An Erromangan (Sye) Grammar

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Terry Crowley

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

1	first person	INST	instrumental
2	second person	INSTPRO	instrumental proform
3	third person	INT	interruptive
ACC.PL	plural accompanitive	IRRCOND	irrealis conditional
ACC.SG	singular accompanitive	IT	iterative
ADJ	adjective	LOC	locative
ADV.DEPRIV	adversative deprivative	LOCPRO	loctative proform
AMEL	ameliorative	MAN	manual comitative
BELONG	belonging	MISDIRECT	misdirective
BEN	benefactive	MR	modified root
BEN.DEPRIV	benefactive deprivative	NEG	negative
BR	basic root	NOM	nominalizer
CAUS	causative	NONSG	non-singular
CAUSE	causal	OBL	oblique
CAUSPRO	causative proform	OBLIG	obligatory
CIT	citation root	OPT	optative
COM	comitative	ORD	ordinal
COMP	comparative	PART	partitive
CONST	construct suffix	PASTHAB	past habitual
CONT	continuative	PERF	perfective
COP	copula	PL	plural
COUNT	counterassertive	POSS	possessive constituent
DAT	dative	PREC	precedentive
DEPPAST	dependent past	PRES	present
DESID	desiderative	PRIOR	prior past
DIST	distributive	PURP	purposive
DISTPAST	distant past	Q	polar question
DL	dual	REALCOND	realis conditional
EM	fifth order verbal prefix	RECPAST	recent past
EMOT	emotive	REDUP	reduplication
EMPH	emphatic	REL	relative clause
ES	echo subject	REST	restrictive
EXCL	exclusive	SG	singular
FUT	future	SIM	similitive
IMM	immediate	SIMULT	simultanitive
IMP	imperative	SUBJ	subjunctive
INCL	inclusive	TOP	toponymic
INDEF	indefinite	TR	transitive

MAPS
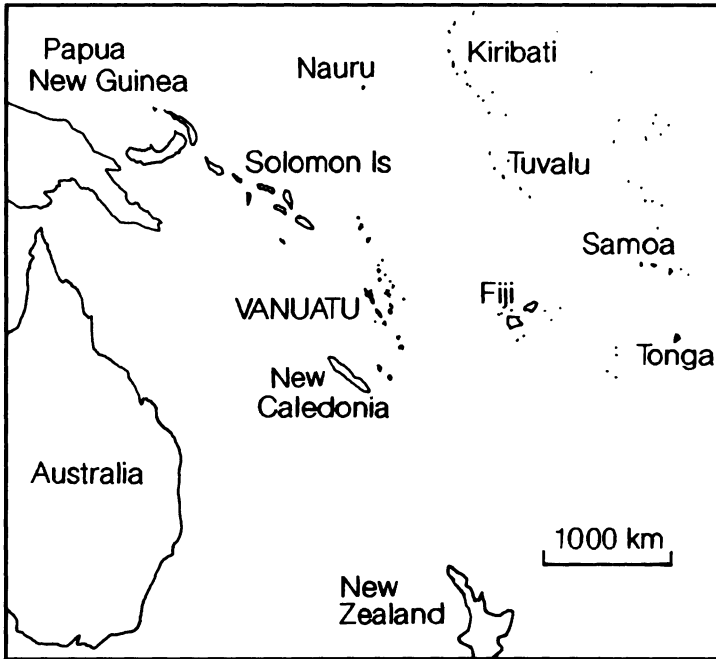
Map 1: Vanuatu in the southwestern Pacific
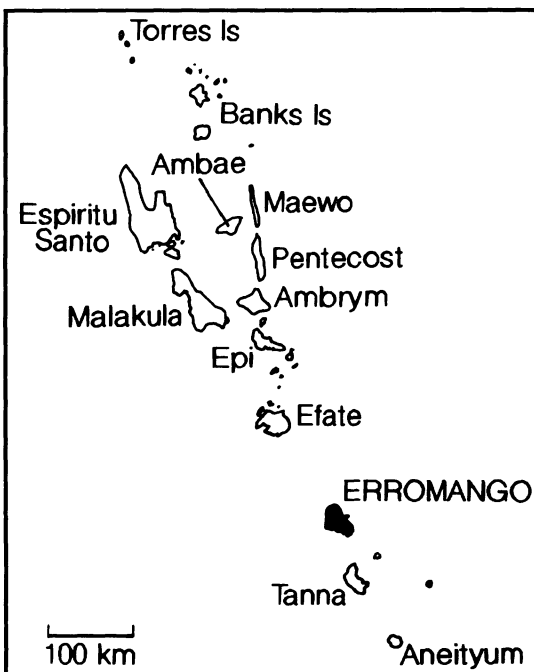
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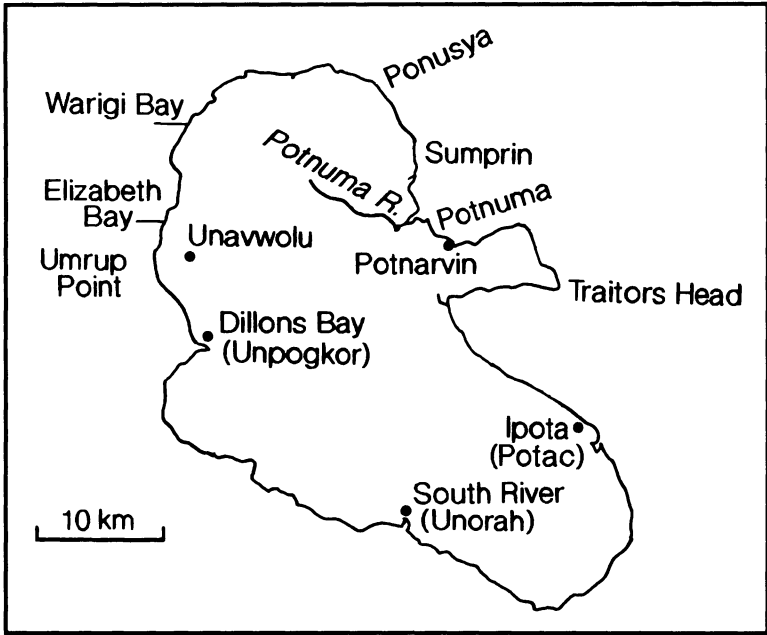
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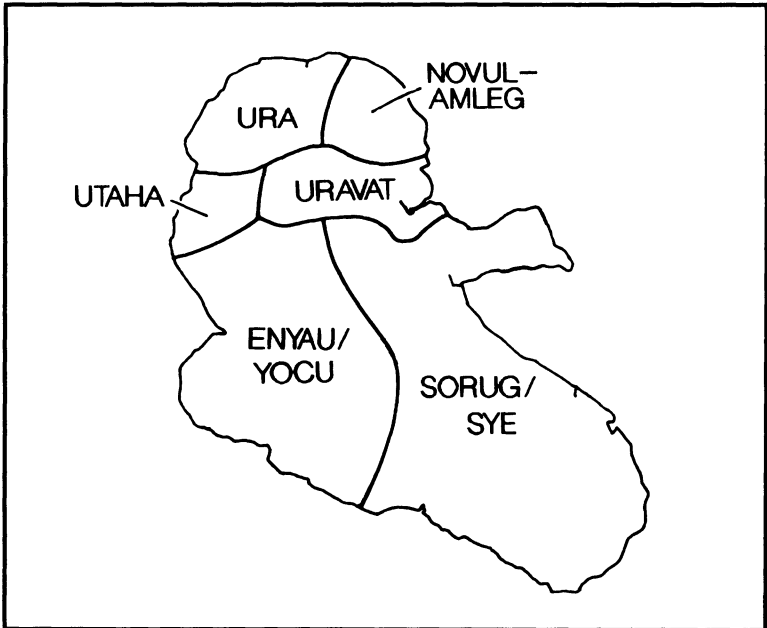
Map 4: Possible original linguistic situation on Erromango

1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Geographical and Demographic Background

This volume presents a description of the language that is currently spoken on the island of Erromango, in southern Vanuatu (Map 2) in the southwestern part of the Pacific (Map 1). Lynch (1983b:3– 9) and Tryon (1976) record the indigenous name of this language as *Sie* (more accurately, *Sye*, given the phonemic shape of the name as /sye/ §2.4.1.2), though few people remember this name now. People on the island these days generally refer to the language simply as *nam Eromaga* /nam eromaŋa/ 'Erromangan language', or as *nam horet* /nam horet/ 'our (INCL) language'. In this volume, I alternate between following the established practice in the literature of referring to the language as *Sye*, and the increasingly common practice among educated local people of referring to it in English simply as *Erromangan*.

Of the islands of southern Vanuatu, Erromango is the closest to Efate, which is where Vila, the capital, is located (Map 2). The neighboring island to the south is Tanna. Erromango (Map 3) is a relatively large island (887 km²), which makes it about the same area as Efate. Of all the islands of Vanuatu, only Espiritu Santo and Malakula are greater in area.

Despite its size, however, Erromango has only a small population. According to the 1989 census figures, the total population was 1254, giving it one of the lowest population densities of all inhabited islands in Vanuatu, with only 1.4 people/km². This compares with Tanna, which had a population density at the same census of 35.3 people/km².

Of the total recorded population of Erromango, only a fairly small number of people originate from elsewhere.[1] Given that there is a small number of people from Erromango living outside Erromango (especially in Vila), The total number of people who speak Erromangan is estimated at around 1400.

1.2 The Linguistic Situation on Erromango

Erromango was originally linguistically quite diverse, with the extent of diversity possibly being similar to that found on Tanna today, where five quite distinct languages are spoken. Resulting from the massive depopulation on Erromango in the nineteenth century, there was a major realignment of languages. Lynch (1983b:3– 9), Taki and Tryon (1994) and Crowley (1997) discuss the original distribution of languages on the island, at least as far as this can be known. There is not full agreement in the conclusions presented in these sources, though uncertainty is unavoidable because of the incomplete nature of earlier sources.

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[1] Outsiders on the island include a number of Tannese settlers, a small number of government employees and some logging company workers.

My own conclusions are that there were definitely three distinct languages on Erromango prior to European contact. There was possibly a fourth language, though this speech form may have been a dialectal variant of one of the other languages. There have been suggestions about several other possible languages, though no concrete evidence is available to either substantiate or refute these claims. Map 4 presents the distribution of languages of Erromango in the mid-nineteenth century as argued in Crowley (1997), with the names of the languages given as they were reported in both contemporary sources and modern oral tradition.[2]

Of the original Erromangan languages, the only other language to survive to the present is Ura, which now has only about half a dozen fully competent speakers, all elderly (though numbers of younger people can understand the language, as well as having a more limited active ability). Lynch gathered some material on this language in the 1960s and 1970s, which was published as Lynch (1983c, 1983d).

Jerry Taki and William Mete have both recorded lexical material, as well as a limited amount of grammatical information, on tape and in notebooks, though this has not been made available in published form. This material has been supplemented by a significant amount of new grammatical and lexical information, including textual data, recorded by the present writer. It is anticipated that a substantial grammar and dictionary of Ura will appear in due course.

The Erromangan language today is dialectally fairly homogeneous, with very little difference between varieties spoken at extreme ends of the island. While the pre-contact population of the island has been estimated at around 6,000 (Spriggs and Wickler 1989:72–73, this dropped to fewer than 400 by 1931 (Lynch 1983a). As entire villages became unviable through population loss, people were apparently constantly relocating and reconstituting larger villages, resulting in a geographical mixing of the entire population. Given that this massive demographic change took place in relatively recent historical times, it should not be too surprising that there is little dialect diversity.

Erromangans today are quick to point out that the people of Dillon's Bay and Potnarvin speak differently from each other, and both speak differently from people in the south. In reality, however, apart from relatively low frequency lexical items, geographical differences on the island are minimal (and scarcely show up at all in the textual material that I have recorded from the north). Some of these lexical differences involve a greater use of forms with cognates in Ura among northern speakers than we find in the south.

Grammatical differences between different parts of the island are also minimal, though a tendency for Dillon's Bay speakers to occasionally use a /nu-/ variant of the third person plural distant past prefix (§4.2.2.1.1) instead of the more general /nru-/ or /ru-/ has been noticed. Erromangans also often claim that southern /h/ corresponds to northern /s/. Such an observation was probably valid even

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[2] Putative inland boundaries are shown by dotted lines as sources for the most part only indicate points along the coast which represented linguistic transitions.

until around the turn of the century, but there has since then been a wholesale shift of /s/ to /h/ in the north, and the distribution of the two sounds in my own data is not noticeably different for speakers from any area. Claims about dialectalisms such as this phonological feature, therefore, appear to involve stereotypes, and no longer accurately reflect linguistic reality.

1.3 Previous Work on the Language

The earliest published account of Erromangan languages is Gordon (1889), which describes the Enyau /enyau/ (or Yocu /yoɣu/) language of the nineteenth century in the form of a seventeen-page sketch and vocabulary. This was published post-humously from notes compiled by the author after his period of residence on the island between 1864 and 1872. Von der Gabelentz (1861–1873) produced a short account of the same language on the basis of materials provided by Gordon, and Ray (1926:171–194 produced a sketch, again based on secondhand materials pro-vided by nineteenth century missionaries.

Capell evidently produced a description of the language in the 1920s on the basis of the same materials that Ray used. This sketch was never published, and as far as I know, there is no surviving copy. It is referred to in detail, however, in unpublished correspondence dated 1927 from Dempwolff to Ray, so he had clearly passed copies on to others. In any case, this was superseded by an undated typescript description of nearly eighty pages that Capell produced after a short period of fieldwork in Vanuatu in 1958. This contained many gaps, so he left it unpublished. The only material that Capell ever published on Erromangan was a short account of the phonology and morphophonemics in Capell (1972).

Lynch gathered some new material from speakers of Erromangan in the 1960s and 1970s. His work was carried out with speakers of the language living in Vila and on Tanna at the time. He also felt that his material was not sufficient as the basis for a publishable grammar. However, a description combining the resources of both his and Capell's material was felt to be feasible, and a fairly detailed grammatical sketch of just over sixty pages was published as Lynch and Capell (1983).

Their joint sketch was probably destined to leave many linguistic points un-certain. Capell's description was, after all, based on nineteenth century translated sources, while Lynch's notes were based on the spoken language of a good num-ber of generations later, after a period of massive demographic and linguistic re-alignment. There turned out to be many unresolvable discrepancies between what was recorded by the two writers. On some points, there was also clearly insuffi-cient material in both corpora to produce valid analyses, and some features of the language were not described at all.

Lynch and Capell made it clear at several points in their 1983 publication that their work was to be viewed as provisional, expressing the hope that someone in the future would be able to devote sufficient time to produce a more detailed de-

scription. Where the present account of the language differs from that of Lynch and Capell, it is hoped that readers will be kind enough to remember the provisional nature of many of their earlier statements.

There are other primary sources of linguistic material on Erromangan which provide lexical rather than grammatical information. Turner (1861) provides a list of words that he gathered on a short visit to Dillon's Bay. Robertson (1902) writes a history of the Presbyterian mission on the island, and lexical references are scattered liberally through his text. Humphreys (1926) reports on his anthropological research on the island, and his text again contains quite a number of vocabulary items. Capell produced an unpublished wordlist, which was supplemented by material gathered by Lynch, which resulted in the appearance of a lexicon of about 2000 items (Capell and Lynch 1983). Tryon (1976) also contains lexical information from the standard elicitation list that he used for the purposes of lexicostatistical comparison.

In addition to the grammatical and lexical sources described above, there is a moderate amount of translated biblical material in the language, all of which dates from the work of the nineteenth century missionaries. The most substantial written source is the Erromangan New Testament, which appeared as *Nam nompusak itevau eni Iesu Kristo Novsuromon enogkos* /nam nompusaɣ itvau en yesu kristo novsurmon enoŋkos/, and was published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1909 (with various reprints since then). While these biblical translations are no longer in widespread use, there is an Erromangan hymn book and catechism that is still commonly used (Netaiyi Tagkeli Committee 1992).

The quality of the nineteenth century translations is variable, and many obvious errors are present. Some of these errors appear to have been incorporated into the stylistic repertoire of modern Erromangans as features to be imitated in producing written ecclesiastical materials.

1.4 The Present Study

This description of Erromangan is based primarily on material gathered from a wide variety of speakers by the present writer over about six months in the field during the period 1995–1996. Additional data was gathered less intensively over about twenty-one months between 1994–1996 from Edward Nalial and Harry Umpkon in New Zealand, as well as a substantial body of previously untranscribed and untranslated oral tradition recorded on tape by Sempet Naritantop and Narai Saniel between 1976 and 1982 and held on deposit in the Vanuatu Cultural Centre. The resulting textual corpus of about 30,000 words comes from villages over most of the island.

Chapter 2 describes the phonology of the language. The morphological behavior of nouns is described next. This is followed by a discussion of the complex patterns of verbal morphology, and there is then a chapter describing the morphology of minor word classes, such as adjectives, adverbs and prepositions. The

internal structure of the nominal, verbal and prepositional phrases is described next, followed by a chapter describing simple sentence structures. The final chapter describes complex sentences. I include at the end an illustrative text, with both interlinear glosses and a free translation.

The primary motivation in this grammar has been the clear presentation of data such that it can be translated into a variety of linguistic models according to the interests of individual readers. Rather than attempting to describe all aspects of the language within the confines of a single model, I have adopted a variety of approaches. The segmental phonology, for example, is presented initially in fairly traditional taxonomic phonemic terms, though morphological alternations are accounted for in terms of underlying representations and rules of morphophonemic derivation.

Structures at the phrase, clause and sentence level are described in a syntactically based rather than semantically based approach in that categories and structures are determined primarily on the basis of the co-occurrence possibilities with other categories and structures. This taxonomic approach draws on terminology from a variety of different approaches to syntactic description. For instance, in dealing with the ordering of constituents within phrases, reference may be made to notions such as slots and fillers, though this should not necessarily be taken as meaning that my approach is fundamentally tagmemic. I similarly refer to movement rules, though this should not be taken as meaning that the approach is fundamentally transformational.

It should be pointed out that while the theoretical approach has been deliberately eclectic in order to maximize intelligibility, this grammar is still likely to strike some as rather dense. This is to a large extent unavoidable, as the language itself exhibits some kinds of structural complexities that often make it difficult to discuss or illustrate a particular point in isolation. For this reason, the text of the grammar is liberally provided with cross-references to other relevant sections.

The layout that has been adopted is also one that avoids as much white space as possible. My personal preference would have been to display more material than I have in lists and tabular form in order to make information more visually accessible. However, in order to include as much information as possible on a complex language in the space available, I have had to aim for a visually more dense-looking text. However, the information is still there, even if the reader sometimes has to work a little harder to find it.

1.5 Typological Overview

Sye—along with those remaining Erromangan languages for which we have adequate information—is a member of the Southern Vanuatu subgrouping of Oceanic languages (Lynch 1995). These languages are distinguished typologically from languages of the neighboring North Central Vanuatu subgroup in that they are morphologically relatively complex.

The phoneme inventory is fairly straightforward, though the phonotactic patterns of Erromangan allow for a considerable variety of consonant clusters word-medially, and to a lesser extent, also initially and finally. There is also a considerable amount of morphophonemic alternation, which means that surface forms frequently look quite different to the underlying forms that we need to set up. While there is only a five-way vowel contrast on the surface, we need to set up a sixth underlying vowel in order to account for morphophonemic alternations.

With regard to word classes, Sye is typologically fairly typical for an Oceanic language in terms of both the number and type of classes that are needed, as well as the extent of multifunctionality. In its derivational morphology, Sye is also fairly typical in that it makes productive use of prefixes and compounding, and less productive use of suffixes. While reduplication is attested, it seems to be much less frequently used than is the case in other Oceanic languages. There is, however, a considerable amount of inflectional suffixation in the nominal, verbal and prepositional morphology.

One of the particular characteristics of the nominal morphology of Sye is the lack of separately marked possessive constructions for a variety of alienable categories, such as food and drink possession, such as we typically find in Oceanic languages. However, Sye does have separate constructions which are typically associated with the expression of alienable and inalienable possession. Another notable feature of the nominal morphology is the near categorical marking of number on nouns, and the fact that accompanying adjectives are also marked for number.

It is with respect to the inflectional morphology of verbs that we find the greatest area of morphological complexity in the language. As is common in Oceanic languages, subjects are marked by means of verbal prefixes, while objects are marked with verbal suffixes. There is a large number of distinct inflectional sets of subject markers on verbs expressing a variety of tense-aspect-mood categories. Not only is this an unusually large number of inflectional categories, but many of these categories are discontinuously marked by combinations of morphotactically separate prefixes for which the constituent forms do not always have definable meanings of their own.

A salient feature of the verb morphology of Erromangan languages is the presence of complex patterns of root-initial mutation, with different root forms being determined by the nature of the preceding morphological environment. This represents a point of typological contrast with the other Southern Vanuatu languages, which otherwise have invariant root forms. In this respect, Sye shares a point of similarity with the languages of Central Vanuatu, though the patterns in these languages are different in some significant respects.

Sye is a well-behaved SVO language in that it has prepositions, as well as postmodifying adjectives within the noun phrase. It is somewhat unusual in that it has a fairly large set of prepositions. It differs from Oceanic languages in that the widespread patterns of serial verbs are largely absent. However, Sye—along with the other languages of the Southern Vanuatu subgroup—has what we can refer to

as an echo subject construction, in which a verb that has the same subject as the preceding verb is marked with a special reduced set of prefixes which replace the full set of subject prefixes. This construction is clearly derived diachronically from coordinate constructions, in which coordinating morphology has replaced the subject marking morphology on verbs.

2: PHONOLOGY

2.1 Phoneme Inventory

The phoneme inventory of Erromangan is on the whole unexceptional in comparison with other Southern Vanuatu languages, having a similar range of phonemic contrasts to Lenakel (Lynch 1978:7–14), and a somewhat smaller inventory than is found in Anejom (Lynch 1982:95–98).

2.1.1 Consonants

The main differences between the phoneme inventories of the languages of Southern Vanuatu involve consonants. Erromangan differs from the languages of Tanna and Aneityum in not having phonemically contrastive labio-velars, and it also lacks the palatal consonants and the dental fricative that we find in Anejom.

2.1.1.1 Contrasts

The consonant contrasts in Erromangan are set out in Table 2.1. Stops are articulated phonetically as voiceless stops at the bilabial [p], alveolar [t], and velar [k] points of articulation respectively. They are quite noticeably aspirated word-finally, though they are much less aspirated, or completely unaspirated, in other positions. In homorganic nasal-stop clusters before liquids, we find voiced realizations in free variation with voiceless variants. We therefore find allophonic variation for /t/ such as the following:

/tali/	[tali]	'shadow'
/ntau/	[ntau]	'native lychee'
/tanti/	[tanti]	'stop!'
/norunt/	[norunt^h]	'our arms'
/nentrap/	[nentrap^h ~ nendrap^h]	'hibiscus'

The fricative /v/ can be realized as [v], [f] or [β]. For some individuals, /v/ is invariably realized as [v]. For others, [v] is in free variation with either [f] or [β], or all three are in free variation together. For yet others, [f] is preferred word-initially and [β] intervocalically before rounded vowels, with [v] being preferred elsewhere. Lynch and Capell (1983:13–18) state that /v/ and /f/ constitute separate phonemes, though their proposed /f/ clearly had only a low functional load. Southern speakers typically stereotype the speech of the north as being characterized by a lot of [f]-pronunciations in places where southerners pronounce [v]. It appears, however, that there is simply a greater incidence of [f] realizations for

Table 2.1 Consonant Contrasts

	Labial	Alveolar	Velar	Glottal
Stop	p	t	k	
Fricative	v	s	ɣ	h
Nasal	m	n	ŋ	
Lateral		l		
Trill		r		
Glide	(w)	y	(w)	

intervocalic /v/ in the north than in the south, and that there is, in fact, no phonemic contrast in either variety of the language.[1]

In most environments, /s/ is pronounced as a voiceless grooved post-alveolar fricative, that is [s]. However, after /t/ it is pronounced as a voiceless grooved palato-alveolar fricative, that is [ʃ]. Thus:

/susu/	[susu]	'fantail'
/sanwis/	[sanwis]	'wild boar'
/ɣompensat/	[ɣompensatʰ]	'it stank'
/itsoŋku/	[itʃoŋku]	'whole'
/ntsaɣ/	[ntʃaɣ]	'uphill slope'

The fricative /ɣ/ is articulated as the voiced velar fricative [ɣ] in all environments, while /h/ is realized as a voiceless glottal fricative, that is [h]. There are three phonemically contrastive nasals, that is the bilabial nasal realized as [m], the alveolar nasal realized as [n], and the velar nasal realized as [ŋ]. The phoneme /l/ is an alveolar lateral, phonetically [l]. All of these sounds exhibit little noticeable allophonic variation.

The phoneme /r/ is realized in most environments as an apico-alveolar tap or light trill, and is represented phonetically as [r]. However, after the homorganic nasal /n/, it is realized as a voiced alveolar stop, that is [d]. Thus:

/retpon/	[retpon]	'his wife'
/yoroh/	[yoroh]	'morning star'
/mran/	[mran]	'tomorrow'
/nrau/	[ndau]	'heliconia'
/navwanr/	[navwand]	'bubble'
/emenroŋ/	[emendoŋ]	'rest!'

Finally, there are two glides. The glide /w/ is produced with simultaneous raising of the back of the tongue towards the velar area of articulation and

[1] In closely related Ura, however, /f/ and /v/ do contrast.

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rounding of the lips, while /y/ is produced by raising the middle of the tongue to-
wards the hard palate, with no simultaneous involvement of the lips. With se-
quences of high vowels followed by a homorganic glide and a following mid
vowel with the same lip-rounding as the glide—that is /iye/ and /uwo/—the glide
optionally has zero realization. Thus, /maliye/: [maliye ~ malie] 'kind of yam' and
/nompuwo/: [nompuwo ~ nompuo] 'island'.

The following pairs illustrate these consonant distinctions:

/p/ and /v/	[npatʰ]	'ignorant'	[nvatʰ]	'stone'
/t/ and /s/	[tau]	'not'	[sau]	'spear'
/k/ and /ɣ/	[kawor]	'you argued'	[ɣawor]	'(s)he argued'
/h/ and /ɣ/	[yoroh]	'morning star'	[yoroɣ]	'you couldn't do it'
/h/ and /s/	[heni]	'his, her, its'	[seni]	'cover it!'
	[nmah]	'death'	[nmas]	'large'
/h/ and /Ø/	[hai]	'one'	[ai]	'blunt'
	[tehwoh]	'role-model'	[tehwo]	'lean'
/m/ and /n/	[norum]	'your hand'	[norun]	'his/her hand'
/n/ and /ŋ/	[nvan]	'his/her thigh'	[nvaŋ]	'food'
/l/ and /r/	[nal]	'mud'	[nar]	'boundary marker'
/r/ and /ɣ/	[norum]	'your hand'	[noɣum]	'coconut sheath'
/w/ and /v/	[wai]	'step on it!'	[vai]	'take it!'

2.1.1.2 The Status of /t/ and /r/

According to the allophony set out in §2.1.1.1, the contrast between /t/ and /r/ with
an immediately preceding /n/ appears phonetically as a constrast between phonetic
voiceless and voiced alveolar stops respectively. Thus:

/ntau/	[ntau]	'native lychee'	/nrau/	[ndau]	'heliconia'
/nompunt/	[nompuntʰ]	'our heads'	/nompunr/	[nompund]	'their eads'
/tanti/	[tanti]	'stop!'	/tanri/	[tandi]	'miss it!'

Given this distribution of [t] and [d], there are several plausible competing
phonemic analyses. Lynch and Capell (1983:13–21), for example, treated [nt]
and [nd] as involving a phonemic contrast between the consonant cluster /nt/
and a prenasalized voiced alveolar stop unit phoneme /d/. According to this
analysis, /nrau/ would be phonemicized as /dau/, /nompunr/ as /nompud/, and
/tanri/ as /tadi/. The main rationale for this analysis appears to have been the
simplification that this allowed in the statement of the phonotactics. In Lynch
and Capell's data, [nd] sequences were most frequently encountered word-
initially, while initial consonant clusters were otherwise sufficiently rare as to
be effectively non-existent. By treating [nd] as the unit phoneme /d/, they were able
to reduce the complexity in the statement of the word-initial phonotactics.

With the broader lexical sample upon which the present discussion is based, it is clear that the phonotactic arguments proposed by Lynch and Capell cannot so easily be sustained. There is, in fact, a significant number of examples of roots with initial consonant clusters other than [nd], while the range of types of clusters is also somewhat wider than Lynch and Capell had recorded. Rather than being marginal in the phonotactics, word-initial consonant clusters clearly represent a basic pattern (§2.4.1.3).

It would also be plausible to treat both [nt] and [nd] as reflecting phonemic clusters, and to argue for a contrast between distinct voiced and voiceless alveolar stops. Thus, [ndau] 'heliconia' would appear phonemically as /ndau/, while [ntau] 'lychee' would be /ntau/. However, positing contrastive /t/ and /d/ would involve an additional phoneme in the consonant inventory, which would then be asymmetrical, as there is no evidence for corresponding contrast at other places of articulation. The phoneme /d/ would be phonotactically aberrant in that it would be the only consonant which appears only with a preceding homorganic nasal. Finally, with a solution involving /nd/, the phonotactics would also have to be written specifically to prohibit the sequence /nr/ (§2.4.1.5).

An analysis whereby [nd] is treated as /nr/ allows us to simplify the statement of the phonotactics in that the latter idiosyncratic statement about the lack of /nr/ would no longer be needed. This would also allow a more general use of the rule which causes underlying sequences of /nr/ to be realized as [nd]. With roots beginning with /r-/ carrying the nominalizing prefix /n-/ (§3.2.1.1), the resulting sequence of /nr-/ is realized as [nd-]. Thus, /rovoh/: [rovoh] 'clear garden site', which is related to the nominalization /n-rovoh/: [ndovoh] 'clearing garden site'. When such verbs accrete /n-/ in environments which call for the modified form of the root (§4.1), we find the same kind of alternation between [r] and [nd]. Thus, compare /yi-rovoh/: [yi-rovoh] '(s)he cleared the garden site' and /γo-nrovoh/: [γo-ndovoh] '(s)he will clear the garden site', in which the former involves the basic root and the latter involves the modified root.

2.1.1.3 The Status of /h/ and /s/

The minimal pairs in §2.1.1.1 make the contrast between /h/ and /s/ appear straightforward. However, the situation is complicated by massive variation between [h] and [s] in the corpus. Lynch and Capell (1983:19–20) reported that the status of these sounds was problematic as a sound change was in progress, with original /s/ shifting to /h/. They suggested that any instance of [s] can be accepted with an [h] pronunciation and vice versa, even though many words are preferred by individuals (or even the whole speech community) with /s/ or /h/ pronunciations. The minimal pairs presented earlier were therefore based on frequently attested variants rather than universally accepted pronunciations. For instance, while [nmah] 'death' can be contrasted with [nmas] 'large', it is still possible for both pronunciations to be associated with both meanings.

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Some words appear to be more amenable to this kind of free variation than others. Thus, only [sau]—and never [hau]—has been spontaneously attested for 'spear', while only [noɣwoh]—and never [noɣwos]—has been encountered for 'octopus'. When questioned explicitly, however, speakers of the language will accept both [sau] and [hau] 'spear', as well as both [noɣwoh] and [noɣwos] 'octopus'.

The situation regarding this kind of "free" variation is more complicated than was suggested by Lynch and Capell, as there is also some phonological conditioning involved in the distribution of these sounds. There is, in fact, almost no choice as to what sound can be produced when there is an adjacent consonant. As the second member of an intervocalic consonant cluster, we almost exclusively find [s], while as the first member of such clusters, we almost exclusively find [h]. The following forms are therefore invariant with [h]: [ehri] 'split', [nehkil] 'snake' and [nehɣon] 'kind of breadfruit'. The following, however, invariably appear with [s]: [ndansu] 'always', [nemsoŋ] 'fork in tree' and [noɣsam] 'kind of tree'.

However, there is a very small number of exceptions to these two generalizations. The word /nemhaɣavu/ 'hernia' has only been attested with [-mh-], and the verb meaning 'see' is generally pronounced with [-ɣh-], though [-ɣs-] appears as a very occasional variant. Thus, [ɣoɣhi] '(s)he saw it' is more frequently encountered than [ɣoɣsi]. Also, two traditional personal names have been attested with [-ɣh-] and never [-ɣs-], that is [naɣhan] and [telyoɣhi]. There is also a single exception to the generalization that pre-consonantally we find only [h], that is the benefactive marker, which alternates freely between [nihɣo-] and [nisɣo-].

While any instance of [s] can be substituted with [h], subject to the phonological and lexical conditioning factors just set out, the reverse is not true. This means that there are some instances of [h] which are never pronounced as [s], that is exponents of the possessive paradigm of which /henyau/ 'my' is the first person singular form (§4.5.1.1.1), which can never be pronounced as [*senyau].

Examples cited in this study with /h/ or /s/ are presented on the basis of the variant which is most widely encountered, or which is categorically required, though this solution obviously entails a considerable amount of arbitrariness in practical terms.

2.1.1.4 The Status of /Cw/ Clusters

Lynch and Capell (1983:13–21) set up a separate series of velarized labials in words such as /pʷaɣah/ 'day' and /amʷap/ 'yawn'. Their justification for this treatment was again basically phonotactic, in that this allowed a simplification in the statement of the consonant clusters, especially word-initially.

However, it was stated in §2.1.1.2 that there is a wider range of consonant clusters than Lynch and Capell were aware of, which significantly reduces the validity of this argument. There is also a wide range of clusters involving initial non-labial consonants and following /w/, in forms such as /alwo-/ '(man's)

nephew or niece', /itetwai/ 'long time ago', /noɣwoh/ 'octopus', /amiswo/ 'sneeze'. If we are to treat velarized labials as unit phonemes, then we should extend this analysis to velarized forms of all consonants which appear in Table 2.4 in such clusters. This would involve adding an unacceptably large number of additional segments to the consonant inventory. Thus, the preferred analysis is to treat these simply as consonant clusters, that is /pwaɣah/ 'day' and /amwap/ 'yawn' respectively.

2.1.2 Vowels

The main difference between the vowel systems of the languages of the Southern Vanuatu grouping lies in the status of the mid (or high) central vowel. This vowel is absent in Anejom, and present in the languages of Tanna. In Erromangan, however, while there is evidence for an underlying contrastive schwa, it does not contrast at the surface level of representation.

2.1.2.1 Contrasts

The underlying vowel inventory in Erromangan is set out in Table 2.2. Although there are six underlying vowel contrasts in Erromangan, this set of contrasts is realized on the surface, however, as a five-way contrast, with no contrastive schwa being found at the surface level of representation. Vowel length is not phonemically contrastive, as in Lenakel (Lynch 1978:11–14), rather than Anejom, where phonemically long vowels are found (Lynch 1982:97–98). While phonetically lengthened vowels have been heard occasionally in Erromangan, these represent optionally slightly lengthened pronunciations of stressed vowels in open syllables, or syllables closed by nasals in disyllabic roots.

The front vowels are articulated with spread lips, while the back vowels are rounded. The only noticeable allophonic variation involves the high back rounded vowel /u/, which has a noticeably lower allophone word finally before /ɣ/, midway between [ʊ] and [o] (though for the sake of convenience this will be represented below simply as [ʊ]). Thus, /netukus/: [netukus] 'salt' and /nenruɣ/: [nendʊɣ] 'garden'.

Evidence for phonemic constrasts involving vowels other than schwa is presented in the form of the following minimal pairs:

/i/ and /e/	[novli]	'sore'	[novle]	'rudderfish'
/e/ and /a/	[ousep]	'leave'	[ousap]	'flood'
/o/ and /a/	[ovorvori]	'drill into'	[ovorvari]	'uncontrollable'
/o/ and /u/	[orŋi]	'hear it!'	[urŋi]	'you all hear it!'

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Table 2.2 Underlying Vowel Contrasts

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

The status of underlying schwa is indicated by the following contrastive pairs:

/ə/ and /e/	/ntovən-/	'because of'	/teven/	'his/her great grandparent'
/ə/ and /o/	/orəŋ-/	'hear, feel'	/oroŋ/	'big'
/ə/ and /a/	/etəv-/	'shoot'	/etav-/	'pick (fruit)'
/ə/ and /i/	/ntovən-/	'because of'	/tovit/	'terrace on escarpment'
/ə/ and /u/	/etər-/	'pierce'	/etur/	'stand'

Contrast between the high vowels and corresponding glides is indicated by:

/u/ and /w/	[ɣuiti]	'they tied it'	[ɣwitis]	'they smiled'
/i/ and /y/	[mali(y)e]	'kind of yam'	[sye]	'language name'

2.1.2.2 The Status of Schwa

Schwa appears in the phonetic data—always pronounced without stress—though its occurrence is completely predictable, so in these environments it has no separate phonemic status, as indicated in the previous section. Phonetic schwa only occurs—and then in alternation with both zero and a phonetically non-syllabic vowel that echoes a mid vowel in a preceding syllable—between either /h/ or /ɣ/ and another consonant, or between any consonant and either /ŋ/ or /ɣ/. Thus:

/nehkil/	[nehkil ~ nehəkil ~ neh^{e}kil]	'snake'
/elɣavi/	[elɣavi ~ eləɣavi ~ el^{e}ɣavi]	'hold it'
/nempŋon/	[nempŋon ~ nempəŋon ~ nemp^{e}ŋon]	'time'
/moɣpon/	[moɣpon ~ moɣəpon ~ moɣ^{o}pon]	'his/her grandchild'
/ɣanrŋi/	[ɣandŋi ~ ɣandəŋi]	'(s)he will hear it'
/yaɣpon/	[yaɣpon ~ yaɣəpon]	'egret'

Word-initial clusters of /n-/ followed by a heterorganic consonant are occasionally pronounced with an intervening unstressed schwa, though only when the word is produced very carefully in isolation. Thus, /nmar/: [nmar ~ nəmar] 'breadfruit' and /nvaŋ/: [nvaŋ ~ nəvaŋ] 'food'.

Although phonetic schwa is present in the corpus, the evidence for the existence of a separate underlying schwa phoneme is of a quite different nature. Underlying /ə/ is in fact never realized on the surface as such, being recognized on the basis of surface alternations between zero and /o/ (or, with some speakers, an alternation between zero and /e/) according to the conditions presented in §2.5.1.2.7. This results in surface alternations such as we find in the third person singular distant past subject form of the transitive verb /tenəm-/ 'bury' with a variety of object suffixes (§4.3.1.1), as set out in Table 2.3. This rule is also involved in the paradigm for the morphologically irregular bound noun /etemayəh-/ 'in-law' (§3.2.2.2), and the verbal preposition /ntovən-/ 'because of' (§5.2).

Given the abstractness of this analysis, we should investigate the possibility of alternative analyses. Two possiblities suggest themselves. First, the underlying root of alternating /tenm- ~ tenom-/ 'bury' could be /tenm-/, with a phonologically conditioned rule of /o/-insertion. Such a solution would require verb roots to be set up with a wide range of final consonant clusters. Apart from such forms, however, the only permissible morpheme-final consonant clusters are /-nt/ and /-nr/ (§2.4.1.4). Just for suffixed transitive verbs, as well as a single noun and a single preposition, we would also need to allow for a much wider range of final clusters, including even three-member clusters for forms such as /sentv-/ 'wipe' (which, by the preferred analysis, is underlyingly /sentəv-/).

This difficulty is avoided if such alternations are analyzed as containing an underlying vowel between the final two consonants of the root. Such an analysis is consistent with what we know of historical developments. The form /orəŋ-/ 'hear', for example, is phonotactically closer to a reconstructible disyllabic ancestral form than is /orŋ-/.

A second possible solution would be to treat these alternating forms as containing underlying /o/, which undergoes vowel deletion. This solution is not viable either because of the contrasting behavior of verbs such as /ovol-/ 'turn', which differ from verbs such as /tenəm-/ in that the /o/ of the final syllable of /ovol-/ is invariably present, and does not alternate with zero. Thus, compare the paradigmatic alternations between /tenom-yau/ 'bury me!' and /tenm-i/ 'bury him/her!' on the one hand, and /ovol-yau/ 'turn me!' and /ovol-i/ 'turn him/her!' on the other. Apart from this, we would have to account for the fact that some instances of /o/ appear invariably as such, while other instances of /o/ appear as /e/ in the speech of those individuals for whom underlying schwa can have a front rather than back realization.

The only plausible suggestion, then, is to argue that there is a sixth underlying vowel, which is needed solely to account for these kinds of alternations. On structural grounds, the best candidate for an additional vowel is schwa, in that this results in a symmetrical vowel inventory, and the schwa also shares the same specification for midness as /o/ (as well as the occasional surface realization /e/). The closely related languages of Tanna also all have six vowels, in which the sixth vowel lies in the central area.

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Table 2.3 Surface Realizations of /ə/ in /tenəm-/ 'bury'

	SG		PL
1	/yi-tenom-yau/	INCL	/yi-tenom-γoh/
		EXCL	/yi-tenom-γam/
2	/yi-tenm-oγ/		/yi-tenom-γum/
3	/yi-tenm-i/		/yi-tenm-or/

2.2 Word-Initial Reduction

Many vowel-initial words exhibit systematic variation with consonant-initial forms, with alternations being accounted for by the following general statements:

(a) With forms of three syllables or more beginning with /VmpV-/, the initial /Vm-/ can be deleted. With trisyllables in which the intervocalic sequence of /-mp-/ is followed by a consonant, as well as with all disyllables, this deletion is blocked. We therefore encounter alternations such as /umpelvi ~ pelvi/ 'whale' and /umpatmonuγ ~ patmonuγ/ 'heart'. Note, however, /umpruɲu ~ *pruɲu/ 'flu' and /umpap ~ *pap/ 'kind of fish'.

(b) With trisyllabic (or longer) forms beginning with /VCV-/, the initial vowel can be deleted. Thus, /orenvau ~ renvau/ 'cottonwood', /isuma ~ suma/ 'that's all', /ulakih ~ lakih/ 'rat', but /uŋkut ~ *ŋkut/ 'river crab'.

(c) With trisyllabic (or longer) forms beginning with vowels followed by the clusters /nt/, /nr/ or /sw/, the initial vowel can be deleted, for example /inrowi ~ nrowi/ 'always', /untemne ~ ntemne/ 'village', /uswotu ~ swotu/ 'name of passage through reef', but /untoγ ~ *ntoγ/ 'in the sea'.

(d) With disyllables of the shape /VCVVC/, the initial vowel can be deleted. Thus, /itais ~ tais/ 'grandfather' and /orait ~ rait/ 'vine', but /uyou ~ *you/ 'grandmother' and /unrai ~ *nrai/ 'kind of cicada'.

These rules can also apply to inflected or derived forms that carry vowel-initial prefixes. This means that the locational derivational prefix /u-/ on disyllabic (or longer) nouns beginning with /nV-/ (§3.2.1.1), can have zero realization, while the third person singular verbal prefix /am-/ in the present tense of verbs (§4.2.2.7) can lose its vowel to become simply /m-/. Thus: /unenruγ ~ nenruγ/ 'in the garden' and /amampaŋ ~ mampaŋ/ '(s)he is eating'.

There is yet another pattern of alternation affecting words beginning with /nt-/. Of the clusters permitted word-initially, /nt-/ is the one that is by far the most frequently attested (§2.4.1.3). Any form with this initial sequence freely alternates in isolation, and in connected speech after a preceding consonant, with a simple

/t-/. In connected speech with a preceding vowel, however, the underlying sequence /nt-/ is pronounced intact. Thus, /ntample/ 'island cabbage' alternates with /tample/. One effect of this alternation is that with verb roots beginning with the segment /t-/, the nominalizing prefix /n-/ is frequently realized as zero, as described in §3.2.1.1.

2.3 Stress

Primary stress is invariably found on the penultimate syllable. In words of four syllables or more, a secondary stress attaches to the preceding syllable but one. Thus, ['nvat] 'stone', ['movoɣ] 'outrigger pole', [na'lintoɣ] 'lobster' and ["sesi'maŋsi] 'index finger'. Word-final diphthongs are treated as single syllables for the purpose of syllable-counting in stress assignment. Thus, ['nikau] 'freshwater prawn', ['ponei] 'kind of lizard' and ['nompwau] 'cloud'. Diphthongs also receive stress as single syllabic units. Thus, ['nouran] 'his/her bone' and [nov'laivin] 'its tail'.

Stress is applied after all morphophonemic processes, so it does not necessarily attach to root syllables only, as affixed syllables can also be stressed. Syllabic material that appears within roots as a result of morphophonemic processes is also counted in the normal way for stress assignment purposes. Compare the following paradigmatically related forms of the underlying root /orəŋ/ 'hear' in its surface manifestations /oroŋ/ and /orŋ/, with accompanying affixes: [ɣo'roŋyau] '(s)he heard me', ['ɣoŋoɣ] '(s)he heard you', [ɣo'ɣoŋi] 'I heard it' and [ɣoɣor'ŋisu] 'I have heard it already'.

2.4 Phonotactics

While the segmental phonology of Erromangan is relatively straightforward, the phonotactics of the language is undeniably messy. Many phonotactic generalizations appear to be subject to seemingly unsystematic exceptions, and there is some evidence that this messiness is evidence of phonological changes in the final stages of progress.

2.4.1 Intramorphemic Possibilities

The phonotactic possibilities within and between roots in Erromangan are in many respects significantly different, so there will be separate discussion of intramorphhemic and intermorphemic phonotactics.

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2.4.1.1 Syllabicity

Morphologically simple free forms can have the minimal shape of just a single syllable, either open or closed, with or without a consonantal onset, for example /nu/ 'water', /kik/ 'you', /o/ 'yes', /am/ 'speak!'. Monosyllabic roots constitute only a small proportion of the lexicon, with a substantial proportion of these being grammatical or other non-lexical items, that is pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions or interjections.

The vast majority of roots are disyllabic and trisyllabic, with the total proportion of such roots accounting for just over 85% of the lexicon. There is a relatively small number of longer roots which appear to be synchronically unanalyzable. However, many roots of four syllables or longer contain repeated elements, which suggests the possibility of diachronic reduplication, for example /kirkiri/ 'beads'. The longest attested synchronically unanalyzable roots contain five syllables. The following figures indicate the proportions of roots according to the number of syllables over the entire lexicon: monosyllables 3.4%, disyllables 52.18%, trisyllables 33.41%, quadrisyllables 10.58% and quinquesyllables 0.43%.

2.4.1.2 Vowel and Glide Sequences

Roots can contain no more than two vowels in sequence, with the only sequences permitted intramorphemically being non-high vowels followed by high vowels. There is only a single exception to this generalization, as predicted /eu/ is not permitted.[2] This generalization excludes the possibility of like vowels. The following illustrate all permitted vowel sequences: /ai/ 'blunt', /alei/ 'lie down', /utɣoi/ 'chin', /nalau/ 'child', /alou/ 'run'. Underlying schwa (§2.1.2.2) has a restricted phonotactic distribution, appearing in only a relatively small number of roots between consonants in the final syllables of forms of two or more syllables.

The glides /y/ and /w/ can be followed by any of the five surface vowels, except that /wu/ is prohibited intramorphemically. We therefore find the following, which illustrate these possibilities root-initially: /yaɣo/ 'marlin', /yelau/ 'penis sheath', /yihi/ 'this', /yomuɣ/ 'mosquito', /yuwi/ 'there', /wane/ 'freshwater mullet', /wemplaŋ/ 'butterfly', /witit/ 'squeezed out grated coconut' and /wolu/ 'sandalwood'.

2.4.1.3 Root-Initial Segments

There are significant differences between the root-initial phonotactics of verbs and non-verbs, so in the discussion which follows, these sections of the lexicon are discussed separately.

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[2] In Ura, however, the sequence /eu/ is permitted, e.g. /ubeu/ 'shark', which compares with Sye /nempou/.

(i) *Non-verbal Roots*

The bulk of the lexicon—nouns and the non-nominal classes of adjectives, prepositions, pronouns and other minor word classes—is subject to a single set of generalizations. Only about ten percent of such roots are vowel-initial, with the only initial vowel that appears at all frequently being /u/. It will also be remembered from §2.2 that many words beginning with vowels are subject to a process of reduction whereby the initial syllable is optionally lost, resulting in many underlyingly vowel-initial forms frequently appearing on the surface with initial consonants.

While all consonants are attested initially, forms beginning with /n/ represent by far the largest single group, accounting for well over half of all noun roots. Historically, this reflects an article that has been reanalyzed as part of the root (though, as will be demonstrated in §3.2.1.4, this is no longer separable from the root synchronically except in a highly restricted set of contexts, and with only a small subset of nouns).

A small proportion of non-verbal roots begin with two-member consonant clusters, and almost all of these are nouns. A variety of initial clusters are permitted, though the most common are those that begin with /n/. The second member in such clusters can be any non-velar consonant, with the further restriction that there can be no root-initial sequences of /*ns-/, /*nh-/ and /*nl-/. The most frequently attested initial clusters are /nt-/ and /nr-/, accounting for over two thirds of all examples of initial /nC-/. The remaining examples of /nC-/ are evenly distributed among roots beginning with /nm-/, /np-/, /nv-/, /ny-/ and /nw-/.

Non-verbal roots can also begin with any of the following sequences: /pr-/, /mr-/, /kr-/, /kl-/, /ml-/, /mn-/, /mt-/, /sy-/, /ty-/ and /sw-/. None of these clusters is attested in more than a small number of examples, with the following representing an exhaustive listing for the corpus:[3] /pruvɣum/ 'morning', /praŋsis/ 'kind of chicken', /mran/ 'tomorrow', /krumpoŋ/ 'kind of banana', /kriŋriŋ/ 'freshwater prawns', /klumit/ 'kind of fish', /mlam/ 'on and on', /mnam/ 'on and on', /mtavin/ 'name of village', /syame/ 'things', /sye ~ tye/ 'what', /swotu/ 'name of passage through reef', /swe/ 'throw off heavy load'. While /ml-/ is attested initially only on the root /mlam/ 'on and on', this sequence appears very frequently as the initial element of the first person plural echo subject prefix on verbs (§4.2.2.1.2), for example /mli-saɣ/ 'and we went up'.

A handful of roots has also been attested with initial /p/ followed by /w/, that is /pwarap/ 'evening', /pwaɣah/ 'daytime', /pwatni/ 'kind of banana'. The corpus contains no examples of root-initial /mw-/ or /vw-/. The lack of initial /mw-/, at least, represents a systematic exclusion, as /u/ is regularly shifted to /w/ after a consonant when there is a following vowel (§2.5.2.4). However, it is regularly deleted between /m/ and a following vowel (§2.5.2.5).

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[3] Some items of these items appear frequently in everyday speech, while others are much less commonly encountered.

There are two three-member root-initial clusters, /nrv-/ and /ntr-/, though only /nrvat/ 'four', /nrve/ 'how much/how many' and /ntrɯ/ 'loya cane' have been attested with these sequences. The form /ntrɯ/ is most frequently encountered with the alternative shape /trɯ/.

Historically, root-initial clusters probably come from a variety of different sources. Sequences of /nC-/ on nouns probably all derive from the loss of the unstressed vowel when the reflex of the original noun phrase marker /*na/ became reanalyzed as part of the nominal root. Earlier /*patu/ 'stone' is clearly recognizable, for example, in /nvat/ 'stone'. Although this derives historically from a disyllable, it now has a monosyllabic pronunciation. The remaining root-initial clusters probably result from the loss of an unstressed root vowel.

Underlying schwa has a restricted phonotactic distribution vis-à-vis the remaining vowels (§2.4.1.2). The initial consonant clusters just described also sit a little uncomfortably in the system as there are relatively few words containing many of these clusters (though collectively, /CC-/ represents a productive phonotactic pattern). Given the observation in §2.1.2.2 that heterorganic initial clusters beginning with /n/ are occasionally attested with intervening schwa, it would be possible to make a case that these phonotactically marked forms contain underlying schwa, which would be subject to general deletion (§2.5.2.7) since they are followed by a /CV/ sequence. Thus, we could postulate underlying forms such as /nəmar/ for [nmar ~ nəmar] 'breadfruit', /nəpaŋ/ for [npaŋ ~ nəpaŋ] 'banyan' and /nrəvat/ for [ndvatʰ ~ ndəvatʰ] 'four'.

However, such an analysis would necessitate further "tidying up" of the phonotactics by inserting underlying schwa in other phonotactically aberrant environments, even though schwa never appears phonetically on the surface. Thus, /pəruvɣum/ 'morning' would always involve zero-realization of the schwa, that is [pruvɣum].

While such an analysis gives schwa a phonotactic distribution that is closer to that of other vowels, as well as reducing the number of permissible underlying consonant clusters word-initially, a number of problems would arise The evidence for underlying schwa in these initial syllables is purely phonotactic, and there is no supporting evidence in the form of morphophonemic alternations such as we find with schwa posited in final syllables. Also, while there is some phonetic evidence for an underlying schwa with initial heterorganic /nC-/ clusters, there is no such phonetic evidence with initial /nt-/ and /nr-/ clusters, as well as the other clusters illustrated above. The only limit on how far we go in positing underlying schwa in such cases appears to be the extent to which we are prepared to simplify the word-initial phonotactic patterns. Finally, positing underlying schwa also has the disadvantage of unravelling arguments about the analysis of [nd] sequences as /nr/ (§2.1.1.2). If this analysis is abandoned, we would be forced to set up a phonotactically aberrant /d/ phoneme.

Because of these problems, it seems best to regard the examples above as representing the synchronic residue of what presumably represents the diachronic source of many initial consonant clusters involving the loss of an earlier schwa (or

other unstressed vowels). For the remainder of this grammar, it is argued that the only instances of underlying schwa which can be synchronically justified are those referred to in §2.5.2.7.

(ii) *Verbal Roots*

Verbal roots differ in their word-initial phonotactics first in that while a small number of non-verbal roots begin with two- and three-member consonant clusters, verbal roots *never* begin with consonant clusters, and second, while non-verbal roots exhibit a very strong preference for initial consonants, verbal roots exhibit an equally strong preference for initial vowels, with about 60% of verbs beginning with vowels. Historically, this difference in phonotactic behavior results from a process of vowel accretion at the beginnings of verbs (Lynch 1992). Non-high vowels are very common initially, while high vowels are much less common. The distribution of initial vowels across a sample of about 1000 verb roots is: /e-/ 23%, /o-/ 18%, /a-/ 16%, /i-/ 2%, /u-/ 1%.

The only consonants which are commonly found verb-initially are /t-/ and /s-/, accounting for 36.5% of roots. Only a small number of verbs (3.5%) begin with all non-velar consonants collectively, that is /p-/, /m-/, /v-/, /r-/, /l-/, /y-/ and /w-/, while there are no roots beginning velar consonants, the fricative /h-/, or the nasal /n-/.

2.4.1.4 Root-Final Segments

Roots of all kinds can end in any vowel, or in any single consonant except the glides /y/ and /w/. Only a handful of roots with word-final consonant clusters have been attested, and these involve only /-nr/ and /-nt/, for example /tavwanr/ 'gush', /etponr/ 'cold', /pokitampent/ 'door'. However, there are three frequently used nominal and verbal suffixes containing the same sequences, which create inflected words ending in these clusters: /-nt/ 'our (inclusive)', /-nr/ 'their' (§3.2.2.2) and /-onr/ 'them' (§4.3.1.1). We therefore find examples of inflected words such as: /noru-nt/ 'our (inclusive) hands', /noru-nr/ 'their hands', /tarwoɣ-onr/ 'remember them!'.

Suffixed transitive verbs, as well as well as other forms accepting the same suffixes that mark verbal objects (§4.3.1.1), that is verbal prepositions (§7.1.3.5) and the irregular bound noun 'brother-in-law' (§3.2.2.2), need to be treated with a separate set of phonotactic statements. Since these forms are obligatorily suffixed, and these suffixes always have the shape of at least a complete additional syllable, the root-final possibilities with such forms are identical to the root-medial possibilities for the lexicon at large. Such roots can therefore end with otherwise forbidden final segments such as /-v/, as in /elɣav-/ 'hold', or consonant clusters such as /-ŋk/, as in /evyoŋk-/ 'leave'.

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2.4.1.5 Intervocalic Consonant Sequences

Intervocalic consonant clusters are quite common. While roots containing no clusters at all constitute 43% of the lexicon, roots containing at least one two-member cluster account for 52% of the total lexicon, and about 5% of roots in the language contain at least one three-member consonant cluster.

It is quite difficult to make definitive statements about permissible intervocalic consonant clusters. It is not always easy to decide on the correct segmentation of some forms with semi-productive morphological processes. The intermorphemic phonotactic possibilities are considerably broader than the intramorphemic possibilities, and it is possible that some such examples may accidentally "contaminate" statements about intramorphemic clusters. The patterns of verb root-initial mutation in certain morphological environments (§4.1.2) also produce intervocalic clusters that are somewhat different from the possibilities for other morphologically simple forms which, although intramorphemic, pattern in some respects more like intermorphemic clusters.

Table 2.4 sets out attested two-member intervocalic consonant clusters, with consonants on the left representing the first consonant, and those across the top representing the second member. Very few patterns emerge out of this table, except that clusters of identical clusters are prohibited. It should also be noted that sequences of /-sC-/ and /-Ch-/ are very rare (as already noted in §2.1.1.3).

Any other observations appear to be specific to single segments or small groups of segments, for example: nasals can be followed by homorganic stops; /p/ and /t/ can be followed by homorganic nasals; or /m/, /v/ and /r/ can be followed by any heterorganic consonant. Some clusters, while indicated as being permissible, are attested in only a handful of forms, for example /-ɣs-/, which only appears in the single word /noɣsam/ 'kind of tree'. While /-kl-/ is indicated as a permissible cluster, it is only attested in the personal name /siklevi/, though it appears frequently in verbal prefixes such as /kokli-/ '1PL:INCL.RECPAST' and /kakli-/ '1PL:EXCL.RECPAST'.

There is also evidence for a somewhat narrower set of intervocalic three-member consonant clusters. The first of these involve homorganic nasal-obstruent sequences followed by the fricative /ɣ/, the nasals /n/ and /ŋ/, the liquids /l/ and /r/, or the glides /w/ and /y/. All of these cluster-final consonants are attested after the sequence /mp/, while more restricted sets of consonants can follow /nt/, /ŋk/ and /nr/. Those patterns that have been attested are set out in Table 2.5. We therefore find roots such as: /empɣu/ 'dance', /wemplaŋ/ 'butterfly', /nompwau/ 'cloud', /nimprau/ 'semen', /naŋkrai/ 'flying fox', /nemenrŋo-/ 'chest'. We also find a small number of words containing the three-member consonant clusters /-pmp-/, /-tnr-/ and /-hnr-/, for example /nipmpenr/ 'kind of plant', /yapmpirai/ 'kind of shellfish', /titnrit/ 'kind of cicada', /etnroɣ/ 'gnash teeth', /yahnror-/ 'pull out'.

Three-member consonant clusters are not made up simply by juxtaposing permissible two-member clusters around a medial consonant that can appear in both cluster-initial and cluster-final position. An examination of the set of three mem

Table 2.4 Two-Member Intramorphemic Consonant Clusters

	p	t	k	v	s	ɣ	h	m	n	ŋ	l	r	w	y
p								+			+	+		+
t	+		+	+	+	+		+	+	+		+	+	+
k											+	+		+
v		+	+		+	+		+	+		+	+	+	+
s						+						+		+
ɣ	+	+		+	+		+	+	+		+	+	+	+
h	+		+	+		+		+	+	+		+	+	+
m	+	+	+		+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+
n	+	+	+	+				+		+	+	+	+	+
ŋ		+	+	+							+	+		
l	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+		+	+	+
r	+		+	+	+	+		+		+			+	+

Table 2.5 Three-Member Intramorphemic Consonant Clusters

	ɣ	n	ŋ	l	r	w	y
mp	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
nt					+		
ŋk				+	+		
nr			+		+		

ber clusters in which the first element is a homorganic nasal-stop sequence, in particular, reveals that final two consonants in the sequence are very often expressly prohibited as two-member clusters. For example, /-pɣ-/, /-pn-/ and /-pw-/ appear after a homorganic nasal in sequences such as /-mpɣ-/, /-mpn-/ and /-mpw-/, though they do not appear intramorphemically between vowels.

2.4.1.6 Modified Verb Roots

One of the complications in Sye phonotactics is the fact that there are different possibilities for basic verb roots and "derived" roots. It may seem contradictory to speak of the "derivation" of roots, since derivation is normally taken to refer to a morphological process whereby a morphological process applies to a root to derive a morphologically complex stem. However, as will be shown in §4.1, it is necessary to speak of a morphological process that looks in some respects like a derivational process, though it simply derives an alternative form of the root, which appears in certain grammatically statable environments.

This phenomenon is mentioned here because modified verb roots exhibit a number of phonotactic possibilities that go beyond those already described for

basic roots. For the majority of verbs, the modified root differs from the basic root in that there is an accretive initial /n-/. With verbs in their basic root forms, however, /n-/ is an impermissible initial segment (§2.4.1.3).

Modified roots also differ with regard to the permissible intervocalic consonant clusters, in that we find a number of three-member clusters which are not otherwise permitted root-internally. Any of the permissible two-member intervocalic clusters that have /r/ or /t/ as their initial elements can be preceded by /n/ in the modified root, with the systematic exclusion of /-ntn-/ clusters. Three-member clusters attested in modified verb roots, but which are excluded elsewhere in the lexicon, are: /-nrv-/, /-ntŋ-/, /-nrɣ-/, /-ntp-/, /-nrw-/, /-nry-/. We therefore find alternations between basic and modified forms of verb roots such as /orɣai ~ anrɣai/ 'bathe', /orwoŋ- ~ anrwoŋ-/ 'wash', /orɣon ~ anrɣon/ 'mix', /oryok- ~ anryok-/ 'pick up' and /etponr ~ antponr/ 'cold'.

2.4.2 Intermorphemic Phonotactics

As a result of the addition of prefixes and suffixes, as well as reduplication and compounding—accompanied by regular morphophonemic rules which insert, delete and change elements over morpheme boundaries (§2.5)—it is possible for segments to appear together within words in sequences that go beyond the phonotactic statements that were made in §2.4.1 with respect to morphologically simple forms.

One additional vowel sequence is encountered in morphologically complex words, that is /ui/. This arises as a result of the application of a rule deleting root initial /e-/ on verbs beginning with /ei-/ when a preceding prefix ends in /u/ (§2.5.2.6). From underlying /u-eit-i/ 'you all tie/him/her!', we regularly derive /uiti/.

With regard to word-initial consonant clusters, over morpheme boundaries we find any sequence of /mC-/ apart from /*mv-/ and /*mm-/, as well as any sequence of /nC-/ apart from /*nh-/, /*ns-/ and /*nn-/, for example /m-paŋ/ 'and ate', /m-tai/ 'and hit it', /m-sen-i/ 'and covered it', /m-yev-i/ 'and covered it', /n-lau/ 'dryness'.

Finally, there is a complete range of /Cw-/ clusters in morphologically complex forms, including the otherwise impermissible /tw-/, /kw-/, /ɣw-/ and /rw-/, for example /kw-alou/ 'you all ran', /ɣw-alou/ 'they (just) ran', /rw-alou/ 'they ran (long ago)'. Table 2.6 sets out two-member intervocalic clusters that are permissible intermorphemically with single plus signs, and compares these with additional clusters found only intramorphemically, indicated by means of double plus signs. We therefore find morphologically complex words such as the following which contain intervocalic clusters that are not permissible in morphologically simple forms: /kopw-alou/ 'we might have run', /virok-ŋo/ 'only a little', /kokw-alou/ 'we ran', /avu-ŋ-hai/ 'my brother', /y-avan-ŋo/ '(s)he went in the other direction'.

Table 2.6 Two-Member Consonant Clusters in Morphologically Complex Forms

	p	t	k	v	s	ɣ	h	m	n	ŋ	l	r	w	y
p							++	+			+	+	++	+
t	+		+	+	+	+	++	+	+	+	++	+	+	+
k					++		++			++	+	+	++	+
v		+	+		+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+
s						+				++			+	+
ɣ	+	+		+	+		+	+	+		+	+	+	+
h	+		+	+	++	+		+	+	+	++	+	+	+
m	+	+	+		+	+	++		+	+	+	+	+	+
n	+	+	+	+	++	++	++	+		++	+	+	+	+
ŋ			+	+	+		++				+	+	++	
l	+	+	+	+	+	+	++	+	+	+		+	+	+
r	+	++	+	+	+	+	++	+		+	++		+	+

Even with these additional clusters, some phonotactic gaps remain for which no explanations are apparent. Some gaps, however, appear to represent systematic prohibitions as morphophonemic rules operate to resolve particular sequences of consonants over morpheme boundaries. In particular, sequences of identical consonants are not permitted, just as there are restrictions against sequences of /ŋy/, /ŋɣ/ and /mv/, as well as word-intial /mw-/.

There is a broader range of three-member consonant clusters in inflected and derived forms than in simple morphemes, as we also find initial /nrw-/ and /nts-/, for example /nrw-alou/ 'they ran' and /nt-saɣ/ 'uphill slope'. Intervocalically, there is a much wider range of three-member clusters over morpheme boundaries. In addition to those clusters already described, we find sequences such as: /-lpm-/ and /-tpm-/, for example /nelpmu/ 'your incisor', /retpmu/ 'your wife'; /-vnp-/, /-vnt-/, /-vnk-/, /-vnv-/, /-vns-/, /-vnɣ-/, /-vnh-/, /-vnm-/, /-vnl-/, /-vnr-/, /-vnw-/, /-vny-/, for example /ovn-kuri/ 'dogs', /ov-npaŋ/ 'banyans'; /-nth-/, /-nrh-/, /-ntm-/ and /-nrm-/, for example /ave-nt-hai/ 'our brothers', /nrinme-nr-me/ 'our mothers'; /-mnr-/, and /-mr-/, for example /koh-nru/ 'with us (incl)', /kam-nru/ 'with us (excl)', /iror-nru/ 'with them'; and /-ɣnr-/, for example /nompuraɣ-nri/ 'misdeed'. Finally, the addition of the plural prefix /ovn-/ can result in four-member intervocalic clusters when added to nouns beginning with the clusters described in §2.4.1.3, for example /ovn-kriŋriŋ/ 'prawns'.

2.5 Morphophonemics

There are certain morphophonemic rules which apply in a variety of morphological contexts, and forms from a variety of word classes, which are determined by general statements involving phonological environments. The nature of these changes, and the circumstances in which they apply, are set out below. There are

extensive cross-references back to this section in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 dealing with morphology whenever these rules are invoked over morpheme boundaries, though a selection of examples illustrating the effect of these rules is also presented below.

Allomorphic variation that is not subject to general phonological conditioning, but which applies instead only with respect to a single morpheme, or within a non-phonologically definable class of forms, is described exclusively in the relevant sections dealing with morphology.

2.5.1 Consonantal Changes

Those morphophonemic rules which delete or modify consonants are described first of all.

2.5.1.1 Spirantization of Velars

The velar non-fricative consonants /k/ and /ŋ/, as well as the cluster /ŋk/, shift to the velar fricative /ɣ/ when preceded by /o/ and when followed by any segment other than a velar consonant over a morpheme boundary. The application of this rule is illustrated by derivations such as /tanryok-ompuɣ/ 'pregnant-heavy' > /tanryoɣompuɣ/ 'heavily pregnant', /tarwoŋ-onr/ 'remember-3PL' > /tarwoɣonr/ 'remember them', /tarwoŋ-yau/ 'remember-1SG' > /tarwoɣyau/ 'remember me', /oryok-yau/ 'pick.up-1SG' > /oryoɣyau/ 'pick me up' and /evyoŋk-onr/ 'leave-3PL' > /evyoɣonr/ 'leave them'.

2.5.1.2 Spirantization of /p/

Root-final /p/ shifts to /v/ over a morpheme boundary before any other segment other than /v/ or /h/. This rule can be observed applying in derivations such as /pwarap-elvuɣ/ 'afternoon-dark' > /pwaravelvuɣ/ 'dusk', /nup-nei/ 'yam-wood' > /nuvnei/ 'cassava', /arap-arap/ 'evening-REDUP' > /aravarap/ 'begin to get dark', /etehep-wi/ '2SG:IMP-sit-LOCPRO > /etehevwi/ 'sit on it', /ɣo-ntovop-la/ '3SG:FUT-MR:laugh-first' > /ɣontovovla/ '(s)he will laugh first', /yi-yep-su/ '3SG:DISTPAST-come.down-PERF > /yiyevsu/ '(s)he has come down'. When a suffix begins with /v/ or /h/, however, final /p/ remains unchanged, as in /tantop-veh/ 'long-very' > /tantopveh ~ *tantoveh/ 'very long' and /yaɣo-etu-tovop-hai/ '1SG:RECPAST-NEG-BR:laugh-EMPH' > /yoɣotutovophai ~ *yoɣotutovovhai/ 'I did not laugh at all'.

In slower and more careful speech, the spirantization of /p/ is optional. There is a ranking of following segments according to the likelihood that a preceding /p/ will be spirantized as follows: any vowel > any consonant other than /m/ > /m/. This means that spirantization is most likely before a vowel, and least likely before /m/.

2.5.1.3 Fricative Dissimilation

The fricatives /v/, /s/ and /ɣ/ undergo dissimilatory despirantization when they appear adjacent to homorganic nasals. The changes that take place are /v/ > /p/, /ɣ/ > /k/ and /s/ > /ts/. There are some differences in how despirantization applies with these different segments, so this process is described separately for each segment.

(a) /ɣ/ > /k/

The velar fricative /ɣ/ generally despirantizes to become /k/ when it appears before the velar nasal /ŋ/ over a morpheme boundary, as in forms such as /viroɣ-ŋo/ 'little-only' > /virokŋo/ 'only a little bit' and /omproɣ-ŋi/ 'steal-TR' > /omprokŋi/ 'steal'. While /ɣ/ generally shifts to /k/ under these conditions, the rule does not apply categorically, as some speakers occasionally leave the fricative unmodified. We therefore occasionally find pronunciations such as /omproɣŋi/ 'steal' alternating with the far more common /omprokŋi/.

(b) /v/ > /p/

The fricative /v/ categorically becomes /p/ when it appears after the bilabial nasal /m/. The application of this process is illustrated by /yam-velom/ '1SG:DISTPAST-BR:come' > /yampelom/ '(s)he came', /kim-vas-i/ '2SG:DISTPAST-BR:buy-3SG' > /kimpasi/ 'you bought it' and /m-ve/ 'SG:ES-BR:go' > /mpe/ 'and went'.

(c) /s/ > /ts/

The process of despirantization of /s/ when there is a preceding /n/ involves the optional insertion of an intervening /t/. The conditioning factors for this insertion rule are also somewhat different to those involved in the despirantization of the other fricatives, as it only applies after the homorganic nasal word-initially. This rule is most frequently encountered when the nominalizing prefix /n-/ is added before a verb root that begins with /s/ (§3.2.1.1). Thus, from /n-sompoɲ/ 'NOM-snore' we can derive /ntsompoɲ/ 'a snore', or, alternatively /nsompoɲ/.

The despirantization of /s/ takes place much less frequently in word-medial position. Thus, /nran-sukrim/ 'day-five' > /nransukim ~ *nrantsukrim/ 'Friday'. Very occasionally, however, medial /ns/ over a morpheme boundary is encountered with /nts/ as an optional variant, though only when the initial element is a prefix rather than a compounded root. Thus, /ovn-syame/ 'PL-things' > /ovnysame ~ ovntsyame/ 'things'.

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2.5.1.4 Consonant Degemination

Sequences of two identical consonants are resolved as a single consonant. We therefore find derivations such as /yam-mah/ '1SG:DISTPAST-BR:die' > /yamah/ 'I died', /yam-epm-mah/ '1SG:DISPAST-PRIOR-BR:die' > /yamepmah/ 'I had died', /yi-um-mah/ '3SG:DISTPAST-IT-BR:die' > /yumah/ '(s)he died again', /m-mah/ 'SG:ES-BR:die' > /mah/ 'and (s)he died', /nvaŋ-ɲi/ 'food-INSTPRO' > /nvaɲi/ 'the food with it', /oroŋ-ŋo/ 'big-PL' > /oroŋo/ 'big (plural)', /ovn-natmah/ 'PL-ghost' > /ovnatmah/ 'ghosts', /am-metuɣ/ 'speak-quiet' > /ametuɣ/ 'whisper', /nran-ndvat/ 'day-four' > /ndandvat/ 'Thursday'.

2.5.1.5 Interconsonantal Stop Deletion

With homorganic nasal-stop sequences followed by /s/ or /h/, the medial stop is lost. This process is involved in the reduction of /-ŋks-/, /-ŋkh-/, /-mps-/ and /-mph-/ to /-ŋs-/, /-ŋh-/, /-ms-/ and /-mh-/ respectively in the modified forms of certain categories of verb roots (§4.1.2). Thus, /aŋkhi/ > /aŋhi/ 'see' and /ampsi/ > /amsi/ 'pull out'. The fact that other three-member clusters do not undergo reduction is illustrated by the basic roots /evɣah/ 'defecate' and /evlami/ 'urinate', which form their modifed roots as /ampɣah/ and /amplami/ respectively, rather than /*amɣah/ and /*amlami/.

2.5.1.6 Preconsonantal /s/ to /h/

The sibilant /s/ shifts to /h/ when there is an immediately following consonant. The structural conditions for the application of this rule are met in the paradigms of suffixed transitive verbs that end underlyingly in /əs/ and there is a following consonant-initial object suffix (§4.3.1.1), though this rule must be ordered before the rule involving the realization of schwa (§2.5.2.7). Compare the following paradigmatically related forms of /evəs-/ 'whip': /yi-evəs-i/ '3SG:DISTPAST-BR:whip-3SG' > /yevsi/ '(s)he whipped him/her' and /yi-evəs-ɣam/ '3SG:DISTPAST-BR:whip-1PL.EXCL' > /yevohɣam/ '(s)he whipped us'.

2.5.1.7 Reduction of /hs/ Sequences

Sequences of /hs/ are resolved by deleting the /h/, as in /yi-mah-su/ '3SG:DISTPAST-BR:die-PERF' > /yimasu/ '(s)he has already died' and /koh-su/ '1PL.INCL-all' > /kosu/ 'all of us'. Note that sequences of /ss/ are resolved simply as /s/. This could be arrived at by the degemination rule described in §2.5.1.4, or by the ordered application of the rules /s > h/ (§2.5.1.6) and /h > Ø/. Thus, /yaɣo-asis-su/ '1SG:RECPAST-BR:fart.silently-PERF' > /yaɣasisu/ 'I have already farted silently'.

2.5.2 Vocalic Changes

Morphophonemic changes affecting vowels in Erromangan are more far-reaching in their effects than those affecting consonants. These various changes are described in turn below.

2.5.2.1 Resolution of /-m(e)w-/ Sequences

When prefixes which end in the sequence /me/ (§4.2.2.6) appear before the segment /w/, the mid front vowel /e/ shifts to the corresponding back vowel /o/. Thus, /yaɣo-eme-wesisar/ '1SG:RECPAST-*EM*-slip' > /yoɣomowesisar/ 'I am slipping'. When prefix-final /m/ is placed next to root-initial /w/, an epenthetic /o/ is optionally inserted between the two segments. This rule applies with a number of verbal prefixes before roots beginning with /w/, for example /yam-wesisar/ '1SG:DISTPAST-slip' > /yamowesisar ~ yamwesisar/ 'I slipped'.

2.5.2.2 Mid Vowel Deletion after /a/

The two vowel sequences /ae/ and /ao/ are resolved by deleting the second vowel in the sequence in each case. This takes place, for example, when a transitive verb root ending in /a/ receives the object suffixes /-oɣ/ '2SG' or /-or/ '3PL' (§4.3.1.1), as in /ta-oɣ/ 'SG:IMP:BR:hit-2SG' > /taɣ/ 'hit yourself!' or /ta-or/ 'SG:IMP:BR:hit-3PL' > /tar/ 'hit them!'.

2.5.2.3 Mid Vowel Backing

The mid front vowel /e/ is backed to /o/ adjacent to a prefix that ends in a rounded segment, or a suffix that begins with a rounded segment. This rule results in sequences that are then subject to the rules described in §2.5.2.5 and §2.5.2.6 below. This rule is illustrated by derivations involving:

(a) verbal prefixes ending in /o/ and /u/ (§4.2.2), for example /ko-esomsaɣ/ '2SG:RECPAST-BR:breathe' > /ko-osomsaɣ/ > /kosomsaɣ/ 'you breathed' and /ku-esomsaɣ/ '2PL:RECPAST-BR:breathe' > /ku-osomsaɣ/ > /kwosomsaɣ/ 'you all breathed'.

(b) verbs carrying the object suffixes /-oɣ/ '2SG' and /-or/ '3PL' (§4.3.1.1), for example /yi-se-oɣ/ '3SG:DISTPAST-spear-2SG' > > /yi-so-oɣ/ > /yisoɣ/ '(s)he speared you', and /yi-se-or/ '3SG:DISTPAST-spear-3PL > /yi-so-or/ > /yisor/ '(s)he speared them'.

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CHAPTER 2

With suffixed verbs ending in /e/, paradigmatic alternations arise such as those illustrated by the third person singular distant past subject form of /se-/ 'spear' with a variety of object suffixes (§4.3.1.1) in Table 2.7.

2.5.2.4 Glide Formation

Morpheme-final /u/ is shifted to the glide /w/ when the following morpheme begins with a vowel and there is a preceding single consonant other than /m/. This rule applies with:

(a) a wide variety of subject-tense prefixes on verbs (§4.2.2), for example /koku-omonki/ '1PL.INCL:RECPAST-BR:drink' > /kokwomonki/ 'you and I both drank', /kaku-ur-i/ '1PL.EXCL:RECPAST-BR:follow-3SG' > /kakwuri/ '(s)he and I both followed him/her', /ku-am/ '2PL:RECPAST-BR:speak' > /kwam/ 'you all spoke', /ɣu-is-i/ '3PL:RECPAST-BR:copulate.with-3SG' > /ɣwisi/ 'they copulated with him/her', /u-avan/ '2PL:IMP-BR:walk' > /wavan/ 'all of you walk!', /nru-alou/ '3PL:DISTPAST-BR:run' > /nrwalou/ 'they ran'.

(b) a verb ending in /u/ followed by a vowel-final suffix (§4.3.1.1), for example /yi-tetu-oɣ/ '3SG:DISTPAST-BR:wait.for-2SG' > /yitetwoɣ/ '(s)he waited for you'.

(c) a form ending in /u/ that is compounded with a form beginning with /e/ (§3.2.1.4), for example /nompu-ehri/ 'head-break' > /nompwehri/ 'bald'.

There is a second element to the process of glide formation, which can be stated as follows: a high vowel shifts to the corresponding glide between two vowels. This shift takes place when a form that ends in a vowel sequence is morphologically bound to a vowel-initial form, as in /vai-atompne/ 'take-reveal' > /vayatompne/ 'reveal', /au-au/ 'hot-REDUP' > /awau/ 'hot' and /nei-empen/ 'tree-smell' > /neyempen/ 'sandalwood'.

2.5.2.5 Prevocalic Vowel Deletion

A morpheme-final /u/ after a consonant cluster, or after /m/, is deleted before another vowel-initial morpheme. Remaining vowels are deleted before all vowel-initial morphemes. This rule applies after the rules described in §2.5.2.3 and §2.5.2.4. This is the most frequently encountered morphophonemic rule in the language, applying in a very wide range of contexts. Rather than list all of these environments separately, a representative set of examples will be presented: /koli-omonki/ '1PL.INCL:RECPAST-BR:drink' > /kolomonki/ 'you and I all drank', /kokwo-ampyu/ '1PL.INCL:FUT-MR:dance' > /kokwampyu/ 'we will dance', /kamu-au-ɣam/ '1DL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:argue.with-1PL.EXCL' > /kamauɣam/ 'we argued', /ro-avu-ŋ-me/ 'PL-friend-1SG-PL' > /ravuŋme/ 'my friends', /tavrivri-or/ 'SG:IMP:BR:forget-

Table 2.7 Paradigmatic Alternations with /se-/ 'spear'

	SG		PL
1	/yiseyau/	INCL	/yiseɣoh/
		EXCL	/yiseɣam/
2	/yisoɣ/		/yiseɣum/
3	/yisei/		/yisor/

3PL' > /tavrivror/ 'forget them', /ovyu-etur/ '2SG:IMP:CAUS-BR:stand' > /ovyetur/ 'stand it up!', /nipmi-ur/ 'face-bad' > /nipmur/ 'ugly', /nemli-aɣan/ 'citrus-bitter' > /nemlaɣan/ 'wild orange'.

The rules described in §2.5.2.3 to §2.5.2.5 together combine to produce the resolutions of all possible vowel sequences over morpheme boundaries set out in Table 2.8.

2.5.2.6 Mid Vowel Deletion after Back Vowels

There is a rule which deletes mid vowels after back vowels which does not constitute a genuine morphophonemic rule as it is not conditioned by purely phonological factors. However, since its effect is so frequently encountered with a variety of sets of verbal prefixes, reference to it is included in this section as well. This rule has the effect of deleting mid vowels in two morphologically definable contexts: root-initially in the basic forms of strong verbs[4] after a prefix that ends in a back vowel (§4.2.2), and prefix-initially with verbal prefixes that appear between the first morphotactic slot and the verb root (§4.2.2.3, §4.2.2.4, §4.2.2.5, §4.2.2.6).

Since the only vowels that appear initially with basic forms of strong verbs are /e/ and /o/, this rule has the effect of resolving vowel sequences in quite a different way to the regular pattern set out in Table 2.8. Thus, sequences of /ue/ and /uo/ are resolved as /wo/ with weak verbs and /u/ with strong verbs. Compare derivations involving the strong verbs /empɣu/ 'dance' and /orɣai/ 'bathe', and the weak verbs /esomsaɣ/ 'breathe' and /omonki/ 'drink': /u-empɣu/ '2PL:IMP-BR:dance' > /umpɣu ~ *wompɣu/ 'you all dance!', /ɣu-orəŋ-i/ '3PL:RECPAST-BR:hear-3SG' > /ɣurŋi ~ *ɣworŋi/ 'they heard it', /u-esomsaɣ/ '2PL:IMP-BR:breathe' > /wosomsaɣ ~ *usomsaɣ/ 'you all breathe!', /ɣu-omonki/ '3PL:RECPAST-BR:drink' > /ɣwomonki ~ *ɣumonki/ 'they drank'.

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[4] Discussion of the distinction between strong and weak verbs will be reserved for §4.1. The effect of a root-initial vowel on a preceding prefixal /u/ is one of the ways by which the two categories of verbs are distinguished, as weak verbs in the same environments require that the prefix-final /u/ be either deleted or shifted to /w/ before a root-initial vowel which is retained intact, as shown by the previous sets of examples.

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Table 2.8 Resolution of Vowel Sequences over Morpheme Boundaries

	/i/	/e/	/a/	/o/	/u/
/i/, /e/, /a/, /o/	i	e	a	o	u
/u/ after /m/ or /CC/	i	o	a	o	u
/u/ elsewhere	wi	wo	wa	wo	wu

2.5.2.7 Resolution of Schwa

In §2.1.2.2, the existence of underlying schwa was justified. This vowel never appears as such on the surface, having instead the following manifestations:

(a) zero, when the following consonant is itself followed by a morpheme that begins with a vowel. With transitive verbs, this includes derivations such as the following involving pronominal suffixes or following vowel-initial nominal objects (§4.3.1.1): /avər-oɣ/ '2SG:IMP-BR:help-2SG' > /avroɣ/ 'help yourself!', /satər-i/ '2SG:IMP-spear-3SG' > /satri/ 'stab him/her!', /tenəm-or/ '2SG:IMP-BR:bury-3PL' > /tenmor/ 'bury them!', /oɣəh etme-n/ '2SG:IMP-BR:see father-3SG" > /oɣh etmen/ 'look at his/her father!'.

(b) /o/, when there is a following consonant-initial morpheme. This involves an immediately following consonant-initial nominal object, or a pronominal object that begins with a consonant. We therefore find derivations such as the following: /avər-ɣoh/ '2SG:IMP-BR:help-1PL.INCL' > /avorɣoh/ 'help us!', /satər-ɣam/ '2SG:IMP-spear-1PL.EXCL' > /satorɣam/ 'stab us!', /tenəm-yau/ '2SG:IMP-BR:bury-1SG' > /tenomyau/ 'bury me!', /oɣəh nrinme/ '2SG:IMP-BR:see mother:3SG' > /oɣoh nrinme/ 'look at his/her mother!'.

(c) /o/, when there is neither a following suffix nor a directly following nominal object, that is when a transitive root is being used intransitively. Thus, compare the following forms of the underlying root /oɣəl/, which can be used intransitively to mean 'dig', and transitively to mean 'dig up': /oɣəl/ '2SG:IMP-BR:dig' > /oɣol/ 'dig!', /oɣəl-ɣam/ '2SG:IMP-BR:dig.up-1PL.EXCL' > /oɣolɣam/ 'dig us up (EXCL)!', /oɣəl-i/ '2SG:IMP-dig.up-3SG' > /oɣli/ 'dig it up!'.

Although underlying schwa is realized on the surface for the most part as an alternation between zero and /o/, with some older speakers the vowel /e/ is occasionally used instead of /o/. In written sources dating from nineteenth century ecclesiastical translations, underlying schwa is invariably represented on the surface as /i/, and this is what is described in Lynch and Capell (1983:33). This realization has never been encountered with modern speakers. Nineteenth century sources show considerable confusion between /e/ and /i/, and it may be that the spelling representing the high vowel was intended to represent /e/, which has since largely shifted to /o/ in these environments.

2.5.2.8 Interconsonantal Vowel Deletion

Root-initial or a root-final vowels are deleted at morpheme boundaries when the vowel is preceded by /V(C)C/ and followed by /CV/. This reduction can only take place when the resulting consonant cluster constitutes a permissible cluster according to the phonotactic rules of the language (§2.4.1.5). These generalizations are consistent with vowel deletion applying in the following sets of circumstances:

(a) in compounds in which the initial element ends in a consonant and the following element begins in a vowel (§3.2.1.4, §4.5.3). We therefore find examples such as /nran-emenroŋ/ 'day-rest' > /nranmenroŋ/ 'Sunday', /norop-omti/ 'beam-break' > /norvomti/ '(particular) house beam', and /empen-aɣan/ 'smell-bitter' > /empnaɣan/ 'stink'.

(b) in possessive constructions in which the possessor is expressed by means of the suffixed preposition /ira-/ which is morphologically bound to the nominal root (§6.1.2.3). Thus, /noɣleh-ira-n/ 'body-POSS-3SG' > /noɣlehran/ 'his/her body, /nempen-ira-n/ 'smell-POSS-3SG' > /nempniran/ 'his/her body odour'.

(c) with the adjectival derivative prefix /itur-/, when the following root begins with a vowel (§5.1.2). Thus, compare /itur-amon/ 'ADJ-hide' > /itramon/ 'hidden' with /itur-lau/ 'ADJ-dry' > /iturlau/ 'dry'.

2.5.2.9 Diphthong Reduction

When a sequence of a non-high vowel and a high vowel are followed by a homorganic glide over a morpheme boundary, the high vowel is deleted. Thus, /enyau-wi/ 'POSS:1SG-COM' > /enyawi/ 'at my place', /koɣ-vai-ya/ '2SG:RECPAST-BR:take-where' > /koɣvaya/ 'where did you take it?'.

2.5.3 Reduplication

Because reduplication affects forms belonging to a variety of word classes, the shapes of reduplicated forms are treated in this section dealing with morphophonemics. At this point, however, only the form that reduplication takes is described, with the discussion of its various functions being left until the appropriate sections (§3.2.1.3, §4.5.4).

Reduplication is used considerably less frequently in Erromangan than appears to be the case in languages in the North Central Vanuatu subgroup, and Oceanic languages generally. This means that it is sometimes difficult to come up with sufficient numbers of examples to justify generalizations.

There are numerous examples in the corpus of forms based on non-attested unreduplicated roots, or for which the putative root bears no plausible semantic relationship to the reduplicated form. Such forms are considered to be synchronically monomorphemic, and are not considered in the discussion that follows. Only examples that clearly involve synchronic patterns of reduplication are described. Thus, with forms such as /kilkil/ 'fish hook', the putative root /*kil/ has no synchronic status.

Erromangan does not have any productive patterns of partial reduplication, though there is a productive pattern of complete reduplication, as illustrated by the following: /isut/ 'far away' > /isutisut/ 'very far away', /metuɣ/ 'softly' > /metuɣmetuɣ/ 'very softly', /omol/ 'fall' > /omolomol/ 'fall all over', / potɣon/ 'short' > /potɣonpotɣon/ 'very short', /unmeh/ 'early' > /unmehunmeh/ 'very early', /tantop/ 'long' > /tantoptantop/ 'very long', /ilar/ 'shine' > /ilarilar/ 'shine brightly'.

When reduplication brings segments together that meet the application for the morphophonemic rules described in §2.5.1, these apply regularly. Thus, /arap-arap/ 'get.dark-REDUP' > /aravarap/ 'begin to get dark', /oŋko-oŋko/ 'straight-REDUP' > /oŋkoŋko/ 'hard, strong', /alou-alou/ 'run-REDUP' > /alowalou/ 'run all over', /au-au/ 'hot-REDUP' > /awau/ 'hot', /etru-etru/ 'have.hole-REDUP' > /etretru/ '(of wall) have many holes'.

2.6 Sandhi

The stress rules in §2.3 and the morphophonemic rules in §2.5 operate within word boundaries, which means that the scope of these rules is indicative of the location of external word boundaries. However, there is a range of circumstances in which word-internal processes are extended to apply over word boundaries as sandhi phenomena. Some such boundaries involve very common grammatical relationships in the language, so the effects of sandhi are very frequently encountered.

(i) *Prepositions + Nouns*

With vowel-final uninflected prepositions, the preposition and a following monosyllabic noun are treated as a single phonological unit. Thus, /ŋi nmap/ 'INST soil' > /ŋinmap/ 'with soil', /ra se/ 'CAUSE what' > /rase/ 'why?', /hoŋkusu nmap/ 'SIM soil' > /hoŋkusunmap/ 'like soil'. With nouns that are disyllabic and longer, as well as with prepositions ending in consonants, the preposition and the noun retain their phonological independence. Thus: /ŋi nautuŋo/ 'INST knife' > /ŋi nautuŋo/ 'with a knife', /ra norwotu/ 'LOC school' > /ra norwotu/ 'at school', /hoŋkusu nompɣahi/ 'SIM pig' > /hoŋkusu nompɣahi/ 'like a pig', /nral ov-oteme/ 'ACC.PL PL:person' > /nral ovoteme/ 'with the people'.

(ii) *Construct Suffix + Noun*

There is a category of nouns which obligatorily carry pronominal possessive suffixes, and these are referred to as bound nouns (§6.1.2.3). There is also a subset of prepositions which behave morphologically in the same way, and these are referred to as nominal prepositions (§5.2). Finally, there are possessive pronouns of the shape /ihen/, /hen/ or /en/ (§6.1.2.3). When any of these forms are immediately followed by any monosyllabic noun or independent pronoun, or a disyllabic noun that begins with /n-/, the two are treated phonologically as a single word. When two instances of /n/ come together as a result of this process, the consonant degemination rule described in §2.5.1.4 reduces these to a single consonant.

We therefore find derivations such as: /nisɣo-n mei/ 'BEN-CONST who' > /nisɣonmei/ 'for whom?', /ihen mei/ 'POSS who' > /ihenmei/ 'whose?', /nisɣo-n nehvo/ 'BEN-CONST European' > /nisɣonehvo/ 'for the European', /nroŋo-n nei/ 'branch-CONST tree' > /nroŋonei/ 'branch of the tree', /nouse-n si-n/ 'vine-CONST excrement-3SG' > /nousensin/ 'his/her intenstines', /alwo-n yau/ 'nephew-CONST 1SG' > /alwonyau/ 'my nephew', /ra nta-n nimo/ 'LOC back-CONST house' > /rantanimo/ 'at the back of the house', /nompu-n noŋu-n nur/ 'head-CONST mouth-CONST place' > /nompunoŋunur/ 'promontory', /nimsi-n mran/ 'PURP-CONST tomorrow' > /nimsinmran/ 'for tomorrow'.

There is a small subset of bound nouns which are morphologically irregular in that their third person singular forms, as well as their construct forms, do not carry the suffix /-n/ (§3.2.2.2), for example /nimte-/ 'eye, sharp end', which has the irregular construct form /nipmi/. These forms also change the word boundary into a word-internal boundary when the following items are of the same shapes. Thus, /nipmi ntit/ 'sharp.end:CONST throwing.stick' > /nipmintit/ 'sharp end of the throwing stick'.

(iii) *Construct Suffix + Verbal Object*

There is a variety of circumstances in which a free form verbal object is treated as a single phonological word with the preceding transitive verb:

(a) With transitive verbs ending in /-i/ and /-n/, a monosyllabic object, or a disyllabic free object beginning with /n-/, is phonologically fused as a single word with the immediately preceding transitive verb. Thus, /ko-oɣəh-i nvaŋ/ '2SG:RECPAST-BR:see-CONST food' > /koɣhinvaŋ/ 'you saw the food', /yaɣ-anrɣon nvaŋ/ '1SG:FUT-MR:mix food' > /yaɣanrɣonvaŋ/ 'I will mix the food'.

In such circumstances, when a disyllabic object begins with a consonant cluster, a stress retraction rule applies. By the regular rule of stress placement (§2.3), we would expect the initial syllable of a disyllabic object to be stressed. What we find, however, is that it is the final syllable of the verb root that is stressed. This means that when a disyllabic noun beginning with a consonant cluster is treated as being part of the same phonological word as a preceding transitive verb, stress

moves one syllable to the left. Thus, /ko-aŋkili n-velom/ '2SG:FUT-MR:be.able NOM-BR:come' > /kaŋki'linvelom ~ *kaŋkilin'velom/ 'you will be able to come'.

(b) Monosyllabic objects, or disyllabic objects beginning with /n-/, are fused with a preceding verb when there is an immediately preceding segment other than /-i/ or /-n/. Note, therefore, /koɣ-vai-ya nvaŋ/ '2SG:RECPAST-BR:get-where food' /koɣvayanvaŋ/ 'where did you get the food?', /ɣo-eni-su nvaŋ/ '3SG:RECPAST-BR:eat-PERF food' > /ɣonisunvaŋ/ '(s)he has eaten the food', /ɣo-ovon-or nvaŋ/ 3SG:RECPAST-BR:give-3PL food' > /ɣovonornvaŋ/ '(s)he gave them food', /ovo-yau-la nvaŋ/ '2SG:IMP-BR:give-1SG-PREC food' > /ovoyaulanvaŋ/ 'give me the food first', /en-i-wi nvaŋ/ '2SG:IMP-BR:eat-CONST-PART food' > /eniwinvaŋ/ 'eat a little food'.

(c) Consonant-initial monosyllabic pronominal objects to vowel-final transitive verbs that do not take any object suffixes are also phonologically bound to the preceding verb. Thus, compare /yi-etipe kik/ '3SG:DISTPAST-BR:appoint 2SG' > /yetipekik/ '(s)he appointed you' with /yi-etipe kimi/ '3SG:DISTPAST-BR:appoint 2PL' > /yetipe kimi/ '(s)he appointed you all'.

(iv) *Personal Names*

Erromangans typically have at least two commonly used personal names, one of which is likely to be a traditional name, and the other a biblical name. Details of how personal names are used belongs more in an anthropological than a linguistic discussion, though it is important to note here that some people are frequently addressed by two names together. When one of these is monosyllabic and ends in /-n/ and the other begins with /n-/, the two names are treated phonologically as a single word. Thus, /tson naliŋ/ 'John Nalig' > /tsonaliŋ/.

(v) *NOUN + NOUN Compounds*

Where a NOUN + NOUN compound (§3.2.1.4) shares the same phonological characteristics as the VERB + OBJECT sequences described in (iii) above, the sequence can also be reduced to a single word. Thus, /nemli ntau/ 'citrus lychee' > /nemlintau/ 'mandarin'.

(vi) *Adverbial Complements*

Locational complements immediately following an intransitive motion or posture verb can also undergo some of the same kinds of morphophonemic alternations that we find over morpheme boundaries within words. For example, with the verb root /yep/ 'come down', the final /p/ optionally shifts to /v/ before both a following suffix and a following locational complement. Thus: /yi-yep ivwar/ '3SG:DISTPAST-come.down Ivwar' > /yiyevivwar/ '(s)he came down to Ivwar'.

The same process is encountered with adverbs of time immediately following an intransitive verb, for example /ko-ntorilki mran/ '2SG:FUT-MR:return tomorrow' > /kontorilkimran/ 'you will return tomorrow'.

Note that when some element appears between two words that, according to the statments above, qualify for the elimination of the word boundary, the intrusive element blocks the application of sandhi phenomena. Thus, while the prepositional phrase /ra nran/ 'LOC day' is pronounced as a single word, that is /ranran/ 'on the day', this reduction does not take place when /nran/ is compounded with /sukrim/ 'five' to give /nransukrim/ 'Friday', as in /ra nransukrim ~ *ranransukrim/ 'on Friday' because the preposition is no longer followed by a monosyllabic noun. The addition of the monosyllabic pluralizing prefix /ovn-/ to the monosyllabic noun /nei/ 'tree' has the same effect. Thus, /ra nei/ 'LOC tree' > /ranei/ 'in the tree', but /ra ovn-nei/ 'LOC PL-tree' > /ra ovnei/ 'in the trees'.

Similarly, when a verb and any following object that meets the structural conditions for phonological fusion as described above, the two are automatically pronounced as separate words if a premodifier or a prefix is associated with the noun. Thus, contrast /yi-oɣəh-i nvat/ '3SG:DISTPAST-BR:see-CONST money'> /yoɣhinvat/ '(s)he saw the money' with /yi-oɣəh-i naŋku nvat/ '3SG:DISTPAST-BR:see-CONST POSS:1SG money' > /yoɣhi naŋku nvat/ '(s)he saw my money'.

2.7 Orthography

From this point on, Erromangan forms will be presented largely in a practical orthography, unless some particular point is served by presenting a phonemic or a phonetic representation. Orthographically represented Erromangan forms will be cited in text in italics in ordinary font. Phonemically and phonetically represented forms will continue to be presented in the phonetic font that has been used up to this point, and surrounded by phonemic slashes and square phonetic brackets as appropriate.

The orthographic symbols that are used to represent the phonemic contrasts of Erromangan are the same as those that have already been used for phonemic representations, subject to the following particular conventions:

(a) It is already established usage on Erromango to write /ŋ/ as *g*, and I have no intention here of going against local usage. The orthographic sequence *ng* therefore represents the consonant cluster /nŋ/. Thus: /aŋot/ *agot* 'itch' and /sinvanŋo/ *sinvango* 'naked'.

(b) The phonemically contrastive /ɣ/ is not consistently distinguished in local usage from other phonemes. Native speakers have been observed writing the language with this sound is not being written at all, or with it being represented orthographically by a variety of single letters (*k*, *g*, *h*, *r*), by a variety of digraphs (*hr*, *ck*, *cr*, *rk*), and even by the trigraphs *rgk* and *rck*. Thus, a form such as /noɣut/

'louse' has the potential to appear orthographically as *nout, nokut, nogut, nohut, norut, nohrut, nockut, nocrut, norkut, norgkut* or *norckut*.

The use of single letters such as *k, g, h* and *r* is unacceptable as each of these symbols is already used to represent other phonemic units. The most widespread local practice is to use *k*, though this leads to large-scale orthographic ambiguity between /k/ and /ɣ/. Local preference rules out other unambiguous single-letter solutions to this problem, such as *x* or *q*.

A recent proposal from Jerry Taki, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre fieldworker for Erromango, has been to unambiguously write this phoneme as *c*. Although there is no precedent in local usage for this choice, it does follow the established pattern on nearby Aneityum where the same sound in the local language is also phonemically distinct from /k/. This proposal has therefore been adopted for the present study, and it has also been introduced in a volume of vernacular stories widely distributed in the community (Crowley 1997). Thus, note: /noɲun/ *nogun* 'his/her mouth', /noɣut/ *nocut* 'louse', /noɣuɲo/ *nocugo* 'road', /ɣoɣohɣoh/ *cocohcoh* '(s)he saw us', /ɣoɣhor/ *cochor* '(s)he saw them', /ɣaɲhoɣ/ *caghoc* '(s)he will see you'.

(c) Although the surface sequence [nd] is the phonetic realization of phonemic /nr/, words containing this phonemic sequence will be spelt *nd* rather than *nr*, following local usage. Thus, /nran/: [ndan] *ndan* 'day', /emenroŋ/: [emendoŋ] *emendog* 'rest', /nrinmenr/: [ndinmend] *ndinmend* 'their mother'.

(d) The underlying schwa that is present in forms such as /oɣəh/ 'see' is not represented in the orthography. Such forms are spelt according to their surface realizations, in which the schwa is realized as either /o/ or zero in phonologically predictable environments. Thus, underlying /ɣoɣəhɣoh/ '(s)he saw us' appears on the surface as /ɣoɣohɣoh/, and this is spelt as *cocohcoh*, while underlying /ɣoɣəhi/ '(s)he saw him/her' is realized as /ɣoɣhi/, and this is spelt as *cochi*. Wherever it is essential to indicate the presence of an underlying schwa at any point in the discussion in the following chapters, this will be done by representing the underlying vowel by means of the IPA symbol, with the rest of the word represented in the ordinary orthography, for example *ocəh-* 'see'.

It should be pointed out that individual names are spelt according to speakers' personal choice. This means, in particular, that velar fricatives may spelt in a variety of ways, for example *Nelakan* for /nelaɣan/ and *Neiruk* for /neiruɣ/, but *Atnelou* for /ɣatnelou/. Other phonemic distinctions may also occasionally be obscured by personal choices in the spelling of names, for example *Epsi* for /ɣevsi/ . Apart from such forms, however, the following correspondences hold between phonemic and orthographic symbols: /p/ *p*, /t/ *t*, /k/ *k*, /m/ *m*, /n/ *n*, /ŋ/ *g*, /v/ *v*, /s/ *s*, /ɣ/ *c*, /h/ *h*, /l/ *l*, /r/ after /n/ *d* and *r* elsewhere, /y/ *y*, /w/ *w*, /i/ *i*, /e/ *e*, /a/ *a*, /o/ *o*, /u/ *u*, /ə/ *o* or Ø.

In keeping with established local practice, grammatical word boundaries will be separated orthographically by spaces. This means that the frequently encoun-

tered sandhi phenomena described in §2.6 are treated simply as surface-level phenomena, and are not represented orthographically. Thus, a grammatical prepositional phrase that is represented orthographically as *ra nu* 'in the water' corresponds to the single phonological word /ranu/, while a possessive construction that is written as *ndogon nei* 'branch of tree' corresponds phonologically to /nroŋonei/.

3: NOMINAL MORPHOLOGY

The class of nominals includes those forms which function as the head of a nominal phrase, the internal structure of which is described in §6.1. Nominals can by themselves occupy the positions of grammatical subject and object, or the object of a free form preposition.

3.1 Pronouns

Nominals can be subcategorized into two major subclasses: pronouns and nouns. In this section, the morphological characteristics of the various types of pronouns are described.

3.1.1 Independent Pronouns

The independent pronouns of Sye are set out in Table 3.1. These can function as verbal subjects and objects, as well as the objects of free form prepositions, and as both topics and comments in equational constructions. In the following examples, brackets surround the element being illustrated, in this case independent pronouns in a variety of structural environments:

[Kik] ko-naruvo.
2SG 2SG:FUT-MR:sing
'You will sing.'

Cotwonorei (<co-etwo-norei)   [kik].
3SG:RECPAST-NEG:FUT-MR:scratch 2SG
'It won't scratch you.'

Nompwat c-antehep   nandu [kik].
Nompwat 3SG:FUT-MR:sit   ACC.SG 2SG
'Nompwat will sit with you.'

The same pronominal distinctions are marked by means of bound forms, which appear in a wide range of grammatical contexts. We therefore find pronominal suffixes expressing many verbal objects (§4.3), prepositional objects (§5.2) and inalienable possessors on nouns (§3.2.2.2).

With the independent pronouns set out in Table 3.1, as well as the various pronominal affixes just mentioned, there are no separate dual (or trial, or paucal) forms such as we find in many other Oceanic languages. However, the pronominal categories that are marked on verbal subjects distinguish between singular, dual and plural in the first person (§4.2.1).

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Table 3.1 Independent Pronouns

	SG		PL
1	*yau*	INCL	*koh*
		EXCL	*kam*
2	*kik*		*kimi*
3	*iyi*		*iror*

Pronouns can be followed by the suffix -*su*. This form has the same meaning of 'every' (or 'both' in the case of items with dual reference) that we find when it is attached to nouns as is described in §3.2.2.1. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Kosu (<koh-su)   kol-ampe.
1PL.INCL-every   1PL.INCL:FUT-MR:go
'We will all go.'

Kosu (<koh-su)   kokw-ampe.
1PL.INCL-every   1DL.INCL:FUT-MR:go
'We will both go.'

There is an emotive suffix of the shape -*pau* which can be attached to nouns (§3.2.1.2). This can also be attached to pronouns to express a strong emotional involvement with the pronominal referents. Thus:

Kik-pau.
2SG-EMOT
'I love/admire/am impressed by you (often said when greeting or expressing fare-well).'

Kam-pau.
1PL.EXCL-EMOT
'We are great! (such as when the speaker's team scores a winning point in sport and (s)he wants to put the other team down).'

3.1.2 Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns are those which express the pronominal category of a pos-sessor, and which can accompany a possessed noun in a possessive construction. There are three sets of such pronouns, as set out in Table 3.2. In the first of these paradigms, the alternation between initial *e*- and *he*- is not semantically contras-tive, though the vowel-initial forms are far more common.

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Table 3.2 Possessive Pronoun Paradigms

	SG		PL
1	*(h)enyau*	INCL	*(h)enogkoh*
		EXCL	*(h)enogkam*
2	*(h)enogkik*		*(h)enogkmi*
3	*(h)eni*		*(h)eniror*
1	*horug*	INCL	*horet*
		EXCL	*hormam*
2	*horom*		*hormi*
3	*ihen*		*ihend*
1	*irag*	INCL	*ira(n)t*
		EXCL	*iramam*
2	*iram*		*irami*
3	*iran*		*irand*

All of these forms are to varying degrees further analyzable morphologically. The first paradigm involves an initial element which varies between *(h)enog-* when the following element begins with *k*, and *(h)en-* otherwise. The following elements are identical in shape to the independent pronouns set out in Table 3.1, except that the third person singular form ends in *-i* rather than **-iyi* and the second person plural form ends in *-kmi* instead of **-kimi*. Historically, these forms appear to represent relatively recent innovations, in which independent pronouns are added to *en*, which marks active alienable possession with free nouns (§6.1.2.3). While historically only appearing before noun possessors, *en* has been extended to appear also before independent pronouns in Sye, with the resulting sequences being analyzed as single words. Note also that *k*-initial pronouns involve the addition of of *-og-* between the original *en* and the pronoun.

The second paradigm is based on an underlying root that is indeterminate between the shapes *hore-* and *horo-*, with pronominal suffixes drawn from the paradigm set out in Table 3.3, which is used in the expression of possession with bound nouns (§3.2.2.2). The shape of the root *horu-* in the first person singular is what we would expect before the suffix *-g* with bound nouns (§3.2.2.2). However, this paradigm exhibits a number of exceptional features. Firstly, the first person plural inclusive suffix is invariably *-t*, rather than the alternating forms *-nt* and *-t* that we find with bound nouns, giving only *horet* rather than the predicted alternant **horent*. With the first person plural exclusive *hormam* and the second person plural *hormi* the root-final vowel is unpredictably deleted. The predicted forms would be **horomam* and **horomi* respectively. Finally, the third person forms are based on a completely different root, that is *ihe-* (though the pronominal suffixes *-n* '3SG' and *-nd* '3PL' are perfectly regular).

Table 3.3 Pronominal Possessive Suffixes

	SG		PL
1	*-g*	INCL	*-(n)t*
		EXCL	*-mam*
2	*-m*		*-mi*
3	*-n*		*-nd*

The third paradigm is based on the root *ira-*, with the same set of pronominal suffixes. This paradigm exhibits no morphological irregularity. Note, however, that there is some phonological reduction involved when these forms appear after possessed nouns, as described in §2.5.2.8.

The first two paradigms in Table 3.2 are used interchangeably to express ordinary kinds of alienable possession. None of the semantic contrasts that are so frequently encoded in Vanuatu languages by means of different forms of possessive constituents, such as food possession, drink possession and so on, are expressed grammatically in Sye. Thus:

nu	*enyau*	*nvag*	*enyau*	*nimo*	*enyau*
water	POSS:1SG	food	POSS:1SG	house	POSS:1SG
'my water'		'my food'		'my house'	

These possessive pronouns can also be used as proforms to refer to possessive noun phrases, for example:

Horug.	*Tawi*	*enogkik.*	*Ihen*	*nmas*	*wocon.*
POSS:1SG	NEG	POSS:2SG	POSS:3SG	big	very
'It's mine.'	'It's not yours.'		'His is very big.'		

These two sets of pronouns are also used to express possession in association with a preceding noun, though the details of such phrase-level phenomena are reserved for §6.1.2.3. The paradigm based on *ira-* cannot be used as a proform, and appears *only* after a noun.

There is one additional possessive pronoun: *nagku* 'my'. This is semantically equivalent to the first person singular possessive pronouns from the first two paradigms presented in Table 3.2, though it differs from these firstly in that in cannot be used as a proform, and secondly in that it is preposed to a possessed noun rather than postposed. Thus:

nagku	*nimo*
POSS:1SG	house
'my house'	

The following, however, is ungrammatical:

*Tawi nagku.
NEG   POSS:1SG

with only the following being possible:

Tawi horug/enyau.
NEG   POSS:1SG
'It's not mine.'

Nagku is not paradigmatically related to forms expressing any other categories of pronominal possessor. While one might have expected, on historical grounds at least, to find forms something like *namu 'your' and *nana 'his/her/its', speakers of Sye do not recognize these at all. Gordon (1889:84) indicates that preposed namu 'your' was used in the now extinct Utaha language, though no further forms from a paradigm of this type have been reported in any of the Erromangan languages.

3.1.3 Coordinate Pronouns

When the referent of a pronoun is coordinated with a noun in a nominal phrase (§6.1.3), this can be expressed using the coordinate pronouns. These take the form of compounds involving the plural independent pronouns and either the accompanitive preposition ndal 'with (plural)' or the short alternant of the accompanitive preposition nandu 'with (singular)', that is ndu. The coordinate pronoun is then followed by a noun. Noun phrases involving coordinate pronouns based on ndal are plural in their reference, while noun phrases involving a coordinate pronoun compounded with ndu are dual. Thus:

kam-ndu   Nompwat
1PL.EXCL-ACC.SG Nompwat
'Nompwat and I'

kam-ndal   ov-nevyarep
1PL.EXCL-ACC.PL PL-boy
'the boys and I'

There is some unpredictable segment loss over the resulting morpheme boundaries. In particular, kimi '2PL' loses its final vowel while iror '3PL' optionally loses its final consonant. We therefore find the pronominal derivations set out in Table 3.4.

The preposition *ndu* 'with (one other)' is semantically incompatible with *koh* '1PL.INCL' in this construction. The minimal interpretation of *koh* involves 'me' and 'you', so when this pronoun is coordinated with any other noun phrase, the reference is automatically plural. The only form with which this is compatible is therefore *ndal* 'with (several others)'. Thus, while the following is semantically interpretable:

koh-ndal   *ov-nevyarep*
1PL.INCL-ACC.PL   PL-boy
'you and me and the boys'

the following is arithmetically impossible:

*koh-ndu   *nevyarep*
1PL.INCL-ACC.SG   boy

as it would have to be interpreted as 'both of the three of us (that is you, me and the boy)'.

If a pronoun is associated with a category that is expressed by means of a suffix or a postmodifier, the phonological contractions in the coordinate pronouns set out in Table 3.4 are not possible. Thus, compare:

iro-ndal   *Torilwo*
3PL-ACC.PL Torilwo
'Torilwo and them'

with:

iror-su   *ndal*   *Torilwo*
3PL-every ACC.PL Torilwo
'Torilwo and all of them'

3.2 Nouns

Nouns exhibit a much wider range of morphological behaviors than we find with pronouns. The following discussion sets out the derivational and inflectional morphology of forms belong to this word class in Erromangan.

3.2.1 Derivation

The only morphological processes that are productively employed in the derivation of nouns in Sye are affixation and compounding. Reduplication is only very rarely attested as a noun-deriving process.

Table 3.4 Coordinate Pronouns

kam + ndu >	*kam-ndu*	'me and (one other)'
kimi + ndu >	*kim-ndu*	'you and (one other)'
iror + ndu >	*iro(r)-ndu*	'him/her and (one other)'
koh + ndu >	*koh-ndal*	'you and me (and others)'
kam + ndal >	*kam-ndal*	'me and (others)'
kimi + ndal >	*kim-ndal*	'you and (others)'
iror + ndal >	*iro(r)-ndal*	'him/her and (others)'

3.2.1.1 Prefixation

Derivational affixes in Erromangan for the most part take the form of prefixes with relatively little derivational nominal suffixation. In the discussion which follows, fully productive prefixes are described first, with purely marginal processes described later.

(i) *Deverbal Nominalizer* n-

The prefix *n-* is added to the basic form of a verb root. Its allomorphic variation is as follows (with cross-references to a discussion of the appropriate morphophonemic processes):

n- ~ Ø-	before *t-* (§2.2)
nt- ~ n- ~ Ø-	before *s-* (§2.5.1.3)
n-	elsewhere

With transitive verbs, all nominalizing prefixes are added to the form of the verb carrying the construct suffix *-i* (§6.3.1). Thus, underlying *avər-* 'help' is nominalized as *navri* 'NOM-help-CONST', rather than on the basis of the alternative realization **avor* which we would expect when there is neither a consonant-initial morpheme attached after the morpheme boundary, nor a following morpheme (§2.5.2.7).

This prefix is completely productive, and it expresses a very wide range of meanings, including the following:

(a) an abstract noun referring to the general activity, state or change of state expressed by the verb root, for example *mah* 'die' > *nmah* 'death', *lau* 'be dry' > *nlau* 'dryness', *yev-* 'pull' > *nyevi* 'pulling'.

(b) a single instance of the activity referred to in the verb, for example *asis* 'fart silently' > *nasis* 'a silent fart', *taru* 'think' > *ntaru ~ taru* 'thought, idea', *sompog* 'snore' > *ntsompog ~ nsompog ~ sompog* 'a snore'.

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(c) something that is produced as a result of an action or a state, for example *en* 'be sunny' > *nen* 'sun', *evoc* 'have hemorrhoid' > *nevoc* 'hemorrhoid', *evip* '(to) rain' > *nevip* 'rain'.

(d) something that is conventionally characterized by the state referred to by the verb, for example *arvarve* 'light' > *narvarve* 'lung', *avucvuc* 'spongy' > *navucvuc* 'bread', *orah* 'oval-shaped' > *norah* 'rounded river stone'.

(e) a product brought about by the action referred to by the verb, for example *elwo* 'vomit' > *nelwo* 'vomitus', *etai* 'write' > *netai* 'book, letter', *sav-* 'draw' > *ntsavi* ~ *nsavi* ~ *savi* 'drawing, picture'.

(f) something that is criterially involved in the action referred to by the verb, for example *vag* 'eat' > *nvag* 'food', *elat* 'eat meat' > *nelat* 'meat', *ovunu* 'rinse mouth' > *novunu* 'cleansing nibbles'.

(g) a person who performs an action, or one who is characterized by a state, for example *ehvo* 'white' > *nehvo* 'European', *talog-* 'kill' > *ntalogi* ~ *talogi* 'killer', *avər-* 'help' > *navri* 'helper'.

(h) the place where an activity is performed, for example *sogklau* 'look at view' > *ntsogklau* ~ *nsogklau* ~ *sogklau* 'vantage point', *yep* 'descend' > *nyep* 'downhill slope', *sac* 'ascend' > *ntsac* ~ *nsac* ~ *sac* 'uphill slope'.

A transitive verb can be nominalized along with an accompanying object by means of this prefix. In such cases, the nominalization is pronounced as a single lexical item. Thus: *arki nam* 'be naughty' (lit. "break talk") > *narkinam* 'naughty person'. Verbs carrying the negative inflectional prefix (§4.2.2.5) can also be nominalized with this prefix as well. Thus, corresponding to:

Etw-am!
2SG:IMP:NEG-BR:speak
'Don't speak!'

we find the noun *netwam* 'mute person' (that is "non-speaker").

(ii) *Habitual Agent* potn-

The prefix *potn-* is attached to the basic form of a verb root, with the following allomorphy:

potn-	before *t-* and vowels
pot-	elsewhere

This prefix productively derives a noun referring to a habitual human performer of an action. Thus: *avan* 'walk' > *potnavan* 'habitual walker', *tamsi* 'play football' > *potntamsi* 'football player', *sepetnam* 'joke' > *potsepetnam* 'jokester'. Verb-object sequences can be nominalized in the same way, even when the object is itself a syntactically complex unit, for example *omonki nacave* 'drink kava' > *potnomonki nacave* 'habitual kava drinker', *eni nagin kuri* 'eat dog's vagina' > *potneni nagin kuri* 'dog's vagina eater'.

(iii) *Areal* potn-

This prefix is identical in its morphological shape to the prefix described in (ii), though it differs in that it is attached instead to nouns rather than verbs. As a denominal prefix, *potn-* is not productive, being attested on only a handful of nouns, where it seems to derive a noun referring to the general area of the location of the referent of the root. Thus: *nelu-* 'penis' > *potnelu-* 'base of penis', *netni-* 'belly' > *potnetni-* 'area where pubic hair grows', *nevlami-* 'urine' > *potnevlami-* 'bladder', *nimo* 'house' > *potnimo* 'part of house between particular beam and ground'.

The prefix *potn-* is also attested as a place name derivative when attached to noun roots, for example *narvin* 'beach' > *Potnarvin* 'village name (where there is a long sandy beach, rather than the more common jagged coastal coral rocks of the Erromangan coastline)', *nevre* 'pith of sprouting coconut' > *Potnevre* 'village name'. There is a large number of place names which contain initial *potn-*, where the root is not synchronically recognizable, for example *Potnahgat*, *Potmeluc*, *Potkuvat*, *Potnurcote*, *Potlusi*.

(iv) *Instrumental* (w)or-

The prefix *(w)or-* is attached to the basic form of the verb root. The alternating forms *or-* and *wor-* are semantically equivalent, though *wor-* is marginally more common, and is often judged prescriptively to be "better". It productively derives a noun referring to the instrument by means of which the action referred to in the verb root is carried out. Thus: *ahwo* 'row (in canoe)' > *(w)orahwo* 'oar', *ocol* 'dig' > *(w)orocol* 'digging stick'. The following illustrates the fact that *(w)or-*, when added to a suffixed transitive verb, requires the verb to appear in its construct form: *etav-* 'pick (fruit)' > *(w)oretavi* 'fruit picking pole'.

The productivity of this prefix is indicated by the fact that the names of many introduced cultural and technological items have been derived in this way. Thus: *avan* 'walk' > *(w)oravan* 'shoes, boots', *sompret* 'scribble' > *(w)orsompret* 'pen', *tepelki* 'carry' > *(w)ortepelki* 'bra'. With some instrumental derivatives, there may be considerable metaphorical extension of meaning, for example *etur* 'stand' > *(w)oretur* 'tap root'.

As with the other nominalizing prefixes described above, *(w)or-* can also be used to derive a morphologically complex noun in which a transitive verb is

nominalized along with its object. In such cases, the VERB + OBJECT sequence is pronounced as a single word. Thus: *tai ntoc* 'body surf' (lit. "hit sea") > *(w)ortaintoc* 'boogie board, surf board', *etovri nei* 'swarm around tree' > *(w)oretovrinei* 'paper wasp', *tai nei* 'hit wood' > *(w)ortainei* 'axe'.

(v) *Locational* un-

The prefix *un-* derives locational nouns (§7.1.3.1) from non-locational nouns. The prefix has the following realizations:

u-	before n- (§2.5.1.4)
un-	elsewhere

Nouns derived in this way appear immediately after a motion or posture verb with a locative or goal meaning with respect to the referent of the root noun. All nouns carrying this prefix can express the same meaning alternatively by means of the locational preposition *ra* (§7.1.3.4). Thus, the following both mean '(S)he worked in the garden':

Y-ompurac   *u-ndenuc.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:work   LOC-garden

Y-ompurac   *ra   ndenuc.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:work   LOC garden

    Less than two dozen nouns have been attested with this prefix, with the remainder of nouns expressing the location/goal only by means of the prepositional construction. Some of those nouns attested as carrying this prefix are: *ntoc* 'sea' > *untoc* 'seawards, in the sea', *veli* 'cave' > *unveli* 'to/in the cave', *naigo-* 'shade (of)' > *unaigo-* 'to/in the shade (of)', *nocori-* 'side (of)' > *unocori-* 'to/at the side (of)'. With some nouns carrying this prefix, the meaning of the derived form is not fully predictable from the meaning of the root. Thus: *nmap* 'ground' > *unmap* 'downwards, below', *nur* 'place' > *unur* 'inland', *nompu-* 'head (of)' > *unompu-* 'to/at the head of the bed (of)', *nimte-* 'eye (of)' > *unimte-* 'in the sight (of)'.
    Locational nouns derived with *un-* optionally lose their initial vowel according to the regular process described in §2.2. Thus, if such a form is trisyllabic or longer and the root begins with *nV-*, *ntV-* or *ndV-*, the prefix can have zero realization. Note, therefore, the following derivations: *nocugo* 'road' > *unocugo ~ nocugo* 'to/on the road', *ntemne* 'village' > *untemne ~ ntemne* 'to/in the village', *ndenuc* 'garden' > *undenuc ~ ndenuc* 'to/in the garden', *pocup* 'sky' > *unpocup ~ *npocup* 'skywards, in the sky', *ntoc* 'sea' > *untoc ~ *ntoc* 'seawards, in the sea'.
    The prefix *un-* is also involved in the derivation of a number of place names from common nouns, for example *nevsem* 'joint' > *Unevsem* 'village name', *norah* 'rounded stone' > *Unorah* 'village name', *nocnompi* 'kind of tree' > *Unocnompi* 'village name'. Other place names involve an initial element that is

derived in this way, with a following modifier which no longer has any recognizable meaning: *nipmi* 'his/her eye' > *Unipmi Sompu* 'place name'.

Finally, there is a host of place names beginning with *un-* which probably originally involved this derivational prefix, though the historical root no longer has any recognizable meaning, for example *Unalvin*, *Unpogkor*, *Ununpog*. These place names, whether or not they are derived from synchronically recognizable roots, are all subject to the same general process of phonological reduction relating to the initial vowel (§2.2).

(vi) *The Prefix* it-

The corpus contains three nouns derived from words belonging to a variety of other word classes by means of the prefix *it-*. Since there is such a small number of examples of this process, these are simply presented in Table 3.5 without any further discussion, as it is presumed that this prefix is purely vestigial.

3.2.1.2 Suffixation

Suffixation is much less widely encountered in noun derivation than prefixation, and those suffixes that are attested are often only semi-productive or completely vestigial.

(i) *Ameliorative* -veh

The suffix *-veh* has been attested on a small number of nouns indicating that the referent of the noun is good. All such derived nouns refer to humans, and the following list of such derivatives is exhaustive for the corpus: *neteme* 'person' > *netemeveh* 'good person', *nalau* 'child' > *nalauveh* 'good child', *nahiven* 'woman' > *nahivenveh* 'good woman'. There is one additional derivation of this type not involving a human noun, and which also exhibits some morphological irregularity: *nevsem* 'joint' > *nevseveh* (rather than **nevsempeh*) 'lower of pair of joined roof beams'.

While this suffix is not productive as a noun-deriving affix, *-veh* functions productively as a derivational suffix with related meanings on adjectives (§5.1.2) and verbs (§4.5.2.2).

(ii) *Pejorative* -ndi

Contrasting with *-veh* is the suffix *-ndi*, which is added to a small number of nouns to indicate that the referent of the noun is bad, particularly in the sense of being wild and undisciplined. The following is an exhaustive listing of forms of this type that have been attested: *neteme* 'person' > *netemendi* 'undisciplined person', *nalau* 'child' > *nalaundi* 'undisciplined

Table 3.5 Nouns Derived by Vestigial *it-*

Root	Word class	Meaning	Derived noun	
elcav-	transitive verb	'touch'	*itelcavi*	'something polluted by having been touched by a menstruating woman'
impwap	locational noun	'deep down'	*itimpwap*	'underpants'
viroc	adjective	'small'	*itviroc*	'younger sibling'

child', *nahiven* 'woman' > *nahivendi* 'undisciplined woman', *nompi* 'behavior' > *nompindi* 'undisciplined behavior', *nompurac* 'work, deed' > *nompuracndi* 'misdeed', *navyat* 'evil spirit' > *navyatndi* 'pig', *nevsem* 'joint' > *nevsemndi* 'upper of pair of joined roof beams', *sat* 'sin' > *satndi* 'sin'.

   This suffix is also attested as a verbal derivational suffix, where it expresses a pejorative meaning (§4.5.2.2). In its verbal function, this suffix is also not productively used.

(iii) *Emotive -pau*

The suffix *-pau* expresses the speaker's positive emotional involvement with the referent of the noun root. This can be used to express emotions as diverse as admiration or pity. Thus: *itmas* 'gift' > *itmas-pau* 'grace of God', *netalam* 'old man' > *netalam-pau* 'poor old man'. This is also attested as a pronominal derivative suffix with a similar meaning (§3.1.1).

(iv) *Toponymic -wi*

Place names are productively derived from inflected verbs and associated nominal arguments by means of the verbal suffix *-wi*, which allows for the expression of an association of a place to some particular aspect of oral tradition. For example, there is a place where, according to oral tradition, a pig blocked the passage of some people. From the clause:

Nompcahi y-empai.
pig   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:make.fence
'The pig made a fence.'

the following toponym is derived:

Nompcahi Y-empai-wi
pig   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:make.fence-TOP

There is another story in which a character named Narai gets angry with his wife because she was always getting nostalgic for her original home, so he killed her, and then burnt her body. Her body then hardened into a stone which can still be seen today. Corresponding to the clause:

Y-etni   *retpo-n.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:burn   wife-3SG
'He burned his wife.'

we find the following toponym:

Y-etni-wi   *Retpo-n*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:burn-TOP   wife-3SG

    These complex toponyms are similar in structure to relative clauses involving relativized objects to the preposition *ra*, in which relativized locational noun phrases are marked by means of the proform *-wi* on the verb (§8.6). Thus, the toponym *Nom-pcahi Yempaiwi* is similar in structure to the normal way of saying 'where the pig made a fence', while the toponym *Yetniwi Retpon* is similar in form to the relative clause clause that expresses the meaning 'where he burned his wife'.
    The same pattern is also infrequently used as a way of deriving a modifier to the noun *neteme* 'person' as the name of an ethnic group, based on some stereotypical association between the people and the place where they live. Note the following examples:

neteme nom camnawi (<cam-nau-wi)
person fire   3SG:PRES-MR:burn-TOP
'Tannese person' (lit. "person of the place where the fire burns", named in reference to the active volcano on the island of Tanna)

neteme   cumnirawi (<cum-nirau-wi)
person   3PL:PRES-MR:jump-TOP
'person from Pentecost' (lit. "person of the place where they jump", referring to the land-diving tradition of southern Pentecost)

3.2.1.3 Reduplication

Reduplication is very much a marginal process in the derivation of nouns. The only examples of reduplicated nouns that are derived from unreduplicated roots

in the entire corpus are: *yelau* 'penis sheath' > *yelauyelau* 'caterpillar'[1], *noki* 'coconut' > *nokinoki* 'kind of plant', *Natni* 'Monday' > *Natninatni* 'Tuesday'[2], *ntample* 'island cabbage' > *ntamplentample* 'kind of plant of the same genus as island cabbage'. In each case, the reduplicated form expresses some kind of unpredictable perceived similarity between the meaning of the plain and the reduplicated form.

3.2.1.4 Compounding

Compound nouns can be subcategorized according to whether the constituent parts constitute a single phonological word, or if they retain their phonological independence. It does not seem to be possible to predict with certainty which particular compounded sequences are going to involve the retention of the phonological integrity of the constituent parts, and which are pronounced as separate words.

(i) *Bound Compounds*

The most straightforward pattern of bound compounds is that in which the resulting sequences of phonemes over the compounding boundary are subject to the normal morphophonemic rules (§2.5). The various patterns that have been attested are described below.

(a) NOUN + VERB. There are not many examples of this kind, though we do find a few examples such as the following: *ndan* 'day' + *worum* 'bake' > *Ndanworum* 'Saturday', *nemli* 'citrus' + *acan* 'bitter' > *nemlacan* 'wild citrus', *netwo* 'chicken' + *agon* 'wild' > *netwagon* 'wildfowl'. There is also a handful of compounds of this type in which the first element is a bound noun rather than a free noun, for example *nimte-* 'eye' + *avlar* 'red' > *nimtavlar* 'conjunctivitis', *nimte-* 'eye' + *ehvo* 'white' > *nimtehvo* 'kind of tree', *nempco-* 'buttocks' + *avan* 'walk' > *nempcavan* 'person who cannot stay in one place for long'. In addition, the corpus contains a single example of a noun with a following verb that is inflected with a singular echo subject marker *m-* in the future tense: *nmah* 'death' + *mawi* 'and will leave him' > *nmahmawi* 'widow'.

(b) VERB + NOUN. There is a handful of constructions in which a transitive verb is compounded with a following noun expressing the object of the verb, for example *taipe* 'fend off' + *nu* 'water' > *taipenu* 'clitoris'.

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[1] The similarity here is that the caterpillar wraps in a cocoon itself in a covering in the same way as the penis is wrapped in the penis sheath.

[2] Both the unreduplicated and the reduplicated forms here are seldom used today (§5.3).

(c) VERB + VERB. There is a single instance of a verb root followed by another verb that is inflected with a singular echo subject marker *m-* in the future tense, that is *sesi* 'point' + *magsi* 'and will see it' > *sesimagsi*[3] 'index finger'.

(d) NOUN + NOUN. There is a single instance of a noun and a following monosyllabic noun being compounded as a single word, that is *menuc* 'bird' + *sat* 'trouble' > *menucsat* 'cardinal honeyeater'.

(e) NOUN + NUMERAL. Numerals can also be compounded with preceding noun roots to produce phonologically tightly bound units. With bound nouns, the construct form of the noun is taken as the basis for forming such compounds. Thus, *ndan* 'day' + *sukrim* 'five' > *Ndansukrim* 'Friday', *no-n* 'leg-CONST' + *ndvat* 'four' > *nondvat* 'car', *nipmi* 'eye:CONST' + *nduru* 'two' > *nipminduru* 'spectacles'.

(f) PREMODIFIER + NOUN. There is a single example of a premodifier being compounded with a following nominal form, that is *ovon* 'plural' + *se* 'what' > *ovonse* 'testicles'.

There is a second category of single-word compounds in which compounded nominal roots appear in shapes that are phonologically different in some way from their corresponding uncompounded roots.

There are four nouns attested as having phonologically reduced roots when they appear as the initial element of a compound. Where free forms begin with *nC-*, the initial *n-* with these nouns is lost, as is the final *-VC* of the single disyllabic member of this set. A low vowel in the free root is raised to either *e* or *o* in the compounding form, and root-final *-p* undergoes regular spirantization to *v* (§2.5.1.2). The correspondences between free and compounding forms of these roots are set out in Table 3.6. The following derivations illustrate these kinds of alternations: *nvat* 'stone' + *acumsu* 'black' > *vetacumsu* 'kind of grey rock', *nvat* 'stone' + *mah* 'die' > *vetmah* 'unused cooking stone', *nmar* 'breadfruit' + *alam* 'swollen' > *moralam* 'kind of breadfruit with medicinal uses', *nmar* 'breadfruit' + *uki* 'kingfisher' > *moruki* 'kind of breadfruit', *nmap* 'land' + *corovoh* '(s)he made the garden' > *Movcorovoh* 'August', *nmap* 'land' + *cowi* '(s)he planted it' > *Movcowi* 'November', *selat* 'road' + *emsog* 'branch out' > *selemsog* 'junction in road', *selat* 'road' + *nemki* 'worm' > *selnemki* 'spinal column'.

This pattern appears for the most part to be purely residual, with between half a dozen and a dozen compounds based on each of these compound forms. New

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[3] The inflected form of the verb that is cited here as *magsi* would almost invariably appear in normal speech as *maghi*. The fact that the word for 'index finger' has only ever been recorded as *sesimagsi*, and never as *sesimaghi*, suggests that perhaps the compound was fixed in former times when the language was more *s*-ful than it is now, and that this is no longer synchronically analyzed as a compound. (It should be pointed out, however, that this morphological breakdown of the word was suggested by several young speakers of the language.)

Table 3.6 Irregular Compounding Forms of Noun Roots

Free form   *Compounding form*

nvat	vet-	'stone'
nmar	mor-	'breadfruit'
nmap	mov-	'ground'
selat	sel-	'road, path'

compounds are based instead on the regular pattern, in which the initial root re-
tains its segmental integrity. Note, therefore, the following recent coinage of *nvat*
'stone' + *petel* 'Bethel' > *nvatpetel* 'clitoris',[4] in which *nvat* is not compounded
as *vet-*.

There is a somewhat larger—though still restricted—set of nouns that have
special compounding forms which are used when the noun appears as the second,
rather than the first, element of a compound. These compounding forms system-
atically involve the loss of initial *n-*, with no other changes (though the regular
morphophonemic rules apply as a result of the juxtaposition of the resulting root-
initial vowel and the final segment of the first element of the compound). Thus,
for example, the form *nos* 'vine' can be compounded with *natmah* 'ghost' and
nacave 'kava' as *nos-atmah* 'kind of vine' and *nos-acave* 'kind of vine' respec-
tively.

Just over 60% of noun roots begin with *n-* and it is likely that most of these
initial segments are derived historically as a result of the fusion of the earlier ar-
ticle **na* with the root. In the closely related languages of Tanna and Aneityum,
the same kind of reanalysis has taken place (along, of course, with many other
Oceanic languages), though in these languages the initial element is still produc-
tively separable in certain restricted grammatical contexts. In Sye, initial *n-*
is much more tightly bound to the historical root, and with the vast majority
of nouns there is no synchronic evidence at all for recognizing any kind of bound-
ary between *n-* and the remainder of the root.

However, some *n-*initial nouns lose this historically reanalyzed article in en-
vironments that are similar to some of the contexts in which *n-* is productively
lost in the languages of Tanna and Anejom. The total number of nouns attested as
behaving in this way is less than three dozen, which constitutes under 5% of *n-*
initial nouns in the corpus. In addition to the NOUN + NOUN compounds described
above, initial *n-* with this subset of nouns is lost in the following situations:

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[4] This involves an allusion to what is believed to be a biblical reference to a
clitoris-like jagged stone upon which Cain reportedly lay after he slew Abel. I
have not been able to find any biblical reference to such a stone, so it would
appear that this is based on a local expansion of the biblical story.

(a) *Nominal Reduplication*

Although reduplication is not synchronically productive in Sye noun morphology, there is a handful of forms which in which there is a second element which appears to represent a historically reduplicated root with the second part lacking the initial *n-* that is present in the initial element. Thus, for example, the form *naram* 'banana' is related diachronically to *naramaram* 'kind of plant', and *narac* 'dragon plum' is related to *naracarac* 'kind of ground plant'.

(b) *Plural Nouns*

There is a small set of nouns with irregular plurals in which a prefix of the basic shape *ovo-* replaces the initial *n-* of singular nouns (§3.2.2.1). For example, corresponding to the singular form *neteme* 'person' is plural *ovoteme* (*<ovo-eteme*).

(c) Verb + Noun *Compounds*

There is also a handful of compound verb stems in which the second element consists of a nominal root minus its initial *n-*. Examples of this type include the verb *aleipo* 'sleep' and the noun *natmah* 'devil', from which the form *aleipatmah* (*<aleipo-atmah*) 'sleep soundly' is derived, as well as *ompi* 'do' and *nurac* 'thing', from which *ompurac* (*<ompi-urac*) 'work' is derived.

(d) Preposition + Noun *Compounds*

There are three examples where the spatial preposition *ra* is compounded with a following suffixed noun, which loses its initial *n-* (§3.2.2.1), leaving the resulting vowel sequence subject to the regular deletion rule set out in §2.5.1.2. Note, therefore, the following derivations: *ra nompu- > ra-ompu- > rampu-* 'to (stony or sandy place)', *ra nampo- > ra-ampo- > rampo-* 'inside', *ra netgo- > ra-etgo- > ratgo-* 'under'.

(ii) *Two-Word Compounds*

A more productive pattern of compounding is one in which the constituent elements remain as phonologically separate words. Such compounds fall into the following general categories, based on their internal make-up:

(a) Noun + Noun, for example *nalau* 'child' + *ntopavo* 'bush' > *nalau ntopavo* 'illegitimate child', *nehkil* 'snake' + *nei* 'wood' > *nehkil nei* 'millipede', *nompcahi* 'pig' + *nempati* 'tusk'> *nompcahi nempati* 'tusker'. The second nominal element can be derived from a verb by means of the nominalizing prefix *n-* (§3.2.2.1), for example *nimo* 'house' + *seivasi* 'sell' > *nimo ntseivasi* 'store', *nevcah* 'excrement' + *orari* 'flow' > *nevcah norari* 'diarrhoea'.

(b) NOUN + LOCATIONAL, for example *nam* 'language' + *ilvucten* 'middle' > *nam ilvucten* 'Bislama', *ndan* 'day' + *ilvucten* 'middle' > *ndan ilvucten* 'midday', *neteme* 'person' + *igko* 'here' > *neteme igko* 'local person'. The compounded locational noun can be one of those forms derived by the prefix *un-* (§3.2.2.1), for example *nagkrai* 'flying fox' + *u-ntoc* 'in the sea' > *nagkrai untoc* 'manta ray', *movoc* 'roof beam' + *u-nmap* 'down' > *movoc unmap* 'particular roof beam'.

(c) NOUN + ADJECTIVE, for example *nacave* 'kava' + *wocon* 'plain' > *nacave wocon* 'kind of kava', *nimo* 'house' + *tompor* 'holy' > *nimo tompor* 'church', *nemli* 'citrus' + *wocon* 'plain' > *nemli wocon* 'orange'. The adjective in such a construction can also be morphologically derived, for example *nam* 'language' + *n-evror* 'mixed' > *nam nevror* 'French', *nandup* 'flame tree' + *n-agon* 'wild' > *nandup nagon* 'bead tree', *navup* 'kind of yam' + *it-eni* 'edible' > *navup iteni* 'kind of yam'.

(d) NOUN + ADVERBIAL, for example *ndan* 'time' + *etwai* 'past' > *ndan etwai* 'ancient times'.

(e) NOUN + VERB, for example *nesur* 'clam' + *avan* 'walk' > *nesur avan* 'kind of clam', *neimah* 'cassia' + *acur* 'wilt' > *neimah acur* 'sensitive grass'.

(f) NOUN + INDETERMINATE ITEM. Provision is also needed for two-word compounds in which the first element is a noun and the second element is indeterminate with regard to word class membership as it has no independent existence apart from that particular compound. There is a substantial number of such compounds in the language, for example *nompcahi* 'pig' + *isini* '?' > *nompcahi isini* 'white pig', *nagai* 'native almond' + *raipau* '?' > *nagai raipau* 'kind of native almond'.

Although the examples presented above involve constituents that are stressed as separate phonological items, these can still be considered as compound nouns rather than phrasal items, because:

(a) The meanings of compounds are not fully predictable from the meaning of their parts. While *nimo* 'house' can be compounded with *orog* 'large' and *viroc* 'small', the meanings of *nimo orog* 'meeting house' and *nimo viroc* 'toilet' cannot be directly predicted from the difference in the meaning of the compounded adjectives.

(b) Additional material cannot be inserted between the nominal head and the following modifier. Postmodifiers must follow the entire sequence. Inserting some kind of modifier between the two constituents forces a phrasal interpretation. Thus, compare the following:

nimo	*orog*	*horet*		*nimo*	*horet*	*orog*
house	big	POSS:1PL.INCL		house	POSS:1PL.INCL	big
'our meeting house'				'our big house'		

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(c) When there is plural marking on the noun and the adjective, this forces a literal phrasal interpretation, excluding a metaphorical compound interpretation. Thus:

ov-nimo orog	*ov-nimo orog-o*
PL-house large	PL-house large-PL
'meeting houses'	'large houses'

(iii) *Syntactic Compounds*

There is another category of derived nominals which falls between morphology and syntax. This pattern is described here because such forms have meanings which are again not directly predictable from the meanings of their constituent parts, even though they have internal grammatical structures that are the same as those at higher levels of syntax.

The most commonly encountered pattern of this type involves possessive noun phrases that have specialized meanings. We therefore find examples such as the following:

namarat en netwo	*movoc en nakih*
sickness POSS chicken	roof.beam POSS rat
'epilepsy'	'beam which runs along top of wall'

When bound nouns enter into this kind of construction, they very frequently meet the conditions described in §2.6 for the elimination of the word boundary between the possessor and the possessed noun. In such cases, these phrasal compounds appear on the surface as single phonological words. Thus, from *va-n* 'real.one-CONST' and *nam* 'language', we can derive *vanam* 'English' (lit. "real language"), and from *netco-n* 'bottom-CONST' and *nau* 'bamboo', we can derive *netconau* 'heel' (lit. "bottom of the bamboo"), with the derivations *van nam* > *vannam* > *vanam* and *netcon nau* > *netcon-nau* > *netconau* respectively.

The bound noun *meta-* '(maternal) uncle' is particularly commonly encountered in this construction referring to a kind of plant – and sometimes an animal – that is similar to, but less beneficial than, some more widely encountered biological taxon. Thus:

meta-n ntample
uncle-CONST island.cabbage
'kind of plant similar to island cabbage'

meta-n yomuc
uncle-CONST mosquito
'kind of daddy-long-legs that is in constant motion'

meta-n   nye (> metanye)
uncle-CONST kind.of.vine
'kind of yam'

Two nouns can also be linked by the preposition *ra* in a phrasal compound construction. Thus, *mosi* 'star' and *ntoc* 'sea' can be linked as *mosi ra ntoc* 'starfish' (lit. "star in the sea"). The preposition *ra* can be phonologically attached to a following noun under conditions described in §2.6, so such phrases are often pronounced as two-word items, for example *mosi rantoc*.

A much less frequently encountered pattern is one in which a simple clause containing a fully inflected verb is used as a noun, for example:

c-arom   un-pocup
3SG:RECPAST-BR:make.noise.in.distance LOC-sky
'kind of island cabbage' (lit. "it made a distant noise in the sky")

3.2.1.5 Post-Inflectional Derivation

Derivational affixes in languages normally appear adjacent to the root, with inflectional affixes appearing before or after these, on the periphery of the word. Exceptions to this generalization are encountered in a variety of languages, though these are usually rather marginal in the overall morphology. Sye has a restricted amount of post-inflectional derivational suffixation, as set out below.

(i) -pelac

This form is more frequently attested as a derivational morpheme in the verbal morphology, where it expresses a meaning of 'motion outwards' (§4.5.2.2). However, there are two bound kin terms which allow this suffix to be added after the pronominal possessive suffix. These forms, and the meanings that they express, are: *ndinme-* 'mother' > *ndinme-...-pelac* 'mother's sister, adoptive mother', *nite-/ nito-*[5] 'child' > *nite-/nito-...-pelac* 'child of spouse by previous partner'.

We therefore find forms such as *ndinme-nt-pelac* 'our (INCL) mother's sister, our adoptive mother' and *nitu-g-pelac* 'child of my spouse (by previous partner)'. Both of these nouns have irregular third person singular inflected forms (§3.2.2.2), and the suffix *-pelac* is still added to the irregular inflected form. Thus, from *ndinme* 'his/her mother' and *nitni* 'his/her child', we can derive *ndinme-pelac* 'his/her mother's sister, his/her adoptive mother' and *nitni-pelac* 'child of his/her spouse (by previous partner)'.

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[5] The root for this noun is indeterminate between these two shapes.

(ii) -sac

This form is also frequently attested as a verbal suffix, expressing either motion upwards or intensification of action (§4.5.2.2). It has also been attested with the following single bound noun as a post-inflectional derivational suffix: *navya-* 'voice' > *navya-...-sac* 'loud or high-pitched voice'. Thus, *navya-n-sac* 'his/her loud or high-pitched voice'. The form *narisac* 'great leader, savior' also involves this form, being based on the verb *ari* 'rule', via the nominalization *nari* 'ruler'.

(iii) -hai *and* -vai

The bound noun *ave-* 'friend, companion' can be followed by the bound elements *-hai* or *-vai*. Since these derivations apply to only this single item, we find forms such as the following with the third person singular possessive suffix *-n*: *ave-n* 'his/her friend/companion', *ave-n-hai* 'his/her same sex sibling', *ave-n-vai* 'husband of wife's sister'. In those categories for which the possessive paradigm of *ave-* is irregular (§3.2.2.2), the suffixes *-hai* and *-vai* are simply attached as suffixes to the irregular inflected form. Thus, from *apmu* 'your friend/companion' we can derive *apmu-hai* 'your same sex sibling'.

While *-hai* and *-vai* can be treated as post-inflectional derivational suffixes, they differ from *-pelac* and *-sac* in that they have no derivational function apart from this pair of examples. It is therefore difficult to know exactly how to treat this construction. It would be quite possible to argue, for example, that the inflected form *ave-n* 'his/her friend/companion' should be treated as being compounded with the numeral *hai* 'one' or the verb root *vai* 'take'. Alternatively, the forms *ave-...-hai* and *ave-...-vai* could be treated as discontinuous roots, with infixed possessive marking.

(iv) *Comitative* -wi

The suffix *-wi* marks the site of a stranded spatial noun phrase introduced by the preposition *ra* (§7.1.3.4). This locational function appears to have been extended to the expression of a comitative meaning when it is attached to nouns which have no derivational relationship with a *ra*-phrase. Thus:

Kamotenom (<kamu-etenom) tawi [kinu-wi].
1DL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:dive   NEG   canoe-COM
'We dived without a canoe.'

This suffix can also be added post-inflectionally to suffixed nouns, as in:

Mei   ma   ntelgo-n-wi,   no-n-wi,   nocve-n-wi,   nipmi-wi?
who that ear-CONST-COM leg-CONST-COM arm-CONST-COM eye:CONST-COM
'Who is that with ears, arms, legs and eyes?'

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The possessive pronouns described in §3.1.1, for which the first person singular exponents are *(h)enyau* and *horug* (but not *irag*), can also be followed by *-wi*, and the resulting form is a locational noun referring to the place to which the referent of the pronoun belongs, or the garden belonging to the referent of the pronoun. Thus:

Yetuchi (<*yi-etu-ocəh-i*)   *nelowi*   *[enogkam-wi]*.
3SG:DISTPAST-NEG-BR:see-CONST   yam.harvest POSS:1PL.EXCL-COM
'He did not see the yam harvest at our place.'

Kokwo-navan   *[ihen-wi   etme-nt]*.
1PL.INCL:FUT-MR:walk   POSS-COM father-1PL.INCL
'We will walk to our father's place.'

The semantically equivalent paradigms which result from this derivational process are set out in Table 3.7.

3.2.2 Inflection

Inflectional morphology with Sye nouns is restricted to the expression of number and some types of possession. It is inalienable possession which is typically marked inflectionally on nouns, while alienable possession is typically marked at the phrase level (§6.1.2.3).

3.2.2.1 Plural Marking

Plural nouns are morphologically distinguished from singular nouns. The marking of plural in Sye differs from the pattern found in many Oceanic languages in that it is not just highly animate nouns that are marked for plural, as inanimate nouns also generally receive plural marking. There are several patterns of number marking, which are to a large extent determined by the semantic category of the noun.

(i) *The Prefix* ovn-

There is a pluralizing prefix *ovn-*, which is functionally equivalent to the preposed modifier *ovon* (§6.1.2.1). The prefix is more widely encountered in speech than the corresponding free form. This appears as *ov-* before noun roots beginning with *n-*, and *ovn-* elsewhere, as determined by the degemination rule (§2.5.1.4). In allegro speech, the prefix is realized as *omn-* before vowel-initial nouns and as *om-* elsewhere. We therefore find alternations such as: *nei* 'tree' > *ovon nei ~ ovnei ~ omnei* 'trees', *natmah* 'devil' > *ovon natmah ~ ovnatmah ~*

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Table 3.7 Derived Locational Pronouns

	SG		PL
1	*horugwi*	INCL	*horetwi*
		EXCL	*hormamwi*
2	*horomwi*		*hormiwi*
3	*ihenwi*		*ihendwi*
1	*(h)enyawi*	INCL	*(h)enogkohwi*
		EXCL	*(h)enogkamwi*
2	*(h)enogkikwi*		*(h)enogkmiwi*
3	*(h)eniwi*		*(h)enirorwi*

omnatmah 'ghosts', *pogku* '(kind of) banyan' > *ovon pogku* ~ *ovnpogku* ~ *ompogku* '(kind of) banyans', *uyou* 'old woman' > *ovon uyou* ~ *ovnuyou* ~ *omnuyou* 'old women'.

The vast majority of nouns pluralize according to this pattern. This includes free common nouns with non-human reference, whether morphologically simple or complex, for example *nei* 'tree', *pumroc* 'night', *kuri* 'dog', *yomuc* 'mosquito', *nehkil nei* 'centipede', *nimo orog* 'meeting house'. This also includes: free nouns with human reference, for example *uyou* 'old woman', *namou* 'mother'; bound nouns with non-human reference, for example *nompu-* 'head', *ntelgo-* 'ear'; a single bound noun with human reference, that is *nompunara-* 'relative'; and the inanimate interrogative *se* 'what'. Thus, contrast the following:

Se yihi?	*Ovn-se yihi?*
what this	PL-what this
'What is this?'	'What are these?'

(ii) *The Suffix* -me

While free human nouns can be pluralized by the prefixation of *ovn-*, there is an additional option in that they can receive the suffix *-me* (or both affixes can appear together on the same noun). The suffix *-me* alternates with *-mo*, the latter appearing on nouns ending *-Cu*, and *-me* elsewhere. We therefore find examples such as: *namou* 'mother' > *namou-me* 'mothers', *itais* 'grandfather' > *itais-me* 'grandfathers', *apmu* 'that person' > *apmu-mo* 'those people'.

The pluralizing suffix *-me* can also be added to bound kin terms. In such cases, the plural marker comes after the possessive suffix, or, in the case of irregularly inflected possessive forms, the resulting portmanteau form. Thus: *etme-nd* 'their father' > *etme-nd-me* 'their fathers', *meta-g* 'my mother's brother' > *meta-g-me* 'my mother's brothers', *mocpmu* 'your grandchild' > *mocpmu-mo* 'your grandchildren'.

With bound nouns having defective possessive paradigms, and which express non-third person possession by means of free form pronouns that are phonologically bound to the noun carrying the construct suffix *-n* (§3.2.2.2), the plural marker follows the pronoun. Thus, singular *alwo-n-yau* 'my nephew' corresponds to the plural *alwo-n-yau-me* 'my nephews'.

The suffix *-me* is fully productive as a pluralizer of kin terms, and it has even been attested on inanimate nouns when they are being used metaphorically as kin terms. The form *nagi-n* 'vagina-CONST', for example, has been attested in the plural as *nagi-n-me*. This form was produced in a jocular context, and the speaker was referring to a group of sexually attractive women, who were presumably being considered as kin, that is wives, at least on a temporary basis. The predicted plural for this noun, that is *ov-nagi-n*, can only be given the literal interpretation of 'vaginas'.

This suffix is also used to mark the plural on one non-kin term, that is the human interrogative form *mei* 'who'. Thus, contrast the following:

Kem-antehep   nandu [mei]?
2SG:PRES-MR:sit ACC.SG who
'Who (singular) are you sitting with?'

Kem-antehep   ndal [mei-me]?
2SG:PRES-MR:sit ACC.PL who-PL
'Who (plural) are you sitting with?'

(iii) *The Simulfix* ro-...-me

Kin terms beginning with segments other than *r-* or *nd-*, phonemically /(n)r-/, exhibit an additional variation in that they optionally also accept the prefix *ro-*. This prefix must appear with an accompanying *-me* suffix (though, as was demonstrated above, *-me* can appear without *ro-*). The prefix *ro-* varies allomorphically as follows:

r-   before *V-*
re-   before *Ce-*
ro-   elsewhere

We therefore find examples such as: *itais* 'grandfather' > *r-itais-me* 'grandfathers', *avu-g* 'my friend' > *r-avu-g-me* 'my friends', *alwo-n-yau* 'my nephew' > *r-alwo-n-yau-me* 'my nephews', *veve-n* 'his sister' > *re-veve-n-me* 'his sisters', *mocpu-g* 'my grandchild' > *ro-mocpu-g-me* 'my grandchildren', *mocpmu* 'your grandchild' > *ro-mocpmu-mo* 'your grandchildren'.

The statements presented above provide for a considerable amount of variability in the expression of the plural with bound human nouns. While the forms *ovn-* and *-me* can each mark plural on their own, or both can appear on the same

noun, the prefix *ro-* cannot appear on its own, and must appear along with the suffix *-me*. The simulfix *ro-...-me* can appear with a preceding *ovn-* prefix as well, with no change in meaning. This means that a form such as *avu-g* 'my friend' can pluralize in any of the following semantically equivalent ways: *ovnavug, avugme, ovnavugme, ravugme, ovnravugme*. In addition, the prefix *ovn-* alternates freely with the preposed free form *ovon*, producing the following additional alternants: *ovon avug, ovon avugme, ovon ravugme*.

There is a small subset of independent nouns with human reference beginning with the sequence *nV-* which lose the initial *n-* and add the plural prefix *ovo-*, rather than the regular *ovn-*. The resulting vowel sequences are then resolved by the regular morphophonemic rules set out in §2.5.1.2. An exhaustive listing for the corpus of those nouns which accept this prefix is set out in Table 3.8, along with their respective plurals.

There is one additional form which carries the same prefix, though the root of the plural form is suppletive with respect to the corresponding singular form, that is *nalau* 'child', for which the plural is suppletive *ovonyan* 'children', though the same prefix is still recognizable in this form[6]. The singular root corresponding to this is indeterminate between **nenyan* and **nonyan*, though neither form is recognized by Erromangans.

There is one vowel-initial form which pluralizes by means of the prefix *ov-*, along with unpredictable loss of the initial vowel of the root, that is *aragi* 'that person', which pluralizes as *ovragi* 'those people'. Finally, there is one additional suppletive form which accepts the regular plural prefix *ovn-*, but which has a completely suppletive root in the plural: *sesai* 'thing', which pluralizes as *ovn-syame* 'things'.

The plural markers presented in (i) to (iii) above constitute an inflectional set in that they are almost categorically required in particular structurally definable contexts. There is, however, a suffix with the shape *-su*, which does not belong to the same inflectional set, expressing the specific meaning of 'every', with respect to non-temporal nouns. Thus, contrast *ovn-syame* 'things' with *syame-su* 'everything'. It is also possible for the plural prefix *ovn-* to co-occur with *-su*, to express the following meaning:

ovn-syame-su
PL-things-every
'every single thing'

Performing the same function, but only with temporal nouns, is the suffix -go. Thus, corresponding to *pruvcum* 'morning' we find *pruvcum-go* 'every morning'.

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[6] Lynch and Capell (1983:37) also record the pair *nalau* 'child' and *ovalau* 'children', which is found in old translated ecclesiastical materials. This form is uniformly rejected by speakers of modern Erromangan.

Table 3.8 Irregular Plurals in *ovo-*

SG	PL	
natman	*ovatman*	'men'
nahiven	*ovahiven*	'women'
neteme	*ovoteme*	'people'
netalam	*ovotalam*	'old men'
nahimnalam	*ovahimnalam*	'adult women'
natmonuc	*ovatmonuc*[8]	'chiefs'

While the marking of number in Sye is not determined by animacy, not all se-manically plural noun phrases are overtly marked for number. Number is marked on all semantically plural nouns except :

(a) when a noun phrase includes an overt numeral modifier, for example:

noki   ndehel
coconut three
'three coconuts'

However, when a noun phrase includes a non-numeral quantifier, the noun op-tionally appears with plural marking, for example:

(ov-)noki   comwisacsu   *(ov-)naram   nogkon*
PL-coconut all   PL-banana   some
'all the coconuts'   'some bananas'

(b) when a noun phrase is introduced by the plural accompanitive preposition *ndal*, which involves an inherently plural following noun phrase (§7.1.3.4). Thus:

Y-etehep   ndal   [etme-n].
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:sit ACC.PL father-3SG
'(S)he sat with his/her fathers[7].'

However, it is still possible for semantically plural nouns to be unmarked for number in circumstances that are not determined by the statements above. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Kaml-alou   ml-ur-i   navya-n   kuri.
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:run SG:ES-BR:follow-CONST voice-CONST dog
We ran in the direction of (lit. "following") the dogs' voices.'

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[7] This obviously refers to the speaker's biological and classificatory fathers together.

in which the context clearly indicates that there were several dogs involved, yet neither *navyan* 'voice' nor *kuri* 'dog' is marked for plural as *ov-navyan* or *ovn-kuri*. Such examples indicate that plural marking is not absolutely obligatory, though it is certainly strongly preferred, with a much greater incidence of overt marking for number than is typically the case in Oceanic languages.

Nouns which have irregular (and suppletive) plurals behave differently from regular nouns in that plural reference is obligatorily expressed by means of an overtly marked plural form, even when accompanying modifiers, or context, would allow other nouns to appear with no overt plural marking. Thus, the singular forms *sesai* 'thing' and *nahiven* 'woman' must appear in their respective plural forms *syame* and *ovahiven* when modified by a plural modifier, for example:

syame	*ginmah*		**sesai*	*ginmah*
things	many		thing	many
'many things'				

ovahiven	*nduru*		**nahiven*	*nduru*
PL:woman	two		woman	two
'two women'				

3.2.2.2 Possession

There is a fundamental distinction in Sye between bound and free nouns, with the subcategorization based on the means by which possession is expressed. Bound nouns always appear with some kind of morphological marking for the category of the possessor. Free nouns, on the other hand, remain invariant in shape, with differences in possessor categories being marked morphologically as separate words accompanying the noun. Thus, for example, the bound noun *nompu-* 'head' expresses a second person singular possessor by means of the suffix *-m*, that is *nompu-m* 'your head', whereas the free noun *nimo* 'house' expresses the same category of possessor by means of a postposed possessive pronoun, as in *nimo enogkik* 'your house'. This section describes the purely morphological aspects of the marking of possession on bound nouns, with syntactically expressed possession being described in §6.1.2.3.

Bound nouns are subdivided into two subsets, according to the nature of the suffixation. With plain bound nouns, there are separate pronominal suffixes for all persons and numbers, as set out in Table 3.9. In the first person plural inclusive, the suffix *-nt* is most frequently found, though *-t* is attested as an occasional variant. There is a separate set of defective bound nouns which accept only third person possessive suffixes *-n* 'singular' and *-nd* 'plural'. First and second person possessors with such nouns are expressed by rather

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[8] For some speakers, this form pluralizes regularly, as *ovnatmonuc*.

different means to the pattern found with plain bound nouns, as described below.

(i) *Plain Bound Nouns*

The suffixes presented in Table 3.9, along with the morphological alternations described in this section, apply not only to the class of plain bound nouns, but also to forms belonging to two other quite separate word classes:

(a) a subset of prepositions that are referred to as nominal prepositions (§7.1.3.4), such as *ira-* 'locative/goal', *nisco-* 'benefactive', *nompli-* 'on the topic of', where the suffixed element expresses the pronominal category of the noun phrase governed by the preposition. Thus:

nisco-m	*ira-nt*
BEN-2SG	LOC-1PL.INCL
'for you'	'to us'

(b) a small subset of transitive verbs that is known as possessive verbs (§4.3.1.2), such as *arinowa-* 'provoke', *tavunta-* 'gossip about', *orelu-* 'retract foreskin of', where the suffixed element expresses the pronominal category of the object of the verb. Thus:

c-arinowa-g	*yoco-ntavunta-nd*
3SG:RECPAST-BR:provoke-1SG	1SG:FUT-MR:gossip.about-3PL
'(s)he provoked me'	'I will gossip about them'

In the discussion which follows, the morphological behavior of regular bound nouns will be presented first. There is, however, a substantial amount of morphological irregularity in the expression of direct possession, which will also be detailed below.

The simplest pattern is that in which the pronominal suffixes set out in Table 3.9 are attached directly to an invariant noun root. Those nouns which exhibit invariant roots include those which end in the high vowels (*-i*, *-u*) or the low vowel (*-a*). This therefore includes form such as *ni-* 'name', *nompu-* 'head' and *nva-* 'thigh'. Also included in this set are monosyllabic nouns which end in any vowel, such as *no-* 'leg', and all nouns ending in *wo-*, such as *ndetwo-* 'paternal aunt'. This pattern is illustrated by the paradigm for the root *no-* 'leg' set out in Table 3.10.

With nouns of two or more syllables ending in *-o* preceded by a consonant other than *w* or a non-labial consonant, for example *nempco-* 'buttocks', *ntelgo-* 'ear', *novletgo-* 'armpit', and with nouns ending in *-e* preceded by a non-labial consonant, for example *nelpavine-* 'forehead', *nete-* 'offspring', there are systematic changes in the shape of the final vowel before suffixes. In particular, before

Table 3.9 Pronominal Possessive Suffixes

	SG		PL
1	-*g*	INCL	-*(n)t*
		EXCL	-*mam*
2	-*m*		-*mi*
3	-*n*		-*nd*

Table 3.10 Possessive Paradigm for *no-* 'leg'

	SG		PL
1	*nog*	INCL	*no(n)t*
		EXCL	*nomam*
2	*nom*		*nomi*
3	*non*		*nond*

the first person singular suffix -*g*, root-final mid vowels become *u*, while before suffixes that begin with *m*, root-final mid vowels become *o*.[9] These changes are illustrated in Table 3.11 with the paradigms for *ntelgo-* 'ear' and *nelpavine-* 'forehead'.

Roots ending with a mid vowel preceded by a labial consonant behave differently before suffixes that begin with *m*. Forms of this type include *retpo* 'wife', *nelve-* 'incisor tooth', *nelwame-* 'tongue', *ave-* 'friend', *mocpo-* 'grandchild' and *nocve-* 'hand'. As well as the rule presented above which shifts *e* to *o* before prefixes beginning with *m*, sequences of *om* over the boundary between the noun root and the possessive suffix shift arbitrarily to *mu*. The resulting sequences of labial consonant followed by *m*, that is -*vm*- and -*mm*, are resolved as -*pm*. (Where the preceding consonant was already *p*, this rule applies vacuously.) The paradigms of the nouns *retpo-* 'wife' and *nelwame-* 'tongue' in Table 3.12 illustrate the application of these changes.

A number of paradigms exhibit features that go beyond the generalizations presented above, and which cannot be explained by any kind of phonologically conditioned changes. The situation with those nouns just described which have second person singular forms ending in -*pmu* is further complicated by the fact that when the suffixes -*mi* '2PL' and -*mam* '1PL:EXCL' are added, an optional -*mu* can be inserted immediately before the suffix. The second person plural possessive form of *nelve-* 'incisor tooth' is therefore alternately *nelpmi* and *nelpmumi*, while the first person plural exclusive possessive form of *nelwame-* 'tongue' can be either *nelwapmam* or *nelwapmumam*.

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[9] With roots that already end in -*o*, this rule obviously applies vacuously, resulting in no change in the shape of the root.

Table 3.11 Possessive Paradigms for *ntelgo-* 'ear' and *nelpavine-* 'forehead'

	SG		PL
1	*ntelgug*	INCL	*ntelgo(n)t*
		EXCL	*ntelgomam*
2	*ntelgom*		*ntelgomi*
3	*ntelgon*		*ntelgond*
1	*nelpavinug*	INCL	*nelpavine(n)t*
		EXCL	*nelpavinomam*
2	*nelpavinom*		*nelpavinomi*
3	*nelpavinen*		*nelpavinend*

Table 3.12 Possessive Paradigms for *retpo-* 'wife' and *nelwame-* 'tongue'

	SG		PL
1	*retpug*	INCL	*retpo(n)t*
		EXCL	*retpmam*
2	*retpmu*		*retpmi*
3	*retpon*		*retpond*
1	*nelwamug*	INCL	*nelwame(n)t*
		EXCL	*nelwapmam*
2	*nelwapmu*		*nelwapmi*
3	*nelwamen*		*nelwamend*

The insertion of the syllable *-mu-* in such environments appears to be a recent development. Neither Gordon (1889:63) nor Capell's typescript grammar provide any evidence for this. The irregular second person possessive forms described above, for example *retpmu* 'your wife' from *retpo-,* are less transparent than other forms in the paradigm. These forms have apparently been reanalyzed as competing roots, which have then become the basis for the addition of the first person exclusive and second person plural suffixes. The resulting paradigm, including forms from the competing sub-paradigm, is set out in Table 3.13. Speakers of the language frequently hesitate when such paradigms are being elicited, which suggests that the new pattern has not fully stabilized.

The paradigm for the noun *ave-* 'friend, companion' behaves as we would expect on the basis of observations already made, which means that we have the paradigm presented in Table 3.14. These forms then become the basis for the formation of new nouns based on the post-inflectional derivational suffixes *-hai* and *-vai* (§3.2.1.5). However, these suffixes can only be added to the regularly inflected forms *apmam* 'our (exclusive) friend' and *apmi* 'your (plural) friend', and

Table 3.13 Competing Possessive Paradigms for *retpo-* 'wife'

	SG		PL
1	*retpug*	INCL	*retpo(n)t*
		EXCL	*retpmam ~ retpmumam*
2	*retpmu*		*retpmi ~ retpmumi*
3	*retpon*		*retpond*

Table 3.14 Possessive Paradigm for *ave-* 'friend, companion'

	SG		PL
1	*avug*	INCL	*ave(n)t*
		EXCL	*ap(mu)mam*
2	*apmu*		*ap(mu)mi*
3	*aven*		*avend*

not to the irregularly inflected forms *apmumam* and *apmumi*. We therefore find only paradigms such as that presented in Table 3.15 for the word meaning 'same sex sibling'.

The next irregular pattern involves the paradigm for the bound noun meaning 'eye', which is set out in Table 3.16. If we assume the underlying root *nimte-*, the irregularities in this paradigm lie in the fact that the third person singular is *nipmi* rather than predicted **nimten*, and the roots in the third person plural and the first person plural inclusive forms are unpredictably *nimi-*.

The irregularities in this paradigm are partly mirrored in the paradigm in Table 3.17 for the word meaning 'offspring'.[10] The first and second person singular forms in this paradigm, as well as the first person plural exclusive and second person plural forms, all point to a basic root that is indeterminate between *nite-* and *nito-*. The third person singular form *nitni* is again unpredictable on the basis of either of these possible roots (though there is a partial similarity between this and the corresponding form in the paradigm for *nimte-* 'eye'). This irregular third person singular form appears to have then become the basis for a competing root, to which regular possessive suffixes are then added in the first person plural inclusive and the third person plural.

The next irregular paradigm is that for the word meaning '(man's) sister', as presented in Table 3.18. If the root here is taken to be *vevne-*, the third person singular and plural, as well as the first person plural inclusive are based on the unpredictable variant *veve-*. It might be suggested that there has been dissimilatory

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[10] There is a synonymous form based on the root *nete-* which is morphologically completely regular. Of the two sets of forms, however, it is the irregular paradigm which is most commonly encountered, so irregular *nitni* 'his/her offspring' is more widely heard than regular *neten*.

Table 3.15 Possessive Paradigm for *ave-...-hai* 'same sex sibling'

	SG		PL
1	*avughai*	INCL	*ave(n)thai*
		EXCL	*apmamhai*
2	*apmuhai*		*apmihai*
3	*avenhai*		*avendhai*

Table 3.16 Possessive Paradigm for 'eye'

	SG		PL
1	*nimtug*	INCL	*nimi(n)t*
		EXCL	*nimtomam*
2	*nimtom*		*nimtomi*
3	*nipmi*		*nimind*

Table 3.17 Possessive Paradigm for 'offspring'

	SG		PL
1	*nitug*	INCL	*nitni(n)t*
		EXCL	*nitomam*
2	*nitom*		*nitomi*
3	*nitni*		*nitnind*

Table 3.18 Possessive Paradigm for '(man's) sister'

	SG		PL
1	*vevnug*	INCL	*veve(n)t*
		EXCL	*vevnomam*
2	*vevnom*		*vevnomi*
3	*veven*		*vevend*

loss of *n* before a prefix beginning with the same segment. However, other nouns of the same shape, such as *avni-* 'namesake', maintain the same form of the root throughout their paradigms, so this change in the paradigm for *vevne-* is idiosyncratic.

Yet another irregular paradigm is illustrated by the forms in Table 3.19 meaning '(woman's) brother'. This paradigm exhibits alternations in its root between *ma-* when the suffix begins with *n*, and a root that is indeterminate in shape between *mane-* and *mano-* in cases where the suffix begins with other segments.

Table 3.19 Possessive Paradigm for '(woman's) brother'

	SG		PL
1	*manug*	INCL	*ma(n)t*
		EXCL	*manomam*
2	*manom*		*manomi*
3	*man*		*mand*

There are irregular paradigms for two phonologically similar words for 'father'. One paradigm is based on a root of the shape *et(m)o-*, as set out in Table 3.20. This paradigm lacks a first person singular exponent, as the predicted form **etug* is rejected by speakers. The only way that the meaning of 'my father' can be expressed is to use the synonymous free noun *nate* 'father', that is:

nate   *enyau*
father   POSS:1SG
'my father'

The paradigm is further irregular in that there are again two competing roots: *etme-* before suffixes that begin with *n* and *ete-* before suffixes beginning with *m*.[11]

A competing paradigm expressing the same meaning is set out in Table 3.21. In addition to lacking again a first person singular exponent, there is a parallel alternation in root forms between *itmi-* and *iti-*. The second person singular form is unpredictable *itom* rather than **itim*.

Finally, the paradigm in Table 3.22 for the noun meaning 'mother' exhibits irregular features. This paradigm also lacks a first person singular exponent, with this meaning being expressed by means of a synonymous free noun:

namou   *enyau*
mother POSS:1SG
'my mother'

If we assume a root that is indeterminate between *ndine-* and *ndino-*, the third person singular *ndinme* is irregular. This has then been taken as a competing root to which suffixes beginning with *n* are added, while suffixes beginning with *m* are added to the regular root.

All of the irregular possessive paradigms presented so far still express possession by means of suffixes that are derivable from the pronominal suffixes presented in Table 3.9. The possessive paradigm of the word meaning 'in-law' is quite different in its suffixing behavior, as shown in Table 3.23. This form is

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[11] By the regular rules presented earlier, *ete-* will automatically become *eto-* before suffixes beginning with *m*.

Table 3.20 Possessive Paradigm for *et(m)o-* 'father'

	SG		PL
1	-	INCL	*etme(n)t*
		EXCL	*etomam*
2	*etom*		*etomi*
3	*etmen*		*etmend*

Table 3.21 Competing Possessive Paradigm for 'father'

	SG		PL
1	-	INCL	*itmi(n)t*
		EXCL	*itimam*
2	*itom*		*itimi*
3	*itmin*		*itmind*

Table 3.22 Possessive Paradigm for 'mother'

	SG		PL
1	-	INCL	*ndinme(n)t*
		EXCL	*ndinomam*
2	*ndinom*		*ndinomi*
3	*ndinme*		*ndinmend*

Table 3.23 Possessive Paradigm for 'in-law'

	SG		PL
1	*etemacohyau*	INCL	*etemacohcoh*
		EXCL	*etemacohcam*
2	*etemachoc*		*etemacohcum*
3	*etemachi*		*etemachor*

based on the underlying root *etemacəh-*, and suffixed elements that are identical
ized as *o* before consonant-initial suffixes, and as zero before vowel-initial suf-
fixes.

Because this bound noun is so aberrant in its behavior in that its suffixing
morphology is verbal rather than nominal, it is tempting to look for some kind of
diachronic explanation. It is perhaps worthy of note that there is a verbal root of
the shape *ocəh-* 'see', and the initial element of this form bears some similarity to
the nominal root *eteme* 'other one'. However, if this form originated as some kind

of compound involving these two forms, then any semantic connection between an original meaning such as 'the other one sees me' and 'my in—law' is fairly obscure. Also, the resolution of the vowel sequence *eo* in *eteme + ocəh-* as *a* is completely idiosyncratic. By the regular rules set out in §2.5.2.5, this sequence should be resolved instead as *o*.

There is one final aberrant possessive paradigm, and that is the form *ita-* 'grandfather', which behaves as set out in Table 3.24. These forms point to the possessive suffixes set out in Table 3.25, where the first and second person markers are identical with one of the sets of postposed possessive set out in Table 3.2, while the third person forms differ from these possessive pronouns only in that they lack the initial vowels.

This paradigm alternates with the corresponding phrasal possessive paradigm based on the free noun *itais* 'grandfather'. Thus, *ita-horug* 'my grandfather' is synonymous with the phrasal item *itais horug*. The aberrant paradigm just presented has presumably arisen as the result of elision, with the original phrase-internal boundary being reanalyzed as an irregular morphological pattern.

(ii) *Defective Bound Nouns*

There is a small subset of bound nouns with defective paradigms in that they permit only the third person singular suffix *-n*, and the corresponding plural form *-nd*. The only nouns of this type attested are *alwo-* '(man's) nephew, niece', *ete-* '(woman's) nephew, niece', *namoli-* 'shadow, reflection', *nampo-* 'trace, track, place, home', *va-* 'body'.[12] When these nouns are associated with first or second person possessors, the third person singular form is phonologically bound to the following independent form of the relevant pronoun (§3.1.1). Thus, the paradigm of the word meaning '(man's) nephew or niece' is as set out in Table 3.26.

In addition to this small set of defective bound nouns, there is one root that belongs in both the plain and defective sets, though there is an associated difference of meaning. The root *nompu-,* when it is used as a plain bound noun, expresses the meaning of 'head', and when it behaves as a defective noun, it means 'leader' or 'boss'. Thus:

nompu-g	*nompu-n-yau*
head-1SG	head-3SG-1SG
'my head''	my leader'

While the forms just presented are obligatorily inflected according to this defective paradigm, any plain bound noun has the potential to express pronominal possessors according to either pattern. This means that with a noun such as *ni-* 'name', for example, the full range of possessive forms is as indicated in Table 3.27.

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[12] To this category, we can add the nominal preposition (§7.1.3.4) *ilvucte(ve)-* 'between'.

Table 3.24 Possessive Paradigm for 'grandfather'

	SG		PL
1	*itahorug*	INCL	*itahoret*
		EXCL	*itahormam*
2	*itahorom*		*itahormi*
3	*itahen*		*itahend*

Table 3.25 Pronominal Possessive Suffixes with 'grandfather'

	SG		PL
1	*-horug*	INCL	*-horet*
		EXCL	*-hormam*
2	*-horom*		*-hormi*
3	*-hen*		*-hend*

Table 3.26 Possessive Paradigm for *alwo-* '(man's) nephew, niece'

	SG		PL
1	*alwonyau*	INCL	*alwonkoh*
		EXCL	*alwonkam*
2	*alwonkik*		*alwonkimi*
3	*alwon*		*alwond*

Table 3.27 Possessive Paradigm for *ni-* 'name'

	SG		PL
1	*nig ~ ninyau*	INCL	*ni(n)t ~ ninkoh*
		EXCL	*nimam ~ ninkam*
2	*nim ~ ninkik*		*nimi ~ ninkimi*
3	*nin*		*nind*

The same generalization holds for nouns that have irregular third person singular forms, which can also become the base to which an independent pronoun is phonologically bound. For instance, *nimi(n)t* 'our (INCL) eyes' corresponds to the irregular form *nipmi* 'his/her eye', and this can become the basis for the the competing form *nipmi-koh* 'our (INCL) eyes'. Similarly, forms involving the addition

of a post-inflectional derivational suffix, such as *ave-n-hai* 'his/her same sex sibling', which corresponds to *ave-(n)t-hai* 'our (INCL) same sex sibling', can become the basis for forms such as *ave-n-hai-koh* with the same meaning.

There is a systematic semantic difference between these two patterns of possession. The unmarked pattern is that described at the beginning of this section, and this expresses ordinary possession. Possessive constructions involving the independent pronouns are encountered much less frequently, and these are associated with the expression of contrast. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Yau	*ni-g*	*Torilwo.*	*Mei*	*ni-n-kik?*
1SG	name-1SG	Torilwo	who	name-3SG-2SG

'My name is Torilwo. What (lit. "who") is *your* name?'

4: VERB MORPHOLOGY

Referring to Sye, Capell (1954:107) wrote, "The language is rather difficult." No doubt he had the verbs of the language in mind when he made this this statement. This chapter is devoted to the description of the relatively complex morphological behavior of Sye verbs.

4.1 Verb Root Mutation

A salient feature of the verb morphology of Sye is the fact that many roots undergo alternations in their initial segments according to the nature of the preceding grammatical environment. While some phonologically determined categories of verbs have invariant roots, most verb roots appear in two different shapes, which will be referred to as the basic root and the modified root respectively.[1] These alternations involve root-modification rather than inflection or derivation, so they can be compared to the patterns of noun root mutation found in Celtic languages. Of the languages of southern Vanuatu, it is only in the Erromangan languages that we find such patterns, though verb-initial mutation is widely attested in the languages of central Vanuatu (Crowley 1991).

4.1.1 Conditioning Environments

The basic root forms are those which appear in the widest range of grammatical contexts, of which the following is an exhaustive listing:

(a) following imperative prefixes (§4.2.2.1.1). Thus, the basic form of *aruvo* 'sing'—which alternates with the modified form *naruvo*—appears after the following prefix (where BR indicates that the verb appears in its basic root form, in contrast to its modified root form, which is marked as MR):

w-aruvo
2PL:IMP-BR:sing
'you all sing!'

(b) following any of the subject prefixes expressing the categories of recent past, distant past, optative and counterassertive (§4.2.2.1.1), for example:

c-aruvo
3SG:RECPAST-BR:sing
'(s)he has just sung'

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[1] The existence of a possible third root form is discussed in §4.2.3.

(c) following the subject prefixes which discontinuously mark the category of dependent past and past continuous (§4.2.2.7), for example:

y-em-aruvo
3SG:DISTPAST-*EM*-BR:sing
'(while) (s)he was singing'

(d) following an iterative, prior past or negative marker (or any combination of these) that intervenes between any of the prefixes just listed and the verb root (§4.2.2.3, §4.2.2.4, §4.2.2.5), for example:

y-epm-aruvo
3SG:DISTPAST-PRIOR-BR:sing
'(s)he had sung'

(e) following the echo subject prefixes corresponding to any of the inflectional categories just presented (§4.2.2.1.2). Thus:

Y-etu-velom   m-aruvo.
3SG:DISTPAST-NEG-BR:come   SG:ES-BR:sing
'(S)he did not come and sing.'

(f) following the instrumental/purposive prefix *(w)or-* (§3.2.1.1, §8.3.1), for example:

Yi-velom   wor-aruvo.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:come   PURP-BR:sing
'(S)he came in order to sing.'

(g) following any derivational prefix. Thus, it is possible to add the adjectival prefix *itur-* (§5.1.2) to the basic root of the verb *aleipo* 'sleep' (which has the modified root *naleipo*) in order to derive surface *itr-aleipo* 'sleepy'. This also includes the derivational prefixes described in §4.5.1 such as *ovyu-* 'desiderative' (which has the modified root form *ampyu-*), which can be used with *aruvo*, for example:

yam-ovy-aruvo
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:DESID-BR:sing
'I wanted to sing'

Even if the derived form appears in an environment which calls for the modified root, the root that it is attached to appears in its basic root. Thus:

yac-ampy-aruvo
1SG:FUT-MR:DESID-BR:sing
'I will want to sing'

(h) following a reduplicated segment of a root (§4.5.4). Thus, *omol* 'fall' (which has the modified root *amol*) reduplicates as *omol-omol* 'fall all over'. Once again, even if the initial element of the reduplicated verb appears in the modified root, the second element appears in the basic form. Thus:

cw-amol-omol
3PL:FUT-MR:fall-REDUP
'they will fall all over'

(i) as the caused verb in the causative construction introduced by the causative verb *om-* (§6.3.3). The following example illustrates the use of the basic form of the verb *etehep* 'sit' (which has the modified root *antehep*) in an environment where the preceding causative verb appears in its modified form *am-*:

c-am-koh	*etehep*
3SG:FUT-MR:CAUS-1PL.INCL	BR:sit
'(s)he will sit us down'	

(j) when the verb appears as the second member of a compound (§3.2.1.4, §4.5.3). Thus, from the weak verb *acur* 'wilt' (which has the modified root *nacur*), we can derive the following compound noun:

neimah	*acur*
cassia	wilt
'sensitive grass'	

The modified root forms are much more restricted in the range of contexts in which they appear, appearing only in the following morphological environments:

(a) following the future tense tense subject prefixes (§4.2.2.1.1). Contrast the examples just presented in which the verb *aruvo* 'sing' appears in its basic form with the following examples in which it carries future tense markers, and the verb appears in the modified form of the root:

co-naruvo	*cotwonaruvo* (<*co-etwo-naruvo*)
3SG:FUT-MR:sing	3SG:RECPAST-NEG:FUT-MR:sing
'(s)he will sing'	'(s)he will not sing'

(b) following any of the discontinuously marked categories of present tense, realis or irrealis conditional, and past habitual, along with any other accompanying inflectional prefixes (§4.2.2.7), for example:

c-am-naruvo
3SG-PRES-MR:sing
'(s)he is singing'

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(c) following echo subject markers (§4.2.2.8) in any of the inflectional categories presented and (a) and (b) above. Thus:

c-ampelom   me-naruvo
3SG:FUT-MR:come   SG:ES-MR:sing
'(s)he will come and sing'

Many of the examples of root modification presented above involve the accretion of *n-* at the beginning of the basic form of the root, producing alternations such as *aruvo ~ naruvo* 'sing'. Such alternations may suggest an alternative analysis whereby the initial *n-* should not be analyzed as part of the root itself, but as part of the prefix, or even a separate prefix in its own right, with a following invariant root. Thus, the form that was segmented above as *co-naruvo* '(s)he will sing' could be segmented as *con-alei*, or perhaps *co-n-alei*.

However, there is compelling evidence that there is a genuine alternation here between two different shapes of the root. For one thing, the process of root modification is phonologically varied in its manifestation and there are many verbs which do not merely add an accretive segment at the beginning of the root, with the root itself being altered internally. Exactly the same sorts of conditions which determine the alternation between *aruvo ~ naruvo* 'sing' also determine the distribution of the roots *ehri ~ ahri* 'break' and *ocol ~ agkol* 'dig', as illustrated by the following:

y-aruvo   co-naruvo
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:sing   3SG:FUT-MR:sing
'(s)he sang'   '(s) will sing'

y-ehri   c-ahri
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:break   3SG:FUT-MR:break
'it broke'   'it will breaking'

y-ocol   c-agkol
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:dig   3SG:FUT-MR:dig
'(s)he dug'   '(s)he will dig'

Secondly, if a form is to be treated as a morpheme, we would expect it to have some clearly definable meaning or grammatical function. However, there is no consistent semantic distinction which correlates with modified as against basic root marking.[2]

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[2] On the basis of a more restricted body of data, Lynch and Capell (1983:23–24) associated this marking with a realis-irrealis distinction. While this may have been historically the case, this analysis no longer holds up for modern Erromangan.

4.1.2 Form of Root Modification

The phonological manifestation of root modification is determined in part by a categorization of all verbs as belonging to the class of either weak or strong verbs. Some phonologically determined categories of verbs are automatically assigned to either the class of weak verbs or strong verbs, though with some categories of verbs, the subcategorization is unpredictable. About three quarters of verbs are weak, including all verbs beginning with the glides *y-* and *w-*, the alveolar consonants *s-*, *l-*, *r-* and *t-*, and the non-mid vowels, that is *a-*, *i-* and *u-*. The smaller category of strong verbs consists of all verbs beginning with the labial consonants *p-*, *m-* and *v-*.

The only phonotactically permissible remaining verb roots in Erromangan are those which begin with the mid vowels *e-* and *o-* (§2.4.1.3), about a third of which are weak, while the remaining two thirds of such verbs belong in the class of strong verbs. The fact that there are minimal pairs between the weak verbs *owi* 'plant' and *ehkar* 'hold feast' (which have the modified roots *nowi* and *nehkar* respectively) and the strong verbs *owi* 'leave' and *ehkar* 'stare' (which have the modified roots *awi* and *ahkar*) indicates that there is clearly no phonological conditioning involved with this category of roots. There is also no possible semantic conditioning factor that can be determined, and transitivity is not a factor either.

Root modification involves, with many verbs, the addition of a nasal segment before either the first or the second segment of the verb root. The final shape of modified roots vis-à-vis basic roots is determined also in part by a division of segments between those which can be preceded by an accretive nasal and those which cannot. Those initial or post-initial segments which are open to prenasalization in modified root environments are the stops (*p, t, k*), the voiced obstruents (*v, r, c*) and the vowels (*i, e, a, o, u*). All remaining segments remain unprenasalized in modified root environments, that is all nasals (*m, n, g*), the glides (*y, w*), the two voiceless obstruents (*s, h*) and the lateral (*l*).

Weak verbs are all characterized by the fact that roots beginning with one of those segments just described as being amenable to prenasalization simply add an accretive *n-* at the beginning of the basic form of their roots in order to produce the modified root form. Thus, the alternation between *aruvo* and *naruvo* 'sing' illustrated in §4.1.1 is an example of a weak alternation.

Given the initial segments in the following forms, there is no difference in the shape of the roots after the prefix *yi-* 'third person singular distant past' (which calls for the basic form of the verb) and *co-* 'third person singular future' (which calls for the modified root): *yi-yep* '(s)he descended' and *co-yep* '(s)he will descend', *yi-wesisar* '(s)he slipped' and *co-wesisar* '(s)he will slip', *yi-sompog* '(s)he snored' and *co-sompog* '(s)he will snore', *yi-lau* '(s)he was dry' *co-lau* '(s)he will be dry'. With all other phonological categories of weak roots, however, we find accretive *n-*, as illustrated by: *y-avan* '(s)he walked' and *co-navan* '(s)he

will walk', *yi-tovop* '(s)he laughed' and *co-ntovop* '(s)he will laugh', *yi-ran* '(day) broke' *co-ndan*[3] '(day) will break'.

The remaining quarter of verbs undergo a separate set of root modification patterns which we can refer to as the strong pattern. This term has been chosen because it does not involve just the addition of an accretive element before the root as with the weak pattern, but it also involves changes within verb root itself, resulting in a wider range of surface realizations, and giving the impression of greater superficial irregularity. In some ways, then, this pattern is reminiscent of the patterns of strong verb alternations in Germanic languages.

The difference between basic and modified forms of the roots of strong verbs can be characterized underlyingly in the following ways:

(a) With consonant-initial strong verbs, *n* is added before root-initial consonants which are amenable to prenasalization. The only consonants which appear initially with strong verbs are *p-*, *v-* and *m-*, of which only the first two segments are amenable to prenasalization.

(b) With vowel-initial strong verbs, *n* is added between a root-initial vowel and any immediately following prenasalizable consonant.

(c) Accreted nasals are then assimilated in place of articulation to the place of articulation of the following segment. Specifically, this means the underlying *n* shifts to *m* before labial consonants, while before velar consonants it shifts to *g*. Before alveolar consonants, the underlying *n* remains unchanged.

(d) Finally, accretive *a-* is added at the beginning of all strong verb roots.

There is then a process of cluster modification by which fricatives shift to homorganic stops after a nasal. This means that sequences of *mv* become *mp*, while *gc* becomes *gk* (§2.5.1.3). There are several additional changes. First, there is dissimilatory loss of the initial nasal in homorganic nasal-stop sequences when there is an immediately following nasal. This results in underlying sequences of *-ntn-*, and *-ntm-* being resolved as *-tn-*, while *-mpm-* sequences become *-pm-*. Second, sequences of *-ntə-* shift the stop to /r/ (which is realized phonetically as [d]). Finally, in sequences of three consonants of which the final segment is *s* or *h*, the middle segment is lost (§2.5.1.5).

The next stage in the derivation of these modified roots is to add an accretive *a-* before the root (and before the accreted nasal, if one has been added). Of the five surface vowels, only the mid vowels *e-* and *o-* are found at the beginnings of strong verbs. The resulting underlying sequences of *ae-* and *ao-* are regularly resolved as *a-* (§2.5.2.2).

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[3] The alternation here between *r* in the basic form of the root and *nd* in the modified root is a purely orthographic matter (§2.7). In phonemic terms, the alternation here is between the basic root /ran/ and the modified root /nran/.

The result is the set of derivations from a representative set of strong verb roots presented in Table 4.1. The forms to the extreme right represent the actual modified root forms which derive from the basic roots on the left.

Strong verbs differ from weak verbs not only in their pattern of root modification, but also in the ways in which specific sequences of vowels are resolved over prefix boundaries. Weak verbs are subject to the same set of morphophonemic rules that apply with the rest of the lexicon (§2.5.2), whereas strong verbs are subject to an exceptional rule (§2.5.2.6).

4.1.3 Irregular Root Modification

There remains a handful of irregular verbs with partly different patterns of root modification from those just described. These are described in turn below.

(i) Ve *'go'*

This is a strong verb, which has the predictable modified root *ampe*. However, its singular imperative form is *eve*, which carries an unpredictable accretive *e-*. The plural imperative is based on the regular root. Thus, *yi-ve* '3SG:DISTPAST-BR:go' '(s)he went', *c-ampe* '3SG:FUT-MR:go' '(s)he will go', *u-ve* '2PL:IMP-BR:go' 'you all go!', *Ø-eve* '2SG:IMP-BR:go' 'go!'.

(ii) Velom *'come' and* velac *'go/come a long way'*

These are also strong verbs, which have the regular modified roots *ampelom* and *ampelac* respectively. The irregularity with these forms again lies with the singular imperative, in which the initial *v-* of the root is lost. Thus, *yi-velom* '3SG:DISTPAST-BR:come' '(s)he came', *c-ampelom* '3SG:FUT-MR:come' '(s)he will come', *u-velom* '2PL:IMP-BR:come' 'you all come!', *Ø-elom* '2SG:IMP-BR:come' 'come!'.

(iii) Mevyac *'dream'*

The strong verb *mevyac* 'dream' has the regular modified root *amevyac*. However, the basic root irregularly accretes initial *e-* to become *emevyac* in the singular imperative (as with the verb *ve* 'go'), as well as after after any prefixes that end in *m*, for example *yi-mevyac* '3SG:DISTPAST-BR:dream' '(s)he dreamt', *Ø-emevyac* '2SG:IMP-BR:dream' 'dream!', *yam-emevyac* '1SG:DISTPAST-BR:dream' 'I dreamt', *m-emevyac* 'SG:ES-BR:dream' 'and dreamt'.

(iv) Evinte *'look after'*, evtit *'meet'*, eveli *'conclude' and* ovyu- *'causative'*

The two strong verbs *evinte* 'look after' and *evtit* 'meet' have unpredictable modified roots in that they only add accretive *a-* (with the regular loss of the following

Table 4.1 Derivation of Modified Strong Verb Roots

Basic root		Nasal accretion	Assimilation	Despirantization	Cluster reduction	a-accretion	Vowel deletion
pat	'blocked'	npat	mpat	–	–	ampat	–
vag	'eat'	nvag	mvag	mpag	–	ampag	–
mah	'die'	–	–	–	–	amah	–
owi	'leave'	–	–	–	–	awi	–
olki	'hang'	–	–	–	–	aolki	alki
oruc	'bathe'	onruc	–	onduc	–	aonduc	anduc
ocep	'fly'	oncep	ogcep	ogkep	–	aogkep	agkep
okili	'know it'	onkili	ogkili	–	–	aogkili	agkili
omurep	'live'	–	–	–	–	aomurep	amurep
ovoli	'turn it'	onvoli	omvoli	ompoli	–	aompoli	ampoli
ehvo	'white'	–	–	–	–	aehvo	ahvo
elwo	'vomit'	–	–	–	–	aelwo	alwo
emlu	'crazy'	–	–	–	–	aemlu	amlu
etehep	'sit'	entehep	–	–	–	aentehep	antehep
opmah	'hungry'	ompmah	–	–	opmah	aopmah	apmah
etni	'cook'	entni	–	–	etni	aetni	atni
etmo-lagkau	'look around'	entmo-lagkau	–	–	etmo-lagkau	aetmo-lagkau	atmo-lagkau
evcah	'defecate'	envcah	emvcah	empcah	–	aempcah	ampcah
eiti	'tie it'	–	–	–	–	aeiti	aiti
ochi	'see it'	onchi	ogchi	ogkhi	oghi	aoghi	aghi
evsor	'wake up'	envsor	emvsor	empsor	emsor	aemsor	amsor

e), but they do not add a homorganic nasal before the post-vocalic *v* (with no resulting despirantization). Thus, *evinte* has the modified root *avinte* (rather than the predicted *ampinte), and *evtit* has the modified root *avtit* (instead of *amptit). The causative prefix *ovyu-* (§4.5.1) also has the irregular form *avyu-* in environments that call for modified roots.[4]

The strong verb *eveli* 'conclude' behaves regularly and irregularly, with the modified roots *aveli ~ ampeli* in free variation. Older speakers are more likely to use the irregular form *aveli*, while younger speakers almost invariably use the regular form *ampeli*.

(v) Ahi *'just'*

The auxiliary verb *ahi* 'just do' alternates freely in shape with *ai* and *ah* (§8.1.2). This is the only vowel-initial verb in the language which does not have a separate modified root. Given that this form begins with *a-*, we would expect to find *nahi* (alternating freely with *nai* and *nah*) in modified root environments, and we find

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[4] Note that the homophonous form *ovyu-* 'desiderative' (§4.5.1) has the regular modified root *ampyu-*.

an invariant root throughout. Contrast the following, in which in the first example calls for the basic root, while in the second, the modified root is called for. It will be noted that the following main verb *torilki* 'return', which carries echo subject prefixes, makes the distinction between basic and modified roots as expected.

Y-ah	*m-torilki.*	*C-ah*	*me-ntorilki.*
3SG:DISTPAST-just	SG:ES-BR:return	3SG:FUT-JUST	SG:ES-MR:return
'(S)he just returned.'		'(S)he will just return.'	

4.2 Inflectional Prefixes

The inflectional morphology of Erromangan verbs is unusually complex for an Oceanic language, with many inflectional categories being expressed by forms belonging discontinuously in several morphotactic slots.

4.2.1 Overview

Because of the complexity of this aspect of Sye structure, the detailed discussion of verb morpohology in the following sections is preceded by a brief overview. The basic morphotactic structure of inflectional prefixes is as follows:

SUBJECT (PRIOR PAST) (ITERATIVE) (NEGATIVE) (*EM-*) **STEM**

This means that verbs are obligatorily marked by means of prefixes that express a range of subject categories, along with a number of orders of optional prefixes appearing between these and the stem.

While independent pronouns make a simple contrast between singular and plural, with an inclusive-exclusive distinction being marked in the first person plural (§3.1.1, §3.1.2), there is a systematic distinction in the inflectional paradigms of verbs between dual and plural in the first person inclusive and exclusive. In the second and third persons, however, there is a simple distinction between singular and non-singular. Thus:

koh　　　　*koku-tovop*
1NONSG.INCL　1DL.INCL:RECPAST-BR:laugh
'we (both) laughed'

koh　　　　*koli-tovop*
1NONSG.INCL　1PL.INCL:RECPAST-BR:laugh
'we (all) laughed'

These forms can be compared with the following, which express either two, or more than two, participants:

iror   *cu-tovop*
3NONSG   3NONSG:RECPAST-BR:laugh[5]
'they (both or all) laughed'

     Following the subject markers is an optional slot which is occupied by a morpheme expressing the prior past (§4.2.2.3). This marker can only combine with preceding subject markers that express a past tense meaning. Following this is an optional iterative marker which can combine with subject markers expressing any tense (§4.2.2.4).
     The next morphotactic slot is occupied by an optional negative marker (§4.2.2.5). In the morphotactic slot immediately before the verb root, there is provision for a final morpheme which, with regard to its phonological shape, morphotactic behavior and semantic function, presents a number of analytical difficulties. To facilitate discussion, this form will simply be referred to as the *EM-* marker, or the fifth order prefix (§4.2.2.6).
     The expression of subject-tense is particularly complex in that all such categories are obligatorily expressed by morphological markers which occupy more than one morphotactic slot. Some categories involve bipartite morphological marking, in which there is a combination of a prefix, and the choice between the basic or modified form of the verb root. Note, therefore, the following, in which the subject marker (*ko-*) happens to be identical, and the difference in tense is carried in this case exclusively by means of the difference in root form:

karuvo (*<ko-aruvo*)   *ko-naruvo*
2SG:RECPAST-BR:sing   2SG:FUT-MR:Sing
'you sang'   'you will sing'

Other categories involve tripartite marking, in that the first order of prefixes is combined with the fifth-order *EM-* marker, and there is an obligatory choice between the basic and modified root. Thus, in the following, the present tense is expressed by combining the recent past subject prefix with the *EM-* marker and the modified form of the root:

kemnaruvo (*<ko-eme-naruvo*)
2SG:RECPAST-*EM*-MR:sing
'you are singing'

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[5] In glosses, NONSG is only used when there is a particular point being made with regard to the lack of a separate category of dual. Otherwise, PL should henceforth be taken as automatically contrasting with SG with second and third person catgories, and with both SG and DL in the first person.

Such discontinuous marking is typologically somewhat unusual in that some categories are marked by means of sequences of prefixes which occupy two different morphotactic slots. It is probably more common for discontinuous affixes to involve a combination of two different kinds of morphological processes, for example prefixation along with suffixation, infixation, reduplication or root modification.

There are five full sets of subject prefixes, as well as a sixth partial set having only second person exponents, which is involved in the expression of the imperative, and a seventh set which has only a first person singular exponent. With a two-way distinction between the basic and modified form of the verb root, as well as the presence or absence of *EM-*, there are twenty-eight logically possible permutations. Of these, only fourteen are actually utilized (with two of these permutations expressing the same meaning), as summarized in Table 4.2.

4.2.2 Prefix Sets

As indicated in the overview just presented, there are five separate orders of inflectional prefixes in Erromangan. The various exponents of these inflectional sets are described in turn in the following sections.

4.2.2.1 First Order Prefixes

Prefixes from the first order express the pronominal category of the subject, as well as a variety of tense-aspect-mood distinctions. There are separate prefixes for new subjects, which express a full set of inflectional contrasts, and echo subjects which express a reduced set of contrasts.

4.2.2.1.1 New Subjects

Inflectional markers for new subjects are used when a verb is the only verb in a sentence, or when it is the first of a series of coordinated verbs. These forms contrast with echo subject prefixes which only ever appear after a fully inflected verb carrying new subject marking. The various inflectional catgories that are distinguished with verbs carrying new subject marking are set out in Table 4.2.

(i) *Imperative*

There is a distinction between singular and plural imperative, with the singular being marked by zero prefixation (this being the only inflectional category in Erromangan marked in this way), and the plural by *u-*. These prefixes are added to the basic form of the verb root.

Table 4.2 Morphotactic Expression of Inflectional Categories

Subject prefix	EM- marker	Root form	Inflectional category
∅- Series[6]	∅-	Basic	Imperative
		Modified	—
	EM-	Basic	—
		Modified	—
ko-[1] Series	∅-	Basic	Recent past
		Modified	—
	EM-	Basic	Past continuous
		Modified	Present
ko-[2] Series[7]	∅-	Basic	—
		Modified	Future
	EM-	Basic	—
		Modified	—
kim- Series	∅-	Basic	Distant past
		Modified	Past habitual
	EM-	Basic	Dependent past
		Modified	Past habitual
kipi-[1] Series	∅-	Basic	Optative
		Modified	—
	EM-	Basic	—
		Modified	Realis conditional
kipi-[2] Series[8]	∅-	Basic	Subjunctive
		Modified	—
	EM-	Basic	—
		Modified	—
kini- Series	∅-	Basic	Counterassertive
		Modified	—
	EM-	Basic	—
		Modified	Irrealis conditional

According to the rule described in §2.5.2.3, weak verbs with initial *e*- shift this to *o*- after this prefix (and any other prefix ending in a rounded vowel). By the rule in §2.5.2.4, *u*- becomes *w*- before a vowel-initial weak verb. By a sepa-

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[6] Each of these paradigms is represented by the underlying form of the second person singular exponent in this table.

[7] In the second person singular, these prefix sets coicidentally have the same shape. In the remaining subject categories, however, the two prefix sets are morphologically distinct.

[8] These prefixes are identical in shape for all categories except the first person singular.

rate rule that applies only with strong verbs (§2.5.2.6), a root-initial vowel is lost after a prefix ending in *u*, such as the plural imperative marker. The examples in Table 4.3 illustrate the singular and plural imperatives for a representative selection of verbs, with the singular imperative forms coinciding with the underlying forms of the roots. It will be remembered from §4.1.3 that the three verbs *ve* 'go', *velom* 'come' and *velac* 'go/come a long way' have irregular singular imperative forms, and these are also shown in Table 4.3.

The imperative expresses an order given by the speaker which it is expected the addressee will carry out. The negative can be expressed along with the negative (§4.2.2.5), in which case a prohibitive meaning is expressed. Thus:

Ø-tovop   *ututovop (<u-etu-tovop)*
2SG:IMP-BR:laugh   2PL:IMP-NEG-BR:laugh
'laugh!'   'don't you all laugh!'

It should be noted, however, that an imperative meaning is also commonly expressed by means of second person future forms of the verb (as described in section (vi) below). Thus, the examples just presented could also be expressed as:

ko-ntovop   *kutwontovop (<ku-etwo-ntovop)*
2SG:FUT-MR:laugh   2PL:RECPAST-NEG:FUT-MR:laugh
'laugh!'   'don't you all laugh!'

A polite imperative is expressed by means of the imperative form of the verb *tapmi* 'try' followed by a verb carrying echo-subject marking (§8.1.2), for example:

Ø-tapmi   *m-etehep*
2SG:IMP-BR:try   SG:ES-BR:sit
'please sit!'

(ii) *Recent Past*

The *ko-¹* series of prefixes referred to in Table 4.2 are added to the basic form of the root in order to express the recent past. The underlying forms of the full set of these prefixes are set out in Table 4.4. In the discussion which follows, there is extensive exemplification of the paradigmatic variation that we find with the recent past tense prefixes in order to demonstrate the varied effects of the morphophonemic rules described in §2.5, as well as all relevant *ad hoc* allomorphic variation. For all remaining inflectional categories, however, discussion and exemplification will be kept to a minimum, with detailed cross-references being provided to statements of all relevant morphophonemic rules.

Table 4.3 Imperative Weak and Strong Verbs

	SG	PL	
Weak verbs	soki	usoki	'climb'
	yevi	uyevi	'pull it'
	alou	walou	'run'
	itis	witis	'smile'
	uri	wuri	'follow it'
	esomsac	wosomsac	'breathe'
Strong verbs	omurep	umurep	'live'
	empcu	umpcu	'dance'
	eiti	uiti	'tie it'
	mah	umah	'die'
Irregular verbs	eve	uve	'go'
	elom	uvelom	'come'
	elac	uvelac	'go/come a long way'

Table 4.4 Recent Past Prefixes

	SG		DL	PL
1	yaco-	INCL	koku-	kokli-
		EXCL	kaku-	kakli-
2	ko-		ku-	
3	co-		cu-	

The intervocalic sequence -kl- is attested outside of this paradigm only in a single word (and that is a personal name), though there is a handful of instances of initial kl- in the language (§2.4.1.3). The clusters in the prefixes in Table 4.4 are subject to optional reduction to -l-, and the resulting forms koli- '1PL.INCL' and kali- '1PL.EXCL' are far more frequently encountered than kokli- and kakli-.

With any root that begins with a consonant, there is an *ad hoc* rule which inserts c between the final o of a singular prefix and the initial consonant of the verb root. There is another rule which applies in all inflectional categories with the first person singular prefix yaco-, whereby the vowel of the initial syllable of the prefix harmonizes the rounded vowel of the following syllable. Thus, yaco- before consonants is realized as yococ-, while before u- it is realized as yuc-, and before o- as yoc-. The pre-consonantal allomorphs are illustrated in the paradigm for *tovop* 'laugh' set out in Table 4.5.

The treatment of prefix-final vowels is different for weak and strong verbs, as described in §2.5.2.5 and §2.5.2.6. The vowel harmony rule mentioned above needs to be ordered after the rule that deletes prefix-final vowels other than u (§2.5.2.5) to ensure that underlying forms such as yaco-itis 'I smiled' appear on

Table 4.5 Recent Past of *tovop* 'laugh'

	SG		DL	PL
1	*yococ-tovop*	INCL	*koku-tovop*	*ko(k)li-tovop*
		EXCL	*kaku-tovop*	*ka(k)li-tovop*
2	*koc-tovop*		*ku-tovop*	
3	*coc-tovop*		*cu-tovop*	

the surface as *yac-itis* rather than undergoing the illicit derivation *yaco-itis > yoco-itis > *yoc-itis*. These rules result in paradigms such as those presented in Table 4.6 for the vowel-initial weak verbs *alou* 'run', *omonki* 'drink', *uri* 'follow it', *esomsac* 'breathe' and *itis* 'smile'.

The same rules apply with vowel-initial strong verb roots, with the exception that prefix-final *u* does not become *w* before a vowel-initial root. Rather, the root-initial vowel is deleted with strong verbs when a prefix ends in *u* (§2.5.2.6). We therefore find paradigms such as those presented in Table 4.7 for *eiti* 'tie it' and *oruc* 'bathe'.

Verbs carrying these markers are used to encode four semantic categories of events:

(a) Simple (that is non-durative and non-habitual) actions in which the event took place relatively recently in the past and which still pertain in some way at the time of utterance, for example:

Korgi (<ko-orəg-i)   *yoconwi (<yaco-enwi)?*
2SG:RECPAST-BR:hear:CONST   1SG:RECPAST-BR:say
'Did you hear me say it?'

In this case, the speaker is referring to something that was said earlier in the day. There is no fixed time at which an event ceases to be recent and moves into the more distant past, which is marked separately, as described in (iii) below.

When discussing the distinction between recent past and distant past out of context, some speakers associate it with the distinction between yesterday and earlier, while others make a distinction between last week and earlier. However, verbs expressing events which took place more than a week or so ago appear not be acceptable with recent past marking by any speaker. This means that adverbials which are inherently associated with relatively recent time can only be used in association with recent past marking, for example:

Yac-ahwo   *ninu.*   **Yam-ahwo*   *ninu.*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:row   yesterday   1SG:DISTPAST-BR:row   yesterday
'I rowed yesterday.'

Table 4.6 Recent Past of Vowel-Initial Weak Verbs

	SG		DL	PL
1	*yac-alou*	INCL	*kokw-alou*	*ko(k)l-alou*
		EXCL	*kakw-alou*	*ka(k)l-alou*
2	*k-alou*		*kw-alou*	
3	*c-alou*		*cw-alou*	
1	*yoc-omonki*	INCL	*kokw-omonki*	*ko(k)l-omonki*
		EXCL	*kakw-omonki*	*ka(k)l-omonki*
2	*k-omonki*		*kw-omonki*	
3	*c-omonki*		*cw-omonki*	
1	*yuc-uri*	INCL	*kokw-uri*	*ko(k)l-uri*
		EXcL	*kakw-uri*	*ka(k)l-uri*
2	*k-uri*		*kw-uri*	
3	*c-uri*		*cw-uri*	
1	*yoc-osomsac*	INCL	*kokw-osomsac*	*ko(k)l-osomsac*
		EXCL	*kakw-osomsac*	*ka(k)l-osomsac*
2	*k-osomsac*		*kw-osomsac*	
3	*c-osomsac*		*cw-osomsac*	
1	*yac-itis*	INCL	*kokw-itis*	*ko(k)l-itis*
		EXCL	*kakw-itis*	*ka(k)l-itis*
2	*k-itis*		*kw-itis*	
3	*c-itis*		*cw-itis*	

Table 4.7 Recent Past of Vowel-Initial Strong Verbs

	SG		DL	PL
1	*yoc-oiti*	INCL	*koku-iti*	*ko(k)l-eiti*
		EXCL	*kaku-iti*	*ka(k)l-eiti*
2	*k-oiti*		*ku-iti*	
3	*c-oiti*		*cu-iti*	
1	*yoc-oruc*	INCL	*koku-ruc*	*ko(k)l-oruc*
		EXCL	*kaku-ruc*	*ka(k)l-oruc*
2	*k-oruc*		*ku-ruc*	
3	*c-oruc*		*cu-ruc*	

Adverbials that are ambiguous between a recent and distant past interpretation can be expressed in either way, for example:

Yac-ahwo	*Ndanworum.*	*Yam-ahwo*	*Ndanworum.*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:row	Saturday	1SG:DISTPAST-BR:row	Saturday

'I rowed on Saturday.'

Where there is potential for either the recent past or the distant past to occur, the difference between the two involves the idea of pertinence in the present. Events marked with the recent past have a close connection with the present, while those marked with the distant past do not. This means that if an event described in the relatively distant past explicitly pertains into the present, the recent past can be used. Thus:

Rumo-nta-i	*koupo*	*ra*	*nogu-n*	*nimo*
3PL:PASTHAB-MR:weave-CONST	coconut.leaf.mat	LOC	mouth-CONST	house

hogku yococ-ta-i.
SIM   1SG:RECPAST-BR:weave-3SG
'They would weave a coconut leaf mat at the doorway like I have woven.'

In this case, although the mat had been woven much more than a week before the time of the utterance, the recent past is used with the verb *yococtai* 'I have woven it' because the effects of this more distant event are still visible in that the mat was still pertinent in the present for the point of the narrative.

(b) Events in which a process began in the recent past, resulting in a change of state that is manifest in the present, for example:

Nvag   c-au   armai.
food   3SG:RECPAST-BR:cook   properly
'The food is properly cooked.'

This contrasts with the following, in which the verb carries present tense marking:

Nvag   cam-nau.
food   3SG:PRES-MR:cook
'The food is cooking.'

In this case, the state has only begun to manifest itself, without having been completed at the time of utterance.

(c) Events involving the expression of perceptions in the present, for example:

Korgorgi (<*ko-orəg-orəg-i*)   *cum-ampelom.*
2SG:RECPAST-BR:hear-REDUP-3SG   3PL:PRES-MR:come
'You can hear them all over the place coming.'

(d) Events which have not yet commenced, but which are immediately imminent, can also be marked with the recent past, for example:

U-velom   *koli-ve*   *ku-vai*   *nup.*
2PL:IMP-BR:come   1PL.INCL:RECPAST-BR:go   2PL:RECPAST-BR:get   yam
'You all come, we are all going to go (right now) and you will get the yams.'

This usage frequently performs a brusque imperative or hortative function.

(iii) *Distant Past*

The underlying forms of the subject prefixes that are used for the distant past are set out in Table 4.8. These prefixes combine with the basic form of the verb root.

The third person plural form *ndu-* alternates with *ru-*, with the latter being more commonly encountered in speech. In the speech of Dillon's Bay, this category is sometimes expressed instead by *nu-*. Keeping in mind the orthographic conventions of the language (§2.7), this involves variation between phonemic /nru- ~ ru- ~ nu-/.

Before consonant-initial roots, these prefixes appear with no derivational changes, except that sequences of *mm* and *mv* over morpheme boundaries are resolved as *m* (§2.5.1.3) and *mp* (§2.5.1.4) respectively, producing derivations such as *yam-mah* '1SG:DISTPAST-BR:die' > *yamah* 'I died' and *yam-velom* '1SG:DISTPAST-BR:come' > *yampelom* 'I came'.

With vowel-initial weak verbs, *u* is deleted after *m*, as well as any vowel other than *u* before another vowel, according to the rule described in §2.5.2.5. We therefore find derivations such as *kimu-omonki* '2PL:DISTPAST-BR:drink' > *kimomonki* 'you all drank', and *komli-omonki* '1PL.INCL:DISTPAST-BR:drink' > *komlomonki* 'we all drank'. The vowel *u* after segments other than *m* regularly shifts to *w* (§2.5.2.4), as in *ndu-omonki* '3PL:DISTPAST-BR:drink' > *ndwomonki* 'they drank'. The backing rule described in §2.5.2.3 results in derivations such as *ndu-esomsac* '3PL:DISTPAST-BR:breathe' > *ndwosomsac* 'they breathed'. It should be noted that this rule applies before the rule deleting *u* after *m* to ensure that we get derivations such as *kimu-esomsac* '2PL:DISTPAST-BR:breathe' > *kimu-osomsac* > *kimosomsac* 'you all breathed', rather than the illicit **kim-esomsac*. With vowel-initial strong verbs, the same vowel-deletion rules illustrated above apply (§2.5.2.6). We therefore find derivations such as *ndu-oruc* '3PL:DISTPAST-BR:bathe' > *nduruc* 'they bathed' and *kamu-etehep* '1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:sit' > *kamutehep* 'we sat'.

Table 4.8 Distant Past Prefixes

		SG		DL	PL
1	*yam-*	INCL		*komu-*	*komli-*
		EXCL		*kamu-*	*kamli-*
2	*kim-*			*kimu-*	
3	*yi-*			*ndu-*	

(iv) *Optative*

The optative is expressed by means of the prefixes in Table 4.9, along with a verb in its basic root form. These prefixes appear unchanged with consonant-initial verbs, while the rules described in §2.5.2 apply to produce derivations such as the following with vowel-initial weak verbs: *yapi-alou* '1SG:OPT-BR:run' > *yapalou* 'I should run', *pu-alou* '3PL:OPT-BR:run' > *pwalou* 'they should run', *pu-esomsac* '3PL:OPT-BR:breathe' > *pwosomsac* 'they should breathe'. With vowel-initial strong verbs, we find derivations such as *kopu-oruc* '1DL.INCL:OPT-BR:bathe' > *kopuruc* 'we should bathe' and *pu-eit-i* '3PL:OPT-BR:tie-3SG' > *puiti* 'they should tie it'.

This category is much less frequently encountered in ordinary discourse than many of the other inflectional categories on verbs. It expresses the following meanings:

(a) an event which the speaker expected to take place in the past but which did not actually take place, for example:

Nagalau yap-elcav-i.
difficult 1SG:OPT-BR:hold-3SG
'It was difficult for me to hold him.'

Powo   kipi-ve?
how.come.not 2SG:OPT-BR:go
'How come you didn't go?'

(b) an event which did not take place, but which might have taken place if another event takes place. This can involve the expression of the conditional by means of the subordinator *nagku* 'if' (§8.5.1):

Armai nagku yap-ehpi-su   netai enyau.
good   if   1SG:OPT-read-PERF book POSS:1SG
'It would be good if I had read my book.'

Nagku yapem-anduc   yap-etw-orei   yau.
if   1SG:REALCOND-MR:bathe 1SG:OPT-NEG-BR:scratch 1SG
'If I had bathed, I would not be scratching myself now.'

(c) an event which the speaker wishes might be realized, but which has not been, and probably will not, be realized. Thus:

Table 4.9 Optative Prefixes

	SG		DL	PL
1	*yapi-*	INCL	*kopu-*	*kopli-*
		EXCL	*kapu-*	*kapli-*
2	*kipi-*		*kipu-*	
3	*pi-*		*pu-*	

Kip-is-i   *nompcahi.*
2SG:OPT-BR:fuck-CONST   pig
'Why don't you fuck a pig?!'[9]

Mei   *porgi (<pi-orəg-i)*   *nogu-m*   *itr-avlar?*
who   3SG:OPT-BR:smell-CONST   mouth-2SG   ADJ-BR:red
'Who would want to smell your red mouth?'

(d) an event over which the participants have no control, for example:

Iya   *puvya (<pu-ve-ya)?*
where   3PL:OPT-BR:go-where
'Where could they have possibly gone?'

Mei   *p-am-wi?*
who   3SG:OPT-BR:speak-CAUSPRO
'Who was there who could have spoken because of it?'

(v) *Subjunctive*

The subjunctive is expressed by means of the prefixes in Table 4.10, along with a verb in its basic root form. The paradigms for the subjunctive and the optative are in fact identical for all subject categories except the first person singular, where there is a contrast between the optative form *yapi-* and the subjunctive *yaki-*.

    The subjunctive refers to events in the future which have not taken place, and which are dependent for their realization on some other event taking place. This category can therefore be marked on a complement to a verb such as *aig-* 'want', which indicates that the following event has not been realized, for example:

Yacam-naig-i   *m-agku*   *yaki-vai*   *ovon*   *netai.*
1SG:-PRES-MR:want-CONST   SG:ES-MR:say   1SG:SUBJ-BR:take   PL   book
'I want to take the books.'

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[9] Often used as an insult.

Table 4.10 Subjunctive Prefixes

	SG		DL	PL
1	*yaki-*	INCL	*kopu-*	*kopli-*
		EXCL	*kapu-*	*kapli-*
2	*kipi-*			*kipu-*
3	*pi-*			*pu-*

This form can also be used to express a wish that something might happen:

Yaki-vai-veh   *hai*   *ntorani*   *wor-etenom.*
1SG:SUBJ-BR:get-very   INDEF   rifle   PURP-BR:dive
'I would really like to get a spear-gun.'

The fact that the contrast between the optative and the subjunctive is neutralized with other pronominal subjects is indicated by the following, where the third person plural prefix coincides in shape with the optative:

Iror   *cum-naig-i*   *m-agku*   *pw-aruvo.*
3PL   3PL:PRES-MR:want-CONST   PL:ES-MR:say   3PL:OPT-BR:sing
'They want that they should sing.'

(vi) *Counterassertive*

This inflectional category is marked by the prefixes set out in Table 4.11, along with the basic form of the verb root.

    This inflectional category is also very infrequently used. It indicates an ability to perform an action in the face of an assertion or an assumption that the speaker is not capable of performing the action. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Yakin-aruvo.
1SG:COUNT-BR:sing
'I can so sing/I can indeed sing.'

This category is more frequently attested in the expression of the adversative construction (§8.1.2). Thus:

Kin-ete   *m-ocu*   *m-omol.*
2SG:COUNT-BR:stay   SG:ES-BR:say   SG:ES-BR:fall
'(Watch out or) you might fall.'

Table 4.11 Counterassertive Prefixes

	SG		DL	PL
1	*yakini-*	INCL	*konu-*	*konli-*
		EXCL	*kanu-*	*kanli-*
2	*kini-*		*kinu-*	
3	*ni-*		*nu-*	

(vii) *Future*

The prefixes in Table 4.12 are added to the modified forms of roots to express the future. Before roots beginning with consonants, we find these prefixes in basically the shape as given, except that in the first person singular, the vowel harmony rule set out in section (ii) above causes the vowel of the first syllable of the first person singular form to shift to *o*, invariably giving *yoco-*. The same optional reduction of intervocalic sequences of *-kl-* to *-l-* noted for the recent past paradigm also applies to the future markers.

Otherwise, the rules described in §2.5.2 regularly account for the realizations of these prefixes. The difference noted in the preceding sections for the behavior of weak and strong verbs does not affect the allomorphy of future prefixes as strong verbs in their modified root form invariably begin with *a-* (§4.1.2). We therefore find examples of verbs carrying future tense prefixes such as the following: *yaco-ntovop* '1SG:FUT-MR:laugh' > *yocontovop* 'I will laugh', *ko-ntovop* '2SG:FUT-MR:laugh' > *kontovop* 'you will laugh', *kokwo-ntovop* '1DL.INCL:FUT-MR:laugh' > *kokwontovop* 'we will laugh', *ko-anduc* '2SG:FUT-MR:bathe' > *kanduc* 'you will bathe', *kokwo-anduc* '1DL.INCL:FUT-MR:bathe' > *kokwanduc* 'we will bathe'.

There is a paradigmatic relationship between these future markers and the recent past markers described in (ii) in that when another prefix intervenes between the subject marker and the verb root, the subject markers in the future are identical with the recent past markers. In such situations, the category of future is marked by a separate form of the interposed prefix. Thus, compare the affirmative forms:

koku-tovop	*kokwo-ntovop*
1DL.INCL:RECPAST-BR:laugh	1DL.INCL:FUT-MR:laugh
'we laughed'	'we will laugh'

with the following, in which the future form of the iterative prefix *umo-* contrasts with the non-future form *um-*, and the future form of the negative prefix *etwo-* contrasts with the non-future form *etu-*:

kokumontovop (<*koku-umo-ntovop*)	*kokutwontovop* (<*koku-etwo-ntovop*)
1DL.INCL:RECPAST-IT:FUT-MR:laugh	1DL.INCL:RECPAST-NEG:FUT-MR:laugh
'we will laugh again'	'we will not laugh'

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Table 4.12 Future Prefixes

	SG		DL	PL
1	*yaco-*	INCL	*kokwo-*	*kokle-*
		EXCL	*kakwo-*	*kakle-*
2	*ko-*			*kwo-*
3	*co-*			*cwo-*

Future prefixes are used to express the following kinds of events:

(a) Those which take place after the time of utterance, but not as a direct result of the utterance itself. This can involve a future time that is either immediate and directly connected with the present, or a more distant future at a time that is not directly connected with the present. Thus:

Yoco-nowi.
1SG:FUT-MR:plant
'I will plant it (at some time in the general future).'

(b) Events in the future which are to be obligatorily realized as a result of some external force, for example:

Mas   kaghiveh (<ko-agkǝh-i-veh).
must 2SG:FUT-MR:look:3SG-carefully
'You must look at it carefully.'

The future can also be used to express an imperative meaning, as noted in (i) above.

(c) With first person non-singular subjects, verbs with this marking express the hortative, for example:

Kol-ampe   u-ntemne!
1PL.INCL-FUT-MR:go LOC-village
'Let's go to the village!'

As noted in (ii) above, a similar meaning can also be expressed by the recent past markers. The difference between the example just given and:

Koli-ve   u-ntemne!
1PL.INCL-RECPAST-BR:go LOC-village

is that the latter represents an order, while the former is more of a suggestion.

(d) A main verb referring to an irrealis event which is associated with a subordinate clause marked by *nempgon* 'when' or *nagku* 'if' (§8.5), carries this marking. Thus:

Nempgon keme-ntamsi *nacave ko-ntantvi* *ov-ndogo-n.*
when   2SG:PRES-MR:uproot kava   2SG:FUT-MR:break.off PL-branch-3SG
'When you uproot the kava, you break off the branches.'

(e) An irrealis complement to a verb in the present that expresses a wish or desire, for example:

Isuma   *wocon yacam-agku*   *yocontagkloc* (<*yaco-ntagkəl-oc*).
that's.all   only   1SG:PRES-MR:want   1SG:FUT-MR:ask-2SG
'That is all that I want to ask you.'

(viii) *Past Habitual*

The final inflectional category is marked by means of the same prefixes set out in Table 4.8 above. In conjunction with the basic form of the root, these prefixes express the distant past, whereas with the modified form of the root, they express the past habitual. Compare, therefore, the paradigms of the strong verb *oruc* 'bathe', in the distant past and the past habitual respectively as set out in Table 4.13.

Forms with this inflectional marking are used to express events in the distant past which took place habitually, and which no longer pertain in the present. Thus:

Ndw-ante   *ra*   *ntemne ma.*
3PL:PASTHAB-MR:live   LOC   village that
'They used to live in that village.'

4.2.2.1.2 Echo Subjects

There is separate inflectional marking when a verb follows another verb in a sentence and the two share the same subject categories, which are referred to as echo subject markers. This section will deal with only the morphological shapes of these forms. The syntactic behavior of these forms will be described in more detail in §8.1.

There is only a single set of echo subject prefixes corresponding to all of the sets of inflectional prefixes described in §4.2.2.1.1 for new subject markers. They do vary in form, however, according to whether the immediately following morpheme is a verb root in a root-modifying environment or not. This means that there are two separate sets of echo subject markers, as set out in Table 4.14.

The second set of prefixes is used when the immediately following morpheme is either another verbal prefix, or a verb root in an environment which calls for the basic form of the root. When the following morpheme is either a modified verb root, or a plain root which falls into the set of roots which is not amenable to root modification in mutating environments, we find the first set of echo subject markers. These forms are all subject to the general morphophonemic rules described in §2.5.

Table 4.13 Distant Past and Past Habitual of *oruc* 'bathe'

	SG		DL	PL
1	*yam-oruc*	INCL	*kom-uruc*	*koml-oruc*
		EXCL	*kam-uruc*	*kaml-oruc*
2	*kim-oruc*		*kim-uruc*	
3	*y-oruc*		*nd-uruc*	
1	*yam-anduc*	INCL	*kom-anduc*	*koml-anduc*
		EXCL	*kam-anduc*	*kaml-anduc*
2	*kim-anduc*		*kim-anduc*	
3	*y-anduc*		*ndw-anduc*	

Table 4.14 Echo Subject Prefixes

	Before verb in modified root environment	*Elsewhere*
SG	*me-*	*m-*
1DL; 2/3NONSG	*mo-*	*mu-*
1PL	*mle-*	*mli-*

Contrast the paradigms in Table 4.15 for the verb *ve* 'go' in the recent past (which involves the basic form of the root) and the future (which involves the modified form of the root) respectively, and the following verb *tovop* 'laugh', which carries echo subject markers. Thus, for example, *yococve mtovop* means 'I went and laughed', while *yacampe mentovop* means 'I will go and laugh'.

It was observed above that roots that are not amenable to root modification are still associated with separate sets of echo subject prefixes in basic and modified root environments. Thus, while the verb *hac* 'ascend' does not vary in modified root environments (§4.1.2), we do find a contrast with the singular echo verb *m-hac* when it is associated with any inflectional category that calls for the basic form of the root, and *me-hac*, which we find when the grammatical environment calls for the modified form of the root. Thus:

Yac-avan   *m-hac.*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:walk   SG:ES-ascend
'I walked up.'

Yoco-navan   *me-hac.*
1SG:FUT-MR:walk   SG:ES-ascend
'I will walk up.'

Table 4.15 Initial Verb *ve* 'go' and Echo Verb *tovop* 'laugh'

	SG		DL	PL
1	*yococ-ve m-tovop*	INCL	*koku-ve mu-tovop*	*ko(k)li-ve mli-tovop*
		EXCL	*kaku-ve mu-tovop*	*ka(k)li-ve mli-tovop*
2	*koc-ve m-tovop*		*ku-ve mu-tovop*	
3	*coc-ve m-tovop*		*cu-ve mu-tovop*	
1	*yac-ampe me-ntovop*	INCL	*kokw-ampe mo-ntovop*	*ko(k)l-ampe mle-ntovop*
		EXCL	*kakw-ampe mo-ntovop*	*ka(k)l-ampe mle-ntovop*
2	*k-ampe me-ntovop*		*kw-ampe mo-ntovop*	
3	*c-ampe me-ntovop*		*cw-ampe mo-ntovop*	

4.2.2.2 Deletion of *l*

In the paradigms presented in §4.2.2.1, all of the prefixes marking the plural (only where there is a contrast with the singular and the dual in the first person) contain the segment *l* in the final syllable of the prefix. The morphotactically intermediate prefixes described in the following sections also have plural prefixes of this general shape, that is *epmle-* and *epmli-* in the plural prior past (§4.2.2.3), *umle-* and *umli-* in the plural iterative (§4.2.2.4), and *emle-* and *emli-* occupying the fifth morphotactic prefixing slot (§4.2.2.6).

With any sequence of plural prefixes, there is an optional dissimilatory loss of the *l*, with the final prefix being the only one to obligatorily retain this segment. Thus, we find derivations such as *komli-umli-tovop* '1PL.INCL:DISTPAST-IT:PL-BR:laugh' > *komumlitovop* 'we laughed again'. However, the form *komlumlitovop* is found as an optional variant, with the *l* retained in both prefixes.

This deletion rule does not apply, however, when a verb carries both a negative marker and a fifth order prefix. In such cases, the underlying *l* is found on both the prefix that precedes the negative marker, as well as the prefix that follows it. That is, the presence of the negative prefix—which is the only prefix that does not itself have a separate plural form containing *l*—effectively blocks the application of the dissimilation rule. Thus, while *komli-emli-tovop* '1PL.INCL:DIST-PAST-*EM*:PL-BR:laugh' can be realized as *komemlitovop* 'we were laughing while . . .', when an intervening negative prefix is present, as in *komli-etu-emli-tovop* '1PL.INCL:DISTPAST-NEG-*EM*:PL-BR:laugh', this can only be realized as *komletumlitovop* 'we were not laughing while . . .', and never as **kometumlitovop*.

In §4.2.2.1, reference was also made to a rule which optionally deletes *k* before *l* in subject prefixes which contain the intervocalic sequence *-kl-*. When *l* is deleted by the rule just described, this renders the preceding *k* ineligible for deletion. Thus, from *kokli-emle-ntovop* '1PL.INCL:RECPAST-*EM*:PL-MR:laugh' it is possible to derive *kokemlentovop* 'we are laughing'. However, *kolemlentovop*

and *koklemlentovop* are encountered as occasional alternants with the same meaning, with the *l* of both prefixes retained, though never **kokemlentovop*.

4.2.2.3 Prior Past

Immediately after the subject prefixes is a morphotactic slot that is optionally filled with prior past markers. These can only co-occur with categories expressing past tense. The underlying forms of these markers are set out in Table 4.16.

It can be seen that these forms express the same reduced set of subject distinctions that we find with echo subject markers. They also differ in shape according to whether the immediately following morpheme is a verb root which appears in a modified root environment, or some other morpeme (that is another prefixed category, or a verb root which appears in a basic root environment).

All non-first order prefixes with initial *e-* interact with preceding prefixes according to the same patterns that are found between *e-*initial strong verb roots and preceding prefixes (§2.5.2.6). The final vowels of the prior past behave exactly as predicted by the general morphophonemic rules set out in §2.5.2 and exemplified in §4.2.2.1.

When the recent past first order prefixes are combined with prior past markers, we encounter a number of additional derivational idiosyncrasies. The sequences of *yaco-epm-* and *yaco-epme-* in the first person singular are realized irregularly as *yacapm-* and *yacapme-* respectively, rather than the predicted **yocopm-* and **yocopme-*. In the third person singular, the sequences *co-epm-* and *co-epme-* are resolved as *capm-/cepm-* and *capme-/cepme-* in free variation, rather than the predicted **copm-* and **copme-*.

Finally, the *m* of the prior past markers can be deleted before a consonant. This means that the prefix *epm-* alternates with *ep-* when there is an immediately following consonant-initial verb root. The forms *epmle-* and *epmli-* also freely alternate with *eple-* and *epli-*, regardless of the nature of the verb root, as the *m* in these prefixes immediately precedes the consonant *l*. Of course, if the *l* is deleted by the general rule presented in §4.2.2.2, the *m* can no longer be deleted, as it is then followed by a vowel. This optional rule deleting *m* must be treated as a very low level change, applying after the application of the general morphophonemic rules described in §2.5, to prevent the resulting sequences of *p* with a following consonant from shifting to *v*, as would be predicted by the rule in §2.5.1.2.

Table 4.17 sets out prior past paradigms with recent past subject markers involving the consonant-initial root *tapmi* 'try', the weak vowel-initial root *avan* 'walk', and the strong vowel-initial root *etipe* 'put'.

The prior past does not occur frequently in textual data, though when verbs with and without this prefix are contrasted, the associated meaning difference is one between simple as against prior past. Thus, contrast the following:

yi-tapmi	*y-epm-tapmi*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:try	3SG:DISTPAST-PRIOR-BR:try
'(s)he tried it'	'(s)he had tried it'

Table 4.16 Prior Past Prefixes

	Before verb in modified root environment	*Elsewhere*
SG	epme-	epm-
1DL; 2/3NONSG	epmo-	epmu-
1PL	epmle-	epmli-

Table 4.17 Prior Past Paradigms of *tapmi* 'try', *avan* 'walk', and *etipe* 'put'

	SG		DL	PL
1	*yacap(m)-tapmi*	INCL	*kokupmu-tapmi*	*kokep(m)li-tapmi*
		EXCL	*kakupmu-tapmi*	*kakep(m)li-tapmi*
2	*kop(m)-tapmi*		*kupmu-tapmi*	
3	*(c)ep(m)-tapmi ~ (c)ap(m)-tapmi*		*cupmu-tapmi*	
1	*yacapm-avan*	INCL	*kokupm-avan*	*kokep(m)l-avan*
		EXCL	*kakupm-avan*	*kakep(m)l-avan*
2	*kopm-avan*		*kupm-avan*	
3	*(c)epm-avan ~ (c)apm-avan*		*cupm-avan*	
1	*yacapm-etipe*	INCL	*kokupmu-tipe*	*kokep(m)l-etipe*
		EXCL	*kakupmu-tipe*	*kakep(m)l-etipe*
2	*kopm-etipe*		*kupmu-tipe*	
3	*(c)epm-etipe ~ (c)apm-etipe*		*cupmu-tipe*	

4.2.2.4 Iterative

The morphotactic slot following the prior past markers is occupied by the set of iterative markers, which have the underlying shapes set out in Table 4.18. The initial and final segments of these prefixes interact with the segments of the preceding and following morphemes in ways that are determined by the general morphophonemic rules of the language, as well as the specific rule relating to *l* in first person plural prefixes, as described in §4.2.2.2. We therefore find examples such as the following:

um-omonki (<Ø-*um-omonki*)   *kokumutehep* (<*koku-umu-etehep*)
2SG:IMP-IT-BR:drink   1DL.INCL:RECPAST-IT:DL-BR:sit
'drink again'   'we sat again'

Table 4.18 Iterative Prefixes

	Before verb in modified root environment	*Elsewhere*
SG	*ume-*	*um-*
1DL; 2/3NONSG	*umo-*	*umu-*
1PL	*umle-*	*umli-*

yucumtovop (<yaco-um-tovop)
1SG:RECPAST-IT-BR:laugh
'I laughed again'

yucumentovop (<yaco-ume-ntovop)
1SG:RECPAST-IT:FUT-MR:laugh
'I will laugh again'

wumetutovop (<u-um-etu-tovop)
2PL:IMP-IT-NEG-BR:laugh
'don't you all laugh again!'

yam-epm-um-tovop
1SG:DISTPAST-PRIOR-IT-BR:laugh
'I had not laughed again'

As indicated in the examples just presented, this category can be used to indicate that an action is performed again, involving only a single repetition. However, it can also be used to express the following additional semantically related notions:

(a) actions which involve a return to the physical point of origin, that is the meaning expressed in English by 'back', for example:

Y-um-avan.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:IT-BR:walk
'(S)he walked back.'

(b) actions which take place over and above what is ordinarily expected, for example:

Y-ete	*m-ete*	*yetwotai*	*mumah (<m-um-mah).*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:stay	SG:ES-BR:stay	short.while	SG:ES-IT-BR:die

'(S)he stayed behind for a short while and (contrary to expections) died.'

4.2.2.5 Negative

The fourth order of inflectional prefixes expresses negation. The negative prefix has two different shapes: *etwo-* before an immediately following verb in a modified root environment, and *etu-* elsewhere. These prefixes differ from all of the other prefixes presented thus far in that they do not express any distinctions of number. The negative prefixes combine with all preceding and following mor-

phemes according to the same patterns noted in the preceding sections. Thus:

etutovop (<*Ø-etu-tovop*)
2SG:IMP-NEG-BR:laugh
'don't laugh!'

ututovop (<*u-etu-tovop*)
2PL:IMP-NEG-BR:laugh
'don't you all laugh!'

yetwavan (<*yi-etu-avan*)
3SG:DISTPAST-NEG-BR:walk
'(s)he did not walk'

kakuturuc (<*kaku-etu-oruc*)
1DL.EXCL:RECPAST-NEG-BR:bathe
'we did not bathe'

kakutwanduc (<*kaku-etwo-anduc*)
1DL.EXCL:RECPAST-NEG:FUT-MR:bathe
'we will not bathe'

   While ordinary negation is marked by the prefixes just described, there is an emphatic negative which is expressed discontinuously, by means of this prefix and a suffix of the shape *-hai* (§4.4). Thus, contrast:

yocotwavan (<*yaco-etu-avan*)
1SG:RECPAST-NEG-BR:walk
'I did not walk'

yocotwavanhai (<*yaco-etu-avan-hai*)
1SG:RECPAST-NEG-BR:walk-EMPH
'I did not walk at all'

When a transitive verb carrying an object suffix (§4.3.1) enters into this emphatic negative construction, the suffixed element *-hai* follows the object suffix. Thus:

yocotukiloc (<*yaco-etu-okil-oc*)
1SG:RECPAST-NEG-BR:know-2SG
'I did not know you'

yocotukilochai (<*yaco-etu-okil-oc-hai*)
1SG:RECPAST-NEG-BR:know-2SG-EMPH
'I did not know you at all'

4.2.2.6 Fifth Order Prefixes

Forms belonging to the final order of prefixes have the underlying shapes presented in Table 4.19. In terms of their interaction with following verb roots, these forms generally behave in the same ways as have been described for the preceding orders of prefixes, though there are some irregularities in the ways that these combine with immediately preceding subject markers in the expression of the present tense, as will be described in (i) below. It should also be noted that when these prefixes are added before a root that begins with *w*, a final *e* of the prefix is shifted to *o* by the rule described in §2.5.2.1. Thus, sequences such as *yam-eme-wa-i* '1SG:DISTPAST-*EM*-step.on-3SG' are realized as *yamemowai* 'I used to step on it'.

Table 4.19 Fifth Order Prefixes

	Before verb in modified root environment	*Elsewhere*
SG	*eme-*	*em-*
1DL; 2/3NONSG	*emo-*	*emu-*
1PL	*emle-*	*emli-*

When a following modified verb root begins with a *nV-*, the final vowel of the prefixes *eme-* and *emo-* are deleted. In the first person plural, we also find that the final *le* is optionally deleted. This, therefore, results in the following derivations involving these prefixes:

kokumnaruvo (<koku-emo-naruvo) *yemnaruvo (<yi-eme-naruvo)*
1PL.INCL:RECPAST-*EM*-MR:sing 3SG:DISTPAST-EM-MR:sing
'we are singing' '(s)he used to sing'

komem(le)naruvo (<komli-emle-naruvo)
1PL.INCL:DISTPAST-*EM*-MR:sing
'we used to sing'

These prefixes present a serious analytical difficulty in that it is not possible to assign any particular meaning to them. A morpheme is normally defined as the smallest meaningful unit of linguistic analysis. In that sense, then, it is difficult to refer to these prefixes as morphemes. However, while they do not have any definable meaning, they behave like ordinary morphemes in that they have consistent phonological shapes, and they occupy a clearly recognizable morphotactic position in the word.

These prefixes combine with all sets of subject markers except those that appear in the future, the imperative and the subjunctive, and they also combine with both the basic and modified forms of the root, to express a number of morphologically discontinuous inflectional categories. The inflectional categories that are expressed using this prefix (which is abbreviated below as *EM-*) are set out in Table 4.20.

Because the meanings of these discontinuously marked categories are not predictable from the meanings of their constituent elements, the convention in this volume is to gloss two contiguous prefixed elements for the resulting category as a whole, rather than glossing the constituent forms separately. Thus, although *yamemaruvo* 'I sang while . . .' can be broken down morphotactically as follows:

Table 4.20 Morphologically Discontinuous Inflectional Categories Involving the Fifth Order Prefix

RECENT PAST	+ *EM-* +	MODIFIED ROOT	=	PRESENT
RECENT PAST	+ *EM-* +	BASIC ROOT	=	PAST CONTINUOUS
DISTANT PAST	+ *(EM-)* +	MODIFIED ROOT	=	PAST HABITUAL
DISTANT PAST	+ *EM-* +	BASIC ROOT	=	DEPENDENT PAST
OPTATIVE	+ *EM-* +	MODIFIED ROOT	=	REALIS CONDITIONAL
COUNTERASSERTIVE	+ *EM-* +	MODIFIED ROOT	=	IRREALIS CONDITIONAL

yam-em-aruvo
1SG:DISTPAST-*EM*-BR:sing

it is glossed in this description as follows:

yamem-aruvo
1SG:DEPPAST-BR:sing
'I sang while . . .'

However, when the constituent parts of such forms are separated by an intervening prefix—that is a prior past, an iterative or a negative marker—the two are glossed separately, with the fifth order prefix simply being glossed as *EM*, given its semantic vacuousness. When dealing with examples involving discontinuous morphological marking of this kind, the various combinations of inflectional markers and the resulting discontinuously marked categories just mentioned will need to be kept in mind. Since the negative of *yamemaruvo* 'I sang while ...' is *yametu-maruvo*, with the dependent past marker *yamem-* being interrupted by the negative prefix *etu-*, this form is glossed instead as:

yametumaruvo (<*yam-etu-em-aruvo*)
1SG:DISTPAST-NEG-*EM*-BR:sing
'I did not sing while . . .'

4.2.2.7 Tripartite Inflectional Marking

There are five inflectional categories which are expressed by means of tripartite morphological marking, involving the presence of fifth order prefixes, in addition to the subject prefixes, and a choice between the basic or modified form of the verb root.

(i) *Present*

The category of present is expressed by a combination of the same first order prefixes that are involved in the expression of the recent past, a fifth order prefix, as

well as the modified form of the verb root. When the subject markers and the fifth order prefixes come together with no intervening morphemes, a number of idiosyncratic changes take place, resulting in some morpheme boundaries being obscured.

In the singular and in the first person plural, while the final *o* of the first order prefix can trigger the regular assimilatory shift of a following *e* to *o* (with subsequent resolution of the resulting sequence of *oe* as *o* by the rule described in §2.5.2.3), it is far more common for the *oe* sequence to be resolved irregularly as *a* in the first person singular, *e* in the second person singular, and as *a* and *e* in free variation in the third person singular.

The initial *c-* of the third person singular prefix is also sporadically lost, which leaves the form open to vowel-initial deletion by the general process presented in §2.2. Thus, the underlying sequence of *yaco-eme-* '1SG:PRES' is generally realized as *yacame-*, and only occasionally as *yocome-*, while *ko-eme-* '2SG:PRES' is generally realized as *keme-* rather than *kome-*. Finally, the sequence *co-eme-* '3SG:PRES' is only rarely realized as anticipated as *come-* ~ *ome-*, with the forms *came-* ~ *ceme-* ~ *ame-* ~ *eme-* ~ *me-* being far more frequent.

In the first person plural inclusive, the *l* of the first order prefix is obligatorily deleted in the present tense. From underlying *kokli-emle-* '1PL.INCL:PRES' and *kakli-emle* '1PL.EXCL:PRES' we derive the respective surface forms *kokemle-* and *kakemle-* by this rule, as well as the remaining general rules encountered frequently in preceding sections. There is also an optional *ad hoc* change whereby the medial *e* in the prefix *kokemle-* shifts to *o*.

The remaining juxtapositions of prefixes behave in the ways already described in preceding sections. The resulting morphotactically complex present tense prefixes are therefore as set out in Table 4.21. These prefixes appear with no change in their shape when the following modified verb root begins with a consonant cluster, as is the case with a weak verb such as *tovop* 'laugh' (for which the modified root is *ntovop*), or with a single consonant other than *n*, such as with the verb *soki* 'climb' (for which there is no separate modified form of the root). When the following root begins with a vowel, the regular rules apply, except that the prevocalic form of the first person singular prefix *yacam-* also optionally loses the *a* of the second syllable of the prefix to become *yacm-*.

As described in §4.2.2.5, the negative is marked by means of the prefixes *etu-* and *etwo-*, which appear between the first and second elements of the morphotactically complex present tense markers. These sequences obey the various rules already described, so we find comparisons such as the following between affirmative and negative present tense forms:

cumnaruvo (<*cu-emo-naruvo*)	*cutumnaruvo* (<*cu-etu-emo-naruvo*)
3PL:RECPAST-*EM*-MR:sing	3PL:RECPAST-NEG-*EM*-MR:sing
'they are singing'	'they are not singing'

However, with the singular exponents of the present tense negative paradigm, when they are followed by a modified verb root beginning with *nV-*, the resulting sequence

Table 4.21 Present Tense Prefixes

	SG		DL	PL
1	*yacame- ~ yocome-*	INCL	*kokumo-*	*kokemle ~ kokomle-*
		EXCL	*kakumo-*	*kakemle-*
2	*keme- ~ kome-*		*kumo-*	
3	*(c)eme- ~ (c)ame- ~ (c)ome-*		*cumo-*	

of *-tumn-* is optionally reduced in allegro speech by means of an *ad hoc* process to *-tn-*. Therefore, a form such as *yocotumnaruvo* (<*yaco-etu-eme-naruvo*) 'I am not singing' alternates with the reduced form *yocotnaruvo*.

Verbs marked for the present encode the following kinds of events:

(a) those in which the time of an action coincides with the time of the utterance:

Kem-ampai   ntovom   orog.
2SG:PRES-MR:take   garden.produce   much
'You are taking a lot of garden produce.'

(b) those in which a change of state is in progress at the time of utterance, but which is not yet complete, for example:

Nvag   cam-nau.
food   3SG:PRES-MR:cook
'The food is cooking (but it is not yet cooked).'

(c) those in which a state pertains habitually over an extended period, for example:

Yacm-antpond   pumrokgo (<*pumroc-go*).
1SG:PRES-MR:cold   night-PL
'I am (habitually) cold in the nights.'

This contrasts with the following, which indicates that the speaker is just cold once, at the time of utterance:

Yocotpond (<*yaco-etpond*).
1SG:RECPAST-BR:cold
'I am cold.'

(d) an event in the past that was in the process of coming about, for example:

Ndu-tamul-i   nam   mucu (<*mu-ocu*)   *hai   nemetagi*
3PL:DISTPAST-BR:send-CONST   message   PL:ES-BR:say   INDEF   cyclone
cam-ampelom.
3SG:PRES-MR:come
'They sent a message that a cyclone was coming.'

(e) events which do not pertain at the time of the utterance but which the speaker holds will pertain in the immediate future, or ought to pertain in the immediate future as a result of the utterance itself. Thus:

Koh   *kokeml-ampe*   *u-ntemne*.
1PL.INCL   1PL.INCL:PRES-MR:go   LOC-village
'It is dark now, we must go to the village (right now).'

(f) A verb in a subordinate clause introduced by the irrealis subordinators *nempgon* 'when' and *nagku* 'if' carries this marking (§8.5). In such constructions, the verb in the main clause is marked for the future. Thus:

Nagku kemagkli (<kem-agkəl-i) potcon k-anduntvi   ovon
if   2SG:PRES-MR:dig-3SG   close   2SG:FUT-MR:break PL
nowatni-n.
root-3SG
'If you dig it (that is the kava) close, you will break its roots.'

(g) events involving the expression of perceptions or feelings at the time of utterance, for example:

Marima   kemaghi (<kem-agkəh-i)   nevloco-n   nagkrai.
now   2SG:PRES-MR:see-CONST   wing-CONST flying.fox
'Now you can see the wings of the flying fox.'

This meaning can also be expressed by the recent past markers (§4.2.2.1.1).

(ii) *Past Continuous*

The same combination of prefixes that mark the present tense is used to express the past continuous, with the difference being expressed solely by the use of the basic form of the verb root as against the modified root. This category expresses a continuous event in the recent past, as illustrated by the following contrasting forms:

yacamandgi (<yaco-eme-andəg-i)   *yacamorgi (<yaco-em-orəg-i)*
1SG:RECPAST-*EM*-MR:hear-3SG   1SG:RECPAST-*EM*-BR:hear-3SG
'I can hear it'   'I was hearing it'

(iii) *Dependent Past*

This category is expressed by a combination of the distant past subject prefixes, the fifth order prefix, and the basic root form of the verb, with prefix combinations being subject to the regular changes noted in earlier sections. Thus, note the contrast between:

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yam-tovop	*yam-em-tovop*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:laugh	1SG:DISTPAST-*EM*-BR:laugh
'I laughed'	'I laughed while ...'

This category is used to express events which took place in the distant past, and which possess any of the following particular characteristics:

(a) The event took place habitually over a long period of time, with the possibility that the event so described still pertains into the present. Thus:

Ndinme   *yem-enwi*   *pog-i*   *m-ocu*
mother:CONST 3SG:DEPPAST-BR:say   GOAL-3SG SG:ES-BR:say
kol-ampe   *ra*   *ndenuc.*
1PL.INCL:FUT-MR:go GOAL garden
'Her mother would say to her, "Let's go to the garden".'

In this case, although the event encoded by the verb *enwi* 'say' took place in the distant past, the activity is considered to pertain to the present because Louvo and her mother are still alive and presumably still say things to each other.

(b) The event took place while some other event was taking place. Thus:

Yamem-aruvo   *nempgon* *nemli* *y-omol.*
1SG:DEPPAST-BR:sing   when   orange 3SG:DISTPAST-BR:fall
'I was singing when the orange fell.'

(c) The event took place immediately before a subsequent event within a narrative sequence. Thus, it is possible to open a narration relating to the distant past using a verb marked in this way as this indicates that other events are about to be related. Thus:

Rumute (<ru-emu-ete) *Potnogkor. . .*
3PL:DEPPAST-BR:live   Potnogkor
'Once upon a time, they lived at Potnogkor. . .'

An introduction such as this indicates that the narrator is going to talk about some things which happened involving these people who used to live at Potnogkor.

(iv) *Past Habitual*

This is expressed by combining once again the distant past subject markers and a fifth order prefix, along with a verb in its modified root form. This category expresses events in the distant past which take place on a regular basis. We therefore encounter the following derivations:

yamemanduc (<yam-eme-anduc)
1SG:DISTPAST-*EM*-MR:bathe
'I used to bathe'

yamemowai (<yam-eme-wa-i)
1SG:DISTPAST-EM-STEp.on-3SG
'I used to step on it'

yamemnaruvo (<yam-eme-naruvo)
1SG:DISTPAST-*EM*-MR:sing
'I used to sing'

This category has, in fact, two competing morphological expressions, as it was indicated in §4.2.2.1.1 that the past habitual could also be marked by a combination of distant past subject markers and the modified form of the root, with no intervening fifth order prefix. Thus, *yanduc (<yi-anduc)* '3SG:DISTPAST-MR:-bathe' and *yemanduc (<yi-eme-anduc)* '3SG:DISTPAST-*EM*-MR:bathe' are alternative ways of saying '(s)he used to bathe'. Of the two patterns, the one in which the fifth order suffix is present is by far the more common, with forms lacking this marker being encountered more frequently in the speech of older speakers.

(v) *Realis Conditional*

The realis conditional is expressed by combining the subject prefixes involved in the expression of the optative and the fifth order prefix, along with a verb in its modified root form. Thus:

yapemnaruvo (<yapi-eme-naruvo)
1SG:OPT-*EM*-MR:sing
'if I had sung'

pumandcai (<pu-emo-andcai)
3PL:OPT-*EM*-MR:bathe
'if they had bathed'

Such verbs express a conditional meaning relating to events that took place in the past, or which are taking place in the present. Events expressed in this way have not taken place, with the speaker hypothesizing about what might have happened if they had. Thus:

Nagku yapem-anduc   *yap-etw-orei*   *yau.*
if   1SG:REALCOND-MR:bathe   1SG:OPT-NEG-BR:scratch 1SG
'If I had bathed, I would not be scratching myself now.'

(vi) *Irrealis Conditional*

This inflectional category is expressed by the subject markers used in the counterassertive, in combination with a fifth order prefix and the modified form of the root. In the first person singular, however, the irrealis conditional is based on the subjunctive prefix *yaki-*, producing *yakeme-*, rather than the counterassertive prefix *yakini-*, which would result in **yakineme-*. Thus:

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yakemnaruvo (<yaki-eme-naruvo)   *numontovop (<nu-emo-ntovop)*
1SG:IRRCOND-MR:sing   3PL:IRRCOND-MR:laugh
'if I were to sing'   'if they were to laugh'

kanemlenaruvo (<kanli-emle-naruvo)
1PL.EXCL:IRRCOND-MR:sing
'if we were to sing'

4.2.2.8 Echo Subjects and Preceding Orders

When two coordinated verbs with identical subjects appear in sequence and the initial verb carries any of subject markers expressed by a single prefix as set out in §4.2.2.1.1, the second verb carries the echo verb prefixes with the appropriate number marking (§8.1). The root of the echo verb also appears in the same root form as the initial verb. Finally, there are separate forms of the echo subject prefixes depending on whether the immediately following morpheme is a verb root in a modified root environment or not. This results in a loss of both tense-aspect-mood distinctions and person distinctions with echo verbs, as illustrated below:

Ø-avan   *m-etvani*
2SG:IMP-BR:walk   SG:ES-BR:spit
'walk and spit!'

yacavan (<yaco-avan)   m-etvani
1SG:RECPAST-BR:walk   SG:ES-BR:spit
'I walked (recently) and spat'

yam-avan   *m-etvani*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:walk   SG:ES-BR:spit
'I walked (some time ago) and spat'

p-avan   *m-etvani*
3SG:OPT-BR:walk   SG:ES-BR:spit
'(I wish) (s)he would walk and spit'

The only prefixed distinction that is maintained on echo verbs is a partially skewed number distinction between singular, first person plural, and a final category that marks both first person dual and second and third person dual and plural by the same form (§4.2.2.1.2).

    If the initial verb carries any of the morphotactically intermediate prior past, iterative and negative markers, an echo verb simply copies the first order prefixes and the root form, as just described, with the additional prefixes not appearing on the echo verb. Thus:

yacapmavan (<yaco-epm-avan)   *m-etvani*
1SG:RECPAST-PRIOR-BR:walk   SG:ES-BR:spit
'I had walked and spat'

yucumavan (<yaco-um-avan)   *m-etvani*
1SG:RECPAST-IT-BR:walk   SG:ES-BR:spit
'I walked again and spat'

yam-etw-avan   *m-etvani*
1SG:DISTPAST-NEG-BR:walk   SG:ES-BR:spit
'I did not walk (some time ago) and spit'

However, an echo verb can mark the iterative and the negative (but not the prior past) independently of the initial verb. Thus:

yam-avan   *m-um-etvani*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:walk   SG:ES-IT-BR:spit
'I walked and spat again'

yam-avan   *metutvani (<m-etu-etvani)*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:walk   SG:ES-NEG-BR:spit
'I walked and did not spit'

*yam-avan   *m-epm-etvani*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:walk   SG:ES-PRIOR-BR:spit

The fifth order prefixes, however, behave rather differently to the other morphotactically intermediate prefixes in that when an initial verb is inflected with a form involving this prefix, it is normally copied onto an echo verb, and an initial inflection that does not involve this prefix cannot be followed by an echo verb that carries fifth order marking. Note, therefore, the following:

ndumavan (<ndu-emu-avan)   *mumutvani (<mu-emu-etvani)*
3PL:DISTPAST-*EM*-BR:walk   PL:ES-*EM*-BR:spit
'they walked and spat while . . .'

cumnavan (<cu-emu-navan)   *mumantvani (<mu-emo-antvani)*
3PL:RECPAST-*EM*-MR:walk   PL:ES-*EM*-MR:spit
'they are walking and spitting'

The combinations of echo subject and fifth order prefixes interact according to the general rules described and illustrated in preceding sections. For convenience, however, the resulting morphotactically complex forms are presented in Table 4.22.

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Table 4.22 Echo Subject and Fifth Order Morphotactic Combinations

	Before verb in modified root environment	*Elsewhere*
SG	*meme-*	*mem-*
1DL; 2/3NONSG	*mumo-*	*mumu-*
1PL	*memle-*	*memli-*

4.2.3 Uninflected Verbs

The analysis of verbal prefixing presented in §4.2.2 involves the obligatory marking of verbs for a variety of inflectional categories, according to a system that is unusually complex for an Oceanic language. The only morphological category which involves zero prefixation is the singular imperative of an initial verb (§4.2.2.1.1).

Speakers of Erromangan do not cite verbs in their zero-marked imperative forms. Rather, verbs are cited in a morphological shape which differs from any of the inflected forms described in this chapter, and which has the following realizations:

n-	before roots beginning with vowels
n- ~ Ø-	before roots beginning with *t-*
Ø-	before roots beginning with glides and all consonants other than *t-*

These are also the forms which Erromangans use when a verb is used as a personal name, for example *Nahwo* (<*ahwo* 'paddle'), *Narvu* (<*arvu* 'break ground when planting in garden'), *Torilwo* (<*torilwo* 'burp'). Finally, these forms are used when vernacular verbs are used while speaking Bislama. Thus, the root *acune* 'begin to feel the effect of kava' appears in a Bislama utterance in the citation form *nacune*, as in the following example:

Yu harem i nacune smol, no?
'Are you beginning to feel the effect of the kava somewhat?'

With many verbs, these forms are identical to the verbal nominalizing prefix (§3.2.1.1), the adjectival derivative prefix (§5.1.2), as well as to the form of the accreted element found with modified verb roots (§4.1.2). However, the rules that have been stated for the expression of these various functions result in differing realizations with some phonologically determined categories of roots. We find correspondences between the three separate paradigms set out in Table 4.23.

Table 4.23 Citation Forms of Verbs

Root		Nominal and adjectival derivative	Modified root	Citation form
avan	'walk'	*navan*	*navan*	*navan*
yep	'descend'	*nyep*	*yep*	*yep*
lau	'dry'	*nlau*	*lau*	*lau*
sac	'ascend'	*n(t)sac*	*sac*	*sac*
tovop	'laugh'	*(n)tovop*	*ntovop*	*(n)tovop*
vag	'eat'	*nvag*	*ampag*	*vag*
etehep	'sit'	*netehep*	*antehep*	*netehep*
oruc	'bathe'	*noruc*	*anduc*	*noruc*

A statistical analysis of textual data reveals that while 99.5% of verbs carry the full set of inflectional markers as described in §4.2.2, there is a very small residue of lexical verbs which carry no inflectional marking whatsoever, and appear instead in their citation forms.

Uninflected verbs can always be replaced with fully inflected verbs, and they are only ever attested in the following restricted contexts:

(a) *Telegraphic Language*

When the inflectional categories of a verb are fully implicit from the situation, it is possible for a short message to be written telegraphically with the verb in its uninflected citation form, rather than its fully inflected form. We therefore find examples such as the following, which was a written notice left at the door of a house, with the identity of the writer being completely unambiguous from the context:

Tolki   pehnuri.
CIT:return later
'(I will) return later.'

The verb could equally well have been expressed as *yoco-ntolki* '1SG:FUT-MR:return' in this example.

Telegraphic language is not restricted exclusively to the written medium. Verbs are sometimes encountered uninflected in speech where the context is fully explicit as to what the inflectional categories should be and where the word appears in a very short utterance. Thus:

N-avan   ku?
CIT-walk   or
'Shall we go for a walk?'

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This could equally well have been expressed as:

Kokwo-navan   *ku?*
1DL.INCL:FUT-MR:walk   or
'Shall we go for a walk?'

(b) *Discourse Linkage*

There is some reference to head-to-tail linkage as a narrative discourse strategy in §8.8, which is a construction whereby information from a previous clause is repeated to introduce a subsequent clause. A verb that is repeated in such a construction sometimes appears in its uninflected form, as in the following, where *yitamuli* 'he sent it' appears first in its fully inflected form, and it is then repeated at the head of the next clause in its citation form *tamuli*:

Kamu-tetw-i   *mavel-i*   *yi-tamul-i.*
1DL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:wait.for-3SG   until-CONST   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:send:3SG

Tamul-i   *kamli-vai.*
CIT:send-3SG   1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:take
'The two of us waited until he sent it. Having sent it, we took it.'

     The verb *tampli* 'finish' is also commonly used in narrative to indicate a transition from one event to another. While this normally carries echo subject marking in such situations (§8.1.2), it sometimes appears completely uninflected as well, as in an example such as the following:

Hai   *nei*   *coc-se-i*   *no-g.*   *Tampli-su*
INDEF   splinter   3SG:RECPAST-stick.into-CONST   foot-1SG   CIT:finish-PERF
kamli-torilki   *pwarap.*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:return   evening
'A splinter stuck into my foot. Then we returned in the evening.'

(c) *Lists*

When actions are presented in the form of a list associated with a single unambiguous subject, they can all appear in their citation forms, for example:

Yetrokilihai (<*yi-etər-okil-i-hai*)   *se*   *y-ompi*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:RANDOM-BR:know-CONST-EMPH   what   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:do
n-elwo   *m-sam*   *comhacsu.*
CIT-vomit   and-CIT:make.nuisance   all
'He had no idea what he had done: vomitting and all kinds of nuisance-making.'

(d) *Corrections*

The citation form is also encountered when a speaker corrects a performance error and wishes to substitute a more appropriately chosen verb. While it is possible to repeat the entire inflected verb, speakers sometimes just present the second verb in its uninflected citation form. Thus:

Ko-nen-i   *gi*   *noki . . . netki*   *gi*   *noki.*
2SG:FUT-MR:eat-3SG INST coconut eat.food.with.something.else INST coconut
'You will eat it with coconut.'

In this case, the speaker first used the verb *en-* 'eat', which produced a grammatical sentence, but immediately afterwards decided that he would prefer to use the more appropriate verb *etki*, which expresses the more specific meaning of 'eat one kind of food with something else'. The corrected verb appears in its citation form, rather than the fully inflected form *ko-netki* 'you will eat food with something else' that would also have been possible.

     However, there is a residue of uninflected verbs which do not fit into any of the categories just mentioned, and for which no explanation for their lack of inflection can be offered. We therefore find examples such as the following, in which *nomonki* might have been expected to appear fully inflected as *kakem-nomonki* '1PL.EXCL:PRES-MR:drink':

K-agkil-i   *m-agku*   *n-omonki.*
2SG:FUT-MR:know-CONST   SG:ES-MR:say   CIT-BR:drink
'You must know that we are drinking.'

and the following, in which uninflected *nokili* could equally well be expressed as *c-okil-i* '3SG:RECPAST-BR:can-CONST':

Hai   *nalau*   *viroc*   *hogku*   *Novul*   *n-okil-i*   *n-avan.*
INDEF   child   small   SIM   Novul   CIT-can-CONST   NOM-BR:walk
'A small child like Novul could have walked.'

     It is possible for an uninflected verb to be followed by another verb carrying echo verb marking. We therefore find examples of telegraphic language such as the following, in which somebody was doodling because of boredom, and he wrote the following commentary on the doodle:

N-alei   *viroc*   *m-ume-ntuc.*
CIT-sleep   little   SG:ES-IT:FUT-MR:get.up

From the context, it is clear that the uninflected verb *nalei* 'sleep' represents a telegraphic abbreviation for fully inflected *yoco-naleipo* '1SG:FUT-MR:sleep', so the appropriate translation of this example is:

'I will sleep a little and get up again.'

It is also possible for an echo verb to be uninflected, and linked to a previously inflected verb by means of the free form coordinator *im* (§8.7). We therefore find examples such as the following:

K-ampaipelac   *ov-ntopavo* *im* *n-atipotni-n*   *magkli* (*<m-agkəl-i*)
2SG:FUT-MR:remove   PL-weed   and CIT-start-CONST   SG:ES-MR:dig-CONST
nacave.
kava
'You will remove the weeds and start digging the kava.'

in which the sequence *im natipotnin* is found instead of the expected echo verb *me-natipotni-n* 'SG:ES-MR:start-CONST'. Note, however, that the second echo verb *magkli* 'and will dig' carries full inflectional marking, and does not appear in the citation form (which would be *nocli*).

Coordination can also be expressed by means of the proclitic form *m-* (§8.7), and this is matched by similar echo verb constructions. Thus, in:

Kole-hac   *m-n-omonki* *hai*   *nunau*.
1PL.INCL:FUT-ascend and-CIT-drink INDEF tea
'Let's go up and drink some tea.'

the uninflected verb *mnomonki* would more frequently be expressed as the following echo verb construction:

Kole-hac   *mle-nomonki*   *hai*   *nunau*.
1PL.INCL:FUT-ascend PL:ES-MR:drink INDEF tea
'Let's go up and drink some tea.'

4.3 Object Suffixes

There is no overt marking of transitivity on Sye verbs. Most verbs are either inherently intransitive, allowing no object, or transitive, requiring an object (though, as is shown in §7.1.2, it is possible for some categories of objects to have zero realization). There is also a small subset of verbs which can be used intransitively or transitively with no change in shape, for example *omonki* 'drink', *vaipelac* 'remove, come off'.

Transitive verbs fall into two major groups with respect to the manner in which objects are marked: suffixed verbs, with which object categories are obligatorily marked by means of suffixes to the verb, and unsuffixed verbs, where there is no inflectional marking for object. The division of verbs into these two categories is not predictable on the basis of verbal semantics or phonological shape. About three quarters of transitive verbs belong in the set of suffixed verbs, while the remaining quarter are unsuffixed. Suffixed verbs can be further subdivided into the open class of plain suffixed verbs, and the closed set of possessive suffixed verbs.

4.3.1 Pronominal Objects

While subject prefixes make a distinction between dual and plural forms in the first person non-singular (§4.2.1), object suffixes directly mirror the paradigm for independent pronouns in that they mark only a singular-plural distinction throughout (§3.1.1).

4.3.1.1 Plain Object Suffixes

There are three sets of plain object suffixes, the distribution of which is determined by the phonological shape of the root to which they are attached, as set out in Tables 4.24 to 4.26.

These forms in Set I are used with verbs ending in *i*, for example *tavrivri-* 'forget' and *senti-* 'see off', or verbs ending in an underlying schwa followed by a nasal, for example *tenəm-* 'bury' and *orəg-* 'hear'. The allomorphs *-i ~ -u, -koh ~ -ucoh, -kam ~ -ucam* and *-kum ~ -ucum* freely alternate with verbs ending in *i* (with the final vowel of the verb being regularly deleted by the rule set out in §2.5.2.5). With verbs such as *tenəm-* and *orəg-*, however, we find only the allomorphs *-i, -koh, -kam* and *-kum*.

Note, therefore, the following derivations involving the verb *senti-* 'send off' and *tenəm-* 'bury' with the third person singular distant past subject marker *yi-*: *yi-senti-yau > yisentiyau* '(s)he saw me off', *yi-senti-oc > yisentoc* '(s)he saw you off', *yi-senti-i > yisenti* '(s)he saw him/her off', *yi-senti-kam > yisentikam* or *yi-senti-ucam > yisentucam* '(s)he saw us off', *yi-tenəm-coh > yitenomcoh* '(s)he buried us' and *yi-tenəm-oc > yitenmoc* '(s)he buried you'. With alternants such as *yisentucam* and *yisentikam* '(s)he saw us off', suffixes beginning with *u* are encountered only occasionally, in the speech of older people.

The forms in Set II are used with verbs ending in *o* followed by the velar consonants *k*, *g* or *gk*, for example *oryok-* 'pick up', *ohrog-* 'look for', *evyogk-* 'leave', or verbs which end in sequences of schwa followed by *k*, for example *orulək-* 'grab hold of', *elilək-* 'burden with troubles'. With roots ending in sequences of *-ok*, *-og* and *-ogk*, the final velar segments regularly shift to *-c* before the first person singular suffix *-yau* and the third person plural suffix *-ond* (§2.5.1.1). Sequences of *gk* before *k* automatically undergo degemination of the *k* segments (§2.5.1.4). Finally, there is an *ad hoc* shift of *k* to *g* before *k*.

We therefore find derivations such as the following, involving the verbs *oryok-* 'pick up', *orulək-* 'burden with troubles' and *evyogk-* 'leave' with the third person singular distant past subject marker *yi-*: *yi-oryok-i > yoryoki* '(s)he picked it up', *yi-oryok-kik > yoryogkik* '(s)he picked you up', *yi-oryok-yau > yoryocyau* '(s)he picked me up', *yi-ohrog-ond > yohrocond* '(s)he looked for them', *yi-evyogk-i > yevyogki* '(s)he left him/her', *yi-evyogk-kik > yevyogkik* '(s)he left you', *yi-evyogk-ond > yevyocond* '(s)he left them'.

With roots ending underlyingly in *ək*, the schwa is unpredictably realized as *o* in the third person plural, instead of zero. Thus, from *yi-orulək-ond* '(s)he em-

Table 4.24 Set I Object Suffixes

	SG		PL
1	*-yau*	INCL	*-koh ~ -ucoh*
		EXCL	*-kam ~ -ucam*
2	*-oc*		*-kum ~ ucum*
3	*-i ~ -u*		*-or*

Table 4.25 Set II Object Suffixes

	SG		PL
1	*-yau*	INCL	*-koh*
		EXCL	*-kam*
2	*-kik*		*-kum*
3	*-i*		*-ond*

Table 4.26 Set III Object Suffixes

	SG		PL
1	*-yau*	INCL	*-coh*
		EXCL	*-cam*
2	*-oc*		*-cum*
3	*-i*		*-or*

braced them' we derive *yorulocond* instead of predicted **yorulkond*. Otherwise, the regular derivations apply, as illustrated in *yi-orulǝk-yau > yorulocyau* '(s)he embraced me', *yi-orulǝk-kik > yorulogkik* '(s)he embraced you' and *yi-orulǝk-i > yorulki* '(s)he embraced him/her'.

The forms in Set III are used with all other phonological categories of plain suffixed transitive roots. This includes roots ending in vowels other than *i*, such as *ta-* 'hit', *se-* 'spear', *tetu-* 'wait for'; underlying schwa when there is a following consonant other than a nasal or *k*, such as *avǝr-* 'help', *ocǝl-* 'dig up', *ocǝh-* 'see', *etǝr-* 'pierce', *etǝv-* 'shoot', *satǝr-* 'stab'; the vowel *o* followed by any non-velar consonant, such as *ovol-* 'turn'; and the vowels *a, e, i* or *u* followed by any consonant, such as *sav-* 'draw', *en-* 'eat', *atgem-* 'visit'. We therefore find regular morphophonemic derivations such as *yi-tetu-yau > yitetuyau* '(s)he waited for me', *yi-tetu-oc > yitetwoc* '(s)he waited for you', *yi-tetu-i > yitetwi* '(s)he waited for him/her', *yi-ta-yau > yitayau* '(s)he hit me', *yi-ta-oc > yitac* '(s)he hit you', *yi-ta-i > yitai* '(s)he hit him/her', *yi-se-yau > yiseyau* '(s)he speared me', *yi-se-oc > yisoc* '(s)he speared you', *yi-se-i > yisei* '(s)he speared him/her' and *yi-se-coh > yisocoh* '(s)he speared us'.

There is also an optional idiosyncratic change whereby the final vowel of mono-syllabic roots ending in *e* and *a* with the third person singular object suffix *-i* undergo reduction to *e*. Thus, *yitai* '(s)he hit him/her' occasionally alternates with *yite*, and *yisei* '(s)he speared him/her' with *yise*.

The verbs *ovog-* 'give' and *en(u)pog-* 'tell' exhibit irregularities in both the root forms and their choice of object suffixes, in that they take suffixes from Set I instead of predicted Set II suffixes. Before the first person singular suffix *-yau*, the roots are unpredictably *ovo-* and *en(u)po-* respectively, rather than expected **ovoc-* and **enpoc-*. Finally, with the second person singular suffix *-oc* and the third person plural suffix *-or*, the roots are unpredictably *ovon-* and *en(u)pon-* respectively, rather than **ovoc-* and **enpoc-*. We therefore find a paradigm such as that in Table 4.27 for the verb *ovog-* 'give' with third person singular distant past subject marking.

Another verb that behaves irregularly with regard to object marking is the causative verb *om-* (§6.3.3). The irregularities here involve both the root and the object suffixes. The root appears unpredictably as *ov-* with singular object suffixes, and as *om-* with plural suffixes. The modified forms of these roots follow the regular rules described in §4.1.2, giving *amp-* and *am-* respectively. The object suffixes are the same as the Set II forms given above, except that the third person plural form is *-kor* rather than *-ond*. The verb also has a defective paradigm in that it is not possible for a third person singular pronominal object to be expressed with this verb. We therefore find paradigms as set out in Table 4.28, in which the verb is expressed with the third person singular distant past subject prefix *yi-* (with the basic form of the root), and a third person singular future subject prefix *co-* (with the modified form of the root).

The presence of underlying schwa in the final syllable of a verb root results in paradigmatic alternations as described in §2.1.2.2, and which are accounted for by the general rule set out in §2.5.2.7. However, the schwa deletion rule can result in sequences of *-gkh-*, *-gks-*, *-mps-* and *-mph-*, in which the middle stop is regularly deleted (§2.5.1.5). The rule described in §2.5.1.6 which shifts *s* to *h* before another consonant results in considerable surface alternation for underlying roots such as *evəs-* 'whip', which has the third person singular future paradigm presented in Table 4.29.

4.3.1.2 Possessive Object Suffixes

There is a small subset of suffixed transitive verbs with which the pronominal object is expressed by means of a different set of suffixes to those of all other transitive verbs, and which are identical to the pronominal suffixes marked on bound nouns (§3.2.2.2). While the suffixing behavior of these forms is the same as that of bound nouns, they are completely verbal in their prefixing behavior. They also behave in a perfectly normal way with regard to the form and distribution of basic and modified root forms (§4.1).

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Table 4.27 Object Suffixes with *ovog-* 'give'

	SG		PL
1	*y-ovo-yau*	INCL	*y-ovog-koh*
		EXCL	*y-ovog-kam*
2	*y-ovon-oc*		*y-ovog-kum*
3	*y-ovog-i*		*y-ovon-or*

Table 4.28 Causative Verb with Object Suffixes

	SG		PL
1	*y-ov-yau*	INCL	*y-om-koh*
		EXCL	*y-om-kam*
2	*y-ov-kik*		*y-om-kum*
3	–		*y-om-kor*
1	*c-amp-yau*	INCL	*c-am-koh*
		EXCL	*c-am-kam*
2	*c-am-kik*		*c-am-kum*
3	–		*c-am-kor*

Table 4.29 Object Suffixes on *evas-* 'whip'

	SG		PL
1	*c-ampoh-yau*	INCL	*c-ampoh-coh*
		EXCL	*c-ampoh-cam*
2	*c-ams-oc*		*c-ampoh-cum*
3	*c-ams-i*		*c-ams-or*

The following is an exhaustive listing for the corpus of verbs of this type: *arinowa-* 'provoke', *wavra-* 'put foot into mouth of', *tavra-* 'throw food into mouth of', *oravra-* 'open wide', *savra-* 'poke finger down throat to induce vomitting', *savransi-* 'poke finger into anus of', *olkiwa-* 'hang by neck', *tavunta-* 'gossip about', *atovni-* 'name', *orelu-* 'retract foreskin of', *orandi-* 'retract foreskin of', *towatni-* 'steal roots of (kava plant)', *tulgo-* 'cut branches of (tree) leaving only trunk', *tigevi-* 'scale (fish)', *atipotni-* 'start'. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Ø-orelu-m	*Ø-etw-arinowa-g*
2SG:IMP-BR:retract foreskin of-2SG	2SG:IMP:NEG-BR:provoke-1SG
'retract your foreskin!'	'don't provoke me!'

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co-ntavunta-nt   *kokwo-natovni-nd*
3SG:FUT-MR:gossip.about-1PL.INCL   1DL.INCL:FUT-MR:name-3PL
'(s)he will gossip about us'   'we will name them'

In addition to these two-place predicates, there are also three one-place predicates which share the same morphological behavior: *orgompu-* 'mourn', *telemunta-* 'stand with one's hands behind one's back', *selwame-* 'poke out tongue'. With these verbs, the object position is occupied by a marker that agrees with the subject, making these effectively reflexive possessive verbs. Thus:

yoc-orgompu-g
1SG:RECPAST-BR:mourn-1SG
'I mourned'

cu-telemunta-nd
3PL:RECPAST-BR:stand.with.hands.behind.back-3PL
'they stood with their hands behind their backs'

The structural similarity between these verbs and possessive nouns derives from the historical origin of these forms as VERB + NOUN compounds in which the nouns accept direct possessive suffixes (§3.2.2.2) and they lose their initial *n-* when they appear as the second element in a compound construction (§3.2.1.4). With some of the verbs presented above, both the first and the second element of the compound are synchronically identifiable, even if the morphological processes that link the two are vestigial rather than productive, and the semantic link sometimes tenuous.

We therefore find derivations such as the following: *se-* 'spear' + *nelwame-* 'tongue' > *selwame-* 'poke out tongue', *wa-* 'step on' + *navra-* 'mouth' > *wavra-* 'put foot into mouth of', *ta-* 'hit' + *navra-* 'mouth' > *tavra-* 'throw food into mouth of', *ta-* 'hit' + *nowatni-* 'root' > *towatni-* 'steal kava roots', *ta-* 'hit' + *nulgo-* 'leaf' > *tulgo-* 'cut branches off tree', *ta-* 'hit' + *nigevi-* 'scales' > *tigevi-* 'scale (fish)', *or-* 'remove bark of' + *nelu-* 'penis' > *orelu-* 'retract foreskin of', *or-* 'remove bark of' + *navra-* 'hole' > *oravra-* 'open wide', *or-* 'remove bark of' + *nandi-* 'male genitalia' > *orandi-* 'retract foreskin of', *orəg-* 'feel' + *nompu-* 'head' > *orgompu-* 'mourn', *olki-* 'hang' + *nowa-* 'neck' > *olkiwa-* 'hang by neck', *ari* 'rule' + *nowa-* 'neck' > *arinowa-* 'provoke'.

In other cases, the final element is still formally similar to a semantically plausible bound noun, even if the initial element is not otherwise attested in the language. Thus, *tavunta-* 'gossip about' and *telemunta-* 'stand with hands behind one's back' both end in *nta-*, which is a bound noun meaning 'back', while *atovni-* '(to) name' ends in *ni-*, which is a noun root meaning 'name' and *atipotni-* 'start' ends in *potni-*, which is a noun meaning 'basis'. However, no verbs of the shape **tavu-*, **telemu-*, **atov-* or **ati-* are synchronically recognizable.

The historical connection between these verbs and bound nouns is further supported by the fact that the putative nominal elements in the forms just presented

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mirror the morphological alternations of the corresponding bound nouns. Note, for example, the following idiosyncratic alternations in the suffixed forms of the bound noun *nelwame-* 'tongue' (§3.2.2.2) and the historically related possessive verb *selwame-* 'poke out tongue': *nelwamug* 'my tongue' and *yococselwamug* 'I poked out my tongue' *vs nelwapmu* 'your tongue' and *kocselwapmu* 'you poked out your tongue'.

Despite the clear historical origin of these forms as VERB + NOUN compounds, the morphological relationship between the two elements is synchronically so obscure such that these forms are best treated as a special subset of formally transitive verbs. It should also be noted that there is a structurally similar set of verbs in Anejom (Lynch, p.c.) that has the same kind of historical origin as these verbs in Sye. However, the verbs that behave in this way in Anejom are neither cognate with these Sye forms, nor do they express the same areas of meaning.

4.3.2 Reflexive Objects

Any transitive verb can be expressed with an object which is identical with its subject to express a reflexive meaning. In such cases, there does not need to be any special marking on the verb, and the object is marked exactly as was described in §4.3.1. With suffixed verbs, we therefore find examples such as the following:

Orwog-kik!
2SG:IMP-BR:wash-2SG
'Wash yourself!'

Yacamagkohyau (<yaco-eme-agkəh-yau) ra   klah.
1SG:PRES-MR:see-1SG   LOC mirror
'I can see myself in the mirror.'

With third person pronominal objects, there is potential ambiguity in that such constructions can have either a reflexive or a non-reflexive interpretation, for example:

Yochi (<yi-ocəh-i).
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:see-3SG
'(S)he saw himself/herself.'
'(S)he saw him/her.'

In order to unambiguously express a reflexive meaning in the third person, and optionally also with any other category of object, the reflexive auxiliary verb *ehpe* can be used. This is followed by a nominalized form of the verb carrying object marking that is identical with the subject (§8.3.2). Thus, the above examples can also be expressed as:

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Y-ehpe   *nochi (<n-ocəh-i).*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:do.reflexively   NOM-BRsee-3SG
'(S)he saw himself/herself.'

Ehpe   *n-orwog-kik!*
2SG:IMP-BR:do.reflexively   NOM-BR:wash-2SG
'Wash yourself!'

Yacam-ahpe   *nocohyau (<n-ocəh-yau) ra   klah.*
1SG:PRES-MR:do.reflexively   NOM-BR:see-1SG   LOC mirror
'I can see myself in the mirror.'

There is also a handful of verbs which are obligatorily reflexive in that they only ever occur with an object that is the same as that of the subject. These include the plain suffixed verbs *au-* 'argue' and *etout-* 'be dressed up', for example:

Kam-au-cam.
1DL.EXCL:RECPAST-BR:argue-1PL.EXCL
'We argued.'

Y-etout-i.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:be.dressed.up-3SG
'(S)he was dressed up.'

As mentioned in §4.3.1.2, the possessive verbs *orgompu-* 'mourn', *selwame-* 'poke out tongue' and *telemunta-* 'stand with hands behind one's back' also fall into this category.

The obligatorily transitive verb *eva-* 'wear' is further unique in that it is obligatorily transitivized by the derivational suffix *-gi* (§4.5.2.1), and this introduces a second object, referring to the item worn. The suffix *-gi* is treated as a realization of a suffix in such constructions rather than as the oblique preposition *(o)gi* (§7.1.3.4) because the entire sequence of VERB + *-gi* is stressed as a single phonological word (§2.3), and because the regular word-internal morphophonemic rules apply between the final segment of the reflexive object suffix and the suffix *-gi* (§2.5). We therefore find forms such as the following:

Yam-eva-yau-gi   *nemah.*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:wear-1SG-TR   clothes
'I wore the clothes.'

Kokom-neva-coh-gi   *nemah.*
1DL.INCL:FUT-MR:wear-1PL.INCL-TR   clothes
'You and I will wear the clothes.'

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Eva-k-gi (<eva-oc-gi)   *nemah.*
2SG:IMP-BR:wear-2SG-TR   clothes
'Wear the clothes!'

4.4 Post-Object Suffixes

There is small mutually exclusive set of suffixes appearing after pronominal object markers in the case of suffixed transitive verbs, and directly on the verb stem in the case of intransitive verbs and unsuffixed transitive verbs. These are described in turn below.

(i) *Perfective* -su

The suffix *-su* expresses the perfective, usually with a verb carrying some form of past tense marking, for example:

Yampelomsu (<yam-velom-su).   *Yocochocsu (<yaco-ocәh-oc-su).*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:come-PERF   1SG:RECPAST-BR:see-2SG-PERF
'I had already come.'   'I have already seen you.'

Konisu (<ko-en-i-su)   *nvag?*
2SG:RECPAST-BR:eat-CONST-PERF   food
'Have you eaten (any) food?'

However, this suffix can also appear on verbs with present and future tense marking to express a perfective meaning, for example:

Yac-ampelom-su.
1SG:FUT-MR:come-PERF
'I will have come.'

Nempgon cam-ampelom-su   *hai*   *neteme*   *co-nelcav-i.*
when   3SG:PRES-MR:come-PERF   INDEF   person   3SG:FUT-MR:hold-3SG
'When (s)he is already coming, somebody will hold it.'

(ii) *Continuative* -la(p)

There is a suffix which alternates freely in shape between *-lap* and *-la*. With a verb carrying affirmative subject marking, this expresses the meaning of 'still', for example:

Kem-nompurac-lap.
2SG:PRES-MR:work-CONT
'You are still working.'

With a verb that carries negative marking, it expresses the meaning of '(not) yet', for example:

Nvag cotwaula (<co-etu-au-la).
food   3SG:RECPAST-NEG-BR:cooked-CONT
'The food is not yet cooked.'

Yocotumnamlap (<yaco-etu-eme-nam-lap).
1SG:RECPAST-NEG-*EM*-MR:speak-CONT
'I am not speaking yet.'

(iii) *Partitive* -wi

The suffix *-wi* can be used to express a partitive meaning, indicating that the action expressed by the verb is performed only to a limited extent in the case of an intransitive verb. When it is attached to a transitive verb, this suffix indicates that the action only affects the object of the verb to a limited extent. Thus:

Yam-talgi-wi   *nunau m-ovog-i*   *Jack.*
1SG:DISTPAT-BR:pour:CONST-PART   liquor SG:ES-BR:give-CONST   Jack
'I poured a little liquor and gave it to Jack.'

Uvoyawi (<u-ovo-yau-wi)   nacave.
PL:IMP-BR:give-1SG-PART   kava
'You all give me a little kava!'

The partitive suffix *-wi* is homophonous with a suffix that has a range of vaguely locative functions (§3.2.1.2, §3.2.1.5, §7.3.2).

(iv) *Negative Emphatic* -hai

The ordinary negative is marked by means of the prefix *etu-/etwo-*. As described in more detail in §4.2.2.5, the negative marker can be combined with the suffix *-hai* to express an emphatic negative, with the second element of this simulfix appearing after the object suffix if one is present, or directly on the verb if no object marking is present.

    The suffixed element of this discontinuous negative marker is identical to the indefinite nominal premodifier *hai* (§6.1.2.1). The suffix is probably derived historically from this premodifier, having been attracted to the verb as a suffix away from the nominal premodifier position. However, a contrast can still be made between the following, where suffixed *-hai* is treated as part of the verb for stress assignment purposes, while the free form indefinite premodifier *hai* is stressed independently:

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Yocotuchihai (<yaco-etu-ocəh-i-hai)   *neteme.*
1SG:RECPAST-NEG-BR:see-CONST-EMPH   person
'I didn't see the person at all'

Yocotuchi (<yaco-etu-ocəh-i)   *hai*   *neteme*
1SG:RECPAST-NEG-BR:see-CONST   INDEF   person
'I didn't see anybody'

(v) *Misdirective* -go

Verbs expressing actions which are inherently directional, as well postures, can carry the suffix *-go*, which indicates that the action is performed to one side, or away from the expected direction. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Ru-ve-go   *Antyok.*
3PL:DISTPAST-BR:go-MISDIRECT   Antioch
'They veered off to Antioch.'

Kamutego (<kamu-ete-go)   *yahac.*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:live-MISDIRECT   up.there
'The two of us were living up there away from everybody else.'

Y-etipe-go   *impwap.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:put-MISDIRECT   deep.down
'(S)he put it deep down to one side.'

The misdirective suffix differs from the other suffixes described in this section in that it cannot appear on a suffixed transitive verb. Thus, a form such as:

Yococ-tavog-i.
1SG:RECPAST-BR:throw.away-3SG
'I threw it away.'

cannot be expressed in a misdirective construction with *-go*, even if it might appear to be semantically consistent with this meaning. Also, with unsuffixed transitive verbs the misdirective suffix can only be attached to the following object and not to the verb itself. Thus:

Y-etipe   *nuvgo (<nup-go)* *impwap.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:put   yam-MISDIRECT   deep.down
'(S)he put the yam deep down to one side.'

*Y-etipe-go   *nup* *impwap.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:put-MISDIRECT   yam   deep.down

4.5 Derivational Verb Morphology

By far the greatest amount of morphological complexity in Erromangan involves the expression of inflectional categories. While there are several productive derivational processes affecting verbs, these are not associated with the same degree of morphophonemic alternation that we find with verbal inflections.

4.5.1 Derivational Prefixes

There are five derivational prefixes in Sye, expressing a range of modal types of meanings: *ovlu-* 'simultanitive', *omproc-* 'immediate', *orcu-* 'interruptive', *etər-* 'random', *ovsoc-* 'manner interrogative', *ovyu-* 'desiderative' and *ovyu-* 'causative'.

The form that is underlyingly *etər-* alternates predictably in shape between *etr-* with a following vowel-initial root and *etor-* with a following consonant-initial root (§2.5.2.7). The vowel-final forms undergo the regular morphophonemic derivations covered by the rules in §2.5.2.5 and §2.5.2.6. All of these but the causative prefix *ovyu-* derive regular strong verbs, and have modified roots that are predictable according to the patterns described in §4.1.2, and they are all followed by verb roots which appear in their basic form (§4.1.1) Thus:

yocovyetehep (<*yaco-ovyu-etehep*)   *yacampyetehep* (<*yaco-ampyu-etehep*)
1SG:RECPAST-BR:DESID-sit   1SG:FUT-MR:DESID-SIt
'I wanted to sit'   'I will want to sit'

The particular functions of these forms will be discussed in turn below.

(i) *Simultanitive* ovlu-

This indicates that an action takes place typically while the referent of the subject noun phrase is going from one place to another. While this is the most usual interpretation of this prefix, it can also express the more general meaning of an action which takes place simultaneously to any other action, whether that action is explicitly stated, or merely implicit from the context. We therefore find examples such as *orvi* 'cut it' > *ovl-orvi* 'cut it while going' and *mah* 'die' > *ovlu-mah* 'die on the way'. Some derivations involving this form have been attested in which the meaning of the derived forms are not fully predictable from the meaning of their constituent parts, for example *omolomol* 'fall all over' > *ovl-omolomol* 'stagger', *agkau* 'turn around' > *ovl-agkau* 'veer away'. The following examples illustrate the use of this form in sentences:

C-avan   *m-ovlu-mah.*
3SG:RECPAST-BR:walk   SG:ES-BR:SIMULT-die
'(S)he walked and (while walking) died.'

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Y-ovlu-mah   *nempgon* *yem-orcai.*
3SG-DISTPAST-BR:SIMULT-die TIME 3SG:DEPPAST-BR:swim
'(S)he died while swimming.'

(ii) *Immediate* omproc-

This indicates that an action has only just taken place. This form is only compatible with past tense marking, as in:

Y-omproc-velom.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:IMM-come
'(S)he has only just come.'

Yoc-omproc-vas-i   *ndovu-n* *mole.*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:IMM-buy-CONST mound-CONST ant (=rice)
'I have just bought some rice.'

(iii) *Interruptive* orcu-

This form expresses the idea that one action has been interrupted before completion in order to perform the action expressed by the verb to which it has been attached. Thus, contrast the following:

Yac-amplami.
1SG:FUT-MR:urinate
'I will urinate.'

Yac-andc-evlami.
1SG:FUT-MR:INT-BR:urinate
'I will stop what I'm doing in order to urinate.'

It can also be used to indicate that an action is performed to only a limited extent. The latter sentence, for example, could also be glossed as:

'I will have a bit of a pee.'

  The negative form of a verb carrying the interruptive prefix is interpreted as meaning 'never', for example:

Yocotumandcochi (< *yaco-etu-eme-andcu-ocəh-i*).
1SG:RECPAST-NEG-*EM*-MR:INT-BR:see-3SG
'I have never seen it.'

(iv) *Random* etər-

This expresses a number of loosely related meanings, each of which is described below. For the sake of convenience, these meanings have been subsumed under

the general category label of 'random', though randomness is only one aspect of the meaning of this form.

(a) *Random Action*

Such verbs can express random actions, which typically involve a large number of participants. Thus, compare the following:

Nogkli-n   nei y-omol.
leaf-CONST   tree 3SG:DISTPAST-BR:fall
'The leaf of the tree fell.'

Ov-nogkli-n nei   ndutromol (<ndu-etər-omol).
PL-leaf-3SG tree   3PL:DISTPAST-BR:RANDOM-BR:fall
'The leaves of the tree fell all over the place.'

(b) *Plural Action*

This form can also indicate that an action involves all of the stated participants at the same time rather than just a partial set of several participants, for example:

Ovonyan   en   Pasta Nafuki ndumutragri (<ndu-emu-etər-agri).
PL:child   POSS   Pastor Nafuki 3PL:DEPPAST-BR:RANDOM-BR:cry
'Pastor Nafuki's children were all crying.'

(c) *Accidental Action*

Another function of *etər-* is to express the idea that an action takes place accidentally, with no overt agency, for example:

Yametrorgi (<yam-etər-orəg-i).
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:RANDOM-BR:hear-3SG
'I just happened to hear it (though no specific person told me).'

(d) *Failed Action*

The final function of this form is to indicate an action that one has tried to perform but failed:

Yametravan (<yam-etər-avan).
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:RANDOM-BR:walk
'I tried to walk and failed.'

(v) *Manner Interrogative* ovsoc-

This prefix can be added to both intransitive and transitive verbs, in order to ask how an action is carried out. Thus:

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Kim-ovsoc-ompi?	*K-amsoc-arki*	*nei?*
2SG:DISTPAST-BR:HOW-BR:do	2SG:FUT-MR:HOW-BR:break	firewood
'How did you do it?'	'How will you break the firewood?'	

(vi) *Desiderative* ovyu-

The desiderative prefix *ovyu-* expresses the meaning of 'want to'. Thus:

Yametuvyam (<*yam-etu-ovyu-am*).
1SG:DISTPAST-NEG-BR:DESID-BR:speak
'I did not want to speak.'

Yam-avan	*m-ovy-etvani.*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:walk	ES:SG-BR:DESID-BR:spit
'I walked and wanted to spit.'	

Verbs can only enter into this desiderative construction when there is identity between the person who is doing the wanting and the performer of the desired action. When one person wants somebody else to do something, the transitive verb *aig- ~ acyog-* 'want to' must be used in a juxtaposed complement clause (§8.4). Thus, contrast the following:

Yacam-ampy-omonki.
1SG:PRES-MR:DESID-BR:drink
'I want to drink.'

Yacam-naig-i	*kik*	*ko-nomonki.*
1SG:PRES-MR:want-CONST	2SG	2SG:FUT-MR:drink
'I want you to drink.'		

It should be noted that with a handful of roots, the combination of the desiderative prefix and the root produce meanings that are not entirely predictable from the meanings of the constituent parts. Thus, from *omnuc* 'wet' we derive *ovy-omnuc* 'thirsty'. The verb *en-* 'eat' appears in its construct form with this prefix as *ovy-en-i* 'hungry'.

(vii) *Causative* ovyu-

The prefix *ovyu-*, in addition to expressing the desiderative, can also be used to express a causative meaning in association with an intransitive verb. This dual function should be treated as homophony, however, as there are differences in morphological behavior. The modified form of the desiderative prefix is regularly *ampyu-* (§4.1.2), while the modified form of the causative prefix is unpredictably *avyu-* (§4.1.3).

This is the only derivational prefix which affects transitivity, with the causee being expressed by means of a free form pronoun or noun in the object position after the derived verb. Thus:

K-avy-etehep   *yau.*   *Yam-ovy-oruc*   *nalau.*
2SG:FUT-MR:CAUS-sit   1SG   1SG:DISTPAST-BR:CAUS-bathe   child
'You will sit me down.'   'I bathed the child.'

As with other unsuffixed transitive verbs, a third person singular object is expressed by zero (§6.3.1). When the inflectional category calls for the basic form of the root, there is therefore ambiguity between a desiderative and a causative interpretation when there is no expressed object. The following can therefore be given two interpretations:

Yocovyetehep (<yaco-ovyu-etehep).   *Yocovyetehep (<yaco-ovyu-etehep).*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:CAUS-BR:sit   1SG:RECPAST-BR:DESID-BR:sit
'I sat him/her down.'   'I wanted to sit down.'

In environments which call for the modified form of the root, however, these forms would be disambiguated as the meaning would be apparent according to whether the prefix has the modified root *ampyu-* or *avyu-*, for example:

Yacavyetehep (<yaco-ampyu-etehep).   *Yacampyetehep (<yaco-ampyu-etehep).*
1SG:FUT-MR:CAUS-BR:sit   1SG:FUT-MR:DESID-BR:SIT
'I will sit him/her down.'   'I will want to sit down.'

The form is also unambiguous if there is an overt object following the verb, as this can only be given a causative interpretation, for example:

Yocovyetehep (<yaco-ovyu-etehep)   *nalau.*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:CAUS-BR:sit   child
'I sat the child down.'

The form is also unambiguously desiderative when it is attached to a transitive verb, as *ovyu-* can never be attached to a transitive verb with a causative reading. Thus:

Yocovyeni (<yaco-ovyu-en-i)   *nalau.*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:CAUS-BR:eat-CONST   child

cannot be interpreted as 'I made the child eat', but only 'I wanted to eat the child'.

    While many Oceanic languages have a productive derivational prefix which performs a causative function, the prefix *ovyu-* in Sye does not appear to be historically related in any way to these. This causative is semantically rather more

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restricted than causatives in other Oceanic languages in that only actions that are brought about through direct physical contact or force can be expressed in this way. The causee normally has to be animate, as there must be some possibility of willful resistance to the action. If the object is inanimate, it must normally be something that is large enough to be difficult for the agent to handle. This means that the following, while potentially ambiguous, would normally only be interpreted with a desiderative reading:

Yocovyutovop (<*yaco-ovyu-tovop*).
1SG:RECPAST-BR:DESID-laugh
'I wanted to laugh.'

A causative reading based on an interpretation with a zero-marked third person singular object is possible:

Yocovyutovop (<*yaco-ovyu-tovop*).
1SG:RECPAST-BR:CAUS-laugh:3SG

However, speakers find this pragmatically awkward because the only conditions under which it could be interpreted as a causative are those in which an agent physically extracts laughter out of the patient in some way, such as with somebody manipulating a laughing squeeze-box of some kind, that is 'I made it laugh'. A causative interpetation of this sentence is not possible, however, if somebody causes laughter in somebody, for example, by simply cracking a joke, or even by tickling them.

The causative *ovyu-* is most frequently used with motion or posture verbs, though it can be used with other intransitive action verbs. It is not used with stative intransitive verbs. We therefore find derivations such as *velom* 'come' > *ovyu-velom* 'make (someone) come', *etehep* 'sit' > *ovy-etehep* 'sit (someone) down' and *oruc* 'bathe' > *ovy-oruc* 'bathe (someone)'. Some causative constructions have meanings that are not exactly as we would predict from the meanings of the free roots to which the causative prefix has been attached, for example *avan* 'walk' > *ovy-avan* 'escort, accompany', *ete* 'stay' > *ovy-ete* 'represent, keep company with', *etisep* 'put down' > *ovy-etisep* 'boast', *etur* 'stand' > *ovy-etur* '(of best man) stand with groom at wedding', *torilki* 'return' > *ovyu-torilki* 'give back', *agkau* 'go around' > *ovy-agkau* 'wind (vine) into bundle'.

(viii) *Vestigial* t-

In addition to the productive prefixes described above, there are a dozen or so verbs in the corpus with initial *t-* which appears to represent a vestigial prefix. A verb with or without *t-* sometimes expresses exactly the same meaning, for example *(t-)eleh-* 'chase away' and *(t-)elahep* 'look down' . In other cases, while there is a difference in meaning between the form with and without *t-*, the seman-

tic relationship is not predictable, for example *agkau* 'go around' > *tagkau* 'go to the other side', *ugon* 'smoky' > *tugon* 'set fire to', *alsi* 'chew' > *talsi* 'pound (food) with stone'.

4.5.2 Derivational Suffixes

Erromangan does not retain reflexes of the Proto Oceanic close and remote transitive suffixes that are so widely distributed in Oceanic languages. However, there is some derivational suffixing morphology, including a transitive suffix that is evolving out of the oblique preposition.

4.5.2.1 Transitivizing *-(o)gi*

The tentative suggestion in Lynch and Capell (1983:32) that Erromangan has two transitive suffixes *-i* and *-(o)gi* represents their collapsing together under a single heading of the inflectional construct suffix on suffixed transitive verbs (§6.3.1) and the inflected form of verbs derived by means of the transitivizing suffix *-(o)gi* described in this section.

There is a small set of ambivalent verbs, which can be used either intransitively or as unsuffixed transitive verbs, with no change in shape. Such forms include *omonki* 'drink', *etai* 'write', *torpesi* 'spill', *sompat* 'close, be closed', *taipelac* 'open, be opened', *vaipelac* 'remove, come off', *alsi* 'chew (something chewy), be chewy', *emai* 'chew (something crunchy), crushed'. Thus:

Stowa coc-sompat.	*Cu-sompat stowa.*
store 3SG:RECPAST-be.closed	3PL:RECPAST-close store
'The store is closed.'	'They closed the store.'

There is another small set of ambivalent verbs in which an intransitive root has the same shape as the root of a suffixed transitive form, such as *avleh* 'guard' and *avleh-* 'guard (something)' and *ugon* 'be smoky' and *ugon-* 'smoke (something) out', for example:

Nom cam-nugon.	*Nom cam-nugon-yau.*
fire 3SG:PRES-MR:smoky	fire 3SG:PRES-MR:smoke.out-1SG
'The fire is smoky.'	'The fire is smoking me out.'

There is a somewhat larger set of suffixed transitive verbs, which, in their construct form (§6.3.1), can also function as intransitive verbs. Such verbs include *orəg-* 'feel, hear', *ocəh-* 'look, see', *okil-* 'know' and *atipotni-* 'start'. Thus, contrast the following:

Yacmandgoc (*<yacame-andəg-oc*). *Yacmandgi* (*<yacame-andəg-i*) *armai*.
1SG:RECPAST-NEG-*EM*-MR:hear-2SG 1SG:PRES-MR:feel-CONST good
'I can hear you.' 'I feel well.'

There is also a small number of semantically related intransitive-transitive pairs in Sye which are lexically distinguished, such as intransitive *vag* and transitive *en-*, both meaning 'eat'. Some such pairs show some kind of formal similarity, but these similarities do not involve productive patterns. An exhaustive listing of such forms attested is: *emetet* 'afraid' and *emtitog-* 'fear (something)', *emevyac* 'dream' and *emevyog-* 'dream about', *semsimac* 'gather together' and *semsimog-* 'gather (something) together', *taru* 'think' and *tarwog-* 'think of, remember', *orwo* 'pour water into kava sieving cloth' and *orwog-* 'wash, wet', *ocol* 'dig' and *oclog-* 'dig with (implement)', *ai* 'want something' and *aig-* ~ *acyog-* 'want, like (something)'. It will be noted, however, that these transitive forms all end in *-(o)g-*, and all are obligatorily suffixed. Thus:

Y-emevyac. *Yemevyocyau* (*<yi-emevyog-yau*).
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:dream 3SG:DISTPAST-BR:Dream.about-1SG
'(S)he dreamt.' '(S)he dreamt about me.'

It should also be noted that there is a substantial proportion of suffixed transitive verbs ending in *-og-*. Although in most such cases, there is no corresponding intransitive root without this final sequence, it seems likely that many of these instances of *-og-* represent earlier transitivizing suffixes which have become reanalyzed as synchronically inseparable parts of the verb roots. We find forms of this type such as *tavog-* 'throw', *asevygog-* 'scatter' and *elintog-* 'love'.

There are many verbs which are formally intransitive in Sye which do not allow an immediately following object, yet which would be semantically compatible with the expression of a patient or some other pragmatically salient oblique noun phrase. This includes verb such as *elwo* 'vomit', *etvani* 'spit', *omproc* 'steal', *emendog* 'rest', *savlehac* 'put right way up' or *agkau* 'go around'. Such verbs can be productively transitivized by means of a derivational suffix of the following shape:

-ogi after verbs ending in *-g*
-gi after verbs ending in other segments

Although the formal similarity here to the historical transitive suffix *-og-* just referred to is obvious, verbs derived according to this synchronically productive pattern behave as unsuffixed rather than suffixed transitive verbs. Thus, from intransitive *emendog* 'rest', *elwo* 'vomit' and *omproc* 'steal', we can derive the following:

Emendog-ogi *nevar* *horom.*
2SG:IMP-BR:rest-TR load POSS:2SG
'Have a break from your load.'

Yac-alwo-gi   nacave.
1SG:FUT-MR:vomit   kava
'I will disgorge the kava.'

Ovon   nehvo   ndwomprokgi (<ndu-omproc-gi) iror.
PL   European 3PL:DISTPAST-BR:steal-TR   3PL
'The Europeans kidnapped them.'

The vestigial suffix *-og-* referred to above is possibly derived from a reconstructible remote transitive suffix /*-akin/ (Lynch, p.c.). The productive *-(o)gi* suffix, however, probably represents a coincidental convergent development, as any verb that carrying this suffix can alternatively express the same function by means of the free form oblique preposition *(o)gi* or the verbal instrumental preposition *wog-*, as described in §7.1.3.4. Thus, compare the last two examples with the following, in which prepositions are functioning as semantically equivalent pseudo-transitivizing morphemes:

Yac-alwo   ogi   nacave.
1SG:FUT-MR:vomit   OBL   kava
'I will disgorge the kava.'

Ovon   nehvo   ndw-omproc   woc-ond.
PL   European 3PL:DISTPAST-BR:steal   OBL-3PL
'The Europeans kidnapped them.'

It appears that these oblique prepositions have relatively recently been "captured" by these intransitive verbs and reanalyzed as transitive suffixes. The fact that variation is still permissible indicates that the reanalysis is not yet complete.

4.5.2.2 Other Derivational Suffixes

There is a small set of other derivational suffixes which can be added either to the construct form of a suffixed transitive verb to derive an unsuffixed transitive verb, or they can be added after the pronominal object markers. Thus, the ameliorative suffix *-veh* can appear in either of the following constructions, with no change of meaning:

Cam-agkil-i-veh   kik.
3SG:PRES-MR:know-CONST-AMEL   2SG
'(S)he knows you well.'

Cam-agkil-oc-veh.
3SG:PRES-MR:know-2SG-AMEL
'(S)he knows you well.'

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Those suffixes which behave in this way are described below.

(i) *Ameliorative* -veh

The suffix *-veh* is identical in shape and similar in meaning to the ameliorative suffix found on nouns (§3.2.1.2) and the intensive suffix found on adjectives (§5.1.2). While verbs derived with this suffix are not always fully predictable in their meaning, they generally express the idea that an action is carried out well or properly. We therefore find examples of derived intransitive verbs and unsuffixed transitive verbs such as *empen* 'smell' > *empenveh* 'fragrant', *vai* 'take' > *vaiveh* 'take good care of', *ehvo* 'white' > *ehvoveh* 'pure white', *au* 'cooked' *auveh* 'properly cooked'. The following involve suffixed transitive verbs with the same suffix: *orəg-* 'feel' > *orgiveh* 'feel good', *ocəh-* 'see' > *ochiveh* 'be interested in', *okil-* 'know' > *okiliveh* 'know well'.

(ii) *Pejorative* -ndi

The suffix *-ndi* is used non-productively with nouns to express a pejorative meaning (§3.2.1.2). With a small number of verbs, this expresses the idea that an action is performed badly or to bad effect. Thus, *vai* 'take' > *vaindi* 'mistreat', *ocəh-* 'see' > *ochindi* 'ignore', *el-* 'blow on' > *elindi* 'bite at and miss'.

(iii) *Directional Suffixes*

There is a set of directional suffixes belonging to the same set that are either identical, or similar, in shape to a small set of intransitive verb roots expressing motion. The correspondences between verbs and directional suffixes are as follows: *velac* 'go/come long way' and *-pelac* 'outwards', *ve* 'go' and *-mpe* 'thither', *velom* 'come' and *-mpelom* 'hither', *sac* 'ascend' and *-sac* 'upwards', and *yep* 'descend' an *-sep* 'downwards'. The behavior of these will be described in turn below.

(a) *Outwards* -pelac

This suffix expresses the idea that an action takes place outwards from the initiator of the action. We therefore find derivations such as *vai* 'get' > *vaipelac* 'take out, remove', *etehep* 'sit' > *etehepelac* 'sit with legs apart', *ta-* 'hit' > *taipelac* 'open' and *semsi-* 'choose' > *semsipelac* 'select out'. It should be noted that this suffix is identical in form with post-inflectional derivational suffix *-pelac* that is attested on a handful of nouns with a clearly related meaning (§3.2.1.5).

(b) *Hither* -mpelom *and thither* -mpe

These forms are only attested with the verb *vai* 'get', from we can derive *vai-mpe* 'take' and *vai-mpelom* 'bring'.

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(c) *Upwards* -sac *and downwards* -sep

The suffix *-sac* can be used to express motion of an action upwards. It can also be used to express intensification of the activity expressed in the root. The suffix *-sep* is the converse of *-sac* in that it expresses either motion downwards, or a reduction of intensity in an activity. However, there is quite often some semantic unpredictability in forms derived with these suffixes. We therefore find sets of verbs such as *vai* 'take' > *vaisac* 'lift up' and *vaisep* 'lower', *ta-* 'hit' > *taisac* 'raise' and *taisep* 'hit underside of', *ocep* 'fly' > *ocevsac* 'roost' and *ocevsep* 'step down', *alou* 'run' > *alousac* 'take inland route' and *alousep* 'take coastal route', *am* 'speak' > *amsac* 'speak up' and *amsep* 'speak softly', and *etur* 'stand' > *etursac* 'stand up high' and *etursep* 'stand down low'.

Some verbs, however, are attested with only one of these two suffixes, for example *evsor* 'wake up' > *evsorsac* 'ascend to heaven', *avlar* 'flame' > *avlarsac* 'flare up', *orcai* 'bathe' > *orcaisac* 'float', *omol* 'fall' > *omolsep* '(of sea) quieten', *enom* '(of tide) come in' > *enomsep* '(of liquid) flow into container without filling it'. There are other verbs ending in *-sac* or *-sep* which involve the expression of intensity or direction of the motion, though the putative roots from which they are derived are not attested independently. We therefore find examples such as *elasac* 'look up' and *elasep* 'look down' < **ela-*, *teisac* 'lob' and *teisep* 'throw down' < **tei-*, *tagisac* 'pile up' < **tagi-*, *tandamsac* 'sprout' < **tandam-*, *asusac* '(of sea) surge' < **asu-*, *etisep* 'put down' < **eti-*.

(iv) *The suffix* -ya

The locative interrogative *iya* 'where' has a cliticized variant *-ya*, the behavior of which is described in §7.2.2. When this clitic is attached to verbs ending in *-e*, the final vowel of the verb root is lost. Thus, from the root *ve* 'go' we find *vya* 'go where'. A form that is identical in shape to the locative clitic has been attested as a derivational suffix on two verb roots in the language. In such cases, it seems to indicate that an action takes place such that something can no longer be seen. Thus, *elampe* 'wake up' > *elampya* 'look away' and *ve* 'go' > *vya* 'disappear'.

4.5.3 Verbal Compounds

It is possible for two verb roots to be compounded into a single inflected word, with meanings that are clearly related to, though not entirely predictable from, the meanings of the constituent parts. When verb roots are brought together over a morpheme boundary in this way, the regular morphophonemic rules of the language apply (§2.5). This is not a very productive pattern, with only two dozen or so verbs of this type in the entire corpus, including *avan* 'walk' + *alou* 'run' > *avanalou* 'half run and half walk', *el-* 'blow on' + *arki* 'break' > *elarki* 'break

with teeth', *eva-* 'insert' + *alnilni* 'fold' > *evalnilni* 'cram in', *etur* 'stand' + *emlimlu* 'drunk' > *etremlimlu* 'clumsy', *elampe* 'open eyes' + *alam* 'grow' > *elampalam* 'wide-eyed' and *empen* 'smell' > *acan* 'bitter' > *empnacan* 'stink'.

There is also a small number of compounded intransitive verbs in which the second element is an adverb. Thus, *am* 'talk' + *metuc* 'slowly' > *ametuc* 'whisper', *ete* 'stay' + *ndowi* 'always' > *etendowi* 'remain'. There is a restricted set of forms in which a nominal root is is compounded with a preceding verbal root, with noun being compounded on this basis of its historical root, that is without the initial *n-* which appears when the noun is used as a free form (§3.2.1.4). The corpus includes a dozen or so examples of this type, including *aleipo* 'sleep' + *natmah* 'devil' > *aleipatmah* 'sleep soundly', *ompi* 'do' + *nurac* 'thing' > *ompurac* 'work', *ur-* 'follow' + *nu* 'river' > *uru* 'go along river', *orǝg-* 'feel' + *nompu-* 'head' > *orgompu-* 'mourn', *wa-* 'step on' + *navra-* 'hole' > *wavra-* 'put foot into mouth of', *se-* 'spear' + *nelwame-* 'tongue' > *selwame-* 'poke out tongue'.

There is a free form noun *sat* 'problem, trouble, sin', which an be compounded as the second element with a number of transitive and intransitive verb stems. Note the following derivations, which have been attested: *amsat* 'swear' < *am* 'speak', *arkisat* 'misbehave' < *arki* 'break', *empensat* 'stink' < *empen* 'smell', *ompisat* 'sin' < *ompi* 'do' and *orgisat* 'worry' < *orǝg-* 'feel'.

There is a final compounding pattern involving the causative verb *om-* (§6.3.3). This is ordinarily followed only by a pronominal suffix, though there are two nouns which can be compounded with it: *nde* 'blood' and *palogi* 'thanks'. The resulting derived forms are *om-nde* 'bleed' and *om-palogi* 'be thanked'. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Novli enyau cam-am-nde.
sore POSS:1SG 3SG:PRES-MR:CAUS-blood
'My sore is bleeding.'

The construction *om-palogi* 'be thanked' is normally only encountered with a second person recent past subject, as follows:

K-om-palogi Yesu gi nvag.
2SG:RECPAST-BR:CAUS-thanks Jesus INST food
'Thank you, Jesus, for the food.'

Kw-om-palogi ntamah.
2PL:RECPAST-BR:CAUS-thanks much
'Thank you all very much.'

These are the only two nouns attested as entering into this construction. The fact that nouns apart from these two are not permitted in this construction is illustrated by the unacceptability of the following:

*Novli   enyau   cam-am-novsar.
sore   POSS:1SG   3SG:PRES-MR:CAUS-pus

The only grammatically acceptable way of expressing a meaning such as 'My sore is pussy' would be to produce a paraphrase such as the following:

Novli   enyau   coc-vai   novsar.
sore   POSS:1SG   3SG:RECPAST-BR:get   pus
'My sore has got pus.'

4.5.4 Reduplication

The only pattern of reduplication in Sye that is productive appears to be complete reduplication. We therefore find examples such as *amon* 'hide' > *amonamon* 'hide all over', *avan* 'walk' > *avanavan* 'walk all over', *alou* 'run' > *alowalou* 'run all over'. Some examples of reduplication involve the idea that an action takes place randomly. However, other examples involve an unpredictable semantic shift, for example *ahar* 'slide' > *aharahar* 'straight', *ilar* 'shine' > *ilarilar* 'bright', *selcon* 'folded' > *selconselcon* 'crumpled'.

There is a smaller number of examples that appear to involve a variety of non-productive patterns of partial reduplication. Each of these patterns is attested in only a handful of forms and they do not appear to represent productive patterns in the language. In one example, the reduplicated element is the initial syllable, with *semsempari* 'protect' being derived from *sempari*, which has the same meaning. From *agkau* 'go around', we find *agkakau* 'go around and around', which points to the reduplication of the initial syllable, along with the initial *CV* from the following syllable (with the resulting vowel sequence being resolved by the regular morphophonemic rules of the language).

A handful of examples involve reduplication of the final syllable, that is *acumsu* 'black' > *acumsusu* 'pitch black', *ourup* 'lob' > *ouruvrup* 'lob' and *owatop* 'walk to meet someone coming the other way' > *owatovtop* 'walk stealthily in search of prey'. There are also several examples which point to the final syllable being reduplicated along with a preceding consonant from the syllable before, that is *omti* 'break' > *omtimti* 'dilapidated' and *alni* 'fold' > *alnilni* 'fold'.

Finally, there is a small number of examples which point to reduplication involving the consonant after the first vowel of the root. While this consonant is reduplicated with an accompanying vowel, the shape of the vowel does not appear to be predictable according to any general rule. We therefore find *elwo* 'vomit' > *elilwo* 'produce disgusting bodily exusion', *etur* 'stand' > *etetur* 'stand in large numbers' and *orut* '(of tuber) past its prime' > *orurut* '(fruit) dried in sun'.

It should be noted that when a reduplicated verb undergoes root modification, only the initial part of the reduplicated form is affected. Thus, *ovol-* has *ampol-* as its modified root form. The reduplicated form of *ovol-* is *ovolvol-*, but when this form appears in an environment that calls for the modified form of the root, the form that we find is *ampolvol-*, and not **ampolampol-*.

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5: MORPHOLOGY OF MINOR WORD CLASSES

The morphological behavior of the minor word classes of adjectives, prepositions and adverbs is described in this chapter.

5.1 Adjectives

Adjectives are forms which express stative attributes to nouns, and which follow a nominal head in a noun phrase. They differ from verbs in that while verbs receive prefixed inflectional marking for a variety of pronominal and other categories, as described in Chapter 4, adjectives have no inflectional marking for these categories.

5.1.1 Underived Adjectives

Less than sixty underived adjectives have been attested in Sye, with most stative attributes being expressed either by means of intransitive verbs, or adjectives that are morphologically derived. Some of the more commonly encountered underived adjectives appear in antonymous pairs, for example *armai* 'good' and *ur* 'bad', *sais* 'fantastic, attractive' and *itcomovki* 'appalling', *orog* 'big' and *viroc* 'little', *nivorih* 'huge' and *vilkih* 'tiny', *mampum* 'first' and *avni* 'last', *ndomo* 'hard, difficult, strong' and *melucluc* 'soft, easy, weak', *tantop* 'long, tall' and *potcon* 'short', *inpalam* 'deep' and *ikri* 'shallow', *meveh* 'right' and *mor* 'left'. However, there is a substantial residue of adjectives which do not belong to semantically related pairs of this type, for example *tompor* 'holy', *umrocri* 'lame', *morihai* 'strange', *itsogku* 'whole'. Some of these forms, in fact, have antonyms or semantically closely related forms that are expressed as verbs, as set out in Table 5.1.

The class of adjectives is somewhat difficult to delimit absolutely in Sye. All of the forms just presented can behave adjectivally in that they can follow a noun in a nominal phrase (§6.1.2.2) or they can function as a comment in a non-verbal clause (§7.1.1). However, there is a certain amount of overlap with specific adjectives between the class of adjectives and other word classes. Thus, for example, *inpalam* 'deep' and *ikri* 'shallow' can also function as locational nouns, meaning 'deep place' and 'shore' respectively. Adjectives such as *nimtipat* 'blind', *ntelgipat* 'deaf' and *nompwehri* 'bald' can also function as common nouns, meaning 'blind person', 'deaf person' and 'bald person' respectively. The adjectives *viroc* 'small' and *potcon* 'short' correspond to the formally similar verbs *eviroc* and *ompotcon* respectively.

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Table 5.1 Related Meanings Expressed as Adjectives and Verbs

Adjective   *Verb*

itnohog	'true, real'	*amlai*	'untrue, false'
itvau	'clean'	*acumsu*	'dirty'
umpamu	'young'	*etalam*	'old'
tepentop	'grey'	*ehvo*	'white'
torogat	'healthy'	*amarat*	'sick'

5.1.2 Adjectival Derivation

While there is a relatively small set of underived adjectives, there is a variety of derivational means by which new adjectives can be productively derived. The following discussion describes these processes.

(i) *Reduplication*

Some underived adjectives can be reduplicated to derive an adjective expressing an intensification of the state indicated by the root. Those adjectives which have been attested with reduplicated derivatives are *tantop* 'long, tall', *potcon* 'short', *orog* 'big', *viroc* 'small (SG)', *ovroc* 'small (PL)', *ndomo* 'strong' and *vilkih* 'tiny'. We therefore find, for example, *viroc-viroc* meaning 'very small', in contrast to *viroc* 'small'.

The adverbial *hogku* 'also' can be followed by the misdirective suffix *-go* that is normally only found on verbs (§4.4), with the suffixed form being obligatorily reduplicated as *hogkugo-hogkugo*, to express the meaning of 'same'.

(ii) *Stative* n-

The prefix *n-* derives an adjective out of a stative verb, although it is also occasionally attested with non-stative intransitive verbs which can be associated with the expression of a state. Thus, from *mevyac* 'dream' we can derive *n-mevyac* 'dreamy'.

This prefix has exactly the same allomorphy as the nominalizing prefix on verbs described in §3.2.1.1. Adjectives derived in this way express stative attributes to the referent of an associated noun phrase. Contrast the following, in which *telemte* 'green' functions in the first example as a verb and in the second example as an adjective:

Nur   co-ntelemte.
place 3SG:FUT-BR:green
'The place will be green.'

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Kokeml-ante   *ra*   *hai*   *nur*   *n-telemte.*
1PL.INCL:PRES-MR:live   LOC   INDEF   place   ADJ-green
'We live in a green place.'

These derived forms behave further like adjectives in that they are negated with *tawi* (§7.1.1). Thus, contrast the following, in which the verb *avlar* 'red' functions verbally in the first example, and adjectivally in the second:

Cotumnavlar (<*co-etu-eme-navlar*).   *Tawi n-avlar.*
3SG:RECPAST-NEG-*EM*-MR:red   NEG   ADJ-red
'It is not red.'   'It is not red.'

(iii) *Change of State* itur-

The prefix *itur-* can also be added to verbs to derive adjectives. This is realized according to the morphophonemic rules described in §2.5.2.8 as follows:

itur   before consonants
itr-   before vowels

This allomorphy is illustrated by derivations such as: *lau* 'dry' > *itur-lau* 'dried', *amon* 'hide' > *itr-amon* 'hidden', *omkai* 'ripe' > *itr-omkai* 'ripened'.
     Such adjectives express the state corresponding to that expressed by a stative or process verbal root. They differ from forms which are derived using the prefix *n-* in that *itur-* is typically associated with the expression of a change of state. Contrast the following:

nesi   *n-ovtar*   *nesi*   *itr-ovtar*
pawpaw   ADJ-rot   pawpaw   ADJ-rot
'pawpaw which is rotten'   'pawpaw which has gone rotten'

The use of *itur-* rather than *n-* is also favored when the associated noun has plural reference (even if this is not overtly marked). The phrase *nesi itrovtar* would therefore be preferred when referring to 'rotten pawpaws' than *nesi novtar*.
     The prefix *itur-* differs further from *n-* in that it is more freely attached to active verb roots, even with transitive verbs. When attached to an intransitive active verb, *itur-* expresses a state that is characteristic of somebody or something performing that action, for example *mevyac* 'dream' > *itur-mevyac* 'dreamy', *amon* 'hide' > *itr-amon* 'hidden', *yep* 'descend' > *itur-yep* 'sloping'. When attached to a transitive verb—which appears in its construct form if the verb is obligatorily suffixed—the resulting adjective expresses the state of being affected by the action referred to in the verb. Thus: *ayoc* 'grate' > *itr-ayoc* 'grated', *en-* 'eat' > *itr-en-i* 'eaten', *worumo-* 'bake' *itur-worumo-n* 'baked'. There is one final example of a derived form involving *itur-* where the meaning is not predictable from the

meaning of the root to which it is attached, that is *velom* 'come' > *itur-velom* 'easy, certain'.

These forms all behave like adjectives in that they can function in the ways set out below:

(a) They can follow nouns as post-modifiers, for example:

Yamowalei (<yam-walei)   *nesi*   *itr-ovtar.*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:step.in.mush   pawpaw   ADJ-rot
'I stood in mushy rotten pawpaws.'

(b) They can be negated in a topic-comment construction by *tawi*, as in the following example:

Nam eni   *tawi itr-ogko.*
talk   POSS:3SG   NEG   ADJ-correct
'What he said was not correct.'

(c) They can be used adverbially, for example:

Etehep   *m-etipe*   *no-m*   *itr-ogko.*
2SG:IMP-BR:sit   SG:ES-BR:put   leg-2SG   ADJ-BR:straight
'Sit with your legs out straight.'

(d) They can be marked for number (§5.1.3), for example:

ov-nautugo ovn-itr-aco
PL-knife   PL-ADJ-BR:sharp
'sharp knives'

(iv) *Ordinal* -gi

Ordinal numerals can be derived from cardinals by the suffix *-gi*. The resulting derived ordinals are postposed to nouns in the same way as other adjectives. Thus, *nduru* 'two' > *nduru-gi* 'second', *ndehel* 'three' > *ndehel-gi* 'third', *ndvat* 'four' > *ndvat-gi* 'fourth', *sukrim* 'five' > *sukrim-gi* 'fifth'. The following examples illustrate the difference between cardinal and ordinal numerals:

nempgon nduru   *nempgon nduru-gi*
time   two   time   two-ORD
'twice'   'second time'

The numeral *haiten* 'one', however, has the suppletive ordinal *mampum* 'first', which was listed in §5.1.1 as one of the underived adjectives. Thus:

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nempgon	haiten		nempgon	mampum
time	one		time	first
'once'			'first time'	

The ordinal suffix is identical in shape to the transitivizing suffix on verbs described in §4.2.5.1. In fact, just as we find with transitive verbs derived in this way, ordinal numerals can also be expressed by means of the preposition *ogi*. Thus, *nempgon ndurugi* can also be expressed as:

nempgon	nduru	ogi
time	two	OBL
'second time'		

(v) *Distributive* -go

The suffix *-go* can be added to numerals to express a distributive meaning, as in *haiten* 'one' > *haiten-go* 'one each, by itself, individual', *nduru* 'two' > *nduru-go* 'two each', *ndehel* 'three' > *ndehel-go* 'three each', *ndvat* 'four' > *ndvat-go* 'four each', *sukrim* 'five' > *sukrim-go* 'five each'. Thus:

Cu-vai	magko	nduru-go.
3PL:DISTPAST-BR:get	mango	two-DIST
'They got two mangoes each.'		

This function of *-go* can be compared with the verbal misdirective suffix of the same shape discussed in §4.4.

(vi) *Intensive* -veh

The suffix *-veh* is productively added to adjectives to indicate that the state has been fully or properly achieved. Thus, *armai* 'good' > *armai-veh* 'very good', *tantop* 'long' > *tantop-veh* 'very long'. The use of this suffix can be compared with the use of *-veh* as an ameliorative nominal derivative (§3.2.1.2) and as a verbal suffix with a similar ameliorative meaning (§4.5.2.2).

(vii) *Vestigial Affixes*

There is a handful of adjectival formatives which appear to be vestigial in that they are each only attested with a small number of examples. The form *ndomo* 'strong' involves the addition of the suffix *-su* to express intensification, with *ndomosu* meaning 'very strong'. The prefix *it-* has been attested with a handful of words deriving adjectives from words coming from a variety of word classes. Nouns which can be made into adjectives in this way include *natman* 'man' > *it-*

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natman 'male (SG)', *ovatman* 'men' > *it-ovatman* 'male (PL)', *nahiven* 'woman' > *it-nahiven* 'female (SG)', *ovahiven* 'women' > *it-ovahiven* 'female (PL)'.

Temporal adverbs referring to days in the past from the present (§5.3) can also be prefixed with *it-* to derive adjectives referring to food leftover from previous days, for example *ninu* 'yesterday' > *it-ninu* 'yesterday's (food)', *nome* 'day before yesterday' > *it-nome* 'day before yesterday's (food)'. The interrogative nominal *se* 'what' corresponds in shape to *it-se* 'which' (though the more commonly encountered form expressing this meaning is *itoco* §7.2). There is a single derivation of this form from an adjectival root, that is *viroc* 'small' > *it-viroc* '(of sibling) younger'. There are two transitive verbs that have been attested with this prefix (with the verbs appearing in their construct forms), that is *elcav-* 'touch' > *it-elcav-i* 'polluted by menstruation', *en-* 'eat' > *it-en-i* 'edible'.

Finally, there is a small number of other adjectives that begin with *it-* which may historically reflect this prefix, though the derivation is no longer synchronically productive. Thus, *velom* 'come' > *it-pelom* 'easy' and *velac* 'go ahead' > *it-pelac* 'unique'. Not only is there an unpredictable change from initial *v-* to *p-*, but the meanings of the derived forms are also semantically unpredictable.[1]

The prefix *un-* has been attested in the derivation of a handful of adjectives referring to the state that is characteristic of the environment referred to by the root. Thus, *nu* 'river' > *u-nu* 'riverine', *ntoc* 'sea' > *u-ntoc* 'marine', *nam* 'talk' > *u-nam* 'resolute, firm'. This function of *un-* is clearly historically related to the semi-productive use of the prefix in the derivation of locational nouns (§3.2.1.1). The derived forms *unu* 'riverine' and *untoc* 'marine' are often used in the naming of biological taxa. Thus, contrast the following:

netelog	*netelog* *untoc*
mushroom	mushroom marine
'mushroom'	'soft coral'
velgah	*velgah* *unu*
bush.nut	bush.nut riverine
'bush nut'	'riverine variety of bush nut'

(viii) *Compounding*

There is a small number of adjectives that are derived by compounding a bound nominal root with a following verb root. Thus, *nompu-* 'head' + *ehri* 'break' > *nompwehri* 'bald', *nimte-* 'eye' + *ei* 'blind' > *nimtei* 'blind', *nimte-* 'eye' + *evivat* 'thick' > *nimtevivat* 'angry-looking'. When the verb root *pat* 'blocked' is compounded with bound nominal roots to produce derived adjectives in this way, it

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[1] It should be noted that the form *itpelom* 'easy' is synonymous with the form *iturvelom* which was noted above, with *velom* 'come' being the root verb in both cases.

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unpredictably takes the shape *ipat*, giving the forms *ntelgipat* 'deaf' (<*ntelgo-* 'ear') and *nimtipat* 'blind' (<*nimte-* 'eye').

There is also a small number of two-word compounds which function as adjectives in the same way as the single-word compounds just described. Such forms include *nompi* 'behavior' + *hai* 'other' > *nompi hai* 'different', *nompi* 'behavior' + *haiten* 'one' > *nompi haiten* 'same', *nipmi* 'face:CONST' + *ur* 'bad' > *nipmi ur* 'ugly', *nipmi* 'face:CONST' + *armai* 'good' > *nipmi armai* 'attractive'.

The adjectives *ɲmah* 'large' and *ndomo* 'strong' can be compounded with the preposition *gi* to form *ginmah* and *gindomo*, both meaning 'many' or 'much' (and also functioning adverbially to mean 'very' or 'very much'). Thus:

nvag ginmah
food   much
'much food'

Finally, the form *semse* 'all kinds of' involves two instances of the interrogative *se* 'what' which are linked into a single phonological word by means of the clitic coordinator *m-*. Thus:

nvag   semse
food   all.kinds.of
'all kinds of food'

5.1.3 Plural Marking

Morphologically simple adjectives accompanying a noun obligatorily agree with the noun for number, while derived adjectives optionally distinguish singular and plural forms. The formal means by which plurality is marked also varies according to whether the adjective is underived or derived.

(i) *Underived Adjectives*

Underived adjectives such as those set out in §5.1.1 mark plurality by means of the suffix *-go* (which also has a pluralizing function with a restricted set of nouns, §3.2.2.1). This is optionally accompanied by the prefix *ovn-* (§3.2.2.1). While this prefix also marks plural nouns, as an adjectival pluralizer, it does not alternate with the preposed free form *ovon* as we find with nouns. We therefore find examples such as *potcon* > *potcongo* ~ *ovnpotcongo* 'short', *orog* > *orogo* ~ *ovnorogo* 'big', *nmah* > *nmahgo* ~ *ovnmahgo* 'big'.

There are several adjectives which exhibit unpredictable root changes in their plural forms. Thus, *viroc* 'small' has the irregular plural forms *ovroc* or *ovrokgo* (with the change from *c* to *k* before the suffix *-go* being predictable according to the rule set out in §2.5.1.3). The discussion in §5.1.2 also indicates that *itnatman*

'male' and *itnahiven* 'female' have the irregular plural forms *itovataman* and *itovahiven* respectively.

The use of these forms in noun phrases is illustrated by the following:

nautugo potcon	*ov-nautugo (ovn-)potcon-go*
knife short	PL-knife PL-short-PL
'short knife'	'short knives'

Adjectives are marked for plural not only when they are used attributively, but also when they are used predicatively. Thus:

Y-etr-ete	*ur-go.*
3SG-DISTPAST-BR:RANDOM-BR:COP	bad-PL
'It all went bad.'	

(ii) *Derived Adjectives*

Plurality with any of the derived adjectives is marked exclusively by means of the prefix *ovn-*. Thus:

ov-nautugo ovn-itr-aco
PL-knife PL-ADJ-BR:sharp
'sharp knives'

Such adjectives do not accept the suffix *-go*, either on its own, or in conjunction with *ovn-*. Thus, the example just presented cannot appear as:

**ov-nautugo ovn-itr-aco-go*
PL-knife PL-ADJ-BR:sharp-PL

5.2 Prepositions

Prepositions are forms that can be followed by a noun phrase, and they express a range of semantic roles which are performed by the referent of that noun phrase in the event. Sye has a fairly large set of prepositions, some of which express very specific meanings.

Prepositions in Sye fall into two subclasses: free and bound. Free prepositions constitute a small class of morphologically invariant forms, the functions of which are detailed in §7.1.3.4. Bound prepositions, on the other hand, are obligatorily associated with some kind of pronominal suffix. These fall into two further subclasses, with morphological behavior ressembling that of bound nouns with one subclass, and suffixed transitive verbs with the other.

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Nominal prepositions are morphologically similar to nouns in that they require the addition of suffixes identical in shape to the possessive suffixes found on bound nouns (§3.2.2.2). There are seven morphologically simple prepositions included in this category: *ira-* 'location/goal', *nisco-* 'benefactive', *nompli-* '(utterance) about', *nimsi-* 'purposive', *nte(m)pgo-/nta(m)pgo-* 'accompanitive', *nte-(m)pelgo-* 'accompanitive' and *ilvucte(ve)-* 'between'. The paradigm for the location/goal preposition *ira-* is presented in Table 5.2, to illustrate the behavior of these forms.

We can also include in this category the three morphologically complex forms *rampu-* 'to/at (stony/sandy place)', *rampo-* 'inside' and *ratgo-* 'underneath'. These forms represent compounds of the free preposition *ra* 'location/goal' and the bound nouns *nompu-* 'head', *nampo-* 'place of' and *netgo-* 'underside' respectively, with loss of the initial *n-* (as described in §3.2.1.4) and with the resulting vowel sequences resolved by the general rule described in §2.5.2.2.

Verbal prepositions accept suffixes identical to those which mark verbal objects with plain suffixed verbs (§4.3.1.1). Such prepositions differ from verbs, however, in that they do not accept any prefixes or any other verbal morphology. Forms of this type are: *pehnur-* 'before', *pog-* 'dative', *ntovən-* 'purposive', *marog-* 'ablative', *movog-* 'against', *parog-* 'adversative deprivative', *mavel-* 'until' and *wog-* 'oblique'. The paradigm for *pehnur-* 'before' is presented in Table 5.3.

The dative preposition *pog-* mirrors the irregularity in the suffixing morphology of the ditransitive verbs *en(u)pog-* 'tell' and *ovog-* 'give' (§4.3.1.1), with which it is presumably historically related, in that there is unpredictable variation in the root between *pog-*, *pon-* and *po-*, as shown in Table 5.4. All other prepositions follow the regular patterns encountered with verbal suffixes, and as described in §2.5. Thus, *marog-* 'ablative' has the paradigm set out in Table 5.5. Finally, *ntovən-* 'purposive' has the paradigm set out in Table 5.6, with the underlying schwa being realized as zero or *o* according to the rule set out in §2.5.2.7.

5.3 Adverbs

The class of adverbs is somewhat diffuse, being fairly free in their syntactic positioning and with no distinguishing morphology. What are referred to in this volume as adverbs are basically residual items which cannot be assigned definitively to any of the other word classes.

Almost all adverbs are morphologically simple, although several adverbs undergo reduplication to express intensity, for example *metuc* 'slowly, softly' > *metucmetuc* 'very slowly, softly', *itnom* 'quickly, on time' > *itnomitnom* 'very quickly', *unmeh* 'early' > *unmehunmeh* 'very early', *indowi* 'continually' > *indowindowi* 'on and on and on', *ndansu* 'always' > *ndansundansu* 'absolutely always'.

Table 5.2 Nominal Preposition *ira-* 'location/goal'

	SG			PL
1	*irag*	INCL		*ira(n)t*
		EXCL		*iramam*
2	*iram*			*irami*
3	*iran*			*irand*

Table 5.3 Verbal Preposition *pehnur-* 'before'

	SG			PL
1	*pehnuryau*	INCL		*pehnurcoh*
		EXCL		*pehnurcam*
2	*pehnuroc*			*pehnurcum*
3	*pehnuri*			*pehnuror*

Table 5.4 Irregular Verbal Preposition *pog-* 'dative'

	SG			PL
1	*poyau*	INCL		*pogkoh*
		EXCL		*pogkam*
2	*ponoc*			*pogkum*
3	*pogi*			*ponor*

Table 5.5 Regular Verbal Preposition *marog-* 'from'

	SG			PL
1	*maro(c)yau*	INCL		*marogkoh*
		EXCL		*marogkam*
2	*marogkik*			*marogkum*
3	*marogi*			*marocond*

Table 5.6 Verbal Preposition *ntovən-* 'purposive'

	SG			PL
1	*ntovonyau*	INCL		*ntovoncoh*
		EXCL		*ntovoncam*
2	*ntovnoc*			*ntovoncum*
3	*ntovni*			*ntovnor*

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The correspondence between *etwai* 'recently' and *itetwai* 'a long time ago' points to a vestigial prefix of the form *it-* which is attested vestigially elsewhere in the lexicon (§3.2.1.1, §5.1.2). *Itnom* 'quickly' may be derived historically in the same way from *nom* 'fire'. *Ndansu* 'always' can be derived ultimately from the verbal root *ran* '(of day) break', which nominalizes regularly as *ndan* with the meaning 'day, time' (§3.2.1.1), and which carries the suffix *-su* 'every' (§3.2.2.1). Historically, therefore, this meant 'every day', though it has become semantically generalized. The adverb *mire* 'until today' can be related to the coordinating proclitic *m-* (§8.7) and the temporal adverb *ire* 'today'. None of the patterns mentioned in this paragraph are synchronically productive.

Sye has an unusually rich set of temporal adverbials expressing distance in time from the present, either before or after, in terms of numbers of days. These forms are set out in Table 5.7. *Ninu* 'yesterday' and *mran* 'tomorrow' are not further analyzable morphologically. The forms expressing three, four and five days ago are derived from the forms referring to days hence by means of the prefix *no-*, which is not used independently of this construction. When this form is added to *weme* 'day after tomorrow', this unpredictably becomes *nome* 'day before yesterday' rather than **noweme*.

There is a set of nouns with temporal reference which can be used adverbially to refer to the days of the week and the months of the year. The days of the week are: *Natni* 'Monday', *Natninatni* 'Tuesday', *Semsimac* 'Wednesday', *Ndandvat* 'Thursday', *Ndansukrim* 'Friday', *Ndanworum* 'Saturday', *Ndanmendog* 'Sunday'. The indigenous forms *Natni* 'Monday' and *Natninatni* 'Tuesday' have been replaced by the borrowed words *Monde* and *Tuste* respectively, though the remaining Erromangan names are still in general use. *Natni* and *Natninatni* have no other known meanings, though the latter is obviously a reduplication of the former. *Semsimac* 'Wednesday' is identical in shape with the verb *semsimac* 'gather together', so-called because a mid-week gathering for worship is usually held on this day. The remaining days are compounds involving the initial element *ndan* 'day' and the numerals *ndvat* 'four' and *sukrim* 'five', and the verbs *worum* 'bake'[2] and *emendog* 'rest'.

The months are now almost always referred to by words of Bislama origin. However, the following indigenous names were recorded: *Uyor* 'January', *Utwalam* 'February', *Lovitantop* 'March', *Movipogkor* 'April', *Movcoyar* 'May', *Movkimetu* 'June', *Movcalpulpu* 'July', *Movcorovoh* 'August', *Movcorevei* 'September', *Movcarcas* 'October', *Movcowi* 'November', *Movcovyog* 'December'. The derivation of some of these names is obscure, though some are semantically transparent. *Lovitantop* 'March' is a non-temporal noun referring to the longest finger. In the traditional seasonal cycle, this is a particularly important month because the previous year's yam crop is nearly ready for harvest at this time.

The recurring element *mov-* in the remainder of the month names is not attested independently of these forms, though it appears to be a special compound-

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[2] Food preparation for Sunday was formerly done on Saturday at the insistence of missionaries intent on protecting the sabbath from illicit work.

Table 5.7 Temporal Adverbs Expressing Distance from Present

Days from present	After present	Before present
1	*mran*	*ninu*
2	*weme*	*nome*
3	*winag*	*nowinag*
4	*wimpe*	*nowimpe*
5	*wisas*	*nowisas*

ing form of *nmap* 'ground' (§3.2.1.4). The remaining element with some of these forms is an inflected verb with meanings that clearly relate to the yearly gardening cycle. Thus: *Movcorovoh* 'August' < *corovoh* '(s)he cleared the garden site', *Movcorevei* 'September' < *corevei* '(s)he trimmed the branches from the top of the tree', *Movcowi* 'November' < *cowi* '(s)he planted it'. The word for 'December' can perhaps be related to the verb *covyog* (<*co-ovyu-og*) '(s)he wanted to do it', though the semantic motivation for this is obscure. For the remaining months, however, no meaning could be offered for the remaining elements.

5.4 Interjections

There is a small set of interjections, which typically express some kind of emotive meaning, and which are either grammatically separate from ordinary sentences, or set apart from the rest of the sentence intonationally in some way. Interjections that have been recorded, with their approximate meanings, include: *i(n)ta* 'OK then', *woragi* 'serves you right', *isuma* 'that's all, that's it', *ei* or *tawi* 'no', *o* or *mose* 'yes', *(mo)nocwo* 'yes indeed', *kai* 'correction of what was just said', *upo* 'yuk, ugh', *is* 'oh', *sise* 'I don't care about ...', *me* 'here you are', *pehe* 'here it is'.

 Some interjections have other lexical or grammatical functions, for example *ku* 'is that so?' (*cf.* coordinating function §8.7), *melwo* 'honestly!, I really mean it' (*cf.* adverb meaning 'above'), *etwai* 'it's already happened, you've missed it' (*cf.* adverb meaning 'long time ago'). *Pau* 'pleased to meet/see you' is used as an emotive suffix (§3.2.1.2). *Itsac* 'get up' and *itsep* 'get down' can be related to the verb roots *sac* 'ascend' and *yep* 'descend', and the vestigial prefix *it-* (§3.2.1.1, §5.1.2, §5.3).

 To these items we can add the temporal nouns in Table 5.8, which are also used as interjections expressing greetings at the corresponding time of day. These forms can also be preceded—or more rarely followed—by the adjective *armai* 'good', with the resulting phrases being used as greetings in the same way. Thus:

Table 5.8 Temporal Nouns and Greetings

	Temporal noun	Interjection
pruvcum	'morning'	'good morning'
pwacah	'daytime	'good day'
pwarap	'evening'	'good evening'
pumroc	'night'	'good night'

(armai) pruvcum	*pwacah (armai)*
good morning	day good
'good morning'	'good day'

Note that *pwacah* is used as a farewell at any time of day during daylight hours, while *pumroc* is used as a farewell at night.

5.5 Universal Suffixes

There is a set of suffixes which are described here for convenience because they are not restricted to forms belonging to any particular word class.

(i) *Restrictive* -go

The suffix *-go* usually expressing the restrictive meaning of 'only'. We find it on nouns, as in:

Cam-nen-i   nesi-go.
3SG:PRES-BR:eat-CONST   pawpaw-REST
'(S)he only eats pawpaws.'

This function of *-go* on nouns needs to be distinguished from the pluralizing suffix *-go* on temporal nouns (§3.2.2.1). It is also found on pronouns, for example:

Kam-go   kakemle-navan.
1PL.EXCL-REST   1PL.EXCL:FUT-MR:walk
'Just us are walking.'

and verbs, for example:

Caghokgo (<co-agkəh-oc-go).
3SG:FUT-MR:see-2SG-REST
'(S)he will just see you.'

This suffix needs to be distinguished from the misdirective suffix of the same shape on verbs (§4.4).

With adjectives and adverbs, the restrictive suffix can also have an intensifying function, as in *viroc* 'small' > *virokgo* 'rather small' and *marima* 'now' > *marimago* 'right now'.

(ii) *Precedentive* -la(p)/-pe

When added to a verb, these synonymous suffixes indicate that an action takes place before another action (whether the other action is overtly expressed, or merely implied from the context). Thus:

Yacaghoclap (*<yaco-agkəh-oc-lap*).
1SG:FUT-MR:see-2SG-PREC
'I will see you first.'

When attached to an imperative verb, these forms function as markers of politeness or tentativeness (see also §4.2.2.1.1). Thus:

Ovog-i-lap!   *Elom-pe!*
2SG:IMP-BR:give-3SG-PREC   2SG:IMP:come-PREC
'Could you please give it to him/her.'   'Could you please come.'

While these suffixes are more frequently encountered on verbs, they do occur on non-verbal forms such as interjections, for example:

Tawi-lap.   *Suma-lap.*
NEG-PREC   that's.all-PREC
'Not yet.'   'That's all for now.'

6: PHRASE LEVEL STRUCTURES

6.1 Nominal Phrases

Nominal phrases are quite well defined in Erromangan, and their internal structure is presented below. The head in a nominal phrase is normally the first element in the phrase, with modifiers following the head. There is, however, a restricted set of pre-head constituents permitted in noun phrases.

6.1.1 Pronominal Phrases

With obligatory subject cross-referencing by means of verbal prefixes (§4.2.2), independent pronouns are optional in subject position. When an unmodified subject pronoun is present, it expresses contrastive stress. Thus:

K-ampelom.
2SG:FUT-MR:come2SG
'You will come.'

Kik   k-ampelom.
2SG   2SG:FUT-MR:come
'*You* (and not someone else) will come.'

With suffixed transitive verbs (§4.3.1) and inflected prepositions (§5.2), independent object pronouns are not present, for example:

Nompwat   yi-tetu-coh.
Nompwat   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:wait.for-1PL.INCL
'Nompwat waited for us.'

Nompwat   yi-tamul-i   *pog-kum.*
Nompwat   3SG:RECPAST-BR:send-3SG   DAT-2PL
'Nompwat sent it to you (PL).'

With a pronominal verbal subject or object, or a prepositional object, any morphologically or lexically expressed modifier is normally expressed with an independent pronoun which "carries" the modifier, even though the verb or preposition retains its normal inflection, for example:

Nompwat   yi-tetu-coh   *koh*   *nduru-su.*
Nompwat   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:wait.for-1PL.INCL   1PL.INCL   two-every
'Nompwat waited for both of us.'

Kik   kahai   k-ampelom.
2SG   alone   2SG:FUT-MR:come
'You will come by yourself.'

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However, if the modifier is a non-numeral quantifier (§6.1.2.2), this can follow the inflected verb or preposition, with or without the independent pronoun being present. Thus:

Nompwat   y-ovog-i   *pog-kum   (kimi)   comwisacsu.*
Nompwat 3SG:DISTPAST-BR:give-3SG DAT-2PL   2PL   all
'Nompwat gave it to you all.'

Although there are no separate dual or trial independent pronouns, noun phrases with pronominal heads can be followed by the same range of numeral and quantifier postmodifiers which can accompany nouns (§6.1.2.2). Thus:

kam   comwisacsu   *kam   ndehel*
1PL.EXCL   all   1PL.EXCL   three
'all of us'   'the three of us'

While sequences of pronouns and numeral postmodifiers for the most part behave like ordinary noun phrases which contain modifiers, the second person plural form *kimi* has the phonologically reduced shape *kim* when it is followed by a numeral rather than a non-numeral postmodifier. Thus:

kimi   comwisacsu   *kim   nduru*
2PL   all   2PL   two
'all of you'   'the two of you'

While non-numeral quantifiers normally follow a pronominal head, they are attested occasionally preceding a pronoun. The following is therefore also possible:

comwisacsu   kimi
all   2PL
'all of you'

When a pronominal phrase containing a numeral is modified by *-su* 'every' (§3.2.2.1), the suffix appears on the numeral, and not on the pronominal head. Thus:

iror   nduru-su
3PL   two-every
'both of them'

Adjectives cannot modify pronouns. However, in addition to the numeral and quantifier modifiers referred to above, there are two postmodifers which uniquely modify pronouns. These are:

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(a) the morphologically simple form *kahai ~ kohai* 'alone, by oneself', for example:

[Yau kahai] yoco-nompi.
1SG alone 1SG:FUT-MR:do
'I will do it by myself.'

(b) a set of morphologically complex forms expressing the same meaning, based on the root *pe-*, to which a following independent pronoun is phonologically bound. We therefore find the paradigm presented in Table 6.1. The derived modifier marks the same pronominal distinctions that are expressed in the pronominal head which it follows. Thus:

[Yau pe-yau] yoco-nompi.
1SG alone-1SG 1SG:FUT-MR:do
'I will do it by myself.'

While the forms based on *pe-* normally appear as pronominal postmodifiers, they do occasionally function as pronominal heads themselves in subject position, for example:

Pe-kik ko-nompi.
alone-2SG 2SG:FUT-MR:do
'You will do it by yourself.'

Although pronominal phrases of the type *yau kahai* and *yau peyau* are synonymous in the frames presented above, there is a difference of meaning when these are not functioning as the subject of a verb. When a pronoun is modified by *kahai ~ kohai* with no following verb, this indicates that the referent of the pronoun exists alone in a particular place. Thus:

Kik kahai?
2SG alone
'Are you alone?'

However, when a modifier based on *pe-* is added to a pronominal head, this indicates that the referent of the pronoun is performing some kind of implicit action alone. Thus:

Kik pe-kik!
2SG alone-2SG
'Do it by yourself.'

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Table 6.1 Pronominal Modifiers Based on *pe-*

	SG		PL
1	*peyau*	INCL	*pekoh*
		EXCL	*pekam*
2	*pekik*		*pekimi*
3	*peiyi*		*peiror*

6.1.2 Noun Phrases

The stylistically preferred sequence of constituents within a noun phrase is set out in the following schema:

(PREMODIFIER) NOUN (POSS. PRONOUN) (POSTMODIFIER) (NOUN   (RELATIVE
                                               POSSESSOR) CLAUSE)

That is, there is an optional single premodifier, and an optional postmodifier, with a relative clause appearing at the periphery of the phrase. If there is a possessive pronoun, this appears before any other postmodifiers, though with a noun possessor, this appears after other postmodifiers.

While only one premodifier is permitted, it is possible for more than one postmodifier to appear, though there is a strong preference for a second postmodifier to be expressed in a relative clause. While the order just presented reflects the stylistic preference of Erromangan speakers, some variation is possible, as described in the following sections.

6.1.2.1 Premodifiers

These are only seven noun premodifiers, which come from the following mutually exclusive set: *hai* 'indefinite', *ovon* 'plural', *ndve* 'how much?, how many?', *mei* 'which?', *imo* 'this, these (near speaker)', *nagku* 'my', *iror* 'plural'. The following illustrate the use of these forms (with square brackets surrounding the noun phrase being illustrated):

Kandvi (<ko-andəv-i)   *[hai   nei].*
2SG:FUT-MR:cut-CONST   INDEF stick
'You will cut a stick.'

Kole-nompi   *[ovon syame iyih].*
1PL.INCL:FUT-MR:do   PL   things this
'We will do these things.'

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Koc-vai   *[ndve   nvat]?*
2SG:RECPAST-BR:get   how.many stone
'How many stones did you get?'

Utwoni (<u-etu-en-i)   *[imo   noki   enyau].*
2PL:IMP-NEG-BR:eat-CONST this   coconut POSS:1SG
'Don't eat these coconuts of mine.'

[Nagku nimo] cam-ante   *ra   ntelgo-n   nu.*
my   house 3SG:PRES-MR:stay LOC side-CONST river
'My house is beside the river.'

[Iror ovonyan] cum-ampelom.
PL   PL:child   3PL:PRES-MR:come
'The children are coming.'

Preposed *nagku* 'my' is quite frequently attested, though all other possessive pronouns are postposed (§3.1.2). This form is most frequently—though by no means exclusively—used with the borrowed terms *poi* 'boy' and *kel* 'girl', with the phrase being used by an older person as a term of address to a younger person. Thus:

[Nagku poi],   eve   *mpai (<m-vai) nemah enyau.*
my   boy 2SG:IMP:BR:go SG:ES-BR:get   shirt   POSS:1SG
'My boy, go and get my shirt.'

While the indefinite premodifier *hai* is most frequently encountered with a following singular noun, it is compatible with a non-singular noun phrase. In such cases, it expresses the meaning of 'any', as illustrated by the following:

[Hai   ovoteme   nduru] cwo-nelcav-i   *nugat.*
INDEF PL:person two   3PL:FUT-MR:hold-CONST coconut.fibre
'Any two people will hold the coconut fibre.'

It is also possible for a noun with preposed *hai* to be followed by postposed *haiten* 'one', for example:

Yampe (<yam-ve)   *m-omonki*   *[hai   neve-n   noki   haiten].*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:go SG:ES-BR:drink INDEF shell-CONST coconut one
'I went and drank a single coconut shell.'

When a noun phrase begins with the premodifier *hai*, this is attached as a clitic to a preceding constituent when this is the negative constituent *tawi*, the unsuffixed transitive verb *vai* 'get, take', or the transitive verbs *ta-* 'hit, kill' or

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se- 'spear' in their respective construct forms *tai* and *sei*. These sequences are re-solved as follows: *tawi + hai > ta-hai, vai + hai > va-hai, ta-i + hai > ta-hai, se-i + hai > se-hai*, for example:

Yau ta-[hai   nvat].
1SG NEG-INDEF money
'I haven't got any money.'

Yi-va-[hai   mersin   nduru].
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:get-INDEF   medicine two
'(S)he got two of a (kind of) medicine'.

The form *iror* normally functions as the third person plural independent pro-noun (§3.1.1). Very occasionally, however, it appears as a preposed plural marker before those nouns described in §3.2.2.1 as having irregular plurals.

Not only is the class of premodifiers very restricted in its membership, but the meanings of these forms can often be expressed by other means. For example, the preposed plural marker *ovon* can also be expressed as the nominal prefix *ovn-* (§3.2.2.1). In any context in which preposed *nagku* 'my' appears, there is always the option of using the postposed possessed pronouns *(h)enyau* or *horug* (§3.1.2). The meaning of 'which' can be expressed either by means of preposed *mei* or postposed *itoc(o)* (§7.2.2). *Ndve* 'how much, how many' freely varies between prenominal and postnominal position with no change in meaning, for example:

Koc-vai   [ndve   nvat]?
2SG:RECPAST-BR:get   how.much   money

Koc-vai   [nvat   ndve]?
2SG:RECPAST-BR:get   money how.much
'How much money did you get?'

The form *imo* 'this, these' also varies between a premodifying and a postmodifying position, though it is only very occasionally encountered as a postmodifier. *Imo* is predominantly — though by no means exclusively — encoun-tered in the written register, with the meaning of 'this, these' being expressed in speech more commonly by means of the postposed demonstrative *iyih* (or equi-valent forms) (§6.1.2.2), as in:

Utwoni (<u-etu-en-i)   [noki   iyih   enyau].
2PL:IMP-NEG-BR:eat-CONST   coconut   this   POSS:1SG
'Do not eat these coconuts of mine.'

As stated earlier, only a single occupant of the premodifier position is permit-ted within a noun phrase. Thus, for example, only one of the forms *nagku* 'my'

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and *ndve* 'how many' can appear in a single noun phrase, with the other meaning being expressed as a postmodifier. Thus:

nagku nvat   ndve?
my   money how.much
'how much money of mine?'

ndve   nvat   enyau?
how.much   money POSS:1SG
'how much money of mine?'

**nagku ndve   nvat?*
my   how.much   money

6.1.2.2 Postmodifiers

There is a number of different subsets of nominal postmodifiers in Erromangan. The distributional characteristics and semantic content of these are described in turn below.

(i) *Adjectives*

Adjectives in Sye are a fairly well defined word class, which share the following grammatical characteristics:

(a) They follow a nominal head, as in:

Kamli-ve   *ra*   *[hai   nu   orog].*
1PL.EXCL:RECPAST-BR:go   GOAL   INDEF river big
'We went to a big river.'

The only exception to this generalization is that the adjective *armai* 'good' generally precedes nouns with temporal reference when used in greetings, that is *armai pruvcum ~ pruvcum armai* 'good morning', *armai pumroc ~ pumroc armai* 'good night', *armai pwacah ~ pwacah armai* 'good day' and *armai pwarap ~ pwarap armai* 'good afternoon'. In all other noun phrases, however, *armai* obligatorily follows the nominal head, for example *neteme armai* 'good person'. The fact that *armai* precedes the head in these greetings is possibly a reflection of linguistic adventurism on the part of nineteenth century European missionaries, who, it seems, felt impelled to introduce greetings directly based on the pattern of "good morning" in English in many places where they established themselves in Vanuatu.

(b) They are similar to nouns in that they can participate in topic-comment constructions, which consist of an initial nominal and an immediately following nominal or an adjectival comment, with no overt grammatical linking between the two (§7.1.1). Compare:

Kik   natmonuc   hormam.   *Kik   armai.*
2SG   chief   POSS:1PL.EXCL   2SG   good
'You are our chief.'   'You are good.'

In such topic-comment constructions, where there is no inflectional marking, the tense is construed as being present. In order to express any other tense with an adjectival comment in such a construction, a copula verb must be used, and this is inflected for tense and subject in the normal way (§7.1.3.3), for example:

C-anti   viroc.   *Nautugo   y-ete   tantop.*
3SG:FUT-MR:become small   knife   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:be long
'(S)he will become small.'   'The knife was long.'

(c) They are negated by means of the free form *tawi*, which is used also to negate a nominal comment, rather than by means of verbal prefixes. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Yau   tawi   nahiven.   *Nu   tawi   tetar.*
1SG   NEG   woman   water NEG   clear
'I am not a woman.'   'The water is not clear.'

(d) They can function adverbially in that they can modify verbs with no morphological marking of any kind (§7.1.3.1). We therefore find examples su ch as the following:

Nom   cam-nau   ndomo.
fire   3SG:PRES-MR:burn   strong
'The fire is burning strongly.'

(e) They agree with their nominal heads in number, as described in §5.1.3.

(ii) *Non-Adjectival Postmodifiers*

Non-adjectival postmodifiers are all forms which appear after a noun in a noun phrase but which do not fall into the set described in §5.1. Such forms therefore include numerals, demonstratives, as well as a number of non-numeral postmodifiers. These forms differ from adjectives in that they are able to occupy a noun phrase slot with no accompanying noun. Thus, note the following, in which non-adjectival modifiers can function alone in noun phrases:

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Yac-ampai	[itoc]?	Coc-vai	[nduru-su].
1SG:FUT-MR:take	which	3SG:RECPAST-BR:take	two-every
'Which will I take?'		'(S)he took them both.'	

While nominal premodifiers must appear in a noun phrase with an accompanying noun, the form *ndve* 'how much, how many' alternates between pre- and postnominal position, and it also behaves in the same way as the forms illustrated above. Thus:

Koc-vai   *[ndve]?*
2SG:RECPAST-BR:get   how.many
'How many did you get?'

The only numerals which are known and used by all speakers of Sye today are those from 'one' to 'five', which have the shapes *haite(ve)n ~ haihi* 'one', *nduru* 'two', *ndehel* 'three', *ndvat* 'four' and *sukrim* 'five'. We therefore find noun phrases such as *ovoteme nduru* 'two people', *nempgon ndehel* 'three times', *ndan sukrim* 'five days'.[1]

There is only a small number of individuals who have consciously taken the trouble to learn the traditional counting system, though they do not use it in ordinary speech because most people would simply not recognize these words. The higher numbers in this system include the morphologically unanalyzable forms *mehikai* 'six', *narwolem* 'ten' and *nalem* 'hundred'. All other numbers are expressed either by means of morphological derivation, or by the phrasal combination of word-level items.

The numbers 'seven', 'eight' and 'nine are expressed by means of compounds of *sukrim* 'five' and the forms for 'two', 'three' and 'four' respectively. When *sukrim* is compounded in this way with *ndvat* 'four', which begins with a three-member consonant cluster, the vowel *e* is inserted over the morpheme boundary. However, because the structural conditions for this rule are met only in the derivation of a single form, it would hardly be justifiable to include this as part of the general morphophonemic statements of the language. With these observations, we can now add the higher numerals *mehikai* 'six', *sukrimnduru* 'seven', *sukrimndehel* 'eight', *sukrimendvat* 'nine' and *narwolem* 'ten'.

Numbers between 'eleven' and 'nineteen' are expressed phrasally, with *narwolem* 'ten' being followed by the form *tavgoneh*,[2] which has no independent

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[1] Numbers higher than five are almost invariably expressed in Erromangan today using forms copied from Bislama (and which ultimately all come from English). However, these forms are still postposed, rather than preposed as in Bislama and English, e.g. *noki sikis* 'six coconuts'.

[2] Lynch and Capell (1983:40) give *tavogi* for the same function. This variation possibly reflects the uncertainty of different speakers today about how to express these higher numerals. It may be, however, that there was genuine variation in the original counting system.

existence. This is then followed by the numerals just presented for 'one' to 'nine'. Thus, 'eleven' is *narwolem tavgoneh haiten*, while 'nineteen' is *narwolem tavgoneh sukrimendvat*. Numbers for each of the higher decades are also expressed phras-ally, with *narwolem* 'ten' being followed immediately by any of the numbers from 'two' (for the twenties) right through to 'nine' (for the nineties). Within each decade, the individual numbers are expressed in exactly way as the teens, by means of the form *tavgoneh*. Thus, 'twenty-one' is expressed as *narwolem nduru tavgoneh haiten*, while 'ninety-eight' is expressed as *narwolem sukrimendvat tavgoneh sukrimndehel*.

As indicated above, the form for 'hundred' is *nalem*. This is reduplicated to give *nalemnalem* for 'two hundred'. For hundreds higher than this, units of *nalem* are simply modified by the lower numerals already given. Thus, 'three hundred' is *narwolem ndehel*. This system obviously has the potential to be extended, though the lack of any morphologically simple words for 'thousand' means that the expression of higher numerals would begin to become unwieldy. Even a number such as '197' is unwieldy enough, that is:

nalem	*narwolem*	*sukrimendvat*	*tavgoneh*	*sukrimnduru*
hundred	ten	nine	"-teen"	seven

In fact, according to the system as it has just been presented, this form should be ambiguous between 197 (that is 'hundred and ninety-seven') and 9,700 (that is 'ninety-seven hundreds'). This could be an indication either than the counting system itself was inherently inadequate (which might explain its rapid replacement by the introduced system), or that the memories of the speakers from whom this information was gathered are incomplete.

The class of nominal postmodifiers also includes the morphologically simple non-numeral modifiers *ntamah* 'much, many', *hai* 'different, other, next', *nogkon* 'some, another', *itoc ~ itoco* 'which' and *mei* 'which kind of'. Thus:

ov-netai comwisacsu	*noki*	*itoc*
PL-letter all	coconut	which
' all the letters'	'which coconut?'	

The postmodifiers *ginmah ~ gindomo* 'much, many' reflect a vestigial pattern of derivation involving the oblique preposition *gi* and the adjectives *nmah* 'big' and *ndomo* 'strong' (§5.1.2).

The postmodifier *comwi(sac)su* 'all, every' is diachronically related to the verb *omwi* 'finish', and its derivative *omwi-sac* 'be completely finished', for example:

Nvag c-omwi-su.
food 3SG:RECPAST-BR:finish-PERF
'The food is finished.'

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Nvag   c-omwi-sac-su.
food   3SG:RECPAST-BR:finish-up-PERF
'The food is completely finished.'

The sequence *nvag comwi(sac)su* can also be used as a noun phrase, with *comwi(sac)su* being reanalyzed as a postmodifying quantifier. When used as a postmodifier, these forms vary in their shape beyond what is enountered with the verb, as we also find *comsacsu* 'all, every'.

The verbal origins of this postmodifier are still evident in that when a noun with future or distant past reference is quantified, the corresponding third person singular future and distant past forms of the verb are occasionally encountered as modifiers. Thus, a quantified noun with future reference can appear with the postmodifiers *camwi(sac)su ~ camsacsu*, while a noun in a distant past context can be marked with the postmodifiers *yomwi(sac)su ~ yomsacsu*. Thus:

Yacam-nen-i   *nvag   comwisacsu.*
1SG:PRES-MR:eat-CONST   food   all
'I am eating all the food.'

Yoco-nen-i   *nvag   comwisacsu ~ camwisacsu.*
1SG:FUT-MR:eat-CONST   food   all ~ FUT:all
'I will eat all the food.'

Yam-en-i   *nvag   comwisacsu ~ yomwisacsu.*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:eat-CONST   food   all ~ DISTPAST:all
'I ate all the food.'

Both numeral and non-numeral quantifiers from this set are occasionally encountered as premodifiers to a nominal or pronominal head. Thus:

comwisacsu ov-netai   *nduru ovoteme*
all   PL-book   two   people
'all the books'   'two people'

This order is dispreferred, however, with the phrases below being far more common:

ov-netai   comwisacsu   *ovoteme nduru*
PL-book   all   people   two
'all the books'   'two people'

The form *hai* can appear both before or after a noun. Because there is a semantic contrast that corresponds to the use of *hai* as a premodifier and as a

postmodifier, we should treat this as an instance of homonymy. As a premodifier, *hai* expresses an indefinite meaning, whereas as a postmodifier it means 'different, other, next'. Thus, contrast the following:

Ra	*[hai*	*Ndandvat]*	*kamli-tuc*	*unmeh.*
LOC	INDEF	Thursday	1PL.EXCL:RECPAST-BR:wake.up	early

'We woke up early on a Thursday.'

[Ndandvat	*hai]*	*kakle-ntuc*	*unmeh.*
Thursday	next	1PL.EXCL:FUT-MR:wake.up	early

'We will wake up early next Thursday.'

Demonstratives also fall into the category of non-numeral postmodifiers. These are forms which follow a nominal head, and which provide some kind of spatial or discourse orientation for the referent of the noun. Demonstratives express a basic distinction between proximate and distant (both spatially and in discourse), by means of the following forms set out in Table 6.2. The various alternatives listed are all interchangeable with no apparent change in meaning, for example *iyih ~ yihi ~ ihi*[3] and *ima ~ yima*. We therefore find examples such as:

[Ntit	*iyih]*	*en*	*ovonyan?*
throwing.stick	this	POSS:CONST	children

'Do these throwing sticks belong to the children?'

[Ndan	*yima]*	*kamli-yep*	*ml-ete*	*yuwi.*
time	that	1PL.EXCL:RECPAST-descend	PL:ES-BR:stay	there

'At that time, we went down and stayed there.'

Lynch and Capell (1983:39–40) note that in the area of demonstratives, the oral data gathered by Lynch and the material based predominantly on written material examined by Capell resulted in considerable disparity between their two corpora as to what the demonstratives were, and even as to whether these forms preceded or followed the nouns that they modified. Part of the confusion is likely to have arisen because some non-demonstrative locational markers illicitly found their way into their data. Their *iyuwi* 'that, at some distance', for example, appears in my own data unambiguously as the locational marker *(ma)yuwi* 'there' (§7.1.3.1), so a discussion of this form does not belong in a treatment of noun phrases at all.

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[3] This form is probably derived historically from *iyi hi* 'this is it', involving reanalysis of a non-verbal clause of the type described in §7.1.1.

Table 6.2 Postposed Demonstratives

	Proximate	*Distant*
Space	iyih, (y)ihi	(y)ima
Discourse	mori	ma

6.1.2.3 Possessive Constructions

The morphological expression of pronominal possessors with bound nouns is described in §3.2.2.2. However, free nouns, as well as bound nouns with noun possessors, express possession at the phrase rather than the word level.

(i) *Possession with Free Nouns*

When a free noun is associated with a pronominal possessor, the possessed noun is followed by a postposed possessive pronoun (§3.1.2). The only exception is that when the form *nagku* 'my' is used, it appears before the noun (§6.1.2.1). When a postposed possessive pronoun is associated with a noun that is associated with a postmodifier, the possessive pronoun appears directly after the noun, with the postmodifier following the NOUN + POSSESSOR sequence. Thus:

kuri	enyau	viroc		*kuri	viroc	enyau
dog	POSS:1SG	little		dog	small	poss:1sg

'my little dog'

A relative clause to a possessed noun appears at the end of the possessive phrase in the same way:

kuri	enyau	mori	coc-mah
dog	POSS:1SG	REL	3SG:RECPAST-die

'my dog which died'

*kuri	mori	coc-mah	enyau
dog	REL	3SG:RECPAST-die	POSS-1SG

There are, in fact, two different kinds of possessive construction involving free nouns: active and passive possession. Active possession is expressed by the possessive pronoun paradigms of which *horug* and *(h)enyau* are the first person singular exponents, while passive possession is expressed by the paradigm based on the root *ira-* (§3.1.2). An active possessive relationship is one in which the possessor exercises control over the referent of the possessed noun, whereas with passive possession, there is a non-controlling relationship between the referents of the two nouns. Contrast the following examples:

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savi	*enyau*	*natman*	*ihen*
picture	POSS:1SG	male	POSS:3SG
'my picture (of something)'		'her husband (that is male)'	

savi	*ira-g*	*natman*	*ira-n*
picture	POSS:1SG	male	POSS:3SG
'my picture (that is a picture of me)'		'his penis (that is maleness)'	

The same formal contrast is also associated with the expression of what can be referred to as normal inalienable possession (which is identical with active possession) and removed inalienable possession (which is identical with passive possession). This distinction is only made with body parts or body products that are possessed inalienably, with the latter being used with items that have been physically removed from the body of the possessor. Thus, compare the following:

netpolu eni
stomach POSS:3SG
'its stomach (as of a pig's stomach when it is still part of the pig)'

netpolu ira-n
stomach POSS-3SG
'its stomach (as of a pig's stomach that has been removed during butchering)'

There is only a relatively small number of free nouns referring to body parts, which means that this distinction is relatively infrequently made. However, there are four free nouns for which pronominal possessors are obligatorily expressed by means of the possessive pronoun *ira-*: *tali* 'shadow', *narep* 'vein, tendon', *nocleh* 'body' and *nempen* 'body odor'. Thus:

tali	*ira-m*	**tali*	*horom*
shadow	POSS-2SG	shadow	POSS:2SG
'your shadow'			

The forms *nempen* and *nocleh* are pronounced as single phonological words with the following possessive pronoun *ira-*, with resulting interconsonantal vowels being deleted, as described in §2.5.2.7. Thus:

nempniram (<nempen ira-m)
smell POSS:2SG
'your smell'

A nominal possessor with a free noun is expressed by means *en*, *hen* or *ihen* in the case of active and normal inalienable possession, and *iran* with passive and removed inalienable possession. The difference between *en*, *hen* and *ihen* is not

referentially significant, though *en* is the form that is most frequently encountered in speech. In possessive constructions of this type, the order of constituents is invariably POSSESSED NOUN + POSSESSIVE MARKER + POSSESSOR NOUN. We therefore find examples such as:

nimo   en   natmonuc
house   POSS   chief
'the chief's house'

nvag   ihen   nompcahi
food   POSS   pig
'the pig's food'

netpolu   iran   nompcahi
stomach   POSS   pig
'the pig's (removed) stomach'

The possessive constituents *ihen* and *iran* also function as third person singular possessive pronouns (§3.1.2). The alternative forms *en/hen* are similar to, but not identical with, the synonymous third person singular possessive pronoun *(h)eni*. These forms are used to mark nominal possession regardless of the number of the possessed noun. Thus:

nimo ihen ovatmonuc   *netpolu iran ov-nompcahi*
house POSS PL:chief   stomach POSS PL-pig
'the chiefs' house'   'the pigs' (removed) stomachs'

(ii) *Possession with Bound Nouns*

When a bound noun appears with a nominal rather than a pronominal possessor, the possessor directly follows the possessed noun which is marked in exactly the same way as when it expresses a third person singular pronominal possessor. Because this suffix is the same whether the possessor has singular or plural reference, it is treated as a construct suffix, in line with the general literature on Oceanic languages. Thus:

nompu-n   natmonuc   *nompu-n   ovatmonuc*
head-CONST chief   head-CONST   PL:chief
'the chief's head'   'the chiefs' heads'

When the possessor noun is one of those which has irregular or otherwise structurally odd third person singular forms (§3.2.2.2), the parallellism between the construct suffix and the third person singular pronominal possessive form is still maintained. Thus:

nitni	*nompcahi*	*ave-n-hai*	*Yalimyau*
offspring:CONST	pig	brother-CONST-brother	Yalimyau
'piglet'		'Yalimyau's brother'	

etemach-i   *Nemor*
in-law-CONST   Nemor
'Nemor's in-law'

Although it was stated earlier that possessor nouns follow the modifier to a possessed free noun, when a bound noun is associated with a postmodifier, the postmodifier must appear after the possessor noun as no constituent can intervene between the construct suffix and a following possessor. Note, therefore, the following:

noru-g   *meveh*
hand-1SG   right
'my right hand'

noru-n   *retpu-g*   *meveh*
hand-CONST   wife-1SG   right
'my wife's right hand'

*noru-n   *meveh*   *retpu-g*
hand-CONST   right   wife-1SG

(iii) *Semantics of Possessive Constructions*

The formal contrast between free and bound nouns corresponds in general to a semantic contrast between alienable and inalienable possession. The main semantic categories of nouns that enter into direct possessive constructions are body parts, kin terms, parts of wholes, natural products of things, and attributes of things.

Body parts are generally expressed as bound nouns, for example *nompu-* 'head', *nelpavine-* 'forehead', *potelgo-* 'temple', *nogu-* 'mouth', *nelwame-* 'tongue', *nelve-* 'incisor tooth'. This category also includes personal attributes, such navya- 'voice' and *ni-* 'name'. Also included within this generalization are parts of bodies of animals and birds, such as *nevloco-* 'wing', *niromunta-* 'dorsal fin', *netovo-* 'breast cartilage (in bird)'.

There are some nouns referring to body parts which do not accept direct possessive suffixes. Bodily products or exusions, rather than body parts as such, are typically expressed by means of free nouns. We therefore find free nouns such as *nde* 'blood', *nelwo* 'vomit' and *nenor* 'sweat'. Freely removable body parts are also expressed by means of free nouns, for example *uvnomu* 'nails'. Nouns referring to an internal body parts (which would normally only be seen when the owner

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is dead and cut open) are also expressed by means of free nouns. Contrast, therefore, the bound noun *netni-* 'belly', referring to an external part of the body, and the free noun *netpolu* 'stomach', referring to a part of the body that is normally only encountered when butchering an animal. Temporary or undesirable manifestations of the body are likely to be expressed as free nouns, for example *nocvat* 'plantar wart', *novli* 'sore', *nilu* 'uncircumcized penis'.[4] Body parts that involve a point or an extremity are also likely to be expressed as free forms. Such nouns perhaps behave similarly to alienably possessed nouns because they are visually distinct from the body to which they are attached. Such forms include *oroglag* 'nose', *utcoi* 'chin' and *nevsem* 'joint'.

There is a small number of apparently unexplainable exceptions to these generalizations. Some words referring to body parts or products are found in apparently synonymous pairs, where one member of the pair accepts direct suffixes and the other does not, regardless of the semantic generalizations presented above. Thus, *si-* vs *nevcah* 'excrement', *ni-* vs *nunu* 'breast', and *nagi-* vs *pukai* 'vagina'. There are also some nouns such as *yomput* 'navel' and *nempri* 'rib', which are unpredictably expressed as free forms, whereas according to the generalizations just presented we might have expected to find a bound form. Finally, there are some removable body products such as *nampri-* 'snot' and *nevlami-* 'urine', which unpredictably accept direct suffixes.

Kin terms are also frequently expressed by means of bound nouns. We therefore find examples such as *etme-* 'father', *ndinme-* 'mother', *asu-* 'husband', *retpo-* 'wife', *meta-* 'maternal uncle' and *ndetwo-* 'paternal aunt'. However, the morphological behavior of kin terms in possessive constructions is less predictable semantically than that of body part nouns. Some words in this category behave as free nouns, while other words to which these are semantically very closely related behave as bound nouns, for example *mocpo-* 'grandchild', which is a bound noun, while *uyou* 'grandmother' is not.

There are even some semantically equivalent pairs of kin terms in which one accepts direct suffixes and the other enters into the indirect possessive construction, for example *ndinme-* vs *namou* 'mother', and *etme-* vs *nate* 'father'. With these forms, there is a further contrast in that *namou* 'mother' and *nate* 'father' can be used independently of an overt possessor as address terms, while the forms *ndinme-* 'mother' and *etme-* 'father' have defective paradigms, lacking inflected forms for a first person singular possessor (§3.2.2.2). However, there is no general correlation between the use of such forms for address purposes and a requirement that these nouns enter only into indirect possessive constructions, as directly suffixed *avu-g* 'friend-1SG' and *avni-g* 'namesake-1SG' are frequently used as address forms.

Parts of wholes are also often expressed by means of bound nouns. One large set of such nouns express parts or products of plants, for example *nulgo-* 'leaf', *novgu-* 'fruit', *ndogo-* 'branch', *novse-* 'seed', *nowatni-* 'root' and *nelye-* 'sucker'. However, there is a substantial number of nouns in this semantic field which are

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[4] Boys on Erromango are routinely circumcized before adolescence.

expressed instead by free nouns. Many of these involve items that commonly either spontaneously fall from the plant, or are removed from the plant for human use. We therefore find free nouns such as *nulpai* 'dry sugarcane leaf', *nugat* 'net of coconut palm', *naveh* 'coconut milk'.

This category also includes words referring to parts of a house. The following bound nouns are expressed with the noun *nimo* 'house' occupying the possessor slot: *neta-* 'thick roof beams', *nevriwo-* 'last row of weaving at top of wall', *nwampu-* 'ridge capping', *navlogo-* 'final rows of wall weave near entrance'. There are other bound nouns referring to parts of other artefacts, such as *nali-* 'carved handle', *nalwo-* 'woven handle', *nomputa-* 'middle joint (of coconut leaf mat)', *veiwo-* 'empty container'. However, the majority of nouns referring to parts of manufactured items are expressed instead by means of free nouns, for example *nelman* 'outrigger', *netvimprac* 'threshhold', *neturtur* 'house post', *pokitampent* 'door', *ntsemploc* 'particular roof beam', *movoc* 'outrigger pole'.

The category of parts of wholes can also be taken as including natural products of things, with the possessor referring to the source of the product. We therefore find directly suffixed examples such as *namoli-* 'shadow, reflection', *naryovo-* 'seaspray' and *nari-* 'mark'. Finally, this category can be taken to include geographical locations with reference to a particular point on an object, such as *navlutni-* 'end', *natipotni-* 'beginning', *potni-* 'bottom, base', *netgo-* 'underside'.

There is pair of bound nouns which expresses a variety of stative attributes. With the forms *novsise-* 'tiny' and *nusya-* 'huge', the possessor noun phrase refers to the noun that is characterized by the state referred to by the bound noun, for example:

novsise-n   noki
tiny-CONST   coconut
'tiny coconut'

The vast majority of stative attributes, however, are expressed by means of either adjectives (§5.1) or intransitive verbs.

While the major grammatical distinction in Erromangan possessive constructions is that between bound and free nouns, the major semantic contrast is that between inalienable and alienable possession. While there is a fair degree of overlap between these grammatical and semantic categories, the overlap is not complete. It is also often possible for the referents of nouns to be possessed both alienably or inalienably. For instance, a tree can inalienably possess its own fruit, whereas somebody who goes and picks the fruit then alienably possesses those same items.

The formal categorization of nouns in Erromangan between free and bound nouns is a rigid one. This means that nouns do not have the freedom that we find in, for example, Fijian, where the same root can freely appear in both types of grammatical construction in order to express a semantic distinction between an alienable and inalienable relationship with respect to the same thing.

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With free alienably possessed nouns, there is no distinct grammatical construction that would enable us to specifically encode an inalienable possessive relationship. With the much smaller number of free inalienably possessed nouns, that construction will necessarily be ambiguous between an alienable and an inalienable interpretation. The following could therefore express two different kinds of possession:

nevcah   horo-m
excrement POSS-2SG
'your excrement'

Given an inalienable interpretation, this would be synonymous with:

si-m
excrement-2SG
'your excrement (which you shitted out)'

On the other hand, *nevcah horom* could be interpreted alienably, in which case it might mean something like 'the excrement which I removed from the pig pen in order to do something nasty to you with'. Such an interpretation would not be possible with *sim*.

The lack of distinct grammatical means for making these kinds of semantic distinctions does not present any significant communicative difficulties, because the pragmatic contexts in which the distinctions are likely to arise would be so restricted. However, while bound nouns generally express semantically inalienable relationships, it is obvious that the referents of many of these morphologically bound nouns can much more readily enter into semantically alienable relationships.

When normally inalienably possessed bound nouns appear in semantically alienable contexts, the noun must always appear in the construct form. Although this is identical with the form carrying third person singular pronominal suffix, this is used non-referentially as a "dummy" possessive suffix. For instance, in the following examples, the bound nouns *noura-n* 'bone-CONST', *etme-n* 'father-CONST' and *nitni* 'son:CONST' appear in the construct form even though the referents of these nouns are not associated with any implied inalienable possessor:

Kuri   yitenmi (<yi-tenəm-i)   *hai*   *noura-n.*
dog   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:bury-CONST   INDEF   bone-CONST
'The dog buried a bone.'

Yacam-anwatompne   m-agku   *Novu iyi   etme-n,*   *nitni*   *im*
1SG:PRES-MR:declare ES-MR:say   God   3SG father-CONST   son-CONST   and
navyat   tompor.
spirit   holy
'I declare that God is the father, the son and the holy spirit.'

Given that the construct suffix does not refer to any inalienable possessor, it is possible for a separate alienable possessor to be expressed. In the following, for example, the speaker is jokingly offering an (inalienable) part of his body to somebody else to (alienably) eat:

Va-n   *horom!*
edible.part-CONST POSS:2SG
'(This is) your edible part!'

Some bound nouns are used with extended senses which are not associated with inalienable possessors, for example *nompu-* 'head', which can also mean 'team (in sport)', *namoli-* 'shadow', which can also mean 'movie', and *nimto-* 'eye', which can also mean 'price'. When used in their primary senses, these forms must be associated with the overt expression of inalienable possessors. However, when used in their extended senses, they must appear in their construct forms. Thus:

Iror   *rum-ante*   *ra*   *nompu-n*   *nduru.*
3PL   3PL:PRES-MR:stay LOC team-CONST two
'They are in two teams.'

Yampasi (<yam-vas-i)   *hai*   *nacave* *nimsi-n*   *nipmi*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:buy-CONST   INDEF kava   PURP-CONST   eye:CONST
ndehel.
three
'I bought a kava for the price of three (hundred vatu).'

The bound noun *nagi-* 'vagina' is commonly used in isolation in exclamations in response to something surprising. In this interjectional function, clearly no referential possessor is intended, and the noun must appear in the construct form, that is:

Nagi-n!
vagina-CONST
'Oh my goodness!'

Bound nouns can also enter into compound or phrasal constructions in which there is again no association with any inalienable possessor. For instance, the word for 'eye' can be compounded with the word *nduru* 'two' to produce a compound meaning 'spectacles' (§3.2.1.4). The compound is formed on the basis of the irregular construct form *nipmi*, that is:

nipmi-nduru
eye:CONST-two
'spectacles'

6.1.2.4 Prepositionally Linked Nouns

Nouns can also be linked into a complex noun phrase by means of the preposi-
tions *(o)gi*, *ra*, *(na)ndu*, *ndal* and *nimsi-*, as described below.

(a) *About* (o)gi

The oblique prepositon *(o)gi* links nouns where the first noun expresses a locu-
tion and the second noun phrase expresses the content of the locution. Thus:

uvuvu	*gi*	*natmah*		*ntampi*	*gi*	*yau*
myth	OBL	devil		story	obl	1sg
'myth about a devil'				'story about me'		

Since this meaning is compatible also with the expression of passive possession,
this can also be expressed by means of the possessive pronoun *ira-*, as described
in §6.1.2.3, for example:

ntampi ira-g
story   POSS-1SG
'story about me'

(b) *Part-Whole* ra

The locative/goal preposition *ra* can be used to express a part-whole relationship
between the referents of two nouns where the noun expressing the whole is a free
noun rather than a bound noun, for example:

nivsog   ra   uvreimpin
midrib   LOC   sago
'midrib of sago (leaf)'

It can also express collectivity, as in:

nivir   ra   nmar
bunch   LOC   breadfruit
'bunch of breadfruit'

It can be used to indicate belonging to a place or habitual association with some-
thing, for example:

neteme	*ra*	*nur*	*igko*		*natmonuc*	*ra*	*ndan*
person	LOC	place	here		guardian	LOC	weather
'person from this place'					'guardian of the weather'		

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In this construction, when the second noun phrase is not overtly expressed after the preposition *ra*, the locative proform *-wi* (§7.3.2) is attached as a clitic to the noun, for example:

Natmonuc-wi iyi Nocpen Moses.
guardian-LOCPRO 3SG Nocpen Moses
'The guardian of it is Nocpen Moses.'

This preposition can be used to refer to removable body parts that are expressed as free nouns. This therefore allows for overlap between the use of the passive possessive marker *ira-* described in §6.1.2.3. Thus:

netpolu ra nompcahi
stomach LOC pig
'the pig's (removed) stomach'

can also be expressed as:

netpolu ira-n nompcahi
stomach POSS-CONST pig
'the pig's (removed) stomach'

This alternation is not possible, however, with human nouns or pronouns, which require the form *ira-*.

Finally, this preposition appears between the relative locational nouns described in §7.1.3.1 and a following inanimate noun phrase that indicates a more specific kind of location. Thus:

unisog	*ra*	*nimo*	*isut*	*ra*	*ntemne*
inside	LOC	house	long.way	LOC	village
'inside the house'			'long way from the village'		

(c) *Accompanitive* (na)ndu *and* ndal

These forms both express accompaniment, with *(na)ndu* meaning 'with (one other)', and *ndal* meaning 'with (two or more others)'. Both can be used to link two nouns to form complex noun phrases which are synonymous with coordinated phrases (§6.1.3). Thus:

Yalimyau	*nandu*	*Tapyau*	*Yalimyau*	*im*	*Tapyau*
Yalimyau	ACC.SG	Tapyau	Yalimyau	and	Tapyau
'Yalimyau and Tapyau'			'Yalimyau and Tapyau'		

Yalimyau	*ndal*	*ov-nevyarep*	*Yalimyau*	*im*	*ov-nevyarep*
Yalimyau	ACC.PL	PL-boy	Yalimyau	and	PL-boy
'Yalimyau and the boys'			'Yalimyau and the boys'		

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When a pronominal category that is expressed by a bound morpheme (for example a pronominal object to a suffixed verb, or a pronominal suffix to a bound noun) is involved in a coordinate noun phrase construction, coordination can only be expressed by means of these prepositions, and never by means of the coordinator *im*. Thus:

Cocohyau (<*coc-ocəh-yau*)   *nandu*   *avu-g-hai.*
3SG:RECPAST-BR:see-1SG   ACC.SG   brother-1SG-brother
'(S)he saw me and my brother.'

*Cocohyau   *im*   *avu-g-hai.*
3SG:RECPAST-BR:see-1SG   and   brother-1SG-brother

Yacaghi (<*yaco-agkəh-i*)   *ndal*   *r-ave-n-me.*
1SG:FUT-MR:see-3SG   ACC.PL   PL-friend-3SG-PL
'I will see him/her with his/her friends.'

*Yacaghi (<*yaco-agkəh-i*) *im*   *r-ave-n-me.*
1SG:FUT-MR:see-3SG   and   PL-friend-3SG-PL

Another pattern for expressing coordination with a bound pronominal category involves the use of the derived accompanitive pronouns described in §6.1.1. Such forms are immediately followed by the noun phrase with which the referent of the pronominal category is coordinated. When such forms are used to express verbal subjects or objects, the bound form again expresses the person and number category of the "sum" of the coordinated noun phrase. The following illustrate the coordination of subjects:

Iro-ndu   *ave-n-hai*   *ndu-velom.*
3PL-ACC.SG   brother-3SG-brother   3PL:DISTPAST-BR:come
'He and his brother came.'

Kim-ndal   *r-apmu-hai-me*   *kimu-velom.*
2PL-ACC.PL   PL-same.sex.sibling:2SG-same.sex.sibling-PL   2PL:DISTPAST-BR:come
'You and your brothers/sisters came.'

Coordinated verbal objects are illustrated by:

Yorgor (<*yi-orəg-or*)   *iro-ndu*   *ave-n-hai.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:ear-3PL   3PL-ACC.SG   brother-3SG-brother
'He heard him and his brother.'

Yorogkoh (<*yi-orəg-coh*)   *koh-ndal*   *ave-nt-hai-me.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:hear-1PL.INCL   1PL.INCL-ACC.PL   brother-1PL.INCL-brother-PL
'He heard me and my brothers.'

(d) *Purposive* nimsi-

The nominal preposition *nimsi-* in its construct form can be used to indicate a purposive relationship between the referents of two nouns, for example:

ki   nimsi-n   nondvat
key   PURP-CONST   car
'car-key'

6.1.2.5 Multiple Postmodification

Although the preference in Sye is for nouns to be associated with only a single lexical postmodifier, there is no principled restriction on the number of postmodifiers which can appear in a noun phrase. Thus, it is grammatically acceptable to say:

Yoco-nomonki   [nacave ndomo ginmah].
1SG:FUT-MR:drink   kava   strong   much
'I will drink a lot of strong kava.'

However, speakers prefer to avoid multiply modified noun phrases by either extracting a quantifier and making it into a modifier at the clause rather than the phrase level (§7.1.3.1), as follows:

Yoco-nomonki   ginmah [nacave   ndomo].
1SG:FUT-MR:drink   much   kava   strong
'I will drink strong kava a lot.'

or by extracting an adjective and placing it within a relative clause (§8.6), as follows:

Yoco-nomonki   [nacave ginmah mori ndomo].
1SG:FUT-MR:drink   kava   much   REL   strong
'I will drink a lot of kava which is strong.'

Numerals and demonstratives do not have the same opportunity for movement into the verb phrase or relative clauses that we find with other quantifiers. This fact is matched by a greater tolerance of noun phrases containing more than one postmodifier when one of the forms is either a numeral or a demonstrative. No preference for the ordering of adjectives and numerals or demonstratives can be discerned. Thus, the following are both accepted as grammatical:

Yoco-nta-i   [nompcahi n-acumsu   nduru].
1SG:FUT-MR:kill-CONST   pig   ADJ-BR:black two

Yoco-nta-i   *[nompcahi nduru n-acumsu].*
1SG:FUT-MR:kill-CONST   pig   two   ADJ-BR:black
'I will kill two black pigs.'

This tolerance for multiply modified noun phrases involving numerals extends even to constructions in which the numeral itself is accompanied by an adverbial modifier. In the following, *haiten wocon* 'only one' and *viroc* 'small' appear in the same noun phrase:

Kamli-vai   *[kilkil haiten wocon viroc].*
1PL.EXCL:RECPAST-BR:take   hook   one   only   small
'We took only one small hook.'

It is possible for both numerals and demonstratives to accompany a noun phrase, and no preferences for phrase-internal ordering are expressed. The following are therefore all considered to be grammatical:

nompcahi nduru n-acumsu   yihi
pig   two   ADJ-BR:black   this

nompcahi nduru yihi n-acumsu
pig   two   this ADJ-BR:black

nompcahi yihi nduru n-acumsu
pig   this two   ADJ-BR:black
'these two black pigs'

However, the stylistic preference, as suggested by statistical preference in spontaneous texts, is for the demonstrative to appear phrase-finally, as in the first example.

6.1.3 Coordinate Noun Phrases

The clausal coordinators *ku* 'or' and *im* 'and' (§8.7) are also used to coordinate noun phrases, for example:

K-ampai   *[nelat ku noki].*
2SG:FUT-MR:take   meat   or   coconut
'You will take some meat or coconut.'

When sequential numerals are coordinated disjunctively within a noun phrase, the conjunction is optionally deleted. Thus, compare the following:

Canduc   *[neve-n*   *noki*   *ndehel ku ndvat].*
3SG:FUT-MR:mix   shell-CONST   coconut   three   or   four
'(S)he will mix three or four coconut shells.'

Yi-talgi   *[nempgon nduru ndehel].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:pour   time   two   three
'He poured it two or three times.'

The conjunctive coordinator is *im*, with the variant *mi* being very occasionally attested. Thus:

Kampai   *[nelat im   noki].*
2SG:FUT-MR:take   meat   and   coconut
'You will take some meat and coconut.'

[Nomotet mi Johnny] rumo-se-i   *tovura.*
Nomotet and Johnny   3PL:DEPPAST-spear-CONST   whale
'Nomotet and Johnny were spearing the whale.'

It is more common, however, for noun phrase coordination to be expressed by the proclitic *m-*, which is attached to the initial element of the second phrase, as in:

[Nate m-r-ave-n-me   *nogkon] ndum-omonki*   *nacave.*
father and-PL-friend-3SG-PL some   3PL:DEPPAST-BR:drink   kava
'Father and some of his friends were drinking kava.'

When the coordinated noun phrase includes a premodifier, the coordinator is attached to whatever happens to be the initial element of the noun phrase. Thus:

Kaml-ovon-or   *[nompcahi m-ovon nikau].*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:give-3PL   pig   and-PL   prawn
'We gave them the pig and the prawns.'

It is possible for more than two noun phrases to be coordinated, with either all non-initial noun phrases being separated by a coordinator, or with the coordinator only being inserted between the final two noun phrases. Thus:

Uvulyoru yi-vai-sac   *[ov-nei m-noki*   *m-syame-su].*
cyclone   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:take-up   PL-tree   and-coconut   and-things-every
'The wind lifted up the trees and coconuts and everything.'

Yamochi (<yam-ocəh-i)   *[Telyen Tom Mougo m-Nayou].*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:see-CONST   Telyen   Tom   Mougo   and-Nayou
'I saw Telyen, Tom, Mougo and Nayou.'

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A noun phrase can be coordinated with a free pronoun in the same way, with the verb being marked for number and person according to the "sum" of the individual coordinated subjects, as illustrated by the following:

[Yau   m-avu-g-hai]   *kamu-ve.*
1SG   and-brother-1SG-brother 1DL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:go
'Me and my brother went.'

[Yau   m-Joe   m-Roro] *kal-amsocwap*   *pumroc.*
1SG   and-Joe and-Roro 1PL.EXCL:FUT-MR:fish   night
'Me, Joe and Roro will go fishing at night.'

It is also possible for postmodifiers of the same structural and semantic set within a structurally simple noun phrase to be coordinated in the same way. In the following example, the derived adjectives *nehvo* 'white and *navlar* 'red' are used to refer to the head *nimo* 'building', which is characterized by both of these colours:

nimo   n-ehvo   m-n-avlar
building ADJ-BR:white   and-ADJ-BR:red
'white and red building'

6.1.4 Apposition

Appositive noun phrases involve two structurally equal and unmarked noun phrases in which one semantically modifies the other. In appositive constructions in Sye, the first noun phrase invariably consists of just a simple unmodified head, while the second noun phrase exhibits the full range of structural possibilities for any noun phrase as described in this section.

Personal names are often apposed to kin terms. This is most frequently encountered with words for 'father' and 'mother', allowing people to distinguish their biological parents, with whom the kin term is used with no apposed personal name, from classificatory mothers and fathers, with whom the kin term is used in apposition to a personal name. Thus, *nate* '(biological) father' contrasts with *nate Nompwat* 'Nompwat (who is my father's brother)'. This construction can also be used with *ave-...-hai* 'same sex sibling' when the relationship is classificatory rather than biological. Thus, *avughai* 'my (biological) brother' contrasts with *avughai Torilwo* 'Torilwo (who is my classificatory brother)'.

In the written register—though not in speech—a noun referring to a person's position in society or kinship relationship with the addressee can be apposed to a pronoun referring either to the writer of the message or the recipient. Thus:

yau apmu-hai   *kik   tavsogi   ra   nur   igko*
1SG brother:2SG-brother   2SG   TEACHER   POSS place here
'I, your brother'   'you, the teacher from this place'

There is a set of synonymous address terms which can be used as generic terms to refer to people, either as address terms or referentially. These forms are *apmu*, *oreli*, *aragi* or *novo* in the singular, and *ovragi* or *ovreli* in the plural. These belong in the class of proper nouns in that they cannot be accompanied by premodifiers or postmodifiers or any kind. Thus:

Oreli   *cam-namarat.*   *Ovreli,*   *u-velom-la!*
that.person 3SG:PRES-MR:sick   PL:that.person   2PL:IMP-BR:come-PREC
'(S)he is sick.'   'Folks, please come over here!'

Personal names are frequently (though by no means obligatorily) apposed to one of these generic proper nouns, for example

[Apmu   *Nompwat]* *coc-velom-su.*
that.person Nompwat   3SG.RECPAST-BR:come-PERF
'Nompwat has come.'

The form *nen* can be apposed to any noun, whether it has human or non-human reference. This is usually used as a hesitation device while the speaker is thinking of the appropriate noun, for example:

Ru-vai   *[nen*   *tep]*   *mu-velom.*
3PL:DISTPAST-BR:take thingy tape.recorder PL:ES-BR:come
'They brought the tape recorder.'

Locational nouns are often apposed to the generic common noun *nur* 'place', especially when there is a preceding preposition (§7.1.3.1), for example:

Yi-ve   *ra*   *[nur*   *Potac].*
3SG:DISTPAST:BR:go GOAL place Ipota
'(S)he went to Ipota.'

A noun phrase expressing the name of something is often apposed to the noun *nin* 'his/her/its name' when the named entity is preceded by a noun referring to a more general class of things. Thus:

Hai   *nemetagi* *[ni-n*   *Uma]* *yi-ta-i*   *nur*   *Vila.*
INDEF cyclone   name-3SG Uma 3SG:DISTPAST-BR:hit-CONST   place Vila
'A cyclone called Uma struck Vila.'

Names that appear as complements to the verb *ocu* 'say' in the indefinite subject construction (§7.1.2) are often also apposed to the noun *nin*, for example:

Ntal *ma* *cum-agku*   *[ni-n*   *ntal* *yomol].*
taro that 3PL:PRES-MR:say name-3SG taro kind.of.taro
'That taro is called *yomol* taro.'

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6.2 Prepositional Phrases

A preposition is a form that appears at the beginning of a prepositional phrase, and which, in certain situations, is the only occupant of the prepositional phrase. Prepositions in Sye fall into three subtypes: free prepositions, nominal prepositions and verbal prepositions.

Free prepositions are those which are morphologically invariant when they are followed by a noun phrase. There are seven forms in this set: *(na)ndu* 'singular accompanitive', *ndal* 'plural accompanitive', *potpot* 'proximate', *hogku(su)* 'similitive', *narigi* 'topic of (locution)' *ra* 'spatial/causal' and *(o)gi* 'instrumental/oblique'. The range of semantic roles expressed by each of these forms is described in more detail in §7.1.3.4.

Prepositional phrases involving free prepositions generally have the structure PREPOSITION + NP, in which the NP constituent can be either a noun or an independent pronoun, for example:

nandu	*kik*		*potpot*	*nimo*
ACC.SG	2SG		near	house
'with you'			'near the house'	

However, the the NP slot can have a zero occupant when the NP has been moved, or is reconstructible from the linguistic or non-linguistic context, resulting in the preposition being stranded, for example:

Ave-n-hai	*Nompwat yococ-ve*	*nandu.*
brother-CONST-brother	Nompwat 1SG:RECPAST-BR:go	ACC.SG
'It was Nompwat's brother who I went with.'		

Sau	*ihen*	*yococ-se-i*	*nomu*	*ogi.*
spear	POSS:3SG	1SG:RECPAST-spear-CONST	fish	INST
'It was his/her spear that I speared the fish with.'				

The preposition *hogku(su)* 'similitive' differs from the remaining free prepositions in that it cannot be stranded. When this form governs a moved third person singular noun phrase, it must be followed by the free third person singular pronoun *iyi*, for example:

Yocochi (<yaco-ocəh-i)	*nalau mori kem-navan*		*hogkusu*	*iyi/*Ø.*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:see-CONST	child REL 2SG:PRES-MR:walk	SIM	3SG	
'I saw the child who you walk like.'				

The prepositions *ra* and *gi* (but not its variant *ogi*) also behave differently to the remaining free prepositions, in two respects. Firstly, they cannot be stranded, and when the governed NP is fronted or recoverable from the context, the prepo-

sitions are cliticized to the preceding verb, in the shapes *-wi* and *-gi* respectively. Thus, corresponding to:

Ndu-seni   nvag gi   ndau.
3PL:DISTPAST-cover   food INST heliconia.leaf
'They covered the food with the heliconia leaves.'

we find:

Ndau   ma ndu-seni-gi   nvag.
heliconia.leaf FOC 3PL:DISTPAST-cover-INSTPRO   food
'It was heliconia leaves that they covered the food with.'

Similarly, corresponding to:

Kim-alei   ra   nimo enyau   mampum.
2PL:DISTPAST-BR:stay LOC   house POSS:1SG before
'You all stayed in my house before.'

we find:

Nimo enyau   ma kim-alei-wi   mampum.
house POSS:1SG FOC 2PL:DISTPAST-BR:stay-LOCPRO   before
'It was my house that you all stayed in before.'

These forms are treated as clitics because they count as the final syllable of the preceding word for stress-assignment purposes (§2.3). The regular word-internal morphophonemic rules set out in §2.5 also apply between the final segment of the verb and the initial segment of the clitic. Thus, from:

E'tehep   'ra-nei.
2SG:IMP-BR:sit   LOC-log
'Sit on the log.'

we can derive the following by the rule set out in §2.5.1.2:

Ete'hevwi (<etehep-wi)
2SG:IMP-BR:sit-LOCPRO
'Sit on it.'

Similarly, from:

'Oruc   'gi-sop.
2SG:IMP-BR:bathe   INST-soap
'Bathe with the soap.'

we derive the following by the rule described in §2.5.1.3:

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O'rukgi (<oruc-gi).
2SG:IMP-BR:bathe-INSTPRO
'Bathe with it.'

The prepositions *ra* and *gi* further differ from the remaining free prepositions in that they are normally associated only with noun phrases that have non-human reference. When the governed noun phrase has human reference, the prepositional meanings must be expressed respectively by the corresponding nominal preposition *ira-* and the verbal preposition *wog-*.

Nominal prepositions are those which accept pronominal suffixes identical in shape to bound possessive nouns, as described in §3.2.2.2. The full set of such prepositions are listed in §5.2. When these forms govern a pronoun, the pronominal category is expressed by means of a pronominal suffix, for example:

nisco-m
BEN-2SG
'for you'

However, when they govern a noun, they appear with the construct suffix, which has the same shape as the third person singular pronominal suffix, that is *-n* (§6.1.2.3), for example:

nisco-n   uyou
BEN-CONST   grandmother
'for grandmother'

Verbal prepositions are also obligatorily suffixed, though they differ from nominal prepositions in that their pronominal suffixes are identical to the object suffixes found on plain verbs (§4.3.1.1). The membership of this set is listed exhaustively in §5.2. We therefore find forms such as the following, in which the preposition governs a pronoun:

pehnur-coh
before-1PL.INCL
'before us'

The construct suffix with such prepositions is *-i*, so with a following noun we find constructions such as the following:

pehnur-i   ovonyan
before-CONST PL:child
'before the children'

As is pointed out in §6.3.1 with respect to suffixed transitive verbs, some—especially older—speakers sometimes omit the construct suffix with a following object, and the same speakers sometimes also omit the construct suffix on verbal prepositions. The sequences of preposition-final consonant and NP-initial segment are then treated as if the boundary were a word-internal one by the rules set out in §2.5.1. Note, however, that the two forms continue to be stressed as separate words. We therefore find alternations such as the following, with the forms on the left representing the most widespread pattern and the forms on the right being more characteristic of older people:

pog-i	*ovoteme*		*poc*	*ovoteme*
DAT-CONST	PL:person		DAT	PL:person'
'to the people'			'to the people'	

ntovni (<ntovən-i)	*ndinme*		*ntovon (<ntovən)*	*ndinme*
PURP-CONST	mother:3SG		PURP	mother:3SG
'for his/her mother'			'for his/her mother'	

Both nominal and verbal prepositions can be stranded, though an appropriate pronominal trace is marked on the preposition. Thus, from:

Yacam-nacyog-i	*wor-ete*	*isut*	*[ira-n*	*Winnie].*
1SG:PRES-MR:want-CONST	PURP-BR:stay	long.way	LOC-CONST	Winnie
'I want to stay a long way from Winnie.'				

we can derive the following:

Winnie	*ma*	*yacam-nacyog-i*	*wor-ete*	*isut*	*ira-n.*
Winnie	FOC	1SG:PRES-MR:want-CONST	PURP-BR:stay	long.way	LOC-3SG
'It is Winnie that I want to stay a long way from.'					

6.3 Verb Phrases

While noun phrases and prepositional phrases in Erromangan can be easily delimited, it is rather more difficult to justify setting up a separate category of verb phrase. However, there are certain phenomena which are indicative of a close grammatical relationship between a verb and a restricted set of following constituents, which it will be convenient to describe in this chapter as verb phrases. It should be noted, however, that the verb phrase as it is described in Erromangan does not correspond to what is often referred to in the same way in grammars of other languages.

6.3.1 Verb-Object Sequences

The grammatical sequence of VERB + OBJECT is an especially close one, in that there can be no other lexical constituent intervening between a verb and its object.

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With the subset of unsuffixed transitive verbs, which receive no morphological marking for the pronominal category of the object, nominal and pronominal objects are simply expressed by means of immediately following nouns or independent pronouns. Thus:

Yi-sompat   stowa.
3SG:DISTPAST-close   store
'(S)he closed the store.'

When no bound morpheme intervenes between an unsuffixed transitive verb and a following pronominal object, monosyllabic pronouns are attached to the preceding verb as clitics, with the entire unit of verb plus pronoun being stressed as a single word (§2.3). This process of clitic attachment does not take place with the disyllabic pronouns *kimi* '2PL' and *iror* '3PL'. Thus:

Y-etipe-kik.	*Y-etipe iror.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:appoint-2SG	3SG:DISTPAST-BR:appoint 3PL
'(S)he appointed you.'	'(S)he appointed them.'

If there is any morpheme intervening between a verb and a monosyllabic pronominal object, the independent pronoun retains its phonologically independent status. Thus:

Y-etipe-su   kik.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:appoint-PERF   2SG
'(S)he already appointed you.'

When the object of such a verb is a third person singular pronoun, this is normally expressed by zero, that is:

Y-etipe   Ø.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:appoint   3SG
'(S)he appointed him/her.'

Occsasionally, however, especially when the object has human rather than non-human reference, it is possible for the third person singular pronoun *iyi* to be used. Thus, the example just presented could appear also as follows, with no change of meaning:

Y-etipe   iyi.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:appoint   3SG
'(S)he appointed him/her.'

With the verb *sompat* 'close', for which an inanimate noun phrase is the only pragmatically likely object, a third person singular pronominal object is almost exclusively expressed as zero, as in the following:

Yi-sompat   *Ø.*
3SG:DISTPAST-close   3SG
'(S)he closed it.'

When a suffixed transitive verb is associated with an object, the verb appears with a suffix that is identical in shape with the third person singular pronominal marker—referred to as the construct form—when the object is a noun. With the greatest number of suffixed verbs, the construct suffix is *-i*, while with that small number of verbs referred to in §4.3.1.2 as possessive verbs, the construct suffix is *-n*. Thus:

Ovrog-i   *ovonyan.*   *Atovni-n*   *ovonyan.*
2SG:IMP-BR:call-CONST PL:child   2SG:IMP-BR:NAME-CONST PL:child
'Call the children!'   'Name the children!'

While no lexical material can appear between a construct suffix on a verb and the following object, the post-object suffixes described in §4.4 can appear in this environment. Thus:

Konisu (<ko-en-i-su)   *nvag?*
2SG:RECPAST-BR:eat-CONST-PERF   food
'Have you had something to eat?'

While the construct suffix is uniformly present when there is a following noun object with the vast majority of speakers, the textual corpus includes a scattering of instances in which the final *-i* of plain suffixed verbs is not present. We therefore find:

Yi-tour-i   *ovon* *kuri.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:lead-CONST PL   dog
'He went hunting (lit. "lead the dogs").'

alternating occasionally with:

Yi-tour   *ovon* *kuri.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:lead PL   dog
'He went hunting (lit. "lead the dogs").'

Such constructions are almost exclusively restricted to the speech of people in their seventies (or older), though younger speakers occasionally produce random instances of such constructions. Younger people judge such constructions prescriptively as "better" than those in which the construct suffix is present, despite the rarity of such forms in their own speech. These facts suggest that the construct suffix on verbs may be a relatively recent innovation in Erromangan. If this is the case, however, it certainly became established very rapidly.

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When the construct suffix is absent, the preceding verb root behaves as if the following noun were morphologically bound to it, and the various morphophonemic rules set out in §2.5 are brought into play. We therefore find the following kinds of alternations:

(i) When the verb root ends in *ok-*, *og-* or *ogk-*, these sequences become *oc* before any segment other than a velar consonant when there is no construct suffix (§2.5.1.1). We therefore find alternations of the following kinds:

Y-oryok-i   *nitni.*   *Yoryoc*   *nitni.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:pick.up-CONST   child:3SG   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:pick.up   child:3SG
'(S)he picked up his/her child.'

Y-ovog-i   *ovoteme.*   *Yovoc*   *ovoteme.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:give-CONST   PL:person   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:give   PL:person
'(S)he gave it to the people.'

(ii) Underlying schwa is realized as either *o* (or, very occasionally, *e*) or zero according to the rule described in §2.5.2.7. Thus:

Yochi (<yi-ocəh-i)   *ovoteme.*   *Yoch (<yi-ocəh)*   *ovoteme.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:see-CONST   PL:person   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:see   PL:person
'(S)he saw the people.'

Yochi (<yi-ocəh-i)   *ndinme.*   *Yocoh (<yi-ocəh)*   *ndinme.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:see-CONST   mother:3SG   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:see   mother:3SG
'(S)he saw his/her mother.'

6.3.2 Dummy Verb Construction

The only verbs of Bislama origin in Sye that can be directly preceded by inflectional prefixes are *suwit* 'sweet' (for which the indigenous equivalent *ompu* is now obsolescent), *tanis* 'perform modern style of dance' (which alternates with *empcu*, referring to both modern and traditional dancing), and *traim* 'try' (which is more frequently expressed by the indigenous form *tapmi*). All other verbs of Bislama origin must be expressed phrasally by means of the initial inflected verb *ompi* 'do, make', which is followed by the borrowed item as a separate lexical item. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Yoco-nompi   *stori*   *gi*   *nemetagi.*
1SG:FUT-MR:do   tell.story   about   cylcone
'I will tell a story about the cyclone.'

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Y-ompi   *slaik*   *wocon.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:do   tired   very
'(S)he was very tired.'

6.3.3 Causative

There is a causative construction in which the action that is brought about by an external agent is expressed by placing the caused action by placing the uninflected basic root of the verb as a separate word after the inflected causative verb *om-*, with the subject of the caused verb being expressed as the pronominal object of the causative verb (§4.3.1.1). The caused verb can be either stative or active, as illustrated by the following:

C-am-kor   *omurep.*   *Y-ov-yau*   *etehep.*
3SG:FUT-MR:CAUS-3PL   BR:alive   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:CAUS-1SG   BR:sit
'(S)he will bring them to life.'   '(S)he sat me down.'

The verb appearing after the causative verb can be either intransitive, as in the examples just presented, or it can be a transitive verb with with an object, for example:

Yac-am-kik   *omonki*   *nu.*
1SG:FUT-MR:CAUS-2SG   BR:drink water
'I will make you drink water.'

    This construction has a defective paradigm in that it cannot be used with either a noun as the subject of the caused verb, or a third person singular pronoun. Thus, in order to express meanings such as 'I will bring the people to life' or 'I will bring him/her to life' a second causative construction—described in §4.5.1—must be used.

6.3.4 Verbal Postmodifiers

There is a small number of verbal postmodifiers which have in common the fact that they are obligatorily associated with a pronoun that agrees with the pronominal category of the subject of the verb.

(i) Pe- *'regardless, in spite of everything'*

Pe- has the same paradigm as the pronominal postmodifier described in Table 6.1, and it indicates that the subject of the verb will perform the action in spite of adverse circumstances. This form appears with the same pronominal marking as the verbal subject, for example:

Kamli-ve   *pe-kam.*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:go   regardless-1PL.EXCL
'We went regardless.'

(ii) Sinvango *'naked'*

The form *sinvango* 'naked' behaves in the same way as an unsuffixed transitive verb in that it is obligatorily followed by an independent pronoun, or, in the case of a third person singular pronominal object, by zero. However, *sinvango* is clearly not a verb itself because it accepts no verbal prefixation of any kind. Thus:

Kaml-oruc   *sinvango kam.*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-MR:bathe   naked   1PL.EXCL
'We all bathed naked.'

Cam-naleipo   *sinvango Ø.*
3SG:PRES-MR:sleep   naked   3SG
'(S)he sleeps naked.'

(iii) Kinta- *'backwards'*

This modifier accepts pronominal suffixes that are identical with those that express possession on bound nouns (§3.2.2.2). These suffixes express the same pronominal category as the subject of the verb. Thus:

Avan   *m-torilki*   *kinta-m!*
2SG:IMP-BR:walk   SG:ES-BR:return   backwards-2SG
'Walk balkwards!'

Yam-avan   *m-torilki*   *kinta-g.*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:walk   SG:ES-BR:return   backwards-1SG
'I walked backwards.'

(iv) No-. . .-go *'barefoot'*

The form *no-* is a bound noun meaning 'foot', though it can also function as a verbal postmodifier, in which case it carries a pronominal possessive suffix that agrees with the pronominal category of the subject, as well as the restrictive suffix *-go* 'only' (§5.4). As a verb modifier, *no-*. . .*-go* indicates that the action is performed barefoot, for example:

Ndw-avan   *no-nd-go.*
3PL:DISTPAST-BR:walk   foot-3PL-REST
'They walked barefoot.'

Yam-avan   *nogo (<no-g-go).*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:walk   foot-1SG-REST
'I walked barefoot.'

(v) Hai eni *'by oneself'*

The indefinite premodifier *hai* can be followed by a possessive pronoun (§3.1.2), with the possessive pronoun marking the same pronominal category as that which is expressed in the subject, to express the idea of 'by oneself' or 'on one's own', for example:

Yac-antur   *hai*   *enyau.*
1SG:FUT-MR:stand   INDEF POSS:1SG
'I will stand by myself.'

When both an object and any of the verbal postmodifiers just described is present, the object immediately follows the verb, and the modifier follows the object, as in:

Yoco-nta-i   *nompcahi pe-yau.*
1SG:FUT-MR:kill-CONST   pig   regardless-1SG
'I will still kill the pig (even though I have been told not to).'

Yac-ahpi   *netai sinvango yau.*
1SG:FUT-MR:read book naked   1SG
'I will read the book naked.'

There is one additional verbal postmodifier whose appearance is not dependent on the inflectional categories marked on the verb, and that is the negative constituent *tawi*. This is described in §7.1.1 as a marker of negation in non-verbal clauses. However, it can also appear after a verb phrase that itself contains inflectional marking in order to express emphatic negation. Thus:

Kotwaghi (<ko-etu-agkəh-i)   *nokimpat*   *tawi.*
2SG:NEG:FUT-MR:see-CONST   kind.of.palm NEG
'You won't see any *nokimpat* palms at all.'

6.4 Universal Modifiers

Finally, there is a small set of phrasal modifiers which are not restricted to occurring with a particular type of phrase, or to words of a particular word class, so these are referred to as universal modifiers. The only forms of this type are *wocon* 'very, only' and *momu* 'more, again'. These can modify a variety of noun-phrase internal constituents, as in:

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hai	*momu*	*netai*		*netai*	*hai momu*		*netai*	*armai*	*wocon*
INDEF	more	book		book	onemore		book	good	very
'another book'				'one more book'			'very good book'		

However, they can also modify verbs, as in:

Cam-naleipo	*wocon.*		*Cam-naleipo*	*momu.*
3SG:PRES-MR:sleep	only		3SG:PRES-MR:sleep	again
'(S)he only sleeps.'			'(S)he is sleeping again.'	

and they can also modify adverbs, for example:

C-ampelom	*[mran*	*wocon].*
3SG:FUT-MR:come	tomorrow	only
'(S)he will only come tomorrow.'		

7: SIMPLE SENTENCES

7.1 Basic Clause Types

This section describes the internal structure of indicative clauses in which the core arguments appear in their underlying positions. Following this is a discussion of interrogative clauses, and the kinds of constituent movement rules that are encountered in the language.

7.1.1 Non-Verbal Clauses

Non-verbal clauses are those which consist of a nominal topic and a following non-verbal comment. The topic in such constructions can be either a pronoun or a noun, as illustrated by the following, in which the topic and comment are each surrounded by square brackets:

[Kik] [hai   nahiven armai].
2SG   INDEF woman   good
'You are a good woman.'

[Noclehram (<nocleh   ira-m)]   [nacave].
body   POSS-2SG kava
'Your body is the kava.'

When the topic is a specific unmodified noun, it is more common for it to be followed in a topic-comment construction by the topic marker *cum* demonstrative *ma* (§6.1.2.2), which indicates that the noun phrase represents given information, with the new information following in the comment, for example:

[Natmah ma]   [natmah itnahiven].
devil   TOPIC   devil   female
'The devil was a she-devil.'

When the topic is a generic noun, it is not followed by the topic marker, and there is usually instead an independent third person pronoun between the topic and the comment, as in the following:

[Morei]   iyi [hai   nvag nimsi-n   ndan nemetagi].
fermented.breadfruit 3SG INDEF food PURP-CONST time cyclone
'Fermented breadfruit is a food for times of cyclone.'

The comment can take a variety of forms, with the examples just cited involving a range of noun phrase comments. The comment can also be an adjective, a prepositional phrase, a demonstrative or a possessive pronoun, for example:

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[Kik] [armai].
2SG   good
'You are good.'

[Ovon nogkli-n   nei ginmah] [ra nocugo].
PL   leaf-CONST tree many   LOC road
'Many leaves of trees were on the road.'

[Ovn-se] [yihi]?
PL-what   this
'What are these?'

[Nvag] [horom].
food   POSS:2SG
'The food is yours.'

There is one constituent which only ever appears in the comment position within a non-verbal clause, and that is the form which has the following shapes:

hi   after forms ending in i
ho   after forms ending in o
he   elsewhere

These forms appear as comments after nominal or pronominal topics, and they indicate that the referent of the topic noun phrase is being pointed at, for example:

Eteme   he.   Iyi   hi.
other.one that's.it   3SG   that's.it
'That's the other one.'   'That's him/her.'

Non-verbal clauses are also involved in the expression of ambient events, in which the existence of some entity or the pertinence of some state is simply asserted with no topic expressed, and the comment appears on its own. Thus:

[Pwarap].   [Ov-nikau wocon m-nasi].
afternoon   PL-prawn   only   and-shellfish
'It is afternoon.'   'There were only prawns and shellfish.'

Topicless comments of this type are often used to introduce the topic of a story, for example:

Noki   m-nacave.
coconut and-kava
'(This story is about) the coconut and the kava.'

Ambient clauses of this type can include the normal range of additional clause-level constituents that lie outside the comment itself, such as temporal adverbs (§7.1.3.1), for example:

[Nevip]   ninu.
rain   yesterday
'There was rain yesterday.'

A topic can also have zero realization when it has been previously mentioned in the discourse. We therefore find the following prepositional phrase function-ing as a comment to a previously mentioned noun phrase topic referring to the powers of the kava spirit:

[Nimsi-n   came-nta-i   ovoteme].
PURP-CONST   3SG:PRES-MR:kill-CONST   people
'It is for killing people.'

There is no lexical verb in Sye meaning 'have' or 'possess'. This meaning can only be expressed by presenting a possessive noun phrase in the comment slot in a topicless non-verbal clause. Thus:

[Hai   netai enyau].
INDEF   book POSS:1SG
'I have got a book.'

Negation with verbal clauses is expressed by means of the prefix *etu-/etwo-* (§4.2.2.5). With non-verbal clauses, however, negation is expressed by the free form negator *tawi* (or its shortened variant *tau*) which appears between the topic and the comment. Thus:

[Yau]   tawi   [nahiven].   *[Nu   mayuwi]   tawi   [nomu].*
1SG   NEG   woman   river there   NEG   fish
'I am not a woman.'   'The river there has no fish.'

Topicless non-verbal clauses are negated in the same way, with *tawi* appearing before the ambient comment. Thus:

Tawi   [yau].   *Tawi   [nvat   enyau].*
NEG   1SG   NEG   money   POSS:1SG
'It was not me.'   'I've got no money.'

In fact, the negative marker *tawi* can independently mark either topic or com-ment, for example:

Tawi [kik] [ra   ovis   horo-m].   [Kik] tawi [ra   ovis   horo-m].
NEG   2SG   LOC office POSS-2SG   2SG   NEG   LOC office POSS-2SG
'It wasn't you in your office.'   'You were not in your office.'

When the negative marker appears before a comment that begins with the indefinite premodifier *hai*, the sequence of *tawi* is generally—though not obligatorily—realized irregularly as a single word *ta-hai*, as described in §6.1.2.1. Thus:

Ta-[hai   nomu].   Ta-[hai   nvag eniror].
NEG-INDEF fish   NEG-INDEF FOOD POSS:3PL
'There are no fish.'   'They have no food.'

With verbs, the emphatic negative is expressed discontinuously by means of the prefix *etu-/etwo-* and the post-object suffix *-hai* (§4.4). Emphatic negation with non-verbal clauses is expressed by adding the negative emphatic marker *-hai* directly to *tawi*, which is then phonologically reduced in the same way to *ta-*. Thus, contrast the following unmarked and emphatic negative constructions:

[Kik] tawi [armai].   [Kik]   ta-hai   [armai].
2SG   NEG   good   2SG   NEG-EMPH good
'You are not good.'   'You are not good at all.'

The negative marker *tawi* can appear on its own in a clause with no overt topic or comment, functioning as a pro-verb, referring to a negatively inflected verb. Thus:

Koc-vai   ku tawi?   Koc-vai-su?   Tawi-la.
2SG:RECPAST-BR:take or NEG   2SG:RECPAST-BR:take-PERF NEG-CONT
'Did you take it or not?'   'Have you taken already taken it? Not yet.'

These sentences could be expressed fully as follows (though such forms would be rarely encountered):

Koc-vai   ku kotuvai (<ko-etu-vai)?
2SG:RECPAST-BR:take or 2SG:RECPAST-NEG-BR:take
'Did you take it or did you not take it?'

Koc-vai-su?   Yocotuvaila (<yaco-etu-vai-la).
2SG:RECPAST-BR:take-PERF   1SG:RECPAST-NEG-BR:take-CONT
'Have you taken already taken it? I have not taken it yet.'

Tawi is frequently used after the conditional subordinator *nagku* 'if' in conditional constructions such as the following where a hypothetical negative event is being contrasted with another event, as in the following:

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Nagku tawi, yac-ante   ra   nimo.
if   NEG   1SG:FUT-MR:stay   LOC   house
'If it doesn't happen, I will stay at home.'

While Sye clearly belongs typologically to the set of subject-prominent rather than topic-prominent languages (Li and Thompson 1976), we still find instances in the corpus of topic-comment patterns that are structurally parallel to what we find in topic-prominent languages such as Chinese. There may be an initial topic, with a comment consisting of an entire clause, with the topic and the comment separated by an intonation break. Thus:

Yau, tawi nvat.
1SG   NEG   money

would not normally be interpreted as 'I am not money' (though such an interpretation would be logically possible). Rather, it would normally be interpreted with *yau* 'I' as the topic, about which is asserted *tawi nvat* 'there is no money', that is 'As for me, there is no money', that is, 'I have no money'.

The comment clause in such cases can also be a verbal clause, for example:

Nmap ra   nur   igko, cutumnowi (<cu-etu-emo-nowi)   nup.
soil   LOC   place here   3PL:RECPAST-NEG-*EM*-MR:plant   yam
'As for the soil here, yams are not planted.'

In this case, the topic which is being addressed is the soil in this particular place, about which the assertion is made that yams are not planted because, presumably, the soil is not of the right kind.

7.1.2 Verbal Clauses

The basic constituent order in verbal clauses is *SVO*. Sentences such as the following, which contain both nominal subjects and objects surrounded by square brackets, illustrate this pattern:

[Nompcahi]   y-omol.
pig   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:fall
'The pig fell down.'

[Ovon kuri] nduchi (<ndu-ocəh-i)   [hai   sanwis   nmah].
PL   dog   3PL:DISTPAST-BR:see-CONST   INDEF   wild.boar   big
'The dogs saw a big wild boar.'

Pronominal objects to unsuffixed verbs also enter into this kind of construction (§6.3.1), for example:

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[Natmonuc] y-etipe   *[kimi].*
chief   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:appoint   2PL
'The chief appointed you all.'

Locational nouns generally do not occupy the syntactic slots of verbal subject or object. When such nouns are associated with the semantic roles expressed by subjects or objects, they are generally—though not obligatorily—apposed to the common generic noun *nur* 'place' (§6.1.4), as in:

[Hai   nemetagi orog] yi-ta-i   *[nur Vila].*
INDEF cyclone big   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:strike-CONST   place Vila
'A great cyclone struck Vila.'

With suffixed verbs involving pronominal patients, there is no post-verbal object phrase, as the object is marked by means of a verbal suffix (§4.3.1). Compare unsuffixed *etipe* 'appoint' above with the suffixed verb *ta-* 'strike':

[Hai   nemetagi orog] yi-ta-cum.
INDEF cyclone big   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:strike-2PL
'A great cyclone struck you all.'

With pronominal subjects, the subject position is normally unoccupied, with the full load of marking the various pronominal categories falling on the verbal prefixes (§4.2.2). This means that a verbal clause can consist minimally of just a verb and its accompanying subject and object affixes, for example:

Y-omol.   *Yi-ta-coh.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:fall   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:strike-1PL.INCL
'It fell.'   'It struck us.'

There is a small set of ditransitive verbs with which two unmarked noun phrases can follow the verb. The only verbs of this type are set out in Table 7.1, with the semantic roles of the first and second objects as indicated. A pronominally marked object expresses the roles listed in Table 7.1 under the heading for the first object. Thus:

Y-ovog-i   *[Nompwat] [nvag].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:give-CONST Nompwat   food
'(S)he gave the food to Nompwat.'

Y-ovon-[oc]   *[nvag].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:give-2SG   food
'(S)he gave you the food.'

Yac-anpog-i   *[ovonyan]*   *[hai   uvuvu itetwai].*
1SG:FUT-MR:tell-CONST   PL:child   INDEF story traditional
'I will tell the children a traditional story.'

Table 7.1 Ditransitive Verbs

		First object	*Second object*
ovog-	'give'	RECIPIENT	OBJECT GIVEN
en(u)pog-	'tell'	RECIPIENT	UTTERANCE
ovrog-	'call'	ENTITY CALLED	NAME
atovni-	'name'	ENTITY NAMED	NAME

Cuvrogi (<cu-ovrog-i)   *[nur ma]*   *[Telauvat]*.
3PL:RECPAST-BR:call-CONST   place that Telauvat
'They called that place Telauvat.'

Cw-atovni-n   *[nevyarep ma] [Nompwat]*.
3PL:RECPAST-BR:name-CONST   boy   that Nompwat
'They named that boy Nompwat.'

With monotransitive verbs, the recipient is expressed by the dative preposition *pog-* (§7.1.3.4). This preposition cannot be used with verbs belonging to the subset of ditransitive verbs. Thus, compare the monotransitive verb *tamul-* 'send' in the following example:

Yi-tamul-i   *nvat*   *pog-kam*.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:send-CONST money DAT-1PL.EXCL
'(S)he sent us money.'

*Yi-tamul-cam   *nvat*.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:send-1PL.EXCL money

with the ditransitive verb *ovog-* 'give' in the following examples:

Y-ovog-kam   *nvat*.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:give-1PL.EXCL money
'(S)he gave us money.'

*Y-ovog-i   *nvat*   *pog-kam*.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:give-CONST money DAT-1PL.EXCL

In §6.3.1 it was pointed out that no lexical constituent can appear between a transitive verb and its object. This restriction does not hold with ditransitive verbs, however, which do allow adverbial constituents to appear between the verb and the first object. Thus:

Yac-ampog-i   *marima* *[Nompwat]* *[nvag]*.
1SG:FUT-MR:give-CONST now   Nompwat   food
'I will now give Nompwat the food.'

As indicated in §6.1.1, the subject slot can be occupied by a free pronoun to express contrastive stress. However, an active verb carrying third person plural subject marking can be used to express a non-specific agent, with the subject slot being obligatorily empty. Sye, like many Oceanic languages, has no passive, and this construction allows the expression of semantically agentless clauses. Thus, compare the examples just given with the following:

Cucohcoh (*cu-ocəh-coh*).
3PL:RECPAST-BR:see-1PL.INCL
'We have been seen.'

Cum-amprog-i   *nur*   *ma*   *nur*   *Telauvat*.
3PL:PRES-MR:call-CONST   place   that   place   Telauvat
'That place is called Telauvat.'

If the independent pronoun *iror* 'they' occupies the subject slot, this can only be interpreted as expressing contrastive stress with a referential subject. Thus:

Iror   *cucohcoh* (*<cu-ocəh-coh*).
3PL   3PL-RECPAST-BR:see-1PL.INCL
'*They* saw us.'

7.1.3 Non-Core Arguments

The minimal clause types described in §7.1.1 and §7.1.2 can be expanded by the addition of a variety of non-core arguments, involving prepositional phrases or a variety of unmarked clause-level modifiers.

7.1.3.1 Unmarked Modifiers

Unmarked modifiers are constituents which provide information about the manner in which the action is carried out, add some kind of temporal or spatial information about the locus of the event, or which provide other kinds of semantic detail about the participants in the event, and which are not introduced by a preposition.

(i) *Manner Adverbials*

There are two forms expressing speed or intensity which function exclusively as adverbs of manner: *metuc* 'slowly, softly and *itnom* 'quickly, on time'. These always follow a verb phrase (that is an intransitive verb, or a VERB + OBJECT sequence in the case of transitive verbs). Thus:

Kaml-avan   *[metuc].*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:walk   slowly
'We walked slowly.'

Yi-ta-i   *naram [itnom].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:cut-CONST   banana quickly
'(S)he cut the banana quickly.'

This post-verbal structural slot expressing manner is also freely occupied by adjectives and other nominal postmodifiers functioning adverbially (§6.1.2.2), with no overt marking of their adverbial status. Thus:

Nom   *y-au*   *[ndomo].*
fire   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:burn strong
'The fire burned strongly.'

Ndansukrim   *yi-tampi*   *[avni]*   *yuwi.*
Friday   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:hold.meeting   last   there
'On Friday (s)he held his/her last meeting there.'

Cam-nam   *[itr-ogko].*
3SG:PRES-MR:speak   ADJ-BR:correct
'(S)he is speaking correctly.'

Cam-nomonki   *[ginmah].*
3SG:PRES-MR:drink   much
'(S)he drinks a lot.'

Some adjectives shift somewhat in meaning when they are used adverbially. Note, therefore, the correspondences between adjectival and adverbial uses displayed in Table 7.2. Thus:

Y-amarat   *[ginmah].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:sick   very
'(S)he was very sick.'

Ovoteme   *ndu-taru*   *[itnohog].*
PL:person   3PL:DISTPAST-BR:think   very.much
'The people thought very much.'

Avu-g-hai   *y-am*   *[hai].*
brother-1SG-brother 3SG:DISTPAST-BR:speak   little
'My brother spoke a little.'

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Table 7.2 Nominal Postmodifiers Functioning as Adverbs

Postmodifier meaning   Adverbial meaning

viroc	'small'	'rather, quite a bit'
itnohog	'true'	'very (much)'
ginmah	'many, much'	'very (much)'
nogkon	'some, different'	'anywhere, all over'
nevror	'wrong'	'anyhow'
tantop	'long, tall'	'for a long time'
potcon	'short'	'nearby'
ndomo	'strong'	'very much, vigorously'
hai	'another'	'a little'
haiten	'one'	'together'

Kakw-avan   [haiten].
1PL.EXCL:RECPAST-BR:walk   together
'We walked together.'

Kaml-alou   [nogkon].
1PL.INCL:DISTPAST-BR:run   anywhere
'We ran anywhere.'

The similitive preposition *hogku(su)* 'like' (§7.1.3.4) can also function as an adverbial meaning 'thus', as in:[1]

Ko-nompi   [hogkusu].
2SG:FUT-MR:do   thus
'Do it like this!'

There is a handful of other forms which function exclusively as adverbs of manner, and which occupy a clause-initial position. Forms of this type that have been attested are *nigoi* 'perhaps', *nelwon* 'fortunately' and *itogku* 'obligatorily'.[2] Thus:

[Nelwon]   ntoc   yem-sac.
fortunately   sea   3SG:DEPPAST-ascend
'Fortunately the tide was rising.'

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[1] Alternatively, this could be treated as a preposition with a zero NP (or clause) that refers to a previously mentioned or contextually determined constituent.
[2] The indigenous form *itogku* has largely been replaced by *mas*, from Bislama, which occupies the same structural position.

[Mas]   kaghiveh (<ko-agkəh-i-veh)
OBLIG   2SG:FUT-MR:see-CONST-well
'You must be careful.'

[Nigoi] yac-anwi   hai   uvuvu.
perhaps 1SG:FUT-MR:tell   INDEF traditional.story
'Perhaps I will tell a traditional story.'

(ii) *Time Adverbials*

There is a larger set of adverbs expressing the temporal orientation of an event. This includes *mampum* 'beforehand, earlier', *itetwai* 'a long time ago', *marima* 'now', *indowi* 'forever, continually', *unmeh* 'early', *ndansu* 'always, constantly', and *potpot* 'almost, nearly'. These forms are positionally freer than adverbs of manner in that they can appear either after the verb phrase, or before it. Thus:

Kem-nomonki   nacave [marima].
2SG:PRES-MR:drink   kava   now
'You are drinking kava now.'

[Ndansu] kamemli-vandog   gi   ovn-kuri.
constantly 1PL.EXCL:DEPPAST-BR:listen   OBL PL-dog
'We were constantly listening for the dogs.'

Noun phrases with time reference can also function as temporal adverbials with no additional marking, for example:

[Pumroc] ndu-vai-pelac.
night   3PL:DISTPAST-BR:take-out
'At night they removed it.'

Kamli-tuc   [pruvcum].
1PL.EXCL-BR:get.up   morning
'We got up in the morning.'

Cam-ante   [itais   haiteven].
3SG:PRES-MR:stay   month one
'(S)he is staying for one month.'

Kaml-avan   [nempgon hai   momu].
1PL.EXCL-DISTPAST-BR:walk   time   one   more
'We walked one more time.'

Note that *ndan hai*, when used as a noun phrase means 'another time', but when used adverbially, means 'sometimes':

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[Ndan   hai]   ovon nowatni-n c-antendowi   ra   nmap.
time   another PL   root-3SG   3SG:FUT-MR:remain LOC   ground
'Sometimes its roots will remain in the ground.'

In conjunction with *wik* 'week', *itais* 'month', *nevi* 'year', and names of the days and months, *hai* means 'next' in unmarked adverbial phrases of this type. We therefore find examples such as:

Yoco-ntorilki   [nevi hai].
1SG:FUT-MR:return   year   next
'I will return next year.'

[Ndanworum hai] yoco-nta-i   netwo.
Saturday   next 1SG:FUT-MR:kill-CONST   chicken
'I will kill the chicken next Saturday.'

The verb *ve* 'go' with third person singular recent past inflectional marking, that is *coc-ve*, is also used as a nominal postmodifier in such constructions, with no overt marking for a relative clause, to express the meaning of 'last', as in examples such as the following:

Yococ-torilki   [nevi   cocve].
1SG:RECPAST-BR:return   year   last
'I returned last year.'

The meaning of 'at (an approximate clock time)' is expressed as an unmarked noun phrase introduced by *hai sesai hogku(su)* 'one thing like'. The following example illustrates this construction:

[Hai   sesai hogkusu navleh   nduru] uvulyoru yi-velom
INDEF thing SIM   o'clock two   cyclone   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:come
ndomo.
strong
'At about two o'clock the cyclone became strong.'

(iii) *Place Adverbials*

The final semantic set of unmarked adverbials are those which refer to the spatial orientation of an event. Toponymic nouns can be used with no overt marking in an adverbial slot to express the location, goal or source orientation of an action. Thus:

Yacam-ante   [Unorah].
1SG:PRES-MR:live   Unorah
'I live at Unorah.'

Yoco-hac   *[Umponyelogi].*
1SG:FUT-ascend Umponyelogi.
'I will go up to Umponyelogi.'

Y-emne   *[Potac].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:come.from   Ipota
'(S)he came from Ipota.'

This construction can also involve any of the derived locational nouns (§3.2.1), for example:

Kole-ntorilki   *[u-ntemne]* *marima.*
1PL.INCL:FUT-MR:return   LOC-village now
'We will return to the village now.'

Novohvoh *yem-ete*   *[ihen-wi]*   *[Topipen].*
Novohvoh 3SG:DEPPAST-BR:stay   POSS:3SG-TOP Topipen
'Novohvoh was at his place at Topipen.'

There is also a set of relative location nouns which can appear in this kind of structural position. These are forms that express location with respect to some other entity, such as *unmap* 'below', *unisog* 'inside', *isut* 'far off', *mampum* 'ahead', *ilat* 'outside'. We therefore find examples such as:

Kamli-ve   *[ilat].*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:go   outside
'We went outside.'

These forms differ from nouns denoting absolute location in that they are free to be followed by a prepositional phrase introduced by the locative marker *ra* in order to indicate the noun phrase that expresses the spatial basis for the locational phrase. Thus:

Kamli-ve   *[ilat*   *ra*   *nimo].*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:go   outside LOC house
'We went outside the house.'

Directional adverbs are unmarked modifiers which indicate relative distance from the speaker, vertical position with respect to the speaker, and whether the location is across from, or in the same area as the speaker. The following indicate location at a variety of distances in the same area as the speaker on a level plain:

igko   'here'
(y)empe ~ yuwi 'there (near the addressee)'

goho   'there (where the speaker is pointing)'
(y)empelampe   'over there (away from the speaker and addressee but still visible)'
ilampe   'over there (away from the speaker and addressee and out of sight)'

Thus:

Nigoi   ntampi horu-g   c-ampeli   [igko].
perhaps story   POSS-1SG   3SG:FUT-MR:conclude   here
'Perhaps my story will finish here.'

Tawi   enyawi (<enyau-wi)   [ilampe]   Nusilan.
NEG   POSS:1SG-TOP   there   New.Zealand
'It is not my place over there in New Zealand.'

The following forms indicate location across a physical space that separates the location in some way from the speaker or the hearer:

geigko ~ goigko   'over there in the direction of the speaker'
gompe   'over there in the direction away from the speaker'
gomplampe ~ gowi 'over there in the direction away from the speaker and the
        addressee'

Thus:

Iyi   yem-ete   [gomplample]   Topipen.
3SG   3SG:DEPPAST-BR:live   over.that.side   Topipen
'He lived over on that side at Topipen.'

Locations higher and lower than the speaker are indicated by the following:

yehep   'down there'   *yahac*   'up there'
empihep ~ empnahep   'down over there'   *empihac ~ empnahac*   'up over there'
gompihep ~ gompnahep 'across down there'   *gompihac ~ gompnahac* 'across up there'

The following indicate location with respect to another place away from the speaker:

goyehep   'over there beneath (something else)'
goyahac   'over there above (something else)'

Thus:

Nimo   hai   [goyahac].
house   another   above.there
'There was another house up there above.'

Any of the directional adverbs beginning with *go-* or *ge-*, all of which express location to one side or direction, can be preceded by the zero-marked locational nominal *ndevsin* 'in the direction of'. Thus:

Cam-ante   *[ndevsin geigko].*
3SG:PRES-MR:stay   direction this.side
'It is in the direction on this side.'

(iv) *Number Adverbials*

A numeral (§6.1.2.2) can appear adverbially after a verb to indicate the number of participants expressed by the subject of the verb. Thus:

Cumlu (<cu-emlu)   *empe [nduru]?*
3PL:RECPAST-BR:crazy   there two
'Are the two of them crazy there?'

An alternative way of expressing the same meaning would be to place an independent pronoun in the preverbal subject slot with the numeral accompanying this as a modifier (§6.1.1), as follows:

[Iror nduru] *cumlu (<cu-emlu)*   *empe?*
3PL   two   3PL:RECPAST-BR:crazy there
'Are the two of them crazy there?'

(v) *Cause*

The final construction of this type is much more restricted in its distribution, with the intransitive verb *empen* 'smell' being followed by an unmarked noun phrase expressing the source of the smell. Thus:

Nur ma compen (<co-empen)   *[nevlami].*
place that 3SG:RECPAST-BR:smell   urine
'That place smells of urine.'

7.1.3.2 Possessive Complements

The possessive phrases described in §3.1.2 and §6.1.2.3 can also modify a restricted set of intransitive verbs, that is those which express some kind of socially productive activity, such *ompurac* 'work', *orovoh* 'do garden work', *orevei* 'cut treetops in garden site', *evsocwap* 'go fishing', *emendog* 'rest'. With such verbs, a possessive modifier indicates that the action denoted by the verb is performed for the benefit of the referent of the noun phrase expressed within the possessive phrase, as in the following:

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Kol-andevei   *[hen   Nelponah].*
1PL.INCL:FUT-cut.treetop   POSS   Nelponah
'We will cut off the treetops for Nelponah.'

Cwo-nompurac   *[enogkoh].*
3PL:FUT-MR:work   POSS:1PL.INCL
'They will work for us.'

Yoco-nemendog   *[enyau].*
1SG:FUT-MR:rest   POSS:1SG
'I will have my rest.'

7.1.3.3 Complements to Copulas

In §7.1.1, there was discussion of equational constructions in which a nominal topic and a nominal comment are simply juxtaposed with no intervening verb. Such constructions are invariably given a realis interpretation. In order to express such constructions with any kind of irrealis interpretation, it is necessary for a copula to be introduced between the topic and the comment, with the comment noun phrase being expressed as a complement to the copula.

The inchoative copula *eti* can be followed by a nominal complement to mean 'become', as in the following:

Y-eti   *pwarap.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:become   afternoon
'It became afternoon.'

Yocotutila (<yaco-etu-eti-la)   *etme-n.*
1SG:RECPAST-NEG-BR:become-CONT   father-CONST
'I have not yet become a father.'

All remaining copula constructions involve verbs that also have non-copula functions. The verb *ete* 'stay' can be used as a stative copula with an irrealis adjectival or nominal complement, for example:[3]

C-ante   *armai.*
3SG:FUT-MR:stay   good
'It will be good.'

The verb *velom* 'come' can be used as an inchoative copula with a following adjective, for example:

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[3] The sequence *ete ur* 'be bad' unpredictably reduces to *etur*.

Uvulyoru   yi-velom   *ndomo.*
cyclone   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:come   strong
'The cyclone became strong.'

The intransitive verb *hac* 'ascend' can be used with a following noun to indicate that the referent of the nominal complement has gradually emerged out of the referent of the subject. Thus:

Novli enyau   came-hac   novsar.
sore   POSS:1SG   3SG:PRES-ascend pus
'My sore is becoming pustulant.'

Finally, intransitive *etpu* 'grow' can be used with a following noun phrase to indicate that something has grown into something else. Thus:

Nacave   y-etpu   npag.
kave   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:grow banyan
'The kava grew into a banyan.'

7.1.3.4 Prepositional Phrases

Prepositional phrases generally appear after the verb and any accompanying object, sharing this position with most of the unmarked modifiers described in §7.1.3.1. Thus:

Ndutipe (<ndu-etipe) nompcahi [ra   nvat].
3PL:DISTPAST-BR:put   pig   LOC stone
'They put the pig onto the (cooking) stones.'

Kaml-etipe   *nogkon [nimsi-n   mran].*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:put.aside   some   PURP-CONST   next.day
'We put some aside for the next day.'

Prepositional phrases with temporal reference, however, frequently appear in presubject position. Thus:

[Pehnur-i   Krismas] kimu-ve   ndal   apmu   Netor.
before-CONST   Christmas 2PL:DISTPAST-BR:go   ACC.PL   that.person Netor
'Before Christmas, you all went with Netor.'

Spatial prepositional phrases marked with *ra* invariably follow the verb when they express goal and source. When they express location, however, they can appear either before the subject or after the verb. Thus:

Yi-ve   *[ra   nu].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:go   GOAL   river
'(S)he went to the river.'

[Ra   navlutni-n]   yi-velom   *armai.*
LOC   end-3SG   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:come   good
'In the end things became good.'

Sye has a relatively large set of prepositions for an Oceanic language, and the semantic roles expressed by these forms are summarized in Table 7.3. In the remainder of this section the semantic roles of each of these prepositions is described and exemplified in detail. Dashes in Table 7.3 indicate semantic categories of nouns which are incompatible with particular prepositions.

Free Prepositions

The first prepositions to be described are those which fall into the subset of free prepositions (§5.2). The behavior of each of these forms is described in turn below.

(i) *Ra*

The preposition *ra* is most frequently encountered as a marker of spatial roles, and the following noun phrase generally has non-human reference. The specific spatial functions that *ra* expresses are:

(a) the locus within which a motion or an activity takes place—that is location—with respect to a common noun phrase that has non-human reference, for example:

Yacantvi (<yaco-antəv-i)   nemah   [ra   nu].
1SG:FUT-MR:soak-CONST   clothes   LOC   water
'I will soak the clothes in water.'

(b) the locus to which a motion or activity is directed—that is goal—with respect to non-human common noun phrases, for example:

Yi-ve   *[ra   novoriwoh].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:go   GOAL   deep.pool
'(S)he went to the deep pool.'

(c) the locus away from from which a motion or activity is directed—that is source—with respect to non-human common noun phrases, as in the example on page 216 after Table 7.3:

Table 7.3 Prepositions

Semantic role	Translation equivalents	Non-human nouns	Toponyms	Human nouns	Personal names
LOCATION	at, on, in	*ra*	*Ø, ra*	*ira-*	*ira-, ra*
LOCATION	under	*ratgo-*	—	*ratgo-*	*ratgo-*
LOCATION	of (group)	*ra*	—	*ira-*	—
LOCATION	inside	*rampo-*	—	—	—
LOCATION	among	*ndal, rampo-*	—	*ndal*	—
LOCATION	between	*ilvucte(ve)-*	—	*ilvucte(ve)-*	*ilvucte(ve)-*
PROX.	near, close to	*potpot*	—	*potpot*	*potpot*
DATIVE	to	*pog-*	—	*pog-*	*pog-*
GOAL	to	*ra*	*Ø, ra*	*ira-*	*ira-, ra*
GOAL	to (stony/ sandy place)	*rampu-*	—	—	—
LOCATION	against	*movog-*	—	—	—
SOURCE	from	*ra, marog-*	*Ø, ra, marog-*	*ira-, marog-*	*ira-, ra, marog-*
SOURCE	from (by force)	*parog-*	—	*parog-*	*parog-*
CAUSE	because of	*ra*	—	*ira-*	*ira-*
PURPOSE	for	*ra, nimsi-, ntovən-*	—	*ira-, ntovən-*	*ira-, ntovən-*
BEN.	for	*nisco-*	—	*nisco-*	*nisco-*
DEP.BEN.	away from	—	—	*ntovən-*	*ntovən-*
BELONG	of, from	*ra*	—	*ra*	—
TIME	at, on, for	*Ø, ra*	—	—	—
TIME	until	*mavel-*	—	—	—
TIME	before, ahead of	*pehnur-*	—	*pehnur-*	*pehnur-*
COMPAR.	than	*ra*		*ira-*	*ira-, ra*
PART	of	*ra*	—	—	—
ACCOMP.	with (one)	*nta(m)pgo-, nte(m)pgo-*	—	—	—
ACCOMP.	with (one)	*(na)ndu*	—	*(na)ndu*	*(na)ndu*
ACCOMP.	with (several)	*ndal*	—	*te(m)pelgo-, ndal*	*ndal*
ACCOMP.	with (in hand)	*nte(m)peln-go-*	—	—	—
SIMILITIVE	like, as	*hogku(su)*	—	*hogku(su)*	*hogku(su)*

Table 7.3 (continued)

Semantic role	Translation equivalents	Non-human nouns	Toponyms	Human nouns	Personal names
LOCUTIVE	(news) about	*narigi*	—	*narigi*	*narigi*
LOCUTIVE	(song, story about	*nompli-*	—	*nompli-*	*nompli-*
LOCUTIVE	about	*(o)gi, ra*	—	*(o)gi*	*(o)gi*
INSTRUM.	with	*(o)gi*	—	—	—
COG.OBJ.	—	*(o)gi*	—	*wog-*	*wog-*

Y-amon   *[ra*   *uvulyoru].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:shelter   SOURCE   cyclone
'(S)he sheltered from the cyclone.'

(d) the specific entity or entities within a larger group of entities that are located in the same general locus, with respect to non-human common noun phrases. This therefore expresses the meaning of 'among' or '(one, two, some, many etc) of'. Thus:

Yacam-naig-i   *nogkon [ra*   *ovon kuri].*
1SG:PRES-MR:want-CONST   some   among   PL   dog
'I want some of the dogs.'

    Locational nouns, including institutionalized place names, are not normally directly preceded by the spatial preposition *ra*. When performing a locative, goal or source role, such nouns are usually dealt with in one of two ways. Firstly, they can be apposed the common noun *nur* 'place', which can be preceded by the preposition *ra* in the normal way (§6.1.4). Alternatively, they can be preceded by zero marking, as described in §7.1.3.1.

    Although the spatial roles of location, goal and source are not normally expressed by means of *ra* with human nouns, it is occasionally possible for personal names in these functions to be marked by means of this form. Thus:

Hai   *ntaru coc-velom*   *[ra*   *Tom].*
INDEF   idea   3SG:RECPAST-BR:come   GOAL   Tom
'An idea came to Tom.'

As will be shown below, however, a spatial meaning is more frequently expressed by means of the bound preposition *ira-* with human nouns.

    The ambiguity between the directional senses of *ra* can be resolved by using the specific directional verbs *ve* 'go' and *velom* 'come' with echo subject marking after the prepositional phrase (§4.2.2.1.2). Thus:

Y-ahwo   *mpe (<m-ve)* *[ra* *ntemne].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:row SG:ES-BR:go GOAL village
'(S)he rowed to the village.'

Y-ahwo   *mpelom (<m-velom)* *[ra*   *ntemne].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:row SG:ES-BR:come   SOURCE village
'(S)he rowed from the village.'

In its general spatial function, *ra* appears before a set of bound nouns, which themselves have a more specific locational reference with respect to some other entity, for example *nocori-* 'side', *navlutni-* 'end', *natipotni-* 'beginning', *potni-* 'bottom', *naitompu-* 'top'. Thus:

Cam-ante   *[ra* *nocori-n* *nimo].*
3SG:PRES-BR:stay LOC side-CONST house
'(S)he is beside the house.'

It also precedes a small set of bound nouns having lexical meanings involving body parts, or nouns referring to locations, with which the resulting prepositional phrases express specific locational roles that are not fully predictable from the meanings of the constituent parts. The following nouns behave in this way: *nogu-* 'mouth' > *ra nogu-* 'in front of', *nta-* 'back' > *ra nta-* 'behind', *nompu-* 'head' > *ra nompu-* 'on top of' and *nampo-* 'place of' > *ra nampo-* 'inside, among'. Thus:

Yac-ampe *[ra* *nampo-n*   *yorset].*
1SG:FUT-go GOAL place-CONST casuarina
'I will go in amongst the casuarinas.'

Cam-antehep *[ra* *nta-g].*
3SG:PRES-MR:sit LOC back-1SG
'(S)he is sitting behind me.'

There are three prepositional phrases of this type which alternate with single lexical forms in which the initial element is *ra-* and the final element is the root of the bound noun, minus its initial *n-* (§3.2.1.4). The resulting vowel sequences are resolved by the regular morphophonemic rules of the language (§2.5.2.5). The meanings of two of the resulting nominal prepositions are identical with the meanings of the prepositional phrases from from which they are derived. Thus, *ra netgo-* alternates with *ratgo-* 'under' and *ra nampo-* alternates with *rampo-* 'inside, among'. However, from *ra nompu-* 'on top of', there is an unpredictable semantic shift to *rampu-* 'to (sandy or stony place)'. The behavior of these derived nominal prepositions will be described in more detail in the section below dealing with nominal prepositions.

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In addition to the spatial roles described above, the preposition *ra* expresses the following non-spatial roles:

(a) an entity which precipitates an event, that is cause. Thus:

Plasta yempaipelac (*<yem-vaipelac*) *[ra   nde]*.
plaster 3SG:DEPPAST-BR:come.off   CAUSE   blood
'The plaster came off because of the blood.'

It is possible for a noun with human reference to be marked with the causal preposition *ra*, though in such cases the causal agent is not the referent of the human noun itself, but something that has been done by someone else to that person. Thus:

Yem-acan   [ra   nahiven].
3SG:DEPPAST-BR:angry   CAUSE   woman
'He was angry about (what somebody else had done to) the woman.'

In conjunction with the interrogative *se* 'what', this preposition expresses the meaning of 'why' (§7.2.2), for example:

Koc-velom   [ra   se]?
2SG.RECPAST-BR:come   CAUSE   what
'Why have you come?'

(b) the entity which the agent has in mind as the ultimate goal in the performance of an action, that is purpose. Thus:

Yococ-velom   igko [ra   nacave].
1SG:RECPAST-BR:come   here PURP   kava
'I have come here for kava.'

(c) the place, or grouping of people, to which a person belongs, for example:

Kam   [ra   nur   haiten].
1PL.EXCL BELONG   place one
'We were from the same place.'

(d) the temporal locus of an event, that is time. Thus:

Yacaghoc (*<yaco-agkəh-oc*) *[ra   Monde]*.
1SG:FUT-MR:see-2SG   TIME   Monday
'I will see you on Monday.'

It will be remembered from §7.1.3.1, however, that noun phrases with temporal reference can also be used with no preceding preposition, with no change of meaning.

(e) the point of comparison in a comparative construction, in which the compared state is marked by the adjectival postmodifier *momu* 'more', for example:

Nimo enyau   nmah momu [ra   horom].
house POSS:1SG big   more COMP POSS:2SG
'My house is bigger than yours.'

(f) the content of a locution, for example:

Ntampi enogkoh   [ra   nemetagi] c-ampeli   igko.
story   POSS:1PL.INCL about cyclone   3SG:FUT-MR:finish here
'Our story about the cyclone will finish here.'

(ii) *(Na)ndu*

The forms *ndu* and *nandu* are semantically equivalent, both expressing an accompanitive relationship with respect to a singular noun phrase, for example:

Cam-antehep   [nandu yau].
3SG:PRES-MR:sit   ACC.SG 1SG
'(S)he is sitting with me.'

(iii) *Ndal*

The preposition *ndal* expresses the same semantic role as *(na)ndu*, but differs in that it indicates accompaniment where more than two entities are involved. Thus:

Cam-antehep   [ndal   koh].
3SG:PRES-MR:sit   ACC.PL 1PL.INCL
'(S)he is sitting with us.'

Even if the object of the preposition itself is not overtly marked for plurality, *ndal* rather than *(na)ndu* is still required if the total number of participants involved is more than two, for example:

Kokwo-nomonki   nacave [ndal   Tom].
1DL.INCL:FUT-MR:drink kava   ACC.PL Tom
'You and I will drink kava with Tom.'

In this case, although *Tom* is explicitly singular, it is clear from the plural marking on the subject that more than two people are going to drink kava. This contrasts with the following, in which the singular subject indicates that the object of the preposition has dual reference:

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Yoco-nomonki   nacave   [nandu   Tom].
1SG:FUT-MR:drink   kava   ACC.SG Tom
'I will drink kava with Tom.'

When the object of the preposition *ndal* is overtly plural, the meaning expressed can be that of accompaniment (that is 'with', 'in the company of') with respect to an animate noun phrase, or comitative (that is 'having') with respect to an inanimate noun phrase, or it can express the idea of 'among', or 'in the midst of'. Thus:

Cam-antehep   [ndal   ovn-kinu].
3SG:PRES-MR:sat   in.midst:PL PL-canoe
'(S)he is sitting the midst of the canoes.'

The verb *evtit* 'meet' enters into an idiosyncratic construction involving the accompanitive prepositions *(na)ndu* and *ndal* in that the subject marking on the verb refers to the sum of both participants involved in the activity, with the people being met expressed as prepositional objects. Thus:

Nduvtit (<ndu-evtit)   nandu   etme-n.
3PL:DISTPAST-BR:meet   ACC.SG   father-3SG
'(S)he met his/her father.'

Kaml-evtit   ndal   kimi.
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:meet   ACC.PL   2PL
'I met you all.'

(iv) *Potpot*

This expresses proximate location, and translates therefore as 'near' or 'close to'. Thus:

Cam-antehep   [potpot nimo enyau].
3SG:PRES-MR:sit   near   house POSS:1SG
'(S)he is sitting near my house.'

(v) *Hogku(su)*

This is the similitive preposition, which expresses similarity between the referent of one noun phrase and something else. It translates, therefore, as 'like' or 'as'. The forms *hogku* and *hogkusu* are semantically equivalent. Thus:

Cam-naruvo   [hogkusu ovonyan].
3SG:PRES-MR:sing   SIM   PL:child
'(S)he is singing like the children.'

In conjunction with the interrogative *se* 'what', *hogku(su)* expresses the meaning of 'how' (§7.2.2), as in:

Koc-vai   *[hogku se]?*
2SG:RECPAST-BR:get   SIM   what
'How did you get it?'

(vi) *Narigi*

This preposition has a very restricted meaning, expressing the idea of 'news about' the referent of a noun phrase. Thus:

Yamorgi (<yam-orəg-i)   *narigi kik.*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:hear-CONST   about 2SG
'I heard the news about you.'

(vii) *(O)gi*

The preposition described in this section appears predominantly with the shape *gi*, though it occasionally appears in the spoken corpus, particularly from older speakers, with the variant shape *ogi* (though *ogi* is almost the only variant that is represented in the written corpus from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries). This preposition—along with the paradigmatically related verbal preposition *wog-* described below—is the most difficult of all the prepositions to characterize semantically as it expresses a wide range of semantically unconnected functions. For many of the specific functions that are described below, *(o)gi* is glossed simply as the marker of a variety of oblique semantic roles, and it derives its specific interpretation from the particular verb that it is associated with.

The most frequently encountered function of *(o)gi* is to mark the instrumental role with a following inanimate noun phrase. Thus:

Cu-seni   *nvag [gi   mevog].*
3PL:RECPAST-cover food INST large.heliconia.leaf
'They covered the pudding with large heliconia leaves.'

This instrumental role can be extended to include the use of a language, as in:

Ko-nam   *[gi   nam   n-evror].*
2SG:IMP-MR:speak INST language ADJ-BR:confused
'You will speak French.'

In its role as a marker of the general oblique, the preposition *(o)gi* is also used to perform the following varied functions:

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(a) It can indicate the content of an utterance expressed by a locutionary verb such as *am* 'talk' or *tampi* 'tell story', for example:

Yoco-ntampi   *[gi nemetagi].*
1SG:FUT-MR:tell.story   OBL   cyclone
'I will tell a story about the cyclone.'

Yoco-ntampi   *[gi kik].*
1SG:FUT-MR:tell.story   OBL   2SG
'I will tell a story about you.'

(b) It can express a causal complement to a stative verb, for example:

Yocotumnavoh (<yaco-etu-eme-navoh) *[gi nompi horom].*
1SG:RECPAST-NEG-*EM*-MR:happy   OBL   behavior POSS:2SG
'I am not happy with your behavior.'

(c) It can indicate the vaguely causal entity in a transitive construction in which a third noun phrase is inherently involved, in addition to the entities expressed by the subject and object. This means that in sentences expressing thanks, the noun phrase referring to the entity for which thanks are offered is marked by *(o)gi*, as in the following:

K-om-palogi   *Yesu [gi nvag].*
2SG:RECPAST-BR:CAUS-thanked   Jesus OBL   food
'Thank you Jesus for the food (lit. "you are thanked, Jesus, for the food").'

With the verb expressing the meaning of 'thank', the causal noun phrase can optionally be marked instead by zero, as shown by the following:

Kw-om-palogi   *[Ø n-evtit enogkoh].*
2PL:RECPAST-BR:CAUS-thanked   NOM-BR:meet POSS:1PL.INCL
'Thank you all for our meeting (lit. "you are all thanked (for) our meeting").'

(d) It can be used with verbs expressing payment, referring to the entity for which something is paid, for example:

Rulvi (<ru-elvi)   *nde [gi ovahiven].*
3PL:DISTPAST-BR:patch   blood OBL   PL:woman
'They paid compensation for the women.'

(e) Cognate objects to intransitive verbs can also be expressed by means of the preposition *(o)gi*. This refers to a noun phrase which refers to something which is produced as an inherent result of an action that is expressed by means of an in-

transitive verb. Since spitting inevitably results in the production of saliva (or perhaps phlegm, blood, bile or kava dregs), nouns with this area of reference can be considered as cognate objects of the intransitive verb 'spit'. This category of intransitive verbs differs from verbs such as 'run' or 'wait', which do not result in the production of anything, and which cannot, therefore, be followed by an *(o)gi*-phrase of this type. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Cum-antvani   [gi   nacave] ra   ndau.
3PL:PRES-MR:spit   OBL kava   LOC heliconia.leaf
'They are spitting the kava onto the heliconia leaf.'

Cumpcu (<cu-empcu)   [gi   tustep].
3PL:RECPAST-BR:dance   OBL two-step
'They danced the two-step.'

Reference was made in §4.5.2.1 to the use of *(o)gi* as a pseudo-transitivizing preposition, allowing a formally intransitive verb to be associated with a pragmatically salient noun phrase, which does not perform an instrumental role, nor does it mark an object of a locution or a cognate object or any of the other semantic roles just presented. Thus, the preposition *(o)gi* may mark a semantic patient, as in the following:

C-omproc   [gi   nacave].
3SG:RECPAST-BR:steal OBL kava
'(S)he stole the kava.'

or it may mark a noun phrase in some kind of spatial role, as in the following:

Y-agkau   [gi   nompuwo].
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:go.around OBL island
'(S)he walked around the island.'

This pseudo-transitivizing function of *gi* clearly represents a VERB + PREPOSITION sequence as the verb followed by *gi* in the examples just presented applies stress without counting the preposition as part of the verb. A post-verbal suffix such as the perfective marker *-su* can intervene between the verb and the following preposition, exactly as we would expect in an intransitive construction, for example:

C-omproc-su   [gi   nacave].
3SG:RECPAST-BR:steal-PERF OBL kava
'(S)he has already stolen the kava.'

At the same time, however, there are aspects of the behavior of pseudo-transitive constructions by which they differ from all other prepositional phrases. The

perfective marker in such constructions has the additional option of being able to appear on the preposition itself, which is not possible with any other preposition. Thus:

C-omproc   *gi-su*   *nacave.*
3SG:RECPAST-BR:steal   OBL-PERF   kava
'(S)he has already stolen the kava.'

Compare this with the following, where the *ra*-phrase has no pseudo-transitivizing function:

Yi-ve-su   *ra*   *norwotu.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:go   GOAL school
'(S)he has already gone to school.'

*Yi-ve   *ra-su*   *norwotu.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:go   GOAL-PERF school

Second, the pseudo-transitivizing preposition *gi* exhibits an additional structural option in that it can be phonologically bound to the verb, essentially being reanalyzed as the transitivizing suffix *-g-*. This sequence is treated as a single phonological word for the purposes of stress assignment (§2.3) and the application of morphophonemic rules (§2.5). Thus:

Comprokgi (<*co-omproc-g-i*) *nacave.*
3SG:RECPAST-BR:steal-TR   kava
'(S)he stole the kava.'

For most speakers, the forms listed above represent the complete set of free prepositions. For some speakers, however, the form *unisog* 'inside' also falls into this set. For most speakers, *unisog* is a locational noun, which enters into a prepositional construction with another noun (§6.1.2.4), for example:

unisog ra   *nimo*
inside LOC house
'inside the house'

However, with some speakers, *unisog* can appear directly before a noun with no intervening *ra*, for example:

unisog nimo
inside house
'inside the house'

In such cases, *unisog* has been reanalyzed from being a locational noun to an additional free preposition.

Nominal Prepositions

The functions of each of the nominal prepositions is now described.

(i) *Ira-*

This preposition is paradigmatically related to the free preposition *ra* in that *ra* generally appears before non-human while *ira-* appears before human nouns. Compare the following with examples presented above for *ra*, involving a range of spatial roles with respect to human nouns:

Hai   ntaru   coc-velom   [ira-g].
INDEF idea   3SG:RECPAST-BR:come   GOAL-1SG
'An idea came to me.'

Y-amon   [ira-n   ovoteme].
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:hide   SOURCE-CONST   PL:person
'(S)he hid from the people.'

Nogkon [ira-mi]   cw-ampelom.
some   LOC-2PL   3PL:FUT-MR:come
'Some of you will come.'

Cam-antehep   isut   [ira-n   retpo-n].
3SG:PRES-MR:sit long.way LOC-CONST   wife-3SG
'He is sitting a long way from his wife.'

With personal names, however, it is possible for spatial roles to be expressed either by means of the nominal preposition *ira-* or the free preposition *ra*. Thus, both of the following are possible:

Hai   ntaru   coc-velom   [ira-n   Tom].
INDEF idea   3SG:RECPAST-BR:come   GOAL-CONST   Tom

Hai   ntaru   coc-velom   [ra   Tom].
INDEF idea   3SG:RECPAST-BR:come   GOAL   Tom
'An idea came to Tom.'

It should be noted that the spatial functions of *ira-* take extreme spatial proximity as an essential part of their definition when the associated noun phrase has human reference. While English spatial prepositions such as 'to' and 'from' can

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be used to indicate motion to or from the general proximity of the referent of a human noun phrase, the following is not possible in Sye to express the meaning of '(S)he came to you':

Yi-velom   *ira-m.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:come   GOAL-2SG

The only way to express a directional meaning of this kind is to involve the human goal as the object of a verb—usually *ocəh-* 'see'—which carries echo subject markers (§4.2.2.1.2), as in:

Yi-velom   *mochoc* (<*m-ocəh-oc*).
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:come   SG:ES-BR:see-2SG
'(S)he came and saw you.'

The construction presented above, in which *ira-* is used to mark a human goal, is not strictly ungrammatical, as it can be used, but only when extreme spatial proximity is involved, as indicated in the following translation:

Yi-velom   *ira-m.*
3SG:DISTAST-BR:come   LOC-2SG
'He came (that is ejaculated) in(side) you.'

A variety of non-spatial semantic roles expressed with human nouns by *ira-* are illustrated below. These also parallel the distinctions noted above for *ra* with non-human nouns:

(a) cause, for example:

Yacam-amah   *[ira-m].*[4]
1SG:PRES-MR:die CAUSE-2SG
'I am dying for you.'

Yem-acan   *[ira-n*   *nahiven].*
3SG:DEPPAST-BR:angry   CAUSE-CONST woman
'He was angry with the (what) the woman (had done).'

Note the contrast between this sentence and the example presented earlier, that is:

Yem-acan   *[ra*   *nahiven].*
3SG:DEPPAST-BR:angry   CAUSE woman
'He was angry about (what somebody else had done to) the woman.'

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[4] This construction is used idiomatically as an equivalent of the Bislama slang expression *Mi ded long yu*, which literally means 'I am dying for you', but which is actually used to express sexual interest.

In the first example, the woman is the direct cause of the man's anger, therefore prompting the choice of *ira-*, which is ordinarily associated with a human noun phrase. In the second example, however, it is something inanimate—that is an action performed by somebody else—associated with the woman that is the cause of the anger, which conditions the choice of the preposition *ra*.

(b) purpose, for example:

Yococ-velom   *igko [ira-m].*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:come   here   PURP-2SG
'I came here for you.'

(c) point of comparison, for example:

Yau tantop momu [ira-n   *Netor].*
1SG tall   more   COMP-CONST   Netor
'I am taller than Netor.'

(ii) *Nisco-*

This preposition expresses the beneficiary of an action, and translates therefore as 'for'. Given its benefactive meaning, it only precedes animate noun phrases. Thus:

Yi-vas-i   *navucvuc [niscu-g].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:buy-CONST   bread   BEN-1SG
'(S)he bought the bread for me.'

The notion of beneficiary can be extended to include the expression of a greeting which is intended for a particular person. Thus:

Umah conwi (<co-enwi)   *pumroc*   *[nisco-n*   *uyou*   *ihen].*
Umah 3SG:RECPAST-BR:say   good.night BEN-CONST   grandmother POSS:3SG
'Umah said good night to his grandmother.'

With utterances other than greetings, however, the goal of an utterance is normally expressed by means of the verbal preposition *pog-*, for example:

Umah conwi (<co-enwi)   *hai*   *uvuvu [pog-i*   *uyou*   *ihen].*
Umah 3SG:RECPAST-BR:say   INDEF story   GOAL-CONST   grandmother POSS:3SG
'Umah said told a story to his grandmother.'

(iii) *Nompli-*

This preposition marks a noun phrase that refers to the topic of a song that has been composed, or a story that has been told. Thus:

Nocwem   *yem-aruvo*   *[nompli-n*   *nacem].*
Pacific.pigeon 3SG:DEPPAST-BR:sing   about-CONST emerald.dove
'The Pacific pigeon sang about the emerald dove.'

(iv) *Rampu-*

This form is morphologically derived by compounding the free preposition *ra* with the compounding form of the bound noun *nompu-* 'head' (§3.2.1.4). The resulting form is a nominal preposition which expresses any of the spatial roles described above with respect to a noun that refers to a place that is either sandy or stony, such as *narvin* 'beach', *nvat* 'rock' or *netuco* 'exposed reef'. Thus, contrast the following:

Yacam-navan   *[ra*   *nvat].*
1SG:PRES-MR:walk   GOAL rock
'I am walking to the rock.'

Yacam-navan   *[rampu-n*   *nvat].*
1SG:PRES-MR:walk   GOAL-CONST rock
'I am walking to the rocky place.'

Also, place names that are made up of the noun *nompun* 'head' followed by another element—which are very common—express locational roles by combining the free preposition *ra* with the first element of the place name in the same way. Thus, spatial roles with the toponym *Nompun Nempouvi* can be expressed alternately as *ra Nompun Nempouvi* 'to/from/at Nompun Nempouvi', using a free preposition, or as *rampun Nempouvi*, in which case the locational marker behaves like a nominal preposition.

(v) *Rampo-*

This preposition is derived from the free preposition *ra* and the compounding form of the bound noun *nampo-* 'place, home'. It expresses the idea of location inside with respect to the referent of a noun with non-human reference. Thus:

Cam-ante   *rampo-n*   *katen.*
3SG:PRES-MR:stay   inside-CONST box
'It is inside the box.'

With a plural noun it can also be used to express the meaning of 'among' or 'in(to) the midst of', for example:

Yac-ampe   *rampo-n*   *yorset.*
1SG:FUT-MR:go   among-CONST casuarina
'I will go in amongst the casuarinas.'

This preposition can also be used with nouns having a temporal reference to express the idea of 'for' a period of time, as in the following:

Yetuchi (<yi-etu-ocəh-i)   *nelowi*   *[rampo-n*   *nevi   narwolem].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:see-CONST yam.harvest DURATION-CONST year ten
'(S)he had not seen the yam harvest for ten years.'

(vi) *Ratgo-*

When the preposition *ra* is morphologically bound to the compounding form of the bound noun *netgo-* 'underside', the resulting nominal preposition expresses the idea of 'under'. Thus:

Nitni   *yem-nalei*   *[ratgo-n*   *nevloc ihen   etme-n].*
son:CONST 3SG:PASTHAB-MR:lie.down under-CONST bed   POSS father-3SG
'A son would lie down under his father's bed.'

(vii) *Nimsi-*

This preposition expresses purpose with respect to an inanimate noun phrase. Thus:

Ru-velom   *[nimsi-n*   *navcat].*
3PL:DISTPAST-BR:come PURP-CONST battle
'They came for the battle.'

Yi-vas-i   *mersin*   *[nimsi-n*   *umprugu].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:buy-CONST medicine PURP-CONST cough
'(S)he bought the medicine for the cough.'

It can also be used to express an amount paid, as in the following construction:

Yi-vas-i   *novolvol* *[nimsi-n*   *nipmi   ndehel].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:buy-CONST kava   for-CONST price   three
'(S)he bought the kava for the price of three (hundred vatu).'

(viii) *Nte(m)pgo-/nta(m)pgo-*

The forms *ntapgo-*, *ntepgo-*, *ntampgo-* and *ntempgo-* are all homophonous variants of the same preposition, expressing a comitative relationship with respect to inanimate singular nouns. This means that they can be substituted by *(na)ndu* with no change of meaning. The following illustrate the behavior of these forms:

Kol-ampe   *u-nenduc*   *[ntempgo-n*   *nautugo].*
1PL.INCL:FUT-MR:go LOC-garden ACC.SG-CONST knife
'We will go to the garden with a knife.'

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Kik [ntepgo-n   nta-n].
2SG ACC.SG-CONST skin-CONST
'You are uncircumcized (lit. "you are with skin").'

(ix) *Nte(m)pelgo-*

The synonymous forms *ntepelgo-* and *ntempelgo-* express a comitative meaning, though when are used with a noun having inanimate reference, they specifically indicate that something is held in the hand, and can be glossed as manual comitative. Thus:

Yam-avan   [ntepelgo-n   ortovi].
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:go   MAN-CONST   basket
'I went with a basket in hand.'

This preposition can also be used with animate nouns, though only when the reference is plural. In such cases it has a general accompanitive meaning, and is semantically equivalent to *ndal*. Thus:

Y-avan   [ntepelgo-n   ovonyan eni].
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:walk   ACC.PL-CONST   PL:child POSS:3SG
'(S)he walked with his/her children.'

(x) *Ilvucte(ve)-*

The forms *ilvucte-* and *ilvucteve-* express location between the referents of two nouns, for example:

Y-etehep   [ilvucte-n   ovn-tovatman nduru].
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:sit   between-CONST PL-man   two
'(S)he sat between the two men.'

Kuri cam-antehep   [ilvucte-n-koh].
dog   3SG:PRES-MR:sit   between-CONST-1PL.INCL
'The dog is sitting between us.'

Verbal Prepositions

The final set of prepositions are those that accept suffixes which have the same shapes as verbal object suffixes (§5.2). The range of functions expressed by each of these is set out in turn below.

(i) *Pehnur-*

This form expresses the idea of 'before', in a temporal sense. This is illustrated by:

Yac-ampum   *[pehnur-oc].*
1SG:FUT-MR:precede   before-2SG
'I will precede you.'

C-ampelom   *[pehnur-i*   *Krismas].*
3SG:FUT-MR:come   before-CONST   Christmas
'(S)he will come before Christmas.'

It should be noted that the construct form of this preposition, that is *pehnuri*, is used as a temporal adverbial to mean 'afterwards', for example:

Yacaghoc (<yaco-agkəh-oc)   *pehnuri.*
1SG:FUT-MR:see-2SG   afterwards
'I will see you afterwards.'

(ii) *Pog-*

This preposition expresses a goal with monotransitive verbs. Thus:

Tavog-i   *nemli [pog-i*   *nalau ma].*
2SG:IMP-BR:throw-CONST   orange GOAL-CONST   child   that
'Throw the orange to that child.'

Yi-tamul-i   *nam*   *[pog-i*   *r-ave-n-me].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:send-CONST   message GOAL-CONST   PL-friend-3SG-PL
'He sent a message to his friends.'

It can also indicate the human recipient of an utterance in the case of an intransitive locutionary verb, for example:

Y-am   *[pog-i*   *etme-n].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:speak   GOAL-3SG   father-3SG
'(S)he spoke to his/her father.'

Finally, it can be used to express the recipient of someone's emotions, for example:

Y-acan   *[pog-i*   *retpo-n].*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:angry   GOAL-CONST   wife-3SG
'He was angry with his wife.'

(iii) *Ntovən-*

This expresses the meanings of:

(a) beneficiary in relation to a human noun phrase as a result of something being taken from somebody else. This can be referred to as the deprivative benefactive, and is illustrated by the following:

C-ampai   *ntovnoc (<ntovən-oc).*
3SG:FUT-MR:get   BEN.DEPRIV-2SG
'(S)he will get it for you (from somebody else).'

(b) the purposive with respect to either a human or a non-human noun, as in:

Yococ-velom   *[ntovni (<ntovən-i) nacave ra   nur   igko].*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:come   PURP-CONST   kava   LOC place here
'I have come for the kava from here.'

Ru-yep   *[ntovnor (<ntovən-or)].*
3PL:DISTPAST-descend   PURP-3PL
'They went down for them.'

(iv) *Marog-*

This expresses source, with either a following human or non-human noun. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Coc-vai   *[marog-i   ntoc].*
3SG:RECPAST-BR:take   SOURCE-CONST sea
'(S)he took it from the sea.'

Yi-velom   *marog-i*   *nur Potac.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:come   SOURCE-CONST place Ipota
'It came from Ipota.'

C-ampai-pelac   *[maroc-yau].*
3SG:FUT-MR:take-out   SOURCE-1SG
'(S)he will take it from me.'

This is a function that can also be expressed by the free preposition *ra* before a non-human noun, or *ira-* before a human noun. We therefore find competing constructions such as the following:

Coc-vai   *[ra   ntoc].*   *C-ampai-pelac*   *[ira-g].*
3SG:RECPAST-BR:take SOURCE sea   3SG:FUT-MR:TAKE-OUT SOURCE-1SG
'(S)he took it from the sea.'   '(S)he will take it from me.'

(v) *Parog-*

This expresses an adversative deprivative, in contrast to the benefactive deprivative meaning expressed by *ntovən-*. This means that the referent of the noun phrase that is marked in this way is disadvantaged by the removal of the referent

of the noun phrase, and that force may be involved in removing it. Thus, contrast the following with the examples presented in (iii) above:

Coc-vai   *[paroc-yau].*
3SG:RECPAST-BR:take   ADV.DEPRIV-1SG
'(S)he took it from me by force.'

Note also the following idiomatic usage:

Ete   *[paroc-yau].*
2SG:IMP:BR:stay   ADV.DEPRIV-1SG
'Get out of my way!'

(vi) *Movog-*

This is only found with following inanimate nouns, with the meaning 'against', for example:

Yococ-savet-i   *nei* *[movog-i*   *nimo].*
1SG:RECPAST-push-CONST   wood against-CONST   house
'I pushed the wood against the house.'

This form has the same shape as the echo subject form of the verb *ovog-* 'give'. When this form is associated with a human object, a verbal interpretation is the only one that is possible. Thus:

Yococ-savet-i   *nei* *[m-ovog-i*   *nalau ma].*
1SG:RECPAST-push-CONST   wood ES:SG-BR:give-CONST   child   that
'I pushed the wood and gave it to that child.'
'*I pushed the wood against that child.'

(vii) *Mavel-*

The form *mavel-* has the temporal meaning of 'until', and it appears in examples such as the following:

Kaml-ete   *[mavel-i*   *pruvcum].*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:stay   until-CONST   morning
'We stayed until morning.'

Note that this preposition, in its construct form *maveli*, also functions as a locational noun, which can be linked with another noun phrase by means of the preposition *ra*, to express the spatial meaning of 'as far as' (§7.1.3.1), for example:

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Yi-ve	maveli	ra	nu.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:go	as.far.as	LOC	river

'(S)he went as far as the river.'

(viii) *Wog-*

This form is paradigmatically related to the free preposition *(o)gi* described above in that *(o)gi* is normally associated with a following non-human noun, while *wog-* is associated with human nouns. The range of oblique functions performed by these prepositions is directly parallel, for example:

C-amevyac	[wog-i	ovotetalam].
3SG:FUT-MR:dream	OBL-CONST	old.people

'(S)he will dream about the old people.'

Yoco-ntampi	[wog-kik].
1SG:FUT-MR:tell.story	OBL-2SG

'I will tell a story about you.'

The parallelism is also maintained in that *wog-* functions as a pseudo-transitivizer allowing the expression of a pragmatically salient human patient with respect to a formally intransitive verb. Thus:

C-omproc	[woc-ond].
3SG:RECPAST-BR:steal	OBL-3PL

'(S)he stole them (for example the babies).'

While *wog-* is only ever associated with human nouns, there is not complete complementary distribution between *(o)gi* and *wog-*, as human nouns can also occasionally appear after the former. It is therefore possible for examples such as those just presented to appear as follows, with no apparent difference in meaning:

Yoco-ntampi	[gi	kik].	C-omproc	[gi	iror].
1SG:FUT-MR:tell.story	OBL	2SG	3SG:RECPAST-BR:steal	OBL	3PL

'I will tell a story about you.'   '(S)he stole them (for example the babies).'

7.2 Interrogative Clauses

The structures described in §7.1 represent those of declarative clauses only. In this section, the features of interrogative clauses are described where these differ from those of declarative clauses.

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7.2.1 Polar Questions

There are three strategies for expressing polar questions in Sye. The simplest is that in which a declarative clause is unmodified in structure, except that there is a final rising intonation instead of final falling declarative intonation. Another pattern is for *ku* to be postposed to a declarative sentence, with a sharply rising intonation on the postposed form. *Ku* is also used as a conjunction linking noun phrases (§6.1.3) or clausal conjunction (§8.7), expressing the meaning of 'or'. Thus:

Kem-ampe   ra   ndenuc ku?
2SG:PRES-MR:go   GOAL   garden or
'Are you going to the garden?'

Alternative—and semantically equivalent—strategies are to add *ku tawi* 'or not?' or *ku hogku(su) se* 'or how?' after a declarative sentence, for example:

Kem-ampe   ra   ndenuc ku   tawi?
2SG:PRES-MR:go   GOAL   garden or   NEG
'Are you going to the garden?'

The final pattern for forming polar questions involves preposing the interrogative form *se*, as follows:

Se kem-ampe   ra   ndenuc?
Q   2SG:PRES-MR:go   GOAL   garden
'Are you going to the garden?'

Se is used in the formation of content questions, expressing the meaning of 'what?' (§7.2.2).

Polar questions expressed with postposed *ku* presuppose an affirmative answer, whereas questions involving preposed *se*, as well as those marked solely by means of intonation, make no presuppositions about the expected answer. The following is probably better translated as 'You are going to the garden, aren't you?':

Kem-ampe   ra   ndenuc ku?
2SG:PRES-MR:go   GOAL   garden or

However, the following can be translated neutrally as 'Are you going to the garden?':

(Se) kem-ampe   ra   ndenuc?
Q   2SG:PRES-MR:go   GOAL   garden

7.2.2 Content Questions

Content questions are expressed in a variety of ways structurally, and the inclusion of these forms under a single heading in this grammar is more a matter of functional convenience than shared grammatical features. The various lexically simple interrogative constituents are: *se ~ tye ~ sye* 'what (SG)?', *ovnse* 'what (PL)?', *mei* 'who (SG)?', *meime* 'who (PL)?', *nocutmei* 'whoever?', *itoc(o) ~ mei* 'which?', *itse* 'what kind of?', *ndve* 'how much?, how many?', *nigoi* 'when?', *nocwo ~ pense* 'how?', *owo* 'do what?', *ovsoc-* 'do how?', *powo* 'how come not?', *iya* 'where?', *nocutya* 'whereabouts?', *yepe ~ iyei* 'where (at)?', *tihve- ~ tisve-* 'which body part?'.

The interrogatives *se* 'what' (along with its occasional archaic variants *tye* and *sye*), *mei* 'who' and *nocutmei* 'whoever' behave in exactly the same way as singular nominal phrases, appearing in the same syntactic positions as ordinary nouns. Thus:

Kem-nen-i	*[se]?*	*Kem-antehep*	*ndu*	*[mei]?*
2SG:PRES-MR:eat-CONST	what	2SG:PRES-MR:SIT	ACC.SG	Who
'What are you eating?'		'Who are you sitting with?'		

The noun *ni-* 'name' is referred to interrogatively by means of the form *mei* 'who', even when the possessor of the name is inanimate. Thus:

[Mei]	*ni-n*	*nei ma?*
who	name-CONST	tree that
'What is the name of that tree?'		

Like nouns, *se* and *mei* accept plural markers (§3.2.2.1). The form *se* 'what' pluralizes with *ovn-*, which is typically associated having nouns with inanimate reference, while *mei* 'who' pluralizes with *-me*, which is found only on human nouns. Thus:

[Mei-me]	*cum-nam?*
who-PL	3PL:PRES-MR:speak
'Who are speaking?'	

Cam-nov-i	*nelat*	*gi*	*[ovn-se]*	*ma?*
3SG:PRES-MR:cut-CONST	meat	INST	PL-what	that
'What all is (s)he cutting the meat with?'				

The interrogatives *itoc* (and its variant *itoco*) 'which', *mei* 'which', *itse* 'what kind of' and *ndve* 'how much, how many' ask questions about nominal postmodifiers. *Itoc(o)* and *itse* invariably appear as postmodifiers (§6.1.2.2), while *mei* is always a premodifier (§6.1.2.1). The form *ndve* appears in either structural position (§6.1.2.2). Thus:

Kem-nalei   *ra*   *nimo*   *[itoc]?*
2SG:PRES-MR:live   LOC   house   which
'Which house do you live in?'

Note that *mei* is the interrogative that is regularly used in association with the noun *ndan* 'time' in order to ask time according to the clock, for example:

Mei   *ndan*   *horom?*
which   time   POSS:2SG
'What is your time, that is what time do you have?'

Mei nipmi 'which price' is regularly used to ask 'how much' with regard to the price of an item, for example:

Mei   *nipmi*   *nacave?*
which   price:CONST   kava
'How much is the kava?'

The forms *ndve*, *itoc(o)* and *itse*—but not *mei*—can also be used as proforms, in which case they occupy ordinary nominal positions in the clause, for example:

Yac-ampai   *[ndve]?*   *K-ampai*   *[itoc]?*
1SG:FUT-MR:take   how.many   2SG:FUT-MR:take   which
'How many will I take?'   'Which will you take?'

The interrogative *nigoi* 'when' behaves like an adverbial in that it can occur either clause-initially or after the verb phrase. This form requires only a general time as the answer, in contrast to the interrogative *mei ndan* 'when', which calls for a clock time. Contrast the following:

[Nigoi]   *k-ampelom?*   *Yac-ampelom*   *mran.*
when   2SG:FUT-MR:come   1SG:FUT-MR:come   tomorrow
'When will you come? I will come tomorrow.'

[Mei   *ndan]*   *k-ampelom?*   *Yac-ampelom*   *ra*   *navleh*   *nduru.*
which   time   2SG:FUT-MR:come   1SG:FUT-MR:come   LOC   o'clock   two
'When will you come? I will come at two o'clock.'

The adverbial interrogatives *nocwo* and *pense*, both meaning 'how', are as free as *nigoi* in their placement within a clause. Thus:

K-ampelom   *[nocwo]?*
2SG:FUT-MR:come   how
'How will you come?'

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These form are also becoming archaic, and this meaning being far more frequently expressed by means of the interrogative prepositional phrase *hogku(su) se*, as in:

K-ampelom   *[hogku se]?*
2SG:FUT-MR:come   SIM   what
'How will you come?'

There is an interrogative verb *owo* 'do what?', which normally appears in a structurally minimal clause with no accompanying words, for example:

Kem-awo?
2SG:PRES-MR:do.what
'What are you doing?'

There is one other verbal interrogative form and that is the derivational prefix *ovsoc-* 'do how?' (§4.5.1), for example:

Kim-ovsoc-ompi?
2SG:DISTPAST-BR:do.how-BR:do
'How did you do it?'

The latter construction is semantically equivalent to the various constructions described above for the expression of 'how'. Thus:

Kim-ompi   *hogku se?*
2SG:DISTPAST-BR:do   SIM   what
'How did you do it?'

Similar in form to the interrogative verb *owo* 'do what' is the form *powo* 'how come not?'. This appears in clause-initial position, with a following verb carrying optative inflectional marking (§4.2.2.1.1), for example:

Powo   *kipi-ve?*
how.come.not   2SG:OPT-BR:go
'How come you did not go?'

Diachronically, *powo* is probably the third person singular optative form of the interrogative verb *owo*, so this example would once have been translated as something like 'You ought to do what such that you ought to go.'

The expression of interrogatives of place is rather more complex than for other interrogatives. The forms *yepe* (and the synonymous form *iyei*) and *nocutya*, appear in topic position in a non-verbal clause. These forms contrast in that *yepe* and *iyei* both ask about location in a specific place that can be seen—translating simply as 'where'—while *nocutya* asks about location in a general area that cannot be seen, translating therefore as 'whereabouts'. Thus, contrast the following:

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[Yepe] Yalimyau?	*[Iyei] nate?*	*[Nocutya] iror?*
where Yalimyau	where father	whereabouts 3PL
'Where is Yalimyau?'	'Where is father?'	'Whereabouts are they?'

These interrogatives of place can only be used to ask about the location of a noun phrase in the present tense. Any temporal adverbs referring to a non-present time render this construction impossible. The following is therefore impossible as a way of asking 'Where was the child in the afternoon?':

*[Yepe]   nalau pwarap?
 where   child afternoon

This meaning can only be expressed grammatically by means of a verbal clause containing an interrogative of place according to the pattern described below.

Locational interrogatives with verbal clauses are expressed by the forms *iya* and *nocutya* in post-object position, and they seek information about location in a place or a general area, as well as motion to or from a place or an area. Thus:

Koc-ta-i   naram [iya]?
2SG:RECPAST-BR:cut-CONST   banana where
'Where did you cut the banana?'

Komne (<ko-emne)   [iya]?
2SG:RECPAST-BR:come.from   where
'Where have you come from?'

Kem-ampe   [iya]?
2SG:PRES-MR:go   where
'Where are you going?'

These forms can also appear clause-initially, though they must be accompanied by a cliticized interrogative copy with the shape *-ya* on the verb. Thus:

[Iya] kotipeya (<ko-etipe-ya)   naram?
where 2SG:RECPAST-BR:put-where   banana
'Where did you put the banana?'

[Nocutya]   cum-ante-ya?
whereabouts 3PL:PRES-MR:stay-where
'Whereabouts are they?'

In fact, the free form interrogatives in such constructions are optional, and it is possible for the interrogative meaning to be expressed solely by the clitic *-ya* on the verb, that is:

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Kotipeya (<ko-etipe-ya)   naram?   Kochorya (<ko-ocəh-or-ya)?
2SG:RECPAST-BR:put-where   banana   2SG:RECPAST-BR:see-3PL-where
'Where did you put the banana?'   'Where did you see them?'

It should also be noted that the verb *ve* 'go' unpredictably loses its final vowel when it is followed by the interrogative clitic *-ya*. Thus:

Cocvya (<coc-ve-ya)?   Kemampya (<kem-ampe-ya)?
3SG:RECPAST-BR:go-where   2SG:PRES-MR:go-where
'Where did it go?'   'Where are you going?'

The clitic *-ya* can also be attached to a noun phrase predicate in a verbless clause to ask about the place which that person is from, for example:

Iyi   neteme-ya?
3SG   person-where
'(S)he is a person from where?'

The form *tisve-* ~ *tihve-* is a directly suffixed noun which specifically asks which body part of an individual is involved in the performance of an action, for example:

Yoco-soki   yorset   gi   tihvu-g?
1SG:FUT-climb   casuarina INST which.body.part-1SG
'Which body part will I climb the casuarina with?'

Kolcavi (<ko-elcav-i)   tisve-n?
2SG:RECPAST-BR:touch-CONST   which.body.part-3SG
'Which part of his/her body did you touch?'

The interrogatives presented above are the only lexically expressed interrogatives in Sye. All other interrogative meanings are therefore expressed phrasally. Interrogatives of reason are expressed by means of the causal preposition *ra* or the purposive preposition *nimsi* in conjunction with the interrogative nominal *se* 'what', as in:

[Ra   se]   koc-velom?
CAUSE what 2SG:RECPAST-BR:come
'Why (lit. "for what reason") did you come?'

Yacaghi (<yaco-agkəh-i)   nito-m   [nimsi-n   se]?
1SG:FUT-MR:look.at-CONST   child-2SG PURP-CONST what
'Why (lit. "for what purpose") should I look at your child?'

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[Nimsi-n   se]   koc-vai?
PURP-CONST   what 2SG:RECPAST-BR:take
'Why (lit. "for what purpose") did you take it?'

As mentioned above, the similitive prepsosition *hogku(su)* is frequently used in conjunction with *se* to express the meaning of 'how?'.

7.3 Noun Phrase Movement Rules

The basic constituent order described in §7.2 is *SVO*, and this represents by far the statistically preferred order, as well as being the order that is pragmatically unmarked. However, there are two noun phrase movement rules which produce different permutations on this basic order, as described below.

7.3.1 Subject Postposing

While the unmarked position is for the subject of a verb to appear in preverbal position, there is a substantial number of instances in which a verb phrase (that is a VERB + OBJECT sequence) is instead followed by the subject. Such sentences exhibit, therefore, a surface order of *VOS*. The verb in such sentences is, of course, regularly prefixed for the pronominal category of the subject.

While clauses of this type are reasonably frequently attested in the corpus, there is a preference for postposed noun phrases to be structurally complex rather than consisting of a single lexical item. We therefore find examples such as the following, in which conjoined or accompanitive pronominal subjects are postposed (and surrounded by square brackets):

Kam-avan   *[yau m-iyi].*
1DL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:walk   1SG   and-3SG
'He and I walked.'

Pumroc   kal-amsocwap   *[yau m-Joe   m-Roro].*
night   1PL.EXCL:FUT-BR:go.fishing   1SG   and-Joe and-Roro
'At night, me, Joe and Roro will go fishing.

Kaml-omonki   *makas*   *[kam-ndal   Nelacan].*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:drink   kava.leftovers 1PL.EXCL-ACC.PL   Nelacan
'Nelacan and us drank the kava leftovers.'

When a complex pronominal subject has been postposed in this way, it is possible for the preverbal subject slot also to be occupied by an independent pronoun as a copy of the full noun phrase which appears later in the clause. In such cases, the subject is therefore split between two positions in the clause, for example:

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[Kam]   kaml-ete   ilat   [yau m-Terry m-Netor].
1PL.EXCL 1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:stay   outside 1SG and-Terry and-Netor
'Me, Terry and Netor stayed outside.'

While there is a preference for conjoined or accompanitive pronominal subjects to be postposed, such subjects are also frequently attested in the normal preverbal subject position. We therefore find examples such as the following:

[Russell m-Joe] ru-ve   ra   ndenuc hai.
Russell   and-Joe 3PL:DISTPAST-BR:go   GOAL garden another
'Russell and Joe went to another garden and came here.'

[Kam   nandu   John] kamu-ve   Unamte.
1PL.EXCL ACC.SG John   1DL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:go Unamte
'John and I went to Unamte.'

While conjoined or accompanitive subjects are more likely to be postposed than other subjects, uncoordinated subjects can still appear in the post-object slot, though this almost invariably involves syntactically complex NOUN + MODIFIER or NOUN + POSSESSOR phrasal constructions. We therefore find examples such as:

Yetwovacam (<yi-etu-eva-cam)   [neteme Maleisa].
3SG:DISTPAST-NEG-BR:give.lift-1PL.EXCL person   Malaysia
'The Malaysian did not give us a lift.'

Yi-velom   [retpo-n   nacem].
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:become   wife-CONST emerald.dove
'The emerald dove's wife came.'

This postposing rule can also shift a topic in a topic-comment clause to a position after the comment. Since there is no verbal inflection in the comment, a free pronoun is retained in the topic position. We therefore find examples of the following type:

[Yau] noki   [yau].
1SG   coconut 1SG
'I am a coconut.'

This construction alternates with the following basic pattern, as described in §7.1:

[Yau] noki.
1SG   coconut
'I am a coconut.'

The difference in meaning between *SVO* and *VOS* (and *SVOS*) orders in examples such as these is largely pragmatic, with *VOS* orders encoding subjects or

topics that are expressed as afterthoughts. With *SVO* order, however, the subject represents a pragmatically more highly salient participant in an event.

The *SVO* constituent order is very widely distributed in Oceanic languages, and given the predominance of pre-verbal subject pronominal markers and post-verbal object pronominal markers even in languages which exhibit variations on this order, it seems likely that this represents the ancestral pattern in Proto Oceanic. The languages of the Southern Vanuatu subgroup all have *SVO* order, with the single exception of Anejom, which has *VOS* order. Given that it also has pre-verbal subject particles and post-verbal object particles, it seems likely that this represents a relatively recent innovation from an earlier *SVO* pattern.

7.3.2 NP Preposing

Sye shares a feature that is widespread in Oceanic languages whereby verbal and prepositional objects, and possessor noun phrases, can be fronted to clause-initial position. With *SVO* clauses, therefore, this preposing rule results in a derived *OSV* order.

When a verbal object is preposed in this way, a suffixed transitive verb is obligatorily marked with a pronominal suffix that copies the full set of pronominal distinctions for a fronted pronoun or animate noun, while a third person singular trace marks a fronted inanimate noun. With unsuffixed verbs, the object slot is left unmarked when an inanimate noun has been fronted, while a fronted pronoun or animate noun is marked by an independent pronoun as a copy. Thus:

[Yau] nacave yitalocyau (<*yi-talog-yau*) *ginmah.*
1SG   kava   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:affect-1SG   very.much
'The kava affected me very much.'

[Hai   nunau] yi-vas-i.
INDEF liquor 3SG:DISTPAST-BR:buy-3SG
'He had bought some liquor.'

[Ovoteme   Maleisa] yocotuchor (<*yaco-etu-ocəh-or*).
PL:person   Malaysia 1SG:RECPAST-NEG-BR:see-3PL
'I did not see the Malaysians.'

[Ov-nei] uvulyoru yempaipelac (<*y-em-vaipelac*) *ra*   *nmap.*
PL-tree   cyclone   3SG:DEPPAST-BR:take.out   SOURCE   ground
'The cyclone took the trees, out of the ground.'

When the object of a nominal or a verbal preposition is preposed, we find the same kind of marking at the site of extraction that we find with fronted verbal objects. Thus:

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[Etme-n] yitagkli (<yi-tagkəl-i)   *hai   sesai   ira-n.*
father-3SG 3SG:DISTPAST-BR:ask.for-CONST   INDEF thing SOURCE-3SG
'He asked for something from his father.'

[Nacave ra   nur igko] yococ-velom   *ntovni (<ntovən-i).*
kava   BELONG place here 1SG:RECPAST-BR:come PURP-3SG
'It is kava from this place that I have come for.'

With free prepositions other than *ra*, *gi* and *hogku(su)*, a preposed noun object is marked by the absence of any pronominal trace. Thus:

[Ave-n-hai   *Nompwat] yococ-ve*   *nandu.*
brother-CONST-brother Nompwat 1SG:RECPAST-BR:go ACC.SG
'I went with Nompwat's brother.'

With the similitive preposition *hogku(su)*, there is an obligatory full pronominal copy at the point of extraction, for example:

Nahiven ma kem-naruvo   *hogkusu iyi/*Ø.*
woman   that 2SG:PRES-MR:sing SIM   3SG
'You sing like that woman.'

With *ra* and *gi*, a fronted noun phrase is marked by means of the cliticized pro-forms *-wi* and *-gi* respectively, which attach to the preceding verb. Note that the form *-wi* appears occasionally as *-ewi* after consonants, though *-wi* is the more frequent variant. After vowels, we invariably find *-wi*. Thus:

[Nimo enyau]   *ko-nalei-wi.*
house POSS:1SG   2SG:FUT-MR:sleep-LOCPRO
'You will sleep in my house.'

[Nur ma] co-yep-ewi.
place that 3SG:FUT-descend-LOCPRO
'(S)he will go down that place.'

The function of noun phrase preposing is again pragmatic. Sye, like most other Oceanic languages, lacks a passive construction for promoting verbal objects into the more highly salient subject position in the clause. There are also no means for promoting prepositional objects to the more pragmatically salient object and subject positions, such as we find with the focus systems of some Western Austronesian languages. The effect of noun phrase preposing is to express higher pragmatic salience with regard to a less salient noun phrase. The preposing of a verbal object, therefore, performs a similar sort of pragmatic role to the passive and applicative constructions in languages that have such constructions.

There are also constructions which it is possible to analyze as involving noun phrase preposing involving the subject itself. What we find are constructions in which a nominal subject (or a nominal topic, in the case of a non-verbal clause) is followed by a pronominal trace. In the following examples, the preposed subject and the pronominal copies are surrounded separately by square brackets:

[Tom] [iyi] colehi (<co-eleh-i)   *nompcahi.*
Tom   3SG   3SG:RECPAST-MR:hunt-CONST   pig
'Tom hunted the pig.'

[Netor m-Nokigo] [iror] ruturcam (<ru-etu-ur-cam).
Netor   and-Nokigo 3PL   3PL:DISTPAST-NEG-BR:follow-1PL.EXCL
'Netor and Nokigo did not follow us.'

Such sentences without the pronominal copy are always grammatically correct. The difference between sentences that contain a pronominal copy after the subject and those which do not is again pragmatic, with the forms containing a pronominal copy expressing a contrast between the expressed subject and other possible subjects not expressed.

In addition to the preposing of verbal and prepositional objects, as well as subjects, it is also possible to front a possessor out of a possessive noun phrase. Note the following:

[Kam nduru] ni-mam   *yi-hac*   *isut.*
1PL.EXCL   two name-1PL.EXCL   3SG:DISTPAST-ascend far
'The names of the two of us became well known.'

[Yau] hai   netai enyau.
1SG   INDEF   book   POSS:1SG
'I have got a book.'

The interjection *isuma* 'that's all' can appear after a preposed topic noun phrase with a following clausal comment, to express the irrevocable involvement of the referent of the topic noun phrase in the event encoded in the clause, contrary to original expectation. Thus:

Steven isuma   cotwampelom (<co-etwo-ampelom) ra   norwotu.
Steven   that's.all 3SG:RECPAST-NEG:FUT-MR:come   GOAL   school
'Steven definitely will not be coming to school any more.'

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8: COMPLEX SENTENCES

Of the various types of multi-clause sentences found in Erromangan, the most notable difference when compared with other Oceanic languages is the relative lack of serial verb constructions.[1] Performing many of the functions of serial verbs in other Oceanic languages, however, is the echo verb construction, which involves verbs marked with a reduced set of subject and tense-aspect-mood categories appearing after a fully inflected initial verb.

Other sorts of complex sentence constructions in Erromangan offer fewer surprises from a typological and a comparative viewpoint. There are complex sentences in which subordinate clauses are marked by preposed subordinators, as well as coordinate constructions in which structurally intact clauses are linked by means of lexically marked coordinators. Both of these patterns are widely attested in Oceanic languages. Another fairly widely encountered pattern of complex sentences in Sye is that in which non-finite subordinating prefixes are found on verbs in structurally reduced subordinate clauses.

8.1 Echo Subject Construction

There is a clear inflectional distinction in Sye between verbs carrying initial subjects and echo subjects. When a verb encodes a new event, its inflectional prefixes mark a full range of subject and tense distinctions. There are separate inflectional markers for the first, second and third persons, and in the first person non-singular, also for inclusive and exclusive. In the first person, there is a three-way distinction of number, while in the second and third persons, there is a two-way number contrast. There is also a formal distinction made between twelve different tense-aspect-mood categories (§4.2).

Verbs with echo subject marking are found on the second (or subsequent) verb (or verbs) in sequence when verbs share the same subject. Verbs which carry these markers do not express the full range of inflectional distinctions found on initial verbs. Full details of the morphological shape of echo subject markers is provided in §4.2.2.1.2 and §4.2.2.8.

There is a restricted set of circumstances in which a verb with echo subject marking does not strictly depend on the subject categories marked on the preceding verb. It is possible for an echo verb to treat both the subject and the object together as a single category if the two are seen as performing the subsequent action together. In the following example, while *misi Ravosen* 'the missionary Robertson' is the subject of the initial verb *yivai* 'he took him' and the following verb *mhac* 'and he went up', the subsequent verb *mute* 'and they stayed' carries

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[1] Lynch and Capell (1983:35) refer to serial verbs in Erromangan, though this is merely a label that they use for what are analyzed in the present grammar as verbal derivational prefixes (§4.5.1).

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plural echo subject marking because the subject and the object of the previous verb stayed together:

Misi   *Ravosen*   *yi-vai*   *m-hac*   *Unpogkor*
missionary Robertson 3SG:DISTPAST-BR:take SG:ES-go.up Unpogkor
mute (<mu-ete) *yuwi* *nandu.*
PL:ES-BR:stay   there   together
'The missionary Robertson took him up to Unpogkor and they stayed there together.'

It is also possible for a non-verbal clause (§7.1.1) to be followed by a verb carrying echo subject marking, for example:

Kau *viroc* *m-eti.*
cow small SG:ES-BR:calve
'The cow is small and it has calved.'

Echo subject marking is pervasive in Erromangan. A count of nearly two thousand verbs in sequence over seven texts gathered from three different speakers produced an average incidence of such verbs of about 37% of the total of inflected verbs.

8.1.1 Non-Grammaticalized Echo Verbs

Echo verbs appear in a number of different sorts of constructions. Perhaps the most frequently encountered function of echo verbs is to express coordination between verbs sharing the same subject, or where a non-verbal clause shares a subject with a following verbal clause. The echo subject prefixes all involve an initial *m-*, which compares with the free coordinator *im*, and its proclitic alternative form *m-* (§6.1.3, §8.7). While echo subject markers are undoubtedly historically derived from earlier coordinate constructions, the discussion below of the functions of echo verbs indicates these prefixes go well beyond the encoding of coordinate clauses in modern Erromangan.

(i) *Coordination*

Echo subject markers can be used to express either sequential or simultaneous coordinate relationships between the events expressed by two (or more) verbs. When an initial event precedes a second event (or a number of subsequent events) in time, the second verb (and all subsequent verbs) can be marked with echo subject prefixes. Thus:

Menuc *y-ocep*   *m-tasi*   *ra* *ndogo-n*   *nei.*
bird   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:fly SG:ES-BR:alight LOC branch-CONST tree
'The bird flew and then alighted on the branch of the tree.'

Cum-nemai   m-antvani-gi   ra   ndau.
3PL:PRES-MR:chew PL:ES-MR:spit-TR LOC heliconia
'They chew it and then spit it onto the heliconia leaf.'

The echo subject construction can also indicate that two actions take place at the same time, with each simply representing different aspects of a single overall event. Thus:

Y-owi   nur   Vila m-tolki   eni-wi.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:leave   place Vila SG:ES-BR:return   POSS:3SG-TOP
'(S)he left Vila and (thereby) returned home.'

It is possible for more than two verbs to appear in sequence with echo subject markers, as long as they all share the same subject, and the first verb receives full inflectional marking. Thus:

Kamli-tour-i   ovon kuri mli-tantvi   nu
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:lead-CONST   PL   dog   PL:ES-BR:cross river
mli-sac   mli-telwog-i   ovon nenduc.
PL:ES-BR:ascend   PL:ES-BR:go.past-CONST   PL   garden
'We led the dogs and crossed the river and went up past the gardens.'

In this example, the only verb to receive full inflectional marking is the initial verb *kamlitouri* 'we led', while the subsequent verbs *mlitantvi* 'and we crossed', *mlisac* 'and we went up' and *mlitelwogi* 'and we went past' all carry echo subject marking.

While echo subject markers copy the inflectional categories of the fully inflected initial verb, they are free to independently mark those inflectional categories which appear between the first order prefixes and the verb root (§4.2.2.8). An echo verb can therefore be negated independently of the initial verb, for example:

Yoco-navan   m-etw-antvani.
1SG:FUT-MR:walk   ES:SG-NEG:FUT-MR:spit
'I will walk and not spit.'

It is also possible for an echo verb to differ in its tense-aspect-mood inflection from the initial verb. Thus:

Etme-n   coc-velom   me-naleipo.
father-3SG 3SG:RECPAST-BR:come   SG:ES-MR:sleep
'His/her father came and will sleep.'

Since echo verbs express a coordinate relationship between two clauses, a sequence of echo subject verbs which are separated by the disjunctive coordinator

ku 'or' is incompatible with this marking. Any verb following this coordinator must be marked as an initial verb, for example:

Nagkrai   yem-agkep   ra   ov-nei-su   mem-nohrog-i
flying.fox 3SG:PASTHAB-MR:fly LOC PL-tree-every   SG:*EM*-ES-MR:look.for-CONST
ov-novgu-n   nei ku yem-nomproc   ra   ndenuc.
PL-fruit-CONST tree or 3SG:PASTHAB-MR:steal LOC garden
'The flying fox would fly to all the trees and look for fruits of the trees or steal in the garden.'

In this case, while the subject of *yemnomproc* 'he would steal' is identical with the subject of the immediately preceding echo verb *memnohrogi* 'and he would look for', it appears with initial verb inflections because the sequence of echo subject verbs has been interrupted by the disjunctive coordinator *ku*.

   While a verb carrying echo subject markers normally refers back to whatever happens to be the immediately preceding verb with initial subject markers, there are cases when another verb with initial subject markers can intervene between an echo verb and the verb from which the inflectional categories are copied. This can happen in the following circumstances:

(a) When there is a stretch of direct speech, an echo verb refers back to the verb preceding the quoted material, rather than to any of the material within the quote itself. Thus:

Nocwem   yi-velom   mochi (<m-ocəh-i) m-ocu:
Pacific.pigeon 3SG:DISTPAST-BR:come   SG:ES-BR:see-3SG   SG:ES-BR:say
"Yacam-naig-i   kakw-ampculac."   Mem-aruvo.
1SG:PRES-MR:want-CONST   1DL.INCL:FUT-MR:get.married   SG:*EM*-ES-BR:sing
'The Pacific pigeon came and saw and said: "I want us to get married." And he sang.'

In this example, the echo verb *memaruvo* 'and he sang' copies the subject categories of the verb *yivelom* 'he came', rather than the immediately preceding verb with initial subject prefixes, that is *kokwampculac* 'we will get married'.

(b) When a relative clause modifies a noun, an echo verb after the relative clause copies the subject categories of the preceding verb that is located within the main clause. Thus:

Kakeml-antipe   nulgo-n   ntaiki   mle-nali
1PL.EXCL:FUT-MR:put.down   leaf-CONST kind.of.banana PL:ES-MR:crumble
nmar   mori cam-nempu   ml-ampai-pelac   ov-novsi.
breadfruit REL   3SG:PRES-MR:ferment PL:ES-MR:take-out PL-breadfruit.seed
'We put down the *ntaiki* leaves and crumble the breadfruit which is fermenting and remove the breadfruit seeds.'

In this case, the verb *mlampaipelac* 'and we take out' does not refer back to the subject of the immediately preceding verb, that is *camnempu* '(the breadfruit) is fermenting', which is part of a relative clause, but to *kakemlantipe* 'we are putting down'.

The verb *ompi* 'make' can be used with third person singular echo subject markers to indicate that the event encoded by the following clause is a result of the event expressed by a preceding clause (§8.1.2). In such constructions, the final verb can carry echo subject markers which differ from the third person singular marking on the immediately preceding verb *ompi*, but which refer to the subject marking on the verb before that. Examine the following example:

Kaml-omonki   *m-ompi*   *ml-etu-taru-hai*   *armai.*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:drink   SG:ES-BR:make   PL:ES-NEG-BR:think-EMPH   properly
'We drank so (lit. "and it made it [that]") we didn't think properly at all.'

The verb *mompi* 'and it made it' does not copy the subject categories of the preceding verb *kamlomonki* 'we drank'(as it does not appear with the plural form **mlompi*), and the final verb *mletutaruhai* 'and we did not think at all' copies the subject categories of *kamlomonki* rather than *mompi*.

(ii) *Direction*

Verbs of motion can be marked with echo subject prefixes to indicate the direction in which an action is performed. The verbs that are most frequently attested with echo subject marker in this construction are the basic motion verbs, that is *ve* 'go', *velom* 'come', *sac* 'ascend' and *yep* 'descend'. Thus:

Kaml-alou   *mli-ve.*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:run   PL:ES-BR:go
'We ran away.'

Y-ur-i   *nu*   *m-yep.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:follow-CONST   river   SG:ES-descend
'(S)he followed the river downstream.'

The general spatial preposition *ra* referred to in §7.1.3.4 can be disambiguated for source and goal interpretations by the use of the directional verbs *ve* 'go' and *velom* 'come' with echo subject marking, as follows:

Yam-avan   *mpe (<m-ve)*   *ra*   *nimo.*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:walk   SG:ES-BR:go   GOAL   house
'I walked to the house.'

Yam-avan   *mpelom (<m-velom)*   *ra*   *nimo.*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:walk   SG:ES-BR:come   SOURCE   house
'I walked from the house.'

There is a restricted set of transitive and pseudo-transitive verbs which also appear in the echo subject construction as directional verbs. Such verbs often have meanings that are rather different—though still clearly related—when used as initial and echo verbs, as set out in Table 8.1. Thus:

Yi-yep   *m-elcav-i*   *nmap.*
3SG:DISTPAST-come.down SG:ES-BR:touch-CONST ground
'(S)he came down as far as the ground.'

Kagkli (<ko-agkəl-i) *me-nur-i*   *nowatni-n.*
2SG:FUT-MR:dig-CONST SG:ES-MR:follow-CONST root-3SG
'You must dig along its roots.'

Y-avan   *m-telwog-i*   *narvin.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:walk SG:ES-BR:go.past-CONST beach
'(S)he walked past the beach.'

The verb *ovog-* 'give' has also been attested carrying echo subject markers in this kind of construction to introduce the recipient of the initial verb. Thus:

Yi-seivas-i   *nimo* *m-ovog-i*   *etme-n.*
3SG:DISTPAST-sell-CONST house SG:ES-BR:give-CONST father-3SG
'(S)he sold the house to his/her father.'

However, speakers generally regard it as preferable to express a goal by means of the dative preposition *pog-* (§7.1.3.4):[2]

Yi-seivas-i   *nimo* *pog-i* *etme-n.*
3SG:DISTPAST-sell-CONST house DAT-CONST father-3SG
'(S)he sold the house to his/her father.'

(iii) *Manner*

The echo subject construction is sometimes also used to indicate the manner in which an action is carried out, as in the following:

Etehep *m-evri* *no-m!*
2SG:IMP-BR:sit SG:ES-BR:cross leg-2SG
'Sit with your legs crossed!'

The transitive verb *tampli* 'finish' can be used in this construction to indicate that an action is performed to complete effect on its objects. Thus:

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[2] This form is obviously historically related to the verb *ovog-*, with which it shares some morphological irregularities.

Table 8.1 Semantically Specialized Echo verbs

	Initial verb	*Echo verb*
elcav-	'hold, touch'	'as far as'
ur-	'follow'	'along'
teloun-	'go over'	'over'
telwog-	'go past'	'past'
evyogk-	'leave'	'from'
agkaugi	'go around'	'around'

Yoco-nowi   ntovom me-ntampli.
1SG:FUT-MR:plant yam   SG:ES-MR:finish
'I will plant all the yams.'

(iv) *Comparative*

The transitive verb *telwog-* 'go past' can be used with echo subject marking to express the point of comparison in a comparative construction after an inflected stative verb, for example:

Nur   Vila   camnawau (<came-nau-au) me-ntelwog-i   nur
place Vila 3SG:PRES-MR:hot-REDUP   SG:ES-MR:go.past-CONST place
Eromaga.
Erromango
'Vila is hotter than Erromango.'

It is even possible for the verb *telwog-* with echo subject marking to following a stative predicate in which there is no verb carrying a set of initial inflectional prefixes.[3] Thus:

Nimo enyau   nmah m-telwog-i   horo-m.
house POSS:1SG   big   SG:ES-BR:go.past-CONST POSS-2SG
'My house is bigger than yours.'

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[3] This is not the only construction that is used to express a comparative meaning in Sye. There is another pattern is which does not make us of the echo verb construction at all, and we find instead the modifier *momu* 'more', with the point of comparison expressed by means of the preposition *ra* (§7.1.3.4). We therefore find examples such as:

Nimo enyau   nmah momu ra   horo-m.
house POSS:1SG   big   more COMP   POSS-2SG
'My house is bigger than yours.'

(v) *Iterative*

A fully inflected initial verb can be followed by one (or more) instances of the same verb carrying the corresponding echo subject markers, to indicate that the action is performed iteratively. Examine the following examples:

Kagkol (<ko-agkəl)   *co-yep*   *me-yep*   *isut.*
2SG:FUT-MR:dig   3SG:FUT-descend SG:ES-go.down   far
'You will dig down and down a long way.'

(vi) *Lexically Specialized Sequences*

There is a number of pairs of verbs that are linked by means of the echo subject construction which have meanings that are not fully predictable from the meanings of the constituent parts. Thus, initial *agri* 'cry' can be followed by *tog-* 'bewail' with echo verb marking to express the meaning of 'cry for', while *avan* 'walk' can appear before *ovlomolomol* 'fall while going' with echo subject marking, to mean 'stagger'. Thus:

Y-agri   *m-tog-i*   *etme-n.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:cry   SG:ES-BR:bewail-CONST   father-3SG
'(S)he cried for his/her father (lit. "(s)he will cry, bewailing his/her father").'

Cam-navan   *m-ampl-omol-omol.*
3SG:PRES-MR:walk   SG:ES-MR:SIMULT-BR:fall-REDUP
'(S)he is staggering.'

The verb *ete* 'stay' can appear after itself in the same construction to express the meaning of 'stay behind', for example:

Kaml-ete   *ml-ete.*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:stay   PL:ES-BR:stay
'We stayed behind (while others left).'

The initial verbs of perception *ocəh-* 'see' and *orəg-* 'hear, feel, smell' can be followed by the verb *okil-* 'know' in the echo verb construction, to express the meanings of 'recognize by sight' and 'recognize by sound/smell' respectively. Since both verbs are suffixed transitive verbs, there is obligatory pronominal marking for object on both verbs, with both expressing the same object categories. Thus:

Yocochoc (<yaco-ocəh-oc)   *m-okil-oc.*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:see-2SG   SG:ES-BR:know-2SG
'I recognized you (by sight).'

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When the sequence is associated with a nominal object, the object appears only after the initial verb, while the second verb carries third person pronominal object marking, for example:

Yocorgi (*<yaco-orəg-i*)   *navya-n*   *m-okil-i.*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:hear-CONST   voice-3SG ES:SG-BR:know-3SG
'I recognized his/her voice.'

Such constructions are negated by inflecting only the second verb in the sequence for the negative, that is:

Yocochoc (*<yaco-ocəh-oc*)   *metukiloc* (*<m-etu-okil-oc*).
1SG:RECPAST-BR:see-2SG   SG:ES-NEG-BR:know-2SG
'I did not recognize you (by sight).'

The verb *ta-* is ambiguous between the meanings of 'hit' and 'kill'. This ambiguity is frequently resolved by means of the subsequent verb *talog-* 'kill', which is marked with echo verb prefixes. Thus, compare the following:

Yi-ta-i   *nalau.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:hit/kill-CONST   child
'(S)he hit/killed the child.'

Yi-ta-i   *nalau m-talog-i.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:hit/kill-CONST   child SG:ES-BR:kill-3SG
'(S)he killed the child.'

8.1.2 Grammaticalized Echo Verbs

Verbs carrying echo subject marking also perform a number of grammatical functions that are not predictable from the lexical meanings of their roots. These various grammaticalized functions of echo verbs are described below.

(i) Ocu *'say'*

There is a widely used intransitive verb *ocu*, which is generally used lexically with the meaning 'say', though it can also be used to mean 'want' or 'think'. This can be followed by an unmarked clausal complement expressing the content of the saying, wanting or thinking. The complement clause can represent either direct or indirect speech. The following illustrate indirect speech complements to the verb *ocu* as a main verb:

Netor *yem-ocu*   *kimu-yep*   *yuwi.*
Netor 3SG:DEPPAST-BR:say 2PL:DISTPAST-descend there
'Netor said you all went down there.'

Yem-ocu   *namou conpoyau (<co-enpo-yau) hai   nam.*
3SG:DEPPAST-BR:say   mother 3SG:RECPAST-BR:tell-1SG   INDEF talk
'He said, "Mother told me something".'

Isuma   wocon yacam-agku   yocontagkloc (<yaco-ntagkəl-oc).
that's.all only   1SG:PRES-MR:want 1SG:FUT-MR:ask-2SG
'That is all that I want to ask you.'

It is possible for the complement to be a non-verbal clause, as in:

Kem-agku   hogku se?
2SG:PRES-MR:think SIM   what
'What do you think?' (lit. "how do you think"?)

Since *ocu* in such constructions behaves like any ordinary lexical verb, it is possible for it to be marked with echo subject prefixes following a verb carrying initial subject markers. We therefore find examples of the following kind:

Nouyauvi yi-tuc   m-ocu   yau noki.
Nouyauvi 3SG:DISTPAST-BR:get.up   SG:ES-BR:say   1SG coconut
'Nouyauvi got up and said, "I am the coconut".'

While *ocu* is widely attested as a lexical verb, it is even more widely attested performing a variety of grammaticalized functions when it carries echo subject marking, as set out below. These grammatical functions of *ocu* are described in the discussion which follows.

(a) *Quotative Construction*

A verb of locution, with or without any associated object or prepositional phrases, can be followed by a clausal complement expressing the content of the locution expressed by the preceding verb. In such cases, the complement is preceded by the verb *ocu*, with echo subject marking in agreement with the marking on the preceding verb. The initial verb in such cases can be any intransitive verb that expresses any kind of locutionary act, such as *am* 'speak', *tampi* 'chat', *aruvo* 'sing', *tamsi* 'answer', *ahor* 'shout', for example:

Netor yem-tampi   pog-kam   m-ocu
Netor 3SG:DEPPAST-BR:chat   GOAL-1PL.EXCL   SG:ES-BR:say
kim-avan   kim-ndal   John.
2PL:DISTPAST-BR:walk 2PL-ACC.PL John
'Netor was chatting to us that you all walked with John.'

Y-aruvo   m-ocu   nacem pontan votete.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:sing   SG:ES-BR:say   nacem pontan votete[4]
'He came came and was singing *nacem pontan votete*.'

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[4] This is the first line of a song. The words are untranslatable.

The initial verb in this construction can also be a transitive locutionary verb, with the verb *ocu* introducing a complement clause immediately after this. Verbs of this type that enter into this construction include *enwi* 'say', *enpog-* 'tell', *orɔv-* 'abuse', *ovrog-* 'call', for example:

Kokl-anwi   *ml-agku*   *hogku hai*   *narisac.*
1PL.INCL-FUT-say PL:ES-MR:say SIM   INDEF great.leader
'We will say that he was like a great leader.'

Y-ovrog-i   *m-ocu*   *yacam-naig-i*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:call-3SG SG:ES-BR:say 1SG:PRES-MR:want-CONST
kokw-ampculac.
1DL.INCL:FUT-MR:get.married
'She went and called to him, "I want us to get married".'

A transitive verb does not itself need to have any locutionary content as long as the associated object refers to a locution of some kind. Thus, *tamul-* 'send' can be followed by a clause introduced by *ocu* if it has an object such as *nam* 'word', as in the following:

Ndu-tamul-i   *nam mucu (<mu-ocu) hai*   *nemetagi*
3PL:DISTPAST-BR:send-CONST word PL:ES-BR:say   INDEF cyclone
cam-ampelom.
3SG:PRES-MR:come
'They sent word that a cyclone was coming.'

An intransitive verb that itself has no locutionary content can also be followed by a complement introduced by *ocu* if its subject refers to a locutionary act. Thus, *ve* 'go' can be followed by a quotative clause introduced by *ocu* if its subject is a noun such as *uvuvu* 'story, as in:

Uvuvu cam-ampe   *hogkuhu m-agku*   *Nouyauvi*
story   3SG:PRES-MR:go thus   SG:ES-MR:say Nouyauvi
yem-ete   *Unur.*
3SG:DEPPAST-BR:live   Unur
'The story goes thus that Nouyauvi was living at Unur.'

(b) *Content of Mental Processes*

The use of *ocu* as a verb expressing a clausal complement does not involve a radical departure from the lexical meaning of *ocu* as described at the beginning of this section. However, the same construction is also encountered with initial verbs expressing mental processes rather than locutionary acts, such as *taru* 'think', for example:

Yi-taru   *m-ocu*   *nimo ihen*   *ndomo*.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:think   SG:ES-BR:say   house POSS:3SG   strong
'He thought that his house was strong.'

Transitive verbs expressing mental processes such as *okil-* 'know', *aig-* 'want', *acyog-* 'want' and *orag-* 'hear' behave in the same way, except that if they are suffixed verbs, they must carry the construct suffix when introducing a complement clause. Thus:

Yacam-agkil-i   *m-agku*   *kik*   *armai wocon* *ire*.
1SG:PRES-MR:know-CONST   SG:ES-MR:say   2SG   good   very   today
'I know that you are very well today.'

(c) *Nominal Complement to Locutionary Verb*

With the ditransitive locutionary verbs *atovni-* 'name' and *ovrog-* 'call', the second object (§6.1.2) can optionally be introduced as a complement to the verb *ocu* with echo subject marking. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Rw-atovni-n   *nalau eniror*   *mucu (<mu-ocu)* *Ragai*.
3PL:DISTPAST-BR:call-CONST   child POSS:3PL   PL:ES-BR:say   Ragai
'They called their child Ragai.'

(d) *Resultative Construction*

This construction can also be used to introduce an event that takes place as a direct result of the event described in the preceding clause containing a verb with initial subject markers. Thus:

Y-orcai   *itrogko (<itur-ogko)* *u-nipmi*   *nomu m-ocu*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:swim   ADJ-BR:straight   LOC-eye:3SG   fish   SG:ES-BR:say
iyi   *co-ntavtur*   *ra*   *nompu-n*   *nogu-n*   *nelpat*.
3SG   3SG:FUT-MR:go.ashore   LOC   head-CONST   mouth-CONST   stony.river.bar
'He swam directly for the taboo place so that he would go ashore at the point of the stony river bar.'

(e) *Aversive Construction*

In the aversive construction, the initial verb *ete* 'be, stay' carries either future or counterassertive inflectional marking. This is followed by the verb *ocu*, carrying echo subject marking, and there is then a third verb, which also carries echo subject marking. The construction as a whole expresses a warning to the referent of the noun phrase encoded as the subject of *ete* that the action expressed in the third verb may happen against their wishes, or it may affect them negatively in some way.

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There is a semantic contrast associated with the two different aversive constructions. When the initial verb in the sequence carries future tense marking, the warning is about a situation that the initial subject might get involved in at some general time in the future. When the initial verb appears with counterassertive marking, a more immediate warning about an event that the subject is already involved in is being expressed. It is possible for an aversive clause to appear on its own without any preceding main clause. In such cases, the activity that the addressee is being warned about is implicit. Thus:

Yac-ante   *m-agku*   *m-amol.*
1SG:FUT-MR:stay   SG:ES-MR:say   SG:ES-MR:fall
'I might fall (as a result of something that I might do in the future).'

Kanl-ete   *ml-ocu*   *ml-omol.*
1PL.EXCL:COUNT-BR:stay   PL:ES-BR:say   PL:ES-BR:fall
'(Watch out or) we might fall (as a result of what we are doing now)!'

However, the activity that is being warned about can also be overtly expressed as a negative future verb expressing a prohibitive meaning, as in the following:

Kotwonomonki (<ko-etwo-nomonki) orog k-ante   *m-agku*
2SG:RECPAST-NEG:FUT-MR:drink   much   2SG:FUT-MR:stay   SG:ES-MR:say
m-amah.
SG:ES-MR:die
'Don't drink too much in case you die.'

Kotwampe (<ko-etwo-ampe) c-ante   *m-agku*   *m-ampip.*
2SG:RECPAST-NEG:FUT-MR:go   3SG:FUT-MR:stay   SG:ES-MR:say   SG:ES-MR:rain
'Don't go in case it rains.'

There is an additional structural alternative to the future aversative construction where the echo subject marking on *ocu* can be lost, leaving just the modified form of the root *agku*, which is then morphologically bound to the preceding verb *ete*. According to the general morphophonemic rules of the language (§2.5.2.5), the resulting sequence of *ea* over the boundary is resolved as *a*. We therefore find synonymous alternatives such as the following:

K-ante   *m-agku*   *m-amol.*
2SG:FUT-MR:stay   SG:ES-MR:say   SG:ES-MR:fall

Kantagku (<ko-ante-agku) m-amol.
2SG:FUT-MR:stay-MR:say   SG:ES-MR:fall
'You might fall.'

With this pattern, the original complex construction has effectively been reanalyzed as the new aversive finite auxiliary verb *antagku*—as described in (iv) below—albeit one with a defective paradigm, as it is restricted to carrying future tense markers.

(ii) Ompi *'do'*

The form *ompi* functions as a lexical verb meaning 'do' or 'make', as well as occurring as a dummy verb before verbs copied from Bislama (§6.3.2). Thus:

Cum-nompi	*se?*	*Y-ompi*	*reti.*
3PL:PRES-MR:do	what	3SG:DISTPAST-BR:do	ready
'What are they doing?'		'It was ready.'	

As is shown in §8.4, it is also used in the expression of periphrastic causatives.

However, this verb also appears with singular echo subject marking with the particular grammatical function of indicating that the event encoded by the following clause takes place as a direct result of the event encoded in the preceding clause. This construction therefore translates as 'so' or 'therefore' in English, and is illustrated by the following:

Nur	*Umponyelogi*	*tawi*	*nu*	*potcon*	*m-ompi*	*nempgon*
place	Umponyelogi	NEG	river	nearby	SG:ES-BR:make	time

kimem-entuc		*pruvcum*	*kim-ampai*		*nu*
2SG:PASTHAB-MR:get.up		morning	2SG:DISTPAST-MR:get		water

virokgo (*<viroc-go*)	*me-ntavti-gi*		*nimto-m.*
little-REST	SG:ES-MR:wash-INSTPRO		face-2SG

'Umponyelogi had no river nearby so when you got up in the morning you would get just a bit of water to wash your face with.'

Yoco-silgi		*nu*	*me-nompi*	*kik*
1SG:FUT-pour.out		water	SG:ES-MR:make	2SG

kotwagkili (*<ko-etwo-agkil-i*)		*n-oruc.*
2SG:RECPAST-NEG:FUT-MR:be.able-CONST		NOM-BR:bathe

'I will pour out the water so you won't be able to bathe.'

Unlike other grammaticalized echo verb constructions, the verb *ompi* in this construction does not copy the number marking of the subject of the initial verb. Thus, in the following example, the verb *ompi* carries echo verb marking as if it followed a third person singular initial verb:

Kaml-omonki	*m-ompi*	*ml-etu-taru-hai*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:drink	SG:ES-BR:make	PL:ES-NEG-BR:think-NEG.EMPH

armai.
properly

'We drank so we didn't think properly at all.'

If it were to copy the subject marking of the preceding verb *kamlomonki*, we would expect to find **mlompi* in this example.

(iii) Tampli *'finish*

Tampli is a lexical verb meaning 'finish', which can be used both transitively and intransitively, as in:

Coc-tampli-su.	*Yoco-ntampli nvag.*
3SG:RECPAST-BR:finis-PERF	1SG:FUT-MR:finish food
'It is finished.'	'I will finish the food.'

This verb is also frequently encountered in speech with echo subject marking, functioning as a discourse marker indicating that the speaker is now proceeding on with the next stage in the story, with the preceding events having been completed. It therefore generally translates as 'and then'. In such cases, the verb *tampli* is almost invariably suffixed with the perfective marker *-su* (§4.4). Thus:

Netor   yi-tampi   Pontrauhac m-tampli-su
Netor   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:hold.meeting   Pontrauhac SG:ES-BR:finish-PERF
ru-ve   Umponyelogi m-alei   yuwi.
3PL:DISTPAST-BR:go   Umponyelogi PL:ES-BR:spend.night there
'Netor held a meeting at Pontrauhac and then they went to Umponyelogi and spent the night there.'

Kamli-ve   ml-elcav-i   hai   nu   orog
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:go   PL:ES-BR:touch-CONST   INDEF river large
ml-emendog   mli-tampli-su   ml-atipotni-n   n-avan
PL:ES-BR:rest PL:ES-BR:finish-PERF PL:ES-BR:start-CONST   NOM-BR:walk
nempgon hai momu.
time   one more
'We went as far as a large river and we rested and then we started walking once again.'

(iv) *Finite Auxiliaries*

There is a set of non-finite auxiliaries described in §8.3.2 which are followed by a verb that receives non-finite marking in the shape of the nominalizing prefix *n-*. However, there is another set of auxiliaries which will be referred to by way of contrast as finite auxiliaries. These differ from non-finite auxiliaries in that the following verb is marked by the appropriate form of the echo subject prefixes, which make at least a partial set of inflectional distinctions.

There is one form which belongs exclusively to this set, and it varies in shape between *ai*, *ah* and *ahi*. This expresses the meaning of 'just do'. It is irregular in

its inflectional paradigm in that in environments which call for the modified form of the root (where we would predict *nai*, *nah* or *nahi*), there is no change in the root at all (§4.1.3). Thus:

Ndu-ve   *mu-ta-hai*   *nompcahi*   *m-ah*   *mu-torilki.*
3PL:DISTPAST-BR:go   PL:ES-BR:kill-INDEF   pig   PL:ES-just.do   PL:ES-BR:return
'They killed a pig and just returned.'

Yac-ahi   *me-ntorilki.*
1SG:FUT-just.do   SG:ES-MR:return
'I will just return.'

In addition to this single finite auxiliary, there is a number of forms which function as both as lexical verbs and non-finite auxiliaries, sometimes with unpredictable differences in meaning. This set of additional forms is set out in Table 8.2. We therefore find examples such as:

Yococ-tapmi   *m-am.*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:try   SG:ES-BR:speak
'I tried to speak.'

Yacam-ante   *meme-ntaru-gi*   *ndansu marima.*
1SG:PRES-MR:HABIT   SG:ES:*EM*-MR:think-TR   always   now
'I always think about it now.'

Yam-ocu   *mpe (<m-ve)*   *Vila.*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:want   SG:ES-BR:go   Vila
'I wanted to go to Vila.'

Hai   *nalau*   *yem-ocu*   *mocohcam (<m-ocəh-cam).*
INDEF   child   3SG:DEPPAST-BR:do.by.chance   SG:ES-BR:see-1PL.EXCL
'A child happened to see us.'

Yavror (<yi-avər-or)   *m-ta-i*   *ovoteme.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:help-3PL   SG:ES-BR:kill-CONST   PL:person
'(S)he helped them to kill the people.'

The suffixed transitive verb *atipotni-* 'start' appears in the construct form when used as an auxiliary, for example:

Co-natipotni-n   *me-nam.*
3SG:FUT-MR:start-CONST   SG:ES-MR:speak
'(S)he will start to speak.'

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Table 8.2 Lexical Verbs Functioning as Non-finite Auxiliaries

	Lexical meaning	Auxiliary meaning
tapmi	'try'	'try to do'
ete	'stay, live'	'habitual, continuous'
ocu	'say'	'happen to do, do by chance, want to do'
atipotni-	'start'	'start to do'
ovum	'precede'	'do first'
avər-	'help'	'help to do'

Finally, this set can be taken to include the reanalyzed aversive echo verb construction referred to in section (i) above. Thus, *antagku* could be regarded as a finite auxiliary expressing an aversive function, for example:

K-antagku   *m-amol.*
2SG:FUT-MR:aversive   SG:ES-MR:fall
'(Watch out or) you might fall.'

(v) *Time Clauses*

The subordinators *nempgon* and *ndan* described in §8.5 are used to introduce irrealis and realis time clauses respectively. While the verb in the subordinate clauses is normally independently inflected for subject categories, when the main clause and the subordinate clause share subjects, it is also usual for the verb of the subordinate clause to receive echo subject marking, as in the following:

Ndan *etme-n*   *yem-torilki*   *pruvcum mochi* (<*m-ocəh-i*)
when   father-3SG   3SG:DEPPAST-BR:return   morning   SG:*EM*-BR:see-CONST
nitni.
son-3SG
'When his father came back in the morning, he saw his son.'

8.2 Uninflected *nocu*

The discussion in §8.1.2 presented a variety of subordinating functions expressed by the verb *ocu* when marked by echo subject prefixes. The same root, however, is also found in the uninflected citation form *nocu* (§4.2.3) with a range of functions which partly overlap with the subordinating functions of inflected *ocu*, and which are partly different.

When *ocu* functions as an initial verb meaning 'say', it can be followed by a clausal complement as we find with any other locutionary verb. However, the complement cannot be introduced by the echo subject form of the same verb. What

we find instead is that the complement is introduced by the uninflected form of the verb, that is *nocu*. Thus, compare the following, which differ in that the initial verb in one case is *enwi* 'say', while in the other case it is the synonymous form *ocu* 'say':

Netor   yem-enwi   m-ocu   kimu-yep   yuwi.
Netor   3SG:DEPPAST-BR:say   SG:ES-BR:say   2PL:DISTPAST-descend   there
'Netor said that you all went down there.'

Netor   yem-ocu   nocu   kimu-yep   yuwi.
Netor   3SG:DEPPAST-BR:say   CIT:say   2PL:DISTPAST-descend   there
'Netor said that you all went down there.'

The uninflected form *nocu* also appears optionally immediately after inflected forms of *ocu* in any of the grammatical functions described in §8.1.2. Its presence or absence appears to represent stylistic variation as no referential or functional significance can be attached to the form. Thus:

Yi-taru   m-ocu   (nocu)   nimo   ihen   ndomo.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:think   SG:ES-BR:say   CIT:say   house   POSS:3SG   strong
'He thought that his house was strong.'

While uninflected *nocu* is frequently attested immediately after the inflected form of *ocu*, it is also commonly found within the body of a direct quote, typically functioning as a reminder that the material that is being presented is being quoted. It appears most frequently after the first word of a direct quote, which is often an interjection of some kind, or a vocative. We therefore find examples such as the following, in which ... in the translation indicates the untranslatable occurrence of *nocu* in the original:

Y-ovrog-i   m-ocu   Nelumplenlou   nocu
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:call-3SG   SG:ES-BR:say   Nelumuplenlou   CIT:say
yacam-nacyog-i   kokw-ampculac.
1SG:PRES-MR:want-CONST   1DL.INCL:FUT-MR:get.married
'She called him and said, "Nelumplenlou . . . I want us to get married".'

However, it can also appear later in a quote, particularly at major constituent boundaries, as in the following:

Yi-velom   mochi (<m-ocəh-i)   ndinme   m-ocu
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:come   SG:ES-BR:see-CONST   mother:3SG   SG:ES-BR:say
kw-ante   mo-nta-i   nimne   nocu
2PL:FUT-MR:CONT   PL:ES-MR:cut-CONST   covering.leaves   CIT:say
yac-ampai   nvag.
1SG:FUT-MR:fetch   food
'She came and saw her mother and said, "You all keep cutting the covering leaves . . . I will fetch the food".'

Sometimes it appears several times within a single quote, as in:

Nompunowai yem-ocu   *ei nocu   neven   nmas nocu*
Nompunowai 3SG:DEPPAST-BR:say no CIT:say eel   big   CIT:say
yocochi (<yaco-ocəh-i)   nocu   co-nen-oc.
1SG:RECPAST-BR:see-3SG   CIT:say 3SG:FUT-MR:eat-2SG
'Nompunowai said, "No ... It was a big eel ... I saw it ... It will eat you".'

The form *nocu* also appears in simple sentences where there is no possibility of a locutionary interpretation. In such cases, it functions as nothing more than a hesitation device (§8.8), for example:

Kokw-ampe   *empelampe nocu   Potnarvin.*
1DL.INCL:FUT-MR:go   there   CIT:say Potnarvin
'We will go there ... to Potnarvin.'

Yau nocu   ntal.
1SG CIT:say taro
'I am ... the taro.'

8.3 Subordinating Prefixes

Two prefixes are found on Erromangan verbs as non-finite markers of subordination. Both of these subordinating prefixes perform non-subordinating functions elsewhere in the morphology.

8.3.1 Purposive *(w)or-*

The discussion of nominal derivational morphology in §3.2.1.1 referred to a prefix of the shape *(w)or-*, which derives an instrumental noun from a verb. This same prefix can replace the inflectional prefixes of a verb in a subordinate clause, with the resulting clause expressing the idea that the event encoded in the main clause takes place in order for the event described in the subordinate clause to take place. Thus:

Yorvi (<yi-orəv-i)   nei   wor-tovni.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:cut-CONST   wood PURP-BR:burn
'(S)he cut the wood in order to burn it.'

Yococ-velom   *igko wor-vai   nacave.*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:come   here PURP-BR:take kava
'I came here to get kava.'

This prefix can also be used to mark a clausal complement after a stative verb or an ambient adjective. Thus:

Yacam-navoh   *wor-enwi*   *uvuvu.*
1SG:PRES-MR:happy   PURP-BR:tell   story
'I am happy to tell the story.'

Armai   *wor-tovom*   *igko.*
good   PURP-BR:roast   here
'It is good to roast here.'

Clausal complements to the verbs *tapmi* 'try', *aig-/acyog-* 'want' and *atipotni-* 'start' can also be expressed by means of the subordinating prefix *(w)or-*, as in the following:

Kamli-tapmi   *wor-aleipo.*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:try   PURP-BR:sleep
'We tried to sleep.'

Yacam-nacyog-i   *worochi (<wor-ocəh-i)*   *gi*   *nimtu-g.*
1SG:PRES-MR:want-CONST   PURP-BR:see-3SG   INST   eye-1SG
'I want to see it with my (own) eyes.'

Yac-atipotni-n   *wor-vai*   *ovon naruvo enogkoh.*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:start-CONST   PURP-BR:record   PL   song   POSS:1PL.INCL
'I have started recording our songs.'

Finally, when a purposive clause is introduced by the subordinator *nimsin* (§8.5) the verb can also be marked by means of *(w)or-*, as in the following:

Candvi (<co-andəv-i)   *hai*   *nei*   *nimsi-n*   *worocli (<wor-ocəl-i)*
3SG:FUT-MR:cut-CONST   INDEF   wood   PURP-CONST   PURP-BR:dig-CONST
nacave.
kava
'(S)he will cut a piece of wood to dig the kava.'

8.3.2 Nominalizing *n-*

There is a small set of verbal forms which can be referred to as non-finite auxiliaries. These are clearly verbs in that they accept inflectional prefixes just like any other verb, though they are auxiliary-like in that they can be followed by a subordinated lexical verb, and they are termed non-finite auxiliaries because the following verb receives no inflectional marking. These forms are *etegi* 'continue to

do, keep on doing', *etnigi* 'continue to do, keep on doing', *ehpe* 'do reflexively' and *or-* 'prevent from doing, unable to do, not know how to do'. The main verb which follows these auxiliaries receives non-finite marking in the form of the nominalizing prefix *n-* (§3.2.1.1). We therefore find examples such as:

Kem-antegi   *nocohyau (<n-ocəh-yau).*
2SG:PRES-MR:keep.doing NOM-BR:see-1SG
'You keep on looking at me.'

Yacam-atnigi   *n-velom* *igko.*
1SG:PRES-MR:keep.doing NOM-BR:come here
'I will keep on coming here.'

The auxiliary *or-* is always marked with a third person singular ambient subject which encodes the tense marking of the event, while the individual who is unable to perform the action is expressed as an object to this verb. Thus:

Co-nor-oc   *n-ta-i*   *nomu.*
3SG:FUT-MR:be.unable-2SG NOM-BR:kill-CONST fish
'You will be unable to kill fish.'

Y-or-cam   *n-avan* *pumroc.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:be.unable-1PL.EXCL NOM-BR:walk night
'We could not walk at night.'

The reflexive auxiliary *ehpe* is also followed by a verb carrying the nominalizing prefix *n-*.[5] The nominalized verb must have an object that expresses the same pronominal categories as those marked on the subject of *ehpe*. Constructions of this type have a reflexive meaning. Thus:

Yocohpe (<yaco-ehpe) *n-orei* *yau.*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:do.reflexively NOM-BR:scratch 1SG
'I scratched myself.'

Etuhpe (<etu-ehpe)   *n-orei* *kik.*
2SG:IMP-NEG-BR:do.reflexively NOM-BR:scratch 2SG
'Don't scratch yourself!'

Yac-ahpe   *nocohyau (<n-ocəh-yau)* *ra* *klah.*
1SG:FUT-MR:do.reflexively NOM-BR:see-1SG   LOC mirror
'I will look at myself in the mirror.'

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[5] Lynch and Capell (1983:29) suggest a possible reflexive prefix of the shape *pen-*. This analysis resulted from a misunderstanding about the boundaries in forms such as *cohpe* (<*co-ehpe*) *ntai* '(s)he killed himself/herself', which they analyzed as *co-pen-tai*.

In addition to these non-finite auxiliaries, there is a small set of lexical verbs which can be used as auxiliaries in the same construction, usually with some kind of shift of meaning. Table 8.3 sets out forms of this type. Those forms which belong to the set of suffixed transitive verbs appear in their construct form when functioning as auxiliaries. Thus:

C-agkil-i-veh   *n-eleh-i*   *ov-nompcahi.*
3SG:FUT-MR:can-CONST-well NOM-BR:hunt-CONST PL-pig
'He can really hunt pigs.'

Yacam-naig-i   *n-ompurac.*
1SG:PRES-MR:want-CONST NOM-BR:work
'I want to work.'

Cume-ntavyag-i   *n-etni*   *nvag.*
3PL:PRES-MR:be.busy.at-CONST NOM-BR:cook food
'They are busy cooking food.'

Yeme-ntarwog-i   *nt-se-i*   *nomu.*
3SG:PASTHAB-MR:think.of.doing-CONST NOM-spear-CONST fish
'(S)he used to think of spearing fish.'

Koc-tavrivri   *n-alou* *gi* *pahkal.*
2SG:RECPAST-BR:forget.how NOM-BR:ride OBL bicycle
'You have forgotten how to ride a bicycle.'

Yococ-tampli   *n-en-i*   *nvag.*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:cease.doing NOM-BR:eat-CONST food
'I have finished eating the food.'

8.4 Clausal Juxtaposition

It is a widespread feature of Oceanic languages for a variety of semantic relationships between events to be expressed by means of simple clausal juxtaposition, with no overt marking of subordination at all. In contrast to the constructions described in §8.1 and §8.3, it is possible for two clauses in sequence to contain verbs which both carry initial subject marking. In this section, the kinds of semantic relationships encoded by such sentences are described.

(i) Condition/Time Clauses

When a complex sentence involves two verbs that are both marked for the future tense and there is an intonation break between the two clauses, this expresses

Table 8.3 Lexical Verbs Functioning as Finite Auxiliaries

	Lexical meaning	Auxiliary meaning
okil-	'know'	'can, be able to, know how to'
aig-/acyog-	'want, like'	'want to'
tavyag-	'deal with'	'be busy at'
tarwog-	'remember'	'think of doing'
tavrivri	'forget'	'forget how to do'
tampli	'finish'	'cease doing, finish doing'
atkihac	'struggle'	'persist in doing'

either a conditional or a temporal relationship between the events described in the constituent clauses. We therefore find complex sentences such as the following, with the two clauses surrounded by square brackets:

[Kokomle-sentvi   nacave] [kokl-amprog-i   ovon nevyarep].
1PL.INCL:FUT-wipe kava   1PL.INCL:FUT-MR:call-CONST PL   youth

This construction is compatible with either the interpretation 'When we wipe the kava, we will call the youths', or the interpretation 'If we wipe the kava, we will call the youths'.

(ii) Complement Clauses

Clausal juxtaposition can also be used to express object complements to a variety of transitive verbs. The object slot on the main verb in such cases is marked by a suffix that expresses the same pronominal category of the subject of the subordinate clause, or, when the subordinate clause has a nominal subject, the construct suffix. Thus:

Yochoc (<yaco-ocəh-oc)   kime-ntanis.
1SG:RECPAST-BR:see-2SG   2SG:PRES-MR:dance
'I saw you dancing.'

Yacmandgor (<yacame-andəg-or) cum-naruvo.
1SG:PRES-MR:hear-3PL   3PL:PRES-MR:sing
'I can hear them singing.'

Yitetwi (<yi-tetu-i)   etme-n   co-ntorilki.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:wait.for-CONST   father-3SG 3SG:FUT-MR:return
'He waited for his father to return.'

(iii) Directional Serialization

The Southern Vanuatu languages in general appear to differ from most other western Oceanic languages in that there is relatively little evidence of serial verb con-

structions. Many of the functions expressed by serial verb constructions in other Oceanic languages are expressed in Sye by means of the echo verb construction described in §8.1. It was pointed out in section (ii) of §8.1.1 that the directional orientation of a verb can be expressed in Sye by means of the echo verb construction. In many other Oceanic languages, the directional orientation of a verb is normally expressed instead by means of a serial verb construction.

However, echo verbs are used to express directional orientation only when there is identity between the subjects of the two verbs involved. When there is identity between the referent of a transitive object and a following directional verb, we find instead that the directional verb is simply juxtaposed after the initial verb, in constructions such as the following:

Coc-tamul-i   *nam* *coc-velom.*
3SG:RECPAST-BR:send-CONST   word 3SG:RECPAST-BR:come
'(S)he sent word hither.'

(iv) *Desiderative*

When the main verb is *aig-/acyog-* 'want, like', the verb is marked with the construct suffix *-i*, while the verb of the subordinate clause can independently mark the subject. Thus:

Yacam-naig-i   *kokw-ampculac.*
1SG:PRES-MR:want-CONST   1DL.INCL-MR:get.married
'I want us to get married.'

Yacam-nacyog-i   *yoco-naruvo.*
1SG:PRES-MR:want-CONST   1SG:FUT-MR:sing
'I want to sing.'

(v) *Periphrastic Causative*

In addition to the causative constructions described in §4.5.1 and §6.3.3, there is another pattern involving *ompi* 'do, make' in the initial clause with a fully inflected verb in the following clause. Thus:

Nevip *c-ompi*   *nmap* *c-omnuc.*
rain   3SG:RECPAST-BR:make   ground 3SG:RECPAST-BR:wet
'The rain made the ground wet.'

When the caused action has a pronominal rather than a nominal subject, there is an option of expressing the subject of the second clause as what could be interpreted as the object of the causative verb, or marking this subject only in the form of the inflectional marking on the second verb. Thus:

C-ompi   *(yau) yococ-tovop.*
3SG:RECPAST-BR:make 1SG 1SG:RECPAST-BR:laugh
'(S)he made me laugh.'

8.5 Pre-Clausal Subordinators

Of the various pre-clausal subordinators, all but one has independent non-subordinating functions in the language, and that is *nagku* 'if'. Even this form may well be historically related to the verb *ocu* 'say' which, it has already been shown, is used in a variety of subordinating functions (§8.1.2, §8.2). The initial *n-* may be related to the third person singular counterassertive prefix (§4.2.2.1.1), with the verb itself appearing in the modified root form. This combination of morphological markers does not mark any inflectional category on verbs in the modern language, though the existence of the form *nagku* as a subordinator may be an indication that such a paradigm was once used with some kind of conditional meaning.

8.5.1 Condition and Time Clauses

The form *nagku* marks a conditional clause, with the condition clause generally appearing first, and the apodosis following this with no overt marking. Thus:

Nagku hai   vulyoru viroc yem-ampelom   ndum-nahor.
if   indef gust   small 3SG:PASTHAB-MR:come 3PL:PASTHAB-MR:shout
'If a small gust came, they would shout.'

A conditional clause expressed with relation to a present event receives present tense marking, while the apodosis receives future tense marking. Thus:

Nagku   kem-naig-i n-en-i nagkrai   if   2SG:PRES-MR:want-CONST
NOM-BR:eat-CONST flying.fox
k-ampelom   ra   Vetemanu.
2SG:FUT-MR:come GOAL   Vetemanu
'If you want to eat flying fox, come to Vetemanu.'

The subordinator *nagku* is used idiomatically in the sequences *nagku tawi* 'if a previously mentioned event does not take place' and *nagku hogku se* 'however things work out', for example:

Nagku hogku se   yacam-naig-i   yoconavri (<yaco-navər-i).
if   SIM   what 1SG:PRES-MR:want-CONST   1SG:FUT-MR:help-3SG
'Depending on how things turn out, I want to help him/her.'

The sequence *nagku kem-agku* 'if 2SG:PRES-MR:say' can also be reduced to the holophrastic form *nagkemagku* to express the meaning 'if you say so'.

Nempgon and *ndan* are both free nouns which express the meaning of 'time', with *nempgon* meaning 'time' in the sense of 'occasion', that is a countable instance of time, and *ndan* referring either to a period of time, or clock time, as well as the extended sense of 'weather'. Thus:

Yoco-nompi   nempgon hai momu.
1SG:FUT-MR:do time   one more
'I will do it once more.'

Tawi kik ra   nimo ra   ndan ma.
NEG   2SG LOC house LOC time that
'You were not at home at that time.'

Both of these nouns can also be used as pre-clausal subordinators to indicate a temporal relationship between the events of the main and subordinate clauses. *Nempgon* is used to refer to an irrealis temporal relationship, as illustrated by the following:

Nempgon kemagkli (<kem-agkəl-i)   *nacave   kaghiveh (<ko-agkəh-i-veh)*
when   2SG:PRES-MR:dig-CONST   kava   2SG:FUT-MR:see-CONST-good
kotwanduntvi (<ko-etwo-anduntvi)   *ov-nowatni-n.*
2SG-NEG:FUT-MR:break   PL-root-3SG
'When you dig up the kava, be careful not to break its roots.'

Because this construction expresses the irrealis, *nempgon* is also sometimes used to express an irrealis conditional, which means that it overlaps in function with *nagku*. Thus:

Nempgon kokum-ampculac   *cw-ampai*   *nulgo-n   ntal*
if   1DL.INCL:PRES-MR:get.married   3PL:FUT-MR:take   leaf-CONST taro
enyau.
POSS:1SG
'If we get married, they will take my taro leaves.'

The form *ndan*, on the other hand, indicates realis temporal relationships. Thus:

Ndan yococ-ve   *ra   ntopavo yococ-ta-hai*
when 1SG:RECPAST-BR:go   GOAL bush   1SG:RECPAST-BR:kill-INDEF
nompcahi.
pig
'When I went to the bush I killed a pig.'

As described in §8.1.2, when a subordinate time clause shares a subject with the main clause, the verb of the subordinate clause can optionally receive echo subject marking.

Another construction that is encountered is one in which the temporal subordinators *ndan* and *nempgon* can be followed by the conditional subordinator *nagku* to express the meaning of 'whenever', for example:

Ndan nagku hai neteme yem-nacyog-i ovon novgu-n
when if INDEF person 3SG:PASTHAB-MR:want-CONST PL fruit-CONST
nei y-ampe m-anpog-i.
tree 3SG:PASTHAB-MR:go SG:ES-MR:tell-3SG
'Whenever somebody wanted fruits of a tree, (s)he would go and tell him/her.'

8.5.2 Concessive Clauses

The adjectives *ur* 'bad' and *nendwavo* 'unimportant' can also be used to introduce subordinate clauses with concessive meanings. *Ur* introduces a clause that expresses an event upon which an unfavourable outcome depends for the event in the main clauses to become realized. It translates, therefore, as 'in case'. The subordinate clause in such constructions normally follows the unmarked main clause, as in:

Yam-naig-i m-agku c-amwi ur
1SG:PASTHAB-MR:want-CONST SG:ES-MR:say 3SG:FUT-MR:finish in.case
ovoteme cwo-ntovop ira-g.
PL:person 3PL:FUT-MR:laugh GOAL-1SG
'I was wanting it to be finished in case people people were to laugh at me.'

Nendwavo introduces a clause indicating that the event encoded therein is irrelevant to the realization of the event encoded in the main clause. It translates, therefore, as 'even though' or 'even if'. The main clause in such constructions normally follows the subordinate clause, and may be introduced by the adversative conjunction *kou*, for example:

Nendwavo kik k-ampai nvat orog kou
even.if 2SG 2SG:FUT-MR:get money much but
kotwagkili (<ko-etwo-agkil-i) n-vas-i hai nimo.
2SG:RECPAST-NEG:FUT-MR:be.able-CONST NOM-BR:buy-CONST INDEF house
'Even if you have a lot of money, you won't be able to buy a house.'

8.5.3 Free Prepositions

The free prepositions *ra, (o)gi* and *hogku(su)* (§7.1.3.4) can be used as subordinators. The preposition *ra* can be used to mark a causal noun phrase, and when it functions as a subordinate clause marker, the same form marks a reason clause. Thus:

Nimo y-omol   ra   nemetagi y-elimsi.
house 3SG:DISTPAST-BR:fall   because cyclone   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:blow:3SG
'The house fell over because the cyclone blew it.'

The preposition *(o)gi* expresses a very wide range of functions about which it is difficult to offer any generalizations. It is also attested as a complement marker preceding a structurally reduced clause in which the verb of the subordinate clause is marked with the nominalizing prefix *n-* (§3.2.1.1). Thus:

Nagalau gi   n-avan   m-ampe   Unpogkor.
difficult COMP NOM-BR:walk SG:ES-MR:go Unpogkor
'It was difficult to walk to Unpogkor.'

C-amlai   gi   n-amarat.
3SG:RECPAST-BR:pretend   COMP   NOM-BR:sick
'(S)he pretended to be sick.'

When the subject of the complement clause is an overt human NP, the complementizer appears as *ira-* (§7.1.3.4), with the suffix copying the pronominal category of the subject of the complement clause, for example:

Nagalau ira-m   kik   k-ampe   maghor (<m-agkəh-or).
difficult COMP-2SG 2SG   2SG:FUT-MR:go SG:ES-MR:see-3PL
'It was difficult for you to go and see them.'

   The final free preposition to be used as a subordinator is the similitive preposition *hogku(su)* 'like'. This is not frequently attested as a marker of subordinate clauses, though it can introduce a clausal complement of similarity to a verb, as in the following:

Kem-ampog-i   ovon tovura hogku kem-anwi.
2SG:PRES-MR:give-3SG PL   whale COMP 2SG:PRES-MR:say
'You are giving it to the whales as you say.'

Yacmaghi (<yacam-agkəh-i) hogkusu nemetagi y-alou
1SG:PRES-MR:see-CONST   COMP   cyclone 3SG:DISTPAST-BR:blow
itnohog.
very.much
'I can see that the cyclone blew hard.'

This preposition is also used occasionally as a subordinator to mark a quotative clause, for example:

Ndum-ocu   hogku nemetagi yi-ta-r   itnohog.
3PL:DEPPAST-BR:say   COMP cyclone 3SG:DISTPAST-BR:hit-3PL very.much
'They said that the cyclone hit them hard.'

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8.5.4 Bound Prepositions

The forms *nimsin, ntovni, pehnuri* and *maveli* are used as subordinators, and they are identical in shape to the construct forms of some of the bound prepositions described in §7.1.3.4.

The nominal preposition of the shape *nimsi-* and the verbal preposition *ntovən-* both express a purposive function with respect to a noun phrase. When used as subordinators and carrying their respective construct suffixes, these forms introduce purposive clauses. If the verb in the purposive clause is finite, it must be expressed in the present or future tense, for example:

Tawi   momu   letrik   nimsi-n   aisboks co-nompurac.
NEG   more   electricity PURP-CONST   freezer   3SG:FUT-MR:work
'There was no more electricity for the freezer to work.'

Yi-vai   nevane ihen   ntovn-i   co-se-i
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:take   bow   POSS:3SG   PURP-CONST 3SG:FUT-spear-CONST
netwo   ma.
chicken   that
'(S)he took his/her bow to spear that chicken.'

There is an alternative non-finite purposive construction in which the subordinator *nimsin* introduces a clause containing the purposive prefix *(w)or-* (§8.3.1). Thus:

Natmah   ma   y-ompi   hogku   ma   nimsi-n   wor-ompi
devil   that   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:do   SIM   that PURP-CONST   PURP-BR:make
nevip.
rain
'That devil did it like that in order to make rain.'

The preposition *mavel-* expresses the temporal relationship of 'until', and when used to introduce subordinate clauses, it indicates that the event described in the main clause takes place until the event described in the subordinate clause. Thus:

Y-elampe   mavel-i   yi-ran.
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:stay.awake   until-CONST   3SG:DISTPAST-daybreak
'(S)he stayed awake until it was daybreak.'

Norwotu c-otwo-natipotni-n   mavel-i   cwo-nompalog-i
school   3SG-NEG:FUT-MR:start-CONST   until-CONST   3PL:FUT-MR:repair-CONST
ov-nimo.
PL-building
'School will not start until they have repaired the buildings.'

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As a preposition, *pehnur-* expresses the meaning of 'before', and in its construct form it introduces a clause that indicates that the event described in the main clause takes place before the event described in the subordinte clause. Thus:

Pehnur-i   *kakle-nteihep*   *ra* *nmap*
before-CONST 1PL.EXCL:FUT-MR:throw.down GOAL ground
kakeml-antipe   *nulgo-n* *uloki.*
1PL.EXCL:PRES-MR:put.down leaf-CONST coconut
'Before we throw it down onto the ground, we put down the coconut leaves.'

8.5.5 Coordinated Interrogatives

The final category of pre-clausal subordinators are structurally complex in that they consist of two identical interrogatives from the set described in §7.2.2, with the second carrying the coordinating proclitic *m-* (§6.1.3). Sequences of this type that have been attested are *se m-se* 'whatever', *iya m-iya* 'wherever' and *mei mei* (<*mei m-mei*) 'whoever'. These appear before the first of two clauses, with the following main clause receiving no marking. They indicate that the event expressed by the main clause takes place despite any possible occurrence described in the subordinate clause eventuating, for example:

Se *m-se* *cum-nompi* *ovoteme* *cum-ampelom*
what and-what 3PL:PRES-MR:do PL:person 3PL:PRES-MR:come
maghi (<*mu-agkəh-i*).
PL:ES-MR:see-3SG
'Whatever they do, people will come and see it.'

8.6 Relative Clauses

A noun phrase can also include a clausal modifier in the form of a relative clause, which follows all other postmodifiers in the phrase (§6.1.2.2). There are two options available for formally marking the beginning of a relative clause, these being either zero or the preposed form *mori*.

  The simplest pattern is to use a zero introducer and to leave a pronominal trace at the point in the relative clause where the coreferential noun phrase was located. The pronominal trace generally makes a singular-plural distinction with human nouns, while with non-human nouns, the trace has the form of singular markers only. The pronominal trace can be either in the form of a free pronoun after unsuffixed verbs or prepositions, or a pronominal suffix, in the case of suffixed verbs or prepositions. Thus:

Kamli-tenmi (<*kamli-tenəm-i*) *ovoteme* Ø *ndu-taloc-ond.*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:bury-CONST PL:person REL 3PL:DISTPAST-BR:kill-3PL
'We buried the people who they killed.'

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Kaml-ovon-or   *ov-nikau*   ∅   *kamli-ta-i.*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:give-3PL   PL-prawn   REL   1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:kill-3SG
'We gave them the prawns that we had killed.'

It is far more common for relative clauses to be introduced by *mori*, with a pronominal trace again marking the location of the coreferential noun phrase in the relative clause. It should be noted that *mori* is identical in shape to one of the demonstratives described in §6.1.2.2. Thus:

Kokl-amprog-i   *ov-nevyarep*   *mori*   *koli-semsi.*
1PL.INCL:FUT-MR:call-CONST   PL-youth   REL   1PL.INCL:RECPAST-choose
'We will call the youths whom we have chosen.'

The examples presented above indicate that a relative clause can be formed on the basis of an object noun phrase. Relative clauses can also be based on subject noun phrases, for example:

Kem-agkil-i   *neteme*   *mori*   *cam-navan*   *ra*   *nocugo?*
2SG:PRES-MR:know-CONST   person   REL   3SG:PRES-MR:walk   LOC   road
'Do you know the person who is walking on the road?'

When the modifiying clause consists of a single intransitive verb with no overt noun phrases, a relative clause construction is also grammatical, for example:

Kem-agkil-i   *neteme*   *mori*   *cam-namarat?*
2SG:PRES-MR:know-CONST   person   REL   3SG:PRES-MR:sick
'Do you know the person who is sick?'

In such cases, however, it is more common for this kind of modifier to be expressed by means of adjectival derivative *n-* (§5.1.2), that is:

Kem-agkil-i   *neteme*   *n-amarat?*
2SG:PRES-MR:know-CONST   person   ADJ-BR:sick
'Do you know the sick person?'

Prepositional objects can also be freely relativized. When the preposition is one of the bound prepositions (that is either a nominal or a verbal preposition), there is a suffixed pronominal trace left on the preposition itself, for example:

Coc-vai   *nacave*   *mori*   *yococ-ve*   *ntovni (<ntovən-i).*
3SG:RECPAST-BR:take kava   REL   1SG:RECPAST-BR:go   PURP-3SG
'(S)he took the kava that I went for.'

With free prepositions, the preposition can be stranded with no pronominal trace with all prepositions except *ra* and *gi.* Thus:

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Cotvilgoni (<co-etvilgon-i)   *ovoteme* Ø   *yacam-antehep*   *ndal.*
3SG:RECPAST-BR:chase-CONST   people   REL   1SG:PRES-MR:sit   ACC.PL
'(S)he chased the people who I am sitting with.'

Similitive noun phrases relativize according to a slightly different pattern. Instead of deleting the coreferential noun phrase as we would expect with the free preposition *hogku(su)* 'like', a full pronominal copy is left as a trace at the point of extraction. Thus:

Yamochi (>yam-ocǝh-i)   *neteme mori kem-naruvo*   *hogkusu iyi.*
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:see-CONST   person   REL   2SG:PRES-MR:sing   SIM   3SG
'I saw the person who you sing like.'

The following, however, is not possible:

*Yamochi (>yam-ocǝh-i)   *neteme mori kem-naruvo*   *hogkusu* Ø.
1SG:DISTPAST-BR:see-CONST   person   REL   2SG:PRES-MR:sing   SIM   3SG

A possessive noun phrase can also be relativized, with the site of the relativized noun phrase being marked by a possessive pronoun, as shown by:

Yi-talog-i   *hai*   *sanwis* Ø   *nempati eni*   *nmas.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:kill-CONST   INDEF   wild.boar   REL   tusk   POSS:3SG   big
'(S)he killed a wild boar whose tusks were big.'

When an object to one of the free prepositions *ra* 'locative' and *gi* 'instrumental/oblique' is relativized, the preposition cannot be stranded, nor can pronominal traces be left at the point of extraction. Such noun phrases are marked instead by means of the clitics *-(e)wi* and *-gi* respectively, which attach to the verb preceding the relativized noun phrase, as described in §7.1.3.4. Thus:

Ndutni (<ndu-etni)   *nimo*   *mori nemah enyau*   *cam-ante-wi.*
3PL:DISTPAST-BR:burn   house   REL   clothes   POSS:1SG   3SG:PRES-MR:stay-LOCPRO
'They burned the house that my clothes are in.'

Ndu-vai   *ndau*   *mori ndu-seni-gi*   *nvag.*
3PL:DISTPAST-BR:take   heliconia   REL   3PL:DISTPAST-BR:cover-INSTPRO   food
'They took the heliconia that they had covered the food with.'

It is possible for a non-verbal clause to appear as a relative clause also, for example:

Yoco-nomonki   *nacave ginmah mori ndomo.*
1SG:FUT-MR:drink   kava   much   REL   strong
'I will drink a lot of kava which is strong.'

In fact, in §6.1.2.5 it is indicated that this is the preferred construction when a noun is accompanied by more than one postmodifier, with one of the postmodifiers being incorporated within a verbless relative clause of this type.

Another relative clause pattern can be described as the afterthought relative clause. It is fairly common for material introduced as an afterthought to be expressed in the form of a relative clause introduced by *mori*, with the afterthought most commonly being either a noun phrase or a prepositional phrase, though any constituent type has the potential to appear in this construction. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Kokwo-ntampi   *wocon*   *gi*   *ndan nemetagi mori ra*   *Uma.*
1DL.INCL:FUT-MR:chat   only   about time cyclone   REL   LOC   Uma
'We will just chat about the time of the cyclone, that is of Uma.'

Novohvoh   *yem-ete*   *ihen-wi*   *mori Topipen.*
Novohvoh 3SG:DEPPAST-BR:stay   POSS:3SG-LOC   REL   Topipen
'Novohvoh was living at his place, that is Topipen.'

Sometimes more than one afterthought in a row can be presented in the same way, and a relative clause can appear with no antecedent head. In such cases, the afterthought relative construction is effectively being used as a hesitation marker (§8.8). Thus:

Y-orcai   *mori itr-ogko (<itur-ogko) mori nipmi*   *nomu.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:swim   REL   ADJ-BR:straight   REL   eye:CONST   fish
'He swam . . . um . . . straight . . . um . . . to the taboo place so he would go ashore at the stony point at the river mouth.'

8.7 Coordination

There are three free form coordinators in Sye: *ku* 'or', *kou(ra)* 'but' and *im* 'and'. The disjunctive coordinator *ku* 'or' that is used to link noun phrases (§6.1.3) can also link clauses to form complex sentences. Identical material can be deleted, as in the following, where *kagkili* 'you can' does not appear before the verb *netvi* 'soak' in the second clause:

K-agkil-i   *ntenmi (<n-tenəm-i) ku n-etvi*   *ra*   *nu.*
2SG:FUT-MR:be.able-CONST   NOM-BR:bury-CONST   or   NOM-BR:soak   LOC   water
'You can bury it or soak it in water.'

Kou 'but'—alternating occasionally with *koura*—expresses contrastive coordination, for example:

Kaml-avan   *u-ntompoi kou kamemli-vandog*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:walk   LOC-bush   but   1PL.EXCL:DEPPAST-BR:listen
gi   ovn-kuri.
OBL   PL-dog
'We walked a long way in the bush but we were listening for the dogs.'

We find the greatest amount of structural diversity and complexity in Erromangan in the expression of conjunctive coordination. The echo verb construction described in §8.1.1 is the stylistically preferred way of expressing conjunctive clausal coordination. However, clauses, as well as noun phrases and other sub-clause constituents such as prepositional phrases, can be conjunctively coordinated by using *im*. When clauses are coordinated in this way, this can indicate first that two events take place at the same time. Thus:

Yac-avan   *im   yocotvani (<yaco-etvani).*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:walk   and   1SG:RECPAST-BR:spit
'I walked and simultaneously spat.'

Second, and more frequently, *im* expresses a subsequent relationship between the events described in the first and second clauses. Thus, the example just presented could equally well be translated as 'I walked and then spat'.

Im has the occasional proclitic variant *m-*, which is attached to the initial constituent of the second clause, or, in the case of sub-clausal constituents, the first element of the second constituent (whether this is a verb or a word belonging to some other word class). Thus:

Yac-avan   *myocotvani (<m-yaco-etvani).*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:walk   and-1SG:RECPAST-BR:spit
'I walked and spat.'

Y-ete   *umelwo m-hai   neteme yi-velom.*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:stay   above   and-INDEF   person   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:come
'(S)he stayed above and somebody came.'

Coordinated clauses containing verbs with identical new subject prefixes must be separated by some overt marker of coordination. Thus, the following is not possible:

*Yac-avan   *yocotvani (<yaco-etvani).*
1SG:RECPAST-BR:walk   1SG:RECPAST-BR:spit

When there is third person marking on two coordinated verbs, there is a difference in meaning in that echo subject marking must be interpreted as involving like subjects between the two clauses. However, when there is separate initial

subject marking on the second verb, there is no identity of reference in the subjects of the two verbs. Thus:

C-avan   *m-etvani.*
3SG:RECPAST-BR:walk   SG:ES-MR:spit
'(S)he walked and spat.'

C-avan   *mcotvani (<m-co-etvani).*
3SG:RECPAST-BR:walk   and-3SG:RECPAST-BR:spit
'(S)he walked and someone else spat.'

8.8 Discourse Patterns

There are certain recurring features of Sye narrative texts which do not fit comfortably within the discussions of any of the grammatical constructions described up to this point. Many of these features allow speakers to link sentences into larger units of discourse, while others represent strategies for expressing stylistic variation within the structural bounds of the sentence. This section will make reference to some of the more notable features of these types, though no claims are being made that this represents a comprehensive account of discourse patterns.

(i) *Completion of Event*

Reference was made in §8.1.2 to the use of the verb *tampli* 'finish' with echo subject markers as a way of indicating that the discussion of a preceding event has now concluded, and that the narrator is moving on to the next part of the story. However, this is not the only device that is used to achieve this goal. The form *isuma* can be used as an interjection to express the idea of 'that is all', and it can also be used to link two sentences in discourse to express the idea of 'and then' or 'so'. Thus:

Kaml-etrantompne   *u-ntemne*   *pwarap.*   *Suma*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:arrive   LOC-village   evening   that's.all
yem-arav-arap.
3SG:DEPPAST-BR:be.dusk-REDUP
'We got back to the village in the evening. And then it was getting dark.'

(ii) *Continuing Event*

There is a variety of ways in which it is indicated in Sye narrative texts that an event continues over a long period of time. One of these is to use the preposition *mavel-* in its construct form *maveli* as a pre-clausal adverbial meaning 'eventually' or 'in the end'. Thus:

Yem-nomproc   *ra*   *ndenuc. Mavel-i*   *nacem*
3SG:PASTHAB-MR:steal   LOC   garden   until-CONST   emerald.dove
yemaghi (<yem-agkəh-i).
3SG:PASTHAB-MR:see-3SG
'He would steal in the garden. Eventually the emerald dove saw him.'

The adverbial *ndowi* 'always' can also be repeated several times after a statement to indicate that the event continues over along time, for example.

Yem-avan   *ndowi*   *ndowi*   *ndowi.*
3SG:DEPPAST-BR:walk   always   always   always
'(S)he walked on and on and on.'

When used to express iteration in this way, all but the last instances of *ndowi* tend to be pronounced in reduced form as *ndou*, for example *ndou ndou ndowi*.

There are other forms which are used in similar discourse-related ways which do not have grammatical functions of their own. For instance, the form *mlam* (with its variants *mla*, *mna* and *mam*) expresses an iterative meaning, indicating that an action is performed over and over, as in:

Kamli-vai   *nocugo hai*   *mli-ve*   *ml-ur-i*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:take road   other PL:ES-BR:go   SG:ES-BR:follow-CONST
nocugo ma mlam.
road   that iterative
'We took another road and went along that road on and on.'

In such constructions, the vowel of this stylistic marker is often lengthened considerably, with longer pronunciations expressing a greater number of repetitions of the action.

Some of the contexts in which these forms appear indicate that they represent alternative ways of expressing the meaning of 'until', which is ordinarily expressed by means of the conjunction *maveli* (§8.5). Thus:

Kamli-ve   *mlam*   *ml-elcav-i*   *hai*   *nu*   *orog.*
1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:go   iterative   PL:ES-BR:reach-CONST   INDEF   river   big
'We went on and on until we reached a big river.'

Another discourse marker which expresses an iterative meaning is the form *magalau*, which alternates with *mnagalau*. More frequent repetition of an action with this form is expressed by reduplicating the *CV* sequence of the final syllable as either *la* or *le*. We therefore find forms such as *m(n)agalelau* or *m(n)agalelelau*. This is illustrated by the following:

Yem-ante   *mayuwi magalelelau mavel-i*   *ndan hai.*
3SG:PASTHAB-MR:live   there   iterative   until-CONST   day   other
'He lived there on and on until another day.'

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This form appears to derive historically from a verb root, though the root *agalau* 'difficult' in Sye is difficult to reconcile with this discourse function. However, the verbal origin of this form can be seen in the fact that repeated events in the distant past are sometimes expressed by an iterative marker of the shape *ndwagalau*, which exhibits the same pattern of infixed reduplication noted above for *magalau*. The initial *ndwa-* in this form coincides with the third person plural distant past subject marker (§4.2.2.1.1).

(iii) *Head-to-Tail Linkage*

A very common discourse device in Melanesian narrative involves the introduction of a new event by a summary of information presented in the previous clause, according to a pattern that is often referred to as head-to-tail linkage.

This kind of pattern is expressed in Sye by repeating a previously mentioned verb, along with a restricted range of accompanying arguments or modifiers, with the repeated verb carrying echo subject marking. We therefore find examples such as the following, with repeated information surrounded by square brackets, and . . . representing the sites of these not naturally translatable repetitions in the translation:

Kam　　*kaml-ovum*　　　　　　　　　*mli-yep*　　　*[mli-yep]*
1PL.EXCL　1PL.EXCL:DISTPAST-BR:precede　PL:ES-descend　PL:ES-descend
mli-tavyog-i　　　　　　　　　　　*hai*　*sendep*　*viroc*　*[ml-ompi*
PL:ES-BR:be.occupied.with-CONST　INDEF　shelter　small　PL:ES-BR:make
sendep]　*mlocli (<mli-ocəl-i)*　　*ntovom.*
shelter　　PL:ES-BR:dig.up-CONST　　yam
'We went down first . . . and we occupied ourselves with a small shelter . . . and we dug yams.'

(iv) *Hesitation Devices*

Dysfluent hesitations are often expressed by coopting a number of grammatical words and using them as hesitation markers in environments which do not call for the presence of those particular grammatical items. Those forms which are used as hesitation devices include the following:

(a) the relative clause marker *mori* (§8.6), for example:

Iyi　*mori*　　　*nogu-n*　　*orog.*
3SG　hesitation　mouth-3SG　big
'He . . . was a show-off.'

(b) the citation form of the verb *ocu* 'say' (§8.2), for example:

Yau nocu   ntal.
1SG CIT:say yaro
'I . . . am the taro.'

(c) the similitive preposition *hogku(su)* (§7.1.3.4), for example:

Kam   ra   nur   haiten kou hogkusu   ra   kam   ovroc
1PL.EXCL BELONG place one   but hesitation because 1PL.EXCL PL:small
tawi taru   armai.
NEG   thought good
'We were from one place but . . . because we were small we didn't have good
thoughts.'

(d) the adverbial *nigoi* 'perhaps' (§7.1.3.1), for example:

Nigoi   hai   ndan kam   narkinam.
hesitation INDEF day 1PL.EXCL naughty
'. . . One day we were naughty.'

9: ILLUSTRATIVE TEXT

This account of Erromangan is based on a number of texts recorded by myself from a variety of speakers over the period 1994–96, as well as texts recorded — but not transcribed or translated — by Narai Saniel in 1976 and Sempet Naritantop over the period 1979–82. These texts have all been transcribed and translated by the present writer, and copies of both the tapes and the transcriptions and translations are held by the Vanuatu Cultural Centre.

The only written materials that Erromangan people have access to in their own language are Christian hymns, a catechism and the New Testament. These were all translated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the form of these translations deviates quite considerably from the ordinary spoken language.

A substantial proportion of the stories that were recorded on tape are now being edited in written form and distributed to the people of Erromango in a written form that much more closely approximates to everyday spoken norms. It is hoped that this will stimulate an interest among Erromangans in writing — and reading — in their own language. These materials are unlikely to be of interest to an academic audience because no translations will be provided.

In this final chapter, I have chosen one text, representing the speech of an older person. Points of contrast between structures found in this text and structures more typical of younger speakers are indicated by means of footnotes. The text is provided with a complete interlinear gloss, as well as a free translation, and footnoted comments on any relevant contextual points that are not explicit in the story. The text is presented with no editing, so any errors, or improvements that were suggested by people after the story had been recorded are also noted for what this may tell us about people's prescriptive attitudes towards their own language.

The following story about the rat and her child was told by Sei Nopog of Umponyelogi village. Sei is an old man who is widely regarded for his knowledge of tradition, and whose knowledge of the language is well regarded.

There are various places where native-speakers of the language made editorial-type suggestions for improvement to the text which follows. Many of these comments involve the replacement of borrowed terms by forms of indigenous origin. I have presented the text as it was given, and have indicated any editorial corrections in a footnote. I have also presented a number of footnoted comments indicating significant differences between the usage of older and younger speakers of the language.

Yoco-nompi   stori[1] gi   lakih.
1SG:FUT-MR:do story OBL rat
'I will tell a story about the rat.'

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[1] Corrected editorially to:

Yac-anwi   uvuvu
1SG:FUT-MR:tell   story
'I will tell a story'

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Lakih y-eti   ra   novkilyenau (<novkilye-n   nau).
rat   3SG:DISTPAST-BR:give.birth LOC dried.leaf-CONST   bamboo
'The rat gave birth in the dried leaves of the bamboo.'

M-ante   mandgi (<m-andəg-i)   nam orog-orog   u-ntemne.
SG:ES-MR:HAB   SG:ES-MR:hear-CONST   talk big-REDUP LOC-village
'And she would always hear loud talk in the village.'

Ovoteme   rum-ante   u-ntemne   rum-nam
PL:PERSON 3PL:PASTHAB-MR:stat   LOC-village 3PL:PASTHAB-MR:talk
orog-orog.
big-REDUP
'The people living in the village would speak loudly.'

Yandyoc²   nitni   m-ampai   me-hac
3SG:PASTHAB-MR:pick.up   child:3SG SG:ES-MR:take SG:ES-ascend
m-agku:
SG:ES-MR:say
'She would pick up her child and take them up and say."

Is,   ucohpe (<u-ocəh-pe)³   nitu-g.
hey   2PL:IMP-BR:look.at-PREC   child-1SG
'Hey, you all look at my child first!'

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² In the previous line, the past habitual of *ete*'stay' was expressed as *rumante*
(*<ru-emo-ante*) 'they would stay', using tripartite marking with the distant past
subject markers, the fifth order prefix and the modified form of the verb root
(§4.2.2.7). In this line (and elsewhere in this text), the same category is ex-
pressed without the more widely used fifth order prefix. The suffixed transitive
verb *oryok-* 'pick up' here appears without its construct suffix, in a construction
that is found with some older speakers. The sequence *yandyoc nitni* would
appear in more general speech as:

Yem-andyok-i   nitni.
3SG:PASTHAB-MR:pick.up-CONST   child:3SG
'She would pick up her child.'

³ Here again, the construct suffix that is present with younger speakers is absent.
This results in the underlying schwa being realized as *o* rather than zero
(§2.5.2.7). The sequence *ucohpe nitug* would appear in the speech of most
people as:

Uchipe (<u-ocəh-i-pe)   nitu-g.
2PL:IMP-BR:look.at-CONST-PREC   child-1SG
'You all look at my child first!'

Rwandvi (<ru-andəv-i) *mantvigi (<mu-antəv-i-gi)* *nitni.*
3PL:PASTHAB-MR:swear.at-3SG PL:ES-MR:fuck-CONST-INST.PRO child:3SG
'They would swear at her and fuck her child with it.[4]'

Mu-nompi nam-sat.
PL:ES-MR:do talk-bad
'And they would swear.'

M-agku: nimsi-n-se?
PL:ES-MR:say PURP-CONST-what
'And they would say, "Why?".[5]'

Ma y-andyok-i *m-ampai* *me-ntorilki*
then 3SG:PASTHAB-MR:pick-up-3SG SG:ES-MR:take SG:ES-MR:return
me-yep.
SG:ES-descend
'Then she would pick it up and take it back down.[6]'

M-ante *m-ante* *mandgi (<m-andəg-i)* *nam orog-orog.*
SG:ES-MR:stay SG:ES-MR:stay SG:ES-MR:hear-CONST talk big-REDUP
'And she stayed and stayed and heard the loud talk.'

Rum-nam *u-ntemne.*
3PL:PASTHAB-MR:talk LOC-village
'They would talk in the village.'

Y-um-andyok-i *m-ampai* *me-nalou*
3SG:PASTHAB-IT-BR:pick.up-3SG SG:ES-MR:take SG:ES-MR:run
ra-nt-sac *m-ampelom.*
LOC-NOM-ascend SG:ES-MR:come
'She would pick it up again and take it and run up the slope and come.'

Magku: Is, ucohpe (<u-ocəh-pe) *nitu-g.*
SG:ES-MR:say hey 2PL:IMP-BR:look.at-PREC child:1SG
'And she would say, "Hey, you all look at my child first!".'

A nimsi-n-se?
ah PURP-CONST-what
'(And they would say), "Ah, what for?".'

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[4] They were fucking her child with their swearing, which is meant to be interpreted as telling her to fuck her own child.
[5] Ellipsis for "Why should we look at your child?"
[6] The descent here refers to the rat's hole that is implicit in the discourse.

Ima magalelau.
then iterative
'Then it went on.'

Y-um-oryok-i[7]   *m-pai*   *m-alou*   *m-hac*
3SG:DISTPAST-IT-BR:pick.up-3SG SG:ES-BR:take SG:ES-BR:run SG:ES-ascend
m-pelom.
SG:ES-MR:come
'She picked it up again and took it and ran up and came.'

Mem-savol-i   *m-ocu:*   *Is, ucohpe (<u-ocəh-pe)*   *nitug.*
SG:ES-*EM*-turn.over-3SG SG:ES-BR:say hey 2PL:IMP-BR:look.at-PREC child:1SG
'And she would turn it over and say: "Hey, you all look at my child first!".'

Latop   yem-yev   pot-nuvnil.
stinging.ant 3SG:PASTHAB-pull   tree-*nuvnil*
'The stinging ant would pull on a *nuvnil* tree.'

Nei mori empe nuvnil.
tree that there *nuvnil*
'That tree there is a *nuvnil*.'

Yi-yev-i   *mpelom (<m-velom) m-ocrog-i*   *ra*
3SG:DISTPAST-pull-3SG   SG:ES-BR:come   SG:ES-BR:put.across-3SG LOC
nocugo eni.
path   POSS:3SG
'He pulled it and came and put it across her path.'

Ima y-oryok-i   *m-hac*   *mem-ocu:*
then 3SG:DISTPAST-BR:pick.up-3SG SG:ES-ascend SG:ES-*EM*-BR:say
Kipuchipe (<kipu-ocəh-i-pe)[8]   *nitu-g.*
2PL:OPT-BR:look.at-CONST-PREC   child-1SG
'They she picked it up and came up and said, "You all ought to look at my child".'

Rumucu (<ru-emu-ocu): nimsi-n-se?
3PL:DEPPAST-BR:say   PURP-CONST-what
'They said, "Why?".'

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[7] The switch from the past habitual to the distant past here indicates that the narrator is no longer talking about general events but about a specific situation.

[8] The narrator has here used the construct suffix on the verb, whereas in all previous instances his suffixed transitive verbs have carried no construct suffix. In this case, then, the construction is more like that of ordinary speakers of the language. Without the construct suffix, this verb would have appeared on the surface as *kipucohpe.*

Y-oryok-i   *mem-ocu*   *c-um-ampai*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:pick.up-3SG   SG:ES-*EM*-BR:want   3SG:IT:FUT-MR:take
me-ntorilki   *mem-oclar*   *ra*   *pot-nuvnil*   *ma.*
SG:ES-MR:return   SG:ES-*EM*-BR:get.stuck   LOC   tree-*nuvnil*   that
'She picked it up and wanted to take it again and return and she got stuck in that *nuvnil* tree.

Y-oclar   *m-oryok-i*   *mpe (<m-ve)*
3SG:DISTPAST-BR:get.stuck   SG:ES-BR:pick.up-3SG   SG:ES-BR:go
m-tantvi   *nitni*   *mahpe (<m-mah-pe).*
SG:ES-BR:drop.heavily   child:3SG   SG:ES-BR:die-PREC
'She got stuck and picked it up and went and dropped her child heavily and it died.'

Ima rumucu (<ru-emu-ocu): Is,   *k-okin-i*   *nito-m*
then 3PL:DEPPAST-BR:say   hey   2SG:RECPAST-BR:hurt-CONST   child-2SG
mori.
that
'Then they said, "Hey, you have hurt that child of yours".'

Ima yem-ocu: *O ei yuc-um-anti*   *hai.*
then 3SG:DEPPAST-BR:say oh no 1SG:RECPAST-IT:FUT-MR:give.birth.to   another
'Then she said, "Oh, no, I will give birth again to another".'

N-ocu   *yac-anti*   *hai.*
CIT-BR:say   1SG:FUT-MR:give.birth.to   another
'(She) said, "I will give birth to another".'

C-ampai   *nipmi*   *etme-n*   *m-ampai*   *nipmi*
3SG:FUT-MR:take   face:CONST   father-3SG   SG:ES-MR:take   face:CONST
ndinme.
mother:3SG
'It will have the face of its father and it will have the face of its mother.'

N-ocu   *m-ume-nalam*   *orog.*
CIT-BR:say   SG:ES-IT:FUT-MR:grow   big
'(She) said, "And it will grow big again".'

Kwaghi (<ku-agkəh-i).
2PL:FUT-MR:see-3SG
'You will all see it.'

Ma   *rumucu (<ru-emu-ocu): nimsi-n-se?*
then   3PL:DEPPAST-BR:say   PURP-CONST-what
'Then they said, "Why?".'

Iyi   nito-m   kip-is-i-veh.
3SG   child-2SG   2SG:OPT-BR:fuck-3SG-AMEL
'You ought to fuck your child properly.'

Ima   hogku   ma   histri.[9]
so   SIM   that   history
'So the history is like that.'

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[9] *Histri* was corrected editorially afterwards to *uvuvu* 'traditional story'.

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