

*Naman: a vanishing language
of Malakula (Vanuatu)*

Pacific Linguistics 576

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Naman: a vanishing language of Malakula (Vanuatu)

Terry Crowley

Edited by John Lynch



Pacific Linguistics
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies
The Australian National University

Published by Pacific Linguistics
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200
Australia

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First published 2006

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry:

Terry Crowley
Naman: a vanishing language of Malakula (Vanuatu)

Bibliography
ISBN 0 85883 565 7

1. Oceanic languages. 2. Vanuatu – Languages. 3. Malekula (Vanuatu) – Languages. I. Lynch, John (John Dominic).
II. The Australian National University. Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies. Pacific Linguistics. III. Title.

499.595

<p>Cover: ‘Double-ended’ hand stencils at the Yalo cave near Tenmial, north-west Malakula. David Roe, ‘Vanuatu Rock Art’, in Joël Bonnemaïson, Kirk Huffman, Christian Kaufmann and Darrell Tryon, eds <i>Arts of Vanuatu</i> (Crawford House Publishing, Bathurst), 1996, Figure 9, p.87.</p>

Copyedited by Bernadette Hince
Typeset by Jeanette Coombes
Cover design by Addcolour Digital Pty Ltd
Printed and bound by Addcolour Digital Pty Ltd, Fyshwick, Canberra

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

Terry Crowley submitted the manuscript of this book to *Pacific Linguistics* just a few weeks before his sudden and untimely death in January 2005. Terry had been visiting the island of Malakula in Vanuatu since the end of 1999, and had undertaken studies of four languages spoken there: Naman, Tape and Nese, which are all moribund languages, and Avava, still actively spoken. Descriptions of all four were well advanced at the time of his death, though this one was the only one to have been actually submitted for publication.

The Editorial Board of *Pacific Linguistics* wanted to ensure that this and the accompanying three books were published, as important documentation in themselves, and as a memorial to a fine scholar. Of course, like all manuscripts submitted for publication, all four of Terry's Malakula manuscripts needed to be not only edited but also checked for minor errors and inconsistencies. Since Terry and I had cooperated on a number of publications in the past, and since he had also sent various bits and pieces of the current book and other monographs to me for comments over the years, the Board approached me to undertake this task. I hope that I have been able to assist in some way in getting these important contributions published.

In the editorial process, I have not tried to change anything of substance in what Terry had written (though I have obviously corrected minor errors and so on). In a few cases, however, I have inserted a comment on something he had written, and these comments 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 wrote 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 lengthy description of a Vanuatu vernacular is published at the same time as his *The Avava language of central 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
Port Vila, Vanuatu.

Acknowledgements

My interest in the languages of central Malakula began somewhat unintentionally. During 1995, while John Lynch, Malcolm Ross and I were toying with the idea of producing the survey volume *The Oceanic languages*—published as Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002)—I approached a speaker of Neve‘ei, Joemela Simeon, who was then studying at the University of Waikato in New Zealand, with the idea of gathering enough grammatical information on this previously undescribed language so that a short sketch could be incorporated into that volume. Joemela was agreeable, and the sketch was eventually published as Crowley (2002a).

On what was originally intended to be a purely social visit for the Christmas and New Year celebrations at the end of 1999 and to see in the year 2000, I spent about ten days in Joemela’s home village of Vinmavis on Malakula. I took with me a small amount of recently rediscovered textual material in Neve‘ei found in Deacon (1934). This old material provoked substantial and unexpected interest among the community in the task of linguistic documentation (Crowley 2001) and I ended up gathering a certain amount of additional lexical material on Neve‘ei during that short visit.

While I was going through these texts in Neve‘ei with people in Vinmavis, one of Joemela’s uncles, Temo Saiti, noticed a heading on p.734 of the Deacon volume which read ‘Texts in the dialect of Lagalag’ and he volunteered that that was ‘his language’. I initially suspected that there had been some misunderstanding, as I had believed that language to be extinct, or, if it did have any remaining speakers, that it was most unlikely that this relatively youthful man (in his late forties at the time) could have been one. However, Temo asked me to try reading an extract from Deacon’s book. I was reluctant to attempt to read a language of which I knew nothing, but Temo persisted. I was somewhat surprised when he immediately declared, ‘Yes, that’s my language. I can understand all of it.’ The language in question was Naman, and it is the subject of the present study.

I was pleased to be awarded a small grant from the Endangered Languages Fund (administered through Yale University) to support a two-month exploratory salvage fieldtrip to the area over the period November 2000–January 2001. I subsequently undertook additional fieldtrips to the area between November 2001 and January 2002, August–November 2002, August–October 2003 and July–October 2004 during which I gathered additional data on Naman. These trips were supported in part by study leave funding from the University of Waikato in New Zealand, in part by funding from the Pacific Area Office of UNESCO in Apia under the auspices of the project *Indigenous language revitalisation and preservation in Melanesia (and the Pacific)*, and in part by the Marsden Fund in New Zealand.

I would like to thank the following individuals from Litzlitz, Vilmbil, Vinmavis, Tarambukhuns and Vësele villages for so enthusiastically providing the information on the Naman language that has become the basis of the current description: Emma Metenmal, Susan Kilman, Denny Malmilip, Bue Menmen, Frank Arthur, Kensi Arthur, Ernie Arthur, Rovea Uren, Bue Meltik, Boyd Bue, Dick Kuken and Morris Bensman. Particular thanks are due to Temo Saiti for his assistance in the transcription, translation and explanation of the textual data that I recorded. I also wish to express my appreciation to John Morrison for help with the transcription and translation of stories recorded by his father, Morris Bensman.

Successful linguistic fieldwork requires much more than just people who are willing to provide linguistic information. Chief Owen of Litzlitz village helped with his support for this project of linguistic documentation. I would also like to thank Jimmy and Lenaiel Simeon and their family in Vinmavis for their tremendous hospitality and support during my various visits to Malakula. A huge debt of thanks goes particularly to Jimmy in his capacity as a Vanuatu Cultural Centre fieldworker for his dedication as an arranger of meetings, explainer and interpreter of facts, and companion on forays into other villages. I would also like to express my gratitude to Renjo Samuel, principal of Lakatoro School, along with Fred Numa and Marshall Hoke of the Malakula Cultural Centre, for allowing me to charge my laptop, minidisc recorder and camera batteries on mains power whenever I had a need. Thanks are finally due to Ralph Regenvanu of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre for once again so expeditiously arranging for the relevant permits and visas.

Of course, any fieldtrip ends up being far more than just an opportunity for data collection. I wish to acknowledge the company of many firm friends that I made, particularly in Vinmavis, with whom I enjoyed myself immensely while drinking kava, partying, working in the gardens, helping with copra production, or just mucking around, as well, of course, as gathering linguistic data. Good friends will stick with one through good times and bad, and I must also acknowledge the support given to me during my troubles, which at various times included the pain of a broken bone and three times in four years the misery of malaria. Although listing names implies the possibility of accidentally leaving out some, I would like in particular to thank the following in Vinmavis: Roy Jeremiah, Kalteri Jeremiah, Setoko Andy, Manu Simeon, Jeff Simeon, Andrew Tony, Simon Johneti, Edmond Johneti, Philip David, Pierre Harry, Daniel Harry, Thomson, Williamson, Kalmatak, Kalorongo, John Morrison, Sano, Marsden, Dudley and Aleris Fathley, Kevin Jack, Dansen Uren, Turan Uren, Malon, Indian and Ian.

There are also those who provided hospitality, support and friendship while in Vila on my way to and from Malakula, including Joemela Simeon and Rosette Karl, Kalros and Leimok Simeon, Neil and Renata Stevens, along with their families. The support of Jimmy Numan with his generous provision of mate's rates at an otherwise unaffordable hotel was very much appreciated during my various transits in Vila. *Weh goh!*

Finally, I would like to thank John Lynch for helpful comments on earlier versions of this description.

Terry Crowley
Hamilton, New Zealand
November 2004

Abbreviations

1	first person	INCL	inclusive
2	second person	INCOMP	incompletive
3	third person	INDEF	indefinite
ABIL	abilitative	INST	instrumental
ACC	accompanitive	IRR	irrealis
ADV	adversative	LOC	locative
ANTIDESID	antidesiderative	MULT	multiplicative
BEN	benefactive	NEC	necessitative
CHAR	characteristic	NEG	negative
COMPL	completive	NOM	nominaliser
CONC	concessive	NONHUM	non-human
COND	conditional	OBL	oblique
CONT/HAB	continuous/habitual	PART	part-whole
COP	copula	PL	plural
DAT	dative	POSS	possessive
DEM	demonstrative	PURP	purposive
DESID	desiderative	REAL	realis
DIR	directional	REDUP	reduplication
DISTPAST	distant past	REL	relative clause
DL	dual	SG	singular
DUR	duration	SIM	similitive
DURT	durative	SUB	subordinator
ED	edible	SUBSEQ	subsequential
EMPH	emphatic	TEMP	temporal
EXCL	exclusive	TOP	topic
HUM	human	TR	transitive
IMP	impersonal		

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:

jëbë-g
grandfather-1SG
'my grandfather'

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

në-lev-ëm
1SG:REAL-give-2SG
'I gave (it) to you'

vëvrëkh
small:PL
'small (pl.)'

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 Naman original:

boas
day.after.tomorrow
'the day after tomorrow'



Photograph 1: Temo Saiti of Vinmavis

Temo was the person who spotted a short text written in Naman in Deacon's volume *Malekula*, and it was Temo who provided the bulk of the help in transcribing and translating texts in Naman recorded from a variety of other people. Temo's primary language is Neve'ei.



Photograph 2: Morris Bensman of Tarambukhuns in the Lakatoro area

Morris is perhaps the last person to continue speaking Naman on a daily basis, as he uses the language with his sons. They understand Naman, though they are not comfortable speaking it back to him, preferring to reply in Bislama or in Neve'ei.



Photograph 3: John Morrison, also of Tarambuhuns

One of Morris Bensman's sons, John is the youngest speaker of Naman, though his knowledge is primarily passive. He is a fluent speaker of Neve'ei and, of course, Bislama.



Photograph 4: Dick Kuken of Vinmavis

Dick kindly agreed to record the first texts that I analysed in Naman, a language which he seldom uses any more, as his primary language is Neve'ei.

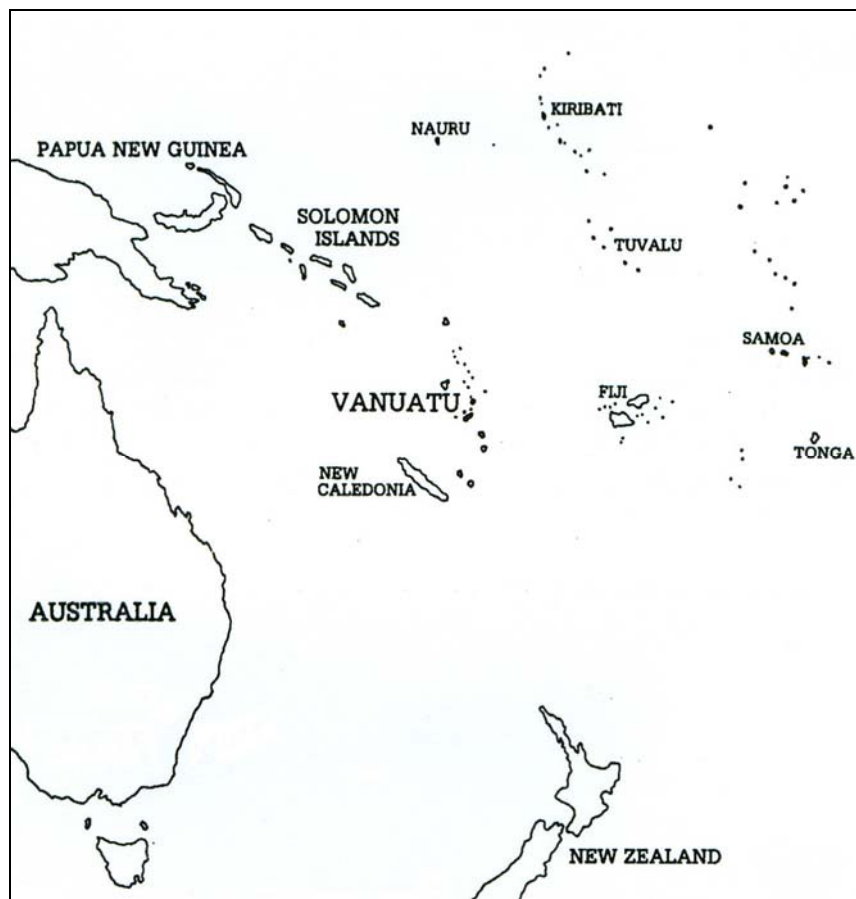


Photograph 5: Susan Kilman of Vësele village in the Lakatoro area

Susan also speaks Neve‘ei, as well as Bislama. Her son, parliamentarian Sato Kilman, was Deputy Prime Minister of Vanuatu at the time this manuscript was submitted.

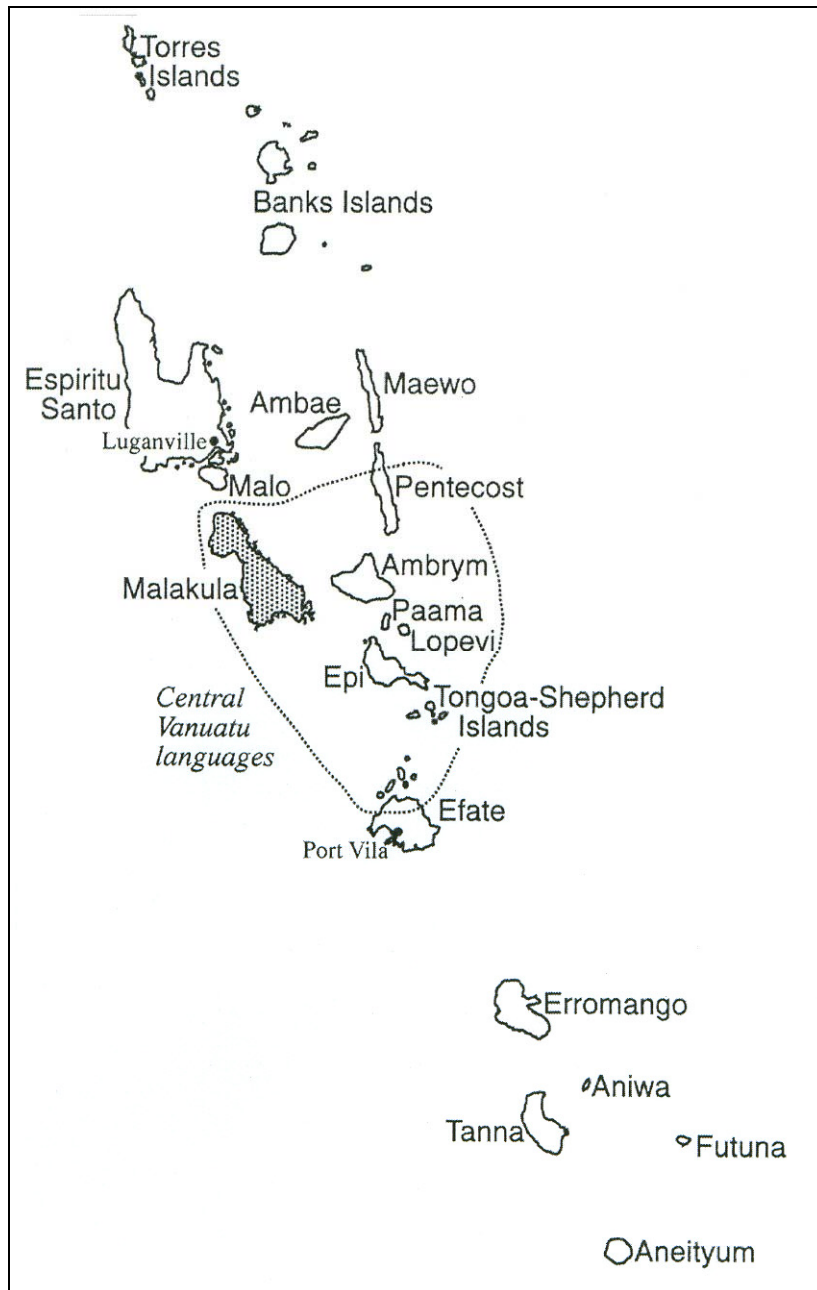
1 *Introduction*

Naman, the subject of this linguistic description, is a moribund language that is spoken on the island of Malakula in the Republic of Vanuatu. Vanuatu is located in the southwest Pacific to the west of Fiji and to the east of northern Queensland (Map 1). Before it gained its independence from joint colonial control by France and the United Kingdom in 1980, it was known in English as the New Hebrides and in French as les Nouvelles-Hébrides.



Map 1: Vanuatu in the southwest Pacific

Vanuatu is made up of a large number of islands spread over a Y-shaped archipelago that is laid out from north to south. Although many are quite small, the island of Malakula, which constitutes the base of the left arm of the Y (Map 2), is substantially larger than most, being 95 km in length, with a maximum width of 40 km.



Map 2: The islands of Vanuatu

Although the population of Vanuatu today is only about 200,000, it hosts an estimated 81 actively spoken languages (Lynch & Crowley 2001:4). This means that each language has an average of just under 2500 speakers, with Vanuatu being the world's linguistically most diverse nation in terms of the number of languages per head of population.

1.1 Malakula: linguistic background

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-sized Malakula language has just under 700 speakers. Excluding the two largest languages—V'ënen Taut¹ (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 single village, a small number of villages, or a scattering of very small hamlets. Some of these languages are spoken only by very small numbers of people scattered around a number of different locations as minorities in villages with completely different dominant languages.

This description of the extent of linguistic diversity on Malakula is likely to *underestimate* the extent of that diversity rather than to overestimate it. For one thing, Lynch and Crowley (2001:2–4) have tentatively grouped together some communalects as single languages that Tryon (1976) had earlier treated as separate languages. Further descriptive work in the future may reveal that some of our suggested single languages may, in fact, turn out to represent mutually unintelligible varieties, more in line with Tryon's earlier suggestions.

Perhaps more importantly, however, it is entirely possible that there are other distinct languages on Malakula which await discovery. Since the year 2000, I have visited various places in central Malakula in order to check on reports that speakers of a number of moribund languages could still be found. In doing so, I heard of possibly as many as five additional separately named moribund linguistic varieties in the area whose existence had previously either been completely unknown, or merely suspected as a vague possibility.² Given the demographic history of Malakula over the last century or so (Crowley 2001), it is entirely plausible that there may be yet other moribund languages on the island awaiting discovery.

Despite the extent of linguistic diversity on Malakula, the languages of the island are quite poorly documented. There are reasonably detailed published grammatical descriptions to date of only two of these languages—Port Sandwich in the southeast (Charpentier 1979) and V'ënen Taut of the northwest (Fox 1979). Although extensive linguistic work has in recent years been carried out in the past decade or more on the language of Uripiv (initially by Ross McKerras and later by Kenichi and Saiko Shibusawa, all of the Summer Institute of Linguistics), and also 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. A description of the Neve'e³ language of central Malakula has recently been completed (Musgrave 2001), though this is also not yet available in published form.

More recently, my own work has been progressing on the grammatical description of a number of languages from central Malakula, including this description of Naman. I have

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

² Of course, until data from these varieties can be recorded and compared, and speakers interviewed about degrees of mutual intelligibility, we will need to reserve judgment as to whether we are dealing with newly discovered separate languages, or simply with separately named dialects of previously known languages.

³ The backwards apostrophe is the orthographic symbol used to represent the phonemically contrastive glottal stop in this language.

also been gathering data on the Avava language of Tisvel, Khatbol,⁴ Taremp and Tembimbi villages, as well as the moribund Tape language, originally of the upper Brenwei River area, but now spoken only by a handful of elderly people in the coastal village of Tautu in northeastern Malakula. Work has also recently commenced on the Aulua language by Martin Paviour-Smith (of Massey University in New Zealand), the Unua language by Elizabeth Pearce (of Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand), the Niverver language of Lingarakh and Limap villages by Julie Barbour (of the University of Waikato in New Zealand) and the Dirak language of Mae village by Amanda Brotchie (of the University of Melbourne in Australia). None of these linguistic descriptions, however, are yet ready for publication.

Although the extent of published grammatical descriptions relating to Malakula languages is at the present quite limited, the situation is even more grim from a lexicographical perspective. The only extensive-looking published dictionary is Capell and Layard's (1980) lexical compilation on the Atchin variety of the Northeast Malakula language. However, it is difficult to use this material for any kind of serious comparative purposes because of the phonologically uncertain status of vernacular forms (Clark 1985). Other than this, we have for the most part 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 about 1700 words in Charpentier (1982). In neither case, however, can we be confident about the phonetic accuracy of all of this information. An additional problem is the fact that it is difficult to establish whether the authors intended their transcriptions to be treated as phonetic or as phonemic transcriptions, with forms in both sources seemingly presented in an unhelpful mix of both underdifferentiated and overdifferentiated representations. In addition—given the nature of these sources—grammatical information is minimal.

1.2 Language viability on Malakula

There is a wide range of opinions about the viability of local languages in the greater Pacific area. Some writers have expressed great pessimism about the long-term survival prospects of most, if not all, of these languages, e.g. Dixon (1991), Mühlhäusler (1996). In Crowley (1995, 1998c), I have expressed a more cautiously optimistic view, at least for the medium-term future, while acknowledging that at least some further language attrition is almost inevitable.

My substantially less pessimistic conclusions were based in part on observations derived from my own periods of extended fieldwork on the Paamese and Sye languages in Vanuatu. Both of these languages are spoken on essentially one-language islands where there is a minimum of in-migration from other islands, and there is nothing remotely resembling an urban centre on either island.⁵

However, Malakula differs in many respects from both Paama and Erromango, and I propose to assess the future prospects of Malakula's languages separately. The linguistic demography of Malakula is possibly the most complex of any individual island in

⁴ The digraph *kh* is used to represent phonemically contrastive velar fricatives in the languages of this part of Malakula.

⁵ Erromango was originally substantially more linguistically diverse (Crowley 1997), but there is basically just one language spoken there today.

Vanuatu.⁶ There is still much to be learned about how many distinct languages were originally spoken on Malakula, as well as how many are still spoken there. In addition to the various actively spoken languages of Malakula, there is also a substantial number of languages that are currently moribund, as well as some apparently distinct languages that have become extinct. Information is still coming in about previously undocumented languages on Malakula that are now either extinct or moribund, but at the moment there appear to be possibly more than a dozen distinct languages in this category.

The reasons for such extensive linguistic attrition on Malakula are for the most part not difficult to find. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many parts of Malakula underwent massive depopulation as a result of epidemics of influenza and other introduced diseases (Crowley 2001:195–99). Much of the once heavily populated interior of the island was completely devastated as large numbers of people died. Most of the original hamlets were very small and many became demographically unviable with the loss of population. The resulting remnant populations tended to merge to form larger villages, sometimes consisting of people from a number of different locations, often speaking different dialects of the same languages, or in some cases even different languages. The once fairly evenly populated interior was largely abandoned as people moved to the coast, often merging with other populations in the process. The result is that today, the interior of the island is now littered with the stone remains of these old village sites, referred to locally in Bislama as *nasara*.



Photograph 6: The abandoned *nasara* of Vanimbili

This site is located just over an hour's walk inland from the coast near Vinmavis, where descendants of the original inhabitants now live. This is the ancestral nasara of Temo Saiti (Photograph 1).

⁶ Espiritu Santo, to the north of Malakula, is possibly similarly complex in terms of its linguistic demography, but this island is even less well documented linguistically than Malakula, so at this stage it is not possible to be sure how many languages are spoken on this island.

Disease was not the only factor resulting in demographic shift to the coast. Other considerations also came into play, including the following:

- *Hostility from neighbouring groups*

In some cases, traditionally hostile neighbours became substantially greater threats with the acquisition of firearms after colonial contact in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Big Nambas and the Dirak people of northwestern Malakula, for instance, waged war on the neighbouring Tape people and drove them in the 1920s from their traditional homeland along the Lowisinwei River down to the present-day east coast village of Tautu. There, they intermarried extensively with people from Uripiv. That language has now become the primary language of people of Tape descent, with their own language now being moribund.

- *Establishment of coastal plantations*

Extensive coconut plantations were established during the early colonial era along the northern and eastern coasts of Malakula. These attracted large populations of labourers from various parts of Malakula, as well as from other islands of Vanuatu. In some cases, the influx of people from outside has had a serious impact on the local language. One such case involves the Nese language of the Matanvat area of the northwestern coast of Malakula. This language is now used by only a single extended family, with the rest of the local population relying exclusively on Bislama.⁷

- *Establishment of coastal mission stations*

Christian churches established mission stations almost exclusively on coastal sites at a variety of locations around Malakula during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These mission stations often resulted in linguistically mixed communities where small language communities sometimes found it difficult to survive. For instance, the Presbyterian Mission at Lambumbu in central Malakula seems to have attracted a primarily Neve‘ei-speaking population. The smaller number of Naman speakers from the interior who also took up residence in this mission station found little support for their language there.

The linguistic demography of Malakula has been further complicated by the introduction of substantial numbers of other languages from different parts of Vanuatu. There are, for example, communities of Paamese speakers living on Malakula. These communities sometimes date back several generations, but remain as linguistically fairly homogeneous Paamese-speaking communities, sometimes even carrying the name of original villages on Paama, even though many members of these communities may never have set foot on Paama. In many of these new plantation communities which are linguistically more mixed, Bislama has become the dominant medium of communication.

While some of the indigenous languages of Malakula have become moribund, or even extinct, the majority appear currently to be relatively ‘healthy’ in the sense that they are widely spoken by members of all generations, including the current generation of young children. Some languages even appear to be gaining new ground. In particular, the

⁷ Bislama is the predominantly English-lexifier pidgin/creole that is the officially declared national language of the Republic of Vanuatu.

V'ënen Taut and the Northeast Malakula languages both have relatively large numbers of speakers. Over the course of the last few generations, these two languages have supplanted the original languages in some areas, and are now showing signs of further spread. About half the population of Larëvat village, for example, now speaks V'ënen Taut. Since the Larëvat language is spoken in no other village, this must now be considered to be a language under threat. The Northeast Malakula language has also largely replaced the Naman language in Litzlitz, as well as the Tape language in Tautu.

Even some of the smaller languages of Malakula seem fairly healthy in that they are spoken rather more widely than in their single 'home' community. For instance, while the Neve'ei language can claim only the single village of Vinmavis as its core 'territory', most adults in the neighbouring village of Tisvel—just over an hour's walk away—also speak Neve'ei alongside their own Avava language, having learned Neve'ei while attending primary school in Vinmavis.⁸ Moreover, Neve'ei is also fairly widely spoken in the Avava-speaking village of Khatbol, as well as in the linguistically mixed village of Vilmbil. A number of Naman speakers in the Litzlitz and Lakatoro areas also speak Neve'ei.

However, we must be careful not to assume that Neve'ei is a completely 'healthy' language, in spite of the fact that there are signs that it appears to be spreading into neighbouring communities. I conducted a survey of households in Vinmavis in 2004 which suggests that there are real pressures on the Neve'ei language within the language's main stronghold. Of the male household heads normally resident in Vinmavis, 30% were married to women from other language groups. While many such women soon acquire a working knowledge of Neve'ei, and some become fairly proficient speakers within a few years, the general pattern is for Bislama to become the dominant language within these households. The children of such couples generally prefer to use Bislama in their inter-sibling interactions, even where those children have acquired a good command of Neve'ei from other children in the village.

Of those households headed by Neve'ei-speaking males living primarily outside of Vinmavis, whether in Port Vila, Luganville or elsewhere, only 12.5% involved wives from the same language group. In such families, there is an overwhelming tendency for children to grow up speaking little Neve'ei, or none at all, with Bislama being the sole language of the home. The result is that of all households headed by Neve'ei-speaking men, Bislama is now the preferred language for inter-sibling communication in 52% of cases.

Of even greater concern is the fact that there are now some households in Vinmavis where both parents come from the same language community, yet the parents have opted to speak to their children predominantly in Bislama. There are just two households at the moment out of a total of about seventy where this is the case, but if this were to become a trend, the existing threat to the language would be seriously exacerbated.

The result is that it is now not possible to function in Vinmavis without a knowledge of Bislama alongside Neve'ei, even for children of a very young age. It is possible to imagine a situation, when today's generation of children grow up and marry, in which Neve'ei becomes restricted to an ever-decreasing circle of adult speakers. In three or four generations' time, therefore, a seemingly healthy language such as Neve'ei may face the same kind of fate that we see today in places such as Matanvat. Thus, Malakula may well represent the locus for some fairly substantial language shift within the next few generations.

⁸ Only a handful of people in Vinmavis, however, display the same level of competence in Avava.

1.3 Geographical and historical background to Naman

Naman was traditionally spoken over a substantial area of what is often referred to locally as the Dog's Neck in central Malakula, in an area known as Lëngalëng (Map 3). Its territory extended along the east coast of the island from the mouth of what is marked on maps as the Aup⁹ River in the north and along the coast as far south as Bushmans Bay where the Nurumbat River enters the sea. The language extended inland as far as the head of the Aup River in the north, and in the south along the northern side of the Nurumbat River as far as the site of modern Lowisal village. The inland boundary extended from Lowisal to just south of Norumb mountain and then to the eastern bank of the upper reaches of the Lambumbu River just inland from modern Lambumbu and Vilmbil villages. From the head of the Lambumbu River, the boundary extended through the interior to the head of the Aup River.

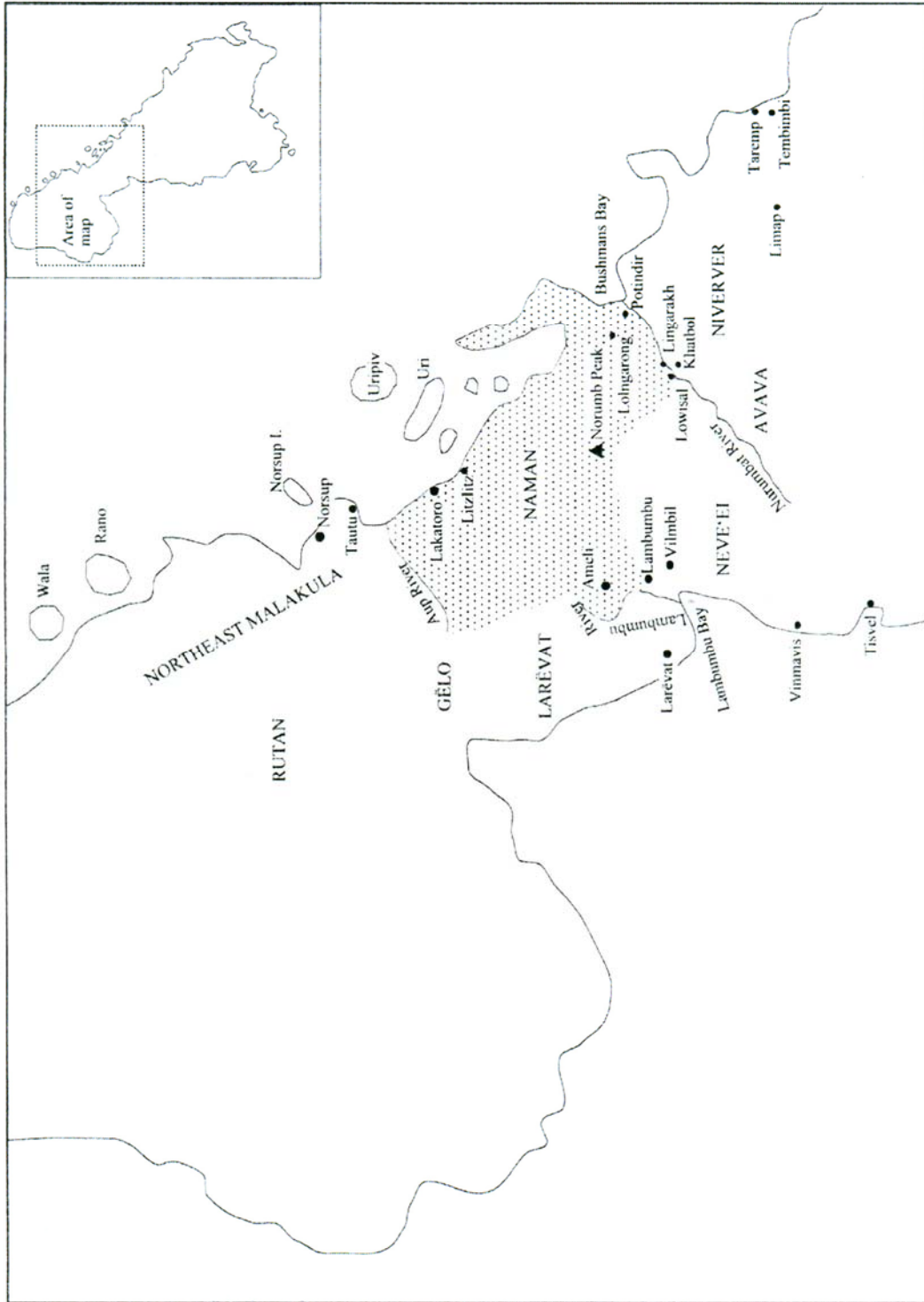
From north to south, the maximum extent of the traditional territory of the Naman language is about 13 km, while from the east coast it extended inland about 8 km almost, but not quite, reaching the west coast of the island. The eastern fringe consists of a narrow coastal plain which is now occupied in part by the extensive coconut plantations of the Plantations Réunies de Vanuatu based at Norsup (where the hospital and airstrip are also located), in part by the fairly substantial semi-urban administrative settlement of Lakatoro and the village of Litzlitz, and in part by local food gardens and locally owned coconut plantations. The inland area consists of densely forested hills rising to a maximum altitude of 543 metres at Norumb mountain. This interior is now almost completely unsettled, apart from a small population of immigrant labourers from other parts of Malakula and other parts of Vanuatu living along the road that was built across the island to Lambumbu in the 1960s. Workers on the Metenesel Estates cocoa plantation in the Lambumbu and Vilmbil area also work and live in what was traditionally Naman-speaking territory.

Given the relatively small extent of the Naman-speaking area, it may seem unlikely that it could have hosted much regional diversity. However, modern Avava (now spoken in Tisvel, Khatbol, Taremp and Tembimbi villages) also occupied a fairly small geographical area which hosted several distinct and separately named local dialects, each of which was associated with a particular *nasara*. Speakers of Naman today make no mention of dialect variation within their ancestral language area. At the same time, there is some variation in my corpus in the distribution of schwa vis-à-vis other vowels (§2.1.2.2), as well as variation in the forms of pronouns (§3.1) and possessive markers (§3.3.2.2) that suggest at least the possibility that some kind of regional dialect levelling may have taken place, resulting in unpredictable variation in the language as it is currently spoken.

The languages which bordered on the traditional territory of the Naman language were the following:

- On the mainland coast to the north of the Aup River, and also on the offshore island of Uripiv, we find the Northeast Malakula language. With an estimated 9000 speakers (Lynch & Crowley 2001:80), this is the language with by far the largest number of speakers on Malakula today, as well as being one of the largest languages in all of Vanuatu.

⁹ The Naman name for this river is *Khaub* [xaump].



Map 3: Pre-contact Naman language area

- To the north, inland from the Norsup plantation in an area known as Lombal, the Rutan language was spoken. Rutan is reportedly named after a local shibboleth, in this case the word meaning ‘let’s go’, in contrast to the Naman word *tëtilung* for the same meaning. During the early twentieth century, the warlike Dirak people chased the people of Lombal out of their homeland, with some relocating to the island of Uri and some to a small village just to the south of present-day Litzlitz. In their new locations, speakers of Rutan abandoned their ancestral language in favour of the Northeast Malakula language and the language now appears to be extinct.¹⁰ This language is completely undocumented apart from the word [rutan] ‘let’s go’ and the words [mærtu] ‘person’ and [rakəm] ‘crab’.
- To the west, in the interior in the area of the junction of the road south to Lambumbu and west to Unmet, is an area where the Gëlo language was reportedly spoken. Speakers of Gëlo moved to Tautu where they also adopted the Northeast Malakula language. Gëlo is now extinct and in the complete absence of any documentation it is impossible to know if this speech variety was mutually unintelligible with all of the neighbouring varieties or if it was simply a separately named dialect of some other language.
- Also to the west, along the coast, is the territory of the language that we can refer to as Larëvat, named after the village along the west coast of Malakula where its speakers are now congregated. This language is currently almost completely undescribed.
- Neve‘ei (sometimes known as Sang) is the language which was spoken on the southwestern boundary of Naman. Its speakers are now concentrated in the village of Vinmavis located just to the south of Larëvat. Musgrave (2001) is the most detailed account of this language.
- To the south in the Lowisal area is the traditional territory of the Avava language. Its speakers have abandoned this area and now live in Khatbol, Tisvel, Taremp and Tembimbi villages. Work on this language by the present author commenced in 2003 and is still ongoing.
- To the southeast along the coast and some distance inland along the southern bank of the Nurumbat River is the traditional territory of the Niverver language.¹¹ Speakers of this language are now concentrated in the villages of Lingarakh and Limap. Julie Barbour of the University of Waikato began work on Niverver in 2004.

Although Naman presumably once had a substantial number of speakers, it is now very much a moribund language. After the major epidemics of influenza and other diseases that devastated the population of many parts of Malakula in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the remaining speakers of Naman moved initially from their small hamlets in the

¹⁰ Recent unconfirmed reports suggest that there may still be a handful of individuals who remember something of Rutan. Ross McKerras, formerly of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, reportedly recorded a small amount of data in the Uri language but this information has been lost.

¹¹ This language is known to speakers of Neve‘ei as Nevwerwver. This is the name which was used for this language in Lynch and Crowley (2001:79–80).

interior to the now-abandoned village of Metenesel in the Lambumbu area, and then to the modern village of Litzlitz on the east coast.¹²

The British anthropologist A. Bernard Deacon visited central Malakula in 1926. By the time of his visit, speakers of Naman were evidently already substantially bilingual in their language and neighbouring Neve‘ei. Deacon’s notes in Naman (some of which are held at the Royal Anthropological Institute in London) are often glossed in Neve‘ei, a language with which Deacon already had some familiarity, and this suggests that Neve‘ei was his language of elicitation or translation.¹³ However, once members of the Naman-speaking community had relocated to Litzlitz, there was extensive intermarriage with people from other language groups, particularly with speakers of the Uripiv variety of the Northeast Malakula language, and the trend to language shift accelerated.

Today, a number of Naman speakers over the age of fifty or so still live in Litzlitz, as well as in the villages of Tarambukhuns and Vësele in the Lakatoro area. The dominant language of Litzlitz is now the Northeast Malakula language, though many of the remaining speakers of Naman are at least equally proficient in Neve‘ei, and some, in fact, have a stronger speaking ability in Neve‘ei than Northeast Malakula. Although Naman is still used among older members of the Litzlitz community, this is primarily only when this small group of people seeks not to be understood by young people within earshot.

Lakatoro and Litzlitz, although located just a short walk apart, have very different linguistic make-ups. Litzlitz is more like a traditional village while Lakatoro has been an administrative centre since the 1950s, as well as being located close to the substantially older plantation settlement of Norsup. These are both linguistically very mixed communities, with Bislama being the primary language of communication. However, Naman speakers living in the Lakatoro area maintain strong social networks with people from Litzlitz. As with most Naman speakers in Litzlitz, the Naman speakers of Lakatoro are also fluent speakers of Neve‘ei.

There has been some recent movement of Naman speakers from the east coast to the newly-established villages of Vilmbil and Ameli (located inland from Lambumbu Bay). Although the dominant languages of Vilmbil and Ameli are Northeast Malakula and Bislama (as some non-Malakulan families also live there), the Naman speakers who live there also speak Neve‘ei. Some speakers of Naman also live in the village of Vinmavis, where, once again, Neve‘ei has become their main language of daily life. There are in all possibly 15–20 fluent speakers of Naman scattered between Litzlitz, Tarambukhuns, Vësele, Vilmbil, Ameli and Vinmavis.¹⁴

Naman is very much a moribund language that is not being passed on to a younger generation of children. Only one of the current generation of speakers—Morris Bensman of Lakatoro—has succeeded in passing on a knowledge of Naman to his children. Although his sons are now in their twenties and thirties and clearly have a strong passive command of the language, they are much more comfortable responding to their father in Bislama or Neve‘ei.

¹² Litzlitz is a colonial adaptation of the traditional Naman name Lenslens, which is named after the broken pieces of dead coral that are commonly found on beaches in Vanuatu.

¹³ It is possible that Bislama was not widely known in the area in the 1920s. That at least some speakers were familiar with Bislama, however, is indicated by occasional glosses in Deacon’s notes such as ‘you no sleep all time (= *yu no slip oltaem*)’.

¹⁴ Tryon’s (1976:171) estimate of 330 speakers for this language—which he referred to as Litzlitz—is quite inaccurate.

The current generation of speakers recognise that when they die, their language will disappear. This is seen as a matter of substantial regret both among those who still speak Naman and those younger people of Lëngalëng who no longer speak the language. My own interest in the language prompted some talk of linguistic ‘revival’, though it is difficult to imagine any scenario by which any kind of viable Naman-speaking community could be re-established given the dispersal of Naman speakers among several different villages, and the fact that all are married to people who do not speak Naman.

1.4 Language names in central Malakula

Information gathered orally from local people and from written sources reveals a plethora of names for peoples, places and languages. Because this wealth of names has the potential to lead to confusion about what languages were originally spoken where, as well as how many distinct languages there were, I propose to discuss the question of nomenclature in some detail here. I will discuss the naming of groups firstly from the perspective of local people, and secondly from the perspective of outside anthropologists and linguists.

1.4.1 *Local naming practices*

Languages in central Malakula are named in local practice according to a variety of different conventions. Some languages are referred to by ‘glossonyms’, i.e. apparently underived names which specifically refer to the name of a language. The Avava language that is spoken in Tisvel, Khatbol, Tembimbi and Taremp villages, for example, appears to be one such language name. Gara, Umbruul,¹⁵ Nivat and Vivti are speech varieties which are now either extinct or moribund and which were traditionally spoken adjacent to Avava, and these also appear to represent genuine glossonyms of this type.

There is a tradition in some parts of central Malakula for the names of languages and of the geographical areas where those languages are (or were) spoken to be different. Thus, for example, the Avava language was traditionally spoken in an area known as Voroka, while Umbruul was spoken in Bangasak, Nivat in Worik and Vivti in Vanakh. The following forms set out those language names of central and northern Malakula for which I have so far been able to determine the corresponding place names:

<i>Glossonym</i>	<i>Originally spoken in ...</i>
Avava	Voroka
Umbruul	Bangasak
Nititta	Viar
Nivat	Worik, Werik
Naman	Lëngalëng
Niverver	Sakan
Rutan	Lombal

¹⁵ Orthographic *br* here represents a voiced bilabial trill, while the double vowel represents contrastive vowel length.

However, people today have sometimes confused original geographical names with language names, and original place names have begun to supplant original glossonyms. Thus, for example, the Nititta language, which was once spoken in the geographical area known as Viar, is usually referred to today instead as the Viar language.

In some cases, there was originally only a name for the geographical area where a language was spoken with no specific glossonym. In such cases, the traditional practice was typically to refer to the language as ‘the language of such-and-such a place’. For instance, the language of the area known as Tape in the upper Lowisinwei River area was traditionally referred to as *Vengesien Tape* ‘the language of Tape’. In this case, however, the original geographical term has in recent times come to be used as a genuine glossonym, so people now often refer to the language simple as Tape.

When languages were relocated well away from their original homelands early in the colonial era, the new location sometimes became the basis of a new name for that language. For instance, the Rutan language was originally spoken in an area known as Lombal, which was located in the hilly interior between the modern village of Mae and the Lowisinwei River. Some of the remnants of this population relocated to the island of Uri adjacent to Uripiv off the northeastern coast of Malakula. Although Rutan has now been completely replaced by the Uripiv variety of the Northeast Malakula language, it is often still referred to locally as the Uri language, even though it was not originally spoken there.

The final source of language names in central Malakula involves the use of salient shibboleths as glossonyms. A variety of naming practices of this type have been encountered so far:

- The local word for ‘what?’ is often used as a language name. For instance, the Neve‘ei language of the Vinmavis area is named after the long form of this interrogative word. (In ordinary conversation, this is more commonly encountered in the shorter form *neve*, but this is never used as the language name as far as I know.) Similarly, the Nese language of the Matanvat area and the Naha language that is now spoken in Wowo village, both in the northwest of Malakula, are named after the local words for ‘what?’.
- Another practice is to use the local expression of surprise, roughly corresponding to ‘oh my goodness!’ in English. The Naman language that is the subject of this description is named in this way. Its linguistic neighbour to the southwest is sometimes referred to as the Sang language because this is the corresponding interjection in that language. (This is an alternative name for the language that is more commonly referred to as Neve‘ei.)
- The Rutan language, originally spoken in the area known as Lombal, is so named because /*rutan*/ was their unique word for ‘let’s go’.
- In some cases, languages are named after the first person singular realis form of the verb meaning ‘speak’. Thus, the Niverver language that is now spoken in Lingarakh and Limap villages corresponds to the word *niverver* ‘I speak’ in their own language. The neighbouring language to the north is sometimes referred to by way of contrast as the Navar language after the characteristic verb *navar* ‘I speak’.

The same language may be known by more than one name, depending on which of these various practices is being followed. I have already indicated that the Naman language, which is the subject of this description, is named after the expression of surprise

in that language. However, Naman was originally spoken in the geographical area of Lëngalëng and people not infrequently also refer to this language nowadays as the Lëngalëng language.

We must also keep in mind the fact that there may well be a difference between endonymous and exonymous practices with regard both to names of languages and of the areas from which they originate. By this I mean that there are sometimes different names, or at least different versions of the same name, used by speakers of different languages. In some cases, this is unlikely to cause any real confusion. For instance, the Dirak language that is now spoken in the village of Mae, is referred to by speakers of Neve‘ei as Dirakh and by speakers of Tape as Tirakh. The referential identity of the names Dirak, Dirakh and Tirakh will be immediately obvious. A similar example involves the Neve‘ei form of the geographical name Lëngalëng, which is sometimes used as an alternative name for the Naman language. Since Neve‘ei has no phonemically contrastive schwa, Lëngalëng, phonemically /ləŋaləŋ/, is known to Neve‘ei speakers instead as Langalang, i.e. /laŋalaŋ/. Thus, both Lëngalëng and Langalang are in circulation as glossonyms.

A slightly different example involves the Avava language, which is referred to by speakers of Neve‘ei by means of the easily recognisable cognate Navava. In this case, the difference relates to the different forms of the original article **na* and **a* that have been historically accreted as part of the roots of many nouns in these two languages. We also encounter variation between names such as Vivti and Viar (which are used endonymically) and other people’s variants of those names in which a historically accreted article of the shape *nV-* has been reanalysed as part of the language name, i.e. Nivivti, Niviar.

A final example involves the Niverver language, which is named endonymically after the local first person singular realis form of the verb *verver* ‘say’, i.e. *niverver*. Recognising this origin for the language name, the same language is referred to by speakers of Neve‘ei using the corresponding verb in their own language, i.e. *Nevwervwer*, this being the glossonym which appears in Lynch and Crowley (2001:79–80).

In some cases, however, it may be more difficult to recognise the cognacy of two glossonyms where there is greater phonological difference between the two forms. The endonym Umbruul, for example, is expressed by speakers of Neve‘ei by the regular cognate name Numbuwul. Some observers may be tempted to assume that the existence of names as different as Umbruul and Numbuwul indicates that there are two separate speech communities involved here, whereas this is in fact not the case. Similarly, the geographical area of Sakan, which is where the Niverver language originates from, is known by speakers of Neve‘ei by the regular cognate form Nesa‘an. These appear superficially to represent quite different names, but they are in fact simply local variants of the same name.

Finally, endonyms and exonyms may be etymologically completely unrelated. For instance, the Naman language is known to speakers of the Tape language as Navar. This name is based on the highly salient first person singular realis form of the verb *var* ‘say’ in Naman, i.e. *navar*.

The result of all of these competing naming practices is that the same language may well be referred to by people in central Malakula in a wide variety of different ways. For instance, the language that is described in this volume is referred to locally variously as Naman, Navar, Lëngalëng and Langalang (and possibly by other names that I have not encountered).

The situation is complicated further by the fact that there are sometimes also distinct ethnonyms which may be used in addition to the names of languages as well as the geographical areas from which particular languages originate. These ethnonyms are often descriptive, saying something either about some aspect of a people's culture, or about their place of residence. For instance, speakers of Neve'eï refer to the people of the 'snout' of the Dog's Head area of northwestern Malakula as the Na'av'av Bur people. This literally means 'large penis sheath' and these people are so named because the traditional dress of men generously covered their entire frontal area, in contrast to the much more revealing men's dress elsewhere which left the testicles publicly visible.¹⁶ Speakers of Naman use the ethnonym Maraakhus to refer to the people of Tape. This name derives from the Naman words *mar* 'person of (place)' and *aakhus* 'above', as the people of Tape originally lived in the mountainous interior of the Dog's Head.

While the Na'av'av Bur people speak a single language—they refer to their language as *V'ënen Taut* 'language of the bush people'—such ethnonyms do not necessarily coincide tidily with the names of distinct languages. Thus, a single ethnonym may subsume several different languages, such as we find with the Neve'eï ethnonym Nemar Ra'ai, literally 'people from above'. This ethnonym refers generically to all people of the Southwest Bay area,¹⁷ regardless of the particular local language that they speak. Speakers of Neve'eï also refer to people who live on the eastern coast of the island as Remav, a name which subsumes speakers of several distinct languages. Those who refer to themselves as the Nedaut people also speak several different languages, as this ethnonym covers speakers of the Avava language of Voroka, the Vivti language of Vanakh, the Umbruul language of Bangasak and the Nivat language of Worik.

1.4.2 *The practices of outsiders*

While local naming practices already provide a rich, and potentially confusing, array of names, the situation becomes even more difficult when we take into account the ways in which missionaries, anthropologists and linguists have added their own naming conventions to the mix. In some cases, such observations have more or less accurately reflected local practices. However, there are also many instances of incorrect names becoming widely established in print.

The Naman language, for instance, has so far never been referred to as such in print. It has for the most part been referred to in published sources in the past as Langalang or Lagalag (e.g. Deacon 1934:8). These spellings are intended to represent the form /laŋalaŋ/. As indicated in §1.4.1, this was originally not a language name at all, as the word referred specifically to the geographical area in which the Naman language was originally spoken (§1.3). Moreover, this is not a Naman word at all. Rather, it is the Neve'eï form of the Naman word Lëngalëng. The same language has also been referred to in print as Litzlitz after the location where some of the remaining speakers live (Tryon 1976). Tryon (1972:55) referred earlier to Naman as the Port Stanley language, while mentioning that it had also been referred to as Lólnarrong and as Netenesel, these again being local village names.

¹⁶ The Bislama name for the same ethnic group, the Big Nambas, is based on the same observation. (The word *nambas* in Bislama means 'penis sheath'.)

¹⁷ On Malakula, south is considered to be 'up' while north is considered to be 'down'.

Modern village names as language names have also been used in other cases. For instance, the Neve‘ei language has often been referred to in print either as the Vinmavis language (e.g. Tryon 1976; Crowley 2001, 2002) or as the Lambumbu language (e.g. Deacon 1934). Both of these names, however, refer to locations: Vinmavis is the name of the main village where Neve‘ei is currently spoken, while Lambumbu is the name of the nearby Presbyterian mission station in the early twentieth century where Neve‘ei was the dominant language. The Avava language has been referred to in the past in the same way, as Katbol (Tryon 1976) or as Timbembe (Tryon 1972), after two of the villages where it is now the primary language. There are, however, some languages in central Malakula for which no indigenous name has yet been established. One such case is the language of the village of Larëvat. We have no option but to continue to refer to this language as the Larëvat language until such time as a local language name is known.

Even externally imposed language names of this kind may vary substantially in shape depending on whose local version of the name was recorded. The name Lambumbu, for example, is based on Neve‘ei speakers’ pronunciation of the name, while the same place is referred to by speakers of Naman by means of a form that would appear orthographically as Lumbumbu. Evidently, some of the east coast peoples produce bilabial trills in their version of this name, giving rise to Capell and Layard’s (1980:7) representations of the same name variably as Lambrmbr and Lumḃmḃ.

Sometimes, a name might be assigned on the basis of some kind of mistranscription or misspelling on the part of an outside observer. For instance, Marakus and Maragus are widely used in print to refer to the Tape language, e.g. Deacon (1934), Tryon (1976). However, this name is not used at all by speakers of this language themselves (or their descendants). These are both mistranscriptions of the Naman name Maraakhus, which is used to refer to the people of the geographical area known as Tape. Lolnarrong is mentioned in Tryon (1972:55) as an alternative name for the Naman language, but this is in fact a misrepresentation of the local name for Port Stanley, i.e. Lolngarong (Capell & Layard 1980:97).

There are also different names which represent the uncertain attempts of cartographers to represent particular sounds orthographically. The modern village name Khatbol, phonetically [xat^mbol], is sometimes used as a language name. This often alternates on maps and in published sources between Katbol and Hatbol. And there are cases where apparent typographical errors have been incorporated in published sources as part of a language name, e.g. Netenesel (Tryon 1972:55) for the former village of Metenesel, which was taken to represent yet another alternative name for the Naman language. In yet other cases, a local place name has been mistaken as the name for a language. For example, Deacon (1934:715) referred to the Neve‘ei language as Mwetelang, but it turns out that this was actually the name of one of the local hamlets that had been abandoned after the depopulation of the interior in the early twentieth century.

Because there has been such a confusing array of different names used to refer to different languages in central Malakula, the following summary is presented to enable readers to make sense of a mass of seemingly confusing information which appears in print as well as in local tradition:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Language referred to ...</i>
Bangasak	Umbruul, Mbruul, Seler
Bangsa‘	Umbruul, Mbruul, Seler
Dirakh	Dirak
Hatbol	Avava, Vava
Katbol	Avava, Vava
Lambumbu	Neve‘ei, Sang
Langalang	Naman
Lëngalëng	Naman
Lingarakh	Niverver
Litzlitz	Naman
Mae	Dirak
Maraakhus	Tape
Maragus	Tape
Marakus	Tape
Metenesel	Naman
Mwetelang	Neve‘ei
Navava	Avava
Nesan	Niverver
Netenesel	Naman
Nevwervwer	Niverver
Niviar	Nititta
Nivivti	Vivti
Numbuwul	Umbruul, Mbruul, Seler
Nesa‘an	Niverver
Sakan	Niverver
Tisvel	Avava, Vava
Vanakh	Vivti
Viar	Nititta
Vinmavis	Neve‘ei, Sang
Voroka	Avava, Vava
Werik	Nivat
Worik	Nivat

1.5 Naman linguistic background

The Naman language is a member of the very large Oceanic subgroup of the much larger Austronesian language family. Within this subgroup, Naman belongs to the Central Vanuatu grouping of languages (Map 2), which includes all of the languages of Malakula, as well as the languages of southern Pentecost, Ambrym, Paama, Epi, the Tongoa-Shepherds Islands and the northern part of Efate (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002:112–114). This once included possibly as many as 60 separate languages, though language shift—most notably on Malakula—has reduced this to about 35 actively spoken languages today.

The closest known relative of Naman appears to be Neve‘ei (or Sang). These two languages share many lexical,¹⁸ phonological and structural features. However, when speakers of Neve‘ei hear recorded texts in Naman, they are typically unable to understand more than a few snippets of what is said, so the two are clearly not mutually intelligible. Interestingly, older speakers of Neve‘ei, who are more likely to have at least a partial passive understanding of some other Malakula languages such as Larëvat, Avava, V‘ënen Taut or Northeast Malakula, are more likely to be able to make some headway in understanding recorded texts in Naman.

By way of contrast, there appear to be substantial discontinuities between Naman and Neve‘ei and both the Larëvat and Northeast Malakula languages. On the basis of a limited amount of lexical and grammatical data from Larëvat that has been collected by the present writer, this language appears to subgroup with the V‘ënen Taut language of the Big Nambas people of northwestern Malakula, as well as the Tape language. The closer affiliations of the Northeast Malakula language are not known at this stage, though it does appear to differ quite substantially from the suggested V‘ënen Taut-Larëvat-Tape grouping. In the complete absence of published information on Rutan and Gëlo, as well as Niverver,¹⁹ it is not possible to say anything at this stage about the nature of the relationship between Naman and these neighbouring languages.

Typologically, Naman exhibits many of the features that are commonly encountered in Oceanic languages, as presented in Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:34–53). In general, however, the languages of Malakula are substantially less conservative than many of the languages of the Northern Vanuatu grouping such as the Northeast Ambae language (Hyslop 2001:23), as well as other Central Vanuatu languages such as Nakanamanga (Schütz 1969).

Naman has a phonemically contrastive schwa, which represents an innovation from the reconstructed five-vowel system of Proto Oceanic (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002:65). The presence of schwa represents a significant point of contrast even with its closest relative, Neve‘ei, though distinctive schwas are quite widely distributed in other languages of north-central Malakula, including Northeast Malakula, Tape and Larëvat. Naman has completely lost the separate series of labiovelars reconstructed for Proto Oceanic (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002:63), though the original series has again been retained in closely related Neve‘ei.

Naman is substantially less complex morphologically than some other Central Vanuatu languages. The inflectional prefixation of verbs exhibits much less morphotactic complexity than we find in V‘ënen Taut and Tape, where several orders of prefixed categories can be expressed with verbs. Naman verbs also lack any mood-related patterns of root mutation such as we find in Paamese and some other Central Vanuatu languages (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002:44). In keeping with a widespread tendency in Oceanic languages, negation in Naman is marked discontinuously with an initial prefixed element and an associated suffixed element (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002:51–52).

Naman maintains the widespread Oceanic distinction between direct (and typically inalienable) possession and indirect (and typically alienable) possession (Lynch, Ross &

¹⁸ Tryon’s (1976) published figure of 57.6% shared lexical cognate sharing between Naman and Neve‘ei is substantially lower than the more correct figure of 66%, in keeping with the general level of inaccuracy reported for the lexicostatistical figures in that volume (Lynch & Crowley 2001:3).

¹⁹ Of course, work that is currently under way by Julie Barbour is expected to fill this gap in the near future.

Crowley 2002:40–41). At the same time, however, there is only a single pattern of indirect possession in Naman, with no separate marking for the possession for edible items, drinkable items and items for general use such as is commonly encountered in the languages of Central Vanuatu (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002:41–42). Naman shares all of these features of both verbal and nominal morphology with neighbouring Neve‘ei.

Syntactically, Naman exhibits characteristics that are widely distributed in other Central Vanuatu languages. It has *SVO* constituent order (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002:49) with serial verb constructions in which verbs exhibit juncture at both nuclear and core layers within the clause (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002:46–48). While there is no passive construction in Naman—a lack that is typical of Central Vanuatu languages—there is a separate impersonal subject prefix which is used when the agent is unspecified. Naman once again shares these typological features with Neve‘ei.

1.6 Previous studies of Naman

Before the appearance of this description, Naman was among the many very poorly documented languages of Malakula (Lynch & Crowley 2001:89–90). The earliest published material on this language was included in Deacon (1934). This is a massive volume containing a great deal of invaluable ethnographic data from many different parts of southern and central Malakula, gathered from people who were still living largely traditional lifestyles in the mid-1920s, or at least from people who had very recent memories of traditional ways.

Deacon became ill and died on Malakula before he was able to complete his work (Crowley 2001), but his original field notes were edited by an anthropologist and published posthumously. Deacon spent only a limited amount of time among Naman speakers, but the published volume did include four short texts in Naman with translations into English (Deacon 1934:613–614, 734–736),²⁰ as well as a certain amount of cultural vocabulary scattered throughout the text, especially on pages 104–107, 109, 456–460, 491–497, 512–558 and 638–639. Although this Naman data was written by a gifted anthropologist, it was recorded without the benefit either of extensive training in phonetics²¹ or extended contact with the language, so we find spellings such as *hambut* for [xam^mbət] ‘pale-skinned spirit’ and *atrhöl* for [atxəl] ‘they dug’. His spellings therefore all need to be checked carefully with modern speakers of the language for accuracy.

Deacon’s original notes have survived and have been archived in the Royal Anthropological Institute in London.²² These notes contain some additional lexical and textual data that was not included in Deacon (1934), as well as some individual sentences. Most of this material was glossed in English, though some was glossed in Neve‘ei, and some in rather anglicised Bislama.

Apart from Deacon’s material, the only other previously published source for Naman is a short wordlist of about 270 items referred to in Tryon (1976) as Litzlitz.²³ While this data

²⁰ There was no attempt at grammatical analysis of these texts.

²¹ This is hardly surprising given that Deacon visited central Malakula at a time when linguistics as a discipline was still in its infancy.

²² Reports that some of his notes have also been archived at the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford University have yet to be checked.

²³ Capell and Layard (1980:102, 112) also include a couple of Naman lexical items gathered during Layard’s fieldwork on Vao and Atchin in the early twentieth century.

is clearly recognisable as Naman, it does contain numerous errors and the list should be treated with caution for comparative purposes.

1.7 The present study

This is essentially a salvage study of a disappearing language. Reference will be made throughout to relevant points of comparison and contrast with Naman's closest relative, Neve'ei, as described in Musgrave (2001) and Crowley (2002a), as well as to other Malakula languages for which I have access to data, whether published or unpublished.

The aim of the present study has been to produce as detailed a description of Naman as is possible under the circumstances. A linguistic fieldworker investigating a moribund language is likely to face particular difficulties, and the present study of Naman has been no exception in this respect. Given that there is no longer a community of active speakers, it was necessary to contrive elicitation and recording sessions in a way that is not always necessary (or desirable) when a language is being used on a daily basis in a living speech community. Formal elicitation of paradigms sometimes tested the patience of the small group of predominantly older speakers who could not imagine why a linguist would want to keep asking for the 'same' word, albeit in different inflectional forms. It sometimes proved difficult to establish the need for exact translations on the basis of my prompts, which from time to time resulted in my notes for a particular verbal paradigm containing randomly scattered realis and irrealis forms, or incorrectly attributed pronominal inflectional categories.

In such circumstances, the analysis of textual data as a complement to elicited data becomes essential. While the analysis upon which this study is based is derived from a mix of material from elicited and textual data, examples have been presented overwhelmingly from narrative texts (though sometimes material that is not relevant to the particular point has been edited out in this description). Elicited examples have only been used in this grammar when they are consistent with patterns that are indicated in the running texts. My corpus of recorded texts comprises twenty-four narratives recorded from ten different speakers—eight male and two female—totalling just under two hours of speech. This has proved to be a sufficiently broad sample for this account of the language to be produced.²⁴ This textual data has been supplemented by the textual data written down by Deacon in 1926, though only after it was carefully checked with modern speakers.

The grammatical data has been supplemented by a collection of lexical data on Naman. The compilation of a Naman vocabulary is still in its early stages, though I have assembled a lexicon containing approximately 1250 items of semantic information, which is organised under about 1150 headwords. It is hoped that this can be expanded substantially and that this information will ultimately be published.

The data on which this study is based was elicited and discussed primarily through the medium of Bislama, though some data was obtained on the basis of prompts in Neve'ei, a language which most speakers of Naman now use much more frequently than their ancestral language. All Naman speakers regularly make use of a variety of other languages, including Bislama and the Uripiv variety of the Northeast Malakula language.

²⁴ By way of comparison, François' (2002:10) quite extensive description of Araki was based on only ten out of a total of fifteen recorded texts, which amounted in total to only about forty minutes of speech.

This grammar is organised along lines that, based on my previous work on other Vanuatu languages, seem to work well for languages of this general type. The morphological behaviour of nouns, including a discussion of the possessive constructions into which they enter, is described first, with the internal structure of expanded noun phrases following. Verbal inflection and derivation is then described, along with a discussion of the expanded verbal complex, including nuclear serial verb constructions. The syntax of simple non-verbal and verbal clauses then follows, with separate discussion of interrogative constructions. Finally, there is a discussion of the various types of complex sentences.

Following the grammar is a sample of textual material in Naman with interlinear glosses and annotations on particular points. The final chapter presents the full set of lexical material that has been recorded in this language. I am well aware that this is by no means a comprehensive lexical collection, but it adds substantially nonetheless to our knowledge of this hitherto almost completely undocumented language.

1.8 The linguistic effects on Naman of language shift

It is well established that as a language undergoes shift, things typically begin to ‘fall apart’ both lexically and structurally in that language, primarily under the influence of whatever happens to be the replacement language. We therefore expect to find evidence of sporadic lexical borrowing, interference in the grammar, and the elimination of grammatical irregularities and complexities in any corpus of data that is recorded for a moribund language.

Mühlhäusler (1996:307–308) argues that most of the vernaculars of the Pacific have begun a process of ‘massive restructuring’ that is destined to result in structural homogenisation in the direction of English (or possibly French). Given that Naman is now clearly in the final stages of language shift, we could perhaps extrapolate from Mühlhäusler’s general statement—as well as our broader experience of language shift elsewhere in the world—with a prediction that the lexicon and grammar of Naman should exhibit massive amounts of influence from other languages.

There are, however, some serious problems with these kinds of views as they have been expressed, at least as applied to Naman. For one thing, it is difficult to say exactly what should be considered as being the replacement language in conducting the search for evidence of these kinds of linguistic interference. English is certainly not the culprit, as I have never heard English used conversationally between any Malakulans in the more than twelve months that I have lived on the island.²⁵ Although Bislama is universally known by adults in central Malakula, as well as being quite widely used for a substantial range of everyday functions, there is no sense in which the former Naman-speaking community has become a Bislama-speaking community.

All speakers of Naman are, in fact, also proficient in languages other than Naman and Bislama, and most Naman speakers now live in villages where other local languages represent the dominant medium of communication. People of Lëngalëng origin who live in Litzlitz but who no longer speak Naman have adopted the Northeast Malakula language

²⁵ Nor do I remember any Malakulans seeking to speak to me in English, except for a couple of brief instances when young males were extremely drunk before Christmas.

as their daily language. Many Naman speakers also make regular use of Neve‘ei, the closest linguistic relative of Naman.

While it is difficult to know which language should be regarded as the replacement language, this is not to say that Naman has not been influenced by other languages as a result of its current moribund status. Given that most speakers of Naman now use their ancestral language only on an occasional basis, it is perhaps not surprising that speakers were not infrequently unsure about the correct way of expressing a particular meaning. My corpus contains some examples which are seemingly at odds with the bulk of my data and which more closely resemble forms in other languages. I have taken such instances for the most part to represent random interference from those languages.

It is rather difficult to know how to deal with such material in this description. For example, the form that I have recorded in Naman as *nakhanien* ‘food’ looks as if it may represent some kind of semi-Namanised version of the Neve‘ei word *na‘anian*. These forms in both languages are nominalisations of the local verbs meaning ‘eat’, which in the case of Naman is *khan*. Nominalisations in Neve‘ei are normally expressed discontinuously by means of the prefix *nV-* and the suffix *-ian*, hence the perfectly regular nominalisation *na‘anian* in that language. In Naman, nominalisations are normally marked only by the suffixed element *-ien* (§3.3.1.2), so we might have expected the word for ‘food’ to be **khanien*, a form which does not appear in my corpus. Given the behaviour of other verbal prefixes in Naman with the verb *khan*, we would have expected a nominalisation based on the prefixed element *na-* to result in the loss of initial *kh* and for the resulting sequence of two vowels to be resolved as long /a:/ (§2.3.5) giving again an unattested form, i.e. **naanien*. The fact *nakhanien* behaves in a way that is doubly irregular in Naman suggests that this may well represent some kind of etymological back formation prompted by speakers’ knowledge of Neve‘ei, which is now their dominant language.

Given that Naman and Neve‘ei were traditionally neighbouring languages, they have obviously had plenty of opportunity for mutual influence, and it is entirely possible—perhaps even probable—that there may have been pre-colonial influence between the two languages resulting in such unexpected forms having become fully established in Naman. However, there are other cases in my corpus of a Neve‘ei-looking form appearing only sporadically alongside a much better attested form that looks rather different. I have chosen to regard such occasional variants as instances of random interference. With an example such as *nakhanien*, where no more genuine-looking form has been attested in my corpus, this has been incorporated into this description exactly as I have recorded it.²⁶

In §2.1.2.2, I suggest that variation between the phonemically contrastive schwa and other vowels in Naman may reflect the influence of etymological pronunciations from other languages, and in §6.1.5 I suggest that the occasional use of the verb *leg* ‘stay’ as an auxiliary marking continuous/habitual aspect may reflect syntactic influence from the Neve‘ei verb *tokh* ‘stay’, which functions productively as an aspectual auxiliary. However, it is impossible to be certain that these features relate specifically to the current moribund status of Naman. After all, Naman was actively spoken by a vibrant speech community alongside other languages over many centuries, and under those circumstances influence between languages is almost inevitable.

²⁶ In any case, the nominalised form of ‘eat’ for ‘food’ exhibits minor morphological irregularities in other languages of central Malakula, so *nakhanien* may still be a perfectly legitimate Naman form in spite of its morphological oddness.

While there is some evidence of possible influence from other languages on Naman, we are in the fortunate position of having access to a significant corpus of material in Naman that was gathered nearly eighty years ago at a time when Naman was still an actively spoken language. As pointed out in §1.3, Deacon visited the area in 1926 and gathered sufficient lexical data, as well as sentences and texts, that it is possible to compare the patterns of my own corpus with those indicated by his own data. However, apart from indications that a phonological change of /aʔa/ to /a:/ affected the language over the intervening period, there is no evidence of structural change having taken place. Thus, today's language looks structurally very much like the language as it was spoken before its speakers abandoned their traditional villages.

Evidence of influence from Bislama, of course, is much easier to recognise, given that the etymological sources of most forms are either English or French. There is certainly some lexical influence from Bislama, with indigenous words such as *matërvarëkh* 'old man' and *numal* 'chief' often appearing in my corpus as *olfala* and *jif* respectively. It should be pointed out, however, that such borrowing is probably no more common in my Naman corpus than in textual corpora that I have recorded in other Vanuatu languages, i.e. Erromangan (or Sye), Ura, Paamese, Neve'ei and Avava.

There are only three areas of the grammar of Naman where it could be said that influence from Bislama has been extensive: the expression of sequence in narrative discourse, the expression of subordinate clauses of time, and the expression of 'but' clauses. *Taim* has overwhelmingly replaced the indigenous form *nelmu* as the subordinator marking time clauses (§6.5.1.1) in my corpus. While the Bislama form *ale* is not the sole marker of a sequential relationship between events in narrative discourse, this represents by far the most commonly used strategy (§6.6.4). Finally, coordinate clauses linked by *but* in English are commonly expressed using the Bislama subordinator *be* (§6.4).

These observations mean that the clause-internal structure of Naman has been wholly resistant to influence from Bislama. While there is evidence for Bislama influence at higher levels of structure, this reflects for the most part the same kinds of influence that we typically find in actively-spoken Vanuatu languages. I would argue, therefore, that Mühlhäusler's claims about the influence of European structural patterns on Vanuatu languages are naive and do not stand up to empirical scrutiny.

2 *Phonology*

In this chapter, forms are transcribed by means of symbols that are based largely on those of the International Phonetic Alphabet. The conventions that have been adopted for the orthographic representation of words in Naman are set out in §2.5 and these spellings will be used in the remainder of this study.

2.1 Segmental contrasts

2.1.1 Consonants

Table 1: Naman consonants

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Plain obstruents		t	c	k
Prenasalised obstruents	b	d	j	g
Fricatives	v	s		ʃ
Nasals	m	n		ŋ
Lateral		l		
Rhotic		r		
Glides	w		y	

The inventory of consonant contrasts for Naman is set out in Table 1. Contrast between various pairs of phonetically similar consonants can be established by means of the following minimal and sub-minimal pairs:

/t/ and /d/	/toro/	‘old’
	/doro/	‘white-throated pigeon’
/k/ and /g/	/nikəj/	‘whitewood species’
	/igər/	‘it fell from above’
	/kəluə/	‘you will shoot it’
	/gəlo/	‘(s)he looked’
/t/ and /s/	/təɣ/	‘(s)he took it’
	/səɣ/	‘(s)he poked it’

/c/ and /s/	/bəcbəc/	‘break to pieces’
	/bəsɓəs/	‘(s)he spoke’
/c/ and /j/	/cəbən/	‘his/her grandfather’
	/jəbən/	‘his/her finger/toe’
/s/ and /j/	/səl/	‘(s)he entered’
	/jəl/	‘(s)he sewed it’
/t/ and /c/	/təɣ/	‘(s)he took it’
	/cəɣən/	‘to (person)’
/l/ and /r/	/laye/	‘to the bush’
	/raye/	‘above’

The consonant inventory of Naman is somewhat simpler than those of most of its neighbouring languages. The relative simplicity of this consonant system lies in the following observations:

- In marked contrast to the neighbouring languages to the south and southwest (Neve‘ei, Avava) and to the north (Northeast Malakula), there is no evidence in Naman for a separate series of labio-velar consonants.¹ This lack of labio-velars in Naman is shared with the neighbouring languages to the west (Larëvat, V’ënen Taut), as well as Niverver to the southeast.
- Despite the geographical proximity of Naman to the V’ënen Taut language, the typologically unusual linguo-labials found in that language (Fox 1979:1–2), sometimes also known as apico-labials, are completely lacking in Naman. Although such segments are widely distributed in northern and northwestern Malakula (Maddieson 1989), their most southerly extension seems to be the V’ënen Taut language area, with no evidence for such sounds in the immediately adjacent Larëvat and Tape languages.
- In the neighbouring Avava and Niverver languages to the south and southeast and in the Northeast Malakula language to the north, there are typologically rather unusual contrastive bilabial trills. Such segments are again completely lacking in Naman. In Northeast Malakula, however, McKerras (2000) indicates that originally contrastive bilabial trills are currently merging with plain bilabials. The neighbouring Neve‘ei and Larëvat languages, as well as Tape, are similar to Naman in that there is no evidence at all for bilabial trills.
- The contrast between the alveolar trill /r/ and the retroflex flap /ɽ/ that is found in Northeast Malakula is lacking in Naman. Naman shares this feature with all of its other immediate neighbours, though there are languages spoken elsewhere in Malakula in which there is a contrast of the same kind that has been described for Northeast Malakula, e.g. Unua-Pangkumu to the south of Niverver and Nese from the Matanavat area.

¹ Tryon (1976) includes a handful of Naman forms transcribed with labio-velars, but these all appear to involve errors of transcription.

- Naman exhibits a significant point of contrast with Neve‘ei with its lack of a glottal stop. While this contrasts as a high-frequency consonant in Neve‘ei,² there is only a single word in my Naman corpus which contains this segment, [aʔa] ‘yes’. This is an interjection, and on this basis alone may be expected to behave exceptionally in its phonological behaviour. The lack of a glottal stop is a feature that Naman shares with all of its neighbours apart from Neve‘ei.
- Finally, Naman lacks the glottal fricative /h/ that is present in languages such as Neve‘ei and Avava.

A noteworthy feature of the Naman consonant inventory is the absence of a plain equivalent of the prenasalised obstruent /b/. However, this feature is not unique to Naman—Neve‘ei (Crowley 2002a:638) behaves similarly, as apparently do Larëvat and Niverver. In other neighbouring languages such as Avava and Northeast Malakula, however, /p/ is well attested as a segment.

While the plain velar stop /k/ contrasts in Naman with both the prenasalised voiced stop /g/ and the velar fricative /ɣ/, it has a somewhat restricted distribution in that it is attested in only a couple of lexical roots, i.e. /nikəj/ ‘tree species’ and /ləktər/ ‘old woman’. In marked contrast to its rarity within lexical roots, /k/ is attested morpheme-initially in a number of high-frequency grammatical items, including the independent pronouns /kine/ ‘I’ and /kamem/ ‘we (pl. excl.)’ (§3.1), as well as the verbal prefix /kə-/ ‘second person singular irrealis’ (§4.1.1). This differential pattern for the distribution of /k/ between lexical and grammatical items is a feature that is also shared with Neve‘ei (Crowley 2002a:639). In the Larëvat language, /k/ is extremely rare in both lexical and grammatical items.

The plain obstruents /t/ and /k/ are realised as voiceless unaspirated stops at the alveolar and velar points of articulation respectively. The segment represented in Table 1 as /c/ is realised as the voiceless affricates [ts] and [tʃ] in free variation intervocally, while it is realised invariably as [tʃ] elsewhere:

/necən/	[netʃən ~ netsən]	‘his/her excrement’
/cigalən/	[tʃi ^h galən]	‘his/her rib’
/iyəc/	[iyətʃ]	‘(s)he killed it’
/bəcbəc/	[^m bətʃ ^m bətʃ]	‘break’

The prenasalised obstruents /b/, /d/ and /g/ are pronounced as stops with preceding homorganic nasals. The stop elements are voiceless word-finally and before word-medial unvoiced consonants. In other environments (i.e. initially, intervocally and medially before voiced consonants), however, the stop elements are fully voiced. Thus:

/babar/	[^m ba ^m bər]	‘pig’
/bələs/	[^m bələs]	‘tree species’
/libay/	[li ^m bax]	‘dog’
/na:b/	[na: ^m p]	‘fire’
/jəbli/	[ⁿ tʃə ^m bli]	‘tree species’
/demes/	[ⁿ demes]	‘devil’

² While /ʔ/ is clearly a separate phoneme in Neve‘ei, it is phonotactically restricted almost exclusively to appearing word-finally after the vowel /a/, and word-medially between like vowels.

/nadəl/	[na ⁿ d.l]	‘egg’
/midag/	[mi ⁿ da ⁿ k]	‘puzzle tree’
/medemed/	[me ⁿ deme ⁿ t]	‘it is raw’
/gorti/	[ⁿ gorti]	‘last’
/iget/	[i ⁿ get]	‘we (pl. incl.)’
/bigvar/	[^m bi ⁿ kfar]	‘ankle rattle tree’
/aɣug/	[aɣu ⁿ k]	‘you (sg.)’

Where there is a preceding consonant which is itself a heterorganic nasal, there is no homorganic prenasalisation associated with the voiced stop. With other preceding consonants, however, there is homorganic prenasalisation. Thus:

/lidumdum/	[li ⁿ dumdum]	‘whale’
/nemenbaŋ/	[nemenbaŋ]	‘man’s name’
/nemasinbatel/	[nemasinbatel]	‘devil’s name’
/mengore/	[mengore]	‘black flying fox’
/atdelaŋan/	[at ⁿ delaŋan]	‘they did not know’
/bəlbəlvuroɣ/	[^m bəl ^m bəlvurox]	‘parrotfish species’

The segment represented in Table 1 as /j/ is realised as [ns] or [ntʃ] in free variation non-initially, while word-initially it is realised invariably as [ʰtʃ]. Thus:

/lejlej/	[lenslens ~ lentʃlentʃ]	‘broken dead coral’
/mejan/	[mensan ~ mentʃan]	‘(s)he looked for it’
/jous/	[ʰtʃous]	‘six’

Sequences of /n/ + /s/ which arise over a morpheme boundary contrast with intramorphemic /j/ in the kinds of free variation that are encountered. Thus, while phonetic [ns] alternates freely with [ntʃ] in the monomorphemic form /mejan/ ‘(s)he looked for it’, giving [mensan ~ mentʃan], the sequence [ns] in the morphologically complex form /sə-mən-si/ ‘(s)he did not drink it’ is invariably realised as [ns]. Thus, [səmənsi] does not alternate with *[səməntʃi].

The arguments for treating the prenasalised obstruents and the phonetically complex segment /j/ as single phonemic units are basically the same as those that apply in a number of other Malakula languages. It is stated in §2.2 that Naman roots can begin and end only with single consonants. Since the phonetic sequences [^mb], [ⁿd], [ⁿg] and [ʰtʃ] freely appear at the beginnings and ends of words, treating these as phonemic clusters would involve a substantial modification to this statement of the phonotactics. The statement of the intervocalic clustering possibilities is also simplified by this kind of analysis in that we need to allow only for two-member root-internal consonant clusters, with no need to make any provision for three- or four-member clusters that would be called for if these sequences were to be treated as phonemically complex.

The segment /ɣ/ is realised as a voiced velar fricative intervocalically and between a voiced consonant and a following vowel, while it is realised as the corresponding voiceless fricative elsewhere. We therefore encounter allophonic variation such as the following:

/ʎaun/	[xaun]	‘south wind’
/bəlieʎ/	[^m bəliex]	‘banded rail’
/botʎorən/	[^m botxorŋ]	‘his/her buttocks’
/ba:ʎe/	[^m ba:ʎe]	‘shark’
/bəʎɔc/	[^m bəʎɔtʃ]	‘(s)he sat with knees together’

The segment /v/ is realised as a labio-dental fricative with voicing governed by the same generalisations made above for /ʎ/, except that word-finally it is realised as a voiceless bilabial stop [p] in free variation with [f]. In syllable-final position within a word, /v/ is realised as [v] in free variation with [p] before a voiced consonant, and as [f] in free variation with [p] before a voiceless consonant. Thus:

/vere/	[fere]	‘outside’
/savay/	[savax]	‘one’
/bulvus/	[^m bulvus]	‘bird species’
/iv/	[ip ~ if]	‘(s)he went’
/nivtivət/	[niptivət ~ niftivət]	‘butterfly’
/natutuvni/	[natutupni ~ natutuvni]	‘coconut crab’
/nevoro/	[nep ⁿ doro ~ nev ⁿ doro]	‘woman’

Word-final sequences of /vəm/ are sometimes pronounced as [vəm], though this pronunciation often alternates with [pŋ], i.e. a voiceless bilabial stop followed by a syllabified bilabial nasal. Thus:

/ʎavəm/	[xavəm ~ xapŋ]	‘your friend’
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The fricative /s/ is realised as a voiceless post-alveolar grooved fricative in all environments. However, when /s/ is immediately preceded by /t/, a situation which arises only over morpheme boundaries, the fricative is alternately realised as [ʃ]. Thus:

/sesar/	[sesar]	‘it blew’
/səbətʃi/	[sə ^m bətʃi ~ sə ^m bətʃi]	‘(s)he did not cut it’

The free variation between [s] and [ʃ] just described means that the phonetic realisation of the phonemic sequence /ts/ optionally overlaps with the phonetic realisation of /c/ as described above. We therefore need to make provision for an optional morphophonemic alternation between /t/ + /s/ and /c/ (§2.3). Thus, /sə-bət-si/ ‘(s)he cut it’ can be analysed as being underlyingly /səbətʃi/, while appearing on the surface as /səbətʃi/.

The glide /w/ is pronounced with simultaneous approximation towards the passive articulators involving the lips and the back of the tongue, and /y/ is realised as the palatal glide represented as [j] in the standard IPA symbols. The nasals /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/ are all articulated as voiced nasals with bilabial, alveolar and velar articulation respectively. The lateral /l/ is invariably pronounced as a voiced alveolar lateral, while the rhotic /r/ is realised as a voiced alveolar flap [ɾ]. As will be shown in §2.1.3, word-final nasals and /l/ appearing after schwa in a definable set of environments can be pronounced as syllabified consonants with the underlying schwa being deleted. We therefore encounter pronunciations such as the following:

/noɣutən/	[noɣutɳ]	‘its base’
/nəverən/	[nəverɳ]	‘his/her arm’
/dalən/	[ⁿ dalɳ]	‘his/her leg’
/nadəl/	[na ⁿ dɪ]	‘egg’
/itəl/	[itɪ]	‘three’

A number of the allophonic statements in the preceding discussion make reference to word-final position as a conditioning factor. These statements are accurate insofar as they apply to words pronounced in isolation, or to words at the end of an utterance. However, when a word appears utterance-medially in continuous speech, segments in word-final position are often realised in the same way allophonically as if they appear word-medially. Thus, while the statements above indicate that the segments /v/ and /ɣ/ are phonetically devoiced word-finally, they are often voiced when the following word begins with a vowel or a voiced consonant. Compare, therefore, the following:

/veditay/	[ve ⁿ ditax]	‘Veditakh (village)’
/veditay air/	[ve ⁿ ditay air]	‘people of Veditakh’

The segment /v/ is also described above as optionally having a stop pronunciation word-finally. However, when a word ending in this segment is followed by a word beginning with a vowel, it is very likely to be pronounced as [v]. Thus:

/iv/	[ip ~ if]	‘(s)he went’
/iv aim i/	[iv aim i]	‘(s)he went home’

Similarly, when a word-final prenasalised obstruent appears utterance-medially before a word beginning with a voiced segment, it often has a voiced realisation. Thus:

/nog/	[no ^ŋ k]	‘it finished’
/nog iar/	[no ^ŋ g iar]	‘it finished there’

2.1.2 Vowels

Table 2: Naman vowels

	Front	Mid	Back
High	i i:		u u:
Mid	e	ə	o
Low		a a:	

Naman has an inventory of six contrasting short vowels and three long vowels, as set out in Table 2. Only the high and low vowels have corresponding long forms, with the three mid vowels having only short forms.

The vowel inventory of Naman differs from that of neighbouring Neve‘ei and Avava in that there is a contrastive schwa in Naman which is not evident in either of these languages. Phonemically contrastive schwa, however, is quite widely distributed among other languages of central Malakula, being encountered in V‘ënen Taut (Fox 1979:1), Northeast Malakula (McKerras 2000) and Larëvat.

Having a restricted set of long vowels with low functional load is a feature which Naman shares with neighbouring Avava and Northeast Malakula. I have found no evidence for a contrast in vowel length in the Larëvat language. Similarly, in Neve‘ei there are no underlying contrasting long vowels (Crowley 2002a:638), though sequences of identical short vowels over certain kinds of morpheme boundaries are sometimes realised superficially as long vowels. Thus /utne + im/ ‘only here’ in Neve‘ei is often realised as [utne:m], in contrast with /utnen/ (phonetically [utnen]) ‘if’.

2.1.2.1 Peripheral short vowels

Contrasts between the five short peripheral vowels in Naman are indicated by the following contrasting pairs:

/i/ and /e/	/ivis/ /ives/	‘how many’ ‘four’
/u/ and /o/	/yuv/ /yov/	‘(s)he blew it’ ‘(s)he planted it’
/e/ and /a/	/delən/ /dalən/	‘his/her voice’ ‘his/her leg’
/o/ and /a/	/iroy/ /iray/	‘(s)he cleared the garden site’ ‘it grew’

Vowels in Naman for the most part have phonetic values that closely approximate to the standard IPA values for these symbols. Thus, /i/ appears phonetically as [i], /u/ appears as [u] and /a/ appears as [a]. However, the mid vowels /e/ and /o/ often have markedly tense realisations, even in closed syllables where we might ordinarily expect to find relatively lax allophones. Because these tense allophones of /e/ and /o/ sound phonetically rather close to the high vowels /i/ and /u/, there has often been some inconsistency in the recording of mid vowels by different observers, or even by the same observer at different times. For instance, Deacon’s unpublished fieldnotes from 1926 and Tryon (1976) include representations that point to the following forms, which are at variance with my own data:

Deacon	Tryon (1976)	My data	
/liv/	/liv/	/lev/	‘give’
/merin/	/mirin/	/meren/	‘tomorrow’
/nivit/	/nevit/	/nevet/	‘stone’

While it is possible that these inconsistencies may be due simply to recorder error,³ it is also possible that interference phenomena may be at work here, resulting in some genuine variation in the data.⁴ In the various neighbouring languages which differ from Naman

³ I am not being ungracious in my observations about other observers here. Earlier and later versions of my own fieldnotes also contain a number of instances of similar sorts of inconsistencies involving these vowels.

⁴ Even after the most careful of transcriptions, I am convinced that there is definitive evidence of some genuine variation between different speakers with at least some words. Deacon’s spellings, for example, point to alternation between /imis/ and /imes/ ‘die’, and while most speakers who I have recorded say /imes/ ‘die’, one of them unambiguously says /imis/.

speakers now use as their primary languages, the mid vowels typically have the lax allophones [ɛ] and [ɔ] respectively in closed syllables, and the more tense allophones [e] and [o] in open syllables. In Naman, however, the mid vowels /e/ and /o/ are realised in all syllable types as raised tense vowels. Thus, while a phonetic form such as [imes] ‘die’ (phonemically /imes/) is possible according to this statement in Naman, such a phonemic form in other languages would automatically be pronounced as [iməs]. The higher (and more tense) pronunciation of [imes], under the influence of primary-language patterns, may then be reinterpreted phonemically as containing the higher vowel (i.e. /imis/) and the word’s pronunciation may then sporadically shift to [imis] to fit with this phonemic reassignment.

2.1.2.2 Schwa

The contrast between schwa and the peripheral short vowels is very well established in Naman, in the form of numerous pairs such as the following:

/ə/ and /a/	/bər/	‘(s)he broke it’
	/bɑr/	‘if’
	/səvələsi/	‘(s)he did not bake it’
	/səvalesi/	‘(s)he did not come’
	/ɣən/	‘to it’
	/ɣɑn/	‘(s)he ate it’
/ə/ and /e/	/iməs/	‘it is cooked’
	/imes/	‘(s)he died’
	/bəle/	‘(s)he accompanied him/her’
	/bele/	‘(s)he chased him/her’
	/vələs/	‘it changed’
	/vələs/	‘(s)he baked it’
	/isəl/	‘(s)he went torch-fishing’
	/isel/	‘it flew’
/ə/ and /i/	/bərav/	‘they (dl.) will go’
	/birav/	‘yam variety’
	/məje/	‘star’
	/mijin/	‘trevally’
/ə/ and /u/	/jəmjəm/	‘(s)he thought’
	/jumjum/	‘(s)he cut down trees’
/ə/ and /o/	/iŋət/	‘many’
	/iŋot/	‘it is blunt’
	/səvsəv/	‘(s)he grated it’
	/sov/	‘it is rotten’
	/səɣɑr/	‘it is lost’
	/soɣɑn/	‘(s)he pushed it’

Although there are some phonotactic restrictions on the distribution of schwa (§2.2), this is a very high-frequency vowel in Naman. It is the third most common vowel in my corpus after /a/ and /e/, accounting for nearly 18% of all vowels in the lexicon. It is not uncommon for roots to contain only schwas, e.g. /bər/ ‘break’, /bəyət/ ‘inside’, /vərəyəs/ ‘call to’. Inflected or derived words also fairly frequently contain long sequences of syllables containing schwas one after the other. For example:

/mət-sə-ləŋləŋ-ər-si/
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-NEG-leave-3PL-NEG
 ‘we (pl. excl.) did not leave them’

However, my corpus also provides substantial evidence for sporadic variation between schwa and any of the short peripheral vowels in forms such as /bəg/ and /big/ ‘tie’, /ivən/ and /ivun/ ‘full’, /iməs/ and /imes/ ‘cooked’, /icəy/ and /icoy/ ‘exist’, and /yəl/ and /yal/ ‘dig’. Both Tryon’s (1976) published wordlist and Deacon’s unpublished fieldnotes from 1926 also reveal the same kinds of uncertainties involving words containing schwas. Some items appear in my own notes with more than one peripheral vowel in alternation with schwa, e.g. /usər ~ usur ~ usar/ ‘like’.

There are several possible explanations for this kind of variability affecting schwa in the Naman corpus:

- Under normal processes of change before Naman became a moribund language, schwa may have already been showing signs of instability. Such a suggestion is consistent with the fact that the same kind of variability was recorded in Deacon’s notes from 1926 at a time when Naman was still an actively spoken language. In this scenario, the present variability would simply represent the initial stages of an incipient change in the vowel system whereby schwa is being lost and the current six-way vowel contrast is being replaced with the five-vowel system that is very widely distributed in Oceanic languages, and which is found in neighbouring languages such as Neve‘ei and Avava. It is suggested in §2.4 that Neve‘ei may once have had schwa and that it has subsequently lost it, reverting to a five-vowel system. If this is correct, then perhaps this description of Naman has recorded this language at a time when a similar shift was just beginning in this language.
- Schwa may once have been more stable than at present, but as the language has become moribund, pressure from schwa-less Neve‘ei—which most speakers of Naman now use as their primary language—has resulted in some sporadic phonological interference from that language. Many words containing schwa in Naman have clearly recognisable cognates in Neve‘ei, with correspondences such as Naman /bəyət/ and Neve‘ei /buyut/ ‘inside’, or Naman /ivən/ ‘full’ and Neve‘ei /vun/. Schwas in Naman generally do not vary randomly with other vowels. Rather, the variation is typically in the direction of cognate vowels in Neve‘ei, which is consistent with the idea that phonological interference from that language may be involved.
- There may once have been some geographical variation in the Naman-speaking area with respect to the distribution of schwa and other vowels, with some dialects showing greater evidence of schwa and other dialects exhibiting vocalism closer to that of Neve‘ei. With the abandonment of the original

villages and the resultant mixing of the remnant population, any original geographical variation may have been levelled in the form of the kind of free variation between schwa and other vowels that we find in the Naman corpus today.

- Schwa, being a central vowel, may be phonetically inherently more variable than vowels articulated on the periphery of the vowel area, leading to greater opportunities for simple transcription errors on the part of linguists. Given that Naman is no longer actively spoken, opportunities to hear conversational language are almost non-existent, so any transcription errors in low-frequency items are unlikely to be corrected by exposure to the same items appearing in spontaneous speech.

These explanations are not mutually exclusive, and it is possible that several factors may be involved at the same time. What this means, of course, is that there may be an element of phonemic uncertainty about some lexical forms in this study, particularly when dealing with low frequency items. This should be kept in mind when attempting phonological comparison between languages, or when carrying out historical phonological reconstruction (§2.4).

In addition, although schwa represents a major element within the vowel inventory of Naman, it differs from the peripheral vowels in that it alone undergoes optional deletion within roots in certain phonologically predictable environments. Before illustrating contexts in which root-internal schwa may be deleted, there is a set of overriding conditions which determine when schwa may *not* be deleted, as follows:

- Schwa cannot be deleted in a closed non-final syllable. In order to be eligible for deletion it must be followed within a root by just a single consonant. It can therefore never be deleted in a form such /bəlbəlvuroŋ/ ‘parrotfish species’ in the word-medial syllable, since this would result in a three-member consonant cluster, i.e. */bəlblvuroŋ/.
- When a schwa is followed by a single consonant, it may be deleted only when the preceding and following consonants are not identical. This restriction means that schwa deletion cannot apply with forms such as /bəbale/ ‘tree species’ or /vəvən/ ‘his sister’ to produce geminate consonants such as */bbale/ and */vvən/.
- Schwa cannot be deleted in an initial syllable between any consonant and a following stop. This accounts for the invariant retention of schwa in forms such as /bətəv/ ‘with’ and /vətmas/ ‘(s)he laughs’. Thus: */btev/, */vtmas/. However, such forms can undergo schwa deletion if inflected prefixed material results in such clusters no longer appearing word initially. Thus: /nə-vətmas/ ‘I laugh’ can be pronounced as [nəvtmas].
- Schwa cannot be deleted in a monosyllabic root. Thus, /bər/ ‘break’ does not reduce to */br/. There are, however, some circumstances in which this restriction can be violated, as described below.
- Except between an alveolar stop (/t/ or /d/) followed by /l/, or between a liquid (/l/ or /r/) or a voiceless alveolar consonant (/s/ or /t/) and /n/, a schwa cannot be deleted in the final syllable of a word. Thus, forms such as /idəm/ ‘fall’ and

/nivəl/ ‘moon’ remain invariant and never appear as */idm/ and */nivl/. Again, however, there are some contexts in which this restriction can be violated, as described below.

- Schwa cannot be deleted between a voiced stop and a following non-liquid consonant. Thus, /bəsien/ ‘language’ and /bəɣət/ ‘inside’ cannot be pronounced as */bsien/ and */bɣət/.
- Schwas cannot be deleted in two adjacent syllables at the same time within a root. Thus, even though the schwas in both the first and second syllables /vrəɣəs/ ‘call to’ are eligible for deletion by the general criteria set out in this section, we can delete only the first schwa to give /vrəɣəs/ or the second schwa to give /vrɣəs/, but never both at the same time to give */vrɣəs/.

Subject to these general restrictions, there is a substantial range of specific phonological environments in which root-medial schwa may be deleted in Naman. In particular, we encounter optional schwa-deletion in the following kinds of situations:

- Between a consonant and a following liquid. Thus: /bələs ~ bləs/ ‘tree species’, /bərəvən ~ bravən/ ‘her fibre skirt’, /gəlo ~ glo/ ‘look’, /tələb ~ tleb/ ‘large’, /vələs ~ vləs/ ‘change’. Also, the form /vrəɣən/ ‘spit’ alternates with both /vrɣən/ and /vrəɣən/.
- Between a consonant other than a voiced stop and a following consonant. Thus: /sənen ~ snen/ ‘his/her mother’, /səɣos ~ sɣos/ ‘pierce’, /təvarəɣ ~ tvarəɣ/ ‘small’, /cəɣən ~ cɣən/ ‘to (person)’, /vəsəɣ ~ vsəɣ/ ‘how’, /rəɣən ~ rɣən/ ‘discard’, /teləbe ~ telbe/ ‘go past’, /ləbaləb ~ lbəbaləb/ ‘tell lies’, /ləɣəɣən ~ lɣəɣən/ ‘hang’, /neləjeləj ~ neljeləj/ ‘yam variety’, /ɣəsən ~ ɣsen/ ‘his, her its’.

Some resulting consonant clusters at the beginnings and ends of words may then be subject to syllabification of nasals and liquids, under conditions set out in §2.1.3.

A number of forms are encountered in my corpus overwhelmingly with the schwa deleted according to the generalisations presented above, while with other forms, the schwa is only occasionally deleted. With some low frequency items, my corpus may contain only one or two instances of that particular form. If such a form appears only with an initial consonant cluster, I have assumed that this should be represented phonemically with a schwa between the two consonants and this is how such forms are entered in the lexicon. Thus, in one text that I recorded, there was mention of a place that was pronounced as [fravər], which was phonemicised as /vrəvər/. The presence of a schwa between the initial consonants of the phonetic form was ultimately supported on historical grounds when it was discovered that the same place is known in Neve‘ei as /viravir/.

With a larger sample of spontaneous speech, it might be possible to establish some kind of hierarchy of phonological environments which favour or disfavour schwa-deletion to varying extents. However, given that Naman is no longer an actively spoken language, it would prove extremely difficult to accumulate a sufficiently broad sample of representative speech, especially given that some of the environments in question are encountered only in items that are likely to be of very low frequency. Therefore, no attempt has been made to establish such a hierarchy or to quantify the extent to which schwa-deletion takes place in particular phonological environments.

Although the general restrictions presented above prevent the deletion of schwa in final syllables where this would result in word-final surface consonant clusters, there are some situations in which schwa is occasionally deleted in such contexts. This involves situations in which a monosyllabic vowel-initial word is effectively attached to a preceding word as a clitic. In such situations, a schwa which appears in the final syllable of a root may be considered as being in a non-final syllable for schwa-deletion purposes. Because of the rarity of final-syllable schwa deletion in my corpus, it is impossible to be certain about the precise range of contexts under which this process may take place, though deletion of this segment has been attested in the following specific environments:

(i) Between a verb and a following free pronoun object. In the following example, the sequence /vələs ai/ is subject to reduction to /vəls-ai/:

Ø-ma-vələs (> mavəls) ai Ø-iv i namat
 3SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-change 3SG 3SG:REAL-go GOAL snake
 ‘He used to change himself into a snake.’

(ii) Between a verb and the following serialised directional verb /iv/ ‘go’ (§6.2.1). Thus, the sequence /səl iv/ in the following example can become /sl-iv/:

matərvəɾəy Ø-səl (> sl) Ø-iv i naye sen
 old.man 3SG:REAL-enter 3SG:REAL-go GOAL log POSS:3SG
 ‘The old man entered into his log.’

(iii) Between a noun and the cliticised form /-ay/ of the demonstrative /nay/ (§3.4.3). Thus, the sequence /nivəs nay/ ‘that bow’ can reduce to /nivs-ay/ as in the following example:

Ø-go nivəs-ay (> nivs-ay) sen
 3SG:REAL:grasp bow-DEM POSS:3SG
 ‘He grasped that bow of his.’

Schwa deletion does occasionally take place in final syllables in other contexts as well, which suggests that with a wider range of conversational speech, it may be possible to state the deletion possibilities more broadly. We therefore also encounter examples such as the following, in which the final sequence /rəv/ can be reduced to /rv/:

Ø-ma-rəv (> marv) oltaim
 3SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-run.away always
 ‘She always used to run away.’

Although the discussion so far has dealt only with deletion of schwa within roots, schwas which appear within prefixes may also be deleted under precisely the same sets of conditions. We therefore encounter morphologically complex forms such as the following in which the schwas in prefixes are open to deletion:

/Ø-sə-mour-si ~ smoursi/
 3SG:REAL-NEG-alive-NEG
 ‘it is not alive’

/rə-melili ~ rmelili/
 3DL:REAL-return
 ‘they (dl.) returned’

/təra-v ~ trav/
 1DL.INCL:IRR-go
 ‘let’s go’

However, schwas within prefixes differ from root-medial schwas in that they are exempt from the restriction presented above which prevents deletion from applying when this would result in three-member consonant clusters. This means that we occasionally encounter alternations such as the following, where the resulting sequence of /tsv/ could not arise within a root as a result of schwa deletion:

/at-sə-vale-si ~ atsvaləsi/
 3PL:REAL-NEG-come-NEG
 ‘they did not come’

Also, the general prohibition against the deletion of schwas in adjacent syllables is relaxed with prefixes with the result that, once again, three-member consonant clusters are occasionally produced. Thus:

/kə-sə-mour-si ~ kəsmoursi ~ ksmoursi/
 2SG:IRR-NEG-live-NEG
 ‘you will not live’

/rə-sə-mour-si ~ rəsmoursi ~ rsmoursi/
 3DL:REAL-NEG-live-NEG
 ‘they (dl.) did not live’

2.1.2.3 Long vowels

There is an underlying contrast in Naman between long and short forms of the high vowels /i/ and /u/, as well as the low vowel /a/. None of the mid vowels, however, has an underlying long equivalent. The long high vowels /i:/ and /u:/ are only attested in a handful of words in my corpus: /ni:sə-/ ‘smoke’, /i:s/ ‘bad’, /nu:sə-/ ‘penis’ and /nu:d/ ‘sea worm’. Long /a:/, however, is rather more frequent. Contrast between long and short vowels is illustrated by the following pairs:

/i/ and /i:/	/nisən/	‘her breast’
	/ni:sən/	‘its smoke’
/u/ and /u:/	/nusulu/	‘clothes’
	/nu:sən/	‘his penis’
/a/ and /a:/	/vəsən/	‘(s)he threw it’
	/vəsɑ:n/	‘(s)he did it how’
	/aɣug/	‘you (sg.)’
	/a:ɣus/	‘inland’
	/naribu/	‘house wall’
	/na:ri/	‘cordyline’

In addition to these underlying long vowels, long vowels occasionally arise in Naman over morpheme boundaries with the optional reduction of the schwa-initial perfective modifier /əj/ (§4.3.1.1) to the enclitic /-j/ after words ending in vowels, with compensatory lengthening of the final vowel of the root. We therefore encounter optional derivations such as the following:

/Ø-melili əj/ (> melili:j)
 3SG:REAL-return PERF
 ‘(s)he has returned’

Roots cannot end in /a/ or schwa in Naman (§2.2). However, given that roots can end in the mid vowels /e/ and /o/, the cliticisation of /əj/ with compensatory lengthening of the vowel can result in surface long mid vowels via derivations such as the following, even though there are no underlying long mid vowels in the language:

/kine əj/ (> kine:j)
 1SG PERF
 ‘it is me’

2.1.3 Syllabification

As mentioned in §2.1.2, certain consonant clusters which arise at the beginning and end of a word as a result of schwa-deletion are subject to obligatory phonetic syllabification of a liquid or a nasal. The environments in which syllabification takes place at the ends of words are as follows:

(i) When a root ends in a sequence of an alveolar stop followed by schwa with a final /n/ or /l/, the schwa is obligatorily deleted and the following consonant is regularly syllabified. Thus:

/tetən/	[tetŋ]	‘it is hot’
/itəl/	[itl]	‘three’
/nadəl/	[na ⁿ dl]	‘egg’

Although forms such as these never appear phonetically with schwa, they are treated phonemically as containing this vowel for the simplification that this achieves in the statement of the word-final phonotactics of the language (as no other final consonant clusters are attested), and at no cost to the vowel inventory.⁵

(ii) The alveolar nasal is also syllabified over morpheme boundaries in association with obligatory deletion of schwa in the same phonological environment when the third person singular possessive suffix /-n/ is added to directly suffixed nouns (§3.3.2.1) ending in /tə/, as in the following:

/noyutə-n/	[noyutŋ]	‘its base’
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⁵ In Neve‘ei, phonetically parallel forms such as [tutŋ] ‘hot’ and [itl] ‘three’ are treated phonemically as containing consonant clusters, i.e. /tutn/ and /itl/ respectively, because (a) there is no independently motivated schwa in this language and (b) a limited range of other word-final consonant clusters is also attested.

(iii) When the final syllable of a directly suffixed noun ends in a liquid followed by a schwa, there is alternation in the third person singular inflected form between a syllabic final nasal and a non-syllabic nasal in which the preceding schwa is retained. Thus:

/nəverə-n/	[nəverən ~ nəvern̩]	‘his/her arm’
/dalə-n/	[ⁿ dalən ~ ⁿ dal̩]	‘his/her leg’

(iv) The nasal /m/ also optionally takes on a syllabic articulation word-finally in association with the optional loss of schwa in word-final sequences of /-vəm/. Such situations arise when the possessive suffix /-m/ ‘your’ is added to directly suffixed nouns ending in /və/, and when the second person singular object suffix /-əm/ (§4.1.4) is added to transitive verbs ending in /v/. When the schwa is deleted and the final nasal is syllabified in this way, the segment /v/ is regularly realised phonetically as [p], as noted in §2.1.1. Thus:

/tenivə-m/	[tenivəm ~ tenip̩m]	‘your wife’
/bəravə-m/	[bəravəm ~ bərap̩m]	‘your fibre skirt’
/nə-lev-əm/	[nəlevəm ~ nəlep̩m]	‘I took you’

(iv) In addition to being attached in the phonologically reduced clitic form /-j/ after vowel-final forms as noted in §2.1.2.3, the perfective marker /əj/ can also be cliticised after a form ending in /t/. In such cases, the nasal element of /j/ described in §2.1.1 is phonetically syllabified, as in the following:

/tat-j/	[tat̩s]	‘the place already’
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Syllabification also takes place word-initially when, as a result of schwa-deletion (§2.1.2.2), a liquid appears before another consonant. This can happen with the verbal subject prefix /rə-/ (§4.1.1.2), though it should be noted that there is an additional option to syllabification of the consonant in that the loss of schwa can also be associated with the addition of prothetic /e/. Thus:

/rə-melili/	[rəmelili ~ ɾmelili ~ ermelili]	‘they (dl.) returned’
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Simple syllabification—without the option of vowel prothesis—is also associated with the deletion of schwa within roots as described in §2.1.2.2 when the result is a word-initial sequence of /rC-/ or /lC-/, as in the following:

/Ø-ləbaləb/	[lə ^m balə ^m p ~ l̩ ^m balə ^m p]	‘(s)he told lies’
/Ø-ləyayan/	[ləyayan ~ l̩yayan]	‘(s)he hung it’

Syllabification of the root-initial liquid is also required when schwa deletion results in a three-member word-medial consonant cluster, as happens when a prefix ends in a consonant. Thus:

/at-ləbaləb/	[atlə ^m balə ^m p ~ at̩ ^m balə ^m p]	‘they told lies’
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However, when such verbs receive vowel-final prefixes, there is no syllabification. Contrast the example just presented with the following:

/yə-ləbaləb/	[xələ ^m balə ^m p ~ xəl̩ ^m balə ^m p]	‘you told lies’
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2.1.4 Stress

Stress is assigned to the penultimate syllable in Naman unless the final syllable contains two vowels, in which case it is that syllable which receives stress. When the final syllable contains a long vowel, that vowel also receives stress. Thus:

/neni/	['neni]	'coconut'
/noutiret/	[nou'tiret]	'perspiration'
/nereun/	[ne'reun]	'leaf'
/nuvuγoi/	[nuvu'γoi]	'roof beam'
/delva:t/	[ⁿ del'va:t]	'at midnight'

Syllables containing schwa are treated in the same way as any other vowels for the purposes of stress assignment. This means that schwas can also be stressed, as shown by the following:

/bəγət/	[^m bəγət]	'inside'
/matərvənrəγ/	[matər'vənrəx]	'old men'

A prefix-final schwa is also eligible for stress-assignment in the regular way, as illustrated by the following:

/γə-lis/	['xəlis]	'you saw it'
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Stress is not fixed to a particular syllable of a root in Naman. Thus, when a root receives a suffix that is at least one syllable in length, stress shifts predictably to the right according to the generalisations just presented. Thus:

/bə-mən/	[^m bəməŋ]	'I will drink it'
/bə-sə-mən-si/	[^m bəsə'mənsi]	'I will not drink it'
/γə-lev/	['xələp]	'you took it'
/γə-lev-ər/	[xə'levər]	'you took them'

As indicated in §2.1.3, Naman nasals and liquids all have both non-syllabic and syllabic realisations. Phonetically syllabified liquids and nasals are treated in exactly the same way as ordinary vowels for stress assignment purposes. Thus, the syllable which immediately precedes a word-final syllabified consonant receives stress, as in the following:

/nəverən/	[nə'verŋ]	'his/her arm'
/tenivə-m/	[te'nipm̩]	'your wife'

Although schwas are for the most part treated in the same way as other vowels for stress-assignment purposes, those schwas which are eligible for optional deletion under the conditions set out in §2.1.2.2 are ignored for syllable-counting purposes in stress assignment. Thus, stress is applied to the final syllable of a word when the penultimate syllable contains deletable schwa, as in the following:

/gəlo/	[ⁿ gə'lo]	'(s)he looked'
/γəmir/	[xə'mir]	'left (hand)'
/vəsan/	[fə'san]	'(s)he threw it'

When such forms receive a prefix which consists of a full syllable, the root-syllable containing the schwa is again skipped for syllable-counting purposes and it is the vowel of the prefix that receives stress. Thus:

/kə-gəlo/ [ˈkə^ɰgəlo ~ ˈkə^ɰglo] ‘you will look’

2.2 Phonotactics

Lexical roots in Naman begin overwhelmingly with consonants rather than vowels. There are no words at all attested with initial /o/ and there are only very small numbers of words beginning with initial /u/, /a/, /e/ or /ə/.⁶ Apart from a handful of verbs beginning with /u/—/usər/ ‘resemble’, /usus/ ‘ask’, /utbu/ ‘run’ and /uvov/ ‘white’—and a single verb beginning with /e/—/esəy/ ‘not exist’—such forms are exclusively non-lexical items such as pronouns, subordinators, adverbials or particles rather than members of open lexical classes. There is only a single form beginning with schwa—the perfective marker /əj/ (§4.3.1.1)—and this often cliticises to the preceding word with the reduced form /-j/, as noted in §2.1.2.3.

The only vowel that is at all commonly attested at the beginning of lexical roots is /i/. Historically this initial segment originated as a third person singular verbal prefix that has been reanalysed as part of the root with some verbs in Naman (§2.4) and it is shown in §4.1.1 that it is subject to systematic loss in certain morphological environments.

Roots in Naman may begin with any single consonant. While there are words which begin phonetically with two-member consonant clusters, these are best analysed as not representing underlying clusters. Rather, such phonetic sequences fall into one of the following two categories:

- There is a substantial number of words beginning with phonetic [ʰtʃ], which is treated phonemically as the prenasalised affricate /j/ (§2.1.1). If this—and the other prenasalised consonants set out in Table 1—were treated as phonemic clusters, we would need to modify the word-initial phonotactic patterns to allow for just such two-member clusters. The word-final phonotactics are similarly simplified by treating such sequences as unit phonemes. We can also eliminate the need to allow for a restricted set of intervocalic three-member consonant clusters in forms such as /na:jvələ-/ ‘hair’ over and above the wide range of two-member clusters intervocalically.
- Other phonetic clusters in word-initial position arise as a result of the optional elimination of schwa in initial syllables (§2.1.2.2). This process commonly results in phonetic word-initial clusters of two consonants, e.g. /bərəvəm/ [ʰbrapm] ‘your fibre skirt’. Over morpheme boundaries, it is even possible for three-member initial clusters to appear phonetically, e.g. /kə-sə-mour-si/ [ksmoursi] ‘you will not live’.

In root-final position, the only vowels that we find are the non-low and non-central short vowels /i/, /e/, /o/ and /u/. This means that words never end in a long vowel, in schwa, or in the low vowel /a/. However, words end overwhelmingly in consonants rather

⁶ Crowley’s lexicon in Chapter 8 does contain the o-initial place-name Orebev ‘Uripiv’, but this is presumably not a native Naman word – JL

than vowels. The only restriction relating to word-final consonants is that words cannot end in /k/ or in either of the glides /w/ or /y/. However, /k/ is a consonant of restricted distribution anyway, appearing for the most part morpheme-initially in only a handful of grammatical items (§2.1.1). Roots in Naman can end in any of the prenasalised obstruents /b/, /d/ or /g/, which represents a significant point of contrast with Neve‘ei, where we encounter final /d/ but never final /b/ or /g/ (Musgrave 2001:17). It is shown in §2.4 that final /b/ and /g/ in Naman correspond systematically to /m/ and /ŋ/ respectively in Neve‘ei.

A very small proportion of roots in Naman can also end in the two-member consonant phonetic clusters [-tɿ], [-tɿ] and [ʰdɿ], e.g. [itɿ] ‘three’, [mitɿ] ‘thick’, [tetɿ] ‘hot’, [na ʰdɿ] ‘egg’. It is shown in §2.1.3 that such forms represent the surface realisations of final syllables which contain underlying schwa, i.e. /itəl/ ‘three’, /mitəl/ ‘thick’, /tetən/ ‘hot’ and /nadəl/ ‘egg’ respectively. Not only does this kind of analysis simplify the overall statement of the phonotactics of the language by completely eliminating word-final consonant clusters at no cost to the vowel inventory, but a process of schwa deletion (§2.1.2.2) and the associated syllabification (§2.1.3) of a word-final liquid or nasal is called for in any case to account for other derivations over morpheme boundaries.

The vowel-sequencing possibilities within Naman roots are covered by the following generalisations:

- Sequences of the low vowel /a/ followed by any of the mid vowels are prohibited, i.e. */ae/, */ao/.
- Sequences of */eo/ and */oe/ are prohibited.
- Sequences of any like vowels are prohibited.
- Sequences of a long vowel with any other vowel are prohibited.
- Sequences of any vowel and schwa other than /iə/ are prohibited: */aə/, */uə/, */oə/, */eə/.

By these generalisations, therefore, we encounter two-vowel sequences as illustrated in the following words: /degiav/ ‘limpet’, /miel/ ‘red’, /beligio/ ‘pigeon species’, /ius/ ‘rain’, /eabe/ ‘where’, /neim/ ‘house’, /nereun/ ‘leaf’, /air/ ‘they’, /bəlaut/ ‘make noise’, /nuvuyoi/ ‘roof beam’, /noag/ ‘canoe’, /bour/ ‘banana variety’, /minbuis/ ‘bird species’, /tuen/ ‘one’, /buag/ ‘taro’, /duov/ ‘whitewood’.

There is a single exception to the restriction against diphthongs involving schwa in that the sequence /iə/ is commonly attested in forms such as /siəy/ ‘climb’, /tiəy/ ‘pull’, /məsiəy/ ‘sick’ and /niəy/ ‘fish’. It should be noted, however, that this sequence is overwhelmingly attested before word-final /y/, though there is a handful of directly suffixed noun roots ending in /iə/ which can be followed by other consonants, i.e. /netriə-n/ ‘his/her back’ and /miə-g/ ‘my urine’. While word-final sequences of /-ay/, /-oy/, /-uy/, /-əy/ and /-ey/ are all attested in Naman, the lack of attested sequences of final /-iy/ suggests the possibility that sequences of final /-iəy/ might best be treated underlyingly as /-iy/,⁷ with the schwa representing a predictable phonetic element appearing between /i/ and /y/. That is:

/niy/	[niəx]	‘fish’
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⁷ There is historical precedent for this suggestion: the form /niəy/ ‘fish’ derives from Proto Oceanic *na ika – JL

In this description, I have continued to analyse such forms conservatively as involving phonemic sequences of /iə/ in the absence of any corroborating evidence in favour of the alternative solution that the schwa arises simply as a result of a low-level phonetic insertion rule. This kind of solution is certainly consistent with the historical evidence from closely related Neve‘ei, as the form in that language corresponding to Naman /niəʎ/ ‘fish’ is very clearly disyllabic, i.e. /niəʎ/.

Intervocally there can be any single consonant, though /k/ is attested in this position only in the single item /nikəj/ ‘whitewood species’. Two-member intervocalic consonant clusters are frequently attested, though it is impossible to come up with any kind of exceptionless generalisations about what is and what is not permitted given the wide range of clusters that are attested, most of which are attested in only small numbers of words, or even in just a single word.

It should be kept in mind that two-member intervocalic clusters can also arise as a result of the process of optional schwa deletion described in §2.1.2.2. This opens up the possibility that some two-member clusters might actually be separated by an unrealised underlying schwa. Thus, a form such as /nesʎo/ ‘year’, phonetically [nesxo], might be best analysed phonemically as /nesəʎo/, a possibility which is supported by historical evidence given the presence of an additional syllable in the corresponding Neve‘ei form /nesəʎau/. With such restricted access to a larger number of attestations of such forms in natural conversation, it has not been possible to resolve such uncertainties. In the complete absence of evidence of variation between zero and schwa in such forms, I have chosen to represent such forms as involving phonemic consonant clusters.

Those two-member intervocalic clusters which are attested can involve stops followed by fricatives (e.g. /bigvar/ ‘tree species’) and fricatives followed by stops (e.g. /nevoro/ ‘woman’), liquids followed by nasals (e.g. /delʎen/ ‘his/her ear’) and nasals followed by liquids (e.g. /dumleb/ ‘tree species’), stops followed by liquids (e.g. /matro/ ‘old man’) and liquids followed by stops (e.g. /vomalto/ ‘bird species’). The problem is that none of the generalisations just offered apply across the board. Of all of the possible STOP + FRICATIVE sequences, for example, the only attested example involving an initial voiced segment is /-gv-/ (and this is attested in only a single word), and other sequences of this type such as /-bs-/ and /-dʎ-/ are simply not attested.

It may be that the lexical data that has been recorded to date in Naman is simply not sufficiently representative for the full range of phonotactic possibilities to be apparent. A lexical corpus of narrow scope may also not allow us to systematically distinguish between forms which historically are morphemically simple and those which historically are morphemically complex, and it is quite possible that historical morpheme boundaries may produce a wider range of consonant clustering possibilities. However, it is also possible that the phonotactics of Naman may be genuinely messy in this respect. This certainly seems to be a possibility in light of the fact that, even with a broader lexical sample in neighbouring Neve‘ei, it has proved to be similarly difficult to come up with exceptionless phonotactic generalisations (Musgrave 2001:19–20).

No intervocalic clusters of three (or more) consonants are attested in Naman. Of course, the optional schwa deletion rules described in §2.1.2.2 can result in occasional three-member consonant phonetic clusters over morpheme boundaries, e.g. [atsvalesi] ‘they did not come’, but such clusters are always derived as a result of the surface deletion of underlying schwa. The example just presented is therefore treated phonemically as /at-sə-vale-si/.

Roots in Naman are overwhelmingly polysyllabic, with 54.5% of roots being of two syllables in length and 28.5% being trisyllabic. Although as many as 11.5% of roots are monosyllabic, these tend to be either verbs (which often end up as longer words as a result of the addition of inflectional morphology) or uninflected grammatical items, with monosyllabic noun roots being relatively uncommon.

2.3 Morphophonemics

A number of general phonological processes apply to sequences of segments which come together over morpheme boundaries in Naman. Each of these processes will be described below, with references to the relevant sections of the grammar where these processes have an effect.

2.3.1 Consonant degemination

When two identical consonants come together over a morpheme boundary, these undergo systematic degemination to become just a single consonant. The effects of this rule are encountered with a number of subject-mood prefixes which end in /t/ or /r/ (§4.1.1) when the following root begins with /t/ or /r/, as well as with roots ending in /s/ when there is a following suffixed element /-si/ of the negative simulfix (§4.1.2). We therefore encounter derivations such as the following:

/at-təγ > atəγ/
 3PL:REAL-take
 ‘they took it’

/mər-rəŋ > mərəŋ/
 1DL.EXCL:REAL-hear
 ‘we (dl. excl.) heard it’

/Ø-sə-vəles-si > səvəlesi/
 3SG:REAL-NEG-bake-NEG
 ‘(s)he baked it’

2.3.2 T-affrication

Sequences of /t/ and /s/ over morpheme boundaries are resolved as the affricate /c/. Given what was said about the phonetic realisation of the segment /c/ in §2.1.1, it should be clear that this morphophonemic change basically involves a change in phonemic status with no actual phonetic change for the segments involved. We therefore encounter derivations such as the following:

/at-sav > acav/
 3PL:REAL-dance
 ‘they danced’

/Ø-sə-bət-si > səbəci/
 3SG:REAL-NEG-cut-NEG
 ‘(s)he didn’t cut it’

2.3.3 Schwa harmony

Prefix-final schwa optionally harmonises with the first post-consonantal vowel of a verb root. This involves a shift of schwa to /o/ when the root vowel is one of the back vowels /u/ or /o/, and to /e/ with all other root vowels (§4.1.1). Note, therefore, the following optional derivations involving the shift of schwa to /o/:

/kə-γov > ko-γov/
 2SG:IRR-plant
 ‘you will plant it’

/nə-luolu > no-luolu/
 1SG:REAL-vomit
 ‘I vomited’

The following illustrate the optional shift of schwa to /e/:

/nə-ban > neban/
 1SG:REAL-hide
 ‘I hid’

/nə-γəl > ne-γəl/
 1SG:REAL-dig
 ‘I dug it’

/nə-lis > ne-lis/
 1SG:REAL-see
 ‘I saw it’

/nə-delaŋan > nedelaŋan/
 1SG:REAL-not.know
 ‘I don’t know’

When the vowel of the root following a schwa-final prefix is itself a schwa and that schwa is subject to deletion according to the rules set out in §2.1.2.2, a prefix-final schwa harmonises instead with whatever happens to be the following vowel of the verb root. Thus:

/kə-gəlo > ko-gəlo ~ koglo/
 2SG:IRR-look
 ‘you will look’

/bə-bəle > be-bəle ~ beble/
 1SG:IRR-accompany
 ‘I will accompany’

2.3.4 Vowel deletion

This process involves two different changes. Firstly, verbs with roots which begin with /i/ undergo systematic loss of the root-initial vowel when preceded by a prefix that ends in the vowel /a/ (§4.1.1.2). Thus:

/ba-ibəs > babəs/
 1SG:REAL-speak
 'I will speak'

Secondly, any prefix ending in schwa obligatorily loses this vowel before a vowel-initial root. Only a small number of verbs beginning with the vowels /u/ and /e/ which meet the structural conditions for the application of this rule, but we see the effect of this derivation in examples such as the following:

/nə-utbu > nutbu/
 1SG:REAL-run
 'I ran'

/bə-esəɣ > besəɣ/
 3SG:IRR-not.exist
 'it will not exist'

While there is a larger number of verbs beginning with /i/, it is only in the second person singular realis that a preceding prefix ends in schwa (§4.1.1.2), so we find derivations such as the following:

/ɣə-iluŋ > ɣiluŋ/
 2SG:REAL-walk
 'you walked'

2.3.5 Velar fricative deletion

When the velar fricative /ɣ/ is preceded and followed by /a/, the resulting sequence /aɣa/ is optionally reduced to the long vowel /a:/. The structural conditions for the application of this rule are met when a verbal prefix ending in /a/ is added to a verb beginning with /ɣa-, such as /ɣan/ 'eat' and /ɣas/ 'bite'. Note the following optional derivation of this type:

/ka-ɣan > ka:n/
 2SG:IRR-eat
 'you will eat it'

/ba-ɣas > ba:s/
 1SG:IRR-bite
 'I will bite it'

2.4 Historical phonology

I propose to leave a fuller treatment of the historical phonology of Naman until a substantially larger corpus of reliable lexical data has been assembled on all of the neighbouring languages.⁸ However, some preliminary observations will be offered at this stage, particularly relating to a comparison between Naman and its closest relative, Neve‘ei.

It was indicated in §2.1 that the phoneme inventory of Naman differs in a number of significant respects from that of Neve‘ei. In particular:

- Neve‘ei has the glottal consonant phonemes /h/ and /ʔ/, which are absent in Naman.
- Neve‘ei has a separate series of labio-velar consonants (/m^w/, /b^w/ and /v^w/), which are absent in Naman.
- Naman has the long vowels /i:/, /u:/ and /a:/, which are absent in Neve‘ei.
- Naman has /ə/ as a sixth short vowel, which is lacking in Neve‘ei.

There are also several phonotactic differences between the two languages (§2.2). Historical explanations to account for these segmental and phonotactic differences will be offered in this section.

This discussion is based mainly at this stage on the principles of bottom-up reconstruction. I have therefore largely tried to avoid reference to existing higher-level reconstructions that are based on a broader range of languages. Such bottom-up reconstructions provide a good independent test of larger-scale top-down comparative studies. At the same time, however, there are some issues which bottom-up reconstruction alone is unable to resolve, particularly in cases where original conditioning environments have been lost in both Naman and Neve‘ei. In some cases, then, reference has also been made to Proto Oceanic reconstructions, or reconstructions made for some post-Proto Oceanic stage, which have been arrived at independently.

The glottal consonant /h/ has a somewhat unusual distribution in Neve‘ei in that it is attested almost exclusively in word-final position (Musgrave 2001:10). Comparative evidence from Naman indicates that the source for Neve‘ei /h/ is very clearly word-final /*s/, retained as such in Naman, as illustrated by the following correspondences:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/bues/	/nubuah/	‘uncastrated boar, pig’
/vos/	/veh/	‘carry’
/ives/	/ivah/	‘four’
/demes/	/netemah/	‘devil’
/vəles/	/vuluh/	‘bake’
/lis/	/leh/	‘see’

It is clear, however, that word-final /*s/ has by no means always shifted to /h/ in Neve‘ei, as illustrated by correspondences such as the following where we find /s/ in both languages:

⁸ *It is hoped that this historical account will form part of a larger project undertaken by a number of linguists currently working on Malakula languages – JL*

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/nivəs/	/nivis/	‘bow’
/ivis/	/ivis/	‘how many’
/ibəs/	/bus/	‘speak’
/buedes/	/boʏodras/	‘dugong’
/ɣawes/	/ɣawes/	‘emerge’
/ɣas/	/ɣas/	‘bite’

It might be suggested that this /s = s/ correspondence originated from a separate original segment, perhaps /*c/. However, we also find correspondences between Naman /c/ and Neve‘ei /s/ in examples such as the following which point more strongly to /*c/:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/cəber/	/seber/	‘reach’
/cəɣə-/	/saɣan/	‘to (person)’
/cəbecəb/	/subasum/	‘walk with stick’
/ɣəc/	/ɣus/	‘kill’
/necəɣo-/	/nasəɣo-/	‘muscle, meat’

If we assume that the /s = h/ correspondences point to original /*s/ and the /c = s/ correspondences point to original /*c/, then the /s = s/ correspondences remain problematic. Post-divergence borrowing is, of course, a possible explanation.

The glottal stop clearly represents an innovation in Neve‘ei, and this is the only language in central Malakula in which such a segment is found. It derives from earlier intervocalic and word-final /*ɣ/, though apparently only after the vowel /*a/. Word-finally, there is a widespread correspondence of /ɣ = ʔ/ between the two languages when the preceding vowel correspondences point to /*a/. For example:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/meray/	/meraʔ/	‘fly’
/metəɣtoɣ/	/metaʔ/	‘afraid’
/bəlieɣ/	/nibilaʔ/	‘banded rail’
/məsiəɣ/	/mesaʔ/	‘sick’

When the vowel correspondences point to any other preceding vowel, the original velar fricative is retained as such word-finally in Neve‘ei, as illustrated by the following:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/metebəɣ/	/metabuɣ/	‘morning’
/icəɣ/	/toɣ/	‘stay’
/buɣubuy/	/maʔabuɣ/	‘short’

However, these observations about the fate of /*ɣ/ in Neve‘ei are again not completely regular, and we find examples such as the following which point to original word-final /*-aɣ/, yet there has been no shift to /-aʔ/ in Neve‘ei:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/libay/	/libay/	‘dog’
/ləɣ/	/lay/	‘hang’
/esəɣ/	/say/	‘not exist’
/niəɣ/	/niay/	‘fish’

Word-medially, there is again a widespread correspondence of /ɣ = ʔ/ in Naman and Neve‘ei when the preceding and following segments appear originally both to have been /*a/. Thus:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/naɣe/	/naʔai/	‘tree’
/raɣe/	/raʔai/	‘above’
/naɣabues/	/naʔabuah/	‘New Guinea rosewood’
/dabaya-/	/netebaʔa-/	‘belly’
/naɣaj/	/naʔans/	‘fire ant’
/naɣari/	/naʔari/	‘cordyline’
/meleɣəj/	/nemelaʔans/	‘parrotfish’

There is a variety of environments in which the segment /*ɣ/ systematically did not shift to /ʔ/ in Neve‘ei. We therefore find correspondences of /ɣ = ɣ/ as follows:

(i) word-initially, for example:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/ɣaray/	/ɣaraʔ/	‘crawl’
/ɣabət/	/ɣabat/	‘pale-skinned spirit’
/ɣan/	/ɣan/	‘eat’
/ɣas/	/ɣas/	‘bite’
/ɣavə-/	/ɣava-/	‘brother’
/ɣəc/	/ɣus/	‘kill’
/ɣəl/	/ɣal/	‘dig’

(ii) word-medially when preceded and followed by vowels other than /a/, for example:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/bəɣət/	/buɣut/	‘inside’
/buɣurvet/	/buɣurvat/	‘plantar wart’
/muɣub/	/numuɣum/	‘gecko’

(iii) word-medially when the velar fricative appears in a consonant cluster, for example:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/botɣorə-/	/nobotɣor/	‘buttocks, hip’

Another significant phonological difference between Naman and Neve‘ei is the presence of a series of labio-velar consonants in Neve‘ei and the absence of such consonants in Naman. Since labio-velars can be reconstructed as having considerable antiquity (Lynch 2002), Neve‘ei is presumably closer to the reconstructible past in this respect than Naman, though even in Neve‘ei there is some evidence of free variation between labio-velars and plain labials. What appears to be an incipient merger in Neve‘ei has clearly been completed in Naman, though there has generally been some accompanying shift in adjacent vowels. In most cases, there is a correspondence between a front vowel after an original labio-velar in Neve‘ei with a lower or centralised vowel in Naman. For example:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/vale/	/v ^w elem/	‘(s)he came’
/meil/	/nim ^w iyil/	‘cycad’
/məje/	/nim ^w insi/	‘star’
/bər/	/b ^w er/	‘break’
/beligio/	/nib ^w iligio/	‘bird species’
/sabasab/	/seb ^w esam/	‘joke’
/varedog/	/v ^w eradaŋ/	‘tell truth’
/var/	/v ^w er/	‘say’
/natabal/	/naʔateb ^w el/	‘dragon plum’

However, there is a smaller number of examples in which the following vowel is either the same in both languages or is in fact higher in Naman. The preceding vowel in such cases also shows evidence of some kind of shift, though it is impossible to come up with any generalisations at this stage about what the possibilities are. Thus:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/novileŋ/	/nav ^w ilaŋ/	‘fly (n.)’
/namat/	/nem ^w at/	‘snake’
/numin/	/nem ^w en/	‘man’

The partial set of phonemically contrastive long vowels in Naman is clearly an innovation in this language. The source of /u:/ involves sequences of /*uwu/ in which the glide is lost, as indicated by the following correspondences:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/nu:d/	/nuwud/	‘sea worm’
/nu:sə-/	/nuwus-/	‘penis’

Long /a:/ derives from /*aya/, where the velar fricative shifts to glottal stop in Neve‘ei, as illustrated by the following:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/na:b/	/naʔam/	‘fire’
/na:voŋ/	/naʔavoŋ/	‘Malay apple’
/mela:s/	/nemelaʔah/	‘cold’
/na:mil/	/naʔamal/	‘meeting house’
/na:bə-/	/naʔaibi-/	‘grandchild’

These long vowels in Naman apparently represent quite recent innovations. Data recorded by Deacon in the 1920s suggest that the change may still have been working itself through at that time. Forms which appear systematically in my corpus as /ra:diŋ/ ‘down’, /na:b/ ‘fire’, /va:s/ ‘still, yet’ and /delva:t/ ‘midnight’ were recorded by Deacon invariably as /raʔadiŋ/, /naʔab/, /vaʔas/ and /delvaʔat/ respectively, suggesting that the change had not yet affected those words. In fact, even in my own modern Naman corpus, the forms /na:bues/ ‘New Guinea rosewood’, /na:ri/ ‘cordyline’ and /dena:-/ ‘food’ are attested with the alternating pronunciations /naʔabues/, /naʔari/ and /denaʔa-/ respectively. We find additional synchronic evidence that this change is still working its way through the language in the morphophonemics of modern Naman, whereby intervocalic /y/ is

optionally lost when preceded and followed by /a/, resulting in sequences of /aʔa/ alternating with /a:/, as described in §2.3.5.

Given that five-vowel systems are very widely distributed in Oceanic languages, as well as being reconstructible in Proto Oceanic (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002:65), we can probably treat the five-vowel system of Neve‘ei as being fairly conservative. The contrastive schwas that we find in many Malakula languages should therefore be regarded as innovations. However, it is particularly difficult at this stage to present any definitive statements about the historical developments of vowels in Naman and Neve‘ei. A comparison of vowels in the two languages shows a confusingly wide range of correspondence patterns. In some cases, the vocalism of the two languages is identical. For example:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/bibi/	/bibi/	‘maternal uncle’
/buroŋ/	/buroŋ/	‘worthless’
/bologo-/	/nobologo-/	‘bone’
/gem/	/gem/	‘you (pl.)’
/ʔan/	/ʔan/	‘eat’

More commonly, however, there is a seemingly unpredictable array of different kinds of vocalic correspondences. Ignoring for the moment any correspondences involving schwa, we find examples such as the following:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/buag/	/nibiaŋ/	‘taro’
/botuen/	/nubutuan/	‘hill’
/buʔurvet/	/buʔurvat/	‘plantar wart’
/delŋe-/	/nadlaŋa-/	‘ear’
/bulbulə-/	/nobolbol/	‘knee, elbow’
/degiaŋ/	/nadigiaŋ/	‘limpet’

When we turn our attention to correspondences involving schwa, things are perhaps even more confusing. There are examples in which Naman schwa corresponds to apparently any vowel in Neve‘ei. The following illustrate correspondences between Naman schwa and various vowels in Neve‘ei:

(i) /ə = i/

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/bən/	/bin/	‘do to death’
/iləm/	/ilim/	‘five’
/mən/	/min/	‘drink’

(ii) /ə = e/

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/bəbale/	/nebebal/	‘tree sp.’
/cəber/	/seber/	‘reach’

(iii) /ə = a/

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/iməs/	/mah/	‘cooked’
/ɣəl/	/ɣal/	‘dig’
/cəɣə-/	/sayan/	‘to (person)’

(iv) /ə = u/

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/metər/	/matur/	‘sleep’
/ibəs/	/bus/	‘talk’
/itər/	/tur/	‘stand’

There are very few correspondences between Naman schwa and Neve‘ei /o/, though the following possible single instance can be noted:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/mən/	/mo/	‘first’

Such correspondences would be consistent with the idea that there has been widespread vocalic merger in Naman in the direction of schwa.

Since a comparison between just Naman and Neve‘ei appears not to reveal the full set of conditioning factors determining when a vowel undergoes shift to schwa and when it does not, a direct comparison between Naman and Proto Oceanic and other reconstructible ancestral languages is needed. It appears that Proto Oceanic /*a/ and /*o/ are frequently reflected in Naman as schwa, though the full details of any conditioning factors remain unclear. However, there are repeated instances in which earlier /*uCu/ has shifted to /əC/ in Naman. For example:

*susu	>	isəs	‘suck’
*turu	>	itər	‘stand’
*punuq	>	ivən	‘full’
*tubu	>	jəbə-	‘grandparent’
*maturuR	>	metər	‘sleep’
*saŋapuluq	>	saŋavəl	‘ten’
*bunuq	>	bən	‘kill’

Earlier /*i/ has also commonly shifted to schwa before a final syllable of the shape /*-Ca(C)/ or /*-Co(C)/, normally with retention only of the original syllable-initial consonant. Thus:

*lima	>	iləm	‘five’
*pilak	>	nivəlivəl	‘lightning’
*tina	>	səne-	‘mother’
*tiko	>	icəɣ	‘stay’
*likos	>	ləɣ	‘hang’
*siko	>	necəɣ	‘kingfisher’

There is one major phonotactic difference between Naman and Neve‘ei. It was mentioned in §2.2 that while word-final /b/ and /g/ are permitted in Naman, words in Neve‘ei do not end in these segments. Naman reflects the earlier situation in this respect, with Neve‘ei having uniformly shifted final prenasalised obstruents to the corresponding nasal. The following examples illustrate the correspondence between Naman final /b/ and Neve‘ei /m/:⁹

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/lebeleb/	/nelebelem/	‘mud’
/muyub/	/numuyum/	‘gecko’
/ləbaləb/	/lubalum/	‘tell lie’
/sabasab/	/seb ^w esam/	‘joke’
/cəbecəb/	/subasum/	‘walk with stick’
/leb/	/lam/	‘big’
/nujub/	/noyoim/	‘Pacific pigeon’

The parallel correspondence between final /g/ in Naman and Neve‘ei /ŋ/ is illustrated by the following:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/nemag/	/nemaŋ/	‘river near sea’
/nebag/	/nebaŋ/	‘banyan’
/noag/	/noaŋ/	‘canoe’
/varedog/	/v ^w eradaŋ/	‘tell truth’
/iyag/	/yaŋ/	‘born’
/nog/	/nonoŋ/	‘finish’

The retention of final /d/ in both languages is illustrated by correspondences such as the following:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/medemed/	/midimid/	‘raw’
/mesed/	/mensed/	‘hiccup’
/nubud/	/nebad/	‘owl’
/nu:d/	/nuwud/	‘sea worm’

Although this discussion of the main historical developments has related so far exclusively to a treatment of phonological changes, there is evidence for some grammatical reanalysis having changed the shapes of some lexical items. It is fairly common in Central Vanuatu languages for an original noun marker of the shape /*na/ to be reanalysed as a more or less integral part of the noun root, though there may be some vestigial separability of this historical prefix in some grammatical contexts, as described in §3.3.1.1 for Naman. We find examples such as the following which illustrate the retention of the accreted historical article in both Naman and Neve‘ei:

⁹ In fact, there is even synchronic evidence in Neve‘ei for this kind of shift having taken place with the partial reduplication of forms such as /tubu/ ‘run’ as /tum-tubu/ rather than as /*tub-tubu/.

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/neto/	/noto/	‘chicken’
/nenom/	/nenam/	‘mosquito’
/naye/	/naʔai/	‘tree’
/nejem/	/nensam/	‘outrigger’
/na:voʔ/	/naʔavoy/	‘Malay apple’
/na:ri/	/naʔari/	‘cordyline’
/neim/	/niyim/	‘house’

Note that when historical roots beginning with /*t-/ underwent accretion of the article in Naman, this is reflected in a shift of the stop to /d/, presumably via an earlier process of prenasalisation. Thus:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/dalə-/	/netal-/	‘leg’
/daut/	/notout/	‘bush person’
/demes/	/netemah/	‘devil’
/dovo/	/notovu/	‘sea almond’
/doro/	/notoro/	‘white-throated pigeon’

However, there has been substantially less accretion of the article in Naman than in some other languages, including Neve‘ei. We therefore find a substantial number of nouns in Neve‘ei which show evidence of accretion of the original article which are reflected in Naman in their original root form. Thus:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/boŋo-/	/noboŋo-/	‘mouth’
/batə-/	/nebat-/	‘head’
/beligio/	/nib ^w iligio/	‘pigeon sp.’
/bulvus/	/nabulvah/	‘bird sp.’
/garitiŋ/	/negeritaŋ/	‘tree sp.’
/labət/	/nelabut/	‘rat’
/lesə-/	/nelese-/	‘male genitalia’
/mere/	/nemer/	‘eel’
/meteli/	/nemetali/	‘door’
/meta-/	/nemeta-/	‘eye’
/duov/	/nuduov/	‘whitewood’
/degiaiv/	/nadigiaiv/	‘limpet’
/delŋa-/	/nadlaŋa-/	‘ear’

Another case of grammatical reanalysis which has affected the shapes of lexical roots involves Naman verbs. Many originally monosyllabic intransitive verbs in Naman have reanalysed the third person singular realis prefix /*i-/ as a grammatically non-functional part of the root.¹⁰ A comparison of the following forms between Naman and Neve‘ei reveals the original monosyllabic forms of the roots:

¹⁰ See §4.1.1 for a discussion of environments in which the original prefix is lost in modern Naman.

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/iber/	/ber/	‘long’
/ibar/	/bar/	‘blind’
/ibəs/	/bus/	‘talk’
/ibu/	/bo/	‘stink’
/igal/	/gal/	‘constipated’
/iyəc/	/yus/	‘kill’
/imes/	/mah/	‘die’
/inur/	/nur/	‘shrivel’
/inev/	/nev/	‘(of fire) burn low’
/iŋot/	/ŋot/	‘blunt’
/iren/	/ran/	‘be daylight’
/irəv/	/ruv/	‘run away’
/iteŋ/	/taŋ/	‘cry’
/itər/	/tur/	‘stand’
/ivən/	/vun/	‘full’
/iyag/	/yaŋ/	‘be born’

When these forms are reduplicated in Naman, their roots are no longer monosyllabic so were no longer eligible for the accretion of /*i-/. Thus, Naman forms such as /ibəs/ ‘talk’ and /iber/ ‘long’ reduplicate synchronically as /bəs-bəs/ and /ber-ber/ respectively (§4.2.1).

Just as some nouns have inexplicably not undergone accretion of the original /*na/, so too have some originally monosyllabic intransitive verbs inexplicably not undergone accretion of the original prefix /*i-/. We therefore encounter additional correspondences such as the following between Naman and Neve‘ei:

Naman	Neve‘ei	
/sav/	/sav/	‘dance’
/mes/	/mesemah/	‘dry’
/vom/	/vuam/	‘go first’
/nog/	/nonoŋ/	‘finish’

2.5 Spelling

In all sections of this volume apart from this chapter, forms are represented in a practical orthography rather than in phonemic script. This spelling system has been adopted in order to render the material on this language as accessible as possible to interested members of local communities on Malakula. The orthography has been designed on the basis of my own observations of local traditions of writing whenever possible, including orthographic decisions that have been taken for the Neve‘ei language after consultation with members of that speech community.

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

- The velar nasal is represented orthographically as *ng*. In the very small number of instances where sequences of phonemic /n + g/ are attested within a word, the consonants are separated by a hyphen to distinguish them from the digraph.
- The glottal stop that is attested in Naman in the single interjection /aʔa/ ‘yes’ is represented by the backwards apostrophe, i.e. *a‘a*.
- The velar fricative /ɣ/ is written as *kh*.
- The phoneme /v/ is written invariably as *v*.
- The prenasalised stops are written with the plain stop symbols *b*, *d* and *g*.
- The affricate /c/ is represented as *j*.
- The prenasalised affricate /j/ is represented by means of the digraph *ns*.
- The schwa is represented as *ë*.
- The long vowels are written double, i.e. *ii*, *uu*, *aa*.

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

Phonemic form	Phonetic form	Orthographic representation	
/libay/	[li ^m bax]	<i>libakh</i>	‘dog’
/na:b/	[na: ^m p]	<i>naab</i>	‘fire’
/bigvar/	[^m bi ⁿ kfar]	<i>bigvar</i>	‘ankle rattle tree’
/bəliɛy/	[^m bəliɛx]	<i>bəliekh</i>	‘banded rail’
/bəlyoc/	[^m bəlyotʃ]	<i>bəlkhoj</i>	‘sit with knees together’
/necən/	[netʃən]	<i>nejən</i>	‘his/her excrement’
/nevəj/	[nevə ⁿ tʃ]	<i>nevəns</i>	‘banana’
/neŋe/	[neŋe]	<i>nenge</i>	‘native almond’
/mengore/	[mengore]	<i>men-gore</i>	‘flying fox’

3 *Nouns and noun phrases*

This chapter describes the behaviour of Naman pronouns, as well as the inflectional and derivational morphology of nouns. It then describes the internal make-up of noun phrases within the Naman clause.

3.1 Pronouns

Pronouns constitute a closed set which distinguish between the categories of first, second and third person and which mark a three-way number distinction between singular, dual and plural. In the first person non-singular, a distinction is made between inclusive and exclusive pronouns.

Table 3: Independent pronouns

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>kine</i>	Incl.	<i>(i)getaru, (i)gëtaru</i>	<i>(i)get, (i)gët</i>
		Excl.	<i>kam(em)ru, kamemaru</i>	<i>kam(em)</i>
2	<i>a(khu)g</i>		<i>(i)gem(a)ru, (i)gëm(a)ru</i>	<i>(i)gem, (i)gëm</i>
3	<i>ai ~ i</i>		<i>(r)aru</i>	<i>air</i>

The independent pronouns in Naman are set out in Table 3. A number of these pronouns contain bracketed elements and other indications of variability in their shapes, which are not associated with any change of function. This means that only the pronouns *kine* ‘first person singular’ and *air* ‘third person plural’ are completely invariant, while all remaining pronouns are attested with slightly variant shapes. It is not known if the kinds of variation that are described below were originally found in the speech of all Naman speakers, or if the current situation is the result of some kind of mixture of pronominal forms that are perhaps derived from the leveling of different geographical varieties of the language, a possibility suggested in §1.3.

Thus, the second person singular pronoun appears as either *ag* or *akhug*. The third person dual form alternates freely between *aru* and *raru*. The first person plural exclusive pronoun varies between *kam* and *kamem*, while the corresponding dual forms vary between *kamru* and *kamemru*, as well as *kamemaru*.

The remaining pronominal categories, i.e. the first person inclusive and the second person non-singular forms, all vary between forms that have an initial *i-* and corresponding forms which lack this segment. Although I point to some uncertainty with regard to forms containing schwa in §2.1.2.2, I find that variation between *e* and *ë* is so pervasive in my corpus that I have little choice but to regard variation between forms such as *igem* and *igëm* ‘you (pl.)’ and *iget* and *igët* ‘we (pl. incl.)’ as legitimate. The second person dual forms vary additionally with regard to the presence or absence of *a* before the dual element *-ru*, producing forms such as *igemru* and *igemaruru* as additional variants.

The variation between the third person singular forms *ai* and *i*, however, is of a different nature to the alternations described in the preceding paragraphs, hence the different manner of presentation of these variants in Table 3. We invariably find *ai* in verbal subject position and as an initial noun phrase in non-verbal clauses. For example:

Ai Ø-*iv* Ø-*tëkh* *babar khëse-n.*
 3SG 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-take pig POSS-3SG
 ‘He went and took his pig.’

Ai *evan.*
 3SG that.one
 ‘That’s the one.’

However, the shorter form *i* represents an occasional variant of *ai* in the positions of verbal or prepositional object. We therefore find examples such as the following in which this category is expressed as *i* in verbal object position:

Nevdoro tinseb Ø-*metemet* *i* Ø-*iv* Ø-*tëleb.*
 woman another 3SG:REAL-look.after 3SG 3SG:REAL-become 3SG:REAL-big
 ‘Another woman looked after him until he became big.’

The following illustrate the appearance of *i* in prepositional object position:

Be-ve *bë-vësakh khën i?*
 1SG:IRR-do 3SG:IRR-how GOAL 3SG
 ‘What (lit. how) will I do with her?’

Misnari Ø-*melili* Ø-*iv* *jëkhë-n i.*
 missionary 3SG:REAL-return 3SG:REAL-go place-3SG 3SG
 ‘The missionary went back to his place.’

However, the fact that the longer form *ai* is still possible in these kinds of environments is illustrated by examples such as the following:

Bubu Ø-*var* *khën ai ...*
 grandfather 3SG:REAL-say GOAL 3SG ...
 ‘Grandfather said to him ...’

The forms in Table 3 indicate that there are separate pronouns in Naman for three categories of number: singular, dual and plural. The dual forms can generally be derived from the plural forms with the addition of *-(a)ru*, which bears a similarity to the form of the numeral *iru* ‘two’ (§3.4.1). However, the formal relationship between dual and plural fails completely in the third person where plural *air* corresponds to dual *(r)aru* rather than expected **airaru*. Thus, any relationship between dual and plural pronouns should be seen

as involving a purely historical connection at best, rather than representing any kind of synchronically productive pattern.

The forms labelled as dual in Table 3 are invariably used whenever two pronominal referents are involved, while the category of plural is used when there are three or more pronominal participants. However, a dual pronominal meaning can also be expressed in Naman by using the plural forms in association with the numeral postmodifier *iru* ‘two’ (§3.4.1). Thus, in alternation with *kamru* (or *kamemru* and *kamemaru*) ‘we (dual exclusive)’ we also find the following phrasal expression with the same meaning:

kam(em) iru
1PL.EXCL two
‘we (dl.) exclusive’

Although Naman is similar to Neve‘ei in having a three-way number distinction in its pronominal paradigm, the two languages differ in the extent to which dual referents are formally distinguished from the category of plural. In Naman, a subject pronoun and a following verb must always carry the same number marking. Thus:

Kamru bër-lis.
1DL.EXCL 1DL.EXCL:IRR-see
‘We (dl.) will see it.’

Kam bët-lis.
1PL.EXCL 1PL.EXCL:IRR-see
‘We (pl.) will see it.’

It is not possible, therefore, for a formally plural subject pronoun to be followed by a verb with dual subject marking:

**Kam bër-lis.*
1PL.EXCL 1DL.EXCL:IRR-see

In Neve‘ei, however, while a formally dual pronoun¹ must always be followed by a verb carrying dual subject marking, a formally plural subject pronoun can be followed by a verb that carries either dual or plural inflection. Thus:

Gememru bwer-leh.
1DL.EXCL 1DL.EXCL:IRR-see
‘We (dl.) will see it.’

Gemem bwer-leh.
1PL.EXCL 1DL.EXCL:IRR-see
‘We (dl.) will see it.’

Gemem bwit-leh.
1PL.EXCL 1PL.EXCL:IRR-see
‘We (pl.) will see it.’

There is, in fact, a difference in meaning in Neve‘ei between formally plural pronouns used with dual reference and formally dual forms. The specifically dual forms are used when the pragmatic context involves particular focus of attention on the fact that two

¹ Musgrave (2001:46) and Crowley (2002a:640) failed to record the existence of the dual pronouns in Neve‘ei, but subsequent observations of conversational usage revealed the presence of these forms.

participants are construed as acting—or being acted upon—together, rather than separately. The following represents the pragmatically neutral way of expressing two participants in Neve‘ei:

Gemem bwer-leh.
 1PL.EXCL 1DL.EXCL:IRR-see
 ‘We (dl.) will see it (perhaps acting independently).’

The following sentence containing an overtly dual subject pronoun is therefore only used in the pragmatically rather restricted context that is suggested by the accompanying translation:

Gememru bwer-leh.
 1DL.EXCL 1DL.EXCL:IRR-see
 ‘We will both see it together.’

Given that the distinction between dual and plural in Naman is made in all pragmatic contexts, and not just the pragmatically restricted contexts just noted for Neve‘ei, the semantic contrast just described for Neve‘ei must be expressed in quite a different way in Naman. This can be achieved by using the dual pronouns with an accompanying postmodifying numeral *iru* ‘two’ (§3.4.1) as in the following:

Nane Ø-vos kamemru iru.
 mother 3SG:REAL-give.birth.to 1DL.EXCL two
 ‘Mother gave birth to the both of us together.’

Another way of expressing this kind of meaning with a dual pronominal object to a verb in Naman is to make use of the postverbal modifier *tabakh* ‘every, both’ (§4.3.1.6) within the verbal complex. For example:

Nane Ø-vos tabakh kamru.
 mother 3SG:REAL-give.birth.to every 1DL.EXCL
 ‘Mother gave birth to the both of us together.’

Naman, in contrast to a number of northern and central Vanuatu languages, has no separate trial series of pronouns, though it shares this lack with neighbouring Neve‘ei. To specifically express a trial meaning, the numeral postmodifier *itël* ‘three’ (§3.4.1) is used in association with formally plural pronouns. For example:

Kamem itël mët-lev noag tuen.
 1PL.EXCL three 1PL.EXCL:REAL-take canoe INDEF
 ‘Three of us took a canoe.’

The numeral here clearly constitutes a separate phonological word to the pronoun, so we are not dealing with a formally trial pronoun involving a historically reanalysed numeral modifier such as we find in some Oceanic languages. The fact that *itël* here is a genuine numeral modifier rather than a part of the pronoun is indicated by the fact that any other numeral or quantifier can appear in exactly the same postmodifier position. For example:

air sangavël
 3PL ten
 ‘the ten of them’

In addition to numeral postmodifiers, non-singular pronouns in Naman can be associated with a variety of other quantifiers, including the following:

<i>tuen</i>	‘one of (many)’
<i>kharuen</i>	‘one of (two)’
<i>natuen</i>	‘some of (many)’
<i>ingët</i>	‘many of’

Thus:

gem natuen
2PL some
‘some of you’

air tuen
3PL one
‘one of them’

aru kharuen
3DL one
‘one of the two of them’

kam ingët
1PL.EXCL many
‘many of us’

These numerals, as well as the quantifier *ingët* ‘many’, also function as nominal postmodifiers (§3.4.1), and the discussion of their behaviour in that structural context indicates that they exhibit some vestigial verbal morphology. This is true of the same forms when they are used to modify pronouns. We therefore encounter examples such as the following in which the pronominal postmodifier *ingët* ‘many’ carries the verbal negative simulfix *sa-/-si*:²

Kam sa-ngët mën-si mët-lev bësien Lëngalëng.
1PL.EXCL NEG-many any.more-NEG 1PL.EXCL:REAL-speak language Lëngalëng.
‘Not many of us any more speak the language of Lëngalëng.’

It should be noted that there are no separate pronominal postmodifiers to express the meanings of ‘all, every’ and ‘both’. These meanings are expressed instead by means of the adverbial modifier *tabakh* within the verb complex (§4.3.1.6). Contrast, therefore, the first example below where the modifier *natuen* ‘some’ is a postmodifier to the pronoun *air* ‘third person plural’, with the other sentences where *tabakh* is a postmodifier to the inflected verbs *metër* ‘sleep’ and *sëvër* ‘tell off’:

Air natuen at-metër.
3PL some 3PL.REAL-sleep
‘Some of them slept.’

² The prefix *sa-* attaches to what would be the initial element of the verb phrase and the suffixed element *-si* attaches to the immediately following verbal modifier (§4.1.2). The loss of the initial *i* of *ingët* in the immediately following example follows the same pattern described in §3.3.1 for numerals.

Air at-met-metër tabakh.
 3PL 3PL.REAL-REDUP-sleep all
 ‘They were all asleep.’

Matërvarëkh Ø-sëvër tabakh kamru.
 old.man 3SG:REAL-tell.off both 1DL.EXCL
 ‘The old man told us both off.’

The fact that *tabakh* functions as part of the verb complex rather than as a modifier of some kind to the pronoun is indicated by the fact that when the verb is negated, the suffixed element of the negative simulfix attaches to *tabakh* as the last element in the verb complex (§4.1.2). Thus:

Air at-së-met-metër tabakh-si.
 3PL 3PL.REAL-NEG-REDUP-sleep all-NEG
 ‘They were not all asleep.’

Matërvarëkh Ø-së-sëvër tabakh-si kamru.
 old.man 3SG:REAL-NEG-tell.off both-NEG 1DL.EXCL
 ‘The old man did not tell us both off.’

The same pronominal categories that we see in Table 3 are also marked inflectionally as possessive suffixes with a particular subset of nouns (§3.3.2.2) and prepositions (§5.3.1.2) in Naman, as well as with verbal subject prefixes (§4.1.1) and object suffixes (§4.1.4). In subject position in the sentence, the independent pronouns may be present or absent under conditions set out in the discussion of clause-level grammar (§5.2).

In addition to the independent pronouns just described, there is also a pair of what we might refer to as indefinite pronouns, i.e. *motuen* ‘somebody’ and *nestuen* ‘something’. For example:

Motuen Ø-esëkh mën Metenesel.
 somebody 3SG:REAL-not.exist any.more Metenesel
 ‘There was no longer anybody at Metenesel.’

Në-rong mevë-n nestuen.
 1SG:REAL-feel smell-3SG something
 ‘I can smell something.’

These forms are regarded as a particular kind of pronoun rather than as a noun because of their inability to be associated with a full range of noun phrase modifiers.

The form *motuen* appears to be diachronically related to the noun *mokh* ‘person’ and the following postmodifier *tuen* ‘one’, though the loss of the final consonant of the initial noun is not a regular synchronic process in Naman. In the same way, *nestuen* appears to be derived from a reduced form of the noun *nete* ‘thing’ followed by the indefinite marker *tuen*.

Both of these indefinite pronouns can be followed by the form *mënsi*, which has no independently attested function in the grammar of Naman. Together, the combination of PRONOUN + *mënsi* expresses the meaning of ‘whoever’ and ‘whatever’ respectively. Thus:

Nestuen mënsi khë-ve Ø-ides.
 something ? 2SG:REAL-do 3SG:REAL-good
 ‘Whatever you do is good.’

Motuen mēnsi bē-lis bē-tēkh.
 somebody ? 3SG:IRR-see 3SG:IRR-take
 ‘Whoever sees it will take it.’

3.2 Demonstrative nouns

In addition to pronouns (§3.1) and nouns (§3.3), there is a small category of nominal constituents in Naman which I will refer to as demonstrative nouns. These are pronoun-like in that they do not freely accept the full range of noun phrase modifiers. They are further pronoun-like in that they have no fixed reference and can only be used when the linguistic or non-linguistic context provides sufficient clues to enable their particular referents to be determined.

These forms mark a three-way semantic contrast, with *man-* referring to human nouns, *den-* referring to non-human nouns and *tan-* referring to places. These differ from pronouns in that they cannot be used on their own, but are obligatorily associated with one of the demonstratives that can accompany a noun phrase (§3.4.3), i.e. *nen* or *net* ‘that’ or *nakh* ‘this’. These sequences of noun followed by demonstrative generally reduce to a single word with the demonstrative losing the initial consonant. We therefore find the forms *man-en* and *man-et* ‘that person’, *man-akh* ‘this person’, *den-en* and *den-et* ‘that thing’ and *den-akh* ‘this thing’. Thus:

Namat Ø-iv bēkhēt Ø-lis man-en Ø-metēr
 snake 3SG:REAL-go inside 3SG:REAL-see HUM-DEM 3SG:REAL-sleep

mel.

soundly

‘The snake went inside and saw the person (i.e. the man who he was going to kill) sleeping soundly.’

Man-en Ø-lēkh dalē-n Ø-iv rakhe.
 HUM-DEM 3SG:REAL-hang leg-3SG 3SG:REAL-go up

‘That person (i.e. the man who was going to turn into a woman) hung with his legs going up (in the air).’

Us den-akh Ø-ve tet ba-des tuen.
 perhaps NONHUM-DEM 3SG:REAL-be REL 3SG:IRR-good INDEF
 ‘Perhaps this thing (i.e. fire) is something that will be good.’

Ne-teren ba-v i den-et.
 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-go GOAL NONHUM-DEM

‘I want to go to that thing (i.e. the moon).’

Note also the following example illustrating the same pattern involving place names:³

Tan-en nangse-n Rabēn Molmoli.
 PLACE-DEM name-3SG Rabēn Molmoli
 ‘The name of that place is Rabēn Molmoli.’

³ While *man-* and *den-* are attested in association with both proximate and distant demonstrative clitics, the demonstrative noun of place *tan-* has only been attested with the distant demonstrative clitic, with the expected form *tan-akh* ‘this place’ being so far unattested.

3.3 Nouns

Nouns constitute an open set of forms defined by virtue of the fact that they can be the sole occupants of the noun phrase position within a clause. They differ from the forms described in §3.1 and §3.2 in that they freely associate with a full range of noun phrase modifiers (§3.4) and they can refer to possessors, as well as possessed items, in possessive constructions (§3.3.2).

3.3.1 Nominal derivation

3.3.1.1 Compounding

There are two types of nominal compounds found in Naman, which can be referred to as loose and tight compounds respectively. With all compounds, whether loose or tight, the meaning of the compound is generally clearly relatable to the meanings of the constituent elements, though there is often some degree of semantic unpredictability involved.

3.3.1.1.1 Loose compounds

With loose compounds, the compounded elements retain their phonological independence as separately stressed words in structurally tightly linked units where no other constituents can intervene between the two parts of the compound. Loose compounds are formed on the basis of the widespread Oceanic pattern of HEAD + MODIFIER, with the head invariably being a noun and the modifier coming from a variety of form classes.

With many such compounds, the modifier is also a noun. For example:

<i>nevet</i>	+	<i>novles</i>	>	<i>nevet novles</i>
‘stone’		‘earth oven’		‘cooking stone’
<i>mokh</i>	+	<i>nëval</i>	>	<i>mokh nëval</i>
‘person’		‘battle’		‘warrior’
<i>nadël</i>	+	<i>lesën</i>	>	<i>nadël lesën</i>
‘egg’		‘his genitals’		‘his testicles’

That this pattern is fully productive is indicated by the fact that it has been used as the basis for post-contact coinages involving vocabulary that has been recently borrowed from Bislama. For example:

<i>neim</i>	+	<i>sukul</i> ⁴	>	<i>neim sukul</i>
‘house’		‘church’		‘church house’
<i>neim</i>	+	<i>klasrum</i>	>	<i>neim klasrum</i>
‘house’		‘classroom’		‘school’

Certain types of combinations of NOUN + NOUN of this type are especially common in the Naman corpus. Included in these are sequences of the noun *bë sien* ‘language’ which is compounded in this way with a language name or with a place name to refer to a particular language. For example:

⁴ The noun *sukul* ‘church’ is a borrowing from Bislama and comes ultimately from English *school*.

<i>bəsien</i> 'language'	+	<i>Naman</i> 'Naman'	>	<i>bəsien Naman</i> 'Naman language'
<i>bəsien</i> 'language'	+	<i>Ləngaləng</i> 'Ləngaləng'	>	<i>bəsien Ləngaləng</i> 'language of Ləngaləng'

A noun with human reference is also commonly compounded according to this pattern with a following place name to refer to people from that place. For example:

<i>mokh</i> 'person'	+	<i>Winev</i> 'Winev'	>	<i>mokh Winev</i> 'person/people from Winev'
<i>nevoro</i> 'woman'	+	<i>Vuli</i> 'Vuli'	>	<i>nevoro Vuli</i> 'woman from Vuli'

Place names can enter into compounds with nouns other than those referring to people to indicate that the referent of that noun is something that is uniquely characteristic of that place, as illustrated by a construction such as the following:

<i>plen</i> 'plane'	+	<i>Jap</i> 'Japan'	>	<i>plen Jap</i> 'Japanese (rather than American) plane'
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Expressing the same kind of meaning as compounds of the type *mokh Winev* 'person/people from Winev' just described is a construction involving the form *tet* with a following place name. *Tet* is primarily used in the formation of headless relative clauses (§3.4.4), though constructions such as the following represent a clearly distinct pattern:

<i>tet Winev</i>
REL Winev
'person from Winev'

The modifier in a loose compound is also commonly an adjective or an uninflected stative verb. For example:

<i>mokh</i> 'person'	+	<i>tinseb</i> 'ordinary'	>	<i>mokh tinseb</i> 'commoner'
<i>mokh</i> 'person'	+	<i>varəkh</i> 'little'	>	<i>mokh varəkh</i> 'little boy'
<i>neni</i> 'coconut'	+	<i>merang</i> 'dry'	>	<i>neni merang</i> 'dry coconut'
<i>niəkh</i> 'fish'	+	<i>miel</i> 'red'	>	<i>niəkh miel</i> 'fish species'

However, in many loose compounds of this type, the modifier may appear only in that particular compound. This means that we are not in a position to say anything about the word class membership of such forms. Examples of this type include the following:

<i>bubu</i> 'grandfather'	+	<i>tevet</i> '?'	>	<i>bubu tevet</i> 'grandmother'
<i>bəsien</i> 'story'	+	<i>mətivar</i> '?'	>	<i>bəsien mətivar</i> 'traditional story'

<i>mokh</i> 'person'	+	<i>amu</i> '?' ⁵	>	<i>mokh amu</i> 'eldest child'
<i>nedum</i> 'yam'	+	<i>vovos</i> '?'	>	<i>nedum vovos</i> 'any long variety of yam'

The final construction of this general type can be referred to as phrasal compounds. These can still be considered to be loose compounds in that the constituent elements retain their phonological independence as separate words, but the first element inflects as a possessed noun while the second element functions as a possessor in indirect possessive constructions described in §3.3.2.1. When such constructions have meanings which are not directly predictable from the meanings of their constituent parts, we can consider these to be an additional pattern of compounding. Examples of this type include the following:

<i>baranga-n</i> 'hole-3SG'	+	<i>nevet</i> 'stone'	>	<i>barangan nevet</i> 'cave'
<i>mete-n</i> 'eye-3SG'	+	<i>nowe</i> 'water'	>	<i>meten nowe</i> 'freshwater spring'
<i>mete-n</i> 'eye-3SG'	+	<i>deswe</i> 'sea'	>	<i>meten deswe</i> 'freshwater spring in sea'
<i>bënalë-n</i> 'hole-3SG'	+	<i>nejë-n</i> 'faeces-3SG'	>	<i>bënalën nejë-n</i> 'his/her anus'
<i>naansvëlë-n</i> 'hair-3SG'	+	<i>naase-n</i> 'jaw-3SG'	>	<i>naansvëlën naase-n</i> 'his beard'

3.3.1.1.2 Tight compounds

While loose compounds represent a fairly productive pattern in Naman, the pattern of tight compounding that is described in the following paragraphs is not productive, and it appears to be very much a vestigial process.

It was mentioned in §2.4 that an original noun marker of the shape **na* has sometimes been reanalysed in Naman as an inseparable part of the noun root. In what are referred to as tight compounds, this original article is lost and the resulting root is attached to another noun with the two becoming a single phonological word. In most cases, it is the second element in the compound which loses this accreted element. For example:

<i>nakhakhar</i> 'stinging tree'	+	<i>nevet</i> 'stone'	>	<i>nakhakhar-vet</i> 'stinging tree with long-lasting effect'
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Sometimes, there may be an accompanying unpredictable change in the vowel of the remaining part of the compounded noun. For example:

<i>netite</i> 'child'	+	<i>numin</i> 'man'	>	<i>netite-mën</i> 'boy'
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⁵ Comparative evidence suggests that this derives from an adjectival or adverbial form meaning 'first'.

With some tight compounds, however, it is instead the initial noun which loses its historically accreted article. Again, there may be some unpredictable change in the following vowel of the remaining part of the root. In the following example, the otherwise unattested form *gore* is compounded with a phonologically reduced form of *nimin* ‘bird’ in this way:

nimin + *gore* > *men-gore*
 ‘bird’ ‘?’ ‘black flying fox’

There are also cases where an initial noun which has undergone phonological reduction in this way may show evidence of yet other kinds of unpredictability in its phonological shape when it enters a tight compound of this type. In the following example, a historically prior root-final vowel that has been systematically lost when the form is used in isolation is retained in the compounded form:

nebag + *leb* > *baga-leb*
 ‘banyan’ ‘large’ ‘banyan species’

3.3.1.2 Affixation

3.3.1.2.1 Nominalisation

The only additional productive morphological process by which nouns can be derived in Naman involves the use of a nominalising affix. Two different patterns of nominalisation have been noted. There is firstly a productive process by which the nominalised verb is marked by means of the suffix *-ien*:

nsumnsum > *nsumnsum-ien*
 ‘cut down trees’ ‘tree-cutting’
iren > *ren-ien*
 ‘(of day) break’ ‘breaking (of day)’

With verbs which carry a historically accreted initial *i-* which is systematically lost in some contexts (§4.1.1), this initial segment is lost when this nominalising suffix is added. Thus:

ibës > *bës-ien*
 ‘speak’ ‘language, speech, story’
iyel > *yel-ien*
 ‘sing’ ‘singing’

There is a second pattern of nominalisation which is much more sporadic. This involves the addition of the same suffixed element *-ien*, but this is combined with a prefixed element of the general shape *nV-* resulting in a simulfix of the shape *nV-/-ien*. The shape of the vowel of the prefixed element is somewhat unpredictable. In some cases, the prefix is realised in the same way as if the basic form of the vowel were schwa. Thus:

mësiëkh > *në-mësiëkh-ien*
 ‘sick’ ‘sickness, disease’

According to statements about the form of verbal prefixes which end in schwa in §4.1.1, we would expect this prefix to appear as *na-* before verb roots beginning with *kha-*, just as we find with the following:

khan > *na-khan-ien*
 ‘eat’ ‘food’

However, my corpus includes a handful of nominalised verbs involving the simulfix *nV-/-ien* in which the prefixed element appears with an unpredictable shape according to the general rules governing the allomorphic variation of verbal prefixes. With verb roots beginning with *i-*, for example, prefixes ending in schwa would normally be expected to undergo shift of the vowel to *a*. Thus, *irëb* ‘work’ and *irokh* ‘clear garden’ would normally be expected to nominalise according to this pattern as *narëbien* and *narokhien* respectively. In fact, however, my corpus includes the following nominalised forms with unpredictable shapes of the prefixed elements of the simulfix:

irëb > *nerëbien*
 ‘work’ ‘job’

irokh > *norokhien*
 ‘clear garden’ ‘garden clearing’

Given my comments in §2.4 about the more restricted retention of accreted **na* in Naman in comparison to Neve‘ei, it may be that the only genuinely productive pattern in Naman involves the nominalising suffix *-ien*. The discontinuous markers in these latter examples possibly represent sporadic influence from Neve‘ei, where the regular pattern involves discontinuous marking with a prefixed element *nV-* and a suffixed element *-ian* (Crowley 2002a:640). For example:

bus > *na-bus-ian*
 ‘speak’ ‘language, speech, story’

mesa‘ > *ne-mesa‘-ian*
 ‘sick’ ‘sickness, disease’

ra‘ > *ne-ra‘-ian*
 ‘clear garden’ ‘garden clearing’

At the same time, however, there is evidence for competing patterns of nominalisation in Neve‘ei with just a handful of nouns unpredictably nominalising by means of just the prefixed element, resulting occasionally in the same noun having two different nominalised forms (Musgrave 2001:145–46). For example:

yokhyokh > *ni-yokhyokh-ian*
 ‘vomit’ ‘the act of vomiting’

ni-yokhyokh
 ‘vomit, the product of vomiting’

Given the legitimacy of both patterns in Neve‘ei, it is possible that the competing patterns described above for Naman may in fact represent genuine alternants in this language.

3.3.1.2.2 Nouns of place

Two other patterns of nominal derivation have been attested in Naman, though both are non-productive, being attested in just a handful of examples each. Both patterns involve expressions of place.

The first of these patterns involves the name of a place with a prefix of the form *dV-*. This prefix derives a noun referring to a person originating from that place.⁶ The only place names which are attested as entering into this construction are the names of the major islands located off the northeastern coast of Malakula. This prefix takes the shape *d-* before vowel-initial forms. That is:

<i>Orebev</i>	‘Uripiv’	<i>Dorebev</i>	‘person from Uripiv’
<i>Ajin</i>	‘Atchin’	<i>Dajin</i>	‘person from Atchin’

Before consonant-initial forms, we sometimes find *de-* and sometimes *da-*, as in the following:

<i>Vala</i>	‘Wala’	<i>Davala</i>	‘person from Wala’
<i>Rano</i>	‘Rano’	<i>Derano</i>	‘person from Rano’
<i>Vau</i>	‘Vao’	<i>Devau</i>	‘person from Vao’

These derived forms can function as ordinary nouns in their own right, as illustrated by the following textual examples:

Da-vala tuen.
 PERSON-Wala INDEF
 ‘There was a person from Wala.’

D-ajin at-lev nibe nen.
 PERSON-Atchin 3PL:REAL-sing song DEM
 ‘The people from Atchin sang that song.’

However, the same forms can also be used as postmodifiers after a noun (§3.4.2) with human reference. For example:

nevdoro d-orebev
 woman PERSON-Uripiv
 ‘woman from Uripiv’

mokh de-rano
 person PERSON-Rano
 ‘person from Rano’

It should be noted that this pattern is limited strictly to the small number of place names set out above. In order to refer to people from any other places, loose compounds involving a human noun with directly following underived place names are used instead (§3.3.1.1.1), as in the following:

mokh Laravet
 person Larëvat
 ‘person from Larëvat’

nevdoro Vinmavis
 woman Vinmavis
 ‘woman from Vinmavis’

⁶ There is no similar prefix in Neve‘ei, though McKerras (2000) includes examples which point to the occurrence of such a form in Northeast Malakula.

In addition to the derivations with the prefix *dV-* involving names of offshore islands, there is a correspondence between the locational noun *aut* ‘inland’ (§5.3.4) and the derived noun *daut* ‘bush-dweller, person from inland’, which appears to involve the same derivational prefix. The form *dosëlsël* ‘European’ may also be related by means of a form of this prefix to the verb *sël* ‘float’ given that the first Europeans ‘floated’ to Malakula on visiting ships.

The final pattern of affixation for which there is sporadic evidence in Naman involves the replacement of the initial *n-* of a noun with *l-* to produce a locational noun (§5.3.4). There are only two pairs of nouns which are attested in Naman as behaving in this way:

<i>nemev</i>	‘level place’	<i>lemev</i>	‘to/at the level place’
<i>nakhe</i>	‘tree’	<i>lakhe</i>	‘to/in the bush’

A directly parallel pattern has also been observed in neighbouring languages such as Avava and Neve‘ei, though with a similarly small number of examples in both cases.

3.3.2 Possession

The only inflectional morphology that is associated with nouns in Naman involves the expression of possession with a particular subset of nouns. Although for the majority of nouns in Naman possession is expressed by means of phrase-level constructions rather than inflectionally on the noun, for the sake of convenience, possessive constructions of all types will be discussed together in this section.

As we commonly find in Oceanic languages, there is a basic distinction in Naman between what we can call directly and indirectly possessed nouns. With indirectly possessed nouns, both the possessor and possessum are expressed as free forms, while with directly possessed nouns, the possessum is expressed by means of a bound nominal root to which an inflectional possessive suffix is obligatorily attached. Contrast, therefore, the behaviour of the directly possessed noun *jëbë-* ‘grandfather’ and the indirectly possessed noun *noag* ‘canoe’ in the following pair of examples:

<i>jëbë-g</i>	
grandfather-1SG	
‘my grandfather’	
<i>noag sog</i>	
canoe POSS:1SG	
‘my canoe’	

3.3.2.1 Directly possessed nouns

Nouns of this type are obligatorily associated with a possessive suffix which expresses the pronominal category of the possessor, and typically refer to items that are inalienably possessed, which includes the following categories:

- Most human or animal body parts, e.g. *batë-* ‘head’, *bongo-* ‘mouth’, *nëverë-* ‘arm, hand’, *dalë-* ‘leg, foot’, *nelvë-* ‘tooth’, *nsense-* ‘comb (on chicken)’, *nokhoverë-* ‘wing’, *bëlasë-* ‘shell’.

- Many body products, e.g. *nejë-* ‘excrement’, *nsuvë-* ‘breath’, *devë-* ‘snot’, *mië-* ‘urine’, *mulë-* ‘dry skin’. Bodily manifestations which are typically the result of some kind of temporary pathology are likely to be possessed indirectly, e.g. *bukhurvet* ‘plantar wart’, *nevënvën* ‘ringworm’, *menokh* ‘sore’.
- Many kin terms, e.g. *bëne-* ‘maternal uncle’, *tenivë-* ‘wife’, *netë-* ‘son, daughter’. However, kin terms which are typically used as address terms are more likely to enter into indirect possessive constructions, e.g. *bibi* ‘maternal uncle’, *bubu* ‘grandparent’, *tate* ‘father’.
- Some highly personal items, e.g. *bëravë-* ‘grass skirt’, *nëkhëvkhëvë-* ‘penis wrapper’, *nangsë-* ‘name’, *ne-* or *nini-* ‘spirit’, *melë-* ‘sleeping mat’, *delë-* ‘voice, opinion’, *bëngë-* ‘mourning day’, *devkhë-* ‘grave’, *jëgë-* ‘personal possessions, belongings’, *jëkhë-* ‘place, home’, *dena(kh)a-* ‘food’.
- Things produced by something else, e.g. *mevë-* ‘smell’, *niisë-* ‘smoke’, *bënalë-* ‘hole (left by something dug out)’.
- Many parts or products of trees or plants, e.g. *nava-* ‘fruit’, *nokhutë-* ‘trunk’, *nerangasë-* ‘branch’, *nereu-* ‘leaf’, *bobë-* ‘edible pith (of sprouting coconut)’.
- Some parts of non-living things, e.g. *baranga-* ‘hole (in something)’.
- Some collections or groups of things, e.g. *golo-* ‘thicket (of trees)’.
- Some nouns referring to a location relative to something else, e.g. *bokhte-* ‘behind’, *nokho-* ‘in front of’, *galë-* ‘side’, *melevë-* ‘underneath’, *nelë-* ‘inside’, *nelva-* ‘middle’, *ningulë-* ‘end, top’.

Table 4: Direct possessive suffixes

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	-g	Incl. Excl.	—	—
2	-m		—	—
3	-n		-raru	-r

With nouns of this type, there are separate suffixed forms for all categories of singular pronominal possessor, and also for any category of third person pronominal possessor. These suffixes therefore exhibit a defective paradigm in that there are no separate possessive suffixes for dual and plural pronominal possessors in the first and second persons, as set out in Table 4. The following examples illustrate some of the inflected forms of the bound noun *jëbë-* ‘grandfather’:

<i>jëbë-g</i>	<i>jëbë-m</i>	<i>jëbë-n</i>
grandfather-1SG	grandfather-2SG	grandfather-3SG
‘my grandfather’	‘your grandfather’	‘his/her grandfather’

With nominal possessors, as well as with pronominal possessors other than those which are expressed inflectionally by means of the suffixes set out in Table 4, the possessor is expressed instead as a following free form (§3.1), while the possessum obligatorily carries the third person singular possessive suffix *-n*. Thus:

jëbë-n *nevoro*
 grandfather-3SG woman
 ‘the woman’s grandfather’

jëbë-n *kamem*
 grandfather-3SG 1PL.EXCL
 ‘our (pl. excl.) grandfather’

The inflectional marking on the possessed noun is formally singular regardless of the number of the possessor. For example:

jëbë-n *nevoro air*
 grandfather-3SG woman PL
 ‘the women’s grandfathers’

With singular pronominal possessors, as well as with third person non-singular possessors, the pattern described above alternates with the same pattern that is used for nominal possessors and also for pronominal possessors for which there are no separate possessive suffixes. The first pattern is illustrated by the following:

nangsë-g
 name-1SG
 ‘my name’

However, this form alternates freely in my corpus with the following:

nangsë-n *kine*
 name-3SG 1SG
 ‘my name’

In addition to these two competing patterns, my corpus includes a rarely attested third pattern in which a directly possessed noun which carries one of the pronominal possessive suffixes set out in Table 4 is immediately followed by one of the possessive postmodifiers typically associated with the expression of indirect possessive constructions (§3.3.2.2). We therefore find occasional examples such as the following:

netë-g *sog*
 child-1SG POSS:1SG
 ‘my child’

No apparent difference in referential meaning can be attached to the variation between these patterns of possession in Naman.

All directly possessed nouns in Naman can be analysed as ending in a vowel. However, these underlying final vowels are subject to a considerable amount of variation in shape according to the following generalisations:

- Noun roots ending in schwa optionally shift this vowel to *o* before the first person singular suffix *-g*, to *a* before the second person singular suffix *-m* and to *e* before any of the third person suffixes.
- However, when the consonant preceding root-final schwa is one of the alveolar consonants *l*, *r*, *t* or *s*, the final schwa is optionally deleted before the third person singular suffix *-n*, while the *-n* of the suffix is syllabified according to the processes described in §2.1.2.2 and §2.1.3.

- When the consonant preceding the root-final schwa is *v*, final schwa is optionally deleted before the second person singular suffix *-m*. The *-m* of the suffix is also syllabified when the preceding schwa is deleted (§2.1.3).
- Noun roots ending in *e* shift this vowel to *a* before the first and second person singular suffixes while the vowel remains invariant before the third person suffixes.
- Finally, noun roots ending in the vowels *o*, *u* and *a* are invariant in shape for all possessive suffixes.

Table 5: Directly possessed noun paradigms with singular pronominal possessors

		1SG	2SG	3SG
<i>jëbë-</i>	‘grandfather’	<i>jëbëg ~ jëbog</i>	<i>jëbëm ~ jëbam</i>	<i>jëbën</i>
<i>khavë-</i>	‘friend’	<i>khavëg ~ khavog</i>	<i>khavëm ~ khavm</i>	<i>khavën ~ khaven</i>
<i>galë-</i>	‘rib’	<i>galëg ~ galog</i>	<i>galëm ~ galam</i>	<i>galën ~ galn</i>
<i>batë-</i>	‘head’	<i>batëg ~ batog</i>	<i>batëm ~ batam</i>	<i>batën ~ batn</i>
<i>delnge-</i>	‘ear’	<i>delngag</i>	<i>delngam</i>	<i>delngen</i>
<i>bongo-</i>	‘mouth’	<i>bongog</i>	<i>bongom</i>	<i>bongon</i>
<i>mobu-</i>	‘liver’	<i>mobug</i>	<i>mobum</i>	<i>mobun</i>
<i>dabakha-</i>	‘belly’	<i>dabakhag</i>	<i>dabakham</i>	<i>dabakhan</i>

Table 5 sets out patterns of alternation according to these generalisations for a representative set of directly possessed nouns. In addition to this variation in the root-final vowels with directly possessed nouns, roots ending in *në* systematically lose this syllable in association with the third person singular suffix *-n*. Thus, *vëvënë-* ‘(man’s) sister’ expresses a third person plural possessor as *vëvënë-r* ‘their sister’. However, to express a third person singular possessor we find only *vëvën* rather than expected **vëvënën*.

3.3.2.2 Indirectly possessed nouns

Pronominal possession of indirectly possessed nouns is expressed by means of postposed possessive pronouns. Nouns which express possession in this way are typically those that refer to things that are alienably possessed. However, while inalienable possession is typically expressed in Naman by means of direct possessive suffixation on the noun itself as described in §3.3.2.1, there is a substantial number of nouns expressing inalienably possessed items which function only as free nouns and which do not accept direct suffixation, including forms such as *bibi* ‘maternal uncle’ and *bubu* ‘grandparent’. The fact that there is some unpredictability as to which nouns will express possession according to which pattern is illustrated by the fact that *tenivë-* ‘wife’ enters into the direct possessive construction, while *niliëkh* ‘husband’ enters into the indirect possessive construction. However, the expression of such inalienably possessed items is expressed in exactly the same way as with indirectly possessed nouns which refer to items that are clearly inalienably possessed. Thus:

noag sog
canoe POSS:1SG
'my canoe'

niliëkh sog
husband POSS:1SG
'my husband'

Table 6: Possessive pronouns

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>(khë)sog</i>	Incl.	—	—
		Excl.	—	—
2	<i>(khë)sam</i>		—	—
3	<i>(khë)sen</i>		<i>(khë)seraru</i>	<i>(khë)ser</i>

With pronominal possessors of indirectly possessed nouns in the singular or in the third person, the category of the possessor is expressed by means of the possessive postmodifiers set out in Table 6. This table indicates that there are no separate forms for first and second person non-singular pronominal possessors. Indirect possession with these categories of possessors is expressed in the same way as for noun possessors, as described separately below. It will also be noted that these possessive pronouns clearly involve the same suffixes as set out in Table 4 for directly possessed nouns, though the root *(khë)sV-* to which they are added exhibits idiosyncratic alternations in the root-final vowels.

The brackets in Table 6 indicate that each possessive pronoun has a short and a long form. Thus:

libakh sog
dog POSS:1SG
'my dog'

babar khësen
pig POSS:3SG
'his/her pig'

The shorter forms—*sog*, *sam*, *sen*, *seraru* and *ser*—are much more frequently encountered in my corpus than the longer forms containing the initial syllable *khë-*.

According to the generalisations about the optional deletion of root-internal schwa described in §2.1.2.2, the vowel of this additional syllable is subject to frequent deletion, resulting also in forms such as the following:

nane khsog
mother POSS:1SG
'my mother'

No referential significance can be attached to the difference between longer and shorter forms when these possessive markers are used as nominal postmodifiers.⁷ However, only the longer forms beginning with *kh(ë)-* can be used independently as noun phrases in their own right when there is no overtly expressed possessum. For example:

Khäsen batë-n Ø-esëkh.
 POSS:3SG head-3SG 3SG:REAL-not.exist
 ‘His (fish) had no head.’

**Sen batë-n Ø-esëkh.*
 POSS:3SG head-3SG 3SG:REAL-not.exist

Pronominal possession involving both first and second person non-singular pronouns and nouns is expressed obligatorily by means of the following pattern in which the third person singular form from the paradigm in Table 6 links the possessum and the possessor:

POSSESSUM + (*khë*)*sen* + NOUN/FREE PRONOUN POSSESSOR

Thus:

numal (khë)sen bubu
 chief POSS:3SG grandfather
 ‘grandfather’s chief’

bësien (khë)sen kamem
 language POSS:3SG 1PL.EXCL
 ‘our (pl. excl.) language’

Following the pattern already described for directly possessed nouns, there are two competing constructions available when there is a singular pronominal possessor or a third person non-singular pronominal possessor. One uses the possessive postmodifiers set out in Table 6, while the other uses the same construction just described for first and second person non-singular pronominal possessors in which the independent pronoun (§3.1) follows (*khë*)*sen*. The following therefore represent referentially equivalent ways of expressing the same meaning:

neni (khë)sog
 coconut POSS:1SG
 ‘my coconut’

neni (khë)sen kine
 coconut POSS:3SG 1SG
 ‘my coconut’

In contrast to many of the languages of central and northern Vanuatu, no formal distinction is made in Naman between different types of possessive relationships in this indirect possessive construction, and we find this also in neighbouring Neve‘ei (Crowley 2002a:643) and Avava. There are, in particular, no separate markers for expressing the

⁷ One possible explanation for this kind of variation is that perhaps there were originally different geographically distributed possessive markers which, as a result of dialect levelling, may have both been incorporated as free variants in the modern language. Although there is no direct evidence for this in the case of Naman, a directly parallel development is well attested in modern Erromangan (Crowley 1997:48).

possession of items that are intended for drinking or eating in contrast to other kinds of alienable possessive relationships.⁸ Thus:

nowe sam
water POSS:2SG
'your water (to drink)'

natabal sam
dragon.plum POSS:2SG
'your dragon plum (to eat)'

lamas sam
garden POSS:2SG
'your garden'

However, there is a directly possessed noun of the shape *(de)nakha-/(de)naa-* meaning 'food (of)' which shows some signs that it might function as a kind of edible possessive marker. This form appears in a strictly nominal structural position in examples such as the following:

Ø-Khan denaa-n neto air.
3SG:REAL-eat food-3SG chicken PL
'(S)he ate the chickens' food.'

The same form can also appear as a nominal complement after an intransitive verb in a construction which directly parallels the benefactive use of possessive markers described in §5.3.3. When used in this way, *(de)nakha-/(de)naa-* expresses an edible benefactive relationship, i.e. the one for whom food is intended. In the following, for example, the verb *tabëkh* 'cook food' is intransitive so the following *nakha-n* 'his food' is clearly functioning as a benefactive complement marker rather than as an object noun phrase:

Ø-Tabëkh nakha-n lis.
3SG:REAL-cook.food ED-3SG again
'(S)he cooked food for him/her again.'

We even find occasional use in texts of *(de)nakha-/(de)naa-* following an object noun phrase in a way that makes it ambiguous between a benefactive interpretation and what is possibly a newly emergent edible possessive construction. Thus:

Ø-Ve nelag nakha-n.
3SG:REAL-make pudding ED-3SG
'(S)he made pudding for him/her.'
'(S)he made his/her pudding.'

3.3.2.3 The preposition *nen*

In addition to the possessive constructions described in §3.3.2.1 and §3.3.2.2, there is another possessive construction involving the preposition *nen*. This construction is used to

⁸ These kinds of distinctions are made, however, in V'ënen Taut (Fox 1979:40–41) and Northeast Malakula (McKerras 2000; Capell & Layard 1980:56). My own fieldwork on Tape indicates that similar distinctions are also made in this language.

express the possession of a free noun which refers to something other than a family member that is semantically inalienably possessed, and the structural pattern is as follows:

POSSESSUM + *nen* + NOUN/FREE PRONOUN POSSESSOR

This construction is encountered with only a restricted subset of inalienably possessed free nouns which refer to body parts that are in some sense ‘removable’ from the body, typically in the context of butchering a slaughtered animal for eating, e.g.

nuvidadam nen babar
heart POSS pig
‘pig’s heart’

This construction is also used with respect to a bodily product which, if it can be seen, is typically removed for aesthetic purposes or comfort. The example below indicates that the preposition *nen* can be followed by a pronominal possessor as well as a noun. The preposition itself does not exhibit an inflectional paradigm for different pronominal categories of possessor such as we find with the possessive constituent (*khë*)*sen*. It behaves, therefore, like the uninflected prepositions described in §5.3.1.1. Thus:

nede nen kine
blood POSS 1SG
‘my blood’

This construction has been attested in the expression of a number of other fairly specialised sorts of relationships, including the kind of relationship that pertains between a ghost and its corporeal possessor, and the relationship that pertains between a chief and his people:

demes nen teme-n
ghost POSS father-3SG
‘his/her father’s ghost’

numal nen mokh Nowiluv
chief POSS person Nowiluv
‘the Nowiluv people’s chief’

Finally, this construction can be used to express the relationship between the eldest child and his/her siblings. Thus:

atokh nen kine
last.born PART 1SG
‘the last child born after me’

Although my Naman corpus includes only a handful of nouns which express possession by means of the preposition *nen*, I have assembled a significantly larger lexical corpus in neighbouring Neve‘ei where a substantial number of nouns enter into exactly the same kind of relationship. A number of these refer to internal body parts: *navnenah* ‘kidney’, *neda’am welewel* ‘heart’, *nemeri* ‘spleen’, *netang* ‘placenta’, *nisilam* ‘bowel’, *noroun nubulat* ‘lung’, *nilinglang* ‘fat’. There is also a larger set of body products in Neve‘ei which express possession in this way, including the following: *nidri* ‘blood’, *navgorgor* ‘bubbly blood coming out of fresh deep wound’, *nobong* ‘ink (of octopus)’, *ninin* ‘pus’. However, a number of other nouns which fall outside these generalisations also enter into this possessive construction in Neve‘ei, e.g. *nimilier* ‘shadow’, *nemwelang* ‘spoor’, *na‘ava* ‘grave’, *na‘at* ‘lice’, *na‘ari* ‘hollow behind ear’. None of the corresponding forms

have been attested in possessive constructions in Naman so it is not known if the prepositionally expressed possessive construction in Naman has a similarly wide distribution to that which we find in Neve‘ei.

Although the preposition *nen* is overwhelmingly encountered in Naman in this kind of construction, the general oblique preposition *khën* (§5.3.1.3.2) has also sporadically been encountered in the same kinds of contexts. For example:

noutiret khën matërvarëkh
sweat OBL old.man
‘the old man’s sweat’

Finally, although possession with inalienably possessed free nouns is normally expressed by means of the construction described in §3.3.2.1, my Naman corpus does contain evidence of the sporadic use of the preposition *nen* as well. Contrast, therefore, the following examples in which apparently directly parallel possessive relationships are encoded by means of different constructions:

niliëkh sog
husband POSS:1SG
‘my husband’

netë-n nevdoro nen numal
child-3SG woman POSS chief
‘the chief’s daughter’

The preposition *nen* has a number of other functions which are distinct from the possessive function just described. The remaining functions of *nen* in the formation of complex noun phrases are set out below:

(a) It is used in phrases referring to someone or something which comes from or belongs to a particular place (or a kind of place). For example:

numal nen Nowiluv
chief PLACE Nowiluv
‘chief of Nowiluv’

nour nen nowe
prawn PLACE fresh.water
‘freshwater prawn’

(b) It can indicate that something is habitually characteristic of something else. For example:

nivël nen demes
month CHAR devil
‘December (lit. month of the devil)’

(c) It can indicate the purpose to which something is put. For example:

nokho nen bues
rope PURP pig
‘pig rope’

neni nen nelag
 coconut PURP pudding
 ‘coconut for the pudding’

(d) Finally, it can indicate that something is physically part of a larger whole. For example:

rel nen noag
 rail PART ship
 ‘rail of the ship’

meteli nen toti
 gate PART rubbish.dump
 ‘gate of the rubbish dump’

The preposition *nen* can be stranded with no following noun phrase if the referent of the second noun phrase can be deduced from the context. For example, the complex noun phrase:

bësien nen Khurni
 language PLACE Khurni
 ‘language of Khurni’

can be expressed as follows when the context makes it clear which place is being referred to:

bësien nen
 language PLACE
 ‘its language’

Related to the characterising function of *nen* is its use following a noun to express a noun phrase which refers to something that is characterised by the quality possessed by the noun. This corresponds to constructions involving ‘one’ in English, as illustrated by the following:

numin nen
 man CHAR
 ‘the male one’

This construction is used when the context makes it clear what kind of male entity is involved. For instance, if there had been previous reference to a male child and a female child, the speaker could subsequently refer to back to the male child by using a noun phrase of this type.

Finally, there is an idiomatic use of the pattern NOUN + *nen* which we encounter in the following time expressions (§5.3.5):

meren nen
 tomorrow CHAR
 ‘the next day’

boas nen
 day.after.tomorrow CHAR
 ‘the day after the next day’

metebëkh nen
 morning CHAR
 ‘the morning of that day, that morning’

Such constructions are used in sentences as adverbials (§5.3.5) in the following way:

At-irëb khën lis meren nen.
 3PL:REAL-do TR again tomorrow CHAR
 ‘They did it again the next day.’

Metebëkh nen Ø-var khën ai ...
 morning CHAR 3SG:REAL-say DAT 3SG
 ‘That morning, she said to him ...’

3.3.2.4 Preposed possessors

In all of the possessive constructions described in the preceding sections, the possessor follows the possessum. However, there are frequently encountered alternatives to these constructions in which the possessor appears before the possessum. With direct possessive constructions involving a nominal possessor (§3.3.2.1), the possessor can appear to the left of the inflected possessum within the noun phrase. This means that we encounter variation between the following patterns:

naabe-n noag
 sail-3SG canoe
 ‘the sail of the canoe’

noag naabe-n
 canoe sail-3SG
 ‘the sail of the canoe’

In the case of directly possessed nouns with pronominal possessive suffixes, the category of the possessor can also be expressed by means of a free pronoun before the possessum, but the possessor must still be marked by means of a pronominal suffix as well. We therefore encounter variation between the following patterns:

tenivë-g ~ kine tenivë-g
 wife-1SG 1SG wife-1SG
 ‘my wife’

Given that there is the additional option of expressing the possessor by means of a free form pronoun, the possessor can still be fronted in such a construction, though the possessor must also be expressed in the original position. This results in the following as additional options:

tenivë-n kine ~ kine tenivë-n kine
 wife-3SG 1SG 1SG wife-3SG 1SG
 ‘my wife’

With indirectly possessed nouns, in addition to the following pattern described in §3.3.2.2:

POSSESSUM + (*khë*)*sen* + POSSESSOR

we also find the following as yet another option:

POSSESSOR + POSSESSUM + (*khë*)*sen*

Note, therefore, the following alternatives:

neim (khë)sen matërvarëkh ~ matërvarëkh neim (khë)sen
 house POSS:3SG old.man old.man house POSS:3SG
 ‘the old man’s house’

It is equally possible for a pronominal possessor to be fronted in such a construction as a nominal possessor. We therefore find examples such as the following:

ai niëkh sen
 3SG fish POSS:3SG
 ‘his fish’

Preposed possessors appear to be more frequent with highly referential nouns such as nouns with human reference, while non-human possessors are more likely to be postposed.

Finally, in the case of possession involving the possessive preposition *nen* (§3.3.2.3), the possessum can appear at the beginning of the noun phrase while the preposition follows the possessum. Note, therefore, the following alternatives:

bësien nen Khurni ~ Khurni bësien nen
 language POSS Khurni Khurni language POSS
 ‘the language of Khurni’

In many other Vanuatu languages, it is possible to front a constituent—including also a typically postposed possessor within a possessive construction—in contexts where contrastive emphasis is being placed on the possessor. In Paamese, for example, there are possessive constructions which directly parallel the form of examples already presented in Naman. However, these are associated in Paamese with a difference in meaning. Examine, therefore, the following possessive constructions in which the first example is pragmatically neutral while the second is pragmatically marked:

aim mo-n ulumatu
 house POSS-3SG old.man
 ‘the old man’s house’

ulumatu aim mo-n
 old.man house POSS-3SG
 ‘the *old man*’s house (rather than the house of somebody else
 who you might be expecting me to be talking about)’

In Naman, however, these two constructions are both used in pragmatically neutral contexts.⁹ Where a possessor is topicalised in pragmatically marked contexts in Naman, it is instead fronted to the head of the clause rather than simply being fronted to the beginning of the noun phrase, as described in more detail in §6.6.1.

⁹ Similar patterns are frequently encountered locally in Bislama with alternations such as *haos blong olfala/olfala haos blong hem* ‘the old man’s house’ and *haos blong yutufala/blong yutufala haos* ‘your (dl.) house’. Very similar kinds of alternations are also encountered in the possessive constructions of Neve‘ei (Musgrave 2001:95–97) and Avava with no appreciable pragmatic considerations being involved in the use of the two patterns.

3.4 Noun phrase modifiers

While there was some discussion of pronominal postmodifiers in §3.1 above, this section will treat the wider set of possibilities for modifying the nominal head of a noun phrase. There are no pronominal modifiers in Naman, with all modifiers appearing after the nominal head. Multiple nominal postmodification is not commonly encountered in my corpus, though combinations of a numeral or quantifier (§3.4.1) and some other kind of modifier (§3.4.2, §3.4.3) are attested:

nevëns nge iru
 banana DEM two
 ‘these two bananas’

nevenu nsebnseb air
 village different PL
 ‘the different villages’

The nominal postmodifiers that have been attested fall into three major categories as described below: numerals and quantifiers, adjectives, and demonstratives.

3.4.1 Numerals and quantifiers

Table 7: Basic numerals

1	<i>savakh</i>
2	<i>iru</i>
3	<i>itël</i>
4	<i>ives</i>
5	<i>ilëm</i>
6	<i>nsous</i>
7	<i>nsuru</i>
8	<i>nsutël</i>
9	<i>nsoves</i>
10	<i>sangavël</i>
‘how many?’	<i>ivis</i>
‘many’	<i>ingët</i>

The numerals set out in Table 7 share certain aspects of their morphological behaviour with the interrogative form *ivis* ‘how many?’ and the quantifier *ingët* ‘many’, so these forms are all treated as members of a single word class.

These numerals and quantifiers can all function as noun phrase heads in their own right, for example:

Iru ra-mes.
 two 3DL:REAL-die
 ‘Two died.’

When numerals function as noun phrase heads in this way, they differ from noun phrases occupied by nominal heads and more closely resemble pronouns in that they cannot be

accompanied by any of the modifiers that are ordinarily permitted in other noun phrases. In such examples, these numerals are essentially functioning as ‘pro-NPs’, referring to some associated quantified noun phrase for which the referents can be deduced by referring either to the non-linguistic context or to previous discourse. More commonly, however, these numerals function as noun phrase modifiers which simply follow a modified noun. Thus:

mokhot iru
 person two
 ‘two people’

nevet sangavël
 stone ten
 ‘ten stones’

metenal ingët
 day many
 ‘many days’

The set of basic numerals in Table 7 can be expanded into an open-ended counting system in Naman. Numerals between 11 and 19 are expressed as compounds involving the basic numeral *sangavël* ‘ten’ followed by the form *daman*¹⁰ and the basic numerals 1–9, that is:

11	<i>sangavël daman savakh</i>
12	<i>sangavël daman iru</i>
13	<i>sangavël daman itël</i>
14	<i>sangavël daman ives</i>
15	<i>sangavël daman ilëm</i>
16	<i>sangavël daman nsous</i>
17	<i>sangavël daman nsuru</i>
18	<i>sangavël daman nsutël</i>
19	<i>sangavël daman nsoves</i>

Decades from twenty to ninety are expressed by means of the special compounding form of *sangavël* ‘ten’, i.e. *ngavël* (in alternation with the shorter form *ngavël*) followed directly by the basic numerals, that is:

20	<i>(na)ngavël iru</i>
30	<i>(na)ngavël itël</i>
40	<i>(na)ngavël ives</i>
50	<i>(na)ngavël ilëm</i>
60	<i>(na)ngavël nsous</i>
70	<i>(na)ngavël nsuru</i>
80	<i>(na)ngavël nsutël</i>
90	<i>(na)ngavël nsoves</i>

¹⁰ This form is clearly cognate with the Neve‘ei form *nedremwen* ‘his/her body’, which is used in an exactly parallel way in the formation of numerals in that language. However, *daman* in Naman has no attested independent function, and the inflected noun meaning ‘his/her body’ is unrelated in shape, i.e. *nibën*.

Intermediate numerals within these decades are expressed again by means of *daman* followed by the basic numerals. Thus:

25	(na)ngavël iru daman ilëm
38	(na)ngavël itël daman nsutël
99	(na)ngavël nsoves daman nsoves

A separate word for ‘hundred’ has also been recorded, i.e. *nongot*.¹¹ This behaves in the same way as the form *(na)ngavël* as far as linking with other numerals is concerned. For example:

100	<i>nongot savakh</i>
101	<i>nongot savakh daman savakh</i>
200	<i>nongot iru</i>
305	<i>nongot itël daman ilëm</i>
567	<i>nongot ilëm daman (na)ngavël nsous daman nsuru</i>

In common with what we find in most Vanuatu languages, the indigenous numerals described above have somewhat restricted—and diminishing—domains of usage in the present-day language. Certain counted items are almost never expressed by means of these numerals, with quantities being expressed instead by means of numerals directly incorporated from Bislama. In particular, amounts of money, as well as clock times and dates, are almost without exception expressed using Bislama-derived numerals which appear in pre-nominal position following the pattern found in Bislama. For example:

<i>ten</i>	<i>vatu</i>
ten	vatu
‘ten	vatu’
<i>sikis</i>	<i>klok</i>
six	o’clock
‘six	o’clock’

While the years in dates are also likely to be expressed by means of Bislama numerals, it is possible for a numeral expressing a decade and a unit to be introduced by the noun *neskho* ‘year’ to be used to express years, with the century left unstated. One speaker consciously attempted to avoid the use of borrowed numerals to express the year 1932 as follows:

<i>Mët-vale</i>	<i>Lenslens</i>	<i>khën</i>	<i>neskho</i>	<i>nangavël</i>	<i>itël</i>
1PL.EXCL:REAL-come	Litzlitz	TIME	year	ten	three
<i>daman</i>	<i>iru.</i>				
and	two				
‘We came to Litzlitz in (19)32.’					

¹¹ Separate numerals for one thousand and one million have not been recorded in Naman, though the use of *netar* ‘thousand’ and *namul* ‘million’ in neighbouring Neve‘ei suggests the possibility that such numbers may also have been found in Naman. Quite large numbers were needed traditionally in the counting of yams in association with the grade-taking ceremony, for which preparations often took up to ten years.

Table 8: Ordinal numerals

1st	<i>vom</i>
2nd	<i>kharuen</i>
3rd	<i>khatël nen</i>
4th	<i>ives nen</i>
5th	<i>khalëmen</i>
6th	<i>nsous nen</i>
7th	<i>nsuru nen</i>
8th	<i>nsutël nen</i>
9th	<i>nsoves nen</i>
10th	<i>sangavël nen</i>

In addition to the cardinal numerals described above, there is also a series of ordinals which can function either as nominal postmodifiers or as noun phrases in their own right. The ordinals for the first ten numerals are set out in Table 8. It can be seen that there is a variety of different ways of deriving ordinals from cardinal numerals.

The form meaning ‘first’ is in fact a verb with a completely suppletive shape. Thus:

Ba-mes bë-vom.
 3SG:IRR-die 3SG:IRR-first
 ‘(S)he will die first.’

The forms for ‘second’ and ‘fifth’ involve an initial element *kha-* which replaces the initial *i-*, with the *kha-* having no independent status in Naman. There is also a suffixed element *-en*, which likewise has no independent function.¹² The form for ‘third’ involves the same prefix *kha-* which replaces the initial *i-*, though this is followed by the preposition *nen* (§3.3.2.3). All remaining ordinals are expressed simply as the unaffixed cardinal numeral followed by the preposition *nen*. Examples:

Ai Ø-leg i neim kharuen.
 3SG 3SG:REAL-live LOC house second
 ‘(S)he lives in the second house.’

Khalëmen Ø-melili Ø-iv lakhe.
 fifth 3SG:REAL-return 3SG:REAL-go to.bush
 ‘The fifth one returned to the bush.’

Although numerals can all function in Naman as both pro-NPs and as nominal postmodifiers, they also exhibit some vestigial verbal properties, a feature which they share with many other languages of central Vanuatu, e.g. Neve‘ei (Musgrave 2001:50–51), V‘ënen Taut (Fox 1979:88–89), Northeast Malakula (McKerras 2000) and Paamese (Crowley 1982:72).

¹² There is, however, a vestigial transitive suffix *-Vn* (§4.2.3) which may be related to this suffix.

Table 9: Numerals with irrealis and negative inflection

	Irrealis	Negative realis	Negative irrealis
1	<i>bəsavakh</i>	<i>səsavakhsi</i>	<i>bəsəsavakhsi</i>
2	<i>baru</i>	<i>sarusi</i>	<i>bəsarusi</i>
3	<i>batël</i>	<i>satëlsi</i>	<i>bəsatëlsi</i>
4	<i>baves</i>	<i>savesi</i>	<i>bəsavesi</i>
5	<i>balëm</i>	<i>salëmsi</i>	<i>bësalëmsi</i>
6	<i>bënsous</i>	<i>sënsousi</i>	<i>bësënsousi</i>
7	<i>bënsuru</i>	<i>sënsurusi</i>	<i>bësënsurusi</i>
8	<i>bënsutl</i>	<i>sënsutlsi</i>	<i>bësënsutëlsi</i>
9	<i>bënsoves</i>	<i>sënsovesi</i>	<i>bësënsovesi</i>
10	<i>bësangavël</i>	<i>sësangavëlsi</i>	<i>bësësangavëlsi</i>
‘how many?’	<i>bavis</i>	— ¹³	—
‘many’	<i>bangët</i>	<i>sangëtssi</i>	<i>bësangëtssi</i>

The initial vowel *i-* on the numerals 2–5 in Naman, as well as on the interrogative *ivis* ‘how many’ and the quantifier *ingët* ‘many’, reflects an earlier third person singular realis prefix of the shape *i-* which has been reanalysed as part of the root. This is a development which is shared with a number of synchronically fully verbal forms in Naman (§2.3.4, §2.4, §4.1.1). However, each of the basic numerals has a corresponding irrealis and negative form as set out in Table 9, with the affixes clearly identical to the irrealis and negative marking for third person singular verbs (§4.1.1).¹⁴

These inflected numerals can be used as verbs in their own right, as in the following:

Kine në-sav-savakh.

1SG 1SG:REAL-REDUP-one

‘I am by myself.’

Ø-Sa-ru-si, savakh ne.

3SG:REAL-NEG-two-NEG one only

‘It wasn’t two, it was just one.’

However, when a noun phrase containing any of the basic numerals from Table 7 appears as a postmodifier to an object of a verb carrying irrealis inflectional marking, the numeral obligatorily appears in the corresponding irrealis form. Compare the following in which

¹³ The predicted form here is *savisi*, but such a form is semantically impossible.

¹⁴ Bislama-derived numerals never accept any of this vestigial verbal morphology when they are used in Naman sentences. Compare, therefore, the following in which both indigenous and Bislama-derived numerals are used:

Bë-tëkh bë-sangavël.

1SG:IRR-take 3SG:IRR-ten

Bë-tëkh ten.

1SG:IRR-take ten

**Bë-tëkh bë-ten.*

1SG:IRR-take 3SG:IRR-ten

‘I will take ten.’

the subject noun phrase contains the uninflected numeral *iru* ‘two’ while the object noun phrase contains the same numeral in the corresponding irrealis form:

Mokhot iru bër-vale.
 person two 3DL:IRR-come
 ‘Two people will come.’

Kë-tëkh nava-n ba-ru.
 2SG:IRR-take fruit-3SG IRR-two
 ‘Get two fruits (of it).’

These inflected numerals are also used when the numeral is not following an overtly expressed object but where the object can be deduced from the context, as in the following:

Bë-tëkh ba-tël, bë-sa-ru-si.
 1SG:IRR-take IRR-three IRR-NEG-two-NEG
 ‘I will take three, not two.’

In fact, an irrealis verb need not even be overtly expressed if this can be deduced from the context. Someone in a store may want to ask for an particular number of some item, in which case the following exchange between the storekeeper and the customer would be possible:

Ba-vis? Ba-ru.
 IRR-how.many IRR-two
 ‘How many (would you like to have)? (I would like to have) two.’

The marking of numerals with irrealis mood extends also to forms that appear as modifiers to noun phrases which function as objects to core-layer serial verb constructions (§6.2.1). For example:

Bët-leg bëtev bë-jëber metenal bë-nsuru.
 3PL:IRR-stay ACC 3SG:IRR-go.until day IRR-seven
 ‘They will stay with him for seven days.’

In fact, numerals with irrealis inflection can appear even in oblique positions such as prepositional object (§5.3.1), as in the following:

Ba-vil khën metenal ba-lëm sëkh bë-sangavël.
 3SG:IRR-eat.from.taboo.fire DUR day IRR-five or IRR-ten
 ‘He will eat from the taboo fire for five or ten days.’

The negative forms of these numerals can also be used as postmodifiers within a noun phrase. Thus, compare the following:

Mokhot ingët at-vale.
 person many 3PL:REAL-come
 ‘Many people came.’

Mokhot sa-ngëji at-vale.
 person NEG-many:NEG 3SG:REAL-come
 ‘Not many people came.’

The negative irrealis forms are used in contexts which parallel the use of the corresponding affirmative irrealis numerals, as illustrated by the form *bësarusi* ‘it will not be two’ in following example, which appears above:

Bë-tëkh ba-tël, bë-sa-ru-si.
 1SG:IRR-take IRR-three IRR-NEG-two-NEG
 ‘I will take three, not two.’

There is a variety of other nominal postmodifiers expressing quantity which exhibit no vestigial verbal morphology. These quantifiers remain invariant in shape regardless of the structural environment in which the noun phrase appears. The independent third person non-singular pronouns (*r*)*aru* ‘3DL’ and *air* ‘3PL’ (§3.1) can be used as nominal postmodifiers to mark definite noun phrases expressing dual and plural number respectively. These postposed number markers can be used with noun phrases having both inanimate and animate reference. Thus:

birav aru
 lesser.yam DL
 ‘the two lesser yams’

bubu air
 grandfather PL
 ‘the grandfathers’

However, while the presence of such markers appears to be genuinely random with animate nouns, with textual counts indicating that about half of such nouns with plural reference are associated with such markers and half are not, there is much less likelihood of referentially plural nouns with inanimate reference appearing with these markers. Textual counts indicate that as few as 15.6% of referentially plural inanimate nouns are associated with overt marking of plurality. A non-singular noun is not overtly marked for number by means of (*r*)*aru* or *air* if there is overt marking for number elsewhere in the noun phrase. Thus:

*mokhot ingët (*air)*
 person many PL
 ‘many people’

Given that there is obligatory pronominal cross-reference between the subject and verb (§4.1.1), it is also possible for non-singular subjects to be unmarked for number within the noun phrase. When the noun phrase is unmarked for number, plurality is overtly marked only by means of subject cross-referencing on the verb. Compare, therefore, the following in which the noun phrase *netite numin* ‘boys’ receives no overt marking for number within the noun phrase in the first example, while in the second example, *Merika air* ‘Americans’ does receive overt plural marking:

Netite numin at-leg bëtev sëne-r.
 child male 3PL:REAL-live ACC mother-3PL
 ‘The boys live with their mother.’

Merika air at-lue noag it Ø-vom.
 American PL 3PL:REAL-shoot.at canoe REL 3SG:REAL-first
 ‘The Americans shot at the first canoe.’

A singular indefinite noun phrase is marked by postposed *tuen*, for example:

neim tuen
house INDEF
'a (particular) house'

Finally, we find a number of additional postmodifying quantifiers within noun phrases, including the following:

*tabakh*¹⁵ 'all, every, both'
ngëtngët 'all, every'
natuen 'some, part of'
tëleb 'many'
tuen air 'some'

For example:

metebëkh tabakh
morning every
'every morning'

metenal ngëtngët
day every
'every day'

mokhot natuen
person some
'some people'

mokhot tëleb
person many
'many people'

Note that the forms *tuen* 'one', *tuen air* 'some' and *natuen* 'some' can also function as noun phrases in their own right. For example:

Tuen Ø-vale.
one 3SG:REAL-come
'One came.'

Natuen air at-bële nevdoro d-orebev.
some PL 3PL:REAL-marry woman PERSON-Uripiv
'Some of them married women from Uripiv.'

Although number is marked syntactically in Naman by means of nominal postmodifiers, two nouns have been attested with distinct singular and plural forms:

Singular	Plural	
<i>matërvarëkh</i>	<i>matërvëvrëkh</i>	'old man'
<i>lektërvarëkh</i>	<i>lektërvëvrëkh</i>	'old woman'

These forms correspond to the number-indeterminate nouns *matro* 'old man' and *lektër* 'old woman', which are used as address terms. The remaining elements *varëkh* and *vëvrëkh* correspond respectively to the singular and plural forms of the adjective (§3.4.2)

¹⁵ *Tabakh* is multifunctional, appearing sometimes as a post-verbal modifier (§4.3.1.6) and sometimes as a nominal postmodifier with very similar meanings.

meaning ‘small, little’.¹⁶ Note that these specifically plural nouns can still be further modified by means of postposed plural markers. For example:

Tokhe matërvëvrëkh air at-leg Tovorëm.
 long.time.ago old.men PL 3PL:REAL-live Tovorëm
 ‘A long time ago the old men lived at Tovorëm.’

3.4.2 Adjectives

Adjectives can be defined in Naman as forms which can appear in the following structural environments:

- immediately after a noun with no inflectional marking.
- as the comment in a verbless clause after a noun phrase (§5.1.4)

A form such as *tinseb* ‘different’ can therefore be described as an adjective on the basis of its behaviour in the following examples:

Në-lis neste tinseb air.
 1SG:REAL-see thing different PL
 ‘I can see different things.’

Nangsa-m tinseb.
 name-2SG different
 ‘Your name is different.’

In keeping with what we typically find in the languages of central and northern Vanuatu, only a fairly restricted set of adjectives is found in Naman, including the following:

<i>bolo</i>	‘large, big’
<i>(it)varëkh</i>	‘small, little (sg.)’
<i>vëvrëkh</i>	‘small, little (pl.)’
<i>iis</i>	‘bad’
<i>toro</i>	‘old’
<i>nsebenseb</i>	‘different, other’
<i>insebi</i>	‘different, other’
<i>tinseb</i>	‘different, ordinary’
<i>burong</i>	‘ordinary, plain’
<i>dongon</i>	‘all kinds of, different kinds of’
<i>lele</i>	‘all kinds of, different kinds of’
<i>khëmir</i>	‘left (hand)’
<i>khëmetu</i>	‘right (hand)’
<i>rangan</i>	‘next’

¹⁶ The meaning of ‘old man’ is frequently expressed in my Naman corpus by means of the Bislama borrowing *olfala*, though this is commonly followed by the same forms marking the distinction between singular and plural, i.e. *olfalavarëkh* ‘old man’ and *olfalavëvrëkh* ‘old men’.

Of these forms, *tëvarëkh* ‘small, little’ can be related in form to the corresponding verbal root *varëkh* by means of a prefix of the form *të-*. Some form of this prefix may also be involved in the relationship between the adjective *tinseb* ‘different, ordinary’ and the verb *insebi* ‘different’. However, if this is correctly analysed as a prefix, it must be viewed as a purely vestigial adjectival derivative in Naman.

Most stative meanings are expressed in Naman by means of inflected intransitive verbs rather than by uninflected adjectives. However, given that the third person singular realis inflectional prefix on verbs has the form of zero (§4.1.1), and given that relative clauses can occasionally also be introduced by zero (§3.4.4), there is very little surface difference between many instances of NOUN + ADJECTIVE and NOUN + RELATIVE CLAUSE. We therefore find potentially ambiguous examples such as the following:

<i>nelag</i>	<i>tëleb</i>	<i>nelag</i>	∅	∅- <i>tëleb</i>
pudding	large	pudding	REL	3SG:REAL-large
‘large pudding’		‘pudding which is large’		
<i>bubu</i>	<i>toro</i>	<i>bubu</i>	∅	∅- <i>toro</i>
grandfather	old	grandfather	REL	3SG:REAL-old
‘old grandfather’		‘grandfather who is old’		

However, the fact that forms such as *tëleb* ‘large’ and *toro* ‘old’ should be treated as inflected verbs rather than uninflected adjectives is indicated by their acceptance of verbal inflectional marking in examples such as the following, where *tëleb* and *toro* appear in environments other than those which call for third person singular realis affirmative inflection:

<i>Kë-toro.</i>
2SG:IRR-old
‘You will be old.’
<i>Nowe ∅-së-tëleb-si.</i>
water 3SG:REAL-NEG-abundant-NEG
‘The water was not abundant.’

3.4.3 Demonstratives

There is a variety of additional postnominal modifiers in Naman which provide locational and contextual specification about which it is difficult to offer much detail given that this language has not been (and probably never will be) heard spontaneously in conversation. Forms of this type include *nen*, *nakh* ~ *nokh*, *nge* and *net*, for which the common glosses ‘this’ or ‘that’ will be offered. Thus:

∅- <i>Var</i>	<i>bë-vibën</i>	<i>mokh</i>	<i>nen.</i>
3SG:REAL-want	3SG:IRR-kill	person	DEM
‘He wanted to kill that person.’			
<i>Në-rov</i>	<i>nibu</i>	<i>nakh.</i>	
1SG:REAL-hold	bamboo	DEM	
‘I held that bamboo.’			

Matërvarëkh nge Ø-khan birav nge aru.
 old.man DEM 3SG:REAL-eat lesser.yam DEM DL
 ‘The old man ate those two lesser yams.’

Matërvarëkh net Ø-khan-ër.
 old.man DEM 3SG:REAL-eat-3PL
 ‘That old man ate them.’

The form *nakh* is also attested without the initial consonant with the cliticised alternative form *-akh* being attached to the final constituent of the preceding noun phrase. For example:

Kine ne-ve misnari-akh.
 1SG 1SG:REAL-COP missionary-DEM
 ‘I am that missionary.’

Ai-akh mokhot sëkh.
 3SG-DEM human NEG
 ‘He (there) is not a human.’

Under the heading of demonstratives, mention should also be made of the three nouns *man-*, *den-* and *tan-* which differ from other nouns in that they are obligatorily accompanied by one of the demonstratives (as described in §3.2).

3.4.4 Relative clauses

Also included in this discussion of the noun phrase is the behaviour of relative clauses, i.e. clausal postmodifiers within a noun phrase. Relative clauses in Naman are overwhelmingly introduced by the form *i* (occasionally *it* or *tit*, as discussed below). When the relativised noun phrase is the subject of the lower clause, the original noun phrase is normally deleted and the site of the deletion is indicated by the obligatory subject-mood prefixation on the lower verb. When this is a third person singular verb, the prefix on the verb in fact has zero realisation (§4.1.1), as illustrated by the following:

Lektërvarëkh Ø-tëkh lue nibë-n i Ø-toro.
 old.woman 3SG:REAL-take out body-3SG REL 3SG:REAL-old
 ‘The old woman took off her body which was old.’

The relativised noun phrase can also be the subject of a non-verbal clause, in which case there is also no marking of the site of the deleted noun phrase. For example:

A-ter kalek tuen it Ø-uvov.
 3PL:REAL-tear cloth one REL 3SG:REAL-white
 ‘They tore a cloth which was white.’

However, if the relative clause is a particularly long one, there is likely to be an overt pronominal trace in the form of one of the independent pronouns (§3.1) at the site of the coreferential noun phrase in the lower clause. For example:

Mokh i Ø-metër bëtev matërvarëkh nge ai Ø-leg
 person REL 3SG:REAL-sleep with old.man DEM 3SG 3SG:REAL-sit

vaas bëkhët.

still inside

‘The person who was sleeping with the old man was still sitting inside.’

Relative clauses can also be associated with a pronominal head. In such cases, the subject marking on the subject of the lower verb is in the third person regardless of the pronominal category of the pronoun which functions as the head of the relative clause. Thus:

Igem i b-utbu atokh ba-var khën-gën.

2PL REL 3SG:IRR-run last 3SG:IRR-say GOAL-1SG

‘Whoever of you runs last will tell me (lit. you all who will run last ...).’

Air it Ø-utbu atokh Ø-vale.

3PL REL 3SG:REAL-run last 3SG:REAL-come

‘The one of them who ran last has come.’

When the relativised noun phrase is the object of the lower verb, this will normally be marked by means of zero pronominal trace in the case of a singular noun, just as we find with singular pronominal objects in matrix clauses (§4.1.4). Thus:

Noag i mët-lev Ø Ø-varëkh.

canoe REL 1PL.EXCL:REAL-take 3SG 3SG:REAL-small

‘The canoe which we took was small.’

Mokh i ke-lis Ø iar e demes.

person REL 2SG:IRR-see 3SG there SUBSEQ devil

‘The person who you will see there will then be a devil.’

However, a relativised plural noun will be overtly marked by means of a pronominal trace in the form of the object suffix *-ër* on the verb (§4.1.4). For example:

Më-tëkh melili-an noag i mët-utbu-an-ër

1PL.EXCL:REAL-take back-TR canoe REL 1PL.EXCL:REAL-sail-TR-3PL

lis Ajin.

back Atchin

‘We replaced the canoes which we had sailed back to Atchin.’

Another possibility is for the site of the relativised object to be marked by means of a demonstrative (§3.4.3). For example:

Ø-Mensan nibëv i na-var Ø-lue net

3SG:REAL-look.for fish.sp. REL 1SG:REAL-say 3SG:REAL-shoot DEM

Ø-vësan aut iar.

3SG:REAL-throw ashore there

‘He looked for the *nibëv*-fish which I said he had shot and thrown ashore there.’

Matërvarëkh tuen Ø-iv i nakhe sen i

old.man INDEF 3SG:REAL-go GOAL log POSS:3SG REL

Ø-ma-utbu-an net.

3SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-sail-TR DEM

‘An old man went into his log that he sailed in.’

While the most frequently relativised noun phrases are, perhaps unsurprisingly, subjects and objects of the lower clause, we do encounter relativisation of prepositional objects as well. In such cases, an uninflected preposition is stranded, with the coreferential noun phrase in the lower clause simply deleted. We therefore find examples such as the following in which the uninflected locative preposition *i* (§5.3.1.1.1) appears in the lower clause with no following noun phrase or pronominal trace:

At-khël neim khën netite air at-ma-sukul i.
 3PL:REAL-build house REL child PL 3PL:REAL-CONT/HAB-go.to.school LOC
 ‘They built a house that the children could go to school in.’

However, the inflected prepositions *bëtev* ‘accompanitive’ (§5.3.1.3.1), *jëkhën* ‘personal spatial’ (§5.3.1.2) and *khën* ‘oblique’ (§5.3.1.3.2) accept either nominal or verbal inflectional suffixes, and these inflectional suffixes mark the site of relativised noun phrases in the same way that we find with verbal objects. For example:

At-vërékhës matërvëvrëkh tit kine ne-leg bëtev-ër.
 3PL:REAL-call old.men REL 1SG 1SG:REAL-live ACC-3PL
 ‘They called the old men who I live with.’

Në-mensan mokhot tit khë-lev nakhanien khën-Ø.
 1SG:REAL-look.for person REL 2SG:REAL-give food GOAL-3SG
 ‘I am looking for the person who you gave the food to.’

Although the vast majority of relative clauses in Naman are introduced by *i*, there is a small number of examples in which other forms are also encountered performing this function, as indicated in some of the immediately preceding examples, i.e. *it* and *tit*. The following illustrate the use of *it* in such constructions:

Mokh it Ø-imes Ø-ma-v alo.
 person REL 3SG:REAL-die 3SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-go coast
 ‘A person who dies goes down to the coast.’

Merika at-lue noag it Ø-vom.
 American 3PL:REAL-shoot.at canoe REL 3SG:REAL-first
 ‘The Americans shot at the first canoe.’

Ø-Bët nakhe it na-var bë-së-bët-si.
 3SG:REAL-cut tree REL 1SG:REAL-say 3SG:IRR-NEG-cut-NEG
 ‘He cut the tree that I said he shouldn’t cut.’

The following exemplifies the use of *tit* as a functionally equivalent form:

Ø-Vale i bungusë-n Aure tit Ø-iv Malo i.
 3SG:REAL-come GOAL point-3SG Aore REL 3SG:REAL-go Malo GOAL
 ‘He came to the point of Aore Island which goes to Malo Island.’

The form *nen*, which is far more frequently attested in its functions as a demonstrative (§3.4.3) and as a preposition (§3.3.2.3), is also occasionally attested as a relative clause marker, as illustrated by the following:

Rë-sage mokhot iru nen rë-bële-bële
 3DL:REAL-give.birth.to person two REL 3DL:REAL-REDUP-marry

melili-an raru.

return-TR 3DL

‘The two of them gave birth to two people who married each other.’

Ø-Lis netitevën nen Ø-ides navon.

3SG:REAL-see girl REL 3SG:REAL-nice very

‘He saw a girl who was very nice.’

Although *nen* is only occasionally encountered as the marker of a relative clause which involves relativisation of verbal subjects or objects or prepositional objects, it is the only option when dealing with the relativisation of a possessor noun phrase in a possessive construction. Thus:

Ø-Lev birav nen nesna-n iru.

3SG:REAL-take lesser.yam REL tuber-3SG two

‘He took the lesser yam which had two tubers.’

Mokhot Ø-khawes i nevet nen nangse-n Malvetrakhrakh.

person 3SG:REAL-originate SOURCE rock REL name-3SG Malvetrakhrakh

‘The person originated from the rock whose name was Malvetrakhrakh.’

As mentioned above, another pattern that is attested involves relative clauses that are introduced by means of the form *khën*. The primary function of *khën* is that of an oblique preposition (§5.3.1.3.2), though it also functions as a general subordinator (§6.5.1.6). However, we find occasional examples such as the following where it clearly introduces a relative clause in alternation with the other relative clause markers set out above:

At-khël neim khën netite air at-ma-sukul i.

3PL:REAL-build house REL child PL 3PL:REAL-CONT/HAB-go.to.school LOC

‘They built a house that the children could go to school in.’

Ba-var usër mesel khën Ø-vale i mete-n nowe.

1SG:IRR-talk about clam REL 3SG:REAL-come SOURCE eye-3SG water

‘I will talk about the clam that came from the spring.’

Finally, we have the least widely encountered relative clause construction, in which there is no introducer at all at the head of the clause. We therefore very occasionally encounter constructions such as the following:

Ø-Lis nevetevet Ø matërvarëkh Ø-lëng nedum air i.

3SG:REAL-see platform REL old.man 3SG:REAL-put yam PL LOC

‘He saw the platform that the old man had put the yams on.’

However, zero-marked relative clauses are common when an otherwise unmodified noun is modified by a stative verb, as exemplified in §3.4.2. Zero-marked relative clauses are also commonly used as alternatives to the construction described above involving *nen* when a possessor noun phrase is relativised. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Ø-Ve netite Ø nibë-n Ø-uvov.

3SG:REAL-COP child REL body-3SG 3SG:REAL-white

‘He was a child whose body was white.’

Matërvarëkh tuen Ø dalë-n Ø-iis Ø-var ...
 old.man INDEF REL leg-3SG 3SG:REAL-bad 3SG:REAL-say
 ‘An old man who had a bad leg said ...’

It is particularly common for a noun phrase referring to a person or thing to be followed by a zero-marked relative clause expressing the name of that person or thing. For example:

Davala tuen nangse-n Leong Ø-var ...
 person.from.Wala INDEF name-3SG Leong 3SG:REAL-say
 ‘A person from Wala whose name was Leong said ...’

The relative clauses described above all involve clausal modifiers to overtly expressed noun phrases within the matrix clause. However, we also frequently encounter headless relative clauses in Naman, i.e. clauses modifying a generic noun phrase—either human or non-human—which is not overtly expressed in the main clause. Headless relative clauses are introduced by the form *tet*, but otherwise behave in exactly the same way as other relative clauses.¹⁷ We therefore find examples such as the following:

Tet na-var khën-ëm us khë-lue lis.
 REL 1SG:REAL-mention DAT-2SG perhaps 2SG:REAL-shoot again
 ‘Perhaps you shot again what I mentioned to you.’

Ø-Ve tet na-var bë-se-ve-si.
 3SG:REAL-do REL 1SG:REAL-say 3SG:IRR-NEG-do-NEG
 ‘(S)he did what I said (s)he should not do.’

Bë-dongodongon tet Ø-lev-ër.
 3SG:IRR-distribute REL 3SG:REAL-catch-3PL
 ‘He will distribute those (fish) which he had caught.’

Mët-lev tet mët-lëng-lëng-ër Ajin.
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-pick.up REL 1PL.EXCL:REAL-REDUP-leave-3PL Atchin
 ‘We picked up those (people) who we had left on Atchin.’

Headless relative clauses of this type are frequently encountered as verbal subjects, as in the following, where the relative clause is interpreted as modifying an unspecified noun phrase meaning ‘something’ or ‘someone’:

Tet Ø-iis tuen bë-vale bë-tavëns jëkhë-n kamem.
 REL 3SG:REAL-bad INDEF 3SG:IRR-come 3SG:IRR-happen GOAL-3SG 1PL.EXCL
 ‘Something bad will come and happen to us.’

Tet Ø-vom Ø-var khën tet Ø-varëkh ...
 REL 3SG:REAL-first 3SG:REAL-say GOAL REL 3SG:REAL-little
 ‘The eldest (child) said to the youngest (child) ...’

Although *tet* is normally used to introduce a headless relative clause, there is a substantial number of examples in my corpus of what might be referred to as ‘afterthought’ headless relative clause constructions which are set off from the main part of the sentence

¹⁷ It will be remembered from §3.3.1.1 that *tet* also has the function of deriving a compound noun referring to a person (or people) from a particular place when used in association with a following place name.

by means of an intonation break (represented in the examples below by a comma). We therefore encounter examples such as the following:

Kët-khov nevëns, tet ra-var bour i net.
 2PL:IRR-plant banana REL IMP:REAL-say bour INST DEM
 ‘You will all plant the banana, the one that is called *bour* (i.e. ... ‘for which one says *bour*).’

Neste tinseb, tet Ø-lev melë-n misnari.
 thing different REL 3SG:REAL-take place-3SG missionary
 ‘It was a different thing, that which replaced the missionary.’

Navas Ø-vër tabakh i main, tet at-lëkh ëns.
 oar 3SG:REAL-strike completely LOC mine REL 3PL:REAL-lay PERF
 ‘The oar struck right into the mine, that which they had laid.’

Although *tet* is overwhelmingly found with no antecedent noun phrase, in these afterthought relative clauses the relative clause is clearly associated with a noun phrase. In such cases, the structure is little different from the ordinary relative clauses described earlier in which an antecedent head is present. Thus, *tet* appears to be moving into functional overlap with the other relative clause markers described above, i.e. *i(t)*, *tit*, *nen* and *khën*.

3.5 Coordinated noun phrases

Any noun phrase that is constituted according to the patterns described in the preceding sections of this chapter can be combined with another noun phrase to make up what we can refer to as a coordinated noun phrase. The simplest pattern is that in which the two noun phrases are simply juxtaposed with only an intonation break signalling the fact that there are two separate noun phrases involved. For example:

At-mensan mere, nour i nowe.
 3PL:REAL-look.for eel prawn LOC river
 ‘They looked for eels and prawns in the river.’

However, it is far more common for noun phrase coordination to be overtly expressed in some way. One common means is to use the form *bële*. This can be inflected as a verb to mean either ‘accompany, go with’ or, in an extended sense, ‘marry’. However, this inflected verb can also be used as a noun phrase coordinator, as in the following:

bubu Ø-bële nane
 grandfather 3SG:REAL-accompany mother
 ‘grandfather and mother’

mokh varëkh Ø-bële nane sen
 person little 3SG:REAL-accompany mother POSS:3SG
 ‘the little boy and his mother’

Bële can be used to coordinate two nouns, as in the examples just provided, or it can coordinate a noun and an independent pronoun, as in the following:

ai \emptyset -*bële* *sëne-n*
 3SG 3SG:REAL-accompany mother-3SG
 ‘he and his mother’

nane sog \emptyset -*bële* *kamemru*
 mother POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-accompany 1DL.EXCL
 ‘my mother and the two of us’

Most instances of *bële* being used as a noun phrase coordinator involve zero-subject marking, as in the examples just presented, but it should be pointed out that this form still retains its verbal inflectional morphology, as illustrated by coordinate noun phrases such as the following where the initial noun phrase does not have third person singular reference:

kine ne-bële *nane sog*
 1SG 1SG:REAL-accompany mother POSS:1SG
 ‘my mother and I’

However, such constituents fit into ordinary noun phrase positions within the clause despite their superficial appearance as clauses in their own right. Thus:

Ka-var khën tavë-m \emptyset -*bële* *sëna-m.*
 2SG:IRR-say DAT father-2SG 3SG:REAL-accompany mother-2SG
 ‘Tell your father and mother.’

Another possibility for coordinating two noun phrases is to use the accompanitive preposition *bëtev* (*khën*) (§5.3.1.2). For example:

numin bëtev nevdoro
 man ACC woman
 ‘man and woman’

A final possibility, which is only occasionally attested, involves the use of *e* as a noun phrase coordinator. This form is very frequently attested as a clausal coordinator (§6.4), but it can be used as a noun phrase coordinator as well, in examples such as the following:

\emptyset -*Lev babar nevdoro tuen e numin tuen.*
 3SG:REAL-give pig woman INDEF and man INDEF
 ‘He gave a sow and a boar.’

The form *sëkh*, which also means ‘no’ and is used to negate non-verbal clauses (§5.1), is used to express disjunction between noun phrases. For example:

numin sëkh nevdoro
 man or woman
 ‘man or woman’

A noun phrase modifier that is disjunctively associated with a single noun can also be linked by *sëkh*, as in the following:

Ba-vil khën metenal ba-lëm sëkh bë-sangavël.
 3SG:IRR-eat.from.taboo.fire DUR day IRR-five or IRR-ten
 ‘He will eat from a taboo fire for five or ten days.’

4 *Verbs and the verb complex*

This chapter describes the morphological behaviour of verbs in Naman, as well as the syntactic behaviour of closely related constituents within what we might refer to as the verb complex. While the noun phrase has fairly clearly definable boundaries, this is less true of the verb complex. Different linguists may therefore prefer to see fewer (or more) types of constituents included within the purview of this chapter.¹ I have made decisions about what to include within this chapter largely on the basis of what is descriptively convenient.

4.1 Verbal inflection

Verbs in Naman obligatorily mark the pronominal category of the subject by means of inflectional prefixation, which is also associated with the marking of a variety of tense/mood distinctions. A summary of the full range of morphotactic options that can be marked on Naman verbs is captured by the following general statement:

SUBJECT/MOOD + NEGATIVE₁ + CONTINUOUS-HABITUAL/ADVERSATIVE + ROOT + OBJECT + NEGATIVE₂

This indicates that negation is marked discontinuously in Naman by means of both a prefixed and a suffixed element. There are three morphotactic positions before the root involving an initial subject/mood marker, which is followed by the first element of negation if it is present, and with a following prefix expressing the categories of continuous/habitual or adversative if they are present. Following the root we find the pronominal object suffixes, which may then be followed by the suffixed element of the negative simulfix.

4.1.1 Subject-mood marking

Verbs are obligatorily marked in Naman with one of two sets of prefixes which distinguish the full set of pronominal contrasts set out in §3.1, as well as an additional subject category referred to here as the impersonal subject. In addition to these subject categories, there is a two-way distinction between realis and irrealis mood.

¹ I eschew the term ‘verb phrase’ to side-step any discussion about whether the verb and its object should be treated as a constituent. For the purposes of *this* description, the object is not treated as part of the verb complex. The relationship between the verb and its object is described in this grammar separately in §5.2.

4.1.1.1 *Realis and irrealis mood*

The two sets of prefixes correspond to a basic distinction between realis and irrealis, with realis prefixes expressing the following:

- Events which take place in the present, for example:

Mër-sabe usër bësien Lëngalëng.
 1DL.EXCL:REAL-talk about language Lëngalëng
 ‘We are talking about the language of Lëngalëng.’

- Events which took place in the past, for example:

Air at-bële nevdoro nevenu nsebseb air.
 3PL 3PL:REAL-marry woman village other PL
 ‘They married women of other villages.’

- General statements about the world for which there is no specific time reference asserted, for example

Khët-ma-khan nokhutë-n buag?
 2PL:REAL-CONT/HAB-eat stem-3SG taro
 ‘Do you (pl.) eat taro stems?’

Irrealis prefixes, on the other hand, encode a wide range of non-real events, including the following:

- Events which will, or might, take place in the future, for example:

Bësien Lëngalëng bë-sëkhar.
 language Lëngalëng 3SG:IRR-disappear
 ‘The language of Lëngalëng will disappear.’

- Events encoded by a verb which is preceded by the adverbial *varsakh* ‘nearly, almost’, for example:

Mokhot varsakh ba-mes tabakh.
 person nearly 3SG:IRR-die all
 ‘Nearly everybody died.’

- Events which the speaker intends the addressee(s) to perform as a result of what the speaker says, i.e. the imperative. In Naman, there are no inflectionally distinct imperative forms of the verb. Thus:

Ka-v kë-tëkh.
 2SG:IRR-go 2SG:IRR-take
 ‘Go and take it!’

- Events which the speaker intends the addressee(s) *not* to perform as a result of what is said, i.e. the prohibitive. Again, there are no separate inflectionally marked prohibitive forms of the verb in Naman. Thus:

Kë-së-vale-si.
 2SG:IRR-NEG-come-NEG
 ‘Don’t come!’

- Events which the speaker hopes the addressee(s) will perform along with the speaker as a result of what is said, i.e. hortative constructions, for example:

Tëra-v aim i.
 1DL.INCL:IRR-go home GOAL
 ‘Let’s (dl.) go home.’

- Events which are dependent on the prior realisation of some other event, i.e. conditional sentences (§6.5.1.5), for example:

Bar bë-së-luolu-an-si nede bë-sa-mes-i.
 if 3SG:IRR-NEG-vomit-TR-NEG blood 3SG:IRR-NEG-die-NEG
 ‘If he does not disgorge blood, he will not die.’

- Events which are encoded by serialised verbs that follow a negated realis initial verb (§6.2), for example:

Ø-Së-mour-si ba-des.
 3SG:REAL-NEG-grow-NEG 3SG:IRR-good
 ‘It hasn’t grown well.’

- Events which are encoded in association with a preceding auxiliary that carries realis marking (§6.1), for example:

Në-sisi bë-lungo-lung.
 1SG:REAL-not.want 1SG:IRR-REDUP-walk
 ‘I don’t want to walk.’

It should be noted that the difference between realis and irrealis in Naman is not associated with any alternation in the shape of the verb root such as is commonly—though by no means universally—found in Central Vanuatu languages (Crowley 1991). This lack of a pattern of root modification is fairly typical of Malakula languages, though the existence of such patterns in Nāti in southwestern Malakula (Crowley 1998a) and Aulua on the east coast (Paviour-Smith pers. comm.) indicates that this generalisation is certainly not true of all languages of Malakula.

4.1.1.2 Subject marking

Table 10: Subject-mood prefixes (Set A)

Realis				
	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>në-</i>	Incl.	<i>tër-</i>	<i>tët-</i>
		Excl.	<i>mër-</i>	<i>mët-</i>
2	<i>khë-</i>		<i>khër-</i>	<i>khët-</i>
3	<i>Ø-</i>		<i>rë-</i>	<i>at-</i>
IMP	<i>rë-</i>			

continued over

Irrealis		Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>bë-</i>	Incl.		<i>tër-</i>	<i>tët-</i>
		Excl.		<i>bër-</i>	<i>bët-</i>
2	<i>kë-</i>			<i>kër-</i>	<i>kët-</i>
3	<i>bë-</i>			<i>bër-</i>	<i>bët-</i>
IMP	<i>rëbë-</i>				

The basic forms of the two sets of prefixes for the great majority of verbs in Naman are set out in Table 10. All verbs are obligatorily marked with an appropriate prefix from one of these two sets. This observation applies not only to indigenous verbs but also to verbs that have been recently borrowed from Bislama. Thus:

at-lis-ëm

3PL:REAL-see-2SG

‘they saw you’

at-makem-ër²

3PL:REAL-measure-3PL

‘they measured them’

While a three-way number distinction for subjects is obligatorily encoded on Naman verbs, there is one context in which referentially non-singular subjects can be marked by means of formally singular prefixes in Naman. When a verbal subject has animate reference and is plural in number, the verb is obligatorily inflected with plural subject prefixes. However, when a referentially plural subject has inanimate reference, it is not uncommon for the verb to carry singular subject marking. We can therefore contrast examples such as the following:

Mokh Veditakh net at-iv Winev.
 people Veditakh DEM 3PL:REAL-go Winev
 ‘The people of Veditakh went to Winev.’

Nadël mete-n mokhot Ø-ijëkh i.
 eyeball eye-3SG person 3SG:REAL-exist LOC
 ‘People’s eyeballs are in it.’

An examination of occurrences of referentially plural inanimate subjects in my Naman textual corpus indicates that 37.5% of such noun phrases are cross-referenced on the verb by means of singular markers as in the second example rather than by means of the corresponding plural prefixes.

It will be noted that some of the subject-mood categories are marked identically in the paradigms set out in Table 10. In the irrealis, there is no inflectional distinction between first and third person singular (both being marked by *bë-*), or between first person non-singular exclusive and the corresponding third person non-singular forms (both being marked by *bër-* in the dual and *bët-* in the plural). Note also that the inclusive non-singular

² From Bislama *makem* ‘measure’.

forms are the same for both realis and irrealis, being marked by *tër-* in the dual and *tët-* in the plural.³

Table 11: Subject-mood prefixes (without dual/plural marking)

Realis			
	Singular		Non-singular
1	<i>në-</i>	Incl.	<i>të-</i>
		Excl.	<i>më-</i>
2	<i>khë-</i>		<i>khë-</i>
3	<i>Ø-</i>		<i>a-</i>
IMP	<i>rë-</i>		
Irrealis			
	Singular		Non-singular
1	<i>bë-</i>	Incl.	<i>të-</i>
		Excl.	<i>bë-</i>
2	<i>kë-</i>		<i>kë-</i>
3	<i>bë-</i>		<i>bë-</i>
IMP	<i>rëbë-</i>		

It can be seen from the forms presented in Table 10 that prefix-final *r* recurs throughout in the dual prefixes while *t* recurs in the corresponding plural forms. This suggests the possibility that these prefixes might be subject to further analysis, with *r-* and *t-* being treated as morphotactically separate number markers that are attached to the putative pronominal prefixes, as set out in Table 11.

Although a similar analysis is well justified in V'ënen Taut (Fox 1979:66–68) and Tape, it is not practical to maintain this kind of treatment in Naman. For one thing, there is no possibility in Naman for any other material to intervene between the putative number markers and the prefixes set out in Table 11 as is the case in both V'ënen Taut and Tape. In any case, the forms of the third person non-singular realis prefixes indicate that there is not complete morphological regularity in such a proposed system, with realis plural *at-* corresponding to dual *rë-* rather than to expected **ar-*. Consideration of these factors favours the initial analysis presented in Table 10 whereby these prefixes are treated synchronically as morphotactically indivisible in Naman.

In addition to the sets of contrasts between first, second and third person pronouns set out in Table 10, there is a fourth category in Naman which can be referred to as the impersonal subject (glossed IMP in the tables above). This prefix has the shape *rë-* in the realis, which gives it exactly the same shape as the third person dual subject marker. The corresponding irrealis form of this prefix is *rëbë-*, which contrasts with the third person dual subject irrealis prefix *bër-*. These impersonal prefixes correspond in function, and are very similar in shape, to the impersonal subject markers in Neve'eï (Musgrave 2001:57–58). These forms in Naman are used with transitive verbs to indicate that no specific agent

³ The conflation of inflectional categories is also a feature in Neve'eï verbal morphology (Crowley 2002a:644), though the patterns of conflation in the two languages are not the same.

is implied. Examples containing these prefixes will be glossed for the moment with ‘one’ as subject, or by means of an impersonal passive verb. For example:

rë-khores

IMP:REAL-cut

‘one cuts, it is cut’

rë-së-ma-khan-khan-si

IMP:REAL-NEG-CONT/HAB-REDUP-eat-NEG

‘one does not eat, it is not eaten’

rëbë-venokh

IMP:IRR-steal

‘one will steal it, it will be stolen’

rëbë-së-venokh-si

IMP:IRR-NEG-steal-NEG

‘one will not steal it, it will not be stolen’

There is further discussion of this construction in §5.2.

The basic forms of the subject-mood prefixes set out in Table 10 are subject to a number of general alternations in their shapes according to different aspects of the surrounding phonological environment.

(i) *Consonant degemination*

When prefixes ending in *t* are attached to *t*-initial verb roots and prefixes ending in *r* are attached to *r*-initial roots, the resulting sequences of two identical consonants are resolved by a general process of consonant degemination as a single consonant (§2.3.1). We therefore encounter alternations in the shapes of prefixes such as the following:

at-khël

3PL:REAL-dig

‘they dug’

a-tëkh

3PL:REAL-take

‘they took’

mër-tëkh

1DL.EXCL:REAL-take

‘we (dl. excl.) took’

më-rong

1DL.EXCL:REAL-hear

‘we (dl. excl.) heard’

(ii) *T-affrication*

Sequences of prefix-final *t* and root-initial *s* are resolved over the morpheme-boundary as the affricate *j* (§2.3.2). We therefore encounter alternations such as the following in association with subject-mood prefixation:

at-khël

3PL:REAL-dig

‘they dug’

at-sav > ajav

3PL:REAL-dance

‘they danced’

(iii) *Schwa-harmony*

Prefix-final schwa optionally harmonises with the first post-consonantal vowel of the verb root according to the patterns set out in §2.3.3. Thus, *ë* after a consonant other than *kh* shifts optionally to *o* when the root vowel is one of the back vowels (*u* or *o*) and to *e* with all other root vowels (*i*, *e*, *ë* or *a*). This generalisation precludes any alternation involving schwa with prefixes ending in consonants, as well as with the second person singular prefix *khë-*. Compare, therefore, the realis paradigms set out in Table 12, which illustrate the kinds of alternations that are possible.

Table 12: Realis paradigms for *khël* ‘dig’ and *luolu* ‘vomit’

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>në-khël ~ ne-khël</i>	Incl.	<i>tër-khël</i>	<i>tët-khël</i>
		Excl.	<i>mër-khël</i>	<i>mët-khël</i>
2	<i>khë-khël</i>		<i>khër-khël</i>	<i>khët-khël</i>
3	<i>Ø-khël</i>		<i>rë-khël ~ re-khël</i>	<i>at-khël</i>
IMP	<i>rë-khël ~ re-khël</i>			
1	<i>në-luolu ~ no-luolu</i>	Incl.	<i>tër-luolu</i>	<i>tët-luolu</i>
		Excl.	<i>mër-luolu</i>	<i>mët-luolu</i>
2	<i>khë-luolu</i>		<i>khër-luolu</i>	<i>khët-luolu</i>
3	<i>Ø-luolu</i>		<i>rë-luolu ~ ro-luolu</i>	<i>at-luolu</i>
IMP	<i>rë-luolu ~ ro-luolu</i>			

(iv) *Vowel deletion***Table 13:** Realis paradigm for *utbu* ‘run’

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>n-utbu</i>	Incl.	<i>t(ë)r-utbu</i>	<i>tët-utbu</i>
		Excl.	<i>m(ë)r-utbu</i>	<i>mët-utbu</i>
2	<i>kh-utbu</i>		<i>kh(ë)r-utbu</i>	<i>khët-utbu</i>
3	<i>Ø-utbu</i>		<i>r-utbu</i>	<i>at-utbu</i>
IMP	<i>r-utbu</i>			

The vast majority of verb roots in Naman begin with single consonants, though there is a handful of roots beginning with *u-* and a single root beginning with *e-* (§2.2). With such verbs, the prefix-final vowel is deleted and the initial vowel of the verb root is retained intact (§2.3.4). Table 13 illustrates this with the realis paradigm of the verb *utbu* ‘run’. Note that by the process of schwa-deletion described in §2.1.2.2, the dual prefixes optionally lose the prefix-internal schwa before a vowel-initial verb root.

Table 14: Subject-mood prefixes (Set B)

Realis				
	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>ne- ~ na-</i>	Incl.	<i>t(ë)re- ~ t(ë)ra-</i>	<i>tët-</i>
		Excl.	<i>m(ë)re- ~ m(ë)ra-</i>	<i>mët-</i>
2	<i>khë-</i>		<i>kh(ë)re- ~ kh(ë)ra-</i>	<i>khët-</i>
3	<i>Ø-</i>		<i>re- ~ ra-</i>	<i>at-</i>
IMP	<i>re- ~ ra-</i>			
Irrealis				
	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>be- ~ ba-</i>	Incl.	<i>t(ë)re- ~ t(ë)ra-</i>	<i>tët-</i>
		Excl.	<i>b(ë)re- ~ b(ë)ra-</i>	<i>bët-</i>
2	<i>ke- ~ ka-</i>		<i>k(ë)re- ~ k(ë)ra-</i>	<i>kët-</i>
3	<i>be- ~ ba-</i>		<i>b(ë)re- ~ b(ë)ra-</i>	<i>bët-</i>
IMP	<i>rëbe- ~ rëba-</i>			

While the prefixes presented in Table 9 are found with the vast majority of verbs in Naman, there are separate prefixes, as set out in Table 14, which are used with small subsets of verbs. These prefixes differ from those presented earlier in the following respects:

- Prefix-final schwa in the singular, third person dual and impersonal prefixes appears instead as either *e* or *a*.
- First and second person dual prefixes end in *re* or *ra* rather than just *r*.

The plural prefixes have the same shape in both paradigms, while the second person singular realis prefix *khë-* is also invariant in shape.

Table 15: Realis and irrealis paradigms for *ve* ‘do

Realis				
	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>neve</i>	Incl.	<i>t(ë)reve</i>	<i>tëtve</i>
		Excl.	<i>m(ë)reve</i>	<i>mëtve</i>
2	<i>khëve</i>		<i>kh(ë)reve</i>	<i>khëtve</i>
3	<i>ve</i>		<i>reve</i>	<i>atve</i>
IMP	<i>reve</i>			
Irrealis				
	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>beve</i>	Incl.	<i>t(ë)reve</i>	<i>tëtve</i>
		Excl.	<i>b(ë)reve</i>	<i>bëtve</i>
2	<i>keve</i>		<i>k(ë)reve</i>	<i>këtve</i>
3	<i>beve</i>		<i>b(ë)reve</i>	<i>bëtve</i>
IMP	<i>rëbeve</i>			

The *e*-final variants here are used only with the small number of monosyllabic verbs beginning with *Ce-*, e.g. *leg* ‘sit’, *ve* ‘do, make’, *lev* ‘take’, *set* ‘be thus’. With prefixes of the shape *Cëre-*, the schwa of the first syllable of the prefix is again optionally deleted in line with observations presented in §2.1.2.2. We therefore encounter paradigms such as that for the verb *ve* ‘do’ set out in Table 15.

Table 16: Realis and irrealis paradigms for *var* ‘say’

Realis				
	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>navar</i>	Incl.	<i>t(ë)ravar</i>	<i>tëtvar</i>
		Excl.	<i>m(ë)ravar</i>	<i>mëtvar</i>
2	<i>khëvar</i>		<i>kh(ë)ravar</i>	<i>khëtvar</i>
3	<i>var</i>		<i>ravar</i>	<i>atvar</i>
IMP	<i>ravar</i>			
Irrealis				
	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>bavar</i>	Incl.	<i>t(ë)ravar</i>	<i>tëtvar</i>
		Excl.	<i>b(ë)ravar</i>	<i>bëtvar</i>
2	<i>kavar</i>		<i>k(ë)ravar</i>	<i>këtvar</i>
3	<i>bavar</i>		<i>b(ë)ravar</i>	<i>bëtvar</i>
IMP	<i>rëbavar</i>			

The *a*-final variants from the prefixes displayed in Table 14 are used with the following subsets of verbs:

- A small number of verbs beginning with *Ca-*. Only *var* ‘say’ and *tavakh* ‘make sudden loud noise, explode’ have been attested as belonging in this set, as well as the following forms which are either synchronically or historically related to *var* ‘say’: *varvar* ‘speak’, *varido* ‘pay attention to’. Most verbs of this shape, however, accept the basic prefixes set out in Table 10, e.g. *vale* ‘come’, *tabëkh* ‘cook food’, *savakh* ‘be alone’, *sakh* ‘go up’, *sabe* ‘chat’.
- Monosyllabic verbs beginning with *kha-*, e.g. *khan* ‘eat’, *khas* ‘bite’, *khair* ‘strong’.
- Verbs beginning with *i-*, all of which are disyllabic and intransitive, e.g. *ides* ‘good’, *ies* ‘smoke’, *ijëkh* ‘stay’, *irëb* ‘work’, *ilung* ‘walk’, *imës* ‘cooked’.

With prefixes of the shape *Cëra-*, the schwa of the first syllable of the prefix is again predictably optionally deleted according to the patterns described in §2.1.2.2. We therefore encounter paradigms such as those set out in Table 16. Note that the second person singular realis prefix *khë-* undergoes loss of the final schwa according to the statement presented in §2.3.4, giving *kh-ilung* ‘you walked’ in contrast to *khë-var* ‘you said’.

With verb roots beginning with *kha-*, the resulting sequence of *akha* over the prefix boundary is optionally resolved as *aa*, as set out in §2.3.5. Otherwise, the prefixes behave predictably according to the forms presented in Table 14, resulting in the alternating forms for the verb *khan* ‘eat’ set out in Table 17.

Table 17: Realis and irrealis paradigms for *khan* ‘eat’

Realis				
	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>naan ~ nakhan</i>	Incl.	<i>t(ë)raan ~ t(ë)rakhan</i>	<i>tëtkhan</i>
		Excl.	<i>m(ë)raan ~ m(ë)rakhan</i>	<i>mëtkhan</i>
2	<i>khëkhan</i>		<i>kh(ë)raan ~ kh(ë)rakhan</i>	<i>khëtkhan</i>
3	<i>khan</i>		<i>raan ~ rakhan</i>	<i>atkhan</i>
IMP	<i>raan ~ rakhan</i>			
Irrealis				
	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>baan ~ bakhan</i>	Incl.	<i>t(ë)raan ~ t(ë)rakhan</i>	<i>tëtkhan</i>
		Excl.	<i>b(ë)raan ~ b(ë)rakhan</i>	<i>bëtkhan</i>
2	<i>kaan ~ kakhan</i>		<i>k(ë)raan ~ k(ë)rakhan</i>	<i>këtkhan</i>
3	<i>baan ~ bëkhan</i>		<i>b(ë)raan ~ b(ë)rakhan</i>	<i>bëtkhan</i>
IMP	<i>rëbakhan ~ rëbaan</i>			

With *i*-initial verbs, all of which accept the *a*-final prefixes set out in Table 14, root-initial *i* is deleted after the final *a* of the prefix according to the observations made in §2.3. Prefixes of the shape *Cët-* in addition alternate freely with *Cit-* with such verbs. This results in the illustrative paradigm for the verb *ilung* ‘go’ set out in Table 18.

Table 18: Realis and irrealis paradigms for *ilung* ‘go’

Realis				
	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>nalung</i>	Incl.	<i>t(ë)ralung</i>	<i>tëtilung ~ titilung</i>
		Excl.	<i>m(ë)ralung</i>	<i>mëtilung ~ mitilung</i>
2	<i>khilung</i>		<i>kh(ë)ralung</i>	<i>khëtilung ~ khitilung</i>
3	<i>ilung</i>		<i>ralung</i>	<i>atilung</i>
IMP	<i>ralung</i>			
Irrealis				
	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>balung</i>	Incl.	<i>t(ë)ralung</i>	<i>tëtilung ~ titilung</i>
		Excl.	<i>b(ë)ralung</i>	<i>bëtilung ~ bitilung</i>
2	<i>kalung</i>		<i>k(ë)ralung</i>	<i>këtilung ~ kitilung</i>
3	<i>balung</i>		<i>b(ë)ralung</i>	<i>bëtilung</i>
IMP	<i>rëbalung</i>			

The vestigial verbal morphology that is encountered with numerals was described in §3.4.1. The shape of the irrealis forms of these numerals, along with the accompanying loss of root-initial *i*, results in alternations between forms such as *iru* and *baru* ‘two’. Such

alternations are entirely consistent with what we would expect for the third person singular realis and irrealis forms of a verb root of the shape *iru*.

It was noted in §2.2 that sequences of low vowels with following mid vowels are not permitted according to Naman phonotactics. My corpus contains a single verb of the shape *ies* ‘smoky’ which, according to the generalisations presented above, would result in illicit sequences of *ae*. We therefore need to posit an obligatory rule to raise *e* to *i* after *a* to account for derivations such as the following:

ba-ies > *baes* (initial *i*-deletion) > *bais* (diphthong raising)
 3SG:IRR-smoky
 ‘it will be smoky’

Note, however, that a verb such as *ius* ‘rain’ does not call for any further change in its diphthong, so we encounter derivations such as the following:

ba-ius > *baus* (initial *i*-deletion)
 3SG:IRR-rain
 ‘it will rain’

The existence of a major set of inflectional prefixes and a minor set of formally very similar prefixes as set out in Tables 10 and 14 is a feature that is not unique to Naman, as a number of other languages of Malakula have patterns of verbal prefixation which are roughly similar. Musgrave (2001:56–57) mentions a separate set of verbal prefixes in Neve‘ei which are associated with a subset of verbs beginning with *Ci-* and *Cu-*, while Fox (1979:48) indicates that monosyllabic intransitive verbs in V‘änen Taut exhibit patterns of inflection which are partially different from all other verbs. In both cases, there is a recurring tendency for prefixes of the smaller subset to end in *a* rather than other vowels, just as we find in Naman.

4.1.2 Negative marking

Negation in Naman is marked discontinuously. There is an initial prefixed element of the shape *së-* with verbs which accept Set A subject prefixes (Table 10) and an alternation between *se-* and *sa-* with verbs which accept those prefixes in Set B (Table 14). This combines with a suffixed element which has the basic shape *-si*. The prefixed element of this negative marker appears between the subject-mood prefixes described in §4.1.1 and the root, while the suffixed element appears after the root, or, in the case of a transitive verb with a pronominal object, after the object suffix (§4.1.4). Both indigenous and borrowed verbs express negation in the same way. Thus:

kë-së-vale-si
 2SG:IRR-NEG-come-NEG
 ‘you will not come’

Ø-së-letem-si
 3SG:REAL-NEG-let-NEG
 ‘(s)he did not let him/her’

The fact that there is discontinuous negative marking is not unusual for a language of central and northern Vanuatu. Neve‘ei, the closest documented relative of Naman, exhibits

close similarity in this respect with clearly cognate prefixed and suffixed elements of the discontinuous negative marker. Thus:

ne-se-vwelem-si
1SG:REAL-NEG-come-NEG
'I did not come'

There is also discontinuous negation in neighbouring Avava, though only the prefixed element is cognate with the Naman and Neve‘ei simulfices; the suffixed element clearly has a different origin. Thus:

o-sa-ka-mu
2SG:REAL-NEG-shout-NEG
'you did not shout'

It should be pointed out, however, that negation is not marked discontinuously in all of the languages of central and northern Vanuatu, or, indeed, in all of the languages spoken close to Naman. In Tape, for example, negation is marked by means of a simple prefix. For example:

më-skha-n-titing
1EXCL.NONSG:REAL-PL-NEG-talk
'we (pl. excl.) did not talk'

The vowels of the prefixed element of the negative marker behave in exactly the same way as the final schwas of the subject-mood-prefixes described in §4.1.1.1. Compare, therefore, the affirmative realis paradigm of the verb *khël* 'dig' in Table 12 and *ilung* 'go' in Table 18 with the corresponding negative paradigms in Table 19.

Table 19: Negative realis paradigms for *khël* 'dig' and *ilung* 'go'

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>nësëkhëlsi</i>	Incl.	<i>tërsëkhëlsi</i>	<i>tëjëkhëlsi</i>
		Excl.	<i>mërsëkhëlsi</i>	<i>mëjëkhëlsi</i>
2	<i>khësëkhëlsi</i>		<i>khërsëkhëlsi</i>	<i>khëjëkhëlsi</i>
3	<i>sëkhëlsi</i>		<i>rësëkhëlsi</i>	<i>ajëkhëlsi</i>
IMP	<i>rësëkhëlsi</i>			
1	<i>nësalungsi</i>	Incl.	<i>tërsalungsi</i>	<i>tëjalungsi</i>
		Excl.	<i>mërsalungsi</i>	<i>mëjalungsi</i>
2	<i>khësalungsi</i>		<i>khërsalungsi</i>	<i>khëjalungsi</i>
3	<i>salungsi</i>		<i>rësalungsi</i>	<i>ajalungsi</i>
IMP	<i>rësalungsi</i>			

The suffixed element of the negative simulfice appears as *-si* on all verbs with the exception of forms ending in *s* and *j*, in which case we find *-i*. Also, when *-si* is added to a root ending in *-t*, the resulting sequence is realised as the affricate *j* by the general morphophonemic rule set out in §2.3.2. Thus:

<i>Ø-ibës</i> 3SG:REAL-speak '(s)he spoke'	<i>Ø-sa-bës-i</i> 3SG:REAL-NEG-speak-NEG '(s)he did not speak'
<i>Ø-ikhëj</i> 3SG:REAL-kill '(s)he killed it'	<i>Ø-sa-khëj-i</i> 3SG:REAL-NEG-kill-NEG '(s)he did not kill it'
<i>Ø-bët</i> 3SG:REAL-cut '(s)he cut it'	<i>Ø-së-bëji</i> 3SG:REAL-NEG-CUT:NEG '(s)he did not cut it'

Table 20 sets out the negative forms of the irrealis forms of the verb *khan* 'eat', which can be compared with the corresponding affirmative forms in Table 17. These forms indicate once again that sequences of *akha* arising over a prefix boundary are optionally resolved as *aa*.

Table 20: Negative irrealis paradigm for *khan* 'eat'

Singular	Dual	Plural
1 <i>bësaansi ~ bësakhansi</i>	Incl. <i>tërsaansi ~ tërsakhansi</i> Excl. <i>mërsaansi ~ mërsakhansi</i>	<i>tëjaansi ~ tëjakhansi</i> <i>mëjaansi ~ mëjakhansi</i>
2 <i>kësaansi ~ kësakhansi</i>	<i>kërsaansi ~ kërsakhansi</i>	<i>këjaansi ~ këjakhansi</i>
3 <i>bësaansi ~ bësakhansi</i>	<i>bërsaansi ~ bërsakhansi</i>	<i>bëjaansi ~ bëjakhansi</i>

When a transitive verb carries inflectional marking for a pronominal object (§4.1.4), the suffixed element of the negative simulfix follows the object suffix. Thus:

Khë-së-lis-gën-si.
2SG:REAL-NEG-see-1SG-NEG
'You did not see me.'

However, there are certain structural elements which are closely associated with the verb—yet which are phonologically not part of the verb root—which are treated grammatically as part of the verb when it comes to positioning the suffixed element of the negative simulfix. One such category involves phonologically separate uninflected serialised verbs with nuclear-layer juncture that are grammatically linked to a preceding inflected verb (§4.3.2), which invariably accept the suffixed element of the negative marker. For example:

Kë-së-tëkh lue-si.
2SG:IRR-NEG-take out-NEG
'You will not remove it.'

There are also certain verbal postmodifiers that are closely associated with a preceding inflected verb which follow the verb and accept the suffixed element of the negative marker, i.e. *mën* 'any more, yet' (§4.3.1.4) and *ve* 'incompletive' (§4.3.1.2). The following examples illustrate this aspect of the behaviour of *mën*:

Ø-Së-lis mën-si.
3SG:REAL-NEG-see yet-NEG
'(S)he has not seen it yet.'

Ajë-lev mën-si bësien.
 3PL:REAL:NEG-speak any.more-NEG language
 ‘They no longer spoke the language.’

This pattern also involves the incompleted marker *ve* which is never used in the affirmative, i.e. it is only ever found with the following suffixed element *-si* of the negative marker to express the meaning of ‘(not) yet’. For example:

Ø-Së-nog ve-si.
 3SG:REAL-NEG-finish INCOMP-NEG
 ‘It is not yet finished.’

Ai Ø-saan ve-si nelag.
 3SG 3SG:REAL-NEG:eat INCOMP-NEG pudding
 ‘(S)he has not yet eaten the pudding.’

If there is a free-form object associated with the negated verb that is modified by either of these modifiers, the negative suffix can be attached to *mën* with the object following the post-verbal modifier, as in the examples just presented. Alternatively, however, the negative simulfix can be attached directly to the verb, in which case the object noun phrase follows the verb and the form *mën* then appears as a clause-level modifier (§5.3.5) after the object. Contrast the examples just presented with the following alternatives:

Në-sa-var-si nangse-raru mën.
 1SG:REAL-NEG-say-NEG name-3DL yet
 ‘I haven’t said their names yet.’

Ø-Së-lis-i dosëlsël net mën.
 3SG:REAL-NEG-see-NEG European DEM yet
 ‘(S)he has not seen the European yet.’

When an intransitive verb is followed by the oblique preposition *khën* in its pseudo-transitivising function (§5.3.1.2.2), the suffixed element *-si* appears obligatorily on the preposition rather than the preceding inflected verb, in contrast to the use of *khën* as an oblique preposition marking a role such as instrument. Contrast, therefore, the following, where the first pair of examples has *khën* in its ‘normal’ prepositional role and the second pair has *khën* as a pseudo-transitiviser.

Bë-së-vël-si khën babar.
 1SG:IRR-NEG-pay.for-NEG INST pig
 ‘I will not pay for it with a pig.’

**Bë-së-vël khën-si babar.*
 1SG:IRR-NEG-pay.for INST-NEG pig

Ø-Sa-rëb khën-si neim sukul.
 3SG:REAL-NEG-work TR-NEG house church
 ‘He did not build a church.’

**Ø-Sa-rëb-si khën neim sukul.*
 3SG:REAL-NEG-work-NEG TR house church

However, the preposition *khën* can also be treated grammatically as part of the preceding verb even when it functions as a genuine preposition rather than functioning as a transitivity device, though only when it functions as a marker of an indirect object to a verb of transfer. In the following example, *khën* is associated with a following dative pronoun while carrying the suffixed element of the negative simulfix:

Kë-se-lev khën-si raru bëraan.
 2SG:IRR-NEG-give GOAL-NEG 2DL 2DL:IRR:eat
 ‘Don’t give it to the two of them to eat.’

In such constructions, if the dative preposition *khën* appears with a pronominal object suffix, it can still accept the negative suffix *-si*, though after the object suffix, as demonstrated by examples such as the following:

Në-se-lev khën-ëm-si.
 1SG:REAL-NEG-give GOAL-2SG-NEG
 ‘I did not give it to you.’

Kë-sa-var khën-gën-si.
 2SG:IRR-NEG-say GOAL-1SG-NEG
 ‘Don’t tell me.’

However, if the prepositional phrase is separated from the verb by means of a free-form direct object, then the suffixed element *-si* obligatorily appears on the verb itself and it can no longer appear on the preposition. Thus:

Në-se-lev-si mersin khën-ëm.
 1SG:REAL-NEG-give-NEG medicine GOAL-2SG
 ‘I did not give the medicine to you.’

**Në-se-lev mersin khën-ëm-si.*
 1SG:REAL-NEG-give medicine GOAL-2SG-NEG

It should be pointed out that *khën* is the only preposition in Naman which accepts the suffixed element of the negative simulfix in this way. The accompanitive preposition *bëtev*, for example, does not accept this suffix, and a negated verb that is immediately followed by a prepositional phrase introduced by this form must itself carry the full negative marking. Thus:

Bë-sa-v-si bëtev-ëm.
 1SG:IRR-NEG-go-NEG ACC-2SG
 ‘I will not go with you.’

**Bë-sa-v bëtev-ëm-si.*
 1SG:IRR-NEG-go ACC-2SG-NEG

4.1.3 Third-order prefixes

Appearing in a morphotactic position between the prefixed element of the negative simulfix and the verb root is one of two optional but mutually exclusive sets of prefixes which mark the categories of continuous/habitual and adversative. The basic form of the

continuous/habitual marker is *ma-* while the adversative is marked by a form that can be represented as *në-*.

The existence of these two morphologically marked categories in Naman represents a significant point of contrast with closely related Neve‘ei, where quite different strategies are employed for the expression of these meanings. In this respect, Naman exhibits greater similarity to V‘änen Taut, where the habitual prefix *mu-* occupies a similar morphotactic slot to that of Naman *ma-* (Fox 1979:68–69).⁴ Tape is another language which exhibits substantially more complexity than Naman in this morphotactic position.

4.1.3.1 Continuous/habitual

The continuous/habitual marker *ma-* interacts morphologically with a following root in exactly the same sorts of ways as has already been described for other prefixes in §4.1.1.1 and §4.1.2, so complete illustrative paradigms will not be presented here.

This form expresses either a continuous action or a habitual action or state, and it can be associated with preceding subject markers expressing either the realis or irrealis. Contrast, therefore, the following simple verbs and the corresponding constructions involving the prefix *ma-*:

<i>në-mësiëkh</i>	<i>në-ma-mësiëkh</i>
1SG:REAL-sick	1SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-sick
‘I am sick’	‘I am (habitually) sick’
<i>kët-khan buag</i>	<i>kët-ma-khan buag</i>
2PL:IRR-eat taro	2PL:IRR-CONT/HAB-eat taro
‘you (pl.) will eat the taro’	‘you (pl.) will (habitually) eat taro’

When an *i*-initial verb root is preceded in this construction by *ma-*, the initial vowel is lost in the same way that we find with other prefixes that end in *a*. Thus, compare the following constructions involving the verbs *ibës* ‘speak’ and *iv* ‘go’:

<i>at-ibës</i>	<i>at-ma-bës</i>
3PL:REAL-speak	3PL:REAL-CONT/HAB-speak
‘they spoke’	‘they (habitually) speak/are speaking’
\emptyset - <i>iv</i>	\emptyset - <i>ma-v</i>
3SG:REAL-go	3SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-go
‘(s)he went’	‘(s)he (habitually) goes/is going’

With verbs beginning with *u*, prefix-final *a* is unaffected by the vowel deletion rules set out in §2.3.4, resulting in root-initial vowels being retained intact, as in the following:

<i>at-utbu</i>	<i>at-ma-utbu</i>
3PL:REAL-run	3PL:REAL-CONT/HAB-run
‘they ran’	‘they (habitually) run/are running’

When such constructions are negated, the prefixed element *së-* of the negative simulfix precedes the continuous/habitual marker *ma-*, while the following verb root—or an

⁴ However, V‘änen Taut shows evidence of much greater opportunities for expansion of this morphotactic position than is the case in Naman.

immediately adjacent extra-verbal constituent as described in §4.1.2—regularly carries the suffixed element *-si*. Thus:

rë-së-ma-khan-khan-si
 IMP:REAL-NEG-CONT/HAB-REDUP-eat-NEG
 ‘one does not (habitually) eat’

Neighbouring Neve‘ei does not have a morphologically expressed category of continuous/habitual similar to the prefix *ma-* in Naman. The same meanings are expressed in Neve‘ei by means of the inflected verbal auxiliary *tokh* which precedes the main verb, which is also fully inflected (Crowley 2002a:645). The form *tokh* also functions as a main verb in its own right meaning ‘stay’.⁵ Contrast, therefore, the quite different ways in the two languages of expressing the same meaning below:

Naman

at-ma-bës
 3PL:REAL-CONT/HAB-speak
 ‘they (habitually) speak/are speaking’

Neve‘ei

at-tokh *at-bus*
 3PL:REAL-stay 3PL:REAL-speak
 ‘they (habitually) speak/are speaking’

The difference between the two languages on this point becomes even more apparent when we consider the corresponding negative forms. It can be seen that the negative simulfix in Neve‘ei attaches only to either side of the main verb while the preceding auxiliary is inflected only for the subject/mood categories (Musgrave 2001:123–124):

Naman

ajë-ma-bës-i
 3PL:REAL:NEG-CONT/HAB-speak-NEG
 ‘they do not (habitually) speak/are not speaking’

Neve‘ei

at-tokh *at-sa-bus-i*
 3PL:REAL-stay 3PL:REAL-NEG-speak-NEG
 ‘they do not (habitually) speak/are not speaking’

4.1.3.2 Adversative

This third-order inflectional position can also be occupied by an additional set of prefixes which will be referred to as the adversative. These markers indicate that an action or state represents an unfavourable outcome of some previous event. There is once again no morphologically marked category of adversative in Neve‘ei. McKerras (2000) indicates that there is a similar category in Northeast Malakula—his ‘warning mood’—but it is

⁵ The verb *leg* ‘stay’ in Naman is attested occasionally in my corpus in the same auxiliary position with a continuous/habitual function, though I suggest in §6.1.5 that this may represent a recent calque on this Neve‘ei construction.

expressed simply as one of four sets of subject prefixes rather than as a form which occupies a distinct morphotactic position of its own as we find in Naman.

Clauses containing the adversative marker in Naman are normally—though not obligatorily—associated with some preceding clause which encodes the ‘endangering’ event (§6.5.2.1), with the adversative marker appearing on the verb of the clause that expresses the negative consequence. Sentences containing verbs with this marking can often be translated with ‘in case’ or ‘lest’. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Ø-Së-vidor-si *bët-iv* *alo* *navas* *më-në-vër*
3SG:REAL-NEG-able-NEG 1PL.EXCL:IRR-go to.shore paddle 3SG:IRR-ADV-strike

main.

mine

‘We could not go to shore in case the paddles struck a mine.’

Commonly, the verb that is inflected for the adversative is immediately preceded by the explicit warning *kërong* ‘you will watch out’ after the statement of the ‘endangering’ event as an interjection, as in the following:

Kë-së-mën-si *nowe* *net* *kë-rong* *kë-në-mësiëkh* *khën-Ø.*
2SG:IRR-NEG-drink-NEG water DEM 2SG:IRR-watch.out 2SG:IRR-ADV-sick OBL-3SG
‘Don’t drink that water in case you get sick from it.’

The basic form of the adversative marker is *në-*, and the final vowel of this prefix interacts with the following root in exactly the same kinds of ways as already noted in §4.1.1.1 and §4.1.2 for other schwa-final prefixes. We therefore find examples such as the following in which the prefix appears with the shape *na-* in association with the *i*-initial roots *imes* ‘die’, *ikhëj* ‘kill’ and the root *khas* ‘bite’ which begins with *kha-*:

Kë-së-mën-si *nowe* *net* *kë-rong* *kë-na-mes.*
2SG:IRR-NEG-drink-NEG water DEM 2SG:IRR-look.out 2SG:IRR-ADV-die
‘Don’t drink that water in case you die.’

Kë-se-ve-si *man-et* *bë-sënevang* *më-na-khëj*
2SG:IRR-NEG-make-NEG HUM-DEM 3SG:IRR-angry 3SG:IRR-ADV-hit

nevgoro *sen.*

wife POSS:3SG

‘Don’t make that man angry in case he hits his wife.’

Libakh *më-na-khas-ëm.*

dog 3SG:IRR-ADV-bite-2SG

‘(Watch out or) the dog might bite you.’

Table 21: Adversative prefixes

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>mënë-</i>	Incl.	<i>tërnë-</i>	<i>tëtnë-</i>
		Excl.	<i>mërnë-</i>	<i>mëtnë-</i>
2	<i>kënë-</i>		<i>kërnë-</i>	<i>këtnë-</i>
3	<i>mënë-</i>		<i>bërnë-</i>	<i>bëtnë-</i>

The adversative marker differs from the continuous/habitual marker *ma-* in that the preceding subject markers are obligatorily drawn from the set of irrealis markers, which means that the realis subject prefixes cannot be associated with adversative marking. However, those irrealis subject prefixes which begin with *b* appear in the adversative unpredictably with initial *m*. Contrast, therefore, the following:

ba-khas-ëm
3SG:IRR-bite-2SG
'it will bite you'

më-na-khas-ëm
3SG:IRR-ADV-bite-2SG
'it might bite you'

The basic forms of the resulting adversative prefix paradigms are set out in Table 21.

As mentioned above, neighbouring Neve'eï has no morphologically expressed category of adversative. In that language, this meaning is expressed syntactically using the clause-initial form *meta'an* (Musgrave 2001:183), which is identical in shape to the uninflected root of the transitive verb *meta'an* 'fear, be afraid of'. This is then followed by a verb with irrealis subject marking. Contrast, therefore, the following equivalent examples in the two languages:

Naman

<i>Kë-rong</i>	<i>navas</i>	<i>më-në-vër</i>	<i>main.</i>
2SG:IRR-watch out	paddle	3SG:IRR-ADV-strike	mine
'Watch out in case the paddle strikes a mine.'			

Neve'eï

<i>Ko-rong</i>	<i>na'ai</i>	<i>valvaleh</i>	<i>meta'an</i>	<i>bwe-gev</i>	<i>main.</i>
2SG:IRR-watch out	wood	row	ADV	3SG:IRR-strike	mine
'Watch out in case the paddle strikes a mine.'					

4.1.4 Object marking

Oceanic languages commonly mark at least some categories of verbal objects by means of pronominal suffixes, though even closely related languages often differ in the extent to which pronominal objects are marked morphologically. In neighbouring Neve'eï, for example, there is no such morphological marking at all (Crowley 2002a:644), while in V'ënen Taut we find object suffixes, but only for the categories of second and third person singular and third person plural (Fox 1979:81).

In Naman, there is a defective paradigm of pronominal suffixes expressing verbal objects on transitive verbs, with the basic forms as set out in Table 22. It can be seen that there are separate suffixes only for singular pronominal objects and for the third person plural. Dual and non-third person plural pronominal objects must be expressed by means of independent pronouns (§3.1) following the verb.

Table 22: Verbal object suffixes

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	-gën	Incl.	—	—
		Excl.	—	—
2	-ëm		—	—
3	-Ø		—	-ër

The vowel-initial suffixes *-ëm* and *-ër* regularly lose the vowel to become *-m* and *-r* respectively when they are attached to a verb root that ends in a vowel other than *i*. Compare, therefore, the following:

<i>në-lis-ëm</i> 1SG:REAL-see-2SG 'I saw you'	<i>në-bele-m</i> 1SG:REAL-chase-2SG 'I chased you'
<i>në-lis-ër</i> 1SG:REAL-see-3PL 'I saw them'	<i>na-varðo-r</i> 1SG:REAL-mention-3PL 'I mentioned them'
<i>Ø-titi-ër</i> 3SG:REAL-live.with-3PL '(s)he lived with them'	

Note that with the negative simulfix (§4.1.2), the suffixed element *-si* appears after a pronominal object suffix. For example:

<i>Ø-së-lëng-ër-si</i> 3SG:REAL-NEG-leave-3PL-NEG '(s)he did not leave them'	<i>bë-së-bële-r-si</i> 1SG:IRR-NEG-go.with-3PL-NEG 'I will not go with them'
--	--

When a verb root ending in *v* appears with the second person singular suffix *-ëm*, the suffix also takes the reduced form of syllabified *-m* (§2.1.2). Compare the following forms of the verb *lev* 'take':

<i>ne-lev-ër</i> 1SG:REAL-take-3PL 'I took them'	<i>ne-lev-m</i> 1SG:REAL-take-2SG 'I took you'
--	--

With verbs associated with non-singular and non-third person plural objects, a free pronominal object (§3.1) simply follows the unmarked verb, just as we find with nominal objects:

<i>Matërvarëkh</i>	<i>Ø-sëvër</i>	<i>kamru.</i>
old.man	3SG:REAL-tell.off	1DL.EXCL
'The old man told the two of us off.'		

<i>Në-lis</i>	<i>raru.</i>
1SG:REAL-see	3DL
'I saw the two of them.'	

However, even with those pronominal categories for which object suffixes are available as described above, the unsuffixed verb followed by an independent pronoun remains an option. We therefore find free variation of the following kind:

<i>Khë-lis-gën.</i>	<i>Khë-lis</i>	<i>kine.</i>
2SG:REAL-see-1SG	2SG:REAL-see	1SG
‘You saw me.’	‘You saw me.’	

In fact, with verbs ending in *g*, the first person singular object suffix *-gën* is systematically excluded, with only the full pronominal object being attested. Contrast, therefore, the following:

<i>At-bëg</i>	<i>jëjën-gën.</i>
3PL:REAL-tie	tight-1SG
‘They tied me up tightly.’	
<i>At-bëg</i>	<i>kine.</i>
3PL:REAL-tie	1SG
‘They tied me up.’	

Table 22 indicates that third person singular pronominal objects are marked by means of zero-suffixation. Note, therefore, examples such as the following:

<i>Në-lis-Ø.</i>
1SG:REAL-see
‘I saw him/her/it.’

However, it is possible for third person singular objects also to be marked by means of the independent pronoun *ai*, or its occasional variant *i* (§3.1) This overt marking is never encountered in my textual corpus with objects that have inanimate reference. Thus:

<i>Khë-lis</i>	<i>ai.</i>
2SG:REAL-see	3SG
‘You saw him/her.’	

However, even with animate objects, the incidence of overt pronominal object marking is not high, with a count of examples from my textual corpus indicating that only 13.7% of such objects are expressed overtly by means of the independent pronoun.

The distinction between third person singular and plural pronominal objects is obligatory in Naman with objects that have animate reference. With objects that have inanimate reference, however, there is considerable variation in my Naman textual corpus between the use of the third person plural object suffix and zero, which is ordinarily used to refer to singular pronominal objects. A count of textual examples indicates that 56.5% of third person plural pronominal objects with inanimate reference are formally marked as plural, as in examples such as the following:

<i>Kë-tëkh</i>	<i>nevëns</i>	<i>ba-ru</i>	<i>kët-sël-ër</i>	<i>kët-rov-ër</i>	<i>vale</i>
2PL:IRR-get	banana	3SG:IRR-two	2SG:IRR-roast-3PL	2PL:IRR-take-3PL	hither
<i>baan-ër.</i>					
1SG:IRR:eat-3PL					
‘Get two bananas and roast them and bring them here and I will eat them.’					

This means that a substantial proportion of such objects are marked by zero, as in the following:

At-lev neni at-lev-Ø khën-Ø.
 3PL:REAL-get coconut 3PL:REAL-give-3PL DAT-3SG
 ‘They got the coconuts and gave them to him.’

4.1.5 Obligatorily reflexive verbs

A handful of verbs have been attested with an obligatorily expressed object which repeats the pronominal category of the subject. Such obligatorily reflexive verbs in Naman include the following:

vëlës ‘turn (into)’
rongrong ‘have a rest’
sortan ‘bang into, crash into’
rong usër ‘sad, feel sorry’
der khën ‘surprised’

Thus:

Netite air at-rongrong-ër.
 child PL 3PL:REAL-rest-3PL
 ‘The children had a rest.’

Matërvarëkh Ø-sortan ai i nevet.
 old.man 3SG:REAL-crash.into 3SG LOC rock
 ‘The old man crashed into the rock.’

At-der khën-ër.
 3PL:REAL-surprised TR-3PL
 ‘They were surprised.’

When such a verb has a third person singular subject, the object position is obligatorily filled by means of the independent third person singular pronoun *ai* (or *i*) and the object cannot be realised by means of the zero option mentioned above. Thus:

Ø-Vëlës ai Ø-iv i namat.
 3SG:REAL-change 3SG 3SG:REAL-become GOAL snake
 ‘He changed into a snake.’

Ø-Rong usër ai.
 3SG:REAL-feel about 3SG
 ‘(S)he felt sad.’

4.2 Verbal derivation

While the inflectional possibilities for Naman verbs express a number of categories along with a fair degree of morphotactic complexity, the derivational morphology of verbs is much more restricted.

4.2.1 Reduplication

Reduplication is used in Naman as a derivational process with verbs. All instances of verbal reduplication that have been attested involve one of three patterns of partial reduplication:

- Initial *CV-* of the root.
- Initial *CVC-* of the root.
- The first two syllables of the root, i.e. *CVCV-*.

Attested examples of *CV-* reduplication include the following:

<i>leg</i>	>	<i>le-leg</i>	‘sit’
<i>lis</i>	>	<i>li-lis</i>	‘see’
<i>vom</i>	>	<i>vo-vom</i>	‘go first’
<i>delangan</i>	>	<i>de-delangan</i>	‘not know’

When an open syllable ending in *a* reduplicates on this pattern, the first instance of the vowel dissimilates from *a* to *e*. For example:

<i>savakh</i>	>	<i>se-savakh</i>	‘one’
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The following examples illustrate the pattern of *CVC-* reduplication:

<i>metër</i>	>	<i>met-metër</i>	‘sleep’
<i>khores</i>	>	<i>khor-khores</i>	‘cut’

When a closed syllable containing *a* is reduplicated according to this pattern, the vowel remains unchanged, in contrast to what we find when an open syllable containing this vowel is reduplicated. Thus:

<i>savakh</i>	>	<i>sav-savakh</i>	‘one’
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With respect to the reduplication of monosyllabic roots consisting of closed syllables, in addition to the *CV-* option described above, there are examples such as the following for which the entire root is reduplicated, basically following the same pattern of *CVC-* reduplication:

<i>khas</i>	>	<i>khas-khas</i>	‘chew’
<i>khan</i>	>	<i>khan-khan</i>	‘eat’
<i>var</i>	>	<i>var-var</i>	‘say’
<i>lëng</i>	>	<i>lëng-lëng</i>	‘leave’
<i>mën</i>	>	<i>mën-mën</i>	‘drink’
<i>vël</i>	>	<i>vël-vël</i>	‘buy’
<i>khël</i>	>	<i>khël-khël</i>	‘dig’

Finally, with respect to *CVCV-* reduplication, we find examples such as the following:

<i>tavakh</i>	>	<i>tava-tavakh</i>	‘explode’
<i>dongon</i>	>	<i>dongo-dongon</i>	‘count’

Of course, when a disyllabic root ends in a final open syllable, this pattern of reduplication effectively results in complete reduplication of the root. Thus:

gëlo > *gëlo-gëlo* ‘look’

When an intransitive root beginning with *i-* is reduplicated, the initial vowel is lost in the reduplicated form, resulting in the reduplication of the original monosyllabic root. This observation is in keeping with the comments made in §2.4 about the historical development and synchronic distribution of verb-initial *i*. Thus:

ibës > *bës-bës* ‘speak’
iber > *ber-ber* ‘long’

Also with monosyllabic roots, there is a tendency for what is presumably a historically prior root-final vowel to appear unpredictably between the two reduplicated elements. We therefore find occasional examples such as the following:

nog > *nogo-nog* ‘finish’
ilung > *lungo-lung* ‘walk’

Finally, there is a single example in my corpus involving reduplication of the final syllable:

vibën > *vibën-bën* ‘kill’

The reduplicated syllable here is identical in shape with the serialised verb *bën* ‘kill, do to death’ (on the pattern of forms discussed in §4.3.2), so the irregular reduplication here may reflect an earlier pattern in which a form *vi* (which no longer exists independently in the language) and serialised *bën* individually had verbal status.

The lack of opportunity for exposure to spontaneous speech in Naman has meant that the likely full range of patterns and functions of reduplication has not been documented. However, reduplication has been attested as expressing the following kinds of functions, which is within the range of what might be expected for reduplication in an Oceanic language:

(i) With a small subset of monosyllabic transitive verbs, reduplication can derive a corresponding intransitive form. For example:

Transitive		Intransitive	
<i>mën</i>	‘drink’	<i>mën-mën</i>	‘drink’
<i>khan</i>	‘eat’	<i>khan-khan</i>	‘eat’
<i>khël</i>	‘dig’	<i>khël-khël</i>	‘dig’
<i>vël</i>	‘buy’	<i>vël-vël</i>	‘buy, sell, engage in commerce’
<i>khov</i>	‘copulate with’	<i>khov-khov</i>	‘copulate’
<i>sëv</i>	‘grate’	<i>sëv</i>	‘grate’
<i>lis</i>	‘see’	<i>li-lis</i>	‘look’
<i>venokh</i>	‘steal’	<i>ve-venokh</i>	‘steal’
<i>nsëvël</i>	‘wash’	<i>nsë-nsëvël</i>	‘wash one’s hands’

(ii) A reduplicated verb may highlight the fact that a large number of participants is involved, especially where the action takes place over a substantial area rather than with all of the participants clustered in a single place. For example:

At-met-metër tabakh.
 3PL:REAL-REDUP-sleep all
 ‘They were all asleep (in their respective homes).’

Revrev at-le-leg vere.
 evening 3PL:REAL-REDUP-sit outside
 ‘In the evening they were sitting around outside (all over the place).’

(iii) Another function of reduplication is to indicate that an action takes place over an extended period of time. For example:

Ø-Khas-khas tabakh nevëns net.
 3SG:REAL-REDUP-chew all banana DEM
 ‘(S)he chewed up the whole banana (over a period of time).’

(iv) Reduplication can indicate that an action takes place reciprocally with numbers of participants engaging in the same activity with other participants. Thus:

Rë-khëj-khëj raru.
 3DL:REAL-REDUP-kill 3DL
 ‘The two of them killed each other.’

A reduplicated transitive verb with a reciprocal object will often be expressed with the associated serialised verb *melilian* ‘return’ (§4.3.2), as in the following:

Rë-bële-bële melili-an raru.
 3DL:REAL-REDUP-marry return-TR 2DL
 ‘The two of them married each other.’

However, a prepositional phrase can also be used to indicate reciprocal action in conjunction with a reduplicated intransitive verb. In such cases, the preposition introduces an oblique noun phrase that expresses the same pronominal category as the subject. Contrast, therefore, the following:

Ra-bës.
 3DL:REAL-speak
 ‘The two of them spoke (but not necessarily to each other).’

Bët-bës-bës khën air.
 3PL:IRR-REDUP-speak GOAL 3PL
 ‘They will speak to each other.’

(v) Finally, reduplication can be used to indicate that an action is performed habitually, sometimes in conjunction with the continuous/habitual prefix *ma-* (§4.1.3.1). For example:

Nokhutë-n buag tet rë-së-ma-khan-khan-si.
 stem-3SG taro REL IMP:REAL-NEG-CONT/HAB-REDUP-eat-NEG
 ‘Taro stem is (something) that is (habitually) not eaten.’

Sometimes, however, it is difficult to assign any particular function at all to reduplication, and a plain and a reduplicated verb root seem simply to represent free variants, as in examples such as the following:

At-delangan *bët-ve* *be-vësakh.*
 3PL:REAL-not know 3PL:IRR-do 3SG:IRR-how
 ‘They do not know how to do it.’

Në-de-delangan *tat* *Ø-iv* *i.*
 1SG:REAL-REDUP-not.know where 3SG:REAL-go GOAL
 ‘I do not know where (s)he went.’

In yet other cases, a plain and a reduplicated root have clearly related meanings, but there is a meaning difference which does not follow any predictable pattern. Examples of this type include the following:

<i>dongon</i>	‘count’	<i>dongo-dongon</i>	‘share out, distribute’
<i>gëlo</i>	‘look, glance’	<i>gëlo-gëlo</i>	‘look after, care for’
<i>ilung</i>	‘go, travel’	<i>lungo-lung</i>	‘walk’
<i>nog</i>	‘finish’	<i>nogo-nog</i>	‘be last’
<i>savakh</i>	‘one’	<i>sav-savakh</i>	‘be the only one’
<i>var</i>	‘say’	<i>var-var</i>	‘tell on someone, report’

4.2.2 Multiplicative

Numerals behave somewhat anomalously in Naman in that they retain some vestigial inflectional verbal subject prefixation (§3.4.1, §4.1.1). They also accept the derivational prefix *vaa-* ‘multiplicative’. In association with this prefix, the initial *i* of a numeral is lost according to the general statement in §2.3.4. We therefore find derivations such as the following:

vaa-savakh
 MULT-one
 ‘once’

vaa-ru (< *vaa-iru*)
 MULT-two
 ‘twice’

These uninflected verb roots can be used verbally in manner serial verb constructions (§6.2.2) such as the following.

Bë-lue *bë-vaa-ru.*
 1SG:IRR-shoot 3SG:IRR-MULT-two
 ‘I will shoot it twice.’

However, multiplicatives can also be used adverbially (§5.3.5), i.e. without any verbal inflection, as in the following:

Vaa-savakh *mët-vëles* *buag.*
 MULT-one 1PL.EXCL:REAL-bake taro
 ‘We baked taro once.’

4.2.3 Transitivity

Most verbs in Naman are lexically specified as being either intransitive or transitive, though there is a handful which can function as either intransitive or transitive verbs with no change of shape, e.g. *lëkh* ‘hang’, *gor* ‘shut, close’. There is also a small set of intransitive-transitive pairs of verbs which are presumably historically related in some way, though there are no longer any synchronically productive patterns involved. Examples of this type include the following:

Transitive	Intransitive	
<i>lue</i>	<i>ilu</i>	‘shoot’
<i>lëbis</i>	<i>lëbalëb</i>	‘tell lies (to)’

In terms of morphologically marked derivational relationships expressing transitivity, it will be remembered from §4.2.1 that there is a small number of transitive verb roots which derive a corresponding intransitive form by reduplication of either initial CV- or initial CVC-.

Table 23: Verbs with transitive suffix *-Vn*

Intransitive		Transitive	
<i>utbu</i>	‘sail’	<i>utbu-an</i>	‘sail in (vessel)’
<i>luolu</i>	‘vomit’	<i>luolu-an</i>	‘disgorge’
<i>sien</i>	‘pregnant’	<i>sien-an</i>	‘conceive’
<i>ilung</i>	‘travel’	<i>ilung-an</i>	‘go to get (something)’
<i>metokhtokh</i>	‘afraid’	<i>metokhtokh-on</i>	‘afraid of’

There is also a suffix, *-Vn*, which is used to derive a small number of transitive verbs from a corresponding intransitive form. In most cases, the form of this suffix is *-an*, while with a single verb the transitive suffix has the shape *-on*.⁶ Pairs of this type that have been attested are set out in Table 23. To illustrate the behaviour of *-Vn* in Naman, we can present examples such as the following:

Tëra-lung-an matërvarëkh.
 1DL.INCL:IRR-travel-TR old.man
 ‘Let’s go to get the old man.’

Bë-së-luolu-an-si nede.
 3SG:IRR-NEG-vomit-TR-NEG blood
 ‘He will not disgorge blood.’

While this suffix appears to be purely vestigial in Naman, in closely related Neve‘ei there is a cognate suffix of the basic form *-en*, which also exhibits some variation in shape according to the nature of the final segments of the verb root. This suffix in Neve‘ei is productive and is attested with a wide range of derived transitive verbs (Musgrave 2001:71–73).

⁶ Given the small number of examples here, it is impossible to be certain if there is any kind of systematic phonological conditioning factor in operation here, though the *-on* variant is found with the only verb ending in *kh*, while *-an* appears after all other verbs.

The intransitive verbs *melili* ‘return’, *mour* ‘alive’ and *medemed* ‘raw’ in Naman can enter into nuclear serial verb constructions with a preceding transitive verb (§4.3.2). In such cases they appear as the suffixed transitive verbs *melili-an*, *momour-an* and *medemed-an* respectively.⁷ We therefore find examples such as the following:

Më-tëkh *melili-an noag i mët-utbu-an-ër*
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-take return-TR canoe REL 1PL.EXCL:REAL-sail-TR-3PL

lis Ajin.
 back Atchin

‘We replaced the canoes in which we had sailed back to Atchin.’

Air a-tëkh mo-mour-an matërvarëkh tuen.
 3PL 3PL:REAL-take REDUP-alive-TR old.man INDEF

‘They took an old man alive.’

The adverbial element *vaas* ‘still’ (§4.3.1.3), if there is an object following the VERB + MODIFIER sequence, also accepts this transitive suffix. For example:

At-rov jējën vaas-an-Ø.
 3PL:REAL-hold tight still-TR-3SG

‘They still held him tightly.’

Finally, the interrogative verb of manner (§5.4) has the corresponding intransitive and transitive forms *vësakh* and *vësaan* respectively. The latter can be related derivationally to the former with the addition of *-an* to *vësakh*, with an associated shift of *vësakh-an* to *vësaan* by the general process described in §2.3.5 whereby sequences of *akha* can be realised as *aa*. Thus:

Deswe Ø-vësakh?
 sea 3SG:REAL-how
 ‘What is the sea like?’

Khët-ve Ø-vësaan-Ø?
 2PL:REAL-do 3SG:REAL-how:TR-3SG
 ‘How did you all do it?’

Table 24: Pseudo-transitive verbs with *khën*

Intransitive		Transitive	
<i>gëlo</i>	‘look’	<i>gëlo khën</i>	‘look for’
<i>irëb</i>	‘work’	<i>irëb khën</i>	‘make, build, do’
<i>nog</i>	‘finish’	<i>nog khën</i>	‘finish’
<i>verong</i>	‘listen’	<i>verong khën</i>	‘listen to’
<i>vom</i>	‘go first’	<i>vom khën</i>	‘precede’
<i>vësvës</i>	‘teach’	<i>vësvës khën</i>	‘teach’
<i>sevsev</i>	‘care for’	<i>sevsev khën</i>	‘care for’

⁷ Note that *momouran* has also been reduplicated according to the pattern of CV- reduplication described in §4.2.1.

The vast majority of intransitive verbs which have the potential to be associated with an affected noun phrase as semantic patient or undergoer are expressed instead in Naman as objects of the ‘pseudo-transitivising’ preposition *khën* (§5.3.1.3.2) rather than by means of the vestigial suffix *-an*. For the most part, this transitivising suffix is used in association with an intransitive verb to produce a lexically complex transitive verb that is associated with a following patient noun phrase. Table 24 sets out a number of examples of constructions of this type. Thus, compare examples such as the following which illustrate the intransitive and transitive uses of one such verb:

Ba-v *ba-rëb* *i* *lamas* *sog*.
 1SG:IRR-go 1SG:IRR-work LOC garden POSS:1SG
 ‘I will go to work in my garden.’

Bë-vale *ba-rëb* *khën* *neim* *sukul* *Lububu*.
 1SG:IRR-come 1SG:IRR-work TR house church Lambumbu
 ‘I will come and build a church at Lambumbu.’

Some lexically complex transitives of this type have been attested only with following *khën*, with the formally related intransitive form not recorded independently. We therefore find examples such as *yeg khën* ‘want’, *jër khën* ‘loosen’, *sël khën* ‘hide’ and *sënamel khën* ‘forget’. Thus:

Matërvarëkh *Ø-sënamel* *khën* *niëkh*.
 old.man 3SG:REAL-forget TR fish
 ‘The old man forgot the fish.’

Such forms are not attested as intransitive verbs without a following object preceded by *khën*. Thus:

**Matërvarëkh* *Ø-sënamel*.
 old.man 3SG:REAL-forget

4.2.4 Compounding

In keeping with what we find in many other languages of central and northern Vanuatu, there is evidence of only sporadic verbal compounding, unless we choose to treat nuclear serial verb constructions (§4.3.2) as a kind of verbal compound. My Naman corpus contains a couple of examples of VERB + NOUN compounds in which the compounded noun appears in a phonologically reduced form based on the historical root before the reanalysis of the earlier article **na* (§2.4):

<i>lulue</i>	+	<i>niëkh</i>	>	<i>lulue-iëkh</i>
‘shoot’		‘fish’		‘shoot fish’
<i>vivi</i>	+	<i>nabat</i>	>	<i>vivi-bat</i>
‘?’ ⁸		‘advantage’		‘gain advantage’

⁸ While there is no independently attested verb *vivi* in Naman, this form in neighbouring Neve‘ei is the reduplicated form of the verb *vi* ‘make, do’. Note that the regular verb + object construction parallel to this uses the verb *ve* (see below), which is both a copula and a verb meaning ‘make, do’. In §5.1.2, Crowley says that *ve* has an alternate form *vi*; and thus it is likely that *vivi* is the reduplicated form of *vi* – JL

The appearance of historically prior noun roots which do not reflect earlier **na* in verbal compounds corresponds to a similar pattern already noted for nominal compounds (§3.3.1.1.2).

Note that both of the verbal compounds just presented correspond to regular VERB + OBJECT constructions with initial verbs that are similar in shape to these compounded verbs, as illustrated by the following:

Ø-Lue *niëkh.*
3SG:REAL-shoot fish
'(S)he shot the fish.'

Ø-Ve *nabat.*
3SG:REAL-do advantage
'(S)he gained the advantage.'

In these cases, the object has a definite specific interpretation, whereas in the compound construction the interpretation is generic, in keeping with the now purely vestigial trace of a once rather more productive pattern of object incorporation from which these compounds are presumably derived.

Perhaps also to be included under this heading is the handful of verbs of perception which can be followed by the obligatorily compounded element *-dur* to indicate recognition according to the sense which is expressed by the verb of perception. Note, therefore, the following examples:

<i>lis</i>	'see'	<i>lis-dur</i>	'recognise by sight'
<i>rong</i>	'hear, smell'	<i>rong-dur</i>	'know, recognise by sound, smell'

However, the element *-dur* in these examples has no independent existence in the grammar or lexicon of Naman, and comparative evidence so far has not revealed what kind of source it might have.

4.3 The verbal complex

There is a set of constituents which are more closely related syntactically to a verbal head than to any other constituent in the clause which I propose to describe in this section under the heading of the verbal complex.

4.3.1 Post-verbal modifiers

There is a range of forms which appear in close proximity to verbs as postmodifiers within verbal complexes and which often express aspectual meanings with respect to those verbs. These post-verbal modifiers generally appear immediately before any free-form noun phrase objects associated with a transitive verb.

Some of the post-verbal modifiers described in this section are clearly semantically incompatible with other postmodifiers from the same set, thus preventing their co-occurrence within the same verbal complex. However, there is no restriction against more than one of these modifiers appearing with the same verb complex if they are semantically compatible. We therefore find examples such as the following, in which *lis* 'again' and *mën* 'any more' both follow the verb *ve* 'do, make':

Ø-Se-ve *lis* *mën-si* *mokh* *nëval*.
 3SG:REAL-NEG-COP again any.more-NEG person battle
 ‘He wasn’t a warrior any more again.’

While the forms that are described and illustrated in this section are postverbal modifiers, many freely appear after non-verbal elements as well with very similar meanings, as will be described in more detail in §5.3.5. The completive marker, for example, can appear after noun phrases, as in the following:

Ag *ëns* *at*.
 2SG COMPL TOP
 ‘It’s *you* already!’

Kine *tat-ns* *në-ma-leg* *iar* *evan*.
 1SG place-COMPL 1SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-live there that.one
 ‘That’s already the place there where I live.’

The following indicate that it can also appear after adverbials:

Demes *tuen* *ai* *Ø-metër* *vovom* *ëns* *bëkhët*.
 devil INDEF 3SG 3SG:REAL-sleep first COMPL inside
 ‘A devil was already asleep first inside.’

Ø-Vale *nenëv* *ëns*.
 3SG:REAL-come yesterday COMPL
 ‘(S)he had come yesterday already.’

It can even be used between a preposition and a following noun phrase, as in the following:

Ra-v *ra-khan* *bëtev* *ëns* *teme-raru*.
 3DL:REAL-go 3DL:REAL-eat ACC COMPL father-3DL
 ‘The two of them would go and have eaten with their father.’

4.3.1.1 *Ëns* ‘completive’

The marker *ëns* expresses a completive meaning. It should be noted that this is the only word in Naman attested as beginning with a schwa. When it follows a vowel-final verb or a form ending in *t*, it is optionally cliticised with the shape *-ns*, with compensatory lengthening of the final vowel of the preceding word (§2.1.2.3). Thus:

Noag *Ø-melili* *ëns*. ~ *Noag* *Ø-melilii-ns*.
 canoe 3SG:REAL-return COMPL canoe 3SG:REAL-return-COMPL
 ‘The canoe has returned.’

When it is added after *t*, the nasal element of the phonetically complex segment /j/ that is represented orthographically as *ns* is syllabified (§2.1.3), as in the following:

Në-tait *ëns*. ~ *Në-tait-ns*.
 1SG:REAL-tired COMPL 1SG:REAL-tired-COMPL
 ‘I am tired.’

In the case of a transitive verb, *ëns* appears between the verb and any free form object, whether this is a noun or an independent pronoun. Thus:

At-lis ëns mere bolo net.
 3PL:REAL-see COMPL eel big DEM
 ‘They had seen the big eel.’

Akhug khë-lis ëns kine?
 2SG 2SG:REAL-see COMPL 1SG
 ‘Have you seen me?’

If the verbal complex is itself syntactically complex as described in §4.3.2, this aspect marker—along with the other forms described in this section—appears after whatever happens to be the final element, though still before the object. For example:

Në-rov jëjën ëns matërvarëkh.
 1SG:REAL-hold tight COMPL old.man
 ‘I have held the old man tight.’

The completive marker can follow either a realis verb—as in the examples just presented—or an irrealis verb. We therefore also find examples such as the following involving irrealis verbs:

Bë-nog ëns.
 3SG:IRR-finish COMPL
 ‘It will have finished.’

Evatëkh bë-bële ëns aru.
 then 1SG:IRR-go.with COMPL 3DL
 ‘Then I will have gone with the two of them.’

4.3.1.2 *Ve* ‘incompletive’

The completive marker *ëns* cannot be used in conjunction with a verb that carries inflectional marking for the negative (§4.1.2). When such a verb is negated, it must be followed by the incompletive postmodifier *ve*, which is only ever attested in negative constructions of this type. Thus:

Ø-Së-nog ve-si.
 3SG:REAL-NG-finish INCOMP-NEG
 ‘It is not finished yet.’

4.3.1.3 *Vaas* ‘continuative’

The form *vaas* is used to express two clearly related meanings, which will be referred to as continuative. On the one hand, it is used to indicate that an ongoing action is continuing, expressing the meaning of ‘still’, as in the following:

At-leg vaas Nowiluv.
 3PL:REAL-live still Nowiluv
 ‘They still live at Nowiluv.’

On the other hand, it can also express the idea that the performer of an action keeps on performing that action, as in the following:

Ka-tër vaas iag.
 2SG:IRR-stand keep.doing here
 ‘Keep standing here.’

This form does not appear in conjunction with negative marking on the verb. In order to express the corresponding negative meaning, the form *mën* is used in association with the negative inflection on the verb, as described separately in §4.3.1.4.

While most of the verbal postmodifiers described in this section appear freely in association with both intransitive and transitive verbs, the postmodifier *vaas* is only used with intransitive verbs. When the same meaning is expressed with a transitive verb, the transitivising suffix *-an* (§4.2.3) is obligatorily added to it, giving *vaasan*. In contrast to the examples presented above, therefore, we also find examples such as the following:

Ø-Rov jējën vaas-an matërvarëkh.
 3SG:REAL-hold tight keep.doing-TR old.man
 ‘He kept holding the old man tight.’

4.3.1.4 Mën ‘first’

This form indicates that an action takes place before some other action, as in the following:

Tëra-v mën tanokhwi.
 1DL.INCL:IRR-go first over.there
 ‘Let’s go over there.’

Bët-ve mën nestuen.
 3PL:IRR-do first something
 ‘They will do something first.’

This form is also used as a way of softening an imperative that is expressed by means of a verb carrying second person irrealis subject marking. For example:

Ka-v mën bëkhët.
 2SG:IRR-go first inside
 ‘Please go inside.’

As indicated in §4.3.1.3, *mën* is also very frequently attested in negative contexts to mean ‘no longer, no more, not yet’, corresponding to the negative of verbs which are modified by the continuative marker *vaas* (§4.3.1.3). In such cases, the initial verb carries the prefixed element of the negative simulfix and the suffixed element *-si* is attached to *mën* or, in the case of verbs with free-form objects, optionally also directly to the verb itself. Thus:

Ø-Së-mour mën-si.
 3SG:REAL-NEG-alive no.longer-NEG
 ‘(S)he is no longer alive.’

At-se-lev mën-si bësien sen teme-r air.
 3PL:REAL-NEG-take no.longer-NEG language POSS:3SG father-3PL PL
 ‘They didn’t speak their fathers’ language any more.’

Në-sa-var-si nangse-raru mën.
 1SG:REAL-NEG-say-NEG name-3DL yet
 ‘I haven’t said their names yet.’

4.3.1.5 Nsar ‘forever’

This is not a frequently attested postverbal modifier, but it is occasionally encountered to express the meaning of ‘forever’ in examples such as the following:

Tët-imes nsar.
 1PL.INCL:REAL-die forever
 ‘We die forever.’

In conjunction with the verb *leg* ‘stay’, it expresses the meaning of ‘stay behind’. For example:

Ai Ø-leg nsar.
 3SG 3SG:REAL-stay forever
 ‘(S)he stayed behind.’

This form is only attested in association with preceding intransitive verbs.

4.3.1.6 Tabakh ‘all’

The verbal post-modifier *tabakh* expresses a number of related meanings. With an intransitive verb, it can indicate that an action is performed in a way that involves all of the subjects of the verb together, as in the following:

At-imes tabakh.
 3PL:REAL-die all
 ‘They all died.’

Mët-itër tabakh i boi net.
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-stand all LOC buoy DEM
 ‘We all stood on that buoy.’

When used with a transitive verb, it can indicate that the action is performed in such a way that it affects all (or both) of the objects. For example:

Matërvarëkh Ø-sëvër tabakh kamru.
 old.man 3SG:REAL-tell.off all 1DL.EXCL
 ‘The old man told us both off.’

If there is just a single object, it can indicate that that object is thoroughly affected, as in the following:

Ø-Khaskhas tabakh nevëns.
 3SG:REAL-chew thoroughly banana
 ‘He chewed the banana all up.’

This form is also occasionally used to express completive action, either in conjunction with the following post-verbal modifier *ëns* described in §4.3.1.1, or on its own. For example:

A-tevën tabakh matërvarëkh.
 3PL:REAL-bury COMPL old.man
 ‘They had buried the old man.’

Tabakh can also be used to express a sequential relationship between two events (§6.6.5.5), as follows:

Nelmu i Ø-ivil tabakh Ø-iv
 time REL 3SG:REAL-eat.from.taboo.fire SUBSEQ 3SG:REAL-go
Ø-lulus khën nowe.
 3SG:REAL-bathe INST water
 ‘He ate from the taboo fire and then he went and bathed with the water.’

4.3.1.7 Lis ‘repetitive’

This form is used to express the meaning of ‘again’ or ‘more’. For example:

Të-tëbe lis nibu.
 1PL.INCL:IRR-cut more bamboo
 ‘We will cut some more bamboo.’
Mët-vëles lis buag i novles.
 1PL:EXCL-bake again taro LOC earth.oven
 ‘We baked another taro in the earth oven.’

The meaning of ‘also’ or ‘too’ is sometimes also expressed by means of *lis*, especially when it appears after a non-verbal constituent. For example:

Ai lis Ø-iv Ø-tëkh babar khësen.
 3SG too 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-take pig POSS:3SG
 ‘He also went and took his pig.’

However, this particular function is often expressed by means of the borrowed form *tu*.

Lis can also be used to indicate that an action is performed to bring about the return of some previous situation. In this sense, *lis* is commonly used redundantly in conjunction with the verb *melili* ‘return’. For example:

Bët-ve melili-an lis bësien.
 3PL:REAL-make return-TR again language
 ‘They will bring the language back again.’
Ø-Melili lis jëkhë-n.
 3SG:REAL-return again place-3SG
 ‘(S)he returned to his/her place.’

Finally, *lis* can be used to indicate that something happens in a way that is contrary to normal expectation. For example:

Ø-Vëlës lis ai Ø-ve labët.
 3SG:REAL-turn again 3SG 3SG:REAL-become rat
 ‘He turned himself into a rat (which was not expected).’

4.3.1.8 *Usër* ‘durative’

The form *usër* has a wide range of seemingly disparate functions (§4.3.2, §6.5.1.2). When *usër* appears as a post-modifier within the verbal complex, it expresses the aspectual meaning of durative which can be translated with ‘do on and on’ or ‘keep doing’. The verb that it follows can be either intransitive or transitive, as illustrated by the following:

At-leg usër, metenal tuen air tuen Ø-isiëkh khën
 3PL:REAL-stay DURT day INDEF 3PL INDEF 3SG:REAL-climb TR

nense.

Tahitian.chestnut

‘They stayed on and on and one day one of them climbed the Tahitian chestnut.’

Tate Ø-lëbis usër mokh Ambrym.
 father 3SG:REAL-deceive DURT person Ambrym

‘Father kept deceiving the Ambrymese person.’

With this meaning, *usër* on an initial verb is commonly associated in narrative discourse with repeated instances of the following verb *iv* ‘it goes’ which serves to indicate that an action or state persists over a very long period (§6.2.4). Thus:

At-meten usër netite nge Ø-iv Ø-iv Ø-iv.
 3PL:REAL-watch DURT child DEM 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go
 ‘They watched the child on and on and on.’

4.3.1.9 *Burong* ‘in vain’

The form *burong* appears after a verb to indicate that an action is performed in vain, for no reason, or to no effect. For example:

Tët-leg burong.
 1PL.INCL:REAL-stay in.vain
 ‘We were there in vain.’

4.3.1.10 *Navon(si)* ‘very’

The form *navon*, alternating occasionally with *navonsi*, appears after a stative verb to express the meaning of ‘very’, as in the following:

Lektërvarëkh Ø-toro navon.
 old.woman 3SG:REAL-old very
 ‘The old woman was very old.’

Ø-Ides navonsi.
 3SG:REAL-good very
 ‘It is very good.’

4.3.1.11 Nsi ‘necessitative’

The postverbal modifier *nsi* is used to express necessitative modality, in conjunction with a verb carrying irrealis mood marking. Thus:

Ba-v nsi aim.
1SG:IRR-go NEC home
‘I must go home.’

Libakh bë-së-mimi-si nsi iar.
dog 3SG:IRR-NEG-urinate-NEG NEC here
‘The dog must not urinate here.’

4.3.2 Nuclear serial verbs

It is common for the languages of central and northern Vanuatu to exhibit patterns of what are frequently referred to as nuclear layer serial verb constructions in which two independent verb roots appear in sequence—often with strong phonological arguments for recognising word boundaries between the verbs—but with subject prefixation attaching only to the initial verb in the series. Object suffixation in such constructions attaches to the second verb and, if there is discontinuous negative affixation, the suffixed element of the negative marker also appears on the second element of this construction (Crowley 2002b:42–73).

Constructions which directly parallel these kinds of patterns, where the two constituent elements receive stress as independent words, are very well attested in Naman, where there are examples such as the following:

Na-khan medemed-an niëkh.
1SG:REAL-eat raw-TR fish
‘I ate the fish raw.’

The transitive verb *khan* ‘eat’ and the intransitive verb *medemed* ‘raw’ can both be used independently, as in the following:

Na-khan niëkh.
1SG:REAL-eat fish
‘I ate the fish.’

Niëkh Ø-medemed.
fish 3SG:REAL-raw
‘The fish was raw.’

Since the intransitive verb *medemed* is serialised with a preceding transitive verb, the second verb must first be transitivised, in this case by means of the vestigial transitive suffix *-an* described in §4.2.3.

Although the sequence *khan medemedan* ‘eat raw’ receives stress as two separate phonological words, it negates as a single grammatical unit with the prefixed element of the negative simulfix (§4.1.2) attaching to the initial verb in the series and the suffixed element attaching to the second verb. Thus:

Në-sa-khan medemed-an-si niëkh.
 1SG:REAL-NEG-eat raw-TR-NEG fish
 ‘I didn’t eat the fish raw.’

Table 25: Main and serialised verbs

	Main verb	Serialised verb
<i>mour</i>	‘alive’	‘do while alive’
<i>melili</i>	‘return’	‘do back, do to each other, do again’
<i>medemed</i>	‘raw’	‘do uncooked’
<i>delvës</i>	‘go around’	‘do around’
<i>usër</i>	‘follow, go along’	‘about’
<i>lëbalëb</i>	‘tell lie’	‘pretend to do (intr.)’
<i>lëbis</i>	‘lie to’	‘pretend to do (tr.)’
<i>gor</i>	‘block’	‘put in the way’
<i>bëlaut</i>	‘make noise’	‘do damagingly’
<i>ngarangar</i>	‘split’	‘do to split something’
<i>rëvëkhës</i>	‘turn’	‘do back-to-front’
<i>venokh</i>	‘steal’	‘do secretly’

The full set of verbs attested as being used freely both as independent verbs in their own right or as serialised verbs linked to a preceding verb with nuclear juncture is set out in Table 25.⁹ It will be seen that with some verbs, there is a slight difference in meaning depending on whether the verb is inflected as a main verb or if it functions as a serialised verb. The intransitive verbs *mour*, *melili* and *bëlaut* all require the transitive suffix *-an* when they are used in conjunction with a preceding transitive verb. However, transitive serialised verbs such as *delvës* and *usër* can be directly followed by an object without the addition of a transitive suffix.

Serialised *usër* ‘follow, go along’ is only attested with a small number of intransitive verbs of locution and it introduces an object noun phrase which represents the content of the locution. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Ba-var-var usër bësien.
 1SG:IRR-REDUP-say follow story
 ‘I will tell the story.’

This form can also be used to indicate something that is being spoken about. For example:

Na-var ba-var-var usër tate.
 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-REDUP-say follow father
 ‘I want to talk about father.’

⁹ Evidence from other languages of Central Vanuatu suggests that this set of verbs may be substantially larger, though a much broader corpus of narrative texts would probably be needed to establish this in Naman. The importance of the size of the textual corpus is suggested by François’ (2002:148) claim that nuclear serialisation is ‘much rarer’ in Araki than in many other Oceanic languages. A similar claim could have been made for Naman at a time when my own textual corpus was closer in size to that on which François’s account of Araki was based. My suspicion is that if François’ account of Araki had been based on a broader textual corpus, his claim might end up being tempered somewhat.

Bë-sabe usër bësien Lëngalëng.
 1SG:IRR-chat follow language Lëngalëng.
 ‘I will discuss the language of Lëngalëng.’

Ba-var usër mesel nendeswe.
 1SG:IRR-say follow clam CHAR:sea
 ‘I will talk about the sea clam.’

Forms such as *mour* ‘alive’, *melili* ‘return’, *delvës* ‘go around’, *medemed* ‘raw, uncooked’, *lëbalëb* ‘pretend to (intr.)’, *lëbis* ‘pretend to (tr.)’, *gor* ‘block’, *ngarangar* ‘split’ and *venokh* ‘do secretly’, however, are used productively with a wide range of different semantically compatible verbs. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Ajël mo-mour-an labët.
 3PL:REAL:burn RED-alive-TR rat
 ‘They burned the rat alive.’

A-tevën mo-mour-an mokhot.
 2PL:REAL-bury RED-alive-TR person
 ‘They buried the person alive.’

At-khan medemed-an niëkh.
 3PL:REAL-eat raw-TR fish
 ‘They ate the fish raw.’

Ø-Metër lëbalëb.
 3SG:REAL-sleep pretend
 ‘(S)he is pretending to sleep.’

Ø-Lue lëbis nimin.
 3SG:REAL-shoot pretend bird
 ‘(S)he is pretending to shoot birds.’

Ø-Lëng gor nesel khën nakhe.
 3SG:REAL-put block path INST log
 ‘(S)he blocked the path with a log.’

Netite Ø-leg gor nesel.
 child 3SG:REAL-sit block path
 ‘The child sat in the way on the path.’

Ai Ø-tëbe ngarangar nakhe.
 3SG 3SG:REAL-cut split wood
 ‘(S)he cut the wood lengthwise.’

Ai Ø-mën venokh melëkh sen get.
 3SG 3SG:REAL-drink steal kava POSS 1PL.INCL
 ‘He secretly drank our kava.’

When *melili* appears in a serial verb construction, it can be used to indicate that there is motion back to the point of origin of the action, or a change of state resulting in a return to an original state. When expressing these meanings, serialised *melili* is commonly followed by the postverbal modifier *lis* (§4.3.1.7), as in the following:

Nowe Ø-memes melili lis.
 river 3SG:REAL-dry return again
 ‘The river dried up again.’

Matërvarëkh Ø-mour melili lis.
 old.man 3SG:REAL-alive return again
 ‘The old man came back to life.’

When *melili* is used in conjunction with a preceding transitive verb—appearing therefore with the transitivity suffix *-Vn* (§4.2.3)—the resulting sequence of verbs sometimes expresses the idea of replacement. For example:

Më-tëkh melili-an noag.
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-take return-TR canoe
 ‘We replaced the canoe.’

Lektërvarëkh Ø-rus melili-an mulë-n i Ø-toro.
 old.woman 3SG:REAL-wear return-TR shed.skin-3SG REL 3SG:REAL-old
 ‘The old woman put her old shed skin back on.’

It can also be used to mean ‘again’, as in:

Kë-lis melili-an netite air.
 2SG:IRR-see return-TR child PL
 ‘See the children again.’

Kë-bële melili-an-Ø.
 2SG:IRR-live.with return-TR-3SG
 ‘Live with him again.’

Serialised *melili*, when used with a reduplicated transitive verb, can also be used to indicate that an action is performed reciprocally (§4.2.1). For example:

Rë-bële-bële melili-an raru.
 3DL:REAL-REDUP-marry return-TR 2DL
 ‘The two of them married each other.’

Just as we find with many other Oceanic languages which have nuclear serial verb constructions, there is a considerable amount of functional restriction involved with forms which occupy the serial verb position in the verbal complex (Crowley 2002b:108–124). Some such forms quite productively appear in the second position after the inflected initial verb and have meanings that are plausibly verbal, even though there is no evidence for the independent existence of these forms as verbs. Attested examples of this type include the following:

<i>lue</i>	‘outwards’	<i>tëkh</i> ‘take’ > <i>tëkh lue</i> ‘take out’, <i>vos</i> ‘carry’ > <i>vos lue</i> ‘remove’, <i>ras</i> ‘remove stone from pudding’ > <i>ras lue</i> ‘remove stone from pudding’, <i>rus</i> ‘wear’ > <i>rus lue</i> ‘take off (clothes), <i>khël</i> ‘dig’ > <i>khël lue</i> ‘dig out’
<i>vesi</i>	‘try’	<i>lis</i> ‘see’ > <i>lis vesi</i> ‘try to see’, <i>var</i> ‘say’ > <i>var vesi</i> ‘try to say’

<i>khur</i>	‘apart’	<i>khas</i> ‘cut’ > <i>khas khur</i> ‘cut apart’
<i>jējən</i>	‘tightly’	<i>təkh</i> ‘take’ > <i>təkh jējən</i> ‘hold tightly’, <i>rov</i> ‘hold’ > <i>rov jējən</i> ‘grab hold of’, <i>bəg</i> ‘tie’ > <i>bəg jējən</i> ‘tie tightly’
<i>bən</i>	‘do to death’	<i>səkh</i> ‘spear’ > <i>səkh bən</i> ‘spear to death’, <i>lue</i> ‘shoot’ > <i>lue bən</i> ‘shoot dead’
<i>nevsilian</i>	‘roughly, randomly, do all kinds of’	<i>bəg</i> ‘tie’ > <i>bəg nevsilian</i> ‘tie roughly’, <i>tutus</i> ‘write’ > <i>tutus nevsilian</i> ‘scribble’, <i>khov</i> ‘plant’ > <i>khov nevsilian</i> ‘plant all kinds of’
<i>vənaan</i>	‘do every, complete’	<i>bele</i> ‘chase’ > <i>bele vənaan</i> ‘chase every (something)’, <i>lev</i> ‘take’ > <i>lev vənaan</i> ‘take every (something)’, <i>khan</i> ‘eat’ > <i>khan vənaan</i> ‘eat all of’
<i>nsubonsuboden</i>	‘together’	<i>bəg</i> ‘tie’ > <i>bəg nsubonsuboden</i> ‘tie together’
<i>vəvrəkhon</i>	‘aimlessly’	<i>lue</i> ‘shoot’ > <i>lue vəvrəkhon</i> ‘shoot aimlessly’
<i>(bər)běj</i>	‘break’	<i>leg</i> ‘sit’ > <i>leg bərběj</i> ‘break by sitting on’, <i>verəs</i> ‘step on’ > <i>verəs běj</i> ‘break by stepping on’

The serialised verb *nsələng* can be used to express the meaning of ‘leave behind’, as in the following:

Nane sen Ø-mes nsələng-Ø.
 mother POSS:3SG 3SG:REAL-die leave-3SG
 ‘His/her mother died and left him/her behind.’

At-irəv nsələng Loag.
 3PL:REAL-run.away leave Loag.
 ‘They ran away from Loag.’

This form is also used in the expression of the comparative in association with a stative verb. For example:

Den-akh Ø-ber nsələng aru.
 NONHUM-DEM 3SG:REAL-long leave 3DL
 ‘That thing is longer than the two of them.’

While *nsələng* is normally treated as a serialised transitive verb which can be immediately followed by an object noun phrase, it is occasionally associated with the pseudo-transitivising use of the preposition *khən* (§4.2.3), indicating that it can function either transitively or intransitively. We therefore also find examples such as the following:

Ai-akh Ø-tələb nsələng khən ai-akh.
 3SG:DEM 3SG:REAL-big leave TR 3SG-DEM
 ‘He is bigger than her.’

In addition to the forms set out above, we encounter a number of forms which appear only in fixed phrases. Sometimes both elements are used independently as verbs, e.g. *iban* ‘hide’ + *terav* ‘wait’ > *ban terav* ‘lie in wait’, *irëv* ‘run away’ + *sesavakh* ‘one’ > *rëv sesavakh* ‘scatter, run in all directions’. In other cases, only the initial verb may be used independently, as with *metër* ‘sleep’ + *mel* > *metër mel* ‘sleep soundly’.

Finally, there are some otherwise non-verbal forms which can be used in these kinds of serial verb constructions. For instance, the adjective *vëvrëkh* ‘very small’ (§3.4.2) appears in association with the verb *ibës* ‘speak’ as *bës vëvrëkh* ‘whisper’. Given what is known about how similar forms are distributed in other languages of central and northern Vanuatu, at least some of these forms could be expected to have wider distributions than has so far been attested.

The patterns described and exemplified above have all involved an initial verb and a single following serialised verb. However, there is no restriction on the number of verbs that may occur in such constructions, as long as the verbs in question are semantically compatible both with each other and with the semantics of the initial verb. We therefore find examples such as the following in my corpus in which two nuclear serial verbs appear in sequence after an initial inflected verb:

Neleng Ø-khëj bër vënaan nakhe air.
 wind 3SG:REAL-hit break do.all tree PL
 ‘The wind broke all of the trees.’

Although there is no principled reason why sequences of more than three verbs linked together in this construction cannot be found, the preference in my corpus is overwhelmingly for sequences of just two, and very occasionally three verbs. Presumably, longer sequences are unlikely because there is less chance of there being semantically compatible combinations which match up with pragmatic realities.

When discussing nuclear-layer serial verb constructions in Naman, we face one difficulty that is commonly encountered when discussing parallel constructions in other languages of central and northern Vanuatu. The problem is that while there are some constructions which are clearly of the VERB + VERB type as described in this section, and there are other constructions which are clearly of the VERB + MODIFIER type as described in §4.3.1, there are many constructions where it is unclear whether a particular postverbal element should be assigned to the class of nuclear serial verbs or to the class of verbal modifiers.

In fact, there are very strong grounds for arguing that there is a continuum between clear modifiers (e.g. VERB + *ëns* ‘completive’) and clear serial verbs (e.g. VERB + *melili* ‘go back’), with many other forms appearing to be neither completely one nor the other. Such forms suggest a need for some kind of additional category—perhaps that of adverbial?—though this is likely to be a category that is extremely difficult to define. An example of such a form might be *(bë)bëtakhe* ‘very’. The following examples suggest that this form, along with *navon*, functions in the same way as adverbial modifiers (§5.3.5):

Ø-Tëleb bëbëtakhe.
 3SG:REAL-large very
 ‘It is very large.’

Ø-Varëkh *bëtakhe*.
 3SG:REAL-small very
 ‘It is very small.’

Ø-Ides *navon*.
 3SG:REAL-good very
 ‘It is very good.’

However, in the following, *(bë)bëtakhe* unambiguously occupies the same position as a nuclear serial verb, and it is even transitivised by means of the pseudo-transitivising preposition *khën* (§4.2.3):

Melaas Ø-khas *bëtakhe khën ai*.
 cold 3SG:REAL-bite very TR 3SG
 ‘(S)he was very cold (lit. Cold very (much) bit him/her).’

5 *Simple sentences*

This chapter describes how the noun phrases described in Chapter 3 and the verb complexes described in Chapter 4 combine with other kinds of constituents in Naman to make up complete clauses.

5.1 Non-verbal clauses

Non-verbal clauses are not nearly as frequently attested in my corpus as verbal clauses. The various types of non-verbal clauses that are found in Naman are described below.

5.1.1 Presentative clauses

One quite widely attested type of non-verbal clause can be referred to as the presentative clause. This is the construction that is used when the existence of something is being asserted, in which case the clause consists minimally of nothing but a single noun phrase. Presentative clauses of this type are commonly encountered towards the beginning of a narrative text where the speaker wishes to state who or what the story is about. Thus:

Numin bētev nevdoro.
man ACC woman
'There was a man and a woman.'

Such clauses are not restricted to narrative openings, however, and a non-verbal clause such as the following can appear within a conversational exchange:

Kinee-ns.
1SG-COMPL
'It was me.'

Such clauses are negated by postposing the free form *sēkh*, which is also used as an interjection meaning 'no' (§5.3.6). Thus:

Kine sēkh.
1SG no
'It was not me.'

The same function can also be expressed by means of the formally related negative existential verb *esëkh* ‘not exist’, with the noun phrase within the presentative clause appearing as the subject. Thus:

Teme-n Ø-esëkh ãns.
 father-3SG 3SG:REAL-not.exist COMPL
 ‘His father wasn’t there.’

Mokhot b-esëkh.
 person 3SG:IRR-not.exist
 ‘There will be nobody.’

Mokhot air at-esëkh mën iar.
 person PL 3PL:REAL-not.exist any.more there
 ‘There were no longer any people there.’

Another situation in which presentative clauses are used involves one of the non-singular inclusive pronouns (§3.1) to indicate that the speaker wishes to be included in some unstated activity with the addressee. Thus:

Iget.
 1PL.INCL
 ‘I will do X with you, Let’s do X together.’

Although presentative clauses consist minimally of just a single noun phrase, optionally also with the negator (*e*)*sëkh*, it is possible for non-core clause elements such as locational or temporal expressions (§5.3) to appear in the clause. We therefore also find presentative clauses such as the following:

Motuen Ø-esëkh mën Metenesel.
 somebody 3SG:REAL-not.exist any.more Metenesel
 ‘There was no longer anybody at Metenesel.’

Tokhe tetel aim mokhot tëleb.
 before all.the.way in.village person many
 ‘A very long time ago in the village, there were many people.’

Although such constructions are often expressed as non-verbal clauses in this way, the presentative function can also be expressed in the form of a verbal clause involving the inflected verb *ijëkh* ‘exist’ following the noun phrase. We therefore also encounter examples such as the following:

Nadël mete-n mokhot sangavël at-ijëkh i nevet nen.
 egg eye-3SG person ten 3PL:REAL-exist LOC rock DEM
 ‘There are ten people’s eyes in that rock.’

5.1.2 Equational clauses

Another non-verbal clause type is the equational construction. This is based on the formula TOPIC + COMMENT in which two noun phrases are simply juxtaposed with no intervening copula. We therefore find examples such as the following, with the boundary between the topic and the comment indicated by the slash:

Nangse-n kine | Dick.
 name-3SG 1SG Dick
 ‘My name is Dick.’

One recurring pattern for non-verbal clauses of this type is for the comment to be a headless relative clause (§3.3.4) introduced by *tet*. For example:

Nokhutë-n buag | tet rë-së-ma-khan-khan-si.
 stem-3SG taro REL IMP:REAL-NEG-CONT/HAB-REDUP-eat-NEG
 ‘Taro stem is (something) that one does not eat.’

The negative of equational clauses is expressed again by means of the form *sëkh* after the comment, or by means of the negative existential verb *esëkh*. Thus:

Ag | bubu tevet Ø-esëkh.
 2SG grandmother 3SG:REAL-not.exist
 ‘You are not (my) grandmother.’

Another possibility with equational clauses is for the comment to be introduced by *e*. This form is used elsewhere to express contrastive coordination between clauses (§6.4). However, when a non-verbal clause introduces a comment which is completely new—perhaps even surprising—information, then the form *e* ‘but’ can separate the topic and the comment. For example:

Iar natuen nangse-n at e Khurni.
 that.place some name-3SG DEM but Khurni
 ‘The name of somewhere there was Khurni.’

In this case, the speaker was telling people of a little-known place called Khurni within the Naman-speaking area where people once spoke a different language, which is now extinct.¹ Note also the following, which illustrates the same pattern:

Mokh i khë-lis iar e demes at.
 person REL 3SG:REAL-see there but devil TOP
 ‘The person who you see there is (not a person at all but) a devil.’

Just as presentative clauses can be expressed both non-verbally and verbally, so too can equational clauses be expressed verbally, involving the inflected copula *ve* intervening between the topic and the comment.² We therefore find examples such as the following:

Nangso-g Ø-ve Nemenbang.
 name-1SG 3SG:REAL-COP Nemenbang
 ‘My name is Nemenbang.’

Kamem mët-ve mokh Tovorëm.
 1PL.EXCL 1PL.EXCL:REAL-COP person Tovorëm
 ‘We are people from Tovorëm.’

¹ This was the Rutan language, which originated from the area known as Lombal in the mountainous interior of northern Malakula, and whose speakers migrated to Khurni and the island of Uri some generations ago (§1.4.1). This language is now extinct.

² Note that the copula *ve* is also used as an ordinary transitive verb meaning ‘make’ or ‘do’.

Ag khë-ve netitevën.
 2SG 2SG:REAL-COP young.girl
 ‘You are a young girl.’

Kine në-ve Morris.
 1SG 1SG:REAL-COP Morris
 ‘I am Morris.’

Note once again that one of the noun phrases involved can be a headless relative clause introduced by *tet*. For example:

Den-akh Ø-ve tet ba-des.
 NONHUM-DEM 3SG:REAL-COP REL 3SG:IRR-good
 ‘That thing is something that will be good.’

The copula *ve* in such constructions can be negated in exactly the same way as any other verb (§4.1.2), as in the following:

Plen net Ø-se-ve-si plen Jap.
 plane DEM 3SG:REAL-NEG-COP-NEG plane Japanese
 ‘That plane wasn’t a Japanese plane.’

Tutunmasa net Ø-se-ve-si tutunmasa burong ne.
 story DEM 3SG:REAL-NEG-COP-NEG story ordinary only
 ‘This story is not just an ordinary story.’

A number of examples have been attested in which the copula has the form *vi* rather than *ve*. For example:

Netë-raru Ø-vi numin.
 child-3SG 3SG:REAL-COP male
 ‘Their child was a male.’

There is a sufficient number of examples of this type to suggest that *ve* and *vi* may represent free variants in Naman. However, it is possible that since *vi* is the invariant form of the copula in Neve‘ei (Crowley 2002a: 646), this represents sporadic influence from that language given that Neve‘ei is now many Naman speakers’ primary language.

5.1.3 Demonstrative clauses

Another kind of non-verbal clause involves a construction that is used when the speaker is physically pointing to the referent of the noun phrase whose existence is being asserted. In such circumstances, the noun phrase that is being pointed out is presented at the beginning of the clause and this is then followed by the nominal form *evan* ‘this one, that one’. Although *evan* functions as a noun phrase, it only ever appears in this particular kind of non-verbal clause. It differs further from other nominal forms in that it can take none of the modifying constituents associated with nouns (§3.4) so it is perhaps best described as something like a demonstrative pronoun. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Matërvarëkh nge | evan.
 old.man DEM that.one
 ‘That is the old man.’

Ai | evan.
 3SG that.one
 ‘That’s it.’ ‘That’s the one.’

This kind of construction is negated by placing *sëkh* immediately after the topic noun phrase and before the form *evan*. Thus:

Mokh sëkh | evan.
 person NEG that.one
 ‘That is not a person.’

The comment noun phrase preceding the clause-final topic *evan* can even be an entire clause, as illustrated by the following:

Kine në-ma-leg iar / evan.
 1SG 1SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-live there that.one
 ‘It’s there that I live.’

The form *evan* can be placed after another clause, usually with the completive marker *ëns* (§4.3.1.1) appearing in the preceding clause, to express an aspectual kind of meaning. Such constructions indicate that the situation described in that clause is well and truly achieved. Thus:

Ø-Tëleb ëns evan.
 3SG:REAL-grown.up COMPL that.one
 ‘He is well and truly grown up.’

Në-rov jējën ëns evan.
 1SG:REAL-hold tight COMPL that.one
 ‘I well and truly grabbed hold of it.’

When the preceding clause is a non-verbal rather than a verbal clause, the completive marker *ëns* is less likely to appear, and the same aspectual meaning may be expressed instead by means of the complete clause *ai evan* ‘that’s it, that’s the one’ appearing after the initial clause. Thus:

Mokh sëkh ai evan.
 person NEG 3SG that.one
 ‘There was absolutely nobody.’

Although equational sentences expressed by means of the copula *ve* (§5.1.2) are formally verbal rather than non-verbal clauses, they nevertheless also enter into this construction. Thus:

Evatnëkh Ø-ve nejëkh ai evan.
 now 3SG:REAL-COP kingfisher 3SG that.one
 ‘Now it has well and truly turned into a kingfisher.’

5.1.4 Topic-comment clauses

The final type of non-verbal clause involves constructions in which a topic noun phrase is followed by a comment which says something about the referent of the topic. A number of different kinds of constituents can occupy this comment position.

When the comment takes the form of a possessed noun phrase, this corresponds to the assertion of a possessive relationship on the part of the referent of the noun phrase in topic position in the absence in Naman of a verb meaning ‘have’. The following examples illustrate this pattern:

Kine | *netë-g ingët.*
1SG child-1SG many
‘I have many children.’

Matërvarëkh | *netë-n sëkh.*
old.man child-3SG NEG
‘The old man has no children.’

Comments in equational constructions need not be just noun phrases. We therefore find examples of comments which consist of uninflected adjectives (§3.4.2). For example:

Bësien nen Khurni | insebi.
language POSS Khurni different
‘The language of Khurni was different.’

Mere | bolo.
eel large
‘The eel is large.’

Such constructions can be quite lengthy, with a structurally complex topic and a comment which consists of a prepositional phrase, as in the following:

Tat Ø-ma-sël khën nakhe sen | i baranga-n
place 3SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-hide TR log POSS:3SG LOC hole-3SG
nevet Abet.
stone Abet
‘Where he hid his log was in the cave at Abet.’

As with equational clauses, the topic and the comment can be separated by means of *e* ‘but’ when the content of the comment represents information that is in some way unexpected (§5.1.2). For example:

Noag e alo at.
ship but by.coast TOP
‘The ship is (contrary to expectation) down by the coast.’

5.2 Verbal clauses

The vast bulk of clauses in my Naman corpus are verbal clauses. These can be divided into two basic construction types. One type of verbal clause is the so-called impersonal construction referred to in §4.1.1.2 in which no specific agent is expressed in association

with a verb. Contrasting with this construction is the pattern which I will refer to as personal constructions, which involve some overtly asserted verbal subject.

5.2.1 Personal constructions

In keeping with the general pattern for the languages of central and northern Vanuatu, verbal clauses have the basic constituent order SVO. For example:

Matërvarëkh Ø-lev nivës sen.
 old.man 3SG:REAL-take bow POSS:3SG
 ‘The old man took his bow.’

The same pattern is encountered with clauses in which the subject or the object is an independent pronoun (§3.1), as in the following examples:

Demes Ø-bele kamem.
 devil 3SG:REAL-chase 1PL.EXCL
 ‘The devil chased us.’

Air at-rov jējën matërvarëkh nge.
 3PL 3PL:REAL-hold tight old.man DEM
 ‘They held the old man tight.’

Given that there is obligatory subject cross-reference on the verb for all pronominal categories (§4.1.1.1), it is not uncommon for there to be no overt occupant of the pre-verbal subject noun phrase position. For example:

At-met-metër tabakh.
 3PL:REAL-REDUP-sleep all
 ‘They were all asleep.’

Re-lev nakhanien.
 3DL:REAL-take food
 ‘They (dl.) took the food.’

In fact, examples of clauses containing both an overtly expressed subject and an overtly expressed object at the same time are quite uncommon in my corpus. With the possibility of zero-marked third person singular objects, along with the fact that certain categories of pronominal object are expressed by means of verbal suffixes (§4.1.4), it is quite common for a clause to consist of nothing but an inflected verb. For example:

Ø-Vos-Ø.
 3SG:REAL-carry-3SG
 ‘(S)he carried it.’

Ø-Lis-ër.
 3SG:REAL-see-3PL
 ‘(S)he saw them.’

Independent pronominal subjects are, in fact, present only when contrast is implied. For example:

Ag kē-metër bētev-Ø.
 2SG 2SG:IRR-stay.overnight ACC-3SG
 ‘You stay overnight with him.’

5.2.2 Impersonal constructions

I referred in §4.1.1.2 to an impersonal construction in Naman which is expressed by means of a distinct inflectional prefix in the verbal subject paradigm. This prefix implies that an agent has performed an action but that the referent of the agent is not specified. The object of the verb is frequently—though not exclusively—fronted in order to express topicalisation (§6.6.1). With such verbs, there is no possibility for an overtly expressed subject noun phrase, whether nominal or pronominal, to occur. Even though the formal marking for the category of impersonal subject is the same in the realis mood as that for the third person dual, the corresponding third person dual pronoun (*r*)*aru* cannot appear before an impersonal verb. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Nokhutē-n buag tet rē-sē-ma-khan-khan-si.
 stem-3SG taro REL IMP:REAL-NEG-CONT/HAB-REDUP-eat-NEG
 ‘Taro stem is something one does not eat.’

Nibu nakh rē-khores khēn-gēn.
 bamboo DEM IMP:REAL-cut OBL-1SG
 ‘This bamboo was cut from me.’

Nēverē-n rē-ve dalē-n.
 arm-3SG IMP:REAL-make leg-3SG
 ‘His arms were made into his legs.’

The fact that this impersonal prefix is formally distinct from the dual is indicated by the completely different prefixes in the corresponding irrealis forms. Compare, therefore, the following:

Bēr-khores-Ø.
 3DL:REAL-cut-3SG
 ‘The two of them cut it.’

Rēbē-khores-Ø.
 IMP:IRR-cut-3SG
 ‘One will cut it.’

It is particularly common for the verb *var* ‘say’ to appear in this construction, with the following object indicating what something is called. For example:

Bēsien nen iar ra-var Rutan.
 language CHAR that.place IMP:REAL-say Rutan
 ‘The language of that place is called Rutan.’

The most natural translation into English of such constructions very often involves an agentless passive. Where a language has a passive construction, this typically involves the promotion of an object noun phrase into the position of grammatical subject, with the original subject being demoted either to an oblique position in the clause or being deleted

altogether. The verb in a passive construction must also be marked in some way as being distinct from the active, and it loses its transitivity.

However, this impersonal construction in Naman cannot be treated as a passive. For one thing, the object is by no means always fronted, and there are examples in my corpus in which the object of a verb in this construction remains in the post-verbal object position. For example:

Rë-vësan nejë-n naab.
 IMP:REAL-throw excrement-3SG fire
 ‘The burning firestick was thrown.’

Also, although the object noun phrase is often moved to pre-verbal position, this simply follows a process of fronting topicalised noun phrases to the head of the clause (§6.6.1), and there is no cross-reference on the verb for the pronominal category of these fronted noun phrases. The difference between a singular and a plural subject to an intransitive verb is marked inflectionally as follows:

Mokh Winev tuen Ø-vale.
 person Winev INDEF 3SG:REAL-come
 ‘A person from Winev came.’

Mokh Winev air at-vale.
 person Winev PL 3PL:REAL-come
 ‘The people from Winev came.’

However, when the same fronted noun phrases appear before a verb carrying impersonal inflectional marking, the difference in number is not cross-referenced on the verb as would be expected of a subject. In fact, the difference in number is still marked in the object position of the verb in the form of object suffixes (§4.1.4). Thus:

Mokh Winev tuen rë-khëj-Ø.
 person Winev INDEF IMP:REAL-kill-3SG
 ‘A person from Winev was killed.’

Mokh Winev air rë-khëj-ër.
 person Winev PL IMP:REAL-kill-3PL
 ‘The people from Winev were killed.’

5.3 Non-core constituents

There is a variety of peripheral arguments within a clause which can equally be found in both non-verbal and verbal clauses, including prepositional phrases and a range of other clause-level constituents. Indeed, a number of the examples presented in §5.1 and §5.2 to illustrate both non-verbal and verbal clause have included a variety of such non-core constituents. This section describes these various additional constituent types.

5.3.1 Prepositional phrases

One category of non-core constituents in the Naman clause is those which are expressed as prepositional phrases. These invariably appear after the core clause constituents of

subject, verb and object, or topic and comment. While it is common for a clause to contain a single prepositional phrase, it is not impossible for a clause to contain more than one such constituent. We therefore find examples such as the following which contain a series of prepositional phrases:

Në-lis bolet Ø-vale Ø-ies i deswe
 1SG:REAL-see bullet 3SG:REAL-come 3SG:REAL-kick.up.spray LOC sea
i bungus-n noag ser.
 LOC prow-3SG canoe POSS:3PL
 ‘I saw the bullet come and kick up spray in the sea at the prow of their canoe.’

Three of the more frequently encountered prepositions—*khën*, *bëtev* and *jëkhën*—exhibit inflectional morphology, with *khën* and *bëtev* sharing some morphological features with inflected verbs (§4.1.4) and *jëkhën* sharing the inflectional characteristics of directly suffixed nouns (§3.3.2.1). The remaining prepositions—*i*, *nar*, *usër*, *rangan*, *bavarse* and *khawes*—are morphologically invariant, being followed directly by nominal or independent pronominal objects.³ In the discussion which follows, the functions of each of these prepositions are described and exemplified in turn.

5.3.1.1 Uninflected prepositions

5.3.1.1.1 *I*

The preposition *i* is invariant in shape, being followed only by a free form noun or pronoun. It expresses a rather wide range of functions which can be encapsulated by the general gloss ‘spatial, instrumental’. The various specific functions that are expressed by this preposition are as follows:

(a) Location (‘in’, ‘on’, ‘at’), for example:

Neto Ø-metër i nakhe.
 chicken 3SG:REAL-sleep LOC tree
 ‘The chicken is sleeping in the tree.’

Nakhe Ø-sël i deswe.
 log 3SG:REAL-float LOC sea
 ‘The log is floating on the sea.’

Watson Ø-leg vaas i Lingarakh.
 Watson 3SG:REAL-live still LOC Lingarakh
 ‘Watson still lives at Lingarakh.’

Note that this can also include location with respect to a person if the implication is one of location on top of the person or in the direct physical presence of the person. For example:

³ A similar three-way subcategorisation of prepositions is encountered in other Malakula languages, e.g. V’ënen Taut (Fox 1979:41–44). Note, however, that in closely related Neve’ei, all prepositions behave identically in being morphologically invariant (Musgrave 2001:142–152).

Numin Ø-metër i nevdoro.
 man 3SG:REAL-lay.down LOC woman
 ‘The man lay down on (top of) the woman.’

Bë-nog i kine.
 3SG:IRR-finish LOC 1SG
 ‘It will finish with me (i.e. the buck stops here).’

- (b) Source (‘from’), for example:

Kine bë-khël lue nedum i neten.
 1SG 1SG:IRR-dig out yam SOURCE ground
 ‘I will dig up the yam from the ground.’

Mokhot Ø-khawes i nevet.
 person 3SG:REAL-originate SOURCE rock
 ‘The person originated from a rock.’

- (c) Goal (‘to’), where the following noun expresses a place rather than a person, for example:

Ner nakhe at-idëm i neten.
 leaf tree 3PL:REAL-fall GOAL ground
 ‘The leaves fell to the ground.’

Nimin Ø-merakh Ø-iv i nibu.
 bird 3SG:REAL-fly 3SG:REAL-go GOAL bamboo
 ‘The bird flew away to the bamboo.’

- (d) People who originate ‘from’ or who ‘belong to’ a particular place, for example:

Mokhot i Veditakh at-imes tabakh.
 person PLACE Veditakh 3PL:REAL-die all
 ‘All the people of Veditakh died.’

- (e) Instrument (‘with, by means of’), for example:

Netite net Ø-vër libakh sen i nakhe.
 child DEM 3SG:REAL-hit dog POSS:3SG INST stick
 ‘That child hit his dog with the stick.’

Note, however, that the instrumental function can also be expressed by means of the oblique preposition *khën* (§5.3.1.3.2). For example:

Kë-së-vangan-si raru khën niëkh net.
 2SG:IRR-NEG-feed-NEG 2DL INST fish DEM
 ‘Don’t feed the two of them with that fish.’

- (f) The entity which something turns ‘into’, for example:

Ø-Vëlës ai Ø-iv i namat.
 3SG:REAL-change 3SG 3SG:REAL-go INTO snake
 ‘He changed into a snake.’

(g) The temporal meanings of ‘in’ or ‘at’ a time, for example:

At-metër i bung.
 3PL:REAL-sleep LOC night
 ‘They slept at night.’

At-lëng i naltimal.
 3PL:REAL-leave LOC sunset
 ‘They left it at sunset.’

(h) Durative (‘during’, ‘for’ a period of time), for example:

At-leg i bëngë-n matërvarëkh.
 3SG:REAL-stay DUR mourning.day-3SG old.man
 ‘They stayed for the mourning days of the old man.’

(i) Point of contrast (i.e. different ‘from’), for example:

Khurni bësien nen insebi i bësien Naman.
 Khurni language POSS different FROM language Naman
 ‘The language of Khurni was different from the Naman language.’

This preposition is also attested occasionally in the same kind of complex prepositional construction that is described in more detail in §5.3.4 for locational markers such as *rakhe* ‘above, on top, up’. These are forms which cannot directly precede a noun so they must be introduced by an intervening preposition. For example:

Mët-iseb rakhe i botuen.
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-walk on.top LOC hill
 ‘We walked on top of the hill.’

There is in addition a small set of directly suffixed nouns (§3.3.2.1) which express specific locations when used in conjunction with the preposition *i*, including *melevë-* ‘under’, *nokho-* ‘in front of’ and *bokhte-* ‘behind’. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Libakh Ø-ma-metër i melevë-n nakhe.
 dog 3SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-sleep LOC under-3SG tree
 ‘The dog sleeps under the tree.’

5.3.1.1.2 *Nar*

This is an infrequently used accompanitive preposition. This meaning is far more commonly expressed by means of the preposition *bëtev* (§5.3.1.3.1). However, *nar* is attested in the following examples:

Evatëkh në-ma-bële-r mët-leg nar vëvënë-r.
 now 1SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-live.with-3PL 1PL.EXCL:REAL-stay ACC sister-3PL
 ‘Now I live with them and stay with their sister.’

\emptyset -Iv \emptyset -irëb ëns nar.
 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-work COMPL ACC
 ‘He went and worked with him.’

It is not known if there is any kind of semantic difference between *nar* and *bëtev*. Some speakers, in fact, did not even recognise this as a preposition in Naman, so it may be that this represents illicit interference from some other language.

5.3.1.1.3 *Usër*

The form *usër* is highly multifunctional in Naman, functioning as a durative postmodifier with verbs (§4.3.1.8), a serial verb with nuclear-layer juncture to introduce the content of a verb of locution (§4.3.2), and as a marker of subordinate clauses of reason (§6.5.1.2). It can also be used as a transitive verb meaning both ‘follow, go along’ and ‘be like, resemble’, as in the following:

At-usër *nemev* *Lakhajkhaj*.
 3PL:REAL-go.along level.place Lakhajkhaj
 ‘They went along the level place at Lakhajkhaj.’

\emptyset -*S-usër-si* *delë-n* *misnari*.
 3SG:REAL-NEG-be.like-NEG voice-3SG missionary
 ‘It is not like the missionary’s voice.’

As a morphologically invariant preposition, however, *usër* expresses a variety of related meanings, including the following:

(a) Similitive (‘like’), for example:

Nevdoro *net* \emptyset -*ibës* *usër* *numin* *tuen*.
 woman DEM 3SG:REAL-talk SIM man INDEF
 ‘This woman talks like a man.’

(b) Capacity (‘as’, ‘in the capacity of’), for example:

Në-ma-rëb *usër* *sekreti*.
 1SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-work SIM secretary
 ‘I work as the secretary.’

(c) In association with a preceding verb of motion, it can express the spatial meanings of ‘through’ or ‘along’, for example:

\emptyset -*Ilung* *usër* *nedong*.
 3SG:REAL-go THROUGH mangrove
 ‘(S)he went through the mangroves.’

At-velsan *ner* *nakhe* *usër* *nesel*.
 3PL:REAL-lay.down leaf tree ALONG path
 ‘They lay down the leaves along the path.’

(d) Also in conjunction with a verb of motion, it can indicate that an action takes place in the direction of something ('towards'), as in the following:

Nevdoro Vuli iru ra-lung usër delë-n namat.
 woman Vuli two 3DL:REAL-go DIR voice-3SG snake
 'The two women of Vuli went towards the snake's voice.'

(e) When used in conjunction with the following oblique preposition *khën* (§5.3.1.3.2), *usër* expresses cause ('because of', 'on account of'), for example:

Në-ma-mësiëkh usër khën nenom.
 1SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-sick CAUSE OBL mosquito
 'I am (habitually) sick because of the mosquitoes.'

Në-luolu usër khën melëkh.
 1SG:REAL-vomit CAUSE OBL kava
 'I vomited because of the kava.'

5.3.1.1.4 *Rangan*

The preposition *rangan* expresses the locative meaning of 'on', in contrast to *i*, which means 'in'. Contrast, therefore, the following:

Ai Ø-leg rangan nevet.
 3SG 3SG:REAL-sit LOC rock
 '(S)he sat on the rock.'

Ai Ø-leg i baranga-n nevet.
 3SG 3SG:REAL-sit LOC hole-3SG stone
 '(S)he sat in the cave.'

5.3.1.1.5 *Bavarse*

The morphologically invariant preposition *bavarse* expresses the locative meaning of 'against', as in the following:

Tët-bëg nibu bavarse nokhutë-n nenge.
 1PL.INCL:IRR-tie bamboo against trunk-3SG native.almond
 'We will tie the bamboo against the trunk of the native almond.'

5.3.1.1.6 *Khawes*

There is a form *khawes* which can be treated as an uninflected preposition meaning 'across', as illustrated in the following:

Merika air at-lëkh main khawes Malo Ø-jëber Tutuba.
 America PL 3PL:REAL-hang mine across Malo 3SG:REAL-reach Tutuba
 'The Americans had laid mines across from Malo to Tutuba.'

However, *khawes* also functions as an inflected lexical verb meaning ‘come from’ or ‘originate’, as in the following:

Mët-khawes *i* *nevet.*
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-originate SOURCE rock
 ‘We originate from a rock.’

Musgrave (2001:150) indicates that there is variability in the expression of the meaning of ‘across’ in Neve‘ei between a prepositional and a serialised verbal construction. However, in my Naman corpus, *khawes* functions clearly as a preposition when expressing this meaning. If it were to exhibit verbal characteristics, we would expect it to carry irrealis marking in the following example in the same way that we find with *jëber* ‘reach’ (§6.2.1), but it is in fact inflectionally unmarked:

Merika *air* *ajë-lëkh-si* *main* *khawes* *Malo*
 America PL 3PL:REAL:NEG-hang-NEG mine across Malo

bë-jëber *Tutuba.*
 3SG:REAL-reach Tutuba
 ‘The Americans did not lay mines across from Malo to Tutuba.’

5.3.1.2 The nominal preposition *jëkhën*

There is a personal spatial preposition with the root *jëkhë-* which is inflected according to the same pattern used with directly possessed nouns (§3.3.2.1), as set out in Table 26. In the same way that we find with directly suffixed possessed nouns, inflected forms of this preposition alternate freely with constructions in which the form inflected for third person singular is followed by an independent pronoun. Thus, for example, the first person singular form *jëkhë-g* is found alongside *jëkhë-n kine*. All other prepositional objects (i.e. nouns and independent pronouns) obligatorily follow the third person singular form of the preposition, i.e. *jëkhën*.

Table 26: Paradigm for *jëkhën*

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>jëkhë-g ~ jëkho-g</i>	Incl.	—	—
		Excl.	—	—
2	<i>jëkhë-m ~ jëkha-m</i>		—	—
3	<i>jëkhë-n ~ jëkhe-n</i>		—	<i>jëkhë-r ~ jëkhe-r</i>

The various functions that are associated with this preposition are set out and illustrated below, though these can all be subsumed under the general label of ‘personal spatial’ in that they express a variety of spatial roles associated typically with a human noun phrase. This includes the following specific functions:

(a) Accompaniment (‘with’), for example:

Kine *bë-velet* *be-leg* *jëkhë-n* *akhug.*
 1SG 1SG:IRR-come 1SG:IRR-sit ACC-3SG 2SG
 ‘I will come and sit with you.’

Note, however, that accompaniment is more frequently expressed by means of the preposition *bëtev* (*khën*) (§5.3.1.3.1).

(b) Recipient of transfer ('to'). The form *jëkhën* alternates with *khën* (§5.3.1.3.2) in expressing this function. Thus:

Khë-lev jëkhë-n kamru.
2SG:REAL-give GOAL-3SG 1DL.EXCL
'You gave it to the two of us.'

Kine ne-lev babar khën-ëm.
1SG 1SG:REAL-give pig GOAL-2SG
'I gave you the pig.'

(c) Location or motion 'to' or 'at' someone's place, for example:

Nakhe Ø-mour vaas jëkhë-n kamem.
tree 3SG:REAL-alive still PLACE-3SG 1PL.EXCL
'The tree is still alive at our place.'

Tëra-v tëre-leg jëkhë-n bibi air.
1DL:IRR-go 1DL:IRR-stay PLACE-3SG uncle PL
'Let's go and stay with (my) uncles.'

(d) Personal goal ('to'), in contrast to a goal which is a place, for example:

Tet Ø-iis tuen bë-vale bë-tavëns jëkhë-n kamem.
REL 3SG:REAL-bad INDEF 3SG:IRR-come 3SG:IRR-happen GOAL-3SG 1PL.EXCL
'Something bad will come and happen to us.'

Igem tuen bë-vale jëkhë-g.
2PL INDEF 3SG:IRR-come GOAL-1SG
'One of you will come to me.'

Matërvarëkh Ø-iv jëkhë-n netite vëvrëkh air.
old.man 3SG:REAL-go GOAL-3SG child PL:little PL
'The old man went to the little children.'

(e) Around or close to ('near, by, close to'), for example:

Mokhot at-iv at-leg jëkhë-n at-khan nelag nen.
person 3PL:REAL-go 3PL:REAL-sit AROUND-3SG 3PL:REAL-eat pudding DEM
'The people went and sat around it and ate that pudding.'

(f) Source with relation to a person ('from'), for example:

Mët-iyag jëkhë-n tate sen kamem.
1PL:REAL-begotten SOURCE-3SG father POSS:3SG 1PL.EXCL
'We were begotten from our father.'

The complex preposition construction described in §5.3.4 can also make use of *jëkhën* as the second element, in alternation with *khën* (§5.3.1.3.2). For example:

Kë-sa-v-si lile jëkhë-n naab net.
 2SG:IRR-NEG-go-NEG close GOAL-3SG fire DEM
 ‘Don’t go close to that fire.’

5.3.1.3 Verbal prepositions

5.3.1.3.1 *Bëtev* (*khën*)

Table 27: Paradigm for *bëtev*

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>bëtev-gën</i>	Incl.	—	—
		Excl.	—	—
2	<i>bëtev-ëm</i>		—	—
3	<i>bëtev-Ø</i>		—	<i>bëtev-ër</i>

The preposition *bëtev* accepts the same pronominal suffixes that we find on transitive verbs (§4.1.4), which means that it has the inflectional paradigm set out in Table 27. With dual pronominal objects, as well as with non-third person plural pronominal objects, we find the independent pronouns following the uninflected form *bëtev*.

Bëtev basically expresses just a single function, that of accompaniment. For example:

Akhug kh-iseb bëtev tan?
 2SG 2SG:REAL-walk ACC who
 ‘Who did you walk with?’

At-vos-Ø at-leg bëtev-Ø aim.
 3PL:REAL-carry-3SG 3SG:REAL-stay ACC-3SG at.home
 ‘They carried him and stayed with him at home.’

This preposition is occasionally followed also by the oblique preposition *khën* to form the complex sequence *bëtev khën* with no change of meaning. The following illustrates the optional use of the oblique preposition *khën* after the accompanitive preposition:

Netite tuen Ø-leg bëtev khën khave-n.
 child INDEF 3SG:REAL-sit ACC OBL friend-3SG
 ‘A child is sitting with his/her friend.’

The accompanitive preposition *bëtev* (*khën*) is sometimes used to link two noun phrases in a coordinate construction (§3.5). For example:

numin bëtev nevdoro
 man ACC woman
 ‘man and woman’

nane sog bëtev khën bubu sog
 mother POSS:1SG ACC OBL grandfather POSS:1SG
 ‘my mother and my grandfather’

5.3.1.3.2 *Khën***Table 28:** Paradigm for preposition *khën*

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>khën-gën</i>	Incl.	—	—
		Excl.	—	—
2	<i>khën-ëm</i>		—	—
3	<i>khën-Ø</i>		—	<i>khën-ër</i>

The oblique preposition *khën* has the paradigm set out in Table 28, which parallels the pattern for transitive verbs (§4.1.4). Just as we find with transitive verbs, these inflected forms alternate with the third person singular form *khën* followed by independent pronouns. Thus, the second person singular form *khën-ëm* alternates freely with *khën a(khu)g*. With nominal objects, as well as all dual pronouns and first and second person plural pronouns, the prepositional object is expressed only by means of a free form which immediately follows the unmarked form *khën*.

This preposition can be described as a general oblique marker because of the wide range of functions that it expresses. Functions which have been attested include the following:

(a) Recipient of transfer, or dative ('to'), for example:

Kine ne-lev babar khën-ëm.
 1SG 1SG:REAL-give pig DAT-2SG
 'I gave the pig to you.'

Këre-lev khën-gën.
 2PL:IRR-give DAT-1SG
 'You two will give it to me.'

Motuen Ø-ikhëj mukhub Ø-vangan khën namat.
 somebody 3SG:REAL-kill lizard 3SG:REAL-feed DAT snake
 'Somebody killed lizards and fed them to the snake.'

This function is sometimes also expressed by means of the preposition *jëkhën* (§5.3.1.2).

(b) Addressee of utterance ('to'), for example:

Ba-var nestuen khën-ëm.
 1SG:IRR-say something GOAL-2SG
 'I will say something to you.'

Ai Ø-sabe tutunmasa tuen khën kine.
 3SG 3SG:REAL-tell story INDEF GOAL 1SG
 'He told a story to me.'

(c) Source ('from'), for example:

Nibu rë-khores khën-gën nelmu it at-khan-gën.
 bamboo IMP:REAL-cut SOURCE-1SG when SUB 3PL:REAL-eat-1SG
 'The bamboo was cut from me when they ate me.'

Note that source can also be marked by means of the preposition *i* (§5.3.1.1.1).

(d) Cause ('because of'), for example:

Mët-le-leg khën-Ø.
1PL.EXCL:REAL-REDUP-sit CAUSE-3SG
'We are sitting down because of it.'

Në-ro Ø-lues khën-ëm.
1SG:REAL-feel 1SG:REAL-tired CAUSE-2SG
'I am tired of you.'

The same function can also be expressed by means of the complex preposition *usër khën* (§5.3.1.1.3).

(e) Purpose ('for'), for example:

Matërvëvrëkh sen kamem air at-ilung khën megi tuen.
old.men POSS 1PL.EXCL PL 3PL:REAL-go PURP grade-taking INDEF
'Our old men went for a grade-taking ceremony.'

(f) Beneficiary ('for'), for example:

Ne-ve tet Ø-ides khën-ëm.
1SG:REAL-do REL 3SG:REAL-good BEN-2SG
'I did something good for you.'

Note, however, that a benefactive noun phrase can also be marked in quite a different way, using the indirect possessive marker (§5.3.3).

(g) Instrumental ('with'), for example:

Bë-vël-Ø khën babar.
1SG:IRR-pay.for-3SG INST pig
'I will pay for it with a pig.'

Kë-së-vangan-si raru khën niëkh net.
2SG:IRR-NEG-feed-NEG 2DL INST fish DEM
'Don't feed the two of them with that fish.'

As noted above, the instrumental function is sometimes expressed alternatively by means of the preposition *i* (§5.3.1.1.1).

(h) Temporal ('in' or 'at' a time, 'on' a day), for example:

Mët-vale Lenslens khën neskho nangavël itël daman iru.
1PL.EXCL:REAL-come Litzlitz TEMP year ten three and two
'We came to Litzlitz in (19)32.'

Ø-Vale khën ne Sade.
3SG:REAL-come TEMP only Sunday
'(S)he only came on Sunday.'

(i) Duration ('during', 'for' a period of time), for example:

Ø-Leg khën neskho ilëm.
 3SG:REAL-stay DUR year five
 'He stayed for five years.'

This preposition also appears after a locational form (§5.3.4) when there is a following noun phrase which can be referred to as a complex prepositional construction. Thus, while *lile* 'near' can be used on its own with no following noun phrase, when an associated noun phrase is overtly marked, this must follow the sequence *lile khën*. For example:

Neim sog Ø-ijëkh lile khën nakhe.
 house POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-exist near OBL tree
 'My house is close to the tree.'

Finally, the preposition *khën* is used to form what was referred to in §4.2.3 as a pseudo-transitive construction in which a formally intransitive verb may be followed by a noun phrase referring to the entity directly affected by the action expressed by the verb for which there is no directly equivalent transitive form. For example:

Air at-irëb khën neim tuen i nourour.
 3PL 3PL:REAL-work TR house INDEF LOC island
 'They made a house on the island.'

Air tuen Ø-isiëkh khën nense.
 PL INDEF 3SG:REAL-climb TR Tahitian.chestnut
 'One of them climbed the Tahitian chestnut.'

Melaas khas bëtakhe khën ai.
 cold 3SG:REAL-bite very TR 3SG
 '(S)he was very cold.'

5.3.2 The postposition *i*

Naman is unusual among the languages of central and northern Vanuatu that have been reasonably well documented to date in that, alongside the various prepositions described in §5.3.1, there is a single postposition of the shape *i*. In this respect, Naman presents a structural contrast with even its closest relative, Neve'e, where there is no evidence of a similar postposition.⁴ This postposition expresses a goal meaning, but it is only used in association with place names or locational nouns (§5.3.4). Contrast, therefore, the use of *i* as a preposition in the first example below with the use of the same form as a postposition in the second example:

Ner nakhe at-idëm i neten.
 leaf tree 3PL:REAL-fall GOAL ground
 'The leaves fell to the ground.'

⁴ However, McKerras (2000) reports the use of postpositional *e* in neighbouring Northeast Malakula to express motion to or from a place.

Kine ba-v mën bëkhët i.
 1SG 1SG:IRR-go first inside GOAL
 ‘I will go inside first.’

In the following pair of adjacent clauses, the locational noun *bëkhët* ‘inside’ appears first with the postposition *i* when it is associated with a goal reading and then without it when it is used locationally:

Ra-v bëkhët i. Ra-tër bëkhët.
 3DL:REAL-go inside GOAL 3DL:REAL-stand inside
 ‘The two of them went inside. They stood inside.’

Because of the rarity of postpositions in closely related languages, a number of additional examples of this form are presented below:

Bubu Ø-iv Loag i.
 grandfather 3SG:REAL-go Loag GOAL
 ‘Grandfather went to Loag.’

Mët-iv Aure i.
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-go Aore GOAL
 ‘We went to Aore.’

Deswe Ø-vale aut i.
 sea 3SG:REAL-come ashore GOAL
 ‘The tide is coming in (lit. the sea is coming ashore).’

Rë-gëlo Ø-vale aatin i.
 2DL:REAL-look 3SG:REAL-come down GOAL
 ‘The two of them looked down here.’

It should be pointed out, however, that the use of postpositional *i* is not obligatory in the marking of goal on place names and locational nouns. In §5.3.4, it is shown that goal is also commonly marked with such nouns without any adpositional marking at all. Contrast, therefore, the examples just given with the following, where the place name Winev is neither preceded nor followed by *i*:

Mokh Veditakh net at-iv Winev.
 person Veditakh DEM 3PL:REAL-go Winev
 ‘The people of Veditakh went to Winev.’

5.3.3 Benefactive phrases

Mention was made in §5.3.1.3.2 of the fact that the oblique preposition *khën* can be used to express a benefactive function in sentences such as the following:

Ne-ve tet Ø-ides khën-ëm.
 1SG:REAL-do REL 3SG:REAL-good BEN-2SG
 ‘I did something good for you.’

In addition to this prepositionally marked benefactive construction, a beneficiary noun phrase can also be marked by means of the indirect possessive markers described in §3.3.2.2. Thus:

At-khël neim klasrum sen netite air.
 3PL:REAL-build house classroom BEN:3SG child PL
 ‘They built the classroom for the children.’

Although possessor and beneficiary are semantically closely related, it is clear with examples such as the following that we are talking of a distinct benefactive use of the possessive form because there is no possibility of a possessive interpretation with the intransitive verb:

Na-rëb sen Merika air Vila.
 1SG:REAL-work BEN:3SG American PL Vila
 ‘I worked for the Americans in Vila.’

Ajysel sen tan?
 3PL:REAL:shell.out.copra BEN:3SG who
 ‘Who are they shelling out copra for?’

There is an additional benefactive construction where the referent of the noun phrase benefits in the form of something that is edible. This construction involves the use of the directly possessed noun (*de*)*na(kh)a-* ‘food (of)’ (§3.3.2.2) to introduce the benefactive complement. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Ø-Tabëkh nakha-n lis.
 3SG:REAL-cook.food BEN-3SG again
 ‘She cooked for him again.’

Ø-Ve nelag nakha-n.
 3SG:REAL-make pudding BEN-3SG
 ‘She made pudding for him.’

5.3.4 Place names and locational nouns

In addition to prepositional and postpositional phrases and the benefactive construction, we find a number of zero-marked forms which express a range of spatial meanings in association with place names and other constituents expressing locational meanings.

Place names in Naman commonly simply follow a verb complex with no accompanying preposition to express location, goal or source. Thus:

Mokhot b-esëkh Veditakh.
 person 3SG:IRR-not.exist Veditakh
 ‘There will be nobody at Veditakh.’

Very occasionally, place names with a locative meaning are attested with a directly preceding preposition, as already noted in §5.3.1.1.1 where the following example was presented:

Watson Ø-leg vaas i Lingarakh.
 Watson 3SG:REAL-live still LOC Lingarakh
 ‘Watson still lives at Lingarakh.’

Place names with a goal interpretation, rather than a locative or source meaning, may also be marked by means of postposed *i*, as noted in §5.3.2.

There is in addition a set of what can be referred to as locational nouns in Naman which behave in the same way as place names with regard to the marking of spatial roles. As mentioned in §5.3.2, these forms can also be followed by the postposition *i* when they are associated specifically with a goal interpretation. Rather than referring to named locations, these forms refer to a number of different types of places which figure prominently in people’s traditional lives. Forms of this type that have been attested are:

<i>deswe</i>	‘sea’
<i>alo</i>	‘coast (from the perspective of the interior)’
<i>(kh)aut</i>	‘coast (from the perspective of the sea)’
<i>lakhe</i>	‘bush’
<i>aakhus</i>	‘hills, mountains’
<i>aim</i>	‘house, home’
<i>khamil</i>	‘meeting house’
<i>tevlen</i>	‘other side’
<i>tevnsar</i>	‘open area, public place’
<i>garsel</i>	‘garden’
<i>lokhor</i>	‘place of circumcision’
<i>lemev</i>	‘level place’

We therefore find examples such as the following:

Ai Ø-*lungolung* Ø-*iv* *deswe*.
 3SG 3SG:REAL-walk 3SG:REAL-go sea
 ‘He walked (thither) to the sea.’

Ø-*Iv* *khamil*.
 3SG:REAL-go meeting.house
 ‘He went to the meeting house.’

At-iv *garsel*.
 3PL:REAL-go garden.
 ‘They went to the garden.’

The form *tevlen* ‘other side’ can be used as a locational noun on its own, or it can be followed by another noun to indicate the geographical feature that must be crossed in order to get to the other side. Thus:

Kë-melili *nangsen* *tevlen?*
 2SG:IRR-return when other.side
 ‘When will you return to the other side?’

Lamas *sog* Ø-*ijëkh* *tevlen* *botuen*.
 garden POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-exist other.side hill
 ‘My garden is on the other side of the hill.’

Table 29: Correspondences between locational and ordinary nouns

Locational noun		Ordinary noun	
<i>lemev</i>	‘level place’	<i>nemev</i>	‘level place’
<i>khamil</i>	‘meeting house’	<i>naamil</i>	‘meeting house’
<i>lakhe</i>	‘bush’	<i>nakhe</i>	‘tree’
<i>aim</i>	‘house, home’	<i>neim</i>	‘house’

Some of these locational nouns are identical in shape to ordinary nouns. With a form such as *deswe* ‘sea’, which can be either a locational noun or an ordinary noun with no change in shape, it is possible for location, source and goal to be expressed either by means of zero, or by means of various prepositions described in §5.3.1, and it is possible also for goal to be expressed by means of the postposition *i* (§5.3.2). Some of the other locational nouns are partly—though unpredictably—different in shape and meaning from clearly related ordinary nouns. Table 29 sets out a number of correspondences between locational nouns and ordinary nouns. Although these forms function as locational nouns, they nevertheless remain noun-like in that they can be followed by nominal postmodifiers (§3.4), as in the following:

At-iv lemev air tanokh.
 3PL:REAL-go level.place PL over.there
 ‘They went to the level places over there.’

Another category of locational nouns refers not to specific geographical locations but to places which can only be located with respect to some other places (which may often be the place in which an utterance takes place). These forms can also appear in a clause with zero-marking for any of the spatial roles, or they can be associated with postpositional *i* for the expression of goal:

lile ‘close, near’
tuoso ‘far’
tanokh(wi) ‘far’
iar ‘there, that place’
iag ‘here, this place’
raadin ‘down, at sea’
aatin ‘down’
rakhe ‘above, on shore’
bëkhët ‘inside’
vere ‘outside’
ranelvan ‘middle’
teteliar ‘everywhere, elsewhere’
gorti ‘last place’

For example:

Ø-Iv Ø-le-leg vere.
 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-REDUP-sit outside
 ‘(S)he went and sat outside.’

Nane Ø-vēlvēl khën kine vale iag i.
 mother 3SG:REAL-marry TR 1SG come here GOAL
 ‘Mother married me off to this place.’

There is no restriction on the number of such constituents which can appear within a clause. This means that two (or more) semantically compatible unmarked locational markers may be used together. For example:

Mēt-lev noag tuen iag Lenslens.
 1PL.REAL-take canoe INDEF there Litzlitz
 ‘We took a canoe there at Litzlitz.’

While forms such as these normally appear as zero-marked spatial constituents in a clause, they occasionally function as ordinary non-spatial noun phrases. In the following, for example, *rakhe* ‘above, on shore’ is used as a subject noun phrase:

Rakhe at-ibēs Ø-vale jëkhë-r i patrolbot.
 on.shore 3PL.REAL-speak 3SG:REAL-come GOAL-3PL LOC patrolboat
 ‘The ones on shore spoke (hither) to them in the patrolboat.’

The following example illustrates the use of the form *iar* ‘there, that place’ as a possessor noun in a possessive construction:

Bësien nen iar ra-var Rutan.
 language POSS that.place IMP:REAL-say Rutan
 ‘The language of that place was called Rutan.’

The forms *iar* ‘there, that place’ and *iag* ‘here, this place’ can be associated with the nominal postmodifier *natuen* or the premodifier *tuen* to express the meanings of ‘somewhere there’ and ‘somewhere here’ respectively. For example:

Iar natuen nangse-n at e Khurni.
 there some name-3SG TOP but Khurni
 ‘The name of somewhere there was Khurni.’

Në-lue niëkh at tuen iag.
 1SG:REAL-shoot fish DEM INDEF there
 ‘I shot the fish somewhere here.’

Some of the forms just listed can be used to express location also with respect to an associated noun phrase, corresponding to phrases such as ‘near the house’, ‘far from the house’, and so on. Since these forms are not prepositions in Naman, they cannot be followed directly by a noun phrase to express such meanings. There is a variety of ways in which members of this set behave when there is a noun phrase associated with them, as set out below:

(a) The forms *lile* ‘close, near’ and *tuoso / tanokh(wi)* ‘far’ can be followed by either the oblique preposition *khën* (§5.3.1.3.2) or the personal spatial preposition *jëkhën* (§5.3.1.2), with the resulting complex preposition preceding the noun. For example:

lile khën neim
 near OBL house
 ‘near the house’

lile jëkhën naab
 near LOC fire
 ‘near the fire’

(b) The form *rakhe* ‘above’ can be followed by the locative preposition *i* (§5.3.1.1.1) in the same way. For example:

rakhe i botuen
 on.top LOC hill
 ‘on top of the hill’

(c) The forms *bëkhët* ‘inside’, *vere* ‘outside’ and *ranelvan* ‘middle’ can directly follow the noun, effectively functioning either as postnominal modifiers, or perhaps even as postpositions. Thus:

neim bëkhët
 house inside
 ‘inside the house’

nelag ranelvan
 pudding middle
 ‘the middle of the pudding’

5.3.5 Adverbials and other forms

In addition to the different kinds of locational markers described in §5.3.4, there are various other clause-level constituents which appear within the clause with no associated prepositional or postpositional markers. These are all forms which cannot occupy noun phrase positions such as verbal subject or object, so they are treated here as different kinds of clause-level adverbial modifiers.

5.3.5.1 Temporal adverbials

One set of clause-level markers expresses a wide variety of temporal meanings, including the following:

<i>meren</i>	‘tomorrow’
<i>boas</i>	‘day after tomorrow’
<i>nenëv</i>	‘yesterday’
<i>noas</i>	‘day before yesterday’
<i>mësavet</i>	‘today’
<i>evatëkh(nakh) ~ evatnakh</i>	‘now’
<i>rangarangan</i>	‘always’
<i>tetelis</i>	‘always’
<i>tunsar</i>	‘always’
<i>monogo</i>	‘and then’
<i>tabrakh ~ tebrakh</i>	‘just then’

<i>varsakh</i>	‘nearly, almost’
<i>tokhe</i>	‘before, long time ago’
<i>(vo)vom</i>	‘first’
<i>atokh</i>	‘last’
<i>gorti</i>	‘last’
<i>delvaat</i>	‘in the middle of the night’

Most of these forms are fairly free with regard to their position in a clause. They may, for example, appear either pre-verbally or after the verb, as in the following:

Meren bët-iv.
tomorrow 3PL:IRR-go
‘They will go tomorrow.’

Në-vale nenëv.
1SG:REAL-come yesterday
‘I came yesterday.’

Some temporal adverbials, however, are much more tightly constrained as to where they may appear. The form *monogo* ‘and then’ is only attested in clause-initial position, as in the following:

Monogo Ø-vëlës lis ai Ø-ve labët.
and.then 3SG:REAL-change again 3SG 3SG:REAL-COP rat
‘And then he changed himself into a rat.’

On the other hand, *tebrakh* ~ *tabrakh* ‘just now’ and *varsakh* ‘nearly’ always appear between the subject of the clause and the following verb. Thus:

Matërvëvrëkh air tabrakh at-rongdur at-var at-varedog.
old.men PL just.then 3PL:REAL-know 3PL:REAL-say 3PL:REAL-tell.truth
‘The old men just then knew that they were telling the truth.’

Mokhot varsakh ba-mes tabakh.
person nearly 3SG:IRR-die all
‘Nearly everybody died.’

We can also include in this set of temporal adverbials those forms derived from numerals by means of the multiplicative prefix *vaa-* (§4.2.2). For example:

vaasavakh ‘once’
vaaru ‘twice’
vaatël ‘three times’

Thus:

Vaa-savakh mët-vëles buag.
MULT-one 1PL.EXCL-roast taro
‘We once roasted taro.’

Some nouns referring to parts of the day can also be used with no further marking as clause-level modifiers expressing time:

metebëkh 'in the morning'
bung 'in the night'

Since these forms also function as nouns, we can encounter nominal postmodifiers (§3.3) in association with them when they are being used as temporal markers. For example:

Getaru tëra-bës metebëkh tabakh.
 1DL.INCL 1DL.INCL:REAL-speak morning every
 'You and I talk every morning.'

There is also a number of NOUN + VERB sequences involving *nout* 'place' in the subject position in which the verbs are inflected as ordinary verbs. However, these sequences together function within the clause as temporal adverbials. Examples of this type include the following:

Nout Ø-nu netite tuen Ø-metër jëkhë-n.
 place 3SG:REAL-dark child INDEF 3SG:REAL-sleep PLACE-3SG
 'At dark a child was asleep at his place.'

Mët-utbu mët-vale Aure nout Ø-nu.
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-sail 1PL.EXCL:REAL-come Aore place 3SG:REAL-dark
 'We sailed here to Aore at dark.'

Nout Ø-iren at-ve nestuen.
 place 3SG:REAL-daybreak 3PL:REAL-do something
 'At daybreak they did something.'

Nout Ø-revrev at-ras nelag.
 place 3SG:REAL-dusk 3PL:REAL-remove pudding
 'At dusk they removed the pudding.'

The NOUN + VERB sequence *nal imal* 'the sun goes down' also functions as a time adverbial in the same way, with the meaning 'at dusk'. Thus.

Kamem mët-melili nal Ø-imal.
 1PL.EXCL 1PL.EXCL:REAL-return sun 3SG:REAL-go.down
 'We returned at sunset.'

Although the forms as presented above look very much as if they could be treated as phrasal adverbs involving an initial noun followed by an uninflected verb root, they clearly do involve regular third person singular realis zero-inflection (§4.1.1.1), as we find the corresponding irrealis inflections when the adverbial appears in an irrealis structural context. It should also be noted that these inflected temporal expressions are not formally embedded into a main clause as subordinate clauses, as none of the subordinators described in §6.5 are permitted. Thus:

Bët-khan nelag nout bë-revrev.
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-eat pudding place 3SG:IRR-evening
 'We will eat the pudding in the evening.'

Bët-khan-Ø nal ba-mal.
 3PL:IRR-eat-3SG sun 3SG:IRR-go.down
 'They will eat it at sunset.'

In addition to marking an event as taking place at a particular time of day, the same adverbial expressions can also be used to indicate that an event takes place over a period of time until the time of day that is referred to. Note, therefore, examples such as the following:

At-leg *nout* *Ø-iren.*
 2PL:REAL-stay place 3SG:REAL-dawn
 ‘They stayed until dawn.’

Ajav *delvës* *matërvarëkh* *nout* *Ø-var* *ba-ren.*
 3PL:REAL:dance around old.man place 3SG:REAL-about.to 3SG:IRR-dawn
 ‘They danced around the old man until it was nearly dawn.’

These constructions involving the noun *nout* ‘place’ are not the only forms with adverbial functions which are formally expressed using inflected verbs. Although there are temporal markers such as *tokhe* ‘long time ago’, there is no adverbial to express the meaning of ‘soon’. This meaning can only be expressed in Naman by means of the third person singular negative form of the verb *berber* ‘long’. Although the resulting form *seberbersi*, literally ‘it is not long’, has the form of a verb, it occupies a purely adverbial slot within the clause in that there is no evidence of a serial, a subordinate, or a coordinate relationship between this and other verbs in the sentence. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Ø-Se-berber-si *bolet* *Ø-ies* *i* *deswe.*
 3SG:REAL-NEG-long-NEG bullet 3SG:REAL-kick.up.spray LOC sea
 ‘Soon the bullet kicked up spray in the sea.’

5.3.5.2 Particles

There is a set of remaining items for which it is difficult to offer any definitive overall characterisation either in terms of their meaning or syntactic behaviour, other than that they function as clause-level modifiers. For the sake of convenience, I will refer to these as particles, and these will be described and exemplified in turn below.

(i) *Us* and *bar* ‘perhaps’

The forms *us* ‘perhaps’ and *bar*, which expresses the same meaning, are used as clause-initial modifiers as in the following:

Us *den-akh* *Ø-ve* *tet* *ba-des* *tuen.*
 perhaps NONHUM-DEM 3SG:REAL-COP REL 3SG:IRR-good INDEF
 ‘Perhaps that thing is something that will be good.’

Bar *at-varedog.*
 perhaps 3PL:REAL-tell.truth
 ‘Perhaps they told the truth.’

(ii) *Ne* ‘just, only’

Postposed *ne* expresses the meaning of ‘just’ or ‘only’. Since it can appear after forms from any word class, it is treated as a clause-level particle rather than as a modifier of any

particular kind of phrase. We therefore find examples such as the following in which it follows a noun phrase or a pronoun:

Nokhutë-n buag ne air at-ijëkh.
 stem-3SG taro only PL 3PL:REAL-exist
 ‘There were only taro stems.’

Get ne attët-khan net.
 1PL.INCL only TOP1PL.INCL:REAL-eat DEM
 ‘It’s just us who eat that.’

The following example shows that *ne* can appear after a verb. In these particular cases, the verb is a transitive verb with an object and it can be seen that the particle appears between the verb and its object.

Mët-vos ne nokhutë-n buag net.
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-carry only stem-3SG taro DEM
 ‘We just carried the taro stems.’

Rë-khëj ne neste dongon air.
 IMP:REAL-kill only thing ordinary PL
 ‘Only ordinary things were killed.’

This particle can also intervene between a verb and an immediately following zero-marked locational noun phrase, as in the following:

Mët-utbu mët-vale ne Aure nout Ø-nu.
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-sail 1PL.EXCL:REAL-come only Aore place 3SG:REAL-dark
 ‘We just sailed to Aore at dark.’

Finally, we find examples such as the following where a numeral can be followed by the same form:

Savakh ne Ø-mour vaas evatëkh.
 one only 3SG:REAL-alive still now
 ‘Just one is alive now.’

(iii) *Me* ‘pity’

There is a handful of examples in my corpus of the form *me* being used to signal the fact that the speaker feels pity for the addressee, or is seeking pity from the addressee. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Tët-ilung me.
 1PL.INCL:IRR-go pity
 ‘Please, let’s just go.’

Deswe nen aru me iar.
 current DEM DL pity there
 ‘Those two currents were unfortunately there.’

(iv) *Nsi*

The form *nsi* is described in §4.3.1.11 as a necessitative modifier within the verb complex. However, the same form is also encountered in my corpus, albeit fairly infrequently, expressing a general proximate temporal and spatial meaning which can be glossed as ‘now’ or ‘here’. It often, though by no means exclusively, appears with the following cliticised demonstrative *akh* (§3.4.3) or the topic marker *at* which is discussed in §6.6.2. It is attested in examples such as the following after both verbs and noun phrases where it expresses the meaning of ‘here’:

Re-leg nsar nsi iag.
 3DL:REAL-stay forever now here
 ‘The two of them stayed here now.’

Tate nsi Ø-rongdur den-et.
 father here 3SG:REAL-know NONHUM-DEM
 ‘Father here knows that.’

Ka-var khën ai bë-vale nsi.
 2SG:IRR-say GOAL 3SG 3SG:IRR-come here
 ‘Tell him/her to come here.’

In the following examples, it expresses the meaning of ‘now’, again after both verbs and noun phrases:

Kine nsi-akh në-vale.
 1SG now-DEM 1SG:REAL-come
 ‘I have now come.’

At-ma-varedog nsi at.
 3PL:REAL-CONT/HAB-tell.truth now TOP
 ‘They are telling the truth now.’

(v) Other clause-level particles

A number of forms which were described in §4.3.1 as verbal postmodifiers also freely occur after a variety of non-verbal constituents, which means that they effectively function in the same way as clause-level particles. Thus, while forms such as *mën* ‘first’ or *ëns* ‘completive’ are most frequently found in verb complexes, they can appear after non-verbal constituents as follows:

Akhug mën.
 2SG first
 ‘You first (i.e. after you).’

Nenëv ëns.
 yesterday COMPL
 ‘(It was done) yesterday already.’

5.3.6 Interjections

Given that this account of Naman has been written without any real exposure to spontaneous conversational usage, there has not been an opportunity to hear a full range of interjections used by speakers of the language. Despite this, however, my corpus of narrative texts does include some examples of interjections.

One interjection that is highly salient both to speakers of Naman as well as to speakers of neighbouring languages is the form *naman*, from which the language has taken its name.⁵ This form is used as an expression of surprise. The form *(e)sëkh* can be used as an interjection meaning ‘no’, though it should be noted that this form is also incorporated into clause-level grammar in Naman in that it is used to negate certain types of non-verbal clauses (§5.1). The corresponding affirmative interjection is *a’a* ‘yes’, and there is also the additional negative interjection *maskhët* ‘not yet’. It was noted in §2.1.1 that *a’a* is the only word in the language which contains a glottal stop.

The only other interjections which have been recorded are the expressions of greeting. In common with many other languages of Vanuatu, greetings at different times of the day are expressed by using the form of the word for ‘good’ carrying third person singular realis inflectional marking followed by a time word (§5.3.5). Thus:

Ø-Ides *metebëkh!*
3SG:REAL-good morning
‘Good morning!’

In common with neighbouring Neve‘ei, the corresponding expression based on the word *bung* ‘night’ is not used to say ‘good night’. Rather, leave-taking at night—and indeed, leave-taking in general at whatever time of day—is expressed simply by using the time word *metebëkh* on its own as an interjection:⁶

Metebëkh!
morning
‘Good night!, Goodbye!’

The rationale here seems to be that this usage represents a fixed abbreviation for a fuller expression that means something like ‘I will see you again in the morning’.

5.4 Interrogative clauses

Although interrogative clauses constitute a functional category in that they all serve to seek information from the addressee, there is considerable variation in the various grammatical constructions by which this overall function is realised. However, for the sake of convenience, these constructions are discussed together in this single section.

Yes/no questions are distinguished in my corpus from declaratives only by means of intonation. Content questions are expressed using a variety of interrogative constituents. The following interrogative forms function in the same way as ordinary noun phrases:

⁵ The equivalent interjection in the neighbouring Neve‘ei language is *sang*, and some people use *Sang* as an alternative name for that language, as noted in §1.4.1.

⁶ This strategy for leave-taking may not be restricted just to Naman and Neve‘ei but may be found in other areas of Malakula as well. It seems to be pervasive enough that I have heard people speaking Bislama—where the normal night-time leave-taking expression is *Gudnaet!*—call out *Moning!* before going to bed.

*tan*⁷ 'who?'
san ~ nsan 'what?'

For example:

Melëkh sen tan at?
 kava POSS:3SG who TOP
 'Whose kava is this?'

Khë-ve nsan?
 2SG:REAL-do what
 'What did you do?'

Note that *tan* 'who', in addition to asking after people, is also used to refer to people's names. For example:

Nangsa-m tan?
 name-2SG who
 'What is your name?'

Since these interrogative forms function as nouns, they can be associated with a restricted range of nominal postmodifiers. In particular, they can appear with the indefinite postmodifier *tuen*, as in the following:

Khë-mensan nsan tuen at?
 2SG:REAL-look.for what INDEF TOP
 'What (specific thing) are you looking for?'

When these interrogative forms ask about plural referents, they are normally marked with the postnominal plural marker *air* (§3.4.1). Thus:

Tan air at-mën melëkh nenëv?
 who PL 3PL:REAL-drink kava yesterday
 'Who (pl.) drank kava yesterday?'

The interrogative *ivis* 'how many?' functions in the same way as the numerals, exhibiting vestigial verbal morphology in having the separate irrealis form *bavis* (§3.4.1). We therefore find examples such as the following:

Mokhot ivis at-vale i neim?
 person how.many 3PL:REAL-come GOAL house
 'How many people came to the house?'

Bë-tëkh ba-vis?
 1SG:IRR-take IRR-how.many
 'How many will I take?'

This form also accepts the multiplicative prefix *vaa-* (§4.2.2) to express the meaning of 'how many times?'. Thus:

⁷ This form appears in Deacon's notes in spellings which indicate *takhan*. Given the apparently recent general shift of *akha* to *aa* (§2.4), we might have expected this interrogative form to be *taan* with a long vowel rather than *tan*. However, I am quite confident that I have correctly recorded this with a short vowel from all speakers.

Be-ve *bë-vaa-vis?*
 1SG:IRR-do 3SG:IRR-MULT-how.many
 ‘How many times will I do it?’

The forms *nangsen* ‘when?’ and *abe* ‘where?’ fall syntactically into the same set as the temporal and locational markers described in §5.3.4 and §5.3.5. We therefore find examples such as the following with the interrogative of time:

Kë-melili *nangsen* *tevlen?*
 2SG:IRR-return when other.side
 ‘When will you return to the other side?’

Ø-Ilung *abe* *Ø-vale?*
 3SG:REAL-travel where 3SG:REAL-come
 ‘Whence has (s)he come?’

When information is being sought about location in a place rather than motion or transfer to or from a place, this can be expressed in a non-verbal clause (§5.1) in which the interrogative *eabe* ‘where (at)?’ appears before or after the noun phrase referring to the item that is to be located. Thus:

Eabe *noag?*
 where ship
 ‘Where is the ship?’

Nesel i *Lenelukh* *eabe?*
 road GOAL Lenelukh where
 ‘Where is the road to Lenelukh?’

There is an intransitive verbal interrogative of the shape *vësakh* which asks about both manner, i.e. ‘how?’, and reason, i.e. ‘why?’. This form functions syntactically as a verb that is serialised with core-layer juncture (§6.2.2). The following example illustrates its use as an interrogative of manner:

Be-ve *bë-vësakh?*
 1SG:IRR-do 3SG:IRR-how
 ‘How will I do it?’

Khë-lis *deswe* *Ø-vësakh?*
 2SG:REAL-see sea 3SG:REAL-how
 ‘How does the sea look to you?’

The following also illustrates how the same form can be used in an interrogative clause of reason:

Ø-Vësakh *khët-sa-var-si* *kët-ve* *nestuen* *khën*
 3SG:REAL-why 2PL:REAL-NEG-want-NEG 2PL:IRR-do something OBL

demes *net?*
 devil DEM
 ‘Why don’t you all want to do something to the devil?’

When there is an overtly expressed—or even only an implied—following object, the corresponding transitive interrogative form *vësaan* can be used instead. Note that this is

derived from *vəsakh* by means of the transitive suffix *-an* (§4.2.3), with the resulting sequence of *akha* being resolved as the long vowel *aa* by the process described in §2.3.5. Thus:

Khët-ve *Ø-vəsaan-Ø* *at?*
2PL:REAL-do 3SG:REAL-do.how:TR-3SG TOP
'How did you all do it?'

In addition to the verbal interrogatives of manner *vəsakh* and *vəsaan*, there is a corresponding interrogative adverbial of the form *tuskhëni*, which expresses exactly the same meaning. This form always appears after the verb, as in the following examples:

Khë-ve *tuskhëni?*
2SG:REAL-do how
'How did you do it?'

Mër-sabe *usër* *bësien* *Lëngalëng* *tat* *Ø-utbu* *tuskhëni.*
1DL.EXCL:REAL-talk about language Lëngalëng where 3SG:REAL-go how
'We are talking about how the language of Lëngalëng went.'

Ne-delangan *kam* *mët-lëkh* *noag* *tuskhëni.*
1SG:REAL-not.know 1PL.EXCL 1PL.EXCL:REAL-tie canoe how
'I don't know how we tied up the canoe.'

The fact that this is an adverb (§5.3.5) rather than a verb is indicated by the lack of any irrealis inflection on the interrogative form. If the forms *vəsakh* or *vəsaan* were used in the following examples, they would appear in these contexts with the irrealis prefix *bë-*. Thus:

Bë-sabe *usër* *mët-ilung* *tuskhëni* *Ø-vale* *jëber* *mësavet.*
1SG:IRR-talk about 1PL.EXCL:REAL-go how 3SG:REAL-come until today
'I will talk about how we came until today.'

Mët-de-delangan *tat* *bët-ve* *tuskhëni.*
1PL.EXCL:REAL-REDUP-not.know where 1PL.EXCL:IRR-do how
'We didn't know how we would do it.'

In §6.6.1, it is indicated that interrogative constituents are frequently fronted, often with the following topic marker *at* (§6.6.2). Thus, corresponding to a question such as the following:

Khë-ve *nsan?*
2SG:REAL-do what
'What did you do?'

we often find:

Nsan *at* *khë-ve?*
what TOP 2SG:REAL-do
'What did you do?'

However, adverbial interrogatives such as *tuskhëni* 'how?' and *nangsen* 'when?' are not fronted in this way and appear only after the verb within a clause.

6 *Multi-predicate sentences*

In this chapter, I will discuss the various types of multi-predicate sentences that are used in Naman. Under this heading are included all constructions which are made up of more than one inflected verb. The first two types of constructions described below—auxiliaries (§6.1) and serial verbs (§6.2)—are clearly rather different in nature from the patterns of coordination and subordination described in the following sections in that coordination and subordination involve complex sentences encoding more than one separate event, while auxiliaries and serial verb constructions are all involved in the expression of single-events via syntactically complex sentences. However, because all of these patterns involve sentences consisting of two or more separately inflected verbs, they are treated together in this chapter.

6.1 Auxiliaries

There is an AUXILIARY + VERB construction in Naman which consists of two inflected verbs. The initial auxiliary involves one of a restricted subset of fully inflected verbs and this is followed by a main verb from the open set of lexical verbs. Most of these auxiliaries also function as lexical verbs in their own right, usually with a clearly related, though not identical, meaning. Table 30 sets out the various auxiliaries found in Naman.

Table 30: Auxiliaries and corresponding lexical verbs

	Auxiliary meaning	Lexical meaning
<i>var</i>	‘intend to, be about to’	‘say, think’
<i>teren</i>	‘want to’	‘want, like’
<i>yeg khën</i>	‘want to’	—
<i>sisi</i>	‘not want to, refuse to’	‘not want, dislike’
<i>rong</i>	‘feel like’	‘hear, feel, smell’
<i>irëb khën</i>	‘keep doing’	‘make, build, do’
<i>rongdur</i>	‘be able to’	‘know’
<i>vidor</i>	‘be able to’	—
<i>delangan</i>	‘be unable to’	‘not know’
<i>leg</i>	‘continuous, habitual’	‘stay’
<i>savsavakh</i>	‘do alone’	‘one’
<i>totobatën</i>	‘start doing’	‘start’

Although both auxiliary and main verbs in these constructions carry inflectional marking, there is a tight structural linkage between the two in that both must carry identical marking for the pronominal category of their shared subject. No constituent can intervene between an auxiliary and the following main verb.

There are two different types of auxiliary in Naman. With most auxiliaries, there is a requirement that the second verb carry irrealis inflectional prefixation (§4.1.1) even if the auxiliary carries realis marking. The following illustrates this kind of relationship between auxiliary and main verb:

Në-sisi *bë-lungo-lung.*
 1SG:REAL-not.want 1SG:IRR-REDUP-walk
 ‘I don’t want to walk.’

With the second kind of auxiliary, however, the mood marking is identical for both auxiliary and the main verb. Thus:

Ø-Leg *Ø-rong* *mevë-n.*
 3SG:REAL-CONT/HAB 3SG:REAL-smell smell-3SG
 ‘(S)he used to smell it.’

In the discussion which follows, mood-shift in association with an auxiliary is called for unless specifically indicated otherwise.

6.1.1 *Intentional*

The form *var* is very commonly used as a lexical verb meaning ‘say, tell’ or ‘think’. For example:

Khë-var *nsan* *at?*
 2SG:REAL-say what TOP
 ‘What did you say?’

Na-var *us* *demes.*
 1SG:REAL-think perhaps devil
 ‘I thought it was perhaps a devil.’

The verb *var* is also productively used to introduce quotative complements to other verbs of locution and mental activity (§6.5.2.2).

As a verbal auxiliary, however, *var* is most commonly encountered in association with an animate subject where it expresses an intentional meaning, i.e. ‘intend to’. Thus:

Na-var *bë-lis-Ø.*
 1SG:REAL-intend 1SG:IRR-see-3SG
 ‘I intend to see it.’

The auxiliary can be negated to indicate the intention of the referent of the animate subject not to do something. For example:

Kine në-sa-var-si *ba-var* *tabakh.*
 1SG 1SG:REAL-NEG-intend-NEG 1SG:IRR-tell all
 ‘I don’t intend to tell all of it.’

This auxiliary is commonly used to introduce a purposive complement clause (§6.5.2.3), as in the following:

Ø-Vale rakhe Ø-var bē-tēkh nereu-n nense.
 3SG:REAL-come up 3SG:REAL-intend 3SG:IRR-take leaf-3SG Tahitian.chestnut
 ‘He came up to take the leaf of the Tahitian chestnut.’

Having an intention to do something often coincides with having a desire to do that thing, and *var* is also commonly used to express a desiderative meaning. For example:

Khē-var kē-vangan niēkh khën raru.
 2SG:REAL-DESID 2SG:IRR-feed fish DAT 2DL
 ‘You wanted to feed the fish to the two of them.’

Given that *var* can often be ambiguous between an intentional and a desiderative meaning, it is possible to unambiguously express the desiderative by using the separate desiderative auxiliary described in §6.1.2.

While *var* is overwhelmingly encountered in association with animate subjects, it is also attested with inanimate subjects. With such subjects, intention or desire is clearly not a possible interpretation. In such cases, *var* expresses instead the meaning of immediate future. Examples of this pattern are:

Bēsien sen kamem Ø-var ba-v bē-sēkhar.
 language POSS 1PL.EXCL 3SG:REAL-IMM 3SG:IRR-go 3SG:IRR-disappear
 ‘Our language is about to go and disappear.’

Nout Ø-var ba-ren.
 place 3SG:REAL-IMM 3SG:IRR-daylight
 ‘Day was about to break.’

6.1.2 Desiderative and antidesiderative

A desiderative meaning is most commonly expressed in my Naman corpus by means of the auxiliary *var* (§6.1.1). However, given that this can often be ambiguous between an intentional and a desiderative interpretation, a specifically desiderative meaning can be expressed by means of one of two desiderative auxiliaries: *teren* and *yeg khën*. The use of *teren* as a desiderative auxiliary is illustrated by the following:

Nē-teren ba-v i nivël.
 1SG:REAL-DESID 1SG:IRR-go GOAL moon
 ‘I want to go to the moon.’

The form *yeg khën* is a lexically complex transitive verb involving the intransitive root *yeg* followed by the oblique preposition *khën* in its pseudo-transitivising function, as described in §4.2.3. Although the verbal root here is clearly *yeg*, this never appears without the following *khën*. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Ø-Yeg khën bē-vibën mokhot.
 3SG:REAL-DESID TR 3SG:IRR-kill person
 ‘(S)he wanted to kill the person.’

Note that while *teren* can be used as an independent verb in its own right meaning ‘want, like’, the form *yeg khën* is attested in my corpus only as an auxiliary.

The desiderative auxiliaries *teren* and *yeg khën* have never been attested in my corpus with negative marking to express lack of desire. There is, in fact, a separate lexical verb *sisi* in Naman meaning ‘not want’ or ‘dislike’ and this is also used as an auxiliary to express the negation of a desiderative verb. Thus:

Në-sisi *bë-bële-m.*
1SG:REAL-ANTIDESID 1SG:IRR-accompany-2SG
‘I don’t want to accompany you.’

Sisi is sometimes also used as an auxiliary with the somewhat stronger meaning of ‘refuse to’, as in the following:

At-sisi *bët-rong* *delë-g.*
3PL:REAL-ANTIDESID 3PL:IRR-heed opinion-1SG
‘They refused to heed my opinions.’

There is an additional desiderative auxiliary in Naman which has a rather restricted distribution and that is *rong*. This form is freely used as a main verb meaning ‘hear’, ‘feel’ or ‘smell’, as in examples such as the following:

Ø-Rong *nejëkh* *Ø-tereter.*
3SG:REAL-hear kingfisher 3SG:REAL-call
‘(S)he heard the kingfisher calling.’

Në-rong *mevë-n* *nestuen.*
1SG:REAL-hear smell-3SG something
‘I could smell something.’

As a desiderative auxiliary, *rong* is only ever used in association with one of the small set of verbs of consumption, i.e. *khan* ‘eat’ and *mën* ‘drink’, along with the corresponding intransitive forms *khankhan* ‘eat’ and *mënmën* ‘drink’. These combinations of AUXILIARY + VERB are commonly used as expressions for ‘hungry (for)’ and ‘thirsty (for)’. For example:

At-rong *bët-mën-mën.*
3PL:REAL-DESID 3PL:IRR-REDUP-drink
‘They are thirsty (lit. they feel like drinking).’

Netite Ø-rong *bë-khan-khan.*
child 3SG:REAL-DESID 3SG:IRR-REDUP-eat
‘The child is hungry (lit. the child feels like eating).’

At-rong *bët-khan* *nuvri.*
3PL:REAL-DESID 3PL:IRR-eat crab
‘They were hungry for crabs.’

There is a separate idiomatic expression meaning ‘hungry’ in which the noun *nimir* ‘hunger’, appears as the subject of the transitive verb *khas* ‘bite’, as in the following:

Nimir Ø-khas netite.
 hunger 3SG:REAL-bite child
 ‘The child is hungry (lit. hunger is biting the child).’

However, this expression is not nearly as commonly used for the expression of hunger as the auxiliary construction involving *rong*. It should be noted that this VERB + AUXILIARY construction is the only pattern that has been attested for expressing the meaning of ‘thirsty’.

6.1.3 *Persistentive*

Irëb is an intransitive verb meaning ‘work’. For example:

Në-ma-rëb usër sekretre.
 1SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-work SIM secretary
 ‘I work as a secretary.’

In its pseudo-transitivised form *irëb khën* (§4.2.3) it expresses the meaning of ‘make’, ‘build’ or ‘do’. For example:

Ba-rëb khën neim sukul Lububu.
 1SG:IRR-work TR house church Lambumbu
 ‘I will build a church at Lambumbu.’

This pseudo-transitive form can also be used as a lexically complex verbal auxiliary to express the meaning of ‘keep doing’. This auxiliary function of *irëb khën* is not widely attested in my corpus, and it is not associated with a change in the mood marking of the main verb. However, we do find examples such as the following:

Lektërvarëkh Ø-irëb khën Ø-var khën naabë-n
 old.woman 3SG:REAL-work TR 3SG:REAL-say GOAL grandchild-3SG
khën bëra-v bër-teveng deswe.
 SUB 3DL:IRR-go 3DL:IRR-scoop.up salt.water
 ‘The old woman kept saying to her granddaughter that they should go and scoop up salt water.’

It was stated above that auxiliaries cannot normally be associated with any kind of postmodifier appearing between them and the following main verb. However, the persistentive auxiliary *irëb khën* differs from the other auxiliaries in that it is attested with a postmodifier; although there is no free choice of adverbial postmodifiers, the only form which can appear in this construction being *khair* ‘strong’. This adverbial is placed between the verbal element of the auxiliary, i.e. *irëb*, and the pseudo-transitivising preposition *khën*. The resulting sequence of *irëb khair khën* effectively functions as an additional auxiliary meaning ‘do with determination, insist on doing’, as illustrated in the following example:

Ø-Irëb khair khën Ø-var bëra-v.
 3SG:REAL-work strong TR 3SG:REAL-say 3DL:IRR-go
 ‘She was determined in saying that they should go.’

6.1.4 Ability and inability

The lexical verb *rongdur* is used to express the meaning of ‘know’, as in the following:

Sëne-raru Ø-rongdur i nibë-n.
 mother-3DL 3SG:REAL-know LOC body-3SG
 ‘Their mother knew it in her body.’

This verb is unusual in comparison to other verbs in Naman in that it has a lexically distinct negative form, i.e. *delangan* ‘not know’.¹ For example:

Në-delangan tat Ø-iv i.
 1SG:REAL-not.know place 3SG:REAL-go GOAL
 ‘I don’t know where (s)he has gone.’

Both of these forms can also be used as auxiliaries to express ability and inability respectively. Thus:

Khë-rongdur kë-saran nokho nen bues khën-gën.
 2SG:REAL-ABIL 2SG:IRR-pass rope PURP pig GOAL-1SG
 ‘You can pass the pig rope to me.’

At-delangan bët-ve bë-vësakh.
 3PL:REAL-INABIL 3PL:IRR-do 3SG:IRR-how
 ‘They didn’t know how to do it.’

For the expression of ability and inability, there is an additional option involving the auxiliary *vidor*. This differs from most of the other auxiliaries discussed in this section in that it is not attested as an independently occurring lexical verb. The use of *vidor* as an auxiliary expressing ability is illustrated below:

Numal i Metenesel Ø-vidor bë-bële netë-n nevdoro
 chief LOC Metenesel 3SG:REAL-ABIL 3SG:IRR-marry child-3SG woman
nen numal.
 POSS chief
 ‘The chief of Metenesel could marry the daughter of the chief.’

While ability is attested as being expressed by means of *vidor*, the meaning is much more commonly expressed by means of *rongdur*. The form *vidor* is much more commonly attested in its negated form to express inability, in examples such as the following:

Get tër-së-vidor-si tëra-bës usër khën
 1DL.INCL 1DL.INCL:REAL-NEG-ABIL-NEG 1DL.INCL:IRR-speak CAUSE OBL
nal Ø-khair.
 sun 3SG:REAL-strong
 ‘You and I can’t speak because it is hot.’

It is possible for the auxiliary and the following main verb to carry identical subject marking, as just illustrated. However, it is rather more common in these cases when inability is expressed by the auxiliary *vidor* for the auxiliary to appear only with third

¹ The only other such pair of suppletive affirmative and negative verbs is *teren* ‘want, like’ and *sisi* ‘not want, dislike’, which also function as auxiliaries (§6.1.2).

person singular subject marking in association with negative inflection, but for the following main verb to carry full marking for the pronominal category of the subject. Contrast, therefore, the example just presented in which the auxiliary carries the subject prefix *tër-* ‘first person dual realis’, with the following in which the auxiliary carries the third person singular subject marker \emptyset - and only the following main verb carries full subject marking:

∅-Se-vidor-si *bët-utbu.*
3SG:REAL-NEG-ABIL-NEG 3PL:IRR-sail
‘They could not sail.’

∅-Se-vidor-si *kë-sesakh* *kë-jëber* *mete-n* *ranelvan*
3SG:REAL-NEG-ABIL-NEG 2SG:IRR-reach 2SG:IRR-hold middle-3SG in.middle
tanokh.
over.there
‘You could not reach as far as the middle over there.’

6.1.5 Continuous/habitual

My corpus includes a very frequently attested lexical verb *leg* meaning ‘live’, ‘stay’ or ‘sit’. For example:

At-leg *Tovorëm.*
3PL:REAL-live Tovorëm
‘They lived at Tovorëm.’

The form *leg* is also attested in auxiliary constructions with the meaning of continuous or habitual aspect. The following verb is sometimes additionally marked with the continuous/habitual prefix *ma-* (§4.1.3.1), though this inflectional marker is not always present. This auxiliary also differs from most other forms discussed in this section in that it is not associated with a shift from realis to irrealis mood marking on the following verb. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Mokh Venave ∅-leg *∅-rong* *mevë-n* *naab.*
person Venave 3SG:REAL-CONT/HAB 3SG:REAL-smell smell-3SG fire
‘The person from Venave used to smell fire.’

Re-leg *rë-ma-bës.*
2DL:REAL-CONT/HAB 2DL:REAL-CONT/HAB-talk
‘The two of them are talking.’

The use of *leg* as an auxiliary in this way is quite rare in my Naman corpus, and the meaning of continuous/habitual is much more commonly expressed solely by means of the verbal prefix *ma-*. For example:

Kët-ma-khan *buag.*
2PL:IRR-CONT/HAB-eat taro
‘You (pl.) will (habitually) eat taro.’

It is possible that this auxiliary function of *leg* represents sporadic influence from Neve‘ei where the lexical verb *tokh* meaning ‘live’ or ‘stay’ is widely attested also as an auxiliary,

and this is the only way of expressing the continuous or habitual aspect in that language (Crowley 2002a:645). Thus, constructions involving *leg* as an auxiliary in Naman directly parallel constructions such as the following in Neve‘ei:

U-tokh Vinmavis.
2SG:REAL-live Vinmavis
‘You live in Vinmavis.’

U-tokh u-min nebwal.
2SG:REAL-stay 2SG:REAL-drink kava
‘You (habitually) drink kava.’

At the same time, however, examples involving the use of *leg* as a continuous/habitual auxiliary cannot be dismissed automatically as calques on this pattern in Neve‘ei. It is, in fact, quite common in Oceanic languages for a lexical verb meaning ‘stay’ to also function as an auxiliary of some kind with this kind of meaning, and this pattern in Naman may well represent a retention of an old pattern, albeit one that has become quite limited in the language today.

6.1.6 Solitariness

The numeral *savakh* ‘one’ in its reduplicated form *savsavakh* can also be used in an auxiliary construction. This functions rarely as a pre-verbal auxiliary to indicate that the referent of the subject of the following verb is characterised by a state alone, or performs the action alone. This uncommon auxiliary is also associated with no change in the mood marking on the main verb. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Saikon Ø-sav-savakh Ø-mour.
Saikon 3SG:REAL-REDUP-one 3SG:REAL-live
‘Saikon is the only one living.’

Kine nē-sav-savakh ne-ve mokh nēval.
1SG 1SG:REAL-REDUP-one 1SG:REAL-COP man fight
‘I alone am a warrior, I am the only warrior.’

6.1.7 Inceptive

The final auxiliary construction is structurally quite different from all of the auxiliaries described in the preceding sections. This construction involves the lexical verb *totobatën* ‘start’, which can also be used in association with a following main verb to express an inceptive meaning, i.e. to start doing something. However, this auxiliary differs from the patterns described above in the following respects:

- *Totobatën* in its auxiliary function is only ever attested with third person singular subject marking, i.e. *Ø-* in the realis and *bë-* in the irrealis.
- The associated main verb is not inflected as a verb at all. Rather, it is expressed as a nominalised form of the verb (§3.3.1.2.1) involving the suffix *-ien*, which appears in the object position after the auxiliary *totobatën*. The agent associated with that verb is then expressed as a postposed possessor noun phrase.

Thus, the meaning of ‘(s)he started walking’ is expressed as follows by means of a construction that can be translated literally as ‘it started his/her walking’:

Ø-Totobatën lungo-lung-ien se-n Ø-vale.
 3SG:REAL-start REDUP-walk-NOM POSS-3SG 3SG:REAL-come
 ‘(S)he started walking this way.’

The following illustrates the same construction with the initial auxiliary appearing instead with third person singular irrealis subject marking, and with a first person plural inclusive agent expressed as the possessive construction *sen get* ‘our’ in relation to the nominalised verb *yalien* ‘singing’

Bë-totobatën yal-ien se-n get nangsen?
 3SG:IRR-start sing-NOM POSS-3SG 1PL.INCL when
 ‘When will we start singing?’

It was mentioned in §3.3.1.2.1 that some verbs are attested in my corpus with the discontinuous nominaliser *nV-/-ien*. The verb *irëb* ‘work’, for example, is recorded with the unpredictable nominalised form *nerëbien* rather than expected **rëbien*. With those verbs which have been attested with this seemingly unpredictable nominalised form, the inceptive construction is also based on the discontinuously nominalised form. Thus:

Ø-Totobatën ne-rëb-ien se-n.
 3SG:REAL-start NOM-work-NOM POSS-3SG
 ‘(S)he started working.’

**Ø-Totobatën rëb-ien se-n.*
 3SG:REAL-start work-NOM POSS-3SG

6.2 Serial verbs

In §4.3.2, I described the behaviour of what were referred to as nuclear-layer serial verb constructions, which are basically sequences of two verb roots in which there is a tight grammatical relationship between the two elements. In those constructions, verbal prefixes attach to the initial element while inflectional suffixation is attached instead to whatever happens to be the final element of the verbal complex. Thus:

At-lev melili-an-ër
 3PL:REAL-take return-TR-3PL
 ‘They took them back.’

Verb serialisation is clearly not a single type of process, and in some languages a number of different structural relationships between verbs can be viewed as different kinds of serial verb constructions ranged along a continuum between tighter and looser juncture (Crowley 2002b:42–43). Oceanic languages commonly exhibit different patterns of verbal linkage which can be discussed under the general heading of verb serialisation, providing evidence both of patterns analogous to these tightly linked nuclear-layer serial verb construction and of other serial verb constructions in which verbs may be linked with much looser juncture.

Naman is no exception in this respect, and in this section I will describe a variety of patterns of serial verbs which exhibit what can be referred to as core-layer juncture. These constructions differ from nuclear-layer serial verb constructions in that both verb roots in the sequence exhibit some form of inflectional marking, though there is a close interdependency between the marking on the verbs. What we find in Naman is that an initial affirmative verb in such constructions will be followed by a verb with identical mood marking to that which is found on the initial verb, but with only third person singular pronominal marking on the second verb. Compare, therefore, the pattern of inflectional marking on the example of nuclear-layer serialisation presented above with the following examples of core-layer juncture between the first verb and the following verb *jëber* ‘reach’:

Bë sien Lëngalëng Ø-iv Ø-jëber Baganskhus.
 language Lëngalëng 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-reach Baganskhus.
 ‘The language of Lëngalëng went as far as Baganskhus.’

Kine bë-lungo-lung bë-jëber botuen rakhe.
 1SG 1SG:IRR-REDUP-walk 3SG:IRR-reach hill up
 ‘I will walk as far as the hill up there.’

Tër-lungo-lung bë-jëber nowe.
 1DL.INCL:IRR-REDUP-walk 3SG:IRR-reach river
 ‘Let’s walk to the river.’

It should be noted that an initial verb carrying irrealis negative marking is invariably followed by a serialised verb that carries irrealis inflection. Thus:

Bë-sa-v-si bë-jëber nowe.
 1SG:IRR-NEG-go-NEG 3SG:IRR-reach river
 ‘I will not go as far as the river.’

A number of distinct patterns of such loosely linked serial verb constructions are very widely attested in my corpus, each of which is described in turn below.

6.2.1 Directional serialisation

Perhaps the most widely distributed pattern of core-layer verb serialisation in Oceanic languages is directional serialisation involving an initial verb followed by one of the basic motion verbs meaning ‘come’ and ‘go’. We certainly find many examples of this kind of pattern in Naman in which *vale* ‘come’ and *iv* ‘go’ follow an initial verb, with the serialised directional verb carrying third person singular subject marking regardless of the subject marking on the initial verb.

Intransitive verbs expressing motion are very commonly followed by one of these verbs of motion to indicate the direction of the action with respect either to the narrator or to the protagonist in a narrative text. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Ø-Melili Ø-iv.
 3SG:REAL-return 3SG:REAL-go
 ‘(S)he went back.’

Ø-Së-melili-si ba-v.
 3SG:REAL-NEG-return-NEG 3SG:IRR-go
 ‘(S)he did not go back.’

Ajesev Ø-iv i mete-n deswe.
 3PL:REAL:jump 3SG:REAL-go GOAL eye-3SG sea
 ‘They jumped into the saltwater spring.’

Bëjesev ba-v i mete-n deswe.
 3PL:IRR:jump 3SG:IRR-go GOAL eye-3SG sea
 ‘They will jump into the saltwater spring.’

Nokhutë-n nakhe ba-dëm iag ba-v i nemev.
 trunk-3SG tree 3SG:IRR-fall there 3SG:IRR-go GOAL level.place
 ‘The tree trunk will fall there to the level place.’

Ra-lung i nesel Ø-iv.
 3DL:REAL-walk LOC path 3SG:REAL-go
 ‘The two of them walked away on the path.’

Ag kh-ilung abe Ø-vale?
 2SG 2SG:REAL-travel where 3SG:REAL-come
 ‘Whence have you travelled?’

It is not necessary for the initial verb to involve physical motion for one of these two directional verbs to be serialised in this way. A non-motion verb such as *gëlo* ‘look’ still involves an activity that can be considered as being directed towards or away from a particular place, and this can be signalled using the same construction, as in the following:

Rë-gëlo Ø-vale aatin.
 3DL:REAL-look 3SG-REAL-come down
 ‘The two of them looked down here.’

A number of transitive verbs of motion or transfer in Naman are not specified with respect to the direction of the transfer. Thus *vos*, for example, can be used to express transfer that takes place either away from (‘take’) or towards (‘bring’) the speaker. Such verbs do not normally appear in my Naman corpus without accompanying directional specification in the form of serialised *iv* ‘go’ or *vale* ‘come’. Thus:

Ø-Vos ai Ø-iv i nevenu.
 3SG:REAL-carry 3SG 3SG:REAL-go GOAL village
 ‘He took him to the village.’

Ø-Go nivës-akh sen Ø-vale.
 3SG:REAL-carry.in.hand bow-DEM POSS:3SG 3SG:REAL-come
 ‘He brought that bow of his.’

When a transitive verb is associated with a subject other than one in the third person singular, and when the object is also not third person singular, the serialised directional verb invariably carries third person singular inflectional marking.² Thus:

² Naman differs in this respect from some other Oceanic languages, where the directional verb often takes its subject marking from the pronominal category of the object.

Rë-vël *kine* *Ø-vale* *jëkhë-n* *nede* *nen* *numal*.
 3DL:REAL-marry.off 1SG 3SG:REAL-come GOAL-3SG bloodline POSS chief
 ‘The two of them married me off here to the bloodline of the chief.’

When the initial verb is realis, the third person singular realis marking which appears on the following directional verb is *Ø-* (§4.1.1.1). Purely on the basis of surface distributional criteria, it might be tempting to argue that the directional verbs *iv* ‘go’ and *vale* ‘come’ have lost their verbal status and have simply been reanalysed as directional particles, as represented in the following:

Ø-Melili *iv*.
 3SG:REAL-return thither
 ‘(S)he went back.’

Ø-Melili *vale*.
 3SG:REAL-return hither
 ‘(S)he came back.’

That these should still be treated as inflected verbs is clearly indicated, however, by the fact that when the initial verb carries irrealis marking, the directional verb also carries overt verbal prefixation in the form of the third person singular irrealis prefix. Thus:

Bë-melili *ba-v*.
 3SG:IRR-return 3SG:IRR-go
 ‘(S)he will go back.’

Bë-melili *bë-vale*.
 3SG:IRR-return 3SG:IRR-come
 ‘(S)he will come back.’

However, there are occasional examples in my corpus which indicate that these forms have begun to acquire the functions of uninflected directional particles. Examine the following:

Kët-rov-ër *vale* *baan-ër*.
 2PL:IRR-carry-3PL come 1SG:IRR:eat-3PL
 ‘Bring them and I will eat them.’

In this case, *vale* appears without the expected third person singular irrealis marker *bë-*, indicating that it is behaving like an uninflected particle rather than an inflected serial verb.³

³ This may be yet another example of possible structural interference from neighbouring Neve‘ei. It is quite common in Neve‘ei for the directional verb *vwelem* ‘come’ (but not *vu* ‘go’) to be used as an uninflected directional particle, in examples such as the following:

Ke-takh *vwelem* *nedam*.
 2SG:IRR-carry hither yam
 ‘Bring the yam here.’

However, the same meaning in Neve‘ei can also be expressed by means of a directional serial verb construction which directly parallels what we find in Naman. That is:

Ke-takh *nedam* *bwe-vwelem*.
 2SG:IRR-carry yam 3SG:IRR-come
 ‘Bring the yam here.’

Vale ‘come’ and *iv* ‘go’ are not the only verbs which enter into this directional serial construction in Naman, though they are certainly the ones that are most commonly attested. The verbs *jëber* ‘reach’ and *telëbe* ‘go past’ can also be serialised in this way. Serialised *jëber* expresses the meaning of ‘as far as’ to indicate that an action takes place all the way to a particular location. For example:

Merika at-lëkh main Ø-jëber Malo.
 American 3PL:REAL-lay mine 3SG:REAL-reach Malo
 ‘The Americans laid mines as far as Malo.’

The same construction can also be used in a temporal context to express the meaning of ‘until’. For example:

Ø-Ijëkh vaas Ø-jëber mësavet.
 3SG:REAL-exist still 3SG:REAL-reach today
 ‘It still exists until today.’

Telëbe expresses the idea that an action takes place past a particular location or time, as in the following:

Tët-bëg nibu bë-telëbe nerangasë-n nenge.
 1PL.INCL:IRR-tie bamboo 3SG:IRR-go.past branch-3SG native.almond
 ‘We will tie the bamboo past the branches of the native almond.’

At-bës-bës Ø-telëbe naltimal.
 3PL:REAL-REDUP-talk 3SG:REAL-go.past sunset
 ‘They talked past sunset.’

This verb is also used in this serial construction in order to express a comparative construction. Thus:

Namakh se-n kine Ø-tëleb Ø-telëbe khësa-m.
 house POSS-3SG 1SG 3SG:REAL-big 3SG:REAL-go.past POSS-2SG
 ‘My house is bigger than yours.’

While *jëber* and *telëbe* can directly follow another verb in this way, it is far more common in my corpus for these verbs to be associated with either of the preceding serialised verbs *iv* ‘go’ or *vale* ‘come’, in multiple core-layer verb serial constructions such as the following:

Ø-Ve Ø-set Ø-vale Ø-jëber mete-n deswe.
 3SG:REAL-do 3SG:REAL-thus 3SG:REAL-come 3SG:REAL-reach eye-3SG sea
 ‘He did it like that (hither) as far as the saltwater spring.’

At-bëg nibu Ø-iv Ø-telëbe nungulë-n nenge.
 3PL:REAL-tie bamboo 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go.past top-3SG native.almond
 ‘They tied the bamboo past the top of the native almond.’

6.2.2 Manner serialisation

Another frequently encountered pattern of core-layer verb serialisation is that in which an initial verb is followed by a stative verb in order to express the manner in which the

initial action was carried out. The following examples show that this pattern also involves only third person singular marking on the second verb regardless of the pronominal categories marked on the initial verb, but with identical mood marking on both verbs:

Ø-Ibës *Ø-ides.*
3SG:REAL-speak 3SG:REAL-good
'(S)he speaks properly/well.'

Deswe Ø-ibën *Ø-tëleb.*
sea 3SG:REAL-high.tide 3SG:REAL-big
'The tide came in very high.'

Be-ve *bë-varëkh* *bëtev* *akhug.*
1SG:IRR-do 3SG:IRR-little ACC 2SG
'I will do it a little with you.'

As with other core-layer serial verbs, when the initial verb is marked for the negative (§4.1.2), the second verb will always appear with irrealis marking even if the initial verb carries realis marking. Thus:

Bësien *sen* *kamem* *Ø-së-mour* *mën-si* *ba-des.*
language POSS:3SG 1PL.EXCL 3SG:REAL-NEG-alive any.more-NEG 3SG:IRR-good
'Our Naman language is no longer properly alive.'

The verb *set* 'be like that, be thus' and the interrogative verbs *vësakh* 'be how (intr.)?' and *vësaan* 'do how (tr.)?' (§5.4) exhibit the unique feature that they never appear as main verbs in their own right. They are therefore only ever attested in my Naman corpus with third person singular marking as the second verb in a stative serial verb construction. Thus:

Be-ve *be-set.*
1SG:IRR-do 3SG:IRR-be.thus
'I will do it like that.'

Be-ve *bë-vësakh?*
1SG:IRR-do 3SG:IRR-be.how
'How will I do it?'

6.2.3 Numerals

Numerals in Naman, along with the quantifier *ingët* 'many' and the interrogative form *ivis* 'how much, how many?', exhibit a certain amount of vestigial verbal inflection (§3.4.1). This inflection is manifested in environments which directly parallel the core-layer serial verb constructions already described. In particular, when a numeral appears as a postmodifier within an object noun phrase after a verb carrying irrealis inflectional marking, the numeral obligatorily appears with its vestigial third person singular irrealis prefix. Thus:

Kë-tëkh *nevet* *ba-ru.*
2SG:IRR-take stone 3SG:IRR-two
'Take two stones.'

Although the form *baru* here can be treated as part of the noun phrase, it nevertheless behaves in the same way that we would expect if it were in a serial verb relationship with the preceding verb *kētēkh* ‘you will take’. This relationship can be seen more clearly in a construction such as the following where there is no overtly expressed noun and the inflected numeral functions alone as the object:

Kē-tēkh *ba-ru*.
 2SG:IRR-take 3SG:IRR-two
 ‘Take two.’

6.2.4 Iteration

Somewhat similar to the pattern of core-layer verb serialisation described above is verbal iteration. This involves the repetition, sometimes just twice, but often three times, and sometimes even more, of an inflected verb. This is quite different from the process of reduplication described in §4.2.1, as that process invariably involves only a single repetition of material. Moreover, reduplication only affects verbal roots, whereas iteration involves the repetition of an entire inflected verb.

Verbal iteration indicates that an action is performed repeatedly over an extended period of time, eventually leading to a subsequent state of affairs. In the following extract, iteration occurs in the third sentence.

Ra-v *ra-v* *i* *baranga-n* *nevet* *tuen*.
 3DL:REAL-go 3DL:REAL-go GOAL hole-3SG rock INDEF
 ‘The two of them eventually got to a cave.’

Ati-lung *ati-lung* *at-vale* *i* *mete-n* *deswe*.
 3PL:REAL-travel 3PL:REAL-travel 3PL:REAL-come GOAL eye-3SG sea
 ‘They travelled on and on until eventually they came to the saltwater spring.’

Ø-Mensan *Ø-mensan* *Ø-mensan* *Ø-së-lis-i*.
 3SG:REAL-look.for 3SG:REAL-look.for 3SG:REAL-look.for 3SG:REAL-NEG-find-NEG
 ‘He looked for it on and on but didn’t find it.’

The verb *iv* ‘go’ is very frequently used in this way, often—but by no means always—followed by the form *e* ‘and’ (§6.4) to express the idea that an action expressed in one clause is carried through ‘until’ or ‘as far as’ the commencement of the action or state expressed in the following clause. Thus:

Re-leg *Ø-iv* *Ø-iv* *Ø-iv* *e* *netë-raru*
 3DL:REAL-live 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go and child-3DL

Ø-iyag.
 3SG:REAL-born
 ‘The two of them lived on and on until their child was born.’

Tēt-bëg *ba-v* *ba-v* *ba-v* *bë-jëber* *nerangasë-n*
 1PL.INCL:IRR-tie 3SG:IRR-go 3SG:IRR-go 3SG:IRR-go 3SG:IRR-reach branch-3SG

nenge.
 native.almond
 ‘We will tie it on and on as far as the branches of the native almond.’

Multiple sequences of realis *iv* followed by *e* are often pronounced extremely rapidly in narrative discourse and these sequences are typically stressed as a single phonological word. In the first example just presented, therefore, the sequence of inflected verbs is pronounced with a single primary stressed syllable as if it were a single word (§2.1.4), i.e. [ivi 'vive].

6.3 Clausal juxtaposition

It is extremely common in Naman for two clauses to be simply juxtaposed with no overt marking either of subordination or coordination between the two. Juxtaposition can express a wide range of functions, and often alternates with one of the patterns described in the following sections in this chapter for overtly marked coordination (§6.4) or subordination (§6.5).

The following specific patterns of clausal juxtaposition are attested in my Naman corpus:

(i) Sequential juxtaposition, for example:

Ø-Lue niëkh tuen Ø-vësan Ø-iv aut i.
 3SG:REAL-shoot fish INDEF 3SG:REAL-throw 3SG:REAL-go ashore GOAL
 ‘He shot a fish and threw it ashore.’

Ø-Usër deswe Ø-vale Ø-jëber Abet Ø-melili.
 3SG:REAL-follow sea 3SG:REAL-come 3SG:REAL-reach Abet 3SG:REAL-return
 ‘He followed the sea hither as far as Abet and returned.’

There is a variety of alternative ways of expressing sequential relationships between events, as described in §6.6.5.

(ii) Simultaneous juxtaposition, for example:

Ø-Gëlo Ø-lis netitevën tuen.
 3SG:REAL-look 3SG:REAL-see girl INDEF
 ‘He looked and saw a girl.’

At-khan sëne-raru Ø-rongdur i nibë-n.
 3PL:REAL-eat mother-3DL 3SG:REAL-feel LOC body-3SG
 ‘As they ate it, their mother felt it in her body.’

This kind of temporal relationship between events can also be expressed by means of the subordinate construction described in §6.5.1.1.

(iii) Contrastive juxtaposition, for example:

Ø-Mensan Ø-së-lis-i.
 3SG:REAL-look.for 3SG:REAL-NEG-find-NEG
 ‘He looked for it but didn’t find it.’

This contrastive meaning can also be expressed by means of the disjunctive marker *e* described in §6.4.

(iv) Purposive juxtaposition.

This pattern invariably involves the initial verbs *vale* ‘come’ or *iv* ‘go’, as in the following:

Ø-Vale *Ø-mensan* *niëkh.*
3SG:REAL-come 3SG:REAL-look.for fish
‘He came to look for the fish.’

Ø-Iv *lis* *Ø-lulueiëkh.*
3SG:REAL-go again 3SG:REAL-shoot.fish
‘He went again to shoot fish.’

The subjects of the first and the second verbs in purposive constructions such as this need not be marked with the same subject prefixes. One common pattern involves the ‘inclusory’ subject construction in which the pronominal category of the subject of the first verb is included within the pronominal marking on the second verb. Thus:

Kë-vale *tëra-v* *aim* *i.*
2SG:IRR-come 1DL.INCL:IRR-go home GOAL
‘Come and let’s go home.’

A purposive relationship between two events can also be expressed by means of the construction described in §6.5.2.3.

(iv) Conditional juxtaposition.

Finally, there is a widespread pattern of clausal juxtaposition in which the verb of the initial clause carries irrealis inflectional marking to encode a conditional relationship between the two events. Thus:

Bë-tëkh *nuvri* *demes* *Ø-bele-r.*
3PL:IRR-take crab devil 3SG:REAL-chase-3PL
‘If they took the crabs, the devil chased them.’

A conditional relationship can also be expressed by means of the subordinate construction described in §6.5.1.5.

6.4 Coordination

Coordinate clauses are linked by means of the coordinating conjunction. For example:

Ag *kaan* *tuen* *e* *kine* *baan* *tuen.*
2SG 2SG:IRR:eat INDEF and 1SG 1SG:IRR:eat INDEF
‘You eat one and I will eat one.’

Vëvën *Ø-khan* *tevlén* *e* *ai* *Ø-khan* *natuen.*
sister:3SG 3SG:REAL-eat half and 3SG 3SG:REAL-eat some
‘His sister ate half and he ate some.’

When a specifically sequential relationship is expressed between two events, this can be explicitly marked by means of the form *merakh* between the two clauses, as in the following:

\emptyset -Var khën nane sen \emptyset -bële tate
 3SG:REAL-say DAT mother POSS:3SG 3SG:REAL-accompany father
 sen merakh ra-var esëkh.
 POSS:3SG and.then 3DL:REAL-say no
 ‘He told his mother and father and then they said no.’

The form *merakh* coincides in shape with a verbal root meaning ‘get up’ or ‘wake up’. While it is possible to envisage a semantic connection between the verbal and coordinating functions of this form, it should be noted that *merakh* as a coordinator in Naman exhibits no evidence whatsoever of verbal inflection, so this cannot be treated as any kind of serial verb construction.

The form *e* can also be used to express contrastive coordination, as in the following:

At-var *bët-bës-bës* *khën air* *natuen* *e* *at-lev*
 3PL:REAL-intend 3PL:IRR-REDUP-talk OBL 3PL some but 3PL:REAL-speak
bësien *tinseb*.
 language different
 ‘They intended to speak to some of the others but they spoke different languages.’

Në-lue *niëkh* *tuen* *e* *ne-de-delangan* *tat*
 1SG:REAL-shoot fish INDEF but 1SG:REAL-REDUP-not.know PLACE

\emptyset -iv *i*.
 3SG:REAL-go GOAL
 ‘I shot a fish but I don’t know where it went.’

Ne-ve *tet* \emptyset -ides *khën-ëm* *e* *khë-së-rongdur-si*.
 1SG:REAL-do REL 3SG:REAL-good BEN-2SG but 2SG:REAL-NEG-know-NEG
 ‘I did something good for you but you didn’t know.’

My own corpus of recorded narrative text includes no examples of a form that uniquely expresses this contrastive function, though the form *be* ‘but’ borrowed from Bislama is quite commonly used. However, the older material recorded by the anthropologist Deacon in the 1920s indicates that this function may once have been expressed by *set*, as in the following:

Bavarsi *aru* *bëra-var* “ \emptyset -imes-mes *mour*” *tët-mour*
 if 3DL 3DL:IRR-say 3SG:REAL-REDUP-die live 1PL.INCL:IRR-live
lis *set* *aru* *ra-var* “ \emptyset -imes-mes *nsar*”.
 again but 3DL 3DL:REAL-say 3SG:REAL-REDUP-die forever
 ‘If the two of them had said “*imesmes mour*”, we would live again, but they said “*imesmes nsar*”.’

6.5 Subordination

There is a number of clause-initial subordinators which mark a variety of subordinate clause types. These can be described under two major headings, firstly those constructions in which the subordinate clause is marked by means of a subordinator, and secondly those in which the subordinate clause is signalled instead by a verbal constituent of some kind.

6.5.1 Clauses introduced by subordinators

6.5.1.1 Time clauses

Subordinate clauses of time are introduced by *nelmu*, usually followed by the relative clause introducer *i(t)* (§3.4.4). The following examples illustrate the placement of the time clause before the main clause:

Nelmu i nevet Ø-movokh mokhot Ø-khawes tevlen.
 TIME REL rock 3SG:REAL-open person 3SG:REAL-emerge one.side
 ‘When the rock opened a person came out of one side.’

Nelmu i kë-toro kë-rus lue mulë-m.
 TIME REL 2SG:IRR-old 2SG:IRR-take off dry.skin-2SG
 ‘When you are old, take off your dry skin.’

The following indicates that the time clause can also follow the main clause:

Nibu rë-khores khën-gën nelmu it at-khan-gën.
 bamboo IMP:REAL-cut SOURCE-1SG TIME REL 3PL:REAL-eat-1SG
 ‘The bamboo was cut from me when they ate me.’

The fact that the relative clause marker is not obligatorily present in such constructions is illustrated by the use of just *nelmu* in the following example:

Nelmu Ø-tëleb ba-v baakhan bëtev teme-n.
 TIME 3SG:REAL-grow.up 3SG:IRR-go 3SG:IRR:REDUP:eat ACC father-3SG
 ‘When he grew up he would go and eat with his father.’

Instead of *nelmu (i)* or *nelmu (it)*, the oblique preposition *khën* (§5.3.1.3.2) is also sometimes used to introduce a time clause, as in the following:

Na-var ba-var-var usër khën mët-leg tokhe.
 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-REDUP-talk about TIME 1PL.EXCL:REAL-live before
 ‘I want to talk about when we lived before.’

When the time clause introduced by *nelmu* appears before the main clause, the following main clause is normally unmarked. However, there is a small number of examples in which the two clauses are separated by the form *e* ‘and, but’. For example:

Nelmu i nevenu Ø-mour Ø-iv Ø-tëleb e
 TIME SUB village 3SG:REAL-grow 3SG:REAL-become 3SG:REAL-big and

at-lis netite tuen.
 3PL:REAL-see child INDEF

‘When the village had grown and become big, they saw a child.’

Nelmu i demes Ø-ma-bele-r e nisë-n
 TIME SUB devil 3SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-chase-3PL and breast-3SG

ra-tava-tavakh.

3DL:REAL-REDUP-make.noise

‘Whenever the devil chased them, her breasts made a noise.’

In my spoken corpus, time clauses are in fact overwhelmingly introduced by *taim i(t)* rather than the subordinator *nelmu i(t)* just described (§1.8). This form clearly originates from Bislama, though speakers of Naman were uniformly insistent on the borrowed subordinator being replaced in printed versions of texts by *nelmu*, which they judged prescriptively to be the ‘correct’ form. It is interesting to note that this near-total incorporation of a borrowed subordinator for this function appears to be specific to Naman. In closely related Neve‘ei, by way of contrast, time clauses are invariably marked by the indigenous subordinator *utnen* (Musgrave 2001:179–181).

6.5.1.2 Reason clauses

The form *usër*, more often than not followed by the oblique preposition *khën* (§5.3.1.3.2), is used to introduce a reason clause. Thus:

Babar Ø-së-lungo-lung mën-si usër melaas
pig 3SG:REAL-NEG-REDUP-walk any.longer-NEG because cold

Ø-khas bëtakhe khën ai.
3SG:REAL-bite very.much TR 3SG

‘The pig didn’t walk any more because it was very cold.’

Bësien sen kamem Ø-var ba-v bë-sëkhar
language POSS:3SG 1PL.EXCL 3SG:REAL-IMM 3SG:IRR-go 3SG:IRR-disappear

usër khën matërvarëkh sen kamem air at-bële
BECAUSE OBL old.man POSS:3SG 1PL.EXCL PL 3PL:REAL-marry

nevoro nevenu nsebseb air.
woman place other PL

‘Our language is about to disappear because our old men married women from other places.’

However, as noted above for time clauses, reason clauses are occasionally also marked simply by means of the oblique preposition *khën*. For example:

Kine në-vale khën na-var be-lev.
1SG 1SG:REAL-come because 1SG:REAL-intend 1SG:IRR-take

‘I have come because I intend to take it.’

Ra-rëv khën bët-khan nelag nge.
3DL:REAL-run.away because 3PL:IRR-eat pudding that

‘The two of them ran away because they were going to eat that pudding.’

6.5.1.3 Place clauses

Subordinate clauses of place are introduced by *tat*. Unlike the time subordinator *nelmu* ‘time’ which can function independently in its own right as a noun, *tat* has no independent function as a noun in Naman. Its sole function, therefore, is as a marker of subordinate clauses.

A subordinate clause that is introduced by *tat* can appear after the main clause, as in the following examples:

Ba-v tat ba-var ba-v i.
 3SG:IRR-go PLACE 3SG:IRR-want 3SG:IRR-go GOAL
 ‘He will go wherever he wants to go.’

Na-var bë-sabe usër tat mët-ilung
 1SG:REAL-intend 1SG:IRR-recount about PLACE 1PL.EXCL:REAL-walk
mët-khawes i.
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-originate LOC
 ‘I want to tell a story about where we originate from.’

However, a place clause introduced by *tat* can also occupy the topic slot of a non-verbal clause in which the comment is a prepositional phrase. For example:

Tat Ø-ma-sël khën nakhe sen i baranga-n
 PLACE 3SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-hide TR log POSS:3SG LOC hole-3SG
nevet Abet.
 rock Abet
 ‘Where he hides his log is in a cave at Abet.’

6.5.1.4 ‘Until’ clauses

The serialised verb root *jëber* (§6.2.1) expressing the meaning of ‘as far as’ with a following noun phrase and ‘until’ with a temporal noun phrase can also be followed by a clause to introduce a subordinate clause meaning ‘until’. In such constructions, *jëber* no longer functions as an inflected serialised verb, as it has been reanalysed as an uninflected subordinator. We therefore find examples such as the following:

At-le-leg bëtev jëber nout Ø-iren.
 3PL:REAL-REDUP-stay ACC until place 3SG:REAL-daybreak
 ‘They stayed with him until daybreak.’

Ø-Rov jëjën jëber Ø-ve nejëkh.
 3SG:REAL-hold tight until 3SG:REAL-become kingfisher
 ‘He held him tightly until he turned into a kingfisher.’

It is more common, however, for an ‘until’ clause of this type to be introduced by *jëber* with the following oblique preposition *khën*, as in the following:

Ø-Mësiëkh Ø-iv jëber khën Ø-imes.
 3SG:REAL-sick 3SG:REAL-go until OBL 3SG:REAL-die
 ‘He was sick until he died.’

Rë-ma-bës jëber khën birav Ø-imës.
 3DL:REAL-CONT/HAB-talk until OBL lesser.yam 3SG:REAL-cooked
 ‘The two of them were talking until the lesser yam was cooked.’

That *jëber khën* should be treated as a genuine subordinator in such examples rather than as a serialised verb is indicated by the lack of inflection in an irrealis environment, where a genuinely verbal form would call for irrealis marking. Thus, the subordinate clause is not introduced by the irrealis form *bë-jëber* but by the uninflected subordinator *jëber* in the following example:

Bë-mësiëkh ba-v jëber khën ba-mes.
 3SG:IRR-sick 3SG:IRR-go until OBL 3SG:IRR-die
 ‘He will be sick until he dies.’

However, this form does retain vestigial verbal properties, as examples such as that just presented are found to alternate occasionally with examples such as the following in which irrealis marking is found on *jëber* in its subordinating function:

Ka-var khën-Ø bë-le-leg bë-jëber khën bë-nog.
 2SG:IRR-say DAT-3SG 3SG:IRR-REDUP-stay 3SG:IRR-until OBL 3SG:IRR-finish
 ‘Tell him/her to stay until it is finished.’

6.5.1.5 Conditional clauses

A conditional clause is marked by the subordinator *bar* ‘if’, along with the alternative forms *bavar* and *bavarsi*. The verb of the conditional clause carries irrealis inflectional marking, as does the verb of the main clause. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Bar bë-së-luolu-an-si nede bë-sa-mes-i.
 COND 3SG:IRR-NEG-vomit-TR-NEG blood 3SG:IRR-NEG-die-NEG
 ‘If he does not disgorge blood, he will not die.’

Bavar ba-v i nourour net tuen ba-vil
 COND 3SG:IRR-go GOAL island DEM INDEF 3SG:IRR-eat.from.taboo.fire
khën metenal ba-lëm.
 DUR day 3SG:IRR-five
 ‘If he went to an island, he would eat from a taboo fire for five days.’

Bavarsi bëra-var ...
 COND 2DL:IRR-say
 ‘If the two of you say (it) ...’

Note that just as with time clauses which are preceded by the subordinate clause, the following main clause in a conditional construction is sometimes also preceded by the form *e* ‘but, and’ (§6.4). Thus:

Bavar kë-sa-rëv mën-si e tër-mour.
 COND 2SG:IRR-NEG-run.away any.more-NEG and 1DL.INCL:IRR-live
 ‘If you don’t run away any more, the two of us will live.’

Bavar nevenu tuen be-ve nelag tuen be-set e nevenu
 COND village INDEF 3SG:IRR-make pudding INDEF 3SG:IRR-thus and village
tuen Ø-vidor ba-v bë-gale nelag net.
 INDEF 3SG:REAL-able 3SG:IRR-go 3SG:IRR-compete.over pudding DEM
 ‘If one village makes a pudding like that, then another village can go and compete with that pudding.’

Sometimes, the concessive marker *bas* (§6.5.1.7) introduces the main clause that follows the conditional clause, as in:

Bavarsi kë-sa-var khën-gën-si bas na-v ëns.
 COND 2SG:IRR-NEG-say DAT-1SG-NEG CONC 1SG:REAL-go PERF
 ‘If you had not told me, I would have gone.’

Bavarsi bë-se-lev khën-ëm-si mersin bas ka-mes.
 COND 1SG:IRR-NEG-give DAT-2SG-NEG medicine CONC 2SG:IRR-die
 ‘If I had not given you the medicine, you would have died.’

6.5.1.6 Clauses marked by *khën*

A number of the subordinate clause types described above involve the preposition *khën* as an optional second element within a structurally complex subordinator. With some of these subordinate clauses, *khën* on its own is occasionally attested as the sole subordinator. There are some remaining subordinate clause types in which *khën* functions alone as a subordinator.

Complement clauses to an initial verb such as *lis* ‘see’, *rong* ‘hear’ or *rongdur* ‘know’ can be introduced by either *khën* or *usër*. Thus:

Ø-Rongdur khën Ø-imes.
 3SG:REAL-know SUB 3SG:REAL-die
 ‘He knew that he was dead.’

Naabë-n Ø-lis khën jëbë-n tevet
 grandchild-3SG 3SG:REAL-see SUB grandparent-3SG woman

Ø-esëkh mën.
 3SG:REAL-not.exist any.longer
 ‘Her grandchild saw that her grandmother was no longer there.’

Mët-lis usër bësien sen teme-r air bë-sëkhar.
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-see SUB language POSS father-3PL PL 3SG:IRR-disappear
 ‘We can see that the language of our fathers will disappear.’

Ø-Rong khën Ø-var usër matërvarëkh.
 3SG:REAL-hear SUB 3SG:REAL-say about old.man
 ‘He heard that he talked about the old man.’

The form *sisi* ‘not want, refuse’, which functions sometimes as an auxiliary (§6.1.2), can also function as a lexical verb with a complement clause introduced by *khën*, as illustrated by the following:

Naabë-n Ø-sisi khën bëra-v.
 grandchild-3SG 3SG:REAL-not.want SUB 3DL:IRR-go
 ‘Her grandchild did not want them to go.’

Finally, *khën* is also attested occasionally introducing a clause that is in a purposive relationship to the preceding clause, e.g.

At-khël neim klasrum sen netite air khën
 3PL:REAL-build house classroom BEN:3SG child PL PURP

Solwota i kam so we i kam so.

‘The tide has really come a long way in.’

Woman ia i olfala we i olfala we i olfala tumas.

‘The woman was really really very old.’

Mun i stap longwe we i longwe.

‘The moon is a long long way away.’

It is possible that this construction in Naman represents a direct calque on the Bislama construction. In fact, the Bislama relative clause marker *we* is occasionally used in this construction in my Naman corpus, even though *we* is never used otherwise in the expression of Naman relative clauses. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Në-teren ba-v i nivël we në-teren.
 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-go GOAL moon REL 1SG:REAL-want
 ‘I really really want to go to the moon.’

That this construction involving *i* might be a calque is further suggested by the fact that in neighbouring languages, there is a directly parallel construction in which the Bislama relative clause marker *we* has been fully incorporated into the grammar of those languages. In Neve‘ei, therefore, we find examples such as the following:

I-tutn we i-tutn we i-tutn.
 3SG:REAL-hot REL 3SG:REAL-hot REL 3SG:REAL-hot
 ‘It is really really hot.’

Similarly, in Larëvat we find directly parallel constructions such as the following:

Ø-R we Ø-r we Ø-r.
 3SG:REAL-hot REL 3SG:REAL-hot REL 3SG:REAL-hot
 ‘It is really really hot.’

However, it is perhaps more likely that there has been mutual influence between vernacular patterns such as this on Bislama and from the Bislama pattern back onto vernaculars. This means that it is equally possible that a construction based on the indigenous relative clause marker, as currently found in Naman, was originally present in vernacular languages such as Neve‘ei and Larëvat. Such a construction could have become the basis for the Bislama construction, and the actual form by which the construction is expressed may subsequently have found its way into local vernaculars such as Neve‘ei and Larëvat.

6.5.2 Verbal subordinate clauses

The remaining categories of subordinate constructions are not marked by dedicated subordinators; rather, they are marked in a variety of ways by inflected verbs.

6.5.2.1 Adversative

There is a distinct adversative morphological category marked on verbs to express the meaning of ‘in case’ (§4.1.3.2). A verb carrying this inflectional category appears in a

subordinate clause following an initial main clause which expresses an event that is seen as having potentially unpleasant consequences of some kind, which are then spelled out in the subordinate clause. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Kėja-v-si iar mēt-nē-lue igem.
 2PL:IRR:NEG-go-NEG there 1PL.EXCL:IRR-ADV-shoot 2PL
 ‘Don’t go there in case we shoot you.’

Ø-Se-vidor-si bēt-iv alo iar i navas
 3SG:REAL-NEG-able-NEG 1PL.EXCL:IRR-go ashore there LOC paddle
mē-nē-vēr tabakh i main.
 3SG-ADV-strike completely LOC mine
 ‘We couldn’t go to shore there in case the paddle struck right into a mine.’

It is also possible for an unpleasant consequence of this type to be expressed by means of a rather complex construction involving an initial inflected form of the verb *metokhtokh* ‘be afraid’ in a pattern of the following kind:

metokhtokh ‘afraid’ + COND + CAUSE OF CONCERN + *e* + CONSEQUENCE

Such constructions involve a conditional marker (§6.5.1.5) which is followed by a clause containing an irrealis verb which expresses the cause of concern that is felt by the referent of the subject of *metokhtokh* ‘afraid’. This is then followed by *e* ‘and’ which is followed by an additional clause containing an irrealis verb, this time expressing the feared consequence. Thus:

Nē-metokhtokh bar tēra-v aim e tenivē-m bē-sēvēr kine.
 1SG:REAL-afraid COND 1DL.INCL:IRR-go home and wife-2SG 3SG:IRR-tell.off 1SG
 ‘I’m afraid in case the two of us go home and your wife tells me off.’

6.5.2.2 Quotative

With verbs of locution, the content of the locution is introduced by means of the verb *var* ‘say’, which carries inflectional prefixation which is the same as the initial verb.⁴ Thus:

Ajabe at-var bēt-leg bētev-Ø.
 3PL:REAL:recount 3PL:REAL-say 3PL:IRR-stay ACC-3SG
 ‘They recounted that they would stay with him.’

Ø-Lēbis sēne-raru Ø-var Ø-metokhtokh.
 3SG:REAL-deceive mother-3DL 3SG:REAL-say 3SG:REAL-afraid
 ‘He deceived their mother saying that he was afraid.’

⁴ François (2002:184) refers to a very similar ‘conjugated complementiser’ in Araki. His claim that the subordinating function of the inflected verb meaning ‘say’ is unique to Araki (François 2002:188) reflects an apparent lack of awareness of the fact that such constructions are in fact widespread in Vanuatu languages. In addition to the construction described in this section for Naman, there are also directly parallel constructions in V’ënen Taut (Fox 1979:127), Neve’ei (Musgrave 2001:173–174), Northeast Malakula (Capell & Layard 1980:41), Paamese (Crowley 2002b:79), Northeast Ambae (Hyslop 2001:394–395), Lenakel (Lynch 1978:110–113), Anejom̄ (Lynch 2000:161–163), Sye (Crowley 1998b:254–257) and Ura (Crowley 1999:217–218).

At-makem at-var tan Ø-iv i melbot Santo.
 3PL:REAL-indicate 3PL:REAL-say who 3SG:REAL-go GOAL mailboat Santo
 ‘They indicated who went onto the mailboat to Santo.’

A quote introduced by grammaticalised *var* can also follow *var* as the initial verb. For example:

Netitevën Ø-var khën ai Ø-var ...
 girl 3SG:REAL-say DAT 3SG 3SG:REAL-say
 ‘The girl said to him ...’

However, this is true only when the initial instance of *var* is separated from the complement by means of some intervening constituent. In the example just presented, the prepositional phrase *khën ai* ‘to him’ appears after the inflected initial verb *var* ‘she said’. Contrast this example with the following, in which the inflected verb *var* is followed directly by the content of the quotation, and it is not separately introduced by *var* in its quotative function:

Mokh nge at-var “A’a mët-khov nevëns i ra-var
 person DEM 3PL:REAL-say yes 1PL.EXCL:REAL-plant banana REL IMP:REAL-say
bour i net.”
 bour INST DEM
 ‘Those people said, “Yes, we have planted the banana that is called *bour*”.’

This grammatical use of the inflected verb *var* extends also to subordinate clauses which express the content of a mental activity, as in the following:

At-rongdur at-var at-ma-varedog.
 3PL:REAL-realise 3PL:REAL-say 3PL:REAL-CONT/HAB-tell.truth
 ‘They realised that they were telling the truth.’

Ai Ø-nsëm Ø-var tenivë-n.
 3SG 3SG:REAL-think 3SG:REAL-say wife-3SG
 ‘He thought that it was his wife.’

Ø-Lis Ø-var jëbë-n tevet Ø-esëkh.
 3SG:REAL-see 3SG:REAL-say grandparent-3SG woman 3SG:REAL-not.exist
 ‘She saw that her grandmother wasn’t there.’

While the inflectional prefixation of the two verbs is shared, this only applies to the subject marking and not to other orders of inflectional prefixes. Thus, when the initial verb carries the continuous/habitual prefix *ma-* (§4.1.3.1) between the subject prefixes and the root, the verb *var* when it is used as a subordinator only copies the subject prefixes. Thus:

Rë-ma-vërékhës ai ra-var Malmemel Usubuel.
 IMP:REAL-CONT/HAB-call 3SG IMP:REAL-say Malmemel Usubuel
 ‘He used to be called Malmemel Usubuel.’

6.5.2.3 Purposive

It was mentioned in §6.1.1 that the intentional auxiliary *var* can be used to express a purposive function. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Matërvarëkh tuen Ø-isiëkh i nense Ø-var
 old.man INDEF 3SG:REAL-climb LOC Tahitian.chestnut 3SG:REAL-intend
bë-tov.
 3SG:IRR-pick.fruit
 ‘One old man climbed up the Tahitian chestnut to pick fruit.’

Ne-n matërvarëkh nge Ø-merakh Ø-var ba-v
 spirit-3SG old.man DEM 3SG:REAL-get.up 3SG:REAL-intend 3SG:IRR-go
vere.
 outside
 ‘The spirit of the old man got up to go outside.’

6.5.2.4 Causative

Finally, we find the inflected verb *ve* ‘do, make’ being used to introduce a clause which expresses an event that arises as a consequence of the event described in the preceding clause. Such constructions correspond to English constructions expressed with ‘so’ or ‘therefore’. Thus:

Ø-Iv lakhe i Ø-ve matërvëvrëkh air tabrakh
 3SG:REAL-go bush GOAL 3SG:REAL-make old.men PL just
at-rongdur.
 3PL:REAL-realise
 ‘He went to the bush so the old men just realised.’

Nous Ø-ius Ø-ve ajë-vale-si.
 rain 3SG:REAL-rain 3SG:REAL-make 3PL:REAL:NEG-come-NEG
 ‘It rained so they did not come.’

The same verb can also be used to express a direct causative relationship between a first event and a second one. For example:

Nevdoro Ø-ve bëravë-n Ø-isog.
 woman 3SG:REAL-make grass.skirt-3SG 3SG:REAL-go.down
 ‘The woman made her grass skirt go down.’

6.6 Discourse patterns

Earlier descriptive accounts of Vanuatu languages concentrated on the phonology and the morphosyntax of individual languages, largely—or even completely—ignoring features of discourse structure. Some more recent accounts have incorporated short observations relating to discourse structure and to stylistic devices, e.g. Crowley (1998b:280–283) for Erromangan, Musgrave (2001:188–195) for Neve‘ei. For the most part, however, any discourse-related phenomena have continued to be dealt with under the same general headings that are used for describing clause- and sentence-level structural phenomena, as in Hyslop (2001) for Northeast Ambae and François (2002) for Araki.

Any kind of comprehensive treatment of discourse patterns in a language calls for the collection of a substantial body of texts representing a variety of genres. Because Naman is

a moribund language, discussions around such themes are necessarily going to be limited, given the restricted amount of textual data that has been assembled, the narrow stylistic range of these texts, and the lack of access to natural conversational speech. However, my corpus of narrative texts is still of sufficient scope to allow a number of observations to be made which help us to compare some of the discourse patterns in Naman with what we encounter in other languages of Vanuatu.

6.6.1 Fronted noun phrases

In many Vanuatu languages, there is a highly productive pattern of movement of noun phrases to the head of the clause as a way of promoting a noun phrase from the position of verbal or prepositional object into a position of pragmatic salience. This kind of fronting of noun phrases in Naman is attested in narrative texts in examples such as the following, where the headless relative clause which functions as the object of the verb *lue lis* ‘shoot again’ has been fronted to the head of the clause:

Tet na-var khën-ëm us khë-lue lis.
 REL 1SG:REAL-mention DAT-2SG perhaps 2SG:REAL-shoot again
 ‘Perhaps you shot again what I mentioned to you.’

In the following sentence, the clause-initial noun phrase *motuen* ‘somebody’ has been shifted away from its original position as subject of the verb *vale* ‘come’ to a position before the sentence-initial subordinate clause of time:

Motuen nelmu deswe Ø-ibën Ø-tëleb
 somebody when sea 3SG:REAL-be.high.tide 3SG:REAL-much
Ø-vale Ø-mensan niëkh.
 3SG:REAL-come 3SG:REAL-look.for fish
 ‘When the tide was very high, someone came looking for fish.’

The following examples illustrate the fronting of possessor noun phrases from the possessor position within possessive constructions, both indirect and direct (§3.3.2), to the head of the clause:

Igem tan Ø-ve balabal sen igem?
 2PL who 3SG-COP leader POSS:3SG 2PL
 ‘Who is your leader?’
Igem dalë-n gem ati-des.
 2PL leg-3SG 2PL 3PL:REAL-alright
 ‘Your legs are alright.’

Noun phrases are particularly commonly fronted in Naman from the position of object of a transitive verb which carries the impersonal subject prefix *rë-* (§5.2). We therefore find examples such as the following in which the object of the verb *khores* ‘cut’ is *nibu nakh* ‘this bamboo’ but it appears before rather than after the verb:

Nibu nakh rë-khores.
 bamboo DEM IMP:REAL-cut
 ‘This bamboo was cut.’

However, the fact that objects are not obligatorily fronted in this construction is illustrated by the occurrence of examples such as the following:

Rë-vësan nejë-n naab.
 IMP:REAL-throw excrement-3SG fire
 ‘The firestick (lit. excrement of the fire) was thrown.’

Interrogative constituents (§5.4) can either appear in their underlying structural position or can be moved to the front of the clause, often followed by the topic marker *at* (§6.6.3). These alternatives are illustrated by the following where the nominal interrogative *nsan* ‘what?’ can appear either in the verbal object position or fronted to the head of the clause:

Khë-ve nsan?
 2SG:REAL-do what
 ‘What did you do?’

Nsan at khë-ve?
 what TOP 2SG:REAL-do
 ‘What is it that you did?’

It is not just nominal interrogatives which can be fronted in this way. The verbal interrogative *vësakh* ‘be/do how/why?’ can also appear at the head of the clause:

Ø-Vësakh khëja-var-si kët-ve nestuen khën demes net?
 3SG:REAL-why 2PL:REAL:NEG-DESID-NEG 2PL:IRR-do something OBL devil DEM
 ‘Why don’t you all want to do something to the devil?’

It is interesting to note that sentences in which noun phrases have been fronted, apart from the impersonal subject construction described above, are rather less common in Naman than in other languages of Vanuatu with which I am familiar. In my corpora of Paamese and Erromangan, the fronting of noun phrases in this way is extremely common from a wide variety of structural positions within ordinary declarative clauses, and the same is true in Bislama. It is not known if there are any specific preferences—or even firm restrictions—in Naman against the fronting of certain kinds of noun phrases, or if the corpus that has been assembled is simply not sufficiently representative of all genres. It may well be that the lack of opportunity for extensive exposure to conversational Naman has resulted in a lack of access to the kinds of pragmatic contexts in which this kind of fronting might be expected.

6.6.2 Topicalisation

The fronting of noun phrases is widely encountered in Vanuatu languages and explicit mention is made of this phenomenon—albeit for the most part quite briefly—in a number of grammatical descriptions,⁵ e.g. Port Sandwich (Charpentier 1979:185–186), Araki (François 2002:156), Northeast Ambae (Hyslop 2001:70–71), Erromangan (Crowley 1998b:243–245) and Anejoñ (Lynch 2000:116–117). As far as I am aware, however, no

⁵ The absence of any mention in a grammar, however, should not necessarily be taken as a sign that fronting is not a feature of that language. Crowley (1982), for example, makes no mention of the extremely frequent process of noun phrase fronting in Paamese because of the unfortunate concentration in that account on basic underived clause types.

mention has been made in print of the possibility in any account of a Vanuatu language for the expression of a noun phrase topic which has not been extracted from any structural position within the remainder of the clause.⁶

However, my Naman corpus includes clear examples of noun phrases which can be placed at the head of a clause to indicate that the clause which follows represents some kind of comment about that noun phrase, but where that noun phrase cannot be construed as having been fronted out of that clause itself. In such cases we are clearly dealing with a rather different kind of construction. One frequently attested pattern of this type is illustrated by the following example involving the verb *var* ‘say’ which carries the impersonal subject marker *ra-*:

Khamil sen nane khësog ra-var Khamil Botuoli.
 ancestral.village POSS:3SG mother POSS:1SG IMP:REAL-say Khamil Botuoli
 ‘My mother’s ancestral village was called Khamil Botuoli.’

In this case, the verb *var* ‘say’ only permits a single object, and this is the name of the village, i.e. *Khamil Botuoli*, while the subject is encoded by the impersonal pronominal prefix *ra-*. The initial noun phrase *khamil sen nane khësog* ‘my mother’s ancestral village’ cannot be inserted structurally into the clause of which *var* is the verb, so it cannot be construed as having been fronted out of that clause. Such initial noun phrases must be interpreted a kind of TOPIC + COMMENT construction in which the topic expresses a location while the comment states how that place is named.

In other cases, the initial topic element can be clearly related to some non-noun phrase constituent within the main part of the clause, though direct fronting from some structural position within the clause to the head of the sentence is again not a possible analysis. In the following, for example, the noun phrase *nerëbien tit nëmarëb khën* ‘the job that I do’ cannot be inserted into any structural position within the rest of the clause. However, the existence of such a noun phrase is nevertheless implied by the presence there of the verb *narëb* ‘I work’:

Nerëbien tit në-ma-rëb khën kine na-rëb usër
 job REL 1SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-do TR 1SG 1SG:REAL-work as
sekretri nen Area Council of Chiefs i Malakula.
 secretary PART Area Council of Chiefs LOC Malakula
 ‘For a job, I work as the secretary of the Area Council of Chiefs on Malakula.’

There are yet other cases, however, in which there is no overt expression of any form which would directly imply a relation to the referent of the topic noun phrase, though such a relationship can nonetheless be deduced by our knowledge of the real world. Examine the following:

Toti meteli Ø-igor.
 rubbish.dump gate 3SG:REAL-closed
 ‘As for the rubbish dump, the gate was closed.’

⁶ Such constructions have not, to date, been widely described in print for Bislama, though they certainly exist, e.g. *Mifala ol jif i strong* ‘As for us, the chiefs are tough’, *Mi solwota i drae* ‘I have no money (lit. As for me, the tide is out)’ (Crowley 2004:165).

Once again, *toti* ‘rubbish dump’ cannot be inserted into the structure of the rest of the sentence for this to be treated as a fronted noun phrase. However, this sentence can be correctly interpreted if we deduce that *meteli* ‘gate’ represents an abbreviation of a longer noun phrase that can be construed as containing *toti*, i.e. *meteli nen toti* ‘the gate of the rubbish dump’.

My corpus contains a number of other examples of sentences containing preposed topic noun phrases which are more difficult to treat in this kind of way. We are therefore forced to interpret such fronted noun phrases as expressing the idea that whatever is said in the remainder of the sentence must be understood in some way as relating to the referent of the preposed noun phrase. For example, examine the following:

Kine misnari Ø-vale Ø-leg iag nangse-n
 1SG missionary 3SG:REAL-come 3SG:REAL-stay here name-3SG
Ø-se-seji.
 3SG:REAL-NEG-thus:NEG

This was said in a recorded story by a protagonist who knew a missionary who had come to his area. That missionary then left and another being—who later in the story turned out to be a supernatural being disguising himself as the missionary—then came along. The protagonist in the story eventually became suspicious and when the supernatural being told him his name, he responded with the sentence above, which can only be translated as something like the following:

‘In my experience, the name of the missionary who came and stayed here was not like that.’

Other examples of the same kind of pattern are presented below:

Kam natuen at-ilung usër boi net.
 1PL.EXCL some 3PL:REAL-walk ALONG buoy DEM
 ‘As for some of us, they walked along that buoy.’

Kamem sukul Ø-vale.
 1PL.EXCL church 3SG:REAL-come
 ‘As part of our history, the church came.’

Iget mokhot Ø-imes ne-n Ø-ve nejëkh.
 1PL.INCL person 3SG:REAL-die spirit-3SG 3SG:REAL-become kingfisher
 ‘As for us, when somebody dies, their spirit becomes a kingfisher.’

6.6.3 The particle *at*

There is a very frequently attested particle in Naman of the shape *at*. Despite the fact that this form is very widely attested, it is difficult to clearly define its precise function (or functions). In any sentence which contains *at*, the particle can be deleted and the result is a perfectly grammatical sentence as described in the remainder of this grammar. Compare, for example, the following pair of attested sentences in which the first contains the particle *at* and the second does not.

Numin nen nangse-n at Rakhrakhvenu.
 male POSS name-3SG Rakhrakhvenu
 ‘The male one’s name was Rakhrakhvenu.’

Nevdoro nangse-n Lerakhrakhvenu.
 woman name-3SG Lerakhrakhvenu
 ‘The woman’s name was Lerakhrakhvenu.’

These sentences are structurally parallel, both being non-verbal equational sentences (§5.1.2) with fronted possessors (§3.3.2.4) in the topic noun phrase and a following comment which is a personal name, yet the first sentence contains *at* after the topic and the second sentence does not.

That the presence or absence of *at* within a sentence is subject to substantial free variation is suggested by the distribution of this particle in narrative closings. Of the twenty-four narrative texts that I have recorded, the vast majority end with a closing line of some kind. There is no fixed formula by which a story must end, though the following represents a common possibility:

Bësien sog Ø-nog iar.
 story POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-finish there
 ‘My story finishes there.’

In the closing just presented, the form *at* does not appear. In other stories, however, the closing line does include *at*, as illustrated by the following attested examples:

Bësien sog Ø-nog iar at.
 story POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-finish there
 ‘My story finishes there.’

Tat Ø-nog i at evatëkh.
 PLACE 3SG:REAL-finish LOC now
 ‘The place that this story finishes is now.’

Tutunmasa net Ø-nog iar at.
 traditional.story DEM 3SG:REAL-finish there
 ‘This traditional story finishes there.’

Just over 60% of narrative closings contain the particle *at*, while it is absent in just under 40% of such closings.

The particle *at* is not restricted to appearing after forms belonging to any particular word class. The examples above show that it can appear after noun phrases (§3), zero-marked locational constituents (§5.3.4) and subordinate clauses of place (§6.5.1.3). Attested examples indicate that it can appear after both nominal subjects and objects. For example:

Watson at Ø-leg vaas Metavin.
 Watson 3SG:REAL-live still Metavin
 ‘Watson still lives at Metavin.’

Re-lev nakhanien at.
 3DL:REAL-take food
 ‘The two of them took the food.’

It can be found after verbs, for example:

Bësien Lëngalëng ba-v bë-sëkhar at.
 language Lëngalëng 3SG:IRR-go 3SG:IRR-disappear
 ‘The language of Lëngalëng will go and disappear.’

Tet Ø-ides tuen bë-vale at.
 REL 3SG:REAL-good INDEF 3SG:IRR-come
 ‘Something good will come.’

In addition to general locational nouns, it can appear after names of places, for example:

Mokhot Ø-leg ëns Nowiluv at.
 person 3SG:REAL-live COMPL Nowiluv
 ‘There was somebody already living at Nowiluv.’

A single clause may contain more than one constituent marked with *at*, for example:

At-rongdur at at-var at-ma-varedog nsi at.
 3PL:REAL-know 3PL:REAL-say 3PL:REAL-CONT/HAB-tell.truth now
 ‘They know that they are telling the truth now.’

Ai at ne at na-var ba-var-var usër-Ø.
 3SG only 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-REDUP-talk about-3SG
 ‘That’s all that I want to talk about.’

In some cases, *at* appears to have a demonstrative or definite-marking type of function, as in the following:

Re-lev nakhanien at rë-sël-Ø.
 2DL:REAL-take food DEM 2DL:REAL-roast-3SG
 ‘The two of them took the food and roasted it.’

It also seems to mark a topic, particularly with a noun phrase that has been fronted to the head of the clause. For example:

Nokhutë-n buag at tet rë-së-ma-khankhan-si.
 stem-3SG taro TOP REL IMP:REAL-NEG-CONT/HAB-eat-NEG
 ‘Taro stem is something that one does not eat.’

Contrastive overtly marked pronominal subjects (§5.2.1) are also frequently—though by no means invariably—associated with the particle *at*. For example:

Kamem at mët-ma-verës nava-n nakhe air net.
 1PL.EXCL TOP 1PL.EXCL:REAL-CONT/HAB-step.on fruit-3SG tree PL DEM
 ‘It is us who steps on the fruit of the trees.’

Given that interrogative constituents (§5.4) are frequently fronted to the position of head of the clause, we commonly find that these too are followed by *at*. For example:

Nsan at khët-vëles net?
 what TOP 2PL:REAL-bake DEM
 ‘What are you baking?’

However, even non-fronted interrogatives may be associated with this marker, for example:

Khë-lis \emptyset -*ve* *nsan* *at* *evatëkhna^hkh?*
 2SG:REAL-see 3SG:REAL-do what TOP now
 ‘What do you see him doing now?’

The particle *at* is also frequently encountered after verbs and other constituents, in which case it is rather more difficult to treat it as any kind of demonstrative or topic marker. In such cases, this form is treated instead as a marker of emphasis, or as having some vague pragmatic discourse function about which it is not possible to say a great deal at the present. Thus:

Bë-nog *ëns* *at* *i* *kine*.
 3SG:IRR-finish COMPL EMPH LOC 1SG
 ‘It will just finish with me.’

\emptyset -*Rongdur* *khën* \emptyset -*imes* *at*.
 3SG:REAL-know SUB 3SG:REAL-die EMPH
 ‘He knew that he was dead.’

Particles—or sometimes clitics—with a similar distribution appear to be widely distributed in Vanuatu languages. *At* in Naman appears to overlap fairly substantially in function with forms in a number of Vanuatu languages, e.g. the particle *ang* in Neve‘ei (Musgrave 2001:163–165), the clitic *-ngani* in Paamese (Crowley 1982:232–233) and the particle *ma* in Erromangan, described in Crowley (1998b:169–170) as a demonstrative. These forms also appear to correspond closely in function to some of the functions of the Bislama form *ia* for which no fully satisfactory overall account has yet been published.

I would argue that in all of the descriptions mentioned above, these forms have been inadequately described, with a substantial body of data having been ignored (or simply not recorded) in the grammatical accounts. The Neve‘ei particle *ang*, for example, has been described as a question tag. While this form certainly does appear in questions, it also frequently appears in declarative clauses such as the following, so it cannot be correct to refer to it simply as a question tag:

Netemah *nge* *ba-khan* \emptyset *ang*.
 devil DEM 3SG:IRR-eat 3SG
 ‘That devil is going to eat her.’

Bi-vi *be-va‘a-ru* *ran* *no* *ang*.
 3SG:IRR-do 3SG:IRR-MULT-two OBL 1SG
 ‘He will do it to me twice.’

Any non-demonstrative functions of *ma* in Erromangan, such as those illustrated in the following sentences, were also ignored completely in Crowley (1998b):

Nomplat *ma* *iyi* *se?*
 nomplat 3SG what
 ‘What is a *nomplat*?’

Y-omol *m-em-alei* *ma* *yahac* *rampunarvin*.
 3SG:DIST-fall ECHOSUBJECT-CONTINUOUS-lie up.there on.beach
 ‘He fell and was lying up there on the beach.’

6.6.4 Instrumental shift

Instrumental noun phrases in Naman are marked either by means of the preposition *i* (§5.3.1.1.1) or by *khën* (§5.3.1.3.2). For example:

Netite net Ø-vër libakh sen i nakhe.
 child DEM 3SG:REAL-hit dog POSS:3SG INST stick
 ‘The child hit his dog with a stick.’

Kë-së-vangan-si raru khën niëkh net.
 2SG:IRR-NEG-feed-NEG 3DL INST fish DEM
 ‘Don’t feed the two of them with that fish.’

When a transitive verb with a following object is associated with an instrumental phrase marked by *khën* and the object of the preposition can be deduced from the context, or if it has been fronted—hence being marked in its original location by means of zero—then the stranded preposition is generally shifted to a position between the verb and its object. Note, therefore, alternations between constructions of the following shapes:

VERB + OBJECT + *khën* + INSTRUMENT

VERB + *khën* + OBJECT

Sentences illustrating the first of these options are presented below:

Ø-Sël niëkh khën nerangasë-n nakhe tuen.
 3SG:REAL-thread fish INST branch-3SG tree one
 ‘He threaded the fish with the branch of a tree (through its gills).’

Kë-vangan raru khën niëkh net.
 2SG:IRR-feed 3DL INST fish DEM
 ‘Feed them with that fish.’

The following, however, illustrate the second of these possibilities:

Ø-Bër nerangasë-n nakhe tuen Ø-sël khën niëkh.
 3SG:REAL-break branch-3SG tree one 3SG:REAL-thread INST fish
 ‘He broke the branch of a tree and threaded the fish with it (through its gills).’

Kë-vangan khën raru.
 2SG:IRR-feed INST 3DL
 ‘Feed the two of them with it.’

Ø-Sere ner nakhe Ø-ivi nowe Ø-lumës khën
 3SG:REAL-take leaf tree 3SG:REAL-squeeze water 3SG:REAL-wet INST
man-en.

HUM-DEM

‘He took the leaf and squeezed the water and wet that person with it.’

This kind of shifting of zero-marked *khën*-phrases is only encountered when this preposition expresses the instrumental function, and is blocked, therefore, when *khën* expresses any other functions. The shift also does not take place when the instrumental function is expressed instead by means of the alternative instrumental preposition *i*.

This pattern has not yet been reported in print for any other languages of Malakula, or indeed, in any other languages of central and northern Vanuatu. It is possible, however, that patterns of this type may in fact be more widely distributed than is suggested in current linguistic descriptions. Musgrave (2001), for example, makes no mention of such a pattern in Neve‘ei, though the following textual examples indicate that exactly parallel constructions are in fact also present in this language:

Na‘ai nen nokhoit i-sokh en nelabut i-vwelem
stick REL octopus 3SG:REAL-spear INST rat 3SG:REAL-become

i-vi nibis-n nelabut.
3SG:REAL-be tail-3SG rat

‘The stick that the octopus speared the rat with became the rat’s tail.’

Abwit-wahan na ‘au tuan abwit-lakh bin en no.
2PL:IRR-look.for vine one 2PL:IRR-hang kill INST 1SG

‘You will all look for a vine and you will all throttle me to death with it.’

In fact, the construction appears to be sufficiently widely distributed on Malakula for a direct calque to have become well established in the Bislama of many speakers on the island involving the instrumental use of the oblique preposition *long*. We therefore find derivations of the following kind in local Bislama:

Ki ia bae mi stap openem doa long hem > Ki ia bae mi stap openem long doa.
‘That is the door that I will open the door with.’

Sop ia bae mi wasem han long hem > Sop ia bae mi wasem long han.
‘That is the soap that I will wash (my) hands with.’

Naef ia hem i katem kokonas long hem > Naef ia hem i katem long kokonas.
‘That is the knife that he cut the coconut with.’

Ston ia bae mi brekem kokonas long hem > Ston ia bae mi brekem long kokonas.
‘I will break the coconut with that rock.’

Wan smol masonaet i stap sam ples ia. Bae mi mekem bokis blong batrik long hem > Bae mi mekem long bokis blong batrik.

‘There is some masonite somewhere here. I will make a box for the battery with it.’

Note also examples such as the following which involve a question word which has been fronted:

Wehem kaliko we yumi stap sevem kava long hem? > Wehem kaliko we yumi stap sevem long kava?

‘Where is the cloth that we sieve kava with?’

6.6.5 Sequence

The various processes of clausal coordination described in §6.3 and §6.4 can be used to join sentences to express the temporal sequencing of events. However, my corpus provides evidence for a range of different structural options for expressing a sequential relationship between events. Although these patterns are structurally quite varied, I have

chosen to highlight the discussion of this aspect of the discourse structure of Naman by bringing these various options together into this single section of this grammar. This is an aspect of Naman structure which shows particularly strong evidence of influence of forms incorporated from Bislama (§1.8).

6.6.5.1 Ale

The form *ale* derives from the Bislama sequential marker of the same form (although ultimately this derives from the French verb *allez* ‘go’). In Naman, as in Bislama, this occupies a clause-initial position to indicate a sequential relationship between two events. This form is ubiquitous in my Naman corpus.⁷ In one recorded narrative containing 449 lines of transcription, the form *ale* appears a total of 109 times. It is not uncommon for several lines of text in a row to begin with *ale*, as shown in the following short extract from one recorded text:

Ø-Rov Ø-iv aim i.
3SG:REAL-carry 3SG:REAL-go home GOAL
‘He took it home.’

Ale Ø-iv Ø-lev savakh khën sène-n.
then 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-give one DAT mother-3SG
‘Then he went and gave one to his mother.’

Ale ai Ø-bële teme-n rë-sël savakh.
then 3SG 3SG:REAL-accompany father-3SG 3DL:REAL-roast one
‘Then he and his father roasted one.’

Ale at-khan tabakh-ër.
then 3PL:REAL-eat all-3PL
‘Then they ate them all.’

Ale meren nen Ø-set lis.
then tomorrow PART 3SG:REAL-same again
‘Then the next day it was the same again.’

6.6.5.2 Nau

Another morpheme of Bislama origin that is occasionally encountered in my corpus to signal a sequential relationship between the events encoded in separate sentences is the form *nau* (which ultimately derives from English *now*). This contrasts with *ale* in that it invariably appears at the end of a sentence which is sequentially related to an event encoded in a preceding sentence. An example of this form in use is:

⁷ In fact, it has become very common as a sequential marker in the spoken version of probably every Vanuatu language with which I have any familiarity, and it is certainly common in neighbouring Neve‘ei.

Nedum Ø-iyag nau.
yam 3SG:REAL-exist then
'Then yams came into existence.'

Given that *ale* and *nau* perform identical functions, it is not uncommon for both to occur in the same sentence, each occupying their respective positions in the clause. Thus:

Ale mët-vale nau.
then 1PL.EXCL:REAL-come then
'Then we came.'

6.6.5.3 Mo(no)go

The indigenous equivalent to *ale* and *nau* is the clause-initial form *monogo*, along with the occasional variant *mogo*. This form is still used by speakers of Naman, but its function has been overwhelmingly supplanted by the borrowed forms, particularly *ale*. In the same text mentioned above as containing 109 instances of *ale*, *mo(no)go* appears only twice. One of those instances was after a sequence of five sentences beginning with *ale* in just six lines of text. In the following example, *monogo* was perhaps seen as something of a prescriptive response to this sustained use of borrowed forms:

Ale Ø-ma-rëb khën usër Ø-set Ø-iv
then 3SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-do TR DURT 3SG:REAL-thus 3SG:REAL-go
Ø-iv Ø-iv monogo nelmu tuen Ø-iv lis.
3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go then time another 3SG:REAL-go again
'Then he would keep doing it like that on and on and then he went back again.'

6.6.5.4 Iv and vale

The verb *iv* 'go' can also be used to link two clauses to indicate that the events described in each clause take place sequentially. Thus:

Ø-Sienan lis kharuen Ø-iv Ø-iyag
3SG:REAL-conceive again another 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-give.birth
lis numin.
again boy
'She conceived another again and then gave birth to another boy.'

It was mentioned in §6.2.4 that the verb *iv* can be repeated twice, very frequently three times, and sometimes even more frequently, to indicate that the second event takes place after a long period in which the situation described in the first clause pertains.

While *iv* is very commonly used in this way to express a sequential relationship, the verb *vale* 'come' is occasionally attested being used in a similar way. We therefore find examples such as the following in my corpus:

Rë-mour Ø-vale rë-tëleb.
3DL:REAL-live 3SG:REAL-come 3DL:REAL-grow.up
'The two of them lived and then they grew up.'

6.6.5.5 Tabakh

There is a postverbal perfective marker of the form *tabakh* (§4.3.1.6). It is not uncommon in my Naman textual corpus for the verb of the initial clause to be marked by means of the completive marker *tabakh* with the verb of the juxtaposed clause expressing a subsequent event. For example:

A-tevën tabakh at-var khën khavë-n at-var ...
 3PL:REAL-bury COMPL 3PL:REAL-say DAT brother-3SG 3SG:REAL-say
 ‘After they had buried him, they said to his brother ...’

6.6.5.6 Merakh

There is a lexical verb of the form *merakh* meaning ‘get up, arise’ or ‘fly’. The uninflected root of this verb is fairly commonly used in discourse to indicate that the sentence that it precedes expresses an event that immediately follows on from the event expressed in the preceding sentence.

At-bele mokh Winev air merakh a-tëkh jëjën
 3PL:REAL-chase person Winev PL then 3PL:REAL-take tight
matërvarekh tuen.
 old.man INDEF
 ‘They chased away the people of Winev and then grabbed hold of an old man.’

6.6.5.7 Head-to-tail linkage

The expression head-to-tail linkage refers to a widely used discourse device in narrative structure in Oceanic languages for the predicate (or part of the predicate) of a sentence to be repeated at the beginning of a following sentence which expresses a temporally subsequent event. In the following extract from part of a text in Naman, repeated material from the previous sentence is underlined, and it can be seen that repeated material of this sort is extremely common.

Nelmu tuen namat nge Ø-leg.
 time INDEF snake DEM 3SG:REAL-stay
 ‘Once there was a snake.’

Ø-Leg Ø-iv Ø-iv Ø-iv e merakh
 3SG:REAL-stay 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go and then

Ø-sakh rangan nibu tuen.
 3SG:REAL-go.up on bamboo INDEF
 ‘Then it went up a bamboo.’

Ø-Sakh rangan nibu nge Ø-iv Ø-iv Ø-iv
 3SG:REAL-go.up on bamboo DEM 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go

i ningulë-n nibu.
 GOAL top-3SG bamboo
 ‘Then it went to the top of the bamboo.’

Ø-Iv i ningulë-n nibu rakhe tetel e
 3SG:REAL-go GOAL top-3SG bamboo up all.way and

Ø-ma-lev nibe tuen.
 3SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-sing song INDEF
 ‘It went all the way up and was singing a song.’

Ø-Lev nibe e nevdoro Vuli iru.
 3SG:REAL-sing song and woman Vuli two
 ‘And there were two women of Vuli.’

6.6.6 Hesitation phenomena

Few published grammars attempt to describe what speakers of a language do when they temporarily do not know what to say, or how to say it. This is presumably because dysfluency is seen as something unpredictable and irregular, as well as being subject to interpersonal variation, and therefore not subject to systematic grammatical analysis. However, my own experience of transcribing and analysing narrative textual data in a number of different Oceanic languages indicates that each language provides its speakers with a range of language-specific hesitation devices that allow people to continue speaking when struck with temporary dysfluency.

In the case of a moribund language which people no longer speak all the time, speakers are arguably more likely to suffer from dysfluency as they seek to remember vocabulary items that they may have momentarily forgotten. Certainly, some of the narrative texts in my Naman corpus are replete with a range of hesitation phenomena,⁸ the behaviour of which I propose to outline in this section.

6.6.6.1 Denokh and demonstrative nouns

The form *denokh* almost invariably occupies the structural position of a noun phrase within a sentence and is used when the speaker is temporarily unable to think of the appropriate noun (or pronoun) to use. The noun (or pronoun) can be of any kind: human, non-human animate, or inanimate.

The form *denokh* is generally followed by a brief hesitation (indicated in the examples below by means of ...) with the appropriate noun phrase then following when the speaker thinks of it. Used in this way, *denokh* most frequently appears later in a clause rather than at the beginning. We therefore find numerous examples such as the following in which a verbal object is expressed initially as *denokh*:

⁸ Such forms were clearly considered by speakers to constitute performance errors, as there was a universal insistence while transcribing that such forms be edited out in any written version of the text that was to be made available publicly.

Mët-vëles *denokh ... nokhutë-n buag.*
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-bake ... stem-3SG taro
 ‘We baked ... taro stems.’

It is also common for the object of a prepositional phrase to be expressed by means of *denokh*, as in the following:

Mokh Ameliakhus Ø-khawes *i denokh ... nevet.*
 person Ameliakhus 3SG:REAL-originate SOURCE ... rock
 ‘The person of Ameliakhus originated from ... a rock.’

While subject noun phrases are rather less commonly expressed in this way, my corpus does include a small number of examples such as the following in which *denokh* appears at the beginning of the sentence in the subject position:

Denokh ... masta Ø-se-letem-si *ai.*
 ... boss 3SG:REAL-NEG-let-NEG 3SG
 ‘... The boss didn’t let him.’

Noun phrases appearing at the beginning of a sentence as a result of topicalisation are also occasionally expressed in this way. For example:

Denokh ... nibu i në-rov *akh rë-khores khën-gën.*
 ... bamboo REL 1SG:REAL-hold DEM IMP:REAL-cut SOURCE-1SG
 ‘... The bamboo which I am holding was cut from me.’

There is no restriction in the number of instances of *denokh* which can appear in a sentence, and a particularly dysfluent speaker may use *denokh* in more than one structural position within the same sentence, as illustrated by the following:

Denokh ... men-gore at-ma-veres *denokh ... nava-n nakhe.*
 ... flying.fox 3PL:REAL-CONT/HAB-step.on ... fruit-3SG tree
 ‘... The flying foxes stepped on the ... fruit of the tree.’

Although speakers normally follow *denokh* immediately with the noun phrase that they were searching for, it is possible to leave the hesitation device on its own in the sentence if the speaker decides that the hearer can deduce what was intended either from the linguistic or the non-linguistic context. One narrator, for example, produced the following line:

Denokh ... Ø-tëbe nibu iru.
 ... 3SG:REAL-cut bamboo two

In this case, the preceding lines clearly indicated that the unexpressed subject of the verb was *netite* ‘child’, but the narrator evidently decided that it was no longer necessary to provide this information after *denokh*. The appropriate translation for this example is therefore:

‘The child cut two pieces of bamboo.’

While *denokh* overwhelmingly occupies a noun phrase position within a sentence, it is occasionally used while a speaker is seeking an appropriate verb. In most cases, although the verb that is then provided is inflected, *denokh* itself appears with no verbal marking whatsoever. Thus:

Taim i denokh ... mët-khawes i nevet ...
 when REL ... 1PL.EXCL:REAL-originate SOURCE rock
 ‘When we ... originated from the rock ...’

Denokh ... khë-lis demes nge.
 ... 2SG:REAL-see devil DEM
 ‘You ... saw the devil.’

Very occasionally, however, *denokh* accepts the same inflectional prefix of the verb that the speaker is struggling to find, as in the following:

Bavar kë-denokh ... kë-vale tëra-rëb i noag.
 if 2SG:IRR-... 2SG:IRR-come 1DL.INCL:IRR-work LOC ship
 ‘If you ... come, you and I will work on the ship.’

The following illustrates a particularly dysfluent moment in a recorded text in which we see the same kind of thing happening:

Mët- ... mët-denokh ... mët- ... mët-leg lis
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-... 1PL.EXCL:REAL-... 1PL.EXCL:REAL-... 1PL.EXCL:REAL-stay again
mën iar.
 first there
 ‘We ... we ... we ... stayed there again first.’

The pair of demonstrative nouns *man-* and *den-* described in §3.2 are also sometimes used in a way that is very similar to *denokh* in that these forms are immediately followed after a brief intonation break with a noun phrase that the speaker is seeking, as in the following:

Man-akh ... nibov nakh Ø-vale.
 HUM-DEM European DEM 3SG:REAL-come
 ‘This ... European has come.’

6.6.6.2 Usër

Usër functions grammatically as a preposition meaning ‘like’ or ‘as’ in Naman (§5.3.1.1.3). However, the same form is used widely as a hesitation device in a wide range of structural environments. Unlike the forms described in §6.6.6.1, *usër* cannot be construed as “replacing” a noun (or pronoun) or a verb which the speaker has temporarily forgotten. Rather, *usër* functions more like a simple hesitation device that does not occupy the same kind of clearly definable grammatical functions that can be ascribed to forms such as *denokh*, *den-* or *man-*. It coincides closely to an English hesitation device such as *um*, or even to the ubiquitous *like* of colloquial youthful English.

We see *usër* in recorded examples such as the following:

Denokh ... usër ... mët-leg iag usër tate Ø-leg
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-live here ... father 3SG:REAL-live
iag Senal.
 here Senal

The speaker began somewhat hesitantly—signalled by the use of the hesitation device *denokh* followed by *usër* as a second hesitation device—by saying *mëtleg iag* ‘we lived here’. He then realised that he was not saying what he intended and used *usër* again as a hesitation device while he set out to recover from his stumble before he eventually says what he really meant to say, i.e. *tate leg iag Senal* ‘father lived here at Senal’.

7 *Illustrative texts*

What follows is a selection of narrative texts in Naman that were recorded on tape and minidisk by myself between 2001 and 2004. They have been chosen from a larger collection of texts mainly because of the inherent interest of the subject matter rather than for any specific linguistic points that they illustrate. Annotations are presented on various points to provide some of the unstated background or to make points clearer to an outsider audience.

The stories as they are presented here have been subject to varying degrees of editing arising out of the transcription process when a variety of ‘errors’ were pointed out. This involved the correction of some inadvertent factual errors (such as the incorrect attribution of actions or words to particular individuals or animals), the inclusion of omitted material (such as the names of certain places or characters that were inadvertently left out of the taped story), the deletion of some repeated material, and the reorganisation of material so that it appears in what was considered to be a more appropriate sequence. Sometimes, the narrator’s intonation provided clues about a change of speaker which was not signalled linguistically, and this was also sometimes felt to call for explicit linguistic expression in the written forms of stories. Speakers were also insistent on the replacement of what were felt to be illicit loans from Bislama with indigenous forms in the final transcriptions.¹

7.1 The confounding of the tongues on Malakula

This story was told by Bue Menmen in Litzlitz village on September 9, 2002. It relates how Naman was once the only language spoken on Malakula. The current diversity of the island arose out of a foolhardy attempt to build a bamboo tower to the moon. When the tower became too high and fell, people found themselves unable to speak to each other because their languages had become different, and the Naman language became restricted just to the geographical area around the location of the bamboo tower.

While this story bears an obvious similarity to the biblical Tower of Babel story, it is not certain if this is purely coincidental or if it reflects some kind of post-Christian adaptation from the biblical story. My own feeling is that it is a genuinely local story, for several reasons:

¹ Copies of the original recordings of these stories have been recorded digitally and will be made available in the archive of the Vanuatu National Museum, along with the exact pre-edited transcriptions and details of editorial comments offered during the transcription process.

- An abbreviated version of this story was recorded by Deacon (1934:734–735) in 1926 at a time when missionary influence was minimal.
- This is regarded locally specifically as a story belonging to people of Naman ancestry, with no similar stories being claimed by people from other language groups.
- This story is associated with a specific place in the Naman-speaking area, and with a specific bamboo plant, which still exists.

Nelmu tuen at-le-leg.

time INDEF 3PL:REAL-REDUP-stay

‘Once they were there.’

Nout Ø-nu netite tuen Ø-metër jëkhë-n
 place 3SG:REAL-dark child INDEF 3SG:REAL-lie.down sleeping.place-3SG

Ø-ma-gëlo Ø-iv rakhe i misnirin.

3SG:REAL-CONT/HAB-look 3SG:REAL-go up LOC sky

‘At dark, a child was lying down on his sleeping place looking up at the sky.’

Ø-Lis nivël Ø-var o tate në-teren ba-v
 3SG:REAL-look.at moon 3SG:REAL-say oh father 3SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-go

i nivël.

GOAL moon

‘He looked at the moon and said: Oh father, I want to go to the moon.’

Në-teren i në-teren Ø-ides.

1SG:REAL-want REL 1SG:REAL-want 3SG:REAL-good

‘I really really want to.’

Na-var bë-lis-Ø.

1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-see-3SG

‘I want to see it.’

Teme-n Ø-var o Ø-së-vidor-si ke-lis-Ø.

father-3SG 3SG:REAL-say oh 3SG:REAL-NEG-able-NEG 2SG:IRR-see-3SG

‘His father said: Oh, you can’t see it.’

Nivël Ø-ijëkh tuoso i tuoso rakhe.

moon 3SG:REAL-located far.away REL far.away up

‘The moon is a long long way up.’

Tët-ve bë-vësakh kë-lis-Ø?

1PL.INCL:IRR-do 3SG:IRR-how 2SG:IRR-see-3SG

‘What can we do for you to see it?’²

At-metër i bung Ø-iv Ø-iv nout Ø-iren
 3PL:REAL-sleep LOC night 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go place 3SG:REAL-dark

² Literally, ‘How can we do for you to see it?’

bët-ve mën nestuen.
3PL:IRR-do first something

‘They slept at night until daybreak before they would do something.’

Netite Ø-var tët-ve nsan?
child 3SG:REAL-say 1PL.INCL:IRR-do what

‘The child said: What will we do?’

Teme-n Ø-var tët-bëg nibu bavarse nokhutë-n
father-3SG 3SG:REAL-say 1PL.INCL:IRR-tie bamboo against tree-3SG

nenge net.
native.almond DEM

‘His father said: We will tie bamboo against the native almond tree.’

Bët-bëg delvës khën-Ø.
3PL:IRR-tie around TR-3SG

‘They would tie it around it.’

Tët-bëg-Ø tët-leg.
1PL.INCL:IRR-tie-3SG 1PL.INCL:IRR-stay

‘We will tie it and stay.’

Bë-nog e tët-be lis nibu e tët-bëg
3SG:IRR-finish and 1PL.INCL:IRR-cut again bamboo and 1PL.INCL:IRR-tie

lis-Ø.
again-3SG

‘When it is finished, we will cut some bamboo again and tie it again.’

Bë-nog e tët-bëg lis-Ø.
3SG:IRR-finish and 1PL.INCL:IRR-tie again-3SG

‘When it is finished, we will tie it again.’

Tët-bëg-Ø bë-nog e tët-be lis-Ø.
1PL.INCL:IRR-tie-3SG 3SG:IRR-finish and 1PL.INCL:IRR-cut again-3SG

‘When we have finished tying it, we will cut some more.’

Tët-bëg-Ø tët-bëg-Ø tët-bëg-Ø ba-v
1PL.INCL:IRR-tie-3SG 1PL.INCL:IRR-tie-3SG 1PL.INCL:IRR-tie-3SG 3SG:IRR-go

ba-v ba-v bë-jëber nerangas-n nenge net
3SG:IRR-go 3SG:IRR-go 3SG:IRR-reach branch-3SG native.almond DEM

e bë-telëbe-Ø.
and 3SG:IRR-go.past-3SG

‘We will tie it on and on and on as far as the branches of that native almond and beyond.’

Tët-bëg-Ø vaas-an-Ø ba-v.
1PL.INCL:IRR-tie-3SG still-TR-3SG 3SG:IRR-go

‘We will keep tying it on and on.’

At-bëg-Ø Ø-iv Ø-iv Ø-iv Ø-telëbe
 3PL:REAL-tie-3SG 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go.past
nungulë-n mete-n nenge net e at-bëg vaas-an-Ø.
 top-3SG new.shoot-3SG native.almond DEM and 3PL:REAL-tie still-TR-3SG
 ‘They tied it on and on past the end of the new shoots of the native almond and they kept tying it.’

Nous Ø-ius e at-vale at-saran nibu.
 rain 3SG:REAL-rain and 3PL:REAL-come 3PL:REAL-hand.up bamboo
 ‘It rained and they came and handed up the bamboo.’

Nibu Ø-sa-v-si rakhe.
 bamboo 3SG:REAL-NEG-go-NEG up
 ‘The bamboo didn’t go up.’³

At-var o nsan Ø-ve?
 3PL:REAL-say oh what 3SG:REAL-make
 ‘They said: Oh, what has happened?’⁴

E at-ijëv Ø-vale raadin.
 and 3PL:REAL-descend 3SG:REAL-come down
 ‘And they came down.’

At-val-vale at-lis nibu Ø-inet.
 3PL:REAL-REDUP-come 3PL:REAL-see bamboo 3SG:REAL-used.up
 ‘They all came and saw that the bamboo was used up.’

At-var o nous Ø-ius Ø-ve ajë-vale-si.
 3PL:REAL-say oh rain 3SG:REAL-rain 3SG:REAL-make 3PL:REAL:NEG-come-NEG
 ‘They said: Oh, it’s been raining so they didn’t come.’

At-vale raadin at-var Ø-vësakh?
 3PL:REAL-come down 3PL:REAL-say 3SG:REAL-how
 ‘They came down and said: What’s up?’

At-var o nibu at-nsensur.
 3PL:REAL-say oh bamboo 3PL:REAL-slippery
 ‘They said: Oh, the bamboo (poles) are slippery.’⁵

Ø-Se-vidor-si bët-velet rakhe.
 3SG:REAL-NEG-able-NEG 3PL:IRR-come up
 ‘(The poles) could not come up.’

³ What is meant here is that people on the ground were cutting the bamboo and handing it up to people on the tower, who were then handing it on to people higher up the tower. Because it had been raining, the people on the ground had gone home without those working on the tower realising it. Eventually, because nobody on the ground was handing up any more bamboo poles, those at the top noticed that there were no longer any more poles coming up.

⁴ They have just noticed that there are no more bamboo poles coming up and they are wondering what has happened lower down.

⁵ When they get down, they ask those working on the ground why they have stopped sending the poles up, and they answer that it was because the bamboo was getting too slippery to handle.

At-var *Ø-ides* *meren* *iget.*
 3PL:REAL-say 3SG:REAL-good tomorrow 1PL.INCL
 ‘They said: Alright, tomorrow we (will do it together).’

At-irëb *khën* *lis-Ø* *meren* *nen.*
 3PL:REAL-work TR again-TR tomorrow POSS
 ‘They did it again the next day.’

At-iv *at-iv* *at-iv* *rakhe* *nsar.*
 3PL:REAL-go 3PL:REAL-go 3PL:REAL-go up forever
 ‘They went all the way up.’

Nibu *Ø-telëbe* *ningulë-n* *nenge.*
 bamboo 3SG:REAL-go.past top-3SG native.almond
 ‘The bamboo went past the top of the native almond.’

At-dedelangan *bët-ve* *bë-vësakh* *merakh* *nenge*
 3PL:REAL-not.know 3PL:IRR-do 3SG:REAL-how and.then native.almond

Ø-mokhov.
 3SG:REAL-bend
 ‘They did not know how to do it and then the native almond bent.’

Ø-Mokhov *merakh* *nibu* *Ø-idëm* *Ø-set* *Ø-iv*
 3SG:REAL-bend and.then bamboo 3SG:REAL-fall 3SG:REAL-thus 3SG:REAL-go

lile *khën* *Lububu.*
 near OBL Lambumbu
 ‘It bent and then the bamboo fell there like that near Lambumbu.’⁶

Nokhutë-n *nakhe* *ba-dëm* *iag* *ba-v* *i* *nemev* *tanokh*
 trunk-3SG tree 3SG:IRR-fall there 3SG:IRR-go GOAL level.place over.there

tevlen *varsakh* *ba-v* *i* *sele* *Lububu.*
 side nearly 3SG:IRR-go GOAL anchorage Lambumbu
 ‘The trunk of the tree fell there as if to go to the level place over there at the side nearly towards the anchorage at Lambumbu.’

Nibu *nen* *Ø-mour* *vaas.*
 bamboo DEM 3SG:REAL-alive still
 ‘That bamboo is still alive.’

Natuen *Ø-imes* *tabakh.*
 part 3SG:REAL-die COMPL
 ‘Part of it has died.’

Nede *nen* *at-ijëkh* *vaas* *Ø-jëber* *evatëkhnakh.*
 descendant POSS 3SG:REAL-stay yet 3SG:REAL-reach now
 ‘Its descendants are still here until now.’

⁶ Lambumbu, *Lububu* in Naman, is a modern settlement in the west of the Naman-speaking area close to the coast which is now the headquarters of a large cocoa plantation.

Nakhe Ø-mokhov at-melili Ø-vale at-itër.
 tree 3SG:REAL-bend 3PL:REAL-return 3SG:REAL-come 3PL:REAL-stand.up
 ‘When the tree bent, they came back and stood up.’

At-var bët-bës-bës khën air natuen air e
 3PL:REAL-want 3PL:IRR-REDUP-speak DAT 3PL some 3PL and

at-lev bësien ser.
 3PL:REAL-speak language POSS:3PL
 ‘When they wanted to speak to each other, they spoke their (own) languages.’⁷

Air tuen Ø-lev bësien tinseb.
 3PL INDEF 3SG:REAL-speak language different
 ‘Some of them spoke different languages.’

Tuen Ø-lis air tuen Ø-var ba-bës bëtev-Ø
 INDEF 3SG:REAL-see 3PL INDEF 3SG:REAL-want 3SG:IRR-speak ACC-3SG

Ø-lev bësien tinseb.
 3SG:REAL-speak language different
 ‘When one saw another one and wanted to speak to him, he spoke a different language.’

Ø-Iv Ø-iv at-var bësien net Ø-iv delvës
 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go 3PL:REAL-say language DEM 3SG:REAL-go around

Malakula iag net.
 Malakula here DEM
 ‘It went on and on and they said that that language went around Malakula here.’⁸

Bësien nen Lenslens Ø-ijëkh Ø-jëber Lingarakh tevlén
 language POSS Litzlitz 3SG:REAL-located 3SG:REAL-reach Lingarakh side

nowe Ø-vale iag i Ø-jëber Bangaleb nowe tevlén
 river 3SG:REAL-come here GOAL 3SG:REAL-reach Bangalaeb river side

Ø-vale iag i.
 3SG:REAL-come here GOAL
 ‘The language of Litzlitz is located as far as Lingarakh on this side of the river here as far as Bangaleb on this side of the river here.’

Bësien savakh Lenslens iar.
 language one Litzlitz there
 ‘There was only one language of Litzlitz there.’

Natuen bësien nen air.
 some language POSS 3PL
 ‘Some had their (own) languages.’

⁷ Before the collapse of the tower, everyone had spoken the same language.

⁸ To ‘go around Malakula’ here means to be the same all around Malakula.

Mokhot nsebseb at-lev-Ø at-lev-Ø at-lev-Ø.
 person other 3PL:REAL-speak-3SG 3PL:REAL-speak-3SG 3PL:REAL-speak-3SG
 ‘Other people (each) spoke (one).’

Ø-Iv Ø-iv Ø-iv Ø-nog tabakh khën
 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-finish COMPL TR

mokhot air.

person PL

‘It went on and on and it was the same for everybody.’⁹

Bësien nen iag ne at.
 language POSS here only TOP

‘This is the language of only here.’

At-lev mokhot tabakh.

3PL:REAL-took person all

‘They (the languages) took everybody.’¹⁰

Ø-Rov evatëkhñakh.

3SG:REAL-touch now

‘It is the same now.’¹¹

Bësien sog Ø-nogiar.

storyPOSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-finish there

‘My story finishes there.’

7.2 The decline of the Naman language

This short story was recorded from Kensi Arthur of Vilmbil village on December 16, 2001. It tells of the original geographical extent of the Naman language, and contrasts this with its current status as a language that is about to disappear.

Na-var bë-sabe usër bësien Lëngalëng Naman.

1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-talk about language Lëngalëng Naman

‘I want to talk about Naman, the language of Lëngalëng.’

Ø-Melu Lëngalëng Ø-iv Ø-jëber Baganskhus nowe

3SG:REAL-come.out Lëngalëng 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-reach Baganskhus river

i Khaub tevlën Ø-vale iag i.

LOC Aup side 3SG:REAL-come here GOAL

‘It came out from Lëngalëng¹² and went as far as Baganjkhus¹³ on the Aup River¹⁴ on this side.’

⁹ Literally, ‘... it finished everybody’.

¹⁰ Meaning that everybody was equally affected by these developments.

¹¹ Literally, ‘It holds/touches now’.

¹² Lëngalëng is the name that is used to refer to the whole of the Naman speaking area, but this appears also to refer to a particular place within that area that is seen as the place of origin of the language.

¹³ I have not been able to locate this place on any map.

Ø-Vale *Ø-jëber* *Khamelingas* *Tebëgo* *Rëteleb* *Langanout*.
 3SG:REAL-come 3SG:REAL-reach Khamelingas Tebëgo Rëteleb Langanout
 ‘It came as far as Khamelingas, Tebëgo, Rëteleb and Langanout.’¹⁵

Ø-Vale *Venave* *Ø-iv* *Ø-jëber* *Baganevenu*¹⁶ *Ø-iv*
 3SG:REAL-come Venave 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go Baganevenu 3SG:REAL-go

raadin.

down

‘It came to Venave and went as far as Baganevenu and (then) it went down (to the coast).’

Ø-Iv *Ø-jëber* *nowe* *i* *Bushman Bay*¹⁷ *teflen* *Ø-vale*
 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-reach river LOC Bushmans Bay side 3SG:REAL-come

iag *i* *Ø-iv* *Ø-nog* *Veditakh*.¹⁸
 here GOAL 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-finish Veditakh

‘It went as far as the river at Bushmans Bay on this side and went and finished at Veditakh.’

Mët-lis *bësien* *sen* *kamem* *Naman* *Ø-së-mour*
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-see language POSS:3SG 1PL.EXCL Naman 3SG:REAL-NEG-alive

mën-si *ba-des*.
 any.longer-NEG 3SG:IRR-good

‘We (can) see that our Naman language is no longer properly alive.’

Ø-Var *ba-v* *bë-sëkhar* *usër* *khën* *matërvarëkh*
 3SG:REAL-about.to 3SG:IRR-go 3SG:IRR-disappear because SUB old.man

sen *kamem* *air* *at-bële* *nevoro* *sëne-n* *kamem* *air*
 POSS:3SG 1PL.EXCL PL 3PL:REAL-marry woman mother-3SG 1PL.EXCL PL

at-lev *bësien* *ser*.
 3PL:REAL-speak language POSS:3PL

‘It is about to disappear because when our old men married (their) wives, our mothers, they spoke their languages.’

Bësien *Lëngalëng* *ba-v* *bë-sëkhar* *at* *usër* *khën* *natuen*
 language Lëngalëng 3SG:IRR-go 3SG:IRR-disappear TOP because SUB some

air *at-bële* *nevoro* *dorebiv* *nevoro* *nevenu* *nsebseb* *air*.
 PL 3PL:REAL-marry woman from.Uripiv woman village different PL

‘The language of Lëngalëng is going to disappear because some of them married women from Uripiv and women from other villages.’

¹⁴ This river is marked on Map 3. It enters the sea between Lakatoro and Norsup, just south of the present-day airport.

¹⁵ I have again not been able to locate any of these places on a map.

¹⁶ Once again, these places have not been located on a map.

¹⁷ This is a bay that is located to the south of Litzlitz and is shown on Map 3.

¹⁸ This is another place that has not been located on a map.

Nelmu it at-vale e at-vos netite e nane
 when REL 3PL:REAL-come and 3PL:REAL-give.birth.to child and mother

khëser at-lev bë sien khëser.
 POSS:3PL 3PL:REAL-speak language POSS:3PL

‘When they came and gave birth to children, their mothers spoke their language.’

Ajë-lev mën-si bë sien sen teme-r air
 3PL:REAL:NEG-speak any.longer-NEG language POSS:3SG father-3PL PL

Ø-ve bë sien Lëngalëng Ø-iv raadin.
 3SG:REAL-make language Lëngalëng 3SG:REAL-go down

‘They didn’t speak the language of their fathers any more so the language of Lëngalëng declined.’

Evatëkhakh kam Ø-sa-ngët mën-si mët-lev
 now 1PL.EXCL 3SG:REAL-NEG-many no.longer-NEG 1PL.EXCL:REAL-speak

bë sien Lëngalëng.

language Lëngalëng

‘Now not many of us any more speak the language of Lëngalëng.’

Mët-lis-Ø usër bë-skhar.
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-see-3SG like 3SG:IRR-disappear

‘It looks to us as if it will disappear.’¹⁹

Nibov nakh Ø-vale Ø-var bët-ve melili-an
 European DEM 3SG:REAL-come 3SG:REAL-purpose 3PL:IRR-make return-TR

lis bë sien bë-vale lis bë-mour lis.
 again language 3SG:IRR-come again 3SG:IRR-alive again

‘This European²⁰ has come for them to make the language come alive again.’²¹

Mët-leg khën mër-sabe usër bë sien Lëngalëng
 1PL.EXCL:REAL-sit because 1PL.EXCL:REAL-talk about language Lëngalëng

Naman.

Naman

‘We are all sitting down²² because the two of us are talking²³ about Naman, the language of Lëngalëng.’

¹⁹ Literally, ‘We see it like it will disappear’.

²⁰ This obviously refers to the author of this volume.

²¹ Despite what the narrator says here, the linguistic researcher tried very hard not to suggest that the task of linguistic documentation represented any kind of attempt to ‘revive’ the language.

²² This verb is marked in the plural because there were four of us sitting down together at the recording session, i.e. myself, the narrator, and two others.

²³ This verb carries dual marking because just two of the four people present were recording stories in Naman at the time.

7.3 The woman who tried to cheat old age

This story was told by Denny Malmilip in Litzlitz village on October 17, 2002. This is a traditional story which relates how an old woman tried to teach her granddaughter how to avoid becoming old.

Në-vale ba-var lis bësien metivar tuen.
 1SG:REAL-come 1SG:IRR-tell again story traditional INDEF
 ‘I have come to tell another traditional story.’

Ra-var Ø-set-akh.
 IMP:REAL-tell 3SG:REAL-be.thus-DEM
 ‘It is told like this.’

Lektërvarëkh tuen Ø-bële naabë-n
 old.woman INDEF 3SG:REAL-accompany grandchild-3SG

rë-ma-leg.
 3DL:REAL-CONT/HAB-live
 ‘An old woman lived with her granddaughter.’

Re-leg Ø-iv Ø-iv Ø-iv lektërvarëkh
 3DL:REAL-live 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-go old.woman

Ø-toro i Ø-toro i Ø-toro navon.
 3SG:REAL-old REL 3SG:REAL-old REL 3SG:REAL-old very
 ‘They lived together on and on and the old woman was really really old.’

Ø-Var khën naabë-n Ø-var bëra-v
 3SG:REAL-say GOAL grandchild-3SG 3SG:REAL-say 3DL:IRR-go

bër-teveng deswe.
 3DL:IRR-scoop.up saltwater
 ‘She said to her granddaughter that they should go and scoop up saltwater.’

Ra-lung i nesel Ø-iv ra-v r-av
 3DL:REAL-walk LOC path 3SG:REAL-go 3DL:REAL-go 3DL:REAL-go

ra-v i baranga-n nevet tuen.
 3DL:REAL-go GOAL hole-3SG rock INDEF
 ‘They walked along the road on and on to a cave.’

Ø-Var khën naabë-n Ø-var ka-tër mën iag.
 3SG:REAL-say GOAL grandchild-3SG 3SG:REAL-say 2SG:IRR-stand first here
 ‘She said to her granddaughter, “Stand here first”.’

Ba-v i baranga-n nevet iar.
 1SG:IRR-go GOAL hole-3SG rock there
 ‘I will go into the cave there.’

Ø-Iv e Ø-tëkh lue nibë-n i Ø-toro.
 3SG:REAL-go and 3SG:REAL-take off body-3SG REL 3SG:REAL-old
 ‘She went and took off her old body.’

Ø-Jëbën.

3SG:REAL-leave.behind

‘She left it behind.’

Ø-Ve lis netitevën tuen e Ø-vale.

3SG:REAL-COP again young.girl INDEF and 3SG:REAL-come

‘She was a young girl again and she came.’

Naabë-n Ø-itër e Ø-lis khën jëbë-n

grandchild-3SG 3SG:REAL-stand and 3SG:REAL-see SUB grandparent-3SG

tevet Ø-esëkh mën.

female 3SG:REAL-not.exist any.longer

‘Her granddaughter stood (there) and saw that it was no longer her grandmother.’

Ai Ø-ve lis netitevën Ø-vale.

3SG 3SG:REAL-COP young.girl 3SG:REAL-come

‘She saw that she was a young girl again and she came.’

Jëbë-n tevet Ø-vale Ø-var kë-velet

grandparent-3SG female 3SG:REAL-come 3SG:REAL-say 2SG:IRR-come

tra-v tër-teveng deswe.

1DL.INCL:IRR-go 1DL.INCL:IRR-scoop.up saltwater

‘Her grandmother came and said, “Come, let’s go and scoop up saltwater”.’

Naabë-n Ø-var ne-sisi be-ble-m.

grandchild-3SG 3SG:REAL-say 1SG:REAL-not.want 1SG:IRR-go.with-2SG

‘Her granddaughter said, “I don’t want to go with you”.’

Ag bubu tevet esëkh.

2SG grandparent female NEG

‘You are not my grandmother.’

Bubu tevet Ø-toro i Ø-toro.

grandparent female 3SG:REAL-old REL 3SG:REAL-old

‘My grandmother is really old.’

Ag khë-ve netitevën.

2SG 2SG:REAL-COP young.girl

‘You are a young girl.’

Bubu tevet esëkh at iag.

grandparent female NEG TOP here

‘My grandmother is not here.’

Ø-Irëb khën Ø-var khën naabë-n khën bra-v

3SG:REAL-do TR 3SG:REAL-say GOAL grandchild-3SG SUB 3DL:IRR-go

bër-teveng deswe.

3DL:IRR-scoop.up saltwater

‘She kept saying to her granddaughter that they should go and scoop up saltwater.’

Naabë-n *Ø-sisi* *khën bra-v* *bër-teveng*
 grandchild-3SG 3SG:REAL-not.want SUB 3DL:IRR-go 3DL:IRR-scoop.up

deswe.

saltwater

‘Her grandchild did not want the two of them to go and scoop up saltwater.’

Ø-Lis *Ø-var* *jëbë-n* *tevet* *esëkh at.*
 3SG:REAL-see 3SG:REAL-say grandparent female NEG TOP

‘She saw that it was not her grandmother.’

Ai *Ø-ve* *netitevën.*
 3SG 3SG:REAL-COP young.girl

‘She was a young girl.’

Ø-Irëb *Ø-khair* *khën* *Ø-var* *bra-v*
 3SG:REAL-work 3SG:REAL-hard TR 3SG:REAL-say 3DL:IRR-go

bër-teveng *deswe.*

3DL:IRR-scoop.up saltwater

‘She kept insisting that the two of them go and scoop up saltwater.’

Ø-Var *khën-Ø* *lis* *e* *naabë-n* *Ø-sisi.*
 3SG:REAL-say GOAL-3SG again and grandchild-3SG 3SG:REAL-not.want

‘She said it to her again and her granddaughter didn’t want to.’

Ø-Var *ka-tër* *vaas iag.*
 3SG:REAL-say 2SG:IRR-stand still here

‘She said, “Keep standing here”.’

Kine *ba-v* *lis* *tanokh* *i* *baranga-n nevet.*
 1SG 1SG:IRR-go again over.there GOAL hole-3SG rock

‘I will go back into the cave.’

Ø-Iv *lis* *e* *Ø-tëkh* *melili-an* *mul-n* *i* *Ø-toro.*
 3SG:REAL-go again and 3SG:REAL-take return-TR shed.skin REL 3SG:REAL-old

‘She went back and put back her old shed skin.’

Ø-Rus *melili-an* *e* *Ø-melili* *Ø-vale.*
 3SG:REAL-wear return-TR and 3SG:REAL-return 3SG:REAL-come

‘She put it back on and she came back.’

Naabë-n *Ø-var* *tabrakh* *bubu* *tevet* *at* *evetëkh.*
 grandchild-3SG 3SG:REAL-say just grandparent female TOP now

‘Her granddaughter said, “That’s just my grandmother now”.’

Ra-v *rë-teveng* *deswe.*

3DL:REAL-go 3DL:REAL-scoop.up saltwater

‘The two of them went and scooped up saltwater.’

Rë-melili *rë-vale* *ra-v* *aim.*
 3DL:REAL-return 3DL:REAL-come 3DL:REAL-go home

‘They came back and went home.’

Jëbë-n tevet Ø-var khën ai Ø-var ne-ve
 grandparent-3SG female 3SG:REAL-say GOAL 3SG 3SG:REAL-say 1SG:REAL-do

tet Ø-ides khën-ëm khë-së-rongdur-si.
 REL 3SG:REAL-good BEN-2SG 2SG:REAL-NEG-recognise-NEG

‘Her grandmother said to her, “I did something good for you but you didn’t recognise it”.’

Bavarsi kë-damansi tat tër-teveng deswe bas ag
 COND 2SG:IRR-agree PLACE 1DL:IRR-scoop.up saltwater CONC 2SG

ka-v nelmu i kë-toro kë-rus lue mule-m
 2SG:IRR-go time REL 2SG:IRR-old 2SG:IRR-wear remove shed.skin-2SG

kë-jëbën e kë-ve lis netitevën.
 2SG:IRR-leave.behind and 2SG:IRR-COP again young.girl

‘If you had agreed where the two of us had scooped up saltwater then you would go when you were old and take off your old skin and leave it behind and become a young girl again.’

Ai at.
 3SG TOP
 ‘That’s it.’

Bësien khësog Ø-nog iar.
 story POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-finish there
 ‘My story finishes there.’

8 *Naman lexicon*

The following represents the complete collection of lexical data in my Naman corpus. Running to approximately 1200 separate lexical entries, this clearly does not purport to be anything more than a fairly modest lexical compilation. It does nonetheless represent one of the more substantial published lexical collections from the languages of central and northern Malakula at this stage.¹

While I have included most of what would ordinarily be considered to be “basic” lexical items, I have not included much of the more specialist terminology. This is because people were often uncertain as to the correct form when asked for the names in Naman of different varieties of yams, bananas, breadfruit—as well as many of the less common species of birds, fish or trees—given that the language is no longer commonly used as a daily means of communication.

8.1 Introduction

Headwords are set out in **bold**.² Immediately following this is the word class specification, represented by the following abbreviations, with the bracketed information indicating the relevant sections of this grammar where that word class is discussed:

<i>adj.</i>	adjective (§3.4.2)
<i>adv.</i>	adverbial (§5.3.5)
<i>aux.</i>	auxiliary (§6.1)
<i>conj.</i>	conjunction (§6.4)
<i>int.</i>	interjection (§5.3.6)
<i>inter.</i>	interrogative (§5.4)
<i>loc.</i>	locational noun (§5.3.4)
<i>n.</i>	indirectly possessed noun (§3.3.2.2)

¹ Much more extensive lexical compilations for Northeast Malakula and V’enen Taut have been assembled, though these are still unpublished. Work that is currently under way on other languages of the area will hopefully also result in similarly extensive compilations, though many of these projects still have some years to run.

² *Alphabetical order follows that of English. Although e is phonemically distinct from ë, as is k from kh, these were not separately ordered in this list. Thus ëns, for example, is listed between eabe and esëkh, while words beginning with kh occur between kamru and kine – JL*

<i>npart.</i>	possessed nouns marked by <i>nen</i> (§3.3.2.3)
<i>ns.</i>	directly possessed noun (§3.3.2.1)
<i>num.</i>	numeral (§3.4.1)
<i>part.</i>	particle (§5.3.5.2)
<i>postmodn.</i>	nominal postmodifier (§3.4)
<i>postmodv.</i>	verbal postmodifier (§4.3.1)
<i>prep.</i>	preposition (§5.3.1)
<i>pron.</i>	pronoun (§3.1)
<i>sub.</i>	subordinator (§6.5.1)
<i>sv.</i>	serialised verb (§4.3.2)
<i>svi.</i>	serialised intransitive verb (§4.3.2)
<i>svt.</i>	serialised transitive verb (§4.3.2)
<i>vi.</i>	intransitive verb (§4.1)
<i>vp.</i>	phrasal verb (§5.2)
<i>vt.</i>	transitive verb (§4.1.4)
<i>vtr.</i>	reflexive verb (§4.1.5)

Directly suffixed nouns are always cited with the third person singular possessive suffix. The root can be extracted simply by removing this suffix. Thus, a form that is entered as follows is based on the root **batë-**:

batën *ns.* head

Different senses for polysemous items are signalled by numbered sense definitions within the same entry. Thus:

vël *vt.* 1. buy 2. pay for

For some entries, an illustrative sentence is provided in italics, along with an English translation. These sentences have been taken overwhelmingly from recorded texts.

Each separate lexeme has been given a separate entry in this lexicon. This means that phrasal items are presented in separate listings rather than being listed under a single headword. Thus:

barangan *ns.* hole

barangan nevet *n.* cave

Where the item from which a phrasal item is derived is not immediately obvious from the form of the entry, this information is provided by means of a cross-reference. Thus:

ibës *vi.* speak

bës vëvrëkh *vi.* whisper. See **ibës**.

However, idioms and non-phrasal items which include inflected verbs or which do not constitute single constituents within a clause are entered immediately after the noun which constitutes the subject.

8.2 Naman–English

A

a‘a *int.* yes

aakhus *loc.* inland, up in the bush, away from the sea *Mokhot air atmelili aakhus ativ atleg Loag.* The people went back up to the bush and stayed at Loag. Also **rakhe**.

aatin *loc.* down by the sea, by the coast *Meren nal bamal bëvelet beleg aatin.* Tomorrow when the sun is about to set I will come and stay by the coast. Also **alo**.

abe *inter.* where? (in verbal clause) *Khilung abe vale?* Where have you come from?

ag *pron.* you (sg.) Also **akhug**.

ai *pron.* (s)he, it

aim *loc.* 1. to/at home *Lektërvarëkh sen leleg aim.* His wife just stayed at home. *Rov nibu iv aim i.* He took the bamboo home. 2. to/in the village

aim tokhe *loc.* in pre-Christian times *Tokhe tetel aim tokhe matërvëvrëkh atrongdur neste air.* A very long time ago in pre-Christian times the old people were not knowledgeable.

air *pron.* 1. they, them (pl.) 2. *postmodn.* definite plural (of nouns) *Bubu sog liv khën tet Loag air.* My grandfather gave it to the people of Loag.

akhug *pron.* you (sg.) *Këvale e beve nelmo bevarëkh bëtev akhug.* Come and I will hold a small ceremony with you. Also **ag**.

alo *loc.* down by the sea, by the coast *Mokhot air atvale atmaskul alo.* The people came down to the coast and went to church. Also **aatin**.

aru *pron.* 1. they, them (dl.). Also **raru**. 2. *postmodn.* definite dual *Matërvarëkh khan birav nge aru.* The old man ate the two lesser yams.

atël nen *num.* third. See **itël**.

atokh *adv.* last, afterward, behind *Butbu atokh.* I will run last.

aut *loc.* 1. to the shore, ashore, to the coast (from the sea) *Atiëkh mere iv aut i.* They pulled the eel up on shore. 2. to the mainland (from an offshore island) *Atve bësien vale aut i.* They sent word to the mainland. Also **khaut**.

Awenorokh *loc.* Lowinorokh

B

baakhe *n.* shark

babar *n.* pig (especially sow)

bagaleb *n.* banyan species

bagaret *n.* banyan species

balabal *n.* 1. leader *Tan ve balabal sen igem?* Who is your leader? 2. post (of house)

balabal *vi.* fight *Mokhot air ativ atmabalabal i toti.* People were going to fight over the rubbish.

balkhën *ns.* wife’s father

ban terav *vi.* lie in wait *Ativ atleg atmaban terav e atlis ëns mere bolo net vale bele neto air.* They went and stayed and lay in wait and saw the big eel come and chase away the chickens. See **iban**.

bar *sub.* 1. if. Also **bavar**, **bavarsi**. 2. *part.* perhaps, maybe. Also **us**.

barangan *ns.* hole in something

barangan gunsën *ns.* nostril

barangan nevet *n.* cave

barës *n.* tree fern

batën *ns.* head

batën darën *ns.* area where pubic hair grows

batilug *n.* pegs by which outriggers are attached to outrigger poles

batnamal *n.* ocean side of reef

batnetele *n.* axe. Also **netele**.

bavar *sub.* if. Also **bar**, **bavarsi**.

bavarse *prep.* against *Tëtbëg nibu bavarse nokhtën nenge*. Let's tie the bamboo against the trunk of the native almond. Also **vas jëkhën**.

bavarsi *sub.* if. Also **bar**, **bavar**.

bëbale *n.* tree species

bëbëtakhe *svi.* very. Also **bëtakhe**.

bëbëtakhe khën *svt.* do to excess, do very much

bëg *vt.* tie up *Atbëg kine*. They tied me up.

bëg do *vt.* tie up *Netite iru rëbëg do mere*. The two children tied up the eel.

bëg nsubonsuboden *vt.* tie together *Atlev nibu atbëg nsubonsuboden*. They took some bamboo and tied it together.

bëgale *n.* cicada

beig *n.* giant turban shell

bëj *svt.* do to pieces, break *Veres bëj nerengasën nense*. He stepped on the branch of the Tahitian chestnut and broke it.

bëjbëj *svt.* do to little pieces, smash *Sëkh bëjbëj nereun never*. He poked the heliconia leaves to little pieces.

bëjën *ns.* navel

bëkhët *loc.* inside *Bav mën bëkhët i*. I will go inside first. *Iv bëkhët i neim sen misnari*. He went inside the missionary's house.

belag *n.* beach hibiscus (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*). Also **nëveve**.

bëlasën *n.* shell

bëlasën batën *ns.* skull

bëlasën neni *n.* coconut shell

bëlaut *vi.* make noise, be noisy *Kine nësëmetërsi i bung usër khën netite air atbëlaut*. I didn't sleep during the night because the children were making noise.

bëlautan *svt.* do damagingly, do resulting in ruin *Lue bëlautan nimin*. He shot the bird thereby ruining it. *Tëbe bëlautan*

nedum. He cut the yam thereby ruining it.

bëlav nejën *ns.* unwiped faeces on anus

bëlbëlvurokh *n.* parrotfish species

bële *vt.* 1. accompany, go with, be with *Kav këbële tavm*. Go with your father.
2. live with, stay with *Atëkh lue tate iv atmabële usër iv iv iv*. The adopted father and they lived with him.
Evatnakh nemabler mëtleq nar vëvënër. Now I live together with their sister.
3. marry, get married to 4. *conj.* along with, and *Ai bële temen rësël nibu savakh*. He and his father roasted one piece of bamboo.

bële *vt.* chase, run after *Demes tuen mabeler naltimal*. A devil used to run after them at sunset.

belebotnakhe *n.* slitgong beating ceremony *Nelmu i matërvarëkh sog ve belebotnakhe Vemarëng e mokh tabakh ativ*. When my father held a slitgong beating ceremony at Vemarëng, everybody came.

bëleg *vt.* fold, cross

bëleg dalën sit cross-legged

bëleg nëverën fold one's arms

bëlës *n.* tree species

bëlev *n.* tree species

belever *n.* thunder *Belever tavakh ve nous sausi*. It thundered so it did not rain.

bëliekh *n.* banded rail (*Gallirallus philippensis*)

beligën *ns.* thigh

beligio *n.* pigeon species

bëlkhoj *vi.* sit with knees together

bëlnu *vi.* dark *Nereun nevi tav gor meteli nen barangan nevet nge e nout bëlnu tëleb*. The giant taro leaves blocked the entrance to the cave and it became very dark.

bëmen *vi.* (of leaves) wither, wilt

bën *svt.* do to death, kill *Air tuen merakh lue bën mere*. Then one of them shot the eel to death. *Netite iru rësëkh bën mere nge*. The two children speared the eel to death.

bënal *n.* gully, creek

bënalën *ns.* hole left by something

bënalën nejën *ns.* anus

bënalën nuvri *n.* crab hole

bënen *ns.* maternal uncle

bëngën *ns.* mourning period for (dead person), funeral feast for (dead person)

bër *vt.* 1. break *Bër nerangasën nakhe tuen*. He broke a branch of a tree. Also **bër bëj**. 2. *svt.* break *Neleng ikhëj bër vënaan nakhe air*. The wind broke all of the trees.

bër bëj *svt.* do to pieces, break *Ai leg bër bëj nakhe*. He sat down and broke the log.

bëravën *ns.* fibre skirt

bërbër *vi.* have goosebumps

berberën *ns.* shoulder

bës bëlautan *vt.* be rude to, speak inconsiderately to *Bës bëlautan sënen*. He spoke inconsiderately to his mother. See **ibës**.

bës vëvrëkh *vi.* 1. talk quietly *Tëreleg tërabës vëvrëkh*. Let's just sit and talk quietly. 2. whisper. See **ibës**.

bësbës *vi.* talk. See **ibës**.

bësien *n.* 1. story 2. message 3. language. See **ibës**.

bësien metivar *n.* traditional story

bësinar *n.* fence posts around garden *Këtsërkhën ner nakhe bav i bësinar tevlen vere i*. Throw the leaves away by the fence posts on the outside.

bësren dalën *ns.* ankle

bët *vt.* cut

bëtakhe *svi.* very *Tëleb bëtakhe*. It is very good. Also **bëbëtakhe**.

bëtakhe khën *svt.* do to excess, do very much *Babar khësen sëlungolung mënsi usër melaas khas bëtakhe khën ai*. His pig wouldn't walk any more because it was very cold.

bëtev *prep.* with *Relis namat nge e releg bëtev*. When they saw the snake, they stayed with it. Also **bëtev khën**.

bëtev khën *prep.* with *Tokhe nane sog leg Lububu bëtev khën bubu sog*. Before my mother lived with my grandfather at Lambumbu. Also **bëtev**.

bibi *n.* maternal uncle

bigvar *n.* ankle rattle tree (*Pangium edule*)

birav *n.* yam variety

boas *adv.* 1. day after tomorrow 2. day after the next day

bobën neni *n.* edible pith of sprouting coconut

bokhten *ns.* 1. behind 2. back (of something)

bolo *adj.* large, big

bologon *ns.* bone

bologon dalën *ns.* shin

bongon *ns.* 1. mouth 2. front

bore *n.* dream

borën *ns.* ear. Also **delngen**.

borer *vi.* deaf

botkhorën *ns.* buttocks

botuen *n.* hill. Also **nirën**.

bour *n.* banana variety

buag *n.* taro

bubu *n.* grandfather, grandmother. Also **jëbën**.

bubu tevet *n.* grandmother. Also **jëbën tevet**.

bubudis *n.* pufferfish without spikes

buedes *n.* dugong

bues *n.* boar

bukhubukh *vi.* short

bukhurvet *n.* plantar wart

bulbulën *ns.* knee, elbow

bulbulën dalën *ns.* knee

bulbulën nëverën *ns.* elbow

bulvus *n.* bird species with yellow breast

bung *n.* 1. night *Atmetër i bung.* They slept at night. 2. *adv.* at night, during the night

bungusën *ns.* 1. point, promontory (of island, place) *Mëtutbu vale i bungusn Aore.* We sailed to Aore point. 2. prow (of canoe) *Nelis bolet vale ies i deswe i bungusn noag ser.* I saw the bullet come and kick up spray on the prow of their canoe.

bunsësäl *n.* beam which runs along the top of the wall

burong *adj.* 1. ordinary, plain *Sevesi tutunmasa burong ne.* It is not just an ordinary story. 2. *adv.* for nothing, in vain *Tëtleg burong.* We are here in vain.

D

dabaan *ns.* belly. Also **dabakhan.**

dabakhan *ns.* belly. Also **dabaan.**

dabakhan luolu (s)he has diarrhoea

dabakhan dalën *ns.* calf (of leg). Also **nelvan dalën.**

dabanowen *n.* 1. sand 2. beach

dajin *n.* 1. person from Atchin 2. *adj.* (person) Atchinese *mokh dajin* ‘person from Atchin’

dakhan *n.* spider web

dakhvit *n.* chiton with hard shell

dalën *ns.* 1. foot 2. leg

daman *num.* used to precede units in counting after a number of decades, e.g. *sangavël daman savakh* ‘eleven’, *nangavël iru daman itël* ‘twenty three’

damansi *vi.* agree *Bavarsi këdamansi, nelmu i këtoro kërus lue mulëm këjëbën e këve lis netitevën.* If you agree, when

you are old you can take off your skin and leave it behind and become a young girl again.

damat *n.* calm sea

dangdang *n.* section (of cane) *Tëbe nibu dangdang iru.* He cut two sections of bamboo.

daut *n.* bushman, inland person

daut *n.* pufferfish with spikes

davala *n.* 1. person from Wala 2. *adj.* (person) from Wala

degiav *n.* limpet

delangan *vt.* not know *Atdelangan tet bëtve.* They didn’t know what they should do.

delën *ns.* voice

deliëkh *vi.* dry retch

delngen *ns.* ear. Also **borën.**

delvaat *adv.* in the middle of the night *Rong atmetmetër tabakh, tuen sëbëlaut mënsi delvaat.* He heard that they were all asleep and nobody was making any more noise in the middle of the night.

delvës *vt.* 1. go around *Mëtdelvës mëtiv tevlën i.* We went around to the other side. 2. *svt.* around *Bësien net iv delvës Malakula iag.* This language went around Malakula here.

demes *n.* devil

denaan *ns.* 1. food of (someone, something) *Mere iv khan denaan neto air.* The eel went and ate the chickens’ food. 2. (food) for (benefactive). Also **denakhan, nakhan.**

denakhan *ns.* 1. food of (someone, something) *Ag kaan denakham.* You eat your food. 2. (food) for (benefactive). Also **nakhan, denaan.**

denet *n.* that thing *Këlënglëng mën denet.* Leave that thing alone first.

denokh *n.* 1. thingummy, whatsit, um (hesitation device to replace noun) *Lënglëng denokh nibu nge.* He left that

... um ... bamboo behind. 2. *vi.* um (hesitation device to replace verb) *Bavar këdenokh ... këvale tërarëb i noag.* If you ... um ... come we will work together on the ship.

der khën *vtr.* be surprised *Atder khënër.* They were surprised.

derano *n.* 1. person from Rano 2. *adj.* (person) from Rano *mokh derano* ‘Rano person’

deswe *n.* 1. sea 2. saltwater 3. tide, current

deswe ibën the tide is rising

deswe imal the tide is ebbing

devau *n.* 1. person from Vao 2. *adj.* (person) from Vao

devdoro *n.* hen

devën *ns.* snot, mucus

devkhën *ns.* grave *Devkhën ijëkh i khamil khësog.* Its grave is in my village.

devlen iru *vi.* split in two *Nakhe devlen iru i matërvarëkh nge imes.* The wood split in two and the old man died.

dilmokhoskhos *n.* dust

do *sv.* a little *Navar bavarvar usër do tat kamem mëtkhawes i.* I want to talk a little about where we came from.

dokholo *n.* north wind

dongodongon *vt.* 1. list, count 2. share out, distribute *Numal dongodongon babar khënër.* The chief distributed the pigs to them.

dongon *adj.* 1. plain, ordinary *Rakhëj neste dongon air.* They killed ordinary things. 2. any kind of

dongon *vt.* count

dorebev *n.* 1. person from Uripiv 2. *adj.* (person) from Uripiv *nevoro dorebev* ‘woman from Uripiv’

doro *n.* white-throated pigeon (*Columba vitiensis*)

dosëlsël *n.* European. Also **nibov**.

dovo *n.* sea almond (*Terminalia catappa*)

dudu *vi.* crazy, mad

duel *vi.* sleepy

dumleb *n.* tree species

duov *n.* whitewood (*Endospermum medullosum?*)

E

e *conj.* and

eabe *inter.* where (in non-verbal clause) *Eabe noag?* Where is the ship? *Nesel i Lenelukh eabe?* Where is the road to Lenelukh?

ëns *postmodv.* completive *Nëvale ëns nenëv.* I had already come yesterday.

esëkh *vi.* 1. not exist *Nakhakhanien esëkh mën.* There was no longer any food. 2. be missing. Also **sëkh**. 3. *int.* no

etne *n.* that thing

evan *n.* that one, this one *Kine tat ënj nëmaleg iar evan.* That’s the place where I live.

evatëkh *adv.* now. Also **evatëkhnaKh, evatnakh, evetëkh, evetëkhnaKh, evetnakh.**

evatëkhnaKh *adv.* now. Also **evatëkh, evatnakh, evetëkh, evetëkhnaKh, evetnakh.**

evatnakh *adv.* now. Also **evatëkhnaKh, evatëkh, evetëkh, evetëkhnaKh, evetnakh.**

evetëkh *adv.* now. Also **evatëkhnaKh, evatnakh, evatëkh, evetëkhnaKh, evetnakh.**

evetëkhnaKh *adv.* now. Also **evatëkhnaKh, evatnakh, evetëkh, evatëkhnaKh, evetnakh.**

evetnakh *adv.* now. Also **evatëkhnaKh, evatnakh, evetëkh, evetëkhnaKh, evatnakh.**

G

galan *vt.* light (fire) *Nelmu i galan naab lisdur demes net.* When he lit the fire, he recognised the devil. Also **velan**.

gale *vt.* defeat somebody with (something) *Nevenu tuen bevidor bav bëgale nelag net.* Another village will be able to go and defeat them with that pudding.

galën *ns.* 1. side (of something)
2. rib. Also **jigalën.**

garagar *vi.* swim from one place to another

gariting *n.* tree species with fragrant yellow flowers

garsel *loc.* to/in the garden *Ativ garsel.* They went to the garden.

gawen *ns.* spur on leg of rooster

gëlo *vi.* 1. look 2. open one's eyes

gëlo khën *vt.* look for *Bubu iv bëkhët gëlo khën bëkhët e selisi.* Grandfather went inside and looked for him inside but didn't see him.

gëlo langalang *vi.* wide-eyed

gëlogëlo *vi.* look, look around

gëlogëlo khën *vt.* look after *Motuen gëlogëlo khën.* Somebody look after him.

gem *pron.* you (pl.). Also **igem, gëm, igëm.**

gëm *pron.* you (pl.). Also **igem, gem, igëm.**

gemar *pron.* you (dl.). Also **igemar, gemru, igemru, gëmru, igëmaru, gëmru, igëmru.**

gëmar *pron.* you (dl.). Also **igemar, gemru, igemru, gëmru, igëmaru, gëmru.**

gemru *pron.* you (dl.). Also **igemar, gemaru, igemru, igëmaru, gëmaru, igëmru.**

gëmru *pron.* you (dl.). Also **igemar, gemaru, igemru, igëmaru, gëmaru, igëmru.**

get *pron.* we (pl. incl.). Also **iget, gët, igët.**

gët *pron.* we (pl. incl.). Also **iget, get, iget.**

getaru *pron.* we, us (dl. incl.). Also **igetaru, igëtaru, gëtaru.**

gëtaru *pron.* we, us (dl. incl.). Also **igetaru, igëtaru, getaru.**

go *vt.* hold many things tightly together (e.g. bunch of arrows)

golon *ns.* thicket (of trees) *Air atijëkh i golon nëveve.* They were in the beach hibiscus thicket.

gor *vt.* 1. shut, close *Atgor meteli.* They have closed the gate. 2. *vi.* shut, closed *Meteli gor.* The gate is closed. 3. *svt.* do in the way, do resulting in blocking *Netite leg gor nesel.* The child sat in the way on the path.

gor khawes *vt.* block off *Gor khawes nesel khën nakhe.* He blocked off the path with the tree.

gorti *adv.* last *Ijëkh gorti khën vale iag i.* It was the last one on this side. Also **atokh.**

gunsën *ns.* nose

I

i *prep.* 1. in (location) 2. to (goal)
3. from (source) *Kamem mëtkhawes i namat.* We originated from a snake.

i nensen *prep.* beside *Rëmaleg i nensen nelag.* The two of them were sitting beside the pudding.

i tevlën *prep.* about, concerning, on the subject of

iag *loc.* here, this place *Kine neleg iag Vinmavis.* I live here in Vinmavis.

iar *loc.* there, that place

iar air *loc.* anywhere there *Sevidorsi bëvëlvël khën bav iar air.* He couldn't marry her off just anywhere there.

iban *vi.* 1. hide 2. shelter *Tëraban mën iag user nous ius tëleb.* Let's shelter here first because it is raining heavily.

ibar *vi.* blind

ibël *vi.* close one's eyes *Kabël*. Close your eyes.

ibën *vi.* (of tide) rise *Motuen nelmu i deswe ibën tëleb vale mensan niëkh*. When the tide was in, somebody came looking for fish.

iber *vi.* 1. long 2. tall 3. *adv.* for a long time *Rarëb i noag iber*. They worked on the ship for a long time.

ibës *vi.* speak *Mere net ibës bëtev netite air*. The eel spoke with the children.

ibu *vi.* 1. stink 2. rotten *Nakhanien net ibu ëns usër khën nuvileng*. That food is rotten because of the flies.

idang *vi.* 1. settle 2. (of river) subside *Nowe memes idang melili*. The river went down and subsided.

idëm *vi.* fall over *Nenge mokhov merakh nibu idëm varsakh bav i sele Lububu*. The native almond bent and then the bamboo fell almost to the anchorage at Lambumbu.

ides *vi.* 1. good 2. *int.* thank you 3. yes

ides metebëkh *int.* good morning

ides navonsi *int.* thank you very much *Navar ides navonsi khën mësavet navar bavarvar usër tutunmasa tuen*. Thank you very much because today I want to tell a story.

iduv *vi.* heavy

ies *vi.* smoke, smoky

igal *vi.* constipated

igem *pron.* you (pl.). Also **gem**, **gëm**, **igëm**.

igëm *pron.* you (pl.). Also **gem**, **gëm**, **igem**.

igëmaru *pron.* you (dl.). Also **gëmaru**, **gemru**, **igëmaru**, **gëmaru**, **gëmru**, **igëmru**.

igëmaru *pron.* you (dl.). Also **gëmaru**, **gemru**, **igëmaru**, **gëmaru**, **gëmru**, **igëmru**.

igemru *pron.* you (dl.). Also **gëmaru**, **gemru**, **igëmaru**, **gëmaru**, **gëmru**, **igëmru**.

igëmru *pron.* you (dl.). Also **gëmaru**, **gemru**, **igëmaru**, **gëmaru**, **gëmru**, **igëmru**.

igër *vi.* fall from above *Khëtli babar atmaveres navan nakhe air atigër*. You can see that pigs have stepped on the fallen fruit.

iget *pron.* we, us (pl. incl.). Also **get**.

ijët *pron.* we, us (pl. incl.). Also **get**, **iget**.

igetaru *pron.* we, us (dl. incl.). Also **getaru**.

ijëtaru *pron.* we, us (pl. incl.). Also **getaru**, **igetaru**.

iis *adj.* bad

ijëkh *vi.* 1. exist *Nokhutn buag ne air atijëkh*. There were only taro stems. 2. stay, live *Nevdoro ijëkh i meten nowe Vëravër*. The woman stayed at the source of the river at Vëravër. *Meren këtmerakh metebëkh këtiv këtli nshan bajëkh i niliu sog*. Tomorrow you will all get up in the morning and go to see what is on my arrow.

ijëv *vi.* 1. go down, descend *Atijëv vale raadin*. They came down. Also **isog**. 2. go ashore (from vessel)

ijev *vi.* cough

ikhans *vi.* tired *Nibën ikhans*. She is tired.

ikhëj *vt.* 1. kill *Motuen ikhëj mukhub vangan khën Bokhwi metenal ngëtngët*. Somebody killed lizards and fed Bokhwi with them every day. 2. beat, punch *Kësevesi manet bësënevang mënakhëj nevdoro sen*. Don't make that man angry in case he beats his wife.

ikho *vi.* burn, be alight *Naab ikho tëleb*. The fire was burning fiercely.

ilel *vi.* walk

ilëm *num.* five *Bavar bëjëber metenal balëm, këtiv këtli lamas nge*. If it reaches five days, go and look at the garden. See **khalëmen**.

ilu *vi.* shoot *Plen net ilu evetëkh.* That plane is shooting now.

ilung *vi.* 1. go, travel 2. come (from) *Khilung abe vale?* Where have you come from? *Dosëlsël net ilung Lebelang vale.* That European came from Lembelang.

imal *vi.* 1. (of sun) set *Meren nal bamal bëvelet beleg aatin.* Tomorrow when the sun is about to set I will come and stay by the coast. *Bët Khan nal bamal.* We will eat it when the sun sets. *Mëmelili nal imal.* We came back at sunset. Also **timal**. 2. (of tide) ebb *Deswe imal.* The tide is ebbing.

imed *vi.* new

imës *vi.* be cooked

imes *vi.* die, be dead

imes gor *vt.* die in order to protect *Yesu imes gor get.* Jesus died to protect us

imes nsëlëng *vt.* die and leave behind *Nane sen imes nsëlëng.* His mother died and left him behind.

imim *vi.* wet

imu *vi.* quake (in earthquake) *Numi imu.* There was an earthquake.

inet *vi.* used up *Atijëv vale raadin atlis nibu inet.* When they came down they saw that the bamboo was used up.

inev *vi.* (of fire) burn down *Vësan nerangasën nakhe tuen iv i naab, lis nerangasën nakhe nge inev.* When he threw the branch into the fire, he saw that it eventually burned down.

ingët *postmodn.* many *Evatëkh nakh kam sangët mënsi mëtlev bësien Lëngalëng.* Now there are not many of us who speak the language of Lëngalëng.

ingot *vi.* blunt

ingus *vt.* sniff, smell

inseb *vi.* be different, be another *Banseb bebële netën nevdoro nen numal, esëkh.* For another to marry the daughter of the chief was impossible.

insebi *adj.* different *Delëm insebi.* Your voice is different. Also **tinseb**.

insëng *vi.* (of bird) settle, alight

inur *vi.* shrivel, shrink

irakh *vi.* (of plant) grow *Ner never nge nelmu i atrëkhën iv iar i e irakh lis.* When they threw the heliconia leaves over there, they grew too.

irëb *vi.* 1. work *Narëb usër sekretiri.* I work as the secretary. 2. make garden

irëb khën *vt.* do *Marëb khën usër set iv iv monogo nelmo tuen iv lis.* He kept doing it like that until eventually another time he went back.

iren *vi.* (of day) dawn, be daybreak, be daylight *Nout iren.* It was daylight.

irer *vi.* 1. flame 2. (of sun) shine *Nal irer.* The sun is shining. Also **isën**.

irëv *vi.* run away, escape

irokh *vi.* clear garden site *Këtirokh sen gemru bovom.* You will all clear the garden sites of the two of you first.

iru *num.* two *Bëtëkh batël, bësarusi.* I will take three, not two. See **kharuen**.

isav *vi.* dance. Also **sav**.

isëb *vi.* wander

isël *vi.* go torch-fishing

isel *vi.* fly. Also **merakh**.

isel khën *vt.* fly *Tat mav i masel khën nakhe sen i barangan nevet Abet.* The place where he would go and fly was in the cave at Abet.

isën *vi.* (of sun) shine. Also **irer**.

isës *vi.* 1. suck 2. breastfeed

isog *vi.* go down *Nevdoro ve bëravën isog.* The woman made her fibre skirt go down. Also **ijëv**.

itab *vi.* (of flood) subside *Nowe tëleb iv iv iv itab tabakh.* The river flooded until it had subsided.

itël *num.* three

iteng *vi.* cry

itër *vi.* 1. stand, stand up 2. stand before gathering in traditional ceremony *Bubu bële nane ratër.* Grandfather and mother stood together before people in the ceremony. 3. wait while somebody does something *Lektërvarëkh var khën naabën var,* “*Katër mën iag.*” The old woman said to her grandchild, “Wait here first.” 4. (of penis) erect

itër lokhor *vi.* go for circumcision, be circumcised

itëvarëkh *adj.* 1. small, little 2. (of story) short. Also **varëkh.**

ius *vi.* rain *Nous ius.* It is raining.

iv *vi.* go *Tërav aim i.* Let’s go home.

iv delvës *vt.* surround, go all over

ivang *vi.* be alight

ivën *vi.* 1. full *Sëv nokhutën melëd iv lis nibu iru e ravën e rov iv aim i.* He scraped the *melëd* tree until the two pieces of bamboo were full and he carried them home. 2. (of river, tide) high *Nowe net ivën vale rakhe tetel.* The river was really high. 3. numerous, abundant 4. crowded

ives *num.* four

ives nen *num.* fourth

ivi *vt.* squeeze liquid out of *Lev ner nakhe tuen ivi.* He got a leaf and squeezed the liquid out of it.

ivil *vi.* eat at the taboo fire *Bavil khën us metenal balëm sëkh bësangavël.* He would eat at the taboo fire for perhaps five or ten days.

ivis *num.* how much?, how many?

iwul *vi.* shout

iwun *vi.* sink, go underwater, drown *Ajesev i meten deswe atiwun iv raadin iar.* They jumped into the sea spring and they drowned there.

iyag *vi.* 1. be born *Kamru iru mëriyag.* Two of us were born. 2. exist, come into existence *Nedum iyag.* Yams came into existence.

iyel *vi.* sing

J

jëbejëb *vi.* walk with walking stick *Matërvarëkh jëbejëb iv jëber aim.* The old man walked home with his walking stick.

jëbën *ns.* grandfather, grandmother *Netite var ëns jëbën i.* The boy already called him grandfather.

jëbën tevet *n.* grandmother

jëbën *vt.* leave behind *Natuen jëbën.* She left some behind. *Bavarsi këdamansi, nelmu i këtoro kërus lue mulëm këjëbën e këve lis netitevën.* If you agree, when you are old you can take off your skin and leave it behind and become a young girl again.

jëber *vt.* 1. reach, go as far as, arrive at *Nevdoro Vuli iru ralung usër delën namat iv iv iv e rëjëber nokhutën nibu nge.* The two women of Vuli walked in the direction of the snake’s voice until they reached the bamboo plant. 2. as far as, up to *Atkhov nedum iv iv iv jëber ranelvan lamas.* They planted the yams up to the middle of the garden. 3. until

jëber khën *sub.* until *Bëmësiëkh bav jëber khën bames.* He will be sick until he dies.

jëgën *ns.* possessions, belongings *Bav belev jëgëg air.* I will go to get my belongings.

jëjën *svt.* do tightly

jëkhën *ns.* 1. to/in the place of *Nevdoro Vuli iru rëleg jëkhën aru rërong khën namat nge malev nibe.* As the two women of Vuli were in their place, they heard the snake singing a song. *Netite mavale tunsar jëkhën.* The boy was always going to his place. *Bëmelili lis mën bav jëkhëg i.* I will go back to my place first. 2. *prep.* near, close to, by *Iv itër jëkhën nokhutën melëd net.* He went and stood by the *melëd* tree. 3. to (a person) *Matërvarëkh tuen vale jëkhën.* An old man came to him.

jibe *vt.* copulate with *Numin metër i nevdoro jibe tabakh ai*. The man lay on top of the woman and really copulated with her.

jigalën *ns.* rib. Also **galën**.

K

kam *pron.* we, us (pl. excl.). Also **kamem**.

kamem *pron.* we, us (pl. excl.). Also **kam**.

kamemaru *pron.* we, us (dl. excl.). Also **kamemru**, **kamru**.

kamemru *pron.* we, us (dl. excl.) *Mëre leg bëtev tate sen kamemru Metenesel*. The two of us lived with our father at Metenesel. Also **kamemaru**, **kamru**.

kamru *pron.* we, us (dl. excl.). Also **kamemru**, **kamemaru**.

khabëj *vt.* cover over, cover up

khabët *n.* white-skinned spirit

khabiëkh *vi.* plant garden, do the planting

khabkhabidukh *vi.* crooked. Also **mekhalakhal**.

khabokh *vi.* satiated, full (from eating)

khabu *vi.* (of food) burnt

khair *vi.* strong *Nal khair*. The sunshine was strong. *Nal sakhairsi*. The sunshine is not strong.

khakhan *vi.* eat *Tërav tërkhakhan i neim sog*. Let's go and eat in my house.

khakhar *vi.* clear one's throat, cough up phlegm

khalëmen *num.* fifth. See **ilëm**.

khamil *n.* ancestral village *Nane khësog khamil sen ravar Khamil Botuoli*. My mother's ancestral village was Khamil Botuoli.

khamil tub *loc.* taboo place. Also **nout iis**.

khan *vt.* 1. eat *Matërvarëkh net khanër*. This old man ate them. *Këtrovër vale*

baanër. You all brought them and I will eat them. 2. (of fire) burn *Naab khan matërvarëkh neim sen*. The fire burnt the old man's house.

khan medemedan *vt.* eat raw

khanmo *vi.* yawn

khanskhansen *vi.* 1. green 2. blue

kharakh *vi.* crawl

kharuen *num.* 1. second *Ai leg i neim kharuen*. He lives in the second house. *Sienan lis kharuen*. She conceived a second one. See **iru**. 2. *n.* one of a pair *Khabët lën mokhot iru, kharuen ve nevdoro, kharuen ve numin*. The creator spirit created two people, one female and one male. 3. *postmodn.* one (of two) *Aru kharuen imes*. One of the two of them died.

khas *vt.* 1. bite *Libakh mënakhasëm*. The dog might bite you. 2. chew

khas khur *vt.* cut apart

khaskhas *vi.* 1. bite 2. chew

khaun *n.* south wind

khaut *loc.* 1. to the shore, ashore, to the coast (from the sea) 2. to the mainland (from an offshore island) *Atbële vale khaut i*. They came with him to the mainland. Also **aut**.

khavën *ns.* 1. brother (of man) 2. friend

khawes *vi.* 1. originate, come, start (from) *Navar bavarvar usër do tat kamem mëtkhawes i*. I want to talk a little about where we came from. 2. *svt.* put across *Gor khawes nesel khën nakhe*. He blocked the path by putting a tree across it. 3. *prep.* across *Lëng nakhe khawes nesel*. He put the tree across the path. *Merika air ajëlëkhsi main khawes Malo bëjeber Tutuba*. The Americans did not lay mines across Malo as far as Tutuba.

khëjkhëj *n.* pounded breadfruit

khël *vt.* 1. dig, dig up 2. build, construct (house)

khëlkhël *vi.* dig

khëlkhël khën *vt.* build, construct. Also **khël**.

khëmetu *adj.* right (side)

khëmir *adj.* left (side)

khën *sub.* 1. because *Navar ides navonsi khën mësavet navar bavarvar usër tutunmasa tuen*. Thank you very much because today I want to tell a story.
2. *prep.* to (dative) *Tutunmasa varëkh net navar bavarvar usër khën get mësavet*. This short story is what I wanted to tell to us today. *Lev nibu savakh khën snen*. He gave one piece of bamboo to his mother.

khësam *pron.* your (sg.). Also **sam**.

khësen *pron.* his, her, its. Also **sen**.

khëser *pron.* their (pl.). Also **ser**.

khëseraru *pron.* their (dl.). Also **seraru**.

khësog *pron.* my. Also **sog**.

kho *vt.* grate (coconut) *Matërvarëkh kho neni nen nelag*. The old man grated coconut for the pudding.

khores *vt.* cut up *Nibu i nërov rëkhores khën-gën nelmu i atkhan-gën*. The piece of bamboo that I am holding was cut from me when they ate me.
Atkhorkhores mere nge e atve nelag khën. They cut the eel up and made it into pudding.

khorkhor *vi.* itch

khov *vt.* copulate with

khov *vt.* plant *Krokhov nedum i lamas sen gemru*. You will both plant the yams in your garden.

khovkhov *vi.* copulate

khuv *vt.* (of person) blow

kine *pron.* I, me

L

labët *n.* rat

lakhe *loc.* to/in the bush

lamas *n.* garden *Krokhov nedum i lamas sen gemru*. You will both plant the yams in your garden.

langalang *vi.* wide-eyed, open eyes wide

langas *vt.* unwrap, open up (pudding)

Nelmu i atras lue nelag nge atlangas. When they removed the pudding from the earth oven, they unwrapped it.

langnous *n.* cloud

Laravet *loc.* Larëvat

lëbalëb *vi.* 1. tell lies 2. pretend 3. *svi.* pretend to do *Metër lëbalëb*. He is pretending to be asleep.

lebeleb *n.* mud

lebërëns *n.* brother's wife

lëbis *vt.* 1. lie to, trick, deceive *Netite vëvrëkh air atlëbis atvar*, "O, deswe vale aut i vale aut." The little children lied to him saying, "Oh, the tide is right in." *Matërvarëkh lëbis usër mokh Ambrym*. Father tricked the man from Ambrym. 2. *svt.* pretend to do *Lue lëbis nimin*. He pretended to shoot the bird.

leg *vi.* 1. sit 2. live *Kine neleg iag Vinmavis*. I live here in Vinmavis. *Rav i tat leg i*. They went to where he lived. 3. stay *Relis namat nge e releg bëtev*. When they saw the snake, they stayed with it. 4. exist *Nelmu tuen namat tuen leg*. Once there was a snake.

leg i bëngën mourn *Atleg i bëngen matërvarëkh nge jëber khën metenal nsuru*. They mourned for the old man for seven days.

leg nsar *vi.* stay behind *Air tuen leg nsar*. One of them stayed behind.

lëkh *vt.* 1. hang, suspend. Also

lëkhakhan. 2. *vi.* hang, suspended *Këlëkh i nakhe net*. Hang in that tree. Also **serav**.

lëkh *vt.* tie *Atlëkh nereun nense i ningulën nibu*. They tied the Tahitian chestnut leaves to the ends of the bamboo.

lëkh do *vt.* hang up

lëkhakhan *vt.* hang, suspend. Also **lëkh**.

lektër *n.* old woman. Also **lektërvarëkh**.

lektërvarëkh *n.* 1. old woman (sg.). Also

lektër. 2. wife *Lektërvarëkh sen leleg aim*. His wife just stayed at home.

lektërvëvrëkh *n.* old women (pl.)

lël *vi.* write. Also **tutus**.

lele *adj.* all kinds of *Atlis nedum lele*.

They saw all kinds of yams.

lemev *loc.* to/on the level area

Matërvëvrëkh air atvale Abet atusër lemev. The old men came to Abet and went along the level area.

lëng *vt.* 1. put *Relëng nelag i naab*. They put the pudding onto the fireplace.

2. create *Khabët lëng mokhot iru, kharuen ve nevdoro, kharuen ve numin*. The white-skinned spirit created two people, one female and one male.

lëngalëng *vi.* 1. crazy, mad 2. drunk

lënglëng *vt.* 1. leave alone, leave behind

2. see (someone) off *Tërav bav bëlënglëngëm*. Let's go and I will see you off. 3. send (someone) away *Netite air atrongdur neste atlënglëngër ativ tuoso i*. When the children were knowledgeable, they would send them far away. 4. release, let go of *Matërvarëkh lënglëng nejëkh iv itër i bongon neim*. The old man released the kingfisher and went and stood at the front of the house.

lënglëngan *vt.* wait for

lenslens *n.* broken dead coral

Lenslens *n.* Litzlitz

lesën *ns.* male genitals

lëtlët *n.* sugar ant

lev *vt.* give *Lev nibu savakh khën snen*.

He gave one piece of bamboo to his mother. *Nëmensan matërvarëkh tit khëlev nakhanien khën*. I am looking for the old man who you gave the food to.

lev *vt.* take, get, fetch

lev bësien (s)he speaks a language *Atvar bëtbësbës khën air natuen air, bëtleb bësien tinseb*. When they wanted to speak to each other, they spoke different languages.

lev melën (s)he replaced it, (s)he took its place *Këmensan motuen belev melam*. Look for somebody to take your place.

lev nibe (s)he sang a song

lev melilian *vt.* replace *Mëtlev melilian noag i mëtutbuanër*. We replaced the canoes that we had sailed in.

lëvalëv *n.* rainbow

libakh *n.* dog

lidumdum *n.* whale

lile *loc.* nearby, close *Bavar kav lile, libakh bakhasëm*. If you go close, the dog will bite you.

lilis *vi.* have a look *Matërvarëkh tuen bëvale bëlilis*. An old man will come and have a look.

lis *sv.* 1. do again 2. do back *Iv lis*. He went back. 3. *adv.* again 4. too, also

lis *vt.* see, look at, watch *Relis namat nge e releg bëtev*. When they saw the snake, they stayed with it.

lisdur *vt.* recognise by sight

lokholokh *n.* purple swamphen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*)

lokhor *n.* circumcision ceremony

lub *vi.* swell up, swollen

Lububu *loc.* Lambumbu

lue *vt.* shoot *Matërvarëkh lev nivës sen lue demes nge*. The old man took his bow and shot the devil.

lue *svt.* take out, remove *Rëtiëkh mere nge, rësëtiëkh luesi*. They dragged the eel but they couldn't pull it out.

luensi *svi.* extraordinarily *Ides luensi*. It is extraordinarily good.

lues *vi.* tired *Rong lues*. He felt tired.

lueiëkh *vi.* shoot fish. See **niëkh**.

lulus *vi.* bathe

lumës *vt.* 1. wet. Also **nsëvël**. 2. bathe

lung usër *vt.* 1. walk in the direction of, walk after *Nevdoro Vuli iru rërong delën namat e ralung usër*. The two women of Vuli heard the snake's voice and they walked after it. 2. go along, walk along *Kamem mëtlung usër nowe*. We walked along the river. 3. come next *Tit lung usër Wendy*. The next one was Wendy. See **ilung**.

lungolung *vi.* walk *Babar khësen sëlungolung mënsi usër melaas khas bëtakhe khën ai*. His pig wouldn't walk any more because it was very cold. See **ilung**.

luolu *vi.* vomit *Dabakhan luolu*. (S)he has diarrhoea.

luoluan *vt.* vomit up, disgorge *Bar bëluoluan need, bames*. If he vomits up blood he will die.

M

maamadokh *vi.* suffer from vertigo

maange *n.* emperor fish

malgavan *ns.* fingernail, toenail

malgavan dalën *ns.* toenail

malgavan nëverën *ns.* fingernail

man *ns.* brother (of woman)

manen *ns.* that person

manet *n.* that person *Kësevesi manet bësänevang mënkhej nevdoro sen*. Don't make that man angry in case he beats his wife.

mar *n.* people (of particular place)

mar aakhus *n.* people from the upper Lowisinewei River area who speak the Tape language

maskhët *int.* not yet

matërvarëkh *n.* 1. old man (sg.)
2. husband 3. father

matërvëvrëkh *n.* old men (pl.)

matro *n.* address term for use with old man

me *part.* expression of pity

medemed *vi.* uncooked, raw

medemedan *svt.* do raw *Atkhan medemedan*. They ate it raw.

megi *n.* grade-taking ceremony

meil *n.* cycad (*Cycas circinalis*)

mekhalakhal *vi.* crooked. Also **khabkhabidukh**.

melaas *n.* cold *Melaas khas*. (S)he is cold. *Babar khësen sëlungolung mënsi usër melaas khas bëtakhe khën ai*. His pig wouldn't walk any more because it was very cold.

melab *n.* spit, saliva

melab sen deswe *n.* sea foam

melëd *n.* tree species *Netëraru mav sëv nokhutn melëd*. Their child used to go and scrape the trunk of the *melëd* tree.

melëkh *n.* kava

melekhëns *n.* parrotfish

melën *ns.* 1. place *Këmënsan motuen belev melam*. Look for somebody to take your place. 2. sleeping place *Numin iv metër i melën imes*. The man went and lay down on his sleeping place and died.

melevën *ns.* 1. underneath, beneath *Libakh mametër i melevën nakhe*. The dog sleeps under the tree. 2. amongst, amid *Rëjëber nowe i Khaub net aakhus tanokh i melevën neni*. The two of them reached the Aup River up there amid the coconuts.

melile *n.* tree species that grows in old garden sites

melili *vi.* come back, go back, return

melilian *svt.* 1. do again *Këvale këlis melilian netite nge*. Come and see the child again. 2. do back *Mokh Ambrym lev melilian noag*. The man from Ambrym took the ship back.

melu *vi.* 1. come out, emerge 2. come from *Namat nge melu jëkhën khamil khësen kine*. That snake came from my ancestral village. 3. leave *Leg Lenslens e melu Lenslens iv irëb i noag*. He lived at Litzlitz and left Litzlitz to go and work on a ship. *Mokhot atmelmelu tabakh air*. Everybody had left.

memelade *vi.* cold

mëmën *vi.* (of sore) inflamed, swollen

mën *vt.* drink *Kësëmënsi nowe net*. Don't drink that water.

mën *postmodv.* 1. first *Tërav mën tanokhwi*. Let's go over there first. 2. any more, no longer *Tet bëtkhan esëkh mën*. There was no longer anything to eat.

men-gore *n.* black flying fox

mënmën *vi.* drink

menokh *n.* sore

menokh mivës *n.* boil

mensan *vt.* look for *Këmensan motuen belev melam*. Look for somebody to take your place.

mëense *n.* star

merakh *adv.* 1. and then *Namat nge leg iv iv iv merakh siëkh rangän nibu tuen*. There was a snake and then it climbed up a bamboo plant. 2. *vi.* get up, wake up *Meren këtmerakh metebëkh këtiv këtliis nsan bajëkh i niliu sog*. Tomorrow when you wake up in the morning, go and see what is on my arrow. 3. fly. Also **isel**.

merang *vi.* (of leaves, wood) dry *Krelis nakhe bëtmerang*. You will see that the trees are dry.

mere *n.* eel

meren *adv.* tomorrow

meren nen *adv.* the next day *Meren nen set lis usër khën tet bëtkhan esëkh*. The next day was the same again because there was nothing to eat.

merere *vi.* light (in weight)

mes *vi.* 1. dry 2. (of flood) subside *Nowe nge memes melili lis*. The river subsided again.

mësavet *adv.* today

mesed *vi.* hiccup

mesel *n.* clam

mesel nen deswe *n.* saltwater clam

mësiëkh *vi.* sick, ill

metab *n.* open space (such as the sky over the land) *Plen tuen isel i metab tanokh*. A plane was flying in the open sky over there.

metebëkh *n.* 1. morning *Meren këtmerakh metebëkh këtiv këtliis nsan bajëkh i niliu sog*. Tomorrow when you wake up in the morning, go and see what is on my arrow. 2. *adv.* in the morning

mete *n.* crab species with red eyes

meteli *n.* 1. door 2. gate 3. way through, entrance

metelo *n.* sister's son

metemet *vt.* 1. take care of, look after *Nevdoro tinseb vos lue metemet i*. Another woman adopted him and looked after him. 2. keep an eye on, watch over

meten *ns.* 1. eye 2. newly unfurled leaf 3. middle

meten *vt.* watch

meten deswe *n.* freshwater spring which comes up beneath the sea

meten ner never *n.* unfurled heliconia leaf

meten nowe *n.* spring

metenal *n.* day

metër *vi.* 1. sleep, be asleep 2. overnight, spend the night *Neleng sadesi mëtmetër Vau*. The wind was not good so we spent the night at Vao.

metër mel *vi.* sleep soundly, be sound asleep

metitelokho *n.* fence surrounding area of house *Rav ne vere i metitelokho*.

The two of them just went outside the fence surrounding the house.

metmetër bori *vi.* dream

mětokhtokh *vi.* 1. afraid, frightened
2. worried, anxious *Nēmětokhtokh usër khën tëber vale.* I'm worried that he is cutting them in this direction.

mětokhtokhon *vt.* fear, be afraid of, be frightened of

mevën *ns.* smell

midag *n.* puzzle tree (*Kleinhovia hospita*)

midag varavar *n.* tree species

miel *vi.* red

miën *ns.* urine

milëns *vt.* tie

miliun *n.* chief. Also **numal**.

milmilëv *vi.* (of things) thin

mimi *vi.* urinate

minbuis *n.* large Tanna fruit dove (*Ptilinopus tannensis*)

minsın *n.* trevally

mismis *n.* tree species (*Garuga floribunda*)

misnav *n.* ashes

misnirin *n.* sky *Netite tuen iv metër jëkhën magëlo iv rakhe i misnirin.*
A child went to sleep at his place and used to look up at the sky.

mitël *vi.* thick

mivës *vi.* white. Also **uvov**.

miviel *n.* seasnake

mobun *ns.* liver

mogo *adv.* and then. Also **monogo**.

mokh *n.* person (of a particular place)
mokh Veditakh air 'the people of Veditakh'

mokh amu *n.* eldest child

mokh atokh *n.* youngest child

mokh nëval *n.* warrior, fighter

mokh tinseb *n.* commoner *Bubu sevidorsi bëvevlël khën netën nevdoro bav jëkhën*

mokh tinseb. Grandfather couldn't marry off his daughter to a commoner.

mokh varëkh *n.* little boy

mokhi *n.* sorcerer

mokhoj *vi.* break, broken

mokhot *n.* person

mokhov *vi.* bent, bend down

molo *n.* megapode (*Megapodius freycinet*)

momouran *svt.* do while alive *Ajël momouran labët.* They burned the rat while it was alive. *Atevën momouran mokhot.* They buried the person alive. *Mokh Veditakh air atëkh momouran matërvarëkh tuen.* The people of Veditakh took an old man alive. See **mour**.

monogo *adv.* and then *Atkhabiëkh usër iv iv monogo neleng ikhëj bër vënaan nakh air.* They planted their gardens and then the cyclone broke all of the trees. Also **mogo**.

more *n.* vine species

morogon *ns.* chest

morot *vi.* (of people or animals) skinny, thin

mose *n.* tree species

motuen *n.* somebody *Motuen esëkh mën Metenesel.* There was no longer anybody at Metenesel.

motuen mënsi *n.* whoever *Motuen mënsi bëlis bëtëkh.* Whoever sees it will take it.

mour *vi.* 1. live, be alive 2. grow

mour nsar *vi.* be still alive *Kamem itël mëtmour nsar evatnakh.* Three of us are still alive now.

movokh *vi.* open up, be open *Nevet nen nangsın Malvetrakhrakh movokh.* The rock named Malvetrakhrakh opened up.

mukhlakh *n.* wife's brother

mukhub *n.* gecko

mulën *ns.* dry skin, shed skin

muluwul *vi.* round

N

- naab** *n.* 1. fire 2. fireplace *Relëng nelag i naab*. They put the pudding onto the fireplace. 3. firewood
- naabën** *ns.* grandchild, grandson, granddaughter
- naaben** *ns.* sail of (canoe)
- naabues** *n.* New Guinea rosewood (*Pterocarpus indicus*). Also **nakhabues**.
- naadu** *n.* east wind
- naadu** *n.* bush
- naadu met** *n.* thick bush, primary forest, deep forest. Also **vasan toro**.
- naadu maraakhus** *n.* northwest wind
- naaetelet** *vi.* (of yam vine) climb up bamboo pole
- naamil** *n.* meeting house
- naansvälën** *ns.* hair
- naansvälën batën** *ns.* hair (on head)
- naansvälën meten** *ns.* eyebrow, eyelash
- naansvälën naasen** *ns.* beard
- naanwei** *n.* tree species with red bark
- naari** *n.* cordyline. Also **nakhari**.
- naarwon** *ns.* (woman's) younger sister
- naasen** *ns.* jaw, chin
- naavëkh** *n.* Malay apple (*Syzygium* sp.)
- nabar** *n.* cloud
- nabat** *n.* advantage over somebody
- nadël** *n.* earwax
- nadël** *n.* egg
- nadël lesën** *ns.* testicle
- nadël meten** *ns.* eyeball
- nagalavat** *n.* tongs for holding hot stones
- naguv** *n.* sleep in eye
- nakhabkhabil** *n.* bat
- nakhabues** *n.* New Guinea rosewood (*Pterocarpus indicus*). Also **naabues**.
- nakhaj** *n.* basket *Khabëj e songon i nakhaj tinseb*. He covered them over and put them into different baskets.
- nakhaj nen netite** *n.* placenta, afterbirth
- nakhakhanien** *n.* food. Also **nakhanien**.
- nakhakhar** *n.* devil nettle (*Dendrocnide* sp.)
- nakhakharvet** *n.* devil nettle with long-lasting sting
- nakhan** *ns.* 1. food of (someone, something) *Kine bëtabëkh nakham*. I will cook your food. *Matërvarëkh tabëkh nakhan lis*. The old man cooked his food again. 2. (food) for (benefactive) *Matërvarëkh ve nelag nakhan*. The old man made pudding for him. Also **denaan**, **denakhan**.
- nakhanien** *n.* food. Also **nakhakhanien**.
- nakhans** *n.* fire ants
- nakhari** *n.* cordyline plant
- nakhav** *n.* crab that runs along rocks around the high tide line
- nakhe** *n.* 1. tree 2. stick 3. wood 4. log
- nakhënsen** *n.* variety of long yam
- nakhlansën** *ns.* vagina
- nal** *n.* 1. sun 2. sunshine *Nal khair*. The sunshine was strong.
- naman** *int.* hey!, oh my goodness!
- namat** *n.* snake
- names** *n.* funeral
- names revrev** *n.* cassia
- nane** *n.* mother *Nane khësog nangsên Alita*. My mother's name is Alita.
- nane varëkh** *n.* paternal aunt
- nangavël** *num.* ten (when counting units of ten from twenty and above). Also **ngavël**.
- nangavël iru** *num.* twenty. Also **ngavël iru**.
- nangavël itël** *num.* thirty. Also **ngavël itël**.

nangsen *inter.* when? *Khëvale nangsen?*

When did you come?

nangsën *ns.* name *Kine nangsen kine Temo Saiti.* My name is Temo Saiti.

nar *prep.* with *Mokh Ambrym tuen irëb ëns nar.* The man from Ambrym worked with him. *Evatnakh nemabler mëtlek nar vëvënër.* Now I live together with their sister.

naribon *n.* variety of long yam

naribu *n.* wall (of house)

natabal *n.* dragon plum (*Dracontomelon vitiense*)

natengteng *n.* slitgong

natuen *n.* some, part of, half of *Nëteren këlev natuen khën-gën.* I want you to give me some. *Këtkhov do ne natuen.* You will just plant some of it.

natutuvni *n.* coconut crab

naval *n.* vine (used for tying house beams)

navan *ns.* fruit

navan naari *n.* wart

navas *n.* paddle, oar

navirit *n.* Moreton Bay chestnut (*Castanospermum australe*)

navon *postmodv.* very *Norong tet khëve tëraan ides navon.* What you have made for us to eat tastes very good.

navrarët *n.* crossed branches that rub against each other in the wind

nawok *n.* albino

ne *part.* just, only

nebag *n.* banyan

nebel *n.* swamp harrier, hawk (*Circus approximans*)

nebel yisyis *n.* bird species

nebëng merah *n.* pumice

nebet *n.* breadfruit

nëbig *n.* tree species

neblat *n.* dry banana leaf

nebou *n.* hardwood tree species

nedar *n.* Indian coral tree (*Erythrina variegata*)

nede *npart.* 1. blood 2. bloodline *Nedenen numal ne bebële nevdoro nen numal.* Only the bloodline of a chief could marry a chief's daughter.

nedong *n.* mangrove

nedou *n.* native lychee (*Pometia pinnata*)

nedum *n.* yam

nedum vovos *n.* long varieties of yam

neim *n.* house. Also **nemakh.**

nejëkh *n.* kingfisher

nejën *ns.* excrement

nejën naab *n.* burning firewood, firestick

nejevël *n.* sea slug

neji *n.* excrement

nejokhon *ns.* meat

nëkhovkhovën *ns.* penis wrapper

nelag *n.* pudding

nelel *n.* trochus

nelem *n.* swamp

nelën *ns.* inside *Ai metër i nelën neim.* She is asleep inside the house.

nelën dalën *ns.* sole of foot

nelën nëverën *ns.* palm of hand

neleng *n.* wind

neleng ikhëj *n.* hurricane, cyclone
Neleng ikhëj bër vënaan nakhe air.
The cyclone broke all of the trees.
Also **neleng rakhas.**

neleng mitëralo *n.* east wind

neleng rakhas *n.* hurricane, cyclone.
Also **neleng ikhëj.**

nelënselëns *n.* yam variety

nelmo *n.* pig-killing ceremony *Nevdoro sëmakhëji bues i nelmo.* A woman does not kill pigs in a ceremony.

nelmu *n.* time, occasion

nelmu i *sub.* when *Ner never nge nelmu i atrëkhën iv iar i e irakh lis.* When they threw the heliconia leaves over there, they grew too.

nelmu tuen *adv.* 1. once 2. another time, next time *Nelmu tuen këvale lis e beve derëng neste air.* Next time when you come back I will prepare everything.

nelvan *ns.* middle

nelvan dalën *ns.* calf (of leg). Also **dabakhan dalën.**

nelvatvul *n.* banana variety

nelvën *ns.* 1. tooth 2. claw (of crab)

nelwemen *ns.* tongue

nemag *n.* part of river near sea

nemakh *n.* house. Also **neim.**

nemer *n.* red-coloured parrotfish

nen *ns.* spirit, soul. Also **ninin.**

nen *prep.* 1. of (part-whole) 2. for (purpose) *Matërvarëkh kho neni nen nelag.* The old man grated coconut for the pudding.

nenav *n.* wave (in sea)

nenëv *adv.* yesterday

neng *vt.* 1. beg, beseech (someone) *Neng netitevën nge.* He begged the young girl. 2. ask for *Motuen Khamelingas iv e neng nevdoro tuen Gëlo.* Somebody from Khamelingas went and asked for a woman from Gëlo.

nenge *n.* native almond (*Canarium* sp.)

neni *n.* coconut *Matërvarëkh kho neni nen nelag.* The old man grated coconut for the pudding.

neni merang *n.* dry coconut

nenini *n.* palm tree

nenom *n.* mosquito

nense *n.* Tahitian chestnut (*Inocarpus edulis*)

nensem *n.* outrigger

ner *n.* leaf of (something)

ner nakhe *n.* 1. leaf 2. traditional medicine 3. magic, sorcery

ner neblat *n.* lung

ner never *n.* heliconia leaf

nerangasën *ns.* branch

nerer *n.* nits (of lice)

nerëun *ns.* leaf (of)

nesëb *n.* knife

nesel *n.* 1. road 2. path

nesev *n.* very small ants which can hardly be seen but which inflict irritating bite

neskho *n.* year *Irëb khësen leg nen nesko ilëm.* He worked for him for five years.

nesnan *ns.* tuber (of yam) *Matërvarëkh lev birav nen nesnan iru.* The old man took two tubers of the *birav* yam.

nesnen *ns.* intestine, guts

neste *n.* thing *Neste tabakh iv i noag.* Everything went onto the ship.

nestuen *n.* something *Tëtve nestuen.* We should do something.

nestuen mënsi *n.* whatever *Nestuen mënsi khëvi ides.* Whatever you do is alright.

neswen *ns.* juice

neswen meten *ns.* tears

nete *n.* 1. axe. Also **batnete.** 2. iron

neten *n.* 1. ground *Tëkh ningulën meten nereun never nge vëlësan raadin i neten.* He took the unfurled heliconia leaves and lay them down on the ground. 2. land 3. soil, dirt

netën *ns.* child, offspring, son, daughter *Kine netëg air itël.* I have three children.

netite *n.* child

netitemën *n.* young boy

netitevën *n.* young girl *Lektërvarëkh tiëkh lue nibën i toro ve lis netitevën tuen.* The old woman pulled off her old body and became a young girl again.

neto *n.* chicken

neto dolakhei *n.* wildfowl, jungle fowl

neto dumin *n.* rooster

netren *ns.* back (of body)

netriën *n.* yam variety

netuakh *n.* tree species

nëval *n.* battle

nevodoro *n.* 1. woman *Nane khēsog ve nevodoro Lëngalëng*. My mother is a woman from Lëngalëng. 2. wife *Kësevesi manet bësënevang mënakhëj nevodoro sen*. Don't make that man angry in case he beats his wife. 3. female *Nevodoro nen ijëkh i meten nowe i Vërevër*. There was a female one in the spring at Vërevër.

nevëns *n.* banana

nevenu *n.* place *Natuen air atbële nevodoro nevenu nsebseb air*. Some married women from other places.

nevënvën *n.* ringworm

never *n.* bamboo roof poles

never *n.* heliconia

nëverën *ns.* 1. hand 2. arm

nevet *n.* 1. stone, rock 2. money *Rëvenokh nevet sog*. My money was stolen.

nevet met *n.* rounded black stone found on shore and in rivers

nevet mivës *n.* coral rock

nevet novles *n.* cooking stone

nevetevet *n.* platform (for yams). Also **vetevet**.

nevev *n.* slipper lobster

nëveve *n.* beach hibiscus (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*). Also **belag**.

nevi *n.* giant taro

nëvilakhalakh *n.* yellow white-eye (*Zosterops flavifrons*)

nëvilvilës *n.* grass

nevinvukh *n.* sorcery

nevkhu *n.* tree species

nevlemiel *n.* March

nevnën *ns.* 1. skin 2. bark (of tree)

nevnën bongon *ns.* lip

nevnën lesën *ns.* scrotum

nevnën meten *ns.* eyelid

nevnën nuusën *ns.* foreskin

nevngan *ns.* flower

nevsilian *svt.* 1. do badly, do carelessly *Tutus nevsilian i novol sen*. She scribbled in her book. 2. do all kinds of *Atkhov nevsilian neste i lamas khësen*. The planted all kinds of things in her garden. 3. do all over the place, do everywhere *Lëng nevsilian novol sen air*. She put her books all over the place.

ngar *vt.* split. Also **ngarangar**.

ngarangar *vt.* 1. split *Ai ngarangar nakhe*. He split the wood. Also **ngar**. 2. *svt.* do resulting in something being split *Tëbe ngarangar nakhe*. He cut the wood lengthwise.

ngavangav *vi.* puff

ngavël *num.* ten (when counting units of ten from twenty and above). Also **nangavël**.

ngavël iru *num.* twenty. Also **nangavël iru**.

ngavël itël *num.* thirty. Also **nangavël itël**.

ngëtngët *postmodn.* every *Motuen ikhëj mukhub vangan khën Bokhwi metenal ngëtngët*. Somebody killed geckoes and fed Bokhwi with them every day.

ngod *vi.* snore

niagan *ns.* sibling with same mother and father

nibe *n.* song

nibël *n.* glue tree (*Cordia dichotoma*)

nibën *ns.* body

nibën ikhans *vi.* (s)he is tired

nibëv *n.* fish species

nibov *n.* European. Also **dosëlsël**.

nibu *n.* bamboo

niëkh *n.* fish

niëkh miel *n.* fish species

niet *n.* 1. sago palm 2. thatch for roof of house

nigi *n.* dolphin

niisën *ns.* smoke of (something)

nijëv *n.* sugarcane

nikëns *n.* whitewood species

nikhanwei *n.* mullet

nikhasarvokh *n.* stingray

nikhët *n.* octopus

nikhët terev *n.* squid

niliëkh *n.* husband

niliu *n.* arrow *Meren këtmerakh metebëkh këtiv këtis nsan bajëkh i niliu sog.*

Tomorrow when you wake up in the morning, go and see what is on my arrow. Also **nulu**.

nimin *n.* bird

niminedung *n.* morning bird

nimir *n.* hunger

nimir khas (s)he is hungry

ningulën *ns.* end, top. Also **nungulën**.

ninin *ns.* spirit, soul. Also **nen**.

niniv *n.* stonefish

ninsëv *n.* coconut lory (*Trichoglossus haematodes*)

nirën *n.* hill. Also **botuen**.

nirësnamar *n.* goatfish

nirum *n.* pandanus

nisën *ns.* breast

nisrëvde *n.* bird species

nivël *n.* 1. moon 2. month

nivël nen demes *n.* December

nivël nen naaletelet *n.* November

nivël nen naaletelet *n.* October

nivël nen narokhien *n.* June, July

nivël nen nsumsumien *n.* August

nivël nen nsumsumien *n.* September

nivëlivël *n.* lightning

nivënlel *n.* husband's brother

nivës *n.* 1. bow 2. rifle, gun

nivës mangarngakhei *n.* bow

nivnu *n.* tree species (*Macaranga* sp.)

nivtivët *n.* 1. butterfly 2. moth

nivu *n.* poles to which outrigger on canoe is attached

nivu *n.* turtle

noag *n.* 1. canoe 2. ship

noas *adv.* day before yesterday

nog *vi.* 1. end, finish 2. (of story) conclude *Tet navar bësabë usër nog iar.* What I want to tell a story about concludes there. 3. resign (from work) *Kine navar bonog.* I would like to resign.

nogonog *vi.* be last one *Nane sog ne bële kamemru mëtnogonog mëtleq vaas Metenesel.* My mother and the two of us were the last ones still living at Metenesel.

nokhmo *n.* island teak (*Intsia bijuga*)

nokho *n.* 1. rope, string 2. vine

nokhokhorën *ns.* tail

nokhon *ns.* 1. face 2. front

nokhon nelvën *ns.* incisor

nokhon nuusën *ns.* glans penis

nokhorien *n.* January, February

nokhorien tëleb *n.* January

nokhorien tëvarëkh *n.* February

nokhot *n.* louse

nokhoven *ns.* armpit

nokhoverën *ns.* wing

nokhto *n.* hermit crab

nokhutën *ns.* 1. plant *Nevdoro Vuli iru ralung usër delën namat iv iv iv e rëjëber nokhutën nibu nge.* The two women of Vuli walked in the direction of the snake's voice until they reached the bamboo plant. 2. tree (type) *Netëraru mav sëv nokhutn melëd.* Their child used to go and scrape the *melëd* tree. 3. trunk (of tree) *Tëtbëg nibu bavarse nokhutën nenge.* Let's tie the bamboo against the trunk of the native almond.

nongoden *ns.* gums

- nongos** *n.* pawpaw
- nongos bëjbëj** *n.* great hog plum
(*Spondias dulcis*)
- nongot** *num.* hundred
- nosen dalën** *ns.* heel
- nou** *n.* 1. vein 2. tendon
- noug** *n.* island cabbage (*Abelmoschus manihot*)
- noul** *n.* maggot
- nour** *n.* 1. prawn 2. lobster
- nour nen deswe** *n.* lobster
- nour nen nowe** *n.* prawn
- nourour** *n.* island
- nous** *n.* rain
- nous ius** it is raining
- nout** *n.* place (when used as subject of a verb expressing an ambient state or event)
- nout bëlnu** it is dark
- nout iis** *n.* taboo place *Namat tuen nangsen Bokhwi ijëkh nout is Laadu.* A snake called Bokhwi lives at the taboo place of Laadu. Also **khamil tub.**
- nout iren** it is dawn, it is daybreak, it is daylight *Ajav delvës iv iv e nout var baren.* They danced around until it was almost daybreak.
- nout nu** it is night
- nout memelade** it is cold
- nout renien** *n.* daybreak
- nout revrev** it is evening *Bëtkhan nout bërevrev.* They will eat it in the evening.
- nout sesov** it is hot
- noutiret** *n.* sweat, perspiration
- novileng** *n.* fly
- novivetevet** *n.* fantail
- novles** *n.* earth oven
- novol** *n.* book *Tutus nevsilian novol sen.* She scribbled in her book.
- novor** *n.* open sea
- nowe** *n.* 1. water 2. fresh water (as against brackish or salty water) 3. river, stream
- nowe mivës** *n.* semen
- nowe tëleb** *n.* flood
- nowen** *ns.* neck
- nowen** *ns.* feather
- nowins** *n.* spear
- nsan** *inter.* what? *Meren këtmerakh metebëkh këtiv këtis nsan bajëkh i niliu sog.* Tomorrow when you wake up in the morning, go and see what is on my arrow.
- nsangansangan nien sen mokh** *n.* April, May
- nsangansangan nien sen mokh rangabutuen** *n.* May
- nsangansangan nien sen mokh reteleb** *n.* April
- nsëbën** *ns.* finger, toe
- nsëbën dalën** *ns.* toe
- nsëbën nëverën** *ns.* finger
- nsëbën titëleb** *ns.* thumb, big toe
- nsëbën varëkh** *ns.* little toe, little finger
- nsëbli** *n.* tree species
- nsebliëkh** *vi.* slippery. Also **nsensur.**
- nsebnseb** *adj.* different, other *Mokhot nsebnseb air atlev bësien ser.* Different people speak their own languages. *Natuen air atbële nevdoro nevenu nsebnseb air.* Some married women from other places.
- nsel** *vt.* 1. tie together, bind *Atnsel nuvri aatin iag.* They tied together crabs down by the sea here. 2. wind up (rope, vine)
- nsël** *vt.* sew
- nsëlëng** *svt.* leave behind, go past
- nselav** *vi.* soft
- nsëlvën meten** *ns.* eyebrow, eyelash
- nsëm** *vt.* think (something) *Bubu mansëm ëns var, "Ai at mokhot sëkh."* Grandfather was already thinking,

“Oh, that is not a person.” *Nensëm navar us akhug*. I thought that perhaps it was you.

nsëmdo *vt.* remember, keep in mind

nsëmnsëm *vi.* think

nсен nemag *n.* side of river near sea
Misnari var beleg Lububu i nsen nemag. The missionary wanted to live at Lambumbu near the side of the river.

nsensen *ns.* comb on chicken

nsënsëvël *vi.* wash one's hands

nsensokhorukh *vi.* sit with legs extended

nsensur *vi.* slippery. Also **nsebliëkh**.

nsëv *vi.* cough

nsëvël *vt.* 1. wet. Also **lumës**. 2. wash

nsi *part.* now, here

nsilën miën *ns.* urethral opening

nsilngën *ns.* seed

nsivukh *vi.* sneeze (once or twice)

nsong *vi.* sniff

nsong lowe devën *vp.* blow one's nose

nsor *vt.* wipe (anus)

nsous *num.* six

nsous nen *num.* sixth

nsoves *num.* nine

nsoves nen *num.* ninth

nsubonsuboden *svt.* join *Atbëg nsubunsuboden nibu*. They tied the bamboo together.

nsumnsum *vi.* cut down trees

nsur *vt.* rub

nsuru *num.* seven

nsuru nen *num.* seventh

nsutël *num.* eight

nsutël nen *num.* eighth

nsuvën *ns.* breath

nu *vi.* be night *Nout nu*. It was night.

nubud *n.* barn owl (*Tyto alba*)

nukhub *n.* Pacific pigeon (*Ducula pacifica*)

nukhubkhub *n.* bamboo (rather than wooden) beam that runs down from the top roof beam to the top of the wall

nukhurën *ns.* root

nukhurën bagan lesën *ns.* vas deferens

nulu *n.* arrow. Also **niliu**.

numal *n.* chief. Also **miliun**.

numi *n.* earthquake *Numi imu*. There was an earthquake.

numin *n.* 1. man 2. male

nungulën *ns.* end, top. Also **ningulën**.

nusokhtuvokh *n.* large number of swarming black and red insects on ground after rain

nusulu *n.* 1. clothes 2. shirt

nuud *n.* sea worms

nuusën *ns.* penis

nuvidadam *npart.* heart

nuvididelën *ns.* throat

nuvire *n.* bird species

nuvitokhotokh *n.* bird species with yellow tongue that is found in bush

nuvri *n.* crab

nuvubut *n.* long pole along the peak of the roof of a house

nuvukhoi *n.* (unspecified) roof beam

nuvun *n.* uncircumcised penis

nuvusmo *n.* white flying fox

O

Orebev *loc.* Uripiv *Rëmelili rav Orebev i*. They went back to Uripiv.

R

raadin *loc.* below, down *Tëkh ningulën meten nereun never nge vëlësan raadin i neten*. He took the unfurled heliconia leaves and lay them down on the ground.

rakhe *loc.* 1. above, on top 2. inland, up in the bush, up away from the coast

Bubu melili iv rakhe i iv Loag i.
Grandfather went back up to the bush at Loag. Also **aakhus**.

rakhe nsar *loc.* right at the top, at the very top, up high *Ativ rakhe nsar*. They went all the way up. Also **rakhe tetel**.

rakhe tetel *loc.* right at the top, at the very top, up high *Namat iv i ninguln nibu rakhe tetel*. The snake went right to the top. Also **rakhe nsar**.

ranelvan *loc.* in the middle *Atkhov nedum iv iv iv jëber ranelvan lamas*. They planted the yams up to the middle of the garden.

rangan *prep.* on top of *Namat nge leg iv iv iv merakh siëkh rangan nibu tuen*. There was a snake and then it climbed on top of the bamboo plant.

rangan *vt.* take with *Vale rangan nane air ativ Malo i*. He came and took his mother and the others and they went to Malo. *Matërvarëkh iv Ambrym rangan mokh Ambrym tuen vale*. Father went to Ambrym and took a man with him from Ambrym.

rangarangan *adv.* always *Atmave set rangarangan naltimal*. They would always do that at sunset. Also **tetelis**, **tunsar**.

raru *pron.* they, them (dl.). Also **aru**.

ras *vt.* remove (pudding) from earth oven

ras lue *vt.* remove (pudding) from earth oven *Nelmu i atras lue nelag nge atlangas*. When they removed the pudding from the earth oven, they opened the leaves.

rëkhën *vt.* throw away, discard *Rëkhën ner nakhe nge iv iar i*. He threw the leaves there. *Ner never nge nelmu i atrëkhën iv iar i e irakh lis*. When they threw the heliconia leaves over there, they grew too. *Këjërëkhënsi ner nakhe nge bav tuoso*. Don't discard the leaves far away.

rëserëse *vt.* rub *Navrarët rëserëse ai*. The crossed branches were rubbing each other.

rëvëkhës *vt.* 1. turn *Mëtrëvkhës lis naaben*. We turned the sail around. 2. *svt.* do backwards, do back-to-front *Rus rëvëkhës nusulu sen*. He put his shirt on back-to-front.

revrev *vi.* 1. be evening *Bëtkhan nout bërevrev*. They will eat it in the evening. 2. *adv.* evening *Revrev atleleg vere*. In the evening they would sit outside.

rong *vt.* 1. hear *Nevdoro Vuli iru rërong delën namat e ralung usër*. The two women of Vuli heard the snake's voice and they walked after it. 2. taste *Norong tet khëve tëraan ides navon*. What you have made for us to eat tastes very good. 3. watch out, pay attention 4. *aux.* feel like (eating, drinking), want to (eat, drink) *Atrong bëtkhan nuvri*. They wanted to eat crabs.

rong delën (s)he heeded/paid attention to him/her *Ajisi bëtrong delëg*. They didn't want to pay attention to me.

rong usër *vtr.* sad *Numin rong usër ai usër lis tenivën vale jëkhën lis*. The man was sad because he saw his wife coming back to him.

rongdur *vt.* 1. know 2. *aux.* be able, can *Kërongdur kësaran nokho nen bues khën-gën*. You can pass the rope of the pig to me. Also **vidor**.

rongdur neste (s)he is knowledgeable

rongrong *vtr.* rest *Atitër do mën atrongrongër*. They stood around a little and rested.

rov *vt.* carry *Sëv nokhutën melëd iv lis nibu iru e ravën e rov iv aim i*. He scraped the *melëd* tree until the two pieces of bamboo were full and he carried them home.

rov jëjën *vt.* hold tightly

rus *vt.* wear, put on (on upper part of body, e.g. shirt, jacket)

rus lue *vt.* take off (clothes) *Bavarsi kēdamansi, nelmo i kētoro kērus lue mulēm kējēbēn e kēve lis netitevēn.*
If you agree, when you are old you can take off your skin and leave it behind and become a young girl again.

S

sabakh *vi.* squat

sabasab *vi.* joke

sabe *vi.* chat, tell story

sabe usēr *vt.* tell story about *Tet navar bēsabe usēr nog iar.* What I want to tell a story about concludes there.

sage *vt.* beget, produce (descendants) *Rēsage mokhot nen rēbēlebēle melilian raru.* They produced descendants who married each other.

sakh *vi.* come up, go up, ascend

sakh aut *vi.* come ashore

sam *pron.* your (sg.) *Nelis dosēlsēl tuen leg i neim sam.* I saw a European living in your house. Also **khēsam.**

san *inter.* what *Tet kētve san at?* That which you are doing, what is that?
Also **nsan.**

sangasang *vi.* sit with legs apart

sangavēl *num.* 1. ten *Bar bējēber metenal bēsangavēl, kētiv kētliis lamas nge.*
If it reaches ten days, go and look at the garden. 2. ten (when counting from 11–19), e.g. *sangavēl daman savakh* ‘eleven’

sangavēl nen *num.* tenth

sara *vt.* extend, stretch out

sara dalēn (s)he sat with legs extended out in front on ground

sara nēverēn (s)he had arms stretched out in front

saran *vt.* pass, hand over *Kērongdur kēsaran nokho nen bues khēn-gēn.*
You can pass the rope of the pig to me.

sav *vi.* dance. Also **isav.**

savakh *num.* one *Netēraru savakh ne.*

They just had one child.

seberbersi *adv.* shortly, after a short while *Seberbersi var “Koglo”.* Shortly he said “Open your eyes”.

sēkh *vi.* 1. not exist, be missing *Nestuen sēkh.* Something is missing. Also **esēkh.** 2. *conj.* or

sēkh *vt.* carry (fire) as burning firestick *Sēkh naab.* (S)he carried the burning firestick.

sēkh *vt.* stand up, erect *Rēsēkh nevet.*
They erected stones.

sēkh *vt.* 1. poke. Also **sēkhos.** 2. spear

sēkhar *vi.* disappear, get lost *Bēsien sen kamem var bav bēsēkhar.* Our language is about to disappear.

sēkhos *vt.* poke. Also **sēkh.**

sēl *vi.* enter, go inside *Bubu sēl iv bēkhēt.*
Grandfather went inside. *Matērvarēkh sēl iv i nakhe sen.* The old man went into his piece of wood.

sēl *vi.* float

sēl *vt.* 1. roast (over fire) *Ai bēle temen rēsēl nibu savakh.* He and his father roasted one piece of bamboo. 2. burn off (garden site) *Kērsēl sen gemru vovom.* The two of you should burn off your gardens first.

sēl *vt.* thread *Bēr nerangasēn nakhe tuen sēl khēn niēkh nge iv i.* He broke a branch of a tree and threaded the fish onto it.

sēl novles (s)he heated cooking stones *Sēl novles e ve nelag.* She heated the cooking stones and made the pudding.

sele *n.* anchorage, harbour *Nenge mokhov merakh nibu idēm varsakh bav i sele Lububu.* The native almond bent and then the bamboo fell almost to the anchorage at Lambumbu.

sēli *vt.* burn, set fire to

selu *vi.* swing on rope tied to branch of tree

sen *pron.* his, her, its. Also **khësen**.

sënam *ns.* your mother *Snam ble tavm bëtvale kavat khënër kavat*, “Nane, tate, mere net var bëjaansi ai.” When your mother and father come, say to them, “Mother, father, the eel said they shouldn’t eat it.”

sënamel khën *vt.* forget, forget about

sënen *ns.* mother

sënen varëkh *ns.* mother’s younger sister

sënevang *vi.* angry *Kësevesi manet bësevang mënakhëj nevdoro sen*. Don’t make that man angry in case he beats his wife.

sensen *vi.* shelter from rain under large leaf

ser *pron.* their (pl.). Also **khëser**.

seraru *pron.* their (dl.). Also **khëseraru**.

serav *vi.* hang, be suspended. Also **lëkh**.

sere *vt.* take

serokh *vi.* swim underwater

sersavakh *vi.* straight

sesakh *vi.* reach *Sevidorsi kësesakh këjëber ranelvan tanokh*. You could not reach as far as the middle over there.

sesar *vi.* (of wind) blow *Neleng sesar*. The wind blew.

sese *vt.* squeeze

sesev *vi.* jump *Atesesevsi bav i meten deswe*. The didn’t jump into the spring in the sea.

seso *vi.* walk *Bëjeso bëtmelili bëtlëkh nuvri*. They will walk back and tie the crabs.

sesov *vi.* fart audibly

sesov *vi.* be hot

set *conj.* but. Also **e**.

set *vi.* 1. be like that, be thus *Kamem mëtkhawes set at*. That’s how we originated. *Nangsen seseji*. His name is not like that. 2. be the same *Meren nen set lis usër khën tet bëtkhan esëkh*. The

next day was the same again because there was nothing to eat.

sëv *vi.* defecate

sëv *vt.* scrape, grate *Netëraru mav sëv nokhutn melëd*. Their child used to go and scrape the trunk of the *melëd* tree.

sëvër *vt.* tell off *Matërvarëkh nge sëvër kamru*. The old man told the two of us off.

sëvsëv *vi.* scrape, grate *Sëvsëv tabakh lev tuen khën demes net*. When he had finished grating, he gave one to the devil.

sevsev khën *vt.* 1. look after, care for *Sevsev khën netite air Lububu*. He looked after the children at Lambumbu. 2. teach *Matërvarëkh vale masevsev khën mokh Ambrym malev noag*. Father taught the man from Ambrym to captain the ship.

siëkh *vi.* climb *Namat nge leg iv iv iv merakh siëkh rangan nibu tuen*. There was a snake and then it climbed up a bamboo plant.

siëkh khën *vt.* climb *Air tuen siëkh khën nense*. One of them climbed a Tahitian chestnut.

sien *vi.* pregnant

sienan *vt.* conceive, be pregnant with *Sienan lis kharuen*. She conceived a second one.

sisi *aux.* not want, refuse *Kine nesisì tëtleg iag e tëtghan mere net*. I don’t want us to stay here and eat the eel.

sisil *vi.* lean

siwul *vi.* crouch, bend over

so lue *vt.* take out, remove *Lis netuakh imës e so lue*. When he saw that the *netuakh* was cooked, he removed it.

sog *pron.* my *Tokhe nane sog leg Lububu*. Before my mother used to live at Lambumbu. Also **khësog**.

sokhan *vt.* push

sokhbukh *vi.* kneel. Also **sokhsokhbukh**.

sokhsokhbukh *vi.* kneel. Also **sokhbukh**.

songon *vt.* 1. put into *Khaběj e songon i nakhaj tinseb*. He covered them over and put them into different baskets.

2. load up (ship). Also **sukhun**.

sortan *vt.* crash into, bang into
Matërvarëkh sortan ai i nevet.

The old man crashed into the rocks.

sosovlakh *vi.* smooth

sov *vi.* rot, rotten

sukhun *vt.* 1. put into 2. load up (ship)
Ajukhun noag. They loaded up the ship.
Also **songon**.

T

tabakh *sv.* 1. do all, do whole *Kine nësavarsi bavar tabakh tutunmasa*. I don't want to tell the whole story.
Atkhan tabakhër. They ate them all.
2. *postmodn.* all, every *Neste tabakh iv i noag*. Everything went onto the ship.
Getaru mërabës metebëkh tabakh. We speak every morning. 3. *adv.* afterwards, then *Tabakh misnari vale*. Then the missionary came. *Tit vom nangsen Lewili e tabakh e kine*. The name of the eldest was Lewili and then there was me.

tabëkh *vt.* cook (food) *Kine bëtabëkh nakham*. I will cook your food.

tabrakh *adv.* just *Tabrakh rongdur khën imes at*. He just knew that he had died.
Also **tebrakh**.

tagav *vt.* gather (shellfish) *Motuen bav bëtagav mesel*. Somebody will go looking for clams.

tan *inter.* who? *Tërlis tan vidor butbu bëtelëbe khaven*. Let's see who can run faster than his friend. *Tan air atmën melëkh nenëv?* Who drank kava yesterday?

tanen *n.* that place

tanokh *loc.* that place, over there, away
Mëtmaleg tanokh mëtmarëb iag. We

were living over there and making gardens here. Also **tanokhwi**.

tanokhwi *loc.* that place, over there, away. Also **tanokh**.

tartar *vi.* (of water) cascade

tat *sub.* where *Navar bavarvar usër do tat kamem mëtkhawes i*. I want to talk a little about where we came from. *Rav i tat leg i*. They went to where he lived.

tate *n.* father *Tate khësog nangsen Malmemel*. My father's name is Malmemel.

tatuve *n.* father's sister's son

tav gor *vt.* block *Nereun nevi nge tav gor meteli nen barangan nevet nge*. The giant taro leaf blocked the entrance to the cave.

tavakh *vi.* make loud noise, explode, flap
Nisën demes tavatavakh. The devil's breasts were flapping.

tavëm *ns.* your father *Snam ble tavm bëtvale kavar khënër kavar*, "Nane, tate, mere net var bëjaansi ai." When your mother and father come, say to them, "Mother, father, the eel said they shouldn't eat it."

tavëns *vi.* 1. arrive *Matërvarëkh tuen vale tavëns jëkhën*. An old man came and arrived by him. 2. happen *Tet iis tuen bëvale bëtavëns jëkhën kamem*. Something bad will come and happen to us.

tëbe *vt.* cut *Netëraru iv tëbe nibu iru*. Their children went and cut two pieces of bamboo.

tebrakh *adv.* just *Akhug tebrakh khëvale?* Have you just come? Also **tabrakh**.

tëkh *vt.* 1. take, get, fetch 2. accept
Misnari tëkh bues. The missionary accepted the boar.

tëkh jëjën *vt.* capture *Mokh Winev air atëkh jëjën matërvarëkh tuen*. The people of Winev captured an old man.

tëkh lue *vt.* 1. take out, remove *Mëtëkh lue nokhutën buag net mëtkhan.* We removed the taro stem and ate it. 2. adopt (child) *Tate nelmu i itëvarëkh e bënen atëkh lue.* When father was small, his uncles adopted him. Also **vos lue**.

tëkh melilian *vt.* 1. replace, exchange *Mëtëkh melilian noag i mëtutbuanër lis Ajin.* We replaced the canoes and sailed in them to Atchin. 2. put back on (clothes) *Iv lis e tëkh melilian muln i toro.* She went and put back on her old skin.

tëkh momouran *vt.* take alive *Atëkh momouran matërvarëkh tuen.* They took an old man alive.

telbës *vi.* spit

tëleb *vi.* 1. big, large *Setëleb navonsi.* It was not very large. 2. grown up *Netite tëleb ëns.* The child has grown up. *Netëg sog atëleb ëns.* My three children are grown up. 3. *postmodn.* numerous, abundant, be many *Mokhot tëleb atmavarvar usër tat atkhawes i.* Many people are talking about where they originated from. 4. important *Atve neste tëleb i khamil.* They did important things in the ancestral village.

telëbe *vt.* 1. go past *Nibu telëbe ningulën nenge.* The bamboo went past the top of the native almond. 2. do more than *Tërlis tan vidor butbu bëtelëbe khaven.* Let's see who can run faster than his friend.

telkhor *vi.* move away to live somewhere else *Telkhor iv jëkhën i.* He moved away to his place.

temen *ns.* father

tenivën *ns.* wife

ter *vt.* tear, rip *Ater kalek tuen it uvov.* They tore a white cloth.

ter devlen iru *vt.* tear in two, rip in two *Ater devlen iru e atbëg delvës nëverën.* They tore it in two and tied it around his arms.

terav *vi.* wait *Bubu terav e lis sëvalesi vere.* Grandfather waited and saw that he didn't come outside.

teren *vt.* 1. want, like 2. *aux.* want *Nëteren këlev natuen khën-gën.* I want you to give me some.

terer *vi.* sharp

tereter *vi.* (of kingfisher) call

tet *n.* that which, what (introduces headless relative clause) *Tet khavar ides.* What you say is good.

teteli *loc.* all over, everywhere *Mere mautbu teteli set.* The eel used to travel everywhere like that.

teteli iar *loc.* elsewhere *Nëvëlvël khën netëg air ativ teteli iar air.* I married off my daughters elsewhere.

tetelis *adv.* always *Mere mautbu tetelis set.* The eel always ran like that. Also **tunsar, rangarangan**

tetën *vi.* 1. be hot 2. be sore, painful

tetenens *vi.* 1. play 2. do unimportant things

tevën *vt.* bury

tevang *vt.* scoop up (water) *Lektërvarëkh var khën naabën var bërav bërtëvang deswe.* The old woman said to her grandchild that they would go and scoop up saltwater.

teven *ns.* side *Këjërkhën ner nakhe bav i bësnar teven vere i.* Throw the leaves away by the fence posts on the outside.

teven botuen *loc.* other side of the hill *Lamas sog ijëkh i teven botuen.* My garden is on the other side of the hill.

teven deswe *loc.* other side of the island *Atilung khën megi tuen teven deswe.* They went for a grade-taking ceremony on the other side of the island.

tevnsar *loc.* public place *Vale lis tevnsar vale vere.* He came back to the public place and came outside.

tevtëvang *n.* fog, mist

tiëkh *vt.* pull, drag, tow

tiëkh bës *vi.* fart silently
tiëkh lue *vt.* pull out, pull off
tiëkh nsuvën (s)he breathed
timal *vi.* (of sun) set *Nal timal*. The sun set. Also **imal**.
tinakh *n.* this thing *Tinakh air netriën at air*. These things are *netriën* (kind of yam).
tinseb *adj.* different *Khabëj e songon i nakhaj tinseb*. He covered them over and put them into different baskets. Also **insebi**.
titi *vt.* live with *Bënen titiër*. His uncles lived with them.
tobo *vt.* cover
togo *vi.* hold something
togo khën *vt.* tie up *Matërvarëkh iv togo khën babar*. The old man went and tied up the pig.
tokhe *adv.* long time ago, before *Tokhe nane sog leg Lububu bëtev khën bubu sog*. Before my mother lived with my grandfather at Lambumbu.
tokhe tetel *adv.* a very long time ago
tongosiëkh *vi.* climb hill *Atongosiëkh iv rakhe i*. They climbed up the hill.
torer *vi.* (of rooster) crow *Rëmetër iv iv e neto atorer*. They slept until the roosters crowed.
toro *adj.* 1. old *Lektërvarëkh toro i toro i toro navon*. The old woman was really really old. 2. *vi.* be old *Bavarsi këdamansi, nelmo i këtoro kërus lue mulëm këjëbën e këve lis netitevën*. If you agree, when you are old you can take off your skin and leave it behind and become a young girl again.
totobatën *vt.* 1. start 2. *aux.* start doing
tov *vt.* pick (fruit)
tuen *postmodn.* a (indefinite) *Navar bavarvar usër tutunmasa varëkh tuen*. I want to tell a short story.

tukhan *ns.* sister (of woman) *Kine nëbële nane sog bëtev khën tukhag sog ne mëreleg vaas Metenesel*. Just my mother and my sister and I kept living at Metenesel.
tunsar *adv.* always *Mav tunsar i nokhutën melëd usër khën tet bëtkhan esëkh*. He would always go the *melëd* tree because there was nothing to eat. Also **tetelis**, **rangarangan**.
tuoso *loc.* far away, far off, a long way off *Këjërkhënsi ner nakhe nge bav tuoso*. Don't discard the leaves far away.
tuskhëni *adv.* how *Bavarvar usër khën tat khëve tuskhëni*. I will talk about how you can make it. *Bësabe usër mëtilung tuskhëni vale jëber mësavet*. I will talk about how we came (to be here?) until today.¹ *Nedelangan kam mëtlëkh noag tuskhëni*. I don't know how we tied the canoes.
tutunmasa *n.* traditional story *Navar ides navonsi khën mësavet navar bavarvar usër tutunmasa tuen*. Thank you very much because today I want to tell a traditional story.
tutus *vi.* write. Also **lël**.
tutus nevsilian *vt.* scribble on
tuvis *vt.* wipe

U

us *part.* perhaps, maybe. Also **bar**.
usër *prep.* 1. as, like *Narëb usër sekretri*. I work as the secretary. *Relis ne usër mokhot*. It looked just like a person. 2. *vt.* be like, resemble *Susërsi tit vale vom*. It is not like the one who came beforehand. 3. go along *Matërvëvrëkh air atvale Abet atusër lemev*. The old

¹ There was a typographical error in the original, which was glossed 'I will talk about how how come until today.' I am not 100% sure of the translation I have given here. – JL.

men came to Abet and went along the level area.

usër khën *sub.* because

usus *vt.* 1. ask *Matërvarëkh usus khën masta khësen var*, “Kine navar bonog.” Father asked his boss, “I would like to resign.” 2. ask for *Misnari vale usus Lububu khën bubu sog*. The missionary came and asked my grandfather for Lambumbu.

utbu *vi.* 1. run *Tërlis tan vidor butbu bëtelëbe khaven*. Let’s see who can run faster than his friend. 2. sail (in vessel) 3. travel *Mere net mautbu i nowe iv Vërevër*. The eel used to travel along the river to Vërevër.

utbu tabakh *vt.* grow all over *Nedum utbu tabakh lamas*. Yams grew all over the whole garden.

utbuan *vt.* sail in (vessel) *Mëtlev meililian noag i mëtutbuanër*. We replaced the canoes that we had sailed in.

uvov *vi.* 1. white Also **mivës** 2. clean *Bënsëvël nakhe buvov*. I will wash the wood clean.

V

vaaru *adv.* twice *Nsivukh vaaru*. He sneezed twice. See **iru**.

vaas *svi.* 1. still, yet *Tutunmasa iv vaas*. The story keeps on going. 2. *adv.* still, yet *Atleg Loag i kastom vaas*. They lived at Loag still according to tradition.

vaasan *svt.* keep doing *Tëtbëg vaasan bav*. We will keep tying it. *Këtmetemeti mere nen nëlëkhakhan i nokho rakhe këtmabele vaasan nuvileng*. Keep an eye on the eel that I have hung up on the rope and keep chasing away the flies.

vaasavakh *adv.* once *Vaasavakh mëtvëles tuen i novles*. Once we baked one in the earth oven. See **savakh**.

vale *vi.* come

vale aut the tide is high

vangan *vt.* 1. feed 2. rear *Rëvangan babar*. They reared a pig.

var *vi.* 1. say 2. be called *Tate khësog khamil khësen ravar Khamil Usubuel*. My father’s village was called Khamil Usubuel. 3. call, address as *Netite var ëns jëbën i*. The boy already called him grandfather. 4. think *Ravar nevet khas gor aru*. They thought that the rock had closed the entrance shut on them. 5. *vt.* mention *Navar bavar mën bovom nane khësog nangsen*. I would like to mention my mother’s name first. 6. *aux.* want to *Navar bavarvar usër tutunmasa tuen*. I want to tell a traditional story. *Kine nësavarsi bavar tabakh tutunmasa*. I don’t want to tell the whole story.

var do *vt.* mention *Tit ne vom at navar dor*. I have only mentioned the first ones.

var teteli *vi.* say wrongly, mispronounce, make mistake while speaking *Navar teteli ëns*. I have made mistake.

varedog *vi.* 1. true, real *Tutunmasa net ve tet varedog*. This story is something that is true. 2. tell the truth *Bar atvaredog atvar nen mokh it imes mav alo*. Perhaps they are telling the truth that the spirit of somebody who has died goes down to the sea.

varëkh *adj.* 1. small, little 2. (of story) short *Navar bavarvar usër tutunmasa varëkh tuen*. I want to tell a short story. Also **itëvarëkh**.

varido *vt.* pay attention to *Temen savaridosi*. His father didn’t pay attention to him.

varsakh *adv.* almost, nearly *Varsakh bëtimes tabakh*. They almost all died.

varvar *vt.* reveal *Mokhot bëtvale kërsavarvarsi tet tëtivëles net*. If anybody comes, don’t reveal what we are baking.

varvar usër *vt.* 1. tell (story) *Navar bavarvar usër tutunmasa tuen.* I want to tell a story. 2. talk about *Navar bavarvar usër tate.* I want to talk about father.

vas jëkhën *prep.* against *Vësar vas jëkhën nokhutën melëd nge.* He leaned it against the *melëd* tree. Also **bavarse**

vasan toro *n.* thick bush, primary forest, deep forest. Also **naadu met.**

vase *vi.* clear bush *Atvale bëtvase nsen nemag.* They came to clear the bush beside the river.

ve *vi.* 1. be (copula) *Nane khësog ve nevdoro Lëngalëng.* My mother is a woman from Lëngalëng. *Sevesi tutunmasa burong ne.* It is not just an ordinary story. 2. happen *Nsan ve?* What's happened? 3. *vt.* make, do *Atdelangan tet bëtve.* They didn't know what they should do.

ve belebotnakhe (s)he held a slitgong beating ceremony *Nelmu i matërvarëkh sog ve belebotnakhe Vemarëng e mokh tabakh ativ.* When my father held a slitgong beating ceremony at Vemarëng, everybody went.

ve bëngën (s)he held a mortuary feast for him/her *Atve bëngën tit imes.* They held a mortuary feast for the one who had died.

ve bësien (s)he sent word *Atve bësien vale aut i.* They sent word to the mainland.

ve derëng *vt.* prepare *Nelmu tuen këvale lis e beve derëng neste air.* Next time when you come back I will prepare everything.

ve nabat (s)he scored points *Nelmu i atmave nelag set, atlëng usër atve nabat.* When they made a pudding like that, they did it to score points.

ve nelmo (s)he held a traditional ceremony

ve nelmu (s)he spent time

ve ner nakhe (s)he practised sorcery *Namat nge lev nibe e ve ner nakhe.* The snake was singing a song and practising sorcery.

ve nevsilian *vt.* mistreat *Vësakh khëtve nevsilian neste khën kamem?* Why have you mistreated us?

vël *vt.* 1. buy 2. pay for *Noag nakh tëtvëlër at mësavet.* We will have to pay for these canoes today.

velan *vt.* light (fire) *Rëvale Ameliakhus e rëvelan naab.* They came back to Ameliakhus and they lit a fire. Also **galan.**

vëlës *vt.* 1. turn around 2. *vtr.* change *Mokh it imes net mavëlës ai iv i namat.* The man who had died changed into a snake.

vëles *vt.* bake *Atvëles mere i nelag.* They baked the eel in the pudding.

vëlësan *vt.* lay down on ground *Tëkh ningulën meten nereun never nge vëlësan raadin i neten.* He took the unfurled heliconia leaves and lay them down on the ground.

vëlet *vi.* come *Meren nal bamal bëvelet beleg aatin.* Tomorrow when the sun is about to set I will come and stay by the coast.

vëlvël *vi.* buy, sell, engage in commerce

vëlvël khën *vt.* 1. sell 2. marry off (daughter) *Bubu vëlvël khën nane sog vale Metenesel i.* My grandfather married off my mother to Metenesel.

vënaaan *svt.* do all, do completely *Neleng ikhëj bër vënaaan nakhe air.* The cyclone broke all of the trees. *Ai khan vënaaan nelag.* She ate all of the pudding. *Atiëkh mere iv iv ajetiëkh vënaansi vale aut.* They dragged the eel but they couldn't pull it all the way ashore.

vënjër *vt.* comb

venokh *vt.* 1. steal *Rëvenokh nevet sog.* My money was stolen. 2. *svt.* do dishonestly *Ai mën venokh melëkh sen get.* He dishonestly drank our kava.

vër *vt.* 1. kill *Kine nalung i nowe net e nëvale e atvër kine.* I came from the river and they killed me. 2. hit, strike *Sevidorsi bëtiv alo iar i navas mënevër i main.* They couldn't pass close to the shore in case the oars struck a mine.

vër bëlautan *vt.* beat up, physically abuse *Vër bëlautan netën.* He beat up his child.

vere *loc.* outside *Këjërkhën ner nakhe bav i bësnar tevlën vere i.* Throw the leaves away by the fence posts on the outside.

vërrëkhën *vi.* spit

vërrëkhës *vt.* 1. call to *Atvërrëkhës matërvarëkh tit kine neleg bëtev.* They called the old man who I was sitting with. 2. call, address as, name *Tate khësog rëmavërrëkhës ai ravar Malmemel Usubuel.* My father is called Malmemel Usubuel.

vërës *vt.* add coconut milk to (food) *Matërvarëkh vërës nelag nge.* The old man added coconut milk to the pudding. *Ilung i nelag nge iv vërës nelag.* He walked onto the pudding and added coconut milk to it.

veres *vt.* step on

veres bëj *vt.* break by stepping on

vërong *vi.* listen

vërong khën *vt.* listen to *Kësëvërong khënsi.* Don't listen to him.

vës *vt.* add coconut milk to

vësaan *vt.* do how?, do why? *Khëtve vësaan at?* Why are you doing that?

vësakh *vi.* be how?, do how? *Khëve vësakh?* How you do make it?

vësan *vt.* throw *Atvësan nokho atvar këtbëg noag.* They threw lines and said to tie the canoes.

vësar *vt.* (of person) lean against something *Vësar vas jëkhën nokhutën*

melëd nge. He leaned it against the *melëd* tree.

vësevës *vi.* boil, bubble

vesi *sv.* try *Këtiv vesi këtlis mere bolo nge iar.* Try and go and see the big eel there.

vësvës *vi.* teach

vësvës khën *vt.* teach *Atvësvës khën netite air i skol.* They taught their children in the school.

vetevet *n.* platform (for yams). Also **nevetevet.**

vëtmas *vi.* laugh

veval *vi.* battle *Mokh Veditakh air atveval bëtev mokh Winev air.* The people of Veditakh battled with the people of Winev.

vëvën *ns.* sister (of man)

vevenokh *vi.* steal

vëvrëkh *adj.* 1. tiny *Netite vëvrëkh nge bële sën rëvale.* The tiny child and his mother came. 2. small, little (pl.) *Netite vëvrëkh atnsel nuvri.* The little children were tying together crabs. 3. *svi.* do secretly, do quietly

vëvrëkhon *svt.* do secretly, do quietly *Lue vëvrëkhon nimin air.* He secretly shot the birds.

vibën *vt.* kill. Also **vibënbën.**

vibënbën *vt.* kill *Nal vibënbën tabakh tet mëtkhovër.* The sun killed everything that we planted. Also **vibën.**

vidor *aux.* be able, can *Tërlis tan vidor butbu bëtelëbe khaven.* Let's see who can run faster than his friend. *Nevenu tuen bevidor bav bëgale nelag net.* Another village will be able to go and defeat them with that pudding. Also **rongdur.**

vivibat *vi.* gain advantage over somebody, score points over somebody

vom *vi.* 1. do first, precede *Navar bav ar mën bovom nane khësog nangsen.* I would like to mention my mother's name first. *Këtirokh sen gemru bovom.*

You will all clear the garden sites of the two of you first. 2. *adv.* first. Also **vovom**.

vomalto *n.* bird species

vomar *n.* emerald ground dove
(*Chalcophaps indica*)

vos *vt.* 1. carry *Vos nedum vale*. She carried the yam over. 2. marry, get married to 3. give birth to *Nane leg Metenesel iv vos kamemru iru*. Mother lived at Metenesel until she gave birth to the two of us.

vos lue *vt.* adopt (child). Also **tëkh lue**.

vovom *adv.* first. Also **vom**.

vuliu *vi.* sneeze three times

W-Y

we *vt.* carry *Ai we nakhaj nge*. He carried the basket.

yangayang *vi.* yellow

yeg khën *vt.* 1. want 2. *aux.* want to
Nelmo i yeg khën bëvibën mokhot iv jëkhën Bokhwi. When he wanted to kill a person, he went to Bokhwi.

yuv *vt.* pelt, throw projectile at

8.3 English–Naman finderlist

The following is a finderlist that has been constructed on the basis of the Naman–English lexicon presented in §8.2. The information that is contained in this finderlist has been kept to a minimum, so any information about word class membership of Naman forms should be obtained from the main lexical listing. It should also be noted that some semantic detail has been eliminated in this finderlist for the sake of convenience. This has sometimes resulted in forms that differ somewhat semantically ending up with the same entry in this finderlist. Forms that are listed together in a single entry should, therefore, not be assumed to be synonymous in Naman. All forms should be checked against the main lexical entries for greater semantic detail

A

a(n) **tuen**

Abelmoschus manihot **noug**

able **rongdur, vidor**

about **i tevlen**

above **rakhe**

abundant **ivën, tëleb**

abuse physically **vër bëlautan**

accept **tëkh**

accompany **bële**

across **khawes**

add coconut milk to (food) **vërës**

address as **var, vërekhës**

adopt (child) **tëkh lue, vos lue**

advantage **nabat**

afraid **mëtokhtokh**

afraid of **mëtokhtokhon**

after short while **seberbersi**

afterbirth **nakhaj nen netite**

afterward **atokh, tabakh**

again **lis**

against **bavarse, vas jëkhën**

agree **damansi**

albino **nawokh**

alight (of bird) **insëng**

alight (of fire) **ivang, ikho**

alive **mour**

all **tabakh**

all kinds of **lele**

all over **nevsilian**

almost **varsakh**

along with **bële**
 also **lis**
 always **rangarangan tetelis, tunsar**
 amid **melevën**
 amongst **melevën**
 anchorage **sele**
 and **bële, e**
 and then **merakh, mo(no)go, tabakh**
 angry **sënevang**
 ankle **bësren dalën**
 ankle rattle tree **bigvar**
 another **inseb**
 another time **nelmu tuen**
 ant
 fire **nakhans**
 sugar **lëtlët**
 very small **nesev**
 anus **bënalën nejën**
 anxious **mëtokhtokh**
 any more **mën**
 anywhere **iar air**
 April **nsangansangan nien sen mokh**
 (reteleb)
 arm **nëverën**
 armpit **nokhoven**
 around **delvës**
 arrive **tavëns**
 arrive at **jëber**
 arrow **niliu, nulu**
 as **usër**
 as far as **jëber**
 ascend **sakh**
 ashes **misnav**
 ashore **(kh)aut**
 ask *vt.* **usus**
 ask for **neng, usus**
 asleep **metër**
 at home **aim**
 Atchin, person from **dajin**
 August **nivël nen nsumsumien**
 aunt, paternal **nane varëkh**

away **tanokh(wi)**
 axe **(bat)netele**

B

back
 (of body) **netren**
 (of something) **bokhten**
 back-to-front **rëvëkhës**
 backwards **rëvëkhës**
 bad **iis**
 badly **nevsilian**
 bake **vëles**
 bamboo **nibu**
 banana **nevëns**
 banana varieties **bour, nelvatvul**
 banana leaf, dry **neblat**
 banded rail **bëliekh**
 bang into **sortan**
 banyan **nebag**
 species **bagaleb, bagaret**
 bark (of tree) **nevnen**
 barn owl **nubud**
 basket **nakhaj**
 bat **nakhabkhabil**
 bathe
 vi. **lulus**
 vt. **lumës**
 battle
 n. **nëval**
 vi. **veval**
 be **ve**
 be last **nogonog**
 be night **nu**
 be with **bële**
 beach **dabanowen**
 beach hibiscus **belag, nëveve**
 beam
 along top of wall **bunsësël**
 running from top of roof to top of wall
 nukhubkhub
 beard **naansvëlën naasen**
 beat **ikhëj, vër bëlautan**

- because (user) **khên**
before **tokhe**
beg **neng**
beget **sage**
behind **atokh, bokhten**
belly **daba(kh)an**
belongings **jëgën**
below **raadin**
bend
 down **mokhov**
 over **siwul**
beneath **melevën**
bent **mokhov**
beseech **neng**
beside **i nensen**
big **bolo, tëleb**
bind **nse**
bird **nimin**
 species **nebel yisyis, nistrëvde, nuvire,**
 vomalto, bulvus, nuvitokhotokh
bite
 vi. **khaskhas**
 vt. **khas**
blind **ibar**
block **gor khawes, tav gor**
blood **nede**
bloodline **nede**
blow
 (of person) *vt.* **khuv**
 (of wind) *vi.* **sesar**
 nose **nsong lowe devën**
blue **khanskansen**
blunt **ingot**
boar **bues**
body **nibën**
boil
 n. **menokh mivës**
 vi. **vësevës**
bone **bologon**
book **novol**
born **iyag**
bow **nivës (mangarngakhei)**
boy **netitemën**
 boy, little **mokh varëkh**
branch **nerangasën**
 crossed (that creaks in wind) **navrarët**
breadfruit **nebet**
 pounded **khëjkhëj**
break
 vi. **mokhoj**
 vt. **bër (bëj)**
 break to pieces **bëj(bëj)**
 break by stepping on veres **bëj**
 break (of day) **nout iren**
breast **nisën**
breastfeed **isës**
breath **nsuvën**
breathe **tiëkh nsuvën**
broken **mokhoj**
brother
 (of man) **khavën**
 (of woman) **man**
brother's wife **lebërëns**
bubble *vi.* **vësevës**
build (house) **khël(khël khën)**
burn
 vi. **ikho**
 vt. **khan, sëli**
 burn down (of fire) *vi.* **inev**
 burn off (garden site) **sël**
burnt (of food) **khabu**
bury **tevën**
bush **naadu**
 bush, thick **naadu met, vasan toro**
 bush, to/in **lakhe**
bushman **daut**
but **set**
butterfly **nivtivët**
buttocks **botkhorën**
buy
 vi. **vëlvël**
 vt. **vël**

C

calf (of leg) **dabakhan dalën, nelvan dalën**

call *vt.* **var, vërëkhës**

call (of kingfisher) *vi.* **tereter**

can **rongdur, vidor**

Canarium sp. **nenge**

canoe **noag**

capture **tëkh jējën**

care for **sevsev khën**

carelessly **nevsilian**

carry **rov, vos, we**

carry (firestick) **sëkh**

cascade (of water) **tartar**

cassia **names revrev**

Castanospermum australe **navirit**

cave **barangan nevet**

Chalcophaps indica **vomar**

change **vëlës**

chase **bele**

chat **sabe**

chest **morogon**

chew

vi. **khaskhas**

vt. **khas**

chicken **neto**

chief **miliun, numal**

child **netën, netite**

child, eldest **mokh amu**

child, youngest **mokh atokh**

chin **naasen**

chiton **dakhvit**

cicada **bëgale**

circumcised **itër lokhor**

circumcision ceremony **lokhor**

Circus approximans **nebel**

clam **mesel**

clam, saltwater **mesel nen deswe** *n.*

claw (of crab) **nelvën**

clean *adj.* **uvov**

clear

bush **vase**

garden site **irokh**

throat **khakhar**

climb

vi. **siëkh**

vt. **siëkh khën**

climb bamboo pole (of yam vine)

naaletelet

climb hill **tongosiëkh**

close *adv.* **lile**

close to **jëkhën**

close *vt.* **gor**

close eyes **ibël**

closed **gor**

clothes **nusulu**

cloud **langnous, nabar**

coast

by **aatin, alo**

to **(kh)aut**

coconut **neni**

coconut shell **bëlasën neni**

coconut, dry **neni merang**

coconut crab **natutuvni**

coconut lory **ninsëv**

cold

n. **melaas**

adj. (of inanimate object) **memelade**

adj. (of living thing) **melaas khas**

Columba vitiensis **doro**

comb

n. (on chicken) **nsensen**

vt. **vënjër**

come **vale, velet**

come ashore **sakh (kh)aut**

come back **melili**

come (from) **khawes, melu**

come into existence **iyag**

come next **lung usër**

come out **melu**

come up **sakh**

commoner **mokh tinseb**

conceive (child) **sianan**

concerning **i tevlën**

conclude (of story) **nog**

constipated **igal**
 construct (house) **khël(khël khën)**
 cook *vt.* **tabëkh**
 cooked **imës**
 cooking stone **nevet novles**
 copulate **khovkhov**
 copulate with **jibe, khov**
 coral, dead **lenslens**
Cordia dichotoma **nibël**
 cordyline **na(kh)ari**
 cough **ijev, nsëv**
 cough up phlegm **khakhar**
 count (**dongo**)**dongon**
 cover *vt.* **khabëj, tobo**
 crab **nuvri**
 crab hole **bënalën nuvri**
 crab species **metele, nakhav**
 crash into **sortan**
 crawl **kharakh**
 crazy **dudu, lëngalëng**
 create **lëng**
 creek **bënal**
 crooked **khakhabidukh, mekhalakhal**
 cross *vt.* **bëleg**
 crouch **siwul**
 crow (of rooster) **torer**
 crowded **ivën**
 cry **iteng**
 current (in sea) **deswe**
 cut **bët, tëbe**
 cut apart **khas khur**
 cut down trees **nsumnsum**
 cut up **khores**
 cycad, *Cycas circinalis* **meil**
 cyclone **neleng ikhëj, neleng rakhas**

D

damagingly **bëlautan**
 dance (**i**)**sav**
 dark **nout bëlnu**

daughter **netën**
 dawn *vi.* **nout iren**
 day **metenal**
 day, next **meren nen**
 day after tomorrow **boas**
 day before yesterday **noas**
 daybreak **nout renien**
 daylight *n.* **noutrenien**
 dead **imes**
 deaf **borer**
 deceive **lëbis**
 December **nivël nen demes**
 deep forest **naadu met, vasan toro**
 defeat **gale**
 defecate **sëv**
Dendrocnide sp. **nakhakhar**
 descend **ijëv**
 devil **demes**
 devil nettle **nakhakhar, nakhakharvet**
 diarrhoea, have **dabakhan luolu**
 die **imes**
 die and leave behind **imes nsëlëng**
 die to protect **imes gor**
 different **inseb(i), tinseb, nsebseb**
 dig
 vi. **khëlkhël**
 vt. **khël**
 dirt **neten**
 disappear **sëkhar**
 discard **rëkhën**
 disgorge **luoluan**
 dishonestly **venokh**
 distribute **dongodongon**
 do **ve, irëb khën**
 do all **vënaan**
 do completely **vënaan**
 do unimportant things **tetenens**
 do very much **bë(bë)takhe khën**
 dog **libakh**
 dolphin **nigi**
 door **meteli**

down **raadin**
 down (by sea) **aatin, alo**
Dracontomelon vitiense **natabal**
 drag **tiëkh**
 dragon plum **natabal**
 dream
n. **bore**
vi. **metmetër bori**
 drink
vi. **mënmën**
vt. **mën**
 drown *vi.* **iwun**
 drunk **lëngalëng**
 dry
adj. **mes**
adj. dry (of leaves, wood) **merang**
 dry retch **deliëkh**
Ducula pacifica **nukhub**
 dugong **buedes**
 dust **dilmokhoskhos**

E

ear **borën, delngen**
 earth oven **novles**
 earthquake **numi**
 earwax **nadël**
 eat
vi. **khakhan**
vt. **khan**
 eat at taboo fire **ivil**
 eat raw **khan medemedan**
 ebb (of tide) **deswe imal**
 eel **mere**
 egg **nadël**
 eight **nsutël**
 eighth **nsutël nen**
 elbow **bulbulën (nëverën)**
 elsewhere **teteli iar**
 emerald ground dove **vomar**
 emerge **melu**
 emperor fish **maange**

end
n. **nungulën, ningulën**
vi. **nog**
 engage in commerce **vëlvël**
 enter *vi.* **sël**
 entrance **meteli**
 erect
vt. **sëkh**
adj. (of penis) **itër**
Erythrina variegata **nedar**
 escape **irëv**
 European **dosëlsël, nibov**
 evening **revrev**
 every **ngëtngët, tabakh**
 excessively **bë(bë)takhe khën**
 exchange **tëkh melilian**
 excrement **nejën, neji**
 excrement, unwiped **bëlav nejën**
 exist **ijëkh, leg**
 explode **tavakh**
 extend (limb) **sara**
 extraordinarily **luensi**
 eye **meten**
 eyeball **nadël meten**
 eyebrow **naansvëlën meten, nsëlvën meten**
 eyelash **naansvëlën meten, nsëlvën meten**
 eyelid **nevnen meten**

F

face **nokhon**
 fall
 from above **igër**
 over **idëm**
 fantail **novivetevet**
 far away **tuoso**
 fart
 audibly **sesov**
 silently **tiëkh bës**
 father **matërvarëkh, tate, temen**
 father, your **tavëm**

father's sister's son **tatuve**

fear *vt.* **mëtokhtokhon**

feather **nowen**

February **nokhorien (tëvarëkh)**

feed **vangan**

feel like (eating, drinking) **rong**

female **nevgoro**

fence

posts **bësnar**

surrounding house **metitelokho**

fetch **lev, tëkh**

fibre skirt **bëravën**

fifth **khalëmen**

fight *vi.* **balabal**

fighter **mokh nëval**

finger **nsëbën (nëverën)**

finger, little **nsëbën varëkh**

finger nail **malgavan (nëverën)**

finish *vi.* **nog**

fire **naab**

fireplace **naab**

firestick **nejën naab**

firewood **naab**

firewood, burning **nejën naab**

first **mën, (vo)vom**

fish *n.* **niëkh**

fish by torchlight **isël**

fish species **nibëv, niëkh miel**

five **ilëm**

flame *vi.* **irer**

flap **tavakh**

float *vi.* **sël**

flood *n.* **nowe tëleb**

flower **nevngan**

fly

n. **novileng**

vi. **isel, merakh**

vt. **isel khën**

flying fox

black **men-gore**

white **nuvusmo**

foam (on sea) **melab sen deswe**

fog **tevtevbang**

fold **bëleg**

arms **bëleg nëverën**

food **na(kha)khanien, (de)na(kh)an**

foot **dalën**

for nothing **burong**

foreskin **nevnën nuusën**

forest, primary **naadu met, vasan toro**

forget *vt.* **sënamel khën**

four **ives**

fourth **ives nen**

freshwater **nowe**

friend **khavën**

frightened **mëtokhtokh**

frightened of **mëtokhtokhon**

from **i**

front **bongon, nokhon**

fruit **navan**

full **ivën**

(from eating) **khabokh**

funeral **names**

funeral feast **bëngën**

G

gain advantage **vivibat**

Gallirallus philippensis **bëliekh**

garden **lamas**

garden, to/in **garsel**

Garuga floribunda **mismis**

gate **meteli**

gather (shellfish) **tagav**

gecko **mukhub**

genitals, male **lesën**

get **lev, tëkh**

get up **merakh**

giant turban shell **beig**

girl **netitevën**

give **lev**
 give birth to **vos**
 glans penis **nokhon nuusën**
 glue tree **nibël**
 go **ilung, iv**
 go all over **iv delvës**
 go along (**lung**) **usër**
 go around **delves**
 go as far as **jëber**
 go ashore (from vessel) **ijëv**
 go back **melili**
 go down **ijëv, isog**
 go for circumcision **itër lokhor**
 go inside **sël**
 go past **nsëlëng, telëbe**
 go underwater **iwun**
 go up **sakh**
 go with **bële**
 goatfish **nirësnamar**
 good **ides**
 good morning **ides metebëkh**
 goosebumps, have **bërbër**
 grade-taking ceremony **megi**
 grandchild **naabën**
 granddaughter **naabën**
 grandfather **bubu, jëbën**
 grandmother **bubu (tevet), jëbën tevet**
 grandson **naabën**
 grass **nëvilvilës**
 grate
vi. **sëvsëv**
vt. **sëv**
vt. (coconut) **kho**
 grave **devkhën**
 great hog plum **nongos bëjbëj**
 green **khanskhansen**
 ground **neten**
 grow **irakh, mour**
 grow all over **utbu tabakh**
 grown up **tëleb**
 gully **bënal**
 gums **nongoden**
 gun **nivës**

guts **nesnen**

H

hair **naansvëlën (batën)**
 half of **natuen**
 hand **nëverën**
 hand over **saran**
 hang
vi. **lëkh, serav**
vt. **lëkh(akhan), lëkh do**
 happen **tavëns, ve**
 harbour **sele**
 hawk **nebel**
 he **ai**
 head **batën**
 hear **rong**
 heart **nuvidadam**
 heat cooking stones **sël novles**
 heavy **iduv**
 heed **rong delën**
 heel **nosen dalën**
 heliconia **never**
 heliconia leaf **ner never**
 heliconia leaf, unfurled **meten ner never**
 hen **devdoro**
 her (**khës**)**en**
 here **iag, nsi**
 hermit crab **nokhto**
 hey! **naman**
Hibiscus tiliaceus **belag, nëveve**
 hiccup **mesed**
 hide **iban**
 high (of tide) **ivën, vale (kh)aut**
 hill **botuen, nirën**
 his (**khë**)**sen**
 hit **vër**
 hold *vi.* **togo**
 hold many things tightly together **go**
 hold mortuary feast **ve bëngën**
 hold slitgong beating ceremony **ve**

belebotnakhe
hold tightly **rov jējën**
hold traditional ceremony **ve nelmo**

hole
in something **barangan**
left by something **bënalën**

homewards **aim**

hot **sesov, tetën**

house **neim, nemakh**

how **tuskhëni, vësaan, vësakh**
how many/much **ivis**

hundred **nongot**

hunger **nimir**

hungry **nimir khas**

hurricane **neleng ikhëj, neleng rakhas**

husband **matërvarëkh, niliëkh**

husband's brother **nivënlel**

I

I **kine**

if **bar, bavar(si)**

ill **mësiëkh**

important **tëleb**

in **i**

in vain **burong**

incisor **nokhon nelvën**

Indian coral tree **nedar**

inflamed **mëmën**

inland **aakhus, rakhe**

Inocarpus edulis **nense**

insects swarming on ground after rain
nusokhtuvokh

inside **bëkhët, nelën**

intestine **nesnen**

Intsia bijuga **nokhmo**

iron **nete**

island **nourour**

island cabbage **noug**

island teak **nokhmo**

it **ai**

itch **khorkhor**

its **(khë)sen**

J

January **nokhorien (tëleb)**

jaw **naasen**

join *vt.* **nsubonsuboden**

joke **sabasab**

juice **neswen**

July **nivël nen narokhien**

jump **sesev**

June **nivël nen narokhien**

jungle fowl **neto dolakhei**

just **ne, tabrakh, tebrakh**

K

kava **melëkh**

keep doing **vaasan**

keep eye on **metemet**

keep in mind **nsëmdo**

kill **ikhëj, vër, vibën(bën), bën**

kingfisher **nejëkh**

Kleinhovia hospita **midag**

knee **bulbulën (dalën)**

kneel **sokh(sokh)bukh**

knife **nesëb**

know **rongdur**

knowledgeable **rongdur neste**

L

Lambumbu **Lububu**

land **neten**

language **bësiën**

Larëvat **Laravet**

large **bolo, tëleb**

last **atokh, gorti**

laugh **vëtmas**

lay down on ground **vëlësan**

leader **balabal**
 leaf **ner (nakhe), nereun**
 leaf, newly unfurled **meten**
 lean *vi.* **sisil**
 lean against **vësar**
 leave
 vi. **melu**
 vt. **jëbën, lënglëng, nsëlëng**
 left (side) **khëmir**
 leg **dalën**
 let go of **lënglëng**
 level area, to/on **lemev**
 lie in wait **ban terav**
 lie to **lëbis**
 light (fire) **galan, velan**
 light (in weight) **merere**
 lightning **nivëlivël**
 like
 prep. **user**
 vt. **teren**
 like that **set**
 limpet **degiaiv**
 lip **nevnén bongon**
 list *vt.* **dongodongon**
 listen **vërong**
 listen to **vërong khën**
 little
 (sg.) **(itë)varëkh**
 (pl.) **vëvrëkh**
 little, a **do**
 Litzlitz **Lenslens**
 live **ijëkh, leg, mour**
 live with **bële, titi**
 liver **mobun**
 load up (ship) **songon, sukhun**
 lobster **nour (nen deswe)**
 lobster, slipper **nevev**
 log **nakhe**
 long **iber**
 long time **iber**
 long time ago **tokhe**
 long way off **tuoso**

look **gëlo(gëlo), lilis**
 look after **gëlogëlo khën, metemet, sevsev khën**
 look around **gëlogëlo**
 look at **lis**
 look for **gëlo khën, mensan**
 lost **sëkhar**
 louse **nokhot**
 Lowinorokh **Awenorokh**
 lung **ner neblat**

M

Macaranga sp. **nivnu**
 mad **dudu, lëngalëng**
 maggot **noul**
 magic **ner nakhe**
 mainland, to **(kh)aut**
 make **ve**
 make garden **irëb**
 make noise **bëlaut**
 make loud noise **tavakh**
 make mistake while speaking **var teteli**
 Malay apple **naavëkh**
 male **numin**
 man **numin**
 man, old **matërvarëkh, matro**
 mangrove **nedong**
 many **ingët, tëleb**
 March **nevlemiel**
 marry *vt.* **bële, vos**
 marry off (daughter) **vëlvël khën**
 May **nsangansangan nien sen mokh**
 (rangabutuen)
 maybe **bar, us**
 me **kine**
 meat **nejokhon**
 medicine, traditional **ner nakhe**
 meeting house **naamil**
 megapode, *Megapodius freycinet* **molo**
 men, old **matërvëvrëkh**
 mention **var (do)**

message **bësien**
 middle **meten, nelvan**
 middle, in **ranelvan**
 midnight **delvaat**
 mispronounce **var teteli**
 missing (e)**sëkh**
 mist **tevtembang**
 mistreat **ve nevsilian**
 money **nevet**
 month **nivël**
 moon **nivël**
 more than **telëbe**
 Moreton Bay chestnut **navirit**
 morning **metebëkh**
 morning bird **niminedung**
 mosquito **nenom**
 moth **nivtivët**
 mother **nane, sënen**
 mother, your **sënam**
 mother's younger sister **sënen varëkh**
 mourn **leg i bëngën**
 mourning period **bëngën**
 mouth **bongon**
 move away **telkhor**
 mucus **devën**
 mud **lebeleb**
 mullet **nikhanwei**
 my (khë)**sog**

N

name
 n. **nangsën**
 vt. **vërëkhës**
 native almond **nenge**
 native lychee **nedou**
 navel **bëjën**
 near **jëkhën**
 nearby **lile**
 nearly **varsakh**

neck **nowen**
 New Guinea rosewood **na(kh)abues**
 new **imed**
 next time **nelmu tuen**
 night **bung**
 night, middle **delvaat**
 nine **nsoves**
 ninth **nsoves nen**
 nits (of lice) **nerer**
 no **esëkh**
 no longer **mën**
 noisy **bëlaut**
 nose **gunsën**
 nostril **barangan gunsën**
 not exist (e)**sëkh**
 not know **delangan**
 not want **sisi**
 not yet **maskhët**
 November **nivël nen naaletelet**
 now **evat(ëkh)nakh, evatëkh,**
 evet(ëkh)nakh, evetëkh, nsi
 numerous **ivën, tëleb**

O

oar **navas**
 occasion **nelmu**
 October **nivël nen naaletelet**
 octopus **nikhët**
 offspring **netën**
 oh my goodness! **naman**
 old **toro**
 on subject of **i tevlën**
 on top **rakhe**
 on top of **rangan**
 once **nelmu tuen, vaasavakh**
 one **savakh**
 one (of pair) **kharuen**
 only **ne**
 open
 vi. **movokh**

eyes **gëlo**
 eyes wide **langalang**
 pudding **langas**
 open space *n.* **metab**
 or **sëkh**
 ordinary **burong, dongon**
 originate **khawes**
 other **nsebenseb**
 other side
 of hill **teven botuen**
 of island **teven deswe**
 outrigger **nensem**
 outrigger pegs **batilug**
 outrigger poles **nivu**
 outside **vere**
 over there **tanokh(wi)**
 overnight *vi.* **metër**

P

Pacific pigeon **nukhub**
 paddle *n.* **navas**
 painful **tetën**
 palm
 of hand **nelën nëverën**
 tree **nenini**
 pandanus **nirum**
Pangium edule **bigvar**
 parrotfish **melekhëns**
 parrotfish species **bëlbëlvurokh,**
 nemer
 part of **natuen**
 pass (something to someone) **saran**
 path **nesel**
 pawpaw **nongos**
 pay attention **rong (delën), varido**
 pay for **vël**
 pelt **yuv**
 penis **nuusën**
 penis wrapper **nëkhovkhovën**
 penis, uncircumcised **nuvun**
 perhaps **bar, us**

person **mokhot**
 person, inland **daut**
 person, that **manen, manet**
 person (of particular place) **mokh, mar**
 perspiration **noutiret**
 pick (fruit) **tov**
 pig **babar**
 pigeon
 white-throated **doro**
 species **beligio**
 pig-killing ceremony **nelmo**
 pith, edible (of sprouting coconut) **bobën**
 neni
 place **nevenu, nout**
 place (of something) **melën**
 place, that **tanen, tanokh(wi)**
 placenta **nakhaj nen netite**
 plain **burong, dongon**
 plant
 n. **nokhutën**
 vi. **khabiëkh**
 vt. **khov**
 plantar wart **bukhurvet**
 platform (for yams) **(ne)vetevet**
 play **tetenens**
 point (of land) **bungusën**
 poke **sëkh(os)**
 pole along peak of roof **nuvubut**
Pometia pinnata **nedou**
Porphyrio porphyrio **lokholokh**
 possessions **jëgën**
 post (of house) **balabal**
 practise sorcery **ve ner nakhe**
 prawn **nour (nen nowe)**
 precede **vom**
 pre-Christian times **aim tokhe**
 pregnant **sien**
 pregnant with **sianan**
 prepare *vt.* **ve derëng**
 pretend **lëbalëb**
 produce (descendants) **sage**
 promontory **bungusën**

prow (of canoe) **bungusën**
Pterocarpus indicus **na(kh)abues**
Ptilinopus tannensis **minbuis**
 pubic area **batën darën**
 public place **tevnsar**
 pudding **nelag**
 puff **ngavangav**
 pufferfish
 with spikes **daut**
 without spikes **bubudis**
 pull **tiëkh**
 pull out **tiëkh lue**
 pumice **nebëng merah**
 punch **ikhëj**
 purple swampen **lokhlokh**
 push **sokhan**
 put **lëng**
 put across **khawes**
 put on (shirt, jacket) **rus**
 put back on (clothes) **tëkh melilian**
 put into **songon, sukhun**
 puzzle tree **midag**

Q

quake (of earthquake) **imu**
 quietly **vëvrëkh(on)**

R

rain
 n. **nous**
 vi. **nous ius**
 rainbow **lëvalëv**
 Rano, person from **derano**
 rat **labët**
 raw **medemed**
 reach
 vi. **sesakh**
 vt. **jëber**
 real **varedog**
 rear (child) **vangan**

recognise (by sight) **lisdur**
 red **miel**
 reef, ocean side **batnamal**
 refuse **sisi**
 release **lënglëng**
 remember **nsëmdo**
 remove (so) **lue, tëkh lue**
 remove (pudding) from earth oven **ras**
 (lue)
 replace **lev melën, lev melilian, tëkh**
 melilian
 resemble **usër**
 resign **nog**
 rest **rongrong**
 return *vi.* **melili**
 reveal **varvar**
 rib (ji) **galën**
 rifle **nivës**
 right (side) **khëmetu**
 ringworm **nevënvën**
 rip *vt.* **ter**
 rip in two **ter devlen iru**
 rise (of tide) **deswe ibën**
 river **nowe**
 river (near sea) **nemag**
 riverside (near sea) **nsen nemag**
 road **nesel**
 roast (over fire) **sël**
 rock **nevet**
 rock, coral **nevet mivës**
 rock, round and black **nevet met**
 roof beam (unspecified) **nuvukhoi**
 roof pole, bamboo **never**
 rooster **neto dumin**
 root **nukhurën**
 rope **nokho**
 rot **sov**
 rotten **ibu, sov**
 round **muluwul**
 rub **nsur, rëserëse**

rude to **bës bëlautan**
 ruinously **bëlautan**
 run **utbu**
 run after **bele**
 run away **irëv**

S

sad **rong usër**
 sago palm **niet**
 sail
 n. **naaben**
 vi. **utbu**
 vt. **utbuan**
 saliva **melab**
 saltwater **deswe**
 same **set**
 sand **dabanowen**
 satiated **khabokh**
 say **var**
 say wrongly **var teteli**
 scoop up (water) **teveng**
 score point **ve nabat, vivibat**
 scrape
 vi. **sëvsëv**
 vt. **sëv**
 scribble on **tutus nevsilian**
 scrotum **nevnen lesën**
 sea **deswe**
 sea almond **dovo**
 sea slug **nejevël**
 sea worms **nuud**
 sea, away from **aakhus**
 sea, calm **damat**
 sea, open **novor**
 seasnake **miviel**
 second *adj.* **kharuen**
 secretly **vëvrëkh(on)**
 section (of cane) **dangdang**
 see **lis**
 see off **lënglëng**
 seed **nsilngën**

sell
 vi. **vëlvël**
 vt. **vëlvël khën**
 semen **nowe mivës**
 send
 away **lënglëng**
 word **ve bësien**
 September **nivël nen nsumnsumien**
 set (of sun) **(t)imal**
 set fire to **sëli**
 settle **idang, insëng**
 seven **nsuru**
 seventh **nsuru nen**
 sew *vt.* **nsël**
 share out **dongodongon**
 shark **baakhe**
 sharp **terer**
 she **ai**
 shell **bëlasën**
 shelter
 vi. **iban**
 vi. from rain under large leaf **sensen**
 shin **bologon dalën**
 shine (of sun) **irer, isën**
 ship **noag**
 shirt **nusulu**
 shoot
 vi. **ilu**
 vt. **lue**
 shoot fish **lulueiëkh**
 shore, to **(kh)aut**
 short **bukhubukh**
 short (of story) **(itë)varëkh**
 shortly **seberbersi**
 shoulder **berberën**
 shout **iwul**
 shrink **inur**
 shrivel **inur**
 shut **gor**
 sibling with same mother and father
 niagan
 sick **mësiëkh**

side **galën, tevlën**

sing **iyel**

sing song **lev nibe**

sink **iwun**

sister

of man **vëvën**

of woman **tukhan**

younger, of woman **naarwon**

sister's son **metelo**

sit **leg**

cross-legged **bëleg dalën**

with knees together **bëlkhoj**

with legs apart **sangasang**

with legs extended **nsensokhorukh**

with legs extended out in front on

ground **sara dalën**

six **nsous**

sixth **nsous nen**

skin **nevnën**

skin, dry **mulën**

skinny **morot**

skull **bëlasën batën**

sky **misnirin**

sleep

vi. **metër**

n. (in eye) **naguv**

sleep soundly **metër mel**

sleeping place **melën**

sleepy **duel**

slipper lobster **nevev**

slippery **nsebliëkh, nsensur**

slitgong **natengteng**

slitgong beating ceremony **belebotnakhe**

small

(sg.) **(itë)varëkh**

(pl.) **vëvrëkh**

smash **bëjbëj**

smell

n. **mevën**

vt. **ingus**

smoke

n. **niisën**

vi. **ies**

smoky **ies**

smooth **sosovlakh**

snake **namat**

sneeze

once or twice **nsivukh**

three times **vuliu**

sniff

vi. **nsong**

vt. **ingus**

snore **ngod**

snot **devën**

soft **nselav**

soil **neten**

sole of foot **nelën dalën**

some **natuen**

somebody **motuen**

something **nestuen**

son **netën**

song **nibe**

sorcerer **mokhi**

sorcery **ner nakhe, nevinvukh**

sore

adj. **tetën**

n. **menokh**

soul **nen, ninin**

sound asleep **metër mel**

sow **babar**

speak **ibës**

speak inconsiderately to **bës bëlautan**

speak language **lev bësien**

spear

n. **nowins**

vt. **sëkh**

spend

night **metër**

time **ve nelmu**

spider web **dakhan**

spirit **nen, ninin**
 spirit, white-skinned **khabët**

spit
n. **melab**
vi. **vërékhën, telbës**

split
vi. **devlen iru**
vt. **ngar(angar)**

Spondias dulcis **nongos bëjbëj**

spring **meten nowe**
 spring, freshwater (in sea) **meten deswe**

spur (of rooster) **gawen**

squat **sabakh**

squeeze **sese, vës**
 squeeze liquid out of **ivi**

squid **nikhët terev**

stand up
vi. **itër**
vt. **sëkh**

star **mënsë**

start **totobatën**

stay **ijëkh, leg**
 stay behind **leg nsar**
 stay with **bële**

steal
vi. **vevenokh**
vt. **venokh**

step on **veres**

stick **nakhe**

still **vaas**
 still alive **mour nsar**

stingray **nikhasarvokh**

stink **ibu**

stone **nevet**

stonefish **niniv**

story **bësien**
 story, traditional **bësien metivar, tutunmasa**

straight **sersavakh**

stream **nowe**

stretch out (limb) **sara**

strike **vër**

string **nokho**

strong **khair**

subside (of flood) **itab, idang, mes**

suck *vi.* **isës**

sugarcane **nijëv**

sun **nal**

sunshine **nal**

surprised **der khën**

surround **iv delvës**

suspend *vt.* **lëkh(akhan)**

suspended **lëkh, serav**

swamp **nelem**
 swamp harrier **nebel**

sweat *n.* **noutiret**

swell up **lub**

swim
 from one place to another **garagar**
 underwater **serokh**

swing on rope **selu**

swollen
 of muscle **lub**
 of sore **mëmën**

Syzygium sp. **naavëkh**

T

taboo place **khamil tub, nout iis**

Tahitian chestnut **nense**

tail **nokhokhorën**

take **lev, sere, tëkh**
 take alive **tëkh momouran**
 take care of **metemet**
 take off (shirt, jacket) **rus lue**
 take out (so) **lue, tëkh lue**
 take place of **lev melën**
 take with **rangan**

talk **bësbës**
 talk about **varvar usër**
 talk quietly **bës vëvrëkh**

tall **iber**

Tanna fruit dove, large **minbuis**

taro **buag**
 taro, giant **nevi**

taste rong	think nsēmnsēm , var think of nsēm
teach vi. věsvēs vt. věsvēs khën , sevsev khën	third atël nen
tear n. neswen meten vt. ter (devlen iru)	thirty (na) ngavël itël
tell (story) varvar usër	this one evan
tell lie lëbalëb off sever story sabe story about sabe usër truth varedog	thread vt. sël
ten sangavël	three itël
tendon nou	throat nuvididelën
tenth sangavël nen <i>Terminalia catappa</i> dovo	throw vësan throw away rëkhën throw projectile at yuv
testicle nadël lesën	thumb nsëbën titëleb
thank you ides thank you very much ides navonsi	thunder n. belever
that one evan	thus set
thatch for roof niet	tide deswe
their (dl.) (khë)seraru (pl.) (khë)ser	tie vt. milëns , lëkh , bëg (do) tie together bëg nsubonsuboden , nsel tie up togo khën
them (dl.) (r)aru (pl.) air	tightly jëjën
there iar	time nelmu
they (dl.) (r)aru (pl.) air	tiny vëvrëkh
thick mitël	tired lues , nibën ikhans
thicket (of trees) golon	to (person) jëkhën , khën (thing, place) i
thigh beligën	today mësavet
thin of inanimate objects milmilëv of living things morot	toe nsëbën (dalën) toe, big nsëbën titëleb toe, little nsëbën varëkh
thing neste thing, that etne thing, this tinakh	toenail malgavan (dalën)
	tomorrow meren
	tongs (for holding hot stones) nagalavat
	tongue nelwemen
	too lis
	tooth nelvën
	top ningulën , nungulën top, right at rakhe nsar , rakhe tetel
	tow tiëkh
	travel ilung , utbu
	tree nakhe , nokhutën
	tree fern barës

tree species **bëbale, bëlës, bëlëv, dumleb, melëd, midag varavar, mismis, mose, nëbig, nebou, netuakh, nevkhu, nivnu, nsëbli, melile, naanwei, gariting**

trevally **minsin**

Trichoglossus haematodes **ninsëv**

trick **lëbis**

trochus **nelel**

true **varedog**

trunk (of tree) **nokhutën**

try **vesi**

tuber (of yam) **nesnan**

turn *vt.* **rëvëkhës, vëlës**

turtle **nivu**

twenty (na)**ngavël iru**

twice **vaaru**

two **iru**

Tyto alba **nubud**

U

uncle, maternal **bënen, bibi**

uncooked **medemed**

underneath **melevën**

until **jëber (khën)**

unwrap **langas**

up (in bush) **aakhus**

up high **rakhe nsar, rakhe tetel**

up to **jëber**

urethral opening **nsilën miën**

urinate **mimi**

urine **miën**

Uripiv **Orebev**

Uripiv, person from **dorebev**

us

(dl. excl.) **kamem(a)ru, kamru**

(dl. incl.) **(i)getaru, (i)gëtaru**

(pl. excl.) **kam(em)**

(pl. incl.) **(i)get, (i)gët**

used up **inet**

V

vagina **nakhlansën**

Vao, person from **devau**

vas deferens **nukhurën bagan lesën**

vein **nou**

vertigo, suffer from **maamadokh**

very **bë(bë)takhe, navon**

very long time ago **tokhe tetel**

village

ancestral **khamil**

village, to/in **aim**

vine **nokho**

vine species **naval, more**

voice **delën**

vomit **luolu**

vomit up **luoluan**

W

wait **itër, terav**

wait for **lënglëngan**

wake up *vi.* **merakh**

Wala, person from **davala**

walk **ilel, lungolung, seso**

walk after **lung usër**

walk along **lung usër**

walk in direction of **lung usër**

walk with walking stick **jëbejëb**

wall (of house) **naribu**

wander **isëb**

want **teren**

want to (eat, drink) **rong**

want to **var, yeg khën**

warrior **mokh nëval**

wart **navan naari**

wash **nsëvël**

wash hands **nsënsëvël**

watch *vt.* **meten, lis**

watch out **rong**

watch over **metemet**

water **nowe**

wave *n.* **nenav**

wax (in ears) **nadël**

way through **meteli**

we

(dl. excl.) **kamem(a)ru, kamru**(dl. incl.) **(i)getaru, (i)gëtaru**(pl. excl.) **kam(em)**(pl. incl.) **(i)get, (i)gët**wear **rus**web **dakhan**

wet

adj. **imim***vt.* **lumës***vt.* **nsëvël**whale **lidumdum**what **(n)san**whatever **nestuen mënsi**when **nangsen**where **(e)abe**whisper **bës vëvrëkh**white **mivës, uvov**whitewood **duov**whitewood species **nikëns**who **tan**whoever **motuen mënsi**whole **tabakh**why **vësaan, vësakh**wide-eyed (**gëlo**) **langalang**wife **lektërvarëkh, nevdoro, tenivën**

wife's

brother **mukhlakh**father **balkhën**wildfowl **neto dolakhei**wilt (of leaves) **bëmen**wind *n.* **neleng**wind, east **naadu, neleng mitëralo**wind, north **dokholo**wind, northwest **naadu maraakhus**wind, south **khaun**wind up (rope, vine) **nsele**wing **nokhoverën**wipe **tuvis**wipe (anus) **nsor**with **bëtev (khën), nar**wither (of leaves) **bëmen**woman **nevdoro**woman, old **lektër(varëkh)**women, old **lektërvëvrëkh**wood **nakhe**work *vi.* **irëb**worried **mëtokhtokh**write *vi.* **tutus, lël****Y-Z**yam **nedum**yam variety **birav, nakhënsen,****naribon, nelënselëns, netriën**yam, any long variety **nedum vovos**yawn **khanmo**year **neskho**yellow **yangayang**yellow white-eye **nëvilakhalakh**yes **a'a, ides**yesterday **nenëv**yet **vaas**

you

(sg.) **a(khu)g**(dl.) **(i)gemar, (i)gëmar, (i)gemru,****(i)gëmru**(pl.) **(i)gem, (i)gëm**your (sg.) **(khë)sam***Zosterops flavifrons* **nëvilakhalakh**

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