3.1 Parts of speech and grammatical roles

*Galak* itself, then, probably doesn't include 'want' as part of its meaning, though the explications above show how it so readily lends itself to desiderative use with a non-coreferential clausal complement; all the more so when accompanied by *beu* which does involve 'want' in its meaning. Although a *beu* construction may be the best translation for many 'I want' constructions, *beu* cannot be used to define other desiderative constructions with *tém*, *meuh'eat* etc., which are not limited to first-person and present-tense use; but *beu* Y V can be defined via *lôn meuh'eat* Y V 'I want Y to do V'.

Returning now to *tém*, we have observed that it is limited to coreferential complements with an A verb. This construction type may be shown as follows, where X[PC] is the pronominal proclitic coreferential with X, and V[A] indicates that the verb is an A verb:

\[
X \ X_{[PC]-tém} \ V_{[A]} \ (\text{e.g. 12-13})
\]
\[
X \ \text{wants: } X \ \text{will do V}
\]

*Meuh'eat* too can occur with an A verb, but it does not have to do so; and its complement can be non-coreferential. This construction can be represented without any stipulation for the verb (A or U), and without any reference to the presence or absence of proclitics on the complement verb, because this is entirely determined by the particular verb, not by the *meuh'eat* construction itself:

\[
X \ \text{meuh'eat} \ X/Y \ V \ (\text{e.g. 14-16})
\]
\[
X \ \text{wants: } X/Y \ \text{will do V}
\]

If the V in this construction is an A verb, it will have its own proclitic, as seen in (14) above.

Comparing the *tém* and *meuh'eat* constructions, it should now be clear that the *meuh'eat* construction could be substituted for all instances of the *tém* construction, but not vice versa. The *tém* construction could only be substituted for the *meuh'eat* one in cases where the complement verb is both A-taking and coreferential. Thus *tém* could be defined in terms of *meuh'eat* but not vice versa:

\[
X \ X_{[PC]-tém} \ V_{[A]} =
\]
\[
X \ \text{meuh'eat} \ X \ V
\]
X meuh'eat X′Y′ V
\ne X X[PC]-tém V[A]

Only one subtype of meuh'eat construction could be defined in terms of tém:

X meuh'eat X V[A] =
X X[PC]-tém V[A]

What, then, is the nature of the semantic relation of tém to meuh'eat? Are they to be regarded as fully synonymous although subject to different syntactic constraints, or is there a semantic difference underlying the difference in grammatical properties? This question is particularly important in understanding the nature of allolexy within NSM theory.

A semantic prime, such as WANT, may have more than one equivalent in a particular language, associated with different syntactic environments. If two lexemes, each in its own syntactic environment, are fully equivalent to this semantic prime, having no more and no fewer components of meaning than WANT, then they are allolexes of this prime and they are in an allolexical relationship to each other. The clearest cases of allolexy are those where the allolexes (like allophones in phonology) are in complementary distribution. This is arguably the case for Japanese hoskii and -tai, where -tai takes only a coreferential verb complement, while hoskii takes NP and non-coreferential V-te complements; the choice or hoskii or -tai is usually predictable from the syntactic environment. But not all languages present clear cases of complementary distribution. In Acehnese, the distribution of tém and meuh'eat is not fully complementary because either can occur with a coreferential A verb complement, as shown above.

Can this still be considered a case of allolexy? To answer this question we would have to establish either that (a) one of the two is more semantically complex than the other, and they are not allolexes; or that (b) their distinctive syntactic properties are sufficient to distinguish them as allolexes despite one environment in which they may be in free variation; or that (c) in their mutually exclusive contexts they are fully allolexical, but in the overlapping construction type one conveys more elements of
meaning than the other. Each of these possibilities will be examined in detail, but first it is necessary to consider some evidence about the semantics of these two verbs.

From the available data, including examples like (12-16) above, both tém and meuh’eut appear to be good equivalents of WANT, conveying no more and no fewer elements of meaning. But the possibility of additional semantic complexity should be considered, particularly in view of suggestions by Durie and colleagues that tém has implications of ‘control over the thing wanted’ and/or of ‘active readiness to do something’; and that with meuh’eut there may be ‘a suggestion that there is some obstacle and the desire may or may not be fulfilled’. These implications are associated with the fact that tém takes an A argument and meuh’eut takes a U: the suggestion is that in those cases where tém can take a non-A complement verb, tém has a different meaning, namely ‘have the ability to’ (cf. 5.4 below on the relationship of ability and potentiality to wanting).

Durie, whose work shows an extraordinarily deep insight into the semantics of Austronesian grammatical relations, has suggested that A verbs may be inherently volitional and may therefore be semantically complex, including, in addition to the action meaning itself, something like ‘something happens because the Actor wants it’. Causatives, formed with the prefix peu-, always take Actors. Some A verbs have non-volitional, non-A counterparts, formed with the prefix teu- (e.g. peugah ‘say’, teupeugah ‘say by accident, happen to mention’).

The idea that the division of predicates into two classes is not arbitrary, but has some basis in meaning, is supported by the fact that most of the A predicates seem to involve volition or intention in a way that non-A predicates do not (e.g. ‘hit’ takes an A, ‘fall’ does not). Further supporting evidence comes from verb derivation: the fact that causatives take Actors, and the fact that the teu- prefix produces a clear set of contrasts between verbs with and without a volitional element.

However, it is important to distinguish between lexical material, such as the prefixes teu- and peu-, and grammatical classes whose members have grammatical behaviour but no actual lexical material in common. The A predicates all take the cross-referencing pronominal proclitics, but there are no common lexical elements shared by all A predicates. Not all the A verbs have a meaning component such as ‘this happens because A wants it’. Therefore, while wanting may be an element in the definitions of many (though not all) of the members of the A class, a
meaning 'want' cannot be tied directly to the grammatical class through any lexical material.

The prefix *teu-, on the other hand, deriving non-volitional, non-A predicates from members of the A class, seems to have a clearly identifiable lexical meaning, along the lines of 'not because someone wants this'. That is, comparing an A verb and its derived counterpart:

\[
\begin{align*}
X \text{ peugah } "Z" & \quad \text{cf.} \quad X \text{ teupeugah } "Z" \\
X \text{ says } "Z" & \quad \text{X says } "Z" \\
& \quad \text{not because } X \text{ wants this}
\end{align*}
\]

This has the added advantage of being able to explain why some A predicates can have derived forms with *teu-, while others cannot. For example, *tém 'want' and *thée 'know' have no counterparts with *teu-. In the case of *tém, the use of the *teu- prefix would be blocked by a clear semantic clash, along the following lines:

\[
\begin{align*}
X \text{ tém } Z & \quad \text{cf.} \quad *X \text{ teu-tém } Z \\
X \text{ wants } Z & \quad \text{X wants } Z \\
& \quad *\text{not because } X \text{ wants this}
\end{align*}
\]

The incompatibility of *teu- with *thée 'know' may arise because one either knows or doesn't know something, regardless of whether one wants this or not.

Acehnese predicate classes, then, are rather like other wordclasses in that they have some prototypical members that contribute a semantic resonance to the wordclass as a whole, but this resonance does not dictate the meanings of all members of the class. The A class includes many members, like 'hit' and the peu- causatives, that share a meaning component 'someone (X) wants this'. It also has other members like *thée which means 'know (by personal experience)', but which acquires a mildly volitional resonance by association with the other more prototypical members of this class. The U class includes many members, like seugan 'not want' and the teu- verbs, that share a meaning component like 'not because X wants this'; but it also includes members like *rasa which means just 'feel' but acquires a passive or avolitional resonance by association with other members of its class.
Since the predicate classes do not dictate the semantic content of their members, it cannot be assumed that tém has any more components of meaning than meuh'eut, or vice versa, arising from their A or U class membership. The suggested connotations of control or willingness with tém and possible hindrance with meuh'eut, may be explainable as wordclass resonance effects. The nature of this resonance can be spelt out but does not actually form part of the meaning of all A or U predicates (these classes include many more than their most prototypical members). When an A argument is present, the chances are that 'this is something that can happen if someone wants it', and when a U argument is present, the chances are that 'this can happen not because someone wants it'; but these semantic associations are not part of the meaning of every A and every U lexeme or construction.

This largely rules out the possibility that either tém or meuh'eut is inherently more semantically complex than the other (possibility (a) above). Next, it should be considered whether there is any evidence for possibility (c), that the meaning of the particular construction X meuh'eut X V[\text{A}] is any more or less complex than the meaning of X X[\text{PC}]-tém V[\text{A}].

Even in this coreferential A-verb context ('X wants to do V[\text{A}']), meuh'eut and tém appear to be synonymous, as in examples (12-14) above. But synonymy often motivates semantic change: when two words or constructions are synonymous, often one of them will acquire additional components of meaning. So, although the A or U class membership does not dictate meaning, it would not be unexpected either for the tém construction to take on an additional 'active readiness' meaning component such as 'X thinks: I will do something because of this', or for the meuh'eut construction to acquire an additional 'uncertainty' component such as 'X thinks: I don't know if this can happen'.

As yet no clear evidence has been seen that either the tém or the meuh'eut construction has such an additional meaning component, but this can be established empirically by the paraphrase substitution method: by taking a dozen or so (preferably more) attested examples of each construction, and testing whether both the (a) and (b) components apply to every case, or whether in some cases the (b) component must be discarded as incompatible with the meaning of the example. Of course the (b) components might need to be reworded somewhat in the process, but only if a single formulation is substitutable in all cases would the component stand as a valid part of the meaning:
X \( X_{PC} \)-tém \( V_{A} \)
   a. X wants: X will do V
   ?b. X thinks: I will do something after now because of this

\( X \text{ meuh'eut} \ X \ V_{A} \)
   a. X wants: X will do V
   ?b. X thinks: I don't know if this can happen

Note that in either case Durie's insight into the connotations of these verbs is valid; but it is important to establish whether these associations are actually part of the lexical meaning, or merely a product of wordclass resonance. This particular question can be resolved by a little more investigation in Acehnese, as no doubt it will be as research on lexical universals in Acehnese continues; the important points here are to do with the broader nature of allolexical relations and methods of identifying them.

When there are two potential allolexes, both of which seem to be good equivalents of a semantic prime in at least some contexts, the first step in analysis is to determine whether they are in complementary distribution syntactically (like Japanese hoshii and -tai). If so, there is a sound empirical basis for regarding them as allolexes of that semantic prime. This type of allolexical relation could be represented formally as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{WANT} & \rightarrow -tai & / & (X \ wa) (Z \ o) \ V \ ____ \\
& \quad \rightarrow \ hoshii & / & (X \ wa) (Y \ ni) (Z \ o) \ V\text{-te} \ ____ \\
& & / & (X \ wa) \ NP \ ga \ ____
\end{align*}
\]

If the distribution is not fully complementary, the next step is to see if there is any evidence for one being more semantically complex than the other. Both lexical and grammatical evidence should be considered, as illustrated above. Lexical content can be established by constructing explicatory paraphrases and testing them against empirical data. Grammatical evidence such as wordclass membership and syntactic behaviour must be assessed in relation to the meanings of particular constructions. The application of these principles above has provided
empirically based accounts of the relationship of *beu* and *galak* to wanting; of construction types associated with the potential allolexes *tém* and *meuh’eut*; of the relationship of their verbclass membership to their meaning and semantic resonance; and a way of determining empirically whether one of two apparently synonymous constructions is more complex semantically than the other.

The next stage of analysis will depend on the outcome of this empirical test. The possible outcomes and their implications are worth spelling out here, because the empirical findings in similar cases will differ from language to language. The possibilities are given in order of decreasing likelihood in the Acehnese case.

[1] Neither construction has a valid meaning component additional to ‘X wants: X will do V’. In this case *tém* and *meuh’eut* must be regarded as allolexes of WANT despite their overlap in one context of use; they would have to be regarded as being in free variation in the coreferential A-verb context. This situation could be represented formally as follows:

\[
\text{WANT} \rightarrow tém \quad / \quad X \ X_{[PC]}-\_ \_ V_{[A]}
\]

\[
\rightarrow \text{meuh’eut} \quad / \quad X \_ \_ X/Y V
\]

\[
\quad / \quad X \_ \_ keu \ NP
\]

Note that there are still two important syntactic differences between them. These are that no constituents separate *tém* from its complement verb; and that a coreferential A (or U) is possible but not obligatory with *meuh’eut*, while a coreferential A is obligatory with *tém*. These differences are sufficient to justify a distinction between these two allolexes on syntactic grounds, as illustrated in the representation above.

[2] The *tém* construction is found to have a second meaning component and the *meuh’eut* one is not. In this case they are not allolexes, *meuh’eut* is the only Acehnese equivalent of WANT, and *tém* can be defined in terms of it, as shown earlier in the discussion:

\[
X \ X_{[PC]}-tém \ V_{[A]}
\]

\[
X \text{ wants: } X \text{ will do } V_{[A]} = (X \text{ meuh’eut } X \ V_{[A]})
\]

\[
X \text{ thinks: } I \text{ will do something after now because of this }
\]
The *meuh’eut* construction is found to have a second meaning component and the *tém* one is not. This situation is more complex than either of the two cases above, but it is definitely a possibility. In this case it is important to distinguish between word meaning and construction type meaning, because the additional meaning component would apply to *meuh’eut* only in this particular construction type, by virtue of its contrast with *tém* in this context only. In non-coreferential contexts *meuh’eut* would still equate with no more and no less than WANT, because there is no semantically simpler desiderative in non-coreferential contexts. This situation could be represented as follows:

\[
\text{WANT} \rightarrow \text{tém} \quad / \quad X \quad X_{[PC]}^{-} \quad V_{[A]}
\]

\[
\rightarrow \text{meuh’eut} \quad / \quad X \quad Y \quad V
\]

\[
/ \quad X \quad __ \quad NP
\]

The coreferential *meuh’eut* construction type would then be definable in terms of *tém* as mentioned above:

\[
X \text{meuh’eut} \quad X \quad V_{[A]} =
\]

\[
X \text{wants: } X \text{ will do } V_{[A]} (X \quad X_{[PC]^{-} \text{tém } V_{[A]})}
\]

\[
X \text{thinks: I don’t know if this can happen}
\]

Observe that the syntactic environments shown in the formula are still different enough to justify the identification of the two allolexes on syntactic grounds.

It is interesting to recall the fact that, if *tém* and *meuh’eut* were fully synonymous, then all instances of *tém* could be rephrased in terms of *meuh’eut* but not vice versa. It is now apparent that this fact in itself is not sufficient evidence for regarding *meuh’eut* as a better equivalent of WANT than *tém*, for two reasons. First, if they are synonymous, as in case [1] above, their syntactic environments are still significantly different for both to stand as allolexes as shown in the formula for that case. Second, if they are not synonymous, then the more complex one must be definable in terms of the simpler one, as shown for cases [2] and [3].
[4] Both the tém and the meuh’eut constructions are found to be semantically complex, that is, each of them has a valid second meaning component. Such a situation is unlikely because of the improbability of ‘X wants to do V’ desiderative constructions always encoding an additional ‘willingness’ or ‘uncertainty’ component. More specifically, it would suggest that meuh’eut should be incompatible with A verbs, if meuh’eut always implies some lack of volition; whereas it occurs freely with A verbs, as in (14) above. Moreover, it is improbable that both tém and meuh’eut should be ‘marked’ with regard to volition. Particularly in view of the freedom of meuh’eut to take A or U complements and the requirement that tém take only A complements, one would expect only tém to have an additional meaning component related to this constraint. The A class in general is grammatically marked in a way that the U class is not, by the presence of the proclitics. Notice too how much vaguer the idea of ‘volition’ or its absence is, than the specific meaning components considered above; if we say that ‘volition’ is present, we need to state just how and in what form this relates to the meaning.

So, there is some evidence against the idea that both the tém and the meuh’eut constructions are more complex semantically than ‘X wants: X will do V’. If this were nonetheless found to be true, it would pose a major problem for NSM, unless some other Acehnese expression is found that encodes no more and no less than ‘X wants: X will do V’. The core of the A/U distinction clearly has to do with wanting (or ‘volition’); this and the wealth of desiderative expressions in Acehnese leave no doubt that the concept of wanting is encoded in many ways in this language.

But in the unlikely case that Acehnese really has no semantically simple way of saying ‘X wants: X will do V’ without obligatorily including some additional meaning, then we would have to consider the possibility that a language may be able to grammaticalise a basic concept like WANT at such a deep level that this distinction pervades the semantic structure of the language, overriding the principle that certain combinations of basic meanings like ‘X wants: X will do V’ should be expressible in a pure form with no additional obligatory components of meaning. This theoretical issue will be taken up again in Chapter 6.

This section has illustrated some procedures for analysing various types of desiderative grammatical constructions and their meanings, with a view to assessing the equivalence or otherwise of desiderative constructions across languages, and identifying precisely the nature of the
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semantic differences and correspondences between such constructions in different languages. We have seen how the range of construction types, their meanings, and the grammatical roles associated with them, interact with the meanings of desiderative lexemes. The nature and syntactic properties of the complements of desideratives are of particular importance in such analysis, and these complement types are the focus of the rest of this chapter.

3.2 Desideratives and their complements

The analysis of desiderative constructions in any language requires thorough consideration not only of the desiderative words or morphemes themselves, but also the ways in which the object of desire is handled in the grammar: which kinds of complements can occur with which desideratives, and what are the requirements and constraints that the grammar imposes on these complement constructions.

Desideratives rarely occur without some kind of complement. In English, this is one of the grammatical features that distinguishes between two meanings of the polysemous verb *want*: only *want₂* can occur without a complement, as in *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want*. With *want₂* a complement is possible, but not obligatory (e.g. *I shall not want for anything*); whereas with the desiderative *want₁* a complement is obligatory (e.g. *I want something*). *Want₁* and *want₂* take different complement types, one with *for* and one without, and semantic and grammatical differences like those between these complement types have parallels in many languages.

Complement structures in general are one of the most intriguing areas of interaction between semantics and grammar, and the challenge of trying to explain and predict complement structures has engaged many of the world’s most outstanding linguists. In focussing here on a very small group of complement-taking predicates, the desideratives, we can observe in detail many of the factors that are involved in complementation. The purpose of this section is not to attempt to find the semantic parameters underlying various complement structures, nor to offer a basis for classification of complement-taking predicates; but rather to explore the ways in which a range of complement structures are exploited by particular languages to express specific desiderative meanings. This can in turn lead
to a clearer understanding of the range of combinatorial possibilities of desiderative meanings across languages, and how these semantic combinations are realised in different grammars.

With desiderative predicates, the type of complement that seems simplest grammatically is not necessarily the simplest semantically; nor is it found in all languages. This is the nominal complement, as in the English *I want (a drink of) water*, Japanese *Okane ga hoshii* 'I want money', Acehnese *Lôn meuh'eut that keu inông nyan* 'I really want that woman', Kawai *Mo ubi uwo kodio gido* 'I want water for drinking', and so on.

The syntax of this kind of construction varies somewhat from language to language. In some languages, the main desiderative word is a transitive verb that can take a direct object noun, as in English *X wants NP*. In other languages nominal complements are accompanied by adpositions, such as *keu 'to'* in Acehnese *X meuh'eut keu NP*. In languages with desideratives that are not verbs, a nominal complement can appear in an appropriate syntactic role. In the Japanese *NP ga hoshii* construction, the adjectival desiderative *hoshii* can take an NP like *okane* 'money' as a core argument marked with *ga* (nominative). In Kawai the desiderative NP *X ubi 'X wants'* has an optional copula *erea* 'be' before an NP complement like *uwo* 'water': *X ubi (erea) NP*. In Arrernte the nominal desiderative *ahentye* 'want' takes an NP with the dative case marker -ke, as in *Ayenge ahentye kere-ke* 'I want meat': *X ahentye NP-DAT*.

In a surprising number of languages as unrelated as English, Acehnese and Dyirbal, the combination of a desiderative with a human NP complement has added connotations of sexual desire, as in the Acehnese example above. This may not be an obligatory interpretation; compare English *Darling, I want you* with the U.S. military recruiting slogan *Uncle Sam wants you*, where the interpretation of *want* as sexual or otherwise depends on social background knowledge about the likelihood of such a relationship between the 'wanderer' and the other person.

In some languages, however, the main desiderative does not allow a nominal complement at all. In Bahasa Indonesia, *mau* 'want' usually has some appropriate verb between it and an NP: *Dia mau nasi* 'She wants rice' is less felicitous for many speakers than *Dia mau makan nasi* 'She wants (to eat) rice'. An alternative way of expressing something like this is with the verb *suka* 'like', which can take a nominal or verbal complement: *Dia suka (makan) nasi* 'She likes (eating) rice'. As noted in the previous
chapter, *suka* has two meanings, one of them apparently synonymous with *mau* ‘want’.

*Mau* is a good example of how a word can be equivalent to the NSM prime WANT without being fully equivalent to the English word *want*. The potential to take a nominal complement is not essential to WANT as a semantic prime, because wanting a thing or a person is a semantically complex notion that can be further decomposed in terms of WANT plus a verbal or clausal complement. Wanting a thing, as in ‘She wants rice’, usually implies wanting to obtain or to do something with this thing, such as to eat it. What X wants is not just the thing as such, but to be able to do something with it:

\[ X \text{ wants } NP \Rightarrow \]
\[ X \text{ wants: } X \text{ can do something with } NP \]

The English *X wants NP* construction allows the desired action, what X wants to do to NP, to be left unspecified, unlike the Indonesian *X mau V NP* construction where it is usually specified (e.g. *makan* ‘eat’ or *mempunyai* ‘have’). In English, *She wants rice* may imply that she wants to get rice, buy it, eat it, or store it for some unspecified future use. The formula above should be adjusted to reflect this fact:

\[ X \text{ wants } NP \text{ (e.g. } \text{She wants rice}) \]
\[ X \text{ wants this:} \]
\[ \text{if I want to do something with this thing, I can do it} \]

It is necessary for ‘want’ to appear twice in this statement of meaning, to reflect the fact that what X wants is a situation where the NP (e.g. ‘rice’) is available to X if X should want to do something with it. Often, wanting to be able to do something with NP entails wanting this thing to be in a particular place, with or near the wanter (wanting to ‘get’ this thing), but this does not apply to all uses of this construction, and is therefore not a necessary component of its meaning.

The comparative infelicity of *mau* with a nominal complement only means that it is not equivalent to English *want* in this particular construction type; it does not mean that *mau* isn’t fully equivalent to *want* in other construction types, such as *X mau maken nasi*, which is fully equivalent to the English *X wants to eat rice*. 
The grammatical constraint that *want* often takes a nominal complement while *mau* usually doesn't is, moreover, associated with the semantic complexity of the NP complement construction. The English construction *X wants NP* is more complex in its meaning than just 'X wants to do V' (= *X mau V*), as shown above: it involves complex notions of conditionality (IF X wants to do something) and ability/possibility (X CAN do it). It is not surprising, therefore, that one language should have a construction encoding this complex meaning while another language may not have a precisely equivalent construction. It would be far more surprising if one language lacked an equivalent of the semantically simpler constructions *X wants to do V* or *X mau V*.

On the other hand, it is not unusual in human affairs for someone to want to get or to have a thing (or a person): and so it is not surprising that many languages from different language families and different cultures do have desiderative constructions with nominal complements. The meanings of such constructions are language-specific and require investigation in each language. It cannot be assumed that they all have the same semantic content as the English *X wants NP* construction has, although many of them encode very similar elements of meaning. For example, the Japanese construction *X wa NP ga hoshii* (e.g. 8 above) seems to encode a very similar meaning to *X wants NP*, that is:

\[ X \text{ wa NP ga hoshii} \]

X wants this:

if I want to do something with this thing, I can do it

But Japanese also has the language-specific variant where X, the wanter, is not specified but is assumed to be the speaker:

\[ NP \text{ ga hoshii} \]

someone wants this:

if I want to do something with this thing, I can do it

people can know: I am this person

Another semantic component that was considered in relation to the Japanese (*X wa*) *NP ga hoshii* construction was the possibility that the NP is something that X has a good opinion of, i.e. that 'X thinks something good about NP'; however, this was not a necessary condition for the use of
this construction in all cases. It is mentioned here to illustrate the fact that the meanings of constructions have to be investigated language-specifically. A similar example arose with the Mangap-Mbula construction \( X \text{ lele-ng pa NP} \), where the desiderative term lele- also refers to a body part ('insides'). Because of this an additional component seemed to be possible, along the lines of 'X feels something because of this'; but again, this component was not a necessary part of the meaning of this construction in all cases. The investigation of language-specific variations in the meanings of similar constructions also illustrates how formulae of meaning such as those offered here can serve as ongoing research tools: they can be tested against further data as it comes to hand, and they can be modified in the light of new findings.

Another aspect of desiderative constructions with nominal complements is their tendency to have connotations of sexual desire, even in quite unrelated languages and cultures. This may in some cases be regarded as a specialised subtype of NP complement construction, where t'e wanted NP is a person, and this might be represented along the following lines, for the English version:

\[
X \text{ wants } NP_{[\text{Human}]}
\]

\[X \text{ wants this:}
\]

if I want to do something with this person, I can do it
if a man and a woman do something like this together,
they can feel something good because of this

The third and fourth lines refer to the fact that in this case what is wanted is something sexual, but just what is unspecified; it is 'like' what a man and a woman can do together, but the construction places no specific constraints on the nature of the act or the gender or age of X and the NP.

However, such a specific formulation is probably unnecessary, indeed superfluous, for English, or for Acehnese or many other languages where similar constructions can have similar connotations. It is superfluous for two reasons. First, it is included within the more general formula given above for \( X \text{ wants } NP \). In the case of sexual connotations, it is still true that X wants to be able to do something unspecified with NP, if X wants to do it; and the idea that this unspecified something could be sexual in nature is an inference from extralinguistic knowledge, not a specific part of the semantic content of this construction.
3.2 Desideratives and their complements

Second, it is too specific. Only if a sexual interpretation were obligatory for all cases of \( X \) \textit{wants} \( NP_{\text{[Human]}} \) would it be justified to treat this as a separate construction with a specifically sexual meaning. This is clearly not so for English, since many examples of this construction have no sexual connotations (e.g. \textit{Uncle Sam wants} \textit{you}, or \textit{someone wants you on the phone}). Nor does Acehnese \( X \) \textit{meu'eat keu} \( NP_{\text{[Human]}} \) always have a sexual connotation; when the NP is \textit{in\öng nyan} ‘that woman’ the implication is obvious, but it is not an obligatory part of the meaning of this construction.

Some languages employ a nominal form for what in other languages would be a verbal complement. In Maori, for example, the complement ‘go’ in ‘I want to go’ is presented as a nominal preceded by an article and by the directional \textit{ki} ‘to’ as a complementiser, so the resulting complement structure is very similar in form to a directional prepositional phrase:

(22) a. \( E \) \textit{hiaha ana au ki te haere.}  
\textsc{TAM} \textsc{want} \textsc{PROG} 1\textsc{s} \textsc{to} \textsc{the} \textsc{go}  
'I want to go.'

b. \( E \) \textit{haere ana au ki te paa.}  
\textsc{TAM} \textsc{go} \textsc{PROG} 1\textsc{s} \textsc{to} \textsc{the} \textsc{village}  
'I’m going to the village.'

The construction in (22a) obviously does not mean ‘\( X \) wants to be able to do something with \( NP \)’. In Maori (22a) is the ordinary way of saying ‘I want to go’, and on the basis of the discussion earlier in this chapter, the wordclass properties of the complement should not of themselves constitute an obstacle to recognising \( E \) \textit{haere ana} \( X \) \textit{ki te V} as equivalent to ‘\( X \) wants to do V’. Nominalised complements of desideratives are also seen in the Finnish and Irish examples (7b) and (49) in Chapter 2, and are found in many other languages.

3.3 Verbal and clausal complements

It has been suggested above that desiderative constructions with nominal complements are fairly complex semantically, and can be defined
in terms of another type of desiderative construction: one with a verbal or clausal complement, for example ‘X wants to be able to do something with NP’ or ‘X wants: X can do something with NP’. It must be asked, then, what is the nature of this kind of complement construction, and can it legitimately be regarded as more basic semantically than the NP complement constructions? Several different types of desiderative constructions with verbal or clausal complements can be observed in different languages. Some shared patterns can be identified across languages, and each language has its own set of constructions that realise these patterns of meaning in language-specific ways.

The Acehnese desiderative verbs discussed above provide a starting point for observing patterns of verbal and clausal complement constructions. The verb têm ‘want’, as seen in examples (12) and (13) above, takes a verbal complement that is obligatorily coreferential with têm. In this construction (X X_{PC}-têm V_{[A]} ‘X wants to do V’) têm is not freely separable from its complement verb. Its relationship to that verb is somewhat like an auxiliary or modifier, although têm imposes the requirement that its complement can only be an A verb. Têm cannot take a full clause as its complement.

The verb meuh’eut can take either a verb or a full clause as its complement. The verbal complement type is seen in example (14) above (X meuh’eut V ‘X wants to do V’). In this construction the performer of the complement action is coreferential with the wanter. If the complement verb is an A verb its pronominal proclitic is attached directly to it (X meuh’eut X_{PC}-V_{[A]}), unlike the têm construction where the proclitic precedes têm and does not come between têm and the complement verb. If the complement verb is not an A verb, no pronominal element comes between it and meuh’eut.

A full clause can be the complement of meuh’eut when the actor or undergoer of the complement verb is a different person from the ‘wanter’, as in example (16) above (X meuh’eut Y V ‘X wants Y to do V’). Of course when the verb in the complement clause is an A verb it has its proclitic; but whatever the class of the complement clause verb, the clause (Y V ‘Y does V’) could stand on its own as an independent clause.

A somewhat different pattern of complement types is seen in Samoan, where the two main desideratives are fia ‘want’ and mana’o ‘want’. Fia is a verbal modifier, occurring only in preverbal position, while mana’o is a main verb. Samoan has two classes of predicates,
formally distinguished by whether they can take an ergative-marked agent; one class consists mainly of transitive actions, and the other of predicates that can refer to actions, qualities or states. With the latter class, fia indicates that someone wants to do or to be what is predicated:

(23) \[ E \text{ fia } \text{'ai le teine.} \]
TAM want eat the girl
'The girl wants to eat.'

(24) \[ E \text{ fia poto le teine.} \]
TAM want clever the girl
'The girl wants to be clever.'

When fia occurs with an ergative-marked argument, it indicates that this person wants to do what is predicated:

(25) \[ E \text{ fia si'i e le teine le pepe.} \]
TAM want carry ERG the girl the baby
'The girl wants to carry the baby.'

But if no ergative argument is present, then fia can refer to the absolutive argument, indicating that this person wants the action to be done to her:

(26) \[ E \text{ fia si'i le pepe.} \]
TAM want carry the baby
'The baby wants to be carried.'

This construction type, where the 'wanter' is the patient, can include an agent as an oblique argument, with a locative-directional (LD) marker:

(27) \[ E \text{ fia si'i le pepe ia le teine.} \]
TAM want carry the baby LD the girl
'The baby wants to be carried by the girl.'

If the agent is marked ergative, as in transitive clauses like (25) above, then fia refers to the agent, not the patient.
The other desiderative, *mana'o* ‘want’, cannot take an ergative-marked agent, so the ‘wanter’ is in absolutive case, and the complement can be either a noun phrase marked with the LD marker, or a clause:

(28) \[ E \ \textit{mana'o le teine i le mea lea}. \]
TAM want the girl LD the thing that
‘The girl wants that thing.’

(29) \[ 'Ou te mana'o e si'i e le teine le pepe. \]
1s TAM want TAM carry ERG the girl the baby
‘I want the girl to carry the baby.’

(30) \[ 'Ou te mana'o e si'i le pepe. \]
1s TAM want TAM carry the baby
‘I want the baby to be carried.’

A clausal complement can also be introduced with the subjunctive particle ‘ia or the optative particle se‘i:

(31) \[ 'Ou te mana'o 'ia mālosi le pepe. \]
1s TAM want SIV healthy the baby
‘I want the baby to get well.’

(32) \[ E te mana'o so'ou [>se‘i+‘ou] si'i le pepe? \]
2s TAM want OPT+1s carry the baby
‘Can/should I carry the baby?’

These partic’es add modal meanings to the complement clause. The subjunctive marker occurs in (31) where the desired outcome is beyond anyone’s control; it is not something that anyone can do. In (32) the optative marker adds a sense of permission or obligation; without this particle the example would mean simply ‘Do you want me to carry the baby?’

With *fia* the ‘wanter’ is coreferential with the main argument of the predicate, whether that argument is an agent or a patient. With *mana'o* the agent or patient of a desired action can be someone other than the ‘wanter’, as in (29)-(32) above, but coreferential complements are also possible:
(33) ‘Ou te mana’o ‘ia ‘ou fai mai.
1s TAM want SIV 1s return hither
‘I want to return here.’

In this construction the coreferential argument of the complement clause cannot be omitted. Compare this with (30) above, where no agent argument is present in the complement clause, but the sentence does not mean ‘I want to carry the baby’. Fia is far more commonly used than mana’o in coreferential contexts, so (33) would be more likely to be expressed as ‘Ou fia foi mai ‘I want to return here’ unless the speaker were doubtful about the possibility of doing the desired action, in which case mana’o would be used with a subjunctive-marked complement clause. However, a subjunctive complement is not obligatory with mana’o, and the following sentence is equally grammatical:

(34) ‘Ou te mana’o ‘ou te foi m:i.
1s TAM want 1s TAM return hither
‘I want to return here.’

Fia and mana’o can also occur together in a context of uncertainty:

(35) ‘Ou te fia mana’o ‘ou te alu ae ailoga
1s TAM want want 1s TAM go but doubt
mana’o ai le uso.
want it the brother
‘I would like to go but I don’t think my brother wants me to.’

The Samoan case is similar to the Acehnese case in that there are two main desideratives, each associated with a different range of construction types; and the predicate class membership of the complement plays an important role in the grammar and the semantics of these construction types. Like the Acehnese desideratives, Samoan fia and mana’o must be regarded as being in an allolexical relationship unless one is demonstrably more complex in meaning than the other.

However, it cannot be assumed that the Samoan construction types are equivalent to the Acehnese ones. In fact they are different, and should be analysed language-specifically. Only the verbal and clausal complement
types will be treated in detail; the NP complement construction  
\[ e \, \text{mana'oe} \, X \, LD \, NP \, \text{'}X \, \text{wants} \, NP \text{'} \]  
(e.g. 28) would be defined via a verbal complement  
construction as discussed above.

For *fia* ‘want’, three construction types have to be recognised, on the  
basis of their grammatical properties: two with ergative and two with  
non-ergative complements. The first construction type is formally marked  
by the presence of an ergative-marked argument. This argument is  
obligatorily interpreted as being both the ‘wanter’ and the agent of the  
wanted action:

\[ e \, \text{fia} \, V \, \text{ERG} \, X \, (Y) \text{ (e.g. 25)} \]

\( X \) wants: \( X \) will do \( V \) (to \( Y \))

The second type has as its complement a verb that can take an  
ergative argument, but no such argument is present. In this construction  
the non-ergative argument \( (Y) \) is the ‘wanter’ but not the agent; \( Y \) wants to  
be acted upon by someone else. The agent can be identified in an optional  
prepositional phrase (\( LD \) \( X \) ‘by \( X \)’, i.e. ‘this other person is \( X \)’):

\[ e \, \text{fia} \, V_{(\text{Erg})} \, Y \, (LD \, X) \text{ (e.g. 26-27)} \]

\( Y \) wants: someone else will do \( V \) to \( Y \)  
\( (\text{this other person is } X) \)

There is a variation of this construction type in which \( Y \) is  
inanimate, for example:

(36)  
\[ E \, \text{fia} \, \text{tatā} \, \text{lāvaluva} \, \text{nei.} \]

\( \text{TAM} \) want wash clot’es these  
‘These clothes need washing.’

The free translation of this example does not indicate that *fia* is  
polysemous between ‘want’ and ‘need’, but only that in this case the \( Y \)  
argument is not capable of being the wanter: this sentence does not  
suggest (even metaphorically) that the clothes want someone to wash  
them. If the \( Y \) argument is not capable of being the ‘wanter’, then the  
interpretation is that the wanter is an unspecified ‘someone’. This is  
reflected in the formula given above: the bracketed \( Y \) applies only if \( Y \) is  
capable of being the ‘wanter’.
One could propose an interpretation rule for this construction type in the case of an inanimate Y argument, but this is not really necessary. The most economical solution would be to recognise that WANT as a semantic prime can only be predicated of a SOMEONE. In a construction like (36), *fia* 'want' can be understood as presupposing the existence of someone who wants the complement action, but if the Y argument is not a 'someone', then the 'wanter' remains formally unspecified. The hearer of an utterance like (36) may or may not be able to infer any more about who wants the clothes to be washed (see Chapter 6 for more discussion of the role of pragmatics in such cases).

This proposed constraint on the predicability of WANT would explain how an inanimate argument produces a similar semantic effect in many languages. In some varieties of English, people say things like *These clothes want washing* or *His coat wants mending* (cf. 2.5 above), and like the Samoan example (36) these utterances do not suggest that clothes or a coat experience wanting. However, these effects must be understood within the lexical and grammatical system of the language in which they occur. The English construction *These clothes want washing* does not refer to an unspecified wanter in the way that the Samoan construction does, because the English word *want* really is polysemous (as discussed in Chapter 2). In English, an inanimate subject triggers the interpretation that this is *want*₂. The English construction *X*[Inanimate] *wants V-ing* thus means something like 'if V-ing doesn't happen to X, something else can't happen', not 'someone wants someone to do V to X'.

The third type of *fia* construction has a complement of the type that cannot ever take an ergative-marked argument, and this formally distinguishes it from the first two types:

\[
\begin{align*}
  e & \text{fia } V X \text{ (e.g. 23)} \\
  X \text{ wants: } X & \text{ will do } V
\end{align*}
\]

The *fia* construction with a stative predicate (e.g. 24) can be regarded as belonging to this same construction type, because Samoan predicates denoting a state or quality (such as *poto* '(be) clever') have the same grammatical properties as other intransitive predicates. Hence example (24) would be represented by means of the same formula as the one given above:
\textit{e fia} \(V[=\text{poto}]\) \(X\) (e.g. 24)
\(X\) wants: \(X\) will do \(V[=\text{be clever}]\)

The use of ‘do \(V\)’ in the English version of these NSM formulations reflects a language-specific feature of English and does not imply a correspondence between English and Samoan grammatical categories. The fact that \textit{poto} ‘(be) clever’ can correspond to ‘do \(V\)’ in the formula reflects the fact that ‘being clever’ and ‘doing something (intransitive)’ are treated identically in Samoan grammar (though not in English grammar). The Samoan version of the NSM would represent these facts in a form consistent with the rules of Samoan grammar, for example \textit{E fia fai X le mea lea} ‘TAM want do \(X\) the thing this’, i.e. ‘\(X\) wants: \(X\) does this’, or \textit{E mana’o X e tupu le mea lea} ‘TAM want \(X\) TAM happen the thing this’, i.e. ‘\(X\) wants: this happens’. The distinction between the two classes of predicates in Samoan may have something to do with the difference between \textit{fai} ‘do’ and \textit{tupu} ‘happen’; this matter would require investigation beyond the scope of the present project. In any case, the seeming inconsistency between ‘be clever’ and ‘do \(V\)’ is a feature of English, not Samoan.

\textit{Mana’o} ‘want’ cannot take a verbal complement, but only a full clausal one. The agent or undergoer of the complement clause must be present whether or not it is coreferential with the wanter (cf. examples 29, 33-34 above). As with \textit{fia}, the construction types for \textit{mana’o} vary according to the properties of the complement clause predicate, and can be represented as follows:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{e mana’o} \(X e V \ erg \ X/Y (Z)\) (e.g. 29)
    \(X\) wants: \(X/Y\) will do \(V\) (to \(Z\))
  \item \textit{e mana’o} \(X e V[\text{Eng}] \ X/Y\) (e.g. 30)
    \(X\) wants: someone else will do \(V\) to \(X/Y\)
  \item \textit{e mana’o} \(X e V\) (e.g. 34)
    \(X\) wants: \(X/Y\) will do \(V\)
\end{itemize}

If the subjunctive marker ‘\textit{ia}’ is used in a construction like (33), it contributes an additional meaning. Accounts of its use suggest that this particle is essentially a disclaimer of certainty, along the lines of ‘I don’t say: this will happen (after now)’. Hence the subjunctive version of this
3.3 Verbal and clausal complements

construction type can be represented including this additional component of meaning:

\[ e \text{ mana'\'o } X 'ia \ V \ X/Y (\text{e.g. } 31, 33) \]
\[ X \text{ wants: } X/Y \text{ will do } V \]
\[ I \text{ don't say: this will happen after now} \]

This would account for the use of the subjunctive in contexts like (31) where the outcome is normally beyond anyone's control, and also for the fact that it is likely to be used to express uncertainty about one's own future actions, in constrast to the more certain \( E \ fia V \ X \ 'X \text{ wants to do } V \).

The optative marker \( se'i \), seen in (32), also contributes additional meaning to the \( mana'\'o \) construction. Space precludes a detailed analysis of this marker, but the construction probably conveys something along the following lines:

\[ e \text{ mana'\'o } X \ se'i \ V \ X/Y (\text{e.g. } 32) \]
\[ X \text{ thinks this about } X/Y: \text{ maybe this person will do } V \]
\[ X \text{ thinks: I want this} \]

These modal markers are optional, and \( mana'\'o \ 'want' \) can be used with ordinary coreferential clausal complements, as in (34). These constructions appear to be synonymous or nearly synonymous with the corresponding \( fia \) constructions, viz.:

\[ e \ fia \ V \ ERG \ X \ (Y) \]
\[ ?= e \text{ mana'\'o } X \ e \ V \ ERG \ X \ (Y) \]
\[ X \text{ wants: } X \text{ will do } V \text{ (to } Y) \]

\[ e \ fia \ V \ X \]
\[ ?= e \text{ mana'\'o } X \ e \ V \ X \]
\[ X \text{ wants: } X \text{ will do } V \]

Comparing these constructions with the case of Acehnese \( t\text{em} \) and \( meuh'\text{e}ut \), it can be seen that although the grammatical specifications for each construction type are language-specific (for example, Samoan \( fia \) can occur with intransitive complements, while Acehnese \( t\text{em} \) requires an A-class complement), the question of allolexical status is similar. Either the
3.3 Verbal and clausal complements

*fia* and *mana'o* constructions paired above have some specifiable difference in their meanings, or they must be regarded as semantically equivalent.

It has been suggested that the *mana'o* version (e.g. ‘*Ou te mana'o 'ou te foi mai* 'I want to return here’) feels to some Samoan speakers emphatic or marked because the *fia* version (‘*Ou te fia foi mai*) is more commonly used in coreferential contexts. But this difference does not seem to correspond to any specifiable component of meaning. Unless it can be shown that there is a specifiable difference in meaning between the two constructions, they must be regarded as semantically equivalent, and the feeling that they are somehow different may be regarded as another type of resonance effect, rather than as part of their compositional meaning.

In this case the resonance appears to be due to the different grammatical properties of the two construction types. The fact that the complement of *mana'o* is a full clause may give it a quality of greater prominence or emphasis than the verbal complement of *fia*. Further, the fact that *mana'o* allows the possibility of a non-coreferential complement may make it seem as if the coreferential *mana'o* construction presents the wanter as someone somehow distinct from the person in the complement clause. This question of ‘split-personality’ effects is further explored later in this chapter, but for the present these differences can be explained as arising from the grammatical properties of the *fia* and *mana'o* construction types without necessarily corresponding to any semantic difference between the lexemes *fia* and *mana'o*.

There is a less exact match between the third type of construction, where a ‘wanter’ wants ‘someone’ to do something to the patient:

\[
\begin{align*}
e \ fia \ V_{[Erg]} \ Y & \ (LD \ X) \\
? = e \ mana'o \ Y \ V_{[Erg]} \ Y & \ (LD \ X) \\
\text{someone (Y) wants: someone else will do V to Y} \\
\text{(this other person is X)}
\end{align*}
\]

The difference here is that the *mana'o* construction cannot take an inanimate Y argument. The argument of *mana'o* has to be someone who is capable of wanting, whereas the *fia* construction can have an inanimate Y and thus leave the identity of the wanter unspecified. Hence the *fia* and the *mana'o* versions in this case are not fully equivalent in meaning. The *mana'o* version can only mean ‘Y wants: someone else will do V to Y',
while the *fia* version means ‘someone [=Y iff Y is someone] wants: someone else will do V to Y’.

There are also constructions in which *fia* and *mana’o* occur together, as in (35) and the following:

(37) ‘Ou te mana’o ‘ou te fia alu.

1s TAM want 1s TAM want go
‘I want to go.’

If these were like the other *fia* and *mana’o* construction types, (35) and (37) would both mean ‘I want to want to go’, but this is not the case. The present evidence suggests that these should be recognised as distinct construction types:

\[ e \ fia \ mana’o \ X \ V \ X \]
\[ e \ mana’o \ X \ e \ fia \ V \ X \]

both meaning probably ‘X wants to do V’; whether these are limited to coreferential contexts, and whether there are any additional components of meaning, would have to be determined on the basis of more information about the use of these constructions in natural texts.

From this survey of constructions involving *fia* and *mana’o*, it can be seen that each construction has its own grammatical properties and constraints. These characteristics are specific to the grammar of the Samoan language, and while they regulate the use of *fia* and *mana’o* in Samoan sentences, they do not pose any obstacles to the identification of *fia* and *mana’o* as equivalents of *WANT*, or to the recognition of constructions such as *e mana’o X V Y* as semantically equivalent to English *X wants Y to do V*, Acehnese *X meuh’eut Y V*, or equivalent constructions in other languages.

### 3.4 Coreferential and non-coreferential complements

Returning now to the question of the apparent equivalence of the coreferential *mana’o* construction (e.g. ‘Ou te mana’o ‘ou te foi mai ‘I want to return here’) and the *fia* construction (e.g. ‘Ou te fia foi mai ‘I want to return here’), one possible difference between them can be identified. The
difference may lie, not in the semantics of the lexemes *mana'o* and *fia*, but in the structural relationship of the complement clause to the main clause. In the *mana'o* construction, the coreferential argument of the complement clause cannot be omitted, and is thus treated just the same as if it were a non-coreferential argument. Notice that the complement clause has its own TAM marker, another feature of full clauses in Samoan. These characteristics of the *mana'o* construction are reflected in the formula proposed above for this construction:

\[ e \text{*mana'o* } X \text{ e } V \text{ } X/Y \]

\[ X \text{ wants: } X/Y \text{ will do } V \]

But in the *fia* construction the ‘wanted’ predicate can only be coreferential; *fia* cannot function as a full verb, and the ‘wanted’ predicate cannot appear as a full clause with the coreferential argument repeated ('*Ou te fia *'ou te foi mai). This might be viewed in terms of a structural explanation that *fia* requires a coreferential argument to be deleted (via an Equi-NP deletion rule), while no such rule applies to *mana'o*.

An alternative explanation would be that in the *fia* construction, the desired complement is not just an action by someone ('X will do V') but more specifically that the wanter wants her own action, that is, 'I will do V'. This would mean that the *fia* construction should be represented as follows:

\[ e \text{ fia } X \text{ V} \]

\[ X \text{ wants: } I \text{ will do } V \]

This formulation appears potentially confusing, however, since there are contexts where the wanter wants someone else to do something, and this other person is the speaker of the utterance, as in (32) above ('you want: I carry the baby'). Here, of course, 'I' refers to the speaker, not to the wanter.

The matter of ‘direct/indirect quotation’ structures within NSM explications is a question currently being investigated, but it does not pose an insurmountable problem here. What is needed is a formal representation of the distinction between an ‘indirect I’ as in (32), and the ‘direct I’ that is required for the formula proposed above. While further research may produce a better way of representing this (see 6.4 below), the
device of quotation marks for the 'direct I' complement is sufficient here to make the distinction clear:

\[ e\ mana' o\ X\ e\ V\ X/Y \]
X wants: X/Y will do V

\[ e\ fia\ X\ V \]
X wants: 'I will do V'

What is proposed here is that there may be a semantic basis for the grammatical distinctions found in many languages between desiderative constructions with verbal complements and desiderative constructions with full clausal complements. Further, it is proposed that the nature of the difference may be that full clausal complements, whether coreferential or not, convey the meaning of 'wanting someone to do something', while coreferential verbal complements express 'wanting in the first person' or 'wanting one's own action'.

This is not intended to suggest, however, that there are two different kinds of wanting (first-person versus other-oriented). Rather, when what one wants is an action by oneself, it is possible to think of the desired action in the first person in a way that is obviously not possible in relation to actions by other people. It would not be unexpected, then, to find that many languages would grammaticalise this 'special relationship' between one's own actions and wanting; but also that this relationship might be expressed in different ways by different languages.

This proposal offers a way of explaining the apparently equivalent Acehnese constructions discussed in 3.1 above, along lines similar to, but not identical to the proposal for Samoan:

\[ X\ meu'h'eut\ X/Y\ V \]
X wants: X/Y will do V

\[ X\ X_{[PC]-tém}\ V_{[A]} \]
X wants: 'I will do V'

This proposal is compatible not only with the fact that the \textit{meu'h'eut} construction can take a coreferential or non-coreferential complement (like Samoan \textit{mana'o}), but also with the requirement (specific to
Acehnese) that the tém construction requires an A verb, while the meuh'eut construction can take either an A or a non-A complement.

Moreover, Acehnese meuh'eut (unlike Samoan mana'o) can have a coreferential complement that is not a full clause, if it has a non-A predicate (e.g. 15 above). In this construction the complement clause is introduced by the preposition keu ‘to’, and this construction type would be represented as follows:

\[
X \text{ meuh'eut keu } V[\neg A]
\]

\[
X \text{ wants: 'I will do } V' \]

In Acehnese, then, the distinction between ‘first-person’ wanting (X wants: ‘I will do V’) versus ‘X wants: X/Y will do V’ does not correspond to the lexemes tém versus meuh'eut alone, but to the construction types in which they appear, subject to the grammatical rules of the language.

Both Acehnese and Samoan have one desiderative that is restricted to coreferential complements (tém and fia), and another desiderative that allows either coreferential or non-coreferential complements (meuh'eut and mana'o). Apart from this similarity, these constructions have specific grammatical properties in each language, and an attempt to describe each of the various constructions in terms of whether or not a coreferential subject is deleted would leave a great deal unexplained. This can be seen even more clearly in another Austronesian language where coreferential complement subjects appear to be completely optional.

In Buru constructions with the grammatical morpheme la (whose relationship to WANT is discussed in the next chapter), a subordinate subject is obligatory if it is non-coreferential, but is optional in coreferential contexts like the following:

(38) \text{Ringe la (da) kaa.}
3s want (3s) eat
‘He wants to eat.’

(39) \text{Ringe oli la (da) kaa.}
3s return want (3s) eat
‘He went home to eat/so that he could eat.’
However, omission of the coreferential complement subject is only permissible with predicates that belong to the grammatical class of active verbs. With non-active predicates, whether verbal or stative, a coreferential subject cannot be omitted, for example:

(40) \textit{Ringe la da haa.} \quad \textit{cf.} \quad *\textit{Ringe la haa.}

\begin{align*}
3s & \quad \text{want} & 3s & \quad \text{big} \\
\text{He wants to grow.} & \quad & \text{want big}
\end{align*}

The difference between active and non-active predicates in Buru is basically that active verbs denote things that a person can do voluntarily or intentionally, while non-active verbs denote involuntary actions, states or processes. Only active verbs can be used in the imperative. In other words, only in the case of active verbs is it possible for the wanter to want her own voluntary action. The fact that only these verbs allow omission of the coreferential subject seems to be another instance of grammaticalisation of the special relationship between wanting and one’s own actions. Hence the full clausal complement construction, whether or not the subject is coreferential, would be represented as follows:

\begin{align*}
X & \quad la \quad X/Y \quad V \\
X \quad \text{wants:} \quad X/Y & \quad \text{will do} \quad V
\end{align*}

The verbal complement construction, without the coreferential second subject, and limited to active verbs, would be represented as:

\begin{align*}
X & \quad la \quad V_{[\text{Active}]}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
X \quad \text{wants:} \quad 'I \quad \text{will do} \quad V'
\end{align*}

In Samoan and in Acehnese, the presence or absence of coreferential arguments in complement clauses is associated with other features of the construction type, and could be thought of as structurally determined, perhaps by a rule deleting a coreferential argument under certain syntactic conditions. But in Buru such a rule would have to be completely optional in the case of active verbs; the presence or absence of the coreferential argument is not dictated by any other part of the syntactic environment. To describe this situation by proposing an optional Equi-NP deletion rule
would not explain why it is optional, and would give no account of why only active verbs allow the coreferential argument to be omitted.

The proposal that the two constructions differ semantically as described above has more power to explain both the semantic and the syntactic facts of this case. It is consistent with the fact that both constructions exist; it offers an account of what could be the difference between them; and it is also consistent with the fact that the coreferential complement subject can only be omitted with an active verb, where the subject has more control over the action.

This discussion of patterns of desideratives and their complements in three Austronesian languages provides a perspective from which we can proceed to look at the grammatical patterns of constructions like these in other languages. Desideratives in many languages display special constructions or grammatical constraints associated with coreferentiality of the complement, and an examination of some of these can enhance understanding of the relationships of desideratives to their complements.

Spanish, like French and a number of other languages having a category of subjunctive mood, distinguishes fairly consistently between coreferential and non-coreferential complements of desiderative verbs. A coreferential complement of querer ‘want’ (like complements of desear ‘desire’ and esperar ‘hope’) normally takes an infinitive form of the verb, while a non-coreferential complement takes the subjunctive form, introduced by the complementiser que ‘that’:

(41) Quiero ir.
    want-1s go-INF
    ‘I want to go.’

(42) Quiero que (ella) vaya.
    want-1s that (she) go-3SJV
    ‘I want her to go.’

The reverse is not grammatical:

(43) *Quiero que (yo) vaya.
    want-1s that I go-1SJV
(44) *La/le quiero ir.
    her/to-her want-1s go-INF

This is notwithstanding the fact that non-coreferential infinitive complements are quite possible with some other verbs, as in La veo ir ‘I see her go’ and Le mando ir ‘I order her to go’; and that querer can take a pronoun as a direct object, as in Le quiero ‘I want/love her’.

To further complicate the picture, a coreferential subjunctive complement is possible in special contexts, where the desired event is beyond the wanter’s control:

(45) Quiero que sea yo y no Pepe, el que le de
    want-1s that be-SJv I and not Pepe the that to-her give-SJv
    la bienvenida a la princesa.
    the welcome to the princess
    ‘I want it to be me and not Pepe who welcomes the princess.’

The same applies in French:

(46) Je veux que je sois en mesure d’attaquer a l’aube.
    I want that I be-SJv capable of-attack at the-dawn
    ‘I want to be able to attack at dawn.’

Here again, then, the complement type cannot be determined from structural criteria alone; and an account based on the semantics of the construction types may provide a better explanation of the facts.

In considering the differences between infinitive and subjunctive complements, it is important to take note of their clausal properties as well as of the verb forms. The infinitive complement (e.g. ir ‘to go’ in (41) above), is not an independent clause. The infinitive form of the verb does not carry any information about the person or number of the subject, as other Spanish verb forms do (e.g. quiero ‘want-1sPRES’ or vayas ‘go-2sSJv’).

Because the subject is marked on the verb, independent pronominal subjects are optional, and an independent clause can consist of the verb alone, or with a subject (e.g. (ella) va ‘she goes’); but an infinitive verb (e.g. ir ‘to go’) cannot serve as an independent clause.

Subjunctive complements, however, do have the form of an independent clause, with subject and verb (e.g. (ella) vaya ‘she go-SJv’ in
(42). It is unusual, but not grammatically impossible, to have a main clause with subjunctive verb. From this perspective, then, we can say that Spanish *querer* ‘want’ has two complement types: one consisting of a full clause with subjunctive verb, and the other a verbal complement in the infinitive, restricted to coreferential contexts. Following the analysis proposed above, the coreferential verbal complement construction can express only wanting one’s own action:

\[ X \text{ quiere } V\text{-INF} \]
\[ X \text{ wants: } ‘I will do } V \]

The full clausal complement expresses wanting someone to do something; the someone is usually someone else, but can be oneself:

\[ X \text{ quiere que } X/Y \text{ V-SJV} \]
\[ X \text{ wants: } X/Y \text{ will do } V \]

The subjunctive, however, has a meaning of its own, that constrasts with the indicative form of the verb in other contexts, for example:

(47) a. *Papá dijo que ella va.*
\[ \text{dad said that she go-PRES} \]
‘Dad said that she is going.’

b. *Papá dijo que ella vaya.*
\[ \text{dad said that she go-SJV} \]
‘Dad said that she should/could go.’

The meaning of the subjunctive is a complex issue that has been much discussed elsewhere, and the present discussion aims not to analyse the subjunctive as such, but to explain its use in complements of desideratives. In non-desiderative contexts like (47b), the subjunctive conveys uncertainty about the action; in (47a) her going is understood as a fact, but in (47b) it is understood as a possibility, not a certainty. The subjunctive here is in effect a disclaimer of certainty, making it clear that the speaker is refraining from expressing an expectation. In contrast with the indicative, then, the subjunctive adds a meaning of the kind suggested
in Wierzbicka's work on subjunctive complements: 'I don't say: this will happen (after now)'.

Does this mean that the subjunctive also contributes this meaning in the construction with *querer*? That is:

\[
X \text{ quiere que } X/Y \text{ V-SJV} \\
X \text{ wants: } X/Y \text{ will do V} \\
?I \text{ don't want to say: this will happen after now}
\]

This would seem compatible with the feeling that Spanish and French speakers have, that the subjunctive complement is more distant and indirect than the infinitive (*X quiere ir*). This is particularly so in those unusual cases (like 45-46 above) where a subjunctive coreferential complement clause seems to present the performer of the wanted event as someone distinct from or external to the wanter, despite the fact that they have the same referent. Does this mean that it is not possible to say in Spanish 'X wants someone to do something' without also encoding this disclaimer of certainty, 'I don't say: this will happen after now'?

Not necessarily; because to accept this view would be to overlook one crucial fact. In some contexts, like example (47), the subjunctive and the indicative can occur in contrast, in a construction that is otherwise the same. But this is not so with desideratives. In the construction *X quiere que X/Y V-SJV* the subjunctive is obligatory; it does not contrast with any indicative construction. In coreferential cases, *X quiere que X V-SJV* contrasts not with an indicative but with the infinitive complement construction, *X quiere V-INF*. This construction is not otherwise the same as the subjunctive version. The structures of the two complements are quite different: a full clausal complement versus a verbal complement, as discussed above.

In the approach proposed here, each grammatical construction that can be distinguished in a language is regarded as a meaningful unit, having distinctive semantic properties along with the grammatical properties that make it a distinct construction type. Because *querer* 'want' takes a different range of grammatical complements from *decir* 'say', a subjunctive complement with *querer* would not be expected to have exactly the same meaning as a subjunctive complement with *decir*. In the *X quiere que X/Y V-SJV* construction no alternative to the subjunctive is grammatically possible with a full clausal complement. In this case the
use of the subjunctive is determined by the grammar of the construction type; the subjunctive is not and cannot be used for the purpose of semantic contrast with an indicative form (as it can be with decir).

Where the subjunctive is used for grammatical reasons and not for semantic reasons, it loses its semantic force as a dissembler of certainty. The construction \( X \textit{ quiere que } X/Y \ V-SjV \) does not provide any means of contrasting a ‘certain’ version with an ‘uncertain’ version of the meaning ‘X wants: \( X/Y \) will do \( V \)’. This is different from the situation in Samoan, where the subjunctive marker ‘\( ia \)’ can optionally introduce a complement of \textit{mana'\( o \) ‘want’} to produce just such a semantic contrast (e.g. 33-34 above).

Because the Spanish subjunctive isn’t optional in a full clausal complement of querer ‘want’, there is no obstacle to regarding \( X \textit{ quiere que } X/Y \ V \) as fully equivalent to ‘X wants: \( X/Y \) will do \( V \)’, and hence to equivalent constructions in other languages.

At the same time, the subjunctive form carries with it a semantic resonance that arises from its use in other, contrasitive contexts (like example 47). This resonance effect contributes to the less direct ‘feel’ of this construction compared to the infinitive complement construction \( X \textit{ quiere } V-\textit{INF} \); but the structural difference between the two complement types (full clause versus verb) probably contributes more strongly to this effect than the subjunctive form by itself does.

In any case, a semantic resonance effect can be distinguished from a specific component of meaning by the properties of the construction type. If, as in Spanish, the subjunctive in the construction type \( X \textit{ quiere que } X/Y \ V-SjV \) is obligatory and non-contrastive, then an ‘uncertainty’ component is neither necessary nor justifiable as part of a full description of the meaning of this construction. But if, as in Samoan, the subjunctive in the construction type \( e \textit{ mana'\( o \) X 'ia } X/Y \ V \) is optional and contrastive, then an appropriate meaning component is both justified and necessary for a full description of the meaning.

For Spanish, then, the proposed analysis succeeds in identifying two construction types with querer ‘want’, specifying the semantic difference between them, and explaining the facts of their use, including the special case of coreferential subjunctive complements. It also makes a correct prediction that the infinitive complement construction \( X \textit{ quiere } V-\textit{INF} \) (X wants: ‘I will do V’) is limited to coreferential use. This analysis is therefore more successful than the traditional approach based on
coreferentiality alone, which does not deal adequately with coreferential subjunctive complements.

A similar kind of resonance effect could explain the difference in ‘feeling’ of the two Japanese constructions discussed earlier in this chapter. The coreferential V-tai construction (e.g. (Watashi wa) iki-tai ‘I want to go’) seems to many speakers somehow more direct than the non-coreferential V-te hoshii construction (e.g. (Watashi wa) kimi ni iki-te hoshii ‘I want you to go’). The -te suffix, often regarded as forming a gerundive complement, also occurs with several other verbs that in English take to complements (e.g. tanomu ‘ask’, kitai suru ‘expect’) as well as with others such as negai ‘hope’. It has a wide range of use in other types of serial verb constructions, and while it is not clearly associated with a particular meaning (in the way that subjunctive is associated with uncertainty), it acquires from these other uses a resonance very different from -tai.

Because -tai is limited to coreferential desiderative uses, it can seem more direct, while -te seems more diffuse because of its wider range of other uses. But the construction (X wa) (Y ni) V-te hoshii does not contrast with any more direct construction that expresses the meaning ‘someone (X) wants someone else (Y) to do V’. It is the only construction that expresses this meaning, and should therefore be regarded as semantically equivalent to ‘X wants Y to do V’.

For a final example of complement clause patterns in desiderative expressions, we return to English, where the distinction between the two constructions X wants to V and X wants Y to V seems to be based entirely upon whether or not the complement verb is coreferential with want. There is no construction *X wants X to V. There is, however, a reflexive construction, only marginally acceptable to many speakers, for example:

(48) (?)She wanted herself to disappear completely.

This can be regarded as parallel to X wants Y to V, in that the reflexive pronoun is a device for conveying specifically that ‘X’ and ‘Y’ are in this instance ‘the same person’. Compare this with the sentence She wanted her to disappear completely, in which she and her can only be interpreted as referring to different entities (that is, her is a pronominal rather than an anaphor, in Chomsky’s terms).

A particularly interesting feature of these English constructions is that there is no full clausal complement construction with want. Compare
3.4 Coreferential and non-coreferential

this, for example, with *hope, which can take either to V or a full clausal complement (with optional complementiser *that):

(49) I hope/want to go to France.

(50) I hope/*want (that) I go to France.

Of course *hope differs in meaning from want as discussed earlier, but the contrast between (49) and (50) is similar to the kind of contrasts seen earlier between coreferential verbal complements and full clausal complements. The verbal complement in (49) suggests a more direct, first-person orientation (X hopes: 'I will do V') as compared with the full clause in (50), which presents the event as less directly related to the hoper (X hopes: X will do V). Full clausal complements can also be modified with modals, and I hope I can go to France sounds a little more natural than I hope I go to France because the interpretation of this construction is that the outcome is beyond the hoper's control.

However, this kind of contrast is not available with want. Neither a full clausal complement (*X wants (that) X V) nor a verbal (infinitive or to) complement with overt coreferential argument (*X wants X to V) is possible with want. The idea of a syntactic rule that would delete a coreferential noun phrase from the complement is of course compatible with these facts. But, if the distinction made above between verbal and clausal complements is correct, does this mean that English lacks what several other languages apparently have, a means of distinguishing between wanting 'I will do V' and wanting 'X will do V' in coreferential contexts?

Moreover, what about the unavailability of a full clausal complement even in non-coreferential cases (*X wants (that) Y will do V)? Even in these cases, only a verbal to complement is grammatical (X wants Y to V). Can this be considered equivalent to the non-coreferential full clausal complements of other languages, expressing 'X wants: Y will do V', or is the English verbal complement somehow less independent semantically than a full clausal complement?

A partial comparison can be made with wish. In certain contexts, wish can be used with to complements, both coreferential and non-coreferential, for example:
3.4 Coreferential and non-coreferential

(51)  

(a) Sign here if you wish to renew your subscription.

(b) Sign here if you wish us to act on your behalf.

These constructions, X wishes to V and X wishes Y to V, are usually limited to written use; many English speakers find them unfamiliar or regard this use of wish as a kind of over-refined euphemism for want. Nonetheless, such constructions are attested, and they provide an interesting contrast to wish constructions with full clausal complements, for example:

(52)  

(a) I wish (that) I could go to France.

(b) I wish (that) you would come with me.

In clausal complements of wish, modal or aspeclual modifiers are obligatory; *I wish I go to France and *I wish you come with me (or *I wish you act on my behalf) are ungrammatical. The semantic effect of the modals could, would in the above example is somewhat similar to subjunctives in other languages, involving a disclaimer of certainty ('I don't say: it will happen after now'). Wish can also take a for...to complement, but this is limited to non-coreferential cases, and is most often found in past tense contexts (e.g. He wished for her to kiss him). The for...to complement is also shown by Wierzbicka to convey the sense 'I don't say: it will happen'.

Without going into a full analysis of all the wish constructions, one can see that with wish, unlike want, it is possible to contrast a verbal complement with a full clausal complement. The semantic effect of sentences like (51a,b) arises not just because these constructions are parallel to X wants to V and X wants Y to V, but because they are in contrast to the more usual wish constructions with full clausal complements, like (52a,b). The construction X wishes to V suggests the first-person orientation (X wishes: 'I will do V'), while the full clausal complement with modal could suggests not only 'X wishes: X can do V' but also 'I don't say: it will happen after now'.

In constructions with want, there is no possibility of contrasts like these, because only the verbal complement type is available. Unlike
several other languages discussed here, English does not have a construction that encompasses both coreferential and non-coreferential use ('X wants: X/Y will do V'). The two main English *want* constructions would thus be represented as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
X & \text{ wants to } V \\
\text{X wants: 'I will do V'} \\
X & \text{ wants } Y \text{ to } V \\
\text{X wants: Y will do V}
\end{align*}
\]

There is, however, a way to express 'X wants: X will do V' in English, and that is via the reflexive construction *X wants herself/himself to V*. This construction is quite unusual; indeed, in each of the languages discussed earlier, the 'I-oriented' coreferential construction ('X wants: 'I will do V') is more commonly used than the alternative ('X will do V). Reflexive pronouns refer to 'the same person', but in this English construction there is no contrast between a reflexive and a non-reflexive (but still coreferential) version. If a non-reflexive pronoun is used ('X wants her/him to do V) the meaning is not 'X wants: X will do V' but 'X wants: Y will do V' (as discussed under (48) above). Because the reflexive pronoun is obligatory and there is no contrasting coreferential construction, it may be that *X wants herself/himself to V* can be considered equivalent to 'X wants: X will do V'. But there is little need to use such a construction in English, except in those very rare instances when one wants to suggest that the wanter has less influence on the outcome than is normally the case in coreferential situations.

The non-coreferential complement (*Y to V in X wants Y to V*) is not, as noted above, a full clause; and this necessitates some investigation of the correctness of equating the English *X wants Y to V* with 'X wants: Y will do V' and equivalent constructions in other languages. The principal justification is based on the unique correspondence between this construction (form) and its meaning. That is, this is the only construction used in (standard) English to express this meaning; it does not contrast with any alternative full clausal complement construction (*X wants (that) Y V*). Moreover, it expresses this meaning and no other. Unlike coreferential constructions, non-coreferential constructions offer no possibility of contrast between 'I-oriented' and other-oriented complements, because a
situation where one person (X) wants another (Y) to do something is inherently other-oriented.

It is also worth noting that the complement in X wants Y to V is closer to a full English clause than the complement in X wants to V; the non-coreferential complement has a subject, while the coreferential complement has only the phrase to V. While it is important to distinguish between complements that are full clauses and those that are not, full clausal status is not a prerequisite for non-coreferential complements.

The English construction X wants Y to V has a certain resonance, however, that is not part of its compositional meaning but arises from similarities to other constructions. In X wants Y to V, Y is in the same position as it would be if it were a direct object in the construction X wants Y (e.g. Uncle Sam wants you). Of course the subject of a complement is not an argument of want (hence the ungrammaticality of *He is wanted by me to go), but the superficial similarity of these constructions may produce a feeling of directness about the relationship between want and its complement. This effect is particularly felt when English is compared with languages where non-coreferential complements are introduced by a different complementiser. In addition, the verb forms are the same in coreferential and non-coreferential complements (to V and Y to V), and this makes the two complement types seem more similar in English than in those languages where non-coreferential complements take a different form of the verb.

Here, as in other cases discussed above, it is important to distinguish between the resonance of a construction and its meaning. The construction X wants Y to V is the only English construction that can express the meaning 'X wants: Y will do V', and there is no reason to suggest that any other components are a necessary part of the meaning of this construction. The fact that to a bilingual, English X wants Y to V seems somehow more direct than Spanish X quiere que Y V-SJIV is a product of the language-specific resonance of each construction. This resonance can be explained in terms of the semantics of the relevant constructions in each language. It can be distinguished in a formal and rigorous way from the necessary and sufficient components of the meaning of a construction.

Some speakers of English, but not others, accept for to complements with want, as in (?)I want very much for my children to be happy. This
happy. This construction (whose acceptability is partly a dialectal matter) is only possible where the complement is non-coreferential, and it is more felicitous when adverbial modifiers (like very much) come between want and the complement (‘I want for my children to be happy sounds worse). This is not because of the adverbs themselves, which can also occur with to (I very much want my children to be happy is fine). As in the case of wish, the for...to complement adds an element of uncertainty (‘I don’t say: it will happen after now’).

Several analyses of complementation have treated to and for...to complements as the same construction type, but a detailed account of the differences between them has been given by Wierzbicka. It is interesting to note that there seems to be more variation in acceptability judgements of for...to complements than there is with other English complement types; some speakers even accept sentences like I regret for you to be in this fix as grammatical.

The potential contrast between X wants Y to V and X wants for Y to V might cause some people to wonder if the latter is a better equivalent for the Spanish subjunctive construction X quiere que Y V-sjV. But on the criteria proposed here, this would not be valid. X wants for Y to V is a somewhat marginal construction in English; even in varieties where it is not considered odd, the most normal way of expressing someone’s wanting someone else to do something is still X wants Y to V; whereas X quiere que Y V-sjV is the normal way of expressing this in Spanish. The English for...to construction adds a specifiable element of meaning, in contrast with the more usual to construction; whereas the Spanish subjunctive in X quiere que Y V-sjV does not add any element of meaning in contrast with another construction that is otherwise the same.

Identifying what components do and do not belong to the meanings of particular desiderative constructions will be the focus of several case studies in the following two chapters. Each language is a unique system. Neither individual lexemes (such as fia, mana'o, querer or want) nor constructions (such as e mana'o X e V Y, X quiere que Y V-sjV or X wants Y to V) can be equated (or differentiated) across languages without an analysis of the meaning of each expression within the system of the language in which it is meaningful. Such an analysis needs to take into account not just the single word or construction, but the range of expressions available in this particular language for encoding similar meanings, in order to arrive at an accurate statement of meaning.
Before proceeding to further case studies, a final observation on the relations of desiderative expressions to their complements is in order. The semantic formulae proposed thus far have contained elements that correspond only partly to the natural language structures whose meaning they are intended to represent. For example, a structure like ‘X wants: Y [will] do V’ is not natural in English; as argued above, the English way of expressing this is *X wants Y to V*.

For most purposes, the most natural way of expressing the meaning would be the best one to use in the English version of NSM, as it would be in any other language’s version of NSM. But the less natural formulation is used here, when necessary, for two purposes. The first is to avoid circularity by stating the meanings of the constructions under consideration in a form that does not rely on the English *to* complement constructions, until it has been established whether the *to* constructions are in fact equivalent to these meanings. The second purpose is to represent more clearly than English does, the distinction between the desiderative itself and its complement; for example, between ‘X wants’ and ‘Y will do V’.

The two are of course bound together in desiderative constructions, and each language has its own grammatical rules that determine which of these elements can function as an independent clause. But, quite apart from language-specific clausal syntax, it is useful to recognise that the two parts of a formulation like ‘X wants: Y will do V’ each have a certain propositional status. ‘X wants’, though not a full clause in English (because *want* in this sense must have a complement of some kind), is a proposition about X, while ‘Y will do V’ is a separate proposition, embodying the event that X wants to happen. The term ‘proposition’ here does not refer only to things that can be known (as ‘facts’), but to things that can be thought and spoken of, regardless of whether or not they are realised in the world.

Even in English, where *X wants* and *Y to V* are grammatically bound together so that neither can function as a separate clause, the full expression *X wants Y to V* conveys two discrete pieces of information. One is a proposition about X (that X wants something to happen), and the other is a proposition embodying this wanted event (that Y will do V). It is interesting to note that the ambiguity of English negated *want* sentences arises from the fact that these two propositions can be independently negated. For example, *I don’t want to go* can be ambiguous between
meaning that I don’t particularly want to go (I don’t want: ‘I go’) and that I want specifically not to go (also expressible as I want not to go) (I want: ‘I don’t go’). The relations between these proposition-like elements in desiderative constructions are further explored in subsequent chapters.
Chapter 4

Polysemy and ambiguity in desiderative grammemes

The quest to determine whether certain basic concepts find lexical expression in all languages throws a renewed focus upon the old question of polysemy: whether it is possible to determine how many meanings a lexical item has. For example, some languages have a word or morpheme that seems to be the most common way of referring to wanting, yet in other contexts this lexeme refers to possibility or futurity. Languages like this may therefore seem to have no lexeme that refers unambiguously to wanting, but to encode instead some more abstract notion of potentiality or unrealised event status.

Such a situation, in even one language, could be interpreted as casting serious doubt on the status of WANT as a lexical and/or semantic universal. In fact, such lexemes are found in not just one but several languages, from different language families. Moreover, this state of affairs does not apply only to desiderative lexemes. Investigations of other proposed NSM universals such as CAUSE, PLACE, and PART show that a number of languages seem to lack unambiguous ways of expressing these.

In the face of this kind of empirical evidence from a variety of languages, it might seem reasonable to abandon the search for semantic universals of this sort, and to direct one’s efforts in some more fruitful direction. However, such a decision should not be made hastily, without a thorough examination of the evidence itself and of possible alternative ways of interpreting it; and this is what brings us back to the question of polysemy.

In considering the evidence of a lexeme that can refer either to wanting or to potentiality, say, the analytical task is to determine whether this lexeme has a single, abstract meaning that unites these two elements, or whether it has two (or more) separate meanings. If it can be shown to have two discrete meanings, then it may after all be identifiable as a lexicalisation of a semantic universal such as WANT, in one of its uses.

This chapter presents detailed case studies of two grammatical morphemes that have important desiderative functions: one from the Australian Aboriginal language Kayardild, and one from the Austronesian language Buru. Another grammeme from Kayardild is investigated in the following chapter. I argue that, with multifunctional forms like these,
each case must be assessed on its own merits, and analysed in considerable depth. It cannot be decided that a proposed universal such as WANT is, or is not, represented in these languages on the basis of a superficial assessment. Even when the available grammatical description is of unusually high quality, as it is for these two languages, a careful and fine-grained semantic analysis is necessary to determine the relationship of functions to meanings, before conclusions can be drawn about the presence or absence of lexical universals in a language.

The case studies considered here illustrate the fact that semantic analysis needs to provide, if at all possible, a coherent account of the meanings associated with the various functions of a lexical form. This is needed not only to shed light on the question of language universals, but also to assist in practical linguistic description. From an exploration of how the principles of NSM analysis can be applied to these complex cases of multifunctionality, we can begin to derive a set of practical analytical tools and procedures that may be useful to descriptive linguists.

4.1 Functions and senses of grammatical morphemes

Determining the semantic content of a grammatical morpheme, or grammeme, can be a complex and controversial task. While some grammemes may be restricted to a small range of functions, the major grammemes of a language tend to occur with great frequency and to cover a wide range of functions. Inflectional grammemes, particularly case markers and markers of tense, aspect and/or mood, are often highly multifunctional. The ‘ablative’ case inflection -nge in Arrernte, to give just one example, has not only a variety of spatial and temporal functions (‘from’, ‘after’ and others), but serves also to express reasons (‘because’, e.g. ...rilkerte akngerre-nge re ‘[you should visit her] because she’s very sick’). Derivational markers can also have quite a variety of functions. Another example from Arrernte, the ‘inchoative’ derivational affix -irre-, covers not only ‘become’ (as in akngerr-irre- ‘become big, grow’) but also ‘happen’ or even ‘do’ (as in iwenh-irre-me ‘what’s going on’, ‘what are you doing’).

This widespread multifunctionality in grammemes poses many challenges to descriptive linguists. Even when the core uses of a grammeme correspond to some well-established crosslinguistic category such as dative or ablative, it can by no means be assumed that all, or even
many, functions of the dative or ablative in one language correspond to functions of the dative or ablative in another. The language-specific applications of these inflections vary widely.

Even in closely related languages, the functions of similar grammemes can vary considerably. The Polish and Russian instrumental inflectional grammemes are both historically cognate and synchronically equivalent in many of their uses, but Wierzbicka's study of these inflections shows that in Polish the instrumental can be used in contexts like *Jan wyskoczył oknem* 'John jumped out the window-INST', while in Russian this would be ungrammatical; and the Russian instrumental can be used for comparison (*On wyl volkom* 'He howled like a wolf-INST'), while Polish has lost this construction. Or to give an example from Australian languages, the Arrernte ablative *-nge* can be used (like the Japanese locative *de*) to mark the area containing a dispersed activity, while the cognate Yankunytjatjara ablative *-nguru* cannot be used in this way. The language-specific applications of verbal inflections are at least as varied as those of case inflections; for example, the Russian irrealis *-by* is used in counterfactual conditionals (if *X* had done *V* [*V-by-PAST*], *Y* would have happened), while in Greek the realis inflection is used in exactly the same function.

It is still somewhat controversial to try to assign semantic content to grammemes. Traditional analyses of European languages took it for granted that grammemes have meanings, usually quite a few related meanings. In dealing with a case or mood marker they tended to give it a general name (such as 'instrumental' or 'optative'), and then to list a number of meanings with examples, but without specifying how the various meanings were related or how they could be separated from one another. It was generally assumed that there are no clear boundaries between meanings of a grammeme, that attempts to classify these meanings are somewhat artificial, and that the differences in classifications given by various grammars and dictionaries don't matter very much.

The results of this approach were notoriously unhelpful to language learners and teachers; they did not fully predict when it would and would not be correct to use a particular grammeme, and they did not explain how the various meanings could be related to one another. They left the polysemy question wide open, or allowed for a bet each way, by suggesting that a grammeme was a single entity with some kind of overall meaning denoted by its label, but also that it was polysemous with several meanings
related to each other and to the general label in unspecified (possibly unspecifiable) ways.

Several structural and post-structural linguists have tried to introduce more orderly approaches to dealing with the meanings of grammemes, particularly case markers, an area that seems at least potentially more tractable than the more modal-like grammemes discussed below. The outstanding example of this is Jakobson’s analysis of Russian cases. He analysed each case into a manageable number of discrete meanings, and posited a semantic invariant to which they could all be reduced, and which, furthermore, could explain the relationships of different cases to one another within the case system. For all its strengths, however, Jakobson’s componential analysis does not fully predict the correct and incorrect uses of Russian case inflections for learners of Russian. Both the overall formula and the semantically complex labels used for the meaning components (e.g. ‘+peripheral, -affected’) are too general to capture the complex relationships between the arguments in a clause. Because of this, as Wierzbicka has pointed out, they cannot predict why the Russian ‘instrumental’ inflection used in *Ivan ubil Petra toporom ‘Ivan killed Peter with an axe-INST’ cannot be used in *David ubil Goliafa praščej ‘David killed Goliath with a sling-INST’.

Because of the difficulty of giving a fully predictive account of the meanings of case inflections, many linguists have come to think that these grammemes do not, after all, have meanings of their own, but are only surface-level markers of covert categories in the underlying grammar. The generative tradition views these surface grammatical markers as semantically arbitrary, and not fully predictable from the underlying grammatical structures.

Descriptive linguists, faced with these competing theories, have generally tried to steer a prudent course between them. Whether describing a case marker or another type of grammeme, most descriptive grammars try to recognise the integrity of a particular form by assigning it an overall label, and also to distinguish and describe the various functions of this form as found in a body of data. While it is comforting to feel that one can at least determine on an empirical basis how many such functions a form has, even the most careful and theoretically-informed analysis of this kind can still leave the linguist unsure as to how these functions correspond to meanings, or in D.P. Wilkins’ words, ‘how many senses (as opposed to functions) this form has’.
It seems likely, then, that some degree of polysemy might have to be accepted for grammemes, even by linguists who strongly prefer monoseymous explanations of independent words. Kempson has suggested that each distinguishable meaning of a word should be treated as a discrete lexical item, which seems a reasonable proposal for getting round the difficulty of distinguishing polysemy from homophony (of which more will be said below). However, in the case of grammemes it would seem far less reasonable to distinguish a dozen or more discrete ‘instrumental’ suffixes for Russian, or -nge (ablative) suffixes for Arrernte. The challenge remains to determine just how many meanings a grammeme has (as opposed to, or in relation to, its functions).

The first example to be examined in detail is a fairly straightforward one in many respects: a modal-like verbal inflection with a comparatively small range of functions. This analysis aims to show how its functions can be correlated with two discrete and specifiable meanings.

### 4.2 How many meanings does a ‘desiderative’ inflection have?

The Kayardild language does not seem to have a desiderative verb, but it has an inflectional suffix -da (---d) that can be attached to verbs. This morpheme has been labelled ‘desiderative’ in Evans’ grammatical description, because its main function seems to be to indicate that the action denoted by the host verb is desirable, or is wanted by the speaker, as in the following examples:

1. *Dan-inja ngal-da jalji-nja wirdi-d.*
   - here-EMOT 1p NOM shade-EMOT stay-DES
   - ‘We should stay here in the shade.’

2. *Dathin-a dangka-a dali-d, dunbu-wa marral-d, dali-jarrma-th!*
   - that-NOM man-NOM come-DES deaf-NOM ear-NOM come-CAUS-IMP
   - ‘That man should come, he’s deaf, bring him over!’

   - again-EMOT dance-DES morrow-EMOT
   - ‘I hope (they’ll) dance again tomorrow.’
4.2 How many meanings

The inflection -da can also be used when the speaker wants to do something, that is when the 'wanter' is the same as the 'doer' of the wanted action:

(4) Ngada warra-da ngarn-kiring-inj.
1sNOM go-DES beach-ALL-EMOT
'I would like to go to the beach.'

The object of a 'desiderative'-marked verb takes the emotive modal case marker -inj, as seen in the above examples. This suffix is one of a set of modal case suffixes that mark most NPs in a sentence, other than the subject. These suffixes show tense and mood in agreement with the verb, and -inj occurs only in verb phrases where the verb carries a desiderative, hortative or apprehensive inflection. It is because these inflections seem to share some emotive content that Evans has named -inj 'emotive'.

Etymologically it comes from the oblique case marker. The subject of a -da-marked verb, that is the 'doer' of the wanted action, is in nominative case.

In subordinate clauses, -da can denote an 'indirect jussive', where a request is transmitted via a third person:

(5) Dathin-a maku wara-th, buru-da ngurrumanji-nj.
that-NOM woman(NOM) send-IMP get-DES bag-EMOT
'Send word to that woman, that she should bring the bags.'

(6) Nyingka kamburi-ja thaa-th, ngijn-inja kajakaja-ntha
2sNOM speak-IMP return-IMP my-EMOT daddy-EMOT
mirrayala-da thungaluruuru.
heal-DES white-man(NOM)
'You go and tell (them) that the white man should heal my daddy.'

In these cases the requester, and therefore presumably the 'wanter' of the subordinate clause action, is identifiable from the main clause. In imperatives like (5) and (6) the 'wanter' is the speaker, and in reported requests the 'wanter' is the subject of the main clause verb.

So far, it looks as if -da is clearly associated with wanting or desirability. However, -da has another function, to mark hypothetical events in an 'if...then' context. In this use -da does not necessarily have anything to do with wanting and is used whether the event is desirable or
not. This can be seen in the following examples, where the first is clearly undesirable and the second is neutral:

(7) **Ngakulu-wan-inja jungarra-ntha ngimi-nja dali-d**,  
1in.p-POSS-EMOT big-EMOT night-EMOT come-DES  
**ngakulu-wan-inja bakiin-inja raa-d**,  
1in.p-POSS-EMOT all-EMOT spear-DES  
'If he comes upon us in the dead of night he will spear us all.'

(8) **Ngijuwa ngudi-da wangalk, dathin-a ri-in-da thaa-d**,  
1sCOBL throw-DES b'rang(NOM) there-NOM east-from-NOM return-DES  
'If I throw the boomerang, it will return there from the east.'

Both of the hypothetical clauses, the 'if' clause and the 'then' clause, are marked with -da, and neither clause is necessarily associated with wanting. In (8) the 'complementising oblique' case marker on the subject of the first clause indicates that this clause is subordinated to the second clause; while in (7) there is no overt marker indicating that one clause is subordinated to the other (though such a relationship can still be inferred).

This non-desiderative use of -da raises the question of polysemy. Can these two uses of -da be related to a single meaning? If the desiderative meaning is considered to be primary, then it is conceivable that a hypothetical meaning could have developed as an extension, related to the desiderative sense in some way. For example, in posing a hypothetical proposition, the speaker may be conveying something like 'I want you to think of this'.

Perhaps a more serious obstacle to identifying -da with wanting is that, although it can mark a verb as desirable or wanted, it cannot unambiguously indicate who wants it, that is, who is the 'wanter'. In examples (1-3) the wanter is presumed to be the speaker, but this is not necessarily so: the wanter could be someone else or someone unspecified, as the 'should' gloss indicates. Even when what is wanted is the speaker's own action, as in (4), the interpretation may be that the wanter is someone other than the speaker, and thus (4) could also be glossed 'I should go to the beach'.

Sentences like (9) and (10) below are entirely vague as to whether the wanter is the speaker, some other person, or people in general. Furthermore, according to Evans, the use of -da need not even refer to
someone wanting the action, but can simply mean ‘it would be good if X does this’, as in (10c):

(9) \textit{Ngada} wirrka-da.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
1sNOM & dance-DES \\
\end{tabular}

\begin{enumerate}
\item ‘I want to dance.’
\item ‘Someone wants me to dance.’
\item ‘I should dance.’
\end{enumerate}

(10) \textit{Dathin-a} dangka-a dali-d.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
that-NOM & man-NOM come-DES \\
\end{tabular}

\begin{enumerate}
\item ‘I want that man to come.’
\item ‘That man should come.’
\item ‘It would be good if that man comes.’
\end{enumerate}

These facts raise the possibility that all these uses of -da may really have more to do with hypotheticality than with wanting. Apparently, all of the cases where $X \text{ V}$-da seems to mean ‘someone wants $X$ to V’ can also be interpreted as meaning ‘if $X$ does V, this would be good’, without necessarily specifying who thinks it would be good, or for whom it would be good.

Of course, an action or event that ‘would be good’ is often wanted by someone, or thought of as desirable, but wanting or desirability is not an essential component of such a meaning. Note also that the inference works only in one direction: if something would be good, then someone might want it to happen; but if someone wants something to happen, it cannot be inferred from this that the happening would be good. This interpretation of -da has several explanatory advantages over linking -da directly with the meaning of wanting. First, it would fit better with the fact that -da does not point, syntactically or semantically, to any particular ‘wanter’. Second, it links the hypothetical use of -da (examples 7-8) with its other uses. Perhaps, indeed, -da can always be linked with a hypothetical or conditional meaning. When two events are involved, as in (7) and (8), the two events are linked in a conditional, ‘if...then’ relationship. When only one event is mentioned, as in the other examples, it seems always to be implied that if this event were to happen, (then) it would be good.

The meanings of the two construction types in which -da occurs could then be spelt out in the following manner. For the two-clause