ‘we (pl.) will work’ |

The singular irrealis prefixes all end in an unspecified vowel segment represented as *V*.<sup>1</sup> This is realised before consonant-initial roots as a vowel which harmonises with the first vowel of the verb root. Thus:

*Ong ka-matur kutn.*  
 2SG 2SG:IRR-sleep below  
 ‘You will sleep below.’

*Ke-vwel.*  
 2SG:IRR-come  
 ‘Come here.’

*Ko-lop.*  
 2SG:IRR-hit  
 ‘Hit it!’

*Ku-vuruh.*  
 2SG:IRR-grab  
 ‘Grab it!’

*Ki-kin.*  
 2SG:IRR-peel  
 ‘Peel it!’

Note that words incorporated into Avava from Bislama behave in exactly the same way. Thus:

*Ko-stop.*  
 2SG:IRR-stop  
 ‘Stop!’

<sup>1</sup> I have not been able to determine how *V* is realised with a verb like *tn* ‘cook over fire’.

*Ki-spit.*<sup>2</sup>  
 2SG:IRR-hurry  
 ‘Hurry!’

When the verb root begins with a glide followed by *a*, the segment *V* takes the form of the vowel which corresponds to the glide in terms of frontness. For example:

*Bwi-yat.*  
 3SG:IRR-bite  
 ‘It will bite it.’

*Ku-wam.*  
 2SG:IRR-fall  
 ‘You will fall.’

With verbs beginning with *i*, the sequence of *V + i* is realised as lengthening of the root-initial vowel. Thus:

*Kiip.*  
 2SG:IRR:go  
 ‘Go away.’

There are also some changes affecting the form of the first and third person singular prefixes, both of which contain the sequence *bwV-*. When the prefix vowel, as a result of the process of vowel harmony just described, is non-front (*u*, *o* or *a*), then the initial segment has the form of a plain labial. Thus:

*Nabwe-leh*  
 1SG:IRR-buy  
 ‘I will buy it.’

*Gabwir bwi-yat ong.*  
 dog 3SG:IRR-bite 2SG  
 ‘The dog will bite you.’

*Bo-tok.*  
 3SG:IRR-stay  
 ‘It will stay.’

*Nabu-lumlum len owe.*  
 1SG:IRR-bathe LOC river  
 ‘I will bathe in the river.’

However, when the prefix vowel *u* appears before root-initial *w-*, the initial segment of the prefix shifts to the bilabial trill. Thus:

*Bbu-wang.*  
 3SG:IRR-laugh  
 ‘(S)he will laugh.’

In addition, the initial stop of the prefix shifts to a corresponding nasal when the initial segment of the verb root is itself a nasal or a (prenasalised) voiced stop. For example:

---

<sup>2</sup> From Bislama *spid* ‘hurry, go very fast’, which itself derives from English ‘speed’.

*Namwi-dingi oweng ran bali.*  
 1SG:IRR-put island.cabbage ON platform  
 ‘I will put the island cabbage on the platform.’

*Nama-matur draka.*  
 1SG:IRR-sleep on.top  
 ‘I will sleep on top.’

Finally, the labio-velar segments shift to plain labials when the following verb root itself begins with a plain labial. Thus:

*Bit-meten sur bala.*  
 PL:REAL-watch follow pig  
 ‘Let’s track the pig.’

In addition, sequences of *bV-* and *bwV-*, with a following *v-*, *w-* or *vw-* followed by a vowel other than *u* at the beginning of the verb root, systematically shift to the voiced bilabial trill. This means that sequences of *bwV-CV* are resolved as *bbi-*, *bbe-*, *bba-* or *bbo-* depending on the quality of the vowel of the original root. Thus:

|                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| <i>i-vi</i>      | <i>bbi</i>        |
| 3SG:REAL-COP     | 3SG:IRR:COP       |
| ‘(s)he is’       | ‘(s)he will be’   |
| <i>i-vwel</i>    | <i>bbel</i>       |
| 3SG:REAL-come    | 3SG:IRR:come      |
| ‘(s)he came’     | ‘(s)he will come’ |
| <i>i-welewel</i> | <i>bbelewel</i>   |
| 3SG:REAL-break   | 3SG:IRR:break     |
| ‘it broke’       | ‘it will break’   |
| <i>i-va</i>      | <i>bba</i>        |
| 3SG:REAL-say     | 3SG:IRR:say       |
| ‘(s)he said’     | ‘(s)he will say’  |
| <i>i-vop</i>     | <i>bbop</i>       |
| 3SG:REAL-rain    | 3SG:IRR:rain      |
| ‘it rained’      | ‘it will rain’    |

The fact that *u* following the segments *b* or *bw* in these prefixes does not trigger this kind of change is illustrated by the following:

|                 |          |                     |          |
|-----------------|----------|---------------------|----------|
| <i>i-vuk</i>    | <i>e</i> | <i>bu-vuk</i>       | <i>e</i> |
| 3SG:REAL-change | 3SG      | 3SG:IRR-change      | 3SG      |
| ‘(s)he changed’ |          | ‘(s)he will change’ |          |

The vowel of the short forms of the non-singular irrealis prefixes are attested as optionally harmonising with the vowel of the following root. If the vowel of the prefix shifts to a rounded vowel in this way, then the preceding labio-velar consonant automatically shifts to a plain labial. Note, therefore, the following alternating forms:

|                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| <i>bwir-luk</i>      | <i>bur-luk</i>       |
| DL:IRR-stay          | DL:IRR-stay          |
| ‘we (dl.) will stay’ | ‘we (dl.) will stay’ |
| <i>bwit-luk</i>      | <i>but-luk</i>       |
| PL:IRR-stay          | PL:IRR-stay          |
| ‘we (pl.) will stay’ | ‘we (pl.) will stay’ |

The non-singular prefixes *bwir(i)-* and *bwit(i)-* are occasionally attested with a preceding *a*, meaning that the prefixes may appear as *abwir(i)-* and *abwit(i)-* respectively. In the same way, the third person singular prefix *bwV-* is occasionally attested with a preceding *e*, resulting in a prefix of the shape *ebwV-*. These alternations are consistent with the suggestion made in §2.1.1.3.2 that all consonant-initial forms of two or more syllables in Avava may, in fact, involve underlying preceding vowels that have been subject to an optional process of vowel deletion.

### 4.1.3 Prefix augmentation

I noted in §4.1.1 that the paradigms of subject prefixes in Avava show far greater evidence of conflation of inflectional categories under a single prefix than is typically the case with Oceanic languages, resulting in forms that are often multiply ambiguous. Apparently in response to this recently developed ambiguity, some of the subject prefixes described in §4.1.1 and §4.1.2 have been augmented by incorporating reduced forms of the independent pronouns.

When the subject is a first person exclusive non-singular pronoun, it is quite common for the independent pronoun *kopm* to be reduced phonologically to *kom-* and then attached to the ambiguous realis subject prefix, effectively resulting in competing prefixes of the form *komar-* and *ar-* in the dual and *komat-* and *at-* in the plural. In addition to the forms illustrated in §4.1.1, we therefore also encounter examples such as the following, which unambiguously have first person non-singular exclusive pronominal reference:

|   |                      |              |              |            |
|---|----------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| <i>Komar-vuruh</i>                          | <i>tata</i>          | <i>bbuah</i> | <i>kabat</i> | <i>ti.</i> |
| 1DL.EXCL:REAL-hold                          | tight                | pig          | European     | DEM        |
| ‘The two of us held tightly onto that cow.’ |                      |              |              |            |
| <i>Komat-ip</i>                             | <i>komat-yoryor.</i> |              |              |            |
| 1PL.EXCL:REAL-go                            | 1PL.EXCL:REAL-hunt   |              |              |            |
| ‘We went hunting.’                          |                      |              |              |            |

However, it is by no means obligatory for this to happen, as we also find textual examples such as the following in which the prefix is not augmented:

|  |                 |               |              |                 |                |
|--|-----------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <i>Kopm</i>  | <i>nan</i>      | <i>at-luk</i> | <i>rasan</i> | <i>at-robit</i> | <i>gabwir.</i> |
| 1PL.EXC. REL   | PL:REAL-located | other.side    | PL.REAL-hear | dog             |                |
| ‘Those of us who were on the other side heard the dogs.’ |                 |               |              |                 |                |

As with the realis prefixes, a non-singular first person exclusive irrealis prefix is also often augmented by a reduced form of the preceding independent pronoun; the resulting alternative prefixes have the forms *kobwir(i)-* and *kobwit(i)-* respectively. We therefore find forms such as:

*Kobwiri-tem tata mwi-ding lalak.*  
 1DL.EXCL:IRR-step tight 3SG:IRR-lie.down quietly  
 ‘We were going to step down hard on it so it would lie down quietly.’

The second person non-singular irrealis prefixes also have an augmented form in which the reduced form *ka-* of the independent pronoun *kam* produces the suffixes *kabwir(i)-* and *kabwit(i)-* respectively. Thus:

*Ka-lap galu tong kabwir-vwel.*  
 2SG:IRR-fetch mother POSS:2SG 2DL:IRR-come  
 ‘Fetch your mother and the two of you will come.’

Finally, the second person singular irrealis prefix *kV-* is sometimes augmented by a reduced form of the corresponding independent pronoun *ong* to produce the prefix *okV-*, as in the following:

*Kiip oki-tir oka-va, “Mom, ong saki-yan-mu*  
 2SG:IRR:go 2SG:IRR-tell 2SG:IRR-say father 2SG 2SG:IRR:NEG-eat-NEG  
*tuut emer”.*  
 EMPH eel  
 ‘Go and tell him, “Father, don’t eat the eel at all”.’

The same kind of optional augmentation also takes place in the corresponding negative form. Thus:

*Osaki-yan-mu tuutuut.*  
 2SG:IRR-NEG-eat-NEG EMPH  
 ‘Don’t eat it at all.’

#### 4.1.4 Irregular ip ‘go’

**Table 11:** Irregular irrealis forms of *ip* ‘go’

|   | Singular     |       | Dual          | Plural <sup>3</sup> |
|---|--------------|-------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1 | <i>nabap</i> | Incl. | <i>bwerap</i> | ?                   |
|   |              | Excl. | <i>bwerap</i> | ?                   |
| 2 | <i>kap</i>   |       | <i>bwerap</i> | ?                   |
| 3 | <i>bap</i>   |       | <i>bwerap</i> | ?                   |

There is a single verb in Avava which is known to behave irregularly with regard to its subject-mood prefixation and that is the verb *ip* ‘go’. This verb can, in fact, behave perfectly regularly according to the paradigms presented in §4.1.1 and §4.1.2. However, there is also a competing irregular irrealis paradigm for this verb which is based on the root *ap*.<sup>4</sup> This means that this single verb has the competing irrealis paradigm set out in Table 11. It should be noted, however, that in the realis, this verb is perfectly regular. Thus:

<sup>3</sup> I do not know if there is an irregular plural form *bwetap* alongside regular *bwitiip*.

<sup>4</sup> It was stated in §2.2 that verb roots cannot begin with *a*. This, therefore, constitutes an exception to this generalisation.

*ar-ip*  
DL:REAL-go  
'they (dl.) went'

*bwer-ap*  
DL:IRR-go  
'they (dl.) will go'

#### 4.1.5 Impersonal subjects

In addition to the pronominal categories of subjects set out in §4.1.1 and §4.1.2, there is also an impersonal prefix. This prefix is mutually exclusive with the various subject prefixes already described, and it occupies the same morphotactic position in the verb. When a verb carries this prefix, there can be no overt occupant in the position of verbal subject, either nominal or pronominal. A verb with this inflectional marking expresses the idea that the action is performed by an unknown or an unspecified agent. This is therefore equivalent in English to a translation involving 'one' as subject, or, in the case of a transitive verb, an impersonal passive construction.

The basic form of this prefix in the realis is *ara-* though, by the process of word-initial vowel loss described in §2.1.1.3.2, it is occasionally attested in textual data in the shortened form *ra-*. More widespread than either of these variants, however, is the form *ar-*. Although this suffix therefore commonly coincides with the shape of the dual realis prefix (§4.1.1), it is well attested in environments where a dual meaning is clearly not possible. Thus:

*Abit-va anal wal abi-sevi atnida nan ar-riit*  
PL:IRR-cause drought PURP PL:IRR-avenge child REL IMP:REAL-kill

*sur tuswe ki*  
LOC sea DEM

'They would cause a drought to avenge the (death of the) child who had been killed by the sea.'

*Amal tana i-tok sikile-n amal nan ar-sasar*  
house POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-located side-3SG building REL IMP:REAL-teach

*atda len ti.*  
child SP DEM

'My house is beside the building that the children are taught in.'

The corresponding irrealis form of this prefix is *(a)bwir(i)-*. Although this again coincides in shape with the irrealis dual subject prefix, this form is also used where the context indicates that a dual interpretation is impossible. For example:

*Bwilia ki i-vevet-i det abwir-riit.*  
slitgong DEM 3SG:REAL-foretell-TR time IMP:IRR-kill

'The slitgong foretold when he should be killed.'

One common pattern in which this prefix is found involves the verb *va* 'say', followed by the name of a person or a place, with this sequence inserted within a clause after a noun referring to an unnamed person or place. Thus:



*Mom tana sapm ara-va Peter.*  
 father POSS:1SG one IMP:REAL-say Peter  
 ‘It was one of my fathers,<sup>5</sup> (who was) called Peter.’

*A-sol at-ip bbu a-siber out sapm*  
 PL:REAL-walk PL:REAL-go until PL:REAL-reach place one  
*ara-va Lenesoweng.*  
 IMP:REAL-say Lenesoweng  
 ‘They walked (away) until they reached a place called Lenesoweng.’

It is also possible for this VERB + NAME sequence to appear after the noun *isan* ‘its/his/her name’, which itself follows an unnamed person or place. Thus:

*Muut sapm isa-n ra-va Lamunbal Teviar.*  
 man one name-3SG IMP:REAL-say Lamunbal Teviar  
 ‘There was a man called Lamunbal Teviar.’

It should be noted that, although verbs with this prefix can often be translated by means of a passive in English, this is clearly not a passive prefix in Avava. This is because transitive verbs with this subject prefix clearly retain their transitivity in the form of their ability to be associated with a following object noun phrase. In any case, this prefix is quite commonly attested with formally intransitive verbs where there is no possibility of an object appearing. Thus:

*Abwit-tur amal nan ar-ma-tntn len ivsak i til.*  
 PL:IRR-tie house REL IMP:REAL-HAB-cook LOC up.there INST vine.type  
 ‘They will tie the house that people cook in up there with the *til* vine.’

In both neighbouring Naman and Neve‘ei, there is also an additional subject prefix which functions in a directly parallel way. Moreover, these prefixes are formally very similar in all three languages:<sup>6</sup>

|         | Realis             | Irrealis           |
|---------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Avava   | <i>ar(a)-, ra-</i> | <i>(a)bwir(i)-</i> |
| Naman   | <i>rě-</i>         | <i>rěbě-</i>       |
| Neve‘ei | <i>rV-</i>         | <i>rVbwV-</i>      |

The presence of such a prefix may turn out to be a significant local subgrouping diagnostic given the apparent lack of any equivalent prefix in languages further to the north such as V‘enen Taut, Tape and Northeast Malakula.

<sup>5</sup> In many Vanuatu languages, one’s biological father, as well as his brothers, are all referred to as ‘father’, so an individual is likely to address a number of different people as ‘father’.

<sup>6</sup> In the data below, the Naman orthographic symbol *ě* represents a phonemically contrastive schwa, while in Neve‘ei the symbol *V* represents an underspecified vowel which takes its shape largely from the shape of the vowel of the syllable which immediately follows.

## 4.2 Negation

Negation is expressed discontinuously on Avava verbs by a combination of an inflectional verbal prefix and a suffixed clitic. The behaviour of the prefixed and suffixed elements of this sumulfix will be described separately.

### 4.2.1 Prefixed element

**Table 12:** Realis negative prefixes

|   | Singular        |       | Dual <sup>7</sup> | Plural         |
|---|-----------------|-------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1 | <i>nasa-</i>    | Incl. | ?                 | <i>sat(i)-</i> |
|   |                 | Excl. | ?                 | <i>sat(i)-</i> |
| 2 | <i>o(ng)sa-</i> |       | ?                 | <i>sat(i)-</i> |
| 3 | <i>sa-</i>      |       | ?                 | <i>sat(i)-</i> |

Table 12 sets out the basic forms of the prefixed elements of the negative simulfix *s(a)-* with realis subject markers, with the bracketed element in the plural indicating material which appears with those verbs which require the longer forms of the subject prefixes. It can be seen that *s(a)-* is a recurring element in these negative prefixes. With singular subjects, *sa-* appears between the realis subject prefixes and the verb root, allowing for a morphological segmentation which provides for a second morphotactic position among verbal prefixes. Thus:

|                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <i>na-robit</i> | <i>na-sa-robit-mu</i> |
| 1SG:REAL-heard  | 1SG:REAL-NEG-hear-NEG |
| ‘I heard (it)’  | ‘I did not hear (it)’ |

It should be noted that with vowel-initial roots, the final vowel of the negative prefix is retained. Thus:

|                 |                         |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| <i>na-ir</i>    | <i>na-sa-ir-mu</i>      |
| 1SG:REAL-strong | 1SG:REAL-NEG-strong-NEG |
| ‘I am strong’   | ‘I am not strong’       |
| <i>uul</i>      | <i>sa-ul-mu</i>         |
| 3SG:REAL:cry    | 3SG:REAL:NEG-cry-NEG    |
| ‘(s)he cried’   | ‘(s)he did not cry’     |

When a verb in the affirmative carries the third person singular realis subject prefix *i-*, the pronominal prefix is regularly lost before the prefixed element of the negative simulfix. Thus:

|               |                       |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| <i>i-per</i>  | <i>sa-per-mu</i>      |
| 3SG:REAL-work | 3SG:REAL:NEG-work-NEG |
| ‘(s)he works’ | ‘(s)he does not work’ |

<sup>7</sup> I have not yet elicited a full paradigm for a single verb which includes dual forms.

|                 |                         |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| <i>i-ir</i>     | <i>sa-ir-mu</i>         |
| 3SG:REAL-strong | 3SG:REAL:NEG-strong-NEG |
| ‘it is strong’  | ‘it is not strong’      |

The form *sa-* is occasionally attested instead as *asa-* in the speech of older speakers. This is consistent with observations made in §2.1.1.3.2 about the loss of initial vowels in longer words. Thus, the basic form of the prefix in this case is arguably *asa-* rather than *sa-*, even though the longer form is very rarely attested in both textual and elicited data.

With non-singular subjects, the negative prefix behaves quite differently from what we find in the singular, and in a way that is in sharp contrast to the way in which negation is marked in neighbouring Naman and Neve‘ei. In these languages, negation is systematically marked throughout the paradigm by forms which appear between the subject prefixes and the root. In Avava, however, the negative prefix appears instead before the non-singular subject prefix, in the form *s-*. Note, therefore, the following examples:

|              |                |                    |                       |
|--------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>git</i>   | <i>ati-kai</i> | <i>git</i>         | <i>s-ati-ka-mu</i>    |
| 1PL.INCL     | PL:REAL-shout  | 1PL.INCL           | NEG-PL:REAL-shout-NEG |
| ‘we shouted’ |                | ‘we did not shout’ |                       |

**Table 13:** Irrealis negative prefixes

|   | Singular          |       | Dual | Plural            |
|---|-------------------|-------|------|-------------------|
| 1 | <i>nasabwV-</i>   | Incl. | ?    | <i>sabwit(i)-</i> |
|   |                   | Excl. | ?    | <i>sabwit(i)-</i> |
| 2 | <i>o(ng)sakV-</i> |       | ?    | <i>sabwit(i)-</i> |
| 3 | <i>sabwV-</i>     |       | ?    | <i>sabwit(i)-</i> |

The basic forms for the prefixed element for the negative with verbs carrying irrealis subject marking are set out in Table 13 (though I have not elicited dual forms). With most of these forms, it can be seen that the pattern is exactly the same as we find with the non-singular negative prefixes in the realis, that is *sa-* is prefixed before the subject marker. Thus:

|                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| <i>ka-ka</i>       | <i>sa-ka-ka-mu</i>     |
| 2SG:IRR-shout      | NEG-2SG:IRR-shout-NEG  |
| ‘you will shout’   | ‘you will not shout’   |
| <i>ba-ka</i>       | <i>sa-ba-ka-mu</i>     |
| 3SG:IRR-shout      | NEG-3SG:IRR-shout-NEG  |
| ‘(s)he will shout’ | ‘(s)he will not shout’ |
| <i>git</i>         | <i>sa-bwiti-ka-mu</i>  |
| 1PL.INCL           | NEG-PL:IRR-shout-NEG   |
| ‘we will shout’    | ‘we will not shout’    |

However, the negative form of the first person singular irrealis prefix *nabwV-* is *nasabwV-*. Thus:

|                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| <i>naba-ka</i>     | <i>nasaba-ka-mu</i>    |
| 1SG:IRR:-shout     | 1SG:IRR:NEG-shout-NEG  |
| ‘I will shout’     | ‘I will not shout’     |
| <i>nabu-lumlum</i> | <i>nasabu-lumlum-u</i> |
| 1SG:IRR-bathe      | 1SG:IRR:NEG-bathe-NEG  |
| ‘I will bathe’     | ‘I will not bathe’     |

It can be seen that the negative element in this case appears within what I have otherwise treated as the morphologically indivisible prefix *nabwV-*. This suggests that, exceptionally for this category of subject marker, the irrealis form is morphotactically complex, with an initial subject marker *na-* followed by an irrealis prefix *bwV-*. Thus, the example just presented could perhaps be segmented instead as follows:

|                       |
|-----------------------|
| <i>na-sa-ba-ka-mu</i> |
| 1SG-NEG-IRR-shout-NEG |
| ‘I will not shout’    |

While Avava shares with its geographical neighbours Naman and Neve‘ei—and indeed, many other languages of central Vanuatu—a pattern of discontinuous negative marking on verbs, the way in which this behaves morphotactically in Avava is quite different from what we find in these other languages. Naman is typical of these other languages, with the prefixed element of the discontinuous negative invariably appearing between the subject-mood markers and the verb root, rather than before the subject-mood marker as is generally the case in Avava. Contrast, therefore, the position of the prefixed element of the negative simulfix in Naman with its position in the following example in Avava:

Naman

|                     |                           |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>air bët-vale</i> | <i>air bët-së-vale-si</i> |
| 3PL 3PL:IRR-come    | 3PL 3PL:IRR-NEG-shout-NEG |
| ‘they will come’    | ‘they will not come’      |

Avava

|                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>ier bwit-vwel</i> | <i>ier sa-bwit-vwel-mu</i> |
| 3PL PL:IRR-come      | 3PL NEG-PL:IRR-come-NEG    |
| ‘they will come’     | ‘they will not come’       |

#### 4.2.2 Suffixed elements

The examples presented in §4.2.1 have all demonstrated the fact that the prefixed elements of the negative are obligatorily accompanied by a suffixed element, which is most commonly a suffix of the basic shape *-mu*. When this suffix is added to a root ending in *-m*, the sequence of two identical consonants over the morpheme boundary is resolved as a single *m*. Thus:

|                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| <i>na-lumlum</i> | <i>na-sa-lumlum-u</i>  |
| 1SG:REAL-bathe   | 1SG:REAL-NEG-bathe-NEG |
| ‘I bathed’       | ‘I did not bathe’      |

Where a root ends in *-k*, this segment is regularly lost with the addition of the suffixed element of the negative simulfix (§2.1.2). Thus:

|                          |                                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>i-tavak</i>           | <i>sa-tava-mu</i>                |
| 3SG:REAL-make.loud.noise | 3SG:REAL:NEG-make.loud.noise-NEG |
| ‘it made a loud noise’   | ‘it did not make a loud noise’   |

There is, however, a second negative construction which expresses the meaning of ‘not yet’, in which the final element of the negative simulfix is *-va* rather than *-mu*. Thus:

|                    |                            |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>i-dakdaka</i>   | <i>sa-dakdaka-va</i>       |
| 3SG:REAL-married   | 3SG:REAL:NEG-married-YET   |
| ‘(s)he is married’ | ‘(s)he is not married yet’ |

This suffix is the only way of negating an affirmative verb that is followed by the perfective postmodifier *iih* (§4.7). Thus:

|                          |            |                          |
|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| <i>i-vwel</i>            | <i>iih</i> | <i>sa-vwel-va</i>        |
| 3SG:REAL-come            | PERF       | 3SG:REAL:NEG-come-YET    |
| ‘(s)he has already come’ |            | ‘(s)he has not come yet’ |

In fact, the suffixed elements *-mu* and *-va* of the negative are perhaps best treated as cliticised elements rather than as inflectional suffixes, given that they appear after whatever happens to be the final element of the verbal complex. In the case of verbal constructions involving nuclear-layer serial juncture (§4.4), for example, the suffixed element of the discontinuous negative marker appears after the final element in the series. For example:

|                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Sa-rivi</i>         | <i>bakah-mu.</i> |
| 3SG:REAL:NEG-good      | very-NEG         |
| ‘It is not very good.’ |                  |

Also, when a verb carrying the transitivising clitic *-i* (§4.5.1) is negated, the suffixed element of the negative simulfix appears after the transitive clitic at the very end of the verbal complex. Thus:

|   |           |                   |                   |                  |
|---|-----------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| <i>Alak</i>   | <i>te</i> | <i>sa-wah</i>     | <i>bakah-i-mu</i> | <i>momok ti.</i> |
| son-in-law  | POSS:3SG  | 3SG:REAL:NEG-like | very.much-TR-NEG  | woman DEM        |
| ‘Her son-in-law did not like that woman very much.’ |           |                   |                   |                  |

The forms *-mu* and *-va* do have functions, on their own, independent of the negative simulfix, though it is difficult to see a direct synchronic connection between these functions, described in §4.5.2, and their role in negation.

#### 4.2.3 Negative impersonal constructions

Verbs inflected with the impersonal prefixes described in §4.1.5 can be negated just like any other inflected verb. The impersonal realis prefix *ar(a)-* negates by means of the prefixed element *(a)sar(a)-*, combined with the same suffixed elements described in §4.2.2. Thus:

|            |                    |            |            |              |              |            |
|------------|--------------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| <i>Det</i> | <i>komat-tok</i>   | <i>dem</i> | <i>len</i> | <i>itoro</i> | <i>draka</i> | <i>ani</i> |
| time       | 1PL.EXCL:REAL-stay | yet        | LOC        | bush         | up.there     | coconut    |

*asar-teri-mu i emwet.*

IMP:REAL:NEG-cut-NEG INST knife

‘When we were still up in the bush, coconuts were not cut with a knife.’

I have no information yet about how the irrealis impersonal prefix is negated.

### 4.3 Verbal derivation

In this section, I will describe a number of processes which have been encountered in the derivational morphology of Avava verbs.

#### 4.3.1 Transitivity

Verbs in Avava are for the most part rigidly specified as being either transitive or intransitive, with only transitive verbs permitting overtly expressed object noun phrases. There are some cases of apparent lexical difference that are associated with a difference in transitivity. For example:

| Transitive |         | Intransitive    |              |
|------------|---------|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>yan</i> | ‘eat’   | <i>kan</i>      | ‘eat’        |
| <i>il</i>  | ‘dig’   | <i>ki(l)kil</i> | ‘dig’        |
| <i>lu</i>  | ‘shoot’ | <i>luluka</i>   | ‘fire shots’ |

However, transitive verbs often appear with no overtly expressed object, as third person pronominal objects—particularly when they have inanimate reference—are generally expressed as zero. Thus:

*I-yan.*

3SG:REAL-eat

‘(S)he ate.’

Such forms are nonetheless considered to be fully transitive, given the possible appearance of a noun phrase in object position, a possibility denied to any formally intransitive verb. Thus:

*I-yan aya.*

3SG:REAL-eat pudding

‘(S)he ate the pudding.’

*\*I-kan aya.*

3SG:REAL-eat pudding

There are, however, means for altering transitivity, which are of varying degrees of productivity in Avava. There is firstly a number of pairs of monosyllabic transitive and intransitive verbs which are marked by reduplication to derive an intransitive verb from a transitive one. While this is not a fully productive process, the subset of verbs which are attested as behaving in this way represents a substantially larger subset than we typically find with respect to the same morphological process in related languages:

| Transitive   |                      | Intransitive       |                    |
|--------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <i>min</i>   | ‘drink’              | <i>min-min</i>     | ‘drink’            |
| <i>yat</i>   | ‘bite’               | <i>yat-yat</i>     | ‘bite’             |
| <i>ter</i>   | ‘chop’               | <i>ter-ter</i>     | ‘chop’             |
| <i>yor</i>   | ‘chase’              | <i>yor-yor</i>     | ‘go hunting’       |
| <i>tir</i>   | ‘tell’               | <i>tir-tir</i>     | ‘talk’             |
| <i>bbung</i> | ‘grate (tuber)’      | <i>bbung-bbung</i> | ‘grate tuber’      |
| <i>reh</i>   | ‘copulate with’      | <i>reh-reh</i>     | ‘copulate’         |
| <i>sar</i>   | ‘retract (foreskin)’ | <i>sar-sar</i>     | ‘retract foreskin’ |
| <i>tn</i>    | ‘cook over fire’     | <i>tn-tn</i>       | ‘cook over fire’   |
| <i>la</i>    | ‘see’                | <i>la-la</i>       | ‘look’             |
| <i>lu</i>    | ‘shoot’              | <i>lu-lu</i>       | ‘fire shot’        |

In some cases, the reduplication is either optionally or obligatorily partial, rather than complete as in the previous set of examples. Thus:

| Transitive |         | Intransitive     |         |
|------------|---------|------------------|---------|
| <i>lap</i> | ‘plant’ | <i>la(v)-lap</i> | ‘plant’ |
| <i>tih</i> | ‘write’ | <i>ti-tih</i>    | ‘write’ |

While all of the examples of reduplicative detransitivisation described above involve monosyllabic roots, my corpus also includes a couple of examples of disyllabic transitive verbs which reduplicate a single syllable to produce a corresponding intransitive form:

| Transitive   |                                 | Intransitive     |                               |
|--------------|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>ivleh</i> | ‘make (pudding)’                | <i>iv-ivleh</i>  | ‘make pudding’                |
| <i>karah</i> | ‘drag fire through<br>(garden)’ | <i>kar-karah</i> | ‘drag fire through<br>garden’ |

It is quite common in Avava for transitive verbs to be derived from corresponding intransitive forms by means of the suffix *-i*, producing pairs such as intransitive *per* ‘work’ and transitive *peri* ‘do, make’. For example:

*Na-per.*  
1SG:REAL-work  
‘I worked.’

*Na-per-i*                      *awang.*  
1SG:REAL-make-TR canoe  
‘I made the canoe.’

However, there are good reasons for not treating this as a verbal derivational suffix in Avava; rather, *-i* is a transitivity clitic which attaches to whatever happens to be the final element of the verbal complex. A detailed description of the behaviour of this form is therefore reserved for separate discussion in §4.5.1.

While it is normally only active verbs that participate in this construction, we do occasionally find pairs such as *ir* ‘strong’ and the corresponding transitivity form *iri*. However, this form has a limited distribution, appearing only in an idiomatic construction following the noun *out* ‘place’ as subject, and with a following object indicating an individual who is sweating. Thus:

*Out* Ø-*ma*                    *iir-i*                    *na*.  
 place 3SG:REAL-CONT 3SG:REAL:strong-TR 1SG  
 ‘I am sweating (lit. the place is “stronging” me).’

### 4.3.2 Reduplication

Reduplication in Avava as a productive morphological process is limited to verbs. It involves the repetition of either the initial CV- or initial CVC- of the verb root, with apparently no functional differences attaching to these two patterns. We therefore encounter examples of reduplication such as the following:

|               |                    |                 |
|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| <i>dri</i>    | <i>dri-dri</i>     | ‘roll’          |
| <i>dan</i>    | <i>da-dan</i>      | ‘go underwater’ |
| <i>dongon</i> | <i>dong-dongon</i> | ‘count’         |
| <i>torop</i>  | <i>tor-torop</i>   | ‘jump’          |
| <i>kila</i>   | <i>kil-kila</i>    | ‘look’          |
| <i>ber</i>    | <i>ber-ber</i>     | ‘long, tall’    |
| <i>marak</i>  | <i>mar-marak</i>   | ‘get up’        |

When an initial CVC- is reduplicated and the intervocalic consonant of the root is one of the prenasalised stops, this shifts to the corresponding nasal in the reduplicated syllable. We see the effect of this in the following examples:

|               |                   |                  |
|---------------|-------------------|------------------|
| <i>kidrap</i> | <i>kin-kidrap</i> | ‘late afternoon’ |
| <i>tabar</i>  | <i>tam-tabar</i>  | ‘open’           |

It will be remembered from §2.2 that the only vowels which are found verb-initially are *i-* and *u-*. Only a handful of vowel-initial verbs have been attested in reduplicated forms, though the pattern involves the repetition of the initial VC- of the root. Thus:

|              |                 |                  |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <i>ivleh</i> | <i>iv-ivleh</i> | ‘making pudding’ |
| <i>up</i>    | <i>uv-up</i>    | ‘blow’           |

The detransitivising function of reduplication was described in §4.3.1. An additional function of reduplication is the expression of a reflexive or a reciprocal action, with an accompanying pronominal object which copies the pronominal categories of the subject. For example:

*I-suv-sup*                    *e*.  
 3SG:REAL-REDUP-scratch 3SG  
 ‘(S)he scratched himself/herself.’

*Ar-ter-ter*                    *ier*.  
 DL:REAL-REDUP-chop 3PL  
 ‘The two of them hacked each other.’

Reduplication can also be used to indicate that an action takes place over an extended period rather than at a single point in time. Contrast, therefore, the following:

*I-dongon*                    *avat*.  
 3SG:REAL-count money  
 ‘(S)he counted money (at a point in time).’



*I-dong-dongon*            *avat*.  
 3SG:REAL-REDUP-count money  
 ‘(S)he was counting money (over a period of time).’

It is anticipated that other functions of reduplication will emerge from an analysis of textual data.

In some cases, however, reduplication appears to be semantically fairly vacuous, with the unreduplicated and reduplicated forms apparently representing different forms of semantically equivalent lexical roots. Examples of this type include the following:

|               |                  |               |
|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| <i>lit</i>    | <i>lilit</i>     | ‘yellow’      |
| <i>melih</i>  | <i>melmelih</i>  | ‘green, blue’ |
| <i>met</i>    | <i>metemet</i>   | ‘black’       |
| <i>mut</i>    | <i>mutmut</i>    | ‘short’       |
| <i>ber</i>    | <i>berber</i>    | ‘long, tall’  |
| <i>sibo</i>   | <i>sisibo</i>    | ‘selfish’     |
| <i>tirsit</i> | <i>tirtirsit</i> | ‘talk’        |
| <i>tep</i>    | <i>teptep</i>    | ‘sprout’      |

There is a substantial number of other cases in which a presumably reduplicated form has no corresponding synchronically attested unreduplicated root. For example:

|                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>drokdrok</i>   | ‘cluck to summon chicks’ |
| <i>yovyop</i>     | ‘white’                  |
| <i>bwingbwing</i> | ‘tell lie’               |
| <i>teltel</i>     | ‘smoky’                  |
| <i>drimdrim</i>   | ‘thirsty’                |
| <i>kalkal</i>     | ‘slice pudding’          |
| <i>lumlum</i>     | ‘bathe’                  |
| <i>malamal</i>    | ‘naked’                  |
| <i>levlep</i>     | ‘large’                  |
| <i>kakalan</i>    | ‘colourful’              |

### 4.3.3 Compounding

There is a handful of reduplicated intransitive verbs in my Avava corpus which are derived from intransitive roots with a following noun which is bound to the verb as a single phonological word. The following examples of this type have been recorded:

|                  |   |              |   |                                   |
|------------------|---|--------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <i>roro</i>      | + | <i>malah</i> | → | <i>roro-malah</i>                 |
| ‘feel’           |   | ‘cold’       |   | ‘shiver’                          |
| <i>tirtir</i>    | + | <i>sit</i>   | → | <i>tirtir-sit</i>                 |
| ‘talk’           |   | ‘something’  |   | ‘talk’                            |
| <i>tirtirsit</i> | + | <i>bari</i>  | → | <i>tirtirsit-bari</i>             |
| ‘talk’           |   | ‘dream’      |   | ‘sleep-talk, talk in one’s sleep’ |

There is also a small number of intransitive verbs which, historically at least, clearly derive from a compounded noun in this way, even if the original verb is not otherwise attested in my corpus. The nouns in this construction invariably appear in phonologically reduced forms with their initial vowels absent (§2.1.1.3.2). Thus:

|                 |   |              |   |                           |
|-----------------|---|--------------|---|---------------------------|
| <i>mimih</i>    | + | <i>anal</i>  | → | <i>mimih-nal</i>          |
| ‘?’             |   | ‘sun’        |   | ‘warm oneself in the sun’ |
| <i>barbar</i>   | + | <i>ebet</i>  | → | <i>barbar-bet</i>         |
| ‘?’             |   | ‘breadfruit’ |   | ‘make pounded breadfruit’ |
| <i>wirwirit</i> | + | <i>lip</i>   | → | <i>wirwirit-lip</i>       |
| ‘?’             |   | ‘tooth’      |   | ‘gnash one’s teeth’       |

A similar example involves the compound noun *oweng bwirnal*, which refers to a variety of *oweng* ‘island cabbage’. The second element of this compound itself appears to be a verbal compound of this type, even though it is not independently attested as a verb:

|             |   |             |   |                                      |
|-------------|---|-------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| <i>bwir</i> | + | <i>anal</i> | → | <i>(oweng) bwir-nal</i>              |
| ‘break’     |   | ‘sun’       |   | ‘drought-resistant (island cabbage)’ |

We also find examples such as the following, in which an initial verb is followed by an apparently compounded element which is not otherwise attested in the language:<sup>8</sup>

|             |   |            |   |                    |
|-------------|---|------------|---|--------------------|
| <i>lulu</i> | + | <i>iki</i> | → | <i>lulu-iki</i>    |
| ‘shoot’     |   | ‘?’        |   | ‘go fish-shooting’ |

Examples such as these are clearly reminiscent of patterns of object incorporation. However, while such patterns are fully productive in some Oceanic languages, this is very much a purely vestigial pattern in Avava, being limited in my corpus only to the examples just presented.

#### 4.4 Nuclear-layer juncture

My Avava corpus includes a substantial number of examples of constructions that directly parallel the kinds of nuclear-layer serial verb constructions which have also been attested in nearby languages such as Naman and Neve‘ei, as well as in Oceanic languages much further afield. I propose to subcategorise these constructions firstly into those in which the initial and the subsequent constituent can both be regarded as verbs, and secondly into those in which less ‘verby’-looking constituents appear in the same structural position.

##### 4.4.1 *Verb + verb*

These are constructions in Avava in which there is an initial element which accepts inflectional prefixes, which is then followed by a second uninflected verbal element. Thus, from the following simple verbs:

---

<sup>8</sup> The lexicon gives *iki* ‘fish’, so I am not quite sure what this refers to – JL

*I-ter.*  
 3SG:REAL-chop  
 ‘(S)he chopped it.’

*I-bwir.*  
 3SG:REAL-break  
 ‘(S)he broke it.’

it is possible to derive the following serial verb construction:

*I-ter*                    *bwir.*  
 3SG:REAL-chop break  
 ‘(S)he broke it with a chop.’

Very often, the meaning of the resultant verb series is not directly predictable from the meaning of the elements which go together to make it up. Thus:

*I-ding*                    *masamah.*  
 3SG:REAL-sleep dry  
 ‘(S)he slept on the floor without a mattress.’

*Owe i-mah*                    *bwir-bwir.*  
 river 3SG:REAL-die REDUP-break  
 ‘The river flows and runs dry intermittently along its course.’

Any verbal object follows this sequence of verbs rather than appearing between the two verbs. For example:

*I-ter*                    *bwir aga.*  
 3SG:REAL-chop break wood  
 ‘(S)he broke the wood with a chop.’

The second element of the negative simulfix (§4.2.2) appears only on the second element of the serial construction. Compare, therefore, the following:

*Sa-ter-mu.*  
 3SG:REAL:NEG-cut-NEG  
 ‘(S)he didn’t cut it.’

*Sa-ter*                    *wel-mu.*  
 3SG:REAL:NEG-cut split-NEG  
 ‘(S)he did not split it by chopping.’

The non-initial position in a serial verb construction cannot be filled by just any verb from the lexicon. Rather, only a fairly limited subset of verbs can freely appear after semantically compatible verbs. Those verbs which are commonly attested in this environment include the following:

|                         |                                 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>bwir</i>             | ‘break’                         |
| <i>kor</i> <sup>9</sup> | ‘block, prevent, get in way of’ |
| <i>koror</i>            | ‘block, prevent, get in way of’ |
| <i>leh</i>              | ‘replace’                       |

---

<sup>9</sup> Note that *k-* and *t-*initial verbs often alternate with *g-*initial forms in serial verb constructions (§2.1.2).

Some forms, while never appearing as such as independent verbs, do nevertheless correspond closely in form and meaning to attested inflected verbs. Thus, the obligatorily serialised form *wel* ‘split’ can only appear in a construction such as the following:

*I-ter*                      *wel*    *aga*.  
 3SG:REAL-chop    split    wood  
 ‘(S)he split the wood with a chop.’

The following, therefore, is not possible:

\**I-wel*                      *aga*.  
 3SG:REAL-split    wood

However, there is a corresponding intransitive verb *welewel* ‘split’, which can take normal verbal inflection, as in the following:

*Aga*    *i-welewel*.  
 wood    3SG:REAL-split  
 ‘The wood split.’

Another pair of a similar nature is the obligatorily serialised verb *lovlop* ‘soften’ and the formally related stative verb *molovlop* ‘soft’.

It is more common, however, for forms which appear as the second element in serial verb constructions to appear *only* in such constructions, though they may nevertheless freely appear with any semantically compatible preceding verb. For example, while *tata* ‘tight’ cannot be inflected like an ordinary verb, it can be combined with a number of other verbs, such as:

|              |             |                   |                        |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| <i>pih</i>   | ‘fasten’    | <i>pih tata</i>   | ‘fasten tight’         |
| <i>vuruh</i> | ‘grab hold’ | <i>vuruh tata</i> | ‘grab hold tight’      |
| <i>gong</i>  | ‘catch’     | <i>gong tata</i>  | ‘catch and hold tight’ |
| <i>rep</i>   | ‘take’      | <i>rep tata</i>   | ‘hold tight’           |
| <i>tem</i>   | ‘step on’   | <i>tem tata</i>   | ‘step on hard’         |

Examples of obligatorily serialised verbs of this type that have been attested in my corpus include:

|                |                             |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>beh</i>     | ‘clean (tr.)’               |
| <i>bbun</i>    | ‘kill (tr.)’                |
| <i>bbuleh</i>  | ‘turn over (tr.)’           |
| <i>boh</i>     | ‘break open (tr.)’          |
| <i>bwiti</i>   | ‘accidentally (tr.)’        |
| <i>yala</i>    | ‘over (tr.)’                |
| <i>titipm</i>  | ‘try’                       |
| <i>bbusal</i>  | ‘go along the road’         |
| <i>dilivih</i> | ‘go around’                 |
| <i>lu</i>      | ‘out (tr.)’                 |
| <i>wah</i>     | ‘look for (intr.)’          |
| <i>bivil</i>   | ‘everywhere, all over’      |
| <i>lalak</i>   | ‘quietly, secretly (intr.)’ |
| <i>tata</i>    | ‘tight, hard (tr.)’         |

We therefore find examples such as:

*I-va beh amal.*  
3SG:REAL-make clean house  
'(S)he cleaned the house.'

*O-dri bbuleh ong.*  
2SG:REAL-turn turn.over 2SG  
'You turned a somersault.'

*A-sap bbusal at-ip.*  
PL:REAL-dance along.road 3PL:REAL-go  
'They danced as they went along the road.'

*I-rep lu aya.*  
3SG:REAL-take out pudding  
'(S)he took out the pudding.'

*Isteleh ti at-uv-up bivil e.*  
devil DEM PL:REAL-REDUP-blow everywhere 3SG  
'The devils blew all over him.'

*Ar-tirtirsit lalak.*  
3DL:REAL-speak quietly  
'They whispered.'

*I-vuruh tata.*  
3SG:REAL-grab.hold tight  
'(S)he grabbed hold of it tight.'

Although most of these forms need to be specified as either transitive or intransitive, there are some exceptional uses in which the transitivity is unpredictably altered. Thus, while *bbun* 'kill' normally appears in transitive serial verb constructions, it is found in a single intransitive serial verb construction, contrasting ambiguous *mat* 'dead, unconscious' with the unambiguous form *mat bbun* 'dead'. Also, while *lu* invariably means 'out' when used transitively, it can also be used intransitively, with the meaning of 'quickly'. For example:

*Ke-vwel lu!*  
2SG:IRR-come quickly  
'Come quickly!'

My lexical corpus includes a substantial number of VERB + VERB sequences of this type in which only the initial element is independently attested as an inflected verb in its own right, while the second element appears in only a single serial verb construction.<sup>10</sup> Examples of this type include:

|              |            |                       |                        |
|--------------|------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <i>dilim</i> | 'swallow'  | <i>dilim sangi</i>    | 'choke'                |
| <i>ding</i>  | 'lie down' | <i>ding meletadr</i>  | 'lie on one's back'    |
| <i>marak</i> | 'wake up'  | <i>mara lengeleng</i> | 'wake up with a start' |

<sup>10</sup> Some of these, though, may turn out to be more widely attested, and these forms need to be checked with a wider range of initial verbs.

|              |           |                     |                               |
|--------------|-----------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>matur</i> | ‘sleep’   | <i>matur melmel</i> | ‘sleep soundly’               |
| <i>ter</i>   | ‘chop’    | <i>ter bih</i>      | ‘chop and catch only side on’ |
| <i>yok</i>   | ‘vomit’   | <i>yok marmar</i>   | ‘dry retch’                   |
| <i>puh</i>   | ‘pick up’ | <i>puh dap</i>      | ‘suddenly appear’             |

Finally, there is a small number of apparently two-word verbal constructions in which neither element appears to have any independent function. For example:

|                         |                                    |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>soro mumum</i>       | ‘whisper’                          |
| <i>kila tisiveli</i>    | ‘pick all fruit, even unripe ones’ |
| <i>rakarak sokosong</i> | ‘weed garden’                      |
| <i>rep sing</i>         | ‘limp’                             |

It should be pointed out that although all of the examples presented so far have involved sequences of just two verbs in a series with nuclear-layer juncture, my textual corpus includes a number of examples in which three verbs appear in this kind of serial verb construction. Thus:

|                                     |               |                 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| <i>Nabwi-yahsur</i>                 | <i>titipm</i> | <i>lalak-i.</i> |
| 1SG:IRR-follow                      | try           | secretly-TR     |
| ‘I will try to secretly follow it.’ |               |                 |

#### 4.4.2 Verb + non-verb

In this section, I describe a number of constructions which involve an initial verb with an immediately following element which is structurally tightly bound to the verb, appearing between the verb and a following object in a way that precludes this from being treated as one of the more loosely connected post-verbal modifiers (§4.7). These forms do not correspond semantically to verbs in that they do not express states or results, as we find with those serial verbs set out in §4.4.1. Rather, the forms described in this section tend to express meanings that are more aspect-like. Moreover, many of these forms are not limited to appearing only within these verbal environments, which represents another point of contrast with those forms described in §4.4.1.

##### (i) *Dem*

The form *dem* can occupy a post-verbal position with nuclear-layer juncture to express the meaning of ‘still’ or the idea of ‘to keep on’ performing an action. Thus:

|                                      |                      |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>At-luk</i>                        | <i>dem.</i>          |
| PL:REAL-live.together                | still                |
| ‘They still live together.’          |                      |
| <i>I-solsol</i>                      | <i>dem sur asal.</i> |
| 3SG:REAL-walk                        | keep along road      |
| ‘(S)he kept walking along the road.’ |                      |

##### (ii) *Bakah*

The form *bakah* commonly appears after a stative verb with the meaning of ‘too’ or ‘very’. Thus:

*I-ber*            *bakah.*  
 3SG:REAL-long too  
 ‘It is too long.’

*Galu tana sa-rivi bakah-mu.*  
 mother POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL:NEG-nice very-NEG  
 ‘My mother is not very nice.’

(iii) *Iteh*

This form similarly appears after a stative verb, apparently with the same meaning as *bakah*. For example:

*I-rivik*            *iteh.*  
 3SG:REAL-good very  
 ‘It is very good.’

However, it clearly appears within the verbal complex in constructions such as:

*Anal i-yat iteh git livani.*  
 sun 3SG:REAL-bite very 1PL.INCL now  
 ‘The sun was beating down on us very much.’

(iv) *(I)mah*

The form *mah*, alternating with *mamah*, functions as a noun phrase postmodifier meaning ‘all, every, both’ (§3.2.3.2). However, the formally similar element *mah*—but not, it would appear, the longer form *mamah*—alternating freely with *imah*, can also appear within a verbal complex in the same structural position that is occupied by nuclear-layer serial verb constructions.

The form *(i)mah* is typically associated with active verbs rather than stative verbs. When it follows an intransitive verb, it can express the idea that the referent(s) of the subject of the verb is/are completely affected by the action expressed in the inflected verb. For example:

*Muut nan ier at-nong mah.*  
 people DEM PL PL:REAL-finish completely  
 ‘Those people were all completely finished.’

A second function of *(i)mah* in this context is to indicate that the performance of an action has been completed. For example:

*At-sap mah.*  
 PL:REAL-dance finish  
 ‘They have finished dancing.’

When it occupies this verbal position, *(i)mah* is treated as if it were an intransitive verb. When it appears after a transitive verb that has an associated object, the transitive clitic *-i* (§4.5.1) must be added. In such cases, it indicates that the action expressed by the verb affects all of the referents of the object noun phrase. Thus:

*Ar-daka imah-i adam aran baladrong.*  
 DL:REAL-hang all-TR yam ON sow  
 ‘They hung all of the yams on the sow.’

*I-tir tata imah-i sala-n ier.*  
 3SG:REAL-tell tight all-TR brother-3SG PL  
 ‘He explained it all to his brothers.’

(iv) *Da*

The form *da* expresses a partitive meaning, indicating that the referent of an object is affected partly, or to a small extent, by the activity expressed in the verbal complex. When used in association with an intransitive verb, it indicates that the action expressed in the verb takes place only partially, or to a small extent. Thus:

*Bwi-kila da.*  
 3SG:IRR-look PART  
 ‘(S)he will have a bit of a look.’

*Ka-ngat da-va.*  
 2SG:IRR-close.eyes PART-first  
 ‘Please close your eyes a little.’

This form also appears with a number of preceding verbs to indicate that the action of the initial verb has been successfully achieved. Note, therefore, the following pairs:

|              |                |                 |              |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>labit</i> | ‘look at, see’ | <i>labit da</i> | ‘find’       |
| <i>tih</i>   | ‘write’        | <i>tih da</i>   | ‘write down’ |

This form is not restricted to appearing after verbal objects, as it can appear productively in non-verbal contexts such as the following:

*Kinkidrap da out i-metmet da.*  
 late.afternoon a.little place 3SG:REAL-dark a.little  
 ‘It was quite late in the afternoon and it was rather dark.’

(v) *Meh*

This form means ‘just’ or ‘only’. It is by no means limited to appearing within the verbal complex, but can appear after forms belonging to many different word classes. In the following, for example, it appears after a noun phrase:

*Komat-rep mwere ti meh.*  
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-gather vine.type DEM only  
 ‘We just gathered the *mwere* vine.’

When it appears in association with a verb, it occurs in a position exhibiting nuclear-layer juncture within the verb complex. This means that it appears within the scope of the negative simulfix, as illustrated by examples such as:

*Sa-tirtirsit meh-mu tuut.*  
 3SG:REAL:NEG-speak only-NEG EMPH  
 ‘(S)he just didn’t say anything at all.’



The cliticised transitive derivative *-i* also appears after this form in a verbal complex. For example:

*Bu-vuk lalak meh-i e.*  
 3SG:IRR-change slowly just-TR 3SG  
 ‘It will gradually just slowly change.’

(vi) *Man*

The form *man* can appear in this slot to express the meaning of ‘again’ or ‘back’, often in conjunction with the pre-verbal element *min*. Thus:

*Na-min vu-puh man-i.*  
 1SG:REAL-again REDUP-take again-TR  
 ‘I will get some more again.’

Note that the verb *leh* ‘replace’ can also be serialised with a preceding verb to express the same meaning. For example:

*Min uup leh ataap ki.*  
 again 3SG:REAL:blow replace conch DEM  
 ‘(S)he blew the conch again.’

(vii) *Sur*

The form *sur* can be used to express the aspectual meaning of an action taking place over an extended period, corresponding to the meaning of ‘keep on doing’ something, typically with the expectation that this will lead to another event taking place. Thus:

*Ar-yet baladrong tier ar-yet ar-yet*  
 DL:REAL-feed sow POSS:3PL DL:REAL-feed DL:REAL-feed

*sur bbu i-sian.*  
 keep.doing until 3SG:REAL-pregnant  
 ‘The two of them kept feeding their sow until it got pregnant.’

*I-lu-lu sur bbu vwilang sapm i-bak*  
 3SG:REAL-REDUP-shoot keep.doing until fly one 3SG:REAL-settle

*aran mata-n emer.*  
 LOC eye-3SG eel  
 ‘(S)he kept on shooting until a fly settled on the eel’s eye.’

## 4.5 Verbal clitics

### 4.5.1 The transitive clitic *-i*

It was mentioned in §4.3.1 that there are numerous intransitive-transitive pairs of verbs in Avava in which the latter appear to be derived from the former by means of a transitive suffix of the shape *-i*, including forms such as the following:

|                  |                 |                    |                   |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| <i>per</i>       | ‘work’          | <i>per-i</i>       | ‘do, make’        |
| <i>pinok</i>     | ‘steal (intr.)’ | <i>pinok-i</i>     | ‘steal (tr.)’     |
| <i>tirtirsal</i> | ‘tell story’    | <i>tirtirsal-i</i> | ‘talk about’      |
| <i>tur</i>       | ‘stand (intr.)’ | <i>tur-i</i>       | ‘stand up, erect’ |
| <i>sisih</i>     | ‘suck (intr.)’  | <i>sisih-i</i>     | ‘suck on’         |
| <i>luluk</i>     | ‘wait’          | <i>luluk-i</i>     | ‘wait for’        |

Thus:

*I-pinok-i*            *avat*    *tana.*  
 3SG:REAL-steal-TR    money    POSS:1SG  
 ‘(S)he stole my money.’

However, while *-i* is indeed frequently attached to an intransitive verb root, and the resulting form functions like a derived transitive verb, this is not a derivational suffix as such, although this is typically how structurally parallel forms have been described in other central Vanuatu languages. Rather, *-i* is a transitivity clitic which attaches to whatever happens to be the final element of the verbal complex.

Thus, any of the constituents described in §4.4 as being linked to a preceding verb with nuclear-layer juncture, if they are formally intransitive and appear after a transitive verb but before its object, must first of all be transitivised by means of *-i*. For instance, an initial transitive verb *teh* and the intransitive verb *berber* ‘long’ can appear together in a serial verb construction to express the idiomatic meaning ‘sit on the ground with one’s legs stretched out straight in front’, which requires as a nominal object either *boloko-* ‘leg’ or *bau-* ‘knee’. However, because the final element of the serial verb in this case is a transitive verb, *-i* must first of all be attached, resulting in sentences such as:

*I-teh*            *berber-i*    *boloko-n.*  
 3SG:REAL-?    long-TR    leg-3SG  
 ‘(S)he extended his/her legs straight out in front.’

It was mentioned in §4.4.1 that many serialised verbs in Avava do not appear independently as inflected verbs, being restricted to this non-initial position within the verbal complex. However, such forms are nonetheless generally specified as being transitive or intransitive, and when a formally intransitive serialised verb appears after a transitive initial verb, the whole VERB + VERB sequence must be transitivised by means of the clitic *-i*. The following, therefore, illustrate examples of this type:

*I-puh*                    *lalak-i*            *momok*    *lele*    *ti.*  
 3SG:REAL-pick.up    carefully-TR    woman    small    DEM  
 ‘(S)he carefully picked up the girl.’

*Nabwi-kila*    *wah-i*            *itnan*    *i-lem*                    *e.*  
 1SG:IRR-look    look.for-TR    place    3SG:REAL-give.birth    LOC  
 ‘I will look for the place where it has given birth.’

Those additional forms described in §4.4.2 as occupying a parallel structural slot to serialised verbs, yet which are themselves arguably non-verbal or at least substantially less verbal in their behaviour, are treated as being formally intransitive. Thus, the form (*i*)*mah* ‘all’ is treated as if it were an intransitive verb, and when it appears after a transitive verb that has an associated object, the transitivity clitic *-i* must again be added. In such cases, it

indicates that the action expressed by the verb affects all of the referents of the object noun phrase. Thus:

*Ar-daka imah-i adam aran baladrong.*  
DL:REAL-hang all-TR yam ON sow  
'They hung all of the yams on the sow.'

*I-tir tata imah-i sala-n ier.*  
3SG:REAL-tell tight all-TR brother-3SG PL  
'He explained it all to his brothers.'

#### 4.5.2 The clitics *-mu* and *-va*

The forms *-mu* and *-va* both have independent functions in Avava outside the negative construction described in §4.2.2. The suffix *-mu* is attested as a verbal suffix expressing the meaning of 'first', as in the following:

*Nabiip-mu nabu-lumlum len owe.*  
1SG:IRR:go-first 1SG:IRR-bathe LOC river  
'I will go first and bathe in the river.'

The suffix *-va* also occurs independently, functioning as a polite softener with imperatives. Thus:

*Ke-vwel-va.*  
2SG:IRR-come-SOFT  
'Please come.'

*Ka-la-la-va Teviar.*  
2SG:IRR-REDUP-look.at-SOFT Teviar  
'Please look at Teviar.'

*Ka-ngat da-va.*  
2SG:IRR-close.eyes a.little-first  
'Please close your eyes.'

Whether these non-negative functions of *-mu* and *-va* should be treated as being related in some way to their function in the negative simulfix is uncertain at this stage given the substantially different semantics involved.

#### 4.6 Pre-verbal modifiers

My corpus contains evidence for just a couple of forms which may function as pre-verbal modifiers. The first of these is *min* 'again, back', which appears in examples such as:

*Vanat-n min at-tarap.*  
child-3SG again PL:REAL-send.on.errand  
'His/her children sent him/her again on an errand.'

However, there is evidence that this form alternates with a pre-verbal auxiliary with the same meaning. Thus:

*Na-min nabiip.*  
 1SG:REAL-back 1SG:IRR:go  
 ‘I will go back.’

With this meaning expressed by means of a pre-verbal modifier, Avava demonstrates a significant structural contrast with neighbouring Naman and Neve‘ei, where this function is expressed exclusively by means of a post-verbal modifier, *lis* in the case of Naman and *lieh* in Neve‘ei. However, the cognate form *leh* can still be used to express this meaning in Avava (§5.2.1.1).

Another possible pre-verbal modifier is *vi*, which expresses a sequential meaning in discourse, roughly translated as ‘now’ or, in the past tense, ‘then’, as in the following:

*Vi aruaru ar-luk.*  
 SUBSQ together DL:REAL-live  
 ‘Then the two of them lived together.’

*Vi i-tirtirsit meh.*  
 SUBSQ 3SG:REAL-speak only  
 ‘And then (s)he just spoke.’

*Ki-tir-i vi bbel.*  
 2SG:IRR-say-TR SUBSQ 3SG:IRR:come  
 ‘Tell her now she will come.’

When there is an overtly expressed subject, whether nominal or pronominal, the pre-verbal marker *vi* appears between the subject and the verb. For example:

*Vat-n git vi i-sir.*  
 stomach-3SG 1PL.INCL SUBSQ 3SG:REAL-full  
 ‘Now our stomachs are full.’

*Kopm vi bit-mat iih.*  
 1PL.EXCL SUBSQ PL.IRR-dead PERF  
 ‘We are now dead.’

When *vi* follows the subject pronoun *kopm*, the pronoun and the following pre-verbal marker can be fused as *kovi*, as in the following:

*Kovi at-vwel at-siber Tarem.*  
 1PL.EXCL:SUBSQ PL:REAL-come PL:REAL-reach Taremp  
 ‘Then we arrived at Taremp.’

*Kovi at-matur.*  
 1PL.EXCL:SUBSQ PL:REAL-sleep  
 ‘Then we slept.’

#### 4.7 Post-verbal modifiers

The final elements within the verbal complex that I will describe in this section are the various post-verbal modifiers. The set of forms which follows is structurally somewhat

diffuse in that each may turn out to exhibit individual structural possibilities that are not shared by some, or all, of the remaining modifiers. However, they do all share the basic feature of being closely associated structurally with the verb complex as it has been described in this chapter, albeit more loosely than forms with nuclear-layer juncture as described in §4.4.2. In particular, they appear between a verb and the following object, though they differ from forms described in §4.4.2 in that they do not fall within the scope of the negative simulfix described in §4.2. Moreover, these forms often also appear in completely non-verbal contexts with essentially the same meanings that are described below.

Each of the forms that have been attested as belonging in this set in Avava is described and illustrated in turn below.

(i) *Mwimwil* ‘a little’

This form indicates that an action takes place to only a small degree. For example:

*Na-ser mwimwil.*  
1SG:REAL-take little  
‘I took a little.’

(ii) *Iih / iis* ‘perfective’

The form *iih* (sometimes *iis*) is used to express the perfective aspect. For example:

*Na-ip iih.*  
1SG:REAL-go PERF  
‘I have gone.’

This form appears between a verb and its following object. Thus:

*Ar-riit bbun iih galu te.*  
IMP:REAL-kill kill PERF mother POSS:3SG  
‘Her mother had already been killed.’

*Muut i-ter iih abah ki.*  
person 3SG:REAL-cut PERF sugarcane DEM  
‘The person had already cut the sugarcane.’

*San na-tir-i iih ong ti.*  
thing 1SG:REAL-say-TR PERF 2SG DEM  
‘That’s what I had told you.’

(iii) *Meh* ‘perfective’

The form *meh* seems to perform a function that is very similar to *iih/iis*, as illustrated in the following:

*Komat-turda meh komat-rep mwere ti.*  
1PL.EXCL:REAL-start PERF 1PL.EXCL:REAL-pull vine.type DEM  
‘We had started pulling the *mwere* vine.’

(iv) *Min* ‘imperfective’

The form *min* is used to express the meaning of ‘still’, as in the following:

*I-sieda min isa-n ong.*  
 3SG:REAL-remember IMPERF name-3SG 2SG  
 ‘(S)he still remembers your name.’

(v) *Man* ‘again’

The verbal post-modifier *man* is occasionally attested with the meaning of ‘again’. Thus:

*E mine-vwel e-kan man.*  
 3SG back3SG:REAL-come 3SG:REAL-eat again  
 ‘(S)he came back and ate again.’

When there is a following object, this form accepts the transitivity clitic *-i*, as in:

*I-la man-i galu te.*  
 3SG:REAL-see again-TR mother POSS:3SG  
 ‘(S)he saw his/her mother again.’

(vi) *Tuut* ~ *tuutuut* ‘emphatic negative, partitive’

The plain negative is expressed by means of the discontinuous negative construction described in §4.2. However, a negated verb can be followed by the form *tuut*, which expresses emphatic negation. For example:

*Sa-tirtirsit meh-mu tuut.*  
 3SG:REAL:NEG-speak just-NEG EMPH  
 ‘(S)he just didn’t speak at all.’

*Osaki-yan-mu tuutuut.*  
 2SG:IRR:NEG-eat-NEG EMPH  
 ‘Don’t eat it at all.’

*Kiip oki-tir oka-va, “Mom, ong saki-yan-mu  
 2SG:IRR:go 2SG:IRR-tell 2SG:IRR-say father 2SG 2SG:IRR:NEG-eat-NEG  
 tuut emer”.*  
 EMPH eel  
 ‘Go and tell him, “Father, don’t eat the eel at all”.’

In addition to its function as a marker of emphatic negation, this form can also be used to express a partitive meaning with a transitive verb, indicating that the referent of the object of the verb is only partly affected by the action expressed in the verb. Thus:

*I-yan tuut emer ki.*  
 3SG:REAL-eat PART eel DEM  
 ‘(S)he ate some of the eel.’

*Tuut* also functions within the noun phrase as a post-modifier expressing the partitive meaning of ‘some’ (§3.2.3.2). From the history of Romance languages, as well as Oceanic languages such as Paamese, a connection of this type between the partitive and the negative is not surprising.

(viii) *Saari* ‘always’

This post-modifier is illustrated in the following:

*Abbuah sapm i-vwel i-yan-yan saari rakian ti.*  
 boar one 3SG:REAL-come 3SG:REAL-REDUP-eat always garden DEM  
 ‘A boar came and was always eating the garden.’

# 5 *Syntax*

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## 5.1 Simple sentences

In this section, I will discuss the internal structure of simple sentences, i.e. single-predicate constructions.

### 5.1.1 Basic constituent order

This section looks at basic constituent order in simple verbal, copular/existential and verbless clauses.

#### 5.1.1.1 Verbal clauses

In common with all of the central Vanuatu languages that have been documented to date, Avava has a basic constituent order of SVO. This means that overtly expressed subjects appear before the verb, while overtly expressed objects appear after the verb, as in the following:

*Atda at-balbalakut.*  
child PL:REAL-noisy  
'The children are noisy.'

*Mwilip i-yet bala.*  
chief 3SG:REAL-feed pig  
'The chief fed the pig.'

Pronominal verbal objects in Avava are invariably expressed by means of independent pronouns (§3.1), a feature which this language shares with neighbouring Neve'ei. Pronominal objects appear in the same post-verbal position in the clause as nouns. For example:

*Gabwir bwi-yat ong.*  
dog 3SG:IRR-bite 2SG  
'The dog will bite you.'



Pronominal subjects likewise occupy the same pre-verbal position that we find with nouns. Thus:

*Ong kiip bang?*  
 2SG 2SG:IRR:go where  
 ‘Where will you go?’

It is quite common for there to be no overtly expressed subject in Avava clauses. With pronominal subjects, the subject-mood prefixes (§4.1) can carry the full load of pronominal reference. For example:

*Na-suda abak sapm.*  
 1SG:REAL-find turtle one  
 ‘I found a turtle.’

With singular pronominal subjects, it is only when contrast is being expressed that the independent pronoun is present. Thus:

*Livani na na-wah nabwi-tirtirsal-i mitile sapm.*  
 now 1SG 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell.story-TR story one  
 ‘Now I am going to tell a story.’

Nominal subjects are also typically expressed only by means of the pronominal cross-reference on the verb where the linguistic or non-linguistic context provides appropriate clues as to the referent of the subject noun phrase. Thus:

*I-dongdongon oto te.*  
 3SG:REAL-count chicken POSS:3SG  
 ‘(S)he counted his/her chickens.’

It will be remembered from §4.1 that the dual and plural subject prefixes in Avava do not make any distinction for person, so such forms are potentially multiply ambiguous. However, it is possible for either linguistic or non-linguistic contextual factors to provide information about the specific referents, meaning that unoccupied subject positions are possible even with such forms. Thus:

*At-ip at-yoryor laka.*  
 PL:REAL-go PL:REAL-hunt in.bush  
 ‘They went hunting in the bush.’

When the object associated with a verb is a first or second person pronoun, the independent pronoun is obligatorily present. However, when it is third person and singular, it is not uncommon for the object not to be overtly expressed. This is especially the case when the object has inanimate reference. Thus:

*Itian i-ter.*  
 old.man 3SG:REAL-chop  
 ‘The old man chopped (it).’

It should be noted that this example is clearly still a transitive verb, with an object that is clearly implied. If the intention of the speaker were to refer intransitively to the general act of chopping without any implied patient noun phrase, a formally intransitive verb (§4.3.1) would be called for instead, as in the following:

*Itian i-ter-ter.*  
 old.man 3SG:REAL-REDUP-chop  
 ‘The old man did some chopping.’

When the object has animate reference, and more particularly when the object refers to a human noun, the post-verbal position is much more likely to be occupied by the overtly expressed independent third person singular pronoun *e*. For example:

*Isteleh ti at-uv-up bivil e.*  
 devil DEM PL:REAL-REDUP-blow everywhere 3SG  
 ‘The devils blew all over him.’

However, the fact that both subject and object position may be unoccupied means that the minimal verbal clause in Avava very often has the form of just a single verb. For example:

*I-mah.*  
 3SG:REAL-spear  
 ‘(S)he speared it.’

*Ar-tn.*  
 DL:REAL-cook.over.fire  
 ‘They cooked (it) over the fire.’

There is, however, one situation in which a verb with even an inanimate object must be associated with an overtly expressed pronominal object and this involves the small subset of verbs in Avava which are obligatorily reflexive. A reflexive meaning in Avava is expressed simply by using an object which is identical to the subject, sometimes with reduplication of the verb root (§4.3.2). Thus:

*Na-yor-yor na.*  
 1SG:REAL-REDUP-scratch 1SG  
 ‘I scratched myself.’

There is a small set of formally transitive verbs which are not associated with any patient noun phrase but which formally require an object that expresses the same pronominal categories as the subject. Some verbs of this type can be used transitively with an appropriate object. For example:

|                   | Non-reflexive meaning  | Reflexive meaning   |
|-------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>dridri</i>     | ‘roll (something)’     | ‘roll over’         |
| <i>dri bbuleh</i> | ‘turn over’            | ‘turn somersault’   |
| <i>ngar wel</i>   | ‘split (something)’    | ‘split’             |
| <i>yel bbuleh</i> | ‘tip (something) over’ | ‘capsize, tip over’ |

Thus:

*O-dridri ong.*  
 2SG:REAL-roll 2SG  
 ‘You rolled over.’

It can be seen that some of the verbs which enter into this construction are nuclear serial verb constructions. In these cases, the reflexive object is still expressed in the appropriate position after the entire verbal complex. Thus:

*I-dri*                *bbuleh e.*  
 3SG:REAL-turn over 3SG  
 ‘(S)he turned a somersault.’

Other verbs of this type only ever appear in reflexive constructions, with no corresponding non-reflexive meaning. Many of these verbs automatically select subjects with animate reference, as in the following:

*suksukur*            ‘happy’  
*tamtami*            ‘stamp on ground’  
*tirtir*                ‘argue’  
*ul*                    ‘shed skin’  
*vuk*                  ‘change’  
*tara*                  ‘separate, disperse’  
*yong*                ‘leave (place)’  
*var*                  ‘break open’

Thus:

*I-suksukur*        *e.*  
 3SG:REAL-happy 3SG  
 ‘(S)he is happy.’

*Ar-tirtir*            *ier wal atan.*  
 3DL:REAL-argue 3PL CAUSE land  
 ‘They argued over land.’

*Amwat uul*                                *e.*  
 snake 3SG:REAL-shed.skin 3SG  
 ‘The snake shed its skin.’

*Boloko-n i-turda*                        *det bu-vuk e.*  
 foot-3SG 3SG:REAL-start SUB 3SG:IRR-change 3SG  
 ‘His/her feet started to change.’

*Komat-tara*                                *kopm.*  
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-disperse 1PL.EXCL  
 ‘We dispersed.’

*Komat-yong*                                *kopm Tarem.*  
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-leave 1PL.EXCL Taremp  
 ‘We left Taremp.’

However, some verbs of this type either can be, or must be, associated with inanimate subjects. For example:

*taltalah*            ‘come undone’  
*tami*                ‘fall from height’

When verbs of this type have subjects with inanimate reference, the reflexive object position is still obligatorily occupied by means of the third person singular pronoun *e*, even though the object in a non-reflexive clause would normally be expressed instead by zero. Thus:

*I-taltaleh* *e.*  
 3SG:REAL-come undone 3SG  
 ‘It came undone.’

The fact that reflexive third person objects are obligatory for all verbs of this type is further illustrated by the following examples from the set of optionally reflexive forms presented earlier:

*Awang ti i-yel bbuleh e.*  
 canoe DEM 3SG:REAL-tip over 3SG  
 ‘This canoe tipped over.’

*Aga ti i-ngar wel e.*  
 wood DEM 3SG:REAL-split break 3SG  
 ‘This wood split.’

### 5.1.1.2 Copular and existential clauses

Copular clauses are a subset of verbal clauses in that they contain a verb, but they differ from both the intransitive and transitive clauses described in §5.1.1.1 in that they are obligatorily followed by some kind of noun phrase which, however, is quite unlike a transitive object in that it cannot be referred to pronominally. Nor can this following noun phrase be fronted to the head of the clause for contrast, as we find with genuine transitive constructions.

The copula *vi*, which inflects like an ordinary verb, can express the equational meaning of ‘be’. Thus:

*Limokian te i-vi baladrong.*  
 mother-in-law POSS:3SG 3SG:REAL-COP sow  
 ‘His mother-in-law was a sow (rather than a person).’

*Bwisian sa-vi-mu mitile.*  
 story 3SG:REAL:NEG-COP-NEG tale  
 ‘The story is not (just) a tale.’

### 5.1.1.3 Non-verbal clauses

While the vast majority of clauses in Avava are structured around an inflected verb, we also need to recognise the existence of a category of non-verbal clauses. One such construction is an equational clause in which an initial noun phrase topic is followed by a noun phrase comment, with no intervening constituents of any kind. Thus:

*Owe lele ki owe tokopm.*  
 stream small DEM stream POSS:1PL.EXCL  
 ‘That small stream is our stream.’

*Bwisian nan nabwi-tirtirsal-i bwisian nan si-n na.*  
 story REL 1SG:IRR-talk-TR story CHAR place.of.origin-3SG 1SG  
 ‘The story that I want to tell is the story of my place of origin.’

*Emwet kabat tier.*  
 knife European POSS:3PL  
 ‘Knives are Europeans’ (things).’

*E muut nan Lavapak.*  
 3SG man CHAR Lavapak  
 ‘He was a man of Lavapak.’

A presentative clause is one which simply asserts the existence of the referent of a noun phrase. Such a clause consists of just a noun phrase. For example:

*Isteleh nan mom tokopm sapm.*  
 spirit POSS father POSS:1PL.EXCL one  
 ‘It was the spirit of one of our fathers.’

*Lama sapm bbum sapm bilep ebbu-n ier langal.*  
 day one grandfather one ACC grandchild-3SG PL ten  
 ‘Once there was a grandfather and his ten grandchildren.’

However, there can sometimes be a demonstrative constituent of some kind following the noun phrase that ‘points’ to the referent of that noun phrase. For example:

*Vitiber bolo sapm i.*  
 dwarf.spirit big one that.one  
 ‘That’s a big dwarf spirit.’

A non-verbal clause is negated with postposed *itik*. Thus:

*Gohgohtal itik.*  
 tangled.vine NEG  
 ‘There were no tangled vines.’

*Bwisian bwingbwing itik.*  
 story untrue NEG  
 ‘It’s not an untrue story.’

*Ong itik.*  
 2SG NEG  
 ‘It’s not you.’

### 5.1.2 Prepositional phrases

The basic verbal clause described in §5.1.1.1 can be ‘augmented’ by the inclusion of one or more prepositional phrases, i.e. constituents which consist of an initial preposition with a following noun phrase. Those prepositions which have been attested in Avava are set out below.

(i) (*A*)*ran* ‘on’, ‘over’. For example:

*I-solsol aran vanabbu-n.*  
 3SG:REAL-shuffle ON buttock-3SG  
 ‘(S)he shuffled along on his/her buttocks.’

*I-bbut ran mat te gabwir sapm.*  
 3SG:REAL-step ON excrement POSS dog one  
 ‘(S)he stepped on a dog turd.’

*Namwi-dingi oweng ti bo-tok ran bali.*  
 1SG:IRR-put island.cabbage DEM 3SG:IRR-stay ON platform  
 ‘I will put this island cabbage on the platform.’

*Ar-daka adam aran bala ti.*  
 DL:REAL-hang yam ON pig DEM  
 ‘They hung the yams on the pig.’

*Asik sapm i-puh ipma-n tobbur sapm i-yal*  
 kingfisher one 3SG:REAL-pick.up flower-3SG hibiscus one 3SG:REAL-fly  
*ran bbum Sahtep.*  
 over grandfather Sahtep  
 ‘A kingfisher picked up a hibiscus flower and flew over grandfather Sahtep.’

*Momok ti ier at-yalyal aran itian.*  
 woman DEM PL PL:REAL-sing over old.man  
 ‘The women sang over the old man (to exorcise the evil spirits).’

- (ii) *Len* ‘spatial’, i.e. ‘to’, ‘from’, ‘in(to)’, ‘onto’, with respect to a following inanimate noun. For example:

*I-sungut len atan.*  
 3SG:REAL-root SP ground  
 ‘It rooted around in the ground.’

*I-labit mom te len amal emwet.*  
 3SG:REAL-see father POSS:3SG SP meeting.house  
 ‘(S)he saw his/her father in the meeting house.’

*I-bbut dah len adrab.*  
 3SG:REAL-step go.down SP mud  
 ‘(S)he slipped in the mud.’

*I-dingi akanian te len monong.*  
 3SG:REAL-put food POSS:3SG SP mat  
 ‘(S)he put his/her food on the mat.’

*I-yor bala matak len rakian te.*  
 3SG:REAL-chase pig wild SP garden POSS:3SG  
 ‘(S)he chased a wild pig in his/her garden.’

*O-vwel kesan len arup?*  
 2SG:REAL-come when SP garden  
 ‘When did you come from the garden?’

This preposition frequently alternates with *le* when the following noun begins with a consonant rather than a vowel. Thus:

*I-tok le sikile-n.*  
 3SG:REAL-located SP side-3SG  
 ‘It is on the side of it.’

- (iii) *Sin* ‘spatial’, i.e. ‘to’, ‘from’, ‘in(to)’, ‘onto’, with respect to a following animate noun. For example:

*Komat-bel lu gabwir ier sin bbuah kabat.*  
 1PL.EXCL:REALchase out dog PL SP pig European  
 ‘We chased the dogs away from the cow.’

This preposition is often used with the specific meaning of ‘to/at/from the house of (someone)’. For example:

*I-vwel i-siber sin misi.*  
 3SG:REAL-come 3SG:REAL-reach house.of missionary  
 ‘(S)he came as far as the missionary’s house.’

*Sin* can also be used to express an animate cause, as in the following:

*Uul var sin galu te.*  
 3SG:REAL:cry sorry CAUSE mother POSS:3SG  
 ‘(S)he cried for his/her poor mother.’

And it can also express an accompanitive meaning in relation to a noun phrase with animate reference. For example:

*Na-va nasabbel-mu sin ong.*  
 1SG:REAL-intend 1SG:REAL:NEG:come-NEG ACC 2SG  
 ‘I wasn’t going to come with you.’

However, this preposition can also be used with a following inanimate noun phrase to express the meaning of ‘in the vicinity of’. For example:

*Ar-ip ar-siber sin avat ti.*  
 DL:REAL-go DL:REAL-reach SP rock DEM  
 ‘They went as far as that near that rock.’

Note also:

*Livani komat-ruv-rup sin kastom tokopm.*  
 now 1PL.EXCL:REAL-REDUP-run SP tradition POSS:1PL.EXCL  
 ‘Now we have run away from our traditions.’

*Sin* is unique among prepositions in that it can also be used as a noun, in this case being the third person singular suffixed form of the directly suffixed noun *si-* ‘place of origin’. The nominal use of this form is illustrated in the following:

*Bwisian nan nabwi-tirtirsal-i bwisian nan si-n na.*  
 story REL 1SG:IRR-talk-TR story CHAR place.of.origin-3SG 1SG  
 ‘The story that I want to tell is the story of my place of origin.’

(iv) *Bilep* ~ *bitep* ~ *bineri* ‘accompanitive’

The preposition *bilep* is the form which most commonly appears in my corpus to express the accompanitive meaning of ‘with’.

*Ong-tirtirsit bilep nahe?*  
2SG:REAL-speak ACC who  
‘Who are you speaking with?’

However, some individuals use instead the form *bitep*—which is similar to the form *bitiv* in Neve‘ei—while some other individuals use *bineri* to express this function.

(v) *Wal* ‘causal, purposive’

The preposition *wal* expresses a causal meaning and translates as ‘because of’. For example:

*I-sal wal anam.*  
3SG:REAL-sick CAUSE mosquito  
‘(S)he is sick because of the mosquitoes.’

*Ar-tirtir ier wal atan.*  
DL:REAL-argue 3PL CAUSE land  
‘They argued over land.’

*Bwilolok bwit-leh bbih wal?*  
kava PL:IRR-buy IRR:how.much CAUSE  
‘How much will we pay for this kava?’

It can also express the purposive meaning of ‘for’, as in the following:

*I-suh na wal avat.*  
3SG:REAL-ask 1SG PURP money  
‘(S)he asked me for money.’

*I-dadan wal alal.*  
3SG:REAL-dive PURP trochus  
‘(S)he dived for trochus.’

Finally, it can express a benefactive meaning. For example:

*Nabe-rep wal na.*  
1SG:IRR-take BEN 1SG  
‘I will take her for myself.’

(vi) *Lapan* ‘under’

*Bwisibok sapm iip i-babak lapan amal ti.*  
rat one 3SG:REAL:go 3SG:REAL-hide under house DEM  
‘A rat went and hid under this house.’

(vii) *Sur* ‘along, beside’

The preposition *sur* expresses the meaning of ‘along’ or ‘beside’. For example:



*I-sol sur asal.*  
 3SG:REAL-walk along road  
 ‘(S)he walked along the road.’

*Galu tana ar-riit sur asal.*  
 mother POSS:1SG IMP:REAL-kill along road  
 ‘My mother has been killed along the road.’

*Ar-tn-tn ier sur owe sapm.*  
 DL:REAL-REDUP-cook 3PL beside river one  
 ‘The two of them cooked food for themselves beside a river.’

*Abit-va anal wal abi-sevi atnida nan ar-riit*  
 PL:IRR-cause drought PURP PL:IRR-avenge child REL IMP:REAL-kill  
*sur tuswe ki.*  
 LOC sea DEM  
 ‘They would cause a drought to avenge the (death of the) child who had been killed by the sea.’

It commonly also appears after a verb of motion with a directly following place name to express the meaning of ‘(travel) along the road to X’, though the noun *asal* ‘road’ is not mentioned. We therefore find examples such as:

*Kopm tuan at-sak sur Arabanah.*  
 1PL.EXCL INDEF PL:REAL-ascend along.road.to Arabanah  
 ‘Some of us went up along (the road) to Arabanah.’

*Komat-sak komat-ip sur Mitnowe.*  
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-ascend 1PL.EXCL:REAL-go along.road.to Mitnowe  
 ‘We went up along (the road) to Mitnowe.’

In fact, the following noun need not necessarily be an institutionalised place name, though this is most commonly the case. We therefore also find examples such as:

*I-dah lalak sur tuswe.*  
 3SG:REAL-descend secretly along.road.to sea  
 ‘(S)he sneaked down along the road to the sea.’

(viii) *I* ‘oblique’

The final preposition that will be discussed is the general oblique preposition *i*, which is used to mark a wide range of functions. This is essentially the default preposition which is used when none of the other prepositions described above are specifically called for.

It can mark the goal noun phrase with a verb of transfer. For example:

*Itian sapm i-ser adam iru i na.*  
 old.man one 3SG:REAL-give yam two GOAL 1SG  
 ‘An old man gave me two yams.’

It can also be used to express instrument. For example:

*I-be*                    *i*    *bwilolok*.  
 3SG:REAL-drunk INST kava  
 ‘He is drunk with kava.’

*Komat-yan*            *mwiniel i moroko-n tuut ier*.  
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-eat taro INST rib-3SG some PL  
 ‘We ate the taro with some of its ribs.’

It is also used to introduce a range of noun phrase complements to different kinds of intransitive verbs, as in the following:

*I-rar*                    *i*    *momok te*.  
 3SG:REAL-angry LOC wife POSS:3SG  
 ‘He was angry with his wife.’

*I-matak*              *i*    *na*.  
 3SG:REAL-afraid LOC 1SG  
 ‘(S)he is afraid of me.’

*I-lingling*            *i*    *adam*.  
 3SG:REAL-tired LOC yam  
 ‘(S)he is tired of yams.’

The preposition *i* is also used to form a pseudo-transitive construction (§4.3.1) in which a formally intransitive verb can be directly followed by a patient noun phrase but with the verb maintaining its formal status as intransitive. Thus:

*I-sisih*                *i*    *vwala-m*.  
 3SG:REAL-suck TR penis-2SG  
 ‘(S)he sucked your penis.’

There is some evidence in the form of examples such as the following of a possible locational postposition of the form *ki*:

*Muut ipar at-matur bbuut ki*.  
 person many 3PL:REAL-sleep inside LOC  
 ‘Many people are asleep inside.’

Such examples are rare in my elicited corpus and require further investigation before this can be confirmed. However, there is a well-attested postposition of the form *i* in Naman which expresses the goal function with the subset of locational nouns, so this is not something that would be completely unique to languages of this area.

### 5.1.3 Other clause-level constituents

In addition to prepositional phrases, a basic clause in Avava can be structurally augmented by a variety of zero-marked constituents. These typically have a range of locational and temporal meanings. The locational markers usually appear after the verb complex, while the temporal markers are somewhat freer in their placement within the clause, sometimes appearing clause-initially.

## 5.1.3.1 Locational markers

The following locational nouns appear in a clause with no prepositional marking to express location or goal:

|                     |                          |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>laka</i>         | ‘to/in the bush’         |
| <i>liim</i>         | ‘to/in the village/home’ |
| <i>lawal</i>        | ‘to/on the coast’        |
| <i>korsal</i>       | ‘halfway, along the way’ |
| <i>korowal</i>      | ‘to/in the gully’        |
| <i>vere</i>         | ‘outside’                |
| <i>bbuut</i>        | ‘inside’                 |
| <i>rasan</i>        | ‘other side’             |
| <i>saman</i>        | ‘far away’               |
| <i>lile</i>         | ‘close by, near’         |
| <i>draka, ivsak</i> | ‘above, on top’          |
| <i>kutn</i>         | ‘down, below’            |
| <i>out</i>          | ‘ashore’                 |
| <i>out sapm</i>     | ‘together’               |
| <i>out tele</i>     | ‘somewhere else’         |

Examples:

*I-sol iih laka.*  
 3SG:REAL-go PERF to.bush  
 ‘(S)he has gone to the bush.’

*At-ip at-yoryor laka.*  
 PL:REAL-go PL:REAL-hunt in.bush  
 ‘They went hunting in the bush.’

*Nama-matur draka, ong ka-matur kutn.*  
 1SG:IRR-sleep on.top 2SG 2SG:IRR-sleep below  
 ‘I will sleep on top and you will sleep below.’

*Na-kilkila i-dah len balaka lawal ti.*  
 1SG:REAL-look 3SG:REAL-descend GOAL cottonwood on.coast DEM  
 ‘I looked down to the cottonwoods on the coast.’

*Kopm nan at-luk rasan at-robit gabwir.*  
 1PL.EXC. REL PL:REAL-located other.side PL:REAL-hear dog  
 ‘Those of us who were on the other side heard the dogs.’

*Min i-sak out i-vwel.*  
 back 3SG:REAL-ascend ashore 3SG:REAL-come  
 ‘(S)he came back ashore.’

*Ar-luk out sapm.*  
 DL:REAL-live place one  
 ‘They lived together.’

While most of these locational nouns may not be associated with any further nominal post-modifiers, the form *liim* ‘to/in the village/home’ can be followed by a possessor. For example:

*Iip liim te.*  
3SG:REAL:go home POSS:3SG  
‘(S)he went to his/her village/home.’

Also included in this category of locational nouns are institutionalised place names. For example:

*Nabiip Lakatoro.*  
1SG:IRR:go Lakatoro  
‘I will go to Lakatoro.’

*Sav-ian sapm i-tok Vanavat.*  
dance-NOM one 3SG:REAL-exist Vanavat  
‘There was a dance at Vanavat.’

The noun *matali* ‘door’ can also directly follow an intransitive verb expressing position (such as *tur* ‘stand’ or *sum* ‘sit’) in constructions such as the following, where there is no locational preposition:

*Iip i-tur matali.*  
3SG:REAL:go 3SG:REAL-stand door  
‘(S)he went and stood at the door.’

*I-sum bongo-n matali.*  
3SG:REAL-sit mouth-3SG door  
‘(S)he sat in the doorway.’

There is also a set of general locational markers, as follows:

*teki* ‘over there’  
*itnani* ‘here’  
*itnani ki* ‘there’

Thus:

*Nahe ier at-tur teki?*  
who PL PL:REAL-stand over.there  
‘Who are standing over there?’

Those forms of this type which express location relative to something else, rather than fixed absolute locations, can appear alone as unmarked locational nouns and can also be followed by a prepositional phrase which indicates the location which they are relative to. Each of these locational forms tends to exhibit individual patterns with regard to the particular following preposition that they are associated with. We therefore encounter the following combinations:

*saman i NP* ‘far from the NP’  
*lile nan NP* ‘close to the NP’  
*vere nan NP ~ vere len NP* ‘outside the NP’  
*bbuut len NP* ‘inside the NP’

Thus:

*Amal tana i-tok saman.*  
 house POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-stay far.away  
 ‘My house is far away.’

*Amal tier i-tok saman i amal takit*  
 house POSS:3PL 3SG:REAL-stay far.away OBL house POSS:1PL.INCL  
 ‘Their house is far away from our house.’

*At-dah rasan vere len get.*  
 PL:REAL-descend other.side outside LOC gate  
 ‘They went down on the other side outside the gate.’

*Gabwir sapm i-matur lile nan na.*  
 dog one 3SG:REAL-sleep close POSS 1SG  
 ‘A dog is sleeping close to me.’

*Emwet tana i-tok bbuut len amal.*  
 knife POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-located inside SP house  
 ‘My knife is inside the house.’

It should be pointed out, however, that not all relative locational meanings are expressed by means of locational markers of this kind. A number of such locational meanings are, in fact, expressed by means of directly suffixed nouns, which can be followed by a noun (as formal ‘possessor’) indicating the place to which the location is relative. The following forms of this type have been recorded:

|                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| <i>bongo-</i>     | ‘front’        |
| <i>udruu-</i>     | ‘back, behind’ |
| <i>sikile-</i>    | ‘side’         |
| <i>ngalngali-</i> | ‘top’          |
| <i>lupa-</i>      | ‘middle’       |
| <i>wuti-</i>      | ‘bottom’       |
| <i>lapa-</i>      | ‘under’        |

Such forms can behave as ordinary nouns in that they can be preceded by the full range of locational prepositions. For example:

*I-tok le sikile-n.*  
 3SG:REAL-located SP side-3SG  
 ‘It is on the side of it.’

*I-tok le lupa-n.*  
 3SG:REAL-located SP middle-3SG  
 ‘It is in the middle of it.’

However, some such nouns can also be used without any associated prepositions, effectively functioning in the same way as locational markers.<sup>1</sup> For example:

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<sup>1</sup> Such forms could conceivably be analysed as prepositions rather than as locational markers.

*Amal tana i-tok sikile-n skol.*  
 house POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-located side-3SG school  
 ‘My house is beside the school.’

*Bwisibok sapm iip i-babak lapa-n amal te.*  
 rat one 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-hide under-3SG house POSS:3SG  
 ‘A rat went and hid under his house.’

The locational interrogative *ba(ng)* described in §5.1.4 also falls into this set. Thus:

*Ong kiip ba?*  
 2SG 2SG:IRR:go where  
 ‘Where are you going?’

There is a second locational interrogative of the form *iba*, which appears only in verbless clauses to ask about the location of something, as in the following:

*Emwet tana iba?*  
 knife POSS:1SG where  
 ‘Where is my knife?’

However, it is not known at this stage if this represents a second locational interrogative, or if it is simply a combination of *i* ‘oblique’ + *ba* ‘where?’.

### 5.1.3.2 Temporal markers

There is also a variety of clause-level adverbials which indicate something about the temporal orientation of an event. Some of these forms can be used both as ordinary nouns and as zero-marked temporal adverbials:

*kidrap* ‘in the late afternoon’  
*kinkidrap* ‘very late in the afternoon’  
*lupat* ‘in the night’  
*lupat dangdang* ‘at midnight’

Thus:

*Na-lumlum kidrap.*  
 1SG:REAL-bathe late.afternoon  
 ‘I bathed in the late afternoon.’

There is also a nearly full set of names for the various months in Avava, as follows:<sup>2</sup>

*Rada* ‘January’  
*Rawel lam* ‘February’  
*Rabwisisi* ‘March’  
*Mwetagadoli* ‘April’

<sup>2</sup> *September is missing from this list, and I have not been able to locate a term for it in the material available to me. One would also assume that, traditionally, there would have been thirteen named months, not twelve, corresponding to the thirteen lunar months in a year. As in many Vanuatu languages, however, the use of the Western calendar has often meant that one named month has been lost – JL*

|                              |            |
|------------------------------|------------|
| <i>Lapda</i>                 | ‘May’      |
| <i>Lap vwelam</i>            | ‘June’     |
| <i>Lap mwisisi</i>           | ‘July’     |
| <i>Reptamal</i>              | ‘August’   |
| <i>Ivlerongo</i>             | ‘October’  |
| <i>Ivlemial</i>              | ‘November’ |
| <i>Bolongmur, Abasi mial</i> | ‘December’ |

The origin of most of these names is obscure. In neighbouring Naman and Neve‘ei, the names of the months can often be clearly related to words used for activities relating to the preparation of food gardens and the harvesting of their products. Several of the Avava month names contain the element *lap*, which is the transitive verb meaning ‘plant’, so this theme may well be repeated in Avava.<sup>3</sup>

Other forms, however, are only ever used as temporal adverbials and do not appear in noun phrases:<sup>4</sup>

|                         |                                  |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>matabb</i>           | ‘in the morning’                 |
| <i>lama sal ~ saari</i> | ‘always’                         |
| <i>livani</i>           | ‘today, now’                     |
| <i>supak ~ lile</i>     | ‘nearly, almost’                 |
| <i>davaki</i>           | ‘formerly, before’               |
| <i>tua</i>              | ‘long time ago, for a long time’ |

Thus:

|                                  |                |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Na-sa-lumlum-u</i>            | <i>matabb.</i> |
| 1SG:REAL-NEG-bathe-NEG           | morning        |
| ‘I didn’t bathe in the morning.’ |                |

The temporal adverbial *kesan* ‘when?’ (§5.1.4) can also be considered to fall into this subset. Thus:

|                                      |              |            |              |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| <i>O-vwel</i>                        | <i>kesan</i> | <i>len</i> | <i>arup?</i> |
| 2SG:REAL-come                        | when         | SP         | garden       |
| ‘When did you come from the garden?’ |              |            |              |

In addition to the morphologically simple temporal markers *maran* ‘tomorrow’, *uwah* ‘day after tomorrow’, *tenep* ‘yesterday’ and *tanawah* ‘day before yesterday’, there is a set of additional forms which refer to three, four and five days from the present, both in the past and the future. The forms referring to future times involve a prefixed element *t(i)*- which is added to the historical roots of the basic numerals (§3.2.3.1), while forms referring to times in the past involve the prefixed element *bbun(i)*-. We therefore find the following unusually rich paradigmatic set of temporal adverbs in Avava:

<sup>3</sup> However, *Abasi mial* ‘December’ literally means ‘red month’. *Mial* ‘red’ is occasionally used in compounds expressing violence, for example *aga mial* ‘kind of club (lit. red stick)’, *bbuah mial* ‘devil nettle with very bad sting (lit. red pig)’. This may be a sign that the end of the year was associated with fighting, though this suggestion would need to be checked in the field.

<sup>4</sup> Corresponding to the temporal adverbial *matabb* ‘in the morning’, however, is the formally related noun *matabbuk* ‘morning’.

|              |                       |                 |                           |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Future       |                       | Past            |                           |
| <i>maran</i> | ‘tomorrow’            | <i>tenep</i>    | ‘yesterday’               |
| <i>uwah</i>  | ‘day after tomorrow’  | <i>tanawah</i>  | ‘day before yesterday’    |
| <i>titl</i>  | ‘three days from now’ | <i>bbunitl</i>  | ‘three days before today’ |
| <i>tivat</i> | ‘four days from now’  | <i>bbunivat</i> | ‘four days before today’  |
| <i>tlim</i>  | ‘five days from now’  | <i>bbunlim</i>  | ‘five days before today’  |

### 5.1.3.3 Benefactives

At this stage, my corpus does not include many examples in which clearly benefactive meanings are expressed in Avava. However, one recurring pattern involves an initial intransitive verb which implies some kind of patient, with the beneficiary of this unstated item being expressed as an unmarked free pronoun from the set presented in §3.1. Thus:

*Momok te b-iv-ivleh ier.*  
 wife POSS:3SG 3SG:IRR-REDUP-make.pudding 3PL  
 ‘His wife made pudding for them.’

*Komat-tntn kopm.*  
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-cook.over.fire 1PL.EXCL  
 ‘We cooked food over a fire for ourselves.’

### 5.1.4 Interrogatives

One pattern for expressing polar questions in Avava involves placing the conjunction *dri* ‘or’ (§5.2.3.1) after a declarative statement, with a sharply rising intonation on the final element. Thus:

*Baladrong takit i-lem dri?*  
 sow POSS:1PL.INCL 3SG:REAL-give.birth Q  
 ‘Has our sow given birth?’

Content questions are expressed in Avava by using one of the following interrogative markers:

|                     |                                   |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>(n)asi, nahe</i> | ‘who?’                            |
| <i>(s)ive</i>       | ‘what?’                           |
| <i>ivih</i>         | ‘how much?, how many?’            |
| <i>bbih</i>         | ‘how much?, how many? (irrealis)’ |
| <i>ba(ng)</i>       | ‘where? (in verbal clauses)’      |
| <i>iba</i>          | ‘where? (in verbless clauses)’    |
| <i>kesan</i>        | ‘when?’                           |
| <i>nan iba</i>      | ‘which?’                          |
| <i>wal sive</i>     | ‘why?’                            |
| <i>tamak</i>        | ‘how?, why?’                      |

These forms fall into a range of different word classes, and thus exhibit a wide range of individual behaviours. However, they are described under a single heading at this point because of their functional similarity as information-seeking devices.



The interrogative *nahe* calls for a response with a noun phrase that has human reference, as in the following:

*Nahe Ø-ma i-ka na?*  
 who SG:REAL-CONT 3SG:REAL-call 1SG  
 ‘Who is calling me?’

However, this form can be used to ask after something with inanimate reference when that noun is somebody’s name. For example:

*Isa-n ong nasi?*  
 name-3SG 2SG who  
 ‘What is your name?’

This form functions as a noun, which means that it can be followed by the plural postmodifier *ier*, as in the following:

*Nahe ier at-tur teki?*  
 who PL 3PL:REAL-stand over.there  
 ‘Who are standing over there?’

Although the forms *nahe*, *nasi* and *asi* appear to be functionally equivalent, it should be pointed out that *nahe* is phonotactically somewhat aberrant in that it is one of only a tiny handful of forms in the language which contain intervocalic *h* (§2.2).

There is a second nominal interrogative: *sive* ~ *ive* ‘what?’. This can appear in an ordinary noun phrase position within a clause, such as in the following example, where it functions as the subject of the verb:

*Sive i-va boloko-n ong i-yoryor?*  
 what 3SG:REAL-make leg-3SG 2SG 3SG:IRR-itch  
 ‘What made your leg itch?’

As a noun, this can also be preceded by a preposition in the ordinary way. The sequence of the causal preposition *wal* and this interrogative form expresses the meaning of ‘why?’, as in the following:

*O-ter aga ti wal sive?*  
 2SG:REAL-cut tree DEM CAUSE what  
 ‘Why did you cut down this tree?’

The form *ivih* functions in the same way as the numerals described in §3.2.3.1. Thus, it can appear as a nominal postmodifier, as in the following:

*Muut ivih at-luk len amal ti?*  
 person how.many 3PL:REAL-stay LOC house DEM  
 ‘How many people are in this house?’

It can also appear as the only element within a noun phrase. For example:

*O-ser ivih?*  
 2SG:REAL-take how.many  
 ‘How many did you take?’

Also like the numerals, it displays vestigial verbal morphology in that it has a separate irrealis form which is used in the position of object of an irrealis transitive verb. For example:

*Ong ke-ser bbih i na?*  
 2SG 2SG:IRR-give 3SG:IRR-how.many GOAL 1SG  
 ‘How many will you give me?’

This form is also used to ask about clock time. For example:

*Matanal ti ivih mehi?*  
 time PRES how.much now  
 ‘What is the time now?’

It was indicated in §5.1.3 that *ba(ng)* ‘where?’ and *kesan* ‘when?’ both function as clause-level adverbials of place and time respectively. Thus:

*Ong ki-p ba?*  
 2SG 2SG:IRR-go where  
 ‘Where are you going?’

*O-vwel kesan len arup?*  
 2SG:REAL-come when SP garden  
 ‘When did you come from the garden?’

Note also that there is a separate locational interrogative *iba* for use in verbless clauses:

*Emwet tana iba?*  
 knife POSS:1SG where  
 ‘Where is my knife?’

*Aya nan komat-va ong k-ivleh ti iba?*  
 pudding REL 1PL.EXCL:REAL-say 2SG 2SG:REAL-make DEM where  
 ‘Where is the pudding that we told you to make?’

The form *iba* also appears after a noun, introduced by the relative clause marker *nan*, to express the meaning of ‘which?’, as in the following:

*O-matur len amal nan iba?*  
 2SG:REAL-sleep SP house REL where  
 ‘Which house did you sleep in?’

The form *tamaki* ‘how?, why?’ is a verbal root which expresses an interrogative meaning. For example:

*I-tamak livani?*  
 3SG:REAL-how now  
 ‘How is it now?’

*Nabba ba-tamak?*  
 1SG:IRR:do 3SG:IRR-how  
 ‘How will I do it?’

### 5.1.5 Interjections

This is an aspect of Avava that I have not attempted to investigate in any detail, though some observations can nevertheless be offered at this stage. The following interjections can be used as single-word utterances, or as independent items within an utterance:

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <i>baki, ikaki</i> | ‘yes’   |
| <i>itik</i>        | ‘no’  |
| <i>tidem</i>       | ‘not yet’                                       |
| <i>wiri</i>        | ‘oh boy, expression of excitement or happiness’ |
| <i>var</i>         | ‘oh dear, expression of pity or sadness’        |
| <i>tara</i>        | ‘look out, expression of warning’               |

Greetings at different times of the day are expressed by means of the verb *irivik* ‘it is good’ followed by the name of the time of day. In such collocations, the final *k* of the verb is normally elided. Thus:

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <i>irivi matabbuk</i> | ‘good morning (sunrise till around 10.00 am)’ |
| <i>irivi lupanal</i>  | ‘good day (around 10.00 am to 4.00 pm)’       |
| <i>irivi kidrap</i>   | ‘good afternoon (around 4.00 pm till sunset)’ |

Leave-taking is normally expressed by the form *maran* which, when it is used as a temporal adverbial within a clause, expresses the meaning of ‘tomorrow’.

The only remaining category of interjections for which I have data involves swearing. I have not been able to discover much about traditional patterns of swearing, though I was told that it was considered as swearing to utter the following:

|               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| <i>Lip-m</i>  | <i>ong!</i> |
| tooth-3SG     | 2SG         |
| ‘Your teeth!’ |             |

Modern patterns of swearing involve the use of a range of grammatically normal utterances that are based on a number of recurring themes, including the following:

- (i) Foreskin retraction, presumably because all adult Avava-speaking males are circumcised, and any reference to somebody having a foreskin is implicitly insulting. For example:

|                             |                 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Ka-sar</i>               | <i>vwala-m!</i> |
| 2SG:IRR-retract.foreskin.of | penis-2SG       |
| ‘Retract your foreskin!’    |                 |

- (ii) Masturbation, for example:

|                              |                |                   |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <i>Ko-lop</i>                | <i>vwala-n</i> | <i>ong!</i>       |
| 2SG:IRR-punch                | penis-3SG      | 2SG               |
| ‘Beat your meat!’            |                |                   |
| <i>Ko-lop</i>                | <i>vwala-m</i> | <i>len tuswe!</i> |
| 2SG:IRR-punch                | penis-2SG      | SP sea            |
| ‘Beat your meat in the sea!’ |                |                   |

(iii) Copulation with another male, for example:

*Ke-reh muut!*  
 2SG:IRR-fuck man  
 'Fuck a man!'

## 5.2 Multi-predicate constructions

In the preceding section, I discussed the internal structure of simple sentences, i.e. single-predicate constructions. In this section, I will cover the full range of multi-predicate constructions. Of these, constructions involving inflected auxiliaries and core-layer serial verb constructions behave more like simple sentences, while the remaining constructions involving subordination and coordination correspond more clearly to the traditional notion of the complex sentence.

### 5.2.1 Auxiliaries

An auxiliary is a form carrying verbal subject-mood inflection which is obligatorily associated with a following verb, with both forms sharing the same subject categories. There are, in fact, two categories of auxiliary in Avava: those in which the mood category of the auxiliary and the following verb are identical, and those in which the initial auxiliary carries the role of mood marking, with the mood marking for the second verb being automatically irrealis.

#### 5.2.1.1 Same-mood auxiliaries

With the following set of forms, the mood marking of the auxiliary and the following verb is identical. So far, four such forms have been attested, though this needs to be verified against textual data and further elicitation work.

(i) *Ma* 'continuous, habitual'

This form appears to exhibit a number of different kinds of behaviour. In examples such as the following, it clearly functions as a verbal auxiliary, expressing the meaning of either continuous or habitual:

*Na-ma na-titih.*  
 1SG:REAL-CONT 1SG:REAL-write  
 'I am writing.'

*E-ma i-sungsung meh abbu-n akanian.*  
 3SG:REAL-HAB 3SG:REAL-smell only smell-3SG food  
 '(S)he would just smell the food.'

In other examples, however, only *ma* appears with subject marking while the following verb appears unmarked:

*I-ma lala iip.*  
 3SG:REAL-CONT REDUP-look 3SG:REAL:go  
 ‘(S)he was looking away.’

And in yet other examples, *ma* appears with no marking while only the following verb is inflected:

*Out ma iir-i na.*  
 place CONT 3SG:REAL:strong-TR 1SG  
 ‘I am sweating (lit. the place is being strong to me).’

*Bala nan ma i-vwel i-lalah-i na*  
 pig REL HAB 3SG:REAL-come 3SG:REAL-eat.garden-TR 1SG

*na-lu iih.*  
 1SG:REAL-shoot PERF  
 ‘That pig that has been coming and eating from my garden—I have shot it.’

Finally, in the following, *ma* is very clearly attached to the verb as an aspectual prefix after the subject marker, similar to what we find in languages such as Naman and Tape (though not in neighbouring Neve‘ei). Thus:

*Abwit-tur amal nan ar-ma-tntn len ivsak i til.*  
 PL:IRR-tie house REL IMP:REAL-HAB-cook.food LOC up.there INST vine.type  
 ‘They will tie the house that food is cooked in up there with the *til* vine.’

(ii) *Vwir* ‘immediate’

This form is also not well attested, but it appears to be an auxiliary expressing the immediate past, in conjunction with a verb carrying realis inflectional marking. For example:

*Na-vwir na-per-i awang tana sapm.*  
 1SG:REAL-IMM 1SG:REAL-work-TR canoe POSS:1SG one  
 ‘I have just made a canoe of mine.’

*E-vwir i-tirtirsal-i.*  
 3SG:REAL-IMM 3SG:REAL-talk-TR  
 ‘(S)he had just talked about it.’

The same form can apparently also appear with a following verb carrying irrealis marking, in which case it expresses the immediate future in relation to a situation in the past. For example:

*Vwir biip.*  
 3SG:REAL-IMM 3SG:IRR:go  
 ‘(S)he was about to go.’

It should be noted, however, that in the first two examples, the auxiliary appears with subject inflection, while in the final example, the auxiliary is uninflected.

(iii) *Turda* ‘inceptive’

This form also enters into this kind of construction, with the meaning of ‘start’. For example:

*Komat-turda meh komat-rep mwere ti.*  
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-start PERF 1PL.EXCL:REAL-pull vine.type DEM  
 ‘We had started pulling the *mwere* vine.’

(iv) *Min* ‘back, again, more’

The form *min* appears in pre-verbal position in a clause but exhibits a range of behaviours in my textual corpus, suggesting that some kind of change regarding its status is currently in progress. In examples such as the following, it clearly functions as a pre-verbal auxiliary, expressing the meaning of ‘back’, ‘again’ or ‘more’. For example:

*I-min i-vwel.*  
 3SG:REAL-back 3SG:REAL-come  
 ‘(S)he came back.’

*E-ip e-min e-tur-matali.*  
 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-again 3SG:REAL-stand-door  
 ‘(S)he went and was standing in the doorway again.’

This auxiliary does not inflect for mood, appearing only with realis prefixes. The mood distinction is therefore marked on the following main verb. Thus:

*Na-min nabiip.*  
 1SG:REAL-back 1SG:IRR:go  
 ‘I will go back.’

*Na-min nabwi-tirtirsal-i ani.*  
 1SG:REAL-again 1SG:IRR-talk-TR coconut  
 ‘I will talk about the coconut again.’

This form can also be negated, though while the prefixed element appears on the auxiliary, the suffixed element appears on the following verb. Thus:

*Out sa-min metmet-mu.*  
 place 3SG:REAL:NEG-more dark-NEG  
 ‘It wasn’t dark any more.’

However, this form has also been attested in pre-verbal position carrying verbal inflection, but with the following verb appearing with no verbal inflection whatsoever, paralleling the pattern just described for negated constructions involving *min* in which only the auxiliary carries verbal prefixation. Thus:

*Na-min vu-puh man-i.*  
 1SG:REAL-again REDUP-take again-TR  
 ‘I will get some more again.’

We also find examples where *min* appears before the verb with no inflection at all, and where the verb carries the full verbal inflection:

*Min at-vwel.*  
back PL:REAL-come  
'They came back.'

*At-up aabb aran at-va outna-n min bbel*  
PL:REAL-blow fire over PL:REAL-make face-3SG back 3SG:IRR:come

*min i-maur.*  
again 3SG:REAL-alive  
'They blew fire over him and made his face come alive again.'

In fact, *min*, along with both *man* and *leh*, have also been attested as clause-level modifiers appearing outside the verbal complex. The following textual example represents a rather fascinating instance of redundant marking of this category, with *min* appearing pre-verbally in association with serialised *leh*, and then followed post-verbally by both *leh* and *min*:

*William min uup leh ataap ti leh min.*  
William again 3SG:REAL:blow again conch DEM again again  
'William blew the conch again.'

With this meaning expressed by means of these pre-verbal forms, Avava demonstrates a significant structural contrast with neighbouring Naman and Neve'e*i*, where this function is expressed by means of a post-verbal modifier, *lis* in the case of Naman and *lieh* in Neve'e*i*. However, the post-verbal forms *man* and *leh* in Avava are often used in conjunction with *min*, redundantly expressing what appears to be the same meaning.

### 5.2.1.2 Different-mood auxiliaries

There is a separate category of auxiliaries with which an initial realis auxiliary is followed by a main verb that carries irrealis marking. This set consists of the following known forms, though further checking against textual data, as well as further elicitation in the field, is again needed on this point:

#### (i) *Va* 'intentional, immediate future'

The form *va* can be used as a verb meaning 'say'. As is commonly the case in central Vanuatu languages, the same verb is also used as an auxiliary expressing intention. Thus:

*O-va ong kiip ba?*  
2SG:REAL-intend 2SG 2SG:IRR:go where  
'Where do you intend to go?'

*Na-va nabwi-tirtirsal.*  
1SG:REAL-intend 1SG:IRR-tell.story  
'I am going to tell a story.'

This auxiliary can also be used to express the meaning of immediate future, as in:

*I-va*                      *lile*      *ba-ran*                      *matabbuk.*  
 3SG:REAL-IMM.FUT   almost   3SG:IRR-dawn   morning  
 ‘Day was about to break in the morning.’

*Va* appears not to accept negative affixation. If a negative meaning is to be expressed in association with this auxiliary, the negative inflection appears only on the following main verb. Thus:

*Na-va*                      *nasabbel-mu*                      *sin*      *ong.*  
 1SG:REAL-intend   1SG:REAL:NEG:come-NEG   ACC   2SG  
 ‘I wasn’t going to come with you.’

(ii) *Wah* ‘desiderative’ and *lip* ‘anti-desiderative’

A purely desiderative meaning can be expressed by means of the auxiliary *wah*, as in the following:

*Na-wah*                      *nabwi-tirtirsal-i*                      *mitile*      *sapm*  
 1SG:REAL-want   1SG:IRR-tell.story-TR   story   one  
 ‘I want to tell a story.’

The auxiliary *lip* expresses the opposite meaning to *wah*, i.e. ‘not want’. Thus:

*Na-lip*                      *nabwi-yal.*  
 1SG:REAL-not.want   1SG:IRR-sing  
 ‘I don’t want to sing.’

Both of these auxiliaries can also be used as main verbs in their own right. *Lip* functions as an ordinary transitive verb meaning ‘dislike’ or ‘not want’. For example:

*I-lip*                      *limokian*                      *te.*  
 3SG:REAL-not.like   mother-in-law   POSS:3SG  
 ‘He did not like his mother-in-law.’

*Wah*, as a main verb, is functionally intransitive, calling for the addition of the transitive suffix *-i* (§4.3.1) if it is to express the meaning of ‘want’ or ‘like’ followed by an object. Thus:

*I-wah-i*                      *git.*  
 3SG:REAL-like-TR   1PL.INCL  
 ‘(S)he likes us.’

(iii) *Ro(ng)* ‘feel like’

The form *ro(ng)* can be used as a main verb meaning ‘feel’, as in the following:

*I-ro*                      *i-rivik.*  
 3SG:REAL-feel   3SG:REAL-good  
 ‘(S)he feels good.’

In addition, *ro(ng)* is also commonly used as an auxiliary before a verb of consumption—i.e. *min* ‘drink (tr.)’, *minmin* ‘drink (intr.)’, *kan* ‘eat (intr.)’ and *yanyan* ‘eat (tr.)’—to express a desiderative meaning. Thus:



*Ebo-ro eba-kan*  
 3SG:IRR-feel.like 3SG:IRR-eat  
 ‘(S)he will feel like eating.’

However, this auxiliary is not limited exclusively to appearing with verbs of consumption, as other verbs that express the way bodily functions can come unexpectedly upon us may participate in this construction as well. Thus:

*Baladrong i-ro bwe-lem vanat-n.*  
 sow 3SG:REAL-feel.like 3SG:IRR-give.birth.to child-3SG  
 ‘The sow felt like giving birth to her piglets.’

(iv) *Rokut* ‘abilitative’ and *delengi* ‘inabilitative’

*Rokut* can function as a transitive verb meaning ‘know’, as in the following:

*I-rokut na.*  
 3SG:REAL-know 1SG  
 ‘(S)he knows me.’

The same form can also be used as an abilitative auxiliary. For example:

*Na-rokut nabwi-yal.*  
 1SG:REAL-able 1SG:IRR-sing  
 ‘I can sing.’

*Na-sa-rokut-mu nabwi-yal.*  
 1SG:REAL:NEG-able-NEG 1SG:IRR-sing  
 ‘I cannot sing.’

Note also that the negated form of *rokut* may appear with just third person singular negative marking, with the following verb carrying the full subject marking. For example:

*Sa-rokut-mu abwit-ter wel bial i emwet.*  
 3SG:REAL:NEG-able-NEG PL:IRR-cut split randomly INST knife  
 ‘They could not cut it apart with any old knife.’

*Anal sa-rokut-mu bi-siber.*  
 sun 3SG:REAL:NEG-able-NEG 3SG:IRR-reach  
 ‘The sun could not reach it.’

There is also a verb of the form *delengi* ‘not know’, which appears in sentences such as the following:

*Ar-delengi itnan i-lem e.*  
 DL:REAL-not.know place 3SG:REAL-give.birth LOC.PRO  
 ‘They did not know where it had given birth.’

The same form can also function as an inflected auxiliary expressing inability, as in the following:

*I-delengi bba momok ki bbel.*  
 3SG:REAL-unable 3SG:IRR:make woman DEM 3SG:IRR:come  
 ‘(S)he couldn’t make the woman come.’

### 5.2.2 Core-layer serialisation

Core-layer verb serialisation differs from the pattern of nuclear-layer serialisation described in §4.4 in that both verbs in the series must carry overt marking for subject and mood. Contrast, therefore, the nuclear relationship between *ter* ‘chop’ and *wel* ‘split’ in the first example with the core-layer juncture between *dingi* ‘put’ and *tok* ‘located’ in the second example:

*I-ter wel aga.*  
 3SG:REAL-chop split wood  
 ‘(S)he chopped the wood, thereby splitting it.’

*Namwi-dingi oweng ti bo-tok ran bali.*  
 1SG:IRR-put island.cabbage DEM 3SG:IRR-located LOC platform  
 ‘I will put the island cabbage on the platform.’

The range of functions expressed by core-layer serialisation in Avava appears to closely parallel what we find both in neighbouring languages such as Naman and Neve‘ei, as well as Oceanic languages more generally. This includes the specific functions described below (though this range of functions can be expected to be expanded upon with an examination of textual data).

#### (i) Directional and spatial orientation

Basic motion verbs such as *ip* ‘go’ and *vwel* ‘come’ can be used to indicate the direction in which an action is oriented. Thus:

*At-kilkila i-vwel.*  
 PL:REAL-look 3SG:REAL-come  
 ‘They looked over here.’

Other motion verbs, like the forms *sak* ‘ascend’ and *dah* ‘descend’, can also be serialised in this way. For example:

*Komat-solsol komat-ip komat-sak Arabanah.*  
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-walk 1PL.EXCL:REAL-go 1PL.EXCL:REAL-ascend Arabanah  
 ‘We walked away up to Arabanah.’

*Na-kilkila i-dah.*  
 1SG:REAL-look 3SG:REAL-descend  
 ‘I looked down.’

Although this kind of serial construction is most commonly encountered in association with initial verbs such as ‘look’ or ‘walk’ which involve activities that are inherently directional, it is possible for less clearly directional verbs also to be serialised in this way if directionality needs to be specifically indicated. Thus:

*Kiip ke-ter abah ti bbel kobwit-yan.*  
 2SG:IRR:go 2SG:IRR-cut sugarcane DEM 3SG:IRR:come 1PL.EXCL:REAL-eat  
 ‘Go and cut the sugarcane (and bring it) here for us to eat.’

The verbs of rest *tok* ‘be located’ and *tur* ‘be standing’ can be used in the same kind of construction to indicate that an action results in something being at rest in a particular location. For example:

*Namwi-dingi oweng ti bo-tok ran bali.*  
 1SG:IRR-put island.cabbage DEM 3SG:IRR-located LOC platform  
 ‘I will put the island cabbage on the platform.’

*Muut ki bi-pih e bu-tur len abah.*  
 man DEM 3SG:IRR-tie.up 3SG 3SG:IRR-stand LOC sugarcane  
 ‘(S)he will tie up that man standing in (the middle of) the sugarcane.’

(ii) *Manner*

Stative verbs can be serialised in this way to indicate the manner in which an action is carried out. The verb *toki* ‘like that, thus’ is only ever used in serial constructions of this type. Thus:

*Stori ti i-nong ma i-toki.*  
 story DEM 3SG:REAL-finish just 3SG:REAL-thus  
 ‘The story just finishes like that.’

(iii) *Attainment or exceeding a limit*

The verbs *siber* ‘reach, arrive at’ and *sadri* ‘go past’ can be used as initial verbs with the meanings just indicated. In serial verb constructions, *siber* can be used to indicate that an action takes place ‘as far as’ the referent of the noun phrase that is expressed as its object. Thus:

*Atda i-saksak Ø-siber ngalngal-n aga ti.*  
 child 3SG:REAL-climb 3SG:REAL-reach top-3SG tree DEM  
 ‘The child climbed as far as the top of that tree.’

*Komat-ip komat-siber asal nan i-sak*  
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-go 1PL.EXCL:REAL-reach path REL 3SG:REAL-ascend

*Arabanah ti.*

Arabanah DEM

‘We went as far as the path that goes up to Arabanah.’

Similarly, the verb *sadri* can be used to indicate that an action takes place ‘past’ a geographical point that is expressed as the object of the verb. Thus:

*Bwir-solsol bwir-sadri owe.*  
 DL:IRR-walk DL:IRR-go.past river  
 ‘Let’s walk past the river.’

(iv) *Comparative*

The verb *sadri* ‘go past’ can also be used in a serial verb construction following an initial stative verb to express a comparative meaning, with the object of *sadri* referring to

the entity against which the referent of the subject of the initial stative verb is being compared. Thus:

*Na-ber*         $\emptyset$ -*sadri*        *ong*.  
1SG:REAL-tall 3SG:REAL-exceed 2SG  
'I am taller than you.'

*Otor*        *iir*         $\emptyset$ -*sadri*        *balaka*.  
island.teak 3SG:REAL-strong 3SG:REAL-exceed cottonwood  
'Island teak is stronger than cottonwood.'

#### (v) Subordination

Core-layer serial verb constructions are frequently used in the formulation of subordinate clauses. A number of different verbs are serialised in this way. Perhaps most commonly, we find the intransitive verb *va* 'say' being serialised to a preceding verb of speaking or saying to introduce the content of an utterance. For example:

*I-tir*        *i*        *momok* *ti*        *i-va*,        "*Ka-lap*        *galu*  
3SG:REAL-say GOAL woman DEM 3SG:REAL-say 2SG:IRR-fetch mother  
*tong*        *kabwir-vwel*".  
POSS:2SG 2DL:IRR-come  
'He said to the woman, "Fetch your mother and come with her".'

*Vanat-n*    *ier*    *at-tarap*        *mom*    *tier*        *at-va*,  
child-3SG PL PL:REAL-send.on.errand father POSS:3PL PL:REAL-say  
"*Kiip*        *ke-ter*        *abah*".  
2SG:IRR:go 2SG:IRR-cut sugarcane  
'His children sent their father on an errand saying, "Go and cut the sugarcane".'

However, other verbs are also attested in this construction. The intransitive verb *ro* 'feel' can also be serialised to a preceding verb of mental activity to introduce the content of that mental activity. For example:

*I-rokot*        *i-ro*        *galu*    *tana*        *ar-riit*        *sur*    *asal*.  
3SG:REAL-realise 3SG:REAL-feel mother POSS:1SG IMP:REAL-kill along road  
'She realised, "My mother has been killed along the road".'

The similitive verb *ka* 'be like, resemble' can also follow a verb of thinking to introduce the content of the utterance. For example:

*E-va*        *i-ka*        *i-nong*        *iih*.  
3SG:REAL-think 3SG:REAL-like 3SG:REAL-finish PERF  
'(S)he thought that it was over.'

### 5.2.3 Complex sentences

The final category of multi-predicate constructions that will be described are what are traditionally referred to as complex sentences, i.e. clausal coordination and subordination.

### 5.2.3.1 Coordination

The form *dri* is used to link clauses meaning both ‘but’ and ‘and’. The meaning of ‘but’ is illustrated by the following:

*Na-rep tata dri i-sabbut.*  
 1SG:REAL-take tight but 3SG:REAL-kick  
 ‘I grabbed hold of it but it kicked.’

### 5.2.3.2 Subordination

At this stage, only a limited amount of information has been assembled on subordinate clause types.

#### (i) General subordinator

The form *det* seems to be used in Avava in a similar way to the general subordinators that we find in a number of other Malakula languages, as well as in a similar way to the general subordinator *we* in Bislama. We therefore encounter examples such as:

*Mwilip i-roro det muut at-vwel at-tirtirsit.*  
 chief 3SG:REAL-hear SUB person PL:REAL-come PL:REAL-speak  
 ‘The chief heard that the people had come to speak.’

*Boloko-n i-turda det bu-vuk e.*  
 foot-3SG 3SG:REAL-start SUB 3SG:IRR-change 3SG  
 ‘His/her feet began to change.’

The same form is attested after some of the other subordinators, such as the causal subordinator *wal*. Thus:

*Atda ti uul wal det i-wam ti.*  
 child DEM 3SG:REAL:cry CAUSE SUB 3SG:REAL-fall DEM  
 ‘The child cried because (s)he fell over.’

#### (ii) Reason clauses

Reason clauses are expressed by means of the subordinator *wal*, which is identical in shape with the causal preposition described in §5.1.2. We therefore find examples such as:

*Out iir-i e wal anal ti iir.*  
 place 3SG:REAL:strong-TR 3SG REASON sun PRES 3SG:REAL:strong  
 ‘(S)he is sweating because the sun is hot.’

*I-morot wal i-sal.*  
 3SG:REAL-skinny REASON 3SG:REAL-sick  
 ‘(S)he is skinny because (s)he is sick.’

*Atda ti i-matur wal i-sal.*  
 child DEM 3SG:REAL-sleep REASON 3SG:REAL-sick  
 ‘The child was asleep because it was sick.’

(iii) *Purpose clauses*

The subordinator *wal* can also be used to introduce a purposive complement, in association with a following verb with irrealis subject marking, as in the following:

*Iip wal bwe-ter abah.*  
3SG:REAL:go PURP 3SG:IRR-cut sugarcane  
'(S)he went to cut the sugarcane.'

*Bbum Sahtep i-yong e liim wal ba-la misi.*  
grandfather Sahtep 3SG:REAL-leave 3SG village PURP 3SG:IRR-see missionary  
'Grandfather Sahtep left the village to see the missionary.'

*Lama naniki Rocky i-tir da kopm wal kopm*  
time that Rocky 3SG:REAL-tell little 1PL.EXCL PURP 1PL.EXCL

*bwit-ip kopm bwit-rep mwere nan amal te.*  
PL:IRR-go 1PL.EXCL PL:IRR-pull vine.type PURP house POSS:3SG  
'At that time, Rocky mentioned to us to go and gather *mwere* vine for his house.'

(iv) *Place clauses*

A subordinate clause of place is introduced by the noun *out* 'place'. For example:

*Komat-sak komat-siber out tuan mar-lala*  
1PL.EXCL:REAL-ascend 1PL.EXCL:REAL-reach place INDEF IMP:IRR-REDUP-see  
*tuswe ti.*  
sea DEM  
'We went up as far as somewhere that the sea could be seen.'

Place clauses can also be introduced by the noun *itnan*. In the following examples, we also find the locative pro-form *e* appearing in the place of the original locative phrase as a kind of copy. It should be noted, however, that this form does not resemble a stranded preposition, as there is no preposition of this shape. Thus:

*Ar-delengi itnan i-lem e.*  
DL:REAL-not.know place 3SG:REAL-give.birth LOC.PRO  
'They did not know where it had given birth.'

*Komat-kawat owe itnan muut at-kaw-kawat e.*  
1PL.EXCL:REAL-cross river place person PL:REAL-REDUP-cross LOC.PRO  
'We crossed the river where people cross the river.'

(v) *Conditional clauses*

The conditional subordinator is *ba(na)* 'if'. Thus:

*Ba git ar-luk kiip ka-lap galu*  
if 1PL.INCL DL:REAL-live.together 2SG:IRR-go 2SG:IRR-fetch mother  
*tong bbel.*  
POSS:2SG 3SG:IRR:come  
'If you and I live together, go and bring your mother.'

*Na-ro bana tana len vanat-n bbuah kabat.*  
 1SG:REAL-feel if POSS:1SG LOC child-3SG pig European  
 ‘I wish that the calf were mine.’

The main clause in such constructions is sometimes introduced by *dri* ‘but’. For example:

*Ba i-ro amar i-yat e dri i-tn-tn e.*  
 if 3SG:REAL-feel hunger 3SG:REAL-bite 3SG but 3SG:REAL-REDUP-cook 3SG  
 ‘If (s)he felt hungry, (s)he would cook food for himself/herself.’

(vi) *Until clauses*

The form *bbu* is used to express the meaning of ‘until’. For example:

*I-sabbut bbu komar-li tata boloko-n.*  
 3SG:REAL-kick until 1DL.EXCL:REAL-tie tight leg-3SG  
 ‘It kicked until we tied its legs tight.’

However, such a meaning can also be expressed without any overt coordinator. Note the appearance of the form *e* in the following, similar to what we find in place clauses:

*Komat-sap ran e.*  
 1PL.EXCL.REAL-dance 3SG:REAL-dawn LOC  
 ‘We danced until dawn broke.’

(vii) *Time clauses*

The general subordinator *det* can introduce a time clause. For example:

*Galu tana ar-riit det min iip.*  
 mother POSS:1SG IMP:REAL-kill time back 3SG:REAL:go  
 ‘My mother was killed when she went back.’

*Sa-ka-mu det ar-sol len gohtohtal ier.*  
 3SG:REAL:NEG-like-NEG time DL:REAL-walk LOC tangled.vines PL  
 ‘It was not like when they were walking through the tangled vines.’

Time clauses can also be introduced by *ba*. For example:

*Ba i-la vwilang sapm i-vwel i-lu*  
 time 3SG:REAL-see fly one 3SG:REAL-come 3SG:REAL-shoot  
*vwilang ki.*  
 fly DEM  
 ‘When he saw a fly come, he would shoot that fly.’

(viii) *Excess constructions*

The Bislama general-purpose subordinator *we* has been incorporated into Avava grammar in a way that directly mirrors one particular pattern that is associated with that subordinator in Bislama. This is the construction in which a predicate is repeated in whole (or in part) after the subordinator *we*, to express the meaning of excess, as in the following:

*San i strong we i strong.*

‘The sun is really really hot.’

Bislama also allows an abbreviated version of this construction where there is no repetition, the clause ending in *we*:

*San i strong we.*

‘The sun is really really hot.’

Essentially the same pattern is used in Avava, but using the Bislama subordinator, as in the following example:

*Anal iir we iir.*  
sun 3SG:REAL-strong excess 3SG:REAL-strong  
‘It is really really hot.’

*Bbuah kabat i-sabbut we i-sabbut.*  
pig European 3SG:REAL-kick excess 3SG:REAL-kick  
‘The cow thrashed around with its legs.’

*Muut sapm i-wah-i we i-wah-i.*  
man one 3SG:REAL-like-3SG excess 3SG:REAL-like-3SG  
‘One man really really liked her.’

The repeated predicate can even include an object, as in the following:

*I-songon edre nan we i-songon edre nan.*  
3SG:REAL-fill.up blood POSS:3SG excess 3SG:REAL-fill.up blood POSS:3SG  
‘(S)he filled up lots and lots of her blood.’

Following the Bislama pattern in which *we* can follow a constituent without the constituent necessarily being repeated, we also find examples in Avava such as:

*Korokor te we!*  
scabies POSS:3SG excess  
‘(S)he has such a lot of scabies.’

### 5.3 Fronting of noun phrases

In common with probably all of the neighbouring languages, a noun phrase in Avava can be fronted from a position of verbal or prepositional object to the beginning of the clause. We therefore find examples such as:

*Muut ki bi-pih e bu-tur len abah.*  
man DEM 3SG:IRR-tie.up 3SG 3SG:IRR-stand LOC sugarcane  
‘(S)he will tie up that man standing in the sugarcane.’

*Bwilolok bwit-leh bbih wal?*  
kava PL:IRR-buy IRR:how.much CAUSE  
‘How much will we pay for this kava?’

In association with this fronting of noun phrases, we also encounter a process of instrumental shift. When an instrumental noun phrase that is expressed by means of the



preposition *i* is fronted and the preposition is thereby stranded, the preposition shifts from its original position after the object of a transitive verb to a position between the verb and its object. Thus:

*Til ia nau abwit-tur i amal.*  
vine.type DEM FOC PL:IRR-tie INST house  
'That *til*-vine is what they will tie the house with.'

*Sema i-rep vunubbu sapm i-vih i ier sapm bat-n.*  
Sema 3SG:REAL-take bamboo one 3SG:REAL-hit INST 3PL one head-3SG  
'Sema took a (length of) bamboo and hit one of them on the head with it.'

We also find examples such as the following in which a topic noun phrase precedes a clause out of which it has not been fronted, yet the clause clearly represents a statement about the referent of the noun phrase:

*Muut akanian tier bo-nong.*  
person food POSS:3PL 3SG:IRR-finish  
'As for the people, their food will be finished.'

## 5.4 Discourse strategies

[*It is apparent that Terry Crowley had been working on this, the final section of the chapter on syntax, at the time of his death. Given that the Avava textual material had not been fully analysed, I am unable to add much to what is given here. Accordingly, I simply present what was in the original manuscript, with a few additional comments in §5.4.2 – JL*]

At this stage, I will just note a number of recurring patterns that are worthy of further discussion.

### 5.4.1 Continuity

Narrative style often involves reference to events which pertain over a long period before leading up to a subsequent event. In my Avava textual corpus, this kind of continuity is expressed in a number of ways.

#### (i) Verb root repetition

One commonly encountered possibility involves the repetition, often three or four (or more) times, of an uninflected verb root. The greater the number of repetitions, the longer the continuity of the event that is being expressed. Thus:

*Komat-sa sa sa sa komat-siber out*  
1PL.EXCL:REAL-ascend ascend ascend ascend 1PL.EXCL:REAL-reach place  
*tuan ma ar-la-la tuswe ti.*  
INDEF HAB IMP:REAL-REDUP-sea sea DEM  
'We went up and up as far as where the sea can be seen.'

It should be pointed out that this does not involve reduplication as described in §4.3.2. This is because, on the one hand, there is an indeterminate number of repetitions possible in this construction, while on the other, repetition can involve several syllables, or even an entire verbal complex, as in the following where uninflected *turtur lalak* ‘stand quietly’ is repeated after the initial inflected form:

*I-tur-tur lalak tur-tur lalak bbu i-ro*  
 3SG:REAL-REDUP-stand quietly REDUP-stand quietly until 3SG:REAL-hear  
*muut sapm i-vwel.*  
 person one 3SG:REAL-come  
 ‘(S)he stood quietly on and on until (s)he heard somebody come.’

(ii) *Bbbbbbbbbb*

The form *bbu* can be used to introduce a subordinate clause with the meaning of ‘until’. *Bbu* can also be repeated two (or more) times to indicate continuity. The vowel often becomes almost inaudible, resulting in something that is very close to an elongated bilabial trill. The longer the trill, the greater the continuity of the initial event. Often, this strategy combines with the repetition of the uninflected form of the verb, resulting in forms such as:

*E-sol-sol i-vwel vwel vwel vwel bbbbbb*  
 3SG:REAL-REDUP-walk 3SG:REAL-come come come come until  
*i-siber liim.*  
 3SG:REAL-reach village  
 ‘(S)he walked on and on and eventually reached the village.’

### 5.4.2 Sequence

Sequence seems to be marked by the form *vaaki ~ baaki* ‘so, and then’, and also by the Bislama loan *ale* which has the same meaning.

*Ar-ip ip ip bbu ar-va ar-ip ar-siber sin avat ti. Vaaki*  
 DL-go go go until DL-do DL-go DL-reach place stone DEM SEQ  
*i-kila lalak i-la momo lele ti i-dingman.*  
 3SG:REAL-look secretly 3SG:REAL-see girl DEM 3SG:REAL-lie.down  
 ‘They went on and on as far as that rock. Then he looked secretly and saw a little girl lying down.’  
*I-va “Kiip ka-lap”. Ale iip i-lap.*  
 3SG-REAL-say 2SG:IRR-go 2SG:IRR-fetch SEQ 3SG:REAL:go 3SG:REAL-fetch  
 ‘He said, “Go and fetch her.” So she went and fetched her.’

It is quite common in texts to find combinations of both of these markers, both in the form *ale vaaki ~ ale baaki* and in the form *vaaki ale ~ baaki ale*. For example:

... *Ale vaaki vat-n i-sir.*  
 ... SEQ SEQ stomach-3SG 3SG:REAL-full  
 ‘... And then his stomach was full.’

# 6 *Avava–English lexicon*

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The following lexicon of Avava is exhaustive for the corpus that has been assembled to date. It contains just under 2000 items of lexical information. While most items are given in their root form, directly possessed nouns are given in their third person singular form, that is with the suffix *-n*: thus the root *ana-* ‘pus’, for example, appears in this list with the 3SG suffix, as *anan*. [*Unlike in Crowley’s three other monographs on Malakula languages, this one contains glosses for some items in both Bislama and Neve’ei as well as in English, often dealing with flora and fauna. I am not sure what the specific intention behind this may have been, but have included them as they were in the original – JL*]

Abbreviations used to mark the grammatical category of an Avava form are as follows:

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>adj.</i>     | adjective                                |
| <i>adv.</i>     | adverb                                   |
| <i>conj.</i>    | conjunction                              |
| <i>int.</i>     | interjection                             |
| <i>inter.</i>   | interrogative                            |
| <i>loc.</i>     | locational noun                          |
| <i>n.</i>       | noun                                     |
| <i>npart.</i>   | noun possessed in partitive construction |
| <i>ns.</i>      | noun which takes suffixed possessive     |
| <i>num.</i>     | numeral                                  |
| <i>pcl.</i>     | paucal                                   |
| <i>postmod.</i> | postmodifier                             |
| <i>premod.</i>  | premodifier                              |
| <i>prep.</i>    | preposition                              |
| <i>pron.</i>    | pronoun                                  |
| <i>sub.</i>     | subordinator                             |
| <i>svi.</i>     | intransitive serial verb                 |
| <i>svt.</i>     | transitive serial verb                   |
| <i>v.</i>       | verb                                     |
| <i>vi.</i>      | intransitive verb                        |
| <i>vt.</i>      | transitive verb                          |
| <i>vtr.</i>     | reflexive transitive                     |

## A

- aabb** *n.* 1. fire [Bis. *faea*] [Nev. *na'am*]  
2. firewood [Bis. *faeawud*]  
3. Ambrym
- aabb teltel** *n.* smoke (from fire) [Bis. *smok*] [Nev. *na'am tetal*]
- aabb vangavang** *n.* 1. burning piece of firewood [Nev. *nemas na'am*]  
2. male lobster or prawn, which has large claws. Also **golvar**.
- aabb vwinianu** *n.* giant taro variety
- aabbul** *n.* banana variety
- aari** *n.* victory leaf (generic) (*Cordyline terminalis*) [Bis. *nakarie*] [Nev. *na'ari*]
- aari bbuah** *n.* victory leaf variety
- aari born** *n.* victory leaf variety
- aari bwetekari** *n.* victory leaf variety
- aari damat** *n.* dragonfly [Nev. *nududunwi*]
- aari sibwedr** *n.* victory leaf variety
- aari vanatubbuah** *n.* victory leaf variety
- aari vweru** *n.* victory leaf variety
- aba** *n.* tree sp. [Nev. *nebo*]
- abah** *n.* sugarcane [Bis. *sugaken*] [Nev. *netev*]
- abak** *n.* turtle [Bis. *totel*] [Nev. *neba'*]
- abal**<sup>1</sup> *n.* kava. Also **bwilolok**. [Bis. *kava*] [Nev. *nebwal*]
- abal**<sup>2</sup> *n.* swamp harrier (*Circus approximans*) [Bis. *hokdei*] [Nev. *nebal*]
- abang** *n.* banyan (generic) [Bis. *nabangga*] [Nev. *nebang*]
- abang nan lison** *n.* vas deferens [Bis. *string blong bol*] [Nev. *na'abang nelesen*]
- abasi** *n.* 1. moon [Bis. *mun*] 2. month [Bis. *manis*] [Nev. *navil*]
- abasi mial** *n.* December. Also **bolongmur**. [Bis. *Disemba*] [Nev. *naviltemah*]
- abat** *n.* vine sp. with roots that can be chewed [Nev. *nebat*]
- abbuah** *n.* 1. boar [Bis. *man pig*] [Nev. *nubuah*] 2. bull [Bis. *bul*]
- abbun** *ns.* smell *Abbun ibo*. It stinks. [Bis. *smel*] [Nev. *nabun*]
- abbung**<sup>1</sup> *n.* day [Bis. *dei*] [Nev. *nabung*]
- abbung**<sup>2</sup> *n.* pumice [Nev. *nabung merah*]
- abbur** *n.* elephantiasis [Bis. *bigleg*]
- abbutbut** *n.* mute person [Bis. *nambut*]
- abi** *n.* cassava, manioc [Bis. *maniok*]
- abulbul** *n.* basket used for carrying rubbish [Bis. *basket blong doti*]
- adam** *n.* 1. yam (generic) (*Dioscorea* spp.) [Bis. *yam*] [Nev. *nedam*]  
2. year [Bis. *ya*] [Nev. *nesakhau*]
- adam matamat** *n.* yam variety
- adam matamat ber** *n.* variety of *adam matamat* yam
- adam matamat mutmut** *n.* variety of *adam matamat* yam
- adl** *n.* earwax [Bis. *doti blong sora*] [Nev. *adl*]
- adrab** *n.* 1. mud [Bis. *sofmad*] [Nev. *nelebelem*] 2. swamp [Bis. *swam*]
- adrab vukar** *n.* athlete's foot [Bis. *sofmad i kakae leg*] [Nev. *nedraba'ar*]
- adrar** *n.* Indian coral tree (*Erythrina variegata*) [Bis. *narara*]
- aga** *n.* 1. tree [Bis. *tri*] 2. wood, stick [Bis. *wud*] [Nev. *na'ai*]
- aga mial** *n.* club which has no knobs below the head
- aga mul** *n.* tree sp.
- agap** *n.* club which has sharp end and no knobs near the end
- akanian** *n.* food. Also **nalah**. [Bis. *kakae*]
- alak** *n.* in-law

- alal** *n.* trochus [Bis. *troka*]  
**alang** *n.* sky [Bis. *skae*]  
**alang nan auh** *n.* cloud [Bis. *klaod*]  
**alangaap** *n.* lightning [Bis. *laetmin*]  
**alap** *n.* tree sp. (*Polyscias scutellaria*)  
 [Bis. *nalalas*] [Nev. *nangalelav*]  
**ale** *adv.* 1. so, and then 2. *int.* OK  
**alih** *n.* nits [Bis. *eg blong laos*]  
 [Nev. *nerer*]  
**alit** *n.* fence [Bis. *fanis*]  
**amal** *n.* house *Bwisibok sapm iip ibabak lapan amal te.* A rat went and hid under his house. Also **iim**. [Bis. *haos*]  
**amal emwet** *n.* clan group [Bis. *nasara*]  
**aman** *n.* bird (generic) [Bis. *pijin*]  
**amap** *n.* level place [Bis. *level ples*]  
**amar** *n.* hunger **amar iyat** be hungry  
*Amar iyat na.* I am hungry. **amar iyatyat** be hungry *Naro amar iyatyat.* I feel hungry.  
**amat** *n.* trap (for bird, pig), sling.  
 Also **tatamat**  
**amul** *num.* million *amul sapm* ‘one million’ [Bis. *million*]  
**amwat** *n.* snake [Bis. *snek*]  
**anah** *n.* Tahitian chestnut (*Inocarpus edulis*) [Bis. *namambe*]  
**anah bwilip** *n.* tree sp. [Nev. *na’avus*]  
**anal** *n.* 1. sun 2. drought [Bis. *san*]  
**anal molmol** *n.* sun that is obscured by dark cloud  
**anam** *n.* mosquito [Bis. *moskito*]  
**anan** *ns.* pus (of sore) *anan vwinih* ‘pus from sore’ [Bis. *doti blong soa*]  
**angat** *num.* hundred *angat sapm* ‘one hundred’, *angat iru* ‘two hundred’ [Bis. *handred*]  
**ani** *n.* coconut [Bis. *kokonas*]  
**ani aabb** *n.* coconut variety that is yellow  
**ani kubaum** *n.* coconut variety that falls when pelted with rock or throwing stick rather than having to be poked out with bamboo pole  
**ani midimidim** *n.* windfallen coconut, coconut that has fallen because it has been chewed by rat  
**ani sangan** *n.* coconut variety which produces many small fruit in a bunch  
**ani tara** *n.* dry coconut that is good for grating to extract milk  
**ani tepmaru** *n.* sprouting coconut with two shoots instead of just one  
**ani teptep** *n.* sprouting coconut [Bis. *navara*]  
**apak** *npart.* yam mound [Bis. *gref blong yam*]  
**apap** *n.* penis wrapper [Bis. *nambas*]  
**Apap Bbur** *n.* Big Nambas people  
**Apap Lele** *n.* people of Lamap area  
**apm** *n.* banana [Bis. *banana*]  
**apm bbur** *n.* banana variety which is good for feeding pigs  
**apm ber** *n.* banana variety  
**apm kevet** *n.* banana variety  
**apm kraun** *n.* variety of *masatan* banana that is shorter  
**apm kuk** *n.* banana variety that is not for making pudding but is only for boiling or cooking in bamboo. Also **apm lilit**.  
**apm lilit** *n.* banana variety that is not for making pudding but is only for boiling or cooking in bamboo. Also **apm kuk**.  
**apm matamat** *n.* Chinese banana, which is eaten ripe. Also **apm salsamu**.  
**apm matamat mutmut** *n.* variety of Chinese banana  
**apm mim** *n.* ripe banana (which can be eaten without being cooked). Also **apmimin**. [Bis. *raef banana*]  
**apm misor** *n.* apple banana with very large fruit [Nev. *nimisur*]

- apm salsalmu** *n.* Chinese banana, which is eaten ripe. Also **apm matamat**.
- apm sibermim** *n.* banana variety
- apmar** *n.* emerald ground dove (*Chalcophaps indica*) [Bis. *sotleg*]
- apmimin** *n.* 1. ripe banana (which can be eaten without being cooked). Also **apm mim**. 2. albino
- apmua** *n.* breadfruit variety
- arah** *n.* yam that has gone rotten
- arah nan emer** *n.* eel sp. which is yellow and black
- arak** *vi.* crawl
- arat** *n.* green coconut without flesh that is not yet ready for drinking
- arum** *n.* crab sp. [Nev. *nurukhum*]
- arum nan ani** *n.* coconut crab (*Birgus latro*) [Bis. *krab kokonas*] [Nev. *nukhutu vusni*]
- arup**<sup>1</sup> *n.* garden. Also **rakian**. [Bis. *garen*]
- arup**<sup>2</sup> *n.* tree sp.
- arup kabat** *n.* store [Bis. *stoa*]
- arupmaap** *n.* 1. tinea versicolor [Bis. *waetspot*] 2. fungus growing on bark of living tree
- arusap** *n.* heliconia leaf [Bis. *lif laplap*]
- aruun** *ns.* leaf [Bis. *lif*]
- aruun aga** *n.* traditional medicine [Bis. *lif meresin*]
- asah** *n.* croton (generic) [Nev. *nensah*]
- asal** *n.* road, path [Bis. *rod*]
- asi** *inter.* who? *Kama asi?* Who are you with? Also **nahe**, **nasi**. [Bis. *hu*]
- asih** *n.* breast [Bis. *titi*]
- asik** *n.* kingfisher (*Halcyon chloris*) [Bis. *nasiko*]
- asil** *n.* 1. light [Bis. *laet*] 2. torch [Bis. *tos*]
- asilimet** *n.* croton variety
- asilimet mial** *n.* variety of *asilimet* croton
- asilimet yovyop** *n.* variety of *asilimet* croton
- asimwinipnu** *n.* yam variety
- asn** *ns.* jaw [Bis. *jo*] [Nev. *nakhasen*]
- asur** *n.* semen [Bis. *melek*] [Nev. *nowi mavis*] **asur irup** ejaculate [Bis. *melek i sut*]
- ataap** *n.* conch shell [Bis. *bubu*]
- atah** *npart.* flower. Also **ipman**. [Bis. *flaoa*]
- atah nan avik** *n.* yam variety
- atal** *n.* 1. rope, string 2. vine [Bis. *rop*] 3. traditional waistband [Bis. *strap*] 4. trousers [Bis. *traoses*]
- atan** *n.* 1. earth, ground, dirt, soil 2. land [Bis. *graon*]
- atan lele** *n.* offshore island [Bis. *smol aelan*]
- atan levlep** *n.* 1. mainland [Bis. *biglan*] 2. Espiritu Santo
- atan nan mekian** *ns.* bladder [Bis. *basket blong pispis*]
- atang** *npart.* placenta, afterbirth [Bis. *basket blong pikinini*]
- atar** *num.* thousand *atar sapm* ‘one thousand’ [Bis. *taosen*]
- atat** *n.* basket [Bis. *basket*]
- atat bbul** *n.* long coconut leaf basket with four handles for carrying garden produce home
- atat bbulah** *n.* open-ended coconut leaf basket with no handles for carrying garden produce home
- atat nan bbulul** *n.* scrotum [Bis. *basket blong bol*]
- atat nan mat** *n.* bowel [Bis. *basket blong sitsit*]
- atat viti** *n.* open-mouthed round coconut leaf basket
- atbutuk** *n.* shellfish sp. [Nev. *natnbutukh*]

**atda** *n.* child. Also **ida**, **atnida**.  
[Bis. *pikinini*]

**atibol** *n.* dragon plum (*Dracontomelon vitiense*) [Bis. *nakatambol*]

**atn** *ns.* child, son, daughter. Also **vanatn**.  
[Bis. *pikinini*]

**atnavin** *ns.* daughter

**atnida** *n.* child. Also **ida**, **atda**.  
[Bis. *pikinini*]

**Atua** *n.* God [Bis. *God*]

**atur** *n.* arrow. Also **ulukai**. [Bis. *ara*]

**auh** *n.* rain [Bis. *ren*]

**aut** *n.* lice, louse [Bis. *laos*] [Nev. *na'at*]

**avam** *n.* cave [Bis. *hol blong ston*]

**avan** *n.* breadfruit variety

**avan mial** *n.* variety of *avan* breadfruit

**avar** *n.* 1. heliconia [Bis. *lif laplap*]  
2. banana variety

**avaran awang** *n.* paddle, oar [Bis. *parel*]

**avat** *n.* 1. stone, rock [Bis. *ston*]  
2. money. Also **bwilat**. [Bis. *vatu*]

**avat ivleh** *n.* cooking stones. Also **avat susulah**. [Bis. *ston blong laplap*]

**avat murmur** *n.* type of stone that crumbles easily in hands

**avat susulah** *n.* cooking stones. Also **avat ivleh**.

**avaton** *n.* coral rock in bush [Bis. *waetston*]

**avik** *n.* Malay apple (*Syzygium* sp.)  
[Bis. *nakavika*]

**avin nan oto** *n.* hen. Also **momo nan oto**. [Bis. *woman faol*]

**avis** *n.* 1. small variety of Fijian asparagus (*Saccharum edule*) [Bis. *smol naviso*]  
2. yam variety

**avis mer** *n.* large variety of Fijian asparagus (*Saccharum edule*) [Bis. *big naviso*]

**avis mial** *n.* variety of *avis* yam

**avis yovyop** *n.* variety of *avis* yam

**avrika** *n.* yam species [Bis. *yam afrika*]

**awah** *n.* spear [Bis. *spia*]

**awal** *n.* 1. hole, hollow 2. gully, creek bed

**awal amah** *n.* dry gully

**awal nan mat** *n.* anus [Bis. *hol blong sitsit*]

**awang** *n.* canoe [Bis. *kenu*]

**awi** *n.* wild cane (*Miscanthus* sp.)  
[Bis. *waelken*]

**aya** *n.* pudding [Bis. *laplap*]  
[Nev. *nelang*]

**aya gun** *n.* grated tuber or banana that is wrapped in island cabbage and cooked in coconut milk [Bis. *simboro*]

**aya kabat** *n.* rice. Also **ovingaad**.  
[Bis. *raes*]

**aya lowe** *n.* kind of pudding (which is no longer made)

**aya nan adam** *n.* yam pudding  
[Bis. *laplap yam*]

**aya nan apm** *n.* banana pudding  
[Bis. *laplap banana*]

**aya nan bbuang** *n.* swamp taro pudding  
[Bis. *laplap wota taro*]

**aya nan mwiniel** *n.* taro pudding  
[Bis. *laplap taro*]

**aya sosong** *n.* pudding that is cooked in bamboo over fire

## B

**ba** *vi.* where? Also **bang**.

**baaki** *adv.* and then, so. Also **vaaki**.

**babak** *vi.* hide *Bwisibok sapm iip ibabak lapan amal te*. A rat went and hid under his house. *Itur da itnan gorki ier atbabak e ti*. She stood where those folks were hiding. [Bis. *haed*]

**bak** *vi.* settle, land *Vwilang sapm ibak aran matan emer*. A fly settled on the eel's eye.

- bakabang** *vi.* tight
- bakadre** *n.* croton variety
- bakah** *svi.* 1. too *Iber bakah*. It is too long. 2. very *Galú tana sarivik bakahmu*. My mother is not very nice.
- bakahi** *svt.* do very much *Sawah bakahimu galu te*. He did not like her mother very much.
- bakamaat** *n.* banyan sp.
- bakamet** *n.* banyan sp.
- baki** *int.* yes. Also **ikaki**.
- bakur** *n.* kind of tree, tamanu (*Calophyllum inophyllum*) [Bis. *nambakura*]
- bakwa** *n.* small banyan sp.
- bala** *n.* pig. Also **barabar**. [Bis. *pig*]
- bala matak** *n.* wild pig
- baladrong** *n.* 1. sow [Bis. *woman pig*]  
2. cow [Bis. *kao*]
- balaka** *n.* cottonwood (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*) [Bis. *buraó*]
- balaka nan tuswe** *n.* sea trumpet tree (*Cordia subcordata*) [Bis. *buraó blong solwota*]
- balawan** *ns.* neck [Bis. *nek*]
- balbalakut** *vi.* make noise, be noisy  
*Atde lele ier atbalbalakut*. The little children were noisy.
- bali** *n.* platform *bali nan adam* ‘yam platform’ [Bis. *bed*]
- balyehyeh** *n.* bird sp. [Nev. *nebal yesyes*]
- bana** *sub.* if
- bang** *vi.* where? *Git bwerap bang?*  
Where will we go? Also **ba**.
- bar** *vi.* (of eyes) blind *Matan ibar*. (S)he is blind. [Bis. *blaen*]
- baraar** *n.* swamp taro variety
- barabar** *n.* pig. Also **bala**. [Bis. *pig*]
- barabar viti** *n.* banana variety [Bis. *malel*]
- barabarian aya** *n.* pudding made with layer of meat in middle
- barang** *n.* island cabbage variety that is dark red and which is only eaten by the men of a particular lineage
- barat** *n.* beam of house which runs along top of the wall (and which rats often run along at night)
- barbarbet** *vi.* make pounded breadfruit. Also **rivritbet**.
- barbarih met** *n.* tree fern [Bis. *blakpam*]
- bari** *n.* dream [Bis. *drim*]
- bari borokonah** *n.* dream that does not come true
- bariin** *adj.* 1. (of side) right 2. true, real, genuine. Also **bwiriin**.
- barum** *n.* dry coconut that has fallen to the ground but which has not yet sprouted
- bas** *vi.* fart audibly [Bis. *fat wetem noes*]
- basn** *ns.* 1. incisor tooth. Also **isong beker**. 2. upper tusk (of pig)
- basubbur** *n.* sugarcane variety with dark red skin and very dark streaks that has soft flesh
- bat** *npart.* head *bat nan ong* ‘your head’ [Bis. *hed*]
- bat nan sivr** *n.* clitoris [Bis. *hed blong nasiviru*]
- bat tamaka** *n.* yam variety
- bat taran** *ns.* pubic area
- batiktor** *n.* warrior [Bis. *jampion*]
- bativin** *n.* breadfruit variety
- batlang** *n.* club. Also **tabar**. [Bis. *nalnal*]
- batmala** *n.* head that is only bald on top
- batn** *ns.* 1. head 2. top (of yam) *batn adam* ‘top of the yam’
- batn osom** *n.* armband
- batn varan** *ns.* shoulder [Bis. *solda*]
- batn vwalan** *ns.* glans penis [Bis. *hed blong kok*]



- batumaap** *n.* bald pate, head that is completely bald [Bis. *bolhed*]
- batumial** *n.* yam variety
- batwaram** *n.* yam variety
- baun** *ns.* elbow, knee
- baun bolokon** *ns.* knee
- baun varan** *ns.* elbow
- bbuah** *n.* grandmother [Bis. *bubu woman*]
- bbuah daka** *n.* wild yam variety. Also **bwirbwir bbul, bwirbwir ibbul.**
- bbuah kabat** *n.* cattle
- bbuah mial** *n.* insect, yellow, which bites
- bbuang** *n.* swamp taro (generic) (*Colocasia esculenta*) [Bis. *wota taro*]
- bbubang** *n.* support post for roof (in house). Also **uba.** [Bis. *stanpos*]
- bbudiem** *n.* 1. lobster or prawn that is carrying eggs 2. roe (of fish)
- bbudop** *vi.* (of river) dry up leaving just occasional pools
- bbukasusa** *n.* giant taro variety
- bbuken** *ns.* section (of cane, bamboo)
- bbukiking** *n.* second gizzard inside bird [Bis. *nambatu gat*]
- bbukumaas** *n.* shark [Bis. *sak*]
- bbul** *npart.* seed (of breadfruit)
- bbul nan ebet** *n.* breadfruit variety
- bbulah** *n.* skull [Bis. *bun blong hed*]
- bbulalam** *n.* thigh
- bbulbbul daling** *vi.* dizzy. Also **outnan ibbulbbul daling** dizzy [Bis. *ae i dak*]
- bbuleh** *svt.* turn over [Bis. *tanem*]
- bbulen** *ns.* feather [Bis. *feda*]
- bbulen apmar** *n.* croton variety
- bbulengi** *vt.* forget *Itnen na ibbulengi isan ong.* I have forgotten your name. [Bis. *fogetem*]
- bbulul** *n.* testicles [Bis. *bol*]
- bbum** *n.* grandfather [Bis. *bubu man*]
- bbun**<sup>1</sup> *svt.* kill
- bbun**<sup>2</sup> *vi.* full [Bis. *fulap*] [Nev. *vun*]
- bbun kor** *vt.* (of tide) come in and block (someone's) way
- bbun lam** *vi.* (of tide) come right in, be full tide [Bis. *fultaed*]
- bbunbbun** *vi.* 1. (of body) swollen with water retention 2. (of tide) come in, rise *Tuswe ibbunbbun.* The tide is rising. [Bis. *kam soa*] 3. (of river) be high
- bbunbbun met** *n.* swamp taro variety
- bbunbbunvat** *n.* banana variety
- bbung** *vt.* grate (tuber) *Ibbung adam.* (S)he grated the yam. [Bis. *skrasem*]
- bbungbbung** *vi.* grate tuber
- bbunitl** *adv.* three days before today
- bbunivat** *adv.* four days before today
- bbunlim** *adv.* five days before today
- bbupur** *vi.* put in bamboo stakes beside yam mounds for yam vines to climb up
- bbur** *vi.* 1. enlarged, unusually large 2. swell up, swollen [Bis. *solap*]
- bbura** *vi.* have pins and needles. Also **parun.**
- bburtan** *ns.* 1. intestines [Bis. *gat*] 2. pith that is removed from middle of breadfruit
- bburtan mwinisini** *n.* first gizzard inside bird [Bis. *nambawan gat*]
- bbusal** *svt.* 1. along the road *Ouh bolo ivop iyan bbusal ier.* It rained heavily on them along the road. 2. *svi.* along the road *Asap bbusal atiip.* They danced along the road.
- bbusaman** *n.* island cabbage variety [Bis. *tang blong buluk*]
- bbuser** *n.* 1. fibre skirt [Bis. *grasket*] 2. *npart.* fibre which falls from top of coconut palm. Also **surang.** [Bis. *blangket blong kokonas*]

- bbusn** *ns.* tail [Bis. *tel*]
- bbut**<sup>1</sup> *vi.* silent, mute [Bis. *nambut*]
- bbut**<sup>2</sup> *vi.* step *Ibbut ran mat te gabwir sapm.* (S)he stepped in a dog's excrement. Also **gem**.
- bbut dah** *vi.* slip *Ibbut dah len adrab.* (S)he slipped in the mud. [Bis. *glis*]
- bbutan** *ns.* footprint [Bis. *trak blong leg*]
- bbutan kabat** *n.* shoes, boots [Bis. *sus, but*]
- bbutasup** *n.* yam variety
- bbutbatn** *ns.* part of back of head which, when struck, results in instant death
- bbutdam metemet** *n.* yam variety
- bbutdap per** *n.* yam variety
- bbuten** *ns.* 1. navel, belly button  
2. umbilical cord [Bis. *nambuton*]
- bbuten avat** *n.* smallest cooking stones, placed in bottom of cooking pit. Also **lasavat**.
- bbuten maramar** *n.* herniated navel
- bbutn** *ns.* large branch
- bbuut** *loc.* inside *Emwet tana ito bbuut len amal.* My knife is inside the house. [Bis. *insaed*]
- be** *vi.* drunk [Bis. *drong*]
- bebe** *vi.* crazy, mad. Also **lengleng**. [Bis. *krangke*]
- bebem** *n.* butterfly, moth [Bis. *bataflae*] [Nev. *nebem*]
- bebesa** *n.* insect that lays eggs in citrus fruit [Bis. *bebet blong aranis*]
- beh** *svt.* clean *Keleng beh ani.* Husk the coconut clean. [Bis. *klinim*]
- behnan** *ns.* 1. base of coconut frond by which it is attached to tree  
2. base of taro leaf where it grows out of tuber
- beke** *n.* sorcery [Bis. *nakaemas*]
- beker** *n.* banana variety which causes urine to turn yellow
- beker dingsar** *n.* variety of *beker* banana
- beker vanusoweng** *n.* variety of *beker* banana
- beker vin-gorit** *n.* variety of *beker* banana
- bel** *vt.* hunt after, chase (to catch) *Atrep gabwir atbel bbuah kabat dri satriitmu.* They took the dogs and hunted after the the cow but they didn't kill it.
- bel lu** *vt.* chase away *Komatbel lu gabwir ier sin bbuah kabat.* We chased the dogs away from the cow.
- belbel** *vi.* prepare fire for lighting *Min ibelbel lehi aabb.* (S)he prepared the fire again for lighting.
- belbeli** *vt.* prepare (fire) for lighting *Kebelbeli aabb.* Prepare a fire for lighting.
- ber** *vi.* 1. long 2. tall 3. (of mountain) high. Also **berber**. [Bis. *longfala*]
- berber** *vi.* 1. long 2. tall 3. (of mountain) high. Also **ber**. [Bis. *longfala*]
- betakon** *n.* breadfruit variety
- betar** *n.* yam variety
- betasil** *n.* breadfruit variety
- betavik** *n.* breadfruit variety
- betbarbar** *n.* pounded breadfruit  
Also **betrivrit**.
- betbbuah** *n.* breadfruit variety
- betivri** *n.* breadfruit variety
- betlitslits** *n.* breadfruit variety
- betlual** *n.* breadfruit variety
- betrivrit** *n.* pounded breadfruit.  
Also **betbarbar**.
- betsamanaga** *n.* breadfruit variety
- betuma** *n.* breadfruit variety
- betuvah** *n.* breadfruit variety
- bial**<sup>1</sup> *adj.* ordinary, common
- bial**<sup>2</sup> *svt.* randomly *Sarokutmu abwitter wel bial i emwet.* They could not cut it apart randomly with a knife.
- bilabil** *n.* croton variety

- bilabil mial** *n.* variety of *bilabil* croton
- bilabil yovyop** *n.* variety of *bilabil* croton
- bilakvwala** *n.* dwarf spirit with long hair [Bis. *lisefsef*]
- bilep** *prep.* 1. with *Ong tirtirsit bilep nahe?* Who were you talking with?  
2. *vt.* be with. Also **bitep**, **bineri**.
- biltuep** *n.* sea cucumber sp. [Nev. *nuwusn matoro*]
- bineri** *prep.* 1. with 2. *vt.* be with. Also **bilep**, **bitep**.
- binitas** *n.* swamp taro variety
- birbir** *n.* sea hearse tree (*Hernandia nymphaeifolia*) [Bis. *nambirimbi*]
- birip** *n.* pandanus [Bis. *pandanus*]
- bisnaap** *n.* 1. ashes [Bis. *asis*] 2. dust [Bis. *smok blong graon*] 3. flour [Bis. *flaoa*] 4. bread [Bis. *bred*] 5. baby powder [Bis. *paoda*]
- bitep** *prep.* 1. with 2. *vt.* be with *Bbum tier atbitep muut tier*. His grandfathers were with the people. Also **bilep**, **bineri**.
- bivil** *svt.* all over, everywhere *Istelah irep bivil*. The devil was pulling him all over the place. *Istelah atwu bivil e*. The devils had touched him everywhere.
- bo** *vi.* stink *Abbun ibo*. It stinks. [Bis. *sting*]
- bobobial** *n.* croton variety
- bobok** *n.* insect, beastie, creepy-crawly [Bis. *bebet*]
- bobomial** *n.* swiftlet
- boh** *svt.* break open
- bolbbur** *n.* banana variety
- bolokon** *ns.* 1. leg, foot 2. (of animal) hind leg [Bis. *leg*]
- bolokon aga** *n.* victory leaf variety
- bolokon kutn** *ns.* foot
- bolokon otomala** *n.* yam variety
- bolokopal** *n.* giant taro variety
- bolokovat** *n.* car [Bis. *trak*]
- bolong** *n.* bone [Bis. *bun*]
- bolong nan druun** *ns.* spine on fin (of fish)
- bolongmur** *n.* December. Also **abasi mial**. [Bis. *Disemba*]
- bolyevyep** *n.* reef heron (*Egretta sacra*) [Bis. *longnek*]
- bongon** *ns.* 1. mouth [Bis. *maot*] 2. front (of something) [Bis. *fored*]
- bongon matili** *n.* doorway
- bonot** *vi.* blunt [Bis. *no sap*]
- bop** *n.* vagina [Bis. *kan*]
- bop mwilip** *n.* spider web [Bis. *bed blong spaeda*]
- bopbbuah** *n.* inedible variety of *vanibop* tuber
- bor**<sup>1</sup> *vi.* (of ears) deaf *Dilingan ibor*. (S)he is deaf.
- bor**<sup>2</sup> *vi.* ashamed, embarrassed, shy [Bis. *sem*]
- born** *ns.* comb (on chicken's head). Also **obor**, **imah**.
- borobor** *n.* scabies. Also **korokor**.
- boroh** *n.* tooth. Modern form for **itivitlak** [Bis. *tut*]
- borokonah** *n.* yellow fungus which grows on roots of tree
- bour** *n.* banana variety [Nev. *nobour*]
- bulbal** *n.* fan [Bis. *fan*]
- busmariri** *n.* bat [Bis. *flaenbat*]
- busuma** *n.* flying fox (generic) [Bis. *flaenfoks*]
- butuan** *n.* 1. hill, mountain [Bis. *hil*] 2. island [Bis. *aelan*]
- butuan berber** *n.* Paama
- bwedr** *vi.* tasteless, bland [Nev. *bwedr*]
- bwetekari** *n.* small devil
- bweteni** *n.* yam variety
- bweyau** *n.* yam variety
- bwian** *ns.* wing [Bis. *wing*]

**bwikilah** *n.* coconut shell. Also **bwilisani**. [Bis. *sel kokonas*]  
**bwikivar** *n.* ankle rattle tree (*Pangium edule*) [Bis. *navangge*]  
**bwil** *vi.* close eyes. Also **ingat**. [Bis. *sarem ae*]  
**bwil kilkila** *vi.* wink [Bis. *sarem wansaed ae*]  
**bwilat** *n.* 1. money [Bis. *vatu*]. Also **avat**. 2. book. Also **ovol**. [Bis. *buk*]  
**bwilbwilingat** *vi.* blink  
**bwilduep** *n.* breadfruit variety  
**bwilisani** *n.* 1. coconut shell. Also **bwikilah**. [Bis. *sel kokonas*] 2. cup [Bis. *kap*]  
**bwilisl** *ns.* 1. seed [Bis. *sid*] 2. shell (of coconut) [Bis. *sel kokonas*]  
**bwilolok** *n.* kava *Ibe i bwilolok*. He is drunk with kava. Also **abal**. [Bis. *kava*]  
**bwingbwing** *vi.* 1. tell lies. Also **kakob**. 2. false, imitation, made-up *Stori bwingbwing itik*. It's not a made-up story. [Bis. *giaman*]  
**bwingbwing sur** *vt.* lie to, trick, deceive *Ibwingbwing sur git*. (S)he tricked us. [Bis. *giaman long*]  
**bwir** *vt.* 1. break 2. disobey (instruction) 3. *svt.* break [Bis. *brekem*]  
**bwirbwir** *vt.* try to convince  
**bwirbwir bbul** *n.* wild yam variety. Also **bwirbwir ibbul, bbuah daka**.  
**bwirbwir epel** *n.* wild yam variety  
**bwirbwir ibbul** *n.* wild yam variety. Also **bwirbwir bbul, bbuah daka**.  
**bwirbwir sado** *n.* wild yam variety  
**bwiriang** *n.* swamp taro variety  
**bwiriin**<sup>1</sup> *adj.* 1. (of side) right 2. true, real, genuine. Also **bariin**.  
**bwiriin**<sup>2</sup> *vi.* determined, arrogant  
**bwirkaka** *n.* spinal column, backbone [Bis. *bun blong bak*]

**bwirkoto** *n.* large hermit crab [Bis. *bigfala nakato*]  
**bwisian** *n.* 1. language [Bis. *lanwis*] 2. talk, utterance 3. message 4. word [Bis. *toktok*] 5. story (especially a historical, contemporary or made-up story, in contrast to a traditional story) [Bis. *stori*]  
**bwisian kabat** *n.* Bislama  
**bwisibok** *n.* rat *Bwisibok sapm iip ibabak lapan amal te*. A rat went and hid under his house. [Bis. *rat*] [Nev. *nelabut*]  
**bwiti** *svt.* accidentally *Tara, kulu bar bwiti matan na!* Watch out, you might accidentally shoot me in the eye!

## D

**da** *svi.* a little, for a short while *Atlingling salan ier iding da*. They left their brother to lie on the ground for a while. [Bis. *smol*]  
**dadan** *vi.* 1. swim underwater 2. go diving (for fish) [Bis. *daeva*]  
**dah** *vi.* 1. go down, descend 2. (of sun) set. Also **dan**. [Bis. *godaon*]  
**dah sur** *vt.* go down along road to *Komatdah sur Mitnowe*. We went down along the road to Mitnowe.  
**daka** *vt.* hang  
**dakdaka** *vi.* married [Bis. *mared*]  
**daldal** *n.* thicket (of trees)  
**dam** *vi.* 1. shout, yell, call out. Also **ka**. 2. bark *Atrobit gabwir idam*. They heard the dog barking. [Bis. *singaot*]  
**damadr** *n.* yam species that is similar to wild yam (generic)  
**damadr vwila** *n.* variety of *damadr* tuber  
**damat** *n.* peace [Bis. *pis*]  
**damre** *n.* yam variety

- dan** *vi.* 1. sink, go underwater 2. (of sun) set *Anal idan*. The sun is setting. Also **dah**. [Bis. *draon*]
- danan momok** *n.* girl. Also **momok lele**. [Bis. *smol gel*]
- danan muut** *n.* boy. Also **muut lele**. [Bis. *smol boe*]
- dapa** *npart.* shoot (of yam) *dapa nan adam* ‘yam shoot’ [Bis. *gru*]
- dat** *n.* maternal uncle [Bis. *angkel*]
- davaki** *adv.* formerly, before *Momok ki itir ma bwisian nan itir davaki ki*. The woman just said the same as what she had said before.
- davalah** *n.* variety of *damadr* tuber
- dede** *vi.* dip pudding into coconut milk. Also **didi**.
- delengi** *vt.* not know *Ardelengi itnan ilem e*. They did not know where it had given birth. [Bis. *no save*]
- dem** *svi.* keep doing, still
- deng** *vt.* remove, take out *Vitiber ti imarmarak ideng abah ki*. The dwarf spirit upped and removed the sugarcane. [Bis. *karemaot*]
- deveh** *vt.* pour out, tip out *Ideveh owe*. (S)he poured out the water. [Bis. *kapsaetem*]
- didi** *vi.* dip pudding into coconut milk. Also **dede**.
- dikiap** *n.* 1. soft limpet 2. slug [Bis. *sofsofbak*] [Nev. *nadigiav*]
- dilim** *vt.* swallow [Bis. *solemdaon*]
- dilim sangi** *vi.* choke *Nadilim sangi*. I choked.
- dilingan** *ns.* 1. ear [Bis. *sora*] 2. gill (of fish) [Nev. *nedlangan*]
- dilingavat** *n.* fish sp., found in fresh water above submerged rocks
- dilivih** *svt.* around *Asap dilivih ier*. They danced around them.
- ding** *vi.* lie down *Kobwiritem tata mwidang lalak*. We will step hard on it so it will lie down quietly. Also **dingman**. [Bis. *ledaon*]
- ding bbuleh** *vi.* stand on head [Bis. *stanap long hed*]
- ding lalak** *vi.* be quiet [Bis. *stap kwaet*]
- ding masamah** *vi.* sleep on floor without mattress
- ding meletadr** *vi.* sleep on back [Bis. *slip long bak*]
- dingi** *vt.* put *Idingi akanian te len monong*. (S)he put his/her food onto the mat. [Bis. *putum*]
- dingman** *vi.* lie down. Also **ding**.
- dinih** *vt.* (of something hot) burn (person) *Avat ti idinih bolokon*. The hot stone burnt his/her feet.
- dirdir** *n.* earthquake [Bis. *etkwek*] [Nev. *namdar*]
- dito** *adj.* last. Also **iptak**. [Bis. *laswan*]
- dongdongon** *vt.* count (over a period of time) *Idongdongon avat*. (S)he is counting the money.
- dongon** *vt.* count (at a point in time) *Idongon avat tenep*. (S)he counted the money yesterday.
- dordorkon** *vi.* burp, belch
- draban** *ns.* scab
- draka** *loc.* 1. above, on top, up there *Namamatur draka, ong kamatur kutn*. I will sleep on top and you will sleep below. Also **ivsak**. 2. up in the bush *Savian sapm itok draka*. There was a dance up in the bush.
- drangdrang** *vi.* creak, crack
- dri**<sup>1</sup> *vt.* 1. turn 2. *vtr.* change [Bis. *tanem*]
- dri**<sup>2</sup> *conj.* 1. but 2. and 3. or 4. polar question marker *Baladrong takit ilem dri?* Has our sow given birth?
- dri bbuleh** *vt.* 1. turn over [Bis. *tanem*] 2. *vtr.* turn a somersault *Odri bbuleh ong*. You turned a somersault. [Bis.]

*kalipet*] 3. turn around *Atdri bbuleh ier bitep ma-Viar ier min atmwilu atvwel*. They turned around with the people of Viar and came back.

**dridri** *vtr.* roll over *Odridri ong*. You rolled over.

**drimdrim** *vi.* thirsty *Nadrimdrim*. I am thirsty. [Bis. *tosta*]

**drobb** *vi.* (of yam) go rotten in ground

**drokdrok** *vi.* (of hen) cluck to summon chicks

**druman** *ns.* 1. body [Bis. *bodi*] [Nev. *nedremwen*] 2. -teen (in counting) *langal druman itl* ‘thirteen’

**drumarah** *n.* lazy-bones [Bis. *les man*]

**drumusn** *ns.* 1. small fine roots 2. aerial roots of banyan

**duel** *vi.* sleepy [Bis. *harem slip*]

**duep** *n.* canoe tree (*Gyrocarpus americanus*) [Bis. *kenutri*] [Nev. *nuduov*]

**dukap** *n.* fog [Bis. *sno*]

**dumu** *vt.* burn, set fire to. Also **dungo**. [Bis. *bonem*]

**dungdung** *n.* banana variety

**dungo** *vt.* burn, set fire to. Also **dumu**. [Bis. *bonem*]

## E

**e** *pron.* he, she, it [Bis. *hem*]

**ebbun** *ns.* grandchild, grandson, granddaughter [Bis. *smolbubu*]

**ebet**<sup>1</sup> *n.* breadfruit (generic) (*Artocarpus altilis*) [Bis. *bbeswud*] [Nev. *nebet*]

**ebet**<sup>2</sup> *n.* pufferfish [Bis. *nilfis*]

**ebet ovol** *n.* breadfruit variety

**ebet ovotoh** *n.* breadfruit variety

**edre** *npart.* blood [Bis. *blad*]

**edre bungbang** *n.* clotted blood [Bis. *strongblad*]

**edrem** *n.* tree sp. that grows in old garden sites [Nev. *nimilili*]

**edreng** *n.* mat (whether made of pandanus or coconut leaf). Also **monong**.

**eleh** *n.* breadfruit variety

**elemet** *npart.* liver. Also **mabwin**. [Bis. *blakleva*]

**elen** *ns.* 1. interior, inside part of (something) [Bis. *insaed*] 2. voice *Narokut elen e*. I know his/her voice. [Bis. *voes*]

**elen bolokon** *ns.* sole of foot

**elen varan** *ns.* palm of hand

**emer** *n.* eel (generic) [Bis. *namarae*]

**emer awah** *n.* eel sp. which is longer than *emer tobbul* and with a yellow underside

**emer mial** *n.* eel sp. which is black and which turns reddish when fully grown

**emer tobbul** *n.* eel sp. which is black and white

**emer wosani** *n.* eel sp. with white eyes

**emwet** *n.* knife *Emwet tana ito bbuut len amal*. My knife is inside the house. [Bis. *naef*]

**enebb** *n.* 1. deep sea 2. deep pool in river *Emer ti idingman len enebb*. The eel was lying in the deep pool.

**eperian** *n.* 1. job, work 2. task [Bis. *wok*]

**esep** *n.* sugar ant. Also **esep met**. [Nev. *nabusbus*]

**esep met** *n.* sugar ant. Also **esep**. [Nev. *nabusbus*]

**esn** *ns.* 1. water, juice 2. sap (of tree) [Bis. *wota*]

**esn abah** *n.* sugar [Bis. *suga*]

**etet** *n.* tree sp. with white sap which grows along coast [Nev. *netet*]

**eve** *n.* stingray [Bis. *stingre*]

**evem** *n.* hat [Bis. *hat*]

## G

- gabwir** *n.* dog *Ibbut ran mat te gabwir sapm.* (S)he stepped in a dog's excrement. [Bis. *dog*]
- gahgah** *vi.* re-clear garden site for planting because it was left too long after clearing and the weeds started to grow back
- gal lam** *n.* mother's elder sister. Also **galu lam**.
- gal lele** *n.* mother's younger sister. Also **galu lele**. [Bis. *smolmama*]
- galat** *n.* devil nettle (*Dendrocnide* sp.) [Bis. *nangkalat*]
- galat mial** *n.* devil nettle variety
- galat mwerah** *n.* devil nettle variety
- galat nan tuswe** *n.* jellyfish [Bis. *nangkalat blong solwota*]
- galat ovop** *n.* devil nettle variety with large leaves
- galu** *n.* mother [Bis. *mama*]
- galu lam** *n.* mother's elder sister. Also **gal lam**.
- galu lele** *n.* mother's younger sister. Also **gal lele** [Bis. *smolmama*]
- garah**<sup>1</sup> *n.* yam variety
- garah**<sup>2</sup> *ns.* vine (of yam) [Bis. *rop blong yam*]
- gem** *vi.* step. Also **bbut**.
- gerevetan** *ns.* top of coconut where stalk attaches to fruit
- geritang** *n.* tree sp. with yellow fragrant flowers [Nev. *negeritang*]
- gerwen** *ns.* 1. large roots 2. handle (of basket). Also **varan**.
- gih** *vt.* squeeze
- gihgih** *n.* bougna (dish of baked tubers and sometimes meat). Also **sosok**.
- gimwin** *ns.* 1. chin 2. red fleshy growth on side of face (of rooster)

- giren** *ns.* 1. heel (of foot) *giren bolokon* 'his/her heel' 2. bottom (of yam)
- git** *pron.* we (pl. incl.) [Bis. *yumi*]
- gitdru** *pron.* we (dl. incl.) [Bis. *yumitufala*]
- gitntl** *pron.* we (pcl. incl.) [Bis. *yumitrifala*]
- gohgohtal** *n.* place where vines are all thick and tangled *Arsol len gohgohtal ier*. The two of them were walking in the place where the vines were all tangled.
- golvar** *n.* male lobster or prawn, which has large claws. Also **aabb vangavang**.
- gom** *vt.* put into mouth
- gong** *vt.* catch (something thrown)
- gorki ier** *n.* those people, those folks *Itur da itnan gorki ier atbabak e ti*. She stood where those folks were hiding.
- guh** *vi.* shrivel, shrink
- gun** *vt.* cross (legs) **gun bolokon sit** cross-legged

## I

- iar** *n.* casuarina (*Casuarina equisetifolia*) [Bis. *oktri*]
- iat** *n.* 1. sago palm (*Metroxylon warburgii*) 2. thatching for house [Bis. *natanggura*]
- iba** *inter.* where? which? *O matur len amal nan iba?* Which house are you sleeping in?
- ibal** *n.* spur (of rooster)
- ibam** *n.* yam variety
- ibbut** *n.* slipper lobster [Bis. *flatnaora*]
- ibbut maari** *n.* variety of prawn with white on back
- ibbut metemet** *n.* variety of prawn which is small and found under waterfalls
- ibing** *n.* giant turban shell [Bis. *grinsnel*]

**ibwil** *npart.* long tail feather (of bird)

**ibwilia** *n.* slitgong [Bis. *tamtam*]

**ida** *n.* child. Also **atda**, **atnida**.

[Bis. *pikinini*]

**ieh** *n.* breadfruit variety

**iem** *npart.* eggs (of prawn, lobster)

[Bis. *eg blong naora*]

**ier** *pron.* they (pl.) [Bis. *olgeta*]

**ierdru** *pron.* they (dl.) [Bis. *tufala*]

**iertl** *pron.* they (pcl.) [Bis. *trifala*]

**ihbariin** *n.* bow. Also **ihbwiriin**.

[Bis. *bonara*]

**ihbwiriin** *n.* bow. Also **ihbariin**.

[Bis. *bonara*]

**ihman** *vi.* unripe

**ihtamat** *n.* rifle [Bis. *masket*]

**iih** *postmod.* perfective. Also **iis**.

**iim** *n.* house. Also **amal** [Bis. *haos*]

**iis** *postmod.* perfective. Also **iih**.

**ikaki** *int.* yes. Also **baki**.

**iki** *n.* fish (generic). Also **vwiniek**.

[Bis. *fis*]

**iki melih** *n.* parrotfish [Bis. *blufis*]

**ikudr** *n.* fish sp., found in freshwater amidst rubbish on bottom of river

**il** *vt.* 1. dig (hole) *Iil awal.* (S)he dug a hole. 2. dig up *Aril uvah sapm.* They dug up a wild yam. [Bis. *digim*]

**iliauh** *n.* pigeon sp. [Nev. *nibwiligio*]

**ilim** *num.* five

**ilung nan tuswe** *n.* wave [Bis. *wef*]

**imah**<sup>1</sup> *ns.* comb (on chicken's head)

Also **obor**, **born**.

**imah**<sup>2</sup> *n.* spoon

**imah nauh** *n.* yam variety

**imalamal** *n.* shin

**imwih** *n.* bush nut (*Barringtonia edulis*)

[Bis. *navele*]

**imwil** *n.* cycad (*Cycas circinalis*)

[Bis. *namele*]

**ingat** *vi.* close eyes. Also **bwil**.

[Bis. *sarem ae*]

**ip** *vi.* go

**ip sur** *vt.* go along road to *Komatsak komatip sur Mitnowe*. We went up along the road to Mitnowe.

**ipanu** *n.* lengths of bamboo stuck through thatch at top of roof below main roof beam

**ipar** *postmod.* many *Muut ipar atmatur*. Many people are sleeping. *Keser bapar!* Give (me) lots!

**ipman** *ns.* flower. Also **atah**. [Bis. *flaoa*]

**ipmi** *n.* tree sp. (*Macaranga* sp.)

[Bis. *navenue*]

**ipmin**<sup>1</sup> *ns.* 1. skin 2. bark [Nev. *nivinin*]

**ipmin**<sup>2</sup> *n.* 1. ringworm 2. fungus growing on dead wood

**ipmin matan** *ns.* eyelid

**ipmin yanga** *n.* biscuit

**ipnon** *ns.* forehead

**ipnuh bbun** *ns.* foreskin [Bis. *skin blong kok*]

**ipnuh nan bongon** *ns.* lip [Bis. *skin blong maot*]

**iptak** *vi.* last *Galute iyan adam nan iptak*. His/her mother ate the last yam. *Ier tuan atiptak atyahsursur*. Some of them were the last to come behind. Also **dito**.

**ir** *vi.* 1. strong 2. hard 3. (of sun) hot *Anal iir we iir*. The sun is very very hot. 4. (of tree that has been trimmed down to just its trunk) remain uncut in garden for yam vines to climb up

**iriin** *ns.* buttress root

**iru** *num.* two

**isan** *ns.* name [Bis. *nem*]

**isiing** *n.* wild ginger [Bis. *waeljinja*]

**isir** *n.* sleep (in eye) [Bis. *doti blong ae*]

**isir nan vwalan** *ns.* smegma [Bis. *doti blong kok*]



**isirimen** *ns.* urine. Also **mekian**.

[Bis. *pispis*]

**isivsipba** *n.* prawn sp., smallest of all, found only at waterfalls

**isol** *n.* coconut spathe [Bis. *kenu blong kokonas*]

**isong beker** *n.* front tooth. Also **basn**.

**isteleh** *n.* devil. Also **tamat**. [Bis. *devel*]

**it** *n.* husband [Bis. *man*]

**itbalian** *n.* everything

**iteh** *adv.* very *Irivik iteh*. It is very good. [Bis. *tumas*]

**itian** *n.* old man *Itian sapm iser adam iru i na*. One old man gave me two yams. [Bis. *olfala man*]

**itik** *int.* no

**ititl** *adv.* two days after tomorrow, three days from now

**ititl nan** *adj.* third

**itivat** *adv.* three days after tomorrow, four days from now

**itivat nan** *adj.* fourth

**itivitlak** *n.* tooth. Archaic form for **boroh** [Bis. *tut*]

**itl** *num.* three

**itlim** *adv.* four days after tomorrow, five days from now

**itlim nan** *adj.* fifth

**itnan** *n.* 1. place *Itnan arva Vanibinang*. The place was called Vanibinang. 2. *loc.* here *San nava nabwitirtirsali inong meh itnan*. What I want to talk about concludes here.

**itnani** *loc.* there *Baladrong ilem vanatn itnani*. The sow gave birth to her piglets there.

**itnen** *ns.* (specific) internal organ (?)

**itnen ibbulengi** (s)he forgot it

**itoro** *n.* bush *Det komattok dem len itoro draka, ani asarterimu i emwet*. When we were still up in the bush, coconuts were not cut with a knife.

**ituru nan** *adj.* second

**ivadaling** *n.* croton variety

**ivat** *num.* four

**ive** *inter.* what? Also **sive**.

**ivih** *inter.* how much?, how many?

*Muut ivih atluk len amal ti*. How many people stayed in that house?

**ivivleh** *vi.* make pudding *It te iva momok te bivivleh ier*. Her husband said his wife should make pudding for them.

**ivleh** *n.* 1. earth oven, cooking pit 2. *npart.* grave 3. *vt.* make (pudding) *Momok te ivleh aya nan adam*. His wife made yam pudding. 4. make (something) into pudding

**ivlemial** *n.* November

**ivlerongo** *n.* October

**ivol** *n.* 1. native almond that has two nuts inside a single shell 2. banana with two fruit inside a single skin

**ivri** *n.* crab (generic)

**ivri balang** *n.* bush crab

**ivsak** *loc.* above, on top, up there *Kopm bwitrep til abwitur i amal nan armatntn len ivsak*. We will gather *til* vine that they will tie the house in which they cook food up there. Also **draka**.

**ivsan**<sup>1</sup> *ns.* chest

**ivsan**<sup>2</sup> *ns.* green (coconut) with soft white flesh that is ideal for drinking

**ivsan nan onohdrap** *n.* green coconut with beginnings of clear flesh that is almost ready for drinking

**ivsodruh** *n.* cramp *Nasiber ivsodruh*. I have a cramp. *Ivsodruh iva na*. I have a cramp.

**ivsuuh**<sup>1</sup> *n.* coconut milk

**ivsuuh**<sup>2</sup> *n.* croton variety

**ivwirir** *n.* phlegm [Bis. *gluspet*]

**iyoh** *n.* roosting place (of chicken)

## K

- ka<sup>1</sup>** *vt.* 1. shout, yell, call out. Also **dam**. [Bis. *singaot*] 2. *vt.* call *Ika ier atvwel*. (S)he called them over. [Bis. *singaotem*]
- ka<sup>2</sup>** *vt.* be like, resemble *Ila bolokon ti ika bala te ti*. (S)he saw that his/her feet were like those of a pig. *Sakamu det arsol len gohgohtal ier*. It was not like when they were walking through the thick vines.
- ka<sup>3</sup>** *int.* perhaps, maybe
- kabat** *n.* European or other non-Melanesian (esp. Chinese, Japanese) [Bis. *waetman*]
- kaduru** *n.* banana variety that cannot be peeled without first squeezing and twisting the skin
- kakalan** *vi.* multicoloured, colourful [Bis. *kalakala*]
- kal** *vi.* constipated
- kala** *vt.* lift up *MaTisman atkala salan ier ki atyahsur kopm*. The people of Tisman lifted up their brother and came after us. [Bis. *leftemap*]
- kalkal** *vt.* slice (pudding) *Ikalkal aya*. (S)he sliced the pudding.
- kalkalat** *n.* split length of wood or bent piece of bamboo used as tongs for holding hot stones. Also **sibervat**.
- kam** *pron.* you (pl.) [Bis. *yufala*]
- kamdru** *pron.* you (dl.) [Bis. *yutufala*]
- kamtl** *pron.* you (pcl.) [Bis. *yutrifala*]
- kan** *vi.* eat [Bis. *kakae*]
- kapkap** *vi.* clear away burnt debris in garden ready for planting
- kar** *vi.* clear throat. Also **teneh**.
- karah** *vt.* 1. drag fire with rakes through (garden site) while burning off [Bis. *pulum faea*] 2. (of chicken) scratch (ground) in search of food [Bis. *skrasem graon*]
- karah lu** *vt.* rake out *Ikarah lu avat ti*. (S)he raked out the stone.
- karkarah** *vi.* drag fire with rakes through garden site while burning off [Bis. *pulum faea*]
- karur** *n.* wild yam variety
- katwan** *n.* something *Iva katwan*. (S)he did something.
- kawat** *vt.* cross, go across *Komatkawat owe rasan ivsak*. We crossed the river on the other side up there. [Bis. *krosem*]
- kel<sup>1</sup>** *vi.* crooked [Bis. *kruked*]
- kel<sup>2</sup>** *vt.* put wedge under [Bis. *putum kale long*]
- kelekel** *vi.* pile up rubbish at end of garden
- kelemi** *vt.* bend [Bis. *benem*]
- kesan** *inter.* when? *Ovwel kesan len arup?* When did you come from the garden? [Bis. *wataem*]
- kevet** *vi.* (of banana) not properly ripe and causing tongue to feel furry when eaten
- kidrap** *adv.* late afternoon, evening [Bis. *aftenun*]
- kih** *vt.* peel (fruit) *Kikih apm mim*. Peel the ripe banana. [Bis. *skinim*]
- kikil** *vi.* dig. Also **kilkil**. [Bis. *digdig*]
- kikil borong** *vi.* dig up yam [Bis. *digim yam*]
- kila** *vi.* 1. look *Bwikila da*. (S)he will have a bit of a look. 2. open eyes Also **kilkila**. [Bis. *lukluk*]
- kila boh** *vi.* look through
- kila tisiveli** *vi.* pick every fruit including even unripe ones
- kilkil** *vi.* dig. Also **kikil**. [Bis. *digdig*]
- kilkila** *vi.* 1. look *Atkilkila ivwel*. They looked over here. 2. open eyes Also **kila**. [Bis. *lukluk*]

**kin** *vt.* peel (tuber, banana) prior to grating

**kinkidrap** *adv.* very late in the afternoon  
*Kinkidrap da out imetmet da.* It was very late in the afternoon and it was getting a little dark.

**kodrarar** *vi.* (of bird, chicken) sit on eggs

**koit**<sup>1</sup> *n.* octopus [Bis. *nawita*]

**koit**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* cut wedge in end (of bamboo) so that it can be used to dislodge fruit

**koiterep** *n.* octopus which floats

**kon** *vi.* sour, bitter [Bis. *konkon*]

**kopm** *pron.* we (pl. excl.) [Bis. *mifala*]

**kompdru** *pron.* we (dl. excl.) [Bis. *mitufala*]

**kopmtl** *pron.* we (pcl. excl.) [Bis. *mitrifala*]

**kor** *vt.* 1. shut, close *Ikor matali.* (S)he closed the door. [Bis. *sarem*]  
2. *svt.* block, put/do in the way of (something) *Isum kor.* (S)he is sitting in the way of it. [Bis. *blokem*]

**kor tata** *vt.* shut tight

**korokor** *n.* scabies. Also **borobor.**

**koror** *svt.* block, put/do in the way of (something) *Ipih koror itian itur bbuut len abah.* He tied the old man into the middle of the sugarcane.

**korowal** *loc.* in the gully *Ier atlap tobbul ki itur korowal ki.* They planted the giant taro in the gully.

**korsal** *loc.* on the way, along the road  
*Iip dem korsal iva, “Livani nabba batamak naberep momok ki?”*  
He was still on the way and he said, “How will I get the woman?”

**kot** *vt.* cut with scissors *Ikot sivlen.* (S)he cut his/her hair. [Bis. *katem*]

**kotkotaah** *vi.* (of hen) cluck after laying egg

**kovili** *n.* beach morning glory

**kutn** *loc.* 1. beneath, below, down  
*Namamatur draka, ong kamatur kutn.* I will sleep on top and you will sleep below. 2. on the ground *Imat idah iding kutn.* He fell unconscious and lay on the ground. 3. down by the coast *Muut nan ier kutn ti abwitsak abwitsap.* The people from down by the coast will go up and dance.

**kuwase bakah** *int.* thank you very much [Bis. *tangkyu tumas*]

## L

**la** *vt.* see, look at. Also **labit.** [Nev. *leh*]  
**la bari** dream

**la wahi** *vt.* look for *Nabwikila wahi itnan baladrong ilem e.* I will look for where the sow has given birth.

**labit** *vt.* see, look at. Also **la.**

**labit da** *vt.* find. Also **som da.**

**laka** *loc.* to/from/in the bush *Aser mahi akanian laka ivwel.* They brought all the food from the bush.

**lakot** *vt.* recognise (by sight). Also **lakut.**

**lakut** *vt.* recognise (by sight). Also **lakot.**

**lala**<sup>1</sup> *n.* spider [Bis. *spaeda*] [Nev. *neta'al*]

**lala**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* see, look at [Nev. *leleh*]. Also **lala bwilat** read.

**lala drimdrim** *vt.* be attracted to *Muut sapm ilala drimdrim momok ti.* One man was attracted to that woman.

**lalabatnaru** *n.* dolphin [Bis. *dolfin*]

**lalah** *vi.* (of pig) dig up and eat somebody's garden

**lalahi** *vt.* (of pig) dig up and eat garden of (someone) *Bala nan ma ivwel ilalahi na.* That pig has been coming and digging up and eating my garden.

**lalak** *svi.* 1. quietly *Kobwiritem tata mwiding lalak.* We will step hard on it so it will lie down quietly. 2. carefully

*Nakilila lalak*. I looked carefully.

3. secretly *Idah lalak sur tuswe*.

(S)he snuck down to the sea.

**lalaki** *svt.* 1. quietly 2. carefully *Marak ipuh lalaki momok lele ti*. Then he carefully picked up the little girl.  
3. secretly *Nabwiyahsur titipm lalaki baladrong*. I will try to secretly follow the sow.

**lalap** *vi.* do the planting. Also **lavlap**.  
[Bis. *plan*]

**lam** *vi.* 1. (of moon) full *Abasi ilam*. It is full moon. 2. (of river) be high, run fresh *Owe ilam*. The river is running fresh.

**lama** *n.* time, occasion *Kitir lama bavat*. Tell it four times. [Bis. *taem*]

**lama sal** *adv.* always *Ilevlep wal ikan bakah lama sal*. (S)he is fat because (s)he always eats too much. Also **saari**. [Bis. *oltaem*]

**lama sapm** *adv.* 1. once, one time, once upon a time 2. all of a sudden *Lama sapm iip ila vanatn ier*. All of a sudden (s)he went and saw his/her children. [Bis. *wantaem*]

**langal** *num.* ten

**langal druman ilim** *num.* fifteen

**langal druman iru** *num.* twelve

**langal druman itl** *num.* thirteen

**langal druman ivat** *num.* fourteen

**langal druman sapm** *num.* eleven

**langal druman savat** *num.* nineteen

**langal druman setl** *num.* eighteen

**langal druman souru** *num.* seventeen

**langal druman sout** *num.* sixteen

**langalang** *n.* multi-layered pudding made with cabbage leaves [Bis. *step laplap*]

**langlangar** *vt.* 1. break open with hands (e.g. grapefruit) 2. open (book)

**lap**<sup>1</sup> *vt.* fetch *Kalap galu tong bbel*. Fetch your mother.

**lap**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* plant (crop) *Ilap adam*. (S)he planted the yams. [Bis. *planem*]

**lap mwisisi** *n.* July

**lap vwelam** *n.* June

**lapan** *ns.* under, beneath *Bwisibok sapm iip ibabak lapan amal te*. A rat went and hid under his house.

**lapda** *n.* May

**lasavat** *n.* smallest cooking stones, placed in bottom of cooking pit. Also **bbuten avat**.

**Latas** *n.* people of Unua–Tisman area

**lavlap** *vi.* do the planting. Also **lalap**.  
[Bis. *plan*]

**lawal** *loc.* to/on the coast *Nakilila idah len balaka lawal ti*. I looked down to the cottonwoods on the coast.

**le** *prep.* location ('in') *Ito le lupan*. It is in the middle.

**leh** *vt.* buy, pay for *Bwilolok bwitleh bbih wal?* How much will we buy the kava for?

**lehi**<sup>1</sup> *vt.* 1. give back, return 2. avenge, get revenge for. Also **sevi**.

**lehi**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* replace *Abwitlehi atnida nan atriit ki*. They will replace the child who was killed.

**lekeleke** *n.* swollen glands

**lelabbutdah** *n.* banana variety

**lelemen** *vi.* (of fire) alight. Also **vangavang**.

**lem**<sup>1</sup> *vt.* pick up (passenger) *Bolokovat sapm ivwel ilem kopm Tarem*. A vehicle came and picked us up at Taremp.

**lem**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* 1. give birth to *Baladrong tier isian bbu iro bwelem vanatn*. Their sow was pregnant until she felt like giving birth to her piglets. 2. *vi.* give birth

**lemen** *ns.* tongue [Bis. *tang*]

**lemlem** *npart.* breadfruit that grows in pairs (or more) in one place

**leng** *vt.* husk (coconut)

**lengleng** *vi.* crazy, mad. Also **bebe**.  
[Bis. *krangke*]

**lesam** *n.* inedible variety of *damadr* tuber

**lesavraka** *n.* disrespectful person

**lesen** *ns.* scrotum and/or testicles. Also **lison**.

**levlep** *vi.* 1. big, large 2. fat *Ilevlep wal ikan bakah lama sal.* (S)he is fat because (s)he always eats too much. 3. grown up, adult

**levwilak** *n.* yellow white-eye (*Zosterops flavifrons*) [Bis. *nalaklak*]

**levwis** *n.* white flying fox

**lihlih** *n.* wild yam variety

**lihlihda** *vt.* flick

**liim** *loc.* in the village

**lik** *vt.* tie up

**lik tata** *vt.* bind, tie tightly *Komarli tata bolokon.* We bound its hind legs.

**lil** *vi.* (of tuber) have bad part which needs to be cut out before cooking

**lile** *loc.* 1. near, close *Gabwir sapm imatur lile nan na.* A dog is sleeping near me. 2. almost, nearly *Iva lile baran matabbuk.* Day was about to break in the morning. Also **supak**.  
[Bis. *klosap*]

**lilis** *n.* chiton [Bis. *strongbak*]

**lilit** *vi.* yellow. Also **lit**.

**limokian** *n.* 1. old woman 2. mother-in-law [Bis. *olfala woman*]

**ling** *vt.* pour

**lingaad** *n.* fire ant [Bis. *blakanis*]  
[Nev. *na'ans*]

**lingarap** *n.* hurricane, cyclone [Bis. *hariken*]

**lingiling** *npart.* body fat

**lingling**<sup>1</sup> *vi.* tired, sick (of)

**lingling**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* 1. leave (someone) behind *Atlingling salan ier iding da.* They left their brother to lie on the ground for a while. 2. drop off (passenger) *Komatvwel komatlingling nan ier Batabong.* We came and dropped off those from Batabong. 3. *vtr.* separate, go separate ways. Also **tara**.

**lip** *vt.* 1. dislike, not want *Ilip limokian te.* He did not like his mother-in-law. 2. *aux.* not want to *Nalip nabiyal.* I don't want to sing.

**lipbbur** *n.* lobster sp. with very large claws

**lipm** *ns.* 1. canine tooth 2. lower tusk (of pig)

**lison** *ns.* scrotum and/or testicles. Also **lesen**.

**lison ubbuah** *n.* wild yam variety

**lit** *vi.* yellow. Also **lilit**.

**livani** *adv.* 1. today 2. now

**lobobbur** *n.* hirsute person

**lobon** *ns.* body hair [Bis. *gras*] **lobon itur** (s)he has goosebumps

**lobon asn** *ns.* beard [Bis. *mustas*]  
[Nev. *nelem*]

**lobon bop** *n.* female pubic hair [Bis. *gras blong kan*]

**lobon matan** *ns.* eyelash

**lobon vwalan** *ns.* male pubic hair  
[Bis. *gras blong kok*]

**lokolok** *vi.* rinse mouth *Ilokolok i owe.* (S)he rinsed his/her mouth with water.

**long** *vi.* burn, burn down *Amal ilong.* The house burnt down.

**lop** *vt.* 1. punch, beat up, hit (with fist) 2. pound, hammer *Kolop yanga!* Hammer the native almonds! 3. masturbate (penis) *Kolop vwalam!* Beat your meat! 4. pelt, throw something at

**lop boh** *vt.* break open by stoning *Ier sapm imarmarak i atnida ki ilop boh*

*batn.* One of them attacked the child and broke his head open by stoning him.

**lop bwir** *vt.* break by hitting

**lornauh** *n.* breadfruit variety

**loromah** *n.* area where toilets are located

**lowetok** *n.* banana variety

**lu**<sup>1</sup> *vt.* 1. shoot (something) 2. fire, shoot (bullet, arrow) *Ilu atur iru.* (S)he shot two arrows. [Bis. *sutum*]

**lu**<sup>2</sup> *svi.* 1. out *Irep lu aya.* (S)he took out the pudding. 2. quickly *Kevwel lu!* Come quickly!

**lu bar bwiti** *vt.* accidentally shoot in the eye *Tara, kulu bar bwiti matan na!* Watch out, you might accidentally shoot me in the eye!

**lualu**<sup>1</sup> *n.* rainbow [Bis. *renbo*]

**lualu**<sup>2</sup> *vi.* vomit (said instead of *yok* when speaking to in-law)

**lugangem** *n.* bamboo sliver used to pin thatch [Bis. *pin blong natanggura*]

**luk** *vi.* 1. stay, (of animate nouns) be located *Muut iru arluk liim.* Two people stayed in the village. 2. live (with somebody) *Git bwirluk.* Let's live together. 3. stay behind, be left behind. Also **luman.** [Bis. *stap*]

**luk kor** *vt.* block *Bwitluk kor asal.* You will all block the road.

**luku** *vt.* cover. Also **pongor.**

**lukun** *vt.* hide [Bis. *haedem*]

**luluder** *vt.* wait for *Naluluder ong.* I waited for you. [Bis. *wet long*]

**luluiki** *vi.* shoot fish [Nev. *luluiakh*]

**luluk** *vi.* 1. stay behind 2. wait

**luluk lalak** *vi.* watch over *Ong kululuk lalak sin emer tokopm.* You will watch over our eel.

**luluk sin** *vt.* watch over, keep an eye on *Momo lele ki iluluk sin aya tier len*

*aabb.* The girl kept an eye on their pudding in the fire.

**luluka** *vi.* shoot, fire shots [Bis. *sut*]

**luluki** *vt.* wait for *Nabululuki ong.* I will wait for you.

**lum** *vi.* sweet [Bis. *swit*]

**lumal** *n.* spear with single prong

**luman** *vi.* 1. stay, (of animates) be located *Arluman len rakian.* They were in the garden. 2. live (with somebody) 3. stay behind, be left behind. Also **luk.** [Bis. *stap*]

**lumlum** *vi.* 1. swim (in one place) 2. bathe, wash, have shower *Olumlum iis?* Have you bathed?

**lumuh** *vt.* wash, wet *Ilumuh ipnon.* (S)he washed his/her face

**lupan** *ns.* 1. middle (of something) 2. trunk (of tree)

**lupanal** *n.* midday, noon

**lupat** *n.* night

**lupat dangdang** *n.* midnight

## M

**ma** *vt.* be with, accompany *Kama asi?* Who are you with?

**maalo** *n.* swamp taro variety

**maap** *vi.* 1. white [Bis. *waet*] 2. (of head) bald *Batn ong imap.* You are bald. [Bis. *bolhed*] 3. bright, shiny

**mabbmabb** *vi.* excited

**mabbuhi** *vt.* chew *Imabbuhi.* (S)he chewed it. Also **sem.**

**mabwin** *ns.* liver. Also **elemet.** [Bis. *blakleva*]

**mabwin arah** *n.* lung [Bis. *waetleva*]

**magal** *vi.* sharp [Bis. *sap*]

**magalip** *n.* joke *Bitva magalip.* Let's tell jokes. [Bis. *tok fani*]

- mah<sup>1</sup>** *vi.* 1. (of tide) ebb, go out *Tuswe imah*. The tide is ebbing. 2. (of river) run completely dry [Bis. *drae*]
- mah<sup>2</sup>** *vi.* cooked [Bis. *tan*]
- mah<sup>3</sup>** *vt.* spear *Namah eve sapm*. I speared a stingray. [Bis. *sperem*]
- mah<sup>4</sup>** *postmod.* all, every. Also **mamah**. [Bis. *evri*]
- mah bwirbwir** *vi.* (of river) intermittently flow for a short distance and then run dry
- mah meret** *vi.* half-cooked, undercooked [Bis. *haftan*]
- makah** *n.* vine sp. with hooks that dig into flesh [Bis. *wetminit*] [Nev. *nemagu*]
- makah lam** *n.* vine sp., black, with hooks that dig into flesh, found in bush
- makah nan tuswe** *n.* vine sp., white, with hooks that dig into flesh, found along coast
- makila** *n.* yam variety
- makila berber** *n.* variety of *makila* yam
- makila mutmut** *n.* variety of *makila* yam
- malaar** *n.* tree sp. with red bark [Nev. *nebarmet*]
- maladr** *n.* tree sp. Also **uver**.
- malah<sup>1</sup>** *n.* wind [Bis. *win*]
- malah<sup>2</sup>** *npart.* leftover food (from something) *malah nan rais* ‘leftover rice’ [Bis. *namalas*]
- malah<sup>3</sup>** *vi.* cold. Also **melekit**. [Bis. *kolkol*]
- malah mial** *n.* victory leaf variety
- malamal<sup>1</sup>** *vi.* naked [Bis. *malmal*]
- malamal<sup>2</sup>** *vi.* suffer from ciguatera
- malang<sup>1</sup>** *n.* open sea
- malang<sup>2</sup>** *n.* shelter
- maling** *n.* bed [Bis. *bed*]
- malu** *vi.* 1. come out, emerge [Bis. *kamaot*] 2. leave *Komatmalu komatrep gabwir tokopm ier*. We left and took our dogs. [Bis. *aot*]
- mamaap** *vi.* smooth
- mamah** *postmod.* all, every. Also **mah**. [Bis. *evri*]
- mamam** *vi.* squat
- man<sup>1</sup>** *ns.* (woman’s) brother
- man<sup>2</sup>** *postmod.* again *Emin evwel ekan man*. (S)he came back and ate again.
- man nan oto** *n.* rooster [Bis. *man faol*]
- manana** *vi.* thin [Bis. *tintin*]
- mangulal** *vi.* yawn
- map** *vi.* heavy [Bis. *hevi*]
- mara lengeleng** *vi.* wake up with a start, wake up suddenly
- maraan** *n.* imperata reed (*Imperata cylindrica*) [Bis. *waetgras*]
- marak** *vi.* 1. get up (from sitting or lying position) 2. wake up [Bis. *kirap*] 3. *adv.* then *Marak ipuh lalaki momok lele ti*. Then he carefully picked up the little girl.
- Maramap** *n.* people of Vinmavis
- maran** *adv.* 1. tomorrow [Bis. *tumora*] 2. *int.* good night, see you in the morning
- maran nan** *adv.* next day *Maran nan out imeh iih lupat ivwel*. The next day when it was already dark at night (s)he came.
- mari** *n.* barrel tree (*Acacia spirorbis*) [Bis. *namariu*]
- marlang** *n.* outrigger pegs (by which outrigger is fixed to struts that are attached to body of canoe)
- marup** *n.* scar [Bis. *trak blong soa*]
- masatan** *n.* banana variety with bunch that grows upright rather than hanging towards the ground
- masir** *n.* banana variety

- masol** *n.* small pieces of used heliconia leaf that are removed from the edges of the earth oven
- mat**<sup>1</sup> *n.* excrement *Ibbut ran mat te gabwir sapm.* (S)he stepped in a dog's excrement.
- mat**<sup>2</sup> *vi.* 1. die, dead. Also **mat bbun**.  
2. unconscious *Imat idah iding kutn.* He fell unconscious and lay on the ground. 3. (of sea) calm 4. (of penis) flaccid
- mat bbun** *vi.* die, dead. Also **mat**.
- mat lolo** *vi.* unconscious
- matabar** *n.* blind person
- matabbuk** *n.* morning
- matabor** *n.* shellfish sp. [Nev. *nabutla* ']
- matabwedr** *n.* croton variety
- matak**<sup>1</sup> *adj.* wild, feral
- matak**<sup>2</sup> *vi.* afraid, frightened *Imatak i na.* (S)he is afraid of me. Also **mitutak**.
- matali** *n.* door [Bis. *doa*]
- matamial** *n.* conjunctivitis [Bis. *redae*] [Nev. *nimitimial*]
- matan** *ns.* 1. eye 2. source (of river) [Bis. *ae*]
- matan asih** *n.* nipple [Bis. *ae blong titi*]
- matan owe** *n.* spring. Also **owe sasak**. [Bis. *spring wota*]
- matan tobbul** *n.* club which has four knobs below the head
- matan tuswe** *n.* spring which bubbles up in sea. Also **owe ruk**. [Bis. *boelwota*]
- matan vwalan** *ns.* urethral opening of penis [Bis. *ae blong kok*]
- matanal** *n.* 1. watch, clock [Bis. *hanwas, klok*] 2. (clock) time [Bis. *taem*]
- matur** *vi.* sleep [Bis. *slip*]
- matur melmel** *vi.* sleep soundly [Bis. *slip ded*]
- maur** *vi.* alive, living [Bis. *laef*]
- Maus** *n.* people from Dixon Reef south to Southwest Bay
- Mavwiningoh** *n.* people of Pentecost
- mekian** *ns.* urine. Also **isirimen**. [Bis. *pispis*]
- meldohtop** *npart.* soft heliconia leaf put down first in earth oven
- mele** *n.* yam variety
- melebb** *n.* spit, saliva. Also **melebbusn**. [Bis. *spet*]
- melebbusn** *ns.* 1. spit, saliva 2. foam (from sea). Also **melebb**. [Bis. *spet*]
- melebieh** *n.* lizard sp., black with large eyes, found in rotten wood
- melebom** *n.* area behind knee
- melekit** *vi.* cold. Also **malah**. [Bis. *kolkol*]
- meler** *vi.* (of water) become clean after being stirred up
- melerler** *vi.* new [Bis. *niufala*]
- meliavik** *n.* giant taro variety
- melih** *vi.* green, blue. Also **melmelih**. [Bis. *grin, blu*]
- melmelih** *vi.* green, blue. Also **melih**. [Bis. *grin, blu*]
- memek** *vi.* urinate [Bis. *pispis*]
- memen** *ns.* gall bladder [Bis. *konkon leva*]
- mere batn** *ns.* brain [Bis. *brim*]
- merebet** *n.* fermented breadfruit that is stored in pits in ground
- mereman** *vi.* raw, uncooked. Also **meret**. [Bis. *grin*]
- meresal** *vi.* light (in weight). Also **sal**. [Bis. *laet*]
- meret** *vi.* raw, uncooked. Also **mereman**. [Bis. *grin*]
- merevwatak** *n.* fish sp., found in freshwater pools and swims in schools
- mese** *n.* tree sp. [Nev. *nimisi*]
- mesemah** *vi.* 1. dry (of something that was wet) 2. horny, not having had sex for some time *Imesemah wal momo te*



- ititik*. He is horny because he doesn't have a girlfriend.
- met** *vi.* 1. black 2. dirty 3. dark. Also **metemet**. *Out imet*. It is dark.
- metemet** *vi.* 1. black 2. dirty 3. dark  
Also **met**.
- meten** *vt.* watch, look carefully at
- meten sur** *vt.* track, follow tracks of  
*Bwitip bitmeten sur bala nan ma ivwel ilalahi na*. Let's go and track the pig that has been coming and eating the food in my garden. *Nalu bala, bwitiip bitmeten sur*. I shot the pig, let's go and follow its trail.
- mevial** *n.* seasnake [Bis. *sisnek*]
- mial** *vi.* 1. red 2. (of Indian coral tree) flower
- mida** *vi.* wet
- midang** *n.* puzzle tree (*Kleinhovia hospita*) [Bis. *namatal*]
- midang varavar** *n.* puzzle tree variety
- milier** *npart.* shadow [Bis. *sado*]
- milivin** *ns.* armpit [Bis. *ananit han*]
- milmilim** *vi.* soft. Also **molovlop**.
- mim** *vi.* ripe [Bis. *raef*]
- mimihnal** *vi.* warm oneself in the sun  
*Armimihnal*. The two of them warmed themselves in the sun.
- min**<sup>1</sup> *vt.* drink
- min**<sup>2</sup> *premod.* 1. again 2. back *Min atvwel*. They came back. 3. *aux.* back  
*Emin esolsol evwel ekan*. (S)he walked back and ate.
- min-gara** *n.* black flying fox
- minmin** *vi.* drink
- miririk** *vi.* have vertigo
- misal** *n.* meat, flesh, muscle
- misodr** *vi.* hiccup
- misum** *vi.* attract somebody's attention by going *tsssst!*
- mitile** *n.* traditional story, tale [Bis. *stori*]
- mitnowe** *n.* tears [Bis. *wota blong ae*]
- mitulu** *vi.* loose
- mitutak** *vi.* afraid, frightened. Also **matak**.
- mobbugal** *n.* banana variety
- mobbulam** *n.* lizard sp., found in cool damp places frequented by frogs
- mol** *vi.* rest [Bis. *spel*]
- molovlop** *vi.* soft. Also **milmilim**.
- mom** *n.* father [Bis. *papa*]
- mom lam** *n.* father's elder brother
- mom lele** *n.* father's younger brother  
[Bis. *smolpapa*]
- momo** *vi.* (of wood, paper, cloth) rotten
- momo nan oto** *n.* hen. Also **avin nan oto**. [Bis. *woman faol*]
- momo turtur** *n.* young unmarried woman
- momok** *n.* 1. woman 2. wife *momo te* 'his wife' [Bis. *woman*]
- momok lele** *n.* girl. Also **danan momok**. [Bis. *smol gel*]
- momom** *n.* sea cucumber (generic)
- monong** *n.* 1. mat (whether made of pandanus or coconut leaf). Also **edreng**. 2. blanket
- morokon** *ns.* rib
- moron** *ns.* reflection
- morot** *vi.* skinny, thin *Imorot wal isal*. (S)he is skinny because (s)he is sick.
- movon** *n.* yam variety
- mulun** *ns.* shed skin (of snake)
- mulun kabat** *n.* 1. (European) clothes 2. shirt
- muluul** *vi.* round
- mumus** *n.* impenetrable bush [Bis. *dakbus*]
- muruh** *n.* clothes *Sarohmu muruh*. (S)he wasn't wearing any clothes.
- murumwidr** *n.* croton variety
- mut** *vi.* short [Bis. *sot*]

**mutmut** *adj.* short [Bis. *sot*]  
**muumak** *vi.* sing song for yams  
**muumaki** *vt.* sing song for (yams)  
*Atmuumaki adam.* They sang the songs for the yams.  
**muut**<sup>1</sup> *n.* man [Bis. *man*]  
**muut**<sup>2</sup> *npart.* heart [Bis. *hat*]  
**muut bial** *n.* commoner, ordinary person [Bis. *man olbaot*]  
**muut lele** *n.* boy. Also **danam muut.** [Bis. *smol boe*]  
**muut levlep** *n.* dignitary, important person  
**muut metemet** *n.* Melanesian [Bis. *blakman*]  
**muut nan sasarian** *n.* teacher [Bis. *tija*]  
**muut nan vipinoian** *n.* thief [Bis. *stilman*]  
**muut rong** *n.* somebody of no consequence, unemployed person [Bis. *man nating*]  
**muut sapm** *n.* somebody [Nev. *numurwan*]  
**mwana** *n.* grass  
**mwekeh** *n.* bush nut variety [Bis. *navele*]  
**mwere** *n.* vine sp. used for binding beams in house *Rocky itir da kopm wal kopm bwitip, kopm bwitrep mwere nan amalte.* Rocky mentioned to us that if we went, we should gather *mwere* vine for his house.  
**mwereverep** *n.* croton variety  
**mwetagadoli** *n.* April  
**mwetewet** *n.* traditional stone axe  
**mwiiir** *adj.* (of side) left  
**mwilip** *n.* chief [Bis. *jif*]  
**mwilit** *n.* banana variety  
**mwilu** *vi.* return [Bis. *kambak, gobak*]  
**mwimwil** *adv.* a little, not much *Neser mwimwil.* I took a little.

**mwiniel** *n.* taro (generic) (*Araceae* spp.) [Bis. *taro*]  
**mwiniel mial** *n.* taro variety  
**mwiniel vuk** *n.* taro variety  
**mwiniel yovyop** *n.* taro variety

## N

**na** *pron.* I [Bis. *mi*]  
**nahe** *inter.* who? *Ong tirtirsit bilep nahe?* Who were you talking with? Also **nasi, asi.**  
**nalah** *n.* food. Also **akanian.** [Bis. *kakae*]  
**nasi** *inter.* who? Also **nahe, asi.** [Bis. *hu*]  
**natana** *n.* mine *Nawahi natana len ong.* I want you to be mine.  
**nataut** *n.* person from the bush, person from inland [Bis. *manbus*]  
**nep** *vi.* (of fire) burn down to embers  
**nepbbun** *n.* Tanna fruit dove (*Ptilinopus tannensis*) [Bis. *grinpijin*]  
**ngal iru** *num.* twenty  
**ngal itl** *num.* thirty  
**ngalngaln** *ns.* top [Bis. *top*]  
**ngap** *vi.* asthmatic [Bis. *sotwin*]  
**ngar** *vt.* split [Bis. *spletem*]  
**ngar wel** *vtr.* split *Aga ingar wel e.* The wood split.  
**ngarian** *n.* breath [Bis. *win*]  
**ngarngar** *vi.* breathe [Bis. *pulum win*]  
**ngarngarit** *vi.* make noise of crunching in mouth *Iyan pinat ingarngarit.* When (s)he ate the peanuts, they crunched in his/her mouth.  
**ngavangap** *vi.* puff [Bis. *sotwin*]  
**ngingi** *vi.* smile [Bis. *skinim tut*]  
**ngit** *vt.* pinch  
**ngodr** *vi.* snore  
**ngorngorn** *ns.* area between upper lip and nose  
**nistuan** *n.* something

**nivruruel** *n.* seeds from canoe tree, which twirl through the air as they fall to the ground  
**nong** *vi.* 1. finish, end 2. (of story) conclude [Bis. *finis*]

## O

**obbuah** *n.* New Guinea rosewood (*Pterocarpus indicus*) [Bis. *bluwota*]  
**obo** *n.* giant taro variety  
**obol** *npart.* stalk (of leaf, fruit)  
**obor**<sup>1</sup> *n.* comb (on chicken's head).  
 Also **born**, **imah**.  
**obor**<sup>2</sup> *n.* deaf person  
**odalah** *n.* worm  
**odih** *n.* prawn spear  
**odo** *n.* native lychee (*Pometia pinnata*) [Bis. *nandao*]  
**odong** *n.* mangrove [Bis. *natongtong*]  
**odralih** *n.* insect that is yellow, which bites, and which lives on bamboo  
**ogot** *n.* yam variety  
**olo** *n.* yam variety  
**omoob** *n.* skink  
**ong** *pron.* you (sg.) [Bis. *yu*]  
**onohdrap** *n.* snot, nasal mucus [Bis. *doti blong nus*]  
**onon** *ns.* flesh, edible part of (fruit) [Bis. *kakae*]  
**onosn** *ns.* nose [Bis. *nus*] [Nev. *na'ansun*]  
**onosour** *n.* sugarcane variety with black streaks on skin. Also **vwiniangah**.  
**oovi** *n.* yam variety  
**opm matan** *ns.* eyeball [Bis. *mabol blong ae*]  
**opon** *ns.* edible pith (of sprouting coconut) [Bis. *navara*]  
**osn** *ns.* chewed remains (of sugarcane) [Bis. *makas*]  
**osokon** *ns.* valued possession [Nev. *nonsogon*]

**osom** *n.* beads [Bis. *bidbid*]  
**oto** *n.* chicken, fowl [Bis. *faol*]  
**oto bisnaap** *n.* chicken with grey feathers  
**oto langanatap** *n.* chicken with black and white feathers  
**oto matak** *n.* jungle fowl [Bis. *waelfaol*]  
**oto metemet** *n.* chicken with black feathers  
**oto mial** *n.* chicken with brown feathers  
**oto mwiritirit** *n.* chicken with multicoloured feathers  
**oto yovyop** *n.* chicken with white feathers  
**otom** *n.* funny or ugly face that somebody pulls  
**otom nan makila** *n.* yam variety  
**otomala** *n.* incubator bird, megapode (*Megapodius freycinet*) [Bis. *skrabdak*]  
**otor** *n.* island teak (*Intsia bijuga*) [Bis. *natora*] [Nev. *notor*]  
**Otorbap** *n.* Uripiv  
**otoro** *n.* white-throated pigeon (*Columba vitiensis*) [Bis. *nataroa*] [Nev. *notoro*]  
**our** *n.* lobster, prawn [Bis. *naora*]  
**our nan tuswe** *n.* wave that breaks on shore  
**ourbet** *n.* prawn sp., black and white, which is found in springs  
**out** *n.* 1. place **out imet** it is dark **out iran** it is daylight 2. *loc.* ashore *Isak out ivwel.* (S)he came ashore.  
**out tele** *loc.* somewhere else *Momok ki iva biip betem dri aman lele ki itorop iip leh out tele.* The woman wanted to go and hold it down but the little bird jumped again to somewhere else.  
**outkirian** *n.* sweat, perspiration [Bis. *swet*]  
**outmetian** *n.* 1. cassia tree (*Leucaena leucocephala*) [Bis. *kasis*]  
 2. darkness, night time 3. Tanna  
**outnan** *ns.* face

**outyovian** *n.* small holes in bamboo weave in wall of house through which one can see daylight

**ovingaad** *n.* 1. ant eggs 2. rice. Also **aya kabat**.

**ovol** *n.* book. Also **bwilat**. [Bis. *buk*]

**owe**<sup>1</sup> *n.* 1. water [Bis. *wota*] 2. river [Bis. *reva*] [Nev. *nowi*]

**owe**<sup>2</sup> *n.* Maewo

**owe bebe** *n.* alcoholic drink. Also **owe nan iir**.

**owe nan bolong** *npart.* marrow

**owe nan iir** *n.* alcoholic drink. Also **owe bebe**. [Bis. *strongdring*]

**owe ruk** *n.* spring which bubbles up in sea. Also **matan tuswe**. [Bis. *boelwota*]

**owe ruvrup** *n.* diarrhoea *Nasiber owe ruvrup*. I have got diarrhoea.

**owe sasak** *n.* spring. Also **matan owe**. [Bis. *spring wota*]

**owem** *n.* fish poison tree (*Barringtonia asiatica*) [Bis. *fisposen tri*]

**oweng** *n.* island cabbage (*Abelmoschus manihot*) [Bis. *kabis aelan*]

**oweng bwirnal** *n.* island cabbage variety that is resistant to drought

**oweng lesukur** *n.* island cabbage variety which grows tall and has large leaves

**oweng meserser** *n.* island cabbage variety which has many dangling leaves with long points [Bis. *nawita*]

**oweng mial** *n.* island cabbage variety with reddish leaves

**ower** *n.* yam variety

**ower mial** *n.* variety of *ower* yam

**ower yovyop** *n.* variety of *ower* yam

## P

**paama** *n.* wild yam variety

**padir** *vi.* surprised, get a fright *Ipadir ina*. (S)he was surprised by me. [Bis. *sek*]

**paparong** *vi.* listen. Also **roro**. [Bis. *lisin*]

**parun** *vi.* have pins and needles. Also **bbura**.

**per** *vi.* work [Bis. *wok*] [Nev. *magar*]

**peri** *vt.* 1. make *Naperi awang tana sapm*. I made myself a canoe. 2. do [Bis. *wokem*]

**pih** *vt.* 1. fasten, tie up 2. put on (penis wrapper) *Ipih apap*. He put on a penis wrapper. [Bis. *fasem*]

**pih tata** *vt.* fasten tight *Ipih tata bala*. (S)he fastened the pig tight. [Bis. *fasem taet*]

**pinok** *vi.* steal [Bis. *stil*]

**pinoki** *vt.* steal *Ipinoki avat tana*. (S)he stole my money. [Bis. *stelim*]

**pom** *vi.* 1. precede, go ahead *Komatipom, ier atyahsursur kopm atvwel*. We went ahead and they kept coming after us. 2. first. Also **pum**, **vupum**, **vopom**.

**pongor** *vt.* cover. Also **luku**. [Bis. *kavremap*]

**prura** *vi.* spit [Bis. *spet*]

**pubbutn** *vi.* (of branches in tree) fork

**puh** *vt.* 1. pick up *Marak ipuh lalaki momok lele ti*. Then he carefully picked up the little girl. 2. carry in arms

**puh dap** *vi.* suddenly appear, suddenly arrive *Atla muut ki atipuh dap bitep vanatn ier sapm*. They saw those people suddenly appear with one of their children.

**puh totoki** *vt.* pick (something) up with (something) *Vitiber ipuh totoki itian bilep abah*. The dwarf spirit picked up the old man with the sugarcane.

**pum** *vi.* 1. precede, go ahead 2. first *Atda iyan adam nan ipum*. The child ate the first yam. Also **pom**, **vopom**, **vupum**. [Bis. *fes*]

**pweli** *vt.* shake [Bis. *sekem*]

**pweli lu** *vt.* shake out *Vanatn bbuah kabat isabbut ipweli lu na*. The calf kicked and shook me out.

## R

**rabwisisi** *n.* March [Bis. *Maj*]

**rada** *n.* January [Bis. *Januari*]

**rah** *vi.* tired **druman irah** (s)he is tired [Bis. *les*]

**rak** *vi.* clear garden site for planting [Bis. *bras*]

**rakararak sokosong** *vi.* weed garden, pull out weeds [Bis. *pulum gras*]

**rakian** *n.* garden. Also **arup**. [Bis. *garen*]

**Ramap** *n.* Vinmavis

**ran** *vi.* dawn **out iran** it has dawned, (of day) break *Iva lile baran matabbuk*. Day was about to break in the morning. [Bis. *delaet*]

**ranaur** *n.* wild yam variety

**rar** *vi.* 1. hot *Anal irar*. The sun is hot. 2. angry *Irar i momok te*. He is angry with his wife.

**rasan** *loc.* other side *Kopm nan atluk rasan atrobit gabwir*. Those of us on the other side heard the dogs.

**ratarat** *vi.* crunchy

**ravarap** *vi.* hurry, go quickly *Karavarap!* Hurry up!

**rawel lam** *n.* February

**rebesa mial** *n.* variety of *rebesak* yam

**rebesa yovyop** *n.* variety of *rebesak* yam

**rebesak** *n.* yam variety

**reh** *vt.* copulate with

**rehreh** *vi.* copulate

**rep** *vt.* 1. pull, drag *Irep baladrong ti arvwel liim*. (S)he dragged the sow and they came to the village.

2. gather, collect (vine) *Rocky itir da kopm wal kopm bwitip, kopm bwitrep mwere nan amal te*. Rocky mentioned to us that if we went, we should gather *mwere* vine for his house. 3. take, bring *Kerep asil bbel*. Bring the torch.

**rep lu** *vt.* take out, take away

**rep sing** *vi.* limp

**rep tata** *vt.* hold tight

**reptamal** *n.* August

**reptulu** *n.* September

**rer** *vi.* sore, painful, hurt

**revrep** *vi.* go fishing

**riit** *vt.* 1. fight with *Komatrit maTisman ier*. We fought with the people of Tisman. 2. kill. Also **riit bbun**. [Bis. *kilim*]

**riit bbun** *vt.* kill *Atrit bbun bbuah kabat*. They killed the cow. Also **riit**.

**rivik** *vi.* good, nice *Galutana sarivik bakahmu*. My mother is not very nice.

**rivritbet** *vi.* make pounded breadfruit. Also **barbarbet**.

**ro** *vi.* 1. feel *Iro irivik*. (S)he feels good. Also **rong**. 2. *vt.* hear *Iro muut sapm ivwel*. (S)he heard somebody coming. Also **rong**, **robit**. 3. *aux.* want to (consume) *Naro naminmin*. I wanted to drink. Also **rong**.

**robit** *vt.* 1. hear *Nasarobitmu ong*. I didn't hear you. 2. smell *Isteh ier atrobit abbun busuma*. The devils could smell the flying fox. Also **ro**, **rong**.

**roh** *vt.* wear, put on (clothes) *Sarohmu muruh*. (S)he wasn't wearing any clothes.

**rokut** *vt.* 1. know 2. *aux.* be able to, know how to *Norokut nabiyal*. I can sing.

**rong** *vi.* 1. feel. Also **ro**. 2. *vt.* hear.

Also **ro**, **robit**.

**rongon** *ns.* small branch

**roro** *vi.* listen. Also **paparong**.

**rorok** *vi.* bend over

**roromalah** *vi.* shiver

**Rubat** *n.* Nurumbat River

**ruk** *vi.* take (respectful word for *ser*)

**rule** *vi.* eat (said instead of *kan* when speaking to in-law)

**rup** *vi.* 1. run *Naruvrup navupum*. I ran ahead. 2. (of semen) ejaculate *Asur irup*. He ejaculated.

**ruruk** *vt.* heap up, pile up. Also **serser kururi**.

**rurukut** *vi.* look for lice in somebody else's hair

**ruul** *n.* wild yam variety

**ruvlaim** *n.* aeroplane

## S

**sa** *vi.* enter, go inside *Momok ki isa bbuut*. The woman went inside.

**saari** *adv.* always *Abbuah sapm ivwel iyanyan saari rakian ti*. A pig was always coming and eating the garden. Also **lama sal**. [Bis. *oltaem*]

**sabbut** *vi.* kick

**sadravsur** *vi.* make yam mound

**sadri** *vt.* 1. go past *Bwirsolsol bwirsadri owe*. Let's walk past the river.

2. more than *Naber sadri ong*. I am taller than you.

**sah** *vi.* prepare food for earth oven. Also **sahsah**.

**sahi** *vt.* prepare (food) for earth oven

**sahliptep** *n.* croton variety

**sahsah** *vi.* prepare food for earth oven. Also **sah**.

**sak** *vi.* go up, ascend *Komatsolsol komatip komatsak Arabanah*. We walked away up to Arabanah.

**sak sur** *vt.* go up along road to *Kopm tuan atsa sur Arabanah*. Some of us went up along the road to Arabanah.

**saka** *n.* soft variety of stone

**saksak** *vi.* climb *Atda isaksak isiber ngalngaln aga*. The child climbed to the top of the tree.

**sal**<sup>1</sup> *vi.* light (in weight). Also **meresel**.

**sal**<sup>2</sup> *vi.* sick, ill

**salan** *ns.* (man's) brother

**salsal**<sup>1</sup> *vi.* (of kingfisher) call *Asik isalsal*. The kingfisher called.

**salsal**<sup>2</sup> *vi.* float, drift [Bis. *flot*]

**sam nan aya** *n.* pudding that is mixed with island cabbage and cooked in bamboo over fire

**saman** *loc.* far off, distant, long way *Amal tier ito saman i amal takit*. Their house is a long way from ours.

**san** *n.* thing (definite or concrete) *Arserser san ipar ti*. They gathered many things. *San nava nabwitirtirsali inong meh itnan*. What I want to talk about concludes here.

**sanwis** *n.* yam variety

**sap** *vi.* dance

**sapm**<sup>1</sup> *num.* 1. one 2. *vi.* be by oneself, be alone *Nasapm meh naluluk livani*. I am all by myself now.

**sapm**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* cover

**sar** *vt.* retract foreskin (of penis) *Kasar vwalam!* Retract your foreskin!

**sari** *vt.* teach *Isari na*. (S)he taught me. Also **sasar**.

**sarsar** *vi.* retract foreskin

**sasak** *vi.* 1. (of spring) gush 2. (of bilge) flood into canoe

**sasamuh** *n.* 1. broom 2. *vi.* sweep

**sasan** *vt.* give free

**sasar** *vt.* teach *Amal tana itok sikilen amal nan arsasar atda len ti.* My house is beside the building that they teach the children in. Also **sari**.

**sasur** *vt.* climb (hill) *Isasur butuan.* (S)he climbed the hill.

**savan** *vt.* open *Isavan matali.* (S)he opened the door.

**savang** *vi.* open *Matali isavang.* The door is open. [Bis. *open*]

**savat** *num.* nine

**savi**<sup>1</sup> *vi.* sneeze

**savi**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* dance (a particular kind of dance) *Asavi kastom.* They performed a traditional dance.

**savian** *n.* dance *Savian sapm itok draka.* There was a dance up in the bush.

**se** *vi.* bad

**seleman** *n.* yam variety

**seleman berber** *n.* variety of *seleman* yam

**seleman mutmut** *n.* variety of *seleman* yam

**sem** *vt.* chew. Also **mabbuhi**.

**sep** *vi.* cough [Bis. *kof*]

**ser**<sup>1</sup> *vt.* 1. give *Ong keser bivih i na?* How many will you give me?  
2. send (word) *Ma-Viar ier aser bwisian ivwel bbu isiber Gara.* The people of Viar sent word as far as Gara. Also **tir bwisian**.

**ser**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* take

**ser leh** *vt.* replace, take place of *Iser leh ong.* (S)he took your place.

**serser** *vt.* gather, collect *Arserser adam ier.* They gathered the yams.

**serser kururi** *vt.* heap up, pile up. Also **ruruk**.

**setl** *num.* eight

**sevi** *vt.* avenge, get revenge for *Abitva anal wal abisevi atnida nan muut ki atriit ki.* They were going to cause a

drought in order to get revenge for the child that those people had killed.

Also **lehi**.

**sian** *vi.* pregnant

**siber** *vt.* 1. reach, arrive at, go as far as *Atda isaksak isiber ngalngaln aga.* The child climbed to the top of the tree. 2. catch (disease), be afflicted by (unpleasant condition) *Nasiber ivsodruh.* I have a cramp.

**sibervat** *n.* split length of wood or bent piece of bamboo used as tongs for holding hot stones. Also **kalkalat**.

**sibili** *n.* tree sp.

**sibo** *vi.* selfish. Also **sisibo**.

**sieda** *vt.* 1. remember 2. think of, think about

**sih** *vi.* call out in pain *Isih wal avat nan idinih bolokon.* (S)he called out in pain because the stone burnt his/her foot.

**siing batik** *n.* wild ginger with reddish leaves

**siing mwiih** *n.* wild ginger with white and green leaves

**sika** *conj.* or *Olumlum iih sika tidem?* Have you bathed or not yet?

**sikilen** *ns.* 1. side *Ito le sikilen.* It is on the side. 2. *prep.* beside *Mom tana imatur sikilen amal.* My father is asleep beside the house.

**sikop** *n.* banana variety that is very sweet when ripe

**sil** *vi.* go fishing at night with burning torches *Arsil len tuswe.* They went torch-fishing in the sea. [Bis. *mekem laet*]

**sil lu** *vt.* scoop out *Arsil lu onon ani.* The flesh of the coconut was scooped out.

**silivat rarar** *n.* kind of pudding that is made very quickly with yams

**sim** *vi.* lean against something

- sin<sup>1</sup>** *ns.* 1. place of origin *Bwisian nan nabwitirtirsali bwisian nan sin na.* The story that I want to tell is the story of my place of origin. 2. *prep.* spatial (with animate noun) 3. near, by (with inanimate noun) *Arip sin avat ti.* They went near that rock.
- sin<sup>2</sup>** *prep.* away from (animate entity) *Komatrep lu gabwir ier sin burah kabat.* We took the dogs away from the cow.
- singsingba** *vi.* kneel
- sir** *vi.* (of stomach) full, replete *Vatn na isir.* I am full.
- sisibo** *vi.* selfish. Also **sibo**.
- sisien** *vi.* think [Bis. *tingting*]
- sisienian** *n.* thought, idea, opinion [Bis. *tingting*]
- sisiget** *vi.* hop
- sisih** *vi.* 1. breastfeed, suckle 2. suck
- sisihi** *vt.* suck, suck on
- sisiltamat** *n.* tree sp.
- sit** *n.* thing (indefinite or abstract) *Sit basapm botok len varan ong.* There will be a thing on your arm.
- sive** *inter.* what? *Sive iva bolokon ong iyoryor?* What has made your foot itch? Also **ive**.
- sivianga** *npart.* nail (of finger, toe)
- sivianga nan bolokon** *ns.* toenail
- sivianga nan varan** *ns.* fingernail
- sivir** *n.* coconut lory (*Trichoglossus haemotodus*) [Bis. *nasiviru*]
- sivirlam** *n.* croton variety
- sivlen** *ns.* hair (of head) [Nev. *nansilen*]
- sobbudur** *n.* breadfruit variety
- sokoliah** *n.* 1. rubbish 2. weeds. Also **sokosong**.
- sokosong** *n.* 1. rubbish 2. weeds. Also **sokoliah**.
- sol** *vi.* go to the bush/garden *Isol iih laka.* (S)he has gone to the bush.
- sol sur** *vt.* walk along *Isol sur asal.* (S)he walked along the road.
- solo** *n.* prawn sp. which is small but with long claw
- solsol** *vi.* walk *Komatsolsol komatip komatsak Arabanah.* We walked away up to Arabanah.
- som da** *vt.* find. Also **labit da**. [Bis. *faenem*]
- song** *vt.* put (food) in bamboo to cook over fire *Arsong aya len vunubbu.* They put the pudding into the bamboo.
- songon** *vt.* 1. fill up 2. put inside, insert *Isongon ani idah len atat te.* (S)he put the coconuts into his/her basket.
- soro mumum** *vi.* whisper. Also **tirtirsit lalak**. [Bis. *toktok slo*]
- sorop** *n.* tuber species (generic) [Nev. *nelaharup*]
- sorop born** *n.* variety of *sorop* tuber
- sorop damadr** *n.* variety of *sorop* tuber [Nev. *nelaharup tomout*]
- sorop tuak** *n.* variety of *sorop* tuber
- sorop vwila** *n.* variety of *sorop* tuber
- sorop vwilaba** *n.* variety of *sorop* tuber
- sosok** *n.* bougna (dish of baked tubers and sometimes meat). Also **gihgih**.
- sosolam** *vi.* (of river) begin to flood, rise
- sosong** *vi.* walk along reef (usually in search of shellfish). Also **vopongon**. [Bis. *folem rif*] [Nev. *vongod*]
- souru** *num.* seven
- sout** *num.* six
- subat<sup>1</sup>** *vi.* 1. walk with walking stick [Bis. *wokbaot long wokingsitik*] 2. *n.* walking stick [Bis. *wokingsitik*]
- subat<sup>2</sup>** *vi.* join [Bis. *joen*]
- subbat** *n.* coral (both dead and living) [Bis. *korel*]
- subbiar** *n.* ring finger, fourth toe



**subbulele** *n.* pinky, little finger, little toe  
[Bis. *smol fingga*]

**subbulevlep** *n.* thumb, big toe [Bis. *bigfala fingga*]

**subbun** *ns.* 1. finger, toe [Bis. *fingga*]  
2. claw (of bird) [Bis. *rek*]

**subbun bolokon** *ns.* toe [Bis. *fingga blong leg*]

**subbun omoob** *n.* variety of *damadr* tuber

**subbun varan** *ns.* finger [Bis. *fingga blong han*]

**subbusibo** *n.* middle finger, middle toe

**subbusilsil** *n.* index finger, long toe

**subbuvat** *n.* broken coral on shore  
[Bis. *korel*]

**sudrum** *vt.* slurp (liquid)

**suh** *vt.* ask (someone) *Isuh na wal avat.* (S)he asked me for money. [Bis. *askem*]

**suhshuh** *vi.* ask. Also **usus**. [Bis. *askem*]

**suka ber** *n.* banana variety

**suksukur** *vtr.* happy *Isuksukur e.* (S)he is happy. [Bis. *hapi*]

**sukun** *vt.* push [Bis. *pusum*]

**sulen** *ns.* sucker (of breadfruit, banana)  
[Bis. *gru*]

**sulen midang** *n.* sugarcane variety with soft flesh

**sulengleng** *vi.* swear. Also **vivsur**.  
[Bis. *swea*]

**sulih** *npart.* shoot (of bamboo) *sulih nan vwinibbu* ‘bamboo shoot’ [Bis. *gru*]

**suluseweng** *n.* fish sp., relatively large, found in fresh water

**sum**<sup>1</sup> *vi.* sit, sit down, be seated [Bis. *sidaon*]

**sum**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* wipe *Isum vanabbun.* (S)he wiped his/her anus. [Bis. *waepem*]

**sum bongon matali** *vi.* sit in the doorway

**sum lam** *vi.* sit on ground with knees raised and legs apart

**sumsum** *vi.* wait *Nasumsum i ong.* I waited for you. [Bis. *wet*]

**sung** *vi.* blow nose

**sungsung** *vt.* smell *Det eboro ebakan ema isungsung meh abbun akanian.* When (s)he felt hungry, (s)he would just smell the food.

**sungut** *vi.* (of pig) push ground with snout *Isungut len atan.* It is pushing the ground with its snout.

**sup** *vt.* 1. scrape (surface of tuber roasted on fire) 2. scrape hair off (pig) *Isup bala.* (S)he scraped the hair off the pig. [Bis. *skrasem*]

**sup beh** *vt.* scrape clean [Bis. *skrasem klinim*]

**supak** *adv.* nearly, almost *Supak nabuwam.* I almost fell over. *Supak ong kuwam.* You almost fell over. Also **lile**. [Bis. *klosap*]

**sur**<sup>1</sup> *prep.* 1. along, beside, alongside  
2. along road to

**sur**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* dislodge (fruit) with pole *Isur ani.* (S)he dislodged the coconuts with a pole. [Bis. *stikimaot*]

**surang** *npart.* fibre which falls from top of coconut palm. Also **bbuser**. [Bis. *blangket blong kokonas*]

**susuh** *vi.* fart silently [Bis. *fat win*]

**susula** *vi.* burn off garden site [Bis. *bonem garen*]

**susur** *vi.* (of food) fatty, oily, greasy

**suvsup** *vi.* 1. scrape surface of something  
2. *vtr.* scratch oneself *Isuvsup e.* (S)he is scratching himself/herself.

## T

**tab** *vi.* defecate [Bis. *sitsit*]

**tabar**<sup>1</sup> *n.* club. Also **batlang**.

**tabar**<sup>2</sup> *vi.* open

**tabatam** *n.* windbreak, open-sided house

**taburong** *vi.* (of limb) numb

**tabwir** *vt.* go across

**tah**<sup>1</sup> *vi.* flower

**tah**<sup>2</sup> *vi.* slippery

**takam** 1. *pron.* your (pl.)

2. *n.* yours (pl.). Also **tatakam**.

**takamdru** *pron.* 1. your (dl.)

2. *n.* yours (dl.). Also **tatakamdru**.

**takamtl** *pron.* 1. your (pcl.)

2. *n.* yours (pcl.). Also **tatakamtl**.

**takit** *pron.* 1. our (pl. incl.)

2. *n.* ours (pl. incl.). Also **tatakakit**.

**takitdru** *pron.* 1. our (dl. incl.)

2. *n.* ours (dl. incl.). Also **tatakitdru**.

**takitntl** *pron.* 1. our (pcl. incl.)

2. *n.* ours (pcl. incl.). Also **tatakitntl**.

**talah** *vt.* uncover, unwrap *Katalah aya*.

Unwrap the pudding.

**talihlih** *n.* headband

**talip** *vi.* disappear, be lost, be missing

[Bis. *lus*]

**talseh** *n.* fine string used for making traps

**taltalah** *vtr.* (of rope) come undone

*Italtalah e.* It came undone.

**tam kor** *vt.* block opening of (something,

e.g. *saucepan*) [Bis. *blokem*]

**tamak** *vi.* how? *Momo, itamak livani?*

Father, how is it now? *Nabaa*

*batamak naberep momok basapm?*

How will I get a wife?

**tamap** *n.* castrated boar [Bis. *natamap*]

**tamat** *n.* devil. Also **isteleh**. [Bis. *devel*]

**tamat sodradang** *n.* cicada sp. which

chirps in evening

**tami** *vtr.* fall from height, fall from above

*Itami e.* (S)he fell from above. [Bis.

*foldaon*]

**tamtabah** *vi.* exorcise evil spirits (by

hitting somebody with branches and

blowing smoke over them)

**tamtami** *vtr.* stamp on ground *Itamtami*

*e.* (S)he stamped on the ground.

**tana** *pron.* my

**tanawah** *adv.* day before yesterday

[Bis. *bifo yestedei*]

**tangatang** *n.* calf (of leg) [Bis. *mit blong leg*]

**tangmoraut** *n.* basket made out of coloured pandanus leaves

**tap**<sup>1</sup> *vi.* (of moon) new *Abasi itam*.

It is new moon.

**tap**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* pick (fruit) [Bis. *pikimap*]

**tapbbuvat** *n.* shellfish sp., found in fresh water but larger than *vanan ipnu*

**tapbilbalah** *n.* cowrie [Bis. *kaori*]

**tara**<sup>1</sup> *int.* watch out, look out *Tara, kulu*

*bar bwiti matan na!* Watch out, you might accidentally shoot me in the eye!

**tara**<sup>2</sup> *vi.* 1. old *Ilip itian wal itara iih*.

(S)he did not like the old man because he was already old. [Bis. *olfala*]

2. (of nuts, sugarcane) ready for eating

**tara**<sup>3</sup> *vtr.* separate, go separate ways

*Komatara kopm.* We went our separate ways. Also **lingling**.

**tarap** *vt.* send (someone) on an errand

*Vanatn ier attarap mom tier atva, “Kiip keter abah ti bbel kobwityan”.*

His children sent their father on an errand saying, “Go and cut the sugarcane and bring it for us to eat”.

**tarban** *n.* barn owl (*Tyto alba*) [Bis.

*hoknaet*]

**tasip** *n.* waterfall [Bis. *wotafol*]

**tata** *svt.* hold tightly *Igong tata.* (S)he

caught it and held it tight. *Ilili tata.*

(S)he tied it tightly. [Bis. *holem taet*]

**tatah** *vi.* (of swell) break at sea *Tuswe*

*itatah.* The swell is breaking at sea.

**tatah sin** *vtr.* agree on day *Ier attatah sin*

*ier atva lama naki abutluluki kopm.*

They agreed on a date that on that day, they would wait for us.

**tatakam** *n.* yours (pl.). Also **takam**.

**tatakamdru** *n.* yours (dl.). Also **takamdru**.

**tatakamtl** *n.* yours (pcl.). Also **takamtl**.

**tatakait** *n.* ours (pl. incl.). Also **takit**.

**tatakaitdru** *n.* ours (dl. incl.). Also **takitdru**.

**tatakaitntl** *n.* ours (pcl. incl.). Also **takitntl**.

**tatamat** *n.* trap (for bird, pig), sling. Also **amat**.

**tatanah i varan** *vi.* applaud, clap *Itatanh i varan*. (S)he applauded. [Bis. *klaphan*]

**tataval** *vi.* wear cloth around waist [Bis. *parpar*]

**tauh varavar** *n.* molar [Bis. *daboltut*]

**tavak** *vi.* 1. make sudden loud noise, bang, crash 2. explode, (of gun) fire [Bis. *faerap*]

**te** *pron.* his, her, its

**teh berberi** *vt.* extend (legs, knees) straight out in front *Isum iteh berberi bolokon*. (S)he sat with his/her legs straight out in front. *Iteh berberi baun*. (S)he stretched our his/her legs.

**teki** *loc.* over there *Nahe ier attur teki?* Who are standing over there? [Bis. *longwe*]

**tele** *adj.* different, other, another [Bis. *narawan*]

**teltel** *vi.* (of fire) smoke, be smoky [Bis. *smok*]

**tem**<sup>1</sup> *vt.* hold down *Momok ki iva biip betem dri aman lele ki itorop iip leh out tele*. The woman wanted to go and hold it down but the little bird jumped again to somewhere else.

**tem**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* step on

**tem tata** *vt.* step on hard, step on firmly *Kobwiritem tata mwiding lalak*. We will step hard on it so it will lie down quietly.

**temetem** *vi.* eat (respectful word for *kan*)

**teneh** *vi.* clear throat. Also **kar**.

**tenep** *adv.* yesterday [Bis. *yestedei*]

**tenir** *n.* former garden site [Bis. *olfala garen*]

**tep** *vi.* sprout. Also **teptep**. [Bis. *gru*]

**teptep** *vi.* sprout. Also **tep**. [Bis. *gru*]

**teptep bbuah** *n.* victory leaf variety

**ter** *vt.* chop, cut with axe or bushknife, hack [Bis. *katem*]

**ter bih** *vt.* chop at (something) but only catch it side on [Bis. *katem glisim*]

**ter bwir** *vt.* break with chopping motion [Bis. *katem bbekem*]

**ter lovlop** *vt.* chop to pieces, chop to mush [Bis. *katem pisisim*]

**ter sisihi** *vt.* (of fowl) chase away (chickens) when they are big enough to look after themselves

**ter wel** *vt.* split with chopping motion [Bis. *katem spletem*]

**terebbun** *n.* croton variety

**terter** *vi.* chop [Bis. *katkat*]

**terterkur** *vi.* chop down trees [Nev. *teterikhai*]

**tete** *n.* his, hers, its

**teterwet** *vi.* (of rooster) crow

**tetevweh** *vi.* wipe hands [Bis. *waepem han*]

**teve** *n.* sea almond (*Terminalia catappa*) [Bis. *natavoa*]

**tidem** *adv.* not yet *Olumlum iih sika tidem?* Have you bathed or not yet?

**tier** *pron.* 1. their (pl.) 2. *n.* theirs (pl.). Also **tititer**.

**tierdru** *pron.* 1. their (dl.) 2. *n.* theirs (dl.). Also **tititerdru**.

**tiertl** *pron.* 1. their (pcl.) 2. *n.* theirs (pcl.). Also **tititertl**.

**tih** *vt.* write *Natih bwisian*. I am writing words. [Bis. *raetem*]

**tih da** *vt.* write down

**tiki** *vt.* not have *Natiki avat*. I've got no money. [Bis. *no gat*]

**til** *n.* *mwere* vine that has been gathered for binding beams in house

**tilung** *vi.* release, let go of [Bis. *lego*]

**timih bebe** *n.* shape-changer

**timih mala** *n.* dwarf spirit with eight elbow joints. Also **vitiber**. [Bis. *lisefsef*]

**tipm** *vt.* bury [Bis. *berem*]

**tir**<sup>1</sup> *vt.* 1. tell (something) *Kitir bavaaru*. Tell it twice. *Natir mitile*. I told the story. [Bis. *talem*] 2. send (word) *Attir bwisian min iip aran ma-Viar ki ier*. They sent word to the people of Viar. Also **ser bwisian**.

**tir**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* take *Nabwitir ihbwiriin baki*. I will take the bow like this.

**tir da** *vt.* mention to *Rocky itir da kopm wal kopm bwitip, kopm bwitrep mwere nan amal te*. Rocky mentioned to us that if we went, we should gather *mwere* vine for his house.

**tir tata** *vt.* 1. reveal, explain 2. reveal to, explain to. Also **tirtir tata**.

**tirsit** *vi.* talk, speak. Also **tirtirsit**. [Bis. *toktok*]

**tirtir** *vt.* argue *Artirtir ier wal atan*. They argued over land. [Bis. *rao*]

**tirtir tata** *vt.* 1. reveal, explain 2. reveal to, explain to *Itirtir tata ier tuan ier*. (S)he explained it to some of them. Also **tir tata**.

**tirtirsal** *vi.* 1. chat 2. tell story [Bis. *storian*]

**tirtirsali** *vt.* talk about, tell story about

**tirtirsit** *vi.* talk, speak. Also **tirsit**. [Bis. *toktok*]

**tirtirsit bari** *vi.* sleep-talk [Bis. *toktok krangke*]

**tirtirsit lalak** *vi.* whisper. Also **soro mumum**. [Bis. *toktok slo*]

**tirtirsiti** *vt.* speak to

**titier** *n.* theirs (pl.). Also **tier**.

**titierdru** *n.* theirs (dl.). Also **tierdru**.

**titiertl** *n.* theirs (pcl.). Also **tiertl**.

**titih** *vi.* write *Natitih*. I am writing. [Bis. *raet*]

**titih bo** *vi.* draw [Bis. *dro*]

**titik** *vi.* not exist *Abah ititik*. There was no sugarcane. [Bis. *nogat*]

**titiki** *vt.* have *Muut sapm tua et bongon ti ititiki*. There was a man before who had no mouth.

**titinih** *vi.* play [Bis. *pleplei*]

**titipm** *svt.* try *Nabwiyahsur titipm lalaki baladrong ti*. I will try to secretly follow the sow.

**tn** *vt.* cook over fire, roast [Bis. *rusum*] [Nev. *tn*]

**tntn** *vi.* 1. cook *Kopm bwitrep til abwitur i amal nan armatntn len ivsak*. We will gather *til* vine that they will tie the house that they cook in up there. 2. *vi.* cook food over fire, roast food over fire *Kopmattntn kopm*. We cooked food over a fire for ourselves. [Bis. *rus*] [Nev. *tntn*]

**to** *vi.* be located *Ito le lupan*. It is in the middle. [Bis. *medel*]

**tobbul** *n.* giant taro (generic) [Bis. *navi*]

**tobbul amah** *n.* giant taro variety

**tobbur** *n.* 1. hibiscus 2. *npart.* long stalk that bush nut fruit hang from

**tobburan** *ns.* bunch (of fruit, coconuts) [Bis. *bandel*]

**tok** *vi.* (of inanimate nouns) be located [Bis. *stap*]

**toki**<sup>1</sup> *vi.* like this, thus *Bwisian nan nabwitirtirali itoki inang*. The story that I will tell is like this. [Bis. *olsem*]

**toki**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* have *Natoki avat*. I've got money. [Bis. *gat*]

**tokopm** *pron.* 1. our (pl. excl.) 2. *n.* ours (pl. excl.). Also **totokopm**.

**tokopmdru** *pron.* 1. our (dl. excl.) 2. *n.* ours (dl. excl.). Also **totokopmdru**.

**tokopmtl** *pron.* 1. our (pcl. excl.) 2. *n.* ours (pcl. excl.). Also **totokopmtl**.

**tomtobo** *vi.* (of bird, chicken) lay eggs [Bis. *putum eg*]

**ton** *vt.* put sticks into mound of (yam) when the yam sprouts *Iton adam*. (S)he put sticks into the yam mounds.

**tong** *pron.* your (sg.)

**torop** *vi.* jump. Also **tortorop**. [Bis. *jiam*]

**tortorop** *vi.* jump. Also **torop**. [Bis. *jiam*]

**totoder** *vi.* wait

**totoki** *vt.* contain, have inside *Vitiber ipweli abah itotoki itian len atan*. The dwarf spirit shook the sugarcane with the old man in it on the ground.

**totokopm** *n.* ours (pl. excl.). Also **tokopm**.

**totokopmdru** *n.* ours (dl. excl.). Also **tokopmdru**.

**totokopmtl** *n.* ours (pcl. excl.). Also **tokopmtl**.

**totong** *n.* yours (sg.)

**tua**<sup>1</sup> *adv.* long time ago, before [Bis. *longtaem*]

**tua**<sup>2</sup> *n.* wood grub

**tuan** *postmod.* 1. indefinite *Komatsak komatsiber aut tuan*. We went up as far as a place. 2. *pronominal postmod.* some *Kopm tuan atyahsur Mitnowe*. Some of us went along the road to Mitnowe.

**tuan ier** *postmod.* some *Nasuda abak tuan ier*. I found some turtles. [Bis. *sam*]

**tubasang** *n.* 1. stonefish [Bis. *stonfis*] 2. freshwater fish that is soft and lies on bottom and which sticks into skin when trodden on, causing pain and blackening of the skin

**tuk** *vt.* (of bird, chicken) break open eggs to hatch chicks [Bis. *brekem eg*]

**tup vinisedr** *vi.* (of coconut) sprout and develop midrib in first leaves

**tur**<sup>1</sup> *vi.* stand up, be standing. Also **turtur, turman**.

**tur**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* 1. prick 2. inject 3. (of hornet) bite [Bis. *stikim*]

**tur da** *vi.* 1. stay behind *It te iva butur da dri itik*. Her husband said she should stay behind but she didn't. 2. *aux.* start *Itur da det buvuk e*. (S)he started to change.

**turi** *vt.* stand (something) up *Ituri aga ti*. (S)he stood the wood up. [Bis. *stanemap*]

**turman** *vi.* stand up, be standing *Nala bbuah kabat tuan ier atturman ivsak*. I saw some cattle standing up there. Also **tur, turtur**. [Bis. *stanap*]

**turtur** *vi.* stand up, be standing. Also **tur, turman**. [Bis. *stanap*]

**turtur viabb** *n.* eel sp. living in fresh water which can reportedly enter the anus

**turwa** *vt.* carry on shoulders *Ier atturwa emer ivwel liim*. They carry the eel back home on their shoulders.

**tuswe** *n.* 1. sea 2. salt water [Bis. *solwota*]

**tutur** *vi.* (of rain, water) drip, drop, leak through roof

**tuut** *postmod.* some *Komatyan morokon tuut ier*. We ate some of its ribs. *Iyan tuut emer ki*. (S)he ate some of the eel.

## U

**uba** *n.* 1. post (in fence) *uba nan alit* 'fence post' [Bis. *pos*] 2. support post for roof (in house). Also **bbubang**. [Bis. *stanpos*] 3. Ambae

**udruun** *ns.* 1. back (of body) [Bis. *bak*] 2. behind (something)

**ukulang** *n.* 1. headrest 2. pillow

**ul<sup>1</sup>** *vi.* cry [Bis. *krae*]  
**ul<sup>2</sup>** *vtr.* shed skin *Amwat uul e.* The snake is shedding its skin. [Bis. *jenisim skin*]  
**ul mitutak** *vi.* cry from fear of punishment rather than from the punishment itself  
**ul sin** *vt.* cry for *Momo lele ki uul sin bbuah te.* The girl cried for her grandmother.  
**ulan** *ns.* itchy fluff (on bamboo)  
**ulangan** *ns.* 1. scale (of fish) [Bis. *skel*] 2. dry skin, flaky skin 3. skin (e.g. of snake) that has been shed  
**ulukai** *n.* arrow. Also **atur**. [Bis. *ara*]  
**ulumial** *n.* breadfruit variety  
**unon** *ns.* spirit [Bis. *speret*]  
**up** *vt.* (of person) blow, blow on [Bis. *bluim*]  
**urubwit** *n.* purple swamphen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*)  
**usus** *vi.* ask. Also **suhshuh**. [Bis. *askem*]  
**usus sur** *vt.* ask (someone) [Bis. *askem*]  
**utemwet** *n.* axe [Bis. *akis*]  
**uuruur** *n.* 1. thunder [Bis. *tanda*] 2. engine noise  
**uvah** *n.* wild yam (generic) (*Dioscorea bulbifera*) [Bis. *waelyam*]  
**uvah met** *n.* wild yam variety  
**uvah vwiliaba** *n.* wild yam variety  
**uvar** *n.* grey-haired person [Bis. *waethea*]  
**uvaup** *n.* swamp taro variety  
**uver** *n.* tree sp. Also **maladr**.  
**uwah** *adv.* day after tomorrow [Bis. *afta tumora*]

## V

**va<sup>1</sup>** *vi.* 1. say [Bis. *se*] 2. *aux.* immediate future, intend *Nava nabwitirtisal.* I am going to tell a story.  
**va<sup>2</sup>** *vt.* 1. do, make [Bis. *mekem*] 2. (of unpleasant condition) have *Ivsodruh*

*iva na.* I have a cramp. **va magalip** tell jokes [Bis. *mekem fani*]  
**va beh** *vt.* clean [Bis. *klinim*]  
**vaaki** *adv.* and then, so. Also **baaki**.  
**vadrvadr** *vi.* (of two branches) cross and creak in wind  
**vakil** *n.* yam variety  
**vakil mial** *n.* variety of *vakil* yam  
**vakil yovyop** *n.* variety of *vakil* yam  
**val** *vi.* fight, wage war [Bis. *faet*]  
**vanabbun** *ns.* buttocks [Bis. *as*]  
**vanan** *ns.* 1. fruit [Bis. *frut*] [Nev. *navwan*] 2. fruit (of coconut) which is still small and without water, shell or flesh inside. Also **veru nan ani**.  
**vanan ipnu** *n.* shellfish sp., small, found in fresh water, with spines [Bis. *nasisa*]  
**vanan mian** *n.* ankle  
**vanasokoot** *n.* croton variety  
**vanatn** *ns.* child, son, daughter. Also **atn**. [Bis. *pikinini*]  
**vanatn awang** *n.* outrigger [Bis. *nasama*]  
**vangavang** *vi.* (of fire) alight. Also **lelemen**. [Bis. *laet*]  
**vanibop** *n.* lesser yam (generic) (*Dioscorea esculenta*) [Bis. *bovile*]  
**vanibop asil** *n.* lesser yam variety  
**vanibop midang** *n.* lesser yam variety  
**vanibop welevil** *n.* lesser yam variety  
**vanibwisawi** *n.* croton variety  
**vanubbuang** *n.* swamp taro variety  
**var<sup>1</sup>** *vtr.* break open *Ipnuh nan bongon ivar e.* His/her lips broke open.  
**var<sup>2</sup>** *int.* expression of sorrow, oh dear!  
**varan** *ns.* 1. arm, hand 2. (of animal) foreleg [Bis. *han*] 3. handle (of basket). Also **gerwen**. [Bis. *handel*]  
**variin** *vi.* tell the truth *Ovariin?* Are you telling the truth? [Bis. *tru*]

- vatn** *ns.* stomach, belly *Vatung isir.*  
My stomach is full. [Bis. *bel*]
- vavasul** *vi.* whistle (including whistling both with pursed lips and with fingers inserted into mouth) [Bis. *wesel*]
- vere** *loc.* outside [Bis. *afsaed*]
- veru nan ani** *n.* fruit of coconut which is still small and without water, shell or flesh inside. Also **vanan**.
- vesihi** *vt.* suckle, breastfeed
- vet** *vt.* weave *Ivet monong.* She is weaving a mat. [Bis. *tanem*]
- veve** *n.* yam variety
- vevet** *vi.* show sign, foretell
- vevet da** *vt.* show sign of, foretell (something)
- vi** *vi.* 1. be (copula) *Galute ivi baladrong.* Her mother was a sow. 2. become *Savimu bbuah.* (S)he did not become a boar. *Atvi mah bbuah.* They all became boars.
- viabb** *n.* Fijian asparagus (*Saccharum edule*) [Bis. *naviso*]
- vidoldol** *n.* Adam's apple
- viel** *n.* giant taro variety
- viel gara** *n.* variety of *viel* giant taro
- vih** *vt.* hit, strike (with hand-held object, e.g. stick) *Muut sapm irep vunubbu sapm ivih i maTisman ier sapm batn.* Somebody took a length of bamboo and struck one of the people from Tisman over the head with it.
- vinbatvat** *n.* bird sp. [Nev. *navevetevat*]
- vinbiris** *n.* ant sp. with large head
- vin-gorit** *n.* Moreton Bay chestnut (*Castanospermum australe*) [Bis. *bintri*]
- vinisedr** *npart.* midrib of coconut leaf [Bis. *brum blong kokonas*]
- vinmali** *n.* outrigger struts (by which outrigger is attached to the body of the canoe)
- vinmasal** *n.* yam variety
- vinvis** *n.* wart [Bis. *ae blong devel*] [Nev. *navwan na'ari*]
- virvavarah** *vi.* make coconut leaf basket to carry individual yams
- vitarisip** *n.* bird sp. [Bis. *tentang*]
- vitiber** *n.* dwarf spirit with eight elbow joints. Also **timih mala**. [Bis. *lisefsef*]
- vitimet** *n.* black stone [Bis. *blakston*]
- vivin** *ns.* (man's) sister
- vivsur** *vi.* swear. Also **sulengleng**. [Bis. *swea*]
- voki** *vi.* sleep on belly [Bis. *slip long bel*]
- volan** *ns.* flower (of breadfruit) [Bis. *flaoa blong bbeswud*]
- von** *vi.* 1. thick [Bis. *tik*] 2. deep [Bis. *dip*]
- vop** *vi.* rain *Auh ivop.* It is raining. [Bis. *ren*]
- vopom** *vi.* 1. precede, go ahead 2. first. Also **vupum, pum, pom**.
- vopongon** *vi.* walk along reef (usually in search of shellfish) . Also **sosong**. [Bis. *folem rif*] [Nev. *vongod*]
- vudroka** *n.* cicada sp. which chirps during day [Nev. *nabugali*]
- vuk** *vtr.* change *Itur da det buvuk e.* (S)he started to change.
- vulavinvis** *n.* banded rail (*Gallirallus philippensis*) [Bis. *nambilak*]
- vulut** *vt.* peel (burnt skin of tuber, banana) before eating
- vin-gaum** *n.* cardinal honey-eater (*Myzomela cardinalis*) [Bis. *redhed*]
- vunubbu** *n.* bamboo. Also **vwinibbu**. [Bis. *bambu*]
- vunubbu ka** *n.* hard bamboo used for weaving walls
- vunubbu kor** *n.* bamboo with small leaves that is not useful for anything
- vunubbu mial** *n.* bamboo with yellowish-green stem

- vunubbu sidridrik** *n.* soft bamboo used for cooking
- vunul** *n.* maggot [Bis. *maget*]
- vunumul** *n.* orange [Bis. *aranis*]
- vupum** *vi.* 1. precede, go ahead *Naruvrup navupum*. I ran ahead. 2. first. Also **vopom, pom, pum**.
- vuruh** *vt.* 1. grab hold of [Bis. *holem*] 2. squeeze out coconut milk *Kuvuruh ivsuuh i owe*. Squeeze the coconut milk with water. [Bis. *melekem*]
- vuruh tata** *vt.* grab hold of tightly [Bis. *holem taet*]
- vwalabbur** *n.* elephantiasis of the scrotum [Bis. *bigbol*]
- vwalamat** *n.* 1. flaccid penis [Bis. *dedkok*] 2. sensitive grass (*Mimosa pudica*) [Bis. *gras nil*]
- vwalan** *ns.* penis [Bis. *kok*]
- vwel** *vi.* come *Erik savwelve?* Has Erik not come yet? [Bis. *kam*]
- vwelat** *vi.* come past
- vwidl** *n.* shellfish sp., found in fresh water, with very sharp point
- vwila** *n.* yam variety
- vwila bbuah** *n.* variety of *vwila* yam
- vwila gerwen ebet** *n.* variety of *vwila* yam
- vwila lele** *n.* variety of *vwila* yam
- vwila met** *n.* yam variety
- vwila mwelekel** *n.* yam variety
- vwilaba** *n.* yam variety
- vwilaba mial** *n.* variety of *vwilaba* yam
- vwilaba yovyop** *n.* variety of *vwilaba* yam
- vwilang** *n.* fly [Bis. *flae*] [Nev. *navwilang*]
- vwilangolo** *n.* blowfly [Bis. *bluflae*] [Nev. *navwilanglu*]
- vwilaun aabb** *n.* charcoal [Bis. *jakol*]
- vwilihvat** *n.* giant taro variety
- vwinearak** *n.* hermit crab [Bis. *nakato*]
- vwinia** *n.* dew [Bis. *wota blong naet*]
- vwinianga** *n.* kidney [Bis. *kidni*]
- vwiniangah** *n.* sugarcane variety with dark streaks on skin. Also **onosour**.
- vwinibbu** *n.* bamboo. Also **vunubbu**. [Bis. *bambu*]
- vwinieek** *n.* fish (generic). Also **iki**. [Bis. *fis*]
- vwinievat** *n.* fish sp., found in fresh water in places hidden by rocks
- vwinih** *n.* sore [Bis. *soa*]
- vwinih maap** *n.* boil [Bis. *boela*]
- vwinih met** *n.* leech
- vwiningoh** *n.* 1. pawpaw (*Carica papaya*). Also **vwiningoh tamat**. [Bis. *popo*] 2. Pentecost *muut nan vwiningoh* ‘person from Pentecost’
- vwiningoh melemel** *n.* great hog plum (*Spondias dulcis*) [Bis. *naos*]
- vwiningoh tamat** *n.* pawpaw. Also **vwiningoh**. [Bis. *popo*]
- vwinmese** *n.* star [Bis. *sta*]
- vwinmese basian** *n.* evening star
- vwinmese bwilbwilingat** *n.* shooting star, meteorite
- vwinmese ranian** *n.* morning star
- vwinmororobbuh** *n.* ant, white, which eats meat
- vwinsilah** *n.* 1. sand 2. beach [Bis. *sanbij*]
- vwir** *aux.* 1. recent past 2. immediate future
- vwiriaabb** *n.* giant taro variety
- vwitarasip** *n.* bird sp. with yellow tongue that is found in bush [Bis. *yelotang*] [Nev. *navtokhtokh*]



## W

- wah<sup>1</sup>** *aux.* want to *Nawah nabwitirtirsali mitile sapm.* I want to tell a story. [Bis. *wantem*]
- wah<sup>2</sup>** *svi.* search
- wah<sup>3</sup>** *vi.* (of yam) ready for harvest
- wahi<sup>1</sup>** *vt.* like, want [Bis. *laekem, wantem*]
- wahi<sup>2</sup>** *vt.* 1. look for *Abwitwahi akanian nan abwityan dri bwititik.* They will look for food to eat but there will be none. 2. *svt.* search for, look for [Bis. *lukaotem*]
- wahla** *vi.* gather shellfish
- wailu** *n.* hard yam (*Dioscorea nummularia*) [Bis. *waelu*]
- wal** *prep.* 1. cause ('because of') 2. purpose ('for') *Idadan wal alal.* (S)he dived for trochus. [Bis. *from*]
- wal sive** *inter.* why? *Ong ter aga ti wal sive?* Why did you chop down that tree? [Bis. *from wanem*]
- wam** *vi.* fall over [Bis. *foldaon*]
- wang** *vi.* laugh [Bis. *laf*]
- wedren** *ns.* gums [Bis. *mit blong tut*]
- wel** *svt.* split [Bis. *spletem*]
- welewel** *vi.* split [Bis. *brok*]
- werekel** *n.* yam variety
- wewe** *vi.* cooee in bush [Bis. *singaot long bus*]
- wiim** *n.* Pacific pigeon (*Ducula pacifica*) [Bis. *nawimba*] [Nev. *nokhoim*]
- wiri** *int.* expression of happiness, oh boy!
- wirwiritlip** *vi.* gnash teeth [Bis. *kakae tut*]
- wu** *vt.* touch
- wum** *vt.* throw piece of wood at [Bis. *stonem long wud*]
- wutn** *ns.* 1. base, bottom 2. trunk (of tree) [Bis. *stamba*]

**wutn dilingan** *ns.* fleshy inside part of gill (of fish)

## Y

- yadr** *vi.* have an erection [Bis. *string*]
- yadra** *n.* grasshopper that is green
- yadra badrang** *n.* grasshopper that is found in imperata reed
- yadryadr** *vi.* 1. straight 2. correct [Bis. *stret*]
- yahsur** *vt.* 1. follow 2. come after, go after *MaTisman atkala salan ier ki atyahsur kopm.* The people of Tisman lifted up their brother and came after us. 3. go along road to *Kopm tuan atyahsur Mitnowe.* Some of us went along the road to Mitnowe. Also **yahsursur**. [Bis. *folem*]
- yahsursur** *vt.* 1. follow *Atip atyahsursur asal nan.* They went and followed its path. 2. come after, go after 3. go along road to. Also **yahsur**. [Bis. *folem*]
- yal** *vi.* sing. Also **yalyal**. [Bis. *singsing*]
- yala** *svt.* go over *Gabwir itorop yala alit ti.* The dog jumped over the fence. [Bis. *jiam ova*]
- yala makar** *n.* gecko [Bis. *bigae*]
- yala mwiih** *n.* green tree lizard (*Emoia sanfordii*) [Bis. *grinlised*]
- yalang** *n.* used heliconia leaf
- yalyal<sup>1</sup>** *vi.* fly
- yalyal<sup>2</sup>** *vi.* 1. sing. Also **yal**. [Bis. *singsing*] 2. song [Bis. *song*]
- yamat** *n.* yam variety
- yamyabbuh** *vi.* pleased, happy *Nayamyabbuh wal, nava "wiri!"* I was pleased with that and said "oh boy!".
- yamyaman** *vt.* settle problem with, make peace with *Iyamyaman na.* (S)he made peace with me.

**yan bbusal** *vt.* (of weather) affect along the road *Ouh bolo ivop iyan bbusal ier.* It rained heavily on them along the road.

**yang** *vi.* born [Bis. *bon*]

**yanga** *n.* native almond (*Canarium indicum*) [Bis. *nangae*]

**yanga bbuah** *n.* nut of native almond that is very large

**yanga kabat** *n.* native almond variety

**yanga movovok** *n.* nut of native almond which has gone soft

**yanga muruh** *n.* nut of native almond which is flat rather than the normal nut with three corners

**yanyan** *vt.* eat [Bis. *kakae*]

**yarak** *n.* wild yam variety

**yaram** *vi.* burnt [Bis. *bon*]

**yat** *vt.* bite [Bis. *kakae*] **yat muut** bite *Iyat muut.* It bites.

**yatyat** *vi.* 1. bite [Bis. *kakae long tut*]  
2. itch [Bis. *skras*]

**yel bbuleh** *vt.* tip over, capsize *Awang ti iyel bbuleh e.* The canoe tipped over. [Bis. *tanem*]

**yelem** *vt.* lick [Bis. *likim*]

**yeng** *vt.* remove (food or cooking stones) from earth oven [Bis. *karemaot*]

**yet** *vt.* feed *Aryet baladrong tier sapm.* The two of them fed their sow. [Bis. *fidim*]

**veyepbet** *n.* firefly

**yok** *vi.* vomit [Bis. *traot*]

**yok marmar** *vi.* dry retch [Bis. *traot nating*]

**yokian** *n.* vomitus [Bis. *traot*]

**yolol** *vi.* (of smell) nauseating *Abbun iyolol.* It is a nauseating smell.

**yomyom** *n.* bamboo rails in roof which run down from main roof beam to the *barat* beam along the top of the wall

**yomyom bwingbwing** *n.* wooden rails in roof which run down from main roof beam to the *barat* beam along the top of the wall

**yong** *vtr.* leave, depart from *Lama sapm komatyong kopm Tarem.* One day we departed from Taremp. *Bbum tokopm iyong e Vanvunubbul.* Our grandfather left Vanvunubul.

**yongoyong** *vi.* move [Bis. *mufmuf*]

**yor**<sup>1</sup> *vt.* 1. chase away *Iyor bala matak len rakian te.* (S)he chased away the wild pig from his/her garden. 2. run after *MaTisman ier atyor kopm.* The people from Tisman ran after us. [Bis. *ronem*]

**yor**<sup>2</sup> *vt.* 1. grate (coconut) 2. scratch *Nayoryor na.* I scratched myself. [Bis. *skrasem*]

**yorot** *vt.* cut with knife, slice [Bis. *katem*]

**yoryor**<sup>1</sup> *vi.* go hunting *Lama sapm komatip komatyoryor.* One day we went hunting. [Bis. *han*]

**yoryor**<sup>2</sup> *vi.* itch [Bis. *skras*]

**yoryorsik** *n.* tree sp. that stings like devil nettle

**your** *n.* water on wet leaves after rain

**yovyop** *vi.* 1. white [Bis. *waet*] 2. (of person) fair-skinned [Bis. *laetskin*]  
3. (of thing) clean [Bis. *klin*]

# 7 *English–Avava finderlist*

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The following is a finderlist that has been constructed on the basis of the Avava–English lexicon presented in the previous section. The information that is contained in this finderlist has been kept to a minimum; thus information about word class membership of Avava forms should be obtained from the main lexical listing, as should detailed semantic descriptions. Grammatical information, where supplied, relates to English and not to Avava; so, for example, what are glossed as adjectives in English are usually intransitive verbs in Avava. All forms should be checked against the main lexical entries for greater grammatical and semantic detail.

## A

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Abelmoschus manihot</i> <b>oweng</b>                 | all of a sudden <b>lama sapm</b>  |
| able, be <b>rokut</b>                                   | all over <b>bivil</b>   |
| above <i>adv.</i> <b>draka, ivsak</b>                   | almond  |
| <i>Acacia spirorbis</i> <b>mari</b>                     | native almond <b>yanga</b>  |
| accidentally <b>bwiti</b>                               | native almond varieties <b>yanga bbuah, yanga kabat, yanga movovok, yanga muruh</b> |
| accompany <b>ma</b>                                     | sea almond <b>teve</b>  |
| Adam’s apple <b>vidoldol</b>                            | almost <b>lile, supak</b>   |
| adult <i>adj.</i> <b>levlep</b>                         | alone <b>sapm</b> <sup>1</sup>  |
| aeroplane <b>ruvlaim</b>                                | along <b>sur</b> <sup>1</sup>   |
| affect, of weather <b>yan bbusal</b>                    | along the road <b>bbusal</b>  |
| afflicted by <b>siber</b>                               | along the road to <b>sur</b> <sup>1</sup>   |
| afraid <b>matak</b> <sup>2</sup> , <b>mitutak</b>       | alongside <b>sur</b> <sup>1</sup>   |
| afterbirth <b>atang</b>                                 | always <b>lama sal, saari</b>   |
| afternoon <b>kidrap, kinkidrap</b>                      | Ambrym <b>aabb</b>  |
| again <b>man</b> <sup>2</sup> , <b>min</b> <sup>2</sup> | and <b>dri</b> <sup>2</sup>   |
| agree on day <b>tatah sin</b>                           | and then <b>ale, baaki, vaaki</b>   |
| albino <b>apmimim</b>                                   | angry <b>rar</b>  |
| alcoholic drink <b>owe bebe, owe nan iir</b>            | ankle <b>vanan mian</b>   |
| alight, be <b>lelemen, vangavang</b>                    | ankle rattle tree <b>bwikivar</b>   |
| alive <b>maur</b>                                       | another <b>tele</b>   |
| all <b>mah</b> <sup>4</sup> , <b>mamah</b>              |   |

ant

fire ant **lingaad**sugar ant **esep, esep met**other varieties **vinbiris, vwinmororobbuh**anus **awal nan mat**appear suddenly **puh dap**applaud **tatanah i varan**April **mwetagadoli**argue **tirtir**arm **varan**armband **batn osom**armpit **milivin**around **dilivih**

arrive

at **siber**suddenly **puh dap**arrogant **bwiriin<sup>2</sup>**arrow **atur, ulukai***Artocarpus altilis* **ebet<sup>1</sup>**ascend **sak**ashamed **bor<sup>2</sup>**ashes **bisnaap**ashore **out**ask **suh, suhsuh, usus, usus sur**asthmatic, be **ngap**athlete's foot **adrab vukar**attract somebody's attention **misum**attracted to **lala drimdrim**August **reptamal**

aunt

mother's elder sister **gal lam, galu lam**mother's younger sister **gal lele, galu lele**avenge **lehi<sup>1</sup>, sevi**away from **sin<sup>2</sup>**axe **mwetewet, utemwet****B**back *n.* (anat.) **udruun**back of head **bbutbatn**back *adv.* **min<sup>2</sup>**backbone **bwirkaka**bad *se* *See also* **lil**bald **maap**bald head **batmala, batumaap**bamboo **vunubbu, vwinibbu**varieties **vunubbu ka, vunubbu kor, vunubbu mial, vunubbu sidridrik**lengths of, in thatch **ip sur**pin for thatching **lugangem**banana **apm**ripe **apm mim, apmimin**varieties **aabbul, apm bbur, apm****ber, apm kevet, apm kraun, apm****kuk, apm lilit, apm matamat, apm****matamat mutmut, apm misor, apm****salsalmu, apm sibermim, avar,****barabar viti, bbunbbunvat, beker,****beker dingsar, beker vanusoweng,****beker vin-gorit, bolbbur, bour,****dungdung, kaduru, lelabbutdah,****lowetok, masatan, masir, mobbugal,****mwilit, sikop, suka ber**banded rail **vulavinvis**bang **tavak**banyan **abang**varieties **bakamaat, bakamet, bakwa**

bark

*n.* **ipmin<sup>1</sup>***v.* **dam**barn owl **tarban**barrel tree **mari***Barringtonia**asiatica* **owem***edulis* **imwih**stalk which nut hangs from **tobbur**base **wutn**of frond, leaf **behnan**basket **atat**kinds **abulbul, atat bbul, atat****bbulah, atat viti, tangmoraut**bat **busmariri**bathe **lumlum**

- be **vi**  
     be with **bilep, bineri, bitep, ma**  
 beach **vwinsilah**  
 beach morning glory **kovili**  
 beads **osom**  
 beam (of house) **barat**  
 beard **lobon asn**  
 beat up **lop**  
 because of **wal**  
 become **vi**  
 bed **maling**  
 before *adv.* **davaki, tua<sup>1</sup>**  
 behind **udruun**  
 belch *v.* **dordorkon**  
 belly **vatn**  
 below **kutn**  
 bend  
     *vi.* **rorok**  
     *vt.* **kelemi**  
 beneath **kutn, lapan**  
 beside **sikilen, sur<sup>1</sup>**  
 big **levlep**  
 Big Nambas people **Apap Bbur**  
 bind **lik tata**  
 bird **aman**  
     unidentified bird sp. **balyehyeh,**  
     **vinbatvat, vitarisip, vuitarasip**  
*Birgus latro* **arum nan ani**  
 biscuit **ipmin yanga**  
 Bislama **bwisian kabat**  
 bite **yat, yatyat**  
     of hornet **tur<sup>2</sup>**  
 bitter **kon**  
 black **met, metemet**  
 bladder **atan nan mekian**  
 blanket **monong**  
 blind **bar**  
     blind person **matabar**  
 blink **bwilbwilingat**  
 block *v.* **kor, koror, luk kor**  
     block opening **tam kor**  
 blood **edre**  
     clotted **edre bungbang**  
 blow *vt.* **up**  
     nose **sung**  
 blowfly **vwilangolo**  
 blue **melih, melmelih**  
 blunt **bonot**  
 boar **abbuah**  
     castrated **tamap**  
 body **druman**  
 boil *n.* **vwinih maap**  
 bone **bolong**  
 book **bwilat, ovol**  
 boots **bbutan kabat**  
 born **yang**  
 bottom **wutn**  
     of yam **giren**  
 boughna **gihgih, sosok**  
 bow *n.* **ihbariin, ihbwiriin**  
 bowel **atat nan mat**  
 boy **danan muut, muut lele**  
 brain **mere batn**  
 branch  
     large **bbutn**  
     small **rongon**  
 bread **bisnaap**  
 breadfruit **ebet<sup>1</sup>**  
     growing in a pair **lemlem**  
     fermented **merebet**  
     pounded **betbarbar, betrivrit**  
     varieties **apmua, avan, avan mial,**  
     **bativin, bbul nan ebet, betakon,**  
     **betasil, betavik, betbbuah, betivri,**  
     **betlitslits, betlual, betsamanaga,**  
     **betuma, betuvah, bwilduep, ebet**  
     **ovol, ebet ovotoh, eleh, ieh, lornauh,**  
     **sobbudur, ulumial**  
 break *vi.*  
     of swell at sea **tatah**  
     of day **ran**  
 break *vt.* **bwir**  
     by hitting **lop bwir**  
     with chopping motion **ter bwir**

- open **boh**, **var**<sup>1</sup>  
 by stoning **lop boh**  
 with hands **langlangar**  
 eggs to hatch chicks **tuk**  
 breast **asih**  
 breastfeed **sisih**, **vesihi**  
 breath **ngarian**  
 breathe **ngarngar**  
 bright **maap**  
 bring **rep**  
 broom **sasamuh**  
 brother  
     of man **salan**  
     of woman **man**<sup>1</sup>  
 bull **abbuah**  
 bunch **tobburan**  
 burn *vi.* **long**  
     burn down **long**  
     burn down to embers **nep**  
 burn *vt.* **dinih**, **dumu**, **dungo**  
     burn off garden site **susula**  
 burnt **yaram**  
 burp *v.* **dordorkon**  
 bury **tipm**  
 bush **itoro**  
     impenetrable **mumus**  
     to/from/in the bush **laka**  
 bush nut **imwih**  
     stalk which nut hangs from **tobbur**  
     variety **mwekeh**  
 but **dri**<sup>2</sup>  
 butterfly **bebem**  
 buttocks **vanabbun**  
 buttress root **iriin**  
 buy **leh**  
 by oneself, be **sapm**<sup>1</sup>
- C**
- calf (of leg) **tangatang**  
 call, call out **dam**, **ka**<sup>1</sup>  
     in pain **sih**
- of kingfisher **salsal**<sup>1</sup>  
 calm (of sea) **mat**<sup>2</sup>  
*Calophyllum inophyllum* **bakur**  
*Canarium indicum* **yanga**  
 canine tooth **lipm**  
 canoe **awang**  
 canoe tree **duep**  
     seeds **nivruruel**  
 capsize **yel bbuleh**  
 car **bolokovat**  
 cardinal honeyeater **vun-gaum**  
 carefully **lalak**, **lalaki**  
*Carica papaya* **vwingingoh**  
 carry  
     in arms **puh**  
     on shoulders **turwa**  
 cassava **abi**  
 cassia **outmetian**  
*Castanospermum australe* **vin-gorit**  
*Casuarina equisetifolia* **iar**  
 catch **gong**  
     disease **siber**  
 cattle **bbuah kabat**  
 cave **avam**  
*Chalcophaps indica* **apmar**  
 change *vt.* **dri**<sup>1</sup>, **vuk**  
 charcoal **vwilaun aabb**  
 chase **bel**  
     chase away **bel lu**, **yor**<sup>1</sup>  
     chase chickens away (of fowl) **ter**  
     **sisihi**  
 chat **tirtirsal**  
 chest (anat.) **ivsan**<sup>1</sup>  
 chew **mabbuhi**, **sem**  
 chicken **oto**  
     kinds **oto bisnaap**, **oto langanatap**,  
     **oto metemet**, **oto mial**, **oto**  
     **mwiritirit**, **oto yovyop**  
 chief **mwilip**  
 child **atda**, **atn**, **atnida**, **ida**, **vanatn**  
 chin **gimwin**  
 chiton **lilis**

- choke *vi.* **dilim sangi**
- chop *v.* **ter, terter**  
 chop at glancingly **ter bih**  
 chop to pieces/mush **ter lovlop**  
 chop down trees **terterkur**  
 break with chopping motion **ter bwir**  
 split with chopping motion **ter wel**
- cicada sp. **tamat sodradang, vudroka**
- ciguetera poisoning, suffer from  
**malamal<sup>2</sup>**
- Circus approximans* **abal<sup>2</sup>**
- clan group **amal emwet**
- clap *v.* **tatanah i varan**
- clean  
*adj.* **yovyop**  
 become clean, of water **meler**  
*vt.* **va beh** See also **beh**
- clear *v.*  
 throat **kar, teneh**  
 burnt debris in garden **kapkap**  
 garden site **rak**  
 re-clear garden site **gahgah**
- climb **saksak, sasur**
- clitoris **bat nan sivir**
- clock **matanal**
- close  
*adv.* (= near) **lile**  
*vt.* **kor**  
 close eyes **bwil, ingat**
- clothes **mulun kabat, muruh**
- cloud **alang nan auh**
- club **batlang, tabar<sup>1</sup>**  
 kinds **aga mial, agap, matan tobbul**
- cluck **drokdrok, kotkotaah**
- coast, to/on the **lawal**
- coconut **ani**  
 still small **veru nan ani**  
 green, not ready for drinking **arat, ivsan nan onohdrap**  
 green, drinking **ivsan<sup>2</sup>**  
 dry **ani tara, barum**  
 sprouting **ani tepmaru, ani teptep**
- windfallen **ani midimidim**
- varieties **ani aabb, ani kubaum, ani sangan**  
 bud **vanan**  
 fibre **bbuser, surang**  
 milk **ivsuuh<sup>1</sup>**  
 shell **bwikilah, bwilisani, bwilish**  
 spathe **isol**  
 top where stalk is attached to fruit  
**gerevetan**
- coconut crab **arum nan ani**
- coconut lory **sivir**
- cold *adj.* **malah<sup>3</sup>, melekit**
- collect **serser**
- Colocasia esculenta* **bbuang**
- colourful **kakalan**
- Columba vitiensis* **otoro**
- comb (of fowl) **born, imah<sup>1</sup>, obor<sup>1</sup>**
- come **vwel**  
 come after **yahsur, yahsursur**  
 come in (of tide) **bbun kor, bbun lam, bbunbbun**  
 come out **malu**  
 come past **vwelat**
- common **bial<sup>1</sup>**
- commoner **muut bial**
- conch shell **ataap**
- conclude *vi.* **nong**
- conjunctivitis **matamial**
- constipated **kal**
- contain **totoki**
- convince (try to) **bwirbwir**
- cooee in bush **wewe**
- cook **tntn**  
 over fire **tn, tntn**
- cooked **mah<sup>2</sup>**  
 half-cooked **mah meret**
- cooking pit **ivleh**
- copulate **reh, rehreh**
- coral **subbat**  
 broken, on shore **subbuvat**  
 coral rock in bush **avaton**

coral tree **adrar***Cordia subcordata* **balaka nan tuswe***Cordyline terminalis* **aari**correct **yadryadr**cottonwood **balaka**cough **sep**count **dongdongon, dongon**cover v. **luku, pongor, sapm<sup>2</sup>**cow **baladrong**cowrie **tapbilbalah**crab **ivri**bush crab **ivri balang**crab sp. **arum**crack **drangdrang**cramp **ivsodruh**crash **tavak**crawl **arak**crazy **bebe, lengleng**creak **drangdrang**of branches **vadradr**creek bed **awal**crooked **kel<sup>1</sup>**cross v. **kawat**legs **gun**croton **asah**varieties **asilimet, asilimet mial, asilimet yovyop, bakadre, bbulen apmar, bilabil, bilabil mial, bilabil yovyop, bobobial, ivadaling, ivsuuh<sup>2</sup>, matabwedr, murumwidr, mwereverep, sahliptep, sivirlam, terebbun, vanasokoot, vanibwisawi**crow v. **teterwet**crunchy **ratarat**cry **ul<sup>1</sup>**from fear of punishment **ul mitutak**cry for **ul sin**cup **bwilisani**

cut

with axe/bushknife **ter**with knife **yorot**with scissors **kot**cut wedge **koit<sup>2</sup>***Cycas circinalis* **imwil**cyclone **lingarap****D**

dance

n. **savian**v. **sap, savi<sup>2</sup>**dark **met, metemet**it is dark **out imet**darkness **outmetian**daughter **atn, atnavin, vanatn**dawn v. **ran**day **abbung<sup>1</sup>**day before yesterday **tanawah**three days before today **bbunitl**four days before today **bbunivat**five days before today **bbunlim**day after tomorrow **uwah**three days from today **ititl**four days from today **itivat**five days from today **itlim**next day **maran nan**daylight, it is **out iran**dead **mat<sup>2</sup>, mat bbun**deaf **bor<sup>1</sup>**deaf person **obor<sup>2</sup>**deceive **bwingbwing sur**December **abasi mial, bolongmur**deep **von**defecate **tab***Dendrocnide* sp. **galat**varieties **galat mial, galat mwerah,****galat ovop**depart from **yong**descend **dah**determined **bwiriin<sup>2</sup>**devil **isteleh, tamat**small **bwetekari**devil nettle **galat**varieties **galat mial, galat mwerah,****galat ovop**



dew **vwinia**  
 diarrhoea **owe ruvrup**  
 die **mat<sup>2</sup>, mat bbun**  
 different **tele**  
 dig **il, kikel, kilkil**  
   dig up **il**  
   dig up yam **kikel borong**  
   dig up and eat garden (of pig) **lalah, lalahi**  
 dignitary **muut levlep**  
*Dioscorea* spp. **adam**  
   *bulbifera* **uvah**  
   *esculenta* **vanibop**  
   *nummularia* **wailu**  
 dip pudding into coconut milk **dede, didi**  
 dirt **atan**  
 dirty **met, metemet**  
 disappear **talip**  
 dislike **lip**  
 dislodge with pole **sur<sup>2</sup>**  
 disobey **bwir**  
 disrespectful person **lesavraka**  
 distant **saman**  
 diving, go **dadan**  
 Dixon Reef people **Maus**  
 dizzy **bbulbbul daling**  
 do **peri, va<sup>2</sup>**  
   do very much **bakahi**  
 dog **gabwir**  
 dolphin **lalabatnaru**  
 door **matali**  
 doorway **bongon matili**  
 down **kutn**  
   down by the coast **kutn**  
*Dracontomelon vitiense* **atibol**  
 drag **rep**  
   drag fire through garden site **karah, karkarah**  
 dragon plum **atibol**  
 dragonfly **aari damat**  
 draw **titih bo**  
 dream *n.* **bari, bari borokonah**

drift **salsal<sup>2</sup>**  
 drink **min<sup>1</sup>, minmin**  
 drip *v.* **tutur**  
 drop *v.* **tutur**  
   drop off (passenger) **lingling<sup>2</sup>**  
 drought **anal**  
 drunk **be**  
 dry *adj.* **mesemah**  
   run dry, of river **mah<sup>1</sup>**  
 dry retch **yok marmar**  
 dry up, of river **bbudop**  
*Ducula pacifica* **wiim**  
 dust **bisnaap**

## E

ear **dilingan**  
 earth **atan**  
 earth oven **ivleh**  
 earthquake **dirdir**  
 earwax **adl**  
 eat **kan, rule, temetem, yanyan**  
 ebb, of tide **mah<sup>1</sup>**  
 eel **emer**  
   varieties **arah nan emer, emer awah, emer mial, emer tobbul, emer wosani, turtur viabb**  
 egg  
   of prawn, lobster **iem**  
   of ants **ovingaad**  
*Egretta sacra* **bolyevyep**  
 eight **setl**  
 eighteen **langal druman setl**  
 ejaculate **asur irup, rup**  
 elbow **baun, baun varan**  
 elephantiasis **abbur, vwalabbur**  
 eleven **langal druman sapm**  
 embarrassed **bor<sup>2</sup>**  
 emerald ground dove **apmar**  
 emerge **malu**  
*Emoia sanfordii* **yala mwiih**  
 end *vi.* **nong**  
 enlarged **bbur**

enter **sa**  
 erection, have **yadr**  
*Erythrina variegata* **adrar**  
 Espiritu Santo **atan levlep**  
 European **kabat**  
 evening **kidrap**  
 evening star **vwinmese basian**  
 every **mah<sup>4</sup>**, **mamah**  
 everything **itbalian**  
 everywhere **bivil**  
 excited **mabbmabb**  
 excrement **mat<sup>1</sup>**  
 exist  
     not exist **titik**  
 exorcise **tamtabah**  
 explain **tir tata**, **tirtir tata**  
 explode **tavak**  
 extend legs out in front **teh berberi**  
 eye **matan**  
 eyeball **opm matan**  
 eyelash **lobon matan**  
 eyelid **ipmin matan**

## F

face **outnan**  
     funny/ugly face someone pulls **otom**  
 fair-skinned **yovyop**  
 fall **tami**  
     fall over **wam**  
 false **bwingbwing**  
 fan *n.* **bulbal**  
 far off **saman**  
 fart  
     audibly **bas**  
     silently **susuh**  
 fasten **pih**  
     tight **pih tata**  
 fat  
     *adj.* **levlep**  
     *n.* **lingiling**  
 father **mom**

father's brother  
     elder **mom lam**  
     younger **mom lele**  
 fatty **susur**  
 feather **bbulen**  
     long tail feather **ibwil**  
 February **rawel lam**  
 feed **yet**  
 feel **ro**, **rong**  
 fence **alit**  
 feral **matak<sup>1</sup>**  
 fetch **lap<sup>1</sup>**  
 fibre of coconut **bbuser**, **surang**  
 fifteen **langal druman ilim**  
 fifth **itlim nan**  
 fight **val**  
     fight with **riit**  
 Fijian asparagus **avis**, **avis mer**, **viabb**  
 fill up **songon**  
 find **labit da**, **som da**  
 finger **subbun**, **subbun varan**  
     thumb **subbulelep**  
     index **subbusilsil**  
     middle **subbusibo**  
     ring finger **subbiar**  
     little finger **subbulele**  
 fingernail **sivianga nan varan**  
 finish *vi.* **nong**  
 fire *n.* **aabb**  
 fire *v.* **lu<sup>1</sup>**, **tavak**  
     fire shots **luluka**  
 fire ant **lingaad**  
 firefly **yevyepbet**  
 firewood **aabb**  
     burning piece of **aabb vangavang**  
 first **pom**, **pum**, **vopom**, **vupum**  
 fish *n.* **iki**, **vwiniek**  
     fish sp. **dilingavat**, **ikudr**,  
     **merevwatak**, **suluseweng**, **tubasang**,  
     **vwinievat**  
 fish poison tree **owem**  
 fishing, go **revrep**, **sil**

five **ilim**  
 five days before today **bbunlim**  
 five days from today **itlim**  
 flaccid **mat**<sup>2</sup>  
 flesh **misal**  
 of fruit **onon**  
 flick **lihlihda**  
 float v. **salsal**<sup>2</sup>  
 flood  
 of bilge **sasak**  
 of river **sosolam**  
 flour **bisnaap**  
 flow intermittently **mah bwirbwir**  
 flower **atah, ipman, tah**<sup>1</sup>  
 of breadfruit **volan**  
 of Indian coral tree **mial**  
 fluff, itchy, on bamboo **ulan**  
 fly n. **vwilang**  
 blowfly **vwilangolo**  
 fly v. **yalyal**<sup>1</sup>  
 flying fox **busuma**  
 black **min-gara**  
 white **levwis**  
 fog **dukap**  
 follow **yahsur, yahsursur**  
 tracks of **meten sur**  
 food **akanian, nalah**  
 leftover **malah**<sup>2</sup>  
 foot **bolokon, bolokon kutn**  
 footprint **bbutan**  
 for (purpose) **wal**  
 forehead **ipnon**  
 foreleg **varan**  
 foreskin **ipnuh bbun**  
 foretell **vevet, vevet da**  
 forget vt. **bbulengi**  
 fork v. of branches **pubbutn**  
 formerly **davaki**  
 four **ivat**  
 four days before today **bbunivat**  
 four days from today **itivat**  
 fourteen **langal druman ivat**

fourth **itivat nan**  
 fowl **oto**  
 jungle fowl **oto matak**  
 kinds of fowl **oto bisnaap, oto langanatap, oto metemet, oto mial, oto mwiritirit, oto yovyop**  
 fright, get a **padir**  
 frightened **matak**<sup>2</sup>, **mitutak**  
 front **bongon**  
 fruit **vanan**  
 full **bbun**<sup>2</sup>  
 of stomach **sir**  
 of moon **lam**  
 full tide **bbun lam**  
 fungus **arupmaap, borokonah, ipmin**<sup>2</sup>

## G

gall bladder **memen**  
*Gallirallus philippensis* **vulavinvis**  
 garden n. **arup**<sup>1</sup>, **rakian**  
 former garden site **tenir**  
 gather **rep, serser**  
 gather shellfish **wahla**  
 gecko **yala makar**  
 genuine **bariin, bwiriin**<sup>1</sup>  
 get up **marak**  
 giant taro **tobbul**  
 varieties **aabb vwinianu, bbukasusa, bolokopal, meliavik, obo, tobbul amah, viel, viel gara, vwilihvat, vwiriaabb**  
 gill **dilingan**  
 fleshy inside part **wutn dilingan**  
 ginger, wild **isiing, siing batik, siing mwiih**  
 girl **danan momok, momok lele**  
 give **ser**<sup>1</sup>  
 give back **lehi**<sup>1</sup>  
 give birth **lem**<sup>2</sup>  
 give free **sasan**  
 gizzard  
 first **bburtan mwiniisini**

second **bbukiking**  
glands, swollen **lekeleke**  
glans penis **batn vwalan**  
gnash teeth **wirwiritlip**  
go **ip**  
go across **kawat, tabwir**  
go after **yahsur, yahsursur**  
go ahead **pom, pum, vopom, vupum**  
go along road to **ip sur, yahsur, yahsursur**  
go as far as **siber**  
go diving **dadan**  
go down **dah**  
go down along road to **dah sur**  
go fishing **revrep, sil**  
go hunting **yoryor<sup>1</sup>**  
go inside **sa**  
go out, of tide **mah<sup>1</sup>**  
go over **yala**  
go past **sadri**  
go quickly **ravarap**  
go separate ways **lingling<sup>2</sup>, tara<sup>3</sup>**  
go to bush/garden **sol**  
go underwater **dan**  
go up **sak**  
go up along road to **sak sur**  
God **Atua**  
good **rivik**  
good night **maran**  
goosebumps, have **lobon itur**  
grab hold of **vuruh**  
tightly **vuruh tata**  
granddaughter **ebbun**  
grandfather **bbum**  
grandmother **bbuah**  
grandson **ebbun**  
grass **mwana**  
grasshopper varieties **yadra, yadra badrang**  
grate  
*vi.* **bbungbbung**  
*vt.* **bbung**

grate coconut **yor<sup>2</sup>**  
greasy **susur**  
great hog plum **vwiningoh melemel**  
green **melih, melmelih**  
green tree lizard **yala mwiih**  
grey-haired person **uvar**  
ground **atan**  
on the ground **kutn**  
grown up **levlep**  
growth on rooster's face **gimwin**  
gully **awal**  
dry **awal amah**  
in the gully **korowal**  
gums **wedren**  
gush (of spring) **sasak**  
*Gyrocarpus americanus* **duep**  
seeds **nivruruel**

## H

hack **ter**  
hair  
of head **sivlen**  
on body **lobon**  
pubic hair **lobon bop** (female), **lobon vwalan** (male)  
*Halcyon chloris* **asik**  
half-cooked **mah meret**  
hammer *v.* **lop**  
hand **varan**  
handle **varan**  
hang *vt.* **daka**  
happy **suksukur, yamyabbuh**  
hard **ir**  
hard yam **wailu**  
hat **evem**  
have **titiki, toki<sup>2</sup>**  
have inside **totoki**  
have (unpleasant condition) **va<sup>2</sup>**  
not have **тики**  
he **e**  
head **bat, batn**  
back of **bbutbatn**

headband **talihlih**  
 headrest **ukulang**  
 heap up **ruruk, serser kururi**  
 hear **ro, robit, rong**  
 heart **muut<sup>2</sup>**  
 heavy **map**  
 heel **giren**  
 heliconia **avar**  
   leaf **arusap**  
   soft leaf **meldohtop**  
   usef leaf **yalang**  
   pieces of used leaf removed from oven  
   **masol**  
 hen **avin nan oto, momo nan oto**  
 her **te, tete**  
 here **itnan**  
 hermit crab **vwinearak**  
   large **bwirkoto**  
*Hernandia nymphaeifolia* **birbir**  
 heron **bolyevyep**  
 hibiscus **tobbur**  
*Hibiscus tiliaceus* **balaka**  
 hiccup **misodr**  
 hide  
   *vi.* **babak**  
   *vt.* **lukun**  
 high **ber, berber**  
   of river **bbunbbun, lam**  
   high tide **bbun lam**  
 hill **butuan**  
 hirsute person **lobobbur**  
 his **te, tete**  
 hit **lop, vih**  
 hold  
   down **tem<sup>1</sup>**  
   hold tight(ly) **rep tata, tata**  
 hole **awal**  
   in bamboo wall **outyovian**  
 hollow *n.* **awal**  
 hop **sisiget**  
 horny **mesemah**  
 hot **ir, rar**

house **amal, iim**  
   open-sided **tabatam**  
 how? **tamak**  
 how much? how many? **ivih**  
 hundred **angat**  
 hunger **amar**  
 hungry **amar iyatyat**  
 hunt after **bel**  
 hunting, go **yoryor<sup>1</sup>**  
 hurricane **lingarap**  
 hurry **ravarap**  
 hurt *vi.* **rer**  
 husband **it**  
 husk *v.* **leng**

## I

I **na**  
 idea **sisienian**  
 if **bana**  
 ill **sal<sup>2</sup>**  
*Imperata cylindrica* **maraan**  
 important person **muut levlep**  
 in **le**  
 incisor **basn**  
 incubator bird **otomala**  
 Indian coral tree **adrar**  
 inject **tur<sup>2</sup>**  
 in-law **alak**  
*Inocarpus edulis* **anah**  
 insect **bobok**  
   kinds of **bbuah mial, bebesa, odralih**  
 insert **songon**  
 inside **bbuut**  
   inside part **elen**  
 intend **va<sup>1</sup>**  
 interior **elen**  
 internal organ **itnen**  
 intestines **bburtan**  
*Intsia bijuga* **otor**  
 island **butuan**  
   offshore **atan lele**

island cabbage **oweng**  
 varieties **barang, bbusaman, oweng**  
**bwirnal, oweng lesukur, oweng**  
**meserser, oweng mial**  
 island teak **otor**  
 it **e**  
 itch *v.* **yatyat, yoryor<sup>2</sup>**  
 its **te, tete**

## J

January **rada**  
 jaw **asn**  
 jellyfish **galat nan tuswe**  
 job **eperian**  
 join **subat<sup>2</sup>**  
 joke *n.* **magalip**  
 juice **esn**  
 July **lap mwisisi**  
 jump **torop, tortorop**  
 June **lap vwelam**

## K

kava **abal<sup>1</sup>, bwilokok**  
 keep doing **dem**  
 kick **sabbut**  
 kidney **vwinianga**  
 kill **bbun<sup>1</sup>, riit, riit bbun**  
 kingfisher **asik**  
*Kleinhovia hospita* **midang**  
 variety **midang varavar**  
 knee **baun, baun bolokon**  
 back of **melebom**  
 kneel **singsingba**  
 knife **emwet**  
 know **rokut**  
 know how to **rokut**  
 not know **delengi**

## L

Lamap people **Apap Lele**  
 land

*n.* **atan**  
*v.* **bak**  
 language **bwisian**  
 large **levlep**  
 unusually large **bbur**  
 last *adj.* **dito, iptak**  
 laugh **wang**  
 lay eggs **tomtobo**  
 lazy-bones **drumarah**  
 leaf **aruun**  
 leak *v.* **tutur**  
 lean against **sim**  
 leave **malu, yong**  
 leave (someone) behind **lingling<sup>2</sup>**  
 leech **vwiniih met**  
 left (side) **mwiiir**  
 left behind **luk, luman**  
 leftover food **malah<sup>2</sup>**  
 leg **bolokon**  
 lesser yam **vanibop**  
 varieties **vanibop asil, vanibop**  
**midang, vanibop welevil**  
 let go of **tilung**  
*Leucaena leucocephala* **outmetian**  
 level place **amap**  
 lice **aut**  
 lick **yelem**  
 lie down **ding, dingman**  
 lie (= tell lies) **bwingbwing**  
 lie to **bwingbwing sur**  
 lift up **kala**  
 ligature in counting -teens **druman**  
 light (in weight) **meresal, sal<sup>1</sup>**  
 light *n.* **asil**  
 lightning **alangaap**  
 like *v.* **wahi<sup>1</sup>**  
 like this **toki<sup>1</sup>**  
 be like **ka<sup>2</sup>**  
 limp *v.* **rep sing**  
 limpet **dikiap**  
 lip **ipnuh nan bongon**

area between upper lip and nose  
**ngorngorn**  
 listen **paparong, roro**  
 little, a **da, mwimwil**  
 live **luk, luman**  
 liver **elemet, mabwin**  
 living **maur**  
 lizard sp. **melebieh, mobbulam, yala  
 mwiih**  
 lobster **our**  
 male **aabb vangavang, golvar**  
 slipper lobster **ibbut**  
 kind of lobster **lipbbur**  
 lobster carrying eggs **bbudiem**  
 located, be **luk, luman, to, tok**  
 long **ber, berber**  
 long time **tua<sup>1</sup>**  
 long way **saman**  
 look **kila, kilkila**  
 look at **la, labit, lala<sup>2</sup>**  
 look at carefully **meten**  
 look for **la wahi, wahi<sup>2</sup>**  
 look for lice **rurukut**  
 look out! **tara<sup>1</sup>**  
 look through **kila boh**  
 loose **mitulu**  
 lost **talip**  
 louse **aut**  
 lung **mabwin arah**  
 lychee **odo**

## M

*Macaranga* sp. **ipmi**  
 mad **bebe, lengleng**  
 made-up **bwingbwing**  
 Maewo **owe<sup>2</sup>**  
 maggot **vunul**  
 mainland **atan levlep**  
 make **peri, va<sup>2</sup>**  
 make basket for yams **virvavarah**  
 make crunching noise in mouth  
**ngarngarit**

make noise **balbalakut, tavak**  
 make peace with **yamyaman**  
 make pounded breadfruit **barbarbet,  
 rivritbet**  
 make pudding **ivivleh, ivleh**  
 make yam mound **sadravsur**  
 Malay apple **avik**  
 man **muut<sup>1</sup>**  
 old man **itian**  
 mangrove **odong**  
 manioc **abi**  
 many **ipar**  
 March **rabwisisi**  
 married **dakdaka**  
 marrow **owe nan bolong**  
 masturbate **lop**  
 mat **edreng, monong**  
 May **lapda**  
 maybe **ka<sup>3</sup>**  
 meat **misal**  
 medicine, traditional **aruun aga**  
*Megapodius freycinet* **otomala**  
 Melanesian **muut metemet**  
 mention to **tir da**  
 message **bwisian**  
 meteorite **vwinmese bwilbwilingat**  
*Metroxylon warburgii* **iat**  
 midday **lupanal**  
 middle **lupan**  
 midnight **lupat dangdang**  
 midrib of coconut leaf **vinisedr**  
 million **amul**  
*Mimosa pudica* **vwalamat**  
 mine *pron.* **natana**  
*Miscanthus* sp. **awi**  
 missing **talip**  
 molar **tauh varavar**  
 money **avat, bwilat**  
 month **abasi**  
 moon **abasi**  
 more than **sadri**  
 Moreton Bay chestnut **vin-gorit**

morning **matabbuk**  
 morning star **vwinmese ranian**  
 mosquito **anam**  
 moth **bebem**  
 mother **galu**  
 mother's brother **dat**  
 mother's sister  
     elder **gal lam, galu lam**  
     younger **gal lele, galu lele**  
 mother-in-law **limokian**  
 mountain **butuan**  
 mouth **bongon**  
 move *vi.* **yongoyong**  
 mucus, nasal **onohdrap**  
 mud **adrab**  
 multicoloured **kakalan**  
 muscle **misal**  
 mute **bbut<sup>1</sup>**  
     mute person **abbutbbut**  
 my **tana**  
*Myzomela cardinalis* **vun-gaum**

## N

nail (anat.) **sivianga**  
 naked **malamal<sup>1</sup>**  
 name **isan**  
 native almond **yanga**  
 native lychee **odo**  
 nauseating **yolol**  
 navel **bbuten**  
     herniated **bbuten maramar**  
 near **lile, sin<sup>1</sup>**  
 nearly **lile, supak**  
 neck **balawan**  
 nettle **galat**  
     varieties **galat mial, galat mwerah,**  
     **galat ovop**  
 new **melerler**  
     of moon **tap<sup>1</sup>**  
 New Guinea rosewood **obbuah**  
 next day **maran nan**  
 nice **rivik**

night **lupat**  
     night time **outmetian**  
 nine **savat**  
 nineteen **langal druman savat**  
 nipple **matan asih**  
 nits **alih**  
 no **itik**  
 noise  
     of engine **uuruur**  
     make loud noise **tavak**  
 noisy **balbalakut**  
 noon **lupanal**  
 nose **onosn**  
 not exist **titik**  
 not have **tiki**  
 not know **delengi**  
 not want **lip**  
 not yet **tidem**  
 November **ivlemial**  
 now **livani**  
 numb **taburong**  
 Nurumbat River **Rubat**

## O

oar **avaran awang**  
 occasion **lama**  
 October **ivlerongo**  
 octopus **koit<sup>1</sup>**  
     kind of **koiterep**  
 oh boy! **wiri**  
 oh dear! **var<sup>2</sup>**  
 oily **susur**  
 OK **ale**  
 old **tara<sup>2</sup>**  
     old man **itian**  
     old woman **limokian**  
 on top **draka, ivsak**  
 once **lama sapm**  
 one **sapm<sup>1</sup>**  
     one time **lama sapm**



open  
*adj.* **savang, tabar<sup>2</sup>**  
*v.* **langlangar, savan**  
 open eyes **kila, kilkila**

opinion **sisienian**  
 or **dri<sup>2</sup>, sika**

orange *n.* **vunumul**

ordinary **bial<sup>1</sup>**  
 ordinary person **muut bial**

other **tele**  
 other side **rasan**

our *excl.*  
*dl.* **tokopmdru**  
*pcl.* **tokopmtl**  
*pl.* **tokopm**

our *incl.*  
*dl.* **takitdru**  
*pcl.* **takitntl**  
*pl.* **takit**

ours *excl.*  
*dl.* **tokopmdru, totokopmdru**  
*pcl.* **tokopmtl, totokopmtl**  
*pl.* **tokopm, totokopm**

ours *incl.*  
*dl.* **takitdru, tatakidru**  
*pcl.* **takitntl, tatakidntl**  
*pl.* **takit, tatakid**

out **lu<sup>2</sup>**

outrigger **vanatn awang**  
 pegs **marlang**  
 struts **vinmali**

outside **vere**

oven **ivleh**

over there **teki**

## P

Paama **butuan berber**  
 Pacific pigeon **wiim**  
 paddle *n.* **avaran awang**  
 painful **rer**  
 palm of hand **elen varan**

pandanus **birip**  
*Pangium edule* **bwikivar**

parrotfish **iki melih**

path **asal**

pawpaw **vwingoh, vwingoh tamat**

pay for **leh**

peace **damat**

peel *v.* **kih, kin**  
 peel before eating **vulut**

pegs of outrigger **marlang**

pelt *v.* **lop**

penis **vwalan**  
 flaccid penis **vwalamat**

penis wrapper **apap**

Pentecost **vwingoh**  
 Pentecost people **Mavwingoh**

perfective **iih, iis**

perhaps **ka<sup>3</sup>**

person  
 blind **matabar**  
 deaf **obor<sup>2</sup>**  
 disrespectful **lesavraka**  
 from bush/inland **nataut**  
 grey-haired **uvar**  
 hirsute **lobobbur**  
 important **muut levlep**  
 mute **abbutbbut**  
 ordinary **muut bial**  
 unemployed, of no consequence **muut rong**

perspiration **outkirian**

phlegm **ivwirir**

pick (fruit) **tap<sup>2</sup>**  
 every fruit **kila tisiveli**

pick up **puh, puh totoki**  
 passenger **lem<sup>1</sup>**

pig **bala, barabar** *See also* **abbuah, baladrong**  
 wild **bala matak**

pigeon sp. **iliauh**

pile up **ruruk, serser kururi**  
 rubbish **kelekel**

pillow **ukulang**  
 pinch **ngit**  
 pins and needles, have **bbura, parun**  
 pit, for cooking **ivleh**  
 pith  
   of breadfruit **bburtan**  
   of sprouting coconut **opon**  
 place *n.* **itnan, out**  
   level place **amap**  
   place of origin **sin**<sup>1</sup>  
   place where vines are tangled  
   **gohgohtal**  
 placenta **atang**  
 plant *v.* **lap**<sup>2</sup>  
   do the planting **lalap, lavlap**  
 platform **bali**  
 play **titinih**  
 pleased **yamyabbuh**  
*Polyscias scutellaria* **alap**  
*Pometia pinnata* **odo**  
 pool in river **enebb**  
*Porphyrio porphyrio* **urubwit**  
 post **bbubang, uba**  
 pound **lop**  
 pour **deveh, ling**  
 powder **bisnaap**  
 prawn **our**  
   male **aabb vangavang, golvar**  
   varieties **ibbut maari, ibbut**  
   **metemet, isivsipba, ourbet, solo**  
   prawn carrying eggs **bbudiem**  
 precede **pom, pum, vopom, vupum**  
 pregnant **sian**  
 prepare  
   fire **belbel, belbeli**  
   food for earth oven **sah, sahi, sahsah**  
 prick *v.* **tur**<sup>2</sup>  
*Pterocarpus indicus* **obbuah**  
*Ptilinopus tannensis* **nepbbun**  
 pubic area **bat taran**  
 pubic hair  
   female **lobon bop**

male **lobon vwalan**  
 pudding **aya**  
   kinds **aya gun, aya lowe, aya nan**  
   **adam, aya nan apm, aya nan**  
   **bbuang, aya nan mwiniel, aya**  
   **sosong, barabarian aya, langalang,**  
   **sam nan aya, silivat rarar**  
 puff **ngavangap**  
 pufferfish **ebet**<sup>2</sup>  
 pull **rep**  
   pull out weeds **rakararak sokosong**  
 pumice **abbung**<sup>2</sup>  
 punch **lop**  
 purple swamphen **urubwit**  
 pus **anan**  
 push **sukun**  
   push ground with snout **sungut**  
 put **dingi**  
   put bamboo stakes for yam vines  
   **bbupur**  
   put food in bamboo to cook **song**  
   put in the way of **kor, koror**  
   put inside **songon**  
   put into mouth **gom**  
   put on (clothes) **roh**  
   put on (penis wrapper) **pih**  
   put sticks into yam mound **ton**  
   put wedge under **kel**<sup>2</sup>  
 puzzle tree **midang**  
   variety **midang varavar**

## Q

quickly **lu**<sup>2</sup>  
 quiet **ding lalak**  
 quietly **lalak, lalaki**

## R

rails in roof **yomyom, yomyom**  
**bwingbwing**  
 rain  
   *n.* **auh**  
   *v.* **vop**

rainbow **lualu**<sup>1</sup>  
 rake out **karah lu**  
 randomly **bial**<sup>2</sup>  
 rat **bwisibok**  
 raw **mereman, meret**  
 reach **siber**  
 read **lala bwilat**  
 ready  
     for eating **tara**<sup>2</sup>  
     for harvest **wah**<sup>3</sup>  
 real **bariin, bwiriin**<sup>1</sup>  
 re-clear garden site **gahgah**  
 recognise **lakot, lakut**  
 red **mial**  
 reed variety **maraan**  
 reef heron **bolyevyep**  
 reflection **moron**  
 release **tilung**  
 remains of chewed sugarcane **osn**  
 remember **sieda**  
 remove **deng**  
     from oven **yeng**  
 replace **lehi**<sup>2</sup>, **ser leh**  
 replete (of stomach) **sir**  
 resemble **ka**<sup>2</sup>  
 rest **mol**  
 retch **yok marmar**  
 retract foreskin **sar, sarsar**  
 return  
     (= give back) **lehi**<sup>1</sup>  
     (= come/go back) **mwilu**  
 reveal **tir tata, tirtir tata**  
 revenge, get **lehi**<sup>1</sup>, **sevi**  
 rib **morokon**  
 rice **aya kabat, ovingaad**  
 rifle **ihtamat**  
 right (side) **bariin, bwiriin**<sup>1</sup>  
 ringworm **ipmin**<sup>2</sup>  
 rinse mouth **lokolok**  
 ripe **mim**  
     not properly ripe **kevet**  
 rise, of river **sosolam**

river **owe**<sup>1</sup>  
 road **asal**  
     along the road **bbusal, korsal**  
 roast **tn, tntn**  
 rock **avat**  
     coral rock in bush **avaton**  
 roe **bbudiem**  
 roll over **dridri**  
 rooster **man nan oto**  
 roosting place **iyoh**  
 root  
     small and fine **drumusn**  
     large **gerwen**  
     aerial, of banyan **drumusn**  
     buttress **iriin**  
 rope **atal**  
 rotten **momo**  
     become rotten **drobb**  
 round **muluul**  
 rubbish **sokoliah, sokosong**  
 run **rup**  
     run after **yor**<sup>1</sup>  
     run dry, of river **mah**<sup>1</sup>  
     run fresh, of river **lam**

## S

*Saccharum edule* **avis, avis mer, viabb**  
 sago palm **iat**  
 saliva **melebb, melebbusn**  
 saltwater **tuswe**  
 sand **vwinsilah**  
 sap **esn**  
 say **va**<sup>1</sup>  
 scab **draban**  
 scabies **borobor, korokor**  
 scale *n.* **ulangan**  
 scar **marup**  
 scoop out **sil lu**  
 scrape **sup**  
     scrape clean **sup beh**  
     scrape hair off (pig) **sup**

scrape surface of **suvsup**  
 scratch **yor**<sup>2</sup>  
 ground **karah**  
 oneself **suvsup**  
 scrotum **atat nan bbulul, lesen, lison**  
 sea **tuswe**  
 deep sea **enebb**  
 open sea **malang**<sup>1</sup>  
 sea almond **teve**  
 sea cucumber **momom**  
 kinds **biltuep**  
 sea hearse tree **birbir**  
 sea trumpet tree **balaka nan tuswe**  
 search **wah**<sup>2</sup>  
 search for **wahi**<sup>2</sup>  
 seasnake **mevial**  
 seated **sum**<sup>1</sup>  
 second **ituru nan**  
 secretly **lalak, lalaki**  
 section (e.g. of bamboo) **bbuken**  
 see **la, labit, lala**<sup>2</sup>  
 seed **bwilisn**  
 of breadfruit **bbul**  
 of canoe tree **nivruruel**  
 selfish **sibo, sisibo**  
 semen **asur**  
 send  
 send on errand **tarap**  
 send word **ser**<sup>1</sup>, **tir**<sup>1</sup>  
 sensitive grass **vwalamat**  
 separate v. **lingling**<sup>2</sup>, **tara**<sup>3</sup>  
 September **reptulu**  
 set (of sun) **dah, dan**  
 set fire to **dumu, dungo**  
 settle **bak**  
 settle problem with **yamyaman**  
 seven **souru**  
 seventeen **langal druman souru**  
 shadow **milier**  
 shake **pweli**  
 shake out **pweli lu**  
 shape-changer **timih bebe**

shark **bbukumaas**  
 sharp **magal**  
 she **e**  
 shed skin **ul**<sup>2</sup>  
 shell, of coconut **bwikilah, bwilisani, bwilisn**  
 shellfish sp. **atbutuk, matabor, tapbbuvat, vanan ipnu, vwidl**  
 shelter *n.* **malang**<sup>2</sup>  
 shin **imalamal**  
 shiny **maap**  
 shirt **mulun kabat**  
 shiver **roromalah**  
 shoes **bbutan kabat**  
 shoot *n.*  
 of bamboo. **sulih**  
 of yam **dapa**  
 shoot v. **lu**<sup>1</sup>, **luluka**  
 accidentally, in the eye **lu bar bwiti**  
 shoot fish **luluiki**  
 shooting star **vwinmese bwilbwilingat**  
 short **mut, mutmut**  
 shoulder **batn varan**  
 shout **dam, ka**<sup>1</sup>  
 show sign **vevet, vetet da**  
 shower, have **lumlum**  
 shrink **guh**  
 shrivel **guh**  
 shut *vt.* **kor**  
 shut tight **kor tata**  
 shy **bor**<sup>2</sup>  
 sick **sal**<sup>2</sup>  
 sick of **lingling**<sup>1</sup>  
 side **sikilen**  
 other side **rasan**  
 silent **bbut**<sup>1</sup>  
 sing **yal, yalyal**<sup>2</sup>  
 sing song for yams **muumak, muumaki**  
 sink **dan**  
 sister of man **vivin**  
 sit **sum**<sup>1</sup>

- sit cross-legged **gun bolokon**  
 sit down **sum<sup>1</sup>**  
 sit in doorway **sum bongon matali**  
 sit on eggs **kodrarar**  
 sit on ground with knees raised and  
 legs apart **sum lam**  
 six **sout**  
 sixteen **langal druman sout**  
 skin **ipmin<sup>1</sup>**  
     dry, flaky, or shed skin **ulangan**  
     skin shed by snake **mulun**  
 skink **omoob**  
 skinny **morot**  
 skirt **bbuser**  
 skull **bbulah**  
 sky **alang**  
 sleep **matur**  
     soundly **matur memel**  
     without mattress **ding masamah**  
     on back **ding meletadr**  
     on belly **voki**  
 sleep in the eye *n.* **isir**  
 sleep-talk **tirtirsit bari**  
 sleepy **duel**  
 slice *v.* **kalkal, yorot**  
 sling *n.* **amat, atamat**  
 slip **bbut dah**  
 slipper lobster **ibbut**  
 slippery **tah<sup>2</sup>**  
 slitgong **ibwilia**  
 slug **dikiap**  
 slurp **sudrum**  
 smegma **isir nan vwalan**  
 smell  
     *n.* **abbun**  
     *vt.* **robit, sungung**  
 smile **ngingi**  
 smoke  
     *n.* **aabb teltel**  
     *vi.* **teltel**  
 smoky **teltel**  
 smooth **mamaap**
- snake **amwat**  
 sneeze **savi<sup>1</sup>**  
 snore **ngodr**  
 snot **onohdrap**  
 so **ale, baaki, vaaki**  
 soft **milmilim, molovlop**  
 soil **atan**  
 sole of foot **elen bolokon**  
 some **tuan, tuan ier, tuut**  
 somebody **muut sapm**  
 something **katwan, nistuan**  
 somewhere else **out tele**  
 son **atn, vanatn**  
 song **yalyal<sup>2</sup>**  
 sorcery **beke**  
 sore  
     *adj.* **rer**  
     *n.* **vwinih**  
 sour **kon**  
 source (of river) **matan**  
 sow *n.* **baladrong**  
 speak **tirsit, tirtirsit**  
     speak to **tirtirsiti**  
 spear *n.* **awah**  
     for prawns *n.* **odih**  
     with single prong **lumal**  
 spear *v.* **mah<sup>3</sup>**  
 spider **lala<sup>1</sup>**  
 spiderweb **bop mwilip**  
 spinal column **bwirkaka**  
 spine on fin **bolong nan druun**  
 spirit **unon**  
     dwarf spirit **bilakvwala, timih mala,**  
     **vitiber**  
 spit  
     *n.* **melebb, melebbusn**  
     *v.* **prura**  
 split **ngar, ngar wel, wel, welewel**  
     with chopping motion **ter wel**  
*Spondias dulcis* **vwiningoh melemel**  
 spoon **imah<sup>2</sup>**  
 spring *n.* **matan owe, owe sasak**

in sea **matan tuswe, owe ruk**  
 sprout *v.* **tep, teptep**  
 of coconut **tup vinisedr**  
 spur (of rooster) **ibal**  
 squat *v.* **mamam**  
 squeeze **gih**  
 squeeze out coconut milk **vuruh**  
 stalk **obol**  
 stamp on ground **tamtami**  
 stand up  
*vi.* **tur<sup>1</sup>, turman, turtur**  
*vt.* **turi**  
 stand on head **ding bbuleh**  
 star **vwinmese**  
 evening star **vwinmese basian**  
 morning star **vwinmese ranian**  
 shooting star **vwinmese**  
**bwilbwilingat**  
 start **tur da**  
 stay **luk, luman**  
 stay behind **luk, luluk, luman, tur da**  
 stay with **luk**  
 steal **pinok, pinoki**  
 step **bbut<sup>2</sup>, gem**  
 step on **tem<sup>1</sup>**  
 step on hard/firmly **tem tata**  
 stick *n.* **aga**  
 still *adv.* **dem**  
 stingray **eve**  
 stink *v.* **bo**  
 stomach **vatn**  
 stone **avat**  
 cooking **avat ivleh, avat susulah,**  
**bbuten avat, lasavat**  
 kinds **avat murmur, saka**  
 black **vitimet**  
 stonefish **tubasang**  
 store *n.* **arup kabat**  
 story **bwisian, mitile**  
 straight **yadryadr**  
 strike **vih**  
 string **talseh**

strong **atal, ir**  
 struts of outrigger **vinmali**  
 suck **sisih, sisihi**  
 sucker (of banana etc.) **sulen**  
 suckle **sisih, vesihi**  
 sugar **esn abah**  
 sugarcane **abah**  
 varieties **basubbur, onosour, sulen**  
**midang, vwiniangah**  
 sugar ant **esep, esep met**  
 sun **anal**  
 obscured by cloud **anal molmol**  
 surprised **padir**  
 swallow *v.* **dilim**  
 swamp **adrab**  
 swamp harrier **abal<sup>2</sup>**  
 swamp taro **bbuang**  
 varieties **baraar, bbunbbun met,**  
**binitas, bwiriang, maalo, uvaup,**  
**vanubbuang**  
 swear **sulengleng, vivsur**  
 sweat *n.* **outkirian**  
 sweep **sasamuh**  
 sweet **lum**  
 swell up **bbur**  
 swiftlet **bobomial**  
 swim **lumlum**  
 underwater **dadan**  
 swollen **bbunbbun, bbur**  
 swollen glands **lekeleke**  
*Syzygium* sp. **avik**

## T

Tahitian chestnut **anah**  
 tail **bbusn**  
 take **rep, ruk, ser<sup>2</sup>, tir<sup>2</sup>**  
 take away **rep lu**  
 take out **deng, rep lu**  
 take place of **ser leh**  
 talk  
*n.* **bwisian**  
*v.* **tirsit, tirtirsit**

talk about **tirtirsali**  
 talk in one's sleep **tirtirsit bari**  
 tall **ber, berber**  
 tamanu **bakur**  
 Tanna **outmetian**  
 Tanna fruit dove **nepbbun**  
 taro **mwiniel** *See also* giant taro, swamp taro  
 varieties **mwiniel mial, mwiniel vuk, mwiniel vovyop**  
 task **eperian**  
 tasteless **bwedr**  
 teach **sari, sasar**  
 teacher **muut nan sasarian**  
 tears **mitnowe**  
 tell **tir**<sup>1</sup>  
 lies **bwingbwing**  
 story **tirtirsal, tirtirsali**  
 the truth **variin**  
 ten **langal**  
*Terminalia catappa* **teve**  
 testicles **bbulul, lesen, lison**  
 thank you very much **kuwase bakah**  
 thatching **iat**  
 their  
*dl.* **tierdru**  
*pcl.* **tiertl**  
*pl.* **tier**  
 theirs  
*dl.* **tierdru, titierdru**  
*pcl.* **tiertl, titiertl**  
*pl.* **tier, titier**  
 then **marak**  
 there **itnani**  
 over there **teki**  
 they  
*dl.* **ierdru**  
*pcl.* **iertl**  
*pl.* **ier**  
 thick **von**  
 thicket **daldal**  
 thief **muut nan vipinoian**

thigh **bbulalam**  
 thin **manana, morot**  
 thing **san, sit**  
 think **sisien**  
 of/about **sieda**  
 third **ititl nan**  
 thirsty **drimdrim**  
 thirteen **langal druman itl**  
 thirty **ngal itl**  
 those people **gorki ier**  
 thought **sisienian**  
 thousand **atar**  
 three **itl**  
 three days before today **bbunitl**  
 three days from today **ititl**  
 throw at **lop**  
 throw stick at **wum**  
 thumb **subbulevlep**  
 thunder **uuruur**  
 thus **toki**<sup>1</sup>  
 tide  
 come in **bbun kor, bbun lam, bbunbbun**  
 be high/full **bbun lam**  
 tie up **lik, pih**  
 tightly **lik tata**  
 tight **bakabang**  
 time  
 (= occasion) **lama**  
 (= clock time) **matanal**  
 tinea versicolor **arupmaap**  
 tip  
 out **deveh**  
 over **yel bbuleh**  
 tired **lingling**<sup>1</sup>, **rah**  
 today **livani**  
 toe **subbun, subbun bolokon**  
 big toe **subbulevlep**  
 second/long **subbusilsil**  
 middle **subbusibo**  
 fourth toe **subbiar**  
 small toe **subbulele**

toenail **sivianga nan bolokon**  
 toilet *See loromah*  
 tomorrow **maran**  
 tongs **kalkalat, sibervat**  
 tongue **lemen**  
 too **bakah**  
 tooth **boroh, itivitlak** *See also basn, lipm*  
     front **isong beker**  
 top **ngalngaln**  
     of yam **batn**  
 torch **asil**  
     torch-fishing **sil**  
 touch **wu**  
 track v. **meten sur**  
 trap n. **amat, tatamat**  
 tree **aga**  
     tree sp. unidentified **aba, aga mul,**  
     **anah bwilip, arup<sup>2</sup>, edrem, etet,**  
     **geritang, malaar, maladr, mese,**  
     **sibili, sisiltamat, uver, yoryorsik**  
 tree fern **barbarih met**  
*Trichoglossus haemotodus* **sivir**  
 trick v. **bwingbwing sur**  
 trochus **alal**  
 trousers **atal**  
 true **bariin, bwiriin<sup>1</sup>**  
 trunk **lupan, wutn**  
 try **titipm**  
 tuber sp. **sorop**  
     varieties **sorop born, sorop damadr,**  
     **sorop tuak, sorop vwila, sorop**  
     **vwilaba**  
 turban shell, giant **ibing**  
 turn **dri<sup>1</sup>**  
     turn around **dri bbuleh**  
     turn over vt. **bbuleh, dri bbuleh**  
     turn a somersault **dri bbuleh**  
 turtle **abak**  
 tusk  
     upper **basn**  
     lower **lipm**  
 twelve **langal druman iru**

twenty **ngal iru**  
 twin fruit (e.g. two nuts in one shell) **ivol**  
 two **iru**  
*Tyto alba* **tarban**

## U

umbilical cord **bbuten**  
 uncle  
     mother's brother **dat**  
     father's elder brother **mom lam**  
     father's younger brother **mom lele**  
 unconscious **mat<sup>2</sup>, mat lolo**  
 uncooked **mereman, meret**  
 uncover **talah**  
 uncut **ir**  
 under **lapan**  
 undercooked **mah meret**  
 undone **taltalah**  
 unemployed person **muut rong**  
 unripe **ihman**  
 Unua-Tisman people **Latas**  
 unwrap **talah**  
 up  
     up in the bush **draka**  
     up there **draka, ivsak**  
 urethral opening **matan vwalan**  
 urinate **memek**  
 urine **isirimen, mekian**  
 Uripiv **Otorbap**  
 utterance **bwisian**

## V

vagina **bop**  
 valued possession **osokon**  
 vas deferens **abang nan lison**  
 vertigo, have **miririk**  
 very **bakah, iteh**  
     do very much **bakahi**  
 victory leaf **aari**  
     varieties **aari bbuah, aari born, aari**  
     **bwetekari, aari sibwedr, aari**



**vanatubbuah, aari vweru, bolokon  
aga, malah mial, teptep bbuah**  
village, in the **liim**  
vine **atal**  
of yam **garah**<sup>2</sup>  
for binding house beams **til**  
tangled vines **gohgohtal**  
vine sp. **abat, makah, makah lam,  
makah nan tuswe, mwere**  
Vinmavis **Ramap**  
Vinmavis people **Maramap**  
voice **elen**  
vomit **lualu**<sup>2</sup>, **yok**  
vomitus **yokian**

## W

wage war **val**  
waistband **atal**  
wait **luluk, sumsum, totoder**  
wait for **luluder, luluki**  
wake up **marak**  
suddenly/with a start **mara lengeleng**  
walk **solsol**  
walk along **sol sur**  
walk along reef **sosong, vopongon**  
walk with walking-stick **subat**<sup>1</sup>  
walking-stick **subat**<sup>1</sup>  
want **wahi**<sup>1</sup>  
want to **ro, wah**<sup>1</sup>  
not want **lip**  
warm self in sun **mimihnal**  
warrior **batiktor**  
wart **vinvis**  
wash  
*vi.* **lumlum**  
*vt.* **lumuh**  
watch *n.* **matanal**  
watch *v.* **meten**  
watch over **luluk lalak, luluk sin**  
watch out! **tara**<sup>1</sup>  
water **esn, owe**<sup>1</sup>  
on leaves after rain **your**

waterfall **tasip**  
wave *n.* **ilung nan tuswe, our nan tuswe**  
way  
on the way **korsal**  
we *excl.*  
*dl.* **kopmdru**  
*pcl.* **kopmtl**  
*pl.* **kopm**  
we *incl.*  
*dl.* **gitdru**  
*pcl.* **gitntl**  
*pl.* **git**  
wear **roh**  
wear cloth around waist **tataval**  
weave **vet**  
weed *v.* **rakarak sokosong**  
weeds **sokoliah, sokosong**  
wet  
*adj.* **mida**  
*v.* **lumuh**  
what? **ive, sive**  
when? **kesan**  
where? **ba, bang, iba**  
which? **iba**  
while  
a short while **da**  
whisper **soro mumum, tirtirsit lalak**  
whistle **vavasul**  
white **maap, yovyop**  
white-throated pigeon **otoro**  
who? **asi, nahe, nasi**  
why? **wal sive**  
wife **momok**  
wild **matak**<sup>1</sup>  
wild cane **awi**  
wild ginger **isiing, siing batik, siing  
mwiih**  
wild yam **uvah**  
varieties **bbuah daka, bwirbwir  
bbul, bwirbwir epel, bwirbwir  
ibbul, bwirbwir sado, karur, lihlih,**

**lison ubbuah, paama, ranaur, ruul,**  
**uvah met, uvah vwiliaba, yarak**  
 wind *n.* **malah**<sup>1</sup>  
 windbreak **tabatam**  
 wing **bwian**  
 wink **bwil kilkila**  
 wipe **sum**<sup>2</sup>  
     wipe hands **tetevweh**  
 with **bilep, bineri, bitep**  
     be with **ma**  
 woman **momok**  
     young, unmarried woman **momo**  
     **turtur**  
     old woman **limokian**  
 wood **aga**  
 wood grub **tua**<sup>2</sup>  
 word **bwisian**  
 work  
     *n.* **eperian**  
     *v.* **per**  
 worm **odalah**  
 write **tih, titih**  
     write down **tih da**

## Y

yam **adam** *See also* hard yam, lesser yam,  
 wild yam  
     rotten yam **arah**  
     yam-vine **garah**<sup>1</sup>  
     varieties **adam matamat, adam**  
     **matamat ber, adam matamat**  
     **mutmut, asimwinipnu, atah nan**  
     **avik, avis, avis mial, avis yovyop,**  
     **avrika, bat tamaka, batumial,**  
     **batwaram, bbutasup, bbutdam**  
     **metemet, bbutdap per, betar,**  
     **bolokon otomala, bopbbuah,**  
     **bweteni, bweyau, damadr, damadr**  
     **vwila, damre, davalah, garah, ibam,**  
     **imah nauh, lesam, makila, makila**  
     **berber, makila mutmut, mele,**

**movon, ogot, olo, oovi, otom nan**  
**makila, ower, ower mial, ower**  
**yovyop, rebesa mial, rebesa yovyop,**  
**rebesak, sanwis, seleman, seleman**  
**berber, seleman mutmut, subbun**  
**omoob, wakil, wakil mial, wakil**  
**yovyop, veve, vinmasal, vwila, vwila**  
**bbuah, vwila gerwen ebet, vwila lele,**  
**vwila met, vwila mwelekel, vwilaba,**  
**vwilaba mial, vwilaba yovyop,**  
**werekel, yamat**

yam mound **apak**  
 yawn **mangulal**  
 year **adam**  
 yell **dam, ka**<sup>1</sup>  
 yellow **lilit, lit**  
 yellow white-eye **levwilak**  
 yes **baki, ikaki**  
 yesterday **tenep**  
 yet  
     not yet **tidem**  
 you  
     *sg.* **ong**  
     *dl.* **kamdru**  
     *pcl.* **kamtl**  
     *pl.* **kam**  
 young woman **momo turtur**  
 your  
     *sg.* **tong**  
     *dl.* **takamdru**  
     *pcl.* **takamtl**  
     *pl.* **takam**  
 yours  
     *dl.* **takamdru, tatakamdru**  
     *pcl.* **takamtl, tatakamtl**  
     *pl.* **takam, tatakam**  
     *sg.* **totong**

## Z

*Zosterops flavifrons* **levwilak**

# 8 *Texts*

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[Terry Crowley had collected a number of texts in Avava, which he had transcribed and translated. However, he had not carried out any interlinear glossing before his death. I have included a couple of texts here as illustrations of Avava discourse, but do not feel competent to provide adequate interlinear glossing.

As is common in many Vanuatu languages, a number of Bislama words have slipped in to these texts, in many cases with Avava morphology. The ‘correct’ indigenous forms are footnoted – JL]

## 8.1 A story of marriage

This story was told by Angel Kali on 7 September 2004, in Tisvel village.

Stori naniki bbum Vila Teviar ... Teviar  
David itirtirsali na det komatluk len  
hospital Santo.

Stori naniki iip ikanang.

Lama sapm bbum sapm bilep ebbun ier  
langal.

Atluk vi vi vaaki bbum tier itir iva, Naro  
namamarit<sup>1</sup> we.

Vaaki itir iva ... dri ... momo tana ititik.

Nabba batamak vaaki na naberep momo  
basapm?

Vaaki isum meh isisien vi vi vaaki iva, No,  
naberep et momo teki atnavin.

Grandfather Teviar David in Vila told me  
this story when we were at the hospital in  
Santo.

This story goes like this.

Once, there was a grandfather with his ten  
grandchildren.

They lived on and on and their grandfather  
said, I really want to get married.

He said, I have no wife.

How will I do it to get a wife?

He just sat there thinking and he said, No, I  
will take the daughter of that woman over  
there.

---

<sup>1</sup> From Bislama *marit*; the expected Avava form would be *namadakdaka*.

Vaaki iva lama sapm itiri ebbun et ki nan ipom iva ... tuan imut<sup>2</sup> itiri iva, Kiip kitiri momo nan teki bbel.

Naberep wal nai.

Vaaki muut ki itiri iva, Ale, nabiip.

Nan ipom nan ki iip iip iva itiri momo ki dri momo ki itiri iva, e, elip itian naniki wal iva itara iih.

Vaaki min ivel itiri bbum te.

Ale maran nan bbum te min itarap leh nan iyahsursur nan.

Iip isuh iih.

Momo ki ... dri momo ki min itir ma bwisian nan itir davaki ki.

Itir iva, e, ilip itian naniki wal itara iih.

Iperi meh ika ki vi vi isiber ier nan et iptak.

Vaaki nan et iptak nan muut le- ... atda lele sapm ma.

Vaaki itiri iva, Bbum, na nabiip nabeperi.

Vaaki dri bbum te itiri iva, No, onglele mai.

Salan ier atiri atva, Onglele ma dri komatlevlep komatsadri ong dri komat- ... komatip komatiri momo ki dri ilip bbel.

Dri ong olele ma.

Dri ongvi ong kiip ong kitiri vi bbel.

Vaaki bbum te ... ier nan ipar ki atva atda lele ke idelengi mai bba momo ki bbel.

Vaaki atda lele ki iva emas ... emas ebitiri momo ki.

Ika biip ma ebba titipm.

Det momo ki bilip dri vaaki min ebbel.

Vaaki maran nan matabbuk imarak iip ip ip ip.

One day, he said to his eldest grandchild, Go and tell that woman over there to come.

I will take her for myself.

That person said, OK, I will go.

The firstborn went and told that woman, but the woman said, no, she didn't want that old man because he is old.

Then he went back and told his grandfather.

So the next day, his grandfather sent him back for what he had already done.

He went and asked her.

But the woman just said again what she had said previously.

She said, no, she didn't want that old man because he is old.

He just did it like that until he got to the last one.

The last one was just a little child.

He said, Grandfather, I will go and do it.

But his grandfather said, No, you are too little.

His brothers said to him, You are small and we are bigger than you but we have gone to tell the woman but she didn't want to come.

But you are just little.

But now you are going to go and tell her to come.

Many of them said that the little child must couldn't make the woman come.

The little child said he must tell the woman.

He would just go and try.

If the woman doesn't want to, then he would come back.

The next morning he got up and went and went and went.

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<sup>2</sup> Unidentified.

Iip ip dem korsal vaaki iva, Livani nabba meh batamak naberep momo ki bbel wal salan na ier atip ma len druman ier dri na nabba batamak?

Vaaki iva, Norokot iih.

Livani nabba nabbi aman lele.

Vaaki nabiip.

Ale iva iip da.

Vaaki iva i- ... idri e ivi len aman lele ki.

Vaaki ma isolsol iip.

Ma itotorop ran aga ier iip iip iip isiber momo ki.

Vaaki dri momo ki mama<sup>3</sup> te marsum<sup>4</sup> man.

Aril uvah sapm.

Vaaki aman lele ki ma iip isum raka ran aga lele sapm.

Vaaki ma iyal.

Iyal iyal iyal vaaki mama te ... iyal ... iyalyal ki etenang:

*Tawate tawatalele*

*Drevereve simana bongbong*

*Simana bongbong*

Vaaki momo ki ma isum.

Vaaki itiri iva, Galu e!

Keserser muruh tana man osom tana bbel kobirip.

Nabiyahsur aman lele anang.

Naberep tata wal nai.

Vaaki iip iser galiko te ... iser muruh te.

Iser osom te ariip.

Iyahsur aman ki.

Ba iva biip berep tata aman ki dri aman ki itorop iip saman.

Vaaki isums- ... isum ran aga lele ki min iyal iva:

*Tawate tawatalele*

While he was still halfway he said, Now how will I do it to get the woman to come because my brothers went in their bodies, so what will I do?

He said, I know.

I will make myself into a little bird.

Then I will go.

He went a little way.

Then he turned himself into a little bird.

Then he walked on.

He jumped up in the trees as far as the woman.

But the woman was sitting there.

They dug a wild yam.

The little bird went and sat up on a little tree.

And he sang.

[Untranslatable]

The woman just sat there.

He said to her, Mother!

Fetch my clothes and my necklace and let's go.

I will follow this little bird.

I will take it for myself.

She took her clothes.

She took her necklace and the two of them went.

She went after the bird.

When she wanted to go and take the bird, the bird jumped far away.

He sat on a little tree and sang again:

<sup>3</sup> Bislama *mama*; the corresponding Avava form is *galu*.

<sup>4</sup> I cannot identify the prefixed element *mar-*.

*Drevereve samana bongbong**Simana bongbong*

Ariperi meh ika ki vi vi iip iva momo ki  
iva biip betem dri aman lele ki itorop iip  
leh aut tele.

Ariperi iip iip vaaki lile ma abiriip sin  
bbum te amal te.

Vaaki at- ... aman lele min iip ... iip leh  
isum.

Isum len bongon matali iyal.

Iva ... iyal dri itian ki e iluman man bbuut  
iva matali iopen.<sup>5</sup>

Vaaki isum bongon matali ki min iyal leh  
iva:

*Tawate tawatalele**Drevereve simana bongbong**Samana bongbong*

Vaaki momo ki iva itorop wal iva berep  
tata aman lele ki dri aman lele ki dri aman  
lele ki itorop isa bbuut.

Iva isum bbuut iva iyal.

Momo ki iva isak iva itorop wal iva bisiber  
aman lele ki dri itorop meh bbuut len amal  
ki.

Vaaki itian ki ikor tata matali.

Iva ikilkila dri ila itian ki.

Aman lele ki vi isak meh.

Isak aran ... isak isumsum ran bbuut nan  
kijin<sup>6</sup> ki.

Vaaki vi idah vere ... idah vere.

Ale momo ki isabbut.

Itian ki vi irep momo ki wal e.

Aman lele ki meh ... atda lele nan ilele ki  
meh isa len aman lele ki.

Vi iwinim momo ki.

Vi ivwel sin itian ki.

Stori tana inong meh itnani.

They just did it like that and the woman  
wanted to go and hold down the little bird  
but it jumped again to a different place.

They did that and they nearly went to his  
grandfather's house.

Then the little bird went back and sat  
down.

He sat in the doorway and sang.

He sang but the old man was still there  
inside and he made the door open.

And he sat in the doorway and he sang  
again:

The woman jumped to grab hold of the  
little bird but the little bird jumped and  
went inside.

He sat inside and sang.

The woman went inside and jumped to  
hold the little bird but it just jumped into  
the house.

Then the old man shut the door tight.

She looked and she saw the old man.

Then the little bird went up.

It went up and sat inside the kitchen.

Then he went outside.

Then the woman went inside.

The old man took the woman for himself.

The smallest of the children changed  
himself into the bird.

Then he defeated the woman.

Then she came to the old man's place.

My story just finishes there.

<sup>5</sup> From Bislama *open*; the non-borrowed equivalent would be *isavang*.

<sup>6</sup> Bislama *kijin*. The equivalent in Avava would be *amal*.

## 8.2 Revenge

This story was told by Maltur Bong on 5 August 2004, in Tisvel village.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Stori nan nava nabwitirtirsali ki iip itoki nang.  | The story that I want to tell goes like this.   |
| Mak Gara ier tuai atip atdah sur tuswe Laumwele.   | The people of Gara before went down to the sea at Laumwele (Bushmans Bay).  |
| Ier ativa abwitrep ivri.   | They wanted to gather crabs.  |
| Vaaki atdah.   | They went down.   |
| Lama sapm atva atip.   | One day they went.  |
| Muut nan ier sur tuswe asomda ... ier asomda ier.  | The coastal people found them.  |
| Ier atriit atnida nan ier sapm.  | They killed one of their children.  |
| Ier atipuh atip ier at- ... at- ... atyan.   | They picked him up and went and ate him.  |
| Ale vaaki muut nan ier draka ... aut ... muut nan ier aut draka min atmmwilu ativwel.  | Then the bush people from up there came back.   |
| Atva atmwilu ativwel atla ier sapm atnida ... muut ier sapm italip. <sup>7</sup>   | They came back and saw that the child of one of the people was missing.   |
| Ale vaaki ativwel bbu atlu sin ier ... len nasara <sup>8</sup> tier.   | Then they came and they stayed at their place.  |
| Vaaki atlu lu bbu atdelengi abitva botoki.   | They stayed there and they didn't know how they were going to do it.  |
| At- ... atsum meh atirtirsali ier atva ier mas abitva anal wal abisevi atnida nan muut ki atriit ki ... arriit sur tuswe ki. | They just sat and said they must cause a drought to get them back for the child who had been killed on the coast. |
| Ale vaaki asum ier atva anal ki.   | So they sat down and caused the drought.  |
| Ier atipuh tobbul sapm.  | They got a giant taro.  |
| Ier atdah len awal sapm.   | They went down to a gully.  |
| Awal ki isan arva Sulnia.  | The name of the gully is Sulnia.  |
| Ier atlap tobbul ki itur korowal ki.   | They planted the giant taro in the gully.   |
| Ale butuan ki iber isak rasan ma rasan itnani ki.  | The hills are high going up on both sides there.  |
| Anal irar sarokutmu bisiber wal awal ki iber we ito kutn we kutn.  | When it is hot, it can't reach there because that gully is deep down.   |
| Ale vaaki ier atlap tobbul ki.   | So they planted the giant taro.   |
| Ier atva ba anal ki irar rar bbu siber tobbul ki ale akanian bwititi mah.  | They said when the sun is hot and it reaches the giant taro, there will be no food at all.                        |

<sup>7</sup> = *muut ier sapm atnida te italip* 'the child of one of the people was missing'

<sup>8</sup> Bislama *nasara* 'village square, public area in village', which corresponds to Avava *amal emwet*.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Muut akanian tier bonong.  | People's food will be finished.   |
| Abwitwahi akanian nan abwityan dri bwititik.   | They will look for food to eat but there will be none.                                    |
| Vaaki abwitro meh bwese.   | They will just feel bad.  |
| Amar bwiyat mahi ier.  | They will all be hungry.  |
| Wal baaki tingting <sup>9</sup> tier atva baaki muut abitmat.                                    | Because their idea was that people should die.  |
| Ale baaki abwitlehi <sup>10</sup> atnida nan atriit ki ... abisevi.                              | They were going to get revenge for the child who they had killed.                         |
| Ale vaaki dri muut nan atriit atnida tier sapm ki ... atriit atnida sur tuswe ier at- ... atsum. | The people who had killed their child by the sea sat down.                                |
| Ier atro bali. <sup>11</sup>   |   |
| Ier attingting. <sup>12</sup>  | They thought.   |
| Ier atip aran ma-Viar.   | They went to the people of Viar.  |
| Ier asuhsuh awahi. <sup>13</sup>   | They asked and ... ?  |
| Ativa ... itama meh anal iyan iteh gi livani.  | Like this, the sun is beating down on us too much now.                                    |
| Vaaki ma-Viar ki aser bwisian iwel vwel bbu siber Garai.   | So the people of Viar sent word as far as Gara.   |
| Vaaki ier ativa atusus sur.  | Then they asked them.   |
| Dri arva <sup>14</sup> muut nan ier ativa anal ki wal asevi atnida nan etet.                     | Those people caused the drought because they were getting revenge for exactly that child. |
| Muut nan ier sur tuswe atriit.   | The people of the coast killed him.   |
| Vaaki atusus sin ier ativa, Sive meh et ier?   | Then they asked them, Just what?  |
| Ier abwitvwel abitvai wal baaki auh min bbop.  | They came to make it rain again.  |
| Abit- ... abwitlehi atnida ki.   | They got revenge for that child.  |
| Vaaki muut ti ier attir ativa, Kopm atwahi kabwiser atnida takam basapm bbel.                    | Those people told them, We want you to bring one of your children.                        |
| Abwibipuh bbel.  | Bring him.  |
| Kopm bwitriit kopm bwityan.  | We will kill him and eat him.   |
| Besevi tokopm nan atriit ki.   | He will pay back ours who you killed.   |

<sup>9</sup> Bislama *tingting* 'think, thought'. The Avava equivalent would be *sisienian*.

<sup>10</sup> = *abisevi* 'get revenge for'

<sup>11</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>12</sup> From Bislama *tingting* (see note 9). The Avava equivalent would be *atsisien*.

<sup>13</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>14</sup> Unidentified.



Vaaki attir bwisian min iip aran ma-Viar ki ier.

Ma-Viar ti ier atipuh bwisian min iip iva va vap isiber sur tuswe.

Ier attirda ier.

Vaaki ier attata sin ier atva lama naki abutluluki kopm.

Kopm bwitipuh atnida tokopm basapm bbelat.

Vaaki muut naniki ier atlulu len nasara tier ki.

Nasara tier ki et nasara nan arva Labar.

Ale sin ... Labar ki famle nan iluluk len nasara nan livani, Karten ilu Vinmavis.

Karten Siabar iluman Vinmavis livani.

Ale bbum te ier atbitem muut ier atreti.

Muut ki ier abwitipuh atnida ki abwitvwel lama nan attir ki.

Atreti mahi itbalian.

Aser mahi akanian laka ivwel.

Aruun asaap ivwel.

Atret mahi akanian.

Aser aabb iding.

Vaaki ier ativa, Butluluk ier.

Atluluk ier atluk asap.

Asavi kastom.

Atriit ibwilia.

Ier asap.

Asap atwet da ier.

Vaaki muut ki ativwel.

Ativwel dri ika ativwel atip aran ma-Viar ier.

Ma-Viar ier atipom.

Ier atyahsur asal.

Atsasa sur Lowenisip.

Ier atrup sur butuan.

Atip sak Wutnarabang.

Ier atip sak ika ki.

Atrup sur butuan Melimel.

They passed the message back to the people of Viar.

The people of Viar received the message and sent it back to the coast.

They told them.

Then they settled on a date saying on that day, wait for us.

We will bring one of our children.

Those people live in their nasara.

Their nasara was called Labar.

The family who lived in that nasara now is Karten in Vinmavis.

Karten Siabar still lives in Vinmavis now.

His grandfathers were prepared with those people.

Those people would bring the child on the day that they had said.

They got everything ready.

They brought all the food from the bush.

The heliconia leaves came.

They prepared all the food.

They brought the firewood and put it down.

They said, Let's wait for them.

As they waited for them, they danced.

They performed traditional dances.

They beat slitgongs.

They danced.

They danced as they waited for them.

Then those people came.

When they came, they went to the people of Viar.

The people of Viar came first.

They came along the road.

They came up along the road to Lowenisip.

They ran along the hill.

They went up to Wutnarabang.

They went up like that.

They travelled along the hill of Melimel.

... Atsiber Melimel ier attur itnani atro  
bwilia ito man.

Muut asap man i.

Vaaki atva, Koro.

Ma-Viar ki ier atva, Koro, ier mehi ki.

Ale baaki muut nan et bupuh atnida ki  
bopom i git.

Bitiip.

Vaaki muut ki ipom ... ipuh atnida ki ipom.

Ier tuan atiptak atyahsursur.

Ier asap bbusal atiip.

Dri muut ki ier asap man len nasara nan et  
Labar ki.

Ier atwet ki.

Asap sap sap bbu atla muut ki atipuhdap.

Atipuhdap bitep atnida ki sapm ... vanatn  
ier sapm.

Vaaki ier asap.

Asap bitep muut ki ier.

Asap dilivih ier iip iva va pap bbu.

Vaaki ier aser avat sapm.

Ier aser i muut ki ier sapm ma min.

Ativa ba asap sap sap bbu siber bbun itnan  
det bwilia ki bwitir baka bevevet da.

Iyalyal ki bevevet da bbun naniki meh.

Atnida ki mamat meh i.

Ier abwitser ... abwitser i muut naniki ier ...  
muut nan ier len nasara ki.

Bwiser leh meh atnida ki.

Vaaki ba asap sap sap bbu ba isiber bbun  
det bwilia ki ivevet i det abwirriit.<sup>15</sup>

Ale vaaki aser avat ki.

Aser i muut ier sapm.

Ier sapm imarmarak i atnida ki ilop batn.

Elop boh batn.

When they reached Melimel they stood  
there and heard the slitgong there.

People were just dancing to it.

They said, Listen.

The people of Viar said, Listen, they're  
here.

So the person who will take the child will  
go ahead of us.

Let's go.

That person took the child ahead.

The others went behind.

They danced along the road.

Those people just danced in the nasara of  
Labar.

They waited.

They danced on and on and they saw the  
people suddenly arrive.

They arrived with that one of their children.

And they danced.

They danced with those people.

They danced around them on and on.

Then they took a stone.

They gave it to just one of the people.

They danced until the time that the slitgong  
would tell or show a bit of a sign.

It sang to show a bit of a sign that it was  
the time.

The child will die now.

They would give him to those people of  
that nasara.

They would just give the child back.

They danced until the time that the slitgong  
showed a sign that they should kill him.

Then they gave the stone.

They gave it to one of the people.

One of them got up and threw the stone at  
the child's head.

He stoned his head, breaking it.

<sup>15</sup> Impersonal irrealis.

Vaaki muut ki ipuh lu ran balawan.

Iser iding kutn.

Ier atika i mwilip nan itnaniki ivwel irep len masian ki.

Ier at- ... ier atluk.

Atluk ... abutluk abwityoryorot atnida ki abwityan.

Abwitriit ier abwityan.

Dri muut ki ... muut nan ier sur tuswe ki min atdri bbuleh ier bitep ma-Viar ier.

Min atmwilu atvwel.

Atva atip sak bbu atva atran Melimel.

Dri auh bolo ki ivop.

Nal inong.

Auh ivop.

Evop meh iyan bbusal ier.

Ivop iva pap ila<sup>16</sup> det asiber sur tuswe Laumwele.

Ier min vi atip ier ... sin ier.

Ei, stori ti inong meh itnani.

Then that person took it away from his neck.

He took it and put it down.

They called the chief of this place to come and take him to this dance.

They stayed.

They would stay and cut up the child and eat him.

They would kill him and eat him.

The coastal people turned around with the people of Viar.

They went back.

They went down and reached Melimel.

Heavy rain fell.

The drought was over.

It rained.

It rained on them.

It rained until they reached the coast at Laumwele.

Then they went back to their place.

This story finishes here.

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<sup>16</sup> Unidentified.

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