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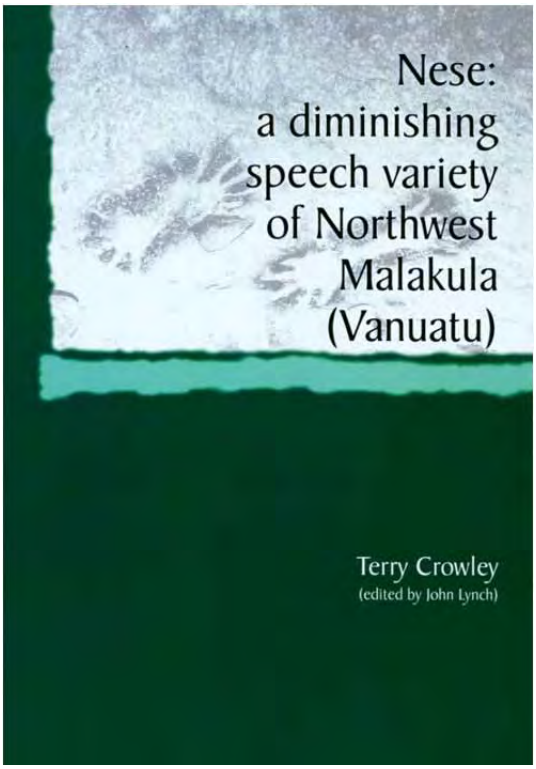

2006 ISBN 0858835665

Prices: Australia AUD $29.70 (incl. GST)

International AUD $27.00

577 Nese: A dminishing speech variety of Northwest Malakula (Vanuatu)

Terry Crowley (edited by John Lynch)

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

Nese (also meaning 'what') is the name of the language variety that was traditionally spoken along the northwestern coast of Malakula, Vanuatu (see Map 1) in the area commonly referred to as Matanvat, from the modern village of Lerrongrrong in the north to Tontarrasak in the south, and inland for four or five kilometres. Its traditional southerly neighbour is Najit, spoken in the area of Tanmial, while to the northeast along the coast is the traditional area of the Naha ('what') speech community, a variety of which is now spoken in the village of Vovo. A further variety—for which no name has yet been recorded—is associated with the Alovas area further to the east along the northern coast of Malakula. Finally, a variety known as Njav originates from the area inland from Tanmial to the east and south of Alovas, though its speakers have relocated to the small village of Tanmaliliv in the Espiegles Bay area.

These five communalects exhibit substantially differing degrees of linguistic viability. The Naha communalect of Vovo village is actively spoken, and based on the 1989 census figures, it possibly has around 170 speakers today. The communalect of Alovas reportedly has only about 15 speakers left, with the population of this village having shifted substantially to Naha, bringing the total population of Naha speakers today to about 225. Njav is reportedly still the daily language of the small village of Tanmaliliv. It had an estimated 10 speakers in 1989. Najit is moribund, though in this case the replacement language is the Espiegles Bay variety of what is referred to in the literature as the Malua Bay language.

Finally, Nese—the subject of the present study—is also moribund, being actively spoken only in the small hamlet known locally as Matanvat SDA (Seventh Day Adventist) by a single extended family consisting of two brothers and their wives, along with their children and their parents. There are speakers of Nese also to be found in the small villages of Lerrongrrong, Tontarr, Senbukhas and Tontarrasak, though the dominant language of these communities is now Bislama. Bislama has come to be the dominant language as a result of extensive settlement of the Matanvat area by people from other parts of Malakula. Of the entire Matanvat area population of about 400 today, only five families represent the original population of the area, and the total number of speakers of Nese is probably no more than 20. Children are no longer learning this speech variety, and most adults in the Matanvat area now seldom use it even when speaking with their own relatives with whom they share a knowledge of Nese.

Nese: a diminishing speech variety of Northwest Malakula (Vanuatu)

Pacific Linguistics 577

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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
Nese: a diminishing speech variety of Northwest Malakula (Vanuatu)

Bibliography.
ISBN 0 85883 566 5

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

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

Copyedited by Basil Wilson
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

Table of contents

List of maps viii
Preface ix
Acknowledgements xi
Abbreviations xii
Conventions in citing examples xiii

1 Introduction 1
1.1 Geographical and demographic background 1
1.2 Present and past studies 4
1.3 Spelling and dictionary entries 4

2 Nese–English vocabulary 6

3 English–Nese finderlist 23

4 A Nese story 36

5 Phonology 38
5.1 Phoneme inventory 38
5.2 Stress 42
5.3 Phonotactics 42
5.4 Ablaut 43
5.5 Prefix vowel assimilation 47

6 Grammar **49**
6.1 Pronouns 49
6.2 Nouns 50
6.2.1 Noun derivation 50
6.2.2 Possession 52
6.2.2.1 Indirect possession 52
6.2.2.2 Direct possession 54
6.2.2.2.1 Distant inalienable possession 57

6.2.2.2.2 Close inalienable possession 57
6.2.2.2.3 Direct possession with nominal possessors 61
6.2.2.2.4 Unsuffixed directly possessed nouns 62
6.2.3 Noun phrase modifiers 64
6.3 Verbs 66
6.3.1 Verbal prefixes 66
6.3.2 Verbal suffixes 71
6.3.3 Verbal complexes 74
6.4 Syntax 74
6.4.1 Simple declarative clauses 74
6.4.2 Interrogative clauses 78
6.4.3 Complex sentences 80

References 81

Maps

Map 1: Vanuatu and the location of Northwest Malakula 2
Map 2: Nese and its linguistic neighbours in the Matanvat area 3

Preface

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

On the inside front cover of a draft version of this monograph, Terry had this to say in Bislama to people of the Matanvat area of Malakula:

> *Olgeta toktok we i stap insaed long buk ia, Terry Crowley i bin karem long Matanvat long Septemba 2002. From se hemia fes taem we mi traem blong raetem lanwis Nese blong Matanvat, bae mi glad tumas sapos yufala i save makem gud eni mistek we yufala i faenem mo bae mi save stretem taem mi kambak nekis taem blong gohed long wok blong yumi.*
>
> [Translation: Terry Crowley collected the information in this book in Matanvat in September 2002. Because this is the first time that I have tried to write the Nese language of Matanvat, I would be very pleased if you could mark any mistakes which you find, and I will be able to correct them when I next return to continue our work.]

Unfortunately, of course, he never returned, and this is all the information we have. And given that Nese is spoken by fewer than 20 people, and that it is unlikely that any other linguist would be working on the language in the foreseeable future, it seems that this may be all the information we are ever going to get. Consistent with Terry's strongly held belief that the results of field research should be made available as soon as practicable, and in a form useful to the speakers, I was asked to go through this draft and do some general editing and tidying-up for publication. There will be places in the text where his statements are inconclusive, for lack of data: but I feel that it is important to make available what he had written. In a few cases 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 ground-breaking work on Bislama. He published a dictionary (in a number of editions), a reference grammar, and a history of the language, as well as numerous articles on various aspects of its history, vocabulary and structure. He even produced a University-level course on Bislama—written entirely in Bislama. He was involved in committees attempting to standardise the spelling system of the language, and also in publications and activities in relation to national language and vernacular education issues.

Terry had a passion for languages and for linguistics which was evident not only in his teaching but also in many of his writings. In particular, he was concerned that the results of his research should, wherever possible, be made available not only to other professional linguists but also, in an accessible form, to speakers of the languages and to other ni-Vanuatu who might be interested. This monograph is published at the same time as his *Naman: a vanishing language of Malakula (Vanuatu)*, *Tape, a declining language of Malakula (Vanuatu)*, and *The Avava language of central 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

Thanks are due to Chief Grégoire Kaku Salior and David Meltelili for so enthusiastically providing the linguistic data which form the basis of this preliminary study, as well as Annie Hymak for overcoming her serious initial trepidation and agreeing to record a short text in Nese. Grégoire and his family also provided accommodation during my visit to the Matanvat area in September 2002, for which I am grateful. Appreciation is also offered for the suggestion from Dudley and Aleris Fathley of Matanvat Primary School that I visit Matanvat in the first place, and for their support and friendship while I was there. I would like to thank Jimmy Simeon of Vinmavis village for acting as my companion and guide on that visit.

For providing all the necessary help with the issuing of permits and visas in association with my field research, I thank Ralph Regenvanu of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre. Thanks are also due to Hannah Vari-Bogiri of the Pacific Languages Unit of the University of the South Pacific for making available funds from the UNESCO project *Indigenous Language Revitalisation and Preservation in Melanesia (and the Pacific).*

Finally, I would like to thank all those who went out on midnight search parties to rescue this visiting linguist who had somewhat foolishly managed to get lost on foot alone—and in serious devil territory—on his first night in Matanvat, and ended up being recovered almost in the next language area at Espiegles Bay.

Terry Crowley
Hamilton, New Zealand
January 2003

Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ACC	accompanitive
adj.	adjective
adv.	adverb
COMPL	completive
conj.	conjunction
DAT	dative
DL	dual
ES	echo subject
EXCL	exclusive
IMP	imperative
INCL	inclusive
INST	instrumental
inter.	interrogative
IRR	irrealis
LOC	locative
loc.	locational
n.	indirectly possessed noun
NEG	negative
ns.	directly suffixed noun (close inalienable possession)
ns.d.	directly suffixed noun (distance inalienable possession)
num.	numeral
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
postmod.	postmodifier
prep.	preposition
PROHIB	prohibitive
pron.	pronoun
REAL	realis
REDUP	reduplication
REL	relative clause
SG	singular
sub.	subordinator
svt.	serialised transitive verb
TL	trial
vi.	intransitive verb
vt.	transitive verb

Conventions in citing examples

Examples are glossed using the abbreviations just presented, with morphological 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:

nanata-k
eye-1SG
'my eye'

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

de-rij
1SG:IRR-speak
'I will speak'

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 Nese original:

Ø-kol-o
3SG:REAL-carry.on.shoulders-3SG
'(s)he carried it on his/her shoulders'

1 *Introduction*

1.1 Geographical and demographic background

Nese (also meaning 'what') is the name of the language variety that was traditionally spoken along the northwestern coast of Malakula, Vanuatu (see Map 1) in the area commonly referred to as Matanvat,[1] from the modern village of Lerrongrrong in the north to Tontarrasak in the south, and inland for four or five kilometres. Its traditional southerly neighbour is Najit [natʃit], spoken in the area of Tanmial, while to the northeast along the coast is the traditional area of the Naha ('what') speech community, a variety of which is now spoken in the village of Vovo. A further variety—for which no name has yet been recorded—is associated with the Alovas area further to the east along the northern coast of Malakula. Finally, a variety known as Njav [ntʃap] originates from the area inland from Tanmial to the east and south of Alovas, though its speakers have relocated to the small village of Tanmaliliv in the Espiegles Bay area. Map 2 shows the pre-contact locations of these various speech communities.

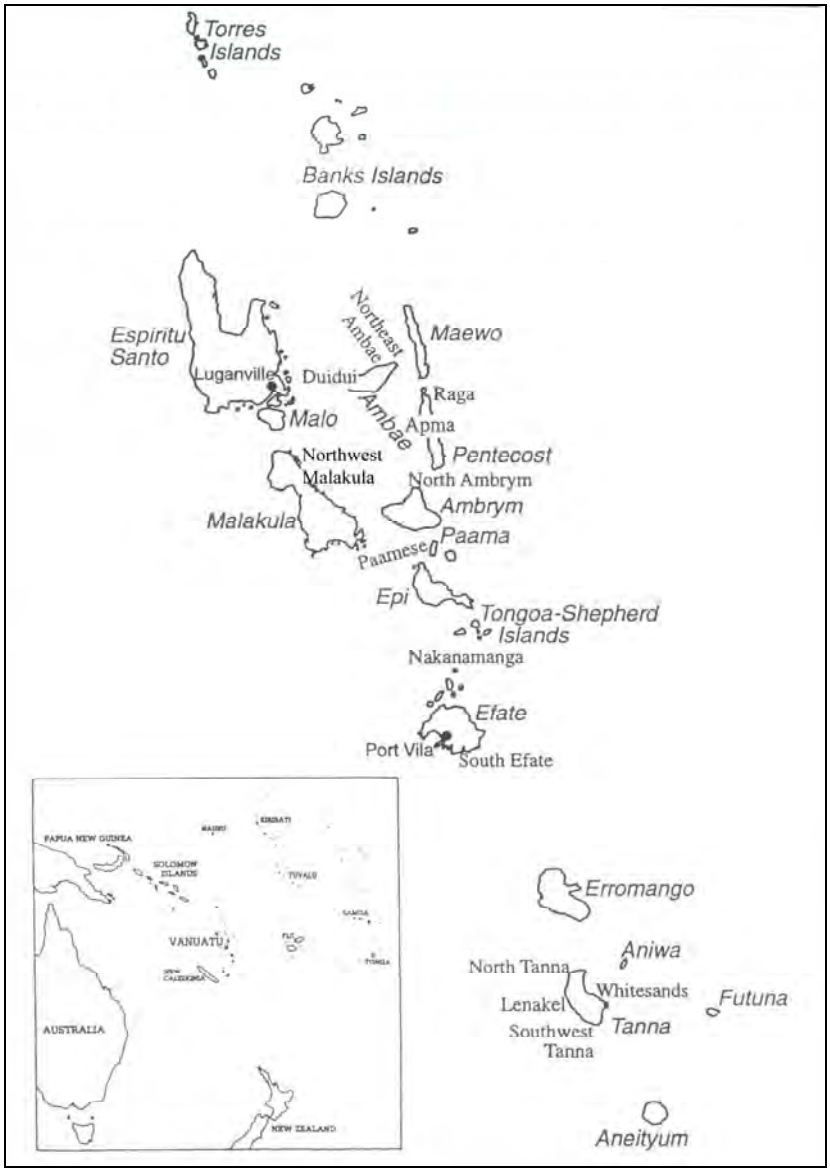
These five communalects exhibit substantially differing degrees of linguistic viability. The Naha communalect of Vovo village is actively spoken, and based on the 1989 census figures, it possibly has around 170 speakers today. The communalect of Alovas reportedly has only about 15 speakers left, with the population of this village having shifted substantially to Naha, bringing the total population of Naha speakers today to about 225.[2] Njav is reportedly still the daily language of the small village of Tanmaliliv [tanmalilip]. It had an estimated 10 speakers in 1989. Najit is moribund, though in this case the replacement language is the Espiegles Bay variety of what is referred to in the literature as the Malua Bay language (Lynch & Crowley 2001:82).

Finally, Nese—the subject of the present study—is also moribund, being actively spoken only in the small hamlet known locally as Matanvat SDA (Seventh Day Adventist) by a single extended family consisting of two brothers and their wives, along with their children and their parents. There are speakers of Nese also to be found in the small villages of Lerrongrrong, Tontarr, Senbukhas and Tontarrasak, though the dominant language of these communities is now Bislama. Bislama has come to be the dominant language as a

[1] The name Matanvat is derived from the local name Natanv'at /natanv̩at/ 'stony ground'. The same place is sometimes referred to locally as Metenvet (see §5.4 for a discussion of the alternation between *a* and *e* in Nese). Published sources have sometimes also used the name Matanavat.

[2] The estimate of 475 speakers of the Vovo language in Lynch and Crowley (2001:82) was probably overly generous.

result of extensive settlement of the Matanvat area by people from other parts of Malakula. Of the entire Matanvat area population of about 400 today, only five families represent the original population of the area, and the total number of speakers of Nese is probably no more than 20. Children are no longer learning this speech variety, and most adults in the Matanvat area now seldom use it even when speaking with their own relatives with whom they share a knowledge of Nese.



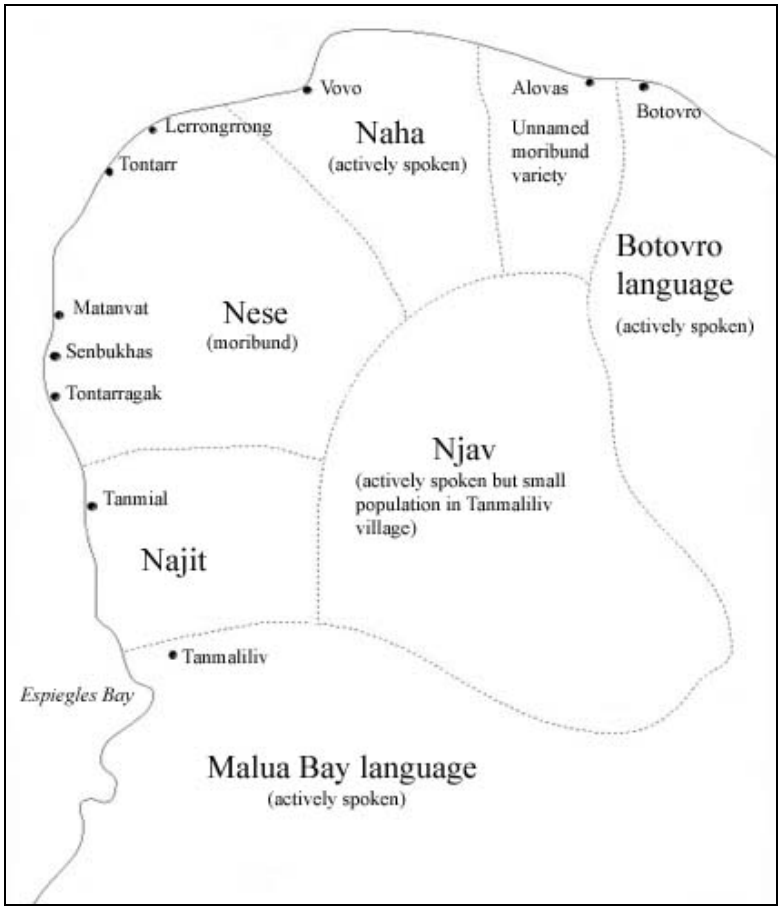
Map 1: Nese and its linguistic neighbour in the Matanvat area

The extent to which the five varieties referred to above differ has so far proved difficult to establish. It is clear that there is a substantial linguistic boundary between Alovas and Botovro on the one hand and between Tanmial and Espiegles Bay on the other, with no real prospects of mutual intelligibility across either boundary. With respect to the five communalects referred to above from the Vovo–Matanvat area, however, while they are locally spoken of as five different 'languages', people are reportedly also able to

communicate with ease between the different groups. It is not clear, however, if this is because the five communalects are simply separately named mutually intelligible dialects of a single language,[3] or if there are several distinct languages—and possibly as many as five—with speakers having extensive passive commands of other languages.[4]

Following the conservative approach to the determination of language numbers adopted in Lynch and Crowley (2001:1–4), and comparing my own lexical data and Tryon's (1976) wordlist, I feel that the listing in Lynch and Crowley (2001:82, 89) of what was referred to as Vovo (i.e. Naha) and Matanvat (i.e. Nese) as separate languages should be revised, and that these two communalects should be treated tentatively as differently named varieties of the same language.

The reason that this description is based on data gathered on the moribund Nese variety rather than actively spoken Naha is due primarily to local interest. A chance meeting in Lakatoro early in September 2002 between myself and Chief Grégoire Kaku Salior led to an immediate—and enthusiastic—invitation to me to visit the Matanvat area to begin the task of linguistic documentation. A short visit was arranged later that month during which the information contained within the present preliminary study was gathered.



Map 2: Nese and its linguistic neighbours in the Matanvat area

[3] Such a situation is not uncommon in other parts of Malakula.

[4] This pattern of 'dual-lingualism' is also fairly common in different parts of Melanesia.

1.2 Present and past studies

The present study is based exclusively on data in Nese that was gathered in Tontar village in the Matanvat area. The only published linguistic data from this part of Malakula is Tryon's (1976) short wordlist from Vovo village, and nothing at all has ever been published on Nese or any of the other communalects referred to above.

Information obtained locally indicates that a French linguist by the name of Jean-Louis Riallou recorded a substantial amount of data on Nese in the 1970s. I am unaware of any published material arising out of this research. It is hoped that material from this field-trip may still be held in the archives of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, though this has not yet been checked.[5]

In 1998, the Functional Literacy Office of the World Vision organisation produced and distributed a number of booklets featuring written Nese vocabulary with the titles *Kasem Smol save long lanwis*, *Smol buk blong kakae* and *Buk blong Raet: Matanvat*. However, the spelling system that is used in these booklets is inaccurate and inconsistent in a number of significant respects.

1.3 Spelling and dictionary entries

Material in this study—with the exception of the discussion of the phonology in Chapter 5, which is transcribed in the standard symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet—is presented in a practical orthography that is based on principles already accepted for other languages of central and northern Malakula where similar features are present and where writing systems have already been developed. It should be noted in particular that:

- The voiceless affricate /c/ is represented orthographically as *j*, just as we find in the spelling system for Northeast Malakula, as well as Bislama.
- The velar nasal /ŋ/ is represented by the digraph *ng*, as is commonly the case in languages of Malakula.
- The apicolabials are distinguished from the plain labials by means of a following apostrophe, e.g. *b'*, *m'*, just as we find in the spelling system that has already been developed for V'ënen Taut.
- The fricatives /ɣ̟/, /v/ and /ɣ/ are represented orthographically as *v'*, *v* and *kh* respectively, following widespread practice elsewhere on Malakula of using *kh* for velar fricatives, and of using the symbols for the voiced rather than the voiceless allophones of the labial fricatives.
- The alveolar trill /r/ is represented as the digraph *rr* while the retroflex flap /ɾ/ is represented as the single letter *r*, following the practice already established for Northeast Malakula.

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

---

[5] *Unfortunately, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre has no record of this person or of any recordings which he might have made – JL*

	Phonemic form	Spelling
‘hook’	/v̪aŋe/	*v’ange*
‘hill’	/nav̪ŋe/	*nav’nge*
‘bush’	/novorɣa/	*novorrkha*
‘flying fox’	/nakara/	*nakara*
‘child’	/ciblaɣ/	*jiblakh*
‘seven’	/ɣodit/	*khodit*
‘twenty’	/ŋovulru/	*ngovulrru*
‘fire’	/naɣab̪/	*nakhab’*

Dictionary entries in Chapter 2 are organised with headwords entered in bold type with the part-of-speech specification following in italics. (The meanings of the various abbreviations are provided under the heading *Abbreviations* above.) The various senses of each word are listed separately, and examples of words are provided in italics, with the translation following in ordinary type. Headwords that are provided with a hyphen at the end require some form of suffixation, with details of the behaviour of the suffixes provided at this stage only in the accompanying examples.

2 *Nese–English vocabulary*

What follows is a list of lexical items that have been recorded so far in Nese. This list contains about 800 separate pieces of lexical information. Apicolabials are ordered before bilabials (thus, for example, *b'* appears before *b*), but *kh* is not ordered separately from *k*.

A

amu *adv.* before

aute *loc.* ashore

B'

b'el *vt.* chase, chase away, run after *B'el neviri*. Chase the dog away. *B'ele*. (S)he chased it.

b'err *vi.* crooked

b'ev'e *n.* 1. mother *b'ev'e sam* 'your mother' 2. my mother

B

babarr *n.* seabird sp.

balak *vt*. be like, resemble

balbal *vi.* fight

bar *vi.* blind

bat *vt.* do, make *Debate severrse?* How will I do it? *Khobet nese?* What did you do?

batot *vi.* blunt

benanev *adv.* yesterday

benelne *adv.* five days ago

benetil *adv.* three days ago

benev'at *adv.* four days ago

bentarru *adv.* day before yesterday

bet khorr *vt.* block

bet sarrav'i *vt.* do wrongly, make mistake with

bet tebengi *vi.* start

bet terrterr *n.* stubborn person

bevelvele *adv.* a little *Sov nua bevelvele te rrisenumu*. Scoop up a little water for us to drink.

bis *vi.* fart silently

bo *vi.* stink, rotten, putrid

boak *n.* swamp taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) *boak sak* 'my swamp taro'

bol *vi.* finish

bovnuak *vi.* sleep on one's stomach

brro *adv.* just, only *Khai khe brro*. That's all.

bubu *n.* grandparent

bubu lekhtarr *n.* grandmother

bubu nasub *n.* grandfather

bukhbukhtakh *vi.* walk backwards

bukhtakh *vi.* walk backwards

bukhusrrum *n.* wild pig

bunbun *vi.* fragrant, nice-smelling

bung *n.* night

bunut *vi.* sleepy

D

dan *loc.* to the ground

darav *vi.* long

deve *conj.* or *Khosonum nua deve khosonum nani?* Will you drink water or will you drink a coconut?

E

evlakh *vi.* happy

H

harr *vt.* spear

J

jal *vi.* get lost

jal *vt.* tie *Jali*. Tie it. *Jel netenge*. (S)he tied the thing.

jalin *vi.* 1. come out 2. *loc.* outside *Khai tiyat jalin*. (S)he is outside. *Khai yat jalin rre naine*. (S)he is outside the house.

janet *vi.* cough

je *prep.* cause ('because of') *Nav'anu khavkhav je netenial*. It is hot because of the sun.

jeje *n.* lesser yam (*Dioscorea esculenta*)

jel tokhon *vt.* tie

jelengi *vt.* lose

jelv'et *vt.* anchor *Jelv'et nuak*. Anchor the canoe.

jem *vt.* chew *Jem nani*. Chew the coconut. *Jeme*. Chew it.

jev *vi.* leak

jevjev *vi.* leak

jibe rrongrrongo *vt.* flick (coconut, watermelon) to test for ripeness

jibejibe *vi.* flick something

jiblakh *n.* child (sg.)

jidar *vt.* touch *Jidari*. (S)he touched it.

jidernas *n.* sensitive grass (*Mimosa pudica*)

jijir *vi.* sweep

jikhjikh *vi.* limp

jile *vt.* stick in, poke

jingba *vi.* kneel

jingreni *vt.* insert into thatch or bamboo weave

jirr *vi.* (of hen) scratch ground to feed chicks

jirrjirr *vi.* (of hen) scratch ground to feed chicks

jivkhe *vi.* sneeze

jojorr *vi.* tired

jokho- *ns.* maternal uncle *jokhok* 'my maternal uncle', *jokhom* 'your maternal uncle', *jokhon* 'his/her maternal uncle'

jokhos- *ns.* (man's) sister *jokhosuk* 'my sister', *jokhosme* 'your sister', *jokhosne* 'his sister'

jorro *vt.* shoot

jov *vi.* fall

jov *vt.* exceed, go past *Nakis jov nav'khat*. It is excessively good.

jubul *vi.* go down

jubul *vi.* jump

jum *vi.* drip

jum *vi.* kiss

jumjum *vi.* drip

K

kalv'at *n.* split stick used for holding hot stones

kanan *pron.* we, us (pl. excl.)

kananrru *pron.* we, us (dl. excl.)

kanantil *pron.* we, us (tl. excl.)

kani *pron.* you (pl.)

kanirru *pron.* you (dl.)

kanitil *pron.* you (tl.)

kel *vt.* answer *Kele*. Answer it.

kele *adv.* again *Khovarri nese kele?* What did you say again? *Vite kele marro rrangan*. (S)he put it back on top of it.

khade *inter.* where? *Khonaturr khade?* Where do you sleep?

khai *pron.* he, she, it

khaje *vt.* 1. break 2. *svt.* cause to break *Rub khaje*. Hit it thereby breaking it.

khajkhaj *vi.* tell lies, pretend, trick

khakhon *vi.* bitter, sour *Tikhakhon*. It is bitter/sour.

kharr *pron.* they, them (pl.)

kharrav *vi.* crawl

kharrkharrav *vi.* crawl

kharrtil *pron.* they, them (tl.)

kharru *pron.* they, them (dl.)

khas *vt.* bite *Nanarr khesia*. I am hungry.

khatabol *n.* dragon plum (*Dracontomelon vitiense*) *khatabol sak* 'my dragon plum'

khavkhav *vi.* hot

khe *postmod.* that

khesve *num.* nine

khili *vt.* dig *Khil nab'urr*. He dug the post hole.

khina *pron.* I, me

khini *pron.* he, she, it

khirrkhirr *vi.* write

khise *inter.* who? *Khise khaverr netenge khe minokh?* Who told you that?

khoal *num.* eight

khodit *num.* seven

kholkhol *vi.* sweet *Tikholkhol*. It is sweet.

khon *num.* six

khorr *svt.* cause to be blocked *Verr khorro*. (S)he prohibited it.

khorrkhorr *vi.* hunt, go hunting

khorrkhorr *vi.* itch

khorro *n.* that one *Nese khorro?* What is that?

khos *prep.* go as far as *Kharav v'an v'an khos rre nebet nakhe nge*. He crawled as far as that tree.

khuban *vi.* clear garden site *Nokhuban*. I cleared the garden site.

khun *vi.* 1. go underwater 2. be baptised

khunokh *pron.* you (sg.)

kinkinit *vt.* pinch

kisai *vt.* look for, look after

kisekh *adv.* always

klerrurr *vi.* look through

koji *vt.* scratch, scrape

kojkoji *vt.* scratch, scrape

kol *vt.* carry on shoulder *Kolo*. Carry it on your shoulder.

komkomo *vt.* spoil, ruin

kori *vi.* bang one's head

krro *vt.* give

kum tokhon *vt.* grab hold of, grasp *Tavu kum tokhoni*. The conch shell grasped him.

kusuakh *vi.* hide

L

lab' *vi.* 1. big, large 2. fat

lakhm'al *loc.* in the meeting house *Khai tinaturr lakhm'al*. (S)he is sleeping in the meeting house.

lalaine *loc.* inside, indoors *Khai tinaturr lalaine*. (S)he is sleeping indoors.

lalo- *ns.* interior *Lalon varre*. (S)he wanted it. *Lalon song*. (S)he is angry. *Lalok song*. I am angry.

lanus *loc.* to/in the bush

lasal *loc.* on the road, on the path *Khai yas lasal*. (S)he is walking on the road.

latan *loc.* down, below

latlat *vi.* argue, quarrel

lekhtarr *n.* 1. woman 2. *ns.d.* wife *lekhtarrak* ‘my wife’

lekhtarr merrji *n.* old woman

lelngarro *vi.* listen

lenelkhav’e- *ns.* armpit *lenelkhav’en* ‘his/her armpit’

lerebere *n.* 1. former garden site 2. bank (of stream)

les *vt.* see, look at *Khai lesia*. (S)he saw me.

lijai *vt.* stone, pelt, throw something at

lilij *vt.* shut, close

line *num.* five

livtov *vi.* spit

lokhsa *loc.* over there *Nab’ak tutrro lokhsa*. The banyan tree stands over there.

lol *vi.* (of tide) high *Natas lol.* It is high tide.

lolnakhav *vi.* angry

lolo- *ns.* feather *lolo nato* ‘chicken feather’

lolovkhat *vi.* be midnight *Tilolovkhat.* It is midnight.

lom’ *vt.* lick *Neviri tilom’ia*. The dog licked me.

long *vi.* black

long *vt.* light (fire)

longlong *vi.* black

lukho *vi.* afraid, frightened

lulmakh *vi.* cover oneself

lulu *n.* vomitus. See **lulu-**

lulu- *ns.d.* vomitus *luluak* ‘my vomitus’, *luluam* ‘your vomitus’, *luluan* ‘his/her vomitus’. See **lulu**

lulu *vi.* vomit

lululum *vt.* roll

lum *vt.* bend, fold *Nelum navarr*. I bent the iron. *Lumu.* Bend it.

M

ma *vi.* come

mako *n.* killer, murderer, warrior

malmal *vi.* naked

marraj *vi.* thin, skinny

marro *loc.* above, on top *Nanankho tasi marro*. The bird is flying above. *Nato sakel marro rre naine*. The chicken is roosting on top of the house. *Vite kele marro rrangan*. (S)he put it back on top of it.

mavos *vi.* straight

melekh *vi.* yellow

mi *vi.* shake (of ground in earthquake) *Nami timi*. There is an earthquake.

min- *prep.* dative (‘to’) *Khai krro nua mina*. (S)he gave water to me. *Kharr rrib’el nemerrte nge nesobsob mini.* They chased the man who I was talking to.

mirre *vi.* ripe

mon *vi.* sharp *Sebemode*. It is not sharp.

morrorran *n.* morning

morruniekhe *adv.* today

mot *vt.* peck *Khobomotia*. You will peck me.

muloun *n.* chief

murrol *vi.* short

N

nab’ak *n.* banyan

nab’akhe *n.* shark

nab’akhrro *n.* tamanu (*Calophyllum inophyllum*)

nab’al *n.* swamp harrier (*Circus approximans*)

nab’an *n.* sail

nab’atav *n.* breadfruit

nab’err *n.* red parrotfish

nab'urr *n.* 1. house-post 2. post hole *Khil nab'urr.* He dug the post hole.

nabakh *n.* freshwater crab sp. (Bislama *krab kaldoni*, Neve'ei *nurukhuba'*)

nabalako- *ns.* leg *nabalakok* 'my leg', *nabalakom* 'your leg', *nabalakon* 'his/her leg'

nabarrsam *n.* coconut variety with sweet-tasting husk

nabas *n.* penis wrapper. See **nabas-**

nabas- *ns.d.* penis wrapper *nabasak* 'my penis wrapper', *nabasam* 'your penis wrapper', *nabasan* 'his penis wrapper'

nabat- *ns.* 1. head 2. tree (of particular type) 3. trunk (of tree) *nebet nakha* 'tree trunk', *nabatuk* 'my head', *nabatme* 'your (sg.) head', *nabatne* 'his/her head', *nabatrrerru* 'our (dl. incl.) heads', *nabatrretil* 'our (tl. incl.) heads', *nabatrre* 'our (pl. incl.) heads', *nebetinanrru* 'our (dl. excl.) heads', *nebetinantil* 'our (tl. excl.) heads', *nebetinan* 'our (pl. excl.) heads', *nebetim'irru* 'your (dl.) heads', *nebetim'i* 'your (pl.) heads', *nabatrrerru* 'their (dl.) heads', *nabatrretil* 'their (tl.) heads', *nabatrre* 'their (pl.) heads'

nabau- *ns.* knee *nabauk* 'my knee', *nabaume* 'your knee', *nabaune* 'his/her knee'

nable *n.* pigeon sp. (Neve'ei *nibwiligio*)

nabob *n.* sprouting coconut

naborrbarr *n.* emperor fish variety (Neve'ei *na'abil*)

nabu *n.* bamboo *nabu sak* 'my bamboo', *nabu sam* 'your bamboo', *nabu san* 'his/her bamboo'

nabungo *n.* mackerel (Neve'ei *nabung*)

nabutbat *n.* maggot

nadaike *n.* green snail

nadakhaj *n.* 1. coconut leaf mat 2. bed

nadakhas *n.* coconut flesh *nadakhas sak* 'my coconut flesh'

naine *n.* house. See **nem-**

naj- *ns.* excrement *najuk* 'my excrement', *najme* 'your excrement', *najne* 'his/her excrement'. See **naji**

najam *n.* outrigger

naji *n.* excrement. See **naj-**

najum *n.* bead

naka *n.* reef heron (*Ardea sacra*)

nakal- *ns.* bunch *nakal nav'ij* 'bunch of bananas'

nakalkal *n.* yam storage platform

nakara *n.* black flying fox

nakha *n.* 1. tree 2. wood 3. stick

nakhab' *n.* 1. fire 2. firewood *nakhab' sak* 'my firewood'

nakhab'e- *ns.* wing *nakhab'en nato* chicken wing

nakhajkhe *n.* fire-ant

nakhajkhe nial *n.* red ant

nakhate *n.* bush hermit crab

nakhate ntas *n.* hermit crab

nakhav' *n.* crab

nakhm'al *n.* meeting house. See **nekhm'el-**

nakho- *ns.* face *nakhok* 'my face', *nakhom* 'your face', *nakhon* 'his/her face'

nakhut *n.* louse

nakis *vi.* good

nakis tubung *int.* good night

nakis tumorrorran *int.* good morning

naku *n.* dolphin

nakurr *n.* thunder

nalak *n.* pegs by which outrigger is attached to outrigger poles

nalak *n.* tree sp.

nalakhej *vi.* 1. green, blue 2. *n.* blue parrotfish

nalang *n.* fly

nalang *n.* wind

nalas *n.* coconut shell (used for drinking)

nalaso- *ns.* testicles *nalasok* ‘my testicles’, *nalasom* ‘your testicles’, *nalason* ‘his testicles’

nalavu *n.* mullet

nale *n.* language. See **nele-**

Nale Vojvojakh *n.* Bislama

naleng *n.* ceremonial dance

nalev *n.* mud

nalkhas *n.* cold *Nalkhas khesi a*. I am cold.

nalngarri *n.* cold

nalok *n.* pudding

nalok narram *n.* yam pudding

nalul *n.* barn owl (*Tyto alba*)

nalum *n.* seaweed

nalve *n.* tooth. See **nolovu-**

nalve nakho- *ns.* incisor *nalve nakhon* ‘his/her incisor’

namab *n.* Tahitian chestnut (*Inocarpus edulis*) *namab sak* ‘my Tahitian chestnut’

namanu *n.* hat *namanu sak* ‘my hat’

namat *n.* snake

namat natas *n.* sea snake

namavorr *n.* clam found on sandy bottom

nami *n.* earthquake

namjo *n.* wild yam

namkho *n.* mosquito

namul *n.* orange

namum *n.* 1. shadow 2. photograph 3. spirit. See **nomum-**

nanaj *n.* fish. See **nanaj-**

nanaj- *ns.d.* fish *nanaj-ak* ‘my fish’, *nanaj-am* ‘your fish’, *nanaj-an* ‘his/her fish’. See **nanaj**

nanak- *ns.* thigh *nanakne* ‘his/her thigh’

nanakhub *n.* green lizard

nanalnge *n.* bed. See **nenelnga-**

nanalukh *n.* kava

nanan *n.* cicada

nanankho *n.* bird *nanankho sak* ‘my bird’

nanarr *n.* hunger *Nanarr khesi*. I am hungry.

nanarte *ns.* rope

nanarte navos *n.* bandage

nanas *vi.* dry

nanasav *n.* empty space

nanata- *ns.* eye *nanatak* ‘my eye’, *nanatam* ‘your (sg.) eye’, *nanatan* ‘his/her eye’, *nanatarr* ‘our (pl. incl.) eyes’, *nanatanan* ‘our (pl. excl.) eyes’, *nanatam’i* ‘your (pl.) eyes’, *nanatarr* ‘their (pl.) eyes’, *nenetbar* ‘blind’

nanav *vi.* yawn

nanav’us *n.* white crab (Neve‘ei *nemavis*)

nanavre *n.* wild cane (*Miscanthus floridulus*)

nanen *n.* pus

nangse *n.* name. See **nengsa-**

nani *n.* coconut *nani sak* ‘my coconut’

nani narrang *n.* dry coconut

nani tatakul *n.* palm sp.

nanibut *n.* dry coconut

nanngas *vi.* 1. urinate 2. *n.* urine. See **nanngas-**

nanngas- *ns.d.* urine *nanngasuk* ‘my urine’, *nanngasam* ‘your urine’, *nanngasan* ‘his/her urine’

nanse *vi.* 1. explode 2. make sudden loud noise

nanus *n.* grass

naon *n.* 1. sand 2. beach

narer *n.* nits

narov *n.* wooden bowl

narra *n.* 1. native lychee (*Pometia pinnata*) 2. wild nutmeg (*Myristica fatua*)

narrah *n.* canoe bailer

narram darav *n.* long yam

narram *n.* 1. hard yam (*Dioscorea nummularia*) *narram sak* ‘my yam’ 2. year

narrarrav’ *n.* Indian coral tree (*Erythrina variegata*)

narraskho *n.* grasshopper

narrau *n.* coconut crab

narre *n.* blood. See **nerre-**

narrlo *n.* ear wax

narrong *n.* mangrove tree

nas *vi.* die, dead

nasak *n.* fork (in road), junction

nasal *n.* road, path

nasalkha- *ns.* nape of neck *nasalkhan* ‘nape of his/her neck’

nasasakh *n.* sugar ant

naskhe *n.* white-collared kingfisher (*Halycon chloris*)

naskhe *vi.* cooked

nasol *n.* boil

nasorr *vi.* hiccup

nasu *n.* coconut milk

nasum *n.* chief

nasus *n.* breast. See **nesus-**

nat- *ns.* child *natuk* ‘my child’, *natum* ‘your child’, *natne* ‘his/her child’, *natrre* ‘our (pl. incl.) child’, *nenetinan* ‘our (pl. excl.) child’, *nenetini* ‘your (pl.) child’, *natrre* ‘their (pl.) child’, *netin nato* ‘chick’

natal *n.* penis. See **natal-**

natal- *ns.* penis *nataluk* ‘my penis’, *natalme* ‘your penis’, *natalne* ‘his penis’. See **natal**

natalol *n.* fog, mist

natam *n.* burial ground, cemetery

natan *n.* ground, soil, land

natang *n.* basket. See **natang-**

natang- *ns.d.* basket *natangak* ‘my basket’, *natangam* ‘your basket’, *natangan* ‘his/her basket’ See **natang**

natang khorrkhorrob *n.* kind of coconut leaf basket

natas *n.* sea

nato *n.* 1. chicken *nato sak* ‘my chicken’, *nato sam* ‘your chicken’, *nato san* ‘his/her chicken’ 2. goatfish (*Milloidichthys flavolineatus*)

natorr *n.* island teak (*Intsia bijuga*)

natot *n.* tree sp. (Neve‘ei *netet*)

naturr *vi.* sleep *Neturr relelivne*. (S)he slept on his/her side.

nau- *ns.* wife *nauk* ‘my wife’, *naum* ‘your wife’, *naune* ‘his wife’

naul *n.* 1. writing 2. book

naun *n.* coconut fibres (used for tying canoe)

naurre *n.* 1. lobster 2. prawn

naurre ntas *n.* lobster

naurre nua *n.* freshwater prawn

naus *n.* great hog plum (*Spondias dulcis*) *naus sak* ‘my great hog plum’

naus rrarrang *n.* bitter great hog plum

naus san takharr *n.* pawpaw, papaya

naus tuarem *n.* sweet great hog plum

nause *n.* rain

naute *n.* garden. See **nout-**

nav’anu *n.* 1. home 2. mainland (in contrast to offshore island). See **nev’enu-**

nav’at *n.* 1. stone, rock 2. money

nav’au *n.* pandanus

nav’i *n.* taro variety

nav’ila *n.* New Guinea rosewood (*Pterocarpus indicus*)

nav’in *n.* ringworm

nav’khat *n.* mark, limit *Nakis jov nav’khat*. It is excessively good.

nav’nge *n.* hill, mountain

navablakhot *n.* biscuit

navakhamel *n.* fish sp. (Bislama *blakfis*)

navar *n.* pig with tusk that has grown back into the bone of the jaw

navarr *n.* iron

navarra- *ns.* 1. arm 2. hand *navarran* 'his/her hand'

navarrangu- *ns.* finger *navarrangun* 'his/her finger'

navarrangun neb'is- *ns.* fingernail *navarrungun neb'isne* 'his/her fingernail'

navas *n.* morning bird (Neve'ei *navevetevat*)

navas *n.* sore. See **navas-**

navas- *ns.d.* sore *navasak* 'my sore', *navasam* 'your sore', *navasan* 'his/her sore'. See **navas**

navaskhaul *n.* hibiscus

naveb *n.* butterfly

naveb navarr *n.* airplane

navel *n.* dance (generic)

navle *n.* 1. moon 2. month

navse *n.* Fijian asparagus (*Saccharum edule*)

navu *n.* turtle

navu sal *n.* pumice floating on sea

neb'ar *n.* axe (for cutting wood)

neb'e- *ns.* body *neb'ek* 'my body', *neb'em* 'your body', *neb'en* 'his/her body', *neb'err* 'our (pl. incl.) bodies'

neb'ere- *ns.* shin *neb'erek* 'my shin', *neb'erem* 'your shin', *neb'eren* 'his/her shin'

neb'irrav *n.* striped surgeonfish (*Acanthurus lineatus*)

neb'irrb'irr *n.* sea hearse tree (*Hernandia nymphaeifolia*)

nebet khadas nani *n.* coconut palm

nebetbang *n.* heart

nebetev *n.* sugarcane

nebetingting *n.* 1. slitgong 2. bell

nebetisir *n.* broom

nebetlak *n.* walking stick *nebetlak sak* 'my walking stick'

nebetmakhav *n.* 1. ashes, dust 2. bread

nebetrraki- *ns.* throat *nebetrrakin* 'his/her throat'

nebetrreiv *n.* sea slug

nebil- *ns.* shoulder *nebilne* 'his/her shoulder'

nebito- *ns.* navel, belly button *nebitok* 'my navel', *nebitom* 'your navel', *nebiton* 'his/her navel'

nebnab' *n.* swollen glands

nedeknarran *n.* 1. sky 2. heaven

nediha- *ns.* foam on sea *nedihan* 'its foam'

nejal *n.* sleeping mat. See **nejal-**

nejal- *ns.d.* sleeping mat *nejalak* 'my mat', *nejalam* 'your mat', *nejalan* 'his/her mat'. See **nejal**

nejin- *ns.* bone *nejinuk* 'my bone', *nejinme* 'your bone', *nejinne* 'his/her bone'

nejirra- *ns.* semen *nejirrak* 'my semen', *nejirram* 'your semen', *nejirran* 'his semen'

nejubuna- *ns.* back *nejubunak* 'my back', *nejubunam* 'your back', *nejubunan* 'his/her back'

nejungo- *ns.* 1. mouth *nejungom* 'your mouth' 2. mouthpiece, speaker (for someone) *nejungon* 'his/her mouthpiece'

nekerebar *n.* white flying fox

nekhe sin takharr *n.* cassia tree

nekhev' bukhas *n.* hairy crab (Neve'ei *nemet*)

nekhev' nakis *n.* black crab

nekhm'el- *ns.d.* meeting house *nekhm'eluk* 'my meeting house'. See **nakhm'al**

nekhte *n.* octopus

nekles *n.* bamboo tongs used for holding hot stones

nekles *pron.* we, us (pl. incl.)

nekrrerru *pron.* we, us (dl. incl.)

nekrretil *pron.* we, us (tl. incl.)

nela *n.* spider

nele- *ns.d.* language *nelean* ‘his/her language’, *nelerr* ‘our (pl. incl.) language’. See **nale**

nelek nalin *n.* tree sp.

nelekhian *n.* marriage, wedding

neleklek *vi.* soft

neleng rrub *n.* hurricane, cyclone

neletar *n.* married woman

neliv- *ns.* rib *nelivuk* ‘my rib’, *nelivne* ‘his/her rib’, *nelivte* ‘rib’

nelivte *n.* saliva, spit

nelkhav’e- *ns.* armpit *nelkav’en* ‘his/her armpit’

nelulmakh *n.* blanket

nem- *ns.d.* house *nemak* ‘my house’, *nemam* ‘your house’, *neman* ‘his/her house’. See **naine**

nem’em’- *ns.* tongue *nem’em’uk* ‘my tongue’, *nem’em’em* ‘your (sg.) tongue’, *nem’em’en* ‘his/her tongue’

nemerre *n.* men (pl.)

nemerrjian *n.* old man

nemerrlonglong *n.* Melanesian

nemerrlulwo *n.* important person

nemerrte *n.* man (sg.)

nenelnga- *ns.* bed *nenelngak* ‘my bed’, *nenelngam* ‘your bed’, *nenelngan* ‘his/her bed’ *Khai naturr rre nenelngan*. (S)he is sleeping on his/her bed. See **nanalnge**

nenere *n.* eel

nenerrnarr *n.* boy

nenerrvusave *n.* white parrotfish

nenesnas *n.* tree sp. (*Garuga floribunda*)

nenetbar *n.* blind person

neneten nev’in *n.* chief-in-waiting

nenga *n.* 1. native almond (*Canarium indicum*) 2. smegma

nengsa- *ns.* name *nengsak* ‘my name’, *nengsam* ‘your name’, *nengsan* ‘his/her name’. See **nangse**

neniburr *n.* tree sp.

nenijun *n.* trevally

neniri *n.* barrel tree (*Acacia spirorbis*)

neniribal *n.* barrel tree species (*Acacia simplex*) (Neve‘ei *nemaribal*)

nerr- *ns.d.* fence *nerrak* ‘my fence. See **niarr**

nerra- *ns.* mother *nerram* ‘your mother’, *nerrarr* ‘their (pl.) mother’

nerre- *ns.* blood *nerreouk* ‘my blood’, *nerreime* ‘your blood’, *nerrean* ‘his/her blood’. See **narre**

nerreiv *n.* canoe tree (*Gyrocarpus americanus*)

nerrem darav *n.* long yam

nerrem nalin *n.* greater yam (*Dioscorea alata*)

nerren *n.* 1. time 2. *sub.* when *Khai tinaturr nerren te netovi.* (S)he was sleeping when I called him/her.

nerreng- *ns.* branch *nerreng nakha* ‘branch of tree’

nerres *n.* saw

nerrivne *n.* snot, nasal mucus

nerrurr *n.* clothes *nerrurr sak* ‘my clothes’

nerrurr longlong *n.* priest, bishop

nerrurr nalkhas *n.* jacket

nesarr *n.* spear *nesarr sak* ‘my spear’

nesde *n.* knife

nese *inter.* what? *Deside rre nese?* What will I cut it with? *Khovarri nese kele?* What did you say again?

nesevian *n.* kind of dance

nesin- *ns.* belly *nesinuk* ‘my belly’, *nesinne* ‘his/her belly’

nesov nua *n.* bucket

nesus- *ns.* breast *nesusne* ‘her breast’. See **nasus**

nesuv *n.* breath. See **nesuv-**

nesuv- *ns.d.* breath *nesuvan* ‘his/her breath’

netebulabulo *n.* coconut leaf basket made for gathering shellfish on reef *netebulabulo sak* ‘my basket’

netekh *n.* hook

neten *prep.* 1. cause (‘because of’) *Terrjiblakh ngarr neten namul*. The child is crying because of the orange. *Khai rroj neten namkho*. (S)he is sick because of the mosquitoes. *Neman jov neten neleng rub.* His/her house fell down because of the cyclone. *Khobet netenge neten nese?* Why did you do that? 2. *sub.* because *Nesul naute neten te jowak narram*. I burnt off the garden because I am going to plant yams. *Khai tinaturr neten nial titerrterr je*. (S)he is sleeping because the sun is very hot. *Natuk ngarr neten nanarr tikhasi*. My child is crying because it is hungry.

neten nese *inter.* why? *Khobet netenge khe neten nese?* Why did you do that?

neteng naj- *ns.* intestine, bowel *neteng najuk* ‘my intestines’, *neteng najne* ‘his/her intestines’

netenge *n.* thing

netenial *n.* sun

netes rrumrrum *n.* rough sea

netial *n.* low tide

netial navse *n.* very low tide

netukhtukhunian *n.* story

netve *n.* belt, waistband

nev’eble *n.* 1. firefly 2. torch, flashlight

nev’enu- *ns.d.* home *nev’enuak* ‘my home’, *nev’enuam* ‘your home’, *nev’enuan* ‘his/her home’. See **nav’anu**

nev’et nakhab’ *n.* battery

nev’etnot *n.* black stone

nev’ikh- *ns.* vagina *nev’ikhak* ‘my vagina’, *nev’ikham* ‘your vagina’, *nev’ikhne* ‘her vagina’

nev’il- *ns.* skin *nev’iluk* ‘my skin’, *nev’ilum* ‘your skin’, *nev’ilne* ‘his/her skin’

nev’ilakh *n.* lightning[1]

nev’iljungun tal- *ns.* foreskin *nev’iljungun talne* ‘his foreskin’

nev’in *n.* arrow

nev’ine *n.* tree sp. (*Macaranga* sp.) (Bislama *navenue*)

nev’khe *adv.* tomorrow

nevelelakh *n.* yellow white-eye (*Zosterops flavifrons*)

nevelelakhtas *n.* flying fish

nevenini *n.* palm sp.

neveram *n.* sow

neveramtas *n.* dugong

nevere *n.* purple swamphen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*)

neverrirr *n.* drill, auger

nevesis *n.* small shellfish (Bislama *nasisa*)

nevetarrtarr *n.* bird sp. (Neve‘ei *navtokhtokh*)

nevetrris *n.* tree sp. (Neve‘ei *neverver*)

nevilias *n.* beard. See **nevilias-**

nevilias- *ns.* beard *neviliasuk* ‘my beard’, *neviliasem* ‘your beard’, *neviliasen* ‘his beard’, *nevilias* ‘beard’. See **nevilias**

neviltara- *ns.* pubic hair *neviltarak* ‘my pubic hair’, *neviltaram* ‘your pubic hair’, *neviltaran* ‘his/her pubic hair’

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[1] *A form* **nevilakh** *was also listed, with no cross-referencing. I assume one was an error, and regular phonological developments would suggest that* **nev’ilakh** *is the correct form – JL*

nevin *n.* arrow point

neviri *n.* dog *neviri sak* ‘my dog’, *neviri sam* ‘your dog’, *neviri san* ‘his/her dog’

nevu *n.* poles by which outrigger is attached to canoe

ngarr *vi.* cry

ngavulrru *num.* twenty

ngirr *vi.* laugh

ngorr *vi.* snore

nial *vi.* red

nial *n.* sun *Nial rrorr*. It is afternoon.

nial jejemelekh *n.* shortest day, winter solstice

nial terrterr *n.* hot sun

nialrrorr *n.* late afternoon, evening

nialvosonbat *n.* noon, midday

niarr *n.* casuarina (*Casuarina equisetifolia*)

niarr *n.* fence. See **nerr-**

niarr nubkhas *n.* pigpen

nias *n.* evil spirit

nias *n.* jaw

nias- *ns.* jaw *niasen* ‘his/her jaw’

nias- *ns.* spirit *niasek* ‘my spirit’, *niasme* ‘your spirit’, *niasne* ‘his/her spirit’ *Niasek sat*. I had bad luck.

niat *n.* 1. sago (*Metroxylon warburgii*) 2. thatch

nibe *vt.* cover

nibilakh *n.* banded rail (*Gallirallus philippensis*)

nies nakhab’ *n.* smoke

nijivirr *n.* coconut lory (*Trichoglossus haemotodus*)

ninin *vi.* wet

niv’iljungote *ns.* lip

niv’ilvok *n.* tinea versicolor

noboborr *n.* cloud

nobolokhv’at *n.* car

noboltolnga- *ns.* pillow *noboltolngak* ‘my pillow’, *noboltolngam* ‘your pillow’, *noboltolngan* ‘his/her pillow’

nobono- *ns.* comb (of chicken) *nobonon nato* ‘chicken’s comb’

nokh naine *n.* door *Khai rrekhej nokh naine*. (S)he opened the door.

nokhb’o *n.* Pacific pigeon (*Ducula pacifica*)

nokhmok *n.* island cabbage (*Abelmoschus manihot*)

nokhobu *n.* bamboo

nokhorrkhorrial *n.* shelter

nokhorrot *n.* bush nut (*Barringtonia edulis*)

nokhwarr- *ns.* handle *nokhwarrne* ‘its handle’, *nokhwarr natang* ‘handle of basket’

nokhwas *n.* digging stick

noluvo- *ns.* tooth *noluvok* ‘my tooth’, *noluvom* ‘your tooth’, *noluvon* ‘his/her tooth’, *noluvorr* ‘our (pl. incl.) teeth’, *nolovonan* ‘our (pl. excl.) teeth’, *noluvom’i* ‘your (pl.) teeth’, *noluvorr* ‘their (pl.) teeth’. See **nalve**

nomum- *ns.* 1. shadow *nomumuk* ‘my shadow’, *nomumme* ‘your shadow’, *nomumne* ‘his/her shadow’ 2. photograph 3. spirit. See **namum**

nomum saburr *n.* holy spirit

nomurrak *n.* puzzle tree (*Kleinhovia hospita*)

nonokh naine *n.* door

noreat *n.* sago leaf

norotoar *n.* white grass

norotoar bunbun *n.* lemon grass

norrean *n.* food

norrobejikh *n.* victory leaf (*Cordyline terminalis*)

norroblat *n.* 1. paper 2. letter 3. book

norrobne *n.* 1. palm species with large leaf (used to shelter from rain) 2. umbrella

norrokalat *n.* stinging tree, devil nettle (*Dendrocnidae* sp.)

norrokalattas *n.* jellyfish

norrokha *n.* leaf Also **norrokho-**

norrokho- *ns.* leaf *norrokhaune* 'its leaf', *norrokho nakha* leaf of tree

norromel *n.* cycad (*Cycas circinalis*)

norromrromian *n.* thought, idea

norrourre *n.* offshore island

norrourretakhno *n.* whale

norrovitebkha *n.* grass sp. (Bislama *kakru gras*)

norrovwovu *n.* beach morning glory

norruan *n.* large abscess

norrube *n.* tree sp. (*Polyscias scutellaria*)

norrul- *ns.* egg *norrul nato* 'chicken egg', *norrul niavu* 'turtle egg' *norrul nanankho* 'bird's egg'

norrul nasasakh *n.* 1. sugar ant eggs 2. rice

norruma- *ns.* chest *norrumak* 'my chest'

norrwo *vi.* alive

noulamu *n.* earth oven

nout- *ns.d.* garden *noutak* 'my garden', *noutam* 'your garden', *noutan* 'his/her garden', *noutarr* 'their garden'. See **naute**

nov'ij *n.* banana

novo- *ns.* fruit *novoan* 'its fruit'

novobo *n.* yam variety

novobov *n.* yam variety

novojujrro *n.* skink

novomakh *n.* emerald ground dove (*Chalcophaps indica*)

novorrkha *n.* bush

novos *n.* paddle, oar *novos sak* 'my paddle'

novos- *ns.* seed *novosne* 'its seed'

novosorrv'at *n.* broken pieces of dead coral

novosvoso- *ns.* hip *novosvosok* 'my hip', *novosvosom* 'your hip', *novosvoson* 'his/her hip'

novotob'ak *n.* Tanna fruit dove (*Ptilinopus tannensis*)

novovorr *n.* star

novovos niarr *n.* fence post that is sharpened and stuck into ground

novso *n.* bow *novso sak* 'my bow'

novunvun *n.* red Moreton Bay chestnut (*Castanospermum australe*)

nua *n.*1. water *nua sak* 'my water', *nua sam* 'your water', *nua san* 'his/her water' 2. river

nua terrterr *n.* alcohol

nua vala *n.* river

nuak *n.* 1. canoe 2. boat. See **nuak-**

nuak- *ns.d.* 1. canoe *nuakak* 'my canoe', *nuakam* 'your canoe', *nuakan* 'his/her canoe' 2. boat. See **nuak**

nuak nakis *n.* canoe

nuak natan *n.* car

nuaknata- *ns.* footprints, spoor *nuaknatan* 'his/her footprints'

nual *n.* hole. See **nul-**

nuam *n.* fish-poison tree (*Barringtonia asiatica*)

nubkhus- *ns.d.* pig (especially boar) *nubkhusak* 'my pig', *nubkhusam* 'your pig', *nubkhusan* 'his/her pig'. See **nubukhas**

nubu- *ns.* smell *nubune* 'its smell', *bon naji* 'smell of excrement'

nubukhas *n.* pig (especially boar). See **nubkhus-**

nubukhas tamav *n.* castrated pig

nubungo- *ns.* piece *nubungon tavak* 'piece of tobacco'

nubut naj- *ns.* buttocks *nubut najuk* ‘my buttocks’, *nubut najme* ‘your buttocks’, *nubut najne* ‘his/her buttocks’

nubuvok *n.* fish sp. (Neve‘ei *nivili*)

nukhudu- *ns.* grandchild *nukhuduk* ‘my grandchild’

nukhuli navrro *n.* warrior

nukhuskhus *n.* sweat, perspiration. See **nukhuskhus-**

nukhuskhus- *ns.d.* sweat, perspiration *nukhuskhusak* ‘my sweat’, *nukhuskhusam* ‘your sweat’. See **nukhuskhus**

nukuns- *ns.* nose *nukunsuk* ‘my nose’, *nukunsum* ‘your (sg.) nose’, *nukunsne* ‘his/her nose’, *nukunsrre* ‘our (pl. incl.) noses’, *nukunsinan* ‘our (pl. excl.) noses’, *nukunsim’i* ‘your (pl.) noses’, *nukunsrre* ‘their (pl.) noses’

nul- *ns.* hole *nul naji* ‘anus’. See **nual**

nul naj- *ns.* anus *nul najuk* ‘my anus’

nulwobetarr *n.* molar

num *vt.* drink *Num nua.* Drink the water.

nusuwu- *ns.* water, juice *nusuwun namul* ‘orange juice’

nusuwun natan *ns.* tears

nuvu- *ns.* fruit *nuvu nakha* ‘fruit of tree’

nuvus boak *n.* hill taro (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium*)

R

rij *vi.* talk, speak

rrakharrakh *vi.* shake *Tirrakharrakh*. It is shaking.

rralo- *ns.* voice *rralom* ‘your voice’, *rralon* ‘his/her voice’

rran *prep.* source (‘from’) *Nemerrte nge novul norrean ran tinaturr*. The man who I bought the food from is sleeping.

rrangan *prep.* locative (‘in’) *Kharr tusul naine nge te nemerrte nge tinaturr rrangan*. They burnt the house that the man is sleeping in.

rrarro *n.* burp, belch

rratakh *vi.* 1. get up 2. wake up

rre *prep.* 1. locative (‘in’, ‘on’, ‘at’) *Khai yas rre naon*. (S)he is walking on the beach. *Khai yat rre nuak*. (S)he is sitting on the canoe. *Khai yas rre nasal*. (S)he is walking on the road. *Nema lalaine nebelesokhte rre nemam*. I came inside but I did not see you in your house. 2. instrumental (‘with’) *Deside rre nese?* What will I cut it with?

rrekhej *vt.* open *Khai rrekhej nokh naine*. (S)he opened the door.

rrenelnga- *loc.* on one’s bed *Khai naturr rrenelngan*. (S)he is sleeping on his/her bed.

rreve *vt.* say

rrevrrav *adv.* late afternoon, evening *Rriv’an rriswo sana tirrevrrav.* Let’s go and bathe in the evening.

rrim *vi.* slurp

rrinrran *vi.* be daylight

rroj *vi.* sick

rrojaj *n.* croton

rrokh *vi.* bend over

rromnelengi *vt.* forget

rromrromi *vt.* think about, remember

rron- *prep.* accompanitive (‘with’) *Khai yat rronia*. (S)he sat with me.

rron *vi.* sink, go underwater

rrong *vt.* 1. feel 2. hear *Rrongo*. (S)he heard it. 3. *aux.* want to *Norrong te derij*. I want to talk.

rrong usong *vt.* 1. know 2. *aux.* be able *Norrong usong te desukhaskho*. I can sing.

rrorr *vt.* turn over, turn around

rrorrovokh *vi.* play

rrov *vi.* heavy *Seberrovte*. It is not heavy.

rru *num.* two

rrub *vt.* hit, kill *Rrubi*. Hit him/her.

rrub khaje *vt.* break by hitting

rrubrrub *vi.* fight

rrukharru *n.* paramount chief

rrulon *vt.* swallow

rrumrrum *vi.* think

rrurr *vt.* sew

rrurrngorr *vi.* sore, painful *Noluvok rrurrngorr*. My tooth is sore.

rruv *vt.* plant (anything other than yam) *Jerruv nav'ij*. I will plant the banana.

S

saburr *adj.* holy

sai *vt.* hold in hands

sakel *vi.* roost

sakh *vi.* climb

sakhal *num.* one

sal *vi.* float

sangav'il *num.* ten

sangav'il rram alne *num.* fifteen

sangav'il rram arru *num.* twelve

sangav'il rram atil *num.* thirteen

sangav'il rram av'at *num.* fourteen

sangav'il rram khesve *num.* nineteen

sangav'il rram sakhal *num.* eleven

sangav'il rrom khoal *num.* eighteen

sangav'il rrom khodit *num.* seventeen

sangav'il rrom khon *num.* sixteen

sarakh *vi.* squat

sat *vi.* bad

savarrum *vi.* stamp on ground

seltab'kharr *vi.* sleep on one's back

serrtengi *vt.* count

sesrre *vt.* teach

seve *sub.* if *Deyat laine seve khovarri balak khe*. I will stay inside if you say so. *Seve nav'anu khavkhav rrisebeyatte rre nev'enuarr*. If it is hot, we will not stay in our home.

severrse *inter.* how? *Debate severrse?* How will I do it?

sian *vi.* pregnant

side *vt.* cut

side tavakhe *vt.* cut lengthwise

sirri *vi.* blow one's nose

sis *vi.* (of cicada) chirrup

sisvarr *vi.* defecate

sisve *vi.* have diarrhoea

sobsob *vi.* tell stories *Khai sobsob kharr bubu sak.* (S)he is telling stories with my grandparent.

song *vi.* angry *Lalok song*. I am angry. *Lalong song*. (S)he is angry.

songoni *vt.* fill up, put inside

souse *vi.* rain *Seve nause souse rebesulte naute*. If it rains we will not burn off the garden.

sov *vt.* scoop up water

sukhaskho *vi.* sing

sul *vt.* burn *Sulu*. Burn it.

surr kele *vt.* repair

sus *vi.* suck

susavurr *vi.* swear

suv *vi.* blow *Nalang suv*. The wind blew.

suv *vt.* blow *Nesuv tavu*. I blew the conch. *Suvu*. Blow it.

swo *vi.* 1. swim 2. bathe *Neswo din*. I have already bathed. *Rriv'an rriswo sana tirrevrrav*. Let's go and bathe in the evening. *Nebeswote wor*. I haven't bathed yet.

T

tabrakhas *n.* athlete's foot *Tabrakhas tibetia*. I have athlete's foot.

taj- *ns.* spur (of rooster) *tej nato* chicken's spur *Tajne var*. Its spur is growing crooked.

takh- *ns.* brother-in-law *tauk* ‘my brother-in-law’, *takhmo* ‘your brother-in-law’, *takhno* ‘his/her brother-in-law’, *takhrro* ‘our (pl. incl.) brother-in-law’, *tokhunan* ‘our (pl. excl.) brother-in-law’, *tokhuni* ‘your (pl.) brother-in-law’, *takhrro* ‘their (pl.) brother-in-law’

takharr *n.* European

takhe *vt.* take

tala *n.* axe (for use in battle)

talne *adv.* five days from now, in five days’ time

tamav *n.* castrated animal

tana- *ns.* father *tanam* ‘your father’, *tanan* ‘his/her father’, *tanarr* ‘their (pl.) father’

tanas *n.* devil

tangav’a *n.* important matter

tara- *ns.* pubic area

tarrav’ *vi.* wet

tarru *adv.* day after tomorrow

tas- *ns.* younger same-sex sibling *tasuk* ‘my younger same-sex sibling’, *tasum* ‘your younger same-sex sibling’, *tasne* ‘his younger brother, her younger sister’

tasi *vi.* fly

tasve *inter.* when? *Jema tasve?* When will I come?

tatil *adv.* three days from now, in three days’ time

Taute *n.* Big Nambas

tav’at *adv.* four days from now, in four days’ time

tavai- *ns.* friend, brother *tavaik* ‘my friend’, *tavaime* ‘your friend’, *tavaine* ‘his/her friend’

tavakh *vi.* split

tavakhe *svt.* cause to split

tavat *n.* woman, girl

tavat malakel *n.* young girl

tavo *n.* sea almond (*Terminalia catappa*) *tavo sak* ‘my sea almond’

tavu *n.* conch shell

tebengi *vt.* find

tedene *n.* conch shell

teleb’ir *n.* clam found on rocky bottom

telnasis *n.* circumcised penis

telwon *n.* uncircumcised penis

tenen nat- *ns.* husband *tenen natuk* ‘my husband’, *tenen natum* ‘your husband’, *tenen natne* ‘her husband’ (women both with and without children)

tenesbo *n.* kind of devil that smells

terrjiblakh *n.* children (pl.)

terrterr *vi.* 1. strong 2. hard

tetarrorr *vi.* (of rooster) crow

tete *n.* 1. father 2. my father

tider *vt.* chop *Khai tider nakhab’.* (S)he is cutting the firewood.

tikak *vi.* (of hen) cluck

til *num.* three

timtibaer *n.* slipper lobster

tingting *vi.* knock

tirenatene *vi.* (of hen) cluck to call chicks

tisir *vi.* fart audibly

tobilakh *n.* black- and white-feathered chicken

tokh *vi.* 1. exist *Nua tokh.* There is water. 2. *aux.* habitual *Nemerrte khe nanatan tokh klerrurr amu.* That man’s eyes used to be able to see through things before.

tokhobarr *n.* yellow goatfish

tomola *n.* scrub fowl (*Megapodius freycinet*)

tonerrnarr *n.* rooster

toni *vt.* push

tori *vt.* adopt *Notor netin tavaik.* I adopted my brother’s child.

torrarrot *n.* Moreton Bay chestnut (*Castanospermum australe*)

torrobilakh *n.* fish sp. (Neve'ei *niakhbila'*)

torronabe *n.* kind of dance

totavat *n.* hen

totra *n.* tree sp. (Bislama *wud blong lastik*)

tov *vt.* call *Tovi*. Call him/her.

toveb *n.* white-feathered chicken

tovon *adv.* now *Debet tovon*. I'll do it now.

trro *vi.* stand

tua *adv.* long time ago

tua- *ns.* 1. older same-sex sibling *tuak* 'my older same-sex sibling', *tuam* 'your older same-sex sibling', *tuan* 'his older brother, her older sister' 2. (woman's) brother

tukh *vt.* 1. hit, punch 2. break open (native almonds) *Tukh nenga*. (S)he broke open the native almonds.

tukhtukhun *vi.* tell story

tuorrongrrong *adv.* long time ago

tutrro *vi.* stand

tuvkhat *n.* chiton

U

us *vt.* ask *Us nemerrte khe*. Ask that man. *Ususi*. (S)he asked him/her.

V

v'an *vi.* go *Rriv'an rriswo sana tirrevrrav.* Let's go and bathe in the evening.

v'anakh *vt.* steal *Khai v'enekh nav'at.* (S)he stole the money.

v'ange *vt.* hook

v'anv'anakh *vi.* steal

v'at *num.* four

v'ati *vt.* weave

v'ev'naul *vi.* read

v'ije *vt.* chop *V'ije nakhab'*. (S)he cut the firewood.

v'inv'in *vi.* 1. whistle 2. (of morning bird) call

vakharru *adv.* twice

vakhatil *adv.* three times

vala *vi.* 1. run 2. get out of the way

valvala *vi.* run

vangvang *vi.* puff

var *vi.* 1. grow crooked *Tajne var*. Its spur is growing crooked. 2. (of pig's tusk) grow back into bone of jaw

varr *vt.* tell, say *Varri*. (S)he said it.

varrasi *vt.* step on *Varras netenge sakhal*. (S)he stepped on something.

varre *vt.* want *Lalon varre*. (S)he wanted it.

varrvarr *vi.* pray

vave *n.* paternal aunt *vave sak* 'my paternal aunt', *vave sam* 'your paternal aunt', *vave san* 'his/her paternal aunt'

vave vakharru *n.* niece, daughter of paternal aunt

vejengi *vi.* 1. fall from height 2. fall over 3. (of sea) break *Natas vejengi*. The sea broke.

vel *vi.* dance

velveleng *vt.* weave (bamboo)

verr khorr *vt.* prohibit *Jokhon verr khorr nelekhian*. His uncle prohibited the marriage.

verr ratne *vi.* tell truth *Khoverr ratne.* You are telling the truth.

verr visvisi *vt.* teach

vesakhsakh *vi.* work

vise *inter.* how much?, how many? *Naus vise jokolo?* How many pawpaws will I carry on my shoulder?

vitan *loc.* down, below

vite *vt.* put

vite saburr *vi.* bless *Vite saburr mini*. He blessed him/her.

vojakh *vi.* gather together

vok *vi.* 1. white 2. clean

voso *vt.* stick into ground

vul *vt.* buy, pay for

vulvul *vi.* buy things, pay

vun jikarrkarr *vi.* overflow

vun *vi.* full

vurrsi *vt.* hold

vusave *adj.* white

vuso *vi.* white

vusvuso *vi.* shine

vuvun *vi.* full

W

waji *vt.* eat *Woj rais*. Eat the rice.

wak *vt.* plant (yam) *Jowak narram*. I will plant the yam.

wor *vi.* eat

Y

yas *vi.* walk

yat *vi.* 1. sit 2. stay

yat nasurr *vi.* sit cross-legged

yat rrerrengmal *vi.* sit on ground

yat vijakharr *vi.* sit on ground

yatakhma *adv.* afterwards

yav' *vt.* pull *Yev' nesuvan*. (S)he is breathing. *Yav'i*. (S)he pulled it.

yesyes *vi.* (of vision) blurred *Nanatak yesyes*. My vision is blurred

3 *English–Nese finderlist*

The following is a finderlist that has been constructed on the basis of the Nese–English lexicon presented in the previous section. The information that is contained in this finderlist has been kept to a minimum; thus information about word-class membership of Nese forms should be obtained from the main lexical listing, as should detailed semantic descriptions. All forms should be checked against the main lexical entries for greater grammatical and semantic detail.

A

Abelmoschus manihot **nokhmok**
able, be **rrong usong**
above **marraj**
abscess **norruan**
Acacia
  simplex **neniribal**
  spirorbis **neniri**
Acanthurus lineatus **neb'irrav**
adopt **tori**
afraid **lukho**
afternoon (late) **nialrrorr**, **rrevrrav**
afterwards **yatakhma**
again **kele**
airplane **naveb navarr**
alcohol **nua terrterr**
alive **norrwo**
almond
  native almond **nenga**
  sea almond **tavo**
always **kisekh**
anchor *vt.* **jelv'et**
angry **lolnakhav**, **song**. *See also* **lalo-**
animal, castrated **tamav**
answer *vt.* **kel**
ant
  fire-ant **nakhajkhe**
  sugar ant **nasasakh**
anus **nul naj-**
Ardea sacra **naka**
argue **latlat**
arm **navarra-**
armpit **lenelkhav'e-**, **nelkhav'e-**
arrow **nev'in**
ashes **nebetmakhav**
ashore **aute**
ask **us**
asparagus, Fijian **navse**
at **rre**
athlete's foot **tabrakhas**
auger **neverrirr**
aunt, paternal **vave**
axe **neb'ar**
  battle **tala**

B

back *n.* **nejubuna-**
bad **sat**
bailer **narrah**
bamboo **nabu**, **nokhobu**
banana **nov'ij**
bandage *n.* **nanarte navos**
banded rail **nibilakh**
bang one's head **kori**
bank (of stream) **lerebere**
banyan **nab'ak**
baptised, be **khun**
barn owl **nalul**
barrel tree **neniri**, **neniribal**
Barringtonia
  asiatica **nuam**
  edulis **nokhorrot**
basket **natang**, **natang-**
  kinds **natang khorrkhorrob**, **netebulabulo**
bathe **swo**
battery **nev'et nakhab'**
be like **balak**
beach **naon**
beach morning glory **norrovwovu**
bead **najum**
beard **nevilias**, **nevilias-**
because **je**, **neten**
bed **nadakhaj**, **nanalnge**, **nenelnga-**
  on one's bed **rrenelnga-**
before **amu**
belch *n.* **rrarro**
bell **nebetingting**
belly **nesin-**
below **latan**, **vitan**
belt **netve**
bend *vt.* **lum**
  bend over **rrokh**
big **lab'**
Big Nambas **Taute**
bird **nanankho**
bird sp. **nevetarrtarr**
biscuit **navablakhot**
bishop **nerrurr longlong**
Bislama **Nale Vojvojakh**
bite **khas**
bitter **khakhon**
black **long**, **longlong**
blanket **nelulmakh**
bless **vite saburr**
blind **bar**, **nenetbar**
  blind person **nenetbar**
block *vt.* **bet khorr**
blocked **khorr**
blood **narre**, **nerre-**
blow **suv**
  blow the nose **sirri**
blue **nalakhej**
blunt **batot**
blurred (of vision) **yesyes**
boar **nubkhus-**, **nubukhas**
boat **nuak**, **nuak-**
body **neb'e-**
boil *n.* **nasol**
bone **nejin-**
book **naul**, **norroblat**
bow *n.* **novso**
bowel **neteng naj-**
bowl, wooden **narov**
boy **nenerrnarr**
branch **nerreng-**
bread **nebetmakhav**
breadfruit **nab'atav**
break **khaje**
  break open **tukh**
  by hitting **rrub khaje**
  of sea **vejengi**
breast **nasus**, **nesus-**
breath **nesuv-**, **nesuv**
broom **nebetisir**
brother **tavai-**
  older, of man **tua-**
  younger, of man **tas-**

of woman **tua-**
brother-in-law **takh-**
bucket **nesov nua**
bunch **nakal-**
burial ground **natam**
burn *vt.* **sul**
burp *n.* **rrarro**
bush **novorrkha**
to/in the bush **lanus**
bush nut **nokhorrot**
butterfly **naveb**
buttocks **nubut naj-**
buy **vul**, **vulvul**

C

cabbage, island **nokhmok**
call *v.* **tov**
of morning bird **v'inv'in**
Calophyllum inophyllum **nab'akhrro**
Canarium indicum **nenga**
cane, wild **nanavre**
canoe **nuak**, **nuak-**, **nuak nakis**
canoe tree **nerreiv**
car **nobolokhv'at**, **nuak natan**
carry on shoulder **kol**
cassia **nekhe sin takharr**
Castanospermum australe **torrarrot**
castrated animal **tamav**
Casuarina equisetifolia **niarr**
causal preposition **je**, **neten**
cause to be blocked **khorr**
cause to break **khaje**
cemetery **natam**
Chalcophaps indica **novomakh**
chase **b'el**
chest (anat.) **norruma-**
chestnut, Tahitian **namab**
chew **jem**
chicken **nato**
black and white **tobilakh**
white **toveb**
chief **muloun**, **nasum**
paramount **rrukharru**
in-waiting **neneten nev'in**
child **jiblakh**, **nat-**
children **terrjiblakh**
chirrup (of cicada) *v.* **sis**
chiton **tuvkhat**
chop *v.* **tider**, **v'ije**
cicada **nanan**
Circus approximans **nab'al**
clam varieties **teleb'ir**, **namavorr**
clean *adj.* **vok**
clear (a garden site) **khuban**
climb **sakh**
close *vt.* **lilij**
clothes **nerrurr**
cloud **noboborr**
cluck **tikak**, **tirenatene**
coconut **nani**
dry **nani narrang**, **nanibut**
fibres **naun**
flesh **nadakhas**
milk **nasu**
palm **nebet khadas nani**
shell **nalas**
sprouting **nabob**
variety **nabarrsam**
coconut crab **narrau**
coconut lory **nijivirr**
cold **nalkhas**, **nalngarri**
Colocasia esculenta **boak**
comb (of fowl) **nobono-**
come **ma**
come out **jalin**
conch shell **tavu**, **tedene**
cooked **naskhe**
coral, broken pieces of **novosorrv'at**
coral tree **narrarrav'**
Cordyline terminalis **norrobejikh**
cough **janet**
count **serrtengi**
cover *vt.* **nibe**

cover oneself **lulmakh**
crab **nakhav'**
black **nekhev' nakis**
freshwater **nabakh**
hairy **nekhev' bukhas**
white **nanav'us**
crawl **kharrav**, **kharrkharrav**
crooked **b'err**
croton **rrojaj**
crow *v.* **tetarrorr**
cry **ngarr**
cut **side**
lengthwise **side tavakhe**
Cycas circinalis **norromel**
cyclone **neleng rrub**

D

dance *n.* **navel**
ceremonial **naleng**
other kinds **nesevian**, **torronabe**
dance *v.* **vel**
dative preposition **min-**
day
shortest **nial jejemelekh**
five days ago **benelne**
four days ago **benev'at**
three days ago **benetil**
day before yesterday **bentarru**
day after tomorrow **tarru**
three days from now **tatil**
four days from now **tav'at**
five days from now **talne**
daylight, be **rrinrran**
dead **nas**
defecate **sisvarr**
Dendrocnidae sp. **norrokalat**
devil **tanas**
smelly **tenesbo**
devil nettle **norrokalat**
diarrhoea, have **sisve**
die **nas**
dig **khili**
digging stick **nokhwas**
Dioscorea
alata **nerrem nalin**
esculenta **jeje**
nummularia **narram**
do **bat**
wrongly **bet sarrav'i**
dog **neviri**
dolphin **naku**
door **nokh naine**, **nonokh naine**
down **latan**, **vitan**
Dracontomelon vitiense **khatabol**
dragon plum **khatabol**
drill *n.* **neverrirr**
drink *v.* **num**
drip *vi.* **jum**, **jumjum**
dry, be **nanas**
Ducula pacifica **nokhb'o**
dugong **neveramtas**
dust **nebetmakhav**

E

ear wax **narrlo**
earth oven **noulamu**
earthquake **nami**
eat *vt.* **waji** *vi.* **wor**
eel **nenere**
egg **norrul-**
of sugar ant **norrul nasasakh**
eight **khoal**
eighteen **sangav'il rrom khoal**
eleven **sangav'il rram sakhal**
emerald ground dove **novomakh**
emperor fish sp. **naborrbarr**
empty space **nanasav**
Erythrina variegata **narrarrav'**
European person **takharr**
evening **nialrrorr**, **rrevrrav**
exceed **jov**
excrement **naj-**, **naji**

exist **tokh**
explode **nanse**
eye **nanata-**

F

face *n.* **nakho-**
fall **jov**, **vejengi**
fart
  audibly **tisir**
  silently **bis**
fat *adj.* **lab’**
father **tana-**, **tete**
feather **lolo-**
feel **rrong**
fence **nerr-**, **niarr**
  fence post **novovos niarr**
fifteen **sangav’il rram alne**
fight *vi.* **balbal**, **rrubrrub**
Fijian asparagus **navse**
fill up **songoni**
find **tebengi**
finger **navarrangu-**
fingernail **navarrangun neb’is-**
finish *vi.* **bol**
fire **nakhab’**
fire-ant **nakhajkhe**
firefly **nev’eble**
firewood **nakhab’**
fish *n.* **nanaj**, **nanaj-**
  unidentified fish **navakhamel**, **nubuvok**, **torrobilakh**
fish-poison tree **nuam**
five **line**
  five days ago **benelne**
  five days from now **talne**
flashlight **nev’eble**
flick *vt.* **jibejibe**, **jibe rrongrrongo**
float *v.* **sal**
fly
  n. **nalang**
  v. **tasi**
flying fish **nevelelakhtas**
flying fox
  black **nakara**
  white **nekerebar**
foam (on sea) **nediha-**
fog **natalol**
fold **lum**
food **norrean**
footprints **nuaknata-**
foreskin **nev’iljungun tal-**
forget **rromnelengi**
fork (in road) **nasak**
four **v’at**
  four days ago **benev’at**
  four days from now **tav’at**
fourteen **sangav’il rram av’at**
fragrant **bunbun**
friend **tavai-**
frightened **lukho**
from **rran**
fruit **novo-**, **nuvu-**
fruit dove, Tanna **novotob’ak**
full **vun**, **vuvun**

G

Gallirallus philippensis **nibilakh**
garden *n.* **naute**, **nout-**
  former garden site **lerebere**
Garuga floribunda **nenesnas**
gather together *vi.* **vojakh**
get out of the way **vala**
get up **rratakh**
girl **tavat**
  young girl **tavat malakel**
give **krro**
glands, swollen **nebnab’**
go **v’an**
  go as far as **khos**
  go down **jubul**
  go hunting **khorrkhorr**
  go past **jov**
  go underwater **khun**, **rron**

goatfish **nato**
  yellow **tokhobarr**
good **nakis**
  good morning **nakis tumorrorran**
  good night **nakis tubung**
grab hold of **kum tokhon**
grandchild **nukhudu-**
grandfather **bubu nasub**
grandmother **bubu lekhtarr**
grandparent **bubu**
grasp **kum tokhon**
grass **nanus**
  sensitive **jidernas**
  white **norotoar**
  kind of **norrovitebkha**
grasshopper **narraskho**
great hog plum **naus**
  bitter **naus rrarrang**
  sweet **naus tuarem**
green **nalakhej**
green lizard **nanakhub**
green snail **nadaike**
ground **natan**
  to the ground **dan**
grow crooked **var**
grow crooked, back into jaw (tusk) **var**

H

habitual auxiliary **tokh**
hair, pubic **neviltara-**
Halcyon chloris **naskhe**
hand **navarra-**
handle **nokhwarr-**
happy **evlakh**
hard **terrterr**
hat **namanu**
he **khai**, **khini**
head **nabat-**
hear **rrong**
heart **nebetbang**
heaven **nedeknarran**
heavy **rrov**
hen **totavat**
hermit crab **nakhate**, **nakhate ntas**
Hernandia nymphaeifolia **neb'irrb'irr**
heron **naka**
hibiscus **navaskhaul**
hiccup *v.* **nasorr**
hide *vi.* **kusuakh**
high (of tide) **lol**
hill **nav'nge**
hill taro **nuvus boak**
hip **novosvoso-**
hit **rrub**, **tukh**
hold **sai**, **vurrsi**
hole **nual**, **nul-**
holy **saburr**
  holy spirit **nomum saburr**
home **nav'anu**, **nev'enu-**
hook
  n. **netekh**
  v. **v'ange**
hot **khavkhav**
house **naine**, **nem-**
  house-post **nab'urr**
how? **severrse**
how much? how many? **vise**
hunger **nanarr**
hunt **khorrkhorr**
hurricane **neleng rrub**
husband **tenen nat-**

I

I **khina**
idea **norromrromian**
if **seve**
important
  matter **tangav'a**
  person **nemerrlulwo**
in **rrangan**, **rre**
incisor **nalve nakho-**
Indian coral tree **narrarrav'**

indoors **lalaine**
Inocarpus edulis **namab**
insert (into weave) **jingreni**
inside *adv.* **lalaine**
interior **lalo-**
intestine **neteng naj-**
Intsia bijuga **natorr**
iron *n.* **navarr**
island **norrourre**
island cabbage **nokhmok**
island teak **natorr**
it **khai**, **khini**
itch *v.* **khorrkhorr**

J

jacket **nerrurr nalkhas**
jaw **nias**, **nias-**
jellyfish **norrokalattas**
juice **nusuwu-**
jump **jubul**
junction **nasak**
just *adv.* **brro**

K

kava **nanalukh**
kill **rrub**
killer **mako**
kingfisher, white-collared **naskhe**
kiss **jum**
Kleinhovia hospita **nomurrak**
knee **nabau-**
kneel **jingba**
knife **nesde**
knock **tingting**
know **rrong usong**

L

land *n.* **natan**
language **nale**, **nele-**
large **lab'**
laugh **ngirr**
leaf **norrokha**, **norrokho**
  of sago **noreat**
leak *vi.* **jev**, **jevjev**
leg **nabalako-**
lemon grass **norotoar bunbun**
letter **norroblat**
lick **lom'**
lie *v.* **khajkhaj**
light (a fire) **long**
lightning **nev'ilakh**
like, be **balak**
limit *n.* **nav'khat**
limp *v.* **jikhjikh**
lip **niv'iljungote**
listen **lelngarro**
little, a **bevelvele**
lizard, green **nanakhub**
lobster **naurre**, **naurre ntas**
long **darav**
  long time ago **tua**, **tuorrongrrong**
look
  after **kisai**
  at **les**
  for **kisai**
  through **klerrurr**
lose **jelengi**
lost, get **jal**
louse **nakhut**
low tide **netial**
  very low tide**netial navse**
lychee, native **narra**

M

Macaranga sp. **nev'ine**
mackerel **nabungo**
maggot **nabutbat**
mainland **nav'anu**
make **bat**
  loud noise **nanse**
  mistake **bet sarrav'i**
man **nemerrte**

men **nemerre**
old man **nemerrjian**
mangrove **narrong**
mark *n.* **nav'khat**
marriage **nelekhian**
married woman **neletar**
mat
for sleeping **nejal**, **nejal-**
of coconut leaf **nadakhaj**
me **khina**
meeting house **nakhm'al**, **nekhm'el-**
in the meeting house **lakhm'al**
Megapodius freycinet **tomola**
Melanesian person **nemerrlonglong**
Metroxylon warburgii **niat**
midday **nialvosonbat**
midnight, be **lolovkhat**
Milloidichthys flavolineatus **nato**
Mimosa pudica **jidernas**
Miscanthus floridulus **nanavre**
mist **natalol**
mistake, make **bet sarrav'i**
molar **nulwobetarr**
money **nav'at**
month **navle**
moon **navle**
Moreton Bay chestnut **torrarrot**
red **novunvun**
morning **morrorran**
morning bird **navas**
mosquito **namkho**
mother **b'ev'e**, **nerra-**
mountain **nav'nge**
mouth **nejungo-**
mouthpiece **nejungo-**
mucus, nasal **nerrivne**
mud **nalev**
mullet **nalavu**
murderer **mako**
Myristica fatua **narra**

N

naked **malmal**
name **nangse**, **nengsa-**
nape (of neck) **nasalkha-**
navel **nebito-**
nettle **norrokalat**
New Guinea rosewood **nav'ila**
nice-smelling **bunbun**
niece **vave vakharru**
night **bung**
nine **khesve**
nineteen **sangav'il rram khesve**
nits **narer**
noon **nialvosonbat**
nose **nukuns-**
now **tovon**
nutmeg, wild **narra**

O

oar **novos**
octopus **nekhte**
old man **nemerrjian**
old woman **lekhtarr merrji**
on **rre**
on top **marraj**
one **sakhal**
only **brro**
open *vt.* **rrekhej**
or **deve**
orange *n.* **namul**
outrigger **najam**
outside **jalin**
oven **noulamu**
over there **lokhsa**
overflow *v.* **vun jikarrkarr**

P

Pacific pigeon **nokhb'o**
paddle *n.* **novos**
painful **rrurrngorr**

palm sp. **nani tatakul**, **nevenini**, **norrobne**
pandanus **nav'au**
papaya **naus san takharr**
paper **norroblat**
paramount chief **rrukharru**
parrotfish
  blue **nalakhej**
  red **nab'err**
  white **nenerrvusave**
path **nasal**
  on the path **lasal**
pawpaw **naus san takharr**
pay for **vul**, **vulvul**
peck **mot**
pegs (of outrigger) **nalak**
pelt **lijai**
penis **natal**, **natal-**
  circumcised **telnasis**
  uncircumcised **telwon**
penis wrapper **nabas**, **nabas-**
person
  blind person **nenetbar**
  important person **nemerrlulwo**
  stubborn person **bet terrterr**
perspiration **nukhuskhus**, **nukhuskhus-**
photograph **namum**, **nomum-**
piece **nubungo-**
pig **nubkhus-**, **nubukhas**
  castrated **nubukhas tamav**
  tusked **navar**
  wild **bukhusrrum**
pigeon sp. **nable**
pigpen **niarr nubkhas**
pillow **noboltolnga-**
pinch **kinkinit**
plant *vt.* **rruv**
  plant yams **wak**
platform (for storing yams) **nakalkal**
play **rrorrovokh**
point (of arrow) **nevin**
poke **jile**
pole attaching outrigger to canoe **nevu**
Polyscias scutellaria **norrube**
Pometia pinnata **narra**
Porphyrio porphyrio **nevere**
post **nab'urr**, **novovos niarr**
post hole **nab'urr**
prawn **naurre**, **naurre nua**
pray **varrvarr**
pregnant **sian**
pretend **khajkhaj**
priest **nerrurr longlong**
prohibit **verr khorr**
Pterocarpus indicus **nav'ila**
Ptilinopus tannensis **novotob'ak**
pubic
  area **tara-**
  hair **neviltara-**
pudding **nalok**
  yam pudding **nalok narram**
puff *v.* **vangvang**
pull **yav'**
pumice **navu sal**
punch **tukh**
purple swamphen **nevere**
pus **nanen**
push **toni**
put **vite**
  inside **songoni**
putrid **bo**
puzzle tree **nomurrak**

Q

quarrel *v.* **latlat**

R

rain
  n. **nause**
  v. **souse**
read **v'ev'naul**
red **nial**
reef heron **naka**

remember **rromrromi**
repair **surr kele**
resemble **balak**
rib **neliv-**
rice **norrul nasasakh**
ringworm **nav'in**
ripe **mirre**
river **nua**, **nua vala**
road **nasal**
  on the road **lasal**
rock **nav'at**
roll *vt.* **lululum**
roost **sakel**
rooster **tonerrnarr**
rope **nanarte**
rotten **bo**
ruin *vt.* **komkomo**
run **vala**, **valvala**
  run after **b'el**

S

Saccharum edule **navse**
sago **niat**
  sago leaf **noreat**
sail *n.* **nab'an**
saliva **nelivte**
sand **naon**
saw *n.* **nerres**
say **rreve**, **varr**
scoop up (water) **sov**
scrape *vt.* **koji**, **kojkoji**
scratch *vt.* **koji**, **kojkoji**
  scratch the ground **jirr**, **jirrjirr**
scrub fowl **tomola**
sea **natas**
  rough sea **netes rrumrrum**
sea almond **tavo**
sea hearse tree **neb'irrb'irr**
sea slug **nebetrreiv**
sea snake **namat natas**
seabird sp. **babarr**
seaweed **nalum**
see **les**
seed **novos-**
semen **nejirra-**
sensitive grass **jidernas**
seven **khodit**
seventeen **sangav'il rrom khodit**
sew **rrurr**
shadow **namum**, **nomum-**
shake *vi.* **rrakharrakh**
  of ground in earthquake **mi**
shark **nab'akhe**
sharp **mon**
she **khai**, **khini**
shell (of coconut) **nalas**
shellfish, small **nevesis**
shelter *n.* **nokhorrkhorrial**
shin **neb'ere-**
shine **vusvuso**
shoot *vt.* **jorro**
short **murrol**
shoulder **nebil-**
shut *vt.* **lilij**
sibling of same sex
  older **tua-**
  younger **tas-**
sick **rroj**
sing **sukhaskho**
sink *vi.* **rron**
sister
  older, of woman **tua-**
  younger, of woman **tas-**
  of man **jokhos-**
sit **yat**
  cross-legged **yat nasurr**
  on ground **yat rrerrengmal**, **yat vijakharr**
six **khon**
sixteen **sangav'il rrom khon**
skin **nev'il-**
skink **novojujrro**
skinny **marraj**

sky **nedeknarran**
sleep **naturr**
  on one's back **seltab'kharr**
  on one's stomach **bovnuak**
sleepy **bunut**
slipper lobster **timtibaer**
slitgong **nebetingting**
slurp **rrim**
smegma **nenga**
smell *n.* **nubu-**
smoke *n.* **nies nakhab'**
snake **namat**
sneeze **jivkhe**
snore **ngorr**
snot **nerrivne**
soft **neleklek**
soil **natan**
sore
  adj. **rrurrngorr**
  n. **navas**, **navas-**
sour **khakhon**
sow *n.* **neveram**
speak **rij**
speaker **nejungo-**
spear
  n. **nesarr**
  vt. **harr**
spider **nela**
spirit **namum**, **nias-**, **nomum-**
  evil **nias**
  holy **nomum saburr**
spit
  n. **nelivte**
  v. **livtov**
split, be **tavakh**
  cause to be split **tavakhe**
spoil *vt.* **komkomo**
Spondias dulcis **naus**
spoor **nuaknata-**
sprouting coconut **nabob**
spur (of rooster) **taj-**
squat **sarakh**
stamp *v.* **savarrum**
stand **trro**, **tutrro**
star **novovorr**
start *vi.* **bet tebengi**
stay **yat**
steal
  vt. **v'anakh**
  vi. **v'anv'anakh**
step on **varrasi**
stick *n.* **nakha**
  digging **nokhwas**
  used for holding hot stones **kalv'at**
stick *v.*
  stick in **jile**
  stick into the ground **voso**
stink **bo**
stone *n.* **nav'at**
  black stone **nev'etnot**
stone *vt.* **lijai**
story **netukhtukhunian**
straight **mavos**
striped surgeonfish **neb'irrav**
strong **terrterr**
stubborn person **bet terrterr**
suck **sus**
sugar ant **nasasakh**
sugarcane **nebetev**
sun **netenial**, **nial**
  hot sun **nial terrterr**
swallow **rrulon**
swamp harrier **nab'al**
swamp taro **boak**
swear **susavurr**
sweat *n.* **nukhuskhus**, **nukhuskhus-**
sweep *vi.* **jijir**
sweet **kholkhol**
swim **swo**
swollen glands **nebnab'**

T

Tahitian chestnut **namab**

take **takhe**
talk **rij**
tamanu **nab'akhrro**
Tanna fruit dove **novotob'ak**
taro varieties **boak**, **nav'i**, **nuvus boak**
teach **sesrre**, **verr visvisi**
teak, island **natorr**
tears **nusuwun natan**
tell **varr**
  lies **khajkhaj**
  stories (i.e. chat) **sobsob**
  a story **tukhtukhun**
  the truth **verr ratne**
ten **sangav'il**
Terminalia catappa **tavo**
testicles **nalaso-**
that *dem.* **khe**
  that one **khorro**
thatch *n.* **niat**
them
  dl. **kharru**
  tl. **kharrtil**
  pl. **kharr**
there **lokhsa**
they
  dl. **kharru**
  tl. **kharrtil**
  pl. **kharr**
thigh **nanak-**
thin **marraj**
thing **netenge**
think **rrumrrum**
  about **rromrromi**
thirteen **sangav'il rram atil**
thought **norromrromian**
three **til**
  three days ago **benetil**
  three days from now **tatil**
  three times **vakhatil**
throat **nebetrraki-**
throw *vt.* **lijai**
thunder **nakurr**
tide
  high **lol**
  low **netial**
  very low **netial navse**
tie *vt.* **jal**, **jel tokhon**
time **nerren**
tinea versicolor **niv'ilvok**
tired **jojorr**
to **min-**
today **morruniekhe**
tomorrow **nev'khe**
tongs **nekles**
tongue **nem'em'-**
tooth **nalve**, **noluvo-**
top, on **marraj**
torch **nev'eble**
touch **jidar**
tree **nakha**
  (of particular type) **nabat-**
  tree sp. (unidentified) **nalak**, **natot**, **nelek nalin**, **neniburr**, **nevetrris**, **totra**
trevally **nenijun**
Trichoglossus haemotodus **nijivirr**
trick *v.* **khajkhaj**
trunk (of tree) **nabat-**
turn around, over *vt.* **rrorr**
turtle **navu**
twelve **sangav'il rram arru**
twenty **ngavulrru**
twice **vakharru**
two **rru**
Tyto alba **nalul**

U

umbrella **norrobne**
uncle, maternal **jokho-**
urinate **nanngas**
urine **nanngas**, **nanngas-**
us
  dl. incl. **nekrrerru**
  tl. incl. **nekrretil**

pl. incl. **nekles**
dl. excl. **kananrru**
tl. excl. **kanantil**
pl. excl. **kanan**

V

vagina **nev'ikh-**
victory leaf **norrobejikh**
voice **rralo-**
vomit *v.* **lulu**
vomitus **lulu**, **lulu-**

W

waistband **netve**
wake up *vi.* **rratakh**
walk **yas**
backwards **bukhbukhtakh**, **bukhtakh**
walking stick **nebetlak**
want to **rrong**, **varre**. *See also* **lalo-**
warrior **mako**, **nukhuli navrro**
water **nua**, **nusuwu-**
we
dl. incl. **nekrrerru**
tl. incl. **nekrretil**
pl. incl. **nekles**
dl. excl. **kananrru**
tl. excl. **kanantil**
pl. excl. **kanan**
weave **v'ati**
(bamboo) **velveleng**
wedding **nelekhian**
wet *adj.* **ninin**, **tarrav'**
whale **norrourretakhno**
what? **nese**
when (subordinator) **nerren**
when? **tasve**
where? **khade**
whistle **v'inv'in**
white **vok**, **vusave**, **vuso**
white-eye, yellow **nevelelakh**
who? **khise**
why? **neten nese**
wife **lekhtarr**, **nau-**
wild cane **nanavre**
wild pig **bukhusrrum**
wild yam **namjo**
wind *n.* **nalang**
wing **nakhab'e-**
winter solstice **nial jejemelekh**
with (accompanitive) **rron-**
woman **lekhtarr**, **tavat**
married **neletar**
old **lekhtarr merrji**
wood **nakha**
work **vesakhsakh**
write **khirrkhirr**
writing **naul**
wrongly, do **bet sarrav'i**

X

Xanthosoma sagittifolium **nuvus boak**

Y

yam
varieties **jeje**, **namjo**, **narram**, **nerrem darav**, **nerrem nalin**, **novobo**, **novobov**
pudding **nalok narram**
yawn **nanav**
year **narram**
yellow **melekh**
yesterday **benanev**
you
sg. **khunokh**
dl. **kanirru**
tl. **kanitil**
pl. **kani**

Z

Zosterops flavifrons **nevelela**

4 *A Nese story*

The following short story is the only textual data that has been recorded so far in Nese. It was told by Annie Hymak of Matanvat on 25 September 2002, and was transcribed and translated with the help of Chief Grégoire Kaku Salior.

Naskhe sakhal yat khe Lokhorr.	The kingfisher lived there at Lokhorr anchorage.
Yat Lokhorr rrengen nebet neniburr sakhal te tokh marro lanus.	He lived in a *neniburr* tree where he lived up in the bush.
Khai yat, tavu sakhal naturr latas rrengen lasale.	He lived there and a conch shell slept in the sea at the anchorage.
Tavu khe naturr latas khe, khai sukhaskho kisekh.	The conch shell lived in the sea there and he sang all the time.
Rrinrrin ma khe sukhaskho.	Daylight came there and he sang.
Naskhe nge yat marro rrong te tavu nge tisukhaskho.	The kingfisher was up there and he heard that the conch shell was singing.
Rreve, 'Nese khorro?'	He said, 'What is that?'
'Norrongo belek tavu sakhal khe latas.'	'It sounds to me like a conch shell is there in the sea.'
Rrong te tavu nge khasukhaskho rreve:	He heard that the conch sell was singing like this:
Sikho sikho	*Sikho sikho*
Urba teau teau	*Urba teau teau*
V'esesa levia o	*V'esesa levia o*
Nes tavu levia o	*Nes tavu levia o*
Totogrroa o teau	*Totogrroa o teau*
Teau sikho	*Teau sikho*
O! Detaiokh o	*O! Detaiokh o*
Kharav ma ma ma rrengen nasal me aute.	He crawled hither to the road here ashore.
Kharav kharav v'an v'an khos rre nebet nekhe nge.	He crawled on and on as far as that tree.

V'an rrong te tavu nge ma yat nge lelngarro.	He went and heard that the conch had come and stayed there and he listened.
Ale sukhaskho kele.	Then he sang again.
Sikho sikho	*Sikho sikho*
Urba teau teau	*Urba teau teau*
V'esesa levia o	*V'esesa levia o*
Nes tavu levia o	*Nes tavu levia o*
Totogrroa o teau	*Totogrroa o teau*
Teau sikho	*Teau sikho*
O! Detaiokh o	*O! Detaiokh o*
Jubul ma latan dan.	He jumped down to the ground.
Naskhe nge rreve, 'Jev'an jevsenokh?'	The kingfisher said, 'I am going to go and do what with you?'
Rreve ma latan.	He said he would come down.
'Nejungom v'e darav.'	'Your mouth is long.'
'Khove khobomotia.'	'Do you want to peck me?'
'Khota khobomotia vusokhte.'	'You cannot peck me.'
Ma latan jubul.	He came down and jumped.
Naskhe nge jubul latan ma.	The kingfisher jumped down.
Tavu nge kum tokhon naskhe.	The conch grabbed hold of the kingfisher.
Belbel tokhoni latan v'an v'an v'an.	He hit him hard down and down and down.
Ale naskhe mot tavu.	Then the kingfisher pecked the conch shell.
Tavu nas.	The conch shell died.
Ale, nale nge nerij rrov khai khe brro.	So the story that I am telling finishes just there.

5 *Phonology*

5.1 Phoneme inventory

The consonant inventory of Nese exhibits a number of features which are somewhat unusual among the languages of Vanuatu, though these unusual features are found in some of the other languages which are spoken nearby. Of particular note are the contrastive apicolabial consonants which are reported in only five languages of northwestern Malakula (V'ënen Taut, Malua Bay, Vovo, Botovro and Vao), as well as some of the languages spoken on the southern coast of Espiritu Santo that is adjacent to northern Malakula. The second unusual feature is the distinction between the apical trill /r/ and the retroflex flap /ɾ/. This distinction is not recorded in neighbouring languages,[1] though it is attested in the Uripiv variety of the Northeast Malakula language (McKerras 2000).

The consonant inventory of Nese is set out below:

	Apicolabial	Labial	Alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Voiceless stops			t		c	k	
Voiced stops	b̪	b	d			g	
Fricatives	v̪	v	s			ɣ	h
Nasals	m̪	m	n			ŋ	
Rhotics			r	ɾ			
Lateral			l				
Glides		w			y		

It will be immediately noted that there are some asymmetries present in this inventory. In particular:

(i) There are no voiceless counterparts to the voiced labial stops /b̪/ and /b/.[2]

(ii) There is no voiced counterpart to the voiceless palatal obstruent /c/.

[1] It should be remembered, however, that all of the immediately neighbouring languages are poorly recorded phonetically, so more accurate information may reveal the presence of this contrast in other languages.

[2] While there is a phonetic [p], it will be shown below that this is simply a word-final allophone of /v/.

While these asymmetries may turn out to be the result of incomplete lexical data, it should be noted that it is not uncommon for the languages of central and northern Malakula to exhibit a lack of correspondence between voiced and voiceless series of labial stops. In both Naman and Neve'ei, for example, while there is a /b/ there is no corresponding /p/.

The apicolabial consonants represent a highly salient feature of the consonant inventory of Nese. These are articulated with the tip of the tongue visibly protruding from the mouth and touching the upper lip. Speakers of Nese are themselves aware of the unusual nature of this sound. Whenever I made the mistake of repeating a word containing one of these sounds with either a bilabial or an alveolar articulation, my error was immediately pointed out and I was told that it was necessary to 'push your tongue out'.

The voiceless stops /t/ and /k/ are pronounced as unaspirated voiceless stops with alveolar and velar articulation respectively. The segment that is entered on the consonant inventory above as /c/ is not strictly a voiceless stop at all. Rather, it is the voiceless palatal affricate [tʃ]. For example:

/cicir/	[tʃitʃir]	'broom'
/nanac/	[nanatʃ]	'fish'
/naɣacɣe/	[naɣatʃxe]	'ant'

The corresponding voiced stops are fully voiced in all environments, even word-finally, as well as being homorganically prenasalised initially and when preceded by a vowel or a non-nasal consonant. Thus:

/b̪ele/	[ᵐ̪b̪ele]	'chase it'
/nab̪ak/	[naᵐ̪b̪ak]	'banyan'
/naɣab̪/	[naɣaᵐ̪b̪]	'fire'
/bo/	[ᵐbo]	'stink'
/nebetev/	[neᵐbetef ~ neᵐbetep]	'sugarcane'
/nubutbat/	[nuᵐbutᵐbat]	'maggot'
/nanaɣub/	[nanaɣuᵐb]	'green tree lizard'
/darav/	[ⁿdaraf ~ ⁿdarap]	'long'
/ɣodit/	[ɣoⁿdit]	'nine'
/nesde/	[nesⁿde]	'knife'
/cigam̪i/	[tʃiᵑgam̪i]	'your (pl.)'
/cigre/	[tʃiᵑgre]	'their'

However, when there is a preceding nasal consonant, there is no homorganic prenasalisation of voiced stops. For example:

/bunbun/	[ᵐbunbun]	'fragrant'
/ciŋba/	[tʃiŋba]	'kneel'

It should be noted that the voiced velar stop /g/ is extremely rare, and is so far attested only in the possessive marker /ciga-/.

Of the fricatives, /s/ is invariably pronounced as a voiceless alveolar grooved fricative. The remaining fricatives, i.e. /v̪/, /v/ and /ɣ/, are pronounced as voiced apicolabial, labiodental and velar fricatives respectively in all environments except word-finally, where they take on voiceless articulations. It should be further noted that, word-finally, /v/ freely

varies between the voiceless labiodental fricative [f] and the voiceless bilabial stop [p]. Thus:

/v̪inv̪in/	[v̪inv̪in]	‘whistle’
/nav̪at/	[nav̪at]	‘stone’
/v̪ev̪naul/	[v̪ev̪naul]	‘read’
/tarav̪/	[taraf̪]	‘wet’
/vuso/	[vuso]	‘white’
/evlaɣ/	[evlax]	‘happy’
/tavaɣ/	[tavax]	‘split’
/nebetev/	[nᵐbetef ~ nᵐbetep]	‘sugarcane’
/tamav/	[tamaf ~ tamap]	‘castrated animal’
/livtov/	[livtof ~ livtop]	‘spit’
/raɣaraɣ/	[raɣarax]	‘shake’
/ɣolɣol/	[ɣolɣol]	‘sweet’
/civɣe/	[tʃivɣe]	‘sneeze’
/meleɣ/	[melex]	‘yellow’

The glottal fricative has been attested only in the words /har/ ‘(to) spear’, /narah/ ‘canoe bailer’ and /nediha-/ ‘foam’. Given its rarity, checking is needed to ensure that these forms have been correctly recorded.

The nasals, the lateral and the glide /w/ have the pronunciations that we would expect on the basis of the IPA symbols used to represent these segments. The glide /y/ is pronounced as a palatal glide, i.e. [j] in the IPA script. The segment that is represented on the consonant chart as /r/ is pronounced as an alveolar trill, whereas the segment that is represented as /ɾ/ is realised as a retroflex flap. For example:

/nab̪ur/	[naᵐb̪ur]	‘house post’
/noromel/	[noromel]	‘cycad’
/neviɾi/	[neviɾi]	‘dog’
/noɾotoaɾ/	[noɾotoaɾ]	‘bracken fern’

The following pairs are evidence of the set of consonant contrasts just presented:

/t/ and /d/	/daɾav/	‘long’
	/tarav̪/	‘wet’
/k/ and /g/	/tikak/	‘it clucked’
	/cigam̪i/	‘your (pl.)’
/b/ and /b̪/	/bet/	‘do’
	/b̪er/	‘crooked’
	/nabu/	‘bamboo’
	/nab̪ur/	‘house post’
	/namab/	‘Tahitian chestnut’
	/naɣab̪/	‘fire’
/d/ and /b̪/	/nadaɣec/	‘bed’
	/nabaɣe/	‘shark’

/m/ and /m̪/	/nemerte/	‘man’
	/nem̪em̪en/	‘his/her tongue’
/n/ and /n̪/	/nenɾe/	‘eel’
	/nen̪em̪er/	‘their (pl.) tongues’
/t/ and /c/	/tete/	‘father’
	/cece/	‘lesser yam’
/c/ and /s/	/cal/	‘get lost’
	/sal/	‘float’
/v/ and /v̪/	/vite/	‘put’
	/v̪ice/	‘chop’
	/tavaɣ/	‘split’
	/tav̪at/	‘four days from now’
	/daɾav/	‘long’
	/tarav̪/	‘wet’
/h/ and /ɣ/	/har/	‘spear’
	/ɣaru/	‘they (dl.)’
	/narah/	‘canoe bailer’
	/raɣaraɣ/	‘it shook’
	/nedihan/	‘its foam’
	/nev̪iɣam/	‘your vagina’
/k/ and /ɣ/	/kol/	‘carry on shoulders’
	/ɣon/	‘six’
	/naka/	‘reef heron’
	/naɣa/	‘tree’
	/nasak/	‘fork in road’
	/nasasaɣ/	‘sugar ants’
/r/ and /ɾ/	/neram/	‘your mother’
	/neveɾam/	‘sow’
	/tarav̪/	‘wet’
	/daɾav/	‘long’
	/naroŋ/	‘mangrove’
	/naɾov/	‘wooden bowl’
/r/ and /l/	/ralon/	‘his/her voice’
	/lalon/	‘its interior’
/ɾ/ and /l/	/neviɾi/	‘dog’
	/nevilias/	‘beard’

The vowel inventory of Nese offers fewer surprises than we find in the consonants, as there is just the basic five-vowel contrast that we find in so many Vanuatu languages, that is:

	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u
Mid	e		o
Low		a	

There is no evidence for contrastive vowel length in Nese. In contrast to many of the languages of central and northern Malakula, there is also no evidence for a contrastive schwa in Nese. The various contrasts are illustrated by the following pairs:

/i/ and /e/	/sis/	'it chirrupped'
	/sesre/	'(s)he taught'
/e/ and /a/	/cel/	'tie (something)'
	/cal/	'it got lost'
/a/ and /o/	/nalak/	'tree sp.'
	/nalok/	'pudding'
/o/ and /u/	/ɣon/	'six'
	/ɣun/	'it went underwater'

5.2 Stress

Little attention so far has been paid to the behaviour of stress in Nese. The basic pattern seems to be little different from what we expect of a language of central Vanuatu in that stress is primarily assigned to the penultimate syllable. This is obviously an area to which greater attention will need to be devoted in any future research on this language.

5.3 Phonotactics

Words begin overwhelmingly with consonants in Nese, with only a tiny handful of forms attested so far as beginning with vowels. Vowel-initial forms include only two items beginning with /a/, i.e. /amu/ 'before' and /aute/ 'ashore', one item beginning with /e/, i.e. /evlaɣ/ 'happy', and one item beginning with /u/, i.e. /us/ 'ask'. Practically all consonants are attested word-initially, except that no items have yet been attested with initial /g/ (which is not a widely distributed phoneme in any case) and /m̥/. Word-initial consonant clusters are extremely rare, and seem to be limited only to sequences of STOP + LIQUID, e.g. /bro/ 'only', /klerur/ 'look through', /kro/ 'give', /tro/ 'stand'.

Root-finally, we find any of the vowels, as well as any single consonant apart from /d/ or /g/. The glides /w/ and /y/ are not recorded root-finally, though the diphthongs /ai/ and /au/ are found. No word-final consonant clusters of any kind are attested.

Intervocalically, we find any of the single consonants, as well as a range of two-member consonant clusters. No consonant clusters involving three or more consonants have been attested. A fairly wide range of intervocalic clusters has been attested, though it is not known at this stage what kinds of systematic exclusions there may be regarding consonant clusters. Part of the problem in establishing the patterns appears to be the limited nature of the corpus, which means that it is not always possible to be certain whether a given form is monomorphemic or not. The presence of a morpheme boundary certainly opens up the

possibilities for intervocalic clusters. For example, while geminate consonants are not permitted intramorphemically, they are certainly permitted over morpheme boundaries. Thus:

/ne-se-yat-te/
1SG:REAL-NEG-sit-NEG
'I did not sit'

5.4 Ablaut

A highly salient feature of the interaction between Nese morphosyntax and its phonology is a very widespread process of vocalic ablaut by which the vowel /a/ of many noun and verb roots in many morphosyntactic environments is raised to /e/.[3] This not only affects monosyllabic roots such as /ɣas/ 'bite' which alternates in statable environments with /ɣes/, but even polysyllabic roots such as /nakaɾa/ 'black flying fox' which has an alternating root form /nekeɾe/. Essentially, where the only vowels within a noun or a verb root are /a/ and that noun or verb is closely linked structurally to some other constituent within a statable set of morphosyntactic environments, then all instances of /a/ in that root are raised to /e/.

This pattern of ablaut appears not to be absolutely obligatory in any given context, even though in many morphosyntactic environments it is very strongly preferred. There is also evidence that alternation between /a/ and /e/ takes place sporadically even where a noun or a verb is not structurally closely bound to any other form, which suggests that there are no environments in which the process categorically does not apply. Given this kind of complexity, it is possible that the full details of this process may ultimately prove impossible to establish, given that Nese is now moribund, and exposure to any substantial corpus of spontaneous speech in the field is unlikely.

The data that have been assembled to date suggests that all instances of /a/ within a noun or a verb root are likely to shift to /e/ under the following sets of conditions:

(i) *Nominal compounds*

When an noun root in which all the root vowels are /a/ is compounded with a following item (§6.2.1), the root vowels are generally all shifted to /e/. We therefore find examples such as the following:

/tanas/ 'devil'	+	/bo/ 'stink'	>	/tenes-bo/ 'kind of devil which smells'
/nalaŋ/ 'wind'	+	/rub/ 'kill'	>	/neleŋ rub/ 'cyclone'
/nataŋ/ 'basket'	+	/nac-/ 'excrement'	>	/neteŋ nac-/ 'bowel'
/natas/ 'sea'	+	/rumrum/ 'wild'	>	/netes rumrum/ 'rough sea'

[3] Patterns of morphosyntactically conditioned vowel ablaut are also a feature of V'ënen Taut (Fox 1979:13–19).

/nabas/	+	/lulwo/	>	/nebes lulwo/
‘penis wrapper’		‘large’		‘large penis wrapper’
/naɣat/	+	/naɣaḇ/	>	/neɣet naɣaḇ/
‘stone’		‘fire’		‘battery’
/naɣaɣ/	+	/nakis/	>	/neɣeɣ nakis/
‘bush crab’		‘good’		‘black crab’

While the examples just presented have all been disyllabic, the same process applies also to trisyllabic nouns in which the root vowels are all *a*, as shown by the following:

/nakara/	+	/bar/	>	/nekere-bar/
‘black flying fox’		‘blind’		‘white flying fox’

Note that this process applies only to the initial element of the compound and not to the second element. The nouns /natan/ ‘ground’ and /navar/ ‘iron’ do not undergo ablaut to /neten/ and /never/ in the following examples where they are preceded by other elements in compounds:

/nuak/	+	/natan/	>	/nuak natan/
‘canoe’		‘ground’		‘car’
/naveb/	+	/navar/	>	/naveb navar/
‘butterfly’		‘iron’		‘airplane’

This process does not seem to be fully systematic, as my data includes a small number of examples in which the initial compounded nouns show no evidence at all of undergoing ablaut. For example:

/namat/	+	/natas/	>	/namat natas/
‘snake’		‘sea’		‘seasnake’
/navar/	+	/nerur/	>	/navar nerur/
‘iron’		‘clothes’		‘clothes iron’

However, noun roots which contain vowels other than sequences exclusively of /a/ systematically do not undergo any kind of ablaut. This is illustrated by examples such as the following, where vowel shift is not a possibility:

/nalok/	+	/naram/	>	/nalok naram/
‘pudding’		‘yam’		‘yam pudding’
/navu/	+	/sal/	>	/navu sal/
‘turtle’		‘float’		‘pumice’
/naɣacɣe/	+	/nial/	>	/naɣacɣe nial/
‘biting ants’		‘red’		‘red ants’
/bubu/	+	/leɣtar/	>	/bubu leɣtar/
‘grandparent’		‘woman’		‘grandmother’

(ii) *Adjectivally modified nouns*

When a noun containing only the vowel /a/ is followed by an adjective within a noun phrase (§6.2.3), the noun root is again eligible for the process of ablaut whereby the root

vowels shift to /e/. In this environment, the process appears not to be completely obligatory, and the examples in my corpus of compounds exhibit alternation between modified and unmodified forms of the root, as follows:

/naram/	+	/darav/	>	/nerem darav ~ naram darav/
'yam'		'long'		'long yam'

(iii) *Directly possessed nouns*

When a possessed noun falls into the set of directly suffixed nouns (§6.2.2), a root which contains only /a/ is eligible for ablaut with all instances of /a/ in the root undergoing shift to /e/. Thus, with the noun /nataŋ/ 'basket', which enters into the distant alienable direct possessive relationship (§6.2.2.2), we find:

/neteŋ ne leɣtar/
basket POSS woman
'the woman's basket'

Similarly, with /nabat-/ 'tree', which enters into the close alienable direct possessive relationship (§6.2.2.2), we find:

/nebet nenibur/
tree kind.of.tree
'*neniburr* tree'

We find the same kind of alternation affecting the noun /tana-n/ 'his/her father' in the following:

/tene-n nat-ne/
father-3SG child-3SG
'the father of his/her child'

The fact that indirectly possessed nouns do not undergo ablaut in indirect possessive constructions is indicated by the invariant nature of the root in examples such as the following:

/namab sak/
Tahitian.chestnut POSS:1SG
'my Tahitian chestnut'

However, there appear to be some additional specific points that need to be made regarding the application of ablaut in directly suffixed possessive constructions. When there is a pronominal rather than a nominal possessor, it is only consonant-final roots which undergo ablaut, and then only when the following possessive suffix begins with the vowel /i/. Note, therefore, the alternation between a noun such as /nabat-/ 'head' with /nebet-/ in the following examples:

/nabat-re/
head-1PL.INCL
'our (pl. incl.) heads'

/nebet-inan/
head-1PL.EXCL
'our (pl. excl.) heads'

However, a form such as /nanata-/ ‘eye’ remains invariant throughout its paradigm. Thus:

/nanata-r/
eye-1PL.INCL
‘our (pl. incl.) eyes’

/nanata-nan/
eye-1PL.EXCL
‘our (pl. excl.) eyes’

(iv) *Prefixed verbs*

For the most part, verb roots are unaffected by any associated inflectional prefixes (§6.3.1). However, there is some scanty evidence pointing to at least the sporadic possibility of shift from /a/ to /e/, though this is possibly conditioned by the adjacent sequence of other syllables containing /e/ in the following example where /yas/ ‘walk’ has become /yes/:

/Ø-se-be-yes-te/
3SG:REAL-NEG-NEG-walk-NEG
‘(s)he did not walk’

(v) *Verbal compounds*

Verbal compounds are not widely attested in my corpus. However, there is a handful of examples in which a verb root containing /a/ is compounded with a following root containing /a/. When the verb is compounded with a following nominal root, both undergo ablaut to /e/. Thus:

/cal/	+	/naɣ̟at/	>	/cel-ɣ̟et/
‘tie’		‘stone’		‘anchor (canoe)’

However, when the verb is compounded with another verb, only the first root shows evidence of ablaut:

/cidar/	+	/nas/	>	/cider-nas/
‘touch’		‘die’		‘sensitive grass’

Note that this latter example also shows unpredictability in the ablaut pattern in that normally only roots in which the only vowel is /a/ undergo this kind of alternation.

(vi) *Transitive verbs with objects*

It is far more common for verb roots containing /a/ to undergo ablaut to /e/ in association with a following object (§6.3.2). When a transitive verb all of whose root vowels are /a/ is followed by a nominal object, the /a/ of the root shifts to /e/, as we find with the roots /ɣ̟anaɣ/ ‘steal’ and /bat/ ‘make’ below:

/Ø-ɣ̟an-ɣ̟anaɣ/	/Ø-ɣ̟eneɣ naɣ̟at/
3SG:REAL-REDUP-steal	3SG:REAL-steal money
‘(s)he stole’	‘(s)he stole the money’

/de-bat-e/
1SG:IRR-make-3SG
'I will make it'

/ɣo-bet neteŋe/
2SG:REAL-make thing
'you made the thing'

When the verb is associated with a pronominal object suffix rather than a following free form noun, the process of ablaut only applies when the suffix begins with the vowel /i/. Note, therefore, the following alternations involving the verb /ɣas/ 'bite':

/Ø-ɣas-oɣ/
3SG:REAL-bite-2SG
'it bit you'

/Ø-ɣas-er/
3SG:REAL-bite-3PL
'it bit them'

/Ø-ɣes-ia/
3SG:REAL-bite-1SG
'it bit me'

/Ø-ɣes-i/
3SG:REAL-bite-3SG
'it bit him/her'

(vii) *Nuclear serial verbs*

The final environment in which vowel ablaut has been observed to affect /a/ is when an initial verb is followed by a following verbal root in a nuclear serial-verb construction (§6.3.3). Note, therefore, that the root /cal/ 'tie' alternates with /cel/ in the construction /cel toɣon/ 'tie tightly', while /balbal/ 'fight' alternates with /belbel/ in the serial verb /belbel toɣon/ 'hit hard'.

5.5 Prefix vowel assimilation

There is a substantial number of prefixes which end in the vowel /e/ in Nese, including the prefixed element of the nominalising simulfix /ne- ... -ian/ (§6.2.1) and a variety of inflectional prefixes on verbs (§6.3.2). There is a very strong tendency for the final /e/ of the prefix to shift to /o/ when the first vowel of the following root is one of the rounded vowels /u/ or /o, or when the initial segment of the following root is the rounded glide /w/. Note, therefore, the following derivations:

/ne-romrom-ian > noromromian/
NOM-think-NOM
'thought'

/ne-vul > novul/
1SG:REAL-buy
'I bought'

/ce-kol-o > cokolo/
1SG:FUT-carry.on.shoulder-3SG
'I will carry it on my shoulders'

This process applies when several prefixes of this shape appear in sequence before a root of an appropriate shape, as illustrated by the following:

/ne-be-roŋ-te > noboroŋte/
1SG:REAL-NEG-hear-NEG
'I did not hear'

It was stated above that this represents a strong tendency rather than being a categorical rule. We therefore encounter occasional examples in which the vowel /e/ remains unchanged in environments where assimilation is an option.

6 *Grammar*

As with the sections on the lexicon, this grammatical sketch uses the orthography outlined in §1.3. That is:

- The voiceless affricate /c/ is represented orthographically as *j*.
- The velar fricative /ɣ/ is represented as the digraph *kh* and the velar nasal /ŋ/ as the digraph *ng*.
- The apico-labials are distinguished from the plain labials by means of a following apostrophe, e.g. *b'*, *v'*, *m'*.
- The alveolar trill /r/ is represented as the digraph *rr* while the retroflex flap /ɾ/ is represented as the single letter *r*.

6.1 Pronouns

The independent pronouns of Nese make a four-way number distinction, along with a distinction between inclusive and exclusive, as follows:

	Singular		Dual	Trial	Plural
1	*khina*	Incl.	*nekrrerru*	*nekrretil*	*nekrre*
		Excl.	*kananrru*	*kanantil*	*kanan*
2	*khunokh*		*kam'irru*	*kam'itil*	*kam'i*
3	*khai ~ khini*		*kharru*	*kharrtil*	*kharr*

The same forms appear in verbal subject position, as well as verbal and prepositional object position, with the exception of the third person singular: *khai* is the 3SG subject form whereas *khini* appears in verbal and prepositional object positions. It can be seen that there are the recurring elements *-rru* in the dual and *-til* in the trial which are added to the plural pronominal roots. These added elements correspond to the numerals *rru* 'two' and *til* 'three' respectively (§6.2.3).[1]

[1] *Given the fact that the dual and trial markers are identical to the corresponding numerals, there was a question in the author's mind as to whether the forms listed in the dual and trial columns were genuine dual and trial pronouns or simply non-singular pronouns followed by a numeral. As far as this description is concerned, they will be treated as genuine pronouns – JL*

6.2 Nouns

6.2.1 Noun derivation

A variety of types of noun compounds have been recorded in Nese, all involving an initial nominal head with a following modifier, which may be another noun or an uninflected verb.

Just over 80% of nouns in Nese begin with *nV-*, a syllable which originates as a noun phrase marker which has been reanalysed as an almost completely inseparable part of noun roots. About the only context in which there is any evidence synchronically for the separability of this accreted article involves nominal compounds. In this respect, Nese exhibits the same kind of pattern of vestigial separability of the accreted noun phrase article that we commonly encounter in the languages of Vanuatu.

Sometimes, as in forms such as the following, the historical article is lost in both the first and second elements of the compound when both are linked together as a single-word compound:

nato	+	*nenerrnarr*	>	*to-nerrnarr*
‘chicken’		‘man’		‘rooster’
nato	+	*nibilakh*	>	*to-bilakh*
‘chicken’		‘banded rail’		‘black and white chicken’

In other cases, the historical article is lost only in the second element of the single-word compound. For example:

neveram	+	*natas*	>	*neveram-tas*
‘sow’		‘sea’		‘dugong’
nevelelakh	+	*natas*	>	*nevelelakh-tas*
‘yellow white-eye’		‘sea’		‘flying fish’
norrokolat	+	*natas*	>	*norrokolat-tas*
‘stinging tree’		‘sea’		‘jellyfish’

It should be pointed out, however, that other compounds are attested in which the historical article is retained intact with both nouns, and the compound itself is pronounced as two separate phonological words. For example:

namat	+	*natas*	>	*namat natas*
‘snake’		‘sea’		‘seasnake’
naurre	+	*nua*	>	*naurre nua*
‘lobster’		‘water’		‘freshwater prawn’

Whichever pattern is followed seems to be depend on individual compound nouns, so in some compounds *natas* ‘sea’ appears without the accreted article as *tas*, while in others it appears with the accreted article retained as *natas*. There is therefore no way that we can talk about the separability of *nV-* synchronically as anything but a vestigial and rather irregular process in Nese morphology.

It will be remembered from §5.4 that, when an initial noun root containing no vowels other than *a* is compounded with a following item from any word class and of any phonological shape, the root vowels are generally all shifted to *e*, as in the following:

nalang	+	*rrub*	>	*neleng rrub*
'wind'		'kill'		'cyclone'
nakara	+	*bar*	>	*nekere-bar*
'black flying fox'		'blind'		'white flying fox'

Nouns which undergo ablaut in this way may also lose the historical accreted article *na-* when it appears as the initial element of the compound. However, the vowel of the remaining syllable still undergoes ablaut from *a* to *e* in the same way. Thus:

natal	+	*nasis*	>	*tel-nasis*
'penis'		'circumcised'		'circumcised penis'
nabat-	+	*terrterr*	>	*bet-terrterr*
'head'		'hard'		'stubborn'

Finally, it will be noted in the discussion of possession which follows (§6.2.2) that, with a certain subcategory of nouns, there are slightly different variants of the root depending on whether or not the noun expresses a possessed item. When nouns of this type enter into compounds, it is the possessive form of the root rather than the free form which we find (though there may also be loss of the historical article *nV-* in the compound). Thus, from *nubukhas* 'pig' (which corresponds to the possessed root *nubkhus-*) and *namum* 'spirit' (which corresponds to the possessed root *nomum-*), we can form the following compounds:

nubukhas	+	*rrum*	>	*bukhus-rrum*[2]
'pig'		'wild'		'wild pig'
namum	+	*saburr*	>	*nomum saburr*
'spirit'		'taboo'		'holy spirit'

Apart from compounding, there is so far very little evidence for other kinds of morphological processes associated with the derivation of nouns in Nese. The following correspondences suggest that the widely distributed nominalising simulfix *ne-... -(i)an* is also found in Nese:[3]

rromrrom	'think'	*no-rromrrom-ian*	'thought, idea'
merrji	'old'	*ne-merrji-an*	'old man'
tukhutukhun	'tell story'	*ne-tukhutukhun-ian*	'story'

A number of other forms have shapes which suggest a similar derivation, though the putative verbs from which they are derived have not yet been attested. Thus:

nelekhian	'marriage'
nesevian	'kind of dance'

There is a handful of nouns which appear to be derived from verbs simply by the addition of the prefixed element *na-* without the suffix *-ian*. For example:

vel	'(to) dance'	*na-vel*	'(a) dance'

---

[2] Note the retention of the vowel *u* in the first syllable of the compounded root, in contrast to its loss in the possessive form *nubkhus-*.

[3] Note that the vowel of the prefixed element of the nominalising simulfix varies with *no-* according to the conditions set out in §5.5. However, in the nominalisation of *tukhutukhun* we find *ne-* rather than expected *no-*.

The existence of a small set of similar irregular nominalisations seems to be fairly widely distributed among the languages of central and northern Malakula.

6.2.2 Possession

[*It will be seen in this section that there is a considerable amount of phonological irregularity associated with the suffixation of possessive pronouns to nouns and possessive markers. This is illustrated in a number of paradigms in this section. But at the same time, the original manuscript contained a number of examples where the dual and trial columns were blank, and even a few where only singular forms were given. In the case of the former, this may have been partly due to the fact that the author was not completely sure whether the dual and trial free pronouns were in fact single pronouns or mere compounds of plural pronoun + numeral (see above). It is also likely that he intended both further testing of this and also further elicitation to attempt to find some sub-regularities.*

Given the full set of possessive suffixes listed under §6.2.2.2 below, it seems likely that the blanks could be filled by forms consisting of those suffixes, though with some uncertainties as to the preceding vowels. In this section, I simply present what was in the original manuscript (sometimes with a comment), except that I have deleted all blank columns. Thus if a paradigm consisted of only singular and plural forms, no empty dual and trial columns are presented – JL].

As we commonly find in Oceanic languages, there is a basic distinction in Nese between indirect and direct possessive constructions. With indirect possession, the possessor is expressed by means of a postposed possessive form which varies in shape for the full set of pronominal categories, whereas with direct possession, a pronominal suffix is added to the noun root itself. Contrast, therefore, the examples below illustrating the indirectly possessed noun *nato* ‘chicken’ and the directly possessed noun *nakho-* ‘face’ with a first person singular pronominal possessor:

nato *sak*
chicken POSS:1SG
‘my chicken’

nakho-k
face-1SG
‘my face’

6.2.2.1 Indirect possession

There are two quite distinct paradigms of possessive postmodifiers used in indirect possessive constructions in Nese. Those forms which have been attested from the first paradigm are based on the root *sa-*, to which the pronominal suffixes associated with the expression of direct possessive constructions (§6.2.2.2) are affixed, as set out below:

	Singular		Plural
1	*sak*	Incl.	*sarr*
		Excl.	*sanan*
2	*sam*		*sam'i*
3	*san*		*sarr*

Those exponents of the second paradigm are based on the root *jin-* in the singular and *jig-* in the plural. These forms accept pronominal suffixes which are similar, though not identical, in shape to those which are used to express verbal and prepositional objects (§6.3.2, §6.4.1). Thus:

	Singular		Plural
1	*jina*	Incl.	*jigrre*
		Excl.	
2	*jinokh*		*jigam'i*
3	*jini*		*jigrre*

So far, I have not been able to establish if there is any kind of semantic contrast associated with the two paradigms of possessive markers, but the indications at present are that they are interchangeable.

When a noun is associated with a nominal rather than a pronominal possessor, the constituent order is POSSESSUM + POSSESSOR and the two noun phrases are linked by means of the third person singular form from either of these paradigms of possessive markers. We therefore find examples such as the following:

neviri	*jini*	*lekhtarr*	*merrji*
dog	POSS:3SG	woman	old

'the old woman's dog'

In keeping with what we have already seen happening with nominal compounds (and also as described below for direct possessive constructions), when there is an initial possessed noun in which the root vowels are all *a*, there is a systematic shift of the vowels to *e* (§5.4). Thus, when the noun *nakha* 'tree' appears as the first noun phrase in a possessive construction, we find instead *nekhe*, as in the following:

nekhe	*san*	*takharr*
tree	POSS:3SG	European

'cassia (lit. the Europeans' tree)'

It should be noted, however, that this vowel shift is only triggered when there is an associated nominal possessor. When the possessor is a pronoun, there is no change in the shape of the root. Thus:

nakha	*sak*
tree	POSS:1SG

'my tree'

The indirect possessive construction is used basically to express alienable types of possession. This therefore includes the possession of a wide variety of items, including the following:

- tools and artefacts (*nesarr sak* ‘my spear’, *novos sak* ‘my oar’, *nebetlak sak* ‘my walking stick’, *novso sak* ‘my bow’, *nerrurr sak* ‘my clothes’, *namanu sak* ‘my hat’);
- domestic animals (*nato sak* ‘my chicken’, *neviri sak* ‘my dog’);
- undomesticated animals (*nanankho sak* ‘my bird’);
- garden products and domesticated plants (*narram sak* ‘my yam’, *boak sak* ‘my water taro’, *nani sak* ‘my coconut’);
- plants growing wild in the bush (*nabu sak* ‘my bamboo’, *naus sak* ‘my great hog plum’, *khatabol sak* ‘my dragon plum’, *tavo sak* ‘my sea almond’, *namab sak* ‘my Tahitian chestnut’);
- a variety of other naturally occurring items found in the environment which are used by people in different sorts of ways (*nua sak* ‘my water’, *nakhab’ sak* ‘my firewood’); and
- kin terms which are idiosyncratically prohibited from accepting direct pronominal suffixes (*tete sak* ‘my father’, *vave sak* ‘my paternal aunt’, *bubu sak* ‘my grandparent’).

It can be seen from these examples that Nese does not have separate markers for expressing the possession of items that are for drinking and eating as is the case in many Oceanic languages.[4] This lack is not uncommon in the languages of central and northern Malakula that have been documented to date, though it should be noted that Fox (1979:40–41) indicates that there are separate possessive markers in V’ënen Taut for the possession of cooked edible items (expressed by means of a paradigm for possessive markers based on the root *na*-), uncooked edible items (*wada*-), items for drinking (*m’am’a*-) and items for chewing (*sama*-). No trace of possessive markers that are cognate with any of these forms have been recorded in Nese.

6.2.2.2 Direct possession

With nouns referring to items that are considered to be inalienably possessed, the so-called direct possessive construction is used instead. This construction involves the addition of a pronominal suffix directly to the possessed noun itself, as illustrated at the beginning of this section on possession. This includes nouns of the following types:

- nouns referring to body parts such as *nabalako*- ‘leg’, *nakho*- ‘face’, *nalaso*- ‘testicle’, *neb’e*- ‘body, *nolovo*- ‘tooth’, *nem’em’*- ‘tongue’, *nukuns*- ‘nose’, *nabat*- ‘head’ and *natal*- ‘penis’;
- kin terms such as *nau*- ‘wife’, *nat*- ‘son, daughter’, *tas*- ‘younger same-sex sibling’, *tua*- ‘elder sibling’, *nerra*- ‘mother’; and

[4] Whatever semantic distinction may ultimately be attributed to the difference between the two paradigms of possessive markers referred to above, it appears that these kinds of meanings are not involved.

- a number of other nouns referring to personal items which are commonly attested in Oceanic languages as being expressed by means of the direct possessive construction, including *nengsa-* 'name', *rralo-* 'voice', *nomum-* 'shadow, photograph', *nias-* 'spirit'.

However, there is a substantially broader range of nouns in Nese which enters into the direct possessive construction than is commonly the case in Oceanic languages. While in other Oceanic languages most body parts enter into this kind of construction, we tend to find a range of body products or body parts that are removed, either for personal cleanliness and comfort or when butchering a slaughtered animal, which are treated instead as being alienably possessed. In addition, temporary body manifestations such as sores and other afflictions tend to be treated in other Oceanic languages as being alienably possessed. In Nese, however, all body parts, products and afflictions attested to date accept direct possessive suffixes. This therefore includes items such as *nerre-* 'blood', *nanngas-* 'urine', *lulu-* 'vomit', *navas-* 'sore', *nejirra-* 'semen', *nesuv-* 'breath' and *nukhuskhus-* 'sweat'.

In addition, a range of artefacts which are in various ways central to local cultural practices are expressed in Nese by means of nouns which enter into direct possessive constructions. This includes the following:

- items of intimate clothing such as *nabas-* 'penis wrapper';
- artefacts that are in constant daily use such as *natang-* 'basket', *nejal-* 'sleeping mat', *noboltolnga-* 'pillow', *nenelnga-* 'bed', *nuak-* 'canoe';
- domestic animals which are particularly important in the cultural context, i.e. *nubkhus-* 'pig' (in contrast to alienably possessed *neviri* 'dog' and *nato* 'chicken');
- undomesticated animals which constitute a core part of the traditional diet, i.e. *nanaj-* 'fish' (in contrast to alienably possessed *nanankho* 'bird', the meat of which is eaten only occasionally as opportunities arise); and
- items relating to land ownership and associated with an individual's belonging to a particular place, i.e. *nev'enu-* 'home', *nekhm'el-* 'meeting house', *nem-* 'house', *nouta-* 'garden', *nerra-* 'fence around garden'

In fact, there are two formally distinct patterns of direct suffixation which distinguish between different kinds of inalienable possession in Nese, and I will refer to these as close and distant inalienability respectively. A close inalienable relationship involves the possession of items from which one cannot ordinarily be physically separated, and this set prototypically comprises body parts, body products and kin terms. A distant inalienable relationship, on the other hand, is prototypically involved with items that one is intimately associated with but from which one can be easily physically removed. This includes certain bodily manifestations which are temporary or atypical (e.g. *nukhuskhus-* 'sweat', *lulua-* 'vomit' and *navas-* 'sore') rather than permanent or normal (e.g. *naj-* 'excrement'). Contrast, therefore, the larger set of nouns which enter into close inalienable possessive relationships and the smaller set which enter into distant inalienable possessive relationships:

Close inalienability		Distant inalienability	
nabalako-	‘leg’	*nabas-*	‘penis wrapper’
nakho-	‘face’	*nele-*	‘language’
nalaso-	‘testicle’	*natang-*	‘basket’
nolovo-	‘tooth’	*nev’enu-*	‘home’
novosvoso-	‘hip’	*navas-*	‘sore’
rralo-	‘voice’	*nejal-*	‘sleeping mat’
lalo-	‘interior’	*nem-*	‘house’
nengsa-	‘name’	*nesuv-*	‘breath’
nerra-	‘mother’	*nuak-*	‘canoe’
norruma-	‘chest’	*nubkhus-*	‘pig’
nejirra-	‘semen’	*nukhuskhus-*	‘sweat’
neviltara-	‘public hair’	*lulu-*	‘vomit’
tua-	‘elder same-sex sibling’	*nanngas-*	‘urine’
nejubuna-	‘back’	*nout-*	‘garden’
jokhos-	‘(man’s) sister’	*nanaj-*	‘fish’
nabat-	‘head’	*nekhm’el-*	‘meeting house’
naj-	‘excrement’	*nerr-*	‘fence’
nomum-	‘shadow’	*lekhtarr-*	‘wife’
netal-	‘penis’		
nejin-	‘bone’		
neliv-	‘rib’		
nesin-	‘belly’		
tas-	‘younger same-sex sibling’		
nukuns-	‘nose’		
nev’il-	‘skin’		
nat-	‘son, daughter’		
nau-	‘wife’		

It should be noted, however, that the distribution of nouns between the two sets does not correspond exactly to the semantic distinction between close and distant inalienability as described above, at least in any immediately obvious way. In the set of nouns which enter into the close inalienable possessive construction, for example, we find items such as *noboltolnga-* ‘pillow’ which we might have expected to be possessed according to the pattern of distant inalienability. Also, it is not easy to see why *naj-* ‘excrement’ and *nanngas-* ‘urine’ should be treated differently, nor *nau-* and *lekhtarr-*, both meaning ‘wife’.

Having two distinct patterns of directly suffixed nouns is not a common feature of Oceanic languages. However, this distinction is closely matched in V’ënen Taut; compare Fox’s (1979:23–30) distinction between the following patterns of possession:

pët-ëk[5]
head-1SG
‘my head’ (= close inalienable possession)

[5] The symbol *ë* here is used to represent schwa.

prapar-ak
sow-1SG
'my sow' (= distant inalienable possession)

ulien nak
wages POSS:1SG
'my wages' (= indirect possession)

6.2.2.2.1 Distant inalienable possession

Nouns which enter into distant inalienable relationships accept the following possessive suffixes in Nese (with gaps indicating that the full paradigm has not yet been established):[6]

	Singular		Plural
1	*-ak*	Incl.	*-arr*
		Excl.	
2	*-am*		
3	*-an*		

Thus:

nele-ak	*nuak-am*	*nabas-an*
language-1SG	canoe-2SG	penis.wrapper-3SG
'my language'	'your canoe'	'his penis wrapper'

The first person plural suffix appears to take the form *-rr* after the vowel *e*, and *-arr* after other vowels or after a consonant. Thus:

nout-arr	*nev'enu-arr*	*nele-rr*
garden-1PL.INCL	home-1PL.INCL	language-1PL.INCL
'our (pl. incl.) garden'	'our home'	'our (pl. incl.) language'

6.2.2.2.2 Close inalienable possession

Nouns which enter into close inalienable possessive relationships, on the other hand, accept the pronominal suffixes which have the following basic forms:

	Singular		Dual	Trial	Plural
1	*-k*	Incl.	*-rrerru*	*-rretil*	*-rr(e)*
		Excl.	*-(i)nanrru*	*-(i)nantil*	*-(i)nan*
2	*-m(e)*		*-(i)m'irru*	*-(i)m'itil*	*-(i)m'i*
3	*-n(e)*		*-rrerru*	*-rretil*	*-rr(e)*

[6] *On the basis of the table in the next section, it seems likely that there is a complete paradigm, and distinctly possible that the forms would be the same as in that table except that they would be preceded by* a. *However, we can not be absolutely certain of this – JL*

While some of the variation in the shapes of these suffixes can be accounted for in terms of phonologically conditioned allomorphy, there remains a considerable amount of variation. It is not clear at this stage of research if there are any general conditioning factors, or if there is instead extensive unpredictability in the forms of the suffixes. There is also a significant amount of vowel ablaut in the roots of directly possessed nouns associated with the addition of these suffixes for which it is not yet possible to offer satisfying generalisations (though see §5.4). At this stage, the various patterns that have been attested will simply be listed in the hope that additional data will shed further light on these matters.

With the bulk of noun roots of this type which end in vowels, the forms of the close inalienable possessive suffixes are as follows:

	Singular		Dual	Trial	Plural
1	*-k*	Incl.	*-rrerru*	*-rretil*	*-rr*
		Excl.	*-nanrru*	*-nantil*	*-nan*
2	*-m*		*-m'irru*	*-m'itil*	*-m'i*
3	*-n*		*-rrerru*	*-rretil*	*-rr*

We therefore find paradigms such as the following for *nanata-* 'eye' and *noluvo-* 'tooth':

	Singular		Plural
1	*nanata-k*	Incl.	*nanata-rr*
		Excl.	*nanata-nan*
2	*nanata-m*		*nanata-m'i*
3	*nanata-n*		*nanata-rr*

	Singular		Plural
1	*noluvo-k*	Incl.	*noluvo-rr*
		Excl.	*noluvo-nan*
2	*noluvo-m*		*noluvo-m'i*
3	*noluvo-n*		*noluvo-rr*

However, there are some vowel-final noun roots which are attested with unpredictable suffixes in certain pronominal categories. The form *nau-* 'wife' accepts the third person singular suffix *-ne*, which is normally associated with consonant-final roots, giving the paradigm below. The vowel-final roots *nabau-* 'knee' and *tavai-* 'friend' are further irregular in that they also accept the second person singular suffix *-me* (which is again normally associated with consonant-final roots), along with the third person singular suffix *-ne*.[7] Thus:

[7] *It occurred to me that these three forms all end in rising diphthongs, and that if the high vowels were realised in this environment as semivowels, then these forms could be considered to follow the regular pattern for consonant-final roots. However, given the lack of data in the non-singular, it is difficult to decide if this is correct – JL*

1SG	*nau-k*	*nabau-k*	*tavai-k*
2SG	*nau-m*	*nabau-me*	*tavai-me*
3SG	*nau-ne*	*nabau-ne*	*tavai-ne*

There is also some evidence of much greater idiosyncrasy in the following paradigm for the noun meaning ‘brother-in-law’:

	Singular		Plural
1	*tau-k*	Incl.	*takh-rro*
		Excl.	*tokh-unan*
2	*takh-mo*		*tokh-um’i*
3	*takn-no*		*takh-rro*

Not only do we find unpredictable alternations in the root between *tau-*, *takh-* and *tokh-* but the suffixes also contain vowels which are limited to this single paradigm.

There is a second paradigm of close inalienable possessive suffixes which is prototypically associated with consonant-final roots, as follows:

	Singular		Dual	Trial	Plural
1	*-uk*	Incl.	*-rrerru*	*-rretil*	*-rre*
		Excl.	*-inanrru*	*-inantil*	*-inan*
2	*-me*		*-im’irru*	*-im’itil*	*-im’i*
3	*-ne*		*-rrerru*	*-rretil*	*-rre*

With noun roots containing the vowel *a*, there is evidence that this shifts to *e* before those prefixes that begin with the vowel *i* (§5.4), giving the following paradigm for the noun *nabat-* ‘head’:

	Singular		Dual	Trial	Plural
1	*nabat-uk*	Incl.	*nabat-rrerru*	*nabat-rretil*	*nabat-rre*
		Excl.	*nebet-inanrru*	*nebet-inantil*	*nebet-inan*
2	*nabat-me*		*nebet-im’irru*	*nebet-im’itil*	*nebet-im’i*
3	*nabat-ne*		*nabat-rrerru*	*nabat-rretil*	*nabat-rre*

Other nouns which are attested as participating in this paradigm are *jokhos-* ‘(man’s) sister’, *naj-* ‘excrement’, *nomum-* ‘shadow’, *natal-* ‘penis’, *nejin-* ‘bone’, *nelil-* ‘rib’, and *nesin-* ‘belly’. It should be noted that such nouns can involve geminate consonants over morpheme boundaries, e.g. *nomum-me* ‘your shadow’, *nesin-ne* ‘his/her belly’.

What needs further testing is whether the pattern of root-vowel ablaut noted for *nabat-* ‘head’ is repeated with these nouns, or whether there are any vowel alternations other than the *a/e* alternation. Note, however, that the root *nat-* ‘son, daughter’ alternates as *nenet-* in the same environments, resulting in the following paradigm:

	Singular		Plural
1	*nat-uk*	Incl.	*nat-rre*
		Excl.	*nenet-inan*
2	*nat-um*[8]		*nenet-im'i*
3	*nat-ne*		*nat-rre*

Just as there are some seemingly unpredictable possessive forms with vowel-final nouns, there are also some consonant-final nouns which exhibit unpredictable possessive forms in certain pronominal categories. The nouns *tas-* 'younger same-sex sibling', *nat-* 'son, daughter, *nukuns-* 'nose' and *nev'il-* 'skin' are all unpredictably attested with the second person singular suffix *-um* rather than *-me*; while the noun *nias-* 'spirit' appears with the unexpected first person singular suffix *-ek* rather than *-uk*. For example:

1SG	*nukuns-uk*	*nias-ek*
2SG	*nukuns-um*	*nias-me*
3SG	*nukuns-ne*	*nias-ne*

The nouns *nevilias-* 'beard' and *nem'em'-* 'tongue' idiosyncratically accept the second person singular suffix *-em* and the third person singular suffix *-en* rather than *-me* and *-ne* respectively. For example:

1SG	*nem'em'-uk*
2SG	*nem'em'-em*
3SG	*nem'em'-en*

The form *nerre-* 'blood' has an apparently idiosyncratic paradigm which has not so far been attested with any other noun. It is therefore impossible to offer any generalisation at this stage as to what is going on here:

1SG	*nerre-ouk*
2SG	*nerre-ime*
3SG	*nerre-an*

Note also that the noun *norrokho-* 'leaf' has the third person singular suffixed form *norrokhaune*. This is also clearly irregular, though a full possessive paradigm cannot be elicited for pragmatic reasons.

In addition to the fairly extensive irregularity that we encounter in the paradigms for some nouns belonging to both sets, there are nouns which are recorded with possessive paradigms which show evidence of a mix of suffixes from both the close and distant inalienable sets. We see this, for example, in the paradigm just presented for *nerre-* 'blood', for which the first and second person singular suffixes *-ouk* and *-ime* are similar to the close inalienable suffixes, while the third person singular suffix *-an* is the same as the corresponding form from the distant inalienable paradigm. The form *nanngas-* 'urine' accepts the close inalienable first person suffix *-uk* but the distant suffixes for other categories. That is:

[8] The unexpected appearance of *nat-um* here rather than *nat-me* is noted further below.

1SG *nanngas-uk*
2SG *nanngas-am*
3SG *nanngas-an*

The noun *nev'ikh-* 'vagina', on the other hand, accepts the close inalienable third person singular suffix *-ne* while accepting the distant inalienable suffixes in the first and second person singular. That is:

1SG *nev'ikh-ak*
2SG *nev'ikh-am*
3SG *nev'ikh-ne*

6.2.2.2.3 Direct possession with nominal possessors

The two categories of direct possession differ also in the manner in which nominal possession is expressed. With nouns which enter into the distant inalienable relationship, the expression of a nominal possessor is somewhat similar to the pattern already described for indirect possessive constructions in that the nouns are ordered as POSSESSUM + POSSESSOR, with an intervening possessive marker, either *ji* or *ne*, as in the following:

natang *ji* *lekhtarr-an*
basket POSS wife-3SG
'his wife's basket'

natang *ne* *lekhtarr* *merrji*
basket POSS woman old
'the old woman's basket'

In such constructions, the optional vowel ablaut alternations can also apply (§5.4), so the form *natang* can alternate with *neteng*, as follows:

neteng *ne* *lekhtarr* *merrji*
basket POSS woman old
'the old woman's basket'

It should be noted that these forms still differ from the pattern that is followed with indirectly possessed nouns in that the possessive constituent which appears between the two nouns must itself be inflected. In addition, the possessed noun appears not to be available for the application of ablaut alternations. Contrast the patterns just presented with the following:

neviri *jini* *lekhtarr* *merrji*
dog POSS:3SG woman old
'the old woman's dog'

With consonant-final nouns which enter into the close inalienable possessive construction, nominal possession is expressed by simply juxtaposing the nouns in the order POSSESSUM + POSSESSOR, as follows:

norrul *nato*
egg chicken
'chicken's egg'

There is evidence that some possessed nouns undergo vocalic ablaut in the root in this environment. In common with what we find happening in nominal compounds, if all the vowels of the possessed noun are *a*, there is a systematic shift of these root vowels to *e* (§5.4). We therefore find alternations affecting possessed forms such as *nabat-* 'head, trunk (of tree)' and *taj-* 'spur (of rooster)' as follows:

nebet *nakha*
trunk tree
'tree trunk'

tej *nato*
spur chicken
'the chicken's spur'

The noun *nat-* 'child' appears to behave idiosyncratically when associated with a nominal possessor. Rather than appearing in its root form with no possessive suffix before the possessor, this noun appears with the root *neti-* and it carries the third person singular suffix *-n*, as in the following:

neti-n *nato*
child-3SG chicken
'chick'

neti-n *tavai-k*
child-3SG brother-1SG
'my brother's child'

With vowel-final nouns, however, the two nouns are juxtaposed in the same order, but the possessed noun must carry third person singular inflectional marking. Such forms are also eligible for vocalic ablaut (§5.4), as illustrated by the alternation between *tana-n* 'his/her father' with *tene-n* in the following example:

tene-n *nat-ne*
father-3SG son-3SG
'the father of her son (i.e. her husband)'

It should also be noted that the possessor in such constructions is sometimes liable to vowel shift according to patterns that have not yet been established. Thus, *navu* 'turtle' alternates with *niavu*, as illustrated by the following:

norrul *niavu*
egg turtle
'turtle's egg'

It is not known at this stage if this alternation is restricted only to the noun *navu* or if there is some kind of a general pattern involved.

6.2.2.2.4 Unsuffixed directly possessed nouns

Nouns which enter into the distant inalienable construction also differ from those which enter into the close inalienable construction in that the former can freely appear as unsuffixed nouns in their own right. About half of the noun roots I have recorded have the same shape in both their suffixed and unsuffixed forms, which means that the remaining

half of such nouns exhibit apparently unpredictable changes in the form of the root between their suffixed and unsuffixed forms. We therefore find examples of alternations in roots between suffixed and unsuffixed forms of nouns such as the following:

Suffixed root	Unsuffixed root	
nem-	*naine*	‘house’
nout-	*naute*	‘garden’
nerr-	*niarr*	‘fence’
nubkhus-	*nubukhas*	‘pig’
nekhm’el-	*nakhm’al*	‘meeting house’
nele-	*nale*	‘language’
nev’enu-	*nav’anu*	‘home’
nenelnga-	*nanalnge*	‘bed’
nul-	*nual*	‘hole’

For other nouns of this type, however, the roots are the same for both their suffixed and unsuffixed forms. For example:

Suffixed root	Unsuffixed root	
nuak-	*nuak*	‘canoe’
nanngas-	*nanngas*	‘urine’
nejal-	*nejal*	‘sleeping mat’
natang-	*natang*	‘basket’
nanaj-	*nanaj*	‘fish’
nabas-	*nabas*	‘penis wrapper’
navas-	*navas*	‘sore’
nesuv-	*nesuv*	‘breath’
nukhuskhus-	*nukhuskhus*	‘sweat’
lulu-	*lulu*	‘vomit’

Nouns which enter into the close inalienable relationship differ in that only a handful of such nouns are attested as having corresponding unsuffixed forms. While we do find the following handful of examples, most such nouns are attested only with pronominal suffixes:

Suffixed root	Unsuffixed root	
nerre-	*narre*	‘blood’
naj-	*naji*	‘excrement’
nevilias-	*nevilias*	‘beard’
nengsa-	*nangse*	‘name’
nolovo-	*nalve*	‘tooth’
nesus-	*nasus*	‘breast’
norrokho-	*norrokha*	‘leaf’

It will be noted once again that there are usually unpredictable changes in the vowels between the suffixed and unsuffixed roots.

Note also that there are semantically equivalent forms *nuvu-* and *novo-*, both meaning 'fruit'. The form *nuvu-*, however, participates in the close inalienable possessive construction, while *novo-* participates in the distant inalienable construction, with no obvious difference in meaning associated with the use of the two different constructions. Thus:

nuvu	*nakha*	*novo-an*
fruit	tree	fruit-3SG
'fruit of the tree'		'its fruit'

6.2.3 Noun phrase modifiers

Nese nouns can be associated with a number of different postmodifiers within the noun phrase, but there do not seem to be any premodifiers.

Number with nouns is not morphologically marked, except for a handful of nouns with human reference which exhibit idiosyncratic differences between singular and plural forms. The following have been attested as behaving in this way:

Singular	Plural	
nemerrte	*nemerre*	'man, men'
jiblakh	*terrjiblakh*	'child, children'

For all other nouns, however, we might expect that the difference between singular and plural is marked by means of a modifier within the noun phrase, though the corpus as yet provides no examples of this pattern.

One well-established category of postmodifiers is that of numerals. The basic set of numerals in Nese is as follows:

1	*sakhal*
2	*rru*
3	*til*
4	*v'at*
5	*line*
6	*khon*
7	*khodit*
8	*khoal*
9	*khesve*
10	*sangav'il*

These forms differ in a couple of respects from the basic numerals of most of the documented nearby languages. Firstly, there is no evidence of any third person singular realis subject prefix having been reanalysed vestigially as part of the root of the numerals 2–5 as is the case in many Vanuatu languages. Instead, the numerals of Nese directly reflect just the reconstructible Proto Oceanic numeral roots. Secondly, the numerals 7–9 appear not to be historically derivable from any kind of combination of forms for 5 + 2,

5 +3 and 5 + 4 respectively. Instead, they are not historically analysable at all, apart from the common initial segment *kh-*, about whose origin I offer no suggestion at this stage.[9]

Derived from these basic numerals by means of the multiplicative prefix *vakha-* are adverbial forms such as *vakha-rru* 'twice' and *vakha-til* 'three times'.

The numerals 11–19 are derived by placing *rram* (*rrom* before *Co-*) between *sangav'il* 'ten' and the numerals 1–9. It should be noted that the forms *rram/rrom* appear to perform no independent function in the language. The numerals 1 and 6–9 directly follow the sequence *sangav'il rram/rrom*, while the numerals 2–5 accept the prefix *a-* (which also has no other known function in the language). It should be noted further that the form *line* '5' loses the vowel of the initial syllable to become *-lne* when this prefix is added.[10] We therefore encounter the following forms:

11	*sangav'il rram sakhal*
12	*sangav'il rram arru*
13	*sangav'il rram atil*
14	*sangav'il rram av'at*
15	*sangav'il rram alne*
16	*sangav'il rrom khon*
17	*sangav'il rrom khodit*
18	*sangav'il rrom kohal*
19	*sangav'il rram khesve*

Units of ten from 20 and above are derived on the basis of the form *ngovul-* with the appropriate basic numeral compounded with this; thus *ngovul-rru* '20'. However, the forms used for other higher numerals have yet to be established. It has also not yet been established how the various intermediate numerals are expressed.

These numerals can be used as postmodifiers within a noun phrase. For example:

nubukhas	*tamav*	*sakhal*
boar	castrated	one

'one castrated boar'

Also functioning as postmodifiers within the noun phrase are forms which belong to the apparently restricted set of adjectives. For example:

nomum	*saburr*
spirit	holy

'holy spirit'

Intransitive verbs can also be used without any kind of morphological marking as postmodifiers within a noun phrase. For example:

nuak	*nakis*
canoe	good

'good canoe'

---

[9] *Indeed, it appears that the numerals 6-9 derive from the Proto Oceanic monomorphemic morphemes with a prefix* kh(V)-, *which may be related to the infrequently occurring 3SG realis verbal prefix* kha- *(see §6.3.1) . The reconstructed forms are* *onom *'6'*, *pitu *'7'*, *walu *'8' and* *siwa *'9' – JL*

[10] We find the same vowel loss in the derivation of the adverbials *benalne* 'five days ago' and *talne* 'five days' hence' (§6.4.1).

Finally, we encounter the demonstratives *nge* and *khe* ‘this, that’ as postmodifiers within the noun phrase. For example:

tavu *khe*
conch that
‘that conch’

naskhe *nge*
kingfisher that
‘that kingfisher’

A final type of nominal modifier which can be discussed at this point is the relative clause. Such clauses are introduced by the relativiser nge, which coincides in shape with one of the demonstrative forms just described. We therefore find examples in my corpus such as the following, which indicate that noun phrases from the subject position, object position and prepositional object position can be relativised:

Nemerrte *nge* *ti-rroj* *ti-naturr*.
man REL 3SG:REAL-sick 3SG:REAL-sleep
‘The man who is sick is sleeping.’

Nemerrte *nge* *ne-les* *benanev* *Ø-naturr*.
man REL 1SG:REAL-see yesterday 3SG:REAL-sleep
‘The man who I saw yesterday is sleeping.’

Nemerrte *nge* *no-vul* *norrean* *rran* *ti-naturr*.
man REL 1SG:REAL-buy food SOURCE 3SG:REAL-sleep
‘The man who I bought the food from is sleeping.’

6.3 Verbs

Verb roots in some of the languages of central Vanuatu exhibit alternations in the forms of their roots which typically reflect a historical alternation between oral and nasal grade, with the alternation being closely associated with a distinction between realis and irrealis inflectional categories. With a few exceptions, the languages of Malakula generally do not seem to have developed this kind of alternation, and Nese also does not reflect any kind of historical oral–nasal grade distinction in association with its inflectional verb morphology.

6.3.1 Verbal prefixes

Verbs in Nese are inflected by prefixation for the pronominal category of the subject, marking a three-way distinction for person, as well as the difference between inclusive and exclusive in the first person. While the independent pronouns express a four-way number distinction between singular, dual, trial and plural, verbs inflect only according to a basic singular–plural distinction. The subject categories combine with what appears to be a basic distinction between realis and irrealis mood to give two paradigms of inflectional prefixes.

The realis prefixes (corresponding to the present and past tenses) for the various subject categories are as follows:

	Singular		Plural
1	*ne-*	Incl.	*rri-*
		Excl.	*brri-*
2	*kho-*		*kirr-*
3	*Ø-*		*rri-*

The second person plural form *kirr-* appears as *ki-* before a verb beginning with *r* or *rr*. Contrast, therefore, the following:

kirr-yat	*ki-rij*
2PL:REAL-stay	2PL:REAL-speak
‘you (pl.) stayed’	‘you (pl.) spoke’

All verbal prefixes ending in *e* have been attested as alternating optionally with *o* when the first vowel of the root is one of the rounded vowels, and also when the initial consonant of the root is *w* regardless of the nature of the following vowel (§5.5). This therefore affects the first person singular prefix *ne-*, which can alternate with *no-* as follows:

ne-yat	*ne-rij*
1SG:REAL-sit	1SG:REAL-speak
‘I sit’	‘I speak’
no-vul	*no-rrong*
1SG:REAL-buy	1SG:REAL-feel
‘I bought’	‘I feel’

While verbs generally have zero-prefixation for the category of third person singular in the realis, they are sometimes attested instead with the prefix *kha-*. At this stage, the meaning that is associated with this difference is not known. The first set of examples below contain a verb which carries zero-inflection:

Khai Ø-yat rre nuak.
3SG 3SG:REAL-sit LOC canoe
‘(S)he sat on the canoe.’

Khai Ø-yas rre naon.
3SG 3SG:REAL-walk LOC beach
‘(S)he walked on the beach.’

Khai Ø-sobsob kharr bubu sak.
3SG 3SG:REAL-tell.story ACC grandparent POSS:1SG
‘(S)he is telling stories with my grandparent.’

Khai Ø-rrekhej nokhnaine.
3SG 3SG:REAL-open door
‘(S)he opened the door.’

The following illustrates the use of *kha-*:

Khise kha-verr netenge khe min-okh?
who 3SG:REAL-tell thing that DAT-2SG
‘Who told you that?’

In addition, there is a widely attested prefix of the shape *ti-* (which appears as *tu-* before a root whose first vowel is *u*). This is most commonly attested in association with a subject that is clearly third person singular. How this differs in function from verbs carrying *Ø-* and *kha-* marking has again not yet been established. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Khai *ti-naturr* *lalaine.*
3SG 3SG:REAL-sleep inside
'(S)he is sleeping inside.'

Ti-kholkhol.
3SG:REAL-sweet
'It is sweet.'

Ti-rrakharrakh.
3SG:REAL-shake
'It is shaking.'

Ti-khakhon.
3SG:REAL-bitter
'It is bitter.'

Noluvo-k *tu-rrurrngorr.*
tooth-1SG 3SG:REAL-sore
'My tooth is sore.'

However, this form has also been attested with third person plural subjects. For example:

Kharr *tu-sul* *naine.*
3PL 3PL:REAL-burn house
'They burnt the house.'

Finally, a single example has been recorded in which a prefix of this shape appears in conjunction with one of the subject prefixes, rather than as part of the same inflectional set as the realis subject prefixes:

Rri-ti-sul.
3PL:REAL-?-burn
'They burnt it.'

In this example, the prefix *ti-* may be performing a different function. One possibility is that this may actually be a past tense or completive aspect marker which occupies a morphotactic slot between the subject marker and the verb, similar to what we find for *te-* in Tape.

The irrealis is expressed by means of the prefix *je-*, which appears between the realis markers just described and the verb root. The first person singular form is irregular in that the marker is the portmanteau form *de-* (in alternation with *je-*) rather than a sequence of realis *ne-* + *je-*. The consonant *j* of this set of prefixes alternates freely between *j* and *s* throughout the paradigm. We therefore find the following forms in the irrealis:

	Singular		Plural
1	*de- ~ je- ~ se-*[11]	Incl.	*rrije- ~ rrise-*
		Excl.	*brrije- ~ brrise-*
2	*khoje- ~ khose-*		*kirrje- ~ kirrse-*
3	*je- ~ se-*		*rrije- ~ rrise-*

Note that final *e* of these prefixes also optionally alternates with *o* under the same conditions noted above for *ne-* in the realis paradigm (§5.5). Thus:

je-ma
1SG:IRR-come
'I will come'

jo-kol-o
1SG:IRR-carry.on.shoulder-3SG
'I will carry it on my shoulder'

khoso-num
2SG:IRR-drink
'you will drink'

jo-wak
1SG:IRR-plant.yam
'I will plant (the yam)'

The singular imperative is expressed by means of an uninflected verb root, with the independent second person singular pronoun *khunokh* optionally present. For example:

(Khunokh) Ø-rij!
2SG 2SG:IMP-speak
'Speak!'

Ø-Woj rais!
2SG:IMP-eat rice
'Eat the rice!'

Ø-Num nua.
2SG:IMP-drink water
'Drink the water.'

Ø-B'el neviri!
2SG:IMP-chase dog
'Chase the dog!'

There is no indication in my corpus as to how non-singular imperatives are expressed.

The prohibitive is expressed by means of a preposed prohibitive marker in conjunction with a verb that carries second person realis subject marking. The singular prohibitive marker has been recorded as *khota* while the corresponding plural form is *khoto*.[12] Thus:

Khota kho-rij!
PROHIB:SG 2SG:REAL-speak
'Don't you (sg.) speak!'

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[11] My notes contain a suggestion that *de-* on the one hand and *je- ~ se-* on the other may actually belong to two different paradigms, the former possibly being a general future with the latter representing the immediate future. Further checking is needed to see if there are indeed two separate paradigms involved here.

[12] These preposed forms are attested also in *Khota kh-bo-mo-ia vusokhte* 'You cannot peck me', for which a complete analysis cannot yet be offered.

Khoto *ki-rij!*
PROHIB:PL 2PL:REAL-speak
'Don't you (pl.) speak!'

Negation is expressed discontinuously in Nese, a pattern which is widely distributed in the languages of central Vanuatu, including a number of languages in central and northern Malakula, such as Naman and Neve'ei. It should be noted, however, that in this respect Nese represents a point of contrast with V'ënen Taut and Tape, where negation is expressed solely by means of a verbal prefix. Negation in Nese is expressed by means of a combination of the prefixed element *se-* which appears between the subject-mood marker and the verb and the suffixed element *-te*. We therefore encounter examples such as the following:

ne-se-rij-te
1SG:REAL-NEG-talk-NEG
'I did not speak'

de-se-rij-te
1SG:FUT-NEG-speak-NEG
'I will not speak'

There is evidence in my corpus for a second prefixed element expressing the negative, and that is *be-* (which appears optionally as *bo-* under conditions described above). Thus:

rrise-be-yat-te
1PL.INCL:IMM.FUT-NEG-stay-NEG
'we will not stay'

ne-be-swo-te
1SG:REAL-NEG-bathe-NEG
'I have not bathed'

no-bo-rrong *usong-te*
1SG:REAL-NEG-feel able-NEG
'I do not know'

At this stage of investigation, the difference (if any) between negation marked as *se- ... -te* and that marked as *be- ... -te* is not known. My corpus even provides a number of examples in which both of these prefixed elements appear in sequence, with *se-* occurring before *be-*. Thus:

Ø-se-be-rrov-te
3SG:REAL-NEG-NEG-heavy-NEG
'it is not heavy'

The meaning that is expressed with this sequence of prefixes is not known at this stage. Tripartite negative marking is not unknown in the languages of central Vanuatu (e.g. Lewo), but further investigation in the field is certainly needed here.

With a verb root that contains the vowel *a*, the root vowel has been attested as shifting to *e* when the negative prefix is added. Note, therefore, the following correspondence:

Ø-yas
3SG:REAL-walk
'(s)he walked'

Ø-se-be-yes-te
3SG:REAL-NEG-NEG-walk-NEG
'(s)he did not walk'

This appears to be an optional process, however, as the following example in which *a* is unaffected by this process of ablaut has also been recorded:

ne-se-yat-te
1SG:REAL-NEG-sit-NEG
'I did not sit'

Given the prevalence of root ablaut affecting the vowel *a* in Nese in a wide range of structural environments (§5.4), we might expect this optional shift to be encountered in other inflectional environments, but the data are too limited at this stage to determine if this is the case or not.

6.3.2 Verbal suffixes

Pronominal objects with one set of transitive verbs are marked by means of the following verbal suffixes:[13]

	Singular		Plural
1	*-ia*	Incl.	*-krre*
		Excl.	
2	*-okh*		
3	*-i*		*-err*

Verbs which are attested as accepting these suffixes are *lom'* 'lick', *khas* 'bite', *tov* 'call', *usus* 'ask', *rub* 'hit, kill' and *les* 'see'. Such forms are illustrated by the following:

Neviri ti-lom'-ia.
dog 3SG:REAL-lick-1SG
'The dog licked me.'

Nanarr ti-khas-okh.
hunger 3SG:REAL-bite-2SG
'You are hungry.'

Nanarr ti-khas-krre.
hunger 3SG:REAL-bite-1PL.INCL
'We are hungry.'

Nanarr ti-khas-err.
hunger 3SG:REAL-bite-3PL
'They are hungry.'

The root *khas* 'bite' alternates with *khes* when the object suffix begins with the vowel *i* (§5.4). Thus:

Ø-khas-okh
2SG:REAL-bite-2SG
'it bit you'

Ø-khas-err
3SG:REAL-bite-3PL
'it bit them'

[13] It is not yet known if the absence of forms in the first person plural exclusive and the second person plural is an indication that these categories of object are expressed instead by means of independent pronouns, as is not uncommon in many Oceanic languages, or if there are object suffixes which have simply not yet been attested.

Ø-khes-i	*Ø-khes-ia*
3SG:REAL-bite-3SG	3SG:REAL-bite-1SG
‘it bit him/her’	‘it bit me’

We also find evidence of the same kind of shift when a verb root which contains only the vowel *a* is unsuffixed but there is a following nominal object. For example:

Ø-V’an-v’anakh.
3SG:REAL-REDUP-steal
‘(S)he stole.’

Khai Ø-v’enekh nav’at.
3SG 3SG:REAL-steal money
‘(S)he stole the money.’

There may well be a second paradigm of object suffixes. To date, I have identified the following:

	Singular		Plural
1		Incl.	*-rre*
		Excl.	
2			
3	*-V*		

While there are substantial gaps in this paradigm which need to be filled, the major difference with these suffixes is that instead of invariant *-i* in the third person singular, this category of objects is expressed instead by means of a vowel which harmonises with the vowel of the verb root. With roots containing the vowel *a*, however, the harmonising vowel is *e* rather than *a*. Verbs which have been attested as carrying this suffix are listed below:

Root	3SG OBJECT	
jem	*jem-e*	‘chew’
kel	*kel-e*	‘answer’
b’el	*b’el-e*	‘chase’
bat	*bat-e*	‘do, make’
kol	*kol-o*	‘carry on shoulder’
khorr	*khorr-o*	‘block’
rong	*rong-o*	‘hear’
suv	*suv-u*	‘blow’
sul	*sul-u*	‘burn’
num	*num-u*	‘drink’
lum	*lum-u*	‘bend’

We therefore need to set up two arbitrary sets of transitive verbs in Nese according to the nature of the object marking, though this needs to be checked further in the field as a wider range of verbs are recorded with third person singular pronominal objects.

Note also that the first person plural inclusive object appears to be *-rre* with such verbs, rather than *-krre* as we find with the set of verbs mentioned first, as illustrated below.

Nalang Ø-suv-rre.
wind 3SG:REAL-blow-1PL.INCL
'The wind blew us.'

In contrast to verbs which belong to the first set, a third person plural object is not marked by means of the suffix *-err*, but is marked instead by means of the following free-form pronoun. For example:[14]

Nalang Ø-suv kharr.
wind 3SG:REAL-blow 3PL
'The wind blew them.'

The verb *bat* also shows evidence of alternation with *bet* when there is a following noun object (§5.4). For example:

De-bat-e severrse?
1SG:FUT-do-3SG how
'How will I do it?'

Kho-bet netenge neten nese?
2SG:REAL-do thing CAUSE what
'Why did you do that thing?'

However, the data in my corpus is at this stage still rather less tidy than has been suggested above. For one thing, I find alternations such as the following which are not accounted for by what has already been said:

Ø-Yav'-i.
3SG:REAL-pull-3SG
'(S)he pulled it.'

Ø-Yev' nesuv-an.
3SG:REAL-pull breath-3SG
'(S)he breathed.'

The appearance of *Ø-yav'-i* '(s)he pulled it' rather than *Ø-yev'-i* (and the verbs *jal-/jel-* 'tie' and *varr-/verr-* are attested as behaving in exactly the same way) may be an indication that these ablaut alternations are simply a preferred option—as already noted elsewhere—rather than categorical facts of the language, though this needs to be checked in the field.

With regard to the suffixed element *-te* of the negative simulfix, it should be pointed out that this suffix appears after a verbal object suffix if one is present. For example:

ne-be-les-okh-te
1SG:REAL-NEG-see-2SG-NEG
'I did not see you'

However, further checking is required to verify that this is the same for all categories of object. In particular, it remains to be seen how the negative marker interacts with third person singular object marking.

When the suffixed element *-te* is added to a verb root that ends in *n*, the sequence of *nt* is resolved over the morpheme boundary as *d*. For example:

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[14] Alternatively, further checking may reveal that an alternation between suffixed and free-form objects is a general feature for all transitive verbs.

Ø-mon
3SG:REAL-sharp
'it is sharp'

Ø-se-be-mon-te (> *sebemode*)
3SG:REAL-NEG-NEG-sharp-NEG
'it is not sharp'

6.3.3 Verbal complexes

As far as postmodifiers to the verb are concerned, there is a completive marker *din*, which appears after the verb in examples such as the following:

ne-rij	*din*
1SG:REAL-speak-NEG	COMPL

'I have spoken'

This form is not used in association with a verb that carries negative marking, where *worr* is used instead. Thus:

ne-se-rij-te	*worr*
1SG:REAL-NEG-peak	COMPL

'I have not yet spoken'

Also under the heading of verbal postmodifiers, we encounter the form *je* which functions as an intensifier meaning 'very' or 'too (much)' in association with stative verbs. For example:

Nav'anu	*Ø-khavkhav*	*je*	*neten*	*nial*.
place	3SG:REAL-hot	INTENSE	CAUSE	sun

'It is very hot because of the sun.'

With such a limited amount of textual data, it is not possible to say a great deal about the patterns of nuclear-layer serial verb constructions in Nese. However, there is clear evidence for the existence of VERB + VERB sequences in which the initial verb receives the subject marking and the second verb receives the inflectional object marking. For example:

Ø-Verr	*khorr-o*.
3SG:REAL-say	block-3SG

'(S)he prohibited it.'

6.4 Syntax

6.4.1 Simple declarative clauses

The basic constituent order in declarative verbal clauses in Nese is SVO, as illustrated by the following:

Naskhe	*Ø-jubul*	*latan*.
kingfisher	3SG:REAL-jump	down

'The kingfisher jumped down.'

Naskhe *Ø-mot* *tavu.*
kingfisher 3SG:REAL-peck conch
'The kingfisher pecked the conch shell.'

The same applies with pronominal subjects and objects. For example:

Kharr *rri-b'el* *nemerrte.*
3PL 3PL:REAL-chase man
'They chased the man.'

Nalang *Ø-suv* *kharr.*
wind 3SG:REAL-blow 3PL
'The wind blew them.'

However, pronominal subjects are obligatorily cross-referenced as prefixes on the verb, and it is only when contrast is being expressed that a pronominal subject will be overtly marked in the preverbal subject position. Pronominal objects are also usually marked by means of suffixes rather than free forms, so it is quite common for a basic declarative clause to consist minimally of just an inflected verb. For example:

Ne-les-okh.
1SG:REAL-see-2SG
'I saw you.'

Prepositions mark a range of functions for non-core noun phrases in the clause. Prepositions fall into two basic types in Nese: those which are morphologically invariant, and those which accept pronominal suffixation, the latter being attested with same suffixes that are found on transitive verbs expressing verbal objects.[15] Those prepositions which have been attested in Nese, along with the functions that they express, are set out below.

(i) *Rre* 'locative/instrumental'. The unsuffixed preposition *rre* expresses the locative, as in the following:

Khai *Ø-yas* *rre* *naon.*
3SG 3SG:REAL-walk LOC beach
'(S)he is walking on the beach.'

Khai *Ø-yat* *rre* *nuak.*
3SG 3SG:REAL-sit LOC canoe
'(S)he is sitting on the canoe.'

Ne-ma *lalaine* *ne-be-les-okh-te* *rre* *nem-am.*
1SG:REAL-come inside 1SG:REAL-NEG-see-2SG-NEG LOC house-2SG
'I came inside but I did not see you in your house.'

It also expresses the instrumental function. For example:

De-side *rre* *nese?*
1SG:IRR-cut INST what
'What will I cut it with?'

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[15] However, some of the seemingly invariant prepositions end in *-n* which may turn out after further investigation to represent part of a paradigm which these forms share with directly possessed nouns.

(ii) *Je* ‘cause’. The form *je* is an unsuffixed preposition which has been attested as expressing the causal function. For example:

Nav’anu Ø-khavkhav je netenial.
place 3SG:REAL-hot CAUSE sun
‘It is hot because of the sun.’

(iii) *Rran* ‘source’. The unsuffixed form *rran* has been attested with the function of source. For example:

Nemerrte nge no-vul norrean ran ti-naturr.
man REL 1SG:REAL-buy food SOURCE 3SG:REAL-sleep
‘The man who I bought the food from is sleeping.’

(iv) *Rrangan* ‘locative’. The unsuffixed form *rrangan* expresses the locative function. For example:

Nemerrte nge ti-naturr rrangan naine.
man that 3SG:REAL-sleep LOC house
‘The man is sleeping in the house.’

It is not known at this stage how the forms *rre* and *rrangan* differ in their range of functions, though they clearly overlap with respect to the expression of the locative.

(v) *Neten* ‘cause’. This is a preposition which is frequently attested as expressing cause. It is not known how this form differs in its range of functions from *je*, which was also listed above as expressing the causal function. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Jiblakh Ø-ngarr neten namul.
child 3SG:REAL-cry CAUSE orange
‘The child is crying because of the orange.’

Khai Ø-rroj neten namkho.
3SG 3SG:REAL-sick CAUSE mosquito
‘(S)he is sick because of the mosquitoes.’

Nem-an Ø-jov neten neleng rrub.
house-3SG 3SG:REAL-fall CAUSE wind hit
‘His/her house fell down because of the cyclone.’

(vi) *Rron-* ‘accompanitive’. The accompanitive preposition *rron-* is attested with the first person singular suffix *-ia* and the second person singular suffix *-okh*, which are the same forms that we find with transitive verbs. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Khai Ø-yat rron-ia.
3SG 3SG:REAL-sit ACC-1SG
‘(S)he sat with me.’

With other pronominal categories, however, pronominal objects are attested instead as free forms. For example:

Khai Ø-yat rron khini.
3SG 3SG:REAL-sit ACC 3SG
‘(S)he sat with him/her.’

Khai *Ø-yat* *rron* *nekrre*
3SG 3SG:REAL-sit ACC 1PL.INCL
'(S)he sat with us.'

It is not known at this stage if this preposition has inflected forms only in the first and second person singular, or if both this preposition and verbs allow for both suffixed and free pronominal objects with these pronominal categories.[16]

(vii) *Min-* 'dative'. A dative noun phrase is marked by means of the inflected preposition *min-*. The full paradigm has not yet been established, but the first person form has been recorded as *mina* rather than expected **minia*. We therefore find the following forms:

1SG *min-a*
2SG *min-okh*
3SG *min-i*

The following examples illustrate the use of this preposition in sentences:

Khai *Ø-krro* *nua* *min-a.*
3SG 3SG:REAL-give water DAT-1SG
'(S)he gave water to me.'

Kharr *rri-b'el* *nemerrte* *nge* *ne-sobsob* *min-i.*
3PL 3PL:REAL-chase man REL 1SG:REAL-talk DAT-3SG
'They chased the man I was talking to.'

In addition to these prepositionally marked arguments within the clause, there is a variety of unmarked locational and temporal markers which can appear in the clause. These include institutionalised place names such as the following:

Tavu *Ø-yat* *Lokhorr.*
conch 3SG:REAL-stay Lokhorr
'The conch shell stayed at Lokhorr.'

Unmarked locational markers other than place names include the following:

jalin 'outside'
marro 'above, on top'
lokhsa 'over there'
vitan 'down, below'
lanus 'to/in the bush'
lasale 'to/at the anchorage'

The following locational markers are clearly related to nouns with similar forms and meanings by means of either some kind of locational prefix *la-* or the preposition *rre*:

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[16] Note also the following example:

Khai *Ø-sobsob* *kharr* *bubu* *sak.*
3SG 3SG:REAL-tell.story ACC grandparent POSS:1SG
'(S)he is telling stories with my grandparent.'

The form *kharr* here may be an additional accompanitive preposition. Alternatively, however, it may represent a particular use of the third person dual pronoun *kharru* (which may have been misrecorded as *kharr*).

Noun		Locational marker	
naine	‘house’	*lalaine*	‘inside’
nakhm’al	‘meeting house’	*lakhm’al*	‘to/in the meeting house’
nasal	‘road’	*lasal*	‘on the road’
natan	‘ground’	*latan*	‘down, below’
natas	‘sea’	*latas*	‘to/in the sea’
nenelnga-	‘bed’	*rrenelnga-*	‘on the bed’

Some of these forms can be used in association with a following locative preposition to indicate a spatial relationship with a following noun phrase. For example:

Khai	*Ø-yat*	*jalin*	*rre*	*naine*.
3SG	3SG:REAL-stay	outside	LOC	house

‘(S)he stayed outside the house.’

Ø-Vite	*kele*	*marrorrangan.*
3SG:REAL-put	back	above LOC

‘(S)he put it back on top of it.’

Temporal markers that have been attested in Nese include the following:

morruniekhe	‘today’
nev’khe	‘tomorrow’
benanev	‘yesterday’
tovon	‘now’
tua, amu	‘before’
tuorrongrrong	‘long time before’
yatakhma	‘afterwards’
kisekh	‘always’
rrevrrav	‘late afternoon’

In addition, there is a series of forms derived from the numerals 2–4 expressing days both before and after the present:

bentarru	‘two days ago, the day before yesterday’
benetil	‘three days ago’
benev’at	‘four days ago’
benalne	‘five days ago’
tarru	‘two days hence, the day after tomorrow’
tatil	‘three days hence’
tav’at	‘four days hence’
talne	‘five days hence’

6.4.2 Interrogative clauses

Interrogative constructions have not yet been investigated in detail. However, the following have been attested as expressing a variety of content questions:

(i) *Khise* ‘who?’, for example:

Khise kha-verr netenge khe min-okh?
who 3SG:REAL-tell thing that DAT-2SG
‘Who told you that?’

De-ma ron khise?
1SG:IRR-come ACC who
‘Who will I come with?’

(ii) *Khade* ‘where?’, for example:

Kho-naturr khade?
2SG:REAL-sleep where
‘Where do you sleep/live*?*’

(iii) *Vise* ‘how much?, how many?’, for example:

Naus vise jo-kol-o?
pawpaw how.many 1SG:IRR-carry.on.shoulder-3SG
‘How many pawpaws will I carry on my shoulder?’

(iv) *Tasve* ‘when?’, for example:

Je-ma tasve?
1SG:IRR-come when
‘When will I come?’

(v) *Severrse* ‘how?’, for example:

De-bat-e severrse?
1SG:IRR-do-3SG how
‘How will I do it?’

It should be noted that there is no evidence for third person singular realis marking on *severrse* in this example, which suggests that this form differs from many other languages in which this interrogative is often expressed as an intransitive verb.

(vi) *Nese* ‘what?’, for example:

De-side rre nese?
1SG:IRR-cut INST what
‘What will I cut it with?’

Kho-varri nese kele?
2SG:REAL-say what again
‘What did you say again?’

(vii) *Neten nese* ‘why? (lit. because of what?)’, for example:

Kho-bet netenge neten nese?
2SG:REAL-do thing CAUSE what
‘What did you do that?’

6.4.3 Complex sentences

There remains a substantial amount of information to be gathered on the formation of complex sentences in Nese. However, a number of observations can be made at this stage.

Clausal coordination is expressed by means of the conjunction *ti*. There is evidence that where the verbs of the first and second clauses share the same subjects, the subject markers on the second verb can be replaced by the echo subject marker *ko-*, as in the following:

Khai	*ti-v'an*	*lalaine*	*ti*	*ko-long*	*nakhab'*.
3SG	3SG:REAL-go	inside	and	ES-light	fire

'(S)he went inside and lit the fire.'

A disjunctive relationship between clauses, however, is marked by *deve* 'or'. For example:

Khoso-num	*nua*	*deve*	*khoso-num*	*nani?*
2SG:IRR-drink	water	or	2SG:IRR-drink	coconut

'Will you drink water or will you drink coconut?'

There is an all-purpose subordinator of the form *te* which appears in a variety of subordinate clause constructions. It can appear on its own to introduce a complement clause, as in the following:

No-rrong	*te*	*de-rij*.
1SG:REAL-want	SUB	1SG:IRR-talk

'I want to talk.'

No-rrong usong	*te*	*de-sukhaskho*.
1SG:IRR-know	SUB	1SG:IRR-sing

'I can sing.'

The subordinator *te* can also be used in conjunction with a number of other markers of subordination. We therefore find reason clauses expressed as *neten te* (where *neten* is a causal preposition). For example:

Ne-sul	*naute*	*neten*	*te*	*jo-wak*	*narram*.
1SG:REAL-burn	garden	because	SUB	1SG:FUT-plant	yam

'I burnt off the garden because I am going to plant yams.'

Time clauses can be marked by means of *nerren te* (where *nerren* is a noun meaning 'time'). For example:

Khai	*ti-naturr*	*nerren*	*te*	*ne-tov-i*.
3SG	3SG:REAL-sleep	time	SUB	1SG:REAL-call-3SG

'(S)he was sleeping when I called him/her.'

Another subordinator that has been recorded is *seve* 'if'. For example:

De-yat	*laine*	*seve*	*kho-varri*	*balak*	*khe*.
2SG:FUT-stay	inside	if	2SG:REAL-say	like	that

'I will stay inside if you say so.'

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