

# Anaphora

## Description and theoretical issues in Whitesands

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COOL9: 5 February 2013

### Abstract

This paper investigates anaphora and control in the language of Whitesands. We look at a range of constructions involving anaphora, including zero referents, full pronouns, ‘reflexive’ suffix *-aru* and switch-reference chains. We use configurations with partial argument coreference to determine the anaphoric nature of the constructions in question.

### Whitesands

#### Classification

Austronesian > Malayo-Polynesian > Central-Eastern > Eastern Malayo-Polynesian > Oceanic > Central-Eastern Oceanic > South Vanuatu > Tanna > Whitesands

Whitesands (ISO: TNP) is a language whose homeland is in the east of Tanna, Vanuatu. It has a variety of less-common indigenous names; *Narak* ‘Narak’ or *naḡhatiien* ‘talk’ being the two most used. It is spoken by roughly 7500 native speakers who live in family oriented hamlets immediately north of the volcano Mt Yasur (Whitesands *iehwei*), reaching until the bay of *Weasisi* where the dialect chain has changed enough so that it is no longer intelligible to Whitesands speakers.

WSN has a nominative alignment with a pragmatically unmarked word order of SV(O). It is mainly head marking where the verb has prefixing agreement and TAM, distinguishing (in order) subject person (1.EXCL, 1.INCL, 2 and 3), a PAST/NONPAST tense axis, various aspectual markers, and subject number (SG, DU, TRI and PL). Similar number and person distinctions are available for nominal constituents and pronouns when appropriate. An inflected verb constitutes a potential clause and there is frequent pro-drop found throughout the language, not only for the subjects indexed on the verb, but for all (contextually recoverable) constituent types, including a noun in a prepositional phrase.

- (1) *Schema of Whitesands verbal prefixing (a) and suffixing (b)*
  - a. MOOD/TENSE - SUBJ.PERSON - TENSE -  
ASPECT/NEGATION - SUBJ.NUMBER - root
  - b. root - (movement.DIRECTION) - (GOAL.PERSON/REFLEXIVE) = (NEGATION)

## 1 Reflexives

Disjoint reference within a clause is marked with zero (2) & (3) or a pronoun (4) & (5).

- (2) *ko namu t-us*                     $\emptyset$   
then fish 3SG.NPST-bite  
Then the fish bites (it).  
WS4-110521-family1 00:43:47.148

- (3) *t-akeikei m-at-ø-elis* Ø  
 3SG.NPST-must ER-PROG-SG-hold  
 He has to hold (it).  
 WS5-120128-conver 00:04:35.336
- (4) *in t-at-os in u*  
 3SG 3SG.NPST-PROG-hold 3SG PROX  
 He holds this one.  
 WS5-120108-nako 00:44:02.348
- (5) *t-oh ilau*  
 3SG.NPST-hit 3DU.ACC  
 He hit them (DUAL).  
 WS4-110521-family1 00:16:36.643 - 00:16:38.000

Coreference is marked with zero (6) or a pronoun (7) & (8), or a benefactive/possessive pronoun (9).

- (6) *itamah n-aut-ol* Ø *o n-eepat-ien*  
 2PL 2-PROG.PL-make OBL NMLZ-big-NMLZ  
 You all are making (yourselves) big/exalted.  
 ISJHWS3-20100329JVC-05-all.wav 592.076 593.214
- (7) *k-ost-əpariəpari =iie itah mən ohni*  
 1.INCL-NEG.PL-admire.RDP =NEG 1PL.INCL.ACC again OBL.3SG  
 We are looking bad at ourselves about it.  
 ISJHWS3-20100329JVC-02-all 00:09:26.673 - 00:09:29.883
- (8) *NS mene G mene k-om-w-eti ilau mən*  
 NS and G and 3-PST-DU-hit 3DU.ACC also  
 NS and G were also fighting each other.  
 WS4-110525-imaiim 00:07:57.100 - 00:08:00.140
- (9) *k-ot-alahu nawanien =ikin niŋ-lah*  
 3.NPST-PL-put food = PLACE POSS.EAT-3PL.GENITIVE  
 They put food there for themselves.  
 ISJHWS3-20100329JVC-01-hi 00:11:27.895 - 00:11:30.566

Coreference can also be additionally marked with a suffix *-aru* that occurs with both zero (10) and pronominal arguments (11).

- (10) *t-at-ətis-aru* Ø  
 3SG-PROG-unwind-REFL  
 It will undo itself.  
 WS5-120128-conver 00:04:30.220 - 00:04:30.993
- (11) *t-at-oh-aru ama in*  
 3SG-PROG-hit-REFL only 3SG.ACC  
 He was only attacking himself.  
 WS4-110524-imaiim 00:05:08.280 - 00:05:09.080

It is not possible to use *-aru* with full nominal reference (12), nor is it possible to use *-aru* with partial coreference (13).

- (12) \* *petan t-oh-aru petan*  
 woman 3SG.NPST-hit-REFL woman  
 (she killed herself)
- (13) \* *petan t-oh-aru ilau*  
 woman 3SG.NPST-hit-REFL 3DU.ACC  
 (she killed themselves)

## 2 Cause Chaining

Disjoint reference is made with full agreement on clauses, with (14) or without nominal reference (15).

(14) *nəwəin k-awt-ue i-Vila, nəwəin k-awt-uven Santo*  
 some 3.NPST-PROG.PL-go LOC-vila some 3.NPST-PROG.PL-go Santo  
 Some go to Vila, some others go to Santo.  
 jhws1-20080417-all01-005

(15) *Laf t-ivi t-iaij rakis*  
 Laf 3SG.NPST-pull 3SG.NPST-escape out  
 Laf fished, it came out (of the mouth).  
 WS5-120128-conver 00:20:24.713 - 00:20:25.963

Coreference across clauses is marked with the echo referent prefix. This prefix tells us that the subject of the clause is typically coreferential with the subject of the preceding clause (16) and (17).

(16) *k-l-eni aroiiu m-l-eru mə, k-apa*  
 1.INCL.NPST-TRI-say now ER-TRI-see COMP 3-no  
 Now us three will talk and we'll see that, no.  
 jhws1-20080417-all01-073

(17) *kani metou k-ot-atij m-oh-uven m-ot-eni mən ko m-oh-ua m-ot-eni mən*  
 and but 3PL.NPST-live ER-PL-go ER-PL-say also then ER-PL-come ER-PL-say also  
*nakele-templau*  
 back-1PL.INCL  
 And because they lived and went on and were also talking, and then they came and talked  
 behind our backs too. WS5-120108-nako 00:08:24.100 – 00:08:27.309

It is a true anaphor and is ungrammatical without an antecedent (18).

(18) \* *m-l-eru mə, k-apa*  
 ER-TRI-see COMP 3-no

Partial coreference is possible with the echo referent prefix (19) & (20).

(19) *t-am-at-oh raha-n ietemimi, m-w-aplis nati kati*  
 3SG-PST-PROG-hit POSS-3SG person ER:3-DU-break thing one  
 He<sub>1</sub> was hitting his wife<sub>2</sub> and they<sub>1+2</sub> have broken something.  
 WS4-110521-family1 00:11:28.190 - 00:11:31.150

(20)

a. *ko ia-k-ø-eles nerow m-ø-aiiu m-ø-uven iwakir*  
 then 1.EXCL.NPST-SG-hold spear ER-SG-run ER-SG-go close

b. *ko m-ø-oh pukah-i*  
 then ER-SG-hit pig-TRNS

c. *t-imis ko*  
 3SG.NPST-die then

d. *m-ot-etei m-ot-eles m-h-awt a(paha) lahwanu*  
 ER-PL-cut ER-PL-carry ER-PL-quick OBL village

<sup>a.</sup> And then I<sub>1</sub> take the spear run close up to the pig <sup>b.</sup> and I<sub>1</sub> kill the pig. <sup>c.</sup> It dies, then <sup>d.</sup>  
 we<sub>1+2</sub> cut it up, and carry it and hurry back to the village.  
 jhws2-20090301-AK01

The argument of the ECHO REFERENT clause can be also referenced with an explicit pronoun (21).

(21) *in m-es-ø-efe =ien nefteni kam lah kati, iewa*  
 3SG<sub>SUBJ</sub> ER:3-NEG-SG-give.to3 =NEG earth to 3PL one yes  
 He didn't give his land to them at all, that is so?  
 WS4-110524-imaiim 00:13:23.910 - 00:13:25.970

### 3 System features

	Without <i>-aru</i> Neutral	With <i>-aru</i> Marked	<i>m-</i> Anaphor
Full NP	Disjoint Reference	*	*
Zero	Disjoint Reference Coreference	Coreference	Coreference Partial Coreference
Simple Pronoun	Disjoint Reference Coreference (Partial coreference)	Coreference	(Coreference)

Table 1: Usage of Anaphora in Whitesands

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### Abbreviations

1 ‘FIRST PERSON’, 2 ‘SECOND PERSON’, 3 ‘THIRD PERSON’, ACC ‘ACCUSATIVE’, COMP ‘COMPLEMENTISER’, DAT ‘DATIVE’, DU ‘DUAL’, ER ‘ECHO REFERENT’, EXCL ‘EXCLUSIVE’, INCL ‘INCLUSIVE’, M ‘MASCULINE’, N ‘NON/NEGATIVE’, NEG ‘NEGATIVE CIRCUMFIX’, NMLZ ‘NOMINALISER CIRCUMFIX’, NOM ‘AGENTIVE NOMINALISER’, OBL ‘OBLIQUE’, PL ‘PLURAL’, POSS ‘GENERAL POSSESSION CLASSIFIER’, PERF ‘PERFECT(IVE)’, PROG ‘PROGRESSIVE’, PROX ‘PROXIMAL’, PROS ‘PROSPECTIVE’, PST ‘PAST’, RDP ‘REDUPLICATION’, REFL ‘REFLEXIVE’, SEQ ‘SEQUENTIAL’, SG ‘SINGULAR’, SUBJ ‘SUBJECT’, TAM ‘TENSE ASPECT MOOD’, TRI ‘TRIAL’, TRNS ‘TRANSITIVE’.