

**The Grammar of Nouns and Verbs in Whitesands, an
Oceanic Language of Southern Vanuatu**

by

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Abstract

Whitesands is an under-described language of southern Vanuatu, and this thesis presents Whitesands-specific data based on primary in-situ field research¹. The thesis addresses the distinction of noun and verb word classes in the language. It claims that current linguistic syntax theory cannot account for the argument structure of canonical object-denoting roots. It is shown that there are distinct lexical noun and verb classes in Whitesands but this is only a weak dichotomy. Stronger is the NP and VP distinction, and this is achieved by employing a new theoretical approach that proposes functional categories and their selection of complements as crucial tests of distinction. This approach contrasts from previous analyses of parts of speech in Oceanic languages and cross-linguistically. It ultimately explains many of the syntactic phenomena seen in the language family, including the above argument assignment dilemma, the alienable possession of nouns with classifiers and also the nominalisation processes.

¹ This thesis is based on data collected by the author for the project: Documentation and Description of Whitesands, a language from Tanna, Vanuatu. Chief Investigator: Prof. Jane Simpson. University of Sydney HREC Reference: 10-2007/10317.

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Other than Edwin there were three other people who were instrumental in getting me to Vanuatu. John Connell, I am in your debt for the financial support you organised that helped my fieldwork and also for initially taking me to Vanuatu in 2007 for a field school. John Lynch, for somewhat flippantly suggesting that I “do my honours year in Vanuatu” and for helping me get my research visa for my work on Tanna. And thank you to Shan, for introducing me to Edwin, encouraging me to go and helping me arrange my time there.

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and archiving is gratefully accepted, and I would like to think that my fieldwork data can contribute to their impressive project.

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At the linguistics department at USYD, I show appreciation to the honours group, in particular Nick and Hope, for their friendship and sincerity. I must also thank a few people by name as they have been my linguistic sounding board for the past two years: Mark Harvey for his long discussions on every topic of linguistics and every problem I could find in the Whitesands language, Aidan Wilson for his technical 'nerddom', proofreading and general linguistic trash-talk, and Sébastien Lacrampe at USP for his hospitality in Vanuatu and some good conversations over kava. I also thank everyone who has had the time to discuss linguistics and culture with me, Oceanic or otherwise, over the past two years.

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Notes on Data

Numbering

Examples from the Whitesands corpus are numbered in respect to the thesis. Further, they each have an audio/video file or specific notebook reference. For example, (jhws2-20090227-NN03_018), refers to the second fieldwork trip, dated 27/2/2009. The speaker's initials are NN and it is the third text of the day. This is usually broken into intonation based units ranging from one second to maybe five seconds of text and in the previous example it was the 18th section. All audio files presented in this fashion are to be deposited with www.paradisec.org.au, and can be accessed with the author's or speaker's permission. The final text in the appendix can be heard in Adobe in the .pdf version (embedded .mp3). All the raw data remains the property of each individual speaker or their families.

Orthography

This thesis follows simplified IPA conventions for orthography. All Whitesands data is presented in *italics*. The vowels are as listed in the following table (with differing orthography in parentheses). There are five rising diphthongs [aw], [ow], [oi], [ei] and [ai].

	front	central	back
closed	i		u
		ə	
mid	ɛ (e)		ɔ (o)
open		ɶ (a)	

The consonants and glides are as below (with the differing orthography in parentheses).

There is no voicing distinction for the stops, but intervocalic stops tend to be voiced (except when adjacent to /h/) and word final stops are aspirated. Fricatives are voiceless. The alveolar trill sometimes surfaces as an intervocalic tap in fast speech.

	bilabial	labio-dental	alveolar	palatal	velar	glottal
stop ²	p		t/tʰ ³ (t)		k/x (k)	
nasal	m		n		ŋ	
trill / tap			r /ɾ (r)			
fricative		f	s	tʃ		h̥ (h)
glide		w			j (y)	
lateral			l			

2 There has been a suggestion in the past that Whitesands has a set of velarised or rounded stops that are phonemes [k^w], [t^w], [p^w]. However in my research in the dialect spoken in *Yenamakel*, I could not find a variation in places that previously may have had it. It is probably the case that the stop and velarised stop have merged.

3 The [tʃ] stands for a palatalised stop, rather like an affricate. While common, it is not originally a phonemic fricative or affricate for two reasons. Firstly, in native Whitesands, it is in complementary distribution with [t]. Whenever a /t/ precedes /i/ then this segment surfaces as a palatalised affricate [tʃ] and the /i/ will only surface if it is the only nucleus of a syllable. Secondly, it shares the voicing alternation with the stop series, while the other fricatives remain voiceless all of the time. Also, some older speakers of Whitesands still use [t]~[d] in environments where younger speakers will have the palatalised [tʃ]~[dʃ], showing this is a recent phonological change. Borrowed words that have the affricate are written as such.

Abbreviations and Conventions

This thesis follows the Leipzig glossing rules. In particular, a period means that a single object-language element is rendered by several metalanguage elements and a hyphen is a morphemic boundary. In-text glossing is in ‘inverted commas’ and grammatical glosses are in SMALL CAPS. The full glossing rules explanation can be accessed at

http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/LGR09_02_23.pdf

1	First person	NMLZ	Nominaliser circumfix
2	Second person	NOM	Agentive nominaliser
3	Third person	NP	Noun Phrase
ABS	Absolutive	OBJ	Object
ANA	Anaphora	OBL	Oblique
ART	Article	OPP.S	Opposite sex
CLFR	Classifier	PL	Plural
COMP	Complementiser	POSS	General possession
CONJ	Conjunction	PP	Preposition phrase
CTH	Close to hearer	PRF	Perfect(ive)
DAT	Dative	PROG	Progressive
DU	Dual	PROX	Proximal
ERG	Ergative	PRON2	Pronominal Suffix
ES	Echo subject	PROS	Prospective
EX	Exhaustive	PST	Past
EXCL	Exclusive	RDP	Reduplication
FUT	Future	S	Speaker
H	Hearer	SEQ	Sequential
HAB	Habitual	S.S	Same sex
HUM	Human	SG	Singular
ID	Identified (by pointing)	SUBJ	Subject
INCL	Inclusive	TAM	Tense/aspect/mood
I	Inflect (for TAM)	TR	Trial
MED	Medial	TRNS	Transitive
N	Non/Neg	VP	Verb Phrase
NEG	Negative aspect circumfix	WS	Whitesands

1 Introduction

1.1 Parts of Speech in Whitesands

This thesis addresses the core issue of noun/verb distinctions in Austronesian languages, which has been a fundamental concern in over 100 years of linguistic description and theory. It will also present a language that has so far been poorly documented, thus adding valuable data to cross-linguistic studies. It is shown that in Whitesands, the syntactic distinction for parts of speech ultimately does match the morphological criteria that demonstrate there are underlying lexical noun and verb word classes. To achieve this, morphological and syntactic behaviour of Whitesands is presented and analysed in a basic lexicalist generative grammar approach.

Like other Austronesian languages, Whitesands verbs and nouns share some syntactic and distributional similarities which may suggest that they are categorically indistinguishable at a lexical level. This problem includes argument assigning nouns, which are unaccounted for in current syntax theories. This thesis' approach shows that there is a weak lexical distinction between the noun and verb word class. Complementing this, is evidence that shows TAM structures and possessive phrases are inherent to the VP and NP phrase distinction, and although they are different to typical Indo-European analyses, this is the primary point of differentiation. This is achieved through a new theoretical framework.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. This chapter (1) lays the foundation for my research; it includes the ethno-geographic description of modern Whitesands. Chapter 2 consists of two interrelated literature reviews; one on the linguistic history of Whitesands, and a second on the noun/verb problem facing Austronesian linguistics. Chapter 3 introduces the Whitesands language, and presents a sketch grammar of the language, focusing on the elements that are significant for this study. This is so that the reader can understand the language in question, and also interpret the findings of the subsequent chapter. Chapter 4 addresses the parts of the Whitesands grammar that suggest that the lexical noun/verb class distinction exists. This

includes the behaviour of the argument assignment by nouns, the nominalisation process and the possession problem. This chapter also outlines the syntactic behaviour that demonstrates that Whitesands syntax does have an underlying NP and VP distinction. This is achieved through the proposal of a new theory that determines phrase class through the selection of complements by functional categories. Chapter 5 summarises and concludes the thesis with a discussion of the direction of further research. The appendix (Chapter 6) consists of a Whitesands text with audio (in the .pdf version).

These chapters all combine for a thesis that demonstrates that even within genetic families, languages have a wide variety of grammatical permutations, and that each language is deserving of its own consideration and analysis. In Whitesands, this is the syntactic noun versus verb distinction which is presented in this study. Additionally, from a theoretical perspective, it proposes a claim that functional categories and the selection of their complements are the decisive criteria for phrase types. This is fundamentally different from current theoretical approaches to x-bar syntax, but exemplifies that syntax (c-structure) and argument structure (a-structure) are parts of the grammar that must be separately analysed. Finally, the importance of this thesis extends beyond simply addressing the word class problem. It also allows Whitesands to be put forth for the first time in a clear and well-documented method.

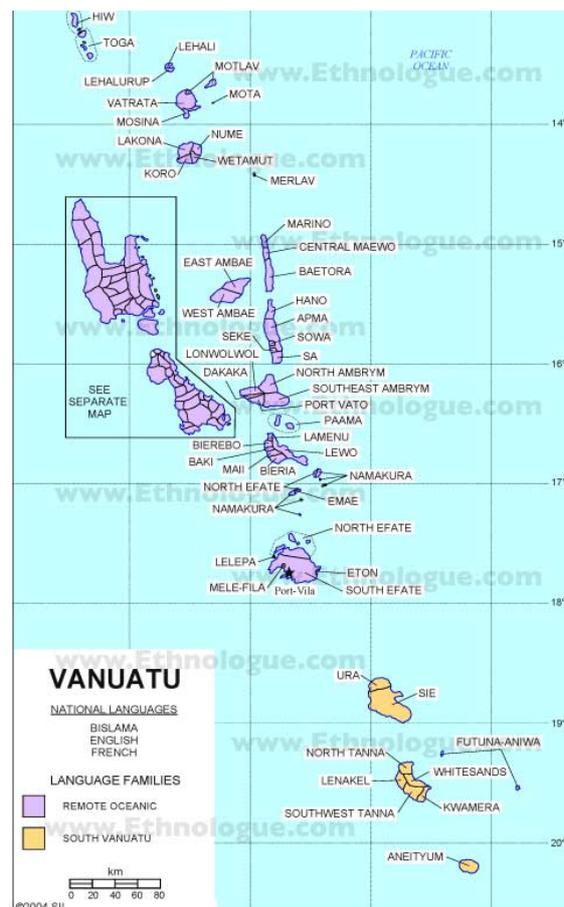
1.2 Whitesands, Vanuatu

The history and culture of Tanna has long been studied by western academics and historical enthusiasts. It has a rich mixture of traditional belief systems, a long experience with Christian missionaries, and more recently has had attention brought to its cargo cults and innovative political systems. This section is a brief introduction to the people and places that speak the Whitesands language. Much more detailed anthropological research into the island's socio-cultural practices can be found in the excellent "*The Tree and the Canoe: History and Ethnogeography of Tanna*" (Bonnemaison & Pénot-Demetry 1994) and also Tabani (1999), (2007) and Lindstrom (1990), (1982).

1.2.1 Location

Whitesands is a language that originates from the eastern coast of Tanna, Vanuatu (see map of Vanuatu (1)). It is spoken primarily in a series of villages that are found immediately to the north and north-east of Mt Yasur, the active volcano on the island, starting on the coast at *Ipakəl* (Sulphur Bay). There is also a significant population of Whitesands speakers in Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu, and a significant proportion of this group live (rather ironically) in a locality called Blacksands. There is an indigenous name for the language *nəŋhatien* ‘(lit.) conversing’. But, since most ni-Vanuatu generally know the area as Whitesands, and many Tanna that were born there refer to themselves as coming from Whitesands, I will, for now, continue using the colonial name.

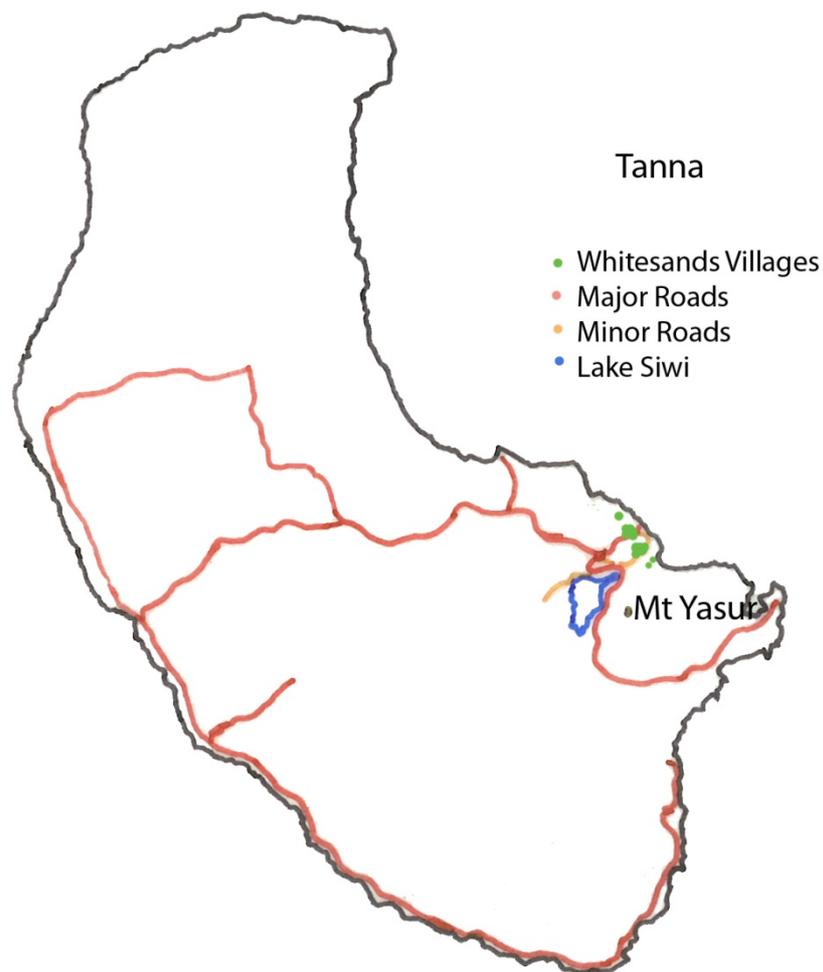
(1)



Map of Vanuatu with language localities, Tanna is in the south
(reproduced in accordance with terms and conditions from Gordon
2005)

I was based during my research in *Yenamakel* village, which is home to one of the larger and politically more powerful *nakamals* (known as *lialu*) in the region (see map of Tanna (2) where the larger green dot to the south represents *Yenamakel*) (see also § 6.2). It is based about one kilometre inland from the former Whitesands hospital and has two churches (one with a big blue roof clearly visible on Google Earth, see [link](#)) and a primary school. The dialect that I therefore am referring to in this thesis is centred around this village, although I did have frequent contact with most villages and their communities within half an hour's walk from *Yenamakel*.

(2)



Map of Tanna: The dialect that this thesis concentrates on is spoken
in the villages marked by green

1.2.2 The Community

The population of *Yenamakel* is about 456 people spread across seven major family groups (counted during a short village-wide census in May 2008). The Whitesands region as a whole consists of about 4-5000 people (there was a country-wide census conducted while I was on Tanna in March 2009, when this is published a more specific figure will be available). On the island, they live a rural, close-to-subsistence lifestyle. This involves the planting of multiple gardens of tubulars such as *nu* ‘yam’, *manto* ‘manioc/cassava’, *netei* ‘taro’ and *koleei* ‘kumara’. This daily activity provides the staples to their diet, along with the domesticated livestock such as *menaj* ‘fowl’ and *pukah* ‘pig’ and other general fruits, such as *nipən* ‘banana’, *nemei* ‘breadfruit’ and *naw* ‘namambe nut’⁴. Two other important crops are *nien* ‘coconut’ used daily for cooking (primarily by the women) and *nəkawə* ‘kava’ for men-only intoxication.

(3)



Kava is an important crop

⁴ Namambe is also known as Tahitian chestnut

(4)



Coconuts are an important crop

There is a strong church and western-style schooling presence in the area, but there also remain many families who are committed to *kastom* traditions. In reality, most families have a variety of different individual beliefs and practices, dependant on each individual. Much of the community is illiterate, and when people are literate it is generally in Bislama, the national language.

The region is notoriously short on land and thus there are limited economic opportunities there. Since Vanuatu's independence, there has been strong migration away from Tanna to Port Vila, thus accounting for the population of Whitesands speakers living and working there. It appears that most people go to Vila at some point during their lives, either to visit family or to work. Some of these return at the end of their employment but many stay in Vila, contributing to a constant flow back and forth between the island and urban communities. There are also a large number of children living on Tanna with extended family because schooling in Vila is comparatively expensive. Although they are away from their immediate

family, growing up on Tanna ensures that they are still exposed to their parents' language from a young age. The first language spoken by children is primarily Whitesands but the influence from Bislama is undoubtable. As the economically dominant lingua franca, Bislama is used for many introduced concepts, schooling and greater Vanuatu communication, and in this respect it is slowly replacing traditional structures, lexicon and knowledge. For the moment, it appears that Whitesands is a healthy language because children are still speaking it as their exclusive language at least until their early teens and most village life is conducted in Whitesands.

More recently, there has been a big initiative to reintroduce migrant worker schemes, with Tanna (and Whitesands) heavily involved. In early 2008, over 100 Whitesands men and women went to New Zealand to work in the Rural Seasonal Employment scheme (Connell & Hammond 2009; Hammond & Connell 2009). This is the first time that there has been mass organised migration from Tanna since the quasi-slavery periods late in the 19th century, when man-Tanna were taken to work in the Queensland sugar cane industry. What is not known is the full effect this migration will have on the community. It has the capacity to increase the desire to learn and speak English, provide more money for schooling and also introduce new technologies. All of these may have an effect on the Whitesands language. Lastly, but equally new, is the widespread introduction of mobile phones. In the past year, the Whitesands community has gone from having no mobile phone tower to having two and now mobile phones and their use is widespread throughout the community. On initial observation it appears that these facilitate communication with the Whitesands language, including text messaging, of which I have received some here in Australia. This is providing the first real dynamic written medium for Whitesands. It will be extremely interesting to watch these changes unfold over the next few years.

1.2.3 Methodology and Data

The decision to study Whitesands was based purely on circumstance. I first went to Vanuatu as part of a University of Sydney geography field school and while I was there I was invited

to come and stay in a friend's village (*Yenamakel*). After consultation with Prof. Lynch at USP, it turned out that the language spoken by my friend was very much under described and documented (see §2.1). After discussion with Prof. Simpson and Prof. Foley, I arranged for my honours year to be inclusive of another field trip to Vanuatu in order to study the language for two purposes, this thesis and general documentation. This trip occurred in November 2007 and I lived in *Yenamakel* for six months. Much of the data was collected during this time. I was also fortunate to return and visit again in early 2009 as part of another project and I was able to spend another month in the village collecting additional data. The data itself is archived with PARADISEC and is being prepared to be sent to the Vanuatu Cultural Centre.

(5)



Public speaking at the nakamal is a valued skill on Tanna

The data is based on my experiences in the village. This includes my day-to-day interactions with all community members, my observations of village life, as well as specific language *skul* 'school/lessons' with various teachers. Since nearly all people living in the village and its surrounds speak Whitesands, there was never a lack of opportunity to practice or ask questions. The corpus includes a range of genres, including public speeches, multiple participant conversations (sometimes over kava), recount, instructions, traditional stories and

general elicitation (see appendix 6.2 for a full text example). For the purposes of this thesis, I have had no restrictions on text-type as I have been searching for specific grammatical patterns. I have attempted to restrict the data to people who are from and live in *Yenamakel* village, as to reduce village micro-lect fluctuations that could interfere with the analysis. My teachers ranged in age from late-teens to early 70s. I worked with both males and females, although due to Tanna social norms this is somewhat biased towards males.

2 Oceanic Languages and Syntax

This chapter consists of two parts; a literature review of Whitesands (and closely related languages), and a linguistic theory background that is the influence on the description and discussion of this thesis. The second part addresses the fundamental question of parts of speech definition, other problematic areas of Oceanic syntax, and provides a foundation for the nominalisation issues.

2.1 Whitesands Literature, a Language of Tanna

Vanuatu, as one of the most linguistically diverse countries (languages per capita), has had a recent history of language documentation and description. This undertaking dates back to the mid 19th century, when missionaries and colonial administrators, some of whom had interest in languages, did preliminary documentation and analysis in the region. Of particular note for Whitesands are a book chapter and some unpublished manuscripts. The chapter is from MacDonald's compendium *The South Sea Languages* and it concerns the basic description of a language called "Weasisi" (Gray 1891). According to Ethnologue, Weasisi is a dialect of the Whitesands language (Gordon 2005). However, this information is misleading and ambiguous, as the Ethnologue entry for Whitesands is lacking in specific information, only noting "Tanna, East Coast" as its realm. In reality, at least three languages are spoken on various parts of the geographical east coast of Tanna.

Gray more specifically writes "The Weasisi dialect (of which an attempt is now made to write a grammar) is spoken all along the east side of Tanna, from Sulphur Bay to within a short distance of the northern end" (1891: 109). This roughly corresponds to where my fieldwork took place, as I was based about 20 minutes walk north of Sulphur Bay (*Ipakəl*). As a result, I and native speakers of Whitesands can recognise some of his exemplar as being of the same language that I have been working with. However, on the whole, this description/analysis is problematic and is an unsuitable source for this thesis' in-depth and synchronic analysis for several reasons.

In the data presented by Gray, while having a detailed orthography, many of the forms do not match current usage. This is because of both language change and possible misrepresentation of the original sources. This is not a direct criticism of Gray, who himself admits this:

“The time at my disposal has been too short to do the work as I would like it to be done. Had there been more time, greater conciseness, accuracy, and completeness could have been given to the work. For the references to the Kwamera dialect I alone am responsible, Mr. and Mrs. Watt being in Scotland carrying through the press the New Testament in that dialect. I have had no opportunity to consult them as to the validity of these references” (1891: 108).

Linguistic knowledge (especially in the academic realm) progressed greatly during the 20th century. This means that as an untrained linguist, some of Gray’s analysis is somewhat awkward. It is clear that the grammar is written to an organised and sectioned model (most likely for the purposes of the MacDonald’s typologically-designed book, *The South Seas Compendium*) and hence does not correctly reflect Weasisi. Evidence for this includes Gray’s chapter on articles, which he freely admits is a grammatical function that Weasisi does not utilise in the canonical sense. Nevertheless, Gray continues on to (mis)-describe the definite article use in the language because the then-contemporary linguistic theory required it. His explication of orthographic *a* highlights another problem: “a has three sounds: a, as in ‘America’: *ika* ‘here’ ; a, as in ‘psalm’ : *raham* ‘thine’ and a, as in ‘all’ : *caka* ‘they are not’” (My italics: Gray 1891: 110)⁵. In short, he was missing a phonemic vowel contrast between IPA schwa [ə] (open mid unrounded vowel) and turned a [ɐ] (open central unrounded vowel).

It is possible to retrieve some information from the text with an understanding of the language. However, from a syntax and semantics viewpoint, his description is lacking a clear explanation of combinations and usage of forms. There is one long text from Kwamera (Gray 1891: 160-162), but this is a language to the south and is not a true reflection of Whitesands and hence a possible analysis of it would not be profitable for this thesis. While Gray clearly

⁵ Gray also does not say which ‘a’ in America he is referring to.

lays out some tables of his morpheme analysis, he presents only a few longer (i.e. sentence-text based) examples of Weasisi. When they are presented, they are not well explained or described as seen in (6) (further, (6) is ungrammatical in modern Whitesands, in square brackets).

- (6) *ik nukabuli laben wa kubwa?* [**ik nəkəpəli lapən wə kapa*]
 Did you sleep in the night (or not)? (Gray 1891: 152)

Two other sources of Whitesands-specific data are unpublished manuscripts. Rev. MacMillan was a Presbyterian missionary who lived on Tanna for about forty years from 1896 (Gregory 2003). He compiled (at the least) a rudimentary wordlist, presumably for his own missionary work which included a New Testament and multi-language hymn book. It is roughly sectioned by a semantic domain classification, such as “Fish and Marine Life” or “Religion and Customs” (MacMillan(Rev.) n.d.: 14 and 22).

(7)	<i>Alas</i>	aue
	<i>Alert</i>	-air
	<i>Alight</i>	-asia (to light)
	<i>Alike</i>	kuakinan (for two things)
	<i>Alive</i>	-amiagah
	<i>All</i>	arafuin
	<i>Alleviate</i>	-asiru akaku
	<i>Allegory</i>	nagahatien aurlin

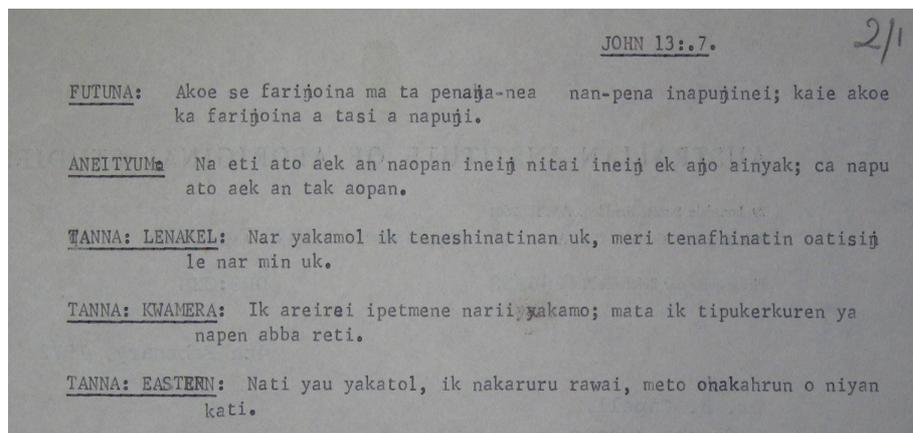
An excerpt from MacMillan’s English-Whitesands wordlist

The wordlist makes no grammatical claims about Whitesands, nor are there any descriptions of usage. The manuscript’s only clue towards the syntax and other structural behaviour of Whitesands, is the use of hyphens, to indicate that a particular morpheme is bound. However, his use of these on verbs, to say they are a bound root, is problematic as the root form does

appear unbound, without zero prefixes, as the imperative form. Also, he is inconsistent throughout the manuscript with this system.

Another possible source of Whitesands material is the expansive (but currently inadequately organised) Arthur Capell collection, which is held at the National Library and part of which has been digitised by Peter Newtown and the Pacific And Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures (www.paradisec.org.au). Most of the accessible Whitesands material is in the form of comparative studies by Capell, such as wordlists with other Tanna and Southern Vanuatu languages. There are some more interesting pieces, such as (8), which is a comparison of a bible text in various languages (Whitesands is listed as “Tanna: Eastern”) (Capell n.d.). Nevertheless, these are not well glossed, and are unsuitable for the purposes of this study. These longer excerpts are also uncommon in the digitised collection, and they are under described, that is they lack metadata, analysis or explanation and are thereby incomplete. They are probably worthy of further investigation, in that they contain data that will be useful for other linguistic studies, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to do so.

(8)

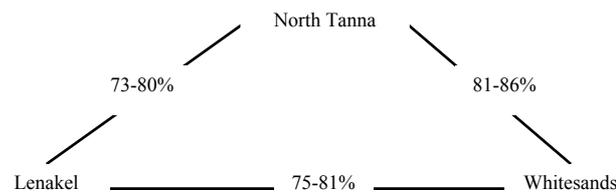


Comparison of John 13:7 by Capell (AC2-VCOMVO202).

The other languages on Tanna and closely related languages on nearby islands have been better addressed by contemporary linguistics. Two southern Vanuatu languages of Erromango, “Sye” and “Ura”, were described in grammars by Crowley and they show some

syntactic similarities with Tanna languages, such as the use of derived nouns (Crowley 1998, 1999; Lynch, Ross, & Crowley 2002: 698). More closely related are the languages of “Lenakel”, “North Tanna”, “Southwest Tanna” and “Kwamera” which are adjacent to Whitesands to the north-west, north, west and south respectively. Although there is a reasonably clear linguistic boundary between Whitesands, Southwest Tanna and Kwamera (fortunately marked by a mountain range and an active volcano), the distinction between Whitesands, North Tanna and Lenakel is more problematic. They have been described as part of a dialect chain, and my experience on Tanna supports, to some extent, this conclusion. Lynch uses a modified Swadesh wordlist to summarise the following lexicostatistical figures presented in (9).

(9)



Tanna lexicostatistics (Lynch 1978: 1).

I will not consider Lynch’s claim that the grammars of these languages “are virtually identical” (1978: 1), as this is not the purpose of this thesis and a complete detailed grammar of Whitesands is needed before this claim can be addressed⁶. This information is included to

⁶ In reality it is not simply ‘identical grammars’ as we can see in this short example. Consider the following Lenakel dictionary entry; “*Namsu* noun, Story about another place or another time (as opposed to myth or legend (*nouanaje*) and to account of a current event (*nauistoaan*) [Possessed alienably by the teller, semi-alienably by one who the story is about: *namsu tahak*, my story (which I tell), *namsu in io* or *namsu lak*, my story (the one about me)]” (Lynch 1977: 67). Compare this to contemporary Whitesands:

<i>namsu</i>	<i>raha</i>	<i>nafaja</i>
story	OBL	bow.and.arrow
a story about the bow and arrow (jhws2-20090301-AK01_002)		

This demonstrably shows that the ‘alienably possessed’ *nafaja* ‘bow.and.arrow’ structure **does not** represent the teller of the story, which is the case in 1970s Lenakel *namsu tahak* ‘my story’.

demonstrate that the Whitesands information being presented here is not in complete areal vacuum.

Two of these languages have dictionaries and grammars written and published in the last forty years (for Kwamera see Lindstrom 1986; Lindstrom & Lynch 1994) and (for Lenakel see Lynch 1974, 1977, 1978). Southwest Tanna has had a grammar and vocabulary sketch written (Lynch 1982). This is not to say that these languages are perfectly described and analysed⁷. However, because they have published data available to the wider linguistic field, they are still being considered by contemporary linguistic theory. North Tanna has had a SIL linguist working on the language for the past 15 years but has only had preliminary phonology analysis completed and this is unpublished (Carlson pers. comm.).

Therefore, Whitesands is still classified as a poorly-described language. While it has been under the scrutiny of modern linguistics for over 150 years, it is still lacking in sound description and explanation. I hope that by creating a detailed and in-depth understanding of Whitesands syntax and semantics, which this thesis is a small part of, then problematic issues in the descriptions of the related languages may also be solved. I reiterate that the value of this thesis is more than just tackling the noun/verb problem, as it also contributes to the documentation of a language.

2.2 The Theoretical Problem

This thesis is about word classes and also how this is affected by the morphosyntax of nominalisation. I address the following; Can we confidently conclude a clear lexical noun and verb ‘word class’ differentiation using syntactic criteria to support the claim? This section will look at how word class definition is problematic, especially within the Austronesian language family. It will sketch a brief history of parts of speech description before focusing on some more recent analyses of other Oceanic languages (a subfamily of the Austronesian

⁷ For example, Lenakel’s grammar contains unresolved problems such as “The preposition *kam* is normally dative. Certain verbs, especially those of giving, require *kam* rather than *to* [also ‘DAT’], but there appears to be no simple way of distinguishing on semantic grounds which verbs take *to* and which verbs take *kam*: thus *akar* ‘speak’, takes *kam*, but *ini* ‘say, speak’ takes *to*” (Lynch 1978: 71).

family). Finally, it will summarise the problems that this thesis will address; how are nominalisation and argument structure affected by distinct word classes?

Parts of speech classification has been at the core of linguistic research for thousands of years. Classically, many Indo-European languages' descriptions have claimed to have a clear noun-verb distinction, and also to have clear and separate classes for adjectives, adverbs, and determiners. Dionysius Thrax, over 2100 years before present, made a clear distinction for eight word classes in (classical) Greek, with explicit definitions for each. His criteria is neatly summed in the following table, note the near complementary use of morphology and syntactic criteria (Vonen 1993: 10-13).

	Morphological	Syntactic	Semantic
Noun	x		x
Verb	x		x
Participle	x		x
Article	x	x	
Pronoun		x	x
Preposition		x	
Adverb	x	x	
Conjunction		x	x

(1) Thrax's word class versus criteria for parts of speech (from Vonen 1993: 11)

In sum, a combination of semantic, syntactic and morphological criteria were necessary to distinguish various word classes in Thrax's work. However, this approach is possibly problematic for contemporary analyses which require syntactic evidence for lexical classes. More recently, the generative grammar school and various related, but somewhat divergent, approaches have pushed for a system that is syntax-driven. This has proposed a core mandatory distinction of a lexical noun and verb, because phrase structure rules presuppose lexical word class. Their definition is a foundation that cannot be overlooked and for some

theoreticians lexical class definition is an argument that has been settled. Baker's considered study into lexical classes is of this view in that "crisp and simple definitions of lexical categories [verb, noun and adjective] do exist ... and their various grammatical behaviours can be deduced from their one essential feature" (Baker 2003: 301). This hypothesis, while supporting a claim to universal grammar, does not require one specific 'test' that is linguistically universal. It allows for underlying properties to be present in the structure of each language and predicts that they will be found if analysed correctly. That is, if syntax makes a distinction of noun and verb word classes, then there must be a clear syntactic test that shows just that. For example, Baker's theory is based on claims such as "a verb is a lexical category that takes a specifier, and [it is] the only one that can assign agent and theme roles" (2003: 94). This classification can be different from the morphological distributions, but equally they could both support the same distinction. Morphologically determined noun and verb word classes are inadequate (see English below), but if they are in agreement with separate syntactic tests this will strengthen any claim to their existence (Baker argues that it is the close links between morphology, syntax and semantics which allow for a bleaching of a syntactic distinction across all three, hence semantics and morphology have the capacity to make a word class distinction even if this is not its source).

If we take English, for example, morphological behaviour is also considered to contribute to word class definitions, but relying solely on it alone is misleading. For example, if we consider the noun *canoe*. It takes full noun morphology inflection, such as *ten canoes*, with the plural *-s*. It can be possessed as in *my canoe* and works with all the other tests for nounhood. Nevertheless, consider these sentences *I canoed my way down the river* or *He canoes with an outrigger*. This is a very productive process in English, where new instrumental-type nouns that are borrowed (or innovated, as in *I sms'd her about the meeting*) can take verbal morphology (see Farrell 2001). A lexical approach can deal with this problem by neatly claiming that there are two entries for the word *canoe*, one is an intransitive verb and one is a noun, and I do not want to argue against this. However, it must be conceded that this viewpoint does not entirely encapsulate the derivation of the verb *canoe* 'to paddle a boat that

has pointy ends' from the noun *canoe* meaning 'a boat that has pointy ends and is paddled'. The *sms* instance is even more evident of this derivation process. Originally a complex noun (an abbreviation from Short Message Service), it has clearly transformed to behave morphologically as a verb. It is clear in Whitesands, that there is some morphological evidence that predicts a basic lexical noun and verb word class distinction, but this is only part of the equation in determining word classes. Specifically, constituent-hood is not precisely established using solely morphological evidence. For this reason, syntactic criteria, such as distribution, must be considered when determining word class, especially if the grammar's formation rules require lexical word classes to project phrase structures. However, we will see that in Austronesian languages this is an ongoing issue, where the syntactic criteria is not always crystal clear.

It is clear that the discussion of the Austronesian language family shows that the definition of lexical categories is a problem. There is no consensus as to distinction of lexical roots in many languages. Further, Oceanic languages violate claims that nouns cannot take arguments. Moyse-Faurie, in respect to the Polynesian languages Wallis and Futuna⁸, claims that regular syntactic tests have not shown a clear distinction between a noun and a verb. Additionally, "l'hypothèse de l'universalité de l'opposition verbo-nominale a été contestée dans certaines familles de langues amérindiennes et austronésiennes, et en particulier dans les langues polynésiennes" (Moyse-Faurie 2005: 162). Since some language families (i.e. Salish, Wakashan (Moyse-Faurie's "amérindiennes") and Austronesian) have difficulties in showing a noun/verb distinction, then the universal parts of speech hypothesis, that there are always distinct noun and verb classes, needs reconsideration. The alternative solution to that challenge is that syntactic theory must be changed. The conclusion of this thesis, for one Oceanic language at least, is that there are other syntactic considerations that can confirm a noun/verb distinction. To do so, we will use a new theoretical framework.

⁸ Note that there is a Polynesian outlier language "West Futuna-Aniwa" that, on a clear day, is based on an island that is visible from the Whitesands region (see Dougherty 1983). Although related to the Futuna of Moyse-Faurie (see Lynch, et al. 2002: 110-112), she is referring to Futuna that is spoken in the Futuna group, north-east of Fiji, also known as "East Futuna".

The word class distinction problem is important because its apparent lack of resolution interplays with analyses of many languages' grammars and general linguistic theory. A brief example is Kaufman's discussion of Austronesian typology (and nominalisation), where his arguments on historical development and typology are based on the premise that "notional verbs [are] still underlyingly nominal" (Kaufman to appear: section 1). Typologically, he uses the re-emergence of a canonical morphosyntactic verb (or more importantly lack of it) as a feature to classify language sub-groups. His assertion and discussion requires a precise understanding of how a noun and verb are distinct to be successful. There must be clear syntactic examination of a language, so that studies such as Kaufman's can be built on truthful claims.

Genetically closer to Whitesands, is the language of Tolai from East New Britain (PNG), which has these types of issues, regarding the fuzziness of the lexical noun/verb distinction. On the surface, Mosel's (1984) description of syntax in Tolai uses an underjustified word class distinction. This assumption then allows for the description of phrase structures that are headed by their respective constituents. However, close examination of Tolai's use of articles and tense/aspect/mood particles demonstrably muddy the distinction between the noun and the verb. In (10) and (11), we can see that *pui* 'bush' can occur with both *ga* 'TAM' (same gloss as the original) or the definite article *ra*.

(10) Tolai (Mosel: 168)

i ga pui
 it TAM bush
 The bush grew

(11) Tolai (Mosel: 67)

ra pupui
 ART RDP/bush
 [in] the bushes

This appears to be productive in Tolai (similar to English), where any lexical item can be a noun or a verb dependent on what constituents it is adjacent to. This suggests that the language lacks a distinction between lexical verbs and nouns. The minimal verb or noun

specific morphology supports this argument that there is no clear lexical word class distinction. However, it is not clear, in Mosel’s description, how argument structure and case assignment affect (or does not affect) any possible word class delineation. One particular instant is the use of roles in the possessive phrases, where “if the head noun is a verbal noun, *kai* + NP denotes the actor of the action” (Mosel 1984: 25). This short aside suggests that perhaps these ‘verbal nouns’ (basically a ‘verb’ using an article, that is a type of nominalisation) behave differently in a possessive phrase than a ‘regular noun’ does and restricts the possible arguments that can fill the ‘possessor’ slot of a possession phrase.

Another language that is problematic in a similar fashion is Niuean, displaying typical Polynesian behaviour (like Wallace and Futuna). A lack of any morphological inflection in Niuean means that syntactic criteria is the only option for defining parts of speech. Consider the following two examples, which show a single lexical constituent behaving in various ways. In (12) *tāmate* ‘kill’ is behaving like a notional ‘verb’ (an event-denoting root) in that it is inflected for tense *ne* ‘PST’. However in (13), the same word is behaving as a notional ‘noun’ (an object-denoting root) taking an argument role from the preposition *kehe* ‘GOAL’.

(12) Niuean (Massam 2000: 2.2)

<i>ne</i>	<i>tāmate</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>Tofua</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>kuli</i>
PST	kill	ERG	Tofua	ABS	dog
Tofua killed the dog					

(13) Niuean (Massam 2000: 2.2)

<i>kehe</i>	<i>tāmate</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>Tofua</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>kuli</i>
GOAL	kill	ERG	Tofua	ABS	dog
about Tofua’s killing of the dog					

I refer to the Niuean problem because there are two possible solutions to this problem and one may be supported by this Whitesands analysis. One argues that there are no distinct classes of words. The opposing side counters, declaring that there is a noun/verb distinction but it is different from other language families, in that it is not the lexicon that makes the distinction but it is syntactically driven instead; meaning that it is a lexical item’s appearance in a phrase that determines its part of speech (Massam 2005). This is interesting because it is

concordant with the goals of this thesis: showing that lexical nouns and verbs in Whitesands have structural similarities and that an independently derived phrasal distinction may account for the problem.

Nominalisation is a complicated process that is still unresolved, even within well analysed languages. This paper is not an attempt at complete semantic and syntactic explanation, but instead the process is used in this thesis to analyse parts of speech by looking at its interaction with case assignment. Nominalisation is the use of a non-noun constituent to head or project a noun phrase (i.e. to behave like a noun-type constituent). This is mostly, but not exclusively, from verbs. It can be morphologically derived (such as Whitesands (14) and English (15)) or can have zero derivation (as in the morphosyntax in Tolai (16) but also in English (15)).

(14) Whitesands

n-anhati-ien

NMLZ-converse-NMLZ

language (jhws1-20071231-AK02V_011)

(15) English

i) my riding

POSS.1SG ride-ing

ii) my ride

POSS.1SG ride

(16) Tolai (Mosel: 169)

i) i ga guria

it TAM earthquake

The earth quaked

ii) a guria

ART earthquake

The earthquake

The reason that it proves to be a good test for constituent class, is that it inherently involves the movement from one word class to another. Therefore, associated behaviour can provide tests for the underlying properties.

Nominalisation and its effects is not a new line of enquiry. In her book on argument structure (in English), Grimshaw (1990) argues that regular ‘nouns’ do not take arguments unless they are accompanied by prepositions. A classification of nominals (inclusive of nominalised forms) into two main types (“complex event nominals” and “result nominals”) allows for a neat distribution of features. In particular, complex event nominals differ critically from

result nominals, in that they have “an event structure and a syntactic argument structure like verbs” (Grimshaw 1990: 58-59). This is very relevant to this thesis because we will see in Whitesands that there are two types of argument-giving nominals, the inalienably possessed noun and the nominalised verb. This suggests that the inalienable nouns are in fact different to English nouns, in that they have an inherent argument structure. This therefore goes beyond Grimshaw’s complex noun set and creates problems for theories that claim only verbs can have obligatory arguments (Baker 2003).

Up to this point, I have been working with the hypothesis that if there is proof of distinct lexical noun and verb classes, then this distinction is syntactically binary, discrete, and unrelated⁹. However, this is not the case and I will briefly address this issue here. We have seen in the English examples above, there is ease of movement between the classes for lexical items, morphologically suggesting a weaker than expected lexical noun and verb distinction. However, Grimshaw’s analysis also requires some kind of distinction of noun types and it could be assumed that the complex event nominals, that assign case, are more verb-like than the simple or result nominals that behave very differently from verbs. In sum, behaviour of constituents is relative and their definitions are inextricably linked. This does not presuppose that all languages are the same in how they display a noun and verb distinction (for a comparison of two unrelated languages see Vonen’s (1993) dissertation on the Indo-European “Russian” and Austronesian “Tokelau”). Instead it allows for a certain flexibility in what syntactic tests (and behaviour) determine parts of speech across a variety of different languages. This follows previous approaches such as Dixon, who in his grammar of Boumaa Fijian states that “this makes it appear as if noun and verb have the same syntactic properties ... however, closer examination of the full range of syntactic functions, and what may fill them, shows that we should recognize the following word classes [Verb, Adjective, Noun] for Fijian” (Dixon 1988: 234). While his tests are semantic based, and therefore inappropriate for

⁹ Ross (1973) considers this in depth for English and concludes that there is a linear scale of word classes with verbs at one end and nouns at the other. A constituent can fall at a number of stages along the cline, dependent on syntactic behavior, meaning that some noun types can be more ‘nouny’ (noun-like) than others. This assumption still holds with this thesis’ analysis.

determining syntactic classes, they show that flexibility is inherent in each language's description and can thus be explored.

2.3 Summary

This section has presented the underlying problem that this thesis is addressing. It is bifaceted, concerning descriptive linguistics and theory-based linguistics alike. When describing and documenting a language, the problem of parts of speech is one of particular importance. Assumptions about their existence (or lack thereof) will undoubtedly influence the account.

Parts of speech, or word classes, also play a fundamental role in the theoretical understanding of grammar. For any phrase based grammar, their lexical distinction is crucial to the underlying structure and the projection of phrases. Their definition by first principles is seen to be complicated in the Austronesian language family. Current syntactic theories on the distinctive properties of lexical nouns and verbs (and their phrasal projection), cannot explain their behaviour. I have hinted at one possible alternative and that is the examination of case assignment by various word types. The manner in which object-denoting words and event-denoting words contrast in their argument assignment, in Whitesands, will suggest that there is a weak syntactic word class distinction between noun and verb. This is ultimately the direction of examination in this Whitesands study. The additional side of the argument will be that phrase-types, the NP and VP, are in fact determined not by a lexical noun or verb head, but instead by the complement selection by functional categories (see Chapter 4). This will be presented as a new theoretical approach that resolves the issues faced by current theories.

3 The Grammar of Whitesands

This chapter presents Whitesands (henceforth WS) data, much of it for the first time. It proposes a basic grammar for the language, with description of the facts which are needed for a noun and verb distinction, and also the nominalisation problem. It is necessary because it will also allow the reader to have a broad view of how WS works and thereby follow the arguments on parts of speech (which would otherwise be impossible because of the limited published data on WS). I show that there are distinct lexical noun and verb word classes, and that these typically correspond to object-denoting and event-denoting roots respectively (Chapter 4).

3.1 Word Order, Sentence Structure and Case Assignment

3.1.1 Unmarked Sentence Structure

The pragmatically unmarked sentence structure in WS is an accusative SVO structure¹⁰. The syntax strictly determines the core argument structure, as there is null case marking for the accusative or nominative in all NP varieties. Consider the pronoun *in* ‘3SG’ in (17) and (18), where it appears in the same form in the ‘subject’ and ‘object’ positions respectively.

- (17) *in* *t-iwaiyu*
3SG 3SG.NPST-go.down
He came down (jhws2-20090227-NN02_029)
- (18) *netemimi* *k-ot-eru* *in*
people 3.NPST-PL-see 3SG
The people saw her (jhws2-20090227-NN02_051)

Similarly, this is the case for regular object-denoting roots, such as *naliŋ* ‘trap’ as in (19) and (20). Note again there is no form change between the two core arguments. The syntax (word

¹⁰ I use the term ‘pragmatically unmarked’ to counter possible word order variation through the use of stress and pauses. For example, a non-subject core argument can be fronted for either topical or focus reasons, on the condition that it has marked intonation. However, this does not have a complete analysis and is a complicated process involving intonation that is beyond the reach of this study. Focus and topic are relatively understudied in Oceanic languages and should be an area for further research.

order) is determining the grammatical function, which is confirmed in (21), where there is only one possible interpretation with the given order.

- (19) *yow ya-k-ol naliŋ*
 1SG 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-make trap
 I made a trap (jhws2-20090301-AK02_015 with pronoun)
- (20) *naliŋ ko n-eles in*
 trap ANA 3SG.PRF-carry 3SG
 That trap had caught him (jhws2-20090301-AK02_043)
- (21) [*kuri*]_{NP SUBJ} [[*t-am-us*]_V] [*pukah*]_{NP}]_{VP}
 dog 3SG-PST-bite pig
 The dog bit the pig (jhws2-field notes_069)
 ≠ The pig bit the dog

Both adjuncts and semantically core arguments with oblique case assignment are formed by using a preposition with the associated noun phrase. There are a range of prepositions (see §3.1.3 for the variety of case assignments) and examples (22) and (23) show two of them in use with a bivalent and an monovalent event-denoting predicate. They will generally be glossed as OBL (unless, of course, it is important for a particular discussion).

- (22) \emptyset *ya-am-eti ik e pis-nelme-k*
 1EXCL-PST.SG-hit 2SG OBL digit-arm-1SG
 I flicked you (jhws2-field notes_069)
- (23) *pukah t-at-emeli e kawpwə*
 pig 3SG-PROG-live.NHUM OBL fence
 The pig lives in the fenced area (jhws1-field notes)

Obliquely marked arguments cannot be ‘raised’ or fronted to be between the predicate and the non-subject argument NP as shown in (25), which is an ungrammatical contrast with (24).

- (24) *t'on t-am-elahu-pen pukah e niŋəm*
 John 3SG-PST-put-TOWARDS3 pig OBL fire
 John put the pig on the fire (jhws1-field notes_ena)
- (25) **t'on t-am-elahu-pen e niŋəm pukah*
 John 3SG-PST-put-TOWARDS3 OBL fire pig
 (jhws1-field notes_ena)

This restriction on movement shows that the hypothesised V and the non-subject NP are linearly ordered and, although not conclusive, this is supporting evidence that this NP is a complement to V within the VP. There are no true syntactically di-transitive verbs in WS as there are only ever two core participants that have zero case assignment (i.e. there is possibly one zero case complement to V). In (26) and (27), which contrast with (21) above, we can see that the preposition-bare NPs *niḡam* ‘fire’ and *pukah* ‘pig’ are ungrammatical as dual ‘objects’ (c.f. *afa* ‘give’ and *ani* ‘tell’, as well as other canonically tri-valent event-denoting words behave the same way, and take their third argument in a case-assigned form). Therefore, all additional arguments of a clause are after the core arguments (the nominative subject NP and the accusative NP) and are marked as oblique with a preposition.

- | | | | | | |
|------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|---|--------------|
| (26) | <i>*t'on</i> | <i>t-am-elahu-pen</i> | <i>niḡam</i> | ∅ | <i>pukah</i> |
| | John | 3SG-PST-put-TOWARDS3 | fire | | pig |
| | (jhws1-field notes_ena) | | | | |
| (27) | <i>*t'on</i> | <i>t-am-elahu-pen</i> | <i>pukah</i> | ∅ | <i>niḡam</i> |
| | John | 3SG-PST-put-TOWARDS3 | pig | | fire |
| | (jhws1-field notes_ena) | | | | |

In WS there is extensive ‘prodrop’ and even full NPs are often implicit. This is for both subject (which will still be represented on the predicate in the subject agreement) and other NPs, which can be elided if the context is sufficient to recover the meaning. The lack of an explicit subject NP is in fact the norm in most text genres from my corpus. Their use (or lack thereof) and subsequent role in information structure is an area of the WS grammar that demands further detailed analysis but is beyond the required description for this thesis. Nonetheless, a short example is seen in (28), where we see a conjunction *nama* ‘if’ that is normally at the front of a clause or sentence. This shows that there is no explicit subject NP before the predicate, the person and number agreement in the predicate providing that information.

- | | | | | |
|------|---|---|----------------------|------------------------------|
| (28) | <i>nama</i> | ∅ | <i>[ya-at-os</i> | <i>[nafana]_{NP}</i> |
| | if | | 1.EXCL-PROG.SG-carry | bow.and.arrow |
| | If [I] am carrying a bow and arrow then ... (jhws2-20090301-AK01_033) | | | |

This NP drop usage is even clearer in (29), where a transitive predicate *eles* ‘carry’ is used without any explicit NP arguments. It is evidently referring to a different subject than the previous predicate (from the number and person agreement). Further, in other instances, such as (30), *eles* ‘carry’ is clearly a syntactically transitive event-denoting lexeme (taking a second core argument *naw* ‘knife’) therefore illustrating that in (29) there is non-subject NP drop.

- (29) [*ya-k-ol* [*naliŋ*]_{NP}]_{IP} ∅ [*t-eles*]_{IP} ∅
 1.EXCL-NPST-make trap 3SG.NPST-carry
 I made a trap and it caught [the pigs] (jhws2-20090301-AK02_083)
- (30) [*ya-k-uen*]_{IP}, [*m-eles* [*naw*]_{NP}]
 1.EXCL-NPST-go ES-carry knife
 I went, and got a knife (jhws2-20090301-AK02_065)

In sum, NP drop is prevalent in Whitesands and in some instances complicates argument structure due to perceived ambiguity. Further, we saw that the preposition phrases must be post-predicate and they cannot come in between the second zero-marked NP and the predicate.

However, these obliques are sometimes found adjacent to a normally transitive predicate. This can only occur if there is no explicit core NP, further proof that there is true NP drop if the context is adequate. For example, (31) shows that *nafaŋa* ‘bow.and.arrow’ takes the preposition *e* ‘INST’ in the predicate-adjacent position. It is not a core syntactic argument because it cannot occur without the preposition in (32), and *eti* ‘hit’ can take a NP as its second core argument, as in (22) above.

- (31) *ya-k-eti* [*e* [*nafaŋa*]_{PP}
 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-hit OBL (INST) bow.and.arrow
 I shoot [it] with a bow and arrow (jhws2-20090301-AK01_021)
- (32) **ya-k-eti* [*nafaŋa*]_{NP}
 1EXCL-NPST.SG-hit bow.and.arrow
 (jhws2-field notes-AK)

So far I have not considered the possibility of a verb phrase (VP) in WS. There is conclusive evidence that suggests that this includes post-verb modifiers, and also core NP or PP

arguments. Firstly, there is aforementioned evidence of linearity of the predicate and the non-subject NP. Oblique arguments or other adjuncts cannot come between them as we saw in (26). This agrees with the primary evidence, which is that there is replaceability of the whole VP. This substitution must include any secondary (complement) NP or PP arguments. I will briefly present this with the lexeme *etei* ‘cut/write’. Firstly, *etei* is a transitive event-denoting predicate as shown in (33).

- (33) *pia-k* *t-at-etei* *nawəwə*
 S.S.sibling 3SG-PROG-write book
 My brother is writing a book (jhws2-20090228-EK01_06)

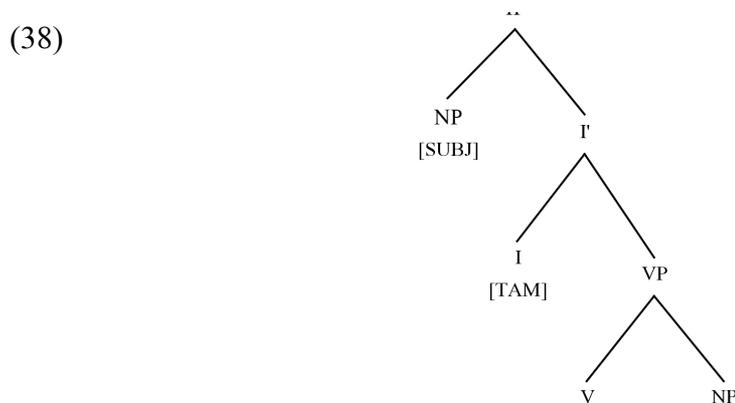
This can have phrasal coordination to introduce different subjects. Example (34) shows this in a fully non-substituted alternative. There are two clear inflected phrases in this example, both having explicit arguments and correct tense/aspect/mood realisation and also full subject agreement. However, this whole ‘doubling up’ can be substituted with *mən* ‘also’, which we can see in the similarly coordinated sentence in (35). This usage implies that it is the same event and it is the same tense/aspect/mood as the previous predicate.

- (34) *pia-k* *t-at-etei* *nawəwə* *kani* *ilah*
 S.S.sibling 3SG-PROG-write book and 3.PL
k-awt-etei (*mən*) *nawəwə*
 3-PROG.PL-write (also) book
 My brother is writing a book and they are (also) writing a book/and they are
 writing a book too (jhws2-20090305-EK)
- (35) *pia-k* *t-at-etei* *nawəwə* *kani* *ilah* *mən*
 S.S.sibling 3SG-PROG-write book and 3.PL also
 My brother is writing a book and they are too (jhws2-20090305-EK)

The argument structure in (35) is important, as it shows that there is still an (expected) new explicit subject NP. The second argument NP is now implicit and examples (36) and (37) are proof that *mən* ‘also’ includes the NP *nawəwə* ‘book’ because it is ungrammatical to include an overt NP phrase, either before or after the replacement VP.

- (36) **kani ilah mən nawəwə*
 and 3.PL also book
 *My brother wrote a book and they did too (jhws2-20090305-EK)
- (37) **kani ilah nawəwə mən*
 and 3.PL book also
 *My brother wrote a book and they did too (jhws2-20090305-EK)

If the object-like NP is not part of the *mən* ‘also’ substitution, then it should be grammatically acceptable to have an explicit NP. Since this is not the case, this supports the premise that the VP contains the NP and that this NP is the complement to the inflected V. The full substitution of the VP element obligatorily includes the complement NP and this cannot be explicitly reintroduced. We can therefore sum the WS c-structure (so far) of an inflected phrase in the following tree.

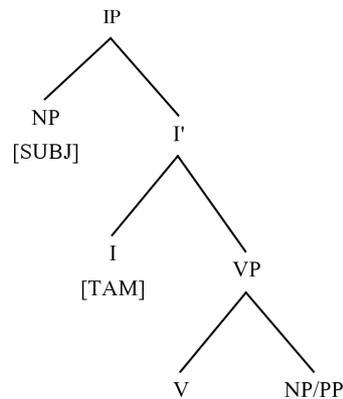


This thesis is focusing on nominalisation and argument structure, therefore sentence and clause coordination is outside of the required knowledge and I will not go further into this (inter-clausal relational structures are a complicated and interesting topic and should be a focal point in further research). However, it is clear that some oblique arguments can also have the same VP parent node as (the complement NP and) the proposed verb. The same reasoning that applies to the complement NP phrase works for an oblique PP. In (39) *uen* ‘go’ takes an oblique phrase for the destination defining argument. The only possible interpretation for (40) is that Marie also went to the same country.

- (39) *atli t-am-uen apaha niu silan*
 Atly 3SG-PST-go OBL New Zealand
 Atly went to New Zealand (jhws2-20090305-EK)
- (40) *atli t-am-uen apaha niu silan kani mari mən*
 Atly 3SG-PST-go OBL New Zealand and Marie also
 Atly went to New Zealand and Marie did too (jhws2-20090305-EK)
- (41) **atli t-am-uen apaha niu silan kani mari mən*
 Atly 3SG-PST-go OBL New Zealand and Marie also
apaha ostreilia
 OBL Australia
 (jhws2-field notes-EK)
- (42) **atli t-am-uen apaha niu silan kani mari apaha*
 Atly 3SG-PST-go OBL New Zealand and Marie OBL
ostreilia
 Australia
 (jhws2-field notes-EK)

Examples (41) and (42) show the possible ungrammatical variations. (41), in particular, shows that when using *mən* ‘also’, the oblique argument must be carried over from the previous matrix clause and cannot change value to another meaning such as Australia. Careful consideration of (42) is evidence that this substitution with *mən* ‘also’ is not simply an elided predicate. If this was allowed (as it is in English, consider: *I went to the baker and John to the butcher*) then this should be grammatical. It is not and therefore *mən* is a true substitution of the VP with its PP complement. So we can build on the c-structure to include the VP consisting of the complement NP or PP (we will see this case is sometimes assigned by the verb):

(43)



There exist object-denoting and state-denoting words that create equational sentences in Whitesands and thus carry no inflection for TAM (although there are only a very small number of the later). This is in the form of NP + XP as in (44) and (45).

(44) *nariŋ-ək* [*niawi* *alek*]
name-1SG Niawi Alec
My name is Niawi Alec (jhws1-20080328-NA01_002)

(45) [*raha-k* *nima*] *asoli*
POSS-1SG house big
My house is big (jhws2-20090228-EK01_01)

These form a sentence, which is different from IP because they do not have I [TAM]. They represent a simple equational relationship between two constituents.

Finally, a short note on a fronted XP that denotes temporal adjuncts. This is considered to be different from other complements or adjuncts for two reasons; it is a non-core phrase type that takes no prepositions, complementisers or relativisers (i.e. it does not have an element that marks case or theta-roles); and it is largely found in a unique position in the c-structure, that is, at the front (but does not or cannot trigger subject agreement, contrasting with the other argument that comes pre-predicate). Since it is inherently associated with TAM, it is either marked or impossible, for speakers to use them as adjuncts of the uninflected

equational sentence S. In (46), the two temporal adjuncts are marked with the square brackets NP. One *mowoj-u* ‘this month’ is an object-denoting root (with deictic marking) and the other *mowoj tatua* ‘the coming month’ is an object-denoting root with an embedded relative clause¹¹.

(46)	[<i>mowoj-u</i>] _{NP}	<i>netehi</i>	<i>t-etapu,</i>		[<i>mowoj</i>
	moon-PROX	sea	3SG.NPST-cold		moon
	<i>t-at-ua</i>] _{NP}	∅	<i>t-apiapwei</i>		
	3SG-PROG-come		3SG.NPST-hot		
	This month the sea is cold, next month it will be warm (jhws2-20090228-EK01_035)				

This is not part of the VP because it is not morphologically bonded with the predicate (i.e. no case marking or the like), syntactically separate (i.e. predominantly separated by the subject arguments and is utterance initial) and is never included in the above substitution tests.

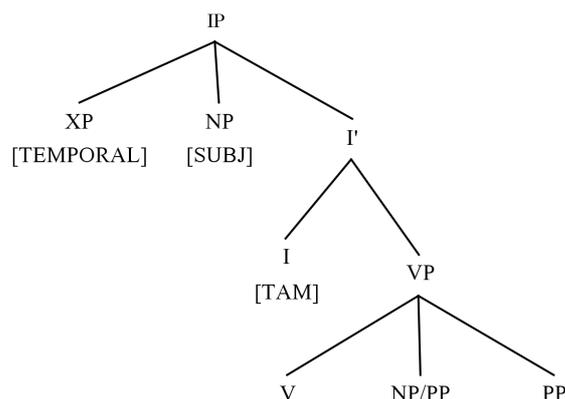
Altogether this combines to give (47) the final basic c-structure for WS, with a tree form in (48)¹²:

(47)	S	→	NP	+	NP/PP	
	IP	→	(XP)	+	(NP)	+ I'
			[temporal]		[subject]	
	I'	→	I	+	VP	
	VP	→	V	+	(NP/PP)	+ (PP)

¹¹ Note that the word for month and moon *mowoj* is unsurprisingly the same, reflecting the regularity of the moon and its use as a seasonal clock. However, due to the strong interaction with Europeans for nearly 200 years (and also the Gregorian calendar), there is no longer local indigenous knowledge of the traditional monthly cycles. *Mowoj*, therefore has shifted meaning and now refers to both the moon and to the borrowed western calendar months, such as *mas* ‘March’ and *tun* ‘June’.

¹² Note that for these preliminary structures there is no expansion of the NP to include the possessive phrases as in (45), where the first participant is marked with a possessed NP. This is addressed in Chapter 4. It also does not include adjuncts other than the temporal phrase, as these do not affect the analysis.

(48)



3.1.2 Arguments and Role Structure

This subsection address the grammatical functions of the various phrases and also outlines the theta-role assignment by the predicate. We have seen so far that the WS grammar assigns core grammatical functions to the subject NP (which has zero case marking) and the other arguments are the complements of V. What we will see is that theta-roles in WS are licensed by predicate type. The predicate can assign the theta-roles of the arguments through a range of case markers in the oblique PPs, and often these behave in a ‘quirky’ or unpredictable manner. That is, theta-roles of arguments are not simply determined by the preposition alone. Furthermore, we will see that the predicate type, patientive (stative), active intransitive or transitive, is important in case assignment.

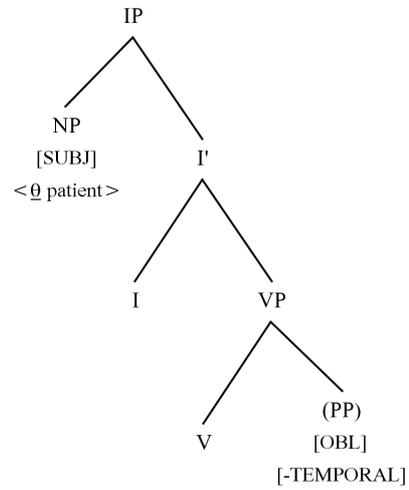
We start here with the simple observation that there is constant morphological subject agreement on the typical event or state-denoting lexeme that is the predicate. In (49) we can see this with the predicate agreeing in 3SG with the initial NP *nəkawə* ‘kava’.

(49) $[nəkawə]_{\text{SUBJ}}$ ← *t-əskasik*
kava → 3SG.NPST-strong
The kava is strong (jhws1-field notes1)

There is a second argument marking on the predicate but this is restricted in both usage and agreement. It occurs in the form of a directional suffix or root alternation, which makes a 1, 2 and 3 person distinction. However, it is not obligatory (except in the aforementioned root

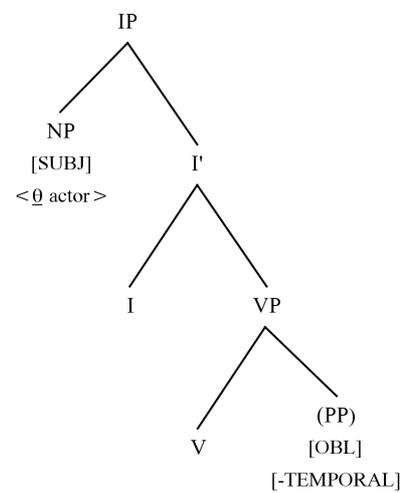
and corresponds to <patient>. This is illustrated in the following three tree-structures for the three verb types.

(59)



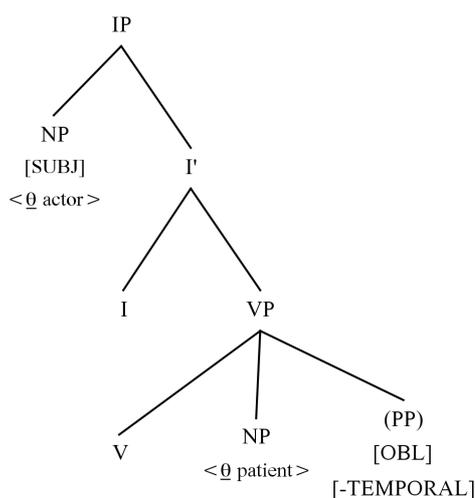
Patientive intransitive (state-denoting)

(60)



Active intransitive (event or action-denoting)

(61)



Active transitive (event-denoting)

Oblique arguments can carry information on theta-roles, specifically through the theta-assigning prepositions (see next section for their range of meanings). Additionally in WS, semantically core participants of a bivalent active predicate can take oblique argument form (i.e. some event denoting words can have two participants (semantically bivalent) but only one core argument (syntax)). That is, predicates can have ‘quirky’ case assignment which affects their complements, therefore marking core patient-like arguments with a variety of cases, including the zero-marking accusative. For example in (62), we can see that the same argument *winta* ‘window’ (< Bislama *windo*), with the same theta-role <patient>, takes different case assignments from two verbs *eerə* ‘open’ and *atəpisəŋ* ‘close’. Although (62) is moderately unclear because the second predicate takes a pronoun form for the second argument, (63) shows clearly that *atəpisəŋ* ‘close’ [x <actor> , y < patient; *e/la*>] is different from *eerə* ‘open’ [x <actor>, y <patient; *ye* >]. This is the realisation of the ‘quirky’ case assignment to patient theta-roles by bivalent event-denoting words.

(62) *na-am-eerə* *ye* *winta* *m-atəpisəŋ* *la-n*
2-PST.SG-open OBL window ES-close OBL-3SG
Did you open the window and close it? (jhws2-20090228-EK02_61)

- (63) *uen m-atəpisəŋ e toa!*
 SG.go ES-close OBL door
 Go (SG) and close the door! (jhws2-20090228-EK02_61.5)

3.1.3 Prepositions and the PP

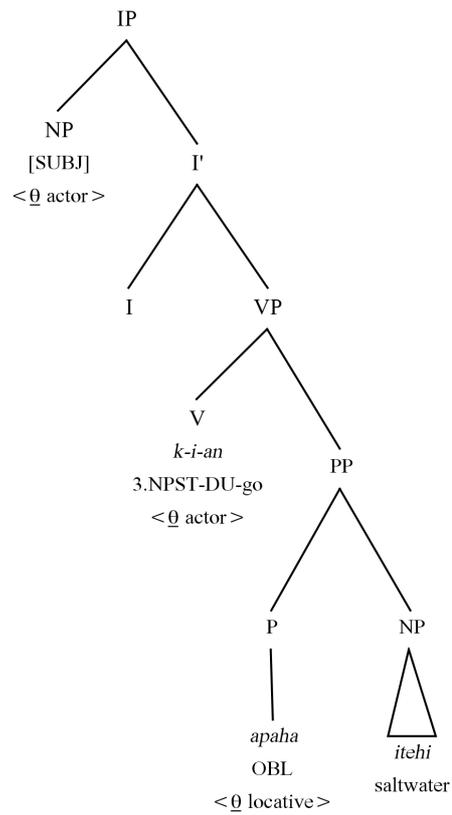
This section will give a basic outline of form and meaning of the preposition system. Oblique non-temporal arguments are marked by a series of prepositions, which in turn form a preposition phrase. The preposition phrase has two distinct structures as seen in (64). Some prepositions take the pronominal form only, some are restricted to the preposition plus NP and some appear in both forms.

- (64) PP → P NP
 → P-PRON2

We can see these two forms in (65)/(66) and (67)/(68). What follows are the variety of preposition forms and their related semantics.

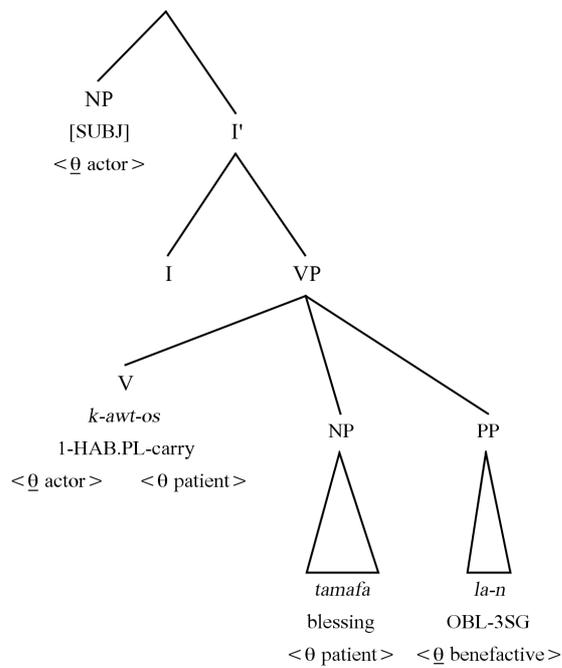
- (65) *k-i-an apaha itehi*
 3.NPST-DU-go OBL saltwater
 They (DU) went to the seaside (jhws2-20090227-NN03_002)

(66)



(67) *k-awt-os* *tamafa* *la-n*
 1-HAB.PL-carry blessing OBL-3SG
 We (INCL.PL) make blessings on/for him (jhws1-20080302-NN01_161)

(68)



information about direction (which comes from the predicate) but is a cover term for all locatives. Compare (65) above, and (72), with (73), and (74).

- (72) *ya-k-i-an* *apaha* *isaka*
 1EXCL-NPST-DU-go OBL Isaka
 We (EXCL.DU) went to Isaka (jhws1-20071203-04AK_004)
- (73) *t-am-atan* *apaha* *ləwantehi*
 3SG-PST-live OBL deep.sea
 He lived in the deep sea (jhws1-20080328-NS02_008)
- (74) *m-at-atul* *apaha* *niki-n-asum-ien*
 ES-PROG-stand OBL inside-NMLZ-make.garden-NMLZ
 He was standing in the middle of the garden (jhws1-20080328-NS02_014)

3.1.3.3 *ye* <patient>

The preposition *ye* takes a variety of meanings as an oblique argument. It generally encodes some kind of <patient> but cannot be used in a comitative, associative or benefactive sense. It can be used for theta-role marking such as the <comparative> in (75), or the more canonical <patient>, as in (76) and (77).

- (75) *nepik-kahaw* *t-ahmen* *ye* *nelme-niel*
 tail-rat 3SG.NPST-same OBL arm-oak
 A rat's tail is like an oak branch (jhws1-20080314-AK01_106)
- (76) *k-ot-əlwainj* *ye* *yetemimi* *aha*
 1.NPST-PL-lay.to.rest OBL human.SG MED
 We will bury that man/person (jhws1-field notes2)
- (77) *na-am-eerə* *ye* *winta*
 2-PST.SG-open OBL window
 Did you open the window? (jhws2-20090228-EK02_61)

3.1.3.4 *o* ~ *on* <patient> <source>

The preposition *o* implies some kind of source or causal role for the oblique argument. While it can be used for locative-type source, this is not very common. More commonly it is used for introducing a <causal> participant for an intransitive or patientive predicate (this is not overtly marked on the predicate). It has an irregular form *on-* for the singular pronouns,

onyow ‘1SG’, *onik* ‘2SG’ and *oni* ‘3SG’. The other pronouns form with the pronominal suffix and *o-* such as *olah* ‘3PL’, as do nouns and proper nouns which take *o*.

(78) *t'on t-am-eles pukah o raha-n nasumien*
 John 3SG-PST-carry pig OBL POSS-3SG garden
 John took a pig from his garden (jhws1-field notes_ena)

(79) *niki-n t-anjen oni*
 inside-3SG_x 3SG_x-PROG-happy OBL.3SG_y
 She_x is happy on accord of him_y (jhws1-20080414-ALL01_186)

(80) *t-iekis on ik*
 3SG.NPST-difficult OBL 2SG
 It is difficult for you (jhws1-20080414-ALL01_096)

3.1.3.5 *raha* ~ *ra* <benefactive>

The preposition *raha* signifies the benefactive role and is homophonous with the general possession classifier (see §3.2.3)¹⁴. It occasionally is vague as to whether it refers to possessive phrases or benefactive due to their similar semantics. This is common throughout Oceanic languages. It can take a NP complement as in (81) or the pronominal suffix as in (82).

(81) *t'on t-am-oh amu pukah raha yawkelpi*
 John 3SG-PST-hit slaughter pig OBL Yaukelpi
 John killed the pig for Yaukelpi (jhws1-field notes_ena)

(82) *m-on-ot-atei neṅow ra-lah*
 ES-PRF.PL-PL-cut canoe OBL-3PL
 And they had cut the canoe for them/their canoe (jhws1-20080314-AK01_006)

Again it is clear that the theta-role assignment is not always simply denoted by the preposition. In (83), for example, *raha* assigns a theta-role to *n-atij-ien* ‘life’ that is not clearly possessive or benefactive.

(83) *namsu akaku kati raha n-atij-ien*
 story small one OBL NMLZ-live-NMLZ
 A short story about life (jhws1-20080414-ALL01_006)

¹⁴ It has been suggested by a reviewer that this could be better glossed as an association between two arguments not necessarily a benefactive reading. While this may be the case, it still must be conceded that there is a need for two separate lexical entries as it can be syntactically distinct from possessive constructions.

3.1.3.6 *e/la* <instrument> <benefactive> <theme>

This is primarily used to mark a wide range of oblique phrases, including some which would be considered semantically core participants (and as such are normally explicit). They can include the theta-roles of <benefactive>, <instrument>, <patient> or <theme>. It is important to note that this preposition cannot refer to a personal <comitative> sense¹⁵. It has two forms; using object-denoting roots, proper nouns or non-singular pronouns it is *e*. With the singular pronouns it is in the form *la-*, taking the pronoun suffix. Examples (84) and (85) show this alteration with one verb *asiru* ‘help’ [x <actor>, y <patient; *e/la*>]. (86) shows that *la-* cannot take a proper noun (nor object-denoting lexeme).

- (84) *in t-am-asiru la-k*
 3SG 3SG-PST-help OBL-1SG
 He helped me (jhws1-field notes1)
- (85) *t-am-asiru e netemimi t-eepət*
 3SG-PST-help OBL human.PL 3SG-many
 He helped a lot of people (jhws1-20080414-SJ02_034)
- (86) **in t-am-asiru la-prus*
 3SG 3SG-PST-help OBL-Bruce
 (jhws1-field notes1)

The following examples show the other variety of thematic roles encoded by the *e/la-* pair. These include obligatory arguments (yet not ‘core’ in a syntactic sense) in (87) and (90), oblique <instrument> in (88) and (89), and <benefactive> in (84).

- (87) *pa yow ya-k-aiuwə la-n*
 should 1SG 1EXCL-NPST.SG-trick OBL-3SG
 Let me trick him/Should I trick him? (jhws1-field notes2)
- (88) *atli t-am-eti namu la-n*
 Atly 3SG-PST-hit fish OBL-3SG
 Atly trapped the fish with it [the net] (jhws2-field notes1)

¹⁵ The comitative sense is constructed within the NP, using either pronouns or conjunction

- (89) *k-ot-atij* *t-eur* *e* *n-ol-ien*
 1.NPST-PL-live 3SG.NPST-good OBL NMLZ-make-NMLZ
 We live well with our work (jhws1-20080414-ALL01_012)
- (90) *k-om-ot-aiyu* *awow* *la-m*
 1-PST.PL-PL-run misunderstand OBL-2SG
 We missed you on the road [by taking a different path] (jhws2-field notes1)

3.1.4 Summary

We have seen that WS uses SVO word order to strictly assign the grammatical function of subject to the initial NP (with agreement on the predicate). This in turn is the argument with the highest agentive ranking in a theta-role hierarchy. The different predicate types show varying behaviour in respect to what theta-roles are allowed as additional core and oblique arguments. This is indeed one of their distinguishing facets. We have seen that the preposition phrase marks case on oblique phrases that are complements to predicates. Further, when an event-denoting word's semantic structure requires two participants, then the second argument that are the complements to the event are assigned case. This can be zero case, like an object, but can also be one of the marked forms. This case is selected by the predicate and has theta-role assignment irregularities that cannot be predicted when considering only the preposition. This means this is a 'quirky' case system. This is separate from case assignment to other complements which is done by the preposition and is more predictable in its theta-role composition. This section contained descriptions of their general usage. A particular predicate can assign to its arguments either zero marked case (accusative) or another case using a particular preposition. The prepositions are often ambiguous and have variable and unpredictable theta-role assignment. They are generally glossed as OBL to show that they are carrying a case assignment from the predicate. This behaviour is important for the discussion on argument assignment by the lexical verb class (§4.2).

3.2 The Noun and The Noun Phrase

The proposed grammar of WS contains a NP. This NP is the phrasal class that can be alienably possessed, the complement of a preposition and usually refers to the participants of an event (the distinctive syntactic properties of the NP are discussed further in Chapter 4).

The notional noun, or object-denoting lexeme, is the leftmost element of this phrase. These will form the lexical class of nouns, weakly distinguished from verbs by their syntactic behaviour. This section introduces the grammatical behaviour of these phrase types.

Modifiers come to the right of the head, including number, deixis and adjectives¹⁶. There are no true articles in WS (thereby removing one indexing test for noun-hood). A basic NP c-structure rule is (91)¹⁷.

$$\begin{array}{l}
 (91) \text{ NP} \rightarrow \text{PRON} \qquad \qquad \text{(DEM)} \\
 \qquad \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{N} \\ \text{PROPERN} \end{array} \right\} \qquad \text{(MODIFIER)} \quad \text{(NUMBER)} \quad \text{(NUMERAL)} \quad \text{(DEM)} \\
 \qquad \rightarrow \text{N-PRON2} \qquad \text{(MODIFIER)} \quad \text{(NUMBER)} \quad \text{(NUMERAL)} \quad \text{(DEM)}
 \end{array}$$

3.2.1 Noun to Noun Derivation

A significant proportion of notional nouns begin with *n*. This is almost definitely traceable to the Proto-Oceanic article **na* (Lynch, et al. 2002: 70). Mostly this is not extricable from the word as it has been grammaticalised. However, in some cases there is still a clear link between two nouns that are derived from the same root. For example, (92) and (93) exemplify two related nouns in *nakamal*~company or *beach*~sand, while (94) and (95) exemplify two that are not decomposable, *nien* ‘coconut’ and *nijəm* ‘fire’.

¹⁶ There is one exception to this claim and that is the variability of word order for alienably possessed nouns using the pronoun suffix, so *rahak nima* = *nima rahak* ‘my house’. This is addressed in the construction of the POSS phrase in Chapter 4.

¹⁷ It may seem marked to have N and ProperN grouped together as usually proper nouns are specific in their reference. However, Melanesian culture has a complex naming system and since it is the case that one name can refer to many different people, it is quite common to have modifiers, such as adjective or states, used with proper nouns. For example, *Jerry asoli* ‘Jerry big’ would refer to the older Jerry in contrast with the younger *Jerry akaku* ‘Jerry small’.

(92)	<i>imaiim</i> nakamal	<i>n-imaiim</i> company (group of people from a nakamal)
(93)	<i>ipakəl</i> beach/a village's name	<i>n-ipakəl</i> sand
(94)	* <i>ien</i>	<i>nien</i> coconut
(95)	* <i>iḡəm</i>	<i>niḡəm</i> fire

Although this is interesting for a historical analysis of the language, this process is irregular and unpredictable. It is a frozen derivation that is synchronically analysed as separate roots belonging to the one word class. Since this thesis is focusing on a grammatical solution to the WS data, this will not be further addressed.

3.2.2 Number

WS makes a number distinction on the NP. This is obligatorily encoded morphologically within the pronouns (and pronominal suffixes). For the object-denoting lexemes it is preferably marked on higher ranked animates, such as humans or domesticated animals, as in (96).

(96)	[<i>neiwo-k</i>	<i>mil</i>] _{NP}
	cousin.OPP.S-1SG	DU
	My two (female) cousins! (jhws1-20071231-MA04V_012)	

If context requires, then lower animates such as *nima* 'house' or *niji* 'tree' can also take number marking, such as (97). When it is in the non-suffix form it is singular \emptyset (SG), dual *mil* 'DU', trial *mihel* 'TR', plural *mən* 'PL' and exhaustive *rofɪn* 'EX'. Note that although within the NP there is a five way distinction, when this number is marked on the predicate with the subject agreement, then the plural and exhaustive collapse into one prefix, the plural.

(97)	[<i>maŋko</i>	= <i>mən</i>] _{NP}	<i>k-ot-aiprakis</i>	[<i>nipən</i>	= <i>mən</i>] _{NP}
	mango	PL	3.NPST-PL-beat	banana	PL
	(The) mango trees are bigger than (the) banana trees (jhws2-20090301-AK03_05)				

There is also a human prefix (agentive nominaliser, see §3.4.2) that has a plural alternation. Singular is marked with *i-/y-* and the plural is marked with *n-* (note this distinction is obligatory on derived nouns such as (98) where the prefix has other functions, but optional on regular nouns such as (99)).

(98)	<i>y-aŋatun</i>		<i>n-aŋatun</i>	
	HUM.SG-teach		HUM.PL-teach	
	teacher		teachers	
(99)	<i>petan</i>		<i>n-petan</i>	
	female		HUM.PL-female	
	woman		women	
(100)	<i>y-etemi</i>	<i>enteni</i>	<i>n-etemimi</i>	<i>enteni</i>
	HUM.SG-human	Tanna	HUM.PL-human.RDP	Tanna
	A person from Tanna		People from Tanna	

3.2.3 Possessive Phrases

This section is a basic summary of possession in Whitesands. There are the two forms that interact with argument structure and phrase structure definitions (this topic is worthy of a whole thesis and there is a variety of work on possessive structures in Oceanic languages, for a summary see Lynch, Ross, and Crowley (2002: 41-43)). WS makes a common Oceanic distinction of alienable and inalienable possession. The inalienable roughly corresponds to the semantic classes of kin terms, body parts and part/whole relationships and the alienable possession structure is the default for all other object-denoting words (and event-denoting nominalisations).

Inalienable possession in Whitesands is a morphologically closed word class that consisting of object-denoting roots. It takes a possessor suffix on the possessum (also known as the possessee or possessed) like *neiwo-* ‘cousin’ (96) and *mansi-* ‘buttocks’ (102). The suffix is a core argument that is a NP. This NP is marked for (genitive) case and it therefore surfaces as either the (oblique) pronominal suffix, or as a proper noun or other modified nouns which both have zero affixation. This argument can never be a zero case pronoun or a NP with a

it has been replaced by the general possessor *raha-*. The plant possessive structure *nai-* has been lost by nearly all speakers, and in the whole WS corpus I have only one text (a traditional recount with multiple instances) that uses this form:

- (106) *naw* *nai-k*
 namambe POSS.PLANT-1SG
 My namambe [I planted] (jhws2-20090227-NN02_014)

Additionally, all the possessor suffixes in both alienable and inalienable structures have the same number (SG, DU, TR and PL) and person (1EXCL, 1INCL, 2 and 3) distinctions as other pronouns or the subject agreement (see Appendix 6.1). We will see that the possession behaviour of derived event-denoting nominals (i.e. from the nominalisation of the proposed lexical verb class) is the same as basic object-denoting lexemes (i.e. the proposed noun class) and takes the alienable possession. Any claim to distinct lexical noun and verb word classes must account for the fact that, in Whitesands, alienable possession can encode an event-like predicator, such as drinking and eating, and inalienably possessed nouns have an obligatory second argument. This will be explored further when discussed in §§4.1-4.2.

3.2.4 Modifiers and Numeral

The grammatical category ‘modifier’ is a mixed group of constituents that modify the NP. This group of words creates further uncertainty in the distinction between lexical nouns and verbs (this will be addressed further in §4.2). It can be a numeral²⁰/ quantifier, a patientive ‘verb’ (with no agreement or TAM), or an adjective (108). When the numeral *kati* ‘one’ is used, it regularly acts as an indefinite marker as in (107).

- (107) *m-ot-aŋow* *niŋi* *asoli* *kati* *u*
 ES-PL-bend tree big one PROX
 And we bend a big tree here on it (jhws2-20090301-AK01_047)

²⁰ Note that numeral is separate from number and can coexist with number, possession and demonstratives as in:

m-eru *petan* *mil* *keiyu*
 ES-see woman DU two
 And he saw two women (jhws1-20071231-MA04V_009)

- (108) *kapiel itoŋa aha t-eur*
 rock foreign MED 3SG.NPST-good
 That spear gun is nice (jhws1-field notes1)

In (109), we can see *pukah* ‘pig’ is lexically modified by *asoli* ‘big’. This word *asoli* belongs to a small set of true adjectives²¹ that cannot stand alone, so (110) is ungrammatical.

- (109) *pukah asoli*
 pig big
 the big pig (jhws2-20090301-AK02_059)

- (110) **asoli t-atij*
 big 3SG.NPST-live
 (jhws2-field notes-AK)

They also cannot take the TAM system or subject agreement, even when they function predicationally in an equational sentence, as seen in the contrast between (111) and (112).

- (111) *awpwen, raha-k nima asoli*
 before POSS-1SG house big
 Before, my house was big (jhws2-20090228-EK01_003)

- (112) **awpwen raha-k nima t-am-asoli*
 before POSS-1SG house 3SG-PST-big
 (jhws2-field notes-EK)

The last class of modifiers are the patientive verbs. When acting as adjective-like modifiers, they have null TAM like *araru* ‘red’ in (113) or *akaku* ‘small’ in (114). In (113), the intonation patterns of this sentence are consistent with it being a simple NP argument, not a second clause.

- (113) *tim kati t-at-akul sot araru*
 team one 3SG-PROG-wear shirt red
 A team is wearing red shirts (Staged Events Set 1 part 2_039)

²¹ Some others include *wi* ‘new’, *wiwi* ‘good’ and *itoŋa* ‘foreign’.

- (114) *ya-k-ol* *raha-k* *kati*, *kastom* *akaku*
 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-make OBL-1SG one custom small
 I make myself one, a small custom (jhws1-20080302-NN01_039)²²

This is one area where there is clear morphological distinction between state-denoting words and event-denoting words. Canonical event-denoting words take full TAM and subject agreement even when acting as a noun modifier in a relative clause. However, it is clear that this is not the case with the patientive predicate (which denote states). These form either with zero TAM and subject agreement, or with the minimal 3SG.NPST in (115). In (115), the first element *eepət* ‘many’ is not part of a high level IP, and thus takes restricted prefixes, despite having the same subject as *uen* ‘go’. This is tested by using the *m-* ‘echo subject’, which takes its subject from the previous predicate. The ungrammaticality of *m-* ‘ES’ in (116) is because there is no previous predicate to ‘echo’ the TAM and subject. Thus *t-eepət* ‘3SG-NPST-many’ is not predicator to an inflected clause.

- (115) *netemimi* *t-eepət* *k-awt-uen* *o*²³ \emptyset
 human.PL 3SG.NPST-many 3-PROG.PL-go OBL
 Lots of people are going to [Vila] (jhws1-20080414-ALL01_265)
- (116) **netemimi* *t-eepət* *m-awt-uen* *o*
 human.PL 3SG.NPST-many ES-PROG.PL-go obl
 (jhws1-field notes)

When *k-ot-eepət* ‘3.NPST-PL-many’ has full subject agreement in (117), then this now is clearly a full predicate with IP ‘coordination’ with the following predicate *m-awt-uen* ‘ES-PROG.PL-go’.

²² Note that although *asoli* ‘big’ is a true adjective, *akaku* ‘small’ can take TAM to be a patientive verb as in:
ya-am-akaku
 1.EXCL-PST.SG-small
 (When) I was small (jhws1-20080305-01JYV_042)

²³ This is a preposition without an explicit NP, and shows that there truly is free NP drop in WS. ‘Vila’ is recovered from context.

- (117) *netemimi* *k-ot-eepat* *m-awt-uen* *o* \emptyset
 human.PL 3.NPST-PL-many ES-PROG.PL-go OBL
 The people are many and they are going to [Vila] (jhws1-field notes)

However, the behaviour of these state-denoting words crosscuts any proposed lexical noun and verb word class distinction. This is because events (when in the predicator position) also take these state-denoting words as modifiers in the same way as object-denoting words. That is, if we were to postulate a noun and verb distinction, their relationship with the state-like modifiers is very similar. This is addressed further in §4.2.

3.2.5 Demonstrative

The demonstrative is the last element of the NP. It is exophoric, in that it gives deictic reference to space or place (see (118)). It is also anaphoric, as it can be referent to text instances, as in (119). It consists of a three way split as seen in table (2). However, the complementary distal locative (physical not temporal) is marked by the use of the preposition (*apaha*), not the demonstrative. We will see that the demonstrative system is also used with the predicator, therefore muddying the lexical noun and verb distinction. I have included, for completeness, *apa* ‘close to speaker: predicator’ even though it is not used in a NP.

Demonstrative	Meaning
<i>u</i>	close to speaker ‘PROX’
<i>ko</i>	close to hearer ‘CTH’
<i>aha</i>	that (not close to speaker or hearer) ‘MED’
<i>apa/apwa</i>	close to speaker (used as predicate)

(2) Demonstratives

- (118) *afa* *naw* *ko*
 SG.give.to.speaker knife CTH
 Pass me that knife [that is next to you] (jhws1-field notes)
- (119) *t-n-uah* *e* *taim* *aha*
 3SG-PRF-come OBL time ANA.MED
 It has come to that point in time (jhws1-20080414-ALL01_082)

There is also an indicative demonstrative prefix *k-* ‘ID’ that attaches to the front of demonstratives. This means that the speaker is indicating (usually with a hand in exophoric use, but can also occur in an anaphoric sense) specifically which one they are talking about:

- (120) *m-uah* *k-aha* ... *aneit'om*
 ES-come ID-MED Anejom
 And he came there, to Anejom (jhws1-20071231-MA04V_002)

3.2.6 Borrowed Nouns

Due to man-Tanna’s constant contact with non-local languages in the past two centuries, there has been extensive borrowing into the language. Primarily this is from Bislama (Vanuatu’s variety of Melanesian pidgin) but there are also some direct borrowings from English and French (due to Tanna’s long history of contact with missionaries, there are borrowed words found in Tanna’s languages that are not found in Vanuatu-wide Bislama, for example *tata* ‘father’). This is important because analysis of borrowed words has the capacity to show the underlying grammar and speakers’ instinctive interpretation of it. There are two important factors, in particular, for any notional noun word class. Borrowed nouns in Whitesands cannot occur with the inalienable possession structure²⁴. Borrowed kin terms or other canonically inalienably possessed items (such as body parts) must take the alienable possession structure.

²⁴ This is not blocked phonologically, for example *foto-n* ‘photo-3SG’ or *foto-lah* ‘photo-3PL’ are phonologically acceptable words in WS.

I do not want to go into this in depth but if we look at the behaviour of (121) *narme-* ‘image (shadow, ghost, drawing)’ and the borrowed *foto* ‘photo’, (122) and (123), we can see that two semantically similar words utilise different possession syntax.

(121) *Remeto, ik ko wə narme-m*
 Remeto 2SG CTH or image-2SG
 Remeto, is that you or your ghost? (jhws2-20090227-NN03_028)

(122) *m-at-os foto ra yehwei*
 ES-HAB-hold photo POSS volcano
 And they take photos of the volcano/the volcano’s photo (jhws1-20071231-MA04V_030 and jhws1-20071231-MA04V_031)

(123) **foto-n*
 photo-3SG
 (jhws1-field notes1)

This is the case for all borrowed nouns, including borrowed kin terms and body parts as in (124), thereby making inalienably possessed nouns a closed word class.

(124) *raha-k tawi (<Bislama tawi)*
 POSS-1SG cousin
 My cousin (jhws1-field notes1)

3.3 The Predicate

The typical predicate (of the IP) in WS is reasonably complicated, as it not only has extensive prefixing for subject and tense, aspect and mood (TAM), but also allows a speaker to encode extra information such as direction, speed and manner with a series of co-verbs and adverbs (see §3.1.2 for the argument that the direction suffix is not part of the argument structure).

This section is not intended as a complete grammar of the predicate in WS, and not all of the internal and external compositions of the predicate concern this thesis. For brevity I have summarised the salient points. They are the definition of the predicate types, the TAM prefix system (which is the surfacing of the functional category I) and subject agreement (which is important for the argument structure discussion).

3.3.1 Agentive and Patientive Predicates

In WS there are two classes of inflected predicates, the ‘agentive (or active)’ and the ‘patientive’. In the word class analysis in Chapter 4 these are the syntactically distinct, lexical classes of verb. The agentive is a typical accusative structure (although I do not call it accusative, because this would not reveal the dichotomy with the patientive). The agentive-type is either transitive (taking two arguments, one agent-like and one patient-like) or intransitive (one agent-like argument). The argument taking the actor or agent role is always in the subject position, and therefore also agrees in prefix subject agreement. The patientive, however, can only ever take one core argument. This argument’s theta-role is normally patient-like (but can be a range of roles), and is always in the subject position consequently agreeing in the predicate subject agreement. This is summarised in the table below, which also presents the basic formalism of the core argument structure.

Predicate Type	Arguments
<i>Agentive Transitive</i> (<i>event/action</i>)	< x (actor) , y (patient)> [SUBJ]
<i>Agentive Intransitive</i> (<i>event/action</i>)	< x (actor) > [SUBJ]
<i>Patientive</i> (<i>state</i>)	< x (patient) > [SUBJ]

(3) Predicate types and argument structure

The three predicate types have different combinations and permutations with the verb-prefix TAM system. Another, albeit weaker, defining characteristic is the semantics or meanings of the two predicate types. The canonical agentive predicate is event- or action-denoting, hence the role of actor/agent filling the subject position and if transitive, the affected <patient> argument is always the non-subject argument. The typical patientive predicate has a subject that is characterized by a state or property (and many of them are modifiers to other predicates or object-denoting words when taking limited or zero TAM).

So, in (125), we can see the agentive *asik* ‘cry’ takes two arguments, *pusi* ‘cat(s)’ <actor> and *miaw* ‘meow’ <patient>.

- (125) *pusi* *k-ot-asik* *miaw*
 cat(s) 3.NPST-PL-cry meow
 <actor> <patient>
 Cats (PL) meow (jhws2-20090228-EK02_073)

True agentive predicates are prohibited from taking non-actor subject which we can see in the contrasting examples (126), (127) and (128). The subject position must be filled with the thing or person responsible for the event or action, hence the ungrammatical status of (128). The animacy of the subject is not important for this delineation, with an inanimate object capable of being <actor>, so long as it fulfills the requirements of the event²⁵. In (129), there is a typical agentive verb that is intransitive taking one <actor> argument only.

- (126) *elsi* *t-am-iarəs* *raha-k* *sot*
 Elsi 3SG-PST-tear POSS-1SG shirt
 <actor> <patient >
 Elsi tore my shirt (jhws2-20090220-AKEK01_06)
- (127) *kowpwə* *t-am-iarəs* *raha-k* *sot*
 fence 3SG-PST-tear POSS-1SG shirt
 <actor> <patient >
 The fence tore my shirt (jhws2-20090220-AKEK01_07)
- (128) **raha-k* *sot* *t-am-iarəs*²⁶
 POSS-1SG shirt 3SG-PST-tear
 <patient>
 (jhws2-field notes2-EK)

²⁵ This is conditional on the object being able to fulfill the denotation of the verb. For example, if *kowpwə* ‘fence’ is replaced with *naw* ‘knife’, this sentence is now ungrammatical, because a knife is considered to make a clean cut, and hence a speaker cannot say *iarəs* ‘tear’ with *naw* ‘knife’:

**naw* *t-am-iarəs* [*raha-k* *sot*]
 knife 3SG-PST-tear POSS-1SG shirt
 <actor> <patient>

²⁶ It is not entirely clear if it is possible to say the English equivalent of *my shirt is torn*. Two alternate possibilities exist, using the 3SG and no explicit subject *t-am-iarəs raha-k sot*, or using 3 with no number marking which serves as a de-facto passive voice by eliding the subject *k-am-iarəs raha-k sot*. In either case the torn shirt would be a non-subject NP.

- (129) *pusi* *t-at-aiyu*
 cat(s) 3SG-PROG-run
 <actor>
 The cat is running (jhws2-field notes_01)

In (130), the position of the NP *pusi ko* ‘the cat next to you’ and its agreement on the verb show that a role of <patient> can be subject, without any valency changing on the verb (there are no true passive structures or topic/focus markers in WS). Instead, this is the patientive verb type.

- (130) [*pusi ko*]_{NP} *t-akaku* *ama*
 cat(s) CTH 3SG.NPST-small only
 <patient>
 The cat next to you is pretty small (jhws2-field notes_01)

In sum, there are a group of predicates that take <actor> for subject (which can have variable valency and transitivity) and there are another group of predicates that take <patient> for subject (and are monovalent and intransitive).

3.3.2 The Basic Tense, Aspect and Mood System

The primary TAM system is marked on the predicate root with a series of affixes (for a more detailed account of TAM in WS see Hammond (2009)). An event or state-like root in the imperative lacks overt TAM marking as in (131), where *asiru* ‘help’ is marked only for number. In the singular, this is zero as in (132), where *akwakir* ‘short’ is the morphologically uninflected root.

- (131) *ot-asiru* *la-k!*
 PL-help OBL-1SG
 (you.PL) Help me! (jhws1-field notes1)

- (132) *niel,* *akwakir!* *niel,* *akwakir!*
 oak SG.short oak SG.short
 Oak tree be short!, Oak tree be short ! (jhws1-20080308-RY03_037)

Object-denoting words (or the very small adjective class) are not found in imperatives without the equational S structure, like *yerman* ‘man’ in (133) where the subject *ik* ‘2SG’ is obligatory.

- (133) *ik* *yerman!*
 2SG man
 Be a man! (jhws2-field notes2-EK)

The salient points for this thesis’ discussion on TAM carrying clauses are as follows. WS uses a strong relative tense system, so that any sentence is temporally oriented to the preceding utterance or clause. This explains why many English glosses do not match in TAM with the WS examples. Secondly, the patientive (state- or property-denoting lexemes) and agentive (transitive and intransitive event- or action-denoting lexemes) predicates take different TAM morphology. This is a weak morphological distinction between the two predicate types. The patientive-types are generally restricted to NON-PAST, PERFECT (INCHOATIVE), NEGATIVE and FUTURE. For example, *areewan* ‘warm’ is predicated with TAM in (134) but ungrammatical in (135) because of the PROGRESSIVE TAM.

- (134) *nahu* *t-areewan*
 water 3SG.NPST-warm
 The water is warm (jhws2-20090228-EK01_31)
- (135) **nahu* *t-at-areewan*
 water 3SG-PROG-warm
 (jhws2-field notes2-EK)

In contrast, the agentive-type takes a much wider range of TAM affixes, additionally including SEQUENTIAL (136), PROSPECTIVE (137) and PROGRESSIVE. The patientive cannot use these. In summary, the TAM system is some evidence that supports the patientive and agentive morphosyntactic distinction.

- (136) *nian* *kati* *(o)-ya-apan-ua*
 day one (FUT)-1EXCL-SEQ.SG-come
 One day I will come back [after doing other things] (jhws2-20090205-AK)
- (137) *yetemi* *itoŋa* *t-anat-uen!*
 human.SG foreign 3SG-PROS-go
 The white man is about to go! (jhws2-20090228-EK02_052)

3.3.3 Subject Agreement

In WS, there is compulsory subject agreement on the predicate (except the imperative which is marked just for number). This marks for number (SG, DU, TR and PL) and person (1EXCL, 1INCL, 2 and 3). This agreement is before the root and interacts with the TAM system. This agreement is what allows for the extensive elision of known NPs. Here are some basic examples:

- (138) *yaukelpi mene rijaw k-am-w-askaləm lialu*
 Yaukelpi CONJ.NP Ringao **3-PST-DU**-hold Lialu
 [The toka (a custom ceremony) that] Yaukelpi and Ringao held at Lialu
 (jhws1-20080414-SJ02_015)

- (139) *olawoŋ ∅ k-ot-awan*
 tomorrow **1.INCL.NPST-PL**-eat.INTR
 Tomorrow, we (INCL.PL) will eat (for a custom ceremony) (jhws2-field
 notes_77)

There is an impersonal structure that is somewhat like a passive (except it does not raise any arguments). In the third person, there is a form that allows for the elision of subject. Using just *k-* ‘3NSG’ with no marking for number prohibits an overt subject NP. For speakers this means that they are either unwilling to divulge or do not know the argument that is to fill in the subject position. This only applies to agentive verbs as in (140) and (141) (but it is never used for interrogatives which use regular subject marking).

- (140) *k-am-əwahmu tif*
 3NSG-PST-murder chief
 Someone murdered the chief (jhws2-20090228-EK02_57)

- (141) *k-afən raha-n n-eepət-ien*
 3.NPST-give POSS-3SG NMLZ-big-NMLZ
 He will be given his grade (jhws1-20080414-ALL01_142)

There are two other important facets to this subject agreement. Firstly, 3NSG and 1INCL have a syncretism, that is, they are homophonous in all number and TAM combinations. We can see this in table (4) which are the simplified (or unsegmented) NPST realisations of this syncretism²⁷.

	Singular	Dual	Trial	Plural
1 exclusive	<i>yak-</i>	<i>yakw-</i>	<i>yakl-</i>	<i>yakot-</i>
1 inclusive		<i>kw-</i>	<i>kl-</i>	<i>kot-</i>
3	<i>t-</i>			
2	<i>nak-</i>	<i>nakw-</i>	<i>nakl-</i>	<i>nakot-</i>

(4) Verb subject syncretism, NPST

Secondly, there is a prevalent discourse prefix, *m-* the echo subject (ES). It is used in place of the person prefix and the tense but normally keeps the number marking intact. It means that the subject of the predicate is taken from a previous clause (for more detailed discussion on this in Lenakel see Lynch (1983), and also De Sousa (2007) and in WS see De Sousa and Hammond (in preparation)). In (142) we can see that the ES in *m-l-eru* ‘ES-TR-see’ retrieves the subject person from the previous predicate, however it is still marking number with *l-* ‘TR’.

- (142) \emptyset *k-l-eni* *ama* *m-l-eru*
 1.NPST-TR-say only ES-TR-see
 We (TR) have just talked and we (TR) have seen (jhws1-20080414-
 ALL01_261)

Echo subject is a replacement of the subject NP (of an IP) and replaces, to some extent the I category²⁸.

²⁷ There are alternate forms *u-* and *i-* for ‘DU’ and *ot-* and *o(h)-* for ‘PL’, but these do not impact on this thesis and will not be discussed further.

²⁸ This not a full I replacement as seen below, where there is some limited TAM marking that is used with ES.

m-wa *m-at-aharaj* *o* *raha-k* *n-asum-ien*
 ES-come ES-PROG-sit OBL POSS-1SG NMLZ-make.garden-NMLZ
 And I came and I was sitting in my garden (jhws2-20090301-AK02_044)

The level of replacement remains unresolved at present, but it does not affect the findings in this paper.

3.3.4 Borrowed Predicates

As per the borrowed object-denoting words (§3.2.6), there is use of Bislama sourced words that are event- or state-denoting. The borrowing of these, however, is more complicated as they have to be affixed with subject agreement, TAM, negation and direction. As a result, most borrowed notional adjectives and verbs from Bislama take a dummy construction where the native word *ol* ‘make/do’ carries the other information. For example;

- (143) *k-ot-ol* *flas* (<Bislama *flas*)
 3.NPST-PL-make decorated
 They are dressed up (jhws1-20080414-ALL01_157)
- (144) *m-ot-ol* *win* (<Bislama *win*) *e* *kot* (<Bislama *kot*)
 ES-PL-make win OBL court
 And we (PL) won in court (jhws1-20080305-01JYV_025)²⁹

The borrowed ‘co-verb’ must come after the TAM carrying predicate and it is clear that it cannot take any of the prefixing as seen in (145).

- (145) **k-ot-flas*
 3.NPST-PL-decorated
 (jhws1-field notes1)

This morphological and syntactic behaviour supports the notion of a lexical verb class, that this verb word class consists of the patientive and agentive predicates (that are the native state-denoting and event-denoting lexemes), and further, it is morphologically closed. In general, it appears that these usually form active intransitive or patient-type predicates without a second core argument. However, because of variability of borrowed forms and their sometimes inconsistent usage, it is not entirely conclusive how argument structure is affected by their use. This is an area that would benefit from further study, especially using an extended corpus.

²⁹ *win* ‘win’ (<Bislama) is not an object NP because *win* when it is an object-denoting lexeme in Bislama can only refer to ‘breath’ or ‘wind’. The meaning *win* ‘win’ is a borrowed event-denoting lexeme.

3.4 Derivational Nominalisation

Lexical items that function normally as morphological predicates (that is, they can take the above TAM affixes, as well as agreeing in number and person with the subject), can be derived into constituents that behave similarly syntactically to the object-denoting words. Once this occurs then they have syntactic behaviour that appears to match that of a typical NP, except there is one significant difference. The derived forms of the event-denoting words are still capable of using the same argument structures that they used as a fully inflected predicate. This includes the ‘quirky’ case assignment. This is evidence supporting a lexical noun and verb distinction based solely on syntactic behaviour. This is discussed further in §4.3.

3.4.1 Result/Event *n-* *-ien*

The most common form of nominalisation is the process that turns event- or state-denoting roots into a noun-like constituent using a circumfix (NMLZ). This is in the form *n-root-ien*. It can be used on any predicating root type, regardless of argument structure (its effects on argument structure will be discussed in §4.3.2). It cannot occur with the small closed set of adjectives or the object-denoting words, the notional noun class³⁰. This usage restriction is an argument that there is some underlying lexical noun and verb distinction in WS (this is not the case cross-Oceanic where there is clearly nominalisation structures that do not morphologically exhibit such restrictions). Once a verb has been ‘nominalised’, then much of its syntactic behaviour is the same as prototypical NPs. They can be alienable possessed, used with the few noun-only modifiers and be the NP constituent of a preposition phrase. Examples (146) and (147) show the process for *awan* ‘eat.INTRS’ and (148) and (149) show this for *asum* ‘make.garden’.

- (146) *na-n-awan* *rakis*
2SG-PRF-eat.INTRS COMPL
Have you (SG) eaten already? (jhws2-20090228-EK_011)

³⁰ With one known exception, *pahrien* ‘true’ → *npahrienien* ‘truth’.

- (147) *k-awt-ol* *n-awan-ien*
 3-HAB.PL-make NMLZ-eat.INTRS-NMLZ
 We (PL.INCL) make food (jhws2-20090301-AK02_041)
- (148) *ya-am-ot-asum* *e* *netei*
 1.EXCL-PST-PL-make.garden OBL taro
 We (PL.EXCL) made a garden of taro? (jhws2-20090301-AK02_003)
- (149) *m-elahu* *apaha* *n-asum-ien*
 ES-put OBL (LOC) NMLZ-make.garden-NMLZ
 And I put [it] at the garden (jhws2-20090301-AK02_064)

In (148), *asum* ‘make.garden’ is fully inflected for TAM (PST) and subject agreement (1EXCL.PL) and takes an argument with the preposition *e* for *netei* ‘taro’. In (149), however, the nominalised form forms part of the oblique phrase, behaving exactly as a normal object-denoting word (see *neyow-iken* ‘place of the canoes’ in (150) for comparison).

- (150) *ya-am-elahu* *kapas* *apaha* *neyow-iken*
 1.EXCL-PST.SG-put axe LOC canoe-PLACE
 I put the axe at the place of the canoes (jhws2-20080504-EK)

As mentioned above, all predicate types (i.e. those with various argument structures with the patientive and active) can take this nominalisation process. For example, (151) and (152) show a canonical transitive verb *ali* ‘smoke’ in both predicate and nominalised forms. The TAM carrying predicate in (152) is *t-arah* ‘3SG.NPST-bad’.

- (151) *ya-as-ali-ie* *paip*
 1.EXCL-NEG.SG-smoke-NEG pipe
 I don’t smoke [tobacco] (jhws1-field notes1)
- (152) [*n-ali-ien* *paip*] *t-arah*
 NMLZ-smoke-NMLZ pipe 3SG.NPST-bad
 Pipe smoking is bad (jhws2-20090409-EK)

Finally, it is also possible to nominalise the patientive verb types. We saw previously that *eepət* ‘big’ has a canonically patientive structure, as it can behave as a modifier to the NP but also takes the subject argument when it is a predicator (repeated in (153) and (154) respectively).

(153) *netemimi t-eeḗḗt k-awt-uen o*
 human.PL 3SG.NPST-many 3-PROG.PL-go OBL
 Lots of people are going to [Vila] (jhws1-20080414-ALL01_265)

(154) *netemimi k-ot-eeḗḗt m-awt-uen o*
 human.PL 3.NPST-PL-many ES-PROG.PL-go OBL
 The people are many and they are going to [Vila] (jhws1-field notes)

Further, it is morphologically assigned to patientive as it is unable to use the progressive TAM. We can see in (155), *n-eeḗḗt-ien* is NP-like as it is now being possessed. Although the meaning ‘grade’ is a slightly poetic interpretation, it is still possible to see how it derived from the inchoative meaning of the root verb (without the inchoative TAM). The giving of grades in Vanuatu custom is a part of growing up, a part of becoming big.

(155) *k-afən raha-n n-eeḗḗt-ien*
 3.NPST-give POSS-3SG NMLZ-big-NMLZ
 He will be given his grade (jhws1-20080414-ALL01_142)

In summary, this nominalisation is grammatically productive for all event- and state-denoting words, regardless of argument structure types. This circumfix corresponds with the proposal that there is some morphological and syntactic distinction between lexical noun and verb classes. The event or state semantics of the nominalisation process are discussed in §4.3.1. The argument structure of this nominalised ‘verb’ is retained and this will be explored in §4.3.2.

3.4.2 Agentive (Personal) *y-/n-*

There is another form of noun creation from event-denoting roots that is very closely related to the human noun singular/plural distinction (see §3.2.2 on number). This is a process that allows agentive NPs to be created from certain agentive verbs using either *y-* (SG) or *n-* (PL). Examples (156) and (157) show this derivation for the verbs *akleh* ‘steal’ < x, y > and *aḡatun* ‘teach’ < x, y >.

(156) *y-akleh t-am-akleh*
 NOM-thieve 3SG-PST-steal
 a/the thief He stole it

(157) <i>n-anatun</i>	<i>ya-k-anatun</i>
NOM.PL-teach	1EXCL-NPST.SG-teach
(the) teachers	I teach

However, it is not always possible to use this productively in the other direction. Backwards formations are sometimes prohibited, as human or agentive nouns that start with *y-/n-* cannot be formed into predicates by dropping the prefix and replacing this with TAM.

(158) <i>y-etemi</i>	* <i>ya-k-etemi</i>
NOM-human	1EXCL-NPST-be.human

Overall this process does not have high usage in contemporary WS. A separate structure using an IP modifier (relative clause) with *tem* ‘person’ is preferred by most speakers.

3.4.3 Locative –*iken*

The last morphological device addressed in this section is the suffix –*iken* ‘place’. This suffix can occur with any other parts of speech or grammar, including fully inflected predicates, possessed nouns, demonstratives and prepositions. It creates “a place” out of the word that it attaches to. For example, we can see it attached to a event-denoting in (159), an object-denoting in (160), an inalienably possessed root in (161) and a preposition in (162).

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| (159) <i>t-asik-iken</i> | |
| 3SG.NPST-dry-PLACE | |
| A place that is dry (jhws2-20090227-NN03_018) | |
| (160) <i>ya-am-elahu</i> | <i>naw akaku apaha neḡow-iken</i> |
| 1EXCL-PST.SG-put | knife small OBL canoe-PLACE |
| I left the small knife at the canoes (jhws2-20090505-EK) | |
| (161) <i>m-at-uen</i> | <i>apa ima-n-iken</i> |
| ES-PROG-go | OBL home-3SG-PLACE |
| And he will go to his place (jhws2-20090301-AK02_056) | |
| (162) <i>nipikəl</i> | <i>apa-iken</i> |
| sand | OBL-PLACE |
| There was sand there (jhws2-20090227-NN03_018) | |

Since the use of this prefix is universal and not restricted to event-denoting roots, the semantics is quite straightforward: *X-iken* ‘the place of X’. It creates a location that is co-indexed to the constituent where *-iken* is suffixed.

4 The Verb and Noun Distinction

This chapter is an investigation into a parts of speech division in Whitesands. It will look at the behaviour of event-denoting and object-denoting lexemes, which will respectively correspond to roots belonging to the lexical verb and noun word classes. This distinction is determined by the argument structures of each word class. Importantly, it is claimed that the common theoretical view that basic object-denoting ‘nouns’ do not assign arguments, while event-denoting ‘verbs’ (or event-denoting nominalisations) do, is incompatible with Whitesands (and Oceanic languages as a whole). This chapter also argues that the syntactic similarities in event and object-denoting roots suggest that at a lexical level there is only a weak distinction between the noun and verb classes. The lexical noun/verb distinction is made by claiming that nouns, while argument assigning, are limited in their case assignment and that verbs, even when nominalised, have a more complex case and argument structure. We will see that nominalised verbs are still verb-like, and have not completely changed word class, belonging instead to a mixed-class category and therefore their behaviour reflects the hypothesised word classes.

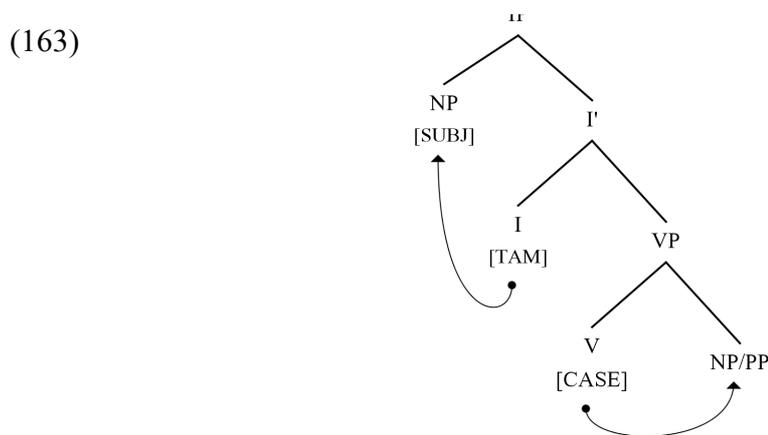
This chapter presents a preliminary analysis that accounts for the data, and uses it to consider the problem areas of the Whitesands grammar. The findings from the study are that the weakly defined lexical noun and verb word classes do not reflect the stronger distinction between NPs and VPs. This analysis crucially claims that the phrase class is determined by the selection of complements by functional categories, and is not determined by an inherent lexical class distinction. The investigation is fundamentally different to the usual understanding of x-bar syntax and employs a new theoretical analysis of Oceanic languages that is currently being developed by Foley (in preparation).

4.1 Phrasal vs. Lexical Categories

This section is concerned with presenting the phrase structures in WS. This is to address the perceived similarities between the event-denoting and object-denoting roots in WS. These are; the inalienably possessed noun requiring an additional obligatory argument; the TAM-

less alienable possession classifiers; and the general argument behaviour of the derived event-denoting nominal (the nominalised verb). Overall, the analysis will show that the lexical noun and verb word classes in WS are of a very similar underlying structure. Further, it is proposed that the higher level phrase structure ‘classes’ (the distinction between a VP and a NP) are separately determined by the selection of complements by functional categories.

Firstly, we start by considering a TAM-inflected phrase as in (163).



IP tree

This underlying representation reflects that a verb assigns case to its complement and belongs underneath the functional category I. I is the TAM carrying feature, is in agreement with the subject NP, and its presence assigns the zero nominative case to the subject NP. Since the subject NP constituent is obligatory in WS (or more precisely, the I agreement is obligatory even if the lexical form is ‘droppable’), its argument’s theta-role is taken from the highest ranking argument for a given verb (thus fulfilling a theta hierarchy (Jackendoff 1990: Chapter 11)). Therefore, for the intransitive and transitive active verbs, this will always be the <actor> and for patientive verbs this role will be <patient> (or <experiencer>). Other semantically core participants must be the complement of V, and their case, in WS at least, is lexically pre-determined by the verb (thus explaining the sometimes unusual case assignment for oblique participants that are canonically objects of bivalent events). The TAM features of functional category I belong to an affix set (that has inherent morphological variations that are associated with the subject agreement) and since in WS these cannot stand alone (by virtue of

being affixes) they surface attached as a prefix (excepting the negative circumfix) to the verb word class.

The composition in (163) gives the starting point for the theoretical development of ‘phrasally-defined’ classes. Traditional x-bar theory claims that there is a lexical word class V that projects to a VP. While this is still true of the structure, we will change focus to higher up on the tree structure. We can see that the functional category I (which surfaces as the TAM and subject agreement), is a node on the IP that takes a complement VP. It is this relationship that could ultimately explain the blurred verb and noun word classes in Oceanic languages. In Whitesands it is ungrammatical for that complement to be a NP as in (164) (and also previously seen in the object-denoting imperatives in (133))³¹.

- | | | |
|-------|--|------------------------------------|
| (164) | <i>*t-am-nejow</i>
3SG-PST-canoe
*He canoed (jhws1-field notes2) | <i>*t-am-ejow</i>
3SG-PST-canoe |
|-------|--|------------------------------------|

Example (165) is this observed lack of nominal ‘predication’ or the morphological blocking of TAM on the object-denoting word class (the noun).

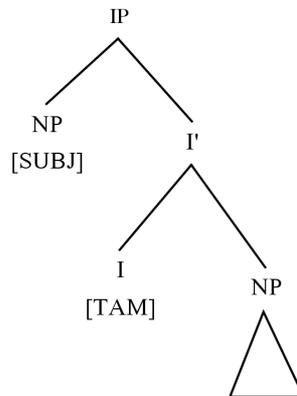
³¹ There are alterations that seemingly can drop the *n-* ‘prefix’ on the noun to create a root capable of being inflected. These are rare, although the example text in Appendix 6.2, contains the following:

<i>M-at-arawieh</i>	<i>narawieh</i>
ES-PROG-sun	sun
And I will sun it	sun

These remain unaccounted for in this analysis because of their unpredictability and rareness. Another pair are *namsu* ‘story’ and *k-at-w-amsu* ‘3-PROG-DU-story: they are story telling’. If it is the case that numerous nouns starting with *n-* are ‘verbalised’ with TAM, this is evidence against the weak lexical noun and verb classes and ultimately will support the theoretical claim that phrasal ‘class’ is independent of lexical word class. It is also possible that these pairs are reflective of an earlier form of the language that had no lexical noun and verb distinction more like Tolai and thus some ambiguous pairs remain.

(165)

*



*IP tree

Therefore, the functional I is a category that takes only a VP complement. It is my contention that this TAM carrying category is choosing or defining the VP, and thus the lexical word class status of the verb is less central to the structure. We will return to this claim later on as it helps explain why lexical items in many Oceanic languages are extremely ambiguous in their parts of speech distribution.

The next issue that this analysis addresses is the problematic definition of a lexical noun class. In WS, this is so because there are no articles per se, which means there is no evidence to satisfy the claim that nouns are inherently indexing (Baker 2003)³². Alternatively to articles, the possessive construction can be used to satisfy this need for indexing on the lexical noun class. Importantly, we will see that this structure is extremely similar to the above IP structure, and this will ultimately support a claim that word classes are principally defined at a phrasal level and in WS are very weak at the lexical distinction. Further, we will see in §4.1.2, that object-denoting roots can have argument structure and assign case without

³² The demonstrative class, typically associated with object-denoting roots (see §3.2.5), are locative, temporally, or textually based. However, they are also used with fully inflected predicates (events or states) as in:

<i>na-k-ol</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>raha-m</i>	<i>nimaiim</i>
2-NPST.SG-make	PROX	OBL-2SG	community
You make (it) here for your community (jhws1-20080414-ALL01_251)			

prepositions or predicates, thus contradicting common theoretical claims that they do not have argument structure.

4.1.1 Possessive Phrases

So far in the discussion of WS grammar, it has been suggested that there are some morphological criteria that, on the surface, presuppose distinct word classes. That is, there are sets of noun-attaching and verb-attaching morphological affixes. While this is not conclusive proof of word classes, it does provide a starting point to pursue any syntactic or other claims. Starting with nouns, this section looks at the alienable possession structure available in WS.

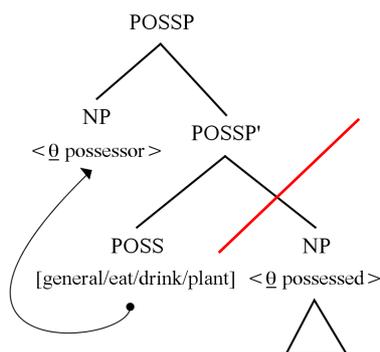
There is a distinct syntactic class of object-denoting roots that are restricted to forming possession with the alienable structure (as opposed to the inalienable class seen in §3.2.3 and §4.1.2). These form the alienably possessed noun, which covers nearly every semantic category in WS (there are even kin terms and body parts that belong to this word class). Some examples are *swaru* ‘road’, *kapa* ‘head’, *kuri* ‘dog’ or *nerow* ‘spear’. They are identified by being unable to occur with the directly attached pronominal suffix. Since the suffix or possessor noun cannot attach to the root, there must be extra grammatical constituents to indicate possession, in particular, one of the possessor classifiers (see §3.2.3 for their varieties) such as *raha* ‘POSS.GENERAL’ in (166) and (167).

(166) *t-eles* *nerow* *raha* *yow*
 3SG.NPST-carry spear POSS turtle
 He carries the turtle’s spear (jhws1-20080314-AK01_095)

(167) *n-arun-ien* *raha* *t’otam*
 NMLZ-know-NMLZ POSS Jotham
 Jotham’s knowledge (jhws1-20080305-04RIV_021)

This class can only use the alienable structure to indicate possession (in WS, the inalienably possessed nouns may also access this alienable possession structure). For both noun types, this is optional (unlike a traditional Determiner phrase or the inalienable possession) and ultimately it creates a possessor phrase. This proposed structure is presented in (168).

(168)



Alienably possessed phrase

This phrase consists of a functional category POSS which is indicating the possessive relationship to its complement NP. This possession assigns a SPEC NP that is the <possessor> argument, and also contains the additional classificatory information (addressed below). This structure accounts for the alienable possession's optionality, as a simple non-possessed NP is still grammatical (marked by the red line in (168)). We will now consider how this structure can account for the behaviour of possession construction in WS.

One problem is that the possessive structure of the alienable nouns has variable word order. There are the two differing structures that show this alternation, *mama asoli rahan* 'his older mother' in (169) and *rahan mama* 'his mother' in (170). In the first example the POSS constituent comes last and in the second example the POSS comes first.

(169) [*mama asoli raha-n*] *t-at-ij* *apaha ifila*
mother_y big POSS-3SG_x 3SG_y-PROG-live OBL Vila
His_x/her_x eldest mother_y lives in Vila³³ (jhws2-pascal)

(170) *t-eni-pen* *kam* [*raha-n mama*]
3SG_x.NPST-TOWARDS3_y OBL POSS-3SG_x mother_y
He_x said to his_x mother_y (jhws1-20080314-AK01_075)

³³ *Mama asoli* 'lit. big mother', refers to your older mother. According to Melanesian culture you use mother for addressing your birth mother, all her female siblings and also your father's brothers' wives. It is usually the case that living arrangements mean that you grow up with two or three mothers at home and they are the ones that are distinguished through age, e.g. *mama akaku* 'mother small' refers to the youngest. Your other mothers can be specified by using their given names, e.g. *mama rut* 'mother Ruth'. The same principle applies to *tata* 'father' as well.

The right movement, while possible, is not preferred for pronominal possessors (i.e. (170) is much more common). It is not due to the extra modifier *asoli* ‘big’, as (171) shows. For a noun or proper noun possessor, the right movement of POSS and the SPEC NP are compulsory³⁴. This is seen by the ungrammaticality of (172) compared to (166).

(171) *kastom ra-tah t-eur*
 custom POSS-1PL 3SG.NPST-good
 Our custom is good (jhws1-20080414-ALL01_146)

(172) **na-k-os [raha t'on nerow]*
 2-NPST.SG-carry POSS John spear
 (jhws1-field notes-ena)

Any analysis that can explain the different structures of the two noun types should ideally account for this variability and the proposed phrase structure in (168) does this somewhat because POSS is not within the possessed NP. Why this is done remains unsolved and perhaps focus or other discourse related strategies are in play. This motivation is an area for further research.

The second significant issue for the noun word class is that when alienable possession takes place, there is the choice within the functional category of the possessive morpheme.

However, this choice within the classifier class is a function that remains unexplained in traditional explanations of lexical word class distinctions. The choice between EAT, DRINK, PLANT or GENERAL is not determined by the lexical head, which is the possessed noun (as a classifier or gender agreement is considered to do). For example, the lexeme *kuri* ‘dog’ can take at least two types of classifier as in (173) and (174).

(173) *raha-k kuri mil*
 POSS.GENERAL- dog DU
 My two dogs (I own) (jhws1-field notes2)

(174) *ney-lah kuri*
 POSS.FOOD-3PL dog
 Their dog they ate/will eat (jhws1-field notes2)

³⁴ I have assumed the underlying structure to be right-branching because in all other instances this is the case with WS phrase structures. As a reviewer pointed out this argument does need expansion in further research. A good account of the socio-pragmatic influences behind the movement (whichever way it is) is needed for this task.

Instead this functional category is introducing a new argument, describing the predicative relationship between the two arguments, and thus assigns a theta-role to this additional argument (which is the proposed SPEC NP). This closely parallels the argument introduction and case assignment of proto-typical event-denoting roots (which map to the verb class). This case assignment to the possessor by POSS is the genitive-like oblique pronominal form. But this can have a large range of theta-roles like <experiencer> as in *raha-k* ‘POSS-1SG I own’ (174) above, or could even shift to be <actor> as POSS.DRINK-2SG ‘you to drink’ as in (175).

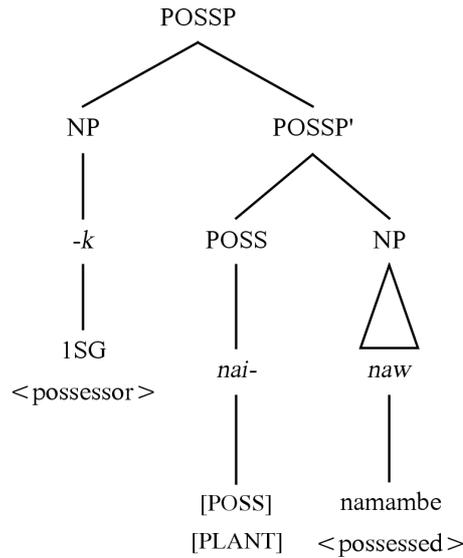
(175) *ya-k-uen* *m-el* *nəm-əm* *kati,* *nəkawə*
 1.EXCL-NPST-go ES-dig POSS.DRINK-2SG one kava
 I will go and dig up a thing for you to drink, some kava (jhws1-20080314-AK01_066)

As can be seen in (174), there is no clear TAM marking in the POSS constituent and this is discussed in §4.1.3. The structure says that POSS has a SPEC NP and therefore the argument is obligatory. That is, once the possessor classifier is introduced to make a POSSP, then it must be accompanied by a possessor. We find this to be the case in WS as (176) is ungrammatical because of the requirement for the possessor with POSS.

(176) **nien* *nəm-∅*
 coconut POSS.DRINK
 *the drinking coconut (jhws1-field notes2)

This supports the proposed structural features of the possessive phrase. The POSS phrase is represented again in (177), with the lexical items included.

(177)



naik naw 'My namambe [I planted]' (jhws2-20090227-NN02_014)

The hypothesis being presented in this thesis is that the parts of speech distinction are defined by higher order phrasal constituents. This is consistent with the data in regards to possessive phrases. It says that the functional category POSS, takes a NP and only a NP complement, thus defining what a NP is: the potential complement of POSS. This immediately removes the problem of explaining how the classification system is linked from the lexical level up, because it is now part of the phrasal construction of POSSP. That is, by creating a POSSP, the functional category chooses a feature from the set [EAT, DRINK, PLANT, GENERAL] and simultaneously assigns the appropriate role to the SPEC NP (thus allowing for a true <actor> theta-role). At this point we will continue on to look at how the other possession structure, the inalienable, interacts with this claim.

4.1.2 Noun Complements

This section presents evidence that some nouns can have obligatory arguments and also assign case to these arguments without prepositions or other predicators. As previously mentioned, this is problematic for claims that argument structure is a distinctive syntactic feature of verbs and complex (or derived) nouns only (see Grimshaw 1990: 104-106). This difficulty emerges from the behaviour of the inalienably possessed nouns. These map

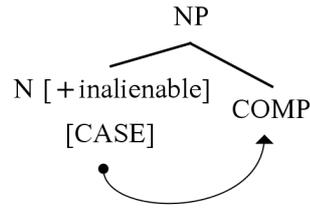
somewhat but not exclusively to the semantically-defined sets of kin terms, body parts and part/whole relationships. Alienability is thus a grammatical distinction, because the semantic class is not delimited to a particular semantic field (nor is it phonologically motivated). The class consists of lexical items that are close kin terms, such as *ite-* ‘mother’, *pia-* ‘brother’ or *mipu-* ‘grandchild’ and most body parts, such as *narfu-* ‘belly’, *nemte-* ‘back’ or *nisi-* ‘faeces’. There are also part/whole or other relationships encoded with this structure, such as *nima-* ‘handle’, *ima-* ‘farewell’ or *nariŋ-* ‘name’. Additionally supporting the argument that this is a grammatical distinction, is that even within semantically proto-typical inalienable fields, there are exceptions that cannot take the inalienable possession form, such as **kapa-n* ‘head-3SG: his head’ or **kaka-m* ‘mother’s.brother-2SG: your uncle’. This noun class strictly occurs with a possessor, usually in the form of a pronominal suffix, such as *-n* ‘3SG’ in (178) (*nisi-* is always inalienable), but they can also occur with a noun possessor such as *yow* ‘turtle’ in (179). This possessor must be immediately adjacent to the right edge of the noun.

(178) *nepike-n* *t-eik* *nisi-n*
tail-3SG_x 3SG.NPST-touch faeces-3SG_x
(that) his tail touch his shit (jhws1-20080314-AK01_102)

(179) *m-aiyir* *mən* *nentowi-* *yow*
ES-defecate again neck turtle
And he shat again on the turtle’s neck (jhws1-20080314-AK01_062)

The theoretical difficulty is the following. These are not (semantically) complex nouns and they do not express an event. Nor are they nouns derived from a verb that is expressing a state or action (Grimshaw 1990). They are simply expressing the possessive relationship between the possessed (which is the head noun, which can be tested using subject agreement) and the possessor. These simple nouns are taking an obligatory complement NP and are assigning genitive-type case to it (displayed as the pronominal form suffix) as represented in (180).

(180)



Underlying case/argument assignment by inalienably possessed nouns

There are no prepositions or verbs involved in this process; it is simply a structural connection between the inalienably possessed noun and its possessor. There is no restriction on the theta-roles of the complement, because the inalienable possession is capable of having a wide range of denotations. Consider the semantic relationship between the following examples in 0, (182) and (183).

	Possessed	Possessor	
(181)	<i>nete-</i> child	<i>m</i> 2SG (parent)	‘your child’
(182)	<i>nemtā-</i> cost	<i>trak</i> car	‘the cost of the car’
(183)	<i>nelka-</i> leg	<i>pukah</i> pig	‘the pig’s leg’

These all take the inalienable possession structure yet they encapsulate very different relationships. Like verbs, they are capable of expressing a wide range of theta-roles.

However, the inalienable possession is restricted in its case assignment for these theta-roles, with only the genitive-type case (which surfaces as the pronominal suffix or zero-marked noun or proper noun possessor).

The existence of this complement to the simple noun is problematic for theories that claim that argument assignment is a core syntactic feature that distinguishes between basic nouns and verbs. The WS data (along with many Oceanic languages) demonstrates that this claim is not true. The simple object-denoting root must have an argument which is assigned a non-zero case form.

In WS, it is grammatical to use the optional alienable possession with inalienable nouns. But, there still must be the inalienable possessor (thereby having two possessors). We can see this in the ungrammaticality of (184), where *narme-* ‘image’ does not have a specific inalienable possessor.

- (184) **narme-∅* *raha-k*
 image-∅ POSS-1SG
 *my picture/photo (jhws1-field notes1/jhws2-pascal)

To make this grammatical, there must be an inalienable possessor 2SG as in (185), where there is also an alienable possessor 1SG.

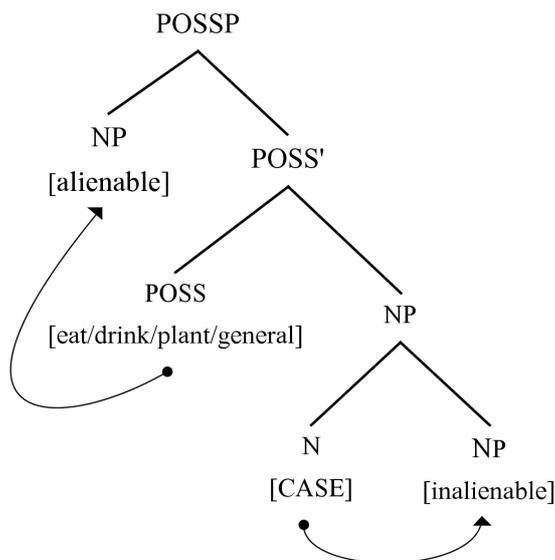
- (185) *narme-m* *raha-k*
 image-2SG POSS-1SG
 My picture/photo of you (the one that I own but is an image of you) (jhws2-pascal)

This shows that the inalienable argument assignment is obligatory, and as this is not considered canonical behaviour of the noun word class, we must reconsider theories that make this assumption³⁵. (185) is additionally important because it shows that the possessive structures are independent of each other and can co-exist. This interaction of alienable and inalienable possession is predicted by the NP possessive phrase structure (from §4.1.1) if the NP contains an inalienable noun, as presented in (186).

³⁵ In fact, when *narme-m* ‘your photo’ is out of context, it is ambiguous as to whether it refers to a photo of you or the photo you own. This confirms the status of alienability as a grammatical distinction, not semantic. Moreover, the modification of the inalienable noun with a PP modifier is possible and this shows that the inalienable noun is predicate-like, taking multiple arguments, both complements and adjuncts.

raha-k *narme-m* *apaha* *yehwei*
 POSS-1SG image-2SG OBL volcano
 My picture/photo of you [being] at the volcano (jhws2-EK)

(186)



The possessive phrase with an inalienably possessed NP

Finally, this structure articulates that the functional category POSS takes a NP complement only and further that a NP is the only possible complement to POSS. This suggests that, in WS, a NP is defined by being the possible (or potential) complement to POSS. Additionally, it is significant that this structure is remarkably like that of the IP in (163). This similarity is discussed further in §4.2.

4.1.3 The Functional Category POSS

This brief sub-section outlines why the possessive classifiers are not carrying TAM and how it interacts with the distinction of lexical and phrasal classes. Firstly, there is a semantic problem with this classifier class. That is, it possibly encodes an event or action, and while this is not absolute criteria, it is canonically something that fully inflected verbs do in WS. Further, while they have the capacity to denote an event, and also assign arguments, they are extremely deficient in TAM referencing. For example, consider (187), (188) and (189), which obviously show different interpretations of how the event is positioned in respect to a timeline (or not at all in the case of (189)). There is no predetermined TAM inflection for the classifier, as only context can tell the full semantic extent of the temporal placement.

- (187) *ya-k-uen* *m-el* *nəm-əm* *kati,* *nəkawə*
 1.EXCL-NPST-go ES-dig POSS.DRINK-2SG one kava
 I will go and dig up a thing for you to drink, some kava (jhws1-20080314-
 AK01_066)
- (188) *no-k-ot-eru* *nai-k* *naw*
 2PL-NPST-PL-see POSS.PLANT-1SG namambe
 You can see my namambe that I planted (jhws2-20090227-NN02_025)
- (189) *kani* *niŋ-ən* *n-awan-ien* ... *noɸwəŋ*
 and POSS.EAT-3SG NMLZ.eat.TRANS.NMLZ coconut.pith
 And his food is the (pith of the germinated) coconut (jhws1-20080328-
 NS02_026)

Like the relative TAM system used for predicates, these classifiers are ambiguous when isolated from context. However, unlike the predicates they are not linked to previous or following TAM, as seen above and in the other examples throughout this thesis. This shows that these possessive classifiers are really TAM-less, thus contrasting with inflected predicates despite their similar semantic event-denoting composition.

The phrasal level analysis being presented explains this behaviour. It is claiming that POSS is a functional category that assigns a SPEC NP argument (which is genitive case and can be a variety of theta-roles) and that this POSS takes a complement that is a NP. It is structurally separate from the NP and therefore can be moved, accounting for the variable word order. It is a classifier in that it can classify relationships between two nouns, but since it is not projected by the lexical noun, it can have multiple classifications for each lexical item. Finally, it is not associated with I in these structures and is therefore TAM-less. This accurately reflects its role in the WS grammar and accounts for previous problems surrounding the lexical and functional classes.

4.2 Further Discussion on the Noun and Verb Distinction

This section introduces syntactic behaviour that concerns the delimitation of distinct lexical noun and verb word classes in WS. Weak syntactic evidence of the distinction, is the

existence of a small class of modals that occur after the verb's suffixes, like *to* 'try.POLITE' (190) in the imperative. These do not appear within or adjacent to a NP.

- (190) *ani* *to!*
 sing.out try.POLITE
 Say it! (jhws1-field notes2)
- (191) **yerman* *to!*
 male try.POLITE
 *Be a man! (jhws1-field notes2)

When creating imperatives like (190) above, it is not possible for a lexical noun or NP to fulfill the required TAM, including politeness. This is predicted by the proposed IP structure which does not allow for I to take NP complements. Imperatives that are formed using a lexical noun such as 'be a woman' do not have inflection for TAM, must have an explicit subject and also can be ambiguous as to their interpretation such as (192) (which without imperative-type intonation could be ambiguous).

- (192) *ik* *petan!*
 2SG female
 Be a woman!/you are a woman (jhws2-field notes2-EK)

Further, while there are no longer determiners in WS, especially of the definite-type article, there is occasionally (but not obligatorily) use of *kati* 'one' like the indefinite article and this is restricted to modifying nouns. This is very weak evidence towards a lexically distinct part of speech as per Baker, where nouns by definition take indexes, here reflected in the numeral *kati*.

Other proto-typical features that distinguish lexical nouns and verbs are also not conclusive. Proto-typical grammatical features associated with the nouns, such as number, can be used with notional verbs. For instance, the predicate can use the number *mən* 'PL' to mean 'as well' and *rofin* 'EXHAUSTIVE' to mean 'all'. So in (193), the only interpretation of the sentence is that all of the reading is complete, not all of the books which is distributionally different as in (194).

- (193) *t-am-afin* *rofin* *nawəwə-u*
 3SG-PST-read EX book-PROX
 He has read all of this book (jhws2-20090228-EK02_54)

≠ He has read every book

- (194) *t-am-afin* *nawəwə* *rofin*
 3SG-PST-read book EX
 He has read every book (jhws2-20090228-EK02_54)

While a synchronic account of WS might have these number pairs listed as separate words, their close semantics and identical form are evidence that they derive from the same functional category. Their distribution therefore does not support that the lexical verb and noun are distinct.

The proposed patientive verb class (the state- or property-denoting root) is also problematic in its varied distribution. With TAM affixes it behaves as a predicate. There is also use of TAM-less patientive verbs as modifiers on basic nouns such as *metəŋ* ‘slow’ in (195). When this is the case they are the constituent most close to the noun root (excepting the directly possessed nouns which have the suffix on the noun root). However, they can also occur, in a similar fashion, as the TAM-less post-predicate modifier as in (196) where *metəŋ* ‘slow’ is directly attached to the predicate. We know that it is not the NP that is being modified, as modifiers must follow the head noun. When this is the case, they are morphologically close to the root, as we can see with the TAM negative circumfix which is used in (197).

- (195) *kuri* *metəŋ* *mil* *raha-k* *k-am-w-apəli* *apaha* *nasumien*
 dog slow DU POSS-1SG 3-PST-DU-sleep OBL garden
 My two slow dogs slept in the garden (jhws2-pascal)

- (196) *in* *t-at-it-metəŋ* *ilah*
 3SG 3SG-PROG-lead-slow 3PL
 He is leading them slowly (jhws2-pascal)

- (197) *s-aliwok-metəŋ-ie!*
 NEG.SG-walk-slow-NEG
 Don't walk slowly! (jhws1-field notes2)

All of these factors are contributing to the fuzziness in distinct lexical classes of noun and verb. However, the phrasal approach being introduced in this thesis is promising that it can

account for their phenomenon. This is by having pre-determined phrasal categories, NP and VP, which are preselected by higher level functional phrasal constituents (primarily in WS the I and the POSS). I reiterate the claim: Oceanic languages present problems using traditional and contemporary criteria for defining parts of speech. However, the theory here claims that the phrasal classes are pre-determined and are not necessarily projected by a lexical head. They are distinguished by the functional categories that they are potential complements to. This means that although the POSS functional category is optional, only a NP is its potential complement. The weak lexical word class distinction (or in some languages like Tolai, close to non-existent) is then a result of phrasal classes bleaching into the lexicon, not of originally distinct lexical word classes. For Whitesands, this means that NPs take either noun heads or *n-* *-ien*, and VPs like to take verb heads (although in other languages this trickledown effect might be limited to one or neither phrase type thus allowing for any lexeme to head either of the phrase types – like Niuean). The distinction of lexical roots into word classes, such as noun and verb, would be somewhat irrelevant for phrase structure.

Lastly, there is additional data that show that NP is distinct from the VP and IP. The NP has its own conjunction *mene* ‘and.NP’, which is restricted to joining NPs as in (198).

(198) *ko* *yow* *mene* *saimon* *ya-k-ia-worisəŋ*
 and.then 1SG and.NP Simon 1.EXCL-NPST-DU-follow
 And then Simon and I came afterwards (jhws1-20071203-04AK_026)

(199) **t-uen* *mene* *t-ua*
 3SG.NPST-go and.NP 3SG.NPST-come
 (jhws1-field notes1)

This cannot be used for IP or VP coordination as in (199)³⁶. They occur with *kani* ‘and’, *metow* ‘RESULTATIVE: because’ or *ko* ‘and.then’ as seen in example (200).

³⁶ While NPs are conjunctionally distinct from VP/IP, the distinction between IP and VP conjunction is more complicated (although they are grammatically distinct as seen in §3.1). This is because of the use of the ECHO SUBJECT prefix for consecutive predicates with no other conjunctions. The role of ECHO SUBJECT which carries limited TAM and various discourse participants is complicated. Because TAM is core to I, this causes a problem in determining where the conjunction is occurring. This remains unanalysed and open to further investigation (see De Sousa & Hammond in preparation).

- (200) *ya-k-ot-os* *naw* *kani* *ko* *m-ot-oh* *rakis*
 1EXCL-NPST-PL-carry knife and and.then ES-PL-hit COMPL
 We (EXCL.PL) take the knife and then we take the handle off it (jhws2-20090301-AK01_036)
- (201) **yo* *kani/ko* *saimon*
 1SG and/and.then Simon

Further the NP is the only phrase type that can follow a preposition, thus indicating that NPs and VPs behave differently. What is important for the discussion is the recognition that lexical nouns and verbs are somewhat alike, and this similarity will be present in their underlying structure. This is what this thesis is proposing, lexical nouns and verbs are very similar, and it is their phrases' interaction with functional categories (their selection as complements) that is the best evidence for their distinctiveness.

4.3 Nominalised Verbs

The thesis introduced a morphological nominalisation process in §3.4. The following discussion is an expansion of this, and addresses two important issues regarding the process. This is important for this paper's hypothesis that word categorisation is through phrasal complements and functional categories. This is because nominalisation is the process that shows movement between two prototypical word classes of noun and verb. Firstly, it considers the semantics of the phenomenon, particularly in respect to the interactions with the three proposed verb types. Secondly, it looks at the syntax of the nominalisation, specifically at argument structure which ultimately suggests that it is not simply movement from one class to another, but instead is a mixed category, sharing properties with both NPs and VPs. It also appears that the nominalisation process is the best evidence for a lexical word class distinction between noun and verb which was previously shown to be weak in WS. This distinction is that nouns are limited in their argument assignment and that verbs, even when nominalised have a more complex argument structure.

4.3.1 Semantics of Nominalisation

Nominalisation is when the normally-predicating event- or state-denoting roots (the notional verb class) take nominalisation morphology in order to form some kind of noun or NP-type constituent. However, as has been discussed in English and other languages, it is not always entirely apparent how derivational nominalisations actually relate to their original verb (see Chomsky 1970). While two of the nominalisations are semantically clear in their change (the *-iken* ‘place nominaliser’ and *y-* ‘agentive nominaliser’), what we see in WS is that the *n-* *-ien* nominalisation process is regularly idiosyncratic at a semantic level and is used in metaphoric extension.

Firstly, it must be pointed out that the nominalisation process in WS is not as prevalent as some other Oceanic languages³⁷. For example, in the text in Appendix 6.2, there are only three *n-* *-ien* examples, two examples of *-iken* and no examples of *y-* from a text that is 280 words and just under three minutes long. It is stylistically preferred, across all currently recorded genres, for fully inflected predicates to describe events, actions, and states, not the TAM-less nominalised forms.

In regards to the nominalisation *n-* *-ien* process, I start by taking some of the more commonly used nominalised forms and their original root form. Some of these are presented in table (5), where syntactic core-arguments are marked with the theta-roles, actor <a>, patient <p>.

³⁷ Dixon writes “a foreign speaker of Fijian must learn not to be frightened of using clausal NPs [nominalised verbs within NPs]... in some circumstances a clausal NP is the *only* way of expressing something” (Dixon 1988: 296). This obviously suggests they play an important role in Fijian.

Root	Predicated Gloss	<i>n-</i> <i>-ien</i> Gloss
<i>ol</i>	‘make/do’ <a, p>	work (doing)
<i>asum</i>	‘make.garden’ <a>	a garden/*gardening
<i>ani</i>	‘sing.out/tell.out’ <a, p>	a speech/*song
<i>arun</i>	‘know/understand’ <p>	knowledge/intelligence
<i>awan</i>	‘eat.INTRS’ <a>	food/kastom.banquet
<i>un</i>	‘eat’ <a,p>	the eating/*food
<i>oh</i>	‘hit’ <a, p>	the hitting
<i>awsan</i>	?	a joke
<i>atiŋ</i>	‘live’ <a>	lifestyle
<i>aməh</i>	‘sad/pity’ <p>	sadness
<i>eur</i>	‘good’ <p>	goodness (of things)
<i>eepət</i>	‘many/big’ <p>	grade (metaphoric)
<i>aŋhati</i>	‘talk/converse’ <a>	language/a point of view (metaphoric)
<i>apilapil</i>	‘boil (state)’ <p>	bubbles
<i>akleh</i>	‘theive’ <a, p>	theft
<i>afaki</i>	‘pray.to’ <a, p>	the church institution/ a week (metaphoric)
<i>arah</i>	‘bad’ <p>	a death of a human (metaphoric)
<i>asiru</i>	‘help’ <a>	the helping/ a gift (metaphoric)

(5) Root and *n-* *-ien* form

Examination of the above table does not give a clear indication of how this nominalisation process derives meaning. This suggests that the *n-* *-ien* process is semantically idiosyncratic and is therefore a lexicalised process. Closer examination shows that neither event semantics

or verb type, at this stage of the WS analysis, cannot account for the nominalised forms. For the transitive agentive verbs, the nominalised form usually refers to a TAM-less expression of the event itself. We can see this in example (202), where the nominalised *ani* ‘sing.out’ is in the TAM-less possessed phrase. This structurally contrasts nicely with (203), while still possessed, uses a ‘noun’ and thus takes on a different interpretation. If we look at syntactic properties there is obviously some relationship, but the semantic difference between ‘song’ and ‘singing’ are very hazy and complex (for the event semantics of ‘sing’ in English see Zucchi 1993: 63-66). Both are resultant of the event of ‘sing’ and it is not yet clear how the resultant semantics derive the nominalised semantic contrast.

- (202) *ya-k-olkeikei* *ra-lah* *n-ani-ien* *nepuen*
 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-like POSS-3PL NMLZ-sing.out-NMLZ song
 I like their way of singing the song (jhws2-pascal)
- (203) *ya-k-olkeikei* *ra-lah* *nepuen*
 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-like POSS-3PL song
 I like their song (jhws2-pascal)

Considering just the patientive verb types, which are the verbs that are adjective-like, as they denote properties or states, also reveals contrasts. Thus, when nominalised it is these states or properties that can be represented without TAM. We can see this twice in (204), where two patientive verbs retain their core meaning of a property, but are now being nominalised with possession and textual demonstratives.

- (204) *n-arun-ien* *aha* *t'otam* *t-ajhati,*
 NMLZ-know-NMLZ MED Jotham 3SG.NPST-talk
ratah *n-askasik-ien*
 POSS-1PL.INCL NMLZ-strong-NMLZ
 That intelligence that Jotham talked about, is our strength (jhws1-20080305-04RIV_024)

It thus appears that patientive verbs normally retain the state (similar to the adjective derivational *-ness* in English), but remove any agreement for TAM or subject <patient>. However, the regular use of these forms in a metaphoric or non-literal manner undermines

this proposal (see *apilapil* ‘boil (state)’ <p> → ‘bubbles’ or *arah* ‘bad’ <p> → ‘a death of a human’). Thus, nominalised patientive verbs too are semantically unpredictable.

Given that transitive verbs and patientive verbs have somewhat unpredictable meaning allocated to their respective event/action or state, the behaviour of the syntactically intransitive verbs also supports the hypothesis that this is a lexicalised process. In the above examples at the surface level, they take on a range of nominalised meanings for the one morphological form. For example, *awan* ‘eat.INTRS’ surfaces as ‘food’ when nominalised, and while related to the eating, it is not the event itself. It is a participant, not the underlying semantic event that is being presented. Another intransitive verb *atij* ‘live’ conversely takes a nominal form ‘lifestyle’ that is referenced to the action itself. One possible hypothesis is that resultative event verbs behave differently from non-resultative action verbs regardless of syntactic structure (transitivity). If we take (205) as a basic representation of the difference between result-based actions and result-less actions, then the hypothesis is that it is the (y) constituent that is surfacing.

(205) Resultative: ACT (x) CAUSE [STATE (y)]

Non-Resultative: ACT (y)

Basic semantics of action-denoting verbs

What we then see is that when resultative intransitive verbs are nominalised, it is possibly the result argument (y) that is kept. So in (206) we see this for *asum* ‘make.garden’.

(206) *m-eteliŋ-pen* *apaha* *n-asum-ien*
 ES-return-TOWARDS3 OBL NMLZ-make.garden-NMLZ
 And I returned to the garden (jhws2-20090301-AK02_022)

However, there are nominalised examples that contradict this proposal, and therefore support the lexicalised status of derivation with *n-* *-ien*. Another resultative yet (syntactically) intransitive verb *asiliŋ* ‘strip.leaves’ surfaces as a representation of the event (x) as in (207).

(207) *n-asiliŋ-ien*

NMLZ-strip.leaves-NMLZ

The leaf stripping activity (not the leaf strips) (jhws1-field notes-EK)

Moreover, if the event semantics were to be the structure behind the meaning of the nominalisation forms, then it would be problematic to distinguish resultative intransitive verbs such as *asum* ‘make.garden’ from the transitive verb class (which takes two arguments by definition). We have already seen this verb class to have a somewhat ambiguous nominalisation process. This varied behaviour of the one morphological process therefore supports the idea that derivations with *n-* *-ien* ‘NMLZ’ are heavily lexicalised in their meaning (for a discussion of similar problems, where derived nominals in English can be uncertain in their semantic composition see Grimshaw (1990: Chapter 3)).

In WS (like English’s complex derived nominals), the other two types of nominalisation appear to be more regular. The agentive prefix *y-* is limited in usage across the WS corpus, and the preliminary observations are currently conditional on further research. It appears that *y-* is restricted to creating a nominal constituent that is agentive (and therefore inherently causative) as in (156).

(208) *y-akleh*

NOM-thieve

a/the thief

t-am-akleh

3SG-PST-thieve

He stole it

(209) **y-erkerek*

NOM.SG-explode

*the one who explodes

t-erkerek

3SG. NPST-explode

It explodes <patientive>

Example (209) is to show that this is restricted to the agentive nominalisation structure and that semantics will only allow verbs with agentive subjects to use this derivation. Finally, the *-iken* suffix is clear in its semantic realisation (*X-iken* ‘the place of X’), and has no syntactic preference to one particular word or phrase class. This suggests that this nominalisation is a straightforward, unrestricted derivation and therefore is non-problematic for any analysis.

The discussion of the semantics of the nominalisation processes is not complete at this stage of the WS grammar description. If it is a lexicalised process, as the data strongly suggests, then it is important from a descriptive perspective to document all the verbs and their

nominalised form meanings. There is the use of nominalisations in the metaphoric sense, like *arah* ‘bad’ which can only have the nominalised meaning of ‘death of a human’, and has lost its transparent meaning which should have been close to ‘badness’. However, metaphor and its use is an extremely complicated area of linguistics, and as such goes beyond the scope of this thesis and should remain open for further investigation. Especially interesting would be a consideration of metaphor in respect to genre or register. This is an area that requires further research but for now this discussion will focus on the syntax of the *n- -ien* process.

4.3.2 *N- -ien*: A Mixed Category³⁸

This short section is an investigation into the phrase structure of *n- -ien* nominalisation and how this interacts with the proposal that word classes in Oceanic should be defined through functional categories and their phrasal complements, not lexical classes. There are some important facts that require reiterating. It is the case that nominalised constituents obviously behave as the notional NP would. For example, it can take possession structures like the alienable nouns do, as in (210). In (211), we see that *n-asum-ien* ‘garden’ can act as the NP constituent that is the complement to a preposition. This is also the case in (212) (*n-atij-ien* ‘life’). The nominalised verb can also use the quasi-indefinite determiner *kati* ‘one’, as in (213).

- (210) *n-anhat-ien* *ra-tah*
 NMLZ-talk-NMLZ POSS-1PL.INCL
 Our language (jhws1-20080305-04RIV_027)
- (211) *m-etelij-pen* *apaha* *n-asum-ien*
 ES-return-TOWARDS3 OBL NMLZ-make.garden-NMLZ
 And I returned to the garden (jhws2-20090301-AK02_022)
- (212) *namsu* *akaku* *kati* *raha* *n-atij-ien*
 story small one OBL NMLZ-live-NMLZ
 A small story about life (jhws1-20080414-ALL01_001)

³⁸ I point out here that although it appears that these forms behave very similarly to NPs, native speaker intuition is that *n-X-ien* is of the ‘verb’ class. Three English-speaking, educated speakers claimed separately at different times, without prompting, that this was the case. Although this is in no way a linguistic test, it is interesting.

- (213) *n-afaki-ien* *kati* *mene*
 NMLZ-pray-NMLZ one and.NP
 One week or thereabouts (jhws2-20090301-AK01_006)

However, despite this evidence that the nominalised verb is NP-like, it still retains argument assignment that is typical of verbs. As we have seen in WS, nouns can take a complement argument and this is obligatory in the inalienable possession. Nevertheless, this NP complement to the noun is restricted to the genitive-only case assignment. This is not the situation with verbs. Their complements can take a much wider range of argument roles and case assignment. For example, it is not grammatical for a noun to take an instrumentive NP complement as in (214).

- (214) **nima* *e* *semen*
 house INST cement
 *the house made with cement (jhws2-field notes2)

Instead this instrumentive argument must be introduced by a fully inflected predicate in a related clause that allows for the non-possessive complement to co-occur, as in (215).

- (215) *nima,* [*t-am-ol* *e* *semen*]
 house 3SG-PST-make OBL cement
 The house, he made with cement (jhws2-field notes2)

The hypothesised phrasal theory stipulates that nouns have to have the capacity to take complements. In WS, we can narrow this by saying that the noun's complements are restricted to genitive case. The verb's complements can have a variety of case choices (which is unsurprising considering the complexities of event and action semantics). Furthermore, each lexical verb is responsible for assigning case to its core arguments, thus accounting for the 'quirky' case system. This is the core syntactic distinction between lexical nouns and verbs.

Turning to the *n- -ien* nominalised verb, like TAM-inflected verbs, they can access this wide variety of case assignment (unlike basic non-derived nouns). They are capable of having non-possessive complements. So in (216), we see this possibility where the nominalised *asum* 'make.garden' is taking an additional instrumentive argument.

- (220) *ya-k-arun* *n-eles-ien* *ik,* *m-u-ari*
 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-know NMLZ-carry.SG-NMLZ 2SG ES-DU-landwards
 I am able to carry you and we'll go landwards (jhws1-20080314-
 AK01_050)

The next example (221) adds further data because it shows that the complement to the nominalised form of *oh* 'hit <x, y>' is a NP, not just a noun.

- (221) *n-oh-ien* [*pukah* *asoli*]_{NP}
 NMLZ-hit-NMLZ pig big
 The killing of big pigs (jhws2-field notes-EK)
 ≠ The big killing of pigs

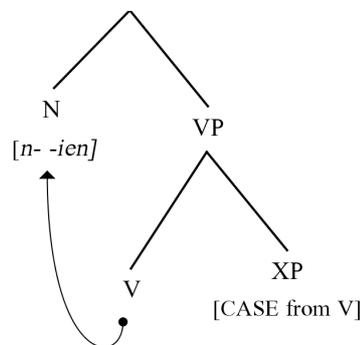
This ultimately means that the nominalised verb is no longer a predicator (because it is TAM-less) and it is alienably possessed, nor is it like a notional noun because it still has access to the residual argument structure of a verb. Instead it should be considered a mixed category, sharing features of both NP and VP classes. Furthermore, its behaviour suggests that the lexical noun and verb class in WS are different in respect to what arguments they can assign. While it is not the case that nouns are simply non-argument taking constituents (as we saw evidence against this above in §4.1.2), this process does show that nouns are limited in their argument assignment, and that verbs, even when nominalised, have a more complex case and argument structure.

What remains is a solution to show how this mixed category fits in with the phrase structure proposal for NPs and VPs. Mixed categories have been addressed in other languages and it is clear that each language has different behaviour in respect to nominalised forms (see Bantu language *Gĩkũyũ* for an analysis of a similar problem with agentive nominalisations (Bresnan & Mugane 2006)). The important distinction to be made is whether the nominalisation is lexically or syntactically derived. If it is the latter then the mixed class category creates problems because “words hypothesized to be syntactically derived do not differ in morphological structure from those lexically formed” (Bresnan & Mugane 2006: 29). In WS, it is simply morphological derivation using *n-* *-ien* to create a nominalised verb. While the semantics of this process are heavily lexicalised, it is clear that syntactically, the nominalised

verb has the capacity to take the same complements as the equivalent TAM inflected verbs. The simple view that nominalisation is when a verb is ‘converted’ into a noun does not apply to WS. The phrasal structure is a NP, as was shown above. The argument structure conversely is still reflective of the VP, where there is the complex case assignment by the head. However, the theory proposed by this thesis can accommodate this behaviour.

Two features of the theory are; lexical nouns are capable of taking complements; and phrasal classes are determined by the functional categories selecting complements. This allows for a lexical noun to take a VP complement. The NP (that this complement-taking noun belongs to), derives its NP class by being a potential complement of POSS not by the lexical head. This nominalisation process is represented in (222), where *n- -ien*, is the [derivational] noun³⁹. As a noun, it takes a VP complement, which is TAM-less because it is not a complement to a higher grammatical constituent I. Since the *n- -ien* ‘NOUN’ is a circumfix it must attach to a grammatical word, and therefore V, as the closest grammatical word, takes the nominalisation morphology.

(222)



The nominalisation process

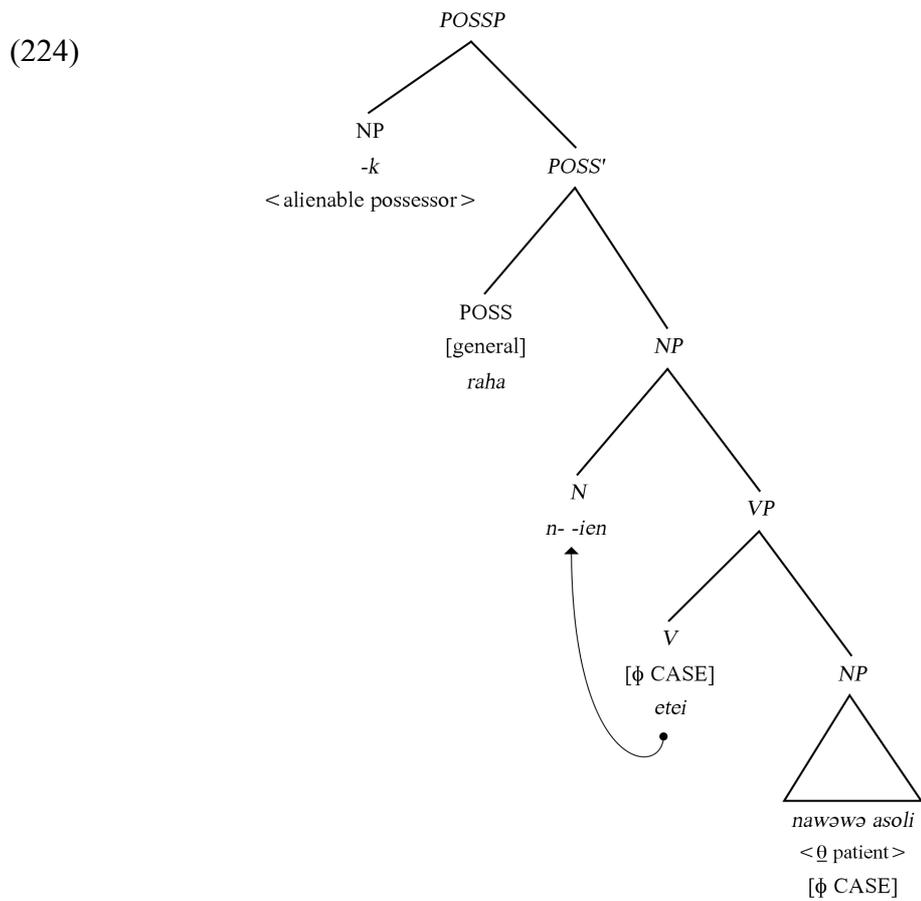
This VP complement is like any other VP in that V can assign case to its own complements and this reflects the behaviour of nominalised forms in WS. According to the hypothesised theory, it then belongs to a NP (albeit complex and derived), as defined by being the potential complement to a POSS (previously shown in the structure in (177)), not necessarily because of the lexical head. (223) and (225) both exemplify how these NPs that contain a lexical verb

³⁹ Note the form of *n- -ien* as well as it matches the majority of nouns which start with *n*, thus reflecting the *Proto-Oceanic article reflex **na*.

constituent are capable of being complement to the POSS functional category. (223) in particular shows that a complex NP *nawəwə asoli* ‘long book’ argument is the complement to the nominal *n-etei-ien* ‘NMLZ-write-NMLZ’, which is in turn the complement to the possessor *raha* ‘POSS’.

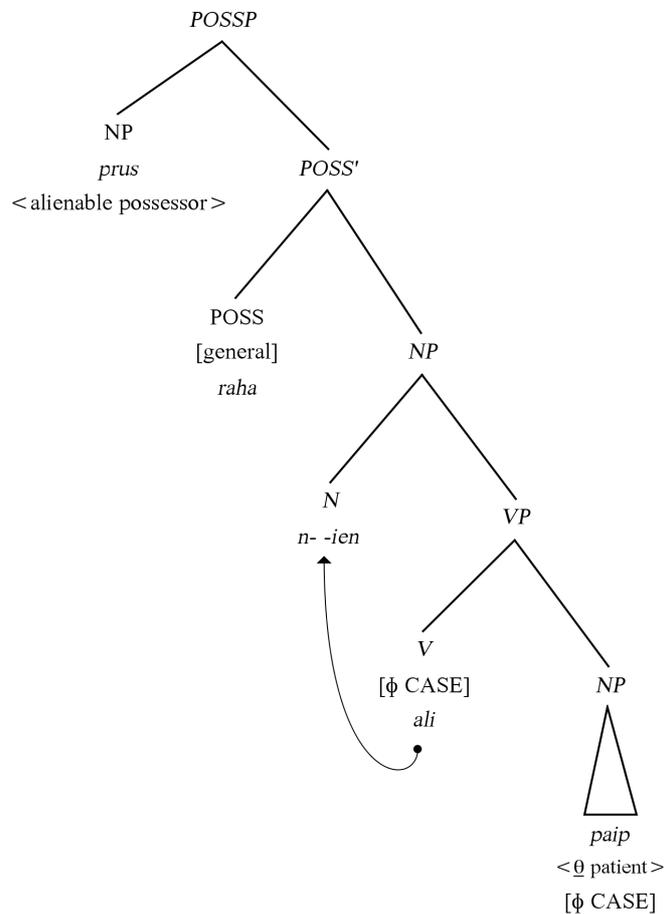
(223) *raha-k* [*n-etei-ien* [*nawəwə* *asoli*]_{NP}]_{NP}
 POSS-1SG NMLZ-write-NMLZ book big

My writing of long books (jhws2-field notes-EK)



- (225) [*n-ali-ien* *paip*]_{NP} *raha* *prus*
 NMLZ-smoke-NMLZ pipe POSS Bruce
 Bruce's tobacco smoking (jhws2-field notes-EK)

(226)



In summary, the difficulties arising for the structural behaviour of the nominalised verb are resolved by the theory's capacity to allow the lexical word class of nouns to take complements. In WS, this complement is more restricted than the complements of the lexical verb. The *n- -ien* nominalised verbs in WS are interesting because their case assignment clearly shows this behaviour, even though semantically they create a disparate set due to lexicalisation of meaning.

4.4 Summary: The Functional Category and Phrase Structure

This section is a concluding discussion on the descriptive and theoretical claims made in this chapter, and addresses the lexical noun and verb distinction, and the phrasal NP and VP distinction. It started with the problem that many features of WS, like other Oceanic

languages, create problems for traditional word class distinction. It has employed the postulated theoretical analysis of Austronesian and Oceanic languages that has been proposed by Foley (in preparation). In principle, this new method requires for phrase classes in Oceanic to be determined not by lexical categories, but instead by the selection of complements by functional categories. While this approach is still in its infancy, it does promise to resolve many issues and explains much of the observed syntactic structure of WS. The underlying representation reflects that a lexical verb (an event-denoting root) assigns case to its complement, and the VP it belongs to is separately determined by being selected by the functional head I. I is the TAM carrying feature and is in agreement with the subject NP in SPEC.

Critically, the theory claims that the core contrast between NPs and VPs is not formulated primarily by their lexical head. We saw above in WS that NPs are the only complements of POSS and VPs are the only complement of I. Therefore the definition of an NP (in WS) is that it is the potential complement of a POSS structure and similarly for a VP, it is defined as being the potential complement of I⁴⁰. This accounts for the differences in the phrasal classes. In particular I's association with the VP explains why verbs are the only class to carry TAM morphology.

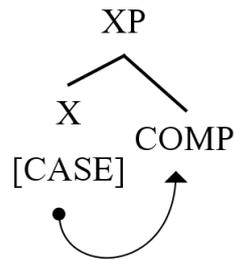
Moreover, this theory also allows for event-denoting roots (which primarily create the verb class) and object-denoting roots (which primarily create the noun class) to both take complements. This accounts for the similarities found between notional nouns and notional verbs, where both are observed to take obligatory arguments. In WS, it does provide weak lexical evidence for a verb word class, as these are capable of having more complex case assignment to its complement. Furthermore, the nominalisation process shows that a mixed class is being formed. This is simply an instance of NP and VP within the same structure. Evidence of this is that lexical verbs assign zero or 'quirky' case to its complements. They

⁴⁰ *m-* 'echo subject', does complicate this because it somewhat replaces I (it removes subject agreement and only takes limited TAM) and also takes the VP complement. This requires further investigation into the echo subject and its behaviour.

keep this zero or ‘quirky’ case assignment when nominalised (forming a NP that can be possessed), and therefore the VP must still be underlyingly present.

If we compare these postulated structures of nouns, verbs and nominalised verbs with each other, there are some noticeable similarities. Case is assigned to the complement by the word classes, the noun or verb. This parallel is represented in (227).

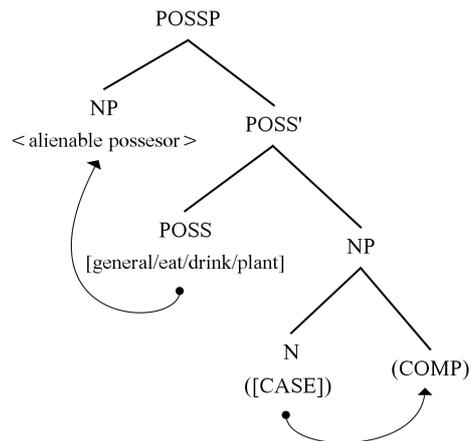
(227)



Underlying case assignment by directly-possessed-nouns, nominalisations
and verbs

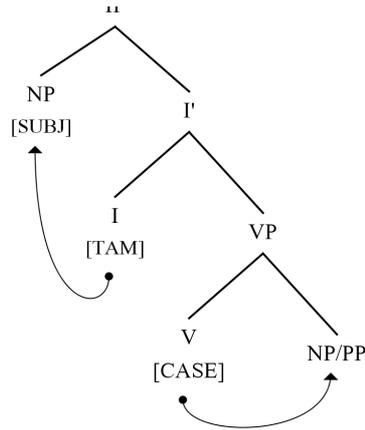
This structural similarity reflects why the distinction between lexical nouns and verbs is so weak. A further but different similarity is apparent in the comparison of POSSP (228) and IP (229) repeated from above. What we see is that a strong resemblance is apparent in the structure of the functional categories.

(228)



POSSP tree (alienable)

(229)

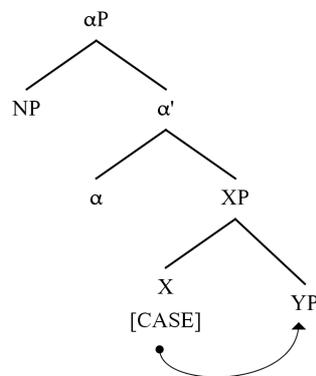


IP tree

That is, possessed nouns have a functional category POSS denoting the alienable possession of a complement NP. POSS is higher ranked in the tree structure, and is the projecting node for the whole phrase. It carries agreement to a SPEC NP argument, to which it assigns a range of theta-roles (this confirms that the possessive classifier is selected by POSS, not the possessed NP).

This is comparable to the behaviour of the grammatical features of a clause. I is the functional head with a SPEC NP argument that is assigned a range of theta-roles. It contrastingly takes a VP complement. We can see this concordance summarised in (230). In this generalisation, α stands for the grammatical feature that ultimately determines the phrase class X.

(230)



Underlying phrasal structure

It claims that the syntactic phrase class is largely determined by the higher order constituents in the clause. Further, in respect to distinguishing lexical classes, it is not simply the case that; nouns take determiners or indexing (because in WS they are non-obligatory); or that verbs are different because they take complements and assign case to them (because nouns can do this too); or that events or actions have to be encoded with verbs and are inflected for TAM (because the noun classifying possessors can encode events which are [-TAM]). Instead, a more plausible explanation is that verbs are the class of words that head the complement of I and thus are morpho-syntactically carrying TAM. Nouns conversely are heads to the complement of POSS and therefore are allowed to take alienable possession, but never take TAM marking even if they are argument assigning or predicating. This permutation is summarised in (231).

(231) IF FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY α = I [+TAM], THEN X = V

IF FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY α = POSS [+CLFR], THEN X = N

Underlying phrasal structure of nouns and verbs

Finally, it is clear that in WS the presence of argument structure, or lack thereof, is not the defining syntactic criteria in the distinction of a lexical noun and verb class, yet it is still the argument behaviour ultimately determines what parts of speech there are. While this noun and verb distinction exists at a lexical level, it is weak, with the only significant contrast being the complexity of the argument assignment, which shows up transparently and counter-intuitively in the nominalisation process. The lexical head *n-* *-ien* takes a VP complement (like I) but is TAM-less. This allows for the WS ‘quirky’ case assignment to be seen in TAM-less forms, which is not the case with nouns which if they assign arguments are restricted to a single case-type for the inalienable possession.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Thesis Summary

This thesis is an in-depth description of the two core word classes, the noun and verb, in an Oceanic language Whitesands. In Chapter 1, there was the introduction to the Oceanic problem and also the ethno-geographic introduction of Whitesands and the people who speak it. This led into Chapter 2, which was a literature review of the Whitesands language, including a brief consideration of other possible Whitesands sources. The second part to Chapter 2, was an expansion of the Oceanic problem in distinct parts of speech, in particular the noun and the verb. This looked at general theory, as well as Oceanic specific analyses. Chapter 3 was the outline of the Whitesands grammar, including a derivation of clause and phrase structure that was used in later chapters. This sketch presented the issues in WS that caused problems for existing theories of the noun and verb word classes. Finally in Chapter 4, the lexical noun and verb classes were addressed from a new theoretical perspective. It also looked at phrase structure, the role of functional categories POSS and I, and finally looked at the mixed word class creation in the nominalisation process. Appendix 6 presents an interlinearised Whitesands text (with audio).

5.2 Conclusion

It is apparent that current syntactic theoretical assumptions have not fully resolved the problems associated with the syntactic definition of parts of speech in Oceanic languages (as discussed by Baker (2003); Vonen (1993); Grimshaw (1990); Kroeger (2004)). This is not trivial because it is important to show how and why distinct noun or verb classes exist. It cannot be the case that linguists use labels without first fully establishing their applicability for a specific language. Additionally, it is important for this discussion to be cemented within the morphosyntax (despite contrary arguments that put forward for a semantically-based analysis⁴¹).

⁴¹ See Vonen (2000) as an advocate of this opposing approach for Polynesian parts of speech description.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to create a new, complete theoretical framework to account for parts of speech distinctions cross linguistically. Instead, however, I have described and addressed the problems as they stand in Whitesands. I have introduced a new and different system of syntactic analysis that appears, at this preliminary stage, to resolve some of the problems encountered in the Oceanic family. This hypothesis is that parts of speech are not lexical heads, but instead they are defined by their phrase's selection by functional categories. What functional categories take as their phrasal complements is the crucial factor in the distinction of the phrase classes, NP and VP. The findings thus far for Whitesands are that I takes a VP complement and POSS takes a NP complement. Therefore, a NP is defined by being the potential complement to POSS and a VP is defined by being the potential complement to I. Moreover, the framework allows for any lexeme to take complements. In Whitesands, this allows for a weak lexical distinction to be made between verbs and nouns in terms of how they select and mark their complements. Verbs have a much more complex range of case assignment to complements and further, they keep this structure even when nominalised. While still inchoate, this approach accounts for syntactic anomalies such as the grammatical alienable possession classifiers, the apparent argument assignment by non-complex nouns, mixed class categories, and also explains why the use of TAM is part of the defining features of verbs.

This discussion is far from complete as it requires further in-depth analysis of other Oceanic languages that have proven to be problematic in their descriptions. It is hoped that this thesis provides stimulus and new ideas to this discussion. In respect to Whitesands, the sketch grammar presented in this thesis is only a small part of the whole language description. This is a small contribution to linguistics that is still in its formative stages and requires additional research, which I hope to continue on in the future.

6 Appendices

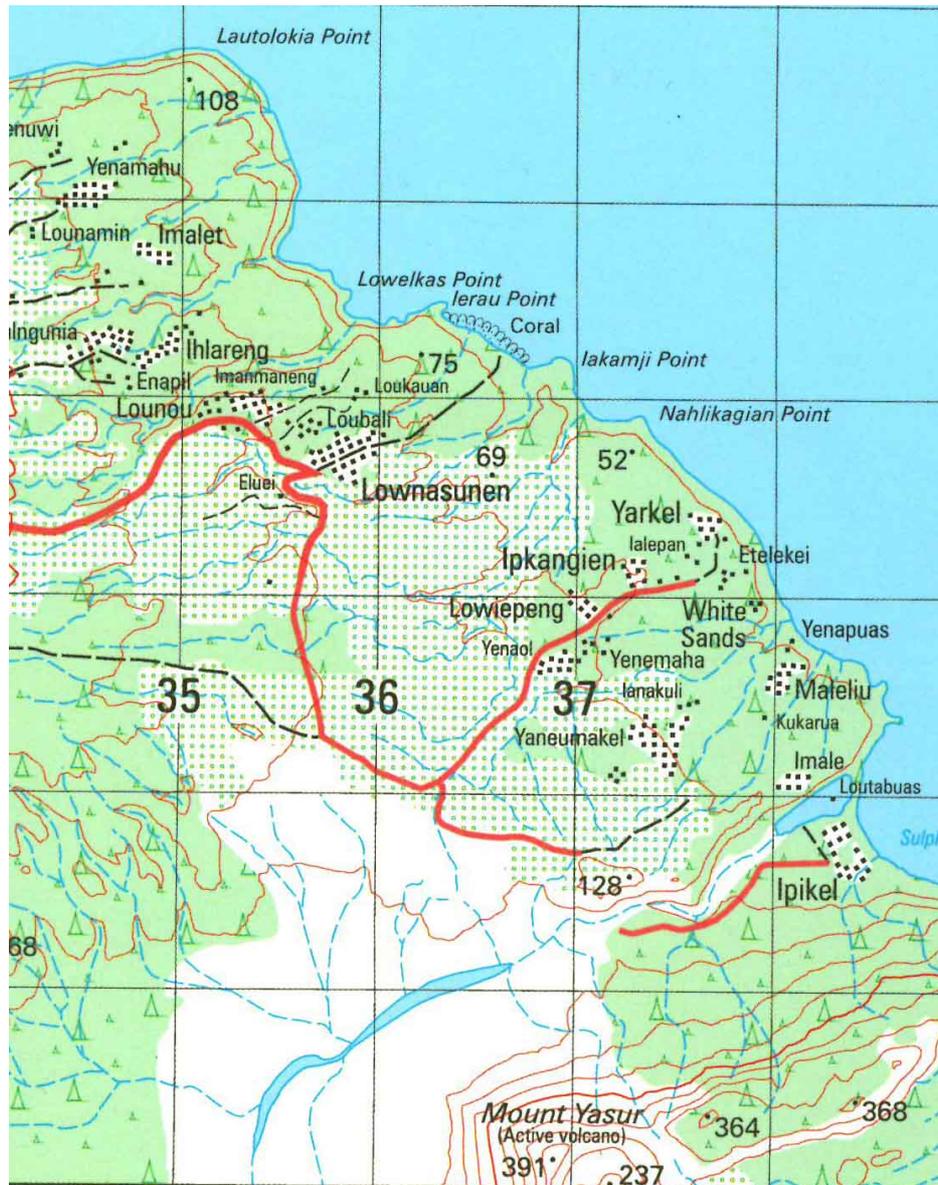
6.1 Table: Pronominal Suffixes (PRON2)

Below is a table with all the pronominal suffixes that are used with the prepositions that require suffixed forms and also with the possession structures. For example, *raha-k* ‘POSS-1SG’ or *narfu-lah* ‘belly-3PL’.

		SG	DU	TR	PL
1	INCL	<i>-(ə)k</i>	<i>-law</i>	<i>-təhal</i>	<i>-tah</i>
	EXCL		<i>-təlaw</i>	<i>-təməhal</i>	<i>-təmah</i>
2		<i>-(ə)m</i>	<i>-tamlaw</i>	<i>-taməhal</i>	<i>-tamah</i>
3		<i>-(ə)n</i>	<i>-talaw</i>	<i>-lahal</i>	<i>-lah</i>

Pronoun Suffixes (jhws1-20080106-AK03)

6.2 Map: Topographic Map of the Whitesands Area



6.3 Text: How to Hunt with a Bow and Arrow

Speaker: Atly Kalanu, Male, DOB 1972, early primary school education only (in English), currently works transiently in agriculture (NZ). jhws2-20090301-AK01.wav

- 002 *Ya-k-ani* *namsu* *raha* *nafaŋa.*
 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-tell.out story OBL bow.and.arrow
 I'm going to tell a story about the bow and arrow.
- 003 *Ya-k-ot-etei* *nafaŋa* *niŋi* *keiyu* *mə* *raha*
 1.EXCL-NPST-PL-cut bow.and.arrow tree two COMP POSS
n-etei-ien *nima-nafaŋa-i.*
 NMLZ-cut-NMLZ handle-bow.and.arrow-TRNS
 When we (EXCL.PL) cut a bow and arrow, there are two types of tree that are for the cutting of the bow section.
- 004 *Kati* *nariŋ-ən* *konu* *noke-nemeli* *nə-nesiko.*
 one name-3SG anaphora root-k.o.tree PL-k.o.tree
 One is called Nemeli Root and the (other) Nesikos.
- 005 *Yama* *ya-k-etei* *ya-k-olkeikei* *ya-k-etei*
 hope.1SG 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-cut 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-want 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-cut
nafaŋa, *ya-k-ol* *m-el* *noke-nemeli* *m-os*
 bow.and.arrow 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-do ES-dig.up root-k.o.tree ES-carry
m-wa *m-etei* *nima-nafaŋa-i,* *yow* *ya-k-etei.*
 ES-come ES-cut handle-bow.and.arrow-TRNS 1SG 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-cut
 Say I would like to make a bow and arrow, then I dig up Nemeli root carry it back and cut a bow out of it, I cut it.
- 006 *N-afak-ien* *kati* *mene.*
 NMLZ-pray-NMLZ one and.NP
 For one week or thereabouts,
- 007 *M-ol* *m-etei* *m-ol* *naunun* *n-eur.*
 ES-make ES-cut ES-do finish 3SG.PRF-good
 I will work on it and cut it till it is finished and has become good.
- 008 *Ko* *ye-k-uen* *m-eti* *raha-n* *towəl,*
 and.then 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-go ES-hit OBL-3SG string.of.bow
noke-nepək.
 root-k.o.banyan.tree
 And then I go and cut down its string, which is Banyan root.
- 009 *Towəl* *m-os* *m-wa.*
 string.of.bow ES-carry ES-come
 The string, I bring it back.
- 010 *Ko* *m-awi.*
 and.then ES-string.wood
 Then I pull the string out of it.

- 011 *M-at-arawieh-i* *m-elahu* *narawieh* *t-ahji*
 ES-PROG-sun-TRNS ES-put sun 3.SG-sunburn
ya-k-eru *mə* *n-asik* *n-eur.*
 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-see COMP 3SG.PRF-dry 3SG.PRF-good
 I sun it, put it in the sun, it dries it and when I see it has become dry, it has become good.
- 012 *Ko* *ya-k-werin-werin* *ko* *m-etu-pen*
 and.then 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-RDPL-twist and.then ES-join-TOWARDS3
e *nima-nfaña* *m-orain.*
 OBL handle-bow.and.arrow ES-bind
 Then I twist it together and put it on the bow and bind it.
- 013 *Kani* *nowan* *ya-k-uen* *m-os* *nolul* *apaha pari,*
 and arrow 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-go ES-carry k.o.wild.cane OBL landward
iSiwi.
 Siwi
 And the arrows, I go collect wild cane from the west, at Lake Siwi.
- 014 *M-os* *m-wa* *ko* *m-etei* *nowan* *e* *niel* *wə*
 ES-carry ES-come and.then ES-cut arrow OBL oak or
naserehi.
 k.o.tree
 I collect them, come back, and then I fit the arrows with oak tree or naserehi.
- 015 *Ko* *m-ulakən,* *m-ulakən* *kani* *ko* *m-os*
 and.then ES-craft ES-craft and and.then ES-carry
m-orain *nima-n* *ko* *m-os* *m-at-aliwok.*
 ES-bind handle-3SG conj.then ES-carry ES-PROG-walk
 Then I craft and craft and then I take it bind the bow and take it walking.
- 016 *M-os* *ya-k-os* *m-uen* *o* *menaj rarpən*
 es-carry 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-carry ES-go OBL fowl wild
wə *kei* *wə.*
 or flying.fox or
 I take it and go for wild fowl or flying fox or (something).
- 017 *Ya-k-os* *m-at-aliwok* *meta.*
 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-carry ES-PROG-walk in.case
 I take it and go walking in case (I see something).
- 018 *Kani* *mə* *in* *aha* *ya-k-olkeikei* *mama* *ya-k-aiyu* *o*
 And COMP 3SG MED 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-want COMP 1.EXCL-NPST-hunt OBL
kei *mən* *pah* *ya-k-os* *nafana* *m-uen*
 flying.fox PL should 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-carry bow.and.arrow ES-go
 And in that way, when I want to hunt flying fox then I should take the bow and arrow and go.
- 019 *Ya-k-os* *nafana* *m-uen* *itəmlau* *keiyu*
 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-carry bow.and.arrow ES-go 1.DU.EXCL two
ya-k-i-an *lapən.*
 1.EXCL-NPST-DU-go night
 I take the bow and arrow and go, two of us we (EXCL.DU) go at night time.

- 020 *Ya-k-i-an* *ko*,
1.EXCL-NPST-DU-go and.then
We (EXCL.DU) go and then,
- 021 *Ya-k-asinapən* *kei*, *ko* *m-əfen* *tos* *kam*
1.EXCL-NPST.SG-spotlight flying.fox and.then ES-give torch OBL
swa- *swa-akaku*, *ko* *in-u*, *in* *t-asinapən*,
person.M- person.M-small and.then 3SG-PROX 3SG 3SG.NPST-spotlight
ko *ya-k-ati* *e* *nafaŋa*.
conj.then 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-hit OBL bow.and.arrow
I spotlight flying fox, then give the torch to the boy, after this, he spotlights it and then I shoot it with the bow and arrow.
- 022 *Nama* *ya-k-i-an* *o* *menəŋ* *rarpen*,
if 1.EXCL-NPST-DU-go OBL fowl wild
If we (EXCL.DU) go for wild fowl,
- 023 *Ya-k-i-an* *lapen*.
1.EXCL-NPST-DU-go night
We (EXCL.DU) go at night.
- 024 *Ya-k-i-an* *ko* *in-u*,
1.EXCL-NPST-DU-go anaphora 3SG-PROX
We go like this,
- 025 *Ya-k-awpwen* *m-arun* *mamə* *menəŋ* *mən* *aha*
1.EXCL-NPST.SG-first ES-know COMP fowl PL MED
k-ot-apeli *iken-aha*.
3.NSG.NPST-PL-sleep NMLZ.PLACE-MED
I go first and find that place where those fowl are sleeping.
- 026 *K-ot-apeli* *iken-ha* *ko* *ya-k-i-an* *oni*
3.NPST-PL-sleep NMLZ.PLACE-MED conj.then 1.EXCL-NPST-DU-go OBL.3SG
ko *ya-k-asinapən*.
and.then 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-spotlight
They sleep at that place, then we (EXCL.DU) go for them and I spotlight them.
- 027 *Nama* *t-asinapən* *ko* *ya-k-ati*.
if 3SG.NPST-spotlight and.then 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-hit
If he spotlights then I shoot it.
- 028 *Kani* *ya-k-w-os-mən* *o* *pukah*.
and 1.EXCL-NPST-DU-carry-also OBL pig
And we also take it [the bow and arrow] for [catching] pig.
- 029 *Nama* *kuri* *mən* *k-ot-aŋaw* *rakis* *pukah*,
if dog PL 3-NPST.PL-follow COMPL pig
So if the dogs chase the pigs,
- 030 *Kani* *ko* *in* *u* *nama* *pukah* *n-əpaau*,
and anaphora 3SG PROX if pig 3SG.PRF-tired
And like that, if the pig has become tired,

- 031 *Kuri mən k-ot-añarain-pen ye nowa-niņi asoli kati*
 dog PL 3-NPST.PL-corner-TOWARDS3 OBL trunk-tree big one
wə puņluwateni kati.
 or cave one
 The dogs will corner him to a big tree trunk or a small cave/hole.
- 032 *K-i-an aha iwakir ya-k-arun n-oh-ien*
 1-NPST-DU-go MED close 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-know NMLZ-hit-NMLZ
e nafaja,
 OBL bow.and.arrow
 We (EXCL.DU) go close where I can shoot with the bow,
- 033 *Nama ya-at-os nafaja*
 if 1.EXCL-PROG.SG-carry bow.and.arrow
 If I had been carrying a bow.
- 034 *Kani nama nafaja t-əke nama ya-am-os nerow*
 and if bow.and.arrow 3SG.NPST-none if 1.EXCL-PST.SG-carry spear
 And if there is no bow, if I had taken a spear,
- 035 *Nerow itəmah ya-k-oh-uen o pukah rarpen mən*
 spear 1PL.EXCL 1.EXCL-NPST-PL-go OBL pig wild PL
 (With) a spear, we (EXCL.PL), we go for wild pigs.
- 036 *Ya-k-ot-os naw kani ko m-ot-oh rakis nima-n*
 1.EXCL-NPST-PL-hold knife and and.then ES-PL-hit COMPL handle-3SG
 We (EXCL.PL) get a knife and take off its handle.
- 037 *Kani ko m-ot-etei niņi*
 and and.then ES-PL-cut wood.
 And then we (EXCL.PL) cut some wood.
- 038 *Kani ko m-ot-iwi nakale-n puti mil t-asileh*
 and and.then ES-PL-sharpen.blade blade.edge-3SG same DU 3.SG-sharp
 And then we (EXCL.PL) sharpen two sides of the knife till it is sharp.
- 039 *Ilau puti k-w-asileh*
 3DU same 3.NPST-DU-sharp
 Both sides are sharp.
- 040 *M-ot-uleden-pen aha e niņi, nama nian kuri mən*
 ES-PL-join-TOWARDS3 MED OBL wood if time dog PL
k-ot-añarain pukah,
 3.NPST-PL-corner pig
 And we craft it and put in the wood, for when the dogs corner the pigs.
- 041 *Ko ya-k-eles nerow m-aiyu m-uen iwakir*
 and.then 1.EXCL-NPST.SG-hold.SG spear ES-run ES-go close
ko m-oh pukah-i
 and.then ES-hit pig-TRNS
 And then I take the spear run close up to the pig and hit the pig

042 *T-imis ko m-ot-etei m-ot-eles m-awt a(paha)*
 3SG.NPST-die and.then ES-PL-cut ES-PL-carry.SG ES-quick OBL
lahwanu
 village
 It dies, then we cut it up, and carry it and hurry back to the village.

082 *Kani raha nafana mən ko ya-am-eni*
 and POSS bow.and.arrow also conj.then 1.EXCL-PST.SG-tell
m-uen m-ol nawnun-i
 ES-go ES-do finish-TRNS
 And the bow and arrows also, I told that and I have now come and finished it.

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