

***Owners into actors: How possessive morphology became
subject agreement in the languages of the Bougainville region.***

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1.1 Introduction

Most languages of the North-West-Solomonic (NWS) branch of Oceanic make some use of possessive morphology to index subject on verbs. This paper investigates the synchronic function and diachronic genesis of the phenomenon.

1.1 The problem

In all subgroups of NWS except Choiseul, possessive (or former possessive) morphology indexes subject in certain verbal constructions. In some languages, such as Mono Alu, two distinct verbal constructions exist: one reflecting Proto-Oceanic (POc) clause structure with preverbal subject-indexing forms reflecting Proto North West Solomonic (PNWS) forms (as in (1)), the other an innovated construction with no preverbal subject-indexing, but with postverbal subject-indexing reflecting PNWS possessive morphology (as in (2)). Ross (1982) coined the term Structure A for the former, and Structure B for the latter. In some of these languages, two distinct indexing auxiliaries occur in Structure B: one reflecting a PNWS indirect possessive classifier for consumable items ((2)a.), the other reflecting a classifier for general possessions ((2)b.). This adnominal morphology is also present in synchronic Mono Alu (as in (3)):

- (1) *ha-na-nuhu-i-Ø*
1SGS-IRR-dive-TR-3SGO
'I shall dive for it.' (Mono Alu - Ross 1982:14)
- (2) a. *soipa ma-mate e-na*
PN RD-die AUX-3SGS
'Soipa is dying.' (Mono Alu - Ross 1988:250)
- b. *eli sa-ria.*
dig AUX-3PLS
'They went on digging.' (Mono Alu - Wheeler 1926: text 29)
- (3) a. *soipa e-na toitoi*
Soipa CP-3SGP banana
'Soipa's banana.' (Mono Alu - Ross 1988:250)
- b. *kai-gu sa-na auau*
brother-1SGP GP-3SGP dog
'my brother's dog' (Mono Alu - Boch)

In other languages, such as Kokota, this 'possessive' subject-indexing occurs as optional additional marking:

- (4) a. *n-a babao*
RL-1S be.tired
'I'm tired.' (Kokota – Palmer f.c.)
- b. *n-a babao no-gu*
RL-1S be.tired AUX-1SGP
'I'm [really] tired.' (Kokota – Palmer f.c.)

1.2 Possessor-indexing in Proto North West Solomonic (PNWS)

Table 1: PNWS possessor indexing:

	1EXC	1INC	2	3
SG	*-gu	-	*-mu	*-na
PL	*-mami	*-da	*-miu	*-di

- (5) a. **na-* ‘general indirect possessive classifier’
 b. **ye-* ‘consumable indirect possessive classifier’
 c. *?*sa-* ‘??’ (see Ross 1988:185-186; Lynch 1996:106-108)
- (6) a. **mata-gu* ‘my eye’
 b. **na-gu ruma* ‘my house’
 c. **ye-gu tohu* ‘my sugar cane (to eat)’

This possessive morphology is cognate with that found throughout Oceanic and reflects Proto Oceanic forms.

2 The function of ‘possessive’ subject-indexing in synchronic North West Solomonic

2.1 Mono Alu and Torau

Structure B in Mono Alu and Torau expresses ongoing states and events in any temporal frame. Structure B therefore expresses something like continuous aspect (note that Mono Alu and Torau employ the possessive classifier *sa-* in place of reflexes of **na-*):

- (7) a. *ta-tai sa-na sa-na kanega taro-na*
 RD-cry AUX-3SGS AUX-3SGS man spouse-3SGP
 ‘She kept on weeping for her husband.’ (Mono Alu - Ross 1982:40)
- b. *io ta-tanisi e-la*
 he RD-cry AUX-3SGS
 ‘He was crying.’ (Torau - Ross 1982:35)
- (8) a. *ba-baeni sa-mang*
 RD-ask AUX-1EXCS
 ‘We are praying.’ (Mono Alu - Boch)
- b. *tioni ruma tia-la-i tu sa-la-to*
 man house inside-3SGP-LOC be AUX-3SGS-now
 ‘The man is inside the house.’ (Torau - Ross 1982:36)
- (9) *talaiva nihe hu-hulau sa-ria*
 women snake RD-fear AUX-3PLS
 ‘Women are frightened of snakes.’ (Mono Alu - Ross 1988:250)

However, stative verbs are typically indexed with Structure A:

- (10) a. *fafine-ng ga Ø-i-belu*
 cross.sibling-2SGP ABS 3SGS-RL-be.hungry
 ‘Your brother is hungry.’ (Mono Alu - Fagan 1986:95)
- b. *magu aoso*
 RL.1SGS sick
 ‘I am sick.’ Torau - (Torau - Rausch 1912:985)

2.2 Uruava

'Possessive' subject-indexing in Uruava again encodes continuous aspect, although here states are always treated as continuous. However, no distinct Structure B exists in Uruava. While clauses corresponding to Structure B in Mono Alu and Torau have no preverbal subject indexing for present events in Uruava, those expressing past and future events often display preverbal indexing cooccurring with postverbal 'possessive' subject-indexing:

- (11) a. *pura-pura-dia-e-mu*
RD-do-3PLO-AUX-2SGS
'You did them.' (Uruava - Rausch 1912:978)
- b. *u vari mariri-no-gu*
1SG.PST RECI love-AUX-2SGS
'I was loving myself.' (Uruava - Rausch 1912:979) ("Die durativ-reflexiv Form")
- (12) a. *karuku mane-man-e-na*
possum RD-hunt-AUX-3SGS
'He is hunting possum.' (Uruava - Oliver: ex.493)
- b. *iana arakao-a popo-no-na*
fish water-LOC exist-AUX-3SGS
'The fish is in the water.' (Uruava - Rausch 1912:981)
- (13) a. *ko popo-no-mu*
2SG.FUT exist-AUX-2SGS
'You will be.' (Uruava - Rausch 1912:981)
- b. *ku vari mariri-no-gu*
1SG.FUT RECI love-AUX-2SGS
'I will be loving myself.' (Uruava - Rausch 1912:979)

2.3 Papapana

In the Papapana data all past or future events are expressed as Structure A (14). Present events are expressed as Structure A (15) or B (16). However, verbs encoding present states or ongoing activities are overwhelmingly expressed with Structure B, and verbs expressing punctual events with Structure A. On that basis it seems reasonable to hypothesise that Structure B expresses continuous aspect, possibly limited to present continuous.

- (14) a. *naunava nauravwi nauvi' e-to-ani-a*
yesterday man yam 3SGS-PM-eat-3SGO
'The man ate the yam yesterday.' (Allen & Hurd 1963:181)
- b. *natui nauravwi nauvi' e-to-ani-a*
tomorrow man yam 3SGS-PM-eat-3SGO
'The man will eat the yam tomorrow.' (Allen & Hurd 1963:182)
- (15) *nauravwi to-nau*
man PM-go
'The man goes.' (Allen & Hurd 1963:177)
- (16) a. *nauravwi nauvi' ani-ani-a-e-na*
man yam RD-eat-3SGO-AUX-SGS
'The man eats the yam.' (Allen & Hurd 1963:180)
- b. *ai-nabu-e-na*
NEG-heavy-AUX-SGS
'It is not heavy.' (Allen & Hurd 1963:121)

2.4 Buka group

In a group comprising Ross's (1988:217) Buka group plus neighbouring Solos, Structure B is used for nonpast, while Structure A is used for "past or distant time events" (Ross 1982:16). In Structure B, reflexes of the PNWS possessive classifiers are normally absent, with reflexes of the possessor-indexing suffixes themselves attaching directly to the verb.

- (17) a. *imanas elia gu ka-u i petats*
 formerly I 1SGS be-LOC LOC PNLOC
 'Formerly I lived at Petats
- kivi roman elia e ka-u-gu i pororan*
 but now I PM be-LOC-1SGS LOC PNLOC
 'but now I live at Pororan.' (Petats - Ross 1982:17)
- b. *na pinipo e ka-o-gu-a-na i nova*
 ART village PM be-TA-1SGS-LOC-I ART PN
 'The village I live at is Nova.' (Solos - Ross 1988:234)
- c. *nonei e roro-la-na tara man han*
 he PM visit-go-3SGS LOC PL village
 'He is visiting the villages.' (Hanahan - Allen & Allen 1987:71)
- d. *elia e la gon-me-g-u e haroman i latu*
 I PM go together-with-1SGS-FUT ART PN LOC bush
 'I will go with Haroman through the bush.' (Petats - Ross 1988:252)

The nonpast Structure B is not limited to progressive events, but also expresses punctual events:

- (18) a. *n-e kui-gu-a o tsinih pea tun*
 I-PM build-1SGS-FUT ART canoe big very
 'I shall build a very big canoe.' (Solos - Ross 1982:23)
- b. *mahu elia e nin-e-g-u a pos*
 tomorrow I PM eat-TR-1SGS-FUT ART banana
 'Tomorrow I shall eat bananas.' (Petats - Ross 1982:18)
- c. *alia e la-gu-ma i mahö*
 I PM go-1SGS-hither ART tomorrow
 'I will come tomorrow.' (Hanahan - Allen & Allen 1987:69)

In several Buka languages, the use of nonpast Structure B to express punctual events extends to a special construction (requiring a direction enclitic), analysed by Ross (1982:18) as expressing 'near past'. Translations given by Ross suggest that this is not so much near past as present perfective:

- (19) *elia e ngits-e-gu-l elia*
 I PM cut-TR-1SGS-thither I
 'I have cut myself.' (Petats - Ross 1982:19)

The possessive classifier does not occur in the general nonpast in the Buka languages, but several use it to encode progressive aspect. In Solos the *no-* marks progressive aspect in nonpast. Compare (20) with (18)a.:

- (20) *no hen no-m-a a tsi pos mahu*
 youSG eat PROG-2SGS-FUT ART bit taro tomorrow
 'You will be eating taro tomorrow.' (Solos - Ross 1982:23)

In Petats and the Haku dialect of Halia, the progressive marker *no* is restricted to present progressive only:

- (21) a. *elia e nin-e-no-gu u korits*
 I PM eat-TR-PRES.PROG-1SGS ART taro
 'I am eating taro.' (Petats - Ross 1982:17)
- b. *aku e nan-e-nu-gu potutu*
 I PM eat-TR-PRES.PROG-1SGS taro
 'I am eating taro.' (Haku - Ross 1982:22)

In the Selau and Hanahan dialects of Halia, this progressive marker is entirely absent, even with clearly progressive events comparable to those in (20) and (21):

- (22) a. *ala e nu-ya-gu osono*
 I PM eat-SGO-1SGS taro
 'I am eating taro.' (Selau - Ross 1982:22)
- b. *a pien e soho noa-na*
 ART child PM sleep yet-3SGS
 'The child is still sleeping.' (Hanahan - Allen & Allen 1987:76)

The tense distinction encoded by Structures A and B appears to have prompted a reanalysis of the possessive classifier as a marker of progressive aspect, functionally disassociating the classifier from the indexing.

2.5 Taiof

Ross (2002:433) describes Taiof Structure A as occurring in the following combinations of tense, aspect and mood: 'past event', 'past durative', 'irrealis', 'irrealis habitual' and 'counterfactual' (excluding 'counterfactual habitual'). The 'irrealis' categories are somewhat unclear: clauses with the future tense marker *tañ* also carry the irrealis marker *ma*, and involve Structure B. Only irrealis-marked clauses without the future tense marker involve Structure A. It is therefore unclear exactly what function Structure A irrealis clauses have. Ross (2002:433) describes Structure B clauses with the postverbal auxiliary form *no-ro* (which he glosses 'imperfective') as occurring with 'past habitual', 'present event', 'present durative', 'present habitual', 'future', 'future habitual' and 'counterfactual habitual' aspects:

- (23) a. *aye to añ vesau=no-n*
 she RL eat quickly=AUX-3SGS
 'She is eating quickly.' (Taiof - Ross 2002:433)
- b. *are ma tañ nau=ro-r tanun tamanañ ta=na voñvoñ*
 they IRR FUT go=AUX-3PLS garden tomorrow LOC=ART morning
 'They will go to the garden tomorrow morning.' (Taiof - Ross 2002:437)

The auxiliary *e-* also occurs in Taiof. Ross (2002:433) analyses this as occurring in "perfective/stative" clauses. All examples in the data involve states existing at the time of speaking:

- (24) a. *u buc to taborei=e-n*
 ART canoe RL broken=AUX-3SGS
 'The canoe is broken.' (Taiof - Ross 2002:433)
- b. *aye to mat=e-n*
 he RL die=AUX-3SGS
 'He has died/is dead.' (Taiof - Ross 1982:27)

The gloss 'broken' in (24)a. suggests the predicate is a stative verb meaning 'be broken', while cognates of *mat-* in (24)b. are found throughout NWS with two related meanings: the punctual 'die' and the stative 'be dead'. It appears therefore that the *e-* auxiliary occurs with stative verbs and *no-ro-* with active verbs, both expressing ongoing states or events. This, coupled with the fact that Structure A expresses past durative aspect, suggests that Structure B in Taiof expresses imperfective aspect, and Structure A perfective.

2.6 Teop

Reflexes of the **na*- forms occur as synchronically unanalysable monomorphemic subject agreement markers, analysed by Mosel & Spriggs (1999) and Mosel & Reinig (2000) as markers of imperfective aspect. The subject-indexing function appears to be in the process of weakening: a single form, *nom* (formerly just 1SG), is used with 1SG, 1EXCPL, 2SG and 2PL subjects. This has developed since Carter (1952:139), who describes distinct forms for each category, but notes a tendency among speakers to use the 1SG form *nom* for 2SG as well.

Structure B is used with any kind of ongoing event, located in the past, present or future. It marks transitive and unergative intransitive active verbs (25) (including habitual acts ((25)c.)); verbs expressing physical and psychological states (26), and existential verbs (27):

- (25) a. *na aheahe nana*
 RL sing IMPRF.3SGS
 'She is singing.'¹ (Teop - Mosel & Reinig 2000:138)
- b. *ena na an munihi tamuana nom*
 I RL eat taro daily IMPRF.1EXC/2S
 'I eat taro every day.' (Teop - Ross 1982:46)
- c. *a moon to paa tara vuru na paa de bata nana bon-o hoi*
 ART girl REL PAST see already I PAST carry ADV IMPRF.3SGS 4-ART basket
 'The woman that I saw was carrying a basket.' (Teop - Ross 1982:11)
- (26) a. *ena na memea nom*
 I RL be.thirsty IMPRF.1EXC/2S
 'I am thirsty.' (Teop - Carter 1952:239)
- b. *a moon na gavagava nana*
 ART girl RL angry IMPRF.3SGS
 'The girl is angry.' (Teop - Mosel & Reinig 2000:136)
- (27) a. *na tei nana te-a imu a rutaa*
 RL be IMPRF.3SGS LOC-ART house ART small
 'He stays in a small house.' (Teop - Mosel & Reinig 2000:137)
- b. *eara na tei me rara a taba ani a mataa*
 weINC RL be APPL IMPRF.1INCS ART thing eat ART good
 'We have good food' (Teop - Mosel & Spriggs 1999:50)

Structure A occurs with any event not treated as ongoing.

2.7 Tinputz

The Tinputz data is limited and the functional distinction between Structures A and B is unclear. Ross (1982:28) claims Structure A is "past in meaning", "[a]s in Teop". However, his description of Teop (1982:23-25) gives Structure B past progressive and present functions, and Structure A is shown above to express progressive aspect.

The Tinputz data does show Structure A only expressing past events:

- (28) *e valain to rep-ra=poe*
 ART PN RL hit-3PLO=they
 'Valain hit them.' (Tinputz - Ross 1982:29)

¹ Forms in all Teop examples are modified to conform to those given by Mosel & Reinig (2000). The glosses in all Teop examples are slightly modified versions of those used by Mosel & Reinig.

However, Structure B also occurs with past events as well as present:

- (29) a. *eyö to ep e kovu to te-te no-n o kovei*
 I RL see ART woman RL RD-carry AUX-3SGS ART basket
 ‘I saw the woman who was carrying the basket.’ (Tinputz - Ross 1982:29)
- b. *a te to te-te no-n iun*
 ART man RL RD-be AUX-3SGS house
 ‘The man is in the house.’ (Tinputz - Ross 1982:28)

The data accords with Structure B expressing ongoing events. The functional distinction does appear to resemble that in Teop.

2.8 Banoni

Structure B in Banoni is used to give permission or prohibition (Lincoln 1976:84, 88; Lynch & Ross 2002:449). This is the only occurrence of Structure B in Banoni. (Ross 1982:12).

- (30) a. *tai ghe-m*
 go AUX-2SGS
 ‘You may go.’ (Banoni - Lincoln 1976:89; Lynch & Ross 2002:449)
- b. *no pa ghe-m pa-patsi mo-bengu*
 youSG NEG AUX-2SGS RD-pick LOC-cluster
 ‘Don’t pick [mangoes] from a cluster.’ (Banoni - Lincoln 1976:133)

Being permissive and prohibitive, the subjects are usually 2SG or 2PL. However, with the prohibitive at least, third person subjects may occur (meaning ‘he is not to...’ etc). (Lincoln 1976:133)

2.9 Nehan

Structure B in Nehan occurs only with the existential verb *kae*, in what Ross (1982:14) refers to as a “relic structure”. The data only shows this occurring with existential events located in the present. However, the inference from Ross is that it marks the existential verb in all occurrences.

- (31) *kalok kae-n ta-r tun*
 PN be-3SGS ART-LIG ditch
 ‘Kalok is in the ditch.’ (Ross 1982:36)

Given that the form of the stative verb throughout the Buka group is *ka*, Ross (1982:36) proposes that *kae-n* is historically **ka-e-n*, the form thus reflecting the PNWS possessive classifier **ghe-*.

2.10 Central New Georgia group

In the NWS languages of New Georgia, ‘possessive’ subject-indexing occurs as an optional aspect marker in the standard clause structure reflecting standard POC clause structure. There is therefore no distinct Structure B in these languages, and postverbal subject-indexing cooccurs with standard preverbal subject-indexing. The New Georgia languages share an innovated set of monomorphemic general indirect possessor-indexing forms applying to both nominal possession and ‘possessive’ subject-indexing:

Table 2: Innovated Proto New Georgia general indirect possessor indexing:

	1EXC	1INC	2	3
SG	<i>*gua</i>	-	<i>*mua</i>	<i>*nana</i>
PL	<i>*mami</i>	<i>*nada</i>	<i>*mia</i>	<i>*dia</i>

New Georgia ‘possessive’ subject-indexing occurs in all temporal frames, including past, present and future:

- (32) a. *korapa sigoto eko nana pa batu huda.*
 IMPF hang lie 3SGS LOC head tree
 ‘He was still hanging from the treetops.’ (Roviana – Corston-Oliver 2002:493)
- b. *vose-vose pule la nana*
 RD-paddle return go 3SGS
 ‘He was paddling back.’ (Hoava – Davis 1997:210)
- (33) a. *ko-ko qua qa rao*
 RD-be 1SGS LMT I
 ‘I am just staying.’ (Hoava – Davis 1997:211)
- b. *asa si ele korapa habotu koa nana mo vasina doduru munumunuma*
 he FOC already PRG sit stay 3SGS just a.little all morning
 ‘He has been sitting there all morning.’ (Roviana – Todd 2000:144)
- (34) *la hele mi*
 go wash 2PLS
 ‘Are you going to wash (yourself)?’ (Hoava – Davis 1997:210)

The Hoava and Roviana data shows ‘possessive’ subject-indexing occurring only with ongoing states and events. Davis (1997:213) claims that Hoava ‘possessive’ subject-indexing has a function “analogous to middle voice”, and occurs only with verbs of emotion and perception; verbs of self-grooming, and events where the subject undergoes change of state, location or posture. The data shows it also occurs with existential verbs, and suggests that the only transitive predications it occurs with are intransitive verbs in which the subject is affected:

- (35) a. *mabo-ni=a qua sa t<in>avete*
 be.tired-APPL=3SGO 1SGS ABS <NOM>work
 ‘I was tired of the work.’ (Hoava – Davis 1997:212)
- b. *podo=a ghua sa keke, podo pule=a nana tu keke, karua*
 give.birth=3SGO ? ABS one give.birth return=3SGO 1SGS LMT one two
 ‘[She] gave birth to one, gave birth again to one, [there were] two.’ (Hoava – Davis 1997:212)

According to Corston-Oliver (2002:479), Roviana ‘possessive’ subject-indexing encodes “the S argument of an intransitive clause”. The data resembles Hoava, with postverbal indexing occurring with postural and existential verbs, and verbs of motion and physical sensation. While ‘possessive’ subject-indexing appears to mark ongoing states and events, it appears to be limited to indexing undergoer and experiencer subjects, including unaccusative subjects (with the focus with verbs of motion being on change of location, rather than volitionality).

2.11 Ganoqa

Ganoqa is identical to Roviana and Hoava in having no distinct Structure B, with ‘possessive’ subject-indexing an optional marker in the standard clause structure. It also shares the same innovated indexing forms as Roviana and Hoava, with ‘possessive’ subject-indexing occurring in all temporal frames:

- (36) a. *ñuma dia pa leo ivere*
 sit 3PL.ABS LOC inside sea
 ‘They stayed sitting inside the sea.’ (Ganoqa - Kettle 2000:197)
- b. *mana va-keni nana*
 IRR.1SGS CS-go 3SG.ABS
 ‘[How] will I make it go away?’ (Ganoqa - Kettle 2000:194)

Kettle (2000:196-198) analyses ‘possessive’ subject-indexing as marking durative aspect. The indexed argument is the absolutive argument (as opposed to the nominative argument as elsewhere in NWS, as (34)b. shows). When this occurs with a transitive verb, this indexing replaces the normal object-indexing.

2.12 Zabana

As in the New Georgia languages, Zabana has no distinct Structure B, with ‘possessive’ subject-indexing an optional marker in the standard clause structure. Like Hoava, Fitzsimons (1989:108) claims that ‘possessive’ subject-indexing in Zabana encodes “middle voice”, functioning “to indicate that the action affects the actor.” The data suggests ‘possessive’ subject-indexing marks ongoing states or activities (in any temporal frame):

- (37) a. *puna mau ghe-mai ma-mu*
 very fear AUX-1EXCP ?-CNT
 ‘We were very frightened.’ (Zabana - Fitzsimons 1989:109)
- b. *veha-mo to-ua ara au ghe-gu ma au velepuhi no-gu ma kolisi*
 good-LMT PRF-say I be AUX-1SGP ? be teacher AUX-1SGP? college
 ‘Good, I will suit myself, I will study at the college,
- ua-ta-na tireni no-gu ma mala velepuhi*
 say-SB-? train AUX-1SGP? PURP teacher
 to train to be a teacher.’ (Zabana - Fitzsimons 1989:110)

Zabana also resembles Roviana and Hoava in distribution of the phenomenon. In the available data ‘possessive’ subject-indexing only occurs with intransitive verbs expressing psychological and physical states and activities affecting the subject (including in this instance studying and eating), motion verbs, and involuntary actions (such as crying). As with Roviana and Hoava, ‘possessive’ subject-indexing in Zabana appears to be limited to indexing undergoer and experiencer subjects, including unaccusative subjects (with the focus of verbs of motion again on change of location rather than volitionality).

2.13 Central Santa Isabel group

The central Isabel languages are identical to Zabana and the New Georgia languages in having no distinct Structure B, with ‘possessive’ subject-indexing an optional marker in the standard clause structure. In the central Isabel group, ‘possessive’ subject-indexing differs in a number of ways from that found in Zabana and New Georgia. In terms of function its use marks events as having “high saliency or immediacy” in Kokota (Palmer f.c.), and in Cheke Holo “intensifying the degree of involvement of the subject” (White et al 1988:xix), and “to amplify or intensify personal involvement of the subject” (White et al 1988:xxxiv). Realis ‘possessive’ subject-indexing indicates that the event or state pertains ‘right now’:

- (38) a. *n-a babao no-gu*
 RL-1S be.tired AUX-1SGS
 ‘I’m [really] tired.’ (Kokota – Palmer f.c.)
- b. *ara n-a go-no-gu-ni nangha-na-na manei*
 I RL-1S be.insensible-AUX-1SGS-3SGO name-3SGP-that he
 ‘I don’t know his name.’ (Kokota – Palmer f.c.)
- c. *mamaja no-gu*
 be.ashamed AUX-1SGS
 ‘I’m ashamed.’ (Cheke Holo – White et al 1988:xx)

With irrealis marking it indicates that the event is about to occur:

- (39) a. *maneri Ø-e zaho no-di*
 they IRR-3S go AUX-3PLS
 ‘They are about to go [right now].’ (Kokota – Palmer f.c.)
- b. *age no-da ka thongno ño*
 go AUX-1INCS LOC ocean there
 ‘Let’s go to the ocean.’ (Cheke Holo – White et al 1988:xx)

If another temporal frame is established, the event had or will have high saliency at the moment indicated:

- (40) a. *ka-t-au-ana* *ge la lehe no-gu bo-sini*
 LOC-SB-exist-that NT go die AUX-1SGSCNT-FOC
 ‘At that I nearly died.’ (Kokota – Palmer f.c.)
- b. *ginau hata no-gu di s-ara rea*
 later get AUX-1SGS 3PLO FOC-I they
 ‘I will get them later.’ (Cheke Holo - White et al 1988:xxxiv)

Unlike in Zabana and the New Georgia languages, there are no semantic restrictions on which verbs can be marked with ‘possessive’ subject-indexing in Cheke Holo and Kokota, the indexing occurring with unergative and unaccusative intransitive verbs, and as (38)b. and (40)b. show, with primary transitive verbs. The nominative argument is indexed.

2.14 Summary of synchronic function of Structure B

Table 3: The function of Structure B in synchronic NWS

Mono Alu	continuous aspect
Torau	continuous aspect
Uruava	continuous aspect
Papapana	(?present) continuous aspect
Buka group (inc. Solos)	nonpast tense (without <i>no-</i>); nonpast progressive aspect (with <i>no-</i>)
Taiof	imperfective aspect
Teop	imperfective aspect
Tinputz	?progressive aspect
Banoni	permission/prohibition
Nehan	occurs only with existential verb
Central New Georgia group	progressive aspect
Ganoqa	durative aspect
Zabana	progressive aspect
Central Isabel group	involvement of subject is intensified; event has high saliency of immediacy

Table 4: Arguments indexed by postverbal ‘possessive’ indexing in synchronic NWS

Mono-Uruavan	any subject
Nehan/NorthBougainville network	any subject
Banoni	any subject
Central New Georgia group	undergoer and experiencer subjects
Ganoqa	absolute arguments
Zabana	undergoer and experiencer subjects
Central Isabel group	any subject

4 Origins of ‘possessive’ subject-indexing and Structure B

4.1 PNWS ancestry of the phenomenon

Postverbal morphology indexing subject but reflecting earlier possessive morphology is found throughout NWS. Of the five or perhaps six first order subgroups², only Choiseul, located at the center of the NWS region, does not display the phenomenon. In the remaining subgroups, all 19 languages and dialects surveyed display the

² Ross (1988:216) proposes five first order subgroups: Nehan/North Bougainville; Piva/Banoni; Choiseul; New Georgia/Isabel; and what I refer to as Mono Uruavan. However, it is not yet clear that New Georgia and Isabel subgroups form a single first order group.

phenomenon, at least in relic form, from Nehan in the extreme northwest of the NWS region to Cheke Holo in the extreme southeast. Given this, it seems likely that a verbal construction employing possessive morphology to index subject existed in PNWS, or at least that an originating construction existed that was on the cusp of developing into a verbal construction with those characteristics.

4.2 Origin in nominalised clauses

The morphology used in NWS postverbal 'possessive' subject-indexing is cognate with nominal possessive morphology found throughout Oceanic (and in many cases is identical to nominal possessive morphology found in the individual languages). It is clear, therefore, that the subject-indexing function has developed out of an earlier possessor-indexing function. As possession is a characteristic of nominal not verbal constructions, 'possessive' subject-indexing of verbal constructions must have developed historically out of possessor-indexing of nominal constructions. However, the constructions marked in this way involve verbs accompanied by additional elements normally found in verbal clauses. This suggests that the originating constructions were nominalised clauses possessed by one of their participants. This would subsequently have been reanalysed as a verbal construction, dragging the possessor-indexing morphology with it, with an argument-indexing function.

4.3 Cooccurrence of preverbal and postverbal 'possessive' subject-indexing in originating construction

In the New Georgia and Santa Isabel languages, postverbal 'possessive' subject-indexing is optional and cooccurs with preverbal subject-indexing. In Uruava postverbal 'possessive' subject-indexing also cooccurs with preverbal subject-indexing. The remaining NWS languages do not allow the cooccurrence of both indexing types. However, in Solos and the various dialects of Halia, Structure B requires the preverbal predicate marker *e*, reflecting the PNWS (and indeed POc) preverbal 3SG subject agreement marker **e*, indicating that at an earlier stage in these languages preverbal and postverbal 'possessive' subject-indexing cooccurred. On this basis we can reconstruct an originating construction in which both preverbal and postverbal indexing cooccurred.

As a verbal construction, this originating construction involved redundancy in subject indexing. In the Nehan/North-Bougainville, Piva-Banoni and Mono-Uruavan languages (other than Uruava), this redundancy was resolved by the loss of preverbal subject-indexing, in some cases with the preverbal 3SGS subject marker generalising as a predicate marker. The loss of preverbal indexing had the effect of generating a new, distinct clause structure in those languages.

4.4 Function of reverballed construction

The data summarised in Table 3 shows 'possessive' subject-indexing throughout synchronic NWS to have a function of encoding aspect, analysed variously as imperfective, progressive, continuous or durative aspect. The originating reverballed construction therefore appears to have expressed ongoing events and states.

4.5 Context for reverballed construction of nominalised clauses in PNWS

Considerably more work needs to be done to investigate the context in which a reverballed construction of nominalised clauses could have occurred in PNWS. However, the most plausible scenario is that subordinate adverbial clauses were reanalysed as conjoined main clauses.

In synchronic Roviana, for example, contextual clauses occur with and without 'possessive' subject-indexing:

- (41) a. *me* [*ene la gua dia*] *tutuv-i-a* *ri se boko*
 and walk go be.like 3PLS meet-TR-3SG 3PL ABS Pig
 'And as they were walking along, they met Pig.' (Roviana – Corston-Oliver 2002:479)
- b. [*en-ene ri karua*] *tutuv-i-a* *ri kara se noki*
 RD-walk 3PLS two meet-TR-3SGO they two ABS snake
 'As they were walking along, they met Snake.' (Roviana – Corston-Oliver 2002:497)

Corston-Oliver (2002:479, 497) analyses the first clause in both sentences as an adverbial subordinate clause. However, both are formally identical to main clauses. Throughout NWS (and elsewhere in Oceanic) conjoined clauses may be linked prosodically, but have no overt conjunction. There is therefore no evidence to support an analysis of the clauses in (41) as anything other than a sequence of conjoined main clauses. More accurate translations may be “They were walking along and met Pig/Snake.”

However, the relationship between (41)a. and b. shows a syntactic context in which a shift from nominalisations to reverbaised clauses could occur. If clauses like these existed in PNWS, the those resembling (41)a., with the possessor-indexing present, may have originally been nominalisations functioning as adverbial subordinate clauses, while those resembling (41)b. could have been conjoined clauses. The presence of conjoined structures like (41)b. could have therefore allowed a reanalysis of those like (41)a. from being possessor-indexed nominalised adverbial subordinate clauses to subject-indexed conjoined main clauses. Once this reanalysis had occurred, these former nominalisations were then free to occur as main clauses on their own.

Some evidence supporting this hypothesis is found in Mono Alu. In Roviana, preverbal subject-indexing is not obligatory in any main clause if the identity of the subject is clear from context. However, in Mono Alu preverbal subject-indexing is obligatory in Structure A, but may not occur in Structure B. The cooccurrence of preverbal and postverbal subject-indexing is therefore impossible in main clauses. However, in certain subordinate clauses both do occur.

One common function of Structure B main clauses in Mono Alu is as a recapitulative device in narratives, indicating that events just recounted provide the temporal context for event expressed by the following clause:

- (42) a. *ir-i-gagana.* *ir-i-nau.* *gagana* *sa-ria,* *ir-i-soku* *hauroho*
 3PLS-RL-go 3PLS-RL-go go AUX-3PLS 3PLS-RL-reach PN
 ‘They went (on their way). They went. Having travelled, [ie. They were travelling and] they reached the Hauroho river.’ (Mono Alu – Ross 1982:38)
- b. *r-e-taofa* *ga* *ŋka-na* *apa-na.*
 3PLS-RL-wail ABS mother-3SGP father-3SGP
 ‘His mother and father wailed for him.
- ta-taofa* *sa-ria* *Ø-i-boi.*
 RD-wail AUX-3PLS 3SGS-RL-night
 As they wailed [ie. They wailed and] night came on.’ (Mono Alu - Wheeler 1926: text 29)

Preverbal subject indexing may occur in Mono in ‘possessive’ marked clauses, but only in clauses with a contextual adverbial function that introduce a subsequent main clause, suggesting such clauses may be subordinate clauses that are live nominalisations:

- (43) a. *au* *e-na* *hahine-na* *pata-aŋ*
 exist AUX-3SGS cross.sibling-3SGP shore-on
 ‘His sister stayed on the shore.’ (Ross 1982:15/39)
- b. *o-na-au* *sa-m* *ha-na-nuhu-i-Ø*
 2SGS-IRR-exist AUX-2SGS 1SGS-IRR-dive-TR-3SGO
 ‘While you stay here, I shall dive for it.’ (Mono Alu - Ross 1982:15/39)
- (44) *o-na-gagana* *sa-m* *o-na-roro-i-Ø* *hanua-aŋ* *saiga*
 2SGS-IRR-travel AUX-2SGS 2SGS-IRR-see-TR-3SGO men-LOC garden
 ‘As you travel on, you will see the men’s gardens.’ (Mono Alu - Ross 1982:39)

The origin of NWS Structure B in adverbial nominalised clauses provides an explanation for the verbal function of the construction as a marker of imperfective, progressive, continuous or durative aspect. Synchronic nominalisations like those in Mono Alu in (43) and (44)b., and apparent former nominalisations like the Roviana cross-over point in (41), have the function of expressing an event in order to provide a temporal context for the following clause: the event in the second clause occurs while the event or state in the first clause applies. The

event or state expressed in the first clause is therefore inherently presented as ongoing. Once reverballed, these clauses could have been interpreted as involving progressive or imperfective aspect. The formal distinction between these clauses and normal main clauses would have been the presence of the postverbal indexing. As the distinctive formal characteristic of the construction, this morphology could have been reinterpreted as the marker of progressive aspect.

5 Consumable and general possessive classifiers in verbal constructions

Both the consumable and general possessive classifiers occur in 'possessive' subject-indexing across NWS. This raises the question of what function this distinction has in verbal constructions in the synchronic languages; whether the use of both in can be reconstructed for the originating nominalisations; and if reconstructable, how an adnominal functional distinction expressed by these classifiers can have been reanalysed in a verbal context.

5.1 Classifier choice in synchronic verbal constructions

5.1.1 Mono Alu

Both the general and consumable classifiers occur in Structure B in Mono Alu. The general classifier (with the form *sa-* in Mono Alu) occurs with unergative verbs and volitional transitive subjects, and the examples in (7) and (8) above show. It may also occur with verbs of perception and psychological state:

- (45) a. *boitalu hanua-aŋ alu roro-i-Ø-a sa-ria ga niunu*
 formerly people-LOC PN see-TR-3SGO-thither AUX-3PLS ABS coconut
 'Formerly the Alu people could see the coconut palm.' (Mono Alu - Ross 1982:40)
- b. *fealao auau pe-peko sa-ng*
 which dog RD-want AUX-2SGS
 what dog do you want (Mono Alu - Boch)
- c. *talaiva nihe hu-hulau sa-ria*
 women snake RD-fear AUX-3PLS
 'Women are frightened of snakes.' (repeating (9)) (Mono Alu - Ross 1988:250)

However, verbs expressing a change of state beyond the control of the subject are marked with the *e-* classifier:

- (46) *soipa ma-mate e-na ata*
 PN RD-die AUX-3SGS now
 'Soipa is dying.' (Mono Alu - Ross 1988:250)

The semantic distinction therefore appears to be between events or states that are potentially controllable, and those which are beyond the subject's control.

5.1.2 Torau

Both the general and consumable classifiers occur in Torau Structure B. However, the distinction is one of tense. The general classifier (with the form *sa-*) occurs with nonpast tense, and the consumable classifier with past:

- (47) a. *pita ge-getu sa-la ba*
 PN RD-dance AUX-3SGS too
 'Peter is dancing too.' (Torau - Ross 1988:250)
- b. *io ta-tanisi e-la*
 he RD-cry AUX-3SGS
 'He was crying.' (Torau - Ross 1982:35)

5.1.3 Uruava

Both the consumable and general classifiers occur in Structure B in Uruava. Reflexes of **na-* occur with postural and existential verbs and verbs of psychological state, as in like (11)b., (12)b. and (13) above.

- (48) a. *piutu-no-na*
 sit-AUX-3SGS
 'He sits.' (Uruava - Allen & Hurd 1963c: ex.15)
- b. *matau-n-ia-no-go* *tue mare ni uruava*
 know-APPL-3SGO-AUX-1SGS say SB ? PN
 'I know how to speak Uruava.' (Uruava - Lincoln 1975:15)

The consumable classifier *e-*, reflecting PNWS **ghe-*, occurs with active verbs like (11)a. and (12)a. above.(including unaccusative active verbs)

- (49) *mate-mat-e-na*
 RD-die-AUX-3SGS
 'He is dying.' (Uruava - Lincoln 1975:15)

The distinction therefore appears to be between active verbs (with *e-*) and stative verbs (with *no-*).

5.1.4 Papapana

Only reflexes of the **ghe-* forms occur in Papapana. Reflexes of the **na-* forms do not occur.

5.1.5 Buka group

Only reflexes of the **na-* forms occur in Solos and the Haku, Hanahan and Selau dialects of Halia. Reflexes of the **ghe-* forms do not occur.

5.1.6 Taiof

It was argued in §2.5 above that the *e-* auxiliary in Taiof marks stative verbs, and *no--ro-* verbs in other categories. *E-* does not simply mark any unaccusative verbs, as verbs expressing changes of state employ the *no* form, as do existential and postural verbs:

- (50) a. *aye matain mat no-n roman*
 he FUT die PROG-3SGS today
 'He will die today.' (Taiof - Ross 1982:26)
- b. *e maras to nongos no-n koma=na matan*
 ART Maras RL dwell IMPF-3SG inside=ART ditch
 'Maras is in the ditch.' (Taiof - Ross 2002:437)

It appears that in Taiof the *e-* auxiliary is used with states (perhaps only those existing at the time of speaking, or perhaps permanent states), while the *no--ro-* auxiliary marks nonstative events.

5.1.7 Teop

Only reflexes of the **na-* forms occur in Teop. Reflexes of the **ghe-* forms do not occur.

5.1.8 Tinputz

Tinputz Structure B employs both *no-* and *e-* auxiliaries, but the functional distinction is not entirely clear. Ross (1982:28) claims that *no-* 'is used in realis contexts' (as in (29) above), while *e-* 'has been found only in conditional clauses'. He gives the following example of *e-*:

- (51) *eën se ki nō: ee me: se nō: e-n*
 youSG FUT COND go he too FUT go AUX-3SGS
 ‘If you went, he would go too.’ (Ross 1982:28)

In (51) the *e-* auxiliary marks the main clause, not the conditional clause. Nonetheless, the data is consistent with *no-* marking actual events, and *e-* hypothetical ones (close to Ross’s claim). Whatever the case, it is clear that unlike Taiof, *e-* is not limited to stative clauses and *no-* to punctual events and activities: in (51) *e-* marks an unergative active verb, while in (29)b. *no-* occurs with an existential verb.

5.1.9 Banoni

Only the **ghe-* form occurs in Teop. Reflexes of the **na-* forms do not occur.

5.1.10 Nehan

As discussed above, Structure B in Nehan occurs only with the existential verb *kae-*, which Ross (1982:36) analyses as eg. **ka-e-n*, reflecting **ghe-*. Reflexes of the **na-* forms do not occur.

5.1.11 Central New Georgia group

Reflexes of both the general and consumable classifiers occur in Roviana and Hoava. However, the *ghe-* forms occur extremely infrequently, and appear to be in the process of being lost in favour of a functional broadening of the general forms. (This corresponds to more restricted use of the consumable classifier in adnominal possession, particularly in Roviana, where the consumable classifier has almost disappeared.) In Structure B the general forms occur with postural, motion and existential verbs, as the examples in (32) and (33) above show. They also occur indexing experiencer and passive subjects:

- (52) a. *tahiko busa gua*
 be.afraid too.much 1SGS
 ‘I was too afraid.’ (Hoava – Davis 1997:212)
- b. *ta-ngani-ni-a gua sa masala heni-ni*
 PASS-eat-APPL-3SGO 1SGS ART criminal this-RD
 ‘I am injured by this criminal.’ (Hoava – Davis 1997:212)
- c. *...sina matagutu dia*
 because be.afraid 3PLS
 ‘...because they were afraid.’ (Roviana - Waterhouse 1949 [1928])

Forms from the *ghe-* paradigm occur in Roviana in this construction so rarely that only two instances have been identified in the existing data, one expressing a change in location, the other meaning ‘sleep’:

- (53) a. *...meke vura-mae ghe-na si keke noki pa kenu-na*
 and appear-come AUX-3SGS ABS one snake LOC front-3SGP
 ‘...and suddenly a snake appeared in front of him.’ (Roviana – Ross 1988:250)
- b. *puta ghe-mi*
 sleep AUX-2PLS
 ‘You sleep.’ (Roviana - Waterhouse 1949 [1928])

In Hoava the consumable classifier forms occur “occasionally”. (Davis 1997:217) Davis identifies no functional distinction. In the data, the consumable possessive forms are confined to predicates encoding change of location:

- (54) *ghore ghe-di na la pota nikana ghua*
 descend AUX-3PLS because go hit man ?
 ‘They went down to kill people.’ (Hoava - Davis 1997:217)

5.1.12 Ganoqa

Reflexes of both the general and consumable classifiers occur in Ganoqa. However, the *ghe-* forms occur extremely infrequently and appear to be in the process of being lost, as in Hoava and Roviana. Kettle's data shows the general forms occurring with unergative and stative verbs, as well as with clearly unaccusative verbs:

- (55) *ko uke beto dia*
 CONJ die finish DUR.3PL
 'So they all died.' [ie. 'So they were all dying to completion.'] (Ganoqa - Kettle 2000:191)

The consumable possessive forms occur in only five clear instances in Kettle's data. Four of these were with the verb *puta* sleep' ((56)a.); the other appears idiomatic ((56)b.):

- (56) a. *betō gari putā ghe-di*
 and.then RL.3PLS sleep AUX-3PLS
 'Then they slept.' (Ganoqa - Kettle 2000:191)
- b. *ge vari-teku ghe-di ari-kori*
 RL.3PLS RECIPIENT-take AUX-3PLS they-DL
 'They two fought each other honourably.' (Ganoqa - Kettle 2000:192)

5.1.13 Zabana

Although Zabana resembles Roviana and Hoava in employing 'possessive' subject-indexing to index undergoer and experiencer subjects, it differs in that it is the *no-* forms that have a more limited distribution, not the *ghe-* forms. In Zabana the *ghe-* forms occur with existential verbs, verbs expressing psychological or physical states, and verbs of motion and eating:

- (57) a. *n-e haghe nga n-e hinae ghe-na-ghu kia mo*
 RL-3SGS ascend CNT RL-3SGS descend AUX-3SGS-then PNLOC LMT
 'He embarked and went down to Kia.' (Zabana - Fitzsimons 1989:92)
- b. *maneri di pake ghe-di ragi-na*
 they IRR.3PLS not.want AUX-3PLS dance-?
 'They don't want to dance.' (Zabana - Fitzsimons 1989:110)
- c. *o mahai ghe-u*
 IRR.2SGS eat AUX-2SGS
 'Eat please.' (Zabana - Fitzsimons 1989:109)

The *no-* forms occur in the data only with verbs expressing studying, as in (37)b. and (58)a., and *sesele* 'bathe'. Although these refer to events in which the subject is affected by the event, they share a sense that the effect results from the subject acting on himself or herself, either mentally or physically. These are therefore in a sense inherently reflexive (and therefore with these verbs close to Fitzsimons' notion of middle voice):

- (58) a. *...a lao ka suga fogara la sikolu no-gu kesao*
 IRR.1SGS go LOC house sick go school AUX-1SGS PNLOC
 '...I will go to the clinic, go to be schooled at Kesao.' (Zabana - Fitzsimons 1989:88)
- b. *o la sesele no-u-ghu agho*
 IRR.2SGS go bathe AUX-2SGS-then youSG
 'You go and bathe.' (Zabana - Fitzsimons 1989:142)

5.1.14 Central Isabel group

Cheke Holo and Kokota resemble Hoava and Roviana in that the consumable classifier has a reduced distribution in Structure B, although unlike the New Georgia languages, it has its full distribution in its

completely in this construction.) This coupled with the presence of both in languages from each major subgroup of NWS other than Choiseul suggests that both were present in the originating construction.

5.3 Functional distinction between consumable and general possession in originating construction

If both consumable and general possessive bases occurred in the originating construction, what function did the distinction have? Both occurred in nominalised clauses, where the possessum was not an entity (consumable or otherwise) but an event. How can a distinction between that which is consumable and that which is not apply to events? In fact, a comparable distinction is widespread in Oceanic (if very poorly described), as a distinction between dominant and subordinate possession.

The best described distinction between dominant and subordinate possessive is that found in Fijian. (Geraghty 1983:242-250; Lynch 1996:96-99; Lynch 2001) The morphology of consumable and general possession of nominals in Fijian is congrate with that found in NWS:

- (61) a. *no-mu vale*
 GP-2SGP house
 'your house' (Fijian)
- b. *ke-mu madrai*
 CP-2SGP bread
 'your bread' (Fijian)

However, consumable possession is also employed to express 'characteristic possession' (possession of characteristics which inherently apply to the possessor and over which the possessor has no control):

- (62) a. *ke-mu levu*
 CP-2SGP big
 'your size' (Fijian)
- b. *ke-na oca*
 CP-3SGP wearisomeness
 'its wearisomeness' (of a chore etc) (Fijian)

The consumable classifier is also employed to express 'passive possession', where the possessor is affected by the referent, rather than controls it:

- (63) a. *ke-mu meca*
 CP-2SGP enemy
 'your enemy' (Fijian)

This distinction is clear with morphologically derived 'deverbalised' (ie. nominalised) verbs:

- (64) a. *no-mu i-vacu*
 GP-2SGP DV-punch
 'your punch' (which you threw) (Fijian)
- b. *ke-mu i-vacu*
 CP-2SGP DV-punch
 'your punch' (which you received) (Fijian)
- (65) a. *no-mu i-talanoa*
 GP-2SGP DV-narrate
 'your story' (which you tell) (Fijian)
- b. *ke-mu i-talanoa*
 CP-2SGP DV-narrate
 'your story' (about you) (Fijian)

As (64) and (65) show, nominalised verbs are possessed using the general classifier when the possessor is the agent, and the consumable classifier when the possessor undergoes the event, or has some oblique function. The distinction is fundamentally one of control and affect. The general classifier expresses a relationship in which the possessor has control over the possessum, either because it is an ordinary possessed entity, or because the possessor is acting in some way. The consumable classifier expresses a relationship in which the possessor is affected by the possessum, or at least has no control over it.

This is also evident in nominalised clauses, where the subject of the nominalised clause is possessor indexed using the general classifier, but this is restricted to agentive subjects. The construction is not available for encoding undergoer or other subjects:

- (66) *na no-mu aa vacu-k-i koya*
 the GP-2SGP PAST punch-TC-3SGS s/he
 'your having punched him'/'when you had punched him' (Fijian)

It is not clear whether a corresponding construction exists in which the consumable classifier occurs indexing undergoer possessor-subjects.

The use of the consumable possessive morphology to encode subordinate possession is not limited to Fijian. It is sufficiently widespread in Oceanic for Pawley to propose that the POc 'edible' possessive classifier **ka-* also marked '[a]ctions over which the possessor has no control (where he is the patient, target, or involuntary experiencer)". (Pawley 1973:162) This is in contrast with the classifier POc general classifier **na-*, where "the possessor owns or is physical control of the head noun, has a choice in the matter of possession, or is the agent or deliberate actor or voluntary experiencer of the action denoted by the head noun." (Pawley 1973:158) Lynch (1996, 2001) surveys passive possession in more detail from existing Oceanic literature.

The phenomenon of subordinate possession is very poorly described across Oceanic in general, and NWS in particular. In Western Oceanic outside NWS the consumable classifier occurs encoding characteristic and/or passive possession in several languages. It occurs in Mangap-Mbula (North New Guinea linkage), at least to the extent of the passive possession of nominals:

- (67) *ko-ng koi bizin*
 CP=1SGP enemy PL
 'my enemies' (Mangap-Mbula - Lynch 2001:200)

This also occurs in several languages of the Meso-Melanesian linkage (the larger grouping within Western Oceanic of which NWS is a part). Tolai (Mosel 1984) resembles Fijian quite closely in the distribution of the consumable classifier encoding subordinate possession. In Tolai, phrases marked with the consumable classifier "do not express a relationship of control, but rather the relationship that exists between an object (e.g. food, weapons) and somebody or something that is affected by this object...the possessor refers to somebody or something the referent of the possessed noun phrase is used on." (Mosel 1984:38) This contrasts with phrases using the general classifier, which all denote an "active voluntary or controlling relationship" (Mosel 1984:36) Subordinate possession applies to the possession of nouns:

- (68) a. *ra=na ram*
 CP=3SGP club
 'its club' (with which it will be killed) (Tolai - Mosel 1984:38)
- b. *ma i ga al pa nam ra=na kankan*
 and he T/A attract EFFECT DEM CP=3SGP anger
 'And he drew [their] anger upon himself.' (Tolai - Mosel 1984:38)

In Tolai, as in Fijian, possessed clauses employ the general not consumable classifier, because of "similarities between the semantic role of the agent of active verbs and that of the [general] possessor". (Mosel 1984:36) As with the Fijian data above, this assumes an agentive subject.

- (69) *a k<un>u-kul na kar ka-i ra tutuna*
 ART RD<NOM>-buy of car GP=3SGP ART man
 'the car buying of the man' (Tolai - Mosel 1984:37)

It is not clear whether nominalised clauses may express events where the subject is an undergoer or experiencer, but Mosel's remarks suggest such a clause could not involve the general possessive classifier.

The situation in NWS is unclear with regard to this issue. Few descriptions of languages in the group discuss nominalised clauses, still fewer the possession of such clauses. Few make any reference to subordinate possession, and none to the subordinate possession of nominalised clauses. It is therefore not possible to form any hypotheses about this in regard to PNWS.

However, given that the phenomenon described for Fijian and Tolai is found in widely divergent branches of Oceanic, it is possible that a distinction between dominant and subordinate possession existed in PNWS. Such a distinction may account for the apparent use of both classifiers in the nominalised clauses that appear to have given rise to 'possessive' subject-indexing in synchronic NWS.

This distinction accords moderately well with the functional distinction between general and consumable classifiers in 'possessive' subject-indexing in a number of the NWS languages where both occur, and semantic extensions and restrictions leading to the distinctions found in a number of others can be envisaged. However, considerably more research is needed, both primary research and in the analysis of existing texts, before firmer hypotheses can be formed.

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