

**POSSESSION IN LELEPA,
A LANGUAGE OF CENTRAL VANUATU**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Sébastien Lacrampe, declare that this thesis is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published, or substantially overlapping with material submitted for the award of any other degree at any institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text.

Signature.....

Date.....

The research in this thesis was performed under my supervision and to my knowledge is the sole work of Mr. Sébastien Lacrampe.

Signature.....

Date.....

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ABSTRACT

This thesis studies possession in Lelepa, a language from the Oceanic subgroup of Austronesian, spoken in Central Vanuatu. Investigating this particular feature of the language was achieved by collecting original data from Lelepa speakers. Language data is presented in the form of interlinearised examples taken from a corpus of texts and elicitation notes. Data was collected between 2006 and 2008 during fieldtrips to Lelepa and Mangaliliu. The core of the study is devoted to the possessive system of Lelepa. Like many other Oceanic languages, Lelepa has direct and indirect possessive constructions. This thesis shows that the direct possessive construction formally consists of a possessed noun to which a possessor suffix attaches. It encodes possession of semantic domains such as body parts, body products, reference kinship terms, items closely associated to the possessor and parts of wholes. Indirect possession is expressed by two distinct subtypes: the free and construct indirect constructions. The free indirect construction has pronominal possessors only, encoded by two distinct pronoun paradigms: general and part-whole possession pronouns. The former pronouns are used for possession of items that normally do not occur in the direct construction, and the latter are used for possession of parts of wholes. The construct indirect construction is characterised by the occurrence of either of two construct suffixes, *-n* or *-g*. The *-n* construct indirect construction has pronominal and nominal possessors, and the same semantic scope as the direct construction. The *-g* construct indirect construction has nominal possessors only, and the same semantic scope as the free indirect construction with general possession pronouns. This study also demonstrates that free variation between two possessive constructions, the direct construction and the *-n* construct indirect construction with pronominal possessors, occur in the language, although more work is needed to determine the scope of this feature.

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ABBREVIATIONS

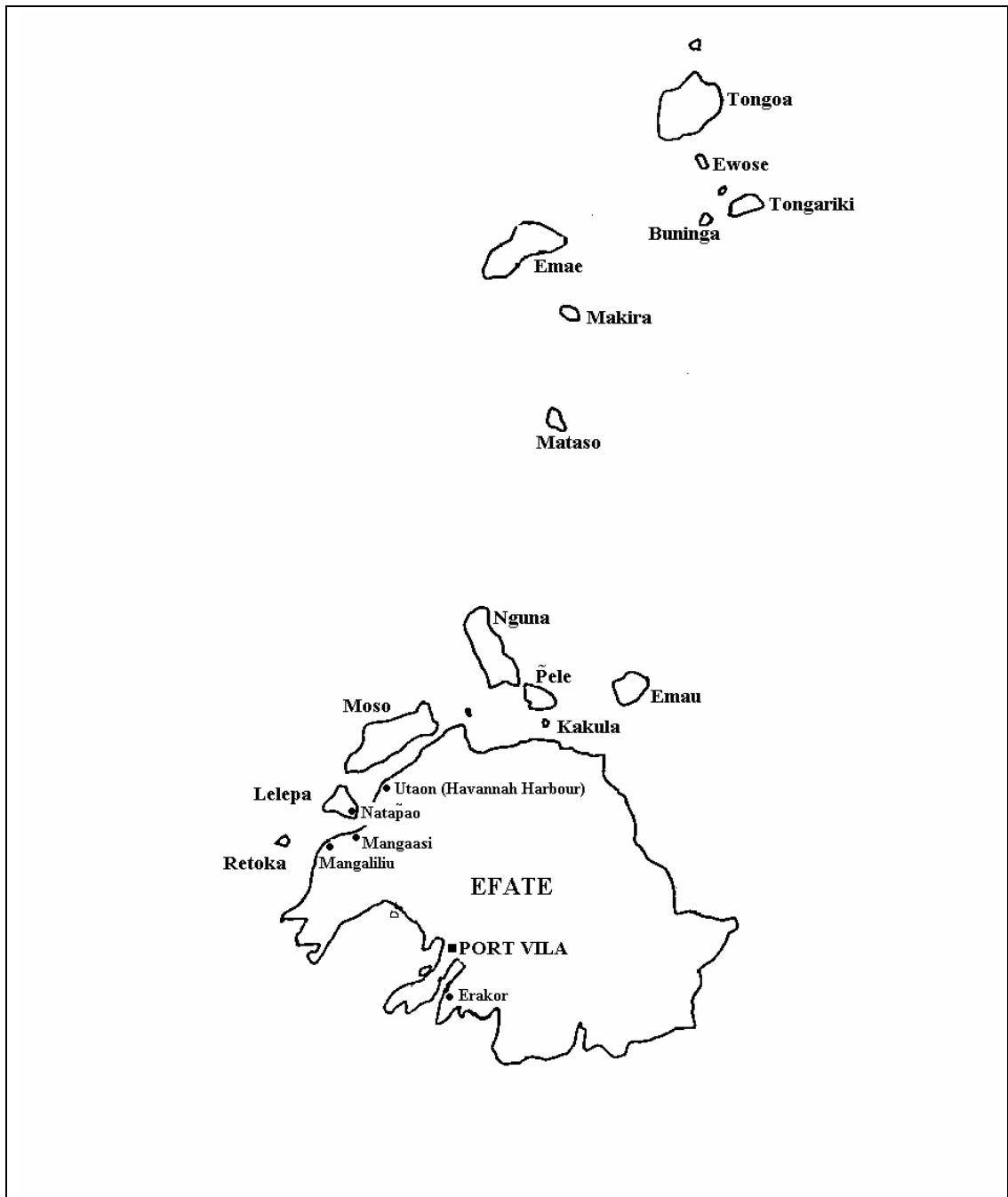
The glossing of the examples appearing in this work follows the Leipzig Glossing Rules. However, some additions and adaptations were made to fit Lelepa.

-	affix boundary
=	clitic boundary
~	reduplication boundary
.	separates meaning in a gloss
:	separates meanings in a portmanteau morpheme

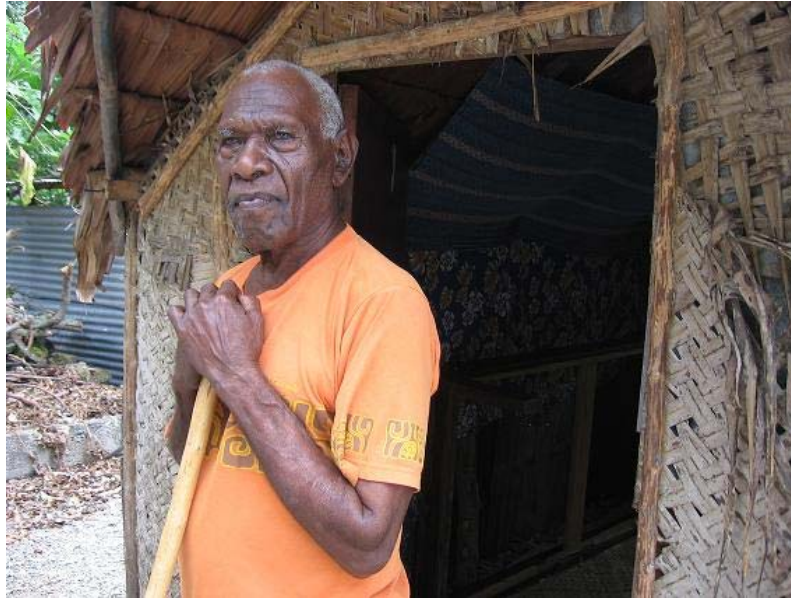
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person

ACC	accusative
AL	alienable
ART	article
BEN	benefactive
CLF	classifier
COMP	complementiser
COP	copula
CS	construct suffix
DAT	dative
DP	direct possessive
DU	dual
DUR	durative
EXCL	exclusive
F	feminine
GENPOSS	general possessive

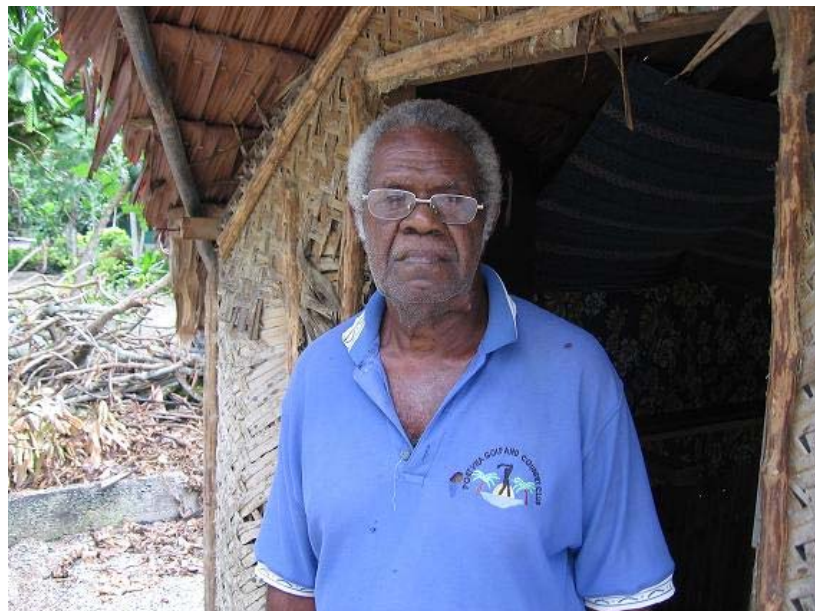
HAB	habitual
HESIT	hesitation
IN	inalienable
INCL	inclusive
INT	intensifier
IRR	irrealis
LIG	ligature (for numerals)
NEG	negation particle
NEG2	second negation particle
NMLZ	nominalisation prefix
NMLZ2	nominalisation suffix
NSG	non singular
OBJ	direct object
OBL	oblique object
PARTPOSS	part-whole possessive
POSS	possessive
PL	plural
p.name	proper name (including place names)
PRF	perfect
PROG	progressive
PRS	present
PRT	preterite
R	realis
REL	relativiser
REP	repetitive
RES	resultative
RF	realis future
SG	singular
TR	transitivizer
V	epenthetic vowel



Map. Efate and the Shepherd Islands
[outline taken from Lynch and Crowley (2001:108)]



Picture 1. Georges Munalpa. His texts are indexed 'GM'. (2008) (all photos by the author except as otherwise stated)



Picture 2. Tomsen Naman. His texts are indexed 'TN'. (2008)



Picture.3 Billy Poikiiki outside his *tĩpa* 'traditional house'.
His texts are indexed 'BP'. (2008)



Picture 4. Clockwise from top left: Tomsen Nāman, the author, Rex Kaltok and Sualo Kalsog working on texts. Sualo's texts are indexed 'SUK'. Photo by Douglas Meto. (2008)



Picture 5. From left to right: Billy Tugulmaan, Tomsen Nāman and Rex Kaltok listening to field recordings. Billy's texts are indexed 'BT'. (2008)

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis describes possessive constructions in Lelepa, an Oceanic language of central Vanuatu. It is the first description of any aspect of this language, which is spoken on the island of Lelepa and in the village of Mangaliliu (see map) on facing Efate Island by about seven hundred people. Several other Efate vernaculars¹ are spoken on Efate, such as Nakanamanga² and South Efate³, and all Efate languages are closely related, with different speech communities scattered around the island, creating a dialect-chain situation (Lynch and Crowley 2001:108).

The present chapter gives background information on Lelepa and on the present study. The first section deals with the history of Lelepa, using archaeological, historical and anthropological information. It focuses on early settlement, material culture, traditional social organisation and early European contact. It also briefly discusses the present Lelepa community in its social context.

The second section discusses the methodology and field methods used to conduct this study. It also defines the corpus on which the various linguistic analyses presented in this work are based.

In section 3, linguistic background on the language is given. First, elements of the phonology are presented: Lelepa's phoneme inventory, stress patterns and orthography are briefly discussed. Then the discussion turns to nominal and verbal morphology. Finally, this chapter's last section is an overview of the study.

¹ Not including the Polynesian outlier Mele-Fila.

² Also called Ngunesse or Nguna. See Schütz (1969) for a brief grammar of that language.

³ See Thieberger (2006) for a grammar of that language.

1.1 LELEPA: HISTORICAL AND ETHNOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

This section briefly discusses the history, social organisation and traditional culture of Lelepa. There are no resources treating such topics regarding Lelepa *per se*, however there are historical, archaeological and anthropological references available for Efate and central Vanuatu. The discussion will be based on these references.

1.1.1 Early settlement and material culture. To understand the history of Efate settlement, archaeologists have conducted research in the region. José Garanger, a French archaeologist, worked at Lelepa, Mangaasi and Retoka (see map) in the 1960s. Matthew Spriggs and Stuart Bedford, two Australian archaeologists, worked in Mangaasi later, from 1996 to 1999.

Garanger (1972:45-46) indicates that the surface surveys and excavations he undertook on Lelepa were not conclusive. According to him, Lelepa may not have been a place of major settlement, due to the fact that the island is dry and infertile, making it more of a “shelter” place rather than a long-term settlement. He then investigated the north-western coast of Efate, where Mangaasi is located. The site of Mangaasi appeared to be much more revealing, with around 17,000 pottery shards excavated (Garanger 1972:49), several burial sites and other items reflecting material culture: an important quantity of fish remains (bones), four distinctive holes that may have been places where vertical carved slit-drums were standing, human bones giving proof of the practice of cannibalism, and tools made of shell and coral stone, such as adzes (Garanger 1972:57). Garanger dated the earlier settlement of Mangaasi to be around 2600 BP⁴, with the site occupied until the 1800s (Garanger 1972:57-58).

More recently, work was continued at Mangaasi by Spriggs and Bedford. They extended the site to another location next to Mangaasi, called Arapus, and renamed the site Mangaasi-Arapus (Spriggs 2006:1). With improved archaeological technology unavailable at the time of Garanger, the start of human occupation at this site was re-dated, at around 2900 BP (Spriggs 2006:2). This occupation is manifested by important quantities of large shellfish as well as bone of fish, dog, flying-fox and

⁴ BP (before present) is conventionally taken as before 1950 (Spriggs 2006:1).

of a species of land crocodile, *Mekosuchus kalpokasi* (Mead et al. 2002) which is now extinct. Pottery was scarce at this early stage of occupation of the site, which went on for about 150 years (Spriggs 2006:3). Other artefacts reflecting material culture are shell adzes and ornaments: arm rings made of the *Tridacna* shell and another type of ornament made of sea urchin spine. While Garanger gives the approximation of the 1800s as the date around which human occupation of Mangaasi ceased, Spriggs (2006:6) indicates that the abandonment of Mangaasi happened at a date unknown at present.

South west of Mangaasi lies the small island of Retoka⁵ which constitutes another major archaeological site for Efate. It was excavated in the 1960s by Garanger who found a collective burial which was identified as being that of Roi Mata, an important character in Efate history as discussed in 1.1.3. Garanger found that Retoka had been settled for “a long time”, approximately around the same time as Mangaasi (Garanger 1972:76). Retoka was then abandoned when the burial was established. He found two distinct human occupation sites on Retoka which were similar to the Mangaasi site (Garanger 1972:59).

1.1.2 Pottery and early history. The manufacture of pottery occupies such an important place in Efate early material culture that it appears useful to include a short discussion on that topic. By dating and classifying the different types of ceramics according to their design, archaeologists determine chronological sequences. These different styles are often named after the place where a particular style of pottery is found first. Hence Lapita pottery was first found at the Lapita site in New Caledonia by Gifford and Shutler (Gifford and Shutler 1956). It is termed as dentate-stamped pottery, after the technique used to produce the designs appearing on the pots. Lapita is also a term now widely used in Pacific archaeology and history to name the first settlers of Oceania some 3300 to 3500 years ago (Summerhayes 2001:34, after Kirch 1997, 2000 and Spriggs 1997, 1998, 1999).

In the Lelepa region, and especially in Mangaasi, Garanger found pottery of a different style from Lapita, with incised and applied-relief patterns which he named

⁵ Called Artok in Lelepa, and also Hat Island or Ilot Chapeau by Europeans, after the hat-like shape of the island.

Mangaasi-style pottery. According to him, this style was the most ancient and with the longest time span in central Vanuatu, starting around 700 BC and lasting for two thousand years (Garanger 1972:127). Garanger also thought that Lapita pottery was an intrusive style, reaching central Vanuatu at a time when Maangasi pottery was already manufactured, suggesting that both wares were contemporaneous. He investigated a site in the south of Efate, called Erueti. There, he found some pottery different from Mangaasi-style pottery and mostly non-decorated. He suggested that this Erueti pottery was affiliated to Lapita pottery and presented a degenerated version of it (Garanger 1972:29).

Spriggs and Bedford's investigation led to a re-interpretation of Garanger's pottery sequences. At Mangaasi-Arapus, they found a few shards of plain Lapita pottery along with another type of pottery, which they named Arapus (Spriggs and Bedford 2001:100). They also found Erueti pottery and were able to date it as a pre-Mangaasi ware (Spriggs and Bedford 2001:96). They established the following sequence: Lapita-Arapus at 3000 BP, followed by Erueti at 2800 BP, then Mangaasi at around 2000-1800 BP. They place the end of pottery manufacturing at around 1200 BP, warning that the end of this sequence is not well defined as yet (Spriggs and Bedford 2001:101).

1.1.3 Social organisation and later history. Sources for the later history of Lelepa and Efate are few and most of them are not very recent. The information on which the following discussion is based was found in Macdonald (1898), Don (1918), Garanger (1972), Guiart (1973), Luders (2001). Archaeological works by Spriggs and Bedford were also used (Spriggs and Bedford 2001, Spriggs 2006). There is quite a gap in time between the works of Macdonald and Don and those of Garanger, Guiart, Luders, Spriggs and Bedford, as there are differing aims, the former being interested in converting Efate people to Christianity, and the latter in understanding their prehistory, history and social organisation.

The eruption of the Kuwae volcano in 1452 AD (Luders 2001:54) offers a convenient reference point when considering the history of Efate and central Vanuatu. This eruption was of colossal dimensions and resulted in the fracturing of the larger island of Kuwae into the several smaller islands of Epi and the Shepherds

group in central Vanuatu. The eruption also sent a massive cloud of ash into the atmosphere which re-deposited itself on land, forming a layer of ground used by archaeologists conducting stratigraphic analyses. Because this eruption was of such proportions, it affected human occupation in a very important way, especially by provoking migrations towards Efate prior to the eruption which announced itself with earthquakes six years before actually happening, as the local oral tradition recounts (Luders 2001:254).

Another important event in the history of Efate relates to the crucial figure of Roi Mata, the chief who re-established peace in war-crippled Efate. Garanger's investigations were based on local oral tradition (Garanger 1972:17), a methodology which proved to be very fruitful, since it allowed him to find the burial site of the last holder of the Roi Mata title. There are a number of sometimes diverging accounts of the story of Roi Mata, which is certainly due to the nature of oral tradition itself. However, most accounts agree in seeing in Roi Mata an important character who introduced a new social organisation which in turn helped in stopping tribal warfare and establishing peace in Efate.

According to oral tradition, as recorded in sources such as Garanger (1972:58), Guiart (1973:290), Luders (2001:249) and my field notes, Roi Mata decided to organise a feast where all Efate people were invited. He found that tribal wars had reached a level that was not bearable anymore, and something needed to be done to stop the casualties. He said to the people invited to bring something to the feast which would be different from what their own neighbours and families would bring. When people arrived at the ceremony, they gave their presents to Roi Mata, who put them on piles arranged in a long line, each present going on the pile corresponding to its category or type. He then explained to the people that he wanted them to "learn to be friends with each other" (Guiart 1973:291), and so everyone who had brought something from the same pile would from then on bear this object as a common symbol:

"Chacun de ceux qui ont apporté une igname est désormais igname; chacun de ceux qui ont apporté un taro est désormais taro, et ainsi de suite. Si un homme

est en peine, qu'il aille voir un ami du même symbole dans un autre village. Il y trouvera aide et refuge, au lieu d'être tué. Il y aura ainsi un secours pour tout homme, en tout lieu ».⁶ (Guiart 1973 :291)

Local oral tradition also says that Roi Mata decided that these symbols, which might be called totems in anthropological terminology, were to be passed matrilineally. Guiart recorded that these matrilineal totems were called *namatarao*⁷; however they are called *naflak* in Lelepa, as in South Efate (Thieberger 2006:21).

The particularly striking feature of the *naflak* system is that it was superposed on the patrilineal clan system already in place, adding a new network of close relations geographically more dispersed. Guiart (1973:291) observes that the system was accepted because of its efficiency in establishing and maintaining peace. Today, it seems that all Lelepa people, young and old, know which *naflak* they belong to, proving that the system is still in place. Luders (2001:256) indicates that the *naflak* and *namatrao* systems are also applied to landholding in Efate, with the *naflak* system managing land matrilineally and the *namatrao* system managing land patrilineally. Land can be transferred from one system to the other⁸.

It is important to point out that Roi Mata refers to a title as much as it refers to an individual holding this title. Therefore, there has been some difficulty determining if the last holder of the Roi Mata title may or may not correspond to the one buried on Retoka, or to the one who held the feast leading to the initiation of the *naflak* system. According to Guiart (1973:287), the last Roi Mata was buried on Retoka. He saw the arrival of the first Europeans, but not of Christianity. Guiart (1973:287) also says that the last candidate for the title went to Queensland to work in plantations, and died shortly after coming back to Lelepa.

⁶ "Each one of those who brought a yam is now yam; each one of those who brought a taro is now taro, and so on. If a man has a difficult time, he may go and see a friend of the same symbol in another village. He will find there help and shelter, instead of being killed. Thus, there will be help for every man, in every place".

⁷ A word of the form *namatrau* appears in my corpus, with the meaning 'extended family'.

⁸ I happened to be in Mangaliliu on a fieldtrip when a dispute over land was solved using the *naflak* system. It was explained to me that some land which was previously administered patrilineally was in dispute, and transferring it to the *naflak* system allowed opposing parties to reach an agreement (Chief Kalkot Murmur 2008 p.c.).

Garanger's dating of the Retoka burial is around 1265 AD (Garanger 1972:77). The arrival of Christianity in Vanuatu is sometimes regarded as corresponding to the arrival of De Quiros in 1606 in Espiritu Santo in northern Vanuatu. He was a Portuguese sailor hired by the Spanish Crown and attempted to annex Big Bay in Espiritu Santo. This arrival also corresponds to the arrival of the first Europeans in the archipelago. However, regarding this date as the arrival of Christianity is more symbolic than anything else, since conversion attempts started later. As discussed in 1.1.4, European contact including the coming of Christianity are both later than 1265 AD, making it unlikely if one follows Garanger's dating that the last Roi Mata saw the first Europeans arriving on Efate.

Subsequent research by Spriggs and Bedford led to a new and later dating for the Roi Mata burial, around the 17th century (Spriggs and Bedford 2001:101). This means that this Roi Mata lived in fact four hundred years later than first established by Garanger, and after the Kuwae eruption, at a time when profound changes in the social organisation may have taken place, after the migrations occurring at the time of the eruption.

It therefore appears likely that the earliest ancestors of the modern Lelepa speakers were settling in the area around 3000 BP, following the start of the pottery sequence established by Spriggs and Bedford (Spriggs and Bedford 2001:101). Major events such as the Kuwae eruption, the migrations related to it, tribal wars and the establishment of peace at the time of Roi Mata also relate to Lelepa ancestry.

1.1.4 European contact. After the passage of De Quiros in the early 17th century and of Cook in the last quarter of the 18th century, more consistent contact with Europeans occurred from the 1820s. Trade was the first motivation for Europeans who engaged with the local populations in sea-cucumber and sandalwood trade. A consequence of this activity was the introduction of alcohol, firearms and epidemics in Vanuatu as in other Pacific islands. As a result, populations started to decline. The next step in relations with Europeans was the forced labour trade, also called *blackbirding*. This consisted in bringing Pacific islanders to Queensland to work in sugar cane plantations. In 1867 only, 250 Efatese out of a total population of 3000 to 4000 people were taken to Queensland (Bonnemaison 1986:74). A global estimate

for Vanuatu is that between 1863 and 1906, over 69,000 men went to work in Queensland plantations (Tryon and Charpentier 2004:208).

While the labour trade was going on, the first efforts of Christian missionaries also started in Vanuatu. In 1839, John Williams from the London Missionary Society went to Erromango, only to be killed on arrival. Missions then changed their strategy and sent Polynesian teachers first. Regarding Efate, the establishment of Christianity had a number of stop-and-go episodes: the first Samoan teachers settled in Erakor in the south of Efate in 1845. Then from 1854 there was no Christian presence on Efate, until the arrival at Erakor of Rarotongan teachers, followed by Rev. Mackenzie in 1872 (Thieberger 2006:27).

In October 1853, two Polynesian teachers, Kavavili and Pikika, arrived in Lelepa with their wives and a young boy who was the son of one of the couples. They were sent by the London Missionary Society following an invitation from a Lelepa chief, Marifatu. On arrival, they were met with great enthusiasm by the Lelepa people, but the two teachers and their wives were killed and eaten nineteen days later. The young boy, who Lelepa people intended to keep with them, could not stop crying, so he was dropped in the sea, a stone tied to his neck (Miller n.d:60-61). This episode is well known in Lelepa today, and in 2005, a reconciliation ceremony was held on the island to commemorate the event.

In 1872, Daniel Macdonald, a Presbyterian missionary, settled in Havannah Harbour in north-west Efate at the now abandoned village of Utaon. Macdonald was an exceptionally driven man, who “carried the fight with equal gusto to the heathen, British traders, other Presbyterian missionaries, the fledgling Condominium government and – most especially – the French, in all their guises” (Ballard and Thieberger 2006:1). By 1875, three years after his arrival, Macdonald only had six baptised converts and in August of that year he opened a church in Utaon (Miller 1987:83). At that time, Lelepa people led by Marifatu were not prepared to let him put a church on the island, and it is only in 1879 that they would occasionally have him there to preach (Miller 1981:97). In 1896, Marifatu converted to Christianity, and in 1898 most of the Lelepa people followed (Miller 1987:105), more than 25

years after Macdonald's arrival in Havannah Harbour. In 1902, while Macdonald was on furlough, the Lelepa people built a church on the island (Miller 1987:112).

Macdonald was very active on the linguistics front, and published extensively in and about the languages spoken on Efate, which he would call *Efatese*. Macdonald and the Rev. Mackenzie based in Erakor had noticed mutual intelligibility between Efate people and so believed that it would be possible to "make a kind of compromise literary dialect" (Macdonald 1889:9). According to Miller (1987:82), they "produced a composite New Testament in 1889, half in the dialect of Havannah Harbour and half in that of South Efate." This enterprise culminated with the *Tusi Tab Tuai*, a translation of the Old Testament by Macdonald published in 1908. But in 1916, in a letter to J.A. Ferguson, the missionary Peter Milne based on Nguna said that the *Tusi Tab Tuai* "is not generally useful, especially in Mr. Michelsen's district⁹, on account of over two thirds of it being in the dialects which they scarcely understand". By 1941, this translation was not in use anymore (Miller 1987:82).

1.1.5 Lelepa today. Lelepa people have not only settled their island, which occupies a relatively small area (8 square km, Garanger 1972:28), but also a large chunk of the facing Efate coastline including the immediate interior, which traditionally belongs to them. This space is where the main food gardens are located today. The reason for this is that in addition to being small, the island is rocky and dry, offering limited subsistence gardening opportunities, while the facing Efate slopes are more fertile and naturally irrigated by several streams. In 1983, a number of people left the island to resettle on Efate, at the place called Mangaliliu, where a coconut plantation was located in the late 1800s. Today Mangaliliu is the Lelepa community's second village, with one church (Presbyterian) and one primary school using French as the medium of education. On Lelepa, people got together in the one village of Nataṗao, which has one Presbyterian and one small Seventh-Day-Adventist church, along with one English-medium primary school. Thus all Lelepa children need to leave the island or Mangaliliu to be educated beyond the primary level.

⁹ The Rev. Michelsen was based in Tongoa by 1879. He was also in charge of South-East Epi, populated by Nakanamanga (or Ngunesse) speakers.

As in other rural areas in Vanuatu, Lelepa people rely on subsistence agriculture and fishing. In recent years, huge pressure to sell their land has been put on the indigenous communities of Efate. This land-selling trend is putting rural communities at risk, because the portion of land used for gardening and housing is decreasing. At the same time, the population of Vanuatu is booming, with a growth rate of 2.6% calculated after the 1999 census (National Statistics Office 2003:19). Efate, whose available land surface is decreasing and which is also facing significant migration from other Vanuatu islands, is in a difficult situation. However, in July 2008, the Roi Mata Domain, comprised of Retoka Island, Mangaasi and Fels cave on Lelepa, was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This may lead to greater care for traditionally owned land in the Lelepa region.

The state of endangerment of the language has not been assessed yet. From my own experience, the great majority of the communication between Lelepa people is done in Lelepa. There are settings where Bislama¹⁰ is used, mostly between Lelepa people and women from elsewhere in Vanuatu who married Lelepa men. In such families, I observed that children are spoken to in Bislama, while Bislama is used between the parents as well. However, I also observed that the same children communicating in Bislama with their parents use Lelepa with other children. Bislama speaking in nuclear families may be a recent trend, since in the past, women from non-Lelepa speaking areas use to learn the language when marrying a man from Lelepa.

1.2 METHODOLOGY AND CORPUS

This study describes possessive constructions in Lelepa. In a broader context, it outlines Oceanic possession generally, by making use of a variety of sources, and then investigates Lelepa accordingly. No comparative perspective is taken or comparative claim made about how Lelepa fits into Oceanic in terms of possession. The description of the Lelepa possessive system is attempted in a purely synchronic frame. A reasonably detailed account of Oceanic possession is given prior to focus on Lelepa, in order to provide the reader with a broad understanding of Oceanic possession.

¹⁰ Bislama is an English-lexified pidgin and also the national language of Vanuatu.

1.2.1 Field methodology. My first encounter with the Lelepa language started in 2001 when I would regularly visit the island with family and friends. At that time, I was teaching at the French international school in Port Vila, an institution despising Bislama and rather oblivious of the incredible language diversity of its host country. My interest in this diversity became gradually sharpened while travelling all over Vanuatu during school holidays, realising that in every island, sometimes in every village I was going to a different language was spoken.

In October 2005, while I was in the process of leaving teaching for linguistic studies, I went to Lelepa for a week for an initiatory fieldtrip¹¹. During that week, I recorded some data and started my learning of the language, and this comforted me that the decision I had taken to work on Lelepa was the right one.

In 2006 and 2007, I conducted several short fieldtrips to the island, spending most of my time there to record speakers and to transcribe the recordings with the invaluable help of a little group of willing language consultants. Transcribed data was then managed within Transcriber, Toolbox and Lexique Pro. I was also conducting formal elicitation sessions on topics I would select, in order to help my understanding of the language structure. Such sessions would be conducted in Bislama, a language which I speak fluently. At the same time, I was concentrating on learning Lelepa. The aim was to develop a more instinctive comprehension of its structure, and ultimately to be able to conduct elicitation sessions in Lelepa, without having to rely on Bislama. This last aim is not reached as yet, and is presently still actively pursued.

In 2008, I stayed a month and a half on Lelepa and in Mangaliliu, expanding the corpus and my group of informants. This time was extremely fruitful in terms of my learning of the language and the diversification of my corpus. I also proceeded with more topic-oriented elicitation sessions, in order to be able to record a satisfactory array of possessive constructions, some of which may not occur in texts very commonly. Regarding the present study, it is important to state that elicitation of possessive constructions has been used in order to complement textual data related to possession, but not to constitute the main body of data on which the analysis is

¹¹ I am grateful to Nick Thieberger for allowing me to accompany him during that fieldtrip.

founded. Each Lelepa example given is indexed either as being elicited or uttered during natural speech. In the latter case, examples are referenced with a code indicating the name of the speaker, the title of the text and the sentence number corresponding to the position of the example in the interlinearised text. In the appendix, the reader can find a table listing the texts from which example sentences were selected.

Initially, I used to transcribe texts with the assistance of the speaker telling the text. However, a group of language consultants started to emerge as I was coming to the field more often and staying longer¹².

1.2.2 The corpus. The corpus comprises 23 interlinearised texts representing a total of about 2 hours of recorded speech. These texts represent several textual types such as narratives of traditional and non-traditional origin, prescriptive texts based on aspects of traditional lives, and songs. The corpus also comprises elicited data in the form of field notes and an ongoing dictionary. As this study investigates a particular aspect of Lelepa grammar, the corpus used in the present study is only part of the corpus I have been constructing since I started working on Lelepa. This means that not every interlinearised text has been used for this study, nor every item of data collected during elicitation sessions. In particular, elicited data which is not relevant to the present study is not regarded as being part of the corpus.

However, it is important to note that before treating the subject of possession in Lelepa, a certain level of comprehension, linguistic knowledge and description of the language had to be reached, and for that purpose the whole corpus was used. Basic understanding of the phonology, as well as the functioning of the noun phrase and verb phrase was achieved through the whole corpus. Despite the fact that there are a number of areas of the language which I presently only partially understand, the analysis of the topic under investigation did not suffer from this, as the present study investigates one aspect of the language and is not a description of the whole language. I plan to pursue the study of the language in the future in order to describe

¹² I am thankful to Tomsen Nañan, George Munalpa, Douglas Kalotiti, Chief Kalkot Murmur and Billy Poikiiki. They formed a team which I had the pleasure and privilege to work with.

and document it. The next section gives a brief account of basic aspects of the language.

1.3 LELEPA: THE LANGUAGE

The aim of this section is to briefly present some aspects of the language which are important as a background to this study. A brief outline of the phonology is given first, presenting the phoneme inventory and discussing stress and orthography. This is followed by discussions of some aspects of the morphology relating to nominals and verbs.

1.3.1 Elements of phonology. Lelepa has fourteen consonant phonemes and five vowel phonemes. They are displayed in table 1:1 below.

Consonant phonemes						
	labiovelar	bilabial	labiodental	alveolar	palatal	velar
stop	^k p ^w	p		t		k
nasal	^ŋ m ^w	m		n		ŋ
trill				r		
fricative			f	s		
lateral				l		
semivowel		w			j	
Vowel phonemes						
	front	central	back			
high	i		u			
mid	e		o			
low		a				

Table 1:1 Lelepa phonemes

The labiovelars /^kp^w/ and /^ŋm^w/ are co-articulated as a sequence comprised of the following elements: a velar component first, followed by a bilabial stop or nasal component, and finally the articulation finishes with a labial component. In fast speech, the velar component is sometimes omitted, but the labial is always present.

Vowel length is phonemic, as indicated by the following minimal pairs:

maala ‘bird sp.’ *faat* ‘stone’ *too* ‘fowl’ *eelo* ‘sun’
mala ‘time’ *fat* ‘to do (irrealis)’ *to* ‘to stay’ *elo* ‘he/she looks’

Vowel length frequency is limited in the language, and is difficult to hear in fast speech.

Stress is not phonemic in Lelepa. Two different stress patterns occur in the language: it can fall either on the second last or on the last syllable. Examples of these two patterns are given in table 1:2 below:

i. penultimate syllable stress	ii. last syllable stress
<i>'sa.ra</i> ‘p.name’	<i>a.'tlag</i> ‘month, moon’
<i>'mar.ka</i> ‘respect term’	<i>na.ta.'pau</i> ‘p.name’
<i>'ru.a</i> ‘two’	<i>ko'nou</i> ‘1SG’
<i>'to.lu</i> ‘three’	<i>lo.par.'kat</i> ‘to look after’
<i>'fa.ti</i> ‘four’	<i>ma.ga.to.ru.'a</i> ‘p.name’
<i>'sra.go</i> ‘possessions’	<i>ar.'tok</i> ‘p.name’
<i>'pal.wa</i> ‘rock pool’	<i>na.'mit</i> ‘mat’
<i>'nag.na</i> ‘3SG.PARTPOSS’	<i>na.'ki</i> ‘pandanus’
<i>mal.'ma.lu</i> ‘quickly’	<i>na.lia.'ti</i> ‘day’
<i>na.'pu.a</i> ‘road’	<i>na.lua.'ki</i> ‘short story’
<i>ta.ma.ra.'o.ta</i> ‘couple’	<i>naf.tau.'rin</i> ‘wedding’
<i>mat.nar.'far.fa</i> ‘p.name’	<i>mal.mau.'na</i> ‘now’
<i>mat.'na.rau</i> ‘p.name’	<i>mat.'mai</i> ‘tomorrow’
<i>mu.'nal.pa</i> ‘p.name’	<i>ko'ri</i> ‘dog’
	<i>ta.ka.'nei</i> ‘how’

Table 1:2. Lelepa stress patterns

In pattern (i), stress falls on the penultimate syllable, especially with a final syllable of the form (C)V. An exception to this is *matnarau* ‘p.name’. This is the commonest pattern for Oceanic (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:35) and it is found in Lelepa common and proper nouns and a few adverbs. Pattern (ii) of last syllable stress is the most common in the language and found in *na*-initial nouns (although note an exception with *napua* ‘road’ which has penultimate stress), other common nouns, proper nouns, verbs and adverbs. This is particularly true when the final syllable is of the form (C)CVC and CVV. An exception is *naki* ‘pandanus’.

Consonant clusters across syllable boundaries and within syllables are permitted in the language, as are word-final ones, even if their status is not always clear. The data from table 1:3 shows examples of these consonant clusters:

clusters across syllables	clusters within syllables
<i>e.pag.ki</i> ‘he climbed it’	<i>nta.ka.iēn</i> ‘dance ceremony’
<i>lat.sa</i> ‘six’	<i>psrok</i> ‘to speak’
<i>sak.sak</i> ‘to sit’	<i>msug</i> ‘to carry’
<i>nam.ta</i> ‘eye’	<i>ka.frau</i> ‘to crawl’
<i>nal.far</i> ‘wing’	<i>nsfa</i> ‘what’
<i>tag.fa</i> ‘let’s go’	<i>m̥la.tigk</i> ‘close to’
<i>kin.ta</i> ‘1PL.INCL’	<i>pi.tlak</i> ‘to have’

Table 1:3: Consonant clusters

Regarding orthography, conventions used by speakers which were often inherited from missionaries have been observed. The orthography as it is used in this work is phonemic. Co-articulated consonants /^kp^w/ and /^ŋm^w/ are respectively represented as *p̃* and *m̃* as in other related Vanuatu languages, such as South Efate (Thieberger 2006:46), Ngunes (Schütz 1969:16), Lewo (Early 1994:62). The velar nasal /ŋ/ is represented as *g*. Long vowels are represented by digraphs such as *aa*, *oo*, *ii*, *ee*, *uu*.

1.3.2 Nominals and the noun phrase. The class of nominals is comprised of pronouns and nouns.

1.3.2.1 Pronouns. Lelepa distinguishes free and bound pronominal forms. Independent, subject and object pronouns are discussed in this section, while possessive pronouns are discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

Independent pronouns are free forms, also called focal pronouns (Thieberger 2006:104, Lynch 2000:40) or disjunctive pronouns (Ross 2004:499). The paradigm of independent pronouns is given below:

	SG	NSG
1INCL	-	<i>kinta</i>
1EXCL	<i>konou</i>	<i>kenem</i>
2	<i>nag</i>	<i>kumu</i>
3	<i>nai</i>	<i>naara</i>

Table 1:4. Independent pronouns

In Lelepa, they encode a referent by marking its person and number. They can function as subjects as in (1) or objects as in (2):

- (1) **nag** Ku=to plag nsfa?
 2SG 2SG.R=stay look.for what
What are you looking for? (TNura009)

- (2) ku=panei lok **konou** naliati...
 2SG.R=come:IRR see 1SG day
You came to see me one day... (TNlif276)

Subject pronouns are bound forms which encode subjects' person and number, and distinguish realis from irrealis mood. Regarding number, they distinguish singular, dual and plural, in contrast with independent pronouns which distinguish singular and non-singular only. The paradigm of subject pronouns is given in table 1:5 below:

	SG		DU		PL	
	R	IRR	R	IRR	R	IRR
1INCL	-	-	<i>ta</i>	<i>tag</i>	<i>tu</i>	<i>tug</i>
1EXCL	<i>a</i>	<i>ag</i>	<i>ar</i>	<i>arg</i>	<i>ur</i>	<i>urug/ug</i>
2	<i>ku</i>	<i>p̃a</i>	<i>kar</i>	<i>karag</i>	<i>kur</i>	<i>kurug/kug</i>
3	<i>e</i>	<i>eg</i>	<i>ar</i>	<i>arg</i>	<i>ur</i>	<i>urug/ug</i>

Table 1:5. Bound subject pronouns

They are exemplified in (3) to (5):

- (3) **Ur**=marou pa **ur**=kat to gaigai.
 3PL.R=be.thirsty go 3PL.R=RES stay pant
They were thirsty so they were panting. (GMmaa069)

- (4) **Pa=ti** false raus-i mou.
 2SG.IRR=NEG1 paddle:IRR follow-3SG.OBJ NEG2
Do not follow it (paddling). (ETna1017)
- (5) **Malao** **ø=lag:** “Kinta **tag=fa** ta rarua skei
 megapode 3SG.R=say 1NSG.INCL 1DU.INCL.IRR=go:IRR cut canoe one
malmauna!
 now
The megapode said: “let’s cut a canoe now!” (MLnaf010)

The examples above indicate that subject pronouns attach either to verb stems or to aspect and polarity particles, which defines them as clitics. In (3), the first occurrence of *ur=* ‘3PL.R’ attaches to *marou* ‘be thirsty’ while the second occurrence of *ur=* ‘3PL.R’ attaches to *kat* ‘RES’, a particle marking resultative aspect. This morpheme is discussed in 1.3.3.3 along with other aspect marking particles. In (4), *p̃a=* ‘2SG.IRR’ attaches to the first negative particle *ti* ‘NEG1’ which negates clauses and is used in conjunction with the second negative particle *mou* ‘NEG2’. The occurrence of subject pronouns is normally obligatory, even when the referent is co-referenced by an independent pronoun as in (5), where *kinta* ‘1NSG.INCL’ and *tag=* ‘1DU.INCL.IRR=’ are co-referential. However, the third person singular form *e=* is sometimes omitted in fast speech, as in (5) where *lag* ‘say’ occurs as a bare verb stem.

Similarly to subject pronouns, object pronouns are bound forms which encode the person and number of their referent. The paradigm of bound object pronouns is given in table 1:6 below:

	SG	NSG
1INCL	-	<i>-ginta</i>
1EXCL	<i>-ou</i>	<i>-gnem</i>
2	<i>-ko</i>	<i>-gmu</i>
3	<i>-i</i>	<i>-ra</i>

Table 1:6. Bound object pronouns

They encode objects and do not co-occur with object NPs. Independent pronouns can also function as object encoders, and the distribution of the bound object pronouns and independent pronouns is not discussed in this work. Bound object pronouns are suffixed to verbs and to the preposition *ki*. Examples (6) and (7) show occurrences of these pronouns in context. In (6), both objects suffixes *-ou* ‘1SG.OBJ’ and *-ko* ‘2SG.OBJ’ encode the same referent: the rat, which engages in a dialog with the coral trout. In (7), *-ra* ‘-3PL.OBJ’ is suffixed to the preposition *ki* and to the verb *parkat* ‘to catch’:

- (6) Kusu e=lag: “wokmag, ku=tai **slai-ou?**”
 rat 3SG.R=say coral.trout 2SG.R=can help-1SG.OBJ
 E=lag naa... “a=tai **slai-ko,** takanei?”
 3SG.R=say HESIT 1SG.R=can help-2SG.OBJ how
 The rat said: “coral trout, can you help me?”
 It said hum... “I can help you, how?” (MLnaq025)

- (7) E=plag **ki-ra,** e=wus napua e=plag **ki-ra**
 3SG.R=search PREP- 3SG.R=follow road 3SG.R=search PREP-3PL.OBJ
 3PL.OBJ
 panei pa **parkat-ra.**
 come go catch-3PL.OBJ
 He looked for them, he followed the road, he looked for them to catch them.
 (GMnaq021)

1.3.2.2 Nouns. This subsection briefly discusses noun classes and the nominalisation process. The discussion of directly possessed nouns occurs later, in section 5.2.

Nouns do not inflect according to subclass, number, person or role. A substantial body of Lelepa nouns starts either with *na* or *n*, and these nouns refer to body parts and products (*namta* ‘eye’, *name* ‘urine’ but also *sutao* ‘sperm’), animals such as fish (*napel* ‘sardine’, *neik* ‘fish’ but also *pai* ‘stingray’), man-made objects (*nasuṃa*

‘house’, *naṗrat* ‘canoe washboard’ but also *rarua* ‘canoe’), and man-made concepts (*naliati* ‘day’, *ntau* ‘year’ and also *atlag* ‘month’). These examples indicate that Lelepa common nouns can be *na* or *n* initial, but that this is not a defining criteria for common nouns in the language, since there are many common nouns which do not start with *na* or *n*. Proper nouns on the other hand generally do not start with *na* or *n*.

Two common noun articles are reconstructed for Proto Oceanic: **na* and **a* (Crowley 1985; Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:71). Lelepa *na* seems to be more a part of the noun itself rather than an article. There are very rare occurrences in the corpus of nouns being able to occur with and without *na*. One example is *nasuṃa* ‘house’, occurring in (8) to (10):

- (8) Kenem ur=wan **suṃa-g** Naviti wan.
 1PL.EXCL 1PL.EXCL.R=be.at house-CS:AL p.name be.at
We (excl.) are at Naviti’s house. (CMmut004)

- (9) Douglas e=to **suṃa** to.
 p.name 3SG.R=stay house stay
Douglas is at home. (elicited)

- (10) A=to sara ṗag **nasuṃa**.
 1SG.R=stay clean inside house
I used to clean the inside of the house. (TNlif134)

In (8) and (9), *suṃag* and *suṃa* ‘house’ have the semantic roles of locations; while in (10) *nasuṃa* ‘house’ is a patient. The occurrence of *na* as a prefix to the noun in (10) may indicate that it is a common noun rather than a location noun as in (8) and (9).

Nominalisation of verbs is a productive process, involving affixation of the prefix *na-* and the suffix *-n/-an/-en/-in/-un* to verb stems. Examples of nominalised verbs are given in table 1:7 below:

	verb stem	gloss	nominalised verb	gloss
-n	<i>lega</i>	to sing	<i>nalegan</i>	song
	<i>kasua</i>	to be strong	<i>nakasuan</i>	strength
	<i>mramra</i>	to rule	<i>namramran</i>	ruled territory
-an	<i>maro</i>	to think	<i>namaroan</i>	thoughts, ideas
	<i>raik</i>	to spear	<i>naraikan</i>	spear-fishing
	<i>sur</i>	to defecate	<i>nasuran</i>	need to defecate
-en	<i>takai</i>	to dance	<i>natakaaien</i>	dancing place
	<i>mat</i>	to die	<i>nmaten</i>	funeral
-in	<i>sor</i>	to sell	<i>nasorin</i>	sale
	<i>traus</i>	to recount	<i>natrausin</i>	story
	<i>p̃og</i>	to be night	<i>naṗogin</i>	night
	<i>weswes</i>	to work	<i>nawesin</i>	work
	<i>tag</i>	to weep	<i>natagin</i>	weeping
	<i>faam</i>	to eat (IRR)	<i>nafaamin</i>	food
-un	<i>mun</i>	to drink	<i>namunun</i>	beverage

Table 1:7. Nominalised verbs

1.3.3 Verbs and the verb phrase. Considering the scope of the present study, a detailed discussion of verb classes is not necessary. However, two features relevant to verbal morphology are discussed: verb structure and mood/aspect marking.

1.3.3.1 Verb structure. The verb is comprised of two obligatory elements, a subject pronoun and a verb stem, to which various other elements are added. Such elements are morphemes marking aspect, polarity, objects and transitivity. Verb stems can be reduplicated or added to the initial verb stem. Verbal morphology is agglutinative, with morphemes preposed and postposed to the verb stem, as indicated in the representation of the structure of the verb below:

obligatory element	subject pronoun
non obligatory elements	first negater, benefactive pronoun, aspect markers
obligatory element	verb stem
non obligatory elements	other verb stems, transitivity, object pronoun

Table 1:8. Structure of the verb

This structure is exemplified in (11) to (15) below, with verbs appearing in brackets and obligatory elements in bold letters:

- (11) **[Pa=fa]**!
 2SG.IRR=go.IRR
Go! (CMmut067)

- (12) [Ag=maginta til] nakai kik skei.
 1SG.IRR=1PL.INCL.BEN tell traditional.story small one
I am going to tell a little traditional story for us. (MLtam004)
- (13) [Pa=ti to takai] mou!
 2SG.IRR=NEG1 PROG dance NEG2
Stop dancing! (MLnaf017)
- (14) [A=po paus suk~suk-i] pak naṣatko-n rarua.
 1SG.R=RF attach be.tight~INT-2SG.OBJ to body-CS:IN canoe
I am about to fasten it tightly to the hull of the canoe. (BKrar066)
- (15) E=pi naure kik skei [e=to mlatig-k] Tahiti.
 3SG.R=COP island small one 3SG=stay close-TR p.name
It is a small island close to Tahiti. (TNlif219)

1.3.3.2 *Mood and aspect.* There is no tense marking in Lelepa. Rather, the interplay between mood and aspect allows positioning of events in time. When marked with the realis, events are located in the present or the past, or are taking place or have already taken place within the timeframe established by the utterance, as in (16). In contrast, events marked with the irrealis are located in the future, as in (17). Irrealis marking also encodes the imperative, as in (18).

- (16) Ar=ptol, nina ar=pag-k ntali.
 3DU.R=be.hungry then 3DU.R=climb-TR Terminalia.catappa
*They (dual) were hungry, so they (dual) climbed the tropical almond tree.
 (MLtam010)*
- (17) Pa=ti faam-i mou, ag-a=faam-ko.
 2SG.IRR=NEG1 eat:IRR-3SG.OBJ NEG2 1SG.IRR-V=eat:IRR-2SG.OBJ
You don't eat it, I will eat you. (CMmut096)
- (18) Pa=tu konou memes kik.
 2SG.IRR=give 1SG knife small
Give me the small knife. (TNlif108)

As seen in 1.3.2.1, subject pronouns are portmanteau morphemes which mark their referent's person and number and which distinguish realis from irrealis as well. As table 1:4 indicates, there is one paradigm of realis forms and one of irrealis forms. Since these subject pronouns are obligatory, mood is marked for all events. There is

also another process of mood marking in the language which only concerns some verbs: such verbs have their initial consonant alternating from *p* to *f* according to mood, with verb stems starting with *p* to mark realis and with *f* to mark irrealis. Table 1:9 shows examples of such consonant-alternating verb stems:

realis forms	irrealis forms	gloss
<i>paam</i>	<i>faam</i>	to eat
<i>pak</i>	<i>fak</i>	to go to
<i>pa</i>	<i>fa</i>	to go
<i>pat</i>	<i>fat</i>	to make
<i>pitlak</i>	<i>fitlak</i>	to have
<i>pi</i>	<i>fi</i>	COP
<i>pe</i>	<i>fe</i>	to be first
<i>palse</i>	<i>false</i>	to paddle
<i>psruk</i>	<i>fsruk</i>	to talk
<i>psak</i>	<i>fsak</i>	to speak
<i>pou</i>	<i>fou</i>	to weave

Table 1:9. Verb stems undergoing initial consonant alternation

Examples (19) and (20) show initial consonant alternation on the verb root *pitlak/fitlak* ‘to have’:

- (19) **A=pitlak** ntau ralma larua atmat latsa.
 1SG=have:R year ten seven LIG six
I am seventy-six years old. (MLtam003)

- (20) Wan a=msau ag=**fitlak** rarua...
 if 1SG.R=want 1SG.IRR=have:IRR canoe
If I want to have a canoe... (BTrar001)

Aspect is marked by means of several particles which are preposed to the verb stem. Some of those also function as lexical verbs while others are aspect markers only. The following paragraphs discuss the main aspect markers found in the corpus: *to* ‘to stay, HAB, PROG’, *kat* ‘RES’, *mro* ‘REP’, *po* ‘RF’, *pe/fe* ‘first’.

The verb *to* ‘to stay’ (21) also acts as an aspect marker when occurring preverbally, marking progressive (22) or habitual (23) aspect.

- (21) **E=pi** mutuam skei **e=to** artoka...
 3SG.R=COP:IRR devil one 3SG.R=stay p.name
There was a devil staying in Retoka... (CMmut007)

- (22) **Ur=to** **sal** **n̄pou** **taaf-n** **faatnleg.**
 3SG.R=PROG dance head hill-CS:IN p.name
They were dancing on top of Faatnleg's hill. (TAtom004)

- (23) **A=to** **kuk,** **a=to** **was,**
 1SG=HAB cook 1SG=HAB wash
a=to **wus** **leta** **pak** **naa...** **postofis.**
 1SG=HAB carry mail to HESIT post.office
I used to cook, wash, and carry the mail to hum... the post office. (TNlif127)

The particle *kat* 'RES', which I call resultative, marks an event as being a result or a consequence of a previous event, as in (24):

- (24) **Mala** **e=nou,** **a=kat** **trups-i** **e=wan** **gara~gara.**
 time 3SG.R=finished 1SG=RES leave-3SG.OBJ 3SG.R=be.at dry~INT
When it is finished, I then leave it there to dry. (BTrar037)

Repetition of a previous action is marked with the particle *mro*, which I call the repetitive:

- (25) **Ur=to** **noumea,** **a=mro** **pag** **plen** **noumea...**
 3PL.R=stay p.name 1SG.R=REP climb plane p.name
We stayed in Noumea, I climbed on a plane again in Noumea... (TNlif046)

The particle *po* 'RF' is called realis future because it marks an event that is to take place after another event happening within the limits of the realis timeframe. An event marked with *po* is in the realis mood but located posteriorly to other realis marked events. In (26), the speaker is explaining that he has to go to the bush again to cut rope for assembling canoe parts:

- (26) **A=mro** **pak** **namlas,** **a=po** **ta** **ntal** **nagna.**
 1SG.R=REP go.to bush 1SG.R=RF cut rope 3SG.POSSPART
I go into the bush again, I am to cut its rope. (BTrar038)

The alternating forms *pe* 'to be first:R' and *fe* 'to be first:IRR' mark an event as being located previously (27) or to be done previously (28) to other events. The irrealis form *fe* 'first' can also function attributively as in (29).

- (27) Tu=kat tarṣagor te-matu aginta
1PL.INCL.R=RES forget DET=old 1PL.INCL.POSS
naara ur=**pe** to,
3PL 3PL.R=first.R stay
te-matu aginta skei ur=**pe** to loparkat kinta.
DET=old 1PL.INCL.POSS one 3PL.R=first.R HAB look.after 1PL.INCL
Then we forget our parents who were there first, our only parents who looked after us first. (ETnal061)
- (28) Maala e=kat lag:
Circus.approximans 3SG=RES say
"Gaio! Nag, urug-a=**fe** mnag lao eg-a=**fe**."
ok 2SG 3SG.IRR- 2SG.BEN plant 3SG.IRR-
V=first:IRR V=first:IRR
The swamp harrier said: "Ok! You, they will plant for you first." (GMmaa029)
- (29) Pa=false raus rarua **fe** nge.
2SG.IRR=paddle.IRR follow canoe first:IRR DEM
Paddle to follow this first canoe. (ETnal020)

1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The present chapter introduces Lelepa's history, social organisation and language. In chapter two, the grammatical category of possession is discussed across languages. The first section defines the notion of possession as a grammatical category and the different possessive relationships that can be expressed. Then, it turns to the syntax of possession and discusses heads and modifiers in possessive constructions. The second section discusses the inalienability vs. alienability opposition, an important notion for this study. Finally, the third section looks at how this opposition is realised across languages, and particularly if it is formally marked or not.

Chapter three is an overview of possession in Oceanic languages. The first section gives background on Oceanic languages, discussing genetic affiliation, subgrouping and typological features. The next section focuses on previous research investigating possession in Oceanic languages. A large array of works is discussed, followed by a section discussing the main possessive systems found in Oceanic.

Chapter four is an overview of Lelepa possession: it briefly outlines and exemplifies the form of the different possessive constructions found in the language.

Chapter five is dedicated to direct possession and focuses on the direct possessive construction. The structure of this construction is analysed first, and this is followed by a discussion of directly possessed nouns and their syntactic behaviour. Finally, this chapter explores the semantic scope of the direct construction.

Chapter six discusses indirect possession, free variation between two possessive constructions and variation in possessive relationships. There are several subtypes of indirect possessive constructions. The form of each subtype is discussed first, followed by their semantic scope. Then, the discussion presents an interesting feature of the language: a case of possible free variation between two distinct possessive constructions. Finally, the last section of chapter six addresses variation in possessive relationships.

CHAPTER TWO

A CROSS-LINGUISTIC APPROACH TO THE CATEGORY OF POSSESSION

2.1. POSSESSION AND POSSESSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Before the expression of possession in Oceanic languages and in Lelepa is discussed in the next chapters, a number of remarks on the notion of possession are in order. Possession is a semantic relationship existing between two nominals. It is important to consider that this relationship can be of different kinds, on both syntactical and semantic grounds. Section 2.1.1 will discuss the semantics of different kinds of possessive relationships, while section 2.1.2 will discuss the syntax of possessive constructions through the notions of head and modifier.

2.1.1 Possessive relationships. The main semantic relationship types usually regarded as relationships of possession in languages are discussed below. Although the term *possession* may seem too narrow or improper to define the ensemble of relationships encoded by possessive constructions in the world's language, it is convenient to use it as a general term. In this work, it will be understood that a possessive relationship exists between a possessor and a possessum. The discussion below will show there are a very large range of possessive relationships, and a probably infinite range of possessors and possessums.

The first, obvious relationship entering the grammatical category of possession is ownership. Ownership is a relationship existing between an owner (the possessor) and a thing owned (the possessum), such as in *the Henricksons' house* or *Tom's shirt*. In these two examples it is understood that the Henricksons and Tom are both owners and that the house and the shirt are the goods that are owned. Although these two examples consist of quite simple noun phrases it is possible to extrapolate on their meaning and suppose that the Henricksons went through quite a long

administrative process to buy this house they live in, while Tom was either given this shirt he is wearing or went to a shop to buy it.

Another type of relationship found in possession is the relationship illustrated in examples such as *John's name*, *the rabbit's burrow*, or *the flag of Zimbabwe*. It is not possible to analyse the participants in these examples by saying that they are owners and things owned. Rather, the relationship existing between each pair of noun involves close association. For John to change his name would involve going through a long and tedious administrative and legal process, for the rabbit to change burrow would mean to be chased off from it and for Zimbabwe to change flag would involve a long consultation with the population or maybe a social or political revolution. So for the name, the burrow and the flag to be changed or to be lost would involve quite dramatic or unusual circumstances: these three nouns refer to items that are respectively closely associated to John, the rabbit and Zimbabwe, and enter in a possessive relationship with them.

Kinship relationships are another type of relationship that can hold between two nouns and enter the category of possession. A relation of kinship is different from ownership and close association. One does not own one's father, uncle, niece or son and is not owned by them. Although kinship is also a type of close relationship, it is different from the ones described just below. *My mother*, *Melissa's husband* and *our nephew* refer to relationships defined by blood or marriage, and are still part of the general category of possession. In section 2.2, it will be shown that in some languages, possession of kin is marked in particular ways.

The relationship between a part and the whole it belongs to is also analysed in terms of possession. *The roof of the house*, *the engine's sparkplugs* and *the end of the story* are all examples involving part-whole relationships. The relationship here is not ownership, close association or kinship, but a relation between a part (the possessum) that is normally needed by a whole (the possessor) to be viewed as complete or to function properly.

In noun phrases such as *Mark's arrival*, *yesterday's weather* or *his dive* there is another type of relationship existing, which is different from the ones discussed

previously. Despite the fact that it has nothing to do with an idea of possession similar to ownership or close association, it is still considered as possession. These examples can be analysed as actions performed by someone or something, with the performers being possessors and the things performed being possessums.

It is possible to multiply examples and define more relationship subtypes still regarded as possession. However, what is important here is to understand that what normally comes under the category of possession is very diverse and is not limited to a basic idea of ownership. Rather, it is important to realise that a great number of relationships holding between two nominals are possessive relationships. Only a few were discussed above, in order to highlight the semantic scope of the grammatical category of possession. The discussion now turns to the grammatical units of head and modifier within the syntax of possession.

2.1.2 Heads and modifiers in a possessive construction. These notions are crucial to linguistic analysis and will be discussed within the frame of possessive constructions. It will also be shown that analyses to determine the head and its modifier(s) in a possessive construction can differ according to the language under study.

Traditionally, in a sentence involving a possessive construction such as “*My car is at the garage*” the head of the noun phrase “*my car*” is the noun *car*, and it is modified by the possessive pronoun *my*. If we want to analyse this noun phrase as a possessive construction, we would say that the possessor is the modifier and the possessum is the head. This analysis is the one adopted by many linguists.

However, this view does not seem to be the most fruitful to follow in particular cases. According to Palmer and Brown (2007), when looking at indirect possessive constructions in Oceanic languages, the head of such constructions may not be the possessed noun. Although indirect possessive constructions will be discussed in detail in chapter three, it is nevertheless important to discuss Palmer and Brown’s ideas here. According to them, one constituent of Oceanic indirect possessive constructions, which they call the “possessor-indexing host” (Palmer and Brown 2007:199-209), is the head of these construction types. To support their analysis,

they show that this constituent meets the criteria for head status laid down by Zwicky (1985): obligatoriness, category determinance, distributional equivalence and morphosyntactic locushood.

Heads are obligatory in a construction, and in Oceanic indirect possessive constructions possessor indexing hosts are obligatory, so they behave like heads in that respect. Regarding the criterion of category determinance, since possessor indexing hosts are the only obligatory elements occurring in the phrases in which they occur, they also are the category determinants for those phrases (Palmer and Brown 2007:206). The third criterion for head status is distributional equivalence, and is found again to be met by possessor-indexing hosts: “indirect possessor-indexed hosts are distributionally equivalent to clearly lexical nouns in languages such as Kokota” (Palmer and Brown 2007:206). The last criterion is morphosyntactic locus, and Palmer and Brown (2006:207) explain that “treating the possessor-indexing hosts as heads is consistent with their being morphosyntactic loci”.

In Mwotlap (François 2001), another Oceanic language, the head of indirect constructions can change from one type of indirect construction to the other. There are two types of indirect construction in Mwotlap, depending on the register used by the speakers. In both constructions, a possessive constituent which has the same functions as the possessor-indexing host discussed in Palmer and Brown (2007) occurs. François (2001:553-554) discusses the syntax of these two constructions and shows that in the higher register one, the constituent carrying the classifier is the head, while in the usual construction, the possessed noun is the head.

The following section discusses the opposition of alienability vs. inalienability. This opposition is central in this study, since it is central to the expression of possession in Lelepa and in many other languages.

2.2 INALIENABILITY VS. ALIENABILITY

This section defines and exemplifies the opposition of alienability vs. inalienability. In 2.2.1, a broad definition of the alienability vs. inalienability opposition is given while in 2.2.2, the grammatical status of this opposition is discussed.

2.2.1 A broad definition of the alienability vs. inalienability opposition. Within the category of possession, the semantic opposition of alienability vs. inalienability refers to items that one can acquire or get rid of easily (alienable) as opposed to items that one cannot acquire or get rid of without major consequences on one's own self (inalienable). Another way of explaining this opposition is to say that the possessor has maximum control over alienable possessums and reduced or no control over inalienable possessums. Examples of inalienable items are to be found amongst items belonging to the personal or intimate domain: body parts, family members, or items forming parts of a whole. On the other hand, alienable items may be found in the domain of material goods; these are items that, in a general way, do not relate to the personal domain of the individual.

Languages react to this opposition in different ways: some languages, such as English and other Indo-European languages, do not formally realise this opposition in their grammar, while others, such as Austronesian languages, have morphosyntactic tools to deal with alienable and inalienable items. This means that in Austronesian languages, inalienable items take one type of possessive construction while alienable items take another type of possessive construction.

2.2.2 Is inalienability a formal or a semantic category? Linguistics constantly defines and refines categories in the hope of understanding and analysing languages better. The alienability vs. inalienability opposition can be viewed as a grammatical category, allowing the classification of nouns, possessive relationships, possessive constructions and so on. It is then possible to look at the type of grammatical category this opposition is part of: is it more of a conceptual category mostly dealing with semantics or is it a purely formal category?

It seems that traditionally, the alienability vs. inalienability opposition is viewed as a conceptual category, based on semantics and also maybe real-world properties of inalienable items such as body parts: the head of any living being cannot be removed – alienated – without major consequences on the living being in question. According to Lévy-Bruhl (1914) the alienability vs. inalienability opposition is a conceptual and semantic category. More recently, Nichols posited the alienability vs. inalienability opposition as a formal category, by saying that:

“No accounts of the semantics of possession types will accurately predict the membership of the “alienable” set of nouns, either within one language or cross-linguistically.” (1988:568)

By saying this, Nichols implies that if a language has two noun classes – the alienable and the inalienable noun classes – then there is nothing that can allow the observer to accurately say if a random noun falls into one class or in the other. If this is true, then the only way to determine this is to look at the morphosyntax of a language to find alienable and inalienable possessive constructions.

However, even more recently, views on defining the grammatical category of inalienability are leaning more towards the semantics side. Chappell and McGregor state the following:

“We believe that predictions for each language can be made on the basis of cultural and pragmatic knowledge [...] and that this works in with the semantic component of a grammar to precisely characterise the personal domain, or inalienability.” (1996:9)

According to Chappell and McGregor, membership of either the alienable or inalienable class for nouns can be determined through semantics. Haspelmath, with the help of a diachronic perspective, also tends to define inalienability as a semantic category. He states:

- “The frequency asymmetry is clearly mostly due to conceptual properties of the nouns, though to some extent it may also be due to real-world properties (‘tree’ vs. ‘house’ because we don’t own and don’t live in trees).
- The frequency asymmetry may lead to a formal asymmetry (constructional split).

- Then speakers have to learn the class of words that belong to a certain form class”. (2006:11)

Haspelmath’s view calls for arguments based on the semantic and formal properties of nouns. But the important factor for him is the frequency of occurrence of nouns in the language as spoken by its speakers, and the “asymmetry” resulting from it: some nouns seem to occur in possessive constructions more than the others, and these are the inalienable nouns. A formal split between those constructions involving alienable nouns and those involving inalienable nouns then occurs, at a later stage of development of the language. As a result, speakers learn the class membership of each noun. Such a view is interesting because it can account for sometimes unexpected class membership of particular nouns in languages in which the alienability vs. inalienability opposition is marked in the morphosyntax.

The views exposed above show different interpretations of inalienability, either as a formal or a semantic category. The status of inalienability also varies across languages, being in some languages a semantic category while in others it is both a semantic and formal category. In the following section, this variation will be discussed cross-linguistically.

2.3 THE REALISATION OF THE INALIENABILITY VS. ALIENABILITY OPPOSITION ACROSS LANGUAGES

The aim of this section is to take a look at how languages realise the alienability vs. inalienability opposition. In 2.3.1, we will discuss languages which realise the inalienability/alienability contrast at the semantic level only, without encoding it in a formal way; while in 2.3.2 the discussion will turn to those languages which do realise this contrast in both their semantics and morphosyntax.

2.3.1 A semantic opposition. While the inalienability/alienability contrast is formally marked in a number of languages, it is not the case for many others, and the latter option is true for most Indo-European languages. To show this, we can take the example of French, in which possessive constructions are not marked according to a distinction between alienability and inalienability. In the examples below, the same

possessive marking is used in an inalienable relationship (1) and in an alienable relationship (2):

(1) **ma** **tête**
1SG.POSS head
my head

(2) **ma** **clef**
1SG.POSS key
my key

Does that mean that French speakers consider that they possess their head in the same way as they possess their keys? Certainly not, and as Lévy-Bruhl says, “When I talk about my head, I do not intend to say that it belongs to me, but that it is *me*.” (1914:18)

This shows that some items such as body parts are inalienable to an individual, despite the fact that this may not be formally marked in the language.

However, it is possible to find in French other possessive construction types that appear to reflect the formal opposition between alienable and inalienable possession. In the following example, the possessed noun is *jambe* ‘leg’. While the English translation is the same in examples (3) and (4), there is an important semantic difference between the two:

(3) Je **me** suis cassé **la** jambe.
1SG 1SG.DAT be:1SG.PRS break:PRF the:F leg
I broke my leg. (lit.: I to myself broke the leg.)

(4) J’ ai cassé **ma** jambe
1SG have:1SG.PRS break:PRF 1SG.POSS leg
I broke my leg.

In (4), the free translation given can not be matched with the literal translation given for (3), because the semantic difference between (3) and (4) is crucial: while the former refers to someone who broke his own leg (e.g. the one attached to his body), the latter is about someone who broke another kind of leg (e.g. his prosthetic wooden or plastic leg).

Example (3) shows a construction involving the first singular dative pronoun *me* and the feminine article *la*. This is the construction normally used in French when talking about one's body parts. In contrast, example (4) uses the first singular possessive pronoun, and no dative element. This construction would be very rarely used in French, except for a colloquial effect or in the unusual case of referring to a prosthetic body part. If this example is read with the latter meaning, then it is interesting to see that the only overtly possessive morpheme used, the feminine possessive pronoun *ma* 'my', is used in the context of alienability.

Example (3) shows that the dative construction in French, used in the context of establishing a possessive relationship between a possessor and a possessed body part may be a way of marking the inalienability of someone's leg. Spanish, another Romance language closely related to French works in a similar way:

- (5) **Me** romp-í **la** pierna.
 1SG.DAT break-1SG.PRT the:F leg
I broke my leg. (lit.: I to myself broke the leg.)

- (6) **He** roto **mi** pierna.
 1SG.PRF break:PRF 1SG.POSS leg
I broke my leg.

In the examples above, we see that Spanish uses a construction involving a dative pronoun to mark an inalienable relationship, as in (5), and a possessive pronoun to mark an alienable relationship, as in (6). Despite the fact that both legs satisfy the same physical function – walking – they are semantically and formally treated in a different way, because they are different things. One is the leg one was born with; the other is the prosthetic leg one uses because the original inalienable leg was lost in some unfortunate circumstance.

Languages realising the inalienability contrast in their semantics rather than in their formal structure can also be found in Asia. Two languages will be discussed here: Mandarin Chinese, a Sinitic language belonging to the Sino-Tibetan family, and Japanese, whose genetic affiliation is still problematic (Chappel & McGregor 1996:17). In Mandarin Chinese, inalienability can be potentially expressed “through the nominal syntax of genitive and appositional noun phrases” (Chappell &

McGregor 1996:17). Tsunoda (1996) shows that Japanese possession is to be analysed as a cline comprised of several levels showing degrees of closeness between possessors and possessums. According to him,

“This cline, that I should term “Possession Cline”, indicates that the distinction between inalienable and alienable possession is not clear-cut but is a matter of degree.” (Tsunoda 1996:856)

We now turn to languages which realise the alienability vs. inalienability opposition in their morphosyntax as well.

2.3.2 A semantic and formal opposition. This section deals with languages which, in a more obvious way than the ones discussed above, present in their morphosyntax an “alienability split” (Haspelmath 2006:2). There are many such languages in the world, but for reasons of space and focus, only a few will be discussed here as a geographical survey, covering one or two languages per continent. The main sources for this survey are The World Atlas of Language Structures Online, a map surveying the world’s languages in terms of possessive classification (Nichols and Bickel n.d) and Chappell and McGregor (1996).

2.3.2.1. Europe. It appears that Europe has only one language having a morphosyntactic split contrasting alienability from inalienability and this is Ossetic, an Indo-European language documented in Abaev (1964).

2.3.2.2. Africa. The Ewe language spoken in Ghana, Togo and Benin, a member of the Niger-Congo family and Acholi, spoken in Uganda, a Western Nilotic language (Chappell & McGregor 1996:9), present an inalienability split. According to Ameka (1996:784), alienable possession is marked in Ewe by the morpheme *Φe* interposed between two noun phrases while inalienable possession is marked by juxtaposed noun phrases. Regarding Acholi, Bavin (1996:862) shows that in nominal possession, inalienable relationships are coded by juxtaposing possessor and possessed nouns, while in pronominal possession the inalienability contrast is neutralized except when the possessor is singular and the possessed noun ends in a

consonant. On the other hand, alienable relations are marked by a genitive construction.

2.3.2.3. *Australia*. Warray and Nyulnyul are two Australian languages belonging to the non-Pama-Nyungan family. With respect to Warray, Harvey (1996) shows that the inalienability contrast is formally realised in the language through class membership marking. Regarding Nyulnyul, McGregor (1996) shows that the category of inalienability in this language is formally marked on nouns using a system of obligatory prefixes attaching to around forty nominal roots from typically inalienable items such as body parts, terms referring to personal representation and protective covering.

2.3.2.4. *The Pacific*. Languages in the Pacific presenting an inalienability split are many, and two will be discussed here: Paamese spoken in Vanuatu and Tinrin spoken in New Caledonia. Both are members of the Oceanic subgroup of Austronesian languages. In Paamese (Crowley 1996), inalienable possession is encoded by a set of possessor-indexing suffixes attached to the possessed noun while alienable possession is marked by a set of free forms to which these same suffixes are attached. Tinrin (Osumi 1996) is rather unusual in that it has a three-way inalienability split encoding inalienable possession, alienable possession and a third construction encoding intermediate possession between inalienability and alienability.

2.3.2.5. *North America*. Two languages will be discussed here: Mohawk, an Iroquoian language, and Koyukon, a NaDena language from the Athabascan family. In Mohawk, Mithun (1996) explains that inalienability is encoded with two constructions: a pronominal construction involving inalienable nouns taking agentive prefixes cross-referencing the possessor, and a construction using noun incorporation. On the other hand, alienability is encoded pronominally with alienable nouns taking patient prefixes. Regarding Koyukon, Thompson (1996) shows that inalienable possession is encoded by an accusative prefix cross-referencing the possessor and attached to the possessed noun. The possessor can also be referred to by a free noun preposed to the possessed noun. In clauses using the verb meaning ‘to

have', nouns referring to alienable items occur, while clauses using the verb meaning 'to be, to exist' involve nouns referring to inalienable items.

2.3.2.6. *South America*. Only one language will be discussed here: Palikur, an Arawak language spoken in Brazil and French Guyana. According to Valadares (n.d), Palikur expresses the semantic concept of inalienability by attaching possessive pronominal prefixes to inalienable nouns and possessive suffixes to alienable nouns.

This chapter has discussed possession in a cross-linguistic perspective. An attempt to broadly define possession was given, followed by a discussion of the semantic and/or formal status of the alienability vs. inalienability opposition. Finally, a short survey of the world languages was presented, showing how languages realise the contrast between alienability and inalienability.

CHAPTER THREE

POSSESSION IN OCEANIC LANGUAGES

3.1 THE OCEANIC LANGUAGES: AN OVERVIEW

This section is a presentation of Oceanic languages, discussing their genetic affiliation, internal subgrouping and possessive typology.

3.1.1 Genetic affiliation. The Oceanic languages were first defined as a genetic group of languages by Dempwolff (1934-38). He stated that the Austronesian languages spoken in Melanesia, along with the Polynesian languages and most of the languages of Micronesia were to be grouped together as a subgroup of the Austronesian family.

The Austronesian family is important in terms of size. According to Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:1), there are about 1200 Austronesian languages. To get a fair picture of the importance of this family, we need to compare it with the number of languages found – or estimated to be found – in the world today. Ethnologue (Gordon 2005) gives the precise figure of 6,912 “known living languages”. Crystal (1997:287) gives a “safe estimate for the 1990s” of 6000 languages. Following this figure, if we estimate the world’s languages to be around 6000, then Austronesian languages represent about one fifth of the world’s languages. According to Lynch (1998:45), the Austronesian family is one of the two largest language families in the world, along with the Benue-Congo family in Africa.

Austronesian languages are spoken in Taiwan, Malaysia, in a few places in mainland Asia, in Madagascar and in most of island Southeast Asia, including all Philippines’ and most of Indonesia’s languages (minus the Papuan languages spoken in Irian Jaya). They are also spoken in the Pacific, where they form the Oceanic subgroup of Austronesian. A generally agreed subgrouping of Austronesian languages (Lynch 1998:47; Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:4) is as follows:

- i. Formosan includes the languages of Taiwan
- ii. Western Malayo-Polynesian is a large subgroup including the languages of the Philippines, Borneo, Sulawesi, Malaysia, Sumatra, Java, Bali, Lombok and Madagascar
- iii. Central Malayo-Polynesian includes the languages of south-eastern Indonesia, the Moluccas and Timor
- iv. South Halmahera-Irian Jaya includes the languages spoken along the southeast coast of Halmahera and in Irian Jaya
- v. Oceanic

3.1.2 Internal subgrouping. The Oceanic subgroup of Austronesian has about 450 languages (Lynch 1998:45). An outline of this subgroup based on Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:92-120) is given below. Three higher level groupings and a residual grouping are posited as follows:

- i. The Admiralties group
- ii. The Western Oceanic linkage
- iii. The Central/Eastern Oceanic grouping
- iv. Residual grouping

3.1.2.1 The Admiralties group. This group is innovation-defined (Ross 1988:330-341, Blust 1996) and consists of two subgroups, the Western and Eastern Admiralties subgroups. The Admiralties languages are spoken on the islands of Aua, Wuvulu, Seimat, Manus and its offshore islands and on the Hermit Islands.

3.1.2.2 The Western Oceanic Linkage. A few prior remarks about the notion of linkage are in order. A linkage is defined by Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:93) as an innovation-linked subgroup, and is to be distinguished from an innovation-defined subgroup. The idea of linkage refers to factors of language dispersal and change connected to socio-cultural values typically found in Melanesia. The village was the largest socio-political unit and the language was one of the main features defining someone's identity. Languages in Melanesia were and still are spoken by small communities interacting with each other, resulting in languages becoming parts of dialect networks. A linkage is to be seen as an extended dialect network, different from an innovation-defined subgroup because languages which are part of linkages

share innovations in a discontinuous way, while languages which are part of innovation-defined subgroups all share the same innovations.

The Western Oceanic linkage comprises the Meso-Melanesian linkage, the Papuan Tip linkage and the North New Guinea linkage (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:99). Languages from these linkages are spoken in the northern and north-eastern coast of New Britain, on New Ireland and its offshore islands, on Bougainville, on the Solomon Islands of Choiseul, Santa Ysabel and New Georgia, in the coastal areas of the New Guinea eastern peninsula, on the Trobriand Islands, in the Papuan Tip, in the Huon Gulf, on the Vitiaz Strait's islands and in the western and south-western part of New Britain.

3.1.2.3 The Central-Eastern Oceanic grouping. This covers a much greater geographical area than the two others discussed above. It extends from Micronesia and the Solomon Islands to Hawai'i, Easter Island and New Zealand. Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:108) recognise five different groupings within Central-Eastern Oceanic: the Southeast Solomonian family, Utupua-Vanikoro, the Southern Oceanic linkage, the Central Pacific linkage, and the Micronesian group.

The Southeast Solomonian group is comprised of languages spoken on Malaita, Makira and smaller islands in between as well as languages spoken on Guadalcanal, Florida and to the south of Santa Ysabel.

Utupua-Vanikoro comprises six Oceanic languages sharing the area with Papuan languages. Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:112) state that the Oceanic languages of Utupua in particular show Papuan contact. However, recent research (Ross and Næss 2007, Næss and Boerger 2008) suggest that these languages, along with the ones spoken in the Reef and Santa Cruz islands "are Oceanic, and it is unnecessary to posit a Papuan element in their histories" (Ross and Næss 2007:458).

The Southern Oceanic linkage is in contrast quite large, including all languages of Vanuatu and New Caledonia, except the Polynesian outliers West Uvean, West Futunan, Ifira-Mele and Emae. The internal subgrouping of this linkage is still under research, and some areas are known better than others. Lynch, Ross and Crowley

(2002:112) recognise two main subgroups, the Northern Vanuatu linkage and the Nuclear Southern Oceanic linkage. The latter appears to be more diverse and covers a larger geographic area. It comprises the Central Vanuatu linkage, of which Lelepa is a member, as well as the South Efate/Southern Melanesian linkage, which includes the South Efate dialect network, and the Southern Vanuatu and New Caledonian groups.

The Central Pacific linkage comprises the Fijian dialect network, Rotuman and the Polynesian group (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:114). The Polynesian family covers a much greater area than the two other groupings, and its internal genetic structure is defined by two subgroupings (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:115-117).

The Micronesian family is comprised of two subgroups, the tiny Nauruan and the large Nuclear Micronesian family (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:117).

3.1.2.4 The Residue. This comprises the Yapese grouping including Yapese only and the St Matthias family with the Mussau and Tench languages.

3.1.3 Typological features. The main sources used here are Ross (2004) and Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002). The Oceanic subgroup is large in terms of language numbers and very diverse, making it difficult for Oceanic typology to be surveyed as a single unit. Ross (2004:492) handles this by identifying a “canonic Oceanic language type”, allowing him to posit typological generalisations. Along the same lines, Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:34) say that Oceanic does not constitute a “typological unity”, but that it is nevertheless possible to find recurring patterns and structures across this family.

The aim of this section is to put together some of these recurring features allowing Oceanic to be presented with some typological coherence. Grammatical categories discussed below are the following: nouns and noun phrases, pronouns and the verb phrase, transitivity, and clause structure. Possession, a major typological aspect of Oceanic, will be discussed in 3.3.

3.1.3.1 Nouns and the noun phrase. Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:37) suggest that nouns in Oceanic languages can be categorised in two independent ways. One is to look at possession and classify nouns in two subclasses: directly possessed and indirectly possessed nouns. The other way is to look at their grammatical status: Oceanic nouns can either be common, local or personal. The latter include personal proper names and sometimes kin terms; local nouns include place names and common nouns include all other nouns of the language.

Articles are a feature of many Oceanic languages but by no means of all of them. As an example, the article *na* derived from Proto Oceanic **na* is reflected differently in modern Oceanic languages, sometimes as a fully fledged article, sometimes as a prefix occurring in processes such as nominalisation, and sometimes as an accreted part of the noun.

Demonstratives are often organised along a three-way system allowing reference to an item close, intermediate or away from the speaker. Again, this is not the case in all Oceanic languages with some languages having more complex systems marking singular and plural, while others have simpler systems only allowing for the proximate/distant distinction.

3.1.3.2 Pronouns and the verb phrase. Ross (2004:498) and Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:35-36) note the following common paradigms of pronominal forms to be found in Oceanic languages:

- i. Independent or disjunctive pronouns, marked for person and number. They function as noun phrases, mark focus, topicalisation or emphasis, and occur as subjects, objects, possessors or prepositional objects.
- ii. Preverbal subject markers, marking person and number of the subject. In Oceanic languages spoken in Melanesia, these also mark tense, aspect and mood (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:35). These occur as free forms, clitics or prefixes.
- iii. Postverbal object markers occurring either as clitics or suffixes.
- iv. Possessor suffixes marking person and number of the possessor.

3.1.3.3 Transitivity. Ross (2004:504-507) shows that Oceanic transitive morphology is defined by verb classes, and that the distinction between A- and U-verbs is important in that respect. A-verbs or actor verbs have an actor subject and can be transitive or intransitive. U-verbs or undergoer verbs have a subject taking the role of undergoer. An intransitive U-verb will then have an undergoer subject and no object, while a transitive U-verb will have an object taking the role of actor.

The transitivity morphology of A- and U-verbs allows the re-arrangement of the semantic relationships of the verb's arguments, creating transitive counterparts of intransitive verbs and vice-versa. However, being lexical derivations, these re-arrangements are partially unpredictable (Ross 2004:507).

3.1.3.4 Clause structure. Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:50) find a variety of constituent orders for Oceanic languages, and show that the SVO order is the most widespread. However, Oceanic OV languages display typical features such as postpositions, possessor-possessed possessive constructions along with VO language features such as postnominal adjectives.

Ross (2004:515-534) discusses the functions of the subject in Oceanic languages, especially in complex sentences where coordination and complementation occur. He shows that in Oceanic languages there is no coordination reduction function: when the nominal subject of the second clause does not occur, then the subject of the second clause has to be inferred from context. According to him, this shows that subject markers in Oceanic languages do not function as reference-tracking devices. He finds that similarly to coordination, the subject in adverbial clauses is rarely deleted for co-referential purposes. He also finds that complement clauses occur as fully-fledged clauses in the great majority of Oceanic languages.

3.2 POSSESSION IN OCEANIC LANGUAGES: PREVIOUS RESEARCH

This section discusses previous research on the expression of possession in Oceanic languages. Features discussed below show common patterns in Oceanic possession as well as variation. After a general introduction, an annotated survey of works focusing on Oceanic possession is given.

3.2.1 Introduction. The expression of possession is a topic that has fascinated linguists working on Oceanic languages for a long time. The fact that most linguists who studied Oceanic are speakers of Indo-European languages may explain the particular interest in this topic, since the match-up between form and semantics in Indo-European possession is not evident as it is in Oceanic possession. This topic may have appeared to the western linguist as extremely interesting, complex and also maybe exotic.

Although Oceanic languages have been much less researched than languages like English, the expression of Oceanic possession has received quite a lot of attention. For this reason, previous works on this topic are discussed below, in order to provide theoretical background for section 3.3 which discusses current accounts of Oceanic possession. The list of previous works appearing in section 3.2.2 does not pretend to be exhaustive, but intends to provide as much information as possible, and also to show aspects that are under debate. In particular, two separate aspects of Oceanic possession have been discussed quite extensively: the grammatical nature of the Oceanic possessive system and its historical reconstruction.

The discussion about the grammatical nature of Oceanic possession revolves around two main theories. The first one, which appeared in earlier works (e.g. Codrington 1885, Ray 1926) views it as a noun class system, associating a gender to nouns occurring in possessive constructions. As there is variation across languages, these genders may differ from one language to another. This theory will be referred to as the noun class theory. The second one appeared later (e.g. Pawley 1973, Lynch 1973, and Wilson 1976) and views the Oceanic possessive system as foregrounding the semantic relations existing between possessor and possessum. It will be referred to as the relational theory. The origin of the Oceanic possessive system is the other aspect that has continually drawn scholars' interest. The review of previous works in 3.2.2 will show how the reconstruction of Proto Oceanic evolved from early works to the present accounts.

Some remarks on terminology are in order here. Since the works referred to below were published over a period of more than a hundred and twenty-five years,

differences in terminology are noticeable. One example is the labelling of the morpheme occurring in indirect possessive constructions and to which possessive pronouns are suffixed. This has been called a “radical” (Codrington 1885), a “classifier” (Lichtenberk 1985), a “possessive marker” (Pawley 1973, Lynch 1996) and a “possessor-indexing host” (Palmer & Brown 2007). Another example is the use of the expression “Melanesian languages” in early sources such as Codrington (1885) and Ray (1919b, 1926). Although both authors refer to Polynesian languages in a way that is similar to latter works, they refer to Melanesian languages as a genetic group of languages. This view was abandoned when it was found that languages spoken in Melanesia are members of two unrelated language groups, the Austronesian and Papuan families. Codrington (1885:10) also uses the expression “Ocean languages”, which he defines as a genetic subgroup comprising Melanesian languages, Polynesian languages and Indian or Malay languages. By Indian or Malay languages, he certainly refers to those Austronesian languages spoken in South East Asia, and his picture of Ocean languages may roughly correspond to what is understood today as the Austronesian family. More recent work (e.g. from Pawley 1973, Lynch 1973 onwards) typically distinguish two major types of Oceanic possession, commonly referred to as direct and indirect possession. Both types are illustrated below with Fijian data (Lynch 1998:123-124). In direct possession, the possessor is encoded directly on the possessed noun with a suffix as in (1). In contrast, in indirect possession the possessed noun and the possessor are separated from each other as in (2). Direct possession is used when the possessum is inalienable and indirect possession when it is alienable:

(1) **na ulu-qu**

the head-my
my head

(2) **na no-na vale**

the POSS:GENERAL-his house
his house

The Polynesian possessive system departs from this basic distinction between direct and indirect possession but distinguishes *a* and *o* possession. This is based on the vowels *a* and *o* which occur in possessive constructions as in the Samoan examples

below (Lynch 1998:129). The *a* and *o* contrastive vowels occurring in the possessive morphemes are underlined:

(3) 'o lo-'u tamā
 FOCUS POSS-my father
 my father

(4) 'o la-'u ta'avale
 FOCUS POSS:my car
 my car

The distinction between *a* and *o* possession in Polynesian languages roughly corresponds to the distinction made respectively between indirect and direct possession in other Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:43).

3.2.2 Previous works on Oceanic possession. This subsection discusses works published from the end of the nineteenth century until today, showing the extent of interest in this topic. These are presented in chronological order of publication to show the evolution of the different analyses proposed, as well as the changes in terminology.

3.2.2.1 Codrington 1885: The Melanesian languages. This is one of the first comparative and grammatical studies of Oceanic languages, in which Codrington realised that languages such as Malay, Malagasy and the ones spoken in Polynesia and Melanesia were somehow related. This realisation predates by about fifty years the formal definition of Oceanic as a subgroup of Austronesian. He showed the genetic relationship between the languages he looked at by studying possession, recognising what will be called by later linguists direct possessive constructions:

“As an example of grammatical forms which being compared together show the common kinship of Melanesian languages, and of these again with the Ocean languages generally, the suffixed Personal Pronoun just referred to will be useful [...] These Pronouns, in all these languages alike, are suffixed to

Nouns, giving, in a general way, a possessive sense”.
(Codrington 1885:27)

In his discussion on “Possessives” (Codrington 1885:129-133), he states that nouns taking suffixes to express a possessive relationship belong to one class, and that they refer to body parts, parts of a whole, kin terms and “equipments of a man”. Other nouns occur in a possessive construction with what he calls a possessive: “These possessives consist of a radical and the suffixed pronoun *ku*, *mu*, *na* &c” (Codrington 1885:128). He gives a comparative list of these forms in twenty-seven languages spoken in Melanesia (Codrington 1885:130-131), and defines them as nouns without clearly analysing their functions. Only a footnote gives clues:

“Melanesian languages generally have more than two of these possessive nouns; at least one meaning a nearer, and another a more distant, relation, at most five or six applied to things owned, produced, eaten, drinkable, &c”. (Codrington 1885:29)

He explains this class distinction in a way that recalls the alienability vs. inalienability terminology as discussed in 2.1: “The distinction is based upon the notion of closeness or remoteness of connection between the object possessed and the possessor” (Codrington 1885:143).

3.2.2.2 *Ray 1919a: The Polynesian languages in Melanesia*. The aim of this paper was to provide some points of comparison between Polynesian languages and non Polynesian languages spoken in Melanesia, as well as with the Polynesian outliers. There is a short account on possessive forms, stating that Polynesian possessives are formed with the *a* and *o* markers, and that Melanesian languages directly suffix pronouns on nouns referring to body parts and kin terms, while other nouns are possessed in a construction including a constituent comprised of a morpheme to which a pronoun is suffixed. This morpheme is Codrington’s radical and often called classifier by modern linguists. Ray (1926:59) defines it as follows: “A special word meaning food, drink or a particular kind of possession”. Similarly to Codrington, he saw that nouns could occur in different construction types according to the

relationship holding between possessor and possessum, without detailing this particular aspect.

3.2.2.3 *Ray 1919b: The Melanesian possessives and a study in method.* This work provides a more detailed account on possession in languages of Polynesia and Melanesia than what is found in Ray (1919a) and Ray (1926). He first gives a structural description of possessive constructions, obviously recognising direct and indirect constructions without labelling them as such. However, he does not support the idea that nouns occurring in direct possessive constructions are involved in an inalienability relationship with the possessor: “The statement that the possessive expressed by the suffixed pronoun implies partial identity does not apply to Melanesian languages generally” (Ray 1919b:351). He also gives support to the noun classification theory:

“The Melanesians have not supplied the want of a possessive pronoun by a prepositional phrase ‘of him’, ‘for him’, but have classified their possessions in various categories and use a general, non-particularised noun such as the English ‘possession’ or ‘chattel’, ‘eatable’ or ‘drink’, which stands as a representative of its class” (Ray 1919b:355)

3.2.2.4 *Ray 1926: A comparative study of the Melanesian island languages.* This work is very similar to Codrington (1885), in that it discusses comparative aspects of Oceanic languages spoken in Melanesia and presents grammatical sketches of some of these languages. No detailed discussion on the expression of possession in these languages is given. However, in the grammar sketches, Ray often defines two classes of nouns, along the same lines as Codrington. Members of the first class take suffixed pronouns when occurring in a possessive construction, other nouns do not. For some languages, he gives some semantic information on the nouns entering the first class, saying that they refer to body parts, locations and kin terms.

3.2.2.5 *Capell 1949: The concept of ownership in languages of Australia and the Pacific.* This paper discusses possession in Australian and Oceanic languages, and

particularly the semantics involved in this category. Regarding Australia and Melanesia, Capell recognises the concept of inalienable possession for items such as body parts, parts of wholes and kin terms, although like Codrington he does not name it as such (Capell 1949:174).

He also recognises the occurrence of bound nouns (Capell 1949:174), and that “Melanesian languages” mark the different relationships existing between possessor and possessum. Items that are possessed to be eaten, drunk, as valuables, or generally possessed are marked accordingly, and there is a certain degree of variation in the marking of these possessive relationships across the languages under study. According to him, nouns such as body parts, parts of wholes and kin terms enter in the same construction types for a reason. He explains this as follows:

“It is not a question of my controlling, acting on or being controlled or acted on by the object possessed, but of the degree of separability of the object possessed from the owner. Parts of the body and relatives are classed together because they are both permanent, or normally permanent, possessions of a person” (Capell 1949:175).

His paper shows his understanding of the inalienability vs. alienability opposition, and that it is expressed in the morphosyntax of these languages by different grammatical constructions. Finally, he recognises that in some languages such as Fijian the construction used for food possession is also used for what has been termed later as subordinate possession (Pawley 1973, Lichtenberk 1985) or passive possession (Lynch 1982, 1992, 1996, 2001).

3.2.2.6 Pawley 1973: Some problems in Proto Oceanic grammar. This paper discusses two major aspects of Proto Oceanic: case marking and nominal possessive constructions. The latter will be discussed here.

Pawley suggests that Proto Oceanic formally distinguished between at least three kinds of relations between possessum and possessor. These were marked as follows:

*zero marking for inalienable possession, *ka- marking for alienable eat and subordinate possession, and *na- marking for alienable dominant possession. He discusses the semantic complexity of the *ka- marked possession by suggesting that two homophonous morphemes *ka-¹(eat) and *ka-²(subordinate) are to be distinguished in Proto Oceanic. In addition, he recognises a certain amount of evidence to reconstruct a category for drink possession, marked with *ma-.

He points out that as linguistic knowledge on Oceanic languages progresses, it appears that most nouns in these languages can occur in more than one possessive construction, showing that possessive markers occurring in possessive constructions do not mark gender of nouns, but the type of relationship existing between possessum and possessor.

3.2.2.7 Lynch 1973: *Verbal aspects of possession in Melanesian languages*. In this paper, Lynch proposed for the first time a hypothesis that he revised and expanded in further works (Lynch 1982, 1996, 2001). Illustrating his discussion with data from four Oceanic languages spoken in Melanesia, he suggests that modern possessive constructions derive from underlying verbal constructions.

He also provides support for the relational theory (Lynch 1973:76, 85, 96) against the noun class theory to explain the possessive systems of Oceanic languages. He introduces the idea of “overlap” (Lynch 1973:76) to explain that nouns can occur in different constructions, denoting different relationships between possessum and possessor. Through overlap, he shows that noun classification is not the only factor deciding in which possessive construction a noun can participate.

To represent the verbal aspect of possession in the languages discussed, he takes the Melanesian Pidgin verb *bilong* as the underlying form governing all possessive constructions. His hypothesis is formulated as follows:

“All possessive constructions derive initially from an underlying sentence with the possessed as subject, the possessor as object and the abstract verb [bilong]

representing a relationship of attribution obtaining between them” (Lynch 1973:84).

He recognises two problems with this: one is that the noun class theory seems to explain some cases better, and the other is that the construction used in food possession is also used in other contexts, such as when the possessor has the role of patient, and the possessum is an actor: this category is referred to as “subordinate” (Pawley 1973) and “passive” (Lynch 1982, 1996, 2001).

3.2.2.8 Wilson 1976: *The o/a distinction in Hawaiian possessives*. This work discusses *o* and *a* possessives in Hawaiian. Wilson reviews the different theories available to analyse this possessive system: the arbitrary noun class theory, the feature-based noun-class theory and the relation-based theory. He also gives rules governing choices of possessive constructions.

The noun-class theory analyses the Polynesian possessive system as a gender system, which Wilson refutes by showing that items introduced after European contact were always possessed in the same way in all Polynesian languages. The feature-based noun-class theory is also a classification system but classifies items according to their semantic features. Wilson argues that it is inadequate because the features are not mutually exclusive and also because some items can occur with any possessive form resulting in a change in meaning. Wilson then argues in favour of the relational theory because no classifying problems are encountered, and that it can account for nouns occurring in both *a* and *o* constructions, the phenomenon called overlap by Lynch (1973).

Wilson formulates three rules governing the choice of one or the other possessive in Hawaiian:

- When the possessor uses the possessed as a location, the latter is possessed in an *o* construction.
- When the possessor has control on the possessive relationship and does not use it as a location, the possessive relationship is expressed by an *a* construction.

- When the possessor has no control over the relation of possession, the possessive relationship is expressed by an *o* construction.

Finally, Wilson discusses the origin of the *o/a* distinction by comparing the Hawaiian and Fijian systems. According to him, the systems are similar because they distinguish possessive relationships along the same lines: whether the possessor has control over the possessive relationship or not. Both systems then had their independent developments: Hawaiian lost the 'eat' and 'drink' possession marking, but innovated with the marking of locational uses of the possessed.

3.2.2.9 *Lynch 1982: Towards a theory of the origins of the Oceanic possessive constructions.* In this paper Lynch takes his 1973 hypothesis further: modern Oceanic possessive constructions derive from verbal constructions, with the object or indirect object of these underlying verbal constructions being the possessor in modern possessive ones.

He rejects the noun classification theory (Lynch 1982:246) and reviews three categories of Oceanic possession: direct possession with the reciprocal and non-reciprocal subcategories, active possession with the manipulative, eat and drink subcategories, and passive possession.

Reciprocal possession (Lynch 1982:247) is to be understood as a possessive relationship that can be expressed in two mirroring direct constructions with possessor and possessum roles reversed: an example of this is kin possession. On the other hand, in non-reciprocal possession roles can not be reversed, and an example of this is part-whole possession. Lynch shows that reciprocal constructions originate from transitive constructions, because of the formal resemblance of the possessive and object suffixes in modern Oceanic languages. Regarding non-reciprocal possessive constructions, he suggests that they originate from prepositional constructions in which the object suffixes are suffixed to the preposition.

Regarding active possession, Lynch (1973) argues against Pawley (1973) that the subcategory of manipulative possession originates from a construction in which the modern possessive marker is a reflex of the Proto Oceanic article **na*. According to

Pawley, these markers originated from a Proto Oceanic preposition. Regarding the subcategories of eat and drink possession, Lynch suggests that possessive markers in these subcategories derive from verbs meaning ‘to eat’ and ‘to drink’. The reason for this is the formal similarity of such verbs with possessive markers for eat and drink possession in modern Oceanic languages. From this assumption, he hypothesises that the possessor in eat and drink possessive constructions derives from the indirect object in an underlying sentence with the Proto Oceanic form meaning ‘to eat’ or ‘to drink’ as the verb.

The last category Lynch discusses is passive possession. Although he recognises that Proto Oceanic eat and passive possession were formally similar, he thinks that they derive from different underlying structures. A first reason for this is that in some modern Oceanic languages such as Aroma and Lenakel, eat and passive possession are formally different. A second reason is that in some of these languages, passive possession is formally identical to direct possession while in others passive possession is distinctively marked, either by a locative preposition or a transitive suffix. This allows him to posit the hypothesis that passive possessive constructions derive from transitive sentences where the object is the possessor and where the verb takes the Proto Oceanic transitive suffix **-akini*.

3.2.2.10 Lichtenberk 1985: Possessive constructions in Oceanic languages and in Proto-Oceanic. In this paper Lichtenberk provides a typology of Oceanic possessive constructions as well as a reconstruction of the Proto Oceanic possessive system. In his typology, he looks at Oceanic possessive constructions according to the types of constituents and their relationships, the order in which these constituents occur, and the semantics of the different types of possessive constructions.

Looking at structure, Lichtenberk distinguishes three different types of possessive constructions in Oceanic languages: direct, indirect and prepositional. Looking at the grammatical status of the possessor, he finds two other types of possessive constructions: simplex ones, in which the possessor is an affix, and complex ones, in which the possessor is a noun phrase, an independent or a possessive free pronoun. Examples (5) to (9) exemplify these possibilities: (5) illustrates the simplex direct construction, (6) the complex direct construction, (7) the simplex indirect

construction, (8) the complex indirect construction and (9) the prepositional construction.

(5) **siyuh-k**

belly-my
my belly (Kosraean. Lichtenberk 1985: 97)

(6) **θaina-na wela lakoo**

mother-his child that
that child's mother (To'aba'ita. Lichtenberk 1985: 97)

(7) **ghe-mi numa**

CLF-your:SG house
your house (Banoni. Lichtenberk 1985: 97)

(8) **wasike a-na bau**

woman CLF-her garden
the woman's garden(s) (Are. Lichtenberk 1985: 97)

(9) **virhoε i rhai**

anger of lizard
the lizard's anger (Houailou. Lichtenberk 1985: 98)

He then discusses the cross-referencing of the possessor. He states that the possessor is never cross-referenced in a prepositional possessive construction as in (9), but in direct and indirect types, it can be cross referenced twice as in (10), cross-referenced only when the possessum is inalienable as in (11), or cross-referenced according to the type of possessor like in (12).

(10) **Nur yaqai qajuo-ny**

p.name he:POSS Cousin-his
Nur's cousin (Kairiru. Lichtenberk 1985: 99)

(11) **luma θa Maeli**

house ART p.name
Maeli's house (To'aba'ita. Lichtenberk 1985: 99)

In (10), the possessor is cross-referenced because the possessum is inalienable but in (11), the possessed is alienable and the possessor is not cross-referenced. In Iaaï however, the possessor referenced to by a common noun in (12) is cross-referenced while in (13), the possessor is encoded by a proper noun and not cross-referenced:

- (12) **ba-n wanakat**
head-his child
the child's head (Iaai. Lichtenberk 1985: 99)

- (13) **bwə Poou**
head p.name
Poou's head (Iaai. Lichtenberk 1985: 99)

Example (14) displays another type of possessor encoding, with construct suffixes, which attach to the possessed noun and encode the possessor without marking its person and number:

- (14) **oadoa-n woall-o**
name-CONST man-that
that man's name (Iaai. Lichtenberk 1985: 100)

Next, he discusses the typology of Oceanic possessive constructions according to constituent order. Looking at modern Oceanic languages, he finds that most orderings occur except possessed-possessor-classifier for complex possessive constructions.

Lichtenberk then turns to the semantics of Oceanic possessive constructions, saying that the opposition between alienable and inalienable possession is crucial to understanding the use of the different constructions. He shows that direct possessive constructions express inalienable possession, in categories such as part-whole, kinship and spatial relations, but also when the “lone, emphatic self” is expressed, in nominalisations and finally in the possession of physical and mental characteristics. Second, he shows that indirect possessive constructions express alienable possession and that Oceanic languages involve a range of classifiers occurring in these constructions. In his analysis, it appears that all Oceanic languages have classifiers to mark alienable possession, and if a language has only one classifier, it marks alienable possession. He then discusses the fact that the classifier used in eating possession is often used in “passive” (Lynch 1982) or “subordinate” (Pawley 1973) possession. According to him, this classifier should be regarded as the same morpheme rather than two separate ones as Pawley (1973) suggests. Finally, Lichtenberk shows that prepositional constructions are used in both alienable and

inalienable possession, and notes that there is a strong tendency for them to be used to express alienability.

Following Lynch (1973), Lichtenberk discusses overlap and finds that in many Oceanic languages this is motivated by the semantic role of the possessor. If an actor, an indirect construction is used. If a patient, then either a direct or an indirect eat possessive construction is used.

Regarding the reconstruction of the Proto Oceanic possessive system, Lichtenberk agrees with Pawley (1973) but not with Lynch (1973, 1982). Lichtenberk does not see Oceanic possessive constructions deriving from an underlying verbal structure. He also thinks that Proto Oceanic had possessive suffixes rather than prefixes, because no modern Oceanic language has only possessive prefixes and because no evidence is found to reconstruct possessive prefixes for Proto Oceanic. Construct suffixes attach to the possessed noun and encode the possessor without marking its person and number (Lichtenberk 1985:100). As he finds them in Micronesian languages only, he states that they are an innovation for these languages (Lichtenberk 1985:114).

He suggests that Proto Oceanic direct simplex constructions were of the form possessed noun-possessor suffix. He also reconstructs direct complex constructions with a noun as a possessor since these are widely occurring in modern Oceanic languages. On the other hand, Proto Oceanic did not have direct complex constructions with a free possessive pronoun as the possessor, because he finds that free possessive pronouns are due to independent developments. In contrast, with independent pronouns being reconstructed for Proto Oceanic, he thinks that they co-occurred with possessive suffixes in Proto Oceanic complex possessive constructions.

Regarding indirect possessive constructions, Lichtenberk follows Pawley (1973) by reconstructing an eat classifier of the form **ka-* and a general classifier of the form **na-*. He also reconstructs a drink classifier of the form **ma-*, showing (against Pawley (1973) and with the benefit of more data) that reflexes of **ma-* are found in modern Oceanic languages. He also argues that Proto Oceanic had only one **ka-*

classifier involved in food and passive/subordinate possession, when Pawley holds the view that there were two homophonous classifiers.

Lichtenberk does not reconstruct prepositional possessive constructions for Proto Oceanic, because in modern day languages the reflexes of two Proto Oceanic prepositions, **ni* and **qi*, are used more in non-possessive prepositional constructions such as generic noun phrase constructions. Regarding the semantics of Proto Oceanic possessive constructions, he finds that direct constructions expressed inalienable possession and indirect constructions expressed alienable possession.

Lichtenberk then addresses the question of the Oceanic possessive systems being gender or relational systems. Distancing himself from Lynch (1982), who defends the relational theory, his view is that if a language has direct and indirect constructions and possessive classifiers, then the system is based on semantics to define classifying criteria. If a language has direct and indirect constructions but no possessive classifiers, then the type of construction is determined by whether the possessum is alienable or inalienable.

3.2.2.11 Pawley and Sayaba 1990: Possessive marking in Wayan, a Western Fijian language: noun class or relational system? By describing the possessive system of Wayan Fijian, Pawley and Sayaba keep open the debate as to whether Oceanic possessive systems are gender or relational systems. Providing a detailed analysis of the Wayan possessive system, they show that it can not be accounted for with one analysis only.

Pawley and Sayaba distinguish seven semantic types of possession in Wayan (kinship, natural part, manufactured part, food, drink, passive and active) matched by eight construction types, kinship being expressed by two distinct constructions. Interestingly, Pawley and Sayaba show that Wayan kinship possession is governed by noun classes, with one construction type only catering for a closed set of less than twenty kinship terms, and the other construction types involving six kinship terms plus three others that can also occur in the other kinship construction type. These three terms constitute an overlapping subclass. In contrast, the other types of possession are strictly governed by semantics.

Two main principles govern Wayan possession: kinship nouns and some part terms are possessed according to their class, while other nouns are possessed according to the semantic relationship holding between possessor and possessum. In a concluding remark, Pawley and Sayaba (1990:168) say the following:

“The facts for Wayan are too complex to be accommodated by an analysis which speaks of a single system of possessive marking. Certain nouns belong to strict and semi-arbitrary noun classes, for purpose of possessive marking, others show marking consistently following semantic principles”.

3.2.2.12 Lynch 1992: “*For my part...*”: *The grammar and semantics of part possession in the languages of Tanna*. This paper provides a thorough analysis of part possession in Tanna, mostly discussing data from two languages, Lenakel and Kwamera. Lynch shows that the well-established analysis of part possession in Oceanic, whereby parts of body and of wholes are possessed in direct constructions, may not fit Tanna languages.

These languages express non-part possessive relationships using three constructions: the direct construction, the indirect active construction and the indirect passive construction. Tanna languages express part possession using these three constructions as well as a fourth one, the prefixed construction. Lynch’s aim is then to explain why particular nouns referring to parts of the body or of wholes occur in particular constructions. He reaches a number of conclusions, while recognizing exceptions difficult to account for (Lynch 1992:261-262):

“Nouns referring to ‘permanent’ parts of human or animal bodies or of plants, body products exuded as part of the normal human condition, aspects of individuality, and nouns expressing orientation, relative position or collection are viewed as inalienable, and are possessed in a direct construction.

Nouns referring to intrinsic parts of bodies or things which are nevertheless removable under normal circumstances (as in butchering), or which are temporary manifestations (as pus), are generally seen as being somewhat less inalienable, and are possessed passively. Nouns referring to parts which can also be viewed as separate entities in their own right (as sails or ridge-poles) are generally possessed actively. Finally nominalised verbs and certain kinds of compound nouns are not able to take possessive suffixes for morphological reasons, and occur in passive (and sometimes active) constructions”.

A small number of nouns only occur in the prefixed construction, and this is the case for all Tanna languages. No account is given as to why some nouns occur in this construction. Lynch notices that conclusions similar to the above are also reached by Crowley (1996) for Paamese.

3.2.2.13 Crowley 1996: *Inalienable possession in Paamese*. In this work, Crowley provides a very detailed account of inalienability in the Paamese possessive system.

He begins by revisiting the much debated question of noun class vs. relationship to account for the distribution of nouns in the grammatical categories of suffixed and non-suffixed possessed nouns. Without taking a strong stance for any of the above positions, Crowley shows that semantics provide an explanation for the behaviour of most nouns in Paamese possession (Crowley 1996:428-429):

“An inalienable relationship holds between two things if, under normal circumstances, the referent of the ‘possessed’ noun does not exist independently of the referent of the ‘possessor’ noun. Thus, the following generally accept direct pronominal suffixation in Paamese, for purely semantic reasons:

- (i) permanent external body parts rather than transient external growths on the body;
- (ii) body products exuded under normal rather than transient body functions;
- (iii) internal body parts perceived to be central to emotions and to life itself rather than internal body parts that are removed while butchering an animal, reserved for eating, or impediments which are removed while eating;
- (iv) blood kin rather than kin acquired by marriage”.

There are some nouns for which Crowley is not able to explain the formal behaviour, recognising that in Paamese formal and semantic categories do not totally match.

3.2.2.14 *Lynch 1996: Proto Oceanic possessive marking.* In this work, Lynch draws on Pawley (1973), Lynch (1982) and Lichtenberk (1985) to propose a revised reconstruction of the Proto Oceanic possessive system. The system he posits here is a more complex one in the sense that more possessive markers/classifiers are reconstructed, and that the category of passive or subordinate possession is revised.

On the basis of evidence taken from languages such as Fijian, Paamese, Mota and Papuan Tip languages, Lynch suggests that **ka-*, marker of eat and passive possession, marked the following kinds of passive or subordinate relationships in Proto Oceanic (Lynch 1996:99): (i) possession by the underlying object of a deverbal noun, (ii) benefactive, (iii) essential characteristics of the possessor. He also shows that some Oceanic languages do not mark passive/subordinate possession with reflexes of **ka-*: some languages such as Aroma and Manam use direct constructions, while others such as Cemuhî and the languages of Tanna have markers especially dedicated to passive possession. Following this, he suggests that Proto Oceanic only marked eat possession with **ka-* in an indirect construction, and other relationships discussed entered direct constructions.

Turning to general possession, Lynch discusses several Proto Oceanic markers reconstructed in the literature: **na-*, **a-*, **ta-*, **sa-* and **le-*. **na-* is the most widely accepted marker of general possession, and although there is important vowel variation among its reflexes, he does not challenge this reconstruction. Evidence for a marker of the form **a-* is also quite important, and Lynch suggest that **na-* and **a-* may derive from the same morpheme, a Proto Oceanic article, and mark general definite possession. Regarding **ta-* and **sa-*, Lynch also considers that they may have been markers of general possession in Proto Oceanic. **ta-* was reconstructed originally as a locative marker and **sa-* as a possessive marker and also with the meaning “one”. Lynch suggests that the contrast between **na-/a-* and **ta-/sa-* may be a contrast of definiteness/indefiniteness for possessed nouns in POc.

3.2.2.15 *Lynch 2001a: Passive and food possession in Oceanic*. Developing ideas he suggested in his 1996 paper, Lynch proposes here that passive/subordinate and characteristic possession (the possession of individual characteristics such as size, age, items linked to one’s history, etc) were marked in Proto Oceanic by a direct construction, and provides explanations as to why some modern languages merged passive and eat possession while others did not.

A short discussion about the debate regarding noun class theory and relational theory sees Lynch following Pawley and Sayaba (1996) in saying that modern Oceanic languages modified the Proto Oceanic system in many ways, to the extent that one or the other analysis taken solely can not account for the complexity of the modern systems. He thinks that elements of both theories are found in the possessive systems of modern Oceanic languages.

By reviewing the different ways Oceanic languages mark passive possession, Lynch suggests a scenario for passive possession marking in Proto Oceanic. He finds that characteristic possession is generally marked in the same way by most of today’s Oceanic languages, and suggests that these two categories were also marked similarly in Proto Oceanic. An important part of the discussion is dedicated to the merger of eat and passive/subordinate possession marked by **ka-*. According to Lynch (1996, 2001) passive possession was marked by a direct construction, and the change to passive marked by **ka-* happened many times in the history of Oceanic

languages. Drawing on Ross (1988), he points out that Proto Western Oceanic had a *ka- preposition marking benefactive or affective. He then suggests that this form may have merged with the *ka- eat marker, given their formal similarity and the fact that they both took possessive suffixes. He also points out that the Proto Oceanic verb *kani ‘to eat’ maybe had the meaning “experience, usually negatively” (Lynch 2001:212), giving a further explanation of the merger of passive and eat possession.

3.2.2.16 Lynch, Ross & Crowley 2002: *The Oceanic languages*. This book is a contemporary equivalent to the Codrington (1885) and Ray (1926) studies. It provides extensive information on the typology, genetic affiliation, proto language and sociolinguistics of the Oceanic languages. Some information on language contact is also provided as well as many maps. But the majority of the book is dedicated to grammar sketches of forty-three Oceanic languages, written by different scholars. Areas commented on below include a discussion of the Proto Oceanic possessive system (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:75-80) as well as an account of the expression of possession in modern Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:40-43).

Regarding Proto Oceanic possession, Lynch, Ross and Crowley reconstruct both direct and indirect possessive constructions, and hold the view that this structural distinction reflected the inalienable vs. alienable semantic distinction. In direct constructions, the possessed noun took a possessor suffix, and if the possessor was encoded by a noun phrase, it followed the possessed noun. Nouns occurring in this construction included most body parts, most kin terms, and most locative parts. Passive possession was certainly expressed by direct constructions.

Indirect constructions used a possessive classifier to which was suffixed the same set of suffixes occurring in direct constructions. The possessed noun certainly followed this constituent. When the possessor was non-specific, the classifier-suffix constituent was replaced by the morpheme *ni. Lynch, Ross and Crowley reconstruct the following Proto Oceanic classifiers: *ka- ‘food’, *m(w)a- ‘drink’ and *na- ‘general’, which is quite similar to what is claimed in other works. However, they point out that Proto Oceanic had more possessive classifiers. They propose a number of other forms that could be reconstructed as such, and suggest that these other forms

were members of a larger open set of possessive classifiers which membership changed over time. For example, they reconstruct the classifier **a-* as an alternant of the general classifier **na-*, occurring with specific rather than generic nouns (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:79).

The synchronic analysis of the Oceanic possessive system provided in this work is brief but covers generalities and some variation. Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:40) recognise that there is a lot of variation in Oceanic possessive constructions, and that the inalienability vs. alienability distinction reflects the main differences in structure for all Oceanic languages, except the Polynesian subgroup.

Languages spoken in Melanesia and Micronesia have the most complex systems, often having one construction type expressing inalienable possession and several construction types expressing alienable possession. Those construction types expressing alienable possession involve possessive classifiers, whose number varies across languages, and whose function is to mark the relationship between possessor and possessum.

Variation from this is exemplified in different ways by different languages, and Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002) illustrate this with the languages discussed below. In Mussau, Iaaï and the Micronesian languages, there are a large number of classifiers, making a distinction between different kinds of alienable possession. In the languages of Malakula, possessive suffixes occur with singular possessors only, and the non-singular possessor is encoded by an independent pronoun while the possessed noun phrase takes a construct suffix. Western Fijian has two kinds of inalienable possession, with kin terms being possessed in a typical direct construction and body parts possessed in a construction with a prefix. Nakanai expresses indirect possession with a preposition linking possessed and possessor.

Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:42-43) briefly discuss Polynesian possession, which shows a different possessive system to other Oceanic languages. These languages do not have direct and indirect constructions, instead they have possessive morphemes involving the vowels *a* and *o*, and the occurrence of one or the other morpheme shows a particular kind of possession. They explain that *a* constructions correspond

to indirect constructions in other languages, while *o* constructions correspond to direct constructions.

3.2.2.17 Ross 2004: *The morphosyntactic typology of Oceanic Languages*. This paper defines the notion of a canonical Oceanic language as a typological unit. Although Ross thinks that typological variation in Oceanic is so large that it is not possible to fully describe it in his paper, he nevertheless suggests a model through which Oceanic typology can be accounted for. The areas under study in this work are pronominals and the verb phrase, transitivity, possession, clauses and sentences, and subjects. The section concerned with possession will be discussed below.

According to Ross (2004:511), possession in canonical Oceanic languages is defined along the following four parameters: first, if the possessum is possessed inalienably or alienably; second, how many subtypes of alienable possession occur in the language; third, what is the grammatical status of the possessor (pronoun, common noun phrase, or personal noun phrase), and fourth, is the possessor referred to by a specific or a non-specific noun phrase. Ross defines the inalienable vs. alienable opposition as an opposition of classes, and says that languages vary in the ability to have nouns occurring in possessive constructions with the morphosyntax of either class, or to “overlap”, following Lynch’s (1973) terminology.

Ross (2004:512) suggests that the canonical form of inalienable possession in Oceanic involves a pronominal suffix attached to the possessed noun and encoding the possessor, a view shared by all scholars. Variation from this is exemplified by Kokota which uses independent pronouns combined with possessive suffixes, or by Malekulan languages (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:42), also using independent pronouns in inalienable possession although with non-singular possessors only.

He shows that the canonical form of alienable possession involves a classifier taking a pronominal suffix encoding the possessor, and that this constituent is preposed to the possessed noun phrase in most – but not all – Oceanic languages, another view that is also endorsed by all scholars. Variation from this comes from languages using prepositions (Arop-Lukep) or independent pronouns (Longgu) to mark the possessor. Canonical alienable possession involves classifiers whose number varies from one

language to another. Common systems have two to three classifiers distinguishing things for eating and drinking from the rest of alienable possessions.

The third and fourth parameters identified by Ross are interwoven: in Proto Oceanic, when the possessor was referred to by a noun phrase, construction types would vary according to the inalienability/alienability of the possessum but also according to the specificity/non specificity of the possessor noun phrase. Following this, Proto Oceanic had four categories of possession, reflected by four constructions: inalienable/specific possessor, inalienable/non-specific possessor with the preposition **qi*, alienable/specific possessor and alienable/non-specific possessor with the preposition **ni*. According to Ross (2004:513-514), some canonical languages still show these distinctions, but most of them have simplified the system. Examples given are Longgu and Tamambo which lost the distinction between the two non-specific possessor constructions which merged into the non-specific alienable construction; and Kokota which lost both non-specific constructions, and marks the specificity on the possessor itself with a demonstrative suffixed to the possessor or just by juxtaposing possessum and possessor. Ross (2004:514) says that modern Oceanic languages tend to lose the non-specific possessor distinction.

3.2.2.18 Palmer and Brown 2007: Heads in Oceanic indirect possession. This paper discusses the syntactic status of a particular morpheme occurring in Oceanic indirect possessive constructions. This is the possessor-indexing host, to which a pronominal suffix cross-referencing the possessor is attached. This morpheme has been mostly called “classifier” (Lichtenberk 1985) or “possessive marker” (Lynch 1982).

Palmer and Brown point out that traditionally, the noun phrase referring to the possessum is viewed as the head of the construction. In Oceanic indirect possessive constructions where classifiers occur, this has been usually adopted. They also state that in languages having classifiers occurring in indirect possessive constructions, these classifiers are encoding relationships rather than classifying nouns (Palmer & Brown 2007:202).

Their aim is to show that possessor-indexing hosts are in fact not classifiers because they do not function as such but are nouns functioning as heads of the possessive

constructions in which they occur. To do so, they show that these forms do not meet criteria for classifier status (Dixon 1986, Grinevald 2000), but rather criteria for head status (Zwicky 1985, 1993). Their discussion is made in reference to Kokota, an Oceanic language spoken in the Solomon Islands.

Criteria defined to test classifier status are as follows:

- i. classifiers do not classify all nouns
- ii. classifiers form an open class comprising quite a large number of members
- iii. one primary function of classifiers is to individuate referents
- iv. classifiers only occur in referential noun phrases

The first criterion does not apply to Kokota because most Kokota common nouns can occur with a possessor-indexing host as long as they are pragmatically and semantically compatible with the message carried out by the sentence. The second criterion does not apply to Kokota either because a hypothetical classifier class in Kokota would only have two items, consumed classifier and general classifier. The third criterion is also not applicable to Kokota possessor indexing-hosts because they do not individuate referents but classify relationships holding between possessor and possessum. Finally, the fourth criterion is also not met by Kokota since possessor-indexing hosts in that language can occur with generic as well as specific referents, meaning that the noun phrases they occur within can be referential as well as non-referential.

Criteria to test head status are as follows (Zwicky 1985, 1993):

- i. heads are the only obligatory constituents in the phrase in which they occur
- ii. heads are the category determinants for those phrases
- iii. heads are distributional equivalents to members of word classes that can act as heads (i.e. verbs are heads of verb phrases, nouns are heads of noun phrases, etc)
- iv. heads are the morphosyntactic locus of the phrase

Kokota agrees with the first criterion, since in a possessive construction, the constituent formed by the possessor-indexing host and the suffixed pronominal is the only obligatory element, and the possessum noun is optional. Meeting the second criterion for head status is a consequence of meeting the first: because they are the only obligatory element in the phrase, Kokota possessor-indexing hosts are category determiners for the phrase in which they occur. They also meet the third criterion, because they occur in distributional equivalence with lexical nouns in Kokota. Finally, Kokota possessor-indexing hosts are the morphosyntactic locus of the construct in which they occur, because “they mark the relation between that construct and the external possessor” (Palmer & Brown 2007:207).

According to Palmer & Brown (2007:207), an advantage of looking at Kokota possessor-indexing hosts as heads of indirect possessive construction is that the syntax of such constructions is simplified: by considering that the pronominal encoding the possessor attaches to the head – either the possessed noun in direct constructions or the possessor-indexing host in indirect constructions – it is easier to locate where the possessor indexing morphology is.

In their conclusion, they claim that possessor-indexing hosts should not be regarded as classifiers, but as generic nouns. They point out that they do not claim that this is applicable to all Oceanic languages where such forms occur, but that it may be applicable to other Oceanic languages behaving like Kokota.

3.3 DIFFERENT POSSESSIVE SYSTEMS

This section draws on the preceding one to describe Oceanic possession. Aspects of possession common to all Oceanic languages will be discussed, as well as the main different patterns that can be isolated.

3.3.1 Inalienability and alienability. This distinction was discussed in Chapter Two in a cross-linguistic perspective. The survey provided in 3.2.2 showed that this is a major, if not the main aspect of Oceanic possession, so a short discussion of this opposition with reference to Oceanic languages is in order.

Early scholars such as Codrington, Ray and Capell understood that something was going on when they observed that different nouns occurred in different constructions, and that this was somehow semantically grounded. Codrington (1885:143) talks about “closeness” and “remoteness”, two terms that do not totally match the semantic domains respectively covered by inalienability and alienability but nonetheless show that he was on the same path as latter scholars. In contrast, with Ray’s work it is difficult to know if he was conscious of a distinction along these lines. He certainly did recognise direct and indirect constructions (Ray 1919b:349), but did not really link them to any semantic division. Similarly to Codrington but offering a wider analysis, Capell was very close to the modern terminology when he talked about “normally permanent possessions of a person” (Capell 1949:175) and “inseparable possession” (Capell 1949:181). Going further, he not only distinguished inalienable from alienable possession but also subtypes of alienable: “Separable objects are distinguished from inseparable, first of all, and then subdivided among themselves” (Capell 1949:175).

The inalienability vs. alienability opposition is crucial to understanding and describing Oceanic possession. It provides the semantic grounding from which different constructions occur, and the common point between different possessive systems. According to Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:40), this opposition is found in all Oceanic languages: “The semantic distinction between alienability and inalienability lies at the core of the main structural differences in all systems”. Not only is it found in all Oceanic languages, it is also the main determiner of different possessive structures in Oceanic.

3.3.2 Systems with direct and indirect possessive constructions. From the semantic distinction of inalienability vs. alienability arises a structural one, between direct and indirect possessive constructions. Direct constructions reflect an inalienable relationship between possessum and possessor, while indirect constructions reflect an alienable relationship. This is the case in a majority of Oceanic languages, but not of all of them. The discussion below presents the most common structures.

3.3.2.1 *Structure of direct constructions.* The most widespread structure of direct constructions exhibiting a pronominal possessor is as follows:

[possessed noun phrase-possessor suffix]

In contrast, when the possessor is encoded by a noun phrase, several variations are found:

[possessed noun phrase-possessor suffix][possessor noun phrase]

[possessed noun phrase-construct suffix][possessor noun phrase]

[possessed noun phrase][possessor noun phrase]

3.3.2.2 *Structure of indirect constructions.* Being more complex, indirect constructions exhibit a higher level of variation. However, a common structure for such constructions is as follows:

[classifier-possessor suffix][possessed noun phrase]

Similarly to direct constructions, the structure of indirect constructions in which the possessor is encoded by a noun phrase shows more cross-linguistic variation. Here are common patterns:

[classifier-possessor suffix][possessed noun phrase][possessor noun phrase]

[possessor noun phrase][classifier-possessor suffix][possessed noun phrase]

[possessed noun phrase][classifier-construct suffix][possessor noun phrase]

3.3.2.3 *Structures exemplified by Oceanic languages.* From the total of forty-three languages sketched in Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002), thirty-seven have direct and

indirect possessive constructions respectively distinguishing semantic inalienability from semantic alienability. In contrast, six languages show structural differences. Buma (Tryon 2002) has four indirect construction types, and no direct constructions. These reflect four semantic categories: inalienable, eat, drink and general possession. Rotuman (Schmidt 2002), an isolate within the Central Pacific linkage, shows unusual patterns. It has two indirect constructions, involving the possessive markers ‘o and ‘e. Constructions with ‘o express possession of a majority of nouns, including those referring to inalienable items. On the other hand constructions with ‘e are only used to express eat and drink possession. Tobati (Donohue 2002) does not make any structural distinction corresponding to the inalienable/alienable opposition, and possession is simply expressed by juxtaposing possessor and possessum. Finally, Ifira-Mele, Niufo’ou and Marquesan are Polynesian languages. They present Polynesian systems of possession, which will be discussed in 3.3.3.

Yapese (Jensen 1977) has two different possessive constructions expressing inalienable and alienable possession. Nouns referring to inalienable items occur in direct possessive constructions and take a pronominal suffix encoding the possessor. When the possessor is encoded by a noun phrase, it follows the suffixed possessed noun. Alienable possession is expressed by prepositional phrases, whether the possessor is expressed pronominally or by a noun phrase. If the possessor is a pronoun, the preposition *roo-* taking a possessor suffix is used, and this constituent follows the alienably possessed noun. If the possessor is a noun phrase, the preposition *ko* is used instead.

Loniu (Hamel 1994) distinguishes direct constructions expressing inalienable possession, and indirect constructions expressing alienable and consumed possession. When occurring in the direct construction, possessed nouns take a possessor suffix if the possessor is singular. If the possessor is non-singular or encoded by a noun phrase, it follows the possessed bare noun. Loniu has two subtypes of indirect construction: alienable and consumed. The alienable construction is formed with the possessed noun followed by the possessive particle *a* and followed by the possessor encoded either by an independent pronoun or a noun phrase. The particle *ta* sometimes occur in place of *a* (Hamel 1994:44). The consumed possession construction involves the directly possessed noun *ana*, glossed

“possessive marker”. When the possessor is pronominal and singular, it is encoded by a suffix on *ana*, and if it is plural or encoded by a noun phrase, it follows *ana*. The possessed noun can either precede *ana* or follow the possessor noun phrase.

Saliba (Mosel 1994) has two main possessive construction types: the direct construction expressing inalienability and the indirect construction expressing alienability. The direct construction is formed with the possessed noun taking a possessor suffix. If the possessor is encoded by a noun phrase, it precedes this constituent. The indirect construction has two subtypes: eat, kin terms, clothes, illnesses and other afflictions with the classifier *ka-*, and general possession (including some kin terms) with the classifier *yo-*. The indirect construction is formed with one of the possessive classifiers taking a possessor suffix, the possessed noun following this constituent. If a possessor noun phrase occurs, it precedes the classifier constituent.

Manam (Lichtenberk 1983) distinguishes direct and indirect possessive constructions, respectively used to distinguish inalienability from alienability. In a direct construction, the possessed noun takes a possessor suffix. Manam has two indirect construction types, expressing eat and general possession. Eat and general possession are respectively expressed by the markers ‘*ana-* and *ne-* to which a pronominal possessor suffix is attached. This constituent follows the possessed noun. If the possessor is encoded by a noun phrase, it simply precedes the possessed noun phrase.

Tolai has three possessive constructions types: direct construction expressing inalienability, indirect construction expressing alienability and part possession (Mosel 1984:31). Direct constructions are formed with the possessed noun taking a possessor suffix. Indirect constructions present two subtypes: general and active possession with the classifier *ka-* and eat and passive possession with the classifier *a-*. Indirect constructions are formed with a constituent made of one possessive classifier to which a possessor suffix is attached. The possessed noun follows. The possessive marker *-i* also occurs when the possessor is non-singular or encoded by a noun phrase: it occurs as first suffix to the possessed noun followed by the possessor suffix when the possessor is non-singular. It also occurs in the same position when

the possessor is expressed by a noun phrase, the possessor suffix being dropped. In indirect constructions, it is suffixed to the possessive classifier when the possessor is encoded by a noun phrase. Finally, the third construction expressing part possession has the structure [head noun] [*na*] [modifying noun].

Mwotlap (François 2001) distinguishes direct constructions expressing inalienability and indirect constructions expressing alienability. In a direct construction, the possessed noun takes a possessor suffix. If the possessor is encoded by a noun phrase, the possessor noun occurs in its basic form and follows the possessed bare noun. There are four subtypes of indirect constructions: eat possession with classifier *ga-*, drink possession with *ma-*, possession of items in a contingent or temporary relationship with the possessor with *mu-*, and general possession with *no-*. The usual structure of indirect constructions in Mwotlap is as follows: the classifier takes a prefixed article and a possessor suffix. This constituent is postposed to the possessed noun and optionally followed by a possessor noun phrase. Interestingly, there is another structure occurring in a higher less used register (François 2001:553-554), previously discussed in 2.1.3. In contrast to the usual construction, the classifier constituent is preposed to the possessed noun, and the optional possessor noun phrase occurs in between these two constituents.

Lolovoli (Hyslop 2001) distinguishes two possessive constructions: direct and indirect, respectively expressing inalienable and alienable possession. There are two subtypes of direct construction, whether the possessor is pronominal or encoded by a noun phrase. If the possessor is pronominal, the direct construction is of the usual type found in languages discussed in this section, with the possessed noun taking a possessor suffix. On the other hand, when the possessor is encoded by a noun phrase, the possessed noun takes a construct suffix of the form *-i* and is followed by the possessor noun phrase. Similarly to Mwotlap, four classifiers are involved in Lolovoli indirect constructions, and all but one, *bula-*, are formally and semantically close to Mwotlap: *ga-* expresses eat possession, *me-* expresses drink possession, *bula-* expresses possession of natural or valued items, and *no-* expresses general possession. Similarly to direct constructions, there are two subtypes of indirect constructions, whether the possessor is pronominal or encoded by a noun phrase. In the former situation, the classifier takes a possessor suffix and this constituent is

followed by the possessed noun. In the latter situation, the possessed noun occurs in first position, followed by the classifier taking the construct suffix *-i*, and the possessor noun phrase then occurs in third position.

South Efate (Thieberger 2006) also has direct and indirect constructions. Direct constructions follow the usual structure with the possessed noun taking a possessor suffix. When the possessor is encoded by a noun phrase, it is simply juxtaposed to the possessed bare noun. Two subtypes of indirect construction are found: one involving possessive pronouns when the possessor is pronominal and another involving the preposition *ni* 'of' when the possessor is referred to by a noun phrase. Unlike most Oceanic languages previously discussed, South Efate does not have classifiers occurring in possessive constructions. The language also exhibits an unusual construction involving the possessive pronoun *nakte* 'my'. This form does not have any paradigmatic equivalents for other persons, and occurs before the possessed noun. According to Thieberger (2006:106), occurrences of *nakte* are rare in the language.

The possessive system of Sye (Crowley 1998) is also quite unusual in comparison to most Oceanic languages. While the distinction between direct and indirect constructions expressing inalienability and alienability exists in the language, Sye shows some variation from the Oceanic norm. Direct constructions conform to the typical Oceanic pattern, with the possessed noun taking a possessor suffix. On the other hand, the structure of indirect constructions is idiosyncratic: three different pronominal paradigms are used in this construction type. Semantics associated with these paradigms are not reminiscent to distinctions such as eat, drink and general possession commonly made in Oceanic. Rather, Crowley (1998:170) shows that two of these possessive pronouns paradigms express active possession while the third one is used to express passive possession. Removed inalienables such as extracted body parts are possessed in the passive indirect construction.

Ponapean (Rehg 1981) has direct and indirect possessive constructions, respectively encoding inalienability and alienability. Direct constructions in which the possessor is pronominal are formed with the possessed noun taking a possessor suffix. If the possessor occurs as a noun phrase, the possessed noun takes a construct suffix of the

form *-n* and is followed by the possessor noun phrase. Ponapean indirect possession requires possessive classifiers encoding the relation between possessor and possessum, and these are many in the language. Rehg (1981:179-181) lists twenty-one of them, and states that it is difficult to know how many others could be found in Ponapean. As in other Oceanic languages that have classifiers used in indirect constructions, Ponapean classifiers take a possessor. When the possessor is expressed by a noun phrase, the possessive classifier takes the *-n* construct suffix instead and the possessor noun phrase follows.

3.3.3 Other systems. This section briefly discusses the Polynesian possessive system, which does not exhibit direct and indirect constructions. Nonetheless, Polynesian languages do make a major semantic distinction somehow reminiscent of the inalienability vs. alienability opposition and around which their possessive systems are structured. However, a better way to define this opposition is to talk about subordinate vs. dominant possession (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:43), with subordinate possession corresponding to inalienability and dominant possession to alienability.

Regarding structure, almost all Polynesian languages distinguish *o* and *a* constructions, which respectively correspond to Oceanic non-Polynesian languages' direct and indirect constructions. However, the way in which Polynesian nouns are distributed into both constructions is more arbitrary than in other Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:43). The *o/a* distinction is briefly defined and exemplified in 3.2.1, and Hawaiian is discussed in 3.2.2.9, including a more consistent discussion of the *o/a* distinction in reference to this language.

Niuean (Lynch 1998:130) is an exception within the Polynesian group which lost the formal distinction between subordinate and passive possession, only retaining *a* constructions to express all possessive relationships. Another language undergoing this change is Niuafo'ou, for which Early (2002:854) notes that *o* constructions are disappearing from the speech of younger speakers.

CHAPTER FOUR

OVERVIEW OF LELEPA POSSESSION

This chapter gives a brief outline of the different types of possessive construction found in Lelepa. The language distinguishes direct from indirect possession, and thus has direct and indirect possessive constructions. Before presenting each possessive construction type found in Lelepa, it is useful to make a few comments on the terminology used in the following chapters.

In direct possession, the possessed noun and the possessor are formally bound to each other. A direct possessive construction is one in which the possessor is always pronominal and directly suffixed to the possessed noun, as in (1) to (4). In contrast, in indirect possession the possessor is formally free from the possessed noun. Thus an indirect possessive construction has a free possessor, which can be pronominal or encoded by a noun phrase. Another component found in Lelepa indirect possession is the construct suffix. It is attached to the possessed noun and marks a genitive relationship between the possessum and the possessor. It occurs in indirect constructions when the possessor is nominal.

4.1 DIRECT POSSESSION

This type of possession is represented in Lelepa by one construction type, the direct possessive construction. It is exemplified in (1) to (4) below:

- (1) **nar-o-go**
hand-V-1SG.DP
my hand

- (2) **namta-rña**
eye-2SG.DP
your eye

(3) **ati-na**

grandmother-3SG.DP
his/her grandmother

(4) **rumta-ra**

tears-3PL.DP
their tears

In the above examples, the possessor is encoded by a suffix attached to the possessed noun. This construction is typical of non-Polynesian Oceanic languages (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:40). In Lelepa there is a phonological process of vowel insertion as evidenced in (1) with the vowel [o] which is discussed in section 5.1.3.

4.2 INDIRECT POSSESSION

In contrast with direct possession, Lelepa indirect possession has several construction types. The possessor is formally independent from the possessed noun and can be encoded either by a free pronoun or by a noun. It is possible to distinguish two main indirect construction subtypes, one in which the possessor is encoded by free possessive pronouns as in (5) and (6) and one in which the possessed noun carries a construct suffix and is followed by the possessor, as in (7) to (11):

(5) **nasurña nai**

house 3SG.GENPOSS
his house

(6) **kerak nagna**

prow 3SG.PARTPOSS
its prow

In (5) and (6), the possessor is encoded by a free possessive pronoun marking the possessor's person and number. Both pronouns occurring in these examples mark the person and number for the possessors they encode, but a different possessive relationship. The function of each pronoun is addressed in sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2. I call the construction type exemplified in (5) and (6) the free indirect construction.

As seen in section 3.3.2, direct constructions in Oceanic languages have their pronominal possessor suffixed to the possessed noun, while in indirect constructions the possessed noun and the possessor are free from each other. For this reason, the constructions exemplified in (7) to (11) are analysed as indirect constructions: possessor and possessum are not bound to each other, and the construct suffix encodes a genetic relationship between both participants in the possessive relationship. One further reason is that the construct suffix occurs in two different forms, corresponding to two different types of possessive relationships, and further, it is clear that synchronically, the possessor is formally dissociated from the possessed noun. The function of each construct suffix is addressed in sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2.

In (7) to (9), the possessed noun takes a construct suffix of the form *-n* ‘CS:IN’, and the possessor is either a noun as in (7) and (8) or an independent pronoun as in (9).

- (7) **naḗuma-n nkas**
 flower-CS:IN tree
 the tree’s flowers

- (8) **natu-n grun**
 leg-CS:IN woman
 the woman’s leg

- (9) **nḗou-n konou**
 head-CS:IN 1SG
 my head

In (10) and (11), the possessed noun takes another construct suffix of the form *-g* glossed ‘CS:AL’. In both examples, the pronoun is a lexical noun phrase. In this construction, the possessor is never encoded by a pronoun.

- (10) **nmalok-o-g Nañian**
 kava-CS:AL p.name
 Nañian’s kava

- (11) **trak-a-g marka naut**
 truck-V-CS:AL respect.term chief
 the chief’s truck

I call the construction type exemplified in (7) to (11) the construct indirect construction. In table 4:1 below, the different possessive construction types found in Lelepa are summarised:

Direct possession	<i>[possessed noun-possessor suffix]</i> nagi-na name-3SG.DP <i>his name</i>	
Indirect possession	Free	<i>[possessed NP][possessor general possession pronoun]</i> neik nai fish 3SG.GENPOSS <i>his fish</i>
		<i>[possessed NP][possessor part possession pronoun]</i> nanou nagna end 3SG.PARTPOSS <i>its end</i>
	Construct	<i>[possessed noun-<u>n</u>][possessor NP]</i> natu-n grun leg-CS:IN woman <i>the woman's leg</i> <i>[possessed noun-<u>n</u>][possessor independent pronoun]</i> n̄pou-n konou head-CS:IN 1SG <i>my head</i>
		<i>[possessed noun-<u>g</u>][possessor NP]</i> nasurña-g Munalpa house-CS:AL p.name <i>Munalpa's house</i>

Table 4:1. Direct and indirect possessive construction types

CHAPTER FIVE

DIRECT POSSESSION

As seen in the preceding chapter, Lelepa direct possession is expressed by one construction type. This chapter is organised as follows: section 5.1 deals with the structure of the direct construction, section 5.2 with directly possessed nouns and section 5.3 discusses the semantic scope of direct possession.

5.1. FORM OF THE DIRECT CONSTRUCTION

5.1.1 Structure and paradigm. In the direct construction, the possessor is encoded pronominally and occurs as a suffix attached to the possessed noun. Its structure can be represented as follows:

[possessed noun-possessor suffix]

The pronominal suffix attached to the possessed noun encodes the possessor by marking its person and number. The paradigm of Lelepa bound possessive pronouns occurring in the simplex direct construction type is given in table 5:1 below. Dual and plural possessors are encoded by non-singular forms, and the third person singular form /-na/ is realised by the two phonologically conditioned allomorphs *-na* and *-a*.

	SG	NSG
1INCL		<i>-gta</i>
1EXCL	<i>-go</i>	<i>-gem</i>
2	<i>-mã</i>	<i>-mu</i>
3	<i>-na/-a</i>	<i>-ra</i>

Table 5:1. Bound possessive pronouns

5.1.2 Number marking. It was shown in Chapter 1 that subject pronouns encode singular dual and plural, and that object suffixes encode singular and non singular, the non-singular category catering for dual and plural possessors. Similarly to object suffixes, possessor suffixes mark the singular and non singular number, as shown in examples (1) to (3):

- (1) A=loṗa masta; e=mato ske **nar-a.**
 1SG.R=see boss 3SG.R=wait hold.up arm-3SG.DP
I saw the boss; he was waiting, holding up his arm. (TNls073)
- (2) Ar=rge **naṗ-a-ra** e=ptun-u-s.
 3DU.R=feel neck-V-3NSG.DP 3SG.R=be.sore-V-OBL
They (dual) felt bad from this. (lit: they felt their necks were sore from this)
(CMmut117)
- (3) Ur=patpur **natu-ra**
 3PL.R=break leg-3NSG.DP
They (plural) broke their legs. (elicited)

In (1), the subject encoded by *e*= ‘3SG.R=’ and the possessor of the arm encoded by *-a* ‘-3SG.DP’ have the same referent. In (2), the dual subject encoded by *ar*= ‘3DU.R=’ is also the possessor of *naṗ* ‘neck’. This dual possessor is directly encoded by the possessor suffix *-ra* ‘-3NSG.DP’. In (3), there is a situation similar to (1) in which the subject of the sentence is also the possessor of the object noun: the plural subject is encoded by *ur*= ‘3PL.R=’, and as a possessor it is encoded by *-ra* ‘-3NSG.DP’. In (2) and (3), the dual and plural possessors are encoded by one form which does not distinguish dual from plural, but encodes non-singular.

Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:67) do not reconstruct pronominal forms encoding dual number for Proto Oceanic. Instead, they reconstruct paradigms for independent pronouns (after Ross 1988:367), subject proclitics, object enclitics (after Evans 1995) and possessor suffixes (after Ross 1988:112), and all of these Proto-Oceanic pronoun paradigms encode singular and non-singular number only. This indicates that the development of dual, trial and paucal number as separate categories is an independent development which occurred in later stages in various descendent subgroups or languages. However, this does not mean that these number categories were not marked in Proto Oceanic in some other way. According to Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:69), “there is good evidence that the numerals **rua* ‘two’, **tolu*

‘three’ and perhaps **vati* ‘four’ were cliticised to independent and possessor non-singular forms to mark dual, trial and paucal number respectively”.

5.1.3 Morphophonology. Two phonologically conditioned processes occur when a noun is directly possessed. The first is related to the suffixation of the third singular suffix *-na/-a*, and the second is a process of vowel insertion occurring between the root noun and the possessor suffix. These will be discussed in turn.

When a noun ends with a vowel and is directly possessed by a third person singular possessor, it takes the *-na* form of the third person singular possessor suffix. If it ends with a consonant, then it takes either allomorphic form of the third person singular possessor suffix, *-na* or *-a*. The distribution of these two allomorphs is conditioned by the final consonant of the directly possessed noun root. When the noun root ends with the liquids /l/ or /r/, it takes the *-a* form of the suffix. On the other hand, if it ends with any other consonant, it takes the *-na* form. Table 5:2 shows examples of directly possessed nouns by a third person singular possessor. The left hand column gives examples of root nouns ending with liquids and the right hand column gives examples of root nouns ending with other consonants.

free form	gloss	suffixed form	free form	gloss	suffixed form
<i>nalel</i>	‘hair’	<i>nalela</i>	<i>n̄mat</i>	‘back’	<i>n̄matna</i>
<i>nmal</i>	‘body’	<i>nmala</i>	<i>npat</i>	‘tooth’	<i>npatna</i>
<i>natul</i>	‘egg’	<i>natula</i>	<i>nlak</i>	‘tongue’	<i>nlakna</i>
<i>nar</i>	‘arm’	<i>nara</i>	<i>nam̄</i>	‘heart’	<i>nam̄ana</i>
<i>nam̄aliar</i>	‘palm’	<i>nam̄aliara</i>	<i>nap̄</i>	‘neck’	<i>nap̄ana</i>
<i>nalfar</i>	‘wing’	<i>nalfara</i>	<i>npap</i>	‘knee’	<i>npapna</i>

Table 5:2. Surface forms of nouns directly possessed with the suffix *-na*

Examples (4) and (5) below show the liquid-ending root nouns *nmal* ‘body’ and *nar* ‘arm, hand’ taking the *-a* suffix, and (6) shows the noun *nam̄* ‘heart’ ending with a non-liquid consonant taking the *-na* suffix:

- (4) Pa=ti lawe **nmal-a** mou.
 2SG.IRR=NEG1 spear middle.body-3SG.DP NEG2
 Do not spear it in the middle of its body. (SUKnar023)

- (5) E=patpur **nar-a**
 3SG.R=break arm-3NSG.DP
He broke his arm. (elicited)
- (6) **Narñ-a-na** e=mai-mai-s, nina e=to takai mau rarua pan.
 heart-V- 3sgR=jump~INT- then 3sgR=stay dance all canoe go
 3SG.DP OBL
*His heart was pounding and pounding from this, and then he was dancing
 all around the canoe. (MLnaf016)*

The other phonological process which happens with possessive suffixation is vowel insertion between the root noun and the possessor suffix. This process happens with nouns ending in consonants only, as indicated in (7) with *nagigo* ‘my name’ in which no vowel is inserted between the vowel-ending noun *nagi* ‘name’ and the possessor suffix. In contrast, (8) and (9) indicate that a vowel is inserted in the directly possessed nouns *nñatogo* ‘my back’ and *napsara* ‘their buttocks’, and that this vowel is copied from the possessor suffixes’ vowels.

- (7) Konou, **nagi-go** e=pi ritait elda Poikiiki.
 1SG name-1SG.DP 3SG.R=COP retired elder Poikiiki
Me, my name is retired Elder Poikiiki. (BPtam002)
- (8) Foonu e=lag: "Pa=lik **nñat-o-go**".
 turtle 3SG.R=say 2SG.IRR=attach.to back-V-1SG.DP
The turtle said: "Hold on to my back". (MLnaf040)
- (9) ur=saksak **naps-a-ra**.
 3PL.R=sit buttock-V-3PL.DP
They sit on their buttocks. (elicited)

5.2 DIRECTLY POSSESSED NOUNS

As expected for an Oceanic language, nouns referring to body parts, body products, kin terms and items closely associated to the possessor such as personal attributes are directly possessed in Lelepa. In other related languages of the region, such nouns are called directly possessed nouns (Crowley 2006:69); bound nouns (Early 1994:96, Hyslop 2001:79) or obligatorily possessed nouns (Lynch 2000:44), because they cannot occur in their free form. In some of these languages, when such nouns occur

outside of a direct possessive construction, they take a suffix whose function is to allow them to stand as non-possessed nouns (Hyslop 2001:79, 168).

In Lelepa, directly possessed nouns do not take any possessive morphology when occurring outside of a direct possessive construction. Compare and contrast (10) where *nra* ‘blood’ is directly possessed with (11) where *nra* occurs outside of a possessive construction:

- (10) E=pitlakan **nra-na** e=to ntan.
 3SG.R=have blood-3SG.DP 3SG.R=stay ground
 There is his blood on the ground. (elicited)

- (11) E=msak, e=luo-k **nra**.
 3SG.R=be.sick 3SG.R=cough-TR blood
 He is sick, he coughed blood. (elicited)

In (12), *nra* functions as a subject noun phrase and similarly to (11) does not occur in a possessive construction. In this situation, it does not take any marking.

- (12) **Nra** e=sara naṣatko-na.
 blood 3SG.R=run body-3SG.DP
 Blood runs in his body. (elicited)

In (12), *nra* ‘blood’ refers to a generic and abstract entity, for which a possessor is not to be conceptualised. In contrast, *naṣatkona* ‘his, her, its body’ is directly possessed and a possessor is encoded. In South Efate, a closely related language, nouns occurring in direct possessive constructions can also occur in a non-possessive context without taking any marking, indicating that “the referent is unowned or disembodied” (Thieberger 2006:130).

Example (13) presents two semantically contrasted occurrences of the noun *nṣou* ‘head’:

- (13) Kano-kik e=kisuk **nṣou-n** **sou-nṣou-mil**.
 man-small 3SG.R=poke head=CS:IN k.o.bird-head-red
 The little boy poked the head of the red-headed bird. (MLnat27)

The first occurrence of *nṣou* takes direct possessive marking because a possessor for the head is identified: the bird. In contrast, the second occurrence of *nṣou* is part of the compound noun *sounṣoumil*. In *sounṣoumil*, no possessor is referred to for *nṣou*

‘head’. The head noun being *sou* ‘k.o.bird’, *n̄pou* acts as a modifier of the head and as such does not take any possessive marking.

These examples show that Lelepa directly possessed nouns are not bound nouns or obligatorily possessed nouns. They take possessive morphology when occurring in possessive constructions, and can occur in their free form in non-possessive contexts. Some examples of directly possessed nouns are given in table 5:3 below:

body parts			
<i>nas</i>	‘chin’	<i>nagus</i>	‘nose’
<i>namta</i>	‘eye’	<i>nagol</i>	‘gum’
<i>ntalega</i>	‘ear’	<i>natu</i>	‘leg’
<i>palwalpa</i>	‘stomach’	<i>nakfe</i>	‘skull’
body products			
<i>name</i>	‘urine’	<i>nāpo</i>	‘smell’
<i>ntanu</i>	‘saliva’	<i>rumta</i>	‘tears’
<i>ntai</i>	‘excrement’	<i>nrafi</i>	‘snot’
<i>nmar</i>	‘breath’	<i>sutau</i>	‘sperm’
kin terms			
<i>gore</i>	‘sister’	<i>nanu</i>	‘offspring’
<i>ati</i>	‘grandmother’		
closely associated items/parts of wholes			
<i>kut</i>	‘louse’	<i>melu</i>	‘photo’
<i>nagi</i>	‘name’	<i>nlak</i>	‘trunk’

Table 5:3. Directly possessed nouns

Examples from each noun class represented in 5:3 are given in examples (14) to (18):

- (14) **namta-m̄ña** e=mil.
 eye-2SG.DP 3SG.R=red
Your eyes are red. (elicited)
- (15) **Ur=patpur** **natu-gem.**
 1PL.INCL.R=break leg-1NSG.INCL.DP
We (inclusive) broke our legs. (elicited)
- (16) **Pa=faam** **ntai-go!**
 2SG.IRR=eat:R excrement-1SG.DP
Eat my shit! (CMmut093)
- (17) **Nanu-na** nanwai e=pitlak atlag Lima.
 offspring-3SG.DP male COP=have:R month five
His/her son is five months old. (elicited)

- (18) **Nagi-gta** kastom.
 name-1PL.INCL.DP custom
 Our customary name. (GNnaa003)

To conclude, nouns in Lelepa can be directly possessed and be called inalienably¹ possessed nouns under the condition that a relationship of semantic inalienability holds between possessor and possessum. When such a relationship is established, then the possessed noun takes direct possessive marking and is a directly possessed noun. In contrast, when the same noun occurs in a non-possessive construction and no possessor is indicated for this noun, it does not take any possessive marking and occurs as a free form, as shown in examples (11) and (12).

The classes of directly and indirectly possessed nouns in Lelepa are not absolute classes in the sense that a given noun is exclusively tied to one or the other class. Rather, membership to these classes is determined by the relationship between possessor and possessum, and is to be re-determined every time a noun occurs in a possessive construction. A discussion on the ability of nouns to be either directly or indirectly possessed according to the type of possessive relationship established between possessor and possessum is provided in section 6.6.

5.3 SEMANTIC SCOPE OF THE DIRECT CONSTRUCTION

In Lelepa, semantic domains expressed in the direct possession can be grouped in the semantic domain of the self. It is comprised of items which are inherently related to the individual, such as body parts, body products, kin relations, personal attributes and representations of the possessor. Such items may be concrete (body parts, body products) or intangible (name, language). This semantic domain comprises the following categories:

- i. body parts
- ii. body products
- iii. kinship terms
- iv. personal attributes (one's self, name, language, etc)

¹ See chapter 2 for a discussion of the alienability vs. inalienability opposition.

- v. representations of the possessor (photos of the possessor, songs about the possessor, etc)

These categories are exhaustive in my corpus: no counter examples have been found, such as indirectly possessed body parts.

5.3.1 Body parts. Body parts are directly possessed, whether the possessor is human (19 to 21), animal (22), inanimate (23) or supernatural (24):

- (19) String ega=sil prai nar-o-go.
 line 3SG.IRR=cut break arm-V-1SG.DP
The line may cut my arm open. (BPatg013)
- (20) ur=saksak naps-a-ra
 3PL.R=sit buttock-V-3PL.DP
They sit on their buttocks. (elicited)
- (21) Ntalega-ra ur=plepla pi=ṗel.
 ears-3NSG.DP 3PL.R=dirty COP=be.big
Their ears are very dirty. (elicited)
- (22) Malau e=lag: "teemñol, konou a=pitlak nalfar-o-go".
 megapode 3SG.R=say all.right 1SG 1SG.R=have wing-V-1SG.DP
The megapode said: "All right, I have got my wings". (MLnaf018)
- (23) Tug=fe pak nlak-na pe.
 1PL.INCL.IRR=first:IRR go.to trunk-3SG.DP first:R
We (inclusive) shall go to its trunk first. (MRnam007)
- (24) Nalul-a e=prau, mutuam ne nalul-a e=prau.
 hair-SG.DP 3SG.R=be.long devil REL hair-3SG.DP 3SG.R=be.long
His hair was long, the devil whose hair was long. (CMmut125)

In (23), *-na* ‘-3SG.DP’ encodes the possessor of the trunk, a pandanus tree. Parts of inanimate entities are normally possessed with the part-whole possession pronouns when the possessor is pronominal (cf. section 6.2.2), but (23) indicates that the trunk of a tree is possessed similarly to a human body part rather than as a part of an

inanimate whole. Other parts of plants are possessed with the direct possessive construction, as (25) and (26) indicate:

- (25) **nkas** **neto**, **naul-na** **e=ñartou**.
 tree DEM leaf-3SG.DP 3SG.R=dry
This tree, its leaves are dry. (elicited)

- (26) **nkas** **neto**, **nwan-na** **e=mlaks**
 tree DEM fruit-3SG.DP 3SG.R=green
This tree, its fruits are green. (elicited)

Nouns referring to body parts are also used anthropomorphically to encode parts of inanimate items. In (27), the speaker is describing the process of weaving a mat. Once the side of the mat is weaved and the pandanus is short on the length's side, the weaver proceeds to weave the width's side, which is referred to as the mat's head:

- (27) **Naki** **e=pa** **ñit**; **tug=fat** **n̄pou-na** **ega=fe**.
 pandanus 3SG.R=go short 1PL.INCL.IRR=make:IRR head-3SG.DP 3SG.IRR=first:IRR
The pandanus goes short; let's make its width's side first. (MRnam020)

5.3.2 Body products. Similarly to body parts, body products are directly possessed, whether the possessor is human (28), animal (29), or inanimate (30):

- (28) **ntai-na** **e=purak** **naul-en** **nafief** **nge** **to**.
 excrement-3SG.DP 3SG.R=fill.up-TR leaf-CS:IN heliconia DEM stay
His excrement filled up the heliconia leaf. (CMmut092)

- (29) **Maata** **e=panei**, **natul-a** **e=pueli**.
 snake 3SG.R=come egg-3SG.DP 3SG.R=disappear
The snake came, its egg had disappeared. (BPtam013)

- (30) **nāpo-na** **e=to** **fif** **sak**.
 smell-3SG.DP 3SG.R=stay fly.around go.up
Its smell was going up, hanging around. (GMtuw013)

The noun *nāpo* 'smell' can refer to a human/animate body product, but also as in (30), to the odour of inanimate items, in which the directly possessed noun *nāpona* 'his, her, its smell' refers to the smell of fruits hanging in the air.

5.3.3 Kinship terms. Regarding kin, Lelepa distinguishes between address terms, which are used as vocatives, and reference terms, which function as common nouns and as such can occur in possessive constructions. The former are used to address one's family members, and the latter to refer to them. The corpus shows that speakers extensively use address terms as reference terms, and use reference terms much less frequently. This means that terms which are normally used as vocatives are also used as common nouns and occur in possessive constructions. The corpus also indicates that reference terms are directly possessed while address terms are indirectly possessed. Correspondences between address and reference kin terms are established in the table below:

kinship terms		
reference terms	address terms	gloss
ati	<i>taatia</i>	grandmother
<i>paapua</i>	<i>paapua</i>	grandfather
<i>tetei</i>	<i>tetei</i>	mother
<i>mamei</i>	<i>mamei</i>	father
<i>lol</i>	<i>lol</i>	maternal uncle
<i>teete</i>	<i>teete</i>	maternal aunt
<i>maam</i>	<i>maam</i>	paternal uncle
<i>mimiia</i>	<i>mimiia</i>	paternal aunt
<i>tai</i>	<i>tai</i>	brother, male cousin
gore	<i>tai</i>	sister, female cousin
nanu nanwai	<i>kanokik</i>	son
nanu nagrun	<i>grunkik</i>	daughter

Table 5:4. Correspondences between address and reference kin terms

Table 5:4 shows that a lot of address terms do not have a corresponding reference term, but are used as reference terms. During fieldwork, reference kin terms were investigated many times, but only the four reference terms in bold letters in table 5:4 could be found. All four terms were given by speakers over fifty years old of age, and most of them were given during formal elicitation whereas only one occurred in texts. While it seems that older speakers use only a few reference terms and a greater number of address terms to cover both functions of address and reference, younger speakers appear to use address terms only. If this is true, then address terms are replacing reference terms, and reference terms are being lost.

(31) Tuwaraka ma ati-na ar=panei
p.name and grandmother-3SG.DP 3DU.R=come
ar=katao lao to natoroa.
3DU.R=RES stand stay cliff
Tuwaraka and her grandmother were coming, and then they stood up on a cliff.
(GMtuw020)

- In section 6.2.1, more examples of address kin terms used as common nouns and occurring in indirect possessive constructions are given. Examples (34) and (35) show occurrences of directly possessed reference kin terms:

- ² Some Fijian communalects also show historical loss of referential kin terms, and one communalect, Tubai, has no suffixed kin terms at all (Geraghty 1983:245).

5.3.4 Personal attributes. Possession of personal attributes is illustrated in examples (36) to (39). In (36) to (38), *nagi* ‘name’ is directly possessed. In (38), it is possessed by a non-human inanimate (a village) indicating that proper names are similarly possessed whether the possessor is human or non-human.

- (36) Konou, **nagi-go** Masavia, a=pak lig ntau 1932.
 1SG name-1SG.DP p.name 1SG.R=go.to out year 1932
Me, my name is Masavia, I was born in 1932. (MLtam001)

- (37) Grun-kik nge, a=tañargor **nagi-na**,
 girl-small DEM 1SG.R=forget name-3SG.DP
 kane **nagi-na** e=pi Tuwaraka.
 but name-3SG.DP 3SG.R=COP p.name
This little girl, I forgot her name, but her name was Tuwaraka. (GMTuw017)

- (38) Konou a=to natkon kiksa nato,
 1SG 1SG.R=stay village very.small DEM
nagi-na e=pi Magatorua.
 name-3SG.DP 3SG.R=COP p.name
I live in this very small village, its name is Mangatorua. (MRnam004)

In (39), the numeral *skei* ‘one’ is directly possessed, and refers to someone’s own self:

- (39) E=lag: "Ai, nag ku=tai **skei-rña** to?"
 3SG.R=say hey 2SG 2SG.R=can one-2SG.DP stay
He said: "Hey, can you be by yourself? (TNlif152)

5.3.5 Representations of the possessor. Representations of the possessor such as photos are directly possessed. In (40), *melu* “shadow” refers to a photo of the possessor, and is directly possessed like *nañaliar* “palm”:

- (40) Go, a=wus **melu-go** to malmauna,
 and 1SG.R=hold shadow-1SG.DP stay now
 e=to nañaliar-o-go to.
 3SG.R=stay palm-V-1SG.DP stay
And, I hold my photo now, it is in my hand. (BPatg32)

CHAPTER SIX

INDIRECT POSSESSION

As seen in chapter four, there are two main types of indirect possessive construction in Lelepa, the free indirect type and the construct indirect type. In free indirect possessive constructions, the possessor is encoded by free pronouns belonging to two different paradigms. In construct indirect constructions, the possessor can be either pronominal or nominal, and the possessed noun takes either of two construct suffixes. The discussion of indirect possession is organised as follows: 6.1 and 6.2 discuss free indirect possession while 6.3 and 6.4 look at construct indirect possession. Section 6.5 looks at a case of free variation between two possessive constructions, and 6.6 discusses variation in possessive relationships.

6.1 FORM OF THE FREE INDIRECT CONSTRUCTION

6.1.1 Structure and paradigms. In this construction, the possessed noun occurs in its root form and is followed by a free possessive pronoun encoding the possessor (see tables 6:1 and 6:2 below). Its structure can be represented as either of the following two forms:

[possessed NP][possessor general possession pronoun]

[possessed NP][possessor part possession pronoun]

In this construction, possessors are encoded by pronouns belonging to either one of two paradigms of free possessive pronouns given in tables 6:1 and 6:2. Note that in the paradigm given in 6:1, the forms encoding second and third person singular and third person non-singular are formally identical to the independent pronoun forms encoding the same person and number (see table 1:3 in section 1.3.2), and that the paradigm given in 6:2 is defective:

	SG	NSG
1INCL		<i>aginta</i>
1EXCL	<i>agnou</i>	<i>agnem</i>
2	<i>nag</i>	<i>agmu</i>
3	<i>nai</i>	<i>naara</i>

Table 6:1. General possession pronouns

	SG	NSG
1INCL		<i>nagagta</i>
1EXCL	-	<i>nagem</i>
2	-	<i>nagmu</i>
3	<i>nagna</i>	<i>nagra</i>

Table 6:2. Part-whole possession pronouns

As represented above, this construction indicates that Lelepa lacks the relational classifiers that often occur in Oceanic indirect possession, as in many Vanuatu languages such as Mwotlap (François 2001), Lolovoli (Hyslop 2001), Mavea (Guérin 2008) and Lewo (Early 1994). However, other Vanuatu languages such as Naman (Crowley 2006), Nefe'ei (Musgrave 2001) and Namakir (Sperlich 1991) as well as the more closely related South Efate (Thieberger 2006) also do not make use of classifiers in indirect possession. These languages' possessive systems are different from those of the majority of Oceanic languages, in that they reduced the Proto Oceanic possessive system for which relational classifiers are reconstructed (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:77).

The examples below illustrate the structure of the simplex indirect construction:

- (1) **A=palse-k rarua agnou ðog nge, pa tagau naktaf.**
 1SG.R=paddle-TR canoe 1SG.GENPOSS night DEM go fish p.name
I paddled my canoe that night, to go fishing at Naktaf. (BPatg005)
- (2) **Masta nag eg-o=tora kig.**
 boss 2SG.GENPOSS 3SG.R-V=wait 2SG.OBL
Your boss will wait for you. (TNlif067)

- (3) E=kat pi nanou nagna wia nge.
 3sgR=RES COP end 3SG.PARTPOSS good DEM
Then, this is its good end! (MLnaf056)
- (4) Mala a=toske, a=pas kopea nagna, kerak nagna...
 time 1SG.R=stand.sth.up 1SG.R=flatten stern 3SG.PARTPOSS prow 3SG.PARTPOSS
When I stand it up, I flatten its stern, its prow... (BKrar030)

6.1.2 Number marking. In (1) and (2) above, the free general possessive pronouns encode the possessor's person and number. Similarly to pronominal possessive suffixes (table 5:1), these free pronouns distinguish singular and non-singular number, as indicated in (5) and (6) below:

- (5) Ur=pat naa... muf kik skei nalon faatu naara.
 3SG.R=make:R HESIT move small one about money 3NSG.GENPOSS
They hum... went on strike about their money. (lit.: they made a little move about their money) (TNlif224)
- (6) Naara ar=msug prukut naara.
 3NSG 3DU.R=carry pig 3NSG.GENPOSS
They (dual) carried their pig. (CMmut135)

In (5), the possessor encoded by *naara* '3NSG.GENPOSS' has the same referent as the subject encoded by *ur=* '3PL.R=', indicating that the possessor is plural. In (6), the same form *naara* '3NSG.GENPOS' encodes the possessor and also has the same referent as the subject encoded by *ar=* '3DU.R=': this indicates that the possessor is dual. These examples show that free possessive pronouns – similarly to the possessor suffixes used in direct possession – mark singular and non-singular without distinguishing dual.

6.1.3 Word order reversal. The word order of the indirect construction as described and exemplified in 6.1.1 is possessum-possessor. However, there are examples in the corpus of this order being reversed, as in (7) to (10):

- (7) A=traus naa... Takanei tu=pou aginta narñit.
 1SG.R=talk HESIT how 1PL.INCL.R=weave 1NSG.INCL.GENPOSS mat
I talked about hum... How we (incl.) weave our mats. (MRnam005)
- (8) Ur=lag: "Ee, aginta nafnag ðel".
 3PL.R=say no 1NSG.INCL.GENPOSS food big
They said: "No, our big feed". (MLnat018)

- (9) A=to pak sto, a=pagtof **agnem** **nafnag**.
 1SG.R=stay go.to.R store 1SG.R=buy 1NSG.EXCL.GENPOSS food
I used to go to the store, I bought our food. (TNlif130)
- (10) “Ag=fak tera pa plag **aginta** **nafaamina**”.
 1SG.R=go.to:IRR garden go look.for 1NSG.INCL.GENPOSS food
“I will go to the garden to look for our food”. (MLtam008)

In (7), *namit* ‘mat’ occurs in the possessed construction in the reversed possessive order and in (8) to (10), the possessed nouns *nafnag* ‘food’ and its synonym *nafaamina* ‘food’, a deverbal noun derived from the verb root *faami* ‘eat:IRR’, also occur in the reversed possessive order. This word order reversal happens with the indirect construction involving free general possession pronouns. At present, it is difficult to explain this feature. More work and a larger corpus are needed to investigate it further.

6.2 SEMANTIC SCOPE OF THE FREE INDIRECT CONSTRUCTION

The function of the free indirect construction varies according to the pronoun encoding the possessor, whether it is a general or part-whole possession pronoun. The semantics of this construction are discussed as follows: 6.2.1 looks at the semantics of possession with general possession pronouns, and 6.2.2 with part-whole possession pronouns.

6.2.1 General possession. This section investigates the semantic domains represented in general possession. It was pointed out in 6.1.1 that there are no relational classifiers in Lelepa indirect construction types. This means that the language does not formally distinguish different types of possessive relationships formally marked in those Oceanic languages that have classifiers. In 3.3.2, a few such languages which mark certain kinds of alienable relationships – such as the use the possessor intends to make of the possessum – are briefly discussed: the possessum may be intended to be eaten, drunk, or is viewed as valuable, or used for some other purpose. In Lelepa, these different relationships are not formally marked as shown in (11) to (15):

- (11) **waag** **agnou**
 pig 1SG.GENPOSS
 my pig, to eat, that I ate or am eating (elicited)
- (12) **waag** **agnou**
 pig 1SG.GENPOSS
 my pig, to raise, that I raised or am raising (elicited)
- (13) **waag** **agnou**
 pig 1SG.GENPOSS
 my pig, to sell, that I sold or am selling (elicited)
- (14) **nwai** **agnou**
 water 1SG.GENPOSS
 my water, to drink, that I drank or am drinking (elicited)
- (15) **nwai** **agnou**
 water 1SG.GENPOSS
 my water, to bathe with, that I bathed or am bathing with (elicited)

The majority of Lelepa nouns are able to occur in this construction. Semantic domains covered are much wider than those related to direct possession, and include the following:

- i. material goods, including consumables and non consumables
- ii. certain personal characteristics
- iii. address kin terms
- iv. items acquired by birthright
- v. items acquired by marriage
- vi. items of cultural significance
- vii. areas of residence and origin
- viii. temporary conditions of individuals, including physical (e.g. sicknesses, boils, etc.) and non-physical ones (e.g. jobs).

Since all of these categories are illustrated in the corpus, it was found convenient to use them as a way to present the data.

6.1.1.1 *Material goods*. Examples illustrating possession of material goods are given above: (1) with *rarua* ‘canoe’, (5) with *faatua* ‘money’, (6) with *prukut* ‘pig’, (7) with *namit* ‘mat’, (8) and (9) with *nafnag* ‘food’, (10) with *nafaamina* ‘food’, (11) to (13) with *waag* ‘pig’, (14) and (15) with *nwai* ‘water’. More examples are given below: (16) with *tera* ‘garden’, (17) with *srago* ‘possessions’, (18) with *wala* ‘spear’ and (19) with *faare* ‘communal house’.

- (16) A=pat psak **tera** **agnem.**

1SG.R=make clean garden 1NSG.EXCL.GENPOSS
I cleaned our garden. (TNlif136)

- (17) **Srago** **nai,** e=fag pa fag pkout.

possessions 3SG.GENPOSS 3SG.R=burn go burn down
Her possessions, they burned down entirely. (TAtom017)

- (18) Nta, naraikan e=pi wala... kanei ãa=weswes **wala** **nag.**

ok spear.fishing 3SG.R=COP spear how 2SG.IRR=work spear 2SG.GENPOSS
OK, spear fishing is... how you will work your spear. (SUKnar003)

- (19) Ar=seik nkap **faare** **nge** **nai.**

2DU.R=light fire communal.house DEM 3SG.GENPOSS
They lit his communal house on fire. (CMmut129)

6.1.1.2 *Certain personal characteristics*. Some nouns which belong to semantic domains expected to be directly possessed are indirectly possessed, as illustrated in (20) below, with *nakasuan* ‘strength’:

- (20) **Nakasuan** **nai** e=pi ãel tol **nakasuan** **agnou.**

strength 3SG.GENPOSS 3SG.R=COP big than strength 1SG.GENPOSS
His strength was greater than my strength. (BPatg012)

6.1.1.3 *Address kin terms*. Address kin terms are often used to function as reference kin terms, as discussed in 5.3.3. When this is the case, they are indirectly possessed, as in (21) and (22):

- (21) Go, **taati** **agnou,** lopa, e=rke **namei** **agnou,**
 grandmother 1SG.GENPOSS p.name 3SG.R=tell father 1SG.GENPOSS
 kalsau **naãar:** “ãa=to pa ta nous”.
 p.name p.name 2SG.IRR=stay go cut wild.cane
*And, my grandmother, Lopa, told my father, Kalsau Naãar: “go cut some wild cane”.
 (MKnal005)*

- (22) **Tetei nai e=slat-i pak surña pa.**
 mother 3SG.GENPOSS 3SG.R=carry-3SG.OBJ to house go
His mother carried him home. (MLnat039)

6.1.1.4 *Items acquired by birthright.* Traditionally, items acquired by birthright are chiefly titles and land. Example (23) indicates indirect possession of land:

- (23) **Ur=sor ntan nai.**
 3PL.R=sell land 3SG.GENPOSS
They sold his land. (elicited)

6.1.1.5 *Items acquired by marriage.* Similarly, items acquired by marriage such as wives, or acquired by exchanging traditional items such as mats, food and live animals as well as money are indirectly possessed:

- (24) **E=lag: "Konou a=to plag fterk agnou,**
 3SG.R=say 1SG 1SG.R=stay look.for wife 1SG.GENPOSS
ar=panei pak wara e=pueli".
 1DU.EXCL.R=come to her 3SG.R=disappear
He said: "I am looking for my wife, we (dual excl.) came here, she disappeared". (TNura057)

6.1.1.6 *Items of cultural significance.* Items of cultural significance are indirectly possessed, such as *nakai* ‘traditional story’ (25), *maata tap* ‘sacred snake’ (26), *nali tap* ‘sacred place’ (27), *tematu* ‘elders’ (28), *naflak* ‘clan’ (29), *namatrau* ‘extended family’ (30):

- (25) **Tena e=pi nakai agnem**
 DEM 3SF.R=COP traditional.story 1NSG.EXCL.GENPOSS
te-matu ur=to magnem til-i sral.
 DET-old 3PL.R=stay 1NSG.EXCL.BEN tell-3SG.OBJ always
This is one of our (excl.) stories the old people used to always tell us. (CMmut006)

- (26) **Maata nai e=to-s to e=pi mñaata tap aginta.**
 snake 3SG 3SG.R=stay- stay 3SG.R=COP snake sacred 1NSG.INCL.GENPOSS
 OBL
The snake staying there is our (incl.) sacred snake. (MKnal026)

- (27) **Wara-nge e=pi nali tap naara, e=pi leskos.**
 place-DEM 3SG.R=COP place sacred 3PL.GENPOSS 3sgR=COP true
This place is their sacred place, it is true. (MKnal034)

- (28) **Te-matu aginta** ur=to loparkat kinta
 DET-old 1NSG.INCL.GENPOSS 3PL.R=stay look.after 1NSG.INCL
mala tu=pi nkarkik.
 time 1PL.INCL.R=COP children
Our elders used to look after us when we (incl.) were kids. (ETnal051)

- (29) **naflak agnou**
 clan 1SG.GENPOSS
my clan (elicited)

- (30) **namatrau agnou**
 extended.family 1SG.GENPOSS
my extended family (elicited)

6.1.1.7 *Areas of residence and origins.* Areas which people live in or originate from are indirectly possessed, as in (31) and (32):

- (31) **Nali agnou, natkon agnou, e=pi alaapa, nataḗau.**
 place 1SG.GENPOSS village 1SG.GENPOSS 3SG.R=COP p.name p.name
My place, my village, it is Lelepa, Nataḗau. (GMwor002)

- (32) **E=pi nanou-n stori agnou,**
 3SG.R=COP end-CS:IN story 1SG.GENPOSS
mala a=mato nfano naara to.
 time 1SG.R=stay country 3NSG.POSS stay
This is the end of my story, about when I lived in their country. (TNlif281)

6.1.1.8 *Temporary conditions of individuals.* Temporary conditions are indirectly possessed. This semantic domain includes nouns whose referents affect one's life in a temporary way, either one's physical integrity or everyday life. In (33), the speaker talks about the time when he went working overseas:

- (33) **A=to pan~pan pa mala ntau agnou e=kat nou.**
 1SG.R=stay go~INT go time year 1SG.GENPOSS 3SG.R=RES complete.
I stayed until my year was completed. (TNlif139)

In (34), the speaker tells that the sickness which was affecting him before is cured:

- (34) **Namlogon agnou e=kat pueli.**
 sickness 1SG.GENPOSS 3SG.R=RES disappear
My sickness is gone. (elicited)

In (35), the possessors encoded by *naara* ‘3PL.GENPOSS’ are moving from one location to the other:

- (35) Ur=mro stat suwar-u-s **napua naara** panei pa.
 3plR=do.again start(bor) walk-V-OBL road 3PL.GENPOSS come:R go:R
They started to walk their road again. (GMnaf026)

6.2.2 Part-whole possession. This category is important in Oceanic languages, which formally mark it in one way or another. In languages such as Lolovoli (Hyslop 2001:168) and South Efate (Thieberger 2006:129), part-whole possession is formally encoded by direct constructions. In others, such as the languages of Tanna (Lynch 1992), part-whole possession is expressed by several different constructions, including the direct construction.

In Lelepa, part-whole possession other than possession of body parts is expressed by the free indirect possessive construction when the possessor is pronominal. In this particular case, the possessor is encoded by a part-whole possession free pronoun, as discussed in 6.1.1. The semantic scope of this construction is limited to possession of parts of inanimate items, and comprises the following:

- i. parts of manufactured objects (canoes, houses, weapons, etc)
- ii. parts of man-made concepts (time-related concepts, ensembles, stories, etc)
- iii. parts of natural entities (caves, regions, etc)

6.2.2.1 Parts of manufactured objects. This includes parts of houses (36, 37), canoes (38) to (41), and weapons (42):

- (36) **Namta nagna** e=pon.
 eye 3SG.PARTPOSS 3SG.R=close
Its door is closed. (elicited)

- (37) **rafta nagna**
 wall 3SG.PARTPOSS
Its wall (elicited)

- (38) A=mro pak namlas, a=po ta **ntal nagna...**
 1sgR=do.again go.to bush 1sgR=RF cut rope 3SG.PARTPOSS
I go back into the bush; I am about to cut its ropes... (BTrar038)

- (39) A=pat psa-k nee **naokonluk** **nagna** e=nou...
 1SG.R=make clean-TR HESIT canoe.hole 3SG.PARTPOSS 3sgR=completed
I clean hum...its hole it is done...(BTrar036)
- (40) A=mas psa-keni **nañrat** **nagna** e=pe nou...
 1SG.R=cut clean-OBL.TR washboards 3SG.PARTPOSS 3SG.R=first completed
I clean its washboards, it is completed first...(BTrar047)
- (41) A=po paus suk~suk nee **nasma** **nagna**
 1SG.R=RF fasten be.tight~ATT HESIT float 3SG.PARTPOSS
pak **nakiat** **nagna**, go e=po pi rarua.
 to boom 3SG.PARTPOSS and 3SG.R=RF COP canoe
I am about to tightly fasten hum...its float to its booms, and it is about to be a canoe. (BTrar071)
- (42) Ar=pat naasu, ar=pat **nalua** **nagan**.
 2DU.R=make:R bow 2DU.R=make:R arrow 3SG.PARTPOSS
They made a bow, they made its arrow. (CMmut119)

6.2.2.2 *Parts of man-made concepts.* This category includes concepts which can be of several types: time related concepts as in (43), ensembles as in (44), and stories as in (45) to (47). In (43), the possessor is the day before the day during which the event described in the sentence takes place:

- (43) **Matmai** **nagna**, marka e=to-s, e=pat suk~suk nkas.
 tomorrow 3SG.PARTPOSS husband 3SG.R=stay-OBL 3SG.R=make be.tight~INT wood
The next day, the husband was there, he attached some pieces of wood together. (SAKtam022)

In (44), the possessor is a group of people, and the possessed is referred to with *skei* ‘one’, as one person in the group. This construction is used for possession of inanimate items, and thus in (44) the group is conceptualised as an inanimate item:

- (44) Ur=to-s pan-pa, **skei** **nagra** e=mkal~kal.
 3PL.R=stay-OBL go-go one 3PL.PARTPOSS 3SG.R=be.itchy~INT
They stayed on and on, one of them was very itchy. (TNnaf004)

It is common for traditional stories in Vanuatu to come with a song and a moral included in the story. These are regarded as parts of stories. In (45), the speaker is about to start singing the song relevant to his story, while in (46), another speaker explicitly tells the moral of the story:

- (45) **Nalegan nagna e=pan tapla.**
 song 3SG.PARTPOSS 3SG.R=go like.this
Its song goes like this. (GMmaa041)
- (46) **Nafsatran len nagna lag e=pi naskau ne e=tap.**
 answer straight 3SG.PARTPOSS say 3SG.R=COP reef REL 3SG.R=sacred
Its proper answer says it is a reef that is sacred. (BPatg027)

In (47), the speaker tells a story which ends with a fire set to a house and killing its occupants:

- (47) **E=paam-i, go e=pi nanou nagan.**
 3SGR=eat-3SG.OBJ and 3SG.R=COP end 3SG.PARTPOSS
It consumed it, and then it is the end of it. (CMmut133)

6.2.2.3 *Parts of natural entities.* The entrance of a cave (48) and the hills of an island (49) are possessed with this construction:

- (48) **Namta nagna, tu=ti tai lag e=pi nsfa mou.**
 entrance 3SG.PARTPOSS 1PL.INCL=NEG1 know COMPL 3SG.R=COP what NEG2
Its entrance, we do not know which one it is. (GMnaf024)
- (49) **E=psi-keni lag amoso, aguna, go alaapa,**
 3SG.show-OBL:TR COMPL p.name p.name and p.name
taaf nagra e=to gore.
 hill 3PL.PARTPOSS 3SG=stay block
It shows that regarding Moso, Nguna, and Lelepa, their hills are obstructing. (BPfaa018)

6.3 FORM OF THE CONSTRUCT INDIRECT CONSTRUCTION

6.3.1 Structure. The discussion now turns to the other subtype of indirect construction, the construct indirect construction. In this construction, the possessor is encoded either by a noun phrase or an independent pronoun, and the possessed noun takes a construct suffix. The structure of this construction can be represented by any of the following three forms:

[possessed noun-n][possessor NP]

[possessed noun-n][possessor independent pronoun]

[possessed noun-q][possessor NP]

There are two distinct construct suffixes in Lelepa, of the forms *-n* and *-g*, with two different functions (cf. sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2). Thus there are two subtypes of construct indirect construction, one with the *-n* construct suffix and one with the *-g* construct suffix, as outlined in table 4:1 in chapter four.

Examples (50) to (53) below illustrate the structure of the construct indirect construction. In examples (51) and (52), *nĩmat* ‘back’ and *nanou* ‘end’ occur in constructions with the *-n* construct suffix while in examples (53) and (54), *ntan* ‘land’ and *rarua* ‘canoe’ are possessed with the *-g* construct suffix:

- (50) E=surai **nĩmat-a-n** **foonu.**

3sgR=defecate back-V-CS:IN turtle
He defecated on the turtle’s back. (MLnaf053)

- (51) Te-nge, e=pi **nanou-n** **natrausin** agnou.

DET-DEM 3SG-R end-CS:IN story 1SG.GENPOSS
Here, this is the end of my story. (SAKtam082)

- (52) Ur=pat wia-k **rarua-g** **john.**

3SG.R=make good-TR canoe-CS:AL p.name
They repaired John’s canoe. (elicited)

- (53) **Ntan-a-g** **marka** **naut** e=to wara

land-V-CS:AL respect.term chief 3SG.R=stay here

pan **pa** **mar** **taaf** **warampa.**

go go stop hill there

The chief’s land goes from here to that hill there. (elicited)

6.3.2 Morphophonology. As (50) and (53) show, there is a process of vowel insertion happening when some possessed nouns take either construct suffix. When a noun root ends in a consonant, like *nĩmat* ‘back’ or *ntan* ‘land’, an epenthetic vowel is inserted between the final consonant of the noun and the construct suffix. But when the possessed noun root ends in a vowel like *nanou* ‘end’ or *rarua* ‘canoe’, no vowel is inserted. This epenthetic vowel is phonologically conditioned by the vowels of the possessed root noun.

Table 6:3 below displays the vowel quality of the epenthetic vowel for nouns ending in a consonant and taking the construct suffix. The left column of table 6:3 presents monosyllabic nouns and the right column disyllabic nouns. With monosyllabic nouns, the process is straightforward: the epenthetic vowel assimilates to the only vowel of the noun. When the vowel of the noun presents some complexity, i.e. if it is a combination of vowels, as in *naul* ‘leaf’ or *nwan* ‘fruit’, then the epenthetic vowel is centralised as a schwa, spelled *e*. With disyllabic nouns, the epenthetic vowel is copied from the last vowel of the root noun, except when the last vowel of the root noun is a front vowel before the *-n* construct suffix. In this case, the epenthetic vowel seems to be backed to /a/, as *nrafen-an* ‘walls-CS:IN’ shows.

free form	gloss	suffixes form	free form	gloss	suffixes form
<i>nar</i>	‘hand’	<i>naran</i>	<i>nagus</i>	‘nose’	<i>nagusun</i>
<i>npat</i>	‘teeth’	<i>npatan</i>	<i>nagol</i>	‘gum’	<i>nagolon</i>
<i>nark</i>	‘vagina’	<i>narkan</i>	<i>naskof</i>	‘tongue’	<i>naskofon</i>
<i>naul</i>	‘leaf’	<i>naulen</i>	<i>nmalok</i>	‘kava’	<i>nmalokog</i>
<i>nkap</i>	‘firewood’	<i>nkapag</i>	<i>nafnag</i>	‘food’	<i>nafnagan</i>
<i>trak</i>	‘car’ (bor.)	<i>trakag</i>	<i>mesmes</i>	‘knife’	<i>mesmeseg</i>
<i>neik</i>	‘fish’	<i>neikey</i>	<i>nrafen</i>	‘walls’	<i>nrafenan</i>
<i>bot</i>	‘boat’ (bor.)	<i>botog</i>	<i>nafarkaak</i>	‘nuclear family’	<i>nafarkaakag</i>

Table 6:3. Vowel insertion in nouns taking the inalienability construct suffix

The data from table 6:3 also shows that in a number cases, the construct suffix is of the form *-an* or *-ag*, due to the fact that many nouns have *na* as their initial syllable. The form of this initial syllable arises from the historical accretion of the Proto Oceanic article *na (Lynch 2001b:243).

6.4 SEMANTIC SCOPE OF THE CONSTRUCT INDIRECT CONSTRUCTION

6.4.1 *-n* construct indirect construction. The semantic scope of the *-n* construct indirect construction includes the domains of the self (see section 5.3), part-whole possession and relations of close association. Nouns which would otherwise be directly possessed occur in the *-n* construct indirect construction when the possessor is encoded by a noun or a noun phrase. Similarly, indirectly possessed nouns whose possessors are encoded by a part-whole possession pronoun (see table 6:2) occur in

this construction when their possessors are encoded by a noun phrase. Thus this construction encompasses the semantic scope of the direct construction and of the indirect construction with part-whole possession pronouns. The *-n* construct suffix is glossed ‘CS:IN’, inalienability construct suffix. Its semantic scope can be categorised as follows:

- i. body parts
- ii. body products
- iii. personal attributes (one’s self, name, language, etc)
- iv. representations of the possessor (photos of the possessor, songs about the possessor, etc)
- v. parts of inanimate items
- vi. closely associated items

6.4.1.1 *Body parts*. The examples below show body part nouns occurring in the *-n* construct indirect construction, whether the possessor is human (54), animal (55, 56) or inanimate. In (54), the possessor is encoded by an independent pronoun:

- (54) E=lag: “ee, a=rge a=msak. N̄pou-n konou e=ptun.”
 3SG.R=say no 1SG.R=feel 1SG.R=sick head-CS:IN 1SG 3SG.R=sore
She said: “well, I feel sick. My head is sore”. (SAKtam013)

- (55) E=surae n̄mat-a-n foonu.
 3sgR=defecate back-V-CS:IN turtle
He defecated on the turtle’s back. (MLnaf053)

- (56) Ur=pi nāpatko-n nfanag-an siisa tu=to paam-i
 3PL.R=COP body-CS:IN food-CS:IN nerite 1PL.INCL.R=stay eat:IRR-3SG.OBJ
They are the body of the food of the nerite that we eat. (BPtam028)

- (57) Ur=to n̄pou-n taaf, ur=sfa rak ntas.
 3PL.R=stay head-CS:IN hill 3PL.R=run towards sea
They stayed on top of the hill, they ran towards the sea. (BPtam018)

6.4.1.2 *Body products*. Body products can occur in this construction, as (58) shows. In this example, the possessor is an independent pronoun. Note that *ntai* ‘excrement’ is able to occur directly possessed as in (16) and (26) in chapter five and indirectly possessed in (58) below:

(58)	Pa=faam	ntai-n	konou,	ṗa=ti	paam-i	mou,
	2SG.IRR=eat:IRR	shit-CS:IN	1SG	2SG.IRR=NEG1	eat:R- 3SG.OBJ	NEG2
	mais	ag=faam-ko	nuk	to.		
	today	1SG.IRR=eat- 2SG.OBJ	as.is	stay		
	<i>Eat my shit; if you don't eat it, today I'll eat you as you are. (CMmut093)</i>					

6.4.1.3 *Personal attributes*. It was shown in section 5.3.4 that personal attributes such as *nagi* ‘name’ are directly possessed. However, when the possessor is an independent pronoun, personal attributes such as name (59, 60), occur in the *-n* construct indirect construction:

(59) Konou, **nagi-n** **konou** e=pi elda Sara.
1SG name-CS:IN 1SG 3SG.R=COP elder p.name
Me, my name is Elder Sara. (SAKtam001)

(60) **Nagi-n** **konou** Lisiel Lopa Jimmy.
 name-CS:IN 1SG Lisiel Lopa Jimmy
My name is Lisiel Lopa Jimmy. (LLmal002)

In (61), the possessor is the noun phrase in brackets:

(61) **Namaroan-an [mamei nai naaram tetei nai]...**
 thought-CS:IN father 3SG.POSS and mother 3SG.POSS
His father and mother's idea... (TNura025)

In (62), the possessor is France, an inanimate concept:

(62)	A=psruk	nafsan-an	franís,	
	3SG.R=speak	language-CS:IN	p.name	
	e=pi	mala-nge	a=tlak	turñalu.
	3SG.R=COP	time-DEM	1SG.R=start	go.out
	<i>I spoke French (lit.: I spoke the language of France), it was then that I started to go out. (TNlif122)</i>			

6.4.1.4 *Representations of the possessor.* Songs about the possessor are indirectly possessed, as in (64):

(64) Ur=lega nalegan-an konou.
3PL.R=sing song-CS:IN 1SG
They sang my song (the one about me). (elicited)

Marks left by the body on something, such as prints or footprints, are indirectly possessed, as in (65):

- (65) Tu=plag **nalfa-n** **ploko** kite **nalfa-n** **waago**.
 1PL.INCL.R=look.for print-CS:IN bullock or print-CS:IN pig
We (inclusive) look for bullock's prints or pig's prints. (BTnam018)

6.4.1.6 *Parts of inanimate items.* The semantic scope of part-whole possession in Lelepa was discussed in 6.2.2. The examples below illustrate the same semantic categories as in 6.2.2: parts of manufactured objects, parts of man-made concepts, parts of plants and parts of natural entities.

Examples (66) to (70) refer to possession of parts of man-made products. In (66) to (68), parts of a house such as *narou* 'framework', *tiṣa* 'posts' and *nrafen* 'walls' are indirectly possessed with the *-n* construct suffix:

- (66) Ar=lkot-i pak **narou-n** **faare** nai.
 3DU.R=fasten-3SG.OBJ go.to framework-CS:IN comm.house 3SG.GENPOSS
They (dual) fastened him to the framework of his communal house. (CMmut126)

- (67) A=ta **tiṣa-n** **nasurña**.
 1SG.R=cut post-CS:IN house
I cut the posts of the house. (elicited)

- (68) Nkarkik ur=pa sla loop rak **nrafen-an** **nasurña**.
 children 3PL.R=go carry bamboo towards wall-CS:IN house
The children went to carry the bamboo towards the walls of the house. (elicited)

In (69) and (70), parts of a canoe such as *naṣrat* 'washboards' and *nakiat* 'boom' occur in the indirect *-n* construct indirect construction:

- (69) A=skig pa ta **naṣrat-an** **rarua** agnou.
 1SG.R=be.by.oneself go cut washboards-CS:IN canoe 1SG.GENPOSS
I went to cut my canoe's washboards by myself. (elicited)

- (70) A=trups **nakiat-an** **kopea** wan wara.
 1SG.R=put boom-CS:IN stern be.at here
I put the stern's boom to be here. (BTrar057)

Examples (71) and (72) illustrate possession of parts of plants:

- (71) Ar=pa ta **naul-e-n** ntal.
 3DU.R=go cut leaf-V-CS:IN taro
They (dual) went to cut a taro leaf. (MLnaf011)
- (72) Ar=mato **nlak-a-n** **nrau** nge,
 3DU.R=stay trunk-V-CS:IN dragon.plum.tree DEM
 nina kusu e=kat pag pa.
 then rat 3SG.R=RES climb go
They (dual) stayed at this dragon plum tree's trunk, and then the rat climbed. (MLnaf046)

Possession of parts of man-made concepts is illustrated below. In (73) and (74), *nanou* 'end' is indirectly possessed with the *-n* construct suffix. Note that in (73) the possessor is of the borrowed form *stori* 'story' while in (74) it is of the form *natrausin* 'story':

- (73) E=pi **nanou-n** **stori** agnou,
 3SG.R=COP end-CS:IN story 1SG.GENPOSS
 mala a=mato nfano naara to.
 time 1SG.R=stay country 3NSG.GENPOSS stay
This is the end of my story, about when I lived in their country. (TNlif281)
- (74) Te-nge, e=pi **nanou-n** **natrausin** agnou.
 DET-DEM 3SG-R end-CS:IN story 1SG.GENPOSS
Here, this is the end of my story. (SAKtam082)

Possession of parts of natural entities such as *taaf* 'hill' and *faatu* 'stone' is exemplified in (75) and (76):

- (75) Ur=to sal **taaf-n** **Faatnleg**.
 3PL.R=stay dance hill-CS:IN p.name
They were dancing at Faatnleg's hill. (TAtom003)
- (76) E=psake to **n̄ou-n** **faatu** nge to.
 3SG.R=put.sth.up stay head-CS:IN stone DEM stay
He put it up on top of that stone. (TNura002)

6.4.1.7 *Closely associated items.* Relations of close association are expressed by the construct indirect construction, with the *-n* construct suffix. They involve inanimate items or inanimate and non-human animate items. They can also involve intangible concepts, such as time or representations of time. Relations of close association cannot be interpreted as part-whole relationships because they do not refer to items

that can be divided in parts entering in the composition of a whole. Such relations are exemplified in (77) to (82).

In (77) a relation of close association exists between an island, Mataso, and the sea surrounding it:

- (77) Wotanmaan e=lau mato nasog-an Mtaso to.
 p.name 3SG.R=stand stay open.sea-CS:IN p.name stay
Wotanimanu is erected in the open sea of Mataso. (BPfaa002)

In (78) a relationship of close association is expressed between an inanimate possessum, *nasokin* ‘smoke’, and an inanimate possessor, *nkap* ‘fire’. In this relationship, the latter produces the former:

- (78) Nai, e=maal-ki nasokin-an nkap.
 3SG 3SG.R=not.want-TR smoke-CS:IN fire
He does not want any smoke. (CMmut020)

In (79), a relationship of close association is established between the animate possessum *ura* ‘prawns’ and the inanimate possessor *nwai* ‘river’, in which the latter is the natural habitat of the former:

- (79) Ura-n nwai netu ur=wia we!
 prawn-CS:IN river DEM 3PL.R=good INT
These river’s prawns are so good! (elicited)

In (80), two abstract man-made concepts are in close association: *ntau* ‘year’ which has the role of possessum and *fakligan* ‘birth’ which has the role of possessor:

- (80) Ntau-n fak-lig-an agnou: a=pak-lig 1923.
 year-CS:IN go.to:IRR-out-NMLZ2 1SG.GENPOSS 1SG.R=go.to:R-out 1923
My year of birth: I was born in 1923. (GMnaf003)

In (81) there is a close association between *male* ‘time’ and three different possessors: *naftaurin* ‘wedding’, *nmaten* ‘funeral’ and *nsfa* ‘what’:

- (81) Wan male-n naftaurin, kite nmaten, kite nsfa,
 if time-CS:IN wedding or funeral or what
 tu=pa slat-i panei.
 1PL.INCL.R=go;R carry-3SG.OBJ come
If it is time for a wedding, or a funeral, or anything else, we (inclusive) go and bring it. (MRnam028)

The sentence in (82) comes just after the one in (81) in the same text. The noun *wari* ‘place’, more appropriately translated here as ‘occasion’, is possessed by the whole following clause in brackets. The relation of close association is between the possessum *wari* ‘place’ and the possessor encoded by the clause *tuto usum nañit rakeni* ‘we are using mats for’:

- (82) E=pi wari-n [tu=to usum nañit rak-keni].
 3SG.R=COP place-CS:IN 1PL.INCL.R=stay use (bor.) mat towards-TR:OBL
 These are the occasions we are using mats for. (MRnam029)

6.4.2 -g construct indirect construction. When the construct indirect construction involves the -g construct suffix, its semantic scope is totally different from when it involves the -n construct suffix. The semantic scope of the -g construct indirect construction is the same as the free indirect construction involving general possession pronouns (cf. table 6:1 in 6.1.1), and includes the same semantic domains: material goods, address kin terms, items acquired by birthright and by marriage, items of cultural significance and areas of residence or origin. The -g construct suffix is glossed ‘CS:AL’, alienability construct suffix. The semantic scope of this construction is exemplified below.

6.4.2.1. *Material goods.* Examples (83) to (88) show that material goods such as *sumā* ‘house’ (83), *rarua* ‘canoe’ (84), *ntan* ‘land’ (85), *mesmes* ‘knife’ (86), *neik* ‘fish’ (87), *nmalok* ‘kava’ (88) are indirectly possessed with the -g construct suffix:

- (83) Ur=wan surña-g Naviti wan.
 1PL.EXCL.R=be.at house-CS:AL p.name be.at
 We (excl.) are at Naviti’s house. (CMmut004)

- (84) Ur=pat wia-k rarua-g John.
 3SG.R=make good-TR canoe-CS:AL John
 They repaired John’s canoe. (elicited)

- (86) **mesmes-e-g** kano neto
 knife-V-CS:AL man DEM
 this man’s knife (elicited)

- (87) A=pu neik-e-g tai-kik agnou
 1SG.R=take fish-V-CS:AL brother-small 1SG.GENPOSS
 ag=fa tu tetei agnou.
 1SG.IRR=go:IRR give mother 1SG.GENPOS
I took my little brother's fish to give it to my mother. (elicited)

- (88) nmalok-o-g Sefo
 kava-V-CS:AL p.name
Sefo's kava (elicited)

6.4.2.2. *Address kin terms.* With a nominal possessor, address kin terms are indirectly possessed with the -g construct suffix:

- (89) A=pa m̃askos-o-s David Pakosale, Joe Kalmalaapa,
 1SG.R=go.R find-V-OBL p.name p.name p.name p.name
 nam paapua-g Merilin.
 and grandfather-CS:AL p.name
I went and found there David Pakosale, Joe Kalmalaapa and Merilin's grandfather. (TNlif229)

- (90) Mamei-g Kaltalu e=panei pan pa e=rke konou-s.
 father-CS:AL p.name 3SG.R=come go go 3SG.R=tell 1SG-OBL
Kaltalu's father came to tell me about this. (TNlif016)

6.4.2.3. *Items acquired by birthright.* Items acquired by birthright such as *ntan* 'land' are indirectly possessed with the -g construct suffix:

- (91) Ntan-a-g marka naot e=to wara
 land-V-CS:AL respect.term chief 3SG.R=stay here
 pan pa mar taaf warampa.
 go go stop hill there
The chief's land goes from here to that hill there. (elicited)

6.4.2.4. *Items acquired by marriage.* Items acquired by marriage such as *fterk* 'wife' are indirectly possessed with the -g construct suffix:

- (92) fterk-e-g kano neto e=mait p̃og-o-n nanou.
 wife-V-CS:AL man DEM 3SG.R=angry night-V-CS:IN yesterday
This man's wife was angry last night. (elicited)

6.4.2.5. *Items of cultural significance.* Items of cultural significance such as *nafarkaal* 'nuclear family' and *naflak* 'clan' are indirectly possessed with the -g construct suffix:

(93) **nafarkaal-a-g** **Douglas**
nuclear.family-V-CS:AL p.name
Douglas's nuclear family (elicited)

(94) **naflak-a-g** **marka** **naut**
clan-V-CS:AL respect.term chief
the chief's clan (elicited)

6.5 A CASE OF POSSESSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN FREE VARIATION?

6.5.1. The problem. The semantic scopes of direct possession (cf. 5.3) and of indirect possession with the *-n* construct suffix (cf. 6.4.1) overlap: they share semantic domains such as body parts, body products, personal attributes and representations of the possessor. In a direct construction, the possessor is pronominal (cf. 5.1.1), and in indirect possession with the *-n* suffix, the possessor can be encoded by an independent pronoun. Thus both constructions share semantic and formal characteristics: a common semantic scope and pronominal encoding of the possessor.

In the examples below, *nagi* ‘name’ which belongs to the semantic domain of personal attributes, occurs indirectly possessed with the *-n* construct suffix in (95) and directly possessed in (96). In both examples, the possessor is encoded with first person singular pronouns:

(95) Konou, **nagi-n** **konou** e=pi elda sara.
1SG name-CS:IN 1SG 3SG.R=COP elder p.name
Me, my name is Elder Sara. (SAKtam001)

(96) Konou, **nagi-go** e=pi ritaet elda poikiiki.
1SG name-1SG.DP 3SG.R=COP retired elder p.name
Me, my name is retired Elder Poikiiki. (BPtam002)

A similar situation is observed in (97) and (98): *ntai* ‘excrement’, from the semantic domain of body products, is indirectly possessed with the *-n* construct suffix in (97) and directly possessed in (98). Both uses are literal commands rather than being expletives, and are part of sentences following each other in the same text. In both examples, the possessor is encoded with first person singular pronouns, and refers to the same participant:

- | | | | |
|------|--|---------------|--------|
| (97) | Pa=faam | ntai-n | konou, |
| | 2SG.IRR=eat:IRR | shit-CS:IN | 1SG |
| | ṗa=ti | paam-i | mou, |
| | 2SG.IRR=NEG1 | eat:R-3SG.OBJ | NEG2 |
| | mais ag=faam-ko | nuk | to. |
| | today 1SG.IRR=eat-2SG.OBJ | as.is | stay |
| | <i>Eat my shit; if you don't eat it, today I'll eat you as you are. (CMmut093)</i> | | |
-
- | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| (98) | Pa=faam | ntai-go! |
| | 2SG.IRR=eat:R | excrement-1SG.DP |
| | <i>Eat my shit! (CMmut094)</i> | |

In (95) and (97), the possessed nouns *nagi* ‘name’ and *ntai* ‘excrement’ occur in the construct indirect construction with independent pronoun possessors. When compared with (96) and (98), in which *nagi* and *ntai* occur in direct constructions, no semantic difference in terms of possession appears. The ability of *nagi* and *ntai* to occur in both construction types is clearly not a case of overlap (Lynch 1973, Lichtenberk 1985) as discussed in chapter 3, since no change in meaning occurs between both sets of examples, indicating that the same possessive relationship is maintained. Thus in the context established by these examples, both constructions can be used indifferently.

In examples (99) to (102), nouns referring to body parts occur in the construct indirect construction with independent pronouns possessors. All of these nouns can also occur in direct constructions:

- (99) **Namta-n** **nag** **ega=to** **rarua** **fe.**
 eye-CS:IN 2SG 3SG.IRR=stay canoe first:IRR
You should look at the first canoe (lit: your eye should be on the first canoe).
(ETnal006)
- (100) **E=patpur** **nar-an** **nai.**
 3SG.R=break arm-CS:IN 3SG
He broke his arm. (elicited)
- (101) **Tu=patpur** **natu-n** **kinta.**
 1PL.INCL.R=break leg-CS:IN 1PL.INCL
We (inclusive) broke our legs. (elicited)

- (102) Tug=fat n̄pou-n naara=rua pe.
 1PL.INCL.IRR=make head-CS:IN 3PL=two first:R
We (inclusive) shall make their (dual) heads first. (MRnam025)

6.5.2. Languages encoding possessors with independent pronouns. The use of independent pronouns to encode possessors in Oceanic does not seem to be extremely common, although it does happen. For instance, this is the case in Naman (Crowley 2006) and Vinmavis (Crowley 2002) also named Nefe’ei (Musgrave 2001). Both languages are spoken in Malakula in northern Vanuatu. In Naman and Vinmavis, when the possessor is encoded by an independent pronoun, there is a relationship of inalienability between possessum and possessor, as can be seen in the following examples:

- (103) jebe-n kamem
 grandfather-3SG 1PL.EXCL
our (pl.excl.) grandfather (Naman, Crowley 2006:71)

- (104) netal-n gu
 leg- 1SG
 CONST
your leg (Vinmavis, Crowley 2002:643)

The structure of these two examples is exactly the same as the structure of the Lelepa indirect construction exemplified in (95) and (97) above. There is a difference in Naman which has *-n* ‘-3SG’, a third person singular possessive pronoun suffixed to the possessed noun instead of a construct suffix.

Independent pronouns are used in possessive constructions not only in Vanuatu languages, but also in other Oceanic languages, such as Babatana, Nissan, Ulawa, Marovo and Manam (Lichtenberk 1985:116-117). In these five languages, independent pronouns co-occur with possessor suffixes, allowing the possessor to be encoded twice, by a possessor suffix and an independent pronoun. Thus Lichtenberk suggests that for these five languages, independent pronouns occurring in possessive constructions bring in their focus and emphasis functions, so that the possessor is foregrounded in the message (Lichtenberk 1985:116).

In Lelepa, possessive constructions in which independent pronouns occur encode the possessor once, since no possessor suffixes co-occur with the independent pronouns.

This makes independent pronouns the only means of encoding the possessor. Although Lelepa independent pronouns do have a function of focusing on or emphasising the referent they encode, this is particularly true when such referents function as subjects, as in examples (95) and (96) above and (1), (5), (8) and (28) in chapter 1. When occurring as possessors, it is difficult to judge if their focus/emphasis function comes into play, since they are the only possessor-encoding device in the possessive construction, as shown in examples (105) to (107):

- (105) E=lag: “Ee, a=rge a=msak. N̄pou-n konou e=ptun.”
 3SG.R=say no 1SG.R=feel 1SG.R=sick head-CS:IN 1SG 3SG.R=sore
 She said: “Well, I feel sick. My head is sore”. (SAKtam013)

- (106) Ur=lega nalegan-an konou.
 3PL.R=sing song-CS:IN 1SG
 They sang my song (the one about me). (elicited)

- (107) Nagi-n konou Lisiel Lopa Jimmy.
 name-CS:IN 1SG Lisiel Lopa Jimmy
 My name is Lisiel Lopa Jimmy. (LLmal002)

6.5.3 Conclusion. These comparisons of examples suggest that the direct construction and the *-n* construct indirect construction may be in free variation in the language. According to Lelepa speakers with whom fieldwork for this study was conducted, the direct construction is used more consistently by older people, while the *-n* construct indirect construction with possessors encoded by independent pronouns is more a feature of younger people’s speech. In agreement with this, the corpus indicates that the direct construction is mostly used by older people, but in contrast, it also shows that the *-n* construct indirect construction with independent pronouns possessors is used indifferently by older and younger speakers.

Rather than a distinction of speech styles corresponding to a distinction of social status as in Tongan (Lynch 1998:257-258) for instance, or a distinction between levels of formality, it seems that this free variation of possessive constructions may indicate a change in progress in the language. At present, it seems that this only affects possession of body parts, personal attributes and representations of the possessor. It is not clear if this free variation includes possession of other nouns

belonging to other directly possessed semantic categories, because these nouns do not appear in the corpus.

Naman (Crowley 2006) displays the same kind of free variation occurring in a similarly patchy way in the language. Crowley (2006:71) finds two “competing patterns” of possession, illustrated by the two following examples:

- (108) **nangse-g**
name-1SG
my name (Naman, Crowley 2006:71)

- (109) **nangse-n** **kine**
name-3SG 1sg
my name (Naman, Crowley 2006:71)

According to him, the form presented in (108) “alternates freely” with the form of (109). This is the only example of this type of free variation given for Naman, so it is difficult to judge the extent of this feature in that language.

In conclusion, more work and a larger corpus are needed to determine if these two possessive constructions are in free variation or not in Lelepa.

6.6 VARIATION OF POSSESSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

This section discusses the ability of nouns to be directly and indirectly possessed according to the context in which the possessive relationship is established. This means that a given noun can occur in different construction types which formally mark different relationships between the possessor and the possessum: inalienability in a direct construction and alienability in certain indirect construction subtypes.

This particular feature has been called overlap (Lynch 1973, Lichtenberk 1985). In examples (110) and (111), *melu* ‘shadow, photo’ respectively occurs in a direct and in an indirect construction. In each situation, a different possessive relationship is marked:

- (110) **melu-go**
photo-1SG.DP
my photo (of myself) (elicited)

- (111) **melu** **agnou**
photo 1SG.GENPOSS
my photo (that I own) (elicited)

In (110), *melu* ‘photo’ is directly possessed. Because it refers to a representation of the possessor, a relationship of inalienability is established and formally marked. In contrast, *melu* ‘photo’ occurs in (111) in a free indirect construction with a general possession pronoun. In this situation, a relationship of alienability encoding ownership of the photograph is signified and formally marked, regardless of the fact that the possessor may or may not be represented by the photograph.

The lack of possessive classifiers discussed in 6.1.1 and 6.2.1 reduces the possibilities of a Lelepa noun to occur in more than two construction types: the marked relationships can either be inalienability or alienability, and the possible possessive constructions in which a noun can occur are either direct or indirect. In contrast, a language which has several relational classifiers makes it theoretically possible for a noun to occur in more than two possessive construction types. Lolovoli is such a language, as indicated in the examples below (Hyslop 2001:181):

- (112) **wai-mu**
water-2SG.DP
your water (to bathe with)

- (113) **me-mu** **wai**
CLF.DRINK- water
2SG.DP
your water (to drink)

- (114) **no-mu** **wai**
CLF.GEN- water
2SG.DP
your water (to wash with, or to use for some other purpose)

In (112), *wai* ‘water’ is directly possessed because it is used as bath water. In (113), it is indirectly possessed with the drink classifier because it is used as a drink and in (114) it is indirectly possessed with the general classifier because it is used for some other purpose. Lelepa contrasts with Lolovoli in that the relationships encoded in (112) to (114) are encoded in Lelepa by one construction only, as illustrated in (115):

- (115) **nwai nag**
 water 2SG.GENPOSS
your water (to bathe with, to drink, or to use for some other purpose) (elicited)

In the following examples, some nouns occur directly and indirectly possessed, indicating variation of possessive relationships:

- (116) **Ur=lega nalegan-an konou.**
 3PL.R=sing song-CS:IN 1SG
They sang my song. (the one about me) (elicited)

- (117) **Ur=lega nalegan agnou**
 3PL.R=sing song 1SG.GENPOSS
They sang my song. (the one I wrote) (elicited)

In (116), *nalegan* ‘song-CS:IN’ occurs in the *-n* construct indirect construction. There is a relationship of inalienability between the song and its possessor, the latter being the subject of the song. In (117), the possessor wrote the song and thus *nalegan* ‘song’ occurs possessed with a general possession pronoun, the construction marking a relationship of alienability. These two examples illustrate the contrast between subordinate, or passive, and active possession discussed in Lynch (1982, 2001a): in (116), the possessor is in a passive position, because the song is about him; while in (117) the possessor wrote the song. This contrast is illustrated again in (118) and (119) in a different context:

- (118) **E=rken masta-n Lasmet-i-s,**
 3sg.r=tell boss-CS:IN p.name-V-OBL
e=msug konou ar=kat pak Bellevue pa.
 3SG.R=carry 1SG 1DU.EXCL.R=RES go.to p.name go
He told La SMET’s boss about it, he took me and then we (excl.) went to Bellevue.
(TNlif019)

- (119) **“Masta nag eg-o=tora kig”.**
 boss 2SG.GENPOSS 3SG.R-V=wait 2SG.OBL
“Your boss will wait for you”. (TNlif067)

In (118), *masta* ‘boss’ is indirectly possessed with the *-n* construct suffix, and in (119) it is indirectly possessed with a general possession pronoun. In (118), the possessor refers to a company, La SMET, and in (119) to an individual encoded by *nag* ‘2SG.GENPOSS’. The possessive relationship in (118) is marked with the *-n*

construct suffix, and as such is viewed as permanent, as if the boss of the company was not easily removable. In (119) on the other hand, it is marked with a general possession pronoun, indicating that the relationship between the boss and his employee is viewed as not permanent, and may be easily terminated.

A majority of Lelepa nouns could be expected to occur in both direct and indirect constructions, according to the type of possessive relationship established by the context in which these constructions occur. Body parts for example are often directly possessed, but it is also common for some body parts to be indirectly possessed, when referring to pieces of an animal to be eaten or used for some other purpose, i.e. to be sold:

- (120) **naru-na**
 fish.spine-3SG.DP
its spine (elicited)

- (121) **naru nai**
 fish.spine 3SG.POSS
his fish spine (to eat, to use to make soup with or for some other purpose) (elicited)

In (120), *naru* ‘fish spine’ is directly possessed, with the possessor suffix referring to a fish which *naru* ‘fish spine’ is a part of. In (121), it is indirectly possessed and the possessive pronoun refers to a possessor which used (or intends to use) the fish spine for some purpose.

Such situations occur but are nevertheless limited, and many body part nouns may never occur in indirect constructions with general possession pronoun or with the -g construct suffix: a relationship of alienability between *ntalega* ‘ear’, *nagus* ‘nose’ and a possessor is difficult to conceive, suggesting that this feature may be relatively marginal in the language.

APPENDIX - TABLE OF TEXTS

The table below presents the 23 texts which are part of the corpus used in the present study. Most examples used to illustrate the discussion on Lelepa possession have been taken from these texts. In the body of the thesis, these examples are indexed with the reference of the corresponding text and a sentence number taken from Toolbox files. Texts are of several types: traditional stories or *nakai* and traditional proverbs or *naluaki* are genuine witnesses of Lelepa oral tradition, transmitted from generation to generation. These can refer to formation myths, recounting of adventures and stories with an educational/moral content. Narratives are personal life stories or refer to other non-traditional aspects of local life. Prescriptive texts are told by speakers recognised in the community for being particularly skilled in certain aspects of traditional life, such as weaving mats, making canoes or fishing. Titles were given by the speakers themselves, along with English titles provided by the author.

REF	speaker	title (Lelepa)	title (English)	type	Running time
BPatg	Billy Poikiiki	<i>Takanei atgau neik</i>	<i>How do I catch fish</i>	narrative	2'32
BPfaa	Billy Poikiiki	<i>Faatu rua</i>	<i>Two stones</i>	traditional story	2'57
BPtam	Billy Poikiiki	<i>Tamatira skei</i>	<i>Grandmother and grandkids</i>	traditional story	2'06
BTnam	Billy Tugulmaan	<i>Natrausinan nafak namlasin</i>	<i>Story about hunting in the bush</i>	prescriptive text	5'58
BTrar	Billy Tugulmaan	<i>Takanei ur to pat rarua</i>	<i>How to make canoes</i>	prescriptive text	5'34
CMmut	Chief Murnur	<i>Mutuam e to Artok to</i>	<i>The devil of Artok</i>	traditional story	12'14
ETnal	Eunice Touger	<i>Naluaki tolu</i>	<i>Three naluaki</i>	traditional proverbs	3'27
GMmaa	George Munalpa	<i>Maala nam Pwas</i>	<i>Maala and Pwas</i>	traditional story	3'55
GMnaf	George Munalpa	<i>Nafarkaal go marka mutuam skei</i>	<i>The brothers and a devil</i>	traditional story	6'09
GMtuw	George Munalpa	<i>Tuwaraka ma atina</i>	<i>Tuwaraka and her grandmother</i>	traditional story	4'52
GMwor	George Munalpa	<i>wordlist</i>	<i>wordlist</i>	wordlist	15'03
LLmal	Lopa lisiel	<i>Natrausinag malao</i>	<i>Story of the megapode</i>	narrative	1'49
MKnal	Malesu Kalsog	<i>Nali tap agnem</i>	<i>Our sacred place</i>	narrative	3'22
MLnaf	Masavia Laklotal	<i>Naftaurin skei e to naure skei</i>	<i>A wedding in an island</i>	traditional story	5'14
MLnat	Masavia Laklotal	<i>Ur to sal natamate</i>	<i>They danced for peace</i>	traditional story	3'23
MLtam	Masavia Laklotal	<i>Tamatira skei</i>	<i>Grandmother and grandkids</i>	traditional story	2'42
MRnam	Maina Ruben	<i>Natrausin namit</i>	<i>How to weave mats</i>	prescriptive text	2'14
SAKtam	Saramomo Kalsog	<i>Tamaraota skei</i>	<i>A couple</i>	traditional story	3'23
SUKnar	Sualo Kalsog	<i>Naraikan</i>	<i>Spearfishing</i>	prescriptive text	3'52
TAtom	Tanunu Asnat	<i>Natrausinag Tomamkolau</i>	<i>The story of Tomamkolau</i>	traditional story	3'41

TN <i>lif</i>	Tomsen Nañan	<i>Mala nañan e pak Franis</i>	<i>When Nañan went to France</i>	narrative	9'52
TN <i>naf</i>	Tomsen Nañan	<i>Nafarkaal ur to taaf Remata</i>	<i>The brothers of Remata's hill</i>	traditional story	5'09
TN <i>nura</i>	Tomsen Nañan	<i>Natrausinan ura</i>	<i>The story of the prawn</i>	traditional story	5'37

Appendix – texts used in the present study

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