
A Grammar of Vamale

A language of New Caledonia

Inauguraldissertation an der Philosophisch-historischen Fakultät der
Universität Bern zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde

vorgelegt von
Jean ROHLEDER

Promotionsdatum: 14.10.2021

eingereicht bei

Prof.Dr. Fernando ZÚÑIGA,
Institut für Sprachwissenschaft
der Universität Bern

Prof. Dr. Isabelle BRIL,
LACITO-CNRS

Rohleder Jean

11-110-434

Bern, den 14. Mai 2021

Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have been possible without the insightful comments and patience of Professor Fernando Zúñiga, University of Berne, and Professor Isabelle Bril of the CNRS. Thank you for taking the time to read and think, and for your patience. I came to you too rarely.

Florian Matter, Dominique Knuchel, Sarah Dopierala, Joël Schregenberger, für ds Läse vo Kapitle u natürlich für ds Mitdänke. Am Flo none bsungere Dank, für ds unermüedliche Hingrfraage vo myne Aanahme, für ds Daate-wöue-gseh, u ständig mit LaTeX, Chaarte, u angerne Sache cho häuffe.

Hao Cakeo, e holeke i wîi-je! Jacob Ganap Oué, Jean-Philippe Oué, André Nigai Kalène, Christophe Keela Pei, holeke thuan nyakovwe i vaaya fine thoatit, li délires ka meeka li been aman! Nyasi Baptiste Ucian, Elise Kalène, e holeke i hun-titabwi ko i ape-thapoke kan, Jethro ma Hedwige Delly ko i hun-wago, ka meeka li apuli xa-moo pala-vwe ko i hun-moo-le! Un deuxième merci encore au groupe de travail, qui sont les deuxièmes auteurs de ce livre.

Daniel Pei, pour m’avoir accueilli, introduit, et logé, Cécile Pei pour m’avoir nourri pendant si longtemps, Richard Pei, Eugénie Pei, Kafeyat Pei, Roger Pei, Kukwe Pei, et toutes les mamans et papas qui m’ont élevé pendant ce temps-là, et Pwiya pour son amour maternel. Merci à Alain Mindia Pei et sa famille pour le jardin, l’accueil et l’amitié.

Doriane Pei, Béty Gohoupe pour avoir été des soeurs, et pour m’avoir montré un côté du pays qui me reste chaud au coeur. Aouh bwaau, les jacks et les soirées à la plage avec vous me manquent!

My thanks to Mandana Seifeddinipur, Sophie Salffner, and Stephanie Petit of ELAR for their patient work.

My family, Olivia Schneider, and Ghada ben Yahia, for support and patience along the way. It was a long one, and I appreciate your support more than I’ll ever be able to say.



A Grammar of Vamale, a language of New Caledonia by Jean Rohleder is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Contents	v
List of Figures	xiii
List of Tables	xv
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Typological profile of Vamale	1
1.2 Structure of this book	2
2 The language and its speakers	5
2.1 Place	7
2.2 Language family	8
2.2.1 Position within Voh-Koné	13
2.3 Previous work	16
2.4 History of speakers	18
2.4.1 Pre-1917	18
2.4.2 The 1917 War	19
2.4.3 French policy and decline of the language	24
2.5 Modern context	25
2.5.1 Villages	25
2.5.1.1 Téganpaïk	26
2.5.1.2 Wanaa	27
2.5.1.3 Tiouandé	28
2.5.1.4 We Hava	28
2.5.1.5 Tiendanite	30
2.5.2 Cultural notes	30
2.5.3 The place of language in Kanak culture	32
2.5.4 Linguistic context	33
2.5.4.1 Multilingualism and variation	34
2.5.4.2 Neighboring languages	35

2.6	Naming	38
2.7	Consultants	39
2.7.1	André Nigai Kalène	40
2.7.2	Christophe Keela Pei	40
2.7.3	Jacob Keela Ganap Oué	40
2.7.4	Jean-Philippe Emyl Téin Oué	41
2.8	Methods	41
2.9	Notes on fieldwork in Vamale country	43
3	Phonology	47
3.1	Consonants	48
3.1.1	Examples	49
3.1.2	Marginal phonemes	49
3.1.3	Labio-velarized consonants	52
3.1.4	Voiceless nasals	52
3.1.5	Aspiration	53
3.1.6	Allophones of consonants	56
3.2	Vowels	57
3.2.1	Quantity	58
3.2.2	Quality	59
3.2.3	Diphthongs	60
3.2.4	Allophones of vowels	60
3.2.4.1	Nasalization of vowels	60
3.2.4.2	Fronting of /u/	61
3.2.4.3	Backing and rounding of /a/	61
3.2.4.4	Interplay between /a/ and <i>e</i> = ‘1SG’	61
3.3	Phonotactics / syllable structure	62
3.3.1	Reduplication	63
3.4	Stress	63
4	Word classes	67
4.1	What is a word?	67
4.1.1	Concerning <i>vwa</i>	68
4.1.2	p-words and g-words	68
4.1.3	Affixes and clitics	69
4.2	The distinction between verbs and nouns	70
4.2.1	Syntactic criteria	71
4.2.2	Morphological criteria	71
4.2.2.1	- <i>n</i>	73

4.2.3	Semantic criteria	74
4.3	Articles	75
4.3.1	The question of definiteness	76
4.3.2	The articles <i>ca</i> and <i>eca</i> ‘some’	78
4.3.3	<i>li</i> vs <i>ni</i>	81
4.3.4	Other, related languages	81
4.4	Demonstratives	83
4.4.1	<i>na</i> ‘DEM’, <i>ha</i> ‘DEM.REP’	84
4.5	Nouns	84
4.5.1	Classifiers	85
4.5.2	Relational nouns	85
4.6	Personal pronouns	85
4.7	Subject indexing bound pronouns	86
4.8	Prepositions	88
4.9	Relativizer	88
4.10	Subject marker <i>ka</i>	89
4.11	TAM markers	89
4.11.1	Phasal negation <i>ban</i> ‘not yet’	90
4.12	Verbs	90
4.13	Adverbs	92
4.13.1	Temporal adverbs	93
4.13.2	Locative adverbs	93
4.13.3	<i>hman</i> ‘also’	94
4.14	Complementizer <i>hapi</i>	95
4.15	Conjunctions	95
4.15.1	Nominal conjunctions	95
4.15.2	Verbal conjunctions	96
4.15.2.1	Nominal coordinators <i>na-bwa</i> , <i>ko</i>	97
4.16	Subordinators	97
4.17	Negation markers	99
4.18	Assertive <i>tha</i>	99
4.19	Intensifiers	100
4.20	Repetitive <i>mwa</i>	101
4.21	Interjections	103
4.22	Quantifiers	103
5	Nouns	105
5.1	Animacy	106

5.2	Possession	107
5.2.1	Alienable	112
5.2.2	Inalienable	112
5.3	Classifiers	113
5.3.1	Relational classifiers: Food	114
5.3.2	Relational classifiers: Possession	114
5.3.3	Relational classifier: Focussed Possession marker <i>ka</i>	116
5.3.4	Noun classifiers	117
5.4	Compound nouns	118
5.4.1	N + N compounds	120
5.4.1.1	Endocentric N+N compounds	120
5.4.1.2	Exocentric N + N compounds	122
5.4.1.3	Compounds with two heads	122
5.4.2	The question of Noun + Adverb compounds	123
5.4.3	N + V compounds	123
5.4.4	V + N compounds	124
6	Noun phrases	125
6.1	Case marking	126
6.1.1	Agentive marker <i>ka</i>	127
6.1.2	Oblique markers	128
6.1.2.1	Benefactive <i>nya</i>	129
6.1.2.2	Oblique markers <i>nyako-</i> , <i>nyasi-</i>	129
6.1.2.3	Oblique marker <i>ko-</i>	131
6.2	Pronouns	132
6.2.1	Personal pronouns	134
6.2.2	Demonstrative pronouns	135
6.2.2.1	Topical demonstrative <i>na</i>	137
6.3	Fronting	138
6.4	Modifying a noun	139
6.4.1	Particles <i>se</i> , <i>been</i> ‘other’	140
6.4.2	Quantification	141
6.4.3	Relativizer <i>a</i>	142
6.4.4	Noun phrase subordinator <i>ko-</i>	143
6.4.5	Demonstrative suffixes	143
6.4.6	Dependent verbs in modified noun phrases	144
6.5	Coordination of noun phrases	146
6.5.1	Comitative <i>ma</i> ‘with’	147

6.5.2	Additive <i>ka</i> ‘also, too’	149
6.5.3	Alternative <i>hai</i> ‘or’	149
7	Verbs	151
7.1	Impersonal verbs	152
7.2	Stative verbs	154
7.2.1	Dependent stative verbs	155
7.2.2	Numerals	158
7.2.2.1	Ordinals	160
7.2.2.2	Multiplicative <i>o</i>	161
7.2.3	Possessible verbs	161
7.3	Active verbs	162
7.3.1	Transitive verbs	164
7.3.1.1	Transitive suffixes <i>-ke</i> and <i>-i</i>	164
7.3.1.2	Dependent transitive verbs	168
7.3.1.3	Verbs with <i>ko-</i> Arguments	171
7.3.2	Benefactive nouns	171
7.4	Space	172
7.4.1	Up/down	172
7.4.2	Upstream/dowstream	173
7.4.3	Spatial adverbs	174
7.4.4	<i>nya</i> ‘around, towards, inside’	174
7.4.5	Same-level axis	176
7.4.6	Centripetal/-fugal axis <i>-me, -le</i>	177
7.4.7	Origin of motion	177
7.4.8	Others	177
7.5	Prefixes	178
7.5.1	Prefixes of manner	178
7.5.2	<i>the-</i>	181
7.5.3	<i>da</i> ‘do first’, <i>ra-</i> ‘do afterwards’	182
7.5.4	Pluri-actional <i>e-</i>	183
7.6	Complex verbs	185
7.6.1	Reduplication	185
7.6.2	Compound verbs	186
7.6.3	Incorporated object constructions	186
7.7	Nominal derivation	187
7.7.1	<i>e-</i>	187
7.7.2	<i>xa-</i>	188

7.7.3	<i>hun-</i>	189
7.7.4	<i>ape-</i>	190
7.7.5	Nominalized verb phrases	190
7.7.6	Nominalization with <i>ka-n</i>	192
8	Verb Phrases	197
8.1	What is a verb phrase?	197
8.2	Negation	198
8.2.1	Verbal negation <i>cipa</i>	199
8.2.2	Existential negation <i>cika</i>	199
8.2.3	Other negative expressions and lexical items	199
8.3	Bound elements of the verb phrase	200
8.3.1	Serial verb constructions	202
8.3.2	Asymmetrical verb strings	204
8.3.2.1	Preverbs	204
8.3.2.1.1	<i>se-me(e)</i> ‘together’	206
8.3.2.1.2	<i>mee</i> ‘all’	208
8.3.2.2	Manner verbs	209
8.3.2.3	Grammaticalized motion verbs	210
8.3.2.4	Iterative <i>han</i>	211
8.4	Adverbs	211
8.4.1	Spatial adverbs and proximity	212
8.4.2	<i>meekan</i> ‘everywhere’	213
8.5	Comparison	213
9	Voice	215
9.1	Reflexive and reciprocal	215
9.1.1	Reflexive	215
9.1.2	Reciprocal	217
9.1.2.1	Comparison and symmetry	217
9.1.2.2	Reciprocal relationships	218
9.2	Middle	219
9.2.1	Lack of intentional initiator	219
9.2.2	Lack of endpoint	220
9.2.3	Mode of grouping	220
9.2.4	Symmetrical point	220
9.3	Causative <i>fa-</i>	221
9.4	“Passive”	223

10 Aspect	225
10.1 Aktionsart	226
10.2 Irrealis <i>bo</i>	226
10.3 Imperfective and future <i>bwa</i>	228
10.3.1 Imperfective <i>bwa</i>	228
10.3.2 Attenuating <i>bwa ju</i>	229
10.3.3 Prospective <i>bwa</i>	230
10.3.4 Negated <i>bwa(n)</i>	231
10.4 Progressive <i>kon</i>	232
10.4.1 Combinations with <i>bwa</i>	232
10.5 Continuative and realis <i>balan</i>	233
10.5.1 Continuative <i>balan</i>	235
10.5.2 Realis <i>balan</i>	236
10.5.3 Finally, continuative: <i>ja balan</i>	237
10.5.4 Finally: <i>bwa balan</i>	238
10.5.5 <i>kon balan</i> ‘about to, recently started’	239
10.5.6 <i>bo balan</i> ‘about to’	239
10.5.7 Summary: Combinations with <i>balan</i>	240
10.6 Perfective <i>pa (ja)</i>	241
10.7 <i>ja</i> ‘finally’	242
10.7.1 <i>kon ja</i>	244
10.8 Frequentative and iterative <i>mu</i>	244
10.9 Combinations	246
11 Simple clauses	251
11.1 Word order	251
11.2 Clause types	252
11.2.1 Declarative clauses	253
11.2.1.1 Discourse marker <i>ka</i>	253
11.2.1.2 Discourse marker <i>go</i>	253
11.2.1.3 Discourse marker <i>bwa</i>	254
11.2.2 Verbless clauses	254
11.2.3 Interrogative clauses	255
11.2.3.1 Polar questions	255
11.2.3.2 Content questions	256
11.2.4 Imperative and prohibitive clauses	257
11.3 Modality	258
11.3.1 Assertive <i>tha</i>	258

11.3.2	Epistemic modality	259
11.3.3	Deontic modality	260
11.4	Repetitive and deictic <i>mwa</i>	260
12	Complex clauses	265
12.1	Coordination	266
12.1.1	Comitative <i>ma</i>	267
12.1.2	<i>kona, kon</i> ‘then’	268
12.1.3	<i>hai</i> ‘or’	268
12.1.4	Contrastive <i>ka</i>	269
12.1.5	<i>ko</i> ‘but’	270
12.1.6	<i>koin</i> ‘then’	270
12.1.7	Contrastive <i>kavi</i>	272
12.2	Subordination	272
12.2.1	Complementation	273
12.2.1.1	Modal complementizer <i>ma</i>	273
12.2.1.2	Complementizer <i>hapi</i>	274
12.2.2	Adverbial clauses with <i>can</i>	275
12.2.3	Relative clauses	276
12.2.4	Purposive function of <i>ma</i>	277
12.2.5	Conditional <i>ma, cama</i> ‘if’	278
12.2.6	Realis ‘while’	279
12.2.7	<i>ko</i> ‘because, thanks to’	279
12.3	Insubordination	280
13	Conclusion	283
A	The Rat, the Swamp Hen, and the Squid (Philippe Gohoupe)	287
B	The 1917 Tipije War (Philippe Gohoupe)	297
B.1	Introduction	297
B.2	Story	299
B.3	Death of Bwaxat	303
B.4	Black Money and the Return of the People	304
	Bibliography	307

List of Figures

1.1	Alignment with active verbs	2
1.2	Building a house requires many parts.	4
2.1	The founding members of the Association Vamale.	6
2.2	A language workshop in late 2018, with members of the Academy of Kanak Languages.	6
2.3	New Caledonian within the Southern Oceanic linkage (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 113)	9
2.4	Mainland New Caledonian, North (red) and South (yellow) (Hammarström et al. 2020)	12
2.5	Language tree of some North New Caledonian languages (Ozanne-Rivierre 1995, 63)	13
2.6	Northern New Caledonian languages (Ozanne-Rivierre 1995, 45)	15
2.7	Languages in the region around 1917 (Leenhardt 1946, 658)	17
2.8	Possible language tree of Voh-Koné languages	17
2.9	Map of the Pamale river	19
2.10	Main movements of refugees following 1917 (Bensa 2008, 7). Many movements leave Pamale (“Pëmarë”).	20
2.11	A map of main Kanak villages around 1913 (Guiart 1970, 269)	22
2.12	Extract of Guiart’s 1979 map <i>Clans Autochtones: Situation Pré-coloniale</i> , with black underlines for yam masters, red for sun / rain masters, purple for taro masters, and dark brown for thunder masters, green highlights for Hoot and yellow for Hwaap lineages, red for Bai and blue for Dui, grey spots show ancient yam plantations and purple ones taro. (Guiart 1981, 71)	24
2.13	Map of speaker households. Approximate map of speaker households on the east coast (Government of New Caledonia, 22.11.2017), dots are my own, thanks to Florian Matter.	26
2.14	Mr. Christophe Pei fishing for sardines in Téganpaïk	28
2.15	The Kacabwec valley leading to Wanaa. Only part of it is inhabited now.	29
2.16	The Tiouandé estuary	29
2.17	The We Hava river	30

2.18	Languages in the region, Voh-Koné-speaking villages in red, Paicî-Cemuhî-speaking ones in yellow	34
2.19	Bensa's 1980 map showing some clans' migrations in the Touho-Hienghène area (Guiart 1981, 71)	37
2.20	Mr. Jacob Oué and the author	40
2.21	Mr. Pei and Mr. Kalène on the path to Wanaa	45
6.1	Alignment of noun phrase flagging	126
6.2	A syntax tree illustrating a noun phrase with preposed modifiers (see ex. 38b).	146
7.1	Alignment for active verbs	152
7.2	Tree-diagram of the sentence structure of <i>vwasoon ma go xaleke li mani</i> 'you cannot see the birds'	154
7.3	A 100 CFP bill from 1964 (IEOM 2014, 24)	160
7.4	The 'realm' of <i>hnuut</i> . Relevant rivers marked in yellow.	173
7.5	Resumptive <i>ka</i>	193
7.6	Cataphoric <i>ka-n</i>	194
12.1	Tree-diagram of the sentence structure of example (2), with <i>le</i> '3PL' instead of <i>li apuli-aen</i> 'these people'	267
13.1	Mr. Pei and Mr. Kalène looking across the Gaheny creek unto Wanaa. Thehwaade is in the distance, and Seejanit in the blue mists beyond that.	285

List of Tables

2.1	Voh-Koné reflexes of POc forms	10
2.1	Voh-Koné reflexes of POc forms	11
2.2	Voh-Koné pronouns after Leenhardt (1946, 504-507), modern Vamale added on the left.	14
3.1	Transliteration system used in this thesis	48
3.2	Consonants in Vamale. Non-phonemes are in brackets.	49
3.3	Examples showing Vamale consonants in monomorphemic words. . .	50
3.4	Loans with aspirate and tenuis plosives, after (Rivierre 1994, 516) . . .	54
3.5	Table comparing Bwattoo and mountain Voh-Koné reflexes of PNC *k .	55
3.6	Minimal pairs for vowels	57
3.7	Vowel allophones in their defining contexts (nasalization omitted) . .	59
3.8	Stress in trisyllabic words	63
4.1	Possessive suffixes, OBJ AND -S _P	72
4.2	Articles in Vamale	75
4.3	The article system in 1970 Hienghène languages (Haudricourt and Ozanne- Rivierre 1982, 255)	82
4.4	Pwaamei Hnaakâ (1a)/ Pwaamei Yaak (1b) / Pwapwâ (2) / Bwattoo (3) / Usa (4) articles in: (Ozanne-Rivierre, 94,95) (1-2) and (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 42) (3), fieldwork 2017 (4).	82
4.5	Bwattoo articles	82
4.6	Pwaamei / Pwapwâ articles in: Ozanne-Rivierre	83
4.7	Demonstrative pronouns	83
4.8	S – free form	86
4.9	Subject and object markers for active and stative verbs	87
4.10	Possessive suffix paradigms	87
4.11	Locative adverbs	93
4.12	Meanings of compounds with <i>juu</i>	101
5.1	Semantic tendencies of possessed nouns	107
5.2	Possessive suffix paradigms	108

5.3	Possessive classes	110
5.4	Possessive suffixes, OBJ AND -S _P	111
5.5	Parts of things	113
5.6	Classifiers, corresponding verbs, and corresponding food item	114
5.7	Noun classifiers in Vamale	118
5.8	Compounds with <i>vaci</i> ‘nucleus, most important part’	121
5.9	Compounds with <i>maan</i> ‘face, tip’	121
5.10	Body parts described metaphorically by (the head of a) compound	121
5.11	Concepts described by their function, origin, or other associations (e.g. toxicity).	122
5.12	Days of the week	124
6.1	Free pronouns	133
6.2	Subject and object markers for active and stative verbs	134
6.3	Demonstrative pronouns	135
7.1	Some forms of the paradigm of transitive <i>caihnan</i> ‘to know’	152
7.2	Subject and object markers for active and stative verbs	153
7.3	Inflection of <i>hmet-</i> ‘sated’	155
7.4	Meanings of <i>xhopwe-</i> ‘grow’	157
7.5	Table showing the first six cardinal numerals and their verbal form.	158
7.6	Complex numerals	159
7.7	Ordinals	160
7.8	Pairs with and without <i>-ke</i>	166
7.9	Transitivization with <i>-i</i>	167
7.10	Dependent transitive verbs	169
7.11	Bwatoo verbs with nominal morphology and Vamale cognates	170
7.12	Verb+Noun compounds	170
7.13	Verbs with <i>ko</i>	171
7.14	The main motion verbs and their associated locative adverbs	174
7.15	Proto-Oceanic verbs for hitting (Ross, Pawley, and Osmond 1998, 267)	180
7.16	Manner prefixes, their likely origins, with examples.	180
7.17	Examples of <i>ape-</i>	191
7.18	Distribution of <i>ka</i>	195
8.1	Negative paradigms	198
8.2	Preverbs and their free counterparts	205
9.1	Functions of Proto-Oceanic retained in Vamale, after (Bril 2005, 28)	216
9.2	Reciprocal kinship terms	218

9.3	Base and middle forms	219
10.1	<i>bo</i> and <i>bwa</i> combined with different <i>aktionsarten</i>	231
10.2	Overview of aspect marker combinations with <i>balan</i>	236
10.3	<i>bwa balan</i>	238
10.4	<i>kon balan</i>	239
10.5	Shades of <i>mu</i>	246
10.6	Overview of aspectual markers and their meanings	247
10.7	Aspect marker combinations	249
11.1	Question words	256

1	first person	IND	indicative
2	second person	INDF	indefinite
3	third person	INS	instrumental
A	argument marked like the agent in prototypical transitive action verb	INTS	intensifier
		IPFV	imperfective
		IRR	irrealis
ABS	absolutive	ITER	iterative
ACCP	finally	LOC	locative
ADD	additive	MID	middle
ADV	adverb(ial)	NEG	negation
AGT	agent	NMLZ	nominalizer
ALR	present perfective (“already”)	NSG	non-singular
ANA	anaphoric	NSPEC	non-specific
ANIM	animate	OBJ	object
ART	article	OBL	oblique
ASS	assertive	ORD	ordinal number
ATT	attenuative	P	argument marked like the patient in prototypical transitive action verb
BEN	benefactive		
CAUS	causative		
CLF	classifier	PFV	perfective
CNJ	conjunction	PL	plural
CNTR	contrastive	POSS	possessive
COM	comitative	PROG	progressive
COMP	complementizer	PROH	prohibitive
COND	conditional	PROX	proximal/proxima
CONT	continuative	PSM	possessum
CPR	comparative	PSR	possessor
DEF	definite	PUN	punctual
DEICT	deictic	PURP	purposive
DEM	demonstrative	REAL	realis
DIR	direct	REC.CONT	have been doing for some time
DIR.CF	away from speaker (“centrifugal”)	RECP	reciprocal
		REFL	reflexive
DIR.CP	towards speaker (“centripetal”)	REL	relative
		REP	repetitive
DISC	discourse marker	S	argument marked like that of an intransitive change of state verb
DIST	distal		
DU	dual	S _A	S marked like A
DUR	durative	S _P	S marked like P
EXCL	exclusive	SBJ	subject
EXIST	existential	SG	singular
EXPL	expletive	SPEC	specific
FOC	focus	SUBR	subordinator
FREQ	frequentative	THE _{DUR}	durative the-
FUT	future	THE _{PUNC}	punctual the-
HAB	habitual	TOP	topic
INAN	inanimate	TR	transitive
INCL	inclusive		

*I tii hnyaut bo nyasivwe, li apuli bwanpu vamale, li nyain dobido
ma vaahit*

Chapter 1

Introduction

The author bows before the reader, as well as the speakers involved in making this grammar, and the people that stand behind them. May you see the work that lies here, and know it.
koin!

This chapter gives some introductory information on the typological profile of Vamale, as well as outlining the structure of the book.

1.1 Typological profile of Vamale

Vamale is a Southern Oceanic language and conforms in many aspects to the canonical profile established by Ross (2004). It is head-first, uses verbs for meanings for which European languages use other word classes, e.g. numerals and adjectives, and makes ample use of serial verbs and other complex verb constructions. Vamale features dual and plural, as well as inclusive and exclusive pronouns. There is no gender, but animacy plays a role in object marking on verbs, among other things. It has no tempus *stricto sensu* and uses aspect markers coupled with *realis* particles to express its predicate's temporal makeup.

The language fits in neatly with its immediate, New Caledonian neighbors: like other Northern languages, Vamale has a large phonemic consonant inventory (38 phonemes), and features contrastive length and nasalization in vowels (20 phonemes). Stress is mostly penultimate, with some influence of syllable weight, syllable position in the word, and (g-)wordhood status. The phonology of the language also features a class of *fortis* onsets, i.e. aspirated plosives, voiceless nasals and liquids, but also /h/, which attract stress and tend to nasalize the following vowel.

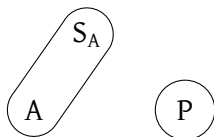


FIGURE 1.1: Alignment with active verbs

However, there are also rarer facets to Vamale. Verb agreement, for example, shows tripartite alignment. “Active verbs” mark A identically to S_A , and distinguish P. This is an nominative-accusative alignment. However, another group of verbs, “stative verbs”, are intransitive, and mark the subject similarly to undergoers in transitive verbs, but are distinct from them. The distinction between S_P and P is blurry, and may in time disappear. This means that additionally to split-transitivity, which is common in the area, Vamale features a split along $A, S_A / S_P / P$. Some constructions, however, show yet different patterns: de-verbal nominalizations show ergative alignment for inanimate subjects and undergoers (Section 7.7.6).

1.2 Structure of this book

Writing a good grammar is a challenging task. Vamale has many forms with different, yet semantically related functions. For example, the repetitive particle *mwa* can also mean ‘again, in return’, ‘on top of that, even’, as well as put the focus on one part of the clause and mean ‘this here, now, here’. The grammars on Bwato (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006) and Cèmuhi (Rivierre 1980), as well as Isabelle Bril’s extensive work on Nêlêmwa (2002, 2004, 2005, inter alia), were of tremendous help and are frequently cited.

This thesis tries to apply a classic structure to a language where syntactic behavior can be assigned to forms much more freely than in European languages: phonology, word classes, nouns and noun phrases, verbs and verb phrases, voice, aspect, and clauses. This means that some common words and constructions are introduced late in the book, and some relatively rare phenomena appear in the first chapters. Cross-references, an index at the back, and many small sections will help the reader find their way. In most cases, the examples presented were recorded, and can be found in their context either in the **FLEX database** uploaded onto ELAR, in the field notes uploaded as scans, or in the .eaf transcriptions freely available along with their media files, also on ELAR.

Chapter The language and its speakers is an alloy of the linguistic environment of the language and its genealogical ties on the one hand (along with a brief research history), and social, cultural, and historical information on the other hand, as well as

some details on the main consultants and the research methods used on a third hand, with some general information on doing research in New Caledonia at the end.

The chapter 3 on Phonology gives a description of the phonemes of Vamale, allophones, phonological rules, and syllable structure. A comparison to its most closely related relatives is made as well. Stress was investigated relatively late in the project, and the author cannot hope to give an exhaustive account, though the most important aspects are covered.

The chapter 4 ‘Word Classes’ is a catalog of the syntactic behaviors of words in Vamale. As some classes only have one or two members, this chapter aims to dispense with labels that are all too clear, and moves along broad axes: first syntactic wordhood is discussed, then the distinction between verbs and nouns, which is especially important in Oceanic languages with zero-derivation. The chapter then groups the word classes by the constituents they depend on, though some particles must be discussed separately: *mwa* ‘again, also, even; now, here’ and *juu* ‘real, very, only’ modify a variety of domains, from words to clauses, and are discussed at the end.

The structure of the chapter ‘Word Classes’ is mirrored in the following chapters, grouping morphemes according to their constituent membership. Chapter 5 on nouns also includes classifiers and possessive constructions (Section 5.2 and Section 5.3, respectively), whereas Chapter 6 ‘Noun Phrases’ takes up demonstrative suffixes again, as they are found on pronouns as well (Section 6.4.5).

Chapter 7 ‘Verbs’ discusses the biggest word class in Vamale. Verbs come with a variety of syntactic behaviors: with numeral and adjectival functions, without a subject (Section 7.1), or unable to head a phrase (manner verbs and preverbs). The latter modify another verb and are described in Chapter 8 ‘Verb Phrases’. Nominalized verbs and verb phrases are described there (Section 7.7), because their internal behavior is verb-like. Nominalized verbs are the only environment with ergative flagging: a particle *ka* ‘ABS’ optionally flags inanimate S and P participants of nominalized verbs, but never agentive ones (Section 7.7.6).

Chapter 8 ‘Verb Phrases’ includes negators, serial verb constructions, and adverbs. Especially serial verb constructions are an important strategy to express complex events and to modify simple ones.

After a brief exploration of voice (Chapter 9), especially of the middle prefix *e-*, aspect is described in some detail in a dedicated chapter (Chapter 10). Aspectual particles can combine and often have complex meanings, dependent on the predicate’s aktionsart.

Following the discussion of aspect, chapters on simple and complex clauses form the end of this description. While the chapter 11 ‘Simple Clauses’ includes a section on alignment, as well as one on modality, it mostly focusses on clause types. It

covers declarative and imperative clauses, prohibitive ones, but also interrogative and even verbless clauses. The last chapter, ‘Complex Clauses’, discusses coordinated and subordinated clauses (Chapter 12). Adverbial and relative clauses as well as the ones introduced by the important complementizer *ma* are common constructions in Vamale. A brief section on insubordination closes the chapter, a construction used for adhortative, optative, and other modal ends.

Three texts form the appendix: a traditional fable as told by Mr. Philippe Gohoupe (Appendix A), and an oral account of the 1917 Tipije War (Appendix B). The traditional fable explains the importance of gratitude (and the animosity between squids and rats), and the War account is a fascinating perspective on the devastating repression of the Koné-Tiwaka region a century ago.



FIGURE 1.2: Building a house requires many parts.

Chapter 2

The language and its speakers

(2.1) juu va m=e juu saxhuti nyakoo-vwe i jaxhut ko
 real too.much SUBR=1SG real narrate for-2PL DEF.SG story about
 i vamale...
 DEF.SG Vamale

‘It is beyond me to properly tell you the story of the Vamale language...’

This chapter aims to introduce Vamale in its genealogical context, as well as its geographical, cultural, and historical environment. The language has been affected by its role in the area over time, its neighbors, and the contact situations born of that. Because Vamale speakers were one of the most severely impacted speaker communities of the 20th century in New Caledonia (see Section 2.4), *i vaa can vije*, the 1917 Kanak revolt or war, plays a crucial role in understanding why so few speakers remain, and why Vamale is a pluricentric language spoken by traumatized people.

Vamale is said to have approximately 100 speakers left (Eberhard, Simons, and Fennig 2020). Asking community members to list everyone capable of having a conversation in 2017 yielded 186 names, nine of whom have since passed away (as of January 2021). Worryingly, only 32 speakers are younger than thirty, and only 2 are minors. Most fluent speakers are over 60 years old. Though the language is used in ceremonies and some households (e.g. Téganpaik chief’s house), and amongst many adult speakers, persons under 25 years of age barely use it with each other. A notable exception is the village We Hava, where a majority of residents understand, and many speak, the language. In one, maybe two generations, the language will stop being spoken, unless the trend is reversed. On a hopeful note, an association was founded in 2019 with the goal of maintaining the language vital and promote its use (pictured in Figure 2.1). Several workshops to this end have already taken place since the beginning of the research project, like the one shown in Figure 2.2.

The chapter is structured as follows: first, the language is situated in the world (Section 2.1). The language’s place in its family is discussed in Section 2.2. Previous



FIGURE 2.1: The founding members of the Association Vamale.



FIGURE 2.2: A language workshop in late 2018, with members of the Academy of Kanak Languages.

work on the language is listed in Section 2.3. Section 2.4 summarizes the events surrounding the war of 1917, while Section 2.4.3 describes the circumstances leading to the language's decline after the displacement of the speakers. The section following this describes the situation of the language today: the villages in which it is spoken (Section 2.5.1), the society which uses it (Section 2.5.2), the cultural context relevant to language transmission (Section 2.5.3) and code-switching (Section 2.5.4.1), as well as Vamale's linguistic neighborhood (Section 2.5.4.2). The issue of the language's name is discussed in Section 2.6. A section on the main consultants introduces the work group and their linguistic background (Section 2.7). The project's methods of data gathering are described in Section 2.8. Some information regarding doing fieldwork in New Caledonia closes the chapter (Section 2.9).

2.1 Place

This study focuses on the northern east coast of *Grande Terre*, the biggest island in the archipelago of New Caledonia (Figure 2.3). These islands, located south of Vanuatu in the subtropical Coral Sea, were settled around 3,200 years ago by Lapita sailors from Vanuatu (Lynch 2004, 334; Sand, Bole, and Ouetcho 2007, 309). Contacted in 1774 for the first time by Europeans, the archipelago was formally claimed by the French in 1853, to break up British dominion in the area. French settlement, and the plantations tied to it, led to an influx of speakers of Vietnamese, Polynesian, Vanuatuan, and French varieties. Before this period, the islands hosted a family of at least 35 South Oceanic varieties.¹ as well as a Nuclear Polynesian language spoken on Iaa/Uvea since the 17th century: Fagauvea (see Figure 2.3) Vamale is the only member of the Voh-Koné linkage situated on the rainy east side of the central mountain range, about 375 km northeast of the capital Nouméa. The sea immediately to the east, and steep, sparsely populated mountains to the west mean that there is an about 5km large belt in which humans live in any density to speak of, and where Kanak languages are mostly found nowadays. Vamale is spoken in an area approximating 25 km², but apart from isolated houses like Laurient Gohoupe's far upstream of We Hava, the speakers can be found in five villages (and, of course, the bigger towns of the territory). These will be described in more detail in Section 2.5.1.

¹Leenhardt described 36 varieties, some of which are considered dialects of the same language, e.g. Orowe, Hamea, and Ajië. Given that in the 1940s, many of them were already quasi-extinct (Waamwang, Arhâ, the ceremonial varieties of Drehu and Nengone), and given the catastrophic decline of the Caledonian population, and how many small languages still co-exist in the North, a larger number may be presumed to have existed.

2.2 Language family

Following Lynch, Ross, and Crowley, the New Caledonian language family and the Southern Vanuatu family are part of the Southern Melanesian family (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 112). With South Efate languages, this group forms the Southern Oceanic linkage (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 112), itself a linkage in East Malayo-Polynesian (see Figure 2.3 for a map). Lynch (2004) hypothesizes that New Caledonia was settled rather directly from Efate (Lynch 2004, 334), which would make sense with its status of a family inside a linkage. Oceanic languages are grouped into innovation-defined groups and innovation-linked ones (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 93), distinguishing languages which descend from a reconstructible proto-language, from languages that form a group through innovations shared via contact, or where innovations have occurred in overlapping smaller groups. The latter case is much more frequent in this area of the world.

Lynch uses the term “Southern Oceanic” to refer to ‘a linkage whose members today comprise the 130 or so non-Polynesian languages of Vanuatu and New Caledonia (Lynch 1999, 2000)’. The linkage is defined by the innovations from Proto-Oceanic (POc) listed below, among others (Lynch 2004, 313).

- POc *R was dropped in absolute word-final position (Lynch 2004, 313) While northern New Caledonian languages do not feature *-l* or *-r* in non-loans, possessed forms hint at a merger with *-t* rather than an apocope; compare Vamale *fedat* ‘blood’ from POc *daaR to its possessed form *fedala-*.
- “Third person pronouns accreted *na-.” (Lynch 2004, 313) The singular article *na- was not conserved in New Caledonian, but Ozanne-Rivierre (1992, 197-201) argues that a trace was responsible for some non-etymological prenasalized consonants (Lynch 2004, 316). Compare *talik ‘sea’ → Vamale ʔjati.
- “POc *k → Proto-Southern Oceanic (PSO) *g in some pronouns” (Lynch 2004, 316) Compare
 - *POc *kita ‘1PL.INCL’ → Southern Melanesian *gida or *gadV → Vam. *gase*
 - *POc *ko ‘2SG’ → PNC, and Vam. *go*
 - *POc *ka[m]u, *kamiu ‘2NSG’ → PNC *ga(m)u → Vam. *gau* ‘2DU’
- “The ancestral system of two transitive suffixes reduced to one (or none).” (Lynch 2004, 313). This relates to the transitive suffixes *-akini and *-i, both of which may still have reflexes in Vamale in the form of *-ke* and *-i*, respectively (see Section 7.3.1.1). While *-i* is found in many northern languages, *-ke* may now be

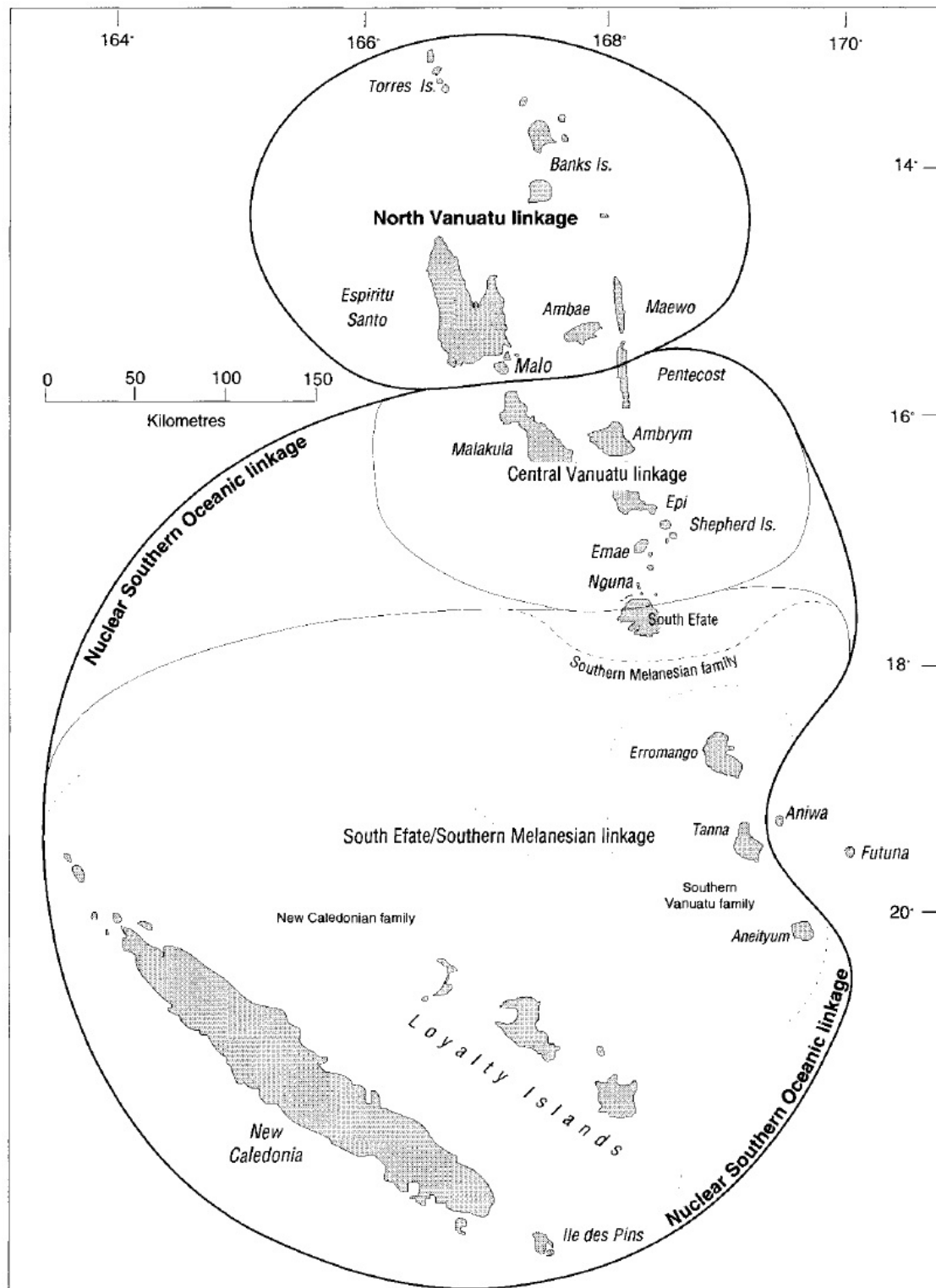


FIGURE 2.3: New Caledonian within the Southern Oceanic linkage (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 113)

unique to Voh-Koné. This potential disagreement with Lynch is grounds for more research.

Southern Oceanic contains the Southern Melanesian family, defined amongst other things by its voicing of the initial plosive in certain pronouns (e.g. POc *kita ‘1INCL’ → SM *gida, later *gadV → Vam. *gase* / *gasu*) (Lynch 2004, 317). New Caledonian as a family is well-defined by sound changes, listed below (Lynch 2004, 317), and some lexical innovations (Lynch 2004, 316). Table 2.1 summarizes and illustrates some of the consonant sound changes from Proto-Oceanic through Proto-New Caledonian, to modern-day Vamale and Bwatoo.

- Merger of POc *c and *s to *s
- Merger of POc *n, *ñ, and *l to *n
- Loss of POc *R and *y
- POc *puV → PNC *p^wV
- POc *ai → PNC *e or *e:

TABLE 2.1: Voh-Koné reflexes of POc forms

POc form	Bwatoo	Vamale
Proto-Oceanic *p		
PNC *p, *pw → v, v ^w		
*paRi ‘ray(fish)’	<i>ve</i>	<i>ve</i>
*poñu ‘turtle’	<i>v^wen</i>	<i>v^wen</i>
PNC *pp, *ppw → f, f ^w		
*posi ‘press’	<i>f^wati</i>	<i>f^wati</i>
POc *d / *r		
PNC *t, *nd → ⁿ d		
*daun ‘leaf’	<i>ⁿdoon</i>	<i>ⁿdoon</i>
*daRoq ‘ground’	<i>ⁿdoot</i>	<i>ⁿdoop</i>
Proto-North *t ^h		
t ^h at ‘pandanus’	<i>t^hat</i>	<i>t^hat</i>
t ^h ap ‘oral thrush’	<i>t^hap</i>	<i>t^hap</i>
POc *t		
PNC *t, *d → ⁿ j		
*tasi ‘younger sibling’	<i>ⁿjati-</i>	<i>ⁿjati-</i>
*tupa ‘grandfather’	<i>ⁿji^mbu-</i>	<i>ⁿji^mbu-</i>

TABLE 2.1: Voh-Koné reflexes of POc forms

POc form	Bwatoo	Vamale
PNC *tt → θ/s *tumpuq ‘swollen’	θ ⁱ mbu	si ⁱ mbu
POc *s PNC *s, *n _s → d/t *sapa ‘what?’ *sake ‘go up’ *suRi ‘bone’	ⁿ da ta ⁿ duu-	ⁿ da ta ⁿ duu-
PNC *ss → t ^h *susu ‘breast’ *suki ‘pierce’	t ^h i t ^h i	t ^h i t ^h i
POc *k PNC *k → ð/j ~ Ø *kulit ‘skin’ *kuRita ‘squid’	ðii ðiia	i- i ⁱ mbwen
PNC *kk → θ/s *kuku ‘claw’ *kau ‘swim’	θi- θoom	si- soom
POc *q PNC *q → ɣ/Ø *qusan ‘rain’ *qupi ‘yam’ *qata ‘man’ *qaso ‘sun’	ɣuta/ wuta ɣuu ɣau ɣat	uta uvu ɣaju ɣat
PNC *qq → x *quma ‘grow, cultivate’ *qulos ‘worm’	xuum xuṇat	xumi xuṇat

The Southern Oceanic languages spoken in New Caledonia can be split roughly into two groups: Mainland (i.e. *Grande Terre*) languages, and the three Loyalty Islands languages Iai, Drehu, and Nengone (Ozanne-Rivierre 1992). Mainland languages split into northern and southern languages (see Figure 2.4), with a tendency for northern languages to have 5 or so vowel phonemes and over 35 consonant ones, and an opposite trend for large vowel inventories and small consonant ones in the South (Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 25). In the North, a Far Northern branch (*Extrême Nord* in French) and a Northern branch clothe the land in sound (see Figure 2.6 for a map).



FIGURE 2.4: Mainland New Caledonian, North (red) and South (yellow)
(Hammarström et al. 2020)

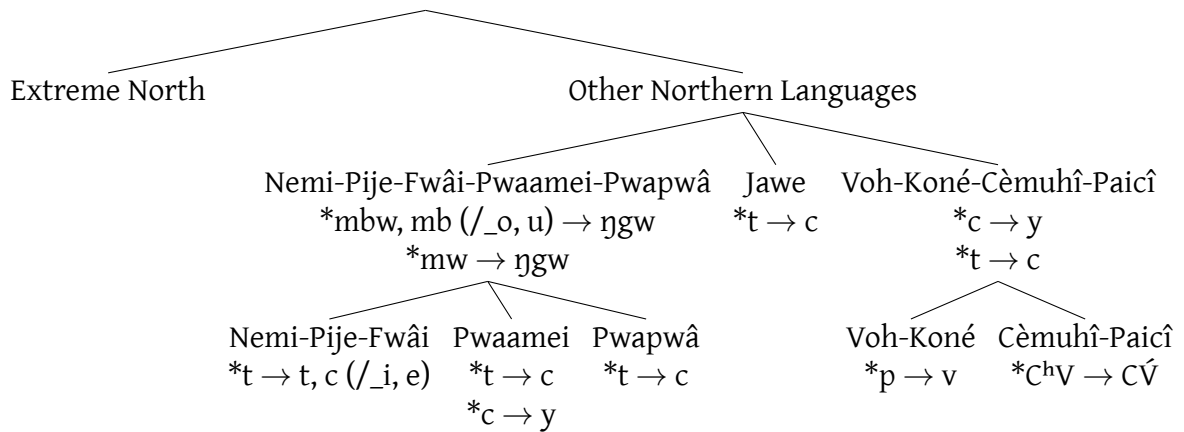


FIGURE 2.5: Language tree of some North New Caledonian languages
(Ozanne-Rivierre 1995, 63)

The latter is split into the so-called Hienghène cluster, the Voh-Koné dialects, and the tonal languages Cèmuhi and Paicî, to which Voh-Koné is more closely related than to the other branches, (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 19) see Figure 2.5 for a language tree. The language described in this book is part of the Voh-Koné cluster. The question of dialect vs language, as well as of the name given to the variety in question, will be addressed in Section 2.6.

Voh-Koné is defined as a group mostly by phonological changes that set it apart from the rest of the Northern and Far Northern languages. Comparing sound changes in the Northern family is difficult due to sparse data. Valuable work was done by Haudricourt (Haudricourt 1948, 73-97) and especially Ozanne-Rivierre (1995, 1992). The following is mostly a summary of her work, with some Vamale data added.

Compared to other Northern languages, Voh-Koné is mostly distinct by its lenition of $*c \rightarrow j$ and initial $*p$ to v (see Figure 2.5). The latter was dropped in some Vamale words such as the singular article $*vi \rightarrow i$ (but not the language's name). Geminates of $*q$, $*k$, $*p$, historically the result of reducing the first syllable in reduplicated contexts, yielded aspirated initial consonants everywhere in the North (Ozanne-Rivierre 1992, 57), but have voiceless fricative reflexes in Voh-Koné (see Table 2.1). Voh-Koné languages do have aspirated plosives which evolved from the same source, too, however. This is partly due to borrowing, but given their almost total occurrence before nasal vowels, this study suggests that the leniting sound changes which led to a fricativization did not occur completely (see Section 3.1.5).

2.2.1 Position within Voh-Koné

Vamale is a member of the Voh-Koné languages, a group of mutually mostly intelligible varieties which forms a belt on the western shore from Voh to Népou including

TABLE 2.2: Voh-Koné pronouns after Leenhardt (1946, 504-507), modern
Vamale added on the left.

	Vamale		Hmwaveke	Waamwang	Haveke	Haeke	Bwattoo	Pwapwâ
	now	1946						
1SG	(e)o	o	yo	ng	ng	ong/ ng	ng	ng
2SG	ko	ko	go	m	go	go/ m	m	m
3SG	(e)a	kon, ke	kon, ke	n	gon	mon/ n	n	n
1DU.INCL	ju						ju	
1DU.EXCL	bu						bu	
2DU	u						u	
3DU	lu						lu	
1PL.INCL	je	ga	ga	je?	gaie	ngaie/ je	je	je
1PL.EXCL	be	be	be	be	gabe	ngabe/ be	be	be
2PL	ga	gae	v ^w e	we	gae	o	e	e
3PL	le	le, ke	le	le	le, ke	le, ke/ le	le	le

Koné and Baco, then follows the Tiéta river upstream and breaks off around Temala, before picking up again in the east around Tiendanite, Ouen Kout and We Hava (see Figure 2.6). As is typical of dialect chains, the varieties furthest apart have distinct grammatical morphemes, distinct lexicon, and different phonological systems. Because of this, Vamale and Bwattoo are not readily understood by speakers of the other variety. Table 2.2 compares Voh-Koné pronouns, along with Pwapwâ, a neighbor of Bwattoo, as they were recorded in the 1940s.

The languages of Voh-Koné probably spread from the eponymous region on the west coast to the Upper Tiéta valley, where Hmwaeke² is spoken. Until the early 20th century, the neighboring valleys of the Pamale and its tributaries were inhabited by some 2,000 people according to oral tradition (Couhia and Maepas 2008, 62). Since this region fell under colonial control only in the wake of World War I, no census before the Tipije war can confirm or contest this number. The entire population of the valley was either killed or scattered (see Section 2.4). A map of the main movements can be found in Figure 2.10. Those who went west assimilated into their linguistic cousins, whereas the eastward fugitives kept a language alive which they call Vamale today. Leenhardt 1946 described it as ‘Moaeke’ of the East Coast and counted 50 speakers (Leenhardt 1946, 162).

Within Voh-Koné, the major division opposes western, coastal varieties and eastern, mountain-based ones. Interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ are features of Bwattoo, Haveke, Haeke and Waamwang, whereas Hmwaveke and Vamale present the alveolar fricative /s/ instead of /θ/, and have lenited /ð/ to /j/, or dropped it before /i/

²hmwaeke is a common greeting in the eponymous variety meaning ‘how [is it going]?’.

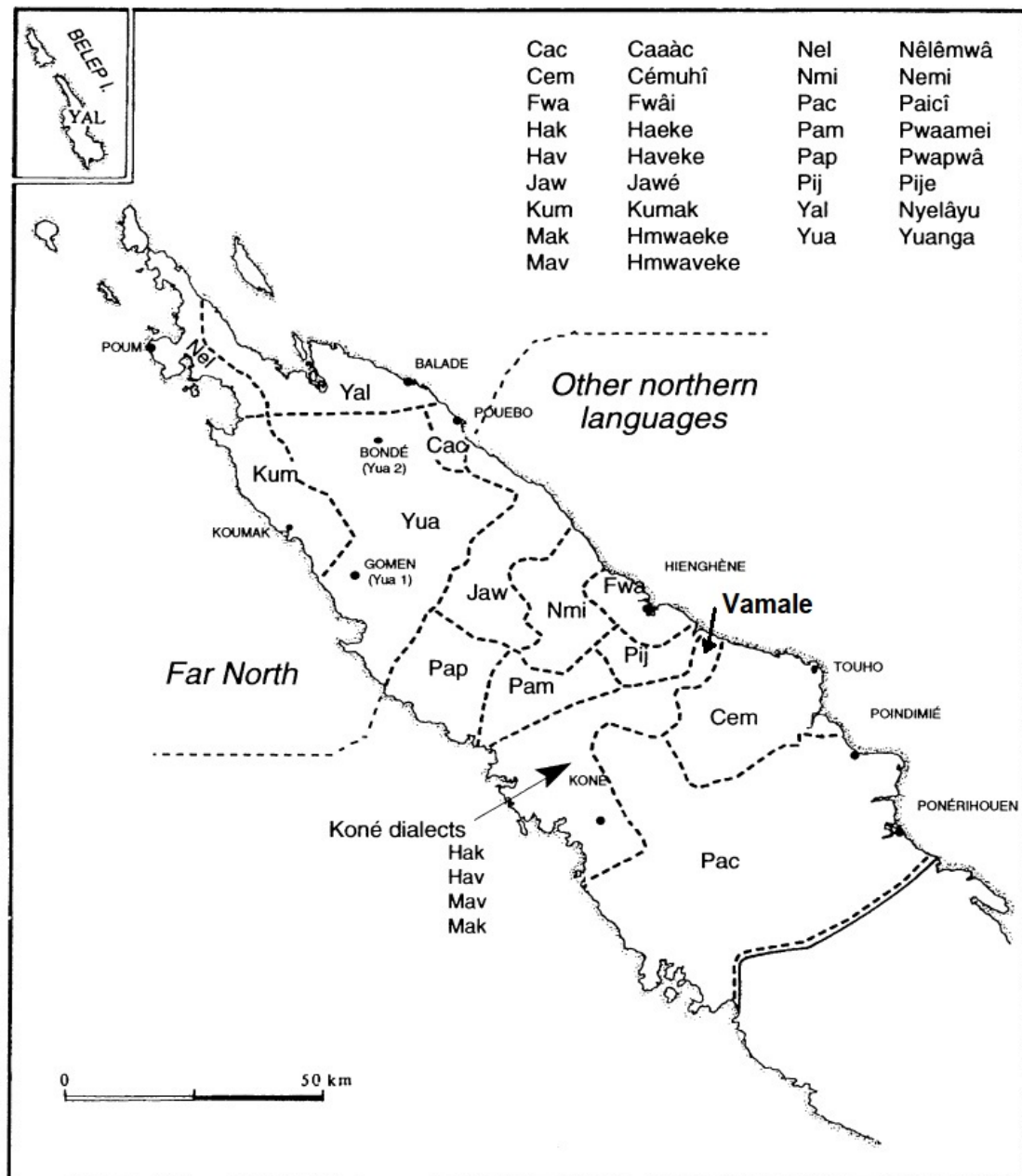


FIGURE 2.6: Northern New Caledonian languages (Ozanne-Rivierre 1995, 45)

(e.g. *kulit ‘skin’ → Bw. *ḏii*, Vam. *i-*).

Proto-Oceanic initial *q has become /ɣ/ in Vamale, except before /u/ (e.g. **qu-san* ‘rain’ → *uta*); western varieties keep /ɣ/ before /u/. The only case of a voiced fricative before /u/ is an allophone of /h/. [ɣ] is also dropped before /o/ (Bwato *yop* ‘high tide’, *op* in Vamale).

Intervocalic /v/ within a morpheme is rare, contrary to the western languages.³ Hmwaveke, part of the mountain group, still shows intervocalic /v/ lost in Vamale, which suggests that this sound change originated in the East. Finally, some final consonants (chiefly /k/ and /c/) were lost in Vamale that remain in Hmwaveke.

Historical sources suggest a sort of *Urheimat*, given that Guiart mentions a bigger Haekic coalition on the west coast before the Paicî influx of the 18th and 19th centuries (Guiart 1963, 131,260). Compare the earlier map in Figure 2.7 to the contemporary Figure 2.6: Voh-Koné languages retreated to the North. Until 1917 Vamale was spoken in an area inhabited since 420–610 AD (Sand 2012, 172) (though probably not by Voh-Koné speaking people), and represents the easternmost point of a putative inward expansion of a dialect continuum.

However, spatial proximity groups coastal Haveke and mountainous Hmwaveke together, so that there is a middle zone, as is typical of dialect chains. In addition to this blurring factor, language contact changed dramatically in the last century, with an influx of refugee Hmwaeke and Vamale speakers that changed Haveke and Hmwaveke. Vamale itself may have changed faster in its relative isolation.

2.3 Previous work

Vamale is almost exclusively an oral language. It is used in church (at least in Té-ganpaïk) for songs; Néa Galé of Baco has published some prose, and some songs are archived, recorded by Haudricourt in 1963 (Nea 1963). The Protestant missionary and pastor Maurice Leenhardt was based in Houaïlou, but was active across the entire archipelago and wrote extensively about Kanak languages and cultures. His most important linguistic work is *Langues et dialectes de l’Austro-Mélanésie*, published in 1946. Short grammar sketches on almost every language at the time are followed by a comparative word list of over 1,000 items. This is the most extensive work done on Vamale (“*Moaëke*”) to this day. While a number of items were deemed by speakers to be loans from other languages, mostly Pije, the list is the only published trace of the names of gods, dances, and objects since lost.

³Except for *fava* ‘4’, but Pije *hovac*, Fwâi *fovec* (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 261). Bwato *fae*, Oundjo-Haveke *favac* (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 135).

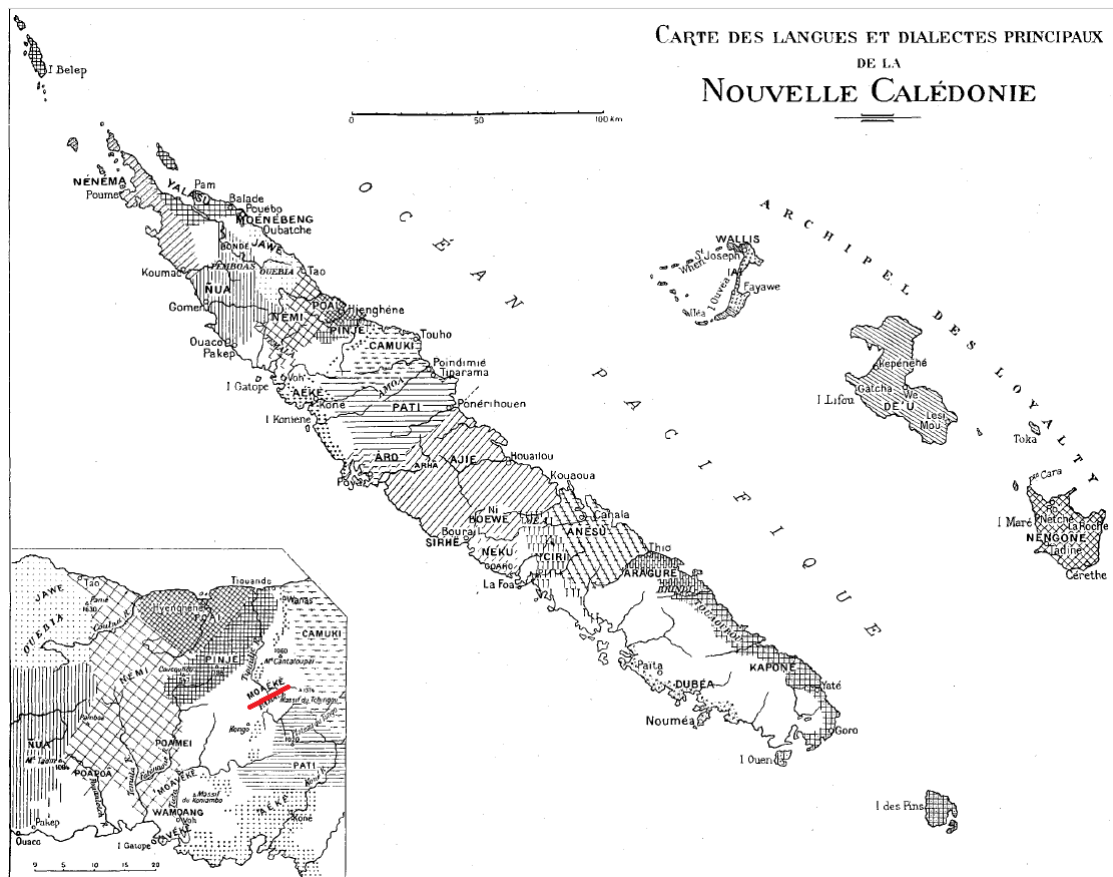


FIGURE 2.7: Languages in the region around 1917 (Leenhardt 1946, 658)

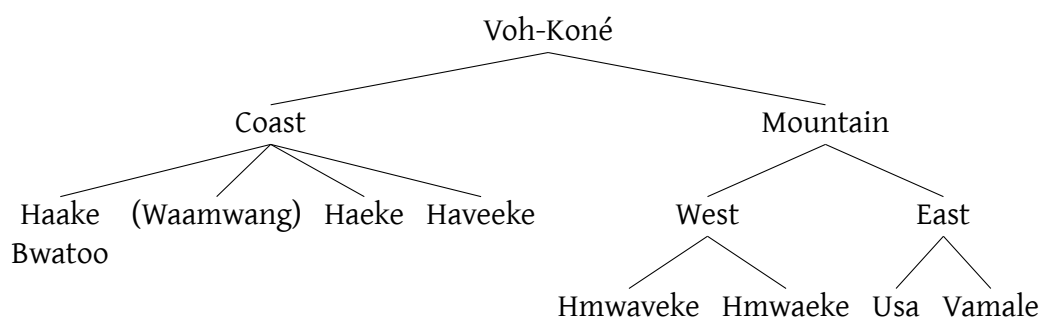


FIGURE 2.8: Possible language tree of Voh-Koné languages

André-Georges Haudricourt worked in New Caledonia between the 1940s and the late 1970s. The relevant articles are overviews over the phonological systems of all then-described languages (Haudricourt 1961), and grammatical typologies of the archipelago (e.g. 1948, 1972, 1948). A single work on Vamale by Haudricourt is cited by Rivierre (a dictionary project), but it was never published and is presumably lost (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 18).

Jean-Claude Rivierre has worked on Paicî (1983) and Cèmuhî (1980, 1993), as well as on Bwato (2006, a grammar sketch of 45 pages with a detailed dictionary following), and is the most important author on Vamale's immediate neighbors (e.g. 1994). He also assembled a precious dictionary of Hmwaveke containing Vamale items, unfortunately not yet published ("Projet de Dictionnaire Thématique En Langue de Tyéta (Hmwaveke)").

2.4 History of speakers

Knowing the history of the speech community helps to understand the length and intensity of exposure to today's contact languages, and to identify possible past dwelling places of speakers. The exact history of Vamale speakers is poorly studied. This section mainly aims at reconstructing the approximate distribution and the contact languages prior to the major population movements of 1904 and 1917, and to give a brief overview of the reasons why the language lost so many speakers. The account given here is different from the situation described in detail by Guiart (1984, 91-93), and yet different from Leenhardt (1978a, 20), partly because most clans have changed names. The following is a summary of written and oral sources; some details remain unclear.

2.4.1 Pre-1917

Pamare (the Paicî name)/Pamale/Vamale is the name of a river tributary to the Tipije, flowing northwards from (Na Unu) Pamale mountain, just southwest of the Cigu massif. Oriented almost exactly south-north, it flows from an area today uninhabited and bordered by Cèmuhî speakers (see Map 2.9), until it unites with the Vawe river,⁴ at a river bend and becomes the Tipije river, joined after a few kilometres by the Usa creek.

The Vawe, Pamale, and the upper Tipije valleys are said today to have been inhabited by Vamale speakers. Pamale is said to have been a great chieftaincy (Gohoup 2008, 59). The North was loosely structured into two alliances: *Hoot* 'great tide' and

⁴The Vawe tribe is mentioned in Leenhardt (1978b, 26) as well as in Sand and Ouetcho (2001), and the Pei and Fouan clans claim to be from there.

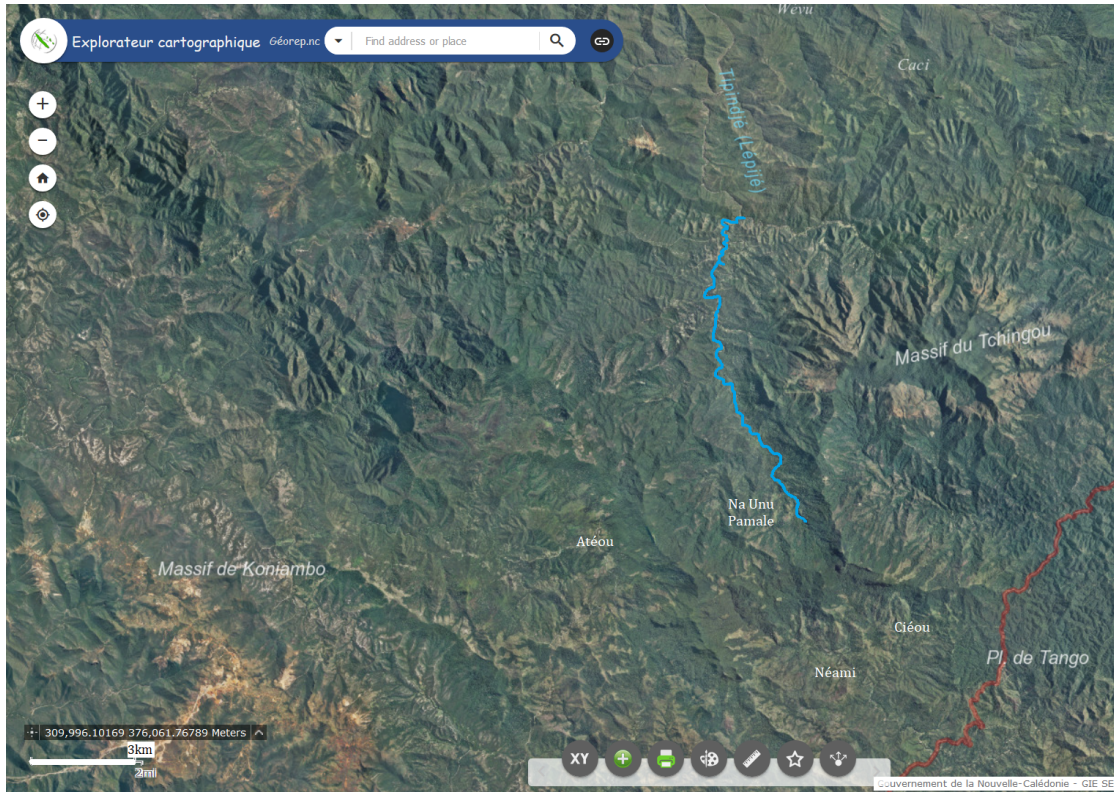


FIGURE 2.9: Map of the Pamale river

Whaap ‘raven’, today eponymous of the customary area *Hoot ma Whaap*. Guiart (1954, 6) cites the Tipije as *Hoot* but the later refugees of Pamale people, Wanas/Wanaa, Temala and Tiéta, as *Whaap* (Guiart 1954, 6), so a cautious assumption may be made that Pamale refugees followed old paths of alliance. See Figure 2.12 for a visual representation of Guiart’s analysis. The local distribution of languages before the 19th century is hard to estimate. However, around the turn of the last century, the land between the Cigu mountains and Koné, south of the Hienghène and at least up until Wan Kuut is likely to have been speaking varieties of Hmwaeke/Vamale. Clans speaking it almost certainly formed minority speaker populations in the allied valleys of Wanaa(s) (Ouanache), Thexhwaade (Tiouandé), We Hava, Pwey (Poyes), and on the other side of the mountains in Temala, Ceta (Tiéta), and Koogo (now deserted), as frequent exchanges were maintained with these villages, and this is where the refugees went (see Figure 2.10). The chiefs of Wanaa and We Hava spoke Vamale (Leenhardt 1978a, 20).

2.4.2 The 1917 War

On May 10th 1901, a peace meeting took place in Pamale (“Paix de Pamalé”). At the time, the area was not yet directly concerned by land spoliations or missions, though oral accounts speak of Pamale as a refuge for people driven from their lands (Bensa,

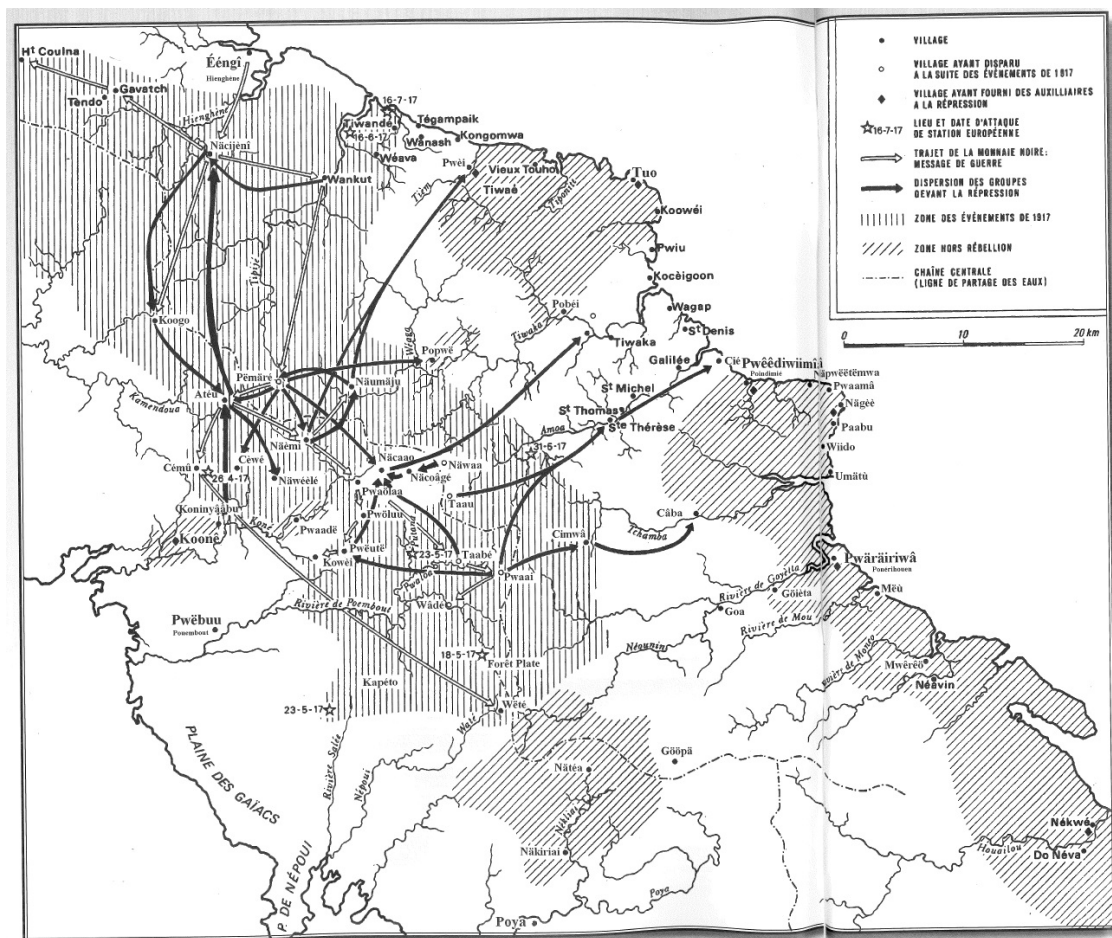


FIGURE 2.10: Main movements of refugees following 1917 (Bensa 2008, 7). Many movements leave Pamalé (“Pëmarë”).

Muckle, and Kacué 2015, 368,369). The parties discussed the ‘Affair of Poyes’, a conflict between war chief Amane of Poyes and chief Hippolyte of Touho. Whatever the real reason was – a woman, capitation tax, cooperation with Europeans, or land – the two reconciled. After the peace meeting, the ‘Thunder of Poyes’ Amane held several reunions in Pamale.

Possibly in response to this subversive behavior (Saussol 1979, 289), or because Pamale was a safe haven for refugees, the Pamale lands’ reservation status was revoked by the government by the (unpublished) *arrêté* n°775 on June 30th 1903 (Guiart 1970, 282), enacted on July 30th 1904 (Guiart 1992, 92), (Philcat 1989, 22). The reservation status had been Pamale’s only protection from state-sanctioned spoliations (Demmer 2003, 3), and the land was bought by the Belgian cattle rancher Charles Metzdorf. He founded a cattle “station”, a ranch, at Pamale (Guiart 1970, 273). The same year, possibly to avoid conflict with the population, Metzdorf’s manager brought in *gendarmes* who burned the houses of the Pamale, as well as the houses and the Protestant temples in Pije-speaking Pupay (Puepaek) and in Paada, and the village of Pwekea Kalemumak (upper Voh valley, probably Haveke-speaking) (Guiart 1970, 266) (a map is given in Figure 2.11). This act of war may have targeted clans who were allied to Pamale families and their neighbors, and who could have taken in refugees. Governor Feillet claims his group arrived on Charles Metzdorf’s cattle-station in Pamale on the 10th of May 1901 and slept in the recently abandoned cattle station in Vawe (Leenhardt 1978b, 26), both of which can only have existed legally 3 years later, after Pamale was erased from the map with fire and guns, as mentioned above (Leenhardt 1978b, 27). Governor Feillet cannot have confused the dates because he left for France on October 18th 1902 and died in Montpellier September 2nd 1903 (Leenhardt 1978b, 29). Whether Metzdorf came earlier than officially claimed and then had the reservation revoked in order to avoid neighborly conflicts with the dispossessed former inhabitants could not be reconstructed by the author. Metzdorf would later leave the area to be succeeded by the Ouaco mining company. It, too, left by the early 1930s (Guiart 1970, 266). The land is now in customary hands and used as hunting grounds by the villages Néami and Noéli.

As a reaction to the destruction of their houses, the Pamale tribe,⁵ which had moved north, hosted war *pilous*⁶ in 1913 (Guiart 1970, 266). This took place in a simmering martial context, and several attacks from various tribes on European stations erupted all over the area in the years after. A book dedicated to the topic is *Les Sanglots de l’aigle Pêcheur* (Bensa, Muckle, and Kacué, 2015).

⁵Since a decentral spatial organisation was described for Pamale in 1857, we use the same term as our sources here instead of “village”, which is more appropriate for the current situation.

⁶A Kanak word for ‘dance’, *vila* in Vamale, for festive meetings and palabres.

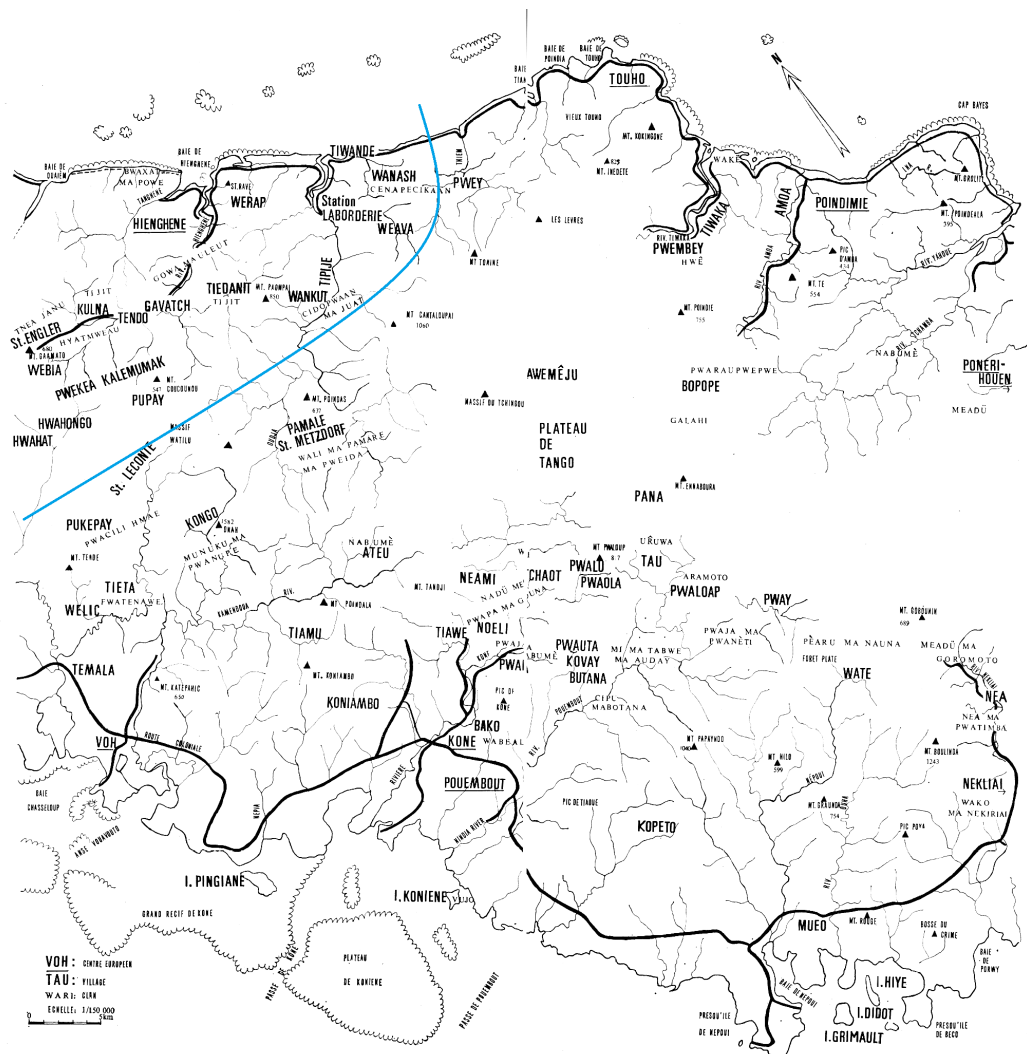


FIGURE 2.11: A map of main Kanak villages around 1913 (Guiart 1970, 269)

The Tipije war of 1917 broke out after long discussions between the chieftaincies. Whether Pamale's chief Athea Sergent Mërëatu actually agreed to participate in the fighting or not is unclear, but does not seem to have played a crucial role. He was not a chief of an existing settlement anymore (Guiart 1970, 277). Warriors from Pamale were among those who slaughtered the Grassin family (Boubin-Boyer 2015, 24), the settler Papin and the Tahitian soldier Elizera in We Hava on June 16th 1917. They were also part of the war party from whom the settler Ragot in Wanaa was saved either by Leenhardt (according to his descendant [Leenhardt 1978a, 20]) or defended by the locals (according to the latter's descendants). In total, 8 settlers were killed in the area. As a result, almost every village, involved or not, was burned down between Koné and Poyes. Over a dozen villages in the Tipije valley and its tributaries have disappeared, including the ones to which Pamale residents had fled after their valley's destruction in 1904. While this account focuses on Vamale, the majority of the villages concerned were Pije-speaking, a language which is now even more endangered than Vamale.

Philippe Dego Gohoupe ("Hao Cakeo")'s account from the 11th November 2016 claims that Vamale speakers came from Mt. Pamale further southwest in the mountain range, and at some point moved to the valley of Tipije, whence they were chased in 1917. This is confirmed by late Galé Kalen's account from the 6th September 2017, as well as Bensa and Goromido (1997) and Leenhardt (1978b), among others. A resettlement of the Pamale valley is unlikely in the near future, as it is considered cursed and the traditional ownership is far from clear. Some families fled to Tiendanite (confirmed by Agnès Wathea, 29.11.2017) while others chose We Hava, Wanaa and the Pije-named coastal villages Téganpaik and Tiouandé (see Figure 2.10). This would explain not only the dispersion of the community, but also the languages with which they are in contact: Pije, Nemi, and Fwâi⁷ for Tiendanite and We Hava, Pije and Cèmuhi for the coastal villages.

The Usa variety is nowadays spoken in Tiendanite. Politically, Tiendanite is chief Goa's domain, a rival of chief Bwaarhat, whereas in 1917, Wan Kuut's chief Kavéat was an ally of both Bwaarhat and Pamale's Athea Sergent. Usa speaker Agnès Wathea mentioned that her father's clan, from Usa, was welcomed to Tiendanite by its chief, though Usa was under Athea's control, and thus not a village allied to Tiendanite. Furthermore, Vamale speakers are likely to have been on the coast prior to the war. Although the coast was disturbed by European presence, Vamale-speaking chiefs were already well in place in We Hava and Wanas by 1917 (Leenhardt 1978a, 20). Overall, this suggests a speaker mobility on an individual and family level that was relatively unimpressed by chiefs and higher politics, and followed personal alliances. This is supported by Guiart's map in Figure 2.19. Regardless of this free individual networking,

⁷Tiendanite and We Hava send their children to school in Fwâi-speaking Hienghène.



FIGURE 2.12: Extract of Guiart's 1979 map *Clans Autochtones: Situation Pré-coloniale*, with black underlines for yam masters, red for sun / rain masters, purple for taro masters, and dark brown for thunder masters, green highlights for Hoot and yellow for Hwaap lineages, red for Bai and blue for Dui, grey spots show ancient yam plantations and purple ones taro. (Guiart 1981, 71)

most family histories are tainted by the war.

2.4.3 French policy and decline of the language

After the war, contact with the French and their language was sporadic until the 1950s. The colonial government locked Kanaks of diverse origins into reservations, hoping that their catastrophic demographic decline from perhaps 400,000⁸ people before contact (Sand, Bole, and Ouetcho 2007, 316) to just about 27,000 in the early 1920s (Sand, Bole, and Ouetcho 2007, 309) would in time lead to a total disappearance in contact with a “superior race” (Stern 1943, 289; Salaün 2005, 2). French colonial language policy was not very invasive and concentrated on prohibiting the use of indigenous

⁸“To our knowledge, the only person to have proposed a density model for Grande Terre was the geographer J. P. Doumenge, who believed in a low population of about 65,000 people at contact. Nevertheless, he proposed a density of “130 to 145 inhabitants per square kilometer of used horticultural surface” ([Doumenge 1982, 463], original text in French). Reducing his figures by half (i.e., seventy p/km²) to account for the vague status of the phrase “used horticultural surfaces,” and again using only one-third of the surface of the island, we would arrive at 400,000 people.” (Sand, Bole, and Ouetcho 2007, 316)

languages in public⁹ (Salaün 2005, 2). However, most Kanaks were confined to reservations (Demmer 2003, 3) in which the only outsiders were missionaries and *gendarmes*, so even that policy did not affect many people.

The event truly leading to speaker decline was schooling, which only began on any scale to speak of in the 1950s.¹⁰ Before that, Kanaks were not citizens,¹¹ and the only schooling was privately done by the churches. Most elders in the villages do not enjoy speaking French, and are multilingual in Kanak languages. Until the 1980s, the Vamale-speaking area was untouched by public schooling. Most children went to the Protestant private school in Tiouandé (*Fédération de l'enseignement libre protestant*, F.E.L.P., closed in the 1980s) or to Catholic institutions like the one in Tuo Mission. Nowadays, all children go to the public schools in Hienghène (for Oué Hava) and Touho (for Tiouandé and Téganpaik), where the dominant Kanak languages are Fwâi and Cè-muhî respectively. TV, radio, the spread of smartphones and the advent of mobile internet in early 2019 have added to language contact.

Having touched upon the history of Vamale as known by European sources, and complemented by Kanak oral sources, the present situation is described below, first in terms of human geography.

2.5 Modern context

This section describes the situation of Vamale today. Below are brief descriptions of the villages in which most speakers live (Nouméa, the capital, is exempt), some notes on society that may help understand what cultural factors contribute to its endangerment, and a list of the languages found in the direct vicinity of Vamale. The latter is important in the context of the name of this work's subject, and whether it is a dialect or not.

2.5.1 Villages

Vamale is spoken in several villages in the communes of Touho and Hienghène along the east coast of northern New Caledonia, in some villages in the mountains, and perhaps close to the west coast (Baco, Koné). The community is thus relatively widespread, which has given rise to a number of “family idioms”. The Vamale-speaking area is large

⁹The ‘public’ being defined by the presence of settlers.

¹⁰Note that Leendhardt counted only around 50 speakers in the 1940s, but schooling prevented a subsequent language transmission, and therefore a quicker recovery.

¹¹The *Code de l'Indigénat* specifying this was abolished in 1946, but this was not noticeably implemented until 1952.

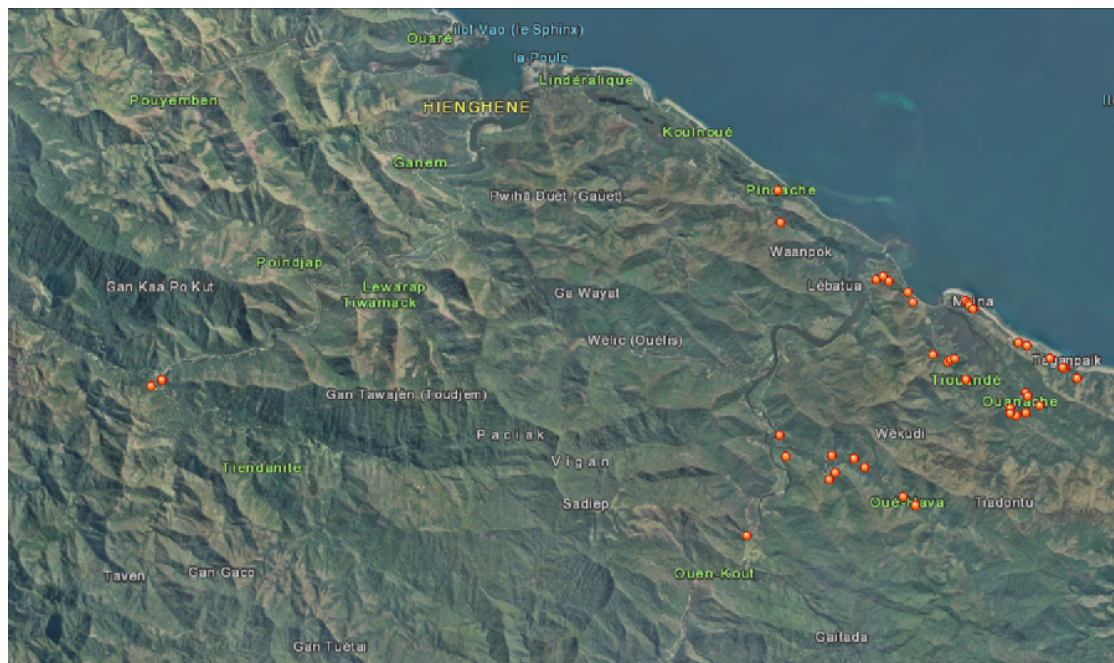


FIGURE 2.13: Map of speaker households. Approximate map of speaker households on the east coast (Government of New Caledonia, 22.11.2017), dots are my own, thanks to Florian Matter.

but sparsely populated, and concentrates on four villages. This work will usually prefer the word “village” to “tribe”, which would be the translation of the official French term *tribu*, because the Vamale word used for village, *xhoogo*, means ‘home’ and has no connotation of a tightly-knit group of clans (especially since the 1917 war), and because it ultimately derives from a colonial vocabulary trying to establish a fundamental difference between Kanaks and settlers. This section will thus describe the villages in which Vamale is spoken, along with some geographical, economic and sociological information.

2.5.1.1 Téganpaïk

⟨Téganpaïk⟩, or in Pije [tʰɛŋgane 'pa:ik] ‘split stone’, after a placename close to the cemetery, is a village of about 200 inhabitants. A Shell gas station, a community center and a church are the only public buildings; the closest school is in Cèmuhî-speaking Touho, though many children go even further to Paicî-speaking Poindimié for secondary education. Téganpaïk is the biggest Vamale-speaking village, and the research project was based there. Traditionally Pije, many families are bilingual, and old marriage alliances have brought women speaking other languages as well. In most families, Kanak language transmission stopped around 1990. The village is a string of houses along the national road RN1 and squeezed between steep mountains and the

sea (there are rarely more than 100 metres between them). While the pre-contact population of the fertile Tipije (Pij. *ti pije* ‘estuary snare’, the Pije name for the river itself is *le pije* ‘in snare’), and Tiwaka valleys, was likely large, this coastal strip harbors no fields and few fruit trees, and may not have been as densely populated before the arrival of Vamale speakers. Almost beachless, and facing sharp, mostly dead coral at low tide, Téganpaïk does not attract many tourists, and with a chiefly ban on kava bars,¹² the only points of interest to travelers are the Shell gas station and a picnic area near the sea. Touho has a diving school and boats one can rent, whereas the only bigger boat the village had, the *Dongan*, was lifted and crashed on the other side of the road by cyclone Betty in 1995. This disbanded the fishing cooperative that had begun between villagers, and the boat’s low-tide haven, a pool created by coral blocks, is now used for swimming and as a sardine reproduction sanctuary. Cyclones are becoming stronger almost every year, and with warmer, more acidic waters, the coral barriers protecting Grande Terre against the occasional tsunamis and other high waves are deteriorating. Villagers have begun planting mangrove trees to attract fish and crabs, but also as a protection against coastal erosion and waves. The author did not meet anybody unworried about climate change.

Téganpaïk is a tightly-knit community. Its children play together, the men go hunting on horseback and in pickup trucks and fish on bamboo rafts and in motor-boats. The protestant church is an important center to the community, and one of the main domains of Vamale. Téganpaïk’s clan council also administrates Wanaa (see 2.5.1.2) as well as the former leper colony Mahena/Maïna, which is composed of few houses and can be considered a suburb of Téganpaïk.

2.5.1.2 Wanaa

⟨Ouanache⟩ [wã'nã:]¹³ has only 11 houses, but fluent child speakers of Vamale, and many fields belonging to Téganpaïk inhabitants. Wanaa was Pije-speaking before 1917, but is now one of the biggest speaker-centers of Vamale. Contrary to Téganpaïk, it is an official tribe, though its chief Luc Oué resides in the former village. A war location in 1917, it welcomed some of the inland refugees. The village concentrates in two road loops close to the neighboring villages Téganpaïk and Tiouandé, but the tribal grounds stretch south-east following a valley shown in Figure 2.15 until a mountain pass leads to Poyes (see Section 2.4). Considering that some of its uninhabited mountain flanks

¹²The next village to the East, ⟨Kongouma⟩ (Cèm. /ko-goo-mwa/ ‘on the wall’), sports three *nakamals* and kava drinkers come from Hienghène and Touho to lift *sels*.

¹³According to inhabitants, possibly from Pije *hwada* ‘planting spot’ (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 106) or Vamale (e-)wanaa ‘dispute’.



FIGURE 2.14: Mr. Christophe Pei fishing for sardines in Téganpaïk

show remains of taro terraces, and that planted araucaria trees can be seen much further upstream, the settling of youths in the wild backyard of the village, Tanaka, is more a reclaiming of former living grounds than a human invasion.

2.5.1.3 Tiouandé

⟨Tiouandé⟩ (Pije [tʰeˈxːaːnde] ‘rock garden’) borders the Tipije river on its northernmost end, the sea on the northeastern side, steep mountains and rock formations like “Napoleon’s hat” (Vam. *vaci that* ‘wind’s nucleus’) on the west (shown on the left in Figure 2.16), and the hill Kapohiyoak (“children-making place”) which separates it from Téganpaïk. Tiouandé is the village with the most Pije speakers in the region, and is in close and active contact with Téganpaïk. Its chieftaincy is held by the Kalène clan, though the Bwiya have held it until the current chief took over.

2.5.1.4 We Hava

⟨Oué Hava⟩, Vam. [ˈwe hava] ‘*Broussonetia papyrifera*¹⁴ creek’, built along a tributary of the Tipije river, is a group of settlements, about four or five, each consisting of several huts and small houses. An exception makes a classic colonial building, white and facing the river, which is now inhabited by We Hava’s former chief Kaina Fouan. The chieftaincy has returned to the traditional owners, the ⟨Tchéou⟩ /ceu/ clan. The long road to *Cake-O* ‘scoop, bail out-bamboo’, We Hava’s last dwelling and home of the oldest Vamale speaker Philippe Gohupe (the author of the Tipije text in Appendix B), is

¹⁴Used for its bark to make *tapa* cloth.



FIGURE 2.15: The Kacabwec valley leading to Wanaa. Only part of it is inhabited now.



FIGURE 2.16: The Tiouandé estuary



FIGURE 2.17: The We Hava river

now bordered by bamboo groves and forest in various states¹⁵, but all along the road, traces of abandoned villages can be seen on both sides of the river. We Hava and the tribe on the other side, Tipije, are what remains of ca. 14 settlements in the valley.

2.5.1.5 Tiendanite

⟨Tiendanite⟩, in Vamale [ˈseːˈɲaɲit], the home village of the politician Jean-Marie Tjibaou, is buried in misty hills up-stream of a Tipije tributary. It mostly houses eastern Nemi and Mountain Pije speakers, but also three households of Vamale Usa speakers, who are in irregular contact with coastal speakers. Usa is a Voh-Koné variety formerly spoken in a valley tributary to Pamale, and has a half-dozen speakers under 40 years of age. Children run around speaking Pije. Vamale speakers arrived there after the war (Couhia and Maepas 2008, 62), though their earlier presence is likely.

Having provided a brief overview over the places in which Vamale is spoken, the chapter now introduces some important societal points.

2.5.2 Cultural notes

Politically, traditional Kanak society is organized in family units headed by the father. The next bigger unit is the clan, to which all persons sharing a particular totem, or

¹⁵Burning brush is a problem for local forestry. While careful burns were part of the slash-and-burn agricultural model, unsupervised fires are a common cause nowadays for wildfires, and are universally frowned upon and creates problems for wildlife, water table, and of course botany. The straw needed for traditional thatching is especially vulnerable.

a common ancestor, belong. This is usually headed by the eldest male. Local clan branches send an elder (not necessarily the oldest member) to a clan council which makes the decisions concerning a community. The chief (or “small chief”) is either appointed or inherits his position, and represents the community in spiritual matters¹⁶, but also to the great chief, whose authority stretches over several villages, and in some cases even covers whole islands (e.g. Isle of Pines / Kunyíé). The decisions by chiefs are supposed to be decisions made in consensus of all clan elders. The respect held towards elders is a strong institution and, coupled with a reluctance to ask questions¹⁷ has made it difficult for heritage speakers to learn the language later in life. Honor and shame remain powerful control mechanisms in Kanak society. Youths who make a mistake while talking will often be reprimanded, which discourages them even more from talking.

The traditional social hierarchy is *de iure* still salient, as the customary authorities have the backing and acceptance of the State (Demmer 2003, 2). However, the chiefs’ authority is not undisputed. This likely has different reasons, including the current chiefs’ ancestors being installed by colonial forces (Demmer 2003, 3), which results in a hereditary system more rigid than what is described by Guiart for pre-colonial societies (Guiart 1954, 5,8).

Ceremonies occupy a central part of speakers’ lives. They frame historical commemorations, some sporting events, and most cultural gatherings. All weddings, birth celebrations and funerals still follow traditional patterns, with ceremonies at every step. In all cases, the custodians of the land will receive symbolic gifts from the guests, and speeches in the native language will be held (comprehension is not required). This is one of the domains in which Vamale is not likely to be replaced by French so long as there are still fluent speakers.

Exogamous, virilocal marriage practices mean that in every traditional couple, the man is a local and the woman has moved from outside onto the land he inherited from his father (Salomon 2000, 321), although uxorilocal movements were attested in the late 19th century (Guiart 1992, 89). This also means that every traditional couple is at least bilingual. However, since everyone in younger couples speaks French, many do not learn their spouse’s language, choosing to communicate in French instead. This is one of the reasons for the decline in speaker numbers.

¹⁶Part of this position is often held by the chief’s younger brother, or the head of a lower branch of the chiefly clan. While the latter will lead the New Yam ceremony and perform incantations over the steam of the new year’s first pot of yam (*ywa bwa jadoon*), a ceremony which still happens today, the latter is not usually held responsible for changes in the weather or a failing harvest anymore, due to missionary influences.

¹⁷This has two reasons: it could embarrass the elder in case they do not know the answer, but more importantly, information is a wealth that is volunteered rather than asked for. Furthermore, refusing an offer or query is tricky for all involved.

Since every adult is supposed to raise offspring, adoptions are a common way of ensuring every household contributes to the perpetuation of the clan. Traditionally, one child goes back to the mother's family, to replace her and take care of the elders. Couples who struggle to have children may also ask for a child, and receive it soon after it is weaned. Families with too many children may give some away as well. In many cases, the children grow up close to their biological family and spend much time with their blood kin. As no terminological, or indeed salient cultural difference, is made between siblings and cousins, all members of the same "generation" (formerly: the group that is initiated together, *yidan*) descend from the same male ancestor and grow up together. The importance of parent-child relationships is thus somewhat lessened, and adoption less of a traumatic event than a western mind might think.

2.5.3 The place of language in Kanak culture

Kanak identity is tied to language Lynch, Ross, and Crowley (2002, 29) and land (Bensa and Goromido 1997, 91). Similarly, an individual's paternal language is linked to their land tenure (Sallabank 2015, 40). The emphasis in the literature is often on the clan name, inherited from the father, and the accompanying land rights. This is also the case in everyday discourse. The language used changes according to need (see Section 2.5.4.1), and people moving to a new place will usually adopt the local language. While this is considered polite, there is also a deeper function: strangers and newcomers have reduced speaking rights at the council and a lower social status. In modern society, with a written land tenure records and weakened land master clans, being a newcomer also often means having no land. However, traditionally, especially in the post-1774 period, geographical mobility often went hand-in-hand with a change of name to get land rights (Bensa and Goromido 1997, 92). Identity is a complex matter nowadays. *Métissage*, 'racial' mixture with descendants of Kabyls, Europeans, Polynesians, but also from other Kanak nations, is a factor as much as traditional values such as where one plants their yam or to which clans one is related. In an increasingly complex society, being *juu* 'real' is also negotiated through speaking the language. Nowadays, young people (who often do not speak their heritage language) refer to themselves via the name of their village or their community in graffiti, tattoos, on Facebook etc. Older people will relate through clan ties, but especially Pije and Vamale are so small, due to a shared history, that speaking them unites people.

2.5.4 Linguistic context

This section aims to describe how Vamale relates to other languages surrounding it. Historically, it is likely that the Voh-Koné languages spread eastwards into the mountains, which would suggest that Vamale/Hmwaeke is most closely related to Hmwaeke proper, then Hmwaveke, maybe Waamwang, and finally Haveke, Haeke, and Bwattoo.

People formerly would cross the mountains on foot- and horse trails, leading to Pije, Fwâi, and Cèmuhi speaking areas, but more importantly other Voh-Koné speaking areas: Tiéta (Haveke), Temala (Hmwaveke), and some isolated houses in the middle, as well as diasporically in Bopope and Atéou. Nowadays, work in the nickel mines and the cargo ports, coupled with a lack of legal restrictions to buy cars without a driver's license, have afforded most families with the means of traveling long distances to visit relatives and maintain social ties. This, however, has also changed the languages with which Vamale speakers are in contact. Nowadays, cars dominate mobility and define it. Roads lead to Hienghène and Touho, so Fwâi and Cèmuhi have gained influence. Crossing the mountains leads through Cèmuhi and Paicî areas, and going to Tiéta and Temala takes up to 4 hours. The nearest road connecting the coasts leaves the shore for the mountains at Touho, 30 km from the southernmost Vamale community, Téganpaik. Tiéta,¹⁸ where Vamale's closest linguistic neighbor Hmwaveke is spoken, can only be reached via Voh (a journey of 3 hours minimum by car). As Rivierre notes, this has led to a differentiation of the former language Hmwaeke into Fa Tiéta (Hmwaeke mixed with Hmwaveke) and Vamale (influenced by Pije, Fwâi, and Cèmuhi) (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 14). Furthermore, traveling used to imply staying somewhere for a while, since it was impractical to walk for days only to stay for a short while. This tradition of longer stays used to cause intensive language contact, and is now in decline. While there are still people alive who used to travel regularly to the other side, and mixed marriages connecting the two coasts are not rare, there is a real break between the speech communities. The two coastal villages Téganpaik and Tiouandé are right on the national main road which runs along most of the east coast, while the others, We Hava and Tiendanite, are between 20 and 45 minutes by car from this main axis. The latter experience less contact, and less attrition.

Vamale has been in contact with other, not readily intelligible, languages for centuries. It is surrounded by North Northern Caledonian languages of the Hienghène cluster, and Central Northern Cèmuhi, see Figure 2.18. While this is also the case for Haeke and Bwattoo (Haake), which mostly interact with Paicî, some Cèmuhi, and Pwaamei in the north, only Vamale is surrounded from all sides by non-Voh-Koné languages. Vamale has adopted the subject marker *e*= '1SG', as well as phonological traits

¹⁸Ceta/Caa-ta 'setting down the foot to go up, doorsill'

the description project, if they do not want somebody to understand, etc. This includes Usa, the variety spoken in Tiendanite. Speakers are able to adapt to coastal varieties, weave in Pije words, etc. In 2017, the author was present at the council of clans in Tiouandé, a monthly public meeting where all local affairs are discussed. We were there to give an update on the work. A conversation about a local criminal was done almost entirely in Pije, before the council switched back to Vamale. This was likely due to privacy reasons, as they knew that the author grasped some Vamale but no Pije. The choice of language among most middle age adults is functional and relatively free. There is thus probably no native speaker in the area who is not fluent or at least somewhat competent in another Kanak language. Male Cèmuḥî speakers are an exception and usually only speak this one Kanak language; due to exogamy, many women come from another language area.

2.5.4.2 Neighboring languages

Vamale speakers have daily contact with other languages, most of which would not be readily intelligible. Pije is spoken in every Vamale-speaking village, and Cèmuḥî by neighboring villages, as well as by local political authorities. Haeke, a Voh-Koné language, will also be discussed in some more detail below, not for its geographic proximity, but because the increased mobility of speakers has intensified contact with it.

Pije

Pije (ISO 639-3 piz) is spoken in the same villages as Vamale. There is a coastal variety with about 70 speakers left; the Tipije varieties having all but disappeared due to the war. A mountain variety spoken in Tiendanite is relatively vital; it is the majority language there and practiced by many children (whereas Usa's youngest speaker is in her 20s). Pije is the most spoken indigenous second language of Vamale speakers. During elicitation sessions, Pije words were often given before being corrected. One reason for Pije's dominance in the area we are focusing on is indigeneity: Pije is the land-owners' language here, the coast between Téganpaik and Pedaa (Pindache) used to be in Pije-speaking hands, and a migration of Vamale speakers led to a complexification of the sociolinguistic situation. With the Vamale river flowing into the Tipije, language contact was always a fact of life in the upper valleys, but this contact has changed and intensified after the war. This also means that Pije is a language of prestige, the "original" language, and many families reported a paternal (land-owning), Pije-speaking bloodline coupled to a maternal, Vamale-speaking one. Many residents were doubtful of the legitimacy of the project, as it should be Pije, more endangered and more autochthonous as it is, that should have been documented before Vamale.

Fwâi

Fwâi (ISO 639-3 fwa) is the language of Hye-hen (Hienghène, ‘cry-walk’), the administrative center north of the Tipije river, and the school town of We Hava. The hospital, the market, an active cultural scene, and a bar, all attract residents of the three villages, and since the main road connecting Hienghène to the south runs through Tiouandé and Teganpaik, language contact is extensive. The main lexical influence seems to be swearwords, and the languages are not mutually intelligible.

Cèmuhi

Cèmuhi or Camuki (ISO 639-3 cam) is a tonal language with 3 register tones. It is spoken in the villages west of Téganpaik up to Kokingone, and is the language of Great Chief Bouillant/Bwiyâ as well as most villages in the Great Chief’s domain (to which most Vamale speakers belong). It is used for official purposes by the Great Chief’s *porte-parole* ‘heralds’, and can thus be considered a regular contact language for Vamale, but is not intelligible with the latter and functional communication occurs in French. With around 3,300 speakers, it is one of the biggest languages in the area.

Vamale would have been surrounded by Cèmuhi speakers for some time before being moved to the coast. The villages Netchaot (Paicî / Cèmuhi) and Bopope (Cèmuhi), as well as the warring factions in the 1903 conflict Touho and Poyes, all spoke Cèmuhi. There was, however, a relatively stable and cohesive dialect chain of Voh-Koné languages from the west coast to Pamale, which suggests that for a while, contact happened eye-to-eye.

Haeke

Haeke (ISO 639-3 aek) speakers, especially of the clans Wabealo and Cidopwaan, are tied through marriage to Vamale speakers, and according to Guiart, the mentioned clans claim to descend from the Paicî Naoutchoue/Naaucuwè lineage (Guiart 1992, 92), with whom the Pei clan (important in Téganpaik) is closely tied. Speakers of Vamale, thanks to cars, family ties (see the map Figure 2.12) and frequent festivities, are now in more regular contact with other Voh-Koné varieties, especially Bwato and Haeke. However, the speakers the author spoke to were very aware of the differences between different speech practices and desirous to keep them distinct. Haeke is closer to Bwato and features typical Western Voh-Koné traits such as interdental fricatives, but as a funeral ceremony speech held in Haeke was understood by most Vamale speakers, some mutual intelligibility may be postulated. Haeke is highly endangered as well, and most contact happens in French.

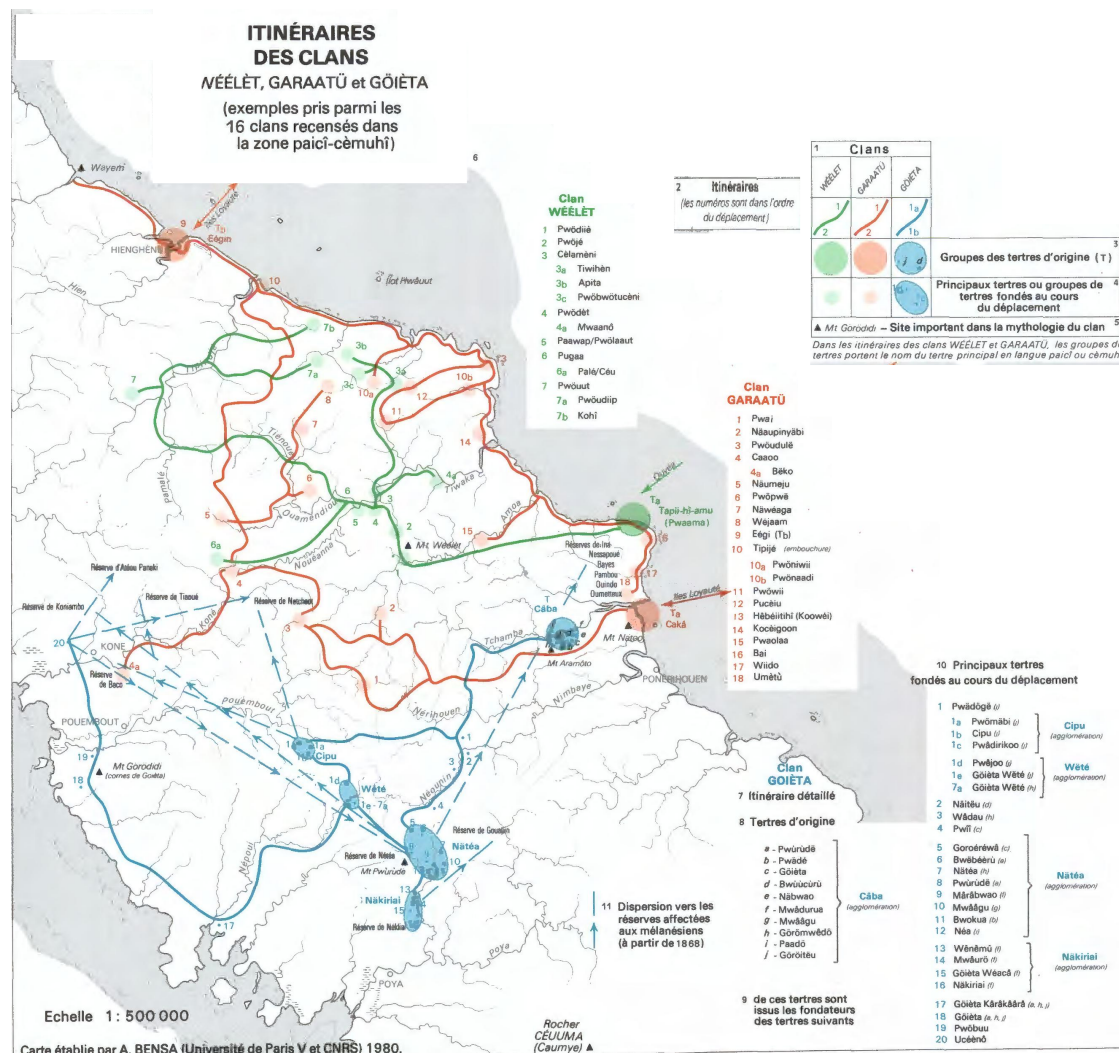


FIGURE 2.19: Bensa's 1980 map showing some clans' migrations in the Touho-Hienghène area (Guiart 1981, 71)

2.6 Naming

The language described in this thesis has been called 'Moaëke (Leenhardt 1946), *Hmwaeke* (especially in Anglophonic literature), or *Vamale*. A language called *Hmwaeke*, or *Fa Tieta*, is spoken in *Tiéta*, and is a very close relative of *Vamale*. In the Kanak conception, languages are defined via the area they are spoken in (Sallabank 2015, 40). Although some broader terms are used, such as *thiie* 'Cèmuhi', *vije* 'Pije', or *cî/thî* 'Paici', one's own language is often just called *juu fati* 'real/indigenous language', or *fati-je* 'our language'. Dialectal differences within one's own language are described as *li vataan geen fati* 'the different voices/accents of language', or simply as 'the language of X'. As mentioned in Section 2.5.4.2, maintaining a dialect's individuality is important to speakers. Whether the idea that there are "true, correct" languages is new or not, distinctions are nowadays made between the "real" *Vamale* and the *Vamale* of, say, *Usa*, or *Tiéta*. This has never been mentioned in a derogatory way, as each family is understood to have its own influences and language histories. The mutually intelligible variety spoken in *Tiendanite* by descendants of refugees from *Usa* will thus be called *Vamale Usa*, as they call themselves *Vamale* speakers. Speakers of western *Voh-Koné* varieties do not use the term *Vamale*, as it is tied to the specific valley of origin. Speakers of other languages often use one term for all the *Voh-Koné* varieties, calling them e.g. "Vamale of the other coast". The names *Haake*, *Haeke*, *Haveeke*, *Hmwaveeke*, *Hmwaeke* are all derived from the greeting "How [are you]?" and were given for the sake of naming. However, though the names suggest only slight dialectal differences, *Haeke* is not easily understood by *Vamale* speakers, nor do the respective speakers consider themselves to speak the same language (albeit acknowledging their similarities). Each community having their own speech is especially important to people who were treated differently by history.

Naming the language after its place and not a distinctive feature that ties it to the dialect cluster is closer to peoples' own conceptions, namely that they are defined by their geographic origins and share more with the east coast than the west coast. *Vamale* speakers do not consider themselves to form a cultural unit with other speakers of *Voh-Koné* languages, preferring to identify with their three home villages, their commune *Touho*, and in general the east coast of the northern province. Since this is not a region that has a name useable for our purposes, the historical origin, *Pamale* ~ *Vamale*, used by the speakers, seems appropriate. Apart from differences in phonology, lexicon, syntax, society and linguistic context, there is also a political reason to call this language *Vamale* instead of *Hmwaeke*. If *Vamale* is ever to be taught at school in *Touho*, it must be recognised as a language separate from *Haeke*, which is already an official language of schooling in the cultural *aire* *Paici-Camuki*. Crucially, *Haeke* is

only taught in the Koné area. The separate status of Vamale, and its emplacement on the east coast, was recognized by the cultural bureau in Pwărăiriwâ (Ponérihouen) in 2019. Finally, since Vamale is called Vamale and not Hmwaeke by its speakers and their neighbors, this thesis will keep to their own usage.

Voh-Koné is a cluster of varieties that are called dialects. This means that their speakers are counted as a unit, and amount, together, to over 1,000 people, which makes them seem a robust language group. However, most of these varieties, except Haveke, have few young speakers and are thus endangered. Labelling them “dialects” and not “languages” has hindered efforts to protect them, as the former concept enjoys less prestige than the latter. While many people acknowledge that Cèmuhî, and Paicî, are languages with a grammar and a literary tradition, the author was told by Kanaks and Europeans alike that Vamale was a waste of time, as it had no “grammar”. Without going into more detail, this book will usually refer to Vamale as a language, or a variety, but avoid the word “dialect”. It will treat Usa similarly, because mutual intelligibility is not sufficiently salient grounds for its speakers to group them together.

2.7 Consultants

Working on Vamale meant finding speakers willing to work with the researcher for free (except for transcriptions), in order to perpetuate the local custom initiated by French researchers. In exchange, consultants and speakers were welcome to discuss the goals of the project and change them. The project was assigned a team of three motivated representatives of the most powerful local clans. Apart from the crucial fact that they had the time and the motivation to do it, they each had a different array of languages and social relations, which was very useful. From this nucleus grew a loose team of speakers joining in. The team members had lives and priorities of their own, and the group’s makeup changed several time over the three stays.

This section says a few words about the four main consultants. My deepest thanks belong to all of them. Other important people were Mr. Baptiste Ucian who kick-started the lexicon and most of the first months’ elicitations, Mrs. Elise Kalène who gave a lot of time to elucidate phonemes, and the entire population of the villages who were happy to share their views on the world, answer spontaneous questions, and always sympathetically asked how the work was going.



FIGURE 2.20: Mr. Jacob Oué and the author

2.7.1 André Nigai Kalène

Mr. Kalène is the eldest brother of Tiouandé's chieftain and grew up bilingual in Pije and Vamale. Extremely knowledgeable in traditions and a skillful boat- and house-builder, he was the most patient and reliable consultant and, in the beginning, walked an hour every day to our meetings. He has been politically invested in protecting indigenous rights his entire life. His extensive family network helped us tremendously.

2.7.2 Christophe Keela Pei

Mr. Pei is the herald of the powerful Pei clan, which housed and fed the author for ten months. Except for French, Mr. Pei is one of the rare monolingual speakers of Vamale, which helped decide whether a word was Vamale or a loan. Mr. Pei is a master fisherman and hunter. We often gathered at his house during the first research period.

2.7.3 Jacob Keela Ganap Oué

Mr. Oué is the eldest man in the land-owning clan of Wanaa and knows much about traditions, land ownership, and local history. A passionate gardener and ecologist, Mr. Oué spent time with Mr. Kalène rehabilitating mangroves, and knows much about plants and animals. We spent most of our elicitation sessions at his house and he hosted the author for the last month. Mr. Oué speaks Vamale, Pije, and Fwâi, as well as excellent French.

2.7.4 Jean-Philippe Emyl Téin Oué

Mr. Oué was the only one in the group who was the author's age, and we spent a lot of time together in his garden, at his house, in his woods, and driving around. A speaker of Vamale, and able to understand Pije and Fwâi, he was the consultant most interested in syntax, morphology, and semantics, and spent many patient hours working on transcriptions, subtle differences between morphemes, and phonological questions.

The four men mentioned here guided the work through unspoken customs and laws, taught the author Vamale to the extent he grasped it, and poured their time and hearts into the project. Without their help, most speakers would not have spoken to the author, nor would he have known where to go, and very little would have seen the light of day. *Holeke thuan nyakoovwe ka gavwe i vaaya!*

2.8 Methods

This section gives an overview of the methods the author and the work group used to gather the data discussed in the book.

While the author hopes that this will not be the last work done on the language, this work is an attempt at the most comprehensive description possible. Since this may well be the last record of the language, and in any case the only one of Vamale as spoken in this period, the usability of the data is crucial. The work group recorded as much as possible, with members of every family, spanning every generation but the youngest, and both genders (a focus on males was hard to avoid). We made videos of ceremonies, everyday activities, in Vamale as well as in other languages, and still missed hunts, funerals, and a women's craft week. The work group usually met three times a week and spent the entire day together. The days in-between were spent transcribing and annotating, as well as preparing the next session. The elicitation sessions were usually structured in the following way: once the date, speaker, and location had been recorded, consent was established, and an overview of the topics of the day was given, in case a consultant wanted to avoid a certain topic. While the interviews led with members of the local clans were conducted in Vamale as much as possible to avoid priming, the elicitation sessions with the work group most often featured questions and discussions in French, and answers in Vamale. Coffee, tobacco and food were provided by the researcher, as well as customary gifts when meeting a consultant for the first time.

A first field trip was undertaken in 2016, chiefly to ask for permission and support in the speaker area and in the relevant organizations: the Academy of Kanak Languages, the University of Nouméa, and the local customary authorities. This took two

weeks, and first lexicographical data were gathered. The research in 2017 lasted a little over 5 months, between June and December, the dry season. The first major stay was dedicated to gathering data from every speaker clan, and to do so in the form of stories and life recollections, as this was important to legitimize the project in the eyes of the speaker communities. The interviews were usually public, and several people would sit, listen, and occasionally chime in. We often mixed grammatical elicitation with text production, i.e. the first part would ask the consultants to check prepared sentences in Vamale or translate French ones, and the second part would invite them to speak about what they wanted. The latter part often revolved around the societal changes that occurred in their lifetimes, but some also commented on climate change, or spoke of oral history. Most of these interviews were filmed as well, depending on the consent given (however, the camera battery gave out more than once in the first year). We also gathered botanical and zoological data and filmed people gardening and fishing, as well as roofing. Whenever possible, the researcher participated in the activities he documented. The second field trip in 2018, around 4 months long, shifted the focus more onto elicitation sessions, as the Bwato, Nêlêmwa, and Cèmuhî grammars were used as reference points to identify gaps in the work group's description of Vamale. A third trip in 2019 focused on filling gaps, handing over data to the respective speakers, and transcribing as much as possible of the data gathered in the previous years. Data from transcribed data incorporated into FLEx carries references in the format L(L)N:NN(N), e.g. KL:126, where the first part designates the text in the FLEx database, and the second the line number. Other data either shows the title of the audio recording and the time signature of the utterance, or the date and page of the notebook entry. Some data was overheard, or so frequently used that no reference was given.

As explained in other sections (Section 2.4.3, Section 2.5.4.1), there are few villages in the area that speak a single language, and Vamale is spoken exclusively in multilingual environments. French dominates in most places, but even where most people communicate via Oceanic languages, Vamale is almost never the majority language. This complex sociolinguistic situation is one reason for the relatively long period spent in the field, as every clan idiolect was recorded. The recordings are all marked for the involved speakers and place, leaving material for future research on language variation. A simple dictionary was built in the field using Leenhardt's 1946 wordlist and existing dictionaries of other languages as prompts, as well as the recorded data. Several elicitation sessions were dedicated to checking this data and illustrating it with example sentences, and elders were visited explicitly to check old words. All materials are open-access and available online via the Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR), [collection 0470](#). The recorded data is also stored in the Archive of the Northern Province

in Hienghène, as well as on SD cards left with the respective speakers.

The project used the following equipment:

- Sennheiser headphones HD201, with a splitter to listen to recordings in groups
- Røde NTG-2 super-cardioid “shotgun” microphone (a dead cat is appropriate on the coast due to the winds), and a Sennheiser EW122 lavalier microphone.
- a Canon XA30 camera, which can record audio in .wav format, has a powerful visual zoom, but a weak battery, bring at least one backup
- A Zoom H6 recorder

Because of the amount of data recorded, time in the field did not allow for a complete transcription of the recordings. In order to alleviate the task, the author attempted to hire and train two locals to help him transcribe. This did not succeed as people were not used to sitting for hours, nor to working with computers. The most useful technique was to ask people to listen to the recording and repeat it clearly word for word for him to write down. This was also effective for the recordings of elders who were difficult to understand.

2.9 Notes on fieldwork in Vamale country

This work is a linguistic contribution, but some anthropological information is relevant for the reader to understand the cultural context in which the language is embedded, and some hints for future researchers may be useful. The northern east coast of New Caledonia is over 90% ethnically Kanak, and everyday life is very much defined by this fact. Although the temperature is relatively stable between 23°C and 28°C, humidity and sudden, unpredictable (even more so with climate change) rain can be dangerous for electronic equipment. The project used waterproof bags and silica gel packs to protect the equipment from humidity, and Lavaliers and hyper-directional microphones to mitigate the noise of the rain. Many roads become difficult when it rains, and most houses are tin-roofed, (making recordings inside difficult due to echoes and rain/sticks falling on the roof). Cars driving by on the main road were an almost unavoidable problem.

When it rains, it does so violently, and sometimes for days on end, with brief interludes. Tap water goes murky, then brown, and finally stops working, so water-purifying pills are useful. Electricity may stop working if trees fall on the line. Because of the powerful weather, the obligation to attend ceremonies (especially unforeseeable funerals), the difficulty of planning an appointment etc, it is advisable to carry

recording equipment at all times and record whenever possible, and to understand that plans can change at short notice. Life moves slowly, and people prefer to finish a thing properly to keeping an appointment exactly. It may be frustrating to consultants to interrupt an interview, so keep the days' planning flexible instead of 'making the most of it' and seeing three consultants in one day.

The author rented a small house from his first contact and stayed there for most of his time in the area. With the exception of old bachelors and widowers, the researcher was the only person in the village who had a house to themselves, slept alone in a room, and could retire to work whenever needed. On the other hand, this also alienated the author from the others and prolonged the time it took him to integrate the community. It took approximately six weeks for the shyness to subside on both sides. The author still recommends individual housing, if at all possible. Participating in as many activities as possible helps bridge the gap between the community and the stranger. Be aware of your weight on a family, contribute in food and money so as to alleviate the burden you represent. Spend free, disinterested time with your consultants and family, as purely professional relationships hardly exist in a tribal setting.

People usually keep a spartanic interior, with little furniture except for beds, TVs, and an occasional table. Mostly, meals take place outside, where the kitchen tends to be located. In general, most people have little to no disposable income. Most families rely on the employment of a family member, as well as their own gardens for subsistence. Customary ceremonies are a major part of life, and exchanging produce, clothing, and money in this frame has a function of leveling inequalities: some people can only contribute bananas or fruit bats, and leave a ceremony with clothing, money and sugar.

Pedagogy traditionally consists of teaching-by-showing, or rather learning-by-paying-attention, which is mirrored in a reluctance to explain more than a small aspect at a time, and speaking quietly. Interrupting somebody is rude, and seniority plays a major role in turn-taking. Patience is paramount; many people willingly talk if the proper introductions were made and they are not rushed by questions.

The adoptions, dispersals of clans, feuds between different people, confessional differences, language diversity, and stark contrasts in the access to public transportation (and stable roads) make the social web extremely complex. Being instrumentalized is unavoidable and rarely detrimental to the project. This complex web also means that one is quickly known, word-of-mouth is fast and effective, and interested parties will often join a workshop or an activity by themselves. There is widespread distrust of outsiders, but this usually subsides after a conversation or two. Though the author never met any negative views against his person, his presence as a European scholar



FIGURE 2.21: Mr. Pei and Mr. Kalène on the path to Wanaa

was seen critically by some, and even bemoaned by Mr. Philippe Gohoupe. It helps to be accompanied by a local when visiting people for interviews.

ma gavwe xaleke, ka caihnan. ‘May you see, and know.’

Chapter 3

Phonology

There are 58 phonemes; 20 phonemic vowels (5 qualities, length and nasality are contrastive) and 38 consonants. The number of consonant phonemes, and vowel phonemes respectively, puts the phoneme inventory of Vamale in the top 10% on Phoible (ca. 3000 compared inventories) (Moran and McCloy 2019), and in the second-largest group of the sample studied by Maddieson et. al in *WALS Online*, which assigns it a high consonant-to-vowel quality ratio.¹ The emphasis on consonants is typical of the Northern and Far Northern languages, and was not diminished by the proximity of consonant-poorer Cèmuhi, nor to have been substantially enriched by Pije, which has e.g. /ɕ/.

Transcription

Following the transcription system established by Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, this work will use ⟨h⟩ after plosives to mark aspiration (regardless of its phonemic status), ⟨h⟩ before nasals and liquids to mark voicelessness, and the circumflex diacritic to mark nasal quality in vowels. All voiced plosives are typically pre-nasalized: /^mb/, /ⁿd/, /ⁿj/, /^ɲg/. This is systematic and, following the local linguistic tradition, will not be represented. Vowels are nasalized after nasals, and often also before them (this includes the pre-nasal elements in voiced plosives /^mb/ etc., to an extent). There is also interplay with aspirated plosives for historical reasons, see Section 3.1.5. Only phonemically nasal vowels will be represented as nasal, with the circumflex diacritic ⟨^⟩ used in all Northern transcription systems.

(3.1) a. [wĩːn je:]

wĩː-n yee
strength-NSPEC.POSS tree
‘strength of a tree’

b. [wĩːn je:]

wii-n yee
field-NSPEC.POSS tree
‘orchard’

¹Note that this counts vowel qualities but not contrastive quantity, hence 38 consonants / 5 vowels yielding a ratio of 7.6.

TABLE 3.1: Transliteration system used in this thesis

⟨x⟩	/ɣ/	⟨hn⟩	/n̥/
⟨xh⟩	/x/	⟨hny⟩	/ɲ/
⟨th⟩	/tʰ/	⟨hl⟩	/l̥/
⟨j⟩	/ɲj/	⟨b⟩	/ᵐb/
⟨ii⟩	/i:/	⟨î⟩	/ĩ/

True minimal pairs between oral and phonemic nasal vowels are rare, while contexts in which phonemically oral vowels are nasalized, abound. The degree of nasality depends on the speaker, so the phonetic difference depicted in ex. (1) is not a representative or reliable criterion to identify phonemically nasal vowels, though the latter tend to be more strongly nasal than nasalized ones. Since phonemic status is not always clearly determined, circumflex diacritics will also mark nasal vowels where the quality is not phonologically conditioned, as for ⟨phwê⟩ /p^{hw}ɛ̃/ ‘moon’ (see Section 3.1.5 and Section 3.2.4.1).

Vamale speakers frequently code-switch to French. Established loanwords such as *watuut* ‘car’ are not written differently in this grammar from pre-colonial Vamale words, whereas *ad hoc* loans are written as they would be in French, and rendered in italics in the examples (2).

- (3.2) tha le vwa *devoirs*-le
 ASS 3PL do homework-3PL.POSS
 ‘They do their homework’

3.1 Consonants

The consonants can be classified along two axes: aspiration (aspirated vs. non-aspirated) and nasality (nasal vs. semi-nasal vs. oral). This has historical reasons, as will be shown in Section 3.1.4. While all consonants may appear syllable-initially and between vowels, a historical neutralization has reduced the set of syllable-final ones: /p,t,ʈ,k,m,n,ɲ,ŋ/, i.e. simple voiced nasals and voiceless plosives. Syllable-final /k/, /ʈ/ and /ɲ/ are much rarer than the others and begin to merge, in many cases, with /ʔ/ (e.g. /pi.uk/ ‘spark’ → /‘pi.uʔ/), /t/ (e.g. /jilowec/ ‘tree sp.’ → [ɲji.‘lo.wet]), and /n/ (e.g. /waj/ → /wan/ ‘consequence of taboo breaking’), respectively, but /k/ and /ʈ/ also often simply dropped. The deletion of final consonants is a sound change that is described by Campbell as affecting mountain Voh-Koné varieties (Campbell 1987, 25), and is furthest advanced in the coastal variety Vamale. This final consonant

TABLE 3.2: Consonants in Vamale. Non-phonemes are in brackets.

	Bilabial	Lab. Bi-labial	Labiod.	Lab. Labiod.	Alv.	Palatal	Velar	Lab. Velar	Glott.
Plosive	(p ^h) p ^{mb}	(p ^{hw}) p ^w m ^b w			t ^h t nd	(c ^h) c ^ɲ	k ^h k ^ɲ g		
Nasal	m̥ m	m̥ ^w m ^w			ɲ n (r)	j̥ j̥	(ŋ) ɲ		
Tap									
Fricative			f v	f ^w v ^w			x ɣ	x ^w	h
Approximant						j		w	
Lat.					l̥ l̥				
A.									

deletion only concerns inherited lexemes, since numerous loanwords from French and Kanak languages feature other syllable-final consonants (*bagaas* ‘luggage’, *cakes* ‘EXPL’).

Vamale consonants distinguish a voiceless series from a pre-nasalized voiced series. This is a feature retained from Proto-Oceanic, and not widespread east of New Caledonia (Ozanne-Rivierre 1992, 196-197). Examples for word-initial, word-internal, and word-final positions are shown in Table 3.3. A typical feature of Northern New Caledonian is the presence of labio-velar plosives and fricatives, and voiceless nasals and liquids. Labio-velarized consonants do not precede /u/ and /o/ for historical reasons: one element merged into the other.

3.1.1 Examples

A table listing examples in word-initial, -internal, and -final positions is given in Table 3.3. No study was done on the frequency of the phonemes, but some consonants are much rarer than others. Syllable-final /k/ has all but disappeared in a regular sound-change, and occurs only in loans from Pije and other languages: e.g. *piuk* ‘nail’² and *xhwahyuk* ‘whistle’ are originally Pije. /r/ only occurs in loans. Initial /ɲ/ is probably a loan phone from Pije, given that it only appears in one plant species name (*ngeein*), and is in free variation for *mwangin* ~ *ngangin* ‘sour’. Finally, all aspirated plosives except /t^h/ are rare.

3.1.2 Marginal phonemes

Some segments appear rarely, are not produced by all speakers, or present a distribution which hints at (former) allophony. This affects most voiceless plosives, the tap

²POc *pituqun, *piguk* ‘star’ in Nêlêmwa (Bril 2002, 21).

TABLE 3.3: Examples showing Vamale consonants in monomorphemic words.

	front		middle		back	
plosives	<i>pwan</i>	‘on’	<i>sapwen</i>	‘clothing’		
	<i>bwan</i>	‘head’	<i>siibwi</i>	‘rat’		
	<i>pa</i>	‘ALR’	<i>ape-</i>	‘trace’	<i>xakoop</i>	‘wild’
	<i>ba</i>	‘wall’	<i>abu</i>	‘1DU.EXCL’		
	<i>thake</i>	‘throw’	<i>mathila</i>	‘bird sp’		
	<i>ta</i>	‘go up’	<i>mata</i>	‘sing’	<i>fuut</i>	‘whistle’
	<i>da</i>	‘spear’	<i>udu</i>	‘drink’		
	<i>cabi</i>	‘break’	<i>kicaa</i>	‘jealous’	<i>tuuc</i>	‘take out’
	<i>jigo</i>	‘mangrove’	<i>vije</i>	‘bird snare’		
	<i>ka</i>	‘SBJ’	<i>buke</i>	‘flower’	<i>piuk</i>	‘star; spark’
	<i>gi</i>	‘adze’	<i>hagu</i>	‘snake’		
fricatives, glides, and liquids	<i>fuu</i>	‘wash’	<i>fufudo</i>	‘foam’		
	<i>vaa</i>	‘war’	<i>fava</i>	‘four’		
	<i>fwa</i>	‘hole’	<i>waafwap</i>	‘raven’		
	<i>vwa</i>	‘do, have’	<i>xhaavwa</i>	‘wait’		
	<i>siteke</i>	‘sacred’	<i>gase</i>	‘1PL.INCL’		
	<i>xhopwen</i>	‘big’	<i>haxhi</i>	‘forgive’		
	<i>xhwatin</i>	‘small’	<i>sixhwe</i>	‘imitate’		
	<i>holeeke</i>	‘thank’	<i>yahan</i>	‘leave’		
	<i>xat</i>	‘sun’				
	<i>xhat</i>	‘clitoris’	<i>bwaxhu</i>	‘hat’		
	<i>yatan</i>	‘name’	<i>vaaya</i>	‘work, move’		
	<i>wadan</i>	‘time’	<i>nyawan</i>	‘spirit’		
	<i>ra-</i>	‘REC.CONT’	<i>gere</i>	‘fat’		
	<i>lu</i>	‘3DU’	<i>pwalalu</i>	‘rainbow’		
	<i>hluupwi</i>	‘suck in’	<i>bwahli</i>	‘long’		
nasals	<i>hmwet</i>	‘tired’	<i>saahmwa</i>	‘banana’		
	<i>mwa</i>	‘house’	<i>imwi</i>	‘grab’		
	<i>hma</i>	‘arrive’	<i>cahma</i>	‘whereas’		
	<i>ma</i>	‘COM’	<i>cama</i>	‘if’	<i>xam</i>	‘mat’
	<i>hnep</i>	‘sail’	<i>ehni</i>	‘prox’		
	<i>naen</i>	‘now’	<i>jinu</i>	‘power’	<i>thiin</i>	‘close’
	<i>hnyimake</i>	‘think’	<i>bwihnyo</i>	‘clam’		
	<i>nyau</i>	‘bad’	<i>xhanyip</i>	‘dream’	<i>wany</i>	‘punishment’
	<i>ngein</i>	‘cycas seemannii’	<i>dingan</i>	‘creek’	<i>vaang</i>	‘unknown’

⟨r⟩ [r], and the voiceless velar nasal. ⟨hng⟩ /ŋ/ only appears in *jahngan* ‘length’, and is in free variation with its voiced counterpart. Considering that, (a) whether due to French influence or not, the aspiration of nasals can be almost or completely inaudible (intervocalic nasals are more audibly aspirated than initial ones), (b) neither Bwato nor Hmwaveke seem to have it in any other words, and (c) only Western Nemi (no present-day contact) has it as a phoneme, this segment is probably a loan.

The tap ⟨r⟩ [r] is a phoneme in Nemi and in Fwâi (Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 18,19). It appears only in loanwords in Pije (Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 17) and Cèmuhi (Rivierre 1980, 21), and does the same in Vamale. There is one instance where I recorded ⟨ra-⟩ as an aspectual prefix ‘to have been doing for a short while’ in unelicited speech. I was able to contrast it with ⟨xa-⟩ /ɣa/, compare examples 3a and 3b.

- (3.3) a. a=xa-soom la
 3SG=HAB-swim be.here
 ‘S/he usually swims here’
- b. a=ra-xa-soom la
 3SG=REC.CONT-HAB-swim be.here
 ‘S/he recently picked up the habit of swimming here’

⟨ra-⟩ is described for Bwato as a continuative particle, see examples 4 (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 57), whereas ⟨xha⟩ /xa/ is the habitual aspect marker (/ɣa/ in Vamale). *ra* is not used in these contexts in Vamale (where the continuative marker is *balan*). *ra* is probably a loan from the West Coast, and [r] most likely a relatively free variant of /ɣ/, except in this one prefix *ra-* ‘REC.CONT’.

- (3.4) a. ka le ra vila na ni bee-le
 CNJ 3PL persist. dance AGT DEF.PL peer-3PL.POSS
 ‘The others keep dancing’
- b. a bwaa ra Numea
 3SG IPFV persist. N.
 ‘S/he is still in Noumea’

The status of [k^h] is tricky in the sense that, while both the aspirated and the non-aspirated phone exist, the aspirated one only very rarely occurs without a nasalized vowel following it. There are no minimal pairs with [k], and the few occurrences of [k^h] before oral vowels are loanwords or due to fortis-spreading (see Section 3.1.5).

Bilabial voiceless plosives exist with aspiration and without, as well as with labiovelarization. So far, the origin of either remain to be established, as the regular sound changes reconstructed by Ozanne-Rivierre mostly led to the development of fricatives. [p^h] is attested before the oral rounded vowels [u] and [o], and before nasal vowels. The latter are a sound class intimately related to aspiration, as is discussed in Section 3.1.5. Most instances of [p^h] before a nasal vowel may be produced with a velar fricative [p^{hw}] ~ [pχ]. The glide [w] and rounded back vowels have merged in modern Vamale. There are no minimal pairs between [p^h] and [p^{hw}]. There are no perfect minimal pairs with either and /p/, though this contrast is clearer, e.g. neither /p/ nor /p^w/ precede nasal vowels. Both /p/ and [p^h] before oral back vowels are rare, the words listed constitute the entirety of the types recorded in the lexicon, many of which are found in non-Voh-Koné languages as well: *pu* ‘on the ground’, *puput* ‘behind (inan)’ vs. *phuake* ‘wiggle’, *poon* ‘coconut fibre’ vs. *phoop* ‘snail’, *phom* ‘butterfly’, *pola* ‘type of weaving’ vs. *photha* ‘sexual taboo; women’s part of the village’.³ Furthermore, there are no instances of /f/ and /f^w/ followed by a nasal vowel, but many cases of /f/ before rounded back vowels. Hence, an imperfect distribution of labiodental fricatives and bilabial aspirated plosives can be identified: front and central vowels are only found after fricatives, nasal vowels only after plosives, and rounded back vowels can follow either. In conclusion, [p^h] and [p^{hw}] may be former allophones of /f/ and /f^w/ before nasal vowels, and [p^h] is now present before oral vowels due to contact with other languages, perhaps Pije (Rivierre 1994, 518). The unaspirated bilabial plosives were borrowed from neighboring languages as well (Rivierre 1994, 516), or constitute remains of an incomplete sound change *p → v.

3.1.3 Labio-velarized consonants

Labio-velar consonants in Vamale are all labial (/b^w/, /f^w/, /m^w/, etc), with the exception of /x^w/. To explain this, Campbell suggests for /x^w/ to be analyzed as an allophone or a surface realization, of /ɰ/ (Campbell 1987, 37), with /ɰ/ as the fortis /w/ (see Section 3.1.5 for an introduction into Vamale fortis). This makes sense, and would make the Hmwa(v)eke systems fit into their regional context, as voiceless liquids and glides are widespread in other Northern languages.

3.1.4 Voiceless nasals

Every nasal except /ŋ/ has an fortis, i.e. voiceless counterpart, e.g. /ɱu:n/ ‘smoke’ vs /mu:n/ ‘blossom’. Like most of the aspirated plosives, voiceless nasals in Vamale have probably developed from forms that were reduplicated in POc and geminated in PNC,

³From Leenhardt’s 1946 notes, not used nowadays.

and which were perhaps already devoiced in Proto-North:

*nana(q) ‘pus’ → hnau- / hnau- ‘snot’ (Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 27)

In Bwato and in Vamale, the phonation of nasals and liquids can be influenced by the fortis status of other consonants in the surrounding syllables. Bwato examples include the following, with the triggering consonants in bold:

- **f**omwa ~ **f**ohmwa ‘village’
- **x**hoomu ~ **x**hoohmu ‘old’
- **x**huni ~ **x**huhni ‘spear sling’
- **x**hwaloop ~ **x**hwahloop ‘be on the belly’

(Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 27).

Even though voiceless nasals have a different historical development from voiced nasals, and though they contrast in some minimal pairs, this account is unsure of how to describe them phonetically. The nasal in ⟨hnau-⟩ might be voiceless [ɲ̥], because the aspiration, even though it often starts before the nasal is articulated, does not seem to stop before the beginning of the nasal’s production (the result is thus closer to [hɲ̥ãw̃]).

3.1.5 Aspiration

Aspiration in North New Caledonian languages, with the exception of tonal Cèmuḥî and Paicî, developed from geminates, as did voiceless nasals:

- POC CV.CV reduplication is reduced to geminate CCV, and then to:
 - C^h in the non-tonal northern languages (Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 27), then ultimately fricatives in Vamale
 - CV̥ in Cèmuḥî and Paicî (Ozanne-Rivierre 1992, 203).

In Vamale, however, this only led to aspirate plosives in the case of /t^h/: *tt̥, *cc̥ → /t^h/ (Rivierre 1994, 513), which also explains the presence of minimal pairs contrasting nasal and oral vowels after /t^h/ (e.g. *tha* ‘ASS’; *thâ* ‘excrement’). A majority of /p/, /k/, and their aspirate counterparts can be attributed to loans, see Table 3.4 (Rivierre 1994, 516). This is a consequence of extensive language contact and near-universal multilingualism, where speakers would fill gaps in one language’s phoneme inventory with phonemes borrowed from other languages, which was made easier by the presence of voiceless plosives in inter-vocal positions.

Furthermore, aspiration is, in many cases, not phonemic, but a result of spontaneous assimilation to voiceless nasals and liquids, and other aspirate plosives in the

TABLE 3.4: Loans with aspirate and tenuis plosives, after (Rivierre 1994, 516)

Vamale form	Gloss	Origin
<i>pik</i>	‘banded land-rail (bird)’	Pwapwa <i>pik</i>
<i>phom</i>	‘butterfly’	Pwapwa <i>pom</i>
<i>piuk</i>	‘spark’	Haveke <i>piu</i> ‘star’, from Pwaamei <i>piu</i>
<i>kuh(u)a</i>	‘gun’	Southern Mainland
<i>katia</i>	‘(person suffering from) leprosy’	Polynesian
<i>koin</i>	‘finished, end’	e.g. Pije <i>koin</i>

same word (Rivierre 1994, 518). Conversely, an aspirated plosive is sometimes followed by a voiceless nasal or glide as a free variant of the voiced segment usually produced. The same phenomenon is described for Bwato (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 27). Aspiration of plosives and nasals can occur spontaneously, e.g. /san-an-ea/ [sanaŋẽã] ~ [sananẽã] ‘content-POSS-3SG.POSS’. Liquids are also affected, e.g. [x^walɔm] ~ [waɭɔm] ‘abcess’ (vamale-170912-dic-5, 1:37). Bwato is analyzed by Rivierre and Ehrhardt as having phonemic contrasts between all voiceless plosives and their aspirated counterparts (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 27).

Schooling argues for Yuanga that the aspirated/unaspirated contrast in plosives and nasals might be better described as fortis/lenis (Schooling 1992, 117-119). In Vamale, too, the voiceless nasals and aspirated plosives can be analyzed as fortis counterparts to the voiced nasals and tenuis plosives, which leaves a third category of pre-nasalized plosives dating back to Proto-Oceanic (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 62). As mentioned above, the spreading of fortis mentioned for plosives and nasals can affect liquids as well, in the sense that they are devoiced. Fortis onsets attract stress to their syllables, be they voiceless/pre-aspirated nasals, or aspirated plosives. This fortis/lenis contrast in stress allocation does not extend beyond the nasals and plosives, although all non-prenasalized parts of the consonant phoneme inventory can be analyzed as split along the historical fortis/lenis lines. The fricative /s/, for example, has a historical lenis counterpart in the glide /y/, see Table 3.5.

All aspirated plosives except /t^h/, some borrowings excepted, correlate with subsequent nasal vowels and can thus not be distinguished with minimal pairs from their unaspirated counterparts. This is partly due to historical post-nasals, some of which still exist in Nemi (Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 19). Origins of postnasals include:

1. Syllabic reduction
2. Nasal infix
3. Onomatopoeia

⁴(Bril 2002, 34)

TABLE 3.5: Table comparing Bwatoo and mountain Voh-Koné reflexes of PNC *k

		Bwatoo	Hmwaveke	Vamale
POc *k				
PNC *k				
*kulit	‘skin’	ðii	i-	i-
*kuluR	‘breadfruit tree’	ðiŋ		in
*kutu	‘lie (parasite)’	ði	iik	i
*kuRita	‘squid’	ðiia	iya	ibwen
*kai ⁴	‘tree’	ðee	yee	yee
PNC *kk				
*kuku	‘claw’	θi-	si-	si-
*kau	‘swim’	θoom	soom	soom

4. Locative derivation

5. Intervocalically (rare): Old compounds (Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 30):

- *tipme* (*tip-me) ‘go down-DIR.speaker’⁵
- *tikna* (*tik-ŋa) ‘go down-REP’

Of these postnasals, some developed into aspirate plosives through the following process, described by various authors for Northern languages, most importantly by Ozanne-Rivierre (Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 28-30). We suggest that this partially explains the development of Vamale [k^h], [c^h], [p^h] and [p^{hw}].

1. Post-nasalized plosives in Proto-North influence following vowels (e.g. *kniik ‘swamp hen’ → *knĩik).
2. Post-nasalized plosives in Proto-North become aspirated in Vamale, possibly because the plosives are lengthened (e.g. *k^hnĩik). (Campbell 1987, 76)
3. Vowels remain nasalized after the loss of post-nasalization (e.g. *k^hĩĩ).
- (a) Velars being most error-prone concerning velar closure, nasal vowels survive consistently after [k^h], possibly more so than after /k/ because of the aspiration leaving more time between the velar closure and the vowel.
- (b) Aspirated plosives from the CV.CV → CCV → C^hV sound change can also have phonemic ã, see *tha* ‘ASS’ vs *thâ* ‘excrement’
4. The aspirated velar plosive [k^h] is reanalyzed as tied to nasal vowels.

⁵Only present in modern Vamale as *tip-wa* ‘fall’ and *te-tip-wa* ‘walk-down-REP?, i.e. unwind’

[k^h] appears before oral vowels only in [k^holɔ:t] ‘red-haired’ and [k^halapa], a variant of [kaɭapa] ‘outrigger canoe’. The latter word is a loan found in most New Caledonian languages, possibly Polynesian (Hollyman 1959, 364). *koloot* ‘redhead’ is unaspirated in Pije and Bwato (*kolook* ‘albino’), and this aspiration is in free variation. Given the hypothesis of Ozanne-Rivierre, a reanalysis of [k^h] as an allophone of /k/ with an extension of [k^h] to all nasalized vowels may have taken place in the past. Hmwaveke has the same phenomenon (Campbell 1987, 13), but not the coastal Voh-Koné languages, where /k^h̃/ and /k^hv/ both occur. /k^h̃/ is also common in French. The analysis posited above of allophony (/k/ → [k^h]/#_̃/) may have become obsolete now, perhaps under influence of neighboring languages, since /k/ and /k^h/ are a common phonemic contrast in the area.

[p^{hw}] nearly always precedes a nasal vowel, e.g. *phwê* ‘moon’, but *fwe* ‘fig tree [guettarda speciosa]’. Exceptions to the correlation with nasal vowels are loanwords, e.g. Pije [p^{hw}a:t] ‘clear, clean’, and [p^{hw}ala:] ‘bread’.⁶

[p^h] also almost only occurs before nasal vowels (e.g. ⟨phâêû⟩ [p^hãẽũ] ‘dry land’ but *fati* ‘language’, *phalik* in Jawe [Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 155])). Where it precedes oral vowels, the items are loans: *phuake* ‘wiggle’, *phom* ‘butterfly’, *phoop* ‘snail’, *photha* ‘sexual taboo’ (from Leenhardt who did not transcribe nasalization, not found nowadays) (Rivierre 1994, 516).

[t^{ch}] was only found in [t^{ch}ĩ] ‘Paicĩ’, [t^{ch}ɔ:n] ‘banana stalk’ and [t^{ch}ɔ:t] ‘product’. In Bwato, /t^{ch}/ is also rare and occurs in the place of Vamale /s/ or /c/. It seems to alternate with the latter (e.g. [t^{ch}op^win] ~ [tɕop^win] ‘bury’ [Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 119]).

Given the distribution of the surviving [p^h] and [p^{hw}], [t^{ch}] and [k^h], as well as the historical development of postnasals given above, the aspirated plosives may be (former) allophones of *p, *p^w, *c and *k. The unaspirated plosives developed into fricatives /v/, /v^w/, /j-/ and /ɣ/ sometime during the development of Voh-Koné out of Proto-North, and the aspirated plosives preceding oral vowels resulted in the voiceless counterparts of the fricatives mentioned above. In front of nasal vowels, aspirate plosives may have subsisted.

3.1.6 Allophones of consonants

Consonants are sometimes realized differently in fast speech, mostly in ways which simplify the production, e.g. ⟨phw⟩ → [pɣ]. The aspirated plosive [k^h] can be realized as voiceless fricative [x]. This is almost exclusively attested in [xawaxan] ~ [ɣawaxan]

⁶From Engl. *flour*, *falawa* in other Caledonian languages.

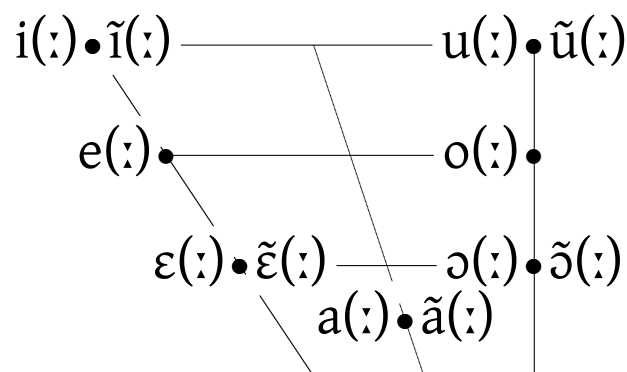
TABLE 3.6: Minimal pairs for vowels

[tʰi] ‘shell’	[tʰi:] ‘pierce’ [wĩ:] ‘strength’	[tɕuvi] ‘say standing’	[tɕu:vi] ‘string up’
[tʰe] ‘algae’	[tʰe:] ‘heavy’	[so] ‘roof pole’	[so:] ‘shoot (bot.)’
[tʰẽ] ‘limestone’	[tʰẽ:n] ‘run, fly’	[tʰɔa] ‘command’ ⁸	
[tʰa] ‘Ass’	[tʰa:] ‘tie’		
[tʰã] ‘feces’			

‘dog’ which, etymologically as well as in some people’s speech, is [ɣavwakʰã̃n], ⟨xa-vwa-khân⟩ ‘NMLZ-make-noise’. In Yuanga, /k/ is realized as [x] intervocalically, according to Schooling (1992, 111). The de-fricativization of /v^w/ is a sound change also attested for Hmwaveke (Campbell 1987, 120), and is present in most speakers’ speech at least for vwa ‘do; EXIST’, though they will insist on /v^w/ when asked. Interestingly, the nasal quality of the vowel in [kʰã̃n] often drops when the aspirated plosive is realized as a fricative [xan], as in *xa-vwa-khân* above. [g]~[ɣ] are also interchangeable in fast speech between vowels. [ɣ] does not appear phonemically intervocally within a morpheme, so all such occurrences are assumed to be lenited /g/. Voiceless nasals and liquids can be voiced in fast speech. Intervocalic voicing of non-fortis consonants is mirrored in Yuanga to some extent, as most unaspirated plosives and fricatives have intervocalic voiced realizations (Schooling 1992, 115).

3.2 Vowels

As shown in Section 3.2, Vamale features at least seven vowel qualities, like Cèmuḥî (Rivierre 1980, 29), and like in Cèmuḥî, they do not contrast everywhere. The openness of vowels depends on nasalization,⁷ length, and the syllable’s coda, so that only five qualities are phonemic. Table 3.6 lists minimal pairs for them.



⁷Half-open and half-closed vowels also collapse in Yuanga (Schooling 1992, 103).

Apart from *wîi* ‘strength’ vs *wii* ‘field’, [ĩ] is not attested in minimal pairs, we thus treat it as a marginal vowel phoneme. The status of [ũ] is even trickier. The nasal closed vowel [ũ] only appears in complementary distribution to its oral counterparts: after the aspirated consonants *kh*, *phw* etc discussed in Section 3.1.5, after nasals, and in other nasalizing conditions. There are no long nasal vowels in open syllables at all (except [k^hĩ:], which is still [k^hĩ:k] in closely related Hmwaveke). Whether we analyze /ũ/ as a phoneme depends on our understanding of [k^h]: If [k^h] is a phoneme, then [ũ] could be analyzed as an allophone of /u/, conditioned by [k^h]. This thesis will assume that the distribution of [ũ] is predictable, but will still transcribe [ũ] as ⟨û⟩ except after nasals.

3.2.1 Quantity

Vamale features phonemic length in both monosyllabic words, see the examples *thi* ‘shell’ and *thii* ‘pierce’ at the beginning of Section 3.2 above, and polysyllabic ones.

Consider the following minimal pairs:

[‘sa.m̩wã] ‘go the other way’ vs [sa:m̩wã] ‘banana’

[‘fa.ti] ‘language’ vs [‘fa:ti] ‘glue something’⁹

[‘t^ha.ke] ‘throw’ [‘t^ha:ke] ‘drag’

This analysis is contested for Voh-Koné languages: Campbell analyzes long vowels in Hmwaveke polysyllabic words as a feature of the stressed syllable (Campbell 1987, 56). In cases where a fortis-onset syllable takes the stress despite other factors, like the presence of a long syllable (e.g. [‘t^ha.ke:ke] ‘stretch out’), or a penultimate syllable (e.g. [‘xaⁿ.ja.ke] ‘eat starchy food’), this is argued to be due to extra articulatory energy, but not phonologically stress (Campbell 1987, 59).

In Vamale, however, many polysyllabic words are composed of only short syllables: e.g. ‘*ta.na* ripe, ‘*xa.le.ke* see, *cu.va.’than.ke* stand apart, ‘*xa.ba.le* ‘their mat’. Apart from lexical factors, length is conditioned by morphosyntactic factors as well. Possession will lengthen the final vowel of some directly possessed, alienable words:

[‘fa.ti] ‘language’ → [fa:‘ti:n] ‘language-3SG.POSS’

iila ‘cauldron’ → *iloong* ‘my cauldron’

fwaadan ‘road’ → *fwadanuung* ‘my road’

⁸Compare to /t^ho-a/ ‘call-3SG.OBJ’

⁹The latter is morphologically complex: *faat* ‘be sticky’ and *-i* ‘TR’

TABLE 3.7: Vowel allophones in their defining contexts (nasalization omitted)

	[o] [ɔ]	[ɛ] [e]
V	['pu:n.djo] 'whale'	[se] 'one'
V:	['tɕo:.lam] 'your part /to eat, to do'	[se:] 'cry'
VC	[tɕɔp̚] 'pass over a ridge' [ko.'kɔt̚] 'bird sp.' [pʰɔm] 'butterfly' [xɔŋ] 'my leg' [kɔn] 'PROG'	[sɛp̚] 'coconut' [xɛt̚] 'warm' [fe.tʰɛm] 'white spots (skin)' [bɛŋ] 'waterfall' [sɛn] 'poison'
V:N	[mbo:m] 'shade' [ja.'ko:n] 'for' [ko:ŋ] 'on me'	[ɣe:m] 'basket' [xe:n] 'noise' [mbe:ŋ] 'my peer'
V:P	[ɣa.'kɔ:p̚] 'wild' [tɔ:t̚] 'grass', [ɔ:t̚] 'rope; vein'	[tɛ:p̚] 'flow (liquid)' [tɛ:t̚] 'be lazy'

While quantity is phonemic, it is not always realized in everyday speech. Compare *ju* 'fish kabob' to *juu* 'real, sacred; very'. While the first word is only rarely produced nowadays,¹⁰ the latter is ubiquitous, and often in an unstressed position, or even a compound (see Section 4.19). Both environments tend to elide stress, and unstressed long syllables are often shortened.

3.2.2 Quality

The mid-open vowels have allophones depending on the syllable structure. Open syllables feature closed vowels. Closed syllables have several variables: closed short syllables feature the more open vowels [ɛ] and [ɔ]. Closed long syllables show both pairs; plosive-final syllables have more open vowels ([sɔ:t̚] 'touch'), and nasal-final ones feature comparatively more closed vowels ([sq̚:m] 'swim'). See Table 3.7 for an illustration. Note that the vowels were rendered here without their nasalization: all vowels preceding nasals are to some degree nasalized, this does not affect with which allophone they are realized.

Possibly because the community is multilingual, there is considerable variation between individuals concerning the expression of nasality. Some nasalize almost all vowels that follow a nasal, which is why Rivierre does not consider nasality of vowels for Bwato, except after oral consonants (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 25).

¹⁰The loanword *brochette* being used to make the analytical *brochette ko-n nyu* 'kabob with fish'

3.2.3 Diphthongs

There are no diphthongs; recorded vowel sequences are either disyllabic or contain a glide. Some variants in fast speech seem to reduce the prominence of a syllable and make it approach an on- or offglide quality: /jo.a.kan/ ['ⁿdjo̞.kān] ‘thick’

3.2.4 Allophones of vowels

Vowel allophony is underdescribed as of yet in Northern languages. A detailed phonological description of Cèmuhî (Rivierre 1980, 32, 35, 40) expands upon Haudricourt’s brief account of the seven phonemic vowels Haudricourt (1968, 373), and considers [ɔ] an allophone of /o/, amongst others. The phonology of the Hienghène languages was studied by Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, but vowel allophones were not mentioned. Yuanga was described in detail by Schooling 1992. Nyelâyû (Ozanne-Rivierre 1998) and Nêlêmwa (Bril 2002) have no phonological descriptions focused on vowel allophony to date.

3.2.4.1 Nasalization of vowels

Nasal spreading in both directions is described in detail for Hmwaveke (Campbell 1987, 66,76). Vamale has this too, and both regressive (e.g. [nĩũ] ‘fish’, (5)) as well as progressive assimilation (e.g. [ãmbu] ‘1DU.EXCL’, see ex. 5b) to nasals are so frequent that nasality of vowels is most often not phonemic.

(3.5) a. [fetamẽ]	b. [fẽãmẽ]
fe-ta-me	fe-hân-me
take-move.up-DIR.CP	take-move.same.level-DIR.CP
‘Bring up’	‘Bring (across the same plain)’

Nasality also spreads from one vowel to another (regressive assimilation), but does not seem to do so across oral consonants, see Section 3.2.4.1. Spreading of nasality is so prevalent in Hmwaveke that Campbell considers it a word-level feature, and that truly phonemically nasal words are only those that have, among other factors:

1. no nasal or semi-nasal consonants
2. and a nasal vowel in the stressed syllable. (Campbell 1987, 66)

Like nasal vowels, nasalized ones are usually realized more open than their oral counterparts, i.e. /e/ and /o/ are realized as [ẽ] and [õ], respectively.

3.2.4.2 Fronting of /u/

/u/ is frequently, but not always, fronted to [y] or [ɥ] after the front vowel /i/ and its non-syllabic variant [j] (6a, 6b). When asked to pronounce the word as slowly as possible, some speakers like Jaaun Kalène produced [ʔʏa:.e.ɯ] or something further front, while others, like Elise Oué, would have two syllables [ʔʏa.ju]. The latter form is likely to be underlying, as the Pije cognate *ka.hyuk* (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 135) suggests that two syllables, with a glide as the second onset, are etymological. While this fronting is not described by Ozanne-Rivierre for Pije, she mentions it for Jawe, as having developed after an intervocalic /v/ was dropped: /ɥi/ ‘blow’ (*uvi* in Fwâi and eastern Nemi) (Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 22).

- (3.6) a. *nyayung*
 [nãĩŋ]~[nãjuŋ]
 nyai-ong
 child-1SG.POSS
 ‘My child’
- b. *xayu*
 [ɥa:ɥ]
 ‘boy, male’

3.2.4.3 Backing and rounding of /a/

/a/ is often backed and centralized in progressive assimilation to labiovelar approximants, a phenomenon also described for Yuanga (Schooling 1992, 129). This happens most frequently with *vwa* ‘do; exist’, especially where it is part of a compound, e.g. ⟨*vwa wĩn*⟩ [wɔ wĩ:n] ~ [wo wĩ:n] ‘EXIST strength’ ‘be strong’. This is not found in careful pronunciation, but is a regular allophone in Hmwaveke (Campbell 1987, 16).

3.2.4.4 Interplay between /a/ and *e* ‘1sg’

Some morphemes ending with /a/ will assimilate to the 1SG subject index *e* (7a). As exs. (7b) and (7c) show, this process can spread over at least one more syllable, though this depends on the speaker.

(3.7) a. *the bwa han*

tha e=bwa hân

ASS 1SG=IPFV go

‘I am leaving’

b. *nyiman cama go vwa*

nyima-n (ca)ma go=vwa

want-3SG SUBR 2SG

‘He wants you to do it’

c. *nyiman ceme vwa*

nyima-n cama e=vwa

want-3SG SUBR 1SG=do

‘He wants me to do it’

Vamale is the only Voh-Koné language described with this assimilation of /a/ to the first person subject index *e=*. The sequence [ae] appears elsewhere in the language without assimilating (e.g. [ʎa.ᵐã.ɛ̃n] ‘tomorrow’); the assimilation is specific to the subject marker. It is also noteworthy that this subject marker only occurs in Vamale within Voh-Koné. While neither Hmwaveke nor Pije (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 246, 247) have subject marker proclitics that differ from the free form, Cèmuhi has a pair /*(wa)eo*/ vs. /*e*/ (Rivierre 1980, 61); Vamale may have borrowed *e=* ‘1SG’ from it. The assimilation, however, is not described for Cèmuhi.

3.3 Phonotactics / syllable structure

Like its Hienghène and Voh-Koné relatives, the language presents a (C^(hw))V(VVC) syllable pattern. Pre-nasalized consonants preceded by a vowel (e.g. V#ⁿC, or V.ⁿC) are reanalyzed, and their nasal is assigned to the preceding syllable: /abu/ → /am.bu/ ‘1DU.EXCL’. Consonants usually meet at morpheme boundaries, like /wane-ke/ → [wan.ke] ‘change’, /bofwa-n-mwa/ [bo.f^wan.m^wã] ‘door, door-of-house’. The only exception found is /x^wat.la/ ‘thunder’, still /x^wa.la.la/ in western varieties. Most morphologically simple words have one or two syllables.

TABLE 3.8: Stress in trisyllabic words

Old words	Loanwords
['a.pu.li] ‘person’	[' ^m bu.ru.(w)et] ‘wheelbarrow’, from French [bʁu.'et]
['va.ma.le] ‘vamale’	['mãŋ.ga.sĩ] ~[maŋ.ga.'sĩ/ ‘shop’, from French /maga'zĩ]
[' ⁿ don.dam.ba] ‘flood garbage’	['pu.a.ka] ‘pig’, from Polynesian <i>puaka</i>
['ma.vu.lən] ‘flying fox sp.’	['ku.m ^w a.la] ‘sweet potato’, from Polynesian <i>kumara</i> ~ <i>kumala</i>
['ma.t ^h i.la] ‘small bird sp.’	[' ^ɲ ge.re.nũ/ ‘frog’, from French <i>grenouille</i>

3.3.1 Reduplication

Reduplication is a common morphological process in many Oceanic languages, but plays a negligible role in Vamale. Historically, most old CVCV reduplications, probably already stripped of their morphological function, developed first into CCV geminates through elision of the first syllable’s vowel, and then into aspirated plosives or voiceless fricatives (see 3.1.5). Since productive derivational processes work with prefixes, the following forms are probably not representative of productive processes.

kokoi, polite negation, loan from Pije (where *koi* is the negation)

hahat ‘nono’, from *hat* ‘strong negation’

sisipo, ‘together’, *nya-sipo-ke* ‘put-together-TR’

fwafwa ‘full of holes’, from *fwa* ‘hole’

juuju(u) ‘truth’, from the root *juu* ‘true’

vayavaya ‘shaky’, from *vaya* ‘move’

3.4 Stress

In Vamale, disyllabic words have penultimate stress, as is typical in Oceanic settings. Trisyllabic, morphologically simple, non-derived nouns take stress on the first syllable, see Table 3.8. These are rare, though loanwords now increase their number.

Longer words are morphologically complex and put stress on the penultimate stress-bearing unit, which is often a syllable of the root, but not always. While some morphological factors complicate the picture, regular phonological aspects predict most stress positions. A closed syllable will be stressed over an open one, a fortis onset will usually top a tenuis onset, and a long syllable will be stressed above all else. This gives us a hierarchy of factors:

[^hun.v^wa] ‘way of doing’ [^a.^{pe}.ta] ‘ladder (place of going.up)’
 [^hun.^{mõ}:] ‘way of living’ [^a.^{pe}.^{mõ}:] ‘dwelling’

Long syllable > fortis onset > closed syllable > penultimate syllable

Complicating factors

Some monosyllabic morphemes do not count in the stress pattern. One frequent example is the extrametrical suffix *-ke* ‘TR’, whose phonological non-importance makes the third syllable in /^fwan.^{ji}.m^wa.ke/ ‘ask something’ the penultimate of the phonological word. Possessive and object-indexing suffixes shift the stress, but not in a simple syllable-counting way, as [^{mb}wãñ.jɛp], [^{mb}wãñ.^jɛp.go] ‘hand drum, hand drum-2SG.POSS’ would suggest, i.e. with the stress, all things being equal, moving to the new penultimate syllable. However, since *bwajep-gavwe* [^{mb}wãñ.jɛp.ga.v^we] ‘hand drum-2PL.POSS’ does not have the stress on the penultimate syllable of the phonological word, [ga], this suggests an analysis of root syllables that is different from that of suffixed morphology. Possessive and object-indexing suffixes count as a single unit in stress assignment, meaning that a two-syllable possessive suffix such as *-gavwe* ‘2PL.POSS’ has the same effect as *-go* ‘2SG.POSS’.

Speech act participant indexes (the proclitics, not the suffixes) are also extrametrical:

/^ʔya.le.ke/ ‘to see’

/le=^ʔya.le-le/ ‘3PL=see-3PL.OBJ’, ‘they see them’

/le=ya.le-^{ka}.v^we/ ‘they see you’, also pronounced /le=ya.^{le}.ka.v^we/

Other syllables attract stress. The nominalizer *xa-* ‘AGT.NMLZ’ (from *xayu* ‘male’) always attracts stress (probably due to its etymology, see Section 7.7.2), but not *hun-* ‘manner.NMLZ’ nor *ape-* ‘place.NMLZ’ (from *ape-n* ‘trace’).

Semantically bleached function words like /^a.^{man}/ ‘thing; object place-holder’ are re-analyzed as one foot in compounds:

[^tɕaj.ɳãñ] ‘know’, [^tɕaj.ɳãñ.ã.mãñ] ‘know something’

[^tɕãm.bi] ‘smash’, [^e.^tɕãm.^{bi}.jã.mãñ] ‘hammer’

The complex word *ape-caihnan-aman-le*, ‘NMLZ-know-thing-3PL.POSS’ ‘their knowledge’, is pronounced [^a.^{pe}.^tɕaj.ɳãñ.ã.^{le}.mãñ] by Kaina Fouan, which could be explained by analyzing (*ape*)-*caihnan-aman* ‘(fact.of-)know-thing’ as a compound, *-le* ‘3PL.POSS’ as a suffix, and thus the main stress on the penultimate syllable.

For Hmwaveke, stress is described as being fundamentally penultimate (Campbell 1987, 59), and forms which deviate from this, with few exceptions, are analyzed by Campbell as several phonological words. Campbell analyzes long syllables in plurisyllabic words as resulting from stress (suggesting that, fundamentally, length is a feature of all stressed syllables). For Vamale, though long syllables are stressed, we argue that the relation is reversed: length attracts stress.

In Nêlêmwa, stress is usually on the first syllable of the lexical root *kâ-'yuva* 'how? (lying.down-be.thus)' (Bril 2002, 26). This correlation between morphological makeup and stress pattern is mirrored in Vamale to a certain extent, in that bound morphemes such as *e-* 'RECP', *-ke* 'TR', and manner prefixes like *mi-* 'do lying down' do not affect the position of the main stress.

Chapter 4

Word classes

Vamale words can be divided into several groups according to their syntactic behavior: some big, open classes, some small, closed classes, and some with just one member. This chapter shall present all of them based on distributional clues. Their names are partly derived from names given to cognate forms in other languages, and in all cases strive to reflect their syntactic function. Verbs, nouns, as well as aspectual markers (here called TAM for “Tense, Aspect, Mood”, presented in Section 4.11), have dedicated chapters later on. Vamale word classes present some aspects of typological interest. Location relative to nouns (e.g. “on”, “next to”) is expressed by derived nominal forms, see Section 4.5.2, and not adpositions. There are no adjectives; rather, nominalized verb phrases, or stative verbs. This is discussed in Section 6.4.6. Numerals are not an own word class either: they are formally verbs, see Section 7.2.2. Furthermore, as is common in Oceanic languages, verbs and nouns can be derived from each other with little to no morphology and their morphology overlaps in some cases (see Section 7.2.3 on verbs with nominal morphology).

4.1 What is a word?

Words in Vamale exist on several levels (phonological and grammatical), and in a way similar to the zero derivation which affects the verb-noun distinction, words can be reinterpreted and forged anew. As has already been sketched in Section 3.4, *g*-words, i.e. words that act as grammatical units, and *p*-words, i.e. units on a prosodic level with one main accent, do not overlap necessarily. One instance of such mismatches are *g*-words that attach to other *g*-words to form a phonological unit (Spencer and Luís 2012, 1), i.e. clitics. Many function words are clitics, e.g. articles. Semantically vague *g*-words which are always part of a phrase, but never its head, and which can be stressed (meaning they are also *p*-words), will be called “particles” in this grammar. TAM markers are included in this broad category. The same grammatical element may be a *p*-word in some construction but part of a larger *p*-word in others, e.g. *aman*, and the influence of a word on the stress pattern of its environment can depend on pragmatic factors,

such as focus, drawing out a pause to think of something further to add, etc. Furthermore, the boundary between often-used phrases, and compounds, is also a fuzzy one, cf. Section 4.1.1 for an example. Other examples of fluidity between word-status and phrase-status are verb phrases or even complete relative clauses which can function as head of a NP by the use of an article (see Section 7.7.5 and Section 12.2.3 respectively), stative verbs whose nominal morphology makes them useful for adjective-like functions (see Section 7.2.1), and serial verb constructions.

4.1.1 Concerning *vwa*

The verb *vwa* ‘do’ can combine with a number of morphemes to express an action or a state. It can combine with nouns (e.g. *vwa mwa* ‘build a house’) and verbs (*vwa tau* ‘to fish (lit. do hit [the water])’) to form compounds. The compounds that these combinations create are mostly intransitive verbs with often idiosyncratic meanings: *vwa vua* lit. ‘do net’ ‘throw a net’. *vwa uvu* ‘do yam’ ‘wind yam sprouts around a tutor’, *vwa xhwaeo* ‘do taro’ ‘harvest taro’. Undergoers would be added as oblique arguments with *ko* ‘OBL’, see ex. (1). Since *vwa* is semantically vague and thus readily used as a filler verb, new compounds are often formed (e.g. *vwa toki* ‘do metal’ ‘make a telephone call’), established compounds can be broken up *ad hoc* into verb phrases with specific arguments (see example 2) and many remain transparent phrases. With few exceptions, this grammar will thus avoid marking *vwa*-constructions clearly as compounds by connecting *vwa* to its modifier or argument. Section 7.1 takes a closer look at intransitive verbs.

- (4.1) go_{AGT} *vwa-vua* *ko* [*i* *vuman nyu*] $_{OBL}$ *nya-xahut*
 2SG do-net OBL DEF.SG group fish send-down.there
 ‘You cast-net upon the fish school down there.’

- (4.2) go_{AGT} *vwa* *li* *xhwaeo_P* *nya-an*
 2SG do DEF.PL taro over.there
 ‘You harvest the taros over there.’

4.1.2 p-words and g-words

Vamale’s wealth in different classes of morphemes is mirrored on the phonological level: phonological units overlap or not with syntactic units, and the latter can be derived and re-analyzed relatively easily, compare (3a) to (3b). Possessive constructions

follow a head-first pattern: PSM-POSS PSR. The personal possessive suffixes mirror the construction found with nouns, and are cognate with “indirect” possessive constructions in other languages, where the possessor is expressed as a pronoun e.g. *Pije thala-n nyan* ‘knife-POSS 3SG’ (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 248). However, there are some arguments in favor of a suffix analysis:

1. The 1SG form *-eong* and the 3SG form *-ea* are not identical (anymore) with the free pronouns *io* and *ia*.
2. The syllabification now includes the formerly external possessor markers (i.e. *puakan-ea* [pu.a.'ka.nẽ.ã] ‘pig.POSS-3SG.POSS’)
3. The stress shift towards the last syllable before the possessive suffix: [tʰa.la] ‘knife’ → [tʰa.'la.nẽ.ã] ‘knife-3SG.POSS’

(4.3) a. [h̥ɲĩmãke e'tɕa:mãn]

hnyimake (eca)=aman
think.about INDF.SG=thing

‘Think about something’

b. [i,h̥ɲĩ.mã'ke.a.mãn]

i=hnyimake-aman
DEF.SG=think-thing

‘The thinking of something’

4.1.3 Affixes and clitics

Vamale morphemes cover much of the spectrum of grammatical wordhood: forms that are units on both syntactic and phonological grounds, some that are either one or the other, and some flexibility depending on the context. This grammar will follow Spencer and Luís (2012) to define clitics: A clitic is a form of a word which is phonologically attached to another word, its host. Clitics cannot be stressed, there cannot be a pause between them and their host, they have the same functions as g-words, and can attach to various kinds of syntactic units (Spencer and Luís 2012, 1).

1. Verbs, nouns, and adverbs are g-words as well as p-words, because they can move relatively freely and can be stressed.

2. Subject markers and articles are proclitics, tied to a predicate (verbal or nominal), and noun phrase respectively, they cannot be stressed.
3. Aspectual markers are particles because they are phonologically autonomous, but since they are grammatically dependent on predicates, Zúñiga's term "anti-clitic" may be more precise (Zúñiga 2014).

4.2 The distinction between verbs and nouns

A common problem in Oceanic linguistics concerns the distinction between verbs and nouns, which can be considered blurry. A verb phrase can be nominalized just by putting an article in front of it, after which it functions as an argument. A noun phrase can be used as a predicate, and preceded by aspect and modality markers. As discussed by Creissels, Bertinetto, and Ciucci, one can distinguish three types of non-verbal predicates: nominal, adjectival, and locative (Creissels, Bertinetto, and Ciucci, 3). Vamale has no adjectives, but nominal and locative predicates are well attested. Ex. (4a) is an example of a pronominal predicate, (4b) shows a predicative locative noun phrase, composed of a prepositional noun and a common noun, and a nominal predicate is shown in (4c).

(4.4) a. X4:14

li bee-m, le niehni
DEF.PL peer-2SG.POSS 3PL all.those

'Your friends, they are those over there.'

b. KG:515

cahma patron ya tha=a juu ena a ca_{PrepoN} i bureau
TOP boss 3SG ASS=3SG very DIST 3SG in DEF.SG office
hihihi

'The boss however, there he was in his office'

c. go=bo i=daahma
2SG=IRR DEF.SG=chief

'You would be chief.'

The transitive suffix *-ke* can be found in or at the end of nouns, but those have verbal origins.

hnyimake ‘think, pay attention’, *hnyimake-aman* ‘think something’, *i ape-hnyimake-aman* ‘DEF.SG-NMLZ-think-thing’ ‘the thought’

vwa-siteke ‘Sunday, lit. do-sacred, pray’

e-topweeke-aman ‘hook, lit. NMLZ-hang-thing’

4.2.1 Syntactic criteria

While nouns and verbs share some syntactic slots, and some nouns and verbs may look the same (see Section 7.2.3), *and* many of the words surrounding both noun and verb phrases have shared origins, like *ma* ‘SUBR, COM’, *ko* ‘on, OBL’, or *xhwat* ‘a small piece, a little bit’, there are differences still: nouns cannot take arguments, they have different modifiers, and if TAM markers are used, they do not mean the same. Numbers, for instance, are verbs because they take arguments, e.g. *se-a* ‘the only one, he is one/alone’, *thaloo mu mani* ‘the birds are two’, *thien li ba* ‘the sardines (are) three’. *nievit* ‘how many’, works the same way: *nievit sinan xat?* ‘how.many sign sun’ ‘what time is it?’.

Within a noun phrase, modifiers are either nominalized verbs that precede them, as in 5a, possessors, or relative clauses, as in 5b. Verbal modifiers are either adverbs or adverbial clauses, or verbs that integrate the verb phrase.

- (4.5) a. *i bwaakala a xhopwen*
 DEF.SG boat REL big
 ‘The big boat’
- b. *i joakan sapwen*
 DEF.SG thick dress
 ‘the thick dress’

4.2.2 Morphological criteria

Verbs and nouns share some morphology, most notably possessive suffixes. While these suffixes are examined in more detail in Section 7.2.3 and Section 7.3.1.2 for verbs, and in Section 5.2 for nouns, an overview is provided in Table 4.1. Inalienable (I and Ib) and alienable (II) possessive suffixes can thus occur on verbs, either to mark the undergoer-like subject of some stative verbs or the undergoer argument of some active transitive verbs.

Reflexive/reciprocal *e-*, mostly found on verbs, also occurs with nouns in predicate function, as shown in (6). This is a relatively rare occurrence and was only attested with a reciprocal meaning.

TABLE 4.1: Possessive suffixes, OBJ AND -Sp

		I	Ib	II	-Sp	OBJ
SG	1	-ng	-ong	-eong	-ong	-eo
	2	-m	-am	-go	-go	-ko
	3	-n	-an	-ea	-(e)a	-a
DU	1INCL	-ju	-aju	-ju	-gaeu/-gasu	-kaeu
	1EXCL	-bu	-abu	-bu	-gabū	-kabū
	2	-u	-au	-gau	-gau	-kau
	3	-lu	-alu	-lu	-lu	-lu
PL	1INCL	-je	-aje	-je	-gaa	-kaa
	1EXCL	-be	-abe	-be	-abe	-kabe
	2	-vwe	-avwe	-vwe	-gavwe	-kavwe
	3	-le	-ale	-le	-le	-le

(4.6) a. vamale-180809-1:00:15:20

lu e-copain-copine

3DU RECP-boyfriend-girlfriend

‘The two are boyfriend and girlfriend’

b. AG1:239

calibeen ma le moo ma li ehni, e-bee-le

sometimes SUBR 3PL stay COM DEF.PL DEM.PROX RECP-peer-3PL.POSS

‘Sometimes when they stay together with those, they are each other’s cousins’

Some particles and affixes, however, mark the resulting construction as definitively verbal. This includes causative *fa-*, transitive markers *-ke* and *-i*, and manner prefixes (discussed in Section 7.5.1). Note that *xhaavwa* in (7a) has a different stem than *xhavwaleke* in (7b), both in vowel quantity and the last syllable *-le*.

(4.7) a. e=xhaavwa

1SG=wait

‘I’m waiting around.’

b. e=xhavwale-ke (aman)

1SG=wait.for-TR something

‘I’m waiting for something’

Object markers in general are sure signs of verbhood. The sections below will explore the noun phrase with its members: articles, nouns, demonstrative and personal pronouns (followed by the subject marker proclitics which are historically related), and some case markers.

TAM markers, which, like subject markers, are shared by both predicative nouns as well as verbs, will form the link in this chapter between the two big groups. Verbs will only be sketched here, as they form the most diverse and big word class of the language. After introducing adverbs, smaller classes, often with a wider scope, will be introduced.

4.2.2.1 -n

The suffix *-n* ‘NSPEC; ANA’ warrants an early explanation, as it occurs across word classes, affecting dependent verbs, prepositional and regular inalienable nouns alike. In essence, *-n* has two functions: one is to mark the generic nature of the argument of its verbal host (8a), or the generic possessor of its nominal host (8b), while the other function is anaphoric or cataphoric. Generic nouns do not take an article, whereas specific nouns take definite or indefinite articles (see Section 4.3).

(4.8) a. KP:12

ka na naen cipa hmwaka-n habu
 CNJ DEM now NEG be.like-NSPEC long.ago
 ‘But this is today, not like [things were] yesterday’

b. PE1:187

kon th=e ra-ta-meebam nyeca-n sohmun
 then ASS=1SG NMLZ-be.sitting-sleep inside-NSPEC school
 ‘You must know that I kept sleeping on my chair at school’

Two other suffixes *-n* must be mentioned: in noun phrases, a suffix *-n* indexes inalienable 3SG possessors on the possessed noun (9a), and another suffix *-n* serves as an alienable possessum-marking morpheme (no indication of person), as in (9b) (see Section 5.2 for a more detailed discussion). The two *-n* are distinguished on the basis of their different distribution. Inalienable *-n* is part of a paradigm of possessive pronoun marking suffixes, excluding a possessor NP following, while the other has no allomorphs, grammatically conditioned or otherwise, and occurs between a nominal possessor and its possessum. As the (in)alienability of nouns is lexically conditioned, the two suffixes do not contrast on the same word.

- (4.9) a. i bwa-n/-m
 DEF.SG head-3SG.POSS/2SG.POSS
 ‘His/your head’
- b. i mwa-n i apuli
 DEF.SG house-POSS DEF.SG person
 ‘The house of the person’

The abovementioned suffix *-n* ‘NSPEC, ANA’ however, is analyzed as one single suffix despite its distribution both on nouns and verbs, as it always marks the head of the phrase and its dependents’ generic nature.

The other function mentioned above is of anaphora in the wider sense: relating to something already mentioned (10a), mentioned in another clause soon after, or known in general (10b). The referent’s specificity is not important in this case.

- (4.10) a. L2:3
- ehni xhwan da, abe fate gavwe koo-**n** go abe
 PROX little what 1PL.EXCL share 2PL OBL-ANA then 1PL.EXCL
 sate-**n**, cipa hmai-n, cipa-bu ju-vaa udu
 be.different-ANA NEG be.many-NSPEC NEG-1DU.EXCL real-too drink
 hmwaka-u
 like-2DU
- ‘This [wine and beer] is nothing much, we share with you of this, and us, it’s different, not much, we don’t drink as hard as you do’
- b. hmwaa-na koo-n!
 like-DIST on-ANA
- ‘Like that!/Now that’s a proper way of doing it!’

4.2.3 Semantic criteria

Like in other Kanak languages (Bril 2002, 89) Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 32, there are few roots exclusively dedicated to one category, and they are mostly nominal roots. Examples include kinship terms, body parts, topographical and meteorological terms, many animals and plants, as well as parts of the house, boats, and tools.

TABLE 4.2: Articles in Vamale

	SPEC and DEF	SPEC and INDF
SG	<i>i</i>	<i>(e)ca</i>
DU	<i>mu</i>	<i>muca</i>
PL	<i>li / ni</i>	<i>ca(been)</i>

4.3 Articles

Vamale has a fine-tuned system of definiteness, using both definite and indefinite articles for specific, and the absence of articles for non-specific (i.e. less transitive) scenarios. This closed word-class is called ‘articles’ in this grammar because its members precede nouns and mark them as (in)definite. Vamale makes the wide-spread distinction between singular, dual and plural (see Table 4.2), and what this study considers to be degrees of definiteness rather than specificity (an argument for this analysis follows under Section 4.3.1). Using a noun phrase without an article makes it non-specific, compare (11a) and (11b).

(4.11) a. G4:22

go=han can hnyimake thamo
2SG=walk SUBR think woman

‘You walk while thinking about a woman’

b. go=han can hnyimake i thamo
2SG=walk SUBR think DEF.SG woman

‘You walk while thinking about the woman’

The article can combine with the stative verb *se* ‘one, same’ and the noun *been* ‘peer’ to mean ‘the/some other’. This is further discussed in Section 6.4.1.

Vamale speakers can choose between using an article (the noun thus having a specific referent) (12a), and not using an article (12b, 12c), in which case the noun is generic. In oft-used expressions, the verb forms a compound with the noun.¹

(4.12) a. e=xaleke i=apuli a=a=xhwi i=puaka
1SG=see DEF.SG=3SG=man REL=eat DEF.SG=pig

‘I see the man who is biting the pig.’

¹See Ozanne-Rivierre and Rivierre 2004 for a discussion of similar phenomena in other New Caledonian languages.

- b. e=xaleke i=apuli a=a=xhwi puaka
 1SG=see DEF.SG=man REL=3SG=eat pig
 ‘I see the man who is eating pork.’ (NOT: the/a/some pig)
- c. lu=xa-tena apuli
 3DU=HAB-understand person
 ‘They understand people.’

4.3.1 The question of definiteness

Vamale articles are split, as can be seen in Table 4.2, not only according to their number, but along another axis, definiteness. Consider example (13b) from a French-language legend, written by Yvonne Sahilé, and translated by the workgroup into Vamale. The example translates ‘il y avait une tribu’ (there was a tribe) using *i* ‘DEF.SG’, making it seem more specific than definite, since the listeners cannot yet be familiar with the tribe. My first suggestion was using an indefinite article *eca* (13a), which was refused. Now look at example (13b), where the tribe has never been mentioned before, compared to examples (13c) and (13d), where it has. All sentences use the same article. In (13d), *li thamo* ‘the women’ are newly introduced to the narrative but marked with the definite *li*.

- (4.13) a. 1, authors’s attempt

*Habu can vije vwa eca ape-moo a pwan jelan
 long.ago in Tipije EXIST INDF.SG LOC.NMLZ-stay REL on side
 ehni i jahoot-ca a xhopwen.
 DEM.PROX DEF.SG river-PROX REL big

- b. 1

Habu Can-Vije vwa i apemoo a pwa-n jela i
 long.ago Tipije exist DEF.SG tribe REL on-NSPEC side DEF.SG
 jahoot a xhopwen.
 river REL big

‘Long ago in the Tipije valley, there was a tribe on the bank of this great river’ (following the French original text)

c. 2

Ca i apemoo-ca le vacuti **ca** daahma a bwa xawe, ka
 in DEF.SG tribe-PROX 3PL erect some chief REL IPFV young and
 yata-n Thêa Xa-vila
 name-3SG.POSS T. NMLZ-dance

‘In this tribe they erected a chief who was still young, and his name was Firstborn the Dancer.’ (Thêa is a name commonly given to the firstborn son)

d. 3

Ca i apemoo vwa **li** xawe thamo
 in DEF.SG tribe EXIST DEF.PL young woman

‘In the tribe were young women.’ (indefinite, non-specific in the French original)

This description analyzes *i* ‘DEF.SG’ and *li* ‘DEF.PL’ as definite articles, using Lyons (1999)’s definition. Noun phrases marked with *i* and *li* are identifiable (Lyons 1999, 1), albeit not necessarily familiar (Lyons 1999, 3), see (13c) and (13d). Familiarity, to Lyons, is not an necessary feature for a construction to be definite (Lyons 1999, 5). As Lyons discusses in the pages following that statement, the uniqueness of a referent, in total or relative to the context (Lyons 1999, 8), or even “the totality of the objects [...] in the context which satisfy the description” (Lyons 1999, 11), can all be grounds for definiteness.

Example (14a) describes a woman not previously mentioned, *eca thamo a en maa-n* ‘she who has a beautiful face’: indefinite but specific. Example (14b) describes a similar situation: In-Thu is a unique, identifiable character, not previously introduced. However, the relative clause modifying her is defining, and so preceded by *i*, whereas the one in (14a) is not, and its modified noun takes *eca*. Example (13c) seems to use *ca* in an indefinite way, too, introducing a character who is then further specified and named.

(4.14) a. GC:4-6

tha fe nyamaa-n ca-n dawee-le eca thamo
 ASS.3SG take eye-3SG.POSS in-NSPEC between-3PL.POSS **some** woman
 a en maa-n. ka a xhani ma mwada-n.
 REL first face-3SG.POSS and 3SG choose SUBR wife-3SG.POSS
 Yata-n In Fwe
 name-3SG.POSS skin guettarda.speciosa

‘Some woman among them ‘took his eye’, who was the most beautiful. And he chose her as his wife. Her name was Figtree Bark’

b. GC:7. Note the *i a yatan* construction, ‘the who name-her’

le kiica ka meeka li been thamo, ma ca-n
 3PL jealous and all DEF.PL other woman COM in-INDF
 e-dawee-le i a yata-n In Thu.
 MID-between-3PL DEF.SG REL name-3SG.POSS skin banyan

‘All the other women were jealous, with among them all the one who was called Banyan Bark’

Vamale thus distinguishes specific from generic participants using articles (except for pronouns and proper names). The articles mark number and definiteness, and, through their presence, specificity. The criteria for definite noun phrases include identifiability and uniqueness, as shown in (14a), where a woman is introduced as one of many, compared to the obligatorily definite introduction of the unique village in (13b).

4.3.2 The articles *ca* and *eca* ‘some’

The article *eca* cannot co-occur with any of the other articles *i*, *mu*, *li*, nor with a demonstrative pronoun in the same phrase.² Table 4.4 also suggests *ca*-forms are used as articles, with *la* cognates in Hienghène-linkage languages.

(4.15) a. eca-aman

some-thing

‘something’

²The adverb *eca-ve* ‘some-where’ probably combines the stative verb *ve* ‘where? (immobile)’ with the article, as does *eca-se* ‘some-one’ (15).

- b. *eca-se*
some-one/other
'someone'
- c. *Usa*
eca-ve(n) xada
some-where up.there
'somewhere up there'

While *eca* is used in compounds with singular meaning (15), the distinction between singular and plural indefinite articles is becoming blurry. *ca* 'INDF.PL' is distinguished by older speakers from *eca* 'INDF.SG', but not anymore by many younger speakers, where the two forms are in relatively free variation. To what extent this distinction is still important is illustrated in the examples (16). According to Jeo Kalène (40 years old), 12.11.2018, *eca* is the singular and *ca* the plural indefinite article (16).

- (4.16) a. *tha vwa eca apuli a a vwa hmwaena*
ASS EXIST some.SG person REL 3SG do thus.DIST
'There is a person who does it like this'
- b. *ca* and *a* cannot refer to the same participant
**tha vwa ca apuli a a vwa hmwaena*
ASS EXIST some.PL man REL 3SG do thus.DIST
(for: 'There is a man who does thus')
- c. *eca* and *le* cannot refer to the same participant.
**tha vwa eca apuli a le vwa hmwaena*
ASS EXIST some.SG man REL 3PL do thus.DIST
(for: 'There is a/some man who does thus')
- d. *tha vwa ca apuli a le vwa hmwaena*
ASS EXIST some.PL man REL 3PL do thus.DIST
'There are people who do it like this'

(4.17) vamale-181127-jp_nelemwa-1: 00:05:02

e xaje ca been
1SG eat.juicy INDF.PL peer

‘I ate some of them’

cabeen, probably from *ca been* ‘some others, some of them’, see (17), is for 25-year-old Jean-Philippe Oué the unambiguous plural form of *eca*, whereas *ca* is a free variant of *eca*, but can also be used for the plural. A similar confusion is found in the examples below, which stem from the translated legend (the translators were all around 40-50 years old). The article in (18) could refer to plural or singular entities, but in (19) would more refer signify a single place.

(4.18) ma cika vuki-n ma a=xaahni **ca** aman ma a
SUBR NEG.EXIST reason-POSS SUBR 3SG=look.for INDF.PL thing SUBR 3SG
vwa tââ-n.
make oven-3SG.POSS

‘So that there was no reason for her to seek something to make her oven [with] (i.e. cook)’.

(4.19) i bwaabwen-an a ja han fwadai **ca**_i [ma a vwa
DEF.SG morning-POSS 3SG ACCP go search.INAN some __SUBR 3SG do
nyangan-aman la_i]
garden-something be.here

‘The next day (lit. its morning) she finally went to look for some place to make her field’

Since number is not marked on nouns, both (18) above and (20) below may actually denote non-singular rather than plural, since both refer to non-singular, possibly uncountable referents.

(4.20) fe ca xhua-m
take ART.INDF.PL food-2PL.POSS

‘Take some food [lit. Take some of your foodstuff]’

4.3.3 *li* vs *ni*

Vamale speakers use both *li* and *ni* as definite plural articles. While *ni* is the plural article in Bwato (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 42), it uses *le* for a “restricted plural” not attested in Vamale. In coastal Vamale, *li* and *ni* seem to be in free variation. *ni* seems to be the standard form in closely related Vamale Usa (spoken in Tiendanite and Pindache), see in (21), possibly under the influence of Pije or Nemi *ni* ‘DEF.NSPEC.PL’, see Table 4.3. The latter table shows that in 1970s Pije, according to Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 255, and even more so in Fwâi and Nemi, the articles were singular, dual, and plural, as well as definite specific, definite non-specific, and indefinite. However, this does not seem to be used anymore nowadays, as my bilingual informants had never heard of it, lacked examples to contextualize the system depicted in the *Dictionnaire* and were unaware of cognates in Vamale. This grammar will thus consider *ni* as a free variant of *li*.

(4.21) 0:01:29 of vamale-171129-ecology (Usa)

ma le tha-vwa ni ape-mae
SUBR 3PL strongly-do n. LOC.NMLZ-fire

‘And they start fires/make the fire places [not like before, they light too many fires now]’

4.3.4 Other, related languages

Articles are a widespread feature of Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 38). They are also common in Mainland New Caledonian languages, with the exception of Far Northern Nêlêmwa, which uses different verbal suffixes to distinguish specific from non-specific objects, and possibly Nyelâyu, where abbreviated demonstratives can act as articles (Ozanne-Rivierre 1998, 43). All Northern languages use articles, from Jawe (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 255) to Paicî (Rivierre 1983, 177). Interestingly, though language contact and multilingualism were common and encouraged until at least the early 20th, article systems are not identical. Cèmuhi, for example, distinguishes nouns along personified/neutral and female/non-female axes (Rivierre 1980, 144). The Hienghène systems distinguish definite, definite specific, and indefinite, where Vamale only has a definite/indefinite distinction (see Table 4.3). Bwato is described to have two plurals (but only one dual): an unmarked one, and a “restricted” one, which is used for groups of known or cohesive elements (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 42), a feature which was not found in Vamale.

³This may be a complex form, with *-n* ‘NSPEC’.

TABLE 4.3: The article system in 1970 Hienghène languages (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 255)

	Singular			Dual			Plural		
	def.	def. sp.	indef.	def.	def. sp.	indef.	def.	def. sp.	indef.
Pije	<i>vin</i> ³	<i>vi</i>	<i>va</i>		<i>maali</i>	<i>maala</i>	<i>ni</i>	<i>li</i>	<i>la</i>
Fwâi	<i>ven</i>	<i>veli</i>	<i>vera</i>	<i>maan</i>	<i>maali</i>	<i>maara</i>	<i>ngen</i>	<i>ngeli</i> / <i>li</i>	<i>ngera</i>
Nemi 1	<i>vin</i>	<i>vi</i>	<i>va</i>	<i>maan</i>	<i>maali</i>	<i>maara</i>	<i>ni</i>	<i>li</i>	<i>ra</i>
Nemi 2	<i>ven</i>	<i>vi</i> / <i>veli</i>	<i>vera</i> / <i>va</i>	<i>maan</i>	<i>maali</i>	<i>maara</i>	<i>ngen</i>	<i>ngeli</i>	<i>(nge)ra</i>
Jawe	<i>nei</i>	<i>di(i)</i>	<i>ya</i>		<i>deuli</i>	<i>deulixen</i>		<i>deeli</i>	<i>deelixen</i> / <i>yaxen</i>

TABLE 4.4: Pwaamei Hnaakâ (1a)/ Pwaamei Yaak (1b) / Pwapwâ (2) / Bwato (3) / Usa (4) articles in: (Ozanne-Rivierre, 94,95) (1-2) and (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 42) (3), fieldwork 2017 (4).

	DEF					INDF				
	1a	1b	2	3	4	1a	1b	2	3	4
SG	<i>ve</i>	<i>vi</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>a/(a)ni</i>	<i>vi(n)</i>	<i>veca</i>	<i>vica</i>	<i>deca</i>	?	<i>veca</i>
DU	<i>vaabu</i>	<i>vaabu</i>	<i>duuli</i>	?	<i>mu</i>	<i>vaabuca</i>	<i>vaabuca</i>	<i>duulica</i>	?	?
PL	<i>ni/i</i>	<i>ni/i</i>	<i>i/dili</i>	<i>(le)ni</i>	<i>ni (li)</i>	<i>ca</i>	<i>ca</i>	<i>ca</i>	?	?

The more archaic Vamale variety Usa kept *v-* in its articles, which is found in Pwaamei, Pije as well, and was dropped in Vamale (see Table 4.4). *muu-hni* ‘DU-PROX, those two’ is frequent, and *mu-ca* ‘DU-INDF’ accepted, following the Pwaamei logic of *vaabu* / *vaabu-ca* (see Table 4.6). A combination of dual article and demonstrative suffix (in this case, a proximate visible one) is thus possible, and results in a demonstrative pronoun.

The definite articles *i* and *li* can derive relative clauses to nouns (22).

(4.22) a. B1:8

le=vwa ma le=thabilo li=a le=fee-ko
 3PL=do SUBR 3PL=strike DEF.PL=REL 3PL=take-2SG.OBJ

‘They want to kill those who took you’

TABLE 4.5: Bwato articles

SG	<i>a</i>	<i>(a)ni</i>
DU	<i>(a)lu</i>	<i>luni</i>
restricted PL	<i>(a)le</i>	<i>leni</i>
PL		<i>ni</i>

TABLE 4.6: Pwaamei / Pwapwâ articles in: Ozanne-Rivierre

		DEF			INDF	
	Pwm Hnaakâ	Yaak	Pwapwâ	Pwm Hnaakâ	Yaak	Pwapwâ
SG	<i>ve</i>	<i>vi</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>veca</i>	<i>vica</i>	<i>deca</i>
DU	<i>vaabu</i>	<i>vaabu</i>	<i>duuli</i>	<i>vaabuca</i>	<i>vaabuca</i>	<i>duulica</i>
PL	<i>ni/i</i>	<i>ni/i</i>	<i>i/dili</i>	<i>ca</i>	<i>ca</i>	<i>ca</i>

TABLE 4.7: Demonstrative pronouns

	Proximal	Distal
SG	<i>e-hni</i>	<i>e-na</i>
DU	<i>muu-hni</i>	<i>muu-na</i>
PL	<i>ni-e-hni</i>	<i>ni-e-na</i>

b. JV:11

na i a vwa wî-n
DEM 3SG DEF.SG REL EXIST

‘That’s the strong one [among them]’

4.4 Demonstratives

Demonstrative pronouns have nominal status in the sense that they function syntactically as nouns including case marking, except that they cannot take articles. Vamale demonstratives distinguish proximal and distal (see Table 4.7), making the system a bit simpler than the regional three-way average (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 38). They are a closed class of six, whose members are only partially transparent. All forms contain a distal or proximal suffix, and the dual forms still carry as a stem the dual article *mu*. The plural forms’ stem *ni* is identical to the plural article in Usa Vamale and other Voh-Koné varieties (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 42) discussed under Section 4.3.3, and is accepted by most speakers of Vamale as well. The segment *e-* in the singular forms may derive from the singular article *i*, the plural forms could be composed of plural article *ni* and the singular, already lexicalised form. Demonstrative pronouns can serve both as topic or comment (23).

(4.23) a. GS:76

cahma **ehni** a mu tua tua i aman
TOP DEM.PROX 3SG FREQ unwrap unwrap DEF.SG thing

‘But him he was unwrapping unwrapping the thing’

b. ET:1

li thôa koon, li e paa vii **ehni** a
 DEF.SG custom.object OBL-NSPEC DEF.PL 1SG ALR say DEM.PROX REL
 kon mo cahni
 PROG stay here

‘The ceremonial objects I mentioned are these, which are lying here.’

4.4.1 *na* ‘dem’, *ha* ‘dem.rep’

The pronoun *na* is special, because it can be used as a presentative (“this is Liline”), and to mark the comment of an equative clause (24a, 24b). Since *hni* does not exist (anymore), *na* is neither proximal nor distal, and functions as a more neutral pronoun.

(4.24) a. KG:472.1

[na]_{NP} [vaang [hapi [na]_{NP} [Lilin]_{NPVP} a [[na=mwa]_{NP} [Liiz]_{NP}]_{clause}
 DEM unknown COMP DEM L. or DEM=REP L.
 a]_{SUBR.clause}]
 or

‘It’s unclear if it was Liline or if it was Lise or’

b. KL:122.1

jacob, tha juu xa-vee ma hmwaana. **na** hmwaana,
 J., ASS real NMLZ.AGT-fuck SUBR thus. DEM thus
 go=xaleke?
 2SG=see

‘Jacob, it’s bad for him if it’s like this. That’s how it is, you see?’

4.5 Nouns

Vamale nouns are defined in this grammar as syntactic units which can bear articles. Few other factors distinguish nouns from verbs, but nouns can be arguments to verbs, most of them can be possessed (though possessive morphology shows overlaps with some verbal morphology, see Section 7.2), and though they do take some TAM marking, not all TAM marking is attested for nouns (examples include *bwa balan* ‘IPFV CONT’, *ja* ‘ACCP’). Nouns are an open class and are described in detail in Chapter 5.

4.5.1 Classifiers

Vamale possesses several types of classifiers, most prominently two types of relational classifiers, one for dynamic relations *ka*, and one for food and drink items (*xhua*- ‘proteiny food’, *ya*- ‘starchy food’, *udoo*- ‘cold drink’, etc.), and one type of noun classifier (for parts of plants). Their occurrence is semantically specified. This class is described in more detail in Section 5.3.

4.5.2 Relational nouns

Relational nouns are the functional equivalent of spatial prepositions in Vamale, meaning they are the head of a phrase. Their modifier ~possessor is the location in which the noun phrase or verb phrase is located (25a). The members of this closed class are possessed (mostly inalienably) and cannot take an article. Members include *xala-n* ‘under’, *cela-n* ‘next to’, *pwa-n* ‘on top of’, *pwan bwa-n* ‘on (top of)’, *cakebwa-n* ‘on the other side’, (*can*) *dawee-n* ‘(in-) between’, *ca-n* ‘in, at’, *can hawâ-n* ‘facing’, *ko-n* ‘on’, *pathabua-n* ‘before (spatial and temporal)’, all of which are inalienably possessed, and *cai-n* ‘behind an animate entity’.

puput ‘behind (a building or a sizeable entity)’ is a stative verb which takes alienable possessive morphology (*puput-ea* ‘behind-3SG, behind it’). Some of the locative nouns are derived from nouns using a devoicing of the first consonant, e.g. *bwa-n* ‘head, top’ → *pwa-n* ‘on top’, *jela-n* ‘side’ → *cela-n* ‘next to’. Inalienably possessed locative nouns like *xala-n* ‘under’, all lose their final *-n* if followed by a specific argument (25b).

- (4.25) a. a=xheela-ta pwa-n ye
 3SG=crawl-go.up on-INDF tree
 ‘He tree-climbs’
- b. a=xheela-ta pwa i ye
 3SG=crawl-go.up on DEF.SG tree
 ‘He climbs the tree/a tree.’

4.6 Personal pronouns

Vamale uses eleven pronominal forms listed in Table 4.8, distinguishing singular, dual, and plural, as well as inclusive and exclusive first persons. The forms are pronouns in the sense that they can take up the same slot as a noun. The difference to subject

TABLE 4.8: S – free form

	1 (EXCL)	1+ (INCL)	2	3
SG		<i>yo</i>	<i>go</i>	<i>ya</i>
DU	<i>abu</i>	<i>gasu</i>	<i>gau</i>	<i>lu</i>
PL	<i>abe</i>	<i>gase</i>	<i>gavwe</i>	<i>le</i>

marker clitics is that the pronouns cannot co-occur with another noun phrase that has the same syntactic function, whereas subject index clitics are always present (except in imperatives, or in stative verbs with inanimate subjects). This means that, at least following the Uniqueness condition after Kroeger asking for each grammatical relation to be assigned only once within its clause (Kroeger 2004, 19), subject indexing clitics (or “bound pronouns”) and free personal pronouns are not allomorphs. Compare to Table 4.9. Pronouns can take subject markers (see example 26), but not articles.

- (4.26) e=vii ka yo
 1SG=say SBJ 1SG
 ‘I say.’

4.7 Subject indexing bound pronouns

As mentioned in Section 4.6, Vamale uses proclitics derived from free pronominal forms, in order to index subject NPs on active verbs, see Table 4.9. Note that stative verbs mark the intransitive subject much like alienable possessums do (compare Table 4.10). The clitics occur before active verbal, or nominal predicates, in the slot left of the TAM markers. The pair *yo* ~*e* ‘1SG’ is the same in Cèmuhî (Rivierre 1980, 61), but not in other Voh-Koné languages. The other markers are transparently Voh-Koné, and almost identical with the western varieties: ⟨zha⟩ [ḏa] ~⟨a⟩ [a] ‘3SG’ is described for Bwato as well (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 31). The sound correspondence [ḏ] ~[j] is a regular one between coastal and mountain varieties. Note that while the bound pronouns are mostly very similar to the free ones, they can co-occur in the same clause (27), which is a sign that they do not have the same syntactic role: the free forms are true pronouns, whereas the bound ones have become grammaticalized to subject indexes on predicates.

- (4.27) e xale-le ka yo
 1SG see-3PL.OBJ SBJ 1SG
 ‘I see them.’

TABLE 4.9: Subject and object markers for active and stative verbs

	Free form	A=/S _A =	-S _P	-P
1SG	<i>io</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>-o(ng)</i>	<i>-o</i>
1DU.INCL	<i>gasu</i>	<i>gasu</i>	<i>-gasu</i>	<i>-kaeu</i>
1PL.INCL	<i>gaa/gase</i>	<i>ga(se)</i>	<i>gaa</i>	<i>-kaa</i>
1DU.EXCL	<i>abu</i>	<i>abu</i>	<i>-abu</i>	<i>-(a)bu</i>
1PL.EXCL	<i>abe</i>	<i>abe</i>	<i>-abe</i>	<i>-(a)be</i>
2SG	<i>go</i>	<i>go</i>	<i>-go</i>	<i>-ko</i>
2DU	<i>gau</i>	<i>gau</i>	<i>-gau</i>	<i>-kau</i>
2PL	<i>gavwe</i>	<i>gavwe</i>	<i>-gavwe</i>	<i>-kavwe</i>
3SG	<i>ia</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>-(e)a</i>	<i>-(e)a</i>
3DU	<i>lu</i>	<i>lu</i>	<i>-lu</i>	<i>-lu</i>
3PL	<i>le</i>	<i>le</i>	<i>-le</i>	<i>-le</i>

TABLE 4.10: Possessive suffix paradigms

		inalienable I	inalienable Ib	alienable II
SG	1	<i>-ng</i>	<i>-ong</i>	<i>-eong</i>
	2	<i>-m</i>	<i>-am</i>	<i>-go</i>
	3	<i>-n</i>	<i>-an</i>	<i>-ea</i>
DU	1INCL	<i>-ju</i>	<i>-aju</i>	<i>-gaeu</i>
	1EXCL	<i>-bu</i>	<i>-abu</i>	<i>-abu</i>
	2	<i>-u</i>	<i>-au</i>	<i>-gau</i>
	3	<i>-lu</i>	<i>-alu</i>	<i>-lu</i>
PL	1INCL	<i>-je</i>	<i>-aje</i>	<i>-gaa</i>
	1EXCL	<i>-be</i>	<i>-abe</i>	<i>-abe</i>
	2	<i>-vwe</i>	<i>-avwe</i>	<i>-gavwe</i>
	3	<i>-le</i>	<i>-ale</i>	<i>-le</i>

4.8 Prepositions

Prepositions are derived from inalienable nominal forms (but do not take articles) and, similarly to locative nouns (see Section 4.5.2), they can have generic or specific markers. There are only four members: *ko* ‘lit. on’ ‘OBL’, *si* ‘for (human)’ (28b), *nya-si* ‘lit. put/place-hand’ ‘for (human)’ (28a), *nya-ko* ‘lit. put/place-on; for (all)’. Forms with *ko* are lengthened when generic or anaphoric (i.e. *koo-n*), and not followed by a NP. Since the markers cannot be modified, lack lexical content, and attach to noun phrases, we call them particles. A more detailed description is found in section 6.1.2.2.

- (4.28) a. *tha lu mata nyasi i jamwa-n sohmu-n*
 ASS 3DU sing for DEF.SG father-POSS study-NSPEC
 ‘They sing for the teacher’
- b. *a nya balan-o si li thamo ka i*
 3SG put piece.of.length-bamboo BEN DEF.PL woman SBJ DEF.SG
xa-vwa-o
 AGT.NMLZ-do-bamboo
 ‘The bamboo cutter hands bamboo poles to the women’

4.9 Relativizer

The relativizer *a* introduces a relative clause subordinated to a noun phrase (29a). It sometimes left out. It is probably related to *a* ‘3SG’.⁴ Relative clauses can be derived to nouns by an article (29b).

- (4.29) a. G2:37
e thapi i iila a a vwa
 1SG break DEF.SG pot REL 3SG do
 ‘I break the pot that he made’
- b. AG1:81
li a le=vwa-sukin
 DEF.PL REL 3PL=do-price
 ‘Those who shop’

⁴The relativizers in Cèmuhî are related to the plural article *li* and proximal *naa* (Rivierre 1980, 92). The relativizer in Bwatoo is the same as in Vamale (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 473, 486).

As the relativizer and the third person singular are both *a*, they usually merge (30).

(4.30) *exaleke iapuli axhwi-puaka*

e=xaleke i=apuli a=a=xhwi puaka
 1SG=see DEF.SG=man REL=3SG=eat pig

‘I see the man who is eating pork.’

4.10 Subject marker *ka*

The subject marker *ka* marks the subject noun phrase. On the grounds that it is part of the noun phrase, but does not attach to any specific word class, that it is phonologically part of its host structure, and that it can itself not be modified or fronted, it is a proclitic. Obligatory for A arguments and optional for S (this is probably a more recent development), *ka* can also be used to mark a focused possessor, though this is rare. A *ka* marked noun phrase cannot be fronted. This distinguishes *ka* from OBL markers and phrase heads *ko*, *nyako*, and *nyasi*, which are hence considered complete own p- and g-words, whereas *ka* is not only dependent on a noun phrase, but also on the latter’s unmarked post-predicate position. See Section 6.1.1 for a detailed description.

4.11 TAM markers

Vamale has around a dozen morphemes used to situate an event relative to its temporal context (aspect), to the speaker moment (tense), and to reality in general (mood). Most of them are aspectual markers. Although Vamale traditionally does not seem to have expressed tense, this is nowadays done with *bwa* ‘IPFV’ and *(b)o* ‘IRR’ for future tense. Most of the morphemes listed here and described in Chapter 10 are used for several functions, and this is the case for all mood functions (e.g. *balan* ‘CONT’ and *bo* ‘IRR’, but also *ja* ‘finally’). Syntactically speaking, all of the TAM markers proper are particles: though they directly precede the predicate (and follow the subject index proclitics), and though most cannot be fronted, they can be stressed. They can combine with other TAM markers to form either transparent or idiosyncratic new meanings (31). Their meaning depends on the word class of the predicate’s head and the aktionsart of the verb.

- (4.31) e=bwa kon vii
 1SG=IPFV PROG say
 ‘I am still saying.’

Their basic members are *bwa(n)* ‘IPFV’, *pa* ‘ALR’, *ja* ‘ACCP’, *(b)o* ‘IRR, FUT’, *balan* ‘CONT’, and *mu* ‘FREQ, ITER’. Some combinations are very common, but will be discussed in detail in the dedicated chapter. *xa-* ‘HAB (most likely from NMLZ.AGT)’, as a prefix, is only semantically related to them.

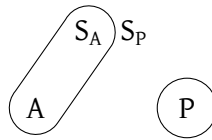
4.11.1 Phasal negation *ban* ‘not yet’

ban ‘not yet’, like a TAM marker, takes a slot between the subject marker and the verb (32). It only occurs after the negator *cipa*. *ban* may be related to *bwa* ‘IPFV’, which in negated verb phrases has the allomorph *bwan*.

- (4.32) G4 16, 17
 cipa go=ban han xaleke
 NEG 2SG=not.yet go see
 ‘You never went to see’

4.12 Verbs

Verbs are by far the biggest word class and so diverse that a more in-depth description is provided in Chapter 7. There are active verbs and stative ones, the latter often describing more state-like, or patientive events. In Vamale, verbs distinguish themselves from other word classes by their participant indexes, which are proclitics for active verbs and suffixes for stative ones. While the proclitics will also attach to nominal predicates, they are optional for nouns, whereas verbs require them in non-imperative settings. Contrary to nouns, verbs cannot take articles. Verbs take derivational morphemes like causative *fa-*, reflexive *e-*, and attenuative *the-*. The animacy of participants influences whether participants are indexed on the verb; inanimate referents to not trigger stative subject suffixes (33d) nor object suffixes. Participant indexing on verbs thus displays tripartite alignment: active verbs index transitive and intransitive subjects identically while distinguishing objects (33a, 33b). Stative verbs do not index their invariably intransitive subject like active verbs do (33c), nor do their suffixes overlap with undergoer marking on transitive verbs (33a). An illustration is given in Section 4.12.



- (4.33) a. *e=xhwii-ko*
1SG=bite-2SG.OBJ
'I bite you'
- b. *e=thana*
1SG=wander
'I wander around'
- c. *sinu-go*
suffer-2SG
'You are ill, you suffer'
- d. *sinu (i xh-ong)*
suffer (DEF.SG leg-1SG.POSS)
'(My leg) hurts'

The main types of verbs are the following.

1. **active transitive:** The subject marker precedes the verb (except in the imperative), and the verb takes an argument (see Section 7.3.1). *e=xale-ke/ko* 'I see it / you'
2. **active intransitive:** The subject marker precedes the verb, the verb does not take an argument. *e=moo* 'I stay', *a=yajen* 'it shakes, trembles', *a=temineen* 'it floats'. The productive transitive suffix *-ke* and the older *-i* can often be added to derive a transitive form (see Section 7.3.1.1).
3. **stative:** stative verbs are directly followed by their subject marker. The latter are bound to the verb stem and cannot choose their host, which is why I analyze them as suffixes rather than clitics. *me-o* 'I die'. While the proclitic subject markers of active verbs are obligatory for all subjects, the stative subject markers are only obl. for human arguments. They are almost, but not completely identical to the object markers found on transitive active verbs with animate objects that are not expressed as noun phrases (see Table 4.9). Stative verbs cover a few semantically defined, closed groups of words.
 - numerals (*see-a* 'be.one-3SG', *thaloo-lu* 'be.two-3DU', *thien-le* 'be.three-3SG')
 - semantically "patientive" verbs like *sinu-ong* 'suffer-1SG' 'I am sick/ I suffer', *xhwiiti-o koo-n* 'long.after-1SG OBL-3SG' 'I miss it'
 - *heeve-o/-go/-a* 'where-1SG/-2SG/-3SG' 'where am I/are you/is s/he'
 - verbs with "adjectival meanings" like *vun-go* 'blue/green-2SG' 'you are blue/green', *xhopwe-* '(be) grow(n)', *mapehno-le* 'they are few'

4. There is also a group of verbs that cannot occur alone. They are not transitive, nor can they take subject markers, and they occur before or after another, independent, verb. These bound roots (called roots because they take no morphology on their own) are further described in Section 8.3.2.2

4.13 Adverbs

Vamale possesses a small, open class of adverbs. They occur at the end of a clause or phrase, are frequently fronted without a phrase (34a), take neither articles nor any kind of possessive or inflective morphology, and are, if at all, modified by the intensifiers described under Section 4.19, *juu*. As they modify verb, noun, and prepositional phrases, and as they can be fronted alone, this analysis considers them to be adjuncts. Most members are transparently derived from nouns or prepositional phrases. See Section 8.4 for examples of their interaction with verb and noun phrases. Example (34a) features two cases of fronted adverbs, (34b) shows an adverb at the end of a verb phrase, and (34c) shows an adverb after noun phrase.

- (4.34) a. CP1:29. Adverbs are in bold, brackets show phrases, the comma separates two clauses

ka [jethro] **canbwen** man **bwethalo** [le cuut cahni ka ni
 CNJ J. yesterday COM two.days.ago 3PL stand here SBJ DEF.PL
 bee-m-ca], **cahni** [ca-n xhoogo]
 peer-2SG.POSS-PROX here in-NSPEC home

‘And Jethro, yesterday and the day before your relatives stood here, here at home’

- b. B2:134

e ha-mwa **canbwen**
 1SG go-REP yesterday

‘I went back yesterday’

- c. AG1:160

na i vaaya-n xayu **habu** ka
 DEM DEF.SG work-POSS man before DISC

‘This was a man’s work back then, like’

TABLE 4.11: Locative adverbs

Axis	Verb	Simple location	Closeby	Further away
same-level	<i>han</i>	<i>xa-han</i>	<i>nya-xa-han</i>	<i>nya-an xa-han</i>
downward	<i>hut</i>	<i>xa-hut</i>	<i>nya-xa-hut</i>	<i>nya-ut xa-hut</i>
upward	<i>ta</i>	<i>xa-da</i>	<i>nya-xa-da</i>	<i>nya-da xa-da</i>
downstream	<i>hnuut</i>	<i>xa-hnuut</i>	<i>nya-xa-hnuut</i>	<i>nya-hnut xa-hnuut</i>
upstream	<i>hnuuda</i>	<i>xa-hnuuda</i>	<i>nya-xa-hnuuda</i>	<i>nya-hnuda xa-hnuuda</i>

4.13.1 Temporal adverbs

Temporal adverbs are a closed class of words that can occur in a fronted position (35). They cannot take articles. Temporal adverbs were almost all derived from nominals, compare *bwaabwen* ‘morning’ is related to the adverb *bwaabwen-an* ‘in the morning after’. Members include *ca-n-bwen* ‘yesterday (lit. ‘in-NSPEC-night’), *naen* ‘today/now’, *xahmaen* ‘tomorrow⁵, *jimin* ‘late at night (after having fallen asleep)’, *bwethaloo* ‘two days ago’, *thaloobwen* ‘overmorrow (lit. “two nights”’, *daboo-n bwen* ‘midnight (“lit. puddle/lake of the night”’, *hnyanan* ‘constantly (lit. “its breath”’, *mati* ‘earlier’, *mu-bwen* ‘early in the morning (lit. “little night”’, *nyeet* ‘when?’ *ca-li-been* ‘sometimes (lit. “among the others”)’.

(4.35) KG:21

na li *peintures* habu
DEM DEF.PL paint before

‘It’s the [style of] painting from the old days’

4.13.2 Locative adverbs

A closed class of words describes locations. They are derived from movement verbs.⁶ They do not bear articles, can be fronted alone (36b), and can modify verbs (36a) as well as nouns (36c). Locative adverbs can be predicates, see (36c). Contrary to locative nouns (Section 4.5.2), locative adverbs do not form possessive relations with nouns, nor do they take generic *-n*. Table 4.11 shows a summary of the forms. For a more thorough account of space, see Section 7.4.3.

⁵Proto (Southern) Oceanic *marani (Lynch 2004, 314)

⁶*patemwano* ‘directly next to it’, *ngangeno* ‘closeby’ in Pije (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 170), can be used in the same slots but does not possess the morphological combinatorics shown in Table 4.11.

- (4.36) a. go moo xahut, go xahut, go hut xahut
 2SG stay below 2SG below 2SG go.down below
 ‘You live down there, you’re down there, you go down there’
- b. xahut, go majit mati
 below 2SG rest earlier
 ‘Down there, you were sleeping earlier’
- c. i apuli (a=) xahut
 DEF.SG man (3SG) below
 ‘The man is down there’

4.13.3 *hman* ‘also’

hman ‘also’ modifies verbs (37a), nouns (37b), and adverbs. Contrary to temporal and locative adverbs, *hman* always comes after the modified word and cannot be fronted on its own. Similarly to *mwa* (Section 11.4), *hman* is used as a discourse marker as well, with a meaning of ‘however’ (37c).

- (4.37) a. KG:9
 tha gau han tha gau tha gase bo arriver *hman*
 ASS 2DU go ASS 2DU ASS 1PL.INCL IRR arrive also
 ‘You go [despite the height of the steel beam], you two, we’ll get [to the other side], too’
- b. KG: 30-1
 li=meeka i=...li=nyan-mwa ca-n_{house} ***hman***
 DEF.PL=all DEF.SG=...DEF.PL=inside-house in-ANA also
 ‘All the rooms in the house as well’
- c. GP:73
 thake yavo kavi tha cipa xhwii *hman*
 throw fishing.line but ASS NEG bite also
 ‘Threw out the fishing line but it didn’t bite though’

4.14 Complementizer *hapi*

Clauses that are complement to verbs of cognition (38a), opinion, and perception (38b), are introduced by the subordinator *hapi*. Considering Lynch, Ross, and Crowley (2002)'s observation that Oceanic languages tend to use a form related or identical to the word 'to say' to introduce complement clauses (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 53), that Voh-Koné languages changed *p-* → *v-*, and that Hienghène languages have *pee* 'to say; COMP' (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 260), postulating *a=vii* 's/he says' as the origin of *hapi* seems plausible.

- (4.38) a. *e=caihna-n hapi tha hmwaana*
 1SG=know-NSPEC COMP ASS thus
 'I know that it's like that'
- b. *sahnaang-eong hapi tha hmwaana*
 not.understand-1SG COMP ASS thus
 'I'm not sure/I doubt that it's like that'

4.15 Conjunctions

Vamale distinguishes two groups of conjunctions: those that link noun phrases, and those that link verb phrases as well as clauses. Clauses are defined by the presence of a predicate, which is in most cases a verb phrase. This book call the conjunctions linking these "verbal", to distinguish them from nominal ones.

4.15.1 Nominal conjunctions

Nominal conjunctions connect noun (phrases) and form a new constituent containing the connected noun phrases and the conjunction. Members include *ma* 'and / with' (39a), *ka* 'on the other hand' (39b), *hai ~a* 'or' (39c) with its derivate *hai...hai* 'either...or' (39d), *moko* 'more than'. *moko* may be complex and composed of *moo* 'rest, reside' and *ko* 'on' (Section 8.5). It has no Hienghène cognate. The other Voh-Koné varieties share the form, however. Rivierre and Ehrhardt suggest a makeup of *mo* 'from', as in *e ha-me mo Tuo* 'I come **from** Touho', and *ko* 'on' (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 215).

- (4.39) a. *i=wabatan* *ma i=xat*
 DEF.SG=north.wind and DEF.SG=sun
 'The north wind and the sun'
- b. *i=wabatan* *ka i=xat*
 DEF.SG=north.wind and DEF.SG=sun
 'The north wind, and (on the other hand) the sun'
- c. *i=wabatan* *hai i=xat*
 DEF.SG=north.wind or DEF.SG=sun
 'The north wind or the sun'
- d. *hai i=wabatan* *hai i=xat*
 or DEF.SG=north.wind or DEF.SG=sun
 'Either the north wind or the sun'

4.15.2 Verbal conjunctions

The set of verbal conjunctions is small and closed, and groups together some morphemes which only occur in this set, like *kavi* 'but', with words also present in other distributional classes. The meaning distinctions between *kavi* 'but [introducing something in contrast with the former element]', *ko* 'but [introducing something unexpected]', and *ma* 'but [relaying something related but different]' are fine and depend on the context. Members include *ka* 'and' (40a), *kavi* 'but' (40b), *ma* 'and, but' (40c), *hai* ~ *a* 'or' (40d), *ko* 'but; because', *kona* 'furthermore'.

- (4.40) a. *le=hame* *ka* *le=siwa=mwa*
 3PL=come and 3PL=return=REP
 'They came and they left again'
- b. *le=hame* *kavi* *le=siwa-mwa*
 3PL=come but 3PL=return-REP
 'They came but they left again'
- c. *le=ha-me* *ma le=siwa-mwa*
 3PL=go-DIR.CP and 3PL=return-REP
 'They come and/in order to go'

- d. le=ha-me hai le=siwa=mwa
 3PL=go-DIR.CP or 3PL=return=REP
 'They come or they go'

ka is also used colloquially after a clause to ask for confirmation (41), see Section 11.2.1.1.

- (4.41) i apuli a=xahan ka?
 DEF.SG person REL=over.there DISC
 'The guy over there, like?'

4.15.2.1 Numeral coordinators *na-bwa*, *ko*

Numbers are verbal, and (*na*)-*bwa* (possibly from DEM-‘head’) ‘plus’ (42a), and *ko* ‘times’ (probably from *ko* ‘on’) are used to construct complex numbers (42b).

- (4.42) a. nim a-bwa se
 nim na-bwa se
 5 plus 1
 ‘6’
- b. nim na-bwa se ko apuli nabwa nim na-bwa se
 5 plus 1 times man/20 plus 5 plus 1
 ‘126’

4.16 Subordinators

Vamale subordinators introduce a subordinated clause. They precede all other elements of said clause, and cannot occur without the clause, moving with it if fronted, see examples (43). All those ending on *-a* assimilate to following *e*= ‘1SG’. They are proclitics. Members include *cala* ‘when’ *cama* ‘if’, *ma* ‘as / in order to’, *ko* ‘because’, *ko-ma* ‘so that’, *ecupwa* ‘until’.⁷

⁷Possibly from *e-cuut-pwa* ‘REFL-stand-on’

- (4.43) a. cel=e=hame go=pa yahan
 when=1SG=come 2SG=ALR leave
 'When I came, you had already left.'
- b. cala go=hame e=pa yahan
 when 2SG=come 1SG=ALR leave
 'When you came, I had already left'
- c. cem=e hame go=pa yahan
 if/when=1SG come 2SG=ALR leave
 'If I come, you will already have left.'
 'whenever I come, you already have left'
- d. cama go=hame e=pa yahan
 if/when 2SG=come 1SG=ALR leave
 'If you come, I will already have left.'
 'whenever you come, I already have left'
- e. m=e hame go=pa yahan
 as=1SG come 2SG=ALR leave
 'As I come, you've already left'
- f. ma le=fe, le=mu=xaahni
 as 3SG=take, 3PL=FREQ=check
 'When they take it, they check it'

Non-fronted examples, illustrated in (44), are the norm.

- (4.44) a. AG1:22
 tha abe saavi cama=abe icu-koo-n ko-n *marché*
 ASS 1PL.EXCL dig.up SUBR=1PL.EXCL trade-OBL-ANA on-NSPEC market
 'We dig (them) up when we sell them on the market'
- b. le=thêên cala le=siwa-mwa
 3PL=run when.REAL 3PL=return-REP
 'They ran when they went back'

- c. le=thêên ma le=yahan
 3PL=run when.IRR/if 3PL=leave
 '(usually) they run when they leave' / 'they would run if they left'
- d. e=ha-me ma go=bwa=yahan
 1SG=go-DIR.CP SUBR 2SG=IPFV=leave
 'I come as as you leave' / 'I come if you leave' / 'I come so that you leave'

4.17 Negation markers

The negation markers *cipa* 'NEG' and *cipii* 'PROH' share their scope over the entire following clause and their left-most position. The negation markers are not identical in their distribution and could, strictly speaking, be classified into two separate classes. Contrary to *cipa* 'neg' (45a), *cipii* 'PROH' cannot take assertive *tha*, nor *na* 'FOC'. Furthermore, *cipii* often omits the subject marker, which *cipa* cannot do (46). This grammar will treat *cipa* as a proclitic, because it integrates into the following verb phrase's stress structure, and assimilates phonologically to it as well (45b).

- (4.45) a. (tha) cipa [go=bwaa=majit]?
 (ASS) NEG 2SG=IPFV=sleep
 'Aren't you still asleep?'
 b. [ci.pe.'mãn.jit]
 cipa= e= majit
 NEG 1SG= sleep
 'I don't sleep.'

- (4.46) cipii xaloo koo-ng hmwaahni (ka go)!
 PROH gaze OBL-1SG.POSS thus SBJ 2SG
 'Don't look at me like that!'

4.18 Assertive *tha*

The assertive marker *tha* is a proclitic that docks onto the predicates of non-imperative clauses, on the left-most position (47a). *tha* assimilates to *e=* '1SG', like *cipa* 'NEG' (47b).

(4.47) a. KG:497

au lieu *ma* *tha* *bwa* *xhavwale* *i* *copain-ea* *vukin*
 instead SUBR ASS IPFV wait DEF.SG friend-3SG.POSS reason
tha *bo* *guide-ea*
 ASS.3SG IRR guide-3SG.POSS

‘Instead of waiting for his friend, because he would be his guide’

b. B3:3

cala *th=e* *vwa-tau*
 when ASS=1SG do-impact

‘When I fish’

4.19 Intensifiers

The two intensifiers *juu* ‘real, very’ and *vaa* ‘(too) much’ (most often preceded by *juu*, but see (48b)) cannot stand alone, are semantically vague (see Table 4.12), and attach to the head of a phrase (be that a noun, an adverb, or anything else (48a)) as closely as possible. Given that they can be stressed, they are analyzed as particles, though anti-clitic may be a better term considering the fact that they syntactically depend on a host that can be nominal, verbal, or adverbial in nature. *juu* is also associated to *bwa* ‘IPFV’, as described in Section 10.3.2.

(4.48) a. *a=juu* *hnyimake* *ka* *i=juu* *apuli*, *juu* *ca-n-bwen*
 3SG=very think SBJ DEF.SG=real person real in-NSPEC-night

‘He thought hard, the real man, just yesterday’

b. KG:140

ma *go* *hmwaani* *vwasoon*, *ma* *go* *hmwaani* *vaa...*
 COND 2SG like.this impossible COND 2SG like.this too.much

‘If you do it like this, it’s impossible, and if you do it like this, it’s too...’

The particle *vaa*, depending on the word it modifies, means ‘much (uncountable)’ with non-human nouns (49a), intensifies the following verb, e.g. *vaa thêên* ‘strongly run’ ‘run fast’, and in combination with *ju* ‘real, true’, it means ‘too much’, as in (49b).

TABLE 4.12: Meanings of compounds with *juu*

Form	translation of the second morpheme	translation of the whole
<i>juu han</i>	walk	‘walk barefoot’
<i>juu aman</i>	thing	‘important (adverb)’
<i>juu we</i>	water	‘drinking water’
<i>juu toot</i>	grass	‘thatching grass’
<i>juu o</i>	bamboo	‘building bamboo’
<i>juu mwa</i>	house	‘trad. house’
<i>juu mani</i>	bird	‘ <i>notou</i> [<i>ducula goliath</i>]’
<i>juu apuli</i>	person	‘Kanak’
<i>juujuu</i>		‘truth’

(4.49) a. J3 16.1

e-vaa nya-da xa-da
 MID-INTS towards-up.there LOC.ADV-up
 ‘There are many (feral pigs) up there’

b. KP:98

juu va vwasoon ma gase vwa li vaaya-n li
 real much difficult COMP 1PL.INCL do DEF.PL work-POSS DEF.PL
 xhaohmu
 elder
 ‘It’s too hard for us to do the work of the elders’

4.20 Repetitive *mwa*

This class only has one member. *mwa* has rather different, related meanings, depending on the context. *mwa* can have the repetitive meaning ‘again’ (50a), the restitutive ‘back’, as well as ‘also’, ‘even’, ‘on top of that’, or mark the preceding phrase as focused, see Section 11.4 for a discussion. The deictic use of *mwa* ‘now’ (51a), seems to mostly anchor the listener’s attention, similarly to *mwa* ‘even’, onto the noun phrase given, see (51b). *mwa* is a particle that can dock onto any phrase preceding it (see 50b).

(4.50) a. e=xaleke *mwa*

1SG=see REP

‘I see again’ / ‘I even see’

- b. e=vatipwe mwa nya-mwa si-m mwa i=mwani mwa
 1SG=drop REP give-REP hand-2SG.POSS REP DEF.SG=money REP
 ‘I pass on to you too this money as well’

(4.51) a. KL:218-222

hê na tha vwa li wii-n. go le vwa ibi-han
 yes DEM ASS EXIST DEF.PL field-POSS.NSPEC then 3PL do pinch-walk
 li nyamaan. go tha le ve-moo mwa, moo mwa.
 DEF.PL eye then ASS 3PL MID-stay REP stay REP

‘Yes there were fields of it [macaranga vedeliana]. And they’d go pinch the young sprouts. And those stay together now, stay.’

- b. ya a ja vwa **mwa** li wee-n a ta-**mwa**
 EXPL 3SG ACCP do REP DEF.PL water-POSS.NSPEC 3SG go.up-REP
 sibu li sibu **mwa**. ja yabwat **mwa** sisuu **mwa**
 swell DEF.PL swell REP ACCP dry REP hard DEICT

‘And there’s the sap that rises, swells, the swells there. It dries then, gets hard then’

In (52) and for all other movement verbs, as well as *xhose* ‘do again’, *mwa* is analyzed as suffix, i.e. as having fused with its host. First, *mwa* assimilates to the root, which it does not do in other contexts.⁸ Compare *hut-mwa* → /hup^wa/ ‘go back down’, to *hut=mwa* ‘go down again’.

(4.52) a. go=ha-mwa-me
 2SG=go=REP=DIR.CP

‘You return to me, you come back’

- b. go=ha-me mwa
 2SG=go=DIR.CP REP

‘You come again’

The particle also expresses repetition (53a), and deictically referring to something close spatially or recently mentioned (which is probably a derived meaning), as in (53b). See Section 11.4 for a more detailed description.

⁸*xhosepwa* suggests a dropped *-t* or *-p*. The Pije and Fwâi cognates *khô-peei* ‘?-say’ (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 155) could be a diachronic hint at a morphologically complex, old Vamale form.

(4.53) a. JR:17

e=tena mwa^{REP} i=hun-det
 1SG=hear REP DEF.SG=NMLZ-sound

‘I hear the sound again.’

b. JR:18

xhose e=tena mwa^{REP} tha a=bwa vwa det mwa^{DEICT}
 again 1SG-feel REP ASS 3SG=IPFV do sound REP

‘Again I heard him make said (*mwa*) noise.’

4.21 Interjections

Interjections do not integrate into clauses or phrases, and though at least *hê* ‘yes’ can be derived to *hêêke* ‘to assent, to say yes’, and *cika* ‘NEG.EXIST’ is an impersonal verb commonly used, exclamations form a group through their uniquely individualistic behavior. Members include *ya* ‘voilà, the result is there’, *ûhû* / *cika* ‘no’, *hat* ‘strong negation’, *hai* ‘oh! (surprise, discovery)’ and *hê* / *helong* ‘yes’, as well as a growing class of swearwords.

4.22 Quantifiers

Quantifiers are a tiny group of particles that are not inflected, directly preceding an (article) noun construction: *mu* ‘little’, *jaa* ‘many’ (54a), and *ju-vaa* ‘too much’, which is also attested as an intensifier in verb phrases (54b). Quantifiers denote number and are described in Section 6.4.2. Other words have similar meanings, but are verbs, like *hmai-* ‘many’. One quantifier similarly integrates the noun phrase, but bears possessive suffixes: *meeka-n* ‘all’.

(4.54) a. B2 31.1

ja apuli canbwen
 many people yesterday
 ‘(there were) more people
 yesterday (than now)’

b. B2:32

ju-vaa apuli
 too.much person
 ‘Too many people’

Chapter 5

Nouns

Vamale nouns are defined in this grammar as single words which can bear articles (see Section 4.3). Few other factors distinguish nouns from verbs, as nouns can be predicates with the same subject index markers as active verbs, see (1). Only nouns, however, can be arguments to verbs, can be counted, can be possessed (though possessive morphology shows overlaps with some verbal morphology, see Section 7.2 and Section 7.2.3, and not all nouns are possessed, e.g. *jati* ‘sea’). Although nouns do take some TAM marking, not all TAM marking is attested for nouns (e.g. *bwa balan* ‘only just (begun)’, *kon* ‘PROG’). Nouns are not inflected for number; this is covered by articles (for specific nouns, generic ones do not have articles).

(5.1) a. B2:108

e juura caacaa
1SG almost father

‘I am almost a father (soon)’

b. xhwat thuang me caacaa
bit joke SUBR.1SG father

‘I am almost a father (kind of)’

Vamale nouns can be classified along different axes. The animate/inanimate distinction, a semantic, lexically determined trait, effects their index-marking on verbs. While index-marking is treated in Section 7.3.1, other effects of this distinction are described in Section 5.1. Some nouns are uncountable (such as water, light, blood etc) and are thus not attested with dual articles. Finally, possessible nouns can be either alienably or inalienably possessed. This distinction is another typically Oceanic feature (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 41), though Vamale has added its own innovations, see Section 5.2. This chapter will briefly introduce these axes, but will focus only on

possession, as the others are lexically determined. This chapter will also discuss classifiers (Section 5.3). Vamale does not have many classifiers, and they are mostly relational: they add information about the nature of relationship between the possessor and the possessum. An exception are food classifiers, which, contrary to the possessive classifiers, can appear without the noun they classify. Section 5.3.4 describes noun classifiers, which are obligatory in the context of plant species: *mwago* ‘mango’ cannot appear alone; one must specify which part of the plant is meant. Noun classifiers are related to a much larger field of optional noun compound heads. Compound nouns are discussed in Section 5.4.

5.1 Animacy

Nouns in Vamale are animate or inanimate. While other languages in New Caledonia distinguish human and non-human animate nouns (Cèmuhî even makes a difference between feminine and non-feminine nouns [Rivierre 1980, 175]), this is of no importance in Vamale. An exception are some nouns, e.g. *in maan* ‘skin (human)’ vs. *in* ‘skin (non-human, or dead human)’, and oblique markers: *nyasi-* ‘BEN, TOP’ can only be used for humans whereas *nyako-* is more general (see Section 6.1.2). Animate participants further trigger person marking on stative verbs (2a) and must be indexed with suffixes on transitive verbs (2b). Both contexts omit any indexing if the relevant noun phrase occurs within the verb phrase (3). Another context in which animacy makes a difference are deverbal nominalizations, in which case the intransitive subject is only marked for person if the referent is animate: *i hun-moo-a* ‘DEF.SG NMLZ-be-3SG’ ‘his/her character’, but *i hun-moo* ‘its nature’. This is described in more detail under Section 7.7.

(5.2) a. DP:29

ka abe niehni a **thien-abe**
CNJ 1PL.EXCL DEM.PL REL three-1PL.EXCL

‘And we are those [masters of the rock], who are three (and we are these three masters of the rock)’

b. HC1:22

na cahni tha xhwan see-a a thathe-**a**
DEM here ASS a.bit one-3SG REL kill-3SG.OBJ

‘Here there was only one that was killed’

TABLE 5.1: Semantic tendencies of possessed nouns

Inalienable	Alienable
Body parts (except blood)	Animals
Things belonging to humans (spirit, colour, appearance, strength)	Plants
Many kinship appellation terms (not the address forms)	Tools

(5.3) *hmwet* is a stative verb. (J8:7)

hmwet i apuli
tired DEF.SG person
‘The person is tired’

5.2 Possession

Vamale distinguishes possessed nouns on the grounds of alienability, i.e. whether they can occur without marking a possessor. This is a widespread Oceanic phenomenon (Ross 2004, 511). Alienable and inalienable nouns follow certain semantic tendencies outlined in Table 5.1, though there are numerous exceptions. Non-possessible nouns include proper names and unique concepts such as the sea or the sun, although poetic contexts may feature counterevidence. Another exception is *la* ‘place’, which can neither be generic (as would be indicated by *-n* on preceding verbs and prepositions), nor take an article, but syntactically behaves like a noun otherwise (i.e. it follows prepositions) (4).

(5.4) KG:115

suu cahni ca la
break here in place
‘Break it here at this spot’

However, while most Oceanic languages distinguish direct (i.e. affixed) possession from indirect constructions using a relational classifier, Vamale has mostly done away with this distinction. Based on prosodic clues, especially stress shift, all possessive morphemes are considered suffixes, as in [‘pu.a.ka] ‘pig’, [pu.a.‘ka.ne.ɔŋ]/[pu.a.‘ka.ne.o] ‘my pig’. The only clearly indirect possessive morpheme remaining is *ka-*, discussed under Section 7.7.6. Possessive forms are not a sure sign of the nounhood of their host, even though nouns represent the vast majority of possessed lexemes. There are verbs

TABLE 5.2: Possessive suffix paradigms

		I	Ib	II
SG	1	-ng	-ong	-eong
	2	-m	-am	-go
	3	-n	-an	-ea
DU	1INCL	-ju	-aju	-gaeu
	1EXCL	-bu	-abu	-abu
	2	-u	-au	-gau
	3	-lu	-alu	-lu
PL	1INCL	-je	-aje	-gaa
	1EXCL	-be	-abe	-abe
	2	-vwe	-avwe	-gavwe
	3	-le	-ale	-le

with nominal morphology (e.g. *hmana-n* ‘hunger-3SG.POSS, s/he is hungry’), and some stative verbs that have an identical nominal counterpart, e.g. *mulip*, *muliv-ong* ‘life, I am alive’, see Section 4.12 and Section 7.2.3.

There are several paradigms of possessive morphology, summarized in their most basic form in Table 5.2. Paradigm I is mostly used for inalienable nouns, while paradigms Ib and II are used for alienable nouns. Loanwords exclusively take paradigm II forms.

This basic overview given in Table 5.2 shows a distinction especially in the singular forms, where paradigm II has forms reminiscent of the free pronouns mentioned in Section 4.6, and of the object suffixes discussed in Chapter 7, whereas paradigms I and Ib have forms that are unique. Indeed, paradigm Ib is the exact same as paradigm I, except that it inflects alienable forms, whose stems end on consonants. The similarity of paradigm II forms with pronouns could suggest that paradigms I and Ib have older morphology, and paradigm II was originally a possessive noun phrase, whose possessor NP was later incorporated (e.g. *yee-n yo* ‘tree-POSS 1SG’ → *yee=n-eo* ‘tree=POSS-1SG’). The first person may have assimilated to paradigm I *-(o)ng*.

Contrary to paradigm I suffixes, paradigm II forms can attach to the end of noun phrases and of nominalized verb phrases, see Section 7.7.6. This difference in freedom of host selection is called “direct” and “indirect” possessive morphology, and many New Caledonian languages still oppose suffixes to free forms. For Vamale, we view *-(e)ong* and the other paradigm II morphemes as suffixes, for at least 1SG and 3SG are different from the free pronominal forms that can be found in other possessive constructions, e.g. *mama-n gau ma yo* ‘The mother of you two, and me’, and the possessive forms are integrated into the stress structure (see Section 3.4).

Hollyman identifies three main classes of possessed nouns in northern New Caledonian languages (Hollyman 1999, 61-62), listed below. While these are found in Vamale as well (see the examples added to Hollyman's list), differences emerge in the subclasses. For example, Hollyman (1999) does not mention vowel lengthening, though this is a phenomenon well described for Nêlemwa (Bril 2002, 29-33). Another possessive noun class not mentioned by Hollyman is that of length shift: *iila*, *il-oong ilaa-m* 'cauldron, my, your cauldron'. This pattern is described for Bwato (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 37), though it seems in every case to be restricted to small groups of nouns.

A inalienable (see set I in Table 5.2)

B alienable, vowel-final

B1 -V + suffix: *wata* 'digging stick', *wata-m* 'your digging stick'

B2 change of -V + suffix: *da*, 'spear' *de-ong* 'spear-1SG.POSS'

B2a Lengthenings are found as well: *hanu*, 'picture' *hanuu-ng* 'picture-1SG.POSS'

B3 -V + other V + suffix: Not seen in Vamale.

C alienable, consonant-final

C1 -C is dropped, possessive suffix is added to the rest of the stem. *xet* 'basket', *xee-ng* 'basket-1SG.POSS'

C2 -C is dropped, last vowel of the stem changes, possessive suffix added to it. Not seen in Vamale, though nouns that used to have a final consonant may have dropped it since.

C3 -C is replaced by an irregular sequence of another consonant and a vowel: *jiket* 'arrow' *jike-l-ong/-an* 'arrow-1SG.POSS/3SG.POSS'.

C4 -C is replaced by an irregular vowel. Not seen in Vamale. However, Hollyman's Jawe example *jic*, *jie-n* 'belly' is still Vamale *jia-n* (Hollyman 1999, 62).

C5 a vowel is introduced between the stem-final consonant and the possessive suffix: *fwaadan* 'road', *fwaadan-i-le* 'road-3PL', but also all forms in set Ib.

Table 5.3 shows several things, most of which only apply to paradigm I. Stems ending on /i/ and /u/ cause a progressive assimilation to /u/ in the first person singular (*si-*, *su-ng* 'hand, my hand', *hanu-ung* 'my picture'), as described in Section 3.2.4.2. Long vowels in the stems of monosyllabic, paradigm I items assimilate the vowel [ɔ] of *-ong* 1SG (*hnyanaa-ng* 'my breath'). Long vowels in the stems of alienable, polysyllabic

TABLE 5.3: Possessive classes

Inalienable		C-final stem			Alienable		V-final
-n							irregular
-V1n/-V2ng	-V:n/-V:ng	ka-n / k-ong	-t/-l-	-C/-C-an	-C/-C-eong	-V-n-eong/ -go / -ea	-V/-V:-ng
sin, s-ung 'hand'	hnyanaa-n, hnyanaa-ng 'breath'	vwaseeka-n, vwaseek-ong 'sadness'	fedat, fedal-an 'blood'	wang, wang-ong 'boat'	hneeng, hneeng- eong 'law'	jo, jo-n-eong 'chicken'	udo, udo-ong 'drink'
xhan, xh-ong 'leg'	wĩ-n, wĩ-ng 'strength'	saleka-n, salek- ong 'possession'	wadat, wadal-ong 'gun'	xhetham, xhetham-an 'plate'	vap, vap-eong 'hunt'	vuki, vuki-n-eong 'reason, fault'	hamu, hamu-ung, hamu 'picture'
xhapuna-n, xhapun-ong 'colour'	waan, waa-ng 'root'		vaset, vaset-ale 'swamp clam'	vadang, vadang- ong 'cabin, shel- ter'	xhanyip, xhanyip-eong 'dream'	mwa, mwa-n- eong 'house'	xa, xaa-ng 'tuber cutting for re- planting'

TABLE 5.4: Possessive suffixes, OBJ AND -S_P

		I	Ib	II	-S _P	OBJ
SG	1	-ng	-ong	-eong	-ong	-eo
	2	-m	-am	-go	-go	-ko
	3	-n	-an	-ea	-(e)a	-a
DU	1INCL	-ju	-aju	-ju	-gaeu/-gasu	-kaeu
	1EXCL	-bu	-abu	-bu	-gabū	-kabū
	2	-u	-au	-gau	-gau	-kau
	3	-lu	-alu	-lu	-lu	-lu
PL	1INCL	-je	-aje	-je	-gaa	-kaa
	1EXCL	-be	-abe	-be	-abe	-kabe
	2	-vwe	-avwe	-vwe	-gavwe	-kavwe
	3	-le	-ale	-le	-le	-le

items lose their length in the possessed form, and a vowel of the possessive morpheme is lengthened (*iila*, *il-oong* ‘pot, my pot’, *fwaadan*, *fwadanuung* ‘path, my path’). There are alienable items, again with paradigm I forms, where the stem-final /t/ changes to /l/ in possessive contexts. This is due to a Proto-Oceanic liquid that is preserved intervocalically as /l/ in Vamale, but merged with /t/ in coda positions (see Section 3.1 for more details on finals). The pair *mulip*, *muliv-an* ‘life, s/he is alive’ is not included in this table because it represents a very small class (the only other confirmed case is *vap* / *vavi* ‘go on a hunt / hunt something’), they probably have a similar background. Alienable forms ending on other consonants add a probably epenthetic -a-: *thin* ‘closing’, *thin-an* ‘lid’. Inalienable nouns belong to the following classes: *ka-n*, -V-ng, vowel change.

Anything that is not usually possessed (*vap* ‘hunt’) or is a loanword (*teeriko*, *teerikoneong* ‘(my) shirt’), is possessed with set II suffixes. An epenthetic *n* appears if following a morpheme-final vowel. Diachronically, it seems likely that this -*n* was a possessum marker, followed by the possessor pronoun or noun. The pronouns were incorporated into the possessum later on. This would also explain the forms -*eo*(ng) ‘1SG.POSS’ and -*ea* ‘3SG.POSS’: the free pronouns are /jo/ and /ja/ to this day, and forms like /ɣaju/ ‘male’ can be pronounced /ɣaeu/, which suggests that glides can be realized as more open vowels in some contexts. This means that the epenthetic -*e*- found in Ib, OBJ, and -S_P suffixes does not seem to be phonologically conditioned like in Caac: “‘IND’ is used when the lexeme it follows ends with a consonant (18, 19) while *le* ‘IND’ is utilized when the lexeme it follows ends with a vowel (16, 17).” (Cauchard 2014, 32)

Some words have two possessive paradigms, one with set I suffixes, like *i mulip* ‘the life’ / *mulivong* ‘I am alive’, and another with set II forms, i.e. -*eong*, *mulip-eong* ‘my life’. Speakers disagree on whether the latter form is more emphatic and marked,

i.e. ‘my life’ vs ‘this life of mine’, or whether there is a meaning difference. This same discussion arises with other nouns as well, e.g. *watong* or *wataneong* ‘the digging stick which is mine (and nobody else’s)’.

5.2.1 Alienable

Alienable nouns form the bulk of Vamale nouns. An open class which seems to be slowly gaining members from the inalienable class, its possessive suffixes are mostly from Set Ib or II. Those nouns inflected with Set Ib forms, usually associated with inalienable nouns, are often semantically close to inalienable nouns, such as certain kinship terms, things belonging to bodies (spirit, breath, tail). One major difference to inalienable forms is the fact that they never drop their final consonant.

5.2.2 Inalienable

Vamale has a considerable number of nouns which must be possessed, be it by a generic *-n* ‘NSPEC’. Inalienably possessed nouns form a closed class, bearing paradigm I suffixes in Table 5.2. The only seeming exception are the nominalisations bearing *=ka-n*, but note that *=ka-* is a grammatical word which can be omitted from the nominalising constructions, see Section 7.7.6, and takes paradigm II suffixes. *ka-* is inalienable in the sense that the construction it precedes must be possessed. The locative nouns (“prepositions”) mentioned in Section 4.5.2 are members of this closed class. Inalienable nouns use both *-n* ‘3SG.POSS’ and *-m* ‘2SG.POSS’ for quotation forms. Some inalienable nouns, in compounds where they are not the head, lose their possessive morphology when they do not have a specific referent, e.g. *mwa-n nyama* ‘glasses (in general, nobody’s glasses)’. If possessed, however, it is the second part of the compound that is possessed, i.e. *mwa-n nyamaa-ng* ‘my glasses’. See also *vwa suki(-n)* ‘pay (for something)’, which, nominalized, becomes *xavwasuki* ‘money-spender’, glossed in (5). This is not attested for *e-vwadi ya-n* ‘thumb (lit. NMLZ.INS-peel.with.fingers starchy.food-POSS)’, possibly because a thumb is itself an inalienable concept, whereas glasses are alienable.

- (5.5) *xa=vwa-suki*
 NMLZ.AGT=do-price
 ‘A money-spender’

Some nouns are inalienable, but cannot be possessed by humans. They thus do not take any personal possessive suffixes, although they otherwise follow classical inalienable morphology, i.e. an alternation between generic *-n* ‘NSPEC’, specific *-n*

TABLE 5.5: Parts of things

<i>thinan</i>	‘lid’
<i>xhiin</i>	‘fin’
<i>vaan</i>	‘undergarment, base’
<i>balan</i>	piece of something long (rope, stick)
<i>hmanyen</i>	crumbs of wood or stone
<i>xadan</i>	shard, sharp-edged bit
<i>bati</i>	detached bit of wood
<i>bate</i>	extremity, beginning/end of an entity
<i>xhulan</i>	consequence, extremity of event
<i>maan</i>	‘point, visible side’

‘3SG.POSS’, and a postponed possessor noun phrase. Examples include *maan* ‘point, visible side’, *thinan* ‘lid’ (derived from *thin*, ‘close’), *xhiin* ‘fin’,¹ and *vaan* ‘undergarment, base’, which must be followed by what garment covers it, shoes or pants or a dress. Consider Table 5.5. The nouns listed in the table need a (specified or implicit) bigger context, which is usually postponed as a modifier. They are part of a part-whole relationship that ties specific part-of-a-whole words to their possessor entity, e.g. *bati* ‘long piece of wood that is detached from the tree’, *xadan* ‘(jagged) detached part of something hard’, while others are more generic, such as *xhulan* ‘extremity, consequence’.

5.3 Classifiers

Classifiers are a well established and rich class in both Nêlêmwa (Bril 2002) and Iaii, but not thought to be widespread in Mainland New Caledonian. In Vamale, there is a semantically defined group of nouns that easily and often forms quasi-possessive phrases with other nouns. Most of these nouns are inalienably possessed. They form the head of their phrase; the other noun cannot bear an article (6b), and, in the cases discussed here, cannot occur without the head (in the semantic contexts which warrant these constructions). In any case, the nouns discussed here can occur without the modifying noun. Following Aikhenvald 2000, this study will call these nouns classifiers. Words like *saleka-n* ‘possession’, *coola-n* ‘task, part of collective work’, *sana-* ‘content’, *san-fe* (content-take) ‘hunting bounty’, *mwa-n* ‘container’, as well as the items in Table 5.5, work the same way, with the exception that they can be omitted. The latter

¹While animal anatomy terms have probably lost some ground since the culture mostly abandoned sustenance fishing, there are remarkably few animal-specific body terms. *uban* ‘fish scale’, *thaangan* ‘tentacle’ and *jahlo* ‘rooster’s crest’ are the only other terms recorded in the lexicon. Animal anatomy, like plant anatomy, is described in the same terms as their human equivalent.

TABLE 5.6: Classifiers, corresponding verbs, and corresponding food item

Classifier	Verb	Food item
<i>xhua-</i>	<i>xhwi</i>	‘(proteiny) food’
<i>fwaa-</i>	<i>fwai</i>	‘chewy food’ (e.g. magnagna root)
<i>xhuta-</i>	<i>xhuti</i>	‘scrunchy food’ (e.g. sugar cane)
<i>u-</i>	<i>xaje</i>	‘juicy food’ (fruit, vegetables)
<i>ya-</i>	<i>xhajake</i>	‘starchy food’ (tubers, rice, bread)
<i>fatoo-</i>	<i>fato</i>	‘hot drink’
<i>udoo-</i>	<i>udu</i>	‘cold drink’

group thus seems to be frequent compound heads, described as generic-specific constructions (Aikhenvald 2000, 86), rather than classifiers. They are discussed in detail in Section 5.4.

5.3.1 Relational classifiers: Food

The members of this subgroup are all linked to special verbs (see Table 5.6) and cannot be omitted in favor of the modifying noun (i.e. the substance consumed). They are all inalienably possessed, and the substance they classify is invariably alienably possessed.

- (5.6) a. Na li vataan *xhua-m* (juu-mani)
 DEM DEF.PL various proteiny.food-2SG.POSS sacred-bird
 ‘These are your various dishes (of wood pigeons)’
- b. na li vataan (*i) juu-mani
 DEM DEF.PL various DEF.SG sacred-bird
 ‘These are the various (live, or inedible) wood pigeons’ (NOT: These are your pigeons to eat)

5.3.2 Relational classifiers: Possession

Vamale has a morpheme *ka-* that takes inalienable possessive morphology, is used to mark usually unpossessed nouns as possessed (7a), and contains semantic information about the relationship between possessor and possessum. The morpheme is obligatory in certain scenarios but optional in others. On these grounds, *ka-* is analyzed as a relational classifier. However, the semantics is somewhat vague and could be described as “relating to the possessor”, a term borrowed from the gloss for the relational classifier

'e in Boumaa Fijian (Dixon 1988, 135). *ka-* is obligatory for *daahma* 'chief' (7b), *phwêêdi* 'youngest child/sibling', *bifidu* 'twin' and a few other nouns possessed through interpersonal relationships. The classifier is in some cases part of a lexicalized possessive noun phrase (7c, 7d). It is also found on:

udee 'medication', to introduce the ailment to be cured, e.g. *udee ka-n nyaabu* 'medicine against mosquitoes'

juuju ka-m 'your truth, you're right'

xhwata 'baldness, bald head' e.g. *xhwata ka-m* 'your bald head'

Contrary to the relational classifiers in Section 5.3.1, *ka-* cannot be used anaphorically. Note that this lexically assigned, obligatory classifier is distinct from the optional *ka-* that can be added to any nominalization, which was described in Section 7.7.6. Apart from the form, the two morphemes share the alternation of the initial *k-* with nasals and non-velar plosives. If the stem ends in these consonants, /k/ is dropped: /kan/ → /an/ / N,p,t,l,c__.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>(5.7) a. <i>vamale-180727-elicitation-ganadd-1</i></p> <p><i>difaadi ka-n</i></p> <p><i>echo</i> CLF.POSS-NSPEC</p> <p>'Its echo'</p> | <p>c. <i>daahma ka-n</i> <i>mani</i></p> <p>chief CLF.POSS-NSPEC bird</p> <p>'Chief of birds [<i>erythrura psittaceae</i>']</p> |
| <p>b. <i>daahma k-ong</i></p> <p>chief CLF.POSS-1SG.POSS</p> <p>'My chief'</p> | <p>d. <i>i ka-n</i></p> <p>lice CLF.POSS-NSPEC</p> <p><i>xavwaxhan</i></p> <p>dog</p> <p>'Flea'</p> |

There are a number of irregular forms. *fedat* 'blood', POc **daaR*, retains the historical liquid in the possessed form *feda-l-am* 'your blood', which show etymological final consonants that have since merged to the plosives -t, -p, -k, -c (see Section 3.1). Their possessive morphology follows the same laws (compare (7c) to (8)) and is a predictable allomorph of *ka-*. In fact *ka-* only follows vowel-final possessums, whereas consonant-final words take -*an*, e.g. *japit/japit-an* 'travel provisions; salary'. Prosodically, constructions with *ka-* have at least two p-words: the possessed NP, and *ka*, which can hence be analyzed as an anticlitic: not an own g-word, but an own p-word (Zúñiga 2014). However, the consonant-final possessed NPs only have one main stress, and thus count as a single p-word. *fedalan*, for example, is split ['fɛⁿ.da.lan], with the stress on the first syllable (see *vamale-181020-01-batis-bonjour-tontons-1*, 01:27). We thus

have a situation where the same morpheme has a different phonological status depending on its host's final form. It seems likely that the indirect possessive constructions with the classifier *ka-* being an own *g*-word was the original situation, and that the classifier was phonologically incorporated into the host for most contexts: *juujuu ka-m* (truth POSS-2SG.POSS) 'you're right (not 'your truth')', but *muliv-ong* (life 1SG.poss) 'I am alive'. Related to this, at least diachronically, are the possessive morphemes discussed in Section 7.7.6, though the latter are optional.

(5.8) 2018 enterrement coutume présentation 1:28

i a e-fii-kaa i in-maa-n apuli ka i
 DEF.SG REL RECP-sew-1PL.INCL DEF.SG skin-face-NSPEC person CNJ DEF.SG
 fedala-n apuli
 blood-NSPEC person

'What ties us together is the human skin and the human blood'

An ambiguous case is that of *mae* 'fire, light'. Normally non-possessed, two possessive constructions are employed to talk about *mae* 'lighter', probably calqued from a local French term *feu* 'fire; lighter' (9). One is that of alienable nouns (e.g. *-n-eong*), and the other uses *ka*. Since there is a choice in the morphology to be used, *mae* is reminiscent of another relational classifier: optional, focussed possession marker *ka*, discussed in the following section.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (5.9) a. <i>mae k-ong</i>
fire CLF.POSS-1SG

'My lighter
(optional: <u>My</u> lighter)' | b. <i>mae-n-eong</i>
fire-POSS-1SG

'My lighter, my fire, my light' |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

5.3.3 Relational classifier: Focussed Possession marker *ka*

ka is an optional preposition marking a possessor as focussed, and/or the possessum as especially important.² Because it does not say anything about the nature of the possessor itself, we do not call it a possessor classifier (Aikhenvald 2000, 125). Instead, it seems more reasonable to call it a relational classifier like the others, as *ka* applies to alienable nouns and can be replaced by more conventional possessor marking (Aikhenvald 2000, 136). Contrary to the obligatory relational classifier discussed in Section 5.3.2, this *ka* is optional, i.e. the noun can be marked as possessed by *-n* 'poss' instead (10). Furthermore, while the obligatory classifier uses inalienable possessive

²Something similar is described as "close possession" in Hebrew (Berman 1978).

suffixes, e.g. *daahma ka-n/k-ong* ‘chief POSS-3SG.POSS/POSS-1SG.POSS’, *phwêêdi k-an/k-ong* ‘youngest child’, *ka* ‘FOC.POSS’ takes nominal and pronominal possessors. Since the two morphemes are probably related and are identical in form and position, there is inter-speaker variation in their distribution: Jacob Oué maintains *thala k-ong* ‘my knife’ where Jean-Philippe Oué, about 20 years younger, uses *thala ka yo* (2019-08-05 JP ka:33). However, Philippe Gohoupe, born in the 1940s, uses *ka* with the pronoun *gavwe* instead of the suffix *-vwe* in (12), i.e. he uses *ka* ‘FOC.POSS’ like Jean-Philippe Oué.

- (5.10) a. *thala-n i xhaohmu*
 knife-POSS ART.SG elder
 ‘The elder’s knife’
- b. *thala ka i xhaohmu*
 knife FOC.POSS ART.SG elder
 ‘The *elder*’s knife’
 ‘The knife belonging to the elder through his use of it’

Note the ambiguity between the 3rd person possessive *-n* shown in *daahma ka-n* ‘chief CLF.POSS-3SG.POSS’ and the anaphoric *-n* in (11), which we take as grounds to differentiate the two *ka*. *udee k-ong* ‘medicine POSS-1SG.POSS’ is not attested.

- (5.11) AG1:212
- cip=e=caihna-n hapi udee ka-n i da hê*
 NEG=1SG=know-NSPEC COMP medicine FOC.POSS-ANA DEF.SG what yes
 ‘I don’t know what the medicine for it [mosquitoes] is, yeah’

Beneficiaries, but not direct objects, can be focussed on with the classifier *ka* ‘FOC.POSS’, because the beneficiary constructions (Section 6.1.2) derive from *si-* ‘hand’ and *ko-* ‘on’, both taking possessors.

- (5.12) *e=hole-ke nyasi-vwe ka=gavwe*
 1SG=thank-TR for-2PL FOC.POSS=2PL
 ‘I thank you (in particular) [for what you did?]

5.3.4 Noun classifiers

Noun classifiers, using Aikhenvald’s term and definition (Aikhenvald 2000, 81), are assigned based on semantics. Not every noun in Vamale takes a noun classifier (in fact,

TABLE 5.7: Noun classifiers in Vamale

Form	Gloss
<i>doo-n</i>	leaf
<i>i-n</i>	bark
<i>vuki-n</i>	stem
<i>ye(e)-n</i>	tree
<i>muu-n</i>	blossom
<i>si-n</i>	living branch

only plant species do). A plant species can take different noun classifiers, depending on the meaning intended. Similarly to relational classifiers, they can be used anaphorically, and indeed usually are (cf. Aikhenvald (2000, 87) for a discussion of how typical this is). These noun classifiers are alienably possessed, but rarely occur without their possessive suffix *-n* for reasons tied to their semantic nature: the possessor tends to be generic. *yee* ‘tree’, and possibly *doo-n* ‘leaf’ are exceptions to this tendency. *xhaapwe* ‘fruit’ occurs in the same environments as the noun classifiers shown in Table 5.7, but is not possessed with *-n*.

Words for trees are always formed in the same way: *yee* ‘wood, tree’, followed by the species of the plant, e.g. *yee-n sep* ‘tree-POSS coco’. The same goes for fruit (*xhaapwe sep*), leaves (*doo-n sep*), and bark (*i-n sep*). The word for the plant species alone denotes an abstract referent.

5.4 Compound nouns

Compound nouns are nouns with a nominal head and modifier (of verbal or nominal nature). Both noun-on-noun and verb-on-noun compounds may be exocentric, i.e. describing a referent not mentioned in the compound (e.g. *vaci nyu* ‘kernel/nucleus fish’ ‘anchor’), or endocentric, where a clue to the referent is present (e.g. *we jati* ‘water salt/sea’ ‘seawater’). Similar constructions with verbal heads are discussed under Section 7.6.3.

Other ways of modifying a noun are relative clauses, and possessive constructions. While these also result in a noun phrase which acts as a single constituent (13), compound nouns are single words: they do not tolerate lexical insertions and often have idiosyncratic meanings (e.g. *hmape-thoatit* and *yeen-bwan* in ex. 13). Compound nouns may be exocentric, use metaphors to describe their referent, or harbor other semantic relations not found in noun phrases with a relative clause, e.g. part-of-whole ones. However, in many cases there are no phonological, morphological, or syntactic ways to clearly differentiate compound nouns from unmarked noun - relative clause constructions.

Indeed, stress is no distinguishing indicator, as both the elements of complex nouns as well as those of noun phrases, are stressed like single words (e.g. *apuli Teganpaik* ['apu.li, tʰegãn'pa:ik] 'Teganpaik resident' and *hmapē-thoatit* ['mãpe tʰɔ.a.tit] 'cloud'), a phenomenon also attested in Nêlêmwa (Bril 2004c, 204). The prosodic domain above the word-level seems to stress the modifier over the modified, again regardless of the syntactic nature of the construction.

(5.13) GC:13

a	xaleke	[[[hmapē-thoatit]	a	fiing]	a	kon	nyasipoke]
3SG	see	flesh-sky	REL	dark	REL	PROG	gather
	nya-pwa-n	yee-n-bwan					
	LOC-on-NSPEC	stick-POSS-mountain					

'She saw dark clouds gathering on the mountain tops'

Many former possessive noun phrases have become lexicalized into compounds and denote a single referent, e.g. *mwa-n nyama* 'glasses (lit. container-POSS eye)'.³ Similarly, some noun phrases have been lexicalized that are formed with *ko-n* 'on-NSPEC', discussed in Section 6.4.4. *ko* is otherwise productive to express part-of-whole relationships: compare established, opaque *bucit kon xhan* 'joint? on leg' 'ankle' to transparent *fubuun ko-n uvu* 'heap on-NSPEC yam' 'heap of yam', and newly coined *chambre-à-air ko-n velo* 'air chambre on-NSPEC bicycle' 'bicycle tyre'. Both the constructions with possessive *-n* and those featuring the preposition represent a middle ground between noun phrases and compound nouns, as they are not single words phonologically, and are transparently derived. This grammar arbitrarily calls the complex nouns which still bear possessive morphology "compound nouns" proper, as they constitute the majority of forms, and the ones without such traces, e.g. the ones in Table 5.8, "bare compound nouns". There does not seem to be a semantic logic behind which words form bare compounds and which bear possessive morphology. While the distribution hinges mostly on the modified noun, there are nouns showing both patterns (e.g. *fwa-n bua-n* 'hole-POSS ?-3SG.POSS' 'navel' but *fwa thâ-n* 'hole excrement-3SG.POSS' 'anus'). Nor is alienability of the head noun a criterion, compare inalienable *nyivwa-n goakan* 'mouth-POSS middle' 'window' to alienable *vaaya-n goakan* 'movement-POSS middle' 'see-saw movement, rocking movement'. A tentative explanation would combine:

1. lexically defined distribution (i.e. it depends on the word, e.g. *vaci* 'hard bit, nucleus')

³Interestingly, *nyamaa-* is inalienable and would usually carry a possessive suffix. It is also shorter in the compound than in its possessed form.

2. avoiding ambiguity with similar-looking words (we ‘water’ never takes *-n* in compounds because *wee-n* ‘sap, fluid’ already exists)
3. lexicalization leads in some cases to the loss of *-n* (perhaps *fwa-thâ-n* ‘anus’)

Compound nouns can be classified via several axes: semantic properties (endocentric vs exocentric, and the semantic relationship between the components), morphological properties (i.e. whether possessive morphology is present within the compound, as discussed above), possessive strategies (i.e. how a compound is possessed by an outside participant), and word-classes represented.

Possessive morphology docks unto the right border of the compound, except if the first noun is inalienable, and the second part not a noun, e.g. *vabu-ng thamo* ‘grandchild-1SG.POSS woman’ ‘my granddaughter’. Regarding word-classes, the main types are N+N, N+V, and V+N. In some cases, compounds integrate yet another compound, which yields more complex forms, e.g. [*mwa*] [*cabi* [*vai-vun*]] ‘house smash stone-blue/green’ ‘prison’ (colonial prisons employed forced labor). Nominal compounds containing adverbs are present in related languages (Bril 2004c, 200) and have semantic equivalents in Vamale, but are not necessarily compounds, syntactically speaking (see Section 5.4.2). The intensifier *juu* ‘very, real, sacred’ is a very common part of compounds as well, e.g. *juu mwa* ‘traditional house’, *juu apuli* ‘Kanak’, *juu toot* ‘thatching straw’ etc.

5.4.1 N + N compounds

Noun-on-noun compounds include many examples of a semantically vague head which is followed by a modifying noun with a more precise or specific meaning. Contrary to a possessive construction, the resulting compound cannot spare the modifier, and would lose its meaning entirely if the head stands alone. For example, when talking about sewing (*sili*), one could not use *vaci* ‘nucleus, most important part’ and expect people to immediately grasp that one is talking about the thread (*vaci sili*). See Table 5.8 and Table 5.9 for lists of compounds affected by this.

Many complex or abstract concepts are described via compounds, and use metaphors for a part of it: *duu-n we* (bone-POSS water) ‘water current’.

5.4.1.1 Endocentric N+N compounds

A special group of endocentric noun-on-noun compounds use modifying nouns like *thamo* ‘woman, female’, *xayu* ‘boy, male’, *xhaohmu* ‘elder, be old’ and *xawe* ‘youth, be young’, which are often predicates, and (at least the latter two) are also attested as stative verbs, e.g. *mani-thamo* ‘female bird’, or *i thamo-xhaohmu* ‘the old woman’. The

TABLE 5.8: Compounds with *vaci* ‘nucleus, most important part’

Form	Meaning second morpheme	Meaning of compound
<i>vaci nyu</i>	‘fish’	‘anchor’
<i>vaci nyima-n</i>	‘heart-3SG.POSS’	‘darling’
<i>vaci xayu</i>	‘male’	‘little boy’
<i>vaci uvu</i>	‘yam’	‘yam tuber’
<i>vaci nyivwa-n</i>	‘mouth-3SG.POSS’	‘tooth’
<i>vaci bwa-n</i>	‘head-3SG.POSS’	‘his cranial box (round part)’
<i>vaci sili</i>	‘sew’	‘sewing thread’
<i>vaci mata</i>	‘sing’	‘musical theme’
<i>vaci vua</i>	‘net’	‘net sinker’

TABLE 5.9: Compounds with *maan* ‘face, tip’

Form	Meaning other morpheme	Meaning of compound
<i>maan hmeewan</i>	‘sand’	‘tip of a sandbank’
<i>maan op</i>	‘(high) tide’	‘waves touching the shore, tip of the tide’
<i>maan da</i>	‘spear’	‘spear tip’
<i>cu-pwan maan</i>	‘standing-on’	‘stand in front of something’
<i>fwa-n maan vua</i>	‘hole X net’	‘net mesh’
<i>nyau maan</i>	‘bad’	‘ugly’
<i>se maan</i>	‘one’	‘same, to repeat’
<i>in maan</i>	‘leather, bark’	‘human live skin’

same meaning is achieved with a relative clause, e.g. *i thamo a xhaohmu*. A relative clause consisting of a nominal predicate, a stative or intransitive verb, or with an inanimate or generic subject (meaning the relativizer *a* and a ‘3SG’ are juxtaposed), may omit the relativizer, especially in fast speech. Some compounds contain elements that are found nowhere else, e.g. *thivaan sin* ‘smallest finger’ (*thivaan* is opaque), *bu-cit ko-n xhan* (? on-NSPEC leg) ‘ankle’, and *bu-vaci xhan* (?-nucleus leg) ‘ankle (bone?)’.

TABLE 5.10: Body parts described metaphorically by (the head of a) compound

Form	Meaning other morpheme	Meaning of compound
<i>futho kon xha-n</i>	plantain on leg-3SG.POSS	‘calf’
<i>we-n ma iila</i>	water-POSS COM pot	‘part of the sole that does not leave a footprint’
<i>vi-n sep</i>	shell-POSS coconut	‘kneecap’
<i>bet ca-n duu-n</i>	worm in-NSPEC bone-3SG.POSS	‘bone marrow’

TABLE 5.11: Concepts described by their function, origin, or other associations (e.g. toxicity).

Form	Meaning other morpheme	Meaning of compound
<i>ye iila</i>	tree pot	‘tree (whose fruit were used as a container)’
<i>xhwaeo pupwaale</i>	taro European	‘dry taro (imported by Europeans)’
<i>dongan thupila</i>	orange corpse	‘ <i>citrus macroptera</i> (toxic when raw)’
<i>mwa-n suhmee</i>	container-POSS spit	‘lung’
<i>mwa-n gila</i>	container-POSS bitter	‘gallbladder’
<i>mwa-n nyai-n</i>	container-POSS child-3SG.POSS	‘uterus’
<i>fwa-thâ-n</i>	hole-excrement-3SG.POSS	‘anus’
<i>xa-funa</i>	AGT.NMLZ-preach	‘middle finger’
<i>ape-tha-xhuuni</i>	NMLZ-throw-spear sling	‘index finger’

5.4.1.2 Exocentric N + N compounds

Exocentric N+N compounds, the smaller one of the two noun-on-noun groups, have more or less opaque meanings. They may describe the referent’s appearance:

bwa-n ibwen ‘head-POSS squid’ ‘a species of deadwood mushroom’

ot-an-bwa-n thupila ‘belt-POSS-band-POSS devil’ “‘devil’s headband”, an orange *nyaouli* savannah vine’

tha-n mutô ‘excrement-POSS sheep’ ‘a species of grass’

The compounds may also describe a purpose of the referent:

thili thâ ‘wipe excrement’ ‘a species of grass’

dipi maphwên ‘wrap leftovers’ ‘a species of tree’

fa-mulip ‘CAUS-life’ ‘*plectranthus parviflorus*, a medical plant’

5.4.1.3 Compounds with two heads

Additive noun-on-noun compounds, where the sense depends on both, equal elements, are rare, but exist, e.g. *bween phwê* ‘night month’ ‘date (specific day decided upon)’.⁴

⁴*bwen* ‘night’ is lengthened, a hint at its possessum origin, see *iila*, *iloo-ng* ‘cauldron, my cauldron’ in Section 5.2.

5.4.2 The question of Noun + Adverb compounds

While noun-and-adverb compounds were described for other languages of the area (Bril 2004c, 192, 200), this work could not find any which were distinguishable from noun phrases that are modified with an adverb, as the latter's position is identical in both cases, and prosody is the same in compounds as it is in complex noun phrases. One distinguishing feature of other noun compounds include the use of words that have otherwise fallen out of use, a lack of possessive morphology, or an unusual word order. None of this was found with adjectives modifying nouns. Furthermore, noun phrases containing an adverb can be modified by a relative clause (14). However, since relative clauses modify single-word nouns as well as noun phrases (to which an adverb can belong), no convincing syntactic arguments seem to posit the existence of said compounds.

- (5.14) li xhaohmu habu^{adv} a vwa wada-le
 DEF.PL elder long.ago REL EXIST gun-3PL.POSS
 'the elders of yore who had guns'

5.4.3 N + V compounds

A major group of compound nouns featuring verbal elements put the noun first. The noun is then described by the verb, which denotes a property, state, or function of the noun.

- *mwa-n vwa-ila* 'house-POSS do-pot' 'cooking house, i.e. kitchen'
- *mwa-n sohmun* 'house-POSS study' 'school'
- *tii siteke* 'notch, writing sacred' 'the Bible'

Stative verbs in general tend to signify properties or states, and the nominal part of the compound usually refers to the bearer of these properties: *we nyam* 'water sweet' 'sweetwater'. While almost all compounds contain intransitive verbs, we found one exception (15). The verb here has a similar function to the intransitive verbs described above, i.e. it assigns a property to the noun.

- (5.15) fwa-n titii-ke
 hole-POSS be.wet-TR
 'moist spot, buried spring'

TABLE 5.12: Days of the week

Sunday	<i>vwa siteke</i>	‘do sacred, pray’
Monday	<i>se vwa-siteke</i>	‘one [day after] Sunday’
Tuesday	<i>thaloo vwa-siteke</i>	‘two Sunday’
Wednesday	<i>thiien vwa-siteke</i>	‘three Sunday’
Thursday	<i>fava vwa-siteke</i>	‘four Sunday’
Friday	<i>fa-siit</i>	‘CAUS-?’
Saturday	<i>savato</i>	(from <i>sabbat</i>)

5.4.4 V + N compounds

While the majority of nominal compounds featuring verbs put the nominal head first, another group put the noun second. Many of these are derived verb phrases, like the endocentric metonymic compound *vun muun* ‘blue/green flower’ (a species name for a blue flower), the exocentric word for humpback, *xhwe duun* ‘twisted back’, or *fun aman* ‘wilt something’ ‘dry season’.

Others are more opaque, e.g. the metaphor *vun bwan-toot* ‘blue grasstips’ ‘blue hour, briefly before nightfall’. Consider the exocentric compounds naming the days of the week:⁵ Monday to Thursday count the days passed since Sunday (see Table 5.12). The word for Friday, *fa-siit*, is likely derived from the Christian taboo of eating meat on that day: the causative prefix *fa-* docks unto *siit*, likely related to *sitooon* ‘taboo’ and *siteke* ‘sacred, forbidden’.

Other exocentric nominal compounds also include *vwa* ‘do; EXIST’:

- *vwa det* ‘make rustling sound’ ‘dead coral bits on a beach, or as a floor covering’
- *vwa jinun* ‘EXIST magical power’ ‘sorcerer, magician’
- *vwa wii-an* ‘EXIST field-3SG.POSS’ ‘shaved head’

This chapter covered simple nouns, their syntactically relevant semantic features and how possession works. After discussing complex nouns, many of which stem from noun phrases, we shall now describe the latter.

⁵The week is called *da(wee)n vwa siteke* ‘between prayers’, itself an exocentric compound derived from a prepositional phrase.

Chapter 6

Noun phrases

Vamale noun phrases, like verb phrases, are head-initial. Thus, noun phrases are composed in the following way: ART=PSM ART=PSR, optionally with relative clauses following each noun. Clitics flag noun phrases that are not object arguments, or unmarked intransitive subjects. Noun phrases display nominative-accusative alignment. This is typical of canonic Oceanic languages (Ross 2004, 495). Free pronouns can be flagged, like nouns, for the roles of transitive subject and intransitive subject, both obligatorily with *ka* ‘SBJ’, while nouns can omit *ka* in intransitive scenarios, see (1). Personal pronouns can be flagged for that of oblique, but they cannot be used as undergoer arguments, contrary to nouns and demonstrative pronouns, e.g. *ena* and *nienae*. Flagging is discussed in Section 6.1.

(6.1) CP2:7 (no *ka* before *hmape-thoatit* ‘cloud’)

cama	vi	hapi	a	moo	a	sibu	ta-me	ka	i	jati
SUBR	say	COMP	3SG	stay	3SG	swell	go.up-DIR.CP	SBJ	DEF.SG	sea
nya-xahut		hai	cama	hu-pe		ca		hmape-thoatit		
towards-down.there	or	if		come.down-DIR.CP	INDF.SG	flesh-sky				
a	xada									
REL	up.there									

‘If one said (=let’s imagine) that the sea down there should swell and rise, or that some cloud up there should come down [and shatter us, we shall still do custom]’

In unmarked scenarios, P and S are marked the same way, meaning that both undergoer and intransitive subject noun phrases follow the verb without flagging, as shown in (2a, 2b). Transitive subject noun phrases (A), by contrast, are obligatorily marked by *ka* ‘SBJ’ (2c). This yields a tripartite alignment for nominal flagging, see Figure 6.1. The particle *ka*, however, may also occur optionally with S_A and S_P (hence the gloss ‘SBJ’). Note that this optional focusing use is not described for other languages in the area, suggesting it might be a relatively recent development.

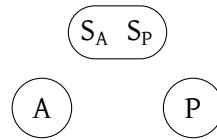


FIGURE 6.1: Alignment of noun phrase flagging

- (6.2) a. [a=han [i=xhaohmu]]
 3SG=walk DEF.SG=elder
 ‘[the elder] walks’
- b. [a_i=xaleke [i=xhaohmu]_{ii}]
 3SG=see DEF.SG=elder
 ‘[S/he]_i [sees [the elder]_{ii}].’
- c. a=xaleke i=xhaohmu ka=ya
 3SG=see DEF.SG old
 ‘He sees the elder’

Noun phrases can be formed by nouns, which were discussed in the previous chapter 5, but also by personal and demonstrative pronouns, which are described in Section 6.2. Apart from possessive constructions, discussed in the previous chapter (Section 5.2), nouns are chiefly modified by verbs and relative clauses. Section 6.4 explores the morphemes within a noun phrase that modify the head, including adjective-like derivations (Section 6.4.6). Noun phrases can be coordinated and form a new constituent. Vamale distinguishes at least three: the comitative *ma*, the additive coordinator *ka* ‘also, on top of that’, and *hai~ a* ‘or’. They are all described in Section 6.5.

6.1 Case marking

Case in this grammar refers to the marking of syntactic roles by morphemes. Vamale, like most Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 37; Ross 2004, 496), does not mark syntactic roles on nouns with affixes. There are, however, prepositions that “flag” the subject (*ka*) and optional, oblique arguments (*((nya)ko*). The choice of the morphemes is influenced by semantic and pragmatic factors: transitive subject noun phrases must be preposed by *ka* (further discussed in Section 6.1.1), whereas intransitive subject nouns may take *ka* in focused contexts. Oblique markers distinguish beneficiary and goal arguments from more generically patientive ones (see Section 6.1.2), and are sensitive to the animacy of the argument.

6.1.1 Agentive marker *ka*

This *ka* is a subject marker (3).¹ Its allomorph *a* is conditioned by a final consonant on the preceding word. It is obligatory before nouns and pronouns that agree with the verb in an A function, probably because unmarked transitive subjects can occur at the very end of long VOS sentences, and directly after an object noun phrase:

V (VV...) O *ka* A.

A clitic *ka* is optional for S_{A/P}, probably in an extension of the first scenario. In principle, Vamale participant flagging is a tripartite flagging system, since it disambiguates A, which must take *ka*, from S, which may take *ka*, from O, which may not take *ka* (see Figure 6.1).

- (6.3) [e=xaleke i [jili i bwaakala]] *ka* yo
 [1SG=see DEF.SG [build_with_wood DEF.SG canoe]] SBJ 1SG
 ‘I see the building of the canoe’

Contrary to A arguments, which have to be marked with *ka* unless fronted and thus not part of the clause anymore (e.g. *yo, e=xale-a* ‘me, I see them’, see Section 6.3), S arguments do not have to be marked with *ka* (4).

- (6.4) a. a=hup-wa (ka) i=jati
 3SG=go.down-REP (SBJ) DEF.SG=sea
 ‘The tide goes down again.’
 b. sinu (ka) mu=xho-ng
 suffer (SBJ) DEF.DU=leg-1SG.POSS
 ‘My legs hurt’ (no index on *sinu* because it is a stative verb)

In nominalizations as well, *ka* ‘SBJ’ obligatorily occurs to mark A (5a, 5d). P may take a different *ka* ‘ABS’ when it is the only participant present in the construction (5b). If several participants co-occur, this option disappears, as the clause would otherwise become confusing. As this *ka* only marks S and P, we gloss it subsequently as absolutive (see Section 7.7.6).

¹The Pije cognate to the agentive marker is *lu*.

- (6.5) a. i hun-saxhuti i jaxhut nyanya-n-eong **ka**
 DEF.SG NMLZ-narrate DEF.SG story mother-POSS-1SG.POSS SBJ
 caacaa-n-eong
 father-POSS-1SG.POSS
 ‘My father’s way of telling my mother’s story’
- b. i hun-vii (ka) i jaxhut
 DEF.SG NMLZ-say ABS DEF.SG story
 ‘The way to say the story’
- c. i hun-moo (ka) i mwa
 DEF.SG NMLZ-be ABS DEF.SG house
 ‘The nature of the house’
- d. i hun-xale-a ka yo
 DEF.SG NMLZ-see-3OBJ SBJ 1SG
 ‘My way of seeing him (lit. the way of seeing him by me)’

The construction in (6) is a more colloquial way of asking for the agent of an action and skips the usual pronoun *kai* ‘who?’.

(6.6) J8:35

na a nya ka?
 DEM 3SG put SBJ

‘This, who put it there?’

6.1.2 Oblique markers

Vamale, like most canonic Oceanic languages (Ross 2004, 510), has no ditransitive verbs. Benefactive scenarios are expressed either with verb phrases or with the prepositions already mentioned in Section 4.8. Four forms add a noun phrase to a verb phrase: *nya* ‘Beneficiary, Goal’ (from the verb ‘put, send, give’), *si-* ‘Recipient (human), Topic (human), Experiencer (animate), Goal (animate)’ (from the noun *si-* ‘hand’), *ko-* ‘Ground, Theme, Stimulus’ (from the preposition ‘on’), and the combined forms *nyasi-* and *nyako-* ‘give, for’ discussed in more detail in Section 6.1.2.2. In all cases, the added NP can be omitted, as in *e (ila-ke) xaxhi/haxhi (nyakoo-n)* ‘I (demand-TR) forgiveness (for X)’. We thus argue that there are no indirect arguments in Vamale. Every NP introduced with

nyako / *nyasi*, *ko* or *nya* can be omitted without violating the verb's valency. This grammar will speak of oblique and (core) arguments.

6.1.2.1 Benefactive *nya*

Most *nya* forms are verbs and head a phrase themselves (7). However, *nya* may also act as an oblique marker and introduce a noun phrase. Since no non-contiguous serial verb construction (s)VoVo is otherwise attested in the language, (8) is analyzed as a verb phrase *vwa ena* ‘do this’ and the animate beneficiary marker *nya*, which introduces the pronoun *kai* ‘who’. *nya* is also used as a spatial preposition meaning ‘towards’ (Section 8.4.1).

- (6.7) a. nya-a-me!
send-move.same.level-DIR.CP

'Give it to me!'
- b. a nya li sale=ka-n (nya)si li apuli
3SG put DEF.PL possession=POSS-3SG.POSS BEN DEF.PL person

'He gives his goods to the people.'
- (6.8) go vwa ena nya kai?
2SG do DEM.DIST give who

'For whom do you do that?'

6.1.2.2 Oblique markers *nyako-*, *nyasi-*

The prepositions *nya-si* ‘Recipient (human), Topic (human), Experiencer (animate)’, *nya-ko* ‘Recipient, Topic, Experiencer’ are composed of the other three oblique markers *nya* ‘put, BEN’, *ko-* ‘on, OBL’ and *si-* ‘hand, BEN’. They are derived from inalienable nominal forms (but do not take articles) and, similarly to locative nouns (see Section 4.5.2), can have generic (-*n*) or specific possessive markers (e.g. -*nq* ‘1SG’, -*m* ‘2SG’).

There are two main differences between *nyasi* and *nyako*. *nyasi* is restricted to animate participants, even human ones for some meanings, and suggests a less direct involvement of the marked NP: questions, demands (9a) and gifts (9b) are the main contexts in which it appears. The main difference between *si* and *nyasi* seems to be that *si* marks the beneficiary of an already benefactive action (9b), whereas *nyasi* can add a beneficiary argument to any verb, see (9d).

(6.9) a. B2:100

e ila-ke nyasi-m i vai
 1SG make.request-TR BEN-2SG.POSS DEF.SG stone

‘I (politely) ask you for the stone (lit. I request the stone from you)’

b. J7:14

a nya li saleka-n si li apuli
 3SG give DEF.PL property-3SG.POSS BEN DEF.PL person

‘He gives his things away to the people’

c. Bw:35

go ha-me saaguu-be see-me si-je mwa ca thôa
 CNJ go-DIR.CP support-1PL.EXCL same-all BEN-1PL.INCL DEICT in work
 koo-n
 OBL-ANA

‘Now, come join to help us (EXCL) to the benefit of us all (INCL) in this customary labour’

d. GB:17

ta-xhavwaleke ma gase bo vwa nyasi-le
 sitting-wait SUBR 1PL.INCL IRR do BEN-3PL

‘(They) sit around waiting for us to do it for them’

Similar in functions, *nyako* is generally more common, as it marks human and non-human participants alike. Similarly to *ko*, *nyako* can introduce a Stimulus (10c). *nyasi* is also only attested once for the function of topic marker, and was in a fronted position: *nyasi Leenhardt, cip=e xa-xale-a* ‘concerning Leenhardt, I never saw him’ (24c). *nyako* is an unmarked particle to introduce a topic (10b).

(6.10) a. tha lu mata nyasi i jamwa-n sohmu-n
 ASS 3DU sing for DEF.SG father-POSS study-NSPEC

‘They sing for the teacher’

b. tha lu mata nyako i jamwa-n sohmu-n
 ASS 3DU sing OBL DEF.SG father-POSS study-NSPEC

‘They sing about/onto the teacher’

- c. vamale-181107-jpnelemwa-06_LR 0:12:24-0:12:26
- e vwa xaleke nyako li mwani-n-eong
 1SG do buy for DEF.PL money-POSS-1SG.POSS
- ‘I do (buy) according to my means’

6.1.2.3 Oblique marker *ko-*

The preposition *ko-* introduces mainly instruments to the verb phrase (see (11a) and (11b)), as well as other oblique noun phrases: Stimulus (12, 12c), Themes (13b) and Ground (e.g. *bitake ko-n koltaa* ‘turn around on the street’²). They are called oblique here, because the verb phrase remains grammatical without the noun phrase introduced by *ko*. A nominal modifier construction with *ko-* is described in Section 6.4.4.

- (6.11) a. 2019-07-25 JP grammare:16

e kon udu ko-n bia
 1SG PROG drink.cold OBL-NSPEC beer

‘I am getting drunk with beer’

- b. GP:78

a vi nyakoo-be nyima-n ma yaai ko-n thala
 3SG say OBL-1PL.EXCL will-3SG.POSS SUBR saw OBL-NSPEC knife

‘He told us that he wants to cut it by knife’

- (6.12) a. G5:51

e-sinu-o koo-n
 MID-suffer-1SG OBL-ANA

‘I suffer from it’

- b. X9:25

yo hmwet-eo ko i vaya-ca
 1SG tired-1SG OBL DEF.SG work-PROX

‘I am fed up with/tired of this work’ (in local French: *je suis fatigué de ce travail*)

²*bitake* ‘rotate on a flat Ground’ takes a *ko*-marked oblique noun phrase when the Ground is specified.

- c. 2017-07-21 Chant de deuil:8-9

Abe holeke nya-koo-m au Nyaanya ko li vaaya a
 1PL.EXCL thank.for put-on-2SG oh Mummy OBL SPEC.PL work REL
 go vwa cahni Bako
 2SG do here Bako

‘We thank you, oh Mommy, for the works you did here in Bako’

- d. go see ko i da?
 2SG cry OBL DEF.SG what

‘Why do you cry?’

While there are adjuncts introduced by *ko*, notably causes (12a) and locations (13a), the ones we call oblique are semantically specified by the verb. For some verbs, noun phrases introduced by *ko* have become core arguments and are not omissible without changing the meaning (e.g. (*vwa*) *icu* ‘barter (intransitive)’, *icu-ko-* ‘sell’ in (13a)). This scenario is discussed in more detail in Section 7.3.1.3. This inalienable *ko-* is not to be confused with the conjunctions *ko* ‘but’ and *kon* ‘and then’ (13a), the progressive particle *kon* (11a), nor with the subordinator *ko* ‘because’, discussed in Section 12.1.5.

- (6.13) a. AG1:22

kon tha abe saavi cama=be icu-koo-n ko-n
 CNJ ASS 1PL.EXCL dig.up if=1PL.EXCL barter-OBL-ANA on-NSPEC
marché
 market

‘And then we dig them up whenever we sell them at the market’

- b. GC:81

ko na kai a eca-kau ko niena-aen
 but DEM who REL.3SG learn-2DU OBL DEM.PL-DIST

‘But who taught you all this? (lit. but this who that teach you about this)’

6.2 Pronouns

There are three types of openly expressed arguments. The free form, called “pronoun” here, can be fronted, take the agentive marker *ka* and the beneficiary *nya*, is used to call

TABLE 6.1: Free pronouns

	1 (EXCL)	1+ (INCL)	2	3
SG	<i>yo</i>		<i>go</i>	<i>ya</i>
DU	<i>abu</i>	<i>gasu</i>	<i>gau</i>	<i>lu</i>
PL	<i>abe</i>	<i>gaa</i>	<i>gavwe</i>	<i>le</i>

people, for topicalization, often occurs in imperatives. This group includes personal pronouns (Section 6.2.1, listed in Table 6.1), demonstrative pronouns (Section 6.2.2), and stand-in question words *kai* ‘who’ and *da* ‘what’ (14a). The latter can take a singular article in marked scenarios, see (14b).

(6.14) a. X1:1

ko go vii da?
 CNJ 2SG say what
 ‘But what are you saying?’

b. RP:14

gaa tha gase juu tena go tha gase thii mae ka
 1PL.INCL ASS 1PL.INCL real listen then ASS 1PL.INCL light fire CNJ
 a bo xahnang i da?
 3SG IRR good DEF.SG what
 ‘We’d listen well, and we’d light fires [anyway] and what’s supposed to be good then?’

The other forms are bound (Table 6.2). S_A participants are indexed on the predicate by proclitic particles called ‘bound pronouns’. S_P participants are indexed on stative verbs via suffixes, as are undergoers. They will be further treated under ‘Verbs’ on page 151.

There is a difference in marking between S_P , S_A/A , and P , leading to a tripartite split S alignment in the marking of participants on the predicate. The undergoer markers are also bound pronouns, because they are in complementary distribution with undergoer NPs, meaning that either the object of the verb is expressed openly (15a), in which case the verb may bear a transitivity marker, or the object is expressed by the suffix (15b), in which case no open object NP may follow (15c).

(6.15) a. a=xaleke i=pupwaale

3SG=see DEF=European

‘He sees the European.’

TABLE 6.2: Subject and object markers for active and stative verbs

	Free form	A=/S _A =	-S _p	-P
1SG	<i>io</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>-o(ng)</i>	<i>-o</i>
1DU.INCL	<i>gasu</i>	<i>gasu</i>	<i>-gasu</i>	<i>-kaeu</i>
1PL.INCL	<i>gaa/gase</i>	<i>ga(se)</i>	<i>gaa</i>	<i>-kaa</i>
1DU.EXCL	<i>abu</i>	<i>abu</i>	<i>-abu</i>	<i>-(a)bu</i>
1PL.EXCL	<i>abe</i>	<i>abe</i>	<i>-abe</i>	<i>-(a)be</i>
2SG	<i>go</i>	<i>go</i>	<i>-go</i>	<i>-ko</i>
2DU	<i>gau</i>	<i>gau</i>	<i>-gau</i>	<i>-kau</i>
2PL	<i>gavwe</i>	<i>gavwe</i>	<i>-gavwe</i>	<i>-kavwe</i>
3SG	<i>ia</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>-(e)a</i>	<i>-(e)a</i>
3DU	<i>lu</i>	<i>lu</i>	<i>-lu</i>	<i>-lu</i>
3PL	<i>le</i>	<i>le</i>	<i>-le</i>	<i>-le</i>

b. a=xale-a

3SG=see-3SG

‘He sees him.’

c. *a=xale-a i=pupwaale

(He sees the European)

Following Kroeger, a syntactic function is unique to one argument (Kroeger 2004, 20). Since free pronouns are noun phrases, they cannot coexist with the noun with which they would share a referent in the same clause.

6.2.1 Personal pronouns

The ‘subject markers’, as they are called in the literature on New Caledonian languages, are obligatory and not in complementary distribution with open noun phrases possessing the same referent. This may be due to the basic word order VOS, where the object follows the verb immediately, but the subject may need a ‘reminder’ at the beginning. This means that they are not pronouns in the traditional sense. They occur before aspect markers, and are proclitics which attach to predicates. They are listed in Table 6.2.

Dual personal pronouns, as well as dual articles, are used for polite speech: while *gau* 2DU is used to politely address a single person, thus augmenting their importance, *muca* INDF.DU is used in offering things, to diminish the size of the offer, as in (16).

TABLE 6.3: Demonstrative pronouns

	proximal	distal
SG	<i>e-hni</i>	<i>e-na</i>
DU	<i>muu-hni</i>	<i>muu-na</i>
PL	<i>ni-e-hni</i>	<i>ni-e-na</i>

- (6.16) fe muca nyu!
take INDF.DU fish

‘Take some fish! (more than two)’

Dual pronouns, and plural pronouns, are used differently than in European languages when including someone with the addressee, i.e. ‘with whom did you go?’ or ‘you and your uncle’s village’ (17).

- (6.17) vamale-181107-jp_nelemwa-06: 00:12:56-00:12:58
i bwanpu-n-abu ma vwoon-ong
DEF.SG country-POSS-1DU.EXCL COM uncle-1SG.POSS

‘My and my maternal uncle’s village’

6.2.2 Demonstrative pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns in Vamale distinguish number: prefixed with *e-* are the singular,³ with *ni-* the plural, and with *mu-* the dual forms. The dual forms are rare. The forms are listed in Table 6.3. Note that the plural forms feature two transparent morphemes: the plural *ni-* and the proximal / distal suffixes *-hni* and *-na* which are also found in the verb *hmwa-ehni* ‘be.like-this’ and *hmwa-ena* ‘be.like-that’. The third part of the plural pronouns is an non-transparent *-e-*. This may be a former singular prefix, as is still featured by the singular forms, onto which a plural morpheme would have been prefixed without replacing it, possibly meaning that *niehni* was formed much later. On the other hand, *ehni* is still pronounced *vehni* by elders, and the singular article is still *vi* in comparatively archaic Vamale Usa, but *nivehni* is not attested anywhere. A simple epenthetic function seems unlikely given that the dual forms lack it.

The suffix *-hni* has the stative verb cognate *hni-* ‘proximal’ in Bwato (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 43). Rivierre calls demonstratives verbs (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 42), which makes sense given that they can take stative subject suffixes: *ehni-o*

³Possibly derived from the singular article *i*. Both *vi* ‘DEF.SG’ and *ve-hni* ‘DEM.PROX’ are attested in older speakers.

‘here I am’. Its distal counterpart *-na* does not seem cognate to Bwato *hanaa*- ‘be here’, but could be cognate to *nai*- ‘recently mentioned’ (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 43). The latter verb *nai*- ‘recently mentioned’ is a possible hint towards the real function of *-hni* and *-na*: the suffixes being able to distinguish between recently mentioned information and some that was mentioned longer ago, or not at all (but is general knowledge).⁴

(6.18) a. Bwato

(Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 43)

go vwa ni ma-nai-a
2SG do DEF.PL NMLZ-recently.mentioned-3SG

‘Do these things’

b. Vamale

go vwa li aman-ca
2SG do DEF.PL thing-PROX

‘Do the things there’

The pronouns are mostly used as topics or comments in equative constructions (19), though *ena* is also used to express agreement, like in English ‘exactly.’. The latter use is also attested with *hmwaana* ‘be like that’. *hmwaani* ‘be like this’ cannot be used to comment on a previous utterance. *-na* and *-hni* may thus be more of an engagement-distinguishing pair than really about distance, i.e. mark whether something is close to the speakers’ attention. The demonstrative suffixes *-ca* and *-aen* can take a similar function.

(6.19) HC19:61

tha pa i hun-moo-o ve-hni
ASS ALR DEF.SG NMLZ-be-1SG DEM-PROX

‘This is my (elder’s) way [not to be able if I’ll be around tomorrow]’ (*pa* conveys that his life has come to this)

niena ‘DIST.PL’ is the only form attested as *nienaen* with an additional *-aen* ‘dist’ suffix, which usually only applies onto nouns, and has the idiosyncratic meaning ‘all that’, see (20). There is no equivalent *niena-ca* form using the nominal proximal suffix, which is reminiscent of the *ena* / *hmwaana* cases only using the more distal form for abstract functions.

⁴Bwato furthermore has the stative verb *huta*- ‘below’ which does not find an exact counterpart in Vamale (see example 18a) (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 43).

(6.20) CP1:49

cahma niehni abe cabeen xhaohmu-n-go ja cip-abe
 TOP DIST.PL 1PL.EXCL INDF.PL elder-POSS-2SG ACCP NEG-1PL.EXCL
 yajooke mwa nien-aen
 attain now DIST.PL-DIST

‘When it comes to these (works of our ancestors), we elders of yours already don’t attain all of that anymore’

The prefix *me* ‘all’ is attested as a prefix to the demonstrative pronoun *ehni* (21), but no other nominal element. The related pre-verb *me* is discussed in Section 8.3.2.1.2.

(6.21) GP:2-3

nyeet ca-n fava-vwasiteke na ca i thuatit a le
 when in-NSPEC four-pray DEM in DEF.SG day REL 3PL
 fe-kaa ka me-ehni cahni pala-je
 take-1PL.INCL.OBJ SBJ all-DEM.PROX here home-1PL.INCL.POSS

‘When, on Thursday, it was on that day that those all came to fetch us here in our home’

6.2.2.1 Topical demonstrative *na*

Related to *ena*, there is another, very common, form, *na*, which can only be used as the topic of a clause. Whether that clause is an equative construction involving only nominal phrases (including the demonstrative pronouns *ena* and *ehni*), or one with a verbal predicate, *na* comes first. The pronoun cannot be used for subjects in the traditional VOS word order, nor take flagging.

(6.22) KP:82

tu vois, na tha cipa ca aman a le thên thên ca-n
 you see DEM ASS NEG INDF.SG thing REL 3PL run run in-NSPEC
 magasî. na le vwa-suki lait.
 shop DEM 3PL do-price rice

‘You see, it’s not something they’d run run to the shop [for], they’d pay for rice...’

The demonstrative *na* has a form used only in insistent scenarios, often associated with repetition: *ha*.

(6.23) DP:12

xa-vuki vai ko-n thexhwaade ha li kalen
 AGT.NMLZ-stem rock at-NSPEC T. DEM DEF.PL k.

‘The guardians of the Thexhwaade rock are the Kalens’

6.3 Fronting

The subject is often fronted, but may then still occur after the verb, indicating that a fronted subject is not a constituent of the clause.⁵ Fronting can be used to focus on any constituent, a resumptive morpheme remains in the matrix clause. The topic markers *cahma* and *nyasi* may precede the fronted constituent (24a, 24c).

With most speakers, the particle is pronounced [tɕamã], but since two older speakers, Mrs. Madeleine Bonu Fouan and Mr. Philippe Dego Gohoupe (e.g. in (24a)), pronounce it with an audibly voiceless nasal [tɕa^hɱa], we distinguish this word from *cama* ‘if, when.IRR’, which introduces subordinate and insubordinate clauses, but never a fronted noun phrase.

(6.24) a. HC19:59

ka cahma yo, tha gavwe paa hmaa-ko-ong naen gavwe bwa
 CNJ TOP 1SG ASS 2PL ALR arrive-on-1SG now 2PL IPFV
 hmaa-ko-ong ka pala
 arrive-on-1SG CNJ talk

‘But me, you have found me now, you found me and [we] spoke’

⁵Prosodically, too, the fronted subject has an own contour, which yields two intonation units: the fronted subject, and the clause.

b. GC:107

ca i wadan-aen, **cahma** Xa-xhwi Apuli, [...] a kon
 in DEF.SG time-DEM TOP AGT.NMLZ-eat person 3SG PROG
 e-hnyimake ma a xhwii-le **hai ma** a cee-le ma le
 REFL-think SUBR 3SG eat-3PL CNJ SUBR 3SG leave-3PL SUBR 3PL
 han.
 go

‘At this moment, Maneater wondered whether he was going to eat them
 or let them go.’

c. HC1:36

nyasi Leenhardt, cip=e xa-xale-a
 TOP L. NEG=1SG AGT.NMLZ-see-3SG.OBJ

‘Concerning Leenhardt, I never saw him’

6.4 Modifying a noun

Noun phrases feature various words that modify their head: particles can be preposed to the noun, see *se* and *been* ‘other’ (6.4.1), as well as the quantifying particles discussed in Section 6.4.2. Two forms, *vataan* ‘each’ and *me* ‘all’ are used (see Section 8.3.2.1), but also attested in noun phrases (*me* is restricted to pronouns) (25). A small sub-class of verbs was described in Section 7.2.1 that integrate the noun phrase. Nouns can be modified by other nouns, either via relative clauses (Section 12.2.3), whose subordinating particle is introduced in Section 6.4.3. The prepositional noun *ko-* ‘on’ (Section 6.4.4) coordinates nouns into a possessive-like construction. Possessors are discussed in the chapter on nouns (Section 5.2). Finally, demonstrative suffixes, while not words, dock onto nouns and pronouns alike, and add information about the saliency or proximity of the word (Section 6.4.5).

(6.25) GT:6

tha lu tena nyasi li vatan xhaohmu
 ASS 3DU OBL DEF.PL each elder

‘They heard about the different/various ancestors’

6.4.1 Particles *se*, *been* ‘other’

Vamale features two function words that can both occur between the article and the noun, and act as a placeholder for the noun after the article. One is *se* ‘other’ (26a). It is derived from the stative verb *se-* ‘one, be one / the same’ which can be used predicatively as well as attributively (26b). *se-* is also a preverb, see Section 8.3.2.1.1. *se* is attested in two cases preceding definite noun phrases without *i* or *li/ni* (26d, 26e), but this use was not further investigated and must be left to future research. The other function word is *been*, derived from the noun *bee-n* ‘peer-3SG.POSS’ (26c). Like *se*, it is not inflected. Both *se* and *been* are attested with indefinite articles as well (27a). We thus find *i/eca se* ‘the/ some other’, *li/ mu/ muca/ ca been* ‘the/ some others’. Both *been* and *se* have a different meaning than the nominal and verbal forms, and can be used as placeholders for the modified noun (27a, (27b)). The co-occurrence of the particles with nouns (26a) excludes an analysis as pronouns.

- (6.26) a. *i se apuli*
 DEF.SG one person
 ‘The other person’
- b. *i apuli a se-a*
 DEF.SG person REL one-3SG
 ‘The person who is alone’
- c. *li bee-n apuli*
 DEF.PL peer-POSS.NSPEC person
 ‘The other people’
- d. J5:58
lu moo ca se mwa-n-lu
 3DU stay in one house-POSS-3DU.POSS
 ‘They stay in the same house. (lit. they stay in one house of theirs)’
- e. J4:14
i that cipa xa-sivu ca la a se la
 DEF.SG wind NEG HAB-blow in location REL one location
 ‘The wind does not always blow in the same place’ (lit. ‘the wind is not a constant blower in a place that is one/the same place’)

- (6.27) a. KL:171 (note that *ecase* ‘someone’ is a pronoun, see Section 4.3.2)

na cip=e tena ca a vi ka ca see
 DEM NEG=1SG hear SG.INDF REL say SBJ SG.INDF one

‘I haven’t heard anything said by anyone’

- b. KL:171

Tha faphâke nyako wîi ca been
 ASS believe OBL strength PL.INDF other

‘We hope for the strength of others’

6.4.2 Quantification

Nouns are mostly quantified with verbs. Numbers are expressed through verbs, as are forms like *hmai-n* ‘many’ in (28) and the derived middle form *e-hmai-n* ‘more and more (countable)’ (see Section 9.2.2). Non-verbal quantifiers include *jaa* ‘much’, *mu* ‘few (uncountable)’ as well as *meeka-n*, all signifying uncountable and thus generic masses: *jaa apuli* ‘too many people’, *mu mwani* ‘little money’, *meeka li apuli* ‘all the people’.

- (6.28) KP:77

go cahma naen mwa xada hê ja mu e-xhopwe mwa i
 CNJ TOP now REP differently yes ACCP ITER MID-grow REP DEF.SG
 hun-moo-gaa **hmain-ga** mwa
 NMLZ-stay-1PL.INCL many-1PL.INCL REP

‘But today it’s nevertheless... yeah, it’s ended up growing more and more, our way of life, we’re numerous now’

One form is attested so far with a quantifying meaning, but able to take alienable possessive morphology: *meeka-n* ‘all’. *meeka-n* cannot take articles, and precedes the noun phrase (29).

(6.29) a. GC:6

le kiica ka meeka li been thamo, ma ca-n
 3PL jealous SBJ all DEF.PL other woman while in-NSPEC
 e-dawee-le i a yata-n In Thu.
 MID-between-3PL DEF.SG REL name-3SG.POSS Skin Banyan

‘All the women were jealous, but among them was the one whose name was Banyan Bark.’

b. X9:31

cipa goon m=e saxhuti nyaako-m meeka i jaxhut
 NEG enough SUBR=1SG tell to-2SG.POSS all DEF.SG story

‘I can’t tell you the entire story (lit. everything of the story)’

meeka-n ‘all’ can be used after noun as well, in which case it carries an anaphoric suffix *-n* (30).

(6.30) vamale-181127-jp_nelemwa-1: 00:01:03-00:01:05

le=hame ka li thamo meeka-n
 3PL=go-DIR.CP SBJ DEF.PL woman all-ANA

‘All the women come’

6.4.3 Relativizer *a*

The relativizer *a* subordinating the modifying clause (31) to the modified noun phrase is often omitted if the subordinated clause is short, same-subject, or stative (in the case of verbal predicates). Relative clauses are discussed in Section 12.2.3.

(6.31) a. KL:66

go xaahni eca paatelo a xa-xahnang
 2SG see INDF.SG trousers REL AGT.NMLZ-good

‘You see some nice pants’

b. KL:162

yo th=e bwa xaleke li xhaohmu a le mu vap
 1SG ASS=1SG IPFV see DEF.PL old REL 3PL FREQ hunt
 ko-n da
 OBL-NSPEC spear

‘Me, I still used to see the elders who’d hunt with a spear’

6.4.4 Noun phrase subordinator *ko-*

Especially for new concepts, a construction is used which reminds of the French one $N + de + N$, e.g. *voiture_i de service_{ii}* ‘work_{ii} car_i’. The modified noun comes first, with a noun phrase subordinated by the preposition *ko-* following it: *watuut ko-n vaya* ‘work car’ (lit. ‘car on-NSPEC work’). This prepositional noun *ko-* ‘on; OBL’ described in Section 6.1.2.3, usually takes a generic noun phrase (32a), but specific ones are also attested (32b). The resulting construction looks like a possessive one, but is analyzed here as a prepositional phrase nested in a noun phrase.

(6.32) a. KG:175

bwa sauver-ong ka ehni a vi, *chambre-à-air* ko-n velo
 IPFV save-1SG.OBJ SBJ DEM 3SG say air.chamber on-NSPEC bike

‘What he said saved me, “bike air chambers” [to train my broken arm]’

b. JN1:174

bee-lu ko i moo
 peer-3DU OBL DEF.SG stay

‘Roommates’

ko is derived from the prepositional noun meaning ‘on’, and is a member of a polyvalent group of *ko* forms, including an oblique marker (Section 6.1.2.3), subordinators (Section 12.2.7 and Section 12.1.5), and, though it lexicalized the non-specific marker *-n*, the progressive marker *ko(o)n* (Section 10.4).

6.4.5 Demonstrative suffixes

Vamale features demonstrative pronouns, discussed in Section 6.2.2. One of the latter, *niena* ‘DEM.PL.DIST’, and common nouns, are the only words able to take demonstrative

suffixes. The suffixes in question are *-ca* ‘PROX.(DIR.CP)’, which can denote visible or otherwise salient entities, and *-aen* ‘DIST’, which marks more generally distant ones. A saliency or spatial distinction appears in Bwato only with the forms *-hni* and *-hanaa* (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 43) discussed in Section 6.2.2, but neither Bwato nor other West Coast dialects seem to feature *-ca* and *-aen*. Hienghène languages make the proximal/distal distinction as well, with a third degree (close but not to the speaker) in eastern Nemi (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 255), again without the *-ca* and *-aen* forms. Cèmuhi, however, has *-cè* ‘PROX’ and *-nè* ‘DIST’ (Rivierre 1980, 92).

Apart from distinguishing different degrees of spatial distance, the suffixes can express saliency degrees in discourse, with proximal *-ca* denoting recently mentioned entities, and *-aen* less recently ones (33, 34). A temporal use is attested with *jo-ca* ‘this year’ *jo-aen* ‘next year’.

(6.33) KL:112

cahma li xhwaawe-ca ha-me naen, cipa le caihna-n
 TOP DEF.PL children-PROX go-DIR.CP now NEG 3PL know-NSPEC
 niena-aen
 DEM-PROX

‘Whereas these kids (*hame*: that have come about) nowadays, they don’t know all that’

(6.34) KL:215

tha vwa i i ye a thaa tha i e-vwa-ka
 ASS EXIST DEF.SG DEF.SG tree REL ASS ASS DEF.SG INS.NMLZ-do-ABS
 i aman-aen
 DEF.SG thing-DIST

‘There is a tree that’s used for said thing’

6.4.6 Dependent verbs in modified noun phrases

This analysis claims that Vamale has no adjectives. Though this word class is common in Oceanic (Ross 2004, 497), it is not seen in Northern New Caledonian languages (Bril 2002, 106; Ozanne-Rivierre 1998, 47). Vamale nouns are modified via relative clauses (35a), or in compounds with post-posed modifiers, see (35b) and Section 5.4. One emerging phenomenon warrants discussion: the inclusion of stative verbs into the noun phrase.

- (6.35) a. i thamo (a)
 DEF.SG woman (REL)
 xhaohmu
 old
 ‘the old woman’
- b. i yee-thamo
 DEF.SG tree-woman
 ‘the female tree’

The stative verbs *xhopwen* ‘big, grow’ and *xhwatin* ‘small’ can take a subject, as shown in Section 7.2.1, and the resulting verb phrase is derived to a noun phrase, as evidenced by the article on the very left of the construction, and the option to coordinate modifiers: ART=[V-*n*_{NSPEC} N_{NSPEC}]. See Figure 6.2 for an example.

Common noun compounds using *xhopwe-n* are attested for weather phenomena and swearwords (36, 37b), where the first item is not the head. Given that this is not a productive pattern (37a), these constructions are analyzed as lexicalized, and not relevant to this discussion of the wordclass of *xhopwen*. Their established use may have contributed to the productive forming of the construction in Figure 6.2.

- (6.36) a. xhopwen uta
 big rain
 ‘monsoon’
- b. xhopwen that
 big wind
 ‘cyclone’
- (6.37) a. *xhopwen goon
 big body
- b. xhopwe-n vwa-m!
 size-POSS penis-2SG.POSS
 ‘The size of your penis!’ (insult referring to uncircumcized, i.e. immature members)

A special case of phrase-internal modification is *joakan* ‘thick’, which may be a loan and cognate to *goo-n* ‘body’, which is *joo-n* in Pije, or *joa-n* ‘totality, all of it’ in western Voh-Koné varieties (38a). Like *xhopwen*, *joakan* cannot take an article without being followed by a noun. It is not attested as a predicate, however, which makes an analysis as a dependent noun plausible. The example in (38b) thus seems to be the result of two reanalyses: the verb phrase *xhopwen juu-sapwen* is reanalyzed as a noun phrase, and the modifier *joakan* is coordinated with the other modifier *xhopwen*.

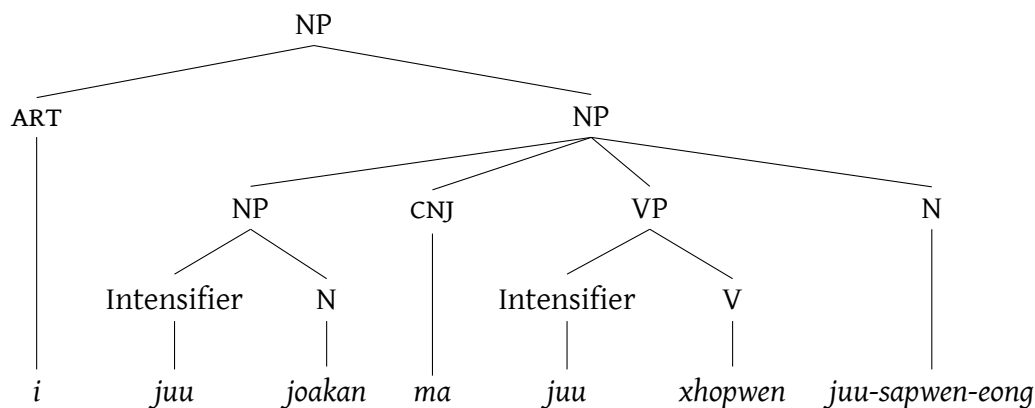


FIGURE 6.2: A syntax tree illustrating a noun phrase with preposed modifiers (see ex. 38b).

(6.38) a. Excerpt of ‘The North Wind and the Sun’

[...]a thawi-a ca i juu joakan sapwen
REL wrap-3SG in DEF.SG very thick clothing

‘[...] wrapped in a thick coat’

b. i juu joakan ma juu xhopwen juu-sapwen-eong
DEF.SG real thick COM real big real-dress-1SG.POSS

‘My very thick and very big dress’

In conclusion, some words appear as modifiers in a noun phrase and have verbal or nominal origins. The modified nouns are the heads of following relative clauses (*i xhopwen apuli [a xahan]* ‘the big **man** [REL over.there]’), which is remarkable since Vamale’s head-initial order is otherwise highly consistent. These constructions seem to be relatively new, as the loss of functional *-n* in stative dependent verbs is still underway.

6.5 Coordination of noun phrases

Noun phrases are coordinated using similar morphemes as Section 8.5. This includes *ma* ‘and (similarly)’, *ka* ‘and, (on the other hand)’, and *hai/a* ‘or’. Contrary to verb phrases, the result is a single constituent, which is why we discuss coordination here instead of in Chapter 12.

For an equative meaning as in (39b), two noun phrases can be connected by *hmwaka-* ‘be like’, which is a possessible verb. The result is not a new clause, however,

but an adjunct. *hmwaka-* can be preceded by a verb phrase, but is always followed by a noun phrase as in (39a), or an adverb, as in (39c).

(6.39) a. HC19:72

gavwe bo vwa sohmu-n hmwaka li nyai-je ko
 2PL IRR do study-NSPEC be.like DEF.PL child-1PLINCL.POSS OBL
 ni fati-je
 DEF.PL language-1PL.INCL.POSS

‘You will study our languages like our children’

b. KP:83

gaa cipa hmwaka li xhaohmu
 1PL.INCL NEG like DEF.PL old

‘We are not like the elders’

c. KP:56

cahma naen tha cipa hmwaka-n habu
 TOP now ASS NEG like-NSPEC before

‘But nowadays, it’s not like before’

6.5.1 Comitative *ma* ‘with’

The comitative *ma* includes the following NP into the action or the state happening, as in (40). It is probably not related to the subordinator *ma*, which is *ne* in Hienghène languages (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 258), whereas the comitative is *ma(a)* (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 259). This coordinator is used to link clauses as well (Section 12.1.1).

(6.40) KG:53

kon i mur séparer i mwa-n vwa-ila ma i
 because DEF.SG wall separate DEF.SG house-POSS cook COM DEF.SG
 tha i mwa habu xaleke?
 ASS DEF.SG house long.ago see

‘Because the wall separates the kitchen and the ... the pre-existing house, see?’

ma serves to form inclusory constructions: to ask with whom one did something, the pronoun including both the addressee and the presumed other person(s) is used, followed by *ma*: *gau ma* ‘you and whom?’ (2 people, (41b)), *gavwe ma* ‘you and whom?’ (more than 2 people), *le/lu ma* ‘they with/and whom?’ (3rd person). This syndetic (i.e. using a conjunction) interrogative inclusory construction is common in Austronesian languages (Bril 2011, 244-257).

- (6.41) a. e bo jili wâng ma Dui
1SG FUT build.with.wood boat COM D.

‘I will build a boat with Dui.’

- b. B2:41

gau ma?
2DU COM

‘You and who?’

Asyndetic constructions also exist, as in (42). In this “verb-marking strategy”, a singular article introduces a noun phrase modified by a relative clause with a dual subject (Bril 2011, 244-245).

- (6.42) KG:471

i-se a lu mee hup-e ya a bwa ta xale
DEF.SG-other REL 3DU all go.down-DIR.CP 3SG 3SG IPFV go.up look

‘The other who came with (lit. the other that the two came down together) went up [in the gas station] to look around’

- (6.43) a. AG1:299

ma i xhwaawe xayu lu e-copain-copine
COM DEF.SG child male 3DU RECP-boyfriend-girlfriend

‘With the boy, she becomes a couple’

b. AG1:406-407

ko cama lu moo mwa ma i thamo, a bwa sila
 because if 3DU stay DEICT COM DEF.SG woman 3SG IPFV raise
 xawe mwa
 youth DEICT

‘Because when they stay together, the woman and him, she will raise children’

6.5.2 Additive *ka* ‘also, too’

Ka is a conjunction used to introduce new actions and different subjects. It is used to coordinate verb phrases, noun phrases (44), as well as clauses, and can take the meaning ‘but’.

(6.44) a. GP:17

a moo ko i yeen ma fe yata li ye ka li
 REL stay on DEF.SG island SUBR take name DEF.PL tree CNJ DEF.PL
 in thii ka hê
 skin-POSS shell yes

‘[...] that live on the island to take the names of the trees and of the clam shells and yes’

b. KL:4

cahma naen buco puakan han pala-je: cahni ka tiwade ka
 TOP now full pig go home-1PL.POSS here CNJ T. CNJ
 wanas ka theganpaik, cama le vwa bordel ...
 W. CNJ T. if 3PL do mess

‘But now it’s full of [feral] pigs running about the homeland, here [We Hava] and in Tiouandé, and Ouanache, and Téganpaik, [and] when they make a mess [in the fields] ...’

6.5.3 Alternative *hai* ‘or’

hai can be used in several different ways. An emotive interjection of surprise when alone, a modal discourse marker expressing insecurity (‘the red one maybe, *hai*?’), or to contrast two choices. In order to mark the first choice, *hai* can precede it (45a),

whereas the second *hai* is obligatory. As shown in (45b), a non-comitative list of noun phrases is usually articulated by the less marked allomorph *a*.

(6.45) a. hai go hai yo?

CNTR 2SG CNTR 1SG

‘You or me?’

b. CP1:42

go bwa fa-pidanke mwa li hao-n-go **a**
2SG IPFV CAUS-separate DEICT DEF.PL grandfather-POSS-2SG.POSS or

li papa-n-go **a** li bee-m mwa **a**
DEF.PL father-POSS-2SG.POSS or DEF.PL sibling-2SG.POSS even or

‘You share this [custom] now with your grandparents, your parents, or even your siblings, or’

Chapter 7

Verbs

Verbs are the biggest word class in Vamale after nouns. They make up over a third of the recorded lexicon (1314/3627), with nouns numbering 1844 (counting proper nouns and common deverbal nominalizations). In Vamale, apart from predication, verbs may modify nouns (covered in Section 6.4) and verbs alike (Section 7.6.3, Section 8.3.1, and Section 8.3.2.2), though adverbs exist as well (Section 8.4). Intransitive verbs can form clauses on their own. They can be divided into three main classes, according to their subject-indexing morphology. Active verbs, which bear subject-indexing on their left (see Section 7.3), mark transitive subjects like agent-like intransitive subjects, compare exs. (2b, 2a) (Figure 7.1). Stative verbs, described in Section 7.2, take suffixes for subject-indexing (2c), use morphemes distinct from undergoer-indexing suffixes, see Table 7.2. Verbs usually index the subject, except in imperative constructions, in serial verb constructions if they are not the first verb, and, for stative verbs, if the subject is inanimate. The argument markers can be omitted for pragmatic reasons, most prominently in lists of things happening, or when it is otherwise clear to whom something happens (1).

(7.1) HC19:59

ka cahma yo, tha gavwe paa hmaa-koo-ng naen, gavwe bwa
 CNJ TOP 1SG ASS 2PL ALR hit-on-1SG now 2PL IPFV
 hmaa-koo-ng, ka pala
 hit-on-1SG CNJ talk

‘But me, you have found me now, you found me and [we] spoke’

Another type is impersonal verbs, which take a subordinate clause as their sole argument, and cannot take a subject (7.1). One type of verbs is described in the chapter Verb Phrases instead of here: manner verbs are bound intransitive verbs that only occur as elements modifying the head verb (Section 8.3.2.2).

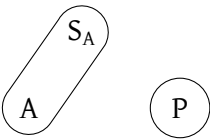


FIGURE 7.1: Alignment for active verbs

TABLE 7.1: Some forms of the paradigm of transitive *caihnan* ‘to know’

<i>a caihna-o</i>	s/he knows me
<i>a caihna-ko</i>	s/he knows you
<i>a caihna-a</i>	s/he knows him/her
<i>a caihna-kau</i>	s/he knows you (2DU)
<i>a caihna-n</i>	s/he knows (it)
<i>a caihna-n apuli</i>	s/he knows people (NSPEC)
<i>a caihna i apuli</i>	s/he knows the person (SPEC)

- (7.2) a. le soom
3PL swim
‘They swim’
- b. le caihna li apuli
3PL know DEF.PL person
‘They know the people’
- c. sinu-le
suffer-3PL
‘They suffer’

A small class of stative verbs are formally indistinguishable from directly possessed nouns, except in that they don’t take articles (Section 7.2.3). Examples include *mulip* ‘life’ *muliv-am* ‘you are alive’, *hman-an* ‘be hungry’.

7.1 Impersonal verbs

Impersonal verbs, a term used by Rivierre (1980, 70) for Cèmuhî, do not take argument indexes and cannot occur in the imperative mood, but like other verbs they can form complete clauses by themselves and can either occur with an argument or without it. One subset of impersonal verbs, the affirmative existential *vwa* and the negative existential *cika*, can only take a noun phrase as an argument, but these are not the subject, as evidenced by their inability to take *ka* ‘SBJ’. This excludes pronouns. Since Vamale does not have a word for ‘to have’, having or not having something is expressed

TABLE 7.2: Subject and object markers for active and stative verbs

	Free form	A=/S _A =	-S _P	-P
1SG	<i>io</i>	<i>e</i>	-o(ng)	-o
1DU.INCL	<i>gasu</i>	<i>gasu</i>	-gasu	-kaeu
1PL.INCL	<i>gaa/gase</i>	<i>ga(se)</i>	<i>gaa</i>	-kaa
1DU.EXCL	<i>abu</i>	<i>abu</i>	-abu	-(a)bu
1PL.EXCL	<i>abe</i>	<i>abe</i>	-abe	-(a)be
2SG	<i>go</i>	<i>go</i>	-go	-ko
2DU	<i>gau</i>	<i>gau</i>	-gau	-kau
2PL	<i>gavwe</i>	<i>gavwe</i>	-gavwe	-kavwe
3SG	<i>ia</i>	<i>a</i>	-(e)a	-(e)a
3DU	<i>lu</i>	<i>lu</i>	-lu	-lu
3PL	<i>le</i>	<i>le</i>	-le	-le

with possessive constructions, as in (3): e.g. ‘there is for me’, calqued into local French: *il y a une femme pour toi?* ‘is there a wife for you?’ meaning do you have a wife?. *cika* ‘NEG.EXIST’ only takes inanimate and non-specific animate arguments, while *cia-* is open to arguments of any animacy, and generic inanimates. *vwa* ‘EXIST’ may take free pronouns and specific animate arguments in marked scenarios (persons will usually be localized with *la* ‘be here’ and demonstratives).

(7.3) KL:141

hê tha vwa li xhaohmu vwa wadala-le
 yes ASS EXIST DEF.PL old EXIST gun-3PL.POSS

‘Yes, there were elders who had guns’

Another subset of impersonal verbs takes a complement clause as their sole argument (4a), but can also stand alone (4b). They form a small, closed class, partly derived from nouns. *goon ma* ‘allowed, possible to’, *vwasoon ma* ‘impossible to’,¹ *sitake ma* ‘forbidden to’ work like this (see Figure 7.2). Most members of this class have other meanings when used as nouns or verbs in other contexts, e.g. *goon* ‘body, enough’ but *goon, ma...* ‘possible, feasible, allowed to...’.

(7.4) a. AG1:71

vwasoon ma go suu
 impossible COMP 2SG break

‘You cannot break it’

¹Maybe from *vwa-s(it)oon* ‘EXIST-taboo’.

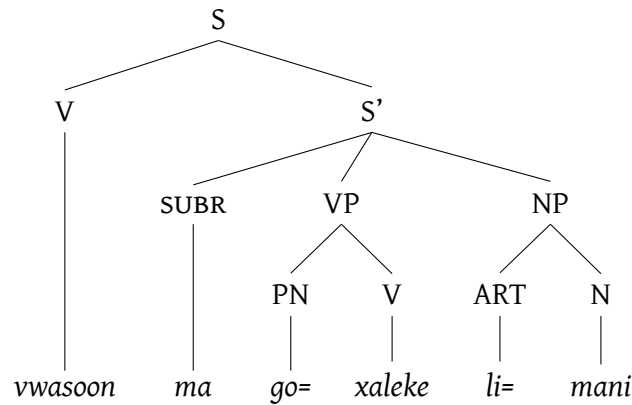


FIGURE 7.2: Tree-diagram of the sentence structure of *vwasoon ma go xaleke li mani* ‘you cannot see the birds’

b. KG:135

ju-vaa vwasoon
 very-too.much impossible
 ‘It’s too difficult’

uta ‘rain’, *mapeke* ‘be day’, *bwen* ‘night’ and other members of the lexical field of weather phenomena, sea tide, etc. exist as article-bearing nouns as well, do not take arguments, but can form clauses and take certain adverbs. This third group is called verbs on the basis of constructions where the members cannot behave like typical nouns (5), and following analyzes of cognates in other languages, where the forms can be derived to take arguments: *bwen-i-εg* ‘it becomes night around me’ (Rivierre 1980, 302). This argument-taking is not attested in Vamale (anymore), but oblique constructions still exist.

(7.5) a. (*i) *uta nyako-ong*
 DEF.SG rain OBL-1SG.POSS
 ‘It rains on me’

b. *thapoke mapeke*
 begin bright
 ‘It is (starting to) dawn.’

7.2 Stative verbs

“Stative verbs” are a classic feature in New Caledonian languages, already described in Haudricourt 1948, and descend from Proto-Oceanic (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 63).² They are inflected with morphemes that closely resemble postponed free forms,

²Lynch, Ross, and Crowley distinguish stative and dynamic verbs, while the French tradition, and this study, call the latter “active” verbs.

TABLE 7.3: Inflection of *hmet-* ‘sated’

SG	1	<i>hmet-eo</i>
	2	<i>hmet-go</i>
	3	<i>hmet-ea</i>
DU	1INCL	<i>hmet-gasu</i>
	1EXCL	<i>hmet-abu</i>
	2	<i>hmet-au</i>
	3	<i>hmet-lu</i>
PL	1INCL	<i>hmet-gaa</i>
	1EXCL	<i>hmet-abe</i>
	2	<i>hmet-gavwe</i>
	3	<i>hmet-le</i>

as in Table 7.3. Like the undergoers of transitive verbs, the animacy of the referent decides whether the subject of a stative verb is marked: inanimate participants are not indexed on the verb.

Stative verbs are a closed class, semantically vaguely characterized by a patientive S (though many active verbs also have a patientive S, e.g. *weke* ‘to be angry’, or *khûda* ‘to stink’). The argument is marked in the same position as transitive undergoers, and shares the latter’s form, except in the first and second persons (where P arguments have a devoiced form, i.e. *-ko* ‘2SG’, *-kaa* ‘1PL.INCL’ etc). This means that S is marked in two ways: S and A are marked the same for active verbs, and stative verb S subjects are either marked the same as P, or slightly differently, depending on the speaker and the verb. We thus have a tripartite system, though stative S and P are merged by many younger speakers. Diachronically, stative S and P participants were probably expressed as free pronouns following the predicate (V PN),³ which became incorporated into the verb (e.g. *hmwet ia* ‘tired 3SG’ → *hmwet-ea*). Indirect possession underwent a similar process (*thala-n ia* ‘knife-POSS 3SG’ → *thala n-ea*). The stative verb *hmana-n* ‘be hungry’ (not a noun because it cannot take an article) has the paradigm of a directly possessed noun, and shares this property with *muliva-n* ‘be alive’ (see Section 7.2.3).

7.2.1 Dependent stative verbs

Some verbs, active as well as stative ones, show nominal inflection. This grammar will use the term “dependent verb” found in some New Caledonian descriptions⁴ for these

³This may be linked to a Proto-Oceanic VSO or VOS word order (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 86, 87), though nowadays SVO is more widespread and considered canonic (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 49). Note that this would not explain the indexing found on active verbs.

⁴Ozanne-Rivierre 1976, 207.

verbs that index a non-specific argument with a generic *-n* (similarly to inalienably possessed nouns, called “dependent nouns” in the French tradition, which also cannot omit marking their modifier). Active verbs with nominal morphology work rather differently and are discussed under Section 7.3.1.2. The verbs described here take different subject-indexing suffixes depending on animacy and specificity of the subject, see Table 7.4. There are few still productive verbs in this category, but they are frequently used. Common members include *xhopwe-n* ‘grow/be big’, *xhwati-n* ‘be small’, *hmai-n* ‘be many’, *sate-n* ‘be different’, *yape-n* ‘be old (inanimate)’. Animate subjects are indexed on stative verbs with personal suffixes (*-eo* ‘1SG’, *-go* ‘2SG’ etc.) when they are not present as a noun phrase (6a). Inanimate subjects take *-n* ‘ANA’ in these cases (6b). Generic subjects are always marked with *-n* ‘NSPEC’ (6c). These rules begin to be less rigidly enforced in Voh-Koné languages in general (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 51), and *-n* now often appears before noun phrases regardless of animacy and specificity (7b). This may have contributed to the development of noun phrase internal modifying verbs, see Section 6.4.6.

Some stative verbs have split into two forms with different meanings, e.g. *hmwaka-n*, *hmwaka-o* ‘be like it, be like me’, but *hmwakan* ‘maybe’. Verbs with nominal morphology can also be found in Cèmuhî (Rivierre 1980, 179, 183) and Nyelâyu (Ozanne-Rivierre 1998, 48). They are not described as an open class in these grammars. Though most verbs with nominal morphology in Vamale are stative, there are also active ones. A prominent example is *caihna-n* ‘to know’, see Section 7.3.1.2. Some stative verbs with *-n* can be derived with *-ke* ‘TR’, compare *xhwatii-n* ‘be small’ and *xhwatii-ke* ‘do softly’.

- (7.6) a. *sate-o*
different-1SG
‘I am different’
- b. *sate-n* (koo-n)
different-ANA (OBL-ANA)
‘It is different (from it)’
- c. KL:243
e vi hapi na naen xadaa sate-n
1SG say COMP DEM now on.the.other.hand different-NSPEC
‘I’m saying that now things have changed’

TABLE 7.4: Meanings of *xhopwe*- ‘grow’

1SG	<i>xhopwe-o</i>	‘I grow’
2SG	<i>xhopwe-go</i>	‘You grow’
3SG	<i>xhopwe-a</i>	‘S/He grows’
NSPEC	<i>xhopwe-n</i>	‘It is big’
overt NP	<i>xhopwe</i>	‘It is bigger than X/before’

For *xhopwe-n* ‘big’, there is a meaning distinction along an animacy axis: without *-n*, it expresses either a development ‘big’ → ‘get bigger’, through time in comparison with an earlier state (‘grow’), or synchronically in comparison with others (‘be bigger than’, see ex. 7a). A table summarizes the forms (Table 7.4). *xhopwe-* means ‘to be bigger’ for animate subjects (7a) and ‘to be big’ for inanimates (7b, 8a).

- (7.7) a. *i=apuli a xhopwe-a (koo-le)*
 DEF.SG=man REL big-3SG.SP (OBL-3PL)
 ‘the bigger man (in years, status, size) (than them)’
 b. *xhopwe(n) i=goon*
 big DEF.SG=body
 ‘the big body (height, corpulence)’

A construction frequently seen with animate subjects is shown in (8a). The unmarked use of *xhopwe*, as explained above, is as a predicate with comparative meaning (8b). In a relative clause, *xhopwe* is ungrammatical without a resumptive subject-indexing suffix (8c), e.g. *-a*, or an anaphoric suffix *-n* (8d). In ex. (8a), however, the meaning of *xhopwen* is not comparative. This construction seems to be a strategy to avoid the incremental/comparative meaning of certain stative verbs, and may be related to the de-grammaticalization of *-n* mentioned for *xhowpen* above.

- (7.8) a. *i=apuli a xhopwe-n*
 DEF.SG=man REL big-ANA
 ‘the fat/old/important man’
 b. *xhopwe i=apuli-aen*
 grow DEF.SG=man-DEM
 ‘this man is bigger/taller/ more important’
 c. **i=apuli a xhopwe*
 DEF.SG=man REL big
 (for: ‘The man who is big’)

TABLE 7.5: Table showing the first six cardinal numerals and their verbal form.

Number	Gloss	Suffixed form	Gloss
<i>se</i>	‘1’	<i>see-a</i>	s/he is one, s/he is alone
<i>thalo(o)</i>	‘2’	<i>thalo-lu</i>	they are two
<i>thi(i)en</i>	‘3’	<i>thien-le</i>	they are three
<i>fava</i>	‘4’	<i>fava-le</i>	they are four
<i>nim</i> ⁵	‘5’	<i>nim-le</i>	they are five
<i>nim na bwa se</i>	‘6’	<i>nim a bwa see-le</i>	they are six

- d. i=apuli a xhopwe-n ca-n dawee-lu
 DEF.SG=man REL big-ANA in-NSPEC between-3DU.POSS
 ‘the fatter man of the two’

7.2.2 Numerals

Numerals in Vamale are stative verbs that can take subject suffixes, see Table 7.5. Some are derived from nouns, notably 5 from ‘hand’ and 20 from ‘person’, the bases of the system. Complex numerals used to be formed like clauses, made of coordinated verb phrases.

(n)a-bwa was only recorded with complex numerals. The initial nasal only occurs if the preceding element ends in an open syllable. Bwato has *bwa* as ‘+’ (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 45), maybe related to *pwa* ‘on’ or *bwa* ‘head’. Leenhardt translates *vajilu ka bwa nim ka bwa se* ‘16’, then with *ka* instead of *na*, as ‘ten and the right hand raised and open, and the thumb sticking out of the fist’, but no modern Vamale word would tie *bwa* to either palm (*yataan*), fist (*daamuun*) nor the right hand (*juu sin*) (Leenhardt 1946, 166). The element having replaced the coordinator *ka* is another puzzle. The demonstrative pronoun *na* often means ‘it is X (who did/is Y)’, and may have replaced the former coordinator *ka* (Leenhardt 1946, 166) in a sense of “five, this on top of two” for ‘7’ (9). This grammar writes the coordinator *na-bwa* joined by a hyphen to account for its single stress contour.

- (7.9) *nim (a)-bwa thaloo*
 5 plus 2
 ‘7’

⁵From *si-* ‘hand’, showing the tendency to rather speak of 2SG or 1PL.INCL than an indefinite 3SG.

TABLE 7.6: Complex numerals

<i>vajilu na-bwa nim a-bwa se</i>	‘16’
<i>thaloo vajilu</i>	‘20’
<i>se apuli⁶ na-bwa nim a-bwa se</i>	‘26’
<i>se apuli na-bwa vajilu</i>	‘30’
<i>thaloo apuli</i>	‘40’ (arch.) ⁷ .
<i>nim apuli</i>	‘100’
<i>apuli ko apuli</i>	‘400’

vajilu ‘10’ could be etymologically composed as in (10). The last syllable is likely -*lu* marking 3DU.POSS on nouns. The system being 5-and 20-based as is typical of the region (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 261), and finally Iaai saying ‘two hands’ for 10, maybe the etymology of this word is something like in (10), but this is purely speculative.

- (7.10) vwa si-lu
EXIST hand-3PL.POSS

‘They have hands/there are their hands’

According to Rivierre and Ehrhardt (2006, 45), and also Dego Philippe Gohupe, another word for 100 is *se apuli* ‘one person’. This confusing polysemy makes more sense considering that the Pacific Franc used to have a 100 Franc bill with a man on it (see Figure 7.3), was a salient thing, and spoken about much more often than groups of twenty. Nowadays, saying *se apuli* normally means ‘100’, but *se apuli na bwa se* is ‘21’, whereas *nim apuli* is ‘100’ if it is part of a complex numeral. Leenhardt notes *nilu apuli* for ‘100’ without glossing it. Whether *nim apuli* is interpreted as 500 or 100 is difficult to ascertain, since most speakers are unsure. Vamale numerals are rarely used beyond 5 in the language, while French loans are taking over due to school, money, hours of the day, and a decay of counting contributions in customary ceremonies. Multiplying based on 20 is attested in *Langues et Dialectes de l’Austro-Mélanésie* for most languages, amongst which is Hmwaveke with *sec apulip ko apulip* for 400, literally ‘one person on people, or ‘20 on 20’, which suggests, along with *nim apuli* ‘100 (lit. 5 20)’, that the multiplication base comes last, and the multiplier first.

⁶*se apuli* lit. ‘one person’

⁷This is never given spontaneously. People are mentally in a ten-based system now (see the word for 20).

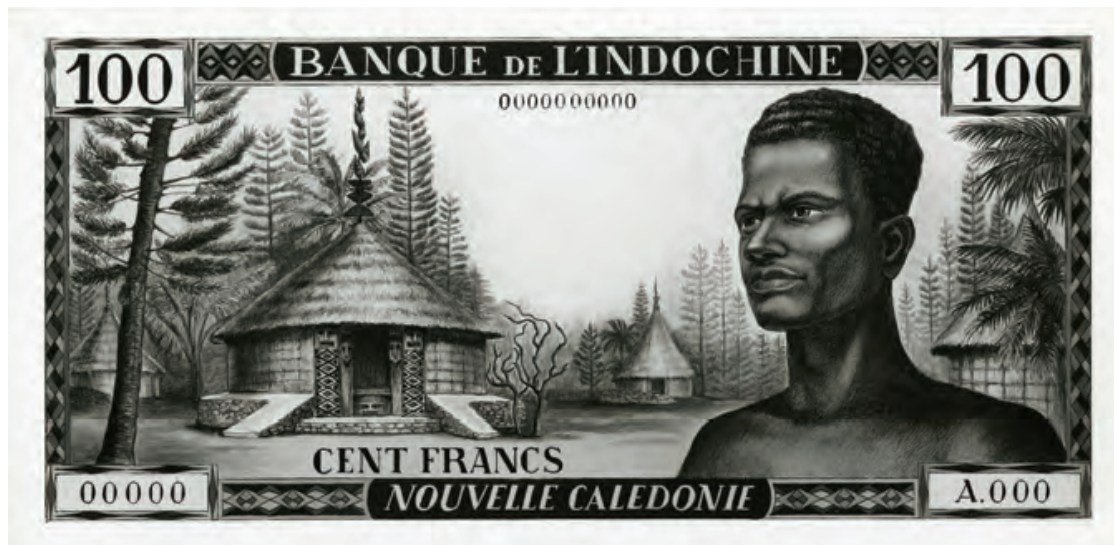


FIGURE 7.3: A 100 CFP bill from 1964 (IEOM 2014, 24)

TABLE 7.7: Ordinals

(i) <i>e-se kan</i>	‘(the) first’
<i>i e-thalo kan</i>	‘the second’
<i>i e-thien an</i>	‘the third’
<i>i e-fava kan</i>	‘the fourth’
<i>i e-nim an</i>	‘the fifth’
<i>i e-vajilu na bwa nim na bwa se kan</i>	‘the sixteenth’
<i>i e-koin an</i>	‘the last’

7.2.2.1 Ordinals

Ordinals are formed with *e*⁸ and *(k)a-n* ‘CLF.POSS-NSPEC’,⁹ yielding the forms listed in Table 7.7. Leenhardt recorded irregular forms which have now disappeared, *i a vathabun* ‘the first (lit. s/he who is in front)’,¹⁰ now regular *i e-se=kan* ‘the first’, and *i ethice nawe*,¹¹ now *i e-thien=an*. They, too, are rarely used beyond 5.

Ordinal numbers seem to have lexicalized *ka-n* ‘CLF.POSS-NSPEC’, since it cannot be omitted. Onto it, another *ka* can be added (but does not necessarily have to) in order to make it possessible by the noun *en* ‘moment’ (11).

⁸*bε-* in Cèmuhi, used only with ordinals (Rivierre 1980, 271).

⁹The Cèmuhi cognate [hɛ̃] is analyzed as a possessive morpheme by Rivierre (Rivierre 1980, 271) and otherwise only present in part-of-whole compounds.

¹⁰Leenhardt’s *vathabun* is *pa(a)thabun* nowadays.

¹¹Since the clitic *=(k)a-n* is used for possessum classifying purposes elsewhere, Leenhardt’s form could have been *i e-thicen=a-vwe*, with *-vwe* ‘2PL.POSS’.

(7.11) a. JN1:37

ja i [ethalokan ka-n en] a tipwa
 ACCP DEF.SG second CLF.POSS-NSPEC moment REL.3SG fall

‘It is the second time that it falls’

b. JN1:37

ja i ekoinan ka-n en a e xale-ko
 ACCP DEF.SG last CLF.POSS-NSPEC moment REL 1SG see-2SG.OBJ

‘It is the last time that I saw you’

7.2.2.2 Multiplicative o

The multiplicative prefix *o-* (‘X times’) only occurs with numerals, the resulting word is derived to an adverb (12a). Hence, multiplicatives cannot be predicates in a matrix clause, but do occur in adjunct clauses. Exceptions are interjections like the work call *o-see!* ‘do at once, in one hard pull’. *o* ‘X times’ is analyzed as a prefix as well in Nêlêmwa (Bril 2002, 39) and Bwato (where it is *we-*) (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 46). In (12b), however, the adverb is possessed by a third person. We analyze this as a zero derivation.

(7.12) a. 2019-08-05 JP ka 42.1

a=tho nyakoo-m o-thiien
 3SG=call OBL-2SG.POSS times-three

‘S/he called you three times’

b. vamale-181127-jp_nelemwa-1: 00:11:51-00:11:52

pa ja o-thien-n-ea ko i (hun-) mata
 ALR ACCP times-three-POSS-3SG.POSS OBL DEF.SG NMLZ- sing

‘This is the third time that he sings’

7.2.3 Possessible verbs

‘Possessible verbs’ are distinguished here from ‘verbs with *-n*’, though they both carry a morpheme *-n* in the third person, because the latter inflect using stative subject indexing suffixes (including *-n* ‘NSPEC’), and the former take possessive morphology (including *-n* ‘3SG.POSS’). There are two subsets of stative possessible verbs, one

with alienable and one with inalienable possessive morphology. Inalienably possessed intransitive verbs, such as the ones below (13a), are not transparently derived from nouns (13b), with the exception of *nyima-* ‘heart’ ~ ‘to want’. Nouns can be derived from some of them using typical deverbal constructions (13c).

- *hman-ong* ‘I am hungry’, *hmana-n* ‘s/he is hungry’
- *bwaa-ng*, *bwaa-n*, *bwaa-ju* ‘if only’. This has an interjection counterpart *bwaa-m* ‘poor/darling you!’. Since this item cannot take an article and can stand as clause, it is analyzed as a verb.
- *holoo-m*, *holoo-u*, *holoo-vwe* ‘goodbye (you, you two, you all)’
- *nyim-ong* ‘I want, like’
- *vwaseek-ong* ‘I am sad’

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>(7.13) a. <i>hman-ong</i>
hungry-1SG.POSS

‘I am hungry’</p> | <p>c. <i>paa juu va xhopwen</i>
already really too big

<i>i=hun-hman-ong</i>
DEF.SG-NMLZ-hungry-1SG(.POSS)

‘I am more and more hungry’
(lit. ‘My hungering has become really big’)</p> |
| <p>b. *<i>i=hman-an</i>

(for: ‘His/her hunger’)</p> | |

There are few alienably possessed intransitive verbs. They include *yamaan-eong*, *yamaan-ea*, *yamaan-gasu* ‘be unwilling to do for lack of motivation, be fed up with something’, and *saxhwe-ong*, *saxhwe-a* ‘refuse to do’,¹² as well as *yathô-ong*, *yathô-a* ‘be in a hurry’. *sinu-ong*, ‘be sick, be suffering; die’ also exists as a noun meaning ‘illness’. Possessible verbs, mostly verbs which the argument endures, take possessive morphology usually found on nouns, but cannot bear an article. They are intransitive, like all stative verbs. The second subset, with alienable possessive morphology, could be derived from the very similar stative paradigm, and in many cases the subject-indexing suffixes differ between speakers: *sino-ong* ~ *sinu-o* ‘ill-1SG’, *saxhwe-ong* ‘refuse-1SG’.

7.3 Active verbs

Active verbs, the biggest group of verbs, have transitive and intransitive members, and many of them are ambitransitive, meaning they can take an object, but do not have to.

¹²This possibly contains the morpheme *xhwe* ‘be across’.

As is common in Oceanic languages (Ross 2004, 510), there are no ditransitive verbs in Vamale. This section will first introduce intransitive verbs, before addressing transitive and ambitransitive verbs. Active intransitive verbs are formally not distinct from transitive verbs, except in that they do not take object suffixes. This is in line with Proto-Oceanic (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 81). Both transitive (e.g. *vavi* ‘hunt something’) and ambitransitive verbs (e.g. *xaahni* ‘check, stare (at)’) can occur without an argument, before other (ad)verbal elements of the verb phrase, or with a generic argument, and will still carry transitive suffixes *-i* or *-ke*, discussed below. Purely intransitive ones usually do not end in *-i* or *-ke*, see (14). All active verbs take subject marking bound pronouns, as in (15).

(7.14) Children’s song

tabo tabo li xho thamo, thêen thêen li xho xayu
sit sit DEF.PL cicada female fly fly DEF.PL cicada male

‘Stay sitting, female cicadas, fly away, male cicadas!’ (children’s song, female cicadas bear eggs and are tastier)

(7.15) a. PQ 10.1

e han-mwa ko-m=e vwa ma=a thuup ka i
1SG go-REP because-SUBR=1SG do SUBR=3SG bathe SBJ DEF.SG
jamw-ong
father-1SG.POSS

‘I’m going back to make my father take a bath’

b. PE2:50

tha **abe** vataan fai li ya-be. cahma
ASS 1PL.EXCL each cook DEF.PL starchy.food-1PL.EXCL concerning
li mama-n-abe, non. tha **le** fwi-kabe
DEF.PL mother-POSS-1PL.EXCL no ASS 3PL pinch-1PL.EXCL.OBJ
ma **abe** mu bwa e-nyoot
SUBR 1PL.EXCL FREQ IPFV REFL-wake.up

‘We’d cook our own lunch. Our mothers however, no. They’d pinch us so that we’d wake up’

7.3.1 Transitive verbs

Transitive verbs mark the subject at the beginning and the undergoer object (if animate, but this condition is disappearing) at the end (16). There are no ditransitive verbs; non-core arguments such as recipients, goals, experiencers and stimuli (depending, of course, on the verb) are marked with the oblique markers *nyasi-* and *nyako-* (see Section 6.1.2). The transitive verb *holeke* ‘thank, receive’, for example, has the Theme as a direct object and the Recipient is added through *nyako-* or *nyasi-* (17). *nyasi-* is more polite and can only be used with humans. Transitive verbs almost invariably appear with the now lexicalized transitive suffix *-i*, possibly descended from Proto-Oceanic **-i* (Ross 2004, 507), or with the still productive *-ke*, possibly descended from **-akin(i)* (Ross 2004, 507). Section 7.3.1.1 describes this in more detail. Transitive verbs without these suffixes are e.g. *tua* ‘detach’, *tuu* ‘take something out of somewhere’, *sivu* ‘blow; smoke’.

(7.16) B2:36

ha-me wati-ko ko go imwi i nyai-n
go-DIR.CP chase-2SG.OBJ because 2SG grab DEF.SG child-3SG.POSS

‘It comes to chase you because you took its pup’

(7.17) Adèle Gohupe, “Hole Nyasi Daahma”:1

gaa se-me holeke **nyasi** bofukaje i thoatit-ca a tha
1PL.INCL together thank OBL god DEF.SG day-DEM.PROX REL ASS
a bwa nya si-je
3SG IPFV put BEN-1PL.INCL

‘We all thank God together for this day that he gave us’

7.3.1.1 Transitive suffixes *-ke* and *-i*

The transitive suffix *-ke* is the only productive transitive suffix in Vamale. This grammar calls *-ke* a transitive rather than applicative suffix because it does not routinely turn obliques into direct objects, but can also derive transitive from intransitive verbs, or even transitive verbs from complex verbs and nouns. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, the suffix is in complementary distribution with an object marker:

TABLE 7.8: Pairs with and without *-ke*

Verb	With overt anim. P	With pronoun	With overt inan. P
<i>xale</i> 'visit, look around'	<i>xale i apuli</i> 'go see the person'	* <i>xale yo, xale go</i>	* <i>xale i mwa</i>
<i>xaleke</i> 'see'	<i>xaleke i apuli</i> 'see the man'	<i>xale-o, xale-ko</i> 'see me, see you'	<i>xaleke i mwa</i> 'see the house'
<i>cade</i> 'admire'	<i>cade i apuli</i> 'admire the man'	* <i>cade-go</i>	* <i>cade i mwa</i>
<i>cadeke</i> 'admire'	<i>cadeke i apuli</i> 'admire the man'	<i>cade-ko</i> 'admire you'	<i>cadeke i mwa</i> 'admire the house'
<i>vathân</i> 'do separately'			
<i>vathânke</i> 'separate'	<i>vathânke li apuli</i> 'separate the men'	<i>vathân-le</i> 'scatter them'	<i>vathânke i we</i> 'part the water'

- b. *feana-a!*
show-3SG.OBJ
'Show him/her!'

-ke is also used with the stative verb *xhwatii-n* 'be small', yielding *xhwatiike* 'do softly', as in (21). Note that *xhwatiike*, despite the translation given here, is not a transitive verb, nor indeed an independent one, but a manner verb postponed to the main verb describing the action, e.g. *jili xhwatiike* 'build slowly', or *hmata xhwatiike* 'sing softly'. Another stative verb is *tada(a)* 'to be surprised' (22), where *tadake* means 'to surprise someone' (23).

(7.21) KG:176-177

cama sinu tha go tha go vwa xhwatiike
when suffer ASS 2SG ASS 2SG do do.slowly
'When it hurts, you, you do it slowly'

(7.22) *cuut hmwaana kavi a tadaa cala a xaleke hapi na tha*
stand like.that, but 3SG surprise when.REAL 3SG see COMP DEM ASS
juu buuke thaloo palet
real destroy two pallet

'He simply stood there but was surprised when he saw that two pallets were destroyed'

TABLE 7.9: Transitivity with *-i*

<i>vwa cuut</i>	‘to make stand’	<i>vacuti</i>	‘to erect’
<i>thaut</i>	‘fire fan’	<i>thauli</i>	‘to fan’
<i>cicaat</i>	‘be taut’	<i>cicaai</i>	‘to stretch’
<i>faat</i>	‘glue; be sticky’	<i>faati</i>	‘to glue’
<i>vap</i>	‘hunt (n), go hunting’	<i>vavi</i>	‘hunt sth’

(7.23) KG:475

après yo m=e cuut hmwaani, tada-ong ko i camion
 then 1SG SUBR=1SG stand like.this, surprise-1SG because DEF.SG truck
khû, xaleke
 make.noise see

‘Then, me, as I’m standing like this, I get jump-scared because of the truck going “bang”, see’

Another, much more common, suffix is *-i*. Contrary to *-ke*, *-i* is not used to increase the transitivity of a verb, or to derive it. However, it must have been in the past, as numerous pairs attest. Consider a few in Table 7.9. Other examples include *thati* ‘beat’, *wati* ‘chase’, *titabwi* ‘welcome’, which do not have a counterpart lacking *-i*.

Far Northern Nelêmwa, lacking articles, has a system of verb suffixes to make transitivity, and animacy distinctions. The language uses a basic intransitive form and two more or less transitive ones, which distinguish non-human (*-a/-u*), and non-specific human *-e* arguments, from specific human ones *-i* (Bril 2002, 44). *-i* in Vamale has lost its transparent function and has become lexicalized. *-a* and *-e* are also still present in Vamale, though they form an even smaller set of transitive/intransitive pairs: some verbs ending on *-a* form pairs with others ending on *-e*, the latter being transitive, the former not. In the case of *fwada-i* ‘to look for sth’, a transitivity of **fwada* seems to have taken place. The attested Vamale pairs with *-a/-e* are:

vila/vile ‘dance/dodge’,

buna/bune ‘thieve/steal’

fwada-i/fwade ‘search (inanim)/search (anim)’

tipwa/tipwe ‘fall, drop’ (the latter only preserved in *vwa-tipwe* ‘drop’)

7.3.1.2 Dependent transitive verbs

Nominal inflection on verbs is mostly seen in stative verbs, as described in Section 7.2.1. For certain transitive verbs, however, generic objects and complement verbs (e.g. *caihna-n* [*tena-n*]_{COMP} in (26)) are marked with the generic suffix *-n*. Examples are listed in Table 7.10. This section does not discuss verbal compounds containing a possessible noun (V + N-POSS), where the undergoer is marked via possessive morphology, e.g. *wai-nyoo-n* ‘tie-neck-3SG.POSS’ ‘hang him(self)’, or *caa-pala-n* ‘step.on-talk-3SG.POSS’ ‘answer’. The morphology of dependent transitive verbs reacts to animacy, and to the co-occurrence of the undergoer in the same clause. This makes dependent transitive verbs similar to dependent stative verbs, verbs ending in *-ke*, and prepositions: verbs with animate undergoers can omit the undergoer-indexing person suffix (e.g. *-o* ‘1SG.OBJ’) in favor of taking a generic *-n* only if the undergoer is indeed generic (24): *V-n* OBJ_{NSPEC}. This probably includes anaphoric use, but is not attested in the corpus so far. If the animate undergoer is specific and does not appear in the same clause, the dependent verb, like all other transitive verbs, must index it: *V-OBJ* (*[ART OBJ_{SPEC}]). If the undergoer is specific and appears as an NP in the same clause, regardless of animacy, the verb takes no suffix, personal or generic (24c), (25b): *V* [ART OBJ].

- (7.24) a. Using *caihna-n* with a free pronoun is not attested, because free pronouns cannot be used in the undergoer position.

go caihna-a
2SG know-3SG

‘You know her’

- b. J4:13

e caihna-n thamo
1SG know-NSPEC woman

‘I know (about) women’

- c. J4:12

e caihna i thamo-aen
1SG know DEF.SG woman-DIST

‘I know that woman’

Verbs with inanimate undergoers distinguish two scenarios: either the undergoer is specific and follows the verb, or not. They will drop the generic undergoer

TABLE 7.10: Dependent transitive verbs

takes animate object	
<i>caihna-n</i>	‘know’
does not take animate object	
<i>vunuu-n</i>	‘finish’
<i>sohmu-n</i>	‘study, to study in general’
<i>thaxhwae-n</i>	‘attempt’
<i>thafwa-n</i>	‘carry on back’
<i>thaboo-n</i>	‘extinguish’
<i>vacia-n</i>	‘lose’
<i>thalepwa-n</i>	‘topple’

index *-n* only if a specific undergoer NP follows the verb: V ART OBJ_{SPEC}. One example is (25b). Note that *-n* is used anaphorically for inanimate undergoers, as in (25a), regardless of their specificity.

(7.25) a. GD:5

gase vi li a gase caihna-n, cipii pala xhayu
 1PL.INCL say DEF.PL REL 1PL.INCL know-NSPEC, PROH talk random
 ko gase bo gat
 because 1PL.INCL IRR lie

‘We say that which we know, don’t talk randomly, for then we’d lie’

b. GP2:16

[...] koma bwa caihna li yee
 [...] PURP IPFV know DEF.PL tree

‘In order to know the trees’

Rivierre mentions several cognate forms for Bwatoo (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 51) and Cèmuhi (Rivierre 1980, 179,180) which are either lexicalized in Vamale, or do not carry the same morphology at all, see Table 7.11. A possible exception is *tena* ‘hear’ that may be ambivalent (26).

TABLE 7.11: Bwato verbs with nominal morphology and Vamale cognates

Bwato	Vamale	Gloss
<i>tete-a/n</i>	<i>tena-a/n</i>	‘hear’
<i>thabwii-a/n</i>	<i>tha(v)wi-a</i>	‘wrap’
<i>caxhwae-a/n</i>	<i>thaxhwaen</i>	Bw. ‘imitate’; V. ‘try’
<i>tatamwi-a/n</i>	<i>titabwi-a</i>	‘welcome’

TABLE 7.12: Verb+Noun compounds

Form	Morphological makeup	Gloss
<i>wai-nyoo-n</i>	twist-neck-3SG.POSS	‘to strangle/commit suicide’
<i>fe-bomaa-n</i>	take-scent-3SG.POSS	‘to smell something’
<i>fe-maa-n</i>	take-face-3SG.POSS	‘to disguise as’
<i>fe-nyamaa-n</i>	take-eye-3SG.POSS	‘catch someone’s eye’
<i>fa-xhopwe-n</i>	CAUS-big	‘glorify it’
<i>tha-fa-bee-n</i>	strongly-CAUS-peer-3SG.POSS	‘to approach something’
stative: <i>see-maa-n</i>	one-face-3SG.POSS	‘be the same’

(7.26) Nigai Tipije

na tena jela-n habu ma cipa go va caihna-n
 DEM hear side-3SG.POSS before SUBR NEG 2SG much know-NSPEC
tena-n thuan ca aman
 hear-ANA well some thing

‘That[what I was doing] was hearing the version of old, when you don’t know how to listen too well to something’

There are constructions that are, at least diachronically, active or stative V+N compounds (see Table 7.12, and ex. (27)). This means that arguments are marked by nominal possessive morphology. Like Rivierre, this study does not count these lexicalized former verb phrases as identical to the dependent transitive verbs in table 7.10 (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 50).

(7.27) GC 100.1

ca i wadan a e-thaloo-ka-n tha **see-ma** i a vi
 in DEF.SG time REL ORD-2-SBJ-NSPEC ASS one-face DEF.SG REL.3SG say
 ‘The second time she said the same thing’

TABLE 7.13: Verbs with *ko*

<i>soot ko(o)-n</i>	‘touch’
<i>xalo ko(o)-n</i>	‘gaze upon’
<i>soxhaa koon</i>	‘waste’
<i>vwa-khû koon</i>	‘force someone’

7.3.1.3 Verbs with *ko*- Arguments

The latter scenario likely affects verbs that were intransitive and whose oblique addition became so common that the form lexicalized, creating a pair. An example of this is *nyima*- ‘to want’, and *nyima-ko*- ‘to like, love’. For a number of verbs (some of which are illustrated in Table 7.13), this hypothetical development left the *ko*-less form behind, and the verb phrase now needs *ko* to be grammatical. This grammar does not analyze *ko* as a suffix, incorporated into the verb, because *ko-* is a p-word, and because the possessor marked on *ko-* is an undergoer argument. Indeed, all of these *ko*-needing verbs are transitive.

7.3.2 Benefactive nouns

“Benefactive nouns” are constructions which can be formed with only a few lexical items. The forms available for this construction are ambiguous as to their nominal or verbal status. They take an alienable possessive pronoun which marks a beneficiary argument. The few attested examples suggest a de-nominal derivation, where a possessive construction is verbalized by adding a subject index. Note that the two spontaneously produced constructions in examples (28a) and (29) used nouns which have identical verbal counterparts.

(7.28) a. 2019-07-25 JP *grammaire*

a=vaaya-n gaa
3SG=work-POSS 1PL.INCL.POSS

‘He does our work. (He works in our stead)’

b. 2019-07-25 JP *grammaire*

a=vaaya nyakoo-je
3SG=work for-1PL.INCL.POSS

‘He works for us. (He does work for our benefit)’

(7.29) vamale-171129-ecology: 0:01:29 (Vamale Usa)

vwa-ila-hn-ea, go ni=nyai-le, nya, tha le moo
do-pot-POSS-3SG.POSS then DEF.PL=child-3PL.POSS put ASS 3PL stay
xahut pedaa
down P.

‘...cook for him, and their children, well, they stayed down in Pindache.’

7.4 Space

Spatial deixis is ubiquitous in Vamale discourse; using a geocentric orientation system since the Proto-Oceanic stage (Francois 2004), the language is infused with references to various axes and cosmologically relevant points. Since moving through space is chiefly expressed verbally, this section of mostly lexical interest is placed in Verbs, though deverbal derivations are also discussed.

7.4.1 Up/down

hut ‘move down’ has several meanings derived from Kanak worldview: following an Oceanic tradition, going down also means moving towards the sea. Since sailing to other islands is done at sea, *hut* also means moving out into the world (e.g. the Loyalty Islands, or France). Related to this is the sense of leaving the house (traditionally built on a mound due to floods). A third sense of *hut* is following the tradewinds, north-east along the coast. In contrast to this, *ta* ‘move up’ is used spatially for moving towards the mountains, up and deeper into a house or the land, and south-west, i.e. having to laboriously sail against the prevailing winds. In combination with other motion verbs, *ta*, *han* and *hut* have allomorphs that assimilate to the previous verb, and to the directional suffixes *-me* ‘DIR.CP’ and *-le* ‘DIR.CF’. *hma* ‘arrive’ forms the following compounds:

hma-han-me → *hmasame* ‘arrive here (moving on the same level)’

hma-hut-me → *hmasupe* ‘arrive here (moving down)’

hma-ta-me → *hmacame* ‘arrive here (moving up)’

hma-han-le → *hmasade* ‘arrive there (moving on the same level)’

hma-hut-le → *hmasute* ‘arrive there (moving down)’



FIGURE 7.4: The ‘realm’ of *hnuut*. Relevant rivers marked in yellow.

hma-ta-le → *hmacale* ‘arrive there (moving up)’

Note that /l/ → /t/ } t₋, /m/ → /p/ } t₋. /ta/ is affricated to /ca/, and /h/ → /s/. This last sound change is unique to the compounds discussed above.

7.4.2 Upstream/downstream

hnuut ‘move downstream’ and *hnuda* ‘move upstream’¹⁴ have cognates across the archipelago, except in the riverless Loyalty islands (Bearune 2012, 232). Interestingly, this axis is also used for southward (*hnuda* ‘move upstream’) and northward movement along a limited part of the coast, between *Cém*¹⁵ and *Lideraalik*, see Figure 7.4. The northern limit of this area depends on the speakers’ home, between *Pedaac* and *Koulnoué*, but the southern limit seems to be undisputably *Cém*, about 10 km along the coast south of the bridge over the *Tipije*. This area corresponds roughly to the valleys of *Wanaa* and *We Hava*, whose defining creeks *Kaciabwec* and *We Hava* flow southeast-northwest, i.e. parallel to the coast. Beyond this area, *hut* ‘move northwards’ and *ta* ‘move southwards’ are used (see Section 7.4.1).

¹⁴This is not the same as *saxhuti* ‘follow the course of a river/road/coastline; tell a story’.

¹⁵‘landing point’ in *Cèmuhi*.

TABLE 7.14: The main motion verbs and their associated locative adverbs

Form	Gloss	Word class
<i>cahni</i>	‘here’	adverb
<i>la</i>	‘be.here’	verb
<i>ta</i>	‘move up’	verb
<i>hut</i>	‘move down’	verb
<i>han</i>	‘go (same level)’	verb
<i>hnu-ut</i>	‘move downstream’	verb
<i>hnu-da</i>	‘move upstream’	verb
<i>xa-da</i>	‘up there’	adverb
<i>xa-hut</i>	‘down there’	adverb
<i>xa-han</i>	‘over there’	adverb
<i>xa-hnu-ut</i>	‘over there (downstream)’	adverb
<i>xa-hnu-da</i>	‘over there (upstream)’	adverb

7.4.3 Spatial adverbs

Vamale derives spatial adverbs from the verbs *hut* ‘go down’, *ta* ‘go up’, and *han* ‘move on the same level, go’. The adverbs in question, prefixed with *xa-*, *xa-hut* ‘down there’, *xa-da* ‘up there’, and *xa-han* ‘over there’ form the basis of this system and are unrelated to the demonstratives in Section 6.2.2. They are described in more detail in Section 8.4.1, but an overview is given in Table 7.14. Spatial words can be combined with other words (*hoot xahut* ‘far down.there’) or with each other (*nyaut xahut* ‘just down there (but too far to reach)’).

7.4.4 *nya* ‘around, towards, inside’

(h)*nya* ‘put, give, send’ is a multi-purpose morpheme, especially in the context of space. One function of *nya* is to combine with prepositions to form new prepositions locating the theme as contained by or very close to the prepositioned location: *ca-* ‘at’ → *nye-ca-* ‘inside’ (30a), *pwa-* ‘on top of’, → *nya-pwa-* ‘upon’, *ko* ‘on (touching a part of it)’, *nya-ko* ‘immediately on; apply on’ (30b). In this function, *nya* also appears as a prefix in spatial adverbs, see Section 8.4.1, to form a proximal form (*nya-ut* ‘(put) down, down there at an arm’s length’). *nya* often displays a phonologically conditioned allomorph *nye* when preceding the article *i* ‘DEF.SG’, and palatal /c/, as in (30a).

(7.30) a. DT:10.3

le vwa-vaci li apuli nye-ca i nye-ca i mwa-n
 3PL do-kernel DEF.PL people LOC-in DEF.SG LOC-in DEF.SG house-POSS
 daahma
 chief

‘The people were quarrelling in, in the chief’s house’

b. X9:20

bitake nya-ko i yee
 wrap LOC-on DEF.SG tree

‘wrap around the tree’

nya can also mean ‘toward’, a meaning that is related to ‘send’. In combination with spatial adverbs, *nya* forms two paradigms: the series *nya-xahut/nya-xada/nya-xahan* is almost equivalent in meaning to *xahan* ‘over there’ etc. It means ‘in the vicinity of X’, whereas *xahan* etc. designate a more precise location. In (31a) and (31b), *nya* is used to express a vague area. The other paradigm combines *nya-an/nya-ut/nya-da* ‘send, put there/down/up’ with the basic adverbial form, which yields a comparatively farther meaning, e.g. *nya-an (mwa) xahan* ‘(even) further away in this general direction’, see Section 7.4.3.

(7.31) a. GC:53.2

In-Fwe hapi “In-Fwe ka e hu-pe **nya nya-da xa-da**”
 I. COMP I. CNJ 1SG come-DIR.CP from send-up LOC-up
 kavi cipa a vi i goakan.
 but NEG 3SG say DEF.SG place

‘Figtree-Bark said that “[my name is] Figtree-Bark and I come from somewhere a little further up” but she didn’t say the place.’

b. PJ:29

ka a cuut cahni go a cuut cai-n ka i
 CNJ 3SG stand here CNJ 3SG stand behind-NSPEC SBJ DEF.SG
 xa-thake i bool. hmwakan **nya**-xahan a cuut
 AGT.NMLZ-throw DEF.SG ball maybe over-there 3SG stand
 xahan ka i see
 over.there SBJ DEF.SG one

‘And she stands here, and behind her stands the cricket pitcher. Maybe around there stands the other [player]’

nya is frequently used to locate something in a named place, especially villages, see (32). This may be a strategy to avoid having to use more specific terms such as *xahut* ‘down there’, but no clear pattern was identified.

(7.32) AG1:66

vwa nya theganpaik
 EXIST around T.

‘It will be in Téganpaik’

7.4.5 Same-level axis

Volitional displacement on the same level is expressed with the active verb *han* or the derived adverb *xahan* ‘over there on the same level’. The movement of an object, e.g. in the wind, is called *va(a)ya* ‘movement, work’. Depending on the context, *han* can mean ‘go’, e.g. *ha-de-ha-me* ‘go-DIR.CF-go-DIR.CP’ ‘to and fro’, and ‘walk’, e.g. *han-maa* ‘walk on the reef at low tide to gather sea-food’. There is an increase of the use of *han* among less fluent speakers, which may be due to French influence.

Nowadays, *han* means ‘to walk’ and *thêên* ‘to run, to fly’, but the manner prefix *t(h)e-* ‘to do while walking’ is probably derived from *thêên*. Since this is the case for both Hienghène languages (*hen* ‘walk’ in Pije, but *te-* ‘while walking’) and Voh-Koné ones, the split must be an old one.

7.4.6 Centripetal/-fugal axis *-me*, *-le*

There are two main suffixes used to express motion to and from the utterance's point of reference. While this center is usually the speaker, stories may set the center somewhere else more or less explicitly,¹⁶ and hypothetical or past situations can also feature these suffixes. The movement verbs assimilate the final consonant's place of articulation to *-me* 'DIR.CP': *ta* 'go up' + *-me* → *tame* 'come up', *hut* 'go down' + *-me* → *hupe* 'come down', *han* 'go' + *-me* → *hame* 'come'. The other suffix *-le* 'DIR.CF' assimilates to the verb's final consonant: *ta-le* 'leave upwards', *hut-e* 'leave downwards', and *han-de* 'go away'. The latter is another example of the relationship between alveolar plosives and liquids mentioned in Section 5.3.2.

Motion verbs can be added to a verb phrase if a centripetal or centrifugal meaning is needed, as other verbs cannot take *-me* or *-le*, see (33).

(7.33) KG:466

kona sili sahmwa ha-me sili sahmwa ha-me
 then pierce other.way go-DIR.CP pierce other.way go-DIR.CP
 'Then he backs [the truck] up, backs it up'

7.4.7 Origin of motion

In order to express the origin of a motion, *moo* 'stay' is preposed to the source, and postposed to the motion verb, as in (34).

(7.34) RP:6

na tha go saat moo cahni
 DEM ASS 2SG wade from here
 'You wade in the water from here,'

7.4.8 Others

This section has not made a complete description of spatial expressions in Vamale, a daunting task that has become a PhD thesis in its own right for both Nengone (Bearune 2012) and Caac (Cauchard 2014). The chapter mostly focused on the main axes of motion, proximity,¹⁷ and centripetal/centrifugal motion, but there is a lexical field of

¹⁶This was described for Caac as well (Cauchard 2014, 176)

¹⁷Proximal and distal demonstratives are discussed in Section 6.2.2.

prepositions (e.g. *pwa-* ‘on’, *xala-* ‘under’, *cela-* ‘beside’, *patemwano* ‘right next to’, *ca-* ‘at’), see Section 4.5.2, manner verbs (e.g. *falogavi* ‘move across diagonally’), and verbs describing motion more specifically, e.g. *cop* ‘go over a mountain, go to the other coast; surpass someone’ or *saat*¹⁸ ‘walk through water, ford a river’. The next section leaves the lexical domain of space and addresses productive prefixes denoting posture and ways of doing things.

7.5 Prefixes

The following derivational prefixes are distinct from TAM markers in that they are not independent words, although they express similar meanings, and are partly sensitive to aktionsart. Prefixes of manner are all derived from verbs and in many cases lexicalized, though some still appear productive. *the-* is a polysemous prefix, as it not only contributes its expected ‘do while walking/running’ meaning to verbs, but also takes more aspectual meanings, depending on the verb and its context (see Section 7.5.2). Prefixes are presented here in Chapter 7 while aspectual markers, which are own words, are described in Chapter 10, and anything that is exclusive to the verb phrase but not part of the verb, in the chapter ‘Verb Phrases’.

7.5.1 Prefixes of manner

Manner prefixes can be added to roots to express how something is done, and have in many cases become lexicalized, i.e. are not added to new words, but can be identified as bearing meaning in several verbs. For example, Rivierre and Ehrhardt analyze some words as complex (e.g. *tha-bilo-ke* ‘to kill’ [Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 61]), which are not attested without their manner prefix, or indeed with another prefix, in Vamale. Bound verbal forms which are still attested in the dictionary include:

- *-bii* ‘crack’ from POC **piti(k)* ‘crack’ (Ross, Pawley, and Osmond 1998, 276),
 - *cu-bi(i)* ‘break bread’
 - *cu-bite* ‘be squashed by a crowd’
 - *caa-bite* ‘harvest’
 - *ca-bi* ‘smash something brittle by hand or blunt tool’
- *-bwane* ‘split’ from POC **p^walaq* ‘split’ (Ross, Pawley, and Osmond 1998, 265), e.g. *tha-bwane vai* ‘split stone’, ‘Téganpaik (a village name)’

¹⁸There are also *sesaat* ‘walk slowly, sneak’, and *sesaaleke* ‘stalk’ which could be related.

- -*bali* ‘drive in’, e.g. *tha-bali* ‘to nail’, *coo-bahli* ‘push someone away with the hand’
- -*theeke* ‘push’
 - *pitheeke* ‘to push someone away’
 - *caatheeke* ‘push away with a stick’
 - *sibatheeke* ‘push someone in a direction’
 - *tha-theeke* ‘kill with a spear’
 - possibly *theeke* ‘blow on food’

Note that in the first three examples listed for -*theeke*, the preceding parts are transparent.

Manner prefixes have been described in “Verbal Compounds and Lexical Prefixes in the Languages of New Caledonia”, called “classificatory prefixes” there (Ozanne-Rivierre and Rivierre 2004, 349), and are typical of New Caledonian languages, albeit more frequent in Southern languages than in Northern ones. It is possible that a compound consisting of a shortened transitive manner verb and an action verb was already a feature of Proto Mainland (Ozanne-Rivierre and Rivierre 2004, 354), as these prefixes appear throughout the main island, but have diversified clearly within the two groups North and South. Having a variety of verbs for striking with different tools is an old feature of Oceanic, see Table 7.15 for a short selection of Proto-Oceanic verbs. The posture prefixes *cu-* ‘do standing’, *ta-* ‘do sitting’, see (35), and *mi-* ‘do lying down’, are unique to Northern languages (Ozanne-Rivierre and Rivierre 2004, 356). Note that Ozanne-Rivierre and Rivierre call verbs prefixed by the morphemes described here, “compound verbs”, whereas we use the term exclusively for verbs where all components are also attested as own words.

(7.35) 2017-10-30 Pauty Ecole et punition:10

bo tha xa-vaaya-n-eo i- m=e=ta-meebam aa ca-n
 IRR ASS HAB-work-POSS-1SG.POSS DEF.SG SUBR=1SG=sit-sleep uuh in-NSPEC
 sohmun
 study

‘That would be my habit, the...if I slept sitting in school’

¹⁹Grace 1969

TABLE 7.15: Proto-Oceanic verbs for hitting (Ross, Pawley, and Osmond 1998, 267)

		Meaning
POc	*sasa	'hunt, thrash, a whip' ¹⁹
POc	*punu(q), *punuq-i-	'hit, strike, fight, kill'
POc	*qubu, *qubWi-	'hit with fist or with a weapon'
POc	*rapu(t), *raput-i-	'hit with hand or stick, slash'
POc	*tutuk, *tuki[-]	'pound, mash by pounding, hammer, crack by hammering'
POc	*putu(k) and *butu(k), *butuk-i-	'repeatedly knock, pound, beat'
POc	*qatu(1), *qatu-J-i-	'strike from above, pound'
POc	*babak, *baki[-]	'strike one against another, knock'
POc	*tupu, *tupu-i-	'knock against, knock over, stub (toe), stumble against'
POc	*pwasa(r,R), *pwasa(r,R)-i	'slap, hit'

TABLE 7.16: Manner prefixes, their likely origins, with examples.

form	meaning	origin	example	meaning
ca-	hit with the hand		<i>cabi</i>	smash something brittle
caa-	set down foot	caa	<i>caa-gati</i>	crush something soft
			<i>caa-thiho</i>	limp
co-	with hand		<i>co-gavi</i>	break by pulling
			<i>co-bahli</i>	push off by hand
ta-	sitting	tabo	<i>ta-meebam</i>	sit-sleep; sleep in a sitting position
cu-	standing	cuut	<i>cu-vathan-ke</i>	stand-each-TR; stand apart from each other
mi-	lying	majit	<i>mi-xaleke</i>	lay-see; have a vision
tha-	forcefully	thake	<i>tha-biloke</i>	strongly-kill; kill with a strike
			<i>tha-gavi</i>	strongly-cut; cut with one strike
so-	touch	soot	<i>so-teet</i>	touch-lazy; do carelessly
fā-	speak	fati	<i>fā-xhopwen</i>	talk big, boast
t(h)e-	do while walking	thêên	<i>t(h)e-thagavi</i>	walk-cut; take a short-cut

7.5.2 *the-*

The prefix *the-* is halfway between a prefix of manner, and an aspect marker. It likely comes from *thêên* ‘run, fly’ and still exists as a manner prefix, as illustrated in the words *the-thagavi* ‘take a shortcut’ and *the-yathô* ‘walk-stress; walk in a hurry’. It seems, however, that this use has become lexicalized.

The productive, non-manner prefix *t(h)e-* has two meanings, depending on the aktionsart of the verb. With punctual verbs, it means ‘do quickly, a bit’. With durative ones, it means ‘do continually since earlier’, often with reference to another event, e.g. *the-xaleke* ‘look at constantly’, and (36b). This is likely due to its putative origin *thêên* ‘run, fly’. In imperatives, *the-* always asks for immediate action: ‘do this now’. While *the-*prefixed verbs, when preceded by TAM markers, often do not take on idiosyncratic meanings, some combinations are interesting. Frequentative *mu*, habitual *xa*, and imperfective/future *bwa* do not change the meaning, but *pa* ‘ALR’ excludes an interpretation of the event as quickly done; the yielded meaning focuses on the time spent on it (“it took me a long time to do it”). This effect is even stronger with *pa ja* ‘ALR.ACCP’. With progressive *kon*, *the-* means ‘right now, immediately’. With durative verbs, *the-* takes on a durative, imperfective meaning, and is similar in function to the adverb *hnyana* ‘constantly’.²⁰ Compare the pair of examples (36a) and (36b) for said similar meanings, but see examples (37) for the differences.

(7.36) a. Jean-Philippe, 11.7.2019, p.20

ceme o vaya tha xalo ko-n tele hnyana
SUBR.1SG IRR work ASS gaze OBL-NSPEC TV constantly

‘Whenever/If ever I work, he’ll watch TV (while and as long as I work)’

b. ceme o vaya tha the-xalo kon tele
SUBR.1SG IRR work ASS THE_{DUR}-gaze OBL-NSPEC TV

‘Whenever/If ever I work, he’ll watch TV (while and as long as I work)’

When describing a situation that is unique and limited in time, *the-* and *hnyana* are interchangeable. However, more general, or abstract, situations, *the-* ‘THE_{DUR}’ takes a meaning similar to *the-* ‘THE_{PUNC}’, see examples (37). This is reminiscent of *mwa* ‘again, now, however’ in Section 4.20.

²⁰See *hnyana*- ‘breath’, from which it is probably derived.

- (7.37) a. *tha go the-xaleke*
 ASS 2SG THE_{DUR}-see
 ‘You see now.’
- b. *tha go xaleke hnyana*
 ASS 2SG see constantly
 ‘You often see.’

Imperative use of *the-*, and *xhaa-*

the- can be used with imperative verbs, where it asks for immediate action: ‘do this now, do this quickly’. Another prefix, *xhaa-* ‘ATT’, only appears in the imperative mood and acts as an attenuative prefix, ‘do a bit’ (38). In some scenarios, the two have similar meanings.

(7.38) Example sentence provided for the dictionary entry.

xhaa-thagavi ye-mwago ma go xaleke i vaaya koo-n
 ATT-cut tree-mango SUBR 2SG see DEF.SG work OBL-NSPEC

‘just (try to) cut a mango tree and you’ll see the work it is’

The attenuative meaning of *xhaa-* is found with imperative *the-* when the latter is used to suggest that the action asked for will be quick. The difference, however, is that *the-* suggests a quickly done task, whereas *xhaa-* means you do something for a short while, without necessarily finishing what you started. *the-* and *xha(a)-* can be combined (39). When combined, their meaning depends on the verb’s aktionsart: ‘quickly do now (PUN)’, ‘do a non-committally big or small bit of it (DUR)’.

- (7.39) *xhaa-the-thagavi cahni*
 ATT-THE_{PUNC}-cut here
 ‘Just cut it here real quick’

7.5.3 *da* ‘do first’, *ra-* ‘do afterwards’

Two morphemes can be used to sort an action with respect to other actions: *da(a)* ‘do first’ (40a), and *ra-* ‘do afterwards’ (40b). Note that the latter is the only phonemic example of /r/, and was only encountered in elicitation sessions. A similar *ra-* ‘continue

to (while others have stopped)’ in Bwato is perhaps cognate (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 56).

(7.40) a. Proverb

da bale ca i xhoogo-n-go, ka go bo vwa
do.first broom in DEF.SG home-POSS-2SG.POSS CNJ 2SG IRR do
thuan nya pala li been
do.well in home DEF.PL peer

‘First clean up your home, then you (may) go clean up other homes’

b. 21.07.2019 p.42

go bo ra-ha-me
2SG IRR later-go-DIR.CP

‘You’ll come afterwards’

da ‘to do first, in advance’ is more common than *ra-*, and contrary to the latter, can take stress (41a). It does not head phrases, however. It will hence be analyzed as a pre-verb.

(7.41) a. D3:79

[e ^hda: vi: nãkõ:m]

e da vii nyakoo-m
1SG in.advance tell OBL-2SG

‘I am warning you’

b. L1:31

gase da xhwi-aman kon gase bwa vwa coutume
1PL.INCL in.advance eat-thing then 1PL.INCL IPFV do custom

‘We’ll eat first, then we’ll conduct the ceremony’

7.5.4 Pluri-actional *e-*

A pluri-actional prefix *e-* occurs in various constructions where several entities perform the same action at the same time, but not to each other, e.g. (42b) and (42c). The prefix is reconstructed to be a reflex of POC *paRi-, which otherwise has reflexive, reciprocal, and middle functions. If *e-* were left out, the pluri-actional meaning would

be lost, and the participants would be engaged in their activities in a more individual manner: compare exs. (42a) and (42b) to *le han cai-n* ‘they follow him’ and *le han cai-le* ‘they follow them’. Note that in constructions such as (42b), the meaning is somewhat in between reciprocal (they follow each other), further described in Section 9.1 and pluri-actional (they each follow a different person). This is called “chaining” by Bril, and widely attested throughout the archipelago (Bril 2005, 32, 47).

(7.42) a. 07.11.18 p.93

le e-han cai-n
3PL MID-go behind-3SG
‘They *all* follow him/her’

b. 07.11.18 p.93

le e-han cai-le
3PL MID-go behind-3PL
‘They walk one after the other (single file)’

c. vamale-181107-jpnelemwa-04: 00:01:19-00:01:24

le e-tipwa pu ka li xhaapwe sep
3PL MID-fall be.on.the.ground SBJ DEF.PL fruit coco
‘The coconuts fell all together’

d. vamale-181107-jpnelemwa-04: 00:00:30- 00:00:32

le tipwa hut hato ka li xhaapwe sep
3PL fall go.down do.alone SBJ DEF.PL fruit coco
‘The coconuts fell by themselves (without known cause)’

A difference between reference and occurrence, i.e. whether several things happen at once, or the same action several times, is made analytically, by adding *sisipo* ‘together’ at the end of the verb phrase, or *vataan* ‘each, individually’ as a preverb.

In (43), similarly to contexts of *mee* ‘all’ described in Section 8.3.2.1.1, the action is performed by several people together. However, while *mee* usually merely implies that out of a group, everyone participates, (v)e- here adds a semantic trait of indistinguishability (Kemmer 1993, 66-73). The participants sit together and form an indistinct group, whose members do not participate in the sitting separately.

(7.43) a. KL:220

go tha le ve-moo mwa moo mwa
 well ASS 3PL MID-stay REP stay REP

‘Well and then they all stay together, stay’

b. PE1:107

tha abe xa-e-hut ca-n jigo
 ASS 1PL.EXCL NMLZ.AGT-MID-go.down in-NSPEC mangrove

‘We all used to go down to the mangrove (to play)’

7.6 Complex verbs

This section introduces three ways in which Vamale forms complex verbs. Following an ancient Oceanic tradition, some verbs are reduplicated. Though not very prevalent in Vamale, some examples are discussed in Section 7.6.1. Verbs and other verbs may join to form compounds, and verbs and nouns are also frequent partners in the creation of new words.

7.6.1 Reduplication

True reduplication in Vamale is rare. Cases abound where a verb is repeated, to express the length, urgency, intensity etc. of a notion: most frequent is the context of a serial verb construction (described under Section 8.3.1), but verbs are also repeated in a poetic context such as in (44), or in a playful one (45). These verbs usually have their own prosodic environment and the whole construction is lexically transparent.

(7.44) Cicada-hunting children’s song (vamale-181121-xho_thamo)

tabo tabo li xho thamo thên thên li xho xayu
 sit sit DEF.PL cicada female fly fly DEF.PL cicada male

‘sit sit oh female cicadas [full of eggs], fly fly (away) oh male cicadas’

(7.45) Stone-skipping call

jaaaavelo-velo-velo-velo
 ricochet

‘Ricochet-chet-chet-chet’

The attested cases in which a word is repeated and forms a new word are the following: *fwa-fwa* ‘hole-hole’ ‘full of holes’, *vaya-vaya* ‘move-move’ ‘wobbly’, and *xhasaat-xhasaat* ‘jump-jump’ ‘hobble, jump around on one foot or to get warm’. While the consultant said that there were many other cases, we found none.

7.6.2 Compound verbs

Compound verbs are composed of a verb, which determines the resulting construction’s word-class and often plays a dominant role in its semantics, and another element. The interesting case of the verb *hnya* ‘put, send’ and spatial adverbs such as *xahan* ‘over there’, which combine to *(h)nya-xahan* ‘in this direction’, is an exception. These combined words are adverbs (see Section 7.4.4), as evidenced by verb phrases like *hnya hnya-xada* ‘put over there’, and will not be discussed further here.

An important group of compound verbs are composed of the vague verb *vwa* ‘do’, and a specifying verb, e.g. *vwa-suu* ‘do break’ ‘pay someone’, *vwa tau* ‘do impact’ ‘fish’,²¹ or *vwa-thiho* ‘do-stumble’ ‘do by accident’. Another group, small but very often used, are the lexicalized serial verb constructions with *fe* ‘take’ and motion verbs, e.g. (46). Other verb compounds also seem to be lexicalized SVCs, e.g. *saahma-cuut* ‘rise-be.standing’ ‘to stand up’, and *ha-de-ha-me* ‘go-DIR.CF-go-DIR.CP’ ‘move to and fro’.

- (7.46) *fe-(h)a(n)-me*
 take-go-DIR.CP
 ‘Bring’

7.6.3 Incorporated object constructions

On top of combining verbs with other verbs, Vamale also forms grammatical words from verbs and non-specific arguments: this includes everyday activities incorporating the most common undergoer, e.g. *xhajake-lait* ‘eat.starchy-rice’ ‘eat rice’, *xhwi-aman* ‘eat.proteiny-something’ ‘eat something’, *vai-xam* ‘weave mats’. This is called “incorporated object constructions” by Ozanne-Rivierre and Rivierre, 357. There are numerous verbs formed with *vwa* ‘do’, e.g. *vwa-vaci* ‘do-pit, hard part’ ‘to argue’, *vwa-ikin* ‘do-meaty.side-dish’ ‘to eat tubers with meat’, *vwa-khêt* ‘do-quarz, blade’ ‘to shave’. All the verbs mentioned form a single stress-contour and cannot be split without losing their overall meaning. Some nominalized forms can contain complex verbs including

²¹This is almost certainly a taboo avoidance strategy. Hunters never use *vap* ‘to hunt’ if they go out, instead they say *balan thaap* ‘length nyaouli’ when describing their plans, to avoid bad luck. *vwa tau* would have replaced the marked word.

a noun, such as *xa-thêên-fe-fati* ‘AGT.NMLZ-run-take-word’ ‘messenger’ and *xa-fe-ta-me-mapeke* ‘AGT.NMLZ-take-go.up-DIR.CP-bright’ ‘morning star’.

7.7 Nominal derivation

Vamale derives nouns from verbs either by using nominalizing prefixes or simply by stripping the verb from its subject indexes (be they proclitics or suffixes), and preposing an article. The nominalizers are analyzed here as prefixes because they directly attach to the root, the article, e.g. *i=* ‘DEF.SG’ can only occur before it (*i=xa-xaleke*, **xa=i=xaleke*). The resulting nominalized construction can be used as an argument with a verb or a preposition and can be possessed by another nominal phrase. The possessor is not, however, understood to be the agent of the action, as in English (e.g. ‘my seeing the brother’), except for intransitive verbs. Instead, the possessor denotes the undergoer. Whether a given verb is nominalized via prefixation or stripping is lexically determined, since nominalizing via stripping was not accepted for some verbs (e.g. **i thapoke* ‘the beginning’, or **i hmanan* ‘his/her hunger’). Another example is *hun-vwa kan* ‘manner-do it; the style of doing it, the act of doing it’ which cannot be **vwa kan* or even **vwa*. Both stripped and prefixed nominalizations may include arguments, as in (47), but not TAM markers. Stripped nominalizations, contrary to the other de-verbal constructions detailed below, do not express a subject through possessive means, but keep the same strategy as normal verb phrases, i.e. using a noun phrase flagged with *ka* ‘sbj’: *ka li apuli* ‘(SBJ DEF.PL person’ in (47). There are two relatively neutral prefixes, *ape-X* meaning ‘fact of doing X’, and *hun-* ‘manner of doing X’, though *hun-* was the only one readily used by speakers for novel constructions.

- (7.47) *e=xaleke i jili i bwaakala ka li apuli_{SBJ}*
 1SG=see ART.SG build.with.wood ART.SG pirogue SBJ ART.PL people
 ‘I see the building of the pirogue by the men’

7.7.1 *e-*

The instrumental nominalizer *e-* has *fe-* and *ve-* cognates in related Northern languages. It is likely that *v-* was only recently dropped, as the word for ‘spoon’ was only coined in the last 150 years, and is *vetupi* from *tuuvi* ‘scoop up from liquid’ (though a loan from a more archaic dialect is not excluded). The word for ‘learning’ *eca* is still listed as *veca* in Leenhardt 1946 and pronounced that way by Chief Luc. In Nelêmwa, a similar morpheme *-ve-*, or *-vi-* depending on animacy (Bril 2004b, 194), comes from *fhe* ‘take’

in Nêlêmwa (*fe* in Vamale), though it is not a nominalizer (*baa-*, Bril [2002, 74]). Our nominalizer *e-* might have a similar background to Nêlêmwa *-ve-*, being derived from *fe* ‘to take’. Cèmuhi and Paicî use *be-* ‘INS.NMLZ’ (Rivierre 1980, 257, Rivierre 1983, 42), versus the reciprocal/middle *pi-* (Rivierre 1980, 257; 1983, 363).

e-vwa-tiike ‘pen’ (lit. ‘INS.NMLZ-make-write’)

e-xadae-ke ‘blessing’ (lit. ‘INS.NMLZ-up.there-TR’)

e-vwadi-ya-n ‘thumb’ (lit. ‘INS.NMLZ-peel-starchy.food-3SG.POSS’)

e-xhwali-aman ‘fork’ (lit. ‘INS.NMLZ-stab-thing’)

e-ja ‘scales’ (lit. ‘INS.NMLZ-measure, weigh’)

Other items look like nominalizations, but the meaning of the presumed base form is lost: *e-xhaat* ‘paddle’, *e-thadala* ‘fruit-picking rod’.

7.7.2 *xa-*

xa- ‘AGT.NMLZ’, an agentive nominalizer, is probably derived from *xayu* ‘male’. Since in Vamale, modifiers usually follow the modified, and possessors the possessum, *xa-* may be an old phrase head, now incorporated into the former modifying phrase. The nominalizer may have developed from a noun phrase with an optionally marked relative clause (48), which was gradually reduced to *xay(u) vwa-tau*, and finally to *xa-vwa-tau* ‘fisherman’.

- (7.48) *xayu* (a=a=) *vwa-tau*
 male (REL=3SG) make-impact

‘The man who fishes’ (The relativizer *a* is often omitted)

The morpheme means ‘one who does regularly, one whose job is X’, the former meaning being used with a habitual meaning on verbs. It can also attach to stative verbs like *xahnang*, but in this case it is a habitual marker (and not a nominalizer), since the verbs can still take subject index marking: *xa-xahnang-go* ‘you are beautiful, you are a good person’.

xa-vabun ‘thief’

xa-moo xada Wanaa ‘an inhabitant of Wanaa’

xa-vap ‘hunter’

xa-vwa suki ‘buyer’

xa-fe-ta-me-mapeke ‘morning star, light-bringer (lit. AGT.NMLZ-take-go.up-DIR.CP-be.bright)’

The habitual meaning can be extended to express whether something has occurred in general, as in (49).

(7.49) a. 21.07.2019 p.42

go pa xa-ha-me
2SG ALR AGT.NMLZ-go-DIR.CP

‘You’ve been here before (lit. you’re already a comer)’

b. HC1:36

nyasi Leenhardt, e bwa ju tena i yata-n, cip=e
for L. 1SG IPFV real hear DEF.SG name-3SG.POSS NEG=1SG
xa-xale-a
AGT.NMLZ-see-3SG.OBJ

‘About Leenhardt, I’ve only ever heard his name, I never saw him (lit. I am not a seer of him)’

7.7.3 *hun-*

This nominalizer expresses a manner of doing something. Cognates are *u-* in Nelêmwa and *kae-* or *hun-* in Pije (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 253), no etymology is given for either. It often associates with *ka-n* ‘ABS-NSPEC’. For a description of *-ka-n* ‘-ABS-NSPEC’, see Section 7.7.6.

hun-moo ka-n ‘NMLZ-be ABS-NSPEC’ ‘way of life, nature’

hun-tiike ka-n ‘NMLZ-write ABS-NSPEC’ ‘orthography’

hun-thêên ka-n ‘NMLZ-run ABS-NSPEC’ ‘driving style’

As with other derivations, whether *hun-* means ‘style’ or ‘tradition’, or something more idiosyncratic can depend on the verb, compare examples (50): *moo* ‘to stay’ keeps the same meaning for inanimate and animate subjects (50a, 50b), but the derivation of *vii* ‘to say’ takes on an idiosyncratic meaning with inanimate subjects, ‘its meaning’ (50c), whereas it keeps a transparent one with an animate subject: ‘his/her way of saying’ (50d).

- (7.50) a. hun-moo ka-n
NMLZ-be ABS-NSPEC
'its nature'
- b. hun-moo-a
NMLZ-stay-3SG
'her/his character'
- c. hun-vii-a
NMLZ-say-3SG
'his/her way of saying it'
- d. hun-vii ka-n
NMLZ-say ABS-NSPEC
'(its) meaning'

Compared to the other nominalizing prefixes, *hun-* is the most neutral one, which casts doubt on the 'manner' meaning postulated above. See ex. (51a), where a nominalization is used because *goon* 'enough' only bears this meaning if it does not subordinate *pala* 'talk'. Otherwise, *goon, ma...* would mean 'permitted, to...', as in (51b). The first example does not mention style, only the bare fact of talking.

- (7.51) a. vamale-181127-jp_nelemwa-1: 00:02:07
cipa goon hun-pala
NEG enough NMLZ-talk
'She didn't speak enough'
- b. cipa goon ma a pala
NEG permitted SUBR 3SG talk
'She is not allowed to speak'

7.7.4 *ape-*

The noun *ape-n* 'trace-POSS' seems a probable origin of the locative nominalizer *ape-*. As can be seen in Table 7.17, most of the forms seem to support a locative interpretation, though some are a bit more abstract. Like with other nominalizers, the transitive suffix *-ke*, auxiliary verbs like *vwa*, and other verbal characteristics, do not disappear upon derivation. *ape-* is also used for the fact of doing something (e.g. *ape-hnyimake-aman* 'fact-think-something, i.e. thought').

7.7.5 Nominalized verb phrases

As well as deriving verbs, Vamale can derive whole verb phrases, the resulting construction being internally a verb phrase with identifiable referents, and externally a

²²Word avoidance taboos are commonplace in this region of the world, perhaps the word for 'wound' is kept vague on purpose.

TABLE 7.17: Examples of *ape-*

Form	Morphemic Gloss	Translation
<i>ape aman</i>	<i>ape</i> something ²²	wound
<i>ape ba</i>	<i>ape</i> wall	terrace wall
<i>ape bwa-jadoon</i>	<i>ape</i> incantation	altar
<i>ape caaji kan</i>	<i>ape</i> turn ABS-NSPEC	road bend
<i>ape fai mae</i>	<i>ape</i> light fire	fireplace
<i>ape hmwa-goon</i>	<i>ape</i> like-body	half of a length
<i>ape hnyi</i>	<i>ape</i> slip	landslide
<i>ape tabo</i>	<i>ape</i> sit	seat
<i>ape tha xhuuni</i>	<i>ape</i> strike spearsling	index finger
<i>ape vwa tii</i>	<i>ape</i> there.is mark	writing
<i>ape tuvi</i>	<i>ape</i> draw.liquid	well
<i>ape-n</i>	trace-POSS	its track
<i>ape ta</i>	<i>ape</i> go.up	mountain pass
<i>ape caihnan aman</i>	<i>ape</i> know something	intelligence
<i>ape tahmangke</i>	<i>ape</i> master	expertise

noun phrase, that can function as an argument. Consider the Bwato example in ex. (52a). Speakers confirmed the acceptability of its Vamale pendant in (52b). In both cases, a ditransitive verb phrase is derived to a noun by dropping the subject marker and adding an article *i=* (or *ani*, in Bwato). This is one way to derive a verb phrase, though the nominalizing prefix *hun-* is also commonly used.

(7.52) a. Bwato (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 32)

ma-hapi watin ani **vetipwaan nya-thii-le** ani bwee-xaman
 when done the give to-them the gift

- b. (ca)ma koin i **vwatipwe nya-sii-le** i bween-aman...
 COND end DEFSG drop put-hand-3PL DEF exchange-thing
 ‘When giving the gift to them is done,...’

Another, more lexicalized approach to nominalizing verb phrases, can be found for established nouns with transparent meanings. Contrary to the constructions discussed above, where the nominalized verb phrase’s arguments are nouns with referents, words like *e-topweeke-aman* ‘hook, lit. NMLZ.INS-hang.up-something’, and *e-xhuli-aman* ‘medicinal plants, lit. NMLZ.INS-spittle-something’ use *aman* ‘thing’, a semantically vague incorporated noun which is also found in *xhwi-aman* ‘eat, lit. bite-something’. Note that *aman* changes the stress pattern of the whole construction as

would a phonologically integrated morpheme (see Section 3.4), which is why it is hyphenated to the verb here.

7.7.6 Nominalization with *ka-n*

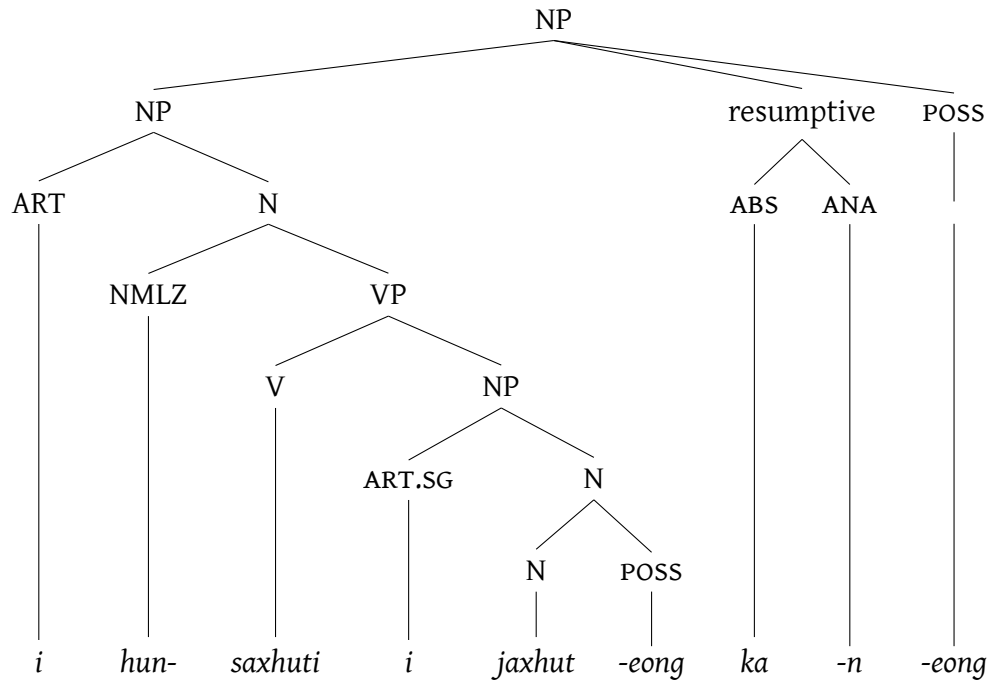
Deverbal nominalizations may carry a clitic *ka-*, with *-n* ‘NSPEC, ANA’ in generic and anaphoric contexts. *ka(-n)* is an optional **S/O** marker and precedes the undergoer or **S** (53).²³ The distribution of *ka* reflects the animacy of the participants: animate **S** or **O** cannot take *ka* if expressed covertly (i.e. through affixes), but take it optionally if overtly present (i.e. as noun phrases), as in (56). In contrast to this, *ka* is obligatory with inanimate, implicit participants (54b), and *-n* refers to the participant (54a).

- (7.53) a. i=hun-vii ka i
 ART=NMLZ-say ABS ART
 jaxhut
 story
 ‘The story’s meaning/moral’
- b. i=hun-vii i jaxhut
 ART=NMLZ-say ART story
 ‘The story’s meaning/moral’

- (7.54) a. i [hun-[saxhuti] ka-n]-eong
 ART;SG NMLZ-explain ABS-NSPEC-1SG;POSS
 ‘My way of explaining it’
- b. *i hun-saxhuti-n
 ART NMLZ-tell-NSPEC
 (for: ‘its telling, the way to tell it’)

ka can either appear directly after the nominalized verb: **V ka Obj** or, resumptively, after the VP: **V Obj ka-n Possessor** (55), illustrated in the Tree 7.5). In said tree, *ka* is shown to be ‘moved’ after the argument before the possessor, like in (55), but it hosts a resumptive morpheme then: *-n* ‘ANA’. This anaphoric use of *-n* also occurs on dependent verbs (Section 7.3.1.2) and prepositions (Section 4.5.2). This means that *ka* is not a suffix, since it tolerates a whole noun phrase in between. It also means that *ka*, although likely related to the *S_P/S_A*-marker, is distinct from the latter, since the *S_P/S_A*-marker cannot be used resumptively. As Figure 7.6 shows, the argument expressed with *ka-n* in a possessed nominalization, tends to be repeated as a nouns phrase afterwards, maybe for better comprehensibility (short-term memory).

²³The Pije cognate is *-a-n*, the Cèmuhi one [tè]- (Rivierre 1980, 273). The possessive classifier *ka*-described in Section 5.3.2 has the Cèmuhi cognate [hè] (Rivierre 1980, 271).

FIGURE 7.5: Resumptive *ka*

- (7.55) *i hun-[saxhuti i jaxhut] ka-n-eong*
 DEF.SG NMLZ-narrate DEF.SG story ABS-NSPEC-1SG.POSS

‘My way of telling the story’ (lit. the way.of-telling the story of-it-mine)

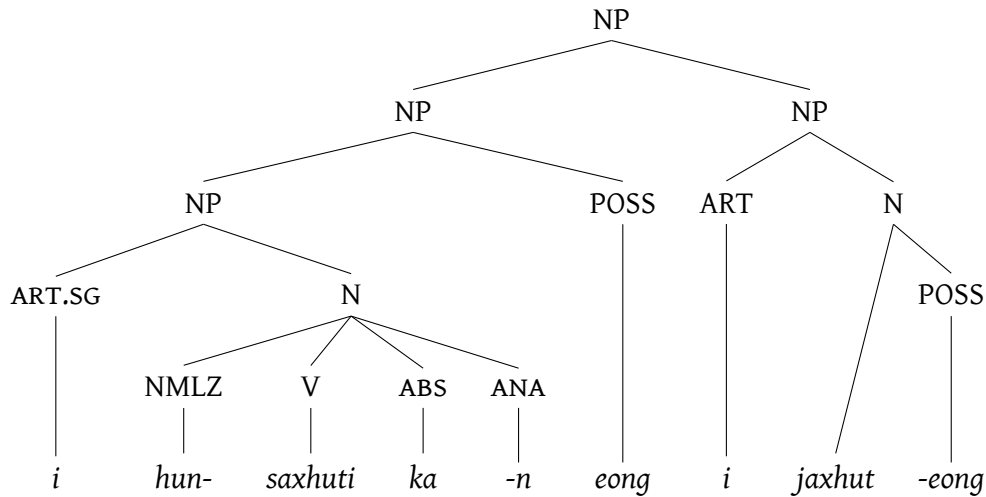
A related, though distinct function *ka-* marks is that of semantically unspecified, focused possession, see Section 5.3.3 on the possessor classifier. The important distinction lies in the classifier’s marked use, whereas the former *ka-* ‘ABS’ is non-marked, though also optional. Both morphemes can function as stand-ins for known or implicit (i.e. non-overt) participants. *ka* ‘ABS’ is also sensitive to animacy, and can be used resumptively, contrary to *ka* ‘CLF.PSR’.

The role of animacy in *ka-n* nominalizations

In deverbal nominalizations, inanimate S and O are optionally flagged by *ka* ‘ABS’. Animate S and O can only take *ka* as overt NPs, however.

- (7.56) *e=xaleke i hun-thapi-bwa- i apuli canbwen*
 1SG=see ART NMLZ-bash-head- ART man yesterday

‘I saw the murder of the man yesterday’ (*thapi bwan* is a fixed expression for ‘killing humans’)

FIGURE 7.6: Cataphoric *ka-n*

Ambitransitive verbs like *thapoke* ‘to begin (something)’ show that the co-occurrence of *ka-* ‘ABS’ and *ka-* ‘CLF.POSS’ is avoided, and only the most agentive participant is marked: derived transitive verbs with both participants present as noun phrases only mark the agent (57a), and *ka* ‘ABS’ is seen in nominalizations of intransitive verbs (57b) and transitive ones without an overt agent (57c). An overview of this distribution is given in Table 7.18, with examples below.

- (7.57) a. le= xaleke i hun thapoke i vaa ka li apuli
 3PL= see ART NMLZ begin ART war SBJ ART person

‘They saw how the war was begun by the people’

- b. le= xaleke i hun thapoke ka i vaa
 3PL= see ART NMLZ begin ABS ART war

‘They saw the start of the war’

- c. thapoke ka-n vaaya
 begin ABS-NSPEC work

‘The beginning of work in general’

- (7.58) a. i hun-saxhuti ka-n
 ART.SG NMLZ-narrate ABS-NSPEC

‘The [traditional/proper] way of telling it; its explanation’

TABLE 7.18: Distribution of *ka*

Tr.V, covert ARG	inanim. O	<i>hun-V ka-n</i> (sem. A, synt. PSR)	(58a)
	anim. O	<i>hun-V-o/ko/a_{OBJ}</i> (<i>ka</i> A)	(58b)
Tr. V, overt ARG	inanim. O	<i>hun-V (ka)</i> ARG (<i>ka</i> A)	(58c)
	anim. O	<i>hun-V</i> ARG (<i>ka</i> A)	(58d)
Itr. V, covert ARG	inanim. S	<i>hun-V ka-n</i>	(58e)
	anim. S	<i>hun-V-o/go/a_{Sp}</i>	(58f), (58g)
Intr. V, overt ARG	inanim. S	<i>hun-V (ka)</i> ARG	(58h)
	anim. S	<i>hun-V ka</i> ARG	(58i)

- b. i *hun-saxhuti-ong*
 DEF.SG NMLZ-narrate-1SG.POSS/OBJ
 ‘My explanation’ (lit. the way.of-telling-my, no natural occurrence identified)
- c. i *hun-saxhuti (ka) i jaxhut-eong*
 DEF.SG NMLZ-narrate ABS DEF.SG story-1SG.POSS
 ‘The way of telling my story’ (the way.of-telling the story-my)
- d. KP:79
 a *vwa ka i hun-moo ka i apuli*
 3SG do SBJ DEF.SG NMLZ-stay ABS DEF.SG human
 ‘It’s because of the nature of man’
- e. AG1:486
 na *juu e-wanke ka-n*
 DEM real NMLZ-change ABS-NSPEC
 ‘It’s a real change’
- f. L3:6
 juu *vataan holeeke mwa hun-hma-gavwe*
 real each thank REP NMLZ-arrive-2PL.POSS
 ‘I thank you each again for your coming’

- g. 2017-08-06 coutumes-maisons-pauvreté:82

e vi tha i hun-moo i apuli
1SG say ASS DEF.SG NMLZ-stay DEF.SG human

‘I’m saying that this is how Man is’

- h. i hun-saxhuti ka-n-eong i jaxhut-eong
DEF.SG NMLZ-narrate ABS-NSPEC-1SG.POSS DEF.SG story-1SG.POSS

‘My way of telling my story’ (lit. the way.of-telling of-it-mine the story-my)

- i. GC:148

a e-imwi i hun-see ka In-Fwe ko a caihna-mwa
3SG REFL-catch DEF.SG NMLZ-cry ABS I. OBL 3SG know-REP
li bee-n
DEF.PL peer-3SG.POSS

‘[When she arrived at the village] Figtree-Bark restrained her crying because she recognized her family’

Chapter 8

Verb Phrases

This chapter describes verb phrases. After exploring what constitutes a verb phrase in Vamale (Section 8.1), various possible parts of the verb phrase are explored. This omits the head verb, which is discussed in Chapter 7. Verbs are mostly modified through analytical means, i.e. by adding words in the same phrase. Prefixes and suffixes that modify a verb, somewhat more rare, are treated under Section 7.5. This chapter will instead focus on negation (Section 8.2), serial verb constructions (Section 8.3.1), bound verbal parts of the VP, and adverbs (Section 8.4). The last section of this chapter explores comparisons between verb phrases, because the coordinator is derived from a verb (*moo ko* ‘rest on’) (Section 8.5).

8.1 What is a verb phrase?

A verb phrase in Vamale will be defined as the syntactic unit depending on a verb, i.e. which moves with the verb, disappears if the verb is replaced by a placeholder word like *vwa* ‘do’ or *hmwaana* ‘do like this’ (1). The verb phrase includes the head verb, its subject and other arguments, and other verbs that stand in a more or less integrated relationship to the head verb, but are neither coordinated nor subordinated verb phrases. Whether TAM markers, subject indexes and other particles should count as part of the verb phrase may be debated, because they still occur with placeholder morphemes, but since the latter were treated under Chapter 7 and the former are described in Chapter 10, we shall concentrate on the elements to the right of the verb. A verb phrase has the following slots available:

ASS TAM NEG SBJ= TAM Prev. Verb Verb Manner-V. OBJ SBJ OBL Adv-S

Example 1 shows a complex verb phrase, where *vwa-suki-n* ‘do-price-NSPEC’ ‘to buy’ is the main verb from which depends *xaleke* ‘to see, according to’ with its oblique argument *i mwani-n-eong* ‘my money’. Example 1b shows the same sentence with the placeholder verb *vwa* ‘do’.

TABLE 8.1: Negative paradigms

Number	Person	<i>cipa</i> 'not do'	<i>ci-</i> 'be absent'	<i>cika</i> 'NEG.EXIST'
SG	1	<i>cipe</i>	<i>ci-e(o)</i>	<i>cika</i>
	2	<i>cipa=go</i>	<i>cia-ko</i>	<i>cika</i>
	3	<i>cipa=a</i>	<i>cia-a</i>	<i>cika</i>
DU	1 INCL	<i>cipa=gasu</i>	<i>cia-gasu</i>	<i>cika</i>
	1 EXCL	<i>cip=abu</i>	<i>cia-bu</i>	<i>cika</i>
	2	<i>cipa=gau</i>	<i>cia-gau</i>	<i>cika</i>
	3	<i>cipa=lu</i>	<i>cia-lu</i>	<i>cika</i>
PL	1 INCL	<i>cipa=gase</i>	<i>cia-gaa</i>	<i>cika</i>
	1 EXCL	<i>cipa=be</i>	<i>cia-be</i>	<i>cika</i>
	2	<i>cipa=gavwe</i>	<i>cia-vwe</i>	<i>cika</i>
	3	<i>cipa=le</i>	<i>cie-le</i>	<i>cika</i>

(8.1) a. vamale-181107-jpnelemwa-06_LR 0:12:24-0:12:26

e **vwa-suki-n** xaleke nyako i mwani-n-eong
 1SG do-price-NSPEC look OBL DEF.SG money-POSS-1SG.POSS

'I buy according to my means'

b. The main verb is replaced by vwa (vamale-181107-jpnelemwa-06_LR 0:12:26-0:12:28)

e **vwa** xaleke nyako i mwani-n-eong
 1SG do look OBL DEF.SG money-POSS-1SG.POSS

'I do it according to my means'

8.2 Negation

Negation in the narrow sense, i.e. the process which negates a predicate, uses the particle *cipa*. The existence of something can be negated with the existential negation *cika*, and absence has a dedicated stative verb *ci(e)-a-n*. Disappearing is expressed with the stative verb *cii-*, e.g. *ciile* 'they disappear'. Whether the active verb *ciba* 'refuse to take' is to be counted in this group of negating morphemes is unclear. Note that all of these forms, as well as the prohibitive *cipii*, start with *ci-*, from POc *tikai (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 88), and ultimately PMP *(q)ati (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 88). A table presenting the most important words is presented below, see Table 8.1.

8.2.1 Verbal negation *cipa*

The negating particle *cipa* is the most common negator. It negates predicates in general, both nominal and verbal ones. This also applies to the other negative forms mentioned above, with the exception of the verb *ci-(e)-a-n* ‘be absent’. The negating particles occur at the very left of the clause, second only to the assertive *tha*.

Contrary to other Voh-Koné varieties, Vamale assimilates the last vowel in *cipa* to [e] in *e*= ‘1SG’, yielding *cip=e*= ‘I don’t’, as it does with *cala* ‘when’, *ma* ‘SUBR’, and the assertive *tha*: there is cross-boundary progressive assimilation, hinting at a proclitical status of *cipa* that *cika* does not have.

8.2.2 Existential negation *cika*

The negative existential *cika* is used to express that something does not exist (2a). It is the opposite of *vwa* ‘exist’. There is no word for ‘to have’ in Vamale, this is expressed with a EXIST X-POSS construction, i.e. by possessing an NP (2b). *cika* is also used as a more formal, or more marked, equivalent of *ûhû* ‘no’.

- (8.2) a. *cika* *we*
 NEG.EXIST water
 ‘There is no water’
- b. *cika* *nyamaa-n*
 NEG.EXIST eye-POSS
 ‘He is blind (there are no eyes of his).’

8.2.3 Other negative expressions and lexical items

cika is also used to express a “negative comitative” for inanimate nouns, using *ko-* ‘on’ i.e. ‘I don’t have it on me’, see (3). A dedicated stative verb expresses absence: *ci-eo/cia-ko/ci-ea*. Like the dependent verbs discussed in Section 7.2.1, *ci-* is able to take generic *-n*, for non-specific and recently mentioned inanimate participants, see (4). This latter form is also part of an old causative form *va(-)cia-n* ‘lose (lit. make absent)’.

- (8.3) *cika* *ca* *mwani ko-ong*
 NEG.EXIST INDF.SG money on-1SG
 ‘I have no money with me’

Focused negation, used to negate one element rather than another ('not *sticks* but *rocks*'), is achieved by fronting (5), like other focusing strategies in Vamale: *tha cipa sukaa kavi tapang* 'ASS NEG sugar but tobacco' 'this is not sugar but tobacco'.

(8.4) KL:80

li xhaohmu habu cipa=gase mu vwa mwa ja mu cia-n
 DEF.PL elder long.ago NEG 1PL.INCL FREQ do house ACCP ITER
 mwa
 absent-NSPEC

'The elders back in the day, we don't build houses anymore, this has progressively been lost, now' (lit. this is absent, now)

(8.5) KG:101

cipa sinu kavi cika wî-n xaleke
 NEG suffer but NEG.EXIST strength-3SG.POSS see

'It doesn't hurt but there's no strength in it, you see'

8.3 Bound elements of the verb phrase

A verb phrase is composed of the head verb and its arguments, possibly other head verbs in the case of serial verb constructions, subordinate verbs, and adverbs (which are discussed in Section 8.4). Among complex verbs, two groups are distinguished by this analysis: serial verb constructions, where several main verbs co-exist in the same phrase, and asymmetrical verb strings, where a head verb is modified by dependent verbs. While there is considerable functional overlap between the two groups, only SVC describe a complex event by naming the simultaneous or consecutive actions, while verb strings are restricted to modifying a verb as an adverb would. A third group called 'complex verb strings' posited for Nêlêmwa was not found in Vamale.

Serial verb constructions (SVC) in Vamale are a common way to describe a complex event or to modify a verb. Serial verb constructions are defined by Brill (2004b, 169) as:

- constituting a single predication/clause
- constituting a single prosodic entity
- sharing syntactic arguments, a single set of pronouns and arguments

- sharing TAM markers
- sharing illocutionary force
- sharing polarity
- referring to aspects of a single event

To this, Bril adds a criterion of contiguity for Nêlêmwa, with directionals such as in (6) counting as the only valid disruption of the verb chain (Bril 2004b, 169). This may be present in Vamale, but could not be distinguished safely from primed calques in eliciting contexts, and was not (to the knowledge of the author) found in unprompted speech.

- (8.6) I u â kuut **mwadu** axi axamalileny ebai nu malileny.
 3SG PFV leave stand down.there see these2.DIST then coconut these2.DIST
 ‘He leaves, stands down there, sees these two coconuts.’

There are three types of SVC common in Oceanic languages: *nuclear*, *core*, and *adjunct* serialization (Bril 2004b, 168).

nuclear serialization features contiguous verbs (sVVo) and are the most common type in New Caledonian languages. **core-layer serialization** has non-contiguous verbs, either with the same subject, or with switch-subject constructions: sV sV(o) (I run I catch [him]) or sVo (s)V (I strike him [he] dies) (Bril 2004a, 4). These meanings would be expressed in two clauses in Nêlêmwa, “serial verb constructions have one single prime argument and one single patient [sVV(V)(o)]; [sV sV] patterns would constitute two independent clauses with a pause inbetween, not a serial construction.” (Bril 2004b, 168) They are not attested in Vamale either. In **adjunct serialization**, a head verb has a second, adjunct verb. These adjunct verbs cannot head a verb phrase on their own. In this grammar, they are called “manner verbs” and described in Section 8.3.2.2, as part of asymmetrical verb strings.

- (8.7) a. vamale-181107-jpnelemwa-05: 00:01:06-00:01:07
 a siva taeke i oot
 3SG attach do.badly DEF.SG rope
 ‘He attached the rope badly’

b. vamale-181107-jpnelemwa-05: 00:01:11-00:01:12

Possibly a word play on the previous example

a siva vee-ke i oot
3SG attach fuck-TR DEF.SG rope

‘He attached the rope badly (by messing around)’

Another type of verb phrase including various verbs are asymmetrical strings, called “complex predicates” elsewhere (Bril 2004b, 168). These can include a head and an adjunct as in (7) (manner verbs are adjuncts), a head and a modal verb, e.g. *thapoke mapeke* ‘begin bright’, ‘it is beginning to dawn’ (preverbs are modal verbs), or a compound whose meaning is different from the meanings of its components (Bril 2004b, 168). A Vamale example of the latter would be *moo han* ‘stay go’ ‘be a nomad’, or *han thêên* ‘walk run’ ‘chase after’, see Section 7.6.2. In any case, where serial verb constructions feature several main verbs, an asymmetrical verb string is characterized by a head verb and a dependent one. Two classes of these are the preverbs and manner verbs discussed under Section 8.3.2.1 and Section 8.3.2.2, respectively.

8.3.1 Serial verb constructions

Serial verb constructions in Vamale are commonly used to link a motion to a purpose (8), with the motion verb always first, e.g. *han moo* ‘go stay’ ‘go to stay somewhere’. Most SVCs combine two verbs, but there are longer ones, e.g. (9a) and (9b). Both the motion and purpose are carried out by the same subject.

(8.8) KG:473-747

ta contrôler li carton ko-n jo, contrôler meeka-n
go.up check DEF.PL box OBL-NSPEC chicken check everything-NSPEC
han han na bwaa ...
go go DEM IPFV

‘She went up to check the boxes of frozen chicken, check everything bit by bit/check everything while walking through it, it’s still ...’

(8.9) a. DT:12

...ma le bwa hup-e wati thapi-bwa-le,
 ...SUBR 3PL IPFV go.down-DIR.CP chase.after smash-head-3PL.POSS,
 watii-le koma bwa vwa ca le vwa-suki-aman
 chase.after-3PL to IPFV do INDF.PL 3PL do-price-thing

‘When they came north, chased and slew them, chased them to punish them’

b. PE2:16

kona e ta-me ta-me thaloot hup-wa sohmun
 CNJ 1SG go.up-DIR.CP go.up-DIR.CP appear go.down-REP study

‘Then I would go up, up, come out (on top of the hill), walk down again (on the other side) to study’

A motion verb *han* ‘go’, *hut* ‘go down’, *ta* ‘go up’, *hnuut* ‘move upstream’ etc. may also be introduced because it can host a centripetal suffix *-me* (10), unlike non-motion verbs. This allows the construction to have a centripetal suffix. In (11), *hame* ‘come’ means that the drinks are aligned in such a way that the tastes change as one moves along them. Crucially, the movement does happen, meaning the motion verb is a full verb and not grammaticalized (for which see Section 8.3.2.3).

(8.10) KG:467

kona sili sahmwa ha-me sili sahmwa ha-me
 CNJ sew the.other.way go-DIR.CP sew the.other.way go-DIR.CP

‘And then he backs up, backs up’

(8.11) KG:277-279

thapoke cuut aligner li parfum ha-me hmwaani, tulem li,
 begin stand align DEF.PL flavor go-DIR.CP like.this tulem DEF.PL
 aligner ha-me li oro li joakan aman
 align go-DIR.CP DEF.PL oro DEF.PL big thing

‘(So I) start and stand there and align the flavors while coming (out of the container), the *tulem* sodas, the, align the *oro* sodas, the big ones’

Motion verbs can also co-occur in an SVC, to describe the path of the subject more precisely. In (12), the motion is first specified as aimless and slow (strolling), then

a Ground is linked to it (beach) with a precise motion verb (follow). In (9b), however, the speaker describes in detail a long journey to school, with studying as a purpose in the end.

(8.12) 181107 p.96

a e-thana saxhuti hmeewan
3SG MID-stroll follow sand

‘She goes for a stroll along the beach’

Another use of SVCs is to link an action not to its direction, as described above, but to its manner. In (13), a rather abstract action is done while considering the available funds.

(8.13) vamale-181107-jpnelemwa-06_LR 0:12:24-0:12:26

e vwa xaleke nyako li mwani-n-eong
1SG do look for DEF.PL money-POSS-1SG.POSS

‘I do (buy) according to my means’

Other SVCs are in muddy waters between true, clear SVCs and grammaticalized constructions (which would make the concerned construction an asymmetrical verb string). Compare *han sate-n* ‘go, leave be.different-NSPEC’ ‘leave separately’ and *saten han* ‘leave afterwards’.¹ While the first meaning is rather transparent, the second is more lexicalized. However, many common SVCs accumulate connotations, while retaining an ambiguity with the literal meaning.

8.3.2 Asymmetrical verb strings

The following section will first introduce so-called preverbs, bound verbs that modify the head verb by preceding it, amongst which a prominent example is *se-me* ‘all together (lit. same-all)’. Other bound parts of the verb phrase may include manner verbs, which are bound like the pre-verbs, but follow the head verb. TAM particles precede the predicate, not the verb phrase, and are discussed under Chapter 10.

8.3.2.1 Preverbs

Vamale has a series of elements which cannot nowadays be the head of a verb phrase. Some have nominal origins, like the ones in Table 8.2, while others have free verbal

¹vamale-181107-jpnelemwa-06: 0:05:11- 0:05:46

TABLE 8.2: Preverbs and their free counterparts

Form	Free Form Meaning	Preverb Meaning
<i>xhwat</i>	‘small piece’ ²	‘do a bit’
<i>balan</i>	‘part of long object’	‘just do; do anyway’
<i>xadaa</i>	‘turn to do something’	‘on the other hand, do unexpectedly’

counterparts, often with a transitive meaning e.g. *vataan* ‘each’, *vathanke* ‘do separately, separate’. Preverbs occur directly before the verb root. The commonly used members include *vataan* ‘each’ (14), *xadaa* ‘on the other hand’ (16), *daa* ‘do first’ (17), *xhose* ‘repeat’ (15), *xhwat* ‘a little bit’ (18), *xhopwe* ‘on top of that’, *balan* ‘just’ (19). In addition to having different word-class status, some preverbs have homophonous equivalents with a different distribution, e.g. *vataan*, which also occurs before nouns, and *balan* exists as an aspect marker (Section 10.5). The two preverbs *mee* ‘all’ and its complex form *se-me* ‘all together’ are discussed in the two sections to come, as examples of this multi-functionality.

(8.14) AG1:68

[hmwaka li buke] [tha= abe= [vataan [vwa buke]]] [tha
 like DEF.PL flower ASS 1PL.EXCL each do flower ASS
 abe vataan cami]
 1PL.EXCL each plant

‘Like the flowers, we each grow flowers, we each plant them’

(8.15) GL:41

xhose vii!
 repeat say

‘Say (that) again!’

(8.16) a. Traditional end of a story

xadaa-go ma go=saxhuti eca se
 turn-2SG SUBR 2SG=narrate INDF.SG other

‘It’s your turn to tell another [story]’

²Compare *xhwat apuli* ‘little man’, *xhwatin* ‘be small’, *xhwatiike* ‘do slowly’

b. KG:162

ko go [[xadaa siva] nya-xada] go xadaa hmwaani
CNJ 2SG otherwise attach towards-up.there then otherwise like.this

‘Then you attach it one way, and then, another way, you do like this’

(8.17) KG:285

go bwa juu [[da [tabe i se carton]] [hnya-ut pu]]
2SG IPFV real first lift DEF.SG one box PROX-move.down ground
go bwa fe i- aaa cana
2SG IPFV take DEF.SG EXPL vagina

‘You just start by lifting one box from the ground, then you take the [next] aah shit’

(8.18) GP:57

lu vwa ma lu **xhwat** cu-vathan-ke li see vuman
3DU do SUBR 3DU a.bit stand-individually-TR DEF.PL same group
nyu nyala ka muu-hni
fish there SBJ DEM.DU-PROX

‘The two did so that they quickly surrounded the same school of fish there’

(8.19) KG:139

na i s-ung tha balan hmwaani
DEM DEF.SG hand-1SG.POSS ASS continue like.this

‘It’s my hand, it stayed [stiff] like this’

8.3.2.1.1 se-me(e) ‘together’ The stative verb *se* ‘be one / same’ has two meanings, depending on the context. One is the verbal form, predicatively used, meaning ‘be alone, be one’. This is a comparatively rare function, shown in (20).

(8.20) i apuli a se-a
DEF.SG person REL one-3SG

‘The person who is alone’

When following a singular article, it means ‘the other’ or ‘another’, see (21). This is discussed in more detail in Section 6.4.1.

(8.21) AG1:339

hê vwa li been xada a mu moo ma ca-se
 yes EXIST DEF.PL peer up.there REL ITER stay COM INDF.SG-other
 thamo lu moo ma ca se xayu
 woman 3DU stay COM INDF.SG other man

‘Yes there are some, up there, he’ll stay with some other woman, she’ll stay with some other man’

The last meaning of *se* is ‘be one / same’. It is used either as a verbal predicate, with singular nouns (22a) as well as plural ones (22b). It can also be used before definite nouns to mean ‘the same’, as in (22c) and (22d).

(8.22) a. J5:70

meeka li yavo, a taemwi ka i apuli a se
 all DEF.PL fishing.line 3SG grab SBJ DEF.SG man REL same

‘All the fishing rods are held by a single man’ (lit. ‘all the fishing rods, a single man holds (them)’)

b. J5:62

lu xhajake li uvu a see
 3DU eat.starchy DEF.PL yam REL one

‘They eat the same yams’

c. J5:58

lu moo ca se mwa-n-lu
 3DU stay in one house-POSS-3DU.POSS

‘They stay in the same house.’ (lit. they stay in one house of theirs)

d. J4:14

i that cipa xa-sivu ca la a se la
 DEF.SG wind NEG HAB-blow in location REL one location

‘The wind does not always blow in the same place’ (lit. the wind is not a constant blower in a place that is one/the same place)

Finally, *se* can form a compound with the preverb *me(e)* ‘be all’; the result is both a pre-verb meaning ‘do something all together’ and a “pre-noun” meaning ‘all of X’ (23a). Note that the former function is only attested for the compound *se-me*, and only with free pronouns.

(8.23) a. J6:1

see-me gaa, gase see-me vwa ka see-me gaa
 same-all 1PL.INCL 1PL.INCL same-all do SBJ same-all 1PL.INCL

‘All together, we all do this together.’

b. AG1:428

m=abe bwa vwa *nettoyage* h=abe thai li
 SUBR=1PL.EXCL IPFV do cleaning TOP.REP=1PL.EXCL pick.up DEF.PL
vaisselle-ea, ya, ja **me** abe mwa
 dish-3SG.POSS EXCL ACCP all 1PL.EXCL REP

‘When we do the clean up we’ll pick up her dishes, well - we all as well’

c. vamale-181127-jp_nelemwa-1: 00:01:11-00:01:17

le ha-me ka (*mee le) meeka le
 3PL go-DIR.CP SBJ all 3PL all 3PL

‘They all come’

8.3.2.1.2 *mee* ‘all’ The morpheme *me(e)* ‘all’'s derived form *mee-ka-n* ‘everything, everywhere’³ suggests it was originally a free verb (see Section 8.4.2 on the adverb and Section 6.4.2 on the quantifier). However, *me(e)* is not attested as a head verb in Vamale, and western Voh-Koné languages only feature the nominalized form *meeka-n* ~ *meena-n* (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 211); no independent verb *me* is attested in the language family today. *me(e)* is mostly used preverbally, see (24a) and (24b), but it is also attested before a prepositional phrase, as in (24b). Interestingly, *me* does not only add a meaning of ‘to all do’, but can also, at least when the subject is singular, signify implicit plural referents “all-ness”, i.e. that all members of the referred-to group of referents are concerned (25, 25b). This was only attested twice. As a prefix, it occurs in combinations with demonstrative pronouns, as for *me-ehni* ‘all those’ (Section 6.2.2).

³*meeka-n* was probably structured *mee ka-n*, with the S/P-marking clitic *ka* ‘ABS’ found in nominalizations, further discussed under Section 7.7.6.

This double occurrence as a pre-verb, and a prefix on pronouns is unique in the language. This grammar distinguishes the preverb and the prefix *me(e)*, and hypothesizes a verbal origin based on the derived form *meeka-n*'s morphology.

(8.24) a. KG:471

i se a lu **mee** hup-e ya a bwa ta xale
DEF.SG other REL 3DU all go.down-DIR.CP 3SG 3SG IPFV go.up look

'The other who came with (lit. the other that the two came down **together**) went up [in the gas station] to look around'

b. KP:102

gaa **me** ca i mwani mwani mwani, cama li xhaohmu
1INCL all in DEF.SG money money money when DEF.PL elder
habu, le, tha cika mwani-n-le
long.ago 3PL ASS NEG.EXIST money-POSS-3PL.POSS

'We all are about money, money, money, but the elders back then, they didn't have money'

(8.25) a. PE2:30

go mee vwa ko na yamaan-go juu en-go, go, hê
2SG all do because DEM unmotivated-2SG real fine-2SG 2SG yes

'You did all that [punishments] because you were fed up [with school], you're a real fine one, yes'

b. HC19:7

ma gavwe vwa ehni a me vi
SUBR 2PL do DEM REL.3SG all say

'May you do all he says.' (lit. may you do this, that he will all say)

8.3.2.2 Manner verbs

"Manner verbs" are, so to speak, halfway between full verbs and more bound morphemes like the prefixes described in Section 7.5.1. They can neither occur alone, nor can they occur in the first position of the verb phrase, or be fronted there. They cannot take arguments or subjects, and modify the head verb. They cannot add arguments to

a verb phrase either. Members include *thuan* ‘do well’ (26), *tatu* ‘do quickly’, *sisipo* ‘do together’,⁴ *xhwatiike* ‘do quietly, softly’.

- (8.26) e=holeke thuan i=vaaya a gavwe=vwa sisipo
 1SG=thank do.well DEF.SG=work REL 2PL=do do.together
 ‘I thank you for the work you did together’

8.3.2.3 Grammaticalized motion verbs

A motion verb can come after verbs describing another action, but the former then has other functions than to contribute its mere meaning. The motion verb may serve to express a spatial boundary as in (27a) (compare this to (27b), where a similar role is played by *seen* ‘border’), or to express a temporal boundary, such as in (28), where *ha-me* ‘go-DIR.CP’ ‘come’ means ‘until now, up to now’. Since nothing actually moves and the motion verb has no subject, the semantically idiosyncratic sequence of a main verb and a motion verb that modifies the former is an asymmetrical verb string.

- (8.27) a. 181107 p.96
 moo cahni gase xaleke hma-ca-mwa xahan ko i
 rest here 1PL.INCL see arrive-go.up-REP over.there on DEF.SG
 jahoot
 river
 ‘From here we can see up to the river (and beyond)’
 b. 181107 p.96
 moo cahni gase xaleke seen xahan ko i jahoot
 rest here 1PL.INCL see border over.there on DEF.SG river
 ‘From here we can see until the river (but not beyond)’

- (8.28) xethoo na la la, ha-mwa-me naen bwa vwa
 landing.net DEM be.here be.here go-REP-DIR.CP now IPFV EXIST
 épuisettes
 landing.net
 ‘Landing nets, it’s a recent thing, it has come about now that there are landing nets’

⁴diachronically related: *nya-sipo-ke* ‘put-together-TR’

8.3.2.4 Iterative *han*

han is used to express iterativity, and can be used before, see (29a) and (29b), or after the other verbs (29c). This is a rather grammaticalized function and although it latches onto serial verb constructions, the resulting whole qualifies as an asymmetrical verb string (composed of a SVC and a modal verb).

(8.29) a. HC19:42

gaa vwa ma fa-pupwaale, gavwe **han** pala thuan
 1PL.INCL do SUBR speak.language-European 2PL go talk do.well
 ‘...we busy ourselves with speaking French, you have come to speak well’

b. HC19:40-42

ko tha ga **han** pa xaleke naen
 CNJ ASS 1PL.INCL go ALR see now
 ‘And we see by now,...’

c. Tipije

e=bwa mu tena ha-mwa
 1SG=IPFV ITER hear GO-REP
 ‘I heard about it all along’

8.4 Adverbs

Vamale does not productively derive adverbs from verbs, and instead commonly forms adverbial clauses with *ca-n* ‘in-NSPEC’ (see Section 12.2.2). Some of these have become established expressions, e.g. *can hawân* ‘vis-à-vis (lit. in its possession/visible dependency)’. Similarly to manner verbs, adverbs can modify a verb and are optional. Adverbs can also modify nouns, as well as occur alone at the edge of the clause, see (30), where *naen* ‘now(adays)’ is used at the end of the first clause, and after the conjunction, at the beginning of the following clause.

(8.30) KP:40

cipa hmwakan **naen**, ko **naen** a xaahni eca lit a... eca
 NEG like-NSPEC now CNJ now 3SG look.for INDF.SG bed CNJ INDF.SG
matelas a
 mattress CNJ

‘It’s not like now, because now he looks for some bed or some mattress (instead of sleeping on a pandanus mat)’

Semantically, most adverbs situate the action in time and space. They constitute a relatively small class. Among the temporal adverbs are *naen* ‘recently, now, later today’, *xahmaen* ‘tomorrow’, and *can-bwen* ‘yesterday (lit. at-night)’ as well as *mati* ‘earlier today’ and *jimin* ‘last night past bedtime’. Vamale has no dedicated words for ‘always’, ‘often’, ‘sometimes’, or ‘rarely’. These meanings are expressed using the frequentative particle, the habitual prefix, and other forms (31). For occasional occurrences, no matter the frequency, *calibeen* ‘sometimes, not always’ is used.

(8.31) B2:145

xa-pala hnyana kavi pa cipa=a pala
 HAB-talk constantly but ALR NEG=3SG talk

‘He talks all the time but now he doesn’t’

Spatial adverbs are as numerous as movement verbs, as they form with the locative prefix *xa-*, or *hnya-* ‘towards’ on a movement verb. Compare *xa-hut* ‘LOC.ADV-go.down (below)’ and *hnya-ut nya-xa-hut* ‘down towards the general area down there’. There are also spatial adverbs not derived from verbs, such as *xala-n* ‘under’ or *paathabu-n* ‘before, in front of’. There are other spatial adverbs derived from verbs that do not denote movement. One prominent example is *meeka-n* ‘everywhere’, ultimately derived from the stative verb *mee* ‘all’ (further discussed in Section 8.4.2).

8.4.1 Spatial adverbs and proximity

Vamale distinguishes three main degrees of proximity via adverbs, which are unrelated to the demonstratives in 6.2.2. The adverbs *xa-hut* ‘down there’, *xa-da* ‘up there’, and *xa-han* ‘over there’ form the basis of this system, and do not specify the distance of the referent.

The closest ring, *nya-ut/nya-da/nya-an* ‘just there’ is composed of (h)*nya* ‘put, give’ and a (sandhied) form of a motion verb. It is often accompanied by *la* ‘be.here’,

i.e. *nya-ut la* ‘right here (below me)’. Things in this ring are at a hand’s reach or figuratively so. *nya-an xa-han* ‘farther than over there’ is farther than either simple *nya-an* or anything previously qualified as *xa-han*. The last ring contains a repetitive morpheme *mwa* ‘REP’: *nya-a-mwa xa-han* ‘even further over there’.

8.4.2 *meekan* ‘everywhere’

A related form of *mee* ‘all’ described above (Section 8.3.2.1.2) is the adverb *meekan* ‘everywhere’. It appears at the fringes of constituents: ex. (32a) stands between a verb and its adjunct *can mwa* ‘in the house’, and in (32b) it modifies a prepositional phrase. Unlike the quantifier *meeka-n* (Section 6.4.2), *meekan* does not shed its *-n* before specific noun phrases.

(8.32) a. KG:26

vwa meekan ca i mwa
EXIST everywhere in DEF.SG house

‘It was everywhere in the house’

b. KG:84

na wanke mae can mwa meekan
DEM change light in house everywhere

‘The lights had changed everywhere in the house’

8.5 Comparison

Verb phrases can be coordinated for comparative purposes using *moo ko-n*, literally ‘rest on-NSPEC’, see (33).

(8.33) RP:48

gase xadaa han-mwa can saten moo-ko i
1PL.INCL however walk-REP ADV.SUBR differently CPR DEF.SG
hun-moo-gaa
manner.NMLZ-stay-1PL.INCL.POSS

‘We, however, walk yet differently from our [real] culture’

moo-ko also means ‘to come from’, as in (34a) (further discussed in Section 7.4.7). Another construction yet is prefaced by *thaloo* ‘two’ and means ‘be of two sorts’, as in (34b) and (34c). Note that *moo* ‘stay’ takes on a meaning of ‘be’ in the common nominalized form *hun-moo* ‘manner.NMLZ-stay’ ‘culture, nature’.

(8.34) a. AG1:429-430

hmwakan cama thamo ha-me hoot, na le o *enseigner* ma
 perhaps if woman go-DIR.CP be.far DEM 3PL IRR teach if
 api a ha-me moo hoot
 COMP 3SG go-DIR.CP stay be.far

‘Perhaps if a woman comes from afar, they [the local women] will teach her, if she comes from afar’

b. Proverb

vi ka vwa, tha juu e-thaloo moo koo-n
 say CNJ do ASS really MID-two stay on-NSPEC

‘Saying and doing are two different things.’

c. KM:29

hê ena thaloo moo koo-n
 yes DEM two stay on-NSPEC

‘Yes exactly, there are two kinds [of bees]’

Chapter 9

Voice

“Voice” in this grammar refers to various kinds of mapping grammatical relations unto a verb. Phenomena discussed in this chapter include reflexive, reciprocal, and middle constructions, all marked by the prefix (v)*e*-, discussed in Section 9.1, and the causative constructions prefixed by *fa*- (Section 9.3). A brief section on agent-omitting constructions is added for completion.

9.1 Reflexive and reciprocal

Vamale prefixes verbs and nouns with *e*-, a morpheme that can have reflexive, reciprocal, and middle functions. It is a reflex of POc **pa*(R)*i*- (Pawley 1973, 151-152). The reconstructed meaning of **pa*(R)*i*-...-*i* is that of “mutual interaction between the entities denoted by the subject of the verb” and refers to “unified or conjoined action by a plural subject, or repeated action by a singular subject, or unification of objects” (Pawley 1973, 151-152). These reconstructed functions did not include reflexive. The reflexes of **pa*(R)*i*- described today did not retain all of the meanings reconstructed for the Proto-Oceanic form. See Table 9.1 for an overview of the reconstructed functions, which ones were retained in Vamale, and where in the chapter the retained functions are discussed.

9.1.1 Reflexive

Reflexive constructions function in two ways. Either the subject marker and the object marker denote the same referent, as in example (1).¹ This is the most common way of forming a reflexive construction.

¹*khêt* originally meant ‘quarz’. Knives were also made from shells (mangrove oysters (*thala*) gave their name to today’s steel knives, though the word may have come from a Polynesian word for knife (*h*)*ele* [Hollyman 1959]), or reed and bamboo shards called *xadan* o ‘shard of bamboo’.

TABLE 9.1: Functions of Proto-Oceanic retained in Vamale, after (Bril 2005, 28)

Function and morph. makeup	Vamale example	Relevant section
Collective actors (<i>paRi</i> , <i>paRi-...-i</i>)	<i>e-moo</i> ‘all stay’	Section 7.5.4
Collective entities, grouping (<i>paRi</i> , <i>paRi</i> +root reduplication)	<i>e-tipwa</i> ‘all fall (not strictly at the same time)’	Section 9.2.3
Reciprocal actors (<i>paRi</i> , <i>paRi-...-i</i>)	<i>e-thaut</i> ‘have a fight’	Section 9.1.2
Comparison (<i>paRi</i>)	<i>e-hmwakan</i> ‘be the same’	Section 9.1.2.1
Iterative actions (<i>paRi</i> , <i>paRi-...-i</i>)	<i>e-hmain</i> ‘more and more’	Section 9.2.2

Not retained:

Intransitivizing, depatientive function (*paRi*, *paRi-...-i*)
 Reciprocal or associated OBJ (*paRi*)
 Reference to states and properties (*paRi* and reduplication)
 Root reduplication in general was not retained

- (9.1) *e=vwa-khêt-eo*
 1SG=do-blade-1SG.OBJ
 ‘I shave myself’

The other possibility is with the prefix *e-* ‘REFL’, formerly *ve-* (Leenhardt 1946, 585),² see (2). This *e-* is distinct from the instrumental *e-* (Section 7.7.1), e.g. *e-vwadi ya-n* ‘thumb (lit. NMLZ.INS-peel.with.fingers starchy.food-POSS)’. Nêlêmwa cognates are *ve-* ‘NMLZ.INS’ and *pe-* ‘RECP’ respectively (Bril 2002, 171). Note that Nêlêmwa does not use *pe-* with a reflexive meaning (Bril 2005, 24), nor is Proto-Oceanic **paRi-* reconstructed to have had a reflexive function.

- (9.2) *go=e-vwa-khêt*
 2SG=REFL-do-blade
 ‘You shave yourself’

Self-directed actions in Bwato are only marked with *e-* for a few verbs of grooming or cognition, and still use coreferential arguments, i.e. object suffixes (Bril 2005, 34). This is not the case in Vamale, where cognition verbs do not need object suffixes, e.g. *go e-hnyimake* ‘2SG REFL-think’ ‘you think to yourself’ and *e-fwajimwake* ‘REFL-ask’ ‘to ask oneself’. Grooming verbs may take it or not. The reflexive is productive, but has become lexicalized in certain forms as well, e.g. *wago* ‘encourage’ → *e-wago* ‘persevere’

²Chief Luc Katelia Oué still uses *veca* ‘learn’, where most younger speakers use *eca*. Usa Vamale, Temala Hmwaveke, and Fa Tiéta (still) tend to use *vi* ‘DEF.SG’ where Coastal Vamale has *i*.

9.1.2 Reciprocal

The reflexive *e-* can also express reciprocity. Interestingly, the prefix had reciprocal functions before reflexive ones (Bril 2005, 26). Dixon describes the Fijian reflex *vei-* as more collective than reciprocal (Dixon 1988, 256). The prefix follows the subject marker, but *e-* and the object markers are mutually exclusive in a reflexive context (a possible, poorly understood exception are grooming verbs). They can (and actually do) however cooccur in a reciprocal reading. The construction in (3a) without the object suffix (*lu=e-xaleke*) means ‘they see themselves’. Reciprocal prefixes are also found on nouns (3c).

Examples of lexicalized forms are *e-thuang* ‘tease each other’ which contrasts with *thuang* ‘joke’, and *e-canim* ‘play hide-and-seek’, from *canim* ‘hide oneself from someone’.

(9.3) a. After 07.11.18 p.93

lu=e-xale-lu
3DU=RECP-see-3DU.OBJ
‘They see each other’

b. lu=xale-lu
3DU=see-3DU.OBJ
‘They see them’

c. AG1:299
lu=e-copain-copine
3DU=RECP-boyfriend-girlfriend
‘They are boyfriend-girlfriend’

9.1.2.1 Comparison and symmetry

The middle prefix, for certain words, expresses symmetry between two or more entities. This meaning of ‘same’ expressed with *e-* ‘MID’ rather than *se* ‘one, same’ appears reliably on verbs and their derivatives, such as *e-hmwakan* ‘MID-same’ ‘be the same’ and *e-hmwa-goon* ‘MID-same-body’, ‘be of same length’ (4), whereas nouns differ. Compare *se fedala-lu* ‘They(2) have the same blood (same blood-3DU.POSS)’ and *e-wada-lu* ‘They have the same age’ (5).

TABLE 9.2: Reciprocal kinship terms

Complex form	Gloss of Morphemes	Meaning
<i>xa-bate</i>	<i>xa-tip</i>	‘brothers’
<i>xabetha</i>		‘sisters’
<i>xaa-vap-an</i>	<i>xa-hunt?-POSS</i>	‘siblings’
<i>xa-fa-thau-n</i>	<i>xa-CAUS-wealth-POSS</i>	‘brother-in-law and sister-in-law’
<i>xa-nya-pwan-an</i>	<i>xa-put-on-POSS</i>	‘paternal aunts’
<i>xa-e-vwona-n</i>	<i>xa-RECP-maternal.uncle-POSS</i>	‘maternal uncle and niece/nephew’
<i>xa-vabu-n</i>	<i>xa-grandchild-POSS</i>	‘grandfather and grandchildren’

(9.4) Example sentence for the dictionary

e-hmwaa-go-lu
 RECP-like-body-3PL.POSS

‘They are equally long’

(9.5) 07.11.18 p.95

e-wada-lu
 RECP-time-2DU.POSS

‘They(2) have the same age’ (but: *nievit joo-n?* ‘how.many year-3SG.POSS’ ‘how old is s/he?’)

9.1.2.2 Reciprocal relationships

The prefix *e-* also occurs on possessed nominals to express a reciprocal relationship outside of the family (3c, 6). Reciprocal relationship nouns for family members (“symmetrical kinship and dyadic relationship” [Bril 2005, 48]) are an own lexical field, prefixed with *xa-*. A non-exhaustive list is found under Table 9.2. These reciprocal relations do not extend beyond the lexical fields of kinship and marriage.

(9.6) AG1:239

calibeen ma le moo ma li ehni e-bee-le
 sometimes if 3PL stay COM DEF.PL DEM.PROX RECP-peer-3PL.POSS

‘Sometimes when they stay together with those, they are each other’s cousins’

TABLE 9.3: Base and middle forms

Base form and meaning	Middle form and meaning
<i>wesidedo</i> ‘mirror (noun)’	<i>e-sidedo</i> ‘look at oneself in mirror’
<i>sunì-xhiit</i> ‘?-pain’	<i>e-sunì</i> ‘to restrain oneself, to suffer’
<i>siiwa</i> ‘go back’	<i>e-siiwa</i> ‘give a counter-gift’
<i>vadanke</i> ‘forget’	<i>e-vadanke</i> ‘forgive someone’
<i>vwa nyako-</i> ‘do; EXIST for’	<i>e-vwa nyako-</i> ‘to seem’
<i>xhwatiin nyima-</i> ‘small heart’	<i>e-xhwatiin nyima-</i> ‘be sad’

9.2 Middle

The reflexive/reciprocal prefix *e-* is used for other functions as well where an intransitive action is somehow enhanced. While there are identifiable patterns, the meaning of *e-* is lexically determined, yielding in some cases completely idiosyncratic meanings (Table 9.3).

Since the meanings associated with *e-* are so diverse, and since the conventional analysis of it differs from verb to verb, additional words may be added to disambiguate: *sisipo* ‘together’, *xhayu* ‘randomly’, *hato* ‘alone’ etc.

9.2.1 Lack of intentional initiator

A function of *e-* to mark events initiated by forced of nature or other unintentional causes is well attested in Oceanic (Bril 2005, 33). While this is described for Bwatoo *ve-* (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 310), it could not be found in Vamale: a true lack of initiator. This is expressed with a manner verb *hato* ‘to do X alone’. The absence of this function otherwise present in New Caledonia may be due to attrition. There are only two possible candidates that this research project found for Vamale: *e-vwa nyakoo-* ‘MID-EXIST for-’ ‘take note of something, become aware’ (7a), and *e-vaaya ko-* ‘MID-move on’ ‘shake, move on one’s own’ (7b). The first uses a non-volitional verb anyway, *vwa* ‘there is’, which casts doubt upon an analysis of *e-* as marking a lack of initiator.

(9.7) a. GC:16

cahma In-Fwe cipa a e-vwa nyakoo-n
TOP Bark-guettarda_speciosa NEG 3SG MID-EXIST for-ANA
‘But Figtree-Bark did not suspect anything’

b. X4:13

e-vaaya ko-n ka i that
MID-move on-NSPEC SBJ DEF.SG wind

‘The wind shakes [the leaves]’

9.2.2 Lack of endpoint

Verbs can acquire an unbounded meaning with *e-*: while e.g. the active verb *thana* ‘to wander’ becomes *e-thana* ‘to go for a stroll, to aimlessly amble’, stative verbs like *gere* ‘fat; be fat’ and *hmain* ‘be numerous’ change from describing mere states, to describing developments: *e-gere* ‘to grow fat’, *e-hmain* ‘more and more numerous’.

9.2.3 Mode of grouping

A rare function, which is described also for other Northern languages (Bril 2005, 46), changes the meaning of a numeral verb to a grouping one: *nya e-thaloo* ‘put two by two’; *e-thaloo moo koon* ‘there are two kinds, they stay on this as two’. The word *e-see* ‘be rare’ derived from *se* ‘be alone, be one’, is assigned here to this category.

(9.8) a. KL:140

xaleke, go, cahma wadat, tha e-see
see well concerning gun ASS MID-be.one

‘You see, and well, guns were rare’

9.2.4 Symmetrical point

While *can dawee-* ‘inbetween’ can be used to describe a member of a group (9a), a derived form *can e-dawee-* ‘among’ also exists (9b). There is not enough data yet to precisely pinpoint the difference, though the indistinguishability of the group members may be a nuance introduced by *e-*, given that this is a function of *e-* attested in other contexts (see Section 7.5.4). Other languages in the area use the middle prefix with a “symmetrical point or space between some landmarks” (Bril 2005, 50), but Vamale speakers were content with either form and only one unprompted occurrence of *can e-dawee-* is attested.

(9.9) a. JV:4

lu e-vi hapi na kai eca a nya wî- vwa
 3DU RECP-say COMP TOP who INDF.SG REL give strength EXIST
 wî-n can dawee- can dawee-lu
 strength-3SG.POSS in between in between-3DU

‘They discussed who was the stronger between the two of them’

b. GC:6

ma can e-dawee-le i a yata-n In-Thu
 CNJ in-NSPEC MID-between-3PL DEF.SG REL name-3SG.POSS Bark-Banyan

‘And among them was the one called Banyan Bark’

9.3 Causative *fa-*

The causative prefix *fa-* is probably a reflex of Proto-Oceanic **pa-* ‘CAUS’ (Ross 2004, 510). It can be applied to active (11a), stative (13), and possessible verbs (10) alike. The Vamale causative is prototypical in Zúñiga and Kittilä’s sense, as it increases the base verb’s valency by one, and introduces a new agent, which acts as the new subject of the clause, and is “formally coded on the predicate complex” (Zúñiga and Kittilä 2019, 15-16). Possessed verbs which are subject to a causative derivation mark the demoted S exactly the same as it was for the base verb, adding the agentive argument in the beginning (10).

(9.10) a. mu-nyima-n

DEF.DU?-heart-3SG.POSS

‘S/he is afraid’

b. go fa-mu-nyima-n

2SG CAUS-?-heart-3SG.POSS

‘You scare him/her’

S_A -indexed verbs can be transitive or intransitive. Intransitive verbs, as expected of a prototypical causative construction, are derived to a transitive one, and the former S subject is demoted to the object (11a). Base transitive verbs are more interesting: the participant made to perform the action by the causer receives the Recipient or Experiencer marker *nyako-* ‘OBL; put on’³ (11b), since Vamale has no ditransitive verbs and cannot demote the causee to a core argument.

³See Section 6.1.2.2.

(9.11) a. Hc1:35

ya a fa-thuat i apuli
3SG 3SG CAUS-go.out DEF.SG person

‘He had the man released’

b. Conte: 129

a fa-tena nyakoo-n meeka-n li aman
3SG CAUS-hear OBL-3SG all-NSPEC DEF.PL thing

‘He let him know everything (that was going on).’

The subordinating construction *vwa, ma ...* ‘do, so that’ is a more common way to express a cause than with *fa-* ‘CAUS’ (12a, 12b), but does not change the verb’s valency. Other constructions use a transitive main verb, and a purposive subordinate clause (12c). Note that the verbs in (11a) and (11b) have not completely transparent meanings. Most verbs prefixed with *fa-* that were recorded had idiosyncratic meanings, such as (13), which may be a hint that the prefix is on its way out.

(9.12) a. 07.11.2018 p.97

a vwa ma vwa i siya-n-ea
3SG do SUBR do DEF.SG field-POSS-3SG.POSS

‘She makes him till his/her field’

b. 07.11.2018 p.97

Jean, a vwa ma a fe-an-de (i) fatii-n
J. 3SG_i do SUBR 3SG_{ii} take-go-DIR.CF DEF.SG word-3SG_i.POSS

(nya)si Vaina

BEN V.

‘Jean made him carry his letter to Vaina’

c. vamale-181107-jpnelemwa-06:00:19:33-00:19:37

Jean a nya si Pierre i fatii-n ma nya si
J. 3SG_i give BEN P. DEF.SG word-3SG_i.POSS SUBR.3SG_{ii} give BEN

Vaina

V.

‘Jean made Pierre carry his letter to Vaina’

- (9.13) a fa-xhopwen
 3SG CAUS-big
 ‘S/he is conceited’

9.4 “Passive”

Vamale has no passive, i.e. no construction that adds a dedicated morpheme to the verb to alter the syntactic mapping of the participants, without changing their semantic nature (i.e. by demoting the agent and promoting the undergoer). Verbs whose agents are unidentified may take *le* ‘3PL’, as in (14a), or may not be marked for subject at all, see (14b). In subject-less scenarios, the undergoer may be additionally marked with *ka* (14c), which is reminiscent of absolutive *ka* (Section 7.7.6). Since this is the only example with *ka* attested so far, more research is needed in the future to reach a conclusion as to this *ka*’s meaning: ‘ABS’ or ‘SBJ’, seen in other verb phrases.

- (9.14) a. vamale-181127-jp_nelemwa-1:
 mwa (a) le vwa ko i doop-ea
 house REL 3PL do OBL DEF.SG soil-3SG.POSS
 ‘a house made of his earth’
- b. HC1:9
 bwa xada thathee mwa maahma ca i=dingan xahan
 IPFV up.there kill REP big.brother in DEF.SG=creek over.there
 thêêdo
 T.
 ‘Up there, the chief was killed, in the creek over in Tendo’
- c. KG:545
 buuke ka i aman nya-ko-n i vin thi
 destroy ABS? DEF.SG thing put-on-ANA DEF.SG shell clam
 ‘Destroyed was the thing on which there is the [Shell Oil] clam shell.’

Chapter 10

Aspect

Vamale uses short function words before predicates to situate them in the temporal context. Irrealis *bo* and realis *balan* also have modal functions, and many aspect particles also carry non-aspectual meanings relating to the core function: e.g. continuative *balan* can also mark adversative situations, and frequentative *mu* on nouns means ‘also, too’. Around a dozen of the particles exist including idiosyncratic combinations; Table 10.6 summarizes the lone forms, an overview of combinations is given in Table 10.7. These particles do not necessarily mark the predicate as verbal. As in other Kanak languages too (see Nêlêmwa [Bril 2002, 89]), predicates can be nominal as well as verbal, and since it is the predicate rather than the verb that takes modal, aspectual, and other particles, the latter’s presence says nothing conclusive about the word class of the lexemes following them. Two of them, perfective *pa* (*ja*) and imperfective *bwa*, can occur in the left-most position of a negated clause, with a difference in scope, see Section 10.6.

Most of the aspectual morphemes’ effects depend on the verb phrase’s aktionsart. Compare *bo* ‘IRR’ in (1a) and *bwa* ‘IPFV’ in (1b): the atelic verb triggers an imperfective meaning of *bwa* (which otherwise means certain future for telic verbs), and an ambiguous irrealis/future meaning for *bo*.

- (10.1) a. e **bo** xaleke
 1SG IRR see
 ‘I will/would see’
- b. e **bwa** xaleke
 1SG IPFV see
 ‘I am still looking.’

xa- ‘HAB’ is a prefix that usually functions as a deverbal nominalizer (see Section 7.7.2) but also used to express habitual action. Since this prefix has a different

morphosyntactic status than the aspectual particles, and since it is not sensitive to aktionsart, we will not further discuss it in this chapter.

10.1 Aktionsart

A central part of Vamale aspect is aktionsart, or verbal aspect. Almost all aspect markers have different meanings depending on the modified predicate's aktionsart. Predicates can be divided into two broad groups: punctual (i.e. that cannot last, e.g. 'to kill'), or telic (with an intrinsic end to the action, e.g. 'to close'), and durative, or atelic. The latter group includes nominal predicates. While telicity and durativity share only some traits, most atelic verbs are also durative, and most punctual verbs also telic. In many cases, the meanings available to an aspect marker - verb combination split along a single axis and do not distinguish between telicity and durativity. Some verbs can have different aktionsarten, depending on the context, e.g. *han* 'to go somewhere (telic and durative), to leave (telic and punctual), to walk (atelic and durative)'. Which semantic trait is more important depends on the aspect particle: telicity is more important than durativity for *balan* 'keep doing sth atelic (despite obstacles), begin something atelic, end something telic', and *mu* 'FREQ, ITER', and makes no difference for *bo* 'IRR', *pa* 'ALR' and *ja* 'ACCP'. The meaning of *bwa* however reacts to durativity and punctuality.

10.2 Irrealis *bo*

Modality, in Vamale, is mostly expressed lexically (e.g. *xahnang ma ...* 'good if ...' see Section 11.3), but there are two dedicated morphemes. Apart from the epistemic modal particle (*b*)*o* 'IRR', which behaves syntactically much like the aspect markers described in the rest of this chapter, an epistemic modality marker *tha* 'ASS' is frequently preposed to matrix, and certain subordinate clauses (mostly complement and relative ones). A particle *ko* 'REAL' is described for western Voh-Koné languages (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 55) but is not attested for Vamale (nor recognized by speakers in elicitations). A more detailed discussion of *tha* 'ASS' takes place in Section 11.3.1. The assertive particle is not included in this chapter because contrary to (*b*)*o*, it does not share the same syntactic slot as the aspectual particles discussed below.

There are also verbs and nouns that express deontic categories such as possibility (*goon, ma* 'enough, SUBR', or *xahnang, ma* 'good, SUBR'), impossibility (*vwasoon* 'impossible', *siteke* 'taboo, forbidden'), and epistemic ones like doubt (e.g. *sahnaang* 'be uncertain (knowledge-wise)', *cacahniing* 'be dubious') and certainty. Since all of these constructions are lexical ones with idiosyncratic meanings, they are briefly discussed

in different sections such as Section 7.1 and Section 11.3.1, and in more detail in Section 12.2.1.1.

The irrealis / future particle *bo* ~ *o*, probably cognate with Nelêmwa *o* ‘virtual’ and Bwato’s eponymous *bwatoo* ‘irrealis’, expresses a state removed from reality, be it because it is yet to happen (2), hypothetical (3), or otherwise unreal.

(10.2) a. KG:9

tha gau han tha gau tha gase bo arriver hman
ASS 2DU go ASS 2DU ASS 1PL.INCL IRR arrive too

‘You go (first), you, and we’ll arrive as well’

b. AG1:394

vaaya, a bo thapoke pwecake i marie
work REL IRR begin after DEF.SG wedding

‘Work, it will start after the wedding’

The purely irrealis function, without marking tempus, is less frequently encountered (3), though the exact meaning of *bo* may be left ambiguous in some contexts.

(10.3) vamale-17116-calendrier_femme 00:00:46-00:00:50

tha cika eca o fa-siit hapi na tha i xayu hatu
ASS there.is.not some IRR CAUS-sacred that DEM ASS DEF.SG man alone
a cami
3SG plant

‘There is nothing that would impose that it’s only the man who plants it.’

Whereas usually, (b)o ‘IRR’ and *tha* ‘ASS’ are not seen together, one exception was recorded: when stating a past situation when something then still unreal was already asserted by somebody, this is expressed with *tha go bo vwa* ‘you would surely do it’, as in (4).

(10.4) D6:10

e caihnan hapi tha go bo vwa
1SG know COMP ASS 2SG IRR do

‘I knew that you would do it’

10.3 Imperfective and future *bwa*

The aspect marker *bwa* has two main meanings depending on aktionsart and context. Atelic verbs with *bwa* express events that include the starting point of the action *t*^o in a progressive way (i.e. ‘it has begun and is still going on’), see (5). The event has a border, which is the main difference with *kon* ‘PROG’. Telic verbs with *bwa* are set in the certain future. *bwa* readily combines with other aspect particles, for example to attenuate the predicate, and it can even modify an entire clause, outside the usual post-subject marker environment. This last case concerns negated predicates, but *bwa* is also attested as an attenuating discourse marker, see Section 11.2.1.3.

(10.5) a. HC2:16

koin a_i kon a_{ii} **bwa** tena-a_i ka i ibwen_{ii}
 afterwards 3SG PROG 3SG IPFV hear-3SG.OBJ SBJ DEF.SG squid

‘During this, he was heard (all along) by the squid’

b. X10:53

a *bwa* pala
 3SG IPFV speak

‘He is still speaking.’

10.3.1 Imperfective *bwa*

Predicates denoting states or ongoing events, if preceded by *bwa*, usually have an imperfective meaning i.e. with a starting point in the past, and no implicit border in the future (6a). Note that while verbal predicates tolerate *bwa* to the left of a (negated) subject index (6b), nominal ones do not (compare (6c) and (6d)).

(10.6) a. *tha bwa nyau*
 ASS IPFV bad

‘It’s still bad.’

b. J4:10

bwa cip=e caihnan
 IPFV NEG=1SG know

‘I still don’t know’

- c. le bwa xhwaawe li a le cuut xahan
 3PL IPFV child DEF.PL REL 3PL stand over.there
 ‘They who stand over there are still children’
- d. *bwa le xhwaawe li a le cuut xahan
 IPFV 3PL child DEF.PL REL 3PL stand over.there

10.3.2 Attenuating *bwa ju*

The imperfective meaning described for *bwa* can also, apart from meaning ‘still’, signify a brief impermanent state, as in ‘I am just, quickly, for a moment, doing X’, a function which can be attenuating. In (7) below, the action of reading is interrupted for now (‘I am impermanently stopping reading the book’).

- (10.7) e bwa koin fine i tii
 1SG IPFV finish read DEF.SG book

‘I am interrupting my reading (lit. I am briefly stopping reading the book)’

bwa ju ‘IPFV real’ is a common expression, meaning ‘really just’ or ‘simply’. While *bwa* and *juu* also combine as individual particles (8), they can form a morpheme in its own right. This is possibly the only such combination between an aspect marker and an intensifier. The abbreviated form of *juu* used in combination with *bwa* may be a hint at the former’s decategorialized status; although the two particles do not form a single p-word.

- (10.8) a. KL:102
 na tha bwa ju
 DEM ASS IPFV really

‘It’s still really...’

- b. KG:273
 go bwa ju tho
 2SG IPFV really call

‘You will simply call out [when a car comes]’

Apart from the attenuative meaning and the ones conveyed by the two particles individually (‘still really’), a third, more aspectual function is also attested: in example

(9), the telic verb *hma* ‘arrive’ is not set in the future, and the intensifier *ju* means ‘only, just’. *bwa ju* with a telic verb can thus have a very immediate meaning.¹

(10.9) G5:59

a *bwa ju (ra) hma*
3SG IPFV real HAB arrive

‘S/he only just arrived (*ra* increases the immediacy)’

10.3.3 Prospective *bwa*

Telic verbs have a prospective meaning with *bwa*. The event has not yet occurred, though it is often immediately about to happen: the marker expresses a certain future meaning, as in (10a), where the sea is sure to go down again, and (10b), where it is actually already happening. Note that in (10b), the first, prospective, verb is atelic.

(10.10) a. X10:69

a *bwa hupwa ka i jati*
3SG IPFV go.down-REP SBJ DEF.SG sea

‘The sea [tide] is about to go down/is going down’

b. e ***bwa*** *pala ka e bwa caeke*
1SG IPFV speak and 1SG IPFV hope

‘I am going to hold a speech and I just hope...’

c. X10:49

e *bwa vi nyakoo-n*
1SG IPFV say OBL-3SG.POSS

‘I will tell him’

Note that (10b) and (5b) (*a bwa pala* ‘he is still speaking’), though containing the same (atelic) verb, differ: one is prospective, while the other is imperfective. Context is thus also a factor. In (10c), *vii* ‘to say’ is a telic verb and thus interacts with *bwa* as such.

¹Note that as *ra* ‘to do afterwards’ would not fit with the meaning, the free variant of *xa*- ‘HAB’ is posited as the gloss of *ra*, but this is speculative.

TABLE 10.1: *bo* and *bwa* combined with different *aktionsarten*

	<i>bo</i>	<i>bwa</i>
atelic	IRR	IPFV
telic	IRR (uncertain, volitional)	FUT (certain, non-volitional)

While *bwa* ‘IPFV’ can also mark future states, the difference is not volition of the participants or how long it will last, but includes the modified predicate’s *aktionsart* and how immediate the starting point is: *bwa* has a future meaning with punctual verbs, and an imperfective one with durative verbs. An immediate starting point may however also confer a future meaning to a durative predicate, in the sense of ‘I’m (practically) already doing it’. Compared to *(b)o* ‘IRR’, a rough distribution can be posited, as illustrated in Table 10.1.

- (10.11) a. *bo me-o naen*
 IRR die-1SG soon
 ‘I will/could die later (today).’
- b. *bwa me-o ca eca thoatit*
 IPFV die-1SG LOC some day
 ‘I will die some day (certainly).’

10.3.4 Negated *bwa(n)*

The allomorph of *bwa* ‘IPFV’, when negated by *cipa*, is *bwan*, see (12a), which consequently never occurs without the negator. This is the only case in Vamale of a grammatically conditioned allomorph. While *cipa bwa* also exists (12b), it does not mean ‘not yet’, but rather negates a predicate that was attenuated by *bwa* ‘not just’, a function that was described in Section 10.3.1.

- (10.12) a. CP:7
na cipa bwan koin
 DEM NEG IPFV end
 ‘It’s not yet over’

b. KG:465

cana ehni ya tha bwa vo cipa bwa cipa bwa tha juu cipa
 fuck PROX 3SG ASS IPFV fill.up NEG IPFV NEG IPFV ASS real NEG
 bwa *reculer* hman
 IPFV back.up also

‘Fuck, this one was still filling up, he didn’t, didn’t, he really didn’t simply back up like.’

10.4 Progressive *kon*

The progressive marker *kon*, probably derived from *ko-n* ‘on-NSPEC’ is fairly straightforward: it marks ongoing situations (13). This means it can only combine with aspect markers that encode realis situations which include *t°*, such as *bwa* ‘IPFV’. Strictly speaking, telic verbs cannot take *kon*.

(10.13) a. B1:20

e kon hmata
 1SG PROG sing
 ‘I am singing right now’

b. HC1:1

a kon vi hapi na gasu enregistrer koin gase bo
 3SG PROG say that DEM 1DU.INCL record while 1PL.INCL IRR
 pala
 talk

‘He is saying that we will record while we speak’

10.4.1 Combinations with *bwa*

The aspectual markers *kon* ‘PROG’ and *bwa(a)* ‘IPFV’ can combine. If *kon* is first, a progressive imperfective *kon bwaa* is the result: ‘is doing still’ (14a). However, when *bwa* is in the first position, the focus is on the imperfective rather than the progressive meaning: ‘still doing’.

Tempus is not marked in Vamale, though the particles discussed in this chapter often carry exclude certain interpretations (*bo* ‘IRR’ cannot mark a past situation, *pa*

‘already’ cannot mark a future one etc.). In some cases, such as ex. (14b), a close future is understood from imperfective *bwa*, progressive *kon*, and a durative, atelic verb.

(10.14) a. 2017-10-04 p.133

e kon bwaa jili
1SG PROG IPFV build.from.wood
‘I am still building’

b. 2017-10-04 p.133

e bwa kon jili
1SG IPFV PROG build.from.wood
‘I am almost done building (lit. I still am building)’

In contrast to this, ex. (15a) has a transparent, and (15b) an idiosyncratic meaning. Both *hmata* ‘sing’ and *jili* ‘build with wood, woodworking’ are durative. The difference in which meaning is assigned to which combination may hinge on the telicity of the verb: *hmata* is atelic, while *jili* implies a result, or at least a possible end.

(10.15) a. 2017-10-04

a bwa kon hmata
3SG IPFV PROG sing
‘He sings since earlier’

b. 2017-10-04

a kon bwa hmata
3SG PROG IPFV sing
‘He just started singing’

10.5 Continuative and realis *balan*

The particle *balan*, similarly to *mu* described below, has more ambiguities than aktion-sart can account for. Its interpretation depends on the context as well. The described event either:

continues to happen (in some cases, despite an obstacle),

has just (unfortunately or finally) taken place or begun,

or will certainly and immediately happen

The following section will first introduce *balan* alone, with its two main meanings, continuative and realis, before addressing the common combinations with other aspect markers, as well as the less common ones. The section closes with a summary.

balan may be a recent addition to the set of aspect markers, as speakers do not agree on the grammaticality of some of its uses, notably the combination with *bo* (see Table 10.2). One universally accepted use is that of *bala-n* as a noun meaning ‘piece of long object-NSPEC’, as in *balan o* ‘piece of bamboo’ and *balan oot* ‘length of string’ (16a). This ‘bit’ meaning allows a use of *balan* as an attenuative particle, similar to *xhwan* / *xhwat* in (16b) and (16c).

(10.16) a. HC19:63

e bo fe balan mwano-aen a bo man nyako-ong
 1SG IRR take piece.length custom.cloth 3SG IRR rot on-1SG.POSS
 ‘I’ll take this piece of *manou* [that you have given me as a greeting custom]
 and [will keep it forever so that] it will rot on me’

b. X10:55

a bo balan pala
 3SG IRR REAL/bit speak
 ‘He will finally/a bit speak’

c. X10:56

a bo xhwan pala
 3SG IRR bit speak
 ‘He will speak a bit’

Used as an aspect marker, *balan* is more frequent in combination with other particles than alone, and *balan* always comes second. A form combined with the progressive marker, *kon balan*, and one with the irrealis one, *bo balan* unambiguously mean ‘has recently happened’ and ‘is just about to happen’ respectively, though both are used rarely and judged ungrammatical by some speakers (especially *kon balan*, perhaps because *balan* expresses an immediate change of state, which contradicts *kon*’s progressive meaning). Other aspectual particles precede *balan* to add a sense of ‘finally’ (*bwa balan*) or ‘despite obstacles’ (*ja balan*).

Aktionsart also matters: durative verbs with *balan* are either about to begin or have begun, but continue. Punctual verbs have either happened or are about to happen. Without context, certain verbs seem to have preferred interpretations. If the context suggests it, *balan* can take an adversative function (17). This example was elicited on the basis of a Nêlêmwa sentence with the same meaning using *bara* (Bril 2002, 238) and though the meaning ‘unfortunately’ was never found in free speech, speakers accepted it in an elicitation context.

(10.17) 181016-jpgramm1, 00:12:56-00:12:58

balan xhali sau-ng pwa-n yee
 alas tear dress-1SG.POSS on-NSPEC tree

‘Unfortunately, my dress tore on a tree.’

10.5.1 Continuative *balan*

Probably derived from the length-associated nominal meaning, is the aspectual use as a continuative. Used with atelic verbs, *balan* can imply that the action happens despite a (potential) obstacle (18a), but may also refer to a lasting state (18b). This interpretation is only available with realis contexts, meaning that *ja* ‘ACCP’, *pa* ‘ALR’, and controversial *kon* ‘PROG’ are the only aspect markers that can combine with this continuative *balan*. Example (18c) combines *balan*’s implication of an obstacle, with the resultative meaning of *ja* to imply an expected hurdle. This is discussed in more detail in Section 10.5.3. *balan* is also found in the verb *fe balan* ‘to continue (lit. take length)’, and as an adverb meaning ‘ever since’, see (18d).

(10.18) a. J2:39

e balan han
 1SG CONT walk

‘I keep walking (despite e.g. your calling me)’

b. KG:139

na i s-ung tha balan hmwaani
 DEM DEF.SG hand-1SG.POSS ASS CONT like.this

‘It’s my arm, it stays like this’

c. J2:43

e ja balan jili wâng
 1SG ACCP CONT build boat

‘Despite an expected holdup, I keep boat-building’

d. Example sentence for the dictionary

balan cel=e xale-ko
 since when.REAL=1SG see-2SG.OBJ

‘Ever since I saw you’

TABLE 10.2: Overview of aspect marker combinations with *balan*

subject marker= b.= verb				
<i>balan</i>	<i>ja b.</i>	<i>bwa b.</i>	<i>kon b.</i>	<i>bo b.</i>
just done / about to do, continue to do, do despite	finally do, do despite constraints	finally do (but not <i>despite</i>)	just begun / about to do	about to do

10.5.2 Realis *balan*

In irrealis situations, with punctual or telic verbs, and with atelic ones in the appropriate pragmatic context, *balan* means something completely different: the realization of a situation.² The continuative meaning discussed above maintains a situation, whereas this realis sense is concerned with change. With meanings ranging from ‘this has just begun/come to happen’ to ‘finally’, the common denominator of non-continuative *balan* is that the resulting construction is a realis one, or is so close to becoming one that it might as well already be. This is the reason why *bo balan* is contested (see Section 10.5.6); it seems to be more widely accepted by younger speakers. *bwa balan* ambiguously means either ‘has recently begun and is still underway’ and ‘has practically begun’, probably both using the ambiguity of *bwa* as both a realis and irrealis marker (10.3), and at least originally coming from hyperbole (‘I’m so close to doing it that I’ve practically begun’). However, neither of these explanations would work with *bo*, which is explicitly irrealis and thus unlikely to be used here for hyperbole, as well as being unavailable for combinations with realis markers. The use of *bo* with *balan*, shown with its ambiguous meanings in (19), may point at a development of *balan* towards a more flexible meaning. Interestingly, the ambiguity that *balan* can express with regard to conceptual limits is shared by *xhwan* ‘almost, hardly’, and not unknown in other languages of the area (e.g. *(k)u* ‘ACCP’ [Bril 2002, 206,207]).

(10.19) a. X10:54

gase bo balan hmasan!
1PL.INCL FUT REAL bit

‘We will finally arrive!’

²Durative verbs do not carry the meaning ‘just done’, but rather ‘recently started and continuing’.

b. X10:55

a bo balan pala
3SG FUT REAL/ACCP speak

‘He will finally/a bit speak’

10.5.3 Finally, continuative: *ja balan*

The combination of *ja* ‘ACCP’ and *balan* shows the oft-encountered temporal immediacy due to *balan*, but *ja*’s contribution is less clear. In examples (20a) and (20b), the meaning ‘finally’ is derived from *ja*. In (21b), *balan* marks perseverance despite an obstacle, and *ja* seems to mark that the obstacle is one that was known beforehand, perhaps relating to single *ja*’s meaning of ‘finally, after an observed period of becoming’.

(10.20) a. a ja balan pala
3SG ACCP CONT speak

‘He continues to speak, he will finally speak’

b. e ja balan fine i tii
1SG ACCP CONT read DEF.SG book

‘You (will) finally begin to read the book’

c. gase **ja** balan hmasan!
1PL.INCL ACCP CONT arrive

‘We are finally about to arrive, we have just arrived’

An adversative meaning is not only achieved with *balan* alone (17), but also in combination with *ja* ‘ACCP’ (18c). The meaning added to the simple adversative is one of foresight: the obstacle against which the predicate takes place is an expected one.

(10.21) a. e ja balan han
1SG ACCP b. go

‘I went on [despite my scheduled meeting]’

b. J2:43

e ja balan jili wâng
1SG ACCP b. build boat

‘I continue building my boat despite X’

10.5.4 Finally: *bwa balan*

bwa balan marks an immediate temporal limit. For punctual verbs, this means either a recent end (22a) or a recent beginning (22b). For durative verbs, *bwa balan* implies ongoing action (22c). This is by far the most frequent form with *balan*. Table 10.3 summarizes the meanings with different verbs.

TABLE 10.3: *bwa balan*

Aktionsart	verb	future meaning	past / progressive meaning
punctual	arrive		recently done
	finish		recently done
durative	speak	about to	recently begun, <i>still happening</i>
	walk	about to	recently begun, <i>still happening</i>
	read		recently begun, <i>still happening</i>
	build		recently begun, <i>still happening</i>

- (10.22) a. gase **bwa** balan hmasan!
1PL.INCL IPFV bit arrive

‘We finally arrived recently; we are about to finally arrive (this is so sure and immediate that we might as well have already arrived)’

- b. e bwa balan han
1SG IPFV b. go

‘I am (finally about to be) leaving’

- c. e bwa balan fine i tii
1SG IPFV b. read DEF.SG book

‘I have finally begun reading’

While some verbs have a conventional interpretation, such as telic (22b) and atelic (22c), ambiguous, context-dependent cases are common (23), possibly because *bwa* has many possible interpretations.

- (10.23) a. e bwa balan jili wâng
 1SG IPFV b. build boat
 ‘I will begin building the boat (this is so sure that I have practically begun); I have begun’
- b. X10:51
 a bwa balan pala
 3SG IPFV b. speak
 ‘He has just spoken; he has begun to speak’

10.5.5 *kon balan* ‘about to, recently started’

Few speakers accept this form without context. If one needs to make clear that something has begun and is going on, this may be possible (24b). Punctual verbs are even more contested, likely because of the progressive *kon*.

TABLE 10.4: *kon balan*

Aktionsart	Gloss of form	
PUN	arrive	recently done
	speak	<i>finally</i> about to
	walk	<i>finally</i> about to
DUR	read	recently begun
	build	recently begun

- (10.24) a. e kon balan jili wâng
 1SG PROG REAL build boat
 ‘I have begun building the boat’
- b. e kon balan fine i tii
 1SG PROG CONT read DEF.SG book
 ‘(rare) I continue reading the book (it has just begun)’

10.5.6 *bo balan* ‘about to’

The combination of *bo* with *balan* is not accepted by many older speakers, and is mostly used to unambiguously state on which side of the temporal border we are: the event is about to happen (25a, 25b). One speaker translated an example with a realis meaning (25c), but none were produced spontaneously.

- (10.25) a. X10:55
 [,am.bom.ba.lan.'pa.la]
 a bo balan pala
 3SG IRR bit speak
 'He will finally speak.'
- b. X10:54
 gase bo balan
 1PL.INCL IRR ACCP
 hma-san!
 arrive-same.level
 'We will finally arrive!'
- c. J2:44
 e bo balan jili wâng
 1SG IRR REAL build boat
 'I begin building'

10.5.7 Summary: Combinations with *balan*

While the chapter features a summarizing table at the end (Table 10.7), the following examples summarize the various functions of *balan*. The data below were elicited explicitly as minimal examples and may present an over-simplified view.

- (10.26) a. e fine i tii
 1SG read DEF.SG book
 'I read the book'
- b. e balan fine i tii
 1SG REAL read DEF.SG book
 'I just started reading a book, I am still reading it'
- c. e kon balan fine i tii
 1SG PROG CONT read DEF.SG book
 '(rare) I continue reading the book (it has just begun)'
- d. e bwa balan koin fine i tii
 1SG IPFV REAL finish read DEF.SG book
 'I have finished reading the book (just now)'
- e. e bo balan koin fine i tii
 1SG IRR REAL finish read DEF.SG book
 'I am about to finish reading the book'

Missing from this collection of examples is *ja balan*, because the pragmatic context is so important that a representative example is impossible.

10.6 Perfective *pa* (*ja*)

The perfective marker *pa*, marks the predicate as completed by the moment of speech (27), or the relative temporal reference point, e.g. in stories.

(10.27) D3:78

cama=a vi hapi a pa xhwi-aman
if=3SG say COMP 3SG ALR eat-thing

‘If he says that he’s already eaten [stop trying to feed him]’

Contrary to most other aspectual markers, *pa* is indifferent to aktionsart. *pa* with an atelic verb means that this has already begun or finished depending on the context, and with a telic verb, that it has taken place. It is commonly translated as ‘already’ in French and stylistically often used in this sense.

Associating *pa* with *ja* ‘ACCP’ (see Section 10.7) adds the information that the completion took some time, or was long awaited, as in (28a), or that whatever is marked has happened some time ago, as in (28b). This is by far the most common combination with *pa*.

(10.28) a. HC1:32

le ja vatipwe-mwa kon ya tha pa ja me-a go tha
3PL ja drop-REP because 3SG ASS ALR ACCP die-3SG then ASS
le ja thuat-mwa moo ka li xhaomu ja tha le
3PL ACCP emerge-REP stay SBJ DEF.PL elder ACCP ASS 3PL
ja ha-mwa-me
ACCP go-REP-DIR.CP

‘They were released [again] because he was already dead, and they came out of prison [again] and came back.’

b. HC1:29

ma le ta ma le xale-a koma le fe-a ma le
 COM 3PL go.up COM 3PL see-3SG so.that 3PL take-3SG COM 3PL
 ta ma le fe-a, ya pa ja me-a
 go.up SUBR 3PL take-3SG 3SG ALR ACCP die-3SG

‘And they went up, saw him, in order to catch him, they went up to catch him, he (however) was already dead’

As illustrated in (29), *pa* (with its frequent companion *ja*) can precede the subject index, though this is rare. This is also attested for *bwa* ‘IPFV’; both are only found in negated contexts. The semantic difference achieved, like with *bwa*, is that *cipe pa ja jili bwaakala* ‘I don’t already build boats’ does not clarify whether the subject ever built boats, whereas *pa ja* in the first position adds a sense of achievement to the statement ‘I don’t build boats’, i.e. ‘my building days are done’.

(10.29) B2:144

pa ja cip=e jili bwaakala
 ALR ACCP NEG=1SG build.with.wood outrigger.canoe

‘I already don’t build boats anymore’

10.7 *ja* ‘finally’

The Bwatoo cognate of this form, *je*, is glossed as “accomplished” (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 56). For atelic verbs, *ja* expresses the expected, or long-awaited beginning of the action, as in (30a), (30b), and (30c). Note the verb *jake* ‘measure, weigh’, which may be related.

(10.30) a. HC2:26 (see Appendix A)

...hê a **ja** han tabo pwan bwa-n, koin a **ja**
 yes 3SG ACCP go sit on head-3SG.POSS then 3SG ACCP
 fe-ta-mwa-me-a
 take-go.up-REP-DIR.CP-3SG.OBJ

‘Yes, he_i eagerly climbs to sit on his_{ii} head, then he_{ii} takes him_i home’

b. HC2:29

go cama i ibwen a **ja** hup- a kon **ja**
 then concerning DEF.SG squid 3SG ACCP go.down 3SG PROG ACCP
 hup-wa-e can we...
 go.down-REP-DIR.CF in water

‘Then, when the squid finally goes down back into the water...’

‘Then, once the squid had gone back into the water [and the rat thought himself at a safe distance to mock him]...’

c. HC2:40

siibwi tha pa me-a. tha pa **ja** sea-da
 rat ASS ALR die-3SG ASS ALR ACCP gaze-up

‘The rat is dead. He ended up gazing upwards’

d. HC2:39-40

cama ibwen tha **ja** hup-wa, tha **ja** koin mwa^{temp. deix}
 concerning squid ASS ACCP go.down-REP ASS ACCP end REP

‘And the squid, he went back down. This is the end.’

‘The squid has gone down, thus it has ended’

With telic verbs, *ja* marks that something finally happens, be it that it was actively anticipated (*tha jaa koin* ‘it’s finally over’) or (31a), or that it was expected and inevitable like one’s own departure from a social situation: *e bwaa ja han* ‘I’m about to finally leave’. The latter function likens it to *pa* (Section 10.6), with which it often associates. Whereas *pa* only marks that the action is completed, *ja* adds a sense of ‘finally’. This also applies to the result of a natural process: *bwaam, tha jaa xhopwe-go!* ‘My, you’ve grown!’. Stylistically, *ja* may to be used to close a scene, see (30d) and Swamp Hen’s takeoff (31b, 31c), where *ja* marks the final leave of the swamp hen; we do not see her again. It cannot be used to describe the death of a person, as this would suggest that their death was expected.

(10.31) a. HC2:38

...go a **ja** vwa mwa me ka i siibwi.
 then 3SG ACCP do REP die SBJ DEF.SG rat

‘Then he killed him’

b. HC2:12

go tha a **ja** ta-mwa-me
then ASS 3SG ACCP go.up-REP-DIR.CP

‘And then it went home’

c. HC2:13

ya tha **ja** thêên thêên ta-mwa-me
3SG ASS ACCP fly fly go.up-REP-DIR.CP

‘Flew home right away’

10.7.1 *kon ja*

In combination with *kon* ‘PROG’, *ja* expresses something that is done by the moment which *kon* designates (32).

(10.32) KG:492

putain yo m=e th=e kon ja vwa i signe
fuck 1SG SUBR=1SG ASS=1SG PROG ACCP do DEF.SG sign

‘Rats, I should have given [him] a sign by then.’

10.8 Frequentative and iterative *mu*

mu is a versatile particle, and can mean ‘as well; all along, during a certain time; at selected moments over a long period of time’. Depending on the aktionsart and the aspectual context of the verb, *mu* can take on frequentative functions (33): this concerns telic verbs in general (33a and 33b), and countable, finished events (33c and 33d).

(10.33) a. X10:40

me xa-vwa hmwata i bee-ng a mu
IRR.1SG HAB-make starchy.cake DEF brother-1SG.POSS 3SG FREQ
xhajake
eat.starchy

‘Whenever I make a yam cake, my brother eats it’

b. X10:42

calibeen goakan e mu taemwi li nyu
 sometimes moment 1SG FREQ catch DEF.PL fish

‘I catch fish every time.’

c. J4:31

e bwa mu majit
 1SG IPFV FREQ rest

‘I sleep from time to time’

d. X10:44

ca i nyan-mwa xahan le mu sivu sikaa
 in DEF.SG inside-house over.there 3PL FREQ blow cigarette

‘They have the habit of smoking in this room over there’

Another function is iterative, with durative verbs (34). There is a difference in meaning with past and present situations, i.e. an ongoing action with *mu* is yet incomplete and evolving bit by bit (34a), whereas a past action happened several times or bit by bit (34b). With a stative verb (34c), it may mean a development, as with *e*- ‘MID’ (Section 9.2.2).

(10.34) a. J4:27

a mu hnuut
 3SG ITER go.downstream

‘He is (still) going down’

b. Tipije

e bwa mu tena ha-mwa
 1SG IPFV ITER hear go-REP

‘I heard about it all along’

c. a mu xhwatin

3SG ITER small

‘It is shrinking’

However, *mu* can also have additive meanings (for states, as in (35)). Note that this is only attested in combination with *pa* ‘already’.

TABLE 10.5: Shades of *mu*

	<i>mu</i>	<i>bwa mu</i>	<i>pa mu</i>
atelic	still, every time (33d,36)	several times over time (opt. with <i>hamwa</i>) (33c,34b)	also (35)
telic	every time (33a)		

(10.35) a. J4:30

tha pa mu hman-ong
ASS already ADD hungry-1SG
‘I, too, am hungry already’

b. J4:32

e paa mu majit
1SG ALR ADD rest
‘I, too, am already asleep’

Some uses are ambiguous, with durative, atelic verbs that can be understood as countable events (36). The meanings of *mu* are summarized in Table 10.5.

(10.36) X10:92

e mu se
1SG ITER/FREQ cry
‘I cry (often; still)’

10.9 Combinations

Vamale aspect markers can be combined to create more complex, and sometimes altogether different meanings. See Table 10.7 for an overview of combinations. Combinations are in some cases preferred to the lone form (especially with *ja* ‘ACCP’ and *balan* ‘CONT’), and may change the overall meaning significantly.

Combinations are not possible between all markers. For instance, perfective *pa* ‘ALR’ and imperfective *bwa* cannot be combined, nor *bo* ‘IRR’ and the realis *bwa* ‘IPFV’.

²See (34a).

TABLE 10.6: Overview of aspectual markers and their meanings

Form	Gloss	Atelic example <i>majit</i> 'to lie down'	Telic example <i>hma</i> 'arrive'
<i>balan</i>	CONT	a b. majit 's/he keeps sleeping'	a b. hma 's/he will immediately arrive / s/he has just arrived'
<i>bo</i>	IRR / FUT	a b. majit 'he will sleep'	a b. hma 's/he will arrive'
<i>bwa</i>	IPFV	a b. majit 'he still sleeps'	a b. hma 's/he will arrive (certain)'
<i>ja</i>	finally	a j. majit 's/he finally sleeps'	a j. hma 's/he has finally arrived'
<i>kon</i>	PROG	a k. majit 's/he is sleeping'	*
<i>mu</i>	ITER, FREQ	a m. majit 's/he sleeps regularly / little by little'	a m. hma 's/he arrives (every time)'
<i>pa</i>	ALR	a p. majit 's/he has (already) slept'	a p. hma 's/he has (already) arrived'

Reversing the order of the markers is rarely possible, though when it is, it always affects the meaning. Several combinations are more frequent than each of their components, especially with *balan* ‘CONT’, see Section 10.5. The reason for these differences in aspect marker behavior may have historical reasons.

TABLE 10.7: Aspect marker combinations

Second form → First form ↓	Gloss	<i>bo</i>	<i>bwa</i>	<i>kon</i>	<i>balan</i>	<i>ja</i>	<i>mu</i>
<i>bo</i>	FUT, IRR		*	*	about to hap- pen	will/would finally	will/would from time to time
<i>bwa</i>	IPFV	*		still X-ing since before	finally about to	finally X-ing (in general, not necessarily right now)	still X-ing from time to time
<i>kon</i>	PROG	*	still X-ing right now		has just hap- pened	X-ing at last	X-ing little by little
<i>balan</i>	CONT, REAL	*	*		*	*	*
<i>pa</i>	ALR	*	*	*		finally com- pleted after a known period	*
<i>ja</i>	ACCP	*	*	finally X-ing	finally com- pleted after a known period	*	finally from time to time
<i>mu</i>	FREQ, ITER	* ADD,	*	*	*	*	

Chapter 11

Simple clauses

This chapter treats simple clauses and the elements they contain, and describes how a matrix clause is formed. As this is the first chapter to discuss matrix clauses and the elements that appear outside of verb and noun phrases, particles such as assertive *tha* (Section 11.3.1) and the repetitive marker *mwa* (Section 11.4) are described here, as well as the discourse markers *go* (Section 11.2.1.2) and *ka* (Section 11.2.1.1). Word order is also explicitly mentioned here for the first time (Section 11.1), as this is the first chapter to look at the domain of the clause. Simple clauses have one main predicate, one subject, one TAM contour, and share a single polarity. A simple clause may contain several verbs, in the case of serial verb constructions (Section 8.3.1). The main clause types are declarative (Section 11.2.1), interrogative (Section 11.2.3), imperative and prohibitive clauses (Section 11.2.4). A brief section addresses equative clauses, which in absence of a copula juxtapose two nouns (Section 11.2.2). As the assertive *tha* is discussed in this chapter, other modal particles and constructions are mentioned as well (Section 11.3). Most of them involve subordination, which is described separately again in Section 12.2.1.1. A typical sentence looks as follows:

PN= TAM= root -OBJ/-ke (ART=) OBJ (ka= (ART=) NP_{subject})

Noun phrases do not necessarily take articles, and noun phrase is optional, as indexing on the verb already carries this information.

11.1 Word order

Word order in Vamale does not change across clause types. Vamale is head-first and usually VOS, though fronted, bi-clausal constructions are common: S, VO. The verb always precedes the object, and the traditionally non-marked order expects the subject after the noun. Oblique arguments tend to follow objects (1a), but pragmatic choices can invert the unmarked order (1b). In general, the earlier a constituent is introduced, the more marked it is.

- (11.1) a. e holeke [sika] ^{obj} [nyasi i apuli a xhwata] ^{obl}
 1SG thank.for cigarette BEN DEF.SG man REL bald

‘I thank the bald man for the cigarette’

- b. B2:94

e holeke nyasi-m li fati
 1SG thank.for BEN-2SG.POSS DEF.PL word

‘I thank you for the words’

The basic word order VOS is generally more common with older speakers, while younger generations often front the subject. Stative verbs, especially with inanimate arguments such as in (2), seem to be exempt from the fronting mentioned above, regardless of the speaker demographic. With animate arguments, fronting is especially common, especially when the agent is stressed. Strategies to make the subject less salient to the listener include using the VOS order, as well as not mentioning the subject, and fronting the object, as in (3a).

- (11.2) sinu i xho-ng
 ill DEF.SG leg-1SG.POSS

‘my leg hurts’

- (11.3) a. go, e xale-ko
 2SG 1SG see-2SG

‘You, I see you’

- b. e xale-ko
 1SG see-2SG.OBJ

‘I see you’

11.2 Clause types

Main clauses in this grammar are those who routinely appear alone and cannot be governed by another clause without subordinating morphology. This includes declarative clauses both with verbs and equative ones with nouns, as well as interrogative, imperative, and prohibitive clauses. The morphosyntax of main (or matrix) clauses is the same as that of most subordinate ones, a topic discussed in further detail in Chapter 12. Exceptions to this are imperative clauses, which do not index the subject on the verb.

11.2.1 Declarative clauses

Declarative clauses are the most common ones in Vamale. They usually contain a subject, either present as a proclitic subject marker, for active verbs and nominal predicates, or as a suffix, for stative verbs with an animate subject, and which can always be expressed as a free noun phrase after the verb phrase, flagged with *ka* ‘SBJ’, or fronted (in which case it is its own clause, prosodically distinct and syntactically not integrated). Exceptions which do not need a subject are impersonal verbs like *vwasoon* ‘impossible’ (discussed in Section 7.1), and imperative clauses.

11.2.1.1 Discourse marker *ka*

Putting *ka* at the end of a sentence is a question to the listener: do you follow? This *ka* (4) is probably related to *ka* ‘CNJ’.

(11.4) a. KL:249

jaa nyu ka
many fish DISC
‘Way too many fish like’

b. KP:73

e vii abe li juu apuli ka
1SG say 1PL.EXCL DEF.PL real human DISC
‘I mean us Kanaks like’

11.2.1.2 Discourse marker *go*

One of the most common morphemes found on a clausal level is *go* ‘well, now, and then’. It cannot be used to coordinate noun phrases nor verb phrases, and occurs before coordinators, assertive *tha*, and other left-most boundaries of clauses (5a). It is a frequent filler, stretched out to prolong the thinking time of the speaker (*goooooo...* ‘weeell’). Its meaning does not carry information about the relationship of the surrounding clauses: while in many cases, the clause following *go* ‘and then, furthermore’ does semantically follow the previous ones (5b), *go* ‘now, on the other hand’ can also mark a change of subject.

(11.5) a. KP:6

go tha le vwa goo i coutume a tha le vwa
 DISC ASS 3PL do enough DEF.SG custom REL ASS 3PL do

‘Well, they kept the ceremonies that they did, moderate’

b. HC19:20

go ka e ilake hapi gavwe wago
 DISC CNJ 1SG ask COMP 2PL brave

‘Well, and I ask you to be brave’

11.2.1.3 Discourse marker *bwa*

Similarly to *go*, *bwa* is frequently used at the beginning of a clause. It contributes an attenuating meaning to the clause: ‘just, first, quickly’ (6a), but is also used like *go* to keep the speaker role (6b).

(11.6) a. KG:146

bwa the-balan=wan-ea ka i yata-n Manu
 DISC THE_{PUNC}-REAL=change-3SG.OBJ CNJ DEF.SG name-3SG.POSS M.
 ka
 DISC

‘First thing that was done, he was quickly and suddenly replaced by the one called Manu, do you know’

b. KG:256-257

ha-go bwaa, tha bwa dévoilé Wawa mwa ka Jon xaleke
 EXCL-2SG DISC ASS IPFV unmasked W. DEICT SBJ J. see

‘Man, well, that’s when Wawa was unmasked by John, see’

11.2.2 Verbless clauses

Vamale has no copula, and thus juxtaposes two nouns to form an equative construction, where the first is the topic, and the second the comment. The example given in (7) is in Usa Vamale.

(11.7) vamale-171129-consent-life:0:04:12-0:04:16

cahma yo ven papa-n ven apuli-ca ko vin
 TOP 1SG DEF.SG father-POSS DEF.SG person-PROX because DEF.SG
 apuli cahni nyae-ung
 person here child-1SG.POSS

‘[My sister married a man from Poindimié] and me, [I married] the father of the man here, for the man here is my child’

The nominal predicate can also be marked with a third person proclitic *a* (8b) and be followed by a subject NP flagged with *ka* ‘SBJ’ (8).

(11.8) a. KG:496

ehni i a xa-vee ka ya
 DEM DEF.SG 3SG AGT.NMLZ-fuck SBJ 3SG

‘It’s him who is an unpleasant individual, him (not me)’

b. KL:121

jacob tha a juu xa-vee ma hmwaana
 J. ASS 3SG really AGT.NMLZ-fuck when like.this

‘Jacob, he’s there like a fool when it’s like this (if there is no bed for him)’

11.2.3 Interrogative clauses

Interrogative clauses are not marked by a special word order. Polar question clauses usually carry the assertive *tha*, which content question ones do not. Pitch plays an important role in marking the clauses as interrogative: it rises towards the end, being highest on the stressed syllable of the predicate’s main word.

11.2.3.1 Polar questions

Polar questions are mostly marked with pitch, either a rising pitch towards the end or with a high pitch on the word demanding confirmation (*tha gavwe xaleke?* ‘do you see?’).¹ The assertive *tha* is almost always present.

¹A relevant description of pitch in a North New Caledonian language is Schooling’s “The Phonology of Yuanga: A Language of New Caledonia”.

TABLE 11.1: Question words

<i>kai</i>	‘who’
<i>da</i>	‘what’
<i>hmwaeke</i>	‘how’
<i>gau ma</i>	‘with whom’ (Section 6.5.1)
<i>heeve</i>	‘where (mobile)’
<i>ve</i>	‘where (immobile)’

(11.9) G11:2

tha go xa-xhwi pimwa?

ASS 2SG HAB-eat chili

‘Do you eat chili?’

11.2.3.2 Content questions

Content questions replace the missing information with a question word, though examples where the missing information is at the end, and just left out, are also attested. The question words are listed in Table 11.1. The pronoun *kai* ‘who’, maybe from *ka i* ‘and the’, does not have cognates in neighboring languages.² The noun *da* ‘what’, used to be considered a impolite, threat-like form, because of its homophony with *da* ‘spear’ (12b). *hmwaeke* ‘how?’ is preferred, as in (12a). The adverb *hmwa-eke* ‘how’ is related to the verbs *hmwa-ena/hmwa-ehni* ‘thus’, the noun *hmwa-goon* ‘half’ (probably composed of *hmwa-* and *goo-n* ‘body, sum’), as well as the adverb *hmwa-ka-n* ‘like X’. *nyeet* ‘when’ is an adverb (10).

(11.10) go ta-mwa-me nyeet?

2SG go.up-REP-DIR.CP when

‘when did/will you come back?’

The stative verbs *heeve* ‘where (mobile)’ (11a) and *ve* ‘where (immobile)’ (11b) can be combined with *nya* ‘towards’ and *eca* ‘INDF.PL’ to form adverbs.

(11.11) a. go han heeve?

2SG go where

‘Where are you going?’

²Voh-Koné (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 125) as well as Cèmuhi (Rivierre 1980, 215) use *de*.

- b. go ha-me moo ve?
 2SG go-DIR.CP stay where
 ‘Where are you coming from?’

(11.12) a. D6:11

sahnaang-eo ma le vwa ko hmwaeke
 not.understand-1SG SUBR 3PL do because be.how

‘I’m not sure why they do this (lit. I’m not sure that they do it because of what)’

b. KL:126

i bol gase vwa ko i da?
 DEF.SG ball 1PL.INCL do OBL DEF.SG what

‘The (cricket) ball, what did we make them with?’

11.2.4 Imperative and prohibitive clauses

Orders take two forms: The simple form, used in intimate settings and with younger people, in situations of emotional affect etc, is the same as the quotation form of verbs, and consists in the stem (13a). The person meant by the imperative can be marked by adding a noun phrase *ka* ‘SBJ’ + pronoun after the verb (subject indexing is still dropped) (13b).

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| (11.13) a. se!
cry
‘Cry!’ | b. xale-ke ka go!
look-TR SBJ 2SG
‘Look!’ |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|

The other, more polite form is an (in)subordinated clause (14), which may be joined by a main clause expressing the speaker’s attitude towards the order: *xahnang* ‘good’, *juu aman* ‘important’, *goon* ‘possible, permitted’, etc. This is discussed in further detail in Section 12.3. This construction is the most commonly used for stative verbs, which rarely occur in imperative settings.

- (11.14) (xahnang) ma go soom...
 (good) SUBR 2SG swim
 ‘You could swim (that would be good)’

Prohibitive clauses, contrary to the imperative, admit person marking (15b), though this is rare; *ka* + PN constructions are preferred. Every prohibitive predicate is preceded by a dedicated particle *cipii* (15a).³ Bwato uses *cipa* for both negating and prohibitive functions (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 58). The Hienghène languages except Pije have similar negating and prohibitive particles as well (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 250), but closely-related Cèmuhî does not.⁴ While *cipa* ‘NEG’ precedes the subject marker, this is not the case for *cipii* ‘PROH’, suggesting a different status, possibly more akin to a preverb (Section 8.3.2.1). The data on prohibitive clauses with person indexing is too sparse yet to draw a conclusion.

- | | | | | |
|------------|----|--------------|----|------------------|
| (11.15) a. | a. | cipii see | b. | B2:8 |
| | | PROH cry | | go cipii weke |
| | | ‘Don’t cry!’ | | 2SG PROH rage |
| | | | | ‘Don’t be angry’ |

11.3 Modality

Modality is marked on the clause level, i.e. the particle *tha* and the modal subordinating constructions do not depend on any part of the commented clause. Modality is expressed in two ways: one employs modal words in a subordinating construction, to which the commented clause is a complement (see Section 12.2.1.1). The other uses dedicated particles and constructions, some transparently decategorized from verbs and phrases still used with non-modal meaning. This section will first discuss *tha* (Section 11.3.1) and describe modal constructions in general, first epistemic, then deontic constructions.

11.3.1 Assertive *tha*

The assertive *tha* is a frequent particle on the far-left border of the predicate. Preceded, in subordinate clauses, by the subordinator (e.g. *a* ‘REL’, *cama* ‘SUBR’), and in equative constructions by the topic, *tha* is analyzed as belonging to the predicate both syntactically and phonologically. The particle expresses that the speaker is invested in the content, i.e. that they believe the thing to be true, and is thus in complementary distribution with *(b)o* ‘IRR’. A notable exception, already discussed in Section 10.2:

³The prohibitive particle contains the negative prefix *ci-* (PMP *(q)ati [Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 88]) also present in *cika* ‘NEG.EXIST’ (from POC *tikai [Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 88]), in *cia-* ‘be absent’, and the neutral negator *cipa*.

⁴Cèmuhî has *tíme* ‘NEG’ (Rivierre 1980, 184), *tíé* ‘be absent’ (Rivierre 1980, 111), and *tíc(i)é* ‘NEG.EXIST’ (Rivierre 1980, 302), but the prohibitive is *nèmwó* (Rivierre 1980, 223).

if a formerly irrealis situation has been realized, the past situation can be marked as irrealis via *bo* and still spoken of with confidence (16).

(11.16) D6:10

e caihnan hapi **tha** go **bo** vwa
 1SG know COMP ASS 2SG IRR do
 ‘I knew that you would do it’

The vowel in *tha*= [t^ha], as is the case for the negation *cipa* and most subordinators, assimilates to *e* ([e]) ‘1SG’, forming *th=e* [t^he], effectively forming a proclitic-host construction.

11.3.2 Epistemic modality

Apart from *tha*, Vamale uses a variety fixed expressions to express speaker certainty concerning the discussed information. Doubt is expressed by using *cama* ‘if, when (IRR)’ (17a), *bo* ‘IRR’, or with verbs like *cacahniing-* ‘be unsure’ and *sahnaang-* ‘be confused, not know’. Certainty, a part from *tha*, is expressed by using realis TAM markers *pa* ‘ALR’ and *ja* ‘ACCP’ (17b). The particle for generally known truth *ko* described for western varieties (Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 55) is not attested in Vamale; instead *vwa hâwan nyakoo-n* ‘there is a visible manifestation of it’ is used (18).

(11.17) a. *cama* fine *nya-koo-n*
 if count put-on-3SG

‘It is doubtful’ (lit. ‘Whether one counts on it’)

b. *th=e* *ja* fine *nya-koo-n*
 ASS=1SG count SUBR put-on-3SG

‘I am sure of it/him/her’

(11.18) XL2:16

vwa *hâwân* *nya-ko* hapi *a* *welo*
 EXIST spirit put-on SUBR 3SG crazy

‘It is apparent that he is drunk [he is slow, slurred speech etc.]’

11.3.3 Deontic modality

Vamale expresses deontic modality through subordinating constructions with *ma* ‘SUBR’ (19), further discussed in Section 12.2.1.1. The matrix clause is a single modal word and the subordinate one contains the Comment. Important constructions are *goon ma...* ‘enough SUBR’ ‘it is possible/allowed to...’, *siteke ma* ‘taboo SUBR’ ‘it is forbidden to...’, *vwasoon ma* ‘impossible SUBR’ ‘it is difficult/impossible to...’, *xahnang ma* ‘good SUBR’ ‘it is good to...’. The constructions may use *cama* ‘if, when (IRR)’ instead of *ma* to express more hypothetical scenarios.

(11.19) KG:191

vwasoon **ma** le feta-ong ko-n *salle*
 impossible SUBR 3PL take-go.up-1SG.OBJ OBL-NSPEC operation.room
 vukin da
 reason why

‘They couldn’t take me to the hospital because what’

11.4 Repetitive and deictic *mwa*

The particle *mwa*, already mentioned in Section 4.20, versatile and docks onto verb and noun phrases alike, as well as adverbs. This chapter takes it into closer consideration now rather than in previous parts, because *mwa* cannot be attributed to one particular word class more than to another. It takes different, related meanings depending on the context (20).

(11.20) i daahma mwa
 DEF.SG chief REP

‘the chief again/too/even’

The most common function is repetition, and its close cousin, restitutive ‘back’. Other meanings conveyed by *mwa* include ‘also’, ‘even’, ‘on top of that’, but *mwa* can also mark the preceding phrase as focused, see Section 11.4 for a discussion. *mwa* ‘now’, appears to mostly anchor the listener’s attention, similarly to *mwa* ‘even’, onto the noun phrase given (21).

(11.21) KP:101

hâ gaa mwa naen hmwa-ena
 yes 1PL.INCL REP now be.like-DIST

‘Yes, we (however) are like that now’

Consider (22), which was already shown in Section 4.20 to illustrate that *mwa* can dock onto verb and noun phrases alike. This example shall also serve to show how *mwa*’s scope works: while *nya si-m* ‘put hand-2SG.POSS’ is the unmarked construction meaning ‘to give to you’, [*nya mwa*] *si-m* means that the object is handed down from a previous interaction (not with the present recipient): ‘give again, to you’. However, *nya si-m mwa* means that something is given, as other things were given before, to the same recipient: ‘give to you this as well’. This *mwa* can also mean that something is given here, now, even, etc. And finally, [[*nya mwa*] *si-m mwa*] can have several meanings: either something is handed back and forth between Source and Recipient several times ‘give back to you again’, or only once (and the last *mwa* has a deictic function) ‘give back to you now, give back to you as well’, or several Themes take the same (possibly reciprocal) Path: ‘give this, too, to you’ (22.07.2019, p.76). All of the above-mentioned constructions are attested, especially in customary exchange speeches.

(11.22) 22.07.2019, p.76

e vatipwe mwa nya mwa si-m mwa i mwani mwa
 1SG drop REP put REP hand-2SG.POSS REP DEF.SG money REP

‘I pass on to you too this money as well’

In (23) and for all other movement verbs, as well as *xhose* ‘do again’, *mwa* is analyzed as suffix, i.e. as having fused phonologically with its host. Apart from integrating the host’s stress contour, which *mwa* does with other words as well, *mwa* assimilates to the root, which it does not do in other contexts.⁵ Compare *hut-mwa* → /hup^wa/ ‘go back down’, to *hut=mwa* ‘go down again’.

(11.23) a. go ha-mwa-me
 2SG go-REP-DIR.CP

‘You return to me /
 you come back’

b. go ha-me mwa
 2SG go-DIR.CP REP

‘You come again’

⁵*xhosepwa* suggests a dropped *-t* or *-p*. The Pije and Fwâi cognates *khô-peei* ‘?-say’ (Haudricourt and Ozanne-Rivierre 1982, 155) could be a diachronic hint at a morphologically complex, old Vamale form.

Repetition and deixis are the two most frequent functions of *mwa*. Examples (24) show different contexts in which *mwa* is a repetitive particle.

(11.24) a. JR:17

e tena mwa^{REP} i hun-det
1SG hear REP DEF.SG NMLZ-sound
‘I hear the sound again.’

b. JR:26

e thake i vai nyako i siibwi e thawatap ka
1SG throw DEF.SG stone OBL DEF.SG rat 1SG miss CNTR
e thake mwa i e-thalo-ka-n
1SG throw REP DEF.SG ORD-two-CLF.POSS-NSPEC
‘I throw the stone at the rat, I miss and I throw again a second [time]’

c. CD:14

cipa abe bo xale-ko mwa^{REP} hmakoo-n habu mwa^{REP}
NEG 1PL.EXCL IRR see-2SG REP find-NSPEC long.ago REP
‘We will never see you again’

Deixis

Apart from repetition, *mwa* is chiefly used for spatial and temporal deixis. As such, *mwa* marks temporal and spatial immediacy to the speaker or the spoken-of event: in example (25a), *mwa* is used to connect the events tightly together, expressing how quickly things followed each other. In (25b), the noise referred to is already known to the speaker, because it was recently mentioned. In (25c), *mwa* clarifies which event had happened by which moment in the narration: he had already died by the time they found him. Concerning spatial deixis in (25d), the area in question is visible from the speaker’s chair. The semantic closeness to the deictic constructions discussed above is apparent: in both cases, *mwa* designates something known to the speaker and to the hearer.

(11.25) a. KG:491

a cana ka th e bwa vee mwa vwaseekan mwa ko
 EXPL vagina CNJ ASS 1SG IPFV fuck DEICT sad DEICT because
vukin-eong mwa
 cause-1SG.POSS DEICT

‘Ah shit, I’ve just messed up right now, I sorry [for them] now because this right here is because of me’

b. JR:18

xhose e tena mwa^{REP} tha a bwa vwa det mwa^{DEICT}
 again 1SG feel REP ASS 3SG IPFV do sound DEICT

‘Again I heard him make said (*mwa*) noise.’

c. HC1:14

go le ja thathe-a **mwa**^{temp. deix} go le nya siwa
 then 3PL ACCP kill-3PL DEICT then 3PL towards return
 mwa^{REP}
 REP

‘And they had finally killed him then, and then they went back.’

d. HC1:22

na i bee i papa-n ena xahnuut pwanbaut
 DEM DEF.SG brother DEF.SG father-POSS DIST downstream P.
mwa^{spat. deix}
 DEICT

‘[The one who was killed] is the brother of the father of those down in P. there.’

In (25c), *mwa* could indicate that the death is already known to the speaker. In (26a) and (26b), it may refer (back) to the speaker’s group (i.e. his generation), and in (26c) mark that the life he speaks about was mentioned before. Note that Mr. Fouan does not use *-kaa* ‘1PL.INCL.OBJ’, but *-gaa*, which looks more like (stative) subject-indexing pronouns.

(11.26) a. KM:61

i ape-caihnan aman-le tha seen-le *pas tout le monde.*
 DEF.SG LOC-know something-3PL ASS limit-3PL.POSS not.everyone
 go cama gaa **mwa** vwa li bebe-n-le le
 then TOP 1PL.INCL REP EXIST DEF.PL baby-POSS-3PL 3PL
 hnyaa-mwa la la
 send-DEICT PROX PROX

‘Their knowledge is limited to them, not everyone. And, concerning us, there were their babies that they sent there [to school].’

b. KM:62

hnya-mwa-ga can mwa-n-sohmun-ea le
 send-DEICT-1PL.INCL in-NSPEC house-POSS-study-3SG.POSS 3PL
 ecaa-gaa **mwa** ko ca aman a saten
 learn-1PL.INCL DEICT OBL INDF.PL thing REL different

‘They₁ sent us to his school, they₂ taught us other things.’

c. KM:64

tha se mulip **mwa**, go a ga ca-n naen
 ASS other life DEICT DISC CNJ 1PL.INCL in-NSPEC now

‘It was another life then, and now here we are.’

In local French, *encore* ‘again’ is used as ‘even, on top of that’. This may be a calque from Kanak languages, as e.g. *mwa* is used exactly like that in Vamale (27). Another way of expressing ‘on top of that’ is *xhopwe*, but the information in its scope is less surprising to the hearer.

(11.27) ka lu e-bee-lu mwa!

CNJ 3DU RECP-peer-3DU even

‘And on top of that, they’re related!’

Chapter 12

Complex clauses

This chapter describes complex clauses in Vamale: coordinated and subordinated clauses, including relative clauses. This excludes fronting, which is discussed in Section 6.3, as it mostly concerns noun phrases. Subordination is a central part of Vamale syntax, since virtually every modification of a verb's argument happens through a subordinated clause, as does much verbal modification. Relative clauses are discussed in Section 12.2.3. Like most Oceanic languages, Vamale does not have a pivot function of the subject; instead it marks the subject in all coordinated and subordinated clauses, whether the subordinate subject is the same as the one in the matrix clause or not. The object of a matrix clause cannot be the implicit subject of a subordinate clause (e.g. *I_i saw the man who _i walked past.*), nor does the subject of one coordinated clause automatically have the same referent as the omitted subject of the other coordinated clause (e.g. *I_i come to _i work.*). Usually, a subject is present in every clause, with the exception of adverbial clauses (Section 12.2.2).

Some morphemes have both subordinating and coordinating functions, e.g. *ma* (Section 12.2.1.1, Section 12.2.5), and the presence of insubordination, usually with adhortative or optative function, confronts us with matrix and subordinate clauses that look the same. Insubordinate clauses are structurally identical to subordinate clauses, with the exception that they do not depend on a matrix clause (Section 12.3). Apart from complement clauses, which are unambiguous, there are cases of two subordinate clauses coordinated by a conjunction, showing that they do not occupy the same slot (ex. 16b in Section 12.2.1.2). Furthermore, coordinate clauses cannot be fronted (though a coordinating conjunction may be the first element of a clause), whereas some subordinate ones can.

Since most coordinators, subordinators, and the relativizer all end in /a/, the 3SG subject index *a* is not pronounced separately. All other subject indices do occur, albeit often in a fused form with the preceding morpheme, e.g. *m=ase* for *ma gase* 'SUBR 1PL.INCL', or *m=e* for *ma e* 'SUBR 1SG'.

Coordination reduction constructions, in the sense that subjects are omitted from consecutive coordinated clauses if they are the same, exist in Vamale (3), contrary

to the typical Oceanic pattern (Ross 2004, 517). The same is the case for subordinate clauses, though an absence of subject means a more immediate sequence: compare (1a), where killing is the underlying purpose of the matrix verb, to (1b), where raising children is a more general and long-term goal not immediately tied to going into the house.

(12.1) a. HC1:7

le hma wati-le ma xaa-le hnuuda-me cahni
3PL arrive chase-3OBJ SUBR beat-3PL.OBJ upstream-DIR.CP here

‘They came to hunt them in order to strike them coming here up the river.’

b. GC 57.1

ma le hma-san a feanake si-le joakan juu-mwa, **vwa**
when 3PL arrive-go 3SG show BEN-3PL big real-house do
can vi “In Fwe ta ca i juu-mwa-ca ma go
ADV.SUBR say I. F. go.up in DEF.SG real-house-PROX SUBR 2SG
silaa mu nyai-m.”
raise DEF.DU child-2SG.POSS

‘When they arrived, he showed them a big house, and said while doing so
“Figtree-Bark, go up into the house, so as to raise your children.’

To give an overview of a complex sentence, (2) shows a clause containing an equative clause, a relative clause, a verb phrase with an argument, and a second relative clause modifying the argument.

(12.2) tha le li a le xhwat xhwi li nyu a xhopwen ka
ASS 3PL DEF.PL REL 3PL almost eat DEF.PL fish REL big SBJ
li apuli-aen
DEF.PL person-DEM.DIST

‘These people are the ones who almost eat/ate the big fish’

12.1 Coordination

Coordination of clauses in Vamale holds no deep secrets. The string of clauses is articulated via elements which, in many cases, also appear in the coordination of noun

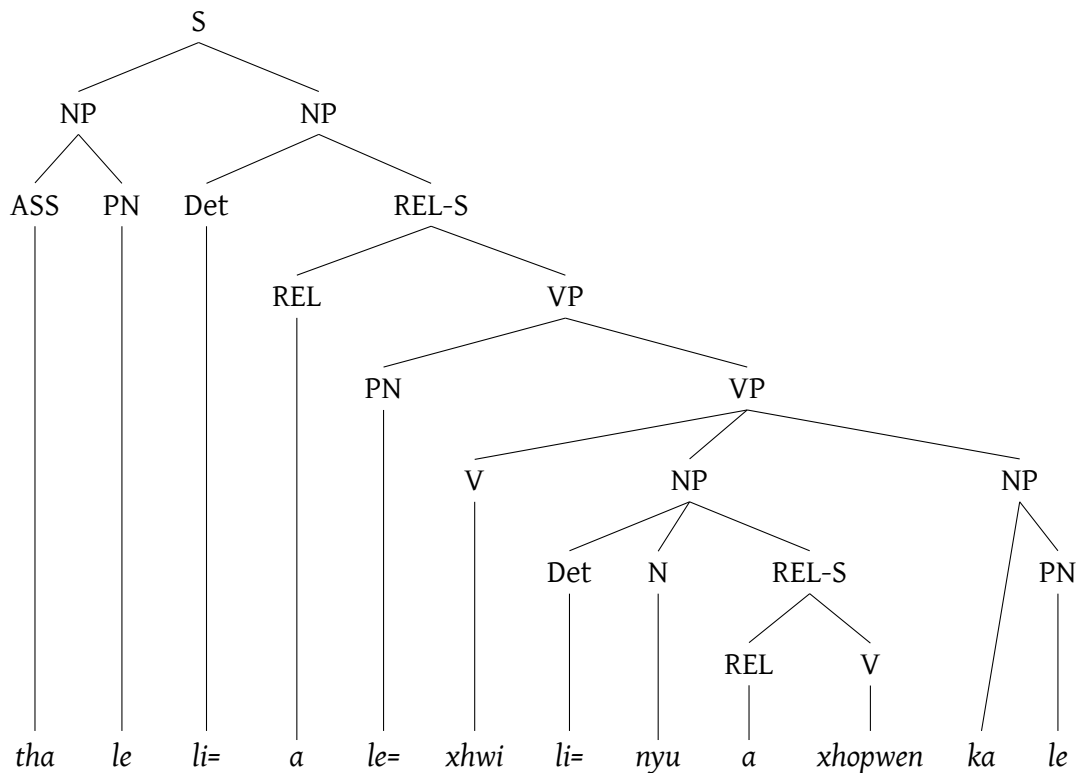


FIGURE 12.1: Tree-diagram of the sentence structure of example (2), with *le* ‘3PL’ instead of *li apuli-aen* ‘these people’

and verb phrases. Both clauses maintain the same word order as single clauses. Coordination reduction constructions which would remove subject marking, are rare. One case of this is (3) below.

12.1.1 Comitative *ma*

Contrary to most other coordinators, *ma* is not attested linking complete clauses, both with their own subject marking, TAM contour, etc. Instead, *ma* is a common coordinator for noun phrases, and is found with verb phrases as well. As for noun phrases, the clauses linked must be semantically part of the same group (3). We mention *ma* here because *ma vwa-tau* is a coordination reduction construction: as the subject and the TAM contour are the same, indeed the verbs are semantically close (hunt and fish), *vwa-tau* ‘fish’ does not need any of the usual particles surrounding it.

(12.3) GC:89

go caihnan naen goon ma abu ja vap **ma** vwa-tau,
 2SG know now enough SUBR 1DU.EXCL ACCP hunt CNJ do-impact
 pa ja tehnang li si-bu
 ALR ACCP sharp DEF.PL hand-1DU.EXCL.POSS

‘You know, now we can hunt and fish, our hands have become deft’

12.1.2 *kona*, *kon* ‘then’

The classic coordinators *kona* (4a) and *kon* (4b) both mean ‘so, and then’, though *ko na* ‘and/but DEM’ also exists, identical in syntactic distribution and phonological shape. *kona* and *kon* are semantically close and present a similar form, and may in fact be allomorphs or free variants.

(12.4) a. GC:551

kona tho-vi nyako i se Ngeein ka i se Cada
 CNJ call-say OBL DEF.SG other N. CNJ DEF.SG other C.

‘And he called the one of them Sound and the other Beat.’

b. AG1:67

kon abe kon xaahni ca piece abe ma abe
 CNJ 1PL.EXCL PROG watch INDF.PL coin 1PL.EXCL SUBR 1PL.EXCL
 thake bigo
 throw bingo

‘And were saving some money for us to play bingo.’

12.1.3 *hai* ‘or’

The coordinator *hai* is used in three contexts: to coordinate two noun phrases or clauses (introduced in Section 6.5.3), to close a clause, implying that a list of possibilities goes on (5a), and to begin a clause that is in direct contrast with the preceding one (5b). In most unmarked scenarios, *hai* is realised [a]. The *hai* form cannot be substituted by *a* when contrasting two noun phrases *hai* X *hai* Y? ‘X or Y?’ (see Section 6.5.3), but is otherwise an allomorph of *a*. Note that in (5c), *hai* coordinates two subordinate clauses introduced by *ma*.

- (12.5) a. naen mwa a xahmaen mwa a
now REP CNJ tomorrow REP CNJ

‘See you later, or tomorrow, or...’

- b. KG:535-536

xhaohmu tha juu the-*profiter* tha juu *facturé* mu *palette*
old ASS real THE_{PUNC}-profit ASS real write.up DEF.DU *palette*
agglo yayo. a i *camion choc*, ya tha *choc*
cement.brick EXPL CNJ DEF.SG truck good 3SG ASS good

‘The old man, he really made a quick profit, he made them pay for the two cement brick palettes, damn. The truck was fine however, it was fine’

- c. GC:107

ca i wadan-aen **cahma** Xa-xhwi Apuli, a nyawân
in DEF.SG time-DEM TOP AGT.NMLZ-eat person 3SG spirit
aman ka apuli, ma jeena-n meekan ka a tena
thing CNJ person COM ear-3SG.POSS everywhere CNJ 3SG hear
i a le kon e-vi nya pwa i bwan, a
DEF.SG REL 3PL PROG RECP-say put on DEF.SG mountain 3SG
kon e-hnyimake ma a xhwii-le **hai ma** a cee-le
PROG REFL-think SUBR 3SG eat-3PL CNJ SUBR 3SG leave-3PL
ma le han.
SUBR 3PL go

‘At this moment, Maneater, who was half man, half spirit and had ears everywhere, and had heard what was said on the mountain, wondered whether he was going to eat them or let them go.’

12.1.4 Contrastive *ka*

Like for noun phrases, a clause introduced in contrast to the preceding one is usually coordinated with *ka*.

(12.6) KP:103

tha le thagavi yee kon gi gi ka thala a xhopwen **ka**
 ASS 3PL cut tree OBL-NSPEC axe axe CNJ knife REL big CNJ
 gaa naen vwa meekan nyasi-je vwa *tronçonneuse*
 1SG.INCL now EXIST everything for-1INCL.POSS EXIST chainsaw

‘They cut trees by axe, axe and machete, but we now, we have everything, we have chainsaws’

12.1.5 *ko* ‘but’

ko ‘on’ is one of the most versatile particles in the language, i.e. *ko* appears with many different functions. Apart from a preposition ‘on’, and an oblique marker, *ko* is also used on an interclausal level, ranging from the coordinating ‘and, but’ (7a) and (7b), to the subordinating, adjunct-adding ‘because’ (7c).

(12.7) a. GC:81

ko na kai a eca-kau ko nien-aen?
 CNJ DEM who REL teach-2DU.OBJ OBL DEM.PL-DIST

‘But who is it that taught you two about all this?’

b. RP:16

ko le, li xhaohmu, tha xahnang-le
 CNJ 3PL DEF.PL old ASS good-3PL

‘But they, the elders, they were fine’

c. KL:114

e vi ko e bwa xaleke
 1SG say because 1SG IPFV see

‘I’m saying this because I still got to see it.’

12.1.6 *koin* ‘then’

The coordinator *koin* ‘then’ derives from the word *koin* ‘end’, which exists as a noun and as a verb (8).

(12.8) a. HC2:1

koin hut pwan maa hma-cu xahut ka cama
 end go.down on reef arrive-stand down.there CNTR TOP
 i=khî a=han moo ko-n maa
 DEF.SG=swamp.hen 3SG=walk stay on-3SG.POSS reef

‘When the tide had well receded, the swamp hen went walking [fishing]
 on the reef’

b. HC1:17

a=vi maman Henri ma maama-le-mwa lu=tua
 3SG=say mother H. COM mother-3PL.POSS-DEICT 3DU=take.out
 a=fe i=dipi ka i=see **koin** a=fe sanan
 3SG=take DEF.SG=cover SBJ DEF.SG=other finish 3SG=take content
 ka i=see
 SBJ DEF.SG=other

‘That is, Henri’s mother and the mother of the others, the two unwrapped
 it and one took the cover, then the other took the content’

c. KM:2-3

vwa i=fwa koo-n. koin i=mapu le=mu ta
 EXIST DEF.SG=hole on-3SG.POSS after.that DEF.SG=bee 3PL=FREQ go.up
 can
 in

‘There is a hole in [the tree]. And the bee, they will go up in there’

If *koin* occurs before a VP, it seems to mean “while”, as in (9).

(12.9) Tipije 1

a=kon vi hapi na gasu enregistrer koin gase=bo pala
 3SG=PROG say that DEM 1DU.INCL record finish 1PL.INCL=IRR say

‘He is saying that we will record while we will be speaking’

12.1.7 Contrastive *kavi*

kavi ‘but’ introduces a coordinate clause that contrasts strongly with the preceding one (10). While it most often coordinates two clauses, *kavi* is also attested at the beginning of an utterance, to contrast it with statements made immediately before in the conversation (10b).

(12.10) a. CP1:23

cip=abe vwa-taeke **kavi** abe vwa
NEG=1PL.EXCL do-badly but 1PL.EXCL do

‘We’re not doing [custom] badly, we’re (simply) doing [the work]’

b. CP1:24

kavi th=abe vwa nyeca i teete
but ASS=1PL.EXCL do in DEF.SG aunty

‘But we’re doing [the funerary work] with the [deceased] Aunty in mind’

12.2 Subordination

Most subordinate clauses, apart from complement and relative ones, are introduced by the neutral verbal subordinator *ma*, as in (11a), or by a complex form containing it, e.g. *cama* ‘if (IRR)’ and *ko-ma* ‘so that (lit. because-SUBR)’, see (11b).

(12.11) a. KP:98

ju-vaa vwasoon ma gase vwa li vaaya-n li
too.much impossible SUBR 1PL.INCL do DEF.PL work-POSS DEF.PL
xhaohmu
old

‘We cannot do the works of the elders’

b. GD:2

udu li fati li xhaohmu ko-ma e-vwa
 drink DEF.PL word DEF.PL old because-SUBR INS.NMLZ-do
 ka-n nyakoo-m ca i thoatit a bwa la
 ABS-NSPEC for-2SG.POSS in DEF.SG day REL IPFV be.here

‘Drink the words of the elders so that they be tools for you in the day that will come’

12.2.1 Complementation

Complement clauses are introduced with *hapi* (*na*) for verbs of perception and locution (e.g. *vii* ‘say’, *tena* ‘hear’), and with *ma* for modal verbs.

12.2.1.1 Modal complementizer *ma*

Modal constructions in Vamale are to a large extent formed in the same way: a matrix clause consisting of a modal word, and the proposition modified by the modal word, i.e. a complement clause. While the complement clause usually takes subject index marking, the 3SG form *a* merges with the subordinator *ma* and is used in contexts where the subject is unknown. In (12), the modal word is the stative verb *xahnang* ‘good’, which introduces the desirable proposition (‘if I knew what you are talking about’).

- (12.12) xahnang m=e bo caihna-n hapi go pala ko i da
 good COMP=1SG IRR know-ANA COMP 2SG speak OBL DEF.SG what
 ‘It would be good if I knew what you are talking about’

Modal words include in fact only two non-verbs: the deontic modal word *goon* ‘enough’ → *goon ma* V... ‘it is possible, it is allowed’, and *xhwan* ‘bite, bit’ → *xhwan ma* V... ‘barely, almost’ (13). The other members are verbs. Some verbs are decategorized and also exist as stative verbs with predicative function, e.g. *xahnang* ‘good’ and *nyau* ‘bad’, see *xahnang-eo* ‘I am good’.

Other modal verbs, especially impersonal ones, always have a modal function, and always take a complement. This includes the deontic verbs *vwasoon* ‘impossible’ and *siteke* ‘taboo’, as well as epistemic *vaang* ‘unknown’. Like other epistemic modal verbs, *vaang* may take the complementizer *hapi* as well as *ma*. A subset of these modal verbs inflects for person: *nyima-n ma* ‘s/he wants, that...’, *saxhwe-a ma* ‘to not want, that’, *sahnaang-ea ma* ‘to not understand if’, *cacahniing-ea ma* ‘to be unsure if’.

(12.13) X10:24

yo, xhwan e-goakan se m=e bwa xhwi nyu
 1SG hardly MID-time one SUBR=1SG IPFV eat fish

‘I rarely eat fish (Hardly is there a time when I eat fish)’

12.2.1.2 Complementizer *hapi*

The complementizer *hapi* is used to introduce the argument of verbs of “locution or perception” (Lynch, Ross, and Crowley 2002, 53), e.g. *vii* ‘say’, *hnyimake* ‘think’, etc. Coupled with *na* ‘DEM’, *hapi* can also introduce quoted speech as in *a vi hapi na* ‘s/he says that’.

(12.14) GC:53.2

In-Fwe hapi “In-Fwe ka e hu-pe nya hnya-da
 I. COMP I. CNJ 1SG come-DIR.CP from PROX-move.up
 xa-da” kavi cipa a vi i goakan.
 LOC.ADV-move.up but NEG 3SG say DEF.SG place

‘Figtree-Bark said that “[my name is] Figtree-Bark and I come from somewhere a little further up” but she didn’t say the place.’

However, *na* can be omitted (14), as can even *hapi*, in a context where the clause boundaries are otherwise clarified (15). In the latter example, the main verb is *fwajimwake* ‘ask-TR’, which is transitive but demands an Experiencer argument (the person asked). The other clause cannot be added with *hapi*, as the latter is governed by a semantically defined group of verbs, which does not include *fwajimwake*. Hence we have two clauses: matrix clause *e fwajimwako* and matrix clause *kai i vukin-ea*. *i vukin-ea*, a nominalized form of the stative verb *vukin-* ‘to be the cause’, is the predicate of the equative clause with *kai*, which is itself an content of the question *fwajimwa-ko*, but cannot be added to the main verb. The two clauses are distinguishable by prosody, as *kai* marks the beginning of a new pitch contour.

(12.15) D3:110

e fwajimwa-ko: “kai a i vuki-n-ea”
 1SG ask-2SG who 3SG DEF cause-POSS-3SG.Sp

‘I ask you who the culprit [of this] is’

The complementizer *hapi* is not necessarily the only morpheme to subordinate a clause. In (16b), the speaker is more certain of the content of the irrealis subordinate clause than in the unmarked example (16a).

- (12.16) a. e caihnan hapi a bo vwa
 1SG know COMP 3SG IRR do
 ‘I know that he will do’
- b. e caihnan hapi ma a bo vwa
 1SG know COMP SUBR 3SG IRR do
 ‘I know with certainty that he will do’

12.2.2 Adverbial clauses with *can*

Adverbial clauses are introduced with *can*, derived from *ca-n* ‘in-NSPEC’ and are indistinguishable from matrix clauses, except that the former’s verb does not take subject marking (17a). Since the adverbial clause’s subject must be the same as that of the matrix, the subject index proclitic is omitted. Aspect markers are rarely used, as the TAM contour is the same as the matrix clause’s, but *bwa* ‘IPFV’ was overheard. Stative verbs that retain their subject marking are not attested. This weak desententialization is somewhat unusual for Oceanic languages, which canonically do not desententialize their adverbial clauses at all (Ross 2004, 519).

- (12.17) a. 2017-08-48.1
- | | | | | |
|----------|-------------------|------------------|----------|--------------------|
| gase | xadaa | ha-mwa | ca-n | sate-n |
| 1SG.INCL | on.the.other.hand | go-DEICT | in-NSPEC | be.different-NSPEC |
| moko | i | hun-moo-gaa | | |
| CPR | DEF.SG | NMLZ-be-1SG.INCL | | |
- ‘We however walk now differently from our traditional ways’
- b. G4 22.1
- | | | | | |
|-----|-----|----------|-------------|-------|
| go | han | ca-n | hnyimake | thamo |
| 2SG | go | in-NSPEC | think.about | woman |
- ‘You’re walking while thinking of women’

If an adverbial clause comes after a verb’s argument, especially if the resulting construction is long, a resumptive *vwa* ‘do’ may be introduced as an anaphoric host to the adverbial clause (18).

(12.18) GC 57.1

ma le hma-san a feanake si-le joakan juu-mwa, vwa
 when 3PL arrive-go 3SG show BEN-3PL big real-house do
 can vi “In Fwe ta ca i juu-mwa-ca ma go
 ADV.SUBR say I. F. go.up in DEF.SG real-house-PROX SUBR 2SG
 silaa mu nyai-m.”
 raise DEF.DU child-2SG.POSS

‘When they arrived, he showed them a big house, and said while doing so
 “Figtree-Bark, go up into the house, so as to raise your children.’

12.2.3 Relative clauses

Relative clauses in Vamale are typical of Oceanic languages, in that they are introduced by a morpheme that looks like a pronoun (Ross 2004, 516). In our case, a ‘REL’ is formally identical to a ‘3SG.S_A’. Relative clauses feature resumptive morphemes which allow the language to relativize a noun phrase in any position on the Accessibility Hierarchy. All NPs can be represented by a resumptive morpheme, but this is not obligatory for the subject.

(12.19) e=xaleke i xawakhan a tana
 1SG=see DEF.SG dog 3SG red

‘I see the red dog’

(12.20) B1:8

le vwa ma le thabilo li a le fee-ko
 3SG do SUBR 3SG kill DEF.PL REL 3PL take-2SG.OBJ

‘They will kill those who took you’

If the relativized, inanimate noun phrase was already mentioned, it does not get mentioned again (21b), unlike in Bwatoo (21a), where it reappears in the slot of its new syntactic function.

- (12.21) a. Rivierre and Ehrhardt 2006, 71

⟨zho tahmake ani meata a go thaxhuti-a⟩

ǎo tamake anĩ mēāta a ʔgo θaxuti-a
1SG know DEF story REL 2SG tell-3SG.OBJ

‘I know the story that you are telling.’

- b. B2:94

e holeke nya-si-m li fati a go vi
1SG thank put-hand-2SG.POSS DEF.PL word REL 2SG say

‘I thank you for the words you said.’

A relativized subject noun phrase which is the subject in the relative clause as well, is most often indexed on the subordinated verb, but the relativizer itself is commonly skipped (22).

- (12.22) KM:13

tha vwa li=apuli le=caihnan tuu mapu
ASS there.is DEF.PL 3SG=know pull bee

‘There are people who know how to pull bees [= harvest honey]’

Several relative clauses may follow one another, modifying the same noun phrase (23), but this was not attested outside elicitations.

- (12.23) e=holeke nya-si-m i=xawakhan [a siim-ea] [a
1SG=thank put-hand-2SG.POSS DEF=dog REL mange-3SG REL
go=nya-a]
2SG=give-3SG.OBJ

‘I thank you for the mangy dog you gave [me]’

12.2.4 Purposive function of *ma*

A very common function of *ma* is to subordinate a purposive clause (24). This can be used with causative meanings, like in *vwa, ma ...* ‘do, so that...’ (see Section 9.3), or alone.

- (12.24) a=nya s-ung m=e nya si-m
 3SG=give BEN-1SG.POSS SUBR=1SG give BEN-2SG.POSS
 ‘He gave me so that I would give you’

12.2.5 Conditional *ma*, *cama* ‘if’

When preceding a matrix clause, *ma* and its derived form *cama* introduce a hypothetical situation (25a, 25c). As can be seen in (26a), *ma* and *cama* can be used interchangeably in some contexts. As far as a difference could be made out between *ma* and *cama*, *cama* seems to precede more markedly irrealis situations (26b), whereas *ma* is also used to refer to traditions (25b). This *ma* is probably the base form from which the insubordinator *ma* was derived (see Section 12.3).

- (12.25) a. GS:1-2

gase cahu ma bwa vwa wadan **ma** le tho
 1PL.INCL answer while IPFV EXIST time when 3PL call
 nyakoo-je ka li xhaohmu
 for-1PL.INCL.POSS SBJ DEF.PL elder

‘We answer while there is still time, when(ever) the elders call on us’

- b. AG1:428

m=abe bwa vwa *nettoyage* h=abe thai li
 SUBR=1PL.EXCL IPFV do cleaning TOP.REP=1PL.EXCL pick.up DEF.PL
 vaisselle-ea
 dish-3SG.POSS

‘When we do the clean up [at a wedding] we pick up [the bride’s] dishes’

- c. D3:90

Ma tha vwa eca loto-n-gaa ma gase ta can Wanaa
 COND ASS exist INDF car-POSS-1PL SUBR 1PL.INCL go.up in W.

‘If we had a car we would go up to Wanaa’

(12.26) a. HC2:5

cama ha-mwa-me ka i khîi ma hma-ca-mwa-me
 when go-REP-DIR.CP SBJ DEF.SG swamp.hen when arrive-go.up-REP-DIR.CP
 paa cika mwa wâng
 ALR NEG.EXIST REP boat

‘When the water fowl went back and arrived, there was no boat anymore
 [because the rat had eaten it]’

b. JU:7

ju hole ko calibeen gase vwa cama vwa cama
 really thank because sometimes 1PL.INCL do SUBR EXIST SUBR
 cika
 NEG.EXIST

‘Thank you very much, for it is our habit that we do whether we have or
 not’

12.2.6 Realis ‘while’

Cala is syntactically identical to *cama* and *ma* (27). Semantically, *cala* is used only to introduce past situations firmly rooted in reality, and *cama* for everything else.

(12.27) GP2:1

ju vaa m=e juu saxhuti i thuatit-abe cala
 real too SUBR=1SG real narrate DEF.SG day-1PL.EXCL.POSS when
 abe hut ko-n yeen nyeet
 1PL.EXCL go.down on-NSPEC island when

‘It’s too much for me to properly tell the story of how when we went down
 the island the other day’

12.2.7 *ko* ‘because, thanks to’

Subordinate clauses can also be linked to a matrix clause of which they are the cause. The subordinators used for this are *ko* ‘because’ described in Section 12.1.5, as well as *vuki-n* ‘cause, stem’. The latter word acts both as a stative verb, when the reason is a participant themselves (28a), or as a subordinating particle, when the reason is an entire clause (28b).

(12.28) a. RP:9

kavi tha hmwaka-je, wanke mwa i hun-moo ka i
 CNJ ASS like-1PL.INCL change DEICT DEF.SG NMLZ-stay ABS DEF.SG
 bwanpu, hai vukin-gaa ko ko gase juu vaaya
 land CNJ reason-1PL.INCL because because 1PL.INCL real work
 xhayu a
 random or

‘But it’s like us, changed the nature of the land or, we’re the reason, because we just work at random [without custom], or...’

b. X9:3

e caihna-n vuki-n go vi nyako-ong
 1SG know-ANA cause-NSPEC 2SG say OBL-1SG.POSS

‘I know because you told me.’

12.3 Insubordination

In order to mark a clause as adhortative (29a, 29b), as a wish (29c), a regret (30), or to diminish the speaker’s assertiveness, the complementizer *ma* can be put at the very beginning of a clause without a preceding matrix clause.

(12.29) a. GB:5

ma gase e-saam ko li vaaya-n-gaa
 SUBR 1INCL RECP-help OBL DEF.PL work-POSS-1INCL.POSS

‘May we help each other in our works’

b. ma gavwe xaleke, ka caihna-n
 SUBR 2PL see CNJ know-ANA

‘May you look [at this custom] and know (acknowledge) it’

c. D3:91

ma tha xa-vwa-wîîn m=e sam koo-m, ma
 COND ASS NMLZ-EXIST-strength SUBR=1SG help OBL-2SG SUBR
 gasu vacuti i=juu.mwa-go
 1DU.INCL erect DEF.SG=hut-2SG.POSS

‘If only I were strong (enough) to I would help you, (so that) we build your house’

(12.30) KG:492

putain, yo, m=e th=e koon ja vwa i *signe*
 fuck 1SG SUBR=1SG ASS=1SG PROG ACCP do DEF.SG sign

‘Dammit, I should have given [him] a sign by then.’

Insubordination is important in deontic contexts, as it frames the predicate as something wished for by the speaker, or as their duty (see Section 12.2.1.1). There are no verbs meaning ‘must’, ‘may’, ‘should’ etc.

Chapter 13

Conclusion

This concludes our description of Vamale. The grammar wanted to give an overview over every major aspect of the language, pass on some of the author's love for the speaker culture, contextualize the language in space and time, and thus had many fires to tend. Hopefully, the thesis contributes information about the interplay of fortis onsets and nasalization of vowels in Northern languages. Alignment patterns in clausal and nominalized contexts are particularly interesting in Vamale. The middle prefix *e-* with its various uses, are other delights the language has to offer. The crucial role of language contact in Vamale's language history, with influence on all aspects of its system, is a typical feature of Oceanic languages, if not indeed all tongues spoken in high density areas. That Vamale has kept a uniqueness to it despite powerful neighbours an hour's walk away, is probably due to a cultural trait of Melanesian civilizations. To what extent the system really is unique will depend on the work that will be done on its neighbours.

However, many aspects of the language deserve closer scrutiny. For example, stress was not completely understood and prosody remains a black box, and some coordinators remain only hazily described. The middle prefix *e-* was a research focus only late into the project, and aspects of it were certainly missed. Furthermore, women did not act as consultants as much as they should have, which deprives the thesis of valuable data. Though there is no genderlect *per se*, the author is likely to have missed important information, given that women form the majority of speakers nowadays, especially among young speakers. Ethnopoetics, and other aspects of oral literature are highly endangered and a very important source of archaic constructions, rare words, and stylistic figures which may inform us further about the language's place in its area. The work ahead is promising, and must be done. In the words of Baptiste Ucian:

(13.1) CP2:7

cama vi hapi [...] a sibu ta-me ka i jati nyaxahut
 if say COMP [...] 3SG swell go.up-DIR.CP SBJ DEF.SG sea down.there
 hai cama hup-e ca hmape-thoatit a xada cama
 or if go.down-DIR.CP INDF.PL flesh-sky REL up.there if
 thêên-fe ni kapwa-ca naen a cahni ...
 run-take DEF.PL steel.sheet-PROX now or here

‘If, say, the sea down there should swell and come up (upon us), or if some clouds up there should come down, or (a wind) strip away the ribbed roofing, (we will still do the work)...’

Indeed, the language is a fascinating link between Hienghène languages, the western coast, and Cèmuhî, and it is the author’s hope that more will be known about their contact history in years to come. As Vamale, Haeke, Pije, and other languages of the area are highly endangered, it is not only a time-sensitive question to describe and document them at all, but there is also the factor of attrition. Languages that undergo drastic changes in transmission are at risk of losing vocabulary, the transparency of certain constructions, and other facets that make them unique and rich windows unto the world. Old ladies mourn the times when men would woo them with poems likening them to mountain flowers, missionaries had the chief’s sister burn her father Nea Gale’s notebook where he’d written down his magic and history, and few youths know how to make a good ceremonial speech. This researcher was given only three traditional songs, but Haudricourt recorded a love song as well as a clanic song, and I was told of war songs, pilou songs, work songs, all of which have been left unsung for so long that no-one dared try sing them again. There was but one traditional story (“The Squid”), but Mr. Kalène remembers that there were stories about the Raven and the Wood Pigeon (the former is thrifty and the latter follows it around hoping for food), the Fruitbat and the Goliath Pigeon (struggling for dominance of the forest, Fruitbat claims superiority because it is eaten whole while the other is plucked, but the other retorts that Fruitbat must be singed to be eaten, whereas itself is spared such treatment), there are stories of Eel and Lizard, of fireballs in which sorcerers travel (*doki*), ghost villages in the Pamale valley, war ships forever lost at sea,... The forest is burned and the soil washed out by the rain into the sea, leaving bare rocks. Nevertheless, the author encourages other researchers to pick up the digging stick and the adze, as some seeds may have clung on, and the garden may yet grow back!

ka na ja koin. xadaago ma go saxhuti eca se!

‘And this is the end. It’s your turn to tell another one!’



FIGURE 13.1: Mr. Pei and Mr. Kalène looking across the Gaheny creek unto Wanaa. Thehwaade is in the distance, and Seejanit in the blue mists beyond that.

Appendix A

The Rat, the Swamp Hen, and the Squid (Philippe Gohoupe)

This story is known all over New Caledonia, and originally from Tiga in the Loyalty Islands. The underlying information of this story, that squids hate rats, and that rats make excellent bait to catch squids, is known beyond the New Caledonian archipelago.

(A.1) koin hupwan maa hmasut xahut ka cahma i khîi ahan moo kon maa

koin hut pwa-n maa a hma-sut xahut ka cahma i
end go.down on-NSPEC reef 3SG arrive-go.down below CNJ TOP DEF.SG
khîi a han moo ko-n maa
swamp.hen 3SG go stay on-NSPEC reef

‘When the receding tide was low, the swap hen went to stay on the reef [to fish]’

(A.2) ka cahma i siimbwi kon moo cai wâng

ka cahma i siibwi koon moo ca i wang
CNJ TOP DEF.SG rat PROG stay in DEF.SG boat

‘And the rat stayed in the boat’

(A.3) ca i wângalu, a lu vwa wângalu

ca i wanga-lu a lu vwa wanga-lu
in DEF.SG boat-3DU.POSS REL 3DU do boat-3DU.POSS

‘In their boat that they made for themselves’

(A.4) ko i ujep. ma moo ka i siibwi a xhuti

ko i ujep ma a moo ka i siibwi a
OBL DEF.SG sugar.cane SUBR 3SG stay SBJ DEF.SG rat 3SG
xhuti
scrunch.(sugarcane)

‘...from sugar cane. When the rat stayed like this, it ate it’

(A.5) cama hamwame ka khî ma a hmacamwa me, paa cika mwa wâng

cama han-mwa-me ka khî, ma a
when go REP-DIR.CP SBJ swamp.hen quand.3SG
hma-ca-mwa-me paa cika mwa wang
arrive-go.up-REP-DIR.CP ALR NEG.EXIST REP boat

‘When Swamp Hen came back, when she came back, the boat was already gone’

(A.6) uwang sin ujep wang lu ma siibwi pa xhuti meka na siibwi

i wang sin ujep wang lu ma siibwi paa
DEF.SG boat arm sugar.cane boat 3DU SUBR rat ALR
xhuti meekan a siibwi
scrunch.(sugarcane) all SBJ rat

‘The boat [of] sugar cane branches, their boat, but Rat had already eaten everything’

(A.7) amwa fajimwa ka vi hapi

a mwa fwajimwake ka vi hapi
3SG DEICT ask and say COMP

‘She asked him and he said that’

(A.8) a moo a hmanan a paa xhuti

a moo a hmana-n a paa xhuti
3SG stay 3SG hungry-3SG 3SG ALR scrunch.(sugarcane)

‘He stayed, he was hungry, and he ate’

(A.9) xhuti i wâng

xhuti i wang
 scrunch.(sugarcane) DEF.SG boat
 ‘ate the boat’

(A.10) go a vi nyakon a khî

go a vi nyakoo-n a khî
 DISC 3SG say for-3SG.POSS SBJ swamp.hen
 ‘then Swamp Hen told him’

(A.11) bwa evaang go go cika ca huntamwa ko yo vwa li vuun sung

bwa e-vaang go go cika eca hun-ta-mwa
 IPFV MID-unknown 2SG 2SG NEG.EXIST INDF.SG NMLZ-move.up-REP
 ko yo vwa li vwun s-ung
 because 1SG do DEF.PL hair arm-1SG.POSS

‘Well I don’t know about you, you don’t have any means to go back up, whereas I have my wings.’

(A.12) go tha ja tamwame

go tha a ja ta-mwa-me
 then ASS 3SG ACCP move.up-REP-DIR.CP
 ‘And she went back up to the land’

(A.13) ya tha ja thên thên tamwame

ya tha ja thên thên ta-mwa-me
 3SG ASS ACCP run run move.up-REP-DIR.CP
 ‘She, she flew up fast to go home’

- (A.14) *cama i siibwi a balan tabo kon se*

cama i siibwi a balan tabo koon se
if DEF.SG rat 3SG finally sit PROG cry

‘But the rat, he just sat there crying’

- (A.15) *ko i vai a foovwat kon tabo xahut pwan bwanma*

ko i vai a fowwat koon tabo xahut pwan bwan-maa
on DEF.SG stone REL blanc PROG sit below on top-reef

‘on the white [coral] rock, he was sitting down there on the reef’

- (A.16) *koin a kon a bwa tena ka i ibwen*

koin a kon a bwa tena-a ka i ibwen
stop 3SG PROG 3SG IPFV hear-3SG.OBJ SBJ DEF.SG squid

‘Then he was - the squid heard him’

- (A.17) *go a hame a hmacame koon a mwa faji mwa go kon se ko hmwaেকে*

go a hame a hma-ca-me koo-n a mwa mwa
2SG 3SG come 3SG arrive-go.up-DIR.CP because-PSM 3SG DEICT DEICT
go koon se ko hmwaেকে
2SG PROG cry because how

‘Then he came he came there to him, he was like “why do you cry”’

- (A.18) *kavi hapi a se a moo a hmanong*

ka a vi hapi a sea moo a hman-ong
and 3SG say COMP 3SG one-3SG stay 3SG hungry-1SG.POSS

‘And he said that he was alone and “I was hungry”’

- (A.19) *a xhuti wâng aju*

a xhuti i wanga-ju
3SG scrunch.(sugarcane) DEF.SG boat.POSS-3DU.POSS

‘He ate our boat’

(A.20) paa ja pa cika mwa ca wang-abu m abu taamwa kabu

paa ja paa cika mwa ca wang abu m=abu
 ALR ACCP ALR NEG.EXIST REP INDF.SG boat 1DU.EXCL SUBR=1DU.EXCL
 ta-mwa ka abu
 move.up-REP SBJ 1DU.EXCL

‘And now there is no more, no more boat of ours with which we could go back up.’

(A.21) go ya avi hapi go tha vaang go yo theja thêên tamwa ko vwa li vuun sung

go ya a vi hapi go tha vaang go yo thêên tamwa
 DISC 3SG 3SG say COMP 2SG ASS inconnu 2SG 1SG run go.back.up
 ko vwa li vwun s-ung
 because EXIST DEF.PL hair arm-1SG.POSS

‘And she said “I don’t know about you, I’m leaving because I have wings”’

(A.22) ko camwa siibwi ko tabo kon se se se a tena ka ibwen a hame

ko cahma siibwi koon tabo koon se se se a tena ka ibwen a
 CNJ TOP rat PROG sit PROG cry cry cry 3SG hear SBJ squid 3SG
 ha-me
 go-DIR.CP

‘And Rat, he sits, he cries, cries, cries, Squid hears and comes’

(A.23) a fajimwa ha go siibwi go se se ko hmwaেকে

a fwajimwake ha go siibwi go se se ko hmwaেকে
 3SG demander EXPL 2SG rat 2SG cry cry OBL how

‘He asks “Hey you, Rat, why do you cry, cry?”’

- (A.24) e se ko e xhuti i wangabe, abe hupwe ma khî kon ya tha paa tamwa

e se ko e xhuti i wang-abe
 1SG cry because 1SG scrunch.(sugarcane) DEF.SG boat-1PL.EXCL.POSS
 abe hup-e ma khî kon ya tha paa ta-mwa
 1PL.EXCL go.down-DIR.CP SUBR swamp.hen CNJ 3SG ASS ALR go.up-REP

“I cry because I ate our boat, we came down with Swamp Hen, and she already went back up”

- (A.25) go ka go hame ko e bo fetamwako

go ka go ha-me ko e bo fe-ta-mwa-ko
 2SG SBJ 2SG go-DIR.CP because 1SG IRR take-move.up

“You, come, because I will take you back up.”

- (A.26) hê a ja han tabo pwan bwan kona ja fetamwamea

hê a ja han tabo pwa-n bwa-n kona a ja
 yes 3SG ACCP go sit on-NSPEC head-3SG.POSS CNJ 3SG ACCP
 fe-ta-mwa-me-a
 take-move.up-REP-DIR.CP-3SG.OBJ

‘Yes, he goes to sit on his head and he takes him back up’

- (A.27) lu hmacamwame can hmeewan

lu hma-ca-mwa-me ca-n hmeewan
 3DU arrive-go.up-REP-DIR.CP on-NSPEC sand

‘The two arrive up at the beach’

- (A.28) ma xhasat nyadamwa siibwi phâêû

ma xhasaat nya-da-mwa siibwi phâêû
 SUBR jump towards-up-DEICT rat dry.land

‘as Rat jumps up now onto dry land’

(A.29) go cahma i ibwen a ja hupwa a konja hupwale can we

go cahma i ibwen a ja hut a koon ja
 2SG TOP DEF.SG squid 3SG ACCP move.down 3SG PROG ACCP
 hup-wa-le ca-n we
 go.down-REP-DIR.CF in-NSPEC water

‘And the squid, he goes back down, he is going back away into the water’

(A.30) a cuut mwa ka siibwi a emwadia a emwadia a mwadike mwa i ape xhwata can bwan

a cuut mwa ka siibwi mwa a e-mwadi-a a
 3SG stand DEICT SBJ rat DEICT 3SG REFL-laugh-3SG.OBJ 3SG
 e-mwadi-a a mwadi-ke i ape-xhwata ca-n
 REFL-laugh-3SG.OBJ 3SG REFL-laugh-TR DEF.SG LOC.NMLZ-bald in-NSPEC
 bwa-n
 head-3SG.POSS

‘Rat stands now and laughs to himself, laughs about the bald spot on his head’

(A.31) ibwan ibwen a xhwata

i bwa-n ibwen a xhwata
 DEF.SG head-NSPEC squid REL bald

‘The bald squid head’

(A.32) aemwadia kona tena ka i ibwen

a e-mwadi-a kona a-tena-a ka i ibwen
 3SG REFL-laugh-3SG.OBJ then hear SBJ DEF.SG squid

‘He laughed to himself, then he was heard by the squid’

(A.33) ha go go mwadike i da?

ha go go mwadike i da
 EXPL 2SG 2SG laugh-TR DEF.SG what

‘Hey you! What are you laughing about?’

- (A.34) e mwadike xhwatakam

e mwadi-ke xhwata ka-m
 1SG laugh-TR bald CLF.POSS-2SG.POSS

‘I laugh of your baldness’

- (A.35) go go thuang-o tame na yo efetame ko can a thake nyadame i thaangan kona thaakea

go go thuang-o ta-me na yo e-fe-ta-me-ko
 2SG 2SG joke-1SG.OBJ move.up-DIR.CP DEM 1SG REFL-take-move.up-DIR.CP-2SG.OBJ
 can, a thake i thaangan koo-n a thake-a
 in 3SG throw DEF.SG tentacle on-3SG 3SG throw-3SG.OBJ

‘You, you laugh of me walking up [to dry land], it is me who brought you up here! Then he threw his tentacle and then hit him’

- (A.36) thakea thakea hut can we go a yabiloa

thake-a thake-a hut ca-n we go a
 throw-3SG.OBJ throw-3SG.OBJ move.down in water 2SG 3SG

‘Threw him, threw him down into the water, then he’

- (A.37) go ethuago e nyauko can we ma bup nyanaam

go e-thuang-o e nya-ut-ko ca-n we ma
 2SG REFL-joke-1SG.OBJ 1SG put-go.down-2SG.OBL in-NSPEC water SUBR
 bup hnyanaa-m
 thunder.strike breath-2SG.POSS

‘You laugh about me, I’ll drag you down into the water to burst your breath’

- (A.38) go aja vwa mwa mekai siibwi

go a ja vwa ma me ka i siibwi
 then 3SG ACCP do SUBR die SBJ DEF.SG rat

‘And he made the rat die’

(A.39) cahma ibwen thaja hupwa

cahma ibwen tha ja hup-wa

TOP squid ASS ACCP go.down-REP

‘And the squid, it went back down’

(A.40) thaja koin mwa siibwi thapa mea thapaja seada

tha ja koin mwa siibwi tha pa me-a tha a pa ja

ASS ACCP stop REP rat ASS already die-3SG.OBJ ASS 3SG ALR ACCP

sea-da

look-go.up

‘This is the end now, Rat is dead, he looks upwards now’

Appendix B

The 1917 Tipije War (Philippe Gohoupe)

This is a version of what happened in the Tipije valley as Mr. Gohoupe's parents experienced it. The storytelling lapses back and forth at certain moments, and most of the participants are not formally introduced. This is due, apart from Mr. Gohoupe's age, to the audience: they all grew up in the area and know the story. Briefly summarized, first Kafeyat Cidopwaan, chief of Ouen Kout/Wan Kuut was blamed for the attacks on settler households (see Section 2.4), and when the European soldiers stationed in Dewanwe conducted punitive expeditions, he was shot in the back near Tendo; he died in a creek there. All men were assembled and either killed in the process or sent to Noumea to be questioned. The women were sent to Houailou. At the same time, the colonial authorities looked for the chiefs responsible for the war, and as the mother of chief Kafeyat could show a black shell money, used to broker war alliances, and as she said that the chief of Hienghène, Bwaarat, had sent it to call his allies to war, the blame shifted onto Bwaarat. He hanged himself when he heard that a ship had come to take him to the guillotine. The men and women were then released from prison.

B.1 Introduction

Asked by Nigai Kalène:

- (B.1) a kon vi hapi na gasu *enregistrer* koin gaze bo pala
 3SG PROG say that DEM 1DU.INCL record finish 1PL.INCL IRR say
 ‘He is saying that we two will [press] record, then we all will talk’

- (B.2) hêê da cama nyima-m ma go enregistrer ce-ma go bo pala
 yes what if/IRR will-2SG.POSS SUBR 2SG record if/IRR 2SG IRR speak
 ma bo fainake koin cama nyima-m ma go xaahni ma
 SUBR IRR show finish if will-2SG.POSS SUBR 2SG keep with
 i evwakan nyakoom.
 DEF.SG NMLZ.INS-do-NMLZ for-2SG.POSS

‘Yes, uh, if you want to record, when you will talk to to explain, then you can keep it as a tool for yourself.’

- (B.3) ma xaani nyakoo... ya a vi canbwen
 SUBR keep for 3SG 3SG say yesterday

‘And keep for... he said it yesterday’

- (B.4) evwakan nyako li mwan somun gase bo bwaa pala koon
 tool for DEF.PL house lesson 1PL.INCL IRR IPFV speak OBL-3SG
 cama goon ca aman thapoke fwajimwake
 if enough in? something begin ask

‘Preserve it for the schools, we’ll talk about it. If we may, something, start asking’

- (B.5) e-nyima-n ma caihnan i hun-moo-kan cala le
 REFL-will-3SG.POSS SUBR know DEF.SG NMLZ-stay-NMLZ when.REAL 3PL
 fe ka li popwaale ce veandan vwa vaa. hê ko i
 fetch SBJ DEF.PL European in time EXIST war yes about DEF.SG
 va.
 war

‘He wants to know about the time when they were taken by the Europeans, in the time when there was a war. Yes, about the war.’

B.2 Story

- (B.6) kona li pupwaale tha le pa fe cahni ko-nya seen hnya
 well DEF.PL European ASS 3PL ALR take here on-toward border toward
 hnut-te
 downstream-DIR.CF

‘The Europeans had taken it, here until the border towards down there’

- (B.7) le hmasa-me ka li pupwaale kon cahni li
 3PL arrive-DIR.CP SBJ DEF.PL-Europeans ? here DEF.PL person
 apuli li xhaohmu moo seen xahnut ca-n la-la li
 DEF.PL elder stay border downstream in-ANA here here DEF.PL
 xhwaapwê
 colonnary.pine

‘The Europeans came, and here the people, the ancestors stayed, till the border down there here where the araucaria pines are’

- (B.8) kone le hma wati-le nya cahni hma xaa-le le thapoke cahni
 when 3PL arrive chase-3PL from³ here until⁴ hit-3PL 3PL begin here
 na tha i seen nya-an-de
 DEM ASS DEF.SG border further-go-DIR.CF

‘When they arrived here while chasing them, they began here and this is the limit [of their movement] over there (visible)’

- (B.9) li apuli li xhaohmu kona... li pupwaale kona... tha
 DEF.PL person DEF.PL elder and? DEF.PL European and? ASS
 i seen hnya hnut-te
 DEF.SG border towards downstream-DIR.CF

‘The people, the ancestors, well... the Europeans, well... this is the border down there’

- (B.10) koin le hma wati-le ma xaa-le hnuuda-me cahni
 then 3PL arrive chase-3OBJ SUBR beat-3OBJ upstream-DIR.CP here

‘Then they came chasing them to strike them, coming up here.’

- (B.11) koin le bwa hân hân cop xada koin le hup-wa
 while 3PL IPFV go go go.over up.there finish 3PL go.down-REP
 xahan xahut le seejanit
 over.there down.there 3PL T.

‘Then they[the Kanak] went from there and walked, walked, crossed [the mountain] up there and then went back down over there, they were in Tiendanite.’

- (B.12) bwa xada thathee mwa maahma ca i dingan xahan
 IPFV up.there kill REP elder.brother in DEF.SG creek over.there
 thêêdo
 T.

‘Up there was killed the chief [Kafeyat Cidopwaan of Wan Kuut], in the creek over there in Tendo.’

- (B.13) go le fwade-a nya-mwa-la ko ya mwa si-n
 then 3PL seek.ANIM towards-REP-PROX because 3SG DEICT BEN-3SGPOSS
 i mwa-n hmat ko i vaa a
 DEF.SG container-POSS customary.money for SG.DEF war 3-SG
 hnyada-me ka thêama
 send-DIR.CP SBJ chief

‘Well, they looked for him around that time, because it was him now, to him that the great chief [Bwarhat of Hienghène] had sent the war money’

- (B.14) i se mwa-n solda a moo xahnut pwanvai
 DEF.SG other house-POSS soldier 3SG stay downstream.there P.
 ka i se a moo xahut dewanwe
 CNTR DEF.SG other 3SG stay down.there T.

‘One barracks was in Pwanvai and one in Dewanwe [the coast of Tiouandé]’

- (B.15) cipa gase va caihnan mwa nya la hun-moo ka i
 NEG 1PL.INCL strongly know REP put here NMLZ-stay ABS DEF.SG
 vaa
 war

‘We don’t know too well anymore what put the war here’

(B.16) ko na a nyadaa-me ka bwaaxat tha i hmat-aen
 but DEM 3SG send-DIR.CP SBJ B. ASS DEF.SG customary.money-DEM
 ‘But that which Bwaaxat sent, was that [war] shell money.’

(B.17) go le ja thathe-a mwa go le nya siwa-mwa
 DISC 3PL ACCP kill-3PL REP then 3PL send return-REP
 ‘And they had already slayed him then, and [the women and tribespeople]
 went back (home)’

(B.18) cama hma-ca-me ka i mwa-n hmat
 when arrive-go.up-DIR.CP SBJ DEF.SG container-POSS customary.money
 ka lu tua lu ma ya lu ma
 CNTR 3DU take.out 3DU COM 3SG 3DU COM
 ‘When the shell money arrived, the two [mothers took] it out’

(B.19) a vi maman Henri ma mama-le mwa lu tua a fe
 3SG say mother H. COM mother-3PLPOSS REP 3DU take.out 3SG take
 i dipi ka i see koin a fe i sanan ka
 DEF.SG cover SBJ DEF.SG other while 3SG take DEF.SG content SBJ
 i see
 DEF.SG other
 ‘That means Henri’s mother and the mother of the others, the two took [the
 shell money] out and one took the wrap, then the other took the content’

(B.20) ma le han ma ja han thathe-a mwa kon le ja
 SUBR 3PL go SUBR ACCP go kill-3SG REP then 3PL-ACCP return-REP
 siwa-mwa
 ‘When [the mothers] fled, when he had died, then [the survivors] returned.’

- (B.21) ma le ja hma-ca-mwa Noumea le ja fee-le mwa jevwan
 IRR 3PL ACCP arrive-REP N. 3PL ACCP take-3PL DEICT l'ensemble
 mwa acan ka li xhaomu mwa le moo cahni
 REP among SBJ DEF.PL elder REP 3PL stay here

'When they arrived in Noumea, they took them then, the whole lot, among them the ancestors as well who lived here'

- (B.22) acan ka i hao-nea tha u vwa mwa li
 among SBJ DEF.SG grandfather-3SG.POSS ASS ? EXIST also DEF.PL
 been
 brothers

'Among them was the [chief's] grandfather, there were also the others.'

- (B.23) na cahni tha xhwan see-a a thathe-a cahni. I a thathe-a
 DEM here ASS a.bit one-3SG REL kill-3SG here DEF.SG REL kill-3SG
 na i bee i papa-n ena xahnuut pwanbaut
 DEM DEF.SG brother DEF.SG father-POSS DIST downstream P.
 mwa
 REP

'Here, there was only one who was slain. Here he who was killed was the brother of the father of those downstream in Pwanbaut there.'

- (B.24) kavi i bee-n i papa-n-le yatan bwaungan
 but DEF.SG brother-POSS DEF.SG father-3PLPOSS name B.

'By the way, their father's brother's name was Bwaungan.'

- (B.25) thathe-a nya xahan waneut ma le siwa-mwa ka
 kill-3SG PROX over.there O.-K. IRR? 3PL-return-REP CNTR 3PL
 le ja fwadai-mwa ka li pupwaale a
 ACCP find.INAN-REP SBJ DEF.PL European 3SG ACCP
 ja ha thaloot ka bwaaxat a e-vwa-koo-n ka
 ? come.out SBJ B. 3SG REFL-do-OBL-3SG SBJ B.
 bwaaxat li apuli-nea
 DEF.PL man-3SG.POSS

‘He died all the way over there in Ouen Kout when they came back. The Europeans were looking for [the reason] and Bwaarat emerged, It turned out it was Bwaarat and his men.’

B.3 Death of Bwaxat

- (B.26) fe-ta ma le hup-e thai-le ma le ta
 take-go.up SUBR 3PL go.down-DIR.CP? attach-3PL SUBR 3PL go.up
 mwa-n suki aman
 house-POSS pay something

‘Brought up to come down and gather them so that they would go up to prison’

- (B.27) hê fwandai ca wuukin, hapi na wukin Bwaxat.
 yes seek.INAN some reason COMP DEM reason B.
 xhu-pwa-mee i wang le bwa vii hapi na “ya
 go.down-REP-DIR.CP DEF.SG boat 3PL IPFV say that DEM 3SG
 ya thapoke i vaa”
 3SG begin DEF.SG war

‘Yes, looked for some reason [for the war], that it was Bwaarat’s fault. The boat came down. They said that “he, he started the war”.’

- (B.28) a ja hu-pwa-mee umwang, hu-pwa-me fe-a, ce
 3SG ACCP go.down-REP-DIR.CP boat go.down-REP-DIR.CP take-3SG in
 i wandan thangavi nyôô-n apuli
 DEF.SG time chop neck-POSS person

‘The boat came down, came down north to take him, in the time when they would cut people’s necks’

- (B.29) ce i wadan a hma-cuut ka i umwang, ka le
 in DEF.SG time 3SG arrive-stand SBJ DEF.SG ship CNTR 3PL
 fe-ta, koma le fe-a, ka i wang a
 take-go.up-3SG in.order.to 3PL take-3SG CNTR DEF.PL boat 3SG
 ha-me hma-cuut, ya, a ta wainyô nyece i
 go-DIR.CP arrive-stand 3SG 3SG go.up tie.neck in(building) DEF.SG
 juu mwa
 real-house

‘At this moment when the boat arrived, and they brought it north to catch him, and the boat had arrived at the shore, him, he had hanged himself in the house’

- (B.30) ma le ta, ma le xale-a, ko-ma le fe-a, ma
 COM 3PL go.up SUBR 3PL see-3SG because-SUBR 3PL take-3SG COM
 le ta ma le fe-a, ya, a pa ja me-a ma le
 3PL go.up SUBR 3PL take-3SG 3SG 3SG ALR ACCP die-3SG when 3PL
 hmasa-mwa xada ma le ja fwandai ta-mwa
 arrive-REP up.there when 3PL ACCP seek.INAN go.up-REP

‘When they went up, to see him, to take him, when they went up to take him, him, he was already dead when they arrived up there, when they searched coming back up north’

B.4 Black Money and the Return of the People

- (B.31) go a ja ta mwa ka i thamo i mama-n
 then 3SG ACCP go.up DEICT SBJ DEF.SG woman DEF.SG mother-POSS
 maama ma
 chief⁶ SUBR

‘Then she went south, the woman, the mother of the chief [Kafeyat], to...’

- (B.32) a fainake i mwa-n hmat a nya ka ena
 3SG show DEF.SG container-POSS customary.money 3SG give SBJ DIST
 na ehni xaaci civije
 DEM PROX strike T.

‘...show the sheath of shell money that he had sent, him who struck Tipije.’

- (B.33) le ja vatipwe-mwa, kon ya tha pa ja me-a. go, tha
 3PL ja drop-REP because 3SG ASS ALR ACCP die-3SG then ASS
 le ja thuat-mwa moo, ka li xhaomu, ja, tha le ja
 3PL ACCP emerge-REP stay SBJ DEF.PL elder ACCP ASS 3PL ACCP
 ha-mwa-me
 go-REP-DIR.CP

‘They were released, because he was already dead. Well, they came back out [of prison], the ancestors, yeah, they came back.’

- (B.34) go, cahma li xayu, le thai-le hnya-da-le wailu
 and concerning DEF.PL male 3PL pick.up-3PL send-move.south-3PL H.

‘And, the men, they gathered them and sent them south to Houailou. [this is probably a mistake of the speaker]’

- (B.35) can goakan-aen, le hma-cup-wa-me ka li xayu,
 in moment-DEM 3PL arrive-down.there-REP-DIR.CP SBJ DEF.PL woman
 ma le hup-wa-me, ka li thamo, le moo wailu
 COM 3PL go.down-REP-DIR.CP SBJ DEF.PL woman 3PL stay H.

‘At this moment, the men came back, when they came back, and the women, they stayed in Houailou.’

- (B.36) a vi ka Leenhardt hapi i apuli a vwa ka i thamo,
 3SG say SBJ L. that DEF.SG man 3SG₁ do SBJ DEF.SG woman₁
 go, ya a fa-thuati i apuli
 then 3SG 3SG CAUS-come.out.TR DEF.SG man

‘Leenhardt said that the man is there thanks to the woman, well, he had the man [=the women?] freed.’

- (B.37) nyasi Leenhardt, e bwa ju tena i yata-n, cip=e
 TOP L. 1SG IPFV truly hear DEF.SG name-3SG.POSS NEG=1SG
 xa-xale-a
 HAB-see-3SG

‘Concerning Leenhardt, I did hear his name, but I never saw him’

Bibliography

- Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y. 2000. *Classifiers. A Typology of Noun Categorization Devices*. Oxford Studies in Typology and Linguistic Theory. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bearune, Suzie. 2012. “L’expression Linguistique de l’espace En Nengone (Nouvelle-Calédonie)”. PhD thesis, INALCO.
- Bensa, Alban. 2008. “1917. Circulation de La Parole de Guerre et Déplacement Des Populations Suite à La Répression”. *Mwà Vée - Revue culturelle kanak* 62:6–7.
- Bensa, Alban, and Antoine Goromido. 1997. “The Political Order and Corporal Coercion in Kanak Societies of the Past (New Caledonia)”. *Oceania* 68, no. 2 (): 84–106.
- Bensa, Alban, Adrian Muckle, and Yvon Goromoédo Kacué. 2015. *Les Sanglots de l’aigle Pêcheur - Nouvelle-Calédonie : La Guerre Kanak de 1917*. Anacharsis.
- Berman, Ruth. 1978. *Modern Hebrew Structure*. Tel Aviv: University Publishing Projects.
- Boubin-Boyer, Sylvette. 2015. “La Nouvelle-Calédonie Durant La Première Guerre Mondiale”. Nouméa, New Caledonia.
- Bril, Isabelle. 2002. *Le Nêlêmwa (Nouvelle Calédonie). Analyse Syntaxique et Sémantique*. Langues et Cultures Du Pacifique 16. Paris: Peeters Publishers.
- . 2004a. “Complex Nuclei in Oceanic Languages: Contribution to an Areal Typology”. In *Complex Predicates in Oceanic Languages: Studies in the Dynamics of Binding and Boundness*, ed. by Isabelle Bril and Françoise Ozanne-Rivierre, 29:1–48. Empirical Approaches to Linguistic Typology. Berlin, New York: Mouton De Gruyter.
- . 2004b. “Complex Verbs and Dependency Strategies in Nêlêmwa (New Caledonia)”. In *Complex Predicates in Oceanic Languages: Studies in the Dynamics of Binding and Boundness*, ed. by Isabelle Bril and Françoise Ozanne-Rivierre, 29:167–198. Empirical Approaches to Linguistic Typology. Berlin, New York: Mouton De Gruyter.
- . 2004c. “Noms Composés En Nêlêmwa”. In *Le Nom Composé: Données Sur 16 Langues*, ed. by Pierre Arnaud, 185–220. Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon.

- . 2005. “Semantic and Functional Diversification of Reciprocal and Middle Prefixes in New Caledonian and Other Austronesian Languages”. *Linguistic Typology* 9 (1): 22–75.
 - . 2011. “Noun-Phrase Conjunction in Austronesian Languages: Additive, Inclusive and Comitative Strategies”. In *Topics in Oceanic Morphosyntax*, ed. by Claire Moyse-Faurie and J Sabel, 239:235–286. Trends in Linguistics. De Gruyter Mouton.
- Campbell, Maryline Ebeth. 1987. “The Phenomenon of Spreading in Fa Tiéta, a Language of New Caledonia”. Master’s Thesis, The University of Texas at Arlington.
- Cauchard, Aurélie. 2014. “A Study of Space in Caac, an Oceanic Language Spoken in the North of New Caledonia”. Phd dissertation, University of Manchester.
- Couhia, Pascal Kalewaik, and Bernard Kalene Maepas. 2008. “Pascal Kalewaik Couhia, de Tiendanite”. *Mwà Vée - Revue culturelle kanak* 62.
- Creissels, Denis, Pier Marco Bertinetto, and Luca Ciucci. “Non-Verbal Predication in the World’s Languages: An Overview”.
- Demmer, Christine. 2003. “Nationalisme kanak et génération : une approche du changement social en Nouvelle-Calédonie”.
- Dixon, Robert M. W. 1988. *A Grammar of Boumaa Fijian*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Doumenge, Jean-Pierre. 1982. “Du Terroir... à La Ville. Les Mélanésien et Leurs Espaces En Nouvelle-Calédonie”. *Centre d’Etudes de Géographie Tropicale, Trav. Doc. Geogr. Trop.* ., no. 46.
- Dryer, Matthew S., and Martin Haspelmath, eds. 2013. *WALS Online*. Leipzig, Germany: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology.
- Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig, eds. 2020. “Vamale”. <http://www.ethnologue.com/language/mkt>, *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (Dallas, Texas).
- Francois, Alexandre. 2004. “Reconstructing the Geocentric System of Proto-Oceanic” [inlangen]. http://muse.jhu.edu/content/crossref/journals/oceanic_linguistics/v043/43.1francois.pdf, *Oceanic Linguistics* 43 (1): 1–31. ISSN: 1527-9421. doi:10.1353/o1.2004.0009.
- Gohoup, Noël Tuai. 2008. “La Guerre Kanak de 1917”. *Mwà Vée - Revue culturelle kanak* 62.
- Grace, George William. 1969. *A Proto-Oceanic Finder List*. Working Papers in Linguistics 2. Honolulu.

- Guiart, Jean. 1954. "L'Organisation Sociale et Coutumière de La Population Autochtone de Nouvelle-Calédonie". *South Pacific Commission Technical Paper*, 17–43.
- . 1963. *La Chefferie En Mélanésie Du Sud*. Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie.
- . 1970. "Les Événements de 1917 En Nouvelle-Calédonie". *Journal de la Société des océanistes* 26 (29): 265–282.
- . 1981. "Clans Autochtones: Situation Pré-Coloniale". In *Atlas de La Nouvelle-Calédonie et Dépendances*, ed. by Gilles Sautier, 69–71. Paris: Éditions de l'Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique Outre-Mer.
- . 1984. "Données Ethnologiques Comparées, Région de Touho, Nouvelle Calédonie". *Journal de la Société des océanistes* 40 (78): 81–102.
- . 1992. "L'aire Linguistique Paici et Ses Marges". In *La Chefferie En Mélanésie*. Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie.
- Hammarström, Harald, et al., eds. 2020. *Mainland New Caledonian*. <https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/main1286.bimap.html#9/-21.0742/165.3305>. Jena.
- Haudricourt, André-Georges. 1948. "Les Langues Du Nord de La Nouvelle-Calédonie et La Grammaire Comparée". *Journal de la Société des océanistes* 4:159–162. doi:10.3406/jso.1948.1612.
- . 1961. "Richesse En Phonèmes et Richesse En Locuteurs". *L'Homme* 1 (1): 5–10.
- . 1968. "La Langue de Gomen et La Langue de Touho En Nouvelle-Calédonie". *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris*, no. 63: 218–235.
- . 1972. "New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands". *Current trends in Linguistics* 8:359–396.
- Haudricourt, André-Georges, and Françoise Ozanne-Rivierre. 1982. *Dictionnaire Thématique Des Langues de La Région de Hienghène (Nouvelle-Calédonie) - Pije - Fwâi - Nemi - Jawe*. Selaf 212. Leuven - Paris: Peeters Publishers.
- Hollyman, Jim. 1959. "Polynesian Influence in New Caledonia". *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 68 (4): 357–389.
- . 1999. *Etudes Sur Les Langues Du Nord de La Nouvelle-Caledonie*. Selaf 377. Leuven: Peeters Publishers. ISBN: 90-429-0750-9.
- IEOM. 2014. *L'Histoire Du Franc Pacifique*. Tech. rep. Institut d'Émission d'Outre-Mer.
- Kemmer, Suzanne. 1993. *The Middle Voice*. Typological Studies in Language 23. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

- Kroeger, Paul R. 2004. *Analyzing Syntax - A Lexical-Functional Approach*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Leenhardt, Maurice. 1946. *Langues et Dialectes de l'Austro-Mélanésie*. Travaux et Mémoires de l'institut d'ethnologie XLVI. Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie.
- . 1978a. "Les événements de 1917 en Nouvelle-Calédonie. Géographie des tribus et des chefs". *Journal de la Société des océanistes* 34 (58): 19–22. ISSN: 0300-953X. doi:[10.3406/jso.1978.2962](https://doi.org/10.3406/jso.1978.2962).
- Leenhardt, Raymond H. 1978b. "Figures Mélanésiennes : Le Grand Chef Amane Des Poyes de 1898 à 1917". *Journal de la Société des Océanistes* 34 (58-59): 23–59. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3406/jso.1978.2963>.
- Lynch, John. 2004. "The Efate-Erromango Problem in Vanuatu Subgrouping". <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3623361>, *Oceanic Linguistics* 43, no. 2 (): 311–338.
- Lynch, John, Malcolm Ross, and Terry Crowley. 2002. *The Oceanic Languages*. Psychology Press.
- Lyons, Christopher. 1999. *Definiteness*. Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Moran, Steven, and Daniel McCloy, eds. 2019. *PHOIBLE 2.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
- Nea, Gale. 1963. *Poésie En Vamale*. https://archives.crem-cnrs.fr/archives/items/CNRSMH_I_1964_003_001_03/. Teganpaik.
- Ozanne-Rivierre, Françoise. 1976. *Le iaai: langue mélanésienne d'Ouvéa, Nouvelle-Calédonie: phonologie, morphologie, esquisse syntaxique*. Vol. 20. SELAF. Peeters Publishers.
- . 1982. "Phonologie Comparée Des Langues de Hienghène et Du Proto-Océanien". In *Dictionnaire Thématique Des Langues de La Région de Hienghène*, ed. by André-Georges Haudricourt and Françoise Ozanne-Rivierre. Selaf 242. Leuven - Paris: Peeters Publishers.
- . 1992. "The Proto-Oceanic Consonantal System and the Languages of New Caledonia". Ed. by Byron W. Bender, Kenneth L. Rehg, and James T. Collins. *Oceanic Linguistics* 31 (2): 191–207. ISSN: 0029-8115. doi:[10.2307/3623014](https://doi.org/10.2307/3623014). JSTOR: [3623014](https://www.jstor.org/stable/3623014).
- . 1995. "Structural Changes in the Languages of Northern New Caledonia". *Oceanic Linguistics* 34 (1): 44–72. JSTOR: [3623111](https://www.jstor.org/stable/3623111).
- . 1998. *Le Nyelâyu de Balade (Nouvelle-Calédonie)*. Langues et Cultures Du Pacifique 12. Peeters Publishers.

- . “Dictionnaire Thématique Des Langues Pwaamei Hnaakâ, Pwaamei Yaak et Pwapwâ (Nouvelle-Calédonie)”. unpublished.
- Ozanne-Rivierre, Françoise, and Jean-Claude Rivierre. 2004. “Verbal Compounds and Lexical Prefixes in the Languages of New Caledonia”. In *Complex Predicates in Oceanic Languages: Studies in the Dynamics of Binding and Boundness*, ed. by Isabelle Bril and Françoise Ozanne-Rivierre. Walter de Gruyter.
- Pawley, Andrew. 1973. “Some Problems in Proto-Oceanic Grammar”. *Oceanic Linguistics* 12 (1/2): 103–188.
- Philcat, Alex. 1989. *La Révolte Des Poyes En Nouvelle-Calédonie*. Nanterre: Académie Européenne du livre.
- Rivierre, Jean-Claude. 1980. *La Langue de Touho: Phonologie et Grammaire Du Cèmuhi*. Vol. 38. Langues et Civilisations à Tradition Orale. Paris: SELAF.
- . 1983. *Dictionnaire Paicî-Français, Suivi d’un Lexique Français-Paicî*. Langues et Cultures Du Pacifique 4. Peeters Publishers.
- . 1993. “Tonogenesis in New Caledonia”. *Oceanic Linguistics Special Publications* 24:153–173.
- . 1994. “Contact-induced phonological complexification in New Caledonia”. In *Language contact and change in the Austronesian world*, 497–522. De Gruyter Mouton.
- . “Projet de Dictionnaire Thématique En Langue de Tyéta (Hmwaveke)”. unpublished.
- Rivierre, Jean-Claude, and Sabine Ehrhardt. 2006. *Le Bwatoo et les dialectes de la région de Koné (Nouvelle-Calédonie)*. Selaf 435. Paris, Louvain, Dudley: Peeters Publishers.
- Ross, Malcolm. 2004. “The Morphosyntactic Typology of Oceanic Languages”. *Language and Linguistics* 2 (5): 491–541.
- Ross, Malcolm, Andrew Pawley, and Meredith Osmond, eds. 1998. *The Lexicon of Proto Oceanic: The Culture and Environment of Ancestral Oceanic Society 1: Material Culture*. Pacific Linguistics. Canberra: The Australian National University.
- Salaün, Marie. 2005. “La Francophonie En Contexte Post-Colonial: L’exemple de La Nouvelle-Calédonie”. Washington, DC.
- Sallabank, Julia. 2015. “Language Ideologies, Practices and Policies in Kanaky/New Caledonia”. In *Policy and Planning for Endangered Languages*, ed. by M.C. Jones, 31–47. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Salomon, Christine. 2000. "Hommes et Femmes". In *En Pays Kanak: Ethnologie, Linguistique, Archéologie, Histoire de La Nouvelle Calédonie*, ed. by Alban Bensa and Isabelle Leblic, vol. 14. *Ethnologie de La France*. Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, Ministère de la Culture.
- Sand, Christophe. 2012. "Certainly the Most Technically Complex Pondfield Irrigation Within Melanesia': Wet Taro Field Systems of New Caledonia". *Senri Ethnological Studies* 78, no. 1 (): 167–188.
- Sand, Christophe, Jacques Bole, and André Ouetcho. 2007. "What Were the Real Numbers? The Question of Pre-Contact Population Densities in New Caledonia". In *The Growth and Collapse of Pacific Island Societies*, ed. by Patrick Vinton Kirch and Jean-Louis Rallu. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Sand, Christophe, and André Ouetcho. 2001. *Tiouandé. Archéologie d'un Massif de Karst du Nord-Est de La Grande-Terre (Nouvelle-Calédonie)*. Les Cahiers de l'Archéologie 12. Nouméa, New Caledonia: Service territorial des musées et du patrimoine - Département archéologie.
- Saussol, Alain. 1979. *L'héritage: Essai Sur Le Problème Foncier Mélanésien En Nouvelle-Calédonie*. Paris: Société des Océanistes.
- Schooling, Stephen J. 1992. "The Phonology of Yuanga: A Language of New Caledonia". *Pacific Linguistics. Series A. Occasional Papers* 82:97–146.
- Spencer, Andrew, and Ana R. Luís. 2012. *Clitics - An Introduction*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Stern, Jacques. 1943. *Les Colonies Françaises: Passé et Avenir*. New York: Brentano's.
- Zúñiga, Fernando. 2014. "(Anti-) cliticization in Mapudungun". *Morphology* 24 (3): 161–175.
- Zúñiga, Fernando, and Seppo Kittilä. 2019. *Grammatical Voice*. Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Index

- Absolutive *ka*, 192
 - Animacy, 193
- Adoption, 32
- Adverbs, 92, 211
 - Adverbial clause, 275
- Affair of Poyes, 21
- Alignment, 90, 125
 - Noun phrases, 125
- Allomorph
 - Grammatically conditioned, 231
- Anaphoric *-n*, 74
- Animacy, 106, 193
 - Active verbs with *-n*, 168
- Articles, 75
- Aspect, 225
 - balan*, 233
 - Attenuating, 234
 - Continuative, 235, 237
 - Realis, 236–239
 - bwa*, 228
 - Attenuating, 229
 - Imperfective, 228
 - Prospective, 230
 - ja* ‘finally’, 242
 - Additive *mu*, 245
 - Aktionsart, 226
 - Frequentative *mu*, 244
 - Iterative *mu*, 245
 - Progressive *ko(o)n*, 232
- Assertive *tha*, 99, 258
- Case, 126
 - Agentive, 89, 127
 - Beneficiary, 129
 - Oblique, 129, 131
- Causative, 221
- Chieftdom, 31
- Classifiers, 113
 - Noun classifiers, 117
 - Possessor classifier, 116
 - Relational classifiers, 114
- Clause types, 252
- Clauses
 - Declarative clause, 253
 - Imperative clauses, 182, 257
 - Interrogative clause, 255
 - Polar questions, 255
 - Prohibitive clauses, 258
 - Simple clauses, 251
 - Verbless clause, 254
 - Word order, 251
- Code-switching, 34
- Complementation, 273
 - Complementizer *ma*, 273, 280
- Consonants, 48
 - Allophones, 56
 - Aspiration, 53
 - Fortis and lenis, 54
 - Labio-velarized consonants, 52
 - Voiceless nasals, 52
- Coordination, 266
 - Coordinator *hai*, 268
 - Coordinator *kavi*, 272

- Coordinator *ka*, 269
- Coordinator *koin*, 270
- Coordinator *kon(a)*, 268
- Coordinator *ko*, 270
- Coordinator *ma*, 267
- Numeral coordinators, 97
- Verbal conjunctions, 96
- Cèmuhi, 36
- Discourse markers
 - Discourse marker *go*, 253
 - Discourse marker *ka*, 253
- Exogamy, 31
- Fronting, 138
 - Topic marker *cahma*, 138
- Fwâi, 36
- Gerontocracy, 31
- Haeke, 36
- Insubordination, 280
- Intensifiers, 100
- Interjections, 103
- Irrealis, 226
- Language and land, 32
- Language contact, 33
- Marginal phonemes
 - [k^h], 51, 55
 - [p^h], 51, 55
 - [ŋ], 49
 - [r], 51
- Metzdorf, Charles, 21
- Modality, 258
 - Deontic modality, 260
 - Epistemic modality, 259
- Morphology, 71
- Negation, 63, 99, 198
 - Existential negation, 199
 - Verbal negation, 199
- Nominalization, 187
 - Absolutive *ka*, 192
 - Agentive nominalizer, 188
 - Instrumental nominalizer, 187
 - Locative nominalizer, 190
 - Manner nominalizer, 189
 - Nominalized verb phrase, 190
- Noun Phrase, 125
 - Contrastive, 149
- Noun phrase
 - Quantifiers, 103
- Nouns, 84, 105
 - Benefactive nouns, 171
 - Classifiers, 85
 - Compound Nouns, 118
 - Compounds with two heads, 122
 - Noun on noun, 120
 - Noun on verb, 123
 - Verb on noun, 124
 - Reciprocal relations, 218
- Numerals, 158
 - Multiplicative, 161
- Ordinals, 160
- Particle
 - been* ‘other’, 140
 - se* ‘other’, 140
- Pije, 35
- Pluri-actional *e-*, 183
- Possession, 107
 - Alienable, 112
 - Inalienable, 112
- Prepositions, 88
 - Relational nouns, 85
- Pronouns, 132
 - Demonstrative pronouns, 83, 135

- Personal pronouns, 85
- Questions
 - Content questions, 256
 - Polar questions, 255
 - Question words, 256
- Reciprocal, 217
- Reduplication, 63, 185
- Reflexive, 215
- Relative clause, 276
 - Relativizer, 88
- Repetitive *mwa*, 101, 260
 - Deixis, 262
- Space, 172
 - nya* 'around, towards, inside', 174
 - Centripetal/-fugal, 177
 - Origin of motion *moo*, 177
 - Proximity, 212
 - Same-level axis, 176
 - Spatial adverbs, 212
- Specificity
 - Generic *-n*, 74, 112
- Stress, 63
 - Complicating factors, 64
 - Extrametrical morphemes, 64
- Subject indexes, 86
- Subordination, 272
 - ko* 'because', 279
 - Adverbial clause, 275
 - Complementation, 95, 273
 - Conditional *ma*, 278
 - Purposive *ma*, 277
 - Realis *cala* 'while', 279
- Syllable structure, 62
- TAM markers, 89
- Tipije War, 21, 23
- Transcription, 47
- Transitivity
 - Transitive *-i*, 164, 167
 - Transitive *-ke*, 164
- Verb phrase, 197
 - Asymmetrical verb string, 204
 - Comparison, 213
 - Iterative *han*, 211
 - Manner verbs, 209
 - Preverbs, 204
 - TAM markers, 89
- Verbs, 90, 151
 - Active verbs, 162
 - Active verbs with *-n*, 168
 - Complex verbs, 185
 - Compound verbs, 186
 - Dependent transitive verbs, 168
 - Impersonal verbs, 152, 227, 273
 - Incorporated object construction, 186
 - Manner verbs, 209
 - Nominalization, 187
 - Numerals, 158
 - Ordinals, 160
 - Possessible verbs, 161
 - Prefixes, 178
 - da* 'do first', 182
 - the-* 'quickly, a bit; while walking', 181
 - Manner, 176, 178
 - Pluri-actional, 183
 - Reduplication, 185
 - Serial verb construction, 202
 - Stative verbs, 154
 - Dependent stative verbs, 155
- Voice, 215
 - Causative, 221
 - Middle, 219
 - Grouping, 220

- Lack of endpoint, 220
- Sameness, 217
- Spatial Symmetry, 220
- Reciprocal, 217
- Reciprocal kinship terms, 218
- Reflexive, 215
- Vowels, 57
 - Allophones, 60
 - Diphthongs, 60
 - Nasal vowels, 47
 - Nasalized vowels, 60
 - Quality, 59
 - Quantity, 58
- Word avoidance taboo, 186, 190
- Word order, 251
- Wordhood, 67
 - vwa, 68
 - Affixes, 69
 - Clitics, 69
 - Verbs vs nouns, 70