

**Data Papers on  
Papua New Guinea Languages**

**Volume 52**

**Mussau Grammar Essentials**

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2007  
SIL-PNG Academic Publications  
Ukarumpa, Papua New Guinea

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Published 2007

Printed by SIL Printing Press  
Ukarumpa, Eastern Highlands Province  
Papua New Guinea

ISBN 9980-0-3223-5

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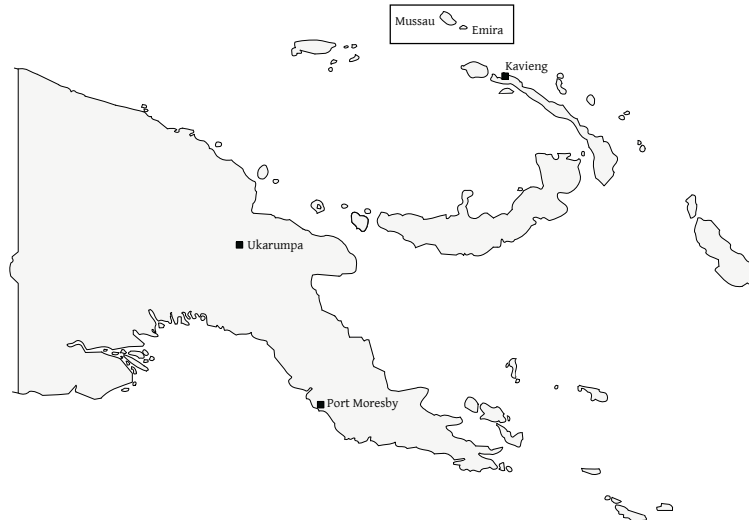
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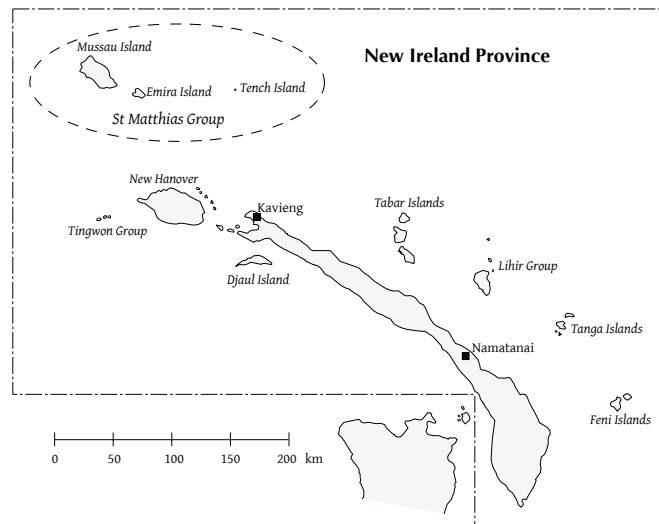
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# Maps



Map 1: Location in Papua New Guinea



Map 2: Location in New Ireland Province



Map 3: Mussau Dialects

## Abbreviations

1	1st person
2	2nd person
3	3rd person
ADJ	adjective
ADJR	adjectivizer
AG	agent
ART	article
CAUS	causative
CF	counterfactual
COMP	complementizer
CONJ	conjunction
CONST	construct
d	dual
DES	desiderative
DIM	diminutive
DIST	distributive
DL	dual
DUR	durative aspect
EMPH	emphatic
EXIST	existential verb
FOC	focus
GP	general possessive
HAB	habitual aspect
i	inclusive
I	class I
II	class II
III	class III
IMPF	imperfective aspect
IMPV	imperative mood
INCEP	inceptive aspect

4	
INST	instrument
INTENS	intensifier
IRR	irrealis mood
IV	class IV
LIG	ligature
LOC	locative
N	noun
NCL	number-classifier
NEG	negative
NOM	nominalizer
O	object
p	plural
P	possessive
PAST	past tense
pc	paucal
PCL	possessive classifier
PF	perfective aspect
PL	plural
PREP	preposition
QUANT	quantifier
RECIP	reciprocal
RED	reduplication
s	singular
s.o.	someone
s.t.	something
SG	singular
sp.	species
STAT	stative
SVC	serial verb construction
t	trial
TAG	tag question
TAM	tense, aspect and mood marker

TL	trial
TR	transitivizer
v	verb
V	class V
VI	class VI
VII	class VII
VP	verb phrase
x	exclusive
YEST.PAST	yesterday's past tense

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Location and Speakers

Mussau-Emira is spoken on the St Matthias group of islands, about 150 km northwest of Kavieng, in New Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea. The principal islands are Mussau, Emira, Loaua and Mananus, with a total land area of about 400 km<sup>2</sup>. The total number of speakers is approximately 5,000. About 3,500 of these are in the St Matthias islands, another 1,000 (at any one time) in Kavieng, the provincial capital, and the rest are spread around the country, with the most significant groups in Lae, Port Moresby and Madang. See Maps 1 and 2 for the location of the language group.

There is some confusion with names of islands and villages within the area. The main island is known as Mussau, though the local pronunciation is [musao], which refers to a small island between the main island and Loaua. It appears that the traditional inhabitants had no name for the main island, since all pieces of ground have a name and a generic name may not have been needed, and Mussau has been adopted since. Nevermann (1933) refers to the main island as St Matthias. Many names have an initial /e/ on maps, which reflects the locative marker, and the local name for many islands and villages lacks this initial /e/. Hence, Loaua is labelled Eloaua on maps, and Mananus as Emananus. Also, Emira is labelled as Emirau on many maps.

## 1.2 Language Name

As with many languages in Papua New Guinea, there is no universally agreed upon name for the language. Those from Mussau and its satellite islands would call it Mussau (*inangari ngeMussau* ‘talk of Mussau’), while those from Emira would call it Emira (*inangari ngEmira* ‘talk of Emira’). In the literature, it has been known by both of those names, as

well as Mussau-Emira and Emira-Mussau. Since Mussau accounts for more than 80% of the population, we have adopted Mussau-Emira as our preferred name.

### **1.3 Linguistic Classification and Dialects**

The classification of Mussau-Emira is Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian, Central-Eastern, Eastern, Oceanic, St Matthias. The only other language in the St Matthias group is Tench (or Tenis), spoken by about fifty speakers on an island of the same name, approximately 70 km east of Emira. This classification is quite significant, as the St Matthias group is a first-order subgroup of Oceanic. Mussau-Emira has relatively little influence from surrounding languages, so that it is of considerable importance in the study of the history of the Oceanic languages. Several of the features of the language are quite dissimilar to the languages of New Ireland and Manus, the closest neighbouring languages.

There are four dialects of Mussau-Emira: three closely-related dialects spoken on Mussau and the satellite islands (Western Mussau, Southern Mussau, and Eastern Mussau), and a more distantly related dialect spoken on Emira island (Emira). See Map 3 for the dialect boundaries on Mussau. Of the approximately 3,500 living on the islands, about 900 speak Southern Mussau, 900 Western Mussau, 1,100 Eastern Mussau, and 600 speak the Emira dialect.

### **1.4 Mussau-Emira Culture**

The Mussau-Emira culture is matrilineal, with moieties and several clans, each divided into several lineages or sub-clans. The moiety system, whereby marriages within the moiety were prohibited, is largely breaking down, though there is still a strong feeling against marriage between members of the same clan. Clans are still very significant in the structure of society, with things like house-building and copra

work involving members of the same clan collaborating.

Apart from the clans, the most significant structure in the society is the church. The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church arrived in 1931, and nearly all of the people who reside in the area belong to the church. The weekly cycle of work is dominated by church activities, with the Sabbath being observed from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. Garden work is geared to having food ready for preparation on Friday, and the mid-week youth and social service meetings are important.

Most people live a subsistence lifestyle, eating fish and garden produce, with tapioca, sweet potato, taro, greens, beans, pumpkin and various fruits being the staples. Many people keep chickens and eat the eggs, the chickens rarely being eaten. Various nuts are also important sources of protein. Fruit includes bananas, pawpaws, guavas, mangoes, a couple of varieties of citrus fruit, varieties of malay apples, pineapples, sugarcane and pandanus. Items such as rice, noodles, tinned meat and tinned fish are also bought from stores (mostly in Kavieng, as there are very few trade stores).

The Seventh-day Adventist church changed the diet by introducing various restrictions on what food could be eaten. In particular, pig meat, cuscus, shellfish, turtle, lobster and crab meat are no longer eaten. Also, the use of betelnut has largely ceased, though some people, largely those outside the church, do continue to chew it.

Cash crops include copra, cocoa and rubber, with many people starting to grow vanilla as well. Some people also harvest trochus shell, fish or lobster for sale in Kavieng, the provincial capital. Several people in each village have a business supplying fuel for outboard motors, chain saws and lawn mowers, by getting fuel in drums from Kavieng. To earn money to pay school fees, men will often travel to Kavieng and stay for weeks or months getting some sort of employment. This leads

to a large turnover of Mussau-Emira speakers living in Kavieng. At any one time there would be about a thousand in Kavieng, but a minority of those live there permanently.

The traditional outrigger canoes were apparently replaced by simple dugout canoes with the coming of the mission in the 1930s. According to the people, the pioneer missionaries were Solomon Islanders, and the Solomon Islands style of canoe was introduced by them. Currently, many people have small canoes that they use for fishing; several people in each village would have bigger canoes with squared-off sterns to accommodate an outboard motor; and there are fibreglass dinghies in every village. Transport to Kavieng is usually on copra boats, which run according to no schedule, so that transport is always a problem. People do travel by dinghy to Kavieng, but there are many stories of mishaps, with engines breaking down or running out of fuel, and some have either been lost at sea or drifted at sea for long periods before being rescued. Travel time to Kavieng is about 14–18 hours by copra boat, and can be shorter by dinghy, depending on the size of the engine and the load in the dinghy.

Travel between islands is by canoe (paddled or with an outboard motor) or dinghy. Between villages, people often still travel by canoe or dinghy, or otherwise walk. There are a few motorcycles and some bicycles around as well, but the hilly terrain and poor roads do not make bicycle travel easy. There have been some vehicles, mostly belonging to the government station or health centre, but these have only worked intermittently in recent years.

Traditional ties of marriage were largely with people from Manus, though it is about one and a half times as far from Mussau to Manus as from Mussau to Kavieng. Nowadays, there are still marriage ties to Manus, but more people are marrying people from other parts of the country, especially those who have studied or worked elsewhere.

In general, health is very good, with a strong appreciation of health services, largely due to the emphasis on health by the SDA church. With no pigs in the villages, and very few people who chew betelnut, the villages are clean, and the people take pride in cleaning the area around the church twice a week, and in keeping the area around their houses neat.

### **1.5 Linguistic Vitality and Education**

All speakers of Mussau-Emira above the age of five or six are bilingual in Tok Pisin, and are able to read English to varying degrees. Mussau-Emira is still the first language that children living on Mussau and Emira learn, and is the primary means of communication within the area. There are many loan words, and there is much code-switching and code-mixing, particularly in non-traditional domains, such as the church. Even so, the language is very strong.

Education was only in English until about 1994, when vernacular elementary schools were established. Now children are able to have at least one year of education in Mussau-Emira. However, finances have been a continuous problem, both for the elementary schools and the community or primary schools, with many of the schools closing for varying periods in recent years.

Currently, children have the opportunity in most villages of attending school either in their own village or a neighbouring village from elementary prep up to grade 4 or 5. Beyond that, there is a boarding school at Boliu which takes education through to grade 8. Further education must be taken in other parts of the country, with children typically going on to a high school in Kavieng or at Kambubu, near Rabaul. However, fees rise as the children go further, with boarding fees at Boliu and in the towns.

Overall, the education level is very high, with several university

graduates and some pursuing higher degrees in fields including linguistics and theology. However, the economic problems noted above have the effect of limiting the educational possibilities, as school fees rise and incomes fall. In some families, it seems that there is a choice being made about which child will get education beyond grade 8, or even if a particular child will go to school at all.

## 1.6 Earlier Work

Little has been published about the Mussau-Emira language. Chinnery (1927) published a list of about 500 words from the Emira dialect. Pastor A. S. Atkins, a pioneer missionary with the Seventh-day Adventist church, produced an unpublished list of words from the Southern Mussau dialect. Blust (1984) published a vocabulary of 570 words elicited from Pastor Isaiah (Uloulou) Ainamangas, an SDA pastor from Lomakunauru village (Southern Mussau) who was working in Manus Province. Blust also included notes on the synchronic and diachronic phonology of Mussau-Emira. He has also published a short article about gemination and syncope, based on the same data (Blust 2001). Ross (1988) mentions the phonology of Mussau-Emira, and he has published a short sketch (2002) of the grammar of Mussau-Emira. The ethnography by Nevermann (1933) includes some words from various dialects, though these are not gathered together.

This paper is based on our work with speakers of the Southern Mussau dialect, based in Lomakunauru village, as well as some texts written by speakers of the Eastern and Western Mussau dialects from Magean, Bai, Taval, Roitan and Nai villages. We have worked with the Mussau-Emira people since 1995 under the auspices of SIL, and have spent about thirty-eight months out of that time living in Lomakunauru.

Most of the examples in this paper are taken from written or tran-

scribed texts, and so the sentences are often quite complex. Hopefully the points being illustrated will be sufficiently clear despite the added complexity, as having the full sentence should give greater context.

## 1.7 Typological Overview

The phonology of Mussau-Emira is fairly straightforward, with five vowels and eleven consonants, plus phonemic length in both vowels and consonants. There are some vowel harmony rules and some other morphophonemic changes, including the insertion of consonants to break up some vowel sequences. Syllables can be complex, with geminate consonants both word-initially and across syllable boundaries, though open syllables are preferred. Stress is usually on the penultimate syllable of a word unless there is a long vowel in the last syllable, in which case stress is on the last syllable.

The pronoun system is complex, with distinction of first, second and third persons, with singular, dual, trial, paucal and plural, with an inclusive and exclusive distinction in the non-singular first person. There are four forms of pronouns: independent, subject and object agreement clitics, and possessive suffixes.

Noun phrases are one of the complex areas of the grammar. There are number-classifiers which divide nouns into various classes as well as differentiating senses of the noun, plus possessive classifiers. Adjectives are a subclass of nouns with a restricted distribution.

Constituent order is SVO, with prepositions, and most adjectives following the head. An unusual feature is that equative clauses are formed with nouns or adjectives together with a transitive marker and the object enclitic, so that the subject is marked with object pronoun. Serial verbs are common and productive, and there are several types of subordination and complement.

## 2. Phonology

### 2.1 Phonemes

Mussau-Emira has the following consonant phonemes:

Table 1: Consonant Phonemes

p	t	k
β	s	ɣ
m	n	ŋ
	r	
	l	

Stops are unaspirated, and /t/ is post-dental. The voiced bilabial fricative /β/ is often realised as a stop, [b], word-initially, such as in some village names, or when geminated. The voiced velar fricative /ɣ/ is frequently realised as a stop, [g], word-initially, or when geminated.

The Mussau-Emira vowel phonemes are:

Table 2: Vowel Phonemes

i	u
ε	ɔ
a	

Phonemic length is present in both consonants and vowels. The long consonants can generally be interpreted as geminates which occur across syllable boundaries, though some occur word-initially. Such cases may plausibly be a result of syncope from a form which was either proto-Oceanic or an older form of Mussau-Emira (Blust 1987; Blust 2001). The long vowels are often the result of a process of consonant deletion from proto-Oceanic roots. Other cases of lengthened consonants and vowels are the product of morphophonemic processes, as described below.

Length occurs at four levels of the language: lexical, morphological, syntactic and discourse. Long vowels and consonants appear in many lexical items. Morphological processes produce other instances of length, as do syntactic environments, when two vowels across a word boundary are realised as a single long vowel (see section 2.3 below). Finally, length is used as a discourse feature, as one method of emphasis.

## 2.2 Orthography

Mussau-Emira has been written in various ways over the last hundred years. The German expedition of 1909 (Nevermann 1933) wrote terms in their own orthography, but this was never used by the Mussau-Emira people themselves. A Fijian-style orthography was introduced by the Seventh-day Adventist mission in the 1930s, and is still used by some today. With the introduction of vernacular education in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a new orthography was developed. Individuals, however, have tended to write in their own idiosyncratic way. We have been using another orthography which attempts to deal with some of the problems in previous orthographies. For more details, see our Orthography and Phonology Description paper (Brownie 2000).

Most of the phonemes are written as in English. The exceptions are that the voiced bilabial /β/ is represented as <v>, except for certain words in which it is geminated or occurs word-initially, especially proper names, when it is represented as <b>, and the voiced velar fricative /ɣ/ is represented by the digraph <gh> whether it is pronounced as a stop /g/ or a fricative /ɣ/. However, <g> alone is preferred in borrowed words. Geminate consonants are represented by doubling the grapheme, except that <gh> is doubled as <gg>.

## 2.3 Phonotactics

Historically, there was a strong preference for open syllables in Mussau-Emira, particularly at the end of words. Among words fully expressed, the only word-final closed syllables that have been recorded end with a nasal, and by far the most frequent of these is a final [m], in words such as *rarum* ‘liquid’, *vatum* ‘tapioca’, *tum* ‘collarbone’, *am* ‘2nd person plural’ and *-m* ‘2nd person singular possessive suffix’. Ross (2002:150) suggests that historical evidence and the absence of word-final [-mu] indicate an underlying form of [-mu]. The ‘Notes for English Readers’ in the introduction to the vernacular hymn book produced by Pastor Atkins (1935) includes the following statement:

The syllable “mu” (pronounced “moo”) is sometimes written as “m’,” and occasionally it appears as “m” only, in order to make the syllable a lighter sound. In some cases it will be found that the natives use the heavy sound “mu” (as in the word “kulumu”) while at times the “u” is barely pronounced in some words. Hence, for the sake of euphony, the “u” is omitted in certain words, e.g., “raem” (your blood), and “nimam” (your hand).

This tends to support the reconstruction by Ross, especially as the example given, *kulumu* ‘axe’, is universally pronounced as *kulum* in present-day speech.

Word-final [n] is only recorded in names of people, e.g., *Dovlin*, *Kendon*, *Jemalin*, and in some borrowed words. Word-final [ŋ] is rare, and, apart from some names such as *Kiling*, the only recorded instance is a variant pronunciation [βatuŋ] for *vatum* ‘tapioca’, which is possibly a dialectal variation.

Closed syllables at the end of words are becoming more common. In everyday speech, it is common for speakers to drop the final vowel of words, so that, for example, *sinaka* ‘sun’ is often pronounced [sinak], or to devoice the final vowel so that *sinaka* would be pronounced [sinakɑ]. Closed syllables also appear with geminates and with some

combinations of affixes and clitics.

Another characteristic of casual speech is syncope, the dropping of some vowels between identical consonants, thus forming long consonants. For example, *susu* 'breast, milk' is often pronounced [s:u]. This is counter to Blust's data, but appears to be evidence of further generational shift. Blust's informant is a conservative older speaker of the language (aged in his mid-70s currently), and things have most likely changed in the three decades since Blust's fieldwork.

In his 2001 paper, Blust suggests that the motivation for syncope and gemination is the pressure towards a canonical bisyllabic root, and hence words like *susu* 'breast' and *keke* 'leg' do not show syncope. However, both words are regularly pronounced as monosyllables with initial geminate consonants in current speech. On the other hand, both nouns, as body parts, most commonly occur in a directly possessed form (see section 3.7), meaning that the actual word shape is two or more syllables, due to the addition of a possessive suffix. Further research into this area is required.

Another sign of generational change is the progression from a fully expressed pair of syllables, to syncope leading to gemination of the consonant, and then to reduction of the geminate consonant to a single consonant. One example would be the word for 'fish', which historically was *koko*, but is *kko* for most current speakers, but just *ko* for many young speakers. Similarly, the word for 'rocky shore' was *vatata* historically, *vatta* currently, and *vata* for young speakers. In the examples in this paper, we follow the way that these words are written in our sources, so that the variation can be seen.

When a word ends with a short vowel, and the following word begins with the same short vowel, they are realised as a long vowel. There are some exceptions, principally with some combinations of affixes and clitics, where ligatures are inserted to break up vowel sequences.

The two ligatures are *gh-* and *ng-*. The former is inserted in verbs after a subject proclitic and an identical vowel and between verbs in a serial verb construction. The *ng-* ligature is used in all other environments, which include between a noun and a number-classifier, between a verb root and a transitivizing suffix, or between a verb root and an object clitic. See section 4.3 for further details on ligatures in verbs.

In some cases, one or more ligatures are added between elements of the verb phrase, including within the verb. It seems that these are phonologically determined, but the circumstances in which these are inserted are not yet clear. Preventing long strings of vowels is part of it, and probably the need to separate the third person singular object =*a* from transitive verbs ending in /*a*/.

Examples of the ligature *gh-* between subject proclitics and verb stems are as follows:

- (1) a. *a=gh-aloanna*  
 1s=LIG-want  
 'I want'
- b. *a=gh-a-toka*  
 1s=LIG-CAUS-sit  
 'I put down'
- (2) a. *u=gh-usu-usu*      *tou*  
 2s=LIG-RED-suck    sugarcane  
 'you are sucking sugarcane'
- b. *u=gh-u-ue*  
 2s=LIG-RED-say  
 'you are saying'
- c. *u=ue*  
 2s=say  
 'you say'

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- (3) a. *e=gh-elei*  
3s=LIG-do  
'he does'
- b. *la=gh-aimuli*  
3p=LIG-follow  
'they follow'

Note the contrast in example (2), showing that the ligature is not always inserted for the second person singular.

There are very few verbs that begin with /e/, with only *elei* 'do'. The verb *elei* seems to be used interchangeably with *ghelei*, and it is possible that *ghelei* has been formed from *elei* with the addition of the ligature *gh-*, which would appear in the third person singular, so that *e=gh-elei* and *e=ghelei* would be homophonous.

Again, in a serial verb construction, a ligature may be introduced to break up a vowel sequence:

- (4) a. *e=laa gh-aso-aso*  
3s=go LIG-RED-lie  
'he is going to lie down'
- b. *kalio atiulu la=ghe ainavita ng-a-vukala-i=e=la*  
cloth SG:IV 3p=PAST tie LIG-CAUS-hang-TR=3sO=PF  
'the cloth in which they tied him hanging up'

Note that in the first, the ligature *gh-* is inserted, while the second uses *ng-*. It appears that, within a serial verb construction, *ng-* is used before the causative prefix *a-*, and *gh-* elsewhere.

Another common context is following long vowels. When a verb stem ends in /uu/, and the transitive marker *-i* is added, the ligature *-ng* is inserted. Some nouns ending in long vowels also add *ng-* to following classifiers. When the vowel is /u/ or /a/, there appears to be a rule

that /uu/ is reduced to /u/, and /aa/ to /a/ before the ligature *ng*.

- (5) a. *ang=ila ghe ru-ng-i=e=la*  
 TAM=3p PAST finish-LIG-TR=3sO=PF  
 ‘they finished it’
- b. *taumattu ng-atoa*  
 person LIG-PL  
 ‘people’

In these, the underlying forms are *ruu* ‘finish’ and *taumattuu* ‘person’.

Finally, when a transitive verb stem ends in /a/, and the transi-  
 tivizer *-i* is not added, the ligature *-ng* is added before object enclitics  
 starting with /a/.

- (6) *ami nim ai-tara-ng=a*  
 1px just RECIP-see-LIG=3sO  
 ‘we are just looking after him’

## 2.4 Syllable Structure

Because Mussau-Emira has length in both vowels and consonants and several vowel sequences, syllable structure is quite complex. Syllables are usually open, though there are exceptions. When there is a geminate consonant, it is normally across a syllable boundary, the exception being word-initial geminates. The only non-geminate closed syllables appear to be those with morpheme-final /m/. As described above, this would appear to be the result of reduction of /mu/.

Syllable types, as whole words, word initial, word final and word medial, are as follows:

Table 3: Syllable Types

Type	Example	Gloss
V	<u>o</u> <u>a.g</u> hi <u>a.ta.ra</u> i. <u>a</u> <u>si.o.ai.na.g</u> hi.la	'that' '1st person singular' 'I see it' '(they) took me down'
V:	<u>uu</u> <u>aa.na</u> .sa <u>e.uu</u> <u>uu.ngu.aa</u> .ne	'hair' 'hot' 'under' 'his work'
VV	<u>ai</u> <u>ie</u> .ma <u>ka.te.ae</u> <u>si.o.ai.na.g</u> hi.la	'wood, tree' 'knife' 'one (class II)' '(they) took me down'
VV:	<u>su.iaa</u> <u>su.iaa</u> .la	'kneel down' 'knelt down'
VC	<u>ang=</u>	'tense/aspect/mood marker'
CV	<u>me</u> <u>ku</u> .la.vu <u>tai.ta</u> <u>a.ta.ra</u> .ia	'and' 'trevally' 'man' 'I see it'
CV:	<u>kuu</u> <u>kii</u> .lo <u>ma.ruu</u> <u>ma.raa</u> .nge	'blow' 'convict surgeonfish' 'warm oneself by a fire' 'fresh water'
CVV	<u>mae</u> <u>lau</u> .ei <u>ma.lai</u> <u>la.sai</u> .e.la	'come' 'bush with edible leaves' 'star fruit' 'they cut it'
CVV:	<u>vaoo</u>	'rain' (verb)

Type	Example	Gloss
CV:V	<i>kaai</i>	'put into s.t.'
	<i>ai.kaai</i>	'get in'
	<i>ai.kaai.a</i>	'belief'
C:V	<i>ssu</i>	'breast'
	<i>kka.la</i>	'sweep'
C:V:	<i>rrii</i>	'tear'
	<i>rrii.e.la</i>	'tear it!'
CVC	<i>kak.kai.li</i>	'cold'
	<i>u.mom.mor.ro</i>	'you are getting fat'
CVm	<i>tum</i>	'collarbone'
	<i>a.lom</i>	'your (sg) throat'
	<i>la.ghom.ghom</i>	'they are crowding around'
CVVm	<i>raem</i>	'your (sg) blood'
	<i>va.gha.laim</i>	'malay apple variety'

## 2.5 Stress

Stress is specified lexically, but generally falls on the penultimate syllable of the word, with secondary stress on every second syllable before the primary stress. A long vowel in the final syllable shifts the stress to the final syllable. Stress shifts with the addition of suffixes and clitics to the penultimate syllable of the affixed word. There are some exceptions to this, however. Ross (2002:150) explains these as reflexes of consonant-final Proto-Oceanic roots which have had an echo vowel added. It would also appear that the perfective clitic *-la* is extrametrical, stress being assigned before it is added. Other exceptions are explained by an optional stress shift.

We follow Ross' analysis (Ross 2002:150), that there is an optional stress shift towards the front of the word when the stressed vowel is immediately preceded by an identical or lower vowel. However, if the

preceding vowel is /a/, with a consonant intervening, then stress may also shift.

Some examples showing stress patterns are as follows:

<b>Phonetic</b>	<b>Orthographic</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
a.'ta.ra	<i>atara</i>	'I see'
,a.ta.'rai.a	<i>ataraia</i>	'I see him'
,a.ta.'rai.ε.la	<i>ataraiela</i>	'I saw him'
,la.ta.,rai.ε.'ma.mi	<i>lataraiemami</i>	'they see us (exc)'
,la.ta.,rai.ε.'ma.mi.la	<i>lataraiemamila</i>	'they saw us (exc)'
a.,yau.li.'a:	<i>aghauliaa</i>	'I say'
a.,yau.li.'a:.la	<i>aghauliaala</i>	'I said'
'ma.si.na	<i>masina</i>	'good'
'ma.si.'na:i.li	<i>masinaaili</i>	'very good'

## 2.6 Reduplication

Reduplication takes five patterns. The first is where the the first two syllables (or the entire root if only one or two syllables) is reduplicated before the root. We call this disyllabic reduplication. The second and third patterns only apply to stems that begin with a consonant. The second pattern takes the first syllable of the root, and lengthens the vowel, so that  $C_1V_1...$  becomes  $C_1V_1V_1C_1V_1...$  We call this CVV reduplication. The third takes the first syllable, but lengthens the initial consonant of the root, so that  $C_1V_1...$  becomes  $C_1V_1C_1C_1V_1...$  We call this CVC reduplication. The fourth pattern only applies to stems that begin with a long consonant. In this pattern, the stem  $C_1C_1V_1...$  becomes reduplicated as  $C_1V_1C_1C_1V_1...$  We call this CV reduplication. The final pattern occurs only with stems that begin with a vowel, and lengthens that vowel. We call this V reduplication. Table 4 show the various forms.

Table 4: Reduplication

Root	Gloss	Reduplicated Form	Reduplication Pattern
<i>toka</i>	'sit, dwell'	<i>toka-toka</i>	Disyllabic
<i>roo</i>	'be able, suffice'	<i>roo-roo</i>	Disyllabic
<i>nama</i>	'eat'	<i>nama-nama</i>	Disyllabic
<i>aso</i>	'lie down'	<i>aso-aso</i>	Disyllabic
<i>vao</i>	'carry on back'	<i>vao-vao</i>	Disyllabic
<i>karasa</i>	'sharpen'	<i>kara-karasa</i>	Disyllabic
<i>tara</i>	'see'	<i>taa-tara</i>	CVV
<i>palata</i>	'be ashamed'	<i>paa-palata</i>	CVV
<i>matautu</i>	'be afraid'	<i>maa-matautu</i>	CVV
<i>vaoo</i>	'rain'	<i>vaa-vaoo</i>	CVV
<i>ruu</i>	'carry on head'	<i>rur-ruu</i>	CVC
<i>kala</i>	'flow'	<i>kak-kala</i>	CVC
<i>tiongo</i>	'punt'	<i>tit-tiongo</i>	CVC
<i>kaua</i>	'worship'	<i>kak-kaua</i>	CVC
<i>kkala</i>	'sweep'	<i>ka-kkala</i>	CV
<i>kkele</i>	'walk off the path'	<i>ke-kkele</i>	CV
<i>llusu</i>	'sleep deeply'	<i>lu-llusu</i>	CV
<i>mmate</i>	'dry out'	<i>ma-mmate</i>	CV
<i>ppoa</i>	'speak'	<i>po-ppoa</i>	CV
<i>rruti</i>	'tear down'	<i>ru-rruti</i>	CV
<i>sso</i>	'go in'	<i>so-sso</i>	CV
<i>ssu</i>	'breastfeed'	<i>su-ssu</i>	CV
<i>ilou</i>	'run'	<i>i-ilou</i>	V
<i>apasunga</i>	'show, teach'	<i>a-apasunga</i>	V
<i>ue</i>	'say'	<i>u-ue</i>	V
<i>aikaiaia</i>	'believe'	<i>a-aikaiaia</i>	V

There does not appear to be any meaning difference between the

five reduplication patterns. Rather, it appears to be lexically specified, since two roots which are identical may have different reduplication patterns.

Root	Gloss	Reduplicated Form
<i>kaili</i>	'be cold'	<i>kak-kaili</i>
<i>kaili</i>	'express'	<i>kaa-kaili</i>
<i>kuluki</i>	'peel'	<i>kuk-kuluki</i>
<i>kuluki</i>	'observe'	<i>kuu-kuluki</i>

Sometimes the reduplication pattern changes for a verb when it changes valency. For example, the verb *kolomi* 'ask' can be either transitive or intransitive. When used intransitively, it occurs with CVC reduplication, *kok-kolomi*. When used transitively with an object enclitic, it occurs with CVV reduplication, *koo-kolomi*. Note that the *kolomi* takes as its direct object the person being asked, the question being a complement. See section 8.3 for more on complements.

The normal pattern employed for new verbs, formed by borrowing, is CVV reduplication. For example, some common expressions are *Aghe raarauni* 'I was walking about', borrowed from Tok Pisin *raun*, *lasaasapraesi* 'they are surprised', from English 'surprise', and *laghe viivisiti se* 'they visited various places', from English.

Since there is no apparent difference of meaning between the different patterns of reduplication, they will all be glossed as simply instances of reduplication.

## 2.7 Morphophonemics

There is a regular rule that a short vowel /a/ is raised to /e/ following a high vowel (/i/ or /u/), when the /a/ is not phrase-final. This rule also applies across word boundaries. It affects many different morphemes, but the most common are the common classifier *ateva*, which

becomes *eteva* following a word ending in a high vowel, the object enclitics beginning with *-a*, and the intensifier *-aili*.

Some examples of the application of this rule are:

*nau* ‘day’ + *ateva* ‘classifier’ > *nau eteva* ‘the day’  
*sausi* ‘help’ + *=aghi* ‘first person singular object’ > *sausieghi* ‘help me’  
*kolomi* ‘ask’ + *=a* ‘third person singular object’ > *kolomia* ‘ask him’  
*kolomi* ‘ask’ + *=a* ‘3sO’ + *=la* ‘perfective’ > *kolomiela* ‘asked him’  
*ata* ‘burn’ + *-i* ‘transitive’ + *=a* ‘3sO’ > *ataia* ‘burn it’  
*ata* ‘burn’ + *-i* ‘transitive’ + *=a* ‘3sO’ + *=la* ‘perfective’ > *ataiela* ‘burned it’  
*aliki* ‘child, youth’ + *=angalua* ‘first person exclusive dual object’ >  
*alikiengalua* ‘we are children’  
*masau* ‘far’ + *-aili* ‘intensifier’ > *masaueili* ‘very far’

Note that *kolomia* has the /a/ phrase-final, and thus it is not raised to /e/, whereas adding the perfective enclitic *=la* makes the /a/ not phrase-final, and so it is raised to /e/ and becomes *kolomiela*. The same happens for *ataia* and *ataiela*.

One exception to this rule is that the nominalizing prefixes *ni-* and *ai-* do not affect the following vowel, so that a verb beginning with /a/ retains the /a/ after the nominalizing prefix, e.g., *asopoi* ‘dream’ (as a verb) becomes *ni-asopoi* ‘dream’ as a noun. Similarly, *alokoi* ‘lay down’ becomes *ni-alokoi* in the phrase *inangari nialokoi* ‘promise’.

Some vowel harmony also occurs, with the first person singular possessive suffix *-ghi* becoming *-ghu* following a rounded vowel (/o/ or /u/).

Certain processes appear to differ in the way they treat roots depending on whether the historical proto-form (Proto-Oceanic) was vowel-final or consonant-final. Mussau-Emira has added echo vowels to consonant-final roots, which are then deleted in these processes. For more details, see Ross (2002). From a synchronic perspective, these are

exceptions which are not predictable. See examples in sections 3.7.3 and 4.2.3.

Some of the possessive classifiers undergo changes when the third person singular possessive suffix *-na* is added. See section 3.7.2 for more details.

## 2.8 Loan Words

The major sources of loan words are Tok Pisin and English, with few, if any, borrowed from other languages. There appear to be several different motivations for the use of loan words. Some are borrowed from Tok Pisin or English when there is no such word in Mussau-Emira, such as *gan* 'gun' or *vini* 'bean'. Other loan words are inconsistently used, and may be plausibly regarded as code-mixing. One other example is where a Mussau-Emira word, *paua* 'dog', exists side-by-side with a loan word, *roko* 'dog', presumably because the Mussau-Emira word sounds like the Tok Pisin word *pawa* 'power'. Similarly, *popo* (though pronounced *poopoo*, it is spelt as in Tok Pisin) is used alongside *paea* for pawpaw, presumably because of the similarity of *paea* and Tok Pisin *paia* 'fire'. Again, the Mussau-Emira word *kko* 'fish' (otherwise *koko* or *ko*) is being replaced by a Tok Pisin borrowing *pisi*, presumably because of the similarity of *koko* to the Tok Pisin *kok* 'penis'.

Established loan words tend to conform to Mussau-Emira phonological patterns, breaking up consonant clusters, adding echo vowels, and changing phonemes to the nearest equivalent. More recent loan words, or cases of code-mixing, exhibit less adaptation.

Some examples of more established loan words are listed in table 5, along with the source word and language.

Table 5: Loan Words

<b>Mussau-Emira</b>	<b>Gloss</b>	<b>Source Language</b>	<b>Source Word</b>
<i>aatina</i>	'difficult'	Tok Pisin	<i>hat</i>
<i>ausiki</i>	'hospital, clinic'	Tok Pisin	<i>haus sik</i>
<i>ghalamutu</i>	'slit gong'	Tok Pisin	<i>garamut</i>
<i>ghalasi</i>	'skindive'	Tok Pisin	<i>glas</i>
<i>huku</i>	'hook'	Tok Pisin	<i>huk</i>
<i>ieti</i>	'yet'	English/Tok Pisin	<i>yet</i>
<i>isiki</i>	'be sick'	Tok Pisin	<i>sik</i>
<i>kapa</i>	'sheet metal'	Tok Pisin	<i>kapa</i>
<i>karai</i>	'cry out'	Tok Pisin	<i>krai</i>
<i>kara</i>	'car, truck'	English	<i>car</i>
<i>karimi</i>	'deliver a baby'	Tok Pisin	<i>karim</i>
<i>katapele</i>	'catapult'	English/Tok Pisin	<i>catapult</i>
<i>misinare</i>	'do mission work'	English/Tok Pisin	<i>missionary</i>
<i>moni</i>	'money'	Tok Pisin	<i>moni</i>
<i>moto</i>	'motorised boat'	Tok Pisin	<i>moto</i>
<i>muruku</i>	'cassowary'	Tok Pisin	<i>muruk</i>
<i>pamili</i>	'family'	Tok Pisin	<i>pamili</i>
<i>pamkeni</i>	'pumpkin'	Tok Pisin	<i>pamken</i>
<i>popo</i>	'pawpaw'	Tok Pisin	<i>popo</i>
<i>pure</i>	'pray'	English/Tok Pisin	<i>pray</i>
<i>rauni</i>	'wander, visit'	Tok Pisin	<i>raun</i>
<i>roko</i>	'dog'	Tok Pisin	<i>dok</i>
<i>sambati</i>	'Sabbath'	(see below)	<i>Sabbath/?</i>
<i>sapraesi</i>	'be surprised'	English/Tok Pisin	<i>surprise</i>
<i>savati</i>	'Sabbath'	English	<i>Sabbath</i>
<i>selou</i>	'ship in sight'	English	<i>sail ho</i>
<i>senso</i>	'chain saw'	English/Tok Pisin	<i>chain saw</i>
<i>sikulu</i>	'school'	Tok Pisin	<i>skul</i>

Mussau-Emira	Gloss	Source Language	Source Word
<i>simuku</i>	'smoke, cigarette'	Tok Pisin	<i>smok</i>
<i>stiringi</i>	'fishing line'	Tok Pisin	<i>string</i>
<i>taoni</i>	'town'	Tok Pisin	<i>taun</i>
<i>taraases</i>	'trousers'	Tok Pisin	<i>trausis</i>
<i>tarae</i>	'dry coconut'	Tok Pisin	<i>drai</i>
<i>tevo</i>	'table'	Tok Pisin	<i>tebol</i>
<i>uiki</i>	'week'	Tok Pisin	<i>wik</i>
<i>vini</i>	'bean'	Tok Pisin	<i>bin</i>
<i>viskete</i>	'biscuit'	Tok Pisin	<i>bisket</i>
<i>vuku</i>	'book'	Tok Pisin	<i>buk</i>

The word *sambati* 'sabbath' has been borrowed from English via an unknown language. Possibly it is a language from the Solomon Islands, possibly Marovo, as the first missionaries were Solomon Islanders, and Marovo was an important centre for the Seventh-day Adventist church in the early part of the 20th century. Alternatively, it may have come through another language of Papua New Guinea, such as Kuanua.

The following example shows some code-mixing of Tok Pisin words into Mussau-Emira sentences, with little phonological adaptation, and conformity to Mussau-Emira grammar:

- (7) *Aghi bipo a=ghe sii-simuku. Nau simuku eteva ghe*  
 1s before 1s=PAST RED-smoke day smoke SG:I PAST  
*kontrolimi=eghi=la karika a=ghe roo=la tani kontrolim*  
 control=1sO=PF NEG 1s=PAST be.able=PF COMP control  
*pamili.*  
 family  
 'Before I used to smoke. When smoking controlled me, I was not able to control my family.'

Here, we have four different loan words from Tok Pisin, with different

degrees of conformity to Mussau-Emira phonology and grammar. The word *simuku* has been adapted to Mussau-Emira phonology, with the consonant cluster broken up, while *kontrolim* has not been adapted, and the consonant cluster remains intact. Both *bipo* and *pamili* are identical in both Tok Pisin and Mussau-Emira phonology.

### 3. Nouns and Noun Phrases

In this chapter, we will begin with pronouns (3.1), then move on to nouns (3.2), demonstratives (3.3), and then to the complex issue of numerals, number marking and classifiers (3.5). We then look at adjectives and nominal modifiers (3.6) and possession (3.7), before concluding with the noun phrase (3.8).

#### 3.1 Pronouns

Mussau-Emira distinguishes pronouns by person (1st, 2nd and 3rd), by number (singular, dual, trial, paucal and plural), and, in the non-singular 1st person, inclusive (of hearer) and exclusive. There are four sets of pronouns: independent, possessive suffixes, subject proclitics and object enclitics. These are all listed in the following table. There is some dialectal and free variation in the independent pronouns, plus variation between /a/ and /o/ in many of the trial forms.

Table 6: Pronouns

	Independent	Possessive	Object	Subject
<b>Singular</b>				
<b>1</b>	<i>aghi</i>	<i>-ghi ~ -ghu</i>	<i>=aghi ~ =eghi</i>	<i>a=</i>
<b>2</b>	<i>io</i>	<i>-m</i>	<i>=o</i>	<i>u=</i>
<b>3</b>	<i>ia ~ ie</i>	<i>-na ~ -ne</i>	<i>=a ~ =e</i>	<i>e=</i>
<b>Dual</b>				
<b>1 inc.</b>	<i>italua</i>	<i>-italua</i>	<i>=talua</i>	<i>italu=</i>
<b>1 exc.</b>	<i>(a)ngalua</i>	<i>-angalua ~ -engalua</i>	<i>=angalua ~ =engalua</i>	<i>(a)ngalu=</i>
<b>2</b>	<i>(a)malua</i>	<i>-imalua</i>	<i>=amalua ~ =emalua</i>	<i>(a)malu=</i>
<b>3</b>	<i>(i)lalua</i>	<i>-irarua</i>	<i>=lalua</i>	<i>lalu=</i>

	<b>Independent</b>	<b>Possessive</b>	<b>Object</b>	<b>Subject</b>
<b>Trial</b>				
<b>1 inc.</b>	<i>itatolu ~ itotolu</i>	<i>-itatolu ~ -itotolu</i>	<i>=tolu</i>	-
<b>1 exc.</b>	<i>(a)ngatolu ~ (a)ngotolu</i>	<i>-(a)ngatolu ~ -engatolu ~ -(a)ngoto(lu) ~ -engoto(lu)</i>	<i>=angatolu ~ =engatolu ~ =angotolu ~ =engotolu</i>	-
<b>2</b>	<i>amatolu ~ amotolu</i>	<i>-imatolu ~ -imotolu</i>	<i>=amatolu ~ =ematolu ~ =amotolu ~ =emotolu</i>	-
<b>3</b>	<i>(i)latolu</i>	<i>-iratolu</i>	<i>=latolu</i>	<i>latolu= ~ lotolu=</i>
<b>Paucal</b>				
<b>1 inc.</b>	<i>itaata</i>	<i>-itaata</i>	<i>=taata</i>	-
<b>1 exc.</b>	<i>(a)ngaata</i>	<i>-angaata ~ -engaata</i>	<i>=angaata ~ =engaata</i>	-
<b>2</b>	<i>amaata</i>	<i>-imaata</i>	<i>=amaata ~ =emaata</i>	-
<b>3</b>	<i>(i)laata</i>	<i>-iraata</i>	<i>=laata</i>	<i>laata=</i>
<b>Plural</b>				
<b>1 inc.</b>	<i>ita</i>	<i>-ita</i>	<i>=ta</i>	-
<b>1 exc.</b>	<i>(a)mami ~ ami</i>	<i>-mami</i>	<i>=mami</i>	-
<b>2</b>	<i>am</i>	<i>-imim</i>	<i>=am ~ =em</i>	-
<b>3</b>	<i>(i)la</i>	<i>-ira</i>	<i>=la</i>	<i>la=</i>

The independent pronouns can function as subjects of clauses. There are several variations between dialects. In particular, the dual, trial and paucal first person exclusive and second person often have the initial *a* dropped, and *ami* 'we (pl, exc)' is variously *amami* or *mami*. Also, there are two forms of each of the third person pronouns: *ia* and

*ie* for singular, and with or without an initial /i/ for the other numbers.

- (1) *Angalua me Dovlin angalu aso-aso tale kateva ale.*  
 1dx and Dovlin 1dx RED-lie PREP one house  
 ‘Dovlin and I slept in one house.’
- (2) *U=tingina oia me aghi a=laa soa mosu eteva.*  
 2s=stand here and 1s 1s=go shoot pig SG:I  
 ‘You stand here and I will go and spear the pig.’

The possessive pronoun suffixes are used in the various possessive constructions (see section 3.7) and with the preposition *eta-* (see section 5.4).

- (3) *Kina-ghi ghe lao sio tani muke ane-angalua*  
 mother-1sP PAST go go.down COMP plant food-1dxP  
*asi.*  
 taro  
 ‘My mother went to plant our taro.’
- (4) *O masina-aili eta-imim, ta am mae sio*  
 O good-INTENS PREP-2pP CONJ 2p come go.down  
*eta-mami e=Tavol.*  
 PREP-1pxP LOC=Tavol  
 ‘O thank you very much, that you came to us in Tavol.’

For the subject proclitics, not all person-number combinations exist, with no forms for trial, paucal and plural in the first and second persons. For practical orthography reasons, subject proclitics apart from the singular (all persons) and third person plural are written as separate words.

For those person and number combinations, the independent pronouns are used alone, though one could, for emphasis, say, *Am am kasu!* ‘You go!’ See further details in section 4.3.

The third person plural subject proclitic is slightly uncertain in status. It does not seem to co-occur with the independent pronoun *la*, though it does with *ila*, suggesting that it is the same as the independent pronoun. However, it is phonologically bound to the following word, and attracts no stress, implying that it is a clitic.

Some examples showing the use of subject proclitics are:

- (5) *E=ghe asekanuei=la me a=ghe taa-tara va aue*  
 3s=PAST close.eyes=PF and 1s=PAST RED-see COMP IRR  
*e=angu o karika.*  
 3s=wake.up or NEG  
 ‘He was unconscious and I was watching whether he would wake up or not.’
- (6) *Kateva nau, angalua me tue-ghi vause ateva*  
 one day 1dx and older.sibling-1sP woman SG:I  
*ta Emily angalu ghe toka pap-pasu.*  
 ART Emily 1dx PAST sit RED-play  
 ‘One day my sister Emily and I were playing.’

The object enclitics are used as objects in verb phrases and also in equative clauses, as discussed in section 6.1.2.

- (7) *La=ghe kaai=eghi=la tale olimo ateva, me la=ghe*  
 3p=PAST carry=1sO=PF PREP canoe SG:I and 3s=PAST  
*sio-ain=aghi=la tale ausiki.*  
 go.down-TR=1sO=PF PREP hospital  
 ‘They carried me to the canoe and took me to the hospital.’

- (8) Nau aliki=eghi, lisa ateva oroi-aili ta  
 day child=1sO louse SG:I many-INTENS PREP

*ng-uru-ghu.*

LIG-head-1sP

‘When I was young, I had many lice on my head.’

Some of the trial and paucal forms listed in the tables are not well-attested in the data, being relatively infrequent in common usage, and some may be corrected after further checking.

There are two forms for the third person singular possessive suffix, *-na* and *-ne*. The difference between them is not yet well-understood. Partly, *-ne* is the Western Mussau dialect version. However, it may be a fourth person, with *-na* as the normal form, and *-ne* used when introducing a new referent in the discourse. This is not yet well-understood.

- (9) a. Kealo, tama-na ta Goma.  
 Kealo father-3sP ART Goma  
 ‘Kealo, his father is Goma.’
- b. Goma tama-ne-i=a Kealo.  
 Goma father-3sP-TR=3sO Kealo  
 ‘Goma is the father of Kealo.’

There may be a difference between the two forms of the third person independent pronouns: *ia* and *ie*, *lalu* and *ilalu*, *latolu* and *ilatolu*, *laata* and *ilaata*, *la* and *ila*. Asking speakers about the difference between the two elicits answers such as, “*Ila* is another group.” As with *-na* and *-ne*, this may be a fourth person marking, or a discourse feature of introducing a new group. An example follows, but further study is needed.

(10) *Vause atoa la=elei unguaa-ira, me taita atoa ila*  
 woman PL 3p=do work-3pP and man PL 3p

*elei unguaa-ira.*  
 do work-3pP

‘The women do their work and the men do their work.’

Notice in this example that the first *la=* refers to the women, but the *ila* refers to the men. Also note the absence of *la=* as the subject marker after *ila*.

A different possibility for some instances of the difference between *ia* and *ie* for the third person singular independent pronouns is the application of the vowel raising rule. Where the pronoun is followed by *nonga* ‘only’ or *tee* ‘accompanying’, it is generally raised, which can be explained as being no longer phrase-final. However, the addition of the demonstrative *o* ‘that’ does not appear to cause vowel-raising.

Another possessive marker is *-ra*. It is used to denote general or collective possession. For discussion of this, see section 3.7.

### 3.2 Nouns

Nouns in Mussau-Emira are words that can function as heads of noun phrases. These may fill the roles of subject, object, recipient, addressee, location and time, and may also function as predicates. Some nouns can be inflected with possessive suffixes, for which see section 3.7. In equative clauses, a noun may be suffixed with a transitive marker and an object enclitic. See section 6.1.2 for further discussion.

Ross (2002:152) divides Mussau-Emira nouns into four classes: common I, common II, personal and locational. There is no general marking to identify the classes, though the classifiers (see section 3.5) can indicate the class. It is probably more useful to assign more common

classes, based on the seven different classifiers noted below. However, many nouns can fall into two or more classes based on classifiers. Further research is needed into this area.

Personal nouns take no classifier, and appear to be restricted to names, and possibly some titles such as *dokta* ‘doctor’. Locational nouns form a closed set, denoting various locations, and are listed below:

<i>elae</i>	‘land’
<i>elamana</i>	‘beach’
<i>elo malionge</i>	‘deep ocean water’
<i>elo pongaiso</i>	‘place where the waves are breaking’
<i>elovusu</i>	‘bush’
<i>enamana</i>	‘shallow water’
<i>elosamarra</i>	‘shore’
<i>malamana</i>	‘shallow water with white sand bottom’
<i>vatta</i>	‘rocky shore’

Derived nouns can be formed from verbs in various ways, and also from inalienably possessed nouns and from place names.

Abstract nouns are derived from verbs by prefixing *ni-*. Often, the verb stem is reduplicated before adding a derivational prefix. Note also that the object of a transitive verb can be incorporated in the abstract noun, as can a negative, and also that a serial verb construction can be nominalized. Some examples of derived abstract nouns are listed in table 7:

Table 7: Derived Abstract Nouns

Derived Noun	Gloss	Verb	Gloss
<i>ni-ai-uvi</i>	‘war’	<i>ai-uvi</i>	‘fight’ (lit. RECIP-hit)
<i>ni-aikaia</i>	‘faith’	<i>aikaia</i>	‘believe, trust’
<i>ni-ari</i>	‘hunting’	<i>ari</i>	‘hunt’

Derived Noun	Gloss	Verb	Gloss
<i>ni-elousi</i>	'love' (noun)	<i>alousi</i>	'love' (verb)
<i>ni-mate</i>	'death'	<i>mate</i>	'die'
<i>ni-nanna</i>	'thought, thinking'	<i>nanna</i>	'think'
<i>ni-pake ale</i>	'roofing a house'	<i>pake ale</i>	'roof a house' (lit. shelter house)
<i>ni-rekati</i>	'fishing'	<i>rekati</i>	'fish with a hook'
<i>ni-rete</i>	'shivering'	<i>rete</i>	'shiver'
<i>ni-sausi</i>	'help' (noun)	<i>sausi</i>	'help' (verb)
<i>ni-tam aikaiaia</i>	'unbelief'	<i>tam aikaiaia</i>	'not believe'
<i>ni-velu eitaua</i>	'feast'	<i>velu eitaua</i>	'sit together'

Instruments and agents are derived from verbs by prefixing *ai-*. Again, the verb stem is often reduplicated. A locative can also be incorporated. Examples are listed in table 8.

Table 8: Instruments and Agents

Derived Noun	Gloss	Verb	Gloss
<i>ai-a-apasunga</i>	'teacher'	<i>apasunga</i>	'show, teach'
<i>ai-ghaa alomasaanga</i>	'school'	<i>ghaa alomasaanga</i>	'get wisdom'
<i>ai-naviti</i>	'binding for climbing a tree'	<i>naviti</i>	'bind together'
<i>ai-rekati</i>	'fishing hook'	<i>rekati</i>	'fish with a hook'
<i>ai-ruu-ruu</i>	'end'	<i>ruu</i>	'finish'
<i>ai-sae-sae</i>	'ladder, stairs'	<i>sae</i>	'go up'
<i>ai-sai-sai</i>	'knife, axe'	<i>sai</i>	'cut'
<i>ai-sama-sama</i>	'radio'	<i>sama</i>	'talk'
<i>ai-soa-soa</i>	'spear'	<i>soa</i>	'shoot, throw at'
<i>ai-taa-tara</i>	'light, torch'	<i>tara</i>	'see'
<i>ai-tiongo</i>	'punting pole'	<i>tiongo</i>	'punt'

Derived Noun	Gloss	Verb	Gloss
<i>ai-tiu-tiu</i>	'beginning'	<i>tiu</i>	'start'
<i>ai-toka-toka</i>	'floor, chair, bed'	<i>toka</i>	'sit, dwell, stay'
<i>ai-u-ungu</i> <i>e=utana</i>	'garden tool'	<i>ungu e=utana</i>	'work in a garden'
<i>ai-viu-viu</i>	'surfboard'	<i>viu</i>	'surf, ride waves'

Following are some examples of the use of the verbs and their derived nouns:

- (11) a. *Taita ateva ghe mate=la.*  
 man SG:I PAST die=PF  
 'The man died.'
- b. *Ni-mate aue e=ghaa-i=emalua me amalu oghi lao*  
 NOM-die IRR 3sS-get-TR=2dO and 2d go.back go  
*tale kosa nongina amalu ghe mae sio.*  
 PREP ground like/where 2d PAST come go.down  
 'Death will take you two, and you will go back to the ground from which you came.'
- (12) a. *Vause ateva ghe toka=la e=Magean.*  
 woman SG:I PAST sit=PF LOC=Magean  
 'The woman lived in Magean.'
- b. *Paua ateva e=aso-aso tale ai-toka-toka ateva.*  
 dog SG:I 3sS=RED-lie PREP NOM=RED-sit SG:I  
 'The dog is lying on the chair.'

It seems that a reduplicated intransitive verb without a derivational prefix can be used as an abstract noun as well, as shown in the following list and example.

*toka* 'sit'      *toka-toka-ghi* 'my life'

<i>masina</i>	'be good'	<i>maa-masinaa-ne</i>	'its goodness'
<i>mate</i>	'die'	<i>mate-mate</i>	'a/the dead person'
<i>maulue</i>	'live'	<i>maa-mauluaa-ne</i>	'his life'

- (13) *Ia pasu-i=a tale maa-masinaa-ne.*  
 3s full-TR=3sO PREP RED-good-3sP  
 'He is full of goodness.'

Further, an inalienably possessed noun (see section 3.7) may be reduplicated to form an indefinite noun. For example, *tama* 'father' may be reduplicated as *tamatama* to mean a father, without specifying whose father, and *tuvu* 'grandparent, grandchild' can likewise be reduplicated as *tuvutuvu*.

- (14) *Tama-na Gindi e=toka-toka e=Magean.*  
 father-3sP Gindi 3sS=RED-sit LOC=Magean  
 'Gindi's father lives in Magean.'
- (15) *Kateva nau kateva tama-tama ghe toka-toka epona*  
 one day one RED-father PAST RED-sit on  
*tanganue-na.*  
 home-3sP  
 'One day a father was sitting in his house.'

The proclitic *a=* can be added to a place name to mean a person from that place. So, *a=Lomakunauru eteva* is 'a/the person from Lomakunauru', and *a=Loaua atoa* is '(the) people of Loaua'.

### 3.3 Demonstratives

Mussau-Emira uses a four-way deictic system, distinguishing here (close to the speaker), there (medium distance from the speaker), there (far from the speaker) and there (a long way off). The demonstratives are as follows:

<i>toko, to, oio, oia</i>	this, here (close to speaker)
<i>o</i>	that, there (not close to speaker, but medium distance)
<i>teke</i>	that, there (far from speaker)
<i>okae, oke, okei</i>	there (a long way off)

The forms *oio* and *oia* vary between dialects, with *oia* more common in Southern Mussau and *oio* more common in Western Mussau. Eastern Mussau uses both. Similarly, Southern Mussau uses *oke*, whereas the other two dialects use *okae*.

(16) *Lo ateva toko namuu=i=a ta lo ateva to.*  
 thing SG:I this big=TR=3sO but thing SG:I this  
 ‘This one is bigger than that one.’

(17) *Mae sio toko.*  
 come go.down this  
 ‘Come here.’

(18) *Ghaine ita saki=la oio.*  
 today 1pi attack=3sO this  
 ‘Today, we will attack them here.’

(19) *la o nau eteva aliki=eghi me a=ghe tara=la*  
 3s that day SG:I child=1sO and 1s=PAST see=PF  
*nongina la=ghe ai-uvi tale masin gan.*  
 like/where 3p=PAST RECIP-hit PREP machine.gun  
 ‘At that time when I was young I saw how they fought with machine guns.’

(20) *Laa sso uvi lo ateva teke!*  
 go go.in hit thing SG:I that  
 ‘Go in and hit that one!’

- (21) *Kuiu o<sub>k</sub>ae me kapu-na atoa la=sso mae tani oe*  
 Kuiu that and friend-3sP PL 3p=go.in come COMP  
 gather

*vua.*

betelnut

‘That was Kuiu and his friends who came to gather betelnut.’

In example (16), both *toko* and *to* are used, both referring to things at hand, close to the speaker. Whether they can be used interchangeably is not known.

### 3.4 The Article *ta*

The particle *ta* is used as an indefinite article in the context of naming people and things. One case is where an identification is added to a person or thing referred to by a kin term or other generic expression. Syntactically, the phrase beginning with *ta* is in apposition to the preceding phrase.

- (22) *Vara me ie-ghi eteva ta Sieke ghe*  
 then and brother-in-law-1sP SG:I ART Sieke PAST

*rekata=la.*

arrive=PF

‘Then my brother-in-law Sieke arrived.’

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- (23) *Ami ghe sae=la elo ale, vause alua ta Ellen*  
1px PAST go.up=PF in house woman DL:I ART Ellen  
*me Orue lalu ghe ai=e=la, me amami ghe*  
and Orue 3d PAST cook=3sO=PF and 1px PAST  
*nama-i=e=la.*  
eat-TR=3sO=PF  
'We went into the house, two women, Ellen and Orue, cooked it  
and we ate it.'

- (24) *Ami ghe laa sio tani sae-sae tale anua*  
1px PAST go go.down COMP RED-go.up PREP ship  
*ateva ta Malalangi.*  
SG:I ART Malalangi  
'We went down to get on the ship Malalangi.'

- (25) *Angalu ghe sae=la elo ale tani tara*  
1dx PAST go.up=PF in house COMP see  
*kina-ngalua ta Mara me nenga-ngalua ta*  
mother-1dxP ART Mara and younger.sibling-1dxP ART  
*Margaret.*  
Margaret  
'We went into the house to see our mother Mara and our younger  
sister Margaret.'

Another case is when telling or asking the name of something, as  
in the following examples:

- (26) *Ngalu ghe aikaai=la tale anua ateva, arari-na atea*  
 1dx PAST board=PF PREP ship SG:I name-3sP SG:II  
*ta MV Mussira.*  
 ART MV Mussira.  
 ‘We got on the ship, its name was the MV Mussira.’
- (27) *Angalua me kie-ghi paua ateva, arari-na atea ta*  
 1dx and PCL-3sP dog SG:I name-3sP SG:II ART  
*Kina, ghe tiu-aa=la tani kongoa tinaua mosu etoa.*  
 Kina PAST start-DUR=PF COMP chase herd pig PL  
 ‘I and my dog, whose name was Kina, started to chase a herd of  
 pigs.’
- (28) *Pipi, tama-na ta see?*  
 Pipi father-3sP ART who  
 ‘Pipi, his father is who?’ (or ‘Pipi, who is his father?’)

This case is that of an equative clause. The phrase beginning with *ta* is the predicate, with the preceding phrase (usually a form of *arari* ‘name’) being the subject.

### 3.5 Numerals, Number Marking and Classifiers

The subject of numerals, number marking and classifiers in Mussau-Emira is very complex, as there are several ways that these categories interact. There are five types of number coding categories:

- counting numbers
- prenominal number-classifiers
- postnominal number-classifiers
- existential verbs
- ordinal numbers

### 3.5.1 Counting Numbers

The number system in Mussau-Emira is a simple decimal system, with numbers that go into the thousands. The numbers are listed below.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Mussau-Emira</b>
1	<i>sesa</i>
2	<i>lua</i>
3	<i>tolu</i>
4	<i>ata</i>
5	<i>lima</i>
6	<i>nomo</i>
7	<i>itu</i>
8	<i>oalu</i>
9	<i>sio</i>
10	<i>sangaulu</i>
11	<i>sangaulu sesa</i>
12	<i>sangaulu lua</i>
13	<i>sangaulu tolu</i>
14	<i>sangaulu ata</i>
15	<i>sangaulu lima</i>
16	<i>sangaulu nomo</i>
17	<i>sangaulu itu</i>
18	<i>sangaulu oalu</i>
19	<i>sangaulu sio</i>
20	<i>luengaulu</i>
25	<i>luengaulu lima</i>
30	<i>tolungaulu</i>
40	<i>atingaulu</i>
50	<i>limangaulu</i>
60	<i>nomongaulu</i>
70	<i>itungaulu</i>
80	<i>oalungaulu</i>

90	<i>siongaulu</i>
100	<i>ai</i>
127	<i>ai luengaulu itu</i>
1,000	<i>airari ~ airare</i>
8,192	<i>oalu airari ai siongaulu lua</i>

According to Ross (2002:153), the tens are formed of three historical morphemes: a form of the numeral itself, a ligature *-nga*, and a suffix *-ulu* indicating ten. The variation between *airari* and *airare* appears to be dialectal, but this has not been tested.

These numbers are only used when counting things, such as people in a group, fish in a net, bags of food, etc.

It is apparent that the number system is being lost apart from the small numbers, to about five or six. Many, especially younger speakers, use English and/or Tok Pisin numbers beyond this limit. For example, many speakers are unsure whether *ai* means 'hundred' or 'thousand'.

### 3.5.2 Prenominal Number-Classifiers

The prenominal number-classifiers encode number and, for numbers one to five, class. There are seven classes in Mussau-Emira, which have some semantic basis, but there are exceptions. The majority of nouns fall into class I, with small numbers falling into the other six classes. However, some nouns can be in more than one class, with the different classes specifying differing meanings of the noun.

The seven classes are:

#### **Class Meaning**

- I General, common nouns
- II Long or tall form, collective nouns?
- III Paired objects
- IV Objects which are pieces of something, long things?

- V Objects in groups or bunches
- VI Sides, dishes, money, some places
- VII Roads, leaves, hairs (thin things?)

Examples of nouns in the seven classes are listed in table 9.

Table 9: Noun Classes

Class	Noun	Gloss
I	<i>ale</i>	'house'
	<i>asi</i>	'taro'
	<i>kko</i>	'fish'
	<i>koto</i>	'wave'
	<i>liu</i>	'place, hole'
	<i>loa</i>	'species of ant'
	<i>motouru</i>	'mountain'
	<i>olimo</i>	'canoe'
	<i>paanaka</i>	'boat'
	<i>paua</i>	'dog'
	<i>raroai</i>	'evil spirit'
	<i>samana</i>	'outrigger'
	<i>taita</i>	'man'
	<i>tokapaipe</i>	'willie wagtail'
<i>vause</i>	'woman'	
II	<i>ai</i>	'tree'
	<i>aisalo</i>	'bridge, platform'
	<i>aranna</i>	'species of pandanus (tree)'
	<i>arari</i>	'name'
III	<i>keke</i>	'leg'
	<i>kuraa</i>	'long piece of firewood'
	<i>ngaa</i>	'branch'
	<i>nima</i>	'arm'

<b>Class</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
<b>IV</b>	<i>aikuukuvati</i> <i>aisoasoa</i> <i>alo</i> <i>atu</i> <i>kalio</i> <i>koikoi</i> <i>komo</i> <i>musuke</i> <i>ose</i> <i>suena</i> <i>tum</i> <i>vili</i>	'shotgun' (lit. 'instrument for shooting') 'spear' (lit. 'instrument for throwing') 'throat' 'stone' 'piece of cloth' 'coconut shell' 'sleeping mat' 'end of a canoe' 'paddle' 'house post' 'collarbone' 'back (of a person)'
<b>V</b>	<i>aranna</i> <i>utana</i>	'species of pandanus (fruit)' 'garden'
<b>VI</b>	<i>kapa</i> <i>nima muenna</i> <i>nima uaise</i> <i>pai</i> <i>pelete</i> <i>terei</i> <i>va, bba</i> <i>viliki veu</i>	'cup' 'right arm' 'left arm' 'place' 'plate' 'tray' 'cheek (of a person)' 'money, coin' (lit. 'skin of a shell sp.')
<b>VII</b>	<i>karoiroi</i> <i>moni</i> <i>salana</i> <i>saoa</i> <i>uasa</i> <i>uru ngai</i> <i>uu nguru</i>	'nut sp.' 'paper money' 'road' 'passage through a reef' 'vine, rope' 'leaf, piece of paper' (lit. 'head of a tree') 'hair of the head'

Class	Noun	Gloss
	<i>uu paa</i>	'hair of the beard'
	<i>veu</i>	'shell sp.'

Note that some nouns can occur in different classes. In such cases, the meaning is determined by the class. For example, *ai* is 'piece of wood' in class I, and 'tree' in class II. Further examples are noted below.

For numbers one to five, there are seven forms of the number-classifiers. For numbers six and above, there is a single form of the number-classifier. These are listed in table 10 for class I, and in table 11 for numbers 1 to 5 in each of the seven classes.

Table 10: Class I Prenominal Number-Classifiers

Number	Mussau-Emira
1	<i>ka-te-va</i>
2	<i>gha-lua</i>
3	<i>ko-tolu</i>
4	<i>gha-ata</i>
5	<i>gha-lima</i>
6	<i>gha-onomo</i>
7	<i>gha-itu</i>
8	<i>gha-oalu</i>
9	<i>gha-sio</i>
10	<i>ka-sangaulu</i>
11	<i>ka-sangaulu ka-te-va</i>
12	<i>ka-sangaulu gha-lua</i>
13	<i>ka-sangaulu ko-tolu</i>
14	<i>ka-sangaulu gha-ata</i>
15	<i>ka-sangaulu gha-lima</i>
16	<i>ka-sangaulu gha-onomo</i>
17	<i>ka-sangaulu gha-itu</i>

18	<i>ka-sangaulu gha-oalu</i>
19	<i>ka-sangaulu gha-sio</i>
20	<i>gha-luengaulu</i>
29	<i>gha-luengaulu gha-sio</i>
30	<i>ko-tolungaulu</i>
40	<i>gha-atingaulu</i>
50	<i>gha-limangaulu</i>
60	<i>gha-onomongaulu</i>
70	<i>gha-itungaulu</i>
80	<i>gha-oalungaulu</i>
90	<i>gha-siongaulu</i>
100	<i>ai</i>
173	<i>ka-te-va ai gha-itungaulu ko-tolu</i>
1,000	<i>airari ~ airare</i>
3,826	<i>ko-tolu airari gha-oalu ai gha-luengaulu gha-onomo</i>

Table 11: Prenominal Number-Classifiers

<b>Class</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>I</b>	<i>ka-te-va</i>	<i>gha-lua</i>	<i>ko-tolu</i>	<i>gha-ata</i>	<i>gha-lima</i>
<b>II</b>	<i>ka-te-ae</i>	<i>gha-lu-ae</i>	<i>ko-tolu-ae</i>	<i>gha-at-ae</i>	<i>gha-lim-ae</i>
<b>III</b>	<i>ka-te-lange</i>	<i>gha-lu- elange</i>	<i>ko-tolu- elange</i>	<i>gha-ati- lange</i>	<i>gha-lima-lange</i>
<b>IV</b>	<i>ka-ti-ulu</i>	<i>gha-lu-lu</i>	<i>ko-tolu-lu</i>	<i>gha-ati-ulu</i>	<i>gha-lima-lu</i>
<b>V</b>	<i>ka-ti-ngiu</i>	<i>gha-lue-ngiu</i>	<i>ko-tolu-ngiu</i>	<i>gha-ati- ngiu</i>	<i>gha-lima-ngiu</i>
<b>VI</b>	<i>ka-ti-vilau</i>	<i>gha-lue- vilau</i>	<i>ko-tolu-vilau</i>	<i>gha-ata- vilau</i>	<i>gha-lima-vilau</i>
<b>VII</b>	<i>ka-ti-kirighi</i>	<i>gha-lue- kirighi</i>	<i>ko-tolu- kirighi</i>	<i>gha-ati- kirighi</i>	<i>gha-lima- kirighi</i>

The prenominal number-classifiers for two to ninety-nine for class I are fairly straightforwardly derived from the counting numbers, by

the addition of a prefix *ka-* (for ten), *ko-* (for three and thirty), or *gha-* (for other numbers). Six and sixty do not quite fit this pattern, with the addition of another vowel, so that six is not \**ghanomo*, as might be expected. This is probably to be explained by its derivation from the Proto-Oceanic \**onom*, to which an echo vowel has been added, and then the initial vowel dropped under pressure towards a Disyllabic shape. The forms for number one are quite different, while the numbers 100 and 1,000 are the same for both the counting numbers and prenominal number-classifiers.

The forms for classes II to VII appear to take an extra morpheme, *-ae* for class II, *-elange* for class III, *-(u)lu* for class IV, *-ngiu* for class V, *-vilau* for class VI, and *-kirighi* for class VII. Note that morpheme breaks, especially for the number one, are uncertain, the words being perceived as wholes by native speakers. Alternatively, they may be considered as merged or portmanteau forms.

In glosses, the number is given, followed by a colon and a roman numeral indicating the class, e.g., *ghaluae* ‘two:II’.

Prenominal number-classifiers appear before the head of the noun phrase, and before any prenominal adjective. Their use for numbers six and up is straightforward, with no variation between classes. For numbers four and five, there is variation between classes. For numbers one, two and three, though, they contrast with the postnominal number-classifiers discussed in section 3.5.3. The prenominal number-classifiers are used when the number is in focus, as new information.

The following examples show use of the prenominal number-classifiers in indicating number with various noun phrases, all from class I:

- (29) *kateva taita*  
       one:I man  
       ‘one man’

- (30) *kotolu olimo namuu*  
 three:I canoe big  
 'three big canoes'
- (31) *ghaitu taumattuu*  
 seven:I person  
 'seven people'
- (32) *kateva masi elue talaua*  
 one:I good morning  
 'one good morning'
- (33) *kateva ai beke niu*  
 one:I hundred bag coconut  
 'one hundred bags of copra'

The next examples show the use of number-classifiers from different classes:

- (34) *ghaluelange kuraa*  
 two:III firewood  
 'two pieces of firewood'
- (35) *katelange nima-ghi*  
 one:III arm-1sP  
 'one of my arms'
- (36) *kotoluae utana*  
 three:II garden  
 'three garden plots'
- (37) *katiulu ose*  
 one:IV paddle  
 'one paddle'

(38) *kativilau kapa manu*  
 one:VI cup water  
 'one drinking cup'

(39) *ghaluekirighi salana*  
 two:VII road  
 'two roads'

The following examples show the distinctions in meaning of the noun made by class:

(40) a. *kateva ai*  
 one:I tree  
 'one piece of wood'

b. *kateae ai*  
 one:II tree  
 'one tree'

(41) a. *ghaluae aranna*  
 two:II pandanus  
 'two pandanus trees'

b. *ghaluengiu aranna*  
 two:V pandanus  
 'two pandanus fruit'

(42) a. *kotolu niu*  
 three:I coconut  
 'three coconuts'

b. *kotoluae niu*  
 three:II coconut  
 'three coconut trees'

- c. *kotolungiu niu*  
 three:V coconut  
 ‘three bunches of coconuts’

### 3.5.3 Postnominal Number-Classifiers

The third type of number is the postnominal number-classifiers. These are similar to the prenominal number-classifiers, but only exist for numbers one, two and three, as well as three other forms which function as either classifiers or quantifiers: *arighi* ‘small’, *atoa* ‘plural’ and *akapa* ‘all’. See section 3.5.6 for discussion of *atoa* and *akapa*.

The postnominal number-classifiers are listed in table 12.

Table 12: Postnominal Number-Classifiers

Class	1	2	3
I	<i>a-te-va</i>	<i>a-lua</i>	<i>ko-tolu</i>
II	<i>a-te-ae</i>	<i>a-lu-ae</i>	<i>ko-tolu-ae</i>
III	<i>a-te-lange</i>	<i>a-lu-elange</i>	<i>ko-tolu-elange</i>
IV	<i>a-ti-ulu</i>	<i>a-lu-lu</i>	<i>ko-tolu-lu</i>
V	<i>a-ti-ngiu</i>	<i>a-lue-ngiu</i>	<i>ko-tolu-ngiu</i>
VI	<i>a-ti-vilau</i>	<i>a-lue-vilau</i>	<i>ko-tolu-vilau</i>
VII	<i>a-ti-kirighi</i>	<i>a-lue-kirighi</i>	<i>ko-tolu-kirighi</i>

These are clearly related to the prenominal number-classifiers, but the derivation is not always the same, with most beginning with /a/, but not all, and various other vowel changes occurring. Historically, the numbers and classifiers were presumably separate, but have become fused, and are now seen as units.

For glossing, the classifiers for numbers one to three are given as the number (singular, dual or trial) followed by a colon and a roman numeral indicating the class, e.g., *aluengiu* ‘DL:V’. The others are glossed as *atoa* ‘PL’, *arighi* ‘SG:small’ and *akapa* ‘all’.

The postnominal classifiers are used when the number is less in focus. They do not mark definiteness, which is marked by a demonstrative, if required. Rather, it appears that they mark an almost obligatory number agreement of singular, dual, trial or plural. Omission of the number classifier often means an indefinite plural.

The following examples show the use of the postnominal number-classifiers:

- (43) *nima-ghi etelange*  
 arm-1sP SG:III  
 'my arm'
- (44) *nima-ghi eluelange*  
 arm-1sP DL:III  
 'my two arms'
- (45) *komo atiulu*  
 mat SG:IV  
 'a/the sleeping mat'
- (46) *taita ateva*  
 man SG:I  
 'a/the man'
- (47) *otolu kotolu*  
 egg TL:I  
 'three eggs'
- (48) *arari-ghi eteae*  
 name-1sP SG:II  
 'my name'
- (49) *uru ng-ai etikirighi*  
 head CONST-tree SG:VII  
 'a/the leaf' (lit. 'a/the head of a tree')

These examples show the use of the different classes to mark different senses or sizes of the noun:

- (50) a. *niu ateva*  
 coconut SG:I  
 'a/the coconut'
- b. *niu ateae*  
 coconut SG:II  
 'a/the coconut tree'
- c. *niu etingiu*  
 coconut SG:V  
 'a/the bunch of coconuts'
- (51) a. *ateo ateva*  
 water SG:I  
 'a/the water container'
- b. *ateo ateae*  
 water SG:II  
 'a/the river'
- (52) a. *kko ateva*  
 fish SG:I  
 'a/the fish'
- b. *kko ateae*  
 fish SG:II  
 'a/the school of fish'
- (53) a. *paua ateva*  
 dog SG:I  
 'a/the dog'

b. *paua atingiu*  
 dog SG:V  
 'a/the pack of dogs'

(54) a. *mosu elua*  
 pig DL:I  
 'two pigs'

b. *mosu etingiu*  
 pig SG:V  
 'a/the herd of pigs'

(55) a. *utana atea*  
 garden SG:II  
 'a/the garden plot'

b. *utana atingiu*  
 garden SG:V  
 'a/the (whole) garden'

For numbers above three, prenominal number-classifiers are normally used. However, the prenominal number-classifiers may be used after the noun, in the same position as a postnominal number-classifier. This is usually done because the number is less in focus than the noun.

(56) *Taumattuu ghaitu, arari-ira isaa o toko: Pastor Lester*  
 person seven name-3pP FOC that here Pastor Lester  
*Sam, Lesly Sam, Dovlin Benis, Thomas Ghaisane, Enoch*  
 Sam Lesly Sam Dovlin Benis Thomas Ghaisane Enoch

*Koaia, Loyd Taonam me Misa Lau.*  
 Koaia Loyd Taonam and Misa Lau  
 ‘The seven people’s names were: Pastor Lester Sam, Lesly Sam,  
 Dovlin Benis, Thomas Ghaisane, Enoch Koaia, Loyd Taonam and  
 Misa Lau.’

- (57) *Nau ghe laa sio-sio me ghe sou=la mosu*  
 day PAST go RED-go.down and PAST meet=PF pig  
*ghalima la=ghe aoso=la longotila tale salana atikirighi*  
 five 3p=PAST jump=PF across PREP road SG:VII  
*me la=ghe lao sio ta kativilau.*  
 and 3p=PAST go go.down PREP side  
 ‘When he was going, he met five pigs who jumped across the path  
 to the other side.’

Apart from the number-classifiers, the classifier *arighi* is used for singular nouns only to indicate that the referent is small. For nouns with number two or three, the regular number-classifier is used with the suffix *-pai*.

- (58) *ale arighi*  
 house SG:small  
 ‘a/the small house’
- (59) *ghila arighi*  
 bird SG:small  
 ‘a/the small bird’
- (60) *taita arighi*  
 man SG:small  
 ‘a/the young boy’

- (61) *olimo-na arighi*  
 canoe-3sP SG:small  
 ‘his small canoe’
- (62) *natu olimo arighi*  
 child canoe SG:small  
 ‘a/the small canoe’
- (63) *kko alue-pai*  
 fish DL:I-small  
 ‘two small fish’
- (64) *niu kotoluae-pai*  
 coconut TL:II-small  
 ‘three small coconut trees’

Certain nouns ending in /i/, /u/ or /aa/ add a ligature *ng-* before the number-classifier. These appear to be nouns designating people, but it is not clear why some nouns do this, and not others. It is possible that the length of the final vowel may be part of the reason, but further research is needed.

- (65) a. *maamaa ng-atoa*  
 mother LIG-PL  
 ‘the/some mothers’
- b. *vau ng-alua*  
 chief LIG-DL:I  
 ‘two chiefs’
- c. *namu ng-ateva*  
 big LIG-SG:I  
 ‘a/the clan leader’

- d. *soakiikii ng-alua*  
 bodyguard LIG-DL:I  
 ‘the two bodyguards’

However, note the contrast with the following examples:

- (66) a. *vau eteva*  
 chief SG:I  
 ‘a chief’
- b. *aliki elua*  
 child two:I  
 ‘two young people’
- c. *atu etiulu*  
 rock SG:IV  
 ‘a rock’

Note the inconsistent treatment of *vau* ‘chief’. If the form *vau ngalua* is not typical, it would be easier to argue that the length of the final vowel is the determining factor. It appears that the phonological rule, that the long vowel is reduced before the ligature, applies, at least in the case of the long /u/.

There are some signs that the classifier system is breaking down, with people using *ateva* as the marker for some words which require a different classifier. For example, we have recorded both *atu etiulu* ‘a stone’ and *atu eteva* ‘a stone’ from the same speaker, with no difference of meaning. Similarly, there is often debate as to whether a noun derived from a verb belongs in class I or class II.

### 3.5.4 Existential Verbs

Existential verbs are used in both positive and negative statements, as well as questions to assert or inquire about the existence of one or more objects or people. They are also used as relative clauses denoting

indefinite things. As verbs, they will be discussed more fully in section 6.1.3.

The form of the existential verbs is that of the corresponding postnominal number-classifiers and quantifiers without the initial *a-*, though with the initial *ko-* for number three. The existential verbs encoding number are listed in table 13, and the existential verbs corresponding to the other quantifiers are listed in table 14.

Table 13: Number Existential Verbs

Class	1	2	3
I	<i>te-va</i>	<i>lua</i>	<i>ko-tolu</i>
II	<i>te-ae</i>	<i>lu-ae</i>	<i>ko-tolu-ae</i>
III	<i>te-lange</i>	<i>lu-elange</i>	<i>ko-tolu-elange</i>
IV	<i>ti-ulu</i>	<i>lu-lu</i>	<i>ko-tolu-lu</i>
V	<i>ti-ngiu</i>	<i>lue-ngiu</i>	<i>ko-tolu-ngiu</i>
VI	<i>ti-vilau</i>	<i>lue-vilau</i>	<i>ko-tolu-vilau</i>
VII	<i>ti-kirighi</i>	<i>lue-kirighi</i>	<i>ko-tolu-kirighi</i>

Table 14: Quantifier Existential Verbs

Verb	Meaning
<i>rigi</i>	'a small one, any'
<i>toa</i>	'some'
<i>kapa</i>	'all'

A few examples will be given here, with the main discussion in section 6.1.3.

- (67) *Teva taita okae.*  
 EXIST:I man there  
 'There is a man over there.'

- (68) *Righi inana?*  
 EXIST:small food  
 ‘Is there any food?’
- (69) *Karika teva e=toka-toka eta-na.*  
 NEG EXIST:I 3s=RED-sit PREP-3sP  
 ‘There is nothing in it.’

### 3.5.5 Ordinal Numbers

The ordinal numbers come in two related forms, which are listed in table 15.

Table 15: Ordinal Numbers

	First Form	Second Form
1st	<i>aitiutiu</i>	<i>emua</i>
2nd	<i>ghaluene</i>	<i>aiaaghalua</i>
3rd	<i>kotona</i>	<i>aiaakotolu</i>
4th	<i>ghaatane</i>	<i>aiaaghaatane</i>
5th	<i>ghalimane</i>	<i>aiaaghalimane</i>
6th	<i>ghaonomina</i>	<i>aiaaghaonomina</i>
7th	<i>ghaituna</i>	<i>aiaaghaituna</i>
8th	<i>ghaoaluna</i>	<i>aiaaghaoaluna</i>
9th	<i>ghasiona</i>	<i>aiaaghasiona</i>
10th	<i>kasangauluna</i>	<i>aiaakasangauluna</i>

The ordinal numbers appear to be derived from the pronominal number-classifiers, with an additional suffix which is usually *-na* or *-ne*, but *-ina* for ‘sixth’, which may be due to removal of the echo vowel added from the Proto-Oceanic \**onom* ‘six’. The suffix is, therefore, homophonous with the third person singular possessive suffix, and is elsewhere analysed as an adjectivizer. Each ordinal has two forms. For ‘first’, there are two forms, one is the locative or temporal adverb *emua*

‘first, before, in front of’, and the other is the adjective *aitiutiu*, derived from the verb *tiu* ‘begin’. For ‘second’ through ‘tenth’, there are two forms, the second derived from the first by the addition of the prefix *aiaa-*. Note, however, that ‘second’ and ‘third’ lose the suffix *-na* or *-ne*, and ‘third’ is *aiaakotolu*, not *aiaatolu*.

There seems to be no distinction in meaning between the two forms, and they are used interchangeably, except that the first set, from first to seventh, are also used as names for the days of the week, Sunday to Saturday, always taking the postnominal number-classifier *ateva* ~ *eteva* or a prenominal classifier.

<b>Mussau-Emira</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>Aitiutiu eteva</i>	Sunday
<i>Ghaluene ateva</i>	Monday
<i>Kotonna ateva</i>	Tuesday
<i>Ghaatane ateva</i>	Wednesday
<i>Ghalimane ateva</i>	Thursday
<i>Ghaonomina ateva</i>	Friday
<i>Ghaituna ateva</i>	Saturday

### 3.5.6 Other Quantifiers

There are five other quantifiers showing indefinite number, three of which are prenominal, and the other two are postnominal.

The three quantifiers which may be used in the same position in a noun phrase as the prenominal number-classifiers are:

<i>katoa</i>	‘some, a few’
<i>kasina</i>	‘some’
<i>oro</i>	‘many’

The form *katoa* is only used with countable nouns, while *kasina* is used with both countable and non-countable nouns. *Oroi* can be used

with either countable or non-countable nouns, and can also be used with the intensifier suffix *-aili*, which usually becomes *-eili*, following the regular vowel-raising rule, though some speakers prefer *oroiaili*.

- (70) a. *katoa ng-aliki*  
 some LIG-child  
 ‘some young people’
- b. *ami me katoa vause*  
 1px and some woman  
 ‘we and some women’
- c. *katoa tani natu ng-aliki*  
 some PREP child LIG-child  
 ‘some of the young children’
- (71) a. *kasina nau*  
 some day  
 ‘some time’
- b. *kasina voto*  
 some thing  
 ‘some things’
- c. *mene kasina vause*  
 again some woman  
 ‘some more women’
- (72) a. *oroī kko*  
 many fish  
 ‘many fish’
- b. *oroī-eili ulana*  
 many-INTENS moon  
 ‘very many months’

- c. *oroi-aili*            *ane-ngalua* *kinatama* *ng-asi*    *etoa*  
 many-INTENS PCL-1dxP huge      LIG-taro PL  
 ‘our (dual, exclusive) many taro (to eat)’

The two postnominal indefinite quantifiers are *akapa* ‘all’ and *atoa* ‘plural’. These can co-occur in the order *akapa atoa*, as well as appearing separately.

- (73) a. *laka*    *akapa*  
 basket all  
 ‘all the baskets’
- b. *nau*    *etoa*  
 day PL  
 ‘days’
- c. *nau*    *ekapa*    *atoa*  
 day all PL  
 ‘every day’
- d. *ami*    *ekapa-aili*  
 1px all-INTENS  
 ‘all of us’

Note that *akapa* can modify pronouns as well as nouns, as in the last example.

### 3.6 Adjectives and Nominal Modifiers

In this section we look at adjectives, then adjective phrases, and then discuss comparative and superlative, though these are not actually expressed with adjectives.

#### 3.6.1 Adjectives

Unlike some Oceanic languages, adjectives in Mussau-Emira are a

subclass of nouns. As noted in section 4.1, most nouns can be used as verbs. Few of the adjectives can do so. Many adjectives contain reduplication within them, either as derivation from a verb or noun, or as a fixed form which perhaps historically was derived. These adjectives do not function as verbs.

Adjectives are a subclass of nouns that normally do not function as the head of a noun phrase, but function as modifiers in a noun phrase. Moreover, they do not take possessive suffixes. When an adjective functions as the head of a noun phrase, no other adjectives occur with it.

Adjectives may be divided into four formal categories by two criteria: those which end in *-na* or *-ne*, and those which do not; those that occur before the head of the noun phrase, and those that occur after it. There are only four adjectives that occur before the head, and none of those four ends in *-na* or *-ne*, which means that only three of the four categories are non-empty.

Examples of the different categories of adjective are listed in table 16.

Table 16: Adjectives

	Before Head		After Head	
<b>Without -na</b>	<i>kinatama</i>	'huge'	<i>aanasa</i>	'hot'
	<i>masi</i>	'good'	<i>aikerrei</i>	'cramped'
	<i>natu</i>	'child'	<i>aikokkonori</i>	'equal in size'
	<i>paka</i>	'big'	<i>akoroola</i>	'vertical'
			<i>alusei</i>	'long, tall'
			<i>eaia</i>	'well cooked'
			<i>isaappae</i>	'different'
			<i>kararike</i>	'slippery'
			<i>korosie</i>	'horizontal'
			<i>maate</i>	'heavy'

		<i>makarri</i>	'cold'
		<i>manga</i>	'holy'
		<i>namuu</i>	'big'
		<i>sesa</i>	'bad'
		<i>sessa</i>	'angry, sick'
		<i>talia</i>	'round'
<b>With -na</b>		<i>ghauna</i>	'small'
		<i>ghulughuluena</i>	'straight'
		<i>ghumighumilana</i>	'narrow'
		<i>kalakalangina</i>	'near'
		<i>kamena</i>	'false'
		<i>koronna</i>	'true'
		<i>kosakosangana</i>	'dirty'
		<i>kouna</i>	'empty'
		<i>kulukulutana</i>	'dirty'
		<i>mallangona</i>	'dry'
		<i>massona</i>	'ripe'
		<i>matakerengana</i>	'sharp'
		<i>muenna</i>	'right side'
		<i>pilupiluena</i>	'curly'
		<i>raarangisana</i>	'clean'
		<i>taritariena</i>	'smooth'
		<i>tumtumngana</i>	'blunt, dull'
		<i>uaise</i>	'left side'
		<i>veeveena</i>	'insane'

Some adjectives with *-na* are clearly derived from nouns or verbs. This appears to be the third person singular possessive suffix, which has been fossilised. However, some seem to have acquired a different form, either *-ana*, *-ina* or *-ngina*, as the derivational suffix. The reasons for this may lie in historical processes, but we do not have enough data

to decide at present. In some cases, we analyse the *-na* suffix as an adjectivizer.

Some derived adjectives ending in *-na* are listed below, along with the noun or verb from which they are derived:

<i>kala-kala-ngina</i>	'near'	<i>kala</i>	'approach'
<i>kame-na</i>	'false'	<i>kame</i>	'lie'
<i>mallango-na</i>	'dry'	<i>mallango</i>	'dry out'
<i>rae-rae-ana</i>	'red'	<i>rae</i>	'blood'
<i>riu-riu-ena</i>	'thin'	<i>riu</i>	'bone'
<i>tuku-na</i>	'short'	<i>tuku</i>	'piece'

There appears to have been some historical process of deriving abstract nouns from adjectives, but this is apparently not a productive process in current Mussau-Emira. The examples we have are:

<b>Adjective</b>		<b>Noun</b>	
<i>sarasarakana</i>	'strong'	<i>sarasarakan-iaa</i>	'strength'
<i>masina</i>	'good'	<i>maa-masina-a</i>	'goodness'
<i>raarangisana</i>	'clean'	<i>raarangisan-iaa</i>	'cleanliness'

Most of the colour terms seem to use reduplication in their derivation, but the source is not obvious in current speech. Colour terms are listed below.

<i>aitelakiena</i>	'yellow'
<i>ghua-ghua-nna</i>	'purple'
<i>rae-rae-ana</i>	'red'
<i>rro-rro-ana</i>	'light red'
<i>sa-vulu-vulu-ngana</i>	'dark blue'
<i>uso-uso-ana</i>	'white'
<i>vero-vero-ngana</i>	'black'

An oddity is the word *masina*. It can be used as an adjective, 'good',

an adverb, ‘well’, a verb, ‘become well’ [see example (74) below], and is also used as ‘thank you’. There is also the verb *masi*, ‘be happy’, which can also be used as an adjective, ‘good’ [see example (75) below]. The adjective *masina* occurs after the head of the noun phrase, while *masi* occurs before the head.

- (74) a. *nau masina ateva*  
           day good SG:I  
           ‘a good day’
- b. *taa-tara masina*  
           RED-look well  
           ‘look well, carefully’
- c. *ang-e-masina=la*  
           TAM-3sS-become.well=PF  
           ‘he has become well’

- (75) a. *a-masi-masi*  
           1sS-RED-be.happy  
           ‘I am happy’
- b. *masi kuukuu eteva*  
           good wind SG:I  
           ‘a nice breeze’

Adjectives which appear after the head of the noun phrase can also take the intensifying suffix *-aili*, which can also appear as *-eili* (after a high vowel). For example:

<i>onose</i>	‘sweet’	<i>onose-aili</i>	‘very sweet’
<i>oroi</i>	‘many’	<i>oroi-eili</i>	‘very many’
<i>masau</i>	‘far’	<i>masau-eili</i>	‘very far away’
<i>masina</i>	‘good, thank you’	<i>masina-aili</i>	‘very good, thank you very much’

### 3.6.2 Adjective Phrases

An adjective phrase consists of an adjective preceded by the only adverb of degree, *mala*, which is a diminutive, and is used in some comparatives.

(76) *A=gh-aloanna huku mala namuu.*  
 1sS=LIG-want hook DIM big  
 ‘I want a medium-sized hook.’

(77) *mala masau*  
 DIM far  
 ‘some distance away’

The negative marker *karika* can also precede at least some adjectives, even when the antonym of the adjective exists as a separate lexical item. The two most common idioms are *karika masina* ‘not good’ and *karika masau* ‘not far, not long’.

Adjectives are coordinated with the conjunction *me* ‘and’, or by simple juxtaposition.

(78) *raroai volovolongina me paavo ateva*  
 spirit deaf and mute SG:I  
 ‘the deaf and mute spirit’

(79) *kinatama paka sumui atea*  
 huge big fish.sp SG:II  
 ‘the enormous long-nosed emperor fish’

### 3.6.3 Degrees of Comparison

Comparatives are expressed in a variety of ways. The most common expression is to use the adversative conjunction *ta*, with or without a verb indicating the relationship.

(80) *Lo ateva toko namuu=i-a ta lo ateva to.*  
 thing SG:I this big=TR=3sO CONJ thing SG:I this  
 ‘This one is bigger than that one.’

(81) *Tau ng-ai-nongo-nongo anna ateva karika*  
 person CONST-AG-RED-hear thought SG:I NEG  
*e=naa-namuu ta vau=na ateva.*  
 3s=RED-increase but chief=3sP SG:I  
 ‘A slave (lit. person who hears wishes) is not greater than his master.’

Note in example (80) that we have an equative clause, which is discussed in section 6.1.2.

Another way is to use the verb *lau* ‘exceed’.

(82) *Sarasarakaniaa-ne e=lau-lau sarasarakaniaa-ghi.*  
 strength-3sP 3sS=RED-exceed strength-1sP  
 ‘He is stronger than I am.’ (lit. ‘His strength exceeds my strength.’)

A third way of expressing a comparative is to use two clauses predicating opposite qualities to the two things being compared.

(83) *Arova a=mate aue e=masina. Arova a=tam mate, karika*  
 if 1sS=die IRR 3sS=good if 1sS=NEG die NEG  
*aue e=masina.*  
 IRR 3sS=good  
 ‘It is better if I die.’ (lit. ‘If I die it’s good. If I don’t die it’s not good.’)

Superlatives are expressed in much the same way, comparing the quality of the topic to all other things.

(84) *Ia o ase ni-ai-elousi namu-ng-ailli=i-a*  
 3s that kind NOM-RECIP-love big-LIG-INTENS=TR=3sO

*e=lau-lau            ekapa mene kasina ase ni-ai-elousi.*  
 3sS=RED-exceed all again some kind NOM-RECIP-love  
 ‘This kind of love is greater than all other kinds of love.’

### 3.7 Possession

Mussau-Emira has two forms of possessive construction, direct and indirect. Direct possessive constructions are further divided into alienable and inalienable, while indirect possessive constructions are always alienable. A third form of relationship between two nouns is the associative construction.

#### 3.7.1 Direct Possession

Direct possession is formally indicated by attaching a possessive pronoun suffix (see section 3.1) directly onto the noun. The possessor noun phrase, if any, generally occurs after the possessed. If the possessor is a personal noun, and is in focus, it may occur before the possessed.

Kinship terms are inalienably possessed, nearly always appearing with a possessive suffix. Kinship terms, however, can occur without the possessive suffix as a term of address, though this is optional.

(85) *tama-ghi*  
 father-1sP  
 ‘my father’

(86) *tuvu-ghu*  
 grandparent-1sP  
 ‘my grandparent’

(87) *nima-m*  
 arm-2sP  
 ‘your arm’

- (88) *anongo-ngatolu*  
aunt-1txP  
'our (trial, excl.) aunt'
- (89) *natu-imalua*  
child-3dP  
'your (dl) child'
- (90) *pappa-ira*  
shoulder-3pP  
'their (pl) shoulders'

Kinship terms are shown in the following list. The only term that regularly occurs without a possessive suffix is *natu* 'child', used as an adjective appearing before the head of the noun phrase, and meaning 'small'.

<i>tama-</i>	father, father's brother, mother's sister's husband
<i>kina-</i>	mother, mother's sister, father's brother's wife
<i>natu-</i>	child, same-sex sibling's child
<i>loka-</i>	father's brother
<i>tue-</i>	older sibling (including parallel cousins)
<i>nenga-</i>	younger sibling (including parallel cousins)
<i>taitani-</i>	husband
<i>vauseni-</i>	wife
<i>tuvu-</i>	grandparent, grandchild (two or more generations distant)
<i>aloo-</i>	father's sister's husband, mother's brother, opposite-sex sibling's child
<i>anongo-</i>	father's sister, mother's brother's wife
<i>ie-</i>	wife's brother, husband's sister, opposite-sex sibling's spouse
<i>tasi-</i>	wife's sister, husband's brother, same-sex sibling's spouse
<i>alomu-</i>	mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law

The forms for husband and wife undergo a morphophonemic change when the third person singular suffix is added:

<b>Underlying Form</b>	<b>Surface Form</b>
<i>taitani-na</i>	<i>taitanna</i>
<i>vauseni-na</i>	<i>vausenna</i>

When talking of a more general or distant relative, the general (or collective) possessive suffix *-ra* is sometimes used. For example, a clan ancestor may be referred to as *kina-ra* ‘our mother’. The form *tuvu-ra* ‘baby’ is literally ‘our (general) descendant’ and takes no further possessive suffixes. Another example is in a general command:

- (91) *Am nongo usila tama-ra me kina-ra.*  
 2p hear follow father-GP and mother-GP  
 ‘Obey your father and mother.’

In the kinship system, children of brothers would address both men *tama-ghi* ‘my father’. When speaking to each other, the children may refer to either father as *tama-italua* ‘our (dual, inclusive) father’ or they may use *tama-ra* ‘our (general) father’.

As noted earlier (section 3.2), a kinship term may be reduplicated to form an indefinite noun, which has no possessive suffix.

A term that is peripherally part of the kinship system is *vau* ‘chief’. In the traditional culture, there was a chief in each village, but this system has ceased to operate, and the term has wider reference now, and is often a term of respect, so that someone may address another as *vau-ghu* ‘my chief’. The wider references can be to employer or superior in a work environment, as a term of address equivalent to ‘sir’, and as a translation of the Tok Pisin *masta* ‘white man’. The term is also used for reference to God, being equated with ‘lord’. However, *vau* is not obligatorily possessed, though it is directly possessed.

- (92) a. *vau-ghu eteva*  
 chief-1sP SG:I  
 ‘my lord’
- b. *vau elua*  
 chief DL:I  
 ‘two chiefs’

The word *arari* ‘name’ is inalienably possessed, e.g., *arari-ghi* ‘my name’, with no exceptions in our data.

Body parts are inalienably possessed in most contexts. In some circumstances, though, they may appear alone, or, more often, with another noun in an associative construction (see section 3.7.3). Body parts include those listed as the following:

<i>alo</i>	‘throat’
<i>asongi</i>	‘ribcage’
<i>atea keke</i>	‘calf’
<i>au keke</i>	‘thigh’
<i>autu</i>	‘chin’
<i>karake nima</i>	‘fingernail’
<i>karake keke</i>	‘toenail’
<i>kasau</i>	‘breastbone’
<i>kavale</i>	‘armpit’
<i>keke</i>	‘leg, foot’
<i>kiro</i>	‘bottom’
<i>korekore mata</i>	‘eyebrow’
<i>kova</i>	‘stomach’
<i>ku</i>	‘penis’
<i>kunikuni keke</i>	‘heel’
<i>laso</i>	‘scrotum’
<i>mata</i>	‘eye’

<i>matekka</i>	'anus'
<i>musiki paa</i>	'lip'
<i>ngalungalu</i>	'tooth'
<i>nganiu</i>	'nape of neck'
<i>ngarongaro keke</i>	'ankle'
<i>ngusungu</i>	'nose'
<i>nima</i>	'arm, hand'
<i>paa</i>	'mouth'
<i>pappa</i>	'shoulder'
<i>patilaka</i>	'forehead'
<i>pou keke</i>	'shin'
<i>ramuramuti paa</i>	'tongue'
<i>riu ngasongi</i>	'rib' (lit. 'bone of ribcage')
<i>susu</i>	'breast'
<i>talinga</i>	'ear'
<i>tine</i>	'intestines'
<i>tum</i>	'collarbone'
<i>uru</i>	'head'
<i>urunguitana</i>	'heart' (lit. 'head of octopus')
<i>uu</i>	'hair'
<i>vili</i>	'back'
<i>vito</i>	'navel'
<i>vuvu keke</i>	'toe'
<i>vuvu nima</i>	'finger'

Body parts of humans are nearly always possessed in a direct possessive construction. When speaking of animal body parts, though, the appropriate terms are usually in an associative construction.

The following example shows how the possessor can be either after or before the possessed, with the former the more common:

- (93) a. *natu-na ateva Kealo*  
 child-3sP SG:I Kealo  
 ‘Kealo’s child’
- b. *Kealo natu-na ateva*  
 Kealo child-3sP SG:I  
 ‘Kealo’s child’

Other nouns with direct possession are usually items intimately associated with the person, but able to be referred to independently. This includes houses, canoes and knives. At least these three also occur as possessive classifiers in the indirect possessive construction.

- (94) *ale-ira*  
 house-1piP  
 ‘our (pl, inc) house’
- (95) *iema-na*  
 knife-3sP  
 ‘his knife’
- (96) *ilimo-ghu*  
 canoe-1sP  
 ‘my canoe’

### 3.7.2 Indirect Possession

The indirect possessive construction is expressed by adding a possessive pronoun suffix (the same as for direct possessive constructions) to a possessive classifier which occurs before the possessed noun. Some of the possessive classifiers are formed from words in common usage, while others appear to be derived from forms no longer used in Mussau-Emira. Generally, the particular possessive classifier used indicates either the purpose of possession that is in focus, or the class to which it belongs. Possessive classifiers recorded are in table 17.

Table 17: Possessive Classifiers

<b>Classifier</b>	<b>Type of Possession</b>	<b>Meaning as Noun or Verb</b>
<i>ai-</i>	trees	'tree, wood' (noun)
<i>ale-</i>	building	'house' (noun)
<i>ane-</i>	food	
<i>gholu-</i>	juicy foods	'eat s.t. juicy' (verb)
<i>iema-</i>	cutting instruments	'knife' (noun)
<i>ilimo-</i>	water craft	'canoe' (noun)
<i>kalu-</i>	abstract personal items	
<i>kapu-</i>	personal relationships	'friend, sibling' (noun)
<i>kie-</i>	domestic animals	
<i>kura-</i>	things giving light	'fire'
<i>ropi-</i>	things to drink	'drink' (verb)
<i>uma-</i>	pieces of land, gardens	
<i>une-</i>	general things	
<i>usu-</i>	things to suck juice from	'suck juice from' (verb)

There are some morphophonemic changes with the third person singular, as listed below:

<b>Underlying Form</b>	<b>Surface Form</b>
<i>ane-na</i>	<i>anna</i>
<i>gholu-na</i>	<i>ghonna</i>
<i>kalu-na</i>	<i>kanna</i>
<i>une-na</i>	<i>unna</i>

The following examples show some of the variation that is possible by the use of the different possessive classifiers.

- (97) a. *kie-ghi paolo ateva*  
 PCL-1sP chicken SG:I  
 'my chicken'

- b. *ane-ghi paolo ateva*  
 PCL-1sP chicken SG:I  
 ‘my chicken (to eat)’
- (98) a. *ai-ghi niu eteae*  
 PCL-1sP coconut SG:II  
 ‘my coconut tree’
- b. *ropi-ghi niu eteva*  
 PCL-1sP coconut SG:I  
 ‘my coconut (to drink)’
- (99) *ilimo-ira paanaka ateva*  
 PCL-3pP boat SG:I  
 ‘their boat’
- (100) *kalu-ghu ssavoto atoa*  
 PCL-1sP evil PL  
 ‘my sins’

Some of the nouns that can go with the different possessive classifiers are listed in table 17.

Table 17: Possessive Classifiers

Classifier	Noun	Gloss
<i>ai-</i>	<i>ai</i> <i>alingasa</i> <i>aranna</i> <i>niu</i> <i>paea</i> <i>paka</i>	‘tree’ ‘tree’ ‘cut nut’ ‘pandanus sp.’ ‘coconut’ ‘pawpaw’ ‘sea almond’
<i>ale-</i>	’ <i>ale manga</i>	‘house’ ‘temple’ (lit. ‘holy house’)

<b>Classifier</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
	<i>ale ng-ai-tuu-tuu</i> <i>ale ng-inana</i>	'kitchen' (lit. 'cooking house') 'food storehouse' (lit. 'house of food')
<i>ane-</i>	<i>ghila</i> <i>kauu</i> <i>ninamanama</i> <i>paolo</i> <i>uri</i>	'food' 'bird' 'sweet potato' 'year, age' 'chicken' 'banana'
<i>gholu-</i>	<i>asi</i> <i>ghorru</i> <i>makere</i> <i>mukei</i> <i>paea</i> <i>pamkeni</i> <i>singa uita</i> <i>vatum</i> <i>viskete</i>	'juicy food' 'taro' 'seaweed sp.' 'sago' 'mango' 'pawpaw' 'pumpkin' (loan word) 'octopus tentacle' 'tapioca' 'biscuit' (loan word)
<i>iema-</i>	<i>ai-sai-sai</i> <i>kaputu</i> <i>kulum</i>	'cutting tool' 'cutting instrument' 'adze' 'axe'
<i>ilimo-</i>	'water craft' <i>anua</i> <i>paanaka</i>	'ship' 'boat'
<i>kalu-</i>	<i>dinao</i> <i>kiukiu</i> <i>ni-aikaia</i>	'abstract personal thing' 'debt' (loan word) 'story' 'faith'

<b>Classifier</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Gloss</b>
	<i>ni-kok-kolomi</i> <i>ni-loo-loo sae</i> <i>ni-masi-masi</i> <i>sessa</i> <i>ssavoto</i> <i>viliki veu</i>	'question' 'prayer' (lit. 'asking up') 'happiness' 'sickness' 'evil' 'money' (lit. 'skin of a shell')
<i>kapu-</i>	<i>disaepolo</i> <i>god</i> <i>kingi</i> <i>tau ng-ai-nongo-nongo anna</i> <i>tau ng-ai-ppoa</i>  <i>taumattuu</i>	'personal relationship' 'disciple' (loan word) 'god' (loan word) 'king' (loan word) 'servant' (lit. 'person who hears wishes') 'spokesman' (lit. 'person who speaks') 'person' (helper, employee)
<i>kie-</i>	<i>paolo</i> <i>pato</i> <i>paua</i> <i>pusi</i> <i>roko</i>	'domestic animal' 'chicken' (loan word) 'duck' 'dog' 'cat' (loan word) 'dog' (loan word)
<i>kura-</i>	<i>lama</i> <i>sulu</i> <i>tosi</i>	'thing giving light' 'lamp' (loan word) 'dry coconut leaf torch' 'torch' (loan word)
<i>ropi-</i>	<i>manu</i> <i>niu</i>	'thing to drink' 'water' 'coconut'
<i>uma-</i>	<i>asi</i>	'piece of ground, garden' 'taro garden'

Classifier	Noun	Gloss
	<i>kauu</i> <i>uri</i> <i>utana</i>	'sweet potato garden' 'banana plant' 'garden'
<i>une-</i>	<i>ai-kuu-kuuvati</i>  <i>ai-taa-tara</i> <i>ai-ulu-ulu</i>  <i>katapele</i> <i>kou ng-uru</i> <i>laka</i>	'general thing' 'shotgun' (lit. 'instrument for shooting') 'light' (lit. 'instrument for seeing') 'towel' (lit. 'instrument for wiping') 'catapult' (loan word) 'hat' (lit. 'head covering') 'basket'
<i>usu-</i>	<i>aranna</i> <i>tou</i>	'thing to suck juice from' 'species of pandanus' 'sugarcane'

When there is an indirect possessive construction, there is generally also a number-classifier in the same noun phrase. The two types of classifier are encoding different aspects of the semantics of the noun phrase. The possessive classifier denotes the type of possession, or its purpose, whereas the number-classifier marks number and also the class of the noun.

This is another case where the number-classifier has lost much of its force, becoming little more than obligatory number marking of the noun phrase, with most of the meaning determined by the combination of the noun and the possessive classifier.

In example (101), the specific information that the subject is a coconut tree is carried by both the possessive classifier and the number-classifier, so that the number-classifier only provides number. Similarly, in example (102), the possessive classifier specifies that it

is not the tree but the fruit, and the number-classifier only adds the number.

- (101) *ai-na niu eteae*  
 PCL-3sP coconut SG:II  
 'his coconut tree'
- (102) *gholu-m paea ng-alua*  
 PCL-2sP pawpaw LIG-DL:I  
 'your (sg) two pawpaws'

When the context makes it clear, the noun can be omitted, leaving just the possessive classifier and the normal classifier.

- (103) *uma-na ateae Lovelyn*  
 land-3sP SG:II Lovelyn  
 'Lovelyn's garden'

Note that *uma-* is not a word on its own, but only occurs as a possessive classifier.

The possessive classifier *ane-*, normally used for food, can be used with a few non-food items, for example *ninamanama* 'year' to denote somebody's age. Also, it can be used with *tuku* 'piece', as in the following example:

- (104) *anna tuku kapa ateva*  
 PCL:3sP piece metal SG:I  
 'its piece of metal'

As with the direct possessive construction, the possessor normally follows the possessive construction. However, it is possible to put a kinship term between the classifier and the noun.

- (105) *unna tama-ghi ai-kuu-kuvati etiulu*  
 PCL:3sP father-1sP INST-RED-shoot SG:IV  
 'my father's shotgun'

An example of a complex possessive construction, containing both direct and indirect possessive, functioning as a single noun phrase is as follows:

- (106) *ai-na niu eteae tuvu-m taita ateva*  
 PCL-3sP coconut SG:II grandparent-2sP man SG:I  
 ‘your grandfather’s coconut tree’

### 3.7.3 The Associative Construction

Another way of connecting two nouns is by an associative construction. In this, the head noun comes first, followed by the modifying noun, with a particle between them. The form of the particle may be a suffix *-i* on the head noun, a prefix *ng-* on the modifying noun, or zero. It would be possible to analyse both non-zero forms as suffixes on the head noun, but native speakers prefer to write *ng-* as a prefix, showing that they consider it as belonging to the modifying noun. When it is non-zero, it is glossed as CONST for construct form.

According to Ross (2002:158), the form is determined by the historical form of the head noun, and by the phonological shape of the modifying noun. Where the head noun was historically vowel-final, the particle is the prefix *ng-* before a modifying noun beginning with a vowel, and zero before a modifying noun beginning with a consonant. Where the head noun was historically consonant-final, the echo vowel is dropped, and the suffix *-i* is added. Again, from a synchronic perspective, these differences are simply lexically determined.

The associative construction is used for part-whole relationships and for descriptions or characteristics. The following examples show part-whole relationships:

- (107) *laa ng-ai*  
 branch CONST-tree  
 ‘tree branch’

- (108) *laa*      *popo*  
 branch pawpaw  
 ‘pawpaw branch’

In examples (107) and (108), we see the difference between *ng-* and zero in the particle.

- (109) a. *uru*    *ng-ai*  
 head CONST-tree  
 ‘leaf of a tree’  
 b. *uru*    *makere*  
 head sago  
 ‘sago leaf’  
 c. *ue*      *ng-ai*  
 fruit CONST-tree  
 ‘fruit of a tree’

Note that *uru* in this context is literally ‘head of a tree’, but is the idiom for ‘leaf of a tree’, and also has the extended meaning of ‘paper’ or ‘book’.

Some further examples show other relationships:

- (110) *rarum-i*      *ko*  
 water-CONST fish  
 ‘fish broth’  
 (111) *lingi*    *ng-alo*  
 sound CONST-throat  
 ‘voice’  
 (112) *musuki*    *ng-asongo*  
 end      CONST-ribcage  
 ‘end of the rafter’

Note here that *asongo* ‘ribcage’ has the extended meaning of the ribs of a house, meaning the rafters.

The following examples show nouns that were historically consonant-final, to which an echo vowel has been added. In the associative construction, the echo vowel has been dropped and the *-i* form appended:

(113) *pakasi*                    *kaputu*  
       *pakasa-i*                *kaputu*  
       handle-CONST    adze  
       ‘adze handle’

(114) *inani*                    *masalo*  
       *inana-i*                *masalo*  
       food-CONST    meat  
       ‘meat to eat’

The second example is probably to be understood as speaking of that kind of meat which is fit to eat, though it also carries the meaning of specifying meat as opposed to other types of food.

The other type of usage of the associative construction is in describing characteristics. There is a common idiom of describing people with *tau* ‘person’ plus a nominalized verb, using either the nominalizer *ni-* or the agentive *ai-*, in an associative construction. The meaning is that this person is characterised by the verb. Some common examples are:

(115) *tau*            *ni-nama-nama*  
       person    NOM-RED-eat  
       ‘person who eats a lot’

(116) *tau*            *ni-kinari*  
       person    NOM-RED-sing  
       ‘person who likes to sing’

- (117) *tau ng-ai-nongo-nongo anna*  
 person CONST-AG-RED-hear think  
 ‘servant’ (lit. ‘person who hears wishes’)
- (118) *tau ng-ai-nama ng-asi*  
 person CONST-AG-eat LIG-taro  
 ‘person who eats taro’
- (119) *tau ng-ai-ssa tee-ira atoa*  
 person CONST-AG-bad with-3pP PL  
 ‘their enemies’ (lit. ‘people who do bad with them’)
- (120) *tau ni-tam aikaia*  
 person NOM-NEG believe  
 ‘unbeliever’

Another common idiom is the name of the language:

- (121) *inangari ng-e=Musao*  
 talk CONST-LOC=Mussau  
 ‘Mussau language’ (lit. ‘speech of the place Mussau’)

Finally, an idiom is *mata ng-emua*, literally ‘eye of the first’, but idiomatically the meaning is ‘principal, first-born’. Thus it is often used of a first-born child:

- (122) *natu-ghu mata ng-emua ateva*  
 child-1sP eye CONST-first SG:I  
 ‘my first-born child’

### 3.8 Noun Phrase Structure

The basic noun phrase structure is as follows (modified from Ross 2002:154):

(Quant<sub>1</sub>) (Adj<sub>1</sub>) Head (Adj<sub>2</sub>) (Quant<sub>2</sub>) (Dem)

Here, Quant<sub>1</sub> stands for a quantifier, which can be a prenominal number-classifier, or one of the prenominal quantifiers *akapa* ‘all’, *katoa* ‘a few’, *kasina* ‘some’ or *oroī* ‘many’. Quant<sub>2</sub> stands for a postnominal number-classifier or a postnominal quantifier. It is also possible to have two quantifiers in the Quant<sub>2</sub> slot. In this case, the first will be *akapa* ‘all’ and the second *atoa*, the plural marker. Note that Quant<sub>2</sub> is a classifier, and thus can further delineate the referent of the head noun. See the examples in section 3.5.

Quant<sub>1</sub> and Quant<sub>2</sub> do not normally co-occur. When they do, which is rare and emphatic, Quant<sub>2</sub> is always the simple plural marker *atoa* (*etoa* after a high vowel, *ngatoa* after a long vowel), and Quant<sub>1</sub> is most commonly a numeral or either *oroī* ‘many’ or *oroī-eili* ‘very many’.

Ross omits the adjectives in his section on the noun phrase, and adds a final element, which he calls a specifier. He notes that adjectives often follow the head noun, but can also function as the head, with the noun extraposed (Ross 2002:155). Our analysis differs here, as indicated below.

The specifier mentioned by Ross is analysed by him as the third person singular independent pronoun *ia*. Our analysis is different, with this construction being an equative clause. See further in section 6.1.2.

### 3.8.1 Adjectives

The normal position for an adjective (or adjective phrase) is immediately following the head (Adj<sub>2</sub>). A small number of adjectives always appear before the head, (Adj<sub>1</sub>). See section 3.6. Normally only one adjective slot may be filled, so that there are not adjectives before and after the head of the noun phrase. As noted in section 3.8.5, adjectives may be brought forward to the beginning of the NP, for reasons of emphasis, or with an ordinal number.

A restricted group of nouns can occur as modifiers in the Adj<sub>2</sub>

position. These include *taita* ‘man’ with the meaning ‘male’ and *vause* ‘woman’ with the meaning ‘female’.

### 3.8.2 Head

The head of the noun phrase is normally a noun, but may also be a possessive construction (see section 3.7), an adjective, a nominalized verb (with object if transitive) or a quantifier. In the following examples, the head is a noun:

- (123) NCL    N  
       *ghalua taita*  
       two    man  
       ‘two men’
- (124) N        NCL  
       *olimo ateva*  
       canoe SG:I  
       ‘a/the canoe’
- (125) N        NCL DEM  
       *ale ateva toko*  
       house SG:I there  
       ‘that house’
- (126) N            QUANT NCL  
       *taumattu ng-akapa atoa*  
       person    LIG-all    PL  
       ‘all the people’
- (127) N        N        NCL  
       *aliki taita ateva*  
       child man    SG:I  
       ‘a young man, a boy’

- (128) NCL    N            N  
*kotolu paolo taita*  
 three chicken man  
 ‘three roosters’

As a noun phrase head, a possessive construction is either a noun with a possessive suffix or a possessive classifier with a possessive suffix followed by the possessed noun (see section 3.7 for more on possessive constructions):

- (129) NCL    N  
*kotolu komo-ghu*  
 three mat-1sP  
 ‘my three mats’
- (130) PCL            N            NCL  
*usu-ghu tou etoa*  
 PCL-1sP sugarcane PL  
 ‘my sugarcane (to suck)’
- (131) NCL            PCL            N  
*ghalima kie-m paolo*  
 five PCL-2sP chicken  
 ‘your five chickens’

Adjectives can be heads of noun phrases in a restricted way. No other adjective can be present, though an adverb modifying the adjective may. Adjectives cannot take a possessive suffix.

- (132) *namu ng-atoa*  
 big LIG-PL  
 ‘the elders’
- (133) *alusei eteva*  
 tall SG:I  
 ‘a/the tall one’

- (134) *mala ghauna ateva*  
 DIM small SG:I  
 ‘the smaller one’

A nominalized verb, which is a verb with either the nominalizing prefix *ni-* or the agent or instrumental prefix *ai-*, can be the head of a noun phrase, as in example (135). In the case of a transitive verb, the object may also form part of the head, as in example (136), or a locative for an intransitive verb, as in example (137).

- (135) a. *ni-rete ateva*  
 NOM-shiver SG:I  
 ‘shivering’
- b. *ai-sae-sae ateva*  
 INST-RED-go.up SG:I  
 ‘a/the ladder’
- (136) a. *ni-pake ale ateva*  
 NOM-roof house SG:I  
 ‘roofing the house’
- b. *ai-ghaa alomasaanga ateva*  
 INST-get knowledge SG:I  
 ‘school (lit. place to get knowledge)’
- (137) a. *ai-u-ungu ng-e=utana*  
 INST-RED-work LIG-LOC=garden  
 ‘garden tools’
- b. *ai-rekati ng-elamana*  
 INST-fish.with.hook LIG-sea  
 ‘fishing hook’

A quantifier by itself or followed by a prepositional phrase can be the head of a noun phrase, with the referent indefinite, but restricted

to a class that is implicit from the context. When the prepositional phrase is present, the meaning is normally partitive.

- (138) *A=ghe tam kila-kila va kateva ghe alo-alo*  
 1s=PAST NEG RED-know COMP one PAST RED-steer  
*kara ateva, draiva-i=a.*  
 car SG:I driver-TR=3sO  
 ‘I didn’t know that someone was steering the car, who was the driver.’

- (139) *Angotolu ghe kasu-kasu e=lao-lao me kateva eta-ingoto*  
 1tx PAST RED-walk 3s=RED-go and one PREP-1txP  
*ghe tara=la aranna luengiu massona.*  
 PAST see=PF pandanus DL:V ripe  
 ‘We (three) were walking along and one of us saw two ripe pandanus fruit.’

- (140) *La=ghe uvi saa-sakiaa=la kasina ta ng-eta-ira.*  
 3p=PAST hit RED-spoil=PF some PREP LIG-PREP-3pP  
 ‘They badly beat some of them.’

Note that in example (138), the number is an indefinite reference, while in example (139) it is indefinite but limited. Both examples (139) and (140) show a partitive meaning.

An ordinal number that is used as the name of a day of the week can be the head, along with the postnominal number-classifier *ateva* ~ *eteva* or the prenominal number-classifier *kateva*.

- (141) *elue talaua ta ghaluene ateva*  
 morning PREP second SG:I  
 ‘Monday morning (lit. morning of the second)’
- (142) *Kateva ghaonomina ami ghe aimanomanosiaa tani sou*  
 one sixth 1px PAST prepare COMP meet

*nau manga.*  
 day holy  
 ‘One Friday (lit. sixth [day]) we were preparing to meet the  
 Sabbath (lit. holy day).’

A special case of the head is the noun *lo* ‘thing’. One use of *lo* is with a demonstrative, making the whole NP definite without specifying the noun. Otherwise, it is used in a matrix clause to provide an indefinite domain noun for a relative clause, for which see section 8.2.1.

(143) [*Lo ateva toko*] *namuu=i=a ta [lo ateva to]*.  
 thing SG:I this big=TR=3sO but thing SG:I this  
 ‘This one is bigger than that one.’

(144) *Tara=la [lo ateva] e=sae-sae.*  
 look=PF thing SG:I 3s=RED-go.up  
 ‘Look at what is climbing.’

### 3.8.3 The Indefinite Article *tana*

There is an indefinite article *tana* (*tani* in some dialects) which can be used in more than one position within the noun phrase. It can be preposed to a noun as the head of a noun phrase to indicate a non-specific noun.

(145) *katoa tana taumattuu*  
 some ART person  
 ‘a few people’

(146) *tana taumattu ng-atoa*  
 ART person LIG-PL  
 ‘many people’

(147) *kalu-ghu tana asi*  
 PCL-1sP ART taro  
 ‘some of my taro’

It can also occur after the noun, with no apparent change of meaning, though this is much less common:

- (148) a. *koko tana*  
 fish ART  
 'a (non-specific) fish'
- b. *koko ateva*  
 fish SG:I  
 'a/the fish'

### 3.8.4 Demonstratives

Definiteness can be made explicit by a demonstrative at the end of the noun phrase. However, the number-classifiers often serve to provide enough information to make the noun phrase definite in the context.

- (149) *aranna luengiu o*  
 pandanus DL:V that  
 'those two pandanus fruit'
- (150) *patunganua ateva oio*  
 island SG:I this  
 'this island'

### 3.8.5 Variations in Constituent Order

Occasionally, the normal order of elements can be altered for emphasis, such as bringing the adjective and classifier forward to emphasise the adjective:

- (151) a. *masina ateva ai-sae-sae*  
 good SG:I INST-RED-go.up  
 'a good staircase (as opposed to a bad one)'

- b. *ai-sae-sae masina ateva*  
 INST-RED-go.up good SG:I  
 ‘a good staircase’

This type of phrase order is almost always used when the adjective is an ordinal number. In this case, the ordinal number comes first, followed by the classifier, and then the head of the noun phrase, possibly preceded by the article *tana*.

- (152) *ai-tiu-tiu eteva ni-sighaa tale ale manga*  
 INST-RED-start SG:I NOM-marry PREP house holy  
 ‘the first wedding in the church’
- (153) *aiaaghaluene ateva nau*  
 second SG:I day  
 ‘the second day’
- (154) *aiaakotonna ateva voto*  
 third SG:I thing  
 ‘the third thing’
- (155) *ghasiona ateva ulana*  
 ninth SG:I moon  
 ‘the ninth month (i.e., September)’
- (156) *ai-tiu-tiu eteva tana koto*  
 INST-RED-start SG:I ART wave  
 ‘the first wave’

Occasionally, though, the ordinal number comes after the head:

- (157) *nau ghaituna*  
 day seventh  
 ‘the seventh day (i.e., Saturday)’

Variation of the order and introduction of a second classifier can also change the meaning of a phrase. Contrast the following phrases:

- (158) a. *natu-na taita ateva*  
 child-3sP man SG:I  
 ‘her son (lit. her male child)’
- b. *natu-na ateva taita ateva*  
 child-3sP SG:I man SG:I  
 ‘her baby son (lit. her child a male)’

The first means a child or a young man, but not a baby, while the second can mean only a baby. The second is a single noun phrase, spoken without break in intonation.

### 3.8.6 Coordinate Noun Phrases

Coordinate noun phrases are formed with *me* ‘and’, or in a series of juxtaposed noun phrases with the final pair separated by *me*.

- (159) *asi me kau me uri*  
 taro and sweet.potato and banana  
 ‘taro, sweet potato and banana’
- (160) *Taumattuu ghaitu, arari-ira isaa o toko: Pastor Lester*  
 person seven name-3pP FOC that here Pastor Lester  
*Sam, Lesly Sam, Dovlin Benis, Thomas Ghaisane, Enoch*  
 Sam Lesly Sam Dovlin Benis Thomas Ghaisane Enoch  
*Koaia, Loyd Taonam me Misa Lau.*  
 Koaia Loyd Taonam and Misa Lau  
 ‘The seven people’s names were: Pastor Lester Sam, Lesly Sam,  
 Dovlin Benis, Thomas Ghaisane, Enoch Koaia, Loyd Taonam and  
 Misa Lau.’

Another common coordinate structure is used for a group of people. The first person is named, or omitted if it is the speaker, the appropriate pronoun for the group follows, then the conjunction *me*, and

the rest of the group. This usage may be referred to as using inclusory pronouns.

- (161) *Goma lalua me Gindi lalu kasu-kasu.*  
 Goma 3d and Gindi 3d RED-walk  
 ‘Goma and Gindi are walking.’
- (162) *Ngatolu me natu-ghu elua ngatolu ghe sso=la*  
 1tx and child-1sP DL:I 1tx PAST go.in=PF  
*e=utana.*  
 LOC=garden  
 ‘I and my two children went to the garden.’
- (163) *Ghaine la=uvi=engalua me nenga-ghi.*  
 today 3p=hit=1dxO and younger.sibling-1sP  
 ‘Now they will kill me and my younger brother.’
- (164) *Amatolu sso=la me natu-italua alua, me aghi a=lao*  
 2t go.in=PF and child-1diP DL:I and 1s 1s=go  
*e=Katulusae.*  
 LOC=Katulusae  
 ‘You and the children go, but I am going to Katulusae.’

In example (161), the subject is a third person dual, and both are named. In example (162), the subject is the speaker and her two children. In example (163), the speaker is referring to himself and his younger brother as the object of the verb. In example (164), the speaker is referring to his wife and their two children.

## 4. Verbs and Verb Phrases

In this chapter, we discuss verbs (section 4.1), then verb morphology (section 4.2), and then consider the structure of the verb phrase (section 4.3). Next comes a discussion of serial and compound verbs (section 4.4), and finally verbal modifiers are discussed (section 4.5).

### 4.1 Verbs

The class of verbs in Mussau-Emira includes items which function as heads of verb phrases, and which take verbal morphology.

#### 4.1.1 Verb Stems and Classes

Verb stems are lexical items, and can appear on their own in the extreme case of an imperative, such as *Ghoa!* ‘Go outside!’ They may be primarily verbal in their use and semantics, or they can be the same as lexical items which are used elsewhere as nouns, adjectives or adverbs. Verb stems are distinguished as verbs by their taking verbal morphology.

Some nouns, adjectives and adverbs can be used as verbs with an inceptive meaning. This can also apply to phrases, so that a noun phrase can function as a predicate, with the first word of the NP taking the preverbal particles.

- (1) *ghe sarasarakana parasi=la*  
 PAST strong quickly=PF  
 ‘he became strong quickly’
- (2) *La-ghe rii-rimoti-a me ghe uru taumattuu.*  
 3pS-PAST RED-strike-3sO and PAST head person  
 ‘They struck it and it became a man’s head.’

Notice in example (1) that the adjective *sarasarakana* ‘strong’ has been

used as an inceptive verb. In example (2), the NP *uru taumattuu* ‘head of a person’ is being used as a predicate.

When not inceptive, nouns, adjectives and adverbs used as verbs are often stative, but may also be active. Some examples of these are:

Form	Meaning as N/ADJ	Meaning as V
<i>atu</i>	‘stone’ (n)	‘weight s.t. down (with a stone)’
<i>kuu</i>	‘wind’ (n)	‘blow’
<i>manu</i>	‘water’ (n)	‘(of tide) rise, (of a well) fill with water’
<i>namuu</i>	‘big, old’ (adj)	‘increase, grow’
<i>maate</i>	‘heavy’ (adj)	‘be heavy’
<i>masi</i>	‘good’ (adj)	‘be happy, rejoice’
<i>masina</i>	‘good’ (adj)	‘be or become well, be fixed’

Verbs may be divided into classes in several ways. One way is to distinguish verbs by their transitivity. There are intransitive active, intransitive stative, transitive, and two classes of verbs which can function either transitively or intransitively without any derivational morphology. These last two classes are referred to as A-type and O-type verbs (Dixon 1988:45). A-type verbs are those where the transitive subject becomes the intransitive subject, while the O-type verbs are where the transitive object becomes the intransitive subject. These are discussed more fully in section 4.2.3. These classes are relevant when it comes to serial verb constructions (see section 4.4). Examples of each are listed in table 19.

Table 19: Verb Classes

Class	Verb	Gloss
Intransitive active	<i>kasu</i>	‘walk, go (away)’
	<i>toka</i>	‘sit, stay, dwell’
	<i>mate</i>	‘die’
Intransitive stative	<i>maloo</i>	‘be hungry’

Class	Verb	Gloss
	<i>matautu</i>	'be afraid'
	<i>aanasa</i>	'feel hot'
	<i>palata</i>	'be ashamed, shy'
<b>Transitive</b>	<i>uvi</i>	'hit'
	<i>ue</i>	'say'
	<i>kata</i>	'bite'
	<i>nama</i>	'eat'
<b>A-type</b>	<i>aimarati</i>	'give birth, give birth to'
	<i>kolomi</i>	'ask'
<b>O-type</b>	<i>totu</i>	'raise, get up'
	<i>velu</i>	'drop'
	<i>ssu</i>	'breastfeed'

An important semantic class of verbs is the basic motion verbs, which are a subclass of intransitive active verbs. Motion verbs are important, since they can be combined with other verbs to form compounds and serial verbs (see section 4.4). These verbs are:

- mae* 'come'
- kasu* 'walk, go (away)'
- laa* 'go (near)'
- lao* 'go (far)'
- sio* 'go down'
- sae* 'go up'
- ghoa* 'go out (either from inside, or out towards the sea)'
- ssu* 'go in (either from outside, or towards the island)'

All of these, except *kasu*, and especially the last four, can be added after a non-stative verb to indicate direction. They are also used in conventional ways, such as the questions, *Ea ulao?* 'Where are you going?' and *Ea ukasula?* 'Where have you come from?' Also, travel between different parts of the language area have acquired conventional

directions, which are not always intuitive. For example, to go from Lomakunauru to Lomana, which involves going up, you would use the verb *sio* 'go down'.

The four directions of importance are up and down, and in and out. Up and down are normally quite transparent, referring to a change of level. Since the villages are all on the coast and the gardens inland at a higher level, it is common to talk of going up to the garden. Similarly, you would go down to Kavieng or Port Moresby, but up to the highlands.

However, travel between different parts of the language area will almost always involve travel both up and down, as the terrain is very hilly. In such cases, conventional ways have been developed for referring to the direction of such travel. For example, from Lomakunauru to Epo involves three ascents, as well as three descents, and you end up higher than you started, but the convention is to say, *Asio Epo* 'I am going down to Epo.'

The directions in and out can be used either with respect to a building, a cave, a village or to the island.

- (3) *A=ghe mae ghoa toka eleka.*  
 1s=PAST come go.out sit outside  
 'I came to sit outside [the house].'
- (4) *La=ghe sso=la lienga ateva.*  
 3p=PAST go.in=PF cave SG:I  
 'They went into the cave.'
- (5) *Ang=ghe a-kala-kala tani kupi sso*  
 TAM=PAST CAUS-RED-approach COMP cross.boundary go.in  
*tale masaliki eteae.*  
 PREP village SG:II  
 'He was approaching to enter the village.'

With respect to the island, whichever island is in focus, towards the sea is out, and away from the sea is in. This leads to the common expressions of going into the bush, since the villages are on the coast, and going out to go fishing. When speaking of travel from one island to another, the most common expression is to refer to travel in terms of the main island, Mussau.

- (6) *Ngalu ghe tiu so-sso=la etapaa tuvui.*  
 2dx PAST start RED-go.in=PF in bush  
 ‘We started into the bush.’
- (7) *Vara me ghe siki ghoa=la olimo ateva.*  
 then and PAST push go.out=PF canoe SG:I  
 ‘Then he pushed out his canoe (into the water).’
- (8) *Kateva nau aghi me kapu-ghu etoa ami ghe*  
 one day 1s and friend-1sP PL 1px PAST  
*ghoa=la tani luku.*  
 go.out=PF COMP fish.with.net  
 ‘One day I and my friends went out fishing.’
- (9) *A=Loaua atoa me a=Boliu etoa la=ghe*  
 person.of=Loaua PL and person.of=Boliu PL 3p=PAST  
*sso=la tani toka tee-i=a.*  
 go.in=PF COMP sit with-TR=3sO  
 ‘The people of Loaua and Boliu (islands) went in to stay with him (on Mussau island).’

Another small class of verbs in Mussau-Emira is experiencer verbs, such as *sessa* ‘be angry’ or *soi* ‘fill one’s stomach’, as in the following:

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- (10) *Taita namu ng-atoa la=ghe sessa-i=la=la*  
man big LIG-PL 3p=PAST be.angry-TR=3pO=PF

*eta-ngotolu.*

PREP-1txP

‘The old men were angry with us.’

- (11) *A=soi=eghi=la.*

1s=fill=1sO=PF

‘I have eaten my fill.’

Experiencer verbs seem to take the actor as both subject and object. Another possible experiencer verb is *ari* ‘itch’, which otherwise means ‘hunt’, a non-experiencer verb. Another is *kiri* ‘turn’, which seems to be an experiencer verb when speaking of a person turning around.

- (12) *Vara ghe kiri=e=la me ghe tara toka=la vause*  
then PAST turn=3sO=PF and PAST see sit=PF woman

*namu ng-ateva ghe toka-toka.*

big LIG-SG:I PAST RED-sit

‘Then he turned and saw an old woman sitting.’

## 4.2 Verb Morphology

In this section we deal with the two types of verb morphology: derivation, where affixes are added to verb stems to change their class or meaning, and reduplication, which has multiple functions. Finally, we discuss changes of valency.

### 4.2.1 Derivation

There are four productive processes of verb derivation in Mussau-Emira:

- adding a suffix to an intransitive verb to make it transitive;
- adding a prefix to an intransitive verb to make a causative;
- adding a prefix to an active verb to make a stative; and
- adding a prefix with various meanings, including reciprocal and distributive.

There is a possible fifth process, the addition of a suffix which is at present unclear in meaning.

### i) Transitive

Intransitive verbs can undergo derivation with the suffixes *-i* and *-aini* (*-eini* after a high vowel, *-ain* in some dialects, possibly also *-ni*) to yield transitive verbs. When either of these transitivity suffixes is added, it is always followed by the object enclitic (see section 3.1), unless an object NP is present. At present, we do not have enough data to distinguish the meaning or function of *-i* and *-aini*. Historical data would suggest that *-i* would be the reflex of the Proto Oceanic *\*-i*, the marker for a ‘close’ object, typically a patient, and *-aini* would be the reflex of the Proto Oceanic *\*-aki(ni)*, the marker for ‘remote’ object, typically an oblique argument (Crowley 2002:33–34).

For those verb stems whose historical form was consonant-final, to which Mussau-Emira has added an echo vowel, the echo vowel is deleted before adding the transitivity suffix. These include *polaka* ‘break’ and *sinaka* ‘sun’ (when used as a verb, ‘shine’).

Some examples are listed in table 20. Note that the third person singular object clitic is appended as a citation form.

Table 20: Transitive Verbs with *-i*

Intransitive	Gloss	Transitive	Gloss
<i>ata</i>	‘feel hot’	<i>ata-i=a</i>	‘heat it, burn it’
<i>sulu</i>	‘burn’	<i>sulu-i=a</i>	‘burn it’

Intransitive	Gloss	Transitive	Gloss
<i>mae</i>	'come'	<i>mae-i=a</i>	'bring it'
<i>sinaka</i>	'(sun) shine'	<i>sinak-i=a</i>	'warm it (in the sun)'
<i>polaka</i>	'break'	<i>polak-i=a</i>	'break it'
<i>tuui</i>	'bump s.t.'	<i>tuui-eini=a</i>	'bump it into s.t.'
<i>mae</i>	'come'	<i>mae-aini=a</i>	'bring it'
<i>sio</i>	'go down'	<i>sio-aini=a</i>	'take it down'
<i>sokola</i>	'go ashore'	<i>sokola-aini=a</i>	'bring it ashore'
<i>angu</i>	'awake'	<i>angu-ni=a</i>	'wake him up'

Note particularly that the verb *mae* 'come' occurs with both *-i* and *-aini*, with little apparent difference in meaning.

There are a few transitive verbs which also take the transitivizing suffix *-i* when the object is represented by an enclitic, but do not have it when the object is a noun phrase or implicit. These include *tara* 'see' and *nama* 'eat', and *suu* 'send'.

- (13) a. *A=tara=la*.  
 1s=see=PF  
 'I looked.'
- b. *A=tara=la Norm*.  
 1s=see=PF Norm  
 'I saw Norm.'
- c. *A=tara-i=e=la*.  
 1s=see-TR=3sO=PF  
 'I saw him.'

Note that this is a different analysis from Ross (2002:159), who takes *tara* and *nama* to be intransitive roots.

## ii) Causative

Causative verbs are formed from intransitive verbs with the prefix *a-*

(e- after a high vowel):

Table 21: Causative Verbs

Intransitive	Gloss	Causative	Gloss
<i>lutu</i>	'happen'	<i>a-lutu</i>	'make happen'
<i>manga</i>	'holy'	<i>a-manga</i>	'sanctify, make holy'
<i>masina</i>	'become well'	<i>a-masina</i>	'make well'
<i>mate</i>	'die'	<i>a-mate</i>	'kill'
<i>sio</i>	'go down'	<i>a-sio</i>	'bring down'
<i>tingina</i>	'stand'	<i>a-tingina</i>	'make stand, stop'
<i>toka</i>	'sit, stay'	<i>a-toka</i>	'put down'
<i>vukala</i>	'hang'	<i>a-vukala</i>	'hang up, anchor'

- (14) a. *Taita ateva ghe mate=la.*  
 man SG:I PAST die=PF  
 'The man died.'
- b. *Taita ateva ghe uvi e-mate=la mosu eteva.*  
 man SG:I PAST hit CAUS-die=PF pig SG:I  
 'The man killed the pig.' (lit. 'The man struck (and) killed the pig.')

Note here the idiom *uvi e-mate* 'strike kill', which is the normal way of speaking about killing something, and which is common in other Oceanic languages.

- (15) a. *A=ghe toka sio=la nongina nenga-ghi*  
 1s=PAST sit go.down=PF like/where younger.sibling-1sP  
*ghe vuu-vukala.*  
 PAST RED-hang  
 'I sat down where my brother was hanging.'

- b. *La=ghe kaai e-vukala-i=e=la tale kalio atiulu.*  
 3p=PAST carry CAUS-hang-TR=3sO=PF PREP cloth SG:IV  
 ‘They hung him in a piece of cloth.’

These two sentences come from the same story, showing the same action, hanging a child in a piece of cloth. In the first, the child is hanging, while in the second it is his parents who have hung the piece of cloth.

Ross (2002:160–162) describes a series of other prefixes which are also causative, as well as indicating the manner of the action. We, however, analyse these as serial verb constructions (see section 4.4).

### iii) Stative

An active or process verb can be made into a stative verb by adding the prefix *ta-*:

Table 22: Stative Verbs

Active	Gloss	Stative	Gloss
<i>koto</i>	‘break’	<i>ta-koto</i>	‘be broken’
<i>kovo</i>	‘pull out easily’	<i>ta-kovo</i>	‘be pulled out easily’
<i>ngore</i>	‘weaken’	<i>ta-ngore</i>	‘be weak’
<i>pakase</i>	‘injure’	<i>ta-pakase</i>	‘be injured’
<i>polaka</i>	‘break’	<i>ta-polaka</i>	‘be broken’

- (16) a. *Vara me la=ghe kovo vella viliki.*  
 then and 3p=PAST pull.off remove skin  
 ‘Then they pulled off the bark.’
- b. *Nganiu eluelange lalu ghe ta-kovo=la.*  
 branch DL:III 2d PAST STAT-pull.off=PF  
 ‘The two branches fell out.’ (lit. ‘The two branches became pulled out.’)

- (17) a. *Aue e=sai pola-polak-i unna tuku kauru.*  
 IRR 3s=cut RED-break-TR PCL:3sP piece bamboo  
 ‘He will cut into pieces his piece of bamboo.’
- b. *Karika poi atu eteva ghe ta-polaka=la.*  
 NEG EMPH stone SG:I PAST STAT-break=PF  
 ‘The stone wasn’t broken at all.’

#### iv) Reciprocal and Distributive

The prefix *ai-* appears to have a variety of meanings, including reciprocal and distributive:

Table 23: Reciprocal and Distributive Verbs

Basic verb	Gloss	Derived verb	Gloss
<i>kanga</i>	‘laugh’	<i>ai-kanga</i>	‘laugh amongst themselves’
<i>koli</i>	‘change’	<i>ai-koli</i>	‘change oneself’
<i>kolo</i>	‘call’	<i>ai-kolo</i>	‘call one another’
<i>kune</i>	‘seize’	<i>ai-kune</i>	‘take hold of one another’
<i>sausi</i>	‘help s.o.’	<i>ai-sausi</i>	‘help each one’
<i>tara</i>	‘see’	<i>ai-tara</i>	‘look after’
<i>tiuaa</i>	‘divide s.t.’	<i>ai-tiuaa</i>	‘divide themselves’
<i>uvi</i>	‘hit’	<i>ai-uvi</i>	‘fight’
<i>vi</i>	‘push’	<i>ai-vi</i>	‘push each other’

- (18) a. *Me e=ghe kune-i=eghi=la me angalu ghe*  
 and 3s=PAST seize-TR=1sO=PF and 1dx PAST  
*sae=la elo ale.*  
 go.up=PF in house  
 ‘And she grabbed me and we went up into the house.’
- b. *La=ghe ai-kune talia=la me la=ghe loo-loo*  
 3p=PAST RECIP-seize round=PF and 3p=PAST RED-ask

*sae=la.*

go.up=PF

‘They held hands in a circle and prayed.’

- (19) a. *Me kina-ghi ghe sau la ng-e=sio ai*  
and mother-1sP PAST hold go LIG-3s=go.down tree

*eteae me ghe tiuaa=la tani uvi=eghi.*

SG:II and PAST begin=PF COMP hit-1sO

‘And my mother got down a piece of wood and began to hit me.’

- b. *Ami ai-kiso me ami ai-uvi.*

1px RECIP-be.angry and 1px RECIP-hit

‘We were angry with each other and we fought.’

- (20) a. *Angatolu ghe tiuaa=la tani kanga euu ta*  
1tx PAST begin=PF COMP laugh under PREP

*paamanu.*

sea

‘We began to laugh under the water.’

- b. *Ngatolu ghe ai-kanga-kanga-aili.*

1tx PAST RECIP-RED-laugh-INTENS

‘We were laughing hard amongst ourselves.’

It seems that the *ai-* prefix does not always have a meaning, and may just indicate some form of stylistic variation, as, for example, both *sausi* and *aisausi* can mean the same, ‘help’.

Similarly, there are verbs beginning with *ai-* which can plausibly be regarded as derived, but with the basic verb no longer in use.

*aikasakasaliaa* ‘not fit together well’

*aimasokoi* ‘designate’

<i>aimanomanosiaa</i>	'prepare'
<i>aipanipania</i>	'make ready'
<i>aisakei</i>	'judge'
<i>aisapasappaai</i>	'whisper'
<i>aitarraui</i>	'get dark'
<i>aitaua</i>	'be together'

#### v) The suffix *-aa*

There is a suffix *-aa*, which is uncertain in meaning. One possibility is that it adds a durative aspect to the verb.

- (21) *Nau la=ghe tara=la voto o ghe lutu=la, la=ghe*  
 day 3p=PAST see=PF thing that PAST happen=PF 3p=PAST  
*soghi-aa=la.*  
 be.surprised-DUR=PF  
 'When they saw this thing happen, they were surprised.'

In example (21), this is the background to a following speech, and it could be argued that the state of surprise lasted a period of time.

A second possibility is that it is one way of marking habitual aspect.

- (22) *Nima-ne me kke-na sum-sum tale kalio*  
 hand-3sP and leg-3sP RED-wrap PREP cloth  
*la=sum-sum-aa mate-na atoa, me mata-ne sum-sum*  
 3p=RED-wrap-HAB die-ADJR PL and eye-3sP RED-wrap  
*tale mene tuku kateva kalio.*  
 PREP again piece one cloth  
 'His hands and feet were wrapped with cloth they wrap dead  
 people in, and his face was wrapped with another piece of cloth.'

In example (22), the contrast between *sumsum* and *sumsumaa* appears

to be that between a single event and the customary use of the cloth.

On the other hand, with the verb *tiu* ‘start’, there appears to be a difference in usage, where *tiu* is only used in serial verb constructions and the derived adjective *aitiutiu* ‘first’, while *tiuaa* is used when only one verb is present, especially when it is used with a complement.

- (23) *Me aghi a=ghe sau=la keru eteva, me ngatolu ghe*  
and 1s 1s=PAST carry=PF basket SG:I and 1tx PAST

*tiu sae=la e=utana.*  
start go.up=PF LOC=garden

‘And I carried a basket, and we started up to the garden.’

- (24) *Ai-tiu-tiu eteva tana koto ghe a-sus-suki=la*  
INST-RED-start SG:I ART wave PAST CAUS-RED-surf=PF

*Tom ghe sso=la arau elae me ghe sao=la*  
Tom PAST go.in=PF straight shore and PAST cover=PF

*arau tale atu eteva.*  
straight PREP rock SG:I

‘The first wave that made Tom surf went straight in to shore and dumped him straight on a rock.’

- (25) *Vara me la=ghe kovo vella viliki, me ami ghe*  
then and 3p=PAST peel move.back skin and 1px PAST

*tiu-aa=la tani sapala-i=a.*  
start-DUR=PF COMP pound-TR=3sO

‘Then they peeled off the bark, and we started to pound it.’

Yet another type of use is the verb *kiri* ‘turn’. When *-aa* is added, it seems to make the meaning more specifically ‘turn around’ or ‘turn over’. Even so, this seems to be optional.

- (26) a. *Vara ghe kiri=e=la me ghe tara toka=la vause*  
 then PAST turn=3sO=PF and PAST see sit=PF woman  
*namu ng-ateva ghe toka-toka.*  
 big LIG-SG:I PAST RED-sit  
 ‘Then he turned and saw an old woman sitting.’
- b. *Me angalu ghe kiri ghoa=la elo ale.*  
 and 1dx PAST turn go.out=PF in house  
 ‘And we turned back and went home.’
- c. *Pai ng-elo alai Salome Molla la=ghe mene*  
 side LIG-afternoon Salome Molla 3p=PAST again  
*aikaai=la me la=ghe mene kiri-aa lao sio*  
 bury=PF and 3p=PAST again turn-DUR go go.down  
*e=Tavilu.*  
 LOC=Tavilu  
 ‘In the afternoon they buried Salome Molla, and they turned  
 and went down to Tavilu.’

Note that in examples (26b) and (26c), *kiri* and *kiriao* have essentially the same meaning.

#### 4.2.2 Reduplication

Reduplication is a common process with verbs, and carries a variety of meanings. As discussed in section 2.6, there are five forms of reduplication, which are lexically specified. The five types are:

- disyllabic, which reduplicates the first two syllables;
- CVC, which reduplicates the initial CV syllable and geminates the consonant;
- CVV, which reduplicates the initial CV syllable and geminates the vowel;
- CV, which reduplicates the initial CV syllable of a stem that begins

with a geminate consonant; and

- V, which reduplicates the initial vowel.

The normal function of reduplication is as a marker of aspect, which can generally be summarised as imperfective. More specifically, a reduplicated verb can mark:

- continuous aspect
- iterative aspect
- habitual aspect

Examples of each of these follow.

- (27) Norm *e=siki-siki olimo-na ateva.*  
 Norm 3s=RED-push canoe-3sP SG:I  
 ‘Norm is pushing his canoe.’

- (28) *La=ghe saa-sapala-i=a me ghe mene ue=la*  
 3p=PAST RED-pound-TR=3sO and PAST again say=PF  
*va, “Am mene laa sso tue mene kateva!”*  
 COMP 2p again go go.in chop again one  
 ‘They were pounding it and he said again, “Go and chop down another one!”’

In example (27), the action is a present activity and hence continuous aspect. In example (28), the action is background for the next event.

- (29) *Ghalua a=Siapani lalu ghe uvi-uvi sae atu eteva*  
 two person.of=Japan 2d PAST RED-hit go.up rock SG:I  
*e=Tangaroasa tale masin gan alulu.*  
 LOC=Tangaroasa PREP machine.gun DL:IV  
 ‘Two Japanese were shooting the rock at Tangaroasa with machine guns.’

- (30) *Me paua atoa la=ghe mae sio, me la=ghe*  
 and dog PL 3p=PAST come go.down and 3p=PAST

*tiuaa=la tani rou-rou.*  
 begin=PF COMP RED-bark  
 ‘And the dogs came, and they started barking.’

In both of these examples, the action of the verb is something that is a repeated punctiliar action, and hence the reduplication provides iterative aspect.

(31) *Gideon e=toka-toka e=Magean.*  
 Gideon 3s=RED-sit LOC=Magean  
 ‘Gideon lives in Magean.’

(32) *Nau o aghi a=ghe kak-kala, karika a=ghe*  
 day that 1s 1s=PAST RED-crawl NEG 1s=PAST  
*kasu-kasu.*  
 RED-walk  
 ‘At that time I used to crawl, I didn’t walk.’

Example (31) shows habitual aspect in that it refers to Gideon’s normal place of living. Example (32) shows how reduplication is used for describing activity over a period of time as habitual.

A second function of reduplication is to make a transitive verb intransitive. For example:

(33) a. *E=ghe nama=la ko ateva.*  
 3s=PAST eat=PF fish SG:I  
 ‘He ate a fish.’

b. *E=ghe nama-nama=la.*  
 3s=PAST RED-eat=PF  
 ‘He ate.’

(34) *Waniu ghe tara=la ko atea makao-i-a, ghe*  
 Waniu PAST see=PF fish SG:II fish.sp-TR=3sO PAST

*soa-soa=la, ghe soa=la ghalua*  
 RED-shoot=PF PAST shoot=PF two  
 ‘Waniu saw a school of *makao* fish, he speared, he speared two.’

### 4.2.3 Changes of Valency

It is common that verbs can be used both intransitively and transitively. Often, this is realised by adding derivational affixes to the intransitive verb to make it transitive, or reduplicating a transitive verb to make it intransitive (see section 4.2.1).

However, a few verbs can be used unchanged both transitively and intransitively. Such verbs fall into two classes, A-type and O-type verbs (Dixon 1988:45, 204–205). A-type verbs are those where the transitive subject becomes the intransitive subject, while the O-type verbs are where the transitive object becomes the intransitive subject. Another description of this phenomenon is that O-type verbs are middle or labile verbs (Payne 1997:216).

The examples that we have are limited, so no attempt at making a semantic classification, as Dixon did for Boumaa Fijian, will be attempted here.

This example shows an A-type verb:

- (35) a. *Ghe aimarati=la Epo.*  
 PAST give.birth=PF Epo.  
 ‘She gave birth at Epo.’
- b. *Ghe aimarati=la Epo natu-na taita arighi.*  
 PAST give.birth=PF Epo child-3sP man SG:small  
 ‘She gave birth at Epo to her son.’

The verb *tara* ‘see’ is another example of an A-type verb, though it also takes the transitivizing suffix *-i* when an object enclitic is present. See example (13).

Following are examples of O-type verbs:

- (36) a. *A=ghe totu=e=la.*  
 1s=PAST rise=3sO=PF  
 'I stood it up.'
- b. *A=ghe totu=la.*  
 1s=PAST rise=PF  
 'I got up.'
- (37) a. *Io u=su-ssu natu-m.*  
 2s 2s=RED-breastfeed child-2sP  
 'You are breastfeeding your child.'
- b. *Natu-m ateva e=su-ssu.*  
 child-2sP SG:I 3s=RED-breastfeed  
 'Your child is breastfeeding.'
- (38) a. *Sinaka ateva ghe sinak-i=la utana atingiu*  
 sun SG:I PAST sun-TR=PF garden SG:V  
 'The sun dried the garden.'
- b. *Ami a-toka va e=sii-sinak-i.*  
 1px CAUS-sit COMP 3s=RED-sun-TR  
 'We put it out to dry (in the sun).'

### 4.3 Verb Phrase Structure

The structure of the verb phrase is as follows:

(Tam<sub>1</sub>) [(Subject) (Tam<sub>2</sub>) (Neg) (Adverb) Head (Object)]<sup>n</sup> (Tam<sub>3</sub>)

We will first discuss what can occur in each of the different slots in the verb phrase, then look at the combinations of tense, mood and aspect particles, and conclude with a summary of tense and aspect marking.

#### 4.3.1 Constituents

The elements that can occur in the various positions of the verb phrase are listed in table 24. We will then discuss each of these, beginning with the negative and adverb, and then considering the tense-aspect-mood

particles, and then dealing with the subject and head.

Table 24: Verb Phrase Constituents

TAM <sub>1</sub>	Subject	TAM <sub>2</sub>	Neg	Adverb	Object	TAM <sub>3</sub>
<i>au= ~ aue=</i> <i>(a)ng=</i> <i>nge ~ ngi</i>	<i>a= '1s'</i>	<i>ghe</i> <i>ghele</i> <i>nga=</i>	<i>tam</i> <i>rou</i>	<i>mala</i> 'a little' <i>mene</i> 'again' <i>nim</i> 'just' <i>tani</i> 'must, greatly'	<i>=a '3sO'</i>	<i>=la 'PF'</i>

### i) Negative

The negative slot can only take two forms, *tam*, used in the indicative mood, and *rou* (also pronounced *rau*), used in the imperative mood or in some contexts expressing fear or hope (see section 6.5).

(39) *A=tam kila-kila.*  
1s=NEG RED-know  
'I don't know.'

(40) *U=rou katuu!*  
2s=NEG fall  
'Don't fall!'

There is also a clause-level negation, which is discussed in section 6.5.

### ii) Adverb

The following adverbs have been recorded in the slot before the Verb (Adverb):

*mala* 'a little'  
*mene* 'again'  
*nim* 'just'

*tani* 'must, greatly'

Note that, when there is nothing in the TAM<sub>2</sub> or negative slots, the subject proclitic is joined directly to the adverb.

- (41) *la=ghe mene ghoa=la*  
 3s=PAST again go.out=PF  
 'they went out again'
- (42) *a=mene aloanna*  
 1s=again want  
 'I also want'
- (43) *ghe nim nama-nama uri*  
 PAST just RED-eat banana  
 'he was just eating banana'
- (44) *ang=e=mala masina=la*  
 TAM=3s=DIM become.well=PF  
 'he is a little better'
- (45) *See e=anna va e=mue-mue, e=tani ghelei=a*  
 who 3s=think COMP 3s=RED-go.first 3s=must make=3s  
*e=ai-ruu-ruu.*  
 3s=INST-RED-finish  
 'Whoever wants to be first, he must make himself last.'

Other adverbs occurring after the head are analysed as serial verbs.

### iii) TAM<sub>1</sub>

The following particles and proclitics can occur in the tense-aspect-mood slot before the subject (TAM<sub>1</sub>):

*ae* irrealis  
*ang=, ng=* various meanings

*nge* ~ *ngi* inceptive

- (46) *ae a=mae*  
IRR 1s=come  
'I will come'
- (47) *ang=e=mae sio*  
TAM=3s=come go.down  
'he came'
- (48) *ng=a=kaluaa=la*  
TAM=1s=forget=PF  
'I forgot'

The particle *ae* marks irrealis mood, and is used for future tense as well as counterfactual and hypothetical clauses.

- (49) *Marova la=ghe tam ghelei=la keru, ae la=ghe sa?*  
if 3p=PAST NEG make=PF basket IRR 3s=PAST what  
'If they hadn't made baskets, what would they have done?'

The proclitic *ang=* (or *ng=*) has various meanings, depending on what other tense-aspect-mood markers are present, and is simply glossed as TAM. See section 4.3.2 for a discussion of these tense-aspect-mood markers.

The particle *nge*, or *ngi* in some dialects, appears to be inceptive.

- (50) *Karika nge la=ghe ai-ppoa.*  
NEG INCEP 3s=PAST RECIP-talk  
'They didn't talk.'
- (51) *Karika la=ghe ai-ppoa.*  
NEG 3s=PAST RECIP-talk  
'They were unable to talk.'

In example (50), the meaning is that they did not talk about something

particular, whereas example (51) implies that they didn't know the language, and hence did not talk at all.

#### iv) TAM<sub>2</sub>

The following proclitics can occur in the tense-aspect-mood slot following the subject (Tam<sub>2</sub>):

*ghe* past  
*ghele* yesterday's past, habitual, desiderative  
*nga=* counterfactual

- (52) *la=ghe atu=la*  
 3s=PAST weave=PF  
 'they wove'
- (53) *angalu ghele ghoa=la*  
 1dx YEST.PAST go.out=PF  
 'we went out (yesterday)'
- (54) *a=nga=kasu=la*  
 1s=CF=walk=PF  
 'I would have gone'

The proclitic *ghele* has various meanings, which are not obvious. See the discussion in section 4.3.2.

We have very few examples of *nga=*, so it is not certain how it interacts with other particles.

#### v) TAM<sub>3</sub>

The enclitic *=la* 'perfective' occurs at the end of the verb phrase (TAM<sub>3</sub>). The perfective is most frequently used with past tense, indicating completed action or an event viewed as a whole. It is often also used in imperative clauses.

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(55) *la=ghe toka aitaau=la*  
3s=PAST sit together=PF  
'they sat together'

(56) *Nama-i=e=la!*  
eat-TR=3sO=PF  
'Eat it!'

### vi) Subject

The Subject can be a subject proclitic, as listed in section 3.1. For the combinations of person and number which do not have such a proclitic, the independent pronoun is used. If the subject is third person singular, and the past tense with *ghe* or *ghele* is used, the subject proclitic may be omitted, as in example (58). Otherwise, it is obligatory in declarative and interrogative clauses.

(57) *Tuvu-ghu vause ateva e=ghe ilou ngang-ngala=la.*  
grandparent-1sP woman SG:I 3s=PAST run RED-cry=PF  
'My grandmother came running and crying.'

(58) *Ghe ghaa-i=eghi=la me angalu ghe sso=la.*  
PAST get-TR=1sO=PF and 1dx PAST go.in=PF  
'She took me and we went inside.'

### vii) Object

The object of a verb phrase can be implicit, an enclitic, or a noun phrase. Ross (2002:162) says that the object enclitic is omitted if the noun phrase object is non-specific. From our data, it seems rather that the object enclitic is omitted when the object is represented as a noun phrase. If the object is a noun phrase, then it is not included as part of the verb phrase, so that only object enclitics are part of the verb phrase.

### viii) Head

The Head slot can be filled by a single verb, or by a series of verb roots, making a serial verb construction. In more complex serial verb constructions, some of the subject, tense and object markers can be repeated. See section 4.4.

### 4.3.2 Combinations of Tense, Aspect and Mood Particles

In this section, we first discuss the meaning of the various combinations with the proclitic *(a)ng=*, then discuss the use of *ghe* and *ghele*.

#### i) Combinations with *(a)ng=*

The proclitic *ang=*, often shortened to *ng=*, is used in a variety of contexts to give different meanings. On its own with a reduplicated root, it can mean a present state or the immediate future.

- (59) *ang=e=toka-toka*  
TAM=3s=RED-sit  
'he is staying'
- (60) *ang=a=kasu-kasu*  
TAM=3s=RED-walk  
'I am leaving'
- (61) *ang=e=vaa-vaoo*  
TAM=3s=RED-rain  
'it is about to rain'

With a root plus the perfective marker *=la*, it refers to the immediate past.

- (62) *Ang=u=masina=la.*  
TAM=2s=become.well=PF  
'You have got well (just now).'

- (63) *Norm ng=e=kasu=la e=Lomakunauru*  
 Norm TAM=3s=walk=PF LOC=Lomakunauru  
 ‘Norm has (just) left Lomakunauru.’

With *ghe* or *ghele* plus a root, there are several functions. One is to encode action preceding the main verb. The main verb can be in the present tense, with the clause with *ang=ghe* as a completed action.

- (64) *Tama-ghi, vausenna ateva ang=ghe mate=la, ie nonga*  
 father-1sP wife:3sP SG:I TAM=PAST die=PF 3s only  
*e=toka-toka tale ale-na ateva*  
 3s=RED-sit PREP house-3sP SG:I  
 ‘My father, whose wife has died, lives by himself in his house.’
- (65) *Ang=u=ghe ghaa=la ghinna-m ateva ghe rau=e=la?*  
 TAM=2s=PAST get=PF clothes-2sP SG:I PAST lose=3sO=PF  
 ‘Have you got back the garment that was lost?’

When the main verb is past tense, the action of the verb with *ang=ghe* is also a completed action before the main verb.

- (66) *Ghele ta-koto=la ta poli ang=ghe marokasa=la.*  
 YEST.PAST STAT-break=PF because TAM=PAST rot=PF  
 ‘It broke because it had rotted.’
- (67) *Vara me ghe mene ruu=la tani angari,*  
 then and PAST again finish=PF COMP make.noise  
*poli moto ateva o a=ghe nongo=la*  
 because motor.canoe SG:I that 1s=PAST hear=PF  
*ang=ghe sso mae tapaa sao e=Talangau.*  
 TAM=PAST go.in come in passage LOC= Talangau  
 ‘Then it stopped making noise, because the motor canoe I had heard had come in to the passage at Talangau.’

It also seems that *ang=* plus *ghe* can be inceptive.

- (68) *Vara me ang=ghe ngang-ngala ta anna tuku*  
 then and TAM=PAST RED-cry CONJ PCL:3sP piece  
*kapa ateva elome ta olimo-na arighi ghe soko=la*  
 metal SG:I inside PREP canoe-3sP SG:small PAST go.in=PF  
*kiro-na ateva.*  
 buttock-3sP SG:I  
 ‘Then he began to cry because a piece of metal in his small canoe  
 had gone into his buttock.’

Sometimes, it seems that *ang=* plus *ghe* can merely indicate sequence.

- (69) *Vare ami ghe ghoa taa-tara me kinatama koto ateva*  
 then 1px PAST go.out RED-see and huge wave SG:I  
*ghe a-suu=la me ang=ghe a-suu*  
 PAST CAUS-bathe=PF and TAM=PAST CAUS-bathe  
*e=so-ss0.*  
 3s=RED-go.in  
 ‘We went out watching and a huge wave broke and foamed in.’

The combination of *ang=* plus *ghele*, a root and the perfective *=la* can be used for an event further forward in time than that of the preceding verb, but before the present.

- (70) *Voto karika ami ghe kile-kile ang=ghele*  
 thing NEG 1px PAST RED-know TAM=YEST.PAST  
*masalike=la eta-mami.*  
 be.clear=PF PREP-1pxO  
 ‘The things we hadn’t understood (later) became clear to us.’

## ii) Use of *ghe* and *ghele*

Mussau-Emira distinguishes three tenses syntactically: non-past, yesterday's past, and generic past. Generic past is marked by the proclitic *ghe*, and yesterday's past by the proclitic *ghele*. Non-past has neither of these proclitics.

*Ghe* is used exclusively for generic past tense. The generic past tense is used for any time before the present, which can include today and yesterday, as well as time before yesterday. Yesterday's past is used for events that occurred the previous day, and is not obligatory. The word for 'yesterday' is *ghalailo*, and this may or may not be used with *ghele*.

- (71) *Ghalailo elue talaua angalu ghele lao sio tani*  
 yesterday morning 2dx YEST.PAST go go.down COMP  
*kaua.*  
 worship  
 'Yesterday morning we went to worship.'

- (72) *Koronna la=ghele sangumaimi=eghi=la.*  
 true 3p=YEST.PAST work.sorcery=1sO=PF  
 'Truly they worked sorcery on me (yesterday).'

However, *ghele* is also used in some other contexts as well, for which the common factor is that they are at a remove from reality. The most common is counterfactual:

- (73) *U=kile-kile va aue u=ghele velu aliki vause atoa?*  
 2s=RED-know COMP IRR 2s=CF drop child woman PL  
 'Don't you know that you could have lost the girls?'

Another usage is desiderative:

- (74) *Sa inangari a=ghele aulia ta ng-eta-na?*  
 what talk 1s=DES say PREP LIG-PREP-3sP  
 ‘What shall I say to him?’

A third usage is seen in the following example, which speaks of the way a person would have behaved in a given situation, and thus is somewhat like a hypothetical habitual:

- (75) *Aruva la=raa-ramuti me ghele ue va, “Am sae=la*  
 if 3s=RED-chew and HAB say COMP 2p go.up=PF  
*vua.”*  
 betelnut  
 ‘If they were chewing (betelnut) he would say, “Climb a betelnut tree.”’

Note, however, that the more common way of encoding habitual aspect is the use of reduplication, as noted earlier (section 4.2.2).

### 4.3.3 Tense, Mood and Aspect

As can be seen from the previous discussion, the combinations of the various tense, mood and aspect markers are complex. Here we outline the functions from the opposite perspective, starting from tense, mood and aspect categories and giving the combinations of particles used to encode these.

#### i) Future

Future is usually encoded with the irrealis particle *aue*. However, the absence of other tense, mood and aspect markers can also be used for the future tense.

For immediate future, the proclitic *(a)ng=* with no other tense marker can be used.

**ii) Present**

The present tense is normally accompanied by continuous aspect, and is encoded with only reduplication in the verb. Otherwise, present tense is unmarked.

**iii) Past**

Past tense is indicated in a number of ways. The proclitics *ghe=* and *ghele=* are used for past and yesterday's past, respectively, but events that happened yesterday can simply be marked as past with *ghe*. The perfective enclitic *=la* is also frequently used. Immediate past can also be marked with just the proclitic *(a)ng=*.

**iv) Continuous, Iterative and Habitual Aspects**

Continuous, iterative and habitual aspects are denoted by reduplication of the verb. Habitual may also possibly be indicated by the suffix *-aa* on the verb.

**v) Perfective Aspect**

Perfective aspect is denoted by the clitic *=la* at the end of the verb phrase.

**vi) Inceptive Aspect**

Inceptive aspect can be marked by the particle *nge ~ ngi*, or by the combination of *ang=* and *ghe=*.

**vii) Irrealis Mood**

Irrealis mood is normally denoted by *aue*, but the proclitics *nga=* and *ghele=* are also used when speaking of non-real topics, namely counterfactuals and hypotheticals.

#### 4.4 Serial and Compound Verbs

Verb serialisation is a productive process in Mussau-Emira, with many serial verb constructions (SVCs) occurring in natural texts. A few cases of serial verb constructions could be classed as compound verbs. These are discussed in section 4.4.5.

Crowley (Crowley 1987, Crowley 2002) describes SVCs in Oceanic languages, and uses the Role and Reference Grammar (Foley and van Valin 1984:189) categories of nuclear and core layer. These describe two layers at which verbs may come together. In many Oceanic languages, this distinction is helpful in analysing SVCs. However, this does not appear to have any explanatory power in Mussau-Emira. In Paamese, Crowley notes several tests to distinguish between nuclear layer SVCs, core layer SVCs, coordination and subordination. It appears that no such distinction can be made in Mussau-Emira between the two layers of juncture, and so we will simply refer to SVCs without reference to the layer of juncture.

Apart from the distinction between core layer and nuclear layer serialisation, Crowley (1987:38–40) describes four types of serialisation, based on the relationships between the nominal arguments associated with each of the verbs in question. These are same-subject, switch-subject, multiple object, and ambient serialisation. Multiple object serialisation is not present in our data, but the other three types occur.

The characteristic feature of a serial verb construction is the use of more than a single verb within a single verb phrase. Typically, verb stems occur in a string with no verbal morphology apart from subject and object clitics and derivational and transitivizing particles, so that the preverbal particles occur before the first verb, and the post-verbal particles after the last verb in the series.

Another indication that the SVC functions as a unit is the phono-

logical connection between the verbs. The vowel-raising rule (section 2.7) is that /a/ becomes /e/ after a high vowel, when the /a/ is not phrase-final. Within an SVC, a word-final /a/ following a high vowel does become /e/ when it is not the last of the verbs in the series, showing that it is still within the same phrase. For example, the third person singular object enclitic =a becomes =e when another verb follows:

(76) *A=ghe tau=e lao ta kina-m.*  
 1s=PAST give=3sO go PREP mother-2sP  
 'I gave it to your mother.'

#### 4.4.1 Same-Subject Serialisation

Same-subject SVCs have the same subject for each of the verbs, and only mark the subject at the beginning of the verb phrase, not on each verb of the series. These are the most common types of SVC, and function in four different ways: directional, complex events, aspectual and adverbial. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

The two most common forms of same-subject SVCs are those that we are calling directional and complex event. A directional SVC has a main verb (or verbs) and then a motion verb indicating direction. A complex event SVC has two or more verbs which describe parts of the event which the SVC as a whole describes.

Since the tense, mood and aspect markers are, apart from reduplication, preverbal and post-verbal clitics, it follows that the SVC as a whole shares these categories. Reduplication occurs with the verb stem, and so it is common to have one or more of the verbs reduplicated. In this case, the imperfective aspect is not shared by the whole SVC. This is most common in complex event SVCs.

##### i) Directional SVCs

A directional SVC consists of a main verb (or verbs) followed by a mo-

tion verb. In a directional SVC, the motion verb usually indicates direction, but not always, for some combinations are conventional. These may well be instances where a SVC is in the process of becoming a compound verb (see section 4.4.5). Most, if not all, non-stative verbs can take a motion verb. Ross (2002:160–162) analyses this usage as directional suffixes, but they are analysed here as SVCs.

Three verbs in particular almost always occur with a motion verb: *mae* ‘come’, *tau* ‘give’, and *kupi* ‘cross boundary’. *Tau* is usually followed by either *mae* ‘come’ or *lao* ‘go’, indicating whether the giving is done to or by the speaker. The SVCs *tau mae* and *tau lao* are often, but not always, then followed by another directional verb. *Kupi* is usually followed by either *sso* ‘enter’ or *ghoa* ‘go out’ to indicate which direction the boundary is being crossed.

There are two main ways that *mae* is used. When the coming is in focus, and the direction is not important, the normal way to say it is *mae sio* ‘come here’, where *sio* has become semantically bleached and lost its sense of going down. When the direction is in focus, the direction is usually first, such as *sso mae* ‘come inside’, or *sio mae* ‘come down’. However, this is not rigid; for example, both *sae mae* and *mae sae* occur, both meaning ‘come up’.

Some examples of motion verbs used as directional indications follow.

(77) *kure*            *sio*  
 get.down go.down  
 ‘get down’

(78) *toka sio*  
 sit go.down  
 ‘sit down’

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- (79) *tingina sae*  
stand go.up  
'stand up'
- (80) *sio mae*  
go.down come  
'come down'
- (81) *sso mae*  
go.inside come  
'come inside'
- (82) *tau mae sio*  
give come go.down  
'give (to me)'
- (83) *tau lao*  
give go  
'give (to someone else)'

Some of these are so conventional that they could be considered as idioms that are the normal way of expressing the meaning. In particular, *mae sio*, *toka sio* and *tingina sae* are almost always used for 'come', 'sit down' and 'stand up', respectively. Some of these are apparently in the process of becoming compound verbs, as discussed in section 4.4.5.

The following example shows a contrast in meaning between a coordinate construction and a serial verb:

- (84) a. *E=mae e=sso.*  
3s=come 3s=RED-go.in  
'It is coming in.'
- b. *E=sso mae.*  
3s=go.in come  
'It is coming in (and has arrived).'

The directional motion verbs *sae* ‘go up’, *sio* ‘go down’, *ghoa* ‘go out’ and *sso* ‘go in’ can be used to indicate the location of the event and direction of movement.

- (85) *E=ghe ue sae, “Amben, ang=u=tara-i=e=la?”*  
 3s=PAST say go.up Amben TAM=2s=see-TR=3sO=PF  
 ‘He called up, “Amben, do you see it?”’
- (86) *A=ghe kasu=la, a=ghe ilou sio=la, me a=ghe*  
 1s=PAST walk=PF 1s=PAST run go.down=PF and 1s=PAST  
*sae=la ai ete, me a=ghe tiuaa=la tani kinari.*  
 go.up=PF tree SG:II and 1s=PAST begin=PF COMP sing  
 ‘I left, I ran down, and I climbed a tree, and I began to sing.’
- (87) *A=ghe velu ghoa=la une-ghi ai-rekati tee*  
 1s=PAST drop go.out=PF PCL=1sP INST=fish.with.hook with  
*tale soana atea.*  
 PREP passage SG:II  
 ‘I cast my hook as well into the passage.’
- (88) *Philip Alopate ghe suu ghoa=la, me ghe sau*  
 Philip Alopate PAST bathe go.out=PF and PAST carry  
*e-ssso mae kko ateva.*  
 CAUS-go.in come fish SG:I  
 ‘Philip Alopate swam out, and carried the fish to shore.’

Also, the verbs *kasu* ‘walk, leave’, *mae* ‘come’ and *lao* ‘go’ can be used to show direction relative to the deictic centre.

- (89) *Tue-ghi ghe kasu vuli elokoi=eghi=la me ghe*  
 older.sibling-1sP PAST walk leave lay=1sO=PF and PAST

*sso=la elae.*  
 go.in=PF shore  
 'My older brother left me lying there and went ashore.'

- (90) *Me ghe kolo=aghi=la me ghe sio mae tani*  
 and PAST call=1sO=PF and PAST go.down come COMP  
*oghi eta-ghi.*  
 return PREP-1sP  
 'And he called me and came down to come back to me.'

- (91) *Vara me a=ghe sapele lao sio tale mene kateva*  
 then and 1s=PAST step go go.down PREP again one  
*laangi-na, me a=ghe katuu velu sio=la tapaa kosa.*  
 branch-3sP and 1s=PAST fall drop go.down on ground  
 'Then I stepped onto another branch, and I fell down to the ground.'

## ii) Complex Event SVCs

The second common type of SVC is complex event. This fits well with Bradshaw's definition of SVCs (Bradshaw 1982:28, cited by Crowley 1987:38) that, "[a]ll verbs in the serial construction refer to subparts of a single overall event." In this type of SVC, the verbs refer to the sequence of parts of the event, or to various parts of the event which occur simultaneously.

In the examples, the verbs in the SVC are underlined.

- (92) *Mene ghelei teva ale, ale me a=mene sso*  
 again make EXIST house house and 1sS=again go.inside

tauu                      elome.  
 cook.in.earth.oven inside  
 ‘Make another house, a house and I can go inside and cook (in an earth oven).’

- (93) *Ngatolu ghe laa toka sio tale kateae ppae liue*  
 1tx PAST go sit go.down PREP one:II other base  
*ng-ai*.  
 CONST-tree  
 ‘We (three) went and sat down at the base of another tree.’

- (94) *Ita sae tara-i=a ta ang=ghe mate=la*.  
 1pi go.up see-TR=3sO CONJ TAM=PAST die=PF  
 ‘Let’s go see him since he has died.’

- (95) *Tue-ghi vause ateva ghe su-ng-i=eghi=la*  
 elder.sibling-1sP woman SG:I PAST send-LIG-TR=1sO=PF  
*tani sso aso pakea tale ai*.  
 COMP go.inside lie take.shelter PREP tree  
 ‘My older sister sent me to go lie down in the shelter of a tree.’

As can be seen in examples (94) and (95), the sequence can also indicate purpose or goal, which tends to tie the whole SVC together as a complete event.

Note that the subparts of the event need not be sequential, but may overlap in time or be simultaneous.

- (96) *Ghe uvi e-mate=a=la*.  
 PAST hit CAUS-die=3sO=PF  
 ‘He killed it (by hitting it).’
- (97) *Vaeo ateva ghe kata pate=la oasa atea*.  
 shark SG:I PAST bite knock.down=PF rope SG:II  
 ‘The shark bit through the line.’

- (98) *Tuvu-ghu vause ateva e=ghe ilou ngang-ngala=la.*  
 grandparent-1sP female SG:I 3s=PAST run RED-cry=PF  
 ‘My grandmother came running and crying.’
- (99) *ghe mae sso velu sokola-aini=e sio*  
 PAST come go.in drop go.ashore-TR=3sO go.down  
 ‘(the wave) came in and dropped it on the shore’

In examples (96) to (98), the subparts of the event are all simultaneous. In example (99), though, there is a combination of both sequential and simultaneous subparts.

As mentioned earlier, it is possible to have only some of the verbs reduplicated, giving differences in aspect between the various verbs and hence the sub-events. For example:

- (100) *La=siki-siki e-toka sso olimo ateva.*  
 3p=RED-push CAUS-sit go.in canoe SG:I  
 ‘They push the canoe ashore.’

Here the pushing is seen as extended, with placing the canoe ashore as the goal.

It is also possible to have more than one verb reduplicated, in which case each subevent is considered as extended.

- (101) *Kina-ira ateva ghe kasu-kasu ghe so-ssso kai-kai*  
 mother-3pP SG:I PAST RED-walk PAST RED-go.in RED-dig  
*lova ateva.*  
 taro SG:I  
 ‘Their mother went in (to the garden) to dig taro.’

However, not all cases of reduplication indicate differences of aspect. In the following example, the verb *sai* ‘cut’ is reduplicated to reduce its valence so that it is used intransitively in this sentence.

- (102) *Ita laa sai-sai.*  
 1pi go RED-cut  
 ‘Let’s go and cut (bush for a garden).’

The examples in Ross (2002:160) of causative prefixes indicating manner are analysed here as sequential SVCs. For example:

- (103) *Piri polak-i righi vatum.*  
 bend break-TR small tapioca  
 ‘Break off (by bending) a piece of tapioca.’

- (104) *A=ghe velu polak-i kapa ateva.*  
 1s=PAST drop break-TR cup SG:I  
 ‘I dropped and broke the cup.’

### iii) Aspectual SVCs

The third type of use is aspectual serialisation. In this case, the verbs all have the same subject, but one of the verbs functions as a modifier of the main verb. This stretches Bradshaw’s definition, as the aspectual verbs are not referring to subparts of an event, but are modifiers of the event described by the main verb.

This type of SVC is rather uncommon. In our data, only two verbs are used in this construction, *toka* ‘sit’ and *lao* ‘go’, both of which add durative aspect.

- (105) *Kinna karika righi rarum e=ssu-na, ghe nim*  
 mother:3sP NEG small liquid LOC=breast-3sP PAST just  
*toka su-ssu poi, ghe ai=e poi rarum*  
 sit RED-breastfeed EMPH PAST pull=3sO EMPH liquid

*e=ssu ta kinna.*

LOC=breast PREP mother:3sP

'His mother had no milk in her breasts, and he just kept sucking, he pulled hard to get milk from his mother's breast.'

In this example, the verb *toka* 'sit', coming before the main verb, adds a durative aspectual component.

- (106) *Greg e=matua tingina=la, ia tingina=la ia o me*  
 Greg 3s=be.quiet stand=PF 3s stand=PF 3s that and  
*e=ringa-ringa* *lao.*  
 3s=RED-shake.head go  
 'Greg stood quietly, he stood there and shook his head.'

Here, the final verb, *lao* 'go', adds durative aspect.

#### iv) Adverbial SVCs

The fourth type of use is adverbial serialisation. In this type, a verb is used in an adverbial sense. Often, this verb has a causative derivational prefix.

In these examples, only the verb used in the adverbial sense is underlined.

- (107) *La=ghe maa-matautu e-tingina.*  
 3p=PAST RED-be.afraid CAUS-stand  
 'They were terrified.' (lit. 'They were afraid stopped.')
- (108) *Nau a=ghe lutu=la karika a=ghe lutu*  
 day 1s=PAST be.born=PF NEG 1s=PAST be.born  
*e-masina=la.*  
 CAUS-be.good=PF  
 'When I was born I had a difficult birth (lit. I was not born well).'

In example (107), we have an idiom. By itself, *tingina* means 'stand'.

With a causative prefix, *a-tingina* means ‘cause to stand’, but also has the idiomatic meaning of stopping someone who is walking. So, the idiomatic meaning may be more like ‘They were brought up short by their fear.’

The verb may be without the causative prefix as well:

(109) *Me a=ghe katuu saa-sakiaa=la.*  
 and 1s=PAST fall RED-ruin=PF  
 ‘And I fell down badly.’

(110) *Vara mami ghe kasu muu-mue=la tani sae*  
 then 1px PAST walk RED-go.first=PF COMP go.up  
*aisulia ng-a-toka tani toi a=Magean atoa,*  
 hide LIG-CAUS-sit COMP wait person.of=Magean PL  
*tani saki=la.*  
 COMP attack=3pO  
 ‘Then we went ahead to hide and wait for the Magean boys, to attack them.’

Some verbs used in this type of construction are rarely used as main verbs, and usually appear as the last verb in the series. These are rather like adverbs, and may possibly be considered as verbs becoming adverbs. These include the following:

*aitaua* ‘be together’  
*longoti* ‘go across’  
*kasina* ‘be first’  
*parasi* ‘move quickly’

(111) *la=ghe ungu eitaua*  
 3s=PAST work together  
 ‘they worked together’

(112) *katoa la=ghe pasi kasina=la*  
 some 3s=PAST plant first=PF  
 ‘some planted first’

(113) *La=ghe suu longoti=la soa-na atea*  
 3p=PAST swim across=PF passage-3sP SG:II  
 ‘They swam across the passage.’

(114) *Karika angalu ghe laa sso rekata parasi.*  
 NEG 1dx PAST go go.in arrive move.quickly  
 ‘We didn’t get to shore quickly.’

Note that, as an adjective, the form *kasina* has the meaning ‘some’ and is used with mass nouns (as in section 3.5.6), while a homophonous form functions as a verb with the meaning ‘be first’.

#### 4.4.2 Switch-Subject Serialisation

The distinguishing feature of switch-subject serialisation is that the subjects of the verbs in the SVC are not the same. Normally, the object of one verb is the subject of the succeeding verb.

Switch-subject serialisation is not very common, since the object of the first verb needs to be expressed as a pronominal clitic, if at all. More frequently, this type of relationship is expressed by coordinate clauses (see section 8.1). When the topic of the text is available as the implicit object (subject), switch-subject serialisation can be used. For example, in a text discussing carrying rubber from the plantation, the following sentence occurs:

(115) *Ami ghaa-ghaa e=mae-mae elo ale.*  
 1px RED-get 3s=RED-come in house  
 ‘We bring it to the house. (Lit. We get [it and] it comes into the house.)’

In another text, a participant introduced by a complex subordinate

clause is present as a null object of the first verb and the subject clitic of the last verb:

- (116) *A=gh-anna va aliki eteva [u=ghe auliani=e=la*  
 1s=LIG-think COMP child SG:I 2s=PAST promise=3sO=PF  
*va e=mae sausi=engalua] u=tau parasi e=mae.*  
 COMP 3s=come help=1dxO 2s=give quickly 3s=come  
 ‘I wish that you would quickly send the child you promised would  
 come to help us.’

In both of these examples, the switch-subject serialisation represents a compound event which is also possible to express as a single verb (*ami mae-aini=a* ‘we bring it’ and *u=su-ng-i=a parasi* ‘you send him quickly’, respectively).

#### 4.4.3 Ambient Serialisation

Mussau-Emira also has what Crowley calls “ambient” serialisation (1987:40). In this case, the subject of the final verb is a generic third person singular, and it refers to the event of the first VP(s), to use Bradshaw’s definition (Bradshaw 1982:30, cited by Crowley 1987:40).

The function of ambient serialisation is aspectual. The verb *lao* ‘go’ can be used for progressive aspect, and normally functions at discourse level as the setting for the next event.

- (117) *ami ghe sai-sai e=lao-lao*  
 1px PAST RED-cut 3s=RED-go  
 ‘we were cutting’
- (118) *Angotolu ghe kasu-kasu e=lao-lao me kateva eta-ingoto*  
 1tx PAST RED-walk 3s=RED-go and one PREP-1txP

*ghe tara=la aranna luengiu massona.*  
 PAST see=PF pandanus DL:V ripe  
 ‘We (three) were walking along and one of us saw two ripe  
 pandanus fruit.’

- (119) *La=ghe tue-tue-i=a e=lao-lao me soo ateva*  
 3p=PAST RED-chop-TR=3sO 3s=RED-go and saw SG:I  
*karika ang=e=roo-roo tani kata ai etea.*  
 NEG TAM=3s=RED-be.able COMP bite tree SG:II  
 ‘They were cutting down the tree and the saw wasn’t able to cut  
 the tree.’

The verb *roo* ‘be able, suffice’ can introduce a temporal VP.

- (120) *Lila ghe ssu=e=la e=roo-roo kateva ulana.*  
 Lila PAST breastfeed=3sO=PF 3s=RED-be.able one moon  
 ‘Lila breastfed him for one month.’

#### 4.4.4 Common Idioms

There are many common idioms which are expressed by SVCs. A selection are listed in table 25:

Table 25: Common SVC Idioms

SVC	Literal meaning	Idiomatic meaning
<i>ghaa velu</i>	‘take drop’	‘remove’
<i>kasu vuli</i>	‘walk leave’	‘go away, leave’
<i>katuu velu sio</i>	‘fall drop go-down’	‘fall down’
<i>kolomi sae</i>	‘ask go-up’	‘pray’
<i>kupi ghoha</i>	‘cross-boundary go-out’	‘exit’
<i>kupi sso</i>	‘cross-boundary go-in’	‘enter’
<i>mae sio</i>	‘come go-down’	‘come’
<i>nongo kila</i>	‘hear know’	‘understand, recognise’

<b>SVC</b>	<b>Literal meaning</b>	<b>Idiomatic meaning</b>
<i>nongo usi</i>	'hear follow'	'obey'
<i>tara kila</i>	'see know'	'recognise'
<i>tau lao sio</i>	'give go go-down'	'give'
<i>tau sae</i>	'give go-up'	'lift up, praise'
<i>tau velu</i>	'give drop'	'allow, permit'
<i>tingina sae</i>	'stand go-up'	'stand up'
<i>toka sio</i>	'sit go-down'	'sit down'
<i>uvi emate</i>	'hit cause-die'	'kill'

#### 4.4.5 Compound Verbs

There are indications that some idiomatic serial verb constructions are becoming grammaticalized as compound verbs. This is shown phonologically, both by stress patterns and by some removal of segments.

The common way to express the meaning 'come' is the SVC *mae sio*. If this is constructed as comprising two verbs, we would expect to have two primary stresses, on *mae* and the first syllable of *sio*. In common speech, however, only one primary stress is assigned, on *mae*, indicating that the two words are being assigned stress as a single phonological word.

In some speech, the SVC *mae sio* has been reduced to a single word, *masio*, with primary stress on the first syllable. This shows that the SVC has become a compound verb, and may even be in the process of being reanalysed as a simple verb.

There are several other verbs which would appear to be compound verbs, though the parts are no longer recognised explicitly. This can be seen from some verbs which are longer than the common disyllabic or trisyllabic roots which appear to have been historically preferable.

*kalaghelaghe* 'dry out'

<i>manonongana</i>	‘feel transient pain’
<i>marokasi</i>	‘over-ripen’
<i>masaliki</i>	‘make s.t. clear’
<i>tavalaka</i>	‘peel outside layer off’

Another category of apparent compound verbs which are not considered as being reduced are compounds involving *alo* ‘throat’. Historically, it would seem that the throat was regarded as the seat of emotions and thoughts, though it has been replaced by heart in modern speech. Some nouns are also formed in this way.

Table 26: Compounds with *alo*

Compound	Gloss	Derivation	Literal Meaning
<i>aloanna</i>	‘want’	<i>alo-anna</i>	‘throat think’
<i>alousiusi</i>	‘pity, sympathise’	<i>alo-usi-usi</i>	‘throat follow’
<i>alokapakapa</i>	‘fool’	<i>alo-kapa-kapa</i>	‘throat finish’
<i>alomasaanga</i>	‘knowledge’	<i>alo-masaanga</i>	‘throat understand’

#### 4.5 Verbal Modifiers

Verbal modifiers include adverbs, among which are temporal adverbs, intensifiers and negatives. Taking ambient serialisation into account (section 4.4.3), verbs can also function as verbal modifiers.

Adverbs function at the phrase level, modifying the verb phrase, and include the following:

<i>mala</i>	‘diminutive’
<i>mene</i>	‘again’
<i>namuu</i>	‘greatly, loudly’
<i>nim</i>	‘just’
<i>masina</i>	‘well’
<i>tani</i>	‘must, greatly’

<i>tee</i>	‘accompanying, as well’
<i>se</i>	‘undirected’

It is possible to divide these further as to where they appear. Some appear before the verb in the verb phrase (the Adverb slot), *tee* and *se* appear immediately following the word they modify, and others can appear phrase-final.

Table 27: Verbal Modifier Distribution

Pre-verbal		Phrase-final	
<i>mala</i>	‘diminutive’	<i>masina</i>	‘well’
<i>mene</i>	‘again’	<i>namuu</i>	‘greatly’
<i>nim</i>	‘just’		
<i>tani</i>	‘must, greatly’		

The adverb *tee* denotes accompaniment or connection. When it is used with a pronoun, the transitive suffix *-i* is added along with the object enclitic. This would imply that *tee* was once a verb which has become more adverb-like in its behaviour.

- (121) *E=ghe toka tee-i=ta=la.*  
 3s=PAST sit with-TR=1piO=PF  
 ‘He was staying with us.’
- (122) *Ghe alousiusi tee-i=e=la.*  
 PAST pity with-TR=3sO=PF  
 ‘He was sorry for her.’
- (123) *Ghe kasu tee=la tama-na.*  
 PAST walk with=PF father-3sP  
 ‘He went with his father.’
- (124) *Me e=aulia tee va ghaisa nau la=toka.*  
 and 3s=speak with COMP how.many day 3p=sit  
 ‘And he says, too, how long they will stay.’

The adverb *se* is used to indicate that the action is without a particular goal in mind.

- (125) *U=lao ghoa tanganue-m me u=nama se.*  
 2s=go go.out home-2sP and 2s=eat do.undirected  
 ‘Go home and eat something.’
- (126) *A=nim kasu-kasu se.*  
 1s=just RED-walk do.undirected  
 ‘I’m just walking around.’

There are at least four intensifiers that we have recorded: *-ali* ‘very’, as discussed in section 3.6, *arau* ‘far’, *vira* ‘near’ and *poi* ‘frustrated’. *Arau* appears to be used for expressing distance, whether in time or space, while *vira* expresses closeness, also in time or space. *Poi* implies that the action is frustrated, though it seems to be used more widely as a general term of emphasis, particularly with a negative.

A particularly common expression with *arau* is *emua arau*, which means literally ‘far ahead’, but is used for the meaning ‘long ago’. Some other examples of these intensifiers follow:

- (127) *La=ghe vira mae.*  
 3p=PAST EMPH come  
 ‘They just came.’
- (128) *A=ghe vira ruu=la tani matautu.*  
 1s=PAST EMPH finish=PF COMP fear  
 ‘I immediately stopped being afraid.’
- (129) *Koto ateva e=ghe so-sso arau elome.*  
 wave SG:I 3s=PAST RED-come.in EMPH inside  
 ‘A wave came a long way inside.’

- (130) *Ngami ghe pae-pae arau mata ng-uri.*  
 1px PAST RED-search EMPH eye CONST=banana  
 ‘We searched a long time for banana suckers (to plant).’
- (131) *Ghe ai=e poi e=ssu ta kinna.*  
 PAST pull=3sO EMPH LOC=breast PREP mother:3sP  
 ‘He was sucking hard (without result) from his mother’s breast.’
- (132) *Ghe paru-paru velu poi=la paua atoa tani ghaa*  
 PAST RED-beat drop EMPH=PF dog PL COMP get  
*kie-na aroa ateva me paua atoa la=ghe nama*  
 PCL-3sP cuscus SG:I and dog PL 3p=PAST eat  
*akapa-i=e=la.*  
 complete-TR=3sO=PF  
 ‘He was beating the dogs to rescue (lit. get) his cuscus, but the dogs ate it up completely.’
- (133) *Karika poi a=ghe taa-tara-i=a.*  
 NEG EMPH 1s=PAST RED-see-TR=3sO  
 ‘I didn’t see him at all.’

There are three negative markers. Two, *tam* and *rou*, appear within the verb phrase. The other is *karika*, which functions at clause level, and which is also used for the meanings ‘no’, ‘nothing’, and ‘zero’. These are further discussed in section 6.5.

## 5. Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases

In this chapter we first list the prepositions and types of prepositional phrases, then discuss each of the five prepositions in turn. Finally, we discuss the locative proclitic *e=*.

### 5.1 Prepositions and Prepositional Phrase Structure

There are three general prepositions in Mussau-Emira, all of which include the syllable *ta*, as well as two other prepositions. They are listed in the following:

<i>tale</i>	with a common or locative noun
<i>ta</i>	with a personal noun
<i>eta-</i>	with a possessive suffix
<i>(e)tapaa</i>	'in, on' (from <i>ta</i> + <i>paa</i> 'mouth')
<i>elo</i>	'in, at'

As the meaning of the general prepositions is very wide, they are glossed simply as PREP.

Ross (2002:163) includes *tani* in his list of forms of *ta*, but we are analysing it as a complementizer (see section 8.3 on complements).

The semantic functions covered by prepositional phrases include locative, partitive, recipient, benefactive, addressee, instrument, and temporal. The structure of the prepositional phrase is one of the following:

- (Locative adverb) Preposition NP
- (Locative adverb) *eta-* Possessive pronoun suffix
- ta ng-eta-* Possessive pronoun suffix

In the first two types, there is an optional locative adverb (see section 6.4.2) before a preposition plus noun phrase, which can also be the

preposition *eta-* with a possessive pronoun suffix. Only locative prepositional phrases can take a locative adverb, and the preposition *elo* does not appear with a locative adverb.

In addition to the prepositions, there is also a locative proclitic *e=*, which is attached to a place name, and is discussed later (section 5.7).

## 5.2 The Preposition *tale*

The most common preposition is *tale*, which has a wide range of meaning. It may be locative, meaning ‘at’, ‘on’, ‘into’, ‘onto’, ‘in’, ‘to’, ‘from’, as shown in the following examples.

- (1) *Ami ghe nim laa tingina pallu tale liue makere.*  
1px PAST just go stand shelter PREP base sago  
‘We just went to stand in the shelter at the base of the sago palm.’
- (2) *Vara me a=ghe sapele lao sio tale mene kateva*  
then and 1s=PAST step go go.down PREP again one  
*laangi-na, me a=ghe katuu velu sio=la tapaa kosa.*  
branch-3sP and 1s=PAST fall drop go.down on ground  
‘Then I stepped onto another branch, and I fell down to the ground.’
- (3) *Ami ghe lau sae=la tale ale-na ateva.*  
1px PAST exceed go.up=PF PREP house-3sP SG:I  
‘We went up into his house.’
- (4) *A=ghe laa sae alokoi=a tale komo.*  
1s=PAST go go.up place=3sO PREP mat  
‘I went and placed him onto a mat.’
- (5) *La=ghe kaai e-vukala-i=e=la tale kalio atiulu.*  
3p=PAST carry CAUS-hang-TR=3sO=PF PREP cloth SG:IV  
‘They hung him in a piece of cloth.’

- (6) *Ngotolu ghe lao sio tale aranna ateae.*  
 1tx PAST go go.down PREP pandanus SG:II  
 ‘We went down to the pandanus tree.’
- (7) *Nau-ghu tani oghi sio tale aranna ateae, ...*  
 time-1sP COMP return go.down PREP pandanus SG:II  
 ‘When it was time for me to come down from the pandanus tree ...’

It may also be used for temporal phrases:

- (8) *Vau epona e=aisausi-eini=eghi tale nau akapa atoa.*  
 chief above 3s=help-TR=1sO PREP day all PL  
 ‘The Lord above helps me every day.’

Another usage is for instrument:

- (9) *Aliki eteva ghe uvi=e=la tale ai eteva.*  
 child SG:I PAST hit=3sO=PF PREP tree SG:I  
 ‘The boy hit it with a stick.’
- (10) *Kateva taumattuu ghe poli=la tale moni kotolu  
vilau.*  
 one person PAST buy=3pO PREP money three  
 ten.toea  
 ‘A man bought them for thirty toea (PNG currency).’

In combination with a locative adverb, *tale* is more constrained in meaning, and generally adds little to the meaning of the locative adverb.

- (11) *Maeka ghe sae=la epona tale ale ateva.*  
 Maeka PAST go.up=PF on PREP house SG:I  
 ‘Maeka went up on top of the house.’

- (12) *Ghe tiit-ingina elome tale kasapani lutu ng-ai.*  
 PAST RED-stand inside PREP gap piece CONST-tree  
 ‘He was standing in the gap between two pieces of timber.’
- (13) *Kateva ghe tii-tingina emua tale anua ateva.*  
 one PAST RED-stand in.front PREP ship SG:I  
 ‘Someone was standing at the front of the ship.’
- (14) *Sa ateva emuli tale kara ateva?*  
 what SG:I behind PREP car SG:I  
 ‘What is behind the car?’

### 5.3 The Preposition *ta*

The range of meaning for *ta* is much the same as for *tale*. In general, though, *ta* is used with personal nouns, though there appears to be some flexibility in this. With personal nouns, though, the most common meanings would be addressee and recipient.

- (15) *Ghe pai=la me la=ghe ue=la ta Sumbilee va, ...*  
 PAST dawn=PF and 3p=PAST say=PF PREP Sumbilee COMP  
 ‘At dawn they said to Sumbilee, ...’
- (16) *A=ghe ue=la ta katoa tani aliki va, “Ita sae*  
 1s=PAST say=PF PREP some ART child COMP 1pi go.up  
*tanganue-na Kaulusi, me ita sae tara-i=a ta*  
 home-3sP Kaulusi and 1pi go.up see-TR=3sO for  
*ang=e=mate=la.”*  
 TAM=3s=die=PF  
 ‘I said to some youths, “Let’s go to Kaulusi’s house, and go up and see him, for he’s just died.”’
- (17) *Nau eteva ang=e=anna me ang=e=roo=la va*  
 day SG:I TAM=3s=think and TAM=3s=be.able=PF COMP

*e=lai teva taita, la=vira mene aitiiti=a*  
 3s=marry EXIST man 3p=EMPH again dress=3sO

*me la=ghe tau-tau=e=la ta taita ateva.*  
 and 3p=PAST RED-give=3sO=PF PREP man SG:I

‘When she wanted to and it was possible for her to marry a man,  
 they would immediately dress her and give her to the man.’

It is also possible to have a locative prepositional phrase with a personal noun:

- (18) *A=ghe aimuli ta tama-ghi me kina-ghi.*  
 1s=PAST follow PREP father-1sP and mother-1sP  
 ‘I followed after my father and mother.’

With non-personal nouns, there can be locative meanings:

- (19) *Nau ghe vo=la, karika a=ghe aloanna tani sae*  
 day PAST night=PF NEG 1s=PAST want COMP go.up  
*aso ta komo-ghu, ta poli a=ghe maa-matautu.*  
 lie PREP mat-1sP because 1s=PAST RED-be.afraid  
 ‘When night fell, I didn’t want to go to bed, because I was afraid.’
- (20) *A=ghe iri=la ai-naviti eteae ta keke-ghi.*  
 1s=PAST tie=PF INST-bind SG:II PREP leg-1sP  
 ‘I tied a binding loop to my feet.’
- (21) *Usai eteva ghe toka=la ta kiro-na ateva kotolu uiki.*  
 sore SG:I PAST sit=PF PREP buttock-3sP SG:I three week  
 ‘The sore was in his buttock for three weeks.’
- (22) *A=ghe velu lao sio ai-kuu-kuvati etiulu ta*  
 1s=PAST drop go go.down INST-RED-shoot SG:IV PREP

*mosu ateva.*

pig SG:I

'I threw the shotgun at the pig.'

- (23) *Me a=ghe tau sae=la ta sospena inana ateva*  
and 1s=PAST give go.up=3pO PREP saucepan food SG:I

*tale kura ate.*

PREP fire SG:II

'And I put them into a saucepan on the fire.'

Note that in examples (19) to (21) the noun is directly possessed, though it is not in examples (22) and (23).

There can also be temporal meanings:

- (24) *Aiaaghalua atae ai-uvi ghe lutu=la ta 1941.*  
second SG:II RECIP-hit PAST happen=PF PREP 1941

'The Second World War began in 1941.'

- (25) *Lesson 6 ta ghaatane ateva, ami ghe sio=la*  
lesson 6 PREP fourth SG:I 1px PAST go.down=PF

*e=Sielaka tani pora makere.*

LOC=Sielaka COMP wash sago

'In lesson (week) 6 on Wednesday, we went to Sielaka to wash sago.'

Again, *ta* can be combined with a locative adverb to give specific meanings.

- (26) *Anna tuku kapa ateva elome ta olimo-na*  
PCL:3sP piece metal SG:I inside PREP canoe-3sP

*arighi ghe soko=la kiro-na ateva.*

SG:small PAST go.ashore=PF buttock-3sP SG:I

'The piece of metal inside his little canoe went into his buttock.'

### 5.4 The Preposition *eta-*

With a pronoun, the range of meanings shown by *tale* and *ta* are largely carried by the preposition *eta-*, which takes a possessive suffix. Addressee, recipient and benefactive are again the most common uses:

- (27) *Apongo ghe auliaa=la eta-ghi va, "U=tingina oia*  
*Apongo PAST say=PF PREP-1sP COMP 2s=stand here*  
*me aghi a=laa soa mosu eteva."*  
 and 1s 1s=go shoot pig SG:I  
 'Apongo told me, "You stand here, and I will go shoot the pig.'"
- (28) *E=ghe a-toka=la marasina eta-ghi me a=ghe*  
*3s=PAST CAUS-sit=PF medicine PREP-1sP and 1s=PAST*  
*masina=la.*  
*become.well=PF*  
 'He gave me medicine and I got well.'
- (29) *Ai-tiu-tiu eta-ghi tani tam nongo usi=la*  
*INST-RED-begin PREP-1sP COMP NEG hear follow=PF*  
*kina-ghi.*  
*mother-1sP*  
 'It was the first time for me to disobey (lit. not hear follow) my mother.'

Locatives are also common:

- (30) *Ghe pakasi vel=la tuku kapa ateva eta-na.*  
*PAST cut drop=PF piece metal SG:I PREP-3sP*  
 'He cut off the piece of metal from it.'
- (31) *Me ghe ilou mae sio eta-ghi vara ghe*  
*and PAST run come go.down PREP-1sP then PAST*

*kata-i=eghi.*

bite-TR=1sO

'And it ran up to me and then bit me.'

- (32) *Me ng=a=ghe rete-rete me ng=a=ghe anna*  
 and TAM=1s=PAST RED-shiver and TAM=1s=PAST think  
*tani sae aso tee nenga-ghi tale kalio*  
 COMP go.up lie with younger.sibling-1sP PREP cloth  
*atiulu ghe vuu-vukala eta-na.*  
 SG:III PAST RED-hang PREP-3sP  
 'And I was trembling and I wanted to go up and lie with my  
 younger brother in the cloth he was hanging in.'

- (33) *Nau la=ghe kasu-kasu ng=a=ghe aimuli eta-ira.*  
 when 3p=PAST RED-walk TAM=1s=PAST follow PREP-3pP  
 'When they were leaving, I began to follow after them.'

Note in example (33) that *aimuli* is an intransitive verb, and the person or thing followed is specified by a locative phrase.

Another use is partitive, where a quantifier precedes *eta-*:

- (34) *Angotolu ghe kasu-kasu e=lao-lao me kateva eta-ingoto*  
 1tx PAST RED-walk 3s=RED-go and one PREP-1txP  
*ghe tara=la aranna luengiu massona.*  
 PAST see=PF pandanus DL:V ripe  
 'We (three) were walking along and one of us saw two ripe  
 pandanus fruit.'

Instrument is another use of *eta-*:

- (35) *Laelae ateva la=ghe ghelei marre ateva me*  
 trochus.shell SG:I 3p=PAST make armband SG:I and

*la=ghe molu-molu eta-na.*

3p=PAST RED-decorate PREP-3sP

'From a trochus shell they made an armband and decorated with it.'

- (36) *Ghe ghaa=la ai eteva me ghe uvi=la paua ateva*  
 PAST get=PF tree SG:I and PAST hit=PF dog SG:I

*eta-na.*

PREP-3sP

'He took a stick and hit the dog with it.'

As with *tale* and *ta*, a locative adverb can be combined with *eta-* to give specific meanings.

- (37) *Auena u=ghaa masi voto emua eta-m.*  
 after 2s=get good thing in.front PREP-2sP  
 'Later you will get good things ahead of you.'

- (38) *Tom ghe sau=la olimo-na arighi ta-polake ateva*  
 Tom PAST carry=PF canoe-3sP SG:small STAT-break SG:I

*elome eta-na.*

inside PREP-3sP

'Tom carried his little canoe with a crack in it.'

Another type of prepositional phrase uses both *ta* and *eta-*, in the combination *ta ng-eta-*, with a variety of meanings. One meaning is instrument:

- (39) *Malu tue=la teae ai me a=sio ta*  
 2d chop=PF EXIST tree and 1s=go.down PREP

*ng-eta-na.*

LIG-PREP-3sP

'Chop down a tree and I will climb down on it.'

A second use is recipient:

- (40) *La=ghe velu-velu eitaua me la=ghe elei program*  
 3p=PAST RED-drop together and 3p=PAST do programme  
*ateva me la=ghe pee-present ta ng-eta-na.*  
 SG:I and 3p=PAST RED-present PREP LIG-PREP-3sP  
 ‘They would come together and have a programme and give presents to her.’
- (41) *A=taa-tara oroiana-aili ai-sausiaa-ne God ta*  
 1s=RED-see many-INTENS INST-help-PF God PREP  
*ng-eta-ghi.*  
 LIG-PREP-1sP  
 ‘I look at the very many helps God has given me.’

A third use is partitive, where the forms *eta-* and *ta ng-eta-* appear to be used interchangeably:

- (42) *Kateva ta ng-eta-irarua ghe tue=la ai eteae.*  
 one PREP LIG-PREP-3dP PAST chop=PF tree SG:I  
 ‘One of the two of them chopped down a tree.’

## 5.5 The Preposition (e)tapaa

The preposition (e)tapaa is derived from *ta + paa* ‘mouth’, and means ‘in, on, into, onto’. The initial /e/ is included by some dialects, and omitted by others. It is followed by a noun.

- (43) *Poipoi e=ghe ghoa mae tanganue-imami tani kolo*  
 Poipoi 3s=PAST go.out come home-1pxP COMP call  
*paua atoa tani laa ari mosu etapaa tuvui.*  
 dog PL COMP go hunt pig in bush  
 ‘Poipoi came to our house to call the dogs to go hunt pigs in the bush.’

- (44) *La=ghe mae-mae tapaa salana.*  
 3p=PAST RED-come on road  
 ‘They were coming on the road.’
- (45) *A=ghe katuu velu sio=la tapaa kosa.*  
 1s=PAST fall drop go.down=PF on earth  
 ‘I fell down onto the ground.’
- (46) *Me a=ghe katuu velu sio=la etapaa manu.*  
 and 1s=PAST fall drop go.down=PF in water  
 ‘And I fell into the water.’

It seems likely that *tapaa* is derived from *ta + paa* ‘mouth’, since there are occasions where they might be separated. In particular, *manu* ‘water’ can be combined with *paa* as *paamanu* ‘sea’, and then we get a locative phrase such as *eeu ta paamanu* ‘under the sea’, which might otherwise be written as *eeu tapaa manu*. However, the absence of other cases of a locative adverb followed by *tapaa* indicates that the first interpretation would be more likely. The full sentence that this occurs in follows:

- (47) *Angatolu ghe tiuaa=la tani kanga euu ta paamanu.*  
 1tx PAST begin=PF COMP laugh below PREP sea  
 ‘We began to laugh under the water.’

## 5.6 The Preposition *elo*

The preposition *elo* means ‘in, into, at’ and is used with noun phrases.

- (48) *A=ghe mae sio elo ale.*  
 1s=PAST come go.down in house  
 ‘I came into the house.’
- (49) *A=ghe katuu velu sio=la elo pake-na ateva.*  
 1s=PAST fall drop go.down=PF in roof-3sP SG:I  
 ‘I fell down in its (a fallen tree’s) canopy.’

## 5.7 The Locative Proclitic *e=*

Locative phrases can also be formed with the locative proclitic *e=* attached to a place name or locational word:

- (50) *Angalu ghele ghoa=la e=Maroi.*  
 1dx YEST.PAST go.out=PF LOC=Maroi  
 ‘We (two) went to Maroi.’
- (51) *Angatolu ghe kasu=la e=utana.*  
 1tx PAST walk=PF LOC=garden  
 ‘We left for the garden.’
- (52) *Ghalua a=Siapani lalu ghe uvi-uvi sae atu*  
 two person.of=Japan 3d PAST RED-hit go.up stone  
*eteva e=Tangaroasa tale masin gan alulu.*  
 SG:I LOC=Tangaroasa PREP machine.gun DL:IV  
 ‘Two Japanese were shooting the rock at Tangaroasa with machine guns.’
- (53) *Anua ateva ghe kasu=la e=Boliu tani sio*  
 ship SG:I PAST walk=PF LOC=Boliu COMP go.down  
*e=Kavieng.*  
 LOC=Kavieng  
 ‘The ship left Boliu to go to Kavieng.’

Note that the meaning of the locative proclitic *e=* can be very broad, including ‘in’, ‘at’, ‘to’ and ‘from’. The precise meaning is determined by the semantics of the verb and the context.

In fact, the locative proclitic can have zero meaning, being added to place names even when there is no locative meaning, as in the following example:

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(54) *Kateva nau Siapani ghe ghaa=la e=Musao, ghe toka=la*  
one day Japan PAST get=PF LOC=Mussau PAST sit=PF

*e=Tamuliegga.*

LOC=Tamuliegga

'One time Japan took Mussau, and settled at Tamuliegga.'

## 6. Clause Structure

In this chapter, we begin with intransitive clauses (section 6.1), including discussion of two specific subtypes, equative clauses and existential clauses. Next we turn to transitive clauses (section 6.2), discuss the obligatory constituents of clauses (section 6.3), then deal with the peripheral arguments of clauses: topicalised noun phrases, temporals, locatives and various prepositional phrases (section 6.4), and finally discuss negative clauses (section 6.5).

### 6.1 Intransitive Clauses

#### 6.1.1 Basic Intransitive Clauses

The basic constituent order of an intransitive clause is SV. The subject may be expressed by a subject proclitic, both a noun phrase and subject proclitic, and, in certain circumstances (see section 6.3), either a noun phrase alone or omitted altogether.

- (1) *La=ghe toka aitaua=la.*  
3s=PAST sit together=PF  
'They sat down together.'
- (2) *Goma lalua me Gindi lala kasu-kasu.*  
Goma 3d and Gindi 3d RED-walk  
'Goma and Gindi are walking.'
- (3) *Taita ateva ghe kasu=la.*  
man SG:I PAST walk=PF  
'The man left.'

Stative clauses take the same form as other intransitive clauses. The only difference between stative and intransitive clauses is the semantics of the verb, which means that certain aspects, such as continuous, iterative or habitual, are not used.

- (4) *Ngalu ghe u-ungu e=lao-lao me ang=ghe voo-vo.*  
 1dx PAST RED-work 3s=RED-go and TAM=PAST RED-night  
 ‘We were working and it became dark.’
- (5) *Aliki vause atoa la=ghe maa-matautu, me la=ghe*  
 child woman PL 3p=PAST RED-be.afraid and 3p=PAST  
*ngang-ngala.*  
 RED-cry  
 ‘The girls were afraid and were crying.’
- (6) *Ghele ta-koto=la ta poli ang=ghe marokasa=la.*  
 YEST.PAST STAT-break=PF because TAM=PAST rot=PF  
 ‘It broke because it had rotted.’

### 6.1.2 Equative Clauses

An equative clause can consist of a single noun phrase or adjective phrase with an object clitic, usually preceded by the transitive marker *-i*, except when the noun phrase ends with */i/*. Ross (2002:154) observed the case of a third person singular object, and analysed it as the independent third person singular pronoun *ia* at the end of the noun phrase, calling it a specifier. Since this construction occurs for other person and number combinations, that analysis is inadequate.

In the following examples, the equative clause consists of a noun phrase with the object clitic:

- (7) *Vau-i=a.*  
 chief-TR=3sO  
 ‘He is a/the chief.’
- (8) *A=ghe ue=la va am goto-i=em.*  
 1s=PAST say=PF COMP 2p god-TR=2pO  
 ‘I said that you are gods.’

- (9) *Nau aliki=ta.*  
 day child=1piO  
 ‘When we were children.’
- (10) *Ila kiukiu-aini=engalua ta nau aliki=engalua.*  
 3p tell.story-TR=1dxO PREP day child=1dxO  
 ‘They tell us the story of when we were children.’
- (11) *Karika a=ghe kila-kila va levolo ateva sa-i=a.*  
 NEG 1s=PAST RED-know COMP level SG:I what-TR-3sO  
 ‘I didn’t know what a level was.’
- In the following examples, the equative clause consists of an adjective phrase with the object clitic:
- (12) *Io masina-i=o?*  
 2s good-TR=2sO  
 ‘Are you OK?’
- (13) *Kuukuu eteva namu-ng-aili-i=a.*  
 wind SG:I big-LIG-INTENS-TR=3sO  
 ‘The wind was very strong.’
- (14) *Aghi, kina-ghi, tama-ghi, me nenga-ghi ta*  
 1s mother-1sP father-1sP and younger.sibling-1sP ART  
*Rikili aliki-eili=a.*  
 Rikili child-INTENS=3sO  
 ‘I, my mother, my father and my younger brother Rikili, who was very young.’
- (15) *Karika a=ghe kila-kila va niu eteae oia*  
 NEG 1s=PAST RED-know COMP coconut SG:II this

*niu ta-kovo-kovo-i=a.*  
 coconut STAT-RED-pull.out.easily-TR=3sO  
 ‘I didn’t know that this coconut tree was one where the fronds  
 pull out easily.’

Note that the more common way to express a stative meaning is with an equative clause rather than using a stative verb. Using an adjective as a verb normally carries the inceptive rather than the stative meaning. Verbs can be derived with the stative prefix *ta-*, but this seems less common than using the equative clause. In example (15), it would appear that the verb has been reduplicated, the stative prefix added, and then the whole verb considered as an adjective, since one would not expect a stative verb to have a transitive marker and an object.

### 6.1.3 Existential Clauses

Existential clauses are expressed with one of the existential verbs, which were introduced earlier, in section 3.5.4. The existential verb takes no modifiers other than the negative. The normal order is *teva* NP. Negative existential clauses take the negative *karika* before the existential word, or simply *karika* alone.

Existential clauses can be either declarative or interrogative, with context and intonation the determining factors.

(16) *Teva taita.*  
 EXIST:I man  
 ‘There is a man.’

(17) *Karika teva e=ghe poso=a=la.*  
 NEG EXIST:I 3s=PAST hold=3sO=PF  
 ‘Nobody touched him.’

- (18) *Karika anua ateva.*  
 NEG ship SG:I  
 ‘There is no ship.’
- (19) *Righi uela?*  
 EXIST:small salt  
 ‘Is there any salt?’
- (20) *Karika riki inana.*  
 NEG EXIST:small food  
 ‘There is no food.’

Note that *riki* is a dialectal variant of *righi*.

- (21) *Lua taumattuu lalu roo-roo tani sausi=eghi?*  
 EXIST:DL:I person 3d RED-be.able COMP help=1sO  
 ‘Are there two people who could help me?’
- (22) *Karika mene tikirighi salana.*  
 NEG again EXIST:VII road  
 ‘There is no other road.’

Existential clauses can also be used as relative clauses, in which case the meaning is expressing indefiniteness. In this case the existential verb has essentially the same meaning as the corresponding pronominal number-classifier. They appear to have lost most of their verbal character and have become more like indefinite quantifiers.

- (23) *Karika poi a=ghe tara teva taumattuu mate-na.*  
 NEG EMPH 1sS=PAST see EXIST:I person die-ADJR  
 ‘I had never seen a dead person.’
- (24) *A=ghe aloanna va a=ghe poli teva une-ghi*  
 1s=PAST want COMP 1s=PAST buy EXIST:I PCL-1sP

*Uru ng-ai Manga.*

head CONST-tree holy

'I wanted to buy my own Bible (lit. holy leaves).'

- (25) *Tue-ghi ghe aloanna uru niu tani atu*  
 older.sibling-1sP PAST want head coconut COMP weave

*teae un-na laka.*

EXIST:II PCL-3sP basket

'My older brother wanted a coconut leaf to weave a basket.'

- (26) *U=ghaa tikirighi uru ng-uri me rautu eteae*  
 2s=take EXIST:VII head CONST-banana and bamboo SG:II

*me u=ghoa tara-i=a.*

and 2s=go.out see-TR=3s

'Take a banana leaf and a bamboo pole and go out and see him.'

- (27) *A=maa-matautu va a=rau mene katuu tale teae*  
 1s=RED-fear COMP 1s=NEG again fall PREP EXIST:II

*niu.*

coconut

'I am afraid lest I again fall from a coconut tree.'

## 6.2 Transitive Clauses

The basic constituent order in Mussau-Emira is SVO. However, variations in this order can occur for various reasons, normally for discourse considerations. As with intransitive clauses, the subject can be represented by a subject proclitic, both a noun phrase and subject proclitic and, in certain circumstances (see section 6.3), either a noun phrase alone or omitted altogether. The object may be represented either by a noun phrase or a pronominal clitic.

- (28) *Norm e=siki-siki olimo-na ateva.*  
 Norm 3s=RED-push canoe-3sP SG:I  
 'Norm is pushing his canoe.'
- (29) *Taumattu ng-atoa la=ghe tue-i=e=la.*  
 person LIG-PL 3p=PAST chop-TR=3sO=PF  
 'Some people chopped it (a tree).'

In some cases, the object may be brought forward in the clause for emphasis or as a form that can be translated as a passive. In these cases, the object is also included as an enclitic on the verb phrase.

- (30) *Me paka kuukuu eteva ang=ghe mae-mae arau, me*  
 and big wind SG:I TAM=PAST RED-come EMPH and  
*ghe tiuaa=la olimo ateva tani uvi=a.*  
 PAST begin=PF canoe SG:I COMP hit=3sO  
 'A big wind came up and began to strike the canoe.' (lit. 'And a big wind came strongly and began the canoe to strike it.')
- (31) *ghe tara=la va ilimo ateva ghe velu*  
 PAST see=PF COMP canoe SG:I PAST drop  
*sokola-ini=e=la*  
 go.ashore-TR=3sO=PF  
 'she saw that the canoe had been dropped on the shore'

### 6.3 Obligatory Constituents

The normal case is that subject, verb and object (in the case of transitive verbs) are all present, with the arguments expressed as either a noun phrase or a clitic. However, the subject may be omitted in some circumstances. When the subject is third person singular, the subject clitic is frequently omitted when it is clear from context. This is especially common when the verb is in past tense expressed with *ghe* or *ghele*, and almost always when *ang=* is present as well.

- (32) *Taita ateva ghe kasu=la.*  
 man SG:I PAST walk=PF  
 ‘The man left.’
- (33) *Aliki eteva ghe nim nama-nama popo.*  
 child SG:I PAST just RED-eat pawpaw  
 ‘The child was just eating pawpaw.’
- (34) *Ghele ta-koto=la ta poli ang=ghe marokasa=la.*  
 YEST.PAST STAT-break=PF because TAM=PAST rot=PF  
 ‘It broke because it had rotted.’

It is common for both subject and object to be noun phrases, though, in context, either may be expressed by the corresponding clitic when the meaning is clear. In some cases of serial verb constructions, the object may be omitted for one of the verbs, as discussed in section 4.4.2.

- (35) *Ami ghaa-ghaa e=mae-mae elo ale.*  
 1px RED-get 3s=RED-come in house  
 ‘We bring it to the house. (Lit. We get [it and] it comes into the house.)’

## 6.4 Verbal Clauses: Peripheral Arguments

The peripheral arguments of a clause include topicalised noun phrases, temporals, locatives and various prepositional phrases.

### 6.4.1 Topicalisation

Topicalised constituents can precede a clause, often with an intonation break, and are represented as pronominal clitics later in the clause. This can occur in verbless and transitive clauses.

- (36) *Pipi, tama-na ta see?*  
 Pipi father-3sP ART who  
 ‘Pipi, his father is who?’ (or ‘Pipi, who is his father?’)
- (37) *Natu-na taita arighi ghe karimi=e=la.*  
 child-3sP man small:I PAST give.birth=3sO=PF  
 ‘She gave birth to a son.’ (lit. ‘A male child she gave birth to him.’)
- (38) *Aliki eteva vause eteva oio kin-na ghe*  
 child SG:I woman SG:I this mother-3sP PAST  
*su-ng-i=e=la.*  
 send-LIG-TR=3sO=PF  
 ‘This young woman, her mother sent her.’

This construction can be used when the object is in focus and the agent or instrument is unimportant, making a construction that can be translated as a passive, though this is quite rare.

- (39) *ilimo ateva ghe velu sokola-ini=e=la*  
 canoe SG:I PAST drop go.ashore-TR=3sO=PF  
 ‘the canoe had been dropped ashore (by the wave)’

#### 6.4.2 Locative Adverbs

With the use of *tale* for most prepositional functions, the exact meaning for location is often supplied by a locative adverb. Locative adverbs can be used adverbially, or in conjunction with a preposition in a prepositional phrase. The locative adverbs are listed in table 28.

Table 28: Locative Adverbs

Adverb	Gloss	Adverbially	With a preposition
<i>elome</i>	‘inside’	‘inside’	‘in, between’
<i>emua</i>	‘first’	‘first’	‘in front of’
<i>emuli</i>	‘behind’	‘last’	‘behind’

Adverb	Gloss	Adverbially	With a preposition
<i>epona</i>	'above'	'above'	'on'
<i>euu</i>	'below'	'below'	'under'

Note that *emua* and *emuli* may be derived from the verbs *mua* 'go before' and *muli* 'go after, follow', respectively.

The following examples show the use of the locative adverbs adverbially, in various contexts:

- (40) *Kapten ghe toka-toka elome.*  
 captain PAST RED-sit inside  
 'The captain was sitting inside.'
- (41) *Emua, a=ghe anna va teva ta Wayne me*  
 first 1s=PAST think COMP EXIST:I PREP Wayne and  
*Allan ghe puu-pure.*  
 Allan PAST RED-pray  
 'First, I thought that one of Wayne and Allan was praying.'
- (42) *La=ghoa a-toka-i=o emuli.*  
 3p=go.out CAUS-sit-TR=2sO last  
 'They will take you to sit last (in line).'
- (43) *Nau ghe sau=eghi sae=la epona, kova-ghi eteva*  
 day PAST carry=1sO go.up=PF above stomach-1sP SG:I  
*ang=ghe ranga=la.*  
 TAM=PAST swell=PF  
 'When she carried me above, my stomach had swollen.'
- (44) *A=ghe a-toka-i=e=la euu, me a=ghe sae=la*  
 1s=PAST CAUS-sit-TR=3sO=PF below and 1s=PAST go.up=PF

*niu ete.*  
 coconut SG:II  
 ‘I put him down below, and I climbed the coconut tree.’

The following examples show the use of the locative adverbs with prepositions:

- (45) *Ghe tii-tingina elome tale kasapani lutu ng-ai.*  
 PAST RED-stand inside PREP gap piece CONST-tree  
 ‘He was standing in the gap between two pieces of timber.’
- (46) *Kateva ghe tii-tingina emua tale anua ateva.*  
 one PAST RED-stand first PREP ship SG:I  
 ‘A person was standing at the front of the ship.’
- (47) *Sa ateva emuli tale kara ateva raeraeana-i=a?*  
 what SG:I behind PREP car SG:I red-TR=3sO  
 ‘What is the thing behind the car that is red?’
- (48) *Maeka ghe sae=la epona tale ale ateva.*  
 Maeka PAST go.up=PF above PREP house SG:I  
 ‘Maeka went up on top of the house.’
- (49) *Angatolu ghe tiuaa=la tani kanga euu ta paamanu.*  
 1tx PAST begin=PF COMP laugh below PREP sea  
 ‘We began to laugh under the water.’

### 6.4.3 Locatives

Location may be specified by means of various locatives, including locational nouns (see section 3.2), locative prepositional phrases (see chapter 5), locative clauses (see section 8.2.3), demonstratives and motion verbs as part of the verb phrase.

The demonstratives that can be used as locatives include *oia* ‘here’, *to* ‘here’, *o* ‘there (close)’, *teke* ‘there (far)’ and *okae* ‘there (distant)’.

Demonstratives are discussed further in section 3.3.

- (50) *Ghaisa kura okae e=laa gh-aso-aso?*  
 how.many firewood there 3s=go LIG-RED-lie  
 ‘How many pieces of firewood will he put there?’

#### 6.4.4 Temporal Adverbs

Temporals normally function at the clause or sentence level, and include temporal clauses, which will be discussed in section 8.2.2. Temporal adverbs recorded so far include the following:

Table 29: Temporal Adverbs

Class	Adverb	Gloss
<b>Days</b>	<i>ghaine</i>	‘today’
	<i>nimana</i>	‘tomorrow’
	<i>ghalailo</i>	‘yesterday’
<b>Time of day</b>	<i>elue talaua</i>	‘morning’
	<i>elo sinaka</i>	‘middle of the day’
	<i>elo alai</i>	‘afternoon, evening’
	<i>eleivo</i>	‘night’
<b>Relative time</b>	<i>arovaea</i>	‘immediately’
	<i>katengaata</i>	‘immediately, at once’
	<i>auena</i>	‘then, later’
	<i>emulina</i>	‘afterwards, finally’
	<i>ghalavo</i>	‘a short time ago’
	<i>ange</i>	‘now, immediate past, immediate future’
	<i>avirina</i>	‘nowadays, just now’
	<i>kasina</i>	‘first’
<b>Question</b>	<i>lovisa</i>	‘when?’

Both *arovaea* and *katengaata*, which are apparently interchangeable, are usually followed by *ta*.

- (51) *A=ghe tara-i=e lao sio, me arovaea ta*  
 1s=PAST see-TR=3sO go go.down and immediately PREP  
*a=ghe anguni=la Allan, me ngotolu ghe nim*  
 1s=PAST wake=PF Allan and 1tx PAST just  
*tiu-aa=la tani ai-kang-kangai.*  
 begin-DUR=PF COMP RECIP-RED-laugh  
 ‘I looked at him and immediately roused Allan, and we just began  
 to laugh together.’

It appears that *auena* and *emulina* are often interchangeable.

- (52) *Auena u=mangoo tee-i=eghi.*  
 later 2s=be.tired with-TR=1sO  
 ‘Later you will get tired of me.’
- (53) *U=tara ai etoa nau la=pii-pinosa, la=sae-sae, me*  
 2s=see tree PL day 3p=RED-shoot 3p=RED-go.up and  
*emulina la=mate-mate.*  
 finally 3p=RED-die  
 ‘You see the trees when they sprout, they grow up, and finally  
 they die.’

#### 6.4.5 Distribution of Peripheral Arguments

The normal position of peripheral arguments is clause-initial or clause-final. However, they may be placed between core arguments as well. Topics are always clause-initial. Typically, temporals are clause-initial, locatives are clause-final and recipients, benefactives and addressees occur between the VP and object (if any).

Topics are always clause-initial, as in example (36) in section 6.4.1.

Locatives are normally clause-final, as in example (54).

Occasionally, they occur between the VP and object, as in example

(35b) in section 4.2.3.

- (54) *E=ghe sae-aini=eghi elo ale tale ng-ai-tuu-tuu*  
 3s=PAST go.up-TR=1sO in house PREP LIG-INST-RED-cook  
*eteva.*  
 SG:I  
 ‘She carried me into the house to the kitchen.’

Temporals occur both clause-initial, as in example (163) in section 3.8.6, and clause-final, as in example (8) in section 5.2. When temporals and locatives both occur after the core of the clause, they can appear in either order, as in the following examples:

- (55) *Naim ghe lutu=la e=Nonga tale ghasiona ateva*  
 Naim PAST be.born=PF LOC=Nonga PREP ninth SG:I  
*ulana 1986.*  
 moon 1986  
 ‘Naim was born at Nonga in September (lit. the ninth month) 1986.’
- (56) *Taitani-ghi eteva ghe mene katuu=la eleivo tale*  
 husband-1sP SG:I PAST again fall=PF night PREP  
*masina ateva ai-sae-sae.*  
 good SG:I INST-RED-go.up  
 ‘My husband also fell down at night on a good set of stairs.’

Instrument normally occurs clause-final, as in example (9) in section 5.2.

Recipients, addressees and benefactives normally occur between VP and object, as in example (57), but may occur clause-final, as in example (58). They may also occur in intransitive clauses, after the VP, as in example (59).

- (57) *U=roo-roo tani tau mae eta-ghi righi uela?*  
 2s=RED-be.able COMP give come PREP-1sP EXIST salt  
 ‘Can you give me some salt?’
- (58) *E=ghe a-toka=la marasina eta-ghi, me a=ghe*  
 3s=PAST CAUS-sit=PF medicine PREP-1sP and 1s=PAST  
*masina=la.*  
 be.well=PF  
 ‘He put medicine on me, and I got better.’
- (59) *Liu-na avalua a=gh-aloanna tani auliaa eta-m John.*  
 place-3sP reason 1s=LIG-want COMP speak PREP-2sP John  
 ‘That’s why I want to talk to you, John.’

## 6.5 Negative Clauses

A negative declarative clause can be formed with either of the two negative markers, *tam* and *karika*. As noted in section 4.5, *tam* is part of the verb phrase, and negates the verb, whereas *karika* is part of the clause structure. The difference in meaning is not clear yet. The normal position for *karika* is between the subject (if expressed as a noun phrase or independent pronoun) and the verb phrase.

- (60) a. *A=tam kila-kila.*  
 1s=NEG RED-know  
 ‘I don’t know.’
- b. *Karika a=kila-kila.*  
 NEG 1s=RED-know  
 ‘I don’t know.’
- (61) a. *Marova lalu ghe tam nama=la ko alua, ...*  
 if 3d PAST NEG eat=PF fish two:I  
 ‘If they did not eat the two fish, ...’

b. ...*ni-mate karika aue e=ghe mae.*  
 NOM-die NEG IRR 3s=PAST come  
 ‘...death would not have come.’

(62) *Karika aue e=rekati=a.*  
 NEG IRR 3s=catch=3sO  
 ‘He won’t catch it.’

Note that *karika* can function both in the clause and in the phrase. See the contrast in the following two sentences:

(63) a. *Ghe ghelei=la voto karika masina.*  
 PAST do=PF thing NEG good  
 ‘He did something not good.’

b. *Karika ghe ghelei=la voto masina.*  
 NEG PAST do=PF thing good  
 ‘He did not do a good thing.’

The first asserts that he did something, but it was not a good thing, while the second asserts that he did not do something which would have been good.

Another example of *karika* modifying a quantifier is the following sentence:

(64) *Karika oroi kko ngalu ghe kea=la.*  
 NEG many fish 1dx PAST fish=PF  
 ‘We didn’t catch many fish.’

*Karika* can be used as a single word negative answer to a question.

(65) *E=ghe ue sae, “Amben, ang=u=tara-i=e=la?”*  
 3s=PAST say go.up Amben TAM=2s=see-TR=3sO=PF  
 ‘He called up, “Amben, do you see it?”’

A=*ghe*    *ue*    *va*,    “*Karika*.”  
 1s=PAST    say    COMP    NEG  
 ‘I said, “No.”’

Similarly, *karika* can function as a negative existential, as in the following example:

(66) *Karika*    *va*            *aghi*    *nonga*,    *ta*    *oroi=emami*.  
           NEG    COMP    1s    only    but    many=1pxO  
           ‘It wasn’t just me, but we were many.’

More commonly, though, *karika* is used with one of the existential verbs.

(67) *Karika*    *riki*                    *inana*.  
           NEG    EXIST:small    food  
           ‘There is no food.’

(68) *Karika*    *teva*            *e=toka-toka*    *eta-na*.  
           NEG    EXIST:I    3s=RED-sit    PREP-3sP  
           ‘There is nothing in it.’

A negative imperative clause is formed with the negative particle *rou* (or its dialectal variant, *rau*). Often, the adverb *mene* ‘again’ is included, even when the action has not yet happened, so that the meaning is not necessarily ‘do not do it again’. Note that *rou* is in the negative slot in the verb phrase, and so the subject proclitic comes before it. It comes before the adverb, and so is not a verb itself.

(69) *U=rou*    *sai=o*            *nonga!*  
           2s=NEG    cut=2sO    only  
           ‘Just don’t cut yourself!’

(70) *U=rou*    *mene*    *katuul!*  
           2s=NEG    again    fall  
           ‘Don’t fall!’

- (71) *Amalu rou mene nama-i=a.*  
 2d NEG again eat-TR=3sO  
 ‘You (two) must not eat it.’

The particle *rou* (or *rau*) is also used in the context of expressing a hope that something may not happen, or a fear that something may happen.

- (72) *Karika a=ghe auliaa=la ta tama-ghi ta a=ghe*  
 NEG 1s=PAST say=PF PREP father-1sP CONJ 1s=PAST  
*matautu=la va tama-ghi e=rou uvi=eghi.*  
 be.afraid=PF COMP father-1sP 3s=NEG hit=1sO  
 ‘I didn’t tell my father for I was afraid lest he hit me.’

- (73) *Nau a=ghe masina=la me ng=a=ghe namuu=la*  
 day 1s=PAST be.well=PF and TAM=1s=PAST be.big=PF  
*karika poi a=sae-sae niu, ta a=maa-matautu*  
 NEG EMPH 1s=RED-go.up coconut CONJ 1s=RED-fear  
*va a=rau mene katuu tale teae niu.*  
 COMP 1s=NEG again fall PREP EXIST:II coconut  
 ‘Since I got better and grew up I certainly don’t climb coconut trees, because I am afraid lest I again fall from a coconut tree.’

## 7. Imperative and Interrogative Sentences

In this chapter, we deal with imperative sentences (7.1) and interrogative sentences (7.2).

### 7.1 Imperative Sentences

Imperative sentences are often indicated by intonation alone. However, in a positive imperative, a singular subject is usually omitted, and a non-singular subject can be omitted if it is clear from the context. Also, the perfective marker, *=la*, can be, and often is, added at the end of the verb phrase. Imperatives will not take other tense-aspect-mood markers, but may take derivational and object affixes and clitics. Normally, an object will be represented only by the enclitic rather than a full noun phrase, as the object is known from context, and can even be omitted entirely.

- (1) *Ghoa!*  
go.out  
'Go outside!'
- (2) *Kasu=la!*  
walk=PF  
'Go away!'
- (3) *Mae sio toko!*  
come go.down here  
'Come here!'
- (4) *Nama-i=e=la!*  
eat-TR=3sO=PF  
'Eat it!'

- (5) *A-toka=la.*  
CAUS-sit=PF  
'Put it down.'
- (6) *Am oghi sio!*  
2p go.back go.down  
'Go back down!'

Negative imperatives are normally formed with the negative particle *rou*, as discussed earlier (section 6.5).

- (7) *U=rou sai=o nonga!*  
2s=NEG cut=2sO only  
'Just don't cut yourself!'
- (8) *Am rou mene poso=a.*  
2p NEG again touch=3sO  
'Don't touch it.'

## 7.2 Interrogative Sentences

Interrogatives are formed by using question words, a tag question or intonation alone. Question intonation is similar to that in English, with rising intonation at the end of the sentence. Such a question has the same form as a declarative sentence.

Question words include the following:

<i>sa</i>	'what?'
<i>see</i>	'who?'
<i>ea</i>	'where?'
<i>vaalu</i>	'what?'
<i>ghaisa</i>	'how many?'
<i>lovisa</i>	'when?'
<i>poli sa</i>	'why?' (lit. 'because what')

The difference between *sa* and *vaalu* is that *sa* is the pronominal form, whereas *vaalu* is used on its own as a question, often meaning something like, ‘What do you want?’ or ‘What is happening?’ Another form, *vaalua*, is similar in meaning, but can also mean ‘how’ or ‘why’.

Question words are normally fronted, but can also be moved to the end of the sentence.

- (9) *Sa ateva?*  
 what SG:I  
 ‘What is it?’
- (10) *Ea u=lao?*  
 where 2s=go  
 ‘Where are you going?’
- (11) *Vaalu?*  
 what  
 ‘What do you want?’
- (12) *See tama-na Pipi?*  
 who father-3sP Pipi  
 ‘Who is Pipi’s father?’
- (13) *Pipi, tama-na ta see?*  
 Pipi father-3sP ART who  
 ‘Pipi, his father is who?’
- (14) *Lovisa am rekata?*  
 when 2p return  
 ‘When will you return?’
- (15) *Poli sa mana ila ghe sai=la olimo ateva?*  
 because what now 3p PAST cut=PF canoe SG:I  
 ‘Why did they carve the canoe now?’

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(16) *Vaalua me karika u=aloanna tani kasu?*  
why and NEG 2s=want COMP walk  
'Why don't you want to go?'

(17) *Vaalua ghaine a=sio?*  
how today 1s=go.down  
'How will I get down now?'

The word *nenge* is used as a tag question, at the end of a declarative sentence, asking the listener to agree with what has been said.

(18) *Delmae e=toka-toka e=Kavieng, nenge?*  
Delmae 3s=RED-sit LOC=Kavieng TAG  
'Delmae is living in Kavieng, isn't she?'

Also, the two words *a* and *va* can be added as tag questions, without as strong an implication that the listener would agree with the statement.

(19) *Am ghe kasu=la e=Maroi, a?*  
2p PAST walk=PF LOC=Maroi TAG  
'Did you come from Maroi?'

(20) *Karika u=anna tani sama tee-i=eghi, va?*  
NEG 2s=think COMP talk with-TR=1sO TAG  
'Don't you want to talk to me?'

An example of a question indicated only by intonation is in the following exchange:

(21) "La=laa=la?" "Ue, la=laa=la."  
3p=go=PF yes 3p=go=PF  
"Did they go?" "Yes, they went."

## 8. Complex Sentences

In this chapter, we discuss three types of complex sentence: coordination (8.1), subordination (8.2) and complementation (8.3).

### 8.1 Coordination

The three forms of coordination discussed in this section are conjunction, disjunction and verbal repetition.

#### 8.1.1 Conjunction

The unmarked form of conjunction is the use of *me* 'and'. This is used for both phrasal and clausal conjunction. Phrasal conjunction is discussed earlier, in section 3.8.

Clausal conjunction normally uses *me*, as in examples (1) and (2), but may also use simple juxtaposition, as in examples (3) and (4). If the subject of the two clauses is the same, then the subject may be omitted in the second clause, as in example (2). Similarly, if the object of both clauses is the same, it may be omitted in the second, as in example (4), though this is relatively uncommon.

In the examples, the two clauses that are conjoined are enclosed in square brackets.

- (1) [Taita ateva ghe tau laa aliki eteva] me [taita ateva  
man SG:I PAST give go child SG:I and man SG:I  
ghe kasu=la.]  
PAST walk=PF  
'A man gave her a child and the man left.'
- (2) [Benniae ghe sessa-i=e=la] me [ghe ue=la va,  
Benniae PAST be.angry-TR=3sO=PF and PAST say=PF COMP

“Sio mae!”]

go.down come

‘Benniae got angry and said, “Come down!”’

- (3) [Areare ssu-na ghe usai=la] [dokta ghe ue=la  
nipple breast-3sP PAST be.sore=PF doctor PAST say=PF  
va, “Laa pae mene teva maamaa e=mae-mae  
COMP go look.for again EXIST:I mother 3s=RED-come  
ssu aliki eteva.”]  
breastfeed child SG:I  
‘Her nipple became sore, and the doctor said, “Go and find  
another mother to come and breastfeed the child.”’

- (4) [Kateva taumattuu ghe tara=la ghila kotolu] [ghe poli=la  
one person PAST see=PF bird three PAST buy=PF  
tale moni kotolu vilau.]  
PREP money three ten.toea  
‘A person saw the three birds and bought them for thirty toea  
(PNG currency).’

Another use of coordination is background information, with the first clause having imperfective aspect and providing the setting for the second clause.

- (5) Kateva nau a=ghe toka tei=la nenga-ghi ta  
one day 1s=PAST sit with=PF younger.sibling-1sP ART  
Wiklip Livae, [ngalu ghe toka-toka] me [ng=a=ghe  
Wiklip Livae 1dx PAST RED-sit and TAM=1s=PAST  
aloanna tani ropi niu].  
want COMP drink coconut  
‘One day I was with my younger brother Wiklip Livae, we were  
sitting and I wanted to drink some coconut.’

- (6) *Vara [mami ghe toka-toka arau], me [la=ghe keo=la].*  
 then 1px PAST RED-sit INTENS and 3p=PAST arrive=PF  
 ‘Then we were sitting there a long time, and they arrived.’

The marked form for adversative uses the conjunction *ta* instead of *me*.

- (7) *Dokta e=ghe auliaa=la ta tama-ghi me kina-ghi*  
 doctor 3s=PAST say=PF PREP father-1sP but mother-1sP  
*va, “Karika aue e=masina, ta aue e=mate.”*  
 COMP NEG IRR 3s=become.well but IRR 3s=die  
 ‘The doctor said to my father and mother, “He will not get well,  
 but he will die.”’

- (8) *Karika a=ghe masi-masi poi, ta a=ghe nim*  
 NEG 1s=PAST RED-be.happy EMPH but 1s=PAST just  
*toka ngang-ngala.*  
 sit RED-cry  
 ‘I was certainly not happy, but I just sat crying.’

- (9) *Karika va aghi nonga, ta oroi-emami.*  
 NEG COMP 1s only but many-1pxO  
 ‘It wasn’t just me, but there were many of us.’

Otherwise, *me* can be used as an adversative.

- (10) *Ghalua a=Siapani lalu ghe uvi-uvi sae atu eteva*  
 two person.of=Japan 2d PAST RED-hit go.up rock SG:I  
*e=Tangaroasa tale masin gan alulu, me karika poi*  
 LOC=Tangaroasa PREP machine gun DL:IV but NEG EMPH

*atu eteva ghe ta-polaka=la.*  
 rock SG:I PAST STAT-break=PF

‘Two Japanese were shooting the rock at Tangaroasa with machine guns, but the rock didn’t break at all.’

- (11) *La=ghe tue-tue-i=a e=lao-lao, me soo ateva*  
 3p=PAST RED-chop-TR=3sO 3s=RED-go but saw SG:I

*karika ang=e=roo-roo tani kata ai etea.*  
 NEG TAM=3s=REd-be.able COMP bite tree SG:II

‘They were cutting away at it, but the saw couldn’t cut the tree.’

### 8.1.2 Disjunction

Disjunction is somewhat remarkable in Mussau-Emira, in that there appears to be no historic form for a disjunctive conjunction. In current speech, the form *o* ‘or’ has been borrowed from Tok Pisin.

- (12) *E=ghe asekanue=la me a=ghe taa-tara va aue*  
 3s=PAST sleep=PF and 1s=PAST RED-see COMP IRR

*e=angu o karika.*

3s=wake.up or NEG

‘He slept and I was watching whether he would wake up or not.’

- (13) *Marova see vause-i=o o taita-i=o, u=nongo*  
 if who woman-TR=2sO or man-TR=2sO 2s=hear

*kutokuto ateva e=sama-sama, u=kile va mosu eteva*  
 frog.sp SG:I 3s=RED-speak 2s=know COMP pig SG:I

*ang=e=mae sio tale uma-m utana atingiu.*  
 TAM=3s=come go.down PREP PCL-2sP garden SG:V

‘Whoever you are, a woman or a man, you hear a *kutokuto* (frog species) calling, you know that a pig has just come into your garden.’

### 8.1.3 Verbal Repetition

Another type of coordination involves repetition of the last part of a verb phrase, and is used to signify extent of time in an activity. It is much the same as the use of *i go* in Tok Pisin.

- (14) *A=ghe kinari=la, kinari=la.*  
 1s=PAST sing=PF sing=PF  
 'I sang and sang.'
- (15) *La=ghe ose=la ose=la vara elo sinaka me la=ghe*  
 3p=PAST paddle=PF paddle=PF soon midday and 3p=PAST  
*tara=la e=Musao.*  
 see=PF LOC=Mussau  
 'They paddled and paddled and in the middle of the day they saw Mussau.'
- (16) *Aliki eteva ghe tiuaa=la tani ropi, ghe ropi=la,*  
 child SG:I PAST begin=PF COMP drink PAST drink=PF  
*ropi=la, ropi=la.*  
 drink=PF drink=PF  
 'The boy began to drink, he drank and drank and drank.'

## 8.2 Subordination

The forms of subordination include relative clauses and various adverbial clauses: temporal, locative, reason, conditional and concession.

### 8.2.1 Relative Clauses

Relative clauses take the same form as independent clauses in most cases. In the terminology of Keenan (1985), they are headed and post-nominal, and have no determiner. The position relativized (NP<sub>rel</sub>) is normally expressed as a personal pronoun, but may be omitted

(gapped) in some cases. The relativized elements in relative clauses can function as subjects, objects, locatives or in place of a complement.

The following examples show relative clauses with NP<sub>rel</sub> as subject. Note that the relative clauses are enclosed in square brackets:

- (17) *Ami ghe asa vul=la olimo ateva [ghe vulu=la], me*  
 1px PAST swim leave=PF canoe SG:I PAST sink=PF and  
*ami ghe asa=la.*  
 1px PAST swam=PF

‘We swam away from the canoe that had sunk, and we swam.’

- (18) *Kateva nau, ami ghe ai-kolo=la tani sae*  
 one day 1px PAST RECIP-call=PF COMP go.up  
*suu-suu tale ateo atae [e=kaa-katuu].*  
 RED-bathe PREP water SG:II 3s=RED-jump  
 ‘One day, we called each other to go and swim at the waterfall (lit. the river that jumps).’

- (19) *Ai-tiu-tiu eteva tana koto [ghe a-sus-suki=la*  
 NOM-RED-start SG:I ART wave PAST CAUS-RED-carry=PF  
*Tom] ghe sso=la arau elae me ghe sau=la*  
 Tom PAST go.in=PF INTENS shore and PAST carry=PF  
*arau tale atu eteva.*  
 INTENS PREP stone SG:I  
 ‘The first wave that carried Tom took him right ashore and dumped him straight on a rock.’

In each example, NP<sub>rel</sub> is represented by a pronominal clitic, which is omitted in examples (17) and (19), following the common rule of third person singular subjects with *ghe*, as noted earlier, in section 4.3.

Note that example (19) is ambiguous, and could be either a relative

clause or coordination with no coordinating conjunction. Since the latter is not very common, we analyse it as a relative clause here.

The next examples show relative clauses with NP<sub>rel</sub> functioning as an object:

- (20) *A=ghe tara=la Kaulusi [la=ghe sumu=e=la tale kalio*  
 1s=PAST see=PF Kaulusi 3p=PAST sew=3sO=PF PREP cloth  
*usousoana].*  
 white

‘I saw Kaulusi who had been sewn in a white cloth.’

- (21) *Me ang=ghe pae-pae va lingi ng-alo*  
 and TAM=PAST RED-search COMP sound CONST-throat  
*ateva [e=nongo-nongo=a] ea e=kasu-kasu.*  
 SG:I 3s=RED-hear=3sO where 3s=RED-walk  
 ‘And she was searching to find where the voice she heard was coming from.’

In both examples, NP<sub>rel</sub> is represented as a pronominal clitic.

The next examples show relative clauses with NP<sub>rel</sub> functioning as a locative:

- (22) *Me ng=a=ghe rete-rete me ng=a=ghe anna*  
 and TAM=1s=PAST RED-shiver and TAM=1s=PAST think  
*tani sae aso tee nenga-ghi tale kalio*  
 COMP go.up lie with younger.sibling-1sP PREP cloth  
*atiulu [ghe vuu-vukala eta-na].*  
 SG:IV PAST RED-hang PREP-3sP  
 ‘And I was shivering and I wanted to climb up and lie with my brother in the cloth that he was hanging in.’

- (23) *Tom ghe sau=la olimo-na arighi [ta-polake ateva*  
 Tom PAST carry=PF canoe-3sP SG:small STAT-break SG:I  
*elome eta-na].*  
 inside PREP-3sP  
 ‘Tom carried his small canoe which had a break in it.’

In both examples, NP<sub>rel</sub> is represented by a pronominal suffix.

When the predicate in the relative clause is a complement-taking predicate, and the complement is relativized, it may be gapped and represented by the generic term *voto* ‘thing’ in the matrix clause, as in the following example:

- (24) *Nau la=ghe sama-sama, karika a=ghe nongo-nongo kila*  
 day 3p=PAST RED-speak NEG 1s=PAST RED-hear know  
*voto [la=ghe auliaa] me a=ghe nim kila=la va*  
 thing 3p=PAST say and 1s=PAST just know=PF COMP  
*alitali-i=la, poli a=ghe ngusu=la nei simuku.*  
 stranger-TR=3pO because 1s=PAST smell=PF odour smoke  
 ‘When they spoke, I didn’t understand what they said and I just knew that they were strangers, because I could smell smoke.’

Often, in place of a domain noun in the matrix clause, the noun *lo* ‘thing’ is used. It has no semantic content of its own, but takes its meaning from the relative clause.

In the following examples, *lo* stands for the subject of the relative clause:

- (25) *Tara=la lo ateva [e=sae-sae]!*  
 see=PF thing SG:I 3s=RED-go.up  
 ‘Look at what’s climbing!’

- (26) *Lo atoa [la=ghe tara=la nau ghe katuu=la] la=ghe*  
 thing PL 3p=PAST see=PF day PAST fall=PF 3p=PAST

*alousiusi tee-i=e=la.*

be.sorry with-TR=3sO=PF

‘Those who saw when she fell down were sorry for her.’

- (27) *Me Kalaa ghe sio=la, ghe kolo=la mene katoa*  
 and Kalaa PAST go.down=PF PAST call=PF again some

*tani vause la=ghe sae mae tani kaai lo*  
 ART woman 3p=PAST go.up come COMP carry thing

*[ghe toka=la].*

PAST sit=PF

‘And Kalaa went down, and called some other women to come up and carry what was lying (on the ground).’

In example (28), *lo* stands for the object of the relative clause:

- (28) *Me arova laa popo atelange e=ta-koto karika*  
 and if branch pawpaw SG:III 3s=STAT-break NEG

*aue a=mae tara-i=o poli aue u=muke lo*  
 IRR 1s=come see-TR=2sO because IRR 2s=harvest thing

*[u=ghe pasa=la].*

2s=PAST plant=PF

‘And if the pawpaw branch breaks, I won’t come to see you because you will reap what you have planted.’

In examples (29) and (30), *lo* stands for the complement of the verb in the relative clause. Note that the verbs *kolomi* ‘ask’ and *auliaa* ‘say’ take the words spoken as complements, not objects.

- (29) *Mene sa lo [e=aloanna tani kolomi]?*  
 again what thing 3s=want COMP ask  
 ‘What else did he want to ask?’
- (30) *Me mene righi lo [e=auliaa] u=nim nongo usi=la.*  
 and again small thing 3s=say 2s=just hear follow=PF  
 ‘And whatever else he says, just obey.’

### 8.2.2 Temporal Clauses

The marker of temporal clauses is the word *nau*, which can mean either ‘day’ or ‘time’ more generally. A common temporal phrase is *kateva nau* ‘one day’, but the form used in temporal clauses is either *nau* or *nau eteva*, both of which mean ‘when’. It occurs first in the temporal clause. Temporal clauses usually precede the main clause.

- (31) [*Nau ghe vo=la*], *karika a=ghe aloanna tani sae*  
 day PAST night=PF NEG 1s=PAST want COMP go.up  
*aso ta komo-ghu, ta poli a=ghe maa-matautu.*  
 lie PREP mat-1sP because 1s=PAST RED-be.afraid  
 ‘When night fell, I didn’t want to go to bed, because I was afraid.’
- (32) [*Nau eteva ang=e=anna me ang=e=roo=la va*  
 day SG:I TAM=3s=think and TAM=3s=be.able=PF COMP  
*e=lai teva taita], la=vira mene aitiiti=a me*  
 3s=marry EXIST:I man 3p=INTENS again wrap=3sO and  
*la=ghe tau-tau=e=la ta taita ateva.*  
 3p=PAST RED-give=3sO=PF PREP man SG:I  
 ‘When she wanted and was able to be married to a man, they then would dress her and give her to the man.’

When *nau* is used without *eteva*, it can be followed by *ta*, with no special meaning. This is similar to the adverbs *arovaea* and *katengaata*,

both meaning ‘immediately’, which are also followed by *ta*, as noted in section 6.4.4.

- (33) [Nau ta ai etea ghe katuu=la], ami voroi ami  
 day PREP tree SG:II PAST fall=PF 1px completely 1px  
 ghe alousiusi=la, ta poli oroi-eili ni-u-ungu  
 PAST be.sorry=PF because many-INTENS NOM-RED-work  
 atoa ami ghe elei eta-na.  
 PL 1px PAST do PREP-3sP  
 ‘When the tree fell, we were all sorry, because of the great work  
 in doing it.’

### 8.2.3 Locative Clauses

Locative clauses are introduced by the preposition *nongina*, which can mean ‘like’, ‘as’ or ‘where’.

- (34) A=ghe toka sio=la [nongina nenga-ghi  
 ghe  
 1s=PAST sit go.down=PF like/where younger.sibling-1sP  
 PAST  
 vuu-vukala].  
 RED-hang  
 ‘I sat down where my younger brother was hanging.’
- (35) Nau a=ghe sae=la niu ete, a=ghe tiuaa=la  
 day 1s=PAST go.up=PF coconut SG:II 1s=PAST begin=PF  
 tani pate niu, me e=ghe mae sio  
 COMP knock.down coconut and 3s=PAST come go.down  
 [nongina niu ghe sio kaa-katuu], me karika  
 like/where coconut PAST go.down RED-fall and NEG

*poi a=ghe taa-tara-i=a.*

EMPH 1s=PAST RED-see-TR=3sO

‘When I climbed the coconut tree, I started to knock down coconuts, and he came where the coconuts were falling, and I really didn’t see him.’

### 8.2.4 Reason Clauses

The normal way to express causation or reason in Mussau-Emira is to state the result and then the reason, with the relationship expressed either by the preposition *ta*, the conjunction *poli* ‘because’ or the compound conjunction *ta poli* ‘because’. There is apparently no difference in meaning, and the usage may be a dialectal preference. The following, both from the Eastern Mussau dialect, show use of *ta poli*:

- (36) *Ghe rri=la me pakasi vella tuku kapa ateva tale*  
 PAST tear=PF and cut remove piece metal SG:I PREP  
*olimo-na arighi, ta poli ghe soko=la kiro-na*  
 canoe-3sP SG:small because PAST go.ashore=PF buttock-3sP  
*ateva.*  
 SG:I

‘He tore up and removed in shreds the piece of metal from his canoe, because it had gone into his buttock.’

- (37) *Kina-ghi e=ghe aloanna tani suusi=eghi, ta poli*  
 mother-1sP 3s=PAST want COMP bathe=1sO because  
*lisa ateva oroi-aili-i=a ta ng-uru-ghu.*  
 louse SG:I many-INTENS-TR=3sO PREP LIG-head-1sP  
 ‘My mother wanted to bathe me, because I had so many lice on my head (lit. the lice were very many on my head).’

The following, both from the Southern Mussau dialect, show just *poli*:

- (38) *Ng-a=ghe maa-matautu poli karika a=ghe tara*  
 TAM-1s=PAST RED-be.afraid because NEG 1s=PAST see  
*kila-i=la=la.*  
 know-TR=3pO=PF  
 ‘I was afraid because I didn’t recognise them.’
- (39) *Nau ghe toka-toka va vara vause atoa la=ghe*  
 day PAST RED-sit COMP soon woman PL 3p=PAST  
*angingini=a poli la=ghe tau-tau=e sae va*  
 feed=3sO because 3p=PAST RED-give=3sO go.up COMP  
*kapu-ira namuu-i=a.*  
 PCL-3pP big-TR=3sO  
 ‘When he was sitting, the women would soon feed him, because they praised him that he was their leader.’

The following, both from the Western Mussau dialect, show the use of simply *ta*:

- (40) *Karika a=ghe auliaa=la ta tama-ghi ta a=ghe*  
 NEG 1s=PAST say=PF PREP father-1sP CONJ 1s=PAST  
*matautu=la va tama-ghi e=rou uvi=eghi.*  
 be.afraid=PF COMP father-1sP 3s=NEG hit=1sO  
 ‘I didn’t tell my father for I was afraid lest he hit me.’
- (41) *Ai-ruu-ruu a=ghe masi-masi=la ta*  
 INST-RED-finish 1s=PAST RED-be.happy=PF PREP  
*kina-ghi, ta lisa ateva e=ghe kapa=la.*  
 mother-1sP CONJ louse SG:I 3s=PAST complete=PF  
 ‘In the end I was happy with my mother, for the lice had gone completely (lit. the louse had finished).’

Of course, in practice there is some blurring of these distinctions.

Partly, this is attributable to the many marriages between people from different dialects, leading to children spending their childhood in more than one village and dialect area, so that the dialects are less clear-cut than they were in the past.

### 8.2.5 Conditional Clauses

Conditional constructions use the conjunction *marova* ‘if’, which has dialectal variants, *arova* and *aruva*. The apodosis is most often marked with irrealis mood.

- (42) [*Arova e=kasu*], *aue a=kasu*.  
 if 3s=walk IRR 1s=walk  
 ‘If he goes, I will go.’
- (43) [*Marova ghe tam sulu-i=e=la*], *sa ateva aue*  
 if PAST NEG burn-TR=3sO=PF what SG:I IRR  
*e=ghe lutu?*  
 3s=PAST happen  
 ‘If he hadn’t burnt it, what would have happened?’

### 8.2.6 Concession Clauses

A concession clause uses the conjunction *arongona* ‘although’ followed by *ta* ‘but’.

- (44) [*Arongona ta oroi pisi*] *me uena atea karika ghe*  
 although but many fish and net SG:II NEG PAST  
*mara=la*.  
 break=PF  
 ‘Although there were so many fish, the net didn’t break.’
- (45) [*Arongona ta e=vaa-vaoo*], *italu sae e=utana*.  
 although but 3s=RDP-rain 1di go.up LOC=garden  
 ‘Although it’s raining, let’s go to the garden.’

### 8.3 Complementation

Complements may be divided into two groups, finite and non-finite. Finite complements are complete sentences introduced by a complementizer, usually *va*, but also *ta* or *vaalua*. They have independent time reference. Non-finite complements have no tense or subject marking, and are introduced by the infinitive complementizer *tani*. The time reference of a non-finite complement is determined by the semantics of the complement-taking predicate.

Classes of complement-taking predicates (as described by Noonan 1985:110–133) include utterance, propositional attitude, knowledge, fear, desiderative, manipulative, modal, achievement, phasal and immediate perception. The following discussion is based on these semantic classes.

Table 30 lists the main complement-taking predicates.

Table 30: Complement-Taking Predicates

Predicate	Gloss	Semantic Class
<i>ue</i>	'say'	Utterance
<i>auliaa</i>	'tell, say'	Utterance
<i>kolomi</i>	'ask'	Utterance
<i>anna</i>	'think'	Propositional attitude
<i>kila</i>	'know'	Knowledge
<i>tara kila</i>	'recognise (appearance)'	Knowledge
<i>nongo kila</i>	'recognise (sound), understand'	Knowledge
<i>matautu</i>	'fear, be afraid'	Fear
<i>anna</i>	'think, worry'	Fear
<i>aloanna</i>	'want'	Desiderative
<i>ari</i>	'itch'	Desiderative
<i>kolo</i>	'call'	Manipulative

Predicate	Gloss	Semantic Class
<i>suu</i>	'send'	Manipulative
<i>tau velu</i>	'allow'	Manipulative
<i>roo</i>	'be able, be possible'	Modal
<i>tiuaa</i>	'begin, start'	Phasal
<i>tai</i>	'start'	Phasal
<i>ruu</i>	'finish, end'	Phasal
<i>aimanomanosiaa</i>	'prepare'	Phasal
<i>aipanipaniaa</i>	'prepare'	Phasal
<i>tara</i>	'see'	Immediate perception
<i>nongo</i>	'hear'	Immediate perception
<i>atea</i>	'feel'	Immediate perception

### 8.3.1 Utterance Predicates

Utterance predicates include *ue* 'say', *auliaa* 'tell, say', and *kolomi* 'ask'. They use the complementizer *va*, and can encode both direct and indirect speech.

- (46) *Kateva nau aloa-na ghe ue=la eta-na va,*  
 one day uncle-3sP PAST say=PF PREP-3sP COMP

*"Ghaine eleivo ita ghoa luku."*

today night 1pi go.out fish.with.net

'One day his uncle said to him, "Let us go fishing tonight."'

- (47) *Namu ng-ateva ang=ghe ue va e=pae-pae*  
 big LIG-SG:I TAM=PAST say COMP 3s=RED-find

*e=mae-mae ita laa sai-sai.*

3s=RED-come 1pi go RED-cut

'The big man said that he would search and come and we would go to prepare (the garden) (lit. to cut).'

- (48) *Dokta e=ghe auliaa=la ta tama-ghi me kina-ghi*  
 doctor 3s=PAST say=PF PREP father-1sP but mother-1sP  
*va, "Karika aue e=masina, ta aue e=mate."*  
 COMP NEG IRR 3s=become.well but IRR 3s=die  
 'The doctor said to my father and mother, "He will not get well,  
 but he will die.'

The verb *kolomi* 'ask' takes as its direct object the person being asked and can be used intransitively or transitively. The actual question is the complement, or it can be expressed as an instrument as a noun phrase.

- (49) *A=ghe kolomi=e=la va "Riki inana?"*  
 1s=PAST ask=3sO=PF COMP EXIST:small food  
 'I asked her, "Is there any food?'"
- (50) *Me a=ghe kolomi=e=la va une-ira komiuniti*  
 and 1s=PAST ask=3sO=PF COMP PCL-3pP community  
*seves vause atoa ta Sevende, me ghe ue=la*  
 service woman PL ART Seventh-day and PAST say=PF  
*va ue.*  
 COMP yes  
 'And I asked her if their community service women were  
 Seventh-day (Adventist), and she said yes.'
- (51) *Ghe nongo-nongo=la me ghe koo-kolomi=la tale*  
 PAST RED-hear=3sO and PAST RED-ask=3pO PREP  
*ni-kok-kolomi.*  
 NOM-RED-ask  
 'He was listening to them and asking them questions.'

### 8.3.2 Propositional Attitude Predicates

The most common propositional attitude predicate is *anna* ‘think’. The complementizer *va* is used, and the complement can be a direct or an indirect quotation.

- (52) *Me a=ghe anna va, “Ghaine la=uvi=engalua me*  
 and 1s=PAST think COMP today 3p=hit=1dxO and  
*nenga-ghi.”*  
 younger.sibling-1sP  
 ‘And I thought, “They are coming to kill me and my brother  
 now.”’

- (53) *O, a=ghe anna va ang-ghe mate=la.*  
 O 1s=PAST think COMP TAM-PAST die=PF  
 ‘O, I thought that he had died.’

Another propositional attitude predicate is the adverb *koti* ‘perhaps’ when used as a verb. This is used in the sense of ‘suppose’ and is less certain than *anna*. Again, it takes a finite complement, but without a complementizer.

- (54) *A=koti ita ruu-ruu.*  
 1s=perhaps 1pi RED-finish  
 ‘I suppose we’ll finish.’
- (55) *A=koti karika.*  
 1s=perhaps NEG  
 ‘I don’t think so.’

### 8.3.3 Knowledge Predicates

Knowledge predicates include *kila* (Western Mussau *kile*) ‘know’ and *alomasaanga* ‘be wise, realise’. They can take both finite and non-finite complements.

- (56) *Karika a=ghe kile-kile tani tara=la me tani*  
 NEG 1s=PAST RED-know COMP see=PF and COMP  
*riti=la.*  
 read=PF  
 ‘I didn’t know how to look and to read.’
- (57) *A=ghe mina alomasaanga=la va anua ateva me kara*  
 1s=PAST EMPH be.wise=PF COMP ship SG:I and car  
*ateva, karika mata-irarua.*  
 SG:I NEG eye-3dP  
 ‘I realised that ships and cars don’t have eyes.’

We have little data on knowledge-like predicates that speak of attitudes, but they appear to take non-finite complements.

- (58) *Ami ghe masi-masi e-tingina tani suu-suu.*  
 1px PAST RED-be.happy CAUS-stand COMP RED-bathe  
 ‘We really enjoy swimming.’

### 8.3.4 Fear Predicates

The only fear predicate is *matautu* ‘fear, be afraid’, though *anna* ‘think’ is also used for the sense of ‘worry’. They both take finite complements.

- (59) *Nau a=ghe masina=la me ng=a=ghe namuu=la*  
 day 1s=PAST be.well=PF and TAM=1s=PAST be.big=PF  
*karika poi a=sae-sae niu, ta a=maa-matautu*  
 NEG EMPH 1s=RED-go.up coconut PREP 1s=RED-fear  
*va a=rau mene katuu tale teae niu.*  
 COMP 1s=NEG again fall PREP SG:II coconut  
 ‘Since I got better and grew up I certainly don’t climb coconut trees, because I am afraid lest I again fall from a coconut tree.’

- (60) *Ghe anna-ng-aili va tau ng-ai-ssa*  
 PAST think-LIG-INTENS COMP person CONST-AG-be.bad  
*tee-na atoa la=pae-pae=a.*  
 with-3sP PL 3p=RED-search=3sO  
 ‘He was very worried (lit. he thought much) that his enemies  
 were looking for him.’

### 8.3.5 Desiderative Predicates

Desiderative predicates include *aloanna* ‘want’, *anna* ‘think’ (used as a synonym or abbreviation of *aloanna*) and *ari* ‘itch’. They normally take a non-finite complement, but finite complements are also possible.

- (61) *Ngalu ghe toka-toka me ng=a=ghe aloanna tani*  
 1dx PAST RED-sit and TAM=1s=PAST want COMP  
*ropi niu.*  
 drink coconut  
 ‘We were sitting and I wanted to drink a coconut.’
- (62) *Tama-ghi ghe tiuaa=la tani su-ng-i=eghi me*  
 father-1sP PAST begin=PF COMP send-LIG-TR=1sO and  
*karika a=ghe anna tani oghi.*  
 NEG 1s=PAST think COMP return  
 ‘My father started to send me home and I didn’t want to go.’
- (63) *Me Tom arova ghe mene ari-eri=a tani ghoa*  
 and Tom if PAST again RED-itch=3sO COMP go.out  
*suki.*  
 surf  
 ‘And soon Tom was again itching to go surfing.’

Note in example (63) that the status of *ari* is somewhat ambiguous. It

may rather be an experiencer verb, with the object the person who is experiencing the action.

A further abbreviation of *aloanna tani* is *antani*, which functions as a predicate that includes the complementizer.

- (64) *La=ghe antani lao tale kateae masaliki.*  
 3p=PAST want:COMP go PREP one:II village  
 ‘They wanted to go to a certain village.’
- (65) *Nau eteva a=gh-antani ghelei ale ateva, ale*  
 day SG:I 1s=LIG-want:COMP do house SG:I house  
*uru makere-i=a, a=laa pae kalau.*  
 head sago-TR=3sO 1s=go find vine  
 ‘When I want to build a house, that is (lit. it is), a sago-thatch house, I go and find bush rope.’

### 8.3.6 Manipulative Predicates

Manipulative predicates include *kolo* ‘call’, *suu* ‘send’ and *tau velu* ‘allow’. Both finite and non-finite complements are used.

- (66) *Tama-ghi ghe kolo=aghi=la va a=usi=a me*  
 father-1sP PAST call=1sO=PF COMP 1s=follow=3sO and  
*angalu ghoa rekati elamana.*  
 1dx go.out fish sea  
 ‘My father called me to follow him and we would go fishing at sea.’
- (67) *Kateva nau, tue-ghi ghe su-ng-i=eghi=la*  
 one day older.sibling-1sP PAST send-LIG-TR=1sO=PF  
*tani sae niu eteae.*  
 COMP go.up coconut SG:II  
 ‘One day, my older brother sent me to climb a coconut tree.’

- (68) *Nau aliki=eghi, tama-ghi me kina-ghi karika lalu ghe*  
 day child=1sO father-1sP and mother-1sP NEG 3d PAST  
*tau-tau velu=eghi va a=ghe lao tale sikulu.*  
 RED-give drop=1sO COMP 1s=PAST go PREP school  
 ‘When I was young, my father and mother wouldn’t let me go to school.’

### 8.3.7 Modal Predicates

Modal predicates are limited, the main one being *roo* ‘be able, be possible’, which takes either a finite or a non-finite complement. When the complement is finite, the subject of the predicate is usually an impersonal third person singular, as in the first example.

- (69) *E=roo-roo va u=totu elue talaua me u=sapi*  
 3s=RED-be.able COMP 2s=arise morning and 2s=scrape  
*tau mae niu?*  
 give come coconut  
 ‘Is it possible that you would get up in the morning and scrape a coconut for me?’
- (70) *Karika ami roo-roo tani velu inangari namu ng-atoa.*  
 NEG 1px RED-be.able COMP drop talk big LIG-PL  
 ‘We can’t ignore the big men’s talk.’

### 8.3.8 Phasal Predicates

Phasal predicates include *tiuaa* ‘begin’, *tai* ‘start’, *ruu* ‘finish’ and *aimanomanosiaa* ‘prepare’. They take a non-finite complement.

- (71) *Me ghe tiuaa=la tani ose.*  
 and PAST begin=PF COMP paddle  
 ‘And he began to paddle.’

- (72) *Me mosu eteva ghe tai=la tani kata maa-mate*  
 and pig SG:I PAST start=PF COMP bite RED-die  
*ai-kuu-kuvati etiulu.*  
 INST-RED-shoot SG:IV  
 ‘And the pig started to bite hard the shotgun.’
- (73) *Nau ngatolu ghe ruu=la tani ungu, ngatolu ghe*  
 day 1tx PAST finish=PF COMP work 1px PAST  
*pae=la ane-imami inana.*  
 find=PF PCL-1pxP food  
 ‘When we had finished working, we found our food.’
- (74) *Kateva ghaonomina ami ghe aimanomanosiaa tani sou*  
 one sixth 1px PAST prepare COMP meet  
*nau manga.*  
 day holy  
 ‘One Friday (lit. sixth [day]) we were preparing to meet the  
 Sabbath (lit. holy day).’

### 8.3.9 Immediate Perception Predicates

Immediate perception predicates include *tara* ‘see’, *nongo* ‘hear’, and *atea* ‘feel’. They all take finite complements.

- (75) *A=ghe tara=la va masina-i=a.*  
 1s=PAST see=PF COMP good-TR=3sO  
 ‘I saw that he was all right.’
- (76) *Ami ghe nongo=la va Kaulusi ang=e=mate=la.*  
 1px PAST hear=PF COMP Kaulusi TAM=3s=die=PF  
 ‘We heard that Kaulusi had just died.’
- (77) *Me vara a=ghe angu=la, me a=ghe ate-atea=la*  
 and then 1s=PAST arise=PF and 1s=PAST RED-feel=PF

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*va katu ng-ateva.*

COMP snake LIG-SG:I

'And then I woke up, and I felt that it was a snake.'

## 9. Further Research

There are a few areas that require some further research, as they are not well-understood.

### 9.1 Phonology

There are some questions remaining about the phonology. In particular, it is possible that there may be an intermediate vowel length, as sometimes it appears that a vowel is neither long nor short.

Also, the rule about long vowels becoming short before /ng/ is far from clear. It seems that there is a lot of variation, and no rule has been found that adequately explains it. Further research into the generational shifts in length and syncope would also help.

### 9.2 Pronouns

There is still quite some uncertainty about the use of the different forms of the third person pronouns. As discussed in section 3.1, there may be a form of fourth person or other discourse level participant reference that explains the difference between the two forms (*ia* and *ie*, *la* and *ila*, *-na* and *-ne*, etc). There may also be dialectal variation to take into consideration, so that there is need for some more study of this area.

### 9.3 Demonstratives

The area of demonstratives is rather complex in any language, and hard to understand fully, especially in working largely from a written corpus. Further research with spoken texts is needed.

### 9.4 Number-Classifiers

There are a few uncertainties about the number-classifiers. One is the

difference between the prenominal and postnominal number-classifiers. The use of the prenominal number-classifiers for numbers above three after the noun is not clear. It may be that there is some blurring of the distinction, or that formerly used postnominal number-classifiers above three are disappearing, with the prenominal number-classifiers being used in their place. Similarly, there is uncertainty about whether the prenominal number-classifiers use only the class I number-classifiers beyond five, or whether the usage is simply dying out.

A second problem area is the use of the *-pai* suffix for small objects. Very few instances have been recorded, so its exact usage is not clear.

A third area for research is the use of the *ng* ligature before some postnominal number-classifiers. As indicated earlier, this may be due to the length of the preceding vowel, or it may be related to the semantics of the noun.

Finally, further investigation may show more clearly the basis for the different noun classes, especially the semantic basis.

## 9.5 Adjectives

The adjectivizing suffix *-na* appears to take different forms, including *-ana* and *-ngina*. The reasons for the different forms are unclear, and may well involve some historical processes that are not clear from the surface forms.

## 9.6 Transitive Suffixes

There are two transitive suffixes, *-i* and *-aini*. The difference may be, as indicated earlier, in section 4.2.1, between patients and oblique arguments. More examples of verbs taking both suffixes are needed to investigate this further.

### **9.7 The Suffix *-aa***

As mentioned in section 4.2.1, the suffix *-aa* on verbs is unclear in meaning. See the discussion there for some suggestions as to the meaning.

### **9.8 Counterfactual**

We have very few examples of the counterfactual proclitic *nga=*, so its interaction with other tense, mood and aspect markers is uncertain. More examples are needed.

## Appendix: Mussau-Emira Texts

### Text 1

The following text was written by David Tamanas of Tavol village, in the Eastern Mussau dialect.

#### *Nau ami ghe tuela taono atea*

**'The time we felled the ton tree (a tree with edible fruit, *pometia pinnata*).'**

- (1) *Kateva nau namu ng-atoa la=ghe ue=la va, "Ita tue*  
 one day big LIG-PL 3p=PAST say=PF COMP 1pi chop  
*velu taono atea, ta oa-ne ang=e=kupi-kupi*  
 drop ton SG:II CONJ root-3sP TAM=3s=RED-cross.boundary  
*tale ale manga ateva."*  
 PREP house holy SG:I  
 'One day the old men said, "Let's chop down the ton tree, because  
 its roots are beginning to come into the church.'"
- (2) *Vause atoa la=ghe tuu=la inana me la=ghe mae*  
 woman PL 3p=PAST cook=PF food and 3p=PAST come  
*sio, me aliki taita atoa la=ghe sau mae sio*  
 go.down and child man PL 3p=PAST carry come go.down  
*senso ateva, me la=ghe tiuaa=la tani tue-i=a.*  
 chainsaw SG:I and 3p=PAST begin=PF COMP chop-TR=3sO  
 'The women cooked food and came, and the young men brought  
 a chainsaw, and they began to cut it down.'
- (3) *La=ghe tue-tue-i=a e=lao-lao, me soo ateva*  
 3p=PAST RED-chop-TR=3sO 3s=RED-go and saw SG:I

*karika ang=e=roo-roo tani kata ai etea.*  
 NEG TAM=3s=RED-be.able COMP bite tree SG:II  
 ‘They were cutting it down, but the saw wasn’t able to cut the tree.’

- (4) *Vara me soo ateva ang=ghe ata-ata-i=a.*  
 then and saw SG:I TAM=PAST RED-be.hot-TR=3sO  
 ‘Then the saw began to overheat (lit. to be hot).’
- (5) *Vara me ang=ghe voo-vo, me la=ghe ue=la*  
 then and TAM=PAST RED-night and 3p=PAST say=PF  
*va, “Karika nge=ita roo=la!”*  
 COMP NEG INCEP=1pi be.able=PF  
 ‘Then night was starting to fall, and they said, “We can’t do it!”’
- (6) *Ghe pai=la me la=ghe ue=la ta Sumbilee va,*  
 PAST dawn=PF and 3p=PAST say=PF PREP Sumbilee COMP  
*“U=mene mai=a une-m ateva tani soo, me u=mene*  
 2s=again come=3sO PCL-2sP SG:I ART saw and 2s=again  
*mai tue-tue poi=a!”*  
 come RED-chop EMPH=3sO  
 ‘In the morning (lit. it dawned and) they said to Sumbilee, “Bring your saw, and you come cut it properly!”’
- (7) *Nau ta ghe rekata=la, la=ghe ai-kune taliaa=la,*  
 day PREP PAST arrive=PF 3p=PAST RECIP-seize round=PF  
*me la=ghe loo-lo sae=la, me ghe vira tiuaa=la*  
 and 3p=PAST RED-ask go.up=PF and PAST EMPH begin=PF  
*tani tue=a, me taono atea ghe vira nongo*  
 COMP chop=3sO and ton SG:II PAST EMPH hear

*usi=la=la.*

follow=3pO=PF

‘When he arrived, they held hands in a circle, and they prayed, and he started to cut it, and the ton tree really obeyed them.’

- (8) *Nau ta ai etea ghe katuu=la, ami voroi ami*  
day PREP tree SG:II PAST fall=PF 1px completely 1px

*ghe alousiusi=la, ta poli oroi-eili ni-u-ungu*  
PAST be.sorry=PF because many-INTENS NOM-RED-work

*atoa ami ghe elei eta-na.*

PL 1px PAST do PREP-3sP

‘When the tree fell, we were all sorry, because of the great work in doing it.’

- (9) *Me oroi-i=la vause namu ng-atoa me taita namu*  
and many-TR=PF woman big LIG-PL and man big

*ng-atoa, la=ghe usi=la tani toka pallu eta-na.*

LIG-PL 3p=PAST follow=PF COMP sit shelter PREP-3sP

‘And there were many old women and old men who used to sit in its shade.’

## Text 2

This text was written by Debra Pali of Lomakunauru village, in the Southern Mussau dialect.

### ***Nau eteva ami ghe lao sio tani usu aranna*** **‘The time we went to eat (lit. suck juice from) pandanus’**

- (1) *Kateva nau, aghi me kapu-ghu elua angatolu ghe*  
 one day 1s and friend-1sP DL:I 1tx PAST  
*ai-kolo=la tani la nge usu se*  
 RECIP=call=PF COMP go INCEP suck do.undirected  
*aranna.*  
 pandanus  
 ‘One day, my two friends and I called each other to go and eat (lit. suck juice from) some pandanus.’
- (2) *Ngotolu ghe kasu-kasu e=lao-lao me kateva eta-ingoto*  
 1tx PAST RED-walk 3s=RED-go and one:I PREP-1txP  
*ghe tara=la aranna luengiu massona.*  
 PAST see=PF pandanus DL:V ripe  
 ‘We were walking along and one of us saw two ripe pandanus fruit.’
- (3) *Vara me e=ghe ue=la va, “Aranna luengiu o*  
 then and 3s=PAST say=PF COMP pandanus DL:V that  
*massona tale aranna atae.”*  
 ripe PREP pandanus SG:II  
 ‘Then she said, “There are two ripe pandanus fruit in that pandanus tree.”’

- (4) *Me a=ghe ue=la va, "Itolu lao me a=laa sae=a."*  
 and 1s=PAST say=PF COMP 1ti go and 1s=go  
 go.up=3sO  
 'And I said, "Let's go and I'll climb it.'"
- (5) *Ngotolu ghe lao sio tale aranna atea me*  
 1tx PAST go go.down PREP pandanus SG:II and  
*a=ghe sae=a=la.*  
 1s=PAST go.up=3sO=PF  
 'We went over to the pandanus tree and I climbed it.'
- (6) *Kapu-ghu elua lalu ghe toka sio=la tale liue*  
 friend-1sP DL:I 3d PAST sit go.down=PF PREP base  
*ng-ai eteae.*  
 CONST-tree SG:II  
 'My friends sat down at the base of the tree.'
- (7) *A=ghe sae=la me a=ghe sai velu sio=la*  
 1s=PAST go.up=PF and 1s=PAST cut drop go.down=PF  
*aranna luengiu.*  
 pandanus DL:V  
 'I went up and cut and dropped the two pandanus fruit.'
- (8) *Nau-ghu tani oghi sio tale aranna atea, me*  
 day-1sP COMP go.back go.down PREP pandanus SG:II and  
*vara a=ghe taa-tara sio tale kateae laa*  
 then 1s=PAST RED-see go.down PREP one:II branch  
*ng-aranna, me a=ghe tara=la katu ng-ateva.*  
 CONST-pandanus and 1s=PAST see=PF snake LIG-SG:I  
 'When it was time for me to come down from the pandanus tree,  
 then I was looking down at a branch of the pandanus tree, and I  
 saw a snake.'

- (9) *Vara me a=ghe ue=la va, “Kapu-ghu elua, katu*  
 then and 1s=PAST say=PF COMP friend-1sP DL:I snake  
*ng-ateva oia! Vaalua ghaine a=sio?”*  
 LIG-SG:I here how today 1s=go.down  
 ‘Then I said, “My friends, there’s a snake here! Now how will I get  
 down?”’
- (10) *Kapu-ghu elua karika lalu ghe sama=la.*  
 friend-1sP DL:I NEG 3d PAST speak=PF  
 ‘My friends didn’t speak.’
- (11) *Vara me a=ghe ue=la va, “Malu tue=la teae*  
 then and 1s=PAST say=PF COMP 2d chop=PF EXIST:II  
*ai me a=sio ta ng-eta-na.”*  
 tree and 1s=go.down PREP LIG-PREP-3sP  
 ‘Then I said, “Cut down a tree and I will go down on it.”’
- (12) *Kateva ta ng-eta-irarua ghe tue=la ai eteae, me*  
 one PREP LIG-PREP-3dP PAST chop=PF tree SG:II and  
*ghe a-tingina vala-ini=e=la tale aranna atea, me*  
 PAST CAUS-stand lean-TR=3sO=PF PREP pandanus SG:II  
 and  
*a=ghe kure sio=la ta ng-eta-na.*  
 1s=PAST get.down go.down=PF PREP LIG-PREP-3sP  
 ‘One of them cut down a tree, and leaned it against the pandanus  
 tree, and I came down on it.’
- (13) *Ngatolu ghe sau=la aranna, me ngatolu ghe laa*  
 1tx PAST carry=PF pandanus and 1tx PAST go  
*toka sio tale kateae ppae liue ng-ai, me*  
 sit go.down PREP one:II other base CONST-tree and

*ngatolu ghe tiuaa=la tani usu aranna, me ngatolu*  
 1tx PAST begin=PF COMP suck pandanus and 1tx

*ghe ai-kang-kanga-aili.*

PAST RECIP-RED-laugh-INTENS

'We picked up the pandanus, and we went and sat down at the base of another tree, and we began to eat (lit. suck juice from) the pandanus, and we laughed hard amongst ourselves.'

- (14) *Vara me ngatolu ghe oghi sio=la elo ale.*  
 then and 1tx PAST go.back go.down=PF in house  
 'Then we went back home.'

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