

A grammar of Neve‘ei, Vanuatu

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A grammar of Neve‘ei, Vanuatu

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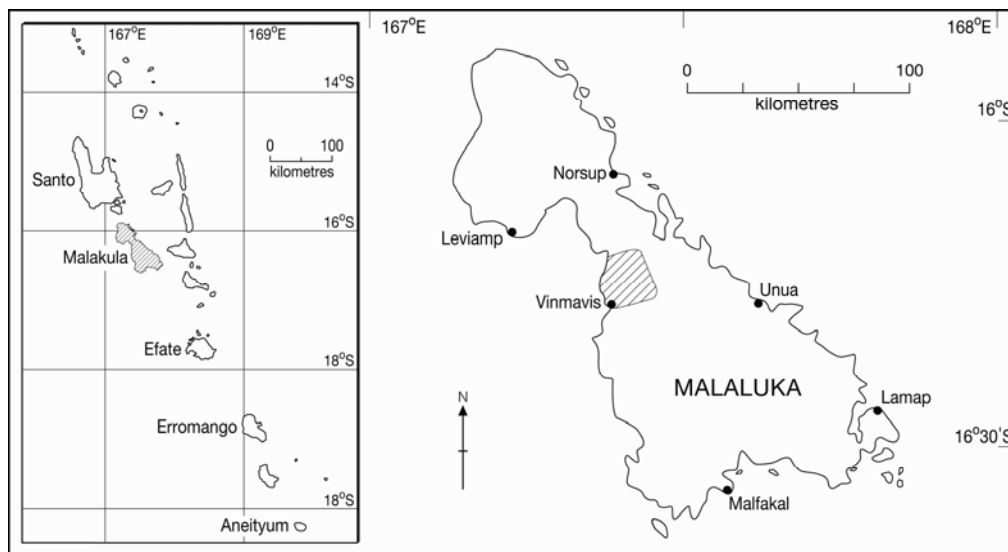
List of abbreviations

1	first person	INTENT	intentional
2	second person	IRR	irrealis mood
3	third person	LOC	location
Ø	zero	NEG1	negative prefix
ABIL	abilitative	NEG2	negative suffix
ACCOMP	accompanitive	NONSG	non-singular
ACTUAL	actual	NONSPEC	non-specific
ANTIDESID	antidesiderative	NP	noun phrase
BEN	benefactive	O	object
BIS	Bislama language	OBL	oblique
C	consonant	PL	plural
CAUSE	cause	POSS	possessive
COMP	completive	PRO	pronominal trace
COMPL	complementiser	PROG	progressive
CONST	construct suffix	REAL	realis
DEM	demonstrative	RED	reduplication
DESID	desiderative	REL	relativiser
DISC	discourse marker	S	subject
DL	dual	SG	singular
EXCL	exclusive	SIM	similative
GEN	general	SOURCE	source
GOAL	goal	TRANS	transitive
HAB	habitual	TIME	time
HESIT	hesitation	V	verb
INCL	inclusive	V	vowel
INCEP	inceptive	<i>vi</i>	verb intransitive
INDEF	indefinite	<i>vt</i>	verb transitive
INST	instrumental		

1 *Introduction*

1.1 The Neve‘ei language

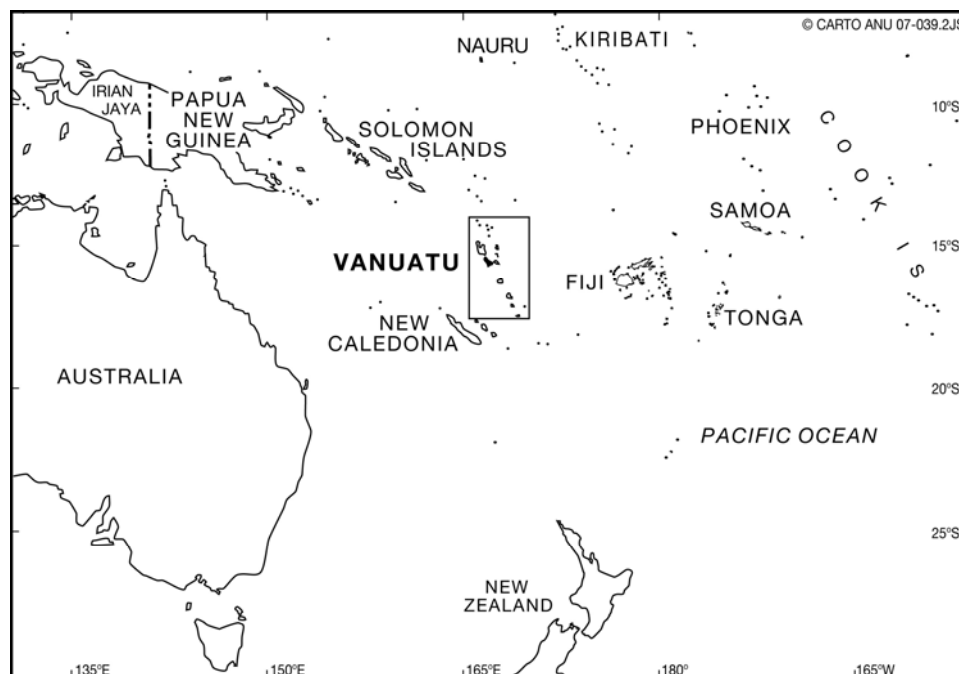
The Neve‘ei language is a member of the Oceanic subgroup of the Austronesian language family. It is spoken in the village of Vinmavis on the west coast of the island of Malakula (see Map 1.1), which is the second largest island in the Republic of Vanuatu in the southwestern Pacific (see Map 1.2).



Map 1.1: Vinmavis village, Malakula

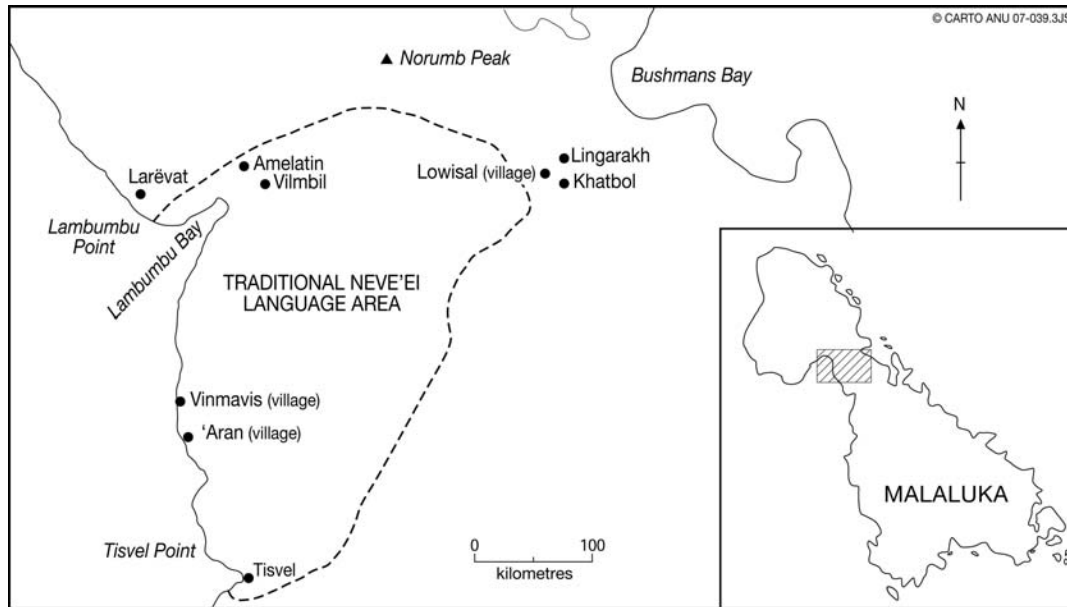
The Neve‘ei language is also the primary language of a significant number of people in other locations, such as the hamlet of ‘Aran, which is located about one kilometre to the south of Vinmavis. There are also Neve‘ei-speaking hamlets at Lowisal, which is several kilometres inland from Vinmavis and on Tisvel Point and Loloang, which are on the coast. Neve‘ei is also the primary language of a significant number of people living in the village of Vilmbil, which is located about seven kilometres to the north of Vinmavis. A number of families who speak Neve‘ei also live in the villages of Lingarakh and Khatbol, which are located several kilometres inland along the Nurumbat River from Bushman’s Bay on the east coast of the island.

A small number of speakers of Neve‘ei now work and live in the urban centres of Port Vila (on Efate) and Luganville (on Espiritu Santo), and there are significant numbers of Neve‘ei-speaking women who have married into other language communities elsewhere in Malakula but maintain social networks where they still speak Neve‘ei.



Map 1.2: The Republic of Vanuatu in the southwestern Pacific

Until the 1940s, most speakers of the Neve‘ei language lived in a number of hamlets along a twelve-kilometre stretch of land to the north and south of the present-day coastal location of Vinmavis village as well as in the hilly hinterland as far as ten kilometres inland (see Map 1.3). The traditional territory extended from Lambumbu Point along the coast to just south of the present-day village of Tisvel. Inland, the territory extended in the south from around Tisvel as far as the head of the Nurumbat River and then downstream to the east of this river as far as the present-day hamlet of Lowisal, which is a short distance from the larger village of Lingarakh near Bushman’s Bay on the east coast. The remaining inland boundary corresponds to a line drawn from Lowisal to a point just west of Norumb peak and then westwards back to the coast at Lambumbu Point. There was a movement away from the hilly interior as more and more Neve‘ei speakers embraced Christianity prior to the Second World War, and today the interior is completely unpopulated, as has happened in many other parts of Malakula. Most Neve‘ei speakers resettled in present-day Vinmavis village though some settled in Lingarakh, and there has been constant visiting and resettlement between Vinmavis and Lingarakh since then.



Map 1.3: The traditional Neve'ei language area

It is estimated that there are approximately 500 primary speakers of Neve'ei and around 750 speakers in total. The language name used throughout this study, Neve'ei (phonetically [neveʔei]),¹ is the name that is recognised by older speakers as the traditional name for the language. This name is the same shape as the long form of the interrogative 'what', the shorter interrogative forms being *neve* and *ve* (§6.5). Most of the younger speakers of the language do not use or even recognise the name, Neve'ei. Instead, they refer to the language quite simply as *nabusian teget* 'our (inclusive) language' or, in Bislama, as *lanwis Vinmavis* 'the language of Vinmavis'.

1.2 Previous studies

Malakula is linguistically the most diverse island in Vanuatu with an estimated forty distinct languages spoken by about 27,000 people (Lynch & Crowley 2001). However, until recently, substantial grammatical accounts had been published only of the V'ënen Taut language of the Big Nambas people of northwestern Malakula (Fox 1979) and the Port Sandwich language in the southeast (Charpentier 1979). Terry Crowley of the University of Waikato in New Zealand also undertook grammatical descriptions of the three moribund languages of Naman, Tape, and Nese as well as the description of the Avava language, which is still actively spoken. Following Crowley's untimely death in 2005, John Lynch worked on all four volumes, which were published in 2006.

Work is currently being carried out on a number of other languages. Summer Institute of Linguistics personnel have undertaken work on the language of Uripiv (initially by Ross McKerras and later by Kenichi and Saiko Shibusawa) and on the language of the Maskelynes (by David and Sue Healey). Work is also being undertaken on the Aulua language by Martin Paviour-Smith of Massey University in New Zealand and on the Unua

¹ With [f] and [v] being non-contrastive, the language was initially referred to as Nefe'ei in Musgrave (2001).

language by Elizabeth Pearce of Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. Julie Barbour of the University of Waikato in New Zealand is working on the Nivverer language of Lingarakh and Limap villages, and Amanda Brotchie of the University of Melbourne in Australia is working on the Dirak language of Mae village.

Until recently, there was also little previous work documenting the Neve‘ei language. The British anthropologist, Bernard Deacon, visited Neve‘ei speakers in the late 1920s while they were still living in their traditional hilly territory in the interior of Malakula. Ethnographic information, vocabulary, and about half a dozen texts are recorded in Deacon (1934) where the language is referred to as Lambumbu, the name of the nearest Christian mission station at the time of Deacon’s visit. A wordlist of about 250 items is included in Tryon (1976) where the language is referred to as Vinmavis, after the name of the main village where the language is now spoken. A short sketch of the main grammatical features of the language is included in Crowley (2002b), and reference to some of these features is made in Lynch (1998). In both cases, the language is referred to as Vinmavis. The language is included as part of the reference survey of languages of Vanuatu in Lynch and Crowley (2001) where it is referred to as Neve‘ei, as it is in the description of Naman (Crowley 2006). This present account is the first attempt towards a detailed description of the grammar of Neve‘ei.

1.3 Aim and focus

The aim of this work is to present a description of the phonology, morphology and syntax of the Neve‘ei language by providing clear statements with appropriate linguistic examples. A synchronic approach is taken with no attempt being made to focus on earlier stages of the history of related languages. Likewise, no attempt is made to focus on linguistic theory or on comparisons of Neve‘ei with related languages. However, references to other Oceanic languages and other studies are made where these seem to be particularly relevant to the description of Neve‘ei.

This work is a revised version of my 2001 Master of Philosophy dissertation. For the most part, these revisions are fairly minor. They include changes to the orthography (§2.6) whereby [f] is now represented as [v] and the labio-velar consonants [b^w], [m^w] and [v^w] are now represented as *bw*, *mw* and *vw*. Nuclear layer serial verbs are represented in this study as constituting separate phonological words whereas they appear as single phonological words in Musgrave (2001). Additional data from the field include the dual forms for the independent pronouns, the possessive postmodifiers, and the possessive pronouns (§3.2). Other observations from the field have resulted in changes and additional material in the section on phonotactics (§2.3), including statements relating to the distinction between labio-velars and plain labials before /a/ and the optional loss of final nasals from prepositions and other grammatical items.

The study is organised into seven chapters, the first of which provides introductory information concerning the status of the language and the geographic and linguistic background of its speakers. The second chapter provides a description of the phonemic inventory and a discussion of phonological processes such as phonotactics, stress, morphophonemic alternations, as well as a discussion of orthographical issues. The third chapter presents a description of the inflectional and derivational morphology of nominals, nominal postmodifiers, numerals, and verbs. In the fourth chapter, the structure of simple nominal phrases and complex nominal phrases is described. The fifth chapter is concerned

with a description of complex verbs including nuclear layer serial constructions and core layer serial constructions. The sixth chapter presents a discussion of the structure of simple sentences, including declarative verbal and non-verbal clauses, the behaviour of core arguments, and the behaviour of non-core arguments belonging to the clause periphery such as prepositional phrases and adverbial modifiers. This chapter also provides a discussion of interrogative clauses and constituent movement patterns. The final chapter provides a discussion of complex sentences including constructions involving clausal juxtaposition, coordinate clauses, subordinate clauses, and relative clauses. The final chapter also contains a brief description of some of the more notable discourse patterns found in Neve‘ei narrative texts.

1.4 Method

The linguistic data used to produce this study came from a collection of fourteen spoken texts provided by a number of different native speakers of Neve‘ei.² One of the texts is a speech while all of the others are narratives. The texts were transcribed from audiotape, and further linguistic data was elicited over a period of eighteen months, from 1998-1999, from Joemela Simeon,³ a native speaker of Neve‘ei who was a student at the University of Waikato at that time. While the majority of the stories were recorded in Vanuatu, the processes of transcription and the elicitation of further information were carried out in Hamilton, New Zealand. Therefore, most of the examples in this grammar have been taken from the taped texts and further information gained through formal elicitation sessions rather than from everyday speech in the field. However, in several places, further observations and examples of spontaneous speech collected in the field by Terry Crowley⁴ have also been included.

² I wish to thank Jimmy Newman, Kalros Simeon, Edwell Tony, Kithwell Jack, Kevin Jack, Jacob Frank and Henry Songi for their willingness to record the narratives and the speech. I also wish to acknowledge the help provided by Neil Netaf Stevens for information concerning numerals.

³ I am very grateful to Joemela Simeon for his enthusiasm and patience during the elicitation sessions.

⁴ My thanks go to the late Terry Crowley from the University of Waikato in New Zealand who undertook the supervision of my Master of Philosophy degree and also provided additional comments and observations from the field, which have been incorporated into this revised grammar.

2 *Phonology*

This chapter contains six sections. The first and second sections contain a description of Neve‘ei consonant and vowel phonemes. The third section provides a discussion of phonotactics and the fourth section provides a brief description of stress patterns in Neve‘ei. Morphophonemic alternations are described in the fifth section and the final section contains a discussion of issues relating to orthography.

2.1 Consonant phonemes

The following consonant phonemes are found in Neve‘ei.

Table 2.1: Consonant phonemes

	Labio-velar	Labial	Alveolar	Velar	Glottal
Voiceless stop			<i>t</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>ʔ</i>
Voiced stop	<i>b^w</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>g</i>	
Nasal	<i>m^w</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>ŋ</i>	
Fricative	<i>v^w</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>h</i>
Lateral			<i>l</i>		
Flap			<i>r</i>		
Glide	<i>w</i>			<i>j</i>	

The segments /t/, /k/ and /ʔ/ are realised as voiceless stops at the alveolar, velar and glottal points of articulation respectively. While /t/ and /k/ provide voiceless counterparts to the voiced stops /d/ and /g/, there are no voiceless counterparts for the voiced stops /b^w/ and /b/. The segment /t/ is realised as a voiceless alveolar stop in initial, medial and final positions.

(2.1)	/tabin/	[ta ^m bɪn]	‘grandfather’
	/b ^w etah/	[^m b ^w etah]	‘grandmother’
	/nebat/	[ne ^m bat]	‘vine variety’
	/tno/	[tno]	‘my’
	/utne/	[utne]	‘here’
	/tlel/	[tlel]	‘secret’
	/atl/	[atl]	‘third’

The voiceless velar stop /k/ is very rare within non-borrowed lexical roots and is so far encountered only in the root /niarekaʔa-n/ ‘fin-CONST’. It is attested in loans such as /nebavkin/ ‘pumpkin’ and /buluk/ ‘cow’ from Bislama *pamkin* and *buluk* respectively. The compound /noaŋ kobo/ ‘bamboo raft’ is thought to have been adopted from a language to the south where bamboo rafts were used rather than canoes. However, /k/ is frequently encountered in the second person singular irrealis verbal prefix /kV-/ (§3.4.1.1). Finally, the segment /ʔ/ is realised as a glottal stop in all positions.

(2.2)	/ʔaʔan/	[ʔaʔan]	‘eat’
	/tuʔan/	[tuʔan]	‘man’s elder brother’
	/nibiʔiŋ/	[ni ^m biʔiŋ]	‘giant turban snail’
	/b ^w ebaʔ/	[^m b ^w e ^m baʔ]	‘hide’
	/nemeraʔwaŋ/	[nemeraʔwaŋ]	‘dolphin’

The segments /b^w/, /b/, /d/ and /g/ are realised as voiced stops at the labio-velar, bilabial, alveolar and velar points of articulation respectively, with homorganic prenasalisation in each case. The labio-velar stop /b^w/ is a voiced prenasalised bilabial stop which involves lip-rounding and an audible labio-velar semi-vowel offset. It is encountered in initial and medial positions.

(2.3)	/b ^w i-/	[^m b ^w i-]	‘3SG.IRR (verbal prefix)’
	/b ^w eli/	[^m b ^w eli]	‘very, too much’
	/ab ^w it-/	[a ^m b ^w it-]	‘2/3PL.IRR (verbal prefix)’
	/neb ^w eleŋen/	[ne ^m b ^w ele ⁿ ŋen]	‘thigh’

The bilabial stop /b/ is a voiced prenasalised stop [^mb] which is encountered in initial and medial positions.

(2.4)	/baxah/	[^m baxah ~ ^m baʔah]	‘clean’
	/ber/	[^m ber]	‘long’
	/nubuah/	[nu ^m bu(w)ah]	‘pig’
	/nibilah/	[ni ^m bilah]	‘coconut shell, cup’

The alveolar stop /d/ is unlike the other prenasalised stops in that it is encountered in all positions. In initial and medial positions it is realised as a prenasalised voiced stop [ⁿd].

(2.5)	/dilivih/	[ⁿ dilifih ~ ⁿ dilivih]	‘around’
	/doŋon/	[ⁿ doŋon]	‘count’
	/dedan/	[ⁿ de ⁿ dan]	‘dive, swim underwater’
	/videnen/	[fi ⁿ denen]	‘throw down from the shoulder’

When the alveolar stop /d/ occurs in final position, it has the phonetic variations of [ⁿd], [ⁿt], [ndr] and [nr] as illustrated in (2.6) for /mised/ ‘hiccup’, /netarbad/ ‘owl’ and /midimid/ ‘(of plants) green, new, uncooked’.

(2.6)	/mised/	[mintʃe ⁿ d ~ mintʃe ⁿ t ~ mintʃe ⁿ dr ~ mintʃenr]
	/netarbad/	[netar ^m ba ⁿ d ~ netar ^m ba ⁿ t ~ netar ^m ba ⁿ dr ~ netar ^m banr]
	/midimid/	[mi ⁿ dimi ⁿ d ~ mi ⁿ dimi ⁿ t ~ mi ⁿ dimi ⁿ dr ~ mi ⁿ dimir]

Finally, the velar stop /g/ is a voiced homorganic prenasalised stop [ⁿg] which is encountered in initial and medial positions.

(2.7)	/gis/	[^ɓ gɪs]	‘squash, squeeze’
	/gu/	[^ɓ gu]	‘you (2SG pronoun)’
	/gegerah/	[^ɓ ge ^ɓ gerah]	‘drag, pull’
	/nabugali/	[na ^m bu ^ɓ gali]	‘cicada’

The phonemes /m^w/, /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/ are realised as voiced labio-velar, bilabial, alveolar and velar nasals respectively. The phoneme /m^w/ is found in initial and medial positions and involves lip-rounding and an audible labio-velar semi-vowel offset.

(2.8)	/m ^w aʔam/	[m ^w aʔam]	‘sit’
	/m ^w elemal/	[m ^w elemal]	‘naked’
	/m ^w ijir/	[m ^w ijir]	‘left (of hand)’
	/mam ^w e/	[mam ^w e]	‘father’
	/nem ^w en/	[nem ^w en]	‘man’
	/nsem ^w eh/	[nsem ^w eh]	‘distant, far’

The segment /m/ is realised as a voiced bilabial nasal in all positions.

(2.9)	/mesemah/	[mesemah]	‘dry’
	/muluwul/	[muluwul]	‘round’
	/nomomox/	[nomomox]	‘woman’
	/nemar/	[nemar]	‘hunger’
	/dam/	[ⁿ dam]	‘shout’
	/ilim/	[ilim]	‘five’

The segment /n/ is realised as a voiced alveolar nasal in all positions.

(2.10)	/nabuŋ/	[na ^m buŋ]	‘time, occasion, day’
	/nowi/	[nowi]	‘water’
	/vanili/	[fanili]	‘different, strange, unusual’
	/videnen/	[fi ⁿ denen]	‘throw down from shoulder’
	/dan/	[ⁿ dan]	‘go down, sink’
	/nemabun/	[nema ^m bun]	‘liver’

Finally, the segment /ŋ/ is realised as a voiced velar nasal in all positions.

(2.11)	/ŋaŋ/	[ŋaŋ]	‘laugh’
	/ŋusŋus/	[ŋusŋus]	‘breathe’
	/doŋon/	[ⁿ doŋon]	‘count’
	/vuŋavil/	[fuŋafil ~ fuŋavil]	‘ten’
	/vivironŋ/	[fifironŋ ~ fivironŋ]	‘listen’
	/naʔaibuŋ/	[naʔai ^m buŋ]	‘my grandchild’

The phonemes /v^w/, /v/, /s/, /x/ and /h/ are realised as labio-velar, labio-dental, alveolar, velar and glottal fricatives respectively. The labio-velar fricative /v^w/ involves lip-rounding and an audible labio-velar semi-vowel offset. It is voiceless in initial position, but it is optionally voiced intervocalically. It is not encountered in final position.

(2.12)	/v ^w elem/	[f ^w elem]	‘come’
	/v ^w isi/	[f ^w isi]	‘train vine’
	/nev ^w en/	[nef ^w en ~ nev ^w en]	‘fruit’
	/nav ^w ilaŋ/	[naf ^w ilaŋ ~ nav ^w ilaŋ]	‘fly’

The labio-dental fricative /v/ is voiceless in initial and final positions, but it is frequently voiced intervocalically. When /v/ occurs in syllable-final position before /m/ and /b/, it is invariably realised as [p] while there is free variation between [f] and [p] in other syllable-final positions.

(2.13)	/vavu/	[fafu ~ favu]	‘walk’
	/vevan/	[fefan ~ fevan]	‘beneath, under’
	/vivironŋ/	[fifironŋ ~ fivironŋ]	‘listen’
	/navbin/	[napbɪn]	‘small Tanna fruit dove’
	/navmolto/	[napmolto]	‘kind of bird’
	/duruv/	[nduruf ~ ndurup]	‘land (of arrow)’
	/tenev/	[tenef ~ tenep]	‘yesterday’

The segment /s/ is realised in most environments as a voiceless alveolar grooved fricative. When /s/ follows /n/, it is realised as the affricate [tʃ] in initial and medial positions and invariably as [s] in final positions.

(2.14)	/sido/	[sɪ ⁿ do]	‘remember’
	/bisah/	[^m bisah]	‘clear’
	/bus/	[^m bus]	‘speak, talk’
	/nsev/	[ntʃef]	‘cough’
	/ninsibin/	[nɪntʃɪ ^m bɪn]	‘finger, toe’
	/bans/	[^m bans]	‘wander, walk about’

The velar fricative /x/ is voiceless in initial and final positions but is optionally voiced intervocalically.

(2.15)	/xus/	[xus]	‘hit, kill’
	/xavan/	[xafan ~ xavan]	‘brother, friend’
	/xoxon/	[xoxon ~ xoɣon]	‘bitter, sour’
	/buxut/	[^m buxut ~ ^m buɣut]	‘inside’
	/maʔabux/	[maʔa ^m bux]	‘short’

The segment /h/ is realised as a voiceless glottal fricative, which is attested only word-finally except for /ahau/ ‘no’ (in answer to a question framed in the affirmative) or ‘yes’ (in answer to a question framed in the negative) (§2.3.2.1). It is also attested word-medially in the form /eheʔ/ ‘no’ which is thought to be a recent loan.

(2.16)	/dilivih/	[ⁿ dilifih ~ ⁿ dilivih]	‘around’
	/vuluh/	[fuluh]	‘bake in earth oven’
	/ivah/	[ifah ~ ivah]	‘four’
	/ahau/	[ahau]	‘no, yes (depending on question)’
	/eheʔ/	[eheʔ]	‘no’

The segment /l/ is realised as a voiced alveolar lateral and is found in all positions.

(2.17)	/lax/	[lax]	‘hang’
	/b ^w eli/	[^m b ^w eli]	‘very, a lot’
	/nabulmens/	[na ^m bulmens]	‘kingfisher’
	/nagaleln/	[na ^ɔ galeln]	‘rib’
	/nedlaŋan/	[ne ⁿ dlaŋan ~ nenlaŋan]	‘ear’
	/nsutl/	[ntʃutl]	‘eight’
	/namul/	[namul]	‘million’
	/tlel/	[tlel]	‘secret, taboo, forbidden’

The segment /r/ is realised as a voiced alveolar flap and is found in all positions.

(2.18)	/raʔ/	[raʔ]	‘work (in garden)’
	/vivironʃ/	[fifironʃ ~ fivironʃ]	‘listen’
	/bor/	[^m bor]	‘deaf’

The glides /w/ and /j/ occur only in syllable-initial position. Most glides that occur in sequences of vowel-glide-vowel are treated as phonetically inserted rather than phonemically contrastive (§2.3.2.3). The semi-vowel /w/ is realised as a voiced labio-velar approximant [w].

(2.19)	/wal/	[wal]	‘because’
	/nuwurwur/	[nuwurwur]	‘thunder’
	/nemeraʔwaŋ/	[nemeraʔwaŋ]	‘dolphin’
	/muluwul/	[muluwul]	‘round’
	/miliwun/	[miliwun]	‘chief’
	/lowi/	[lowi]	‘out, away’
	/xawes/	[xawes]	‘across’

The semi-vowel /j/ is realised as a voiced palatal approximant.

(2.20)	/jaʔai/	[jaʔai]	‘this person’
	/joxjox/	[joxjox]	‘vomit’
	/nijim/	[nijim]	‘house’

2.1.1 Consonant phoneme contrasts

The following forms are provided to establish contrast between the phonetically similar consonant phonemes of Neve^{ei}.

(2.21)	/b/	/ber/	‘long, tall, deep’
	/b ^w /	/b ^w er/	‘possibly, maybe’
	/m/	/melemaal/	‘have cramp’
	/m ^w /	/m ^w elemaal/	‘straight, correct’
	/v/	/veri/	‘outside’
	/v ^w /	/v ^w eri/	‘say (something), tell (story)’
	/ʔ/	/meraʔ/	‘get up, fly, jump up’
	/h/	/merah/	‘light (in weight)’

/h/	/veh/	‘carry’
/Ø/	/veØ/	‘what’
/ʔ/	/saʔ/	‘go up’
/x/	/sax/	‘not’
/d/	/madl/	‘in three days’ time’
/t/	/matl/	‘thick, incorrect, uncircumcised’
/g/	/gu/	‘you (pronoun)’
/k/	/ku-/	‘2SG.IRR (verbal prefix)’
/ŋ/	/ŋe/	‘the (demonstrative)’
/g/	/ge/	‘the very one’
/l/	/nebal/	‘hawk’
/r/	/nebar/	‘blind person’
/n/	/neban/	‘woman’s headdress’
/w/	/wah/	‘look’
/u/	/uah/	‘day after tomorrow’

2.1.2 Neutralisation of labial contrasts

The contrast between the plain labials /m/, /v/ and /b/ and the labio-velars /m^w/, /v^w/ and /b^w/ is neutralised in certain environments, as suggested by the phonotactic statements in §2.3.2.1. This contrast occurs before the front vowels /i/ and /e/ as shown in (2.22).

(2.22)	/nimins/	‘wooden stirring stick’
	/nim ^w insi/	‘star’
	/meli/	‘wilt’
	/m ^w elam/	‘marked, spotted’
	/visvis/	‘teach’
	/v ^w isi/	‘train yam vine’
	/veh/	‘carry’
	/v ^w elem/	‘come’
	/b ^w iaŋ/	‘all right’
	/bial/	‘all over the place, all sorts of things’
	/b ^w er/	‘maybe’
	/ber/	‘long, tall’

Before the rounded vowels /o/ and /u/, however, there is no contrast and only plain labials are found, as shown in (2.23).

(2.23)	/moŋ/	‘proud’
	/numur/	‘person’
	/vov/	‘rain’
	/navusmo/	‘white flying fox’
	/bor/	‘deaf’
	/bubut/	‘do quietly’

There is some evidence that the contrast between plain labials and labio-velars may currently be disappearing, as is the case in a number of Vanuatu languages where such a contrast is found. Before the low vowel /a/, the situation seems to be particularly difficult to describe. Some speakers make a contrast between labial consonants before /a/, with some words invariably appearing with plain labials and others appearing with labio-velars. However, it would appear to be more common for the contrast to manifest as a phonetic difference in the vowel itself. For example, the bilabial nasal /m/ followed by /a/ is realised as [ma] with a fronted low vowel whereas the labio-velar nasal /m^w/ followed by /a/ is realised as [mɐ] where a centralised low vowel is preceded by a plain labial. The minimal pairs¹ in (2.24) illustrate this contrast.

(2.24)	/nebal/	[ne ^m bal]	‘hawk’
	/neb ^w al/	[ne ^m bɐl]	‘kava’
	/nemat/	[nemat]	‘trap’
	/nem ^w at/	[nemɐt]	‘snake’

It would seem that this contrast only occurs after a preceding labial consonant, and, on the basis of symmetry, sequences such as [ma] are treated here phonemically as /ma/ while sequences such as [mɐ] are treated phonemically as /m^wa/.

2.2 Vowel phonemes

The following vowel phonemes are found in Neve‘ei. It should be noted that there is no contrastive vowel length in Neve‘ei.

Table 2.2: Vowel phonemes

	Front	Back
HIGH	i	u
MID	e	o
LOW	a	

The vowel /i/ is usually realised as a tense high front unrounded vowel. When followed by a nasal or prenasalised consonant, and in closed syllables ending in a non-liquid alveolar consonant, it is realised as the lax high front vowel, [ɪ].

(2.25)	/ivah/	[ɪfah ~ ivah]	‘four’
	/viviri/	[ɪfɪri ~ fiviri]	‘spit’
	/nimin/	[nɪmɪn]	‘bird’
	/gis/	[^ɪ gɪs]	‘squash, squeeze’
	/ab ^w it-/	[a ^m b ^w it-]	‘2/3PL.IRR (verbal prefix)’
	/videnen/	[ɪvɪdenen]	‘throw down from shoulder’

¹ These minimal pairs, collected by Terry Crowley in 2004, checked out consistently with a number of different speakers in the field. The speakers were consciously aware of this distinction and spoke of the difference in vowel quality, with [a] being described as ‘light’ and [ɐ] being described as ‘heavy’.

The vowel /u/ is realised as a high back rounded vowel.

(2.26)	/utne/	[utne]	‘here’
	/muluwul/	[muluwul]	‘round’
	/lueh/	[lu(w)eh]	‘tired’
	/nanuanu/	[nanu(w)anu]	‘rainbow’

The vowel /e/ is realised as a mid front unrounded vowel.

(2.27)	/etnaŋ/	[etnaŋ]	‘that thing there’
	/dedan/	[ⁿ de ⁿ dan]	‘dive, swim underwater’
	/seber/	[se ^m ber]	‘touch, hold’
	/mam ^w e/	[mam ^w e]	‘father’

The vowel /o/ is realised as a mid back rounded vowel.

(2.28)	/oʔo/	[oʔo]	‘yes’
	/doŋon/	[ⁿ doŋon]	‘count’
	/nomomox/	[nomomox]	‘woman’
	/noto/	[noto]	‘chicken’

The vowel /a/ is realised as a low front unrounded vowel.

(2.29)	/alimin/	[alimin]	‘fifth’
	/atl/	[atl]	‘third’
	/mavis/	[mafis ~ mavis]	‘white’
	/naʔanian/	[naʔani(j)an]	‘food’

2.2.1 Vowel phoneme contrasts

The following set of forms is provided to establish contrast between the five vowel phonemes of Neve‘ei.

(2.30)	/i/	/bir/	‘fart audibly’
	/u/	/bur-/	‘1DL.IRR (verbal prefix)’
	/e/	/ber/	‘long, tall, deep’
	/o/	/bor/	‘deaf’
	/a/	/bar/	‘blind’

2.3 Phonotactics

2.3.1 Basic syllable structure

The various permitted syllable types of Neve‘ei are illustrated in (2.31). It is also possible for a syllable to contain two vowels in sequence, but as such sequences are encountered only in restricted environments, they are described separately (§2.3.2.3).

(2.31)	V	/u-/	‘2SG.REAL (verbal prefix)’
		/i-/	‘3SG.REAL (verbal prefix)’
	VC	/im/	‘only, just’
		/ar/	‘they, them (pronoun)’
	VCC	/itl/	‘three’
	CV	/vi/	‘do, make’
	CC	/tn/	‘roast’
	CCV	/nsu/	‘remove bark of’
		/tno/	‘my (pronoun)’
	CCVC	/nsev/	‘cough’
		/tlel/	‘secret’
	CVC	/dan/	‘go down, sink’
		/veh/	‘carry’
	CVCC	/matl/	‘thick’
		/bans/	‘wander’
	CCVCC	/nsutl/	‘eight’

2.3.2 Intramorphemic possibilities

Phonotactic patterns exhibit different possibilities within morphemes and over morpheme boundaries. In this section, intramorphemic phonotactic patterns are described while additional statements to account for phonotactic patterns over morpheme boundaries are presented in the following section.

2.3.2.1 Single segments

Root-initially, any of the five vowels is permissible although initial vowels are uncommon in lexical items. As shown in (2.32), initial vowels are most frequently encountered in grammatical items, interjections and minor lexical classes such as adverbials.

(2.32)	/i/	‘he/she/it’
	/en/	‘instrumental’
	/ar/	‘they, them’
	/oʔo/	‘yes’
	/utnaŋ/	‘there’

Most lexical roots, therefore, begin with any single consonant or glide, with the exception of /h/. As previously noted, whereas /k/ is rarely attested in lexical roots, initial /k/ is very frequently attested in the second person singular irrealis verb prefix /kV-/ (§3.4.1.1). The phonotactic possibilities for verbs differ from those of nouns in that nouns frequently begin with /n/ which represents a reanalysis of an earlier article as a largely inseparable part of the root (§3.2). Verbs, on the other hand, never begin with /n/.

Root-finally, any of the four non-low vowels /i/, /e/, /o/ and /u/ is permitted. The low vowel /a/ does not appear root-finally unless there is an optional loss of a final nasal. For example, prepositions ending in /n/, such as /len/, /sakhan/ and /nsensan/, frequently appear in speech without the final consonant when there is a following noun phrase. However,

when the preposition is stranded without the following noun phrase, the final consonant is obligatory. The optional loss of the final nasal also applies to other grammatical items, such as /jaŋ/. When such forms lose the final nasal in this way, they end in /a/, thus violating the general phonotactic constraint against root-final /a/.

Any single consonant is permitted root-finally with the exception of the prenasalised voiced stops /b^w/, /b/ and /g/ as well as the other labio-velars /v^w/ and /m^w/. The glides /w/ and /j/ are also not attested root-finally. The glottal fricative /h/ is quite common in root-final position, in contrast to its non-occurrence root-initially.

Additional observations about the distribution of particular segments within roots include the statement that the labio-velar consonants /b^w/, /m^w/ and /v^w/ are not attested before or after the back vowels /o/ or /u/. Therefore, while sequences of /b^wi/, /m^wi/, /v^wi/, /b^we/, /m^we/ and /v^we/ are found, sequences of /b^wo/, /m^wo/, v^wo/, /b^wu/, /m^wu/ or /v^wu/ are not found. As explained in §2.1.2, when the labio-velar consonants /b^w/, /m^w/ and /v^w/ are attested before the low vowel /a/, it is common for the low vowel to be realised as [ɐ] and for the labio-velar consonants to be realised as plain labials.

The glide /w/ is not attested before the mid-back vowel /o/ while the glide /j/ is not attested before either of the high vowels /i/ or /u/ as shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Glides

	<i>w</i>		<i>j</i>	
/i/	/wier/	‘wet’	–	
/u/	/wur/	‘sweep away’	–	
/e/	/welwel/	‘dig’	/jev/	‘throw stone at’
/o/	–		/joxjox/	‘vomit’
/a/	/wam/	‘fall’	/jaŋ/	‘be born’

There also appear to be some restrictions on the distribution of a number of other single consonants. For example, the velar fricative /x/ does not appear before or after the front vowel /i/, and neither the velar fricative /x/ nor the velar nasal /ŋ/ appear before or after the front vowel /e/, except for the single attested examples of /ŋ/ after /e/ in the interjection /eʔeŋ/ ‘yes’ and /ŋ/ before /e/ in the anaphoric demonstrative /ŋe/ ‘the (mentioned previously)’. There is also a single attested example of the glottal fricative /h/ intervocalically in the interjection /ahau/ ‘no’ (in answer to a question framed in the affirmative) or ‘yes’ (in answer to a question framed in the negative).

The glottal stop /ʔ/ is overwhelmingly attested intervocalically between like vowels as shown in (2.33a) while only two forms (2.33b) are attested in which the glottal stop appears between non-like vowels, and in both forms the initial vowel is /u/ and the second vowel is /a/.

- (2.33) a. /naʔai/ ‘tree’
 /neveʔei/ ‘what’
 /oʔo/ ‘yes’
 /nibiʔiŋ/ ‘greensnail’
- b. /tuʔan/ ‘man’s elder brother’
 /luʔam/ ‘show signs of something that is to happen’

2.3.2.2 Consonant clusters

The syllable structure set out in §2.3.1 also allows for the occurrence of two-member consonant clusters within Neve‘ei roots. Root-initially, the only consonant cluster which is frequently attested is /ns-/, as shown in (2.34).

(2.34)	/nsavi/	‘sneeze once’
	/nsev/	‘cough’
	/nsier/	‘push’
	/nsouh/	‘six’
	/nsuru/	‘seven’
	/nsavah/	‘nine’

All other root-initial consonant clusters are attested in only a few forms. For example, the initial cluster /tl-/ is attested only in the root, /tlel/ ‘secret’ while the initial cluster /tn-/ appears only in the root /tn/ ‘roast’ and the pronoun /tno/ ‘my’. The root /sne-n/ ‘mother-3SG’ (§3.2.1) and the root /sn/ ‘(of rain) stop’ would appear to be the only forms containing the initial cluster /sn-/. Finally, the initial sequence /dr-/ is encountered only in a few forms, such as /droŋ/ ‘still, yet’, /dreh/ ‘tear’ and /druh/ ‘through’.

A somewhat wider range of consonant clusters is attested root-finally. The sequences /-ns/ and /-tl/ are quite frequently attested as shown in (2.35).

(2.35)	/bans/	‘wander’
	/nabulmens/	‘kingfisher’
	/naʔans/	‘fire ant’
	/navins/	‘banana’
	/nelans/	‘staghorn coral’
	/nsutl/	‘eight’
	/itl/	‘three’
	/atl/	‘third’
	/matl/	‘thick’
	/buŋnitl/	‘three days ago’

A small number of roots end in /-tn/, such as /tutn/ ‘painful’ and /-ln/, such as /xuln/ ‘add (meat) to pudding’. The final cluster /-dl/, in roots such as /nadl/ ‘earwax’, alternates phonetically between the prenasalised voiced stop followed by a liquid and the corresponding nasal followed by the liquid [naⁿdl ~ nanl].

Intervocally, a somewhat wider range of consonant clusters is permitted. While it can be stated that intramorphemic geminate clusters are prohibited, it is difficult to offer generalisations about the intramorphemic two-member consonant clusters that are permitted intervocally. For example, reduplication of Neve‘ei verbs involves repetition of the initial syllable of the verb stem, resulting in repetition of the entire stem for verbs consisting of one syllable and repetition of the first syllable (and often the initial consonant of the second syllable) for verbs consisting of more than one syllable (§3.4.4.1). Therefore, forms such as those provided in (2.36) look as if they are morphologically complex.

(2.36)	/xumxum gor/	‘fold over’
	/xansxansan/	‘green, blue’

However, there are no attested roots /xum/ or /xansan/ from which these forms could be synchronically derived. While it is assumed that these roots existed at one time but have since been lost, it is difficult to decide on the synchronic status of the resulting consonant clusters /mx/ and /sx/, which are not otherwise attested within morphemes. This results in a situation where historically reduplicated forms contain intervocalic consonant clusters, which are more consistent with intermorphemic clustering patterns (§2.3.3). There are also other examples of intramorphemic consonant clusters, which would appear to have historically involved compounds where a once productive morphological process has not been retained synchronically, as shown in (2.37).

- (2.37) /buŋnitl/ ‘three days ago’
/moxtoro/ ‘old woman’

The form /buŋnitl/ ‘three days ago’ involves the idiosyncratic intervocalic cluster /ŋn/. Although this cannot be derived regularly from existing roots in the language, it bears sufficient similarity in form and meaning to /buŋ/ ‘night’ and /itl/ ‘three’ to suggest that this now unsegmentable form was once morphologically complex according to a pattern that has been lost. A similar example is /moxtoro/ ‘old woman’ containing the idiosyncratic cluster /xt/. This form can be compared with (but not synchronically derived from) /nomomox/ ‘woman’ and /toro/ ‘old’.

Some of the forms that appear to be historically complex contain three-member consonant clusters, which are otherwise prohibited intramorphemically. The examples in (2.38) contain the three-member sequences /nsx/ and /nsb/.

- (2.38) /xansxansan/ ‘green, blue’
/bunsbunsun/ ‘pack down earth’

However, these sequences contain the permissible morpheme-final cluster /-ns/ and the following permissible morpheme-initial consonants /x-/ and /b-/ respectively, suggesting the possibility of a historical morpheme boundary following the /ns/.

What would appear to be the permissible intramorphemic two-member consonant clusters in synchronically (and historically) simple roots are set out in Table 2.4 where the first consonant of the cluster is found on the left-hand side of the table and the second consonant of the cluster is found at the top of the table.

Table 2.4: Intramorphemic consonant clusters

	/t/	/b/	/d/	/g/	/m/	/n/	/v/	/s/	/x/	/l/	/r/	/w/
/t/			+			+			+	+		+
/ʔ/												+
/d/										+	+	
/m/			+									
/n/					+		+	+				+
/ŋ/		+			+					+		+
/v/					+							
/s/		+			+	+						
/x/		+				+						
/h/									+	+		
/l/	+	+	+		+	+	+					
/r/	+	+		+			+	+	+	+		

Examples of forms containing the intramorphemic consonant clusters presented in Table 2.4 are provided in (2.39).

(2.39)	/td/	/metmetdum/	‘black’
	/tn/	/etnaŋ/	‘that there’
	/tx/	/nobotxor/	‘hip’
	/tl/	/matl/	‘thick’
	/tw/	/xutwan/	‘somewhere’
	/ʔw/	/nemeraʔwaŋ/	‘dolphin’
	/dl/	/nedlaŋan/	‘ear’
	/dr/	/dreh/	‘tear’
	/md/	/lirumdah/	‘whale’
	/nm/	/nivinmaliŋ/	‘outrigger poles’
	/nv/	/nivinvoɦ/	‘parrot fish variety’
	/ns/	/vunsar/	‘dislodge’
	/nw/	/nududunwi/	‘dragonfly’
	/ŋb/	/nsaŋnsaŋbon/	‘kneel’
	/ŋm/	/roŋmi/	‘watch out for’
	/ŋl/	/laŋlou/	‘onshore wind’
	/ŋw/	/jaŋwal/	‘want’
	/vm/	/nevm/	‘species of tree’
	/sb/	/tutusbo/	‘draw’
	/sm/	/navusmo/	‘white flying fox’
	/sn/	/nesnen/	‘stomach’
	/xb/	/nubuxbul/	‘juvenile shark’
	/xn/	/nuxnubo/	‘sleep in foetal position’
	/hx/	/nsehxunseh/	‘refuse’
	/hl/	/nib ^w ihlowi/	‘wild cane’
	/lt/	/maltedad/	‘sleep on one’s back’
	/lb/	/nogolbur/	‘sweet banana variety’
	/ld/	/nunsulbulden/	‘tentacle’
	/lm/	/nabulmens/	‘kingfisher’
	/ln/	/xuln/	‘add (variety of meat) to pudding’
	/lv/	/nibilvetevat/	‘dead coral’
	/rt/	/naburtan/	‘gizzard’
	/rb/	/nuburbar/	‘leatherjacket variety’
	/rg/	/mermergot/	‘suffer from vertigo’
	/rv/	/virvav/	‘bear child’
	/rs/	/sursal/	‘on the roadside’
	/rx/	/neteberxai/	‘cracker biscuits’
	/rl/	/nibiterlam/	‘puffer fish with spikes’

2.3.2.3 *Vowel sequences*

A wide range of two-vowel sequences is attested in Neve‘ei. Any two non-like vowels can occur together in sequence within a morpheme with the exception of the vowel sequences shown in the following table:

Table 2.5: Impermissible vowel sequences

*eo, *oe	mid vowels cannot be followed by another mid vowel
*ea	mid front vowel /e/ cannot be followed by /a/
*iu, *eu	front vowels /i/ and /e/ cannot be followed by /u/
*ae, *ao	low vowel /a/ cannot be followed by a mid vowel
*ui	back vowel /u/ cannot be followed by /i/

All other vowel-vowel sequences, with the exception of like vowels, are therefore attested. An optional epenthetic glide allowing for transition from one vowel to another is inserted between a number of vowel-vowel sequences. The glide [j] is optionally inserted between sequences of the high front vowel and a following vowel, /ie/, /ia/ and /io/ as illustrated in (2.40).

(2.40)	/lieh/	[li(j)eh]	‘again’
	/wier/	[wi(j)er]	‘wet’
	/mial/	[mi(j)al]	‘red, brown’
	/bial/	[^m bi(j)al]	‘all over the place’
	/nib ^w iligio/	[ni ^m b ^w ilɪŋgi(j)o]	‘pigeon variety’
	/nsensel biox/	[nsentʃel ^m bi(j)ox]	‘mushy’

The glide [w] is optionally inserted between the sequences of a rounded vowel and a following vowel, /oa/, /ou/, /ue/, /ua/ and /uo/ as illustrated in (2.41).

(2.41)	/loal/	[lo(w)al]	‘north’
	/noaŋ/	[no(w)aŋ]	‘canoe’
	/moul/	[mo(w)ul]	‘bad’
	/ʔout/	[ʔo(w)ut]	‘inland, ashore’
	/lueh/	[lu(w)eh]	‘tired’
	/susuen/	[susu(w)en]	‘hide’
	/nubuah/	[nu ^m bu(w)ah]	‘pig’
	/nanuanu/	[nanu(w)anu]	‘rainbow’
	/nuduov/	[nu ⁿ du(w)ov]	‘whitewood’
	/nuom/	[nu(w)om]	‘fish poison tree’

While an optional epenthetic [w] is inserted in words containing /ou/ within a closed syllable, as in [mo(w)ul] and [ʔo(w)ut], when /ou/ appears in an open syllable, these two vowels are pronounced without an intervening glide, as in [ʔgilou]. Vowel-vowel sequences of non-high vowels followed by high vowels, /ai/, /au/, /ei/, /ou/ and /oi/, are only encountered in open syllables (with the exception of /oi/ which also occurs in closed syllables) and are always pronounced without an intervening glide.

(2.42)	/raʔai/	[raʔai]	‘above’
	/naʔai/	[naʔai]	‘tree’
	/nesaxau/	[nesaxau ~ nesaxau]	‘year’
	/naʔau/	[naʔau]	‘rope, string’
	/nevei/	[nefei ~ nevei]	‘stingray’
	/neveʔei/	[nefeʔei ~ neveʔei]	‘what’ (inter)
	/gelou/	[^h gelou]	‘carry (load) on pole’
	/gilou/	[^h gilou]	‘look, open one’s eyes, wake up’
	/joxoi/	[joxoi ~ joʔoi]	‘that person over there’
	/noxoit/	[noxoit ~ noʔoit]	‘octopus’
	/noxoim/	[noxoim ~ noʔoim]	‘Pacific pigeon’

2.3.3 Intermorphemic possibilities

As indicated in §2.3.2, there are some statements relating to the phonotactics of morphologically complex forms that are distinct from those relating to morphologically simple forms. However, it is possible that some of the intramorphemic consonant clusters between vowels can be explained diachronically as the result of the loss of productivity of certain morphological possibilities. Over morpheme boundaries, there appear to be very few restrictions on clusters of two consonants, and even geminate clusters are encountered intermorphemically.

(2.43)	/at-tox/	‘they all stayed’
	/nu-su-wuswus-si/	‘I didn’t ask’
	/ar-raʔ/	‘they (both) worked (in the garden)’
	/er-roguʔel/	‘we (both) know’
	/it-taŋ/	‘we all cried’

Sequences of /t/ + /s/ over a morpheme boundary are often realised simply as /s/. For example, verbal prefixes which end in /t/ very frequently lose this consonant before a verb root that begins with /s/, (2.44a). Likewise the final /t/ of a verbal prefix is frequently lost before the prefixed element *sV-* of the negative prefix, (2.44b).

(2.44) a.	/at-sido/	[a-si ⁿ do]	‘they remembered’
	/it-sav/	[i-saf] ~ [i-sap]	‘we dance’
	/at-sisi/	[a-sisi]	‘they don’t want’
b.	/at-se-tax-si/	[a-se-tax-si]	‘they didn’t take’

In addition, a wider range of word-final clusters is permitted over a morpheme boundary than is found intramorphemically. Root-final sequences of /-rn/ are not permitted and roots ending in /-ln/, /-sn/ and /-tn/ are seldom attested (§2.3.2.2). Word-final clusters of /-ln/, /-rn/, /-sn/ and /-tn/ are common, however, with directly possessed noun roots ending in /l/, /s/, /t/ and /r/ which carry the construct suffix /-n/ (§3.2.1).

(2.45)	/nuxut-n/	‘base-CONST’
	/nas-n/	‘juice-CONST’
	/netal-n/	‘foot-CONST’
	/noŋor-n/	‘area between mouth and nose-CONST’

2.4 Stress

Stress is predictable in Neve‘ei with the primary stress falling on the penultimate syllable as shown in (2.46) where the last two syllables contain single vowels.

- (2.46) /ˈvenox/ ‘steal’
 /meˈtabux/ ‘morning’
 /ˈmoxot/ ‘torn, ripped’
 /ˈnowi/ ‘water’

In the examples in (2.47), when a word ends in a sequence of $-VV(C)$, the stress falls on the first of the two vowels.

- (2.47) /nesaˈxau/ ‘year, age’
 /naˈʔai/ ‘tree’
 /luˈxei/ ‘go over, step over’
 /noˈxoim/ ‘Pacific pigeon’
 /giˈlou/ ‘look, open one’s eyes, wake up’

When a single syllable suffix is added to a word, the stress moves to the right in order to fall on the penultimate syllable.

- (2.48) /ˈnebat-n/ ‘leg-3SGPOSS’
 /neˈbat-uŋ/ ‘leg-1SGPOSS’

2.5 Morphophonemic alternations

In the following sections, there is a discussion of a variety of alternations that are encountered in a number of different areas of the morphology of Neve‘ei. Since it is more economical to state these as general morphophonemic processes than to independently describe these patterns wherever they are applicable in the morphology chapter, they are described here, with cross-references provided to the relevant morphology sections.

2.5.1 Labiovelar unrounding

All irrealis verbal prefixes, with the exception of the second person singular prefix /kV-/ , contain the labiovelar stop /b^w/ (§3.4.1.1) when the following vowel is realised as a front vowel, /i/ or /e/. With the exception of prefixes carried by verbs whose prefix vowel is realised as /a/ (Table 2.7), when prefixes containing the labiovelar stop /b^w/ appear before verb roots whose initial consonant is a plain labial consonant /v/, /b/ or /m/, there is a shift of /b^w/ to /b/ which is set out formally as:

$$b^w \rightarrow b / -V(C)\# \left\{ \begin{array}{c} v \\ m \\ b \end{array} \right\}$$

This shift also occurs with some, but not all, verb roots in which the second consonant in the verb root is a plain labial. For example, it would seem that the shift is always attested in /be-nsev/ ‘(s)he will cough’ but is never attested in /b^we-sevax/ ‘it will be one’. To illustrate the process described above, the illustrative examples in Table 2.6 include all of

the irrealis prefixes containing the labiovelar stop /b^w/. Prefixes with both of the front vowels /i/ and /e/ are included and for each prefix, verb roots containing initial consonants with plain labials, as well as those which do not have plain labials, have been included.

Table 2.6: Labiovelar unrounding

<i>nVb^wV-</i>	→ <i>nVbV-</i>	1SG.IRR
/neb ^w e-veh/	→ /nebe-veh/	‘I will carry’
/neb ^w e-v ^w elem/		‘I will come’
/nib ^w i-jev/	→ /nibi-jev/	‘I will throw stones’
/nib ^w i-jel/		‘I will sing’
<i>b^wV-</i>	→ <i>bV-</i>	3SG.IRR
/b ^w e-bebal/	→ /be-bebal/	‘(s)he will beat the slitgong’
/b ^w e-v ^w er/		‘(s)he will say’
/b ^w i-minsed/	→ /bi-minsed/	‘(s)he will hiccup’
/b ^w i-nsim ^w i/		‘(s)he will chew’
<i>b^wVr-</i>	→ <i>bVr-</i>	1DL.IRR
/b ^w er-vevena?/	→ /ber-vevena?/	‘we (both) will steal’
/b ^w er-tax/		‘we (both) will take’
/b ^w ir-jav/	→ /bir-jav/	‘we (both) will be slow’
/b ^w ir-jaŋwal/		‘we (both) will like’
<i>ab^wVr-</i>	→ <i>abVr-</i>	2/3DL.IRR
/ab ^w er-seber/	→ /aber-seber/	‘you/they (both) will touch’
/ab ^w er-sesa?wi/		‘you/they (both) will climb’
/ab ^w ir-vi/	→ /abir-vi/	‘you/they (both) will make’
/ab ^w ir-titinih/		‘you/they (both) will play’
<i>b^wit-</i>	→ <i>bit-</i>	1PL.IRR
/b ^w it-vevena?/	→ /bit-vevena?/	‘we (all) will steal’
/b ^w it-leh/		‘we (all) will see’
/b ^w it-jav/	→ /bit-jav/	‘we (all) will be slow’
/b ^w it-jaŋwal/		‘we (all) will like’
<i>ab^wit-</i>	→ <i>abit-</i>	2/3PL.IRR
/ab ^w it-seber/	→ /abit-seber/	‘you/they (all) will touch’
/ab ^w it-sesa?wi/		‘you/they (all) will climb’
/ab ^w it-vi/	→ /abit-vi/	‘you/they (all) will make’
/ab ^w it-titinih/		‘you/they (all) will play’

2.5.2 Vowel harmony

A number of realis and irrealis verbal inflectional prefixes in Neve‘ei exhibit a range of patterns of allomorphic variation, which are dealt with here as instances of a general process of morphophonemic alternation. Prefix vowels that exhibit alternations in their shape are represented with *V* while non-alternating prefix vowels are simply represented as ordinary vowels.

2.5.2.1 Values of *V*

The prefixes that contain alternating and non-alternating vowels are set out in Table 3.8 and Table 3.9 in §3.4.1.1. The second person singular realis prefix, for example, appears invariably as /u-/ and is cited as such. However, the corresponding first person singular prefix alternates in shape between /na-/, /ni-/, /ne-/, /no-/ and /nu-/, and so this pattern of alternation is cited as /n*V*-. Illustrative examples of these two prefixes are set out side by side in (2.49) to show that the second person singular prefix contains a non-alternating vowel while the first person singular prefix contains an alternating vowel. As seen in these examples, the realisation of *V* involves progressive assimilation at a distance of the prefix vowels to the vowel of the first syllable of the verb root.

(2.49)	/u-ŋaŋ/	‘you laugh’	/na-ŋaŋ/	‘I laugh’
	/u-vi/	‘you make’	/ni-vi/	‘I make’
	/u-veh/	‘you carry’	/ne-veh/	‘I carry’
	/u-roŋ/	‘you feel’	/no-roŋ/	‘I feel’
	/u-duruv/	‘you jump down’	/nu-duruv/	‘I jump down’

The following discussion shows that the shape of the initial consonant of the verb root also has some influence on the realisation of *V* in the verbal prefixes. While most of the examples provided below are confined to the realisation of *V* for the first person singular realis prefixes, it should be noted that all of the irrealis singular and dual prefixes contain *V* and are also affected by the processes described here.

With verb stems beginning with the glide /j/, *V* is realised invariably as /i/, irrespective of the nature of the vowel which follows the glide.

(2.50)	/ni-jaŋwal/	‘I like’
	/ni-jel/	‘I sing’
	/ni-joxjox/	‘I vomit’

The realisation of *V* with verb stems beginning with the glide /w/, however, is not as straightforward, in that some prefix vowels harmonise with the glide /w/ and others harmonise with the vowel following the glide. With verb stems beginning with /w/ followed by a non-front vowel, *V* is realised as /u/. It should be noted that the corpus does not contain any examples of verb roots beginning with /wo/ (§2.3.2.1).

(2.51)	/nu-wuswus/	‘I ask’
	/nu-wuv/	‘I blow’
	/nu-wahan/	‘I look for’
	/nu-wam/	‘I fall’

However, when /w/ is followed by a front vowel, *V* is realised by a vowel which harmonises with the vowel of the initial syllable of the root.

- (2.52) /ni-wier/ 'I am wet'
 /ne-wel/ 'I lever up'

With verb stems beginning with consonants rather than glides, the statement of the realisation of prefix vowels is somewhat more complex. When the vowel of the initial syllable of the verb stem is a mid vowel, /e/ or /o/, *V* is realised invariably as a vowel which harmonises with the vowel of that initial syllable.

- (2.53) /ne-dedan/ 'I dive'
 /ne-veh/ 'I carry'
 /ne-v^wer/ 'I say'
 /ne-leh/ 'I see'
 /ne-mesaʔ/ 'I am sick'
 /ne-nsev/ 'I cough'
 /ne-sesawiʔ/ 'I climb'
 /ne-teŋev/ 'I let go'
 /no-bor/ 'I am deaf'
 /no-doŋon/ 'I count'
 /no-moŋ/ 'I am proud'
 /no-nononŋ/ 'I finish'
 /no-roŋ/ 'I feel'
 /no-sox/ 'I spear'
 /no-to/ 'I put'
 /no-toŋov/ 'I grab'

When the vowel of the initial syllable of the verb stem is the low vowel /a/, the realisation of *V* depends on the nature of the initial consonant of the root. For verbs with velar or glottal initial consonants, *V* is realised as /a/ as illustrated in (2.54a), but when the initial consonant of the root is not velar or glottal, *V* is realised as /e/ as illustrated in (2.54b).

- (2.54) a. /na-ʔaʔan/ 'I eat'
 /na-gah/ 'I chase'
 /na-ŋaŋ / 'I laugh'
 /na-xal/ 'I dig'
- b. /ne-dan/ 'I drown'
 /ne-valeh/ 'I row'
 /ne-lax/ 'I hang'
 /ne-matur/ 'I sleep'
 /ne-nsavil/ 'I wash'
 /ne-raʔ/ 'I clear (the garden)'
 /ne-sav/ 'I dance'
 /ne-tax/ 'I take'

When the vowel of the initial syllable is one of the high vowels /i/ or /u/, the realisation of *V* is again rather complex. About half of the attested consonant-initial verbs stems followed by a high vowel /i/ or /u/ are harmonising roots where *V* is realised as /i/ or /u/

respectively, as shown in (2.55a). However, the other half of such verbs are non-harmonising roots where *V* is realised as /a/, as shown in (2.55b).

- (2.55) a. /ni-vi/ 'I make'
 /ni-gilou/ 'I look, I wake up'
 /ni-sian/ 'I am pregnant'
 /ni-titinih/ 'I play'
 /nu-vuruh/ 'I hold'
 /nu-gu/ 'I tie'
 /nu-suli/ 'I burn'
 /nu-tuv/ 'I poke'
- b. /na-vivireh/ **ni-vivireh* 'I call'
 /na-viviroŋ/ **ni-viviroŋ* 'I listen'
 /na-minmin/ **ni-minmin* 'I drink'
 /na-nsinsen/ **ni-nsinsen* 'I push'
 /na-gis/ **ni-gis* 'I squash'
 /na-sido/ **ni-sido* 'I remember'
 /na-vu/ **nu-vu* 'I go'
 /na-vul/ **nu-vul* 'I buy'
 /na-lu/ **nu-lu* 'I shoot'
 /na-bus/ **nu-bus* 'I speak'
 /na-ŋusŋus/ **nu-ŋusŋus* 'I breathe'
 /na-ruv/ **nu-ruv* 'I run away'
 /na-tur/ **nu-tur* 'I stand'

It can be said, therefore, that verb stems with the shape *C(C)i-* and *C(C)u-* are assigned to one of two lexically determined sets. For verbs of the first set, prefix vowels undergo vowel harmony. For verbs of the second set, where the prefix vowel is realised as /a/, some irregular features are exhibited. For example, such prefixes are not affected by the process of labio-velar unrounding (§2.5.1). In addition, the dual realis and irrealis prefixes exhibit a prefix-final /a/ (§3.4.1.1). The realisation of *V* also appears to exhibit some variability within the speech of single individuals as shown in the examples in (2.56) where each prefix was considered equally acceptable.

- (2.56) /ba-tutur ~ bu-tutur/ 'It will leak'
 /ba-lul ~ bu-lul/ 'It will be orange'
 /ba-lulut ~ bu-lulut/ 'It will be yellow'
 /ba-lulum ~ bu-lulum/ 'It will be sweet'

A summary of the various verb stems, the resulting realisation of the vowels in the inflectional prefixes, and the conditioning factors involved is presented in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7: Values of *V*

Prefix vowel	Verb stem	Conditioning factor
<i>i-, a-</i>	<i>C(C)i-</i>	Lexical
<i>u-, a-</i>	<i>C(C)u-</i>	Lexical
<i>i-, u-, e-</i>	<i>wV-</i>	Phonological
<i>i-</i>	<i>jV-</i>	Phonological
<i>e-</i>	<i>C(C)e-</i>	Phonological
<i>o-</i>	<i>C(C)o-</i>	Phonological
<i>a-</i>	Velar or glottal <i>C(C)a-</i>	Phonological
<i>e-</i>	Non-velar or non-glottal <i>C(C)a-</i>	Phonological

2.5.2.2 Values of multiple *V*

As verbs accept more than one order of prefixes (§3.4.1.1) and as some prefixes contain more than one syllable, it is possible for a verb to contain prefixed material with several instances of the underspecified vowel *V*, such as *nVb^wV-jel* ‘I will sing’, *nV-sV-nsim^wi-si* ‘I did not chew’, *nVb^wV-sV-duruv-si* ‘I will not jump down’. In this section, the realisations of such multiple instances of *V* are described.

Assigning vocalic value to sequences of *V* applies from right to left, with the instance of *V* which is furthest to the right deriving its value according to the rules presented in Table 2.7. The instance of *V* to which these rules apply can either be the *V* of a monosyllabic prefix, the final *V* of the disyllabic prefix *nVb^wV*, the *V* of the prefixed element *sV-* of the discontinuous negative simulfix *sV- ... -si* (§3.4.1.2), or the *V* of the prefixed element of the nominalising simulfix *nV- ... -ian* (§3.2.2.2).

When the *V* furthest to the right, that is the *V* closest to the verb stem, is realised as any vowel other than the low vowel /a/ according to the rules presented in Table 2.7, all preceding instances of *V* will harmonise with the particular vowel which has been assigned. Examples of harmonising instances of multiple *V* are presented in Table 2.8 for the verbs listed in (2.57).

- (2.57)
- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| /nsim ^w i/ | ‘chew’ |
| /duruv/ | ‘jump down’ |
| /wier/ | ‘wet’ |
| /wuswus/ | ‘ask’ |
| /wel/ | ‘lever up’ |
| /wahan/ | ‘search’ |
| /jel/ | ‘sing’ |
| /joxjox/ | ‘vomit’ |
| /jaŋwal/ | ‘want’ |
| /dedan/ | ‘dive’ |
| /bor/ | ‘deaf’ |
| /tax/ | ‘take’ |

Table 2.8: Values of multiple *V*: harmonising

Stem	1SG.REALIS	1SG.REALIS.NEG	1SG.IRREALIS	1SG.IRREALIS.NEG
<i>C(C)i-</i>	<i>ni-nsim^wi</i>	<i>ni-si-nsim^wi-si</i>	<i>nib^wi-nsim^wi</i>	<i>nib^wi-si-nsim^wi-si</i>
<i>C(C)u-</i>	<i>nu-duruv</i>	<i>nu-su-duruv-si</i>	<i>nubu-duruv</i>	<i>nubu-su-duruv-si</i>
<i>wV-</i>	<i>ni-wier</i>	<i>ni-si-wier-si</i>	<i>nib^wi-wier</i>	<i>nib^wi-si-wier-si</i>
	<i>nu-wuswus</i>	<i>nu-su-wuswus-si</i>	<i>nubu-wuswus</i>	<i>nubu-su-wuswus-si</i>
	<i>ne-wel</i>	<i>ne-se-wel-si</i>	<i>neb^we-wel</i>	<i>neb^we-se-wel-si</i>
	<i>nu-wahan</i>	<i>nu-su-wahan-si</i>	<i>nubu-wahan</i>	<i>nubu-su-wahan-si</i>
<i>jV-</i>	<i>ni-jel</i>	<i>ni-si-jel-si</i>	<i>nib^wi-jel</i>	<i>nib^wi-si-jel-si</i>
	<i>ni-joxjox</i>	<i>ni-si-joxjox-si</i>	<i>nib^wi-joxjox</i>	<i>nib^wi-si-joxjox-si</i>
	<i>ni-jaywal</i>	<i>ni-si-jaywal-si</i>	<i>nib^wi-jaywal</i>	<i>nib^wi-si-jaywal-si</i>
<i>C(C)e-</i>	<i>ne-dedan</i>	<i>ne-se-dedan-si</i>	<i>neb^we-dedan</i>	<i>neb^we-se-dedan-si</i>
<i>C(C)o-</i>	<i>no-bor</i>	<i>no-so-bor-si</i>	<i>nobo-bor</i>	<i>nobo-so-bor-si</i>
Non-velar or non-glottal <i>C(C)a-</i>	<i>ne-tax</i>	<i>ne-se-tax-si</i>	<i>neb^we-tax</i>	<i>neb^we-se-tax-si</i>

However, when the *V* closest to the verb stem is realised as /a/, according to the rules presented in Table 2.7, all other preceding instances of *V* are realised as /e/. Examples of first person singular realis and irrealis forms for the verbs listed in (2.58) are presented in Table 2.9. It should also be noted that the dual realis and irrealis inflectional prefixes for the first four verbs exhibit a prefix-final /a/ (§3.4.1.1).

- (2.58) /sido/ ‘remember’
 /viviroŋ/ ‘listen’
 /bus/ ‘speak’
 /tur/ ‘stand’
 /ʔaʔan/ ‘eat’
 /ŋaŋ/ ‘laugh’

Table 2.9: Values of multiple *V*: non-harmonising

Stem	1SG.REALIS	1SG.REALIS.NEG	1SG.IRREALIS	1SG.IRREALIS.NEG
<i>C(C)i-</i>	<i>na-sido</i>	<i>ne-sa-sido-si</i>	<i>neba-sido</i>	<i>neb^we-sa-sido-si</i>
	<i>na-viviroŋ</i>	<i>ne-sa-viviroŋ-si</i>	<i>neba-viviroŋ</i>	<i>neb^we-sa-viviroŋ-si</i>
<i>C(C)u-</i>	<i>na-bus</i>	<i>ne-sa-bus-si</i>	<i>neba-bus</i>	<i>neb^we-sa-bus-si</i>
	<i>na-tur</i>	<i>ne-sa-tur-si</i>	<i>neba-tur</i>	<i>neb^we-sa-tur-si</i>
Velar and glottal <i>C(C)a-</i>	<i>na-ʔaʔan</i>	<i>ne-sa-ʔaʔan-si</i>	<i>neba-ʔaʔan</i>	<i>neb^we-sa-ʔaʔan-si</i>
	<i>na-ŋaŋ</i>	<i>ne-sa-ŋaŋ-si</i>	<i>neba-ŋaŋ</i>	<i>neb^we-sa-ŋaŋ-si</i>

2.6 Orthography

Neve‘ei speakers do not have a tradition of printed materials in their language. When they write, most Neve‘ei speakers write either in Bislama or in one of the major languages of education in Vanuatu, predominantly in English but occasionally in French.

However, some people do occasionally write in Neve‘ei for a restricted range of functions, such as the composition of hymns or stringband songs, or the recording of details of family history and land ownership. When people write in Neve‘ei, they tend to adopt ad hoc solutions to the representation of orthographically problematic phonemes, and there appear to be no entirely consistent patterns of local orthographic convention.

For the first version of this grammar (Musgrave 2001), a number of decisions were made for the orthographic representation of Neve‘ei forms for purely practical purposes. After that time, initial vernacular literacy was incorporated into the programme of the private Jehova Nissi School in Vinmavis, as was consistent with government educational policy at that time. Terry Crowley and the Summer Institute of Linguistics team Ken and Saiko Shibusawa agreed to provide advice to the community on the preparation of written materials in Neve‘ei. Following their discussions with members of the local community and the staff of the Jehova Nissi School, a number of decisions were made relating to the orthographic representation of Neve‘ei forms, and these have been applied to this grammar.

The velar nasal /ŋ/ is represented in this study as *ng* and the velar fricative /x/ as *kh* while the glottal stop /ʔ/ is represented as the inverted apostrophe ‘. The glide /j/ is represented as *y*. The labio-velar consonants /b^w/, /m^w/ and /v^w/ are represented as *bw*, *mw* and *vw* respectively. The voiced alveolar flap /ɾ/ is represented as *r* and the velar stop /g/ is represented as *g*. All other phonemes are represented orthographically by the same symbol that appears in the phoneme charts in Table 2.1 and Table 2.2. The particular correspondences between phonemic form and orthographic representation are presented in Table 2.10.

Table 2.10: Orthographic representation

Phonemic form	Orthographic representation	
/ŋusŋus/	<i>ngusngus</i>	‘breathe’
/buxut/	<i>bukhut</i>	‘inside’
/xavan/	<i>khavan</i>	‘friend’
/nibiʔiŋ/	<i>nibi‘ing</i>	‘greensnail’
/joxjox/	<i>yokhyokh</i>	‘vomit’
/neb ^w elegen/	<i>nebwelegen</i>	‘thigh’
/m ^w aʔam/	<i>mwa‘am</i>	‘sit’
/v ^w elem/	<i>vwelem</i>	‘come’
/viviroŋ/	<i>vivirong</i>	‘listen’

While phonemic representations have been used throughout this chapter on phonology, examples in the remainder of the study are represented according to the practical orthography represented in Table 2.10.

3 *Morphology*

This chapter contains four sections, the first and second of which contain a description of the inflectional and derivational morphology of nominals and nominal postmodifiers. The third section contains a description of both cardinal and ordinal numerals while the final section contains a discussion of the inflectional and derivational morphology of verbs.

3.1 Pronouns

3.1.1 *Independent pronouns*

The independent pronouns, which are shown in Table 3.1 below, are a subclass of nominals and constitute a closed set. These forms function as verbal subjects (§4.1.2) and as verbal and prepositional objects. They also appear in reflexive constructions (§6.2) and as adjuncts following directly possessed nouns where they function as pronominal possessors (§3.2.1).

Table 3.1: Independent pronouns

	Singular	Dual	Non-singular
1	<i>no</i>	INCL <i>getdru</i> EXCL <i>gememru</i>	<i>get</i> <i>gemem</i>
2	<i>gu</i>	<i>gemru</i>	<i>gem</i>
3	<i>i</i>	<i>ardru</i>	<i>ar</i>

The independent pronoun forms have been labelled singular, dual⁵ and non-singular, rather than singular, dual and plural because of the semantic distinctions encoded within this pronominal system. The three-way distinction between singular, dual and plural number that is commonly found in Oceanic languages is also found in Neve‘ei verbal prefix subject markers (§3.4.1.1). Neve‘ei pronominal forms, however, usually display a two-way distinction between singular and non-singular where the non-singular forms correspond to both dual and plural verbal subjects.

⁵ The dual independent pronoun forms as shown in Table 3.1 and the dual possessive postmodifier forms as shown in Table 3.2 represent a correction to the incomplete paradigms that appear in the published sketch in Crowley (2002b).

- (3.1) a. *Gemem bwera-vu ran nourour toro.*
 1NONGS.EXCL 1DL.IRR-go GOAL island big
 ‘We (two) will go to the mainland.’
- b. *Gemem bwit-tovu ran nourour toro.*
 1NONGS.EXCL 1PL.IRR-go GOAL island big
 ‘We (all) will go to the mainland.’

While the category of dual is usually expressed by means of the non-singular forms as in (3.2a), the dual forms shown in Table 3.1 are used in contexts involving pragmatic contrast with singular or plural reference and where the two participants act together rather than as two individuals separately as in (3.2b).

- (3.2) a. *Ar ar-vwelem.*
 3NONGS 3DL.REAL-come
 ‘They (two) came.’
- b. *Ardru ar-vwelem.*
 3DL 3DL.REAL-come
 ‘They (two) came together.’

While there are no trial independent pronoun forms such as are commonly found in other Oceanic languages, the numeral modifier *itl* ‘three’ can follow the non-singular pronouns to express a trial meaning.

- (3.3) *Get itl bwit-tovu ran nourour toro.*
 1NONGS.INCL three 1PL.IRR-go GOAL island big
 ‘We three will go to the mainland.’

In the same way pragmatically unmarked duals, that is, not meaning together, can also be marked by the postposed *iru* ‘two’.

- (3.4) *Ar iru ar-vwelem.*
 3NONGS two 3DL.REAL-come
 ‘They (two) came.’

3.1.2 Possessive postmodifiers

The possessive postmodifier forms, shown in Table 3.2, form a distinct word class in Neve‘ei and also constitute a closed set. These forms appear in the data as possessive adjuncts to indirectly possessed nouns (§4.3.1.2). Like the independent pronoun forms these forms have been labelled singular, dual and non-singular where the non-singular forms are widely used for both dual and plural referents. In the context of the narrative in which (3.5) appears, the non-singular form is used for a dual referent.

- (3.5) *Gu ke-takh natitimwen teget bwe-sevakh.*
 2SG 2SG.IRR-take boy 1NONGS.INCL.POSS 3SG.IRR-one
 ‘You will take one of our boys.’

Table 3.2: Possessive postmodifiers

	Singular		Dual	Non-singular
1	<i>tno</i>	INCL	<i>tegetdru</i>	<i>teget</i>
		EXCL	<i>tegememru</i>	<i>tegemem</i>
2	<i>tugu</i>		<i>tegemru</i>	<i>tegem</i>
3	<i>ti</i>		<i>terdru</i>	<i>ter</i>

While not all of these forms can be derived in a regular manner from the independent pronouns (§3.1.1), there are clearly some recurring patterns. The first and third person singular forms are made up of *t-* plus the respective independent pronoun form. The second person singular and the first and second person non-singular forms are made up of *tV-* (where the vowel assimilates in the direction of the following vowel) plus the respective independent pronoun forms. The third person non-singular form *ter* only partially conforms to the recurring patterns outlined above in that the expected form **tar* appears irregularly as *ter*.

The dual possessive postmodifier forms are made up of the corresponding non-singular forms plus *-dru* for the first person inclusive and the third person forms, and *-ru* for the first person exclusive and the second person forms.

3.1.3 Possessive pronouns

There is a separate set of pronominals, referred to as possessive pronouns (§4.1.3), which is also a subclass of nominals constituting a closed set. These forms are used when the possessed noun is not overtly expressed, but can be deduced from the context, corresponding to pronominal forms such as ‘mine’ and ‘yours’ in English. These forms can be derived in a regular manner from the possessive postmodifiers (§3.1.2). Each form is made up of *ti-* plus the respective possessive postmodifier form.

Table 3.3: Possessive pronouns

	Singular		Dual	Non-singular
1	<i>titno</i>	INCL	<i>(ti)tegetdru</i>	<i>(ti)teget</i>
		EXCL	<i>(ti)tegememru</i>	<i>(ti)tegemem</i>
2	<i>(ti)tugu</i>		<i>(ti)tegemru</i>	<i>(ti)tegem</i>
3	<i>titi</i>		<i>titerdru</i>	<i>titer</i>

In Table 3.3 brackets have been used to show that for some of the forms *ti-* is optional. In (3.6a) the full form of *titi* ‘his’ appears whereas in (3.6b) *ti-* has been omitted from *titugu*.

- (3.6) a. *Get tuan ba-khal titi.*
 1NONGS.INCL INDEF 3SG.IRR-dig 3SG.POSS
 ‘Each of us will dig his own.’

- b. *Utnen ke-sa-khal-si tugu ...*
 if 2SG.IRR-NEG1-dig-NEG2 2SG.POSS
 ‘If you don’t dig yours ...’

Forms from this paradigm are occasionally also used in association with possessed nouns as premodifiers with no apparent change of either referential or pragmatic meaning. Compare, therefore, *bubu tno* and *titno bubu* ‘my grandfather’.

3.1.4 Indefinite pronouns

The indefinite pronouns (§4.1.4) are a subclass of nominals constituting a closed set. The examples presented in Table 3.4 appear in the data as verbal subjects and objects.

Table 3.4: Indefinite pronouns

Slow speech	Fast speech	
<i>numuruan</i>	<i>numurwan</i>	‘somebody, someone’
<i>nusutuan</i>	<i>nusutwan</i>	‘something’
<i>nisituan</i>	<i>nisitwan</i>	‘something’
<i>nei mang (mi)</i>		‘who, whoever’
<i>neve‘ei mang (mi)</i>		‘what, whatever’

For each of the first three indefinite pronouns in Table 3.4, a slow speech form has been provided, followed by the corresponding fast speech form. The indefinite pronoun *numurwan* would seem to be morphologically complex, apparently being derived from the roots *numur* ‘person’ and the indefinite article *tuan*. The compounding process here involves the irregular loss of the initial consonant for the slow speech form and also the shift of *u* to *w* in the fast speech form.

The indefinite pronoun *nisitwan* also follows the same compounding pattern, with the root *nisit* ‘thing’ forming a compound with the indefinite postmodifier *tuan*. The form *nusutwan* also appears in the data. While this form would seem to follow the same pattern as the other two compounds just described, it cannot be analysed in the same way in that there is no known root form *nusut*. It is presumed that some sporadic process of assimilation is responsible for the change in the vowels of the root from *nisit* to *nusut*.

While the forms *mang* ‘very much’ and *mi* ‘and’ are recognisable morphemes in Neve‘ei, the indefinite pronoun *nei mang (mi)* ‘who, whoever’ is not readily analysable in terms of its individual parts of *nei* ‘who’, *mang* ‘very much’ and *mi* ‘and’. Likewise, the indefinite pronoun *neve‘ei mang (mi)* ‘what, whatever’ is not readily analysable in terms of the forms *neve‘ei* ‘what’, *mang* ‘very much’ and *mi* ‘and’, so these are treated as fixed phrasal units expressing a single meaning.

3.2 Nouns

As is common for Oceanic languages, most Neve‘ei nouns are invariant in form. The only noun inflection is for direct possession and this involves a relatively small subset of nouns in the language (§3.2.1). Nouns are not inflected for number although number may be specified by various postmodifiers, such as numeral postmodifiers (§4.2.6) and the plural postmodifier, *ar* (§4.2.5). Many nouns begin with *nV-* which is derived from the

Proto Oceanic common article **na*. This article is now an almost inseparable part of the root although it may be removed in some compounds (§3.2.2.1). Unlike the closed subclasses of nominals, such as independent pronouns, possessive pronouns and indefinite pronouns, nouns constitute an open class.

3.2.1 Directly possessed nouns

In this section, the morphology of directly possessed nouns is outlined while a fuller discussion of possessive constructions is presented in §4.3.1. As in many other Oceanic languages, there are two different types of possession in Neve^{ei}: direct and indirect possession (§4.3.1). A singular pronominal possessor of a directly possessed noun is expressed by means of a suffix that is attached directly to the noun itself, in contrast with that of an indirectly possessed noun which is expressed by means of a possessive postmodifier, as shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Direct and indirect possession

Direct possession	Indirect possession
<i>netal-ung</i>	<i>noang tno</i>
leg-1SG	canoe 1SG.POSS
‘my leg’	‘my canoe’

While the majority of the directly possessed nouns found in the data have stems ending in vowels (3.7a), directly possessed noun stems ending in the non-nasal alveolar consonants *t*, *s*, *l* and *r* are also attested (3.7b).

- (3.7) a. *khava-* ‘brother, friend’
na ‘*ansu-* ‘nose, feelers (on lobster or crab)’
nasokho- ‘muscle, flesh, meat, edible part of (fruit, nut)’
ninsibi- ‘finger, toe, claw (of bird, chicken)’
nivini- ‘skin, bark, cover (of book)’
nobologo- ‘bone’
nokhora- ‘root’
nolovu- ‘tooth, tusk’
nuvunse- ‘stalk (of leaf)’
teme- ‘father’
- b. *nagalel-* ‘rib, side (of body)’
nas- ‘juice, water, liquid (of something)’
nemelnibis- ‘spit, saliva, foam, froth’
netal- ‘foot, leg, hind leg (of animal)’
nibis- ‘tail’
nongor- ‘area between mouth and nose’
nubul- ‘hole inside something, hollowed out part of canoe’
nukhut- ‘base, tree of particular species’

Directly possessed noun stems always appear with a suffix. When they have a nominal possessor (§4.3.1.1) and when they are used without reference to a specific possessor, they carry what is referred to as a construct suffix, which is identical in shape to the third person singular pronominal possessor suffix *-n* (Table 3.6).

- (3.8) a. *nebat-n* *nemwat*
 head-CONST snake
 ‘the head of the snake’
- b. *nat-n* *i-matur*
 child-CONST 3SG.REAL-sleep
 ‘the child sleeps’

When directly possessed nouns have a singular pronominal possessor, they carry one of the suffixes shown in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Singular pronominal possessor suffixes

	After consonants	After vowels
1	<i>-ung/-ing</i>	<i>-ng</i>
2	<i>-um/-im</i>	<i>-m</i>
3	<i>-n</i>	<i>-n</i>

The suffixes *-ing/-im* appear after roots ending in *-iC* while the suffixes *-ung/-um* are found after all other roots ending in a consonant. The suffixes *-ng/-m* appear after all roots ending in a vowel.

- (3.9) a. *nemelnibis-ing* ‘my saliva’
nemelnibis-im ‘your saliva’
nemelnibis-n ‘his, her saliva’
- b. *nebat-ung* ‘my head’
nebat-um ‘your head’
nebat-n ‘his, her head’
- c. *nobongo-ng* ‘my mouth’
nobongo-m ‘your mouth’
nobongo-n ‘his, her mouth’

A few nouns exhibit unpredictable alternation in the form of the stem-final vowel, whereby first and second person singular suffixes are preceded by non-front vowels and third person suffixes are preceded by front vowels. The following irregular paradigms are attested.

- (3.10)a. *sna-ng* ‘my mother’
sna-m ‘your mother’
sne-n ‘his/her mother’
- b. *tabu-ng* ‘my grandfather’
tabu-m ‘your grandfather’
tabi-n ‘his/her grandfather’

- (3.12) a. ... *Ø-medang nelabut i-yangan nibis-n.*
 3SG.REAL-how rat 3SG.REAL-get tail-3SG
 ‘... how the rat got its tail.’
- b. *Khava-ng ke-vwelem ke-veh no.*
 brother-1SG 2SG.IRR-come 2SG.IRR-carry 1SG
 ‘Brother, come and carry me.’
- c. *Na ‘aibu-ng marnang nobo-to gu len nemeta-n nelang.*
 grandson-1SG now 1SG.IRR-put 2SG LOC eye-CONST pudding
 ‘Grandson, now I will put you in the middle of the pudding.’
- d. *Ke-takh lowi nebat-n no.*
 2SG.IRR-take away head-CONST 1SG
 ‘Take away my head.’

3.2.2 Noun derivation

Morphologically complex nouns can be formed either by means of compounding or by means of affixation.

3.2.2.1 Compounding

Compound nouns can be derived from a combination of a noun root and either a noun or verbal root. They can consist of a directly suffixed noun followed by another noun, each of which remains intact in the compound. While this construction looks similar to the possessive construction of possessed noun followed by possessor noun (§4.3.1.1), there are some important differences. In the compound construction, the order of the constituent parts cannot be reversed and the individual parts of the compound cannot take postmodifiers. In the possessive construction, on the other hand, both the possessed noun and the possessor noun can be followed by postmodifiers, and in the case of animate nouns the constituent parts can be reversed.

The following examples have been organised into two semantic groups. In (3.13a), each of the compounds expresses a body part. While the meaning of the compound is not always fully predictable from its constituent parts, the second noun expresses a specific part of the body while the initial noun expresses a meaning that is semantically related to the meaning of the compound. In (3.13b) each of the compounds expresses a plant product. The noun that expresses the product precedes the noun that expresses the source of the product.

- (3.13) a. *nansile-n* + *nakhase-n* *nansilen nakhasen*
 ‘hair’ ‘jaw’ ‘beard’
- nelel-n* + *nevera-n* *neleln neveran*
 ‘inside part’ ‘hand’ ‘palm of hand’
- neteba ‘an* + *netal-n* *neteba ‘an netaln*
 ‘belly’ ‘leg’ ‘calf of leg’
- nivini-n* + *nobongo-n* *nivinin nobongon*
 ‘skin’ ‘mouth’ ‘lip’

b.	<i>nas-n</i> 'water'	+	<i>na'ai</i> 'tree'	<i>nasn na'ai</i> 'sap'
	<i>nas-n</i> 'water'	+	<i>nani</i> 'coconut'	<i>nasn nani</i> 'coconut water'

The following set of compounds is structurally different from those just described in that the first noun is not a directly suffixed noun. The superficial similarity to possessive constructions, therefore, no longer holds with the second noun effectively functioning as a nominal modifier. Each of the compounds in the following examples expresses a particular item that belongs to the same general class of items as that expressed by the first noun. The second noun modifies the first noun so as to reveal the sub-class or particular identity of the referent of the compound noun.

(3.14)	<i>niar</i> 'garden'	+	<i>khabat</i> 'European'	<i>niar khabat</i> 'store'
	<i>noang</i> 'canoe'	+	<i>khabat</i> 'European'	<i>noang khabat</i> 'car, vehicle'
	<i>noang</i> 'canoe'	+	<i>netan</i> 'land'	<i>noang netan</i> 'car, vehicle'
	<i>nubuah</i> 'pig'	+	<i>khabat</i> 'European'	<i>nubuah khabat</i> 'cow, cattle'

Compound nouns in Neve'eï can also consist of one phonological word that is derived from two noun roots. For all compounds consisting of one phonological word, the head or more generic term comes first while the modifying noun comes second. The following Neve'eï nouns are frequently attested as the second noun in such compounds.

(3.15)	<i>na'ai</i>	'tree'
	<i>nemwen</i>	'man'
	<i>netah</i>	'sea'
	<i>niakh</i>	'fish'
	<i>nomomokh</i>	'woman'
	<i>nubuah</i>	'pig'

In such compounds, *n(V)-* of the second noun is lost. As explained in Crowley (1985), a number of Oceanic languages exhibit the partly productive loss of *n(V)-*, which originated as a preposed common noun phrase marker of the shape **na*. In the Neve'eï language, when the first noun ends in a consonant, the initial *n-* on the second noun is lost and the two nouns are morphologically linked as a single phonological word, as in (3.16a). When the first noun is a directly suffixed noun and the two nouns are morphologically linked as a single phonological word (3.16b), there are perhaps two possible analyses for the compound noun. It can either be said that the construct suffix *-n* on the end of the first noun is lost or that the initial *n-* on the second noun is lost. When the first noun ends in a vowel, as in the forms listed in (3.16c), the initial *nV-* on the second noun is lost.

(3.16) a.	<i>neba</i> 'turtle'	+	<i>nubuah</i> 'pig'	<i>neba'ubuah</i> 'turtle which lays large eggs'
	<i>niakh</i> 'fish'	+	<i>nubuah</i> 'pig'	<i>niakhubuah</i> 'napoleon fish with large teeth'
	<i>niar</i> 'garden, fence'	+	<i>nubuah</i> 'pig'	<i>niarubuah</i> 'pigpen'
	<i>noang</i> 'island cabbage'	+	<i>netah</i> 'sea'	<i>noangetah</i> 'tree species which grows along the foreshore'
b.	<i>nat-n</i> 'child'	+	<i>niakh</i> 'fish'	<i>natniakh</i> 'juvenile parrotfish'
	<i>nat-n</i> 'child'	+	<i>nomomokh</i> 'woman'	<i>natnomomokh</i> 'girl, unmarried woman'
c.	<i>natiti</i> 'child'	+	<i>nemwen</i> 'man'	<i>natitimwen</i> 'boy'
	<i>nukhubou</i> 'housepost'	+	<i>nemwen</i> 'man'	<i>nukhuboumwen</i> 'tall houseposts holding up roof'

Compound nouns can also consist of a noun root followed by a verbal root where each remains intact in the compound. For each of the compounds in (3.17), the referent of the compound can be described as a sub-class of the item denoted by the noun root while the verb root modifies the noun root in some way.

(3.17)	<i>na'ai</i> 'wood'	+	<i>sesal</i> 'float'	<i>na'ai sesal</i> 'driftwood'
	<i>natiti</i> 'child'	+	<i>nganga</i> 'small'	<i>natiti nganga</i> 'baby'
	<i>nemetali</i> 'door'	+	<i>nganga</i> 'small'	<i>nemetali nganga</i> 'window'
	<i>nevves</i> 'sore'	+	<i>mavis</i> 'white'	<i>nevves mavis</i> 'boil, abscess'
	<i>nisit</i> 'thing'	+	<i>nganga</i> 'small'	<i>nisit nganga</i> 'child'
	<i>niyim</i> 'building'	+	<i>nganga</i> 'small'	<i>niyim nganga</i> 'toilet'
	<i>noto</i> 'chicken'	+	<i>mial</i> 'red, brown'	<i>noto mial</i> 'rooster'
	<i>nowi</i> 'water'	+	<i>mangmang</i> 'crazy'	<i>nowi mangmang</i> 'alcoholic drink'

The compound nouns in (3.18a) and (3.18b) consist of one phonological word that is derived from a noun root and a verbal root. It would seem that this is a less regular and less productive form of compounding than the processes described above. In (3.18a) the initial

component of the compound is the noun root *mamwe* ‘father’ while the second component is a stative verb *lam* ‘big’. In the idiosyncratic compound *mamwilam*, it can be said that the final vowel of the noun root has been lost and the vowel *i*, which is the third person singular realis verbal prefix, links the noun and verbal components into one phonological word. In (3.18b), the initial component of the compound is once again the noun root *mamwe* ‘father’ while the second component is an adjectival verb *nganga* ‘small’, which can behave both attributively and predicatively (§4.2.2). Here the initial consonant and vowel of the verbal root is lost in the compound. Once again, it can be said that the final vowel of the noun root has been lost and the vowel *i* links the noun and verbal components into one phonological word.

- (3.18) a. *mamwe* + *lam* *mamwilam*
 ‘father’ ‘big’ ‘father’s elder brother’
- b. *mamwe* + *nganga*’ *mamwinga*’
 ‘father’ ‘small’ ‘father’s younger brother’

Reduplication of the initial syllable, or of the initial syllable and the initial consonant of the second syllable, occurs in the verbal component (§3.4.4.1) of some Neve‘ei compounds as shown in (3.19).

- (3.19) *na’ai* + *geleh* *na’ai gelgeleh*
 ‘wood’ ‘grasp’ ‘tongs for picking up hot stones’
- na’ai* + *mwa’am* *na’ai mwamwa’am*
 ‘wood’ ‘sit’ ‘stool’
- na’ai* + *takham* *na’ai takhtakham*
 ‘wood’ ‘hook’ ‘hooked stick’
- na’ai* + *valeh* *na’ai valvaleh*
 ‘wood’ ‘row’ ‘oar’

3.2.2.2 Affixation

In addition to the derivational process of noun compounding, morphologically complex nouns can be derived by means of affixation. Nouns can be productively derived from verbs in Neve‘ei by the addition of a simulfix to the verb stem, consisting of the prefix *nV-* and the suffix *-ian*. The precise shape of the vowel in the prefix is determined by the same vowel harmony rules that determine the realisation of the vowel in verbal prefixes (§2.5.2.1). Nouns that are derived from verbs in this way refer to the activity expressed in the verb root or the state expressed in a stative verb root.

- (3.20) *khokhon* *no-khokhon-ian*
 ‘bitter’ ‘bitterness’
- yel* *ni-yel-ian*
 ‘sing’ ‘singing’
- yokhyokh* *ni-yokhyokh-ian*
 ‘vomit’ ‘vomiting’

In some cases a nominalised verb of this type also expresses a concrete instance of the particular activity expressed by the verb root, for example, *nabusian* ‘speech, talk,

message, language' or *nangangian* 'laughter'. In most of the examples above, the semantic relationship between the derived nominal form and the verbal form is one in which the derived form is an abstract noun denoting an action performed or a state experienced. There is also evidence of a non-productive, vestigial pattern of noun derivation, in which just the prefix *nV-* is added to the verb stem. Whereas *ni-yokhyokh-ian* (3.20) denotes the activity 'vomiting', *niyokhyokh* (3.21) denotes the substance 'vomit'.

(3.21)	<i>bar</i>	<i>nebar</i>
	'blind'	'blind person'
	<i>tuturmwitiyil</i>	<i>natuturmwitiyil</i>
	'tell a story'	'story'
	<i>va'al</i>	<i>neva'al</i>
	'fight in battle'	'battle'
	<i>yokhyokh</i>	<i>niyokhyokh</i>
	'vomit'	'vomit'

3.3 Numerals

Numerals are found in the data as nominals, nominal postmodifiers and stative verbs. In the following section, the system of Neve'e numerals is described. While the numerals from one to ten are quite familiar to younger speakers and many of these numerals are also found in narratives, it would seem that younger speakers are not so familiar with higher numerals and use instead forms derived from Bislama.

3.3.1 Cardinal numerals

The Neve'e number system operates as a decimal (base ten) system. Within the set of ten cardinal numerals shown below, however, there are some features that the first five numerals have in common, setting them apart from the second five numerals, which also have some common features.

(3.22)	1	<i>sevakh</i>
	2	<i>iru</i>
	3	<i>itl</i>
	4	<i>ivah</i>
	5	<i>ilim</i>
	6	<i>nsouh</i>
	7	<i>nsuru</i>
	8	<i>nsutl</i>
	9	<i>nsavah</i>
	10	<i>nangavil (sevakh)/vungavil</i>

Each of the numerals from two to five begins with the vowel *i-*, which is also the third person singular realis verbal prefix (§3.4.1.1). Although this verbal prefix has now been reanalysed as part of the numeral, it would seem that numerals may once have functioned fully as stative verbs, and there are still some residual verbal characteristics of numerals where *i-* is separable, as explained in the discussion that follows the cardinal numeral forms.

Each of the numerals from six to nine begins with *nsV-* though this form has no known independent function. In addition to this, there are some features that would suggest that the second set of five is derived from the first set of five. The numerals seven, eight and nine end with *-ru*, *-tl* and *-vah* respectively, which correspond to the historical roots of the numerals two, three and four as described above.

The numeral ten may be expressed as a single morpheme *nangavil*, or as a phrase *nangavil sevakh*, which includes the word for one. The form *nangavil* is used for the numeral ten when counting whereas the form *vungavil* is used as a postmodifier within a nominal phrase, e.g. *noang vungavil* ‘ten canoes’ rather than **noang nangavil*.

Cardinal numerals can also function as head of the nominal phrase, as shown in (3.23) where *sevakh* ‘one’ functions as an object noun phrase.

- (3.23) *Sevakh re-vwer Kensi.*
 one NONSPEC.REAL-say Kensi
 ‘One is called Kensi.’

In addition, there are some vestiges of an earlier system in which the numerals were once stative verbs and although they no longer function as stative verbs in the realis mood, they do still function as verbs in the irrealis mood.

- (3.24) *Gu ke-takh natitimwen teget bwe-sevakh.*
 2SG 2SG.IRR-take boy 1NONGS.INCL.POSS 3SG.IRR-one
 ‘You will take one of our boys.’

Each of the numerals listed in (3.25) carries the third person singular irrealis verbal prefix *bwV-*. The rules that account for the particular realisation of the prefix vowel for each verb root are discussed in §2.5.1.

- (3.25) 1 *bwe-sevakh*
 2 *ba-ru*
 3 *ba-tl*
 4 *be-vah*
 5 *ba-lim*
 6 *bo-nsouh*
 7 *bu-nsuru*
 8 *bu-nsutl*
 9 *be-nsavah*
 10 *ba-vungavil*

The numerals eleven to twenty are expressed as phrasal constructions. As is common in Oceanic languages, where body parts (such as fingers, hands, and toes) are included as part of the expression of higher numerals, Neve‘ei makes use of the word *nedremwen* ‘body’. The underlying meaning of these expressions is ‘ten-(times)-one-body-one’, ‘ten-(times)-one-body-two’ and so on.

- (3.26) 11 *nangavil sevakh nedremwen sevakh*
 12 *nangavil sevakh nedremwen iru*
 13 *nangavil sevakh nedremwen itl*
 14 *nangavil sevakh nedremwen ivah*
 15 *nangavil sevakh nedremwen ilim*

The numerals twenty, thirty, forty, and so on, are also expressed with the number ‘ten’ being followed by ‘two’, ‘three’, ‘four’, and so on, respectively. The underlying meaning of each of these is ‘ten-(times)-two’, ‘ten-(times)-three’ and ‘ten-(times)-four’.

(3.27)	10	<i>nangavil sevakh</i>
	20	<i>nangavil iru</i>
	30	<i>nangavil itl</i>
	40	<i>nangavil ivah</i>
	50	<i>nangavil ilim</i>
	60	<i>nangavil nsouh</i>
	70	<i>nangavil nsuru</i>
	80	<i>nangavil nsutl</i>
	90	<i>nangavil nsavah</i>

The numerals for one hundred and above follow a similar compounding pattern where ‘hundred’ is expressed as *nangat*. The underlying meaning of the following examples is ‘hundred-(times)-one’, ‘hundred-(times)-one-body-one’ and so on.

(3.28)	100	<i>nangat sevakh</i>
	101	<i>nangat sevakh nedremwen sevakh</i>
	102	<i>nangat sevakh nedremwen iru</i>
	103	<i>nangat sevakh nedremwen itl</i>
	104	<i>nangat sevakh nedremwen ivah</i>
	105	<i>nangat sevakh nedremwen ilim</i>
	111	<i>nangat sevakh nangavil sevakh nedremwen sevakh</i>

It is of interest that, unlike most Melanesian languages, Neve‘ei also has separate numerals for ‘a thousand’, *netar*, and ‘a million’, *namul*.

3.3.2 Ordinal numerals

Corresponding to the cardinal numerals is a set of ordinal numerals. The form *vuam* ‘first’ is a suppletive form that bears no relationship to the shape of the cardinal form *sevakh* ‘one’. Whereas the cardinal numerals ‘two’, ‘three’, ‘four’ and ‘five’ all begin with the vowel *i-*, the corresponding ordinal numerals begin with the vowel *a-*. The sequence of sounds immediately following this initial vowel is the same as for the cardinal numerals: *-ru*, *-tl*, *-va* and *-lim*.

The forms *aruan* ‘second’, *avasn* ‘fourth’ and *alimin* ‘fifth’ end with *-(V)n*, which resembles the verbal transitivising suffix (§3.4.4.2). Unlike the cardinal form *ivah* ‘four’, which ends in *h*, the nominal ordinal form *avasn* ‘fourth’ contains *s*. For the ordinal *atl nen* ‘third’, rather than being followed by *-(V)n*, *atl* is followed by *nen*, which is the same shape as the possessive marker (§4.3.1.2) and the relativiser (§4.2.8 and §7.4).

For each of the ordinals higher than ‘fifth’, the form is the same as the cardinal form, followed by *nen*. Each of the ordinal numerals from ‘third’ to ‘tenth’ can also be expressed by the cardinal forms preceded by *nen vwelem*, literally ‘which comes’, which can also be described as a headless relative construction.

- (3.29)
- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1 st | <i>vuam</i> |
| 2 nd | <i>aruan</i> |
| 3 rd | <i>atl nen ~ nen vwelem itl</i> |
| 4 th | <i>avasn ~ nen vwelem ivah</i> |
| 5 th | <i>alimin ~ nen vwelem ilim</i> |
| 6 th | <i>nsouh nen ~ nen vwelem nsouh</i> |
| 7 th | <i>nsuru nen ~ nen vwelem nsuru</i> |
| 8 th | <i>nsutl nen ~ nen vwelem nsutl</i> |
| 9 th | <i>nsavah nen ~ nen vwelem nsavah</i> |
| 10 th | <i>vangavil nen ~ nen vwelem vangavil</i> |

The ordinal forms can function in a number of ways as shown by the following examples. In (3.30a) *vuam* ‘first’ functions as a verb whereas in (3.30b), *nen vuam* ‘the first one’ is used in a headless relative construction. In (3.30c), *aruan* ‘second’ functions as a postmodifier within the noun phrase *niyim nge aruan* ‘the second house’. In (3.30d), *alimin* functions as head of the nominal phrase *alimin nge* ‘the fifth one’. Finally, in (3.30e), *nen vwelem ilim* functions as a headless relative within the nominal phrase *nen vwelem ilim nge* ‘the fifth one’.

- (3.30) a. *I-vuam.*
3SG.REAL-first
‘(S)he is first.’
- b. *I-yavyav sur nen vuam.*
3SG.REAL-follow REL first
‘(S)he was second.’ (lit. ‘(S)he followed the first one.’)
- c. *No-tokh ran niyim nge aruan.*
1SG.REAL-live LOC house DEM second
‘I live at the second house.’
- d. *Alimin nge i-malili i-vu liyim.*
fifth DEM 3SG.REAL-return 3SG.REAL-go home
‘The fifth one returned home.’
- e. *Nen vwelem ilim nge i-malili i-vu liyim.*
fifth DEM 3SG.REAL-return 3SG.REAL-go home
‘The fifth one returned home.’

3.4 Verbs

As is the case for many Oceanic languages of Melanesia, there is some complexity in the morphological structure of Neve‘ei verbs. Neve‘ei verb stems, however, are invariant in shape unlike many central Vanuatu languages, such as Paamese (Crowley 1982:118) and Lewo (Early 1994:151) that display stem-initial consonant alternations relating in part to a distinction between realis and irrealis mood. Malakula languages in general, to the extent that reliable information is as yet available, appear by and large not to exhibit patterns of root-initial mutation, as suggested by the evidence of Big Nambas (Fox 1979:69), Port Sandwich (Charpentier 1979) and Uripiv (McKerras 1989). To date the only Malakula languages that have been attested as having patterns of verb-root mutation are Nāti (Crowley 1998b) and Aulua (Martin Paviour-Smith, pers. comm. to Terry Crowley).

3.4.1 Inflectional morphology

As shown in the following formula and examples, the verb stem is obligatorily accompanied by a subject prefix. The categories of person and number of the subject noun phrase are indexed onto the verb by means of a verbal prefix. There is, however, no such indexing on the verb for the categories of person and number of the object noun phrase. Negation is marked discontinuously by means of a simulfix, the prefixed element of which (negative 1) follows the subject prefix and precedes the verb stem while the suffixed element (negative 2) appears as the final morpheme in the verb.

SUBJECT PREFIX + (NEGATIVE 1) + VERB STEM + (NEGATIVE 2)

- (3.31) a. *Natuturmwitiyilian nge i-nonong im utnang.*
 story DEM 3SG.REAL-finish just there
 ‘The story finishes just there.’
- b. *Ne-leh nusutwan.*
 1SG.REAL-see something
 ‘I saw something.’
- c. *Na'ai nge bo-to noro-n ar.*
 tree DEM 3SG.IRR-grow leaf-CONST PL
 ‘The tree will grow leaves.’
- d. ... *ar-se-leh-si Kensi.*
 3DL.REAL-NEG1-see-NEG2 Kensi
 ‘... they didn’t see Kensi.’

3.4.1.1 Subject/mood

Inflectional prefixes on Neve‘ei verbs are portmanteau morphemes marking the person and the number of the subject as well as the mood of the verb. There are two complete sets of prefixes marking person and number, one set for realis mood as presented in Table 3.8, and another set for irrealis mood as presented in Table 3.9.

Table 3.8: Realis prefixes

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>nV-</i>	INCL EXCL	<i>er-</i>	<i>it-</i>
2	<i>u-</i>		<i>ar-</i>	<i>at-</i>
3	<i>i-/Ø-</i>			

Table 3.9: Irrealis prefixes

	Singular		Dual	Plural
1	<i>nVbwV-</i>	INCL EXCL	<i>bwVr-</i>	<i>bwit-</i>
2	<i>kV-</i>		<i>abwVr-</i>	<i>abwit-</i>
3	<i>bwV-</i>			

All of the irrealis prefixes, with the sole exception of the second person singular prefix *kV-* contain a clearly recognisable element *bwV-* that appears to some extent to be morphologically separable from an accompanying element that closely resembles the corresponding realis prefixes. For example, the first person singular irrealis prefix consists of the first person singular realis prefix *nV-* followed by *bwV-*. The first person dual irrealis prefix consists of *bwV-* followed by the same final consonant found in the first person dual prefix *er-*. Likewise, the first person plural irrealis prefix consists of *bw-* followed by an element that has the same shape as the realis prefix, *it-*. The second and third person dual irrealis prefix contain *bwV-* inserted between the initial vowel *a-* and the final consonant *r-* of its realis prefix counterpart. Likewise, the second and third person plural irrealis prefix contain *bwi-* inserted between the initial vowel *a-* and the final consonant *t-* of its realis prefix counterpart. However, while there are clearly some recurring features, the irrealis prefixes cannot be derived from their realis counterparts in a manner regular enough to warrant further synchronic morphological analysis.

The third person singular realis prefix is optionally realised as \emptyset - in a number of environments. For example, it is frequently attested as \emptyset - in directional core layer serial constructions (§5.2.2) and it is almost always attested as \emptyset - with the verb *medang* (§6.6.1) and the verbs *menene* and *menenang* (§5.2.2). The third person singular prefix is also frequently attested as \emptyset - before *s-* as shown in (3.32).

- (3.32) a. ... *numur bweradang \emptyset -sakh*
 person real 3SG.REAL-is.not
 ‘... not a real person.’
- b. ... *i-tokh \emptyset -se-lakh-lakh-si*
 3SG.REAL-HAB 3SG.REAL-NEG1-RED-hang-NEG2
 ‘... he didn’t use to hang.’

The verbal prefixes that end in *t* frequently lose this consonant before a verb root that begins with *s* as shown in the contrasting pairs of examples in (3.33a) and (3.33b). This also frequently occurs when the prefixed element *sV-* of the negative prefix appears after a plural prefix (3.33c).

- (3.33) a. *it-vveri* *i-sav*
 1PL.REAL-say 1PL.REAL-dance
 ‘We (all) say’ ‘We (all) dance’
- b. *at-vwelem* *a-sisi*
 2/3PL.REAL-come 2/3PL.REAL-not want
 ‘They come’ ‘They don’t want’
- c. *a-se-takh-si*
 2/3PL.REAL-NEG1-take -NEG2
 ‘They did not take (it)’

The realisation of *V-* in the realis and irrealis prefixes shown above is dependent on the nature of the first vowel in the verb stem, involving a process of progressive assimilation at a distance (§2.5.2.1). However, the prefix forms provided in the tables above do not fully account for the shape of the dual realis and irrealis prefixes for verb stems of the shape *C(C)i-* and *C(C)u-* whose prefix vowel is realised as *a-* (Table 2.7). For these verbs, the

dual realis prefixes are *era-* and *ara* (3.34a) while the dual irrealis prefixes are *bwera-* and *abwera-* (3.34b).

- | | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| (3.34) a. | <i>era-vivireh</i>
1DL.REAL-call
'we (both) call' | <i>ara-vivireh</i>
2/3DL.REAL-call
'you/they (both) call' |
| | <i>era-tubu</i>
1DL.REAL-run
'we (both) run' | <i>ara-tubu</i>
2/3DL.REAL-run
'you/they (both) run' |
| b. | <i>bwera-vivireh</i>
1DL.IRR-call
'we (both) will call' | <i>abwera-vivireh</i>
2/3DL.IRR-call
'you/they (both) will call' |
| | <i>bwera-tubu</i>
1DL.IRR-run
'we (both) will run' | <i>abwera-tubu</i>
2/3DL.IRR-run
'you/they (both) will run' |

As shown above and as explained in §2.5.1, prefixes carried by verb stems whose prefix vowel is realised as *a-* (Table 2.7) are not affected by the process of labio-velar unrounding. Therefore, these prefixes always contain labio-velar stops. For verb stems which begin with a velar or glottal *C(C)a-* whose prefix vowel is realised as *a-* (Table 2.7), the dual realis prefixes are *er-* and *ar-* (3.35a) while the irrealis prefixes are *bwer-* and *abwer-* (3.35b).

- | | | |
|-----------|--|---|
| (3.35) a. | <i>er-ngang</i>
1DL.REAL-laugh
'we (both) laugh' | <i>ar-ngang</i>
2/3DL.REAL-laugh
'you/they (both) laugh' |
| b. | <i>bwer-ngang</i>
1DL.IRR-laugh
'we (both) will laugh' | <i>abwer-ngang</i>
2/3DL.IRR-laugh
'you/they (both) will laugh' |

In addition to the inflectional prefixes contained in Table 3.8 and Table 3.9, Neve'e*i* has a prefix that is non-specific for number but which distinguishes between realis (*rV-*) and irrealis (*rVbwV-*) mood. The shape of the non-specific inflectional prefixes is similar to the shape of the first person singular realis and irrealis inflectional prefixes except that the initial consonant for these prefixes is *r-* rather than *n-*. Transitive verbs carrying this prefix are often accompanied by a fronted object and may have no overtly expressed subject, so they can typically be translated as passives in English.

- (3.36) *Nisit nganga' nge ro-so-rogulel-si*
 thing little DEM NONSPEC.REAL-NEG1-ABIL-NEG2
rubu-susuen.
 NONSPEC.IRR-hide
 'The child couldn't be hidden.'

It is of interest that the Big Nambas language of Malakula has an inflectional prefix which is used to indicate a third person non-specific or collective plural number (Fox 1979:66), in addition to three separate inflectional prefixes which indicate third person singular, third person dual (or several), and third person plural, respectively. The following

The distinction between first person inclusive and exclusive, which is commonly found in Oceanic languages, is made in the Neve‘ei non-singular independent pronoun forms, but in the dual verbal prefixes (3.41a) and plural verbal prefixes (3.41b) this distinction is collapsed under a single prefix.

- (3.41) a. *get* *er-vwer*
 1NONGS.INCL 1DL.REAL-say
 ‘we (inclusive) both say’

gemem *er-vwer*
 1NONGS.EXCL 1DL.REAL-say
 ‘we (exclusive) both say’
- b. *get* *it-vwer*
 1NONGS.INCL 1PL.REAL-say
 ‘we (inclusive) all say’

gemem *it-vwer*
 1NONGS.EXCL 1PL.REAL-say
 ‘we (exclusive) all say’

The non-singular independent pronouns also make a distinction between second and third person whereas in the dual and plural verbal prefixes, this distinction is collapsed under a single prefix.

- (3.42) a. *gem* *ar-vwer*
 2NONGS 2/3DL.REAL-say
 ‘you both say’

ar *ar-vwer*
 3NONGS 2/3DL.REAL-say
 ‘they both say’
- b. *gem* *at-vwer*
 2NONGS 2/3PL.REAL-say
 ‘you all say’

ar *at-vwer*
 3NONGS 2/3PL.REAL-say
 ‘they all say’

While the non-specific inflectional prefixes *rV-* and *rVbwV-* occupy the same morphosyntactic slot as other Neve‘ei inflectional prefixes, in that they precede both the negative prefix (if present) and the verb stem, they differ from other inflectional prefixes in a number of ways. As shown below, they cannot be preceded by independent pronoun subjects.

- (3.43) a. **I* *ru-luv.*
 3SG NONSPEC.REAL-plant
- b. **Ar* *ru-luv.*
 3NONGS NONSPEC.REAL-plant.

These prefixes are used when the precise identity of the referent of the subject is not known or is not important. The meaning of the *rV-* prefix, therefore, cannot be expressed in English as ‘he, she’, or ‘they’. Instead, it would be expressed as the indefinite formal pronoun ‘one’ or the indefinite informal form ‘you’ meaning ‘people in general’. As shown in (3.44), a transitive verb that carries this prefix will often need to be expressed in English by means of an agentless passive construction.

- (3.44) *Nebwal ro-tokh ra-min.*
 kava NONSPEC.REAL-HAB NONSPEC.REAL-drink
 ‘Kava is drunk.’

However, this construction should not be treated as a passive construction in Neve‘ei. In (3.44), *nebwal* ‘kava’ is the fronted object of the transitive verb *min* ‘drink’ and this active transitive construction can also be expressed as follows.

- (3.45) *Ro-tokh ra-min nebwal.*
 NONSPEC.REAL-HAB NONSPEC.REAL-drink kava
 ‘People (in general) drink kava.’

Further evidence that such constructions should not be treated as passives in Neve‘ei is provided by the fact that the same inflectional prefixes are also used on clearly intransitive verbs, such as *lelav* [vi] ‘plant yams’.

- (3.46) ... *amweran nen re-lelav*
 time REL NONSPEC.REAL-plant.yam
 ‘... a time when one plants yams’
 (OR: ‘a time when you plant yams’ OR: ‘a time when yams are planted’)

Mood is another category that is morphologically marked on Neve‘ei verbal prefixes, with the two-way distinction between realis and irrealis that is commonly found in Oceanic languages. The realis prefixes indicate that the speaker views the event or state as having some kind of factual or real existence while the irrealis prefixes indicate that the speaker views the event or state as having potential rather than real existence. While the two sets of prefixes do not include any specification for time, the realis prefixes are never used to express future events and states. The irrealis prefixes, on the other hand, are used to express future events and states but can also be used to express past events and states that are viewed as hypothetical rather than real.

Verbs carrying realis prefixes express a range of past, present, and habitual events and states. In the context of the narrative from which (3.47) comes, the events occur in the past, as revealed in the English translation provided here.

- (3.47) *I-teri bakhah i-leh nemeta-n nemwat nge.*
 3SG.REAL-cut clean 3SG.REAL-see eye-CONST snake DEM
 ‘She cut it clean and she saw the eyes of the snake.’

However, the realis prefixes on the verbs in example (3.47) indicate only that the events are viewed as factual or real, and as tense is not marked, in a different context the same sentence could also be translated as ‘she cuts it clean and she looks at the eyes of the snake’ (expressing habitual actions with no specific reference to time) or ‘she is cutting it clean and she is looking at the eyes of the snake’ (expressing actions of limited duration in progress at the time of speaking).

Temporal adverbs (§6.4) can place the actions of verbs with realis prefixes in non-future time. Example (3.48) appears later in the same narrative from which (3.47) comes.

- (3.48) *Itie utnen get it-teri nani it-leh*
 now when 1NONGS.INCL 1PL.REAL-cut coconut 1PL.REAL-see
nemeta-n bitiven nobongo-n.
 eye-CONST with mouth-CONST
 ‘Now when we cut the coconut we see eyes with a mouth.’

In the context of the narrative, the temporal adverb *itie* ‘now’ contrasts with the time of previously reported events (the time the first coconut was cut). Therefore, these realis prefixes are provided with a present tense translation in English. In (3.49), the temporal adverb *tukhoi* ‘long ago’ specifies past time while the realis prefix specifies that the speaker views the event as having actually happened.

- (3.49) *Matoro tuan mi mokhtoro tuan ar-tokh tukhoi.*
 old.man INDEF and old.woman INDEF 3DL.REAL-exist long.ago.
 ‘Long ago, there was an old man and an old woman.’

Verbs carrying irrealis prefixes express a range of conditional, hypothetical, and future events and states. Whereas many Oceanic languages express the singular imperative by \emptyset -inflection on the verb, both the imperative and the prohibitive are expressed in Neve‘ei by means of the second person irrealis prefixes.

- (3.50) a. *Ki-vi. Ki-si-vi-si.*
 2SG.IRR-do 2SG.IRR-NEG1-do-NEG2
 ‘Do it!’ ‘Don’t do it!’
- b. *Abor-tokh drong.*
 2DL.IRR-stay keep.on.doing
 ‘(You both) stay!’
Abor-so-tokh drong-si.
 2DL.IRR-NEG1-stay keep.on.doing-NEG2
 ‘Don’t (you both) stay!’
- c. *Abwit-gah. Abwit-sa-gah-si.*
 2PL.IRR-chase 2PL.IRR-NEG1-chase-NEG2
 ‘(You all) chase it!’ ‘Don’t (you all) chase it!’

In (3.51), irrealis prefixes are used to express future events and states.

- (3.51) *Bwera-vu lieh len niar. Ki-vi nivis tno tuan.*
 1DL.IRR-go again GOAL garden 2SG.IRR-make bow 1SG.POSS INDEF
 ‘We will go to the garden again. You will make my bow.’

Irrealis prefixes are also used to show that the speaker views the events as hypothetical rather than factual. Irrealis prefixes are used throughout an entire stretch of discourse in (3.52) to indicate that the events are not intended as a precise report of what actually took place in the story. At this point of the story, the narrator is providing a hypothetical explanation of how the events, which were previously reported, might have actually taken place.

- (3.52) *Wal utnen nabulmens i bwe-vwelem bwe-vwer*
 because kingfisher 3SG 3SG.IRR-come 3SG.IRR-ACTUAL
ba-suv do ran na'ai tuan bwe-vwer
 3SG.IRR-settle hit LOC tree INDEF 3SG.IRR-ACTUAL
bwi-gilou bwe-dah yang bwe-leh nurukhum
 3SG.IRR-look 3SG.IRR-go.down and 3SG.IRR-see crab
nge tuan.
 DEM INDEF
 'Because the kingfisher would come and actually settle on a tree and
 he would look down and see one of those crabs.'

Irrealis prefixes also express conditional events and states. In (3.53), the irrealis prefix on the modal verb *yangwal* 'want' is used because the speaker views this 'wanting' to be potential rather than real or factual. The irrealis prefix on the main verb *totobatn* 'name' is used because the speaker views 'naming the day' to be a future event which is conditional upon the addressee wanting this to happen.

- (3.53) *Utnen ki-yangwal get bor-tobatn nabung tuan*
 if 2SG.IRR-DESID 1NONSG.INCL 1DL.IRR-name day INDEF
utnen bor-tobatn khutwan.
 when 1DL.IRR-start somewhere
 'If you want we will name a day when we will start somewhere.'

3.4.1.2 Negative marking

Negation is marked discontinuously by means of the simulfix *sV-* ... *-si* 'not' and the simulfix *sV-* ... *-vang(-an)* 'not yet'. As shown in the formula in §3.4.1, the prefixed element of the negative (negative 1) comes directly after the subject prefix and before the verb stem while the suffixed element (negative 2) is always the final morpheme of the verb. In (3.54a) and (3.54b), the negative simulfixes are used with the intransitive verb *mah* 'die'.

- (3.54) a. *Nelabut i-se-mah-si.*
 rat 3SG.REAL-NEG1-die-NEG2
 'The rat didn't die.'
 b. *Nelabut i-se-mah-vang.*
 rat 3SG.REAL-NEG1-die-NEG2
 'The rat hasn't died yet.'

When there are several components to a serial verb construction (§5.1), the prefix belonging to the negative simulfix always follows the subject prefix and precedes the initial stem of the verb while the negative suffix is always the final morpheme in the sequence.

- (3.55) *I-so-rong lueh bweli mang-si.*
 3SG.REAL-NEG1-feel tired too.much very.much
 '(S)he didn't feel really very tired.'

The prefixed element *sV-* is used in both of the negative simulfixes and the particular realisations of *V-* are dependant on a process of vowel harmony (§2.5.2). The suffixed element *-si*, which is used in the simulfix *sV- ... -si* ‘not’, is invariant in shape following both transitive and intransitive verbs. The suffixed element *-vang(-an)*, which is used in the simulfix *sV- ... -vang(-an)* ‘not yet’, has both a transitive and an intransitive form. The suffix *-vang* follows intransitive verbs while the suffix *-vang-an*, which itself can be described as containing the transitive suffix *-Vn* (§3.4.4.2), is found with transitive verbs.

The negative simulfixes are used with the intransitive verb *nonong* ‘finish’ in (3.56a) and (3.56b). In (3.56c) and (3.56d) the negative simulfixes are used with the transitivised equivalent *nonong-on* ‘finish (something)’.

- (3.56) a. *No-so-nonong-si.*
1SG.REAL-NEG1-finish-NEG2
‘I haven’t finished.’
- b. *No-so-nonong-vang.*
1SG.REAL-NEG1-finish-NEG2
‘I haven’t finished yet.’
- c. *No-so-nonong-on-si* *nemagarian tno.*
1SG.REAL-NEG1-finish-TRANS-NEG2 work 1SG.POSS
‘I haven’t finished my work.’
- d. *No-so-nonong-on-vang-an* *nemagarian tno.*
1SG.REAL-NEG1-finish-TRANS-NEG2-TRANS work 1SG.POSS
‘I haven’t finished my work yet.’

3.4.2 Irregular verbs

The verb *vu* ‘go’ exhibits an irregular pattern for all plural realis and irrealis inflectional prefixes. This verb belongs to the group of verbs which have verb stems of the shape *C(C)u-* where the prefix vowel is realised as *a-* (Table 2.7). As discussed in §3.4.1.1, verbs belonging to this group carry dual realis prefixes of the shape *era-* and *ara-* and dual irrealis prefixes of the shape *bwera-* and *abwera-*.

Whereas other verbs belonging to this group carry regular plural realis and irrealis inflectional prefixes as shown in Tables 3.8 and 3.9, the verb *vu* carries what might be described as irregular plural realis prefixes of the shape *ito-* and *ato-*, as well as plural irrealis prefixes of the shape *bwito-* and *abwito-*. However, it would seem that rather than analysing these as irregular prefixes, there is a case for analysing the verb root itself as having the irregular form of *tovu* when used with plural realis and irrealis prefixes on the grounds that a geminate *t* is attested.

- (3.57) *it-tovu* *bwit-tovu*
1PL.REAL-go 1PL.IRR-go
‘we (all) go’ ‘we (all) will go’
- at-tovu* *abwit-tovu*
2/3PL.REAL-go 2/3PL.IRR-go
‘you/they (all) go’ ‘you/they (all) will go’

The verb *wu* ‘take’ is unpredictably irregular in that the realisation of *V-* in the verbal prefixes is *o*, for example, *no-wu* ‘I take’ rather than *u* as would be expected. In addition, the dual irrealis verbal prefix ends in a vowel, for example, *boro-wu* ‘we (both) will take’. The dual irrealis prefix of the verb *wahan* ‘search’ also ends in a vowel, for example, *buru-wahan* ‘we (both) will search’. The verb *wahan* ‘search’ otherwise behaves according to the rules presented in §2.5.2.1. Therefore, the following prefixes, which would normally be expected by the vowel harmony rules discussed in §2.5.2.1, are not attested.

- (3.58) a. **Nu-wu*.
1SG.REAL-take
b. **Bur-wu*.
1DL.IRR-take
c. **Bur-wahan*.
1DL.IRR-search

3.4.3 Completive marker

The completive marker *i* is attested both as a separately stressed free form (3.59) and as a suffix following both intransitive and transitive verb stems as shown in (3.60).

- (3.59) a. *U-min i ti?*
2SG.REAL-drink COMP tea
‘Have you drunk tea?’
b. *I-tus do i natuturmwitiyil?*
3SG.REAL-write hit COMP story
‘Has he already written down the story?’
- (3.60) a. *Ar-dah-i nsan tuan netah.*
3DL.REAL-go.down-COMP side INDEF sea
‘They had already gone down on one side of the sea.’
b. *Noto nge na-lu-i Ø.*
chicken DEM 1SG.REAL-shoot-COMP 3SG
‘As for the chicken, I’ve already shot it.’

The completive marker *i* is similar in shape to the independent pronoun *i*, which is used for all third person singular pronoun subjects and also for third person singular pronoun objects which have an animate noun referent. When the noun referent is inanimate, however, the third person singular object is represented as *-Ø* (§6.2.1). Therefore, it is sometimes necessary to use the context to determine the exact meaning of an utterance, as illustrated by comparing (3.60b) with (3.61).

- (3.61) *Matoro nge na-lu i.*
old.man DEM 1SG.REAL-shoot 3SG
‘As for the old man, I shot him.’

The completive suffix *-i* often follows the nuclear layer aspectual serial verb *mah*, ‘finish doing’. In (3.62), the first member of the serial construction is the transitive verb *vveri* ‘say’.

- (3.62) *Ne-vveri mah-i Ø.*
 1SG.REAL-say finish.doing-COMP 3SG
 ‘I’ve already said it.’

When sentences containing a verb with the completive suffix *-i* are negated, the simulfix *sV- ... -vang(-an)* usually replaces the completive suffix.

- (3.63) *Ne-se-vveri mah-vang-an Ø.*
 1SG.REAL-NEG1-say finish.doing -NEG2-TRANS 3SG
 ‘I haven’t said it yet.’

3.4.4 Derivational morphology

The morphological processes which are involved in the derivation of Neve‘ei verb stems are reduplication and suffixation though some mention is also made here of nuclear layer serialisation.

3.4.4.1 Reduplication

Reduplication is a productive morphological process involved in the derivation of Neve‘ei verb stems. The most commonly encountered semantic functions of reduplication in Neve‘ei are those that express intensity, reciprocity and habitual or progressive aspect. There are also some transitive verbs that have reduplicated intransitive counterparts (§3.4.4.2).

Reduplication in Neve‘ei verbs frequently involves repetition of the initial syllable of the verb stem. This results in the repetition of the entire stem for verbs consisting of one syllable and repetition of the first syllable for verbs consisting of more than one syllable. In (3.64), reduplication of the stem *bans* ‘wander’ expresses habitual or progressive aspect.

- (3.64) *I-bans-bans do.*
 3SG.REAL-RED-wander.about a.little
 ‘(S)he wandered about a bit.’

The negative commands in (3.65) involve reduplication of entire monosyllabic verb stems, each consisting of *CVC*. Reduplication in these examples expresses intensity or prohibition.

- (3.65) a. *Abur-su-khus-khus-si Ø.*
 2DL.IRR-NEG1-RED-kill-NEG2 3SG
 ‘Don’t kill it.’
 b. *Ke-sa-khan-khan-si Ø.*
 2SG.IRR-NEG1-RED-eat-NEG2 3SG
 ‘Don’t eat it.’

The examples in (3.66) involve reduplication of the initial syllable of the verb stems *teri* ‘cut’, *yangwal* ‘like’ and *terer* ‘cluck’. Reduplication in (3.66a) and (3.66b) expresses reciprocity while in (3.66c) it expresses intensity.

- (3.66) a. *Ar ar-te-teri ar.*
 3NONSG 3DL.REAL-RED-cut 3NONSG
 ‘They cut each other.’

- b. *Ar ar-yang-yangwal ar.*
 3NONGS 3DL.REAL-RED-like 3NONGS
 ‘They like each other.’
- c. *Noto nge i-te-terer.*
 chicken DEM 3SG.REAL-RED-cluck
 ‘The chicken (rooster) crowed.’

While reduplication for verbs consisting of more than one syllable often involves the repetition of the first syllable, in a number of reduplicated forms, the initial consonant of the second syllable is also included in the reduplicated segment.

- (3.67) a. *Netah i-vwel-vwelem bukhut.*
 sea 3SG.REAL-RED-come inside
 ‘The sea rushed inside.’
- b. *Neba-khar-khara‘ len netan.*
 1SG.REAL-RED-crawl LOC ground
 ‘I will crawl on the ground.’

3.4.4.2 Transitive suffix

The majority of transitive and intransitive verb meanings in Neve‘ei are expressed by a very productive morphological process in which intransitive verbs become transitive by means of the addition of the transitive suffix *-Vn* to an intransitive verb stem. The transitive suffix has three allomorphs: *-on*, *-an* and *-en* which are illustrated in Table 3.10.

- on* ~ *-en* after verb stems ending in *oC*-
-an ~ *-en* after verb stems ending in *aC*- where the consonant is glottal or velar
-en elsewhere

Table 3.10: Transitive suffixes

Intransitive		Transitive	
<i>nonong</i>	‘finish’	<i>nonong-on</i> ~ <i>nonong-en</i>	‘finish’
<i>vivirong</i>	‘listen’	<i>vivirong-on</i> ~ <i>vivirong-en</i>	‘listen to’
<i>meta‘</i>	‘be afraid’	<i>meta‘-an</i> ~ <i>meta‘-en</i>	‘fear’
<i>ngang</i>	‘laugh’	<i>ngang-an</i> ~ <i>ngang-en</i>	‘laugh at’
<i>wah</i>	‘search’	<i>wah-an</i> ~ <i>wah-en</i>	‘search for’
<i>dedan</i>	‘dive’	<i>dedan-en</i>	‘dive for’
<i>magar</i>	‘work’	<i>magar-en</i>	‘work at’
<i>visvis</i>	‘teach’	<i>visvis-en</i>	‘teach’

The major allomorph of the transitive suffix, *-en*, is the same shape as the oblique preposition *en* (§6.3.1). It is fairly common in Vanuatu languages for an oblique preposition to be used also as a pseudo-transitivising suffix (Crowley 1990:297) or for a phonologically adapted form of the oblique preposition to be used as a clitic or as a transitivising suffix. In Paamese, the oblique preposition *eni* functions as a pseudo-transitivising preposition (Crowley 1982:151), and this has also developed into a genuine derivational suffix with the phonologically reduced shape of *-ni* (Crowley 1982:151–152).

Because the oblique preposition *en* is identical in shape to the transitive suffix *-en*, this form is sometimes ambiguous, posing difficulties for analysis. When such sentences are negated, however, they reveal two different structural patterns. In (3.68) *-en* is attached directly to the serial verb *dem* ‘still do’ preceding the negative suffix *-si*, thus revealing that it is the transitive suffix. In example (3.69), however, *en* follows the negated verb revealing that it is functioning as an oblique preposition.

(3.68) *At-su-suli dem-en-si niar nge.*
 3PL.REAL-NEG1-burn still.do-TRANS-NEG2 garden DEM
 ‘They are not still burning the garden.’

(3.69) *I-si-viviri lowi-si en navir ti.*
 3SG.REAL-NEG1-spit out-NEG2 OBL phlegm 3SG.POSS
 ‘(S)he didn’t spit out her/his phlegm.’

The examples in (3.70) consist of three pairs of sentences in which the first sentence of each pair involves an intransitive verb while the second sentence involves the transitive counterpart.

(3.70) a. *Nelabut i-ngang.*
 rat 3SG.REAL-laugh
 ‘The rat laughed.’

Nelabut i-ngang-an nokhoit.
 rat 3SG.REAL-laugh-TRANS octopus
 ‘The rat laughed at the octopus.’

b. *Natuturmwitiyilian nge i-nonong im utnang.*
 story DEM 3SG.REAL-finish just there
 ‘The story finishes just there.’

... utnen ar-vwer abor-nonong-on nge.
 place.where 3DL.REAL-INTENT 3DL.IRR-finish-TRANS PRO
 ‘... the place where they planned to finish it.’

c. *Abwit-yel.*
 2PL.IRR-sing
 ‘(You all) sing!’

Abwit-yel-en nubu nge.
 2PL.IRR-sing-TRANS song DEM
 ‘(You all) sing the song!’

In a small number of cases, Neve‘ei transitive and intransitive verb meanings are expressed by forms which differ unpredictably from each other in shape, as shown by the verbs presented in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11: Transitive and intransitive verb forms

	Intransitive	Transitive
‘eat’	<i>a’an</i>	<i>khan</i>
‘steal’	<i>vevena’</i>	<i>venokh</i>
‘burn’	<i>lililmin</i>	<i>vang do</i>

In (3.71), the intransitive verb *a'an* 'eat' and the transitive verb *khan* 'eat' are both attested.

- (3.71) *Utnen ko-rong ka- 'a'an ke-sa-khan-khan-si*
 when 2SG.IRR-feel 2SG.IRR-eat 2SG.IRR-NEG1-RED-eat-NEG2
nasokho-n nakhankhan nge.
 flesh-CONST pawpaw DEM
 'When you feel hungry, don't eat the flesh of the pawpaw.'

In a similarly small number of cases, intransitive equivalents to transitive verbs are expressed by means of reduplication (§3.4.4.1), as shown in Table 3.12.

Table 3.12: Reduplicated intransitive verbs

	Transitive	Intransitive
'turn around'	<i>vilih</i>	<i>vil-vilih</i>
'buy'	<i>vul</i>	<i>vul-vul</i>
'drink'	<i>min</i>	<i>min-min</i>
'copulate (with)'	<i>'av</i>	<i>'av-'av</i>

The intransitive verb *min-min* 'drink' and the transitive verb *min* 'drink' are attested in (3.72).

- (3.72) a. *Ke-sa-min-min-si.*
 2SG.IRR-NEG1-RED-drink-NEG2
 'Don't drink.'
- b. *Ke-sa-min-si nowi nge.*
 2SG.IRR-NEG1-drink-NEG2 water DEM
 'Don't drink the water.'

3.4.4.3 Compounds

A small number of Neve'ei compound verbs is derived from a combination of a verbal root followed by a noun root. The verbal element of these compounds consists of a reduplicated verb and the noun element consists of the noun root without *nV-*, which has its origin in the Proto Oceanic common phrase marker **na* (§3.2). Examples of such compounds are provided in Table 3.13 below, together with their verbal root and noun root.

Table 3.13: Verbal compounds

Verbal root	Noun root	Compound
<i>khal</i> 'dig'	<i>nebat</i> 'vine species'	<i>khalkhalbat</i> 'dig up <i>nebat</i> vine'
<i>lu</i> 'shoot'	<i>niakh</i> 'fish'	<i>luluiakh</i> 'shoot fish'
<i>lu</i> 'shoot'	<i>nimin</i> 'bird'	<i>lulumin</i> 'shoot birds'
<i>matur</i> 'sleep'	<i>nebari</i> 'dream'	<i>matmaturbarien</i> 'dream about'

3.4.4.4 *Verb-verb sequences*

As is common for Oceanic languages, two or more verb stems can combine in Neve‘ei to express a single event by the process referred to in this study as nuclear layer serialisation. While this process is given more detailed discussion in §5.1, examples of nuclear layer serial verb constructions with two, three and four components are provided below. The verb stem *lu* ‘shoot’ is followed by the form *do* ‘hit’ in (3.73a). In (3.73b), the verb stem *takhtakh* ‘fish’ is followed by *drong* ‘keep on doing’ and *sur* ‘keep doing’. Finally, the verb stem *rong* ‘feel’ is followed by the forms *lueh* ‘tired’, *bweli* ‘too much’ and *mang* ‘very much’ in (3.73c). There are no attested examples with more than four stems.

- (3.73) a. *I-lu do nubuah.*
 3SG.REAL-shoot hit pig
 ‘(S)he hit the pig by shooting it.’
- b. *I-takhtakh drong sur.*
 3SG.REAL-fish keep.on.doing keep.doing
 ‘He kept on fishing.’
- c. *I-rong lueh bweli mang.*
 3SG.REAL-feel tired too.much very.much
 ‘He felt really very tired.’

4 *The nominal phrase*

Nominal phrases in Neve‘ei belong to one of two types: simple nominal phrases, consisting of a single head followed by optional postmodifiers, or complex nominal phrases, consisting of two or more noun phrases with optional postmodifiers. This chapter contains three sections. The first section provides a description of the behaviour of the various subclasses of nominals when occupying the position of head of a simple nominal phrase, the second section provides a description of the various postmodifiers which follow the head of a simple nominal phrase, and the final section provides a description of the behaviour of complex nominal phrases.

4.1 Nominal phrase heads

The position of the head of a simple nominal phrase is the only obligatorily filled slot in the phrase. The head can be filled by any member of the class of nominals as well as by members of other word classes which also have the ability to function as nominals, such as determiners, numerals, quantifiers and headless relatives (§4.1.5).

Nominals constitute a distinct word class in Neve‘ei and are defined by the fact that they can fill any of the following syntactic positions: verbal subjects with the person and number categories of the subject indexed onto the verb by means of a verbal prefix; verbal and prepositional objects; subjects and predicates in non-verbal sentences; possessors in possessive constructions and heads of nominal phrases with optional adjuncts. The four subclasses of nominals to be discussed here are nouns, independent pronouns, possessive pronouns and indefinite pronouns. There is also some discussion of other word classes with members that sometimes function as nominals.

While the second section of this chapter focuses on nominal postmodifiers, the constituent order of postmodifiers within the simple nominal phrase is summarised in this section in order to show clearly which postmodifiers are usually associated with each type of nominal head. In Neve‘ei, there is a certain amount of flexibility in the order of postmodifiers as each modifies the nominal head only and not any of the other postmodifiers. The most frequently encountered constituent order is given in the following formula.

NOMINAL + (ADJECTIVE) + (POSSESSIVE POSTMODIFIER) + (DETERMINER) +
(PLURAL POSTMODIFIER) + (NUMERAL) + (QUANTIFIER) + (RELATIVE CLAUSE)

4.1.1 Nouns

The nominal phrase in (4.1a) consists of a single unmodified noun head functioning as a verbal subject with the third person singular category of the subject indexed onto the verb by means of a verbal prefix. In (4.1b), two noun phrases, joined by the conjunction *mi* ‘and’, function as verbal subject with cross-reference on the verb for person and number.

- (4.1) a. *Netah i-vwel-vwelem bukhut.*
 sea 3SG.REAL-RED-come inside
 ‘The sea rushed inside.’
- b. *Matoro nge mi na‘aibi-n ar-tokh len*
 old.man DEM and grandson-3SG 3DL.REAL-live LOC
niyim ter.
 house 3NONGS.POSS
 ‘The old man and his grandson lived in their house.’

When a noun occupies the position of nominal phrase head, any of the postmodifiers listed in the formula in the introduction to §4.1 can follow the noun head. However, as might be expected, there are no examples of simple nominal phrases containing a member from every one of the seven possible postmodifier slots. Anything from one to four postmodifiers would seem to be the usual number.

- (4.2) a. *Gemem bwera-vu ran nourour toro.*
 1NONGS.EXCL 1DL.IRR-go GOAL island big
 ‘We will go to the mainland.’
- b. *Nemwen ar ingat at-tovu ‘out.*
 man PL many 3PL.REAL-go ashore
 ‘Many men went ashore.’
- c. *Abit-vi na‘anian toro nenang ar.*
 3PL.IRR-make food big DEM PL
 ‘They will prepare those big feasts.’
- d. *Libakh toro nsouh nen ne-leh ...*
 dog old six REL 1SG.REAL-see
 ‘The six old dogs which I saw ...’
- e. *Libakh toro ti ar nsouh ...*
 dog old 3SG.POSS PL six
 ‘His six big dogs ...’

4.1.2 Independent pronouns

The nominal phrase in (4.3) consists of a single unmodified independent pronoun (§3.1.1) head functioning as a verbal subject with the second person dual category of the subject indexed onto the verb by means of a verbal prefix (§3.4.1.1).

- (4.3) *Gem abor-tokh drong.*
 2NONGS 2DL.IRR-stay keep.on.doing
 ‘You (both) will stay behind.’

When an independent pronoun occupies the position of nominal phrase head, the postmodifiers attested are the indefinite postmodifier, numerals, quantifiers and relative clauses as shown by the following formula.

INDEPENDENT PRONOUN + (INDEFINITE POSTMODIFIER) + (NUMERAL)
+ (QUANTIFIER) + (RELATIVE CLAUSE)

In (4.4a), the indefinite postmodifier *tuan* follows the independent pronoun *get* ‘we’. This particular construction (§6.2.2) is unusual in that the third person singular marking on the verbal prefix agrees with *tuan* rather than *get*. The numeral *itl* follows the independent pronoun *get* in (4.4b). The person and number marking on the verbal prefix agrees with the person and number of the independent pronoun *get*. The quantifier *ingat* follows the independent pronoun *ar* in (4.4c) and in (4.4d) a relative clause follows the independent pronoun *get*. The person and number marking on the verbal prefix agrees with the person and number of the independent pronoun.

- (4.4) a. *Get tuan ba-khal titi.*
1NONGS.INCL INDEF 3SG.IRR-dig 3SG.POSS
‘One of us will dig his own.’
- b. *Get itl bwit-tovu ran nourour toro.*
1NONGS.INCL three 1PL.IRR-go GOAL island big
‘We three will go to the mainland.’
- c. *Ar ingat abwit-tokh.*
3NONGS many 3PL.IRR-stay
‘Many of them would stay.’
- d. *Get nen ... it-‘a‘au.*
1NONGS.INCL REL 1PL.REAL-be.parent
‘We who are parents.’

4.1.3 Possessive pronouns

The nominal phrase in (4.5) consists of a single unmodified possessive pronoun (§3.1.3) head functioning as a verbal object.

- (4.5) *I-so-rogulel-si ba-khal lowi titi.*
3SG.REAL-NEG1-ABIL-NEG2 3SG.IRR-dig out 3SG.POSS
‘He couldn’t dig out his.’

When a possessive pronoun occupies the position of nominal phrase head, the only postmodifiers attested are determiners and the plural postmodifier as shown in the following formula.

POSSESSIVE PRONOUN + (DETERMINER) + (PLURAL POSTMODIFIER)

In the examples in (4.6), the possessive pronouns (*ti*)*tugu* and *titer* (§3.1.3) are followed by the determiner *nge* and the plural postmodifier *ar* respectively.

- (4.6) a. *Utnen gu u-sa-khal-si tugu nge...*
if 2SG 2SG.REAL-NEG1-dig-NEG2 2NONGS.POSS DEM
‘If you don’t dig yours ...’

- b. *Yokhoi at-khal titer ar.*
 that.person 3PL.REAL-dig 3NONGS.POSS PL
 ‘Those guys dug theirs.’

4.1.4 Indefinite pronouns

The nominal phrase in (4.7) consists of a single unmodified indefinite pronoun head, *nusutwan* ‘something’, functioning as a verbal object.

- (4.7) *Nisit nganga i-leh nusutwan.*
 thing little 3SG.REAL-see something
 ‘The child saw something.’

When the indefinite pronouns *nusutwan* and *numurwan* (§3.1.4) occupy the position of nominal phrase head, the only postmodifiers attested are possessive postmodifiers, determiners and the plural postmodifier as shown in the following formula. No postmodifiers are attested with the indefinite pronouns *nei mang (mi)* and *neve’ei mang (mi)*.

INDEFINITE PRONOUN+ (POSSESSIVE POSTMODIFIER) + (DETERMINER) + (PLURAL
 POSTMODIFIER)

The indefinite pronoun *nusutwan* is followed by the possessive postmodifier *ter* and the plural postmodifier *ar* in (4.8a) and by the determiner *nge* in (4.8b).

- (4.8) a. *Ara-vu ar-takh nusutwan ter ar.*
 3DL.REAL-go 3DL.REAL-take something 3NONGS.POSS PL
 ‘They went and they took their things’
- b. ... *ti nusutwan nge be-mera’.*
 and something DEM 3SG.IRR-fly away
 ‘... and something will fly away.’

4.1.5 Other nominals

Some members of word classes that normally occur as postmodifiers within a nominal phrase can also occur as head of the nominal phrase. These include determiners and numerals. The proximate demonstrative *nene* stands as head of a nominal phrase functioning as a verbal subject in (4.9a). In (4.9b), the cardinal numeral *sevakh* stands as head of a nominal phrase functioning as a verbal object in a construction involving the non-specific verbal prefix *rV-* (§3.4.1.1) while the ordinal numeral *alimin* stands as head of a nominal phrase functioning as a verbal subject in (4.9c).

- (4.9) a. *Ni-yangwal nebwe-vwer-vwer sur natuturmwitiyil tuan.*
 1SG.REAL-DESID 1SG.IRR-RED-talk about story INDEF
- Nene i-vwer-vwer bisah Ø-medang nani*
 DEM 3SG.REAL-RED-say clear 3SG.REAL-how coconut
- i-vwelem sakhān get.*
 3SG.REAL-come GOAL 1NONGS.INCL
 ‘I want to tell a story. This one explains how the coconut came to us.’

- b. *Sevakh re-vwer Kensi.*
 one NONSPEC.REAL-say Kensi
 ‘One is called Kensi.’
- c. *Alimin nge i-malili i-vu liyim.*
 fifth DEM 3SG.REAL-return 3SG.REAL-thither home
 ‘The fifth one returned home.’

4.2 Nominal phrase postmodifiers

In this section, each of the postmodifiers that occur within the simple nominal phrase is described in turn. This discussion also focuses on the semantic relationship between the postmodifier and the nominal phrase head.

4.2.1 Adjectives

In Neve‘ei, as in many other Oceanic languages, distinguishing properties ascribed to noun referents are mostly expressed by stative verbs. However, there is a small class of adjectives which is distinguished by the fact that its members immediately follow the head of the nominal phrase without any further marking and without being used predicatively. While the adjectives in (4.10) may not be an exhaustive listing, it would seem likely that adjectives do, in fact, constitute a closed set.

- (4.10) *bereber* ‘long, tall, deep’
bweradang ‘real, true, (of hand) right’
metmetdum ‘black’
mwiwir ‘(of hand) left’
tokhtokh ‘big, large’
toro ‘big, large’

As adjectives can be used only attributively, in order to express an equivalent meaning predicatively, a formally distinct adjectival verb or stative verb must be used. The differences in the syntactic behaviour of adjectives, adjectival verbs and stative verbs are set out in Table 4.1. Examples showing the syntactic behaviour of adjectives and stative verbs are provided in this section while examples showing the syntactic behaviour of adjectival verbs are provided in §4.2.2.

Table 4.1: Adjectives, adjectival verbs and stative verbs

Adjectives	Adjectival verbs	Stative verbs
attributive	attributive	–
–	predicative	predicative

Sometimes the adjectival verb or the stative verb is formally similar to the adjective, and sometimes it is quite different. For example, the adjective *bereber* ‘long’ is similar in shape to the stative verb *ber* ‘long’ and the adjective *metmetdum* ‘black’ is similar in shape to the adjectival verb *metemet* ‘black’. However, the adjective *toro* ‘big’ is quite different in shape from the stative verb *lam* ‘big’.

In (4.11a), the adjective *toro* ‘big’, which can be used only attributively, follows the head of the nominal phrase *libakh* ‘dog’. In order to express the same meaning predicatively, the stative verb *lam* ‘big’ can be used (4.11b).

- (4.11) a. *Libakh toro nge i-vu liyim.*
 dog big DEM 3SG.REAL-go home
 ‘The big dog went home.’
- b. *Libakh nge i-lam.*
 dog DEM 3SG.REAL-big
 ‘The dog is big.’

As adjectives cannot be used predicatively and stative verbs cannot be used attributively, note the ungrammaticality of (4.12a) and (4.12b) when used to express the meanings of the examples in (4.11). However, because the form *toro* also functions as the stative verb ‘old’, (4.12c) is grammatically correct when expressing the meaning ‘the dog is old’.

- (4.12) a. **Libakh nge i-toro.*
 dog DEM 3SG.REAL-big
- b. **Libakh lam nge i-vu liyim.*
 dog big DEM 3SG.REAL-go home
- c. *Libakh nge i-toro.*
 dog DEM 3SG.REAL-old
 ‘The dog is old.’

Whereas verbs are negated by means of a verbal simulfix (§3.4.1.2), adjectives are negated by means of the verb *sakh* ‘not exist’ which is expressed in (4.13) with an optional third person singular singular prefix (*i-*) (§3.4.1.1).

- (4.13) *Nsan bweradang (i-)sakh.*
 side right-hand 3SG.REAL-is.not
 ‘It’s not the right-hand side.’

As illustrated in (4.14) adjectives can also be followed by the intensifiers *ba‘at* and *mang*, which are also attested within nuclear serial verb constructions (§5.1.2.3).

- (4.14) *Libakh toro ba‘at mang ...*
 dog big very very.much
 ‘The really very big dog ...’

4.2.2 Adjectival verbs

A separate class of adjectival verbs is distinguished by the fact that its members can behave both like the class of adjectives described above as well as like stative verbs. The adjectival verbs listed in (4.15) can be used both attributively as postmodifiers within the nominal phrase as well as predicatively like stative verbs. Based on the number of examples found in the data, it is thought that adjectival verbs constitute an open set.

(4.15)	<i>khanskhansan</i>	‘green, blue’
	<i>lul</i>	‘orange, brown’
	<i>lulut</i>	‘yellow’
	<i>ma‘abukh</i>	‘short’
	<i>mavis</i>	‘white’
	<i>melela‘adi</i>	‘cold’
	<i>mesemah</i>	‘dry’
	<i>metemet</i>	‘black’
	<i>mial</i>	‘red, brown’
	<i>moul</i>	‘bad’
	<i>muluwul</i>	‘round’
	<i>nganga‘</i>	‘small, little’
	<i>revakh</i>	‘good’
	<i>tutn</i>	‘hot, painful, sore’

In (4.16a), *nganga‘* ‘small’ is used attributively and functions as a postmodifier to the nominal phrase head *libakh* ‘dog’. In (4.16b) *nganga‘* ‘small’ is used predicatively and carries a third person singular verbal prefix to mark the person and number of the nominal phrase head *libakh* ‘dog’ which functions as the verbal subject.

- (4.16) a. *Libakh nganga‘ nge i-vu liyim.*
 dog small DEM 3SG.REAL-go home
 ‘The small dog went home.’
- b. *Libakh nge i-nganga‘. I-vu liyim.*
 dog DEM 3SG.REAL-small 3SG.REAL-go home
 ‘The dog is small. It went home.’

4.2.3 Possessive postmodifiers

The possessive postmodifier forms (§3.1.2) are used with indirectly possessed nouns (§4.3.1.2), that is, those that do not accept possessive suffixes.

- (4.17) a. *Ar ar-vwer abor-tobatn natubuian ter.*
 3NONGSG 3DL.REAL-INTENT 3DL.IRR-start race 3NONGSG.POSS
 ‘They planned to start their race.’
- b. *I-leh yokhoi nang ti i-vanili mang.*
 3SG.REAL-see that.person mother SG.POSS 3SG.REAL-different very.much
 ‘He saw that person’s mother was very different.’

4.2.4 Determiners

This word class comprises five members: the proximate demonstrative *nene*, the intermediate demonstrative *nenang*, the distant demonstrative *nenokhoi*, the anaphoric demonstrative *nge*, and the indefinite postmodifier *tuan*. The determiners are postposed to the nominal phrase head and fill the postmodifier slot that immediately follows any adjectival and possessive postmodifiers.

Each member of the word class of determiners marks the noun with some kind of reference in relation to the speaker and/or the addressee. In Neve‘ei, nouns with indefinite reference are marked by the indefinite postmodifier *tuan* while nouns with definite reference are either unmarked or marked by a demonstrative. As many Neve‘ei nouns begin with *nV-*, which is derived from the Proto Oceanic common article **na*, it would seem likely that at some earlier stage of the language definite reference was marked by a common article which has now become attached to the noun forming an inseparable part of the noun root itself. The demonstratives are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Demonstratives

Proximate	Intermediate	Distant	Anaphoric
<i>nene</i>	<i>nenang</i>	<i>nenokhoi</i>	<i>nge</i>
‘this’	‘that’	‘that’	‘the’
(near in space and time)	(middle distance in space and time)	(far away in space and time)	(mentioned previously)

As is common in Oceanic languages (Lynch 1998:114), Neve‘ei reveals a three-way spatial and temporal distinction in demonstratives. In addition to these, Neve‘ei has an anaphoric demonstrative that marks nouns as having been mentioned previously. Each of the three forms *nene*, *nenang* and *nenokhoi* has the same initial element. In addition to this, the final element of each of these three forms is identical to the final element of other locational forms which also have a three-way distinction, for example, *utne*, ‘in this place, here,’ *utnang* ‘in that place, there,’ and *utnokhoi*, ‘in that place over there’ (§6.4.1).

The demonstratives are used to locate nouns in space or time. In (4.18a) the demonstrative *nene* indicates that the child is physically close to the speaker. It would seem that the intermediate form *nenang* is most commonly used to indicate a temporal orientation as shown in (4.18b).

- (4.18) a. *Ne-leh do nisit nganga‘ nene len nukhut-n*
 1SG.REAL-see hit thing little DEM LOC clump-CONST
nubu utnokhoi.
 bamboo over.there
 ‘I found this child in the clump of bamboo over there.’
- b. *Nemwen nenang utnen i-lam ... i-veh ... bubu*
 male DEM when 3SG.REAL-big 3SG.REAL-beget ancestor
tegem ar.
 2NONGS.POSS PL
 ‘That boy when he grew big, he begat children ... your ancestors.’

The demonstrative *nge* can be described as an anaphoric demonstrative in that it is used once the referent of the nominal phrase has already been introduced. The anaphoric demonstrative *nge* is identical in form to the pronominal trace that marks the original site of the coreferential noun phrase in relative clauses (§4.2.8).

In (4.19) the head of the noun phrase, *nourour* ‘island’ has indefinite reference the first time it is mentioned and is therefore marked with the indefinite postmodifier *tuan*. The next time it is mentioned, however, it is marked with *nge* indicating that it now has definite

reference and that the identity of the referent can be located by referring backwards in the discourse to the time it was previously mentioned.

- (4.19) *At-tokh ran nourour nganga' tuan. Nourour*
 3PL.REAL-exist LOC island little INDEF island
nganga' nge i-tokh do ...
 little DEM 3SG.REAL-stay hit
 'They lived on an islet. The islet is located ...'

A nominal phrase marked by *nge* can follow any nominal phrase which has been mentioned previously, not just those marked by *tuan*. In (4.20), *natuturmwitiyilian* 'story' is modified by a relative clause in the first sentence and then by *nge* the next time it is mentioned.

- (4.20) *Natuturmwitiyilian nen ne-vwer nebwe-vveri lieh*
 story REL 1SG.REAL-INTENT 1SG.IRR-tell again
natuturmwitiyilian nge ...
 story DEM
 'The story, which I want to tell again, the story ...'

The behaviour of the anaphoric demonstrative *nge* differs from that of the other four determiners in that, whereas the others occur in the data as both nominal postmodifiers and as nominal phrase heads (§4.1.5), *nge* only ever occurs as a postmodifier.

As mentioned previously, nouns with indefinite reference in Neve'ei are marked with the indefinite postmodifier *tuan*. The nominal phrase in (4.21a) consists of a single unmodified noun *nani* 'coconut'. In the context of this sentence, *nani* is viewed as a known fruit that can be identified by the reader or hearer. In (4.21b), however, *nani* is viewed as having indefinite reference, marked by *tuan*, in that the particular identity of the coconut is not known to the reader or hearer, either because it hasn't been mentioned or encountered previously or because its particular identity is unimportant.

- (4.21) a. *I-vwer-vwer bisah Ø-medang nani i-vwelem*
 3SG.REAL-RED-say clear 3SG.REAL-how coconut 3SG.REAL-come
sakhan get.
 GOAL 1NONGS.INCL
 'It explains how the coconut came to us.'
- b. *I-teri nani tuan.*
 3SG.REAL-cut coconut INDEF
 'He cut a coconut.'

It is perhaps useful to note that in (4.21a), *nani* can be viewed as having non-specific generic reference in that it does not refer to a particular coconut, but to coconuts in general, while in (4.21b), *nani* has specific reference in that a particular coconut is being referred to. This distinction between specific and non-specific reference is not marked by determiners in Neve'ei. It is, however, a distinction that is marked by the plural postmodifier *ar* (§4.2.5).

4.2.5 The plural postmodifier

In Neve‘ei, nouns do not change shape to distinguish singular from plural. Plurality is expressed by a separate postmodifier *ar*, referred to here as the plural postmodifier, which does not distinguish between dual and plural. This postmodifier is identical in shape to the third person non-singular independent pronoun *ar* (§3.1.1).

In the previous discussion concerning the indefinite postmodifier, it was noted that the distinction between definite and indefinite reference is marked grammatically in Neve‘ei in that nouns with definite reference are either unmarked or marked by demonstratives while nouns with indefinite reference are marked by the indefinite postmodifier, *tuan*. The distinction between specific and non-specific reference is also marked grammatically in Neve‘ei. Nouns with non-specific reference are unmarked for plurality while nouns with specific reference are marked by the plural postmodifier *ar*. For example, in (4.22a), the nouns *nuvungun na‘ai* ‘flowering plant’, *navins* ‘banana’ and *nedam* ‘yam’ are unmarked for plurality as they each have non-specific reference whereas the nouns *khavan* (4.22b) and *nivis* (4.22c) are marked by *ar* for plurality as they have specific reference.

- (4.22) a. *At-luv nuvungu-n na‘ai at-luv navins*
 3PL.REAL-plant flower-CONST tree 3PL.REAL-plant banana
at-luv nedam.
 3PL.REAL-plant yam
 ‘They planted flowering plants, they planted bananas and they planted yams.’
- b. *I-vwer do en khava-n ar.*
 3SG.REAL-say hit GOAL friend-3SG PL
 ‘He mentioned it to his friends.’
- c. *Ar-veh nivis ter ar.*
 3DL.REAL-carry bow 3NONSG.POSS PL
 ‘They carried their bows.’

The plural postmodifier *ar* can also follow *tuan* or *nge* to mark that the noun is plural, as shown in (4.23). The indefinite postmodifier *tuan* followed by *ar* is analysed as the quantifier *tuan ar* ‘some’ (§4.2.7).

- (4.23) *Natuturmwitiyilian nene i-vwer-vwer sur nisit*
 story DEM 3SG.REAL-RED-talk about thing
nganga‘ tuan ar ... Nisit nganga‘ nge ar at-vwer
 little INDEF PL thing little DEM PL 3PL.REAL-INTENT
abwit-khal-khal-bat.
 3PL.IRR-RED-dig-*nebat*.vine
 ‘This story tells about some children ... The children wanted to dig the *nebat* vine.’

4.2.6 Numerals

In many Oceanic languages, numerals function as stative verbs while in other Oceanic languages they function as adjectives within the noun phrase (Lynch 1998:117–118). In Neve‘ei, numerals (§3.3) frequently function as nominals, verbs and as nominal postmodifiers. In (4.24a), the cardinal numeral *sevakh* ‘one’ is postposed to the nominal

phrase head *nisit nganga* ‘child’. In (4.24b) the ordinal numeral *aruan* ‘second’ functions as a postmodifier within the noun phrase *niyim nge aruan* ‘the second house’.

- (4.24) a. *I-veh* *nisit nganga* *sevakh*.
 3SG.REAL-beget thing little one
 ‘She had one child.’
- b. *I-tokh* *ran niyim nge aruan*.
 3SG.REAL-live LOC house DEM second
 ‘(S)he lives at the second house.’

4.2.7 Quantifiers

The quantifiers listed in (4.25) are attested both as noun postmodifiers and as nominals.

- (4.25) *tuan ar* ‘some’
 ingat ‘many’
 mamah ‘every, all’

The quantifier *tuan ar* ‘some’ (4.26a) is made up of the indefinite postmodifier *tuan* and plural postmodifier *ar*. While the quantifier *ingat* ‘many’ (4.26b) would appear to have verbal origins, in that it begins with the vowel *i-*, which is also the third person singular realis prefix (§3.4.1.1), it would appear that this verbal prefix has now been reanalysed as part of the quantifier. The form *ingat mang* ‘most’ (4.26c) is made up of the quantifier *ingat* and the intensifier *mang* (§5.1.2.3). The form *mamah* (4.26d) is possibly derived from the morpheme *mah* ‘finished, complete’ showing reduplication of the initial consonant and vowel. The plural postmodifier *ar* cannot be omitted before the quantifiers *ingat*, *ingat mang* and *mamah*.

- (4.26) a. *Nemwen tuan ar at-tovu* ‘out.
 man some 3PL.REAL-go ashore
 ‘Some men went ashore.’
- b. *Nemwen ar ingat at-tovu* ‘out.
 man PL many 3PL.REAL-go ashore
 ‘Many men went ashore.’
- c. *Nemwen ar ingat mang at-tovu* ‘out.
 man PL many very.much 3PL.REAL-go ashore
 ‘Most men went ashore.’
- d. *Nemwen ar mamah at-tovu* ‘out.
 man PL all 3PL.REAL-go ashore
 ‘All the men went ashore.’

4.2.8 Relative clauses

In Neve‘ei, relative clauses (§7.4) appear after the head of the nominal phrase. The relativiser *nen*, which is identical in shape to the possessive marker *nen* (§4.3.1.2), marks the beginning of the relative clause. The original site of the coreferential noun phrase in the relative clause can be marked by *nge*, which is the same shape as the anaphoric demonstrative (§4.2.4), acting as a pronominal trace. In (4.27a) where the relativised noun

phrase is the subject, the original site of the coreferential noun phrase is marked by \emptyset whereas in (4.27b) where the relativised noun phrase is the direct object, the original site of the coreferential noun phrase is optionally marked by *nge*.

- (4.27) a. *Ne-leh matoro nen \emptyset i-matur.*
 1SG.REAL-see old.man REL PRO 3SG.REAL-sleep
 ‘I saw the old man who was sleeping.’
- b. *Nabung nen ar-totobatn (nge) i-vwelem.*
 day REL 3DL.REAL-name PRO 3SG.REAL-come
 ‘The day which they had named came.’

4.3 Complex nominal phrases

Whereas a simple nominal phrase consists of a single head followed by one or more optional postmodifiers, a complex nominal phrase consists of two or more noun phrases, each having optional postmodifiers. The types of complex nominal phrases that will be described in the following section are possessive constructions, the coordinate noun phrase construction and the appositional construction.

4.3.1 Possessive constructions

As in many other Oceanic languages, there are two different types of possession in Neve‘ei: direct and indirect possession (Lynch 1998:122–124). However, both the direct and the indirect possessive constructions found in the Neve‘ei language are somewhat reduced systems which show some areas of departure both from the Proto Oceanic system of possession as well as from some of the patterns that are encountered in present-day Vanuatu languages. One such difference is that those languages which closely reflect the Proto Oceanic system have a variety of possessive markers contrasting various subtypes of indirect possession (Lynch 1998:123–124) while Neve‘ei does not make a contrast between various indirect possessive subtypes in this way and its direct possessive forms are limited to singular pronominal possessors (§3.2.1).

4.3.1.1 Direct possessive constructions

As previously explained in a discussion of the morphology of directly possessed nouns (§3.2.1), when a directly possessed noun has a nominal possessor, the directly possessed noun usually precedes its possessor and appears in its construct form.

- (4.28) a. *netal-n matoro*
 leg-CONST old.man
 ‘the leg of the old man’
- b. *nubusura-n na‘ai*
 branch-CONST tree
 ‘the branch of the tree’

All directly possessed nouns express a very close semantic relationship between the referents of the possessed and possessor nouns. This relationship is often described as inalienable in that the referent of the possessed noun cannot normally be separated from or exist independently of its possessor. The semantic subgroupings of nouns that enter into

this kind of construction include the body parts of humans or animals (4.29a), body products (4.29b), integral parts of plants (4.29c) and human kin terms (4.29d).

- (4.29) a. *na'adle-n* 'egg (of bird, turtle), roe (of fish)'
na'ansu-n 'nose, feelers (on lobster or crab)'
na'avera-n 'wing'
nebeloa-n 'neck'
neleme-n 'tongue'
nesne-n 'stomach, intestines, bowel'
- b. *nemakha-n* 'urine'
nemwetebwe-n 'excrement'
- c. *na'ansemwe-n* 'stem (of leaf, fruit)'
na'avile-n 'pith (of breadfruit)'
netevi-n 'shoot (of plant)'
nokhora-n 'root'
nubusura-n 'branch'
- d. *na'aibi-n* 'grandchild'
nat-n 'child'
tabi-n 'grandfather'
tas-n 'youngest child, last born'
tu'a-n 'eldest child, first born'

All complex nominal phrases involving directly possessed nouns follow the same constituent order patterns when the possessed noun precedes its possessor noun. As shown in the following formula and in (4.30), it is not possible for any postmodifiers belonging to the directly possessed noun to come between it and its nominal possessor.

POSSESSED NOUN + POSSESSOR NOUN + (POSSESSOR NOUN POSTMODIFIERS)
+ (POSSESSED NOUN POSTMODIFIERS)

- (4.30) a. *Nebat-n nemwat ar at-met.*
head-CONST snake PL 3PL.REAL-black
'The heads of the snakes are black.'
- **Nebat-n ar nemwat ar at-met.*
head-CONST PL snake PL 3PL.REAL-black
- b. *I-takh lowi nevwene-n nakhankhan nge sevakh.*
3SG.REAL away fruit-CONST pawpaw DEM one
'She took away one fruit of the pawpaw tree.'
- **I-takh lowi nevwene-n sevakh nakhankhan nge*
3SG.REAL away fruit-CONST one pawpaw DEM

When a possessor noun is moved to the front of a possessive construction in order to give it prominence, it would seem that the presence or absence of postmodifiers following the possessor noun depends on the degree of animacy of that possessor noun. Possessors which are viewed as being highly animate, such as humans and animals, allow the directly

possessed noun to follow with or without intervening postmodifiers, as shown in the following formula and in (4.31).

POSSESSOR NOUN + (POSSESSOR NOUN POSTMODIFIERS) + POSSESSED NOUN
+ (POSSESSED NOUN POSTMODIFIERS)

- (4.31) a. *Nemwat ar nebat-n ar at-met.*
snake PL head-CONST PL 3PL.REAL-black
'The snakes' heads are black.'
- b. *Nemwat nebat-n ar at-met.*
snake head-CONST PL 3PL.REAL-black
'The snakes' heads are black.'

However, less animate possessor nouns, such as trees or plants, do not allow the possessed noun to follow the possessor noun directly. Instead, the possessor noun must be followed by a postmodifier before the possessed noun can follow, as shown below.

POSSESSOR NOUN + POSSESSOR NOUN POSTMODIFIERS + POSSESSED NOUN
+ (POSSESSED NOUN POSTMODIFIERS)

- (4.32) a. *nakhankhan nge nevwene-n sevakh*
pawpaw DEM fruit-CONST one
'one fruit of the pawpaw'
- b. **nakhankhan nevwene-n sevakh*
pawpaw fruit-CONST one

4.3.1.2 Indirect possessive constructions

As explained in the previous section, directly suffixed nouns always establish an inalienable relationship with their possessor nouns. While the majority of the indirectly possessed nouns found in the data establish an alienable relationship with their possessor nouns, there are some indirectly possessed nouns that express inalienable relationships. There would seem, therefore, to be a certain amount of overlap between the semantic domains of alienable and inalienable relationships.

The indirectly possessed nouns in (4.33) lack possessive suffixes and are also similar in terms of their syntactic behaviour. Those listed in (4.33a), would perhaps be expected to establish semantically alienable relationships with their noun possessors while those listed in (4.33b), which are all kinship terms, would perhaps be expected to establish semantically close or inalienable relationships with their noun possessors.

- (4.33) a. *libakh* 'dog'
na'ai 'stick, tree, wood'
nesel 'knife'
netah 'sea'
neteli 'clam, axe'
niar 'house yard, garden, fence'
nowi 'water, river, stream'

b.	<i>mamwe</i>	‘father, father’s sister’s son’
	<i>mamwilam</i>	‘father’s elder brother’
	<i>mamwinga</i> ‘	‘father’s younger brother’
	<i>nang</i>	‘mother, mother’s sister, father’s sister’s son’s wife’
	<i>nang tokhtokh</i>	‘mother’s elder sister’
	<i>nang nganga</i> ‘	‘mother’s younger sister’
	<i>mokhtoro</i>	‘mother-in-law’
	<i>matoro</i>	‘father-in-law’

However, as explained in Crowley (1995) in a discussion of the grammar of inalienability in Paamese, while there may be some lack of predictability about the behaviour of many kinship terms, blood relations are more likely to be expressed as directly possessed nouns and distant relations are more likely to be expressed as indirectly possessed nouns. Crowley also found that many directly possessed kinship terms in Paamese have indirectly possessed noun equivalents. It would seem, on the basis of the data examined, that Neve‘ei kinship terms reveal similar distinctions. For example, the terms *matoro* ‘father-in-law’ and *mokhtoro* ‘mother-in-law’ can be described as distant rather than close kinship relationships. In addition to this, the indirectly possessed nouns *nang* ‘mother’ and *mamwe* ‘father’ have the directly possessed counterparts *sne-n* ‘mother’ and *teme-n* ‘father’.

As explained in §4.2.3, when an indirectly possessed noun has a pronominal possessor, it is followed by a possessive postmodifier. When an indirectly possessed noun has a nominal possessor, it can appear in two quite distinct indirect possessive constructions. In the first of these constructions, the indirectly possessed noun is firstly followed by a third person possessive postmodifier and then by the possessor noun. In (4.34a) the third person singular possessive postmodifier *ti* ‘he/she/it’ follows the nominal possessor, and in (4.34b) the third person non-singular possessive postmodifier *ter* ‘their’ follows the nominal possessor. The possessive postmodifier therefore agrees with the number of the possessor noun. The semantic relationship established in this construction can be described as distant or alienable in that the referent of the possessed noun can exist independently of its possessor.

- (4.34) a. *Libakh ti matoro i-mah.*
 dog 3SG.POSS old.man 3SG.REAL-die
 ‘The old man’s dog died.’
- b. *Libakh ter matoro ar at-mah.*
 dog 3NONSG.POSS old.man PL 3PL.REAL-die
 ‘The old men’s dogs died.’

All complex nominal phrases involving indirectly possessed nouns allow the same constituent order possibilities whether the possessed noun comes first within the nominal phrase or whether the possessor noun is fronted to the beginning of the nominal phrase. The third person possessive postmodifier must always follow directly after the possessed noun as shown in the following formulas and examples.

POSSESSED NOUN + POSSESSIVE POSTMODIFIER + POSSESSOR NOUN + (POSTMODIFIERS)

- (4.35) a. *libakh ti matoro*
 dog 3SG.POSS old.man
 ‘the old man’s dog’
- b. *nang ti nomomokh nene*
 mother 3SG.POSS girl DEM
 ‘this girl’s mother’

POSSESSOR NOUN + (POSTMODIFIERS) + POSSESSED NOUN + POSSESSIVE POSTMODIFIER

- (4.36) a. *matoro libakh ti*
 old.man dog 3SG.POSS
 ‘the old man’s dog’
- b. *nomomokh nene nang ti*
 girl DEM mother 3SG.POSS
 ‘this girl’s mother’

Different kinds of alienable possessive relationships that are widely encountered in Oceanic languages are not distinguished grammatically in Neve‘ei. In many languages, for example, there are separate series of possessive modifiers depending on whether the possessor intends to eat or to drink the referent of the possessed noun, as well as a range of other specific kinds of alienable possessive relationships (Lynch 1998:123–124). It is noteworthy, therefore, that the examples in (4.37) are expressed with exactly the same possessive modifier in Neve‘ei whereas in many Oceanic languages, separate paradigms of possessive modifiers would be required.

- (4.37) a. *nubuah tno*
 pork 1SG.POSS
 ‘my pork’ (to eat)
- b. *nowi tno*
 water 1SG.POSS
 ‘my water’ (to drink)
- c. *noang tno*
 canoe 1SG.POSS
 ‘my canoe’ (which is neither for eating nor drinking)

Another indirect possessive construction involves the use of the possessive marker *nen*, which is identical in shape to the relativiser (§4.2.8) as well as being the form that is involved in the formation of ordinals from higher cardinal numerals (§3.3.2). In this possessive construction, *nen* comes between the possessed nominal and the possessor nominal as shown in the following formula.

POSSESSED NOUN + NEN + POSSESSOR NOUN + (POSSESSOR POSTMODIFIERS)
 + (POSSESSED POSTMODIFIERS)

The semantic relationships expressed by this construction seem to fall into three broad categories: purposive relationships (4.38), habitual relationships (4.39), and possession of certain body parts (4.40).

- (4.38) a. *nevetevat nen nedam*
platform POSS yam
'platform for yams'
- b. *nibilah nen nebal*
coconut.shell POSS kava
'coconut shell for kava'

The possessed noun in (4.39a) is a person and the possessor noun is an occupation. In (4.39b)–(4.39d) the possessed noun is a person or thing that originates from, or belongs to, the possessor noun that is a place. The possessed nominal in (4.39e) is a person who belongs to a group, the possessor noun.

- (4.39) a. *numur nen navisvisian*
person POSS teaching
'teacher'
- b. *matoro nen notout*
old.man POSS inland.villages
'the old man of the inland villages'
- c. *nomomokh nen nsan teli*
woman POSS side different
'woman from some other place'
- d. *noal nen Ulmet nge*
creek POSS Ulmet DEM
'the creek of Ulmet'
- e. *na'ar nen ar i-so-rogu-lel-si ba-khal*
the.youngest POSS 3NONGS 3SG.REAL-NEG1-ABIL-NEG2 3SG.IRR-dig
nebat ti.
nebat 3SG.POSS
'The youngest of them couldn't dig his *nebat* vine.'

A number of body parts obligatorily express possession by means of this construction. While many body parts are directly possessed nouns (§4.3.1.1), establishing an inalienable semantic relationship with their possessor nouns, some body parts are expressed as indirectly possessed nouns. For example, as explained by Crowley (1995), internal organs, body parts that are potential food items and bodily exudations are likely to establish an alienable semantic relationship with their possessor nouns. This construction is used both with nominal possessors as in (4.40a) and (4.40b) as well as with pronominal possessors (4.40c).

- (4.40) a. *nidri nen libakh*
blood POSS dog
'the dog's blood'
- b. *nowi nen netal-n*
water POSS leg-CONST
'leg veins'

- c. *navnenah nen no*
 kidney POSS 1SG
 ‘my kidney’

4.3.2 Coordinate noun phrase construction

Complex nominal phrases can also consist of two or more simple nominal phrases linked together with the conjunction *mi* ‘and’. When nominal phrases are linked together in this way, the semantic relationship expressed is one in which each nominal phrase refers to an equal and individual part of the whole. In (4.41a) and (4.41b) two singular nominal phrases are linked together and the third person dual verbal prefix agrees in number with its subject. The constituent order of two nominal phrases in the linked construction is shown in the following formula and examples.

NOMINAL PHRASE HEAD + (POSTMODIFIERS) + *mi* + NOMINAL PHRASE HEAD
 + (POSTMODIFIERS)

- (4.41) a. *Matoro nge mi na'aibi-n ar-tokh len niyim*
 old.man DEM and grandson-3SG 3DL.REAL-stay LOC house
ter.
 3NONGSG.POSS
 ‘The old man and his grandson lived in their house.’
- b. *Amweran tuan mamwe ter mi nang ter*
 time INDEF father 3NONGSG.POSS and mother 3NONGSG.POSS
ar-vweri en ar ...
 3DL.REAL-say GOAL 3NONGSG
 ‘Once upon a time their father and their mother said to them ...’

4.3.3 Appositional construction

The final kind of complex nominal phrase construction to be described here is that in which two or more distinct nominal phrases are juxtaposed with no additional marking of any kind. When nominal phrases occur in this kind of construction, the semantic relationship expressed is one in which each nominal phrase refers to the same noun referent.

- (4.42) a. *mamwilam Roger*
 uncle Roger
 ‘Uncle Roger’
- b. *nat-n no James*
 son-CONST 1SG James
 ‘my son James’

5 *Complex verbs*

This chapter contains a description of complex verbal constructions in Neve‘ei. When examining the Neve‘ei language according to the approach of Foley and Van Valin (1984), where the clause is described as having a layered structure consisting of a nucleus, core and periphery, some Neve‘ei complex verbal constructions operate at the level of the clausal nucleus, while others operate at the level of the core of the clause. Verbs involved in such constructions have been described variously as compound stems in Big Nambas (Fox 1979:71), verbal suffixes in Manam (Lichtenberk 1983:209), verbal adjuncts in Paamese (Crowley 1982:162), compound verbs in Kwaio (Keesing 1985:133), co-verbs in Loniu (Hamel 1994:116) and complex verbs in Saliba (Margetts 1999:101). In this chapter the approach of Crowley (1987, 2002a) for Paamese, and Early (1994) for Lewo, has been followed where such verbs are described as nuclear layer serial verbs. The less tightly bound patterns of core layer serialisation are also described here under the same general heading of complex verbs.

5.1 Nuclear layer serialisation

The structure of Neve‘ei verbs allows for the inflected verb stem (§3.4.4.4) to consist of a sequence of two or more stems. Such verbs in sequence, express a single event or state, and take a single set of inflectional markers for the categories of subject, mood and negation. Each stem in the nuclear construction receives stress as an independent word, with the primary stress falling on the penultimate syllable (§2.4). Therefore, the verb stems are represented in this study as constituting separate phonological words as they are in Crowley’s (1987, 2002a) treatment of parallel constructions in Paamese. There are, however, some verb-verb sequences that are unpredictably treated as single phonological words, e.g. *rogulel* ‘recognise’, which is derived from the stems *rong* ‘feel’ and *gulel* ‘know’.

The nuclear serial construction in (5.1a) involves the verb stems *lu* ‘shoot’ and *bibiangan* ‘damage’ expressing the meaning ‘shoot damage’ which has been translated in this instance as ‘shoot thereby injuring’. The verb stems that fill the verb slot cannot be separated by any other argument, as shown in (5.1b), where the object noun phrase *nimin* ‘bird’ cannot come between the two verb stems.

- (5.1) a. *I-lu bibiangan nimin.*
 3SG.REAL-shoot damage bird
 ‘(S)he shot the bird thereby injuring it.’
- b. **I-lu nimin bibiangan.*
 3SG.REAL-shoot bird damage

The verb stems of a Neve‘ei nuclear serial construction are negated as a single unit by the negative simulfix, *sV- ... -si* (§3.4.1.2). In (5.2b), the negative prefix (negative 1) precedes the first verb stem and the negative suffix (negative 2) follows the final verb stem in the sequence.

- (5.2) a. *I-yel totovung.*
 3SG.REAL-sing try
 ‘(S)he tried to sing.’
- b. *I-si-yel totovung-si.*
 3SG.REAL-NEG1-sing try-NEG2
 ‘(S)he didn’t try to sing.’

The first position of a nuclear serialisation can apparently be occupied by any lexical verb that is semantically compatible with the following serialised verb. In the examples in (5.3), three different lexical verbs, *teri* ‘cut’, *bus* ‘speak’ and *khus* ‘hit’, combine with the verb *bibiangan*, which occupies the second position in each example.

- (5.3) a. *I-teri bibiangan nedam.*
 3SG.REAL-cut damage yam
 ‘(S)he cut the yam thereby damaging it.’
- b. *I-bus bibiangan nang ti.*
 3SG.REAL-speak damage mother 3SG.POSS
 ‘(S)he was rude to her/his mother.’
- c. *I-khus bibiangan nat-n.*
 3SG.REAL-hit damage child-CONST
 ‘(S)he physically abused her/his child.’

It is also possible for more than two verbs to appear in Neve‘ei nuclear serial verb constructions (§3.4.4.4) as shown in (5.4a) where there are three components, *rogulel*, *lieh* and *mo* and (5.4b) where there are four components, *tokh*, *bweli*, *lieh* and *mo*.

- (5.4) a. *I-so-rogulel lieh mo-si bwe-sa’*
 3SG.REAL-NEG1-able again do.any.more-NEG2 3SG.IRR-go.up
 ‘he couldn’t go up any more’
- b. *I-so-tokh bweli lieh mo-si nsemweh*
 3SG.REAL-NEG1-stay too.much again do.any.more-NEG2 far
 ‘it wasn’t very far any more’

As illustrated above, the forms that occupy the first and second positions in the nuclear serial verb construction conform to the following behaviour. Together they express a single event or state and take a single set of inflectional markers for the categories of subject, mood and negation. The forms are also negated together with the negative prefix preceding the first verb stem and the negative suffix following the final form in the sequence.

While any lexical verb can occupy the first position of the nuclear serial construction, describing the precise nature of the forms that occupy the second or subsequent slots of the construction described above is less straightforward. In some cases the forms are clearly verbs in that they also appear as independent verbs outside this construction. In other cases, however, the form of the second or subsequent element never occurs as an independent verb. Some of these forms are only ever found within serial constructions while others are also found in non-verbal environments outside the nuclear serial construction.

The situation described above is similar to that found in the moribund language of Naman, for which Neve‘ei is the closest relative. Crowley (2006:137–139) describes Naman forms that are frequently attested in the serial verb position as having meanings that are acceptable as verbs even though they are never encountered as independent verbs. In addition some Naman forms are attested in serial verb constructions as well as in non-verbal environments. Crowley explains that it is frequently difficult to decide whether to classify such forms as nuclear serial verbs or ‘verbal modifiers’ but says that ‘there are very strong grounds for arguing that there is a continuum between clear modifiers ... and clear serial verbs ... with many other forms appearing to be neither completely one nor the other’.

The difficulties encountered when attempting to classify such forms in Neve‘ei and Naman are also faced when classifying the forms that take part in similar constructions in other languages of central and northern Vanuatu. Crowley (2002a:108–116) suggests that the variation that is found in the descriptions of these constructions reflects the actual ambiguity and variability of the structures themselves which is compatible with the idea that these constructions are undergoing a process of change. When describing the impact of change on nuclear serial constructions in Paamese, he refers to ‘leakage of nuclear serial verbs in Paamese out of this particular construction into other parts of the grammar’ and also to ‘originally non-verbal elements ... currently undergoing reanalysis leading to the acquisition of serial verb properties’.

In the following sections, Neve‘ei forms that are clearly verbs, in that they also appear as independent verbs outside nuclear serial constructions, are described here as ‘unrestricted’ serial verbs. The forms that never occur as independent verbs are grouped together and are described here as ‘restricted’ serial verbs. Within the group of restricted serial verbs some forms have verbal origins historically, some are found only within nuclear serial constructions while others are also found in non-verbal environments outside nuclear serial constructions. It is thought that these latter forms may have recently been co-opted into the serial verb position while still retaining their non-verbal functions elsewhere.

5.1.1 *Unrestricted serial verbs*

The examples presented in Table 5.1 are described as unrestricted in that they are attested both as independent verbs and as serial verbs. These examples have been selected to include both intransitive and transitive verbs. In some cases, there is a difference in meaning depending on whether a form is used independently or in a serial construction. The forms *khawes*, *lieh* and *sesevakh* are also attested in non-verbal environments. An example of *khawes* ‘across’ as a preposition is provided in §6.3.1 and an example of *lieh* ‘again’ as an adverb is provided in §6.4.2.

Table 5.1: Unrestricted serial verbs

	Independent verb	Serial verb
<i>bweba</i> [vi]	‘hide, hidden’	‘do without being seen’
<i>gor</i> [vt]	‘close, shut’	‘block’
<i>khawes</i> [vt]	‘go across’	‘go across’
<i>lieh</i> [vt]	‘give back, pay back’	‘(do) again’
<i>lubalum</i> [vi]	‘tell lies’	‘pretend to do’
<i>mah</i> [vi]	‘die’	‘finish doing’
<i>mangmang</i> [vi]	‘be crazy, mad, drunk’	‘do crazily, out of control’
<i>sesevakh</i> [vi]	‘do something alone’	‘do one by one’
<i>wahan</i> [vt]	‘look for’	‘do in search of’

The following examples illustrate the behaviour of three of the verbs listed in Table 5.1, *lubalum*, *gor* and *mah*, firstly as independent verbs in (5.5) and then as nuclear serial verbs in (5.6).

- (5.5) a. *I-lubalum.*
3SG.REAL-tell.lies
‘(S)he lied.’
- b. *I-gor nemetali.*
3SG.REAL-shut door
‘(S)he shut the door.’
- c. *Ke-mah im utne.*
2SG.IRR-die just here
‘You will die here.’

In (5.6a) *lubalum* is combined with the intransitive first member stem *matur* ‘sleep’ and in (5.6b) it is combined with the transitive first member stem *lu* ‘shoot’. The verb stems of each of these constructions are negated as a single unit as shown in (5.6c) and (5.6d). The meaning of the combined verb stems in nuclear serial constructions is not always easy to predict. For example, the meaning of the whole, *lu lubalum* ‘pretend to shoot’, is not immediately obvious from the meaning of the parts ‘shoot’ and ‘tell lies’.

- (5.6) a. *I-matur lubalum.*
3SG.REAL-sleep pretend.to.do
‘(S)he pretended to sleep.’
- b. *I-lu lubalum en nimin.*
3SG.REAL-shoot pretend.to.do OBL bird
‘(S)he pretended to shoot the bird.’
- c. *I-se-matur lubalum-si.*
3SG.REAL-NEG1-sleep pretend.to.do-NEG2
‘(S)he didn’t pretend to sleep.’
- d. *I-sa-lu lubalum-si en nimin.*
3SG.REAL-NEG1-shoot pretend.to.do-NEG2 OBL bird
‘(S)he didn’t pretend to shoot the bird.’

In (5.7a) *gor* is combined with the intransitive first member stem *tur* ‘stand’ and in (5.7b) it is combined with the transitive first member stem *to* ‘put’. As for the previous examples in (5.6), the verb stems of each of these constructions are negated as a single unit as shown in (5.7c) and (5.7d).

- (5.7) a. *I-tur gor nesal.*
3SG.REAL-stand block road
‘(S)he stood in the road thereby blocking it.’
- b. *I-to gor nesal en na‘ai.*
3SG.REAL-put block road INST wood
‘(S)he blocked the road with the wood.’
- c. *I-sa-tur gor-si nesal.*
3SG.REAL-NEG1-stand block-NEG2 road
‘(S)he didn’t stand in the road thereby blocking it.’
- d. *I-so-to gor-si nesal en na‘ai.*
3SG.REAL-NEG1-put block-NEG2 road INST wood
‘(S)he didn’t block the road with the wood.’

Finally, in (5.8a), when *mah* is combined with the intransitive first member stem *gegerah* ‘rake fire’, it does not carry a transitive suffix. However, when the first member of the nuclear serial construction is a transitive verb, *mah* carries a transitive suffix as shown in (5.8b). The verb stems of each of these constructions are negated as a single unit as shown in (5.8c) and (5.8d).

- (5.8) a. *Ar-gegerah mah.*
3DL.REAL-rake.fire finish.doing
‘They finished raking the fire through the garden site.’
- b. *Ara-vu ar-ra‘ mah-an niar nge.*
3DL.REAL-go 3DL.REAL-clear finish.doing-TRANS garden DEM
‘They went and finished clearing the garden.’
- c. *Ar-se-gegerah mah-si.*
3DL.REAL-NEG1-burn finish.doing-NEG2
‘They didn’t finish burning.’
- d. *At-su-luv mah-an-si nedam.*
3PL.REAL-NEG1-plant finish.doing-TRANS-NEG2 yam
‘They didn’t finish planting the yams.’

5.1.2 Restricted serial verbs

Whereas the serial verbs discussed above are attested both as independent verbs and as serial verbs, the majority of the attested forms that take part in nuclear serial verb constructions are restricted in their use in that they never occur as independent verbs. Examples of restricted serial verb forms are presented in Table 5.2. Some of these forms have only ever been attested as the second or subsequent member of a serial verb construction while others are also commonly found in non-verbal environments outside nuclear serial constructions. Examples of the behaviour of *lili* and *mo* within non-verbal

environments are provided in §6.4.2 and an example of the behaviour of *ba'at* and *mang* following an adjective is provided in §4.2.1.

Table 5.2: Forms which function as restricted serial verbs

Serial verb	
<i>ba'at</i>	'really, very, a lot'
<i>bararakh</i>	'do aimlessly'
<i>bial</i>	'do all sorts of (things), do all over the place'
<i>bibiangan</i>	'damage, ruin'
<i>bilih</i>	'do wrongly, do the wrong way around'
<i>bin</i>	'do to death'
<i>bweli</i>	'too much'
<i>dem</i>	'still do, still be'
<i>dilivih</i>	'around'
<i>do</i>	1. 'hit' 2. 'a little, a bit'
<i>drong</i>	'keep on doing'
<i>gulel</i>	'able, know'
<i>lili</i>	'near, close'
<i>lowi</i>	'out, away'
<i>mang</i>	'very much'
<i>mo</i>	'do any more'
<i>nsemweh</i>	'far away'
<i>sur</i>	1. 'keep doing' 2. 'do at, do around'
<i>totovung</i>	'try'

While some of the forms listed above are encountered in only a few V-V sequences, others are very productive and combine with many different initial intransitive and transitive stems. An example of a productive form is *lowi*, which combines with both intransitive and transitive verbs to express a variety of meanings. When *lowi* is serialised to an intransitive stem, the following patient/theme must be encoded as an oblique object, as shown in (5.9a) and (5.9b). When *lowi* is serialised to a transitive stem, the direct object noun phrase immediately follows the serial construction, as shown in (5.9c) and (5.9d). When negated, the combined verb stems are negated as a single unit, as shown in (5.9e) and (5.9f).

- (5.9) a. *I-viviri lowi en navir ti.*
 3SG.REAL-spit out OBL phlegm 3SG.POSS
 '(S)he spits out her/his phlegm.'
- b. *I-langlang lowi en nowi len noang.*
 3SG.REAL-tip out OBL water SOURCE canoe
 '(S)he tipped the water out of the canoe.'
- c. *I-bus lowi mamwe ti.*
 3SG.REAL-speak out father 3SG.POSS
 '(S)he speaks on behalf of her/his father.'

- d. *I-nsinsen lowi na'ai.*
3SG.REAL-push out wood
'(S)he pushed out the log.'
- e. *I-sa-bus lowi-si mamwe ti.*
3SG.REAL-NEG1-speak out-NEG2 father 3SG.POSS
'(S)he doesn't speak on behalf of her/his father.'
- f. *I-sa-nsinsen lowi-si na'ai.*
3SG.REAL-NEG1-push out-NEG2 wood
'(S)he didn't push out the log.'

While *lowi* has been glossed as 'out' in the examples in (5.9), it can also be glossed as 'away', 'up' and 'off' as shown in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Serial verb *lowi*

Independent verb	Serial verb
<i>gah</i> 'chase'	<i>gah lowi</i> 'chase away'
<i>gu</i> 'tie'	<i>gu lowi</i> 'tie up', 'make (house)'
<i>rus</i> 'wear (clothes)', 'shed (skin, shell)'	<i>rus lowi</i> 'take off (clothes)', 'shed (skin, shell)'
<i>veh</i> 'carry'	<i>veh lowi</i> 'carry away'

Another form which is frequently attested in nuclear serial constructions is *do*, which is glossed as 'hit' in (5.10a) and (5.10b). In some contexts, the form *do* indicates that the action of the main verb is only partially carried out, or is carried out in a limited manner, in which case it is glossed as 'a little', as shown in (5.10c) where *do* is the third component of the serial construction following *sesevakh* 'one by one'. In (5.10d), *do* is glossed as 'hit' when it follows the first verb in the sequence, *tokh* 'exist, stay', and then as 'a little' when it follows the form *nsemnsemweh* 'far'.

- (5.10) a. *I-sa-lu do-si nubuah.*
3SG.REAL-NEG1-shoot hit-NEG2 pig
'(S)he didn't hit the pig by shooting it.'
- b. *Nebwe-takh do nebem nene tuan.*
1SG.IRR-take hit butterfly DEM INDEF
'I will catch one of these butterflies.'
- c. *At-toto sesevakh do en ar.*
3PL.REAL-leave do.one.by.one a.little OBL 3NONSG
'They spread out a bit from each other.'
- d. *Nourour nganga' nge i-tokh do nsemnsemweh*
island little DEM 3SG.REAL-stay hit far
do en nourour nen i-lam.
a.little LOC island REL 3SG.REAL-big
'The little island is located quite far from the mainland.'

In the following sections, the behaviour of some of the restricted serial verb forms from Table 5.2 is illustrated. These examples have been grouped together according to the meaning of the restricted forms.

5.1.2.1 Manner

In each of the following nuclear serial constructions the manner in which the action of the first verb is carried out is expressed by the second component in each construction: *bararakh* ‘do aimlessly’ (5.11), *bial* ‘do all sorts of things, do all over the place’ (5.12), and *bilih* ‘do wrongly’ (5.13). In (5.11b) and (5.12b) each of the serial verb forms carries a transitive suffix *-Vn* (§3.4.4.2) when it combines with an initial transitive verb.

- (5.11) a. *Nisit nganga‘ nge i-rivriv bararakh.*
 thing little DEM 3SG.REAL-make.pudding do.aimlessly
 ‘The child plays at making pudding.’
- b. *I-lu bararakh-en nisit ar.*
 3SG.REAL-shoot do.aimlessly-TRANS thing PL
 ‘(S)he shot aimlessly at things.’
- (5.12) a. *I-tustusbo bial len buk ti.*
 3SG.REAL-draw do.all.over.the.place LOC book 3SG.POSS
 ‘(S)he scribbled in her/his book.’
- b. *At-luv bial-en nisit ar.*
 3PL.REAL-plant do.all.sorts.of.things-TRANS thing PL
 ‘They planted all sorts of things.’
- (5.13) a. *I-rus bilih nusulu.*
 3SG.REAL-wear do.wrongly clothes
 ‘(S)he wore her/his clothes inside out.’
- b. *I-yel bilih nevat.*
 3SG.REAL-lift do.wrongly stone
 ‘(S)he lifted up the stone upside down.’

5.1.2.2 Location

The second component of each of the following nuclear serial constructions, *nsemweh* ‘far away’ (5.14a) and *dilivih* ‘around’ (5.14b), expresses a meaning that relates to the spatial orientation of the event described by the initial verb in the series.

- (5.14) a. *Niyim i-so-tokh nsemweh-si en netah.*
 house 3SG.REAL-NEG1-stay far-NEG2 LOC sea
 ‘The house isn’t far from the sea.’
- b. *Libakh i-sa-tubu dilivih-si en niyim.*
 dog 3SG.REAL-NEG1-run around-NEG2 LOC house
 ‘The dog didn’t run around the house.’

In (5.15a), the form *lili* ‘near’ appears as the second component of a nuclear serial construction, in (5.15b) the second component of the construction, *sur*, is glossed as ‘do around’ while in (5.15c) *sur* is glossed as ‘do at’.

- (5.15) a. *Niyim i-so-tokh lili-si en netah.*
 house 3SG.REAL-NEG1-stay near-NEG2 OBL sea
 ‘The house isn’t near the sea.’
- b. *Nebem nganga’ nge ar at-mera’ sur*
 butterfly little DEM PL 3PL.REAL-fly do.around
nuvunge-n na’ai nge ar.
 flower-CONST tree DEM PL
 ‘Those little butterflies flew around the flowering plants.’
- c. *Libakh i-se-dam sur-si nubuah.*
 dog 3SG.REAL-NEG1-bark do.at-NEG2 pig
 ‘The dog wasn’t barking at the pigs.’

5.1.2.3 Intensification

The forms *mang*, *bweli* and *ba’at* express intensification and appear as the second component of the serial constructions in (5.16a), (5.16b) and (5.16c) respectively. Both *bweli* and *ba’at* are also attested in examples where they are followed by *mang*, which increases the degree of intensity, as shown in (5.16d) and (5.16e). In (5.16f), where *ba’at mang* follows the transitive verb *yangwal* ‘to want’, *mang* carries the transitive suffix *-an*.

- (5.16) a. *Nang ti i-vanili mang.*
 mother 3SG.POSS 3SG.REAL-different very.much
 ‘Her mother was very different.’
- b. *I-mera’ bweli.*
 3SG.REAL-fly too.much
 ‘(S)he flew too much.’
- c. *I-lam ba’at.*
 3SG.REAL-big very
 ‘It was very big.’
- d. *I-rong lueh bweli mang.*
 3SG.REAL-feel tired too.much very.much
 ‘(S)he felt really very tired.’
- e. *I-lam ba’at mang.*
 3SG.REAL-big very very.much
 ‘It was really very big.’
- f. *Ar-yangwal ba’at mang-an*
 3DL.REAL-want very very.much-TRANS
abwir-yangan nisit nganga’ tuan.
 3DL.IRR-have thing little INDEF
 ‘They wanted to have a child very much.’

5.1.2.4 Aspect

Whereas Neve‘ei verbal prefixes obligatorily specify the category of mood (§3.4.1.1), the category of aspect is not obligatorily marked in Neve‘ei. However, aspectual meanings can be specified by means of reduplication (§3.4.4.1), auxiliary verbs in core layer serial constructions (§5.2.1), and by means of nuclear serial constructions. Forms that occur frequently in aspectual nuclear serial constructions are presented in Table 5.4 below. Two of these forms carry a transitive suffix *-Vn* (§3.4.4.2) when combined with transitive first member forms.

Table 5.4: Aspectual nuclear serial verbs

Serial verb	Aspectual meaning
<i>sur</i>	‘keep doing’ (durative aspect)
<i>drong(-on)</i>	‘keep on doing’ (continuative aspect)
<i>dem(-en)</i>	‘still do, still be’ (continuative aspect)

The form *sur*, which in (5.15b) and (5.15c) expresses location, can also express durative aspect, signalling that the event or state expressed by the first member of the serial construction has a long duration. This form can be used to signal the duration of iterative events as well as the duration of events in progress. In the examples in (5.17), *sur* signals that the events of ‘fishing’ and ‘playing’ and the state of ‘living’ took place over a long period of time.

- (5.17) a. *Ar-tokh ar-takhtakh ar-takhtakh sur.*
 3DL.REAL-PROG 3DL.REAL-fish 3DL.REAL-fish keep.doing
 ‘They were fishing, and they fished on and on.’
- b. *I-tokh i-titinih sur.*
 3SG.REAL-PROG 3SG.REAL-play keep.doing
 ‘He was playing on and on.’
- c. ... *i-tokh sur vi vi.*
 3SG.REAL-live keep.doing on.and.on
 ‘... (s)he lived on and on.’

In the previous examples, the verb *takhtakh* ‘fish’ (5.17a) and the verb *titinih* ‘play’ (5.17b) are also involved in core layer serial constructions where the aspectual auxiliary *tokh* expresses progressive aspect. In (5.17c) explicit signalling of the duration of time is also provided by the discourse marker *vi vi* (§7.5.1), which shows either that an event continues for a long period of time or that a long period of time passes between events.

The form *drong* has a similar meaning to *sur*. In Table 5.4 *sur* is described as expressing durative aspect and *drong* is described as expressing continuative aspect. The form *drong* signals that the event expressed by the first member of the serial construction remains unchanged beyond the time that is in focus. In the context of the narrative from which (5.18a) comes, the parents tell their children that if they see a white chicken, they must not kill it. The form *drong* indicates that the event of ‘leaving (the chicken) alone’ should remain unchanged beyond the time in focus, that is, the time when the parents speak these words. On comparing examples (5.18b) and (5.18c), it is evident that when *drong* is serialised to a transitive verb, it carries the transitive suffix *-Vn* (§3.4.4.2). In

(5.18d) both *drong* ‘continuative’ and *sur* ‘durative’ are serialised to the verb *takhtakh*. In this example the form *drong* is serialised to the verb *takhtakh* ‘fish’ that is also involved in a core layer serial construction in which the auxiliary *tokh* expresses progressive aspect.

- (5.18) a. *Abor-toto drong-on ba-tur.*
 2DL.IRR-leave keep.on.doing-TRANS 3SG.IRR-stand
 ‘Just leave it alone.’
- b. *Ki-yel drong.*
 2SG.IRR-sing keep.on.doing
 ‘Keep on singing.’
- c. *Ki-yel-en drong-on nubu nge.*
 2SG.IRR-sing-TRANS keep.on.doing-TRANS song DEM
 ‘Keep on singing the song.’
- d. *I-tokh i-takhtakh drong sur.*
 3SG.REAL-PROG 3SG.REAL-fish keep.on.doing keep.doing
 ‘They kept on fishing, on and on.’

The form *dem* also has a similar meaning to that of *drong* and *sur*. Whereas the form *drong* signals that an event remains unchanged beyond the time that is in focus, the form *dem* signals that an event remains unchanged within the time that is in focus. In Table 5.4 *dem*, like *drong*, is described as ‘continuative’ and the gloss provided in the examples below is ‘still do’. Like *drong*, the form *dem* also carries a transitive suffix *-Vn* when combined with a transitive first member stem as shown in (5.19a). In (5.19b), *dem* is serialised to the verb *vavu*, which is also involved in a core layer serial construction in which the auxiliary *vwer* means ‘while actually’ or ‘while in the process’.

- (5.19) a. *At-su-suli dem-en-si niar nge.*
 3PLREAL-NEG1-burn still.do-TRANS-NEG2 garden DEM
 ‘They are not still burning the garden.’
- b. *I-vwer i-vavu dem i-vu ...*
 3SG.REAL-ACTUAL 3SG.REAL-walk still.do 3SG.REAL-thither
 ‘While she was still in the process of walking away ...’

5.1 Core layer serialisation

Core layer serial constructions in Neve‘ei differ from nuclear layer serial constructions in a number of ways. Firstly, whereas the second and subsequent components of nuclear layer serial constructions can never carry inflectional prefixes, core layer serial verbs (with the partial exception of directional serials) always carry inflectional prefixes, as do the main verbs in these constructions. Secondly, whereas the second and subsequent components of nuclear layer serial constructions cannot be separated from the main verb stem by any other argument, core layer serial verbs can be separated from the main verb by other noun phrases. Thirdly, whereas the components of a nuclear layer serial construction are negated as a single unit, in core layer serialisations only one verb in the serial construction carries the negative simulfix. Finally, whereas the majority of the forms which occur in Neve‘ei nuclear layer serial constructions do not occur as independent verbs, all core layer serial verbs are attested both as independent verbs as well as in serial constructions.

5.2.1 Auxiliary serialisation

The verbs in Table 5.5 are frequently attested in Neve‘ei both as independent verbs and as serial verbs expressing aspectual meanings. When used in core layer serial constructions, these aspectual auxiliaries precede the main verb and both the aspectual auxiliary and the main verb obligatorily carry inflectional prefixes marked with exactly the same categories of person, number and mood.

Table 5.5: Core layer aspectual auxiliaries

	Independent verb	Aspectual auxiliary
<i>magar(-en)</i>	‘work, work at, make’	‘progressive’
<i>mera‘</i>	‘get up, fly, jump up’	‘inceptive’
<i>tokh</i>	‘stay, exist’	‘habitual, progressive’
<i>vwer</i>	‘say, intend’	‘actual’

The following section consists of a discussion of the behaviour of each of the verbs in Table 5.5 when used as an independent verb and when used as an auxiliary.

In (5.20a), *magar* functions as an independent intransitive verb meaning ‘work’ while in example (5.20b), *magaren* functions as an independent transitive verb meaning ‘make’.

- (5.20) a. *I-magar len niar.*
 3SG.REAL-work LOC garden
 ‘(S)he worked in the garden.’
- b. *I-magar-en niyim.*
 3SG.REAL-make-TRANS house
 ‘(S)he made the house.’

When used in a core layer serial construction, *magaren* signals that the state or action of the verb is in progress. In each of the examples in (5.21), the aspectual auxiliary precedes the main verb and both the aspectual auxiliary and the main verb obligatorily carry inflectional prefixes marked with the same categories of person, number and mood.

- (5.21) a. *I-magaren i-vavu i-vu len niyim.*
 3SG.REAL-PROG 3SG.REAL-walk 3SG.REAL-thither GOAL house
 ‘(S)he was walking away to the house.’
- b. *At-magaren at-yavyav sur nubuah ar.*
 3PL.REAL-PROG 3PL.REAL-follow pig PL
 ‘They were following the pigs.’
- c. *I-magaren i-wahan na‘ai.*
 3SG.REAL-PROG 3SG.REAL-look.for stick
 ‘(S)he was looking for a stick.’
- d. *Ke-magaren ke-takhtakh.*
 2SG.IRR-PROG 2SG.IRR-fish
 ‘You will be fishing.’

The verb *mera‘* ‘fly’ is frequently attested as an independent verb in Neve‘ei, as shown in (5.22).

- (5.22) *Gu ke-mera' ra'ai.*
 2SG 2SG.IRR-fly above
 'You will fly above.'

When used in a core layer serial construction, *mera'* expresses the inceptive aspect indicating the beginning of an action or event. As shown in the examples in (5.23) the aspectual auxiliary precedes the main verb and both the aspectual auxiliary and the main verb obligatorily carry inflectional prefixes marked with the same categories of person, number and mood. The inceptive auxiliary is frequently attested before the main verb *vveri* 'say'.

- (5.23) a. *I-mera' i-vveri en nang ter ...*
 3SG.REAL-INCEP 3SG.REAL-say GOAL mother 3NONGSG.POSS
 'Then (s)he said to their mother ...'
- b. *Yang i-mera' i-vivireh.*
 and 3SG.REAL-INCEP 3SG.REAL-call
 'And then (s)he called.'
- c. *I-mera' i-lu bin bibi ti ar.*
 3SG.REAL-INCEP 3SG.REAL-shoot do.to.death uncle 3SG PL
 'Then (s)he shot dead her/his uncles.'
- d. *Nelabut i-mera' i-mwa'am ran nokhoit nebat-n.*
 rat 3SG.REAL-INCEP 3SG.REAL-sit LOC octopus head-CONST
 'Then the rat sat on the head of the octopus.'

The verb *tokh* is frequently attested in Neve'ei as an independent verb. In example (5.24a) *tokh* is glossed as 'stay' and in (5.24b) as 'exist, there is/are'.

- (5.24) a. *Nisit nganga' nge ar-tokh.*
 thing little DEM 3DL.REAL-stay
 'The children stayed.'
- b. *Amweran tuan nomomokh tuan mi tenemwe-n ar-tokh.*
 time INDEF woman INDEF and husband-3SG 3DL.REAL-exist
 'Once upon a time there was a woman and her husband.'

While both *magaren* and *tokh* function as core layer serial verbs expressing progressive aspect, *magaren* is not as frequently attested in Neve'ei as *tokh* which can also express habitual aspect. In the examples in (5.25) *tokh* indicates that the activity of the verb is in progress at the time of another event. In both (5.25a) and (5.25b) *tokh* indicates that the activity of the verb *magar* 'work' is in progress at the time of the events, *ar-rong noto* 'they heard the chicken' and *titinih* 'play', respectively. In (5.25c) the aspectual auxiliary *tokh* indicates that the events of sleeping and crying were in progress at the time of the first mentioned event, *i-leh* 'he saw'. Once again, the inflectional prefixes of both verbs involved in the serial construction mark the same categories of person, number and mood.

- (5.25) a. *Ar-tokh ar-magar ... ar-rong noto.*
 3DL.REAL-PROG 3DL.REAL-work 3DL.REAL-hear chicken
 'They were working (when) they heard the chicken.'

- b. *Gu ko-tokh ke-magar len niar ti no*
 2SG 2SG.IRR-PROG 2SG.IRR-work LOC garden while 1SG
nibwi-titinih im bitiven nivis nge veri.
 1SG.IRR-play just with bow DEM outside
 ‘You will be working in the garden while I will just play with my
 bow outside.’
- c. *I-leh nisit nganga‘ tuan i-tokh i-matur*
 3SG.REAL-see thing little INDEF 3SG.REAL-PROG 3SG.REAL-sleep
retan yang i-tokh i-tang.
 below and 3SG.REAL-PROG 3SG.REAL-cry
 ‘He saw a child sleeping down below and it was crying.’

In the examples in (5.26), *tokh* indicates habitual aspect. In the context of (5.26a), *tokh* signals that the action of ‘flying’ is a repeated action. In (5.26b) *tokh* also indicates habitual aspect, and in both examples the inflectional prefixes of the auxiliary and the main verb are marked for the same category of mood. In (5.26b), number is not marked on the *rV-* prefix (§3.4.1.1), which is used because the precise identity of the subject referent is not known or is not important.

- (5.26) a. *Noto nge i-tokh i-mera‘ len nukhut-n*
 chicken DEM 3SG.REAL-HAB 3SG.REAL-fly GOAL clump-CONST
nubu nge.
 bamboo DEM
 ‘The chicken (repeatedly) flew into the clump of bamboo.’
- b. *Amweran nen ro-tokh ri-vi*
 time REL NONSPEC.REAL-HAB NONSPEC.REAL-make
niar ar.
 garden PL
 ‘A time when gardens are made.’

The verb *vwer* ‘say’ is frequently attested as an independent verb in Neve‘ei.

- (5.27) *Tu‘a-n ar at-vwer: gu u-sa-khal-si.*
 elder.brother-CONST PL 3PL.REAL-say 2SG 2SG.REAL-NEG1-dig-NEG2
 ‘The elder brothers said, “You didn’t dig.”’

When used as an aspectual auxiliary in a core layer serial construction, *vwer* signals that while an event is actually in process, another event occurs. In the examples in (5.28) this auxiliary is glossed as ‘actual’ and is translated as ‘actually (in the process of)’. In (5.28c) both the aspectual auxiliary and the main verb carry irrealis prefixes indicating that the events are viewed as hypothetical rather than real.

- (5.28) a. *Utnen i-vwer i-sido nabusian ...*
 when 3SG.REAL-ACTUAL 3SG.REAL-remember words
nulung netah toro i-vwelem.
 wave big 3SG.REAL-come
 ‘When he actually remembered the words ... a big wave came.’

- b. *Utnen numur at-vwer at-dedan ... at-rong*
 when person 3PL.REAL-ACTUAL 3PL.REAL-dive 3PL.REAL-hear
sur etnang ar.
 keep.doing thing PL
 ‘When people are actually in the process of diving ... they keep hearing those things.’
- c. *Wal utnen nabulmens i bwe-vwelem bwe-vwer*
 because kingfisher 3SG 3SG.IRR-come 3SG.IRR-ACTUAL
ba-suv do ran na'ai tuan bwe-vwer bwi-gilou
 3SG.IRR-settle hit LOC tree INDEF 3SG.IRR-ACTUAL 3SG.IRR-look
bwe-dah yang bwe-leh nurukhum nge tuan.
 3SG.IRR-go.down and 3SG.IRR-see crab DEM INDEF
 ‘Because the kingfisher would come and actually settle on a tree and he would look down and see one of those crabs.’

When core layer constructions containing the aspectual auxiliaries *magaren* ‘progressive’, *mera* ‘inceptive’ and *tokh* ‘progressive/habitual’ are negated (5.29), the main verb carries the negative simulfix while the serialised auxiliary appears with affirmative polarity. Therefore, sequences such as those in (5.30) are not found. It is noted that there are no attested examples of negated constructions containing the aspectual auxiliary *vwer* ‘actual’.

- (5.29) a. *I-tokh i-se-lakh-lakh-si minmin utnen*
 3SG.REAL-HAB 3SG.REAL-NEG1-RED-hang-NEG2 as
ninsiver i-tokh i-lakh vusur.
 parrot 3SG.REAL-HAB 3SG.REAL-hang how
 ‘He didn’t use to hang as the parrot does.’
- b. *I-magaren i-sa-vavu-si i-vu len niyim.*
 3SG.REAL-PROG 3SG.REAL-NEG1-walk-NEG2 3SG.REAL-thither GOAL house
 ‘He isn’t walking there towards the house.’
- c. *U-mera’ u-so-rong do-si.*
 2SG.REAL-INCEP 2SG.REAL-NEG1-listen a.little-NEG2
 ‘Then you didn’t listen at all.’
- (5.30) a. **I-se-magaren-si i-vavu.*
 3SG.REAL-NEG1-PROG-NEG2 3SG.REAL-walk
- b. **U-se-mera’-si u-rong do.*
 2SG.REAL-NEG1-INCEP-NEG2 2SG.REAL-listen a.little
- c. **I-so-tokh-si i-lakh-lakh ...*
 3SG.REAL-NEG1-HAB-NEG2 3SG.REAL-RED-hang

The verbs in Table 5.6 are frequently attested in Neve‘ei both as independent verbs and as serial verbs expressing modal meanings.

Table 5.6: Core layer modal auxiliaries

	Independent verb	Modal auxiliary
<i>rogulel</i>	‘know, be able’	‘abilitative’
<i>yangwal</i>	‘want, like’	‘desiderative’
<i>sis</i>	‘not want, not like’	‘anti-desiderative’
<i>vwer</i>	‘say’	‘intentional’

In the following section, the behaviour of each of the verbs in Table 5.6 is discussed, both when used as an independent verb and also when used as an auxiliary in a core layer serial construction. Abilitative modality is expressed in Neve‘ei by the auxiliary verb *rogulel* ‘to know, to be able’. As holds true for all core layer serial verbs, *rogulel* ‘know’ is attested as an independent verb as shown in the examples in (5.31).

- (5.31) a. *U-rogulel negensa-n nat-n?*
 2SG.REAL-know name-CONST child-CONST
 ‘Do you know the child’s name?’
- b. *No-so-rogulel-si.*
 1SG.REAL-NEG1-know-NEG2
 ‘I don’t know it.’

When *rogulel* is used in a core layer construction to express abilitative modality, both the auxiliary and the main verb carry inflectional prefixes marked for the same category of subject person and number. However, the main verb in this construction is always marked for the irrealis mood while the auxiliary modal may either be marked for realis or irrealis mood depending on the particular meaning intended. In (5.32a), *rogulel* carries a realis prefix indicating that the ability is seen as a real or actual ability. The irrealis prefix on the main verb, however, expresses that a potential action is being referred to here, rather than an action that has actually taken place. In (5.32b) both the auxiliary verb *rogulel* and the main verb *dedan* carry irrealis prefixes, expressing a potential or future ability and a potential rather than an actual activity of ‘diving’.

- (5.32) a. *No-rogulel nebe-mera’.*
 1SG.REAL-ABIL 1SG.IRR-fly
 ‘I can fly.’
- b. *Utnen nebe-lam nobo-rogulel nebwe-dedan.*
 when 1SG.IRR-old 1SG.IRR-ABIL 1SG.IRR-dive
 ‘When I’m older I will be able to dive.’

Desiderative modality is expressed by the verb *yangwal*. In (5.33) *yangwal* is an independent verb.

- (5.33) *Ni-yangwal nevat.*
 1SG.REAL-want money
 ‘I want money.’

When attested as a modal auxiliary in a core layer construction, *yangwal* ‘desiderative’ exhibits the same behaviour with respect to subject and mood marking as *rogulel* ‘abilitative’ in that the inflectional prefixes for both the auxiliary and the main verb are always marked for the same categories of person and number. Likewise, the mood marked

on the inflectional prefix of the auxiliary verb may be realis or irrealis while the mood marked on the main verb is always irrealis. In (5.34a) the auxiliary verb *yangwal* is in the realis mood because an actual or real desire is being referred to while the main verb *yangan* ‘have (child)’ is in the irrealis mood because a potential event is being referred to rather than an actual event. In (5.34b) both verbs carry inflectional prefixes marked for the irrealis mood. The first irrealis prefix expresses a potential or conditional desire and the second a potential or future event.

- (5.34) a. *Ar-yangwal abwir-yangan nisit nganga’ tuan.*
 3DL.REAL-DESID 3DL.IRR-have thing little INDEF
 ‘They wanted to have a child.’
- b. *Utnen ki-yangwal ka-vu liyim ...*
 if 2SG.IRR-DESID 2SG.IRR-go home
 ‘If you want to go home ...’

When negated, the auxiliary verbs *rogulel* (5.35a) and *yangwal* (5.35b) carry the negative simulfix while the main verb appears in the affirmative polarity, in contrast with the pattern for the previously described aspectual auxiliaries where the main verbs carry the negative simulfix. Therefore, sequences such as those shown in (5.36) are not found.

- (5.35) a. *No-so-rogulel-si nebwe-lakh.*
 1SG.REAL-NEG1-ABIL-NEG2 1SG.IRR-hang
 ‘I can’t hang.’
- b. *Ni-si-yangwal-si nebwe-vweri nabusian nene.*
 1SG.REAL-NEG1-DESID-NEG2 1SG.IRR-say story DEM
 ‘I don’t want to tell this story.’
- (5.36) a. **No-rogulel nebwe-se-lakh-si.*
 1SG.REAL-ABIL 1SG.IRR-NEG1-hang-NEG2
- b. **Ni-yangwal nebwe-se-vweri-si.*
 1SG.REAL-DESID 1SG.IRR-NEG1-say-NEG2

In Neve‘ei, while the verb *yangwal* can be negated, as shown in (5.35b), there is also a separate verb, *sisi* ‘not want, not like’, which expresses anti-desiderative modality. In (5.37), the verb *sisi* ‘not want’ occurs as an independent verb.

- (5.37) *Gem at-sisi.*
 2NONSG 2PL.REAL-not.want
 ‘You (all) didn’t want it.’

When used as a modal auxiliary in a core layer construction, the behaviour of *sisi* is similar to that of *rogulel* and *yangwal* in that both the auxiliary and the main verb carry inflectional prefixes marked for the same categories of person and number. In addition, the auxiliary verb can carry either a realis prefix (5.38a) or an irrealis prefix (5.38b) while the main verb obligatorily carries an irrealis prefix.

- (5.38) a. *I-sisi ba-suasuv.*
 3SG.REAL-ANTIDESID 3SG.IRR-bathe
 ‘(S)he doesn’t want to bathe.’

- b. *Ba-sisi* *ba-suasuv*.
 3SG.IRR-ANTIDESID 3SG.IRR-bathe
 ‘(S)he will not want to bathe.’

The final modal auxiliary to be discussed here is *vwer*, which is also attested as an aspectual auxiliary as previously discussed, and as the independent verb ‘say’ (5.39).

- (5.39) *Tu‘a-n* *ar at-vwer:* *gu u-sa-khal-si*.
 elder.brother-CONST PL 3PL.REAL-say 2SG 2SG.REAL-NEG1-dig-NEG2
 ‘The elder brothers said, “You didn’t dig.”’

As a modal auxiliary, *vwer* expresses intentional modality translated in (5.40a) as ‘going to’, and in (5.40b) as ‘want to’. In each example, the realis prefix on the auxiliary verb shows that the intention is viewed as actual or real while the irrealis prefix on the main verb shows that the activity did not ever eventuate or we are not sure whether it eventuated. In a core layer serial construction expressing intentional modality *vwer* cannot be negated (5.41a). Instead the serial verb that expresses anti-desiderative modality *sisi* is used to express a negative intention (5.41b).

- (5.40) a. *Ar-vwer* *abir-vi* *niar* *ter*.
 3DL.REAL-INTENT 3DL.IRR-make garden 3NONSG.POSS
 ‘They were going to make their garden.’
- b. *I-vwer* *be-mera‘* *ba-vu*.
 3SG.REAL-INTENT 3SG.IRR-fly 3SG.IRR-thither
 ‘(S)he wants to fly away.’
- (5.41) a. **I-se-vwer-si* *be-mera‘* *ba-vu*.
 3SG.REAL-NEG1-INTENT-NEG2 3SG.IRR-fly 3SG.IRR-thither
- b. *I-sisi* *be-mera‘* *ba-vu*.
 3SG.REAL-ANTIDESID 3SG.IRR-fly 3SG.IRR-thither
 ‘(S)he didn’t want to fly away.’

5.2.2 Directional serialisation

Similar to patterns that have been reported for other Oceanic languages, such as Paamese (Crowley 1982), Loniū (Hamel 1994) and Lewo (Early 1994), Neve‘ei has a number of motion verbs that are attested both as independent verbs and as directional core layer serial verbs expressing the direction of the motion of an event. The verbs set out in Table 5.7 are frequently attested as directional verbs in this kind of serial construction.

Table 5.7: Directional serial verbs

	Independent verb	Directional serial verb
<i>dah</i>	‘descend, come/go down’	‘come/go down’ (from source)
<i>sa‘</i>	‘rise, come/go up’	‘come/go up’ (toward goal)
<i>seber</i>	‘touch, hold, reach’	‘go as far as’ (goal)
<i>vu</i>	‘go’	‘that way, thither’ (from source)
<i>vwelem</i>	‘come’	‘this way, hither’ (toward goal)

Directional serial verbs follow both intransitive and transitive main verbs, frequently attested examples of which are verbs of motion and verbs expressing inherently directional activities, as listed in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Main verbs in directional constructions

Main verbs		Main verbs	
<i>duruv</i> [vi]	‘jump’	<i>tubu</i> [vi]	‘run fast, race’
<i>gar</i> [vi]	‘swim’	<i>vavu</i> [vi]	‘walk’
<i>gilou</i> [vi]	‘look’	<i>veh</i> [vt]	‘carry’
<i>kharkhara</i> [vi]	‘crawl’	<i>videnen</i> [vt]	‘throw’
<i>lakh lakh</i> [vi]	‘hang’	<i>vivireh</i> [vi]	‘call, shout’
<i>sesal</i> [vi]	‘float’	<i>wam</i> [vi]	‘fall over’
<i>takh</i> [vt]	‘take’	<i>wu</i> [vt]	‘carry’

In the following examples, the verbs *dah* ‘come/go down’ (5.42a), *sa* ‘come/go up’ (5.42b), *seber* ‘touch, hold, reach’ (5.42c), *vu* ‘go’ (5.42d) and *vwelem* ‘come’ (5.42e) function as independent verbs.

- (5.42) a. *Ke-dah.*
2SG.IRR-come.down.
‘Come down.’
- b. *I-sa’ ran nebang nge.*
3SG.REAL-come.up LOC banyan.tree DEM
‘He climbed onto the banyan tree.’
- c. *Ar-seber Khuduelo.*
3DL.REAL-reach PLACE NAME
‘They reached Khuduelo.’
- d. *Gemem bwera-vu ran nourour toro.*
1NONGSG.EXCL 1DL.IRR-go GOAL island big
‘We will go to the mainland.’
- e. *Tenemwe-n i-vwelem bitiven nisit nganga’ sevakh.*
husband-3SG 3SG.REAL-come with thing little one
‘Her husband came with a child.’

Examples of the directional verb *vu* ‘thither’ are provided in (5.43) below to illustrate the behaviour of directional verbs in core layer serial constructions. Directional verbs always follow the main verb, which can be either intransitive or transitive. When the main verb is transitive, as in (5.43e), any stated direct object follows immediately after the main verb. This illustrates one of the ways in which core layer serial constructions differ from the more tightly bound nuclear layer serial constructions where the verbs involved in the serial construction cannot be separated by any other arguments.

Only a third person singular prefix can appear on a directional verb. When the main verb carries a realis prefix, the directional serial verb optionally carries a third person singular subject prefix marked for realis as shown in (5.43a), (5.43c), (5.43e) and (5.43f). When the main verb carries an irrealis prefix, the directional verb obligatorily carries a

third person singular subject prefix marked for irrealis mood as shown in (5.43b) and (5.43d).

The third person singular prefix has the function of expressing a general comment or predication and can be described as being rather like a dummy subject in that it doesn't have a specific referent. For example, in (5.43c) the referent for the third person singular subject of the directional verb, *(i)-vu*, is clearly not the same as the referent for the third person plural subject prefix of the main verb *at-gilou*. Likewise, in (5.43d) the referent for the third person singular subject of the directional verb, *ba-vu*, is clearly not the same as the referent for the second person plural subject prefix of the intransitive main verb, *abwit-gilou*. In negated directional serial constructions only the first verb carries the negative simulfix, as shown in example (5.43f). Therefore sequences such as that shown in (5.43g) are not possible in Neve'e.

- (5.43) a. *Nabulmens i-mera' (i)-vu 'out.*
kingfisher 3SG.REAL-fly 3SG.REAL-thither ashore
'The kingfisher flew away to the shore.'
- b. *I-sisi be-mera' ba-vu.*
3SG.REAL-ANTIDESID 3SG.IRR-fly 3SG.IRR-thither
'He didn't want to fly away.'
- c. *Utnen khava-n ar at-vwer at-gilou*
when brother-CONST PL 3PL.REAL-ACTUAL 3PL.REAL-look
(i)-vu yang i-duruv.
3SG.REAL-thither and 3SG.REAL-jump
'While the brothers were actually in the process of looking away,
then he jumped.'
- d. *Abwit-gilou ba-vu abwit-leh nang.*
2PL.IRR-look 3SG.IRR-thither 2PL.IRR-see mother
'Look over there and you will see mother.'
- e. *Ar-takh gegeerah-en noang i-dah*
3DL.REAL-take drag-TRANS canoe 3SG.REAL-go.down
(i)-vu len netah lo.
3SG.REAL-thither GOAL sea below
'They dragged the canoe down there to the sea below.'
- f. *I-sa-vavu-si (i)-vu len niyim.*
3SG.REAL-NEG1-walk-NEG2 3SG.REAL-thither GOAL house
'He didn't walk there to the house.'
- g. **I-vavu i-sa-vu-si*
3SG.REAL-walk 3SG.REAL-NEG1-thither-NEG2

Whereas *vu* 'thither' is used as a directional serial verb to indicate direction away from a point of reference or locational source, *vwelem* 'hither' is used to indicate direction towards a point of reference or locational goal. The verb *wu* 'carry' has the English reading of 'bring (here)' when followed by the directional verb *vwelem* (5.44a) and 'take (there)' when followed by the directional verb *vu* (5.44b).

- (5.44) a. *I-wu na'anian teget (i-)vwelem.*
 3SG.REAL-carry food 1NONGS.INCL.POSS 3SG.REAL-hither
 'She is bringing our food here.'
- b. *Ke-vwelem boro-wu Ø ba-vu len niyim.*
 2SG.IRR-come 1DL.IRR-carry 3SG 3SG.IRR-thither GOAL house
 'Come and we will take it (there) to the house.'

It is also possible for more than one directional verb to follow the first verb in the construction. As shown in the examples in (5.45), the most usual order is for the directional verbs *dah* 'come/go down' or *sa* 'come/go up' to come immediately after the first verb in the serial construction. These are then followed by *vu* 'thither' or *vwelem* 'hither' while the final verb in the construction is *seber* 'go as far as, reach'.

- (5.45) a. *Nabulmens i-gilou (i-)dah (i-)vu*
 kingfisher 3SG.REAL-look 3SG.REAL-go.down 3SG.REAL-thither
sakhan nurukhum.
 GOAL crab
 'The kingfisher looked down (there) towards the crab.'
- b. *I-ruv (i-)vwelem (i-)seber liyim.*
 3SG.REAL-run 3SG.REAL-hither 3SG.REAL-reach home
 'He ran until he reached home here.'

While *dah*, *sa*, *seber*, *vu* and *vwelem*, are the most frequently attested directional verbs, other verbs are also encountered in this kind of construction. In example (5.46), the nuclear serial verb *gah sur* 'go along' is also used as a directional verb where three verbs in sequence *gah sur*, *vu* and *seber* each carry the third person singular irrealis prefix.

- (5.46) *Ar ar-vwer abwera-tubu ba-gah sur*
 3NONGS 3DL.REAL-INTENT 3DL.IRR-race 3SG.IRR-go.along
ba-vu be-seber utnen ar-vwer
 3SG.IRR-thither 3SG.IRR-reach place.where 3DL.REAL-INTENT
abor-nonong-on nge.
 3DL.IRR-finish-TRANS PRO
 'They planned to race along there to reach where they planned to finish it.'

In the examples in (5.47), the verbs *nsaren* 'go past' and *yavyav sur* 'follow' also behave like the directional verbs in the examples above and carry third person singular irrealis prefixes.

- (5.47) a. *Neba-vavu bwe-nsaren nowi.*
 1SG.IRR-walk 3SG.IRR-go.past river
 'I will walk past the river.'
- b. *Neba-vavu bwi-yavyav sur nowi.*
 1SG.IRR-walk 3SG.IRR-follow river
 'I will walk along the river.'

Likewise the verbs *menene* 'like this' and *menenang* 'like that' behave in the same way as the directional verbs above as shown in the examples in (5.48). However, whereas the third person realis prefix of the directional verbs is frequently attested as \emptyset , the third

person realis prefix of *menene* and *menenang* is almost always attested as \emptyset . The final elements of these verbs are the same as the final elements of the proximate and intermediate demonstratives *nene* ‘this’ and *nenang* ‘that’ (§4.2.4).

- (5.48) a. *Natuturmwitiyilian nge i-vu \emptyset -menene.*
 story DEM 3SG.REAL-go 3SG.REAL-like.this
 ‘The story goes like this.’
- b. *Utnen ar-tengev na‘abang nen nivis ter*
 when 3DL.REAL-release rope POSS bow 3NONGS.POSS
 \emptyset -menenang ...
 3SG.REAL-like.that
 ‘When they released the rope of their bows like that ...’

In the examples in (5.49), *menene* and *menenang* carry third person singular irrealis prefixes.

- (5.49) a. *Ki-vi be-menene.*
 2SG.IRR-do 3SG.IRR-like.this
 ‘Do it like this.’
- b. *Khabat i-vwelem i-vwer: ne-se-vwer-si*
 European 3SG.REAL-come 3SG.REAL-say 1SG.REAL-NEG1-say-NEG2
abwer-vweri be-menenang.
 2DL.IRR-say 3SG.IRR-like.that
 ‘The European came and said, “I didn’t say you should both say it like that.”’

6 *Simple sentences*

In this chapter, the structure of simple sentences is described. Firstly, there is a discussion of declarative non-verbal and verbal clauses including the behaviour of core arguments in the clause. This is followed by a discussion of non-core arguments belonging to the clause periphery, such as prepositional phrases and adverbial modifiers. Next, there is a discussion of interrogative clauses and finally, the constituent movement patterns that are attested in Neve‘ei are described.

6.1 Declarative non-verbal clauses

Non-verbal clauses in Neve‘ei are defined here as subject-predicate constructions in which the predicate consists of a noun phrase, a prepositional phrase or a locational phrase. In the examples in (6.1), the subject and the predicate of the non-verbal clause each consists of a noun phrase. Each example can be described as an equational non-verbal clause where the entity specified in the subject of the clause is the same as the entity specified in the predicate.

- (6.1) a. *Nat-n nge nomomokh.*
child-CONST DEM female
‘The child was a girl.’
- b. *Nang ti nemwat toro tuan.*
mother 3SG.POSS snake big INDEF
‘Her mother was a big snake.’

In each of the non-verbal clauses in (6.2), the predicate comprises a complex noun phrase where *etnen* ‘person from’ precedes the name of the place.

- (6.2) a. *Nemelav nge etnen ar Khuduelo.*
twins.of.same.sex DEM person.from PL Khuduelo
‘The twins were from Khuduelo.’
- b. *Nang ter etnen Vinukhukhut.*
mother 3NONSG.POSS person.from Vinukhukhut
‘Their mother was from Vinukhukhut.’

The forms, *ie* ‘here it is, here they are, this thing’ and *iang* ‘there it is, there they are, that thing’ are frequently encountered in the predicate or subject position of non-verbal clauses. In the following example, the noun phrase *nebat nge* ‘the *nebat* vine’ is the subject of the non-verbal clause while the form *ie* ‘here it is’ is the predicate.

- (6.3) *Nebat nge ie.*
nebat.vine DEM here.it.is
 ‘Here is the *nebat* vine.’

In (6.4), the noun phrase *neve‘ei* is the predicate of the non-verbal clause while the form *iang* ‘that thing’ is the subject.

- (6.4) *Neve‘ei iang?*
 What that.thing
 ‘What is that thing?’

When non-verbal clauses are negated, the intransitive verb *sakh* ‘not exist’ or the transitive verb *sakhsakhan* ‘not exist’, carrying an optional third person singular prefix (§3.4.1.1), follows the nominal phrase that is being negated.

- (6.5) a. *Nomomokh nene nang ti numur*
 girl DEM mother 3SG.POSS person
bweradang Ø-sakh.
 real 3SG.REAL-not.exist
 ‘This girl’s mother was not a real person.’
- b. *Ar nat-n ar Ø-sakhsakh-an.*
 3NONSG child-CONST PL 3SG.REAL-not.exist-TRANS
 ‘They didn’t have any children.’

6.2 Declarative verbal clauses

The basic constituent order of verbal clauses in *Neve‘ei* is SVO where the subject precedes the verb in both intransitive and transitive clauses, and the object follows the verb in transitive clauses. Nominal phrases are identified as subjects or objects, not by any overt grammatical marking on the noun phrase but by word order. As information concerning both the person and number of the subject is indexed onto the verb by means of inflectional prefixes (§3.4.1.1), a verb can function alone as a complete clause (6.6).

- (6.6) a. *I-bans.*
 3SG.REAL-wander
 ‘(S)he wandered about.’
- b. *At-dedan.*
 3PL.REAL-dive
 ‘They (all) dived.’

In each of the examples in (6.7), a noun phrase occupies the subject slot of the clause and the categories of person and number of the subject are indexed onto the verb by means of the verbal prefix.

- (6.7) a. *Nabulmens i-mera*‘.
kingfisher 3SG.REAL-fly
‘The kingfisher flew.’
- b. *Libakh i-khan* \emptyset .
dog 3SG.REAL-eat 3SG
‘The dog ate it.’
- c. *Nurukhum nge ar at-khan nabulmens nge*.
crab DEM PL 3PL.REAL-eat kingfisher DEM
‘Those crabs ate the kingfisher.’

In each of the examples in (6.8), the subject noun phrase comprises an independent pronoun (§3.1.1). These independent pronouns are not an obligatory component of the clause, being used instead for emphasis or for contrast.

- (6.8) a. *Gu ke-mera*‘ *ra*‘ai.
2SG 2SG.IRR-fly above
‘You will fly above.’
- b. *No neba-khar-khara*‘ *len netan*.
1SG 1SG.IRR-RED-crawl LOC ground
‘I will crawl on the ground.’

It is also possible for the subject slot to be occupied by both a noun phrase and an independent pronoun, as shown in example (6.9).

- (6.9) *Numur tuan i i-leh nomomokh nge*.
person INDEF 3SG 3SG.REAL-see woman DEM
‘A man saw the woman.’

Unlike many other Oceanic languages (Lynch 1998:141–142), pronominal objects in Neve‘ei are not marked at all by means of verbal suffixes or clitics (§3.4.1).

- (6.10) a. *I-leh gu*.
3SG.REAL-see 2SG
‘(S)he saw you.’
- b. *I-khas no*.
3SG.REAL-bite 1SG
‘It bit me.’

There is a small subset of verbs that are obligatorily reflexive as illustrated by the reflexive verb *deren* ‘surprise’ in example (6.11).

- (6.11) *Nomomokh ti i-deren i*.
wife 3SG.POSS 3SG.REAL-surprise 3SG
‘His wife was surprised.’

Other examples of obligatorily reflexive verbs are *bensbens* ‘happy’, *rus* ‘come undone’, *vilih* ‘turn around’ and *rongrong* ‘have a rest’.

6.2.1 Third person singular pronominal object

In Neve‘ei, the third person singular verbal and prepositional pronominal object is sometimes expressed as \emptyset . In the context of the narrative from which example (6.12) comes, a snake mother is talking to her daughter.

- (6.12) *Ke-takh lowi nebat-n no ka-vu ke-tavin \emptyset .*
 2SG.IRR-take away head-CONST 1SG.POSS 2SG.IRR-go 2SG.IRR-bury 3SG
 ‘You will take away my head and go and bury it.’

On examining the data, it appears that a hierarchy exists in terms of the animacy of such noun referents, with third person singular pronominal objects being expressed as *i* if they are viewed as highly animate and as \emptyset if they are viewed as less animate or inanimate. In example (6.13), the referent of the third person singular pronominal object is the snake’s head, which is viewed by the speaker as being low on the animacy hierarchy. Therefore, the third person singular pronominal object is expressed as \emptyset . In example (6.13), the referent of the third person singular prepositional object is a pawpaw, which is also viewed as being low on the animacy hierarchy. The prepositional object is once again expressed as \emptyset , behaving in the same way as a verbal object.

- (6.13) *Bwer-sesal len \emptyset ba-vu len netah lo.*
 1DL.IRR-float LOC 3SG 3SG.IRR-thither GOAL sea below
 ‘We will float in it (the pawpaw) down there to the sea below.’

In example (6.14), however, where the noun referent is human, the third person singular pronominal object is expressed as *i*.

- (6.14) *Utnen i-tokh i-bans numur at-tokh*
 when 3SG.REAL-HAB 3SG.REAL-wander person 3PL.REAL-HAB
at-leh i.
 3PL.REAL-see 3SG
 ‘When she used to walk about people would see her.’

6.2.2 Clauses containing partitive NPs

Subject and object nominal phrases in Neve‘ei can also consist of a ‘partitive’ construction where the nominal phrase consists of two elements, the first of which expresses ‘a group’ and the second of which expresses ‘a part’ of that group. This construction has implications at the level of the clause in that the subject marker that is prefixed to the verb always has the same categories of number and person as the constituent expressing the part.

In example (6.15), the subject of the clause is a partitive construction in which a non-singular constituent *get* ‘we, us’ expresses the group, and a singular constituent *tuan* ‘some, a, one of’ expresses the part. The third person subject marker, which is prefixed to the verb, is singular in number agreeing with *tuan*.

- (6.15) *Get tuan i-bus ...*
 1NONSG.INCL INDEF 3SG.REAL-talk
 ‘One of us talks ...’

The constituent expressing the whole can also be a noun, as shown in example (6.16) where the noun *khavan* is followed by the plural postmodifier *ar*, while the constituent expressing the part is a singular determiner *tuan*. Once again, the third person subject marker prefixed to the verb agrees in number with the singular determiner.

- (6.16) *Khava-n ar tuan i-vwelem.*
 brother-CONST PL INDEF 3SG.REAL-come
 ‘One of his brothers came.’

In each example in (6.17), the constituent representing the whole is a non-singular independent pronoun while the constituent expressing the part is a numeral, *sevakh* ‘one’, *iru* ‘two’ and *itl* ‘three’ respectively. In each example, the third person subject marker prefixed to the verb agrees in number with the constituent expressing the part.

- (6.17) a. *Gem sevakh ba-vu.*
 2NONGSG one 3SG.IRR-go
 ‘One of you will go.’
- b. *Get iru ar-malili.*
 1NONGSG.INCL two 3DL.REAL-return
 ‘Two of us returned.’
- c. *Get itl at-malili.*
 1NONGSG.INCL three 3PL.REAL-return
 ‘Three of us returned.’

As illustrated in (6.18), the part can also be expressed by a plural quantifier, in which case both the part and the whole are non-singular in number. However, once again it is understood that the categories of person and number indexed onto the verb by means of the inflectional prefix are those of the constituent expressing the part. In (6.18c) both the subject nominal phrase and the object nominal phrase are partitive constructions.

- (6.18) a. *Nurukhum nge ar mamah at-vwelem.*
 crab DEM PL every 3PL.REAL-come
 ‘Every crab came.’
- b. *Ar tuan ar abwit-tokh.*
 3NONGSG some 3PL.IRR-stay
 ‘Some of them will stay.’
- c. *Ar tuan ar at-khus ar teli ar.*
 3NONGSG some 3PL.REAL-kill 3NONGSG another PL
 ‘Some of them killed some of the others.’

In each of the examples in (6.19), the partitive nominal phrase is the object of the verb. As shown in these examples, the order of the constituents within the partitive construction is the same both when the nominal phrase functions as the object of the verb and when it functions as the subject.

- (6.19) a. *I-takh natitimwen ter sevakh.*
 3SG.REAL-take boy 3NONGSG.POSS one
 ‘She took one of their boys.’

- b. *Nebwe-takh do nebem nene ar tuan.*
 1SG.IRR-take hit butterfly DEM PL INDEF
 ‘I will catch one of these butterflies.’
- c. *Nibwi-nsimwi nebat tegem tuan.*
 1SG.IRR-chew nebat.vine 2NONGSG.POSS INDEF
 ‘I will chew one of your *nebat* vines.’

6.3 Prepositional phrases

Whereas subjects and objects constitute the core arguments of the clause, prepositional phrases are used to express non-core arguments of the clause, such as oblique objects, temporal and locational constituents, along with adverbial modifiers. As illustrated by the examples in (6.20) prepositional phrases, which consist of a preposition followed by a nominal phrase, follow the verb and any object noun phrase that is present.

- (6.20) a. *I-vweri en gu.*
 3SG.REAL-say GOAL 2SG
 ‘He told you.’
- b. *I-mwa’am ran nevat.*
 3SG.REAL-sit LOC rock
 ‘He sat on the rock.’
- c. *No-to nedam ran nevetevat.*
 1SG.REAL-put yam LOC platform
 ‘I put the yams on the platform.’

6.3.1 Prepositions

Prepositions in Neve‘ei constitute a closed class of forms as presented in Table 6.1. In this section, each of the prepositions presented in Table 6.1 is discussed and examples are provided.

Table 6.1: Prepositions

Preposition	Semantic role	Translation
<i>bitiv(en)</i>	accompanitive, instrumental	‘with’
<i>en</i>	goal, location, instrumental	‘to, at, over, amongst, with’
<i>khawes</i>	location	‘across’
<i>len</i>	location, goal, source	‘in, to, from, at (time), on (day)’
<i>minmin</i>	similative	‘like, as’
<i>nsensan</i>	location	‘near, close to, beside’
<i>ran</i>	location, goal, source	‘on, at, to, from’
<i>sakhan</i>	location, goal, source	‘near, beside, to, from’
<i>vevan</i>	location	‘beneath, under’
<i>wal</i>	cause, benefactive	‘because of, for’

The preposition *bitiv*, alternating freely with *bitiven*, is used to indicate the accompanitive and instrumental roles as shown in the following examples.

- (6.21) a. *I-vwelem bitiven nisit nganga' sevakh.*
 3SG.REAL-come ACCOMP thing small one
 'He came with one child.'
- b. *I-teri na'ansemwe-n nakhankhan nge bitiven nobongo-n.*
 3SG.REAL-cut stalk-CONST pawpaw DEM INST beak-3SG
 'He (the kingfisher) cut the stalk of the pawpaw with his beak.'

In (6.22), the prepositional phrase is introduced by *len nemweran* 'in the middle' which is followed by the noun phrase *netah* 'the sea' and then *bitiven* precedes the noun phrase *nubutuan* 'the hill'.

- (6.22) *Niyim i-tokh len nemwer-an netah bitiven nubutuan.*
 house 3SG.REAL-exist LOC middle-CONST sea ACCOMP hill
 'The house is between the sea and the hill.'

The oblique preposition *en*, which has the same shape as the major allomorph of the transitive suffix *-Vn* (§3.4.4.2), is used to mark a wide range of semantic roles, examples of which are provided below. In the examples in (6.23), *en* indicates the recipient of an utterance.

- (6.23) a. *I-vwer-vwer sur natuturmwitiyilian nge en no.*
 3SG.REAL-RED-say about story DEM GOAL 1SG
 'He told the story to me.'
- b. *Ku-wuswus en numurwan liyim.*
 2SG.IRR-ask GOAL someone at.home
 'You will ask someone at home.'

The preposition *en* can also indicate the undergoer of a happening.

- (6.24) a. *Nusutwan i-tokh i-minsal en ar.*
 something 3SG.REAL-HAB 3SG.REAL-happen GOAL 3NONGSG
 'Something would happen to them.'
- b. *Abwit-tovu abit-vi nusutwan en nomomokh nge*
 3PL.IRR-go 3PL.IRR-do something GOAL girl DEM
nang ti.
 mother 3SG.POSS
 'They would go and do something to the girl's mother.'

The preposition *en* can also be used to indicate the spatial location of an event.

- (6.25) a. *Nulung netah i-dan en ar.*
 wave 3SG.REAL-go.down LOC 3NONGSG
 'The wave went down over them.'
- b. *At-dongdongon en ar.*
 3PL.REAL-share.out LOC 3NONGSG
 'They shared it out amongst themselves.'

In the examples in (6.26), *en* indicates the instrument by which an action is performed, a function which can also be marked by *bitiv(en)*.

- (6.26) a. *Noang nge ar-vi im en nakhankhan.*
 canoe DEM 3DL.REAL-make just INST pawpaw
 ‘They made the canoe just out of pawpaw.’
- b. *I-lu lowi nimin ran na'ai en nivi ti.*
 3SG.REAL-shoot out bird SOURCE tree INST rifle 3SG.POSS
 ‘He shot the bird out of the tree with his rifle.’

The form *khawes* is found both as a nuclear serial verb ‘go across’ (§5.1.1) and as the preposition ‘across’ with no apparent difference in meaning as shown in the examples in (6.27).

- (6.27) a. *Ne-sa-vavu khawes-si nowi.*
 1SG.REAL-NEG1-walk go.across-NEG2 river
 ‘I didn’t walk across the river.’
- b. *Ne-sa-vavu-si khawes nowi.*
 1SG.REAL-NEG1-walk-NEG2 across river
 ‘I didn’t walk across the river.’

The preposition *len* marks a number of spatial semantic roles and is usually followed by a noun phrase that has a non-human referent. In the examples in (6.28), *len* indicates the location in which an event or activity takes place.

- (6.28) a. *Nisit nganga' i-matur len niyim.*
 thing little 3SG.REAL-sleep LOC house
 ‘The child is sleeping inside the house.’
- b. *Mokhtoro i-leh nimivial len netah.*
 old.woman 3SG.REAL-see seasnake LOC sea
 ‘The old woman saw the seasnake in the sea.’
- c. *Nabung merah i-sesal len netah.*
 pumice 3SG.REAL-float LOC sea
 ‘The pumice is floating on the sea.’

In the examples in (6.29), *len* indicates the goal or place to which an event or activity is moving whereas in (6.30) *len* indicates the source or place from which the event or activity originates. The semantics of the verbs and the context of the discourse of each example make the particular roles of *len* clear.

- (6.29) a. *Nen lam i-dah i-vu len netah lo.*
 REL big 3SG.REAL-go.down 3SG.REAL-thither GOAL sea below
 ‘The big one went down to the sea below.’
- b. *I-mera' len nukhut-n nubu nge.*
 3SG.REAL-fly GOAL clump-CONST bamboo DEM
 ‘It flew into the clump of bamboo.’

- (6.30) *Na-khal lowi nedam len noal.*
 1SG.REAL-dig out yam SOURCE hole
 ‘I dug the yam out of the hole.’

In (6.31), *len* indicates the time at which an event takes place.

- (6.31) *Ke-vwelem len Tuste.*
 2SG.IRR-come TIME Tuesday
 ‘Come on Tuesday.’

In (6.32) *minmin* functions as a preposition expressing a simulative semantic role. It can also function as a conjunction (§7.3.3) and as a hesitation device or filler (§7.5.4).

- (6.32) a. *Numur nenang i-vavu minmin nomomokh.*
 person DEM 3SG.REAL-walk SIM woman
 ‘That person walks like a woman.’
- b. *No-rogulel nibwi-yel minmin numur nenang.*
 1SG.REAL-ABIL 1SG.IRR-sing SIM person DEM
 ‘I can sing like that man.’

The preposition *nsensan* is used to indicate the location in which an event or activity takes place with the specific meaning of ‘near, close to, beside’. It is followed by noun phrases with human referents as well as by those with non-human referents. In each of the following examples *nsensan* follows the verb *vavu* ‘walk’.

- (6.33) a. *Na-vavu nsensan nowi.*
 1SG.REAL-walk beside river
 ‘I walked beside the river.’
- b. *Na-vavu nsensan gu.*
 1SG.REAL-walk beside 2SG
 ‘I walked beside you.’

The preposition *ran* seems to mark the same range of semantic roles as *len* and is also followed by noun phrases that have non-human referents. In the following examples, *ran* indicates the location in which an event or activity takes place.

- (6.34) a. *Ne-mwa’am ran nevat.*
 1SG.REAL-sit LOC rock
 ‘I sat on the rock.’
- b. *I-lakh ran netal-n mi nevera-n.*
 3SG.REAL-hang LOC leg-3SG and arm-3SG
 ‘He hung on his legs and arms.’
- c. *At-tokh ran nourour nganga’.*
 3PL.REAL-live LOC island little
 ‘They lived on a little island.’

In the examples in (6.35), *ran* indicates the goal or place to which the event or activity is moving whereas in (6.36) *ran* indicates the source or place from which the event or activity originates.

- (6.35) a. *Gemem bwera-vu ran nourour toro.*
 1NONGS.EXCL 1DL.IRR-go GOAL island big
 ‘We will go to the mainland.’
- b. *I-vwer i-gilou Ø-dah ran*
 3SG.REAL-ACTUAL 3SG.REAL-look 3SG.REAL-go.down GOAL
nukhut-n na'ai nge.
 base-CONST tree DEM
 ‘He looked down at the base of the tree.’
- (6.36) *Khava-n i-tubu Ø-vu ran netah*
 brother-3SG 3SG.REAL-run 3SG.REAL-thither SOURCE reef
lo Ø-vwelem.
 below 3SG.REAL-hither
 ‘His brother ran away from the reef below to here.’

The preposition *sakhan* marks some of the same semantic roles as *len* and *ran*. When *sakhan* is used to indicate the location in which an event or activity takes place, it is followed by noun phrases with human referents as well as those with non-human referents and usually has the English translation of ‘near’ or ‘beside’.

- (6.37) a. *I-vwelem i-mwa'am sakhan tabi-n.*
 3SG.REAL-come 3SG.REAL-sit LOC grandfather-3SG
 ‘He came and sat beside his grandfather.’
- b. *Ar-seber Khuduelo utnang sakhan nevat toro tuan*
 3DL.REAL-reach Khuduelo there LOC rock big INDEF
len noal.
 LOC creek
 ‘They reached Khuduelo (place name) there beside a big rock in the creek.’

Whereas *len* and *ran* are followed by noun phrases with non-human referents, when used to mark goal or source, *sakhan* is usually followed by noun phrases which have human referents or animal referents endowed with human attributes. In the following examples, *sakhan* indicates the goal of a spoken utterance. The prepositions *sakhan* and *en* (§6.3.10) can be used interchangeably here.

- (6.38) a. *I-vwer-vwer sur natuturmwitiyilian nge sakhan no.*
 3SG.REAL-RED-say about story DEM GOAL 1SG
 ‘He told the story to me.’
- b. *I-mera' i-vivireh i-vu sakhan*
 3SG.REAL-INCEP 3SG.REAL-call 3SG.REAL-thither GOAL
nabulmens nge.
 kingfisher DEM
 ‘Then he called to the kingfisher.’

In the following examples, *sakhan* is used to indicate the goal for noun phrases with human referents.

- (6.39) a. *Nene i-vwer-vwer bisa Ø-medang nani*
 DEM 3SG.REAL-RED-say clear 3SG.REAL-how coconut
i-vwelem sakhān get.
 3SG.REAL-come GOAL 1NONGS.INCL
 ‘This one (this story) explains how the coconut came to us.’
- b. *I-va-vavu Ø-vu sakhān nomomokh ti.*
 3SG.REAL-RED-walk 3SG.REAL-thither GOAL wife 3SG.POSS
 ‘He walked away to his wife.’

In (6.40), *sakhān* indicates the source from which the event or activity originates. The noun phrase following *sakhān* has a human referent.

- (6.40) *No-rong sakhān nat-n no utnen nous bo-vov.*
 1SG.REAL-hear SOURCE child-CONST 1SG COMPL rain 3SG.IRR-rain
 ‘I heard from my child that it will rain.’

In (6.41), *sakhān* indicates someone’s place or home.

- (6.41) *I-to Ø sakhān Manu.*
 3SG.REAL-put 3SG LOC Manu
 ‘(S)he put it at Manu’s place.’

The preposition *vevan* expresses the location ‘beneath, under’ as illustrated in the examples in (6.42). However, as shown in (6.42c), this preposition is unusual in that, when it has a first person singular or a second person singular pronominal object, it can also behave like a directly possessed noun with the root *veva-* (§3.1.1).

- (6.42) a. *Nevat i-tokh vevan na‘ai.*
 rock 3SG.REAL-exist under tree
 ‘The rock is under the tree.’
- b. *Nevat i-tokh vevan no.*
 rock 3SG.REAL-exist under 1SG
 ‘The rock is under me.’
- c. *Nevat i-tokh veva-ng.*
 rock 3SG.REAL-exist under-1SG
 ‘The rock is under me.’

In (6.43) the form *wal* functions as a preposition expressing causal and benefactive semantic roles. This form can also function as a conjunction (§7.3.3).

- (6.43) a. *I-mesa‘ wal nenam.*
 3SG.REAL-sick CAUSE mosquito
 ‘He is sick from the mosquitoes.’
- b. *I-takh niakh tuan wal khava-n.*
 3SG.REAL-catch fish INDEF BEN brother-3SG
 ‘He caught a fish for his brother.’

6.3.2 Complex prepositions

The prepositions *en*, *len* and *ran* are frequently encountered in complex prepositions involving an initial adverbial form and a following noun phrase. As shown in the examples in (6.44), when an adverbial, such as *bukhut*, is followed by a noun phrase, the preposition *len* obligatorily stands between that adverbial form and the noun phrase.

- (6.44) a. *Netah bwe-vwelem bukhut.*
 sea 3SG.IRR-come inside
 ‘The sea will come inside.’
- b. *Netah bwe-vwelem bukhut len noang.*
 sea 3SG.IRR-come inside LOC canoe
 ‘The sea will come inside the canoe.’
- c. **Netah bwe-vwelen bukhut noang.*
 sea 3SG.IRR-come inside canoe

Examples of other complex prepositions are *lili en* ‘near’, *nsemweh en* ‘far from’ and *ra’ai ran* ‘above’.

6.4 Adverbial modifiers

Adverbs in Neve‘ei constitute a closed class of forms that usually function as temporal or locational modifiers. Most adverbial forms modify the whole clause and are attested in clause-initial or clause-final positions. However, there is also a small number of adverbial forms which are structurally less constrained. These forms are used both to modify an entire clause, where they are attested in clause-initial and clause-final positions as well as to modify verbs and non-core arguments such as adverbial and locational forms. In the following sections, those adverbial forms which are attested in clause-initial and clause-final positions will be discussed first, followed by a discussion of adverbial forms which are attested in more diverse structural positions.

6.4.1 Clause-initial and clause-final adverbs

In the following examples, the temporal adverbs *tokhi* ‘always’, *marnang* ‘now’ and *itiang* ‘then, at that time’ are attested in clause-initial position.

- (6.45) a. *Tokhi utnen ar-tokh ara-vu len niar nge ...*
 always when 3DL.REAL-HAB 3DL.REAL-go GOAL garden DEM
 ‘Always when they would go to the garden ...’
- b. *Marnang nobo-to gu len nemeta-n nelang.*
 now 1SG.IRR-put 2SG LOC eye-CONST pudding
 ‘Now I will put you in the middle of the pudding.’
- c. *Itiang ar-dah-i nsan tuan netah.*
 at.that.time 3DL.REAL-go.down-COMP side INDEF sea
 ‘At that time they had already gone down on the coast (on the other side of the island).’

In the next set of examples, the temporal modifiers *itie* ‘now, nowadays’ and *tukhoi* ‘long ago’ are attested in clause-final position.

- (6.46) a. *Natuturmwitiyilian nen nebwe-vwer-vwer sur itie ...*
 story REL 1SG.IRR-RED-say about now
 ‘The story, which I will tell now ...’
- b. *Utmen u-sa‘ ra‘ai utnang tukhoi ...*
 when 2SG.REAL-go.up above there long ago
 ‘When you climbed up above there (on the mountain) long ago ...’

In addition to the temporal adverbs illustrated above, temporal phrases which function adverbially, such as *va‘asevakh* ‘once’, *amweran tuan* ‘once upon a time’ and *nabung tuan* ‘once’ are also frequently attested in clause-initial position. There is also a group of temporal adverbs that express days calculated from the present as shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Temporal adverbs

Days calculated from the present	
<i>marnang</i>	‘now, today’
<i>meran</i>	‘tomorrow, the next day’
<i>meran nen</i>	‘the next day’
<i>uah</i>	‘in two days’ time’
<i>madl</i>	‘in three days’ time’
<i>tenev</i>	‘yesterday’
<i>tenoah</i>	‘day before yesterday’
<i>bungnitl</i>	‘three days ago’

Other adverbial forms which are attested in clause-initial and clause-final positions are the place adverbials that provide a locational reference for the clause and make a distinction between proximate, intermediate and distant categories. The final elements of these forms are identical to the final elements of the demonstratives *nene* ‘this’, *nenang* ‘that’ and *nenokhoi* ‘that over there’ (§4.2.4). The place adverbials are presented in Table 6.3, where each adverbial has two forms, the second of which consists of the form *utnen* ‘place where’ followed by the proximate, intermediate or distant locational form *ie*, *iang* or *yokhoi* respectively.

Table 6.3: Place adverbials

Proximate	Intermediate	Distant
<i>utne/utnen ie</i> ‘here’ (near the speaker)	<i>utnang/utnen iang</i> ‘there’ (near the addressee)	<i>utnokhoi/utnen yokhoi</i> ‘over there’ (away from both speaker and addressee)

In each of the following examples, a place adverbial appears in clause-final position functioning as a non-core argument.

- (6.47) a. *Tokhi utnen get er-vwelem utne ...*
 always when 1NONGS.INCL 1DL.REAL-come here
 ‘Always when we come here ...’
- b. *Abor-tokh drong utnen ie.*
 2DL.IRR-stay keep.on.doing here
 ‘Just stay here.’
- c. *Ar-to nivis nge ar utnang.*
 3DL.REAL-put bow DEM PL there
 ‘They put the bows there.’
- d. *Nedam i-mour utnokhoi.*
 yam 3SG.REAL-grow there
 ‘The yam grows over there.’

As shown in the next example, place adverbials are also encountered in clause-initial position.

- (6.48) *Utne i-moul.*
 here 3SG.REAL-bad
 ‘Here (in this place) it is bad.’

The forms in Table 6.3 can also be used in combination with the adverbs *ra'ai* ‘above’ and *retan* ‘below’ to provide a location in relation to a vertical position. In Table 6.4 the three locations are expressed from a high position such as when speaking from the top of a hill or tree and also from a low position such as when speaking from the bottom of a hill or tree.

Table 6.4: Place adverbials showing vertical position

Proximate	Intermediate	Distant
<i>ra'ai utne /</i> <i>ra'ai utnen ie</i> ‘up here’	<i>retan utnang /</i> <i>retan utnen iang</i> ‘down there’	<i>retan utnokhoi /</i> <i>retan utnen yokhoi</i> ‘way down there’
<i>retan utne /</i> <i>retan utnen ie</i> ‘down here’	<i>ra'ai utnang /</i> <i>ra'ai utnen iang</i> ‘up there’	<i>ra'ai utnokhoi /</i> <i>ra'ai utnen yokhoi</i> ‘way up there’

While *ra'ai* is the only form attested to express the meaning ‘above’ the two forms *retan* and *lo* are both frequently attested to express the meaning ‘below’. Whereas *retan* is used to describe a position directly below the speaker as listed in Table 6.4, *lo* is used specifically for ‘down below to the coast’.

- (6.49) *Nen lam i-dah i-vu len netah lo.*
 REL big 3SG.REAL-go.down 3SG.REAL-thither GOAL sea below
 ‘The big one (brother) went down there to the sea below.’

The locational forms *ie* ‘this here’ and *iang* ‘that there’, and the temporal adverbs *itie* ‘now, at this time’ and *itiang* ‘then, at that time’, have both proximate and intermediate forms with the same final elements as the proximate and intermediate demonstratives *nene* ‘this’ and *nenang* ‘that’ (§4.2.4).

forms with the same final elements as the proximate and intermediate demonstratives *nene* ‘this’ and *nenang* ‘that’ (§4.2.4).

6.4.2 Structurally diverse adverbs

In addition to the adverbial forms described above which modify the whole clause and are attested in clause-initial and clause-final positions, there is another group of adverbial forms which are attested in more diverse positions where they are used to modify verbs as well as non-core arguments such as adverbial and locational forms. Examples of these structurally diverse adverbs are presented in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5: Structurally diverse adverbs

Structurally diverse adverbs	
<i>im</i>	‘only, just’
<i>tebar</i>	‘after, then, just’
<i>bwer</i>	‘possibly, maybe’
<i>lieh</i>	‘again, also’
<i>lili</i>	‘almost, nearly, soon’

In each of the following examples, *im* ‘only, just’ indicates that the action of the preceding verb is limited or confined to the referent or location of the following prepositional phrase, adverb or locational expression. The form *im* is often cliticised as *-Vm*. Therefore, *i-nonong im* ‘it just finishes’ alternates with *i-nonong-om* and *i-revakh im* ‘it’s just all right’ alternates with *i-revakh-am*.

- (6.50) a. *Etnen nebwe-vveri im en gu ...*
 thing 1SG.IRR-say just GOAL 2SG
 ‘What I will say just to you ...’
- b. *... no nibwi-titinih im bitiven nivis nge veri.*
 1SG 1SG.IRR-play just ACCOMP bow DEM outside
 ‘... I will just play with my bow outside.’
- c. *Naturmwitiyilian nge i-nonong im utnang.*
 story DEM 3SG.REAL-finish just there
 ‘The story finishes right there.’
- d. *No neba-vu nebe-bans im ‘out.*
 1SG 1SG.IRR-go 1SG.IRR-wander just ashore.
 ‘I will go and wander about just ashore.’

The adverbial form *tebar* ‘after, then, just’ is frequently attested before the verb.

- (6.51) a. *Nomomokh nen tebar i-vwelem nge ...*
 woman REL just 3SG.REAL-come PRO
 ‘The woman who has just come ...’
- b. *Tebar im at-suli mah-an niar nge.*
 just only 3PL.REAL-burn finish.doing-TRANS garden DEM
 ‘They have just finished burning the garden.’

- c. *Tebar nebwe-vwelat.*
 after 1SG.IRR-come
 ‘I will come later.’

The adverb *bwer* ‘possibly, maybe’, which is also encountered as a filler or a hesitation device (§7.5.4), is usually encountered in clause-initial position but can also precede another adverbial form.

- (6.52) a. *Bwer nebwe-vwelat len na‘anian.*
 maybe 1SG.IRR-come GOAL party
 ‘Maybe I will come to the party.’
- b. *Bwer nous bo-so-vov-si.*
 maybe rain 3SG.IRR-NEG1-rain-NEG2
 ‘Maybe it won’t rain.’
- c. *Bwer marnang ko-tokh-tokh drong neba-vu*
 maybe now 2SG.IRR-RED-stay keep.on.doing 1SG.IRR-go
nebwe-leleh ...
 1SG.IRR-have.a.look
 ‘Maybe now you will just wait and I will go and have a look ...’

As mentioned previously (§5.1), some forms which function as serial verbs are also attested in syntactic positions more commonly occupied by adverbs. For example, *lieh* ‘again’ behaves as a serial verb in (6.53a) and as an adverbial in (6.53b).

- (6.53) a. *I-so-rogu^{le} lieh mo-si ba-tur.*
 3SG.REAL-NEG1-ABIL again do.any.more-NEG2 3SG.IRR-stand
 ‘He couldn’t stand any more.’
- b. *Nen itie ni-yangwal nebwe-vwer-vwer sur natuturmwitiyilian*
 REL now 1SG.REAL-DESID 1SG.IRR-RED-say about story
tuan lieh.
 INDEF again
 ‘Now I want to tell a story again.’

The form *mo* ‘first’ behaves as a serial verb in (6.53a) and (6.54a) as an adverbial in (6.54b).

- (6.54) a. *Ar-se-leh mo-si ar.*
 3DL.REAL-NEG1-see do.any.more-NEG2 3NONGS
 ‘They didn’t see them any more.’
- b. *Gu mo.*
 2SG first
 ‘You (go) first.’

The form *lili* behaves as a serial verb, ‘near’ in (6.55a) and as an adverbial, ‘almost, nearly, soon’ in a complex preposition construction (§6.3.11) in (6.55b) with no apparent change in meaning.

(6.55) a. *Niyim i-so-tokh lili-si en netah.*
 house 3SG.REAL-NEG1-stay near-NEG2 LOC sea
 ‘The house isn’t near the sea.’

b. *Niyim i-so-tokh-si lili en netah.*
 house 3SG.REAL-NEG1-stay-NEG2 nearly LOC sea
 ‘The house isn’t near the sea.’

The form *lili* is also used adverbially with reference to time where it means ‘soon’ as shown in the following example.

(6.56) *Lili abwit-suli niar nge.*
 soon 3PL.IRR-burn garden DEM
 ‘They will burn the garden soon.’

6.5 Locationals

Locational nouns form a subgroup of nominals in Neve‘ei on the grounds that they are used to express locational objects or goals without a preceding preposition. In (6.57a), the non-locational noun *netah* ‘sea’ is preceded by the preposition *len* while in (6.57b) the locational noun ‘*out* ‘ashore’ is not.

(6.57) a. *Neba-vu len netah.*
 1SG.IRR-go GOAL sea
 ‘I will go to the sea.’

b. *Neba-vu ‘out.*
 1SG.IRR-go ashore
 ‘I will go ashore.’

In (6.58) the forms *nsan* ‘side’ and *loal* ‘north’ can also be described as locational nouns.

(6.58) *Ara-vu nsan loal nen nene.*
 3DL.REAL-go side north of DEM
 ‘They went on the side to the north of this.’

Likewise, institutionalised place names in Neve‘ei function as locational nouns and cannot therefore be preceded by a preposition.

(6.59) *Neba-vu Norsup.*
 1SG.IRR-go Norsup
 ‘I will go to Norsup.’
 **Neba-vu len Norsup.*
 1SG.IRR-go GOAL Norsup

A number of pronominal forms in Neve‘ei provide a locational reference for the clause making a distinction between proximate, intermediate and distant categories. The forms presented in Table 6.6 are called inanimate locationals, in that each refers to the particular location or position of an inanimate object in relation to the speaker and addressee. The final elements of each of these forms are similar in shape to the place adverbials presented in Table 6.3 and each also has two forms. In the case of the inanimate locationals, the

distant locational form, *ie*, *iang* and *yokhoi* respectively. These forms function as nominals in both subject and object position.

Table 6.6: Inanimate locationals

Proximate	Intermediate	Distant
<i>etne/etnen ie</i> 'this thing here' (near the speaker)	<i>etnang/etnen iang</i> 'that thing there' (near the addressee)	<i>etnokhoi/etnen yokhoi</i> 'that thing over there' (away from both speaker and addressee)

In the following example, the proximate locational form is encountered as the subject of the adjectival verb *nganga* 'small'.

- (6.60) *Etne i-nganga*'.
this.thing.here 3SG.REAL-small
'This thing is small.'

In (6.61), the intermediate locational form is encountered as the object of the verb *rong* 'hear'. In this example, the locational form is followed by the plural postmodifier *ar*.

- (6.61) *At-rong drong-on ar etnang ar itie*.
3PL.REAL-hear keep.on.doing-TRANS 3NONSG that.thing.there PL now
'They still hear them, those things now.'

The forms presented in Table 6.7 are described as animate locationals, in that each form refers to the particular location or position of a person in relation to the speaker and addressee. The final elements of each of these forms are similar in shape to the forms presented in Table 6.3 and Table 6.6. These forms function as nominals in both subject and object position.

Table 6.7: Animate locationals

Proximate	Intermediate	Distant
<i>netene</i> 'this person here' (near the speaker)	<i>netenang</i> 'that person there' (near the addressee)	<i>netenokhoi</i> 'that person over there' (away from speaker and addressee)

In (6.62), the intermediate locational form, *netenang* is attested in a possessive construction, which functions as object of the verb *leh* 'see'.

- (6.62) *I-leh netenang nge nang ti*.
3SG.REAL-see that.person.there DEM mother 3SG.POSS
'He saw that person's mother.'

6.6 Interrogative clauses

6.6.1 Polar questions

There are three ways to ask polar questions in Neve'ei. The simplest structure involves a normal declarative clause with rising intonation to indicate that this is a question.

- (6.63) *Gu ka-vu len niyim?*
 2SG 2SG.IRR-go GOAL house
 'Are you going to the house?'

The second way of asking a polar question involves a declarative clause structure which is followed by the discourse marker *ang* or *si medang* 'or how'.

- (6.64) a. *Gu ka-vu len niyim ang?*
 2SG 2SG.IRR-go GOAL house DISC
 'Are you going to the house?'
- b. *Gu ka-vu len niyim si Ø-medang?*
 2SG 2SG.IRR-go GOAL house or 3SG.REAL-how
 'Are you going to the house?'

The third way to ask a polar question is to use a negated declarative clause with question intonation. As shown in (6.65b) and (6.65c) it is not possible to follow a negated declarative clause question with *ang* or *si medang*.

- (6.65) a. *Gu ke-sa-vu-si len niyim?*
 2SG 2SG.IRR-NEG1-go-NEG2 GOAL house
 'Aren't you going to the house?'
- b. **Gu ke-sa-vu-si len niyim ang?*
 2SG 2SG.IRR-NEG1-go-NEG2 GOAL house DISC
- c. **Gu ke-sa-vu-si len niyim si Ø-medang?*
 2SG 2SG.IRR-NEG1-go-NEG2 GOAL house or 3SG.REAL-how

Alternative questions are asked using declarative clauses linked by the conjunction *si* 'or'.

- (6.66) *I-mour si i-mah?*
 3SG.REAL-alive or 3SG.REAL-dead
 'Is it alive or is it dead?'

The following answers can be provided for all of the polar question types described above.

- (6.67) a. *E'eng.*
 'Yes'.
- b. *(N)ahau.*
 'No' (in answer to a question framed in the affirmative).
 'Yes' (in answer to a question framed in the negative).
- c. *Sa'adem.*
 'Not yet.'

- d. *Ne-delang-an.*
1SG.REAL-not.know-TRANS
'I don't know.'
- e. *Ne-delang dem-en.*
1SG.REAL-not know still.do-TRANS
'I don't know yet.'

There is also a recent loan item *ehe* 'no', which reportedly comes from a Malakula language which as yet has not been identified. This form is equivalent in meaning and use to the form (*n*)*ahau*.

6.6.2 Content questions

The interrogatives, *neve*'*ei* 'what', its short form *neve*, and *nei* 'who', are singular nominal phrases. In the examples in (6.68), these interrogatives occur in the usual subject position in front of the verb and the verb carries a third person singular prefix marker.

- (6.68) a. *Neve*'*ei i-vi na'am nge?*
what 3SG.REAL-make fire DEM
'What caused the fire?'
- b. *Nei i-leh gu?*
who 3SG.REAL-see 2SG
'Who saw you?'

In (6.69), *neve*'*ei* and *nei* occur in the usual object position following the verb.

- (6.69) a. *U-leh neve*'*ei?*
2SG.REAL-see what
'What did you see?'
- b. *U-leh nei?*
2SG.REAL-see who
'Who did you see?'

Both *neve*'*ei* and *nei* can be followed by the plural marker *ar*, as shown in the following examples.

- (6.70) a. *Neve*'*ei ar ie?*
what PL this.thing
'What are these things?'
- b. *Nei ar ie?*
who PL this.person
'Who are these people?'

As shown in the following examples, the interrogative forms *neve*'*ei* 'what', *ve*'*ei* and *ve* can be used to follow the nominal phrase in equational questions.

- (6.71) a. *Negensa-n gu neve*'*ei?*
name-CONST 2SG.POSS what
'What is your name?'

- b. *Nabung ve'ei?*
 day what
 'What day is it?'
- c. *Nomot ve ie?*
 excrement what here.it.is
 'What excrement is this?'

In the following example, the relativiser *nen* (§4.2.8) comes between the noun and the interrogative.

- (6.72) *U-yangwal buk nge nen neve'ei?*
 2SG.REAL-want book DEM REL what
 'What book do you want?'

In the following examples, the interrogatives, *giev* 'where' and *gensan* 'when', come at the end of the clause.

- (6.73) a. *U-vu giev?*
 2SG.REAL-go where
 'Where are you going?'
- b. *Abwit-vwelem gensan?*
 3PL.IRR-come when
 'When will they come?'

The interrogative meaning 'why' is expressed in a phrase consisting of the causal preposition *wal* followed by either *neve'ei* 'what' or *medang* 'how'. As shown in the following examples, these interrogatives can occur at the beginning or at the end of the clause.

- (6.74) a. *Wal neve'ei u-suli niyim nge?*
 CAUSE what 2SG.REAL-burn house DEM
 'Why did you burn the house?'
- b. *U-suli niyim nge wal neve'ei?*
 2SG.REAL-burn house DEM CAUSE what
 'Why did you burn the house?'
- c. *Wal medang u-ngang-an no Ø-menenang?*
 CAUSE 2SG.REAL-laugh-TRANS 1SG 3SG.REAL-like.that
 'Why are you laughing at me like that?'

As previously discussed, while the numerals no longer function as stative verbs in the realis mood, they do still function as verbs in the irrealis mood (§3.3.1). The interrogative 'how much/how many' is also verbal in form but while there is both a realis form *i-vis* and an irrealis form *ba-vis*, these verbal interrogatives only ever occur with a third person singular prefix, irrespective of whether the noun concerned is singular or plural. As shown in the following examples, *i-vis* and *ba-vis* appear straight after the noun phrase they refer to.

- (6.75) a. *U-takh niakh i-vis?*
 2SG.REAL-catch fish 3SG.REAL-how.many
 ‘How many fish did you catch?’
- b. *U-yangwal nevat ba-vis?*
 2SG.REAL-want money 3SG.IRR-how.much
 ‘How much money do you want?’
- c. *Numur i-vis at-tokh utnang?*
 people 3SG.REAL-how.many 3PL.REAL-live there
 ‘How many people live there?’
- d. *Nesakhau tugu i-vis?*
 year 2SG.POSS 3SG.REAL-how.many
 ‘How old are you?’

The interrogative *medang* ‘how’ is also a verb.

- (6.76) a. *I-ber Ø-medang?*
 3SG.REAL-tall 3SG.REAL-how
 ‘How tall is he?’
- b. *Bwit-tovu be-medang?*
 1PL.IRR-go 3SG.IRR-how
 ‘Which way will we go?’

6.7 Interjections

The following interjections are encountered in Neve‘ei.

- (6.77) *o‘o* ‘yes’
(n)ahau ‘no’ (in answer to a question framed in the affirmative)
 ‘yes’ (in answer to a question framed in the negative)
sa‘adem ‘not yet’
mai expression of surprise
sang expression of surprise

6.8 Noun phrase movement

While the most usual constituent order of verbal sentences in Neve‘ei is SVO, it is possible to move a verbal object or a peripheral noun phrase to the beginning of the clause, in order to give it pragmatic prominence. When an object noun phrase is moved in front of the verb, the verb carries an inflectional prefix marking the categories of person and number of the subject, resulting in an OSV constituent order. As shown in the following examples, there is no additional marking of any kind following the preposed object noun phrase or at the original site of the object noun phrase.

- (6.78) a. *Niakh toro nge tuan na-lu-i.*
 fish big DEM INDEF 1SG.REAL-shoot-COMP
 ‘One of those big fish, I’ve shot it.’

- b. *Noto nene abur-su-khus-si.*
 chicken DEM 2DL.IRR-NEG1-kill-NEG2
 ‘As for this chicken, don’t kill it.’
- c. *Noang nge ar-vi im en nakhankhan.*
 canoe DEM 3DL.REAL-make just INST pawpaw
 ‘They made the canoe just out of pawpaw.’

Fronted object noun phrases are often followed by the marker *ge* ‘the one’ which also has the function of giving pragmatic prominence to the noun phrase it is associated with. In the next example, the object noun phrase *noal nen Ulmet* ‘creek of Ulmet’ is preposed to the front of the clause and is followed by the locational marker *iang*, which is followed by the marker *ge*.

- (6.79) *Noal nen Ulmet iang ge ar-tokh ar-yavyav sur.*
 creek of Ulmet that.there the.one 3DL.REAL-PROG 3DL.REAL-follow
 ‘The creek of Ulmet there, they were following it.’

In the following example, the prepositional phrase *sakhan i* ‘at her place’, which functions here as a locational phrase, is preposed to the front of the clause.

- (6.80) *Sakhan i i-moul.*
 near 3SG 3SG.REAL-bad
 ‘At her place, it is bad.’

It is also possible to prepose the predicate of a non-verbal clause to clause-initial position. In the following example, the prepositional noun phrase *ran navil nen Krismas nge* ‘in the months of Christmas’ is preposed to the front of the clause.

- (6.81) *Ran navil nen Krismas nge ar ge ang.*
 LOC months POSS Christmas DEM PL the.one DISC
 ‘In the months of Christmas, they were the months (that was the time).’

When transitive verbs in Neve‘ei carry the non-specific prefixes *rV-* or *rVbwV-* (§3.4.1.1), the verbal object is usually fronted so that it occupies the pre-subject position of the clause with no possible occupant of the pre-verbal subject slot. While the non-specific prefix is the grammatical subject of the verb, the referent of this subject is usually unknown or unimportant. Sentences of this type can readily be translated as passives in English.

- (6.82) a. *Nisit nganga‘ nge ro-so-rogulel-si rubu-susuen.*
 thing little DEM NONSPEC.REAL-NEG1-ABIL-NEG2 NONSPEC.IRR-hide
 ‘The child couldn’t be hidden.’
- b. *Navins ru-luv nedam ru-luv nibiang*
 banana NONSPEC.REAL-plant yam NONSPEC.REAL-plant taro
ru-luv.
 NONSPEC.REAL-plant
 ‘Bananas were planted, yams were planted and taro was planted.’

As mentioned in §3.4.1.1, these constructions should not be treated as passives in Neve‘ei as indicated by the fact that the same inflectional prefixes can also be used on clearly intransitive verbs, such as *lelav* [vi] ‘plant yams’.

- (6.83) *amweran nen re-lelav ...*
 time REL NONSPEC.REAL-plant.yams
 ‘a time when one plants yams ...’

When the noun phrase is moved in a relative clause construction, this can result in a stranded preposition. In this case, the preposition either stands on its own or is followed by the pronominal marker *nge* (§7.4).

- (6.84) a. *Ne-vangdo nevetevat nen no-to nedam ran (nge).*
 1SG.REAL-burn platform REL 1SG.REAL-put yam LOC PRO
 ‘I burnt the platform which I put the yams on.’
- b. *Ne-leh na‘ai nen nokhoit i-sokh nelabut en (nge).*
 1SG.REAL-see stick REL octopus 3SG.REAL-spear rat INST PRO
 ‘I saw the stick which the octopus speared the rat with.’

7 *Complex sentences and discourse patterns*

In this chapter, a discussion of constructions involving clausal juxtaposition is followed by a discussion of coordinate clauses, subordinate clauses and relative clauses. Finally, there is a brief discussion of some of the more notable discourse patterns found in the Neve‘ei narrative texts.

7.1 Clausal juxtaposition

It is a common feature of Neve‘ei narratives for events to be expressed by means of simple clausal juxtaposition without any intervening conjunctions. Constructions involving clausal juxtaposition appear to be structurally similar to aspectual and modal core layer serial verb constructions (§5.2). However, the core layer serial constructions involve a single event with an auxiliary verb indicating the way in which the action of the main verb is carried out. The following constructions, on the other hand, involve two or more events and a number of different semantic relationships between the events of each clause can be expressed. In each example in (7.1), the juxtaposed clauses express a purposive semantic relationship between two events.

- (7.1) a. *Neba-vu nubu-wahan niakh.*
1SG.IRR-go 1SG.IRR-look.for fish
‘I will go to look for fish.’
- b. *Khava-ng ke-vwelem ke-veh no.*
brother-1SG 2SG.IRR-come 2SG.IRR-carry 1SG
‘Brother, come and carry me.’
- c. *Ka-vu ko-toto no ‘out.*
2SG.IRR-go 2SG.IRR-leave 1SG ashore
‘Go and leave me ashore.’

In the examples in (7.1), the first verb in each construction is a verb of motion and the verbs of both clauses carry inflectional prefixes marking the same categories of person, number and mood. In (7.2), the first verb is once again a verb of motion and both verbs carry third person dual realis prefixes. However, the semantic relationship expressed by the juxtaposed clauses in this case is a sequential one.

- (7.2) *Ar-vwelem ar-wam lieh ran nesela-n ar.*
 3DL.REAL-come 3DL.REAL-fall again LOC track-CONST PL
 ‘They came and they fell upon their tracks again.’

A sequential relationship is also expressed in (7.3), where three clauses are juxtaposed.

- (7.3) *Ninsivir i-lakh mah i-tur i-mera’.*
 parrot 3SG.REAL-hang finish.doing 3SG.REAL-stand 3SG.REAL-fly
 ‘The parrot hung and then he stood and then he flew.’

In each example in (7.4), where the initial verb is *vi* ‘cause, do, make’, the juxtaposition of clauses expresses a causative relationship.

- (7.4) a. *I-vi na-minmin.*
 3SG.REAL-cause 1SG.REAL-drink
 ‘(S)he made me drink.’
- b. *Abir-vi ba-tur drong.*
 2DL.IRR-cause 3SG.IRR-stand keep.on.doing
 ‘Leave it alone. (Cause it to keep standing.)’
- c. *I-vuruh nesel nge i-vi*
 3SG.REAL-hide knife DEM 3SG.REAL-cause
no-so-rogulel-si nebwe-leh.
 1SG.REAL-NEG1-ABIL-NEG2 1SG.IRR-see
 ‘(S)he hid the knife so that I couldn’t see it.’

Clausal juxtaposition is also used to express object complements to transitive verbs. In each of the examples in (7.5), the verb in the initial clause is a transitive verb of saying or writing. This clause is followed directly by the intransitive verb *vwer* ‘say’ which is translated as ‘that’ in this construction.

- (7.5) a. *Ne-vveri ne-vwer nebwe-vwelat.*
 1SG.REAL-say 1SG.REAL-say 1SG.IRR-come
 ‘I said that I would come.’
- b. *I-tus do i-vwer i bwe-vwelat.*
 3SG.REAL-write hit 3SG.REAL-say 3SG 3SG.IRR-come
 ‘(S)he wrote down that he would come.’
- c. *U-lubalum u-vwer u-magar.*
 2SG.REAL-lie 2SG.REAL-say 2SG.REAL-work
 ‘You lied that you were working.’

In (7.6), *vwer* and the complementiser *utnen* (§7.3.3) are used together to introduce an object clause.

- (7.6) *Nang ti i-vveri i-vwer utnen nat-n*
 mother 3SG.POSS 3SG.REAL-say 3SG.REAL-say COMPL child-CONST
nomomokh ti nge bwe-se-vwer-vwer-si.
 girl 3SG.POSS DEM 3SG.IRR-NEG1-RED-say-NEG2
 ‘Her mother said that her daughter wouldn’t mention it.’

In each of the examples in (7.7), the direct object of the first verb is also the subject of the second verb.

- (7.7) a. *Ar-rong noto nge i-tokh i-teterang.*
 3DL.REAL-hear chicken DEM 3SG.REAL-PROG 3SG.REAL-cluck
 ‘They heard the chicken clucking.’
- b. *At-leh nemwat toro nge i-tokh drong.*
 3PL.REAL-see snake big DEM 3SG.REAL-stay keep.on.doing
 ‘They saw the big snake just staying there.’
- c. *I-leh nabulmens tuan i-mwa’am ran noron*
 3SG.REAL-see kingfisher INDEF 3SG.REAL-sit LOC leaf
nakhankhan nge ar.
 pawpaw DEM PL
 ‘(S)he saw a kingfisher sitting on the leaves of a pawpaw.’

7.2 Coordination

The form which is most frequently encountered as a coordinating conjunction is *yang* which can mean ‘and’ or ‘but’ depending on the context of the discourse. In the previous section, it was noted that a sequential relationship between two clauses can be expressed quite simply by means of clausal juxtaposition. Sequential relationships can also be expressed by linking the clauses together with the conjunction *yang* as illustrated in (7.8).

- (7.8) a. *I-leh noto mavis nge yang i-lu bin.*
 3SG.REAL-see chicken white DEM and 3SG.REAL-shoot do.to.death
 ‘He saw the white chicken and then he shot it dead.’
- b. *Nulung netah toro i-vwelem yang i-dan*
 wave big 3SG.REAL-come and 3SG.REAL-go.down
en ar.
 LOC 3NONGS
 ‘A big wave came and then it went down over them.’
- c. *Mamwe ter i-vweri mah-an ar*
 father 3NONGS.POSS 3SG.REAL-say finish.doing-TRANS 3NONGS
Ø-menenang yang ar-takh noang ara-vu.
 3SG.REAL-like.that and 3DL.REAL-take canoe 3DL.REAL-go
 ‘Their father finished saying that to them like that and then they took the canoe and went.’

In the following example, where *yang* follows the discourse marker *vi vi* ‘on and on’ the English translation provided is ‘until’.

- (7.9) *Ar-vi sur vi vi yang nevwenen nakhankhan*
 3DL.REAL-do keep.doing on.and.on and fruit pawpaw
nge i-wam Ø-vwelem retan.
 DEM 3SG.REAL-fall 3SG.REAL-hither down
 ‘They continued to do this until the fruit of the pawpaw fell down.’

The conjunction *yang* is also used to express a contrastive relationship between clauses as shown in (7.10).

- (7.10) a. *I-vwer* *i-lakh* *yang* *i-so-rogulel*
 3SG.REAL-ACTUAL 3SG.REAL-hang but 3SG.REAL-NEG1-ABIL
lieh *mo-si* *bwe-sa'* *ba-tur.*
 again any.more-NEG2 3SG.IRR-go up 3SG.IRR-stand
 'He (the parrot) hung but he couldn't go up and stand any more.'
- b. *Ar-vwer* *abwera-vu* *abwer-leh* *yang* *noto* *nge*
 3DL.REAL-INTENT 3DL.IRR-go 3DL.IRR-see but chicken DEM
i-mera'.
 3SG.REAL-fly
 'They wanted to go and see it (the chicken) but the chicken flew away.'

The form *si* 'or' is also encountered as a coordinating conjunction, expressing a choice between alternatives. As shown in the examples in (7.11), *si* can be used to link clauses as well as other constituents.

- (7.11) a. *I-mour* *si* *i-mah?*
 3SG.REAL-alive or 3SG.REAL-dead
 'Is it alive or is it dead?'
- b. ... *ivah* *si* *ilim.*
 four or five
 '... four or five.'

In (7.12), the form *utnen* is used together with *si* to express the relationship 'whether ... or ...' linking two noun phrases.

- (7.12) *I-se-leh* *gulel-si* *utnen* *bwe-vwer* *nemwen*
 3SG.REAL-NEG1-see know-NEG2 if 3SG.IRR-say boy
si *nomomokh.*
 or girl
 'He couldn't recognise whether it was a boy or a girl.'

7.3 Subordination

The form most frequently encountered as a subordinating conjunction is *utnen*, 'if, when, while, even though', which is used to mark conditional and time clauses and also functions as a complementiser introducing clausal objects. This conjunction is also frequently attested following other subordinators, such as *wal utnen* 'because' and *minmin utnen* 'as, like'. Other subordinating conjunctions are also attested, such as *menangsi* 'if', *tebar* 'before', *wal* 'because' and *ta'an* 'in case'.

7.3.1 Conditional clauses

In the examples in (7.13), where the conjunction *utnen* expresses a conditional relationship between the clauses, the conditional clause comes first and the verbs in both clauses carry irrealis mood prefixes.

- (7.13) a. *Utnen abwer-leh noto mavis tuan bwe-vwelem utne*
 if 2DL.IRR-see chicken white INDEF 3SG.IRR-come here
abur-su-khus-khus-si.
 2DL.IRR-NEG1-RED-kill-NEG2
 ‘If you see a white chicken coming here, don’t kill it.’
- b. *Utnen ka-lu nubuah tuan get bwit-khan.*
 if 2SG.IRR-shoot pig INDEF 1NONGS.INCL 1PL.IRR-eat
 ‘If you shoot a pig, we will eat it.’

In (7.14), *utnen* ‘if’ and *ti* ‘and, so’ are used together to express the logical relationship of cause and effect ‘if ... then’.

- (7.14) *Utnen nebwe-vwer i-mour ti gu ka-gis*
 if 1SG.IRR-say 3SG.REAL-alive then 2SG 2SG.IRR-squash
bin len nevera-n gu.
 do.to.death LOC hand-CONST 2SG
 ‘If I say it is alive then you will squash it dead in your hand.’

The form *menangsi* ‘if’ is also used to mark a conditional clause. Once again the conditional clause comes first and irrealis mood prefixes are carried by the verbs in both clauses. The meaning expressed by *menangsi* is such that neither the event in the conditional clause nor the event in the main clause has eventuated.

- (7.15) a. *Menangsi i bu-wuswus matoro nge i bwe-vwelem.*
 if 3SG 3SG.IRR-ask old.man DEM 3SG 3SG.IRR-come
 ‘If she had asked the old man, he would have come.’
- b. *Menangsi ka-lu-i nubuah tuan get*
 if 2SG.IRR-shoot-COMP pig INDEF 1NONGS.INCL
bwit-khan.
 1PL.IRR-eat
 ‘If only you had shot a pig, we would have eaten it.’

7.3.2 Time clauses

In (7.14) above, where the verbal prefixes in each clause mark the irrealis mood, *utnen* and *ti* express ‘if ... then’. In (7.16), the verbal prefixes in each clause are in the realis mood, and *utnen* and *ti* express a time relationship translated here as ‘when ... then’.

- (7.16) *Utnen nabulmens i-vwer i-gilou Ø-vwelem*
 when kingfisher 3SG.REAL-ACTUAL 3SG.REAL-look 3SG.REAL-hither
ti i-tokh do.
 then 3SG.REAL-stay hit
 ‘When the kingfisher looked here then he stopped.’

In the examples in (7.17), *utnen* is also used to mark time clauses. Once again, the time clause comes first and the verbs in both clauses carry realis mood prefixes.

- (7.17) a. *Utneŋ u-tokh u-khar-khara' len netan*
 when 2SG.REAL-HAB 2SG.REAL-RED-crawl LOC ground
u-yav bweli.
 2SG.REAL-slow too.much
 'When you crawl on the ground, you are too slow.'
- b. *Utneŋ i-rong Ø-menenang i-mera' i-ngang.*
 when 3SG.REAL-hear 3SG.REAL-like.that 3SG.REAL-INCEP 3SG.REAL-laugh
 'When he heard it like that, then he laughed.'

In (7.18), three clauses are linked together, using the forms *yang utneŋ ... yang* 'but when ... then'.

- (7.18) *Ar-rong noto nge i-tokh i-teterang*
 3DL.REAL-hear chicken DEM 3SG.REAL-PROG 3SG.REAL-cluck
yang utneŋ ar-vwer abwera-vu abwera-leh yang
 but when 3DL.REAL-INTENT 3DL.IRR-go 3DL.IRR-look then
noto nge i-mera'.
 chicken DEM 3SG.REAL-fly.
 'They heard the chicken clucking but when they wanted to go and look,
 then the chicken flew away.'

In (7.19), *tebar*, which can also function as an adverb meaning 'afterwards, just', introduces a time clause and functions as a subordinating conjunction meaning 'before'.

- (7.19) *Tebar abwera-vu nang ti i-vweri en nat-n ...*
 before 2DL.IRR-go mother 3SG.POSS 3SG.REAL-say GOAL child-CONST
 'Before they were to go, her mother said to the child ...'

In the next example, the function of *tebar* is somewhat ambiguous and could be analysed either as an adverb (7.20a) or as a subordinating conjunction introducing a time clause (7.20b).

- (7.20) a. *Nebwe-ra' mah mo. Tebar nebwe-vwelat*
 1SG.IRR-clear finish.doing first afterwards 1SG.IRR-come
ku-mumum.
 2SG.IRR-breastfeed.
 'I will finish clearing first. Afterwards, I will come to you so you can
 breastfeed.'
- b. *Nebwe-ra' mah mo tebar nebwe-vwelat ku-mumum.*
 1SG.IRR-clear finish.doing first before 1SG.IRR-come 2SG.IRR-breastfeed.
 'I will finish clearing first before I come to you so you can breastfeed.'

7.3.3 Reason and purpose clauses

The subordinating conjunction *wal* 'because' is used to mark both reason and purpose clauses. In the examples in (7.21), *wal* expresses reason whereas in the examples in (7.22), *wal* expresses purpose.

- (7.21) a. *I-rong lueh wal i-mera' bweli.*
 3SG.REAL-feel tired because 3SG.REAL-fly too.much
 'He (the kingfisher) felt tired because he had been flying too much.'
- b. *Nomomokh ti i-deren i wal*
 wife 3SG.POSS 3SG.REAL-surprise 3SG because
i-leh tenemwe-n i-vwelem bitiven nisit
 3SG.REAL-see husband-3SG 3SG.REAL-come ACCOMP thing
nganga' sevakh.
 little one
 'His wife was surprised because she saw her husband coming with a child.'
- c. *Nemeta-n i-langlang wal utnen i-leh noto nge.*
 eye-3SG 3SG.REAL-open.wide because 3SG.REAL-see chicken DEM
 'His eyes opened wide because he saw the chicken.'
- (7.22) a. *I-gar i-vu 'out wal bo-toto nelabut.*
 3SG.REAL-swim 3SG.REAL-go ashore because 3SG.IRR-leave rat
 'He swam away ashore in order to leave the rat there.'
- b. *Meran nen ara-vu lieh wal abur-suli niar*
 next.day 3DL.REAL-go again because 3DL.IRR-burn garden
ter.
 NONSG.POSS
 'The next day they went again in order to burn their garden.'

The form *minmin*, which was described in §6.3.1 as the similative preposition 'like', is frequently followed by *utnen* which together function as the conjunction 'as'.

- (7.23) a. *No-so-rogu-lel-si nebwe-lakh minmin utnen u-lakh.*
 1SG.REAL-NEG1-ABIL-NEG2 1SG.IRR-hang as 2SG.REAL-hang
 'I can't hang as you do.'
- b. *I-tokh i-se-lakh-si minmin utnen ninsivir*
 3SG.REAL-HAB 3SG.REAL-NEG1-hang-NEG2 as parrot
i-tokh i-lakh.
 3SG.REAL-HAB 3SG.REAL-hang
 'He didn't use to hang as the parrot does.'

7.3.4 'In case' clauses

'In case' clauses are expressed by the conjunction (*me*)*ta'an* 'in case'.

- (7.24) a. *Ne-meta' ta'an abwit-leh get.*
 1SG.REAL-worry in.case 3PL.IRR-see 1NONSG.INCL
 'I'm worried in case they see us.'
- b. *Ku-su-khus-khus-si nebat meta'an ku-khus no.*
 2SG.IRR-NEG1-RED-beat-NEG2 nebat.vine in.case 2SG.IRR-kill 1SG
 'Don't beat the *nebat* vine in case you kill me.'

7.3.5 Complement clauses

In addition to the function of a subordinating conjunction, the form *utnen* also functions as a complementiser as shown in (7.25a) where *utnen* introduces a non-verbal object clause and (7.25b) and (7.25c) where *utnen* introduces verbal object clauses.

- (7.25) a. *Nomomokh nge i-tokh i-se-vwer-vwer do-si*
 girl DEM 3SG.REAL-HAB 3SG.REAL-RED-say hit-NEG2
utnen i nang ti nemwat toro tuan.
 COMPL 3SG mother 3SG.POSS snake big INDEF
 ‘The girl didn’t ever mention that her mother was a big snake.’
- b. *I-so-rogulel-si utnen no ne-magar.*
 3SG.REAL-NEG1-know-NEG2 COMPL 1SG 1SG.REAL-work
 ‘He didn’t know that I was working.’
- c. *No-rong sakan Joe utnen u-minmin.*
 1SG.REAL-hear SOURCE Joe COMPL 3SG.REAL-drink
 ‘I heard from Joe that you drink.’

7.4 Relative clauses

As explained in §4.2.8, relative clauses appear after the head of the nominal phrase where the relativiser *nen*, which is identical in shape to the possessive marker *nen* (§4.3.1.2), marks the beginning of the relative clause. The original site of the coreferential noun phrase in the relative clause can be marked by the pronominal marker *nge*, which is the same shape as the anaphoric demonstrative (§4.2.4).

Relative clauses can also be headless where they function as independent noun phrases in their own right. In (7.26), the headless relative \emptyset *nen nganga* ‘(the boy) who is little’ stands as head of a nominal phrase functioning as a verbal subject.

- (7.26) *Nen nganga’ i-vwer: no neba-vu ...*
 REL little 3SG.REAL-say 1SG 1SG.IRR-go
 ‘The little one said, “I will go” ...’

In an attempt to determine the universal properties of relative clauses, Keenan and Comrie (1977) compared the syntactic form of relative clauses in a large number of languages. The data they gathered support the existence of an ‘Accessibility Hierarchy’. This Accessibility Hierarchy includes the following positions where > means ‘is more accessible than’: SU > DO > IO > OBL > GEN > OCOMP. SU stands for ‘subject’, DO for ‘direct object’, IO for ‘indirect object’, OBL for an oblique NP, GEN for genitive or possessor and OCOMP for ‘object of comparison’. The universal constraints inherent in this hierarchy mean that in a given language any NP position which can be relativised will also entail relativisation of all NP positions to the left on the hierarchy.

On examining data from narratives and elicited material in Neve‘ei, it would seem that every NP position on Keenan and Comrie’s Accessibility Hierarchy can be relativised. This means that Neve‘ei will allow OCOMP ‘object of comparison’ NPs to be relativised as well as every position to the left on the hierarchy: GEN ‘genitive’, OBL ‘oblique case’, IO ‘indirect object’, DO ‘direct object’ and SU ‘subject’.

In all positions within the relative clause, *nge* is optionally used to mark the original site of the relativised noun phrase. From the data examined, it would seem that, the lower the position on the Accessibility Hierarchy, the more likely it is that *nge* will be present. Therefore, with a relativised subject or object, *nge* will appear relatively infrequently, while with relativised objects of comparison, *nge* will appear very frequently.

The following examples illustrate relativisation from each position and also provide native-speaker responses as to how likely it is for the pronominal marker *nge* to appear in each example. Given the size and nature of the corpus, it was not possible to carry out a more sophisticated analysis of the variability regarding the presence or absence of *nge*. In (7.27), where the subject of the subordinate clause is relativised, there is usually no overt marking of the site of the deleted noun phrase.

- (7.27) *Ne-leh matoro nen Ø i-matur.*
 ISG.REAL-see old.man REL PRO 3SG.REAL-sleep
 'I saw the old man who was sleeping.'

In (7.28), where the relativised NP is the direct object, the original site of the coreferential noun phrase is optionally marked by *nge*.

- (7.28) *Nabung nen ar-totobatn (nge) i-vwelem.*
 day REL 3DL.REAL-name PRO 3SG.REAL-come
 'The day which they had named came.'

When the relativised NP is an indirect object involving a prepositional construction, the site of the coreferential noun phrase is optionally marked by *nge*.

- (7.29) *Nat-n nomomokh nge nen at-seren nani*
 child-CONST female DEM REL 3PL.REAL-give coconut
en (nge) nesakhau ti vungavil.
 GOAL PRO age 3SG.POSS ten
 'The girl who they gave the coconut to is ten years old.'

In the examples in (7.30), the relativised NPs are prepositional objects. While optional, it is more likely that the site of the co-referential noun phrase will be marked by *nge* than by \emptyset .

- (7.30) a. *Khava-n nen i-takh niakh wal (nge) i-mesa'.*
 brother-3SG REL 3SG.REAL-catch fish BEN PRO 3SG.REAL-sick
 'His brother who he caught a fish for is sick.'
- b. *Nowi nen i-vavu khawes (nge) i-ber.*
 stream REL 3SG.REAL-walk across PRO 3SG.REAL-deep
 'The stream which he walked across is deep.'
- c. *Na'ai nen nabulmens i-suv ran (nge)*
 tree REL kingfisher 3SG.REAL-settle LOC PRO
re-teri.
 NONSPEC.REAL-cut down
 'The tree which the kingfisher settled on was cut down.'

- d. *Na'ai nen i-khus libakh en (nge) i-ber.*
 stick REL 3SG.REAL-hit dog INST PRO 3SG.REAL-long
 'The stick with which he hit the dog is long.'

In (7.31), where the relativised NP is a possessor NP, it would be unusual, but still possible, for the site of the co-referential noun phrase to be marked by \emptyset rather than *nge*.

- (7.31) *Numur nen ne-leh libakh ti (nge) i-vu 'out.*
 person REL 1SG.REAL-see dog 3SG.POSS PRO 3SG.REAL-go ashore
 'The man whose dog I saw went ashore.'

Likewise, in (7.32), where the relativised NP is the object of comparison, it would be unusual, but still possible, for the site of the co-referential noun phrase to be marked by \emptyset rather than *nge*.

- (7.32) *Ne-leh numur nen Meri i-lam nsaren (nge).*
 1SG.REAL-see person REL Mary 3SG.REAL-big more.than PRO
 'I saw the man who Mary is bigger than.'

In addition to the relative clause construction described above, there are a number of attested examples of a similar construction in which the forms *etnen* 'thing, what' and *utnen* 'place where' (§6.4.1) appear. In (7.33), the form *etnen* 'thing, what' (§6.5) functions in the same way as a nominal followed by the relativiser *nen*. The site of the coreferential noun phrase is marked by *nge* exactly as it is in the relative clause constructions described above.

- (7.33) *I-vwer-vwer bisah en ar etnen i mi nabulmens*
 SG.REAL-RED-say clear GOAL 3NONGSG what 3SG and kingfisher
ar-vwer abir-vi nge.
 3DL.REAL-INTENT 3DL.IRR-do PRO
 'He explained to them what he and this kingfisher planned to do.'

In (7.34), the form *utnen* 'place where', would also seem to function as a nominal relative pronoun. The site of the coreferential noun phrase is also marked by *nge* as in the previous example.

- (7.34) *Nukhut-n nubu tuan i-tokh lili en utnen*
 clump-CONST bamboo INDEF 3SG.REAL-exist close LOC place.where
ar-vwer abir-vi niar en nge.
 3DL.REAL-INTENT 3DL.IRR-make garden LOC PRO
 'There was a clump of bamboo close to where they wanted to make the garden.'

7.5 Discourse patterns

As the narratives that form the linguistic data used to produce this study are spoken discourse, which is dependent upon the immediate context of the speaker and the listener(s), they reveal a high frequency of deictic items. There has been some mention in the previous chapters of such items, including the anaphoric demonstrative *nge* (§4.2.4), the three-way distinction in demonstratives (§4.2.4) and the pronominal locational forms (§6.5). However, there are other features, relating to the way in which the discourse of the

narratives is structured, which have not been dealt with in the previous chapters. Some of the more prominent features are discussed in the following sections.

7.5.1 Discourse markers

The following passage comes from a narrative about a kingfisher and a rat who make a boat from a pawpaw and go fishing in the sea. When the rat becomes hungry, he nibbles on the pawpaw in spite of the kingfisher's prior warnings. Eventually the sea rushes into the boat and the kingfisher scolds the rat for his actions.

- (7.35) *No ge ... no-rogulel nebe-mera' ti gu ki-vi*
 1SG the.one 1SG.REAL-ABIL 1SG.IRR-fly but 2SG 2SG.IRR-do
neve 'ei? Gu ge ke-dan yang ke-mah im utne
 what 2SG the.one 2SG.IRR-drown and 2SG.IRR-die just here
wal no ge nebe-mera' lieh ba-vu 'out.
 because 1SG the.one 1SG.IRR-fly again 3SG.IRR-go ashore
 'I'm the one, ... I can fly, but you, what will you do? You're the one who
 will drown and you'll die right here because I'm the one who will fly back
 ashore.'

The stretch of discourse in (7.35) is structured into two contrasting parts. The items introducing each part consist of an independent pronoun followed by *ge* 'the one'. The first part is introduced by *No ge* 'I'm the one' and the second part is introduced by *Gu ge* 'you're the one'. In the discussion of verbal clauses (§6.1), it was noted that the independent pronouns are not an obligatory component of the clause, being used instead for emphasis or contrast, and in the discussion of noun phrase movement (§6.8), it was mentioned that *ge* 'the one' gives pragmatic prominence to the nominal phrase which it follows. The particular choice of grammatical items here is relevant to the way in which the discourse is structured in this passage. Prominence is given firstly to the kingfisher and his likely fate and then to the rat and his likely fate.

In (7.36), *ge* gives prominence to the third person singular independent pronoun *i* which makes anaphoric reference to the noun phrase *natuturmwitiyil* 'story'.

- (7.36) *Natuturmwitiyil nen nebwe-vwer-vwer sur itie i ge*
 story REL 1SG.IRR-RED-say about now 3SG the.one
ya'ai i-vwer do-i nge.
 that.person 3SG.REAL-say hit-COMP PRO
 'The story that I will tell now, it's the one, that guy there mentioned already.'

In the following example, *ge* follows the third person singular independent pronoun *i* and stands between a relativised clause and the main clause without the relativiser *nen* being repeated.

- (7.37) *Natuturmwitiyil nge i-vweri i-vwer na'ai nen*
 story DEM 3SG.REAL-say 3SG.REAL-say stick REL
nokhoit nge i-sokh en nelabut nge i ge
 octopus DEM 3SG.REAL-spear INST rat DEM 3SG the.one

i-vwelem *i-vi* *nibis-n* *nelabut*.
 3SG.REAL-come 3SG.REAL-make tail-CONST rat
 ‘The story says that the stick which the octopus speared the rat with,
 it’s the one, it became the rat’s tail.’

Whereas in each of the previous examples, *ge* gives prominence to the independent pronoun *i*, which refers back to a noun phrase, in the following example, the scope of *i* is much wider in that it refers back to an entire clause, *i-sa’ vu* ‘out’ ‘he went up ashore’.

(7.38) *I-sa’* \emptyset -*vu* ‘out *i* *ge* *ang* *i-leh*
 3SG.REAL-go.up 3SG.REAL-go ashore 3SG the.one DISC 3SG.REAL-see
noto *mavis* *nge*.
 chicken white DEM
 ‘He went up ashore, it was then (when he went up ashore), he saw the
 white chicken.’

In the next example, rather than referring to another item within the text, *i ge* would seem to be used exophorically to refer to the listener’s experience and knowledge of the appearance of a coconut. This is followed by a description of the coconut so that *i ge* also becomes a device for cataphoric reference where the referent is provided after the reference item itself.

(7.39) *Natururmwitiyil* *nge* *i-vweri* *i-vwer* *i* *ge*
 story DEM 3SG.REAL-say 3SG.REAL-say 3SG the.one
itie *minmin* *utnen* *get* *it-teri* *nani*
 now like when 1NONG.INCL 1PL.REAL-cut coconut
it-leh ... *nemeta-n* *bitiven* *nobongo-n*.
 1PL.REAL-see eye-CONST with mouth-CONST
 ‘The story says that, it’s like that now, like when we cut a coconut we
 see eyes with a mouth.’

The marker *ge* is also attested in a non-verbal construction, which often follows a section of the narrative, to mark that those events form a completed stretch of the discourse. In this construction, the scope of the reference item can be a short section or quite a long stretch of discourse. When used in this way *i ge* is frequently followed by the discourse marker *ang*.

(7.40) *I* *ge* *ang*.
 3SG the.one DISC
 ‘That’s how it was / that’s where it was.’

It is difficult to define the functions of *ang*, which is frequently attested in questions (§6.6.1) as shown in (7.41) and is also widely attested at the end of declarative constructions as shown in (7.42). Crowley (2006:207) also describes the difficulties involved in defining the functions of the parallel form *at* in the Naman language. Like *ang*, the Naman form *at* is attested in a wide range of positions and its presence or absence is subject to free variation. François (Crowley, pers. comm.) has described the apparently parallel form in Mwotlap as having a backgrounding property, which would also seem to apply to the Neve’ei form *ang*.

In each of the following examples, *ang* would seem to signal that the status of the associated phrase or clause is background information already shared by both the speaker and the addressee. While it is difficult to provide an appropriate gloss, it would seem that *ang* has the function of referring to something in the context that is already understood. In each of these examples, *ang* can be deleted and what remains is still grammatical.

- (7.41) a. *Gu ka-vu len niyim ang?*
3SG 2SG.IRR-go GOAL house DISC
'Are you going to the house?'
- b. *Ka-vu giev ang?*
2SG.IRR-go where DISC
'Where are you going?'
- c. *I-malu i ang?*
3SG-come.out COMP DISC
'Has it come out yet?'
- (7.42) a. *Sa'adem ang.*
not.yet DISC
'Not just yet.'
- b. *I bwe-vwer bwer yokhoi ge ang.*
3SG 3SG.IRR-say maybe that.person the.one DISC
'He would say: that's probably him.'
- c. *Ba-vusur im ang.*
3SG.IRR-like.that just DISC
'It will be just like this.'
- d. *Natururmwitiyil nge i-vusur im ge ang.*
story DEM 3SG.REAL-like.that just the.one DISC
'This story is perhaps just like that.'

The discourse marker *vi vi*, which is glossed and translated here as 'on and on', is an uninflected repeated form of *vi* 'do, make, cause'. This discourse marker is used to indicate that an event continues for a period of time or that time has passed between events. As shown in the next example, where there are three repetitions of *vi*, the more repetitions there are the longer the period of time indicated.

- (7.43) *At-magaren at-yavyavsur nubuah nge ar vi vi vi.*
3PL.REAL-PROG 3PL.REAL-follow pig DEM PL on.and.on
'They continued to follow the pigs on and on and on.'

Another strategy that is used to indicate that an event continues over a period of time is to repeat the entire clause several times. In the following example, repetitions of the clause are interspersed with *vi vi*.

- (7.44) *At-sa' at-sa' at-sa' vi vi*
3PL.REAL-climb 3PL.REAL-climb 3PL.REAL-climb on.and.on
at-sa' vi vi at-sa' ran nubutuan ra'ai.
3PL.REAL-climb on.and.on 3PL.REAL-climb LOC mountain above
'They climbed and climbed and climbed, on and on, on the mountain above.'

7.5.2 Tail-head linkage

Tail-head linkage is a cohesive device that is frequently encountered in Neve‘ei narratives and also in the narratives of other Oceanic languages, such as Lewo (Early 1994:454) and Sye (Crowley 1998:282). This device involves the repetition of the final clause of a sentence at the beginning of the next sentence. In (7.45), the repeated clause appears in full as part of a time clause in the subsequent sentence.

- (7.45) *At-te-teri at-dongdongon en ar. Utnen*
 3PL.REAL-RED-cut 3PL.REAL-divide LOC 3NONGS when
at-dongdongon en ar nomomokh i-vveri
 3PL.REAL-divide LOC 3NONGS girl 3SG.REAL-say
i-yangwal bwe-tabukh nebat-n.
 3SG.REAL-DESID 3SG.IRR-keep head-CONST
 ‘They chopped it up and then divided it among themselves. When they divided it among themselves, the girl said she wanted to keep the head.’

A frequently encountered feature of tail-head linkage is for the repeated material to expand on the information contained in the initial statement as shown in (7.46).

- (7.46) *Nulung netah toro i-vwelem. I-vwelem yang*
 wave big 3SG.REAL-come 3SG.REAL-come and
i-dan en ar. I-dan en
 3SG.REAL-go.down LOC 3NONGS 3SG.REAL-go.down LOC
nourour nganga‘ nge. I-dan en etnen
 island small DEM 3SG.REAL-go.down LOC thing
ar at-tokh ran nourour nganga‘ nge.
 PL 3PL.REAL-stay LOC island small DEM
 ‘A big wave came. It came and it went down on them. It went down on the small island. It went down on the things on the small island.’

7.5.3 Hesitation devices

The forms *minmin*, *yang* and *bwer* are frequently encountered as fillers or hesitation devices in narratives.

- (7.47) a. *Tenemwe-n nomomokh nge minmin i-deren i.*
 husband-CONST woman DEM HESIT 3SG.REAL-surprise 3SG
 ‘The woman’s husband ... like ... he was surprised.’
- b. *Ar-vwer yang nisit nganga‘ nge ar-khus noto*
 3DL.REAL-say HESIT thing little DEM 3DL.REAL-kill chicken
mavis nge.
 white DEM
 ‘They said ... um ... the children have killed the white chicken.’
- c. *Bwer itie utnen iang utnen numur at-tokh at-dedan ...*
 HESIT now there when people 3PL.REAL-PROG 3PL.REAL-dive
 ‘Maybe ... now, in that place, when people are diving ...’

7.5.4 Narrative openings and closings

A feature of the Neve‘ei narrative genre is that narratives begin with similar openings and finish with similar closings. While there are stylistic variations in these openings and closings, as presented by individual storytellers, there are also some common features. The information contained in the openings generally consists of an announcement of the intention or desire of the speaker to tell the story and the time at which the story is being told.

- (7.48) a. *Nen itie ni-yangwal nebwe-vwer-vwer sur natuturmwitiyil*
REL now 1SG.REAL-DESID 1SG.IRR-RED-talk about story
tuan lieh.
INDEF again
‘Now I want to tell a story again.’
- b. *Mweran nenal marnang ni-yangwal nebwe-vwer-vwer sur*
midday today 1SG.REAL-DESID 1SG.IRR-RED-talk about
natuturmwitiyil tuan.
story INDEF
‘At midday today I want to tell a story.’

The participants and the subject matter are often introduced in the opening sentence.

- (7.49) a. *Natuturmwitiyil nen nebwe-vwer-vwer sur mweran nenal*
story REL 1SG.IRR-RED-talk about midday
itie i-vwer-vwer sur nurukhum bitiven nabulmens.
now 3SG.REAL-RED-talk about crab ACCOMP kingfisher
‘The story which I will tell this midday tells of a crab and a kingfisher.’
- b. *Natuturmwitiyil nen nebwe-vwer-vwer sur itie i-vwer-vwer*
story REL 1SG.IRR-RED-talk about now 3SG.REAL-RED-say
bisah utnen Ø-medang nelabut i-yangan nibis-n.
clear when 3SG.REAL-how rat 3SG.REAL-have tail-3SG.POSS
‘The story that I will tell now, explains how the rat got its tail.’

The information contained in the endings of the stories consists of a statement that the story finishes at the point. Once again there are stylistic variations between speakers.

- (7.50) a. *Bwer natuturmwitiyil nge i-nonong im utnang.*
maybe story DEM 3SG.REAL-finish just there
‘Maybe this story finishes right there.’
- b. *Bwer natuturmwitiyil nen ne-vwer nebwe-vwer-vwer*
maybe story REL 1SG.REAL-INTENT 1SG.IRR-RED-talk
sur nge i-nonong im utnang.
about PRO 3SG.REAL-finish just there
‘Maybe the story that I wanted to tell finishes right there.’
- c. *Natuturmwitiyilian nge i-nonong im utnang.*
story DEM 3SG.REAL-finish just there
‘This story finishes right there.’

Appendix: Illustrative text

The following narrative text has been chosen to illustrate the patterns presented in this grammar. This story tells of a race between a crab and the kingfisher and was told by Joemela Simeon to Jill Musgrave and Terry Crowley in June 1998 in Hamilton, New Zealand. Joemela is a native speaker of Neve'ei and was aged 26 when this story was recorded. He also provided the translation and other linguistic information when the story was transcribed, and the punctuation decisions were his. It should be noted that this text has not been edited, so a variety of hesitations and other performance related features are retained as well as features deriving from Bislama.

1. *Natuturmwitiyilian nen nebwe-vwer-vwer sur mweran nenal itie*
 story REL 1SG.IRR-RED-talk about midday now
i-vwer-vwer sur nurukhum bitiven nabulmens.
 3SG.REAL-RED-talk about crab ACCOMP kingfisher
 The story, which I will tell this midday, tells of a crab and a kingfisher.
2. *Utenen Ø-medang ar ar-vwer abwera-tubu minmin*
 when 3SG.REAL-how 3NONSG 3DL.REAL-INTENT 3DL.IRR-race HESIT
nabulmens i be-mera' ra'ai yang nurukhum i ba-khar-khara'
 kingfisher 3SG 3SG.IRR-fly above and crab 3SG 3SG.IRR-RED-crawl
len netan utnen abwer-leh nei mang i-rogu'el ba-ruv
 LOC ground when 3DL.IRR-see whoever 3SG.REAL-ABIL 3SG.IRR-run
bwe-nsaren khava-n.
 3SG.IRR-go.past friend-3SG.POSS
 ... when they planned to race ... like ... the kingfisher would fly above and the
 crab would crawl on the ground when they would see whoever could run faster
 than his friend.
3. *Natuturmwitiyilian nge i-vu Ø-menene.*
 story DEM 3SG.REAL-go 3SG.REAL-like.this
 The story goes like this.
4. *Va'asevakh nurukhum tuan i-tokh.*
 once crab INDEF 3SG.REAL-exist
 Once upon a time there was a crab.
5. *I-tokh yang i-vwer i-khar-khara'*
 3SG.REAL-exist and 3SG.REAL-ACTUAL 3SG.REAL-RED-crawl

i-vu *khutwan,* *vevan* *na'ai tuan* *yang nabulmens*
 3SG.REAL-thither somewhere underneath tree INDEF and kingfisher
tuan i-mera' \emptyset -*vwelem* *i-mwa'am* *ran nubusura-n*
 INDEF 3SG.REAL-fly 3SG.REAL-hither 3SG.REAL-sit LOC branch-CONST
na'ai nge.
 tree DEM

There was a crab and he crawled away somewhere underneath a tree and a kingfisher flew here and sat on a branch of the tree.

6. *Nabulmens i-gilou i-dah* \emptyset -*vu* *sakhan*
 kingfisher 3SG.REAL-look 3SG.REAL-go.down 3SG.REAL-thither GOAL
nurukhum i-vwer: *nurukhum gu utnen u-tokh*
 crab 3SG.REAL-say crab 2SG when 2SG.REAL-HAB

u-khar-khara' *len netan u-yav* *bweli.*

2SG.REAL-RED-crawl LOC ground 2SG.REAL-slow too.much

The kingfisher looked down there towards the crab and said 'Crab, you, when you crawl on the ground, you are too slow.'

7. *U-so-rogulel-si ka-ruv* *ba-vivilah.*
 2SG.REAL-NEG1-ABIL-NEG2 2SG.IRR-run 3SG.IRR-quick
 'You can't run quickly.'

8. *Yang nurukhum i-mera'* *i-vveri* *en nabulmens*
 and crab 3SG.REAL-INCEP 3SG.REAL-say GOAL kingfisher

i-vwer: *i-revakh u-bus* \emptyset -*moul* *en no*
 3SG.REAL-say 3SG.REAL-good 2SG.REAL-talk 3SG.REAL-bad GOAL 1SG

\emptyset -*menenang,* *utnen ki-yangwal* *get* *bor-tobatan nabung*
 3SG.REAL-like.that if 2SG.IRR-DESID 1NONGS.INCL 1DL.IRR-name day

tuan utnen bor-tobatan *khutwan,* *gu ke-mera'* *ra'ai yang*
 INDEF when 1DL.IRR-start somewhere 2SG 2SG.IRR-fly above and

no neba-khar-khara' *len netan,* *bwera-vu ber-seber* *utnen*
 1SG 1SG.IRR-RED-crawl LOC ground 1DL.IRR-go 1DL.IRR-reach place.where

bwer-vwer bor-nonong-on *nge,* *yang bwer-leh* *nei mang*
 1DL.IRR-INTENT 1DL.IRR-finish-TRANS PRO and 1DL.IRR-see whoever

bor-rogulel ba-ruv *bwe-nsaren* *khava-n.*

1DL.IRR-ABIL 3SG.IRR-run 3SG.IRR-go.past friend-3SG.POSS

And then the crab said to the kingfisher, he said, 'That's fine, you talk badly to me like that but if you want we'll name a day when we will start somewhere and you'll fly above and I'll crawl on the ground and we'll go and reach the place where we will plan to finish, and we'll see whoever can run faster than his friend.'

9. *Nabulmens utnen i-rong* \emptyset -*menenang* *i-mera'*
 kingfisher when 3SG.REAL-hear 3SG.REAL-like.that 3SG.REAL-INCEP

i-ngang *we i-ngang*,¹ *yang i-vweri* *en nurukhum*
 3SG.REAL-laugh and 3SG.REAL-laugh and 3SG.REAL-say GOAL crab

i-vwer: *i-revakh* *gu ke-vwer* *do nabung nen*
 3SG.REAL-say 3SG.REAL-good 2SG 2SG.IRR-say hit day REL

get *bwera-tubu,* *yang ar-totobatn* *nabung tuan*
 1NONGS.INCL 1DL.IRR-race and 3DL.REAL-name day INDEF

amweran nenang yang ar-tokh *vi vi* *Ø-seber*
 time DEM and 3DL.REAL-stay on.and.on 3SG.REAL-reach

nabung nen ar-totobatn nge i-vwelem.
 day REL 3DL.REAL-name PRO 3SG.REAL-come

The kingfisher, when he heard it like that, he laughed and laughed and said to the crab he said, ‘That’s fine, you decide the day when we will run,’ and they named a day at that time and they stayed until the day which they had named came.

10. *Tebar abor-tobatn utnen abwera-tubu, nurukhum i-vu*
 before 3DL.IRR-start when 3DL.IRR-race crab 3SG.REAL-go

yang i-vwer do en khava-n ar.
 and 3SG.REAL-say hit GOAL friend-CONST PL

Before they would start to run, the crab went and he mentioned it to his friends.

11. *I-vwer-vwer bisah en ar etnen i mi nabulmens*
 3SG.REAL-RED-say clear GOAL 3NONGS what 3SG and kingfisher

ar-vwer abir-vi nge.
 3DL.REAL-INTENT 3DL.IRR-do PRO

He explained to them what he and the kingfisher planned to do.

12. *Yang i-vweri en khava-n ar i-vwer ar tuan ar*
 and 3SG.REAL-say GOAL friend-3SG PL 3SG.REAL-say 3NONGS some

abwit-tokh minmin abwit-tokh ba-gah sur nesela-n utnen
 3PL.IRR-stay HESIT 3PL.IRR-stay 3SG.IRR-go.along track-CONST place.where

ar ar-vwer abwera-tubu ba-gah sur ba-vu
 3NONGS 3DL.REAL-INTENT 3DL.IRR-race 3SG.IRR-go.along 3SG.IRR-thither

be-seber utnen ar-vwer abor-nonong-on nge.
 3SG.IRR-reach place.where 3DL.REAL-INTENT 3DL.IRR-finish-TRANS PRO

And he said to his friends that some of them would stay ... like ... they would stay along the track where they planned to race along there to reach where they planned to finish it.

13. *Nabung nge i-vwelem yang nurukhum i-vu*
 day DEM 3SG.REAL-come and crab 3SG.REAL-go

i-tokh-tokh en nabulmens utnen ar ar-vwer
 3SG.REAL-RED-stay OBL kingfisher place.where 3NONGS 3DL.REAL-INTENT

¹ The construction *i-ngang we i-ngang* comes from the Bislama construction *i laf we i laf* ‘he really, really laughed’. This construction expresses intensification and is widely used in Neve‘ei although it has not been described in this grammar.

abor-tobatn natubuian ter nge en.
 3DL.IRR-start race 3NONGS.POSS DEM OBL
 The day came and the crab went and waited for the kingfisher where they planned to start their race.

14. *Yang nabulmens i-vwelem i-mwa'am ran na'ai ra'ai.*
 and kingfisher 3SG.REAL-come 3SG.REAL-sit LOC tree above
 And the kingfisher came and sat on the tree above.
15. *Nurukhum i-tokh len netan retan yang, ar-vweri*
 crab 3SG.REAL-stay LOC ground below and 3DL.REAL-say
ar-vwer abor-tobatn utnen minmin nabulmens i be-mera'
 3DL.REAL-say 3DL.IRR-start when HESIT kingfisher 3SG 3SG.IRR-fly
yang nurukhum i ba-khar-khara'.
 and crab 3SG 3SG.IRR-RED-crawl
 The crab stayed on the ground below and then they said that they would start when ... like ... the kingfisher would fly and the crab would crawl.
16. *Nurukhum i-tobatn utnen i-khar-khara' yang nabulmens*
 crab 3SG.REAL-start when 3SG.REAL-RED-crawl and kingfisher
i-mera' ra'ai.
 3SG.REAL-fly above
 The crab started to crawl and the kingfisher flew above.
17. *Nabulmens i-mera' i-vu vi vi i-seber*
 kingfisher 3SG.REAL-fly 3SG.REAL-thither on.and.on 3SG.REAL-reach
khutwan, i-vwer i-mwa'am ran ... i-suv do ran
 somewhere 3SG.REAL-ACTUAL 3SG.REAL-sit LOC 3SG.REAL-settle hit LOC
na'ai tuan i-vwer i-gilou i-dah
 tree INDEF 3SG.REAL-ACTUAL 3SG.REAL-look 3SG.REAL-go.down
i-leh nurukhum i-tokh i retan i-mera'
 3SG.REAL-see crab 3SG.REAL-stay COMP below 3SG.REAL-fly
lieh i-vu i-seber lieh khutwan i-vu
 again 3SG.REAL-go 3SG.REAL-reach again somewhere 3SG.REAL-go
i-suv do lieh ran na'ai tuan i-vwer
 3SG.REAL-settle hit again LOC tree INDEF 3SG.REAL-ACTUAL
i-gilou Ø-dah ran nukhut-n na'ai nge retan
 3SG.REAL-look 3SG.REAL-go.down LOC base-CONST tree DEM below
i-leh nurukhum nge i-tokh lieh i utnang.
 3SG.IRR-see crab DEM 3SG.REAL-stay again COMP there
 The kingfisher flew away there until he reached somewhere and he sat on ... he settled on a tree and then looked down and saw the crab was already down below and he flew away again and reached somewhere again and he went and settled again on a tree and then looked down at the base of the tree below and he saw the crab was already there again.

18. *I-mera'* *lieh i-vu* \emptyset -*seber* *khutwan*,
 3SG.REAL-fly again 3SG.REAL-thither 3SG.REAL-reach somewhere
i-suv *do ran na'ai tuan, i-vwer* *i-gilou*
 3SG.REAL-settle hit LOC tree INDEF 3SG.REAL-ACTUAL 3SG.REAL-look
 \emptyset -*dah* *ran nukhut-n na'ai nge i-leh*
 3SG.REAL-go.down LOC base-CONST tree DEM 3SG.REAL-see
nurukhum nge tuan i-tokh lieh i utnang.
 crab DEM INDEF 3SG.REAL-exist again COMP there
 He flew away again and reached somewhere and he settled on a tree and looked
 down at the base of the tree and he saw that crab was already there again.
19. *Utnen i-vi* \emptyset -*menenang* *minmin i-rong lueh*
 when 3SG.REAL-do 3SG.REAL-like.that HESIT 3SG.REAL-feel.tired
wal i-mera' bweli.
 because 3SG.REAL-fly too.much
 When he did it like that ... like ... he felt tired because he had been flying too much.
20. *Yang utnen ar ar-vwer abor-nonong-on*
 and place.where 3NONSG 3DL.REAL-INTENT 3DL.IRR-finish-TRANS
nge i-so-tokh bweli lieh mo-si nsemweh.
 PRO 3SG.REAL-NEG1-exist too.much again any.more-NEG2 far
 And the place where they planned to finish it wasn't very far away any more.
21. *Yang i-rong* \emptyset -*menenang* *i-mera'* *lieh i-vwer*
 and 3SG.REAL-feel 3SG.REAL-like.that 3SG.REAL-fly again 3SG.REAL-ACTUAL
i-vu i-suv do ran na'ai tuan i-vwer
 3SG.REAL-go 3SG.REAL-settle hit LOC tree INDEF 3SG.REAL-ACTUAL
i-gilou \emptyset -*dah* *i-leh nurukhum nge*
 3SG.REAL-look 3SG.REAL-go.down 3SG.REAL-see crab DEM
i-tokh lieh i utnang.
 3SG.REAL-exist again COMP there
 And he realised that and he flew away again and went and settled on a tree and
 he looked down and saw the crab was already there again.
22. *Yang i-seber utnen i-so-rogu'el lieh*
 and 3SG.REAL-reach place.where 3SG.REAL-NEG1-ABIL again
mo-si be-mera' wal i-rong lueh bweli.
 any.more-NEG2 3SG.IRR-fly because 3SG.REAL-feel.tired too.much
 And he reached a place where he couldn't fly any more because he felt too tired.
23. *Yang i-wam wal minmin i-mah nge yang*
 and 3SG.REAL-fell because HESIT 3SG.REAL-die PRO and
i-wam i-vwelem ran netan retan.
 3SG.REAL-fell 3SG.REAL-hither LOC ground below
 And he fell because ... like ... he died and he fell here onto the ground below.

24. *Nurukhum nge ar mamah at-vwelem yang at-magaren*
 crab DEM PL all 3PL.REAL-come and 3PL.REAL-PROG
utnen at-khan nabulmens nge.
 when 3PL.REAL-eat kingfisher DEM
 All of those crabs came and were eating the kingfisher.
25. *Utnen nabulmens i-tokh i-mera' i-vwelem*
 when kingfisher 3SG.REAL-HAB 3SG.REAL-fly 3SG.REAL-hither
i-suv do i-gilou i-dah nge, nurukhum
 3SG.REAL-settle hit 3SG.REAL-look 3SG.REAL-go.down PRO crab
nen i-leh ar nge, ar nurukhum teteli mang
 REL 3SG.REAL-see PL DEM 3NONSG crab different very.much
ar i ge iang.
 PL 3SG the.one that's.it
 Whenever the kingfisher flew here and settled he looked down there and the crabs that he saw were actually different crabs, that's how it was.
26. *Nurukhum nen Ø-sakh i ar ar-tobatn natubuian*
 crab REL 3SG.REAL-is.not 3SG 3NONSG 3DL.REAL-start race
ter nge, khava-n nurukhum nenang ge iang
 3NONSG.POSS PRO friend-CONST crab DEM the.one that's.it
minmin i i-vwer do i en ar i-vwer
 HESIT 3SG 3SG.REAL-say hit COMP GOAL 3NONSG 3SG.REAL-say
ar abwit-tokh ba-gah sur nesela-n utnen
 3NONSG 3PL.IRR-stay 3SG.IRR-go.along track-CONST place.where
ar abwera-tubu ba-gah sur nge.
 3NONSG 3DL.IRR-run 3SG.IRR-go.along PRO
 It was not the crab, who started their race, it was that crab's friends that's how it was ... like ... he mentioned it to them and he said they would stay along the track where they would run along it.
27. *Wal utnen nabulmens i bwe-vwelem bwe-vwer ba-suv*
 because kingfisher 3SG 3SG.IRR-come 3SG.IRR-ACTUAL 3SG.IRR-settle
do ran na'ai tuan bwe-vwer bwi-gilou bwe-dah
 hit LOC tree INDEF 3SG.IRR-ACTUAL 3SG.IRR-look 3SG.IRR-go.down
yang bwe-leh nurukhum nge tuan i bwe-vwer bwer
 and 3SG.IRR-see crab DEM INDEF 3SG 3SG.IRR-say HESIT
yokhoi ge iang minmin i ge ne-vveri mah
 that.guy the.one that's.it HESIT 3SG the.one 1SG.REAL-say finish.doing
i en nge, nabulmens i-mah yang nurukhum nge ar
 COMP OBL PRO kingfisher 3SG.REAL-die and crab DEM PL

at-khan nabulmens.

3PL.REAL-eat kingfisher

Because the kingfisher would come and actually settle on a tree and he would look down and see one of those crabs and he would think ... it was that guy, that's it ... like ... he was the one and I have already said that and the kingfisher died and the crabs ate the kingfisher.

28. *Natuturmwitiyilian nge i-nonong im utnang.*

story DEM 3SG.REAL-finish just there.

The story finishes just there.

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