

## 7.2.2.2 The lack of prefixal agreement in some verbs

We have seen that the paradigms for prefixal agreement on verbs of different phonological types are complicated, but underlyingly regular (the beginning of 7.2.2). It is also true that many verbs lack any prefixal agreement altogether. While a lot of this can be described phonologically, there is also a large element of lexical stipulation involved.

We can summarise the information presented on verbal inflection so far in this chapter as follows:

- there are regular conjugations for the verbs beginning with *w*, *l*, *k*, *h* or with a vowel (*a*, *oe*, *ue*, *o*, and *e* are attested in this position; the high non-central vowels *i* and *u* are not found in conjugating verbs);
- for the first person singular and the third person plural there are alternate inflectional forms within these conjugations (though all vocalic paradigm verbs have *t*- in 3PL, and all bilabial verbs show the same inflection for these cells);
- there is extra variation in the *l*-conjugation verbs for 3SG.F and 1PL.

In the light of these conditions, compare the three verbs in table 108xx, all *h*-initial and so phonologically analogous, yet displaying degrees of variation that exceeds that described above.

Table 108. Differences in prefixal agreement patterns on *h*-initial verbs

	‘stand’	‘close’	‘wash’
1SG	<i>há</i>	<i>há</i>	<i>hí</i>
2SG	<i>má</i>	<i>má</i>	<i>hí</i>
3SG.NF	<i>ká</i>	<i>ká</i>	<i>hí</i>
3SG.F	<i>wá</i>	<i>wá</i>	<i>hí</i>
1PL	<i>ná</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>hí</i>
2PL	<i>há</i>	<i>há</i>	<i>hí</i>
3PL	<i>tá</i>	<i>yá</i>	<i>hí</i>

The different 3PL inflections of ‘stand’ and ‘close’ can be accounted for assuming that they are *h*-initial verbs with membership in the *t*- and *y*- conjugations, respectively. Both have the same stem, *há*, and are differentiated only in the 3PL. The verb ‘wash’ is also clearly *h*-initial, and unproblematically has the root form *hí*. In contradistinction to the other two verbs in the table, however, there is no variation of the stem for person, number and gender of the subject at all. The lack of prefixal inflection on this verb is unexplained by any phonological factors: in addition to *hí* for 1SG and 2PL we would expect to find *mí*, *kí*, *wí*, *ní* and either *tí* or *yí*, and this is not the case. The vowel is not a conditioning factor, as can be seen in the inflections of the verb *há hi* ‘count’: *há hi*, *má mi*, *ká ki*, etc. to *yá yi* (see 7.8 for discussion of this verb and others with what might be considered bipartite inflectional patterns); we must simply accept that *hí* is listed in the lexicon as a verb that does not take inflection, without any phonological or semantic conditioning factors.

Other examples of verbs with a range of different onsets that do not show alternations in their onset for agreement are shown in table 109xx. Only one example for each onset type (each type of consonant is shown; only one example of a vocalic (= non-consonantal) onset is shown) is shown; additional examples can be found in appendix 4. In this table note particularly the vowel-initial verbs, and those beginning with *h*, *k*, *l*, and *w*, all of which are onsets that are attested templates for prefixing verbs, as already seen in 8.2.2. The fact that verbs with these

onsets are also found without prefixation is thus proof that the assignment of an agreement strategy is based on lexical stipulation, and not on phonological grounds.

Table 109. Non-prefixing verbs with different onsets

	‘fight’	‘climb’	‘meet’	‘come to land’	‘open’	‘scream’	‘surprised’
	<i>b</i>	V	<i>f</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>l</i>
1SG	<i>bóe</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>fí</i>	<i>hóe</i>	<i>jíng</i>	<i>kí</i>	<i>léngho</i>
2SG	<i>bóe</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>fí</i>	<i>hóe</i>	<i>jíng</i>	<i>kí</i>	<i>léngho</i>
3SG.NF	<i>bóe</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>fí</i>	<i>hóe</i>	<i>jíng</i>	<i>kí</i>	<i>léngho</i>
3SG.F	<i>bóe</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>fí</i>	<i>hóe</i>	<i>jíng</i>	<i>kí</i>	<i>léngho</i>
1PL	<i>bóe</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>fí</i>	<i>hóe</i>	<i>jíng</i>	<i>kí</i>	<i>léngho</i>
2PL	<i>bóe</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>fí</i>	<i>hóe</i>	<i>jíng</i>	<i>kí</i>	<i>léngho</i>
3PL	<i>bóe</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>fí</i>	<i>hóe</i>	<i>jíng</i>	<i>kí</i>	<i>léngho</i>
	‘ridicule’	‘play’	‘swim’	‘rub’	‘push’	‘plant’	‘search for’
	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>y</i>
1SG	<i>mà me</i>	<i>è na</i>	<i>pi</i>	<i>rapu</i>	<i>tajíng</i>	<i>wá</i>	<i>yú</i>
2SG	<i>mà me</i>	<i>è na</i>	<i>pi</i>	<i>rapu</i>	<i>tajíng</i>	<i>wá</i>	<i>yú</i>
3SG.NF	<i>mà me</i>	<i>è na</i>	<i>pi</i>	<i>rapu</i>	<i>tajíng</i>	<i>wá</i>	<i>yú</i>
3SG.F	<i>mà me</i>	<i>è na</i>	<i>pi</i>	<i>rapu</i>	<i>tajíng</i>	<i>wá</i>	<i>yú</i>
1PL	<i>mà me</i>	<i>è na</i>	<i>pi</i>	<i>rapu</i>	<i>tajíng</i>	<i>wá</i>	<i>yú</i>
2PL	<i>mà me</i>	<i>è na</i>	<i>pi</i>	<i>rapu</i>	<i>tajíng</i>	<i>wá</i>	<i>yú</i>
3PL	<i>mà me</i>	<i>è na</i>	<i>pi</i>	<i>rapu</i>	<i>tajíng</i>	<i>wá</i>	<i>yú</i>

We can see that all of the consonantal onsets of Skou (*b, f, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, t, w, y*) are found as the initial element in verbs. There are also a number of verbs that show no prefixal alternation, as with the verbs above, but do show some agreement by means of vowel alternations. These are described in 7.2.3. It should be noted, though, before we leave this section, that the rate of verbs that are phonologically suitable for prefixal agreement marking (that is, verbs that have as their onset *w, l, k, h* or  $\emptyset$ ) and which do *not* take prefixal agreement are in a very small minority. In the overwhelming majority of cases verbs that can take prefixal agreement do: the overall frequency of prefixal agreement patterns in verbs is 66.7%, but if we examine only those verbs that are phonologically eligible to appear with a prefix, then the figure rises to 90%.<sup>44</sup> The patterns reported here are thus minority patterns within the otherwise phonologically regular system (allowing for the variation described in the main part of 7.2.2; and see also appendix 2).

### 7.2.2.3 Irregular prefixal agreement

In addition to the patterns of regular agreement, there are some instances in which the ‘wrong’ forms appear. Some of the ways in which irregularities are found will be discussed here.

<sup>44</sup> The distribution of the non-prefixing verbs is not even across the different onsets:  $\frac{1}{7}$  bilabial verbs,  $\frac{1}{50}$  alveolar verbs,  $\frac{1}{9}$  velar verbs,  $\frac{1}{9}$  glottal verbs, thus averaging 10% or less for the consonant-initial paradigms, but  $\frac{5}{14}$  or 36% of all vocalic verb roots, implying that the vowel-initial verbs are less regular than the others.

We have already seen the irregularities of omission in 7.2.2.1 and 7.2.2.2, but from table 103xx and the surrounding discussion it should be obvious that there are many areas in which verbs can potentially show ‘irregular’ variation. The choice of  $\emptyset$ , *k-* or *n-* to mark 1SG for vowel- and glottal-initial verbs is one example of an element of the inflectional system that needs to be lexically specified, as is the choice of *y-* or *t-* conjugation for 3PL. Additionally, and especially in the alveolar paradigm, there is quite a lot of individuality in the exact realisations of each inflectional cell; 3SG.F, for instance, may be realised as any of *r*, *t*, *w* or *p*. Logically there could be up to 120 variations on the alveolar paradigm, given the combinations found in table 103xx; in fact, as can be judged from appendix 1, there are only 11 attested variations, implying that there must be some organising principles behind the choice of exponent in each cell. This is a point that we shall return to in 7.2.2.4.

The choice of which of the varying cells are selected for a given verb does have some implication for which other variables can be chosen. The empirical data can be seen in appendix 2, and in 7.2.2.5. Additionally, we find some variation in the realisation of each verb. The verb *leng* ‘give’, for instance, normally inflects with the paradigm seen in (58).

Regular inflection of ‘give’

- (58) *leng* *reng*  
*peng* *leng*  
*leng* *ring*  
*rung*

These are the citation forms for the verb in its paradigm, as will be given by any number of speakers without hesitation. Furthermore, they are the most common forms encountered when the verb is used in non-monitored speech. Nonetheless, various unpredicted inflections have been occasionally heard. The 3PL form has been attested with an *n-* instead of an *r-*, the 1PL with *t-*, and the 3SG.NF as *nung* rather than the unmarked *leng*. The following examples are from the texts *Te Táng*, line (25), and *Tangmoe*, line (30). In the first line below we can see ‘get’ appearing without vowel alternations (*te=r-e* for expected *te=r-i*), and the verb ‘give’ appearing as *n-ing* rather than (prescriptive) *ring*, from the root *léng*.

- (59) *ó=fa* *te=r-e* *n-ing* *e* *ti-ti=ing a*,  
 little.bit=only 3PL=3PL-get 3PL-give 3PL.be 3PL.do-RED=the  
 ‘well they just give us some, they would, ...’
- (60) *á* *ne=r-óe* *t-éng=pa* *te=r-í* *hí*,  
 rope 1PL=1PL-get.PL 1PL-give=INSTR 3PL=3PL-get.PL go.down  
 ‘they catch the fish with lines, and get them, ...’

In the next extract the verb ‘give’ appears with a 3SG.NF subject, an environment in which it is normally realised as *rung*; in this extract, however, *nung* is found, with an unexpected nasal onset.

- (61) ... *taíngbe* *ung* *ke=we* *núng* *nì*.  
 money now 3SG.NF=get.F give 1SG  
 ‘now he’s given me some money.’

It is clear that the nasal appears as a result of the influence of the nasalised vowel; the fact that *r* patterns as the missing \*d, even though historically is derived from \*s, might indicate that some sort of nasal harmony within the syllable is operating in Skou as well as other languages of the Western Skou family (see the discussion of \*b[ĩ/ẽ] ‘tail’ in Donohue 2002b. In

both these cases the narrators, when questioned, made self-corrections to the prescribed form. Nonetheless this level of deviation from the prescriptive norms is not unusual, and indicates that there are less rule-based regularities underlying the inflectional system of the verbs than might be thought.

#### 7.2.2.4 Inheritance trees and the regularities behind Skou prefixation

We have seen that, despite underlying regularities, the number and form of inflectional contrasts on verbs in Skou is subject to a large amount of idiosyncrasy. Even though there is a strong element of irregularity in these verbal paradigms, the way in which different verbs build up contrasts in their inflectional paradigm is not random. Table 110xx shows the progressive development of differences in the prefixing paradigms of various verbs. We can see that, rather than being random, there are common points at which inflectional differences appear, and all verbs share the features of having no inflection for 2PL. There are some developments beyond those shown here (see appendix 2), but they are minority cases.

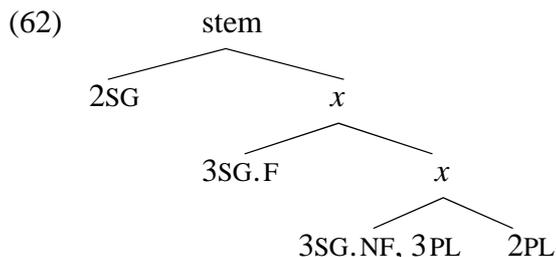
Table 110. The extension of prefixal contrasts in verbs

	2SG	3SG.F	3PL	1PL	3SG.NF	1SG	2PL	
Nonbranching	<i>wá</i>	‘plant’						
1 <sup>st</sup> branch	<i>pé</i>	<i>wé</i>	<i>wé</i>	<i>wé</i>	<i>wé</i>	<i>wé</i>	<i>wé</i>	‘get.F’
2 <sup>nd</sup> branch	<i>pá</i>	<i>wá</i>	<i>lá</i>	<i>lá</i>	<i>lá</i>	<i>lá</i>	<i>lá</i>	‘utter’
3 <sup>rd</sup> branch	<i>bá</i>	<i>wá</i>	<i>já</i>	<i>ká</i>	<i>ká</i>	<i>ká</i>	<i>ká</i>	‘hit’
	<i>páng</i>	<i>wáng</i>	<i>táng</i>	<i>táng</i>	<i>láng</i>	<i>láng</i>	<i>láng</i>	‘hit.F’
4 <sup>th</sup> branch	<i>páng</i>	<i>wáng</i>	<i>jáng</i>	<i>táng</i>	<i>láng</i>	<i>láng</i>	<i>láng</i>	‘narrate’
5 <sup>th</sup> branch	<i>ma</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>ha</i>	<i>ha</i>	‘walk’
6 <sup>th</sup> branch	<i>mang</i>	<i>pang</i>	<i>tang</i>	<i>nang</i>	<i>kang</i>	<i>kang</i>	<i>ang</i>	‘eat’
<i>oeng ...</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>pe</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>ne</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>ne</i>	<i>e</i>	‘refuse’

From the data given in this section we can create an inheritance tree for grammatical features that are parsed in the morphology (for this approach see, for example, Wunderlich and Fabri 1996). We can describe the inflectional system of Skou in terms of an increasing number of distinctions, arranged in a dependency hierarchy. From (61) we can see that, of the verbs that do show underlying prefixes (or, if we prefer, stem alternations) that correlate with features associated with the subject, the least differentiated verbs are those belonging to the bilabial paradigm, in which only the 2SG is distinguished from the rest. We may posit that the first split, then, in a verb’s stem involves the 2SG being distinguished from the rest. If, and only if, this distinction is made are there any further distinctions in the paradigm; there are no verbs that do show consonant alternations which do not have a distinct form for the 2SG part of their paradigm.

The next level of distinctions then involves the 3SG.F being distinguished from the other inflections; again, from table 110xx we can see that the velar paradigm exemplifies this level in the inheritance tree. The 3SG.NF is the next distinction to be made; the regular paradigms described in tables 101xx – 103xx do not show this particular division, a verb in which 2SG, 3SG.F and 3SG.NF are distinguished but 1SG and all the plurals are identical, but the data in 7.2.2.1 and appendix 2 present ample exemplification of this point amongst the irregular verbs. The complete inheritance tree that can describe all the major Skou verbal prefixation patterns is shown in (62).

## Inheritance tree for Skou verbal prefixation



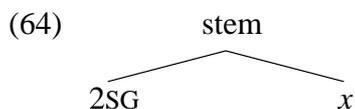
Examining this, and extracting the sections that are relevant for an exposition of different morphological verb classes, we would first have a non-branching node, representing the verbs that do not show prefixation, such as *wá* in table 110xx. Somewhat unsightfully, this is represented in (63).

## Inheritance tree showing the distinctions found in bilabial verb prefixation



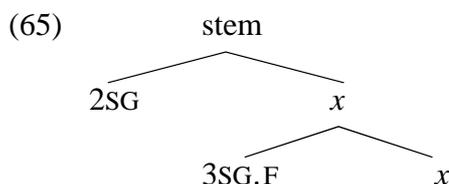
The next step is to describe those verbs with only a two-way distinction in prefixal alternations, and this description matches the bilabial verbs with just the first branch, as shown in (64). This diagram shows only one contrastive verb form, the form that is used to mark the 2SG. The regular bilabial verbs all fit this model, with the root form of the verb used for most inflections.

## Inheritance tree showing the distinctions found in bilabial verb prefixation



The next level of detail in terms of inflectional possibilities shows a separate form for 2SG and 3SG.F, but not for the rest. This is shown in (65); the verbs of the regular velar paradigm all fit these criteria, as do some of the less-differentiated alveolar conjugation verbs such as *lá* ‘utter’, *lèng* ‘be quiet’, *la* ‘erect fence’.

## Inheritance tree showing the distinctions found in velar verb prefixation



After this point the 3SG.NF is the next to be differentiated, though for some verbs it might be the 3PL that is split off first. In part this is matched by the different divisions that are made in different parts of the inflectional paradigms: vowel alternation, for instance, differentiate 3SG.F and 3PL, but not 3SG.NF. Consonant alternations, on the other hand, are more likely to show differences in the 3SG.NF, while the 3PL is a more erratic category, with two conjugations, one of which (the *t*-conjugation) does not show any overt forms with the velar verbs. Verbs that match the first specification include *ké* ‘get’, *ku* ‘stab’, and *kepu* ‘wear hat’. The only verb with a distinct 3PL form, but no distinct 1PL or 3SG.NF, is *ká* ‘hit’.

After the development of a 3PL form we cannot find any clear pattern in the paradigm development of the verbs. In many alveolar-*l* verbs the same consonant that is used for the 3SG.F inflection is also found for both the 3PL and the 1PL, but this is not uniform. The final node on the tree in (62) is for the 2PL. This is the form of the verb stem that is used when there is no more highly specified form: it corresponds to the root form of the verb. For most (97%) verb roots this is also the form that is used for 1SG inflection as well.

There is some evidence that the inheritance trees shown here are psychologically real, at least to some extent. Anecdotal evidence suggests that speakers do not give as much weight to the more embedded branches of the tree as they do to the higher branches, when evaluating homophone status of different verbs. For instance, when eliciting verbal paradigms I have had speakers stop part-way in and remark that the verb being checked was the same in pronunciation (*bunyi sama*) with one that we had recently investigated. In all cases this has turned out not to be strictly true: the paradigms are differentiated, but only in the plural forms, areas that would be low in the inheritance tree. If the uninflected 1SG and 2PL forms are identical, and the inflections for 2SG and 3SG.F are also the same, then it is highly likely that speakers will consider the verbs to be the same, despite being aware of the inflectional differences for the lower branches. Consider the following pair, which were judged by several informants, on several occasions, to be homophonous; the inflections have been arranged according to the inheritance tree that has been developed in this section. The paradigm is identical except for the first and third person plural forms, where ‘hide (self)’ shows overt inflection, while ‘be quiet’ is (unpredictably) uninflected. Clearly in their judgements of homophony, speakers take the ‘lower’ 1PL and 3PL forms to ‘not count’.

	Inflection of ‘be quiet’	Inflection of ‘hide (self)’
(66) 1SG/2PL	<i>lèng</i>	<i>lèng</i>
2SG	<i>pèng</i>	<i>pèng</i>
3SG.F	<i>wèng</i>	<i>wèng</i>
3SG.NF	<i>lèng</i>	<i>lèng</i>
3PL	<i>lèng</i>	<i>reng</i>
1PL	<i>lèng</i>	<i>reng</i>

All this suggests that the irregular inflections of verbs are at their most irregular in the lower end of the paradigm, in the inflected plural forms, and that these forms are less salient to speakers. This is the opposite result found to that found by examining the inheritance tree that we must draw to account for inflection by means of stem suppletion or vowel alternation, presented in 7.2.3 and 7.2.4.

#### 7.2.2.6 The patterns within the irregularities

We have seen that there are different kinds of irregular verbs in Skou with different kinds of irregularities. Rather than assuming that there are no discernible patterns in this irregular set, there are, as has been demonstrated in the previous sections, clear patterns. The development of paradigmatic complexity follows a limited number of regular paths, and the existence of complexity at one point in a paradigm can be used to predict complexity elsewhere. Although not all verbs exhibit the same set of morphological alternations, there is a constant path for the development of morphological alternation, showing that there is an underlying abstract level or generality to the system.

## 7.2.3 Vowel alternation

The features plural and feminine are marked by vowel alternations on some verbs in Skou, in addition to the proclitic and any prefixation that is present. The pattern of agreement by vowel alternation is by no means common – only approximately 15% of the verbs so far recorded show vowel alternations, and not all of them show the full three-way split, marking both plural and feminine as distinct to the unmarked, or ‘base’ form. Amongst those verbs that do show the alternations described here, the general pattern is that feminine is marked by a rounding (and, usually, corresponding backing) of the vowel, and plural is marked by unrounding (and fronting). Three different vowels are found on the verb *lúe* ‘hear’ (the last word in the following sentences) in otherwise identical sentences with different subjects. The root form of the verb is shown in (67), and the following two sentences show the changes in vowel quality that accompany the marking of feminine or of plural, respectively.

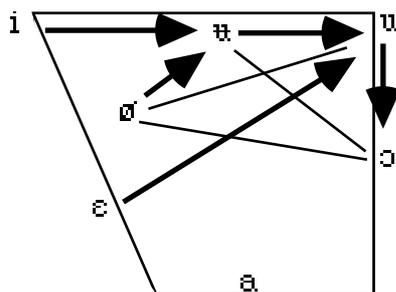
- (67) *Ke naké boeboe ke=lá=ing ke=lúe.*  
 3SG.NF dog bark 3SG.NF=bark=DEIC 3SG.NF=hear  
 ‘He heard the dog barking.’
- (68) *Pe naké boeboe ke=lá=ing pe=r-ú.*  
 3SG.F dog bark 3SG.NF=bark=DEIC 3SG.F=3SG.F-hear.F  
 ‘She heard the dog barking.’
- (69) *Te naké boeboe ke=lá=ing te=r-í.*  
 3PL dog bark 3SG.NF=bark=DEIC 3PL=3PL-hear.PL  
 ‘They heard the dog barking.’

Vowel alternations are found with verbs that show agreement by other means, such as consonantal prefixation, as well as verbs that do not have any alternation by prefix. The vowel alternations are found on many verbs, but there are cases of phonologically analogous verbs not showing vowel alternations when their partner does. For instance, the most common set of alternations found between the ‘unmarked’ vowel of a verb (the form found with all but 3SG.F and 3PL agreement) and the plural and feminine forms are shown in table 111xx:

Table 111. Common vowel alternation patterns

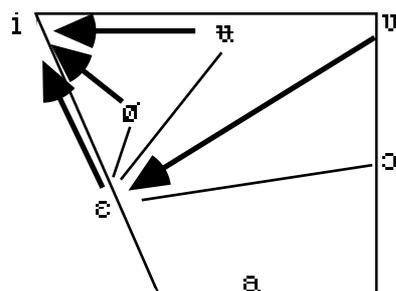
Plural	Plain	Feminine
<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>ue</i>
<i>ing</i>	<i>eng</i>	<i>ung</i>
<i>i</i>	<i>ue</i>	<i>u</i>
<i>i</i>	<i>oe</i>	<i>ue</i>
<i>ing</i>	<i>oeng</i>	<i>ung</i>
<i>e</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>o</i>
<i>e</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>o</i>

The patterns underlying these alternations are more apparent when shown in diagrams on a pair of vowel charts, showing the changes associated with feminine and with plural. Figure xx7 shows the changes in plain vowels found when the verb is marked for feminine; in all cases the feminine vowel is rounded, and usually further back than the plain vowel.

Figure 7. Vowel alternations and the feature [ $\pm$ feminine]

It is quite plain that the process of marking [feminine] by vowel shift involves rounding the vowel, and if the vowel was not back, additionally backing the vowel one place; if the vowel was already back, the vowel loses height. Nasalisation obeys these same principles, but when it would create an ungrammatical \*[ $\tilde{u}$ ], the shift moves further back to [u], which with nasalisation is realised as [ $\tilde{u}$ ], an acceptable coda.

With plural marking we see much the same set of processes, but in reverse. The vowel for a verb marked for plural is in all cases further forward, unrounded, and, if the plain form vowel was non-back, high. The plural alternation is shown in figure xx8.

Figure 8. Vowel alternations and the feature [ $\pm$ plural]

Here it is plain that fronting is the central change, with the vowel additionally raising if the base vowel is [+ front], and lowering if the base vowel is [+ back]. An analysis of this rule in terms of phonological features can be found in 2.2.3.2.

Examples of verbs that show these patterns are given in the following tables. In all cases below the alternation in vowel quality shows information about the subject, as well as (in many cases) the initial consonant showing variation (see 2.2.3.2).

Table 112. Verbs showing vowel alternations for feminine and/or plural

Vowel:	i-i-ue	ing- <b>eng</b> -ung	i- <b>ue</b> -u	i- <b>oe</b> -ue	ing- <b>oeng</b> -ung	e- <b>u</b> -o
Verb:	'do'	'give'	'hear'	'shave'	'speak to'	'fear'
1SG	<i>li</i>	<i>leng</i>	<i>lue</i>	<i>lóe</i>	<i>lóeng</i>	<i>fu</i>
2SG	<i>pi</i>	<i>peng</i>	<i>pue</i>	<i>póe</i>	<i>póeng</i>	<i>fu</i>
3SG.NF	<i>li</i>	<i>leng</i>	<i>lue</i>	<i>lóe</i>	<i>lóeng</i>	<i>fu</i>
3SG.F	<i>tue</i>	<i>nung</i>	<i>ru</i>	<i>rúe</i>	<i>rúng</i>	<i>fo</i>
1PL	<i>ti</i>	<i>reng</i>	<i>rue</i>	<i>róe</i>	<i>róeng</i>	<i>fu</i>
2PL	<i>li</i>	<i>leng</i>	<i>lue</i>	<i>lóe</i>	<i>lóeng</i>	<i>fu</i>
3PL	<i>ti</i>	<i>ning</i>	<i>ri</i>	<i>rí</i>	<i>ríng</i>	<i>fe</i>
ROOT:	<i>li</i>	<i>làng</i>	<i>ang</i>	<i>lóe</i>	<i>lóeng</i>	<i>fu</i>

In addition to these (semi-)regular vowel alternations there are also verbs that show alternations but which deviate from the patterns described above.

In the simplest case the verbs change in the manner shown above. A third person singular feminine subject or a third person plural subject provide the necessary conditions for a vowel to alternate in agreement with that argument. In some verbs the situation is more complex, and vowel alternations are present showing agreement for feature alternations in either subject *or* object. Compare the examples above, in which person, number and gender features of the subject changes, with the paradigm below, in which the features of the subject remains constant, and the object is the variable. Again we see that the vowel in the verb changes according to feminine gender or plural number, yet the covariant is not the subject.<sup>45</sup>

- (70) *Ke*      *ke=naké*      *ke=fue.*  
 3SG.NF    3SG.NF=dog    3SG.NF=see  
 ‘He saw the male dog.’
- (71) *Ke*      *pe=naké*      *ke=fu.*  
 3SG.NF    3SG.F=dog    3SG.NF=see.F  
 ‘He saw the female dog.’
- (72) *Ke*      *te=naké*      *ke=fe.*  
 3SG.NF    3PL=dog    3SG.NF=see.ANIM.PL  
 ‘He saw the dogs.’

In the case of agreement by vowel change for object the consonant at the beginning of the verb does not change for feminine or plural. These examples show that the vowel changes are a form of inflectional agreement that is, in some verbs at least, independent of the marking of subject by prefix and clitic. The prefixal and clitic agreement always and only varies according to values of subject; the vowel alternations, on the other hand, display changes that agree with either argument that satisfies their gender or third person plural features. The question arises, of course, how we resolve conflicting requirements for feature coding by means of vowel modification when there are two possible contenders to have their features marked by the vowel quality. To take an example, if we consider a predicate in which the subject is third person plural and the object is third person singular feminine, the values for subject will be uncomplicatedly marked by both clitic and, of appropriate, prefix. We are faced with competing candidates for the vowel, however: if the plural subject dominates the choice of vowel alternation, then we will expect a higher front vowel allomorph. If, on the other hand, the feminine object is the determiner of vowel alternation, we will expect a more back round vowel. Both of the logical possibilities are shown in (73).

#### Coding quandary with vowel alternation

- (73) ?*Te*    *pe*    *te=fe.*                      or    ?*Te*    *pe*    *te=fu.*  
 3PL    3SG.F    3PL=see.PL                      3PL    3SG.F    3PL=see.F  
 ‘They saw her.’

<sup>45</sup> If the object *naké* is not explicitly marked with a specifying pronominal clitic (*ke=* or *pe=*) indicating the sex of the nominal and thus the grammatical gender associated with it, then the verb may still show the plain *fue* or the marked *fu* or *fe* forms. The presence of overt gender marking in the verb is not dependant on the presence of marking in the NP.

This question can be answered by examining the full paradigm of alternations according to person, number and gender of both subject and object, for this verb. This is shown in table xx113.

Table 113. Inflection of the verb *fue* ‘see’

A \ P	inanimate								
	1SG	2SG	3SG.NF	3SG.F	1PL	2PL	3PL	3PL.NF	3PL.F
1SG		<i>fue</i>	<i>fue</i>	<i>fu</i>		<i>fe</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fu</i>
2SG	<i>fue</i>		<i>fue</i>	<i>fu</i>	<i>fe</i>		<i>fe</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fu</i>
3SG.NF	<i>fue</i>	<i>fue</i>	<i>fue</i>	<i>fu</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fu</i>
3SG.F	<i>fu</i>	<i>fu</i>	<i>fu</i>	<i>fu</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fu</i>
1PL		<i>fue</i>	<i>fue</i>	<i>fu</i>		<i>fe</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fu</i>
2PL	<i>fue</i>		<i>fue</i>	<i>fu</i>	<i>fe</i>		<i>fe</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fu</i>
3PL	<i>fī</i>	<i>fī</i>	<i>fī</i>	<i>fu</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fu</i>

According to this table the clause ‘They saw her’ will code the verb with the feminine form *fu*, and that the first of the putative sentences shown above, \**te pe te=fe*, is ungrammatical. We can also see that there are a total of four forms of the verb involved in the paradigm, *fue*, *fu*, *fī* and *fe*. The selection of the appropriate form of the verb is based on a parsing algorithm according to the following set of features assigned to each form, in addition to the lexical specification that is common for all forms of the verb for ‘see’:

Table 114. Features associated with the separate vowel-differentiated forms of ‘see’

	F	(3)PL	ANIM	OBJ
<i>fe</i>	.	+	+	+
<i>fī</i>	.	+	.	.
<i>fu</i>	+	.	.	.
<i>fue</i>	.	.	.	.

That is, the form *fī* is specified only as bearing the feature PL for its subject or object, the agreeing argument of *fu* only bears the feature ‘feminine’, and *fue* itself is unmarked for any grammatical information. The frequently-occurring *fe* (see table 113xx) is highly specified, annotated for the features plural, animate, and object.

Note also that *fī* can only occur with a third person plural subject, whereas *fe* occurs with any person, as long as it is plural (and, of course, the object of the clause). This is part of a consistent difference in the application of vowel alternations, which depends on whether they are used to code features of the subject or the object. In the same vein, the feminine form *fu* is not completely restricted to singular, but can be used with plural nouns if they are both inanimate and the object (and, naturally, feminine!). This is part of the regular asymmetry between animate and inanimate referents in gender marking that is attested elsewhere (see 10.2). Table 115xx shows the conditions under which the feminine or the plural vowel alternations will be used, depending on the animacy of the subject or object that they code (shown in the left-hand column). If the vowel alternations mark a subject that is animate, then feminine vowel alternation forms may be used to mark a third person singular subject, or plural forms to mark a third person plural. On the other hand, the most extreme alternative can be found if the vowel alternations are used to code an object that is inanimate, in which case we find that the feminine

forms can be used to code either a third person singular or a third person plural argument. The plural forms are not used to mark a third person plural argument.

Table 115. Asymmetries in the marking of gender for subject and object

		feminine		plural	
subject	ANIM	3SG			3PL
	INAN	3SG			3PL
object	ANIM	3SG		1PL, 2PL,	3PL
	INAN	3SG,	3PL	n/a	

It would intuitively seem that 3PL.F objects, when inanimate, should be eligible to be marked by either the plural form or the feminine form. That the feminine form is the one selected shows the salience of gender marking over plural marking, at least in this part of the system. On the other hand, plural feminine arguments, when animate, are coded as plural rather than feminine when subject. Examples of the use of this system can be seen with the following sentences. The first two show that when there is a plural animate subject, the verb must be marked for the plural feature, regardless of any feminine gender values that might be present on the nominal. Marking the verb as feminine, as in (74)', is not grammatical.

subject is third person plural feminine animate: verb vowel marks plural

- (74) *Kungpáue hítong te=fi.*  
 spider.F blowfly.NF 3PL=see.PL  
 'The spiders saw the fly.'

- (74)' \* *kungpáue hítong te=fu.*  
 spider.F blowfly.NF 3PL=see.F

When a plural feminine subject is inanimate, on the other hand, the verb is marked as feminine, not as plural. Here the inanimacy of the referent overrides the need to mark plurality.

subject is third person plural feminine inanimate: verb vowel marks feminine

- (75) *Hóeng nawò mong tue pì lo-pí.*  
 valley.F many F.sit 3SG.F.do mountain direction-south  
 'Many valleys are behind the mountains.'

- (75)' \* *hóeng nawò meng ti pì lo-pí.*  
 valley.F many 3PL.sit 3PL.do mountain direction-south

When the subject is neither third person nor plural the verb is not marked according to the inflectional umlaut agreeing with values of the subject, regardless of the actual sex of the referent. The subject in the sentence below can be interpreted as either male or female, with no change in the morphosyntactic encoding (exactly the same patterns are found for second person subjects; this verb inflects for plural subjects, so sentences with 1PL or 2PL subject will differ.

non-feminine animate object & first (or second) person, non-plural subject: verb vowel unchanged for gender of subject

- (76) *Nì páng-pé-pè=pe nì-fue.*  
 1SG husband-3SG.F.DAT-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT 1SG-see  
 'I<sub>male/female</sub> saw her husband.'

- (76)' \* *nì páng pé pè pe nì fu*  
 'I<sub>male/female</sub> saw her husband.'

feminine animate object & first person, non-plural subject: verb vowel unchanged for gender of subject

- (77) *Nì fáfa-pè=pe nì-fu.*  
 1SG husband-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT 1SG-see.F  
 ‘I<sub>male/female</sub> saw her aunt.’

- (77)' \* *nì fáfa pè pe nì fue*  
 ‘I<sub>male/female</sub> saw her aunt.’

feminine non-animate object & first person, non-plural subject: verb vowel unchanged for gender of subject

- (78) *Nì lúng nì-fu.*  
 1SG fly.F 2SG-see  
 ‘I<sub>male/female</sub> saw the fly/flies.’

- (78)' \* *nì lúng nì fue*  
 ‘I<sub>male/female</sub> saw the fly/flies.’

non-feminine non-animate object & first person, non-plural subject: verb vowel unchanged for gender of subject

- (79) *Nì óngmi nì-fue.*  
 1SG firefly.NF 2SG-see  
 ‘I<sub>male/female</sub> saw the [firefly / \* fireflies].’

- (79)' \* *nì óngmi nì fu*  
 ‘I<sub>male/female</sub> saw the [\*firefly / fireflies].’

How do we resolve which of these forms is used when there is potential conflict? In addition to these features, there is a principle of object saliency: where it is possible to parse features associated with the object, they take precedence over parsing features associated with the subject. Thus in the sentence

- (80) *Pe te pe=fe.*  
 3SG.F 3PL 3SG.NF=see.PL.ANIM.P  
 ‘She saw them’

- (81) \* *pe te pe fu*

- (82) \* *pe te pe fi*

the form *fu* is not found, because it codes for the feminine feature of the subject, not the plural of the object. The form *fi* is blocked from appearing because the features in *fe* are more specific to the coding requirements of the clause. On the same principles

- (83) *Te pe te=fu.*  
 3PL 3SG.F 3PL=see.F  
 ‘They saw her.’

uses the feminine form, and not the plural, because feminine is the feature present on the object. Compare with

- (84) *Te ke te=fì.*  
 3PL 3SG.NF 3PL=see.PL  
 ‘They saw him.’

which uses forms coding values for the subject because there are no form that parse the features ‘singular’ and ‘non-feminine’. When no argument in the clause contains any of the features feminine or (third person) plural, then the base form *fue* is used.

To return to the question posed in the discussion of (73), we can now answer: the coding quandary is resolved in favour of the object. The grammatical rendering of ‘They saw her.’ into Skou is thus:

- (85) *Te pe te=r-u.*  
 3PL 3SG.F 3PL=3PL-see.F  
 ‘They saw her.’

Not all verbs permit the vowel alternations to be so independent of the consonant prefixation. We saw earlier that the verb *lue* ‘hear’, and saw that it is one that shows vowel alternations for subject. The full paradigm of this verb is as shown in table 116xx.

Table 116. *lue* ‘hear’, inflected for subject and object

A \ P	inanimate								
	1SG	2SG	3SG.NF	3SG.F	1PL	2PL	3PL	3PL.NF	3PL.F
1SG		<i>lue</i>	<i>lue</i>	<i>lu</i>		<i>li</i>	<i>li</i>	<i>li</i>	<i>lu</i>
2SG	<i>pue</i>		<i>pue</i>	<i>pu</i>	<i>pi</i>		<i>pi</i>	<i>pi</i>	<i>pu</i>
3SG.NF	<i>lue</i>	<i>lue</i>	<i>lue</i>	<i>lu</i>	<i>li</i>	<i>li</i>	<i>li</i>	<i>li</i>	<i>lu</i>
3SG.F	<i>ru</i>	<i>ru</i>	<i>ru</i>	<i>ru</i>	<i>ri</i>	<i>ri</i>	<i>ri</i>	<i>ri</i>	<i>ru</i>
1PL		<i>rue</i>	<i>rue</i>	<i>ru</i>		<i>ri</i>	<i>ri</i>	<i>ri</i>	<i>ru</i>
2PL	<i>lue</i>		<i>lue</i>	<i>lu</i>	<i>li</i>		<i>li</i>	<i>li</i>	<i>lu</i>
3PL	<i>ri</i>	<i>ri</i>	<i>ri</i>	<i>ru</i>	<i>ri</i>	<i>ri</i>	<i>ri</i>	<i>ri</i>	<i>ru</i>

Clearly the amount of variation here is not too extreme (there are only nine separate forms in the table above), but the principles underlying the selection of the form that is appropriate for a given cell in the paradigm is not simple.

### 7.2.3.1 Defective vowel paradigms on verbs with vowel alternations

The vowel alternations described above are obligatory for the verbs that lexically specify their application. That is, speakers uniformly and unexceptionally inflect verbs by means of vowel alternations when that verb is one that specifies vowel alternations (amongst other morphological mechanisms) as part of the agreement system, and for verbs that are not lexically specified as having vowel alternations as part of their agreement system, they do not inflect. I have not observed any variation in this prescription: speakers are unanimous in their application, or non-application, of vowel alternations on verbs.

These same speakers, however, occasionally show some divergence from this ideal model in actual usage. In texts we occasionally find instances of verbs in which the vowel alternation is not realised; when transcribing texts, speakers consistently render these verbs with the vowel alternation added. If questioned about the quality of the vowel, they usually question the quality of the recording, denying that the verb occurred without the ‘correct’ alternation. One particularly interesting example can be seen in the following extract from a text (*Te Lóngpa táng te te*, line 11), in which the non-vowel alternation form of the verb appears immediately following the same verb WITH vowel alternations. This is shown in (86).

- (86) *te=r-í-rí=pa*                      *te=r-oe*              *tu*              *me*              *toe,*  
 3PL=3PL-get.PL-RED=INSTR 3PL=3PL-get carry.PL 3PL.return 3.come  
 ‘they get them and they take them home, ...’  
 (Expected (and also grammatical): *te rí rí pa te rí tu me toe*)

The reasons for the occasional omission of lexically prescribed vowel alternations are not known, and (given native speaker denial of the phenomenon) cannot easily be investigated. There are too few recorded instances to be able to judge from the available textual material.

### 7.2.3.2 The absence of vowel alternations in some verbs

At the start of section 7.2.3 we examined the patterns of vowel alternations found on verbs with different rimes, and the semantic significance of these alternating vowel patterns. We also investigated the principles behind selecting the vowel alternation that is realised when the conditions are appropriate for more than one vowel alternation on the one root.

Despite the regular patterns that we can specify for the appearance of these vowel alternations, there are still exceptions to the patterns. In table 112xx we saw the alternations for *leng* ‘give’; a phonologically comparable verb is *peng* ‘forget’. Because it is *p*-initial it does not show consonant alternations, but nevertheless its verbal status can be established through the consistent appearance of proclitics on the verb when predicative; recall from 5.5 and 7.2.1 that adjectives do not appear with proclitics unless they have an inchoative reading. Apart from the initial consonant, then, *peng* and *leng* are identical: they have the same phonological rimes, with identical tone and nasalisation settings. Nonetheless, *peng* does not show any inflection for number or gender of either subject or object by means of vowel alternations. We might argue that *peng* is a verb that cannot take any agreement marking: its phonological shape, an initial bilabial stop, precludes any prefixing paradigm, and this might be concomitant with vowel alternations. Vowel alternations are attested regardless of whether the verb is prefixing or not prefixing; on the other hand, there are verbs with prefixing alternations that show no vowel alternations, such as *loe* ‘come’, or *há hi* ‘count’. Compare the verbs in the partial paradigm shown in table 117xx. Although the first two verbs show identical rimes, *eng* /*ẽ*/ and the same suprasegmental features (nasalised, low tone), one shows vowel alternations and one does not. Similarly with *lóeng* and *hóeng*, which both share the same rime *óeng* /*ø̃*/, the same suprasegmental features, and in which *lóeng* shows vowel alternations, and *hóeng* does not (both the verbs show agreement by prefixation).

Table 117. Lexical specification of vowel inflections

		Plural	Plain	Feminine
<i>leng</i>	‘give’	<i>ling</i>	<i>leng</i>	<i>lung</i>
<i>peng</i>	‘forget’	<i>peng</i>	<i>peng</i>	<i>peng</i>
<i>lóeng</i>	‘say’	<i>líng</i>	<i>lóeng</i>	<i>lúng</i>
<i>hóeng</i>	‘wait for’	<i>hóeng</i>	<i>hóeng</i>	<i>hóeng</i>

(The verbs are shown without the application of prefixal marking for 3PL or 3SG.F inflection. With consonant changes shown as well ‘give’ is realised as *ring:leng:rung*, ‘say’ as *ring:lóeng:rúng*, and ‘wait for’ as *jóeng:hóeng:wóeng*)

We have seen that, just as with prefixal agreement, although there are phonological constraints on which verb roots are eligible for marking agreement, these constraints can only

be taken to exclude some roots, and do not provide a list of all the items that are included. Just as prefixal agreement is a feature that must be lexically stipulated for each verb root, so too must the question of whether a verb shows vowel alternations or not.

### 7.2.3.3 A comparative note: vowel alternations in related languages

The pattern of vowel alternations described in 7.2.3 is not unique to Skou, but is found in other languages in the family. Although some degree of vowel alternation is regular in the Macro-Skou languages, it appears to be most regular in Skou compared to the other languages. While none of these languages have object marking affixes such as are found in more distant relatives, there is evidence of vowel alternations, though not as easily describable as for Skou.

As an example of vowel alternations in a related language, examine the Nyao paradigms for the verb *hūpu* ‘see’, which shows alternations for feminine and for plural objects, just as does the same verb in Skou. The changes from the basic form are shown in bold.

Table 118. Nyao inflections of ‘see’

	Plain	Feminine		Plural		
1SG	<i>hūpu</i>	Ø-hū-Ø-pu	<i>hēpə</i>	Ø-hē-Ø-pə	<i>hēpi</i>	Ø-hē-Ø-pi
2SG	<i>hmufu</i>	m-hū-m-pu	<i>hməfə</i>	m-hē-m-pə	<i>hməfi</i>	m-hē-m-pi
3SG.NF	<i>kūku</i>	k-hū-k-pu	<i>kək<sup>wə</sup></i>	k-hē-k-pə	<i>kək<sup>wi</sup></i>	k-hē-k-pi
3SG.F	<i>hmufu</i>	f-hū-f-pu	<i>hməfe</i>	f-hē-f-pe	<i>hēfe</i>	f-hē-f-pe
1PL	<i>hpuwu</i>	n-hū-n-pu	<i>hnəwe</i>	n-hē-n-pe	<i>hnəwi</i>	n-hē-n-pi
2PL	<i>hūpu</i>	Ø-hū-Ø-pu	<i>hēpi</i>	Ø-hē-Ø-pi	<i>hēpi</i>	Ø-hē-Ø-pi
3PL	<i>hpuwu</i>	y-hū-y-pu	<i>hṇəwi</i>	y-hē-y-pi	<i>hṇəwi</i>	y-hē-y-pi

Since both the feminine and plural columns have [ə] as the vowel of the first syllable, that cannot be analysed as marking either the feature feminine or the feature plural, though it is clearly associated with a ‘marked feature’ category. The vowel of the second syllable, however, is consistently front for the plural marking verbs, and usually high. On the other hand the second vowel of the feminine forms is lower, as might be expected for the feminine for of a back vowel in Skou. The 2PL and 3PL forms show interference from the plurality of the subject, even though this is not found in the plain paradigm.

Some further aspects of Nyao inflection, as they are relevant to an understanding of Skou grammar, can be found in 7.8.1

### 7.2.4 Stem suppletion

Having completely separate stems for different paradigmatic ‘inflections’ of a verb is not a very common means of showing agreement with an argument, but a few verbs do use it, usually based on the number of the absolutive argument. One such verb is ‘get’, which has the base *lóa* for plural objects, *wé* for feminine objects, and *ké* in the unmarked case. For instance, with the inherently gendered nouns *móe* ‘fish’(feminine) and *moelúe* ‘turtle (sp.)’ (non-feminine), using both plural and singular forms, we find the following patterns.

Non-feminine object

- (87) *Moelúe* (áling) *ke=ké*.  
 small.turtle(sp.) one 3SG.NF=get  
 ‘He got (one) turtle.’

Feminine object

- (88) *Móe (áling) ke=wé.*  
 fish one 3SG.NF=get.F  
 ‘He got one fish.’

Plural objects

- (89) *Móe nawò ke=lóe.*  
 fish many 3SG.NF=get.PL.P  
 ‘He got many fish.’
- (90) *Moelíue nawò ke=lóe.*  
 small.turtle(sp.) many 3SG.NF=get.PL.P  
 ‘He got many turtles.’

In each example above the form of the verb used is the only one possible for that sentence, and it is not acceptable for one of the other verbs to be used. In the second example *móe* ‘fish’ is feminine, and so the verb used must match the feminine gender, if the object is singular. In the last examples we can see that, regardless of the gender of the noun, if the referent is plural, then plural number must be indexed by the choice of verb. Various ungrammatical possibilities are shown in (91) - (93).

- (91) \* *móe nawò ke wé*, \* *móe (nawò) ke ké*  
 (92) \* *móe áling ke lóe*, \* *móe (áling) ke ké*  
 (93) \* *moelíue áling ke lóe*, \* *moelíue ke wé*

Unlike the similar cases of verbal agreement with features of the object being expressed through vowel alternations, we cannot identify any plausible common root for the three verb stems that we can see with ‘get’. It is true that the same values for tone and nasality are found in all three forms of the verb, and it is just within the bounds of plausibility for the vowels of the three verbs to be related to each other, though it would be an irregular paradigm (compare the *oe-e-i* paradigm seen here with the other, more common, paradigms described in 7.2.3). There is no precedent, however, for the sort of alternation that we would need to posit to account for the initial consonants of the verb stems, as the regular verbs show nothing like the *l-k-w* alternation that is observed here.

Another verb that shows suppletive forms depending on the features of the object is *ká* ‘hit’. This verb is best thought of as having three distinct stems, *ká*, *láng* and *jí* though one is clearly derived from one of the forms of the unmarked stem (*jí* < \**ká* + *i*). The different forms of ‘hit’ are shown in table 119xx.

Table 119. Conjugation of the verbs ‘hit’

A \ P	inanimate								
	1SG	2SG	3SG.NF	3SG.F	1PL	2PL	3PL	3PL.NF	3PL.F
1SG		<i>ká</i>	<i>ká</i>	<i>láng</i>		<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>
2SG	<i>bá</i>		<i>bá</i>	<i>páng</i>	<i>jí</i>		<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>
3SG.NF	<i>ká</i>	<i>ká</i>	<i>ká</i>	<i>láng</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>
3SG.F	<i>wá</i>	<i>wá</i>	<i>wá</i>	<i>wáng</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>
1PL		<i>ká</i>	<i>ká</i>	<i>táng</i>		<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>
2PL	<i>ká</i>		<i>ká</i>	<i>láng</i>	<i>jí</i>		<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>
3PL	<i>já</i>	<i>já</i>	<i>já</i>	<i>jáng</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>	<i>jí</i>

The verb forms in the column for singular (non-feminine) object (starting with *ká*) are consistent with inflection on a *k*-initial verb, just as the forms for singular, feminine objects (the *láng* column) show regular inflection for an *l*-initial verb. The plural object forms are plausibly derived from the non-feminine form of the verb, with vowel modification, though the change of the stem to *j*-, from *k*-, is unexplained, though likely to be formed by analogy with the inflection on the 3PL subject forms. The change in the vowel for the plural form could be attributed to the regular process of vowel alternation described in 7.2.3, though we would expect *kí*, and not *jí*. As with the various forms of ‘see’, we can analyse the forms of ‘hit’ according to their grammatical features:

Table 120. Features associated with the suppletive forms of the verb ‘hit’

	F	(3)PL	ANIM	OBJ
<i>jî</i>	.	+	.	+
<i>já</i>	.	+	.	.
<i>láng</i>	+	.	.	.
<i>ká</i>	.	.	.	.

The categories that are relevant here are the same as those which were found with ‘see’ earlier, and the same sets of features describe them, showing that, even though the morphological realisation of these features is very different from one verb to another, the set of distinctions and their relationship to each other is (approximately) constant.

#### 7.2.4.1 Plural marking

The restriction of plural marking for objects to apply only to animate nouns can be seen in the following example. Here the interpretation of *tang* must be plural, because of the NP-internal quantifier *nawò*. Despite this clearly forced plurality, the verbal agreement does not reflect a plural feature, but shows feminine gender.

- (94) *Tang nawò nì=fu.*  
 canoe many 1SG=see.F  
 ‘I saw many canoes.’

- (94)' \* *tang nawò nì=fe*

Compare this with the verbal marking associated with a plural feminine human noun, which will indicate plurality, not femininity:

- (95) *Te=ueme nawò nì=fe.*  
 3PL=woman many 1SG=see.ANIM.PL.P  
 ‘I saw many women.’

- (95)' \* *te=ueme nawò nì=fu*

That this is an animate:inanimate distinction, and not a human:nonhuman one is shown by the following sentences, both with feminine nouns. In the first case, where the object, *móe héngtong*, is animate and plural, the verb agrees with the plurality by the use of the *fe* form. In the second example, however, although *rítóe héngtong* is plural, the verb shows (singular?) feminine agreement, because the object is inanimate.

(96) *Pe móe héngtong pe=fe.*  
 3SG.F fish three 3SG.F=see.ANIM.PL.P  
 ‘She saw three fish.’

(96)' \* *pe móe héngtong pe fu*

(97) *Pe rítóe héngtong pe=fu.*  
 3SG.F tree three 3SG.F=see.F  
 ‘She saw three trees.’

(97)' \* *pe rítóe héngtong pe fe*

We can draw the following conclusions about the hierarchical importance of marking of the features [plural] and [feminine] on the verb, which show different rankings in terms of their representation with different kinds of arguments:

- features of the object are marked in preference to those of the subject, if there is a clash of possibilities;
- [feminine] can only be marked for third person arguments;
- [plural] can only be marked for third person, unless they are both animate and the object, in which case plural marking extends to first and second person as well;
- [feminine] is restricted to singular arguments, unless they are both inanimate and plural, in which case feminine marking extends to plural as well.

It is clear that there is a preference for morphological plural marking with animate arguments, and morphological gender marking with inanimates. The fact that plural marking on objects is only found with first and second persons if animate is not surprising – a first or second person will always be animate, by definition of its participation in the speech act. The restriction of feminine marking to third persons is cross-linguistically not surprising, though it is worth noting that languages related (distantly) to Skou, in the Serra Hills and Piore River families, show gender marking in the second person, and in both second person and first person, respectively. Also, the fact that dual pronouns in Skou show gender in all persons does give a precedent for gender marking on first or second person, but this is not found.

The appearance of feminine marking, in preference to plural marking, on inanimate (but not animate) referents is discussed in chapter 16.

#### 7.2.5 Inheritance trees and the regularities in Skou suppletion and vowel alternation

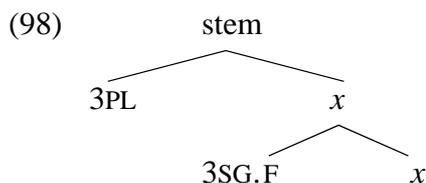
Similarly to the inheritance trees developed from examining the different ways in prefixal paradigms are built up, we can examine the different kinds of distinctions that are present in the marking of pronominal features by either stem-suppletion or vowel alternation in verbs. Table 121xx shows the kinds of distinctions we need to make; the material is largely the same as that seen in 7.2.3.

Table 121. The development of number of contrasts in suppletive verbs

		3PL	3SG.F	1SG, 2SG, 3SG.NF, 1PL, 2PL	
Invariant		<i>wá</i>	<i>wá</i>	<i>wá</i>	‘plant’
1 <sup>st</sup> branch	suppletion	<i>bìng</i>	<i>wung</i>	<i>wung</i>	‘die’
	vowel	<i>me</i>	<i>moe</i>	<i>moe</i>	‘return’
2 <sup>nd</sup> branch	suppletion	<i>lóa</i>	<i>wé</i>	<i>ké</i>	‘get’
	vowel	<i>líng</i>	<i>lúng</i>	<i>lóeng</i>	‘say’

Building an inheritance tree for the features and their relationships here we find that the best representation is that shown in (97).

#### Inheritance tree for Skou suppletion and alternation



Where the plural values were at the bottom of the tree with prefixation, in this tree we see that they appear at the first branch. This notably reflects the arguments that are being indexed by these features: the prefixing tree represents the divisions and complexities found in indexing nominative arguments: the S or A of a clause. With suppletion and vowel alternation typically it is an S or a P, that is an absolutive argument, that is being indexed. Clearly there are different preferential hierarchies depending on which arguments are referred to. This division is found elsewhere in the grammar, with, for instance, floating quantification referring to an S or P grouping, while switch reference is sensitive to an S or A grouping. Further details on verbal disagreement, and how prefixal patterns are distinct from suppletive/alternating patterns, and also how the kind of argument that is indexed by these agreement strategies affects their behaviour, can be found in 7.8, 7.9.3, 7.9.4, 12.3.2 and 12.4.

### 7.3 The status of verbal agreement

We have seen that there is extensive agreement on the verb in Skou, though in most cases all of the agreement present will be found to be marking the same argument. In the light of investigations into the status that pronominal agreement takes in different languages (see, for instance, Andrews 1990, or Song 2001), it is instructive to examine the issues for Skou concerning the status of the agreement on the verb as simply indexing an argument, or functioning as the argument itself.

The function of verbal agreement can be empirically organised into three distinct categories, depending on the degree to which the information represented by the verbal agreement marker can be or must be repeated elsewhere in the clause. We can characterise these different patterns as follows:

Weak agreement: attested in Germanic languages such as English, Dutch, etc., and others. The presence of agreement on the verb does not license the clause to appear without an overt subject (pro)noun.

- Strong agreement: most widely attested agreement status across the world. The presence of a fully-specifying agreement marker on the verb obviates the need for a free (pro)nominal that is no more contentful than the agreement marker.
- Hyperstrong agreement: attested in Irish, Woleaian, Salish and others. The appearance of an agreement marker on the verb is in complementary distribution with the appearance of free (pro)nouns.

In terms of a formal model of grammar the different forms of agreement can be thought of as differing in terms of whether or not, or how, they specify actual pronominal information. Weak agreement does not function pronominally: it specifies [PRO –]. Hyperstrong agreement, on the other hand, is always pronominal in nature, and so can be taken as specifying [PRO +]. In between these two extremes, strong agreement is contextually determined as pronominal or not; it specifies [PRO ±], allowing a pronominal interpretation when there is no noun or independent pronoun filling the phrase-structural position for subject, but assuming full pronominal status in the absence of this filler. It is not the case for simple strong agreement that the agreement morphology is necessarily pronominal, since we can show (see chapter 3) that a nominal subject does not necessarily bear a topic relationship to the rest of the clause.

Examples of these different patterns are shown in the following sentences. In the first set, we can see that in Dutch both agreement on the verb, and a free pronoun are required to render a sentence grammatical. Neither the free pronoun nor the verbal agreement on its own is sufficient, nor is a clause without a free pronoun and without inflection on the verb grammatical with the translation given.

Weak agreement: Dutch

- (99) *Hij*                    *kijk-t*                    *naar*    *mij.*  
 3SG.M.NOM    look-2/3SG            to            1SG.ACC  
 ‘He’s looking at me.’

- (100) \* *hij kijk naar mij*, \* *kijkt naar mij*, \* *kijk naar mij*

This is exactly the pattern found in agreement in English (which has fewer overt morphological exponents of agreement than does Dutch), and as such is familiar from its frequent discussion in the linguistics literature.

As Klamer (1998: 60-61) points out, however, this is far from being the post prominent pattern cross-linguistically: rather than the weak agreement pattern being common, we find that strong agreement prevails. An example of strong agreement can be gathered from *Tukang Besi* (and many, if not most, other languages). In *Tukang Besi* (Donohue 1999b) both a free pronoun and verbal agreement may occur together in the same clause (with some pragmatic effects concomitant with certain choices: contrastive focus, or emphatic assertion of identity). In addition to this, a clause consisting of the verb alone (with its agreement morphology) is grammatical, as can be seen in (103), but on in which the verb appears without agreement morphology is not (with the non-imperative translation we are assuming), even if there is a free pronoun in the clause.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> For both Dutch and *Tukang Besi*, as with English, the bare verb stems may be used as imperatives, thus *Kijk naar mij* in Dutch is grammatical with the translation ‘Look at me!’, and *Wila* in *Tukang Besi* is grammatical with the translation ‘Go!’ Note also that the free DP *na ia*

## Strong agreement: Tukang Besi

- (101) *No-wila na ia.*  
3R-go NOM 3SG  
'HE went.'
- (102) *No-wila.*  
'He went.'
- (103) \* *wila na ia*, \* *wila*

This pattern can be referred to as strong agreement, more robust than the weak agreement patterns already described, but less extreme than the hyperstrong agreement to be presented in the following paragraph. Since the pronominal marking on the verb is enough to carry the parsing load required by the language, but is not so strong as to prohibit a free nominal or pronominal.

Hyperstrong agreement is attested in a range of languages, most well known from various varieties of Irish. In Ulster Irish there is a choice within the one verbal paradigm of a sentence being composed of an inflected verb form with no free pronoun, or an uninflected verb form with a free pronoun. Unlike the previous examples from Dutch and Tukang Besi, however, in Irish it is not grammatical for both the verbal inflection and the free pronoun to occur in the same clause. The following examples show that it is grammatical for the verb to appear inflected for 2SG, or for the uninflected verb to appear with an independent 2SG pronoun. It is not, however, grammatical for both the independent pronoun and the bound inflection to appear in the same clause, and equally it is not grammatical for neither of them to be used (if we wish to preserve a 2SG interpretation), leaving simply a verb, *cuireann*, uninflected for person and number.

## Hyperstrong agreement: Ulster Irish

- (104) *Cuirir.*  
put.PRES.2SG  
'You are putting.'
- (105) *Cuireann tu.*  
put.PRES 2SG  
'You are putting.'
- (106) \* *cuirir tu*, \* *cuireann*

We can summarise the possibilities for what combination of pronominal elements may appear in the clause depending on the status of the agreement morphology in a language by examining table 122xx. Here each of Germanic (as seen in Dutch or English, amongst others), Tukang Besi (and representing the vast majority of the world's languages) and Irish (as well as a small minority of other languages) are displayed according to whether co-occurrence is possible, or even omission of an element. In the Germanic and the Tukang Besi pattern agreement on the verb is obligatory, while only in Germanic is a free pronoun also required. The Irish pattern is unusual in allowing, and requiring, either, but not both, of the pronominal

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in the Tukang Besi sentence in (101) is not an instance of a topical subject, so we cannot simply state that the prefix 'is' the argument, while the free pronoun is a coreferring topical adjunct. A contrastive topic would be marked in preverbal position: *Te ia no-wila* CORE 3SG 3R-go 'He<sub>TOP</sub> went.', or with a pseudo-cleft *Te ia na w<um>ila* CORE 3SG NOM go.SI 'It was him who went.' / 'The one who went was him.'

occurrences. If there is agreement on the verb, then a free pronoun cannot be present, while if there is a free pronoun, that dictates that there can be no agreement on the verb.

Table 122. Agreement patterns and morphosyntax

	In the presence of a free pronoun,	can we also find ... Agreement on verb?	
Germanic	+	+	Weak agreement
Tukang Besi	+/-	+	Strong agreement
Irish		-	Hyperstrong agreement

In Skou, the verb usually shows agreement with subject by more than one morphological means, and sometimes shows agreement for more than one argument. The following morphological forms of agreement are found:

- clitic agreement for subject;
- prefix agreement for subject;
- vowel alternations in the verb:
  - based on the features of the subject (usually S, but found with A as well);
  - based on the features of the object;
- stem suppletion based on the features of the S (for monovalent verbs) or P (for bivalent verbs).

We shall examine these in turn in the following sections, and evaluate the patterns found in each case in terms of what sort of agreement they display.

### 7.3.1 The status of clitic agreement

Must work has been published on the status of agreement patterns, summarised in the preceding section. The following patterns of clitic agreement are relevant to an investigation of their status on verbs:

1. nominal (as opposed to pronominal) subjects *always* display clitic doubling on the verb;
2. dual pronominal subjects always display both the free pronoun and a clitic, unless phonological reduction takes place;
3. third person subjects always display both the free pronoun and a clitic unless embedded in discourse;
4. first or second person singular or plural (not dual) subjects often appear without a free pronoun, but always with a clitic; this is found with a more restricted occurrence with third person singular or dual subjects, as described in 3. above.

The first observation is based on sentences such as the following, which show that a clitic pronoun must occur regardless of the presence of a nominal representing that argument in the sentence.

- (107) *Ke=bà=ing a táng ke=yú-yú.*  
 3SG.NF=person=the bird 3SG.NF=search-RED  
 'That man is going to look for birds.'

(107)' \* *ke bà ing a táng yúyú*

(107)" \* *táng ke yúyú*

The obligatoriness of both the clitic agreement marker and the free DP in the clause shows that the clitics are not hyperstrong agreement markers, and in these sentences do not serve as full pronominal arguments of the verb by themselves (see the arguments in Bresnan and Mchombo 1987, and the references therein, also Jelinek and Demers 1994). At the least, they allow the option of a nominal argument in normal argument position.<sup>47</sup>

The second observation is based on the fact that the pronominal clitics do not code as much information as is found in the dual pronouns. Recall (from 6.3) that the pronominal clitics show only a singular/non-singular distinction, and so do not code for the category plural. Furthermore, apart from the third person singular forms, the clitics do not mark gender, whereas the dual pronouns all distinguish gender in all persons. For these reasons, when the number of the subject is dual the presence of a clitic alone is not enough to code the pronominal features that the subject expresses, and so both clitic and free pronoun appear. This fact, and the one exception to it, has been discussed in 7.2.1.1.

The third fact, that of third person clitics not appearing without an independent free pronouns, shows that, extending the analysis presented in the discussion of the first factor, the pronominal clitics (for third person at least) are not only optionally non-pronominal, they are in fact obligatorily non-pronominal: the agreement that they mark is always weak agreement, to use the terminology defined earlier in this section. Compare the sentences in (107) and (107)' with the following, which shows that even with a pronominal subject, the clitic is required, but is not sufficient for a grammatical sentence:

(108) *Ke táng ke=yú-yú.*  
 3SG.NF bird 3SG.NF=search-RED  
 'He is going to look for birds.'

(109) *Táng ke=yú-yú.*  
 bird 3SG.NF=search-RED  
 'The bird looked around.'  
 (Possibly, but most unlikely, interpretable as 'He is going to look for (the) bird(s).')

This demonstrates that the pronominal clitics are, in fact, purely agreement markers, and do not necessarily bear the feature [pronominal]. We cannot state categorically that the clitics are agreement markers that are never pronominal, because in many cases, especially with monovalent verbs, only the clitic appears. Examine the following sentences, in which it is clear that the preferred coding is with both a free pronoun and a clitic, but that the free pronoun can be omitted in the right contexts. It is ungrammatical to omit the clitic, and the omission of a free pronoun is infelicitous without the right context, but if we have already established the referent in the preceding discourse, as is presupposed in (109), then there is no question as to the complete acceptability of the clause with only a pronominal clitic. Indeed, the appearance of a free pronoun in the second clause would be highly marked, and probably indicate reference to a different person than the one referred to in the first clause.

<sup>47</sup> The non-topicality of the subject in (107) can be demonstrated by the grammaticality of a topicalised object in this sentence: *Táng a ke bà ing a ke yúyú*, or by the neutral position of a time expression, which must precede *ke bà ing a*: *Bàng ke bà ing a táng ke yúyú*.

- (110) *Pe pe=ló weng.*  
 3SG.F 3SG.F=eye.F sleep  
 ‘She’s sleeping.’
- (111) \* *pe ló weng*
- (112) # *Pe=ló weng*
- (113) *Pe=angku=ing a pe=moe te pá=ko pe=ló weng.*  
 3SG.F=child=the 3SG.F=return 3SG.F.go house=OBV 3SG.F=eye.F sleep  
 ‘The girl went back home and slept.’
- (114) # *Pe angku ing a pe moe te pá ko pe ló weng.*

In evaluating the data here, recall that the free pronouns and the clitics can be distinguished by the ability of the clitics to appear with a reduced vowel, whereas the free pronouns are always pronounced with a front vowel; the difference between (111) and (112) is thus more than just a ‘trick’ difference in representation, and does reflect real data. If (111), with a non-cliticised pronoun preceding the noun, was grammatical, it would forbid the pronunciation [pəlowɛ̃], showing the reduced vowel associated with a clitic realisation of the pronoun. This pronunciation is in fact acceptable, while \*[pəlowɛ̃], the transcription that would be associated with (111), is unacceptable. Further evidence that clitics, such as seen in (112), and free pronouns, as in (111), must be analysed separately comes from tone spreading (2.3.1). The pitch realisations on (111) is [|-\_-], never \*[|\_-] with the H of *ló* spread onto the free pronoun *pe*. (112), on the other hand shows both variants: both [|-\_-] and [|\_-] are acceptable.

An exception to the requirement that third person subjects must be expressed by both clitic and free pronoun emerges when no phonological material intervenes. In, for instance, the sentence ‘She’s sleeping’ above there is no intrusive material between the *pe* that is the free pronoun and the *pe* that is the clitic. There is no sentence-internal nominal that could be interpreted as the antecedent of the clitic *pe*. Given these conditions, the sentence can appear with no free pronoun, provided that the preceding discourse does not provide potential ambiguity. In sentence (112) above *pe=ló weng* is only acceptable under these circumstances, namely when embedded in a discourse context: it is not acceptable as a context-free translation of the sentence ‘She’s sleeping / Dia ada tidor’, and if presented to speakers will more often than not be rejected as an ungrammatical sentence. In the correct context, however, it is normal and acceptable. The following mini-dialogue presents one such plausible context for the use of a clause without a free pronoun or noun. Here the last clause in the exchange does not have an independent pronoun or an independent nominal subject. This is not necessary, because the identity of the subject in this final clause has been established beyond any possible confusion by the conversation in the previous seven clauses, narrowing down the possible range of referents to a single individual. In this environment it is acceptable for the pronominal indexing on the verb alone to carry the full referential load in identifying the subject of the clause.

- (115) a. *Ya-me-mè=me pe=te nè?*  
 sister-2SG.DAT-2SG.GEN=2SG.DAT 3SG.F=3SG.F.go Q  
 ‘Where did your sister go?’
- b. *Ya-ne? Pe=ing a pe=mong tue wi a!*  
 sister-1SG.DAT 3SG.F=the 3SG.F=F.sit 3SG.F.do this  
 ‘My sister? She’s sitting right here!’

- c. *Ka. Pe=bafāng-mè=me ka,*  
 NEG 3SG.F=younger.sibling-2SG.GEN=2SG.DAT NEG  
*pe=bahúe=wò=ing a pe=te nè?*  
 3SG.F=elder.sibling=EMPH=the 3SG.F=3SG.F.go Q  
 ‘No, not your younger sister, your older sister, where’s she gone to?’
- d. *Pe=ing a pe=moe te pá. Pe=ló weng.*  
 3SG.F=the 3SG.F=return 3SG.F.go house 3SG.F=eye.F sleep  
 ‘She went home. She’s asleep.’

A real textual instance of a clause appearing without any free pronoun or free nominals in core functions can be seen in the following extract (from *Tangmoe*, lines 58-65). In the second numbered line of this extract, given that the identity of the object being made, the canoes, has already been clearly and unambiguously established, it is not necessary to reiterate it at the beginning (though we can see that it is included as an afterthought following the end of the sentence – this supports the argument that omission of the independent (pro)noun is only contextually allowed, and is not really a purely grammatical pattern). The position where we might expect to find some pronominal (or nominal) reference is shown in the example with a [Ø] before the verb.

- (116) *Tang=ing, tang tang=ing a, tangmoe te=ti ka.*  
 canoe=DEIC canoe canoe=the canoe.moe 3PL=3PL.do NEG  
 ‘Those canoes, canoes, those canoes, they don’t make the tangmoe kind of canoes.’
- (117) *A, [Ø] mong tue-tue Te Lúng=pa, Te Lángfa, Te tang,*  
 uh F.sit 3SG.F.do-RED Ormu=INSTR Tanah Merah 3PL canoe  
*Te Láng=fue a=ing a.*  
 Tanah Merah=that=the  
 ‘Uh, no they’re (canoes) at Ormu, and at Tanah Merah, they (make) canoes, that lot over in Tanah Merah.’

This analysis of purely grammatical agreement, as seen in Germanic, is complicated by the fourth fact listed at the start of this section, namely that we find very different behaviour with first or second person pronouns. The sentences used in this explication so far have shown that the third person clitics do not and can not function as the sole pronominal exponent in a clause. Compare this fact with the evidence of the clauses in (118) - (118)", in which the subject is first person (identical patterns are found with second person subjects, and (non-dual) plural subjects).

- (118) *Nì táng nì=yú-yú.*  
 1SG bird 1SG=search-RED  
 ‘I am going to look for birds.’
- (118)' *Táng nì yúyú.*
- (118)" \* *nì táng yúyú*

When the subject is first or second person, a free pronoun is optional, but the clitic remains obligatory. From these four patterns presented above, we can now assess the pronominal status of the clitics. The relevant facts are that:

- a. a pronominal clitic never excludes the use of an independent pronoun or nominal; this means that ‘clitic doubling’ is always allowed, and so the agreement clitics are never ‘hyperstrong’, in the terminology presented earlier.

- b. third person clitics always require independent instantiation of the argument that they represent elsewhere in the clause; this is evidence that they are exponents of ‘weak’ agreement, never bearing the feature [pronominal].
- c. first or second person clitics may appear with an independent pronoun in the clause, but do not have to; this implies that their status is as ‘strong’ agreement markers, since they optionally bear the feature [pronominal].
- d. a dual subject is usually represented with a free pronoun even when, from the above constraints, we would expect the clitic alone to be sufficient. This is because the clitics do not show as many contrasts in number as are present on the free pronouns, critically they do not mark either dual number as distinct to generic non-singular, nor gender in the duals. The free pronoun, then, is the only way, short of numerical modification in the NP, to express that particular grammatical number.

These facts indicate that the first and second person clitics are examples of strong pronominal agreement, while the third person ones are weak. The other means of indicating agreement on the verb are also worth discussion, as they too show variable status. The following sections discuss prefixal agreement patterns, suppletive verb forms, and vowel alternations, the last of which need to be treated in two sections.

### 7.3.2 The status of prefixal agreement

The various phonological forms taken by prefixal agreement have been described in 7.2.2; the status of these prefixes is unambiguous. In all cases this form of agreement represents a weak agreement system. In view of the fact that fully one third of all verbs do not inflect by prefixal agreement, and that there is no overt prefix for second person nonsingular in all cases, and first person singular in most cases (see table 103xx), it is not surprising that prefixal agreement should not have any pronominal status. Examining the formal exponents of agreement in the following examples, we can see that prefixal agreement is weak agreement for third persons. In all cases a free pronoun is required.

(119) *Pe móa pe=w-é e tue ná?*  
 3SG.F fish 3SG.F=3SG.F-catch 3SG.F.be 3SG.F.do Y/N  
 ‘Is she fishing?’

(119)' \* *pe móa wé e tue ná?*

(120) \* *móa pe wé e tue ná?*

(120)' \* *móa wé e tue ná?*

In this sentence not only is the proclitic insufficient for a grammatical sentence, but the prefixal agreement too does not satisfy the requirements of the clause for a pronominal element. It is, nonetheless, obligatory for a grammatical clause, as can be seen in the following sentence, in which the uninflected form of the verb *ké* (the initial *k* is part of the verb root) is used with no 3SG.F inflection by prefixation, and the result is ungrammatical.

(121) \* *pe móa pe ké e tue ná?*

While it might not be surprising that the third person prefixes is not pronominal in status, given that the corresponding clitics are also not pronominal, we find the same pattern for first and second person as well. In the following examples we can first note the difference in prefixal agreement: while all four clauses show agreement by clitic, the first and second persons do not,

on any of the verbs attested here, have a prefix (in all cases the sentences have been presented without a free pronoun, which would be grammatical if present).

- (122) *Nì=ha o re báng i li.*  
 1SG=walk seawards go beach be do  
 ‘I am going to the beach.’
- (123) *Mè=m-a m-o me báng me pi.*  
 2SG=2SG-walk 2SG-seawards 2SG.go beach 2SG.be 2SG.do  
 ‘You are going to the beach.’
- (124) *Ne=n-a n-o ne báng ne ti.*  
 1PL=1PL-walk 1PL-seawards 1PL.go beach 1PL.be 1PL.do  
 ‘We are going to the beach.’
- (125) *E=ha o re báng i li.*  
 2PL=walk seawards go beach be do  
 ‘You are (all) going to the beach.’

Even with the 2SG or 1PL parts of the paradigm, which have overt prefixal agreement, a clause will be ungrammatical unless it has a clitic to instantiate a pronominal feature:

- (123)' \* *ma mo me báng me pi*  
 (124)' \* *na no ne báng ne ti*

This shows that the prefixal agreement is obligatory, yet carries no pronominal information on its own. It is worth noting in passing that even in the restricted phonological circumstances in which a clitic may be lost (see 7.2.1.1), the prefixal agreement remains. This can be seen in sentences such as the following, in which the clitic is absent, but the prefixal agreement on any verb cannot be omitted. The first sentence shows all elements present:

- (126) *Amanè ne=n-a n-o ne báng ne ti.*  
 1DU.IN 1PL=1PL-walk 1PL-seawards 1PL.go beach 1PL.be 1PL.do  
 ‘You and I are going to the beach.’

The proclitic may be omitted, as in the following variant of the sentence, which shows just the pronoun and five inflected verbs.

- (126)' a. *Amanè na no ne báng ne ti.*

Despite this, it is ungrammatical for any of the verbs to appear without overt prefixal agreement. The following ungrammatical examples show that none of the verbs that are eligible for prefixation may appear without this agreement.

- (126)' b. \**amanè ha no ne báng ne ti*  
 c. \**amanè na o ne báng ne ti*  
 d. \**amanè na no re báng ne ti*  
 e. \**amanè na no ne báng e ti*  
 f. \**amanè na no ne báng ne li*  
 g. \**amanè ha o re báng e li*, etc.

Even with identical and adjacent syllables, reduction is not possible except for the clitic:

- (127) *Amanè ne=ne.*  
 1DU.IN 1PL=1PL.go  
 ‘You and I went.’

(127)' *Amanè ne.*

(127)" \**amanè, \*ama ne*

This shows us that the reduction that applies between the 1DU.IN pronoun and its immediately adjacent proclitic is not recursive.

### 7.3.3 The status of agreement by stem suppletion

As mentioned in 7.2.4, only a few verbs show stem suppletion, and when they do the choice of stem depends on the single argument of a monovalent verb, or the object of a bivalent verb. In neither case is the suppletive use of a verb stem grounds for omitting the relevant free pronoun, proclitic, or prefix, as can be seen in the following examples.

In (128) the verb root *láng* has been used because the object is feminine. Nonetheless, the feminine object must be overtly present in the clause.

- (128) *Mè pe mè=p-áng-páng.*  
 2SG 3SG.F 2SG=2SG-hit.F-RED  
 ‘You will hit her.’

(128)' \**mè mè=páng páng, \*mè páng páng, \*páng páng*

Similarly, when the inflection of a monovalent predicate is formed with a suppletive stem, the presence of this suppletive stem does not allow for the independent pronoun or clitic to be omitted. To take an extreme example, the predicate ‘fall’ consists of the inflecting and number-suppletive verb ‘go’, and a number-suppletive adjunct nominal. Despite the multiple marking of person, number and gender features on the verb+adjunct nominal complex, this marking does not license the omission of the clitic. The following three sentences show the obligatory use of clitics (and, for third person, a free pronoun) with suppletive forms of ‘fall’.

- (129) *Ni=kú re.*  
 1SG=fall go  
 ‘I fell over.’

- (130) *Pe pe=pí te.*  
 3SG.F 3SG.F=F.fall 3SG.F.go  
 ‘She fell over.’

- (131) *E=í re.*  
 2PL=PL.fall go  
 ‘You (all) fell over.’

Even though number, or gender, is explicitly marked on the form of the adjunct nominal in these clauses, this is not sufficient condition to allow either the free pronoun or the clitic to be omitted. Various ungrammatical variations of (130) and (131) are shown in the below.

(130)' \**pe=pí te, \*pe pí te, \*pe=pí re*

(131)' \**í re*

These examples show that stem suppletion does not count as strong agreement where it is found. A very different pattern emerges with vowel alternations, as the following sections reveal.

#### 7.3.4 The status of agreement by vowel alternations for the subject

In 9.2.3 we saw that the gender or plurality of a subject can affect the quality of the vowel in several predicates, with feminine being marked by a rounding and backing of a vowel, and plurality marked by a fronting and raising of the vowel. As with prefixal agreement, however, vowel alternation does not apply to all verbs. The analogy for the status of this agreement holds: the presence of agreement by vowel alternation is not pronominal, just as with prefixal agreement. Since vowel alternation is not found in the main with first and second persons, we shall only examine sentences with third persons.

The following sentences show that agreement by vowel alternation does not represent a pronominal feature on the verb. In addition to the vowel alternation, the normal clitic and free pronoun are still required.

(132) *Pe nì pe=fu.*  
 3SG.F 1SG 3SG.F=see.F  
 ‘She saw me.’

(132)' \* *nì pe=fu*, \* *pe nì fu*, \* *nì fu*, \* *pe=fu*  
 (This last possibility, *Pe=fu*, is grammatical with another meaning, ‘She saw her.’  
 See the following section)

When plural number is marked on the verb stem by vowel alternations, an identical pattern emerges: the marking is insufficient to allow for the free pronoun to be omitted, and so the only grammatical option for coding the sentence is for the free pronoun, as well as the clitic and the vowel alternation on the verb, to be present.

(133) *Te nì te=fi.*  
 3PL 1SG 3PL=see.PL  
 ‘She saw me.’

(133)' \* *nì te=fi*, \* *te nì fi*, \* *nì fi*.

We can only conclude that vowel alternations, like prefixes and their induced initial consonant alternations, are not pronominal when marking features of the subject. These same morphophonemic alternations are used to show agreement for the object, on the other hand, their status can be pronominal.

#### 7.3.5 The status of agreement by vowel alternations for the object

Vowel alternations can be used to mark [feminine] or [nonsingular] features of the object, in addition to their use in marking these features for the subject of the verb. If this is the case, the status of the alternations is quite different.

A full sentence showing a vowel alternation for object is given in (135). Alternatives, in (134)', show various grammatical reductions in the amount of material in the sentence.

(134) *Nì pe nì=fu.*  
 1SG 3SG.F 1SG=see.F  
 ‘I saw her.’

(134)' *Pe nì=fu*, *Nì=fu*, *Nì nì=fu*.

From these examples we can see that, unlike the case of verbs showing alternations in the quality of the vowel based on the features of their subject, which does not have pronominal status, when the alternation is based on the features of the object of the verb, pronominal status

may be (not obligatorily) found in the verb. A sentence such as *Ni fu* ‘I saw [feminine].’, does not have a free pronoun representing the object. The vowel *u* can only be found in this verb if there is a feature [feminine] coded on it, from either the subject or the object, and since first and second persons do not control gender agreement, the only other controller must be the non-overt object, which is adequately represented by just that vowel alternation.

With plurals, a similar pattern emerges. In the following sentence the subject is third person, and so the free pronoun is obligatory,<sup>48</sup> but the status of the vowel alternation on the verb stem is identical.

- (135) *Ke ne ke=fe.*  
 3SG.NF 1PL 3SG.NF=see.PL.ANIM.P  
 ‘He saw us.’

- (135)' *Ke ke=fe.*  
 3SG.NF 3SG.NF=see.PL.ANIM.P  
 ‘He saw [plural].’  
 (= ‘He saw us/you lot/them.’)

When both the subject and the object of the verb would show the same vowel alternations, the marking on the verb codes the object (see 7.2.3), which may then be represented solely by the verbal agreement marking; it is grammatical for the free pronoun to be omitted from the clause:

- (136) *Pe=fu.*  
 3SG.NF=see.F  
 ‘She saw [feminine].’

This has the most unmarked reading ‘She saw her.’, and might be related to the more ‘saturated’ sentence *Pe pe=fu*. It shows identical syllable reduction applying to reduce [pɛpɛfu] to [pɛfu] ~ [pɛfu], as seen in (136). This sentence is not a grammatical way of expressing, for instance, ‘She saw him.’, which could only be grammatically expressed as *Ke pe=fu*, with a full pronoun for the object, which is not recoverable from any context. With vowel alternations involving a plural object, the same pattern can be observed. In (137) the vowel change alone is sufficient to encode the plural object in the clause.

- (137) *Ni=fe ka.*  
 1SG=see.PL.P NEG  
 ‘I didn’t see (you plural, them).’

It is clear that, even though the same grammatical mechanism is involved in marking features of the object on the verb by vowel alternation as is used to mark subject features, the pronominal status of the two is different. This might reflect the origin of the vowel alternations: a likely source of these vowel changes is that they were originally used only to mark object features on the verb. They do still show an obvious grammaticalisation path pronoun > clitic > affix > vowel modification, but at an older level than proto-Skou. Productive object markers can be found in more distant relatives: Barupu has the 3SG.F.P suffix *-u*, Womo has an identical suffix, and Krisa, even more distantly related, shows 3SG.F.DAT *-ũ*, 3SG.F.P *-wi*, which appears related to the Skou rounding and backing process that marks feminine subject. It is most likely that the Skou vowel alternations reflect a proto-Macro Skou set of productive object

<sup>48</sup> Though phonological reduction may result in the reduction of one of the [kɛ] syllables.

suffixes, which are variously preserved (in I'saka, Piore River and Serra Hills languages) or lost (in the Western Skou family) in the daughters of proto-Macro Skou.

### 7.3.6 Summary of the pronominal status of verbal agreement markers

We have seen that there are a variety of means by which verbs show agreement with the subject or the object of the clause, and that these different agreement strategies have differ in terms of the pronominal status that they exhibit. These different results are summarised in table 123xx, in which weak agreement, which is never pronominal, is indicated with a ‘–’ in the appropriate cell, strong agreement is shown with a ‘±’, and hyperstrong agreement is not shown, as it does not occur in Skou. The notation ‘n/a’ indicates that that particular form of agreement is not found for the person indicated in the leftmost column.

Table 123. Pronominal status of agreement in Skou

Person	Subject			Object	
	Clitic	Prefix	Vowel	Vowel	Suppletion
1,2	±	–	n/a	n/a	n/a
3SG.NF	–	–	n/a	n/a	n/a
3SG.F	–	–	–	±	–
3PL	–	–	–	±	–

The asymmetry between the functions of vowel alternation marking subject or vowel alternation marking object is particularly striking, since it is exactly the same piece of morphology that is used in both instances.

## 7.4 A model of idiosyncrasy in the verbal lexicon

The preceding sections of this chapter have shown that there are a lot of complicating factors behind the agreement paradigms that is realised on different verbal roots in Skou. The randomness is not, however, entirely without patterns. We have seen that some cells in the inflectional paradigm are less likely than others to take distinct inflected forms, and at the same time there is a dependency relationship between inflection in different cells of the table, such that, for instance, inflection of the verb for a distinct 3SG.F form implies the existence of a distinct 2SG form, and not the other way around. Clearly, then the acquisition of complexity in a verbal paradigm follows a set of ordering principles. Nevertheless, the degree to which those ordering principles are manifested in the paradigm of any one verb is not predictable.

The number of non-predictable patterns, compared to both the number of verbs in the inflecting system and to the total number of verb stems, bears a strong resemblance to the behaviour of Germanic strong verbs in the Germanic verbal systems. We note that there are approximately 144 verb roots in Skou, a number that is not large, even given the limited lexical materials available for the language. It does, in fact, compare equably with the between 100 and 200 strong verbs in Germanic languages. This suggests that perhaps dealing with the Skou verbal lexicon in the same way that we deal with the strong verbs in languages like the Germanic ones might in fact be a better way to analyse the data. The regular patterns that can be derived from the inflectional paradigms might well represent the vestiges of an earlier, more regular, system (to judge from the verbal morphology found in the related languages further east), and now only linguists can determine the connections between what might be simply learned paradigms, and not rule-produced.

## 7.5 The obligatoriness of arguments: pro-drop and topic-drop

We have discussed the degree to which agreement marking on the verb can have the status of a syntactic argument of the verb, and the extent to which agreement marking alone can satisfy the subcategorisation requirements of a verb. It is worthwhile taking an excursion and examine the degree to which a verb's subcategorisation requirements must be met; in other words, how obligatory are the arguments of a verb?

For a monovalent verb, the single core argument is obligatory in the clause (though see the discussion of the status of pronominal agreement in 7.3). This is true for agentive, dynamic, and volitional verbs, such as *ha tà* 'run', and others listed in 5.4.1.1, as well as for nonagentive verbs such as those described in 5.4.1.2.

Some languages allow, or even require, certain meteorological verbs to appear without any overt subject. Some examples are shown in the following three Austronesian languages.<sup>49</sup>

	Indonesian	Tagalog	Tukang Besi
(138) a.	<i>Hujan.</i> rain 'It's raining.'	<i>[Um]u-ulan.</i> RED-rain.AV	<i>No-wande.</i> 3R-rain
b.	<i>Angin (tiup).</i> wind blow 'The wind is blowing.'	<i>H[um]a-hangin.</i> RED-wind.AV	<i>No-kawea.</i> 3R-wind

In Skou this type of construction is not an option; translations of the sentences in (138) must include a nominal representing the subject, and a verb.

(139) a.	<i>Fu ma e tue.</i> rain fall 3SG.F.be 3SG.F.do 'It's raining.'
b.	<i>Féng ke=lúe i li.</i> wind 3SG.NF=blow be do 'The wind is blowing.'

In (139) the verbs used are both highly specific: *ma* can only be used with *fu* as its subject (the more general predicate for falling is *ku re*), and similarly *lúe* only applies to the wind blowing, not to, for instance, a person blowing on a fire (*pong*). There is a lot of redundancy here, but the principle behind it is that the subcategorisation frame for a monovalent verb requires an argument, and that argument must be overt. We have already seen that clitic agreement markers, if representing first or second persons, are sufficient to fill these subcategorisation needs, but in other cases an overt free nominal or pronoun must be used.

With bivalent verbs, we find a continuation of this pattern. The subcategorisation frame of the verb calls for two arguments, and they must both be represented in the clause. Because of the variable status given to agreement marking on the verb, this means that it is possible for some clauses to fully satisfy their subcategorisation requirements with only the inflected verb, as in (140).

<sup>49</sup> Indonesian does, colloquially, allow (Hari) hujan '(The day) is raining.', but the 'subject' in this case has no referential status and no special (subject-like) grammatical privileges (such as the ability to head a relative clause, expected for subject (amongst other functions), which is ungrammatical for this example: \* hari yang hujan 'the days on which it rained').

- (140) *Ne=fu.*  
 1PL=see.F  
 ‘We saw her.’

Since most verbs do not show agreement by means of vowel alternations, and since vowel alternations are the only means available for showing agreement with the object on the verb, we find that in general, and divorced from discourse, a free NP representing the object must be present. Compare, for instance, the following sentences, two grammatical, and the last ungrammatical.

- (141) *Te=angku móe te=t-ang.*  
 3PL=child fish 3PL=3PL-eat  
 ‘The children ate fish.’

- (142) *Te=angku ya te=t-ang.*  
 3PL=child thing 3PL=3PL-eat  
 ‘The children ate (something).’

- (143) \* *te angku te tang*  
 ‘The children ate.’

Here the verb does not provide any means of indexing the object (by, for instance, vowel alternation or suppletive verb form), and so this argument is unrepresented on the predicate. The only way it can be expressed is by means of a free nominal, or pronominal. When it is not so realised, as in (143), the sentence is judged ungrammatical. Here, as with the monovalent verbs, we can see that when an argument is called for by the subcategorisation frame, then it must be provided. If the clause does not refer to a specific nominal, and only a generic interpretation is intended, then at the least the lexically ‘empty’ form *ya* ‘thing’ must be used to satisfy the subcategorisation requirements.

This principle of obligatory representation of subcategorised-for arguments extends further than a requirement on subjects and objects being present. There are some monovalent predicates that require a nominal other than the subject to be present. Examine the following sentence, in which the verb appears with a preverbal subject and a postverbal locative oblique.

- (144) *Pe=ueme=wò=fa=ing a pe=w-a lèngma.*  
 3SG.F=woman=EMPH=just=the 3SG.F=3SG.F-walk road  
 ‘The woman walked on the road on her own.’

If there is no location or goal mentioned, then an adjunct nominal must appear with this verb.<sup>50</sup> A clause with just the subject and the verb is not grammatical.

- (145) *Pe=ueme=wò=fa=ing a lèng pe=w-a.*  
 3SG.F=woman=EMPH=just=the ‘road’ 3SG.F=3SG.F-walk  
 ‘The woman walked on the road on her own.’

- (146) \* *pe ueme ing a pe wa*

The other notes that need to be made concerning adjunct nominals relate to their function as parts of predicates, rather than arguments. They are found with various types of predicates (see chapter 14), both bivalent and monovalent, and in most cases serve to semantically specify the predicate, since the verb used is often (but not always) semantically ‘bleached’. An example of a verb requiring an adjunct nominal is *hí* ‘wash’, which is only grammatical if it appears with a

<sup>50</sup> The syntax of adjunct nominals is discussed in considerably more detail in Chapter 14.

nominal specifying the mode of the washing, typically *pa* ‘water’, but also possible with other watery locations.

(147) *Pa nì=hí-hí li.*  
 water 1SG=wash-RED do  
 ‘I want to wash.’

(148) *Tí nì=hí-hí li.*  
 sea 1SG=wash-RED do  
 ‘I want to wash in the sea.’

(149) \* *nì=hí-hí li*

Another relevant parameter that we need to describe the adjunct nominal construction is the fact that an adjunct nominal does not satisfy the conditions for the realisation of a object sufficiently to allow a subcategorised-for argument to be omitted (this is especially interesting given the absence of any lexically trivalent verbs in the language). In the following sentences we can see that the subject of instruction must be mentioned, even though there is another nominal, *na* ‘teachings’, in the clause which might (incorrectly) be thought to satisfy this requirement.

(150) *Nì pí na nì=lung ke.*  
 1SG language teaching 1SG=teach 3SG.NF  
 ‘I taught him (our) language.’

(151) \* *nì na nì lung ke*

(152) *Nì ya na nì=lung ke.*  
 1SG thing teaching 1SG=teach 3SG.NF  
 ‘I taught him.’

In passing we should note that, in contrast to the obligatoriness of the adjunct nominal and the requirement that core arguments are realised in the clause, it is acceptable for a bivalent clause to lack an oblique participant, even if it is one that has been subcategorised for by the verb. In the following sentence *na lùng* ‘teach’ subcategorises for a postverbal, oblique, instructee, but it may be omitted.

(153) *Ne te Máwo pílang tè te na ne rùng ne ti.*  
 ‘We’re teaching the Skou language.’

Similarly, verbs of placing, existing, living, posture verbs, and others may all appear without a specified oblique, unlike their equivalents in English. Contrast the grammaticality of the following sentences with their English translations. In both cases the Skou sentences are perfectly well-formed and natural.

(154) *Pe=mong tue wa=ing a.*  
 3SG.F=F.sit 3SG.F.do cave=the  
 ‘She lived in that cave.’

(155) *Pe=mong tue.*  
 3SG.F=F.sit 3SG.F.do  
 ‘? She lived.’

Finally, the requirement for the obligatory representation of arguments can all be suspended under the conditions of discourse salience. When a nominal is clearly retrievable from its context, and has been unambiguously established as topical, then it may be omitted. The

following, somewhat lengthy, extract demonstrates this point. The penultimate clause appears to be a direct counter example to the indicated ungrammaticality of (143) and (151). As we can see from the preceding clauses, however, the nominal *hòe* has been unambiguously established as the topic.

- (156) *Hòe te=me toe bàme, pa pe=wé-wé hí*  
 sago 3PL=return.PL 3.come village water 3SG.F=get.F-RED go.down  
*e ti, pa lí-lí=pa,*  
 3PL.be 3PL.do water boil-RED=INSTR  
 [ ] *è=ko-ko lí=pa,*  
 cook=OBV-RED do=INSTR  
*hòe pe=tue, hòe pe=tue lang, hòe=pa,*  
 sago 3SG.F=3SG.F.do sago 3SG.F=3SG.F.do pot sago=INSTR  
*páng-pe=ing=pa, te=angku hìngtung=pa*  
 husband-3SG.F.DAT=DEIC=INSTR 3PL=child two=INSTR  
 [ ] *te=t-ang,*  
 3PL=3PL-eat  
*hòe te=t-ang=ko=ra k-, ka.*  
 sago 3PL=3PL-eat=OBV=also NEG NEG  
 ‘They (take) the sago back to the village, she gets water, and pours it all in, the water boils, and (the sago) cooks, and does that, and she stirs the sago, she stirs the sago in a pot, and (she gets) the sago, and with her husband, and the two children, they all eat (it), they eat the sago, eat it till it’s all fin-, all gone.’

The mention of *pa* ‘water’ in the second and third clauses does not disrupt the topicality of *hòe*; *pa* is not rated as topical enough to be omitted in the clause *pa lí lí pa*, and must be overtly mentioned. But in the fourth clause from the start, highlighted, the subject is omitted. In the third last clause, also highlighted, *hòe* is similarly omitted from its position as object. Here the dominance of any scales of topicality by the referent *hòe* means that it can be omitted. Nonetheless, a clause such as *te angku te tang* will unhesitatingly be judged as incomplete and ungrammatical by speakers, when it is presented to them without this establishing context. In cases such as these the speaker immediately corrects/elaborates the clause with *hòe te tang* ‘they ate sago’, with an overt object, showing the strong preference for explicitly filled argument positions. This occurs even under these conditions of established topicality, following this omission of a subcategorised-for argument.

In sum, Skou is a language with very strict restrictions on the morphological realisation of valency and subcategorisation patterns. When a verb is lexically specified as taking two arguments, then two arguments are obligatory. Under the conditions summarised at the end of 7.3.6, those arguments may be realised simply by verbal agreement, but in most cases overt free NPs must be used.

## 7.6 Questioned subjects and verbal agreement

In an interrogative sentence questioning a human subjects, the regular pronominal clitics on the verb can be replaced by the animate interrogative *bá* ‘who’:

- (157) *Hòe-nì=ne bá=k-ang?*  
 sago-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT who=3SG.NF-eat  
 ‘Who ate my sago?’

This sentence serves as an alternative to the following, in which the interrogative appears in the normal position for an argument of its function, and the agreement on the verb is simply with the unmarked third person clitic:

- (158) *Bá hòe-nì=ne ke=k-ang?*  
 who sago-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-eat  
 ‘Who ate my sago?’

The sentence in (157) must be parsed as a two-word clause of the form NP<sub>P</sub> V, rather than a three word clause with a focussed nominal out of its normal clause-initial position: \*NP<sub>P</sub> NP<sub>FOC</sub> V. The evidence for this position can be found in the following sentence that attempts this latter strategy, but preserves the normal proclitic agreement on the verb. We have already seen, in the alternative phrasing immediately above, that subject agreement is allowed when the subject is in the normal sentential position, yet in this case it is not grammatical.

- (159) \* *hòe-nì=ne bá ke=k-ang?*  
 sago-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT who 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-eat

From this test we must conclude that the appearance of *bá* in sentences such as (157) represents a real interrogative agreement marker on the verb. It is beyond the scope of the present work to definitively determine whether this is a recent innovation, or represents an ancient feature of the language, but the fact that the related and non-contiguous language I'saka (Donohue and San Roque 2004) also has special interrogative agreement prefixes for human subjects argues that this might be an old, relic feature of the Macro-Skou languages. The fact that we also find relic classifiers using the morpheme *bà=* with adjectival predicates adds further support to this hypothesis.

### 7.7 Person agreement in adjectives

Although it is not obligatory, or normal, for an adjective to appear with agreement markers, words of this word class can show agreement when they are used in a predicative function. The agreement is marked by use of the same pronominal agreement clitics that are seen on verbs. Displaying overt agreement is not, however, a feature of all adjectival predication, as it is in verbal predication. Compare the following two sentences with adjectival predicates: in the first, there is not a marker of agreement on the adjective, whereas in the second we find a feminine agreement clitic, agreeing with *hòe ing a*, which is feminine. (If the subject of the main clause was non-feminine, the agreement on *langpi* would still show the feminine form). Additionally, there is an aspectual distinction.

- (160) *Hòe=ing a langpi.*  
 sago=the delicious  
 ‘The sago is delicious.’

- (161) *Ní pe=wé=ko hòe=ing pe=langpi.*  
 sago.stirrer 3SG.F=get.F=OBV sago=the 3SG.F=delicious  
 ‘She stirs it with a sago stirrer, and that sago, it becomes really delicious.’

The difference between these two predicates is based on the scale of inchoativity: in the first, the predicate describes an ongoing, and perhaps even repeated and habitual, state. In the second sentence, on the other hand, *langpi* refers to the changing state of the sago, which becomes delicious. It is a consistent fact that inchoative adjectives, while not formally marked or derived in any way from their bases, take pronominal agreement when predicative, while

non-inchoative adjectives do not. This accords with cross-linguistic tendencies for inchoative properties to be more likely to be coded in the same manner as verbal predicates, if there is a distinction between verbal and other predicative categories.

## 7.8 Verb collocations and multiple consonantal agreement

The grammatical patterns associated with verb sequences in the forms of serialisation and other restrictions are discussed in more detail elsewhere, but in this section I shall address the implications for patterns of agreement morphology of a sequence of two or more verbs, all of which are used as part of the description of a single event. This is especially important when those two verbs are only found in a collocation with each other.

The first characteristic that we shall describe for verbal collocations involves the omission of the proclitic on a verb other than the initial one in the series. In many instances either both verbs in series may appear with proclitic agreement markers, or just one may. The next two examples show this.

Both verbs with clitics (possible serial verb construction, possible biclausal)

- (162) *Lòeng pe=w-á*                      *pe=te*                      *pa.*  
 ‘road’ 3SG.F=3SG.F-walk      3SG.F=3SG.F.go      water  
 ‘She walked to the river.’

Only first verb marked by clitic (serial verb construction)

- (163) *Lòeng pe=w-á*                      *te*                      *pa.*  
 ‘road’ 3SG.F=3SG.F-walk      3SG.F.go      water  
 ‘She walked to the river.’

(other instances in which proclitic agreement may be omitted are described in 7.2.1.1)

Another variable factor in a description of the appearance of agreement in collocations is whether the features coded in the agreement are shared across the two (or potentially more) verbs in the construction. In the following two sentences, both encoding the same semantic meaning, we can see that in (165) the feature [plural] referring to the number of the object (the plural object, fish), is coded in the choice of the verb of getting (the selection of *lòe* rather than *wé*) and the vowel alternation in the verb of putting down (*fe* rather than *fu*). In (165) the plural feature is marked only on the verb of getting, and not on the verb of placing, which shows inflection for singular (and feminine, since *móe* is a feminine noun – feminine gender must always be marked, if it is present on nonsentient nouns). Clearly in (165) the two verbs *disagree* in terms of the pronominal features that they index.

Number agreement shared

- (164) *Móe te-r-é*                      *fe.*  
 fish 3PL=3PL-get.PL      put.down.PL  
 ‘They put the fish<sub>FEM, PL</sub> down.’

Number agreement not shared

- (165) *Móe te-r-é*                      *fu.*  
 fish 3PL=3PL-get.PL      put.down.F  
 ‘They put the fish<sub>FEM, PL</sub> down.’

The variation between forms such as (164) and (165), which is apparently random though with a statistical preference towards the fully agreeing verb forms seen in (164), is tolerated. It is, nonetheless, not acceptable for the first verb in the sequence to do anything other than faithfully

code the features as best it can. Any variation of the sentence (164) above involving a verb of getting that does not code the feature [plural] for the object, such as (166) and (167), is not grammatical, regardless of the pronominal features found in the second verb. In (167) we can see that even if the first verb shows agreement for a different pronominal feature of the object, here [feminine], the sentence is regarded as ungrammatical, because it is the less-preferred feature (see 7.2.3). (Note that the PL annotation for *kí* indicates vowel alternations for plural *subject*, and does not show agreement with the *object*. This verb does not show agreement with object.)

Plural agreement absent on first verb: ungrammatical

(166) \* *móe te-kí* (*fe* / *fu* / *fue*)  
 fish 3PL=PL.get put.down.PL / put.down.F / put.down  
 ‘They put the fish<sub>FEM, PL</sub> down.’

(167) \* *móe te-wé* (*fe* / *fu* / *fue*)  
 fish 3PL=get.F put.down.PL / put.down.F / put.down  
 ‘They put the fish<sub>FEM, PL</sub> down.’

Similarly, the allowed variation extends in the second verb to a choice of which features of the object may be coded: sentence (165) shows the feminine gender, rather than plural number, being marked in the verb (with ‘put down’ it is marked by vowel alternation, not by a suppletive selection of verb stem), so there is still some degree of agreement being marked, even if it is not the ‘preferred’ agreement pattern. What we do not observe is a simple stripping away of features, with, for instance, a maximally underspecified verb root appearing, not marking any number or gender features at all, such as in (168). Here the first verb selected is the 3PL form of the plural object verb *lóe*, but the second verb, *fue*, marks neither feminine nor plural agreement. The resulting clause is ungrammatical.

Pronominal agreement absent on first verb

(168) \* *móe te-r-í* *fue*  
 fish 3PL=3PL-get.PL put.down  
 ‘They put the fish<sub>[FEM, PL]</sub> down.’

Rather than irregularly seeing bare, or reduced, forms of verbs, we observe alternatives in coding different features: the choice of forms for the second verbs is either *fe*, which marks a plural value for the object, or *fu*, marking feminine, but not simply the bare form *fue*. Logically this would mean that in a collocation in which the second verb in the series does not have multiple alternative forms which would permit alternative codings (either through vowel alternation or suppletive forms of the verbs), variation in the coding of the collocation as a whole would not be possible. That is, if there is only one possible feature that can be coded on the verb (see 7.2.3.1, or appendix 2, for examples of verbs with defective paradigms in vowel alternation), then the variation will not be found. This prediction is borne out by the data. In (169) the object is singular, as shown by the (optional) numeral in the NP, and the choice of verb of getting (recall that this verb has suppletive forms for different features of the object; in (164) and (165) the plural object form, *lóe*, is used (with appropriate inflections); in (169) the feminine object form, *wé*, is used, the same form that was seen in (167). The second verb, *fue* ‘put down’, also shows agreement with the feature [feminine] in the use of a high back vowel, *fu*.

- (169) *Móe* (*áling*) *te-wé* *fu*.  
 fish one 3PL=get.F put.down.F  
 ‘They put the fish<sub>FEM, SG</sub> down.’

There are no grammatical alternatives to the coding strategy shown in (169), in which feminine gender is marked on both verbs. We have seen that the first verb does not allow a disagreement option. The only coding choices that we have are for plural object being marked on the second verb, or for no object agreement to be registered on the second verb. Since the object is not plural, the first option is not grammatical, as in (170). We have already seen that a plural object may not be used with a second verb that shows no agreement at all, as in (168); the same holds for a feminine object, as shown in (171).

- (170) \* *móe* (*áling*) *te-wé* *fe*  
 fish one 3PL=get.F put.down.PL

- (171) \* *móe* (*áling*) *te-wé* *fue*  
 fish one 3PL=get.F put.down

Similarly, when the object is one that is eligible for agreement on either the feature [feminine] or [plural], but not both, then there can be no alternations, since alternations with non-agreeing forms are not allowed. In (164) and (165), where the object is both [feminine] and [plural], we can see that variation in terms of which feature is indexed is allowed, while in (169), in which the feature [feminine] is present, but [plural] is not, there is not such variation. In (172) the object is plural, but not feminine: the only pronominal feature that a verb can agree with is the feature [plural]. Consequently there are no acceptable variants in the coding of this sentence, since there is no feature [feminine] for the second verb to show agreement with, and non-agreement, in the presence of features that call for agreement and a verb that allows such agreement, is not grammatical, as shown in (173) and (174).

- (172) *Apále* *te-r-é* *fe*.  
 black.crab(sp.) 3PL=3PL-get.PL put.down.PL  
 ‘They put the fish<sub>FEM, PL</sub> down.’

- (173) \* *apále* *te-r-é* *fu*.  
 black.crab(sp.) 3PL=3PL-get.PL put.down.F

- (174) \* *apále* *te-r-é* *fue*.  
 black.crab(sp.) 3PL=3PL-get.PL put.down

If we examine those verbs with ‘defective’ paradigms for vowel alternation (see 7.2.3.1), we find that where there is any gap in the paradigm of vowel alternations, it is the singular feminine that is not realised as a distinct unit, not the plural (which is realised). For example, on the basis of comparison with verbs such as *lóa* ‘shave’, we might expect a set of vowel alternations for *moe* ‘return’ that included a unique form for 3SG.F; this is not the case, as can be seen in (175).

	Attested vowel alternations for <i>lóa</i> ‘shave’	Paradigm for <i>moe</i> ‘return’	*
(175)	Root: <i>lóa</i>	<i>moe</i>	<i>Coe</i>
	3PL: <i>rí</i> (< <i>t-lí</i> )	<i>me</i>	<i>Coe</i>
	3SG.F: <i>ría</i> (< <i>C-lúa</i> )	* <i>mu</i> , * <i>mo</i> ; <i>moe</i>	<i>Cue</i>

The fact that the 3SG.F form for ‘return’ is in fact *moe*, identical with the root and showing no vowel alternation at all, shows that vowel alternations do not always apply where they might



Inflection and suppletion for ‘give’:

	non-feminine, non-plural	feminine, non-plural	plural	
(177)	<i>ké leng</i>	<i>ké reng</i>	<i>wé leng</i> <i>wé reng</i>	<i>lóa leng</i> <i>róa reng</i>
	<i>bé peng</i>	<i>ké leng</i>	<i>pé peng</i> <i>wé leng</i>	<i>lóa peng</i> <i>lóa leng</i>
	<i>ké leng</i>	<i>ké ring</i>	<i>wé leng</i> <i>wé ring</i>	<i>lóa leng</i> <i>rí ring</i>
	<i>wé rung</i>		<i>wé rung</i>	<i>róa rung</i>

This model of incipient complex verb formation (or at least the formation of complex agreement) is also useful for describing some of the other collocations found in the language. The collocation for ‘count’, for instance, consists of two regularly inflecting *h*-initial verbs. Unlike the collocations for ‘give’ above, however, neither of the elements in ‘count’ are found in any other verbal units. This means that there is, synchronically, no reason (other than the obvious regularity of the changes) for a speaker to think that there might be anything other than a verb with complex patterns of bipartite verb inflection, involving both prefixation and infixation on a single disyllabic root. This question will be pursued further in the discussion of (180).

Inflection of ‘count’:

(178)	<i>há hi</i>	<i>ná ni</i>
	<i>má mi</i>	<i>há hi</i>
	<i>ká ki</i>	<i>yá yi</i>
	<i>wá wi</i>	

Examples of verbal collocations in which the two separate elements that take prefixal inflection do not take the same forms of inflection, and which are nevertheless not semantically separable, are shown in (179) (for both the 3SG.F and the 3PL cells in ‘pull’ there are two possible forms; this variation applies to different speakers, and also to the same speaker, some of whom vary and acknowledge the variation in their speech).

Inflection of *ha lú* ‘pull’, *lo hí* ‘hit with hand’ and *lé lúe* ‘annoy’

(179)	<i>ha lú</i>	<i>na rú</i>	<i>lo hí</i>	<i>ro ní</i>	<i>lé lúe</i>	<i>té rúe</i>
	<i>ma pú</i>	<i>ha lú</i>	<i>po mí</i>	<i>lo hí</i>	<i>pé púe</i>	<i>lé lúe</i>
	<i>ka lú</i>	<i>ta rú / tu rú</i>	<i>lo kí</i>	<i>ro jí</i>	<i>lé lúe</i>	<i>té rí</i>
	<i>wa rú / pu rú</i>		<i>wo wí</i>		<i>tóe rúe</i>	

An extreme example of this sort of verbal collocation, with inflection for subject on each of the putative verb roots that make up the collocation, can be seen in the expression ‘raise, nurture’, which inflects as shown in (180).

Inflection of ‘raise, nurture’:

(180)	<i>a wa li e</i>	<i>na wa ti ne</i>
	<i>ma wa pi me</i>	<i>a wa li e</i>
	<i>ka wa li i</i>	<i>tu wa ti e</i>
	<i>pu wa tue e</i>	

In this verb we can see inflection on three of the four parts of the collocation; the first element appears to be at least diachronically derived from *ka* ‘fetch, carry’ (though in this expression the 1SG *k-* that is found with *ka* ‘carry’ has not been observed), and speakers give this as the etymology of this part of the verb. The second last syllable is clearly the generic verb *li* ‘do, make’, and it inflects exactly as we would expect that verb to inflect. The final syllable is

derived from *i* ‘be (at)’, leaving the uninflecting *wa* as the only element that is semantically specific to ‘raise, nurture’. If this verb is analysed not as four composite parts, but as one single unit, not decomposable into sub-parts, with complex internal inflection, then the description of agreement patterns becomes much more complex. Examine the following alternative presentation of the same verbal predicate (*NOT* seriously advocated here), with the bold showing the segments that show inflectional variation.

Alternative representation of ‘raise, nurture’ as a single lexical item

- (181) *awalie nawatine*  
*mawapime awalie*  
*kawali.i tuwatie*  
*puwatue.e*

Taking just the (inflectionally completely regular – see 7.2.2) 2SG form for more detailed consideration, we would be forced to describe the inflection as involving something like the template shown in (182). This far exceeds what is normally considered to be bipartite verb behaviour, though some languages of the east Caucasus show analogous behaviour (for instance, Dargwa; see Magometov (1976), described in Anderson (1992). This sort of ‘tripartite’ stem is unlikely to be so simply analysable, synchronically or diachronically.<sup>51</sup> The subscripts show identifiable elements in the verbal complex, and the locus of inflection (for this form at least). This would essentially involve an analysis that permits *tripartite* verbal inflection: [ ]*awa*[ ]*i*[ ]*e* ‘raise, nurture’.

- (182) [ [*m-awa*]<sub>a</sub>-[*p-i*]<sub>b</sub>-[*m-e*]<sub>c</sub> ]  


A major problem with this analysis would be that we have no means of predicting if a particular lexical verb will take multiple exponence for its consonantal inflection, or if it will appear with only one prefix marking subject (or, for that matter, none at all). For instance, compare the paradigm for *léngho* ‘be amazed’ with *lèng* ‘be quiet’ and *leng* ‘give to’ (which is most usually found in combination with a verb of getting, *ké*, *wé* or *lóa*).

Inflection of *léngho* ‘be amazed’, *lèng* ‘be quiet’, and *leng* ‘give to’

- (183) *léngho léngho lèng lèng leng reng*  
*léngho léngho pèng lèng peng leng*  
*léngho léngho lèng lèng leng ring*  
*léngho wèng rung*

Even if we ignore the vowel changes found on *leng* ‘give to’, we still have to explain why there is regular prefixal inflection on *leng* ‘give to’, while the plural forms for *lèng* ‘be quiet’ lack any inflection, and *léngho* ‘be amazed’ completely lacks prefixal inflection at all (other than by proclitic). Clearly we require a degree of lexical stipulation in the ordering of the prefix system in order to explain the workings of agreement.

On the other hand, patterns of reduplication clearly treat predicates such as ‘count’, ‘pull’, ‘hit with hand’ and ‘annoy’ as single units. Reduplication applies to the final syllable of a verb,

<sup>51</sup> Another reason why the ‘bipartite analysis’ has not been pursued here is that it is non-predictive, and that the diversity of Skou inflectional classes exceeds the ability of the label ‘bipartite’ to be useful in distinguishing them.

as described in 2.6. Verbs which are unproblematically monomorphemic such as *jíngpa* ‘fly’ show reduplication of the second syllable, but not the first. When we examine reduplicated versions of the collocations we find that, just as with monomorphemic roots.

		‘fly’	‘count’	‘pull’	‘hit with hand’	‘annoy’
(184)	Plain	<i>jíngpa</i>	<i>há hi</i>	<i>ha lú</i>	<i>lo hí</i>	<i>lé lúe</i>
	Reduplicated	<i>jíngpapa</i>	<i>háhihi</i>	<i>halúlú</i>	<i>lohíhí</i>	<i>lélúelúe</i>
	form	* <i>jíngjíngpa</i>	* <i>háháhi</i>	* <i>háhálu</i>	* <i>lolohí</i>	* <i>lélélúe</i>
		* <i>jíngjíngpapa</i>	* <i>háháhii</i>	* <i>háhálulu</i>	* <i>lolohíhí</i>	* <i>lélélúelúe</i>

An example of a collocation involving *ké*, combined with a pair of motion verbs and a main activity verb, is shown in the textual extract presented in (184) below (taken from the text *Uepong*, line 10, in appendix 4). Here the carrying is shown taking place after the acquiring of the object (in this case, the new husband acquiring a wife), and then the direction of motion of the carrying is given in the two motion verbs. It might seem surprising that the motion to another village is marked with *loe* ‘come’, and not *re* ‘go’, given that the perspective is situated in the woman’s village. In the previous clause we have already seen the manner of motion, *wang* ‘sail’, combined with the appropriated inflected form of the verb *re* ‘go’; at this point the speaker has started to shift perspective from her home village to that of her future (and, at the time of the telling of the story, deceased) husband’s village. Further, given the operation of the Skou system of deixis, a village, as a centre of human settlement, is always treated as being inward and upward, regardless of any other factors influencing the coding. As part of this aspect of the language’s organisation, a village can only be approached with *loe*, never with *re*, when travelling by sea. The use of *moe* ‘return’ is also clearly referring to the village as being associated with the speaker as her future home, thus becoming the deictic centre for her; the appearance of *moe* before *loe* is not iconic, but simply reflects the fact that *moe* is always first in a series of motion verbs (see 13.4.1).

(9999)	<i>wang</i>	<i>ne=te=pa</i>	<i>ne=moe=ko</i>	<i>ne=ne</i>
	sail	1PL=1PL.go=INSTR	1PL=return=OBV	1PL=1PL.go
	<i>ke</i> =	[ <i>ke</i> <i>ka</i> <i>moe</i> <i>toe</i> ]	<i>bàme</i> ,	
		3SG.NF=get carry return 3.come	village	
		‘we sailed and went back to (his) village, he took me with him, ...’		

While not pretending to be complete, the following table gives some idea of the range of meanings that are associated, in different collocations, with *ké* ‘get’.

Table 124. Some common collocations involving *ké* ‘get’

Collocation	Components	Combined meaning
<i>ké fue</i>	‘get’ + ‘put.down’	‘put down’
<i>ké léng</i>	‘get’ + ‘give’	‘give to’
<i>ké ka</i>	‘get’ + ‘carry’	‘take away’
<i>ké tu</i>	‘get’ + ‘bring’	‘bring home’
<i>ké ka loe</i>	‘get’ + ‘carry’ + ‘come’	‘bring’
<i>ké ka te</i>	‘get’ + ‘carry’ + ‘go’	‘take’
<i>ké ka loe moe</i>	‘get’ + ‘carry’ + ‘come’ + ‘return’	‘bring/take home’

Other common collocations involve general motion verbs, which combine with manner of motion verbs, or manner of motion verbs which combine with directional verbs. Some further examples are shown below.

(185) *Ke=rapue hí<sub>L</sub> toe.*  
 3SG.NF=descend go.down 3.come  
 ‘He came down.’

(186) *Ke=rapue hí<sub>L</sub> toe.*  
 3SG.NF=descend go.down 3.come  
 ‘He came down.’

More details of the syntax of serial verb constructions, including those involving ‘get’ verbs, can be found in chapter 12.

### 7.8.1 Excursus: multiple exponence in other languages of the Macro-Skou family

In this section we shall examine certain features of multiple affixation in predicates found in languages related to Skou (see 1.4). Puare is a representative of the Serra Hills group, Barupu represents the Piore River languages, and Nyao is more closely related to Skou, being in the Western Skou family, and adjacent to Skou geographically, but representing the divergent Border group within the West Coast chain (see 1.4). Each of the languages has its own peculiarities concerning the locus of agreement and the multiple exponence of subject in different verbs, as shall be seen in the following sections.

#### 7.8.1.1 Puare

Puare generally uses prefixes to mark subject, as can be seen in the paradigm for ‘cough’ in table 125xx (the table gives both phonetic information and an underlying morphological form; in the morphological form the morphological elements that serve solely to mark subject features are shown in bold). The regular prefixes *n-*, *m-* and *y-* (the first two transparently cognate with the Skou forms described in 7.2.2; the *y-*, phonetically [ɔ̃kʲ], is a reflex of proto-Serra Hills \*r) are added to the root, with regular phonological consequences.<sup>52</sup> The adjunct nominal (see chapter 14) is unaffected by the prefixation on the root.

By contrast, *lukno* ‘drink’ shows a lack of most prefixal inflect on the first part of the verb, despite the same initial [l] being found in both cases. This might suggest that *luk* is at least historically an adjunct nominal, and the verb root is the inflecting *o*, where we find apparent (regular) prefixation. Nonetheless, the 1SG does show prefixation on the start of *luk* as well as on the generic verb, possibly indicating that there is a process of grammaticalisation in progress. The verb ‘yell’ shows the same two-part split in the verb, and the same lack of evidence for the full application of prefixal agreement on the first part of the ‘collocation’ (*y-* is found elsewhere in complex onsets with *k* and other consonants: *yke* ‘He/She hit him’, *yla* ‘thatching’, *ypwo* ‘eagle (Brahminy kite)’, *ymu* ‘thoughts’). More surprisingly, in the 3SG for ‘yell’ no affix is found on either part of the verb: *\*ykaye*, *\*ykae*, *\*kaye*. This undoubtedly

<sup>52</sup> In addition to the affixal patterns described here, some Puare verbs use a mixture of infixal and prefixal agreement, and a few verbs are developing a set of clitics, in addition to the affixal agreement, just as in Skou (7.2). An example is *Àna yuh an=n-k-e* 1SG bird 1SG=1SG-3SG.P-hit ‘I shot a bird.’ The clitic agreement is not obligatory in Puare, and is not as widespread through the lexicon and through the paradigm as it is in Skou.

reflects a level of lexical conditioning, or conjugation classing, in the language. Precedents for this in Skou can be seen in the different 1SG and 3PL conjugations (7.2.2).

Table 125. Sample verbal paradigms in Puare

	‘cough’		‘drink’		‘yell’	
1SG	[si ŋɔɔ]	lsi <b>n</b> -lo	ɔugɔɔ	<b>n</b> -luk- <b>n</b> -o	(ŋ)gane	<b>n</b> -ka- <b>n</b> -e
2SG	[si mɔɔ]	lsi <b>m</b> -lo	[ugmɔɔ]	[ ]-luk- <b>m</b> -o	kame	[ ]-ka- <b>m</b> -e
3SG	[si ʒɔɔ]	lsi <b>y</b> -lo	[ukʒɔɔ]	[ ]-luk- <b>y</b> -o	kaε	[ ]-ka-[ ]-e

In Puare we find that not only do some verbs show apparently complex behaviour, but that there is a great deal of unpredictability in the degree of exponence of the members of the paradigm that cannot be attributed to simply phonological factors, and so synchronically must be simply stipulated in the lexicon.

#### 7.8.1.2 Barupu

Multiple exponence is a persistently occurring feature of Barupu verbal morphology, being found in the basic inflectional paradigms of some verbs, and in all complex verbs that involve applicative derivation (Donohue 2003a).

The verb *riri* ‘shiver’, partially illustrated in table 126xx, shows the most commonly-encountered paradigm, in which the verb is prefixed for subject, and for mood (here shown in realis with *k-*). The verb whose root is *kwau*, ‘vomit’, inflects with these same prefixes, but additionally with a consonantal infix, separate from the prefixal inflection. For these verbs there are two positions at which the person, number and gender values of the subject are realised.

The verb *a* ‘eat’ is in the inflectional group that consists of the more complex verbs in the language. In this verb class the same monoconsonantal affixes that were seen infixal in verbs like *kwau* are used, but for verbs of this class they appear prefixally (perhaps for phonological reasons – all verbs in this small class have single-vowel stems). Instead of the normal full prefix, there is only a single vowel, corresponding in most cases to the first vowel of the full prefix set (an analysis that treats these verbs as inflecting with the prefixes *en-*, *am-* and *or-* does not work, though this shall not be pursued here).

Table 126. Sample verbal paradigms in Barupu

	‘shiver’		‘vomit’		‘eat’	
1SG.F	kendriri	<i>k-εn-riri</i>	kenkwanu	<i>k-εn-kwa&lt;n&gt;u</i>	kεna	<i>k-ε-n-a</i>
2SG.M	kamariri	<i>k-ama-riri</i>	kamakwamu	<i>k-ama-kwa&lt;m&gt;u</i>	kama	<i>k-a-m-a</i>
3SG.F	koriri	<i>k-o-riri</i>	kokwaru	<i>k-o-kwa&lt;r&gt;u</i>	kora	<i>k-o-r-a</i>

In addition to the examples of multiple exponence seen in these paradigms, applicatives in Barupu also introduce further complications. When an applicative ‘suffix’ is added to a fully inflected verb, the applicative morpheme additionally inflects for its own object *and* subject. Examine the following example, in which the fully inflected verb *kenyara* ‘I saw him.’ is suffixed with the accompaniment applicative *-i-*, which itself inflects for its own object by means of the regular object suffixes (here *-re* for third person plural feminine), and for subject by means of the consonantal affixes that have been seen infixally and prefixally in table 126xx (here *n-* for first person singular, masculine or feminine). The result is a complex verb with two separate loci for agreement in which the features of the subject are marked.

## Barupu

(187) *K-ɛn-yara-ka-n-i-rɛ.*

R-1SG.F-3SG.M-1SG-ACCOMPANY.APPLICATIVE-3PL.F

‘I<sub>FEMALE</sub> saw him with them<sub>FEMALE</sub> (present).’

A partial paradigm for this verb varying with other values for subject, but holding a constant 3PL.F object, are shown in table xx127.

Table 127. Verbal paradigm of an applicative verb in Barupu

	‘__ saw him with them <sub>FEMALE</sub> ’	
1SG.F	kɛndʒarakanire	<i>k-ɛn-yara-ka-n-i-rɛ</i>
2SG.M	kamajarakamire	<i>k-ama-yara-ka-m-i-rɛ</i>
3SG.F	kojarakarire	<i>k-o-yara-ka-r-i-rɛ</i>

It is quite clear that there are two loci for subject agreement in the applied verbs of Barupu (and the other Piore River languages), though they can arguably be thought of as single agreement markers on a double-headed complex verb. There might be phonological reasons for the different inflectional classes in Barupu, but the complex inflections on verbs such as ‘vomit’ and ‘eat’ can still only be explained in terms of multiple inflectional positions for subject.

## 7.8.1.3 Nyao

Nyao is next to Skou geographically and part of the same smaller grouping within Macro-Skou that contains Skou (see figures 1 and 2 in 1.4). Many of the trends, both phonological and morphological, that can be found in Skou are also apparent in Nyao (and to an approximately equal extent in Nyao’s linguistic siblings, Wutung and Musu). Some sample verbal paradigms are shown in table 128xx, which illustrate the points that are being made about multiple exponence in the inflectional paradigms of verbs, and also some aspects of the phonology of this language, which is the most unusual in the Western Skou family.

Table 128. Sample verbal paradigms in Nyao

	‘go’		‘see’		‘stab’	
1SG	hã	[ ]-hã	hũpu	[ ]-hũ-[ ]-pu	pĩkɔ	[ ]-pĩ-[ ]-kɔ
3SG.M	kã	<b>k</b> -hã	kũk <sup>w</sup> u	<b>k</b> -hũ- <b>k</b> -pu	k <sup>w</sup> ixɔ	<b>k</b> -pĩ- <b>k</b> -kɔ
3PL	ɲã	<b>y</b> -hã	hɲubu	<b>y</b> -hũ- <b>y</b> -pu	wĩkɔ	<b>t</b> -pĩ- <b>t</b> -kɔ

The verb hã ‘go’ is completely unremarkable in Nyao. The verb, transparently cognate with Skou *ha* (though oddly with nasalisation, which is not found in other closely related languages any more than it is in Skou) shows the same basic inflectional paradigm that is found in Skou (compare with Skou: *ha ka ya*), and in all cases maximally one instance of agreement for subject. The regular inflection for 1SG verbs is, like Skou, zero, and this is reflected unexceptionally in all three verbs in table 128xx. While Ø is the normal inflection for 1SG, a small number of verbs take a *k*- inflection. The same verbs that have been observed in Skou with *k*- also take the *k*- in Nyao (*k-ɛ* ‘eat’ and *k-ej* ‘carry’, cognate with Skou *kang* and *ka*), and show ɲ- inflections in Leitre and Dusur, the conservative \*ɲ retaining languages of the Western Skou family. This suggests that the irregularity of these verbs can be traced to proto-Skou at least.

The inflection for 3SG.M is an initial *k-*, as seen transparently in the paradigm for ‘go’, but in ‘see’ not just the initial consonant of the verb, but also the consonant of the second syllable *pu* shows inflection for 3SG.M, and also for 3PL. The regular morphophonological result of a *k-* prefixing to a *p*-initial verb is [k<sup>w</sup>], as attested in [xɛj k<sup>w</sup>a] ‘he drops’ (< k-kɛj k-pa), and ‘stab’ in table 128xx. The verb *pīkɔ* ‘stab’ also shows multiple inflection for the non-1SG forms. For disyllabic verbs, then multiple exponence is the norm in Nyao; since the inflections are in all cases regular, it is highly likely that the synchronically disyllabic verbs reflect diachronic serial verbs, just as the various collocations involving the verbs of getting in Skou may well be developing into complex verbs such as are also attested in *há hi* ‘count’.

Another possible source for what might well develop into complex verbal collocations involves the grammaticalisation of adjunct nominal + verb constructions, specifically the variety in which the agreement proclitic shows variation or a fixed position outside the nominal and verb together, thus treating them as if they were a single verb. This is described in 14.5.

## 7.9 Tense, aspect and mood

The categories of tense, aspect and mood (henceforth: TAM) are marked on a verbal clause in Skou by a combination of bound morphological forms, both segmental and suprasegmental, and the use of serialisation with a fixed range of verbs that have taken on aspectual functions. There are, additionally, a small number of time and aspect adverbials that may be used, in combination with other marking or alone. The following core TAM distinctions are made in verbal predicates, morphologically and with auxiliaries:

- completed** the semantically (and morphologically) least marked of the marked categories. The essential meaning (according to speakers) is that the predicate has already run to completion;
- irrealis** intended, planned, not yet started; purposive clauses, resulting states;
- intentional** ‘want’, ‘will’ translations; similar to general irrealis, though more likely to be used with first person subjects in main clauses;
- continuous** the action is ongoing at the time of the reference of the speech act, and that ongoing aspect is emphasised by the speaker;
- (unmarked)** this functions as a default category, when specification for a more explicit tense/aspect category is omitted for textual reasons, and is used in imperatives. The root form of the verb is used.

There is not a neat paradigm with three or four TAM morphemes fitting into the same templatic position marking these four categories. Rather, these four distinctions are created by the use of three different morphosyntactic processes. The actual devices employed are:

- tonal stripping:** delinking the lexical tone associated with the verb root (which results, phonetically, with a low pitch on the word – see 2.3.1.6);
- serialisation:** with ‘do’; with ‘be’ and ‘do’ together;
- reduplication:** reduplicating the last syllable of the already inflected verb (with complications in serial verb constructions)

These different processes can be seen in the following examples, which employ the verb root *lá* ‘roast’, which has a lexically-assigned high tone. In the first example we can see that the tone is low, and not the high tone that we find elsewhere on the verb (see the other following examples). In the second example the high tone of the lexeme is realised, but the syllable of the verb stem (the prefixally-inflected stem, and not the entire, proclitic-inflected verbform) is reduplicated.

Tone of the verb is replaced with L pitch (‘tonal suppletion’)

- (188) *Kóe=ing*                      *te=r-a<sub>L</sub>*  
 baked.sago=DEIC 3PL=3PL-roast  
 ‘They roasted the sago.’

Reduplication

- (189) *Kóe=ing*                      *te=r-á-rá*  
 baked.sago=DEIC 3PL=3PL-roast-RED  
 ‘They will roast the sago.’

The next two examples, (190) and (191), show different serialisations employed to show aspectual distinctions. In the first example we can see that the verb stem is reduplicated. The second example has a simple, unreduplicated, verb stem, but the serialisation now involves not just the appropriately inflected form of the verb ‘do’, but rather the twin verbs ‘be’ and ‘do’ together. In this last example we can see that the lexically-assigned tone of the verb root is realised on a non-reduplicated stem, showing that it is not simply a phonological restriction that causes the tone in (189) to be realised as a low pitch, but a morphological one.

Reduplication and serialisation with ‘do’

- (190) *Kóe=ing*                      *te=r-á-rá*                      *ti*  
 baked.sago=DEIC 3PL=3PL-roast-RED 3PL.do  
 ‘They want to roast the sago.’

Serialisation with ‘be’ and ‘do’

- (191) *Kóe=ing*                      *te=r-á*                      *e*                      *ti*  
 baked.sago=DEIC 3PL=3PL-roast-RED 3PL.be 3PL.do  
 ‘They are roasting the sago.’

Observe the reduplication pattern on the following disyllabic verb *hàpe* ‘judge’, showing clearly that it is the second, and not the first, syllable that is reduplicated.

- (192) *Ke*                      *mè=m-àpe-pe*                      *ka!*  
 3SG.NF 2SG=2SG-judge-RED NEG  
 ‘Don’t judge him!’

- (193) \* *ke mè màpèpe ka*

Additionally, the verb stem, uninflected for any of these categories, may be used in imperatives. These are not nonfinite clauses, since the verb is (at least optionally – see 18.1) inflected for features of subject and, depending on the verb, object as well, but they do not carry any information about TAM categories (except by their absence).

Imperative clause:

- (194) *Kóe*                      *mè=p-á!*  
 baked.sago 2SG=2SG-roast  
 ‘Roast the sago!’

It is apparent that the four core distinctions in TAM which are overtly marked in Skou correspond to the three morphological devices as seen in table 129xx. We can decompose the morphological composites found in the sentences above into the parameters of [auxiliary use] and [reduplication]. Further, there is a (redundant) stipulation that in the absence of either of these features, the lexical tone of the verb is disassociated, and in the absence of a phonologically assigned tone a low pitch is realised.

Table 129. The morphological markers of TAM

Process:	[auxiliary]?	[reduplication]?	([tonal stripping]?)
• completion	–	–	+
• irrealis	–	+	–
• intentional	+	+	–
• continuous	+	–	–

We shall now examine the system underlying these four distinctions, arguing, based on the commonalities observed in the morphological mechanisms used to encode the four categories, that there are in fact two binary oppositions.

Not surprisingly, the two different morphological processes can be associated with two different semantic notions of aspect and mood. These might be added to table 129xx as follows:

Semantic component:	involvement	irrealis
---------------------	-------------	----------

That is, the use of an auxiliary implies a greater degree of involvement on the part of the subject, while the use of reduplication indicates that the state or event has not yet started. The combination of involvement and irrealis indicates volition; the lack of either gives a completive interpretation.

Some variation is found with the intentional aspect, in which the auxiliary component of the verbal complex may be reduplicated rather than the verb root itself. The following two sentences are reportedly very similar if not identical in meaning.

(195) *Ne móe ne=yú ne ti-ti.*  
 1PL fish 1PL=search.for 1PL.be 1PL.do-RED  
 ‘We’re going to look for fish.’

(196) *Ne móe ne=yú-yú ne ti.*  
 1PL fish 1PL=search.for-RED 1PL.be 1PL.do

Another relevant factor in a description of TAM in Skou is the polarity of a sentence: negative sentences show a restricted range of aspectual choices compared to positive sentences (see also chapter 16). The negative equivalents of (188) - (191) above are shown in (197) - (200) below.

(197) *Kóe=ing te=r-a ka.*  
 baked.sago=DEIC 3PL=3PL-roast NEG  
 ‘They didn’t roast the sago.’

(198) *Kóe=ing te=r-á-rá ka.*  
 baked.sago=DEIC 3PL=3PL-roast-RED NEG  
 ‘They won’t roast the sago.’

- (199) *Kóe=ing*      *te=r-á-rá*      *ka.*  
 baked.sago=DEIC 3PL=3PL-roast-RED NEG  
 ‘They don’t want to roast the sago.’
- (200) *Kóe=ing*      *te=r-á*      *ka*  
 baked.sago=DEIC 3PL=3PL-roast-RED NEG  
 ‘They aren’t roasting the sago.’

The completive and the irrealis show a simple addition of the negative morpheme; the two aspects that use an auxiliary both show the absence of this auxiliary in the negative, thus collapsing the distinction between the two irrealis categories, and in the continuous/present realising the finite verb without any auxiliary, but also without the tonal change that is characteristic of the completive. With verbs of motion, the schema is slightly different, with the auxiliaries permitted even in negative sentences, when called for by the intentional and the continuous, where they follow the negative. Examples of these are shown in (201) and (202).

Auxiliaries in the negative with verbs of motion

- (201) *Ne*    *bàme=fue a*    *ne=ne-ne*      *ka*    *ti.*  
 3PL    village=that    3PL=3PL.go-RED NEG    3PL.do  
 ‘They don’t want to go to that village.’
- (202) *Te*    *te=y-á*      *ka*    *e*      *ti.*  
 3PL    3PL=3PL-walk    NEG    3PL.be.    3PL.do  
 ‘They aren’t walking.’

We can summarise the differences observed between TAM marking in positive and negative clauses in table 130xx.

Table 130. Contrasting positive and negative sentences

	Semantic features	Positive	Negative	Negative (motion)
complete	[- involved], [- irrealis]	V <sub>pitch: L</sub>	V <sub>L</sub> NEG	V <sub>L</sub> NEG
irrealis	[- involved], [+ irrealis]	V-V	V-V NEG	V-V NEG
intentional	[+ involved], [+ irrealis]	V-V do	V-V NEG	V-V NEG do
continuous	[+ involved], [- irrealis]	V be do	V NEG	V NEG be do

(Note that in addition to the V-V do cosing option for the intentional, V do-do is also possible)

A further morphological complication concerns the morphological realisation of TAM features, but does not seem to bear on their instantiation. The intentional category, which is marked by a combination of reduplication and an auxiliary when the clause positive (as opposed to negative), can be realised with the auxiliary, not the main verb, reduplicated.

Intentional: reduplication on the main verb:

- (203) *Pa ke=k-ung-kung*      *li.*  
 water 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-drink-RED do  
 ‘He wants to drink some water.’

Intentional: reduplication on the auxiliary:

- (204) *Pa ke=k-ung*      *li-li.*  
 water 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-drink do-RED  
 ‘He wants to drink some water.’

In the negative the main verb must show reduplication; it is not possible for the reduplication to appear on the auxiliary.

Negative intentional: reduplication on the main verb:

- (205) *Pa ke=k-ung-kung ka li.*  
 water 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-drink-RED NEG do  
 ‘He doesn’t want to drink some water.’
- (206) \* *pa ke=k-ung ka li-li.*  
 water 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-drink NEG do-RED

The reduplication of the auxiliary is also sometimes found in continuous sentences, giving a sense of irrealis continuity: the action is continuous at the time of reference of the speech act, but the results of the action are unrealised. In this case the auxiliary component that is reduplicated is the last syllable of the ‘be+do’ complex.

Continuous: reduplicated auxiliary

- (207) *Nì Áì pí nì=lóeng i li-li.*  
 1SG father speech 1SG=say be do-RED  
 ‘I was asking God.’

Very occasionally the continuous is found with the main verb reduplicated, but this is not usual, and when brought to the attention of speakers most Skou people will ‘correct’ the reduplication, or change the auxiliary. For instance, at one point in a story one speaker, having produced the following sentence,

Continuous: reduplicated auxiliary

- (208) *Ing a, pe hòe pe=tue-tue e tue,*  
 the 3SG.F sago 3SG.F=3SG.F.do-RED 3SG.F.be 3SG.F.do  
 ‘So she was stirring the sago, ...’

then ‘corrected’ her utterance to

- (209) *Trus hòe pe=tue e tue.*  
 [and. then] sago 3SG.F=3SG.F.do-RED 3SG.F.be 3SG.F.do  
 ‘And then she was stirring the sago.’

(Having already mentioned the subject *pe* ‘she’ in the immediately preceding discourse, the speaker judged this context enough to omit an overt free-pronominal reference to the argument, and to allow verbal agreement to be the sole exponent of the subject in the sentence.)

showing a clear judgement against reduplication on the main verb when combined with the presence of the auxiliary set.

These variations in the realisation of the reduplication morphological feature show that there are two separate morphological processes operating together, even though both reduplication and auxiliary choice together instantiate the TAM paradigm. They must be kept morphologically distinct, since they behave in distinct manners.

### 7.9.1 More on reduplication

Reduplication was first discussed in 2.6. The reduplication template is a simple monosyllabic one that applies from the right of the verb. On a monosyllabic verb, the directionality is not obvious, since both the base and the reduplicant are identical.

- (210) a. *fí*  
meet  
'meet'
- b. *fí-fí*  
meet-RED  
'will meet'
- (211) a. *p-óe*  
2SG-get.PL  
'you get many'
- b. *p-óe-póe*  
2SG-get.PL-RED  
'you will get many'

With disyllabic predicates, however, it is clear that only the second syllable is reduplicated (the change in tone is due to the regular application of the tone sandhi rule seen in 2.3.1.1; in all cases the reduplicant shares the pitch specification of the original syllable):

- (212) a. *te=y-a tà*  
3PL=3PL-sit sitting  
'they sat'
- b. *te=ya tá-tà*  
3PL=3PL-sit sitting-RED  
'they will sit'

Note that, even though in both cases it is only, and completely, a CV template that is reduplicated, from the second example we can see that the initial consonantal alternations due to underlying prefixation apply before the CV template finds its input.

I have one recorded instance of a reduplicant not reflecting the original syllable exactly, but changing the quality of the vowel (while preserving other rime features, such as nasalisation). This is shown in (212), with the verb *leng* 'become'.

- (213) a. *leng*  
become  
'become'
- b. *leng-lang*  
become-RED  
'will become'

Since this is the only instance of a change in vowel quality in the reduplicant, we cannot speculate about the mechanism behind the change. The fact that the second, and not first, part of the reduplicated form shows the altered vowel is further evidence that reduplication is suffixal in Skou, since it seems simpler to treat the vowel alternation as applying to the reduplicant rather than to assign it to the root, following the reduplication process.

### 7.9.2 Problems with the analysis

One inadequacy with the analysis of the tense/aspect system presented here is that it is not fully predictive, which implies either that some major parameter in the description eludes the model, or that the system allows for a lot of variation, and that the factors underlying this variation have not yet been described. For instance, not all predicates that express irrealis events will be encoded with reduplicated verbs. The following is an example; the use of *féung* 'tomorrow' marks the clause as irrealis, yet the verb not only does not have to appear with reduplication expressing the irrealis, but cannot, as seen in (2159)xxsecondonexx/

- (214) *Fé-ung*                      *ne=n-úng.*  
tomorrow-now      1PL=1PL-drink  
'We'll drink tomorrow.'

- (215) \* *féung ne núng núng*

We might postulate that overt marking of a future time in the clause in the form of a time adverbial conflicts with marking irrealis aspect on the verb, and this would fit the facts; there is a kind of morphological blocking applying, such that the TAM feature [irrealis] can only be realised once in a clause, either by means of a time adverbial or on the verb itself. This analysis does predict the fact that other marked verbal aspects are compatible with noncompletive events,

as in (21699) in which an intentional, and so irrealis, clause can occur with an overt time adverbial.

- (216) *Ung a te=y-úng-yúng ti.*  
 now 3PL=3PL-drink-RED 3PL.do  
 ‘They want to drink now.’

This argues against the binary semantic featural analysis of TAM categories presented in 7.9, and for a four-way distinction in TAM categories, using the unitary features complete, irrealis, intentional and continuous, rather than the two binary features involved and irrealis, described in that earlier section.

*Table 131.* TAM coding options

V	habitual
VV	intentional
VV do	desiderative
V be+do	present continuous
V [low pitch]	past
V [low pitch] finish	perfective

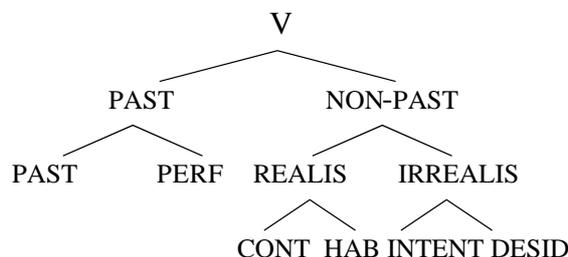
There are clearly three morphological processes that can apply to the verb: reduplication, tone disassociation, and auxiliary addition. The effects of each process are as follows:

*Table 132.* TAM morphology and its features

Process	Result
reduplication	irrealis
tone disassociation	past
say	volition
be / do	continuous
finish	completed

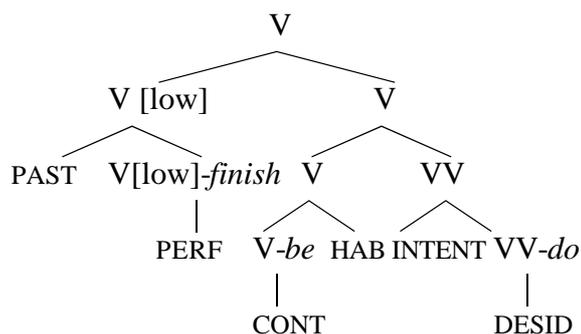
We can arrange the semantic order of these changes in a hierarchical manner, showing which categories govern which other ones, in the manner shown in figure 9xx.

*Figure 9xx.* Dependencies in the TAM system



These different distinctions are realised with the following pieces of morphology. Figure 10xx shows which morphological categories are responsible for the distinctions shown in figure 9xx.

Figure 10xx. Dependencies in the TAM system



These different contrasts can be illustrated with the following simple paradigm of alternations.

Plain

- (217) *Nì ró à nì=hù.*  
 1SG clothes thread 1SG=sew  
 'I sew clothes.'

Low pitch: past

- (218) *Nì ró à nì=hu.*  
 1SG clothes thread 1SG=sew  
 'I sewed (some) clothes.'

low pitch, 'finish': perfective

- (219) *Nì ró à nì=hu loeng.*  
 1SG clothes thread 1SG=sew finish  
 'I have sewn (the) clothes.'

be+do: continuous

- (220) *Nì ró à nì=hù i li.*  
 1SG clothes thread 1SG=sew be do  
 'I am sewing clothes.'

reduplication: intentional

- (221) *Nì ró à nì=hù-hù.*  
 1SG clothes thread 1SG=sew-RED  
 'I will sew (the) clothes.'

reduplication + do: desiderative

- (222) *Nì ró à nì=hù-hù li.*  
 1SG clothes thread 1SG=sew-RED do  
 'I want to sew (some) clothes.'

Reduplication applies from the right edge of the verb; this is only noticeable with a verb of two or more syllables in length, as the reduplication only applies to one syllable.

- (223) *Ya pe=w-a w-í-wí tue.*  
 thing 3SG.F=3SG.F-count<sub>1</sub> 3SG.F-count<sub>2</sub>-RED 3SG.F.do  
 'She wants to count (something).'

(224) \* *ya pe wa-wa wí tue*

(225) \* *ya pe wa-wa wíwí tue*

In addition to the marking of TAM by the presence of various auxiliary elements, we need to examine the morphological forms that these auxiliaries take. While there are regularities, there are also some unexpected patterns.

### 7.9.3 Concordance between the main verb and the auxiliary

The examples in 7.9.2 exemplified sentences with a first person singular subject, which for many verbs does not show agreement on the verb – this is certainly the case with the verbs ‘be’ and ‘do’. With subjects other than 1SG, 2DU or 2PL, the verbs show the changes we would expect. While redundant in many ways, the following sentences show in complete form the changes associated with marking a clause with the auxiliaries *i* ‘be’ and *li* ‘do’, as well as the normal pronominal clitic agreement and the prefixal agreement, as realised on the glottalic verb root *hú* ‘sew’. The degree of multiple exponence can be seen clearly, pronominal information appearing associated with the free pronoun, the pronominal clitic, the verbal prefix, and each of the two auxiliary verbs.

(226)	<i>Nì</i>	<i>ró</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>nì=hù</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>li.</i>
	1SG	clothes	thread	1SG=sew	be	do
(227)	<i>Mè</i>	<i>ró</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>mè=m-ù</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>pi.</i>
	2SG	clothes	thread	2SG=2SG-sew	2SG.be	2SG.do
(228)	<i>Ke</i>	<i>ró</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>ke=k-ù</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>li.</i>
	3SG.NF	clothes	thread	3SG.NF=3SG.NF-sew	be	do
(229)	<i>Pe</i>	<i>ró</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>pe=w-ù</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>tue.</i>
	3SG.F	clothes	thread	3SG.F=3SG.F-sew	3SG.F.be	3SG.F.do
(230)	<i>Anake</i>	<i>ró</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>ne=n-ù</i>	<i>ne</i>	<i>tì.</i>
	1DU.EX	clothes	thread	1PL=1PL-sew	1PL.be	1PL.do
(231)	<i>Anape</i>	<i>ró</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>ne=n-ù</i>	<i>ne</i>	<i>tì.</i>
	1DU.EX.F	clothes	thread	1PL=1PL-sew	1PL.be	1PL.do
(232)	<i>Amanè</i>	<i>ró</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>ne=n-ù</i>	<i>ne</i>	<i>tì.</i>
	1DU.IN	clothes	thread	1PL=1PL-sew	1PL.be	1PL.do
(233)	<i>Enake</i>	<i>ró</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>e=hù</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>li.</i>
	2DU	clothes	thread	2PL=sew	be	do
(234)	<i>Enape</i>	<i>ró</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>e=hù</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>li.</i>
	2DU.F	clothes	thread	2PL=sew	be	do
(235)	<i>Tenake</i>	<i>ró</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>te=y-hù</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>tì.</i>
	3DU	clothes	thread	3PL=3PL-sew	3PL.be	3PL.do
(236)	<i>Tenape</i>	<i>ró</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>te=y-hù</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>tì.</i>
	3DU.F	clothes	thread	3PL=3PL-sew	3PL.be	3PL.do
(237)	<i>Ne</i>	<i>ró</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>ne=n-ù</i>	<i>ne</i>	<i>tì.</i>
	1PL	clothes	thread	1PL=1PL-sew	1PL.be	1PL.do
(238)	<i>E</i>	<i>ró</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>e=hù</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>li.</i>
	2PL	clothes	thread	2PL=sew	be	do
(239)	<i>Te</i>	<i>ró</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>te=y-ù</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>tì.</i>
	3PL	clothes	thread	3PL=3PL-sew	3PL.be	3PL.do

‘I/You/He/She/We/You/They am/are/is sewing clothes.’

In some verbs we find disagreement in the pronominal features encoded between the main verb and the auxiliary. The following textual example in (240) (from *Kóeng bang tue* line 11) shows a main verb with a 1PL subject, as evidenced by the storyline and the proclitic agreement on the verb, yet the auxiliaries do not show the expected (and also grammatical) *ne ti* forms, but rather *e tue*, the 3SG.F forms. The prescriptively ‘correct’ version of the clause is shown in (240)’.

(240) *te=Húngfa=ko*      *ne=moe*      *e*      *tue*,  
 3PL=Sentani=OBV      1PL=return      3SG.F.be      3SG.F.do  
 ‘from Sentani, we were returning, ...’

(240)' *te=Húngfa=ko*      *ne=moe*      *ne*      *ti*,  
 3PL=Sentani=OBV      1PL=return      1PL.be      1PL.do

This is a different type of disagreement to that discussed later in 12.3.2, where disagreement in motion verb constructions sometimes show a lack of agreement marking on directional verbs in the serialisation construction, or to that seen in 7.8, discussing the coding of features associated with objects in serial verb constructions. With the disagreement in the aspectual marking verbs above we can see that the disagreeing version is not simply not marked for first person plural, but rather it is overtly marked for third person feminine. A version of (240) with simple null-agreement would be as shown in the ungrammatical (240)".

(240)" \* *te=Húngfa=ko*      *ne=moe*      *i*      *li*,  
 3PL=Sentani=OBV      1PL=return      be      do

This ungrammatical form of disagreement is separate from the attested disagreement in serial verb constructions involving motion verbs, described in 12.2.

#### 7.9.4 Aspect marking, agreement, and serial verb constructions

The previous sections have discussed the aspectual distinctions that are realised in Skou. A complication to this pattern is found when we consider serial verb constructions. I shall first examine agreement patterns in serial verb constructions, and then reduplication.

It is possible for any contiguous series of verbs from the left to display clitics. Thus, in addition to (241), we also have the grammatical variants shown in (242) and (243) (It is unclear what, if any, semantic differences exist between (241), (242) and (243)). In (241) we can see one clitic at the beginning of the series of prefixally-inflected verbs. In addition to this, however, the possibilities shown in (242) and (243), in which the second verb, or the second and third verbs show clitic agreement in addition to the first verb; all of these sentences are grammatical.

(241) *Pe*      *pe=wa*      *p-o*      *te*      *báng*.  
 3SG.F      3SG.F=3SG.F-walk      3SG.F-seawards      3SG.F.go      beach  
 ‘She walked to the beach.’  
 CL=[pref-V pref-V pref:V]

(242) *Pe pe=wa pe=po te báng.*      CL=[pref-V]      CL=[pref-V pref:V]

(243) *Pe pe=wa pe=po pe=te báng.*      CL=[pref-V]      CL=[pref-V ]      CL=[pref:V]

While each of (241) - (243) are grammatical, they can only be construed as grammatical if they involve a series of verbs that is contiguous from the start of the serial verb construction, each with an agreement clitic. This means that strings involving clitics appearing on

discontiguous verbs, or on some verbs other than the first in the series, are ungrammatical, as shown in (244) - (247). Clearly all the verbs in the predicate must be within the scope of a clitic, a condition that is not satisfied in (244), (245) and (247). In (246) we can see that with the addition of a second clitic on the last verb in the series, the scope of the first clitic is narrowed to the verb it immediately precedes. (The final option, lacking clitic agreement altogether, is as ill-formed as any of (244) - (247).)

- (244) \* *Pe wa pe=po ti báng.* pref-V CL=[pref-V pref-V]  
 (245) \* *Pe wa po pe=ti báng.* pref-V pref-V CL=[pref-V]  
 (246) \* *Pe pe=wa po pe=ti báng.* CL=[pref-V] pref-V CL=[pref-V]  
 (247) \* *Pe wa pe=po pe=ti báng.* pref-V CL=[pref-V] CL=[pref-V]

In serial verb constructions involving an object the subject agreement clitic may only appear at the beginning of the sequence of verbs, to the exclusion of forms analogous to those which were seen in (242) - (243). Thus (250), which might have been predicted to be grammatical by comparison with sentences such as (242) and (243), is ill-formed.

CL=[pref-V pref-V]

- (248) *Pe tángbe=ing a pe=wé r-ung ke.*  
 3SG.F money=the 3SG.F=get.F 3SG.F-F.give 3SG.NF  
 'She gave him the money.'  
 (249) \* *Pe tángbe=ing a wé pe=rung ke.* [pref-V] CL=[pref-V]  
 (250) \* *Pe tángbe=ing a pe=wé pe=rung ke.* CL=[pref-V] CL=[pref-V]

The intentional aspect is marked by a combination of reduplication and auxiliary use, as described earlier in 7.9. The reduplication is usually found on the first verb in a serial verb construction, as in (251), but it can also be found on the last element, as in (252) and (254). Note that in (254) the reduplication applies to the second of the auxiliary verbs which, in conjunction with the presence of reduplication, mark desiderative aspect.

- (251) *Pe pe=w-a-wa p-o te báng.*  
 3SG.F 3SG.F=3SG.F-walk-RED 3SG.F-seawards 3SG.F.go beach  
 'She will walk to the beach.'  
 (252) *Pe pe=wa po te te báng.* V V V-RED  
 (253) *Ke ke=k-a-ka ti báng i li.*  
 3SG.NF 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-walk-RED 3SG.NF.go beach be do  
 'He wants to walk to the beach.'  
 (254) *Ke ke=ka ka ti báng i li li.* V V AUX/AUX-RED

Reduplication can, rarely, apply to both the first and last elements of the construction, but cannot apply to any 'medial' verbs. This is illustrated below with examples analogous to (251) and (252), but is equally true of examples with auxiliaries, after the manner of (253) and (254).

- (255) *Pe pe=wa wa po te te báng.* V-RED V V-RED  
 (256) \* *Pe pe=wa po po te báng.* V V-RED V  
 (257) \* *Pe pe=wa wa po po te báng.* V-RED V-RED V  
 (258) \* *Pe pe=wa po po te te báng.* V V -RED V-RED  
 (259) \* *Pe pe=wa wa po po te te báng.* V-RED V-RED V-RED

Unlike the possibilities for agreement, the variable placement of aspect is found with serial verb constructions that contain objects, such as (260), as freely as it is with monovalent clauses such as (251)/(252). In (261) we see that reduplication on the final verb is as grammatical as reduplication on the first verb for aspect marking purposes. (262) shows that both the initial and the final verb may appear reduplicated. (263) - (268) present a selection of sentences involving reduplication applying to a non-initial, non-final verb in the series. Even though the initial verb is shown reduplicated in (265) - (268), and the final verb is reduplicated in (268), the presence of reduplicated medial verbs means that these sentences will be construed as ungrammatical.

- |         | V-RED   |  | V              | V              | V            |                 |                     |                         |
|---------|---|--|----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| (260)   | <i>Móe ne=r-oe-roe</i>                                      |  | <i>n-á</i>     | <i>moe toe</i> | <i>bàme.</i> |                 |                     |                         |
|         | fish 1PL=1PL-get.PL-RED                                     |  | 1PL-carry      | return         | 1PL.come     | village         |                     |                         |
|         | 'We will take the fish and bring them back to the village.' |  |                |                |              |                 |                     |                         |
| (261)   | <i>Móe ne=roe ná</i>  |  | <i>moe toe</i> | <i>toe</i>     | <i>bàme.</i> | V V V V-RED     |                     |                         |
| (262)   | <i>Móe ne=roe roe ná</i>                                    |  | <i>moe toe</i> | <i>toe</i>     | <i>bàme.</i> | V-RED V V V-RED |                     |                         |
| (263) * | <i>Móe ne=roe ná ná</i>                                     |  | <i>moe toe</i> | <i>bàme.</i>   |              | V V-RED V V     |                     |                         |
| (264) * | <i>Móe ne=roe ná</i>  |  | <i>moe moe</i> | <i>toe</i>     | <i>bàme.</i> | V V V-RED V     |                     |                         |
| (265) * | <i>Móe ne=roe roe ná</i>                                    |  | <i>ná</i>      | <i>moe toe</i> | <i>bàme.</i> | V-RED V-RED V V |                     |                         |
| (266) * | <i>Móe ne=roe roe ná</i>                                    |  | <i>moe moe</i> | <i>toe</i>     | <i>bàme.</i> | V-RED V V-RED V |                     |                         |
| (267) * | <i>Móe ne=roe roe ná</i>                                    |  | <i>ná</i>      | <i>moe moe</i> | <i>toe</i>   | <i>bàme.</i>    | V-RED V-RED V-RED V |                         |
| (268) * | <i>Móe ne=roe roe ná</i>                                    |  | <i>ná</i>      | <i>moe moe</i> | <i>toe</i>   | <i>toe</i>      | <i>bàme.</i>        | V-RED V-RED V-RED V-RED |

The factors that govern these alternations in agreement positioning and the locus of reduplication are at best poorly understood, and any meaning differences associated with the alternations are unknown.

### 7.9.5 Reduplication and verbal collocations

As with serial verb constructions, the kinds of predicates that are coded by verbal collocations (as described in section 7.8) deserve clarification, though they lack the variation that makes serial verb constructions so complicated with respect to aspect marking via reduplication.

With a verbal collocation such as *há hi* 'count' we have a situation that is superficially analogous to a serial verb construction. Compare, for instance, the following two sentences. Each involves multiple prefixally-inflected verb roots functioning as a single predicate.

- |       | V <sub>1</sub> / 1         | V <sub>2</sub> / 2 |              |
|-------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| (270) | <i>Pe=angku=ing a móe</i>  | <i>pe=w-á</i>      | <i>w-i .</i> |
|       | 3SG.F=child=the thing      | 3SG.F=3SG.F-count  | 3SG.F-count  |
|       | 'The girl counted things.' |                    |              |

	V <sub>1</sub>	V <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>3</sub>	
(271)	<i>Móe</i>	<i>ke=ké</i>	<i>k-á</i>	<i>tí pá.</i>
	fish	3SG.NF=get	3SG.NF-carry	3SG.NF.go house
	'He took the fish home.'			

We have seen in 7.9.4 that with serial verb constructions it is possible for reduplication to apply to the first, the last, or both the first and the last verbs in a sequence ((260) - (262)). The same is true with sentences such as (271), which are completely analogous to these examples. This is not, however, possible with collocations such as *há hi* 'count', as shown in (272) - (999). If we wish to apply reduplication to the predicate to show an intentional aspect, the only grammatical result is that shown in (271), in which the final syllable of the collocation is reduplicated. If we combine an auxiliary with reduplication to show desiderative aspect we find that the final syllable of the collocation, or the auxiliary, or both, may show reduplication, as is normal and expected. But, still, the first syllable of the collocation cannot be reduplicated, as seen in (262) (and previously described in 2.6).

(272)	<i>Pe=angku=ing a móe pe=wá wi wi.</i>	V V-RED
(273) *	<i>Pe=angku=ing a móe pe=wá wá wi.</i>	V-RED V
(274) *	<i>Pe=angku=ing a móe pe=wá wá wi wi.</i>	V-RED V-RED
(275)	<i>Pe=angku=ing a móe pe=wá wi wi tue.</i>	V V-RED V
(276)	<i>Pe=angku=ing a móe pe=wá wi tue tue.</i>	V-RED V V V-RED
(277)	<i>Pe=angku=ing a móe pe=wá wi wi tue tue.</i>	V V-RED V-RED
(278) *	<i>Pe=angku=ing a móe pe=wá wá wi tue tue.</i>	V-RED V V-RED

The behaviour of predicates such as *há hi* 'count' is identical to unanalysable disyllabic verbs such as *jíngpa* 'fly', which cannot be considered serial verbs, at least not synchronically.

(279)	<i>Tángná=ing a pe=jíngpa hángpeng.</i> cockatoo=the 3SG.F=fly bush 'The cockatoo flew to the bush.'	
(280)	<i>Tángná=ing a pe=jíngpa-pa hángpeng.</i> cockatoo=the 3SG.F=fly-RED bush 'The cockatoo is flying to the bush.'	1 2-RED
(281) *	<i>Tángná=ing a pe=jíng-jíng-pa hángpeng.</i>	1-RED 2

Although the two syllables of a collocational predicate both show prefixal agreement, with respect to the possibilities of reduplication they behave as if they were a single stem, and not a sequence of verbs in a serial verb construction.

#### 7.9.6 Other markers of tense, aspect or mood: 'come' and 'go'

There are two cases of what were almost certainly originally serial verbs which have now become aspectual markers. These are the verbs *re* 'go' and *loe* 'come', which are used aspectually in the third person singular feminine form, *te*, for 'go', and in the general third person form, *toe*, for 'come'. The link between the inflecting verbs and the aspectual markers is proposed because of the close meanings that hold between the verbs and the aspect marking, making a grammaticalisation not unlikely. Compare the meanings of the independent verbs and the aspect markers, shown together in table 133xx, with the aspectual meanings associated with

grammaticalised verbs of ‘going’ and ‘coming’ in other languages (taken from Hook 1974, Hopper and Traugott 1993).

Table 133. The verbs *re* and *loe* compared with the aspect markers *te* and *toe*

			Attested meaning in Skou	Aspectual meanings found cross-linguistically
Verbs	<i>re</i>	‘go’	motion away from speaker / locus	‘future’, ‘frequentive’
	<i>loe</i>	‘come’	motion towards speaker / locus	‘becoming’, ‘frequentive’, ‘potential’
Aspect markers	<i>te</i>	‘go’	continuous, durative, iterative, pluractional activity	
	<i>toe</i>	‘come’	resulting state, endpoint of activity	

Given the plausibility of a link between the observed free verbs and the aspect markers, we must investigate the status of these morphemes when they are used with aspectual uses, and contrast these uses with others. There is no longer any sense of any particular person or number associated with these forms when they are used aspectually, but they nonetheless appear in the position we would expect of an auxiliary verb (following a main verb and goal NP, and preceding a location NP). To what extent are they still verbs? This can be answered by taking near-identical sentences, as proposed above.

Compare, for example, the following two sentences, apparently using the same lexical items, but with different interpretations.

(282) *Pe=ueme=ing a*      *pe-w-a*      *te*      *báng.*  
 3SG.F=woman=the    3SG.F=3SG.F-walk    3SG.F.go    beach  
 ‘The woman walked to the beach.’

(283) *Pe=ueme=ing a*      *pe-w-a*      *te*      *báng.*  
 3SG.F=woman=the    3SG.F=3SG.F-walk    ‘3SG.F.go’    beach  
 ‘The woman walked and walked (and walked) on the beach.’

In sentence (282xx) the verb sequence *pe wa te* functions as a serial verb construction; the verb *ha* ‘walk’ indicates the manner of motion, and the appearance of a goal is licensed by the use of the simple motion verb *re* ‘go’ (an alternative would be the use of an applicative suffix – see 13.2). The construction can be seen as a serial verb construction because the goal, *báng*, appears following both verb roots. In (283xx) the verb *te* is present as an auxiliary; the oblique NP that follows it can only be interpreted as a location, not as a goal, and it has an aspectual, not directional, role in the sentence. Morphologically we can test and prove these different uses by examining equivalents of the two sentences above with a subject of a different person/number/gender. In (284) and (286) we can see sentences equivalent to (282) and (283), except cast with a non-feminine subject. Where the verb of simple going is part of a serial verb construction the verb must show person, number and gender agreement with the subject matching the agreement marked on the main manner-of-motion verb. This is a general principle that governs serial verb constructions, and is described in more detail in 12.4; the ungrammaticality of (285)’, which is identical to (283) except for the use of a 3SG.F form of the verb, and so cannot have the reading. Yet in (286), in which the aspectual use is intended, there can be no agreement in person, number and gender categories on the putative verb of going. This is taken as evidence that the form *te* has in this use grammaticalised away from the

meaning of ‘go’, and into an uninflecting aspect marker, which is not grammatical if it appears in an inflected form to agree with the subject.

Motion-verb sentence using *ti* ‘3SG.NF.go’

- (284) *Ke=bà=ing a ke-k-a ti báng.*  
 3SG.NF=man=the 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-walk 3SG.NF.go beach  
 ‘The man walked to the beach.’

- (285)' \**ke=bà=ing a ke-k-a te báng.*  
 3SG.NF=man=the 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-walk ‘3SG.F.go’ beach  
 ‘The man walked to the beach.’

Motion-verb sentence using *te* ‘3SG.NF.go’

- (286) *Ke=bà=ing a ke-k-a te báng.*  
 3SG.NF=man=the 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-walk ‘3SG.F.go’ beach  
 ‘The man walked and walked on the beach.’

- (287) \**ke=bà=ing a ke-k-a ti báng.*  
 3SG.NF=man=the 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-walk 3SG.NF.go beach  
 ‘The man walked and walked on the beach.’

It is most economical to propose that a grammatical model accounting for (282) - (283) would show the templatic structures described in (282)' and (283)', respectively.

[NP Subject] [NP Object] [V]=[V] [NP OBL:Goal] [V Auxiliary] [NP OBL:Location].

- (282)' *Pe ueme ing a pe wa te báng.*

- (283)' *Pe ueme ing a pe wa te báng.*

While the verb (at least when inflected for 3SG.F) and the aspect marker are phonologically identical, we can see that they are syntactically quite distinct. This strongly suggests that they are not morphologically congruent either.

Similar arguments apply to the use of *toe* as an aspect marker. It is true that sentences such as (288) appear to show agreement (or, at the least, no disagreement) between the subject and the verb, testing with non-third person subjects shows that this is a fortuitous accident arising because of the particular subject that appears being third person and feminine in (288).

- (288) *Hòe=ing pe=wé=ko toe langpi.*  
 sago=the 3SG.F=get.F=OBV ‘3.come’ delicious  
 ‘She stirred the sago until it became delicious.’

When we replace the third person subject with a non-third person subject, we see that the form of the putative verb is still *toe*, with no change for person. In (290) the form of the verb ‘come’ is that which we would expect with a 1SG subject, yet the sentence is ungrammatical. Clearly there is no pattern of agreement here.

- (289) *Hòe=ing nì=wé=ko toe langpi.*  
 sago=the 1SG=get.F=OBV ‘3.come’ delicious  
 ‘I stirred the sago until it became delicious.’

- (290) \**hòe=ing nì=wé=ko loe langpi.*  
 sago=the 1SG=get.F=OBV come delicious

From these morphological tests we can conclude that, although there is very likely (given the meanings involved) to be a diachronic connection between the independent verbs *te* ‘go’ and

*toe* ‘come’ and the aspect markers *te* and *toe*, this relationship is no longer productive, and the aspect markers cannot be regarded as grammaticalised motion verbs in a serial verb construction with the main verb. We have seen evidence that the aspect markers *te* and *toe* differ from the (serial) verbs ‘go’ and ‘come’ in the following ways:

- the aspect markers *te* and *toe* do not show agreement for subject, whereas serial verbs do;
- the aspect markers appear in a position following a goal, structurally, whereas serialised motion verbs appear in the main verbal position, preceding any goal;
- the post-goal position is otherwise only occupied by the aspect-marking *i* ‘be’ and *li* ‘do’, which are also verbs that have grammaticalised away from their verbal function to a more dedicated aspect-marking pair of morphemes.

These facts indicate that we must treat the aspect-marking use of *te* and *toe* separately from their motion-verb functions. The following example clearly shows complete semantic bleaching of the verb *toe*, being used purely in an aspectual sense. The fact that it is followed by *te* ‘she goes’ makes it clear that *toe* does not have any motion sense.

- (291) *Te=ing a=ko bépú-pú toe=ing=pa pe=te*  
 3PL=the=OBV lay-RED 3.come=DEIC=INSTR 3SG.F=3SG.F.go  
*w-a=pa tú=ko*  
 3SG.F-walk=INSTR carry.PL=OBV  
 ‘those things, she lays (her eggs) on them, so she goes about and gets them  
 and then, ...’

Another examples that shows the ‘becoming’ sense of *toe* can be found in the following textual example.

- (292) ... *te=te, títlong te=nà pe=jí toe,*  
 3PL=3PL.go doorway 3PL=open 3SG.F=open 3.come  
 ‘... they went, and they opened the door, ...’

It is clear that this use of *te* and *toe* is not simply a serialisation of the verbs that they represent, but that a degree of grammaticalisation has taken place.

#### 7.9.7 Aspect marking on non-dynamic predicates

An ongoing sense (continuative/persistent), similar to that marked by English ‘still’, can be found with a stative predicate (adjectival, nominal or stative verb) can be achieved by using the combination ‘be+do’ as an auxiliary element. This is used rather than ‘be+do’, the continuative aspect serialisation that is found on active predicates. The iconic use of a locational verb with a temporal, and not a strict locational, sense is not unexpected, and the distribution of the two, with the ‘be’ serialisation appearing with stative predicates only, and the ‘be’ serialisation with active predicates, is a result of the basic function of ‘be’ as locating the subject (in either time or space). A stative predicate, which does not require any auxiliaries to assume a continuous aspectual interpretation, does not appear with this serialisation.

The difference in interpretation between a predicate with ‘be+do’ (or one of the other verbs of existence that can stand in for ‘be’, such as *moeng* ‘sit’, *rue* ‘stand’ – see 7.9.4.1) and one without, can be seen in the following pair of sentences. In the first sentence there is no aspectual reading inherently associated with the clause, which, given that there is no verb, is not unexpected. With ‘be+do’ marking there is a particular emphasis on the ongoing, current,

aspect of the state, and so it tends to acquire the aspectual sense that is best translated with ‘still’.

- (293) *Ku-nì=ne* *rílele*.  
 ‘child’-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT short  
 ‘My child’s short.’
- (294) *Ku-nì=ne* *rílele e tue*.  
 ‘child’-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT short 3SG.F.be 3SG.F.do  
 ‘My child’s still short (right) now.’

Sentence (294) has the same semantic content in its predicate as the simple adjectival predicate in (293), but with the verbs *i* ‘be’ and *li* ‘do’, inflected for third person singular feminine, marking the aspectual difference. The meaning of this marked aspect is largely predictable from the meaning of the ‘be+do’ serialisation with verbal predicates. Something that is unique to adjectival predicates is an alternative. In this aspect marking, seen in (294), there is also a pair of serial verbs following the adjective, but now the verbs *rue* ‘stand’ and *li* ‘do’, inflected for third person singular feminine, also appear. The aspectual meanings associated with the use of ‘be+do’ that have been described in 7.9 are found with the adjectival predicate as well, using a stance verb in place of the more generic ‘be’ verb.

- (295) *Ku-nì=ne* *rílele ro tue*.  
 ‘child’-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT short 3SG.F.stand 3SG.F.do  
 ‘My daughter’s still short.’  
 (implication: she hasn’t grown as much as was expected)

In this clause it appears best to consider *rílele* ‘short’ not as the predicate, but as a adverbial comment on the predicate; a more literal glossing might be ‘My daughter is standing short(ly).’ This interpretation does not explain the aspectual readings associated with the use of this construction; it does, however, account for the fact that such a predicate is highly restricted, requiring a vertically growing sentient subject and a height-dimension small clause associated with it. It is probably best interpreted as a main verb, which, given that it occurs in the same frame in which the light verb *li* ‘do’ can appear when an adjectival predicate marks an over aspect, makes sense.

- (296) *Ke=lú weng* *i li*.  
 3SG.NF=eye sleep be do  
 ‘He’s still asleep.’

There are no pragmatic or semantic difference between these two coding choices, and the alternative with ‘stand’ simply reflects the fact that a stative verb inherently has extension in time, and so satisfies the condition that it must have a location for the ‘stand’ verb to point to. A non-stative verb such as *rue* ‘stand’, on the other hand, does not allow this option:

- (297) *Ke=k-a tà* *i li*.  
 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-walk running be do  
 ‘He’s running.’
- (298) \* *ke=k-a tà* *rue li*.  
 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-walk running stand do

We can see that the eligibility of a predicate to occur with *rue* ‘stand’ is thus dependent not simply on the syntactic category to which that predicate belongs, but to the semantic



## 7.9.8.3 still, be at

A sense of continuation, similar to that implied by English ‘still’, with a stative (adjectival, nominal or stative verb) predicate can be marked by using the combination ‘be+do’ as an auxiliary element. This is used contrastively compared to simple non-verbal copular constructions with predicative NPs, which simply imply a continuous aspect on an active predicate and which do not allow for aspect marking (see earlier parts of 7.9). The iconic use of a locational verb with a temporal, rather than strict locational, sense is in keeping with the overlap of range for location-referring expressions into the temporal domain; see the discussion of *te* and *toe* in 7.9.4.

(303) *Ke angleng.*  
3SG.NF bachelor  
‘He’s a bachelor.’ / ‘He was a bachelor.’ / ‘He will (remain) a bachelor.’

(304) *Ke angleng rue li.*  
3SG.NF bachelor stand do  
‘He’s still unmarried.’

Further aspectual marking (such as the use of reduplication or auxiliaries) is not grammatical with nominal predicates, as seen in (305) - (309).

(305) \* *ke angleng-leng*  
3SG.NF bachelor-RED  
‘He will be a bachelor.’

(306) \* *ke angleng rue li li*

(307) \* *ke angleng rue rue li*

(308) \* *ke angleng i li*  
3SG.NF bachelor be do  
‘He’s being a bachelor.’

(309) \* *ke angleng rue li i li*

The division between nouns and verbs can be seen very clearly here in the different possibilities and forms of aspect marking on clauses. The basic nominal clause allows for a wide range of aspectual interpretations; adding a minimal amount of verbal predication, as in (304), allows a particular aspectual reading to be ‘frozen’ onto the clause. But this is the extent to which aspect can be marked. Other pragmatic and temporal information can be added through the use of the pragmatic clitics seen in 4.4, or time expressions (*bàng* ‘yesterday’, *féung* ‘tomorrow’, etc.), but the aspect system of auxiliiation and reduplication cannot be employed with nominal predicates.

## 7.10 Summary of verbal morphological patterns

The main morphology associated with the verb is subject agreement, with most verbs obligatorily showing agreement for this argument by both prefix and by proclitic. In almost all cases the prefixes show a strong degree of fusion with the initial consonant of the verb, and in many cases the phonological result of these ‘fusions’ is not entirely predictable: a strong degree of stipulation is present in the system.

The fact that various types of vowel alternation, in terms of their pronominal status, are also found raises problems for the idea that features are associated with particular morphemes or morphological operations. There is clearly a morphological alternation in vowel quality, a kind

of umlaut that reflects earlier stages in the history of Skou in which a morpheme with a high front vowel (plural) or high back rounded vowel (feminine) was suffixed to the verb, an affixation which is now observable only in the changes in vowel quality in the stem (Donohue 2003b). Problematically, however, we find this same morphological process now being used with a fully pronominal interpretation in some cases, and without that interpretation in others. An incremental approach to morphology would have to ignore the immense similarities found in the uses of this vowel alternation operation, and posit two separate (and phonologically identical) processes.

Aspect is marked on the verb not by a series of dedicated aspect marking morphemes, but by a variety of morphological means: there is one dedicate morpheme which marks past tense by disassociating any tone melodies that were lexically associated with the verb (and so is not an overt morpheme, but a subtractive one, much like the formation of masculine forms of adjectives in French proceeds by delinking the last coda from a word). Reduplication and serialisation also play a role, and the tense/aspect system shows a reduced number of distinctions when it operates in negative clauses (see chapter 16).

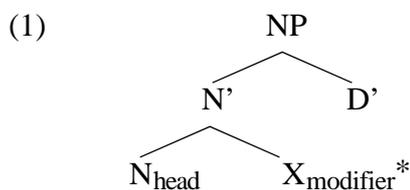
## 8 Nominal Phrases

The noun phrase in Skou is unmarked by case (the only exception being instruments – see 3.2 and 11.6, and optional, and rare, ergative marking – 3.2), depending on position more than morphology to indicate its role in the clause. Reflecting this, there are more issues concerning position and structure inside the NP than there are to do with any specific morphology. The only exceptions to this involve possession, which is discussed in detail in chapter 9, and perhaps, in a peripheral sense, relative clauses. Relative clauses co-opt existing morphology as part of their structure.

### 8.1 Elements of the nominal phrase

The morphology of the noun phrase is not complicated. Despite the lack of much dedicated morphology, there are several twists in phrase structure configurations involved in the description of these phrases. Most of the functional morphemes are based on the prime pronouns (6.2), and their spread into various functions.

The primary structural division is between the obligatorily present head, the N, with any independent modifiers (consisting of at least one free word) and any demonstratives, which are clitics that follow this unit:



Non-pronominal inflection with the instrumental case marker also found in the D position (see 4.9). This means that case-marked instruments cannot appear with deictic modification. If an instrument must be marked with a deictic, it is coded with a serial verb construction. See 11.xx for examples.

Within the NP the head is initial, with all modification following. Examples of different kinds of modification can be seen in the following phrases:

NP with Adjective modifier

- (2) *pá* *rong*  
house old  
'old house'

NP with Numeral modifier

- (3) *pá* *héntong*  
house three  
'three houses'

NP with Relative clause modifier

- (4) *naké hòe-nì=ne ke=k-ang=ing a*  
 dog sago-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-eat=the  
 ‘the dog which ate my sago’

It is very rare for more than one modifier to appear inside an NP; additional properties specifying a nominal appear are more likely to appear as a series of predicates modifying the one bare noun. In the relative clause example the demonstrative *ing a* is final in the NP, and is completely compatible with other NP modification: *pá rong ing a*, *pá héngtong fue a*, etc. With the relative clause modifiers, this D is obligatory: sentence (5), which attempts to show a relative clause modifying the head noun *naké*, can be made grammatical by the addition of a D following *ke=k-ang*.

- (5) \* *nì* [<sub>NP</sub> *naké hòe nì ne ke kang* ] *nì yú i li*  
 ‘I’m looking for the dog which ate my sago’
- (6) *Nì* [<sub>NP</sub> *naké* [*hòe-nì=ne ke=k-ang* ]=*ing a* ]  
 1SG dog sago-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-eat=the  
*nì=yú i li.*  
 1SG-search be do  
 ‘I’m looking for the dog which ate my sago’

Further details on the morphosyntax of relative clauses can be found in 8.3. The only pre-head modification that may appear is a gender/number marking pronoun, with certain human nouns (see 6.3.2), or a possessor. The full structure of a nominal phrase is then that seen in (7).

- (7)
- 
- ```

  graph TD
    NP --> N_prime[N']
    NP --> D_prime[D']
    N_prime --> NP_Poss_r[NP_Poss'r]
    N_prime --> N[N]
    N_prime --> Mod_star[Mod*]
  
```

In this example the possessor is a full NP, and so subject to modification of its own. Some examples of modified possessing NPs are shown in (8), where the possessor is modified by a numeral, and (9), in which there is possessive modification of the possessor of the head.

- (8) [<sub>NP</sub><sub>Poss'r</sub> *púle* *hìngtung* ] *ró-tè=te*  
 cuscus two skin-3PL.GEN=3PL.DAT  
 ‘the skins of two cuscus’
- (9) [<sub>NP</sub><sub>Poss'r</sub> *nì* [<sub>NP</sub><sub>Poss'r</sub> *bápáne-nì-ne* ] ]  
 1SG friend-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT  
*te=angku-pè=pe*  
 3PL=child-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘my (female) friend’s daughters’

When more than one modifier, other than a relative clause, is found in the same NP, then there is not a fixed order to their occurrence, as can be seen by comparing the following sentences:

- (10) *Púle bápáli hìngtung nì=fe.*  
 cuscus big two 1SG=see.PL  
 ‘I saw two large cuscuses.’

- (11) *Púle hìngtung bápáli nì fe.*

Taken out of context the second of these phrases (the less common of the two) would be considered ungrammatical. The following strings of words, analogous to the NPs in (10) and (11), could be taken as demonstrating that phrases occur with the fixed order Noun-Adjective-Numeral, but in fact show a strong preference for treating a numeral as a predicate in a non-verbal clause. We have seen in (11) that Noun-Numeral-Adjective is possible in an NP, but the data below show that a sequence of two potential NP modifiers, when presented with a noun out of context, will be interpreted as a lighter NP and a predicate, and that, given this parsing, the numeral cannot be the NP modifier.

- (12) *Kungpáue bápáli hìngtung.*  
 spider big two  
 ‘There are two big spiders.’  
 (literally, ‘The big spiders are two.’)

- (12)' [NP *kungpáue bápáli*] [PRED *hìngtung*]

- (12)" \* [NP *kungpáue bápáli hìngtung*]

- (13) \* *kungpáue hìngtung bápáli*  
 ‘the two spiders are big’

- (13)' \* [NP *kungpáue hìngtung*] [PRED *bápáli*]

Judgements about the grammaticality of these clauses are quite clear, with a numeral-modified noun predicated by an adjective being judged not just unlikely or unusual, but outright unacceptable. Relative clauses, including relative clauses consisting of a simple stative verb, may never precede a numeral. Compare the grammatical appearance of an N-ADJ-NUM sequence in (12) with the ungrammatical use of a relative clause in this same position.

- (14) \* *púru* [RC *ku te*] *hìngtung te=moe y-a tà.*  
 white.tree.kangaroo fall two 3PL=return 3PL-walk run  
 ‘(The) two cuscuses which fell (down) ran (bounced) away.’

These modifiers may appear grammatically in the same NP, as seen in (15), in which the relative clause appears following the numeral.

- (15) *Púru hìngtung ku te ing te moe ya tà.*  
 ‘The two cuscuses which fell (down) ran (bounced) away.’

More details concerning relative clauses can be found in 8.3.

## 8.2 Pronouns in the nominal phrase

Pronouns can appear with a summarising function in the D position when there is an NP headed by non-pronominal material, but may also appear by themselves or modified by a deictic, either the definite *ing a* or the prominence marker *a*. Other, more spatially explicit, demonstratives such as *wi a* ‘this’ and *fue a* ‘that’ may not be used on pronouns. The use of *a* is common with identificational focus or topicalised nominals, which occurs most commonly with third persons. The use of *ing a* is also found with third persons, but is more common on first or second person pronouns, where it is sometimes found in emphatic contexts.

- (16) *Pe=a nì=pung i li.*  
 3SG.F=PROM 1SG=liver be do  
 ‘She is the one that I love.’

- (17) *Mè=ing a ya m̀è=pi?*  
 2SG=the what 2SG=2SG.do  
 ‘What have you done?’  
 (as opposed to some other recent addressee, eg. when talking to a group of children one by one)

Apart from the use of the prominence markers or definiteness markers to mark pronouns (or other nominals) when they are topics, the use of a demonstrative with a pronoun is extremely uncommon for objects, and is most likely with As or obliquely coded nominals. The following sentences show that it is acceptable for the subject of a bivalent to be marked with a deictic, or even for the originally obliquely coded recipient to be marked with a deictic (see 11.5 and 16.3 for more discussion on the status of recipients generally, and of their status in negated clauses).

Bivalent subject pronoun marked with a pragmatic deictic

- (18) *Pe=a ke=angku=ing a pe=fu.*  
 3SG.F=PROM 3SG.NF=child=the 3SG.F=see.F  
 ‘She saw the boy.’

Obliquely coded pronominal P marked with a pragmatic deictic

- (19) *Rópu=ing a ǹi=leng ke=a ka.*  
 book=the 1SG=give 3SG.NF=PROM NEG  
 ‘I didn’t give the book to him.’

In the negated clause shown above, the obliquely coded recipient is in fact treated, morphologically and syntactically, as a normal object, and so we must conclude that the restrictions on the appearance of deictics on pronouns refers to their lexical specification in the predicate, and not their surficial realisations.

In addition to these uses of deictic marking on pronominals when they serve as A or (obliquely coded) P, respectively, we also find complete acceptability of deictics when used with oblique pronouns (though this is rare, probably reflecting the rarity of pronouns in oblique functions).

Oblique pronouns marked with a deictic

- (20) *Pe=angúe=ing a pe=te ke=a.*  
 3SG.F=unmarried.woman-=the 3SG.F=3SG.F.go 3SG.NF=PROM  
 ‘The unmarried girl went up to him.’

Despite these freedoms, from (21) we can see that it is not entirely felicitous for an S, the subject of a monovalent clause, to be marked with a pragmatic deictic, and (22) shows that a pronominal P is not felicitous with deictic marking. These are not ungrammatical, and having a full nominal with deictic marking in either of these positions would be completely normal. The use of prominent deictic marking on a pronominal S or A, however, is only compatible with some extreme pragmatic conditions, conditions that are more likely to lead to the use of a contrastive topicalisation structure than a clause-internal coding of the pronoun with deictic marking.

Infelicitous use of deictics on an S (monovalent subject) pronominal

- (21) # *M̀è=a m̀è=me-me pi ná?*  
 2SG=PROM 2SG=2SG.go-RED 2SG.do Y/N  
 ‘Do you want to go?’

## Infelicitous use of deictics on a pronominal P

- (22) # *Ke=angku=ing a*      *pe=a*      *ke=fu.*  
 3SG.NF=child=the      3SG.F=PROM      3SG.NF=see.F  
 ‘The boy saw her.’

When followed by the clitic *a*, the pronoun has a more individual-identifying sense, as if it is identifying the referent from a selection of other possibilities in a set that the speaker has in mind. In (19), therefore, the use of *ke=a* rather than simply *ke* indicates that the identity of the person in question was either a surprise, or else was contrastively focussed with respect to some other possible, and recently mentioned, referent.

### 8.3 Relative clauses

Relative clauses in Skou are most productively found externally, following the noun that they modify, though there are other possibilities. A relative clause, regardless of position, is almost invariably followed by at least one demonstrative, though whether this demonstrative is part of the relative clause construction, or simply a pragmatic correlate of the kind of referent that is modified by a relative clause is not known. A simple example of an NP showing the external, post-nominal relative clause construction is shown in (23), in which the relative clause is bracketed and the head noun is shown in bold:

- (23) [NP ***ke=angku-nì=ne***      [RC *hòe ke=k-ang*]      =*ing* ]  
 3SG.NF=child-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT      sago      3SG.NF=3SG.NF-eat      DEIC  
 ‘that son of mine who ate (the) sago’

The sentence above shows a relative clause in which the head serves as the subject of the relative clause. As we shall see in this section, there are in fact no restrictions on the grammatical function of the head of a relative clause of this type. We may model the structure of the most common relative clauses as follows:

## Basic relative clause structure

- (24) N [RC      ... V ] DEM

The use of a demonstrative in the NP that contains the relative clause is not absolutely required, but its appearance correlates strongly with arguments appearing that bear one of the more core syntactic roles, which in turn are more likely to be more highly prominent in the discourse. It may be, then, that the appearance of a demonstrative of some sort is not part of the relative clause construction, and as such on a par with relativisers such as ‘which’ or ‘that’ which are found in English, but simply another morphosyntactic consequence of the pragmatic conditions that lead to a relative clause being used to modify a noun, rather than an independent clause. Some evidence for this is the fact that the demonstrative may be found on the head of the relative clause, rather than at its end, thus satisfying the need for marked prominence. This might be a sort of appositional relative clause, appended to the entire NP, or an alternative structure with the relative clause following the demonstrative. An example can be seen in (25).

- (25) ***Ke=balèng=ing a*** [RC *bàng púle ke=jí*]      *nì=re*  
 3SG.NF=man=the      yesterday      cuscus      3SG.NF=hit.PL      1SG=go  
*nì=fí-fí*      *li.*  
 1SG=meet-RED      do  
 ‘I’m going to meet the man who killed the cuscuses yesterday.’

Arguments that this relative clause type is externally headed, and not internally headed, will be presented in 8.3.3, where a more detailed account of the morphosyntax of this construction will be presented.

A second relative clause type is found, only when the head of the relative clause is an object of the clause. In this case the noun appears internal to the relative clause, a common pattern for object-headed relative clauses in Papuan languages. The basic relative clause is also possible for these nominals. An example of two phrases, exemplifying both types of relative clause, are shown in (26) and (27), with the same conventions as were used earlier.

- (26) *hòe* [RC *ke=angku-nì=ne* *ke=k-ang*] =ing a  
 sago 3SG.NF=child-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-eat =the  
 ‘the sago that my son ate’
- (27) [RC *ke=angku-nì=ne* *hòe ke=k-ang*] =ing a  
 3SG.NF=child-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT sago 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-eat =the  
 ‘the sago that my son ate’

The second of these phrases (in (27)) is lexically identical to an adverbial clause, with the meaning ‘because my son ate (the) sago’. Despite this, intonation and the context serve to unambiguously disambiguate these two possible readings. With an adverbial reading the intonation rises to the last syllable of the verb, and then drops sharply after *ing a*. With a relative clause, on the other hand, the intonation is more level right until the completion of the demonstrative form, as is to be expected from a non-intonation phrase final unit (that is, a single element inside an NP, not IP-final).

The structure of this second relative clause type is modelled in (28). Although the position of the head of the relative clause is different to those relative clauses seen at the start of this section, the requirement that they appear with a demonstrative is maintained.

Internal relative clause structure

- (28) [RC ... N<sub>OBJ</sub> ... V ] DEM

There is no morphology on the verb of a relative clause that would not be found in a main clause, nor any omissions. Similarly, there is no special relativiser, that marks either of these two clauses as a subordinate clause. Only the position, overtly within the NP (as shown by its appearance between the noun and the NP-final demonstrative), that marks the relative clause as being anything other than a main clause, and the optional omission of a proclitic subject pronoun on the verb. In the following sections we shall examine what sorts of nouns may be the heads of relative clauses, and what restrictions there are for non-canonical heads.

### 8.3.1 Syntactic function of the head of a relative clause

Any noun may be the head of a relative clause; there are no restrictions on the semantic or syntactic role of the head. There are, however, different coding patterns for locations as heads than for nouns with other semantic roles in this position. The following sentences present examples with nouns filling different syntactic roles in the relative clause as their heads. In each case the position of the head in the relative clause has been indicated in an equivalent of the relative clause, if it was functioning as a main clause on its own. This is placed following the main sentence, so that following the sentence illustrating the noun phrase with a relative clause ‘the girl who made the sago yesterday’ we can see the unglossed sentence ‘The girl made the sago yesterday.’, with the position of the subject made clear.

A head, subject of a bivalent clause

- (29) *Nì pe=angku* [RC *bàng hòe pe=tue*] = *ing a nì=fu*.  
 1SG 3SG.F=child yesterday sago 3SG.F=3SG.F.do=the 1SG=see  
 ‘I saw the girl who made the sago yesterday.’

[IP *Bàng pe=angku hòe pe=tue*].

S head, animate subject of a monovalent clause

- (30) *Ku* [RC *bàng te báng*] = *fue pe*  
 ‘child’ yesterday 3SG.F.go beach=that 3SG.F.ERG  
*hòe pe=p-ang*.  
 sago 3SG.F=3SG.F-eat  
 ‘The child who went to the beach yesterday ate the sago.’

[IP *Bàng ku te báng*].

The subject of a monovalent clause behaves the same as does the subject of a bivalent clause with respect to this relative clause strategy. This is to be expected, given that they share the same morphologically and syntactically privileged position elsewhere in the verbal system, specifically the fact that they are treated alike as far as agreement marking and switch reference tracking goes. This privilege is based on the relative position of the argument in a hierarchy, rather than the semantic role it plays in the particular sentence. This assertion can be seen to be true by examining the following sentence, in which no animacy, and hence no agentivity, can be construed as applying to the S head of the relative clause. Here we have a complex relative clause formed about the head *pa* ‘river’, which is predicated by *ko (í i li)* ‘flow (and form a pool)’; the main clause equivalent of the relative clause plus its head is shown in (31)ʹ.

S head: inanimate subject of a monovalent clause

- (31) *te pa* [RC *ko í i li*], ...  
 3SG.F.go river flow pool be do  
 ‘... to a river that flows and forms a pool, ...’

- (31)ʹ [IP *Pa ko í i li*].  
 ‘(The) river forms a pool.’

This example also shows that agentivity is not a factor in determining the eligibility of an S to function as the head of a relative clause. Examining objects, which have significantly different morphological representation, we find that as far as treatment goes in relative clauses they are not differentiated from subjects. The following example shows that the morphosyntax of the relative clause with an object head is identical to that of a relative clause with a subject head. Again, the main clause equivalent of the relative clause plus its head is shown, in (32)ʹ.

P head, object of a bivalent clause

- (32) *Hòe* [RC *bàng mè=pi*] = *ing mong tue nè*.  
 sago yesterday 2SG=2SG.do=the F.sit 3SG.F.do Q  
 ‘Where’s the sago you made yesterday?’

- (32)ʹ [IP *Bàng (mè) hòe mè=pi*].  
 ‘You made sago yesterday.’

The similarity behaviour in relative clauses extends beyond the core arguments, however, and we can see from the following sentences that morphosyntactically oblique nominals can behave the same in relativisations as do the core arguments. This is true for both unmarked

adjuncts, such as the location in (34), and overtly marked obliques, such as the instrument in (36). These two sentences also show that pre- or postverbal position does not affect the structure of the relative clause, or the nominal's eligibility to head it.

Adjunct head: goal oblique

- (33) *Bàme* [RC *bàng* *nì=re* ]=*ing a bàme bápáli*.  
village yesterday 1SG=go=the village big  
'The village I went to yesterday is a big village.'

[IP *Bàng nì=re bàme* ]  
'I went to a village yesterday.'

Adjunct head: (inner) location

- (34) *Te Máwo* *bàme* [RC *jéng* *nì* *pe=tanghang* ]=*ing*  
Skou Mabo village place 1SG 3SG.F=face=DEIC  
'Skou Mabo is the village I was born in.'

[IP *Nì pe=tanghang bàme* ].  
'I was born in the village.'

Adjunct head: (outer) location

- (35) *Ung a pe=te* *bàme* [RC *jéng* *félangro* *te* *lí* *nì=li* ].  
now 3SG.F=3SG.F.go village place year 3SG.F.go dance 1SG=do  
'Now she's gone to the village that I danced at last year.'

[IP *Lí nì=li bàme* ]  
'I danced in the village.'

Adjunct head: instrument

- (36) *Tanglilong* [RC *ró* *pe=w-á* *e* *tue* ]=*wi a topó*.  
scissors cloth 3SG.F=3SG.F-cut 3SG.F.be 3SG.F.do=this blunt  
'These scissors that she used to cut the cloth are blunt.'

[IP *Tanglilong=pa ró pe=wá e tue* ].  
'She's cutting the cloth with the scissors.'

In the relative clause involving an instrument there is no morphological clue to the fact that the head of the relative clause serves as an instrument in that clause. Only the facts that the scissors are not the (subject) argument indexed on the verb, and that a separate overt object is present, let us know that the head of the relative clause must have another role in the clause other than subject or object, and so must be an oblique. The instrumental marker *=pa* is absent both from the noun in the main clause, and from the relative clause (there is no resumptive marker for the instrument). The instrumental relative clause is thus identical to the locational relative clause seen in (34) and (35), and only constraints of real-world plausibility allow us to interpret 'scissors' as an instrument, and not a location.

There is an alternative relative clause construction available for locations when they serve as the head, involving the use of *jéng* 'place' apparently as a relativiser, initially in the relative clause. The following cleft construction shows the use of the locational relative clause with *jéng*; the non-relativised sentence that corresponds to the relative clause is shown as well.

- (37) *Te Máwo* *bàme* [RC *jéng* *nì* *pe=tanghang* ].  
Skou Mabo village place 1SG 3SG.F=face  
'Skou Mabo is the village I was born in.'

[<sub>IP</sub> *Nì pe=tanghang bàme* ].  
 ‘I was born in the village.’

(In order to express the English notion of ‘be born’ in Skou, we are forced to encode an explicit feminine subject. There is no monovalent lexical item corresponding to the English translation, but there is a conventionalised use of an inexplicit third person singular feminine subject in this case, obviously referring to the speaker’s mother. This is very similar in broad outline to the adjunct nominal predicates described in chapter 14, but without the adjunct nominal.)

An alternative coding without *jéng* sounds less fluent to Skou ears. With non-oblique participants this sort of dummy head is not required in clefts, and its presence is almost a guarantor of unacceptability. The following sentence is essentially not grammatical with *bà* in the position indicated, and while some ‘hardened informants’ (those who have worked with me for longer) might judge it as acceptable most speakers will not.

(38) *Ke=ing a ke=bà* [<sub>RC</sub> (\*’ *bà*) *nì ke=ká* ].  
 3SG.NF=the 3SG.NF=person person 1SG 3SG.NF=hit  
 ‘He’s the man who hit me.’

[<sub>IP</sub> *Ke=bà(=ing a) nì ke=ká* ].  
 ‘The man hit me.’

There are clearly different strategies for cleft constructions for obliques as opposed to core arguments, showing that even though they are all eligible for relativisation, there are differences between them in terms of their relativisability. The morphologically least marked relativisations are those that involve subjects, objects, and subcategorised-for obliques, while locative adjuncts require the most marking. There is a clear hierarchy of relativisability, with the least-disrupted clauses being those with objects as heads, then those with subjects, obliques, and instrumental adjuncts, and finally locational adjuncts as the most morphosyntactically disrupted participants to have as the head of a relative clause.

### 8.3.2 Pre-nominal modification: habitual action

Some relative clauses are not so easily characterised as involving a grammatical function, but rather describe a typical or habitual function. These relative clauses appear pre-nominally. The following example exemplifies these relative clauses. Here the string *ku te ti e ti* ‘give birth’ modifies *yano* ‘work pre-nominally.

(39) *Ku te=ti e ti yano nì=lóe i*.  
 ‘child’ 3PL=3PL.do 3PL.be 3PL.do work 1SG=work be  
 ‘I worked as a midwife.’

Not all habitual descriptors are prenominal, as the following example shows:

(40) *pe=bà nà fèng-fèng pe=òe e tue-tue*  
 3SG.F=person play bad-RED 3SG.F=play 3SG.F.be 3SG.F.do-RED  
 ‘a naughty girl’

This form of modification is not extremely common, and all occurrences are with stative, permanent descriptions, not punctual events. The infrequency of its occurrence, however, means that any generalisations we can draw about the restrictions on its appearance must remain tentative.

## 8.3.3 Internal relative clause

In addition to the relative clause types described above, in which the modifying element appears post-nominally, it is also possible to form a relative clause with the head noun in its normal position in the clause inside the relative clause. This is only possible when the head of the relative clause is an object, and is specific. The object appears in its normal clause-internal position. Other potentially clause-internal elements of a sentence, such as instruments, goals or subjects, may not appear in this construction, allowing only the post-nominal relative clause construction seen in 8.3.1.

An example of an internal relative clause can be seen in (41); compare with (43), which shows the same sentence with a post-nominal relative clause. The sentence ‘You made sago yesterday’, with no subordinate clauses involved, is shown in (42), for comparison.

Object head of internal relative clause

- (41) [RC *Bàng hòe m̀=pi*] =ing a mong tue nè?  
 yesterday sago 2SG=2SG.do=the F.sit 3SG.F.do Q  
 ‘Where’s the sago you made yesterday?’

- (42) [IP *Bàng (m̀) hòe m̀=pi*].

Object head of external (postnominal) relative clause

- (43) *Hòe* [RC *bàng m̀=pi*] =ing mong tue nè.  
 sago yesterday 2SG=2SG.do=DEIC F.sit 3SG.F.do Q  
 ‘Where’s the sago you made yesterday?’

Further evidence that *hòe* ‘sago’, and not simply the whole clause, is the argument of the main clause is that the verbal agreement is with this argument. The clause above has a feminine noun heading the relative clause, but if we were to use a non-feminine noun a different agreement pattern on the main clause verbs would result, as in (44). Here we can see that, in contrast to (41), the unmarked forms of the verbs *moeng* ‘sit’ and *li* ‘do’ must be used; (45) shows that feminine inflection on these verbs is not grammatical.

Non-feminine object head

- (44) [RC *Bàng pa m̀= b-é m-á moe poe*] =ing a  
 yesterday water 2SG=2SG-get 2SG-carry return 2SG.come=the  
*moeng li nè?*  
 sit do Q  
 ‘Where’s the water you fetched yesterday?’

- (45) \* [RC *Bàng pa m̀= bé má moe poe*] ing a mong tue nè?  
 F.sit 3SG.F.do Q

- (46) [IP *Bàng (m̀) pa m̀= bé má moe poe*].  
 ‘Yesterday you fetched water.’

This structure is not grammatical with arguments other than objects serving as the head of the relative clause. When demonstrably internal to the clause, such as when preceded by a time expression, a subject nominal may not be relativised in this manner.

Subject as internal head.

- (47) \* [RC *bàng* *pe=ueme* *hòe* *pe=tue*] =ing a  
 yesterday 3SG.F=woman sago 3SG.F=3SG.F.do=the  
*mong tue nè?*  
 F.sit 3SG.F.do Q  
 ‘Where’s the woman who made the sago yesterday?’

This sentence will be judged grammatical if the head, *peueme*, is simply placed preceding the relative clause, rather than internal to it, as in (48).

- (48) *Pe=ueme* [RC *bàng hòe pe=tue*] =ing a *mong tue nè?*  
 ‘Where’s the woman who made the sago yesterday?’

Similarly obliques and adjuncts of all kinds may not be relativised with internal relative clauses. We can thus see that the identity of the head, in terms of the grammatical function that it bears inside the relative clause, is important in determining the possibilities for relativisation that are available to it. The postnominal relative clause option is available to all nominals, but only objects are allowed to appear in internal relative clauses.

#### 8.3.4 Headless relative clauses

There are basically no headless relative clauses in Skou. Instead, a semantically underspecified noun must be used in sentences in which no referential noun is referred to. This is similar to the way that English uses ‘one’ (*the running one*). In this context *bà* is used for animates, paralleling the use of *bà=* with adjectives that refer to an animate noun. If the referent is not animate, then the general episteme *ya* will be found. For instance, ‘Get the one that I made.’ would be expressed as in (49), with a pleonastic nominal filling the head-of-NP position, and not with a genuinely empty head, as seen in (50).

- (49) *Mè* [NP *ya* [RC *nì=li*] =ing a] *mè=b-é*.  
 2SG thing 1SG=do=the 2SG=2SG-get  
 ‘Get the one that I made.’

- (50) \* *mè* [NP Ø [RC *nì=li*] =ing a] *mè=b-é*

When questioning a subject, however, that is animate, there is a headless option, using the question word ‘who’ in its clitic function. Thus, for ‘I’m looking for the person who ate my sago.’ there are two options. In the first option, the relative clause is headed, and follows the English quite closely in structure.

Headed relative clause

- (51) *Nì* [NP *ke=bà* [RC *hòe-nì=ne* *ke=k-ang*] =ing a]  
 1SG 3SG.NF=person sago-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-eat=the  
*nì=yú i li.*  
 1SG=search be do  
 ‘I’m looking for the person who ate my sago.’

An alternative to this is to use the interrogative clitic with a headless relative clause, seen in (52), and to allow the epistemic classificatory functions of the interrogative to specify the semantic category of the head.

## Interrogative proclitic

- (52) *Nì* [NP Ø [RC *hòe-nì=ne* *bá=k-ang* ] =*ing a* ]  
 1SG sago-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT who=3SG.NF-eat=the  
*nì=yú i li.*  
 1SG=search be do  
 ‘I’m looking for the one who ate my sago.’

The absence of any interrogative clitic for non-animate referents means that there is no morphological means to code any information about their class on the verb, and so a headless relative clause construction is not available for these nouns. The following sentences show that a normally headed relative clause is acceptable, (53), as is a relative clause with a dummy head, (54). A relative clause with no nominal head, however, is not grammatical. This is true whether it is coded with a normal subject proclitic, as shown in (55), and definitely so if we attempt to cliticise *ya* ‘what’ onto the verb, in (56). In the first case the clause suffers from a lack of reference, and in the second it is ungrammatical because there is no clitic form (the best approximation is *ya=*) that can fill the subject proclitic position.

- (53) *Fu* [RC *nì ke=ká* ]=*ing a bápáli.*  
 rain 1SG 3SG.NF-hit=the big  
 ‘The rain which soaked me was big.’
- (54) *Ya* [RC *nì ke=ká* ]=*ing a bápáli.*  
 thing 1SG 3SG.NF-hit=the big  
 ‘The thing that soaked me was big.’
- (55) \* Ø [RC *nì ke=ká* ]=*ing a bápáli.*  
 1SG 3SG.NF-hit=the big
- (56) \* Ø [RC *nì ya=ká* ]=*ing a bápáli.*  
 1SG what=hit=the big

This difference in relativisation strategies demonstrates another aspect of the asymmetry between the two major noun categories, animate and inanimate, which cross-cuts the feminine vs. non-feminine gender distinction (see chapter 10). While it is possible for an animate noun to appear in a genuinely headless relative clause, it must either leave have some semantically loose ‘filler’ head, or else have an interrogative pronoun appear in its place as an agreement marker inside the relative clause. This means that the second strategy is an option available only to subjects.

- (57) *Rópu=eng nì=wé leng te-te*  
 book=the 1SG-get.F give 3SG.F.go-RED  
*ke=angku-nì=ne* [RC *ke=li i li Tembapúra* ].  
 3SG.NF=child-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 3SG.NF=do be do Tembapúra  
 ‘I’m sending this book to my child who’s in Tembapúra.’  
 (here [ɛ̃] is an extremely reduced form of =*ing a* ‘the’)

We must thus distinguish the following different grammatical categories in a structural account of the variation found in relative clauses:

- location
- object
- animate

The following section discusses the occurrence of relative clauses modifying nouns that are modified by other means.

### 8.3.5 Relative clauses and other modifiers in the same NP

When a relative clause and another non-demonstrative modifier both appear as modifiers in the same NP, then the order of these elements is fixed. This construction is found only rarely, and is not preferred as a means of supplying information about the nominal, but it nonetheless possible. If there is a demonstrative it must, of course, be final in the NP, following the nominal and all its modifiers, but the relative clause must also be final in a string of modifiers. In the following sentence we can see that both the adjective *bápáli* ‘big’ and the relative clause *lópa âi ke li ko moeng* both modify *pá* ‘house’, and the order of these elements is fixed; some of the possible ungrammatical orderings of the elements of the NP are shown in (59) - (61), contrasting with the single grammatical sequence shown in (58).

- (58) *Ni=re-re*  
 1SG=go-RED  
 [NP *pá* *bápáli* [RC *lópa* *âi* *ke=li=ko* *moeng*] =*fue a*].  
 house big earlier father 3SG.NF=do=OBV sit that  
 ‘I want to go to that house that my father used to live in.’

- (59) \* *pá fue lópa âi ke li ko moeng*  
 (60) \* *pá bápáli lópa âi ke li ko moeng*  
 (61) \* *pá lópa âi ke li ko moeng bápáli fue a*

Even with shorter relative clauses the same conditions hold, showing that this is not simply a prosodic constraint based on the moraic weight of the modifiers.

### 8.3.6 Relative clauses without verbs

In languages for which there is not a copular verb, we can often observe differences between verbal and non-verbal clauses beyond simply the presence or absence of a verb. The syntax of non-verbal clauses is discussed elsewhere (see 8.6), but here we shall consider the combination of non-verbal predicates and relative clauses.

In some cases there are no significant differences between verbal and non-verbal predicates in relative clause formation. For example, the Indonesian phrases in (62) - (64) demonstrate the equivalence of verbal and non-verbal (PP and NP) predicates in relative clause structure in that language.

- (62) orang [RC yang tidur di rumah]  
 person REL sleep LOC house  
 ‘the person who is sleeping in the house’
- (62) orang [RC yang di rumah]  
 person REL LOC house  
 ‘the person who is in the house’
- (62) orang [RC yang guru]  
 person REL teacher  
 ‘the person who is a/the teacher’

In Skou the differences between verbal and non-verbal clauses impose strict constraints on relative clause formation. While there are a variety of ways of forming relative clauses with

verbal heads, it is not possible for a nominal to function as the predicate in a relative clause. Thus, although both the non-verbal and verbal clauses in (63) are grammatical, they cannot be combined with the nominal predicate in the relative clause (the verbal predicate may appear in a relative clause, with the nominal *kurù* predicating the main clause – compare with (30)).

- (63) *Ke=balèng=ing a kurù, ke=ti-ti báng i li.*  
 3SG.NF=man=the teacher 3SG.NF=3SG.NF.go-RED beach be do  
 ‘The man is a teacher, he’s going to the beach.’
- (64) \**ke=balèng [RC kurù]=ing a ke=ti-ti báng i li*  
 3SG.NF=man teacher =the 3SG.NF=3SG.NF.go-RED beach be do  
 ‘The man who is a teacher is going to the beach.’
- (65) *Ke=balèng [RC ke=ti-ti báng i li]=ing a kurù.*  
 3SG.NF=man 3SG.NF=3SG.NF.go-RED beach be do =the teacher  
 ‘The man who is going to the beach is a teacher.’

Note that, given the absence of adpositions in Skou, there are no equivalents of (62), with PP predicates. In order to translate (62), a verbal predicate must be used, as shown in (66).

- (66) *Ke=balèng [RC ke=moeng pá]=ing a*  
 3SG.NF=man 3SG.NF=sit house =the  
 ‘that man who is in the house’
- (67) \**ke=balèng [RC pá]=ing a*  
 3SG.NF=man house =the  
 ‘that man in the house’

Although nominals cannot serve as the predicate in a relative clause, they may appear in a sequence of conjoined clauses, such as (63). Nominal predicates are thus beyond the grammaticality of relative clauses, but simply represent a grammaticalised extreme of the preference for main clause predication and sequencing, rather than having material presented in subordinate clauses. This will be described in the following section.

### 8.3.6 The use and avoidance of relative clauses

The preceding sections have described the three different kinds of relative clauses, and the syntactic and pragmatic environments in which each of them can and should be used. It should be pointed out that, while the external, postnominal relative clause is the most common and most productive of these relative clause types, it is also the type that is most likely to be avoided.

If we return to the first example of a relative clause that we saw in (23), and then embed it in its textual context, we have the sentence seen in (68).

- (68) [<sub>NP</sub> *Ke=angku-nì=ne* [<sub>RC</sub> *hòe ke=k-ang* ] =ing ]  
 3SG.NF=child-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT sago 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-eat = DEIC  
*tang=pa ke=ti k-o=ko*  
 canoe=INSTR 3SG.NF=3SG.NF.go 3SG.NF-seaward=OBV  
*móe ke=ké li.*  
 fish 3SG.NF=catch.fish  
 ‘That son of mine who ate (the) sago went out in a canoe to catch fish.’

While an example of naturally-occurring speech, the content of this extract is more likely to be expressed as shown in (69); here what was the relative clause in (68) is coded as an independent clause, which is followed by the clause that corresponds to the main clause of (68).

- (69) *Ke=angku-nì=ne hòè ke=k-ang.*  
 3SG.NF=child-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT sago 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-eat  
*Ke=k-ang, tang=pa ke=ti k-o=ko*  
 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-eat canoe=INSTR 3SG.NF=3SG.NF.go 3SG.NF-seaward=OBV  
*móe ke=ké li.*  
 fish 3SG.NF=catch.fish  
 ‘That son of mine ate (some) sago. After eating, he went out in a canoe to catch fish.’

A real textual example showing the dispreference for relative clauses is shown in (70) (taken from Text 5 in appendix 4). Here the material in the second line could have been more economically coded as a relative clause modifying the topic, *tangwáue ku* ‘bush turkey eggs’, or possibly even two; (71) shows one possible (but not naturally-attested) rearrangement of the material from the text. While grammatically acceptable, this was not the speaker’s choice when presenting the text, indicating a preference for sequential clauses, rather than subordinate clauses, in narrative.

- (70) a. *Tangwáue ku ne=kúe ne hángpeng.*  
 bush.turkey egg 1PL=dig 1PL.be bush  
 ‘We’d dig up bush turkey eggs in the bush.’
- b. *Tangwáue ku, ne=te=ko ne=kúe=ko kúe=ko,*  
 bush.turkey egg 1PL=1PL.go=OBV 1PL=dig=OBV dig=OBV  
 ‘Bush turkey eggs, we’d go and dig them, dig them up, and, ...’
- c. *ku=ing mong=ing,*  
 egg=DEIC sit.F=DEIC  
 ‘those eggs, there they were, ...’
- d. *a ku k-a=ko ne=r-oe e.*  
 uh egg 1SG-carry=OBV 1PL=1PL-get.PL 3SG.F.be  
 ‘well, I’d take those eggs, we’d collect them all.’
- Possible reformulation of (70) using a relative clause
- (71) a. *Tangwáue ku ne=kúe ne hángpeng.*  
 bush.turkey egg 1PL=dig 1PL.be bush  
 ‘We’d dig up bush turkey eggs in the bush.’
- b. *Tangwáue ku [RC ne=kúe ]=ing a,*  
 bush.turkey egg 1PL=dig =the  
 ‘The bush turkey eggs that we’d dig up, ...’
- c. *nì k-a=ko ne=r-oe e.*  
 1SG 1SG-carry=OBV 1PL=1PL-get.PL 3SG.F.be  
 ‘I’d take those eggs, we’d collect them all.’

Another example showing a more frequent textual encoding is presented in (72), using the clause seen earlier in (33). While grammatical, the biclausal presentation in (72) is a more usual way of expressing the same information.

Adjunct head: goal oblique

- (72) *Bàme [RC bàng nì=re ]=ing a bàme bápáli.*  
 village yesterday 1SG=go=the village big  
 ‘The village I went to yesterday is a big village.’

- (73) [IP *Bàng* *nì=re* *bàme* ]. *Bàme=ing a* *bàme* *bápáli*.  
 yesterday 1SG=go village village=the village big  
 ‘I went to a village yesterday. It was a big village.’

In short, while various relative clause structures exist, and while the postnominal relative clause is the more unmarked ‘citation’ relative clause, there is a tendency not to use relative clauses and their subordinate structures in Skou.

We have seen that there is a variety of different ways to form relative clauses in Skou, but that not all relative clauses may be formed with every kind of nominal. The restrictions on relative clause formation are partly dependent on the semantic characterisation of the head of the relative clause, partly dependent on the semantic characterisation that the relative clause gives to the head noun, partly dependent on the function that nominal plays inside the relative clause (locational obliques require a complementiser *jéng*), and also partly dependent on the environment inside the NP in which the relative clause is found. The internal relative clause strategy is the most restricted, appearing only with heads that bear the grammatical function ‘object’ in the relative clause. We can justify treating these all as variants of the ‘relative clause’ construction on the basis of their shared similarity: all require, more or less obligatorily, a demonstrative at the end of the relative clause.

#### 8.4 Compounds

There are a number of what might be thought of as ‘lexicalised’ expressions. In most cases these compounds are best thought of as phrasal compounds, and not lexical ones, in that they do not have the structure of a single word, but rather that of a relative clause(-like) unit. For instance, in (74) there is no evidence for the sort of phonological coherence that is associated with single words. On the other hand, there is no demonstrative to close the relative clause, which we would expect in purely compositional syntactically-formed relative clauses.

- (74) [NP Ø [RC *rí* *tópo* *rue* *bi* ] ]  
 wood carve stand ??  
 ‘teacher’

The following example shows a compound used as part of an adjunct nominal construction, though the fact that the verb involved is the generic light verb *li* ‘do’ weakens the generality of this observation.

- (75) [N+ *ya* *po* ] *ke=li*  
 thing carve 3SG.NF=do  
 ‘write’

- (76) [N+ *ya* *po* ]  
 thing carve  
 ‘writing’

Further examples of complex adjunct nominal constructions not made up of lexicalised compounds can be found in chapter 14.

#### 8.5 Special modification: quantifiers

Most modifiers can grammatically co-occur inside the same NP, modifying the same nominal head, though occurrences of this happening in non-elicited texts are rare. There are exceptions, however: quantifiers *hìng* ‘other’ and *fátà* ‘all’ cannot occur with any other modification in the

NP. To illustrate this, although both (77) and (78) are grammatical, showing a quantifier or an adjective modifying a noun, it is not possible for the two to both appear in the same NP.

- (77) *Nì=re-re pá hìng li.*  
1SG=go-RED house other do  
'I want to go to another house.'
- (78) *Nì=re-re pá bápáli li.*  
1SG=go-RED house big do  
'I want to go to a big house.'
- (79) \* *nì=re-re pá hìng bápáli li.*  
1SG=go-RED house other big do
- (80) \* *nì=re-re pá bápáli hìng li.*  
1SG=go-RED house big other do

The quantifiers *fátà* behaves the same as *hìng*, in that it cannot appear in an NP with any other modifiers. *Nawò*, on the other hand, can cooccur with other modifiers in the same NP, as in (81).

- (81) *Nì=re-re pá bápáli nawò li.*  
1SG=go-RED house big many do  
'I want to go to many big houses.'

Another major difference between *fátà* and *nawò* is the ability of *fátà* to appear in a position external to the NP that it quantifiers. This is discussed in 13.3.2.1.

## 8.6 Predicate nominals

When a nominal is predicative, there is no change to the structure of the NP. This can be judged by comparing the following pairs of sentences, showing referential and predicative uses of the same (or nearly same) NPs.

Plain nominal: argument and predicate

- (82) *Naké boeboe ke=li.*  
dog growl 3SG.NF=do  
'The dog growled.'

- (83) *Ke=ing a naké.*  
3SG.NF=the dog  
'That one's a dog.'

Modified noun: argument and predicate

- (84) *Naké máki=ing ingéong ke=yú-yú i li.*  
dog big=DEIC cat 3SG.NF=chase-RED be do  
'That big dog is chasing a cat.'

- (85) *Nì kóeng ke=k-ang=ing a naké máki=fue.*  
1SG tooth 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-eat=the dog big=that  
'The one that bit me was that big dog.'

The only differences that can arise come about when the nominal is used with an inchoative sense, in which case the verb *li* ‘do’ is used as well as the nominal.<sup>53</sup> Compare the following clauses, both with a nominal predicate. In the first the predicate is stative, and there is no verbal element in the clause. In the second the semantics of the state portion of the predicate is unchanged, but with an inchoative sense, and so a verb must be used.

- (86) *Ke kurù.*  
3SG.NF teacher  
‘He’s a teacher.’
- (87) *Ke kurù ke=li.*  
3SG.NF teacher 3SG.NF=do  
‘He’s (already) become a teacher.’ (= ‘He’s a teacher.’)

When used with a verb, and this inchoative sense, the clause may show all the tense, aspect and mood alternations that are found with verbal clauses. Compare the following possibilities with a purely nominal predicate and with a light verb in the clause as well.

Table 134. TAM coding with nominal predicates

|     | Nominal        | TAM        | Nominal + verb             | Sense with verbal auxiliary:       |
|-----|----------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| [1] | <i>Ke kurù</i> | past       | <i>Ke kurù ke=li</i>       | ‘He had been a teacher.’           |
| [2] | <i>Ke kurù</i> | habitual   | <i>Ke kurù ke=li</i>       | ‘He has become a teacher.’         |
| [1] | <i>Ke kurù</i> | intent     | <i>Ke kurù ke=li-li</i>    | ‘He will become a teacher.’        |
|     | (verbal)       | desire     | <i>Ke kurù ke=li i li</i>  | ‘He wants to become a teacher.’    |
| [2] | <i>Ke kurù</i> | continuous | <i>Ke kurù ke=li-li li</i> | ‘He is becoming a teacher.’        |
|     | (verbal)       | perfective | <i>Ke kurù ke=li loeng</i> | ‘He had already become a teacher.’ |

Code for the readings of the nominal sentences in the left-hand column above:

- [1]: ‘He was a teacher.’  
[2]: ‘He is a teacher’

Further details about the morphosyntax of predicative nominals can be found in 17.1.

## 8.7 Place names

There are many named places in the Skou world, especially if it lies on the coast. This means that, in addition to the developed system of directionals and direction-indicating verbs, a person can accurately indicate a direction of travel or the relative location of an event simply by naming the place.

The place names are listed here as part of the description of NPs since their external distribution parallels that of NPs, with whatever restrictions that apply to the positioning and coordination of other NPs applying equally well to place names. They deserve special treatment in that they are restricted in terms of the modification they can receive, appearing only with deictic markers and demonstratives, and not with other typical NP modifiers such as have been described in this chapter, nor with possessive modification. They are, then, elements that can replace entire NPs, but not entire DPs, since they too are open to demonstrative modification.

<sup>53</sup> This is identical to the use of the same light verb with inchoative adjectives, as described in 5.3 and 7.2.1.

From *Tangwáto* in the west to *Pa ílong* in the east the land is all owned by Skou people, but beyond that there are names for many broad places that are culturally relevant to the Skou people in both directions, especially where there are social ties through marriage. The following list, far from exhaustive, shows in indication of the Place name detail and naming forms used by the Skou people.

Table 135. Place names in the Skou area (west to east)

| Location       | Skou                                  | Description of location                                        | Cultural notes                                                             |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Far west       | <i>Te Bà Lea</i>                      | Biak                                                           | there were strong trade connections between Biak and the Humboldt Bay area |
|                | <i>Te Bà Lato</i>                     | Serui, Yapen                                                   | many mythological references                                               |
|                | <i>Te Lángfa</i>                      | Tanah Merah, Tabla                                             | trading links                                                              |
|                | <i>Te Lùng</i>                        | Ormu                                                           | marriage ties                                                              |
| Immediate west | <i>Te Purà</i>                        | Kayu Batu village in Jayapura bay                              | marriage ties                                                              |
|                | <i>Te Mélong</i>                      | Kayu Pulau village in Jayapura bay                             | marriage ties                                                              |
|                | <i>Nofé</i>                           | Jayapura valley                                                |                                                                            |
|                | <i>Te Húngfa</i>                      | Sentani                                                        | both the ethnic group and now also the airport town                        |
|                | <i>Àbi</i>                            | Abepura valley                                                 |                                                                            |
|                | <i>Te Téme</i>                        | Nafri                                                          | traditionally relations were not good with the Nafri                       |
|                | <i>Te Pa</i>                          | Tobati                                                         | strong marriage ties                                                       |
| Skou lands     | <i>Te Lóngpa</i>                      | Enggros village                                                | many marriages with this village                                           |
|                | <i>Fàngri</i>                         | beach just west of Tanjung Jar at the east end of Humboldt Bay | western edge of Skou land                                                  |
|                | <i>Tangwáto</i>                       | Cape that marks the east boundary of Humboldt Bay              | Skou Yambe land                                                            |
|                | <i>Pa úerong</i>                      | stream flowing to the sea from the Tanjung Jar cliffs          |                                                                            |
|                | <i>Tangráme</i>                       | closer cliffs of Tanjung Jar                                   |                                                                            |
|                | <i>Pa bípa</i>                        | river at Skou Yambe                                            |                                                                            |
|                | <i>Pa rang</i>                        | creek west of Skou Yambe                                       |                                                                            |
|                | <i>Te Tángpe</i>                      | Skou Yambe                                                     | most populous Skou village                                                 |
|                | <i>Te Máwo</i>                        | Skou Mabo                                                      | most prestigious Skou village                                              |
|                | <i>Pa pípa</i>                        | river at the eastern end of Skou Mabo                          |                                                                            |
|                | <i>Nàho</i>                           | beach between Skou Mabo and Skou Sai                           |                                                                            |
| <i>Léli</i>    | beach immediately seaward of Skou Sai |                                                                |                                                                            |

|            |                   |                                                   |                                                                                                       |
|------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|            | <i>Te Bapúbí</i>  | Skou Sai                                          | most eastward of the three villages; smallest in population                                           |
|            | <i>Pa púbí</i>    | river at Skou Sai                                 |                                                                                                       |
|            | <i>Pa ílong</i>   | Tami river                                        | southern and eastern boundary of Skou land                                                            |
| Hinterland | <i>Te Húele</i>   | Sangke clan (< Nyao Nemo)                         | Moved to Nyao-Kono in PNG in 1969                                                                     |
|            | <i>Te Nóemo</i>   | Nyao Nemo (on the Tami River, now in PNG)         | A Nyao group                                                                                          |
|            | <i>Te Bà Kófo</i> | Sko Kofo (close to the modern border, now in PNG) | One of the Nyao groups                                                                                |
|            | <i>Te Pòeng</i>   | Skofro (the old village for modern Tapos, in PNG) | Moved to PNG in the early 1960s                                                                       |
|            | <i>Jáwung</i>     | Nyao (now in PNG)                                 | General name for the ethnic group in three villages                                                   |
| East       | <i>Te Óeti</i>    | Wutung                                            | many marriage ties, especially with Skou Sai                                                          |
|            | <i>Fáwi báng</i>  | beach just to the east of Wutung village          |                                                                                                       |
|            | <i>Te Yákó</i>    | Yako                                              |                                                                                                       |
|            | <i>Te Mòru</i>    | Moso / Musu                                       | Nyao people who moved to the coast from the hills in the 1950s; linguistically assimilating to Wutung |
|            | <i>Te Lú</i>      | Waromo                                            | most populous village on the Vanimo coast, halfway between Vanimo and the border                      |
|            | <i>Te Yong</i>    | Vanimo, Lido                                      | politically dominant village in the Vanimo area, just west of modern Vanimo town                      |
|            | <i>Máke</i>       | Vanimo headland, (modern) Vanimo town             | Same political and linguistic ties as Lido, traditionally                                             |

As stated above, the list of names given in table 135xx is not intended to be exhaustive. It is simply a sample of the kind of detail in which the surrounding area is known, and the level of categorisation that is made for the land. This list of terms could be expanded manyfold for the areas listed as Skou lands, particularly regarding the number of terminological differences that are made along the coast near *Tangwáto*, where in some areas the name designating the beach can change every ten or twenty metres, depending on the degree of detail that a speaker feels is necessary.

## **8.8 Summary of noun phrase syntax**

As we have seen, NP syntax in Skou is not overly complex. There is little, if any, variation within a clause in terms of the relative order of its elements, and the only morphological marking that is found is for possession (see the next chapter): there are no special markers of adjunction, no linkers, no markers of subordination.

The only case marking found on core nominals involves the optional ergative pronoun, formed by means of the third person pronominals (see chapter 6). The pronominal clitics are also used to specify gender on the head noun, in some cases optionally, in some cases obligatorily; this is discussed in greater detail in chapter 10. Other morphological marking that can be obligatory is the marking of possession on the small set of ‘inalienable’ lexemes, detailed in the following chapter.

## 9 Possession

This chapter deals primarily with the marking of possession inside the NP – the translation equivalents of ‘his house’ and similar constructions. Since phrasal possession (‘He has a house.’) uses the same morphosyntax, and since Skou does not have a lexical item translating ‘have’, it is also dealt with here, following the account of phrasal possession. Finally various forms of external possession are found in Skou, constructions in which the marking for possessor appears outside the NP that is possessed, and they are also documented.

### 9.1 Structure of possession

Possession is a head-marking construction in Skou, as would be predicted from the overall typology of the language. A possessive phrase has the possessor, if nominal or overt pronominal, preceding the possessum, and suffixal marking on the possessum showing agreement with the possessor with dedicated genitive and dative morphemes. This structure is shown in (1).

- (1) (NP<sub>POSSESSOR</sub>)<sub>pers, num, gdr</sub> N<sub>POSSESSUM-GEN</sub><sub>pers:num:gdr</sub> =DAT<sub>pers:num:gdr</sub>

When the possessor is nominal, it must appear in the pre-head position. When the possessor is pronominal this is optional, but still preferred. An example of this sort of possession is shown in (2). Here the head noun *peangku* ‘daughter’ appears suffixed with the possessive string *-ké=ke*, which marks *peangku* as possessed, and indicates the person, number and gender of the possessor. The nominal possessor appears pre-nominally, and is not marked in any way.

- (2) *Theo pe=angku-ké=ke*  
 Theo 3SG.F=child-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT  
 ‘Theo’s daughter’

A pronominal possessor may optionally be present in the pre-head position, but even if this is the case the possessive morphology is still obligatorily suffixed to the possessum.

- (3) a. *ke pe=angku-ké=ke*  
 3SG.NF 3SG.F=child-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT  
 ‘his daughter’
- b. *pe=angku-ké=ke*  
 3SG.F=child-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT  
 ‘his daughter’
- c.\* *ke pe=angku*  
 3SG.NF 3SG.F=child  
 ‘his daughter’

The following section details more specific facts of possessive constructions depending on whether the possessum is an alienable or inalienable noun.

## 9.2 Alienable possession

Alienable nouns are those, the majority of nominals in the languages, which can appear without any indication of possession. When they are possessed the genitive suffixation and dative clitics, used together, is sufficient morphology to indicate possession. This is generally adequate when the possessor is pronominal, though more often, especially if there is some degree of emphasis on the identity nominal, a free pronoun indexing the possessor is also used preceding the possessed nominal as well.

- (4) *pá-pè=pe*  
house-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
'her house'
- (5) *pe pá-pè=pe*  
3SG.F house-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
'her house' / 'her house'

Nominal possession follows this same morphosyntactic pattern, with the possessor preceding the possessum, which is then affixed with genitive and dative suffixes. In the following example *te=* specifies 'children', not Theo.

- (6) *Theo te=angku-ké=ke*  
Theo 3PL=child-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT  
'Theo's children'

Stacked pronominal marking sequences on the one nominal can arise when the possessor is specified with a gender marking pronoun, and the NP is summarised with a pronoun. The possessive structure, however, is identical. Compare the above sentences with the superficially more complicated one below, and then examine the structures representing them.

- (7) *Pe=ueme te=yá-pe-pè=pe te*  
3SG.F=woman 3PL=sister-3SG.F.DAT-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT 3PL  
*nì te=fì.*  
1SG 3PL=see.3PL  
'The woman's sisters saw me.'

The most basic possessive structure is simply a noun affixed to show the pronominal features of the possessor. This basic structure can be expanded, seen in both (5)' and (8), to include a pre-nominal possessor.

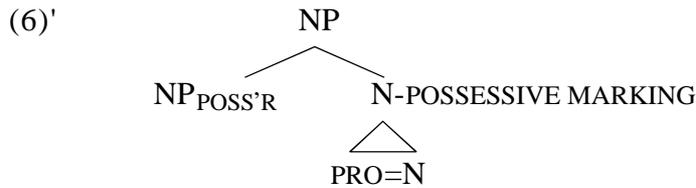
- (4)' [[ [N-GEN=DAT] ] ]
- (5)' [[POSS'R [N-GEN=DAT] ] ]

Structure of the possessive constructions in (4) - (5)

- (8)
- 

- (8)' [[POSS'R [N-GEN=DAT] ] ]

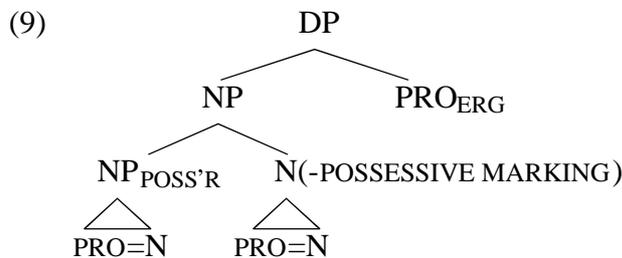
Structure of the possessive constructions in (6)



The phrase seen in example (7) is cast in the same pattern, though exigencies of clausal syntax require there to be more overt markers of pronominal information. The possessor noun itself is specified with a pronominal element, as is the possessum. The possessum is inalienable (see 9.3), and so takes triple marking to show agreement with the possessor, and the whole NP *peueme te yá pe pè pe* is summarised with the 3PL pronoun *te*, which also appears as an agreement clitic on the verb.

(7)' [[POSS'R [N-GEN=DAT] ] PRO<sub>SUMMARY</sub>] [PRO] CLITIC=V

Structure of the NP in (7)



Crucially, the appearance of multiple pronouns does not necessarily mark iterative possession, although initially that might be the impression gained. Rather, the excess of pronouns in the NP is simply another sign of the multiple uses to which pronouns are being put in Skou, grammaticalising in this phrase as markers of possession distinguishing alienable and inalienable – see the following section), as a specifier of the gender of the noun, and as a case marker for the NP as a whole. A genuine case of iterativity in possession marking is found with certain inalienable nouns, described in the following section.

### 9.3 Inalienable possession

A small set of nouns must be analysed as appearing in a construction for possession that does not conform to the description provided in the preceding sections. An example is that seen in (10).

(10) *yá-pe-pè=pe*  
 sister-3SG.F.DAT-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 'her sister'

(10)' \* *yá-pè=pe*  
 sister-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 'her sister'

The morphosyntactic points by which these inalienable possessive constructions differ from 'normal' alienable possessive constructions are:

- the nominal roots cannot occur without the dative pronoun being suffixed on them;

- to indicate possession these affixed stems additionally take the normal suffixation for genitive and dative, just as is found on all possessed nouns

Because the nouns that show this sort of behaviour are mainly kinterms, and so high on the (cross-linguistically definable) scale of inalienable to alienable possession, it seems justified to describe these nouns as being inalienably possessed. Although it is true that most of the known inalienable nouns are kinterms the converse, the proposition that kinterms are mainly inalienable, is not sustainable. The list of known inalienable nouns is shown in table 136xx, where they are shown with first person singular or second person singular dative marking on the nominal root.

Table 136. Inalienably possessed nouns

|                     |                                          |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <i>bápá(ne)</i>     | ‘friend’                                 |
| <i>è(ne)</i>        | ‘wife, daughter in law’                  |
| <i>í(ne)</i>        | ‘father in law, son in law’              |
| <i>là(ne)</i>       | ‘mother in law’                          |
| <i>páng(ne)</i>     | ‘husband’                                |
| <i>tà(ne)</i>       | ‘daughter in law’                        |
| <i>yá(ne)</i>       | ‘sister’                                 |
| <i>yu(ne)</i>       | ‘brother’                                |
| <i>héng(me)</i>     | ‘(someone else’s) brother/sister in law’ |
| <i>má(me)</i>       | ‘(someone else’s) mother’                |
| <i>re(me)</i>       | ‘(someone else’s) father’                |
| <i>yaramenà(ne)</i> | ‘song’                                   |

The list of kinterm nouns that show this marking strategy does not form a discrete semantic category. For instance, although *má(me)* ‘mother’ is inalienably possessed, *áni* ‘mother (general/speaker’s)’ is not, as can be judged by the lack of dative marking inside the genitive suffix in (11)b, and the unacceptability of such marking in (12)b.

- (11) a. *má-mé-mè=me*  
 mother-2SG.DAT-2SG.GEN=2SG.DAT  
 ‘your mother’
- b. *áni-pè-pe*  
 mother-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘her mother’  
 (This word is realised with the pitch contour [ˈ ˈ \ -], due to regular tone sandhi operations – see 2.3.1)
- (12) a. \**má-mè=me*  
 b. \**áni-pe-pè=pe*

The final syllable in *bápá(ne)* appears to be grammaticalising onto the root, and losing its function as an indicator of first person singular dative. For a first-person singular possessor, the only grammatical coding option is the predictable one that can be seen in (13).<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Note the lack of high pitch on the first *ne* in [bápáneɲe]. This reflects the fact that the root for ‘friend’ has an HL tone melody, which is realised as a high pitch on the first two syllables of the stem followed by a lower pitch on the pseudo-suffix *-ne*.

- (13) *bápá-ne-nì=ne*  
 friend-1SG.DAT-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT  
 ‘my friend’

For a second person possessor (or any other possessor, though it is only illustrated here for second person singular), however, there are two grammatical coding options: one predictably replaces the *-ne* dative marker with the second person dative, and then adds the possessive marking cluster *-mè=me* -2SG.GEN=2SG.DAT, as would be expected for any second person singular possession. This is shown in (14)a.

- (14) a. *bápá-me-mè=me*  
 friend-2SG.DAT-2SG.GEN=2SG.DAT  
 ‘your friend’

The second option for coding a second person singular possessor retains the *-ne* in place as a suffix that must now be interpreted simply as marking the word as belonging to the class of inalienable roots, and this complex stem is then followed by the possessive marking cluster specifying the pronominal features of the intended possessor.

- b. *bápáne-mè=me*  
 friend(INAL)-2SG.GEN=2SG.DAT  
 ‘your friend’

This apparent semantic bleaching of the internal dative morpheme is not consistently accepted by speakers as grammatical, but the following generalisations do apply:

- bleaching (and the subsequent ‘mismatch’ or pronominal features in a possessed nominal) is found most commonly with the roots *bápá(ne)* ‘friend’ and *yaramenà(ne)* ‘song’;
- bleaching has occasionally been observed (or a speaker has once or twice judged it grammatical) with the roots *yá(ne)* ‘sister’ and *yu(ne)* ‘brother’;
- bleaching has never been observed (or judged grammatical) with the root *è(ne)* in the sense of ‘wife’, but has been heard when *è(ne)* is used to mean ‘daughter in law’;
- bleaching has never been observed (or judged grammatical) with the roots *í(ne)* ‘father in law, son in law’, *là(ne)* ‘mother in law’, *páng(ne)* ‘husband’, *tà(ne)* ‘daughter in law’;
- bleaching has never been observed (or judged grammatical) with the roots that cannot be possessed by a first person singular possessor, namely *hég(me)* ‘(someone else’s) brother/sister in law’, *má(me)* ‘(someone else’s) mother’, *re(me)* ‘(someone else’s) father’.

The fact that there is considerable semantic divergence for a large number of (fairly) basic kin terms indicates that the process of grammaticalisation is being applied not to the inalienable construction as a whole, but to the 1SG.DAT suffix, and then more commonly to those kinterm roots that are less closely associated (in terms of generational or marriage links) to the speaker, or to non-kinterm roots. This might be seen as providing evidence for a scale of ranking of the perceived ‘inalienability’ of the different roots, in terms of their resistance to bleaching and the retention of the *-ne* marker as a meaningful and productively analysable unit. On the other hand one might interpret these data as suggesting that the category of inalienability is starting to display its own unique morphology, the inalienable suffix *-ne*, that is not simply parasitic on the

existing possessive morphology already present when marking alienable possession. Under either interpretation we do have strong evidence that there is differential treatment of kin terms depending on whether they are in a vertical relationship to the speaker, or a horizontal one.

It is worth noting that some of these nominals which behave as inalienable nouns are phonologically identical, both segmentally and suprasegmentally, to another noun which behaves as an alienable one. Some examples of inalienable nouns that have an alienable noun homophone include:

Table 137. Alienable – inalienable homophones

| Alienable sense |                      | Inalienable sense |                                             |
|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <i>è</i>        | ‘ripe, cooked (one)’ | <i>è(ne)</i>      | ‘wife, daughter in law’                     |
| <i>í</i>        | ‘snake’              | <i>í(ne)</i>      | ‘father in law, son in law’                 |
| <i>là</i>       | ‘prawn’              | <i>là(ne)</i>     | ‘mother in law’                             |
| <i>páng</i>     | ‘bedbug’             | <i>páng(ne)</i>   | ‘husband’                                   |
| <i>tà</i>       | ‘bow’                | <i>tà(ne)</i>     | ‘daughter in law’                           |
| <i>yá</i>       | ‘grass’              | <i>yá(ne)</i>     | ‘sister’                                    |
| <i>yu</i>       | ‘cousin’             | <i>yu(ne)</i>     | ‘brother’                                   |
| <i>héng</i>     | ‘yawn’               | <i>héng(me)</i>   | ‘(someone else’s)<br>brother/sister in law’ |

While chance resemblance cannot be ruled out in a set of monosyllables from a language with only 413 possible syllables (see 2.4), it is also likely that the inalienable senses of at least some of these homophones, which all involve kinship, are symbolic extensions from the common noun uses of the words. For example, conceiving of ‘brother’ as an inalienable form of ‘cousin’ is not a problematic extension, but the leap between, say, ‘prawn’ and ‘mother in law’ is a more abstract one. It is clear that a more detailed ethnographic account of the Skou culture and symbology is needed, before we can state with certainty that the inalienable kin terms are all extensions of commonplace nouns, but from what is known of the symbology and beliefs of the Skou, it is not entirely unlikely. The fact that there are necessarily a large number of homophones in Skou (see 2.4), due to the highly constrained phonotactics of the language and a tendency for monosyllabic roots, means that the possibility of chance resemblance cannot be ruled out. The obligatory dative morpheme on the inalienably possessed nominal makes disambiguation of the two senses of a lexeme unproblematic.

In addition to these notes on inalienability, showing that there is a set of nominals that mark possession in more than the usual manner, there are morphosyntactic environments in which other complications in possessive marking arise, either specifying a different style of marking (pre-head rather than post-head), or apparent doubling of the entire suffix+clitic sequence.

#### 9.4 Unusual forms of possession

The preceding sections described the morphosyntactic forms of ‘normal’ possessive constructions in Skou. In addition to these, involving alienable and inalienable variants, there are several other ways in which possession can be morphologically realised, detailed in the following sections.

## 9.4.1 Reduced possession

When a possessor is itself possessed, such as in the English sentence ‘my mother’s sister’, then the ultimate possessum (‘sister’ in the English phrase above) only takes simple possession, not the full set of genitive and then dative marking. Note the usual possessive sequences in the following two simple possessive phrases:

- (15) (ni) áni-nì=ne  
1SG mother-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT  
‘my mother’
- (16) (pe) pe=bafàng-pè=pe  
3SG.F 3SG.F=younger.sibling-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
‘her younger sister’

When these two phrases are combined to form ‘my mother’s younger sister’ the only possessive morphology on *pe=bafàng* is the genitive *-pè*; the dative *=pe* does not appear:

- (17) (ni) áni-nì=ne pe=bafàng-pè  
1SG mother-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 3SG.F=younger.sibling-3SG.F.GEN  
‘my mother’s younger sister’
- (18) \* (ni) áni-nì=ne pe=bafàng-pè=pe

This reduced possession does not exclude the possibility of a summarising pronoun at the end of the phrase, if it is in the appropriate syntactic role to receive one. This is shown in (19), where the possessed NP *áni nì ne pe bafàng pè* is the subject of a bivalent clause, and so is eligible to be marked with an ergative summation pronoun.

- (19) (Nì) áni-nì=ne pe=bafàng-pè pe  
1SG mother-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 3SG.F=younger.sibling-3SG.F.GEN 3SG.F.ERG  
*ibábúeli* *pe=fu.*  
black.wasp(sp.) 3SG.F=see.F  
‘My mother’s younger sister saw a wasp.’

Proof that the *pe* in the example above is indeed an ergative-marking pronoun, and not simply the continuation of the possessive marking can be seen by using this phrase in a monovalent environment, as in (20). Here we find it is not possible to use the ergative marker, and so the ‘genitive’ analysis of this phonologically identical syllable is not tenable.

- (20) (Nì) áni-nì=ne pe=bafàng-pè (\*pe)  
1SG mother-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 3SG.F=younger.sibling-3SG.F.GEN  
*pe=moe* *ti* *pá.*  
3SG.F=return 3SG.F.go house  
‘My mother’s younger sister went home.’

The only cases where it is normal to have full genitive + dative coding for the possessor on a noun when the possessor itself is possessed is when the final possessum is a body part of the intermediate possessor. Compare the following sentence with that in (19). While (19) uses an animate head of the NP, *pe bafàng*, (21) has *fútong* as its head, and so may be marked with both the genitive and the dative. The use of the dative agreement set is not obligatory, however.

- (21) (Ni) *áni-nì=ne* *fítong-pè=pe=ka=ra*  
 1SG mother-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT side.of.buttock-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT=FOC=also  
*ibábúeli* *pe=p-ang.*  
 black.wasp(sp.) 3SG.F=3SG.F-eat  
 ‘My mother was bitten by a wasp on her buttock.’

#### 9.4.2 Apparent double possessive marking

While the suffixal case may be reduced in the case of embedded possession within possession, there is another instance in which the marking for possession is apparently doubled. Examine the possessive marking genitive+dative morphemes in sentence (20).

- (20) *Ke* *te=táng* *hòe-tè* *ke=híte* *e*  
 3SG.NF 3PL=bird sago-3PL.GEN 3SG.NF=boil cooked  
*ke=bahúe-ké=ke-ké=ke*  
 3SG.NF=elder.sibling-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT  
*i li pá.*  
 be do pot  
 ‘He’s cooking the rice in a pot for his big brother.’

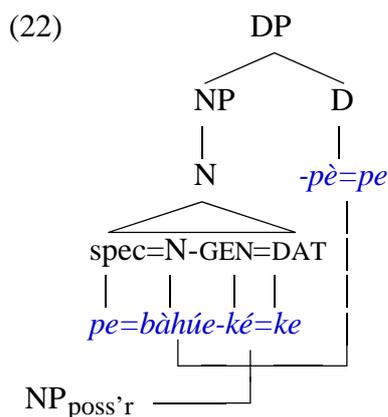
Examined simplistically, this sentence has the templatic structure shown in (20)’ (see 3.13 for more details and argumentation for hierarchical units).

- (20)’ S NP<sub>SUBJ</sub> NP<sub>OBJ</sub> V ADJ<sub>RESULT</sub> NP<sub>BEN</sub> AUX NP<sub>LOC</sub>

Most notably, the nominal *ke=bàhúe-ké=ke-ké=ke* ‘his big brother’ appears to be doubly marked for possession, with two sets of genitive+dative markers. It is, in fact, only possessed once, but the possessive marking collocation appears a second time in response to the beneficiary role that the NP plays in the sentence. Changing ‘brother’ with ‘sister’ (effected simply by swapping the gender on the specifying pronoun), the sentence is as follows, with different sets of genitive and dative markers for different functions:

- (21) *Ke* *te=táng* *hòe-tè* *ke=híte* *e*  
 3SG.NF 3PL=bird sago-3PL.GEN 3SG.NF=boil cooked  
*pe=bahúe-ké=ke-pè=pe*  
 3SG.F=elder.sibling-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
*i li pá.*  
 be do pot  
 ‘He’s cooking the rice in a pot for his big sister.’

This time we can see that the first genitive sequence, *-ké=ke*, marks the possessor of the nominal, but that the second sequence *-pè=pe*, with feminine pronominals, does not agree with the possessor, but rather with the beneficiary in the sentence. The role of beneficiary is doubly marked in this example with both postverbal position, the normal place for obliques, and with genitive marking. The internal structure of the beneficiary nominal phrase from (21) is shown in (22).



Without a beneficiary, the sentence in (21) would be (23). The linear order of the components is identical, except for the omission of *pe bàhúe ké ke pè pe* following the main verb.

- (23) *Ke*      *te=táng*      *hòe-tè*      *ke=híte*      *e*  
 3SG.NF    3PL=canoe    sago-3PL.GEN    3SG.NF=boil    cooked  
*i*    *li*    *pá.*  
 be    do    pot  
 'He's cooking the rice in a pot.'

The form of the benefactive marking string or genitive and dative morphemes is identical to a string of genitive and dative morphemes marking possession; the only difference between the two observed functions is that there is no 'inalienable beneficiary' construction, by analogy with the inalienably possessed nouns which appear with an extra dative morpheme.

#### 9.4.3 Apparent mismatches in possessive marking

Possessive constructions sometimes mark a pronominal category on the head noun that is not matched by the pre-nominal possessor. For instance, we would expect either of the following phrases, in which the pronominal possessor, either nominal or pronominal, is matched by the possessive morphology that follows the noun. In the first example the male possessor is indexed on the head noun by third person singular non-feminine pronominal morphology, and in the second case we can see that the pronominal morphology matches the pre-nominal possessor pronoun in all respects.

- (24) *âi*      *tang-ké=ke*  
 father canoe-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT  
 'father's canoe'
- (25) *mè*      *tang-mè=me*  
 2SG canoe-2SG.GEN=2SG.DAT  
 'your canoe'

In addition to this pattern, we can also find cases such as the following in which the pronominal possessor is indexed on the head noun, but with not with the set of possessive markers that we would expect, based on the lexical features associated with the pronominal possessor.

- (26) *âi*      *tang-mè=me*  
 father canoe-2SG.GEN=2SG.DAT  
 'your canoe, father'

The motivation behind the use of the second person singular on *tang* is the fact that *âi*, and a limited set of other kinterms, can be used as polite referring expressions. In (26) we have an example of a phrase that would be uttered when talking to a man that the speaker wished to show respect for; the use of *âi* shows the respect, but the agreement on the noun *tang* is for the real-world second person singular, and so those bound morphemes appear.

## 9.5 Unusual Possessive strategies

There are two forms of morphological possession that go beyond the description given in the sections above, either by presenting a different sort of NP-internal morphology, or by marking the possessive relationship external to the noun phrase. In both cases the possessum must be in a body part relationship to the possessor, and must be either the object of the sentence or the affected body part of a predicate.

### 9.5.1 Specified possession

The first of the unusual possessive strategies is found only with first or second person possessors, and takes the form of a specifying pronoun on the noun phrase, rather than a possessor. The specifying possession construction is seen below.

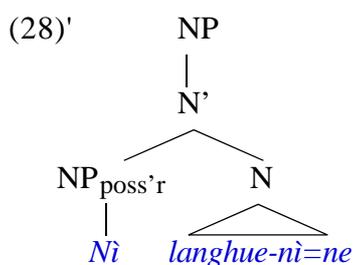
- (27) *Naké nì=lá nghùe=wi a kóeng ke=ká.*  
 dog 1SG=calf=this tooth 3SG.NF=bite  
 ‘The dog bit me in the calf here.’

Constituency tests, such as the placement of an instrumental phrase in the clause, show that we cannot analyse clauses of this type as involving two appositional NPs, the possessor (here *nì*) and a separate NP containing the possessum (here *lá nghùe*). The two nominals must be analysed as one phrasal unit in the clause, and the simplest analysis available is one that uses the specifying position in the NP, established in 8.2.

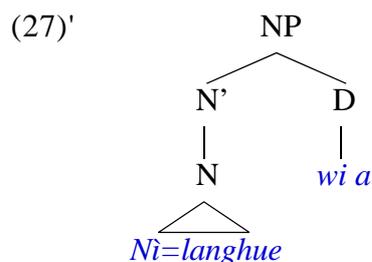
This construction differs to that found in normal possession, in which genitive and dative markers follow the noun, as is seen in the following example:

- (28) *Nì lá nghùe-nì=ne iri.*  
 1SG calf-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT cramp  
 ‘My calf’s cramping up.’

The two different structures can be modelled as shown in the following discussion. The simple possession seen in (28) takes the form of a possessor NP (optional for pronominal possession) preceding a possessum which agrees with it by means of a combination of suffix and clitic, as described in sections 8.2 – 8.4. The structure of the possessed NP in (28) is given below in (28)′.



Specified possession, on the other hand, applies to the word, as a simple word-level clitic. The object NP in (27) above is shown here as (27)′. Note the different structural positions of the pre-nominal possessing pronoun in the two examples.



Although the specifying possession pronoun set is not the same as the set that is used to mark agreement on verbs, shown by the failure of the vowel in third person or plural representative of this clitic set to reduce to schwa (see 6.3), the function and position is very similar.

Compare the specifying clitic in (27) with the following examples, which show that the clitic is part of the specification of the word, not of the phrase:

- (30) a. *ke=angku*                      b. *pe=angku*  
           3SG.NF=child                      3SG.F=child  
           'boy'                                      'girl'

More details of this construction can be found in 6.3.2. Although these examples are by themselves ambiguous as to the scope of the proclitic pronoun, the fact that the gender-marked pronoun specifies only the noun, and not the whole phrase, is apparent in the following example, in which the scope of the pronoun can only be the noun, not the phrase:

- (31) *Ke=angku-ni=ne*                      *è-ke*                      *tà-ni=ne.*  
       3SG.NF=child-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT    wife-3SG.NF.GEN SW-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT  
       'My son's wife is my daughter in law.'

Here it is clear that only the noun immediately following the first *ke=* is specified as non-feminine, not the whole phrase or, indeed, the head of that phrase, *è-ke*. These bracketings are shown in (31)'.  
 (31)' [clitic-inflected word *Ke*=[ [affixed stem [root *angku*]-*ni*]=*ne* ] [affixed stem [root *è*]-*ke* ] ]

In addition to these strategies that go beyond the 'normal' means of marking possession in Skou there are also various constructions that functionally indicate possession without necessarily employing any of the genitive or dative paradigms that have been described above. What these other constructions do share in common is that in all cases there is some indication of the possessor in a position external to the possessed NP, hence the term external possession.

### 9.5.2 External Possession

In addition to the specifying possession construction that involves the first or second person possessor preceding the possessum, we can also identify three forms of external possession which are available to all possessors regardless of the personal features of that possessor.

The defining feature of external possession is that, unlike the forms of possessive constructions examined so far, an external possession construction requires that there be some mention of the person, number or gender features of the possessor outside the NP in which the possessum appears. This is found in three different ways:

- possessor as topic (NP unmarked for possessor);
- possessor marked on the verb by means of vowel alternations (possessor still marked inside the NP);

- possessor marked as object NP (NP with possessum unmarked for possession, and appears as an oblique, not as object).

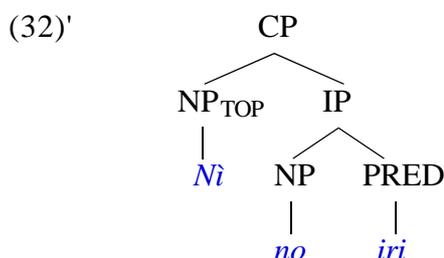
These three different forms of external possession are described separately in the following sections, and subsequently compared together.

#### 9.5.2.1 Topic possessors and involuntary states

The first of the possessor-as-topic constructions involves body parts as the locus of an experience, as in (32), and might be best analysed as a topic-comment construction:

- (32) *Nì no iri.*  
 1SG hand cramp  
 ‘My hand’s cramped up.’

In sentences of this sort the experiencer possessor is cast as the topic, and the possessum, a body part and the locus of the sensation, is the subject of a clause. The sentence above can be modelled as shown below:



In a sense this is not a ‘true’ external possession construction, in that the possession is not marked external to the NP within the same clause; the possession is not explicitly coded as such, but rather the topic-comment relationship that applies between the topic and the clause is interpreted as being one of possession between a possessor topic and a possessum comment, which is subject of the clause. Constructions of this sort all involve monovalent predicates of involuntary states.

Chapell (1999) describes a similar construction in various Chinese languages, and Iwasaki (2002) presents data from Thai for what appears to be the same kind of construction, though described under different labels.

#### 9.5.2.2 Gender assumption

The second form of external possession is also constrained to appear only with body part possessums and their possessors, but this time they are the objects of adversely affecting bivalent clauses. The possessum is marked inside the NP for possession as normal, and the external possession is found in the assumption of grammatical gender features of the possessor by the object NP as a whole, which are marked on the form of the verb. This construction can only be identified when the main verb is one that varies depending on the gender of the object. For instance, the alternation in verb forms seen in (33) can only be attributed to the gender of the object.

- (33) a. *Ke (nì, mè, ke) ke=ká.*  
 3SG.NF 1SG, 2SG, 3SG.NF 3SG.NF=hit  
 ‘He hit (me, you, him).’

- b. *Ke*                    *pe*            *ke=láng.*  
 3SG.NF    3SG.F   3SG.NF=hit.F  
 ‘He hit her.’

In these cases we would not want to argue for different syntactic structures, but simply the feature [feminine] on the object in the b. sentence being obligatorily marked on the predicate by the choice of verb stem.

We see these same alternations in the choice of the verb depending on the grammatical gender of the possessor of an object. When the possessor and the possessum have the same grammatical gender, there is no alternation. A trivial example of this can be seen below. Here the possessor, *Ái-nì=ne*, is non-feminine, as is the possessum, *lángghùe-ké=ke* (the subject is also non-feminine, but this would not in any case have influenced the choice of the suppletive verb stem *láng*) The predicate, therefore, does not select the feminine verb stem, in the absence of any arguments that could bear this feature.

- (34) *Ái-nì=ne*                                    *lángghùe-ké=ke*                                    *ke=ká.*  
 father-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT    calf-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT    3SG.NF=hit  
 ‘He hit my father’s calf.’

If there is a difference in grammatical gender between the possessor and the possessum, however, we might find a discrepancy between the gender of the object and the gender marked on the predicate. In the following example the possessor of the calf is female, and the verb of hitting is the one that is used with a feminine object.

- (35) a. *Ánì-nì=ne*                                    *lángghùe-pè=pe*                                    *ke=láng.*  
 mother-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT    calf-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT    3SG.NF=hit.F  
 ‘He hit my mother’s calf.’
- b. \* *ánì nì ne langhue pè pe ke ká*

When the necessary conditions for gender assumption are met, gender assumption must occur. The b. sentence, without feminine gender coded on the verb, is not grammatical. We can show that this assumption of gender is a purely grammatical gender, and not based on the real-world sex of the referent, by testing with different sexed first or second person possessors: in all cases, the non-feminine verb form must be used:

- (36) *Lángghùe-nì=ne*                                    *ke=ká.*  
 calf-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT    3SG.NF=hit  
 ‘He hit my calf.’  
 (male or female speaker)
- (37) \* *lángghùe-nì=ne*                                    *ke=lang*  
 calf-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT    3SG.NF=hit.F  
 ‘He hit my calf.’  
 (ungrammatical for both male or female speakers)

Finally, the action must adversely affect the object and its possessor. This can be seen by attempting to mark possessor’s gender on a non-affective verb, such as *fue* ‘see’. With this verb, gender can only be marked if it is the gender of the possessum (or of the possessor), but does not vary according to the gender of the subject. The first sentence of the following three is a control sentence, showing the unmarked verb of seeing, *fue*, in a morphosyntactic environment (possession by first person singular) that would not be expected to produce exceptional marking for gender on the verb (for a more detailed explication of the inflectional possibilities using ‘see’, see 7.2.3).

- (38) *No-nì=ne* *ke=fue.*  
 hand-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 3SG.NF-see  
 ‘He saw my hand.’

In the following sentences we can see that this same form of the verb, unmarked for gender, is also used when the possessor is feminine, exactly the circumstances that led to the use of the feminine form of the verb in (39). The use of the feminine form of the verb in this construction is ungrammatical.

- (39) *No-pè=pe* *ke=fue.*  
 hand-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT 3SG.NF-see  
 ‘He saw her hand.’
- (40) \* *no-pè=pe* *ke=fu*  
 hand-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT 3SG.NF-see.F

In these examples, then, we have seen that there are specific criteria that must be met in order for gender assumption to take place. These criteria are:

1. the possessum must be the object of its clause;  
 This construction is not possible with the subjects of monovalent or bivalent clauses, regardless of their semantic role.
2. possessum and possessor must be adversely affected by the clause;  
 A verb with little or no physical affect of its object does not license gender assumption. Even if there is significant physical affect, it must be to the detriment of the possessor.
3. possessum must be a body part of the possessor;  
 This is simply a formal statement of the requirement that in order for the possessor to be affected as well as the possessum, the possessum must be part of the possessor.

The morphosyntactic effects of this form of external possession are not demonstrably great. Morphologically, the gender of the possessor is marked on the verb, but, the possessor is still marked inside the NP as possessor, and the possessum still appears in the normal position for objects. A different set of morphosyntactic effects are found with another, final, form of external possession, described in the following section.

### 9.5.2.3 Function assumption

The final EP construction that we can identify involves the same morphosyntactic and semantic restrictions that have just been described for gender assumption. The demotional EP construction differs in that the possessor is marked as the sole object in the clause, and the possessum appears postverbally in the position usually allotted to goals.

The following pair of examples show first an example with no external possession. Here the target of the kicking is the possessed nominal *húe mè me* ‘your stomach’, which is predictably coded as the object of the clause. In (42), on the other hand, we can see the possessor as the object of the clause, coded with a single pronoun, and the head of the object NP in (41), *húe*, is now coded as a postverbal oblique NP.



- (46) *Naké mè kóeng ke=ká nè?*  
 dog 2SG tooth 3SG.NF=hit Q  
 ‘Where did the dog bite you?’
- (47) \* *naké nòe=ha-mè=me kóeng ke=ká?*  
 dog body=what-2SG.GEN=2SG.DAT tooth 3SG.NF=hit  
 ‘What part of your body did the dog bite?’

This sort of requirement for the external possession strategy over the plain coding strategy, precisely in the environment of pragmatic focus appearing in the phrase, helps to support the idea that the appearance of external possession is associated with particular pragmatic focus. In this case we are ascribing particular focus to the addressee, and not to the particular body part that was bitten. By contrast, in sentence (47) the body part would be assigned greater pragmatic salience than the person, which is nonsensical.

In a declarative statement, some speakers allow either coding choice with third person possessors, but others do not allow this. There is no obvious (to me) geographical, social, or age basis behind the different judgements. All speakers will accept the sentence in (48).

- (48) *Naké pe kóeng ke=láng lánghùe.*  
 dog 3SG.F tooth 3SG.NF=hit.F calf  
 ‘The dog bit her on the calf’

On the other hand, only some speakers allow the possessum to be coded as the object, as in (49) (and this is only with third person possessors).

- (49) *Naké lánghùe-pè=pe kóeng ke=ká.*  
 dog calf-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT tooth 3SG.NF=hit  
 ‘The dog bit her calf’

(*lánghùe* ‘calf’ has non-feminine gender, so the form of the verb not marked for feminine object, *ká*, is used in this sentence)

The decreased salience of a third person, compared to a first or second person, might explain why some speakers do allow the alternation to take place for these possessors.

#### 9.5.2.4 Different possession constructions compared

We have seen that there are three ways in which possession can influence the morphology of the clause in Skou, beyond simple marking of the possessor in the NP.

These different strategies, along with normal possession, are summarised point by point in table 138xx, for quick comparison. In this table the arrangement is, left to right, from the least unusual to the most unusual form of possession.

Table 138. Possession and external possession strategies allowed

|                           | Internal possession |                  | External possession |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                           |                     | Topic possession | Gender assumption   | Function assumption |
| Poss'n marked in NP?      | yes                 | no               | yes                 | no                  |
| Applies to P              | yes                 | yes              | yes                 | yes                 |
| Applies to S              | yes                 | yes              | no                  | no                  |
| Applies to A              | yes                 | no               | no                  | no                  |
| semantically unrestricted | yes                 | no               | no                  | no                  |

We can see that the more possession strategies to the right in this table, the ones that involve the most morphosyntactic disruption of the structure of the clause, are much more restricted in terms of the roles that they can apply to, and also the amount of overt marking of possession that is encoded in the sentence. As was seen in 9.5.2.3, function assumption does not overtly encode possession at all: the possessum appears marked as a postverbal oblique, and the possessor appears preverbally in the position associated with the P of the sentence, but there is no explicit link between the two, only a conventionalised one. That is, the structures found in the following two sentences is identical, and only the pragmatic relations operating between the arguments allows for the possessive interpretation in the second:

- (50) *Ke*      *nì*      *ke=ká*      *pá.*  
 3SG.NF    1SG    3SG.NF=hit    house  
 ‘He hit me in (the/a) house.’  
 (No implicature about the identity of the owner of the house, or of the relevance, if any, of the house to the action)
- (51) *Ke*      *nì*      *ke=ká*      *há.*  
 3SG.NF    1SG    3SG.NF=hit    nose  
 ‘He hit me in the nose.’  
 (The affected nose must be the nose of the object-encoded argument, not anyone else’s, and that object must be adversely affected by the action)

The restrictions described above represent a lot of semantic information to be required of a construction that overtly matches another construction. Of course, *pá* in (50) is coded in the location position, and *há* in (51) is in the goal/general oblique position, but without an auxiliary or a negated sentence that difference is not obvious.

By contrast the possessum is still marked by pronominal affixation with gender assumption strategies, even though the unusual marking on the verb shows that something, namely external possession, is going on. Possession by a topic-comment construction is the broadest form of external possession, in reality simply one of a related set of properties that apply between a topic discourse function and its comment.

## 9.6 Headless possessive phrases

While it is most normal for a possessive construction to appear in the form of a noun and morphological (and optionally NP) elements to show how it is possessed, as described in 9.2, it is also possible for possession to appear without any possessed element in the NP, and so to serve as a headless possessive phrase. Two examples can be seen in the following sentence; the two NPs both consist simply of a free pronoun with dative marking, with no nominals present.

- (52) [ Ø *Nì=ne* ]      *mè=yata*      *pi-pi,*  
           1SG=1SG.DAT    2SG=transact    2SG.do-RED  
       [ Ø *Mè=me* ]      *nì=yata*      *li-li.*  
           2SG=2SG.DAT    1SG=transact    do-RED  
       ‘You buy mine, and I’ll buy yours.’

These equate to headless possession constructions in English, where the ‘mine’ – ‘yours’ set of pronouns are used, rather than the ‘my’ – ‘your’ set. With nominal possession in English the dummy marker ‘one’ is used to fill the structural position called for by the phrase structure rules. This is also a possibility; compare the following sentences, which differ only in the presence versus absence of the pleonastic *ya* ‘thing’, and the choice of the pronominal sets that are used with a noun, or those that are independent.

- (53) [  $\emptyset$  *Ni=ne* ]            *ko*    *tue*            *nè?*  
 1SG=1SG.DAT    be.at    3SG.F.do    Q  
 ‘Where’s my one?’
- (54) [ *Ya-ni=ne* ]            *ko*    *tue*            *nè?*  
 thing-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT    be.at    3SG.F.do    Q  
 ‘Where’s my one?’

There is little, if any, pragmatic or semantic difference between these two sentences. There are, however, syntactic differences. The apparently headless possessive structures are allowed only if the possessor is pronominal, but not for a nominal possessor. If a nominal possessor is to appear in a lexically ‘headless’ possessive structure, then the same dummy noun *ya* ‘thing’ must be used in what appears to be a ‘headless’ relative clause (see 8.3).

- (55) *Ái-ni=ne*                            *ya-ké=ke*                            *ko*    *tue*  
 father-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT    thing-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT    be.at    3SG.F.do  
*nè?*  
 where  
 ‘Where’s my father’s one?’
- (56) \* *âi-ni-ne*                             $\emptyset$             *ke=ke*                            *ko tue nè?*  
 father-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT            3SG.NF=3SG.NF.DAT

Another difference between the two ‘headless’ possessive constructions is that the dummy head *ya* must be used if there are any modifiers in the NP other than the possessive construction. The use of the genitive+dative morphemes without a *ya* is thus only possible if there is no demonstrative in the NP, and no adjectival or relative clause modification. Some examples of this contrast in grammaticality are given in the following examples.

- (57) \* [  $\emptyset$  *Ni=ne*            *hápa* ]            *ko*    *tue*            *nè?*  
 1SG=1SG.DAT    small            be.at    3SG.F.do    Q  
 ‘Where’s my little one?’
- (58) [ *Ya-ni=ne*                            *hápa* ]            *ko*    *tue*            *nè?*  
 thing-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT    small            be.at    3SG.F.do    Q  
 ‘Where’s my little one?’
- (59) \* [  $\emptyset$  *Ni=ne=ing a* ]            *ko*    *tue*            *nè?*  
 1SG=1SG.DAT=the    be.at    3SG.F.do    Q  
 ‘Where’s that one of mine?’
- (60) [ *Ya-ni=ne=ing a* ]                            *ko*    *tue*            *nè?*  
 thing-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT=the            be.at    3SG.F.do    Q  
 ‘Where’s that one of mine?’

The fact that the genitive+dative morphemes, if unsupported by a lexical host, cannot cooccur in the same NP as a demonstrative implies that they are being ‘hosted’, abstractly, in the position that demonstratives are found, if they cannot be located with a nominal.

## 9.7 Clausal possession

In addition to the various phrasal means of marking an item in a noun phrase as being possessed, there are also different strategies for marking possession as a clausal predicate. We shall examine the two strategies that mark possession, one verbal and one non-verbal.

## 9.7.1 Non-verbal clausal possession

The normal way to code clausal possession (X has a Y) is by a non-verbal construction. While there are no restrictions on the sorts of nominals that can be used in this construction, it is unusual to use this construction with an inalienable nominal since it obligatorily shows phrasal possession. The following examples, using a range of different nouns, show that both animate and inanimate nominals may be possessed.

- (61) *Ha=wi a ni=ne.*  
 bag=this 1SG=1SG.DAT  
 ‘This bag is mine.’
- (62) *Pe=angku=wi a ni=ne.*  
 3SG.F=child=this 1SG=1SG.DAT  
 ‘This girl is mine.’

This clausal possessive construction is not an instance of the genitive and dative morphemes appearing independently of any noun as a predicate. That is, the sequence [niɛ] [|\\_ ] in (61) is not the same set of morphemes as the same sequence in (63).

- (63) *Ha=wi a ha-ni=ne.*  
 bag=this bag-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT  
 ‘This bag is my bag.’

The non-identity of this construction with the possessed nominal construction can be shown by the behaviour with a possessor that is not first or second person singular. Recall from 6.3 that the genitive pronouns are identical to the free pronouns except for the application of a HL tone melody to the syllable. In the case of the first or second person singular pronouns, such as *ni* in the examples above, the pronoun has a HL melody assigned lexically, so there is no difference phonologically between the form of the free pronoun and the genitive pronoun. If we examine the same sentences with third person pronouns, however, we can see that there is a tonal difference: in the predicative possessive sentence the pronouns are clearly a free pronoun with a dative clitic attached, not a sequence of two ‘clitics’, the genitive and the dative. In the case of the possessed nominal, the genitive suffix and dative clitic are used.

- (64) *Ha=wi a ha-pè=pe.*  
 bag=this bag-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘This bag is her bag.’
- (65) [NP *Ha=wi a* ] [NP *pe=pe* ].  
 bag=this 3SG.F=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘This bag is hers.’
- (66) \* [NP *ha=wi a* ] [NP *pè=pe* ]  
 bag=this 3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT
- (67) \* *ha=wi a ha-pe=pe*  
 bag=this bag-3SG.F=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘This bag is her bag.’

The same forms of clausal possession are applied to animate nouns as well.

- (68) *Ingéngong=wi a ingéngong-pè=pe.*  
 cat=this cat-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘This cat is her cat.’

- (69) [NP *Ingéngong=wi a*] [NP *pe=pe*].  
 cat=this 3SG.F=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘This cat is hers.’

Inalienably possessed nouns are at best of dubious grammaticality in this construction, and for some speakers they are rejected outright. The use of a full NP predicate, with a possessed noun, is the preferred clausal possession strategy.

- (70) # *Yá-ne=wi a* *nì=ne*.  
 sister-1SG.DAT=this 1SG=1SG.DAT  
 ‘This sister is mine.’
- (71) *Yá-ne=wi a* *yá-ne-nì=ne*.  
 sister-1SG.DAT=this sister-1SG.DAT-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT  
 ‘This sister is my sister.’

Further discussion on the status of the pronominal elements in this construction can be found in 5.1.2.

### 9.7.2 Clausal possession with a verb

Clausal possession can be encoded with the generic light verb ‘do’, with the possessor serving as the subject of this verb and the possessum as the object; in this way the arguments of the clause function very much like the arguments of a clause with the verb ‘have’ in English. Examples of this use of the light verb as the inflecting verb in a clausal possessive construction can be seen in the following sentences.

- (72) *Ku* *nì=li*.  
 ‘child’ 1SG=do  
 ‘I have a child.’
- (73) *Ke=bà=ing a* *ku* *híngtung* *ke=li*.  
 3SG.NF=person=the ‘child’ two 3SG.NF=do  
 ‘He has two children.’

The same morphemes may be interpreted as an adjunct nominal plus the generic verb ‘do’, meaning ‘I (have) give(n) birth to a child.’ The possessive reading described here cannot be interpreted as simply an aspectual extension of the ‘give birth’ reading that is found with *ku li*, since, as can be seen in (73), the ‘have’ reading is also available for male subject, where this is (biologically, as well as grammatically) impossible with the ‘give birth’ reading.

Not all different types of possession may be encoded in this way. Specifically, we may identify the following conditions on the use of verbal clausal possession:

- inalienable body-part nouns (as defined in 9.3) are eligible for possession with this strategy;
- kinship terms may be the possessum, regardless of whether they otherwise count as alienable or inalienable.
- alienable nouns may not be possessed using verbal clausal possessive constructions;

Compare the grammaticality of (72) above with the complete ungrammaticality of (74) if it is interpreted with a possessive reading. When the verb is interpreted with a sense of production of working (see 14.3), then the sentence may be parsed grammatically. In order to express

possession of nouns such as *hòe* ‘sago’ in (74), the non-verbal clausal possessive structures that have been described in 9.7.1 must be used, seen here in (75).

- (74) *Hòe nì=li.*  
 sago 1SG=do  
 \* ‘I have (some) sago.’  
 ‘I processed (some) sago.’

- (75) *Hòe=ing a nì=ne.*  
 sago=the 1SG=1SG.DAT  
 ‘I have (some) sago.’  
 OR ‘The sago is mine.’

With nouns that cannot even be interpreted as the product made, the only possible interpretation of the N+*li* construction is that it marks the inception of possession. This is similar to the inchoative sense with which *li* is used with adjectives (5.2, 7.2.1, 7.7, and also 8.6 for inchoative nominal predicates).

### 9.7.3 Clausal possession without a verb

For nominals that do not fit into the restrictive categories that have been listed in 9.7.2, and so are not eligible to appear in a verbal clausal possession structure, a close translation equivalent alternative is to mark the possession phrasally, and to the present the nominal as an existential clause with verbs of being. This is shown in (76).

- (76) *Hòe-nì=ne ko tue.*  
 sago-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT be.at 3SG.F.do  
 ‘I have some sago.’  
 (= ‘My sago exists.’)

This is grammatical, and is suggested by Skou speakers as a translation of sentences such as ‘I have some sago.’ (presented in Papuan Malay as *Sa=pu sagu ada*, literally ‘My sago exists.’), but it does not seem to be, in the opinion of the writer, a preferred strategy. Most speech acts indicating clausal possession involve a clear deictic gesture (either physical or else in speech), and rather than simply asserting that a particular possessor does indeed have something or the other (in the abstract, with the location unspecified), a more natural discourse strategy in Skou is to either indicate that possession with a gesture, or else to state where it is. The following examples, variants of the sentence in (75) and (76), are more ‘natural’, though no more or less grammatical, or even felicitous.

- (77) *Fue a hòe-nì=ne.*  
 that sago-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT  
 ‘That’s my sago.’

- (78) *Hòe-nì=ne ko tue nakong.*  
 sago-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT be.at 3SG.F.do space.under.a.house  
 ‘My sago is under the house.’

The infelicitousness of a locational clause specifying the location without a verb is shown in (79). This sentence is most likely to be interpreted (following the non-verbal grammar for nominal identificational clauses that lack any inchoative or inceptive sense) as ‘My sago is the space under a house.’, which, being clearly nonsensical, is judged as being a bad example of language use.

- (79) # *Hòe nì ne nakong*

With something that can be conceived of as having a degree of inception, it is possible to use the light verb *li* ‘do’ instead of (or in addition to) *ko tue* as the head of the predicate, though in these cases it is somewhat infelicitous to construct the sentence without an overt stated location.

- (80) *Rítóe-nì=ne* *tue* (*ko tue*) *hòe-pa*.  
 tree-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 3SG.F.do be.at 3SG.F.do sago-water  
 ‘My tree is at the sago swamps.’

- (81) # *rítóe nì ne tue ko tue*

This sentence allows the verbal predicate because a particular tree can come to be found at a particular location, not through transplanting but simply through growing from a sapling stage. In this sense it fulfils the conditions for inchoative coding, and so unambiguous. The requirement for an overtly stated location (minimally *wi a* ‘here’ or *fue a* ‘there’) is present because stating simply that something came into being will be marked with a more specific verb, such as ‘grow’ or ‘become big’ (using another inchoative construction, *bápálibi* big do – see 7.7, 8.6).

#### 9.7.4 Possessive predicates

Possession may be coded predicatively, as in the English ‘That’s mine.’ In Skou this type of predicative possession is shown with a non-verbal clause, using the same interrogative and the same possessive markers that are found when marking possession phrasally.

- (82) *Ku=ing* [PRED *bá-ké*]?  
 ‘child’=DEIC who-3SG.NF.GEN  
 ‘Whose child is that?’  
 (literally, ‘That child is whose?’)

Answers to questions are shown in the same way, with a free pronoun affixed for possessive marking appearing as the predicate, with no noun as its head.

- (83) *Ing a* [PRED *nì=ne*].  
 the 1SG=1SG.DAT  
 ‘That’s mine.’

An alternative to this usual means of coding a possessive is found more commonly with questions, and involves the possessor and the possessed appearing in the predicate, with just a deictic as the subject:

- (84) *Ke=ing* [PRED *bá ku-ké*]?  
 3SG.NF=DEIC who ‘child’-3SG.NF.GEN  
 ‘Whose child is that?’  
 (literally, ‘That one is whose child?’)

This latter strategy is also the more commonly heard one. Marking the possession, without the possessum, as the predicate is in normal (ie., non-elicited) speech would only be heard as the answer to questions such as (82), and would not be offered as a statement about possession, preferring instead the formulation seen in (85).

- (85) *Ke=ing* *ku-nì=ne*.  
 3SG.NF=DEIC ‘child’-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT  
 ‘He’s my child.’

Some further discussion of the similarity in appearance of the genitive+dative pronominal sets to the free pronoun+dative sets can be found in 5.1.2.

### 9.8 Interpretation of Possessive scope

When a nominal is marked for possession, the identity of the possessor is usually immediately retrievable. In the following sentence, for instance, the owner of the house platform must be the subject of the sentence:

- (86) *Ni=ta hùng pá-loe-nì=ne.*  
 1SG=seating sit house-platform-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT  
 ‘I sat down on my platform.’

In this sentence the identity of the owner can be determined from the fact that there is only one immediately prior referent in the discourse, and most unambiguously from the fact that the genitive and dative suffixes used on the nominal show the same, unique, person, number and gender features as those of the previous referent – there is only one first person singular argument.

If the possessor and the subject of a clause were both third person, then possible ambiguity would arise, as in the following English sentence. In this example the possessor of the location can be interpreted most naturally as the subject of the sentence, but, given appropriate context, can also be interpreted as another nominal, not mentioned in this sentence.

- (87) She<sub>i</sub> sat down on her<sub>i,j</sub> platform.

In Skou, as in English, sentences of this sort display potential ambiguity: is the female owner of the platform the same person as the female subject of the sentence? The sentence, in translation, reads as follows in Skou.

- (88) *Pe=ta w-ùng pá-loe-pè=pe.*  
 3SG.F=seating 3SG.F-sit house-platform-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> sat down on her<sub>i,j</sub> veranda.’

This is a genuine ambiguity, but is almost certainly resolved in Skou in favour of the interpretation of the owner and the subject being the same person. The above sentence, thus, would most likely be interpreted as referring to a state of affairs in which someone is sitting on her own platform. This is best thought of not as being a constraint on subject coreference for possessors of oblique nominals, but rather a realisation of the general cross-linguistic tendency for discourse topics to assume the role as ‘default reference’ in the span of discourse for which they pertain: a subject is the most likely topic in the sentence in which it occurs, and so is the most likely possessor of a possessed oblique nominal. Only in the case of a previously established, and recently maintained topic in the discourse other than the subject is it at all likely that the possessor will be interpreted as other than the subject of the clause in which it appears. This is not to say that speakers could not, or would not, ever utter sentence (88) with the intention of describing one female participant sitting in the house of another. This is a possible way of expressing the desired meaning, but does lead to ambiguity.

An example of the sort of context that would allow the felicitous and unambiguous use of what is, from a mono-clausal perspective, an ambiguous construction, is the following extract, taken from the point of introduction of a new topic in a conversation, seen in (89).

- (89) *Yá-né-nì=ne=ing a, pe pe=te.*  
 sister-1SG.DAT-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT=the 3SG.F 3SG.F=3SG.F.go  
*Pe=te pá=fue. Pe=ueme=fue a,*  
 3SG.F=3SG.F.go house=that 3SG.F=woman=that  
*pe=ueme bàng mè=fu=ing, pe=ta w-ùng*  
 3SG.F=woman yesterday 2SG=see=DEIC 3SG.F=seating 3SG.F-sit  
*pá-loe-pè=pe=ko ...*  
 house-platform-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT=OBV  
 ‘My sister<sub>i</sub>, well, she<sub>i</sub> went. She<sub>i</sub> went to that house there. Now that  
 woman<sub>j</sub>, the woman<sub>j</sub> you saw yesterday, she<sub>j</sub> sat on her<sub>i</sub> veranda...’

While the two possible interpretations of (88) are coded in the same way morphologically, there are two morphosyntactic means by which they may be differentiated. Firstly, the optional omission of the dative pronoun from the possessive construction (see 6.3.1, 9.4.1) is only possible if the owner and the subject are the same referent. In (90), compared to (88), there is no possible ambiguity.

- (90) *Pe=ta w-ùng pá-loe-pè.*  
 3SG.F=seating 3SG.F-sit house-platform-3SG.F.GEN  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> sat down on her<sub>i</sub> / \*<sub>j</sub> veranda.’

Secondly, the use of the emphatic marker following the possessive suffix and dative clitic makes the reference unambiguous: in (90) the only possible interpretation of the possessor is to refer to the person who sits. Even if we were to place the sentence in a discourse context with a highly salient, highly topical but different 3SG.F referent, the possessor in this sentence can only be interpreted as referring to the subject of that same sentence.

- (91) *Pe=ta w-ùng pá-loe-pè=pe=wò.*  
 3SG.F=seating 3SG.F-sit house-platform-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT=EMPH  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> sat down on her own<sub>i</sub> / \*<sub>j</sub> platform.’

We can show that possessive scope interpretations are not simply a consequence of the linear order of the elements of the clause. This is accomplished by presenting the same examples in negated sentences: in these cases the possessive reference is the same, even though there is no linear predecessor of the possessed nouns (see chapter 16 for a discussion of the grammatical changes associated with negation in Skou). Note particularly that in (91) the use of the emphatic morpheme is acceptable even though the possessed noun appears before its antecedent, the proclitic on the verb.

- (92) *Pá-loe-pè=pe pe=ta w-ùng ka.*  
 house-platform-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT 3SG.F=seating 3SG.F-sit NEG  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> didn’t sit down on her<sub>i,j</sub> platform.’
- (93) *Pá-loe-pè pe=ta w-ùng ka.*  
 house-platform-3SG.F.GEN 3SG.F=seating 3SG.F-sit NEG  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> didn’t sit down on her<sub>i</sub> / \*<sub>j</sub> platform.’
- (94) *Pá-loe-pè=pe=wò pe=ta w-ùng ka.*  
 house-platform-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT=EMPH 3SG.F=seating 3SG.F-sit NEG  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> didn’t sit down on her own<sub>i</sub> / \*<sub>j</sub> platform.’

Similar scope restrictions are found with obliques, including postverbal goals and beneficiaries, and instrumentally marked NPs. With the instruments we can see that there is not a strong linear relationship between the possessor and the possessum, since the instrument may appear in a variety of positions, and the scope is the same regardless of their position in the

clause. The following three sentences show that the position of the fully possessive-marked instrument does not affect the interpretation of its possessor.

- (95) *Pe tangtítí-pè=pe=pa pe=te Nofé.*  
 3SG.F vehicle-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT=INSTR 3SG.F=3SG.F.go Jayapura  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> went to Jayapura by her<sub>i,j</sub> car.’
- (96) *Pe pe te tangtítí pè pe pa.*  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> went by her<sub>i,j</sub> car.’
- (97) *Tangtítí pè pe pa, pe pe te Nofé.*  
 ‘By her<sub>i,j</sub> car, she<sub>i</sub> went to Jayapura.’

In the next three sentences we can see that if the dative clitic is omitted from the clause, the interpretation of the possessor is restricted to the (sole) argument of the immediate clause:

- (98) *Pe tangtítí-pè=pa pe=te Nofé.*  
 3SG.F vehicle-3SG.F.GEN=INSTR 3SG.F=3SG.F.go Jayapura  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> went to Jayapura by her<sub>i,\*j</sub> car.’
- (99) *Pe pe te tangtítí pè pa.*  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> went by her<sub>i,\*j</sub> car.’
- (100) *Tangtítí pè pa, pe pe te Nofé.*  
 ‘By her<sub>i,\*j</sub> car, she<sub>i</sub> went to Jayapura.’

The following three sentences show the possible positions of an instrumental NP in the clause, appearing preverbally before or after the object, or postverbally (see 3.13 and 11.6 for a summary of the positional restrictions of instruments in the clause).

- (101) *Pe tangnófó totá=pa móe pe=r-ú.*  
 3SG.F knife sharp=INSTR fish 3SG.F=3SG.F-cut.F  
 ‘She cut up the fish with a sharp knife.’
- (102) *Pe móe tangnófó totá pa pe rú.*  
 ‘She cut up the fish with a sharp knife.’
- (103) *Pe móe pe rú tangnófó totá pa.*  
 ‘She cut up the fish with a sharp knife.’

The preferences in interpretation of the identity of the antecedent are not changed when the instrumental NP is possessed, regardless of the position of the NP. In all cases, including the topicalised example in (107), the possessor can be interpreted as either the subject of the clause or of an unstated (but presumably accessible) other party.

- (104) *Pe tangnófó-pè=pe totá=pa móe pe=r-ú.*  
 3SG.F knife-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT sharp=INSTR fish 3SG.F=3SG.F-cut.F  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> cut up the fish with her<sub>i,j</sub> sharp knife.’
- (105) *Pe móe tangnófó pè pe totá pa pe rú.*  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> cut up the fish with her<sub>i,j</sub> sharp knife.’
- (106) *Pe móe pe rú tangnófó pè pe totá pa.*  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> cut up the fish with her<sub>i,j</sub> sharp knife.’
- (107) *Tangnófó pè pe totá pa pe móe pe rú.*  
 ‘With her<sub>i,j</sub> sharp knife, she<sub>i</sub> cut up the fish.’

Just as was true when we examined the possessors of conveyances in (98) - (100), when the possessed instrument is marked only with genitive suffixes, and not with dative clitics, the possessor is restricted to an argument of the predicate in the clause, regardless of its position.

- (108) *Pe tangnófó-pè totá=pa móe pe=r-ú.*  
 3SG.F knife-3SG.F.GEN sharp=INSTR fish 3SG.F=3SG.F-cut.F  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> cut up the fish with her<sub>i,\*j</sub> sharp knife.’
- (109) *Pe móe tangnófó pè totá pa pe rú.*  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> cut up the fish with her<sub>i,\*j</sub> sharp knife.’
- (110) *Pe móe pe rú tangnófó pè totá pa.*  
 ‘She<sub>i</sub> cut up the fish with her<sub>i,\*j</sub> sharp knife.’
- (111) *Tangnófó pè totá pa pe móe pe rú.*  
 ‘With her<sub>i,\*j</sub> sharp knife, she<sub>i</sub> cut up the fish.’

We shall now turn our attention to the scope of possessive antecedency in bivalent clauses, in which there are potentially two immediately preceding arguments, and so potential ambiguity arises. When the person/number/gender features of the two arguments in a clause differ, the interpretation of the possessor of some adjunct is obviously unproblematic, as in the following pair of clauses, in which the subject is feminine and the object is non-feminine, and which differ only in the choice of gender on the possessive marking on the location.

- (112) *Martha pe ke=bà=ing a pe=fu*  
 Martha 3SG.F.ERG 3SG.NF=person=the 3SG.F=see.F  
*pá-pè-pe.*  
 house-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘Martha saw the man in her house.’
- (113) *Martha pe ke bà ing a pe fu pá-ké-ke.*  
 house-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT  
 ‘Martha saw the man in his house.’

In these examples, and analogous ones, the fact that the only possible antecedents for the possessive marking are nominals with different genders makes the interpretation of the reference of the possession simple. There is no restriction on which noun may be the potential possessor of the oblique. Where the morphologically marked gender of the genitive and dative morphemes on the possessum is sufficient to make the interpretation of the possessor unambiguous, then an interpretation is possible. Similarly, if there is a first or second person argument in the pool of possible antecedents, the interpretation of the identity of the possessor is unproblematic, since the possessive marking on the noun will make the antecedent of the possessive marking unambiguous.

- (114) *Pe nì=fu pá-pè=pe.*  
 3SG.F 1SG=see.F house-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘I<sub>i</sub> saw her<sub>j</sub> in her<sub>\*i / j / ?k</sub> house.’
- (115) *Pe nì=fu pá-nì=ne.*  
 3SG.F 1SG=see.F house-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT  
 ‘I<sub>i</sub> saw her in my<sub>i</sub> house.’

In example (115xx) above the first person singular features of the possessive marking completely unambiguously identifies the possessor as the same as first person singular subject. In the first of the above examples it is possible for the female possessor to be someone other

than the immediately preceding female argument of the verb, but this is a most unlikely reading. If a female possessor is intended other than the one obvious from the clause, it will in most discourse appear as a full NP, making the possessive reference unambiguous, as in (116).

- (116) *Pe ni=fu Maria pá-pè=pe.*  
 3SG.F 1SG=see.F Maria house-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘I<sub>i</sub> saw her<sub>j</sub> in Maria’s\*<sub>i</sub> / ?\*<sub>j</sub> / k house.’

In this example it is just possible that the person seen is also the owner of the house, but this is a highly marked reading of the sentence. A more natural way to say ‘I saw Martha in her (Martha’s) house.’ would be to code Martha as the object of the verb, as in the example following. Here the reference of the possessor can only possibly be with the object, and not with the subject (even if we were to re-cast the sentence with a third person singular feminine subject, it could not be the possessor in this case). A reading of the sentence with a non-subject, non-object possessor is also ungrammatical.

- (117) *Martha ni=fu pá-pè=pe.*  
 Martha 1SG=see.F house-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘I<sub>i</sub> saw Maria<sub>j</sub> in her\*<sub>i</sub> / j / \*<sub>k</sub> house.’

Here the reference of the possessive construction is still clause-internal, and the maximal identificatory load is with the core argument, and not on the oblique. This appears to be a preference in the language: contentful expressions should be coded as core arguments if possible, and salient information in oblique phrases is likely to be interpreted as contrastive or in some other way ‘marked’.

From what we have seen so far we might infer that there are no restrictions on the interpretation of the possessor of an oblique nominal. This is not so, and the restrictions emerge when morphology is insufficient to disambiguate the reference of the possessor. When the two arguments in a bivalent clause share the same person, number and gender features, a postverbal oblique is interpreted as belonging to the P, if the person/number/gender categories of the P and the possessor are not contradictory.

- (118) *Amos ke Pius ke=fí pá-ké=ke.*  
 Amos 3SG.NF.ERG Alfius 3SG.NF=meet house-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT  
 ‘Amos<sub>i</sub> met Alfius<sub>j</sub> at his\*<sub>i</sub> / j / ?\*<sub>k</sub> house.’

Unlike monovalent sentences such as (88), (92), and (95) - (97), (118) is not ambiguous. The interpretation is not absolutely clear, but there is a very strong preference for treating the possessor as being the P of the clause, and the possessor cannot be interpreted as being the A or the clause. In order to have a different restriction, either the name of the possessor may be mentioned, as in (119), or the reflexive strategy, seen earlier in (120), may be used, in which case the only possible reference is to the A of the clause.

- (119) *Amos ke Pius ke=fí Amos pá-ké=ke.*  
 Amos 3SG.NF.ERG Alfius 3SG.NF=meet Amos house-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT  
 ‘Amos<sub>i</sub> met Alfius<sub>j</sub> at his<sub>i</sub> /\*<sub>j</sub> /\*<sub>k</sub> house.’

- (120) *Amos ke Pius ke=fí*  
 Amos 3SG.NF.ERG Alfius 3SG.NF=meet  
*pá-ké=ke=wò.*  
 house-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT=EMPH  
 ‘Amos<sub>i</sub> met Alfius<sub>j</sub> at his<sub>i</sub> /\*<sub>j</sub> /\*<sub>k</sub> own house.’

In the following example both the A and the P are male, and so non-feminine gender. This means that the feminine possessive morphology on the location can only be interpreted as referring to someone other than the arguments of the clause in which they are found. This someone will most likely be the topic of the paragraph or discourse in which this sentence is embedded.

- (121) *Amos ke Pius ke=fi pá-pé=pe.*  
 Amos 3SG.NF.ERG Alfius 3SG.NF=meet house-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘Amos<sub>i</sub> met Alfius<sub>j</sub> at her<sub>i</sub>/\*<sub>j</sub>/k house.’

We have seen that, if the dative clitic is omitted, then the interpretation of possessive antecedency is restricted to the arguments of the predicate in which it is found. The one exception to this involves cases such as the preceding sentence, where the pronominal features marked by the possessive morphology are incompatible with both of the possible referents in the clause. In that case the possessor will be interpreted as someone other than one of the arguments of the clause, as can be seen in (122).

- (122) *Amos ke Pius ke=fi pá-pè.*  
 Amos 3SG.NF.ERG Alfius 3SG.NF=meet house-3SG.F.GEN  
 ‘Amos<sub>i</sub> met Alfius<sub>j</sub> at her<sub>i</sub>/\*<sub>j</sub>/k house.’

We can summarise the conditions on possessive antecedency, presented here, as follows:

- if the morphological form of the possessive marking clearly differentiates between the possible possessing referents (in terms of person, number, or gender), then any reference is possible.
- if the morphological form of the possessive marking allows for possible real-world ambiguity, as is the case for third person reference, then:
  - there is a preference for the most immediate possible referent (in terms of predicate structures, where arguments » non-arguments) to be interpreted as the antecedent of the possessive marking.
  - this can be overridden in the case of a highly topical referent other than the most immediate.

The next section presents one further complication in the expression of possession, that involving kinterms and the fossilisation of certain inalienable possessive marking.

## 9.9 Kinship

The kinship system of Skou is loosely of the Sudanese type, in that it regularly maintains the differences between parents and their siblings, and siblings and cousins. Despite this there are indications that the language in fact displays two systems coexisting in the one set of terminologies, with Hawaiian-like elements in use. For instance, referring to ego’s siblings there are the terms *bahúe* ‘elder sibling’ and *bafàng* ‘younger sibling’, which do not distinguish sex, and also *yá(ne)* ‘sister’ and *yu(ne)* ‘brother’, which do not distinguish age. The simplest explanation for the existence of both these terms is that the language originally employed just one of the oppositions, and that the second pair have been borrowed as a result of extensive contact with members of a culture with a different system. The fact that *yu(ne)* is used for parallel cousins of either sex as well as for brothers, but not sisters, showing a collapse of siblings and parent’s sibling’s children, indicates some Austronesian influence. This combines with the fact that both *bahúe* ‘elder sibling’ and *bafàng* ‘younger sibling’ fit into the general

specifying-pronoun system, allowing for the representation of sex, is suggestive of widescale borrowing of age-sensitive kin categories into Skou from an outside source, and their being incorporated into a more native system that is more oriented towards sex distinctions than age distinctions. The borrowing must have taken place at a very distant period, since it is now all-pervasive in the Skou kinship system, as can be seen in the terms listed in table 139xx.

Despite the many terms that do not lexically specify sex, we could well argue that sex distinctions are basic in Skou. The fact that, for instance, the terms that do not refer to sex, such as *(ang)ku* ‘child’, are almost obligatorily marked for grammatical gender by pronominal clitics, means that indication of sex is a basic part of any kin reference in Skou, even if it is not part of the basic lexical specification of the word. On the other hand many of the terms that do indicate relative age appear to have transparently incorporated elements to indicate that age: in *tóeùè* ‘mother’s younger sister’ and *bahúe* ‘elder sibling’, for instance, the *-(h)ue* element is possibly related to *húe* ‘old’ (though with some extremely irregular and unwarranted semantic change in the case of *tóeùè*).

For instance, examine the following terms for different siblings. While only two of them lexically specify the sex of the referent, all of them must explicitly mention sex, by means of the gender-marking system if necessary, in order to be felicitously used with real-world reference. On the other hand only two of the kinship terms specify relative age, the sex-neutral *bahúe* and *bafàng*. There are no lexical items to express relative age, if it is not built into the lexical semantics of the lexical item, and while *hue* ‘old’ and *a* ‘young’ may be used to give an approximation of this difference, these adjectives are never required. Finally, it is noteworthy that, of the kinterms that specify relative age, none are included in the small set of inalienable nouns, indicating that they are not as integrated as the sex-specific terms.

|       |               |              |                                     |                                         |
|-------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| (123) | Root          | ... use      | ... gender                          | ... age                                 |
|       | <i>yu(ne)</i> | ‘brother’    | <i>yu(ne)</i> <i>yu(ne)</i>         | <i>yu(ne) (a)</i> , <i>yu(ne) (húe)</i> |
|       | <i>yá(ne)</i> | ‘sister’     | <i>yá(ne)</i> <i>yá(ne)</i>         | <i>yá(ne) (a)</i> , <i>yá(ne) (húe)</i> |
|       | <i>bahúe</i>  | ‘elder Si’   | <i>pe=bahúe</i> , <i>ke=bahúe</i>   | <i>pe=bahúe</i> , <i>ke=bahúe</i>       |
|       | <i>bafàng</i> | ‘younger Si’ | <i>pe=bafàng</i> , <i>ke=bafàng</i> | <i>pe=bafàng</i> , <i>ke=bafàng</i>     |

These facts, combined with the widespread marking of grammatical gender throughout the grammar of the language (see chapter 10), make it seem that the relative-age terms are later additions to an earlier system which was purely sex-based. The extensive contacts that the Skou people have with Austronesian speakers in the Humboldt Bay area, speakers of languages that predominantly have kin systems emphasising the relative age of the two persons, might well be responsible for the grafting of such a system onto an existing sex-based system.

### 9.9.1 Kinship in Skou

The Skou kinship system shows several points of grammatical interest to general linguistics, apart from the study of kinship systems, particularly blended systems, in and of themselves. Three factors distinguish the set of kinterms from any other selection of nominals:

- almost all the inalienable nouns are kinterms (<sup>10</sup>/<sub>12</sub>);
- several terms have suppletive doublets specifying 1SG possession of non-1SG possession;
- several terms occur with a (near) obligatory specifying pronoun;

- several inalienable kinterms are homophonous with an alienable noun, distinguished only by the morphosyntactic environment in which they occur.

Despite the semantically unifying criteria that join the kinterms together as against other lexical items, it is true that there is no one over-arching grammatical criteria for distinguishing them. Nonetheless, they make a sensibly delimitable lexicographic unit that can be discussed fruitfully.

We shall first present the kinterms and their organisation, and then discuss the linguistically interesting aspects of their formation and use. A list and discussion of the homophonies can be found in 9.3.

Table 139. Kinterms

| Skou             |                                     | Description of relationship                                                              | Grammatical notes            |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>bahúe</i>     | eSi                                 | elder sibling                                                                            | must use specifying pronouns |
| <i>bafàng</i>    | ySi                                 | younger sibling                                                                          | must use specifying pronouns |
| <i>yá(ne)</i>    | Z                                   | sister                                                                                   | inalienable                  |
| <i>yu(ne)</i>    | B, MZC, FBC<br>(= parallel cousins) | brother, parallel cousins:<br>mother's sister's children,<br>father's brother's children | inalienable                  |
| <i>lálà(ne)</i>  | FZC, MBC<br>(= cross cousins)       | cross-cousins: father's<br>sister's children,<br>mother's brother's children             | inalienable                  |
| <i>áni</i>       | M                                   | mother                                                                                   |                              |
| <i>âi</i>        | F                                   | father                                                                                   |                              |
| <i>má(me)</i>    | oM                                  | mother (not speaker's)                                                                   | inalienable                  |
| <i>re(me)</i>    | oF                                  | father (not speaker's)                                                                   | inalienable                  |
| <i>títí</i>      | FeB, MeZH                           | father's elder brother,<br>mother's elder sister's<br>husband                            |                              |
| <i>kóko</i>      | FyB                                 | father's younger brother                                                                 |                              |
| <i>kóko ueme</i> | FyBW                                | father's younger brother's<br>wife                                                       | analytical                   |
| <i>wówo</i>      | MB, FZH                             | mother's brother,<br>father's sister's husband                                           |                              |
| <i>tóeùe</i>     | MeZ, FeBW                           | mother's elder sister,<br>father's elder brother's wife                                  |                              |
| <i>áni</i>       | MyZ                                 | mother's younger sister                                                                  | analytical                   |
| <i>pe bafàng</i> |                                     |                                                                                          |                              |
| <i>fáfa</i>      | FZ, MBW                             | father's sister, mother's<br>brother's wife                                              |                              |
| <i>tata</i>      | PP, CC                              | grandparent, grandchild                                                                  |                              |
| <i>yaya</i>      | PPP                                 | great-grandparent                                                                        |                              |



- (127) *ùe pung li*  
 marriage do  
 ‘marry’
- (128) *tanghang tue*  
 face 3SG.F.do  
 ‘bear a child’

Possessing kin that are generationally older than you cannot be coded with light verb constructions, and must use either predicative nominals, as in (126), or a statement of the continued life of that relative, as in (129) and (131).

- (129) *Yáya-nì=ne moeng li Te Óeti.*  
 PPP-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT sit do Wutung  
 ‘My great-grandfather is at Wutung.’
- (130) \* *yáya-nì=ne ke=li (Te Óeti)*  
 PPP-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 3SG.NF=do Wutung  
 ‘I have a great-grandfather (at Wutung).’
- (131) *Wówo-nì=ne moeng li Te Tángpe.*  
 MB-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT sit do Skou Yambe  
 ‘My (maternal) uncle is at Skou Yambe.’
- (132) \* *wówo-nì=ne ke=li*  
 MB-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 3SG.NF=do  
 ‘I have a maternal uncle.’

In (130) the ‘existential coding’, as opposed to the light verb coding, is the only possibility regardless of the actual age of the referent. Even if the person in question was the speaker’s mother’s much younger brother, younger than the speaker, (132) will be ungrammatical.

### 9.10 Issues to do with possession in Skou

The grammatical parameters that we need to consider in a discussion of the marking of possession in Skou are the following (although they are presented as separate points, they interact to a significant degree).

- location of possession: internal to the NP  
 external to the NP:
- type of possessum: inalienable: use -DAT-GEN=DAT marking strategy  
 alienable: use -GEN=DAT marking strategy

The fact that these two factors could logically overlap does not create complications, since the ‘type of possessum’ factor is only relevant to internal possession. External possession applies in a range of forms and to a range of noun phrase types, as detailed in 9.5.

## 10 Nominal Classification

Nominal classification, the linguistically overt division of the elements of the world into discrete (or less discrete) classes, has been reported in several languages of New Guinea, such as Enga, Yimas, and Saweru (Lang 1975, Foley 1991, Donohue 2001b, respectively), and Skou too is a language that employs nominal classification as part of its linguistic code. While the morphological means used to realise the classification system is described in detail elsewhere in this book as it is relevant for other aspects of the morphology of Skou (see particularly chapters 6, 7 and 19), this chapter discusses the notion of classification and the kinds of divisions that are made, with the morphological behaviour of the morphemes that realise these divisions being of secondary importance.

### 10.1 Gender and classification

Gender is a pervasive feature in the morphology of the Skou clause, with all nominals being classed as feminine or non-feminine. This gender is realised on any pronominal reference that applies to that nominal. For instance, the choice of vowel on the verb in the following clauses monitors the gender of the object. In the first example the object, *ke*, is not marked as feminine gender, and so the generic form of the verb is used. In the second example the object is feminine, and the verb appears with the vowel alternations typical of verbs marked for feminine gender.

- (1) *Mè ke m̀=ʃue na?*  
 2SG 3SG.NF 2SG-see Y/N  
 ‘Can you see him?’
- (2) *Mè pe m̀=ʃu na?*  
 2SG 3SG.F 2SG-see.F Y/N  
 ‘Can you see her?’

When inanimate nominals are indexed on the verb, the same divisions are observed.

- (3) *Mè p̀ing m̀=ʃue na?*  
 2SG bow 2SG-see Y/N  
 ‘Can you see the bow?’
- (4) *Mè wá m̀=ʃu na?*  
 2SG carrying.basket 2SG-see.F Y/N  
 ‘Can you see the carrying basket?’

This chapter will deal with the type of nominal classification that is found in Skou, and the means used to realise it. A formal description of the type of agreement found on verbs is presented in 7.2. Here we shall deal mainly with the semantic bases for gender choice, and the ways in which gender marking is realised in the NP. Additionally, the type of system found in

Skou, which combines gender and number into the one classificatory paradigm, is discussed in a cross-linguistic perspective.

## 10.2 The classificatory divisions

There are several classificatory divisions that are relevant to a discussion of classification in Skou. To simply list them, we need to take into account the following four divisions, each of which is itself binary, and some of which show a clear dependency relationship with other categories.

|                 |                                                   |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| gender:         | feminine versus non-feminine                      |
| number:         | singular versus non-singular                      |
| animacy:        | animate versus inanimate                          |
| higher animacy: | humans (and associated animates) versus non-human |

The second classification, number, is fairly self-explanatory, and will not be discussed here in detail, except as it relates to the morphological realisation of gender: all non-mass nouns may appear with a different number of referents, and so this is obviously not a matter for lexical specification. Although number appears to be straightforward, and not the sort of ontological category that gender and the two animacy divisions are, it is bound into the system of marking gender, which is covariant also with animacy, as shall be discussed in 16.4. Systems of classification that treat number, as well as some semantic property of the nominal, in the same paradigm are not common, but neither are they unreported in the languages of the world. Kiowa (Watkins 1984: 79) is one such language.

Animacy, and higher animacy, are both straightforward categories; the category ‘animacy’ divides the word into sentient and non-sentient entities, without any complications: there are no biologically sentient entities that are classified as inanimate, nor any biologically non-sentient things that are classified as animate. The related category ‘higher animacy’ involves a basic division between humans, spirits, and sometimes animals associated with humans (dogs, pigs, cassowaries) and the animals of the bush or the water. This is clearly a more culturally determined category, not a biologically one, and more will be said about it. later.

The category most dependent on cultural criteria, rather than strict natural-world criteria (such as shape, size or location) for its determination is that of ‘gender’. At the higher-animate end of the scale there is a clear biological basis for gender assignment, with the two genders correlating absolutely with the two sexes. At the lower end of the animacy scale, however, this biological basis is lost, and the two genders must be assigned according to a complex, but related, set of criteria. The factors that lie behind the assignment of gender to different nominals will be discussed in the following section.

## 10.3 The semantic and pragmatic bases of gender marking

A set of non-congruous principles lie behind the assignment of gender of nouns in Skou, but as guiding principles rather than absolutes. It is best to think of the discussion following in this section as representing the distillation of the introspections of various Skou speakers about the gender system in their language, after the alternations were brought to their attention.<sup>55</sup> This

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<sup>55</sup> Most speakers I questioned denied that there was anything going on at all, and, even as they altered vowels from [ɥ] to [u] to show agreement, denied that any alternation was happening.

section, then, represents an idealisation of the principles that are prescriptively said to be behind the gender system, while 10.4 shall present data with lists of lexical items of various categories showing the operation of the gender division in practise. There are four categories of nouns relevant for determining the different principles of gender assignment. The divisions that are relevant, showing different behaviour with respect to gender assignment, are:

- human and higher animate referents;
- inanimate items associated with humans;
- animate referents not closely associated with humans;
- inanimate referents not closely associated with humans.

These proposed divisions are ontologically relevant for the following reasons:

- Human referents do not have grammatically-assigned gender other than that associated with their biological sex (female = feminine, male = non-feminine), and so can in a way be thought of as participating in the system of grammatical gender less tightly than are inanimate objects, for which gender is purely grammatical. Various higher-animate non-humans, such as *naké* ‘dog’, or *pále* ‘pig’, are also assigned gender simply on the basis of their biological sex.
- Inanimate items associated with humans are assigned the gender of the human that usually used them: thus, tools and things associated with men are assigned non-feminine gender, while tools and things associated with women are fixed with feminine gender. This means that the same real-world referent, with the same linguistic sign, may change grammatical gender as it is processed. The most salient example of this is *hòe* ‘sago’: this is non-feminine when it grows and as it is chopped down, as it is the domain of men to plant and harvest the sago trees. Once the sago is at the point where it can be processed by women (washing, packaging, cooking, and eating), the sago is treated as feminine (see 10.3.1). This should not be thought of as a fluid gender system, but rather as a series of lexical concepts that are all encoded with the one lexical item, but whose separate identity is clear from the fact that they are treated separately in the grammar. The different genders apply because of the different dynamics of oppositions in different cultural contexts.

Animate and inanimate nominals that are not treated as having biologically determined gender make up the ‘conceptual’ part of the classification system.

- Within the class of animate nouns, there are both feminine and non-feminine nouns, with the following broad criteria determining their membership:
  - Feminine gender is associated with the more domesticated animals;
  - non-feminine gender is associated with more ‘wild’ items and animals.
- Inanimate nouns that are closely associated with humans, such as body parts, are predominantly non-feminine, though both feminine dominates when the part of the body is soft or smooth. Some examples of feminine and non-feminine body parts are shown in 10.4, table 143xx. There is a clear preference for feminine body parts being large, enveloping, smooth, or soft.

- The inanimate nouns that are not closely associated with humans are predominantly feminine, though both feminine and non-feminine occur. The following categories emerge:
  - Feminine gender is associated with things that are associated with women or women's work, and with nature in general. There are plenty of counter-examples, but there is a tendency for less man-influenced things to be feminine
  - Non-feminine gender is associated with trees and other wild foods in their pre-processed state, and with dangerous things of the bush, or the more showy of birds. It is also associated with things that are the products of male endeavour, and the larger of two similar artefacts, when there are two structurally different versions (such as different pot types, for instance).

These general principles provide a road map for the principles behind gender assignment in Skou. The following sections will map out how these overlapping criteria are resolved in particular cases.

### 10.3.1 Underspecified gender: the case of *hòe* 'sago' and *pa* 'water'

Some nouns in Skou do not seem to have a completely fixed, lexically assigned, gender. One highly prominent noun (in terms of cultural relevance and frequency of use) is *hòe* 'sago', which illustrates the point that the nature of classification in Skou is not dependent on any broad semantic criteria associated with the nature of the object. This can be shown with a couple of examples.

When a sago tree is growing, whether it is in the wild or in a garden, it is referred to as *hòe* 'sago', and assigned non-feminine gender, as can be seen by the choice of non-feminine (unmarked) verb forms *fue*, *i* and *li*, with no vowel alternations or fused prefixal agreement on the root, in the following sentence.

- (5) *Hòe nì=fue.*  
 sago 1SG=see  
 'I saw the sago (tree or swamp garden, unprocessed, not cooked food, not conceived of as food).'
- (6) *Hòe moeng i li fue a.*  
 sago sit be do there  
 'The sago (tree or swamp garden, unprocessed, not cooked food, not conceived of as food) is over there.'

If the sago is processed, however, or is at the point in processing of being washed and rinsed by women, and especially if it has already been cooked and is being eaten, or is ready to be eaten, then it is referred to with feminine gender. This is shown by the use of vowel umlaut (*fue fu, i e*) and in once case vowel umlaut is combined with consonantal alternation due to underlying prefixation (*li tue*) (see chapter 7 for further details).

- (7) *Hòe nì=fu.*  
 sago 1SG=see.F  
 'I saw the (cooked, currently being processed, processed, or simply designated as edible) sago.'

- (8) *Hòe mong e tue fue a.*  
 sago F.sit 3SG.F.be 3SG.F.do there  
 ‘The (cooked, currently being processed, processed, or simply designated as edible) sago is over there.’

Here the assumption of feminine gender can be attributed to the fact that sago is rinsed, carried back to the village, cooked and served by women: there is some degree of ‘contamination’ of gender onto the object that the feminine gendered women are having such close contact with.

In the case of *pa* ‘water’ we can see the opposite process: the wild state of sago is assigned the feminine gender, as can be seen from the choice of the form of the verb ‘see’, which marks a feminine object, and the feminine form of ‘do’ in the *ko tue* collocation, which is the feminine form. This is shown in (9). The ungrammaticality of these verbs appearing with non-feminine forms can be seen in (10).

- (9) *Pa nì=fu ko tue hángpeng.*  
 river 1SG=see.F be.at 3SG.F.do bush  
 ‘I saw the river in the bush.’

- (10) \* *pa nì fue ko li hángpeng*  
 do (neutral, including 3SG.NF)

Water in a non-natural state, however, is non-feminine. In the following sentence the choice of the verb root *ké* ‘get’, rather than the alternative *wé*, which specifies a feminine object, indicates that *pa* ‘water’ cannot be thought of as being feminine. Again, the ungrammatical sentence underneath shows that the use of a verb form specifying a feminine object is not grammatical.

- (11) *Pa ke=ké k-á toe pá-pè=pe.*  
 water 3SG.NF=get 3SG.NF-carry 3.come house-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘He brought some water to her house.’

- (12) \* *pa ke=wé ká toe pá pè pe*  
 3SG.NF=get.F

Compare these sentences with unproblematically feminine nouns in sentences (13) and (14), and the sentences with unambiguously masculine nouns in (15) and (16). In (13) and (14) we can see that the feminine form of the verb must be used, showing vowel alternations, while in (15) and (16) the verb is in the base form that is used for non-feminine participants.

#### Feminine

- (13) *Tang nì=fu ko tue báng.*  
 canoe 1SG=see.F be.at 3SG.F.do beach  
 ‘I saw a canoe at the beach.’
- (14) *Pe=ueme nì=fu mong tue báng.*  
 3SG.F=woman 1SG=see.F F.sit 3SG.F.do beach  
 ‘I saw a woman at the beach.’

#### Non-feminine

- (15) *Pá nì=fue moeng li bàme.*  
 house 1SG=see sit do village  
 ‘I saw the house in the village.’

- (16) *Ke=balèng nì=fue moeng li pá.*  
 3SG.NF=man 1SG=see sit do house  
 ‘I saw the man in the house.’

We could solve the sorts of classificatory quandaries that we have seen with *hòe* and *pa* by positing in each case two paired lexemes, which just happen to be homophonous. In the first pair we would have to posit the words *hòe* ‘growing sago, NF’ and *hòe* ‘processed sago’; the second pair of examples would be accounted for by the lexical entries *pa* ‘river’ and *pa* ‘water’. While feasible, any degree of linguistic intuition, as well as native speakers’ judgements, indicates that there is lexical unity between *hòe* and *hòe*, *pa* and *pa*. As an alternative, we might suppose that there is a transfer of grammatical gender: the association with women preparing and cooking sago imparts feminine gender to an otherwise non-feminine nominal. What then of the water? If we were to make our judgement solely on the basis of the sentences seen above, we might suppose that the non-feminine gender of *pa* in (11) is due to the presence of a male subject in this sentence. This does not hold up in the light of sentences such as (17), in which the subject is feminine; again, the feminine object form of the verb *ké* ‘get’ (suppleted to *wé*, and inflected for third person singular feminine as *pé*, as seen in (18)) is not allowed. (19) and (20) show parallel data for a plural subject.

- (17) *Pa pe=w-é p-ú toe*  
 water 3SG.F=3SG.F-get 3SG.F-3SG.F.carry 3.come  
*pá-pè=pe.*  
 house-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘She brought some water to her house.’
- (18) \* *pa pe=p-é pú toe pá pè pe*  
 3SG.F=3SG.F-get.F
- (19) *Pa te=kí t-ú toe*  
 water 3PL=3PL-get 3PL-3PL.carry 3.come  
*pá-tè=te.*  
 house-3PL.GEN=3PL.DAT  
 ‘They brought some water to their house.’
- (20) \* *pa te=wé tú toe pá tè te*  
 3PL=get.F

Here we can only appeal to the general tendency for cultural items (as opposed to things that are part of the natural, non-human, world) to be marked masculine. We would need to assume that ‘water’ is inherently feminine, but that on transfer to the world of humans, whether the transfer is accomplished by women or by men, the non-feminine gender is applied. It might be worth noting that the Tami river (*Pa Ílong* in Skou), the major river in the Skou part of the world, also marks the traditional border between the Skou land to the north and the land belonging to the Wutung, Musu and Nyao to the east, and the Elsend and Awyi to the south (see map 2 in chapter 1). This means that the river marks the border of the known and unknown, the controlled and the uncontrolled.

Assigning feminine gender to such an obvious marker of the non-human, non-cultural world is not surprising. Inanimate nouns that are not closely associated with humans are generally marked as non-feminine. There are exceptions to this; these exceptions involve very visible and important natural features, such as mountains, islands, the sea and capes, and these

are discussed in more detail, along with the organising principles behind these assignments, in the following section.

#### 10.4 The lexical distribution of gender

The tables in this section, while being a long way from providing exhaustive listings of the membership of each semantic group, give an impression of the lexical items that are classified into the different gender classes in Skou. Rather than simply listing members of the different genders in each different semantic field, they are arranged to try to show functional oppositions, based on informants' perceptions, on cultural practices, or on physical similarities. In those cases for which there appears, for one reason or another, to be an opposition existing between a feminine and a non-feminine noun (or group of nouns), they are listed on the same line. Otherwise, when there is no obvious relationship between two nouns, they are listed on separate lines. More details of the lexical items presented here can be found in appendix 1.

Table 140. Feminine and non-feminine gender oppositions in land animals

| Semantic field | Feminine nouns                 | non-feminine nouns                |
|----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Animals        | <i>ya ápátàngpang</i> 'animal' |                                   |
|                | <i>pále</i> 'pig'              | <i>naké</i> 'dog'                 |
|                | <i>púru</i> 'tree kangaroo'    | <i>pumà</i> 'wallaby'             |
|                | '♀ sugar glider'               | <i>púpí</i> '♂ sugar glider'      |
|                | <i>púfàue</i> 'cuscus (sp.)'   | <i>púbà</i> 'cuscus (sp.)'        |
|                |                                | <i>púbèng</i> 'cuscus (sp.)'      |
|                | <i>í</i> 'snake'               | <i>ífóngta</i> 'giant goanna'     |
|                | <i>íwúng</i> 'snake (sp.)'     | <i>fongtà</i> 'green tree lizard' |
|                | <i>íméeri</i> 'snake (large)'  |                                   |
|                | <i>ingéngong</i> 'cat'         | <i>kíngue</i> 'green tree frog'   |

The generic term for '(land) animal', *yaápátàngpang*, is feminine, but there is a nearly perfect set of oppositions within the field that is most clearly realised in the sugar glider terms, *púwa* and *púpí*, which both refer to complete species, but which are mythologically paired. *Púwa*, then, refers to both male and female members of the same species, as does *púpí* refer to all members of that species. Tree kangaroos form an obvious pair with (non-climbing, ground) wallabies on physiological grounds, with the tree-dwelling *púru* 'tree kangaroos' taking feminine gender, probably by association with trees which are also feminine, and by virtue of their smaller size. The larger *pumà* are non-feminine. Snakes and lizards provide another opposition, with the ground-dwelling characteristic of snakes serving to anchor that class in feminine gender, by association with the ground, which is feminine. Snakes are also, perhaps surprisingly, considered to be squat creatures: they are most typically found coiled up, and so most often present a round shape. The cat versus frog opposition is tentative, but both these animals can be treated similarly as animals that are not eaten. These two may well turn out not to be an opposition, but simply happenstance members of opposite genders. Before all these oppositions, however, the pig:dog opposition is the most important. The pig is the archetypal bush animal: there is little animal husbandry in the Skou area (see 1.3), and most pig were traditionally taken from the bush, or in trade. The dog, on the other hand, is the domesticated animal, used by men in hunting, and so serves as a functional opposite to the pig, which is the

culturally most important prey. Dogs and pigs are clearly paired in the Skou world-view, as antagonists.

Table 141. Feminine and non-feminine gender oppositions in birds

| Semantic field | Feminine nouns                                | non-feminine nouns                                |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Birds          |                                               | <i>táng</i> ‘bird’                                |
|                | <i>pu</i> ‘nest’                              |                                                   |
|                | <i>tángránpoe</i> ‘12-wired bird of paradise’ | <i>tángráng</i> ‘(raggiana) bird of paradise’     |
|                | <i>tángboe</i> ‘crowned pigeon’               | <i>tángké,tangé</i> ‘eagle (sp.)’<br><i>táglù</i> |
|                | <i>ojíng</i> ‘chicken’                        |                                                   |
|                | <i>tángáue</i> ‘sea tern’                     | <i>pátángke</i> ‘kingfisher’                      |
|                | <i>tángná</i> ‘(white) cockatoo’              | <i>tángróepa</i> ‘(black) palm cockatoo’          |
|                | <i>tángkeng-keng(wa)</i> ‘small bat (sp.)’    | <i>tangóe</i> ‘bat’                               |
|                | <i>tángfí</i> ‘small black bat’               |                                                   |
|                | <i>tangwáue</i> ‘bush turkey’                 | <i>tángung</i> ‘hornbill’                         |
|                | <i>tángrùe</i> ‘cassowary’                    |                                                   |

In the domain of birds we find that the cover-term is non-feminine, not the feminine that in the case for animals. This ties in with the use of birds as clan totems in Skou society. In opposition to this, however, is the feminine gender assigned to *pu* ‘nest’, reflecting female domestic roles (see ‘tools’ and ‘house and home’ below). The bird of paradise (*tángráng* is both a cover term for birds of paradise in general, and the species-specific name for the raggiana bird of paradise) is non-feminine as a clan totem, though the 12-wired bird of paradise, one of the smaller of the prominent birds of paradise, is feminine in opposition to it. Eagles, which both symbolise hunting (a male domain) and fly high in the sky (near the sun – non-feminine), typically (in the Skou area) soaring on winds from the north (the sea – non-feminine) as they hit the hills near the coast, are non-feminine, while the largest other typical bird is the victoria crowned pigeon, which due to its round shape is assigned feminine gender. The oppositions between the water birds, with kingfishers (with their long beaks) being non-feminine while the more squat sea term in feminine is clearly shape-based, and the colour difference that separates the two cockatoo species names reflect the feminine status of the moon and the masculine status of the sky and stars; the longer beak of the palm cockatoo further adds to the structural differences between the two species. Longer bills, and an aggressive nature, lead to the hornbill also being classed as non-feminine, while the bat species are separated on size grounds. The cassowary is grouped as a feminine bird (it is considered avian in Skou culture, and indeed in all the cultures descended from the proto-Macro Skou peoples (see figure 2, in 1.4), in contrast to its near-human treatment in many highlands New Guinea cultures) by virtue of its large, round, eggs, its round body, the rounded crest on its head, and its stay-at-home characteristics. The bush turkey is also classed as feminine because of its habit of building nesting mounds, and its squat shape.

Table 142. Feminine and non-feminine gender oppositions in fish and water creatures

| Semantic field | Feminine nouns  |                     | non-feminine nouns |                |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Fish           | <i>móe</i>      | ‘fish’              |                    |                |
|                | <i>kunpáue</i>  | ‘octopus’           | <i>móema</i>       | ‘shark’        |
|                | <i>páli</i>     | ‘kraken’            | <i>móewú</i>       | ‘barracuda’    |
|                | <i>móenðeng</i> | ‘crocodile’         | <i>móelíue</i>     | ‘dolphin’      |
|                | <i>kungwóue</i> | ‘hermit crab’       | <i>apále</i>       | ‘crab’         |
|                | <i>kúng</i>     | ‘small crab (sp.)’  |                    |                |
|                | <i>lá</i>       | ‘prawn’             | <i>le</i>          | ‘shellfish’    |
|                | <i>móeí</i>     | ‘large turtle’      | <i>moelíue</i>     | ‘small turtle’ |
|                | <i>moeláng</i>  | ‘medium turtle’     |                    |                |
|                |                 | (most fish species) |                    |                |

Fish in general are a feminine biological category, and most fish species take feminine gender. The exceptions are the long, dangerous fish with teeth, such as sharks and barracuda (see the body parts section below, table 145, for ‘teeth’), and dolphins, with their long noses. Crabs and shellfish are also non-feminine, by virtue of their sharp edges, though smaller, more land-based species are feminine: the ground is feminine. The fact that small turtles are non-feminine might seem to run in the opposite direction to the normal male:female::large:small divisions that operate, except for the fact that the larger turtles are all rounder, and moreover are more likely to be seen laying eggs, a clearly female domain. The principle of oppositions within domains accounts for the non-feminine gender of the small turtles.

Table 143. Feminine and non-feminine gender oppositions in insects

| Semantic field | Feminine nouns         |                           | non-feminine nouns |             |
|----------------|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Insects        | <i>tangbéro</i>        | ‘butterfly’               |                    |             |
|                | <i>tanbéro títú</i>    | ‘butterfly of good omens’ |                    |             |
|                | <i>tangbéro léngfi</i> | ‘butterfly of bad omens’  |                    |             |
|                | <i>lúng</i>            | ‘fly’                     | <i>hítong</i>      | ‘blowfly’   |
|                | <i>tángrue</i>         | ‘praying mantis’          | <i>ibábúeli</i>    | ‘wasp’      |
|                |                        |                           | <i>yabíto</i>      | ‘firefly’   |
|                |                        |                           | <i>óngmi</i>       | ‘firefly’   |
|                | <i>pàng</i>            | ‘bedbug’                  | <i>loe</i>         | ‘ant’       |
|                | <i>fí</i>              | ‘louse, flea’             | <i>óe</i>          | ‘black ant’ |
|                | <i>fúnglìng</i>        | ‘scorpion’                |                    |             |
|                | <i>kunpáue</i>         | ‘spider’                  |                    |             |
|                | <i>áli</i>             | ‘leech’                   |                    |             |
|                | <i>ójá</i>             | ‘hairy caterpillar’       |                    |             |
|                | <i>óhóeha</i>          | ‘sago grub’               |                    |             |

The insect world is predominantly feminine. The only consistently non-feminine insect groups are those that sting, such as ants, wasps and biting flies, or fireflies, which are too similar to both fire and stars, both non-feminine, to be counted as feminine. Other than these exceptions the natural world category seems to dominate the insect world, especially since no

insects can be domesticated (and so drawn, at least potentially, into the male, and thus non-feminine, world).

Table 144. Feminine and non-feminine gender oppositions in plants

| Semantic field | Feminine nouns  |                 | non-feminine nouns |                       |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Plants         | <i>rí</i>       | ‘tree’          |                    |                       |
|                | <i>yá</i>       | ‘grass’         | <i>ta</i>          | ‘elephant grass’      |
|                | <i>rílo</i>     | ‘bud’           | <i>hí</i>          | ‘weeds’               |
|                | <i>hang</i>     | ‘coconut’       | <i>ingno</i>       | ‘banana’              |
|                | <i>ápólè</i>    | ‘gnemon, tulip’ | <i>rángúeke</i>    | ‘sweet potato’        |
|                | <i>póweng</i>   | ‘gedi, aibika’  | <i>nále</i>        | ‘taro’                |
|                | <i>póní</i>     | ‘edible ferns’  |                    |                       |
|                | <i>poí</i>      | ‘spinach’       |                    |                       |
|                | <i>óemòe</i>    | ‘round red yam’ | <i>óe</i>          | ‘yam’                 |
|                |                 |                 | <i>óewa</i>        | ‘long yam’            |
|                | <i>káue</i>     | ‘mushroom’      |                    |                       |
|                | <i>ríro</i>     | ‘bark’          |                    |                       |
|                | <i>hangling</i> | ‘roots’         | <i>àno</i>         | ‘tree with air roots’ |
|                |                 |                 | <i>béngue</i>      | ‘cucumber’            |
|                |                 |                 | <i>pupúki</i>      | ‘eggplant’            |
| <i>yú</i>      | ‘breadfruit’    | <i>sangbiki</i> | ‘pumpkin’          |                       |

The world of plants is also predominantly feminine. There are two reasons behind this, firstly the fact that, as part of the natural world plants are in the feminine sphere, and secondly because the collection of most edible plants, and of most plants that are destined to become the materials used to make tools, is women’s work. The exceptions tend to be either shape- or activity-determined: bananas, cucumbers, and long yams, which by virtue of their long, thin shape are non-feminine, and less obviously weeds and (not useful) elephant grass, which are traditionally cleared by men’s work, and pumpkins and eggplants, both relatively recent imports which arrived with the coming of the (male) Malay traders to the Dutch capital Hollandia in the early years of the twentieth century.

Table 145. Feminine and non-feminine gender oppositions in body parts

| Semantic field | Feminine nouns  |                                                   | non-feminine nouns |                                               |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Body parts     | <i>nòe</i>      | ‘body’                                            |                    |                                               |
|                | <i>húe</i>      | ‘stomach’                                         | <i>háng</i>        | ‘intestines (end)’                            |
|                | <i>hi</i>       | ‘faeces’                                          | <i>húe kukupa</i>  | ‘intestine, small’                            |
|                | <i>làng</i>     | ‘foot’                                            | <i>tunghúbi</i>    | ‘shin’                                        |
|                | <i>làngbi</i>   | ‘knee’                                            | <i>lánghùe</i>     | ‘calf’                                        |
|                | <i>lèng</i>     | ‘hips’                                            |                    |                                               |
|                | <i>nupá(ho)</i> | ‘armpit’                                          |                    |                                               |
|                | <i>páwu</i>     | ‘shoulder’                                        |                    |                                               |
|                | <i>nórùerue</i> | ‘elbow’                                           |                    |                                               |
|                | <i>nò</i>       | ‘arm, hand’                                       |                    |                                               |
|                | <i>nómàma</i>   | ‘thumb’                                           | <i>nókàngkang</i>  | ‘finger’                                      |
|                |                 |                                                   | <i>ròebi</i>       | ‘head’                                        |
|                | <i>néko</i>     | ‘forehead’                                        | <i>hángta</i>      | ‘skull’                                       |
|                | <i>lúbi</i>     | ‘eyebrow’                                         | <i>lúto</i>        | ‘eye’                                         |
|                | <i>péngro</i>   | ‘lip’                                             | <i>kóeng</i>       | ‘tooth’                                       |
|                | <i>loe</i>      | ‘ear’                                             | <i>há</i>          | ‘nose’                                        |
|                | <i>lóeri</i>    | ‘snot’                                            | <i>loelóng</i>     | ‘nostril’                                     |
|                | <i>òebi</i>     | ‘cheek’                                           | <i>kóeti</i>       | ‘throat’                                      |
|                |                 |                                                   | <i>kéng</i>        | ‘neck’                                        |
|                | <i>yángue</i>   | ‘boil’                                            | <i>pang</i>        | ‘pus’                                         |
|                | <i>hùng</i>     | ‘vagina’                                          | <i>òe</i>          | ‘penis’                                       |
|                | <i>nóng</i>     | ‘breast’                                          | <i>òebi</i>        | ‘testicle’                                    |
|                | <i>bèngro</i>   | ‘tail (of fish,<br>feminine birds<br>and snakes)’ | <i>pú</i>          | ‘tail (of animals,<br>non-feminine<br>birds)’ |

Most body parts, including *nòe* ‘body’ itself, are feminine. The exceptions are sex-based (non-feminine *òe* ‘penis’ and *òebi* ‘testicle’ versus feminine *hùng* ‘vagina’ and *nóng* ‘breast’ are quite obvious) shape-based: fingers, long bones, the longer intestinal portion of the digestive tract, the neck, and teeth all fit in the longer, thinner prototype, and ‘nose’ is not far off, compared to the flatter, broader ears, cheeks and forehead, which are feminine. The rationale behind ‘boil’ and ‘pus’ appears to be shape-based (feminine items being rounder), and emphasising the presence of an opposition (pus as opposed to the boil being coded as a gender opposition). The two different terms for tails, *bèngro* and *pú*, nicely split into two genders based on the types of animals they occur with. The fact that *bèngro* is limited to fish and snakes, while *pú* describes the tails of mammals and legged reptiles might be thought of as representing a strictly formal classification (two words that translate as ‘tail’ reflecting two different body parts), but the fact that in the realm of birds there is a perfect split in terminology which is completely predictable based on the gender assigned to the bird in question makes it clear that the opposing genders of the two tail lexemes mirrors the gender of the animal that they are found with.

Table 146. Feminine and non-feminine gender oppositions in tools and artefacts

| Semantic field | Feminine nouns                                 |                     | non-feminine nouns  |                  |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Tools          | <i>tá</i>                                      | ‘arrow’             | <i>pìng</i>         | ‘bow’            |
|                | <i>já</i>                                      | ‘pig noose trap’    |                     |                  |
|                | <i>takúe</i>                                   | ‘punji stakes’      |                     |                  |
|                | <i>núng</i>                                    | ‘large handnet’     |                     |                  |
|                | <i>lòengma</i>                                 | ‘path’              | <i>rè</i>           | ‘bridge’         |
|                | <i>palang</i>                                  | ‘water pot’         | <i>pa</i>           | ‘kettle’         |
|                | <i>rúto</i>                                    | ‘(small) water pot’ | <i>lang</i>         | ‘large pot’      |
|                | <i>taíngbe</i>                                 | ‘money’             | <i>bòeng</i>        | ‘basket/purse’   |
|                | <i>tangnófó</i>                                | ‘(small) knife’     | <i>tangnófó tíí</i> | ‘large knife’    |
|                |                                                |                     | <i>fe</i>           | ‘fork’           |
|                |                                                |                     | <i>anangbí</i>      | ‘chopsticks’     |
|                |                                                |                     | <i>ríoe</i>         | ‘planks of wood’ |
|                |                                                |                     | <i>lé</i>           | ‘drum’           |
|                | (most domestic tools and personal decorations) | <i>kúci</i>         | ‘marbles’           |                  |

Tools are also mainly feminine, because they are typically used in domestic settings. The obvious exceptions to this domestic use criterion, arrows, noose traps and punji stakes, are feminine by association with their prey, pigs, which are the archetypal feminine animal, even though they are used by men in this pursuit. The intrusion of feminine gender into the otherwise male world of hunting is to enforce the gender contrast in that sphere of living: since the participants are male, and bows (synonymous with ‘war’) is non-feminine, the arrows and other trapping tools are classified as feminine.

Table 147. Feminine and non-feminine gender oppositions in canoe parts

| Semantic field | Feminine nouns |                  | non-feminine nouns |             |
|----------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Canoes         | <i>tang</i>    | ‘canoe’          | <i>tú</i>          | ‘ship’      |
|                | <i>tangtó</i>  | ‘front of canoe’ |                    |             |
|                | <i>tangrúe</i> | ‘rudder’         |                    |             |
|                | <i>wáng</i>    | ‘sail’           |                    |             |
|                | <i>tangta</i>  | ‘outrigger pole’ | <i>tanghang</i>    | ‘outrigger’ |

The terminology for parts of the canoe is predominantly feminine. Although the sea is non-feminine, and the crews of canoes are predominantly or exclusively male, the only part of a canoe that is non-feminine is the long, thin outrigger that runs outside the canoe proper. *Tú* ‘ship (airplane)’ is classified as non-feminine in opposition to the smaller feminine *tang* ‘canoe (vehicle in general)’, but all the other sea-going technology, canoes themselves included, are classified as feminine. This is an example of the Skou operation of dynamic oppositions: while we might make an argument that the canoe represents the human, domestic element braving the sea, and so should be part of the non-feminine domain, the fact that the sea itself is classified as non-feminine, in opposition to the feminine land, means that the only way to create an opposition between the (natural world) sea and the (technological) canoes is by coding the canoes as feminine.

Table 148. Feminine and non-feminine gender oppositions in the house

| Semantic field | Feminine nouns  |           | non-feminine nouns |               |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|
| House and home | <i>bàme</i>     | ‘village’ | <i>pá</i>          | ‘house’       |
|                | <i>tího</i>     | ‘door’    | <i>úee</i>         | ‘ladder’      |
|                | <i>tílong</i>   | ‘doorway’ |                    |               |
|                | <i>hò</i>       | ‘roof’    |                    |               |
|                | <i>láho, fá</i> | ‘wall’    | <i>ràng</i>        | ‘house poles’ |
|                | <i>pátáng</i>   | ‘ceiling’ |                    |               |
|                | <i>rápong</i>   | ‘smoke’   | <i>ra</i>          | ‘fire’        |
|                | <i>rawòng</i>   | ‘coals’   |                    |               |

Houses, as the domain of domesticity, are mainly feminine. The exceptions are determined by shape: long thin objects, the house poles and ladder, are non-feminine. The house itself is non-feminine, probably by association with the men who construct the house, while the individual parts of the house are all feminine gender. Fire, usually employed in the house, is non-feminine, by association with the non-feminine sun (the similarity in phonological shape between *ra* ‘fire’ and *ráng* ‘sun’ is unlikely to be pure chance).

Table 149. Feminine and non-feminine gender oppositions in the natural world

| Semantic field | Feminine nouns  |                | non-feminine nouns    |              |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Natural world  | <i>fítong</i>   | ‘earth, soil’  |                       |              |
|                | <i>hángpeng</i> | ‘bush, jungle’ |                       |              |
|                | <i>ké</i>       | ‘moon’         | <i>ráng</i>           | ‘sun’        |
|                |                 |                | <i>ha</i>             | ‘star’       |
|                | <i>a</i>        | ‘cloud’        | <i>pítang</i>         | ‘sky’        |
|                | <i>fu</i>       | ‘rain’         | <i>pítang pu i li</i> | ‘thunder’    |
|                | <i>fángfū</i>   | ‘South wind’   | <i>(féng) bibi</i>    | ‘North wind’ |
|                | <i>láng</i>     | ‘East wind’    | <i>wá</i>             | ‘West wind’  |
|                | <i>hóeng</i>    | ‘valley’       | <i>pì</i>             | ‘mountain’   |
|                | <i>bàng</i>     | ‘beach’        | <i>já</i>             | ‘sea’        |
|                | <i>tíná</i>     | ‘salt’         |                       |              |
|                | <i>pato</i>     | ‘lake’         | <i>í</i>              | ‘pool’       |
|                |                 |                | <i>tíó</i>            | ‘large wave’ |
|                | <i>tí toto</i>  | ‘small wave’   | <i>ó</i>              | ‘wave’       |
|                | <i>wúng</i>     | ‘stone’        | <i>piútu</i>          | ‘island’     |

The natural world is the classic domain of the feminine, being one of the primary oppositions that exist between the two genders, expressing the primary division between society and nature. The earth is considered feminine, as is the vegetation that grows on it. Non-feminine parts of the earth are mountains and islands, from their shape, and small pools: these are non-feminine in opposition to the larger, rounder lakes which are feminine, and also because the prototypical *í* is a body of water at the lower end of a river, just before it enters the sea: it might be that the connection with the sea provides the non-feminine gender.

We can see that both genders are represented equally in most categories, which shows the basic Skou division of the world into equal parts of feminine and masculine in all domains, rather than have completely strict divisions. Nevertheless, the members of each semantic field

are not split between the two genders in a random fashion. The following principled oppositions can be seen to hold:

*Table 150.* The feminine:non-feminine opposition

|            | feminine     | non-feminine         |
|------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Sex:       | female       | male                 |
| Size:      | small        | large                |
| Shape:     | squat, round | long, thin           |
| Domains:   | natural      | human, technological |
|            | life         | death                |
|            | production   | destruction          |
|            | stability    | change               |
|            | group        | individual           |
|            | dangerous    | safe                 |
|            | chaos        | control              |
| Location:  | land         | sea                  |
|            | south, east  | north, west          |
|            | night        | day                  |
| Phenomena: | moon         | sun, stars           |
|            | clouds, rain | sky                  |

Interestingly, these oppositions, while global, do undergo local reversals. This is allowed by the contradictory categories that are in opposition: the uncontrolled, natural world (and thus non-societal) feminine gender is associated with danger, but is also associated with groups and with life. How can this be reconciled? The solution lies in the notion of dynamic oppositions: while feminine is non-societal, and is the opposite of organised human society, it attracts the (non-feminine) individual, the controlling human, the destructive male. Skou myths and clan histories typically pair a lone male character with a pair of women. The group represents stability, though at the same time degeneration, while the individual represents the forces of change and the imposition of human culture. Canoes are an example of a controlling technology, which would be expected to be non-feminine gender, being assigned feminine gender. They sail the seas, which are non-feminine, and they are long, large, operate during the day. How then can their predominantly feminine gender be explained? The canoe is used at sea, but it only operates from land, and more importantly is launched from villages (the connection being so strong that houses are even made for canoes when they are under repair – see picture 8 at the beginning of this book). Canoes, then, are an expression of the extension of the land into the ocean, of human society into the changing, destructive, environment of the sea (the number of supernatural dangers found in the sea is quite impressive, and the sea is inaccessible for four months of the year due to the force of the wave that break).

Through this lies the thread of dynamic oppositions: there are different, and contradictory, rationales behind the assignment of feminine and non-feminine gender, and when applied to society we find that often a gender is assigned to things on the basis of the dynamic oppositions that they can bring. This reaches its ultimate expression in those nouns which change gender depending on which aspect of their existence and function is emphasised, such as sago changing from a non-feminine entity in its wild state (large, long, processed by male activity involving destruction and breaking), to a feminine one when processed and cooked (squat in

bundles or cooking pots, life-giving food, eaten in a group). *Kóe* ‘sago pancakes, baked sago’ are the sago product that is taken by individuals on journeys, because it is more readily packed and packaged, the one least likely to spoil: the non-feminine characteristics (requiring more manufactured technology to produce woks, frying pans or forno griddles, consumed individually, less subject to decay, more easily transported) determine that it alone of processed sago products should not take feminine gender.

## 10.5 The morphological realisation of gender

Gender in Skou, and the morphology of classification generally across languages, may be realised at the NP level, or on the head of the clause (if the clause is a verbal predicate), or on both.<sup>56</sup> This section will discuss mainly the possibilities of realisation of gender and number in the NP, and the basis for the choice of marking gender or number on verbs. We shall only secondarily deal with the actual realisation of these categories on verbs, as they are discussed in more detail as part of the general discussion of verbs in 7.2.

### 10.5.1. Gender and number in the NP

On the NP itself gender is only realised if the NP is followed by a pronoun to summarise the features of the NP, and that is possible only if the head of the NP is both animate and serving as the A of the clause.

There are degrees of realisation of gender in the NP of a nominal, ranging from the obligatory to the impossible. The following scale applies:

- third person singular pronouns;
- certain inherently gendered nouns that must take gender specification;
- nouns that must appear with specified gender, but are not inherently tied to feminine or non-feminine;
- nouns that may appear with gender specified, but need not do so, and change sense when appearing with overt gender. Sub-parts of this optionally-specified set of nouns include:
  - nouns that may appear with gender marking, but do not usually do so;
  - nouns that may only appear with gender marking in a special context;
- nouns that do not appear with gender marking

In all cases the specification of gender is accomplished by the use of the appropriate pronoun initially in the phrase. Apart from the use of such a pronoun, there are two ways in which the gender of a noun phrase can be realised, if the noun is animate:

- use of a summation pronoun (which marks gender and/or number) to show that the NP is the subject of its transitive clause;
- appearance of a summation pronoun when the NP is part of a string of conjoined NPs which have been coordinated:

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<sup>56</sup> Gender and number can also be realised on the nominal predicate of a clause, but then only through the appearance of these categories within the NP that functions as the predicate, and so this is not a new locus for realisation.

- if the combination is plural, then only plurality can be marked;
- if the combination is dual, then both dual number and gender can be marked

We can list examples of each of these categories, and note the conditions under which they appear with gender marking. The different conditions are arranged from most obligatory marking of gender to least.

1. third person singular pronouns must mark the difference between feminine and non-feminine must be marked with the feminine and non-feminine pronouns *pe* and *ke*.

2. some nouns, such as *ueme* ‘woman’, always appear with a specifying pronoun.

With *ueme*, the noun appears as either *pe=ueme* ‘woman’ or *te=ueme* ‘women’;<sup>57</sup> the lexeme may not appear with the non-feminine pronoun: *\*ke=ueme*, nor (as mentioned in 1.) without a pronoun: *\*ueme*. The lexeme is thus specified as having feminine gender, but must have a gender category overtly marked.

3. other nouns with human referents must take gender marking, but are not associated inherently with either feminine or non-feminine

Examples of this include *bafàng* ‘younger sibling’, which may refer to an elder sister or an elder brother, but in either case requires the appropriate specifying pronoun: *pe=bafàng* ‘younger sister’ and *ke=bafàng* ‘younger brother’, respectively, or *te=bafàng* for plural reference: ‘elder brothers and sisters’.

4. certain other nouns, more generic in nature, may appear with a specifying pronoun, but do not have to.

Examples are *bà* ‘person’, which may appear with the non-feminine pronoun to indicate ‘man’: *ke=bà*, but which is highly marked with the feminine specifying pronoun: *?#pe=bà*, since there is a more explicit lexical item *ueme* ‘woman’, which will in almost all circumstances be used rather than this expression. Non-human nouns such as *naké* ‘dog’ are not normally marked as feminine or non-feminine in the NP, but if the gender of the animal is salient, it may be indicated: *ke=naké* ‘male dog’, *pe=naké* ‘female dog’ (and *te=naké* ‘dogs’). In these cases the reference must be to a specific individual or set of individuals, and not to the class of entities as a whole, and the sex (or number) of that individual or individuals must be both clear and relevant

5. many nouns are lexically assigned to a particular gender, but do not mark this feature in the NP, and it is apparent only by examining verbal agreement patterns.

These include *ha* ‘string bag’, feminine, and *pìng* ‘bow’, non-feminine. Although these are gendered nouns, they do not appear with pronouns to show that gender: *\*pe=ha*, *\*ke=pìng*.

The categories established above need to be qualified somewhat in terms of the empirically attested categories that they represent. It is true that for all animate nominals we have the option of marking plurality (really nonsingularity) by means of a 3PL pronoun procliticised to the head

<sup>57</sup> Also, as situation calls for it, *ne=ueme* ‘we women’, *e=ueme* ‘you women’, using the 1PL and 2PL pronominal clitics respectively.

noun; in this sense one of the cells of the paradigm that defines the examples in 2., 3., and 4. above is non-unique.

We should also note a syncretism that arises when the gender categories that are used for animate entities are ‘extended’ to mark inanimates. The morphological system for animate referents marks feminine and non-feminine in the singular versus an undifferentiated plural. The same is true for inanimates, but the plural category for inanimates is identical morphologically to the feminine forms. In a sense, then the relationship of the gender category feminine to inanimate, nouns mirrors to some extent the relationship of the number category plural to animate nouns. It is also apparent that feminine inanimate nouns do not distinguish number. Table 151xx summarises this conflation of categories. Similar tables dealing with the marking of gender and number have already been presented as table 114, and additionally in tables 111, 112, 113, 114, 116, and 117 xx in 7.2.3.

*Table 151.* Gender and number marking for animate and inanimate referents

| Semantic category |              | singular | plural |
|-------------------|--------------|----------|--------|
| Animate           | feminine     | FEM      | PL     |
|                   | non-feminine | NON-FEM  | PL     |
| Inanimate         | feminine     | FEM      | ‘FEM’  |
|                   | non-feminine | NON-FEM  | ‘FEM’  |

Marking gender or number in the NP of the referent is optional in most cases, and accomplished by the use of pronominal specifiers where it is marked. On the other hand all nouns with a feminine gender, or a plural number, mark those categories on verbs where the morphology is available for distinguishing these categories. This is discussed in section 10.5.2 following.

#### 10.5.2 Gender and number on the verb

The gender and number of the subject and object are indexed on the verb of a verbal clause, in a variety of manners depending on what morphological forms the verb is capable of realising.<sup>58</sup> The morphological means used are not the same for both subject and object, reflecting the location of the different means of marking agreement for subject and object, rather than facts about gender and number itself. Table 152xx shows the positions in the inflected verb that may display gender and number features.

*Table 152.* Location of gender and number marking on the verb

|                   | subject         | object |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------|
| proclitic         | yes             | –      |
| prefix            | yes             | –      |
| vowel alternation | yes             | yes    |
| suppletion        | yes (INTR only) | yes    |

Clearly subject marking is the locus of more morphological encoding of gender, but that is only because there are more positions on the verb in which subject is marked. Wherever object

<sup>58</sup> In the right circumstances the possessor of an object may also be indexed on the verb, showing external possession; see 9.5.2 for details of these constructions.

is encoded, then gender is marked, and so we can most accurately state that all agreement positions on the verb encode gender to the maximum extent possible.

### 10.5.3 Classification operating over gender and number

The classification system in Skou is not purely based on a set of semantic features, but is a combination of the more strict categorisation of nouns as feminine or non-feminine, over-ridden in part by their appearing as singular or nonsingular, and interacting with the animate/inanimate class.

## 10.6 Realisation of the animacy distinction

Although the primary morphological division in Skou nominal classification is found in the feminine/non-feminine(/plural) gender system, realised in verbal agreement and various NP-edge pronominal forms, factors concerning animacy also play a part in determining the morphological choices made in some contexts. In addition to this there are some domains in which animacy alone is behind the distinctions observed. We may demonstrate this with verbs of location. Compare the verbs used in the following examples, which covary with various semantic features related to the animacy of the subject:

- (21) *Páloe ko tue pá-nì=ne tílóng.*  
 terrace be.at 3SG.F.do house-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT front  
 ‘There’s a terrace at the front of my house.’
- (22) *Pále ro tue pá tílóng.*  
 pig 3SG.F.stand 3SG.F.do house front  
 ‘There’s a pig standing in front of the house.’
- (23) *Páng-né-nì=ne moeng li pá tílóng.*  
 son.in.law-1SG.DAT-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT sit do house front  
 ‘My son in law’s at the front of the house.’

These classificatory verbs are in a sense fluid; an animate entity may be referred to with an inanimate classifier, but only if it no longer displays the characteristics that are typical of an animate one (namely, life).

- (24) *Pále ko tue pá tílóng.*  
 pig be.at 3SG.F.do house front  
 ‘There’s a dead pig in front of the house.’

In the case of the ‘be at’ verb there is no variation for number or gender of the subject, but the animate-referring verb of location, *moeng* ‘sit’, does distinguish feminine and non-feminine forms as well as a distinct plural, formed by vowel alternation. Of course, verbs with animate subjects also take pronominal proclitics to further identify the features of their subjects.

Table 153. Verbs of physical location

|           | Gender      |              | Plural      | Alternatives                              |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------|
|           | feminine    | non-feminine |             |                                           |
| Inanimate | <i>ko</i>   | <i>ko</i>    |             | be, do                                    |
| Animate   | <i>mong</i> | <i>moeng</i> | <i>meng</i> | be, do<br>postural verb<br>if appropriate |

The postural verbs that have been observed with locational senses are only used with the referents that are towards the higher end of the animacy scale. These verbs are *rue* ‘stand’ and *i* ‘lie down, be’, which join the more highly grammaticised *moeng*. Examples of the use of the postural verbs as verbs specifying location are shown in the following sentences. (25)b and (25)c differ from (25)a in that they imply a longer period of time; they do not, however, presuppose a particular postural state for the referent, but rather the possibility of that posture having been attained (hence the implication that the period of time spent at the location is longer than simply transitory).

- (25) a. *Pe=angku=fue a ung a pe=mong Te Húele.*  
 3SG.F=child=that now 3SG.F=F.sit Sangke  
 ‘That girl is at Sangke now.’
- b. *Pe=angku=fue a ung a pe=ro Te Húele.*  
 3SG.F=child=that now 3SG.F=3SG.F.stand Sangke  
 ‘That girl is at Sangke now.’
- c. *Pe=angku=fue a ung a pe=e Te Húele.*  
 3SG.F=child=that now 3SG.F=3SG.F.lie.down Sangke  
 ‘That girl is at Sangke now.’

Of these alternative verbs *rue* is also available to be used as a support verb for adjectival predication, as long as the adjective can be construed as being related to the idea of standing in some way. In this case the appropriately inflected verb of doing added as well, as in the following example. Note that, since this is an adjectival predicate, there is no pronominal clitic on either the verbs or the adjective.

- (26) *Ku-nì=ne rílele ro tue.*  
 ‘child’-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT short 3SG.F.stand 3SG.F.do  
 ‘My daughter is (still) short.’ (implication: she hasn’t grown much yet, she is still young)

This usage is completely ungrammatical with *i* ‘lie down’, since there is no obvious association between the measure of tallness and the action of lying down.

- (27) \* *ku-nì=ne rílele e tue.*  
 ‘child’-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT short 3SG.F.lie.down 3SG.F.do

Another reason behind the ability of this construction to appear with verbs of standing, but not with verbs of lying down, has to do with a possible inchoative interpretation. In the unmarked case a person moves from lying down to standing by volition, while moving from a standing posture to a lying down posture can happen either volitionally or non-volitionally. In other words, there is less surprising about the assumption of a lying posture, while a standing posture is more unusual. If an adjectival predicate is being expressed with a posture verb, rather than non-verbally or simply with an inchoative sense marked with *li* ‘do’, then a marked aspectual interpretation is associated with that coding (see the translation of (22)). The standing verb is associated with a marked reading, and so is more suitable for the function.

We also find the animate/inanimate distinction on attributive adjectives. Normally an adjective appears with no special morphology in any position, but it may appear, when attributive, with a marker for animate referent, *bà=*. This is transparently derived from the word for ‘person’, *bà*, but its grammaticalised use in this context can be established as distinct from

the nominal use. The animate adjectival prefix is found on a predicative adjective even when the noun phrase on which it is predicated contains the noun *bà* ‘person’ itself, as in the following:

- (28) *Ke=bà=ing a*                      *bà=tété.*  
 3SG.NF=person=that ANIM=important  
 ‘That man is important.’

It might still be argued that this sentence should be more properly translated ‘That man is an important man.’, with the glossing as shown in (25).

Putative reglossing and retranslation of (24)

- (29) [<sub>NP</sub> *Ke=bà=ing a* ]                      [<sub>NP</sub> *bà*                      *tété* ].  
 3SG.NF=person=that                      person                      important  
 ‘That man is an important person.’

Five facts argue against the interpretation in (29). Firstly, when asked to translate the difference between ‘That man is important.’ and ‘That man is an important person.’, speakers are unhesitating in their agreement that (28) has an adjectival predicate, and so can be used to translated the first of the two sentences, while the nominal predicate translation given for (29) will be translated as seen in (30), with a pronominal clitic on the occurrence of *bà* in the predicate.

Nominal predicate

- (30) *Ke=bà=ing a*                      *ke=bà*                      *tété.*  
 3SG.NF=person=that 3SG.NF=person                      important  
 ‘That man is an important person.’

Secondly, the fact that the morpheme has extended in use from the nominal reference for humans to a more general animate use can be seen from the following examples, in which it clearly does not refer to a human being. In the first example a dog is the head of the NP in which *bà* appears, and in the second a snake, both clearly not human.

- (31) *Naké-nì=ne*                      *bà=uefa=ing a*  
 dog-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT ANIM=old=the  
*ke=moe*                      *k-a tà.*  
 3SG.NF=return 3SG.NF-walk running  
 ‘My old dog’s running home.’
- (32) *Í*                      *bà=uefa*                      *nì=fue,*                      *ke=moe*                      *k-a tà.*  
 snake ANIM=old 1SG=see 3SG.NF=return 3SG.NF-walk running  
 ‘I saw a big (old) snake, and it slithered away quickly.’

The next examples demonstrate the contrast between an animate subject, *nì* ‘I’, and an inanimate subject, *ha we* ‘this bag’, with the same adjective. The class marker *bà* can only appear with animate subjects, with which it is obligatory, and cannot appear with an inanimate subject. In (33) we can see a sentence with an animate subject and the class agreement marker on the predicative adjective; the lack of this agreement marker, shown in (35), is ungrammatical.

- (33) *Nì*                      *bà=fêng.*  
 1SG ANIM=bad  
 ‘I’m no good.’

- (34) *Ha=we fèng.*  
 bag=this bad  
 ‘This bag is no good.’

(35) \* *nì fèng*

(36) \* *ha we bà fèng*

The sentence in (33) should be parsed with *bà* taken to be a clitic on the adjective, and should not be parsed as shown in (37).

Possible mis-parsing of (29)

- (37) *Nì bà fèng.*  
 1SG person bad  
 ‘I’m a bad person.’

A third piece of evidence for this analytical position lies in the tonal patterns: while *bà* and *fèng* both realise underlying HL tone melodies, in (33) the two syllables show a H HL pattern, while in (37) both syllables have a falling tone. This conforms to the difference in boundaries that is postulated for the two sentences (see 2.3.1 for more discussion of tonal behaviour, including the HL H / \_\_HL sandhi rule).

Fourthly, we should note the paraphrase

- (38) *Nì bà=fèng rue li.*  
 1SG ANIM=bad stand do  
 ‘I’m no good.’

This paraphrase, of a predicate headed by a non-verbal word (here an adjective), as a verbal predicate which has an adjective complement is only possible for adjectives, and is not found with NPs. Relative clauses formed from adjectives with light verbs are rejected when interpreted with the plain adjectival reading, though in some cases alternative readings are possible, and grammatical.

- (39) *ke=bà (\*bà=)fèng=ing a*  
 3SG.NF=person ANIM= bad=the  
 ‘the bad man’
- (40) *ke=bà [RC (\*bà=)fèng rue li]=ing a*  
 3SG.NF=person ANIM= bad stand do=the  
 \* ‘the bad man’  
 ‘the man who’s standing badly’

Finally, when asked to translate Skou predicative adjectives into Papuan Malay we find that overt translations of *bà=* ‘animate class marker’ do appear, with Malay *orang* ‘person’ appearing where we might expect *bà=* in Skou, as can be seen in the following examples. Again, *orang* appears even where it cannot be interpreted as having reference to a person.

Human referent

- (41) *Laki baru lari cepat itu orang capek.*  
 man just.now run quick that ANIM/person tired  
 ‘The man who was just running quickly is tired.’  
 (NOT ‘The man who was just running quickly is a person who is (habitually) tired.’ or (necessarily) ‘The man who was just running quickly is a tired person.’)

Non-human referent (compare with (41))

- (42) Sa=pu            anjing orang tua    itu    lari    kembali    di    rumah.  
 1SG=POSS    dog    ANIM old    that    run    return    LOC    house  
 ‘My old dog’s running home.’  
 (NOT ‘My dog (TOPIC), (it’s) parent ran back home.’, or ‘My dog (TOPIC), that old person ran back home.’) (orang tua is a lexicalised expression meaning ‘parent’, not the compositionally predicted ‘old person’, in Malay.)

As can be seen, *orang* is used regardless of the human or non-human status of the referent, as long as it is animate. Clearly the use of *bà=* in examples such as (29) or (34) is as a grammaticalised class marker, and is not simply the noun being used as a clitic, but still with the sense of ‘person’.

### 10.7 Relics of a more complex system

There is some evidence that the animate/inanimate classification system described in the preceding section is a relic of an earlier, more complex system. Examine the following sentence. Here we can see the use of *rí* ‘tree’ as an apparent classifier for *líhi* ‘garden’, just as *bà* ‘person’ and *ya* ‘thing’ are still productively used in common speech.

- (43) *ne=r-óe-róe*            *líhi*            *ri=rong=pa.*  
 1PL=1PL-get.PL-RED    garden    tree=old=INSTR  
 ‘we get them all from the old garden.’

Unlike the use of *bà* ‘person’ and *ya* ‘thing’ as classifiers with adjectives, however, examples such as that above are not reproduced under direct questioning or in other elicitation settings, despite being occasionally found in the spontaneous speech of older people. For these reasons, then, is likely to ‘repeat’ her or himself with one of the sentences in (44) when questioned about the sentence in (43) a speaker, even if it is the same speaker who produced the initial utterance.

- (44) a. ?*Ne=r-óe-róe*            *líhi*            *ya=rong.*  
 1PL=1PL-get.PL-RED    garden    thing=old  
 ‘We get them all from the old garden.’  
 b. *Ne=r-óe-róe*            *líhi*            *rong.*  
 1PL=1PL-get.PL-RED    garden    old  
 ‘We get them all from the old garden.’

In the optional use of *bà=* and *ya=* we are observing the last vestiges of a once more elaborate classification system. We cannot know how extensive this system was, in terms of the degree to which it was marked on different elements of the clause, or in terms of the number and nature of the categories that were differentiated, though there are clues. While the only productive predicative classifier we observe with adjectives is *bà=*, and there are sporadic occurrences of *ya=*, a number of other generic nominals are found in patterns that suggest earlier classification. In 2.3.1.3 we discussed the use of the generic roots such as *móe* ‘fish’, *táng* ‘bird’, and *tàng* ‘blade’ with more specific lexemes to form new words. That is, although the only meaning ascribable to *nòeng* is ‘crocodile’, it never appears without the classifier *móe*: *móenòeng*. With other lexemes we can observe a strong, but not complete, tendency for the generic classifier to appear in any predicative constructions involving adjectives as well. This can be seen in (45). While both the a. and the b. sentence are acceptable, (45)a is more natural-sounding to Skou people.

- (45) a. *Tágná=ing a táng tútú.*  
 cockatoo=the bird white  
 ‘The cockatoo is a white bird.’
- b. *Tágná=ing a tútú.*  
 cockatoo=the white  
 ‘Cockatoos are white.’

Although the generic noun appears in predicative adjective constructions, it would be very unusual for it to appear with an NP-internal attributive adjective, illustrated in (46). The only likely interpretation of (46)b is that there are two appositional NPs, *tágná* and *táng máki ing a*, referring to the same object and the second one clarifying the first (possibly for the benefit of the inexperienced listener, who might not be familiar with which cockatoo was being referred to, the smaller white species or the larger black species).

- (46) a. *Tágná máki=ing a nì=fu.*  
 cockatoo big=the 1SG=see.F  
 ‘I saw a big cockatoo.’
- b. [NP *Tágná* | *táng máki=ing a*] *nì=fu.*  
 cockatoo bird big=the 1SG=see.F  
 ‘I saw a cockatoo, a big bird.’  
 \*/# ‘I saw a big cockatoo.’

The behaviour reported for *rí* ‘tree’ in (43) is not found under elicitation, and so the degree to which the classification system persists for attributive adjectives cannot be easily checked in the absence of a large corpus of naturally-occurring spoken material. Generic nouns that display the preferences shown here in (45) and (46) include:

- à* ‘rope’ (rarely, with ropes, strings, or things made from string);
- bàng* ‘yesterday’ (with days of the week);
- hang* ‘coconut’ (with things associated with coconuts, but only occasionally, and with considerable hesitation, with other round objects that take *hang-* as their specifier);
- kung* ‘crab’ (with all crustaceans, but not octopi, spiders or shells);
- móe* ‘fish’ (with water creatures, but not with crocodiles);
- pa* ‘water’ (with rivers, ponds, or the ocean);
- pìng* ‘war’ (with arrows);
- pó* ‘vegetables’ (with all vegetables, including those that do not take *pó-* lexically, such as *pupúki* ‘eggplant’);
- rí* ‘wood, tree’ (with all trees, including the vast majority of tree species names that do not take *rí-* lexically, and with anything made of wood and longer than it is wide);
- tang* ‘canoe’ (with any vehicle, including those that do not take *tang-* lexically, such as *tujíngpa* ‘airplane’);
- táng* ‘bird’ (with any bird species);
- tàng* ‘blade’ (with any manufactured bladed instrument);

Illustrations of some of these patterns are given in (47) - (56), in addition to (43) - (46). Note that from examples such as (47)a we can clearly tell, from the HL tone pattern on *à* and the LHL on *héfèng*, that there are two distinct words, and that *à* is not prefixed or procliticised to *héfèng*. Note that in (47)a it is, in some abstract grammarian's sense, possible for the sentence to be interpreted as meaning 'Your basket is good string.', but this is not a reading that would be accepted by any speaker.

- (47) a. *Bòeng-mè=me=ing a*                      *à*      *héfèng.*  
 small.basket-2SG.GEN=2SG.DAT=the      string    good  
 'Your basket is good.'  
 #! 'Your basket is good string.'
- b. *Bòeng-mè=me=ing a*                      *héfèng.*  
 small.basket-2SG.GEN=2SG.DAT=the      good  
 'Your basket is good.'

Note that it is not normally felicitous to simply repeat a nominal subject as a nominal predicate. Thus, compared to the naturalness of (47)a and b, (48) is unequivocally infelicitous. This shows that the use of the relic classifiers cannot simply be dismissed as a discourse preference.

- (48) # *Bòeng-mè=me=ing a*                      *bòeng*      *héfèng.*  
 small.basket-2SG.GEN=2SG.DAT=the      small.basket    good  
 'Your basket is a good basket.'

The next examples show that while the relic classifier *hang* can be used with genuine coconut-related etyma in a natural fashion, using what is most likely the same original lexeme with a significantly shifted meaning, as in (50), is not really acceptable. Just as (47)a can, technically, be interpreted in a nonsensical way, so too could (49)a technically, to a grammatically-minded speaker, be interpreted as meaning 'That coconut shell is a big coconut.' In practise, however, (49)a will be translated into Papuan Malay identically to (49)b, as *Itu tempurung besar* 'That coconut is big.', and not \**Itu tempurung kalapa besar*.

- (49) a. *Hangkúe=fue a*      *hang*      *máki.*  
 coconut.shell=that      coconut    big  
 'That coconut shell is big.'  
 # 'That coconut shell is a big coconut.'
- b. *Hangkúe=fue a*      *máki.*  
 coconut.shell=that      big  
 'That coconut shell is big.'
- c. # *Hangkúe=fue a*      *hangkúe*      *máki.*  
 coconut.shell=that      coconut.shell    big  
 'That coconut shell is a big coconut shell big.'
- (50) a. *Hangkúe=pè=pe*                      *máki.*  
 kneecap=3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT      big  
 'Her kneecaps are big.'
- b.\*/# *Hangkúe=pè=pe*                      *hang*      *máki.*  
 kneecap=3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT      coconut    big  
 'Her kneecaps are big.'  
 \* 'Her kneecaps are big coconuts.'

The examples with *rí* and *pó* that follow show that the morphological presence of the relic classifier etymon in the noun is not necessary for the relic classifier to appear.

- (51) a. *Hòe=fue a rí ikáféng.*  
 sago=that tree tall  
 ‘That sago (tree) is tall.’  
 ‘That sago (tree) is a tall tree.’
- b. *Hòe=fue a ikáféng.*  
 sago=that tall  
 ‘That sago (tree) is tall.’
- c. #!*Hòe=fue a hòe ikáféng.*  
 sago=that sago tall  
 ‘That sago (tree) is a tall sago (tree).’
- (52) a. *Sangbiki pó langpí.*  
 pumpkin vegetable delicious  
 ‘Pumpkins are delicious.’  
 ‘Pumpkin is a delicious vegetable.’
- b. *Sangbiki langpí.*  
 pumpkin delicious  
 ‘Pumpkins are delicious.’
- c. #/#!*Sangbiki sangbiki langpí.*  
 pumpkin pumpkin delicious  
 ‘Pumpkins are delicious pumpkins.’
- (53) a. *Ojng táng hápa.*  
 chicken bird small  
 ‘Chickens are small.’  
 ‘Chickens are small birds.’
- b. *Ojng hápa.*  
 chicken small  
 ‘Chickens are small.’

This selection of pseudo-classifiers leaves both a large number of lexical items that, in the modern language at least, lack any nominal classifier. An example of such a lexeme is *wúng* ‘rock’, which cannot use any of the pseudo-classifiers listed earlier, nor will it appear using itself in a classifier-like function. At the same time it also leaves a large number of specifiers that are not used in the classifier-like manner shown here include *hòe* ‘sago’, *nò* ‘hand’ and *pá* ‘house’. The ungrammaticality of their use as relic classifiers can be seen in (54) - (56), which show that nouns which are subsets of the classes of *hòe* ‘sago’, *nò* ‘hand’ and *pá* ‘house’ do not use these superordinate terms as classifiers, but are more likely, if they use any nominal as part of an adjectival predicate, to simply use a generic lexeme, such as *yayong* ‘food’ with edible items.

- (54) a. \**fáti=fue a pá hápa*  
 hut=that house small  
 ‘That hut is small.’
- b. *Fáti fue a hápa.*  
 ‘That hut is small.’

- (55) a. \**kóe=fue a hòe langpí*  
 sago.pancake=that sago delicious  
 ‘That sago pancake is tasty (sago).’
- b. *Kóe fue a langpí.*  
 ‘Sago pancakes are tasty.’
- c. *Kóe=fue a yayong langpí.*  
 sago.pancake=that food delicious  
 ‘That sago pancake is delicious (food).’
- (56) a. \**nómàma nò bápáli.*  
 thumb hand big  
 ‘Thumbs are big.’
- b. *Nómàma bápáli.*  
 ‘Thumbs are big.’
- c. *Nómàma nókàngkang bápáli.*  
 thumb finger big  
 ‘Thumbs are big fingers.’

Comparatively, I'saka has tendencies that might be labelled as the relics of a classification system, though the form and divisions appear completely different to what we see here in Skou, and are, in I'saka, most likely a morphological device acquired as a result of the language's location in the Pual basin and contact with the other languages that can be found there (Donohue and San Roque 2004).

### 10.8 Summary: the morphological realisation of gender and animacy

In this chapter we have seen that the ontological categories of gender, number, and animacy class are bound together in a complex set of motivations and morphological possibilities. Table 154xx summarises the information in this chapter.

Table 154. Morphological realisations of classificatory systems

|         |              | NP head                        | Modifier                      | Predicate                                              |
|---------|--------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Class:  | Animate      | option for specifying pronouns | adjective may take <i>bà=</i> | choice of <i>ro</i> or <i>moeng</i> as locational verb |
|         | Inanimate    | –                              | –                             | use of <i>ko</i> as locational verb                    |
| Gender: | Feminine     | specifying pronouns and        | –                             | use of vowel ablaut                                    |
|         | Non-feminine | summation pronouns             | –                             | –                                                      |

We can see a lot of skewing in the representation of the classification system in different discourse functions, a skewing that does not accord with cross-linguistically attested norms. Specifically, there is very little marking on modifiers, which is where a gender distinction is most commonly realised. One particular feature of the system is the complex interaction of

gender (feminine vs. non-feminine), animacy and number, whereby the marking used to indicate singular plural in animate referents is used to mark plural with inanimate nouns.

A similar system is found in the (so far presumed) unrelated language Saweru, from Cenderawasih Bay. In this language, too, the 3SG.F prefixes are used with inanimate (or very low animate) nouns with a singular sense, while the 3SG.NF prefixes take a plural reading with these nouns. With animate reference, these prefixes are restricted to the singular, and there are separate plural prefixes. This can be seen in the following examples, where the 3SG.F *mo=* is used for singular reference and *fo=*, the agreement marker that is normally used with singular reference with humans, appears to mark the plural with inanimate references. With animate reference we can see that the separate marker *yo=* is used for plurals.

Saweru: inanimate

- (57) *Kadera mo=tami iri watuny=ai.*  
 chair 3SG.F=be.at LOC house=OBL  
 'There is a chair in the house.'
- (58) *Kadera fo=tami iri watuny=ai.*  
 chair 3SG.NF=be.at LOC house=OBL  
 'There are chairs in the house.'

Saweru: animate

- (59) *Kaer fo=tami iri unat=ai.*  
 bandicoot 3SG.NF=be.at LOC mountain=OBL  
 'The (male) bandicoot is on the mountain.'
- (60) *Kaer mo=tami iri unat=ai.*  
 bandicoot 3SG.F=be.at LOC mountain=OBL  
 'The (female) bandicoot is on the mountain.'
- (61) *Kaer yo=tami iri unat=ai.*  
 bandicoot 3NSG=be.at LOC mountain=OBL  
 'The bandicoots are on the mountain.'

The semantic basis of the Skou gender system follows many of the widely attested universals, in terms of being (variously) shape-based, cultural usage based, size-oriented, and connected to perceived mythological domains, throughout relating to the primary opposition between the female natural world and the male social world. But in addition to these general principles for assigning gender, which can be seen to be valid as organisational principles because of the existence of some lexical items which are assigned different grammatical gender based on the stage in the production or socialisation cycle that they are in, there is also the principle of opposition. There are many nouns whose gender appears to contradict the general principles that operate for the majority of nouns; indeed, one semantic field, the class of lexemes associated with canoes, is entirely the opposite of what might be expected from any of these general principles. Here we can only invoke the idea of dynamic opposition as an organising principle in the Skou gender system, a principle that is at least as important as the size-, shape- and function-based principles.

## 11 *Non-subcategorised participants*

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### 11.1 Non-subcategorised participants and obliques

In addition to the (maximally two) preverbal arguments that are subcategorised for by the main verb in a clause, other nominals may be present in the clause serving a variety of semantic roles. Any additional arguments that are present will be coded with some form of oblique marking, usually positional. The various means used to mark an NP as serving a role other than subject or object of a clause are:

- postverbal rather than preverbal position;
- the use of a case marker;
- the use of ‘applicative’ marking on the verb;
- the use of a serial verb construction.

In many instances more than one of these strategies will be combined to mark the one nominal. Of the three techniques, only that of marking with the instrumental case, is unambiguous as a means of marking oblique status.<sup>59</sup> The postverbal position is used to code the objects of certain low-transitivity clauses, and the applicative marker is a device that creates objects from goals, and is thus a marker of a previously oblique role.

Nominals serving syntactically as adjuncts may appear with a variety of roles in the clause. The semantic roles that are morphosyntactically differentiated are:

- beneficiary
- instrument
- location
- goal
- source

Examples of the appearance of each of these different semantic roles in English sentences are as follows, with the semantic roles shown above presented in bold. The semantic roles are shown in the same order as the list above.

- (1) *They made it **for me*** Beneficiary.
- (2) *He used **an axe*** Instrument? *to fell the tree.*
- (2)' *He felled the tree **with an axe*** Instrument.
- (3) *She put it **on the platform*** Location.

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<sup>59</sup> As noted in the preliminaries, the label ‘oblique’ is used as a cover term for both non-subcategorised for adjuncts (such as *in the room* in *We discussed the matter in the room*) and subcategorised-for non-term obliques (*I put the bags in the room*).

- (4) *I went to the river*<sup>Goal</sup>.  
 (5) *She came from Jayapura*<sup>Source</sup>.

In all cases the nominal shown in bold above is not subcategorised for by the verb: the clauses are all grammatical without the use of the bolded phrase. Nevertheless the bolded phrases may be placed in the clause to further specify the predicate. Not all verbs allow for any extra obliques, and it must be emphasised that although we can conceive of some oblique participants being essential to all events (all actions must happen somewhere, and the action of coming inherently implies a source where the referent came from). In Skou many of these semantic roles may be expressed in more than one morphosyntactic device, just as the instrument in (2) may be coded either as the object of the verb, or as the object of a preposition, reflecting different discourse structures. The different ways of marking the different oblique semantic roles in Skou will be examined one by one for the kinds of morphosyntax they may employ, showing a range at least as great as that found in English.

## 11.2 Postverbal obliques

Most obliques occur immediately following the verb, without any case marking. The only alternative to this coding option, for most obliques, is found if they have been coded as topical, in which case they can appear in a pre-clausal position (see 4.2). The exception to this generalisation involves instruments, for which see 11.8. Although they follow the verb, there are different positions for different kinds of obliques, depending on their relative position with respect to any auxiliary verbs: goals precede auxiliaries, while locations follow them. This is shown schematically in (6) (see also (69) in chapter 3).

- (6) (NP<sub>SUBJ</sub>) ... V (GOAL/BEN/INSTR) V<sub>be</sub> V<sub>do</sub> (LOCATION)

Examples of clauses with goals or locations as obliques can be seen in (7) and (8).

Goal

- (7) *Fetànghapa ke=ti Àbi.*  
 morning 3SG.NF=3SG.NF.go Abepura  
 'He went to Abepura this morning.'

Location

- (8) *Te=angku=fue a nà te=oe báng.*  
 3PL=child=that play 3PL=play beach  
 'Those children played on the beach.'

Evidence that these two postverbal obliques are in fact coded differently comes from examples such as (9) - (10), in which the clause contains auxiliary verbs. The goal can only be coded preceding the auxiliaries, while a location can only be coded following them.

Goal: pre-auxiliary

- (9) *Pe pe=w-a tà p-o te*  
 3SG.F 3SG.F=3SG.F-walk running 3SG.F-go.seawards 3SG.F.go  
*báng e tue.*  
 beach 3SG.F.be 3SG.F.do  
 'She ran down to the beach.'

- (9)' \* *pe pe wa tà po te e tue báng*  
 (grammatical with the sense 'She ran down (to the water while she was) on the beach', and a locative reading)

Location: post-auxiliary

- (10) *María pe ya pe=w-á w-i e tue*  
 Maria 3SG.F thing 3SG.F=3SG.F-count 3SG.F-count 3SG.F.be 3SG.F.do  
*bàme.*  
 village  
 ‘Maria is counting the things in the village.’

- (10)’ \* *María pe ya pe wá wi bàme e tue*

Human goals, the recipients of gifts or the goals of sent items, are coded in the same position as an inanimate goal, preceding any auxiliaries. Their syntactic behaviour, however, is different (5.4.4). This is not to say that a human (or other animate entity) cannot be the goal of a motion predicate: is is also possible, but it is not possible for the postverbal, non-location participant of a predicate like *ké leng* ‘give’ to be classified as showing the same grammatical status as the goal of verbs of going: the former is an object, while the latter is an oblique.

- (11) *Pe=te ke.*  
 3SG.F=3SG.F.go 3SG.NF  
 ‘She went to him.’

Although positionally an object recipient shows the same behaviour as an adjunct (locational) goal, recipients can be shown to have distinct morphosyntactic patterns that indicate that they are in fact best thought of as being exceptionally marked core arguments, and do in fact bear the grammatical function object. The data on raising shows this quite clearly, and is presented in chapter 15.

### 11.3 Location

Static locations in which events take place are the most simply encoded of all adjunct NPs. There is no alternation in coding strategies: the location invariably appears clause finally, followed only by clause-level operators such as conjunction or switch reference, but following all other clausal elements including auxiliaries. There is no morphological material associated with the marking of a locative semantic role, either on the NP or on the verb. There is no difference in morphosyntactic realisation between an inner locative and an outer locative.

- (12) *Pe=r-oe pá-loe.*  
 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-place.PL house-platform  
 ‘She put them on the platform.’
- (13) *Ne ìngno-tong ne=wá-wá lí(hi) náti=ing a.*  
 1PL banana-shoots 1PL=plant-RED garden new=the  
 ‘We plant the banana shoots in the new garden.’
- (14) *Nì ùepong nì=li Te Lóngpa=we=ing.*  
 1SG marriage 1SG=do Enggros=this=DEIC  
 ‘I married in Enggros.’

In the following example a location appears in a clause with an auxiliary, and we can see that the location appears following this as well as the verb: it is truly clause-final.

- (15) *Pe=mong e tue fújéng.*  
 3SG.F=F.sit 3SG.F.be 3SG.F.do chair  
 ‘She is sitting on the chair.’

The appearance of an NP in this final position, following auxiliaries, contrasts with the coding position of goals, detailed in the following section.

### 11.4 Goal

The goal of a predicate is defined here as the location towards which an action directed in space, and is distinct from the recipient of an event of giving (see 11.4). A goal may be marked in a clause either by the bare NP appearing in postverbal position (the oblique slot), between the main verb(s) and any aspectual auxiliaries, or as a postverbal object, which appears in the same position but which is further indexed on the verb with the applicative suffix, and which is eligible for participation in those processes that specify an object as eligible where an oblique participant is not. Not all goals show this alternation in coding choices; the alternation is restricted to inanimate location goals ('destinations'), and does not apply to human recipients (this is part of the semantic specification of the applicative in Skou). This is just one factor in the differentiation of recipients from more prototypical goals, and concerns the grammatical function status of recipients as objects, not obliques or adjuncts.

Sentences (16) - (18) show that a manner-of-motion verb such as *hú* 'paddle' can appear simply with one argument, the paddler, and may also appear with a postverbal (and post-auxiliary) location adjunct. This verb, and most like it, cannot appear with a goal argument.

- (16) *Ná*      *nì=hú*      *i li.*  
paddle    1SG=paddle    be do  
'I am paddling.'
- (17) *Ná*      *nì=hú*      *i li Pa ílóng.*  
paddle    1SG=paddle    be do Tami river  
'I am paddling in the Tami river.'
- (18) *Ná*      *nì=hú*      *Pa ílóng i li.*  
paddle    1SG=paddle    Tami river be do  
\* 'I am paddling in the Tami river.'

In (19) and (20) we can see variations on one option for marking a goal in a sentence with a manner-of-motion verb predicate, using the applicative. In (20) the goal appears simply following the verb, but preceding any auxiliaries. Notice that (20) has an identical structure to (18); in fact, (18) is grammatical with the reading 'I am paddling to the Tami river.', but not with the reading given, which specifies a locative adjunct. (21) shows another option, with the verb *re* 'go' serialised in the clause following the goal.

- (19) *Ná*      *nì=hú=na*      *Te Bpúbi.*  
paddle    1SG=paddle=APPL    Skou Sai  
'I paddled to Skou Sai.'
- (20) *Ná*      *nì=hú=na*      *Te Bapúbi i li.*  
paddle    1SG=paddle=APPL    Skou Sai be do  
'I am paddling to Skou Sai.'
- (21) *Ná*      *nì=hú=na*      *Pa ílóng re.*  
paddle    1SG=paddle=APPL    Tami river go  
'I am paddling to the Tami river.'

Without an applicative a goal may still be included in the sentence, but only in a second clause; without the applicative, a goal may not appear simply with *re* ‘go’ in the same clause, as in (23).

location

- (22) *Nì=ha tà* *báng.*  
1SG=walk running beach  
‘I’m running around on the beach.’

goal in clause with a motion verb

- (23) *Nì=ha tà=ko* *nì=re* *te Tángpe.*  
1SG=walk running=OBV 1SG=go Skou Yambe  
‘I ran to Skou Yambe.’

goal ungrammatical in a clause with a manner-of-motion verb

- (24) \* *nì=ha tà* *te Tángpe* *re.*  
1SG=walk running Skou Yambe go  
‘I ran to Skou Yambe.’

A combination of goal and location is treated as a location for the purposes of position in the clause. In the following sentence *hángpeng* was consistently judged by speakers to be the goal of the sentence, even though it is also the location of the second predicate, and is marked as such (following the auxiliary ‘do’) in the sentence.<sup>60</sup>

- (25) *Ke=ti* *í* *li hángpeng.*  
3SG.NF=3SG.NF.go sleep do bush  
‘He’s gone to sleep in the bush.’

- (26) \* *ke=ti* *hángpeng í* *li.*  
3SG.NF=3SG.NF.go bush sleep do  
‘He’s gone to sleep in the bush.’  
\* ‘He’s gone to the bush to sleep.’<sup>61</sup>

It should be noted that these monoclausal purposive constructions are not common; the kinds of clauses seen in (27), with separate clauses separated by a switch-reference marker, are more frequent. A no-less grammatical, but more favoured way to code the event described in (25) is shown in (27). Here the status of *hángpeng* is unambiguously that of a location.

- (27) *Ke=ti=ko* *ke=í* *li hángpeng.*  
3SG.NF=3SG.NF.go=OBV 3SG.NF=sleep do bush  
‘He’s gone to sleep in the bush.’

While infrequent, the fact that clauses such as (25) are grammatical means that we can construe a hierarchy of some sort in which goals outrank locations in terms of being realised in a clause.

<sup>60</sup> Speakers would translate such sentences into Papuan Malay as De pi (ka) hutan tidor 3SG go (ALLATIVE) forest sleep.

<sup>61</sup> The purposive interpretation would require agreement for subject on the second clause: *Ke=ti hángpeng ke=í li* 3SG.NF=3SG.NF.go jungle 3SG.NF=sleep do ‘He’s gone to the jungle to sleep.’

### 11.4.1 The cooccurrence of location and goal in the one clause

The one instance that been recorded of a sentence containing two postverbal NPs is when there is both an animate beneficiary serving as a goal, and a general location present as an outer oblique, in the same clause. The example given is the following:

- (28) *Ha pe=wé n-ung ke nè?*  
 bag 3SG.F=get.F 3SG.F-give 3SG.NF where  
 ‘Where did she give the bag to him?’

While this sentence has been judged grammatical by speakers – indeed, it was offered as a first suggestion by a group as an example of the use of *léng* ‘give’, not in the context of eliciting for two postverbal NPs – it is not the only way that this meaning might be encoded. Indeed, it is not the preferred, or most common, way to code this set of meanings. Alternative, and more frequent, coding options include:

- marking two separate clauses, with the goal in one clause and the location in another, as in (27);
- forcing an aspect that will allow for an auxiliary to appear between the goal and the location, as in (29);

The following sentence shows quite explicitly the placement of the auxiliary between the goal and the location.

- (29) *Ha pe=wé n-ung-nung ni tue*  
 bag 3SG.F=get.F 3SG.F-give-RED 1SG 3SG.NF.do  
*pá-pè=pe=fue a.*  
 house-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT=that  
 ‘She wants to give the bag to me at that house of hers.’

When we are dealing with ‘true’ spatial goals, as well as locations, we find that they cannot both appear in the same clause:

- (30) *Ke=k-a tà-tà ti Te Bapúbi li.*  
 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-walk running-RED 3SG.NF.go Skou Sai do  
 ‘He wants to run to Skou Sai.’

- (30)' *Ke=k-a tà-tà ti li báng.*  
 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-walk running-RED 3SG.NF.go do beach  
 ‘He wants to run on the beach.’

- (31) \* *ke=k-a tà-tà ti Te Bapúbi li báng.*  
 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-walk running-RED 3SG.NF.go Skou Sai do beach  
 ‘He wants to run to Skou Sai on the beach.’

This shows that, despite having different phrase structural positions, there is some functional unity to adjuncts with these two different semantic roles in the clause.

## 11.5 Beneficiary

Beneficiary is a semantic role that may be expressed in Skou uniquely; it does not, as is common in many languages, collapse with recipient as a single ‘dative’ category. There are, however, several different ways of expressing a beneficiary, depending in part on the valency of the verb, and in part on pragmatic factors, and so we cannot necessarily talk about one single (unified) ‘beneficiary construction’. The common strategies can be classified based on the

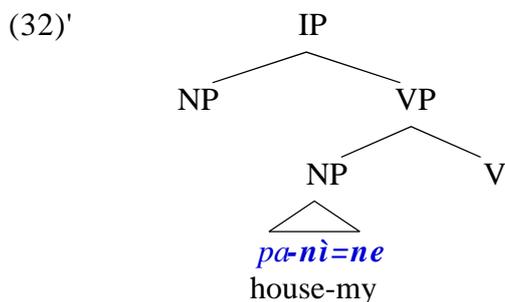
position of the beneficiary in the clause, and the morphology and syntax that are used to encode it. The three strategies are:

- Preverbal: beneficiary is coded as the possessor of the object of the verb. This strategy is obviously restricted to bivalent clauses;
- Postverbal:
  - beneficiary is marked with genitive or dative morphemes agreeing with the beneficiary
  - beneficiary is marked with the deictic *a*;
  - beneficiary appears as a simple NP (optionally marked with genitive and dative morphemes) following the main verb and separated from it by the obviative marker =*ko*.

These different strategies represent a wide variety of different formal means to represent the same semantic function in the morphosyntax of the language. We can see that one coding strategy is biclausal, while another codes the beneficiary through morphological modification of the theme NP. Examples of these different strategies appear below. I have included explanatory phrase structure trees to emphasise the differences between the different strategies.

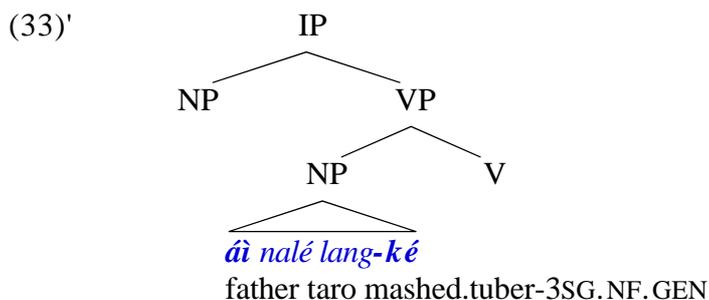
Preverbal possessor strategy: possessive pronominal beneficiary

- (32) *Tenake pa-nì=ne te=ti-ti.*  
 3DU.NF house-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 3PL=3PL.do-RED  
 ‘They will build a house for me.’



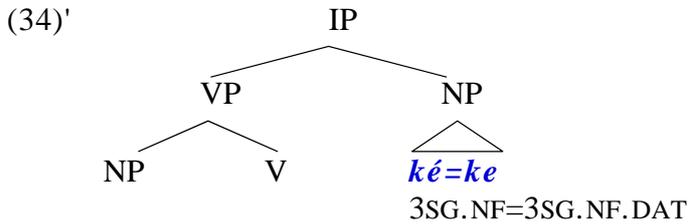
nominal beneficiary

- (33) *Ánì-nì=ne âi nalé lang-ké*  
 mother-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT father taro mashed.tuber-3SG.NF.GEN  
*pe=tue.*  
 3SG.F=3SG.F.do  
 ‘Mother is making taro lang for dad.’

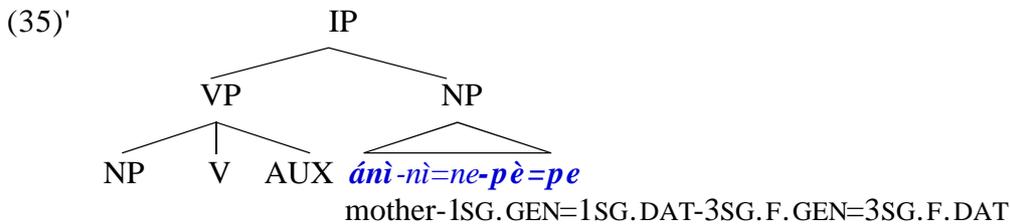


Postverbal strategy: pronominal beneficiary

- (34) *Móe=ing nì=ké ke=ke.*  
 fish=the 1SG=get 3SG.NF=3SG.NF.DAT  
 'I fetched the fish for him.'



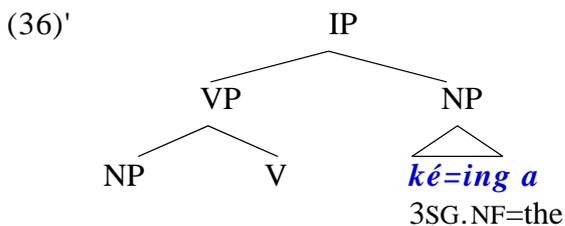
- (35) *Á nì=hù i li*  
 bucket 1SG=1SG.sew be do  
 nominal beneficiary  
*ánì-nì=ne-pè=pe.*  
 mother-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 'I am sewing a bucket for my mother.'



(The pronominal status of the verbal clitic *nì=* means that no nominal subject is required)

Postverbal, deictic oblique strategy: pronominal beneficiary

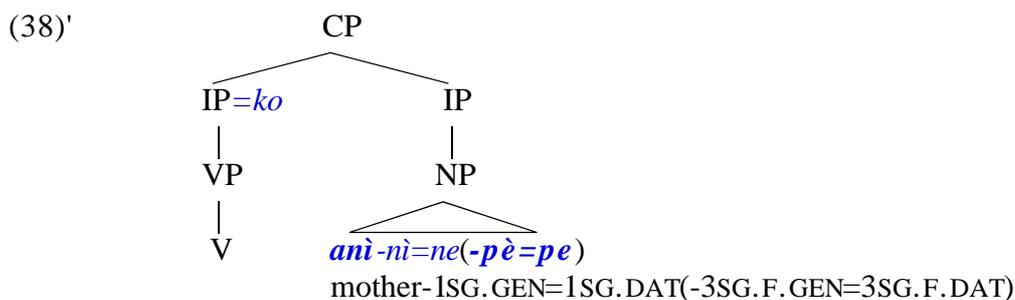
- (36) *Ha pe=tue ke=ing a.*  
 bag 3SG.F=3SG.F.do 3SG.NF=the  
 'She made a bag for him.'



Postclausal strategy: nominal beneficiary, ± possessive marking

- (37) *Nì=hà=ko anì.*  
 1SG=weave=OBV mother  
 'I am weaving (something) for mum.'

- (38) *Lóeúe nì=hà=ko*  
 blackpalm.mat 1SG=weave=OBV  
*ánì-nì=ne-pè=pe.*  
 mother-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 'I am weaving a blackpalm mat for mum.'



The NP following the obviative marker is still part of the same clause as the material preceding it, as can be shown by examining the behaviour of clauses of this type when an auxiliary is used. The auxiliary appears following the beneficiary, and not preceding it.

- (39) *Bòeng=ing*    *pe=tue=ko*                      *bá-tè=te*                      *tue?*  
 basket=DEIC    3SG.F=3SG.F.do=OBV                      who-3PL.GEN=3PL.DAT    3SG.F.do  
 'Who is she weaving the baskets for?'

- (40) \* *bòeng ing pe tue tue ko bá tè te?*

When the beneficiary is questioned it may appear in a preverbal position, but then the use of possessive pronominal strategy is obligatory:

- (41) *Á-bá-ke*                      *mè=m-ù*                      *me*                      *pi?*  
 bucket-who-3SG.NF.DAT    2SG=2SG-sew                      2SG.be                      2SG.do  
 'Who are you sewing (that) bucket for?'

- (41)' *Á-bá*                      *mè=m-ù*                      *me*                      *pi?*  
 bucket-who                      2SG=2SG-sew                      2SG.be                      2SG.do

It is grammatical, but unusual, for a questioned beneficiary to appear postverbally. Most speakers questioned on this felt that it is more acceptable, though still somewhat unusual, if the beneficiary is a question word, as in (32)a.

- (42) a. # *Á*                      *mè=m-ù*                      *bá-ké*                      *me*                      *pi?*  
 bucket 2SG=2SG-sew                      who-3SG.NF.GEN 2SG.be                      2SG.do  
 'Who are you sewing (that) bucket for?'

Note that this is the only case in which a question word is found by preference in a position other than its normal one, that is, the only instance in which there is evidence for there being a special focus position.

It is equally ungrammatical for a non-possessive strategy to be used preverbally, or postverbally, in questions, as can be seen by the ungrammatical b. versions of the following sentences.

- b. \* *á*                      *bá*                      *mè=m-ù*                      *me*                      *pi?*  
 bucket who 2SG=2SG-sew                      2SG.be                      2SG.do  
 'Who are you sewing (that) bucket for?'

The possessor of NP strategy may be employed even when the identity of the possessor is questioned, as can be seen in the following sentence, in which the possessive marking is replaced by the interrogative clitic *bá*. There is no dative form of the interrogative, so, in the absence of information about the sex of the recipient, the generic (and thus unmarked for gender – see 6.3) 3SG.NF dative clitic =*ke* is used.

- (43) *Ánì, m̀è nalé lang-bá=ke*  
 mother 2SG taro mashed.tuber-who=3SG.NF.DAT  
*m̀è=pi me pi?*  
 2SG=2SG.do 2SG.be 2SG.do  
 ‘Mother, who are you making pounded taro for?’

If the recipient in the sentence above was known to be a woman, but the identity of the particular woman in a group of others was being questioned, then the form *nalé lang bá pe* would be perfectly acceptable. Even in these sorts of situations, however, it is possible to use the ‘non-feminine’ dative suffix, showing that the ‘non-feminine’ category really is simply characterised by being unmarked for gender, and not for having a particular marking that excludes feminine-gendered participants. See chapters 6 and (particularly) 10 for more discussion of the grammar of gender in NPs.

### 11.6 Source

The usual means of encoding a source is with a serial verb construction involving *há* ‘from’, which, while being an independent and separate verb root, is clearly etymologically related to either the verb *ha* ‘walk’ or *há* ‘stand, get up’. The fact that the tone of ‘walk’ is different is evidence that it is not synchronically the same etymon as *há* ‘from’. *Há* ‘stand’ would appear to be a likely candidate, but in fact the inflectional paradigms of the two verbs are distinct, as can be seen in (44).

|      | <i>há</i> ‘from’ |           | <i>há</i> ‘stand up’ |           |
|------|------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| (44) | SG               | PL        | SG                   | PL        |
| 1    | <i>há</i>        | <i>ná</i> | <i>há</i>            | <i>ná</i> |
| 2    | <i>má</i>        | <i>há</i> | <i>má</i>            | <i>há</i> |
| 3NF  | <i>ká</i>        | <i>yá</i> | <i>ká</i>            | <i>tá</i> |
| 3F   | <i>wá</i>        |           | <i>wá</i>            |           |

On the basis of the distinct conjugation in the 3PL cell of the paradigm, we must conclude that these verbs, too, are distinct synchronically, no matter how compelling the circumstantial evidence is to consider them to have a common source, historically. (The paradigm for ‘walk’ has *ya* in the 3PL, suggesting that, if the inflectional evidence is historically stable [for which there is ample counter-evidence] ‘walk’ might be thought of as being more closely related to ‘from’ than is ‘stand’.) In addition to the source-specifying verb there must also be a verb indicating endpoint, typically one of *loe* ‘come’, *re* ‘go’, *moe* ‘return’; less commonly this is combined with a direction verb, such as *e* ‘go east’ or *hóe* ‘come landward, south’. It might be that the source specified by the use of *há* already fills the morphosyntactic template for direction (albeit the reverse of what is normal), making the specification of further directional information something of an overload.

- (45) *M̀è=m-á ǹè p-oe?*  
 2SG=2SG-from where 2SG-come  
 ‘Where have you come from?’

- (9999) *Ǹì=há Te Óeti re.*  
 1SG=from Wutung go  
 ‘I went from Wutung.’

- (48) *Nì=há pá re-re li.*  
 1SG=from house go-RED do  
 'I went (there) straight from the house.'

An alternative coding for source involves specifying the location at which the subject was prior to movement, with a verb of location, and following this with a verb of coming or returning, which of course may also be serialised with other motion specifying verbs (see 5.4.1.3, 5.4.1.4). The following two sentences are functionally identical.

- (46) *Nì=há loko loe.*  
 1SG=from east come  
 'I came from the east.'

- (49) *Pe=moeng Nofé toe.*  
 3SG.F=sit Jayapura 3.come  
 'She came from Jayapura.'

- (49)' *Pe=w-á Nofé (pe=)w-a toe.*  
 3SG.F=3SG.F-from Jayapura 3SG.F=3SG.F-walk 3.come  
 'She walked here from Jayapura.'

Note that this is not a multi-clausal construction; if it were, we would expect to see the possibility of some indication of switch reference, as in (50)' and (51)'.

- (50) \* *pe=w-á=pa Nofé toe*  
 3SG.F=3SG.F-from=INSTR Jayapura 3.come  
 'She came from Jayapura.'

- (50)' \* *pe=w-á Nofé=pa toe*  
 3SG.F=3SG.F-from Jayapura=INSTR 3.come  
 'She came from Jayapura.'

- (51) \* *pe=w-á=ko Nofé toe*  
 3SG.F=3SG.F-from=OBV Jayapura 3.come  
 'She came from Jayapura.'

- (51)' \* *pe=w-á Nofé=ko toe*  
 3SG.F=3SG.F-from Jayapura=OBV 3.come  
 'She came from Jayapura.'

The source marking is in a sense the opposite function of the postverbal marking for beneficiaries, as seen in 11.4. It occupies the same position in the clause as does a beneficiary or goal (or any obliques other than locations), as shown in the (pragmatically odd) clause in (52), which shows 'come from' with an auxiliary construction.

- (52) *Pè=p-á fue a e tue toe*  
 3SG.F=3SG.F-from there 3SG.F.be 3SG.F.do 3.come  
 'She is coming from there.'

Unlike other languages, in which the coding for source, (oblique) agent and/or instrument may be interrelated, the use of a serial verb construction with *há* is not found in any other constructions other than to mark a source. The following sections will deal with the marking of agents in passive clauses and of instruments.

### 11.7 Oblique agents

Agents can be encoded as adjunct ‘sources’ in some languages, where they appear as the agents of passive constructions, such as *Your brother’s being tickled by his cousins*. The other commonly-found way that a non-subject agent can be coded as an adjunct is if it is an accompanier of the subject of the verb, as in *Your brother’s cousins are tickling him with their parents*. In Skou there is a passive that allows for an overt agent adjunct (see 13.3), but it does not appear with the morphosyntactic coding for sources. While there is no evidence to suggest that it is coded as a source, we can state that it is treated as a postverbal oblique (see 11.2 - 11.4), either goal or location. The passive construction does not occur with the aspects marked by the auxiliaries *i li* ‘be’+ ‘do’, and so the exact position cannot be determined. The inability of a passive agent to appear in the same clause as a location might suggest a locative coding for the agent, but the fact that goals and locatives are also constrained against appearing in the same clause (see (31) in section 1.4) means that this is not conclusive evidence for their being in the same phrase structural position, only that they are treated as having the same status in terms of grammatical functions, and the appearance of both an oblique agent and an adjunct location is ruled out because of violation of the principle of uniqueness of functions in a clause.

- (53) *Mòng ke=wí pe.*  
 affect 3SG.NF=get 3SG.F  
 ‘He was hit by her.’
- (54) \* *mòng ke=wí pe pá*  
 affect 3SG.NF=get 3SG.F house  
 ‘He was hit by her in the house.’

The test for cooccurrence restrictions only tells us that the agent is a postverbal oblique, and the exact position of the postverbal coding of the agent cannot be determined. We can only state with confidence that the agent is coded as either a goal or a locative, but not decide which.

### 11.8 Instruments

Instruments may appear anywhere in the clause preceding the verb, so long as they do not interrupt a verb and its adjunct nominal (see chapter 14). If they precede a nominal subject, then they must be interpreted as topicalised. In addition to this preverbal positional restriction, they must retain the instrumental marker =*pa*, whether they precede or follow any object present in the clause. Examples of instruments both preceding and following the object are shown in (55) and (56), while (57) and (58) give examples of monovalent sentences with a marked instrument, with the functions means of transport in (57) - (59), and platform for action in (60).

- (55) *Hòe-toe rangwáue=pa nì=lé.*  
 sago-tree axe=INSTR 1SG=chop  
 ‘I chop the sago tree with (my) axe.’
- (56) *fe=pa hòe ne=n-ang.*  
 chopsticks=INSTR sago 1PL=1PL-eat  
 ‘... and we eat the sago with chopsticks.’
- (57) *Pe tangtúí=pa pe=te.*  
 3SG.F car=INSTR 3SG.F=3SG.F.go  
 ‘She went in a car.’

- (58) *Fu wa ro=ing a ne tang=pa ne=ne-ne ka.*  
west.wind.season=the 1PL canoe=INSTR 1PL=1PL.go-RED NEG  
'We won't go by canoe when the western winds are blowing.'
- (59) *Ni tang-ni=ne=pa ni=hítáfi hang.*  
1SG canoe-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT=INSTR 1SG=collide coconut  
'I crashed into a coconut tree on my bike.'
- (60) *Féng langro te=balèng tang=pa móe te=r-í*  
wind eat.wind 3PL=male canoe=INSTR fish 3PL=3PL-get.PL  
'In the season with eastern winds the men catch fish in canoes.'

Additionally, for many (but not all) speakers instruments may appear following the verb, in the position in which goals and beneficiaries appear. There does not appear to be an easily definable distribution of the speakers who allow postverbal instruments and those who do not, based on geographical or clan lines, though there is a tendency for older speakers to be more likely to accept the postverbal position for instruments. For these speakers, then (61) is as acceptable as (57).

- (61) *Pe pe=te tangtúí=pa.*  
3SG.F 3SG.F=3SG.F.go car=INSTR  
'She went in a car.'

These possibilities may be schematised as follows, with arrows showing where an instrumental phrase may be inserted, and asterisks marking ungrammatical positions.

Possibilities for instrumental NPs: templatic view

- (62) CP NP<sub>TOP</sub> NP<sub>SUBJ</sub> NP<sub>OBJ</sub> N<sub>ADJ.NOM</sub> V AUX  
INSTR INSTR INSTR (INSTR)

Although an instrument may appear before a nominal subject it seems that this is only possible if the instrument is a topic, as seen in the following examples.

- (63) *Pe tangtúí=pa pe=te.*  
3SG.F car=INSTR 3SG.F=3SG.F.go  
'She went in a car.'
- (64) *Tangtúí=pa, pe pe=te.*  
car=INSTR 3SG.F 3SG.F=3SG.F.go  
'In a car, she went.'

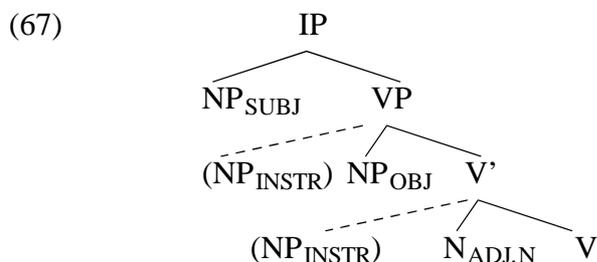
Note that a pre-subject instrument may not be questioned, confirming the incompatibility of the pre-sentential pragmatically marked ('topic') position with the focus function that is inherent with content questioning.

- (65) *Pe ya=pa pe=te?*  
3SG.F what=INSTR 3SG.F=3SG.F.go  
'What did she go in?'  
(= 'By what means did she travel?')
- (66) \* *ya=pa, pe pe=te?*  
what=INSTR 3SG.F 3SG.F=3SG.F.go

Because of the presence of a pre-subject instrument being ascribable only to productive topicalisation that may apply to any nominal in the clause, and so not part of a distributional rule

specifically describing the instrumental, we may reduce the statement of appearance of instruments in the clause to the following. This tree shows that an instrument can be left-adjoined to either a VP or a V'. Despite there being two positions available for the instrument to appear in, no clause may contain two different instrumental NPs, or iterations of the same instrument.

Basic structural positions for instruments in the Skou clause: preverbal



Note that the alternative representations seen in (62) and (67) are not compatible. Specifically, some of the positional variants in (62) are not predicted from (67). To resolve this, we need to make the following assumptions. First, the pre-subject position is the result of the automatic positioning of an NP preceding the other elements of the clause when it is topicalised, as described above. Secondly, the postverbal occurrences of instrumentals, not acceptable to all speakers, are the result of the instrumental appearing in the general oblique position, which follows the verb but precedes any auxiliary that might be present. Examples of the variation possible in the positioning of instruments can be seen in the next three sentences.

Preverbal, precedes object

- (68) *Ke rangwaue=pa rító ke=le.*  
 3SG.NF axe=INSTR tree 3SG.NF=chop  
 'He chopped the tree down with an axe.'

Preverbal, follows object

- (69) *Ke rító rangwaue pa ke le.*  
 'He chopped the tree down with an axe.'

Postverbal (precedes auxiliary, if present)

- (70) *Ke rító ke le rangwaue pa.*  
 'He chopped the tree down with an axe.'

A version of the same sentence, this time with a sentence-initial topicalised instrument, is shown in (71).

- (71) *Rangwaue pa, ke rító ke le.*  
 'With an axe, he chopped the tree down.'

This last construction is somewhat rare, as an instrument that receives sufficient pragmatic prominence is more likely to be coded in an alternative structure using a serial verb construction using *ké* 'get', as described below (see example (73)). This involves the instrument appearing as the object of the verb *ké* 'get, (use)'. In this case we find the main verb and its object appear after *ké*. There is no instrumental case marker on the instrument of the combined clause, since it is the object of its own verb and not purely an adjunct.

While this might be seen to be a spurious comment, self-evident and unnecessary, many languages of the New Guinea region do have structures in which the instrumental NP is case

marked as instrumental, but also appears as the object of a verb meaning ‘get, use’ as part of a serial verb construction. It appears that these nominals are subcategorised for by the ‘get’ verb, but receive case marking as a result of their function in the clause as a whole (providing strong support for the analysis that serial verb constructions are monoclausal). This may be modelled as follows:

(72) [ NP<sub>SUBJ</sub> [ NP<sub>INSTR</sub>-case(INSTR) ‘get’ ] NP<sub>OBJ</sub> Verb ]

Structures of this sort are found in Korafe (Farr 1999: xxx) and other languages in New Guinea. In Meyah (Gravelle 2001) instruments appear marked not only in a serial verb construction, but also with an applicative morpheme on the main verb. Since these structures are not found in Skou, they are not discussed in detail here, but they indicate the ‘confused’ status of instrumental case marking in many of the languages of New Guinea, sometimes being treated as an adjunct, and sometimes as an object with a peculiar form of ‘grammatical function agreement’ (Donohue 2005c).

An example of the instrumental serial verb construction in Skou is shown below.

(73) *Ke* [ *rangwaue ke=ké* ] *rító ke=le.*  
 3SG.NF axe 3SG.NF=get tree 3SG.NF=chop  
 ‘He used an axe to chop the tree.’

(74) \* *ke rangwaue pa ke ké rító ke le*

More information and discussion on the use of serial verb constructions to introduce instruments is presented in the following section.

#### 11.8.1 Instrumental alternatives

Of all the participants in a clause that are not subcategorised for by the main verb, instruments are the ones most likely to appear in a serial verb construction, other than sources, for which there is no coding alternative to the serial verb construction (see 11.6). When appearing in a serial verb construction, the instrument appears as the object of the verb *ké* ‘get’. This strategy exists in addition to the more frequent case-marking strategy described above, and in the presence of this option instruments are again unique, since no other oblique or adjunct participants are found with a dedicated case marker to indicate their role.

Note that it is still possible for the sentence to be coded without a serial verb construction, as seen in (75). The option of coding with a serial verb construction is preferred for answers to content questions concerning instruments, as this construction puts the focus on the instrument more clearly than in a clause with the instrumental case (reflecting universalist principles that assign higher pragmatic salience to higher grammatical functions). The following sentences are ranked from most to least likely to be spontaneously produced by native speakers.

- (75) a. *Tangnófo ke=ké=ko ke=Húng-tè ke=kí.*  
 knife 3SG.NF=get=OBV 3SG.NF=Sentani-3PL.GEN 3SG.NF=stab  
 ‘He stabbed the Sentani with a knife.’
- b. # *Ya=pa ke=Húng-tè ke=kí?*  
 what=INSTR 3SG.NF=Sentani-3PL.GEN 3SG.NF=stab  
 ‘What did he stab the Sentani man with?’
- c. \* *ke ya=pa ke=Húng-tè ke=kí*  
 3SG.NF what=INSTR 3SG.NF=Sentani-3PL.GEN 3SG.NF=stab  
 ‘What did he stab the Sentani man with?’

The answer to such a question, regardless of the phrasing of the instrument as a serial verb object or an overtly-marked oblique, is perfectly acceptable with a non-initial oblique instrument. Alternatively the serial verb construction may be used, but this is only likely if the question involved the serial verb construction, and there is an element of contrastive focus concerning the expected and the actual identity of the instrument. The a. sentence below is only likely to be heard answering the question in (75)a, while the b. sentence can answer either of (75)a or (75)b.

- (76) a. *Ke tangnófó ke=ké=ko (ke) ke=kí.*  
 3SG.NF knife 3SG.NF=get=OBV 3SG.NF 3SG.NF=stab  
 ‘He stabbed him with a knife.’
- b. *Ke tangnófó=pa (ke) ke=kí.*  
 3SG.NF knife=INSTR 3SG.NF 3SG.NF=stab  
 ‘He stabbed him with a knife.’

Some speakers allow an instrument to appear postverbally, in addition to the positions already described. In this case it is still marked by *=pa*; an example can be seen in the following sentence.

- (77) *Ke rító ke=le rangwaue=pa.*  
 3SG.NF tree 3SG.NF=fell axe=INSTR  
 ‘He cut down a tree with an axe.’

Now, as mentioned above, this type of construction is not possible for all speakers, and even some of the speakers who accept postverbal instruments reject them at other times. Universally, though, the instruments must appear with over marking of their status by the postposition/clitic *=pa*, unless there is a serial verb introducing the clausal instrument as its object.

The instrumental case marker is structurally found in the D position at the right edge of the NP (see chapter 8). This means that case-marked instruments cannot appear with deictic modification. If an instrument must be marked with a deictic, it must be coded with a serial verb construction.

- (78) a. *\*ke tangnófó=fue a=pa (ke) ke=kí*  
 3SG.NF knife=that=INSTR 3SG.NF 3SG.NF=stab  
 ‘He stabbed him with that knife.’
- b. *Ke tangnófó=fue a ke=ké=ko (ke) ke=kí.*  
 3SG.NF knife=that 3SG.NF=get=OBV 3SG.NF 3SG.NF=stab  
 ‘He stabbed him with that knife.’

The fact that there is a way to code instruments as the objects of a serial verb construction, which shows that they are more salient than when they appear with the instrumental marker, does not preclude them from appearing with the instrumental marker and a lexical, though not morphologically marked, pragmatic focus, as can be seen in the following.

- (79) *Ya=pa ke=Húngteng ke=kí?*  
 what=INSTR 3SG.NF=Sentani 3SG.NF=stab  
 ‘What did he stab the Sentani with?’

Although there are no simple alternative coding options for obliques other than instruments, there is a goal applicative, which offers an alternative, though more complicated, coding option for some obliques. This is discussed in 11.9.

## 11.9 Applicatives

Monovalent verbs of motion may appear with an applicative morpheme, which offers an alternative coding option for goals similar to the serial verb construction option that is available for instruments. The analogy is not perfect; with the applicative the goal argument serves as the object of the clause, not as an oblique, though it remains coded in postverbal position. The applicative morpheme *-na* is suffixed to the verb, and the source applicative appears prefixal to the verb. A simple example is shown below:

(80) *Nì=ha tà*                      *re báng.*  
 1SG=walk running    go beach  
 ‘I’m running to the beach.’

(81) *Nì=ha tà-na*                      *báng.*  
 1SG=walk running-APPL beach  
 ‘I’m running to the beach.’

Evidence for the object status of *báng* in (81), and not in (80), can be seen in the different grammaticality of the goal undergoing raising. In (82)a and (83)a the sentence headed by the complement-taking predicate *fue* shows no raising. In the b sentences of both (82) and (83) we can see the subject of the complement clause raised as the object of the matrix clause. (83)c shows that while the goal of *ha tà-na* can be raised to object, the goal of *ha tà re* in (82)c cannot. This difference is due to *báng* in (82) being an oblique, while in (83) it is an object (see chapter 15 for more discussion of this raising construction).

(82) a. *Ke=fue*            *nì=ha tà*                      *re báng.*  
 3SG.F=see    1SG=walk running    go beach  
 ‘He saw me running to the beach.’

b. *Nì*    *ke=fue*            *nì=ha tà*                      *re báng.*  
 1SG    3SG.F=see    1SG=walk running    go beach  
 ‘He saw me running to the beach.’

c. \**báng*    *ke=fu*            *nì=ha tà*                      *re*  
 beach 3SG.F=see.F    1SG=walk running    go  
 ‘He saw me running to the beach.’

(83) a. *Ke=fue*            *nì=ha tà-na*                      *báng.*  
 3SG.F=see    1SG=walk running-APPL beach  
 ‘He saw me running to the beach.’

b. *Nì*    *ke=fue*            *nì=ha tà-na*                      *báng.*  
 1SG    3SG.F=see    1SG=walk running-APPL beach  
 ‘He saw me running to the beach.’

c. *Báng*    *ke=fu*            *nì=ha tà-na*  
 beach 3SG.F=see.F    1SG=walk running-APPL  
 ‘He saw me running to the beach.’

The applicative is quite restricted, being found only with monovalent verbs of motion. The applicative construction and the syntax associated with it is described in more depth in 13.2.

### 11.10 Correlations of morphosyntax and semantics

The following table lists the different morphosyntactic devices that are attested in Skou, namely position, case and various verbal devices, along with the different sorts of structural and semantic roles that they can be used to encode.

There is clearly a strong skewing against the encoding of material on the verb, other than the agreement patterns described in chapter 7. Case marking occupies a middle position, both in terms of the degree to which it is used, and also the arguments that it is used to encode. With the sole exception of the optional ergative use of summation pronouns, case marking choices are restricted to middle-level semantic roles, beneficiaries, recipients and instruments. Positional encoding is by far the most frequently used device for showing argument status in Skou, and also the one that shows the sharpest core versus oblique distinction. Clearly the distinction between subjects and objects, on the one hand, and obliques and adjuncts on the other, is the most heavily grammaticalised one in Skou, as it is in most (if not all) non-Austronesian languages of New Guinea.

Table 155. Morphosyntactic coding and semantic roles

|             | __ V | V __ | case | APPL | SVC |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|-----|
| SUBJ, OBJ   |      |      | ( )  |      |     |
| Beneficiary |      |      |      |      |     |
| Beneficiary |      |      |      |      |     |
| Instrument  |      | ( )  |      |      | ( ) |
| Location    |      |      |      |      |     |
| Goal        |      |      |      | ( )  |     |
| Source      |      |      |      |      | ( ) |

This table can be compared to table 80xx in 3.13, in which similar material is presented from a different perspective and with slightly different values on the axes.

### 11.11 Summary: oblique nominals from a formal perspective

This chapter has been functionalist in its organisation: the different oblique functions have been presented according to the semantic function that they represent. It is also useful to examine these nominals formally, that is, in terms of the question ‘What functions can a certain form encode?’ This is the aim of this final section.

## 12 *Serial verb constructions*

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Serial verb constructions are a hallmark of languages of the New Guinea area. These constructions, in which one clause contains two lexical verbs, are not as frequent in Skou as a survey of other languages in the area would lead one to expect. It is because of the existence of positional licensing in Skou that we see many non-subcategorised for arguments appearing in the clause without the use of serial verb constructions:

- strict word order makes the appearance of locatives unambiguous when they follow the verb, and obviates the need for a special location-introducing predicate;
- an overt instrumental marker makes instrumental phrases easily identifiable, even though they are not strictly positionally coded, and again removes the need for an instrument-introducing predicate.

The main areas where we find verb serialisation in Skou are in the linguistic encodings of the following kinds of events:

- motion verbs, further specifying the direction of movement:
  - verbs showing direction: eastwards, westwards, seawards, landwards (= returning);
- manner of motion verbs, further specifying the orientation of the movement:
  - running, walking, paddling, chasing, etc.;
- transfer events:
  - verbs of getting, combined with verbs of giving or bargaining;
- aspect marking by:
  - the verb *i* ‘be’ to mark habitual action;
  - the verb *li* ‘do’ to mark intention;
  - the verbs *i* ‘be’ and *li* ‘do’ used together to mark progressive action;
  - the verbs *toe* ‘(third person) come’ and *te* ‘(she) goes’ to mark kinds of completion and inception;
- special predicate types:
  - predicates with results;
  - predicates of violence with inverted pragmatic focus;
  - passives;
  - purposelessness

These different factors that are associated with serial verb constructions are not mutually exclusive; it is quite possible, indeed common, to specify a manner of motion predicate for orientation, direction, and as being continuous, as seen in the following example. There is only one verbal clitic present, implying that we are only dealing with one verb ‘unit’, *moe wa tà po te*. Alternatively expressed, we could say that the serialisation present in Skou is always of the contiguous type, and non-contiguous serialisations are not found. The whole serial construction is, therefore, within the scope of the same agreement clitic. Any exceptions to this must necessarily involve switch reference marking. Other evidence supporting the view that there is in a sense only one ‘verbal unit’ involves the assignment of a pitch contour: there can only be one tone melody assigned to the whole serial verb construction (this is true for motion verb sequences such as that presented here, and for other serial verb constructions as well). In the examples they have been written as separate words for the sake of easy identification of the semantic units, and because, although there is no requirement that each verb should take its own proclitic, each verb that can must take prefixal agreement marking, and the glosses of these prefixes would become confusing if the serial verb was written as one unit, as seen in (1)'. Further discussion of the issues raised here can be found in 7.8 and 7.9.4; discussion of the phonological parameters behind tonal assignment can be found in 2.3.1.8.

|       | SUBJ                                    | Centrifugal                                             | Manner-of-motion   | Direction      | Motion    | Goal         |
|-------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------|--------------|
| (1)   | <i>Pe</i>                               | <i>pe=moe</i>                                           | <i>w-a tà</i>      | <i>p-o</i>     | <i>te</i> | <i>báng</i>  |
|       | 3SG.F                                   | 3SG.F=return                                            | 3SG.F-walk running | 3SG.F-seawards | 3SG.F.go  | beach        |
|       | Progressive aspect                      |                                                         |                    |                |           |              |
|       | <i>e</i>                                | <i>tue.</i>                                             |                    |                |           |              |
|       | 3SG.F.be                                | 3SG.F.do                                                |                    |                |           |              |
|       | ‘She’s running back down to the beach.’ |                                                         |                    |                |           |              |
|       | SUBJ                                    | Centrifugal:manner-of-motion:direction:motion           |                    |                |           | Goal         |
| (1)'  | <i>Pe</i>                               | <i>pe=moe-w-a tà=p-o-te</i>                             |                    |                |           | <i>báng.</i> |
|       | 3SG.F                                   | 3SG.F=return-3SG.F-walk running-3SG.F-seawards-3SG.F.go |                    |                |           | beach        |
| (1)'' | <i>Pe</i>                               | <i>pe moe wa tà po te</i>                               |                    |                |           | <i>báng.</i> |
|       | [ -                                     | • - - \ - -                                             |                    |                |           | - ]          |

In this example we can see the basic predicate is the manner-of-motion indicated by the verb + nominal *ha tà* ‘run’. This core is preceded by the verb *moe* ‘return’, and is followed by the directional verb *o* ‘seawards’, the motion verb *re* ‘go (from speaker)’. The goal follows, and the entire clause is concluded with the (double) use of the verbs of being, *i* and *li*. Any of the verbs in the sequence, apart from the auxiliary verbs, may take a clitic pronoun, though it is only required on the first verb in the sequence, and so for reasons of redundant information being kept to a minimum at phrasal levels and above, it is not normal to multiply express proclitics.

In this chapter, as well as elsewhere in this book, I shall refer to these constructions as *serial verb constructions*. This is, however, terminologically slightly under-representative. While verbs overwhelmingly make up the components of these predicates, adjectives and also complex predicates involving adjunct nominal + verb constructions can also be found in a so-called ‘serial verb construction’, as the following example attests.

SVC with one simple verb, one complex predicate, and one adjective

- |     |                                                                       | VERB              | [ADJ.NOM+VERB] | ADJ.         |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|
| (2) | <i>Bòeng=fue=ra=ing a</i>                                             | <i>ke=jí(=ko)</i> | <i>báng li</i> | <i>fèng.</i> |
|     | small.basket=that=also=the                                            | 3SG.NF=break=OBV  | snap do        | bad          |
|     | 'He then even hit that basket so that it broke apart and was ruined.' |                   |                |              |

A more accurate term would be 'serial predicate construction', reflecting the makeup of the different elements that may participate in such a process. The term 'serial verb construction' shall be retained because it is clear that the constructions described here are comparable to those described using this term elsewhere (see Zwicky 1990).

Finally, we need to mention a semantic relation that is frequently found encoded in serial verb construction, but which in Skou most commonly appears with the marking of a switch reference construction (though the interpretation is complex). The encoding of cause-result predicates, such as in (2), is often found with an overt marker of biclausality, the switch-reference marker =*ko*. This is described in more detail in 19.5.

### 12.1 Clitic placement in serial verb constructions

The requirement for proclitic agreement can be satisfied by a single clitic appearing on the leftmost verb in the sequence. It is possible, though less likely, for a series of clitics to appear, marking several or all of the verbs in the serial verb construction. Any or none of the verbs in a serial verb construction may be marked with a clitic, as long as the first verb in the series is so marked. It is not possible for a serial verb construction to appear without proclitic agreement on the first verb in the series.

Some possible alternative versions of (1), differing only in terms of the placement of different numbers of optional agreement proclitics, are shown in (3).

Alternative clitic placements

- (3) a. *Pe pe moe pe watà po te báng e tue.*  
 b. *Pe pe moe watà pe po te báng e tue.*  
 c. *Pe pe moe watà po pe te báng e tue.*  
 d. *Pe pe moe pe watà po te báng e tue.*  
 e. *Pe pe moe pe watà pe po te báng e tue.*  
 f. *Pe pe moe pe watà pe po pe te báng e tue.*  
 ...etc.

Note that auxiliary verbs found in serial verb constructions may not be marked by clitics, just as they are not eligible for clitic marking when there is only a single verb as the predicate of the clause.

- (4) a. \**pe pe moe watà po te báng pe e tue*  
 b. \**pe pe moe watà po te báng e pe tue*  
 c. \**pe pe moe watà po te báng pe e pe tue*
- (5) *Pe hòe pe=p-ang e tue.*  
 3SG.F sago 3SG.F=3SG.F-eat 3SG.F.be 3SG.F.do  
 'She is eating sago.'

- (5)' a. \**pe hòe pe pang pe e tue*  
 b. \**pe hòe pe pang e pe tue*  
 c. \**pe hòe pe pang pe e pe tue*

Even if following verbs take clitics then placement of adverbs shows the whole sequence of verbs to behave as a single unit. The position of the location *báng* 'beach' in (3) follows all the verbal elements except the auxiliaries, and cannot precede any of the non-auxiliaries, as shown in the ungrammaticality of (6)a and b.

- (6) a. \**pe pe moe watà po te báng pe e tue,*  
 b. \**pe pe moe watà po te báng e pe tue*

Manner adverbs, which usually precede the predicate that they modify, precede all of the verbs in the serial verb construction. The placement of additional clitics does not affect the possible positioning of adverbs: the remain at the beginning of the whole string of verbs. The sentences in (7) are modelled on (3), with the addition of an adverb.

- (7) a. *Pe láláfa pe moe watà po te báng e tue.*  
           slowly  
 b. \**pe pe moe láláfa pe watà po te báng e tue.*  
 c. \**pe pe moe (pe) watà láláfa pe po te báng e tue.*  
 d. \**pe pe moe (pe) watà (pe) po láláfa pe te báng e pe tue*  
       ...etc.

With serial verb constructions that do not involve motion predicates, such as serial verb constructions from the other categories listed as the start of this chapter, the various options for clitic placement are not found. Only one clitic, found at the left edge of the serial verb construction such as is seen in (8), is encountered.

- (8) a. *Pe taíngbe=ing a pe=wé r-ung ke.*  
           3SG.F money=the 3SG.F=get.F 3SG.F-F.give 3SG.NF  
           'She gave him the money.'  
 b. \* *pe taíngbe=ing a wé pe=rung ke*  
 c. \* *pe taíngbe=ing a pe=wé pe=rung ke*

Having examined the possibilities for clitic placement in different kinds of serial verb constructions, in the following section I shall examine the use of and variation in prefixal agreement.

## 12.2 Multiple prefixation in serial verb constructions

The examples already presented have shown that each verb root in a serial verb construction must take prefixal agreement if it is eligible to do so (this applies to agreement by vowel alternation or stem suppletion as well). That is, if the verb would have inflected by prefix, vowel, or suppletion if it were the sole verbal element in a clause, then this same agreement must appear in the serial verb construction.

A concrete example of this is shown below. In The first clause each verb shows agreement as normal, and the clause is grammatical. If prefixal agreement is omitted on either of the verbs, the clause is judged ungrammatical, as in the sentences in (10).

- (9) *Pe* *pe=w-a tà* *te* *pá.*  
 3SG.F 3SG.F=3SG.F-walk running 3SG.F.go house  
 ‘She’s running to the house.’
- (10) a. \**pe* *pe=w-a tà* *re* *pá*  
 3SG.F 3SG.F=3SG.F-walk running Ø.go house  
 ‘She’s running to the house.’
- b. \**pe* *pe=ha tà* *te* *pá*  
 3SG.F 3SG.F=Ø.walk running 3SG.F.go house  
 ‘She’s running to the house.’
- c. \**pe* *pe=ha tà* *re* *pá*  
 3SG.F 3SG.F=Ø.walk running Ø.go house  
 ‘She’s running to the house.’

This pattern, that of retaining lexical agreement alternations as well as the clausally-specified clitic agreement, creates a predicate with multiple locations for marking agreement, not dissimilar to facts found for the verbal collocations discussed in 7.8. The principles by which we can distinguish these as separate phenomena are the productivity of combination that is found with serial verb constructions, and the fact that independent meanings can be ascribed to all elements of a serial verb construction, which is not always true for the different inflecting elements of the sorts of predicates that have been described in 7.8.

### 12.3 Agreement in serial verb constructions

In chapter 7 we examined the facts of multiple exponence in the Skou verbal agreement system, both the realisation and status of the different agreement marking strategies on verbs in the language. In the case of a serial verb construction, we find that there remain some issues in agreement that have not yet been dealt with. We have already discussed the fact that individual verbs will each show prefixation in the previous section, but that is not the end of the story as far as agreement goes. The following sections each present one issue that is related to the idea of agreement in serial verb constructions.

#### 12.3.1 The use of proclitics on both verbs

While prefixation is consistently applied to all individual lexical verbs in a serial verb construction (or, of course, to lone verbs or to each member of a verbal collocation, if applicable – see 7.8), unexceptionally, proclitic agreement is not so consistent. In some cases we find proclitic agreement on both verbs, while there are other attestations of the same verbs serving apparently the same function, but with clitics only one the first verb in series. There are no textual or naturally-occurring attestations of serial verb constructions with three or more verbs in which each verb takes individual proclitic marking, though speakers usually accept these as grammatical when presented with them as an alternative. Furthermore, it appears that whenever there is an adjunct nominal + verb predicate in a serial verb construction, then the verb in this series must take proclitic agreement.

The following examples show both of the main possibilities, with the first sentence having proclitics on both verbs, and the second showing a single proclitic serving as the sole pronominal exponent in the clause.

- (11) *Ne líhi náti ne=ne ne=pang-pang.*  
 1PL garden new 1PL=1PL.go 1PL=chop.PL-RED  
 ‘We went and cleared (it) away to make a new garden.’
- (12) *Rító nawò ne=ne [ ]=pang-pang.*  
 tree many 1PL=1PL.go chop.PL-RED  
 ‘We went and chopped up all the trees.’

The differences given in the translations for the two sentences are real reflections of the different structures in Skou: there is a strong sense of biclausality in the first sentence, while the second sentence has a feeling of being a unified, single event. Tests such as examining the scope of negation bear this hypothesis out. The scope of a sentence-final negator is ambiguous in the case of a sentence with two proclitic agreement markers, but has only one, inclusive, interpretation if there is only one proclitic.

- (11)' *Ne líhi náti ne=ne ne=pang-pang ka.*  
 1PL garden new 1PL=1PL.go 1PL=chop.PL-RED NEG  
 ‘We didn’t go and clear (it) away to make a new garden.’  
 ‘We went but didn’t clear (it) away to make a new garden.’
- (12)' *Rító nawò ne=ne [ ]=pang-pang ka.*  
 tree many 1PL=1PL.go chop.PL-RED NEG  
 ‘We didn’t go and chop up all the trees.’  
 \* ‘We went but didn’t chop up all the trees.’

The next example shows three predicates together, in which one proclitic appears at the start of the verbal series, and another appears on the light verb that concludes the serial verb series as part of the NV complex predicate *lolo li* ‘exchange’.

- (13) *Nì táng nì=á re lolo nì=li te=Húele.*  
 1SG bird 1SG=carry go exchange 1SG=do 3PL=Sangke  
 ‘I exchanged a bird with the Sangkes (for something else).’

This example is however a false example of the optionality of proclitics, since the placement of the verb of getting, as well as the presence or absence of proclitic agreement on it, determines the interpretation of the sentence. There is more discussion about the different frames in which serial verb predicates of exchange can appear in 12.5.

### 12.3.2 Disagreement in ‘prefixation’

While proclitic agreement marking is inevitably ‘correct’ for the subject of the clause, the consonantal agreement on non-initial verbs does not always agree with the subject of the sentence in some serial verb constructions involving a shared subject, but can reflect the ‘neutral’ 3SG.F form of the verb. This is most common with verbs with highly syncretic consonantal agreement, such as ‘be’, ‘do’ and ‘go’, and in constructions with these elements.

The following example shows the verb *lóe* ‘get (plural object)’ as part of a serial verb construction. This verb participates in the process of vowel alternation (see 7.2.3) to show agreement, and the expected plural subject form, with prefixation added, is *rí*, attested elsewhere (including in the first clause of this sentence, *te rí rí pa* ‘they get them and’). Instead of this form, in the serial verb construction with *ká* ‘carry’ (irregularly *tú* in the 3PL) the plain, unaltered vowels are heard.



Past/completed: low pitch through tone stripping

- (18) *Pe pe=w-a tà te líhi.*  
 3SG.F 3SG.F=3SG.F-walk running 3SG.F.go garden  
 ‘She walked to the garden.’

tonal replacement applies only to verbs, not to adjunct nominals

- (19) \* *pe pe wa ta<sub>L</sub> te líhi*

Irrealis: reduplication

- (20) *Pe pe=w-a-wa te líhi.*  
 3SG.F 3SG.F=3SG.F-walk-RED 3SG.F.go garden  
 ‘She walked to the garden.’

reduplication on both verbs ungrammatical

- (21) \* *pe pe wa wa te te líhi*

reduplication on only the second verb ungrammatical

- (22) \* *pe pe wa te te líhi*

Intentional: reduplication + auxiliaries

- (23) *Pe pe=w-a-wa te líhi tue.*  
 3SG.F 3SG.F=3SG.F-walk-RED 3SG.F.go garden 3SG.F.do  
 ‘She wants to walk to the garden.’

reduplication must be present only on the first verb, and auxiliaries must follow all verbs in the construction

- (24) a. \* *pe pe wa wa tue te líhi*  
 b. \* *pe pe wa tue te líhi*  
 c. \* *pe pe wa wa tue te te líhi*  
 d. \* *pe pe wa wa te te líhi tue*  
 e. \* *pe pe wa te líhi tue*

Continuous: auxiliaries

- (25) *Pe pe=w-a te líhi e tue.*  
 3SG.F 3SG.F=3SG.F-walk 3SG.F.go garden 3SG.F.be 3SG.F.do  
 ‘She is walking to the garden.’

auxiliaries must follow all verbs in the construction

- (26) a. \* *pe pe wa e tue te líhi*  
 b. \* *pe pe wa e te líhi tue*

Pronominal agreement can be seen as a spreading morphological feature, while tense/aspect is not. Proclitic agreement is a left-edge phenomenon, while auxiliaries are a right-edge one.

## 12.4 Serial verb constructions involving motion

When a series of motion verbs are used together to describe an event, their order in the clause follows a strictly ordered sequence, which is more reminiscent of the sorts of templates that have been proposed in morphology than in syntax. This might simply reflect the fact that serial verbs are the sort of construction that straddles the borders of these two ‘modules’ of grammar.

A relatively simple example of the sorts of serialisation we can encounter is shown in the following sentence. Here the reduplication of the verb *re* ‘go’, and the addition of *li* ‘do’, is found because of aspectual requirements (see 7.9), and does not reflect anything directly to do with the presence of the verb in a serial verb construction. We can see that there are three verb roots involved, all to do with motion. This is perhaps slightly unusual (since most motion is associated, textually at least, with a purpose, or an activity, either at the start or the endpoint of the motion), but is nonetheless frequently attested.

|      | VERB <sub>1</sub>                | VERB <sub>2</sub> | VERB <sub>3</sub> | (VERB <sub>aspectual</sub> ) |
|------|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| (27) | <i>Nì=moe</i>                    | <i>hóe</i>        | <i>re-re</i>      | <i>li.</i>                   |
|      | 1SG=return                       | go.landwards      | go-RED            | do                           |
|      | ‘I want to go back to the land.’ |                   |                   |                              |
|      | (spoken while riding in a canoe) |                   |                   |                              |

In this example, typically representative of this sort of construction, the least specified verb, the general motion verbs specifying only motion towards or motion from the speaker or reference, is the last in the sequence. The first verb might also be thought to be rather generic, in that it does not specify a particular manner or direction of motion, but simply the fact that the motion is headed towards a human residence, in this case the village, situated just behind the beach (see the pictures at the start of the book for aerial views of Skou Mabo, Skou Yambe and Skou Sai).

Other examples will show different combinations of different kinds of verbs, but there are clear emergent patterns in the way in which they combine, reflecting a quasi-templatic structure. Some examples of the sorts of combinations that are frequently encountered are given in the examples below.

|      | VERB <sub>1</sub>      | VERB <sub>2</sub> | VERB <sub>3</sub> |                   |
|------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|      | manner of motion       | direction         | motion            |                   |
| (28) | <i>Pe=w-a tà</i>       | <i>p-e</i>        | <i>te</i>         | <i>Te Bapúbi.</i> |
|      | 3SG.F=walk running     | 3SG.F=eastwards   | 3SG.F.go          | Skou Sai          |
|      | ‘She ran to Skou Sai.’ |                   |                   |                   |

With the ‘preposition-like’ verb *há* ‘from’, we find that this verb appears initially in the sequence of verbs, before the source locative that it governs. Following this unit a ‘regular’ serial verb construction, with centrifugal verbs, manner of motion verbs, directional verbs and motion verbs, can follow, as in (29) (which does not exhibit a manner of motion verb).

|      | VERB <sub>PREP</sub>            | VERB <sub>1</sub>   | VERB <sub>2</sub> | VERB <sub>3</sub> |
|------|---------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|      | source                          | centrifugal         | direction         | motion            |
| (29) | <i>Te=y-á</i>                   | <i>Te Bapúbi me</i> | <i>hi</i>         | <i>toe.</i>       |
|      | 3PL=3PL-from                    | Skou Sai 3PL.return | westwards         | 3.come            |
|      | ‘They came back from Skou Sai.’ |                     |                   |                   |

Other than this one verb, all other appear in a contiguous sequence. Another typical example of this SVC pattern can be seen in (30).

|      | VERB <sub>1</sub>          | VERB <sub>2</sub> |                           |
|------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
|      | manner of motion           | motion            |                           |
| (30) | <i>Pe=w-a</i>              | <i>te</i>         | <i>pá-pè=pe</i>           |
|      | 3SG.F=walk                 | 3SG.F.go          | house-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT |
|      | ‘She walked to her house.’ |                   |                           |

Table 156xx presents a template that shows what elements can occur in each of the four different slots that defines the template describing pure motion serialisations. This template does not attempt to list all the possible manner of motion verbs that can possibly occur in conjunction with other motion verbs, but for the other columns the lists are complete: each of columns 1, 3 and 4 is composed of a small closed class of between one and four verbs that appears in a fixed position in a serial verb construction (or independently, outside a serial verb construction, in the case of column 1 or column 4). They may all appear outside the motion verb serial verb construction as well, or in other kinds of serial verb constructions, but if they occur in this construction they are both limited as to what may occur paradigmatically to replace them, and limited syntagmatically as to what may surround them.

Table 156. Serialisation of motion verbs: a templatic model

| 1. Centrifugal      | 2. Manner of motion    | 3. Direction           | 4. Motion         |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>moe</i> 'return' | <i>ha</i> 'walk'       | <i>o</i> 'seawards'    | <i>re</i> 'go'    |
|                     | <i>ha tà</i> 'run'     | <i>hi</i> 'westwards'  | <i>toe</i> 'come' |
|                     | <i>híng</i> 'crawl'    | <i>hóe</i> 'landwards' |                   |
|                     | <i>rapue</i> 'descend' | <i>e</i> 'eastwards'   |                   |
|                     | <i>(pa) pi</i> 'swim'  |                        |                   |
|                     | <i>ná hú</i> 'paddle'  |                        |                   |
|                     | <i>jíngpa</i> 'fly'    |                        |                   |
|                     | <i>òe</i> 'jump'       |                        |                   |
|                     | etc.                   |                        |                   |

Some example of different combinations of these templatic slots being filled to different degrees can be found in the following sentences:

Centrifugal + manner of motion (1+2)

- (31) *Mó péngue=ing a, táng=ing a te=me jíngpa.*  
 season mango=the bird=the 3PL=return.PL fly  
 'And when it's mango season, then those birds fly back.'

Centrifugal + motion (1+4)

- (32) *Ke=moe ti=ing a taíngbe ka.*  
 3SG.NF=return 3SG.NF.go=the money NEG  
 'Because he's gone back, we don't have any money.'

Manner of motion + direction (2+3)

- (33) *Ke=angku=fue a háháfa ke=k-íng toe.*  
 3SG.NF=child=that slowly 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-crawl 3.come  
 'That boy is slowly crawling over here.'

Manner of motion + motion (2+4)

- (34) *Ke=k-íng ti ùee i li.*  
 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-crawl 3SG.NF.go ladder be do  
 'He's crawling towards the ladder.'



(38) \* *ke ko ti báng nà ke oe i li*

The structure of (37) and (38) can be represented as shown in (39). The location, *báng*, is shown as coordinate to both the purposive clause and the motion clause since it scopes over both of them.

(39) [ [MOTION ] [PURPOSE ] [LOCATION ] ]

This coding strategy has the effect of keeping all the predicates in the serial verb construction contiguous, which seems to be a requirement in Skou. The use of the third person (singular, feminine) verbs *te* ‘she goes’ and *toe* ‘he/she/they come’ as aspectual markers has already been described in 7.9.4.

## 12.5 Serial verb constructions involving transfer

The use of serial verb constructions with transfer events has two functions. When the verb of transfer itself specifies orientation (*leng* ‘give’ specifies that the action is oriented away from the speaker), then the serial verb is used to license the theme argument, since there are no true trivalent verbs in Skou. Examples of this can be seen in (40) - (42). (40) shows that *ké* ‘get’ can be used to express the acquisition of something, but, in (41) we can see that this verb cannot be used on its own to express the disposal of that item.

(40) *Rabáká nì=ké.*  
tobacco 1SG=get  
‘I got (some) tobacco.’

(41) \* *rabáká nì=ké te=bà Húele*  
tobacco 1SG=get 3PL=person Sangke  
‘I gave tobacco to the Sangkes.’

In (42) we can see that *leng* can be used alone, with the only actants expressed being the agent and the recipient(s); this usage is grammatical, but highly marked. With *leng* as the only verb in the clause, a theme cannot be expressed. (44) shows that a theme is not grammatical in a clause containing only *leng* as the predicate.

(42) *Nì=leng te=bà Húele.*  
1SG=give 3PL=person Sangke  
‘I gave ((some/the) things) to the Sangkes.’

(43) \* *rabáká nì=leng te=bà Húele*  
tobacco 1SG=give 3PL=person Sangke  
‘I gave tobacco to the Sangkes.’

Examples (44) and (45) show that *ké* cannot appear with a recipient and no theme, and that *leng* cannot appear with a theme and no recipient.

(44) \* *rabáká nì=leng*  
tobacco 1SG=give  
‘I got (some) tobacco.’

(45) \* *nì=ké te=bà Húele.*  
1SG=get 3PL=person Sangke  
‘I gave ((some/the) things) to the Sangkes.’

When *leng* is serialised with *ké* ‘get’ the theme must be present as a preverbal argument, with the rest of the clause showing the same arrangement as in the non-serial verb clause.

- (46) *Rabáká nì=ké leng te=bà Húele.*  
 tobacco 1SG=get give 3PL=person Sangke  
 'I gave tobacco to the Sangkes.'

It is quite normal (in contrast to the markedness of (42)) to have an indeterminate object in a serialised clause such as (46). Here the recipient may be overt, as in (47), or implied, as in (48), but the theme must be present as a dummy NP with *ya* 'thing'. Omission of the theme altogether, as in (49), is not grammatical, regardless of the presence or absence of an overt recipient.

- (47) *Ya nì=ké leng te=bà Húele.*  
 thing 1SG=get give 3PL=person Sangke  
 'I gave (something) to the Sangkes.'

- (48) *Ya nì=ké leng.*  
 thing 1SG=get give  
 'I gave (something) to (someone).'

- (49) \* *nì=ké leng (te=bà Húele).*  
 1SG=get give 3PL=person Sangke  
 'I gave (something) (to the Sangkes).'

It is possible for speakers to orient the action towards themselves with the same verbs, but with a different arrangement, as in (44). Here *ké* (regularly inflected as *kí* with a 3PL subject) is used to show the person acquiring the goods, the tobacco, after the act of giving.

- (50) *Nì=leng te=Húele=ing a rabáká te=kí.*  
 1SG=give 3PL=Sangke tobacco 3PL=3PL.get  
 'I gave ((the) things) to the Sangkes.'

The other use of serial verbs in transfer events is when there is no inherent orientation specified in the verb of transfer itself. One good example of this can be seen in the following pair of predicates, expressing opposite points of view in a scenario involving commercial exchange, 'buying' and 'selling'. Both use the verb *yatà li* 'transact' as their primary semantic predicator, but used on its own this can only be interpreted in the sense 'buy'. In order for *yatà* to be interpreted as 'sell', the event must be more explicitly decomposed into the acts of collecting the goods for sale, transporting them to the point of sale, and only then transacting the sale. This can be seen in (51).

'sell': carry – go – transact+do

- (51) *Nì rabáká a re yatà nì=li.*  
 1SG tobacco carry go transact 1SG=do  
 'I sold (some) tobacco.'

Some of the options for coding the 'buy' sense of *yatà* are shown in (52) and (53), where we can see that with no extra morphosyntactic marking the verb is interpreted as 'buy'; complete explicitness can be produced by forming a serial verb construction.

'buy': transact+do, transact+do – carry – go

- (52) *Nì rabáká yatà nì=li (Máli).*  
 1SG tobacco transact 1SG=do Mali  
 'I bought some tobacco (from Mali).'

- (53) *Nì rabáká yatà nì=li a re pá.*  
 1SG tobacco transact 1SG=do carry go house  
 ‘I bought some tobacco and took it home.’

Adding *a re* ‘carry’ + ‘go’ (= ‘take’) after *yatà li* can only be interpreted as referring to the removal of the tobacco following its purchase. This indicates the unity of an event that is such a feature of serial verb constructions, since an interpretation of (45) along the lines of ‘I sold some tobacco<sub>i</sub>, and then carried it<sub>j</sub> home.’, with two separate events described, is completely ungrammatical.

Even when constructed with the intended reading ‘buy’, it is preferable to make the predicate more explicit by means of a serial verb construction. While the sentence in (52) is perfectly acceptable, the following is also heard, and is preferred by some speakers:

‘buy’: more explicit encoding

- (54) *Nì rabáká yatà nì=li a loe.*  
 1SG tobacco transact 1SG=do carry come  
 ‘I bought some tobacco.’

These sorts of serial verb constructions have already been introduced in 3.5, and are discussed further in 12.8.

## 12.6 Serial verb constructions giving alternative pragmatic coding

One use of serial verb constructions in Skou is not to add an argument that is not otherwise subcategorised for by the verb of the clause, but rather to shift the pragmatic perspective on the arguments that are already present. This productive function is presented here, but an only slightly different construction can be found described in 13.3, where the lexical passive is discussed.

It is a common strategy in many languages for serial verbs to be used to code otherwise not subcategorised-for arguments: in effect, they function in the same role as prepositions or oblique case markers in other languages. Indeed, Foley and Van Valin (1984: 207) note that “[i]n one sense the functions of serial verbs and prepositions/oblique case markers are similar in that they mark NPs which are *not normally* core arguments of the main verb of the clause.” In Skou this generalisation is often an accurate summary of the function of serial verbs, with serial verb constructions employed in predicates involving motion or transfer in order to allow the clause to bear the recipient/goal argument; these constructions are described in 11.4. Another function of the serial verb construction in Skou is quite different to this, in that rather than allowing a new participant to be coded, the serial verb construction allows for an alternative pragmatic function to be coded on an already present (core) argument. In this respect the serial verbs are more like dynamic applicatives in a language that possesses both applicatives and case markers or prepositions to code a non-subcategorised-for nominal (Donohue 2001a), or more like a voice system (see 13.3).

For instance, to give a concrete example of this sort of alternation, consider the following two clauses, both describing the same state of affairs. In the first clause we can see a completely normal encoding of a bivalent event with a subject, an object, and, because it is the only way to express the required predicate semantics, an adjunct nominal bound to the verb. There is no serial verb construction used, with only one predicate and one verb in the sentence.

- (55) *Nì táng pìng nì=lú.*  
 1SG bird bow 1SG=release  
 ‘I shot a bird.’

If we wish to encode this even with the means of killing marked more peripherally, (56) would be an alternative.

- (56) *Nì tà=pa táng nì=ká.*  
 1SG arrow=INSTR bird 1SG=hit  
 ‘I killed a bird with an arrow.’

Alternatively the same event may be encoded in a sentence with two predicates forming a serial verb construction, as seen in (57).

- (57) *Pìng nì=lú=ko táng nì=ká.*  
 bow 1SG=release=OBV bird 1SG=hit  
 ‘I shot a bird.’  
 (glossing literally, ‘I fired a bow and hit a bird.’)

There are both pragmatic and grammatical differences between these two sentences. In the first sentence the adjunct nominal *pìng* simply specifies the action indicated by the verb, firing a bow as opposed to kicking (expressed as *làng lú* ‘leg release’), or throwing a ball (*hangléúe lú* ‘ball release’). Any prominence or discourse salience assigned to a portion of the clause will fall on the subject or the object, but not on the attributive *pìng*, which is arguably not an argument, but simply part of the predicate (see 14.4).

In the second sentence, by contrast, there are two verbs, with two different objects and a single shared subject. Since *pìng* is no longer coded as part of the predicate, but rather as the object of a verb of its own, it is grammatically eligible to receive more pragmatic prominence. These are exactly the opposite conditions that a pronoun must meet in order to be assigned deictic markers indicating pragmatic salience. See 4.7.1 for a discussion of the different ways in which deictics are restricted in their appearance with pronouns bearing different syntactic functions. The fact that this construction contrasts with the adjunct nominal construction means that *pìng* is interpreted with greater pragmatic prominence than otherwise.

Furthermore, in the second sentence the fact that *pìng* is the head of an NP, and not simply an adjunct nominal, means that it may be marked with any modification that the speaker deems necessary for adequate communication of his or her ideas. Some examples are shown below.

- (58) *Pìng=ing a nì=lú=ko táng nì=ká.*  
 bow=the 1SG=release=OBV bird 1SG=hit  
 ‘I shot the bow at a bird.’
- (59) *Pìng bápá(ne)-mè=me ke=li*  
 bow friend(1SG.DAT)-2SG.GEN=2SG.DAT 3SG.NF=do  
*nì=ne=fue nì=lú=ko táng nì=ká.*  
 1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT=that 1SG=release=OBV bird 1SG=hit  
 ‘I shot the bow that your friend made for me at a bird.’

We can see that prominence can be coded on *pìng* not only through the contrast of the object construction with the adjunct nominal construction, but also through the ability of the noun in an object NP such as that in (59) to take modification that is not allowed for the nominal in an adjunct nominal position.

Another example of the use of these sorts of serial verb constructions to render a slightly different pragmatic effect on the sentence can be seen in the following pair. The first is an unproblematic bivalent clause, with a subject and an object (though there is no independent pronoun for the feminine subject, which is shown solely by means of verbal agreement).

- (61) *Nì pe=w-á.*  
 1SG 3SG.F=3SG.F-hit  
 ‘She hit me.’

The alternative to this coding strategy does not see a change in the syntactic roles of the two arguments in (54), but adds a second predicate encoding not the action but the result of the striking. This alternative, complex, coding strategy puts more pragmatic emphasis on the affected party, and serves a similar function to that played by the passive in languages such as English.

- (62) *Nì pe=w-á=ko mòng nì=wí.*  
 1SG 3SG.F=3SG.F-hit.=OBV affect 1SG=get  
 ‘She hit me and I was hit.’

The nominal *mòng* is not attested except in serial verb constructions such as that seen here or in the passive construction (for more discussion, see 13.3), and so cannot be easily defined. Only the fact that the verb *wé* is regularly attested as the feminine object form of the verb ‘get, obtain’ allows us to hazard a guess at the possible semantics of *mòng wí* (review also the rules for mid-vowel raising in high-tone environments, making the prospect of a shift from *é* to *í* highly plausible – 2.2.3). A similar serial verb construction with a patient subject, using the same verb but without the nominal, is also found, as in (63) and (64). Here the elided P of the first predicate is the affected subject of the *wí* predicate.

- (63) *Nì làng nì=lú=ko ke=wí.*  
 1SG leg 1SG=release=OBV 3SG.NF=get  
 ‘I kicked him (effectively).’

- (64) *Pe ke=láng=ko pe=wí.*  
 3SG.F 3SG.NF=hit.F=OBV 3SG.F=get  
 ‘He hit her (effectively).’

These coding choices are alternatives to a simple monoverbal sentence with the kicked person marked as the object of the first verb. Just as is the case in the sentences with *mòng wí*, such as (62), the pragmatic function of the sentence in (63) is to put more emphasis on the patient, rather than the agent, when compared to a simpler sentence such as (65).

- (65) *Ke làng nì=lú.*  
 3SG.NF leg 1SG=release  
 ‘I kicked him.’

Similarly, and also coincidentally using the verb *lú* ‘release’, the various predicates of throwing allow for more than one coding choice. As can be seen in the translations of the following sentences, the interpretation is different with each different serialisation construction

release + throw.at

- (66) *Wúng nì=lu hí naké.*  
 stone 1SG=release throw.at dog  
 ‘I threw a stone at the dog.’

release & release + throw.at

- (67) *Wúng nì=lú=ko nì=lu hí naké.*  
 stone 1SG=release=OBV 1SG=release throw.at dog  
 ‘I threw a stone at the dog (deliberately).’

release & hit

- (68) *Wúng nì=lú=ko naké nì=ká.*  
 stone 1SG=release=OBV dog 1SG=hit  
 ‘I threw a stone at the dog (and hit it).’

Note that some of the sentences above use the morpheme *=ko*, otherwise found in switch-reference environments. This might be thought of as evidence that we are, in fact, dealing with two separate clauses, and not an instance of a serial verb construction inside a single clause. It is more likely, however, that this is a construction similar to the serialising *na* that has been reported for Tok Pisin (see, for example, Lynch 1994). These complex verbal predicates may not also be combined with an affecting serialisation with *mòng wí*.

- (69) \* *wúng nì lú ko nì lu hí naké mòng ke wí*

Another popular way to translate Indonesian or Papuan Malay passives that include an agentive *by*-phrase is with a topicalised A, as in (70). This probably says more about the function of *by*-phrases in passives from Papuan Malay, or at least the Skou perception of these *by*-phrases, than it does about the structure of Skou.

- (70) *Mè=a, nì mè=b-á.*  
 2SG=PROM 1SG 2SG=2SG-hit  
 ‘You hit me.’  
 (Serui variety of Papuan Malay: ‘Saya dapa pukol deng kau.’ – see (64) below)

The different correspondences between the roles of the arguments in different alternative serial verb constructions are summarised in table 158xx. We can see that the subject is never coded as anything else, and that nothing can be recoded as an adjunct nominal, but that most other possibilities are found. The lack of a construction in which an adjunct nominal is recoded as a subject reflects the fact that these constructions are only found with involuntary state predicates.

Table 158. Grammatical role correspondences

| Monoverbal | Biverbal |     |       |
|------------|----------|-----|-------|
|            | SUBJ     | OBJ | ADJ.N |
| SUBJ       | ( )      |     |       |
| OBJ        |          |     |       |
| ADJ.N      |          |     |       |

Other syntactic oddities in a related structure involving a serial verb construction with the complex predicate *mòng wí* ‘get’ are described in 13.3.

#### 12.6.1 A comparison with an eastern Malay passive

While the variety of Malay spoken in the area where Skou is spoken does not have a passive construction, other north Papuan Malay varieties do. It is attested in Serui Malay, for instance, an area that is well-known to Skou people (see text 20 in appendix 4).

In Serui Malay the passive is formed with the auxiliary *dapa* ‘get, receive, (be) affect(ed)’, and an agentive by-phrase, if present, is marked with the instrumental/comitative ‘*deng* ‘with’. This yields the following alternations:

Serui Malay

- (71) Laki=tu pukol bini tu.  
man=that hit woman that  
‘The man hit the woman.’
- (72) Bini=tu dapa pukol (deng laki tu).  
woman=that get hit with man that  
‘The woman was hit (by the man).’

In the light of this comparison, it is worth noting that when translating Skou into Papuan Malay speakers use an active sentence when translating sentences such as (61), and the passive for sentences such as (62). These Papuan Malay equivalents are shown below.

- (73) De=pukol kita. (loose translation of (61))  
3SG=hit 1SG  
‘She hit me.’
- (74) Sa=dapa pukol. (loose translation of (62))  
1SG=get hit  
‘I was hit.’

An alternative to the passive is a biclausal construction, which mirrors quite closely the structure found in Skou.

- (75) De=pukol trus sa=dapa. (alternative translation of (62))  
3SG=hit and 1SG=get  
‘I was hit by her.’

More discussion of the aspects of the *mòng wí* construction that lead to a passive analysis can be found in 13.3.

## 12.7 *fa* ‘use, employ’

The pleonastic verb *fa* is, apart from *li* ‘do’, the most widely employed light verb in the language. Unlike *li*, *fa* can be used with full NPs, and not just simple Ns or N’s, implying that the formations involving *fa* are formed in the syntax, and not in the lexicon. That said, there are some collocations with *fa* that may alternatively be coded with *li*, provided they are not full phrasal units.

Some examples of sentences with predicates that employ *fa* ‘use’ are shown below. In the first sentence we can see the NP *pílang tè i* ‘their different language’ forming a predicate with the light verb. In the second the plain noun *ong* ‘deception’ is used with *fa*.

- (76) *Te Húng te=ra pílang-tè i fa.*  
Sentani 3PL=also language-3PL.GEN different USE  
‘The Sentanis use a (really) different language.’
- (77) *Ong nì=fa ko tue Te Óeti.*  
deception 1SG=USE be.at 3SG.F.do 3PL=Wutung  
‘I fooled those Wutungs.’

In some cases the construction using *fa* appears to be identical. in meaning at least, to an adjunct nominal + light verb combination (see chapter 14). For instance, one possible

paraphrase of (77) would be the sentence seen in (78), which is identical in all respects to (77) except for the use of the general light verb *li* rather than *fa*.

- (78) *Ong ni=li ko tue Te Óeti.*  
 deception 1SG=do be.at 3SG.F.do 3PL=Wutung  
 ‘I fooled those Wutungs.’

We should not, however, consider *fa* to be simply a more restricted variant of the light verb *li*. In some cases there is no equivalent paraphrase for a particular predicate using a light verb. In (80) we can see that *fa* can appear with ephemeral body parts to indicate their existence, while this is not possible for *li*.

- (79) *Mè kúeta mè=fa.*  
 2SG beard 2SG=USE  
 ‘You’ve got a beard.’
- (80) \* *mè kúeta mè=pi.*  
 2SG beard 2SG=2SG.do

The opposite case is also true, and in greatly increased numbers. There are many more nominals that can combine with *li* than there are those that can combine with *fa* to result in a well-formed predicate, and most of them do not allow the sort of alternation that we observed with *ong li/ong fa*. The following is just one instance, but the examples in chapter 14 give a good idea of the range and productivity of *li*.

- (81) *Mè angku mè=pi.*  
 2SG child 2SG=2SG.do  
 ‘You’ve got a child.’
- (82) \* *mè angku mè=fa.*  
 2SG child 2SG=USE

Other cases, such as the first example in this section, show that *fa* can occur with a complex NP. The adjunct nominal construction only occurs with simple nominals, and so cannot be thought of as the same process. Compare the sentence in (83), which has the complex NP *pílang tè i* ‘their different language’, with the ungrammaticality of a paraphrase with *li* ‘do’, even though there is an adjunct nominal construction using that light verb with the unqualified nominal *pílang* ‘language’, seen in (84).

- (83) \* *te Húng te=ra pílang-tè i (te=)ti*  
 Sentani 3PL=also language-3PL.GEN different 3PL=3PL.do  
 ‘The Sentanis use a (really) different language.’
- (84) *Te Húng te=ra pílang te=ti.*  
 Sentani 3PL=also language 3PL=3PL.do  
 ‘The Sentanis speak a language.’

The verb *fa* is also used, in conjunction with a normal predicate, to form a continuous and exclusive sense, ‘do the predicate, and nothing else’. An example of this use can be seen in (85). Here the verb *ha tà* ‘run’ is combined with *fa* and the aspectual auxiliaries *i li* ‘be+do’, to yield the predicate ‘running about aimlessly/purposelessly’.

- (85) *Ni=ha tà fa i li.*  
 1SG=walk running USE be do  
 ‘I’m just running about (without any particular purpose).’

When the predicate has an adjunct nominal, there are two options for the position of *fa*, either following both the adjunct nominal and the verb, or following just the adjunct nominal. Both these options are shown below:

- (86) *Nì=lú weng fa i li.*  
 1SG=eye sleep USE be do  
 ‘I was just sleeping.’
- (86)' *Nì lú fa weng i li.*
- (87) *Nì=moeng fa moeng-moeng.*  
 1SG=sit USE sit-RED  
 ‘I’m just sitting about.’

It might be thought that this appearance of *fa* is in fact the focal marker =*fa* ‘only’ (see 4.7). If this were true it would be the only case of a focal marker appearing on a predicate, and the only case of an adjunct nominal appearing modified in any way, though the fact that there is variation in the placement of the *fa*, and that adjunct nominal + verb constructions also display variation in the placement of pronominal clitics, makes that a weaker argument than might be hoped for.

Another use of *fa* is to mark an incontrovertible, habitual sense, to indicate events that are the natural order of things and which will always be so. Some examples of this sense are shown in (88) and (90) - (91).

- (88) *Fu ma fa.*  
 rain rain.falls USE  
 ‘Rain falls.’

Compare this with (89), which does not have *fa*, and which lacks the generic meaning.

- (89) *Fu ma.*  
 rain rain.falls  
 ‘It’s raining.’ / ‘It rained.’

Other examples of *fa* being use in clauses to give a generic or habitual reading to the sentence are shown in (90) and (91).

- (90) *Féng lang ro=pa lánng ne=Máwo ke=ká fa.*  
 wind east.wind season=INSTR east.wind 1PL=Mabo 3SG.NF=hit USE  
 ‘When it’s the east wind season the wind blows on us.’
- (91) *Te=Táng te=toe=ko fítong-nè=ne léng te fa.*  
 3PL=bird 3PL=3.come=OBV land-1PL.GEN=1PL.DAT lost 3SG.F.go USE  
 ‘Whenever the Indonesians come we lose (more of) our land.’

This sense of *fa* seems to be the most closely related to the instrumental (and thense adverbial) \**fa* that was posited for pre-Skou (see 5.6).

## 12.8 Transfer collocations with serial verb constructions

The most common collocational patterns found with serial verb constructions involve movement and transfer. We have already seen that most verbs describing a manner of motion do not allow for a goal, and must serialise with a verb specifying a particular direction of motion, or a generic motion verb, in order to appear in the same clause as a goal oblique.

Similarly, most predicates indicating transaction are expressed with serial verb construction, usually, but not always, involving a verb of motion.

An example of this can be seen in (92). Here the encoding of what is translated into English as ‘take’ is decomposed in Skou into the lexical units *ké* ‘get’, *a* ‘carry’, and *re* ‘go’:

|      |                                               |              |             |           |              |
|------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------|
|      |                                               | TAKE         | CARRY       | GO        |              |
| (92) | <i>Wá</i>                                     | <i>pe=ké</i> | <i>p-a</i>  | <i>te</i> | <i>líhi.</i> |
|      | carrying.basket                               | 3SG.F=get    | 3SG.F-carry | 3SG.F.go  | garden       |
|      | ‘She took the carrying basket to the garden.’ |              |             |           |              |

The other very common area for serial verb collocations involves motion verbs, particularly combinations that see a directional verb combining with a manner-of-motion verb, or a motion verb with a transfer verb, or variations on these themes. These have already been discussed in 12.4, and one example of each will suffice to show the kind of serialisation.

|      |                             |                |             |
|------|-----------------------------|----------------|-------------|
|      |                             | DIRECTION      | MOTION      |
| (93) | <i>Jepa</i> [ŋ]             | <i>hoe</i>     | <i>toe,</i> |
|      | Japan                       | come.landwards | 3.come      |
|      | ‘So the Japanese came, ...’ |                |             |

|      |                                               |                 |           |               |
|------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|---------------|
|      | GET                                           |                 |           |               |
| (94) | <i>Te=r-í=ko</i>                              | <i>tang=ing</i> | <i>pì</i> | <i>ung=pa</i> |
|      | 3PL=3PL-get.PL=OBV                            | canoe=DEIC      | full      | now=INSTR     |
|      | ‘They get them in and fill up the canoe, ...’ |                 |           |               |

|  |                                               |             |                |            |                 |
|--|-----------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|------------|-----------------|
|  | CARRY                                         | CENTRIFUGAL | DIRECTION      | MOTION     |                 |
|  | <i>te=r-e-tu</i>                              | <i>me</i>   | <i>hoe</i>     | <i>toe</i> | <i>báng=pa,</i> |
|  | 3PL=3PL-carry.PL                              | 3PL.return  | come.landwards | 3.come     | beach=INSTR     |
|  | ‘they carry them back to the beach, and, ...’ |             |                |            |                 |

In (94) the small clause *tang ing pì* shows the result of the action *te rí*, referring to placing caught fish in the boat: the caught them such that the canoe was filled.

## 12.9 Summary: the syntax of serial verb constructions

In this chapter we have seen that there are many instantiation of what might be called ‘serial verb constructions’ in Skou. There are, however, very few morphosyntactic commonalities between these different uses, making it appear that the notion ‘serial verb construction’ is simply an epiphenomenon: while there are several types of multi-verb predicates, there does not seem to be anything in common between them in terms of morphosyntactic definitions, certainly nothing that can be used to exclude other constructions which do not appear to warrant being called serial verb constructions.

For instance, the applicative *-na* is treated here as being an instance of morphological valency increase, and is discussed as such in the next chapter. An alternative analysis would might consider the *na* to be an abstract verb that is never realised independently, but only appears bound to another verb. This would then treat the applicative construction as an instance of serialisation as well. This line of argumentation has not been pursued here, since there is no evidence that *-na* has any verbal characteristics, and there are no known verbs that begin with an alveolar nasal.

## 13 Valency changing processes

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As with many languages, there are a variety of morphosyntactic means of indicating that a verb is being used with more, or less, than the number of arguments that it subcategorises for in its lexical entry. There are no morphological devices for lowering the number of core arguments of a verb (passives or antipassives, reflexives or reciprocals), as is common in languages of New Guinea, but there are a number of ways of accomplishing these goals with periphrastic constructions or multi-verb predicates. A putative passive uses a complex periphrastic construction with serial verbs; the reflexive construction maximally uses *nòe* ‘body’ as a marker of reflexivity, though the only indication that the valency is other than canonically bivalent is that possessive marking on a subject-possessed body (or body part) may be omitted. The reciprocal construction too appears to be a subset of a normal construction of nominal coordination, but there are some small morphosyntactic possibilities that allow us to think of this as representing a separate morphosyntactic category of its own.

Periphrastic constructions are also used to indicate causation for most verbs, a valency-increasing device, but applicatives have their own dedicated suffix, and so are the only valency-changing process that involves bound morphology. Partly this is definitional: an applicative must involve morphology on the verb, otherwise it is termed a serial verb construction (which is also a possibility that is realised in Skou, and discussed more in 12.4). Nonetheless, the applicative is interesting for genuinely having bound morphological instantiation (reflecting a proto-Skou morpheme \**na*, with approximately the same meaning: applicative/dative), where the other valency changing devices do not.

These different constructions, while structurally quite diverse, are unified in the fact that they act as (clause-level) valency changing devices, and so are all treated together in this chapter.

### 13.1 Causatives

There are no regular and completely productive morphological causative morphemes in Skou, a pattern that is typical of Papuan languages in general. In New Guinea the typical pattern found in non-Austronesian languages is for a range of semantically explicit resultative constructions to be employed. (There is a more general causative’ strategy that uses the general manipulation verb *ké* ‘get’ and a sentential complement. This is discussed in 15.5.3.) The two most productive ways of forming monoclausal causatives are both analytical, using one of the verbs *li* ‘say, ‘do’ and *leng* “ ‘give’ ”, and having the base predicate appear following the verb, in the position used to encode obliques. Examples of each can be seen in (1) and (2), which show causative forms of base predicates which are monovalent and bivalent, respectively; (1)’ and (2)’ show the base predicate on which the causatives are built.

- (1) *Pe nì=li pe=ti-ti.*  
 3SG.F 1SG=do 3SG.F=3SG.F.go-3SG.F.go  
 ‘I sent her.’  
 (that is, ‘I made her go.’)
- (1)' *Pe pe=ti.*  
 3SG.F 3SG.F=3SG.F.go  
 ‘She went.’
- (2) *Pe (ya) nì nì=leng pe=p-ang.*  
 3SG.F thing 1SG 1SG=give 3SG.F=3SG.F-eat  
 ‘I fed her.’  
 (that is, ‘I made her eat.’)
- (2)' *Pe ya pe=p-ang.*  
 3SG.F thing 3SG.F=3SG.F-eat  
 ‘She ate (something).’

We shall examine these two strategies, and other, more lexicalised, methods used to encode causation, in the following sections, starting with the most productive causatives formed with *li* ‘do’, and then looking at other analytical causatives formed with *leng* ‘give’. Following this a short account of some of the lexicalised causative pairings will be discussed.

### 13.1.1 Bicausal causativisation with *li* ‘do’

In the absence of such a lexically suppletive form that marks the bivalent causation of a monovalent state, causation is most commonly expressed bicausally, with the general verb *li* ‘do’ as the causative verb. Other. The following example shown that the simple stative predicate *fu* ‘be afraid’ can be used either monovalently or bivalently, with the subject of the verb being in both cases the experiencer of the state.

Monovalent predicate, only experiencer S

- (3) *Nì=fu i li.*  
 1SG=afraid be do  
 ‘I’m afraid.’

Bivalent predicate, experiencer A and effector P:

- (4) *Nì móenðeng nì=fu i li.*  
 1SG crocodile 1SG=afraid be do  
 ‘I’m afraid of crocodiles.’

An alternative, causative reading, ‘scare’ rather than ‘fear’, in which the experiencer is the sentence’s notional object, and the effector of the fear is the subject, can be expressed with the addition of the causative *li* ‘do’, and a marker of switch reference (see 19.5). This is shown in (5), with (6) added to show the different domains of agreement. Note that with the feminine noun *móenðeng* ‘crocodile’ as subject the verb must display the feminine form of *li*, *tue*. Clearly the *li* in (4) cannot be agreeing with the crocodile, but can only represent aspectual marking for the predicate *fu* ‘afraid’.

Causative, A added

- (5) *Móenðeng pe=tue=ko nì=fu i li.*  
 crocodile 3SG.F=3SG.F.do=OBV 1SG=afraid be do  
 ‘The crocodile scared me.’



Table 160. Lexical valency increase strategies

|                |          | INTR                  | (+A)                   | (+P)                |
|----------------|----------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>re</i>      | ‘go’     | go                    | do go                  |                     |
| <i>ráue há</i> | ‘laugh’  | laughter do           |                        | laughter hit        |
| <i>fu</i>      | ‘afraid’ | afraid <sub>ADJ</sub> | do afraid <sub>V</sub> | afraid <sub>V</sub> |

The relevance of these N+V predicates in a discussion of causation is that there is one class of verbs which show an absolute restriction from appearing in a causative construction formed with *li* ‘do’, and are presented in clearly biclausal sentences with switch reference between the cause and the effect, such as the following.

- (9999) *Ang ne=ti-ti=ko móe bing.*  
 fish.poison 1PL=1PL.do-RED=OBV fish PL.die  
 ‘We wring out the fish-poison roots, and the fish die.’

Here the complex predicate *ang li* ‘do fish poison = poison fish’ cannot be causativised with a *li* causative, since this lexical verb is already present in the simple non-causative predicate, and there is a constraint (an operation of the obligatory contour principle, forbidding adjacent like entities) that prevents identical verbs following each other. This means that (11) is ungrammatical.

- (11) \* *ang ne=ti-ti(=ko) ke=li=ko móe bing*  
 fish.poison 1PL=1PL.do-RED=OBV 3SG.NF=do=OBV fish PL.die  
 ‘He made us wring out the fish-poison roots to kill the fish.’ ~  
 ‘He made us wring out the fish-poison roots killing the fish.’

In order to causativise the clause in (10), we must use a separate clausal construction with a more semantically explicit verb, as in (12). In this sentence the verb *lóeng* ‘say, tell’ is a separate clause that is linked by switch reference morphology to the base predicate.

- (12) *Ne te=r-íng=ko ang ne=ti-ti*  
 1PL 3PL=3PL.say.PL=OBV fish.poison 1PL=1PL.do-RED  
 (=ko móe bing).  
 =OBV fish PL.die  
 ‘They told us to wring out the fish-poison roots (to kill the fish).’

Generally the *li* causative strategy cannot be used with lexically bivalent predicates. A construction such as (13) is thus ungrammatical, as mentioned above, and so are (14) and (15). Replacing *te ti ko* with *te ríng ko* (as in (12)) in these examples would make grammatical sentences.

- (13) \* *ne te=ti=ko ang ne=ti-ti*  
 1PL 3PL=3PL.do=OBV fish.poison 1PL=1PL.do-RED  
 ‘They told us to wring out the fish-poison roots.’
- (14) \* *ne te=ti=ko ang ne=yú-yú*  
 1PL 3PL=3PL.do=OBV fish.poison 1PL=search.for-RED  
 ‘They told us to look for the fish-poison roots.’
- (15) \* *ne te=ti=ko naké ne=jí-jí*  
 1PL 3PL=3PL.do=OBV dog 1PL=PL.hit-RED  
 ‘They told us to hit the dogs.’

Another example of the ungrammaticality of *li* as a causative with a bivalent predicate can be seen in the strongly rejected (16), in which the base predicate uses the verb *li* as well.

- (16) \* *ang ne=ti-ti(=ko) ne=ti=ko móe (te=)bìng*  
 fish.poison 1PL=1PL.do-RED=OBV 1PL=1PL.do=OBV fish 3PL=PL.die  
 ‘We wring out the fish-poison roots, killing the fish.’

In summary, the *li* causative can be used with monovalent stems reasonably productively, but is constrained against appearing with a bivalent verb root. For non-lexical causative constructions with bivalent roots an alternative construction must be used, involving the verb root *leng*.

### 13.1.2 Causatives formed with (*ké*) *leng* ‘give’

Causatives formed with ‘give’ are not as common as are the causatives formed with ‘do’ which we have already examined, both in terms of the predicates that are found in this construction and in terms of sampled frequencies in texts and in conversation. Unlike *li* causatives, which appear to be productive, *leng* causative constructions show all signs of being lexicalised collocations. For these reasons we can more easily define a set of semantic characteristics of the verbs that may appear with this causativising construction than for those that appear with *li* ‘do’. One example has already been seen in (2), and further examples will be presented in the following sections.

Firstly, though, the verb ‘give’ which is used as a causative marker is not the entire verbal collocation that is used in translation equivalents of ‘give’ in English (or *kasi* in Papuan Malay). Recall from 5.4.4 and 7.8 that the predicate ‘give’ is formed with a complex ‘get’ + ‘give’ construction, *ké leng*, as in the following example, contrasted with the causative construction in (17).

- (17) *Te=Táng hòe-tè pe=wé r-ung nì.*  
 3PL=bird sago-3PL.GEN 3SG.F=get.F 3SG.F-give 1SG  
 ‘She gave me some rice.’
- (18) *Te=Táng hòe-tè pe=r-ung nì=k-ang.*  
 3PL=bird sago-3PL.GEN 3SG.F=3SG.F-F.give 1SG=1SG-eat  
 ‘She fed me some rice.’

Note the ungrammaticality of using the simple verb *leng* ‘give’ in a main clause without *ké* ‘get’ (or one of the other verbs of getting), and conversely the ungrammaticality of using the complex ‘get’ + ‘give’ collocation in a causative construction.

- (19) \* *te Táng hòe tè pe rung nì*  
 (20) \* *te Táng hòe tè pe wé rung nì kang*

That this use of *leng* has grammaticised to become a general causative marker, and not just a causative with predicates associated with the transfer of some property, can be deduced from the existence of sentences such as (21) (compare with (12) in 13.1.1). In (21) there can be no question of *leng* (realised here as *ring*, due to regular agreement with the 3PL subject; see 7.2)

being used in its lexical sense as ‘give’, since only in the most abstract sense is there any transfer involved.<sup>62</sup>

- (21) *Ne te=r-ing=ko ang ne=ti-ti.*  
 1PL 3PL=3PL-give.PL=OBV fish.poison 1PL=1PL.do-RED  
 ‘They made us wring out the fish-poison roots.’

Note the reduplication of *ne ti* ‘we do’ in the second half of the sentence. Without reduplication the sentence loses much of its acceptability, even with punctual predicates.

- (22) ?# *Ne te=r-ing=ko ang ne=ti.*  
 1PL 3PL=3PL-give.PL=OBV fish.poison 1PL=1PL.do  
 ‘They made us wring out the fish-poison roots.’
- (23) ?# *Ni te=r-ing=ko wúng nì=wí ta fí te.*  
 1SG 3PL=3PL-give.PL=OBV stone 1SG=discard 3SG.F.go  
 ‘They made me throw away the stone.’

Causatives formed with ‘give’ are not uncommon in many languages of Southeast Asia and New Guinea. In the next section we will take a short excursus to examine some prominent uses of ‘give’ as a causative marker in various languages.

### 13.1.2.1 A background survey of ‘give’ as a causativiser

Many languages form productive causatives from the verb that is also the translation equivalent of ‘give’. This is commonly found in languages of Southeast Asia, and in languages such as Hokkien, a (north-)east Asian language that has historically been influential as a trade language in the region (see 1.8.7 for linguistic evidence in Skou), as in the following examples.

#### Papuan Malay

- (24) *De su=kas-jalan sa-pu tete.*  
 3SG PF=‘give’-walk 1SG-POSS grandfather  
 ‘He sent my grandfather away.’  
 (compare with *Sapu tete su jalan* ‘My grandfather has (already) gone.’)
- (25) *De su=kas doi sama tete.*  
 3SG PF=give money PREP grandfather  
 ‘He gave (some) money to grandfather.’

#### Hokkien

- (26) *Wa ho i zi png.*  
 1SG CAUS 3SG cook rice  
 ‘I had him cook rice’  
 (compare with *Wa zi png ho i* ‘I cooked rice for him.’)
- (27) *Wa ho i png.*  
 1SG CAUS 3SG rice  
 ‘I gave him (some) rice’

<sup>62</sup> The normal ‘give’ expression, *ké leng* ‘get-give’, cannot be used with abstract ‘transfer’, such as (i). This further implies that the causative use of *leng* in 13.1.2 is an instance of grammaticalisation away from the ‘give’ sense, and not simply an extension of its range.

(i) \**húhú pe=w-é r-ung nì*  
 story 3SG.F=3SG.F-get 3SG.F-F.give 1SG  
 ‘She gave me a story.’

This common typological pattern is also found in languages of New Guinea, such as Alamlak (Bruce 1984: xx) and Papuan Malay (Donohue to appear).

Alamlak

- (28) *Hɪnu-t doh-t hay-ni-mě-t-t.*  
 high.water-3SG.F canoe-3SG.F CAUS-go-R.PST-3SG.F-3SG.F  
 ‘The high water took (away) my canoe.’  
 (compare with *ni* ‘go.’)
- (29) *Na yěn-r hěhrampan hay-mě-an-r*  
 1SG child-3SG.M medicine give-R.PST-1SG-3SG.M  
 ‘I gave a child medicine.’

Papuan Malay

- (30) *De=su=kas=tidor sa=pu=ana.*  
 3SG=PERF=CAUS=sleep 1SG=POSS=child  
 ‘She’s already put my child to sleep.’  
 (compare with *Sa pu ana su tidor* ‘My child has gone to sleep.’)
- (31) *De=su=kas kladi sama de=pu=ana.*  
 3SG=PERF=give taro DAT 3SG=POSS=child  
 ‘She’s given taro to her child.’

Clearly the use of ‘give’ as a means of increasing the valency of a clause, and so marking it as expressing causation (arguably the least marked form of valency increase), is quite widespread. With this quick survey in mind, we can return to the use of *leng* in Skou as a causativiser.

### 13.1.2.2 The analysis of ‘give’ as a causativiser in Skou

While there is an analogy to this use of ‘give’ (by which I refer to the Skou verb *leng*) as a causative verb in Skou, the analysis of the verb in sentences like this is complicated. Although glossed as, and used as the translation equivalent of ‘give’, this verb does not normally occur on its own with three arguments (see 5.4.4). This can be seen in sentence (32), which is not acceptable, even though all the arguments appear in the correct positions.

- (32) \**móe nì=leng mè.*  
 fish 1SG=give 2SG  
 ‘I gave you a fish.’

Rather, a serial construction is used, with *ké* ‘get’ (or the appropriate feminine or plural form of the verb, *wé* or *lóe*), introducing the theme argument, and *leng* adding a recipient argument, as can be seen in (33). Note that *ké* ‘get’ can be used without *leng*, although it does not then have the transferral sense that is found with the combination *ké leng*, and it can only take two arguments, as in (34).

- (33) *Móe nì=ké leng mè.*  
 fish 1SG=get give 2SG  
 ‘I gave you a fish.’
- (34) *Táng nì=ké.*  
 bird 1SG=get  
 ‘I got (caught) a bird.’

These data imply that *ké leng* is a complex predicate made up of two verbs, and that *ké* and *leng* should be analysed as having the following subcategorisation frames:

(35) *ké*: ‘get agent , theme ’

(36) *leng*: ‘“give” agent , OBL: recipient ’

That is, the verb *leng* subcategorises for a subject and an obliquely-coded (that is, positionally postverbal) argument, while *ké* subcategorises for two preverbal arguments. There is no position in the subcategorisation frame for *leng* for the item transferred, the theme, in the construction. Together, these predicates combine to yield a three-place predicate with both theme and recipient:

(37) ‘give to: *ké*: get agent, theme *leng*: “give” agent , recipient ’

From this discussion we can identify two important differences in the verb *leng* in Skou and translations of ‘give’ in other languages, differences that are relevant to the grammaticalisation of the verb to a function as a causativiser:

- *leng* in Skou is a verb that subcategorises for two arguments, not three;
- *leng* in Skou does not serve the predicative function of ‘give’ on its own, but must appear with a version of *ké* ‘get’ in order to code the theme;
- the use of *leng* as a causative follows from the fact that it subcategorises for a recipient object; this is relevant because:
  - a recipient is almost invariably human,
  - humans are potentially agentive,
  - agency is a key factor required for a participant to be the causee of a bivalent predicate;

this means that the lexical item has the potential to be reanalysed as a predicate that takes an agentive causee as its object.

A similar reanalysis has probably occurred with the other verb that is popularly used with causative constructions, *lóeng* ‘say’, but since this is basically a speech-act predicate it is an even shorter grammaticalisation pathway from the lexical meaning to the grammatical causative meaning.

### 13.1.3 Causation with *lóeng* ‘say’

In some cases *lóeng*, which serves as a complement-taking verb meaning ‘say, order, tell, command’, appears in a causative construction. Only indirect causation can be expressed by this infrequent manner.<sup>63</sup> Thus in (38) we have a grammatical use of *lóeng* as a causativiser, since

<sup>63</sup> Note the lack of agreement proclitics in (99)a. This is not a feature of the ‘causative construction’ as such, but might be related to the non-human nature of God, but if so this would imply that God as conceptualised by the Skou is inanimate – see 6.3.3. Alternatively the proclitic is not required because God is conceptualised as ‘supra-animate’. Since clitics are omitted in other instances involving *Áì*, *Tata* ‘god’ and *Tata (k)u-ké* ‘Jesus’, the idea that this omission is regular is substantiated, but the hypothesis of ‘supra-animacy’ versus inanimacy cannot be sustained beyond this small data set of two items, begging the question of what counts as regularity.

there is no direct (physical or otherwise) manipulation of the causee. In (39) the semantics of the predicates in the two clauses means that there is necessarily direct physical manipulation, and the sentence is ungrammatical.

- (38) *Áì lóeng=ko ke=toe, ke=a=toe=pa,*  
 father say=OBV 3SG.NF=3.come 3SG.NF=FOC=3.come=INSTR  
 ‘God arranged for him to come, and he came, and then ...’  
 Not necessarily ‘God told him to come ...’
- (39) \* *táng nì=lóeng=ko pe=pí te*  
 bird 1SG=say=OBV 3SG.F=3SG.F.fall 3SG.F.go  
 ‘I dropped the bird’  
 (conceivably possible with an indirect interpretation: ‘I did something that caused the bird to fall.’)

This type of only loosely grammaticalised causative is common in languages of New Guinea (Foley 1986: xxxx), and it is in fact contentious as to whether this is a causative construction or simply a complement formed with the main verb *lóeng* ‘say, command, tell’. Note the second translation given for (38): an identical string of morphemes will convey a complement-taking verb of speaking (see 15.xx.xx). The ungrammaticality of causatives formed with *lóeng* appearing with nonsentient subjects (or, indeed, subjects not gifted with language) is evidence that there is only a limited degree of grammaticalisation involved with this predicate, at best, since the expected lexical semantics of the ‘say’ predicate still dictate the grammaticality of the sentence. Compare the grammatical (40), in which the causee is human and capable of comprehending language, with (41) which is completely ungrammatical.

- (40) *Ke=angku nì=lóeng=ko ke=i.*  
 3SG.NF=child 1SG=say=OBV 3SG.NF=lie.down  
 ‘I made the boy lie down.’  
 ~ ‘I told the boy to lie down.’
- (41) \* *Nì nì=lóeng=ko ke=i.*  
 sago.stirring.spoon 1SG=say=OBV 3SG.NF=lie.down  
 ‘I put the spoon down.’

The fact that speakers offer different, rival translations of the same Skou sentence does suggest that at least some degree of semantic extension has applied to *lóeng* in this function. The fact that the collocational possibilities involving *lóeng* as a causativiser are exactly those that we would expect from the pre-existing sense of *lóeng* as a speech act verb suggests that the level of syntactic divergence is even less than the degree of semantic divergence we observe.

#### 13.1.4 Causatives via serial verb constructions

By far the most frequently encountered means of expressing a causative event is by means of a serial verb construction. Where a semantically more explicit verb is available, it is very marked to use one of the generic causative marking strategies presented earlier in this chapter. Thus the expression in (42), using a very explicit verb, is preferred. The default verb for acts of violent or dramatic change of state is *ká* ‘hit’, and this may be used if the speaker does not know the cause of death (or, alternatively, wishes to be inexact about the cause – this would be a very marked option, given Skou culture). Coding with the completely generic verb *li* ‘do’ is not acceptable, as in (44).

- (42) *Ke=balèng=ing a pìng te=r-ú=ko ke=wung.*  
 3SG.NF=man=the bow 3PL=3PL-release=OBV 3SG.NF=die  
 ‘They shot the man dead.’
- (43) *Ke=balèng=ing a te=jí=ko ke=wung.*  
 3SG.NF=man=the 3PL=PL.hit=OBV 3SG.NF=die  
 ‘They killed the man.’
- (44) # *Te=ti=ko ke=balèng=ing a ke=wung.*  
 3PL=3PL.do=OBV 3SG.NF=man=the 3SG.NF=die  
 ‘They killed the man.’

Further discussion on this more generic means of indicating causation using a light verb such as *li* ‘do’ has already been presented. It should be noted that the *lóeng* causativiser from the previous section will also most likely not be used unless there is really an element, at least potentially, of speech-act command involved.<sup>64</sup>

### 13.2 Applicatives

The applicative construction in Skou is restricted to appearing with monovalent verbs, with which it is used to indicate that a goal is being treated as the object of the clause. The applicative construction is signalled by the suffixal morpheme *-na*, which appears on the verb.<sup>65</sup> Simple examples of sentences with and without the applicative are shown in (45) and (46).

- (45) *Nì=ha Te Jáwung.*  
 1SG=walk Nyao  
 ‘I walked from Nyao.’ / ‘I walked (around) in and about Nyao.’
- (46) *Nì=ha-na Te Jáwung.*  
 1SG=walk-APPL Nyao  
 ‘I walked to Nyao.’  
 \* ‘I walked around in and about Nyao.’

The following ungrammatical sentences show attempts to build an applicative construction based on a bivalent verb (or trivalent predicate) which subcategorises for a goal. Although this goal is coded postverbally, in the position where obliques (other than locations) are found, it is functionally an object (see 13.2.1). Of the following sentences, grammatical utterances result if the applicative morpheme is omitted, as seen in (47) and (49). As they appear in (48) and (50), with the applicative morpheme introducing the goal/object, they are ungrammatical.

- (47) *Pe tángbe=ing a pe=w-é r-ung*  
 3SG.F money=the 3SG.F=3SG.F-get 3SG.F-give  
*yu-pe-pè=pe.*  
 brother-3SG.F.DAT-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘She gave the money to her brother.’

<sup>64</sup> And since suicide, or commanded suicide, is not part of the Skou cultural milieu, this is unlikely to be judged to be felicitous.

<sup>65</sup> This morpheme shows cognates in many languages of the are, such as Barupu (Macro-Skou) *-na*, possibly related to I’saka *-na* 1SG.DAT (see 1.4). A very similar morpheme is also found in Sissano (Austronesian, Oceanic) *-na*. Interestingly, none of the more closely related Skou family languages (from figure 1, section 1.4) show any reflexes of this morpheme, and it is hard to find outside the Piore river branch of the family.

- (48) \* *pe táingbe=ing a pe=w-é r-ung-na*  
 3SG.F money=the 3SG.F=3SG.F-get 3SG.F-give-APPL  
*yu-pe-pè=pe*  
 brother-3SG.F.DAT-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘She gave the money to her brother.’
- (49) *Pe=fí ke.*  
 3SG.F=meet 3SG.NF  
 ‘She bumped into him.’
- (50) \* *pe=fí-na ke*  
 3SG.F=meet-APPL 3SG.NF  
 ‘She bumped into him.’

These are verbs with a subject and an object, but which exceptionally encode the object postverbally, after the manner of obliques, and it is the fact that the postverbal argument is an object that prohibits it from appearing in an applicative construction. Animate, and even human obliques may participate in applicative constructions, as can be seen in (51) and (52).

- (51) *Nì=ha-na te.*  
 1SG=walk-APPL 3PL  
 ‘I walked up to them.’
- (52) *Pe=w-a tà-na áni-pè=pe.*  
 3SG.F=3SG.F=walk running-APPL mother-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT  
 ‘She ran to her mother.’

Note also the following sentence, which also has *ha* ‘walk’ as the main verb, and allows a goal without the use of an applicative. The goal is in this case licensed through the use of a structure involving a serial verb; in the sentence below the verb ‘go’ is what allows the goal to be mentioned, since the verb *ha* on its own only allows a location or source as oblique participants. (The verb in this sentence appears in the ‘unmarked’ third person form, but the 1SG is also possible: *Nì ha re Te Jáwung.*)

- (53) *Nì=ha te Te Jáwung.*  
 1SG=walk 3SG.F.go Nyao  
 ‘I walked up to them.’

Rather than appearing with general motion verbs, the applicative suffix is more commonly found with an explicit manner-of-motion verb, such as *ha tà* ‘run’, as in (54).

- (54) *Nì=ha tà-na báng.*  
 1SG=walk running-APPL beach  
 ‘I ran to the beach.’
- (55) #/? *Nì=re-na báng.*  
 1SG=go-APPL beach  
 ‘I went to the beach.’

In cases such as these the paradigmatic contrast with a non-applicative structure is less clear, since the manner of motion verbs (apart from *ha* ‘walk’) do not allow for a goal oblique, but require serialisation with a separate motion verb to code this element. Sentences illustrating the ungrammaticality of a manner-of-motion verb appearing with an oblique goal, and the serialisation strategy, are shown in the next pair of sentences, to be compared with (54), which shows an applicative attached to the verbal element.

- (56) *Nì=ha tà* *báng.*  
 1SG=walk running beach  
 \* ‘I ran to the beach.’  
 (grammatical with the reading ‘I ran about on the beach.’ – see below for a discussion of the significance of this grammatical reading, and the ways in which they are syntactically differentiated.)
- (57) *Nì=ha tà* *te* *báng.*  
 1SG=walk running 3SG.F.go beach  
 ‘I ran to the beach.’

In (56) and (57) the contrast is between a verb + serial motion verb and a bare verb, rather than being between a bare verb and an applicative-suffixed verb; functionally, the serial verb construction allows the same options that the applicative does, the overt mention of the goal in the clause. There is a contrast between the verb + serial motion verb and the verb + applicative suffix, as we shall see later, even though superficially they present the same morphosyntactic profile, a bare NP goal being permitted to appear following the verb(s) at the end of the clause. Certain grammatical tests, however, show that they are not identical.

Note that from the above sentences we can see that direction of motion verbs such as *re* ‘go’ do not require an applicative to express a goal. We might have expected there the applicative to be obligatory in these cases as well, on the basis of sentences involving manner-of-motion predicates with no applicative, in which the manner of motion verb must appear with a directional verb if a goal is to be encoded. Manner-of-motion verbs are not required in clauses with applicatives, though such a combination is possible, as seen in the examples below.<sup>66</sup>

- (58) *Nì=ha tà-na* *o* *báng.*  
 1SG=walk running-APPL seawards beach  
 ‘I ran to the beach.’
- (59) *Nì=ha tà-na* *o* *re báng.*  
 1SG=walk running-APPL seawards go beach  
 ‘I ran to the beach.’

A positional variation of this is allowed only for applicative verbs, and not for non-applicative verbs, and that involves the placement of the motion verb. In the non-applied verb the sequence must be manner verb – motion verb – goal, as seen in (57), and (61) below, but with the applicative it is possible (but never obligatory) for the motion verb to appear following the goal as well, as in (60). This is not possible for a non-applied verb, as is shown by the ungrammaticality of (62).

- (60) *Ná* *nì=hú=na* *Pa ílong re.*  
 paddle 1SG=paddle=APPL Tami river go  
 ‘I paddled to the Tami river.’
- (61) *Ná* *nì=hú* *re Pa ílong.*  
 paddle 1SG=paddle go Tami river  
 ‘I paddled to the Tami river.’
- (62) \* *ná nì hú Pa ílong re*

<sup>66</sup> Similar constraints on the appearance of serial verb constructions with verbs that take the instrumental applicative marker are reported for Meyah (Gravelle 2001).

Similarly, the requirement that manner of motion verbs must appear with an orientation verb ('come', 'go' or a directional verb) is also relaxed when there is an obvious orientation implicit in the applicative.

- (63) *Nì=ha tà-na*                      *báng i li.*  
 1SG=walk.running-APPL beach be do  
 'I'm running to the beach.'

The applicative can only be used to code a goal oblique. In (45) and (46) we saw that the inherent source associated with *ha* 'walk' is replaced by a goal object when the verb is suffixed with the applicative. Similarly, when the oblique participant is a location and not a goal, the applicative cannot be used. This can be seen in sentences in which the oblique appears with an auxiliary complex using 'be' and 'do' to encoding a continuous tense/aspect (7.9). The post-auxiliary position can use used to code locations but not goals (chapter 11). In this case the applicative may not appear, since it does not license true adjuncts, only goal obliques.

- (64) *Nì=ha tà*                      *i li báng.*  
 1SG=walk.running be do beach  
 'I'm running around on the beach.'

- (65) \* *nì ha tà na i li báng.*

The examples above show that only a location may be coded following the auxiliaries. When the verb has an applicative suffix (*-na*), the goal cannot be coded in the same position as a location would be, in accordance with general restrictions on the appearance of participants in the clause (see chapter 3, and Donohue 2006).

We have established that there is a distinct applicative construction, and examined in broad detail the kinds of verbs with which it is found. The following section shall describe the status of the goal in the applicative construction, which might be thought to be somewhat ambiguous, given that the position of the goal in the clause does not change, remaining in postverbal position regardless of whether the verb is marked with an applicative morpheme or not.

### 13.2.1 The status of the goal in applicative constructions

Since the typical position for objects of bivalent verbs is preverbal, and the typical position for oblique participants is postverbal, there is usually an easily verifiable distinction between the two different grammatical functions based on their position with respect to the verb. In the case of goals, however, we find that they are postverbal when there is no applicative morpheme on the verb, typical for an oblique participant, and are also postverbal when the verb is found with an applicative morpheme. Clearly, if these goals in applicative constructions are Ps, they are atypical Ps. Since some Ps of bivalent verbs are lexically marked to that they appear in postverbal position, we must allow for the possibility that they are, in fact, the P of a bivalent clause, and so here we shall address the question of the status of the goal in applicative constructions.

We can show that, while the goal of a simple direction verb is an oblique, and not a P, the goal of a verb marked with the applicative is a P. In short, the ability of the goal in a subordinate clause to appear as the object of the main clause in (66)', in which the goal appears as the applicative object of the verb *ha tà na* 'run to', matches the behaviour of recipient objects such as the recipient of *ké leng* 'give'. Although they are coded postverbally, they behave as do preverbal objects for raising purposes. In contrast, there is no possible object-of-main-clause

coding option available for the goal of the non-applicativised verb in (67), which is unambiguously oblique by virtue of being the oblique complement of the verb *re* ‘go’.

- (66) *Ke*      *nì=fue*      *ke=k-a tà-na*      *báng.*  
 3SG.NF    1SG=see    3SG.NF=3SG.NF-walk.running-APPL    beach  
 ‘I saw him running to the beach.’
- (66)' *Báng* *nì=fue*      *ke=k-a tà-na.*  
 beach 1SG=see    3SG.NF=3SG.NF-walk.running-APPL  
 ‘I saw him running to the beach.’
- (67) *Ke*      *nì=fue*      *ke=k-a tà*      *ti*      *báng.*  
 3SG.NF    1SG=see    3SG.NF=3SG.NF-walk.running    3SG.NF.go    beach  
 ‘I saw him running to the beach.’
- (67)' \* *báng nì=fue ke ka tà ti*

Note that the recipient/goal of *ké leng* ‘give’ is an object, not an oblique, despite being postverbal (as shown earlier in 11.5). As an object this (necessarily animate, and usually human) goal behaves differently to the location *báng* in (67), and identically to the goal *báng* in (66). This behaviour, the fact that it may appear as the object of a matrix clause, adds evidence to the assertion that it is a postverbal P, and not a postverbal oblique.

Subject of lower clause appears as object of matrix clause

- (68) *Pe*      *nì=fu*      *rópu*      *pe=w-é*      *r-ung*      *ke.*  
 3SG.NF    1SG=see.F    book    3SG.F=3SG.F-get    3SG.F-give    3SG.NF  
 ‘I saw her giving him the book.’

Recipient object of lower clause appears as object of matrix clause

- (69) *Ke*      *nì=fue*      *rópu*      *pe=w-é*      *r-ung.*  
 3SG.NF    1SG=see    book    3SG.F=3SG.F-get    3SG.F-give  
 ‘I saw him, her giving a book (to).’

Theme object of lower clause appears as object of matrix clause

- (70) *Rópu*      *nì=fue*      *pe=w-é*      *r-ung*      *ke.*  
 3SG.NF    1SG=see    3SG.F=3SG.F-get    3SG.F-give    3SG.NF  
 ‘I saw her giving the book to him.’

More details on the raising construction shown here, and the restrictions on which nominals may participate in the sort of raising seen in (66)' and (67)', can be found in 3.11, where complementation and raisings involved in these constructions are dealt with in more depth.

### 13.2.2 Lexicalised ‘applicatives’

In many cases there is a semi-lexical way to express an applicative relationship. One very productive exemplar of this strategy can be shown with an adjunct nominal construction with an alternation between an monovalent variant with the light verb *li* ‘do’, and a bivalent variant with a base-bivalent verb, such as *ká* ‘hit, affect’, serving as the inflectional head. Note that the ‘applicative’ object appears preverbally, not postverbally (as would be expected from (46) earlier).

## Monovalent

- (71) *Nì ráue nì=li.*  
 1SG laughter 1SG=do  
 ‘I laughed.’  
 (Another possible way to encode this meaning is *Ráue nì=há* ‘I stand (at) laughter.’ / ‘I laugh.’)

## Bivalent

- (72) *Nì ke ráue nì=ká.*  
 1SG 3SG.NF laughter 1SG=hit  
 ‘I laughed at him.’

- (73) \* *nì ke ráue nì li*

- (74) \* *nì ráue nì ká*

The fact that the relationship seen here involves a separate, and productive, verb, and not an instance of the morphological applicative, is not accidental. The applicative *-na* is restricted to appearing on verbs that contain, lexically, a specification for a goal. The light verb *li* ‘do’ has no such specification, and so cannot appear with an applicative.

## Morphological applicative on a monovalent N+V predicate

- (75) \* *Nì ráue nì=li-na ke.*  
 1SG laughter 1SG=do-APPL 3SG.NF  
 ‘I laughed at him.’

While the form in (72) is not what should be considered an applicative construction, since it does not involve an applicative morpheme, it does perform a similar function: a predicate that does not allow for a second argument can not appear with a second argument. The fact that the alternation seen in (71) and (72) is the only way to add this second argument to predicates involving adjunct nominals and light verbs, however, suggests that we should treat the construction in (72) as being part of the same paradigmatic alternation that is otherwise signalled by the applicative suffix.

### 13.3 The passive

It is a general feature of the non-Austronesian languages of Melanesia that they lack voice alternations, either passives or antipassives (Foley 2000). This would at first glance also appear to be true of Skou, but unusually for the New Guinea region Skou has a verb, *wí*, clearly related to, but distinct from, *wé* ‘get (feminine object)’, which functions in many ways like a non-specific passive. Compare the following two sentences:

- OBJ PRED:V  
 (76) *Nì ke=ká.*  
 1SG 3SG.NF=hit  
 ‘He hit me.’
- SUBJ PRED: [N+V]  
 (77) *(Nì) mòng nì-wí.*  
 1SG wound 1SG-get  
 ‘I got hit.’

Just as in English, it is possible to mention the *by*-phrase agent of in the ‘passive’ clause, and in this case the agent is coded as an oblique participant of the verb, appearing in postverbal

position. The following sentence shows that it is possible to overtly code the agentive *by*-phrase in the ‘passive’ version of the clause seen in (76).

|      | SUBJ                      | PRED: [N+V] | OBL:agentive <i>by</i> -phrase |            |
|------|---------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| (78) | (Ni)                      | <i>mòng</i> | <i>nì-wí</i>                   | <i>ke.</i> |
|      | 1SG                       | wound       | 1SG-get                        | 3SG.NF     |
|      | ‘I got a wound from him.’ |             |                                |            |

Peripherally we may not that an alternative interpretation for the postverbal position is as the affected location in an external possession construction, as in the following example:

|      |                         |              |               |
|------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| (79) | <i>Mòng</i>             | <i>nì=wí</i> | <i>táŋge.</i> |
|      | wound                   | 1SG-get      | leg           |
|      | ‘I got hit in the leg.’ |              |               |

The interpretation of the postverbal nominal is not problematic, given the animacy and agentivity levels of body parts. Note that the subject of this ‘passive’ construction is the possessor, not the possessum. In fact, we find that the ‘passive’ cannot appear with *táŋge* as the subject:

|      |                |             |                 |
|------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| (80) | * <i>táŋge</i> | <i>mòng</i> | <i>(ke=)wí.</i> |
|      | leg            | wound       | (3SG.NF=)get    |

This implies that, as is typical for many languages of, say, South-east and East Asia, and is also true of Papuan Malay, the ‘passive’ is more than simply a device predicated on discourse and syntactic motivation, but also contains a significant amount of semantic restructuring as well. Specifically, there is a strong sense of adverse affect built into the semantics of such a predicate, and this in turn stipulates that the subject in the passive predicate must be animate.

### 13.3.1 The status of *mòng wí* as a ‘passive’ construction

I have been using scare quotes around the word ‘passive’ when describing this construction. There are several issues salient in the analysis of the *mòng wí* constructions, and the ones that I shall address here, possibly the more salient, are the following:

- in what sense does the *mòng wí* construction ‘correspond’ to the active *ká* ‘hit’ predicate? Is the correspondence the same as is found in other languages with ‘true passives’?
- how productive does a syntactic process have to be to be called a ‘construction’ – are we justified in discussing a ‘passive construction’, or are we dealing with a lexically unusual verb?
- in what sense is the patient in a *mòng wí* construction the syntactic subject? Could it not be thought of as an object, which exceptionally shows proclitic agreement on the verb?

We shall address the last of these points first, simply because it is the one most subject to empirical testing, and then examine the other two issues.

### 13.3.2 Patient as subject, agent as oblique

There is empirical evidence supporting the idea that the patient in these *mòng wí* constructions is the grammatical subject.<sup>67</sup> We can apply tests for subjecthood, which indicate that the patient is indeed a subject, and that the agent is oblique. The tests that we can refer to were earlier presented in chapter 3, and the ones that shall be demonstrated in the following sections are:

- the restriction of floated quantifiers;
- behaviour in negative sentences;
- behaviour in switch-reference marked clause chains.

The results obtained from examining these different constructions shall be presented one by one in the following sections.

#### 13.3.2.1 Floated quantifiers and *mòng wí*

Floated quantifiers are restricted to the P of a bivalent clause, or the single core argument, the S, of a monovalent one (see 16.3 for discussion). In a construction with *mòng wí* as the predicate, a floated quantifier can only be restricted to the theme, not the (implied or overt) agent, nor the adjunct nominal *mòng*. This suggests that *mòng* is simply part of the complex predicate, and cannot be considered an argument of the verb (in this respect it behaves somewhat different to at least some other adjunct nominal + verb constructions – see chapter 14).

- (81) *Mòng te=r-í fátà.*  
 affect 3PL=3PL-get.PL all  
 ‘They all got hit.’  
 \* ‘They got hit a lot.’ (\*‘They got a lot of hitting/affect.’)

Compare this sentence and the interpretation of the floated quantifier with the following active sentence, using the plural form of the verb *ká* ‘hit’.

- (82) *Te=ing a te ke=jí fátà.*  
 3PL=the 3PL 3SG.NF=hit.PL all  
 ‘They hit them all.’  
 \* ‘They all hit them.’

Since the restriction of a postverbal *fátà* can only be to an S or a P, we can definitively say that *mòng* in (81) is not the P of the clause. Either we accept that the clause has a third person P with no A (and the P is mysteriously and inexplicably coded on the verb prefixally and by proclisis), or else we accept that in (81) *te* ‘they’ is the S of a monovalent clause. For *te* to be the subject A of a bivalent clause would require a complete revision of the principles governing the behaviour of the floating quantifier, making an exception for this predicate alone.

The verb of the predicate in (81) shows the same alternation in terms of suppletion as is found with the verb *wé* ‘get (feminine object)’, adding further weight to the idea that the two verb roots are related. In the *mòng wí* ‘be hit’ construction, however, the variation in form of the verb is dependant on the number of the subject. Since number agreement (in terms of vowel alternations of suppletive forms) on the verb depends on the features of either the S or the P, this means that, if in examples such as (81) the use of a form of *lóe* ‘get.PL’ depends on the number of the participant being hit, and cannot depend on the amount of hitting, then the hitting

<sup>67</sup> It would be more ‘general’ to discuss the grammatical status of the syntactic roles A and P, rather than the semantic roles agent and patient. Since, in the case of Skou, there is only one passive alternation, we are justified in being explicit without needing to fear losing generality.

cannot be interpreted as a P. The use of subject clitics on the verb agreeing with the hit participant shows that this argument cannot be a P either, and so must be interpreted as the S in the clause.

This implies that the clause is monovalent, and implies that *mòng* must be interpreted as an adjunct nominal (though the choice of the verb *lòe* that indicates a plural object implies that, if it is an adjunct nominal, then it is an adjunct nominal that is an argument of the verb, and not simply part of the predicate). It also means that the construction must in fact be a true passive, since it involves reducing the valency of the clause as a whole.

Note that it is not possible to interpret *fàtà* as modifying *mòng*, even when that is the only plausible nominal in the clause. Compare the grammatical (81) above with the following ungrammatical sentence, in which the subject is singular, and so the quantification is not allowed:

(83) \* *mòng nì=wé fàtà.*  
 affect 3PL=get.F all  
 ‘I got hit a lot.’

(84) \* *mòng nì=lòe fàtà.*  
 affect 3PL=get.PL all  
 ‘I got hit a lot.’

When we examine the behaviour of this construction in questions we find that the theme cannot be quite so unambiguously identified as the subject. The following is an acceptable question:

(85) *Bá mòng pe=wí?*  
 who affect 3SG.F=get  
 ‘Who was hit?’  
 (a question formed with a non-feminine clitic on the verb [*Bá mòng pe wí?*] would also be grammatical, but is less likely. The unmarked option here is for feminine marking on the verb.)

An alternative that is found in other questions about the identity of the subject, using interrogative clitics on the verb instead of the regular third person pronominal clitics, is not acceptable, as can be seen in (86).

(86) \* *Mòng bá=wí?*  
 affect who=get  
 ‘Who was hit?’

This implies that there is not a total association of the properties associated with a subject (see 3.13) and the single core argument of a *mòng wí* construction. Mismatches in behaviour between properties associated with subjects in active constructions and in non-active constructions are reasonably common in languages around the world, and so this is not a damning counter to the voice analysis.<sup>68</sup>

Given these facts about the construction involving *mòng wí*, we must ask whether we are justified in calling it a ‘passive’, or if it is simply a verb that, like nonagentive verbs or inverted predicates (see 5.4.1.2 and 5.4.3.4), codes an affected subject. The difference, of course, is that this is a predicate with a specified (albeit optional) oblique agent as well as the affected

<sup>68</sup> Examples of such languages include, famously, Tagalog (see Schachter 1976, 1977 for the classical account of the data, updated in Kroeger 1993), and Palu’e (Donohue 2005b).

subject. This means that this is a monovalent clause, with a single S, and should not be thought of as having an ‘inverted’ predicate (see 5.4.3.4), in which the more animate, topical argument is coded as P and the inanimate cause is the A.

### 13.3.2.2 Negation and *mòng wí*

The negation of a clause with a nominal that appears in a postverbal position, and is nominally oblique, such as locations or goals, results in the ‘oblique’ argument appearing preverbally, with the syntactic properties of an object (see 3.11). Subjects and objects do not show this sort of behaviour.

If the agent in a *mòng wí* construction shows similar behaviour, we can assume, in the absence of any counter-evidence, that the agent is grammatically oblique. With this in mind, compare (78), repeated here as (87), with its negative equivalent, (88). Note also the ungrammatical sentence in (89), in which *ke* appears between *mòng* and the verb.

- (87) *Mòng nì=wí ke.*  
wound 1SG=get 3SG.NF  
‘I got a wound from him.’
- (88) *Ke mòng nì=wí ka.*  
3SG.NF wound 1SG=get NEG  
‘I didn’t get a wound from him.’

- (89) \* *mòng ke nì wí ka*

The fact that the pronoun marking the agent, *ke*, appears postverbally in (87), the position typically associated with adjuncts and obliques, suggests that in (87) it is coded as a non-core argument: either an adjunct or an oblique. Furthermore, the fact that *ke* cannot appear between *mòng* and *wí* is evidence that *mòng* is not an object in the clause. When, as a result of negating a clause with both an object and an oblique, a clause with two objects is produced, the order of those objects is not fixed with respect to each other. This can be seen in (91) and (92), which are negative equivalents of (90) (see also the discussion in chapter 16).

- (90) *Naké ke=ká líhi.*  
dog 3SG.NF=hit garden  
‘He hit the dog in the garden.’
- (91) *Líhi naké ke=ká ka.*  
garden dog 3SG.NF=hit NEG  
‘He didn’t hit the dog in the garden.’
- (92) *Naké líhi ke ká ka.*  
‘He didn’t hit the dog in the garden.’

A more ‘neutral’ negation of (90) would be that seen in (93), in which the location is simply not mentioned. Having any mention of an oblique in a negated clause implies some degree of contrastive or pragmatic focus on that constituent.

- (93) *Naké ke=ká ka.*  
dog 3SG.NF=hit NEG  
‘He didn’t hit the dog.’

By comparison a location in a negated clause headed by a complex N+V predicate cannot appear between the N and the V, as shown in the following sentences.

- (94) *Naké nì kóeng ke=ká líhi.*  
 dog 1SG tooth 3SG.NF=hit garden  
 ‘The dog bit me in the garden.’
- (95) *Naké líhi nì kóeng ke=ká ka.*  
 dog garden 1SG tooth 3SG.NF=hit NEG  
 ‘The dog didn’t bite me in the garden.’
- (96) *Naké nì líhi kóeng ke ká ka.*  
 ‘He didn’t hit the dog in the garden.’
- (97) \* *naké nì kóeng líhi ke ká ka*  
 ‘He didn’t hit the dog in the garden.’

The fact that *ke* cannot intrude between *mòng* and *wí*, seen in the ungrammaticality of (89) compared to the acceptability of (88), shows that *mòng* does not display the positional properties of objects. It appears, then, that the agent in one of these constructions is truly an oblique nominal, and that *mòng* is truly part of the predicate, as the first part of an N+V construction, and is not the object in a bivalent clause.

### 13.3.2.3 Switch reference and *mòng wí*

One test for subjecthood in Skou involves the behaviour of the nominals in a sentence with switch reference morphology. If we examine such a sentence, seen here in (98), we can see that the clause marked with *=pa*, the morpheme used in same-subject conjunction, is used to monitor the identity of the affected argument of the first clause with the S argument in the second clause. This shows that the proclitic agreement on the verb does indeed index the subject of the clause, since this same argument is selected as the pivot in switch reference structures.

- (98) *Hans mòng ke=wí Theo=pa, ke=moe ti pá.*  
 Hans wound 3SG.NF=get Theo=INSTR 3SG.NF=return 3SG.NF.go house  
 ‘Hans<sub>i</sub> got hit by Theo<sub>j</sub>, and Ø<sub>i</sub>/\*<sub>j</sub> went back home.’

If we wish to conjoin the agent of the first clause with the agent of the second clause, we must use the obviative marker *=ko* that is used to conjoin two clauses that do not share the same subject, as can be seen in (99).

- (99) *Hans mòng ke=wí Theo=ko, ke=moe ti pá.*  
 Hans wound 3SG.NF=get Theo=OBV 3SG.NF=return 3SG.NF.go house  
 ‘Hans<sub>i</sub> got hit by Theo<sub>j</sub>, and then Theo<sub>j</sub>/\*<sub>i</sub> went back home.’  
 OR ‘Theo<sub>j</sub> hit Hans<sub>i</sub>, and then Ø<sub>j</sub>/\*<sub>i</sub> went back home.’

Chapter 19 presents a more detailed discussion of the forms and functions of the switch reference system in Skou, showing that same versus different ‘subject’ is not always the category that is monitored by this morphology, which means that this test is not entirely clear.

### 13.3.3 On productivity and grammatical constructions

The issues raised by the putative passive construction in Skou are quite intriguing. It is not unknown for a language to ‘buck the trend’, and display features that are not typical of its region or its genetic group, such as the appearance of a passive in Skou. While it is true that Papuan languages tend to lack voice systems, there are occasional exceptions to this. Tanglapui shows a restricted inverse systems, being contrastive only with high-transitive verbs (Donohue 1996). Saweru operates with a voice systems that is monitored by variation in the amount of inflection on the verb, apparently acquired through contact with neighbouring Austronesian

languages, which possess similar typologies. It is most likely that there are other examples of non-canonical voice systems in evidence in other, less well-described Papuan languages.

The issue that we must confront with the Skou passive, however, is of a different kind: how productive must an alternation be to ‘count’ as being productive, and so a regular part of the grammar?

Ideally, of course, a paradigm is fully productive for an entire lexical class. In the case of a voice system, the ‘ideal’ voice system would productively operate over the entire lexical set of verbs. Yet even in languages with clear voice alternations there are lexical exceptions: English, for instance, allows *I resembled her*, with the subject being the A, but not *\*She was resembled by me*, with the reverse coding. Similarly, but showing the opposite preference, Tagalog allows *tinakot* ‘fear’ in main clauses, with a P subject but not *tumakot*, the ‘actor voice’ equivalent with an A subject.<sup>69</sup> *Tukang Besi* (Donohue 1998) allows *molinga’e* ‘forget’ with the P as subject, but not *molinga* with A as subject. It is clear that some level of exceptionality is tolerated in the grammarians’ notion of a voice system. It seems, however, that a ‘productive’ voice system must allow at least the primary transitive verbs to participate in the alternation. We are not surprised at the English system which allows the alternation in high transitive bivalent verbs, yielding the pair *hit: be hit*, but not with low-transitive verbs, and so we lack pairs such as *resemble: \*be resembled*.

Now in Skou we have a situation in which the putative voice system can be described for exactly one predicate, the translation equivalent of ‘hit’. I suggest that it is no accident that this is the one verb to display a voice alternation, since this is the most highly transitive verb in the language. We can make this claim not only on cross-linguistic grounds based on the semantic content of the verb, but also on language-internal morphosyntactic grounds: ‘hit’ is a predicate that shows not only subject agreement but also object marking, through suppletive verb forms (*jí* for plural object, *láng* for feminine object, *ká* otherwise), and which does not (unlike some predicates – see 5.4.3.3) allow for a postverbal alternative coding option for the P. All these factors, plus the semantic representation of the verb, allow us to consider it a primary transitive verb – a perfect exemplar of the kind of verb that should participate in a voice alternation, if any verbs in the language do. Far from being exceptional, the restricted nature of the voice alternation in Skou is simply an example of a language at one extreme end (the lower end) of a continuum that can be observed in the productivity of voice systems in other languages.

#### 13.3.4 Linking between separate lexical items as paradigmatic?

The main question in an analysis of the *mòng wí* construction as a possible passive involves the question of the nature of the putative correspondence between the active predicate *ká* ‘hit’ and the ‘passive’ predicate *mòng wí* ‘be hit’. Unlike active:passive pairs in languages with unproblematic voice alternations, such as English with its analytical passives (*hit* (ACTIVE), *be hit* (PASSIVE)) or Indonesian with a morphological voice system (*mem-[p]ukul* ‘hit (ACTIVE)’, *di-pukul* ‘hit (NONACTIVE)’), there is no shared lexical material in the Skou pair. The verb roots are not obviously related to each other in any phonological way, synchronically or historically, nor do I wish to argue that there is some ‘underlying level’ at which they are similar. These two predicates are clearly two separate lexemes; the *mòng wí* lexeme is, if it is best analysed as a

<sup>69</sup> A small number of verbs in English only appear in clauses with passive morphology: *reincarnate*, *repute*, *rumour*, for example. Others are only rarely found in active clauses; see Dingare (2001) for further details.

passive, a lexical passive, not a morphological or analytical one. How, then, can we analyse two lexemes as representing an active:passive paradigm? Is this not akin to analysing ‘receive’ in English as the ‘passive’ equivalent of ‘give’?

There are empirical grounds for considering the passive analysis to be the correct one. Firstly, speakers recognise this as a correspondence, in a way that they do not recognise a link between, for instance, *kasi* ‘give’ and *dapa(t)* ‘receive’ in Papuan Malay, or *pukol* ‘hit’ and *kena* ‘suffer, affect’ (also in Papuan Malay), or for that matter between *héng* ‘ask’ and *lóeng* ‘say, answer’ in Skou. Skou people do, however, feel similarly about the relationship between *ké yata li* ‘sell’ and *yata li ké* ‘buy’, which are opposite descriptive predicates, which make use of the same lexical items. This implies that we should ascribe some difference to the lexical representation of *ká* with respect to *mòng wí*, compared to the same speaker’s behaviour with the other pairs.

In English we recognise the connection between conative pairs such as *hit*, *hit at*, and between simple verbs and phrasal verbs, in examples such as *open*, *open up*. With less semantically specified verbs, such as *get*, there is not always either a strong phonological connection, nor an obvious semantic connection, between two possible predicates: compare *get into*, [getɪntu] ‘come to like a lot’, with *get around* [getəɹaʊnd] ~ [getɹaʊnd] ‘manage to avoid prescribed activity or restriction’. Here the predicates are quite disparate, yet they are felt to be somehow linked together, more tightly than they are to semantically closer matches: *get around* is not thought of as particularly ‘close’ to *avoid*, nor is *get into* especially related lexically to *appreciate*, even though these are predicates that share many more semantic features in common than the two *get*-predicates do with each other.

Yet with the pair *ká* ‘hit’ and *mòng wí* ‘be hit’ there is a very close semantic relationship. We cannot use *mòng wí* as an alternative coding device for any predicate other than *ká* ‘hit’; constructions such as those attempted in (100), with a completely non-affective verb, are ludicrous from a Skou perspective.

- (100) \* *nì fue nì=wí*,      \* *nì=fue wí*,      \* *nì=wí fue*,      etc.  
 1SG see 1SG=get      1SG=see get      1SG=get see  
 “I was seen.”

Clearly the predicate *mòng wí* does, in some sense ‘belong’ with *ká*, regardless of the fact that they do not share any phonological material, just as *láng* ‘hit (feminine)’ and *jí* ‘hit (plural)’ are related to *ká* ‘hit’. We can talk about connections between lexical entries in the absence of those lexical entries being sub-entries of each other, and that is the relationship between the simplex predicate *ká* ‘hit’ (with all its variants, depending on features of the object), and *mòng wí* ‘be hit’ (again, with variation, depending on the number of the subject).

### 13.3.5 *mòng wí* as a passive construction

Can we consider the pair *ká* ‘hit’ and *mòng wí* ‘be hit’ to represent the same sort of opposition that is found between the translations given for them in English, namely that of an active:passive pair? To claim that this is so is to afford this construction the status of one member of a voice alternation. But is it valid to describe an alternation as a voice alternation when it only applies to one pair of predicates?

This kind of phenomenon, in which it appears that a lexical item displays the argument-structure characteristics of a passive (rather than being a productive morpheme) has been termed a *lexical passive* (in contrast to a morphological or analytical one). Payne (1997: 205) notes that

lexical passives are rare; the appearance of a single lexical passive predicate in Skou, with correspondences only to one other very in the lexicon is, then, not too surprising. More surprising would be the discovery of a language in which every ‘normal’ active verb had a lexical passive counterpart, with no morphologically or syntactically productive voice alternation mechanism. The active correspondant to *mòng wí, ká* ‘hit’, is in every sense the most prototypical of bivalent verbs: it encodes the most highly affected P of any of the verbs in the language, and is unmarkedly interpreted as having an agentive A. It marks a punctual, telic event, and when used as a light verb adds these (bivalent) semantic features to the predicate. If any verb should be eligible to have a lexical passive correspondant it would be *ká*. The unusualness lies then not in the correspondence between a single lexically active verb and its counterpart, but in Skou for having such a lexeme.

### 13.3.6 Morphosyntactic restrictions of the passive

We have examined the basic, clause-internal, grammatical consequences of the passive for argument coding in the preceding sections. In this section some of the aspectual dimensions to the passive must be mentioned

In 7.9 we examined the four basic TAM distinctions that can be marked on most verbal predicates in Skou. With the passive, however, we find that both of the auxiliary-using coding options, the continuous and the intentional, cannot appear. The irrealis and the completive/plain coding choices are open, as shown in the contrastive grammaticality of the following four sentences.

- (101) *Mòng ke=wí.*  
wound 3SG.NF=get  
‘He was hit.’
- (102) *Mòng ke=wí-wí.*  
wound 3SG.NF=get-RED  
‘He will be hit.’
- (103) \* *mòng ke=wí-wí li.*  
wound 3SG.NF=get-RED do  
‘He wants to be hit.’
- (104) \* *mòng ke=wí i li.*  
wound 3SG.NF=get-RED be do  
‘He is being hit.’

The restriction of the passive to a particular type of verbs is absolute: there is, as mentioned in the previous discussion, only one passive alternation, and so there is only one verb that can be said to meet the criteria for appearing in a passive construction, the verb *ká* ‘hit’. This means that there is a strong restriction on the semantic roles of the arguments in the passive, as well as a strong requirement for adverse affectedness on the part of the passive subject.

## 13.4 Reflexives

There is no true reflexive construction in Skou, though there are various ways to express these concepts. For the most part simple bivalent sentences are used to represent what in English would be coded with a reflexive. Examine the following sentence:

- (105) *Nále lang nì=li=ko, nó-kàngkang nì=na lu=ko*  
 taro dish 1SG=do=OBV hand-finger 1SG=pound=OBV  
*yáng e tue.*  
 hurt 3SG.F.be 3SG.F.do  
 ‘I was pounding taro for a meal, and I hit my finger, and it hurt.’

Here the form of the second clause *nókàngkang nì na lu* is the same as it would be if the object was not related to the subject; so *ná nì na lu* ‘I hit the taro.’ shows the same structure. In other words, there is no special morphosyntactic marking for the reflexive.

In English and many other language a reflexive form is possible as an alternative to the mention of the body part that has been affected; in addition to ‘I hit my finger.’, we also have ‘I hit myself’. In Skou this is not the case; at best, a more generic noun *nòe* ‘body’, still possessed, can be used, as in the following examples.

- (106) *Nòe-nì=ne nì=wò na lu.*  
 body-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 1SG=EMPH pound  
 ‘I bashed myself.’
- (107) *Nòe-ké=ke ke=wò ká.*  
 body-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT 3SG.NF=EMPH hit  
 ‘He hit himself.’

In these cases the subject clitic on the verb has the emphatic marker (see 4.7.4 for non-reflexive uses of this morpheme) attached to it, unlike the original sentence in (105). Without this morpheme, this sentence is at best marginally acceptable, though most speakers reject it outright.

- (108)\* *nòe ké ke ke ká*

Attempts to directly elicit reflexives has resulted in the use of *nòe*. This probably indicates that, as in many other languages, *nòe* ‘body’ has grammaticalised into a reflexive marking, stripped of the semantic reference that it has as a plain noun. The following sentences show how speakers avoid the use of the grammaticalised sense of *nòe* if there is another plausible noun that can be substituted in its stead, and treated as a ‘true object’.

- (109) *Nì=re hángpeng, tánghang-nì=ne nì=fu í.*  
 1SG=go bush face-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 1SG=see.F pool  
 ‘I went to the bush, and saw my face in a pool of water.’  
 (For Papuan Malay Sa pi hutan, lalu sa lia sa pu diri di kolam)
- (110) *Nì=re hángpeng, nòe-nì=ne nì=fu í.*  
 1SG=go bush body-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 1SG=see.F pool  
 ‘I went to the bush, and saw myself in a pool of water.’  
 (For Papuan Malay Sa pi hutan, lalu sa lia sa pu diri di kolam)

We can see that while there is a variety of ways of expressing reflexivity in Skou, there is no common syntactic behaviour to logically unify them together. If there is such as thing as a ‘reflexive construction’ in Skou, then it exists as an abstract entity only, and does is not strongly grammaticised, if at all, in terms of dedicated morphology or dedicated syntactic constructions.

Data on the interpretation of reflexives in multi-clausal constructions can be found in 15.5.3.

### 13.5 Reciprocals

There is more than one way to express the notion of a ‘reciprocal’ action in Skou. The most common reciprocal construction in Skou is a variant of the normal structure used to express conjoined nominals in the same NP. The verb is necessarily marked for a non-singular subject, but there is no explicit marker of reciprocity in the clause; only the absence of any realisation of any nominal (or pronominal) object in the clause is a clue to the fact that a normally bivalent verb should be read with a reciprocal meaning. (The fact that, in other circumstances, the overt presence of an object is obligatory, this is then a significant, if negative, indication of the construction.) An example is the following sentence, which is grammatical with the translation given, and not with the reading ‘Those two hit (someone else).’

- (111) *Tenake=ing a te=j-á.*  
 3DU.NF=the 3PL=3PL-hit  
 ‘They hit each other.’  
 \* ‘Those two hit (someone else).’

With plural reciprocal subjects, as opposed to simply dual ones as exemplified above, the same construction is used:

- (112) *Te=ing a te=j-á.*  
 3PL=the 3PL=3PL-hit  
 ‘They hit each other.’  
 \* ‘They hit (someone else).’

Note that the clauses in (111) and (112) are not ‘normal’ variants of a bivalent clause. A predicate that subcategorises for two arguments MUST express them, either through agreement on the verb with pronominal status (see 7.3), or in overt NPs. Compare (112) with (113). In (113) we can see the use of the ‘dummy’ *ya* ‘thing’, which must appear if no lexical or pronominal object is present. Alternatively, a form of the verb that specifies the object may be used, as in (114).

- (113) *Te=ing a ya te=j-á.*  
 3PL=the thing 3PL=3PL-hit  
 ‘They hit (something/ ?someone else).’  
 \* ‘They hit each other.’

- (114) a. *Pe=ing a ya pe=fue.*  
 3SG.F=the thing 3SG.F=see  
 ‘She saw (something).’  
 b. *Pe=ing a (ya) pe=fu.*  
 3SG.F=the thing 3SG.F=see.F  
 ‘She saw something (feminine).’

It is possible for the object position to be filled with a pronoun bearing the same pronominal features of the nonsingular subject; in this case the clause is ambiguous in reading between a reciprocal and a simple transitive clause.

- (115) *Te=ing a te te=j-á.*  
 3PL=the 3PL 3PL=3PL-hit  
 ‘They<sub>i</sub> hit each other<sub>j</sub>.’  
 OR ‘They<sub>i</sub> hit them<sub>j</sub>.’

An alternative reciprocal construction is found only with predicates that take adjunct nominals. In this case the verb that is associated with the adjunct nominal is replaced by *li* ‘do’,

and the subject and object of the non-reciprocal predicate are covertly coordinated inside the same NP. Proof that *Te=Téme* and *Te=Máwo* in (116) are members of a single NP comes from the ungrammaticality of ergative case marking on, shown in (118).

- (116) *Te=Máwo*      *te*      *Te=Téme*      *pìng*      *te=r-ú.*  
 3PL=Skou Mabo 3PL.ERG 3PL=Nafri      bow 3PL=3PL-release.PL  
 ‘The Skou Mabos shot the Nafris.’

- (116)' [NP SUBJ ] [NP OBJ ] [ADJ. NOM. ]      Verb

- (117) *Te=Téme*      *Te=Máwo*      *pìng*      *te=ti.*  
 3PL=Nafri      3PL=Skou Mabo      bow      3PL=3PL.do  
 ‘The Nafris and the Mabos shot each other.’

- (117)' [NP SUBJ (+) OBJ ] [ADJ. NOM. ]      Verb — *li* ‘do’

- (118) \* *te=Téme*      *te*      *Te=Máwo*      *pìng*      *te=ti*  
 3PL=Nafri      3PL.ERG 3PL=Skou Mabo      bow      3PL=3PL.do  
 ‘The Nafris and the Mabos shot each other.’

We can see that, as with reflexives, there is no morphology dedicated to reciprocal constructions, but there is nevertheless a distinct reciprocal construction in the language. This reciprocal construction displays behaviour, in terms of the morphology and syntax that may appear in it, that is not found elsewhere, and so it is uniquely defined.

### 13.6 Combinations of valency-changing processes?

It is logically possible for a clause to contain more than one valency-changing process. We can see one example of this happening in the following (elicited) Skou sentence, in which a causativised predicate appears in a reciprocal clause.

- (119) *Te*      *te*      *te=ti=ko*      *te=fe.*  
 3PL      3PL      3PL=do.PL=OBV      3PL=afraid.PL  
 ‘They scared each other.’

That is, there are many languages in which both an applicative and a passive can be found applied to the same verb. The following examples from *Tukang Besi* show this happening.

*Tukang Besi*: plain clause

- (120) *No-gonti*      *te*      *kau*      *kene*      *baliu.*  
 3R-chop      CORE      wood      with      axe  
 ‘He chopped the wood with an axe.’

instrumental applicative

- (121) *No-gonti=ako*      *te*      *baliu*      *te*      *kau.*  
 3R-chop=APPL      CORE      axe      CORE      wood  
 ‘He chopped the wood with an axe.’

instrumental applicative + passive

- (122) *No-to-gonti=ako=mo te kau na baliu.*  
 3R-PASS-chop=APPL=PF CORE wood NOM axe  
 ‘The axe was used to chop wood.’  
 (± ‘The axed was chopped-with the wood.’)

On the other hand some combinations of valency-changing processes are not so readily combinable. Continuing from *Tukang Besi*, we can see that while a passive may combine with a causative in the same clause, the reverse is not the case. This reflects strong (but not absolute) cross-linguistic tendencies.

*Tukang Besi*: grammatical passive of causative

- (123) *No-to-pa-gonti=mo na mia te kau.*  
 3R-PASS-CAUS-chop=PF NOM person CORE wood  
 ‘The person was made to chop the wood.’

ungrammatical causative of passive

- (124) \* *no-pa-to-gonti=mo na kau*  
 3R-CAUS-PASS-chop=PF NOM wood  
 ‘the wood was made to be chopped’

In Skou this sort of free combining is less likely to be found, for various reasons. The passive is, as we have seen, lexically restricted, and furthermore is a lexical passive. In common with most languages, passives cannot be causativised. All the sentences in (125) - (128), showing attempts to causativise a passive predicate such as (101), are thus ungrammatical.

Basic passive predicate

- (125) *Ke=bà=ing a mòng ke=wí pe=a.*  
 3SG.NF=person=the wound 3SG.NF=get 3SG.F=FOC  
 ‘He was hit by her.’

Attempted causative of a passive with *leng*

- (126) \* *te=r-íng=ko ke=bà=ing a mòng ke=wí.*  
 3PL=3PL-give.PL=OBV 3SG.NF=person=the wound 3SG.NF=get  
 \* ‘They caused him to be hit.’

Attempted causative of a passive with *li*: only an active interpretation possible

- (127) *Te ke=bà=ing a mòng te=ti.*  
 3PL 3SG.NF=person=the wound 3PL=3PL.do  
 ‘They wounded him.’  
 \* ‘They caused him to be hit.’

- (128) \* *te ke=bà=ing a mòng te=ti pe=a.*  
 3PL 3SG.NF=person=the wound 3PL=3PL.do 3SG.F=FOC  
 \* ‘They caused him to be hit by her.’

We can summarise the grammatical and ungrammatical combinations in table 161xx. Note that no construction may apply to another construction of the same kind; this is most noteworthy for causatives constructions, as described in 13.6.1; there are no double causatives in Skou, nor any double applicatives. Further, there are clear asymmetries in the list of permitted combinations of different valency-affecting devices; for instance, while a causative of an applicative is allowed, an applicative of a causative is not.

Table 161. Combinations of valency-changing processes

| a           | of a | Causative | Applicative | Passive         | Reflexive | Reciprocal |
|-------------|------|-----------|-------------|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Causative   |      | no        | yes         | no              | yes       | yes        |
| Applicative |      | no        | no          | no              | no        | no         |
| Passive     |      | no        | no          | no              | no        | no         |
| Reflexive   |      | yes       | no          | no              | no        | no         |
| Reciprocal  |      | no        | yes         | no <sup>†</sup> | no        | no         |

The following sections detail the grammatical and ungrammatical combinations that are shown in this table, offering some explanation for both the gaps and the attested combinations.

### 13.6.1 Causative + other valency-changing process

Causatives show the greatest freedom in combinations with other valency-changing processes. An apparently biclausal combination with an applicative can be seen in (129).

Causative + applicative in a =*ko*-linked clause

- (129) *Ke=li=ko*      *te=angku=fue a*      *te=y-a-na*      *báng.*  
 3SG.NF=do=OBV 3PL=child=that 3PL=3PL-walk-APPL beach  
 ‘He made the children go to the beach.’

Evidence that the relationship between the two clauses linked with the obviative =*ko* can be found in the fact that there are constraints on combinations. While the ungrammaticality of the combination of causative and passive in (130) is perhaps expected on cross-linguistic grounds, the inability of two causative ‘clauses’ to embed, seen in (131), is not so predictable, and is something requiring a language-specific parametric setting (‘do not form causatives of causatives or passives’).

Ungrammatical: causative + passive

- (130) \* *ke=li=ko*      *pe*      *mòng*      *pe=wí*  
 3SG.NF=do=OBV 3SG.F wound 3SG.F=get  
 ‘He made her get hit.’

Ungrammatical: causative + causative

- (131) \* *ke=li=ko*      *pe*      *pe=tue=ko*  
 3SG.NF=do=OBV 3SG.F 3SG.F=3SG.F.do=OBV  
*te=angku=ing a hòe*      *te=t-ang*  
 3PL=child=the sago 3PL=3PL-eat  
 ‘He made her get the children to eat the sago.’

The following example in (132), from *Tukang Besi*, shows that not all languages share this ban.

*Tukang Besi*: causative + causative

- (132) *No-hepe-hoko-leama di iaku te wurai.*  
 3R-REQ-FACT-good OBL 1SG CORE sarong  
 ‘He asked me to repair the sarong.’

Combinations with reciprocals and with reflexives are pragmatically unlikely, but syntactically possible, as seen in (133) and (134).

causative + reciprocal

- (133) *Ke=li=ko te te te=jí.*  
 3SG.NF=do=OBV 3PL 3PL 3PL=hit.PL  
 ‘He made them hit each other.’

causative + reflexive

- (134) *Pe ke=li=ko nòè-pè=pe pe=fu tangpaja.*  
 3SG.F 3SG.NF=do=OBV body-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT 3SG.F=see.F mirror  
 ‘He made her see herself in the mirror.’

### 13.6.2 Applicative + other valency-changing process

Applicatives do not combine with other valency-changing processes. This is based on a variety of factors, lexical, semantic and syntactic. Lexically we find that since applicatives are restricted to verbs of motion, they cannot appear on causative constructions, which are all formed with either the verb *li* ‘do’ or *leng* ‘“give”’, neither of which is eligible for an applicative suffix. Similar conditions might apply to an applicative of a reciprocal, formed with *li*, or an applicative of a passive, which uses a non-motion predicate (note that, on the other hand, a reciprocal can be formed on the basis of an applicative construction – see below).

Ungrammatical: applicative + causative *or* applicative + reciprocal

- (135) \* *X te=li-na Y*  
 3PL=do-APPL  
 ‘They make X (go) to Y’ / ‘They VERB each other up to Y’

Ungrammatical: applicative + passive

- (136) \* *Y mòng te=wí-na*  
 wound 3PL=get-APPL  
 ‘They were hit to (Y)’

A double applicative is not possible. The restriction here is semantic: the applicative can only index a goal argument, and so combinations are redundant.<sup>70</sup>

Ungrammatical: applicative + applicative

- (137) \* *te-y-a-na-na pá=fue a*  
 3PL=3PL-walk-APPL-APPL house=that  
 ‘They went to that house.’

- (138) \* *pá=fue a te-y-a-na-na*  
 house=that 3PL=3PL-walk-APPL-APPL

Finally, applicatives of reflexives are not possible. This is partly semantic, in that a verb that allows a reflexive construction is not one that has an inherent goal complement, but also syntactic: recall from 13.4 that a semantically reflexive clause is still syntactically bivalent, and so it fails to meet the monovalent manner-of-motion verb criteria that applicatives require.

<sup>70</sup> Languages with applicatives for more than one semantic role allow for multiple applicative constructions, attested in, for instance, Kinyarwanda (Gerds 1992, Donohue 1999). The following *Tukang Besi* example illustrates this possibility.

*Tukang Besi*

- (i) *No-wila-ngkene=ako te ina=no te Wa Ki'i.*  
 3R-go-COM=APPL CORE mother=3GEN CORE Wa Ki'i

Ungrammatical: applicative of a (pseudo-)reflexive

- (139) *Pe pe=fí ke=bálèng-pè=pe=wò.*  
 3SG.F 3SG.F=meet 3SG.NF=ghost-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT=EMPH  
 ‘She met her own ghost.’
- (140) \* *pe pe=fí-na ke=bálèng-pè=pe=wò*  
 3SG.F 3SG.F=meet-APPL 3SG.NF=ghost-3SG.F.GEN=3SG.F.DAT=EMPH  
 ‘She met her own ghost.’

### 13.6.2 Passive + other valency-changing process

Passives do not combine with other valency changing processes. For some of these combinations there are good reasons for the ungrammaticality: a reciprocal construction does not have a ‘spare’ participant to be coded as subject other than the existing one. Crucially, however, the passive in Skou is a lexical passive, restricted to an alternation with just one other verb, ‘hit’, and so passives cannot be formed from other predicates.

### 13.6.2 Reflexive + other valency-changing process

It is grammatical to form a reflexive of a causative construction, though it is more usual to code such an event with an explicit description of the body part that is affected. Thus while (141) is acceptable, a more explicit statement such as (142) is preferable, if possible.

- (141) *Nòe-ké=ke ke=li=ko héfèng.*  
 body-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT 3SG.NF=do=OBV good  
 ‘He made himself better.’
- (142) *Nò-ké=ke ke=li=ko héfèng.*  
 hand-3SG.NF.GEN=3SG.NF.DAT 3SG.NF=do=OBV good  
 ‘He<sub>i</sub> made his<sub>j</sub> hand better.’

With the other valency changing devices we do not find combinations with reflexives. This is expected with passives and reciprocals on syntactic grounds, and the inability of a reflexive to occur with an applicative is based on the semantic incompatibility of motion towards a goal with a reflexive notion.

### 13.6.2 Reciprocal + other valency-changing process

A reciprocal construction based on a causative should be possible, except that the morphology used to encode both the causative (*li* ‘do’) and the reciprocal is the same. This means that it is possible to construct sentences with reciprocal of causative meanings, but these reciprocal readings are only a subset of the possible readings associated with such a construction, and we can only conclude that there is no true reciprocal of causative combination.

- (143) *Pe=tue=ko ke=fue.*  
 3SG.F=3SG.F.do=OBV 3SG.NF=scared  
 ‘She scared him.’
- (144) *Ke=li=ko pe=fu.*  
 3SG.NF=do=OBV 3SG.F=scared.F  
 ‘He scared her.’

- (145) *Te te te=ti=ko te=fe.*  
 3PL 3PL 3PL=do.PL=OBV 3PL=scared.PL  
 ‘They<sub>i</sub> scared each other<sub>i</sub>/them<sub>j</sub>.’

Reciprocal constructions are permitted with applicative clauses. The following examples show how two simple applicativised clauses can be combined with a reciprocal construction. Note that here the applicative morpheme is licensed on the verb in (146), despite that verb not being inherently a motion verb. This implies that the restrictions seen in 13.6.2 are not purely semantic, but have some element of syntactic restriction (the nature of the construction coded) as part of their specification as well.

- (146) *Pe pe=w-a-na ke=ing a.*  
 3SG.F 3SG.F=3SG.F-walk-APPL 3SG.NF=the  
 ‘She walked up to him.’
- (147) *Ke ke=k-a-na pe=ing a.*  
 3SG.NF 3SG.NF=3SG.NF-walk-APPL 3SG.F=the  
 ‘He walked up to her.’
- (148) *Te=ing a te=ti-na.*  
 3PL=the 3PL=3PL.do-APPL  
 ‘They walked up to each other.’

Reciprocals do not appear in combination with passives, reflexives, or other reciprocals.

### 13.7 A summary of valency-affecting processes in Skou

We have seen that both bound morphology and periphrastic constructions are used in Skou to indicate processes that involve a change in the valency of the clause. Because of this, there are no formal grounds for describing ‘valency-change’ as a morphologically unified process. Because of the unified nature of their functions, however, we can group them together. We can characterise the different constructions that we have examined in this chapter by means of the diagram in table 162.

Table 162. Valency changing constructions compared

|     |              | Verbal                   | Nominal          | Bound      |
|-----|--------------|--------------------------|------------------|------------|
| + A | causatives:  | <i>li</i>                |                  |            |
| –A  | passive:     | <i>wí</i>                |                  |            |
| + P | applicative: |                          |                  | <i>-na</i> |
| –P  | antipassive: | — not attested in Skou — |                  |            |
| A=P | reflexive    |                          | <i>nòe</i> -POSS |            |
|     | reciprocal   | <i>li</i>                |                  |            |

As can be seen, a great variety of valency-changing devices are found in Skou, with only a marked antipassive being absent from the inventory.

## 14 Adjunct nominals

The grammatical functions ‘subject’ and ‘object’ are well-established in both the formalist and functionalist linguistics literature, as is the status of ‘oblique’ or ‘adjunct’ participants as distinct from the subcategorised arguments (there are no syntactic reasons to distinguish obliques from adjuncts from each other in Skou, or in many other languages of New Guinea, other than the obligatory nature of the obliques compared to adjuncts). In many languages, however, there is another class of ‘nominal’ function, which is more part of the semantic specification of the predicate than a fully independent nominal. T. Mohanan (1995, 1997) and Butt (1995) discuss the status of these nominals in Hindi, but they are at least as widely attested in the languages of New Guinea, and Skou is no exception to this. In this chapter we shall discuss the syntactic behaviour of these nominals, which have been termed ‘adjunct nominals’ in the Papuanist literature, in Skou. To gain a perspective I shall compare the syntactic traits of adjunct nominals in Skou with the parameters of behaviour observed in other languages in the region and beyond, as well as examining their semantic and lexical scope.

### 14.1 An extra grammatical function? The ‘adjunct nominal’

A reasonably large number of verbal predicates in Skou are composed of two distinct phonological parts: there is the inflecting verb root, which takes all agreement marking and any tense/aspect marking, and which, because the verb is semantically ‘light’, additionally requires an adjunct nominal to fully specify the semantics of the predicate. Some examples of this are found in the following sentences. Here we can see the general affective verb *ká*, which we may gloss as ‘hit’ based on the sense it has when occurring simply with two nominals. This verb<sup>71</sup> can combine with a nominal, which is neither A nor P, that is positioned outside the inflectional scope of the verb, but nonetheless is essential for the whole predicate’s meaning.

- (1) *Naké=fue a ke kóeng ke=ká.*  
 dog=that 3SG.NF tooth 3SG.NF=hit  
 ‘That dog bit him.’

Some examples of lexicalised collocations involving a nominal and the verb *ká* ‘hit’ are shown below.

- (2) *Ku ke nì ráue ke=ká i li.*  
 ‘child’ 3SG.NF.ERG 1SG laughter 3SG.NF=hit be do  
 ‘The child laughed at me.’

<sup>71</sup> Also the normal suppletive forms, *láng* with a feminine object, and *jí* with a plural object. The fact that all suppletive forms of the verb occur in all of the ‘idiosyncratic’ and possibly lexicalised collocations of the sort described here suggests that the verb, and its suppletive forms, is linked in the lexicon to the nominal in some way. See Butt and Lahiri (2002) for discussion of the stability of a similar construction in Indo-European languages.

- (3) *Lí te=j-á e tí.*  
 festival 3PL=3PL-hit 3PL.be 3PL.do  
 ‘They’re holding a festival.’
- (4) *Ke hang hêng ke=ká i lí.*  
 3SG.NF coconut accusation 3SG.NF=hit be do  
 ‘He made accusations concerning his coconuts.’

The next examples differ in that the adjunct nominal is not adjacent to the verb, being separated from it by the affected argument.

- (5) *Féng ne ke=jí.*  
 wind 1PL 3SG.NF=hit.PL  
 ‘The wind’s blowing on us.’
- (6) *Fu ke ke=ká.*  
 rain 3SG.NF 3SG.NF=hit  
 ‘The rain soaked him.’ ~ ‘He got soaked in the rain.’
- (7) *Oe pe ke=láng*  
 burp 3SG.F 3SG.NF=hit.F  
 ‘She burped.’ (lit., ‘(A) burp hit her.’)

In the examples above *kóeng*, *ráue*, *lí*, *hêng*, *féng*, *fu*, and *oe* are not the subject of their clauses, nor the object, and they do not appear in the postverbal oblique position. These nominals shall be termed, for the while, ‘adjunct nominals’, though they are better thought of as adjuncts to the verb, and not to the clause. Descriptions of what appear to be related phenomenon in Australian languages refer to it as ‘coverb + verb’ (Wilson 1999 on Wagiman; it is not clear what the basis is for Wilson’s decision that the non-inflecting non-verb is a ‘coverb’, as opposed to a noun) or ‘preverb + verb’ (Warlpiri). Mohanan (1982), describing similar structures in Malayalam, refers to it simply as an X’ constituent, and T. Mohanan (1995, 1997) describes the ‘NV complex predicates’ in Hindi. Butt (1995) provides extensive argumentation on the status and nature of these constructions in Urdu.

An adjunct nominal does not satisfy the subcategorisation requirements of a bivalent verb. For instance, the verb *lùng* ‘teach’ requires both the adjunct nominal *na* and a thing that can be taught, as well as its subject, in order to appear in a grammatical clause:

- (8) *Ne te=Máwo pílàng-tè=te na ne=r-ùng*  
 1PL 3PL=Mabo language-3PL.GEN=3PL.DAT teaching 1PL=1PL-teach  
*ke ne tí.*  
 3SG.NF 1PL.be 1PL.do  
 ‘We’re teaching the Skou language to him.’
- (8)' \* *ne na ne rùng ke ne tí*  
 ‘we’re teaching him’

The examples above show that the adjunct nominal does not satisfy the subcategorisation frame of a bivalent verb. Although there are two nominals in the clause, *ne* ‘we’ and *na* ‘teaching’, this is not sufficient to satisfy the subcategorisation requirement of the verb. Despite this, the adjunct nominal is not optional in the sentence, as can be seen from the ungrammatical (9), in which *na* has been omitted.

- (9) \* *ne te Máwo pílàng tè te ne rùng ke ne tí*  
 ‘we’re teaching him the Skou language’

This condition on obligatory appearance is present even if the adjunct nominal is not found independent of the adjunct nominal construction, and even if the verb is not found in any contexts without the adjunct nominal (and so the two cannot be said to have productively independent semantics). This is the case for *na lùng* ‘teach’, but not the case for the adjunct nominal + verb in the following construction:

- (10) *Pe ku pe=tue.*  
 3SG.F ‘child’ 3SG.F=3SG.F.do  
 ‘She gave birth.’

In this sentence the nominal *ku* ‘child’ is also found independently in other constructions, functioning as a free nominal, as in the following sentence:

- (11) *Ku=ing a rúrí ke=léng i li.*  
 ‘child’=the hide.and.seek 3SG.NF=hide be do  
 ‘The child is playing hide and seek.’

In yet other contexts the root *ku* is encountered as one part of a compound, such as *kulílong* ‘twin(s)’ (*lílong* is not otherwise attested as an independent lexeme) or *angku* ‘young child’ (with *ang* elsewhere attested with the meaning ‘young, unmarried’). Similarly, the light verb *li* ‘do’ (*tue* for 3SG.F) is found in other adjunct nominal constructions, and without any adjunct nominal is found with the sense ‘make, cause’, as in the following examples (*li* is also used with aspectual functions – see 7.9).

- (12) *Pe pá pe=tue.*  
 3SG.F house 3SG.F=3SG.F.do  
 ‘She built a house.’
- (13) *Pe nì=li pe pá hápa pe=tue-tue.*  
 3SG.F 1SG=do 3SG.F house small 3SG.F=3SG.F.do  
 ‘I made her build a small house.’

In some cases the adjunct nominal fails to adequately specify the semantics of the predicate, though this may simply reflect the cultural divisions that existed prior to contact. For instance, compare the alternative translations of the following sentence:

- (14) *Ke rópu-nì=ne yatà ke=li.*  
 3SG.NF book-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT transaction 3SG.NF=do  
 ‘He bought a book for me.’  
 ‘He sold my book.’

Disambiguation is only possible by serialising with the verb *ké* ‘get’; when it appears before *yatà li* the serial verb construction means unambiguously ‘buy’, and when *ké* is put after *yatà li* the only interpretation possible is ‘sell’. The following two sentences differ only in the placement of the inflected *ké*, but show opposite semantics.

- (15) *Ke rópu-nì=ne ke=ké yatà ke=li.*  
 3SG.NF book-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT 3SG.NF=get transaction 3SG.NF=do  
 ‘He sold my book.’  
 \* ‘He bought a book for me.’
- (16) *Ke rópu-nì=ne yatà ke=li ke=ké.*  
 3SG.NF book-1SG.GEN=1SG.DAT transaction 3SG.NF=do 3SG.NF=get  
 ‘He bought a book for me.’  
 \* ‘He sold my book.’

We have now surveyed the main uses of what we are calling ‘adjunct nominals’ in Skou. This label is used because on the one hand these words do are more related to nouns than to any other word class, and on the other hand their function is as a sort of ‘adjunct’ to the verb. An alternative explanation, not ruled out here, is that we are, in some cases at least, dealing with bipartite verb stems, complex verb/predicate stems that can be interrupted by inflectional material. This possibility is not excluded, but at the same time is not pursued here since, in many cases, the ‘verbal’ and ‘nominal’ elements occur independently, and since the label ‘bipartite stem’ would not adequately delimit the different kinds of complex predicates that are found in Skou. Further discussion on this point can be found in 7.8. We have not yet described the formal properties of these ‘adjunct nominal constructions’, and we shall attempt to delimit their use formally following an excursion into the behaviour of similar constructions in other languages of New Guinea.

## 14.2 Adjunct nominals in other languages of New Guinea and its region: a brief survey

Adjunct nominals have been reported widely in various languages of New Guinea and Australia (as well, of course, as elsewhere in the world), functioning essentially as semantic specifiers on verbs that lack a closely defined conceptual structure.<sup>72</sup> The following example from Asmat (Foley 1986: 120) illustrates adjunct nominals specifying an essentially semantic content-free light verb (data from Voorhoeve 1965).

Asmat:

- (17) *po*            *yi-*  
paddle        say-  
‘to paddle’

Ross (1980: 90), discussing adjunct nominal constructions in Dumo (which he calls ‘complement + verb combinations’) allows for three functional conditions that can be used to diagnose the presence of these constructions; any of these are taken to be sufficient to diagnose an adjunct nominal construction:

- a. the morpheme preceding the verb does not otherwise occur as an independent word
- b. the verb is one with a very wide range of meaning and the preceding morpheme therefore plays a major role in determining meaning in context
- c. the morpheme + verb combination itself takes an object

Examples of these three criteria working in adjunct nominal constructions in Dumo are illustrated below (sentences from Ross 1980: 91). In the first example, the only specification of the manner of motion is by the use of the nominal *lɨŋ* ‘walking’, which also appears as part of other nominals, such as *lɨŋdi* ‘road’.<sup>73</sup> This, then, satisfies Ross’ first criterion.

<sup>72</sup> This is a generalisation, but easily true for 99% of all reported examples. Barupu, cited below, is one exception.

<sup>73</sup> The parallels to the Skou case for ‘walk’, with perfectly cognate morphemes, is striking (see 7.5).

Dumo

- (18) *Hé*      *lìŋ*      *ha.*  
 3SG.M    walking    3SG.M.go  
 ‘He walks.’

The next example fulfils Ross’ second criterion: it shows a semantically unspecified light verb ‘do’ with a nominal, *nú* ‘hand’, that combine together to form a semantically noncompositional predicate, ‘fight’. Since *nú* appears in other contexts not associated with fighting, and *hle* also has no implicit specification of fighting, it is only the combination of the inflectable light verb and the semantically contentful nominal that has a meaningful interpretation.

Dumo

- (19) *Hé*      *nú*      *hle.*  
 3SG.M    hand    3SG.M.do  
 ‘He fights.’

The third criterion is demonstrated in (20), in which the existence of the adjunct nominal *sí* ‘arrow’ does not preclude the presence of an affected nominal (here, *díŋ* ‘bird’) that serves as the object of the clause.

Dumo

- (20) *Hé*      *díŋ*      *sí*      *hle.*  
 3SG.M    bird    arrow    3SG.M.do  
 ‘He hunts birds.’

Austin (1982) discusses what he calls ‘cognate objects’ in Australian languages, a grammatical category closer to the adjunct nominal discussed here than to the English grammar notion of cognate object. He points out the fact that, while there can be two nominals in a clause, neither of them behave as one would expect the subject of a bivalent verb to behave, with respect to case marking. Neither of the nominals may take ergative case, or accusative case, for instance.

Examining other languages in New Guinea and beyond, we find that Ross’ criteria define an extreme: the definition offered for Vanimo is that a nominal is not independent, the verb is semantically bleached, and the nominal+verb unit itself takes an object. In addition to a construction meeting this constellation of criteria, which together will incontestably define an adjunct nominal construction, there are also many related constructions which fail to meet one or the other of these criteria. For instance, it might well be that the nominal involved in the construction is attested elsewhere in the language, or that the verb root is not found anywhere else except in this one predicate, making it a moot point as to how semantically (or otherwise) bleached it can be considered. Finally, there are many N+V predicates which are monovalent, in the sense that they do not take objects. Illustrating all of these points is the Skou translation of the Dumo sentence seen in (18); the Skou version is presented here as (21), and as can be seen is both morphologically and syntactically very similar.

- (21) *Ke*      *lòeng*      *ke=k-a.*  
 3SG.NF    ‘road’    3SG.NF=3SG.NF-walk  
 ‘He walks.’

Here we can see clearly that all the lexical morphemes, and their relative positions, are cognate with those seen in Dumo; the only difference is the addition of the pronominal proclitics on the verb in Skou, a morphological addition which is a feature unique to Skou in the close group of

languages to which it is related (see figure 1 in 1.4), though a feature which finds parallels in other, more distantly related languages (see 7.8.1 for some examples). In this predicate, however, unlike the Dumo case the nominal is found freely elsewhere, in the compound *lòengma* ‘path’ (the element *-ma* is not attested elsewhere). The verb, too, is semantically explicit, denoting only walking (or, at the widest sense, movement by leg). Finally, the predicate does not license an object. The Skou construction fails all three of Ross’ criteria, yet it nevertheless involves a non-subject, non-object nominal, and a verb, which together predicate the clause which has *ke* ‘3SG.NF’ as its subject.

T. Mohanan (1995, 1997) describes a similar construction in Hindi, and notes that we can identify two distinct types of nominal + verb predicate in that language, and further types in other south Indian languages, such as Malayalam (see 14.3). In the languages of the Piore river branch of the Macro-Skou family (see 1.4) we find a particularly interesting variant on this construction, that goes completely against the spirit of Ross’ criteria. In these languages there are some NV complex predicates that are composed of a semantically bleached, or semantically underspecified nominal, and a semantically explicit inflecting verb root. Examine the following sentences from Barupu.

Barupu

- (22) *O*            *k-o-ro-na*.  
 ‘feelings’ R-3SG.F-be.happy-1SG.M  
 ‘I<sub>male</sub>’m happy.’
- (23) *O*            *k-o-taipe-na*.  
 ‘feelings’ R-3SG.F-be.sad-1SG.M  
 ‘I<sub>male</sub>’m sad.’
- (24) *O*            *k-ana-kina*.  
 ‘feelings’ R-1SG.M-remember  
 ‘I<sub>male</sub> remember.’

In these sentences the adjunct nominal, *o* ‘feelings’, is the same in all cases: it cannot be taken to be contributing any semantic specification to the predicate. The semantic content is all found in the verb roots, *ro* ‘be happy’, *taipe* ‘be sad’, and *kina* ‘remember’ (which also display different inflectional paradigms, though that is beyond the scope of the discussion here; Donohue 2003a presents the different paradigms). Here the construction is the same, but the putative motivation for the nominal’s presence, providing specific semantic content to an underspecified verb root, cannot be a functional explanation for the construction. Barupu contains more than enough semantically explicit verb roots, but nonetheless many predicates also require an adjunct nominal to be grammatically complete.

The reported paucity of verb roots in Dumo, and the lack of the widespread use of serial verb constructions (at least in reports), necessarily make adjunct nominal constructions a highly productive mechanism in Vanimo. In Skou there are also many adjunct nominal predicates, as seen in the following example. Here both *hí* ‘wash’ and some representation of the water are required for the clause to be judged grammatical. It is possible for a more specific noun than *pa* to be used to satisfy this requirement.

- [NOUN VERB]
- (25) *Nì*    *pa*    *nì=hí*    *tí*.  
 1SG    water 1SG=wash    sea  
 ‘I washed in the sea.’