

*Tape: a declining language
of Malakula (Vanuatu)*

Pacific Linguistics 575

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Tape: a declining language of Malakula (Vanuatu)

Terry Crowley

Edited by John Lynch



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Special thanks

We wish to record our great debt to Professor John Lynch, who—at a time when his own work had increased after Terry's death—worked on all four of Terry Crowley's Malakula volumes to bring them to publication in 2006. We thank him most sincerely.

Pacific Linguistics Board
Canberra, March 2006

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Preface

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

Various sections of the manuscript contained notes by Terry along the lines of ‘this needs to be checked in the field’. Clearly, he was hoping that one more trip to the field and more time spent on going through his collected texts would sort out some minor problems, fill the occasional gap, and make his grammar as complete and accurate as possible. That last field trip will, of course, not eventuate. Given that it is unlikely that any other linguist will work on Tape in the near future, and taking into consideration also Terry’s strongly held belief that the results of field research should be made available as soon as practicable, and in a form useful to the speakers, I was asked to go through this draft and do some general editing and tidying-up for publication. In some cases, I have inserted a comment on something he had written, and these comments usually appear as footnotes in italics (signed ‘JL’).

Terry’s death was a great loss to linguistics in the Pacific, and a personal loss to his many friends and colleagues. He was probably the most active and productive publisher in the field of Pacific linguistics and, given that he was only 51 when he died, it seemed that he had many fruitful years in front of him. A full obituary appeared in *Oceanic Linguistics* vol. 44, no. 1, 2005, but a brief summary is given below.

Terry had a BA (First Class Honours) and a PhD from The Australian National University. He taught at the University of Papua New Guinea from 1979 to 1983, and was then appointed the founding Director of the Vanuatu-based Pacific Languages Unit of the University of the South Pacific. He left Vanuatu at the end of 1990 to take up a teaching post at the University of Waikato in New Zealand, where he remained for the rest of his life, being promoted successively to Associate Professor and then Professor.

His initial research interests were in Australian Aboriginal linguistics. However, his PhD research was on the Paamese language of Vanuatu—he first went to Paama in 1976—and thus began almost three decades of close and continuous association with Vanuatu and its languages and people. As well as Paama, he also had lengthy periods of fieldwork on Erromango and Malakula. He published widely on Paamese and Erromangan languages,

as well as on broader comparative issues, and at the time of his death was just getting started on a series of publications on Malakula languages.

Despite this amazing productivity, he was possibly even better known for his groundbreaking work on Bislama. He published a dictionary (in a number of editions), a reference grammar, and a history of the language, as well as numerous articles on various aspects of its history, vocabulary and structure. He even produced a University-level course on Bislama—written entirely in Bislama. He was involved in committees attempting to standardise the spelling system of the language, and also in publications and activities in relation to national language and vernacular education issues.

Terry had a passion for languages and for linguistics which was evident not only in his teaching but also in many of his writings. In particular, he was concerned that the results of his research should, wherever possible, be made available not only to other professional linguists but also, in an accessible form, to speakers of the languages and to other ni-Vanuatu who might be interested. This book, his fourth lengthy description of a Vanuatu vernacular, is published at the same time as *Naman: a vanishing language of Malakula (Vanuatu)*, *The Avava language of central Malakula (Vanuatu)*, and *Nese, a diminishing speech variety of northwest Malakula (Vanuatu)*. He has left Oceanic linguists and the Vanuatu people an amazing legacy.

John Lynch

University of the South Pacific

Acknowledgements

My interest in the languages of northern Malakula began somewhat unintentionally. During 1995, while John Lynch, Malcolm Ross and I were toying with the idea of producing the survey volume *The Oceanic languages*—published as Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002)—I approached a speaker of Neve‘ei, Joemela Simeon, who was then studying at the University of Waikato in New Zealand, with the idea of gathering enough grammatical information on this previously undescribed language so that a sketch could be incorporated into that volume. Joemela was agreeable, and the sketch was eventually published as Crowley (2002a).

Another student from Malakula who also was studying at the University of Waikato, Lensi Samuel of Tautu village, volunteered the information that his mother was a speaker of a language which she used with her friends when she did not want to be generally understood. He was unsure of the name of the language and he knew nothing of the language himself, though he was very keen for this language to be documented. This language turned out to be Tape, which is the subject of the present study.

I was awarded a small grant from the Endangered Languages Fund (administered through Yale University) to support a two-month salvage fieldtrip to central Malakula over the period November 2000–January 2001 to begin a survey of the linguistic situation in the area, and during this period I was able to gather some preliminary data on Tape, as well as some other languages. I undertook a subsequent visit in 2002 during which I was able to further document the Tape language, this time funded by a small grant from UNESCO’s project *Indigenous language revitalisation and preservation in Melanesia (and the Pacific)*. Final work on Tape has been carried out with the help of three years of support from the Marsden Fund administered by the Royal Society of New Zealand over the period 2004–2007. I would like to formally acknowledge the invaluable contribution provided by each of these funds to the success of this project.

I would like to thank Harry Rambe, Selen Bue, Ephraim Joshua and Elder Lui Harry from Tautu village for so enthusiastically providing information in the Tape language. Successful linguistic fieldwork requires much more than just people who are willing to provide linguistic information, and in this respect I would also like to thank Ansen André and Kemuel Harry for their interest in the conduct of my research, and for being so enthusiastic about seeing the results of this work made publicly available. I would like to offer special thanks to the Tape community of Tautu village for their role as enthusiastic and generous hosts during my various visits to their village. Numa Fred and Marshall Hoke of the Malakula Cultural Centre in Lakatoro also helped greatly by allowing me to charge the batteries of my laptop, my recorder and my camera.

Thanks are due to Jimmy Simeon, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre fieldworker from Vinmavis village, for his dedication overall as an arranger of meetings, explainer of facts, and companion on forays into villages other than his own. Thanks must also go to Ralph Regenvanu of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre for once again so expeditiously arranging for the relevant permits and visas. Jimmy Numan's contribution in the form of mate's rates at an otherwise unaffordable but very pleasant hotel during my various sojourns in Port Vila was also very much appreciated.

Terry Crowley
Hamilton, New Zealand
December 2004

Abbreviations

ACC	accompanitive	MULT	multiplicative
BEN	benefactive	NEC	necessitative
CHAR	characteristic	NEG	negative
CHEW	chewable possession	NONSG	non-singular
COMPL	completive	OBL	oblique
CONT	continuative	PART	part-whole
COP	copula	PL	plural
ED	edible possession	POSS	general possession
DEM	demonstrative	PREP	preposition
DL	dual	PURP	purposive
DRINK	drinkable possession	REAL	realis
ES	echo subject	REDUP	reduplication
EXCL	exclusive	REL	relative clause
ILL	illative	SG	singular
IMP	impersonal	SIM	similitive
INCEP	inceptive	SUB	subordinator
INCL	inclusive	TL	trial
INDEF	indefinite	TR	transitive
INST	instrumental	1	first person
IRR	irrealis	2	second person
LOC	locative	3	third person

Conventions in citing examples

Examples are glossed using the abbreviations just presented, with morphological categories presented in small capitals and lexical glosses in ordinary type. Where there is a clear boundary between morphemes expressing separate categories, these are separated in glosses by means of a hyphen. For example:

pëti-m
head-2SG
'your head'

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

i-mekar
3SG:REAL-work
'(s)he works'

Where a lexical or morphemic gloss contains a word boundary in the English gloss, there is a joining full-stop to indicate that this corresponds to a single morpheme in the Tape original:

nëkhaarët
stinging.tree
'stinging tree'



Photograph 1: Some of the remaining Tape speakers
(Tautu village, December 2000)



Photograph 2: Harry Rambe (August 2004)



Photograph 3: Elder Lui Harry (August 2004)



Photograph 4: Ephraim Joshua (August 2004)

1 *Introduction*

1.1 Geographical background

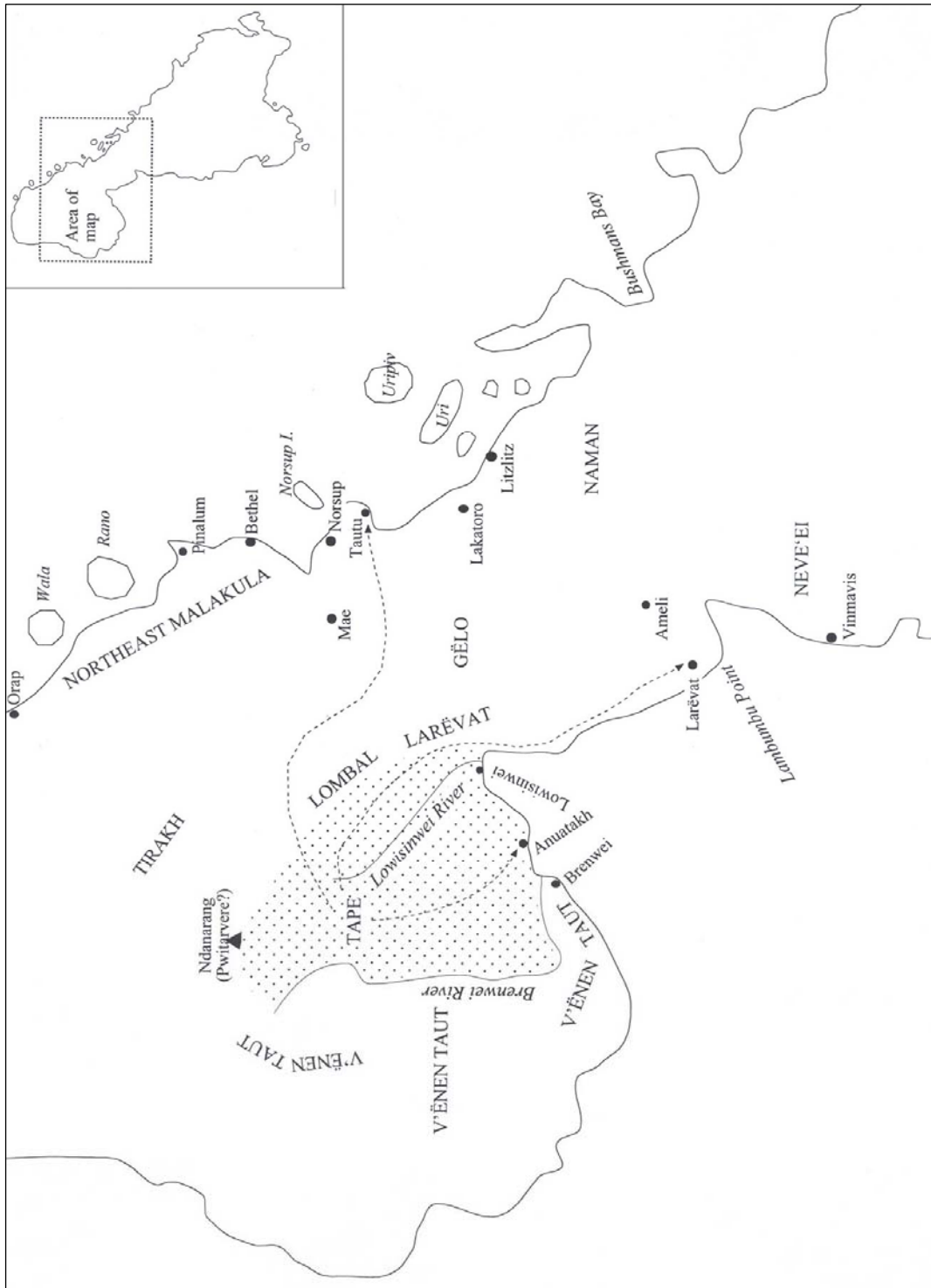
Tape is a relocated language that is now spoken by only a handful of older people some distance away from their traditional homeland, which has been abandoned as a place of residence.¹ The traditional territory of Tape speakers was an area of northwestern Malakula extending inland between the Lowisinwei River valley and across to the eastern bank of the Brenwei River to the south of a mountain called Pwitarvere. I have not been able to locate a mountain with this name on topographical maps, though from local information, this appears to correspond to the high peak labelled as Ndanarang which is located in this area. (See map.)

Although Tape traditional territory included a stretch of coast from Anuatak to Lowisinwei—which gave people living in this area access to salt which they could trade with the Tirakh people—Tape speakers oriented their lives primarily towards the bush. This is reflected in this study in the fact that speakers today were unable to offer more than an absolute minimum of terminology relating to sea life, even though they have lived in the coastal village of Tautu for about eighty years.

Tape was originally the name for the area shown on the map where the language which is the subject of this description was originally spoken. There was reportedly no distinct name for the language as such, which was referred to simply as *vengesien Tape* ‘the language of Tape’. However, speakers of the language today—and other people of Tape descent who do not speak the language—have come to use Tape as the name for the language as well.

This language has been referred to elsewhere in print (Deacon 1934; Capell & Layard 1980:4; Tryon 1976) as Marakus, Maragus and Maragus, which is correctly represented according to the spelling conventions adopted in this volume (and in other studies of languages of the area that are currently in preparation) as *Maraakhus* [mara:yus]. This is not a word in the Tape language at all. Rather, it is the name that was used to refer to Tape speakers by speakers of the Naman language of the Litzlitz area to the south. This name is based on the elements *mar* ‘person of (place)’ and *aakhus* ‘bush’ in that language.

¹ However, Tape people retain land ownership in their traditional territory and some continue to make food gardens there.



Map 1: Pre-contact Tape language area and subsequent population movements

1.2 Traditional neighbours

The Tape language was traditionally bordered to the west by the V'ënen Taut (or Big Nambas²) language, which was spoken along the coast from just west of Anuatak. This language occupies a large geographical area of northwestern Malakula, and in terms of the number of speakers, it is currently the second largest language of Malakula (Lynch & Crowley 2001:68). The neighbouring group to the northeast of Tape territory spoke the Tirakh language.³ During the colonial era, they moved down to the coast and their traditional homeland is now unoccupied.

Another language group which traditionally bordered on Tape territory were the people of Lombal, whose language was known as Rutan.⁴ This language was traditionally located in the interior between Pwitarvere mountain and the modern village of Mae. Some of these people relocated in the 1920s to the offshore island of Uri, located immediately to the south of Uripiv, while others relocated to the mainland just south of present-day Litzlitz village. Eventually, the mainland site was abandoned, and the language was replaced in their new home on Uri by the Uripiv variety of the Northeast Malakula language. The last speaker of Rutan reportedly died in the 1980s, and there is no known published record of the language.⁵

Another neighbouring language was reportedly known as Gëlo [ᵑgəlo], which was spoken in the area around the junction of the vehicular roads from Lakatoro, Lambumbu and Unmet. Speakers of this language also relocated to Tautu, where the language was ultimately completely replaced by the Northeast Malakula language. This language was also lost without record and today's descendants of Gëlo speakers all speak the Northeast Malakula language. Finally, spoken along the coast between the Lowisinwei River and Lambumbu Point was the language that is generally referred to now as Larëvat after the name of the single village where it is now spoken.

Although not traditionally immediately neighbouring languages, mention will also be made of the Naman and Neve'ei languages since there is frequent reference to these

² The name *Big Nambas* refers to the style of men's clothing which was unique to this particular group of people. Men from other parts of Malakula traditionally wore a penis wrapper—known in Bislama (the English-lexifier pidgin/creole which is the major lingua franca in Vanuatu) as a *nambas*—which was attached to a belt with the testicles visible. Among the Big Nambas, however, the penis wrapper was considerably more elaborate and men's genitals were completely covered. The term *Big Nambas* continues to be widely used on Malakula today even though traditional clothing has now been abandoned. This name is not a colonial imposition; rather, it is a direct calque into Bislama of traditional expressions such as *Na'av'av Bur* in neighbouring languages (in this case, Neve'ei).

³ This language was referred to in Lynch and Crowley (2001:80) as *Dirak*, this being the form of the name that was recorded initially from speakers of the Northeast Malakula language.

⁴ This name reportedly derives from the local word for 'let's go'. Languages in central Malakula are often named after shibboleths in this way. Thus, the Neve'ei language that is now spoken in Vinmavis is named after the word for 'what?', while the Naman language of Litzlitz is named after the local expression of surprise. The same language is referred to by Tape speakers as the Navar language, named after the Naman expression *navar* 'I say'.

⁵ Because the last location where this language was spoken was the island of Uri, this is often referred to locally as the Uri language, though it clearly did not originate from Uri island at all. The small population now living on the island of Uri speaks the Uripiv variety of the Northeast Malakula language. Ross McKerras, formerly of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, reportedly recorded a small amount of data in the Uri language but this information has been lost. Apart from the word [rutan] 'let's go', I have only been able to record the words [mərtu] 'person' and [rakəm] 'crab' in this language.

languages in this account of Tape. Naman⁶ was originally spoken in the area between Bushmans Bay, Lakatoro and Ameli, though it is now moribund, with just a small number of speakers scattered in various locations around central Malakula. Neve‘ei is an actively spoken language with a traditional territory located on the southern border of the Larëvat and Naman languages. Its speakers are now concentrated in the village of Vinmavis.

1.3 Recent history

Central Malakula experienced some rather dramatic events in its early colonial history, dating from the development of the first European-owned copra plantations around the time of the signing of the Anglo-French accord which established formal government in Vanuatu in 1906. Some of this historical background is provided in O’Reilly (1957:27–28, 47) and Van Trease (1987:172–173). Combined with the evidence of oral tradition from the area, a picture emerges of sometimes cordial and sometimes brutal relationships between settlers and some of the indigenous peoples. Also, the effects of traditional practices of warfare were exacerbated by the acquisition of rifles by some groups, resulting in sometimes aggressive campaigns by one local group against another.

The Big Nambas people were traditionally a war-like people and, in the early twentieth century, they launched a series of armed attacks on their Tape-speaking neighbours. They reportedly killed over thirty people, eating some. To escape the depredations of the Big Nambas, people from the Tape area moved to a series of new locations in the interior within (or adjacent to) the eastern part of their traditional territory, as far as possible away from the territory of the Big Nambas. (The text in §4.7 mentions the names of several locations within their own territory to which Tape speakers initially moved, though I have not been able to locate these places on any map.)

However, the attacks continued and the Big Nambas were also joined in their attacks against Tape speakers by speakers of the Tirakh language to their northeast. In desperation, the entire Tape-speaking population abandoned their homeland and relocated in the 1920s to the modern village of Tautu on the coast opposite the offshore island of Uripiv, near modern Norsup, where they came under the protection of colonial authorities and Christian missionaries.⁷

They were, however, soon followed to the Tautu area by their traditional Tirakh neighbours, and relations between the two groups remained poor for many years. There was a final bout of violence between the two groups in 1949 which resulted in speakers of Tirakh resettling in the present-day village of Mae,⁸ which is located several kilometres from the coast not far from Tautu. Some speakers of Tirakh subsequently established the village of Bethel, located on the coast about halfway between Norsup and Pinalum. Other speakers of Tirakh also resettled directly from the interior homeland as a minority in the predominantly Northeast Malakula-speaking village of Orap, located on the coastal mainland just to the north of Wala Island.

When the original Tape refugees settled in Tautu in the 1920s, the coast of the mainland was largely unpopulated, as the local people preferred to live on the various offshore

⁶ See *Naman: a vanishing language of Malakula* (Crowley 2006c)

⁷ Only two of those people who were born in the traditional homeland of Tape are still alive in Tautu today, both now in their eighties or nineties. One of these old men, Harry Rambe, provided a number of recorded texts in Tape, which form the basis of this study.

⁸ Tryon (1972:56) uses the name of this present-day village as the name for the Tirakh language.

islands of Uripiv, Atchin, Wala and Rano. Tautu village began its history as a predominantly Tape-speaking refugee settlement. Over the years, increasing numbers of people from nearby Uripiv settled among the Tape speakers in Tautu and there was considerable intermarriage. The village became linguistically mixed, with Tape speakers generally being bilingual in their own language and the Uripiv variety of the Northeast Malakula language. Few people from Uripiv living in the village, however, acquired a knowledge of Tape.

In the late 1960s, as nationalist sentiment in Vanuatu was beginning to develop in the run-up to independence in 1980, there were numerous land disputes in different parts of Vanuatu. Disputes between the people of Tautu and the neighbouring French-owned copra plantation at Norsup were particularly bitter (Van Trease 1987:174–179), with a number of outbreaks of civil disobedience. The condominium governments,⁹ in an effort to block the disruptive activities of politically active young men from Tautu, sent policemen from the offshore islands to break up demonstrations and to gather information on their plans and activities.

In response to this strategy, the land activists of Tautu addressed each other in Tape rather than the language of Northeast Malakula, in order to leave the colonial police in the dark. The Tape language at the time rapidly became a potent tool for keeping information secret from colonial authorities, as the only people who could understand it were the politically active groups from Tautu. The chief of Tautu at the time, seeing the value of Tape as a ‘private’ language that could be used to keep information from all outsiders, dictated that henceforth, Tape speakers in Tautu should no longer teach the language to their children. This was, he said, to ensure that the next generation of people from Tautu could not teach this secret language to any outsider, thereby ensuring its value to them as a secret language.¹⁰

This was clearly a remarkably short-sighted decision. The Tape-speaking community complied with this edict—one of the more successfully implemented language policies anywhere in the world, it might be pointed out—and the result is that the 25-year old land activists of 1967 have now reached their 60s, and they are the youngest speakers of this now moribund language. More than half of the current population of Tautu identify themselves as originating from Tape, though the vast majority now are first-language speakers of the Northeast Malakula language, albeit with some features that are unique to Tautu, and know no Tape language at all.¹¹ The total number of fluent speakers of the Tape language today is no more than ten or fifteen. There are reportedly also individual speakers of Tape living on the western coast of Malakula in what is now the V’ënen Taut-speaking village of Anuatak, as well as in Larëvat.

There has been an ongoing dispute over land ownership in Tape territory which is now reaching its final stages, with people from the Tape community in Tautu regaining traditional rights over their land from Big Nambas usurpers. The question of language played a significant role in the litigation, with Tape speakers making a point of using their

⁹ During the colonial era, Vanuatu—then known as the New Hebrides—was jointly administered by Britain and France in an arrangement that was known as the ‘condominium’.

¹⁰ These events are detailed by Elder Lui Harry in the text that is presented in §4.8.

¹¹ Northeast Malakula in its various regional varieties now has the largest number of speakers of any language on Malakula (Lynch & Crowley 2001:68). In addition to having already replaced both the Lombal and Rutan languages, it has also nearly supplanted Naman in Litzlitz village (Crowley 2006c), and it is widely known by speakers of Tirakh, many of whom also perceive their language to be under threat from Northeast Malakula.

language in front of the Big Nambas defendants to clearly demonstrate their group distinctiveness.

There has been considerable interest among the Tape community of Tautu in seeing the Tape language documented and taught to young children, and this interest appears to have been strengthened by the current research project. Kemuel Samuel of Tautu, himself a partial speaker of the language, had recorded a small amount of material on paper before the commencement of my own work, and Ansen André, a school-teacher in the local primary school, is keen to incorporate Tape language material in the local curriculum.

1.4 Previous and present work on Tape

Lynch and Crowley (2001:88–89) indicate that Tape is among thirty-five languages of Vanuatu which were at that time almost completely undocumented. In fact, the only published source of which I am aware which relates to this language is a basic wordlist of about 200 items in Tryon (1976), where the language was referred to as Maragus.

The present study is very much a salvage description of a disappearing language. A linguistic fieldworker investigating a moribund language typically faces particular kinds of difficulties, and the present study of Tape has been no exception in this respect. Given that the Tape language is no longer actively spoken, it was necessary to contrive elicitation and recording sessions in a way that is not always necessary when a language is being used in a living speech community on a daily basis.

Given that the most confident speakers of Tape are now quite elderly, it sometimes proved difficult to clearly hear certain kinds of sounds. In particular, the distinction between /p/ and /v/, and even /n/ and /l/, proved rather difficult to hear. Perhaps not surprisingly, other distinctions such as the contrast between plain labials and labiovelars (§5.1.2) and the contrast between schwa and other vowels (§5.1.1.2) also proved difficult to hear consistently. Formal elicitation of paradigms often tested the patience of the predominantly elderly speakers, who could not imagine why a linguist would want to keep asking for what was perceived to be the ‘same’ word. It sometimes proved difficult to establish the need for exact translations on the basis of my prompts, which resulted in my notes for particular verbal paradigms containing randomly scattered forms from different tenses, or incorrectly attributed pronominal inflectional categories.

It also became apparent that it was necessary to carefully consider certain structural features in my corpus. In general, if a particular feature is found only sporadically in contrast to a competing pattern that appears to have a more general distribution, I have tended to place less weight in this description on the pattern that is less widely distributed.

Also, if a particular pattern is found only in my elicited corpus, while a different pattern is found exclusively in my textual data, I have taken those patterns that appear in spontaneous speech to more reliably reflect the competence of speakers. While the analysis of textual data in conjunction with elicited data is essential in the documentation of any language, it becomes especially important in the case of a moribund language such as this one.

To date, I have transcribed and analysed a total of ten fairly short texts in Tape, amounting to a total of about twenty minutes of speech (§4). This is still a substantially smaller textual corpus than I have been able to assemble and analyse for the Naman language. However, while Naman is also moribund, it has a somewhat larger number of confident speakers than is the case with Tape. Members of the Tape community tend to

look to a very small number of octogenarians who were born in ‘the bush’ and moved to the coast with the original migration in the 1920 as representing the best sources of information on the language. However, analysis of texts recorded from these older speakers often proved difficult, and one relatively long text simply could not be transcribed and analysed at all because the elderly narrator’s voice was too unclear for other speakers of the language to make out what he was saying, and his performance was too rambling for people to be willing to make the extra effort that would be needed for the transcription process.

In addition, speakers of Tape who were born on the coast after the original migration were sometimes reluctant to put themselves forward as linguistic exemplars, even though their speech was typically much clearer. While these younger speakers were able to speak confidently in Tape, some structural evidence from their texts can be presented in support of their claim to speak a somewhat impoverished form of the language. The relatively unusual echo subject construction described in §6.2.1.1.2, for example, appears frequently only in narrative texts produced by the oldest speaker who was born in the bush, while it is either rare or non-existent in parallel structural contexts in the speech of people who were born on the coast.

Another potential source of material to which I have not been able to gain access involves one speaker of Tape who is himself not of Tape ancestry. It is not uncommon in highly multilingual Malakula, especially among the older generations, for people to fluently speak one or more local languages other than their own. There is one old non-Tape man who learned to speak Tape in his youth through his close association with members of this community, but during recording sessions he was never volunteered as a potential story-teller, nor did he ever attempt to volunteer himself, even though he could often be seen pottering around in the vicinity of the area where recordings were being made.

A final issue which has affected the accumulation of a more substantial corpus of textual data involves the unique preferences of members of the Tape-speaking community. While linguistic analysis can proceed on the basis of essentially any kind of well-recorded spoken data, the small group of Tape speakers have so far limited themselves to recording textual data on topics related directly to Tape traditions and history. Although the people from whom I recorded data were familiar with a wide range of traditional stories, they were unwilling to record a story in the Tape language if that story ‘belonged’ to somewhere else.

With regard to elicited data, the material on which this study is based was elicited and discussed primarily through the medium of Bislama. Some data, however, was obtained on the basis of prompts in the Uripiv variety of the Northeast Malakula language, this being the language which speakers of Tape now use much more frequently than their ancestral language. While I speak Bislama, I have no familiarity with the Northeast Malakula language, but when it was clear that my own prompts in Bislama were either not heard or not properly understood by an older speaker of Tape, they were then often passed on in Northeast Malakula by Kemuel Harry, Elder Lui Harry or Ephraim Joshua.

This study is organised somewhat differently from what some linguists may expect of a published account in that it follows the organisation of my previously published description of Ura (Crowley 1999). There, the first major section is devoted to the lexicon. The lexicon is followed by a collection of texts, which are followed by a discussion of the phonology and then the grammar. The reason behind this organisation is that people in

Vanuatu typically view the task of linguistic documentation primarily as a lexicographical task and secondarily as involving a compilation of texts. Most local people have little (or no) awareness of the need for phonological and grammatical analysis, and, if they do appreciate the need for this, would for the most part have little understanding of the technical terminology and analytical principles of modern linguistics. In order to increase the value of this study to local people, I have chosen to put towards the end of the book the material that is least likely to be of local interest—the phonology and grammar—and to place the material that local people are most likely to value—the dictionary and texts—at the beginning.

1.5 Tape and its linguistic relationships

Clearly, until much more data has been assembled on the languages of northern and central Malakula, and indeed until existing information has been carefully checked, much of what might be said about the historical relationship between Tape and other languages must remain tentative. While we have substantial grammatical information on V'ënen Taut (Fox 1979), Naman (Crowley 2006c) and Neve'ei (Musgrave 2001), as well as a grammatical sketch of Northeast Malakula (McKerras 2000), and while we have modest lexical collections for V'ënen Taut, Naman and Neve'ei, there is still no published lexical material available for Northeast Malakula. In addition, we have almost no useful lexical or grammatical information on the neighbouring languages to the north, i.e. Tirakh and Malua Bay.¹² For the neighbouring Larëvat language, my own fieldnotes contain some lexical and a little grammatical information, but we are little better off with this language than we are for the Malua Bay language.

Of the various languages of central and northern Malakula, Tape is very clearly more closely related to V'ënen Taut than it is to any other language. Although there are very good reasons for not paying too much attention to the raw lexicostatistical figures presented in Tryon's (1976) survey (Lynch & Crowley 2001:3), it is worth noting that the highest figures for cognate sharing with Tape involve his V'ënen Taut wordlists from Leviamp and Unmet. This is consistent with my own observations that Tape has substantially more in common grammatically with V'ënen Taut than it does with any of the neighbouring languages. The major grammatical features which uniquely link the two languages involve the following features of verbal inflectional morphology:

- The categories of dual and plural are morphotactically distinct from subject-mood prefixes (§6.2.1.4).
- There is a range of mood-aspect categories—including the continuative, completive and necessitative—which are marked by means of prefixes which appear in a distinct morphotactic position between the initial subject prefixes and the following numeral prefixes (§6.2.1.2).
- Negation is marked by means of a single prefix, rather than discontinuously by means of separate prefixed and suffixed elements as in Naman and Neve'ei (§6.2.1.3).

¹² Amanda Brotchie of the University of Melbourne commenced work on Tirakh in August 2004, so it is anticipated that a substantial amount of information on this language will become available. *Crowley's sketch of Nese, referred to in Lynch and Crowley (2001:82) as Vovo, has also been published in conjunction with this book – JL*

- Indirect possession marks a difference between the possession of items for eating, drinking and chewing, whereas in other languages of the area, these categories have been merged into a single general category of indirect possession.
- Both V'ënen Taut and Tape have an echo subject prefix which replaces the full set of subject prefixes in particular syntactic contexts (§6.2.1.1, §6.4.3).

Although Tape and V'ënen Taut are close linguistic relatives, there are numerous points of lexical and grammatical contrast between the two. The two languages also differ phonologically in a number of significant respects. Perhaps the most immediately obvious difference is the complete absence in Tape of the typologically rather unusual apico-labial consonants of V'ënen Taut. The apico-labials of V'ënen Taut correspond to the plain labials in Tape, though there is usually an associated correspondence in adjacent vowels between the low vowel /a/ in V'ënen Taut and a higher vowel in Tape. We therefore find correspondences between the two languages such as the following:

Tape	V'ënen Taut	
mekar	m̩akar	'work'
meləy	m̩aləy	'kava'
meteveren	m̩atav̩aran	'morning'
venu	v̩anu	'place'
pəre	p̩arei	'long'
deb	d̩ap	'ground'
nib	n̩ap	'fire'
lipay	l̩ipay	'dog'

Another significant point of phonological contrast between the phoneme inventory of the two languages is the complete lack of labiovelar consonants in V'ënen Taut. In common with many other Oceanic languages, Tape maintains a contrast between plain labials and labiovelars. The labiovelars of Tape correspond to plain labials in V'ënen Taut, as illustrated by the following:

Tape	V'ënen Taut	
m̩əçi	m̩əsi	'star'
m̩əliun	m̩lin	'chief'
p̩ərp̩ar	p̩rap̩ar	'pig'
v̩ər	v̩r	'stay'

The final major point of segmental contrast between the two languages is the absence in V'ënen Taut of the velar nasal. There has clearly been a wholesale shift of /ŋ/ to /n/, as indicated by the following correspondences between the two languages:

Tape	V'ënen Taut	
na:ŋəs	nana	'pawpaw'
dəlŋe-	d̩rəl̩na-	'ear'
ləŋl̩aŋ	l̩enl̩en	'body fat'
ŋəp	neŋ	'breathe'

1.6 Lexical entries and spelling

In all sections of this volume apart from this introductory chapter and the discussion of the phonology in §5, forms are represented in a practical spelling system rather than in phonemic script in order to render this material as accessible as possible to interested members of local communities, and in particular to descendants of the original Tape people. This orthography has been designed on the basis of my own observations of local traditions of writing whenever possible, and in particular with conventions for writing the Northeast Malakula language (McKerras 2000), which members of the Tautu community are familiar with. The following particular points should be noted:

- The velar nasal is written as *ng*.
- The velar fricative is written as *kh*. (Another possibility to consider is *h*, given the absence of an /h/ phoneme in Tape. This would be consistent with the established V'ënen Taut orthography, and it would have the advantage of eliminating a digraph. The use of the digraph at this stage reflects a purely personal preference to allow for the maximum comparability of forms between Tape and other languages from which I have gathered data in central Malakula, such as Avava and Neve'ei, where there is a phonemic contrast between /h/ and /ɣ/.)¹³
- The prenasalised stops are written with the plain stop symbols *b*, *d* and *g*.
- The affricate /tʃ/ is represented as *j*.
- The labiovelar consonants are distinguished from plain labials by means of following *w*.
- Long vowels are written as double vowels.
- The schwa is represented as *ë*.

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

Phonemic form	Spelling	
/kənək/	<i>kënëk</i>	'I'
/lipay/	<i>lipakh</i>	'dog'
/tirɣəbəb/	<i>tirkhëbëb</i>	'wild'
/tʃiru/	<i>jiru</i>	'seven'
/dəlŋen/	<i>dëlŋen</i>	'his/her ear'
/ni:vəy/	<i>niivëkh</i>	'Malay apple'
/pəɾpar/	<i>pwërpar</i>	'pig'

What follows is a brief discussion of the internal organisation of entries in the lexicon. Immediately after the entry is the word class specification in italics, for which the

¹³ Linguists working on some other Malakula languages which have contrastive velar fricatives have reportedly opted for orthographic *x* to represent this segment. If such a practice is considered locally acceptable, this option might also be considered for Tape. However, the Vanuatu Ministry of Education has reportedly issued guidelines for the design of local orthographies that the symbols used should stick as closely as possible to the kinds of sound-symbol correspondences that people will already be familiar with in English, French and Bislama.

following abbreviations are used (with the cross-references indicating the section of the grammar where the main discussion of that word class can be found):

<i>adj.</i>	adjective (§6.1.3)
<i>adv.</i>	adverbial (§6.3.3)
<i>aux.</i>	auxiliary (§6.4.1)
<i>conj.</i>	conjunction (§6.4.3)
<i>int.</i>	interjection
<i>inter.</i>	interrogative (§6.3.4)
<i>loc.</i>	locational noun (§6.3.3)
<i>n.</i>	indirectly possessed noun (§6.1.2.2.1)
<i>nom.</i>	nominal (§6.1.2.1.1)
<i>npart.</i>	noun possessed in partitive prepositional construction (§6.1.2.2.4)
<i>ns.</i>	directly possessed noun (§6.1.2.2.2)
<i>num.</i>	numeral (§6.1.3)
<i>postmod.</i>	postmodifier (§6.1.3)
<i>prep.</i>	preposition (§6.3.2)
<i>pron.</i>	pronoun (§6.1.1)
<i>sub.</i>	subordinator (§6.4.4)
<i>svi.</i>	serialised intransitive verb (§6.2.4)
<i>svt.</i>	serialised transitive verb (§6.2.4)
<i>vi.</i>	intransitive verb (§6.3.1)
<i>vt.</i>	transitive verb (§6.3.1)

Primary and secondary senses in dictionary entries are introduced by numerals within a single entry, while homophonous forms are marked by means of separate entries followed by superscript numerals. Example sentences for some items are included in italics, followed by an English translation in plain type. A considerably greater number of examples of lexical items within sentences—taken overwhelmingly from narrative texts—are provided in this lexicon than might ordinarily be expected for a dictionary. This is because of the precarious status of this language given that it is probably the last generation of speakers whose speech is reflected here.

A fairly typical entry, then, will look something like this:

dui *n.* 1. man 2. husband 3. person *Envwër betiting ogi jënen mimin ikhëjpongen dui.*
I just want to speak because the spirit used to kill people.

Compounds or idioms are entered as separate lexical entries, such as the following:

dui bëte *n.* sorcerer

dui mit *n.* Melanesian

dui tërep *n.* old man *Dui tërep gi nëkhsen Masing.* There was an old man whose name was Masing.

dui tërtërep *n.* old men *Eren dui tërtërep tetwo invwër inpantakhe tëvëlëkh, intakhe tëvëlëkh esar.* When the old men a long time ago wanted to marry women, they would take their wives.

Members of some word classes in Tape undergo obligatory inflectional marking as set out in §6.1.2.2.2 and §6.2.1. Verbs in the lexicon are entered in their unprefixated root forms (which normally only appear in a highly restricted range of structural contexts), while directly possessed nouns and suffixed prepositions are entered with the third person singular pronominal suffix *-n*.

The underlining of headwords indicates forms for which I have obtained good quality digital recordings. It is hoped that these entries will ultimately be linked in a digitised form of the lexicon to sound files which will allow people to click on these items in order to hear these words pronounced by speakers of Tape. Headwords which are not underlined have been transcribed directly from speech with no digital recording available.¹⁴

¹⁴ *Given Terry's premature death, it is not known at this stage whether this linking will be able to be done. However, I have retained the underlining in the lexicon in case this turns out to be possible – JL*

2 *Tape–English lexicon*

The following lexicon of Tape is exhaustive for the corpus that has been assembled to date. The total number of entries is just over 1100. Note that alphabetical ordering does not distinguish *e* and *ë* or *k* and *kh*. So, for example, *belevër* is immediately preceded by *bëlëkhësën* and immediately followed by *bëng isimëk*.

A

asen *ns.* maternal uncle (mother’s brother)

asen netite *ns.* brother-in-law

atua *n.* god *Inlot en atua eser.* They prayed to their god.

B

bawos *adv.* day after tomorrow

bëbëtën *ns.* 1. navel, belly button

2. swelling on tree trunk. Also **bëtën**.

běj¹ *vi.* (of bird, chicken) alight, settle

běj² *vt.* pick (fruit)

bëjij *vi.* blunt

bëkh *vi.* short

bëkhëj *vt.* squeeze

bëlakhëj *n.* parrotfish

bële *vt.* squeeze liquid out of (e.g. coconut)

bëlëkhësën *ns.* 1. shell (of something)
blëkhësmëtiu ‘coconut shell’ 2. cup

belevër *n.* thunder *Belevër ijvot.*
It thundered.

bëng isimëk *adv.* once

bëngale *n.* cicada (generic)

bëngën *ns.* days after death (of someone)
Bëngën ilëm enisi. It is five days since his death today.

bëni *svt.* do to death *Inslikh dënvinvin eies jere dënkhej bëni netën ar.* They carried him on their shoulders and walked around up in the bush and then they killed that boy.

bër¹ *vi.* fart audibly

bër² *adv.* still, yet

bërbër *n.* sea hearse tree (*Hernandia nymphaeifolia*)

bërdimdim *n.* brain

bëri *svt.* split *Ijej bri.* He split it with an axe.

bërkhavi *vt.* bend

bëruj *vt.* break *Enbëruj ne gi envwër bekhëj en lipakh.* I broke the stick that I wanted to hit the dog with.

bërvin *ns.* uncircumcised penis

bës lëmen *ns.* fingernail. Also **lil bësën**.

bësën *ns.* finger. Also **narëkh lëmen**.

bëte *adj.* forbidden, taboo. Also **tëbëte**.

bétel *svt.* around *Iling bétel nēmakh.*

He walked around the house.

bètèn *ns.* 1. navel, belly button

2. swelling on tree trunk. Also

bëbëtèn.

bëtnie *n.* ashes. Also **nies nib.**

bu *vi.* stink, stinking, putrid, rotten

buok *n.* water taro (*Cyrtosperma* sp.)

buos *n.* uncastrated boar *Eren mwëliun gi ivwër ipove nëbëng, ivëkhëj buos.*

When a chief wants to perform a ceremony, he will kill an uncastrated boar.

bwëliil *n.* sea almond tree (*Terminalia catappa*) *Mënliék erenge plebwëliil erenge emakh levër.* We were at the sea almond tree at that building.

bwëlin *ns.* 1. back *Bwëlik irar snekopra.*

My back is sore from the copra.

2. behind

D

dang luo *vt.* pull out *Povër iskadang luo lun, ikivin ejëkhën elakh esen, netën dui gi emu nen ikëmes.* If they do not pull out her teeth and she goes to her husband, her first male child will die.

dar *pron.* their (pl.) (edible)

darëp *n.* Indian coral tree (*Erythrina indica*)

dartël *pron.* their (tl.) (edible)

daru *pron.* their (dl.) (edible)

de¹ *n.* blood. Also **deen.**

de² *prep.* edible possessive ('of')

deb *n.* 1. ground *Dënlep net pwërpar dënkho erenge deb.* And they took the piglet and tied it to the ground.
2. soil 3. land

ded *pron.* our (pl. incl.) (edible)

dëdën *vi.* 1. tell lies 2. *vt.* tell lies to, lie to *Idëdënëd.* He lied to us.

dëdënen *ns.* sap. Also **nuon.**

dëdëng *vi.* afraid, frightened

dëdëngen *vt.* fear, afraid of *Idëdëngen khaavot.* He is afraid of the European. *Netite idëdëngenëk.* The child is afraid of me.

dedëtël *pron.* our (tl. incl.) (edible)

dedru *pron.* our (dl. incl.) (edible)

deen *ns.* blood. Also **de.**

delëng dëlengen *n.* earwax

dëlim *vt.* swallow *Idëlim nëkhanien.*

He swallowed the food.

dëlin *ns.* 1. voice 2. sound

dëlengen *ns.* 1. ear 2. gill (of fish)

dëlo *vi.* 1. go slowly 2. *svi.* slowly

Ilingling dëlo. He walked slowly.

3. quietly *Ititing dëlo.* He whispered.

dëm *vi.* fall

dëmen¹ *ns.* oil found in flesh of sprouting coconut

dëmen² *vt.* let, agree

dëmon *num.* used in counting teens, decades and hundreds *isngel dëmon itël* 'thirteen', *ingeltël dëmon iru* 'thirty-two', *ingasngel dëmon isngel dëmon isig* 'one hundred and eleven'

dëmot *n.* peace

den *pron.* his, her, its (edible)

denge *vi.* cook food on fire

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

dërap po *n.* wild yam with thorny vine which grows in bush

dëring *n.* 1. fungus growing on rotten wood 2. mushroom

dëriu *vi.* burp, belch

devo *n.* new yam celebration

didis *n.* palm tree

didiven *vi.* sleep on back

dikio *n.* 1. chiton without shell 2. slug

ding *n.* mangrove

dip *vi.* heavy *Iskedip.* It is not heavy. *Kërëng idip?* Does it feel heavy?

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

doakh *n.* native lychee (*Pometia pinnata*)

dok *pron.* my (edible)

dom *pron.* your sg. (edible) *Pomo dēlep kake dom duen melēkh nen duen buos nen.* Come and take your yam with its kava and its pig. *Betabēkh viakh dom.* I will cook the taro for you.

duen *prep.* 1. with *Dēnsēkh duen melēkh nen.* We stood it up with its kava.
2. to. Also **duon, eduen, eduon.**

duon *prep.* 1. with 2. to

dui *n.* 1. man 2. husband 3. person
Envwēr betiting ogi jēnen mwimwin ikhēj pongen dui. I just want to speak because the spirit used to kill people.

dui bēte *n.* sorcerer. Also **te bēte.**

dui e nib *n.* Ambrymese person

dui elo *n.* coastal person

dui eut *n.* inland person

dui lil *n.* important man

dui mit *n.* Melanesian

dui nēmon *n.* boy. Also **netite dui.**

dui nur *n.* warrior, fighter

dui tērep *n.* old man *Dui tērep gi nekhsen Masing.* There was an old man whose name was Masing.

dui tērtērep *n.* old men *Eren dui tērtērep tetwo invwēr inpantakhe tēvēlēkh, intakhe tēvēlēkh esar.* When the old men a long time ago wanted to marry a woman, they would take their wife. Also **dui tētērep.**

dui tētērep *n.* old men. Also **dui tērtērep.**

duil *vi.* sleepy *Mēten iduil.* He is sleepy.

duon *prep.* 1. with 2. to. Also **duen, eduon, eduen.**

E

e *prep.* 1. from *Naakēd rivwi e Tape.* We are all from Tape. *Envwēr beviri en kem ipērvī dēnriū e venu esed.* I want to say to you all how we escaped from our place. 2. at (place) *Dēnlēnglēng venu esed e Tape dēnmo e Vēti.* We left our place at Tape and came to Vēti. *Eren mēnvwēr banjej waia ese khaavot e Jinarur lene, mēnvīn mēnvētīr erenge waia.* When we were about to cut the Europeans' fence at Jinarur over there, we went and stood at the fence. 3. to (place) *Dēnlēnglēng venu esed e Tape dēnmo e Vēti.* We left our place at Tape and came to Vēti. *Dui gi eso invin e venu esar.* People who were from far away went to their villages. 4. of (place) *Vengesien e Tape.* It is the language of Tape.

edeb *loc.* down, below

eduen *prep.* 1. with 2. to *Envwiri pij eduen kem.* I will explain it to you all. Also **duen, duon, eduon.**

eduon *prep.* 1. with 2. to. Also **duen, duon, duēn, eduen.**

eies *loc.* uphill, up in the bush

ejēkhēn *prep.* 1. to (person) *Jerete inlep ivin ejēkhēn elakh sen.* Only then did they take her to her husband. *Invin ejēkhēn mwēliun.* They went to the chief. 2. with (person) *Er gi inliek ejēkhēn mwēliun inliek.* Those who lived with the chief stayed behind. *Imo iliek ejkhēn netēn mwili.* She came and stayed with her child again. 3. at (place of) *Nuo isig ejēkhēmēm.* There is a spring at our place.

eji *loc.* here *Vengesien esek imos eji.* My story concludes here.

ejujen *prep.* beside *Lipakh imetēr ejujen nēmakh.* The dog is sleeping beside the house. *Dui intiting ejujen nēmakh.* The man is talking beside the house.

elakh *n.* husband *Jerete inlep ivin ejëkhën elakh esen.* Only then did they take her to her husband.

elë *prep.* location ('inside, within, into') *Dui ilunum elë nuo.* The man dived in the river.

elëvenu *loc.* inside *Invin dënliëk elëvenu.* They went and lived inside. *Kënëk enliëk elëvenu.* I stayed inside.

elikh *loc.* before, in front *Ivtir elikh enëk.* She stood in front of me.

elo *loc.* 1. down (to the coast) *Dënmo elo erenge skul.* We came down to the church. 2. on the coast *Dëniar erenge skul elo erenge 1928.* We arrived at the church on the coast in 1928. 3. south *Nitëp iling elo.* The wind came from the south.

elwen *ns.* nephew

emakh *loc.* home *Mënmelet imo emakh.* We returned home.

emel *loc.* to/in the meeting house *Elple nib emel.* Light the fire in the meeting house.

emu *loc.* 1. at the front, in front *Intëkh emu levër.* They knocked out that one at the front. 2. *adj.* first *Povër iskadang luo lun, ikivin ejëkhën elakh esen, netën dui gi emu nen ikëmes.* If they do not pull out her teeth and she goes to her husband, her first male child will die.

en¹ *pron.* he, she, it *Ipovwiri en en.* He will say it to him.

en² *prep.* 1. to (person) *Envwër bevwiri en kem ipërvü dënriu e venu esed.* I want to say to you all how we escaped from our place. *Këpanvwiri en netëkem ipadrëngdo vengesiën esed mo diar enisi.* You will all tell it to your children so they know our language up till today. *Inlot en atua eser.* They prayed to their god. 2. in (language)

Bevwiri en vengesiën esek. I will say it in my language.

en³ *adv.* and then *Isngnen elë lib en inudi.* They put him into the bamboo and then they ate him.

enir *n.* that one *Sëkho gi dënmo erenge skul enir.* That was the year that we came to the church. *Vengesiën esek ogi enir.* That is just my story.

enisi *adv.* 1. today *Këpanvwiri en netëkem ipanrëngdo vengesiën esed mo diar enisi.* You will all tell it to your children so they know our language up till today. 2. now *Enisi envwër bevwiri mwili vengesiën isig en kem.* Now I want to tell one more story to you all.

enivin *loc.* underneath, beneath

enkhëkhërën *prep.* beside *Ivtir enkhëkhërëk.* She stood beside me.

eple *vt.* light (fire) *Eple nib emel.* Light the fire in the meeting house. *Bepë nib gi poliek evibëkh ejëkhën.* I will light a fire which you will sit close to.

er *pron.* they, them (pl.) *Er gi inliëk ejëkhën mwëliun inliëk.* Those who lived with the chief stayed behind. *Povër tëvet gi ipivin ivëtir ejëkhën dui gi banvësvësiën en er iporëng.* If a woman goes to marry a man, she will teach it to them and they will hear it.

eren *n.* 1. time *Eren levër George Kalkoa ivwër polis esen ipanmo.* At that time George Kalkoa told his police to come. 2. *sub.* when *Eren dui tërtërep tetwo invwër ipantakhe tëvëlëkh, intakhe tëvëlëkh esar.* When the old men a long time ago wanted to marry a woman, they would take their wife. *Eren mwëliun gi ivwër ipove nëbëng, ivëkhëj buos.* When a chief wants to hold a ceremony, he will kill a pig. *Eren gi ivwër ipokhëj dui e ilingling ivin ikhëj dui.* When she wanted to kill somebody she would go and kill somebody. *Eren mënvwër banjej waia*

ese khaavot e Jinarur lene, mēnvin mēnvētir erenge waia. When we were about to cut the Europeans' fence at Jinarur over there, we went and stood at the fence.

erengen *nom.prep.* 1. goal ('to') *Dēnmo elo erenge skul.* We came down to the church. *Itutuen erenge venu gi ipomo erenge nēbēng esen.* He distributed it to the village that came to his ceremony. *Ivin erenge nuo levēr.* He went to that spring. 2. at (time) *Dēniar erenge skul elo erenge 1928.* We arrived at the church on the coast in 1928. 3. location ('on, in, at') *Inkho erenge lib.* They bundled them up on the bamboo. *Iliek ogi erenge nēmakh esen.* She just stayed at her house. *Iskerngdo ipul tegi mwili erenge nol esen.* He couldn't write anything more in his book. 3. in (language) *Ivtir ivwēr iporēng povēr bantinge tegi erenge vengesien ese kēmēm.* He stood in order to hear if we said anything in our language.

eritēl *pron.* they, them (tl.)

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

es *inter.* who? *Es ivwēr kēpanjej waia ese khaavot?* Who said you should cut the Europeans' fence? *Bivin duen es?* Who will I go with?

esakh *loc.* uphill, upwards *Mēnvin mēnvētir erenge waia divin divin divin divin iar esakh lene.* We went and stood at the fence as far as all the way up over there.

esar *pron.* their (pl.) *Eren dui tērtērep tetwo invwēr invantakhe tēvēlēkh, intakhe tēvēlēkh esar.* When the old men a long time ago wanted to marry a woman, they would take their wife. *Jere dēnbēkhrap esar.* They they just cleared their garden sites.

esartēl *pron.* their (tl.). Also **gesartēl**.

esaru *pron.* their (dl.). Also **gesaru**.

ese *prep.* possessive ('of') *Intakhe divin e nemakh ese mwēliun.* They took them to the chief's house. *Banlulo nēkhanien ese naakēd evi?* Where will we plant our food? Also **gese, se**.

esed *pron.* our (pl. incl.) *Envwēr bevwiri en kem ipērvī dēnriū e venu esed.* I want to say to you all how we escaped from our place. *Dēnlēnglēng venu esed e Tape dēnmo e Vēti.* We left our place at Tape and came to Vēti. *Netite esed itar iskanrēngdo vengesien esed mwili.* Many of our children don't know our language any more. Also **gesed**.

esedētēl *pron.* our (tl. incl.). Also **gesedētēl**.

esedru *pron.* our (dl. incl.). Also **gesedru**.

esek *pron.* my *Vengesien esek ogi enir.* That is just my story. Also **gesek**.

esen *pron.* his, her, its *Jerete inlep ivin ejēkhēn elakh esen.* Only then did they take her to her husband. *Inrap esen.* They cleared a garden site for him. Also **gesen**.

eso *loc.* far away *Dui gi eso invin e venu esar.* People who were from far away went to their villages. *Iliek eso en nēmakh.* He stayed a long way from the house.

esom *pron.* your (sg.) *Bejej mētiū esom.* I will cut your coconut. Also **gesom**.

esoweies *loc.* above, on top *Insēkh ivin esoweies.* They stood it up on top. *Mēnjul ivin esoweies mēnvwēr, 'Oi!'* We shouted up there, 'Oi!' *Nēmen ivtir esoweies erenge nēmakh.* The bird is standing on top of the house.

etakh *adv.* 1. next, afterwards *Ikēmes jerete gi etakh nen ikēbēkhjilēp.* He will die and then the next one will just live. 2. behind *Ivtir etakh enēk.* She stood behind me.

etakhdo *adj.* last *Nēbēng isig, injem luo isig divin divin iar e etakhdo.* For each

day they would remove one until it reached the last one.

etbën *ns.* grandparent, grandfather, grandmother

etër *loc.* 1. there *Itëkh etër divin divin divin imumu.* It stayed there until it rotted. *Imos etër.* It ends there. 2. *n.* that *Etër ogi envwër bevwi en kem.* That's all I want to tell you.

etkhan *ns.* brother-in-law

etmen *ns.* father

etmen lil *n.* father's elder brother

etmen vës *n.* father's younger brother

eut *loc.* inland

evi *inter.* where? *Povër bëskanjej waia levër, banmekar evi?* If we don't cut that fence, where will we make our gardens? *Banlulo nëkhanien ese naakëd evi?* Where will we plant our food?

evibëkh *loc.* near, close *Ivin evibëkh ejkhën.* He went close to her. *Pomo evibëkh ejkhëk.* Come close to me.

evren *loc.* outside, outdoors *Imos, inmo evren.* When it was over, they came outside. *Pivin evren!* Go outside! *Netiti er itmo evren erenge skul.* The children have come out of school.

G

gesar *pron.* their (pl.). Also **esar**.

gesartël *pron.* their (tl.). Also **esartël**.

gesaru *pron.* their (dl.). Also **esaru**.

gese *prep.* possessive ('of'). Also **ese**, **se**.

gesed *pron.* our (pl. incl.). Also **esed**.

gesedëtël *pron.* our (tl. incl.). Also **esedëtël**.

gesedru *pron.* our (dl. incl.). Also **esedru**.

gesek *pron.* my. Also **esek**.

gesen *pron.* his, her, its. Also **esen**.

gesom *pron.* your (sg.). Also **esom**.

gi¹ *postmod.* 1. this, that *Sëkho gi dënmo erenge skul enir.* That was the year that we came to the church. 2. one, any *Dui gi iskhe ivwiri en këmëm gi banjej waia.* Nobody told us to cut the fence. *Povër tëvet gi ipivin ivëtir ejkhën dui gi banvësvësien en er iporëng.* If a woman goes to marry a man, she will teach it to them and they will hear it.

gi² *sub.* 1. relative clause marker *Kake gi insëkhër ikskanjar.* The yams that they had stood up wouldn't be touched. *Ivul luo vengesien gi mëntiting en levër.* He wrote down the things that we said to that one. *Dui gi eso invin e venu esar.* People who were from far away went to their villages. 2. headless relative clause marker *Gi elakh esen iyek adasketëkh lun, ikmelet divin nëmakh gi ikantëkh lun.* One who has a husband and her teeth have not been knocked out will come back to the house where they will knock out her teeth. *Gi idaskivin ejkhën elakh esen intëkh lun.* One who has not gone to her husband will have her teeth knocked out. 3. where 4. complementiser *Dui gi iskhe ivwiri en këmëm gi banjej waia.* Nobody told us to cut the fence.

gir *n.* that one *Gir ogi envwër betinge këpanrëngdo.* That's all I want to say for you all to hear.

I

iar *vi.* 1. arrive, reach *Dëniar erenge skul elo erenge 1928.* We arrived at the church on the coast in 1928. *Nëbëng isig, injem luo isig divin divin iar e etakhdo.* For each day they would remove one until it reached the last one. 2. touch *Eniar.* I touched it. 3. go until *Intëkh luo rivwi, inkhës divin divin ikear nit ikeren.* When they had knocked them out, they danced on

and on until daybreak. *Këpanvwiri en netkem ipanrëngdo vengesien esed mo diar enisi*. You will all tell it to your children so they know our language up till today. 4. go as far as *Mënvin mënvëtir erenge waia divin divin divin divin iar esakh lene*. We went and stood at the fence as far as all the way up over there. 5. vt. touch *Kake gi insëkhër ikskaniar*. The yams that they had stood up wouldn't be touched.

ij vi. cry *Iij*. (S)he cried.

ikhos adv. too much, very *Tirakh er inututakh dui ikhos*. The people of Tirakh were very bad to people.

il vt. slice

ilëm num. five

ililëm vi. do five by five, do in fives

ingelëm num. fifty

ingelëmjis num. sixty

ingeljevet num. ninety

ingeljiru num. seventy

ingeljitël num. eighty

ingelru num. twenty

ingeltël num. thirty *Nëbëng ingeltël dënliëk elelvenu*. For thirty days we stayed inside.

ingelves num. forty

ip vt. blow

ipij likhalmo int. good day

ipij meteveren int. good morning

ipij rivrip int. good afternoon, good evening

iru num. two *Intëkh luo lun iru*. They knocked out two of her teeth.

irusimëk vi. same *Karusimëk*. The two of you are the same.

is vt. bite *Lipakh iis dui*. The dog bit the man. *Lipakh iisëk*. The dog bit me.

is vëkharët gnash teeth

isig num. one *Enisi envwër bevwiri mwili vengesien isig en kem*. Now I want to

tell one more story to you all. *Nuo isig ejëkh këmem*. There is a spring at our place.

isimëk num. one *Nil isimëk dënliëk elelvenu*. For one month they stayed inside. *Lipakh isimëk iis tiu esek*. A dog bit my chicken.

iskha int. no *Dui iskha*. There were no men. Also **iskhe**.

iskhe int. no *Dui gi iskhe ivwiri en këmem gi banjej waia*. Nobody told us to cut the fence. Also **iskha**.

isngel num. ten *Vër ikës nëbëng isngel, venu esar injem nimwil*. If it exceeded ten days, their village would remove the cycad leaves.

itar postmod. many *Netite esed itar iskanrëngdo vengesien esed mwili*. Many of our children don't know our language any more. *Ilis ikhëj dui itar*. He saw him kill many people.

itël num. three

itvwiren adv. nearly, almost, soon *Itvwiren ipomo*. He will soon come.

iu vi. rain *Nuis iu*. It is raining.

ivaru vi. do twice

ivës inter. how much?, how many? *Kudi niivëkh ivës?* How many Malay apples did you eat?

ives num. four

ivësves vi. do four by four, do in fours

ivijevet vi. do nine times

ivijiru vi. do seven times

ivijitël vi. do eight times

ivilëm vi. do five times

ivilëmjis vi. do six times

ivin vi. 1. go *Invin dënliëk elelvenu*.

They went and lived inside. *Gi idaskivin ejëkhën elakh esen intëkh lun*. One who has not gone to her husband will have her teeth knocked out. *Invtir divin divin ibëkhvin ejëkhën elakh esen*. They will stay behind until she just

goes to her husband. 2. on and on, eventually *Intëkh luo rivwi, inkhës divin divin ikear nit ikeren*. When they had knocked them out, they danced on and on until daybreak.

ivisngel *vi.* do ten times

ivitël *vi.* do three times

ivives *vi.* do four times

ivsig *adv.* 1. once 2. one day 3. all at once, suddenly, straight away *Ivsig imetër*. He slept straight away. Also **ivsimëk**.

ivsimëk *adv.* 1. once 2. one day *Ivsimëk Tirakh inmo erenge venu esekëmëm e Tape*. One day the Tirakh people came to our village at Tape. 3. all at once, suddenly, straight away. Also **ivsig**.

J

jar *vt.* wipe *Ijar lëmen*. He wiped his hands.

jëbëkh *ns.* smegma

jei¹ *n.* croton

jej² *vi.* 1. cut *Eren mënvwër banjej waia ese khaavot e Jinarur lene, mënvin mënvëtir erenge waia*. When we were about to cut the Europeans' fence at Jinarur over there, we went and stood at the fence. 2. chop *En ijej ne*. He chopped the wood.

jej bëri *vt.* split by chopping

jëjën *svt.* tight

jejër *vi.* slip *Ijejër erenge lip*. He slipped in the mud.

jël *vi.* smoke, be smoky *Nib ijël*. The fire is smoky.

jële *vt.* comb *Ijële pëtin*. He combed his hair.

jëlëj *n.* earthworm

jëlën *ns.* sucker (of banana, breadfruit)

jëljil *vt.* flick

jëm *vt.* remove *Vër ikës nëbëng isngel, venu esar injem nimwil*. If it exceeded ten days, their village would remove the cycad leaves.

jëm luo *vt.* remove *Nëbëng isig, injem luo isig divin divin iar e etakhdo*. For each day they would remove one until it reached the last one.

jëmjëm *vi.* leak *Nëmakh ijëmjëm*. The house leaks.

jënen *sub.* because *Envwër betiting ogi jënen mwimwin ikhëj pongen dui*. I just want to speak because the spirit used to kill people. Also **sënen**.

jënin *ns.* intestine

jëpakh *n.* earth oven. Also **lel jëpakh**.

jëpere *vt.* put short sticks in ground for (yam vines)

jëpon *vt.* count

jërbësen *vi.* clear one's throat

jere *adv.* afterwards, and then *Jere dënbëkhrap esar*. Then they just cleared their garden sites. *Jere inkhël mwili kake pove nëbëng te ipankhës jënen*. Then they dug up the yams again to perform a ceremony to dance with. Also **jerete**.

jëren¹ *ns.* semen

jëren² *vt.* throw

jërëp *n.* coconut lory (*Trichoglossus haematodus*)

jerete *adv.* afterwards, and then *Jerete inlep ivin ejëkhën elakh esen*. Only then did they take her to her husband. *Ikames jerete gi etakh nen ikabëkhjilëp*. He will die and then the next one will just live. Also **jere**.

jëvarën *ns.* shin

jevet *num.* nine

jëvjëpen *vi.* stamp feet

jëvjëvten *vt.* join

jëvot *vi.* bang, crash, make sudden loud noise, explode, (of gun) fire *Belevër ijvot*. It thundered.

ji *n.* excrement, faeces *Ipoj ji*. He stood in excrement. Also **jin**.

ji mëten *ns.* sleep in eye

jijen *vi.* 1. green 2. blue

jiijër¹ *n.* skink

jiijër² *vi.* (of road, branch) fork *Sel ijijër*. The road forked. *Rengesne ijijër*. The branch forked.

jiijër³ *vi.* 1. sweep 2. (of fowl) scratch ground in search of food

jiikhëvo *vi.* kneel

jikhëp *vi.* sneeze

jile *vt.* 1. wash *Bejile belet en nuo*. I will wash the plate in the water. 2. wet, water *Posip nuo vës bejile en kon*. Scoop up a little water for me to water the corn with.

jilëp *vi.* live, be alive, stay alive *Ikames jerete gi etakh nen ikabëkhjilëp*. He will die and then the next one will just live. *Tëvëlëkh ikënjilëp*. The woman will live.

jiimod *n.* sow

jin¹ *ns.* excrement. Also **ji**.

jin² *ns.* vine (of something) *ji kake* ‘yam vine’

jiru *num.* seven

jitël *num.* eight

jomar *pron.* their (pl.) (chewable)

jomartël *pron.* their (tl.) (chewable)

jomaru *pron.* their (dl.) (chewable)

jomjom *n.* sweet coconut

jomo *vt.* 1. chew *Ijomo*. (S)he chewed it. 2. *prep.* chewable possessive (‘of’)

jomod *pron.* our (pl. incl.) (chewable)

jomodëtël *pron.* our (tl. incl.) (chewable)

jomodru *pron.* our (dl. incl.) (chewable)

jomoj *n.* wild pandanus

jomok *pron.* my (chewable)

jomom *pron.* your (sg.) (chewable)

jomon¹ *ns.* gratings of kava

jomon² *pron.* his, her, its (chewable)

jopakh *vi.* squat

josin *ns.* fin (of fish)

jovo *vt.* 1. follow, go after, come after *Tirakh er injovo këmem dënmo erenge skul*. The Tirakh people came after us to the church. 2. go along *Panlingling dënjovo sel*. Let’s walk along the road.

jovo tes walk along reef (typically in search of shellfish)

ju bwëlin *ns.* backbone, spine

ju mërën *ns.* sternum, breastbone

ju nëpakh *n.* turtle shell

juele *vi.* shout. Also **jul**.

jul *vi.* shout, yell *Mënjul ivin esoweies mënvwër*, ‘Oi!’ We shouted up there, ‘Oi!’ *Netite ijul evi?* Where is the child shouting? Also **juele**.

jun *ns.* 1. bone 2. shell, carapace 3. post (in fence) *junëmwël* ‘fence post’

K

kake *n.* yam *Inlulo kake esen, jerete inbëkhulo esar*. They planted his yams and then they would just plant their own.

kake përe *n.* long yam variety

kel *vi.* constipated *Jin ikel*. He is constipated.

këlëlën *ns.* ribs

këlkelen *vi.* colourful

kem *pron.* you (pl.) *Envwiri pij eduen kem*. I will explain it to you all. *Envwër beviri en kem ipërvü dënriu e venu esed*. I want to say to you all how we escaped from our place.

këmem *pron.* we, us (pl. excl.) *Nuo isig ejëkhkëmem*. There is a spring at our place.

këmemru *pron.* we, us (dl. excl.)

këmentël *pron.* we, us (tl. excl.)

kemru *pron.* you (dl.)

kemtël *pron.* you (tl.)

kënëk *pron.* I, me *Kënëk Harry Rambe.*

I am Harry Rambe.

kënkënel *n.* swollen glands

kërisel *n.* garden *Eskerëng bivin ra krisel.*

I don't want to go to the garden.

kërkër *vi.* (of hen) cluck after laying eggs, or when calling chicks

kërliu *n.* door. Also **liu**.

kës *vt.* 1. pinch 2. break off (leaf) with fingers *Ikës nimwil.* He broke off the cycad.

kësëlëm *n.* snot, nasal mucus

kësën *ns.* nose

kësiar *vt.* exceed, go past *Vër ikësiar nëbëng isngel, venu esar injem nimwil.*

If it exceeded ten days, their village would remove the cycad leaves.

khaavot *n.* European *Eren mënvwër banjej waia ese khaavot e Jinarur lene, mënvvin mënvëtir erenge waia.* When we were about to cut the Europeans' fence, we went and stood at the fence.

khabu *vi.* (of food) burnt

khakhas *vi.* cold

khan *vi.* eat *Tiu ikhan e milivin nëmakh.* The chicken is eating under the house.

khap *vi.* crooked, bent

kharep *vi.* crawl

khau *vi.* 1. sour, bitter *Ikhou.* It is bitter.
2. (of food) spicy, piquant

khawen *vi.* happy

khe *vi.* sing. Also **khékhe**.

khëj *vt.* 1. kill *Eren mwëliun gi ivwër ipove nëbëng, ivëkhëj buos.* When a chief wants to perform a ceremony, he will kill a pig. *Envwër betiting ogi jënen mimin ikhëj pongen dui.* I just want to speak because the spirit used to

kill people. 2. hit, strike, pound *Ikhëj en tili tëvëlëkhar gi ikhëjpongen dui ar.* He struck it on the leg of that woman who used to kill people. 3. (of cyclone) strike *Lang ikhëj.* The cyclone struck. 4. beat (slitgong) *Inkhëj nokhmo.* They beat the slitgong.

khëjkhëj pëte *n.* pounded breadfruit (which is eaten with coconut milk)

khékhe *vi.* sing. Also **khe**.

khëkhël *vi.* 1. shake 2. shiver

khël *vt.* 1. dig 2. dig up *Invin inkhël.* They went and dug them up. 3. build (house) *Inkhël nëmakh nen tëvëlëkh esar.* They built a house for their wives.

khëmit *vi.* be dark, be night *Nit ikhmit.* It is dark. Also **mit**.

khër *vt.* scratch, scrape

khërkhër¹ *vi.* itch

khërkhër² *svt.* block, prohibit *Intiting khërkhër sel.* They put a spoken prohibition over the path.

khës *vi.* dance *Intëkh luo rivwi, inkhës divin divin ikear nit ikeren.* When they had knocked them out, they danced on and on until daybreak. *Jere inkhël mwili kake pove nëbëng te ipankhës jënen.* Then they dug up the yams again to perform a ceremony to dance with.

kho *vt.* bundle up, bind *Rivrip inkho kake.* In the evening they bundled up the yams. *Inkho erenge lib.* They bundled them up on the bamboo.

khuos *vi.* strong *Iskarkhuos mwili.* The two of them were no longer strong.

kuku *n.* penis

L

laabët *n.* rat

laang *n.* fly

laang bibi *n.* blowfly

laang ikhëj *n.* hurricane, cyclone

labarang *n.* breadfruit variety

lakh *vi.* married, get married *Irlakh*.

The two of them got married. *Iskelakh*.
He is not married.

lakhien *n.* marriage, wedding *Ivin erenge lakhien*. He went to the wedding.

lakhmël *vi.* hurry, go quickly

lakhmëlsi *adv.* now

lau *vt.* 1. cross, go over *Ilau nuo*. He crossed the river. 2. *svt.* go over *Isëp lau*. He jumped over it.

lavenu *n.* evening star

lebëb *n.* bush *Nitëp iling e lebëb*. The wind came from the bush.

lebëb tërep *n.* primary forest

lebëlëb *n.* pudding made with island cabbage

Lebënwo *loc.* Norsup

lëjar *n.* nits

lejelej *n.* short round yam variety

lëjlëjëkh *vi.* hop

lëkh¹ *n.* wood grub (found in rotten wood)

lëkh² *vt.* tie up *Inlëkh buos esar*. They tied up their pig.

lëkhlēkh¹ *n.* wild ginger

lëkhlēkh² *vt.* hang, suspend

lel jëpakh *n.* earth oven. Also **jëpakh**.

lel lëmen *ns.* palm of hand

lel nëvop *n.* cave. Also **pëlkonëvet**.

lel tilin *ns.* 1. sole of foot 2. shoes

lel vëjëjën *ns.* glans penis

lelakh *vi.* hang, be suspended

lëlëkh *vi.* sew

lelëm *vi.* sweet *Ilëlëm*. It is sweet.

lelën *ns.* 1. interior, inside part 2. tuber, edible part *Itëkh divin divin divin iar e kake imdakh iar e leln iyek*. It stayed and stayed until the yam grew until it had tubers. 3. flesh (of fruit, coconut) *leln mëtiu* ‘coconut flesh’

lelën ilil envious *Leln irar*. She is envious.

lelën irar angry *Leln irar*. He is angry.

lëlës *vt.* roll

lelo *n.* tree species (*Polyscias scutellaria*)

lëmen *ns.* hand, arm

lëmjis *num.* six

lene *loc.* over there *Eren mënvwër banjej waia ese khaavot e Jinarur lene, mënvin mënvëtir erenge waia*. When we were about to cut the Europeans’ fence at Jinarur over there, we went and stood at the fence.

lëng *vt.* put

lëng meleten *vt.* put back

lëng nëbëng settle date, announce day (of ceremony) *Eren invwër ipanmo ipanul tes, inlëng nëbëng*. When they wanted to come and buy saltwater, they would settle on a date.

lënglang *n.* fat (of body) *lënglang ne pekën* ‘the fat of his body’

lënglëng *vt.* 1. leave *Dënlënglëng venu esed e Tape dënmo e Vëti*. We left our place at Tape and came to Vëti. 2. let go of, release

lep¹ *vt.* 1. take *Jerete inlep ivin ejëkhën elakh esen*. Only then did they take her to her husband. *Dënlep net pwërpar dënkho erenge deb*. They took the piglet and tied it to the ground. *Pomo dëlep kake dom duen melëkh nen duen buos nen*. Come and take your yam with its kava and its pig. 2. get, receive 3. catch (disease) *Enlep mësitien*. I caught a disease.

lep² *vt.* give

lep luo *vt.* take out, remove *Këtlep luo?* Have you removed it?

lesën *ns.* male genitalia, penis, testicles

let *vi.* argue, dispute *Inlet*. They argued.

levër *postmod.* 1. that *Ivin erenge nuo levër*. He went to that spring. *Eren levër George Kalkoa ivwër polis esen*

ipanmo. At that time George Kalkoa told his police to come. *Eren mënjej rivwi*, George Kalkoa imo ivwiri en dui Rano levër imo ivtir. When we had cut it, George Kalkoa came and said to that man from Rano to come and stand up. 2. *n.* that one *Intëkh emu levër*. They knocked out that one at the front.

lëvlip *n.* 1. mud 2. swamp. Also **lip**.

lib *n.* bamboo *Inkho erenge lib*. They bundled them up on the bamboo.

lib velës *n.* soft bamboo

lib vet *n.* hard bamboo

liek *vi.* 1. live *Invin dënliek elelvenu*. They went and lived inside. 2. stay *Maren nen inliek*. The next day they stayed. *Dënliek divin divin nit imit inkhës divin divin nit iren*. They stayed until night and they danced until daybreak. 3. sit 4. rest

liek khëmëj *vi.* be quiet

lijëkh *vi.* limp

likhalmo *n.* 1. noon, midday, middle part of the day 2. *adv.* at noon

likhan *ns.* 1. middle 2. front 3. leafy part of tree (in contrast to trunk)

likhanan *ns.* 1. face 2. forehead

likhat *n.* 1. night 2. *adv.* at night

lil *vi.* 1. big, large 2. fat 3. jealous, envious *Leln ilil*. He is envious.

lil bësën *ns.* fingernail. Also **bës lëmen**.

lil mëtü *n.* coconut husk

lil ne *n.* bark of tree

lil pekën *ns.* skin (of person or animal)

lilakh *vi.* (of food) tasteless, bland

lilën *ns.* 1. skin 2. bark 3. peel (of fruit)

lilës *n.* chiton

lilis *vi.* 1. open eyes 2. wake up

limën *ns.* leaf bud (of tree or plant)

limi *vt.* lick *Ilimi*. (S)he licked it.

ling *vi.* walk *Inling*. They walked.

ling bëtél *vt.* walk around *Iling bëtél nëmakh*. He walked around the house.

lingën *vi.* straight

lingling *vi.* wander about *Mwimwin ilingling nit imit*. The spirit wandered about at night.

lingling lau *vt.* walk across *Ilingling lau nuo*. He walked across the river.

lip *n.* 1. mud 2. athlete's foot *Lip iis en*. He has athlete's foot. Also **lëvlip**.

lipakh *n.* dog

lis *vt.* see *Ilis ikhëj dui itar*. He saw him kill many people. *Kënëk enlisëm*. I saw you. *Këlisëk*. You saw me.

lisdo *vt.* recognise by sight

liu *n.* door. Also **kërliu**.

lo¹ *vt.* plant

lo² *loc.* coast

lobres *vt.* look through small hole in *Kolobres nëmakh*. Look through the small holes in the wall of the house.

lomël *n.* garden *Bivin nit arve lomël erengen*. I will go to where the garden was made. *Povër nuis ipiu pëskanvin erenge lomël*. If it rains, we will not go to the garden.

lot *vi.* pray *Inlot en atua eser*. They prayed to their god. *Dënlot en dui gi plevenu*. We prayed to the person who was the origin of the world.

lu¹ *n.* 1. arrow 2. bullet, cartridge

lu² *vi.* shoot, fire shot. Also **luluakh**.

lu bête *n.* poison arrow

luakh *vi.* vomit

luakhen *ns.* vomit, vomitus

lulo *vt.* plant *Inlulo kake esen, jerete inbëkhllulo esar*. They planted his yams and then they would just plant their own. *Banlulo nëkhanien ese naakëd evi?* Where will we plant our food?

luluakh *vi.* shoot, fire shots *Irmo irluluakh eji.* The two of them came and fired shots here. Also **lu**.

lumlum *n.* waterweed, seaweed

lumlum nuo *n.* waterweed

lumlum tes *n.* seaweed

lun¹ *ns.* 1. tooth *Intëkh lun.* They knocked out her teeth. 2. tusk (of pig)

lun² *ns.* belt, waistband

lunen *ns.* flower (of breadfruit)

lunum *vi.* swim underwater, dive *Dui ilunum elel nuo.* The man dived in the river.

luo¹ *vt.* shoot *Irluo asekmemru.* They shot our uncle.

luo² *svt.* out *Intëkh luo lun iru.* They knocked out two of her teeth.

M

makhlo *loc.* to/in the meeting house *Partiting makhlo.* Let's talk in the meeting house.

mamau *vi.* yawn

mamwe *n.* brother (of woman)

mang *vi.* make noise, be noisy

maren *adv.* tomorrow

maren nen *adv.* the next day *Maren nen inliek.* The next day they stayed.

maru *n.* vagina

mavëkluir *n.* Adam's apple

meang *n.* green coconut with flesh that has become hard and the water has begun to go fizzy

mëd *vi.* ripe

mëdakh *vi.* 1. new 2. uncooked, raw *Imëdakh.* It is raw. 3. (of plant) grow *Itëkh divin divin divin iar e kake imdakh iar e leln iyek.* It stayed and stayed until the yam grew until it had tubers.

mëdëdin *vi.* smooth, level

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

mëdes *n.* women's fibre skirt

mëdin *vi.* 1. sink, go underwater 2. (of sun) set *Niel imdin.* The sun has set.

mëdkëhën *ns.* scar

mëj *vi.* break, broken *Tilin nitveln imëj.* One of her legs was broken.

mëji *n.* star

mekar *vi.* 1. work *Imekar.* He worked. *Iskemekar.* He didn't work. 2. make garden *Povër bëskhanjej waia levër, banmekar evi?* If we don't cut that fence, where will we make our gardens?

mekaren *vt.* make, do *Imekaren ivaru.* (S)he did it twice.

mëkarien *n.* work, job *Mëkarien esom ste?* What is your job?

mëkhwaia mëji *n.* shooting star

mëldon *ns.* right hand

mëlej *n.* leftover food

melëkh¹ *n.* kava *Dënsëkh duen melëkh nen.* They stood it up with its kava.

melëkh² *vi.* pitch dark *Nit imelëkh.* It was pitch dark.

melëkh miel *n.* kava variety with reddish branches

mëlep *n.* twins

melet *vi.* return, go back, come back *Gi elakh esen iyek adasketëkh lun, ikmelet divin nëmakh gi ikëntëkh lun.* One who has a husband and her teeth have not been knocked out will come back to the house where they will knock out her teeth. *Mënmelet imo emakh.* We returned home.

meleten *svt.* back, in return *Ilëng meleten.* He put it back.

mëlip *vi.* lean, be at an angle

mëlis *n.* 1. widow, widower 2. orphan *Irve mëlis.* The two of them are orphans.

mëlivin *ns.* shadow. Also **mëlmilën**.
mëljiu *vi.* clean
mëlmëlëj *vi.* (of hair) tangled, matted
Pëtin imëlmëlëj. His hair is matted.
mëlmilën *ns.* shadow. Also **mëlivin**.
mëlmol *vi.* naked
mëlnge nelo *n.* spider web
mëlnge tilin *ns.* track, spoor, footprint
mëlngen *ns.* 1. sleeping place 2. bed
Bivin e mëlngek. I am going to bed.
mëlulo *vi.* soft
mëmang *vi.* make noise, noisy *Netite*
inmëmang. The children are making
noise.
mëmëlkhai *vtr.* sharp *Imëmëlkhai en.*
It is sharp.
memes *vi.* dry
mëmëtikh *vi.* have vertigo *Leln*
imëmëtikh. He has vertigo.
mën¹ *ns.* smell, odour *Mën ipij.* Its smell
is nice.
mën² *vt.* drink *Imën.* (S)he drank it.
Bëmën melëkh duenëm. I will drink
kava with you.
mënar *pron.* their (pl.) (drinkable)
mënantël *pron.* their (tl.) (drinkable)
mënaru *pron.* their (dl.) (drinkable)
mëne *prep.* drinkable possessive ('of')
mëned *pron.* our (pl. incl.) (drinkable)
mënedëtël *pron.* our (tl. incl.) (drinkable)
mënedru *pron.* our (dl. incl.) (drinkable)
mënëmënëp *vi.* thin (rather than thick)
mënen *pron.* his, her its (drinkable)
mënkre *n.* black flying fox, black fruit bat
mënmën *vi.* 1. drink 2. breastfeed
mënok *pron.* my (drinkable)
mënom *pron.* your (sg.) (drinkable)
mer *n.* wild cane variety with thin stems
mëran *vi.* (of sore) healed *Imran.* It is
healed.

mërang *vi.* (of wood, leaves) dry
mëre *n.* eel
mërej *vi.* thin, skinny, emaciated
mërën *ns.* chest
mëri *n.* 1. coconut leaf mat *Tëvëlëkh ive*
mëri. The woman made a coconut leaf
mat. 2. bed
mëri pwitar *n.* coconut leaf mat used for
making walls and roof of house
mërij *vt.* crunch in mouth
mërit *vi.* wake up *Imrit.* He woke up.
mëru *n.* barrel tree (*Acacia spirorbis*)
mërorur *vi.* (of food) oily, greasy
mes *vi.* die, dead *Inkhëj khaavot duon*
mesis esen irmes. They shot the
European and his wife dead.
mësep *n.* empty space
mësid *vi.* hiccup *Imsid.* He hiccupped.
mesien *n.* funeral *Invin sëne mesien isig.*
They went for a funeral.
mësit *vi.* sick, ill *Imsit sne nëkhmakh.* She
is sick because of the mosquitoes.
mësitien *n.* sickness, disease, illness
mësmes *n.* tree sp. (*Garuga floribunda*)
mëte kuku *n.* urethral opening (of male).
Also **mëte lesën**.
mëte lesën *ns.* urethral opening (of male).
Also **mëte kuku**.
mëte mëtiu *n.* eye of coconut (which can
be pierced to get access to water inside)
mëte niel *n.* 1. cassia (*Schleinitzia* sp.)
2. clock, watch
mëte nuo *n.* spring. Also **nuo**.
mëte sësën *ns.* nipple
mëte tëmes *n.* wart
mëtemiel *n.* conjunctivitis
mëten *ns.* eye
mëtepar *n.* blind person
metër *vi.* sleep *Ivsig imetër.* He suddenly
slept.
metër en nëkhëkhërën sleep on side

metër lilis *vi.* dream
meteveren *n.* 1. morning 2. *adv.* in the morning
mëtëvlilakh *n.* boil
mëtiu *n.* coconut *Bejej mëtiu esom.*
 I will cut your coconut.
mëtiu mërang *n.* dry coconut
meviel *n.* rainbow
mib¹ *n.* fontanelle
mib² *n.* gecko
mibëkhlu *vi.* slippery
mibën *ns.* grandchild, grandson, granddaughter
miel *vi.* red
mikhwel *n.* gully, non-permanent watercourse
miles *n.* cold *Irëng miles.* He feels cold.
mili *adv.* 1. again 2. any longer. Also **mwili**.
milivin *ns.* under, beneath *Tiu ikhan e milivin nëmakh.* The chicken is eating under the house.
mimid *vi.* sweat, perspire *Naakëm këmimid.* You are sweating. *Imimid.* (S)he is sweating.
mimin¹ *ns.* tongue
mimin² *ns.* spirit (of place or dead person). Also **mwimwin**.
mingir *vi.* snore
mip *n.* small rock crab
mis *vi.* cooked *Imis.* It is cooked.
mis pij *vi.* cooked properly, well done *Iskemis pij.* It is not properly cooked.
misir *n.* apple banana
mit *vi.* 1. be dark, be night *Dënliëk divin divin nit imit inkhës divin divin nit iren.* They stayed until night and they danced until daybreak. *Mwimwin ilingling nit imit.* The spirit walked at night. Also **khëmit**. 2. black
miul *vi.* (of dry skin) peel

mo *vi.* come *Dënmo elo erenge skul.*
 We came down to the church.
Dënlënglëng venu esed e Tape dënmo e Vëti. We left our place at Tape and came to Vëti. *Këpanvwiri en netkem ipanrëngdo vengesien esed mo diar enisi.* You will all tell it to your children so they know our language up till today.
moar *vi.* shiny, bright
mokhwo *vi.* urinate
momon *vi.* 1. ask *Inmomon en këmem rivwi,* ‘*Es ivwër këpanjej waia ese khaavot?*’ They asked us all, ‘Who said you should cut the Europeans’ fence?’ 2. *vt.* ask *Imomonëk.* He asked me.
mopën *ns.* liver. Also **movmit**.
mopën khar *n.* lung. Also **movkhar**.
mor *vi.* split
mornen *ns.* left hand
mos *vi.* 1. conclude *Vengesien esek imos eji.* My story concludes here. 2. end, finish *Imos imo mwili iliek duen netën vësar.* When she was finished, she would go and stay with that little child of hers.
mosi *adv.* today
movkhar *n.* lung. Also **mopën khar**.
movmit *n.* liver. Also **mopën**.
mumu *vi.* disintegrate *Itëkh etër divin divin divin imumu.* It stayed there until it disintegrated.
mwëlës *n.* citrus, orange
mwëliun *n.* chief *Eren mwëliun gi ivwër ipove nëbëng, ivëkhëj buos.* When a chief wants to perform a ceremony, he will kill a pig. *Intakhe divin e nemakh ese mwëliun.* They took them to the chief’s house. Also **nëmwäl**.
mwëliun lil *n.* paramount chief
mwëlmwël *vi.* round
mwëlnëvet *n.* stone wall

mwili *adv.* 1. again *Këpanrëngk mwili entiting*. You will all hear me again talking. *Intëkh lun mwili*. They knocked out her teeth again. 2. any longer *Netite esed itar iskanrëngdo vengesien esed mwili*. Many of our children don't know our language any more. Also **mili**.

mwimwin *ns.* spirit (of place or dead person) *Nuo mwimwin iyek*. The spring has a spirit. *Ilis mwimwin nuo levër ive tëvëlëkh*. He saw the spirit of the water was like a woman. Also **mimin**.

N

naabues *n.* New Guinea rosewood (*Pterocarpus indicus*). Also **naabuos**.

naabuos *n.* New Guinea rosewood (*Pterocarpus indicus*). Also **naabues**.

naakëd *pron.* we, us (pl. incl.) *Naakëd rivwi e Tape*. We are all from Tape. *Banhulo nëkhanien ese naakëd evi?* Where will we plant our food? *Imomonëk*. He asked me.

naakëdëtël *pron.* we, us (tl. incl.)

naakëdru *pron.* we, us (dl. incl.)

naakel *n.* post (in house construction)

naakëm *pron.* you (sg.) *Envwër betiting mwili duen naakëm*. I want to talk with you again.

naangës *n.* 1. great hog plum (*Spondias dulcis*) 2. pawpaw, papaya (*Carica papaya*)

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

naaret *n.* drinking coconut with flesh that is still soft

naarin *ns.* root *naarine* 'root of tree (generic)'

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

naaviu *n.* pandanus variety (for making mats)

nabu *n.* club

nale *n.* lizard

nalomoj *n.* green tree lizard (*Emoia sanfordii*)

namëd *n.* bush sprite

napopo *n.* snake bean

narëkh lëmen *ns.* finger. Also **bësën**.

narëkh tilin *ns.* toe

nari tang *n.* handle of basket

nau *n.* 1. vine 2. rope, string

nau ne lesën *ns.* vas deferens. Also **nuot ne lesën**.

nau ne tes *n.* wave, swell

Navar *n.* 1. Naman language 2. person from Langalang

navëj *n.* comb

navul *n.* 1. bed 2. platform, bench

navwilo *n.* yam variety

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

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

neb pëtïn *ns.* back of neck (which, when struck, causes immediate death)

nëbakhasu *n.* freshwater crab (*Bislama krab kaldoni*)

nebën *ns.* buttocks

nëbëng¹ *n.* day *Nëbëng ingëltël dënliek ellevnu*. For thirty days they stayed inside. *Vër ikës nëbëng isngel, venu esar injem nimwil*. If it exceeded ten days, their village would remove the cycad leaves.

nëbëng² *n.* ceremony *Eren mwëliun gi ivwër ipove nëbëng, ivëkhëj buos*. When a chief wants to perform a ceremony, he will kill a pig.

Nebënwo *n.* Norsup

nëbër *n.* elephantiasis

nëbëthët *n.* mute person

nëbwëd *n.* wild yam

nej *vt.* pelt, throw missile at

- nëjiër** *n.* broom
- nëkhaarët** *n.* stinging tree, devil nettle (*Dendrocnide* sp.)
- nëkhanien** *n.* food *Banlulo nëkhanien ese naakəd evi?* Where will we plant our food?
- nëkhëb** *n.* soft yam variety with little taste
- nëkhëkhërën** *ns.* side
- nëkhës** *n.* hill, mountain
- nëkhët** *n.* louse
- nëkhmakh** *n.* mosquito
- nëkhmo** *n.* island teak (*Intsia bijuga*)
- nëkhsen** *ns.* name *Inwis nëkhseen ive Tar.* They called him Tar.
- nelo** *n.* spider
- nëmakh** *n.* house, building *Inkhël nëmakh nen tëvëlëkh esar.* They built a house for their wives.
- nëmej** *n.* fish
- nëmen** *n.* bird
- nëmi** *n.* dust
- nëmop** *n.* Tahitian chestnut (*Inocarpus edulis*)
- nëmot** *n.* snake
- nëmum** *n.* earthquake
- nëmwäl** *n.* chief. Also **mwëliun.**
- nëmwël** *n.* fence around garden *Inve nëmwël esen.* They made the fence around his garden.
- nëmwël ne pwërpar** *n.* pig pen
- nen** *nom.prep.* part-whole ('of') *lënglang ne pekën* 'the fat of his body', *novo ne pëte* 'seed of the breadfruit' *Inkhël nëmakh nen tëvëlëkh esar.* They built a house for their wives.
- nenëp** *adv.* yesterday
- nëpakh** *n.* turtle
- nëpek** *n.* banyan tree
- nëpel** *n.* swamp harrier, hawk (*Circus approximans*)
- nëpet** *n.* tuber with chewy (and slightly bitter) flesh
- nëpik** *n.* giant turban shell (*Turbo marmoratus*)
- nesël** *n.* coconut frond *nesël ra mëtiu* 'frond of the coconut tree'
- nesël nunud** *n.* firefly found at sea
- nesip** *n.* knife
- neskërkërit** *n.* sensitive grass (*Mimosa pudica*)
- net** *n.* tree with edible round soft green fruit
- net nuok** *n.* outrigger
- net pwërpar** *n.* piglet *Dënlep net pwërpar dënkho erenge deb.* They took the piglet and tied it to the ground.
- netën** *ns.* son, daughter, child *Këpanvwiri en netkem ipanrëngdo vengesien esed mo diar enisi.* You will all tell it to your children so they know our language up till today. *Povër iskadang luo lun, ikvin ejëkhën elakh esen, netën dui gi emu nen ikames.* If they do not pull out her teeth and she goes to her husband, her first male child will die.
- netite** *n.* child *Netite esed itar iskadrëngdo vengesien esed mwili.* Many of our children don't know our language any more.
- netite dui** *n.* boy. Also **dui nëmon.**
- netite tëvëlëkh** *n.* girl
- netitevën** *n.* young unmarried woman
- nëvar** *n.* heliconia
- nëvëdëlin** *ns.* top rail of long walls of house
- nëvek** *n.* ankle rattle tree (*Pangium edule*)
- nëvës** *n.* Fijian asparagus (*Saccharum edule*)
- nëvet** *n.* 1. stone, rock *Ilep nëvetar.* He took that stone. 2. money *Invnakh nëvet gi envwër bul en nëmakh.* They stole the money that I wanted to buy the house with.

nëvet mit *n.* black stone *Itakhe nëvet mit isig.* He took a black stone. Also **vetmit**.

nëvet nen neyo *n.* cooking stone

nëvnevën *ns.* hip

nëvod *n.* barn owl (*Tyto alba*)

nëvon *n.* breadfruit variety

nëvwëk *n.* albino

nëvwër *n.* pus

nëvwib *n.* fish poison tree (*Barringtonia asiatica*)

nëvwid *vi.* bald head

neyo *n.* pudding

ngep *vi.* breathe

ngërngir *vt.* scale (fish) *Inngërngir nëmej.* They scaled the fish.

ngërngirën *ns.* scale (of fish)

ngërngirin *ns.* area between upper lip and nose (where moustache grows)

ngevien *n.* asthma

ngëvngep *vi.* puff, be puffed

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

nib *n.* 1. fire *Nib ivang.* The fire is alight. 2. firewood 3. volcano 4. Ambrym

nib bëte *n.* taboo fire

nib vang *n.* burning piece of firewood

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

nidël mëten *ns.* eyeball

nidël tëlet *n.* 1. ant eggs 2. rice

nidëlä *ns.* egg (of bird, fowl)

niel *n.* sun *Pëtik irar sneniel.* My head is sore because of the sun.

nienge *n.* native almond (*Canarium indicum*)

nies nib *n.* 1. ashes. Also **bëtnie**. 2. bread

niet *n.* 1. sago palm (*Metroxylon warburgii*) 2. thatch (for house-building)

niivëkh *n.* Malay apple (*Syzygium malaccense*) *Kudi niivëkh ivës?* How many Malay apples did you eat?

nij *n.* fire ants (*Solenopsis geminata*)

nijen *ns.* stalk (of fruit)

nijëngjëng *n.* stool, chair

nijëvjëp *n.* walking stick *Ilingling duen nijëvjëp.* He walks with a walking stick. Also **pëlijëvjëp**.

niji *n.* 1. sugarcane 2. sugar

nil *n.* 1. moon 2. month *Nil isimëk dënliek elelvenu.* For one month they stayed inside.

nil mëten *ns.* 1. eyebrow 2. eyelash 3. eyelid

nil mëtiu *n.* coconut husk

nil nisin *ns.* beard

nil pek lesën *ns.* foreskin

nil pekën *ns.* 1. body hair 2. skin

nil pële lesën *ns.* (male) pubic hair

nil pëtin *ns.* hair (of head)

nil pwingin *ns.* 1. lip 2. moustache

nil tiu *n.* 1. chicken feather 2. feathered dancing stick

nilën *ns.* 1. skin 2. bark (of tree) 3. hair 4. feathers 5. peel (of fruit) *nilmwëlës* 'orange peel'

nilen¹ *ns.* pith of breadfruit

nilen² *ns.* tail *nile lipakh* 'dog's tail'. Also **nululen**.

nililëk *n.* 1. shirt 2. clothes

nimel *n.* meeting house *Intakhe divin e nimel ese mwëliun udi.* They took them to the chief's meeting house and he ate them.

nimwil *n.* cycad (*Cycas circinalis*) *Ikës nimwil.* He broke off the cycad.

nin *n.* ringworm

ninëkh nëmen *ns.* bird's nest

nines *n.* grass

ningen *ns.* flower

ningidin *ns.* gums

nini *vi.* burn down to embers *Nib inini.*

The fire has burnt down to embers.

ninit *vi.* dirty

niniu *n.* tree sp. (*Macaranga* sp.)

ninwolën *ns.* top

nio *n.* armband

nipip *n.* bamboo rail to which thatch is attached in roof of house

nipipil *n.* 1. cave bat 2. swiftlet (*Aerodramus* sp.)

nipirang *n.* heat, sweatiness *Enrëng nipirang.* I feel hot and sweaty.

nipwiji *n.* stinkwood (*Dysoxylum* spp.)

niri *n.* imperata reed (*Imperata cylindrica*)

nirirëp *n.* fan

nisakh *n.* banana *Budi nisakh duen kake.* I will eat banana and yam.

nisakh mes *n.* banana variety

nisakh mit *n.* banana variety

nisëkh *n.* kingfisher (*Halcyon chloris*)

nisin *ns.* 1. jaw 2. chin 3. fleshy growth hanging down from rooster's face

nisis *n.* shellfish species (*Bislama nasisa*)

niskhën *ns.* muscle

nisnes *n.* pudding cooked over fire inside bamboo

nit *n.* place *Mënjej waia divin divin iar nit imos en.* We cut the fence all the way as far as where the place finished.

nit bëte *n.* forbidden place. Also **nit tëbëte.**

nit imit *adv.* at night *Dënliek divin divin nit imit inkhës divin divin nit iren.* They stayed until night and then until daybreak. *Mwimwin ilingling nit imit.* The spirit wandered about at night.

nit iren *adv.* until daybreak *Intëkh luu rivwi, inkhës divin divin ikear nit ikeren.* When they had knocked them out, they danced on and on until

daybreak. *Dënliek divin divin nit imit inkhës divin divin nit iren.* They stayed until night and then until daybreak.

nit irusimëk *adv.* at midnight

nit itëb *n.* sore *Enlis nit itëb.* I can see the sore.

nit mädëdin *n.* level area

nit tëbëte *n.* forbidden place. Also **nit bëte.**

nitëp *n.* wind *Nitëp iling elo.* The wind is coming from the south.

nitëp ileng e lebëb *n.* onshore wind

nitëp iling e lo *n.* southeast wind

nitiu *n.* hermit crab

nitiu tivnu *n.* coconut crab (*Birgus latro*)

nitlip *n.* dragon plum (*Dracontomelon vitiense*)

nitvelën *postmod.* one (of a pair) *Tilin nitveln imëj.* One of her legs was broken.

niu *n.* dew

niur *n.* island

nivëkh *n.* giant taro (*Alocasia macrorrhiza*)

nivël *n.* lightning

nivip *n.* 1. penis wrapper. Also **nivivën.** 2. trousers

nivir *npart.* gratings, scrapings (of coconut) *nivir nen mëtiu* 'coconut gratings'

nivisëkhëvin *ns.* armpit

nivivën¹ *ns.* wing

nivivën² *ns.* penis wrapper. Also **nivip.**

nivos *n.* paddle, oar

nivwi *n.* song *Enrëng nivwi isig.* I heard a song.

nivwip *n.* sprouting coconut

nokh luu *vt.* lift up

nokh luu lelën have hernia

nokhmo *n.* slitgong *Inkhëj nokhmo.* They beat the slitgong.

nokhoskhos *n.* pumice
nokhwip *n.* Pacific pigeon (*Ducula pacifica*)
nol *n.* book *Iskerngdo ipul tegi mwili erenge nol esen.* He couldn't write anything more in his book.
novo *npart.* seed (of breadfruit) *novo nen pëte* 'breadfruit seed'
novo napopo *n.* ankle
novolelën *ns.* seed (of tree or plant other than breadfruit) *novolel ne* 'seed of tree (generic)'
novolesën *ns.* testicles
novon *ns.* fruit *novo ne* 'fruit of tree (generic)'
novonejëp *n.* dead coral pieces on shore
novop *n.* bladder
novotlip *n.* kidney
nud *n.* palolo, sea worm
nuik *n.* island cabbage (*Abelmoschus manihot*)
nuir *n.* 1. lobster 2. prawn
nuis *n.* rain *Nuis iu.* It is raining. *Povër nuis ipiu pëskanvin erenge lomël.* If it rains, we will not go to the garden.
nukhru *n.* Christmas
nulul *n.* 1. firefly 2. luminescent fungus
nululen *ns.* tail. Also **nilen**.
nun *ns.* fibrous cloth-like material which falls from top of coconut palm
nunu *n.* mother *Iskerngdo te nunu esen ive pongen.* She didn't know that her mother used to do that.
nunwin *n.* 1. sand 2. beach *Panliek renga nunwin.* We will sit on the beach.
nuo *n.* 1. water 2. river *Dui ilunum elel nuo.* The man dived in the river.
 3. spring *Nuo isig ejëkhkëmem.* There is a spring at our place. *Ivin erenge nuo levër.* He went to that spring. Also **mëte nuo**.
nuo mëten *ns.* tears

nuo mëtiu *n.* coconut water
nuok *n.* canoe
nuon *ns.* 1. water, juice (of something) 2. sap *nuone* 'sap of tree'. Also **dëdënen**.
nuos *adv.* day before yesterday
nuot *npart.* 1. tendon 2. vein, artery
Nuot nen. His/her vein.
nuot ne lesën *ns.* vas deferens. Also **nau ne lesën**.
nur *vi.* fight battle, wage war
nurakh *n.* long pole for yam vines to climb up
nuru¹ *n.* crab
nuru² *n.* car
nuru mes *n.* white crab found in mangrove
nuru mëtemiel *n.* red-eyed crab
nuru mit *n.* black crab

O

ogi *adv.* just, only *Vengesien esek ogi enir.* That is just my story.

P

par¹ *n.* tamanu tree (*Calophyllum inophyllum*)
par² *vi.* blind
pau *n.* circumcision ceremony
pavnuik *vi.* sleep on one's belly
pëjpëjërakh *vi.* sit on ground with legs extended straight out in front
pek nëmakh *n.* wall (of house)
pekën *ns.* body
pëkhajin *n.* long yam variety
pëkpok *n.* hard yam variety, presented at time of celebrations
pekren *n.* 1. cloud 2. sky
pël¹ *vi.* choke
pël² *vi.* close eyes

pël mëten tëvëlkhās *vi.* wink

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

pëlakhtilin *ns.* heel

pële *vt.* light (fire) *Idaskhaple nib.* They haven't lit the fire yet.

pële lesën *ns.* base of penis

pële ne *n.* tree

pëlej *n.* tongs for holding hot stones (typically made of bamboo)

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

pëlelëkhët *n.* outrigger pins which attach outrigger to the outrigger poles

pëlen *ns.* 1. tree (of particular species) *Mënliek erenge ple bwëlil erenge emakh levër.* We stayed at the sea almond tree at that building. 2. trunk (of tree) 3. origin (of something) *Dënlot e dui gi ple venu.* We prayed to the person who was the origin of the world.

pëlen *ns.* spur on leg (of rooster). Also **pëlpëlen.**

pëlijëvjëp *n.* walking stick. Also **nijëvjëp.**

pëlilikh *n.* wild kava

pëlkönëvet *n.* cave. Also **lel nëvop.**

pëlkon *ns.* hole

pëlpël *vi.* blink

pëlpëlarës *vi.* 1. sit on ground with legs apart and knees raised 2. sit cross-legged

pëlpëlen *ns.* spur on leg (of rooster). Also **pëlen.**

pëlpol *vi.* fight

pëlpolien *n.* battle, fight *Inlis pëlpolien nenëp.* They saw a fight yesterday.

pepe *vt.* give birth to *Ipepe netën.* She gave birth to the baby.

pëpëlakh *vi.* somersault

pepet *npart.* buttress root

pëptakh *n.* rubbish

përe *vi.* long

përing *n.* comb (of rooster or hen)

përir *vi.* deaf. Also **pwërpërir.**

përvi *vi.* how? *Envwër bevwi en kem ipërvi dënriu e venu esed.* I want to say to you all how we escaped from our place.

pëte *n.* breadfruit (*Artocarpus altilis*)

pëti vwisin *ns.* shoulder *pëti vwisin* 'my shoulder'

pëtin *ns.* head *Ivtir en pëtin.* He stood on his head.

pëtinuo *n.* heart. Also **tang ne nuo, pëtinuomen.**

pëtinuomen *npart.* heart. Also **tang ne nuo, pëtinuo.**

pëtisëkhe *n.* yam variety

pij *vi.* 1. good *Ipj en bës Khanvësvesen en netite ese naakëd.* It is good that we do not teach it to our children. 2. properly, well *Envwiri pij eduen kem.* I will explain it to you all.

pilakhan *ns.* mother-in-law, father-in-law

pitejevet *adj.* ninth

pitejiru *adj.* seventh

pitejitël *adj.* eighth

pitelëm *adj.* fifth

pitelëmjis *adj.* sixth

pitemu *adj.* first

piteru *adj.* second

pitesngel *adj.* tenth

pitetakh *adj.* last

pitetël *adj.* third

piteves *adj.* fourth

poj *vt.* step on (something) *Ipoj ji.* He stood in excrement.

pokël *n.* palm species

pongen *adv.* 1. just, only *Tëvëlëkh pongen.* There were only women. 2. always *Imekar pongen.* He always works.

pongeret *n.* tree fern

poolëmen *ns.* elbow

pootilin *ns.* knee

poplej *vt.* close, shut *Enpoplej liu.*

I closed the door.

potakhdëlin *ns.* neck

potkhai *n.* skull

povër *sub.* if *Povër iskadang luo lun, ikvin ejëkhën elakh esen, netën dui gi emu nen ikames.* If they do not pull out her teeth and she goes to her husband, her first male child will die. *Povër bëskanjej waia levër, banmekar evi?* If we don't cut that fence, where will we make our gardens? *Ivtir ivwër iporëng povër bantinge tegi erenge vengesien ese këmem.* He stood in order to hear if we said anything in our language.

pupu *n.* grandparent

pupu dui *n.* grandfather

pupu tëvëlëkh *n.* grandmother

pwarëkhilil *n.* thumb

pwarëkhpëre *n.* index finger

pwarëkhvës *n.* little finger, pinky

pwear *vt.* shake

pwear lëmën shake hands

pwërpar *n.* pig

pwërpar tirkhëbëb *n.* wild pig

pwërpërir *vi.* deaf. Also **përir**.

pwingi përe *n.* garfish

pwingin *ns.* mouth

pwitar *n.* pandanus leaf mat

pwitlakh *n.* small greensnail shell

R

ra *prep.* 1. part-whole *nesël ra mëtiu* 'frond of the coconut tree' 2. goal ('to') *Eskerëng bivin ra krisel.* I don't want to go to the garden. 3. location

('at', 'in') *Imekar ra krisel.* He worked in the garden.

rakh *vi.* come up, rise

rang *vi.* hot

rangan *ns.* branch *ranga ne* 'branch of tree (generic)'. Also **rengesën**.

rap *vi.* clear garden site *Inrap esen.*

They cleared his garden site. *Jere dënbëkhrap esar.* They they just cleared their garden sites.

rar *vi.* sore, painful, hurt

rek *vi.* (of tide) low, ebb, go out *Tes irek.* It is ebb tide.

rëkhrej *vi.* have diarrhoea *Irkhrej.* He has diarrhoea.

ren *vi.* (of day) break *Intëkh luo rivwi, inkhës divin divin ikear nit ikeren.* When they had knocked them out, they danced on and on until daybreak. *Dënliëk divin divin nit imit inkhës divin divin nit iren.* They stayed until night and they danced until daybreak.

rëng *vt.* 1. hear *Këpanrëngk mwili entiting.* You will all hear me again talking. *Ivtir ivwër iporëng povër bantinge tegi erenge vengesien ese këmem.* He stood in order to hear if we said anything in our language. *Enrëng intiting en vengesien gi eskerngdo.* I hear them speaking in a language that I do not understand. *Enrëng dui gi ilingling domo.* I can hear somebody wandering about over here. 2. feel *Irëng miles.* He feels cold. *Kërëng idip?* Does it feel heavy? 3. smell *Irëng mën.* He smelt it. 4. *aux.* want to *Eskerëng bivin ra krisel.* I don't want to go to the garden.

rëng ipokhan *vi.* hungry *Irëng ipokhan.* (S)he is hungry.

rëng ipomën *vt.* thirsty for *Irëng ipomën.* (S)he is thirsty for it.

rëng ipomënmën *vi.* thirsty

rëng iset *vi.* sorry, sad

rëngdo *vt.* 1. know, understand *Netite esed itar iskanrëngdo vengesien esed mwili*. Many of our children don't know our language any more. *Këpanvwiri en netkem ipanrëngdo vengesien esed mo diar enisi*. You will all tell it to your children so they know our language up till today. *Iskerngdo te nunu esen ive pongen*. She didn't know that her mother used to do that. *Enrëng intiting en vengesien gi eskerngdo*. I hear them speaking in a language that I do not understand.
2. recognise by sound or smell *Irëngdo dlim*. He recognised your voice.
3. *aux.* be able to *Iskerngdo ipul tegi mwili eren ge nol esen*. He couldn't write anything more in his book. *Dëskanrëngdo badosusuen tegi mwili*. We won't be able to hide anything any more.

reng *prep.* location ('on') *Panliek reng* *nunwin*. We will sit on the beach.

rengesën *ns.* branch. Also **rangan**.

reteret *vi.* (of hen) cluck

revesakh *n.* long white yam variety

riu *vi.* escape, run away *Envwër bevwiri en kem ipëvri dënriu e venu esed*. I want to say to you all how we escaped from our place.

rivrip *n.* 1. evening, late afternoon, dusk
2. *adv.* in the evening *Rivrip inkho kake*. In the evening they bundled up the yams.

rivwi *postmod.* 1. all *Naakëd rivwi e Tape*. We are all from Tape. *Dui rivwi injej waia*. Everybody cut the fence.
2. completive *Intëkh luu rivwi, inkhës divin divin ikear nit ikeren*. When they had knocked them out, they danced on and on until daybreak. *Eren mënnej rivwi, George Kalkoa imo ivwiri en dui Rano levër imo ivtir*. When we had cut it, George Kalkoa came and said to that man from Rano to come and stand up.

ron *ns.* leaf *rone* 'leaf (generic)', *ronëvar* 'heliconia leaf'

ruru *vi.* do two by two, do in twos

rusimëk *vi.* be midnight *Nit irusimëk*. It is midnight.

ruten *vt.* 1. turn 2. tip over 3. roll
4. *vi.* turn over 5. tip over

S

sakh¹ *vi.* 1. go up *Isakh erenge ne*. He went up the tree. 2. (of spring) bubble up *Nuo isakh*. The spring bubbled up.

sakh² *vt.* (of devil) cause (someone) to call out while asleep *Tëmes isakh en*. A devil caused him to call out.

sakhen *vt.* climb *Isakhen ne*. He climbed the tree.

sar¹ *n.* 1. spear 2. *vi.* spear 3. *vt.* spear
4. poke, pierce

sar² *vi.* (of moon) shine *Nil isar*. The moon is shining.

se *prep.* possessive ('of'). Also **ese**, **gese**.

sëkh *vt.* stand up *Dënsëkh duen melëkh nen*. They stood it up with its kava. *Kake gi insëkhër ikskaniar*. The yams that they had stood up wouldn't be touched.

sëkh nurakh put long poles into ground for yam vines to climb up

sëkhavi *vt.* give birth to *Tëvëlëkh iskhavi netite*. The woman gave birth to a child.

sëkho *n.* year *Sëkho gi dënmo erenge skul enir*. That was the year that we came to the church.

sëkhtren *vt.* tip out, pour away *Isëkhtren nuo ivin*. She poured the water away.

sëkol *n.* hibiscus

sël *vi.* go fishing by torchlight *Insël erenge tes*. They went fishing by torchlight in the sea.

sel¹ *n.* road, path

sel² *vi.* float

selën *ns.* friend, companion

sëli *vt.* burn

sëlikh *vt.* carry on shoulder *Inslikh netën dui dënjovo nuo dënvîn eies.* They carried the boy on their shoulders along the river up there.

sëmsimëk *vi.* do one by one, do individually

sen *pron.* his, her, its

sënen *nom.prep.* 1. purpose ('for') *Besere netite ipivîn snenuo.* I will send the child for some water. 2. cause ('because of') *Pëtik irar sneniel.* My head is sore because of the sun. Also **jënen.**

sëngen *vt.* fill up, put inside *Inkhëj bëni dënsngen eel lib.* They killed him and put him into the bamboo.

sëp lau *vt.* jump over

sëpij *vt.* kill

sëpsëprir *vi.* flame *Nib isëpsëprir.* The fire is flaming.

sere *vt.* send on errand *Besere netite ipivîn snenuo.* I will send the child for some water.

sëren *vi.* swell up, swollen *Isren.* It is swollen.

sërip *vt.* slurp (food, water) *Isrip.* He slurped it.

sësëkha *vi.* 1. lost, missing *Nesip esek isëskha.* My knife is missing. 2. disappear *Vengesien esed iposëskha.* Our language will disappear.

sësël *vi.* burn garden site after it has been cleared

sësën *ns.* breast

sësëreves *vi.* whisper

sësërip *vi.* sniff

set *vi.* bad

sëte *inter.* what? *Këvwër ste?* What did you say?

sëtek *vt.* do *Invin dënstek.* They would go and do it.

Sevenu *n.* Tautu

sëvërën *inter.* when? *Panvin sëvërën?* When will we go?

sëvsëvij *vi.* jump

sëvsip *vi.* joke

sien *vi.* pregnant

silen *vt.* insert (knife) into thatch for safe-keeping

siol *vi.* crouch, bow down

sip *vt.* scoop up (water) *Sip nuo.* Scoop the water. *Posip nuo vës bejile en kon.* Scoop up a little water for me to water the corn with.

sir *vt.* tear, rip

sivi *vt.* catch (something thrown)

su *vi.* hide, hidden

susur *vi.* swear, be abusive

suvsip *vi.* 1. swim *En iskerngdo iposuvsip.* He doesn't know how to swim. 2. bathe *Idaskesuvsip.* I haven't bathed yet.

T

tabëkh *vt.* roast, cook (food) on fire *Itabëkh viakh.* He cooked the taro on the fire. *Betabëkh viakh dom.* I will cook the taro for you.

tabkhën *vi.* roast food *Itabkhën.* (S)he roasted food.

takhe *vt.* 1. take *Invin intakhe.* They went and took them. *Wosip isig imo itakher dënvîn e Vila.* A warship came and took them away to Vila. 2. marry *Eren dui tërtërep tetwo invwër ipantakhe tëvëlëkh, intakhe tëvëlëkh esar.* When the old men a long time ago wanted to marry a woman, they would take their wife.

tang *n.* 1. basket 2. crop (of bird)

tang ne netite *n.* placenta

tang ne nuo *n.* heart. Also **pëtinuo**, **pëtinuomen**.

te *adv.* 1. just, only *Jerete inlep ivin ejëkhën elakh éeen*. Only then did they take her to her husband. *Ikames jerete gi etakh nen ikëbëkhjilëp*. He will die and then the next one will just live.
2. *sub.* that *Iskerngdo te nunu esen ive pongen*. She didn't know that her mother used to do that.

te bete *n.* sorcerer. Also **dui bëte**.

tëb *vi.* 1. sore, painful, hurt 2. have sore

teb *vi.* defecate

tebe *vt.* push

tebës *vi.* spit

tëbëte *adj.* forbidden, taboo. Also **bëte**.

tëbëtel tërep *n.* former garden site

tegi *n.* thing, something, anything *Ivtir ivwër iporëng povër bantinge tegi erenge vengesen ese këmem*. He stood in order to hear if we said anything in our language. *Iskerngdo ipul tegi mwili erenge nol esen*. He couldn't write anything more in his book.

tëkh¹ *vt.* 1. punch 2. knock out (tooth) *Intëkh lun*. They knocked out her teeth. *Gi elakh esen iyek adasketëkh lun, ikmelet divin nëmakh gi ikëntëkh lun*. One who has a husband and her teeth have not been knocked out will come back to the house where they will knock out her teeth.

tëkh² *vi.* stay *Itëkh divin divin divin iar e kake imdakh iar e leln iyek*. It stayed and stayed until the yam grew until it had tubers.

tëkh³ *vi.* start

tëkh luo *vt.* knock out *Intëkh luo lun iru*. They knocked out two of her teeth.

tëkhe *vtr.* cough *Itëkhe en*. He coughed. *Entkhak*. I coughed.

tëkhes *vt.* chase away *Eren Tirakh intkhes kmem mëmmo mënliek erenge skul*.

When the people of Tirakh chased us away, we came and stayed with the church. *Itëkhes tiu*. He chased away the chicken.

tële *n.* axe

tëlet *n.* small sugar ants

tëltël *vi.* do three by three, do in threes

tëmës *vi.* laugh *Itmës*. He laughed.

tëmës *n.* devil

tëmës nëmar *n.* short devil which, if you kill it, causes you to die yourself

tëmop *n.* castrated boar

tën *vt.* give *Itën en*. He gave it to him. *Dëtënër*. They gave it to them.

tenej *vi.* play

tëngting *n.* smoke

tëngting ne nuis *n.* fog

tep *vt.* push *Intevër invin elelvenu*. They pushed them inside.

tërakh *vt.* 1. wait for *Itërakhëk*. He waited for me. 2. *vi.* wait *Itërakh*. He waited.

tërëkh *vi.* hunt, go hunting *Ipantërëkh*. They will go hunting.

tërep *adj.* old (sg.) *Dui tërep gi nëkhšen Masing*. There was an old man whose name was Masing.

tëriu *n.* white-throated pigeon (*Columba vitiensis*)

tërtërep *adj.* old (pl.) *Eren dui tërtërep tetwo invwër ipantakhe tëvëlëkh, intakhe tëvëlëkh esar*. When the old men a long time ago wanted to marry a woman, they would take their wife.

tes *n.* 1. sea 2. saltwater

tesëk *vi.* surprised *Entesëk enëm*. I was surprised by you. *Pësketesëk enëk*. Don't be surprised by me.

tete *n.* father

tëtëb *vi.* thick

tëtëp *vt.* (of pig) push (ground) with snout

tëtëp *vi.* fly

tetwo *adv.* long time ago *Eren dui tērtērep tetwo invwēr ipantakhe tēvēlēkh, intakhe tēvēlēkh esar.*
When the old men a long time ago wanted to marry a woman, they would take their wife.

tēvakh *vi.* (of sun) rise *Niel itvakh.* The sun has risen.

tēvël *vt.* beckon with (arm) *Kētevël lēmom.* You will beckon.

tēvēlēkh *n.* 1. woman. Also **tēvet**.
2. wife *Eren dui tērtērep tetwo invwēr ipantakhe tēvēlēkh, intakhe tēvēlēkh esar.* When the old men a long time ago wanted to marry a woman, they would take their wife.

tēvēlēkh tērep *n.* old woman

tēvēlkhās *adj.* 1. one (of pair) *Ipël mēten tēvelkhas.* He winked (with one eye).
2. *loc.* across, on the other side *Ivin eies bër tēvēlkhes ne nuo.* It goes all the way up across the river. 3. *n.* side

tēvet *n.* woman *Povēr tēvet gi ipivin ivētir ejkhën dui gi banvēsvēsien en er iporēng.* If a woman goes to marry a man, she will teach it to them and they will hear it. Also **tēvēlēkh**.

tēvtēvribēs *n.* morning star

tib *n.* saliva, spit *tib sen* 'his/her saliva'

tib se tes *n.* sea foam

tibēr *npart.* bundle, bunch

tibēs *vt.* split

tikh¹ *n.* 1. hole 2. grave

tikh² *vt.* pull

tikh luo *vt.* pull out, extract *Isketikh luo.*
He could not pull it out.

tikh ne kake *n.* yam mound

tilin *ns.* leg, foot *Ikhēj en tili tēvēlēkhar gi ikhēj pongen dui ar.* He struck it on the leg of that woman who used to kill people. *Tilin nitveln imēj.* One of her legs was broken.

timolo *n.* scrub fowl, incubator bird
(*Megapodius freycinet*)

tin *n.* rifle, gun

tin vēsvēs *n.* bow

tinge *vt.* tell, talk about *Enir ogi envwēr betinge.* That is all I want to talk about.
Ivtir ivwēr iporēng povēr bantinge tegi erenge vengesien ese kēmēm. He stood in order to hear if we said anything in our language.

tini *vt.* bury

Tirakh *n.* 1. Tirakh language 2. person from Tirakh

tirkhēbēb *adj.* wild, feral

tirtir *vi.* stop

titar *vi.* (of rooster) crow *Tiu ititar.*
The rooster crowed.

titep *vi.* light (in weight)

titing *vi.* talk, speak *Kēpadrēngk mwili entiting.* You will all hear me again talking. *Envwēr betiting mwili duen naakēm.* I want to talk with you again. *Eren levēr mēskantiting duen en.* At that time we did not speak with him.

titing dēlo *vi.* whisper

titing khērkhēr *vt.* prohibit, place verbal prohibition on *Intiting khērkhēr sel.*
They put a prohibition on the road.

titing pij *vi.* bless

tiu *n.* chicken, fowl

tiu dui *n.* rooster

tiu miel *n.* fowl with brown feathers

tiu mit *n.* fowl with black feathers

tiu pēlakh *n.* fowl with multicoloured feathers

tiu tēvet *n.* hen

tiu tirkhēbēb *n.* wild fowl

tiu wip *n.* fowl with white feathers

tivwi *n.* conch shell

to *vt.* put

top *vi.* empty

tor *n.* grade-taking ceremony
tosusuen *vt.* hide, conceal *Itosusuen*.
 He hid it. *Dëskanrëngdo bantosusuen tegi mwili*. We won't be able to hide anything any more.
tu *n.* shellfish (generic)
tuarëb *n.* uncircumcised man
turwir *n.* barren woman
Tut *n.* 1. inland person, bushman
 2. Big Nambas person
tutuen *vt.* distribute *Itutuen erenge venu gi ipomo erenge nëbëng esen*.
 He distributed it to the village that came to his ceremony.

U

udi *vt.* eat *Intakhe divin e nimel ese mwëliun udi*. They took them to the chief's meeting house and he ate them. *Kudi niivëkh ivës?* How many Malay apples did you eat? *Budi nisakh duen kake*. I will eat banana and yam.
uje *vt.* slap
ul¹ *vt.* write *Iskerngdo ipul tegi mwili erenge nol esen*. He couldn't write anything more in his book.
ul² *vt.* pay for, buy *Dui e Tirakh invwër ipanul stik tabak ejkhë Mr Presis*. The people of Tirakh wanted to buy a tobacco stick from Mr Bridges.
ul luo *vt.* write out, write down *Ipul luo vengesien gi mëntiting en levër*. He will write down the things that we said to that one.
ulel *n.* pillow
ulul *vi.* write
ululen *vt.* sell
unun *vi.* swim underwater, go diving *Ivwër ipunun*. He wanted to go diving.
ured *prep.* like. Also **uren**.

uren *prep.* like *Eren imo ivtir uren levër*.
 When he came, he stood up like that.
 Also **ured**.
uri *vt.* open *Puri liu*. Open the door.
En uri liu. He opened the door.
urtakh *n.* phlegm
use *vt.* hold *Inuse rivwi lëmar*. They held all of their arms. *Enususe*. I held it.
use jëjën *vt.* hold tight *Enususe jëjën*.
 I held it tight.
ututakh *vt.* spoil, damage, ruin, be bad to *Tirakh er inututakh dui ikhos*. The people of Tirakh were very bad to people.

V

vang *vi.* be alight, burn *Nib ivang*. The fire is alight.
vave *n.* paternal aunt (father's sister)
ve *vt.* 1. do, make, cause *Inve nëmwël esen*. They made his garden. *Këve ste?* What are you doing? *Tëvëlëkh ive mëri*. The woman made a mat. *Iskerngdo te nunu esen ive pongen*. She didn't know that her mother used to do that.
 2. happen to *Tegi kevek kemru*. Something must happen to the two of you. 3. be (copula) *Inwis nëkhseen ive Tar*. They called him Tar. *Ilis mwimwin nuo levër ive tëvëlëkh*. He saw the spirit of the water was a woman.
ve nëbëng perform ceremony *Eren mwëliun gi ivwër ipove nëbëng, ivëkhëj buos*. When a chief wants to perform a ceremony, he will kill a pig.
ve pau go for circumcision
vëdkho *npart.* gall bladder
vëkhvakh *vi.* crazy, mad
vël *vi.* (of lightning) flash *Nivël ivël*.
 The lightning flashed.
velenges *n.* bush nut (*Barringtonia edulis*)

vëli *vt.* heap up, pile up

vëlkhëmit *vi.* black

vëlonib *n.* charcoal

vënakh *vi.* steal *Ivnakh*. He stole.

vënakhen *vt.* steal *Invënakhen nëvet gi envwër bul en nëmakh*. They stole the money that I wanted to buy the house with.

vëngen *vt.* feed, give food to *Ivngen pwërpar*. He fed the pig.

vengesien *vt.* speak (language)

vengesien *n.* 1. story *Vengesien esek ogi enir*. That is just my story. *Vengesien ivwërdo*. The story is true. 2. language *Netite esed itar iskanrëngdo vengesien esed mwili*. Many of our children don't know our language any more.

vënmwili *n.* bird species

vënpö *n.* white flying fox, white fruit bat

venu *n.* 1. place *Envwër bevwi en kem ipërvi dënriu e venu esed*. I want to say to you all how we escaped from our place. *Dënlënglëng venu esed e Tape dënmo e Vëti*. We left our place at Tape and came to Vëti. 2. village *Itutuen erenge venu gi ipomo erenge nëbëg esen*. He distributed it to the village that came to his ceremony. 3. world *Dënlot e dui gi plevnu*. We prayed to the person who was the origin of the world.

vënwosowos *n.* whitewood
(*Endospermum medullosum*)

vër *sub.* if *Vër ikës nëbëng isngel, venu esar injem nimwil*. If it exceeded ten days, their village would remove the cycad leaves.

vëre *vt.* 1. poke, prick 2. inject

vërëng *vi.* 1. listen 2. think

vërëngien *n.* idea, thought, opinion
Vërëngien esom ipërvi? What is your opinion?

vëris *vt.* call to *Ivris en*. He called him.

vërngës *vi.* blow nose

vërvër *vi.* 1. run 2. be fast, be quick
Ilingling ivëvërver. He walked quickly.

vës¹ *vi.* small, little *Ilis mwimwin nuo levër ive tëvëlëkh netën gi idavës ogi*. The spirit of that spring looked to him like a woman with a child which was still only small. *Imos imo mwili iliek duen netën vës ar*. When she was finished, she would go and stay with that little child of hers. *Netite vës esen tëvëlëkh mili*. Her little child was another girl. *Posip nuo vës bejile en kon*. Scoop up a little water for me to water the corn with.

vës² *vt.* dig

vësakh *vt.* remember, think of

vësës *vi.* fart silently

veskai *vt.* lose *Enveskai en*. I lost it.

vësningen *vt.* forget

vësnu *n.* sheath around coconut flower

vësvës *vi.* teach

vësvësen *vt.* teach *Ivwër bëskhanvësvësen en netite ese këmem vengesien ese këmem*. He said that we should not teach our children our language.

vetën *ns.* belly

vëtir *vi.* 1. stand *Eren mënjej rivwi, George Kalkoa imo ivwiri en dui Rano levër imo ivtir*. When we had cut it, George Kalkoa came and said to that man from Rano to come and stand up. *Eren mënvwër banjej waia ese khaavot e Jinarur lene, mënvin mënvetir erenge waia*. When we were about to cut the Europeans' fence at Jinarur over there, we went and stood at the fence. 2. stay behind *Invtir divin divin ibëkhvin ejëkhën elakh esen*. They will stay behind until she just goes to her husband. *Ivtir en pëtin*. He stood on his head.

vëtir ejëkhën *vt.* marry *Povër tëvet gi ipivin ivëtir ejëkhën dui gi banvësvësen*

er iporëng. If a woman goes to marry a man, we will teach it to them and they will hear it.

vetmes *n.* limestone rock from uplifted reef

vetmit *n.* black stone. Also **nëvet mit**.

vettilin *ns.* calf (of leg)

vetvet *vi.* make mat

vëvëdel *vi.* dizzy

vevnën *ns.* 1. sister (of man) 2. paternal aunt (father's sister)

viakh *n.* taro

vieb *n.* wild cane variety with thick stems

vio *n.* 1. headband 2. hat 3. *vi.* wear hat, put on hat *Pivio*. Put on the hat.

vive *n.* cottonwood (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*)

yunupup *n.* 1. butterfly 2. moth

vwëkwvëk *vi.* be albino

vwër *aux.* 1. want *Envwër bevwiri en kem ipërvi dënriü e venu esed*. I want to say to you all how we escaped from our place. *Eren mwëliun gi ivwër ipove nëbëng, ivëkhëj buos*. When a chief wants to perform a ceremony, he will kill a pig. 2. be about to *Eren mënvwër banjej waia ese khaavot e Jinarur lene, mënvin mënvëtir erenge waia*. When we were about to cut the Europeans' fence at Jinarur over there, we went and stood at the fence. 3. *vi.* say *Ivwër bëskanvësvësien en netite ese këmem vengesien ese këmem*. He said that we should not teach our children our language. *Mënjul ivin esoweies mënvwër, 'Oi!'* We shouted up there, 'Oi!' 4. in order to *Ivtir ivwër iporëng povër bantinge tegi erenge vengesien ese këmem*. He stood in order to hear if we said anything in our language.

vwërdo *vi.* 1. tell truth *Këvwërdo?*

Are you telling the truth? 2. be true *Vengesian ivwërdo*. The story is true.

vwilil *vi.* whistle

vwilvwilmiel *n.* small black bird with red head¹

vwiri¹ *n.* red-bellied fruit dove (*Ptilinopus greyii*)

vwiri² *vt.* say *Envwër bevwiri en kem ipërvi dënriü e venu esed*. I want to say to you all how we escaped from our place. *Këpanvwiri en netkem ipanrëngdo vengesien esed mo diar enisi*. You will all tell it to your children so they know our language up till today.

vwiri pij *vt.* explain *Envwiri pij eduen kem*. I will explain it to you all.

vwiru *n.* coconut which has water but no flesh

vwirvwiri *vt.* tell on, reveal (secret)

vwito *n.* Tanna fruit dove (*Ptilinopus tannensis*)

W

wilës *n.* maggot

wili *vt.* lever out

wip *vi.* white

wis *vt.* 1. address *Inwis nëkhsen ive Tar*. They called him Tar. 2. call to, shout to *Inwis dui rivwi inmo*. They called everybody over. *Powis en ipomo*. Call him over. *Bewis dui gi këmo jënen*. I will call the man who you came for.

woj *vi.* yellow

wolesen *vt.* look for *Inwolesen nëmej*. They looked for fish.

wor *vi.* wet

wun *vi.* 1. full 2. (of tide) high, rise, come in *Tes iwun*. The tide is coming in.

¹ Quite possibly *Myzomela cardinalis*, the cardinal honeyeater – JL

Y

yek vt. have *Gi elakh esen iyek adasketëkh lun, ikmelet divin nëmakh gi ikantëkh lun*. One who has a husband and her teeth have not been knocked out will come back to the house where they will

knock out her teeth. *Itëkh divin divin divin iar e kake imdakh iar e leln iyek*. It stayed and stayed until the yam grew until it had tubers. *Nuo mwimwin iyek*. The spring has a spirit.

3 *English–Tape finderlist*

The following is a finderlist that has been constructed on the basis of the Tape–English lexicon presented in the previous section. The information that is contained in this finderlist has been kept to a minimum; thus information about word class membership of Tape forms should be obtained from the main lexical listing, as should detailed semantic descriptions. Grammatical information, where supplied, relates to English and not to Tape (thus what is glossed as an adjective in English is usually an intransitive verb in Tape.) All forms should be checked against the main lexical entries for greater grammatical and semantic detail.

A

Abelmoschus manihot **nuiik**

able to, be **rëngdo**

above **esoweies**

abusive **susur**

Acacia spirorbis **mëru**

across **tëvëlkhas**

Adam’s apple **mavëkluir**

address **wis**

Aerodramus sp. **nipipil**

afraid **dëdëng, dëdëngen**

afternoon, late **rivrip**

afterwards **etakh, jere, jereete**

again **mili, mwili**

agree **dëmen²**

albino **nëvwëk**

be albino **vwëkwvëk**

alight

v. (of bird) **bëj¹**

adj. **vang**

alive **jilëp**

all **rivwi**

all at once **ivsig, ivsimëk**

almond

native **nienge**

sea **bwëlil**

almost **itvwiren**

Alocasia macrorrhiza **nivëkh**

always **pongen**

Ambrym **nib**

Ambrymese person **dui e nib**

and then **en³, jere, jereete**

angle, be at **mëlip**

angry **lelën irar**

ankle **novo napopo**

ankle rattle tree **nëvek**

announce (day of ceremony) **lëng**

nëbëng

ant

fire ant **nij**

sugar ant, small **tëlet**

any **gi¹**

any longer **mili**

anything **tegi**
Ardea sacra **nibonwo**
 argue **let**
 arm **lëmen**
 armband **nio**
 armpit **nivisëkhëvin**
 around **bëtel**
 arrive **iar**
 arrow **lu¹**
 poison arrow **lu bëte**
 artery **nuot**
Artocarpus altilis **pëte**
 ashes **bëtnie, nies nib**
 ask **momon**
 asthma **ngevien**
 at **e, erengen, ra**
 at night **likhat**
 athlete's foot **lip**
 axe **tele**

B

back *adv.* **meleten**
 back *n.* **bwëlin**
 of neck **neb pëtin**
 backbone **ju bwëlin**
 bad **set**
 be bad to **ututakh**
 bald head **nëvwid**
 bamboo **lib**
 hard **lib vet**
 soft **lib velës**
 banana **nisakh**
 varieties **misir, nisakh mes,**
 nisakh mit
 banded rail **pëlakh**
 bang **jëvot**
 banyan **nëpek**
 bark *n.* **lil ne, lilën, nilën**
 barn owl **nëvod**
 barrel tree **mëru**
Barringtonia
 asiatica **nëvwib**

edulis **velenges**
 basket **tang**
 bat
 black fruit bat **menkre**
 white fruit bat **vënpo**
 cave bat **nipipil**
 bathe **suvsip**
 battle **pëlpolien**
 be **ve**
 be about to **vwër**
 beach **nunwin**
 bean **napopo**
 beard **nil nisin**
 because **jënen**
 because of **sënen**
 beckon **tevël**
 bed **mëlngen, mëri, navul**
 behind **bwëlin, etakh**
 belch *v.* **dëriu**
 belly **vetën**
 belly button **bebëtën**
 below **edeb**
 belt **lun²**
 bench **navul**
 bend *vt.* **bërkhavi**
 beneath **enivin, milivin**
 bent **khap**
 beside **ejujen, nkhëkhërën**
 big **lil**
 Big Nambas person **Tut**
 bind **kho**
 bird **nëmen**
 unidentified birds **vënmwili,**
 vwilvwilmiel
Birgus latro **nitiu tivnu**
 bite **is**
 bitter **khau**
 black **mit, vëlkhëmit**
 bladder **novop**
 bland **lilakh**
 bless **titing pij**
 blind **par²**

blind person **mētepar**
 blink **pēlpēl**
 block *v.* **khērkhēr²**
 blood **de¹, deen**
 blow *vt.* **ip**
 blow nose **vērngēs**
 blowfly **laang bibi**
 blue **jijen**
 blunt **bējij**
 boar
 castrated **tēmop**
 uncastrated **buos**
 body **pekēn**
 boil *n.* **mētēvlilakh**
 bone **jun**
 book **nol**
 bow *n.* **tin vēsvēs**
 bow down **siol**
 boy **dui nēmon, netite dui**
 brain **bērdimdim**
 branch **rangan, rengēsēn**
 bread **nies nib**
 breadfruit **pēte**
 breadfruit variety **labarang, nēvon**
 pounded breadfruit **khējkhēj pēte**
 break
 vt. **bēruj**
 vi. **mēj**
 break off **kēs**
 of day **ren**
 breast **sēsēn**
 breastbone **ju mērēn**
 breastfeed **mēnmēn**
 breathe **ngep**
 bright **moar**
 broken **mēj**
 broom **nējijēr**
 brother of woman **mamwe**
 brother-in-law **asen netite, etkhan**
 bubble up **sakh¹**
 bud *n.* **limēn**

build (house) **khēl**
 building **nēmakh**
 bullet **lu¹**
 bunch **tibēr**
 bundle *n.* **tibēr**
 bundle up **kho**
 burn
 vi. **vang**
 vt. **sēli**
 burn cleared garden site **sēsēl**
 burn down to embers **nini**
 burnt **khabu**
 burp *v.* **dēriu**
 bury **tini**
 bush **lebēb**
 bush nut **velenges**
 bush sprite **namēd**
 bushman **Tut**
 butterfly **vunupup**
 buttocks **nebēn**
 buttress root **pepet**
 buy **ul²**

C

calf (of leg) **vettilin**
 call to **vēris, wis**
Calophyllum inophyllum **par¹**
Canarium indicum **nienge**
 canoe **nuok**
 canoe tree **diwip**
 car **nuru²**
 carapace **jun**
Carica papaya **naangēs**
 carry on shoulder **sēlikh**
 cartridge **lu¹**
 cassia **mēte niel**
Castanospermum australe **naavēvrit**
Casuarina equisetifolia **niar**
 catch
 disease **lep¹**
 something thrown **sivi**

cause v. **ve**

to call out **sakh²**

cave **lel nēvop, pēlko nēvet**

celebration for new yams **devo**

ceremony **nēbēng²**

for circumcision **pau**

grade-taking **tor**

perform ceremony **ve nēbēng**

chair **nijēngjēng**

Chalcophaps indica **navwimar**

charcoal **vēlonib**

chase away **tēkhes**

chest (anat.) **mērēn**

chew **jomo**

chewy tuber **nēpet**

chicken **tiu**

chief **mwēliun, nēmwal**

paramount chief **mwēliun lil**

chin **netēn, netite, nisin**

chiton **lilēs**

without shell **dikio**

choke *vi.* **pēl¹**

chop **jej²**

Christmas **nukhru**

cicada **bēngale**

circumcision ceremony **pau**

Circus approximans **nēpel**

citrus **mwēlēs**

clean *adj.* **mēljiu**

clear v.

garden site **rap**

the throat **jērbēsen**

climb *vt.* **sakhen**

clock **mēte niel**

close *adv.* **evibēkh**

close v. **poplej**

close eyes **pēl²**

cloth-like material at top of coconut

palm **nun**

clothes **nililēk**

cloud **pekren**

club **nabu**

cluck **kērkēr, reteret**

coast *loc.* **lo²**

coastal person **dui elo**

coconut **mētiu**

dry coconut **mētiu mērang**

drinking **naaret**

frond **nesēl**

green **meang**

husk **lil mētiu, nil mētiu**

immature **vwiru**

sheath of flower **vēsnu**

shell *See* **bēlēkhēsēn**

sprouting **nivwip**

sweet **jomjom**

water **nuo mētiu**

coconut crab **nitiu tivnu**

coconut lory **jērēp**

cold **khakhas, miles**

colourful **kēlkelen**

Columba vitiensis **tēriu**

comb

n. **navēj**

of fowl **pēring**

v. **jēle**

come **mo**

after **jovo**

back **melet**

in, of tide **wun**

up **rakh**

companion **selēn**

completive **rivwi**

conceal **tosusuen**

conch shell **tivwi**

conclude **mos**

conjunctivitis **mētemiel**

constipated **kel**

cook

vi. **denge**

vt. **tabēkh**

cooked **mis**

properly **mis pij**

coral pieces on shore **novonejēp**

coral tree **darëp**
Cordyline terminalis **naarës**
cottonwood **vive**
cough **tëkhe**
count **jëpon**
crab **nuru**¹
 black crab **nuru mit**
 coconut crab **nituu tivuu**
 freshwater crab **nëbakhasu**
 hermit crab **nituu**
 red-eyed crab **nuru mëtemiel**
 small rock crab **mip**
 white mangrove crab **nuru mes**
crash **jëvot**
crawl **kharep**
crazy **vëkhvakh**
crooked **khap**
crop (of bird) **tang**
cross *vt.* **lau**
croton **jej**¹
crouch **siol**
crow *v.* **titar**
crunch in mouth **mërij**
cry **ij**
cup **bëlëkhësën**
cut **jej**²
cycad, *Cycas circinalis* **nimwil**
cyclone **laang ikhëj**
Cyrtosperma sp. **buok**

D

damage *v.* **ututakh**
dance *v.* **khës**
dark **khëmit, mit**
 pitch dark **melëkh**²
daughter **netën**
day **nëbëng**¹
 day after tomorrow **bawos**
 day before yesterday **nuos**
 the next day **maren nen**
 days after a death **bëngën**

daybreak, until **nit iren**
dead **mes**
deaf **përir, pwërpërir**
defecate **teb**
Dendrocnide sp. **nëkhaarët**
devil **tëmes**
 kind of devil **tëmes nëmar**
devil nettle **nëkhaarët**
dew **niu**
diarrhoea, have **rëkhrej**
die **mes**
dig **khël, vës**²
 dig up **khël**
Dioscorea esculenta **dërap**
dirty **ninit**
disappear **sësëkha**
disease **mësitien**
disintegrate **mumu**
dispute *v.* **let**
distribute **tutuen**
dive **lunum**
dizzy **vëvëdel**
do **mekaren, sëtek, ve**
 one by one, individually **sëmsimëk**
 twice **ivaru**
 two by two, in twos **ruru**
 three times **ivitël**
 three by three/in threes **tëltël**
 four times **ivives**
 four by four/in fours **ivësves**
 five times **ivilëm**
 five by five/in fives **ililëm**
 six times **ivilëmjis**
 seven times **ivijiru**
 eight times **ivijitël**
 nine times **ivijevet**
 ten times **ivisngel**
 to death **bëni**
dog **lipakh**
door **kërliu, liu**
down **edeb**

Dracontomelon vitiense **nitlip**
 dragon plum **nitlip**
 dream *v.* **metër lilis**
 drink *v.* **mën², mënmen**
 dry *adj.* **memes, mërang**
Ducula pacifica **nokhwip**
 dusk **rivrip**
 dust **nëmi**
Dysoxylum spp. **nipwij**

E

ear **dëlngen**
 earth oven **jëpakh, lel jëpakh**
 earthquake **nëmun**
 earthworm **jëlëj**
 earwax **delëng dëlngen**
 eat **khan, udi**
 ebb **rek**
 eel **mëre**
 egg **nidëlën**
 of ants **nidël tëlet**
 eight **jitël**
 do eight times **ivijitël**
 eighth **pitejitël**
 eighty **ingeljitel**
 elbow **poolëmen**
 elephantiasis **nëbër**
 emaciated **mërej**
 emerald ground dove **navwimar**
Emoia sanfordii **nalomoj**
 empty **top**
 empty space **mësep**
 end *v.* **mos**
Endospermum medullosum **vënwosowos**
 envious **lelën ilil, lil**
Erythrina indica **darëp**
 escape **riu**
 European **khaavot**
 evening **rivrip**
 in the evening **rivrip**
 evening star **lavenu**
 eventually **ivin**

exceed **kësiar**
 excrement **ji, jin¹**
 explain **vwiri pij**
 explode **jëvot**
 extract **tikh luo**
 eye **mëten**
 of coconut) **mëte mëtiu**
 eyeball **nidël mëten**
 eyebrow, eyelash, eyelid **nil mëten**

F

face *n.* **likhanan**
 fall **dëm**
 fan *n.* **nirirëp**
 far away **eso**
 fart
 audibly **bër¹**
 silently **vësës**
 fast *adj.* **vërvër**
 fat
 adj. **lil**
 n. **lënglang**
 father **etmen, tete**
 father's elder brother **etmen lil**
 father's sister **vave, vevnën**
 father's younger brother **etmen vës**
 father-in-law **pilakhan**
 fear *v.* **dëdëngen**
 feather **nilën, nil tiu**
 feed **vëngen**
 feel **rëng**
 fence around garden **nëmwël**
 feral **tirkhëbëb**
 fifth **pitelëm**
 fifty **ingelëm**
 fight
 n. **pëlpolien**
 v. **pëlpol, nur**
 fighter **dui nur**
 Fijian asparagus **nëvës**
 fill up **sëngen**
 fin **josin**

finger **bəsən, narəkh ləmen**
 thumb **pwarəkhilil**
 index **pwarəkhpère**
 little **pwarəkhvès**
 fingernail **bəs ləmen, lil bəsən**
 finish v. **mos**
 fire
 n. **nib**
 taboo fire **nib bête**
 v. **jəvot, lu², luluakh**
 fire ant **nij**
 firefly **nesəl nunud, nulul**
 firewood **nib**
 burning piece of **nib vang**
 first **emu, pitemu**
 fish
 n. **nəmej**
 v. by torchlight **səl**
 fish poison tree **nəvwib**
 five **iləm**
 do five by five/in fives **ililəm**
 do five times **iviləm**
 flame v. **səpsəprir**
 flash (of lightning) **vəl**
 flesh **lelən**
 flick **jəljlil**
 float v. **sel²**
 flower **ningen**
 of breadfruit **lunen**
 fly
 n. **laang**
 v. **tətip**
 flying fox
 black **menkre**
 white **vənpō**
 foam (in sea) **tib se tes**
 fog **təngting ne nuis**
 follow **jovo**
 fontanelle **mib¹**
 food **nəkhanien**
 leftover **məlej**

foot **tilin**
 footprint **məlŋge tilin**
 for (purpose) **sənen**
 forbidden **bête, tēbête**
 forehead **likhanan**
 foreskin **nil pek lesən**
 forest, primary **lebēb tērep**
 forget **vəsningen**
 fork v. **jijər²**
 forty **ingelves**
 four **ives**
 do four by four/in fours **ivəsves**
 do four times **ivives**
 fourth **piteves**
 fowl **tiu**
 kinds **tiu miel, tiu mit, tiu pələkh,**
 tiu wip
 wild **tiu tirkhēbēb**
 friend **selən**
 frightened **dədəng**
 from **e**
 frond **nesəl**
 front **likhan**
 in/at the front **emu**
 fruit **novon**
 full **wun**
 funeral **mesien**
 fungus **dəring**
 luminescent **nulul**

G

gall bladder **vədkho**
Gallirallus philippensis **pələkh**
 garden *n.* **kərisel, loməl**
 former garden site, former **təbətəl**
 tērep
 make garden **mekar**
 garfish **pwingi pēre**
Garuga floribunda **məsmes**
 gecko **mib²**
 genitalia, male **lesən**

get **lep¹**
 get married **lakh**
 giant taro **nivëkh**
 giant turban shell **nëpik**
 gill **dëlngen**
 ginger, wild **lëkhlēkh¹**
 girl **netite tēvēlēkh**
 give **lep², tēn**
 give birth to **pepe, sëkhavi**
 give food to **vëngen**
 glands, swollen **kënkënel**
 glans penis **lel vëjējën**
 gnash teeth **is vëkharët**
 go **ivin**
 after **jovo**
 along **jovo**
 as far as **iar**
 back **melet**
 diving **unun**
 for circumcision **ve pau**
 hunting **tërëkh**
 out, of tide **rek**
 over **lau**
 past **kësiar**
 quickly **lakhmël**
 slowly **dëlo**
 underwater **mëdin**
 until **iar**
 up **sakh¹**
 god **atua**
 good **pij**
 good afternoon/evening **ipij rivrip**
 good day **ipij likhalmo**
 good morning **ipij meteveren**
 grade-taking ceremony **tor**
 grandchild **mibën**
 grandfather **etbën, pupu dui**
 grandmother **etbën, pupu tēvēlēkh**
 grandparent **etbën, pupu**
 grass **nines**
 gratings
 of coconut **nivir**

 of kava **jomon¹**
 grave *n.* **tikh¹**
 greasy (of food) **mërorur**
 great hog plum **naangës**
 green **jijen**
 greensnail (small) **pwitlakh**
 ground **deb**
 growth hanging from rooster's throat
 nisin
 grub *See* **lëkh¹**
 gully **mikhwel**
 gums **ningidin**
 gun **tin**
Gyrocarpus americanus **diwip**

H

hair **nilën**
 on body **nil pekën**
 on head **nil pëtïn**
 pubic (male) **nil pële lesën**
Halcyon chloris **nisëkh**
 hand **lëmen**
 handle of basket **nari tang**
 hang
 vi. **lelakh**
 vt. **lëkhlēkh²**
 happen **ve**
 happy **khawen**
 hat **vio**
 have **yek**
 hawk **nëpel**
 he **en¹**
 head **pëtïn**
 bald **nëvwid**
 headband **vio**
 healed **mëran**
 heap up **vëli**
 hear **rëng**
 heart **pëtïnuo, pëtïnuomen, tang ne nuo**
 heat *n.* **nipirang**
 heavy **dip**
 heel **pëlakhtilin**

heliconia **nëvar**
 hen **tiu tëvet**
 her **esen, gesen, sen**
 *chewable jomon*²
 drinkable mënen
 edible den
 here **eji**
 hermit crab **nitiu**
Hernandia nymphaeifolia **bërbër**
 hernia, have **nokh luo lelën**
 heron **nibonwo**
 hibiscus **sëkol**
Hibiscus tiliaceus **vive**
 hiccup **mësid**
 hidden **su**
 hide
 vi. su
 vt. tosusuen
 high tide **wun**
 hill **nëkhës**
 hip **nëvnevën**
 his **esen, gesen, sen**
 *chewable jomon*²
 drinkable mënen
 edible den
 hit **khëj**
 hold **use**
 tight **use jëjën**
 hole **pëlkon, tikh**¹
 home **emakh**
 hop **lëjlëjëkh**
 hot **rang**
 house **nëmakh**
 how? **përvi**
 how much? how many? **ivës**
 hungry **rëng ipokhan**
 hunt **tërëkh**
 hurricane **laang ikhëj**
 hurry **lakhmël**
 hurt *vi.* **rar, tëb**
 husband **dui, elakh**

husk *n.* **lil mëtiu, nil mëtiu**

I

I **kënëk**
 idea **vërëngien**
 if **povër, vër**
 ill **mësit**
 illness **mësitien**
Imperata cylindrica **niri**
 important man **dui lil**
 in **ra**
 in (language) **en**², **erengen**
 in front **emu**
 in order to **vwër**
 incubator bird **timolo**
 Indian coral tree **darëp**
 inject **vëre**
 inland **eut**
 inland person **dui eut**
Inocarpus edulis **nëmop**
 inside **ellevnu**
 inside part **lelën**
 interior **lelën**
 intestine **jënin**
Intsia bijuga **nëkhmo**
 island **niur**
 island cabbage **nuik**
 island teak **nëkhmo**
 it **en**¹
 itch *v.* **khërkhër**¹
 its **esen, gesen, sen**
 *chewable jomon*²
 drinkable mënen
 edible den

J

jaw **nisin**
 jealous **lil**
 job **mekarien**
 join **jëvjëvten**

joke *vi.* **sëvsip**
 juice of **nuon**
 jump **sëvsëvij**
 over **sëp lau**
 just *adv.* **ogi, pongen, te**

K

kava **melëkh¹**
 variety **melëkh miel**
 wild **pëlilik**
 kidney **novotlip**
 kill **khëj, sëpij**
 kingfisher **nisëkh**
Kleinhovia hospita **medek**
 knee **pootilin**
 kneel **jijikhëvo**
 knife **nesip**
 knock out **tëkh¹, tëkh lu**
 know **rëngdo**

L

land *n.* **deb**
 language **vengesien**
 large **lil**
 last **pitetakh**
 laugh **tëmës**
 leaf **ron**
 leaf bud **limën**
 leafy part **likhan**
 leak *v.* **jëmjëm**
 lean *vi.* **mëlip**
 leave *vt.* **lënglëng**
 left hand **mornen**
 leftover food **mëlej**
 leg **tilin**
 lesser yam **dërap**
 let **dëmen²**
 let go of **lënglëng**
 level **mëdëdin**
 level area **nit mëdëdin**
 lever out **wili**

lick **limi**
 lie (= tell lies) **dëdën**
 lift up **nokh lu**
 light
 adj. (in weight) **titep**
 v. **eple, pële**
 lightning **nivël**
 like *prep.* **ured, uren**
 limestone rock **vetmes**
 limp **lijëkh**
 lip **nil pwingin** *See also ngërngirin*
 listen **vërëng**
 little **vës¹**
 live **jilëp, liek**
 liver **mopën, movmit**
 lizard **nale**
 green **nalomoj**
 lobster **nuir**
 long **përe**
 long time ago **tetwo**
 look for **wolesen**
 look through small hole **lobres**
 lose **veskai**
 lost **sësëkha**
 louse **nëkhët**
 low tide **rek**
 lung **mopën khar, movkhar**
 lychee, native **doakh**

M

Macaranga sp. **niniu**
 mad **vëkhvakh**
 maggot **wilës**
 make **mekaren, ve**
 make garden **mekar**
 make mat **vetvet**
 make noise **jëvot, mang, mëmang**
 Malay apple **niivëkh**
 man **dui**
 important man **dui lil**
 old man **dui tërep**
 old men **dui tërtërep, dui tëtërep**

uncircumcised man **tuarëb**
 mangrove **ding**
 many **itar**
 marriage **lakhien**
 married **lakh**
 marry **takhe, vëtir ejëkhën**
 mat
 of coconut leaf **mëri, mëri pwitar**
 of pandanus **pwitar**
 make mat **vetvet**
 matted (of hair) **mëlmëlj**
 me **kënëk**
 meeting house **nimel**
 to/in the **emel, makhlo**
Megapodius freycinet **tímolo**
 Melanesian person **dui mit**
Metroxylon warburgii **niet**
 midday **likhalmo**
 middle **likhan**
 midnight
 at **nit irusimëk**
 be **rusimëk**
Mimosa pudica **neskërkërit**
 missing **sësëkha**
 money **nëvet**
 month **nil**
 moon **nil**
 Moreton Bay chestnut **naavëvrit**
 morning **meteveren**
 morning star **tëvtëvribës**
 mosquito **nëkhmakh**
 moth **vunupup**
 mother **nunu**
 mother-in-law **pilakhan**
 mountain **nëkhës**
 moustache **nil pwingin**
 mouth **pwingin**
 mucus, nasal **kësëlëm**
 mud **lëvlip, lip**
 muscle **niskhën**
 mushroom **dëring**

mute person **nëbëtbët**
 my **esek, gesek**
 chewable **jomok**
 drinkable **mënok**
 edible **dok**

N

naked **mëlmol**
 Naman language **Navar**
 name **nëkhsen**
 native almond **nienge**
 native lychee **doakh**
 navel **bëbëtën, bëtën**
 near **evibëkh**
 nearly **itvwiren**
 neck **potakhdëlin**
 back of **neb pëtin**
 nephew **elwen**
 nest, of bird **ninëkh nëmen**
 nettle **nëkhaarët**
 New Guinea rosewood **naabues,**
 naabuos
 new **mëdakh**
 next **etakh**
 next day **maren nen**
 night **likhat**
 at **nit imit**
 be **khëmit, mit**
 nine **jevet**
 do nine times **ivijevet**
 ninety **ingeljevet**
 ninth **pitejevet**
 nipple **mëte sësën**
 nits **lëjar**
 no **iskha, iskhe**
 noise, make **jëvot, mang, mëmang**
 noisy **mang, mëmang**
 noon **likhalmo**
 Norsup **Lebënwo, Nebënwo**
 nose **kësën**
 now **enisi, lakhmëlsi**

O

oar **nivos**
 odour **mën¹**
 of **ese, gese, se**
 chewable **jomo**
 drinkable **mëne**
 edible **de²**
 part-whole **nen, ra**
 place **e**
 oil (in sprouting coconut) **dëmen¹**
 oily (of food) **mërrurur**
 old **tërep, tërtërep**
 old man **dui tërep**
 old men **dui tërtërep, dui tëtërep**
 old woman **tëvëlëkh tërep**
 on **rengë**
 on and on **ivin**
 on top **esoweies**
 once **bëng isimëk, ivsig, ivsimëk**
 one **gi¹, isig, isimëk**
 of a pair **nitvelën, tëvëlkhas**
 one day **ivsig, ivsimëk**
 only **ogi, pongen, te**
 open *vt.* **uri**
 eyes **lilis**
 opinion **vërëngien**
 orange *n.* **mwëlës**
 origin **pëlen**
 orphan **mëlis**
 other side, on the **tëvëlkhas**
 our *incl. dl.* **esedru, gesedru**
 chewable **jomodru**
 drinkable **mënedru**
 edible **dedru**
 our *incl. tl.* **esed, esedëtël, gesedëtël**
 chewable **jomodëtël**
 drinkable **mënedëtël**
 edible **dedëtël**
 our *incl. pl.* **esed, gesed**
 chewable **jomod**
 drinkable **mëned**
 edible **ded**

out **luo²**
 outdoors **evren**
 outrigger **net nuok**
 outside **evren**
 oven **jëpakh, lel jëpakh**
 over there **lene**

P

Pacific pigeon **nokhwip**
 paddle *n.* **nivos**
 painful **rar, tëb**
 palm (of hand) **lel lëmen**
 palm sp. **didis, pokël**
 palolo **nud**
 pandanus variety **jomoj, naaviu**
Pangium edule **nëvek**
 papaya **naangës**
 paramount chief **mwëliun lil**
 parrotfish **bëlahhëj**
 paternal aunt **vave, vevnën**
 path **sel¹**
 pawpaw **naangës**
 pay for **ul²**
 peace **dëmot**
 peel *v.* (of dry skin) **miul**
 n. (of fruit) **lilën, nilën**
 pelt *v.* **nej**
 penis **kuku, lesën**
 base of **pële lesën**
 uncircumcised **bërvin**
 penis wrapper **nivip, nivivën²**
 perform ceremony **ve nëbëng**
 person **dui**
 Ambrymese **dui e nib**
 Big Nambas **Tut**
 blind **mëtepar**
 coastal **dui elo**
 from Langalang **Navar**
 from Tirakh **Tirakh**
 inland **dui eut**
 Melanesian **dui mit**
 mute **nëbëtbët**

perspire **mimid**
 phlegm **urtakh**
 pick (fruit) **běj²**
 pierce **sar¹**
 pig **pwërpar**
 wild pig **pwërpar tirkhëbëb**
 pig pen **nëmwël ne pwërpar**
 piglet **net pwërpar**
 pile up **vëli**
 pillow **ulel**
 pinch **kës**
 pins attaching outrigger to poles
 pëlëläkhët
 piquant **khau**
 pith (of breadfruit) **nilen¹**
 place *n.* **nit, venu**
 forbidden place **nit bëte, nit tëbëte**
 place verbal prohibition on **titing**
 khërkhër
 placenta **tang ne netite**
 plant *vt.* **lo¹, lulo**
 platform **navul**
 play **tenej**
 poison arrow **lu bëte**
 poke **sar¹, vëre**
 pole (for yam vines) **nurakh**
Polyscias scutellaria **lelo**
Pometia pinnata **doakh**
 post **jun, naakel**
 pound **khëj**
 pour away **sëkhtren**
 prawn **nuir**
 pray **lot**
 pregnant **sien**
 prick *v.* **vëre**
 prohibit **khërkhër², titing khërkhër**
Pterocarpus indicus **naabues, naabuos**
Ptilinopus
 greyii **vwiri¹**
 tannensis **vwito**
 pubic hair (male) **nil pële lesën**

pudding (of island cabbage) **lëbëlëb,**
 neyo, nisnes
 puff, be puffed **ngëvngëp**
 pull **tikh²**
 pull out **dang luo, tikh luo**
 pumice **nokhoskhos**
 punch *v.* **tëkh¹**
 pus **nëvwër**
 push **tebe, tep**
 ground with snout (of pig) **tëtëp**
 put **lëng, to**
 put back **lëng meleten**
 put inside **sëngen**
 put knife into thatch **silen**
 put on hat **vio**
 put poles in ground for yam vines
 sëkh nurakh
 put sticks in ground **jëpere**
 putrid **bu**

Q

puzzle tree **medek**
 quick **vërvër**
 quiet **liek khëmëj**
 quietly **dëlo**

R

rail
 top rail of house wall **nëvëdëlin**
 rail to which thatch is attached **nipip**
 rain
 n. **nuis**
 v. **iu**
 rainbow **meviel**
 rat **laabët**
 raw **mëdakh**
 reach **iar**
 receive **lep¹**
 recognise **lisdo, rëngdo**
 red **miel**
 red-bellied fruit dove **vwiri¹**

reed variety **niri**
 reef heron **nibonwo**
 release **lënglëng**
 remember **vësakh**
 remove **jem, jem luo, lep luo**
 rest v. **liek**
 return
 vi. **melet**
 in return **meleten**
 reveal (secret) **vwirvwiri**
 ribs **këlëlën**
 rice **nidël tëlet**
 rifle **tin**
 right hand **mëldon**
 ringworm **nin**
 rip **sir**
 ripe **mëd**
 rise **rakh**
 of sun **tëvakh**
 of tide **wun**
 river **nuo**
 road **sel¹**
 roast
 vi. **tabkhën**
 vt. **tabëkh**
 rock **nëvet**
 roll *vt.* **lëlës, ruten**
 rooster **tiu dui**
 root **naarin**
 buttress root **pepet**
 rope **nau**
 rotten **bu**
 round **mwëlmwël**
 rubbish **pëptakh**
 ruin v. **ututakh**
 run **vërvër**
 run away **riu**

S

Saccharum edule **nëvës**
 sad **rëng iset**
 sago palm **niet**

saliva **tib**
 saltwater **tes**
 same **irusimëk**
 sand **nunwin**
 sap **dëdënen, nuon**
 say **vwër, vwiri²**
 scale
 n. **ngërngirën**
 v. **ngërngir**
 scar *n.* **mëdkëhën**
Schleinitzia sp. **mëte niel**
 scoop up (water) **sip**
 scrape *vt.* **khër**
 scrapings (of coconut) **nivir**
 scratch *vt.* **khër**
 scratch ground **jjër³**
 scrub fowl **timolo**
 sea **tes**
 sea almond **bwëlil**
 sea hearse tree **bërbër**
 sea worm **nud**
 seaweed **lumlum, lumlum tes**
 second **piteru**
 see **lis**
 seed **novolelën**
 of breadfruit **novo**
 sell **ululen**
 semen **jëren¹**
 send on errand **sere**
 sensitive grass **neskërkërit**
 set (of sun) **mëdin**
 settle
 (date) **lëng nëbëng**
 (of bird) **bëj¹**
 seven **jiru**
 do seven times **ivijiru**
 seventh **pitejiru**
 seventy **ingeljiru**
 sew **lëlëkh**
 shadow **mëlivin, mëmilën**
 shake
 vi. **khëkhël**

- vt. **pwear**
 shake hands **pwear lēmēn**
 sharp **mēmēlkhai**
 she **en¹**
 sheath of coconut flower **vēsnu**
 shell **jun**
 of something **bēlēkhēsēn**
 of turtle **ju nēpakh**
 shellfish **tu**
 sp. **nisis**
 shin **jēvarēn**
 shine (of moon) **sar²**
 shiny **moar**
 shirt **nililēk**
 shiver **khēkhēl**
 shoes **lel tilin**
 shoot v. **lu², luluakh, luo¹**
 shooting star **mēkhwaia mēji**
 short **bēkh**
 shoulder **pēti vwisin**
 shout **juele, jul**
 shout to **wis**
 shut v. **poplej**
 sick **mēsīt**
 sickness **mēsītien**
 side **nēkhēkhērēn**
 sing **khe, khekhe**
 sink vi. **mēdin**
 sister of man **vevnēn**
 sit **liek** *See also* **pēlpēlarēs**
 with legs extended **pējpējērakh**
 six **lēmjis**
 do six times **ivilēmjis**
 sixth **pitelēmjis**
 sixty **ingelēmjis**
 skin n. **lil pekēn, lilēn, nil pekēn, nilēn**
 skink **jjēr¹**
 skinny **mērej**
 skirt **mēdes**
 skull **potkhai**
 sky **pekren**
- slap **uje**
 sleep **metēr**
 on back **didiven**
 on one's belly **pavnuik**
 on side **metēr en nēkhēkhērēn**
 'sleep' in the eye **ji mēten**
 sleeping place **mēlngen**
 sleepy **duil**
 slice v. **il**
 slip v. **jejēr**
 slippery **mibēkhlu**
 slitgong **nokhmo**
 slowly **dēlo**
 slug **dikio**
 slurp **sērip**
 small **vēs¹**
 smegma **jēbēkh**
 smell
 n. **mēn¹**
 vt. **rēng**
 smoke
 n. **tēngting**
 vi. **jēl**
 smoky vi. **jēl**
 smooth **mēdēdin**
 snake **nēmōt**
 snake bean **napopo**
 sneeze **jikhēp**
 sniff **sēsērip**
 snore **mingir**
 snot **kēsēlēm**
 soil **deb, mēlulo**
 sole (of foot) **lel tilin**
Solenopsis geminata **nij**
 somersault **pēpēlakh**
 something **tegi**
 son **netēn**
 song **nivwi**
 soon **itvwiren**
 sorcerer **dui bēte, te bēte**
 sore

<i>adj.</i> rar, tēb	<i>vi.</i> vēnakh
<i>n.</i> nit itēb	<i>vt.</i> vēnakhen
have a sore tēb	step on poj
sorry rēng iset	sternum ju mērēn
sound dēlin	stick ne
sour khau	feathered, for dancing nil tiu
sow <i>n.</i> jimod	still <i>adv.</i> bēr²
speak titing	stink, stinking bu
a language vengesen	stinkwood nipwij
spear <i>n. & v.</i> sar¹	stone nēvet
spider nelo	black nēvet mit, vetmit
spider web mēlnge nelo	cooking nēvet nen neyo
spine ju bwēlin	stone wall mwēlnēvet
spirit (of place/dead person) mimin², mwimwin	stool nijēngjēng
spit	stop tirtir
<i>n.</i> tib	story vengesien
<i>v.</i> tebēs	straight lingēn
split bēri, mor, tibēs	straight away ivsig, ivsimēk
by chopping jej bēri	strike khēj
spoil ututakh	string nau
<i>Spondias dulcis</i> naangēs	strong khuos
spoor mēlnge tilin	sucker (of banana etc.) jēlēn
spring <i>n.</i> mēte nuo, nuo	suddenly ivsig, ivsimēk
spur (on rooster's leg) pēlēn, pēlpēlēn	sugar niji
squat <i>v.</i> jopakh	sugar ant, small tēlet
squeeze bēkhēj	sugarcane niji
squeeze liquid out of bēle	sun niel
stalk (of fruit) nijen	surprised tesēk
stamp feet jēvjēpen	suspend lēkhlēkh²
stand	be suspended lelakh
<i>vi.</i> vētir	swallow dēlim
<i>vt.</i> (stand something up) sēkh	swamp lēvlip
star mēji	swamp harrier nēpel
evening star lavenu	swear susur
morning star tēvtēvribēs	sweat <i>v.</i> mimid
shooting star mēkhwaia mēji	sweatiness nipirang
start tēkh³	sweep jjēr³
stay liek, tēkh²	sweet lelēm
alive jilēp	swell
behind vētir	<i>n.</i> nau ne tes
steal	<i>v.</i> sēren
	swelling on tree trunk bēbētēn, bētēn

swiftlet **nipipil**
 swim **suvsip**
 underwater **lunum, unun**
 swollen **sären**
 swollen glands **kënkënel**
Syzygium malaccense **niivëkh**

T

taboo **bëte, tëbëte**
 taboo fire **nib bëte**
 Tahitian chestnut **nëmop**
 tail **nilen², nululen**
 take **lep¹, takhe**
 take out **lep luo**
 talk **titing**
 talk about **tinge**
 tamanu **par¹**
 tangled (of hair) **mëlmëlëj**
 Tanna fruit dove **vwito**
 taro **viakh**
 giant **nivëkh**
 water **buok**
 tasteless **lilakh**
 Tautu **Sevenu**
 teach **vësvës, vësvësen**
 tear v. **sir**
 tears **nuo mëten**
 tell **tinge**
 tell lies **dëdën**
 tell on **vwirvwiri**
 tell truth **vwërdo**
 ten **isngel**
 do ten times **ivisngel**
 tendon **nuot**
 tenth **pitesngel**
Terminalia catappa **bwëlil**
 testicles **lesën, novolesën**
 that *dem.* **etër, gi¹, levër**
 that one **enir, gir, levër**
 sub. **te**
 thatch **niet**

their *dl.* **esaru, gesaru**
 chewable **jomaru**
 drinkable **mënaru**
 edible **daru**
 their *tl.* **esartël, gesartël**
 chewable **jomartël**
 drinkable **mënantël**
 edible **dartël**
 their *pl.* **esar, gesar**
 chewable **jomar**
 drinkable **mënar**
 edible **dar**
 them
 dl. **eru**
 tl. **eritël**
 pl. **er**
 then **en³, jere, jereje**
 there **etër, lene**
 they
 dl. **eru**
 tl. **eritël**
 pl. **er**
 thick **tëtëb**
 thin **mënëmënëp, mërej**
 thing **tegi**
 think **vërëng**
 think of **vësakh**
 third **pitetël**
 thirsty **rëng ipomënmën**
 thirsty for **rëng ipomën**
 thirty **ingeltël**
 this **gi¹**
 thought **vërëngien**
 three **itël**
 do three times **ivitël**
 do three by three / in threes **tëltël**
 throw **jëren²**
 throw missile at **nej**
 thumb **pwarëkhilil**
 thunder **belevër**
 tie up **lëkh²**

tight **jējēn**
time **eren**
tip out **sēkhtrēn**
tip over *vt. & vi.* **ruten**
Tirakh language/person **Tirakh**
to **duen, duon, ra**
 (goal) **erengen**
 (person) **en²**
 (place) **e**
today **enisi, mosi**
toe **narēkh tilin**
tomorrow **maren**
tongs **pelej**
tongue **mimin¹**
too much **ikhos**
tooth **lun¹**
top **ninwolēn**
 on top **esoweies**
touch **iar**
track (of something) **mēlnge tilin**
tree **ne, pēle ne**
 of particular species **pēlen**
 unidentified tree sp. **net**
tree fern **pongeret**
Trichoglossus haematodus **jērēp**
trousers **nivip**
true **vwērdo**
trunk **pēlen**
tuber **lelēn**
 chewy **nēpet**
Turbo marmoratus **nēpik**
turn *vt.* **ruten**
 turn over *vi.* **ruten**
turtle **nēpakh**
 turtle shell **ju nēpakh**
twenty **ingelru**
twice, do **ivaru**
twins **mēlep**
two **iru**
 do two by two, in twos **ruru**
Tyto alba **nēvod**

U

uncle
 father's elder brother **etmen lil**
 father's younger brother **etmen vēs**
 mother's brother **asen**
uncooked **mēdakh**
under **milivin**
underneath **enivin**
understand **rēngdo**
uphill **esakh**
upwards **esakh**
urethral opening **mēte kuku, mēte lesēn**
urinate **mokhwo**
us *excl.*
 dl. **kēmēmrū**
 tl. **kēmētēl**
 pl. **kēmēm**
us *incl.*
 dl. **naakēdrū**
 tl. **nakedētēl**
 pl. **naakēd**

V

vagina **maru**
vas deferens **nau ne lesēn, nuot ne lesēn**
vein **nuot**
vertigo, have **mēmētikh**
very **ikhos**
victory leaf **naarēs**
village **venu**
vine **jin², nau**
voice **dēlin**
volcano **nib**
vomit
 n., vomitus **luakhen**
 v. **luakh**

W

wage war **nur**
waistband **lun²**
wait **tērakh**

wait for **tërakh**
 wake up **lilis, mērit**
 walk **ling**
 walk across **lingling lau**
 walk along reef **jovo tes**
 walk around **ling betel**
 walking stick **nijëvjëp, pëlijëvjëp**
 wall
 of house **pek nēmakh**
 stone wall **mwëlnëvet**
 wander about **lingling**
 want **vwër**
 want to **rëng**
 warrior **dui nur**
 wart **mëte tēmes**
 wash **jile**
 watch *n.* **mëte niel**
 water
 n. **nuo, nuon**
 v. **jile**
 water taro **buok**
 watercourse (non-permanent) **mikhwel**
 waterweed **lumlum, lumlum nuo**
 wave *n.* **nau ne tes**
 we *excl.*
 dl. **kēmēru**
 tl. **kēmēmtël**
 pl. **kēmē**
 we *incl.*
 dl. **nakedru**
 tl. **nakedëtël**
 pl. **naakëd**
 wear hat **vio**
 web, of spider **mëlŋe nelo**
 wedding **lakhien**
 wet
 adj. **wor**
 v. **jile**
 what? **sëte**
 when *sub.* **eren**
 when? **sëvërën**

where? **evi**
 whisper **sësëreves, titing dëlo**
 whistle **vwillil**
 white **wip**
 white-throated pigeon **tëriu**
 whitewood **vënwosowos**
 who? **es**
 widow **mëlis**
 widower **mëlis**
 wife **tëvëlëkh**
 wild **tirkhëbëb**
 wild cane varieties **mer, vieb**
 wild kava **pëlikikh**
 wild yam **nëbwëd**
 variety **dërap po**
 wind *n.* **nitëp**
 onshore **nitëp ileng e lebëb**
 southeast **nitëp iling e lo**
 wing **nivivën¹**
 wink **pël mëten tëvëlkhās**
 wipe **jar**
 with **duen, duon, eduen, eduon**
 woman **tëvëlëkh, tëvet**
 barren woman **turwir**
 old woman **tëvëlëkh tërep**
 young woman **netitevën**
 wood **ne**
 wood grub **lëkh¹**
 work
 n. **mekarien**
 v. **mekar**
 world **venu**
 worm **jëlëj**
 sea **nud**
 write **ul¹, ulul**
 write out/down **ul luo**

Y–Z

yam **kake**
 lesser **dërap**
 wild **dërap po**

varieties **kake përe, lejelej, navwilo,**
nëkhëb, pëkhajin, pëkpok,
pëtisëkhe, revesakh
yam mound **tikh ne kake**
yawn **mamau**
year **sëkho**
yell **jul**
yellow **woj**
yellow white-eye **pëlelakh**
yesterday **nenëp**
yet **bër²**

you
sg. **naakëm**
dl. **kemru**
tl. **kemtël**
pl. **kem**
young woman **netitevën**
your *sg.* **esom, gesom**
chewable **jomom**
drinkable **mënom**
edible **dom**
Zosterops flavifrons **pëlelak**

4 *Tape texts*

A total of ten texts in the Tape language have been recorded, transcribed and analysed, amounting to about twenty minutes of continuous speech from three different male speakers, aged in their fifties and above. Each of these is presented below with interlinear glosses.

These texts have been lightly edited from the recorded spoken version in line with the wishes of speakers of Tape. Changes which have been made to the texts as they were actually spoken take into account the following considerations:

- Some stories include occasional factual errors. In some cases, the speaker would immediately correct this in the recording, in which case the original error has simply been deleted. In other cases, the error was not noticed until the story was being transcribed, in which case the correct material is substituted for what was said incorrectly.
- Small parts of some of the recordings turned out to be inaudible (or very nearly so), either because of poor quality recording or because a speaker was mumbling. Such material has also been ignored.
- Occasionally, a speaker makes unexpected shifts of audience, sometimes addressing a story to me (as the recorder) and sometimes to the community of Tape speakers. Where a story is consistently addressed to a single audience, this is not changed in these stories. However, where a narrator alternates unpredictably within a single story, the audience is made consistent throughout in these published versions.
- Unsurprisingly—especially since this language is no longer spoken on a daily basis—the stories also occasionally contain what were recognised by speakers as ‘performance errors’, i.e. slips of the tongue, inappropriate choice of words, incomplete words or sentences while a speaker struggles to find an acceptable way to express something, and so on. Again, such features were sometimes corrected on tape and sometimes not, though these features have been eliminated from these published texts.
- Sometimes a story-teller began to jump ahead of himself and then reverted back to the original story line, or he thought of something later that he meant to say earlier. In such cases, material that was spoken out of place has been edited out, or placed in a more appropriate location.

- Speakers of Tape were insistent that where somebody had occasionally lapsed into Bislama, this should not be reflected in the written record of the language. Such material has also been edited out in the versions of the texts that are presented here.

However, it is recognised that some scholars may have a legitimate interest in the original versions of these texts, so the recordings, along with detailed transcriptions of these, will ultimately be deposited in appropriate archival sources.

4.1 Women's tooth avulsion

This story was told by Harry Rambe in Tautu village on 4 September 2002. It tells of traditional practices associated with the removal of the front teeth of women when they reached a marriageable age.

Be-vwiri en vengesien esek e Tape.
 1SG:IRR-tell LOC language POSS:1SG LOC Tape
 'I will tell it in my Tape language.'

Eren dui tørtërep tetwo i-n-vwër ipa-n-takhe tëvëlëkh
 time man old: PL before 3REAL-PL-want 3NONGS:IRR-PL-marry woman

i-n-vin i-n-khël nëmakh nen tëvëlëkh esar.
 3REAL-PL-go 3REAL-PL-build house PURP wife POSS:3PL
 'When the old men before wanted to marry a woman, they would go and make a house for their wives.'

I-n-vin dë-n-liek ellevnu.
 3REAL-PL-go ES-PL-live inside
 'They would go and live inside.'

Tëvëlëkh pongen.
 woman only
 'There were only women.'

Dui iskha.
 man no
 'There were no men.'

I-n-vin dë-n-liek ellevnu.
 3REAL-PL-go ES-PL-live inside
 'They would go and live inside.'

En i-n-tëkh lu-n iru gi emu levër.
 and 3REAL-PL-knock.out tooth-3SG two REL front that.one
 'And they would knock out those two teeth which were at the front.'

I-n-tëkh luo, i-n-tëkh luo rivwi.
 3REAL-PL-knock.out out 3REAL-PL-knock.out out all
 'They would knock them out until they had knocked them both out.'

I-n-khës d-ivin d-ivin i-k-iar nit
 3REAL-PL-dance ES-go ES-go 3SG:REAL-NEC-reach place

*i-kë-ren.*¹

3SG:REAL-NEC-be.daylight

‘They would dance on and on until daybreak.’

Maren ne-n i-n-liek.
 tomorrow PART-3SG 3:REAL-PL-stay
 ‘The next day they would stay (there).’

Nil isimëk i-n-liek elelvenu en i-mos.
 month one 3REAL-PL-stay inside and 3SG:REAL-finish
 ‘They would stay inside for one month and then it was finished.’

I-n-mo evren i-n-khës mili.
 3REAL-PL-come outside 3REAL-PL-dance again
 ‘They would come outside and they would dance again.’

Jerete i-n-lep ivin ejëkhë-n elakh esen.
 then 3REAL-PL-take 3SG:REAL:go GOAL-3SG husband POSS:3SG
 ‘Then they would take her away to her husband.’

Gi elakh esen i-yek a-da-ske-tëkh lu-n
 REL husband POSS:3SG 3SG:REAL-have IMP:REAL-CONT-NEG-knock.out tooth-3SG

i-kë-melet d-ivin erenge nëmakh gi i-kë-n-tëkh
 3SG:REAL-NEC-return ES-go GOAL house SUB 3REAL-NEC-PL-knock.out

lu-n mili.
 tooth-3SG again

‘She who has a husband and her teeth have not been knocked out had to go back to the house where they would knock out her teeth again.’

Gi i-da-sk-ivin ejëkhë-n elakh esen i-n-tëkh
 REL 3SG:REAL-CONT-NEG-go GOAL-3SG husband POSS:3SG 3REAL-PL-knock.out

lu-n.
 tooth-3SG

‘They would knock out the teeth of her who has not yet gone to her husband.’

I-vëtir d-ivin d-ivin i-bëkh-vin ejëkhë-n elakh
 3SG:REAL-stay.behind ES-go ES-go 3SG:REAL-INCEP-go GOAL-3SG husband

esen.
 POSS:3SG

‘She would stay behind and would eventually just go to her husband.’

Povër i-ska-dang luo lu-n i-kë-vin ejëkhë-n
 if 3REAL-NEG:PL-pull out tooth-3SG 3SG:REAL-NEC-go GOAL

¹ The reason for the appearance of the necessitative prefixes in this sentence is still a mystery.

elakh esen netë-n dui gi emu ne-n i-kë-mes.
 husband POSS:3SG offspring-3SG male REL first PART-3SG 3SG:REAL-NEC-die
 ‘If they hadn’t pulled out her teeth and she went to her husband, her firstborn son would die.’

Jerete gi etakh ne-n i-kë-bëkh-jilëp.
 then REL next PART-3SG 3SG:REAL-NEC-INCEP-live
 ‘Then the next one would surely live.’

Tëvëlëkh i-ka-n-jilëp.
 female 3REAL-NEC-PL-live
 ‘The females will surely live.’

Gir ogi en-vwër be-vwiri en kem këpa-n-rëngdo.
 that only 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell GOAL 2PL 2NONGS:IRR-PL-know
 ‘That is all what I want to tell you all for you to know.’

Vengesien e kastom esed e Tape.
 story ABOUT tradition POSS:1PL.INCL SOURCE Tape
 ‘It is a story about our traditions from Tape.’

4.2 Offerings to Tar

This story was also told by Harry Rambe. It was recorded in Tautu village on 4 September 2002. In it, he discusses the traditional practice of making offerings to Tar, who he regarded as the traditional equivalent of the Christian God.

Enisi en-vwër be-vwiri mili vengesien isig en kem
 now 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell again story one GOAL 2PL
këpa-n-rëngdo.
 2NONGS:IRR-PL-know
 ‘Now I want to tell another story to you for you all to know.’

Naakëd e Tape.
 1PL.INCL SOURCE Tape
 ‘We are from Tape.’

Eren mwëliun gi i-vwër ipo-ve nëbëng i-vëkhëj buos.
 time chief REL 3SG:REAL-want 3SG:IRR-make ceremony 3SG:REAL-kill pig
 ‘When there was a chief who wanted to hold a ceremony, he would kill a pig.’

I-n-vin i-n-ve nëmwël esen.
 3REAL-PL-go 3REAL-PL-make garden BEN:3SG
 ‘They would go and make a garden for him.’

I-n-rap esen jere dë-n-bëkh-rap esar.
 3REAL-PL-clear.garden BEN:3SG then ES-PL-INCEP-clear.garden BEN:3PL
 ‘They would clear a garden site for him and then they would just clear garden sites for themselves.’

I-n-lulo kake esen jerete i-n-bëkh-lulo esar.
 3REAL-PL-plant yam BEN:3SG then 3REAL-PL-INCEP-plant BEN:3PL
 ‘They would plant yams for him and then they would plant them for themselves.’

I-tëkh d-ivin d-ivin d-ivin iar e kake i-mëdakh
 3SG:REAL-stay ES-go ES-go ES-go 3SG:REAL:reach LOC yam 3SG:REAL-grow
iar e lelë-n i-yek.
 3SG:REAL:reach LOC tuber-3SG 3SG:REAL-have
 ‘It would stay until the yams had grown and had tubers.’

I-n-vin dë-n-khël.
 3REAL-PL-go ES-PL-dig
 ‘They would go and dig them up.’

I-n-vin dë-n-takhe en nimel ese mwëliun.
 3REAL-PL-go ES-PL-take GOAL meeting.house POSS chief
 ‘They would go and take them to the chief’s meeting house.’

Udi.
 3SG:REAL:eat
 ‘He would eat them.’

Jere i-n-khël mili kake po-ve nëbëng te
 then 3REAL-PL-dig again yam 3SG:IRR-make ceremony SUB
ipa-n-khës jëne-n.
 3NONSG:IRR-PL-dance CAUSE-3SG
 ‘Then they would dig yams again for him to hold the ceremony that they would dance for.’

En i-n-kës nimwil.
 and 3NONSG:REAL-PL-pinch.off cycad
 ‘And they would pinch off the cycad (leaves).’

I-tutuen erenge venu gi ipo-mo erenge nëbëng
 3SG:REAL-distribute GOAL village REL 3SG:IRR-come GOAL ceremony
esen.
 POSS:3SG
 ‘He would distribute them to the villages that would come to his ceremony.’

Vër i-kësiar nëbëng isngel venu esar i-n-jem
 if 3SG:REAL-go.past day ten village POSS:3PL 3REAL-PL-remove
nimwil.
 cycad
 ‘If it went past ten days, their village would remove the cycad (leaves).’

Nëbëng isig i-n-jem isig.
 day one 3REAL-PL-remove one
 ‘For each day, they would remove one (leaf).’

Nëbëng isig i-n-jem luo isig d-ivin d-ivin iar e
 day one 3REAL-PL-remove out one ES-go ES-go 3SG:REAL:reach LOC

nëbëng isngel.

day ten

‘For each day they would remove one (leaf) for ten days.’

I-n-vin ejëkhë-n mwëliun ipa-n-ve nëbëng esen.
3REAL-PL-go GOAL chief 3NONSG:IRR-PL-make ceremony POSS:3SG

‘They would go to the chief to perform his ceremony.’

I-n-lëkh buos esar dë-n-tën e mwëliun.
3REAL-PL-tie.up pig POSS:3PL ES-PL-give GOAL chief

‘They would tie up their pigs and give them to the chief.’

D-ivin d-ivin i-mos iar rivrip i-n-kho
ES-go ES-go 3SG:REAL-finish 3SG:REAL:reach evening 3REAL-PL-bundle.up

kake erenge lib.

yam LOC bamboo

‘Eventually it was done by the evening and they would bundle up yams on the bamboo (platform).’

I-n-kho erenge lib dë-n-sëkh duen melëkh ne-n.
3REAL-PL-bundle.up LOC bamboo ES-PL-stand.up ACC kava PURP-3SG

‘They would bundle them up on the bamboo (platform) and stand them up with the kava to go with it.’

I-n-sëkh ivin esoweies dë-n-lep net pwërpar
3REAL-PL-stand.up 3SG:REAL:go on.top ES-PL-take child pig

dë-n-kho edeb.

ES-PL-tie.up on.ground

‘They would stand it up on top and take a piglet and tie it up on the ground.’

Gi levër i-n-lot en atua ese këmem.
? ? 3REAL-PL-pray GOAL god POSS 1PL.EXCL

‘... (?) They would pray to our god.’

I-n-wis nëkhse-n i-n-vwër Tar.
3REAL-PL-call name-3SG 3REAL-PL-say Tar

‘They used to call him “Tar”.’

I-n-wis en i-n-vwër, “Tar o!”
3REAL-PL-call 3SG 3REAL-PL-say Tar oh

‘They would call to him, “Oh, Tar!”.’

Po-mo dë-lep kake dom duon melëkh ne-n duon buos
2SG:IRR-come ES-take yam ED:2SG ACC kava PURP-3SG ACC pig

ne-n.

PURP-3SG

‘Come and take your yams and the kava to go with it and the pig to go with it.’

*Nëbëng jiru mosi.*²
 day seven today
 ‘It is seven days today.’

I-vwiri mwili.
 3SG:REAL-say again
 ‘He would say it again.’

I-wis nëkhse-n i-vwër, “Tar o!”
 3SG:REAL-call name-3SG 3SG:REAL-say Tar oh
 ‘He would call his name, “Oh, Tar!”.’

Po-mo dë-lep kake dom duon melëkh ne-n duon buos
 2SG:IRR-come ES-take yam ED:2SG ACC kava PURP-3SG ACC pig
ne-n.
 PURP-3SG

‘Come and take your yams and the kava to go with it and the pig to go with it.’

Nëbëng jiru mosi.
 day seven today
 ‘It is seven days today.’

Dë-n-liek d-ivin d-ivin nit i-mit.
 ES-PL-stay ES-go ES-go place 3SG:REAL-dark
 ‘And they would stay until it was dark.’

I-n-khës d-ivin d-ivin nit i-ren.
 3REAL-PL-dance ES-go ES-go place 3SG:REAL-be-daylight
 ‘They would dance until it was daylight.’

Dui gi eso i-n-vin e venu esar.
 person REL far.away 3REAL-PL-go GOAL village POSS:3PL
 ‘People who were from far away would go to their villages.’

Er gi i-n-liek ejëkhë-n mwëliun i-n-liek.
 3PL REL 3REAL-PL-live ACC-3SG chief 3REAL-PL-stay
 ‘Those who lived with the chief would stay.’

Kake gi i-n-sëkh-ër i-kë-ska-n-iar.
 yam REL 3REAL-PL-stand.up-3PL 3REAL-NEG-NEG-PL-touch
 ‘They must not touch the yams that they had stood up.’

I-tëkh etër d-ivin d-ivin d-ivin i-mumu duon
 3SG:REAL-stay there ES-go ES-go ES-go 3SG:REAL-disintegrate ACC
melëkh ne-n.
 kava PURP-3SG

‘It would stay there until it disintegrated with the kava that went with it.’

² This appears to be a formulaic utterance associated with the offering of goods to Tar, the significance of which is not explained by the narrator.

Etër ogi en-vwër be-vwiri en kem këpa-n-rëngdo.
 there all 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell GOAL 2PL 2NONGS:IRR-PL-know
 ‘That is all I wanted to tell you for you all to know.’

Tetwo dë-n-lot en dui gi pële venu.
 before 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-pray GOAL person REL origin village
 ‘Before we used to pray to the person who was the origin of the village.’

Nëkhse-n i-ve Tar.
 name-3SG 3SG:REAL-COP Tar
 ‘His name was Tar.’

4.3 A devil

This story, told by Ephraim Joshua on 5 September 2002 in Tautu village, tells of an old man who stopped a devil from killing people.

En-vwër be-titing mili duon naakëm.
 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell.story again ACC 2SG
 ‘I want to tell another (story) with you.’

Nuo isig ejëkh këmem.
 spring one LOC 1PL.EXCL
 ‘There is a spring on our land.’

Nuo mimi-n i-yek.
 spring spirit-3SG 3SG:REAL-have
 ‘The spring has a spirit.’

En-vwër be-titing ogi jënen mimi-n i-khëj
 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell.story only because spirit-3SG 3SG:REAL-kill

pongen dui.
 always person
 ‘I just want to tell the story because the spirit was always killing people.’

I-khëj dui d-ivin dui tërep gi nëkhse-n Masing.
 3SG:REAL-kill person ES-go man old REL name-3SG Masing
 ‘It killed people until there was an old man whose name was Masing.’

Dui tërev-ër nëkhse-n enir.
 man old-DEM name-3SG that.one
 ‘That was the old man’s name.’

I-liek d-ivin i-lis i-khëj dui itar.
 3SG:REAL-stay ES-go 3SG:REAL-see 3SG:REAL-kill person many
 ‘He stayed until he saw that it had killed many people.’

Ivin ivsig i-metër.
 3SG:REAL:go one.day 3SG:REAL-sleep
 ‘He went one day and he went to sleep.’

I-metër i-lis ivin erenge nuo levër.
 3SG:REAL-sleep 3SG:REAL-see 3SG:REAL:go GOAL spring that
 ‘He dreamt that he went to that spring.’

I-lis mimi nuo levër i-ve tëvëlëkh.
 3SG:REAL-see spirit spring that 3SG:REAL-COP woman
 ‘He saw that the spirit of that spring was a woman.’

I-ve tëvëlëkh netë-n gi i-da-vës ogi.
 3SG:REAL-COP woman child-3SG DEM 3SG:REAL-CONT-small only
 ‘She was a woman whose child was still only small.’

I-r-liek d-ivin en ivin i-khëj pongen dui.
 3NONSG:REAL-DL-stay ES-go and 3SG:REAL:go 3SG:REAL-kill always person
 ‘The two of them lived on and on and she would always go and kill people.’

D-ivin i-mo i-liek ejëkhë-n netë-n mili.
 ES-go 3SG:REAL-come 3SG:REAL-stay ACC-3SG child-3SG again
 ‘And she would come and stay with her child again.’

Eren gi i-vwër ipo-khëj dui e i-lingling
 time SUB 3SG:REAL-want 3SG:IRR-kill person LOC 3SG:REAL-walk

ivin i-khëj dui.
 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-kill person

‘At a time that she wanted to kill somebody, she would walk away and kill somebody.’

I-mos i-mo mili i-liek duon netë-n vës-ar.
 3SG:REAL-finish 3SG:REAL-come back 3SG:REAL-live ACC child-3SG small-DEM
 ‘When she was finished, she would come back and live with her small child.’

Dui tërev-ar i-lis uren-ër i-metër.
 man old-DEM 3SG:REAL-see like-DEM 3SG:REAL-sleep
 ‘That old man dreamt like that.’

Mimi-n i-lingling nit i-mit.
 spirit-3SG 3SG:REAL-walk place 3SG:REAL-dark
 ‘The spirit would wander around when it was dark.’

Ivin i-lis tëvëlëkh levar i-ve mëri.
 3SG:REAL:go 3SG:REAL-see woman that 3SG:REAL-make mat
 ‘He went and saw that woman making a mat.’

I-ve mëri i-mos, i-vwër mili ip-ivin
 3SG:REAL-make mat 3SG:REAL-finish 3SG:REAL-want again 3SG:IRR-go

mili ipo-khëj dui.
 again 3SG:IRR-kill person

‘When she had finished making the mat, she wanted to go again and kill somebody.’

Dui tërev-ar ivin i-lis uren-ër i-takhe nëve
 man old-DEM 3SG:REAL:go 3SG:REAL-see like-DEM 3SG:REAL-take black

mit isig.
stone one

‘When the old man saw that, he took a black stone.’

Ivin evibëkh ejëkhë-n.
3SG:REAL:go close GOAL-3SG

‘He went close to her.’

I-lep nëvet-ar i-khëj en tili tëvëlëkh-ar gi
3SG:REAL-pick.up stone-DEM 3SG:REAL-hit INST leg woman-DEM REL

i-khëj pongen dui er.
3SG:REAL-kill always person PL

‘He picked up that stone and hit the leg of that woman who was always killing people with it.’

I-khëj tili-n.
3SG:REAL-hit leg-3SG

‘He hit her leg.’

Tili-n nitvelën i-mëj.
leg-3SG one.of.pair 3SG:REAL-break

‘One of her legs was broken.’

Enisi i-ske-lingling mili.
now 3SG:REAL-NEG-walk again

‘Then she didn’t walk any more.’

I-ske-khëj mili dui.
3SG:REAL-NEG-kill again person

‘She didn’t kill people any more.’

I-liek ogi erenge nëmakh esen.
3SG:REAL-stay only LOC house POSS:3SG

‘She just stayed at her house.’

I-liek i-liek.
3SG:REAL-stay 3SG:REAL-stay

‘She stayed and stayed.’

Netite vës esen tëvëlëkh mili.
child small POSS:3SG female again

‘Her small child was another female.’

I-ske-rëngdo te nunu esen i-ve pongen mili.
3SG:REAL-NEG-know SUB mother POSS:3SG 3SG:REAL-do always again

‘She did not know that her mother always behaved like that.’

I-ska-r-khuos mili gi ipa-r-lingling ipa-r-khëj dui.
3:REAL-NEG-DL-strong again SUB 3NONSG:IRR-DL-walk 3NONSG:IRR-DL-kill person

‘They were not strong (enough) to wander around killing people.’

Enir ogi en-vwër be-tinge.
 that.one only 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-talk.about
 ‘That is all I want to talk about.’

I-mos etër.
 3SG:REAL-finish there
 ‘It finishes there.’

4.4 Trading saltwater

This story was told by Ephraim Joshua on 13 August 13 2004 in Tautu village. It tells how the Tape people used to arrange to meet the neighbouring Tirakh people, whose land provided no access to the sea, at a particular place where they could exchange saltwater (used for cooking) for other goods.

Kënëk en-vwër be-tinge gi Tirakh i-n-mo
 1SG 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-talk.about SUB Tirakh 3REAL-PL-come

i-n-ul tes ejëkh naakëd.
 3REAL-PL-buy saltwater SOURCE 1PL.INCL

‘I want to talk about how the Tirakh people would come and buy saltwater from us.’

Eren i-n-vwër ipa-n-mo ipa-n-ul tes
 time 3REAL-PL-want 3NONSG:IRR-PL-come 3NONSG:IRR-PL-buy saltwater

i-n-lëng nëbëng.
 3NONSG:IRR-PL-put day

‘When they wanted to come and buy saltwater, they would settle on a day.’

I-n-lëng nëbëng i-n-lëng nëbëng gir.
 3REAL-PL-put day 3REAL-PL-put day that.one

‘When they settled on a day, that’s the day that they settled on.’

Nëbëng enir këmem ba-n-mo ba-n-ul
 day that.one 1PL.EXCL 1NONSG.EXCL:IRR-PL-come 1NONSG.EXCL:IRR-PL-buy

tes ejëkh-kem.
 saltwater SOURCE-2PL

‘(They would say) “On that day we will come and buy saltwater from you”.’

Këmem më-n-vin më-n-sip tes
 1PL.EXCL 1NONSG.EXCL:REAL-PL-go 1NONSG.EXCL:REAL-PL-scoop.up saltwater

elo.

on.coast

‘We would go and scoop up saltwater on the coast.’

Më-n-takhe i-mo emakh.
 1NONSG.EXCL:REAL-PL-carry 3SG:REAL-come to.home

‘We would bring it home.’

Eren nēbēng ne-n i-n-mo.
 time day PURP-3SG 3REAL-PL-come
 ‘When it was time for it, they would come.’

I-n-mo i-n-luluakh en tin.
 3REAL-PL-come 3REAL-PL-fire.shot INST rifle
 ‘When they came, they would fire shots with rifles.’

I-n-rēng tin i-jēvot kēmēm mē-n-vwēr,
 3REAL-PL-hear rifle 3SG:REAL-fire 1PL.EXCL 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-say

“*Ai, i-tē-n-mo enir*”.
 ah 3REAL-COMPL-PL-come that.one
 ‘When they heard the rifles fire, we would say, “Ah! There they have come”.’

Mē-n-vin mē-n-tērakh-ēr nit i-n-ul
 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-go 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-wait.for-3PL place 3REAL-PL-buy

tes e.
 saltwater LOC
 ‘We would go and wait for them where they used to buy the saltwater.’

Nit i-n-ul tes e nēkhse-n i-ve e Jarabu.
 place 3REAL-PL-buy saltwater LOC name-3SG 3SG:REAL-COPLOC Jarabu
 ‘The place where they bought the saltwater was Jarabu.’

Eren i-n-ul tes i-n-lep kake i-n-tēn en
 time 3REAL-PL-buy saltwater 3REAL-PL-bring yam 3REAL-PL-give GOAL

naakēd.
 1PL.INCL
 ‘When they bought the saltwater, they brought yams and gave them to us.’

Naakēd dē-n-to tes en-ēr.
 1PL.INCL 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-present saltwater GOAL-3PL
 ‘We would present the saltwater to them.’

Er i-n-ling i-n-vin emakh esar.
 3PL 3REAL-PL-walk 3REAL-PL-go to.home POSS:3PL
 ‘They walked away to their homes.’

Naakēd tu dē-n-vin erenge nēmakh se naakēd.
 1PL.INCL too 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-go GOAL house POSS 1PL.INCL
 ‘We also went to our houses.’

Te en-vwēr be-tinge i-mos enir.
 ? 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-talk.about 3SG:REAL-finish that.one
 ‘What I wanted to talk about finishes there.’

4.5 Murder over a debt

This story was recorded on 13 August 2004 in Tautu village by Harry Rambe. It tells of a renowned incident in the early colonial era of Malakula in which some Tirakh people

murdered a number of Europeans at Norsup. They were eventually captured and sent away to Vila, never to return to Malakula.

These events are documented historically and reported in O'Reilly (1957:27–28) as having taken place in 1916. A man called Bridges, his Ni-Vanuatu wife and their four children were all reported as having been hacked to death in a dispute with people from Tirakh over a debt. Although this account indicates that Bridges' son was captured alive and later taken to the bush to be killed and eaten, the historical record indicates that it was in fact the son of Corlette, an associate of Bridges, and not Bridges' own son, who was killed and eaten.

Kënëk Harry Rambe.

1SG Harry Rambe

'I am Harry Rambe.'

En-vwër be-vwiri mwili ipërvī dui e Tirakh
1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell again 3SG:REAL-how man LOC Tirakh

i-n-mo dë-n-khëj Misti Presis i-liek e Lalep.
3REAL-PL-come ES-PL-kill Mr Bridges 3SG:REAL-live LOC Lalep

'I want to tell again how the Tirakh people came and killed Mr Bridges who was living at Lalep.'

I-n-kho mëtü dë-n-mo.

3REAL-PL-tie.up copra ES-PL-come

'They tied up copra (threaded onto lengths of rope) and came.'

I-n-vwër ipa-n-ul stik tabak ejëkh Misti Presis.

3REAL-PL-want 3NONGS:IRR-PL-buy stick tobacco SOURCE Mr Bridges

'They wanted to buy tobacco stick from Mr Bridges.'

Misti Presis ul mëtü esar i-set.

Mr Bridges 3SG:REAL:pay.for copra POSS:3PL 3SG:REAL-bad

'Mr Bridges did not pay good money for their copra.'

I-n-vwër ipa-n-khëj en.

3REAL-PL-want 3NONGS:IRR-PL-kill 3SG

'They wanted to kill him.'

I-n-khëj Misti Presis duon mesis esen i-r-mes.

3REAL-PL-kill Mr Bridges ACC wife POSS:3SG 3REAL-DL-die

'They killed Mr Bridges and his wife dead.'

I-n-sëlikh netë-n dui dë-n-jovo nuo dë-n-vin eies.

3REAL-PL-carry.on.shoulders child-3SG male ES-PL-go.along river ES-PL-go up

'They carried his son on their shoulders away up along the river.'

Dë-n-vin-vin eies jere dë-n-khëj bëni netë-n-ar.

ES-PL-REDUP-go up then ES-PL-kill dead child-3SG-DEM

'And they went up and up and then killed that child of his.'

Dë-n-sëngen elel nib en i-n-udi.

ES-PL-put.into inside bamboo and 3REAL-PL-eat

'And they put him inside the bamboo (and baked him) and ate him.'

I-n-udi jere i-n-vwër ipa-n-mo mwili
 3REAL-PL-eat then 3REAL-PL-want 3NONGS:IRR-PL-come back

ipa-n-ul stik tabak e Nebënwo mwili.
 3NONGS:IRR-PL-buy stick tobacco LOC Norsup again
 ‘When they had eaten him they wanted to come back to buy tobacco stick at Norsup again.’

I-n-mo en Kaya i-lis-ër.
 3REAL-PL-come and Caillard 3SG:REAL-see-3PL
 ‘They came and Caillard saw them.’

I-lis-ër i-vwër, “Dui i-n-khëj Misti Presis-ar enir.”
 3SG:REAL-see-3PL 3SG:REAL-say man 3REAL-PL-kill Mr Bridges-DEM that.one
 ‘When he saw them, he said, “Those are the men who killed Mr Bridges”.’

Pa-n-tikh-ër.
 1NONGS.INCL:IRR-PL-pull-3PL
 ‘Let’s pull them (and hold onto them).’

I-n-use jëjën-ër.
 3REAL-PL-hold tight-3PL
 ‘They grabbed hold of them.’

I-n-use rivwi lëma-r.
 3REAL-PL-hold all arm-3PL
 ‘They held all of their arms.’

I-n-tev-ër i-n-vin elelvenu stoa gi enivin edeb.
 3REAL-PL-push-3PL 3REAL-PL-go inside store DEM underneath on.ground
 ‘They pushed them inside that store underneath on the ground.’³

I-n-metër d-ivin d-ivin d-ivin nit i-ren wosip
 3REAL-PL-sleep ES-go ES-go ES-go place 3SG:REAL-be-daylight warship

isig i-mo.
 one 3SG:REAL-come
 ‘They slept until it was daylight and a warship came.’

I-takhe-r dë-n-vin e Vila.
 3SG:REAL-take-3PL ES-PL-go GOAL Vila
 ‘It took them away to Vila.’

I-n-mes e Vila.
 3REAL-PL-die LOC Vila
 ‘They died in Vila.’

Vengesien esek ogi enir.
 story POSS:1SG only that.one
 ‘That is just my story.’

³ The building in which these men were incarcerated is still standing at Norsup, and still functions as a store. The main store is built over a ground-level warehouse and is reached by climbing one of two sets of concrete steps. The door to the warehouse is found beneath these steps.

En-vwër be-vwiri këpa-n-rëng ipërvi Tirakh er
 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell 2NONGS:IRR-PL-hear 3SG:REAL-how Tirakh PL

i-n-ve dui set.
 3REAL-PL-COP person bad

‘I just wanted to tell it for you all to hear how the people of Tirakh used to be bad people.’

I-n-ututakh dui ikhos.
 3REAL-PL-be.bad.to person very.much

‘They were very bad to people.’

Vengesien esek i-mos etër.
 story POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-finish there

‘My story finishes there.’

4.6 Becoming refugees from the Tirakh people

Harry Rambe’s story, recorded in Tautu village on 13 August 2004, tells of the initial incident which led to a battle with the Tirakh people, which resulted in the Tape people escaping from their neighbours to the present-day village of Tautu.

Kënëk Harry Rambe.

1SG Harry Rambe

‘I am Harry Rambe.’

En-vwër be-vwiri mwili ipërvi më-n-riu
 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell again 3SG:REAL:how 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-escape

dë-n-mo erenge skul.

ES-PL-come GOAL church

‘I want to tell again how we escaped and came to the church.’

Ivsimëk Tirakh i-n-mo erenge venu ese këmem e Tape.
 one.day Tirakh 3REAL-PL-come GOAL village POSS 1PL.EXCL LOC Tape

‘One day, the Tirakh people came to our village of Tape.’

I-n-liek d-ivin d-ivin d-ivin dui tërep ejëkhë-d isig
 3REAL-PL-stay ES-go ES-go ES-go man old LOC-1PL.INCL one

i-ve mwëliun.

3SG:REAL-COP chief

‘They stayed on and on and one old man at our place was a chief.’

I-vwiri en-ër isig i-vwër, “Lipakh iis-ëk-ar
 3SG:REAL-say GOAL-3PL one 3SG:REAL-say dog 3SG:REAL:bite-1SG-DEM

enir”.

that.one

‘He said to one of them, “That dog bit me”.’

Kënëk povër lipakh esek ipo-yek i-d-is en.
 1SG if dog POSS:1SG 3SG:IRR-have 3SG:REAL-CONT-bite 3SG
 ‘If I had a dog, it would still bite him (back).’

I-vwiri ured en, etet esek Harry Rambe i-rëng.
 3SG:REAL-say like 3SG father POSS:1SG Harry Rambe 3SG:REAL-hear
 ‘When he said that, my father Harry Rambe heard it.’

Ivin dë-luo dui nen.
 3SG:REAL:go ES-shoot man DEM
 ‘He went and shot that man.’

I-luo Tirakh nen i-mes i-metër.
 3SG:REAL-shoot Tirakh DEM 3SG:REAL-die 3SG:REAL-sleep
 ‘He shot that Tirakh man stone dead.’

I-n-vwiri dë-n-vwër, “O, kë-luo dui-ër.”
 3REAL-PL-say ES-PL-say oh 2SG:REAL-shoot man-DEM
 ‘They (the other Tape people) said, “Oh, you have shot that man”.’

Tirakh i-kë-n-tëkhes-öd.
 Tirakh 3REAL-NEC-PL-chase.away-1PL.INCL
 ‘The Tirakh people will surely chase us away.’

I-ske-përe Tirakh i-n-mo.
 3SG:REAL-NEG-long Tirakh 3REAL-PL-come
 ‘Before long, the Tirakh people came.’

I-n-vëtir erenge nëkhës e Pwitarvere dë-n-luluakh i-mo
 3REAL-PL-stand LOC hill LOC Pwitarvere ES-PL-fire.shot 3SG:REAL-come
e venu ese këmem e Tape.
 GOAL village POSS 1PL.EXCL LOC Tape
 ‘They stood on Pwitarvere hill and fired shots into our village of Tape.’

I-n-vwër, “Këpa-n-mën tes!”
 3:REAL-PL-say 2NONSG:IRR-PL-drink saltwater
 ‘They said, “You will all drink saltwater”.’

Jerete i-n-melet dë-n-vin.
 then 3REAL-PL-return ES-PL-go
 ‘Then they went back.’

Maren ne-n te i-n-mo i-n-luluakh.
 tomorrow PURP-3SG ? 3REAL-PL-come 3REAL-PL-fire.shot
 ‘The next day they came (back) and fired shots.’

“Këpa-n-mën tes!”
 2NONSG:IRR-PL-drink saltwater
 ‘(They said), “You will all drink saltwater!”.’

I-n-vwiri i-n-vwër iar meteveren ne-n.
 3REAL-PL-say 3REAL-PL-say 3SG:REAL:reach morning PURP-3SG
 ‘They said it until the morning.’

Këmem rivwi më-n-riu *dë-n-mo erenge skol.*
 1PL.EXCL all 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-escape ES-PL-come GOAL church
 ‘We all escaped to the church.’

Gir ogi en-vwër be-vwiri en kem këpa-n-rëngdo.
 that.one only 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell GOAL 2PL 2NONGS:IRR-PL-know
 ‘That is all that I want to tell you all so that you will know it.’

Vengesien esek i-mos eji.
 story POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-finish here
 ‘My story finishes here.’

4.7 Escaping to Tautu

This story was told by Harry Rambe of Tautu village on 4 December 2000. It tells briefly about the original migrations of people from Tape in the 1920s to escape from the depredations of the Big Nambas and the Tirakh people and of their escape to Tautu. It also expresses his hope that the ancestral Tape language will not be lost forever.

Kënëk Harry Rambe.
 1SG Harry Rambe
 ‘I am Harry Rambe.’

En-vwiri pij eduen kem.
 1SG:REAL-speak good ACC 2PL
 ‘I am explaining with you all.’

Naakëd rivwi dui e Tape.
 1PL.INCL all person LOC Tape
 ‘We are all Tape people.’

Këpa-n-rëng-k mwili en-titing.
 2NONGS:IRR-PL-hear-1SG again 1SG:REAL-speak
 ‘You will all hear me speaking again.’

En-vwër be-vwiri en kem ipërv
 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell GOAL 2PL 3SG:REAL:how

dë-n-riu e venu esed
 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-escape SOURCE village POSS:1PL.INCL

dë-n-mo elo erenge skol.
 1NONGS:REAL-PL-come to.coast GOAL church
 ‘I want to tell you all how we escaped from our village and came to the church on the coast.’

Dë-n-lënglëng venu esed e Tape dë-n-mo
 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-leave village POSS:1PL.INCL LOC Tape ES-PL-come

e Vëti.
 GOAL Vëti
 ‘We left our village of Tape and came to Vëti.’

Dë-n-riu e Vëti dë-n-mo e Tilip.
 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-escape SOURCE Vëti ES-PL-come GOAL Tilip
 ‘We escaped from Vëti and came to Tilip.’

Dë-n-mo e Tilip dë-n-riu dë-n-mo e Olsup.
 1NONGS.INCL-PL-come SOURCE Tilip ES-PL-escape ES-PL-come GOAL Olsup
 ‘We came to Tilip and escaped to Olsup.’

Dë-n-mo Olsup dë-n-riu mwili erenge skul.
 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-come Olsup ES-PL-escape again GOAL church
 ‘We came to Olsup and escaped again to the church.’

Dë-n-iar erenge skul elo erenge 1921.
 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-arrive LOC church on.coast LOC 1921
 ‘We arrived at the church on the coast in 1921.’

Sëkho gi dë-n-mo erenge skul enir.
 year REL 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-come GOAL church that.one
 ‘That was the year that we came to the church.’

Vengesien esek ogi enir.
 story POSS:1SG only that.one
 ‘That is just my story.’

En-vwër be-vwiri en kem këpa-n-rëngdo ipërvî
 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell GOAL 2PL 2NONGS:IRR-PL-know 3SG:REAL:how

dë-n-riu e venu esed
 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-escape SOURCE village POSS:1PL.INCL

dë-n-mo elo.
 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-come to.coast
 ‘I wanted to tell you all so you would know how we escaped from our village and came to the coast.’

Netite esed itar i-ska-n-rëngdo vengesien
 child POSS:1PL.INCL many 3NONGS:REAL-NEG-PL-know language

esed mili.
 POSS:1PL.INCL again
 ‘Many of our children no longer know our own language.’

Vengesien esed ipo-sëskha.
 language POSS:1PL.INCL 3SG:IRR-disappear
 ‘Our language is going to disappear.’

En-vwiri en naakëd rivwi e Tape e Vëti e
 1SG:REAL-tell GOAL 1PL.INCL all SOURCE Tape SOURCE Vëti SOURCE

Meledeb këpa-n-rëng vengesien esek.
 Meledeb 2NONGS:IRR-PL-know story POSS:1SG
 ‘I am telling all of us from Tape, from Vëti and from Meledeb so you will all know my story.’

Këpa-n-vwiri en net kem ipa-n-rëngdo vengesien
 2NONGSG:IRR-PL-tell GOAL child 2PL 3NONGSG:IRR-PL-know language

esed i-mo d-iar enisi.
 POSS:1PL.INCL 3SG:REAL-come ES-reach now

‘You will all tell your children so they will know our language up until now.’

Vengesien esek ogi enir en-vwër be-vwiri en kem
 story POSS:1SG only that.one 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell GOAL 2PL

këpa-n-rëngdo.
 2NONGSG:IRR-PL-know

‘That is just my story that I wanted to tell you all so you would know it.’

Vengesien esek i-mos eji.
 story POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-conclude here

‘My story concludes here.’

4.8 The decline of the Tape language

This story, told by Elder Lui Harry on 17 October 2002 in Tautu village, tells of the events in the 1960s which brought about the final loss of the Tape language and the wholesale shift to the Uripiv variety of the Northeast Malakula language in Tautu village.

En-vwër be-vwiri ipërvî mwëliun Avia i-vwër
 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell 3SG:REAL:how chief Avia 3SG:REAL-say

bë-ska-n-vësvës-en netite ese këmem vengesien ese
 1NONGSG.EXCL:IRR-NEG-PL-teach-TR child POSS 1PL.EXCL language POSS

këmem.
 1PL.EXCL

‘I want to tell how chief Avia said that we should not teach our children our language.’

Eren më-n-vwër ba-n-jej waia ese
 time 1NONGSG.EXCL:REAL-PL-intend 1NONGSG.EXCL:IRR-PL-cut fence POSS

khaavot e Jinarur lene më-n-vin
 European LOC Jinarur over.there 1NONGSG.EXCL:REAL-PL-go

më-n-vëtir erenge waia d-ivin d-ivin iar
 1NONGSG.EXCL:REAL-PL-stand LOC fence ES-go ES-go 3SG:REAL:reach

esakh lene.
 up over.there

‘When we were going to cut the European’s fence⁴ at Jinarur over there, we went and stood along the fence as far as up there.’

⁴ This was a fence which a European-owned plantation had moved and which led to a major land dispute that went before the courts in Port Vila and also led to this instance of protest (Van Trease 1987:174–179).

Më-n-jul *ivin* *esoweies* *më-n-vwër,*
 1NONGSG:EXCL:REAL-PL-shout 3SG:REAL:go above 1NONGSG:EXCL:REAL-PL-say

“Oi!”.

oi

‘We shouted up there, “Oi!”.’

Uren levër dui rivwi i-n-jej waia.
 like that person all 3REAL-PL-cut fence

‘At that (signal), everybody cut the fence.’

Më-n-jej *d-ivin d-ivin iar* *nit i-mos*
 1NONGSG:EXCL:REAL-PL-cut ES-go ES-go 3SG:REAL:reach place 3SG:REAL-finish

en më-n-melet i-mo emakh.
 and 1NONGSG:EXCL:REAL-PL-return 3SG:REAL-come home

‘We cut the fence as far as the place where it ended and we came back home.’

Eren më-n-melet i-mo emakh George Kalkoa
 time 1NONGSG:EXCL:REAL-PL-return 3SG:REAL-come home George Kalkoa

i-vwër polis esen ipa-n-mo.
 3SG:REAL-say policeman POSS:3SG 3NONGSG:REAL-PL-come

‘When we came back home, George Kalkoa⁵ said his policemen should come.’

I-vwiri en dui Rano gi, “En-vwër Samuel en
 3SG:REAL-tell GOAL man Rano DEM 1SG:REAL-want Samuel 3SG

i-mo”.

3SG:REAL-come

‘He said to that man from Rano, “I want Samuel⁶ to come”.’

I-vwër ipo-lep vengesien ese këmem.
 3SG:REAL-say 3SG:IRR-take word POSS 1PL.EXCL

‘He said he should take (down) our words (to find out who the ringleaders were).’

Eren levër më-ska-n-titing duen en.
 time that 1NONGSG:EXCL:REAL-NEG-PL-speak ACC 3SG

‘At that time, we did not speak with him.’

I-mo më-n-liek erenge pële bwëlil erenge
 3SG:REAL-come 1NONGSG:EXCL:REAL-PL-stay LOC tree sea.almond LOC

taningrum levër.
 dining.hall that

‘When he came, we were at the sea almond tree at that dining hall.’

⁵ George Kalkoa, later to be known as Ati George Sokomanu, became the first president of the Republic of Vanuatu in 1980. At the time of the events described in this story, he was working with the British police force.

⁶ The intention here was to call over a policeman from one of the islands close to Tautu village because it was assumed that everybody in the area could understand each other. George Kalkoa did not realise at the time that Tape was a very different language.

I-n-wis dui rivwi i-n-mo.
 3REAL-PL-call person all 3REAL-PL-come
 ‘They called everybody over.’

I-n-mo i-n-liek.
 3REAL-PL-come 3REAL-PL-sit
 ‘They came and sat down.’

I-n-momon en këmem rivwi, “Es i-vwër këpa-n-jej
 3REAL-PL-ask GOAL 1PL.EXCL all who 3SG:REAL-say 2NONGS:REAL-PL-cut
waia ese khaavot?”
 fence POSS European
 ‘They asked all of us, “Who said you should cut the European’s fence?”.’

Më-n-vwër, “Këmem rivwi më-n-jej waia.”
 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-say 1PL.EXCL all 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-cut fence
 ‘We said, “We all cut the fence”.’

Dui gi iskhe i-vwiri en këmem gi ba-n-jej.
 person DEM no 3SG:REAL-tell GOAL 1PL.EXCL SUB 1NONGS.EXCL:IRR-PL-cut
 ‘Nobody told us to cut it.’

Më-n-vwër, “Povër bë-ska-n-jej waia levër,
 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-say if 1NONGS.EXCL:IRR-NEG-PL-cut fence that
ba-n-mekar evi?”
 1NONGS.EXCL:IRR-PL-make.gardens where
 ‘We said, “If we didn’t cut the fence, where would we make (our) gardens?”.’

Ba-n-lo nëkhanien ese këmem evi?
 1NONGS.EXCL:IRR-PL-plant food POSS 1PL.EXCL where
 ‘Where would we plant our food?’

Eren levër i-ve te më-n-vin
 time that 3SG:REAL-make SUB 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-go
më-n-jej waia.
 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-cut fence
 ‘At that time, it’s what made us go and cut the fence.’

Eren më-n-jej rivwi George Kalkoa i-mo
 time 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-cut all George Kalkoa 3SG:REAL-come

i-vwiri en Samuel, dui Rano levër, i-mo i-vëtir.
 3SG:REAL-tell GOAL Samuel man Rano that 3SG:REAL-come 3SG:REAL-stand
 ‘When we had cut the fence, George Kalkoa came and told Samuel, that man from Rano, to come and stand up.’

I-vëtir i-vwër ipo-rëng povër ba-n-tinge
 3SG:REAL-stand 3SG:REAL-intend 3SG:IRR-hear if 1NONGS.EXCL:IRR-PL-talk.about

tegi erenge vengesien gi dë-n-vengesen lesi.
 something LOC language REL 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-speak here
 ‘He stood up to hear if we would talk about something in the language that we speak here.’

Ip-ul luo vengesien gi më-n-titing-en levër.
 3SG:IRR-write out words REL 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-talk-TR that
 ‘(He intended to) write down those words that we said.’

Eren më-n-titing-en vengesien ese këmem e Tape
 time 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-talk-TR language POSS 1PL.EXCL LOC Tape

i-ske-rëngdo ip-ul tegi mili erenge nol esen.
 3SG:REAL-NEG-able 3SG:IRR-write something again LOC book POSS:3SG
 ‘When we spoke our Tape language, he couldn’t write anything else in his book.’

I-vwiri en George Kalkoa i-vwër, “O, en-rëng
 3SG:REAL-say GOAL George Kalkoa 3SG:REAL-say oh 1SG:REAL-hear

i-n-titing-en vengesien gi e-ske-rëngdo.”
 3REAL-PL-talk-TR language REL 1SG:REAL-NEG-understand
 ‘He said to George Kalkoa, “Oh, I heard them speaking a language that I do not understand”.’

Eren levër më-n-vwër ba-n-vësvës-en
 time that 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-intend 1NONGS.EXCL:IRR-PL-teach-TR

vengesien ese këmem levër en netite se këmem er.
 language POSS 1PL.EXCL that GOAL child POSS 1PL.EXCL PL
 ‘At that time, we intended to teach that language of ours to our children.’

Mwëliun Avia i-vwër bë-ska-n-vësvës-en en
 chief Avia 3SG:REAL-say 1NONGS.EXCL:IRR-NEG-PL-teach-TR GOAL

netite esed.
 child POSS:1PL.INCL

‘Chief Avia said we should not teach it to our children.’

Povër tëvet gi ip-ivin ipo-vëtir ejëkhë-n dui i-kë-vwiri
 if woman REL 3SG:IRR-go 3SG:IRR-stand ACC-3SG man 3SG:REAL-NEG-tell

en elakh esen.
 GOAL husband POSS:3SG

‘(He said) if a woman who goes and stands with a man (i.e. marries a man), she will tell it to her husband.’

Bë-ska-n-rëngdo ba-n-tosusuen tegi mwili.
 1NONGS.EXCL:IRR-NEG-PL-able 1NONGS.EXCL:IRR-PL-keep.secret something again
 ‘We would not be able to keep anything secret any more.’

I-pij en bë-ska-n-vësvës-en en netite ese
 3SG:REAL-good SUB 1NONGS.EXCL:IRR-NEG-PL-teach-TR GOAL child POSS

këmem gi i-n-mo.
 1PL.EXCL REL 3NONGS:REAL-PL-come
 ‘(He said) it is good for us not to teach it to our children who come (in the future).’

Vengesien gi en-vwër be-vwiri enir ogi.
 story REL 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell that.one only
 ‘That is just the story that I want to tell.’

4.9 The last battle with the Tirakh people

Ephraim Joshua told this story in Tautu village on 13 August 2004. Relations between the Tape and the Tirakh people had been troubled for some decades, as detailed in some of the texts presented above. Even though the two groups of people eventually both relocated to the same area along the coast, relations continued to be bad. This story tells of the last battle between the Tape and the Tirakh people in Tautu village in 1947, after which the Tirakh people moved to their present-day location of Mae.

Kënëk en-vwër be-tinge vengesien mili isimëk.
 1SG 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell story again one
 ‘I want to tell another story.’

Eren Tirakh i-n-tëkhes këmem më-n-mo
 time Tirakh 3REAL-PL-chase.away 1PL.EXCL 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-come
më-n-liek e Tautu erenge skul.
 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-stay LOC Tautu LOC church
 ‘When the Tirakh people chased us away, we came and stayed at Tautu with the church.’

Më-n-liek d-ivin d-ivin iar sëkho ingelves
 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-live ES-go ES-go 3SG:REAL:reach year 40

dëmon jevet.
 + 9
 ‘We lived (here) until the year ’49.’

Tut gi i-mo nëkhse-n i-ve Maku Barabar
 Big.Nambas REL 3SG:REAL-come name-3SG 3SG:REAL-COP Maku Barabar

duon selë-n mili.
 ACC companion-3SG again
 ‘A Big Nambas man, whose name was Maku Barabar, came with another companion.’

I-r-mo i-r-luluakh eji.
 3REAL-DL-come 3REAL-DL-fire.shots here
 ‘The two of them came firing shots here.’

I-r-luo ase këmemru Jeffrey.
 3REAL-DL-shoot maternal.uncle 1DL.EXCL Jeffrey
 ‘They shot the maternal uncle of Jeffrey and me.’

Eren en-lev-ër dui Tirakh er i-dëdëng-en këmem.
 time 1SG:REAL-go.for-3PL person Tirakh PL 3REAL-afraid-TR 1PL.EXCL
 ‘When I went for the people of Tirakh, they were afraid of us.’

I-n-riu i-n-vin e Mai
 3REAL-PL-escape 3REAL-PL-go GOAL Mae
 ‘They escaped to Mae.’

I-n-liek d-iar mosi.
 3REAL-PL-stay ES-reach today
 ‘They have lived there until today.’

Gir ogi en-vwër be-tinge këpa-n-rëngdo.
 that.one only 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-talk.about 2NONSG:IRR-PL-know
 ‘That is all I want to talk about for you all to know.’

4.10 The rock of the devil

This is a short story told by Ephraim Joshua on 13 August 2004 in Tautu village about a time when he and some of his friends were young and they were walking in the bush. They came across a cave in which there were many bats, but it was only when they got back home that they discovered this was a place of devils.

Kënëk en-vwër be-tinge mili vengesien isimëk mili.
 1SG 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell again story one more
 ‘I want to tell one more story again.’

Nëvet ese këmem isig nëkhse-n i-ve Nëvet Ese Tëmes.
 rock POSS 1PL.EXCL one name-3SG 3SG:REAL-COP rock POSS devil
 ‘There is a rock of ours whose name is the Rock⁷ of the Devil.’

I-tëkh erenge nuo se këmem gi nëkhse-n Luosinwo.
 3SG:REAL-be.located LOC river POSS 1PL.EXCL REL name-3SG Lowisinwei⁸
 ‘It is located on our river whose name is Lowisinwei.’

I-tëkh ivin eies bër tëvëlkhas ne-n nuo
 3SG:REAL-be.located 3SG:REAL:go up yet across PART-3SG river

ivin e Tut ie.
 3SG:REAL:go GOAL Big.Nambas ?
 ‘It is located further up across the river towards the Big Nambas.’

Kënëk duon Kipion më-r-vin dë-r-vëtir erenge-n.
 1SG ACC Kipion 1NONSG.EXCL:REAL-DL-go ES-DL-stand LOC-3SG
 ‘Kipion and I went and stood in it (i.e. the cave).’

⁷ Although this place is named as a rock, the primary feature of the site is, in fact, a cave.

⁸ The Luosinwo River of the Tape people is marked on present-day maps as Lowisinwei, which is how it is more widely known.

5 *Phonology*

Because substantial reference to phonetic detail is called for in this chapter, forms are presented here in widely used symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet. Elsewhere in this volume, however, forms are presented in a practical orthography which follows principles which are by and large consistent with practices adopted for neighbouring languages (§1.6).

5.1 Segmental contrasts

Those aspects of the segmental phonology of Tape which can be stated with confidence are presented below. There are, however, a number of issues which remain somewhat uncertain at this stage, with the nature of these uncertainties presented in the following discussion.

5.1.1 Vowels

Table 1: Vowel contrasts

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

There are five uncontestedly contrasting peripheral short vowels in Tape, /i, e, a, o, u/, as well as a highly salient schwa /ə/, as set out in Table 1. However, there is some room for debate as to the precise underlying status of schwa in many words. There is also a possible contrast involving vowel length, though if this feature does prove to be phonemically contrastive, it appears to be of somewhat limited distribution, with only certain vowels exhibiting distinct long and short forms, and then with long vowels carrying fairly low functional load.

5.1.1.1 *Peripheral short vowels*

The vowel inventory for Tape includes five peripheral short vowels, as set out in Table 1. The following pairs are presented to demonstrate evidence of contrast between peripheral vowels which are adjacent to each other in the vowel area:

/i/ and /e/	/ičičər/	‘(s)he swept’
	/ičečər/	‘(s)he slipped’
	/čənin/	‘his/her intestines’
	/čənen/	‘because of it’
	/məri/	‘coconut leaf mat’
	/mərə/	‘eel’
/e/ and /a/	/nelo/	‘spider’
	/nalomoč/	‘green tree lizard’
	/niet/	‘sago’
	/niar/	‘casuarina’
	/ipəl/	‘(s)he choked’
/a/ and /o/	/ipar/	‘(s)he is blind’
	/maren/	‘tomorrow’
	/mornen/	‘his/her left hand’
	/iɣayas/	‘it is cold’
/o/ and /u/	/iyos/	‘too much’
	/ilo/	‘(s)he planted’
	/ilu/	‘(s)he fired shots’
	/nio/	‘armband’
	/niu/	‘dew’

Pairs can also be presented in support of the contrastive status of schwa vis-à-vis each of these peripheral vowels, though the status of schwa is reserved for separate discussion in §5.1.1.3.

The peripheral vowels for the most part have phonetic realisations as suggested by their traditional IPA values with no major allophonic variation. The only exception is the high front vowel /i/, which has a distinctly centralised realisation before the velar fricative /ɣ/. Thus:

/liɣanan/	[liɣanan]	‘his/her face’
/pəliliɣ/	[pəlilix]	‘wild kava’
/tiɣ/	[tix]	‘grave’

When /i/ appears word-initially before the velar fricative /ɣ/, this phonetically centralised vowel is often also preceded by a palatal glide. Thus:

/iɣəč/	[iɣəts ~ jɣəts]	‘(s)he killed it’
/iɣan/	[iɣan ~ jɣan]	‘(s)he ate’

With sequences of /u/ followed by another vowel, there is an optional transitional rounded glide between the two vowels:

/dui/	[ⁿ dui ~ ⁿ duwi]	‘man’
/nuo/	[nuo ~ nuwo]	‘water’
/duen/	[ⁿ duen ~ ⁿ duwen]	‘with’

It should also be noted that there is evidence that sequences of word-medial /ue/ vary freely with /uo/, as illustrated by variants such as the following:

/duen/	[ⁿ duen ~ ⁿ duon]	‘with’
/na:bues/	[na: ^m bues ~ na: ^m buos]	‘New Guinea rosewood’

However, sequences that are represented underlyingly as /uo/ remain invariant. Thus:

/buok/	[^m buok]	‘water taro’
/nuot/	[nuot]	‘tendon’

5.1.1.2 Vowel length

In other languages of central and northern Malakula, contrastive vowel length is either completely absent, or at best only marginal. For example, there is no contrastive vowel length at all in V’ënen Taut (Fox 1979:1–5). Long vowels, while they do contrast in Northeast Malakula (McKerras 2006) and Naman (Crowley 2006c), are of low functional load in both languages. Moreover, in Naman, only the non-mid vowels /i/, /u/ and /a/ have contrastive long equivalents, with the mid vowels /e/, /ə/ and /o/ being invariably short.

In my Tape corpus, there is some evidence of phonetically long vowels alongside the corresponding short equivalents. The most commonly attested long vowel is the low vowel [a:], though there is also evidence in some words for long [i:], as well as marginal evidence for [o:] and [e:]. There are no attested instances of words containing the long vowels [u:] or [ə:].¹

However, it does appear that the difference between [a] and [a:] may well be phonemically contrastive. If so, this contrast seems to be of restricted distribution, being limited to stressed syllables (§5.2) when the preceding consonant is /n/, /l/ or /ɣ/. That is, there is no evidence for contrast in unstressed syllables; nor is there any evidence of contrast in stressed syllables with preceding consonants other than /n/, /l/ and /ɣ/. My corpus contains the following possible minimal pair:²

/nari-/	[ⁿ nari-]	‘handle of’
/na:ri-/	[ⁿ na:ri-]	‘root of’

¹ Where words have been attested with phonetically lengthened vowels, I am not certain if these reflect normal Tape speech or if the process of recording with a microphone, as well as elicitation of words in isolation for transcription purposes, has perhaps interfered in some unnatural way with the pronunciations of some words. Final judgement on the phonemic status of vowel length will therefore need to wait until a sufficiently representative sample of more natural connected speech can be recorded and analysed.

² In a number of places in the draft version of this section, Crowley had footnotes reminding himself to check these possible length contrasts, and/or querying whether the contrast had been correctly recorded. It is clear that the question of a length contrast in Tape may not be resolved without further field research – JL

Examples of other forms attested with putative /a:/ in my corpus include the following

/na:ŋəs/	['na:ŋəs]	‘great hog plum’
/na:ret/	['na:ret]	‘green coconut’
/na:rəs/	['na:rəs]	‘victory leaf’
/na:kəm/	['na:kəm]	‘you (sg.)’
/na:kəd/	['na:kə ⁿ d]	‘we (pl. incl.)’
/na:viu/	['na:viu]	‘pandanus’
/na:bues/	['na: ^m bues]	‘New Guinea rosewood’
/na:kel/	['na:kel]	‘post’
/na:rəŋləmen/	['na:rəŋ'ləmen] ³	‘his/her finger’
/la:ŋ/	['la:ŋ]	‘fly (n.)’
/na:bu/	['na: ^m bu]	‘club’
/la:bət/	['la: ^m bət]	‘rat’
/ɣa:vot/	['xa:vot]	‘European’
/nəɣa:rət/	[nə'ɣa:rət]	‘stinging tree’

These examples can be contrasted with the following in which the vowel has been recorded in parallel environments invariably as phonetically short:

/taŋ/	['taŋ]	‘basket’
/sar/	['sar]	‘spear (n.)’
/par/	['par]	‘ <i>Calophyllum inophyllum</i> ’
/p̄arəŋlil/	['p̄arəŋ'lil] ⁴	‘thumb’
/kake/	['kake]	‘yam’
/bəŋale/	[^m bə'ŋale]	‘cicada’

In unstressed syllables, the low vowel is invariably phonetically short regardless of the preceding consonant, as in the following:

/iɣan/	['iɣan]	‘(s)he ate’
/niar/	['niar]	‘casuarina’
/lipax/	['lipax]	‘dog’
/nisax/	['nisax]	‘banana’
/pəptax/	['pəptax]	‘rubbish’
/naʋimar/	[na'ʋimar]	‘ <i>Chalcophaps indica</i> ’

In addition to the possible contrast between /a/ and /a:/, there is also a possible contrast between /i/ and /i:/, illustrated by the contrast between the following pair of words:

/nivəx/	['nivəx]	‘giant taro’
/ni:vəx/	['ni:vəx]	‘Malay apple’

Verb roots beginning with /i/ also lengthen the vowel with the addition of the third person singular realis prefix /i-/. Thus, /i-ič/ ‘(s)he cried’ is realised phonetically as [i:ts].

The existence of a contrastive long /e:/ is suggested by the following minimal pair:

³ This form appears to be stressed as a compound of /na:rəŋ-/ (which is not independently attested) and /ləmen/ ‘his/her hand’.

⁴ This form is a compound of /p̄arəŋ/ ‘finger’ and /lil/ ‘large’.

/den/	[ⁿ den]	‘his/her (edible thing)’
/de:n/	[ⁿ de:n]	‘his/her blood’

Some instances of /e:/ are derived when nouns ending in /e/ are followed by a cliticised item beginning with /e/. For instance, the pluraliser /er/ can be attached as a clitic to a preceding noun resulting in derivations such as the following:

/netite=er/ child-PL	[netite:r]	‘children’
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Also, the instrumental preposition /en/ can be cliticised, when it is stranded (§6.3.2.3.3), to a preceding verb, as in the following:

/be-čile=en/ 1SG:IRR-wash-INST	[^m betʃile:n]	‘I will wash (it) with (it)’
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Finally, while my corpus contains no minimal or subminimal pairs involving the vowels [o] and [o:], I have recorded phonetically long vowels in the forms [po:ləmen] ‘his/her elbow’ and [po:tilin] ‘his/her knee’. There are thus pairs such as the following, which also suggest the possibility of contrast:

/po:ləmen/	[po:ləmen]	‘his/her elbow’
/poŋeret/	[poŋeret]	‘tree fern’
/po:tilin/	[po:tilin]	‘his/her knee’
/potaydəlin/	[potay ⁿ dəlin]	‘his/her neck’

However, the forms containing long vowels here are both bimorphemic involving the independently attested elements /ləmen/ ‘his/her arm’ and /tilin/ ‘his/her leg’, whereas /poŋeret/ ‘tree fern’ and /potaydəlin/ ‘his/her neck’ are monomorphemic. This difference in morphological analysis may be responsible for the lengthening of the morpheme-final vowel here.

5.1.1.3 Schwa

Schwa is widely distributed as a phonemically contrastive vowel among languages which were spoken in the general neighbourhood of the traditional Tape area, e.g. Northeast Malakula (McKerras 2000), Larëvat (Crowley, field notes) and Naman (Crowley 2006c).⁵ However, this vowel is not universally present in the languages of the general area. Neve‘ei (Musgrave 2001:14–15), Avava (Crowley, fieldnotes) and Neverver (Julie Barbour, University of Waikato PhD student, pers. comm.), for example, show evidence for only the five peripheral vowels.

In Tape, however, a contrast involving a sixth central vowel, /ə/, is very well established, as indicated by the following pairs:

⁵ Note, however, that while neighbouring V‘ënen Taut is described as having a contrastive schwa (Fox 1979:1), there is no mid back rounded vowel /o/, so this language still has only a five-vowel system.

/i/ and /ə/	/içile/	‘(s)he washed it’
	/içəle/	‘(s)he combed it’
	/iliŋliŋ/	‘(s)he walked’
	/iləŋləŋ/	‘(s)he left it’
/e/ and /ə/	/ives/	‘four’
	/ivəs/	‘how many?’
	/isel/	‘it floated’
	/isəl/	‘(s)he went fishing by torchlight’
/a/ and /ə/	/ilay/	‘(s)he is married’
	/iləy/	‘(s)he tied it up’
	/nisaŋ/	‘banana’
	/nisəŋ/	‘kingfisher’
	/itəray/	‘(s)he waited’
	/itərəy/	‘(s)he hunted’
/o/ and /ə/	/içopay/	‘(s)he squatted’
	/çəpay/	‘earth oven’
	/noymə/	‘slitgong’
	/nəymə/	‘island teak’
/u/ and /ə/	/nuyrə/	‘Christmas’
	/nəysən/	‘his/her name’
	/isusur/	‘(s)he swore’
	/səsən/	‘her breast’

There are numerous instances in my corpus in which all vowels in a word are schwa, e.g. /mən/ ‘its smell’, /kəsən/ ‘his/her nose’, /təvələy/ ‘woman’, /mədəyəŋ/ ‘scar’. Moreover, schwa is a vowel of rather high frequency. Approximately 16.5% of all vowels in my lexical corpus are schwas, with schwa being the third most commonly encountered vowel of all, after /i/ and /e/, in that order. The vowels /u/, /a/ and /o/ are all substantially less common than schwa.

However, schwa also behaves in ways which set it apart somewhat from the five peripheral vowels. For one thing, it is the only vowel which never appears word-initially. It also appears to be the only vowel which never appears word-finally. Moreover, schwa is the only vowel which can not occur adjacent to another vowel within the same word; i.e. it is the only vowel in the language which must *always* be simultaneously preceded and followed by a consonant.

Another characteristic feature of schwa in Tape is that there is evidence in my corpus for the rampant alternation between schwa and zero in a wide variety of phonological environments. This kind of alternation is particularly common in unstressed initial syllables of roots, resulting in a wide range of root-initial consonant clusters alternating with sequences of /CəC-/. The most commonly encountered instances of variation result in clusters of an initial stop followed by a liquid, and occasionally some other continuant, as illustrated by the following:

/pələlay/	[pələlay ~ pləlay]	' <i>Zosterops flavifrons</i> '
/pəre/	[pəre ~ pre]	'long'
/təlet/	[təlet ~ tlet]	'sugar ant'
/təriu/	[təriu ~ triu]	'white-throated dove'
/təvet/	[təvet ~ tfet]	'woman'
/təmes/	[təmes ~ tmes]	'devil'
/kərisel/	[kərisel ~ krisel]	'garden'
/kəmem/	[kəmem ~ kmem]	'we (<i>pl. excl.</i>)'
/bələyəsən/	[^m bələyəsən ~ ^m bləyəsən]	'its shell'
/dəriŋ/	[ⁿ dəriŋ ~ ⁿ driŋ]	'mushroom'
/dəlin/	[ⁿ dəlin ~ ⁿ dlin]	'his/her voice'

However, alternations between schwa and zero after the first consonant of a word are not limited to such pairs of consonants, as clusters involving two different continuants are quite frequently attested in my corpus as well. For example:

/məre/	[məre ~ mre]	'eel'
/məri/	[məri ~ mri]	'coconut leaf mat'
/məraŋ/	[məraŋ ~ mraŋ]	'dry (leaf, wood)'
/məsit/	[məsit ~ msit]	'sick'
/nəvet/	[nəvet ~ nvet]	'stone'
/vəlonib/	[fəloni ^m b ~ floni ^m b]	'charcoal'

In fact, I have even encountered words in which the word-initial cluster of [pt-] arises by the same process. For example:

/pətin/	[pətin ~ ptin]	'his/her head'
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It should be noted that when a word contains an initial sequence of /CəC-/, the optional deletion of the schwa is accompanied by syllabification of the trill. For example:

/kərliu/	[kərliu ~ kɾliu]	'door'
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While this kind of alternation between schwa and zero is quite common when words are pronounced in isolation, it is much more frequent when a form of the shape /CəC-/ is morphologically attached to some kind of preceding material. The third person singular realis verbal prefix /i-/ is one form which is particularly frequently associated with this kind of alternation. Thus, from the root /məsit/ 'sick' we can derive the nominalised form /məsit-ien/ 'sickness, disease' and the inflected verb /i-məsit/ '(s)he is sick'. While /məsitien/ may appear as both [məsitien] and [msitien], the inflected verb is overwhelmingly likely to appear as [imsit], with [iməsit] only being produced in extremely careful speech. Other examples of the same kind of alternation with this verbal prefix include the following:

/i-rəŋdo/	[irəŋdo ~ irŋdo]	'(s)he knew'
/i-čəpon/	[itsəpon ~ itspon]	'(s)he counted'
/i-dəlim/	[i ⁿ dəlim ~ i ⁿ dlim]	'(s)he swallowed'
/i-vənay/	[ivənay ~ ivnay]	'(s)he stole'
/i-mədin/	[imə ⁿ din ~ im ⁿ din]	'it sank'
/i-məday/	[imə ⁿ dax ~ im ⁿ dax]	'it is raw'
/i-səya/	[isəya ~ isxa]	'there is none'

This process is also encountered when the spatial preposition /e/ (§6.3.2) is attached as a proclitic to the name of a place. For example:

/e=vəti/ [evəti ~ epti] ‘to Vėti’

In fact, forms do not even need to be attached within the same phonological word for the schwa deletion rule to be activated. When a vowel-final possessum precedes a possessor, even though the two represent different phonological words, schwa deletion is quite strongly favoured. For example:

/ʃu nəpəɣ/ [tʃu nəpax ~ tʃu npax] ‘turtle carapace’
carapace turtle

/ese kəmem/ [ese kəmem ~ ese kmem] ‘our (pl. excl.)’
POSS 1PL.EXCL

In addition to the widespread alternation in my corpus between word-initial phonetic consonant clusters and /CəC-/ sequences, there is a substantial collection of forms which have, at least at this stage of research, *only* been attested with initial clusters. Even though these forms have not been attested with a schwa following the initial consonant, they are nevertheless analysed phonemically as containing a schwa for the simplification that this achieves in the statement of the phonotactics of the language, where underlying word-initial consonant clusters are otherwise not permitted. Free forms of this type include the following:

/səkol/	[skol]	‘hibiscus’
/pəriŋ/	[priŋ]	‘comb (of rooster)’
/dərəp/	[ⁿ drap]	‘lesser yam’
/bəri/	[^m bri]	‘split’
/tərəp/	[trep]	‘old’
/səte/	[ste]	‘what’

We can also include in this set forms which are analysed as beginning with /ləC-/ where the deleted schwa is accompanied by syllabification of the initial lateral. Thus:

/ləčar/ [lʃar] ‘nits’

It is perhaps also worth pointing out that these proposed underlying schwas also appear to reflect historically prior vowels given that cognates of these forms in nearby languages contain vowels which are invariably present. Thus, Tape /səkol/ ‘hibiscus’ corresponds to Neve‘ei /ninsogoul/, while Tape /ləčar/ ‘nits’ corresponds to Neve‘ei /nilis/.

In addition to the loss of schwa in root-initial syllables, there is also evidence for the loss of schwa in root-final syllables. This happens only occasionally when words are pronounced in isolation, but it is somewhat more frequent when words appear in continuous speech, especially when a following word begins with a vowel. Thus, while /i-rəŋ/ ‘(s)he felt’ would normally be pronounced with the schwa in isolation, it is common for it to be lost in environments such as the following:

/i-rəŋ (> irŋ) i-po-ɣan/
3SG:REAL-feel 3SG-IRR-eat
‘(s)he felt like eating’

This loss of schwa in final syllables always appears to involve sequences of the liquids /r/ and /l/, as well as the velar fricative /ɣ/, followed by another consonant. In addition to the example just presented, we also find examples of occasional loss of schwa in forms such as the following:

/nəɣa:rət/	[nəɣa:rət ~ nəɣa:rt]	' <i>Dendrocnide</i> sp.'
/na:rəs/	[na:rəs ~ na:rs]	'victory leaf'
/nəɣəs/	[nəɣəs ~ nəɣs]	'hill'

One form has been attested *only* with a final cluster, though an intervening schwa is posited in the phonemic representation for the simplification that this achieves with respect to the phonotactics of the language since no other underlying word-final clusters are posited in the language. Thus:

/wiləs/	[wils]	'maggot'
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Schwa deletion in final syllables appears to be obligatory in some environments. In particular, there is a small number of disyllabic forms ending in sequences /-təl/ in which the schwa is obligatorily deleted and the final liquid is syllabified. Thus:

/itəl/	[itl]	'three'
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Obligatory deletion of schwa in final syllables is also encountered with directly suffixed noun roots (§6.1.2.2.2) ending in schwa where the preceding consonant is /r/, /l/ or /t/ and the form carries the third person singular possessive suffix /-n/, again with syllabification of the final consonant. We therefore find examples such as the following:

/nəɣəɣərə-n/	[nəɣəɣərŋ]	'his/her rib'
/netə-n/	[netŋ]	'his/her child'
/lelə-n/	[lelŋ]	'its interior'
/nilə-n/	[nilŋ]	'its feather, bark'

With directly possessed noun roots ending in /sə-/, there is alternation between deletion of the schwa with accompanying syllabification of the final nasal and retention of the schwa. Thus:

/reɣesə-n/	[reɣesən ~ reɣesŋ]	'its branch'
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Although schwa deletion is overwhelmingly encountered in initial syllables, and occasionally in final syllables, there is also a relatively small number of trisyllabic roots in which a medial syllable which contains schwa shows evidence of optional schwa deletion. For example:

/mədəɣən/	[mə ⁿ dəɣən ~ mə ⁿ dɣən]	'scar'
/tirɣəbəb/	[tirɣə ^m bə ^m b ~ tirɣ ^m bə ^m b]	'wild'
/ečəɣən/	[etsəɣən ~ etsɣən]	'to him/her'

In some cases, the deletion of word-medial schwa in forms of three or four syllables can result in word-medial surface clusters of three, and sometimes even four or five, consonants. For example:

/tərtərep/	[tərtərep ~ tərtrep]	'old (pl.)'
/p̄arəɣp̄ərə/	[p̄arəɣp̄ərə ~ p̄arɣp̄rə]	'middle finger'
/neskərkrit/	[neskərkrit ~ neskr̄krit]	' <i>Mimosa pudica</i> '

In the discussion above, I indicated that I treated the relatively small number of recorded initial and final clusters as containing an underlying schwa between the two consonants, but there are rather more problems associated with a similar treatment for medial clusters. While some medial clusters clearly do derive from deleted schwas, as just demonstrated, there are very many medial clusters in Tape which are only ever attested as clusters, with no suggestion that schwas may optionally intervene. For instance, a form that has been invariably recorded as [ˈdələn] ‘his/her ear’ could hardly be treated phonemically as /dələn/ without forcing the parallel insertion of schwas into large numbers of other kinds of intervocalic clusters as well (§5.3).

The precise conditions under which schwa is available for deletion and when it is invariably pronounced as such in Tape are somewhat difficult to establish.⁶ It is possible that if I had had the opportunity to be exposed to a much broader sample of natural conversational speech in Tape, I may have obtained a wider range of examples in which schwa is deletable, as well as examples in which it is not deletable. However, even though the language is no longer used conversationally, my corpus does indicate that there is a number of environments in which schwa deletion appears to be categorically impossible. In particular, this process is completely unattested in the first syllable of a root when:

- (i) a schwa appears within a monosyllabic root. There are very few monosyllabic free roots in Tape of the shape /CəC/, though the following examples can be noted:

/bər/	[^m bər ~ * ^m br]	‘still, yet’
/vər/	[fər ~ *fr]	‘if’

This restriction against schwa deletion in monosyllabic roots holds even if the root happens to be inflected in some way within a longer word. Thus:

/i-γəs/	[iγəs ~ *iγs]	‘(s)he danced’
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- (ii) a schwa is stressed according to the regular penultimate stress rule set out in §5.2. Thus:

/kəsən/	[kəsən ~ *ksən]	‘his/her nose’
/təvələŋ/	[təvələx ~ *təvləx]	‘woman’

- (iii) a schwa is followed by a medial consonant cluster. For example:

/nəvnevən/	[nəvnevən ~ *nvnevən]	‘his/her hip’
/vədyo/	[və ⁿ dyo ~ *v ⁿ dyo]	‘gall bladder’

- (iv) a schwa is preceded and followed by the same consonant. For example:

/səsən/	[səsən ~ *ssən]	‘her breast’
/idədən/	[ⁿ də ⁿ dən ~ *i ⁿ d ⁿ dən]	‘(s)he told a lie’
/iməmaŋ/	[iməmaŋ ~ *immaŋ]	‘it chirped’

⁶ McKerras (2000) indicates that in Northeast Malakula words of the shape VCVCV, the medial vowel is also often deleted, resulting in alternations such as /ečiki/ [etsiki ~ etski] ‘there is none’. This process of vowel loss in Northeast Malakula involves a number of different vowels, but apparently not the mid central vowel.

(v) a schwa is preceded or followed by a labiovelar consonant. For example:

/b̃əlin/	[^m b̃əlin ~ * ^m b̃lin]	‘his/her back’
/m̃əliun/	[^m m̃əliun ~ * ^m m̃liun]	‘chief’
/iṽəri/	[iṽəri ~ *iṽri]	‘(s)he told’
/nəṽib/	[nəṽi ^m b ~ *nṽi ^m b]	‘ <i>Barringtonia asiatica</i> ’
/nəṽmal/	[nəṽmal ~ *nṽmal]	‘chief’

(vi) a schwa is preceded and followed by stops which differ in their voicing. Note, therefore, the possibility of schwa deletion in the first example below but not in the second:

/pət̃in/	[pət̃in ~ ptin]	‘his/her head’
/bət̃e/	[^m bət̃e ~ * ^m bte]	‘forbidden’

(vii) a schwa is preceded by /č/ and followed by a liquid. Thus:

/ičəren/	[itʃəren ~ *itʃren]	‘(s)he threw it’
/ičəle/	[itʃəle ~ *itʃle]	‘(s)he combed it’

It was mentioned above that schwa deletion in root-final syllables is much less frequently encountered than in root-initial syllables, occurring only in a limited set of syllable types. Although final syllables of the shape /-təl/ are eligible for reduction in this way, there is an overriding restriction that such syllables cannot undergo schwa deletion if the result would be a three-member consonant cluster at the end of the word. Thus, with a form such as /kəmemtəl/ ‘we (trial exclusive)’, the schwa of the final syllable is invariably retained and we do not find *[kəmemtɿ], even though /itəl/ ‘three’ is invariably pronounced [itɿ].

With other roots of the shape /CəCV-/, however, schwa appears to be fairly widely open for deletion. It is particularly common in the following environments, almost to the point of being categorical:

- when the first consonant is a nasal, a fricative or a voiceless stop and the second consonant is a liquid, e.g. /mərə/ ‘eel’, /vəris/ ‘call’, /pələn/ ‘its base’, /pəliliy/ ‘wild kava’;
- when both consonants are continuants, e.g. /məsit/ ‘sick’; and
- when the first consonant is /s/ and the second consonant is a fricative, a voiceless stop or a nasal, e.g. /səɣa/ ‘not exist’, /sət̃e/ ‘what’, /sənen/ ‘because of it’, /səkəl/ ‘hibiscus’.

Although deletion of schwa is much less common in other environments, the examples presented in this section demonstrate clearly that deletion can take place between almost any two consonants, even when the first is a stop and the second is a nasal, as shown by the alternation in the pronunciation of /təmes/ ‘devil’ between [təmes] and [tmes]. It is even possible to encounter surface word-initial consonant clusters consisting of two stops of different places of articulation arising as a result of schwa deletion with the pronunciation of forms such as /pəti-/ ‘head’ as [pəti-] and [pti-].

Some quite elaborate intervocalic clusters can also arise as a result of schwa deletion, especially over morpheme boundaries. For instance, /nidələ-/ ‘egg’ and /təlet/ ‘sugar ant’ regularly combine to produce /nidltlet/ ‘sugar ant eggs’, in which we find an intervocalic cluster of four consonants. It is possible to find elaborate intervocalic clusters also in the verbal prefixing system where schwa has been optionally deleted. For instance, the sequence:

/i-kə-ska-n-iar/
 3SG:REAL-NEC-NEG-PL-touch
 ‘they (pl.) must not touch it’

can be pronounced /iksksaniar/ with the three-member intervocalic cluster /ksk/.

This pattern of widespread alternation between schwa and zero that I have described above is consistent with the idea that what we are observing is phonological change in progress in Tape, with an original contrastive schwa undergoing a process of widespread loss. In the normal course of events, we might have predicted that ultimately, many instances of what are currently analysed phonemically in Tape as schwa may have been completely lost, resulting in a wide range of word-initial two-member consonant clusters. Exactly this kind of process is already well attested as having taken place in languages further south in Vanuatu, such as Sye (Crowley 1998b:18–21) and South Efate (Thieberger 2004:51).

However, even though I have described these alternations as involving optional zero realisations of schwa phonemes in Tape, we should probably not close our minds completely to the idea that phonemic schwa loss may already have taken place, at least with forms that invariably appear in my corpus with initial or final consonant clusters, resulting in phonemic forms such as /skol/ ‘hibiscus’ or /wils/ ‘maggot’. Even with forms where we find alternation between schwa and zero, it may be possible to view the schwa as a phonetically inserted vocalic transition between underlying clustered consonants. Thus, a form that appears in my corpus variably as [msit] and [məsit] ‘sick’ may also be treated phonemically as /msit/, but with an optional rule of schwa insertion in certain environments.

There are, however, some genuine difficulties with this kind of analysis on the basis of the current data. For one thing, phonemic schwa is independently motivated within the vowel inventory of Tape, given that in many words the only vowel is schwa. If all instances of schwa were to be treated as instances of phonetic insertion, then a form such as [təvələx] ‘woman’ would presumably need to be treated phonemically as /tvly/ (with no vowels at all), rather than as /təvələy/ as at present. Such a solution would clearly result in huge complications to the statement of the phonotactics of the language, in that we would need to allow for wide ranges of initial and final consonant clusters, in contrast to the existing pattern whereby words can begin and end with only single consonants.

It might be possible to overcome this problem by distinguishing between those phonetic schwas which reflect underlying schwas and those which are to be seen purely as phonetically inserted transitions between clustered consonants. However, it is by no means obvious that there is any clearly definable set of mechanisms for distinguishing which schwas should be treated in which way, so there is bound to be an unacceptable amount of arbitrariness in any such solution to this question of the status of schwa.

5.1.2 Consonants

Table 2: Consonant contrasts

Plain obstruents	ḽ	p	t	č	k
Prenasalised stops	ḽ̃	b	d		g
Fricatives	ṽ	v		s	ʃ
Nasals	m	m	n		ŋ
Lateral			l		
Rhotic			r		
Glides	w			y	

The consonant inventory of Tape is set out in Table 2. This inventory involves a number of significant points of similarity with the consonant inventories of languages which traditionally bordered on the Tape area, as well as several points of contrast. In particular:

- Unlike V'ënen Taut, there are no apico-labial consonants in Tape. V'ënen Taut therefore represents the southernmost in a series of languages spoken along the northern and northwestern coasts of Malakula in which this typological fairly unusual feature is present. Tape (and Larëvat) represent the northernmost languages to lack such segments, and they share this lack with Naman, Neve'e and Northeast Malakula.
- Tape, along with Larëvat, Northeast Malakula and Naman, has a contrastive palatal affricate, represented in Table 2 as /č/, which is completely lacking in V'ënen Taut.
- Tape, along with Northeast Malakula, has a contrastive series of labiovelar consonants, which are completely lacking in neighbouring V'ënen Taut,⁷ Larëvat and Naman.
- Tape lacks the contrastive bilabial trill which is found, albeit marginally, in Northeast Malakula, as well as in Niverver and Avava spoken to the south of Naman and Neve'e. However, it is absent in the intervening Naman and Neve'e languages.

The plain obstruents in Table 2 are pronounced with labiovelar, bilabial, alveolar, post-alveolar and velar articulations respectively. The labiovelar obstruent is pronounced as a voiceless bilabial stop with simultaneous lip-rounding. The segment /č/ is realised as the voiceless post-alveolar affricates [ts] and [tʃ] in free variation. The remaining voiceless obstruents are pronounced as we would expect on the basis of their IPA values.

When obstruents in the prenasalised series are preceded by a vowel or a non-nasal consonant, we find automatic non-syllabic homorganic prenasalisation of a phonetically voiced stop. For example:

/na:bues/	[na: ^m bues]	' <i>Pterocarpus indicus</i> '
/medek/	[me ⁿ dek]	'puzzle tree'
/mædes/	[mæ ⁿ des]	'fibre skirt'
/mældon/	[mæ ⁿ ldon]	'his/her right hand'

⁷ However, Fox (1979:2) indicates that /p/ and /m/ have labiovelar allophones before the front vowels /i/ and /e/.

Word-initially, while they are generally pronounced as voiced prenasalised stops, one occasionally encounters a plain (i.e. non-prenasalised) voiced stop in free alternation with a corresponding prenasalised stop. Thus:

/buos/	[^m buos ~ buos]	‘uncastrated boar’
/dui/	[ⁿ dui ~ dui]	‘man’

When there is a preceding non-homorganic nasal consonant, these stops are invariably pronounced as plain voiced stops. Thus:

/bærdimdim/	[^m bær ⁿ dimdim]	‘brain’
/la:ŋbibi/	[la:ŋbi ^m bi]	‘blowfly’

Word-finally, the stop element of the prenasalised obstruents have both voiced and voiceless realisations, though prenasalised realisations are far more frequent than the corresponding voiceless forms. Thus:

/mib/	[mi ^m b ~ mi ^m p]	‘gecko’
/tirɣəbəb/	[tirɣə ^m bə ^m b ~ tirɣə ^m bə ^m p]	‘wild’
/imimid/	[imimi ⁿ d ~ imimi ⁿ t]	‘(s)he is sweating’

The alveolar stop /d/ additionally exhibits variants with lightly trilled release in some environments. Such variants can be noted word-finally after the vowels /ə/ and /o/. Thus:

/na:kəd/	[na:kə ⁿ d ~ na:kə ⁿ d ^r ~ na:kə ⁿ t ~ na:kə ⁿ t ^r]	‘we (<i>pl. incl.</i>)’
/čimod/	[tʃimo ⁿ d ~ tʃimo ⁿ d ^r ~ tʃimo ⁿ t ~ tʃimo ⁿ t ^r]	‘sow’

There is also a possibility of a lightly trilled release initially and intervocalically when the following vowel is /u/. Thus:

/duen/	[ⁿ duon ~ ⁿ d ^r uon]	‘with’
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When the following vowel is /ə/, this segment is again often pronounced with a trilled release, though the schwa is itself often deleted and the trill is syllabified. This pronunciation is attested as being in free variation with a simple prenasalised voiced stop followed by the schwa, as in the following:

/dəlo/	[ⁿ dəlo ~ ⁿ d ^r lo]	‘slowly’
/idədəŋ/	[i ⁿ də ⁿ dəŋ ~ i ⁿ d ^r ⁿ d ^r ŋ]	‘(s)he is afraid’

The consonant chart for Tape indicates that there is a distinct series of labiovelar segments contrasting with each of the plain bilabials. As in many of the neighbouring languages, this contrast in Tape is only made in certain environments. In particular, there is no evidence for a contrast between the two series of consonants either syllable-finally, or when the following vowel is one of the rounded vowels /u/ or /o/. This means that these segments are only encountered in syllables of the following types: /m̃a/, /m̃e/, /m̃i/, /m̃ə/.

In many languages of central Vanuatu in which a phonemic contrast can be established between plain labial and labiovelar consonants, the contrast frequently shows signs of being lost, with wholesale shift of labiovelars to the corresponding labial consonants. The corpora for many of these languages therefore show substantial variation in the pronunciations of many words.

In my Tape corpus, however, the distribution of labiovelars seems to be unusually stable, with just a couple of pairs of words showing clear evidence of variation: /mĩĩ- ~ mimi-/ ‘spirit’ and /mĩili ~ mili/ ‘again’. There are two logically possible explanations for the apparent stability of labiovelars in Tape:

- These segments just happen to be unusually stable in this language, in somewhat stark contrast to what we find in many of the neighbouring languages.
- The apparent stability of these segments in Tape is the result of the nature of the corpus which I have been able to assemble for this moribund language. All of the speakers in my corpus are aged between their fifties and their eighties. It may simply be that in this age group for any language, the contrast may turn out to be relatively stable and that it is only among younger speakers that we start finding substantial evidence of variability.

The labial and velar fricatives have both voiced and voiceless allophones. Voiceless realisations predominate over voiced allophones word-initially and word-finally, as well as word-medially when the segment is preceded or followed by a voiceless segment. Elsewhere, however, these fricatives are normally articulated as voiced fricatives. Thus:

/təvələy/	[təvələx]	‘woman’
/ɣa:vot/	[xa:vot]	‘European’
/iɣəč/	[iɣəts]	‘(s)he killed it’
/noɣmo/	[noɣmo]	‘slitgong’
/nəɣsen/	[nəxsen]	‘his/her name’

However, these generalisations represent strong tendencies rather than absolute statements, as some degree of free variation between voiced and voiceless allophones of these fricatives is encountered in all environments.

The contrast between /v/ and /p/ is maintained only in non-final position, with the opposition being neutralised at the ends of words. The phonetic forms [p], [f] and [v] all appear in free variation word-finally, with fricative allophones being more commonly encountered utterance-medially and the stop allophone being preferred utterance-finally (including also in citation). We therefore find variation such as the following:

/niʋip/	[niʋip ~ niʋif ~ niʋiv]	‘sprouting coconut’
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The consonant /l/ is realised as an alveolar lateral, while /r/ is realised as an apico-alveolar flap or trill. Finally, we have the glide /w/ which is realised according to its IPA value of [w], and the corresponding palatal glide, which is represented as /y/.⁸ The palatal glide in Tape is attested in only a handful of words, including /neyo/ ‘pudding’ and /yek/ ‘have’. However, a contrast between /i/ and /y/ is suggested by a pair such as the following:

/iar/	‘reach, arrive at’
/yek/	‘have’

⁸ Fox (1979:1) points to the complete absence of both glides in V’enen Taut, though he does include a number of words beginning with /uV-/ and containing the medial sequence /VuV/ which many would perhaps have treated as /wV-/ and /VwV/ respectively.

The following pairs illustrate the contrasts for phonetically similar sounds from the set of consonants discussed in this section:

/p̃/ and /b̃/	/p̃ərpar/ /b̃əlɪn/	‘pig’ ‘his/her back’
/p/ and /b/	/pəte/ /bəte/	‘breadfruit’ ‘forbidden’
/t/ and /d/	/iməsɪt/ /iməsɪd/	‘(s)he is sick’ ‘(s)he hiccupped’
/k/ and /g/	/dikio/ /ogi/ /irek/ /isig/	‘slug’ ‘only’ ‘(the tide) ebbed’ ‘one’
/p/ and /p̃/	/pərɪr/ /p̃ərpar/ /ɪpɪč/ /nɪp̃ɪč/	‘deaf’ ‘pig’ ‘it is good’ ‘ <i>Dysoxylum</i> sp.’
/b/ and /b̃/	/bəlaɣəč/ /b̃əlɪl/	‘parrotfish’ ‘sea almond tree’
/t/ and /č/	/nəmeč/ /imelet/ /ɪtɪtar/ /ičɪčər/	‘fish’ ‘(s)he returned’ ‘(the rooster) crowed’ ‘(s)he swept’
/č/ and /s/	/ičiləp/ /isimək/	‘(s)he is alive’ ‘one’
/p̃/ and /ṽ/	/nɪp̃ɪč/ /nɪṽɪp/	‘ <i>Dysoxylum</i> sp.’ ‘sprouting coconut’
/p/ and /v/	/nəpek/ /nəvet/ /nɪpɪpɪl/ /nɪvɪvən/	‘banyan’ ‘stone’ ‘bat’ ‘his penis wrapper’
/k/ and /ɣ/	/kənək/ /ni:vəɣ/ /nuik/ /pəlɪlɪɣ/	‘I’ ‘Malay apple’ ‘island cabbage’ ‘wild kava’
/v/ and /ṽ/	/ivərvər/ /iṽər/	‘(s)he ran’ ‘(s)he said’
/w/ and /ṽ/	/wiləs/ /ṽiri/	‘maggot’ ‘red-bellied fruit dove’

/v/ and /w/	/ivul/ /iwun/	‘(s)he wrote it’ ‘it is full’
/m/ and /m̃/	/imit/ /nim̃il/ /mimin/ /m̃im̃in/	‘it is dark’ ‘cycad’ ‘his/her tongue’ ‘his/her spirit’
/l/ and /r/	/ilay/ /iray/	‘(s)he is married’ ‘(s)he came up’

5.2 Stress

In disyllabic words of the shape (C)VC(C)V(C) containing only short peripheral vowels, the basic stress pattern in Tape is for stress to be attached to the penultimate syllable. We therefore encounter examples such as the following involving disyllables:

/nisay/	[ˈnisax]	‘banana’
/nitlip/	[ˈnitlip]	‘dragon plum’
/čimod/	[ˈtʃimo ⁿ d]	‘sow’
/ulel/	[ˈulel]	‘pillow’
/ogi/	[o ⁿ gi]	‘only’

With trisyllables of the same basic pattern, it is the middle syllable which receives stress according to this generalisation. For example:

/novotlip/	[noˈvotlip]	‘kidney’
/liyanan/	[liˈyanan]	‘his/her face’
/veleŋes/	[feˈleŋes]	‘ <i>Barringtonia edulis</i> ’
/niŋidin/	[niˈŋi ⁿ din]	‘his/her gums’
/nalomoč/	[naˈlomots]	‘green tree lizard’
/nibonwo/	[ni ^m ˈbonwo]	‘reef heron’

Vowel length, if this is ultimately confirmed as being phonemically contrastive, does not affect the position of stress, as long vowels are described in §5.1.1.2 as being attested only in syllables that would otherwise be eligible for stress. Thus:

/ya:vot/	[ˈxa:vot]	‘European’
/nəya:rət/	[nəˈya:rət]	‘ <i>Dendrocide</i> sp.’

With disyllabic forms of the shape CVV(C), i.e. where there are two adjacent vowels with or without a following closing consonant, the first of the two vowels receives stress. Thus:

/vio/	[ˈfio]	‘hat’
/dui/	[ˈ ⁿ dui]	‘man’
/viay/	[ˈfiay]	‘taro’
/niel/	[ˈniel]	‘sun’
/nuis/	[ˈnuis]	‘rain’

However, in words of this basic shape but with one or more additional syllables of the shape CV preceding this final material, these vowel sequences are treated for stress assignment purposes as if they were a single syllable. Stress is assigned, therefore, to the immediately preceding syllable. Thus:

/niniu/	['niniu]	' <i>Macaranga</i> sp.'
/na:viu/	['na:viu]	'pandanus'
/eduen/	['e ⁿ duen]	'with'
/na:bues/	['na: ^m bues]	'New Guinea rosewood'
/nəyanien/	[nə'yanien]	'food'

When the final syllable of a word contains schwa and the other vowels in the word are peripheral vowels, the schwa is treated in the same way as other vowels for syllable counting purposes. Stress appears, therefore, on the penultimate syllable, as in:

/nivəl/	['nivəl]	'lightning'
/belevər/	[^m be'levər]	'thunder'

With words ending in /CəC/ which result in word-final clusters ending in a syllabic /l/ or /n/ in association with the loss of schwa (§5.1.1.3), the final syllabic consonant is counted as a separate syllable for stress-assignment purposes. For example:

/nilən/	['nilŋ]	'its feather'
/čəvarən/	[tsə'varŋ]	'his/her shin'
/nəγəγərən/	[nəγə'γərŋ]	'his/her rib'

With words which contain only schwas, stress is again assigned to the penultimate syllable according to the same generalisation that operates for all other categories of words described above. Thus:

/'kəsən/	['kəsən]	'his/her nose'
/nəγət/	['nəγət]	'louse'
/nəvəs/	['nəvəs]	'Fijian asparagus'
/kəsələm/	[kə'sələm]	'snot'
/təvələγ/	[tə'vələx]	'woman'
/mədəγən/	[mə ^m dəγən]	'his/her scar'

With words which contain a mix of schwas and peripheral vowels, the position of stress varies somewhat from the penultimate placement of stress described so far. With disyllables of the shape CVCV(C) in which the vowel of the initial syllable is schwa and the vowel of the second syllable is not schwa, stress is generally attracted instead to the final syllable.

/nəmi/	[nə'mi]	'dust'
/pəte/	[pə'te]	'breadfruit'
/məru/	[mə'ru]	' <i>Acacia spirorbis</i> '
/nəpek/	[nə'pek]	'banyan'
/nəmax/	[nə'max]	'house'
/pətin/	[pə'tin]	'his/her head'
/dəlin/	[ⁿ də'lin]	'his/her voice'
/bəlın/	[^m bə'lin]	'his/her back'

It should be noted, however, that the phonetic difference between the stressed and unstressed syllables with forms such as these is, in fact, not particularly marked, and occasional variation has been noted between stress on the first and second syllables. Thus:

/čənin/ [tsə'nin ~ 'tsənin] 'his/her intestines'

Of course, many instances of unstressed schwa in these kinds of environment are available for optional deletion (§5.1.1.3), resulting in alternations such as the following:

/pətin/ [pə'tin ~ 'ptin] 'his/her head'

/təmes/ [tə'mes ~ 'tmes] 'devil'

When a vowel is available for deletion according to the generalisations presented in §5.1.1.3, it never receives stress, even if it is retained and it appears in the penultimate syllable. Thus, if a prefix is added to such a form—which happens most commonly with verbs—the stress will shift to the vowel of the prefix rather than to the vowel of the final syllable of the root. Thus, with a root such as /məsit/ 'sick', the stress appears on the prefixed syllable in the inflected form /i-məsit/ '(s)he is sick': i.e. ['iməsit] or, with schwa deletion, ['imsit]. The schwa is simply 'bypassed' for stress assignment purposes, meaning that [*i'məsit] is not a possible pronunciation.

As noted above, with words ending in two adjacent vowels, or in a consonant preceded by two adjacent vowels, stress is normally attracted to the vowel of the preceding syllable. However, when the preceding syllable contains schwa, stress is applied instead to the first of the two vowels. Thus:

/m̃əliun/ [m̃ə'liun] 'chief'

/mətiu/ [mə'tiu] 'coconut'

With disyllabic forms in which the vowel of the first syllable is schwa and there is a medial consonant cluster, stress attaches invariably to the penultimate syllable. Thus:

/məlŋen/ ['məlŋen] 'his/her bed'

/nəɣməɣ/ ['nəɣməɣ] 'mosquito'

/vənpə/ ['fənpə] 'white flying fox'

/pəptəɣ/ ['pəptəɣ] 'rubbish'

/məldən/ ['məlⁿdən] 'his/her right hand'

/dəlŋen/ ['ⁿdəlŋen] 'his/her ear'

/kərliu/ ['kərliu] 'door'

Again, with words ending in /-CCVV(C)/, we find stress on the preceding syllable even if that syllable contains schwa. Thus:

/bətne/ [^mbətne] 'ashes'

Roots of three or more syllables are much less infrequent in Tape than disyllables, but when the penultimate syllable contains a schwa and the remaining syllables contain other vowels, stress shifts one syllable to the left to the antepenultimate syllable if that syllable contains a peripheral vowel. Thus:

/nidələn/ ['niⁿdələn] 'its egg'

/tirɣəbəb/ ['tirɣə^mbə^mb] 'wild'

/pətaɣdəlin/ [pə'taɣⁿdəlin] 'his/her neck'

Stress in Tape is not fixed to a particular syllable of a root in all morphological contexts. Given that the addition of prefixes and suffixes can affect the number of syllables in a word, stress can be shifted leftwards or rightwards from a particular syllable in the root in line with the general requirement that stress should ordinarily appear on the penultimate syllable of the phonological word. Note, therefore, the varying position of stress in the following examples containing the root /lis/ ‘look at’:

/Ø-lis-Ø/ 2SG:IMP-look.at-3SG	[ˈlis]	‘look at it’
/Ø-lis-ər/ 2SG:IMP-look.at-3PL	[ˈlisər]	‘look at them’
/i-lis/ 3SG:REAL-look.at-3SG	[ˈilis]	‘(s)he looked at it’
/i-lis-ər/ 3SG:REAL-look.at-3PL	[iˈlisər]	‘(s)he looked at them’
/kəpa-n-lis-Ø/ 2NONSG:IRR-PL-look.at-3SG	[kəˈpanlis]	‘you will all look at it’
/kəpa-n-lis-ər/ 2NONSG:IRR-PL-look.at-3SG	[kəpanˈlisər]	‘you will all look at them’

5.3 Phonotactics

From what has been described in the preceding sections, particularly §5.1.1.3, the description of the phonotactic patterns of Tape potentially varies quite dramatically depending on what particular phonological analysis is adopted vis-à-vis schwa. The discussion which follows is predicated on the same kinds of assumptions about the vowel inventory for this language which are described in this chapter.

Roots in Tape begin overwhelmingly with consonants. Any single consonant can appear at the beginning of a word, though initial /g/ is attested in only a couple of items. One of these, however, is the high-frequency multifunctional item /gi/ with functions as a demonstrative (‘this, that’), as an indefinite noun phrase marker, and as a relative clause marker.

Although roots may begin with vowels, a number of phonotactic restrictions on the distribution of initial vowels can be noted. The initial high vowels /i/ and /u/ are reasonably commonly attested, though almost exclusively with verbs. Root-initial /e/ is also quite widely encountered, though such forms overwhelmingly belong to closed sets such as pronouns, prepositions, locational nouns or adverbs, with just a handful of nouns and no verbs at all. There is only a single word in my corpus beginning with /o/, though it is the high-frequency form /ogi/ ‘just, only’. Only a single indigenous word has been attested with initial /a/, i.e. /ase/ ‘mother’s brother’.⁹ No word at all begins with schwa.

In word-final position we encounter all vowels apart from /ə/. The vowel /a/ only appears at the end of the preposition /ra/, though it is suggested in §6.3.2 that this form

⁹ My corpus includes the word /atua/ ‘God’, though that represents a post-contact borrowing ultimately from Samoan.

may represent sporadic influence from some other language.¹⁰ A variety of vowel sequences are permitted within roots in Tape, as governed by the following generalisations:

- The low vowel /a/ can be followed by a high vowel, i.e. /ai/, /au/.
- High vowels can be followed by any non-like vowel other than schwa, i.e. /ie/, /ia/, /io/, /iu/, /ui/, /ue/, /ua/, /uo/.
- Mid vowels can be followed by the low vowel, i.e. /ea/, /oa/.

Specifically excluded by these generalisations are the following vowel sequences:

- Any vowel sequence in which schwa appears as the first or second vowel.
- Any sequence of two like vowels.
- Any sequence of the mid vowels with anything other than following /a/.
- Sequences of the low vowel followed by a mid vowel.

There are some restrictions on word-final consonants in that labiovelar consonants are not attested. There is also only a single form attested with word-final /g/ and that is /isig/ 'one'. It will also be remembered from the discussion in §5.1.2 that there is no word-final contrast between /v/ and /p/. The glides /w/ and /y/ are also excluded word-finally, though we do find words ending in the diphthongs /au/ and /ai/. Word-finally, we never encounter more than a single phonemic consonant. However, it will be remembered from the discussion in some of the preceding sections that while there is a range of permissible final phonetic clusters, these are all derived as a result of the deletion of underlying schwa.

The labiovelar consonants are somewhat restricted in their distribution in that they never appear word-finally or as the initial element of a consonant cluster. There is also no evidence for schwa deletion taking place after a word-initial labiovelar that would result in a surface word-initial consonant cluster (§5.1.1.3). Labiovelars also never appear before the rounded vowels /u/ and /o/, being attested only before the vowels /i/, /e/, /a/ and /ə/.

Intervocally we find any single consonant. A substantial number of words are found with two-member intervocalic consonant clusters, though it is difficult at this stage to formulate any generalisations as to what kinds of clusters are permitted and what kinds are disallowed. Excluding historically reduplicated roots and likely compounds, the vast majority of intervocalic clusters are attested in only a single root or in a small handful of roots. In fact, of the forty-three different two-member consonant combinations that are currently attested in my corpus, thirty-one cluster types are attested in only a single form.¹¹ The following nine clusters each appear in only two forms: /vr/, /yr/, /yl/, /lŋ/, /sn/, /ly/, /ry/, /rp/, /yd/. Only three clusters, /ym/, /vn/ and /tl/, are each attested in three separate roots.

With the relatively restricted lexical corpus that has been assembled at this stage it is difficult to offer any generalisations about the intervocalic clustering possibilities in Tape. About the only restrictions that can be stated regarding two-member consonant clusters are the following:

¹⁰ Note that some directly suffixed nominal roots do end in schwa and /a/, though these forms obligatorily receive some suffix, or are morphologically bound to a following possessor noun, so we do not find these vowels at the ends of words.

¹¹ These clusters are: /pt, pl, tb, tṽ, ty, tm, tn, kl, br, dɣ, dl, vl, vs, sk, sy, sŋ, mč, mk, my, np, nṁ, lč, lk, ld, lm, rt, rk, rb, rd, rv, rn/.

- (i) Not attested as the initial element of a cluster are the following: all labiovelar consonants; the velar consonants /g/ and /ŋ/; and the palatal affricate /č/.
- (ii) Not attested as the final element of a cluster are the following: the voiced velar stop /g/ and the labiovelar stops /p̃/ and /b̃/.
- (iii) There can be no root-medial clusters of two identical consonants.

However, these statements about the intervocalic clustering possibilities of Tape still leave well over a third of the logically possible two-member clusters completely unrepresented in the lexicon of Tape. It is not known which of the following explanations for this rather unsatisfactory set of generalisations is most appropriate:

- My lexical corpus may simply be too restricted at this stage to allow for proper generalisations about this aspect of the phonotactic possibilities in the language.
- My current knowledge of the morphology of the language may have failed to properly distinguish between intra-morphemic clusters and inter-morphemic clusters.
- This aspect of the phonology of Tape may be genuinely messy, with the description just presented above more or less accurately reflecting what is going on in the language. That is, in addition to the general phonotactic restrictions just presented, there may well be a substantial set of more or less *ad hoc* restrictions against particular consonant clusters.¹²

In addition to the various two-member consonant clusters discussed above, my corpus also includes only two forms containing three-member intervocalic consonant clusters: /menkre/ ‘black flying fox’ and /səytren/ ‘tip out’. The first of these forms appears to represent a historic compound, possibly being based on the historical root of /nəmen/ ‘bird’ (with loss of the accreted article /nə-/) (§6.1). It may also be that the sequence /kr/ should be treated as involving an underlying schwa that has been deleted according to the widespread process described in §5.1.1.3. Thus, it is possible that the phonemic form here should be /menkərə/. Certainly, such a three-syllable analysis would be consistent with comparative data, as cognate forms in nearby languages all have an additional syllable, e.g. Naman /mengore/, Neve‘ei /nimingori/.¹³

The phonotactic statements presented so far relate exclusively to intra-morphemic possibilities. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a substantially greater range of consonant clusters is permitted over morpheme boundaries in Tape. One point that is worthy of specific comment, however, is the fact that the intra-morphemic contrast between the non-prenasalised voiceless stop /t/ and the prenasalised voiced stop /d/ is supplemented by an additional contrast involving the consonant cluster /nt/, which only arises over morpheme boundaries. Compare, therefore, the following:

¹² Unappealing though this kind of conclusion may be to many linguists, this is possibly the most likely solution given that substantially broader lexical corpora assembled for closely related Naman and Neve‘ei reveal more or less the same kinds of problems in relation to the clustering possibilities for these languages.

¹³ However, I have no explanation to offer for the apparent exceptional phonotactic behaviour of the verb /səytren/, unless this is also an example of an unrecognised underlying trisyllable of the shape /səytərən/.

/i-titiŋ/	[ititiŋ]
3SG:REAL-speak	
‘(s)he spoke’	
/i-di-diven/	[i ⁿ di ⁿ diven]
3SG:REAL-sleep.on.back	
‘(s)he slept on his/her back’	
/i-n-titiŋ/	[intitiŋ]
3:REAL-PL-speak	
‘they spoke’	

5.4 Morphophonemic rules

The morphology of Tape brings together a number of sequences of segments which are subject to systematic morphophonemic processes. These general processes are outlined in this section, and the reader will be reminded of the application of these processes at the appropriate points in the discussion of noun morphology in §6.1 and verb morphology in §6.2.

5.4.1 Vowel deletion

When two vowels are brought together over a morpheme boundary, one of the following two changes apply:

- (i) If one of the two vowels involved is a schwa, the schwa is lost. The effects of this change can be seen in the derivation of the following verbal object suffixes (§6.2.2):

/i-rəŋdɔ-ək → irəŋdɔk/
 3SG:REAL-know-1SG
 ‘(s)he knows me’

/en-tini-ər → entinir/
 1SG:REAL-bury-3PL
 ‘I buried them’

/kə-udi → kudi/
 2SG:REAL-eat
 ‘you ate (it)’

- (ii) If neither of the two vowels is a schwa, the first of the two vowels is systematically lost. This rule can be seen in the developments affecting vowel-final verbal prefixes (§6.2.1). For example:

/be-udi → budi/
 1SG:IRR-eat
 ‘I will eat (it)’

/ipo-ivin → ipivin/
 3SG:IRR-go
 ‘(s)he will go’

/i-ske-ivin → iskivin/
 3SG:REAL-NEG-go
 ‘(s)he did not go’

Where the prefix /i-/ 3SG:REAL is added to a non-monosyllabic root beginning with /i/, the resulting sequence of like vowels is realised as a single vowel. For example:

/i-ipərvi → ipərvi/
 3SG:REAL-do.how
 ‘how did (s)he do it?’

However, when the verb root is monosyllabic, there is an exceptional realisation of this sequence of vowels in that the result is a phonemically long vowel. Thus:

/i-ič → i:č/
 3SG:REAL-cry
 ‘(s)he cried’

5.4.2 The treatment of -p

When root-final /p/ is followed by a vowel as a result of some morphological process, the /p/ systematically shifts to /v/. We encounter this kind of change when object suffixes are added to verbs (§6.2.2). For example:

/i-tep-ər → itevər/
 3SG:REAL-push-3PL
 ‘(s)he pushed them’

When a noun ending in /p/ is suffixed with a cliticised demonstrative of the shape /-ər/ or /-ar/, we find the same kind of shift. For example:

/dui tərep-ər → dui tərevər/
 man old-DEM
 ‘that old man’

We also see evidence of the effect of this process in root alternations such as that between the unsuffixed noun /nivip/ ‘penis wrapper’ and the corresponding directly possessed form (which obligatorily ends in a vowel), /nivivə-/ ‘penis wrapper’.

As just formulated, this rule has the appearance of an ordinary morphophonemic rule. However, as noted in §5.1.2, there is no phonemic contrast word-finally in Tape between /p/ and /v/. This form is represented phonemically here as /p/ (and orthographically as *p*). However, since this segment is indeterminate with respect to /p/ and /v/, it would have been perfectly possible to have chosen /v/ to represent this segment word-finally in phonemic representations (and to have represented this orthographically as *v*), and the derivations as presented above would no longer be needed. We would therefore find instead alternative patterns such as the following:

/i-tev/	[itep]
3SG:REAL-push	
‘(s)he pushed (it)’	

/i-tev-ər/	[itevər]
3SG:REAL-push-3PL	
‘(s)he pushed them’	

5.4.3 Deletion of n

When sequences of /n/ and /d/ are brought together over morpheme boundaries, the nasal is regularly lost.¹⁴ We encounter this change when the first person singular realis prefix /en-/ is followed by a root or another prefix beginning with /d/. For example:

/en-de-vəs → edevəs/
1SG:REAL-CONT-small
‘I am still small’

The plural prefix /n-/ on verbs (§6.2.1.4) also has zero realisation before a verb beginning with /d/. For example:

/i-ska-n-dədəŋ → iskadədəŋ/
3REAL-NEG-PL-afraid
‘they are not afraid’

¹⁴ It will be remembered that /d/ is a prenasalised stop, so there will always phonetically be an alveolar nasal, even if phonemic deletion of a nasal has taken place.

6 Grammar

6.1 Nouns and noun phrases

A noun phrase in Tape can consist minimally of either a pronoun or a noun. The behaviour of pronouns, along with the range of modifiers that are associated with them, is described in §6.1.1. The morphology of nouns is described in §6.1.2, while the much wider range of modifiers that can be found with nouns is covered in §6.1.3.

6.1.1 Pronouns

Table 3: Independent pronouns

	Singular		Dual	Trial	Plural
1	<i>kënëk</i>	Incl.	<i>naakëdru</i>	<i>naakëdëtël</i>	<i>naakëd</i>
		Excl.	<i>këmemru</i>	<i>këmentël</i>	<i>këmem</i>
2	<i>naakëm</i>		<i>kemru</i>	<i>kemtël</i>	<i>kem</i>
3	<i>en</i>		<i>eru</i>	<i>eritël</i>	<i>er</i>

The closed set of independent pronouns in Tape is set out in Table 3. It can be seen that these forms mark a formal distinction between first, second and third person, as well as a four-way number distinction with separate categories of dual ('two') and trial ('three') alongside the singular ('one') and plural ('more than three'). Note that the dual and trial series of pronouns are formed by adding to the plural pronoun the historical roots of the numerals *iru* 'two' and *itël* 'three' respectively (§6.1.3.2), with some unpredictable forms arising out of these combinations.

The category of dual is obligatorily distinguished in Tape from the singular and plural wherever dual reference is implied, as illustrated by the following textual examples:

Kemru ka-r-vin erenge nëvet ese têmes.
 2PL 2NONGS:REAL-DL-go GOAL rock POSS devil
 'The two of you went to the rock of the devil.'

En-vwër be-vwiri en kem.
 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell GOAL 2PL
 'I want to tell it to you (pl).'

Pronouns with trial reference are less likely to be used than any of the other series of pronouns, for purely pragmatic reasons. My textual corpus does not provide a single instance where a trial pronoun would be called for, and the forms presented in Table 3 are derived exclusively from elicited data. However, while there is a four-way number distinction in the pronouns, this is not matched in the subject prefixes found on verbs in Tape, where only a three-way number distinction is marked (§6.2.1.1). Verbal subjects with trial reference are cross-referenced on verbs in the same way as plural subjects. Thus:

Naakëdëtël dë-n-titing.
 1TL.INCL 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-speak
 ‘We (tl. incl.) are speaking.’

Naakëd itar dë-n-titing
 1PL.INCL many 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-speak
 ‘Many of us are speaking.’

Quantifiers can appear after the plural forms of the pronouns. For example:

Këmem rivwi më-n-jej waia.
 1PL.EXCL all 1NONGS:REAL-PL-cut wire
 ‘We all cut the wire.’

Naakëd rivwi dui e Tape.
 1PL.INCL all person SOURCE Tape
 ‘We are all people from Tape.’

6.1.2 Nouns

While the bulk of nouns in my Tape corpus are inflectionally and derivationally simple, there are nonetheless a number of derivational processes which relate to the formation of new nouns, described in §6.1.2.1. Because possession with one large subset of nouns is expressed inflectionally in Tape, possessive constructions in general are set out in §6.1.2.2.

6.1.2.1 Nominal derivation

While there are a substantial number of derived nouns in Tape, the processes of nominal derivation described in this section are either less than fully productive or, if productive, not very frequently found in ordinary speech.

6.1.2.1.1 Nominalisation

There is a productive pattern for deriving nouns from verb roots in Tape which involves the addition of the suffix *-ien*. For example:

<i>mekar</i>	‘work’	<i>mekar-ien</i>	‘work, job’
<i>khës</i>	‘dance’	<i>khës-ien</i>	‘(a) dance’
<i>mësit</i>	‘sick’	<i>mësit-ien</i>	‘illness, disease’

<i>vërëng</i>	‘think’	<i>vërëng-ien</i>	‘thought, idea’
<i>mes</i>	‘die’	<i>mes-ien</i>	‘funeral’
<i>pëlpol</i>	‘fight’	<i>pëlpol-ien</i>	‘(a) fight’
<i>lakh</i>	‘married’	<i>lakh-ien</i>	‘marriage, wedding’

Verbs ending in *p* involve regular shift of the consonant to *v* in association with the nominalising suffix (§5.4.2). For example:

<i>ngep</i>	‘breathe’	<i>ngev-ien</i>	‘asthma’
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These nominalised verbs in Tape participate in the full range of sentence structures in the same way as ordinary nouns. For example:

Vërëng-ien esom ipërv?
 think-NOM POSS:2SG 3SG:REAL:how
 ‘What is your opinion (lit. how is your thinking)?’

Mekar-ien esom sëte?
 work-NOM POSS:2SG what
 ‘What is your job?’

Er i-n-vin erenge khës-ien isig.
 3PL 3REAL-PL-go GOAL dance-NOM one
 ‘They went to a dance.’

I-n-vin jëne mes-ien isig.
 3REAL-PL-go CAUSE die-NOM one
 ‘They went for a funeral.’

It should be pointed out, however, that while this pattern of derivation is certainly productive in that any verb is presumably open to nominalisation in this way, Tape—in common with most of its Oceanic relatives—is not a language in which speakers frequently call upon this structural possibility.

This pattern of suffixed nominalisation in Tape corresponds to what we find in V’ënen Taut (Fox 1979:32), Naman (Crowley 2006c) and Avava (Crowley 2006a), and it contrasts with other languages of central Malakula, such as Neve’ei and Neverver, in which nominalisation is marked discontinuously by means of a prefixed element *nV-* and the suffixed element *-ian*.

However, in addition to this productive pattern of suffixed nominalisation in Tape, there is also evidence for two rather more sporadically attested patterns. The first of these involves a couple of intransitive verbs for which nominalisation is expressed discontinuously by means of the prefixed element *në-* and the suffixed element *-ien*.¹ Those verbs which have been attested as behaving in this way are:

<i>khan</i>	‘eat’	<i>në-khan-ien</i>	‘food’
<i>ij</i>	‘cry’	<i>n-ij-ien</i> ²	‘crying’

¹ The existence of a handful of nominalised verbs involving a simulfix parallels a minor pattern that we also find in Naman.

² The loss of the final vowel of the prefix before the vowel-initial verb root here is consistent with what we systematically find with verbal prefixing morphology (§6.2.1), and is covered by the general morphophonemic rule set out in §5.4.1.

The word for ‘food’ occasionally shows evidence of irregular nominalisation in Malakula languages, so this may well be an idiosyncratic pattern in Tape. The appearance of a simulfix rather than simple suffixation in this case may reflect sporadic influence from the Northeast Malakula language, where many—though apparently not all—nominalisations are expressed discontinuously by means of *nV*-/-(*i*)*en* (McKerras 2000).

The second sporadic pattern of nominalisation involves simple prefixation of *ně*- with no accompanying suffix. This is again a pattern which is attested sporadically in some of the neighbouring languages. One verb-noun pair which is attested as behaving in this way is the following:³

jijër ‘sweep’ *ně-jijër* ‘broom’

The following noun also appears to be derived in the same way, though at this stage the putative unreduplicated verbal root has not been attested:

vwëkvwëk ‘be albino’ *ně-vwëk* ‘(an) albino’

6.1.2.1.2 Compounding

There is considerable evidence for compounding as a derivational process involving nouns in my Tape corpus. One commonly attested pattern is that by which two nominal roots are linked to form a new noun. For example:

pupu *tëvëlëkh*
grandparent woman
‘grandmother’

netite *dui*
child man
‘boy’

lumlum *tes*
waterweed sea
‘seaweed’

A noun referring to a person with a following place name indicates a person who originates from that place. For example:

dui *Tape*
man Tape
‘Tape man’

Locational nouns other than institutionalised place names can also enter into this construction. For example:

dui *elo*
man coast
‘coastal person’

³ Others that possibly fall into this set are as follows, though at this stage of research the corresponding verb stems have not been recorded: *nijëngjëng* ‘stool’, chair’, *nijëvjëp* ‘walking stick’, *nirirëp* ‘fan’, *nëbëtbët* ‘mute person’, *nëvwid* ‘bald head’.

dui eut
 man inland
 ‘inland person’

Locational nouns, including institutionalised place names, can also be made into compound nouns with the preceding locative preposition *e*, as in the following:

dui e Tape
 man LOC Tape
 ‘Tape man’

dui e nib
 man LOC fire
 ‘Ambrymese⁴ man’

Another pattern of compounding involves an initial noun being followed by an uninflected verbal root (§6.1.3). The most common pattern of this type involves a stative verb, as in the following:

dui mit
 man black
 ‘Melanesian’

dui lil
 man big
 ‘important person’

It is particularly common for stative verbs of colour to be used in the formation of nouns referring to particular varieties of plants or other biological taxa. For example:

melëkh miel
 kava red
 ‘kava variety with reddish-coloured branches’

nisakh mit
 banana black
 ‘variety of banana’

However, it is also possible for an active verb also to enter into a nominal compound as the second element. For example:

dui nur
 man wage.war
 ‘warrior’

nib vang
 fire burn
 ‘burning piece of firewood’

⁴ The island of Ambrym—clearly visible from the east coast of Malakula—is well known for its two volcanoes which are more or less permanently active. It is named in Tape for the word *nib* ‘fire’ because of the burning volcanic glow which can be seen at night.

Compounds can also be formed with an initial noun followed by an adjective (§6.1.3). For example:

lu bête
arrow forbidden
'poison arrow'

dui bête
man forbidden
'sorcerer'

nit bête
place forbidden
'forbidden place'

When nouns ending in *-iu* enter into nominal compounds as the initial element, the final *u* is frequently (though by no means invariably) lost. Thus:

mëtiu + *mërang* → *mëti mërang*
'coconut' 'dry' 'dry coconut'

tiu + *tëvet* → *ti tëvet*
'chicken' 'woman' 'hen'

tiu + *dui* → *ti dui*
'chicken' 'man' 'rooster'

nitiu + *tivnu* → *niti tivnu*
'hermit crab' '?' 'coconut crab'

Compounds which are derived from directly suffixed nouns (§6.1.2.2.2) fall into two groups in terms of their morphological behaviour. With one subset of such nouns, a noun carrying its possessive suffix is followed by a compounded element. Examples of this type include the following:

etme-n lil
father-3SG big
'his/her father's elder brother'

etme-n vës
father-3SG little
'his/her father's younger brother'

With members of the second subset of directly suffixed nouns, however, there is no suffix present and the noun and the verb are linked in a single phonological word. Thus:

mëte-miel
eye-red
'conjunctivitis'

With a handful of attested compounds, however, both of these patterns appear to be in free variation, as in the following:

<i>mopë-n</i>	<i>mit</i>	<i>mov-mit</i>
liver/lung-3SG	black	liver/lung-black
‘lung’		‘lung’

While my Tape corpus includes a substantial number of examples of nominal compounds, many of these specific patterns would have to be described as less than fully productive. Such a comment perhaps applies to compounding in most languages, since meanings that one might logically expect to be expressed by means of a compound are either unpredictably expressed by means of separate morphologically underived forms, or expressed by means of periphrasis of some kind. For example, while there is the compound *dui mit* ‘Melanesian’ (= ‘person’ + ‘black’), there is no compound **dui wip* (‘person’ + ‘white’) for ‘European’, as there is a separate lexical form, i.e. *khaavot*.

6.1.2.1.3 Reanalysis of **na*

A common feature of Vanuatu languages is the wholesale reanalysis of an original preposed noun phrase marker of the form **na* as an integral part of the noun root (Crowley 1985). While we certainly find evidence that this reanalysis has also taken place in Tape, it is interesting to note that this process has not been nearly as thoroughgoing as in some of the neighbouring languages. In Tape, only about 38% of nouns now begin with *n-* as a result of this kind of change, in comparison to 54% of nouns in Naman and as many as 91% in Neve‘ei. This means that we find examples such as the following in which Tape shows no evidence of having retained reflexes of accretive **na* whereas the other languages have clearly reanalysed the original article as part of the root:

Neve‘ei	Naman	Tape	
<i>noto</i>	<i>neto</i>	<i>tiu</i>	‘chicken’
<i>nesal</i>	<i>nesel</i>	<i>sel</i>	‘road, path’
<i>nesakhau</i>	<i>neskho</i>	<i>sëkho</i>	‘year’

There are also forms such as the following which show evidence of accretion of **na* only in Neve‘ei, but not in Tape or Naman:

Neve‘ei	Naman	Tape	
<i>nibiang</i>	<i>buag</i>	<i>viakh</i>	‘taro’
<i>nebat-</i>	<i>batë-</i>	<i>pëti-</i>	‘head’
<i>nelabut</i>	<i>labët</i>	<i>laabët</i>	‘rat’

However, there are some forms in which all three languages show evidence of accretion of the original article. For example:

Neve‘ei	Naman	Tape	
<i>na‘abuah</i>	<i>nakhabues</i>	<i>naabues</i>	‘New Guinea rosewood’
<i>na‘ari</i>	<i>nakhari</i>	<i>naarës</i>	‘cordyline’
<i>nebang</i>	<i>nebag</i>	<i>nëpek</i>	‘banyan’

Finally, there is a handful of forms which show no evidence of article accretion in any of these languages. For example:

<i>libakh</i>	<i>libakh</i>	<i>lipakh</i>	‘dog’
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In those languages which extensively retain reflexes of **na*, it is common for nouns to lose the historically accreted element in at least some nominal compounds, with the resulting compounds reflecting only the historically prior roots. Such patterns typically alternate with apparently more recent patterns in which compounds are derived on the basis of the new root. In a language such as Neve‘ei, therefore, we encounter alternations between the following older (and much less productive) pattern:

<i>nukhubou</i>	+	<i>nemwen</i>	→	<i>nukhubou-mwen</i>
‘post’		‘male’		‘main house post’

and the following newer (and much more productive) pattern:

<i>noang</i>	+	<i>netan</i>	→	<i>noang netan</i>
‘canoe’		‘land’		‘car’

In Tape, however, the first of these patterns appears to have diminished to the point where it can hardly be recognised as a pattern in the language at all. This is perhaps not too surprising given the relatively low proportion of nouns which show any evidence for the retention of reflexes of **na*. Even so, my Tape corpus does contain a handful of compounds which suggest the possible wider existence of such a pattern at an earlier stage in the language. For example:

<i>nëvet</i>	+	<i>mes</i>	→	<i>vetmes</i>
‘stone’		‘dry’		‘uplifted coral reef found in bush’
<i>lib</i>	+	<i>nëvet</i>	→	<i>libvet</i>
‘bamboo’		‘stone’		‘very hard variety of bamboo’

However, the more general pattern of compounding with the noun *nëvet* ‘stone’ is illustrated by the following, where the historical article is not lost:

<i>nëvet</i>	+	<i>mit</i>	→	<i>nëvet mit</i>
‘stone’		‘black’		‘black stone’

There is, in addition, a vestigial process involved in the derivation of a handful of locational nouns (§6.3.3.2) by which the reflex of **na-* is replaced with *e-*, producing pairs such as the following:

<i>nëmakh</i>	‘house’	<i>emakh</i>	‘to/at home’
<i>nimel</i>	‘meeting house’	<i>emel</i>	‘to/in the meeting house’

6.1.2.2 Possession

As is extremely common in the Oceanic subgroup, Tape presents a basic distinction between indirectly (and typically alienably) possessed and directly (and typically inalienably) possessed nouns (Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002:40–43). With indirectly possessed nouns, both the possessor and possessum are expressed as free forms, while with directly possessed nouns, the possessum may be expressed by means of a bound nominal root to which some kind of possessive suffix is attached. These two patterns can therefore be contrasted as follows, in which the possessum is the indirectly possessed noun *nisip* ‘knife’ in the first example and the directly possessed noun *pëti-* ‘head’ in the second:

nisip ese mwëliun
 knife POSS chief
 ‘the chief’s knife’

pëti-k
 head-1SG
 ‘my head’

6.1.2.2.1 Indirectly possessed nouns

The possession of free nouns in Tape is expressed by means of the indirect possessive construction, in which the possessed noun is followed by a possessive pronoun when there is a singular pronominal possessor. Postposed possessive pronouns are also used with third person non-singular pronominal possessors, as well as with first person inclusive pronominal possessors.

The paradigms for pronominal possessors are therefore defective in that there are no separate possessive pronouns for first person non-singular exclusive possessors, nor for second person non-singular possessors, just as we find with the paradigms for directly possessed nouns (§6.1.2.2.2). The same pronominal suffixes that are used in the expression of possession with directly possessed nouns are attached to the various possessive constituents in these indirect possessive constructions.

In contrast to some languages of central Malakula such as Naman, Neve‘ei and Avava, there is a formal distinction in Tape between constructions expressing different kinds of alienable possessive relationships, involving special markers for the possession of items that are to be eaten, chewed and drunk, as well as a separate category for ‘general’ possession which does not come under any of these three specific possessive relationships. While this kind of elaboration in the expression of alienable possession represents a contrast with some of the immediately adjacent languages, it is a feature which is shared with its immediate neighbour V’ënen Taut (Fox 1979:40–41), as well as many other languages of central Vanuatu and, indeed, other Oceanic languages further afield.

The basic forms of the roots of the various possessive forms in Tape are *de-* for the expression of edible possession, *jomo-* for the possession of chewable items, *mëne-* for drinkable items and *(g)ese-* for general possession. The first three of these possessive forms bear partial, though unpredictable, similarities to transitive verb roots which express clearly related meanings. Thus, *de-* can be compared to the verb *udi* ‘eat’, *jomo-* to the verb *jomo* ‘chew’ and *mëne-* to the verb *mën* ‘drink’.

Table 4: Possessive pronouns (edible)

	Singular		Dual	Trial	Plural
1	<i>dok</i>	Incl.	<i>dedru</i>	<i>dedëtël</i>	<i>ded</i>
		Excl.	—	—	—
2	<i>dom</i>		—	—	—
3	<i>den</i>		<i>daru</i>	<i>dartël</i>	<i>dar</i>

The markers that are used in association with items that are for eating, including nouns such as *nëkhanien* ‘food’, *mëtiu* ‘coconut’ (of which one can eat the flesh), *nëmej* ‘fish’, *pwërpar* ‘pork’, are set out in Table 4. Thus:

mëtiu do-m
coconut ED:2SG
‘your coconut (for eating)’

It will be seen that the variation in the form of the vowels of the root of the possessive marker between *e*, *o* and *a* here mirrors the variation that we find in root-final vowels with directly suffixed nouns that end in *e* (§6.1.2.2.2).

Table 5: Possessive pronouns (chewable)

	Singular		Dual	Trial	Plural
1	<i>jomok</i>	Incl.	<i>jomodru</i>	<i>jomodëtël</i>	<i>jomod</i>
		Excl.	—	—	—
2	<i>jomom</i>		—	—	—
3	<i>jomon</i>		<i>jomaru</i>	<i>jomartël</i>	<i>jomar</i>

The chewable possessive markers are used with nouns such as *niji* ‘sugarcane’, *jomjom* ‘sweet coconut’ (which is chewed rather than drunk or eaten) and *nëpet* ‘kind of tuber with very fibrous flesh’. The markers that are used to express this relationship are set out in Table 5. Thus:

niji jomo-m
sugarcane CHEW-2SG
‘your sugarcane (for chewing)’

Table 6: Possessive pronouns (drinkable)

	Singular		Dual	Trial	Plural
1	<i>mënok</i>	Incl.	<i>mënedru</i>	<i>mënedëtël</i>	<i>mëned</i>
		Excl.	—	—	—
2	<i>mënom</i>		—	—	—
3	<i>mënen</i>		<i>mënaru</i>	<i>mënantël</i>	<i>mënar</i>

The drinkable possessive relationship is expressed by means of the markers set out in Table 6. Items for which possession is marked in this way include *nuo* ‘water’, *ti* ‘tea’ and *wiski* ‘whisky’. Thus:

nuo mëno-m
water DRINK-2SG
‘your water (for drinking)’

nuo mëne-n
water DRINK-3SG
‘his/her water (for drinking)’

Table 7: Possessive pronouns (general)

	Singular		Dual	Trial	Plural
1	(g)esek	Incl. Excl.	(g)esedru —	(g)esedëtël —	(g)esed —
2	(g)esom		—	—	—
3	(g)esen		(g)esaru	(g)esartël	(g)esar

Finally, there is a set of possessive markers which is used with all other indirectly possessed nouns, as set out in Table 7. These forms appear overwhelmingly in my corpus in their vowel-initial forms based on a root of the basic shape *ese-*. However, speakers of Tape did volunteer a series of occasional *g*-initial variants based on the root *gese-*. These two sets of forms were seen as being semantically and functionally equivalent. Thus:

nisip eso-m
knife POSS-2SG
'your knife'

nisip geso-m
knife POSS-2SG
'your knife'

With those pronominal categories for which there are no possessive suffixes in this possessive construction, the pattern of possession is exactly the same as that which is followed with nominal possessors. That is, the unsuffixed possessive morphemes are simply followed by the independent pronoun (§6.1.1) to express the pronominal category of the possessor. The unsuffixed forms of the possessive markers are respectively *jomo* for chewable items, *mëne* for drinkable items and *de* for edible items. Thus:

nuo mëne tëvëlëkh
water DRINK woman
'the woman's water (for drinking)'

nuo mëne këmem
water DRINK IPL.EXCL
'our (pl.excl.) water (for drinking)'

niji jomo tëvëlëkh
sugarcane CHEW woman
'the woman's sugarcane (for chewing)'

mëtiu de pwërpar
coconut ED pig
'the pig's coconut (for eating)'

With general possession, the unsuffixed form of the possessive marker varies between *ese* and *gese*, though there is an additional variant here in that there is a shortened form *se*. Thus:

nisip ese tëvet
knife POSS woman
'the woman's knife'

nisip gese këmemru
 knife POSS 1DL.EXCL
 ‘our (dl. excl.) knife’

nëmakh se mwëliun
 house POSS chief
 ‘the chief’s house’

As is commonly found in Oceanic languages where similar kinds of semantic distinctions are expressed with regard to alienable possession, nouns are not assigned to fixed categories with regard to these four different possessive markers. Rather, different kinds of possessive relationships can potentially be expressed by different markers with the same noun. Thus, since taro, for example, can be seen as something to be eaten, as well as something to be seen in some other way (e.g. for planting), possession of taros can be expressed in more than one way. For example:

viakh do-m
 taro ED-2SG
 ‘your taro (for eating)’

viak eso-m
 taro POSS-2SG
 ‘your taro (for some purpose other than eating, e.g. planting)’

This means that while it would be possible to say something like the following:

Pwërpar eso-m i-lingling lene.
 pig POSS-2SG 3SG:REAL-wander over.there
 ‘Your pig is wandering about over there.’

it would not be possible to express this same meaning as:

**Pwërpar do-m i-lingling lene.*
 pig ED-2SG 3SG:REAL-wander over.there

since this would imply that a dead, and possibly even butchered or cooked, pig is somehow managing to wander around as though it were alive.

6.1.2.2.2 Directly possessed nouns

Table 8: Possessive suffixes

	Singular		Dual	Trial	Plural
1	<i>-k</i>	Incl. Excl.	<i>-dru</i> —	<i>-dëtël</i> —	<i>-d</i> —
2	<i>-m</i>		—	—	—
3	<i>-n</i>		<i>-ru</i>	<i>-rtël</i>	<i>-r</i>

With nouns which participate in the direct possessive construction—expressing predominantly inalienable possessive relationships—the possessive suffixes are as set out in Table 8.⁵ We therefore find examples such as the following:

pëti-m
head-2SG
'your (sg.) head'

With directly suffixed noun roots ending in the mid vowels *e* and *o*, there is some change in the form of the final vowel of the root, as follows:⁶

- (i) Before suffixes beginning with *r* (i.e. all third person non-singular suffixes), a root-final mid vowel is lowered to *a*. Thus, from *lëme-* 'hand, arm', we find the following:

lëma-r
hand/arm-3PL
'their hands/arms'

- (ii) Before the first person singular suffix *-k* and second person singular suffix *-m*, root-final *e* is backed to *o*. For example:

lëmo-m
hand/arm-2SG
'your hands/arms'

With other suffixes, however, the final vowel of the root remains unchanged. For example:

lëme-n
hand/arm-3SG
'his/her hands/arms'

With roots that end in schwa that is preceded by *t*, *l* or *r*, the addition of the third person possessive suffix *-n* is accompanied by the loss of the schwa, and the nasal of the suffix is syllabified (§5.1.1.3). Note, therefore, the following possessive forms:

<i>nilë-</i>	'hair, feather'	<i>nil-n</i>	'its hair/feather'
<i>nëkhëkhërë-</i>	'side'	<i>nëkhëkhër-n</i>	'his/her/its side'
<i>netë-</i>	'son, daughter'	<i>net-n</i>	'his/her son/daughter'

When a directly suffixed noun ends in *s* followed by schwa, the deletion of schwa and associated syllabification of the nasal of the suffix is optional. Thus:

<i>rensesë-</i>	'branch'	<i>renses(ë)-n</i>	'its branch'
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Nominal possessors with indirectly possessed nouns are expressed by simply juxtaposing the unsuffixed possessum with the immediately following possessor. These sequences are stressed as two separate phonological words. Thus, contrast the following:

⁵ These are the same pronominal suffixes that are attached to the various possessive constituents associated with alienable possession as described in §6.1.2.2.1.

⁶ Crowley had a note to himself in the draft manuscript to carry out further checks on these vowel alternations, so it is possible that what is described here might require modification once further research has been carried out – JL

<i>pële-n</i> trunk-3SG 'its trunk'	<i>pële ne</i> trunk tree 'trunk of the tree'
<i>pwingi-n</i> mouth-3SG 'his/her mouth'	<i>pwingi ase</i> mouth uncle 'uncle's mouth'
<i>nuo-n</i> juice-3SG 'its juice'	<i>nuo mëte-n</i> juice eye-3SG 'his/her tears'

Note once again that there are no pronominal suffixes for non-singular first person exclusive and non-singular second person pronominal possessors of directly suffixed nouns. This category of possessor is expressed by directly postposing the full pronoun to the unsuffixed form of the noun in the same way just described for nominal possessors. Note, therefore, the following:

<i>pëti kemru</i> head 2DL 'your (dl.) heads'

It is worth pointing out that there is a major structural difference between Tape and central Malakula languages to the south such as Naman, Neve'e, Avava and Neverver with regard to the expression of pronominal possession. These languages also have a partial paradigm of pronominal possessive suffixes paralleling those for Tape set out in Table 8. However, with these categories of pronominal possession, the possessive suffixes typically alternate with a construction that directly parallels the pattern used for nominal possession, but making use of the independent pronouns. Compare, therefore, the following forms in Naman:

<i>batë-n libakh</i> head-3SG dog 'the dog's head'
<i>bato-g ~ batë-n kine</i> head-1SG head-3SG 1SG 'my head'

In these languages, the option represented by the example *bato-g* 'my head' clearly represents an older pattern, though the pattern represented by examples such as *batë-n kine* is very common in the present-day language, especially among younger speakers.

In Tape, however, there is no evidence whatsoever for the same kind of development having taken place. Thus, the meaning of 'my head' is invariably expressed by means of the direct pronominal possession, as in the following:

<i>pëti-k</i> head-1SG 'my head'
--

The following pattern, therefore, is completely unattested:

**pëti* *kënëk*
head 1SG

When schwa-final directly possessed forms are associated with a free form possessor—either a noun or one of those pronominal categories which is not expressed by means of pronominal suffixes—then the possessor again directly follows the possessum, though the final schwa of the root is lost. Compare, therefore, the following:

<i>netë-k</i>	<i>net</i> <i>këmem</i>
child-1SG	child 1PL.EXCL
‘my child’	‘our child’
<i>netë-m</i>	<i>net</i> <i>pwërpar</i>
child-2SG	child pig
‘your child’	‘piglet’
<i>net-n</i>	<i>net</i> <i>nuok</i>
child-3SG	child canoe
‘his/her child’	‘outrigger (= child of canoe)’

6.1.2.2.3 Membership of possessive classes

As with Oceanic languages in general where the same kind of structural difference is found, nouns which enter into the direct possessive construction are generally semantically inalienably possessed. On the other hand, nouns which enter into the indirect possessive construction can generally be considered to be alienably possessed. Membership of these two sets of nouns is overwhelmingly fixed in Tape in the sense that any given noun can ordinarily participate in only one of these two constructions. About three-quarters of the total number of nouns in my Tape lexicon are free form (or indirectly possessed) nouns while the remaining quarter are bound (or directly possessed) nouns.

The semantic notion of inalienability, as expressed by membership of the set of directly possessed nouns, involves the following specific sets of notions in Tape:

- Many human and animal body parts, e.g. *pëti*- ‘head’, *mëte*- ‘eye’, *tili*- ‘leg’, *jëni*- ‘intestine’, *mëdëkhë*- ‘scar’, *nivivë*- ‘wing’. However, some internal organs are expressed as free nouns, e.g. *bërdimdim* ‘brain’, *novotlip* ‘kidney’. Also, temporary manifestations of the body are likely to be expressed as free nouns, e.g. *mib* ‘fontanelle’, *nin* ‘ringworm’.
- Some intimate personal items, e.g. *mëlnge*- ‘bed’, *nivivë*- ‘penis wrapper’, *mwimwi*- ‘spirit’.
- Some body products relating to both humans and animals, e.g. *dëli*- ‘voice’, *ji*- ‘excrement’, *dee*- ‘blood’, *jëre*- ‘semen’, *luakhe*- ‘vomit’, *nidëlä*- ‘egg’. However, many body products are expressed as indirectly possessed nouns, e.g. *kësälëm* ‘snot’.
- Many parts of plants, e.g. *jëlë*- ‘sucker’, *lilë*- ‘peel’, *lune*- ‘flower (of breadfruit)’.
- Many (though by no means all) kin terms, e.g. *elwe*- ‘nephew’, *etme*- ‘father’.

- Some positions, e.g. *bwëlin* ‘behind’.
- Some commonly encountered products of things, e.g. *jomo-* ‘gratings (of kava)’.

There is, however, a handful of nouns referring to body products which have formally related free and directly suffixed roots, as set out below:

Unaffixed noun	Suffixed noun	
<i>ji</i>	<i>ji-</i>	‘excrement’
<i>de</i>	<i>dee-</i>	‘blood’

The unaffixed forms are used when a speaker wishes to refer to the body product in question without referring to its origin. For example:

I-poj *ji.*
 3SG:REAL-step.on excrement
 ‘He stepped in excrement (of, presumably, unknown origin).’

Note also the following pair for which I have no information on how the different forms are used:

Unaffixed noun	Suffixed noun	
<i>nivip</i>	<i>nivivë-</i>	‘penis wrapper’

There are, in addition, some semantically equivalent nouns which have formally unrelated roots, yet they belong to quite different morphological classes, i.e.

Unaffixed noun	Suffixed noun	
<i>tete</i>	<i>etme-</i>	‘father’
<i>pupu</i>	<i>etbë-</i>	‘grandparent’

While both sets of forms can apparently equally be used referentially, only the indirectly possessed forms appear to be used as address forms.

6.1.2.2.4 Prepositional possession

In addition to nouns that are linked in possessive constructions, two nouns can also be linked in Tape by means of the nominal preposition *ne-* (§6.3.2.2). This preposition expresses either a part-whole or a purposive relationship between the referents of the two nouns. For example:

lënglang ne pekë-n
 fat PART body-3SG
 ‘fat of his/her body’

novo ne pëte
 breadfruit.seed PART breadfruit
 ‘breadfruit seed’

nau ne tes
 swell PART sea
 ‘swell (of sea)’

tang ne netite
 basket PURP child
 ‘placenta (= basket for child)’

This form can also appear without a following noun phrase, in which case we find the third person singular possessive suffix *-n*, as in the following:

melëkh ne-n
 kava PURP-3SG
 ‘the kava of/for it’

With a handful of nouns, this preposition is used to introduce a following animate possessor, as in the following:

tang ne-n
 placenta PURP-3SG
 ‘its placenta’

The only nouns which have so far been attested as expressing possession in this way are the following:

<i>tang</i>	‘placenta’
<i>nuot</i>	‘vein, tendon’
<i>jëbëkh</i>	‘smegma’
<i>pëtinuomen</i>	‘heart’
<i>vëdkho</i>	‘gall bladder’

Directly parallel constructions using a clearly cognate preposition are also found in a number of other central Malakula languages which have been investigated so far, e.g. Naman, Neve‘ei, Avava. In each case, it is only a restricted set of body parts which is involved, so it may well be that there are not many more members of this subset awaiting discovery in Tape than those which I have just listed.

6.1.3 Noun modifiers

There are no preposed nominal modifiers in Tape, with all modifiers within the noun phrase placed after the nominal head. These modifiers will be described below under two major headings: non-numeral and numeral modifiers.

6.1.3.1 Non-numeral modifiers

My Tape corpus includes the following kinds of non-numeral nominal modifiers:

(i) the demonstratives *gi* ‘this, that’, *levër* ‘that’, and *nen* ‘that’. For example:

Dui tërep gi nëkhse-n Masing.
 man old DEM name-3SG Masing
 ‘That old man’s name was Masing.’

Ivin *dë-luo* *dui* *nen.*
 3SG:REAL:go ES-shoot man DEM
 ‘He went and shot that man.’

It should be noted that the form *levër* ‘that’—alternating freely with the form *levar*—is sometimes expressed by means of the clitic *-ër* (alternating with *-ar*), which is attached to the final element of the noun phrase. Thus:

mimi nuo levër
 spirit water that
 ‘that spirit of the water’

dui tërev-ër
 man old-that
 ‘that old man’

The form *levër/levar* can also be used as a noun phrase in its own right, with either human or non-human reference. For example:

Ip-ul *luo vengesien gi* *më-n-titing* *en* *levër.*
 3SG:IRR-write out talk REL 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-say GOAL that.one
 ‘He will write down the things that we say to that one.’

(ii) one of the third person non-singular pronominal forms (§6.1.1) which functions as a definite number marker. For example:

Tirakh *er*
 Tirakh.person PL
 ‘the people of Tirakh’

The plural postmodifier *er* is also optionally cliticised, as *-r*, to a noun ending in a vowel; when this occurs, there is accompanying lengthening of the final vowel of the preceding noun. Thus:

dui er → *duiir*
 man PL
 ‘the men’

(iii) a small set of adjectives, including *bëte* ‘forbidden, sacred’, *tirkhëbëb* ‘wild, feral’, *tërep* ‘old (sg.)’, *të(r)tërep* ‘old (pl.)’, *emu* ‘first’, *etakhdo* ‘last’. For example:

nib bëte
 fire taboo
 ‘forbidden fire’

tiu tirkhëbëb
 fowl wild
 ‘wild fowl’

dui tërtërep
 man old:PL
 ‘old men’

To this set we can also add the class of stative intransitive verbs which can be used without inflection as adjectival modifiers to a noun. For example:

netite vës
child little
'little child'

dui set
man bad
'bad man'

(iv) quantifiers such as *rivwi* 'all', *itar* 'many', *nitvelën* 'one of a pair'. For example:

netite esed itar
child POSS:1PL.INCL many
'many of our children'

dui rivwi
person all
'everybody'

tili-n nitvelën
leg-3SG one.of.pair
'one of his/her legs'

6.1.3.2 Numerals

There is an open-ended set of numerals in Tape, all of which can appear as postmodifiers within a noun phrase, as illustrated by the following:

lipakh isimëk
dog one
'one dog'

dui iru
man two
'two men'

The full set of numerals to ten is set out below:

1	<i>isimëk, isig</i>
2	<i>iru</i>
3	<i>itël</i>
4	<i>ives</i>
5	<i>ilëm</i>
6	<i>lëmjis</i>
7	<i>jiru</i>
8	<i>jitël</i>
9	<i>jevet</i>
10	<i>isngel</i>

Note that the forms for 7 and 8 are derived from the forms for 2 and 3 by the addition of the prefixed element *j-*, which has no known independent function in the language. The form for 9 bears a similarity in form to the word for 4, as well as showing evidence of the same initial *j-*. The form for 6 appears to involve the root of the word for 5,⁷ though the following element *-jis* has no known independent function in Tape.

There is also a series of ordinal numerals in Tape which function as nominal postmodifiers. The form *pitemu* ‘first’ is suppletive with respect to the cardinal numerals *isimäk/isig*. Other ordinal numerals, however, are expressed using the basic pattern of *pite-* followed by the root of the basic numerals, with loss of the initial vowel of those numerals which begin with *i-*.⁸ Thus:

1 st	<i>pitemu</i>
2 nd	<i>piteru</i>
3 rd	<i>pitetël</i>
4 th	<i>piteves</i>
5 th	<i>pitelëm</i>
6 th	<i>pitelëmjis</i>
7 th	<i>pitejiru</i>
8 th	<i>pitejitël</i>
9 th	<i>pitejevet</i>
10 th	<i>pitesngel</i>

In common with many other languages of central and northern Vanuatu including neighbouring V’ënen Taut (Fox 1979:88–91), the cardinal numerals 1–10 have separate irrealis forms when they are used as postmodifiers to the object of an irrealis verb, or as independent object noun phrases in their own right. Contrast, therefore, the following in Tape:

En-lep *iru.*
1SG:IRR-take two
‘I took two.’

Be-lep *iporu.*
1SG:IRR-take IRR:two
‘I will take two.’

The respective irrealis forms of the numerals just presented are as follows:

1	<i>iposig, iposimäk</i>
2	<i>iporu</i>
3	<i>ipotël</i>
4	<i>ipoves</i>
5	<i>ipolëm</i>
6	<i>ipolëmjis</i>
7	<i>ipojiru</i>

⁷ Note the partial similarity in shape between the root *lëm* ‘five’ and *lëme-* ‘hand’. It is common in the languages of Vanuatu for there to be a connection between the word for five and the numerals 6–9.

⁸ The form *pite-* has no known independent function in Tape.

8	<i>ipojitël</i>
9	<i>ipojevet</i>
10	<i>iposngel</i>

The irrealis numerals can be related to the corresponding realis forms in the following ways:

- Vowel-initial numerals lose their initial *i-* and add the prefix *ipo-*.
- Consonant-initial numerals simply add the prefix *ipo-*.

This behaviour is consistent with the idea that numerals were once rather more verbal in their behaviour, with the separable *i-* of the numerals 1–5, as well as 10, deriving from the same prefix that now regularly marks third person singular realis verbs. Similarly, the element *ipo-* that we find on the irrealis numerals corresponds exactly to the shape of the third person singular irrealis prefix of verbs.

Tape has a counting system that allows for the expression of quite high numbers. However, speakers of Tape are not always completely proficient in expressing these higher numbers. The Bislama counting system appears to have largely supplanted the indigenous counting system at an early stage, not only within the Tape community but more widely around Malakula. We find evidence of this lack of proficiency in one text where a speaker was attempting to express the year 1949 (as '49). This should have been expressed as *ingelves dëmon jevet*, but the speaker said *ingasngel ivives dëmon jevet*, which actually means 409.

To express the numbers 11–19, the cardinal numeral for 10, *isngel*, is followed by *dëmon*, with the numerals 1–9 immediately following. Thus:

11	<i>isngel dëmon isimëk</i>
12	<i>isngel dëmon iru</i>
13	<i>isngel dëmon itël</i>
14	<i>isngel dëmon ives</i>
15	<i>isngel dëmon ilëm</i>
16	<i>isngel dëmon lëmjis</i>
17	<i>isngel dëmon jiru</i>
18	<i>isngel dëmon jitël</i>
19	<i>isngel dëmon jevet</i>

The form *dëmon* has no known independent function in Tape. However, there is a cognate form in Neve‘ei of the shape *nedremwen* which functions in the same way in the derivation of numerals, while at the same time also functioning as a noun meaning ‘body’.⁹

Decades from 20 and above are formed by attaching the form *ingel-* to the following basic numerals 1–9 within a single phonological word.¹⁰ With those numerals beginning with *i-*, the initial vowel is removed. Sequences of *ll* arising over the morpheme boundary are resolved as a single consonant. Thus:

⁹ The root for ‘body’ in Tape is of a completely different shape, i.e. *pekë-*.

¹⁰ The alternation between *isngel* used in counting and the unpredictably different form *ingel-* used in the derivation of higher numerals is paralleled by a similar irregularity in V‘ënen Taut between *sënal* used in counting and *inel* used in deriving higher numerals (Fox 1979:88–90).

20	<i>ingelru</i>
30	<i>ingeltël</i>
40	<i>ingelves</i>
50	<i>ingelëm</i>
60	<i>ingelëmjis</i>
70	<i>ingeljiru</i>
80	<i>ingeljitël</i>
90	<i>ingeljevet</i>

Units between the various decades are again expressed using *dëmon* in the same way as already described for the -teens:

21	<i>ingelru dëmon isig</i>
32	<i>ingeltël dëmon iru</i>
43	<i>ingelves dëmon itël</i>

etc.

There is a separate form for 100, which appears to represent a derivation of the same pattern (i.e. 10 x 10) involving the decade formative *ingel-* and the basic numeral *isngel*. However, rather than expected **ingelisngel*, we find instead the irregular form *ingasngel*. Units above 100 are again linked to *ingasngel* by means of postposed *dëmon*. Thus:

101	<i>isngasngel dëmon isig</i>
110	<i>ingasngel dëmon isngel</i>
111	<i>ingasngel dëmon isngel dëmon isig</i>

etc.

For 200 and above, the form *ingasngel* is directly followed by the multiplicative forms of the basic numerals. The multiplicative numerals are described separately below, but the resulting numerals for the various centuries from 200 are as follows:

200	<i>ingasngel ivaru</i>
300	<i>ingasngel ivitël</i>
400	<i>ingasngel ivives</i>
500	<i>ingasngel ivilëm</i>
600	<i>ingasngel ivilëmjis</i>
700	<i>ingasngel ivijiru</i>
800	<i>ingasngel ivijitël</i>
900	<i>ingasngel ivijevet</i>

There is no separate numeral known in Tape for 1000,¹¹ and the form *ingasngel ivisngel* ('ten hundreds?') was volunteered instead.

In addition to the postmodifying functions of numerals, the same basic numerals also exhibit derived adverbial forms. The first of these derived adverbials are the multiplicative numerals, which express the number of times that an action is performed. These forms occupy adverbial slots within the clause, illustrated by the following:

¹¹ In some of the languages of central Malakula, there is a separate numeral for 1000, e.g. Neve'ei *netar*.

I-mekar-en *ivi-tël.*
 3SG:REAL-work-TR MULT-three
 ‘(S)he did it three times.’

The multiplicative forms are based on the pattern *iv(V)*- followed by the root of the basic numeral. Thus:

‘once’	<i>ivsimëk, ivsig</i>
‘twice’	<i>ivaru</i> ¹²
‘three times’	<i>ivitël</i>
‘four times’	<i>ivives</i>
‘five times’	<i>ivilëm</i>
‘six times’	<i>ivilëmjis</i>
‘seven times’	<i>ivijiru</i>
‘eight times’	<i>ivijitël</i>
‘nine times’	<i>ivejevet</i>
‘ten times’	<i>ivisngel</i>

It is difficult to generalise about the precise shape of these multiplicatives, as the initial *i*- of the basic numerals is sometimes lost and sometimes retained. In some cases, the multiplicative prefix appears as *iv*-, while in other cases it has the shape *iva*-, *ivi*- and *ive*-.

It should also be noted that the multiplicative forms *ivsimëk* and *ivsig*, in addition to meaning ‘once’, can also be used adverbially to mean both ‘one day’ and ‘at once, all of a sudden’, as in the following:

Ivsimëk *Tirakh* *i-n-mo* *ereenge* *venu* *ese-këmem* *e* *Tape.*
 one.day Tirakh 3:REAL-PL-come GOAL village POSS-1PL.EXCL LOC Tape
 ‘One day the people of Tirakh came to our village at Tape.’

I-vin *ivsig* *i-metër.*
 3SG:REAL-go at.once 3SG:REAL-sleep
 ‘(S)he went at once and slept.’

Finally, corresponding to the numerals 5 and below, there is a set of distributive forms which express the idea that an action is performed by subjects acting together in groups of a particular number, i.e. ‘one by one, individually’, ‘two by two, in twos’, ‘three by three, in threes’. Thus:

I-n-khës *sëm-simëk*
 3REAL-PL-dance REDUP-one
 ‘They danced individually.’

I-n-khës *ru-ru.*
 3REAL-PL-dance REDUP-two
 ‘They danced two by two.’

¹² I have also recorded this as *ivevaru*, and am not sure whether this reflects genuine variation or an error of some kind.

While reduplication is a recurring feature of these distributive numerals, it is not possible to generalise about the precise morphological process by which this category is expressed. The following are the forms of the distributive numerals as they have been recorded:

‘one by one’	<i>sëmsimëk</i>
‘two by two’	<i>ruru</i>
‘three by three’	<i>tëltël</i>
‘four by four’	<i>ivësves</i>
‘five by five’	<i>ililëm</i>

It should be noted that these forms can also appear in irrealis environments, in which case they accept the third person singular irrealis prefix *ipo-*, as in the following:

I-pa-n-khës *ipo-sëm-simëk.*
 3REAL-IRR-PL-dance IRR-REDUP-one
 ‘They will dance individually.’

I-pa-n-khës *ipo-ru-ru.*
 3REAL-IRR-PL-dance IRR-REDUP-two
 ‘They will dance two by two.’

Distributives involving numerals 6 or higher are expressed by means of the basic numerals without any reduplication:

I-n-khës *lëmjis*
 3REAL-PL-dance six
 ‘They danced six by six.’

6.1.4 Pro-NPs

One noun phrase construction for which there is evidence in my Tape corpus is what can be referred to as a pro-noun phrase construction. These are noun phrases which contain a stative modifier but where the referent of the noun to which this form refers is not present, and it can only be deduced by referring to a previous mention of a noun phrase within the linguistic context, or to some aspect of the non-linguistic context. Such constructions correspond, therefore, to constructions that are expressed in English by means of the form ‘one’ in association with an adjective, i.e. ‘sweet one’ in a sentence such as ‘Can I have a sweet one?’

In Tape, such constructions are expressed by means of the partitive preposition *ne-* in its third person singular suffixed form *nen*, appearing after a stative postmodifier. This structure then occupies a normal noun phrase position within the clause. We therefore find examples such as *emu nen* ‘first one’ and *etakh nen* ‘next one’ in sentences such as the following:

Gi emu ne-n *i-kë-mes.*
 REL first PART-3SG 3SG:REAL-NEC-die
 ‘The one who is the first would surely die.’

Jerete gi etakh ne-n i-kë-bëkh-jilëp.
 then REL next PART-3SG 3SG:REAL-NEC-INCEP-live
 ‘Then the next one would surely live.’

6.1.5 Relative clauses

Relative clauses in Tape are introduced by the form *gi*, which also functions as a postnominal demonstrative (§6.1.3.1) as well as a general subordinator (§6.4.4.7). Thus:

Dui gi i-vënakh nëvet esek i-të-riu.
 man REL 3SG:REAL-steal money POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-COMPL-run.away
 ‘The man who stole my money has run away.’

The relativised noun phrase can be the topic of a verbless clause, as in the following:

Dui tërep gi nëkhse-n Masing.
 man old REL name-3SG Masing
 ‘There was an old man whose name was Masing.’

Dui gi eso i-n-vin e venu esar.
 person REL up.there 3:REAL-PL-go GOAL village POSS:3PL
 ‘People who were from up there went to their villages.’

Examples have been recorded of relativised noun phrases from verbal object position, as in the following, with non-singular noun phrases being copied pronominally as object suffixes to the verb. Thus:

Kake gi i-n-sëkh-ër i-k-ska-n-iar.
 yam REL 3:REAL-PL-stand.up-3PL 3REAL-NEC-NEG-PL-touch
 ‘The yams that they had stood up mustn’t be touched.’

Ip-ul luo vengesien gi më-n-titing en levër.
 3SG:IRR-write out talk REL 1NONSG.EXCL:REAL-PL-say GOAL that.one
 ‘He will write down the things that we say to that one.’

The following illustrate a range of relativised prepositional objects:

En-lis dui gi kë-titing duen en.
 1SG:REAL-see man REL 2SG:REAL-talk ACC 3SG
 ‘I saw the man who you talked with.’

Dui gi en-titing duen-ër i-të-n-melet.
 man REL 1SG:REAL-talk ACC-3PL 3:REAL-COMPL-PL-return
 ‘The men who I was talking with have returned.’

Be-pële nib gi po-liek evibëkh ejëkhë-n.
 1SG:IRR-light fire REL 2SG:IRR-sit close LOC-3SG
 ‘I will light a fire that you will sit close to.’

B-ivin nit ar-ve lomël erenge-n.
 1SG:IRR-go place IMP:REAL-make garden LOC-3SG
 ‘I will go to where they are making the garden.’

Be-wis dui gi kë-mo jëne-n.
 1SG:IRR-call man REL 2SG:IRR-come CAUSE-3SG
 ‘I will call the man who you came for.’

The form *gi* can also be used to introduce a headless relative clause, as shown by the following examples:

Gi elakh esen i-yek i-kë-melet.
 REL husband POSS:3SG 3SG:REAL:have 3SG:REAL-NEC-return
 ‘She who has a husband would have to return.’

Gi etakh ne-n i-kë-bëkh-jilëp.
 REL next one 3SG:REAL-NEC-INCEP-live
 ‘He who was the next one would just live.’

While relative clauses are overwhelmingly marked by means of preposed *gi*, there is textual evidence that the general subordinator *te* (§6.4.4.7) is also occasionally used in this kind of construction. We therefore encounter examples such as the following:

Jere i-n-khël mili kake po-ve nëbëng te
 then 3REAL-PL-dig again yam 3SG:IRR-make ceremony SUB
ipa-n-khës jëne-n.
 3NONSG:IRR-PL-dance CAUSE-3SG
 ‘Then they would dig yams again for him to hold the ceremony that they would dance for.’

6.1.6 Coordinate noun phrases

The corpus does not at this stage include a wide range of examples of coordinated noun phrases, but the accompanitive preposition *duen* or *duon* (§6.3.2.3.1) is the only form that is attested as being used to link noun phrases in such constructions. Note that this construction is used to conjoin both animate and inanimate noun phrases. Thus:

Kënëk bë-lis pwërpar duen lipakh.
 1SG 1SG:IRR-see pig ACC dog
 ‘I will see the pig and the dog.’

B-udi nisakh duen kake.
 1SG:IRR-eat banana ACC yam
 ‘I will eat bananas and yams.’

The corpus also includes examples of multiply coordinated noun phrases which are linked in the same way. For example:

kake duon melëkh duon buos
 yam ACC kava ACC pig
 ‘yams and kava and pigs’

6.2 Verbs and verb complexes

Tape exhibits a fair degree of morphotactic complexity in its verbal prefixation, a feature which it shares with V'ënen Taut, in contrast to nearby languages such as Northeast Malakula, Naman and Neve'e, which are morphotactically rather simpler. There is in addition a limited set of object suffixes on transitive verbs. The overall pattern for Tape verbal affixation can be summarised as follows:

SUBJECT- MOOD	MOOD- ASPECT	NEGATIVE	NUMBER	INCEPTIVE	ROOT	OBJECT
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The following examples illustrate some of the morphotactic complexity of Tape verbal prefixes:

pë-ska-r-vin

1NONSG.INCL:IRR-NEG-DL-go
'we (dl. incl.) will not go'

i-kë-n-bëkh-jilëp

3REAL-NEC-PL-INCEP-live
'they will surely just live'

This section describes the morphological behaviour of verbs, as well as the behaviour of other constituents that are closely linked grammatically to verbs within what we might refer to as the verbal complex in Tape.

6.2.1 Inflectional prefixation

Verbs in Tape obligatorily mark the pronominal category of the subject by means of inflectional prefixation, which is also associated with the marking of a distinction between realis and irrealis mood.

It is common in the languages of central Vanuatu for the difference between realis and irrealis inflectional categories to be associated with patterns of root-initial mutation which reflect some kind of historical distinction between oral and nasal grade. Tape verb roots, however—as well as those of all documented neighbouring languages—exhibit no such alternation in all inflectional environments.¹³

However, verb roots in Tape do exhibit some alternations in shape of a rather different kind. It was mentioned in §5.1.1.3 that the addition of inflectional prefixes to certain categories of verbal roots of the general shape *CəCV-* promotes the application of a schwa-deletion rule which results in verb roots beginning optionally with surface consonant clusters. We therefore find frequent examples of root alternations such as the following:

mësit-ien

sick-NOM

'sickness, disease'

¹³ Aulua (Paviour-Smith, pers. comm.) and Nāti (Crowley 1998a:124–125) are Malakula languages which do show evidence of some kind of verb-initial mutation, demonstrating that this pattern is not completely absent on Malakula.

i-msit
3SG:REAL-sick
'(s)he is sick'

6.2.1.1 Subject-mood marking

Tape verbs are inflected differently according to whether the subject is a new one or if it is the same as the immediately preceding one in the discourse. It is the new subjects which exhibit the greater amount of morphological complexity and these are the prefixes which are described first below (§6.2.1.1.1), with 'echo-subject' prefixes described separately afterwards (§6.2.1.1.2).

6.2.1.1.1 Initial subjects

Verbs in Tape are obligatorily marked by subject prefixes which make a basic distinction between realis and irrealis mood. The realis prefixes are used to refer to events in the past or present, while the irrealis forms are used for events in the future, as well as to express other irrealis categories such as the following:

(i) the imperative ('do X!'), for example:

P-ivin!
2SG:IRR-go
'Go!'

Këpa-r-vin!
2NONGS:IRR-DL-go
'Both of you go!'

Këpa-n-vin!
2NONGS:IRR-PL-go
'You all go!'

In addition to the use of the irrealis mood to express the imperative, it should be noted that singular imperatives can also be expressed by means of zero prefixation. For example:

Ø-Poplej kërluu!
IMP:SG-shut door
'Shut the door!'

(ii) prohibitive ('don't do X!')

Po-ske-titing!
2SG:IRR-NEG-talk
'Don't talk!'

Pë-ska-n-mëmang!
2:IRR-NEG-PL-be.noisy
'Don't (pl.) be noisy!'

(iii) hortative ('let's do X!'), for example:

Pa-n-vin!
 1NONGSG.INCL:IRR-PL-go
 'Let's go!'

(iv) necessitative ('must X'), for example:

Naakëm p-ivin bër.
 2SG 2SG:IRR-go NEC
 'You must go.'

(v) conditional ('if X does ...'), for example:

Povër nuis ip-iu pë-ska-n-vin erenge lomël.
 if rain 3SG:IRR-rain 1NONGSG.INCL:IRR-NEG-PL-go GOAL garden
 'If it rains, we will not go to the garden.'

These subject-mood prefixes mark a distinction between singular and non-singular, but since the non-singular forms are obligatorily associated with either the following dual number marker *r-* or the plural marker *n-* (§6.2.1.4), a three-way number distinction is marked inflectionally on Tape verbs. Because other prefixes may intervene between the subject-mood prefixes and the number markers, these number prefixes should be treated in Tape as being morphotactically separate from the preceding subject-mood prefixes. The following, for example, indicate that the negative prefix can intervene between the two:

<i>më-n-titing</i>	<i>më-ska-n-titing</i>
1NONGSG.EXCL:REAL-PL-speak	1NONGSG.EXCL:REAL-NEG-PL-speak
'we (pl. excl.) spoke'	'we (pl. excl.) did not speak'

This kind of analysis for Tape is consistent with comparative evidence from neighbouring V'ënen Taut (Fox 1979:65–68), where we find examples such as the following:

*a-ha-v-hap'il*¹⁴
 3NONGSG:REAL-NEG-PL-tell.lie
 'they (pl.) did not tell lies'

In other Malakula languages such as Naman and Neve'ei, however, we need to recognise distinct sets of singular, dual and plural prefixes which cannot be further segmented morphotactically. Contrast the examples presented above for Tape with the following examples from Naman:

<i>mët-ibës</i>	<i>mët-sa-bës-i</i>
1PL.EXCL:REAL-speak	1PL.EXCL:REAL-NEG-speak-NEG
'we (pl. excl.) spoke'	'we (pl. excl.) did not speak'

Table 9: Subject-mood prefixes

Realis

¹⁴ In the orthography used for V'ënen Taut, *h* represents a velar fricative (symbolised as *kh* in this study of Tape), while *p'* represents a voiceless apico-labial stop.

	Singular		Non-singular
1	<i>en-</i>	Incl.	<i>dë-</i>
		Excl.	<i>më-</i>
2	<i>kë-</i>		<i>ka-</i>
3	<i>i-</i>		<i>i-</i>
Irrealis			
	Singular		Non-singular
1	<i>be-</i>	Incl.	<i>pa-</i>
		Excl.	<i>ba-</i>
2	<i>po-</i>		<i>këpa-</i>
3	<i>ipo-</i>		<i>ipa-</i>

Table 10: Realis paradigm for *titing* ‘speak’

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>entiting</i>	Incl.	<i>dërtiting</i>	<i>dëntiting</i>
		Excl.	<i>mërtiting</i>	<i>mëntiting</i>
2	<i>këtiting</i>		<i>kartiting</i>	<i>kantiting</i>
3	<i>ititing</i>		<i>irtiting</i>	<i>intiting</i>

Table 11: Irrealis paradigm for *titing* ‘speak’

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>betiting</i>	Incl.	<i>partiting</i>	<i>pantiting</i>
		Excl.	<i>bartiting</i>	<i>bantiting</i>
2	<i>potiting</i>		<i>këpartiting</i>	<i>këpantiting</i>
3	<i>ipotiting</i>		<i>ipartiting</i>	<i>ipantiting</i>

The basic forms of the two sets of initial subject-mood prefixes are set out in Table 9. The non-singular subject prefixes obligatorily combine with one of the number markers, i.e. *r-* in the dual or *n-* in the plural (§6.2.1.4). This means that we encounter complete paradigms such as that set out in Table 10 for the realis forms of the verb *titing* ‘speak’. The corresponding irrealis paradigm is set out in Table 11.

A number of these prefixes exhibit allomorphic variation in particular morphological environments. When two non-like vowels come together over a prefix boundary, a prefix-final vowel is systematically lost (§5.4.1).¹⁵ (It will be remembered from §5.3 that the only vowels which appear verb-initially are *i-* and *u-*.) Note, therefore, the following derivations:

¹⁵ At this stage of research, it is not certain if there is any accompanying lengthening of the vowel which remains after the loss of the vowel of the prefix.

kë-udi (→ *kudi*)

2SG:REAL-eat

‘you ate (it)’

i-udi (→ *udi*)

3SG:REAL-eat

‘(s)he ate (it)’

be-udi (→ *budi*)

3SG:IRR-eat

‘I will eat (it)’

po-uri (→ *puri*)

2SG:IRR-shut

‘you (sg.) will shut (it)’

ipo-iu (→ *ipiu*)

3SG:IRR-rain

‘it will rain’

Although the non-singular prefixes are all presented as vowel-final in Table 9, these forms are never subject to this process of vowel deletion because they are obligatorily followed by some form of consonant-initial prefix, whether a number marker, a negative marker, or some other verbal prefix which appears between these subject markers and the verb root. However, there is a general process affecting all *a*-final verbal prefixes in Tape by which the *a* shifts to *ë* if the immediately following morpheme is other than a number prefix. Thus, if some other prefix intervenes between one of these non-singular prefixes and the number prefix, we find alternations such as the following:

pa-n-titing

1NONSG.INCL:IRR-PL-speak

‘we (pl. incl.) will speak’

pë-ska-n-titing

1NONSG.INCL:IRR-NEG-PL-speak

‘we (pl. incl.) will not speak’

When the third person singular realis prefix *i-* is attached to a monosyllabic verb beginning with the same vowel, the vowel of the prefix is no longer deleted. Rather, the resulting sequence of identical vowels is realised as a lengthened vowel. Thus:

i-is (→ *iis*)

3SG:REAL-bite

‘(s)he bit (it)’

However, with a longer *i*-initial verb, the sequence of two identical vowels is resolved as a single short vowel. For example:

i-ivin (→ *ivin*)

3SG:REAL-go

‘(s)he went’

When the first person singular realis prefix *en-* appears before a following root that begins with *r*, the final *n* optionally shifts to *d*.¹⁶ For example:

en-rəngdo ~ *ed-rəngdo*
 1SG:REAL-know
 ‘I know’

Alternatively, this could be treated as a case of optional insertion of phonetic [d] between *n* and *r* with no change needed in the phonemic representation of the form. Thus, phonemic /en-rəŋ/ could be seen as alternating phonetically between [enrəŋ] and [endrəŋ].

Table 12: Irrealis paradigm for *ivin* ‘go’

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>bivin</i>	Incl. Excl.	<i>parvin</i> <i>barvin</i>	<i>panvin</i> <i>banvin</i>
2	<i>pivin</i>		<i>kəparvin</i>	<i>kəpanvin</i>
3	<i>ipivin</i>		<i>iparvin</i>	<i>ipanvin</i>

In addition to the regular patterns of subject marking described above, there is one known irregular verb in Tape. The very common verb *ivin* ‘go’ has two different root forms: *ivin* in the singular and *vin* in the non-singular.¹⁷ Table 12 sets out the resulting irrealis paradigm for this verb.

In at least some of the languages that are spoken in the neighbourhood of Tape, there is an additional pattern of subject marking which can be referred to as an ‘impersonal’ construction. This is a construction in which there is no overtly expressed noun phrase subject, while the subject marking on the verb itself is different in form from any of the ordinary subject prefixes. Verbs with this kind of subject marking are overwhelmingly transitive, and the object is often—though by no means always—fronted for contrast. The following illustrates this construction in Naman:

Nibu nakh rə-khores khən-gən.
 bamboo DEM IMP:REAL-cut SOURCE-1SG
 ‘That bamboo was cut from me.’¹⁸

V’ënen Taut also has an impersonal construction (Fox 1979:66–67), which is expressed by means of a subject prefix which is identical in shape with the third person non-singular subject marker (*a-*), but without the otherwise obligatory associated dual or plural prefixes. Contrast, therefore, the following:

a-tr-i
 3NONG:REAL-cut-3SG
 ‘one cut it, it was cut’

¹⁶ Remember, of course, that /d/ is phonetically prenasalised (§5.2).

¹⁷ This irregularity has a parallel in Neve’ei, where we find the root *vu* in the singular and dual and *tovu* in the plural.

¹⁸ While this is translated here by means of the passive in English, this is still an active construction in Naman. A structurally more faithful—if stylistically somewhat awkward—translation would be something like ‘One cut that bamboo from me’.

d-ivin
 ES-go
 ‘and (singular subject) went’

dë-n-vin
 ES-PL-go
 ‘and (plural subjects) went’

The echo subject prefix in Tape functions in a very similar way to the echo subject prefixes described for the languages of southern Vanuatu (Lynch 2002:177–178). Fox (1979:82–85) also describes a prefix *ka-* in V’ënen Taut, which he refers to as a marker of a ‘dependent verb’, and this appears to directly parallel the behaviour of *dë-* in Tape. The echo subject prefix appears in place of the subject prefixes set out in Table 9, and a verb carrying this prefix never appears as the initial verb in a discourse. This prefix does not distinguish between realis and irrealis mood, and a verb carrying this prefix takes its value for mood from the mood marking of the initial verb. If there is a change in mood between an initial verb and a following verb, then both must take initial subject prefixes, as in the following:

I-n-vin *ejëkhë-n* *mwëliun* *ipa-n-ve* *nëbëng* *esen.*
 3REAL-PL-go GOAL chief 3NONGS:IRR-PL-make ceremony POSS:3SG
 ‘They would go to the chief to perform his ceremony.’

The subject prefix *dë-* expresses a coordinating function in examples such as the following, by simply echoing the subject and mood categories of the preceding verb:

B-ivin *dë-liek.*
 1SG:IRR-go ES-stay
 ‘I will go and stay.’

Po-mo *dë-lep* *kake.*
 2SG:IRR-come ES-take yam
 ‘Come and take the yams.’

Ip-ivin *dë-mekar* *Lakatoro.*
 3SG:IRR-go ES-work Lakatoro
 ‘(S)he will go and work at Lakatoro.’

When the initial verb carries non-singular marking, the echo subject marker is also obligatorily followed by one of the number prefixes, as shown by the following:

Më-r-vin *dë-r-vëtir.*
 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-DL-go ES-DL-stand
 ‘We (dl. excl.) went and stood up.’

I-n-vin *dë-n-liek* *elëvenu.*
 3:REAL-PL-go ES-PL-stay inside
 ‘They went and stayed inside.’

The echo subject prefix does not simply express a coordinating function, however, as it is very frequently attested on the verbs *ivin* ‘go’ and *mo* ‘come’ to express the direction of an action. A verb such as *riu* ‘escape’ is indeterminate with respect to direction hither or thither, and this distinction can be expressed by means of an echo verb, as in the following:

dë-n-vin-vin eies jere dë-n-khëj bëni netë-n-ar dë-n-sëngen
 ES-PL-REDUP-go up then ES-PL-kill dead child-3SG-DEM ES-PL-put.into
elel lib en i-n-udi.
 into bamboo and 3:REAL-PL-eat
 ‘They carried him on their shoulders and went along the river uphill and walked about
 up there and then they killed that child of his and put him into bamboo and ate him.’

Although the discussion above describes a range of contexts in which the echo subjects are used in Tape, there are many contexts in which verbs would be eligible for echo subject marking, yet they appear with initial subject marking. Alongside textual examples such as the following in which the first verb carries initial subject marking and the second verb carries echo subject marking:

Kënëk duon Kipion më-r-vin dë-r-vëtir erenge-n.
 1SG ACC Kipion 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-DL-go ES-DL-stand LOC-3SG
 ‘Kipion and I went and stood in it (i.e. the cave).’

we find many examples such as the following, in which both inflected verbs carry initial subject marking:

I-r-mo i-r-luluakh eji.
 3REAL-DL-come 3REAL-DL-fire.shots here
 ‘The two of them came firing shots here.’

There is, in fact, something of an age correlation in my—albeit rather narrow—range of speakers. Of the three speakers who have contributed to my textual corpus of Tape, Speaker A is in his eighties, Speaker B is in his sixties, and Speaker C is in his fifties. The incidence of echo subject prefixes in environments where, from the preceding discussion, they may be expected,¹⁹ is as follows for each of these three speakers:

Speaker A	63.2%
Speaker B	8.7%
Speaker C	0.0%

Thus, the older the speaker, the more likely it is that the echo subject prefixes will be used, with the youngest speaker not using them at all. The distribution of this feature in my Tape corpus is consistent with the idea that younger speakers are showing evidence of structural interference from their dominant language, Northeast Malakula, where parallel structures appear to be absent.²⁰

6.2.1.2 Mood-aspect

¹⁹ I have excluded from these counts the use of repeated *d-ivin d-ivin d-ivin* to express ongoing actions, as this is structurally somewhat different from the remaining functions of verbs carrying echo subjects. All speakers made frequent use of this construction, regardless of how frequently or infrequently they used this construction in other environments.

²⁰ This conclusion needs to be checked, though McKerras (2000) makes no reference to any verbal prefixes which could be seen as being similar in function to this prefix in Tape.

Immediately following the realis subject-mood markers described in §6.2.1.1 is a second order of verbal prefixes. These express a number of additional specific mood or aspect categories, each of which is described in turn below.

6.2.1.2.1 Continuative

The first of these is a prefix which expresses the continuative meaning of ‘still’.²¹ The basic form of this prefix is *de-*, but when the immediately following prefix is one of the non-singular markers *r-* or *n-*, it has the form *da-*. The following illustrates the *de-* variant of the continuative prefix:

Netë-n i-de-vës ogi.
 child-3SG 3SG:REAL-CONT-small only
 ‘Her child was still only small.’

The *da-* variant is illustrated by the following:

Më-da-n-vës.
 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-CONT-PL-small
 ‘We (excl.) are still small.’

When this prefix appears before a vowel-initial root, it regularly loses its final vowel to become *d-* (§5.4.1). For example:

i-d-ivin
 3:REAL-CONT-go
 ‘(s)he is still going’

e-d-udi
 1SG:REAL-CONT-eat
 ‘I am still eating (it)’

The continuative prefix is more frequently attested when the following morphotactic slot is occupied by the negative marker (§6.2.1.3). This combination of prefixes expresses the meaning of ‘not yet’.²² Because the number prefixes invariably follow the negative marker, the continuative prefix appears in its basic form of *de-* rather than as *da-* for all numbers, as in examples such as the following:

I-de-ske-pële nib.
 3SG:REAL-CONT-NEG-light fire
 ‘(S)he has not yet lit the fire.’

²¹ Fox (1979:63–64) describes a prefix of the shape *d(a)-* with the same function in V’ënen Taut, which occupies a parallel morphotactic slot, as shown by examples such as the following:

i-da-ma
 3SG:REAL-STILL-come
 ‘(s)he is still coming’

²² This again parallels what we find in V’ënen Taut, with examples such as the following:

a-d-a-v-takhtakh
 3NONGS:REAL-STILL-NEG-PL-burn.off
 ‘they have not yet burnt off’

I-de-sk-ivin *ejëkhë-n* *elakh* *esen.*
 3SG:REAL-CONT-NEG-go GOAL-3SG husband POSS:3SG
 ‘She has not yet gone to her husband.’

I-de-ska-n-tëkh *lu-n.*
 3REAL-CONT-NEG-PL-knock.out tooth-3SG
 ‘They have not yet knocked out her teeth.’

Table 13: Realis continuative paradigm for *titing* ‘speak’

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>edetiting</i>	Incl.	<i>dëdartiting</i>	<i>dëdantiting</i>
		Excl.	<i>mëdartiting</i>	<i>mëdantiting</i>
2	<i>këdetiting</i>		<i>këdartiting</i>	<i>këdantiting</i>
3	<i>idetiting</i>		<i>idartiting</i>	<i>idantiting</i>

The continuative prefix has so far only been attested in association with preceding realis subject prefixes, and I am not sure whether they may or may not be used with irrealis markers. The first person singular realis prefix *en-* regularly loses its final consonant before the continuative marker (§5.4.3), as illustrated by the following:

Kënek *e-de-vës.*
 1SG 1SG:REAL-CONT-small
 ‘I am still small.’

In the non-singular, the continuative prefixes are also obligatorily accompanied by number markers and, as noted above, the continuative is marked by *da-*. The combinations of subject prefixes, continuative prefixes and number prefixes result in the paradigm for the verb *titing* ‘speak’ set out in Table 13.

6.2.1.2.2 Completive

Also appearing immediately after the subject-mood markers is the second-order prefix *të-*, which expresses a completive function.²³ This form is attested only in conjunction with preceding realis subject prefixes, and once again it is not clear whether they may be used with irrealis markers. In contrast to the continuative prefix which varies in shape between singular and non-singular, the completive marker has the same shape for all numbers. Thus:

Kë-të-vës.
 2SG:REAL-COMPL-small
 ‘You have become small.’

²³ Fox’s (1979:62–63) account of V’ënen Taut refers to a prefix of the shape *ta-* which occupies a parallel morphotactic slot, describing it also as a completive marker. For example:

kë-ta-ma
 2SG:REAL-COMPL-come
 ‘you have come’

I-të-n-mo
 3REAL-COMPL-PL-come
 ‘They have come.’

The vowel of this prefix is regularly lost before a verb root beginning with a vowel (§5.4.1), as illustrated by the following:

Kë-t-ivin.
 1SG:REAL-COMPL-go
 ‘You have gone.’

It should be noted that in the first person singular, the normal realis prefix *en-* is replaced with the unpredictable form *na-*. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Na-t-ivin.
 1SG:REAL-COMPL-go
 ‘I have gone.’

Table 14: Realis completive paradigm for *metër* ‘sleep’

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>nat(ë)metër</i>	Incl.	<i>dëtërmëtër</i>	<i>dët(ë)nmetër</i>
		Excl.	<i>mëtërmëtër</i>	<i>mët(ë)nmetër</i>
2	<i>kët(ë)metër</i>		<i>këtërmëtër</i>	<i>kët(ë)nmetër</i>
3	<i>it(ë)metër</i>		<i>itërmëtër</i>	<i>it(ë)nmetër</i>

It will be remembered from §5.1.1.3 that schwa often alternates with zero. Before the plural prefix *n-*, the final schwa of the completive marker is often deleted, with accompanying syllabification of the nasal of the number marker. Taking into account the various comments just presented about the completive prefix, we therefore encounter paradigms such as that in Table 14 for the verb *metër* ‘sleep’.

6.2.1.2.3 Necessitative

A third category in this morphotactic slot is the necessitative marker *kë-*, which is again attested only after the realis subject prefixes. This category expresses the idea of ‘must’ or ‘have to’, as in the following:

I-kë-n-tëkh *lu-n.*
 3:REAL-NEG-PL-knock.out tooth-3SG
 ‘They have to knock out her tooth.’

In addition to this necessitative meaning, there is an additional rather different function of *kë-*, which is sometimes found in complex sentences in the clause expressing a consequence after an initial clause that is marked by the conditional subordinator *povër* ‘if’ (§6.4.4). The following textual examples illustrate this aspect of the behaviour of this prefix:

Povër i-ska-dang *luo lu-n* *netë-n* *dui gi* *emu nen*
 if 3:REAL-NEG:PL-pull out tooth-3SG child-3SG boy REL first one

i-kë-mes.

3SG:REAL-NEC-die

‘If they did not pull out her tooth, her first son would die.’

Povër tëvet ip-ivin ipo-vëtir ejëkhë-dui i-kë-vwirvwiri
if woman 3SG:IRR-go 3SG:IRR-stand ACC-man 3SG:REAL-NEC-reveal

en elakh esen.

GOAL husband POSS:3SG

‘If a woman goes and stands with (i.e. marries) a man, she will reveal it to him.’

Povër ipo-sëkha tegi i-kë-ve kemru.

if 3SG:IRR-not.exist something 3SG:REAL-NEC-happen.to 2PL

‘If it hadn’t been (thus), something would have happened to the two of you.’

The final vowel of this prefix is affected by the same general processes described in the preceding sections for the other verbal prefixes. We therefore find examples such as the following in which the final vowel of the prefix is systematically lost before a vowel-initial root (§5.4.1):

I-k-ivin.

3:REAL-NEC-go

‘(S)he had to go.’

The following demonstrate that the schwa of the prefix is optionally deleted before consonants (§5.1.1.3), resulting in word-medial two- and three-member consonant clusters:

I-k-melet.

3SG:REAL-NEC-return

‘(S)he had to return.’

Kake gi i-k-ska-n-iar.

yam DEM 3:REAL-NEC-NEG-PL-touch

‘They must not touch the yams.’

It should be pointed out that when the first person singular realis prefix *en-* is followed by the necessitative prefix *kë-*, this sequence is unpredictably realised by means of the portmanteau form *gë-*, as illustrated by the following:

g-ivin.

1SG:NEC-go

‘I had to go’

6.2.1.3 Negative

The languages which neighbour Tape’s traditional territory mark verbal negation in a variety of ways. In Northeast Malakula, a negative particle is placed before the inflected verb (McKerras 2000). For example:

sete e-vini

NEG 3SG:REAL-come

‘(s)he did not come’

Naman follows a widespread pattern in central and northern Vanuatu languages in marking negation with a discontinuous affix, the prefixed element of which appears between a number-marked subject-mood prefix and the verb, while there is a suffixed element which appears after the verb, or after the final element of a complex verb involving an initial inflected verb and a following unprefixed nuclear serial verb (Crowley 2006c). For example:

në-së-vale-si
1SG:REAL-NEG-come-NEG
'I did not come'

kë-së-tëkh *lue-si*
2SG:IRR-NEG-take out-NEG
'you will not take (it) out'

Finally, in V'ënen Taut, negation is marked by means of a prefix only (Fox 1979:65–66). For example:

i-a-sakhëv
3SG:REAL-NEG-sneeze
'(s)he did not sneeze'

The pattern in Tape is essentially the same as that of V'ënen Taut in that there is a single prefixed morphotactic slot within the verb that is reserved for the expression of negation. The basic form of the negative prefix in Tape is *ske-* in the singular and *ska-* in the non-singular. The following present a number of instances of corresponding affirmative and negative forms of verbs:

<i>i-mekar</i> 3:REAL-work '(s)he works'	<i>i-ske-mekar</i> 3:REAL-NEG-work '(s)he is not working'
<i>be-titing</i> 1SG:IRR-talk 'I will talk'	<i>be-ske-titing</i> 1SG:IRR-NEG-talk 'I will not talk'
<i>i-r-khuos</i> 3:REAL-DL-strong 'they (dl.) are strong'	<i>i-ska-r-khuos</i> 3:REAL-NEG-DL-strong 'they (dl.) are not strong'
<i>dë-n-rëngdo</i> 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-know 'we (pl. incl.) know'	<i>dë-ska-n-rëngdo</i> 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-NEG-PL-know 'we (pl. incl.) do not know'
<i>i-de-pële</i> 3:REAL-STILL-light '(s)he is still lighting (the fire)'	<i>i-de-ske-pële</i> 3:REAL-STILL-NEG-light '(s)he has not yet lit (the fire)'

While subject prefixes generally combine with negative prefixes by simply being placed one after the other in sequence with no change in the shape of either prefix, it should be noted that the first person singular realis subject marker *en-* undergoes unpredictable loss of the final consonant to become *e-* before the negative prefix. Thus:

en-rëngdo
1SG:REAL-know
'I know'

e-ske-rëngdo
1SG:REAL-NEG-know
'I don't know'

The second person non-singular subject marker *këpa-* also loses its initial syllable and becomes *pë-* when the negative prefix is present. For example:

këpa-n-mëmang
2NONGSG:IRR-PL-be.noisy
'you (pl.) will be noisy'

pë-ska-n-mëmang
2NONGSG:IRR-NEG-PL-be.noisy
'you (pl.) will not be noisy'

6.2.1.4 Number

As mentioned in §6.2.1, non-singular number is obligatorily marked by means of the prefixes *r-* 'dual' and *n-* 'plural'. (The singular is therefore the formally unmarked category, as we might have expected on typological grounds.) It should be noted that when the plural prefix is attached to a *t*-initial verb root, the resulting sequence of *nt* is maintained over the morpheme-boundary, even though sequences of NASAL + VOICELESS STOP are prohibited intra-morphemically by the phonotactic rules of the language (§5.3). Given that the phoneme inventory includes voiced prenasalised stops (§5.1.2), this means that over morpheme boundaries there is a contrast between [ʰd] and [nt]. Compare, therefore, the morphologically simple form *mëdes* [məⁿdes] 'fibre skirt' with the following inflected form, which is realised phonetically as [mənte^mbe]:

më-n-tebe
1NONGSG.EXCL:REAL-PL-push
'we (pl. excl.) pushed (it)'

When the plural prefix *n-* appears before a following root that begins with *r*, the *n* optionally shifts to *d*, in the same way that the first person singular realis prefix *en-* alternates with *ed-* (§6.2.1.1). Thus:

këpa-n-rëng ~ *këpadrëng*
2NONGSG:IRR-PL-hear
'you (pl.) will hear'

këpa-n-riu ~ *këpadriu*
2NONGSG:IRR-PL-run.away
'you (pl.) will run away'

When the dual prefix *r-* appears before a verb root which itself begins with *r-*, the sequence of two identical consonants is reduced to a single consonant. This means that the only overt marking of number is in the vowel of the prefix.²⁴ Thus:

këpa-r-riu (→ *këpariu*)
2NONGSG:IRR-run.away
'you will both run away.'

²⁴ I have no data at this stage as to what happens when plural *n-* immediately precedes an *n*-initial verb.

6.2.1.5 Inceptive

There is a final pre-verbal prefix in Tape, which appears after the number markers. This is the form *bëkh-*, which can be glossed as ‘inceptive’.²⁵ This basically expresses the idea that something just happens of its own accord, as in the following:

i-bëkh-vin
3:REAL-INCEP-go
‘(s)he just went’

i-kë-bëkh-jilëp
3:REAL-NEC-INCEP-live
‘(s)he must just live’

The fact that this prefix must be ordered after the number markers in Tape (and therefore after all other prefixes) is indicated by examples such as the following:

dë-n-bëkh-rap
1NONSG.EXCL:REAL-PL-INCEP-clear.garden
‘we (pl. excl.) just cleared the garden’

i-n-bëkh-lulo
3:REAL-PL-INCEP-plant
‘they (pl.) just planted (it)’

6.2.2 Object marking

Table 15: Object suffixes

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	-ëk	Incl. Excl.	—	-ëd
2	-ëm		—	—
3	-Ø		—	-ër

Transitive verbs accept a limited range of pronominal object suffixes according to the defective paradigm set out in Table 15. The limited range of object suffixes is paralleled in nearby languages such as V’ënen Taut (Fox 1979:81) and Naman (Crowley 2006c). These object suffixes are illustrated by the following:

En-lis-ëm.
1SG:REAL-see-2SG
‘I see you.’

²⁵ Fox (1979:54–69) provides no evidence for a prefix category in this morphotactic position in V’ënen Taut. However, he does refer to the clearly cognate ‘proximity’ marker *p’ëkh-*. In V’ënen Taut, this appears before the number markers rather than after them as in Tape (Fox 1979:64–65). For example:

a-p’ëkh-v-p’ëlt
3NONSG:REAL-PROX-PL-join
‘they have all just joined’

I-n-sëkh-ër.

3:REAL-PL-stand.up-3PL

‘They stood them up.’

Third person singular inanimate objects are invariably marked in my corpus by means of zero suffixation, as in the following:

Dui tërev-ar i-lis-Ø.

man old-that 3:REAL-see-3SG

‘That old man saw it.’

However, when a third person singular pronominal object has animate reference, it is overwhelmingly marked in my Tape corpus instead by means of the independent pronoun *en*. For example:

I-n-vwër ipa-n-khëj en.

3REAL-PL-want 3IRR-PL-kill 3SG

‘They wanted to kill him.’

The difference in behaviour of third person singular inanimate *vs.* animate pronominal objects is well illustrated by a sentence from a text which comes shortly after the previous example in which the person referred to had by then been killed and was being prepared for baking in lengths of bamboo. The now-dead—hence inanimate—individual is referred to in this second instance by means of a zero-object marker in the following:

Dë-n-sëngen elel lib en i-n-udi.

ES-PL-put.into.bamboo inside bamboo and 3REAL-PL-eat

‘(And) they put (him) into the bamboo and they ate (him).’

The object suffixes presented above regularly lose their initial vowel when they are attached to a verb that ends in a vowel (§5.4.1). Thus:

i-rëngdo-k

3SG:REAL-know-1SG

‘(s)he knows me’

i-tini-k

3SG:REAL-bury-1SG

‘(s)he buried me’

i-jile-m

3SG:REAL-wash-2SG

‘I washed you’

en-jovo-m

1SG:REAL-follow-2SG

‘I followed you’

i-jile-d

3SG:REAL-wash-1PL.INCL

‘(s)he washed us (incl.)’

i-n-rëngdo-d

3SG:REAL-PL-know-1PL.INCL

‘they know us’

i-n-tini-r

3:REAL-PL-bury-3PL

‘they buried them’

en-rëngdo-r

1SG:REAL-know-3PL

‘I know them’

In addition, with verb roots which end in *-e*, the final vowel shifts to *a* before the first person singular object suffix *-k* and the third person plural suffix *-r*. For example:

i-jila-k

3SG:REAL-wash-1SG

‘(s)he washed me’

i-jila-r
 3SG:REAL-wash-3PL
 '(s)he washed them'

The first person singular object suffix also loses the initial vowel to become *-k* after a root ending in *ng*. Contrast the following:

kë-lis-ëk
 2SG:REAL-see-1SG
 'you see me'

këpa-n-rëng-k
 2NONSG:IRR-PL-hear-1SG
 'you (pl.) will hear me'

With those categories of pronominal objects for which there are no separate object suffixes, as well as for third person singular pronominal objects with animate reference, the object is expressed by means of one of the independent pronouns set out in §6.1.1 appearing immediately after an uninflected verb. Thus:

En-lis kam.
 1SG:REAL-see 2PL
 'I saw you all.'

I-rëngdo naakëd.
 3SG:REAL-know 1PL.INCL
 '(S)he knows us (pl. incl.).'

Reflexive and reciprocal verbs are not marked derivationally in Tape, with these meanings simply being expressed by means of the appropriate marking of pronominal objects on the verb. My corpus also includes the single verb *tëkhe* 'cough' which is obligatorily expressed as a reflexive verb, even though the action is a simple one. For example:

en-tëkha-k
 1SG:REAL-cough-1SG
 'I coughed'

kë-tëkhe-m
 2SG:REAL-cough-2SG
 'you coughed'

i-n-tëkha-r
 3:REAL-PL-cough-3PL
 'they coughed'

dë-n-tëkhe-d
 1NONSG.INCL:REAL-PL-cough-1PL.INCL
 'we (pl. incl.) coughed'

When such verbs have subjects that correspond to objects for which there are no suffixed forms, the reflexive object must be expressed by means of a free form object. Thus:

kë-n-tëkhe *kem*
 2REAL-PL-cough 2PL
 ‘you (pl.) coughed’

i-tëkhe *en*
 3SG:REAL-cough 3SG
 ‘(s)he coughed’

At this stage, my corpus contains only a single confirmed example of this type of verb. On the basis of comparative evidence from other languages spoken in the area, however, it is possible that there may be a small but semantically heterogenous set of other verbs which behave in the same way.

6.2.3 Verbal derivation

The discussion in this section has so far dealt exclusively with the inflectional morphology of Tape verbs. I will now turn my attention to verbal derivational morphology.

6.2.3.1 Transitivity

Verbs in Tape are overwhelmingly lexically characterised as being either intransitive (which can never be associated with an object) or transitive (which can take a following object). There is, however, a handful of verbs for which corresponding transitive-intransitive pairs are expressed by means of distinct lexical roots, or at least by means of differences in the forms of roots which do not follow any general patterns. Thus:

Transitive	Intransitive
<i>udi</i>	<i>khan</i> ‘eat’
<i>luo</i>	<i>lu(luakh)</i> ‘shoot’
<i>tabëkh</i>	<i>tabkhën</i> ‘cook’
<i>lëkhlēkh</i>	<i>lëlëkh</i> ‘hang’
<i>vwiri</i>	<i>vwër</i> ‘say’

In addition, there is a small number of transitive verbs which have reduplicated intransitive equivalents, i.e.

Transitive	Intransitive
<i>khër</i> ‘scratch’	<i>khër-khër</i> ‘itch’
<i>mën</i> ‘drink’	<i>mën-mën</i> ‘drink’
<i>ul</i> ‘write’	<i>ul-ul</i> ‘write’
<i>lis</i> ‘see’	<i>li-lis</i> ‘look’
<i>tinge</i> ‘talk about’	<i>ti-ting</i> ²⁶ ‘speak’

²⁶ In addition to partial reduplication, this verb also shows evidence for an unpredictable change in the form of the root.

Finally, there is a small number of verbs which function both transitively and intransitively with no change in the shape of the root. Thus:

dëdën ‘tell lies (to)’

There is also evidence in my corpus for the derivation of transitive verbs from intransitive roots by the addition of the transitivising suffix *-en*. Attested examples that are derived on the basis of this pattern include the following:

Intransitive		Transitive	
<i>dëdëng</i>	‘afraid’	<i>dëdëng-en</i>	‘afraid of’
<i>vënakh</i>	‘steal’	<i>vënakh-en</i>	‘steal’
<i>vësvës</i>	‘teach’	<i>vësvës-en</i>	‘teach’
<i>mekar</i>	‘work’	<i>mekar-en</i>	‘do, make’
<i>titing</i>	‘speak’	<i>titing-en</i>	‘say’

My corpus also includes one example of an intransitive verb from which a corresponding serialised transitive form has been derived by the addition of the suffix *-en*. Thus, corresponding to *melet* ‘return’ we find the serialised verb *melet-en* ‘do back’, as in the following:

I-lëng *melet-en-Ø*.
 3SG:REAL-put return-TR-3SG
 ‘(S)he put it back.’

While Neve‘ei makes productive use of the suffix *-en* as a transitiviser (Musgrave 2001:71–73), the corresponding form *-an* in Naman appears to be purely vestigial (Crowley 2006c), and there is no evidence for a similar form in V‘ënen Taut (Fox 1979). It is therefore quite possible that this suffix is also vestigial in Tape, though this needs to be checked further.

In many of the languages of central Vanuatu, one of the prepositions is coopted for use as what we might refer to as a ‘pseudo-transitiviser’, allowing for the expression of a patient noun phrase immediately following a formally intransitive verb. Fox (1979:92), for example, indicates that the oblique preposition *an* in V‘ënen Taut functions in this way:

K-en *sali* *an-i*.
 2SG:REAL-do wrongly TR-3SG
 ‘You did it wrongly.’

In Naman, the oblique preposition *khën* also performs a parallel function. For example:

Na-rëb *khën* *nemakh*.
 1SG:REAL-work TR house
 ‘I built the house.’

There is some evidence from my corpus that the causal preposition *jëne-* in Tape (§6.3.2) can also be used in the same sort of way. For example:

I-n-titing *pij* *jëne-n*.
 3:REAL-PL-speak good TR-3SG
 ‘They blessed it.’

6.2.3.2 Reduplication

As with most—if not all—languages of central Vanuatu, reduplication is attested as part of the verbal morphology of Tape. In the preceding section, it was indicated that reduplication is involved in the derivation of some intransitive verbs from transitive verbs, though this is very much an unproductive process.

Reduplication is much more commonly attested in Tape with purely semantic, rather than syntactic, effect. Because the textual corpus is still fairly restricted at this stage, I am not yet in a position to state the full range of reduplication patterns in this language, along with the range of functions that it expresses. However, the functions that have been attested for reduplication in Tape—repetition and randomness of an action—by and large mirror the kinds of functions that we find in other languages of central Vanuatu.

With regard to the form of reduplication, it does appear that there is a tendency for syllables containing the high front vowel *i* to be reduplicated with schwa. We therefore encounter examples such as the following:

isimək ‘one’ *səm-simək* ‘one by one’

6.2.4 Complex verbs and verbal modifiers

While the noun phrase is a fairly tightly constrained syntactic unit in Tape (§6.1), it is rather more difficult to argue for a similarly tightly defined verbal complex in this language. The bounds of the putative verbal complex are arguably more difficult to define in Tape than is the case in languages such as Naman and Neve‘ei. In these languages, the position of the suffixed element of the discontinuous negative affix can sometimes be used to determine the boundary of a verbal complex, but in Tape there is no equivalent suffixed negative. Nevertheless, there is a range of constituents in Tape which appear to be more closely related syntactically to a verbal head than to any other constituent in the clause which I propose to describe in this section under the heading of the verb complex.

6.2.4.1 Nuclear serial verbs

It is common in the languages of central and northern Vanuatu for two (or more) verbs to appear in sequence with a single set of inflectional prefixes appearing on the initial verb and a single set of inflectional suffixes appearing on the second verb in a pattern which has come to be referred to as nuclear-layer verb serialisation (Crowley 2002b:82–92). Such constructions are well attested in Neve‘ei (Musgrave 2001:102–117) and Naman (Crowley 2006c) for which substantially larger amounts of textual data have been analysed than is the case with Tape. In Tape’s closest relative, V’ënen Taut, Fox (1979:72–81) describes a large set of what he calls ‘stem modifiers’, which he treats as derivational suffixes, and elsewhere he refers to ‘modifying adverbs of manner’ (Fox 1979:92). However, Crowley (2002:51–52) argues that these forms behave seemingly identically to what in other languages have since been analysed as nuclear serial verbs.

Despite the fact that my textual corpus of Tape is relatively limited in comparison to what has been recorded for some of these other languages, convincing evidence has emerged for the existence of nuclear-layer serial verb constructions such as we find fairly

widely distributed elsewhere, often even involving clearly cognate forms. Well-attested serial verbs in my corpus include the following:

<i>bëni</i>	‘kill’
<i>bëri</i>	‘split’
<i>bëtel</i>	‘go around’
<i>dëlo</i>	‘go slowly’
<i>khërkhër</i>	‘block, prohibit’
<i>lau</i>	‘go over’
<i>luo</i>	‘remove, take out’
<i>meleten</i>	‘return, take back’
<i>pij</i>	‘well, properly’
<i>jëjën</i>	‘tight’
<i>pongen</i>	‘do habitually’

The fact that unprefixated forms such as these are particularly tightly bound to preceding inflected verbs is illustrated by examples such as the following, in which the object suffix appears on the second element of the verbal complex, i.e. *jëjën* ‘tight’, rather than on the initial transitive verb *use* ‘hold’:

I-n-use jëjën-ër.
 3REAL-PL-hold tight-3PL
 ‘They grabbed hold of them.’

Some of the forms just listed are used as independent verbs in their own right, while also appearing productively as the second element of a serial verb construction. One example of this type is *dëlo* ‘go slowly’. For example:

I-dëlo.
 3SG:REAL-go.slowly
 ‘(S)he went slowly.’

I-ling-ling dëlo.
 3SG:REAL-REDUP-walk slowly
 ‘(S)he walked slowly.’

The form *pij* ‘good’ is used as an ordinary intransitive verb meaning ‘good’. For example:

I-pij.
 3SG:REAL-good
 ‘It is good.’

However, it is also used as the second element of a number of verbal complexes to express an action that is performed well or properly. For example:

En-lëng pij nol esek.
 1SG:REAL-put properly book POSS:1SG
 ‘I put my book (somewhere) properly.’

Some independent verbs, however, while they are attested as the second element of a serial verb construction of this type, appear only in single fixed expressions. Thus, while

metër ‘sleep’ and *lilis* ‘look’ are both used independently, *lilis* only appears as the second element of a serial verb construction in the single complex verb *metër lilis* ‘dream’.

Another form which functions as both an initial inflected verb and as an uninflected serialised verb is *melet*. Its use as an ordinary intransitive verb meaning ‘return’ is illustrated in the following:

En-melet emakh
1SG:REAL-return home
‘I returned home.’

In its transitivised form *meleten* (§6.2.3.1), it can be used as a serial verb in association with a preceding transitive verb to mean ‘back’, as in the following:

I-lëng melet-en.
3SG:REAL-put return-TR
‘(S)he put (it) back.’

The remaining forms that were presented in the list above have been attested only as the second verb in the serial verb construction and have no attested independent function as main verbs. Thus, while the form *luo* indicates that an action is performed outwards, it has never been attested as a stand-alone verb in its own right. Thus:

I-lep luo.
3SG:REAL-take go.out
‘(S)he took (it) out.’

**I-luo.*
3SG:REAL-go.out

The form *pongen* is used in such constructions to indicate that an action is performed habitually, as in the following:

I-khëj pongen dui-ar.
3SG:REAL-kill HABIT person-that
‘(S)he had been killing those people.’

Nunu esen i-ve pongen-Ø.
mother POSS:3SG 3SG:REAL-do HABIT-3SG
‘His/her mother used to do it.’

There are also examples such as *liek khëmëj* ‘be quiet’ in which *liek* ‘stay’ is followed by *khëmëj*. The latter form has not been attested independently, so it may turn out to be a functionally restricted form, or it may simply be that the corpus is at this stage not sufficiently broad to have revealed other examples of this form in association with other verbs.

6.2.4.2 Other verbal modifiers

There is also evidence in my Tape corpus for a number of other forms which appear to be grammatically closely linked to verbs and which follow the verb that they modify, though these forms appear to be less tightly linked to the verb than the serialised verbs discussed above, in that the object of the verb intervenes between the verb and the

following adjunct. One form of this type that has been attested is *mili* ‘again’, and this is illustrated by the following:

Këpa-n-rëng-k mili en-titing.
 2:IRR-PL-hear-1SG again 1SG:REAL-speak
 ‘You will all hear me again speaking.’

Another verbal modifier of this type appears to be *ikhos* ‘very much’. For example:

I-n-ututakh dui ikhos.
 3REAL-PL-be.bad.to person very.much
 ‘They were very bad to people.’

The form *bër* has also been attested in a single example, apparently with a necessitative meaning in association with a verb carrying irrealis subject marking:

Naakëm p-ivin bër.
 2SG 2SG:IRR-go must
 ‘You must go.’

However, the full range of occupants of this structural position has not yet been established. Indeed, it is somewhat difficult to recognise a clear difference between a purely verbal modifier and a clause-level adverbial, and the distinction may well turn out to be an artificial one.

6.3 Clause structure

The syntax of Tape will be described in two major sections: one which describes the make-up of simple sentences (§6.3), and one which describes the structure of multi-predicate sentences (§6.4).

6.3.1 Verbal and non-verbal clauses

Simple clauses in Tape can be categorised into two basic types: verbal clauses, which contain a single inflected verb (§6.3.1.1); and non-verbal clauses, which contain no inflected verb (§6.3.1.2).

6.3.1.1 Verbal clauses

The basic constituent order in Tape with underived clauses containing only core constituents with a single inflected predicate is SVO. Intransitive exemplars of this pattern include the following:

Mimi-n i-ling-ling.
 spirit-3SG 3SG:REAL-REDUP-walk
 ‘His/her spirit wandered about.’

Tili-n nitvelën i-měj.
 leg-3SG one.of.pair 3SG:REAL-break
 ‘One of his/her legs was broken.’

Transitive clauses containing nominal objects are illustrated by the following:

Dui tærtërep i-n-takhe tævëlëkh esar
 man old:PL 3:REAL-PL-marry wife POSS:3PL
 ‘The old men married their wives.’

Kënëk be-lis pwërpar duen lipakh.
 1SG 1SG:IRR-see pig ACC dog
 ‘I will see the pig and the dog.’

When an object is expressed by means of an independent pronoun, this occupies the same post-verbal position. For example:

Tirakh i-n-tëkhes këmem.
 Tirakh 3REAL-PL-chase.away 1PL.EXCL
 ‘The people of Tirakh chased us away.’

In addition to transitive verbs with a single direct object, my corpus indicates that there is also a small number of ditransitive verbs in Tape, such as *vësvësen* ‘teach’, which are associated with two unmarked noun phrases after the verb, the first object representing the recipient and the second representing the object of transfer. Thus:

Bë-ska-n-vësvës-en netite ese këmem vengesien ese
 1NONGS.EXCL:IRR-NEG-PL-teach-TR child POSS 1PL.EXCL language POSS
këmem.
 1PL.EXCL
 ‘We will not teach our children our language.’

In association with the fact that there is obligatory marking of the pronominal category of the subject on the verb (§6.2.1.1), it is possible for there to be no overt occupant of the subject noun phrase position. For example:

I-liek ogi erenge nëmakh esen.
 3SG:REAL-stay only LOC house POSS:3SG
 ‘(S)he just stayed in his/her house.’

I-ske-khěj dui.
 3SG:REAL-NEG-kill person
 ‘(S)he didn’t kill anybody.’

In fact, an examination of verbs carrying initial subject marking in textual data reveals that in about 90% of clauses there is no occupant of the pre-verbal subject position, whether by a noun (or a nominal phrase) or by a pronoun. When a pronoun is present, this invariably expresses contrast. For instance, when a speaker begins a story that follows on from another story that he has just told, the opening is likely to include no overtly expressed pronoun, as in the following:

Enisi en-vwër be-vwiri mili vengesien isig.
 now 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell again story one
 ‘Now I want to tell another story.’

However, when a new story-teller in a recording session which involves several narrators opens his story, the opening is likely to be as follows, with the pronoun present:

Kënëk en-vwër be-tinge vengesien mili isimëk.
 1SG 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell story again one
 ‘I (in contrast to the previous story-teller) want to tell another story.’

While it is possible for any verb carrying initial subject marking to be preceded by a subject noun phrase, verbs which carry echo subject marking may *never* appear with an immediately preceding overtly expressed subject. Thus, while it would be possible to say either of the following:

Dui i-n-vin.
 person 3REAL-PL-go
 ‘The people went.’

I-n-vin.
 3REAL-PL-go
 ‘They went.’

it would be possible only to say:

Dui i-n-vin dë-n-khël kake.
 person 3REAL-PL-go ES-PL-dig.up yam
 ‘The people went and dug up the yams.’

and never the following:

**Dui i-n-vin dui dë-n-khël kake*
 person 3REAL-PL-go person ES-PL-dig.up yam

Another clause type in which subjects appear to be strictly prohibited are the impersonal constructions referred to in §6.2.1.1.1, where the subject position is marked on the verb by means of the prefix *a(r)-*. Thus:²⁷

A-da-ske-tëkh lu-n.
 IMP:REAL-CONT-NEG-knock.out tooth-3SG
 ‘Her teeth had not been knocked out.’

B-ivin nit ar-ve lomël erenge-n.
 1SG:IRR-go place IMP:REAL-make garden LOC-3SG
 ‘I will go to where the garden was made.’

It should be remembered that some object categories are also expressed by means of pronominal suffixes (§6.2.2). This means that a full transitive clause can consist minimally of nothing more than an inflected verb. For example:

²⁷ Data on the impersonal construction in general are somewhat limited, and probably need further checking in the field.

En-lis-ëm.

1SG:REAL-see-2SG

‘I saw you.’

I-n-sëkh-ër.

3:REAL-PL-stand.up-3PL

‘They stood them up.’

There is, however, one minor type of verbal clause which varies from the SVO pattern described above, showing instead systematic SOV order. Exceptional clauses of this type involve only the single transitive verb *yek* ‘have’. With this verb, the object must always be a possessed noun phrase of some kind (§6.1.2.2). Examples of this pattern include the following:

Kënëk lipakh esek ipo-yek.

1SG dog POSS:1SG 3SG:IRR-have

‘I will have a dog.’

Nuo mimi-n i-yek.

river spirit-3SG 3SG:REAL-have

‘The river has a spirit.’

Kake lelë-n i-yek.

yam tuber-3SG 3SG:REAL-have

‘The yam has a tuber.’

6.3.1.2 Non-verbal clauses

TOPIC + COMMENT clauses can be expressed non-verbally by juxtaposing the two constituents in that order with no intervening copula. For example:

Tautu venu esek.

Tautu place POSS:1SG

‘Tautu is my place.’

Kënëk dui Tape.

1SG man Tape

‘I am a Tape man.’

Netite vës esen tëvëlëkh.

child little POSS:3SG female

‘Her little child was a female.’

In addition to a noun phrase, the comment can involve some other constituent type such as a prepositional phrase, as in the following:

Naakëd e Tape.

1PL.INCL SOURCE Tape

‘We are from Tape.’

Nuo isig ejëkh këmem.
 river INDEF LOC 1PL.EXCL
 ‘There is a river at our place.’

Although clauses of this type are commonly expressed in my corpus by means of non-verbal clauses, there is another possibility in which the inflected verb *ve* appears between the topic and the comment. This verb can function as an ordinary transitive verb meaning ‘do’ or ‘make’, as in the following:

I-n-ve nëmwël esen.
 3:REAL-PL-make garden POSS:3SG
 ‘They made his garden.’

Ve as a transitive verb can also express the meaning of ‘happen to’, as in the following:

Tegi i-kë-ve kemru.
 something 3SG:REAL-NEC-happen.to 2PL
 ‘Something would certainly happen to the two of you.’

This form can also be used to link a topic and a comment, in which case it functions as a copula. Thus:

Nëkhse-n i-ve Tar.
 name-3SG 3SG:REAL-COP Tar
 ‘His name was Tar.’

The verbal and non-verbal constructions here seem to be in genuinely free variation, as a directly parallel meaning to that expressed in the preceding example has also been attested in my textual corpus being expressed as a non-copular sentence, as follows:

Nëkhse-n Masing.
 name-3SG Masing
 ‘His name was Masing.’

Although it was mentioned above that *ve* can function as a transitive verb, the construction just described in which it functions a copula is not considered to be a transitive one. For one thing, the noun phrase which occupies the putative ‘object’ position after the copula cannot be fronted to the head of the clause in the same way that is possible for an ordinary verbal object (§6.3.5). Thus:

**Tar nëkhse-n i-ve.*
 Tar name-3SG 3SG:REAL-COP

Another consideration is that *ve* in its copula function never appears with any of the pronominal object suffixes that we find with ordinary transitive verbs (§6.2.2).

TOPIC + COMMENT clauses that are expressed non-verbally have only been attested in their negative forms by inserting the copula *ve* between the topic and the comment and treating this as an ordinary verb. Thus:

Naakëd dë-ska-n-ve Tirakh.
 1PL.INCL 1NONSG.INCL:REAL-NEG-PL-COP Tirakh
 ‘We are not Tirakh people.’

Kënëk e-ske-ve dui e Tirakh.
 1SG 1SG:REAL-NEG-COP person SOURCE Tirakh
 ‘I am not a person from Tirakh.’

Another possibility for a non-verbal clause is a presentative construction in which the referent of a single noun phrase is asserted with no accompanying constituents in the clause. Thus:

Tëvëlëkh pongen.
 woman only
 ‘There were only women.’

The negative of such clauses is expressed using the corresponding free form negative marker *iskha* ‘not exist’ after the noun. For example:

Dui iskha.
 man no
 ‘There were no men.’

When the referent of the noun phrase that is being presented in this way is being pointed to or referred to contextually, this can be indicated by use of the deictic forms *enir* or *gir* ‘that one’ appearing after the noun phrase. For example:

Nëkhse-n enir.
 name-3SG that.one
 ‘That was his name.’

Vengesien esek ogi enir.
 story POSS:1SG only that.one
 ‘That is just my story.’

Sëkho gi dë-n-mo erenge skol enir.
 year REL 1NONGS.INCL-PL-come GOAL church that.one
 ‘That was the year that we came to the church.’

Nëbëng gir.
 day that.one
 ‘That was the day.’

It should be noted that these forms can also function alone in the expression of presentative clauses if it is clear from the linguistic or non-linguistic context what it refers to. Thus:

Enir ogi.
 that.one only
 ‘That’s all.’

Gir ogi.
 that.one only
 ‘That’s all.’

Presentative clauses can also be expressed verbally, by means of the intransitive verb *liek* ‘exist’, as in the following:

Navul i-liek.
 bed 3SG:REAL-exist
 ‘There is a bed.’

Another presentative construction that is expressed verbally involves the intransitive verb *tëkh* ‘exist, be located’, as in the following:

I-tëkh erenge nuo se këmem gi nëkhse-n Luosinwo.
 3SG:REAL-be.located LOC river POSS 1PL.EXCL REL name-3SG Lowisinwei
 ‘It is located on our river whose name is Lowisinwei.’

It will be remembered that in §6.3.1.1, I referred to the apparently exceptional behaviour of *yek*, which was described at that point as a transitive verb. It is possible, however, to offer an alternative analysis of this construction by which *yek* would be treated instead as a presentative intransitive verb similar to *liek* and *tëkh*. In the case of *yek*, the subject would have to be specified obligatorily as a possessive noun phrase. Thus, the putatively transitive construction presented earlier may be analysed instead as follows:

Kënëk lipakh esek ipo-yek.
 1SG dog POSS:1SG 3SG:IRR-exist
 ‘I will have a dog (lit. my dog will exist).’

However, even if this alternative analysis were to be accepted, we will still be forced to recognise a structural anomaly with this particular clause type in that the possessor within the subject noun phrase appears to be obligatorily—rather than merely optionally—fronted. Thus, we find no attestations in my corpus of clauses of the following type in which the possessor appears in the unmarked second position within the noun phrase:

**Lipakh esek ipo-yek.*
 dog POSS:1SG 3SG:IRR-exist
 **Mimi nuo i-yek.*
 spirit river 3SG:REAL-exist

6.3.2 Prepositional phrases

The basic verbal and non-verbal clauses described in §6.3.1 can be structurally augmented by the addition of any of the types of non-core prepositional clauses described in this section. Such constituents invariably appear after the central clause constituents of subject, verb and object in the case of verbal clauses. For example:

Be-jile belet en nuo.
 1SG:IRR-wash plate LOC water
 ‘I will wash the plate in the water.’

Prepositional constructions also appear after non-verbal clauses, as in the following:

Nuo isig ejëkh këmem.
 spring one LOC 1PL.EXCL
 ‘There is a spring on our land.’

There are three different types of preposition in Tape: free prepositions, nominal prepositions and verbal prepositions.²⁸ Free prepositions are those which are directly followed by a noun or an independent pronoun with no suffixing morphology of any kind attaching to the preposition itself. Nominal prepositions are those which can accept the same pronominal suffixes that we find on directly possessed nouns (§6.1.2.2.2). Finally, verbal prepositions are those which accept the same pronominal suffixes that we find on transitive verbs (§6.2.2). In the discussion which follows, the membership and functions of each of these types of prepositions is described and exemplified.

6.3.2.1 Free prepositions

There appear to be just two free prepositions in Tape. The range of functions expressed by each of these is set out below.

6.3.2.1.1 *E* ‘(placename) spatial’

The free preposition *e* is used as a marker of any of the spatial roles of location (‘at’), source (‘(come) from’), goal (‘to’) and place of origin (‘(be) from’) with a following place name. Thus:

Ba-n-jej waia ese khaavot e Jinarur.
 1NONGS.EXCL:IRR-PL-cut fence POSS European LOC Jinarur
 ‘We will cut the Europeans’ fence at Jinarur.’

Dë-n-mo e Olsup.
 1NONGS:INCL:REAL-PL-come GOAL Olsup
 ‘We came to Olsup.’

Naakëd e Tape.
 1PL.INCL ORIGIN Tape
 ‘We are from Tape.’

Note that with disyllabic nouns in which the initial syllable contains schwa, the preposition *e* is optionally cliticised to the place name, with the schwa being deleted according to the conditions set out in §5.1.1.3. Thus:

Dë-n-mo e=Vti.
 1NONGS:INCL:REAL-PL-come GOAL=Vëti
 ‘We came to Vëti.’

It should be noted, however, that place names do sometimes appear with no preposition at all when expressing these spatial roles (§6.3.3). For example:

En i-metër Norsup.
 3SG 3SG:REAL-live Norsup
 ‘(S)he lives at Norsup.’

²⁸ This three-way subcategorisation of prepositions directly mirrors the pattern that we find in V’ënen Taut (Fox 1979:41–44) and Naman (Crowley 2006c).

Ivin Norsup.
 3SG:REAL:go Norsup
 ‘(S)he is going to Norsup.’

Ip-ivin dë-mekar Lakatoro.
 3SG:IRR-go ES-work Lakatoro
 ‘(S)he will go and work at Lakatoro.’

One context in which the spatial preposition *e* appears to be obligatory is when a generic noun with some kind of spatial reference is marked with the nominal preposition *erege-* (§6.3.2.2.1) and this is then followed by a more specific place name. In such a case, the spatial meaning is expressed again before the second noun phrase by means of the preposition *e*. We therefore find examples such as the following:

I-n-vëtir erege nëkhës e Pwitarvere dë-n-luluakh
 3:REAL-PL-stand LOC hill LOC Pwitarvere ES-PL-fire.shots

i-mo e venu ese këmem e Tape.
 3SG:REAL-come GOAL village POSS 1PL.EXCL GOAL Tape
 ‘They stood on the hill at Pwitarvere and fired shots here into our village of Tape.’

The preposition *e* can also appear before nouns other than institutionalised place names, though such nouns will normally be associated by speakers with some unstated place name. In the example below, it appears before the noun *venu* ‘village’:

Dë-n-riu e venu esed.
 1NONGS:INCL:REAL-PL-escape SOURCE village POSS:1PL.INCL
 ‘We escaped from our village.’

The final example below indicates that *e* can also be used to express the meaning of ‘about’ in relation to a story or an utterance:

Vengesien e kastom esed e Tape.
 story ABOUT tradition POSS:1PL.INCL LOC Tape
 ‘It is a story about our traditions from Tape.’

The preposition *e* has become so strongly associated with institutionalised place names that it sometimes appears before a place name which is used purely referentially and with no spatial interpretation at all, as in the following example:

Nit i-n-ul tes e nëkhse-n i-ve e Jarabu.
 place 3:REAL-PL-pay.for saltwater LOC name-3SG 3SG:REAL-COP LOC Jarabu.
 ‘The name of the place that they paid for the saltwater at is Jarabu.’

Some locational nouns (§6.3.3) also appear obligatorily with an initial *e-*, which presumably derives from the same kind of association, e.g. *elo* ‘to/by the coast’, *emakh* ‘at home’, *emel* ‘to/in the meeting house’, *esakh* ‘uphill’. In fact, the illative preposition described in the following section is also probably derived historically from a combination of the spatial preposition *e* and the directly possessed noun *lelē-* ‘interior’.

Finally, the spatial preposition *e* can precede a directly suffixed noun expressing location such as *milivi-* ‘under, beneath’.²⁹ For example:

²⁹ It is not known if this also appears with other directly suffixed nouns expressing place.

Tiu i-khan e milivi nēmakh.
 chicken 3SG:REAL-eat LOC under house
 ‘The chicken is eating under the house.’

A free preposition such as *e* can be stranded. Because this preposition exclusively governs noun phrases with inanimate reference, it is normal for a third person singular prepositional object to be expressed by means of zero in exactly the same way that we find with verbal objects (§6.2.2). We therefore find examples such as the following in textual data (where the stranded *e* is the first occurrence of *e* in the sentence):

Nit i-n-ul tes e nēkhse-n i-ve e Jarabu.
 place 3:REAL-PL-buy saltwater LOC name-3SG 3SG:REAL-COP LOC Jarabu
 ‘The name of the place that they bought the saltwater at was Jarabu.’

6.3.2.1.2 *Elēl(venu)* ‘illative’

The preposition *elēl* also expresses a spatial meaning, but refers explicitly either to location ‘inside’ something else, or motion ‘into’ something. The following examples illustrate both of these illative functions of this form:

Dui i-lunum elēl nuo.
 man 3SG:REAL-dive ILL water
 ‘The man is diving in the water.’

Dē-n-sēngen elēl nib.
 ES-PL-put.into ILL bamboo
 ‘(And) they put him into the bamboo.’

It should be noted that the preposition *elēl* combines with the noun *venu* ‘place’ to produce the locational adverb *elēlvenu* ‘inside’ (§6.3.3). For example:

I-n-vin dē-n-liek elēlvenu.
 3REAL-PL-go ES-PL-live inside
 ‘They would go and live inside.’

While this longer form is normally attested only as a locational noun, it is found in a single textual example with an immediately following noun, in which case it appears to be functioning as an alternant form of the illative preposition. Thus:

I-n-tev-ēr i-n-vin elēlvenu stoa.
 3REAL-PL-push-3PL 3REAL-PL-go ILL store
 ‘They pushed them inside that store underneath on the ground.’

6.3.2.1.3 *Uren* ‘similitive’

The form *uren*, occasionally alternating in shape with *ured*, appears in my corpus before noun phrases with the meaning of ‘like’.

I-vwiri ured en, etet esek Harry Rambe i-rēng.
 3SG:REAL-say like 3SG father POSS:1SG Harry Rambe 3SG:REAL-hear
 ‘When he said it like that, my father Harry Rambe heard it.’

Uren levër dui rivwi i-n-jej waia.
 like that person all 3REAL-PL-cut fence
 ‘Like that (i.e. at that signal), everybody cut the fence.’

Dui tërev-ar i-lis uren-ër i-metër.
 man old-DEM 3SG:REAL-see like-DEM 3SG:REAL-sleep
 ‘That old man dreamt like that.’

6.3.2.2 Nominal prepositions

Nominal prepositions are those which accept the third person singular possessive suffix *-n* described in §6.1.2.2.2 for directly suffixed nouns when they are stranded or associated with a third person singular pronominal object. Thus:

Kënëk duon Kipion më-r-vin dë-r-vëtir erenge-n.
 1SG ACC Kipion 1NONSG.EXCL:REAL-DL-go ES-DL-stand LOC-3SG
 ‘Kipion and I went and stood at it.’

Ivin evibëkh ejëkhë-n.
 3SG:REAL:go close LOC-3SG
 ‘He went close to her.’

The form and functions of each of these nominal prepositions is described in the following sections.

6.3.2.2.1 *Erenge-* ‘(non-personal) spatial’

The nominal preposition *erenge-* expresses the same range of spatial roles that are expressed by the free preposition *e*. The difference between the two lies in the fact that *e* is typically associated with following placenames while *erenge-* is typically associated with non-placenames other than personal nouns. (Note that the shorter variant *renge-* is also very occasionally attested in my corpus.) When these forms govern a following noun, the preposition appears in its unsuffixed form, i.e. *erenge* (or *renge*).

This preposition expresses the following range of specific spatial meanings:

(i) allative (‘to’), for example:

Dë-n-mo elo erenge skul.
 1NONSG.INCL:REAL-PL-come to.coast GOAL church
 ‘We came to the coast to the church.’

(ii) location (‘in’, ‘along’), for example:

I-jejër renge lip.
 3SG:REAL-slip LOC mud
 ‘(S)he slipped in the mud.’

I-tëkh erenge nuo se këmem.
 3SG:REAL-be.located LOC river POSS 1PL.EXCL
 ‘It is located along our river.’

However, when it governs an independent pronoun, it appears in its unsuffixed form. In such cases, it either loses its final schwa to become *ejëkh*, or it loses its medial schwa, retaining the final vowel.³⁰ Thus:

Nuo isig ejëkh këmem.
 river INDEF LOC 1PL.EXCL
 ‘There is a river at our place.’

It also seems that this preposition appears in its unsuffixed form when it governs a personal name. Thus:

I-n-vwër ipa-n-ul stik tabak ejkhë Misti Presis.
 3:REAL-PL-want 3NONSG:IRR-PL-buy stick tobacco SOURCE Mr Bridges
 ‘They wanted to buy tobacco stick from Mr Bridges.’

Ejëkhë- expresses a similar range of spatial functions to those that are expressed by the nominal preposition *erenge-* and the free preposition *e* described in the preceding sections, with the only difference being that *ejëkhë-* always governs personal nouns. We therefore find this preposition expressing the following range of functions:

(i) allative (‘to’), for example:

I-n-lep ivin ejëkhë-n elakh esen.
 3:REAL-PL-take 3SG:REAL:go GOAL-3SG husband POSS:3SG
 ‘They took her over to her husband.’

(ii) source (‘from’), for example:

I-n-ul tes ejkhë naakëd.
 3:REAL-PL-buy saltwater SOURCE 1PL.INCL
 ‘They bought saltwater from us.’

(iii) While the locative function (‘in’, ‘on’, ‘at’) is pragmatically unlikely with personal nouns, this preposition does express the semantically related meaning of accompanitive (‘with’). Thus:

Ip-ivin ipo-vëtir ejkhën dui.
 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:IRR-stand ACC man
 ‘She will go and stand with the man.’

Er gi i-n-liek ejëkhë-n mwëliun i-n-liek.
 3PL REL 3:REAL-PL-live ACC chief 3:REAL-PL-stay
 ‘Those who lived with the chief stayed.’

(iv) Finally, this preposition also expresses the idea of location at a place which belongs to a person (or a group of people), for example:

Nuo isig ejëkh këmem.
 river INDEF LOC 1PL.EXCL
 ‘There is a river at our place.’

³⁰ The reduced preposition *ejkhë* is the only form in the language where word-final schwa is encountered.

Dui tërep ejkhë-d isig i-ve mwëliun.
 man old LOC-1PL.INCL one 3SG:REAL-COP chief
 ‘An old man from our place was a chief.’

6.3.2.2.3 *Ejuje-* / *enkhëkhërë-* ‘beside’

The nominal prepositions *ejuje-* and *enkhëkhërë-* share the same very specific locational function, expressing the meaning of ‘beside’, as in the following:

Lipakh i-metër ejuje-n nëmakh.
 dog 3SG:REAL-sleep beside-3SG house
 ‘The dog is sleeping beside the house.’

*I-vëtir enkhëkhërë-k.*³¹
 3SG:REAL-stand beside-1SG
 ‘(S)he stood beside me.’

6.3.2.2.4 *Sëne-* / *jëne-* ‘cause’

The nominal preposition *sëne-* alternates freely with *jëne-*. The schwa of the root is commonly deleted to produce the form *sne-*, though the vowel is more likely to be retained with the *j*-initial variant. When this preposition governs a following free form noun or pronoun, it invariably appears in its unsuffixed form.

This preposition is used to indicate the following range of functions:

(i) cause (‘because of, on account of, from’), for example:

Pëti-k i-rar sëne niel.
 head-1SG 3SG:REAL-sore CAUSE sun
 ‘My head is sore because of the sun.’

I-mësit sëne nëkhmakh.
 3SG:REAL-sick CAUSE mosquito
 ‘(S)he has malaria (lit., (S)he is sick from the mosquitoes).’

(ii) purpose (‘for’), for example:

Be-sere netite ip-ivin sëne nuo.
 1SG:IRR-send.on.errand child 3SG:IRR-go PURP water
 ‘I will send the child on an errand for water.’

I-n-khël kake te ipa-n-khës jëne-n.
 3:REAL-PL-dig.up yam PURP 3NONSG:REAL-PL-dance CAUSE-3SG
 ‘They dug up the yams to dance because of them.’

6.3.2.2.5 *Ne-* ‘part-whole’

³¹ There is a noun *nëkhëkhërë-* ‘side’. What I have suggested is a preposition *enkhëkhërë-* may in fact be a misrepresentation of *e nëkhëkhërë-* ‘LOC side’.

The preposition *ne-*, rather than expressing clause-level functions, normally expresses interrelationships between two noun phrases such as part-whole, as well as purpose, characteristic, and even a particular subtype of body-part possession (§6.1.2.2.4). However, it does occasionally function as a clause-level marker of beneficiary, as in the following:

I-n-khël nëmakh ne-n tēvēlēkh esar.
 3REAL-PL-build house BEN-3SG wife POSS:3PL
 ‘They built houses for their wives.’

6.3.2.2.6 *Ra-* ‘oblique’

My corpus also includes a small number of examples of a preposition of the shape *ra-*. Although it has not been attested in its presumed third person singular suffixed form *ra-n*, it is considered unlikely that *ra* will turn out to be a free preposition given that *a* is otherwise unattested as a word-final segment (§5.3).

However, *ra-* is very rarely attested in my corpus, and appears to date only in elicited rather than textual data. Moreover, there is no function that is unique to this form, as it overlaps in function with a number of the other prepositions described here. Those functions that can be attributed to *ra-* are as follows:

(i) part-whole, for example:

nesël ra mētiu
 frond PART coconut
 ‘coconut frond’

In this function, *ra-* overlaps with the part-whole function of the preposition *ne-* described in §6.3.2.2.5.

(ii) allative, for example:

E-ske-rëng b-ivin ra kërisel.
 1SG:REAL-NEG-feel.like 1SG:IRR-go GOAL garden
 ‘I don’t feel like going to the garden.’

It is difficult to know whether *ra* represents a very rare variant for expressing these (and possibly other) functions, or if this preposition represents random influence from some other language. However, there is no viable source for *ra-* in Tape speakers’ dominant Northeast Malakula language, nor is there a similar form in V’ënen Taut (Fox 1979:41–41) or Naman (Crowley 2006c). There is a spatial preposition *ran* in Neve‘ei (Crowley 2002a:647), and this frequently appears as *ra* when there is an immediately following noun. However, speakers of Neve‘ei and Tape have not been in extensive contact either before or since colonial contact, so it is difficult to imagine how such a transfer might have taken place.

6.3.2.3 Verbal prepositions

The final category of prepositions is those which accept the same suffixes that are used to express pronominal objects to transitive verbs (§6.2.2).

6.3.2.3.1 (*E*)*duen-* / (*e*)*duon-* ‘accompanitive, instrumental’

The form *duen-* / *duon-*, with its occasional longer alternants *eduen-* / *eduon-* is one such preposition. It is clear, however, that this is not a verb of any kind, as it does not accept any of the inflectional prefixing morphology described in §6.2.1.1.

This preposition expresses the following range of meanings:

- (i) accompanitive (‘with’), in relation to animate nouns. Thus:

Be-liek duen nēmwal.
1SG:IRR-stay ACC chief
‘I will stay with the chief.’

Be-mën melëkh duen-ëm.
1SG:IRR-drink kava ACC-2SG
‘I will drink kava with you.’

It should be pointed out that while a category such as the second person singular can be expressed by means of a verbal pronominal affix, as shown in the immediately preceding example, it is also possible for this category to be expressed by means of a free form, as in the following:

En-vwër be-titing mili duon naakëm.
1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell.story again ACC 2SG
‘I want to tell another story with you.’

- (ii) accompanitive (‘with’), also in relation to inanimate nouns, for example:

Dë-n-sëkh duen melëkh.
1NONGS.INCL-PL-stand.up ACC kava
‘We stood it up with the kava.’

Kake i-mumu duen melëkh.
yam 3SG:REAL-rot ACC kava
‘The yams rotted with the kava.’

- (iii) instrument (‘with’, ‘by means of’), for example:

I-ling-ling duen nijëvjëp.
3SG:REAL-REDUP-walk INST walking.stick
‘(S)he walked with a walking stick.’

6.3.2.3.2 *En-* ‘oblique’

The last preposition to be described is *en-*. The fact that this form falls into the subset of verbal prepositions is illustrated by the existence of inflected forms such as *en-ër* in the

following, as *-ër* is otherwise attested as a third person plural marker only on transitive verbs:

Naakëd dë-n-to tes en-ër.
 1PL.INCL 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-present saltwater GOAL-3PL
 ‘We would present the saltwater to them.’

Because *en-* expresses a wide range of functions, it can be considered as the default or ‘oblique’ preposition. It will be remembered from the discussion of verbal derivational morphology in §6.2.3.1 that the transitivity suffix that is found with verbs bears the same shape as this oblique preposition. The full range of individual functions of *en-* that have been attested to date includes the following:

(i) addressee of utterance, for example:

I-n-lot en atua eser.
 1:REAL-PL-pray DAT god POSS:3PL
 ‘They prayed to their god.’

En-vwër be-vwiri en kem.
 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-say DAT 2PL
 ‘I want to say it to you all.’

I-n-momon en këmem rivwi, “Es i-vwër
 3REAL-PL-ask GOAL 1PL.EXCL all who 3SG:REAL-say

këpa-n-jej waia ese khaavot?”
 2NONGS:REAL-PL-cut fence POSS European
 ‘They asked all of us, “Who said you should cut the European’s fence?”.’

(ii) goal of verb of transfer, for example:

Naakëd dë-n-to tes en-ër.
 1PL.INCL 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-present saltwater GOAL-3PL
 ‘We would present the saltwater to them.’

Eren levër më-n-vwër ba-n-vësvës-en
 time that 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-intend 1NONGS.EXCL:IRR-PL-teach-TR
vengesien ese këmem levër en netite se këmem er.
 language POSS 1PL.EXCL that GOAL child POSS 1PL.EXCL PL
 ‘At that time, we intended to teach that language of ours to our children.’

(iii) instrument (‘with’, ‘by means of’), for example:

Be-jile belet en nuo.
 1SG:IRR-wash plate INST water
 ‘I will wash the plate with water.’

I-n-mo i-n-luluakh en tin.
 3REAL-PL-come 3REAL-PL-fire.shot INST rifle
 ‘When they came, they would fire shots with rifles.’

It was shown in §6.3.2.3.1 that this function can also be expressed by means of the preposition (*e*)*duen-* / (*e*)*duon-*.

(iv) location ‘on’, for example:

I-vëtir en pëti-n.
 3SG:REAL-stand LOC head-3SG
 ‘(S)he stood on his/her head.’

However, it has already been shown in §6.3.2.2.1 that the nominal preposition *erenge* can also be used to express this meaning.

(v) allative ‘to’, for example:

I-n-vin dë-n-takhe en nimel ese mwëliun.
 3REAL-PL-go ES-PL-take GOAL meeting.house POSS chief
 ‘They would go and take them to the chief’s meeting house.’

(vi) speaking ‘in’ a language, for example:

Be-vwiri-Ø en vengesien esek.
 1SG:IRR-say-3SG LOC language POSS:1SG
 ‘I will say it in my language.’

Again, it is indicated in §6.3.2.2.1 that the preposition *erenge* can also express this meaning.

6.3.2.3.3 Preposition stranding and instrumental shift

In keeping with what appears to be a fairly widely distributed feature among central Malakula languages—and possibly languages further afield on Malakula—there is a process of instrumental shift in Tape whereby the stranded preposition *en-*, when it expresses an instrumental function (but none of its other varied functions), is systematically shifted from the post-object position in the clause to a position between the verb and its associated object. We therefore find examples such as the following:

I-lep nëvet i-khëj en tili tëvëlëkh.
 3SG:REAL-take rock 3SG:REAL-hit INST leg woman
 ‘He took the rock and hit the woman’s leg with it.’

I-n-vënakh nëvet gi en-vwër b-ul en nëmakh.
 3REAL-PL-steal money REL 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-buy INST:3SG house
 ‘They stole the money that I wanted to buy the house with.’

En-bëruj ne gi en-vvër bë-khëj en lipakh.
 1SG:REAL-break stick REL 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-hit INST:3SG dog
 ‘I broke the stick that I wanted to hit the dog with.’

When *en* is shifted to a position immediately following a verb ending in *e*, the resulting sequence of vowels is resolved as a long vowel, with the instrumental marker being cliticised to the verb itself. Thus:

Po-sip nuo vës be-jile=en kon.
 2SG:IRR-scoop.up water little 1SG:IRR-water=INST:3SG corn
 ‘Scoop up a little water to water the corn with.’

6.3.3 Other clause-level constituents

In addition to the core clause constituents of subject, verb and object, along with prepositional phrases, clause structures can include a number of additional constituents which are typically less tightly bound to the constituents already described. These additional constituents are also more diffuse in terms of their functions, though many of these forms provide additional information about the temporal or locational orientation of the event that is encoded in the clause.

6.3.3.1 Benefactive

One particular construction that is worthy of special note is the use of the possessive markers described in §6.1.2.2.1 as markers of the benefactive when they appear as clause-level constituents. When the beneficiary is expected to benefit from an action by the consumption of something, the benefactive relationship can be expressed by means of one of the possessive constituents that is used to express edible or drinkable possession. Thus:

Be-tabëkh viakh do-m.
 1SG:IRR-roast taro BEN:ED-2SG
 ‘I will roast taro for you (to eat).’

In association with a transitive verb such as *tabëkh* ‘roast’, there is potential ambiguity here between this benefactive reading and a reading in which *viakh dom* ‘your taro (for eating)’ is interpreted as a patient noun phrase, i.e.

Be-tabëkh viakh do-m.
 1SG:IRR-roast taro POSS:ED-2SG
 ‘I will roast your taro (for eating).’

The fact that these are genuine benefactive constructions, however, is indicated by the fact that forms such as *dom* can appear after clearly intransitive verbs.

Benefactive relationships which do not involve something from which someone is expected to benefit by consumption are marked by the possessive form that is used in the expression of general possession. For example:

I-mekar ese khaavot.
 3SG:REAL-work BEN European
 ‘(S)he worked for the European.’

I-n-rap ese mwëliun jere dë-n-rap esar.
 3REAL-PL-clear.garden BEN chief then ES:REAL-PL-clear.garden BEN:3PL
 ‘They cleared gardens for the chief and then they cleared gardens for themselves.’

6.3.3.2 Non-benefactive constituents

In this section I will list a variety of uninflected clause-level markers. These are quite diffuse in terms of their specific behavioural characteristics, as is often the case with what might be loosely termed ‘adverbial’ constituents.

6.3.3.2.1 Locational forms

It will be remembered from the discussion in §6.3.2.1 that place names exhibit grammatical behaviour that distinguishes them from other categories of nouns, in that the spatial roles of location, goal and source can be marked by means of the preposition *e*, in contrast to general nouns which mark such roles by means of the prepositions *en* or (*e*)*renge*. Compare, therefore, the following:

Dë-n-mo *e* *Olsup*.
 1NONGS:REAL-PL-come GOAL Olsup
 ‘We came to Olsup.’

Dë-n-mo *erenge* *skul*.
 1NONGS:REAL-PL-come GOAL church
 ‘We came to the church.’

Place names—but not general nouns—have the additional option of being able to express these kinds of spatial roles by means of zero marking, as in the following:

En i-metër *Norsup*.
 3SG 3SG:REAL-sleep Norsup
 ‘(S)he slept at Norsup.’

In behaving in this way, place names are optionally behaving in the same way as a definable set of locational adverbs. These are forms which encode information about the spatial orientation of an event but which appear in a clause with no prepositional marking. My corpus includes the following forms:

<i>ejì</i>	‘here’
<i>etër</i>	‘there’
<i>lene</i>	‘way over there’
<i>evibëkh</i>	‘nearby’
<i>eso</i>	‘far away’
<i>esoweies</i>	‘above’
<i>esakh</i>	‘uphill’
<i>elo</i>	‘below, downhill, coastwards’
<i>emu ~ elikh</i>	‘at front, first’
<i>elvelvenu</i>	‘inside’
<i>evren</i>	‘outside’
<i>emakh</i>	‘to/at home’
<i>emel ~ makhlo</i>	‘to/at the meeting house’

We therefore find examples such as the following:

Dën-mo *elo* *ereŋge* *skul*.
 1PL.INCL:REAL-come to.coast GOAL church
 ‘We came to the coast to the church.’

Pa-r-titing *makhlo*.
 1NONSG.INCL:IRR-DL-talk in.meeting.house
 ‘Let’s talk in the meeting house.’

Vengesien *esek* *i-mos* *eji*.
 story POSS:1SG 3SG:REAL-finish here
 ‘My story finishes here.’

I-mo *emakh*.
 3SG:REAL-come home
 ‘(S)he came home.’

These forms almost all begin with *e-*, which suggests the possibility that they may involve the historical reanalysis of the spatial prefix *e* as part of the root. The fact that the putative roots may once have had independent existence as nouns is further suggested by the fact that the forms *emakh* ‘to/at home’ and *emel* ‘to/at the meeting house’ show partial similarity to the general nouns *nëmwakh* ‘house’ and *nimel* ‘meeting house’ respectively, as already noted in §6.1.2.1.3. Note also that the form *elvelenu* ‘inside’ is clearly derivable historically from a combination of the spatial preposition *e* ‘inside’, the directly suffixed noun root *lelä-* ‘interior’ and the free noun *venu* ‘place’. For example:

Këñëk *en-liek* *elvelenu*.
 1SG 1SG:REAL-stay inside
 ‘I stayed inside.’

Some of these locational markers can appear on their own in a clause with zero-marking, while also entering into complex prepositional constructions in which these initial locational elements are linked to a following noun phrase by means of one of the prepositions set out in §6.3.2. Such forms include the following:

eso (*en-* + NP) ‘far (from)’
evibëkh (*en ~ ejëkhë-* + NP) ‘close (to)’
esoweies (*ereŋge-* ~ *reŋge-* + NP) ‘on top (of)’

We therefore find examples such as the following in which there is no noun phrase associated with these forms:

Më-n-jul *ivin* *esoweies*.
 1NONSG.EXCL-PL-shout 3SG:REAL:go above
 ‘We shouted up there.’

However, we also find examples such as the following in which the locational markers are linked to an associated noun phrase by means of a preposition:

I-liek *eso* *en* *nëmakh*.
 3SG:REAL-stay long.way LOC house
 ‘(S)he is a long way from the house.’

Po-mo evibëkh ejëkhë-k.
 2SG:IRR-come close LOC-1SG
 ‘Come close to me.’

Nëmen i-vëtir esoweies renga nëmakh.
 bird 3SG:REAL-stand above LOC house
 ‘The bird is standing on top of the house.’

6.3.3.2.2 Temporal forms

In addition to these zero-marked locational markers, my corpus includes a set of zero-marked temporal markers. This lexical set includes the following:

<i>mosi</i>	‘today’
<i>enisi</i>	‘now’
<i>maren</i>	‘tomorrow’
<i>nenëp</i>	‘yesterday’
<i>bawos</i>	‘day after tomorrow’
<i>nuos</i>	‘day before yesterday’
<i>tetwo</i>	‘long time ago’
<i>jere(te)</i>	‘afterwards’
<i>etakh</i>	‘next’
<i>meteveren</i>	‘in the morning’
<i>likhalmo</i>	‘at noon’
<i>rivrip</i>	‘in the evening’
<i>likhat</i>	‘at night’

Thus:

Jerete i-n-lep i-vin ejëkhë-n elakh esen.
 then 3REAL-PL-take 3SG:REAL-go GOAL-3SG husband POSS:3SG
 ‘Only then did they take her to her husband.’

We also find the noun *nit* ‘place’ followed by a handful of inflected verbs which can be used both as clauses in their own right or as adverbials within a clause. For example:

nit i-ren
 place 3SG:REAL-daybreak
 ‘It dawned.’
 ‘at/until daybreak’

nit i-mit
 place 3SG:REAL-dark
 ‘It was night.’
 ‘during/until the night’

Thus:

Mimi-n i-ling-ling nit i-mit.
 spirit-3SG 3SG:REAL-REDUP-walk place 3SG:REAL-dark
 ‘The spirit walked about at night.’

While the locational markers typically appear after the core arguments of the clause, the temporal markers are more loosely constrained in their position in the clause. They are commonly found at the beginning of the clause, as in the case of *rivrip* ‘in the evening’ and *enisi* ‘now’ in the following:

Rivrip i-n-kho kake.
 evening 3:REAL-PL-bundle.up yam
 ‘In the evening they bundled up the yams.’

Enisi en-vwër be-vwiri vengesien isig.
 now 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell story INDEF
 ‘Now I want to tell a story.’

However, they can appear in other positions in the clause, even between a subject and a verb, as in the placement of *tetwo* ‘before’ in the following:

Eren dui tørtërep tetwo i-n-vwër ipa-n-takhe tøvëlëkh
 time man old: PL before 3REAL-PL-want 3NONGS:IRR-PL-marry woman
i-n-vin i-n-khël nëmakh nen tøvëlëkh esar.
 3REAL-PL-go 3REAL-PL-build house PURP wife POSS:3PL
 ‘When the old men before wanted to marry a woman, they would go and make a house for their wives.’

Unmarked noun phrases including modifiers with time reference, in addition to the simple nouns listed above, can also be used adverbially, as illustrated by the following:

Nil isimëk dë-n-liek elelvenu.
 month one 1NONGS.INCL:REAL-PL-stay inside
 ‘We stayed inside for one month.’

Another phrasal construction which is used to express a temporal meaning involves the adverbial *maren* ‘tomorrow’ followed by the part-whole preposition *ne-* carrying the third person singular pronominal suffix *-n* (§6.3.2.2.5). The resulting sequence *maren nen* expresses the meaning of ‘the next day’, as in the following:

Maren ne-n i-n-liek.
 tomorrow PART-3SG 3:REAL-PL-stay
 ‘The next day they would stay.’

6.3.3.2.3 Miscellaneous adverbs

Finally, there is a number of additional clause-level modifiers which do not fall into any particular semantically or structurally definable class, including the following:

ogi ‘only’
pongen ‘only’
te ‘only’
mili ‘again, back’

Thus:

Këpa-n-rëng-k *mili en-titing.*
 2NONGSG:IRR-PL-hear-1SG again 1SG:REAL-speak
 ‘You will all hear me speaking again.’

The forms *ogi*, *te* and *pongen* have all been attested with the meaning of ‘just’ or ‘only’, though it has not yet been established what sorts of differences there may be between these forms. We find examples such as the following in the corpus:

Vengesien esek *ogi enir.*
 story POSS:1SG only that.one
 ‘That is just my story.’

Tëvëlëkh pongen.
 woman only
 ‘There were only women.’

Eren levër i-ve *te më-n-vin* *më-n-jej*
 time that 3SG:REAL-make only 1NONGSG.EXCL-PL-go 1NONGSG.EXCL-PL-cut

waia.
 fence
 ‘At that time, it just made us go to cut the fence.’

6.3.4 Interrogative clauses

A full range of interrogative constructions has yet to be documented. Because the language is no longer used conversationally, and because the amount of textual data that has been recorded so far is quite limited, I have no recorded examples of yes/no questions, and the content questions that I have recorded do not cover the full range.

The interrogatives *sëte* ‘what?’ and *es* ‘who?’ function as noun phrases (§6.1) within a clause. Thus:

Kë-vwër *sëte?*
 2SG:REAL-say what
 ‘What did you say?’

B-ivin *duen es?*
 1SG:IRR-go ACC who
 ‘Who will I go with?’

Es i-vwër *këpa-n-jej* *waia?*
 who 3SG:REAL-say 2NONGSG:IRR-PL-cut fence
 ‘Who told you all to cut the fence?’

The form *ivës* ‘how much/many?’ functions as a numeral postmodifier within a noun phrase (§6.1.3.2). For example:

K-udi *niivëkh* *ivës?*
 2SG:REAL-eat Malay.apple how.many
 ‘How many Malay apples did you eat?’

The interrogatives *evi* ‘where?’ and *sëvërën* ‘when?’ function in the same way as zero-marked locational and temporal adverbials within the clause (§6.3.3). For example:

Netite i-jul evi?
child 3SG:REAL-shout where
‘Where is the child shouting?’

Kë-metër evi?
2SG:REAL-sleep where
‘Where do you sleep?’

Pa-n-vin sëvërën?
2NONSG:IRR-PL-go when
‘When will you all go?’

Finally, the form *ipërvi* ‘how’ behaves like a verb and takes subject-mood inflection as in the following:³²

Dë-n-riu ipërvi e venu esed?
1NONSG:REAL-PL-escape 3SG:REAL:how SOURCE village POSS:1PL.INCL
‘How did we escape from our village?’

6.3.5 Noun phrase fronting

In common with many Oceanic languages, we find that focussed noun phrases can be shifted from verbal object position to the beginning of the clause. In the absence of a passive construction, such a process allows a patient noun phrase to be shifted into a position of pragmatic salience in the clause, as illustrated by the following:

Vengesien esek ogi enir en-vwër be-vwiri en kem.
story POSS:1SG only that.one 1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell GOAL 2PL
‘That is just my story that I want to tell you all.’

Kake gi i-n-sëkh-ër i-k-ska-n-iar.
yam REL 3:REAL-PL-stand.up-3PL 3:REAL-NEG-PL-touch
‘They must not touch the yams that they have stood up.’

On the basis of comparative evidence, we would expect to find that prepositional objects might also be amenable to shifting in this way, though this needs to be checked against further textual data from the field. However, examples such as the following indicate that the possessor noun phrase in a possessive construction can also be fronted:

Dui tërev-ër nëkhse-n enir.
man old-that name-3SG that.one
‘That was the old man’s name.’

Gi i-da-sk-ivin ejëkhë-n elakh esen
REL 3SG:REAL-CONT-NEG-go GOAL-3SG husband POSS:3SG

³² It is not clear whether the verb root is *përvi*, which is preceded by the 3SG prefix *i-*, or whether there is a monomorphemic root *ipërvi*.

i-n-tëkh *lu-n.*
 3:REAL-PL-knock.out tooth-3SG
 ‘They knocked out the teeth of one who had not yet gone to her husband.’

6.4 Multi-predicate constructions

The final section of this grammar deals with sentences which are made up of two (or more) predicates. Under this general heading, we can include auxiliary constructions, core-layer serial verb constructions, coordinate constructions and subordinate constructions.

6.4.1 Auxiliaries

A verbal auxiliary is one of a small set of fully inflected verbs which is followed by a main verb carrying verbal inflection which is tightly constrained by the inflectional marking on the preceding auxiliary. These auxiliaries express a range of modal meanings, and they cannot be separated from the following main verb by any kind of intervening constituents. The following auxiliaries have been attested in Tape:

vwër ‘intend to, be about to, want to’
rëng ‘want to, feel like’
rëngdo ‘know how to, be able to’

The subject marking on the auxiliary and the following main verb is identical. An auxiliary that carries realis marking is followed by a main verb carrying irrealis marking. Thus:

En-vwër *be-vwiri-Ø* *en* *kem.*
 1SG:REAL-intend 1SG:IRR-say-3SG GOAL 2PL
 ‘I intend to say it to you all.’

En *i-rëng* *ipo-metër.*
 3SG 3SG:REAL-want 3SG:IRR-sleep
 ‘(S)he feels like sleeping.’

When a verb that is associated with a preceding auxiliary is negated, the negative marking is found on the auxiliary and not on the following main verb. Thus:

E-skë-rëng *b-ivin.*
 1SG:REAL-NEG-want 1SG:IRR-go
 ‘I don’t want to go.’

En *i-skë-rëngdo* *ipo-suvsiv.*
 3SG 3SG:REAL-NEG-be.able 3SG:IRR-swim
 ‘(S)he can’t swim.’

En-rëngdo *be-lep* *kake.*
 1SG:REAL-be.able 1SG:IRR-carry yam
 ‘I can carry the yam.’

6.4.2 Core-layer serial verbs

Core-layer serial verb constructions are those in which two verbs are closely bound conceptually and grammatically, but where both verbs carry overt marking for subject-mood categories.

6.4.2.1 Directional serialisation

This kind of construction commonly involves expression of the directional orientation of an action by means of the basic motion verbs *ivin* ‘go’ and *mo* ‘come’. When these verbs are serialised, they are marked by third person singular prefixation on the directional verb, as illustrated by the following:

I-n-lep *tëvëlëkh* *ivin* *ejëkhë-n* *elakh* *esen*.
 3:REAL-PL-take woman 3SG:REAL:go GOAL-3SG husband POSS:3SG
 ‘They took the woman to her husband.’

I-sëkhtren *nuo* *ivin*.
 3SG:REAL-pour water 3SG:REAL:go
 ‘(S)he poured the water away.’

While core-layer serialisation is generally expressed with both verbs carrying initial subject marking (§6.2.1.1.1) as in the examples just presented, we find occasional use of echo subject marking on the directional verb (§6.2.1.1.2). Thus:

Më-n-riu *dë-n-mo* *erenge* *skul*.
 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-escape ES-PL-came GOAL church
 ‘We escaped (hither) to the church.’

I-n-melet *dë-n-vin*.
 3:REAL-PL-return ES-PL-go
 ‘They went back.’

It will be noted, however, that when echo subject markers are used in this kind of construction, the number category of the initial verb is copied onto the subsequent verb. This represents a point of contrast with core-layer serial verb constructions in which both verbs carry initial subject marking, as the second verb invariably appears with singular inflection. Contrast, therefore, the last two examples with the following:

Më-n-jul *ivin* *esoweies*.
 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-shout 3SG:REAL:go up
 ‘We shouted up there.’

Më-n-melet *i-mo* *emakh*.
 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-return 3SG:REAL-come home
 ‘We came back home.’

6.4.2.2 Manner serialisation

As we might expect from evidence provided by comparable constructions in related languages, the same construction is also encountered with stative verbs expressing the manner in which an action is carried out. In the following example, *set* ‘bad’ carries the

same third person singular inflection to indicate that the act of paying for the copra was done ‘badly’:

Misti Presis ul mētiu esar i-set.
 Mr Bridges 3SG:REAL:pay.for copra POSS:3PL 3SG:REAL-bad
 ‘Mr Bridges did not pay good money for their copra.’

6.4.2.3 Quotative serialisation

The verb *vwër* ‘say’ can be used on its own as the sole verb within a clause to indicate what somebody has said. For example:

Mwēliun Avia i-vwër bē-ska-n-vēs-vēs-en en
 chief Avia 3SG:REAL-say 1NONGS.EXCL:IRR-NEG-PL-teach-TR GOAL
netite esed.
 child POSS:1PL.INCL
 ‘Chief Avia said we should not teach it to our children.’

However, this verb is very frequently serialised after another verb of locution to introduce the content of the utterance. Thus:

I-n-wis nēkhse-n i-n-vwër Tar.
 3REAL-PL-call name-3SG 3REAL-PL-say Tar
 ‘They used to call him “Tar”.’
I-n-vwiri i-n-vwër iar meteveren ne-n.
 3REAL-PL-say 3REAL-PL-say 3SG:REAL:reach morning PURP-3SG
 ‘They kept saying it until the morning.’

It is common in Vanuatu languages for a clausal complement to a verb of perception or mental activity to be expressed in the same way as a complement to a verb of saying, often making use of a serialised form of the verb meaning ‘say’. The evidence to date for Tape, however, is that with such verbs, the separate subordinator *te* is used instead (§6.4.4.7), as in the following:

I-ske-rēngdo te nunu esen i-ve pongen mili.
 3SG:REAL-NEG-know SUB mother POSS:3SG 3SG:REAL-do always again
 ‘She did not know that her mother always behaved like that.’

6.4.3 Coordination

There is a range of constructions which can be used when speakers wish to signal a coordinate relationship between two clauses. One possibility is to use the clausal coordinator *en*, as in the following:

I-n-mo en Kaya i-lis-ër.
 3REAL-PL-come and Caillard 3SG:REAL-see-3PL
 ‘They came and Caillard saw them.’

However, this is a possibility that speakers do not make frequent use of, and my spoken corpus provides a total of only four instances of this kind of coordination. Another possibility that has a similarly low frequency in my spoken texts is for the temporal adverb *jere(te)* ‘then’ to link two clauses, as in the following:

I-n-lulo kake esen jerete i-n-bëkh-lulo esar.
 3:REAL-PL-plant yam BEN:3SG then 3:REAL-PL-INCEP-plant BEN:3PL
 ‘They would plant yams for him and then they would plant them for themselves.’

My textual corpus includes many examples in which two clauses are simply coordinated with no overt marking of any kind. This is particularly common when the first of the coordinated clauses contains either of the basic motion verbs *mo* ‘come’ or *ivin* ‘go’, as in the following:

I-n-mo i-n-liek.
 3:REAL-PL-come 3:REAL-PL-stay
 ‘They came and stayed.’

I-n-vin i-n-takhe.
 3:REAL-PL-go 3:REAL-PL-take
 ‘They went and took it.’

However, there is an alternative construction involving the echo subject prefix *dë-* (§6.2.1.1.2). This prefix expresses a coordinate relationship between two clauses in which the subjects of the two verbs are identical and the two verbs express the same mood category. Thus:

I-n-vin dë-n-liek elelvenu.
 3:REAL-PL-go ES-PL-stay inside
 ‘They went and stayed inside.’

It should be noted that when two clauses are linked by means of the temporal adverbial *jere(te)*, it is still possible for the second verb to appear with echo subject marking. Thus:

I-n-rap esen mwëlin jere dë-n-bëkh-rap
 3:REAL-PL-clear.garden POSS:3SG chief then ES-PL-INCEP-clear.garden
eser.
 POSS:3PL
 ‘They cleared the chief’s garden and then they just cleared their own.’

However, when the coordinator *en* is used to link clauses, the second verb appears to obligatorily carry initial subject marking.

6.4.4 Subordination

Only a partial range of subordinate clause types have so far been attested in my textual data. Those subordinators that have been attested are set out and illustrated below.

6.4.4.1 Time clauses

There is a noun *eren* which can be used to mean ‘time’, as in the following:

Eren levër mē-ska-n-titing duen en.
 time that 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-NEG-PL-speak ACC 3SG
 ‘At that time, we did not speak with him.’

However, this form can also be used as a subordinator to introduce time clauses. For example:

Eren dui tērtērep i-n-vwër ipa-n-takhe tēvēlēkh
 time man old.PL 3:REAL-PL-want 3NONGS:IRR-PL-marry woman
i-n-vin i-n-takhe tēvēlēkh
 3NONGS:REAL-PL-go 3NONGS:REAL-PL-take woman
 ‘When the old men wanted to marry a woman, they went and took the woman.’

While *eren* is generally simply preposed at the beginning of the time clause as a genuine subordinator in its own right, its original nominal function is still apparent in occasional examples such as the following in which the relative clause marker *gi* also occurs (§6.1.5):

Eren gi i-vwër ipo-khěj dui e i-ling-ling
 time SUB 3SG:REAL-want 3SG:IRR-kill person LOC 3SG:REAL-REDUP-walk
i-ivin i-khěj dui.
 3SG:REAL-go 3SG:REAL-kill person
 ‘When (= ‘(at) the time that’) she wanted to kill somebody, she would walk away and kill somebody.’

It is also possible for the form *rivwi* ‘all’ (§6.1.3.1) to be used as a completive marker after a verb when a sequential interpretation between two events is intended. For example:

I-n-tēkh lu-n rivwi i-n-khēs d-ivin d-ivin
 3:REAL-PL-knock.out tooth-3SG COMPL 3:REAL-PL-dance ES-go ES-go
d-ivin i-k-iar nit i-ke-ren.
 ES-go 3:SG:REAL-NEC-reach place 3SG:REAL-NEC-daylight
 ‘When they had knocked out her teeth, they would have to dance on and on until it was daylight.’

In fact, we sometimes find *eren* used as a clause-initial subordinator along with the verbal postmodifier *rivwi* to express the same meaning. Thus:

Eren ba-n-jej rivwi George Kalkoa i-mo.
 time 1INCL.NONGS:REAL-PL-cut COMPL George Kalkoa 3SG:REAL-come
 ‘When we had cut it, George Kalkoa came.’

6.4.4.2 Place clauses

The form *nit* is commonly used as a noun meaning ‘place’ as a verbal subject in a number of idiomatic constructions expressing ambient states, as in the following:

Mimi-n i-lingling nit i-mit.
 spirit-3SG 3SG:REAL-walk place 3SG:REAL-dark
 ‘The spirit would wander around when it was dark.’

The same form is also used to introduce a subordinate clause of place. We therefore find examples such as the following:

Më-n-vin më-n-tërakh-ër nit
 1NONGSG.EXCL:REAL-PL-go 1NONGSG.EXCL:REAL-PL-wait.for-3PL place

i-n-ul tes e.
 3REAL-PL-buy saltwater LOC

‘We would go and wait for them where they used to buy the saltwater.’

Nit i-n-ul tes e nëkhse-n i-ve e Jarabu.
 place 3REAL-PL-buy saltwater LOC name-3SG 3SG:REAL-COP LOC Jarabu
 ‘Where they bought the saltwater was Jarabu.’

6.4.4.3 ‘Until’ clauses

‘Until’ clauses are expressed by means of a combination of the verb *ivin* ‘go’ carrying echo subject marking, often repeated several times, and often also in conjunction with the verb *iar* ‘reach, arrive at’, as illustrated by the following example:

I-n-tëkh lu-n rivwi i-n-khës d-ivin d-ivin
 3:REAL-PL-knock.out tooth-3SG COMPL 3:REAL-PL-dance ES-go ES-go

d-ivin i-k-iar nit i-ke-ren.
 ES-go 3:SG:REAL-NEG-reach place 3SG:REAL-NEG-daylight

‘When they had knocked out her teeth, they would have to dance on and on until it was daylight.’

6.4.4.4 Conditional clauses

Conditional clauses are introduced by *povër*. For example:

Povër nuis ip-iu pë-ska-n-vin erenge lomël.
 if rain 3SG:IRR-rain 2NONGSG:IRR-NEG-PL-go GOAL garden
 ‘If it rains, you (pl.) will not go to the garden.’

Occasionally, the conditional marker appears as the shorter form *vër*. For example:

Vër i-kësiar nëbëng isngel venu esar i-n-jëm nimwil.
 if 3SG:REAL-go.past day ten village POSS:3PL 3REAL-PL-remove cycad
 ‘If it went past ten days, their village would remove the cycad (leaves).’

It is not uncommon for the verb of the second clause in such constructions to be marked by the necessitative mood markers described in §6.2.1.2.3. Thus:

Povër i-ska-dang luo lu-n netë-n dui gi emu
 if 3:REAL-NEG-remove out tooth-3SG child-3SG male REL first

ne-n i-kë-mes.

PART-3SG 3:REAL-NEC-die

‘If they did not remove her teeth, her first son would certainly die.’

6.4.4.5 Reason clauses

Reason clauses are introduced by means of the third person singular form of the causal preposition (§6.3.2.2.4), i.e. *sënen* or *jënen*. For example:

En-vwër be-titing ogi jëne-n mimi-n i-khëj
1SG:REAL-want 1SG:IRR-tell.story only CAUSE-3SG spirit-3SG 3SG:REAL-kill

pongen dui.

always person

‘I just want to tell the story because the spirit used to kill people.’

6.4.4.6 Purpose clauses

Purposive clauses can be marked by means of the same subordinator *gi* which is used in the formation of relative clauses (§6.1.5), as in the following:

I-vwiri en këmem gi ba-n-jej waia.
3SG:REAL-tell GOAL 1PL.EXCL PURP 1EXCL.NONSG:REAL-PL-cut fence

‘He told us to cut the fence.’

However, a purposive relationship between two events can also be signalled by simple clausal juxtaposition if the verb of the initial clause carries realis marking and the second verb carries irrealis marking. Thus:

I-n-vin ejëkhë-n mwëliun ipa-n-ve nëbëng esen.
3REAL-PL-go GOAL-3SG chief 3NONSG:IRR-PL-make ceremony POSS:3SG

‘They would go to the chief to perform his ceremony.’

6.4.4.7 The subordinators *te* and *gi*

In addition to the various subordinators described in the preceding sections, the forms *te* and *gi* are also attested in a small number of textual examples with subordinating functions. *Gi*, and very occasionally also *te*, is used to introduce relative clauses in Tape (§6.1.5). The form *gi* is also used as a general subordinator to introduce a complement clause. For example:

I-ska-r-khuos mili gi ipa-r-lingling ipa-r-khëj
3:REAL-NEG-DL-strong again SUB 3NONSG:IRR-DL-walk 3NONSG:IRR-DL-kill

dui.

person

‘They were not strong (enough) to wander around killing people.’

Examples such as the following suggest that *gi* can also be used to introduce a quotative complement, alongside the more commonly attested pattern described in §6.4.2.3 which involved the serialised form of the verb *vwër* ‘say’. Thus:

Dui gi iskhe i-vwiri en këmem gi
 person DEM no 3SG:REAL-tell GOAL 1PL.EXCL SUB
ba-n-jej.
 1NONGSG.EXCL:IRR-PL-cut
 ‘Nobody told us to cut it.’

It has already been mentioned in §6.4.2.3 that the subordinator *te* is used to introduce a clausal complement to a verb of mental activity, as in the following:

I-ske-rëngdo te nunu esen i-ve pongen mili.
 3SG:REAL-NEG-know SUB mother POSS:3SG 3SG:REAL-do always again
 ‘She did not know that her mother always behaved like that.’

However, it appears that *te* can also be used as a more general marker of a complement clause, as in the following:

Eren levër i-ve te më-n-vin
 time that 3SG:REAL-make SUB 1NONGSG.EXCL:REAL-PL-go
më-n-jej waia.
 1NONGSG.EXCL:REAL-PL-cut fence
 ‘At that time, it’s what made us go and cut the fence.’

6.5 The discourse function of *ivin* ‘go’

Given that I have been able to assemble only a fairly small corpus of spoken Tape, along with the fact that it will probably never be possible to observe people spontaneously conversing in the language, it would probably be unwise to attempt to offer anything more than passing comments about Tape discourse patterns. Limited though my corpus of narrative text is, however, there are nonetheless some recurring patterns which clearly function to link sentences together in continuous speech. It is these recurring patterns which are described in this final section of the grammar.

One very widely attested pattern involves the verb *ivin* ‘go’. This frequently appears in narrative texts carrying the echo subject prefix *dë-* (§6.2.1.1.2), with the inflected verb regularly appearing as *d-ivin*. This can be used to link two clauses with the implication that the event described in the first clause takes place over an extended period before a second event (or state), expressed in the form of a verbal clause, is realised. Thus:

I-liek d-ivin i-lis i-khëj dui itar.
 3SG:REAL-stay ES-go 3SG:REAL-see 3SG:REAL-kill person many
 ‘He stayed until he saw that it had killed many people.’

The verb *d-ivin*, when used with this discourse function, is very commonly repeated. About half of all instances of *d-ivin* used in this way in my Tape corpus appear twice, as in the following:

I-vëtir *d-ivin d-ivin i-bëkh-vin* *ejëkhë-n elakh*
 3SG:REAL-stay.behind ES-go ES-go 3SG:REAL-INCEP-go GOAL-3SG husband
esen.
 POSS:3SG

‘She would stay behind and would eventually just go to her husband.’

However, it is common for about a quarter of such patterns to involve three repetitions, as in the following, with the remaining quarter of exponents just involving a single instantiation of *d-ivin*, as illustrated above. Thus:

I-tëkh *etër d-ivin d-ivin d-ivin i-mumu* *duon*
 3SG:REAL-stay there ES-go ES-go ES-go 3SG:REAL-disintegrate ACC
melëkh ne-n.
 kava PURP-3SG

‘It would stay there until it disintegrated with the kava that went with it.’

Although *d-ivin* has the form of the verb *ivin* ‘go’ with echo subject prefixation, this pattern differs from the regular echo subject constructions described in §6.2.1.1.2 in that the category of number is not obligatorily copied from the initial verb onto the verb carrying echo subject marking. In the following, for example, the initial plural verb *i-n-khës* ‘they danced’ is followed by the singular echo verb *d-ivin* rather than the corresponding plural form **dë-n-vin*:

I-n-khës *d-ivin d-ivin nit i-ren.*
 3REAL-PL-dance ES-go ES-go place 3SG:REAL-be-daylight
 ‘They danced until it was daylight.’

Where an event takes place either over an extended period of time or over a large distance leading up to a particular point in time or a particular place, *d-ivin* may be followed by the verb *iar* ‘reach’ in its third person singular realis form. Thus:

Më-n-vëtir *erege waia d-ivin d-ivin iar*
 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-stand LOC fence ES-go ES-go 3SG:REAL:reach
esakh lene.
 up over.there
 ‘We stood (in a line) along the fence as far as up there.’

Më-n-liek *d-ivin d-ivin iar* *sëkho ingelves*
 1NONGS.EXCL:REAL-PL-live ES-go ES-go 3SG:REAL:reach year 40
dëmon jivet.
 + 9
 ‘We stayed until the year ’49.’

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