

Library

## MUYUW NOUN PHRASES

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### 1. **APPOSITIONAL PHRASE**

### 2. **POSSESSION PHRASE**

### 3. **PHRASE CONTAINING VERBAL CLAUSES**

### 4. **PHRASE CONTAINING NOMINALISED CLAUSES**

### 5. **PHRASE OF ORIGIN**

### 6. **ENUMERATIVE PHRASE**

### 7. **ACCOMPANIMENT**

The data in this article is in practical Muyuw spelling, and not in phonemic script. Phrases are usually quoted as part of a sentence, with the rest of the sentence enclosed within square brackets.

Abbreviations used are as follows:

u. unreal aspect

r. real aspect

1 first person

2 second person

3 third person

in. inclusive

ex. exclusive

pl. plural

du. dual

1. APPOSITIONAL NOUN PHRASE

The basis of noun phrase formation in Muyuw is apposition and co-reference. Muyuw descriptive phrases do not follow the usual pattern of head-noun with modifier, although there are some phrases which could be analysed in this way. Rather, the usual pattern is to have a noun plus suffixed classifiers, each of which conveys different information, but each of which could stand alone as subject or object of the clause in which it occurs.

e.g.            na-wen            vin            na-kakit  
                 woman-that        woman        woman-small

(that small woman)

vin ("woman") may seem to be the head of this phrase, but it could be omitted without loss of meaning. ngwen and vin are interchangeable in position. Descriptives such as na-kakit usually follow the noun or pronoun which they describe. In common speech the classifier may be omitted, in which case the descriptive may precede the noun (but not pronoun) which it describes.

vin kakit            or            kakit vin ("small woman")

This conforms to the pattern of head-noun with subordinate modifier which is found in most languages, but it should be emphasised that this is not regarded as good Muyuw. It should also be noted that these modifiers can

act in isolation as nouns or pronouns, e.g.

Avakaen bo i-kous;      kakit n-i-ses.  
big really it-finished; little r.-it-stays

(Most of it is finished; a little bit is left)

Numeral and demonstrative suffixes are not found without a classifier, except siyas "those", which may stand alone. Usually however it is tasiyas "those men", nasiyas "those women", bunsiyas "those houses" etc. The singular demonstrative suffix is -wen "that one". The numeral suffixes are: -tan "one", -y "two", -toun "three", -vas "four", -nim "five".

Numerals with classifiers can function in isolation as pronouns. In a phrase in which they are in apposition to a noun they may precede or follow it. Following the noun seems to be the preferred position.

Noun phrases of this kind, consisting of nouns, pronouns and affixed classifiers in apposition to each other, are exactly the same in form as stative clauses.

Examples:

The first examples involve a classifier plus a modifier -

kwei-vaw  
non specific classifier-new (new thing)

(a) Tut kwei-vaw    tasilamaws  
Time thing-new    we begin

(We start a new period of time)

- (b) Nagein neim kwei-vaw misinal  
Today he came thing-new missionary

(Now a new missionary has come)

In the above examples kweivaw was in apposition to a noun in a phrase, but in the next example it stands alone as object of the clause.

- (c) Wankuyeim mo biwlules kwei vaw.  
Later then they will build new thing

(Later they will build a new one)

There is no fixed word-order in appositional noun phrases, as can be seen in the following examples:

- (d) Bunatum buna-tan iwlul Solomon  
House building-one he built Solomon

(Solomon built one house)

- (e) Kwavi-tan kwavig imom Iv  
vessel-one cup she drank Eve

(Eve drank one cupful)

The next example shows two nouns and a numeral pronoun, all in apposition, any of which could stand alone as subject of the sentence.

- (f) Man ma-na-tan bunibwan iyow in Budibud  
bird particular one-creature-one eagle it flew it went  
to Budibud

(That particular bird, the eagle, flew to Budibud)

The next example has two nouns, a numeral pronoun, and a descriptive pronoun.

- (g) Wankuyeim yey isekeig bwaloud bula-tan, bula-vaw alei-g.  
 Later me he gave me pig pig-one, pig-new, domestic animal-my

(Later he gave me one new pig for myself)

If this noun phrase stood alone as a stative clause, it would mean, "One new pig is mine."

Appositional noun phrases can be made negative in the same way as a stative clause.

- (h) nag kwei-tan yowbad  
 not thing-one god

(not one god)

## 2. POSSESSION PHRASE

The possessive affix on any noun can optionally have as a referent the appropriate pronoun, or a noun, or a noun phrase. There is no fixed word-order.

- (a) Agu-livan yey towen.  
 my-talk me this one

or Yey agu-livan towen.  
 Me my-talk this one

(This is my talk)

- (b) Gwad to-wen ina-geiguy mawan.  
 Child man-that his-preaching like that

(That young man's preaching was like that)

In the first example agu- "my" has the pronoun yey "me" as its referent. In the second example the phrase gwad towen "that child" is the referent of ina- "his". In this case the word-order in the phrase gwad towen could be reversed, and

the phrase could precede or follow the noun inageiguy.

- (c) Kuweiys na-tan kalkolek ate-n.  
You hit creature-one fowl liver-its.

(You hit the liver of one fowl)

In this case natan kalkolek "one fowl" is the referent of -n "its".

In every case the referent may be omitted, whether it be a pronoun, noun or noun phrase, if it is clear from the context what the referent is.

### 3. PHRASE CONTAINING VERBAL CLAUSES

A verbal clause (or clauses) may function as a modifier in a descriptive type of noun phrase, of which the head is an overt, or covert, nominal.

- (a) Iwekey Dakanikan, n-i-ses wa-ked, ilana ....  
He met Dakanikan, r.-he-stayed at-road, he said ....

(He met Dakanikan on the road, and he said ....)

nises waked "he stayed on the road" is the modifier which is descriptive of Dakanikan. If Dakanikan had been mentioned previously, it could have been omitted, and the phrase would consist of the clause only, modifying the covert noun Dakanikan, which is object of the transitive verb iwekey "he met him".

- (b) To-wen si-mey gimgeilin ven to-wen na-ka-n.  
Man-that companion-our person of village thing-that r.-we-went there

(That companion of ours was a person of that village to which we went)

In this case nakan "we went there" is descriptive of ven townen "that village".

(c) I-kin taw to-wen b-ei-kuk b-ei-n Loloman.

He-saw man man-that u.-he-sail u.-he-go to Loloman

(He saw that man who will sail and go to Loloman)

In this case beikuk bein Loloman "he will sail and go to Loloman" describes taw townen "that man".

#### 4. PHRASES CONTAINING NOMINALISED CLAUSES

A verb can be nominalised by an actor prefix, either

ta-            the man who

or      na-            the woman who

Such words can take the plural suffix -s.

If the verb stem is transitive it may take the first-order suffix -n, which indicates third person singular object, to which second-order suffix -s (plural subject) may be added; and this may be followed by a free-form object.

ta-wtelei-n      wag  
the man who-works-it    canoe    (the canoe maker)

ta-wtelei-n-s      wag  
the man who-works-it-pl. canoe    (the canoe makers)

Nominalised transitive verb-stems take object suffixes other than third singular and do so in a perfectly regular way.

ta-labeli-g  
the one who-helps-me

Such nominalised clauses act as single nouns, which may be possessed, and act in other ways as nouns within a phrase or clause.

Idawes tasiyas ina-tawteleins wag  
He called them his-workers of canoe

(He called for his canoe makers)

## 5. PHRASES OF ORIGIN

There are three types, the first being a prefix type, the second with a suffix such as -nen, and the third with a singular or plural suffix on the word gamag "person".

The prefix types are as follows:

gum-Kilivil

a man of Kiriwina

nen-Muyuw

a woman of Muyuw (Woodlark)

mina-Wamwan

people of Wamwan

When the -nen suffix is added to a word like in (or yin) "fish", it contracts to yanen which means "the fish of that place." Thus

Bowagis yanen means "the fish of Bowagis"

In the next example there is no contraction:

Sulog yabiy-nen means "the sago from Sulog"

The third group is possibly derived from

gamag-nen "person of that place",

with extensive phonological change.



These words usually follow the place-name to which they refer, but may precede it.

Niwgin gimgilis      people of New Guinea

An enumerative noun phrase is a list of nouns or pronouns or apposition phrases, in apposition to a single noun or pronoun (which may be overt or covert), which enumerates its constituent members.

(a) ka-touw      ama-tei-toun,      Deibid, Tulal, Tomin  
We-embarked our-men-three,      David, Tulal, Tomin

(b) sinebad si-ne-y nitu-n i-siwa-s  
 woman companion-her-pl. offspring(pl.)-her third  
 person-stayed there-pl.

in this case the enumerative phrase has two heads and is in apposition to the covert pronoun tasiyas "they". The first head is sinebad "woman", and the second head is siney nitun "her companions her children", which is an appositional phrase with two heads.

Lists of nouns in an enumerative noun phrase if stated emphatically have a transitional -a following each noun, and this is functionally equivalent to a comma.

<u>nuy-a</u>	<u>bwaloud-a</u>	<u>yabiyea</u>	<u>kana babaw</u>
coconuts,	pigs,	sago,	food plenty

In this case the first three items list the constituents of kana babaw "plenty of food". The -a on kan does not function as a comma, but is a transitional vowel as found in a close-knit grammatical sequence when two separate words are fused together as one phonological word. The conjunction o "and/or" is now found between nouns in enumerative phrases. This is a recent addition to the language which some people are not willing to accept as true language.

## 7. PHRASES OF ACCOMPANIMENT

The accompanitive noun so sou si se "companion" in our apposition phrase which is subject (or object) of a sentence usually specifies only part of the subject (or object). The other person(s) present can be deduced by subtraction from the subject (or object) affix.

All persons may be explicit, as in

<u>Yey sou-g</u>	<u>yak bi-te-n.</u>
I companion-my	you u.-we(in.du.)-go

(You and I will go).

However, in this sentence yey would normally be omitted. The

## Muyuw Noun Phrases

subject marker on the verb indicates that one speaker and hearer will go, so the apposition phrase soug yak "my companion you" indicates that the actors are "you" and "I". The free-form pronoun "I" is then redundant.

In fact the free-form pronoun yak "you" can be deduced from the verbal subject marker, and is redundant, so the sentence can be clearly stated

<u>Sou-g</u>	<u>bi-te-n.</u>
companion-my	u-lin.du.-

and this is a quite idiomatic usage of the accompanitive noun.

A further example of a partially stated subject is

<u>Nag kadilok</u>	<u>bi-ta-muloul-s</u>	<u>bwein si-gwe-y</u>	<u>yakamiy</u>
Not sufficiency	u.-lin.-greet-pl.	well	companions-my-pl.you(pl.)

(We were not able to greet properly, myself with all of you)

The overt free-form subject is found in the apposition phrase sigwey yakamiy "my companions you", but as the subject affixes on the verb indicate first person inclusive plural, then it can be deduced that the speaker is also included in the subject, although the free-form pronoun yey "I" is not added.

Use of the accompanative noun in this way is a prominent feature of Muyuw grammar, and also in the Dobu language family. (I used the Oklahoma Concordance Project in writing this paper).