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**A Fieldwork-Based Approach to
Blanga (Blablanga), an
Austronesian Language of the
Solomon Islands, with Reference
to Predicate-Argument Relations**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2017

Department of Linguistics
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Declaration for SOAS PhD thesis

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Abstract

This thesis explores the structure of Blanga (iso 639-3 code blp), a previously undescribed and undocumented Austronesian language of the Solomon Islands. It opens with a sociolinguistic and ethnographic introduction to the language, their speakers and the linguistic ecology of the region, followed by a presentation of the main phonological features and an analysis of some major phonological processes, including strategies for hiatus avoidance, which constitute the base of several surface phenomena, and stress assignment, the theoretical importance of which is also revealed by surface processes. A detailed description of major morphological and morphosyntactic aspects is then made available, which continues with a discussion of *Aktionsart*, types of predicates and their subcategorisation frames, in an attempt to define thematic roles and identify macroroles, according to the RRG principles of lexical decomposition. Sentence-level coordination and subordination are subsequently looked at. The final chapters focus on the relations established between a predicate and its (direct) arguments and their implications for the general theory. Blanga does not use formal means of encoding semantic roles but the speakers are able to identify them based on their intuitions of verb semantics, on pragmatic and cultural knowledge, and on discourse context. There is also considerable variation in the language with respect to the order of constituents in a clause, which, in conjunction with morphosyntactic markers and prosody is used to encode topic and focus. Blanga, therefore, employs completely different means of encoding the two primary sets of predicate-argument relations. Because of the lack of a voice distinction and of other constructions in the language, evidence for the necessity of employing a third set, that of grammatical relations, is limited to verb agreement, Equi-NP coreference, coreference in chained clauses and, partially, causativisation, which comes to confirm their construction-specific character.

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*For Mom
and
for Anastasia!*

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I owe thanks to Louise Ashmore and Oliver Bond for setting up our small writing group, sharing their research data and making insightful comments on mine, to Tom Castle, who worked his magic through the paginating chaos of my thesis and prepared it for printing, and to Ed Garrett, who made sure it was printed in time. I thank them for their hard work but most of all for their durable friendship.

A special thank is due to Charlotte Hemmings, who thoroughly and promptly proofread the materials despite my delays in sending them to her.

A greater number of friends, fellow-students and colleagues have helped in various ways during my PhD years. Among those, Bruce Bayley, Aicha Belkadi, Pete Budd, Giuliano Castagna, Mary Chambers, Kakia Chatsiou, Mike Franjeh, Maria Flouraki, Ramona Gönczöl, Karolina Grzech, Benedicte Haraldstad Frostad, Bernard Howard, Kay Johnson, Samuil Marusca, Simone Mauri, Jean McGarry, Stuart McGill, Svetoslav Minchev, Tom Owen-Smith, Sandy Ritchie, Kirsty Rowan, Sophie Salfner, Candide Simard and Connor Youngberg.

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Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
A	actor
ADVP	adverbial phrase
AGR	agreement
ALT	alternative particle
ASSC	associative noun
C	consonant
CARD	cardinal numeral
CMPL	completive aspect
CND	conditional particle
CNT	contrastive particle
CNTX	contextualising noun
CONJ	conjunction
CONS	consumable
CS	causative
DEM	demonstrative
DIST	distal
DL	dual
EXCL	exclusive
EXHST	exhaustive
FOC	focus particle
FUT	future
GEN	general
HAB	habitual
HES	hesitation particle
IMM	immediacy particle
INCL	inclusive
INCPT	inceptive
INIT	initiality particle
INTERJ	interjection
INTS	intensifier
IRR	irealis
LIM	limiter
LOC	locative
N	noun
N	nearby (dem.)
NEG	negative particle/suffix
NP	noun phrase
NP _{LOC}	noun phrase headed by local noun
NP _{PN}	noun phrase headed by personal noun
NP _{PRO}	noun phrase headed by personal pronoun
NP _{REFL}	noun phrase headed by reflexive
NP _{DEM}	noun phrase headed by demonstrative
NP _{POSS}	possessive noun phrase
NSG	non-singular
NV	non-visible
O	object agreement

ORD	ordinal numeral
P	possessor agreement
PART	particle (function uncertain)
PERF	perfective
PL	plural
PLN	place name
PN	personal name
POSS	possessive base
PP	prepositional phrase
PRED	predicate
PREP	preposition
PRES	present
PROG	progressive
PROX	proximal
PSSB	possibilitative particle
PSSM	possessum
PSSR	possessor
PURP	purposive
PV	potentially visible (dem.)
R	within reach (dem.)
RF	reflexive agreement
REAL	realis
REC	reciprocal
REDUP	reduplication
REFL	reflexive base
RELC	relative clause
S	subject agreement
SEQ	sequential particle
SPEC	specific article
SB	subordinator
SG	singular
SUBJ	subject
T	touching (dem.)
TAM	tense-aspect-mood
TR	trial
TRANS	transitiviser
U	undergoer
V	verb
V	vowel
VI	intransitive verb
VOC	appellative vocative particle
VT	transitive verb

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This thesis represents a theoretically and typologically informed exploration of the structure of a previously undescribed and undocumented language spoken in the Solomon Islands, focusing on topics that have been less approached in the Oceanic literature. It can be regarded as consisting of four distinct but interconnected components: an ample introduction to the language, its speakers and the research that led to the thesis (Chapter 1), a general description and analysis of the phonology, morphology and syntax of the language (Chapters 2-5), a more specialised investigation of the relations established between predicates and arguments in Blanga clauses and their consequences beyond clause level (Chapters 6 and 7) and some brief concluding remarks (Chapter 8).

The numerous examples quoted throughout the chapters come from recordings made in the field, which are in the process of being deposited with the Endangered Language Archive (ELAR) at SOAS, University of London. Each example is followed by a reference to the recording from which it has been extracted. The audio and video recordings have been uniquely labeled and each label consists of a three-digit number, followed by the letters A (audio only), V (video) or AV (video with separate audio backup), which are in turn followed by the date of the recording in ddmmyy format. Thus, recording 171A031109 is the 171st recording, made in audio only on 3rd November 2009, recording 005V031207 is the 5th video recording without separate audio backup and was made on 3rd December 2007, while recording 136AV111209 is the 136th video recording, made with separate audio backup on 11th December 2009. In a small number of cases, the data were recorded only in writing in my field notebooks. In such cases the labels consist of FN (field notebook), followed by the notebook's number separated by a colon from the page number. Therefore, if an example is referenced by NB2:46, it means that it was taken from page 46 in my second field notebook.

1.1 Sociolinguistic and ethnographic data

Blablanga (iso 639-3 code blp) is an Austronesian language belonging to the Northwest Solomonic branch of the Oceanic subgroup. Its three dialects are spoken by 1150 people on Santa Isabel Island, Solomon Islands. One dialect is spoken on the northern coast in the villages of Popoheo, Kolosori and, partially, Hovukoilo-Sogholona (Maringe area, Hovukoilo Ward). The other two dialects are spoken on the southern coast in and

around Kilokaka and Biluro respectively (Susubona Ward, neighbouring the Hograno region). This thesis deals exclusively with the northern variety. Mention of the southern varieties will be made sporadically and mainly for comparison's sake.

The name is obviously a frozen reduplication. Palmer (1999a:9) suggests that the base of the reduplication may be the limiter particle *bla* and does mention native consultants reporting that Blablanga means “the language with *bla* in it”, reflecting the high frequency of occurrence of the particle in the language (3.1.11)¹. Whatever the origin of the name, both native speakers and other Santa Isabel Islanders currently refer to the language almost exclusively as *Blanga*, and this will be the name that I shall use henceforth in this thesis, unless quoted or paraphrased from another source.

Although limited to communication at village level and seriously threatened by its more vigorous neighbour Cheke Holo and, to a lesser extent, by Solomons Pijin, Blanga has shown strong potential for a comprehensive documentation, as shown in 1.3.

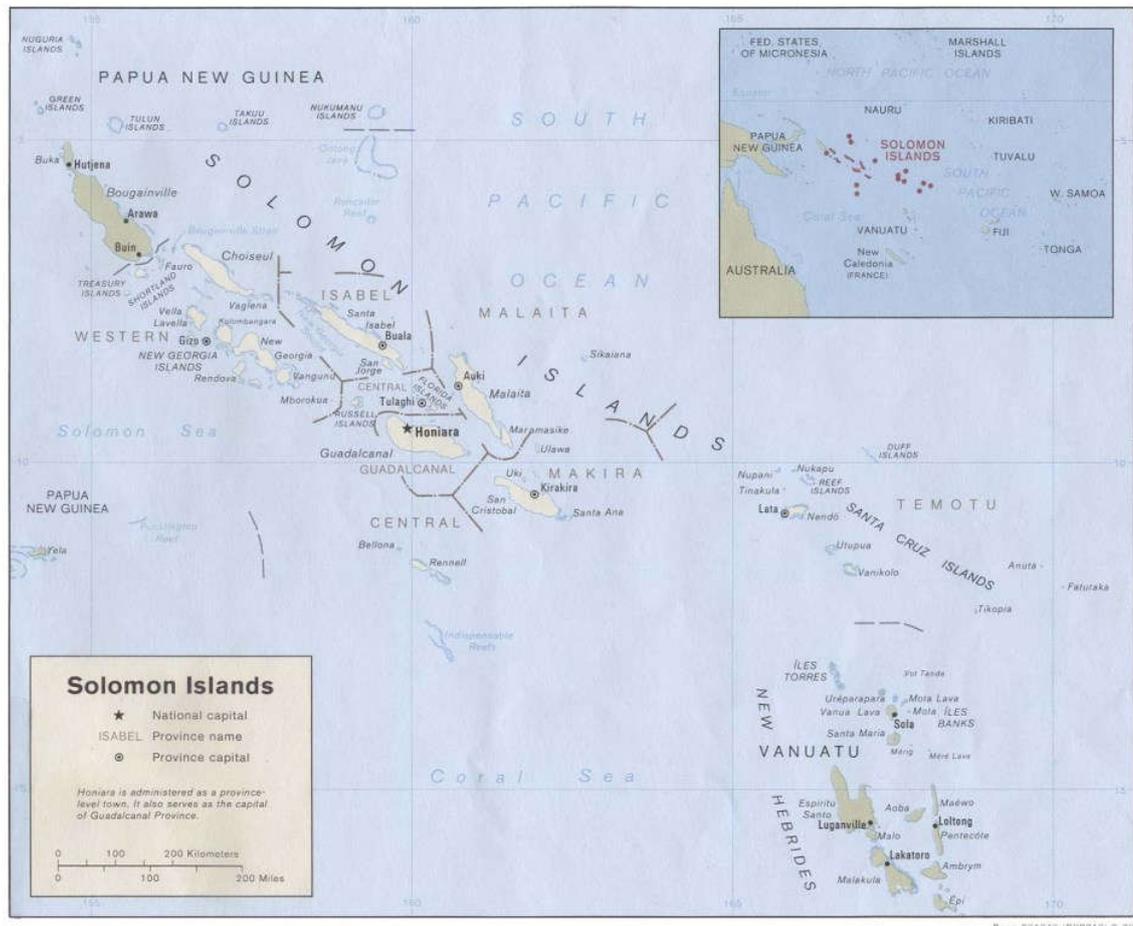
1.1.1 Location

The Solomon Archipelago lies between 5° and 12° S.Lat. and 154.5° and 162.5° E.Long. Its northernmost and westernmost points, Cape Hanpan and Cape Dunganon respectively, are situated on Buka Island. The outlying Rennell atoll reaches halfway between the Equator and the Tropic of Capricorn in the south and the small atoll of Santa Ana marks its eastern limit. Its major islands, Bougainville, Choiseul, Santa Isabel, and Malaita in the north and New Georgia, Guadalcanal, and San Cristobal in the south, make up two parallel mountainous chains aligned along a NW-SE axis and encompassing approximately one and a half dozen medium-size volcanic islands, some large atolls, and around 900 islets, smaller atolls, and reefs (Map 1-1).

Politically, the archipelago is divided between two countries. In the north, its largest island, Bougainville, together with Buka and some of the islets in their close proximity are part of Papua New Guinea, while the rest form the state known as Solomon Islands and represent all the territories formerly administrated by Britain under the name of The British Solomon Islands Protectorate, which achieved self-government in 1976 and independence in 1978, with the capital, Honiara, on Guadalcanal Island. Like the Protectorate, the independent state also includes territories that are not part of the same geographical unit as the rest of the country, such as the Ontong Java atoll, situated 250 kilometres north of Santa Isabel, and the isolated Temotu Province,

¹ A particle *bla*, with the same function, is also frequently used in the neighbouring Kokota language (Palmer 2009:321 and 1999a:256).

comprising the Easter Outer Islands (the Reef and Santa Cruz Islands), just north of Vanuatu. I shall conventionally use the name *Solomon Islands* or *the Solomons* to denote the political entity as described above, which covers a land area of approximately 28,000 square kilometres and has a population of almost 515,870², and *Solomon Archipelago* when referring to the geographical entity.



Map 1-1: The Solomon Archipelago and the Solomon Islands state (courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries).

Out of the fifty-six indigenous Austronesian languages³ of the Solomon Islands (Tryon and Hackman 1983:19), six or seven are currently spoken by the 26,158⁴ indigenous inhabitants of Santa Isabel. Crossed by the parallel of 8° S.Lat., this long and narrow island is situated between 158° and 160° E.Long. in the northern chain of the Solomon

² Solomon Islands National Statistics Office 2009 Census Results, available at:

<http://www.statistics.gov.sb/statistics/demographic-statistics/census>, last accessed 02/02/2017.

³ According to Tryon and Hackman (1983:41-45), the remaining seven indigenous languages of the Solomons are non-Austronesian, belonging to the East Papuan Phylum. Controversial among those are four languages of the Temotu Province, grouped together as the Reefs-Santa Cruz languages, which would be Papuan according to Wurm (1978:969-1010) but Austronesian according to Lincoln (1978:929-967). Recent evidence supports the latter opinion (Næss 2006, Ross and Næss 2007, and Næss and Boerger 2008).

⁴ Solomon Islands National Statistics Office 2009 census results, available at

<http://www.statistics.gov.sb/statistics/demographic-statistics/census>, accessed 02/02/ 2017.

Archipelago. Although it is the fourth largest of the nine provinces of the Solomon Islands, with an area of 4,136 square kilometres, it is ranked eighth in terms of population density. In terms of distribution, the languages of Santa Isabel exhibit a somehow curious pattern, although common in many Melanesian regions: most of them are, or used to be, spoken on both sides of the volcanic range that rises along the island's main axis, forming what White, Kokhonigita and Pulomana (1988:vii) call "dialect bands", which cross the mountainous inland (see Map 1-5, Map 1-6, Map 1-7 in Section 1.1.3). This situation is explained by the fact that in pre-colonial times most of the Isabel population lived in the interior, protected from enemy raids. In the early 20th century, when headhunting was over, they left the highlands, different groups of speakers of the same language settling in corresponding areas on the northern and southern coast respectively (White, Kokhonigita and Pulomana 1988:vii; Palmer 1999a:1). Following this pattern, the Blanga speakers can nowadays be found in the following villages and smaller settlements: Popoheo, Kolosori and, as a minority, in Hovukoilo, Sogholona and Gozoruru (on or close to the Maringe coast in the north); and Kilokaka (together with its daughter settlements of Gazuhungari, Gugugluro and Kotlomuro), Galili (also known as Fizaghalia), Hiroleghu, Biraki, Taval and, partially, Biluro (and perhaps some tiny adjacent settlements) next to the Hograno region on the opposite, southern coast (for demographic data see 1.1.4).

1.1.2 Genetic affiliation

All the Austronesian languages of the Solomons belong to the Oceanic branch. With 1,200 languages, 20% of the world's total, spoken over a huge area, from Taiwan and Hawaii in the north to New Zealand in the south, and from Madagascar in the west to the Easter Island in the east, the Austronesian family is the second, after Indo-European, in terms of geographical spread (Adelaar 2005:1). It is probably the first by number of languages too⁵, although the number of speakers does not exceed 270 million (Adelaar 2005:1). The most widely accepted classification of the Austronesian languages is based on different publications by Robert Blust (1977 and subsequent). The diagram in *Figure 1-1* is reproduced after Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:4), slightly modified and with the addition of the regions where the different groups are spoken.

Numerous and extremely complex are the problems associated with the internal classification of the Austronesian languages. The Formosan languages, for instance, are believed by Blust (1999) to belong to nine first-order subgroups, while an earlier article

⁵ Or second, after Benue-Congo.

by Ross (1995) suggests that a different subgrouping approach, as explained later in this section, can account for a smaller number of subgroups. Moreover, the genetic relationships between most members of the Malayo-Polynesian subgroups are not well established (Adelaar 2005:14). The lowest-order subgroups, however, seem to be unanimously regarded as genetically ‘well-established’ and there is hardly any doubt nowadays that the languages labelled as Oceanic are all descendent from a common ancestor, Proto-Oceanic, many aspects of which have been reconstructed (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:54-91).

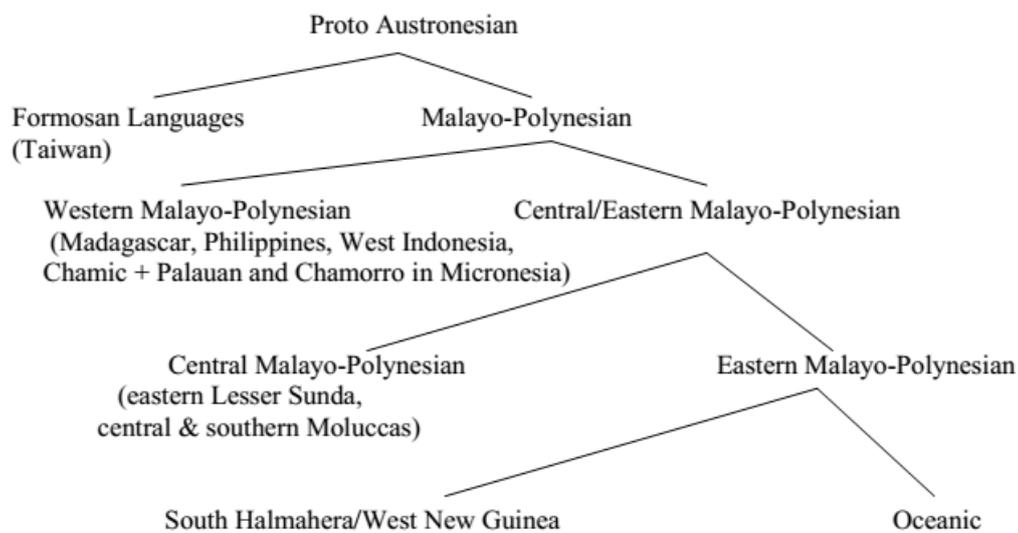


Figure 1-1: Blust’s internal classification of Austronesian (slightly modified after Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002).



Map 1-2: Oceania (courtesy of Wikimedia Commons).

With the exception of Palauan and Chamorro (Micronesia), all the indigenous languages of Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia, around 450 in all, belong to the Oceanic subgroup and are spoken by approximately two million people (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:10-11). In the case of Polynesia and Micronesia, except for the two languages mentioned above and Polynesian outliers, the geographic units correspond to linguistic subgroups so the terms *Polynesian* and *Micronesian languages* respectively can be used with both a geographical and genetic sense. The languages of Melanesia belong to different subgroups of Oceanic at different orders.

The internal classification of the Oceanic subgroup requires some preliminary clarifications of the current practice as well as of the status and meaning of some terms used in recent works and of those that will be employed in this thesis. Having found a sufficient number of cognates in several languages and having concluded that the respective languages are genetically related, any attempt at internal classification should distinguish between shared features in general and shared innovations in particular (Trask 1996:182). Unlike shared innovations, shared features may constitute retentions from a common ancestor, which are irrelevant for internal subgrouping, or may be due to contact and convergence. Most of the time, related languages are in contact, forming linguistic continua, which makes it difficult to decide if particular common features are shared innovations or are due to convergence. The two classical models for the representation of language subgroups have been devised in an Indo-European context and both have their limitations. Schleicher's tree model does not account for convergence, while Schmidt's wave model fails to represent the relative period of time when a particular split occurred. The latter is also a tiresome and less manageable graphical representation (Trask 1996:183-187). Although not at all accurate, in practice the former is preferred for its simplicity and is considered to work well enough in the conventional subgrouping of Indo-European, Finno-Ugric, and other families. However, it is generally agreed that the relationships between the descendants of a protolanguage are far more complex, especially when they make up a dialect chain or network.

Until the early eighties, scholars involved in the classification of the Oceanic languages tended to assume that the emergence of different subgroups was the outcome of the independent development of isolated varieties due to the dispersal of an initially homogenous language community. Reanalysing this position, Pawley and Green (1984:138-139) call it the *radiation model* and point out that it can only describe a limited number of cases. In many others, a different approach, namely the *network-breaking* model, can represent more accurately the complex relationships between

different subgroups and their members. The basic idea of the latter model is that diversification does not necessarily imply isolation. The network-breaking model takes into account not only the fact that the early Austronesians were capable of rapid geographical expansion over a large area, but also that this very ability allowed them to maintain unity and contact between different resulting groups. Thus, in many cases, the ocean and long distances did not constitute barriers, but dialect networks were formed, across which innovations spread fairly evenly for long periods of time. Diversification appeared gradually and when, eventually, one or more dialects became divergent it can be said that the network had been broken.

Similar models are presented by Ross (1988:7-11), who distinguishes between two processes of diversification: *separation*, corresponding to Pawley and Green's radiation model, and *dialect differentiation*, corresponding to Pawley and Green's network-breaking model. Separation is regarded as the outcome of isolation and it is pointed out that, in such cases, features shared by the resulting varieties are retentions from the common ancestor. Each variety innovates in isolation and when different varieties diversify in turn, by either of the two processes, the daughters in each lower-level subgroup share innovations not displayed by the members of the other subgroups at the same level. The first-order group of languages resulting from separation is called by Ross a *family*. Dialect differentiation is characteristic to dialect chains or networks and innovations that appear in one or another region of the continuum are spread only to neighbouring dialects. The result is a chain or network of languages linked by overlapping innovations, which is labelled by Ross a *linkage*. Ross uses trees to represent the outcome of separation (Figure 1-2a) and double lines for the graphic representation of a linkage descending from a dialect chain/network (Figure 1-2b). It is also shown that a linkage can split into two or more linkages (Figure 1-2c) and, most importantly, the model accounts for situations when two related linkages become one through convergence (Figure 1-2d).

In a more recent paper, Pawley and Ross (1995:50-51) join forces and present the two processes as “two basic patterns *across languages*, enabling linguists to identify subgroups” [my emphasis], but instead of *family* and *linkage* they now use the more transparent terms *innovation-defined subgroup* and *innovation-linked subgroup* respectively, emphasizing the fact that they “are not mutually exclusive”. Several years later, discussing the theoretical background for the internal subgrouping of Oceanic, Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:92-93) reintroduce *family* and *linkage*, using them

interchangeably with *innovation-defined subgroup* and *innovation-linked subgroup* respectively.

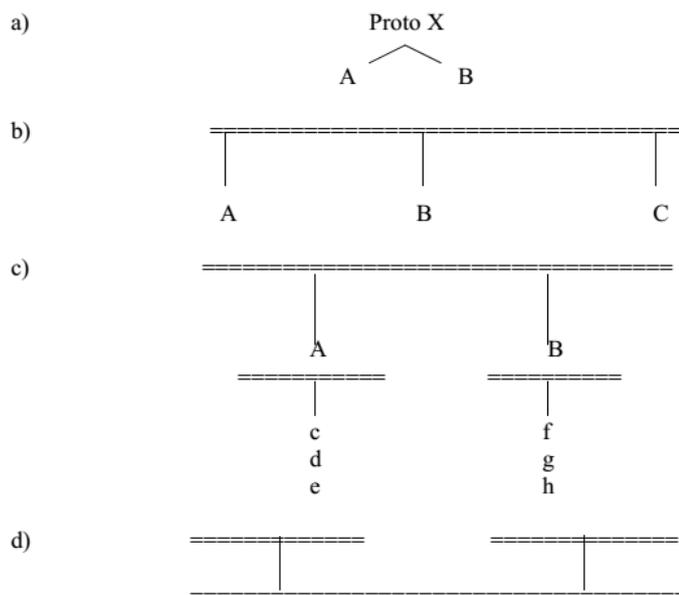


Figure 1-2: Diagrams used by Ross (1988) to represent a family (a), a linkage (b), and the split (c) and convergence (d) of linkages.

It is important to keep in mind that, as explicitly stated by the cited authors, a linkage is either descendent from an earlier dialect network or from a detached portion of it, or, more rarely, it may be the outcome of convergence. In addition, it seems that, *unlike* in a dialect network, neighbouring members of the descendant linkage have already diversified enough to cease being mutually intelligible. If contact persists or is re-established after this phase, it may result in bilingualism.

I shall adopt the terminology used by Ross (1988), according to which a linkage may be represented by a chain or a network⁶. A chain is a linear linkage: each member has related neighbours only on two opposed sides (and the extremes only on one side). This is probably very rare, almost ideal, in many regions of the world, but it does exist, at least in the Oceanic context, where there are cases of lects “spread along a coastline, each related more closely to its neighbour on other side” (Ross 1988:8). The Isabel languages are distributed according to such a pattern, which is illustrated by maps 5, 6 and 7 in Section 1.1.3. The most common situation is when the members of a linkage are scattered over a wider region of land or ocean or both, with neighbours on more than two sides, forming a network. The quoted author sometimes uses the term ‘cluster’ for a higher-order network. I am sporadically using *grouping* as an umbrella term. Another term adopted from Ross is *communalect*, by which I understand a lect spoken in a

⁶ Descending respectively from a dialect chain and a dialect network.

particular village or sometimes in a small region delimited by several villages, no matter if, sociolinguistically or otherwise, it is described as a language or a dialect⁷. The communalect of Kilokaka (Zazao Blanga), for instance, used to be considered a separate language but there is now enough evidence to support the fact that it is actually a Blanga dialect (1.1.3). Moreover, the present-day region where Kilokaka is spoken includes several additional settlements/villages, some of which probably did not exist during Tryon and Hackman's survey or were not known to the authors⁸.

Lynch, Ross and Crowley (2002:878-890) list five major groupings within Oceanic: Yapese (one member only), the St Matthias family (with two members: Mussau and Tench), the Admiralties family, the Western Oceanic linkage, and the Central-Eastern Oceanic grouping. The Oceanic languages of the Solomon Islands fall into two of the above categories. The languages spoken on and around the Shortland Islands, Choiseul, New Georgia and Santa Isabel, except for Bughotu, belong to the Northwest Solomonic linkage, a fourth-level subgroup of Western Oceanic, while the rest, with the exception of the Polynesian outliers, belong to two first-level subgroups of Central-Eastern Oceanic: the Southeast Solomonic family and the Utupua-Vanikoro grouping. The Polynesian family is a third-level subgroup of Central-Eastern Oceanic.

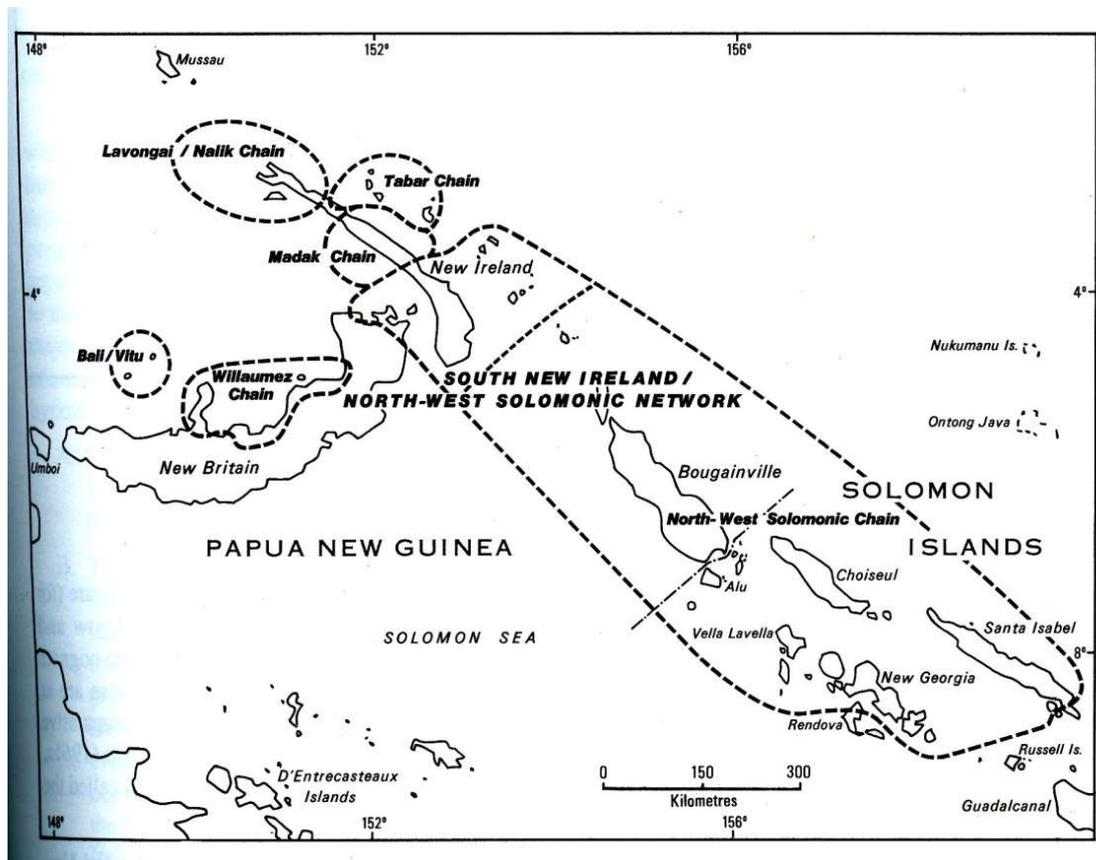
In their survey of the Solomon Islands languages, Tryon and Hackman (1983:56-64) posit the existence of a western subgroup consisting of the languages mentioned at the beginning of the previous paragraph. However, they limited their work to the political boundaries of the Solomons. It was Ross (1986) who established the Northwest Solomonic linkage by adding the Austronesian languages of Bougainville, Buka, Nissan, and Carteret (Kilinailau) Islands (Map 1-3). In a subsequent work (Ross 1988:257-314), the Northwest Solomonic linkage is shown to belong to a higher order grouping, labelled Meso-Melanesian, which also includes the Oceanic languages of New Ireland, some of the New Britain languages, and Bali-Vitu, as shown on Map 1-4 (see also 1.2.). Like the North New Guinea and Papuan Tip linkages and the Sarmi-Jayapura family, the Meso-Melanesian linkage is a first-level subgroup of Western Oceanic (Ross 1988:346-394) (Map 1-4). The place of the Northwest Solomonic linkage within Meso-Melanesian is shown in Figure 1-3.

⁷ Apparently, the term was coined by Geraghty (1983) in the Fijian context. Communalects are somehow reminiscent of those "discrete and homogenous systems [...] that represent each a unique formal organization of the substance of expression and content", mentioned by Weinreich (1954) in his attempt of defining higher-level "diasystems" as a useful construct in structural dialectology.

⁸ It can however be assumed that the authors were aware that, as pointed out in the editor's introduction to Napu (1953), the language "is spoken along the shore [...] for about fifteen to twenty miles", which suggests the existence of several settlements.



Map 1-3: The Northeast Solomonic linkage (after Ross 1986:177)



Map 1-4: The Meso-Melanesian cluster (after Ross 1988:259.)

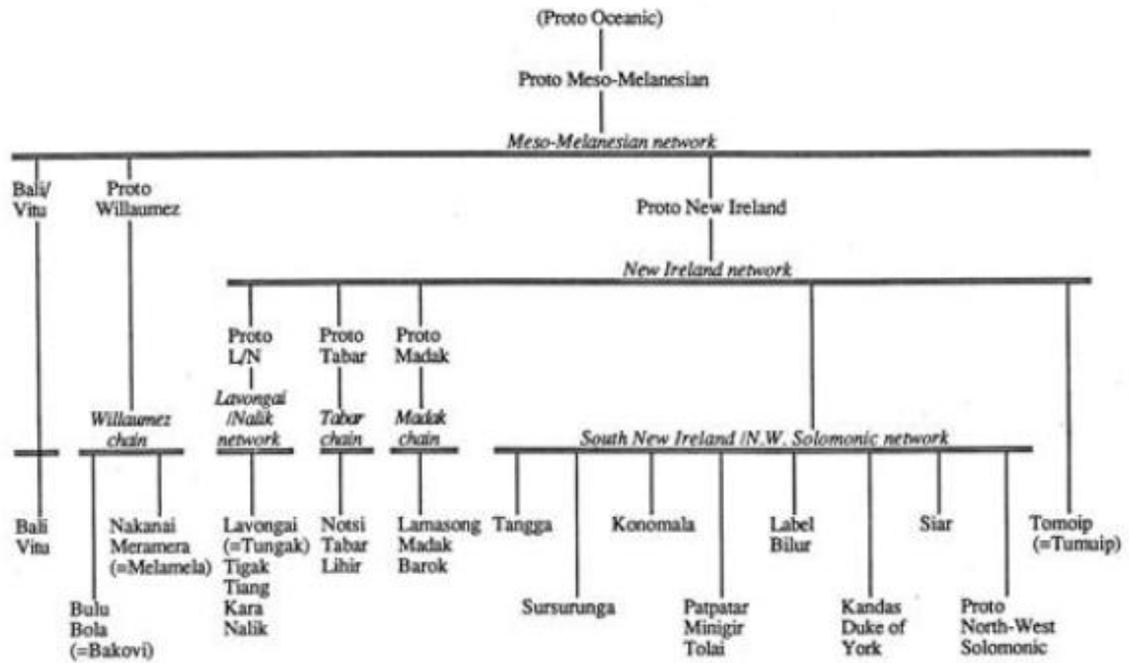


Figure 1-3: The place of the Northwest Solomonic linkage within Meso-Melanesian (after Ross 1988:258). Western Oceanic, ranked above Meso-Melanesian, is not shown.

As mentioned before, one language located on Santa Isabel, Bughotu, is not immediately related to the rest. Zabana, Kokota, Blanga (including Zazao), Cheke Holo, and Gao form a distinct grouping within Northwest Solomonic. Henceforth, I shall refer to this grouping as the *Isabel languages* or the *Isabel subgroup* (see 1.1.3).

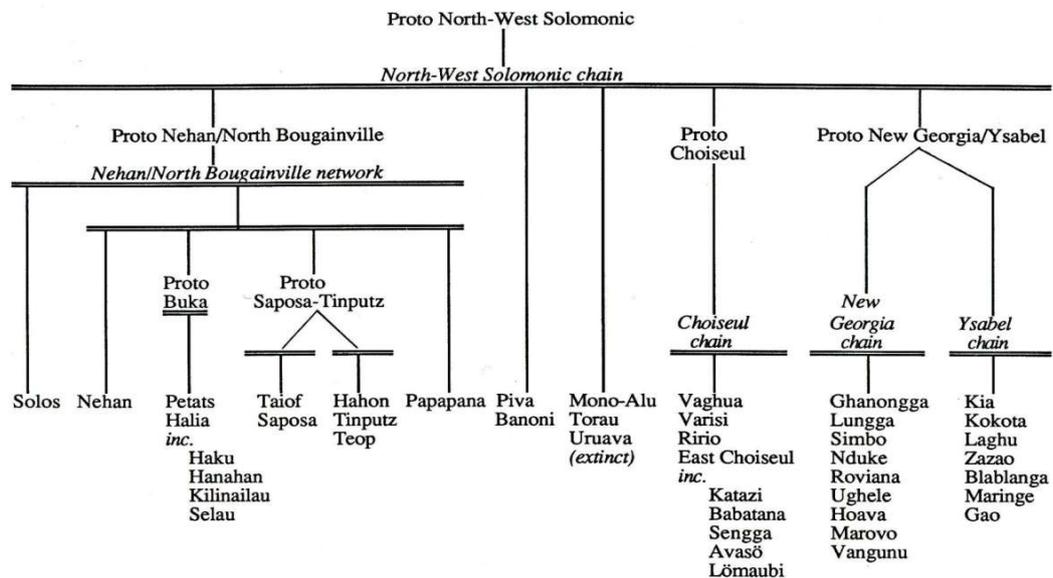


Figure 1-4: The place of the Isabel languages within the Northwest Solomonic linkage (after Ross 1988:217)

Figure 1-4 shows their relationship with the rest of the linkage. According to Tryon and Hackman's (1983) analysis of Guy's (1977) data (see 1.2.) the extinct Laghu also belongs with them. White, Kokhonigita and Pulomana (1988:vii) mention another

language, Reirei, spoken in Kмага on the north coast by bilinguals in Cheke Holo. I did not have access to any information about the extinction or surviving of Reirei, and I do not know of any data confirming its status as a distinct language or supporting the theory that it belongs to the Isabel subgroup. Tryon and Hackman (1983:74 and *passim*) present the Cheke Holo variety spoken in Kмага (Kmagha in their publication), but make no mention of any extinct or moribund language called Reirei. At this stage of the research, there is not enough evidence to support the idea that New Georgia and Isabel languages form a subgroup together. It may be the case that each represents a first-order subgroup of Northwest Solomonian in its own right (Palmer 1999a:6-7).

1.1.3 Subgrouping Isabel languages

In the diagram above, all Isabel languages are shown to form a linkage descending from the same dialect chain, which conventionally can be referred to as Proto-Isabel. Evidence from the development of consonant clusters (Palmer 1999a:30, n.10) suggests that a first division appeared between pre-Zabana and Proto-Central-Eastern-Isabel, the latter giving birth to Proto-Central-Isabel, pre-Holo and pre-Gao. The situation can be schematically represented as in Figure 1-5.

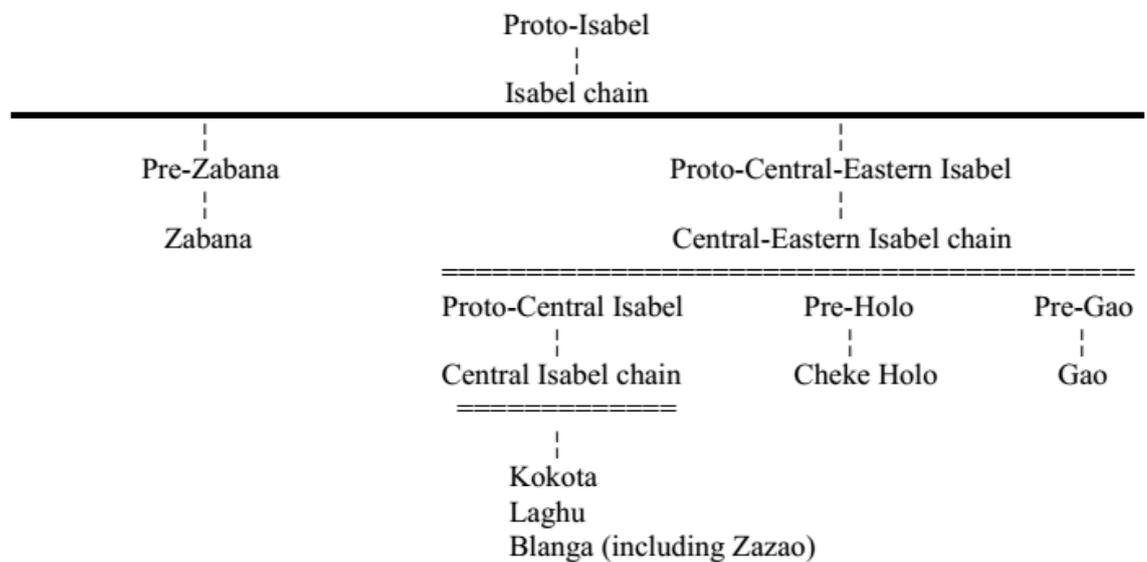
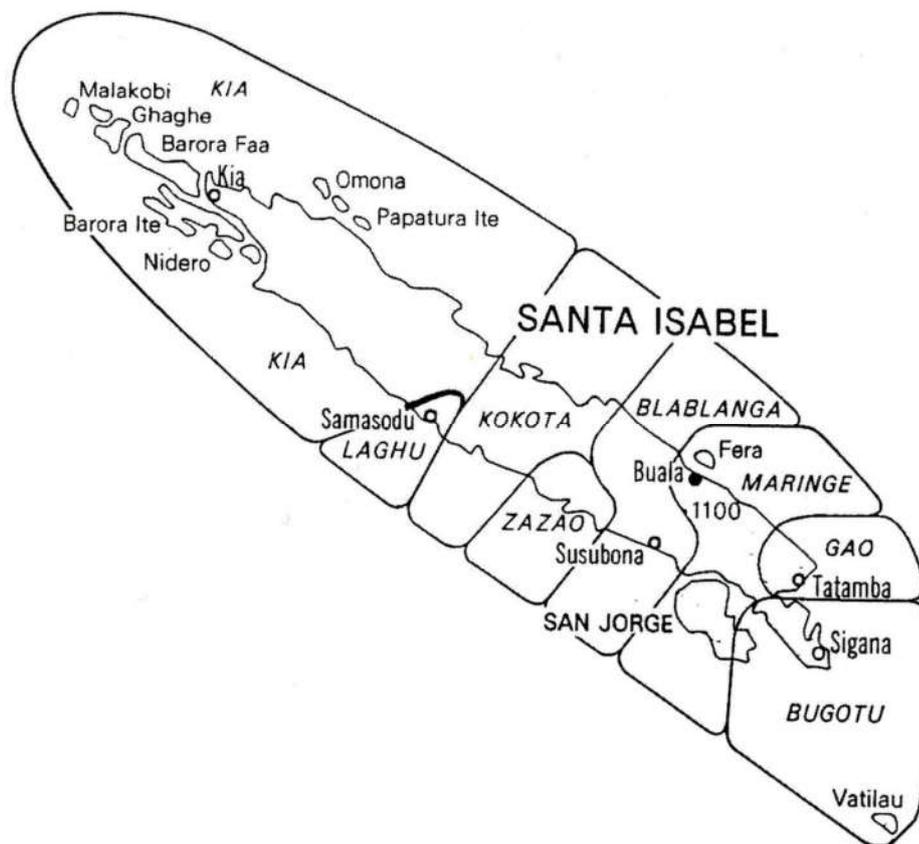


Figure 1-5: The subgrouping of Isabel languages

Nowadays, the lowest-level members of this grouping represent languages distinct from each other, with one exception, that of Zazao, which is clearly one of the three Blanga varieties. Based on lexicostatistical comparison, Tryon and Hackman (1983) treat Zazao (Kilokaka) as a separate language, since the cognation percentage between it and Blanga is slightly less than the standard 81%. Subsequent sources maintain the same

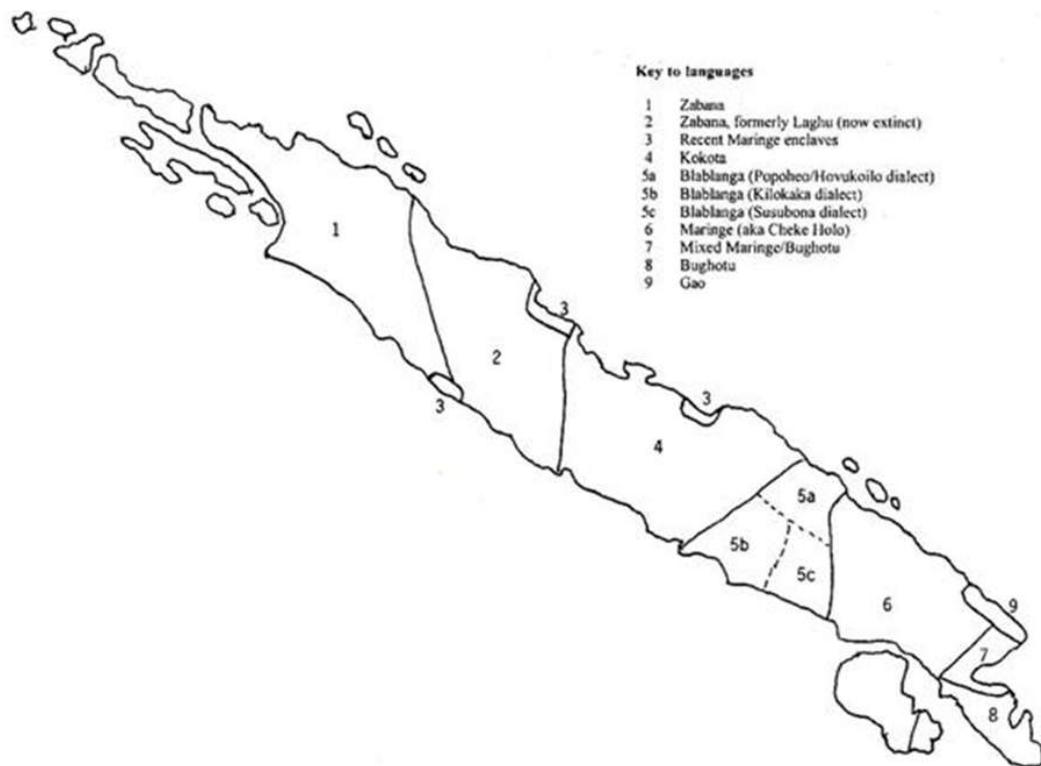
distinction and Zazao has been assigned a separate iso 639-3 code (jaj). The standard language map of Santa Isabel is shown below.



Map 1-5: The standard language map of Santa Isabel (shown in Palmer 1999a after Wurm and Hattori 1981; also reproduced in Ross 1988).

However, lexicostatistics alone is not a very reliable method, especially with lower level subgroups, as pointed out by Tryon and Hackman (1983) themselves, who, thus, leave some of their classifications open for further discussion. Palmer (1999a:9) mentions that consultants from both Kilokaka and the northern Blanga speaking villages consider their lects to be the same language, which, in turn, is seen as distinct from the neighbouring languages. Based on a combination of first-hand information from consultants and the findings of Whiteman and Simons' (1978:8-9) report, Palmer (1999a:9) concludes that the communalect currently spoken in the village of Kilokaka and a few other neighbouring settlements is a Blanga variety and recognises three Blanga dialects: one spoken on the northern coast in the Popoheo-Hovukoilo region (Maringe District), and two on the southern coast. Of the two southern dialects, one would consist of the communalects of the Kilokaka and Biluro areas, and the other of the communalects of Susubona and Ghalatha, immediately east of Biluro. Palmer's (1999a:11) revised

language map of Santa Isabel, showing the Blanga dialect division proposed by him, is reproduced here as Map 1-6.



Map 1-6: Palmer's (1999a:11) revised language map of Santa Isabel⁹.

The map above also takes into account the fact that Laghu, formerly spoken across a region between Zabana and Kokota, is now extinct, reconsiders the boundaries between Cheke Holo, Gao and Bughotu, and shows recent Cheke Holo enclaves in the Kokota and Zabana speaking regions.

My own fieldwork has confirmed the unity of the northern variety and brought further evidence that the communalect of Kilokaka is a Blanga dialect, but has also revealed a slightly different picture as far as the distribution of the dialects is concerned. Thus, on the southern coast, Blanga is not the language of Susubona and Ghalatha, while the Kilokaka communalect and, respectively, that of Biluro represent two distinct varieties of the language. In addition, on the northern coast, only Popoheo and Kolosori can be regarded as 'full' Blanga villages. In Hovukoilo and its extension Sogholona, Blanga is spoken by a minority of inhabitants. The majority of the Hovukoilo-Sogholona population speak a different lect, which, according to my Blanga consultants, is called *Mae* or, more rarely, *Pea Mae*, and is the same as that of Susubona and

⁹ A note to this map specifies that "the absence of dialect boundaries for languages other than Blanga does not imply that no dialect differentiation exists".

Ghalatha. I consider Mae to be a Holo variety¹⁰, especially in view of criterion (ii) in the list below.

In my attempt to distinguish the Blanga dialects from each other and from the neighbouring lects, and especially from Mae, I have taken into account: (i) sociolinguistic data (speakers' attitudes); (ii) phonological data (the distribution of the palatal nasal /ɲ/, present in all Cheke Holo varieties; and (iii) the revision of the cognation percentage provided by Tryon and Hackman (1983).

- i) consultants from Kilokaka, Biluro and the northern Blablanga speaking regions consider that they speak the same language (with some minor differences)¹¹, which, in turn, is seen as distinct from other neighbouring languages, and thus also different from Mae; consultants from Susubona and Ghalatha and many of the Hovukoilo and Sogholona inhabitants confirm that they do not speak Blanga;
- ii) the palatal nasal /ɲ/ is phonemic in Mae as in any other Cheke Holo variety, but is lacking from the inventory of those claiming to speak Blanga; compare the following cognates: Cheke Holo *hɲahro*, Blanga *nahro* 'string'; Cheke Holo *hɲokro*, Blanga *hnokro* 'sit'; Cheke Holo *ɲa*, Blanga *na* '3SG.P';
- iii) Tryon and Hackman (1983) found a cognation percentage of 78.6% between Blablanga and Kilokaka, which is just slightly less than the 81% that they use as standard in their lexicostatistic analysis but, if the gaps in their data are filled in, then the percentage rises to 84.8%.

Regarding the last point in the above list, I need to stress that this is entirely Tryon and Hackman's (1983) work, which I have only supplemented with some missing pieces. As far as their methodology is concerned, they only applied lexicostatistics to their lowest level of classification, used a unique 200-item Swadesh list adapted to Oceanic context for the comparison of each two lects, and adopted the convention that if the cognation percentage is above 80%, then the two compared lects should be regarded as belonging to the same language, while if the cognation percentage is below 80%, the two compared lects would be separate languages. Given the extent of the surveyed territory (the whole Solomon Islands state) and the number of communalects analysed, it is not surprising that some gaps appear in the data. In the case of the comparison between

¹⁰ In Cheke Holo, the word *mae* means 'man'/'human' and *pea* is the numeral for 'two'. The phrase *pea mae!* may be lexicalised as an exclamation expressing surprise. Similar constructions are found in other Isabel languages, such as, *palu mane!* in Kokota (Palmer 2009:91) or *phea mane!* in Blanga. Cf. also Pijin *oloketa!*, based on the 3rd plural pronoun.

¹¹ In each of the three regions people claim that their version of Blanga is the "pure", "authentic" one, while the others have "corrupted" the language.

Kilokaka and Blablanga, only 192 items were available in both lects. Moreover, they took the Kilokaka data from Napu (1953). While invaluable, Napu's data suffer from a few drawbacks: they were collected at the beginning of the 20th century, thus already outdated when used for lexicostatistics; the spelling conventions that Napu uses are quite misleading and not at all explained in the publication; the items in Napu's wordlist are glossed in Mota, the reader being referred to a different article (Towia and Riulera 1953) for the Mota-English translation.

Therefore, Tryon and Hackman (1983) treat Blanga and Kilokaka as separate languages based on 192 items, of which 151 are cognates and 41 non-cognates (a cognation percentage of 78.64%). By being able to add six more items and by showing that cognates can be found for 17 more items in their list, I have compared 198 items and found 168 cognates and only 30 non-cognates (a cognation percentage of 84.84%). A comparative table is shown in Appendix 2. Therefore, even the results of a lexicostatistic analysis indicate that Kilokaka and Blanga must be treated as varieties of the same language.

Having established that Kilokaka is a Blanga dialect (ii and iii above), that Mae is not a Blanga variety but rather a Cheke Holo one (i and ii above) and that Kilokaka, Biluro and northern Blanga are distinct varieties (i above and note 11), the picture that emerges is as follows. There are three distinct (but only slightly different) Blanga dialects: one on the northern coast of Santa Isabel, which can be called *Northern (N) Blanga* and whose main villages are Popoheo and Kolosori, and two on the southern coast of the island, *Southwestern (SW) Blanga*, spoken in and around the village of Kilokaka, and *Southeastern (SE) Blanga*, in the Biluro area. N Blanga can also be referred to as *Loghahaza Blanga*, after the name of the speakers' old settlement, nowadays uninhabited, on the northern slopes in the middle bush (1.1.5). In the same way, when necessary to distinguish it from other Blanga varieties, Kilokaka speakers sometimes refer to their dialect as *Zazao Blanga*, Zazao being their own old settlement on the southern slopes¹². Finally and mainly for consistency, one can refer to SE Blanga as *Biluro Blanga*¹³. My revised language map of the Blanga area is shown as Map 1.7.

Further subclassification has not been attempted yet. At this stage the impression is that SE Blanga and N Blanga are closer to each other than they are to SW Blanga, but it is very likely that convergence has occurred between the two southern varieties. This

¹² Some Zazao people may have established residence in Biluro. However, only Kilokaka is strongly associated with Zazao in the minds of the contemporary people 1.1.5.

¹³ The Biluro people do have an old settlement of their own in the middle bush, called Kukutiro 1.1.5. However, at this stage it is not very clear to me how comparable this is with Loghahaza or Zazao.

is, however, a matter to be addressed by future research. Mae is a Cheke Holo variety, which in the southeast stays at the edge of the Holo continuum, while in the northwest it represents an enclave in the Blanga-speaking territory, where convergence seems to be taken place between the two lects. The initial confusion between Mae and Blanga may be explained by mixed settlements in the past and present (1.1.5). As mentioned in the opening section of this chapter, the structures described and analysed in this thesis are from N Blanga and only sporadic mention will be made of the other two dialects, except for the discussions in this chapter.



Map 1-7: Revised map of the Blanga areas on the N and S coast. Zazao and Biluro represent different varieties and Blanga is not spoken in Susubona and Ghalata. N Blanga is represented by red dots, SW Blanga by orange and SE Blanga by blue. Red with black indicate mixed N Blanga and Mae, orange with blue mixed SW and SE Blanga, blue and black mixed SE Blanga and Mae and full black dots indicate Mae. The association of language names with different areas on the map is not to be taken as evidence of customary land ownership. ©Radu Voica, 2007-2017.

1.1.4 Demographic data and language profiles of the Blanga villages

The most recent population census in the Solomon Islands took place in 2009, and its results were published in 2011¹⁴. The results of the 1999 population census are also available¹⁵. Unfortunately, no statistics in those censuses are given for the first language of the interviewee. The term *language* occurs only in the subheading “language ability”, which is an indicator in relation with education and literacy, and only four possibilities are listed: “English”, “Pidgin”, “Local Language” and “Other Language”¹⁶. Moreover, statistics are offered per ward, not per village, and a ward often includes sections of different linguistic areas. For instance, the Blanga villages on the N Coast are part of the Hovukoilo Ward, which also includes Cheke Holo villages, while, on the S Coast, they belong to the Susubona Ward, together with villages of Hograno and Mae speakers (both Cheke Holo varieties).

Being aware of the shortcomings of the 1999 census and not expecting much from the 2009 one, I endeavoured to count the number of Blanga speakers myself, with the help of my consultants and other local people. This was done in two stages. In mid-1998, towards the end of my first field trip (1.3), I obtained the numbers of the N Blanga speakers assisted by members of the Popoheo Youth Organisation (for the Popoheo Village), Hedis Abira and Asma Maika (for Kolosori and its adjacent settlements) and the non-Blanga chief of Hovukoilo and Sogholona, Allen Sade, for his jurisdiction. During my second trip, in December 2009 (1.3), I calculated the numbers of speakers of SW and SE Blanga, with the help of Chief John Rocky (Kilokaka) and Chief John Probert (Biluro) together with some recent statistics made for or by the health centre in the area. Table 1-1 illustrates the approximate number of Blanga speakers per dialect and group of settlements, while Map 1-7 above identifies the main locations mentioned here.

N Blanga 500			SW Blanga 515			SE Blanga 135
Popoheo	Kolosori	Hovukoilo	Kilokaka	Galili	Hiroleghu	Biluro
Gozoruru	Kavaberi	Sogholona	Gazuhungari		Biraki	Hiroleghu
Dodova	Boinio		Gugugluro		Tavol	Tavol
	Holokama		Kotlomuro			
220	220	60	300	200	15	135

Table 1-1: The approximate number of Blanga speakers per dialect and group of settlements

¹⁴ <http://www.statistics.gov.sb/statistics/demographic-statistics/census>, last accessed 02/02/2017.

¹⁵ <https://dl.vecnet.org/files/4j03cz808>, last accessed 02/02/2017.

¹⁶ The question asked was “Can you read and write a simple sentence in one or more of the following languages: English, Pidgin, Local language, or Other language?”

It is worth stressing that the figures above refer only to Blanga speakers and repeating that in Hovukoilo and Sogholona they are a minority. Moreover, some non-Blanga speakers are, naturally, found in the formerly 'all-Blanga' villages, either as the outcome of recent intermarriages, or as migrants from other provinces, especially from the overpopulated Malaita. More rarely, people settle as individuals who have taken over a particular position in the village or larger area, such as priest, catechist, nurse, teacher, or coordinator of a government project, and may have also brought their families. In the following paragraphs, I shall discuss the villages or (groups of) settlements individually. The current contact situations described here need to be considered within the larger context offered by Sections 1.1.5 and 1.1.6, as they all establish a base for the discussion in 1.1.7; together they aim to present as accurately as possible the language ecology in the Blanga areas in 2009.

The village of Popoheo lies on the northern coast of Isabel Island, half way between Gozoruru Point to the NW and the mouth of the small Tihitubu River to the SE, and includes Ghighigrai, a later extension, separated from the rest of the village by a narrow strip of swampy land that could not be cleared. The total population of the village is about 300 inhabitants, of which approximately 220 are native speakers of Blanga¹⁷. The rest are represented by a small Malaitan community distributed across five or six households (mixed or compact), an extended family from Kia, occupying two or three households, a handful of people with mixed Bughotu ancestry, and the family of a man originally from the Polynesian outlier of Bellona who holds an administrative function with the nearby Gozoruru plantation and/or logging company and whose daughter is married to a Blanga speaker. In a narrow sense, the place name Gozoruru refers to a small point (cape) west of Popoheo. To my knowledge, only one family lives more or less permanently there and they are Blanga speakers. I have included them with the Popoheo population. In a broader sense, the name is applied to the coconut plantation that extends along the shore reaching approximately 2.5 miles west of the actual point and to the logging area behind it, which includes accommodation for seasonal workers who come from all over Isabel and other provinces, especially Malaita. Another small settlement in the area, Dodova, is inhabited by two or three generations of one single mixed family (Kia-Blanga)¹⁸. Immediately west of the Gozoruru Plantation, by the Garanga River and near the contact zone between Blanga

¹⁷ Including, more or less conventionally, all children of speaking age coming from mixed (Blanga-other) families. This convention has been adopted for all villages and settlements discussed here.

¹⁸ This is the family of the Laghu rememberer mentioned in 1.2 below.

and Kokota, is a relatively recently established vocational school, which attracts students and teachers from different parts of the country. Those are, however, not in direct contact with the Popoheo population.

The other main settlement of N. Blanga, Kolosori, is situated slightly inland, on the right bank of the Holokama River, neighbouring the Cheke Holo-speaking area. As in Popoheo, the native Blanga speakers, including those living in the small settlements of Holokama, Boinio and Kavaberi, amount to approximately 220 people and a small number of inhabitants come from Kia, Maringe and Malaita. The settlement of Holokama, situated at the mouth of the eponymous river, consists of two households, one Blanga and the other Kia. Boinio, on the left bank of the river is inhabited by three generations of a Blanga-speaking family, who also have a house close to Kavaberi, on top of the Guguha Hill. Kavaberi itself is a relatively new settlement established by a Kia settler and populated by a mix of Blanga, Kia, Gao and Maringe speakers. The contact situation in the Kolosori area is further complicated by the existence adjacent to the village of the Guguha Community School, including the accommodation facilities for its numerous population of students and teachers coming from different parts of the province, and the Guguha Distance Learning Centre, a larger initiative of the Central Government.

Hovukoilo, including its extension Sogholona, is a Mae village. Of the total of 400 inhabitants only 60 are Blanga speakers. Their presence there is explained in 1.1.5. A few speakers of other languages live there permanently but I do not have enough data to attest their presence.

Along the southern coast of the island, on a strip delimited approximately by Mufa (Mufu) Point to the east and Ghaghaolo Point to the west, lie the Zazao Blanga villages of Galili (Fizaghalia), with 200 speakers, and Kilokaka, which, together with the smaller settlements of Kotlomuro, Gugugluro and Gazuhungari houses 300 speakers. Gazuhungari, a logging settlement, is very close to the Kokota-speaking village of Hurepelo but somehow isolated by geographical features and not in direct contact with it. The school that serves the area is located in the village of Kilokaka and numerous teachers from different parts of the island or the country live there during term time.

The small village of Hiroleghu, in Sekoblahi Bay, east of Mufa Point, is inhabited by seven families and has a total population of approximately 40 people, of which two families are Zazao Blanga speakers, four families are Biluro Blanga speakers and one family non-Blanga (Mae) speakers. Two tiny settlements can also be found in the area:

Biraki, inhabited by one family from Kilokaka, and Taval, home to one mixed Kilokaka-Biluro family.

Finally, the village of Biluro, located farther east, at the mouth of the Kekeio River, has a total population of 250 people, of which only 100 are Blanga speakers (SE Blanga), the rest are Mae speakers. Immediately to the west, the village neighbours the Mae enclave of Matotoku, while to the east, across the Koradaho Bay, lies the Mae village of Susubona. On the other side of the bay, opposite Susubona, is the deserted Tuarughu, which used to be a compact SE Blanga village (1.1.5). The next section briefly describes the historical process that led to the current distribution of the Blanga people and language.

Outside the Blanga area, a few Blanga take up seasonal work in Buala, the provincial capital, or in different logging camps and plantations on the Island but tend to return to their villages during periods of unemployment. At the moment, there is no compact Blanga community in the national capital, Honiara, which can be regarded as the only urban centre in the country and has become a melting pot of ethnic groups and languages. A few permanent Honiara residents of Blanga origin exist but they constitute an individual, rather than mass, phenomenon. Very few older people had jobs in different provinces but came back after retirement. Several young people have gone or are going to Honiara, some for schooling but most for work, but they usually return after relatively short periods. At the moment, there is no significant risk of losing people to urbanisation and I cannot think of any area in the Solomons that can be properly characterised as urban, except for Honiara, and that only partially.

1.1.5 Old Blanga settlements and the arrival of Christianity

The events and facts described in this section and the next have been reconstructed based on consultants' reports, especially those recorded with Nason Haidu (009A051207, 012A051207, 018A101207, 039A160208, 041A160208), Cecil Rhodes Kusapa (050A240208, 052A240208), Johnson Bana (076A260308), Jacob Tarasa (127A160508, 128A160508), Kristin Tinoni (144A020608), Toni Samson Ura (156A040608), Asma Maika (162A100608, 163A100608, 164A100608, FN2:30-31), Frederik Kana (199A181109, 200A181109, 203A181109, 204A181109, 226A211109, 228A211109, 229A211109, 230A211109), Mark Legata (243A241109, FN2:33), Heleni Zalani (017AV110408, 032AV220408), John Rocky (243A241109, 325A101209, NB3:77, 80), Ezele Zaka (329A111209, 330A111209, 331A111209), Reginald Kaprumana, (336A111209, 337A111209), Nason Kongaghita (358A131209),

and John Probert (371A161209). Some of the information is supported or complemented by a few passages in Wilson (1935). For my labelling conventions and how the recordings and field notebooks can be accessed see the beginning of this introduction.

It has been mentioned earlier in this chapter that at the time when the first Europeans, first traders and then missionaries, made contact with the people of Isabel the latter inhabited mostly the mountainous inland, where they felt more protected against enemy raids. The island was constantly targeted by head-hunting parties coming from New Georgia and Roviana. In the absence of those, the inhabitants of Santa Isabel, who nowadays have a reputation for being among the most peaceful and hospitable in the Solomon Islands, did not hesitate to organise smaller or larger-scale expeditions against each other. Naturally fortified settlements in the high hills were relatively safe, but dwelling there came at a price, since food was scarce and the narrow ridges inadequate for proper habitation. The memories of such places are rapidly fading and many of the consultants who still remember them seem to be reluctant to disclose much information, either because they are embarrassed by the association of their ancestral dwellings with a violent past, or because they feel that they should not share such information with outsiders. My long stay in the area and the strong relationships I have established with some consultants helped me gain access to some relevant historical data and I have even visited two of their old settlements, Tirokana and Loghahaza. However, the picture summarised below cannot be considered exact and complete at this stage. Moreover, different facts related to ancestral territories and lineages are frequently interpreted subjectively by different story tellers, according to their taking different views on and various sides in the local land disputes. I have, thus, tried my best to refrain from inserting any commentary, either my own or belonging to the consultants, that can lead to speculations about customary land ownership¹⁹.

During the head-hunting era, the Blanga people seem to have settled around and above the springs of two water courses, Garanga and Patunitu, on several narrow ridges radiating north and south of the highest summit or summit plateau in the area. The summit, slightly above 1000 meters is not named but clearly identified by contour lines on recent 1:15000 maps of Santa Isabel, which also indicate an altitude of between 900 and 1000 meters for the multiple sources of the mentioned rivers. Toponyms such as

¹⁹ Land ownership and tenure is currently one of the most complex and dividing issues in the Solomon Islands, fuelled by the interventions of foreign logging and telecommunications companies, and dealing with it is far beyond the purpose of this thesis. Suffice to say that many cases that end up in the High Court in Honiara are based on narratives about the origins of clans, lineages and ancestral territories.

Riria, Dume and Sufisihei are associated by consultants with their high altitude dwellings, but not present on any maps that I know of.

From there, the ancestors of the Loghahaza Blanga people, descending to the north, established a settlement at Tirokana, a small plateau at an elevation of slightly above 500 meters²⁰, which I had the chance to visit in December 2009 and where no traces of previous habitation are visible nowadays. From Tirokana, they could control, more or less efficiently, numerous slopes between the valleys of Garanga to the west and Holokama to the east and were able to send their scouts and, more rarely, fishing parties all the way down to the sea shores in the area of nowadays Popoheo.

Thus, having their permanent base at Tirokana, the N Blanga people also used lower locations, either as advanced observation points, or for temporary shelter during wild yam gathering or opossum hunting trips, or for ritual practice. Among those, of great significance is Loghahaza, situated on a hill shoulder in the middle bush at an altitude of approximately 130 meters²¹ and dominating the lower lands and marshes of Hovukoilo-Sogholona and the seashore between Popoheo and Gozoruru. Loghahaza had been designated by the Tirokana people as a burial ground for themselves as well as for the enemies killed by them in battle or ritually beheaded afterwards.

I visited Loghahaza on two occasions, in June 2008 and December 2009, during my first and second field trip, and the marks of the pre-Christian graves are still visible in the cemetery. The Blanga people used to bury their dead vertically, leaving the head above the ground. The head, connected to the body or not, was then covered by a pyramid of stones, left to rot and dry and later removed. Numerous skulls used to adorn Blanga houses, those of enemies being kept as trophies and those of relatives probably as memorials. The practice was stopped quite abruptly after conversion to Christianity and ornamental skulls have been disposed off without trace.

But Loghahaza is mostly connected with the conversion of the N Blanga people to Christianity. After a failed attempt by the Marist Catholic Bishop, Jean-Baptiste Epalle, in Bughotu in 1845, the first steps towards the establishment of a Christian mission on Santa Isabel were taken in 1861, when John Coleridge Patteson²², the first Bishop of the Anglican Church of Melanesia (1861-1871) and a skilled missionary-linguist, visited the same area and persuaded Chief Bera to allow him to take a few young men along to

²⁰ The elevation was read by myself on a Garmin eTrex H GPS navigator, which gives very reliable latitude and longitude readings but, unfortunately, when it comes to altitude, allows a considerable error margin of ± 10 meters, according to my tests at sea level.

²¹ See note 20 above.

²² John Coleridge Patteson's mother was the niece of the Lake Poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

train as missionaries in New Zealand and on Norfolk Island. Five years later, in 1874, a converted Loyalty Islander by the name of Wadrokal, who represented the same Melanesian Mission, founded a school at Nuro, also in Bughotu. Apparently, Chief Bera had mixed feelings about the missionaries' activities and could not stand Wadrokal as a person, but was cautious enough, just in case the Christian God was as mighty as they said, to forbid human sacrifice rituals "at his own death" (Wilson 1935:7), which happened in 1883, during a period when the office of Bishop of Melanesia was held by John Selwyn (1877-1892). Bera's son and successor, Chief Soga, gradually converted and was finally baptised in 1889, together with his wife and 170 other Bughotu people. The actual triumph of Anglican Christianity on Santa Isabel is due to the activity of Dr. Henry Welchman, an English physician and Anglican priest who first stepped on the island in 1890, and the Bughotu people who trained as missionaries in New Zealand and Norfolk Island, together with other locals trained by them.

Among the Bughotu missionaries, Joseph Bengere and Fr. Hugo Hebala prepared the ground for the conversion of the N Blanga people. During their attempt to spread the Gospel, missionaries on Santa Isabel also tried to persuade people to leave their settlements in the highlands and move to more accessible ones. A first encounter between the Bughotu missionaries and a N Blanga delegation led by a chief called Tobo took place in the area of nowadays Popoheo, which was not inhabited at the time. Not much was achieved there and, feeling uncomfortable on the exposed shores, Chief Tobo insisted that the missionaries should visit the highland settlements for any further talks. A compromise was achieved and Loghahaza was named as the place for further missionary visits. The exact date of this encounter is not known and it is not clear if, at that moment, Loghahaza was still just a burial ground or if people had already started to establish a more permanent settlement there. What is certain is that Dr. Welchman, ordained a priest in 1893, first reached Loghahaza in 1906 and "baptised forty men and forty-nine women and twelve children, 101 in all" (Wilson 1935:84). Eventually, all the N Blanga people deserted Tirokana and moved to Loghahaza, where they built their first church²³, set up a Christian cemetery immediately next to the previous one and established their first school, right opposite the church. The closest neighbours of the N Blanga people were Mae speakers living in the areas or settlements of Susulu and Kukuduro, who were being converted at the same time. Some accounts suggest that

²³ What makes the Loghahaza church quite a unique building in the area is that the choice of material for its walls was stone, most probably as a statement of durability. In the absence of any quarries, coral rock was extracted from the reefs in the Maringe Lagoon. The whole population participated and it is claimed that the rock was passed along a human chain that stretched from the seaside all the way to Loghahaza.

these Mae people, or at least some of them, also moved to Loghahaza but other versions seem to contradict such statements. In any case, it is very likely that they had access to the Loghahaza church and school.

While Loghahaza was much more accessible than Tirokana, reaching it still meant putting up with a relatively long and sinuous way but the inhabitants were reluctant to establish a permanent settlement in the lowlands. That eventually happened but much later, following the occurrence of numerous sudden deaths over a short period of time due to what seems to have been an outbreak of malaria or dengue fever. 'Unexplained' deceases, including those caused by illness, were believed to be the result of black magic performed by enemies.²⁴ Given the number of fatalities, whoever cast the curse must have used quite strong black magic and between 1962 and 1964 the entire Loghahaza population together with the Mae speakers of Susulu and Kukuduro descended to Hovukoilo to build a new church and live there as one community.

This well-intended but artificial spirit of unity, much encouraged by the Church, did not last long. Despite generally being in friendly terms, some frictions must have existed between the Loghahaza and Mae people and they split in 1966, when the former established their own settlement and church at Popoheo under Chief Harrison Kokoru. In 1984, almost half of the Popoheo population left the village and set up a new settlement at Kolosori. This last major movement within N Blanga may have been caused, as some reports suggest, by a certain amount of tension between different extended families. However, its main trigger was most probably a destructive hurricane that had recently affected the Santa Isabel shores. During the same period or even slightly earlier, a few Popoheo inhabitants moved back to Hovukoilo and its extension Sogholona. Most of the Blanga speakers who nowadays live in Hovukoilo-Sogholona have intermarried with Mae speakers or are the offspring of such mixed marriages. Among the tiny settlements mentioned in the previous section, those at Gojoruru, Boinio and Dodova were subsequently established by former Popoheo residents, the last one as a mixed Blanga-Kia household. The Blanga family living at Holokama come from Kolosori.

The ancestors of the SW and SE Blanga people followed similar routes along the southern slopes of the island. Their movements are, however, less documented at this stage and I did not have the opportunity to visit any of their old settlements. The highest of these, probably comparable with what Tirokana was in the N Blanga area, was a

²⁴ Such beliefs still persist nowadays among the population of Santa Isabel.

place called Sife. Two main settlements are mentioned in the middle bush: Zazao, the ancestral village of the SW Blanga speakers, living nowadays in and around Kilokaka, and Kukutiro, the homeland of the SE Blanga speakers, who live today in Biluro. It is reported that a minority of the Zazao inhabitants also descended straight to Biluro. Another settlement established by the Kukutiro people was at Tuarughu, in Korodaho Bay, opposite Susubona. This was deserted after the 1984 hurricane and all its inhabitants moved to Biluro, except for a woman who married a Susubona man and joined him in his village. The couple, both alive but very old in 2009, still kept a shed and a garden at Tuarughu but, otherwise, the place is uninhabited today. Like those on the northern slopes, the Blanga settlements on the southern slopes of the island also neighboured Mae settlements, which bore names such as Kologhodu, Ghonai and Hirobuka. From there, they populated Susubona, Ghalata and, probably later, Matotoku, but also most of Biluro.

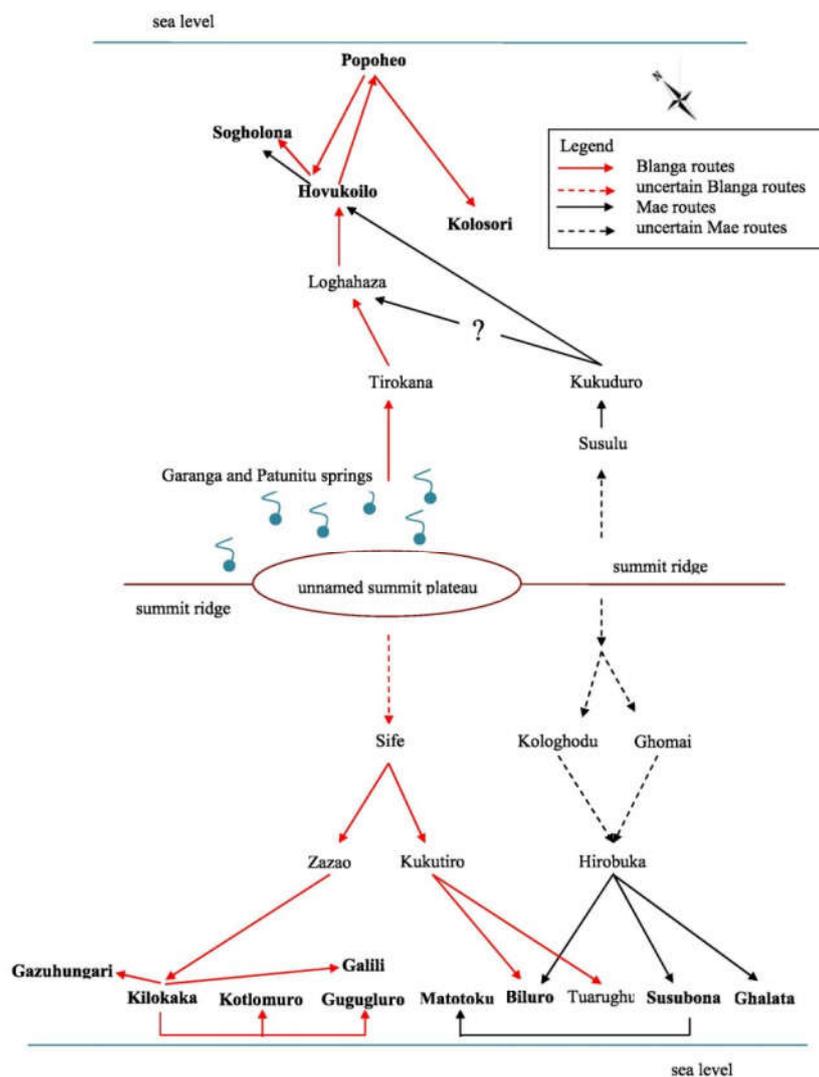


Figure 1-6: The movements of the Blanga and Mae people. The diagram is unscaled.

The conversion to Christianity of the Zazao and Kukutiro people is to a great extent related to the activity of Ben Napu, a local catechist. The movements of the Blanga and Mae people are schematically represented in the unscaled diagram in Figure 1-6 above.

1.1.6 Lineages and totems of the Blanga people

All Blanga people belong to one of two matrilineal²⁵ and exogamous lineages, which trace their ancestry to two respective totems, *Posamogho* ‘green parrot’ and *Khome* ‘crocodile’. The actual name for ‘crocodile’ is *nasava* and the common noun *khome* actually designates a sea shell species, but legend has it that the ancestral *khome* shell had been swallowed by a crocodile, who subsequently regurgitated it, therefore the *Khome* line descends directly from *Nasava*. Consequently, they extend totemic taboos to crocodiles, such as the prohibition to kill and eat members of the tutelary species²⁶, and take significant pride in associating themselves with such a prestigious ancestor²⁷. The relationship between the Blanga people and crocodiles seems to go beyond lineage appurtenance. In the Blanga oral tradition, a giant mythical crocodile features as guardian and protector of all Blanga people, both *Khome* and *Posamogho*, and of their land. In the Loghahaza Blanga version, he dwells in the waters of Garanga and, having grown as long and wide as the river, is completely identified with it. In the Zazao Blanga version, the crocodile hides in a deep pool of water in the heavily forested hills that dominate the village of Kilokaka.

The origins of the *Posamogho* lineage are traditionally associated with the settlement of Dume and those of the *Khome* lineage with that of Sufisihei, both on or by a high altitude plateau, from where they descended on the northern and southern slopes of the island to meet at Tirokana and Sife respectively (1.1.5), where intermarriage started. The two-totem system seems to have been ideal as long as they lived in isolation but complications later arose with new influxes of population. Rather than allowing the penetration of new totems, the Blanga people solve the issue by assigning one of their two totems to the newcomers. The best documented infiltration of non-Tirokana population took place as a result of the mass conversions at Loghahaza (1.1.5). Having

²⁵ Land is also controlled matrilineally in the Blanga area as, apparently, in all other parts of Isabel Island. Otherwise, in the daily life, the father is considered to be the head of the family.

²⁶ A *Khome* man from Popoheo, whose name I shall not mention here due to the possibly sensitive content of the story, told me that he had once chased and killed, but not eaten, a crocodile in retaliation for the latter having killed and eaten his pigs. He felt that was acceptable because it was the crocodile who broke the rules first and not his human relative, and therefore the crocodile had to be punished, a reminder that one cannot choose one’s family and that the end justifies more than the means.

²⁷ The only species of crocodile found in the Solomon Islands, the saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*), is also the largest in the world and the most aggressive to humans.

accepted Christianity, the Loghahaza people needed experienced teachers and catechists and asked some of the Bughotu missionaries to remain in the village and guide their new spiritual life. Those who stayed were a woman and her family and, although their original totem was Eagle (Bughotu *Manu Hutu*; Blanga *Memeha Dou*, lit. 'big bird'), they were assigned to the Blanga totem and lineage of *Posamogho*. Their descendents from intermarriages with the Loghahaza people live today in Kolosori and are native speakers of Blanga.

A different influx of population is that of a less compact group of people, originally from Kia, whose descendents can also be found in and around Kolosori and are also native Blanga speakers. Their original totem was *Kusa* 'barracuda' and they were also assigned to *Posamogho*. The accounts of their arrival and integration are very speculative and often contradictory. The only clear thing at this stage is that they should be distinguished from other Kia migrants, more recently arrived and who do not speak Blanga. Interestingly, both the descendents of the Bughotu missionaries and those of the earlier Kia migrants still acknowledge their original totems, while using the assigned Blanga ones mostly for marriage purposes.

Recently, marriages outside the Blanga community have become more frequent but these are individual rather than group phenomena. The non-Blanga spouse who comes to live within the Blanga community is assigned to the totem that is not that of the Blanga spouse.

1.1.7 Degree of endangerment

As a general pattern, the languages of Melanesia are subject to a double threat, that of the local Pidgin, which is rapidly spreading through mass media and education and as lingua-franca, and that of a more vigorous neighbouring language, usually functioning as trade language in a particular region. In the case of Blanga, these are Pijin and Cheke Holo. Pijin, the Solomons variety of Melanesian Pidgin (Tryon and Charpentier 2004:40-41 and *passim*; Keesing 1988), is the *lingua franca* of the country, widely used in education and for religious purposes. However, Blanga speakers seem to be gradually shifting not to Pijin, but to another indigenous language, Cheke Holo, the major trade language of Santa Isabel, in which the majority of Blanga speakers are bilingual. They use it for communication with neighbouring communities in most spheres of activity. It is reported that speakers of different languages of Isabel are of the opinion that in the future everybody on the island will speak Cheke Holo (Palmer 1999a:2). Such reports seem exaggerated as there are at least two other vigorous

languages on the island: (1) Zabana, which has expanded from the west and eliminated Laghu, and (2) Bughotu, which still enjoys significant cultural prestige as the language of the first Christian missionaries and Bible translations.

Blanga appears to be in a more fragile position. Although the language is still transmitted from parents to children, the threats that it faces are numerous and complex and shifting tendencies are obvious. Both general and village-specific factors need to be considered in order to give a full account of its degree of endangerment.

Solomon Islanders are Christians belonging to the Anglican Church of Melanesia (1.1.5) and the religious services that I attended in the Blanga-speaking villages were done in a mixture of Cheke Holo, Pijin and English, reflecting the availability (or lack of it) of translations of the different texts used. A Blanga translation of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, which is the first ever publication in the language, was launched in December 2009 and must now be used along with the English version.

The Solomon Islands Constitution makes no mention of a national language. English is officially used in administration and, allegedly, in education, where, with some exceptions, it is heavily mixed with Pijin. Blanga is seldom used in writing by its speakers who, when they do write it, tend to use the alphabet devised for Cheke Holo. Prior to this documentation, there have been no attempts to establish a standard orthography for Blanga (1.4). The proportion of literate Blanga speakers is not known. It is true that the 2009 census (1.1.4) includes an indicator of basic literacy (defined as the ability to “read and write a simple sentence”) but the census data are useless for our purposes for reasons explained in the first paragraph of Section 1.1.4. Many people, especially younger ones, do have basic literacy skills in Pijin, Cheke Holo or, to some extent, English. Some older and/or more senior members of the community, among them mainly current or former employees of the provincial or, less frequently, central government, speak English fluently and have very good writing skills. The same can be said about several younger people who have finished or almost finished secondary education. The problem is not lack of ability but lack of necessity. Reading and writing in English and Pijin is necessary in school and some forms of employment, reading in Cheke Holo is necessary in church, but the necessity of reading and writing in Blanga seldom occurs. Perhaps with the recent introduction of modern technology, especially mobile telephony, people will have a reason to use their language in writing, at least to send text messages to each other.

In addition to general factors, each variety of Blanga and almost each village where the language is spoken faces particular situations that may affect its status. Some

area and village-specific data presented in Section 1.1.4 are summarised here. SE Blanga is only spoken as a minority lect in Biluro, where the majority of people are Mae speakers, and converges with SW Blanga at Hiroleghu and Taval. The compact SW Blanga villages trade constantly with their Mae and Hograno neighbours, and the presence and importance of the school at Kilokaka means daily interaction, in Pijin or Cheke Holo, with a large group of teachers and school employees from all over the country. In the logging area around Gazuhungari, the Zazao Blanga people also interact regularly with Kokota speakers and with migrant workers from other areas and provinces. On the northern coast, Hovukoilo and Sogholona are Mae villages with only a minority of Blanga speakers, most of whom are members of mixed families. The only compact Blanga villages on this side of the island are Kolosori and Popoheo. Kolosori, however, is also an area of strong contact and multilingualism due to the presence adjacent to the village of the Guguha Community School, which attracts students and teachers from different parts of Santa Isabel and even from other Solomon Island provinces. In addition, the Guguha Distance Learning Centre, equipped with Internet access, provides an opening towards more distant communities. Popoheo is only a one-hour walk away from Kolosori, where its children attend school. Most Blanga children learn the language from their parents and its only institutionalised use is in the village kindergarten, mixed with Pijin and Cheke Holo to facilitate comprehension by the odd non-Blanga-speaking children. Otherwise, Blanga is not used in any form of primary or secondary education. Other multilingual settings are the Gozoruru plantation and logging area and the vocational school at Garanga.

Therefore, the status of Blanga is that of an oral language restricted to communication at village level. Its speakers, of course, no longer live isolated in their villages but interact on a daily basis with the larger and multilingual Isabel community and often with people from other provinces. They use Cheke Holo when they go to the market, post office or hospital in Buala or in general to communicate with other people of Isabel, including public servants employed by the local government, and employ Pijin for exchanges during their trips outside the island or with residents of non-Isabel origin. Strong Cheke Holo influences are reflected in phonology and vocabulary. Pijin influences are also present. They also affect the phonology and vocabulary but are more general in the sense that they are also present in other languages of the Solomons.

1.2 Previous research on Isabel languages

Some data on Blanga, and Kilokaka as a separate language, were published as part of Tryon & Hackman's (1983) sound correspondences analysis of 111 communalects in the Solomons, accompanied by a 324 item comparative wordlist. The study is a survey of the languages spoken at that time within the borders of the Solomon Islands state and does not treat Blanga in particular. Although outdated and containing some misleading information, it is still an important source for the languages of the Solomons. The internal classification that it proposes, based mainly on phonological data, as well as the suggested relationships between the Solomons languages and their neighbours have been widely accepted and constituted the base for the establishment of the Northwest Solomonic (Ross 1986) and Western Oceanic (Ross 1988) subgroups. Tryon & Hackman's analysis also supported with further evidence the establishment by Pawley (1972:98-110) of the Southeast Solomonic group. However, the language-dialect distinction is based on lexicostatistics, and in some cases proves to be unreliable.

Not much else has been published, except for a two-page grammatical sketch of Zazao (Kilokaka) (Ray 1926: 532-534), which is mainly concerned with the morphology of the communalect. The same work includes similar brief sketches of "the bush language of Ysabel" (Cheke Holo, 529-532) and Kia (Zabana, 534-538) as well as an overview of Isabel languages (525-529). The Zabana sketch is based on Edmund Bourne's unpublished field notes, while the source used for the description of Kilokaka is a vocabulary collected at the beginning of the 20th century and later published by Napu (1953). This vocabulary consists of 418 words and 48 phrases with Mota equivalents. The English translations of the Mota words can be found in a different article in the same volume (Towia and Riulera 1953).

The regional varieties of Blanga and its relationships with Kilokaka are discussed by Palmer (1999a:9-10) where he revises the standard language map of Santa Isabel (1.1.3). I am not aware of any unpublished Blanga data, except for my own, and, to my knowledge, audio or video recordings did not exist prior to my documentation project.

The only Central-Eastern Isabel language for which a comprehensive reference grammar (Palmer 1999a, 2009) has been produced is Kokota. Based on intensive fieldwork, the cited works analyse in detail stress assignment in the language and Kokota morphosyntax. A lengthy grammatical sketch (Palmer 2002), an online dictionary (Palmer 2004), and articles on the phonemic status of Kokota voiceless sonorants (Palmer 1999b) and stress assignment variation (Palmer 2003b) are also

available. Palmer has also presented on various aspects of Kokota at conferences over the years.

Cheke Holo is described by White (1995), in an article that summarises an ampler grammatical sketch published as an introduction to a substantial dictionary of the language (White, Kokhonigita and Pulomana 1988). The dictionary also includes an overview of Santa Isabel languages, a brief discussion of the orthographic systems and a semantic index. Topicalisation and focusing strategies in Cheke Holo are discussed in relation to clause order in an article by Palmer (2003a). Other published materials include articles on syllable structure and reduplication (Blevins 2003), orthography (Boswell 2001), and speech genres (Boswell 2002). The most detailed description of Cheke Holo is Boswell's (forthcoming) PhD thesis.

The first description of an Isabel language consists of a five-page grammatical sketch of Gao published by Codrington (1885: 555-559) but except for wordlists and mentions in more general or comparative studies, nothing else has been published to my knowledge. Even more dramatic is the case of the extinct Laghu, whose speakers have gradually switched to Zabana (Kia). Some unpublished field notes exist, consisting of data collected by Jacques Guy in 1977 from the last three speakers, already very old at that time and not completely reliable. In 1998, while collecting Blanga data in the field (1.3), I met Hudson Kiko Haza, originally of Kolopakisa in the Kia region but now living in the small settlement of Dodova in the N Blanga area, a Zabana native speaker, who was descended on his father's side from some of the last Laghu speakers of Somasodu and Baolo. He and his paternal cousin Zozes Haidu Piritetu of Somasodu, both remembers rather than fluent speakers of Laghu, compiled for me a Kia-Laghu-English list of 305 words grouped, at their own initiative, into semantic domains and including, among others, body parts, kinship terms, geographical names, tools and weapons, celestial bodies, locative terms, fauna, pronouns, demonstratives and frequent verbs. The list also included eight short sentences. Kiko was 68 at the time, while the slightly younger Zozes was ill in the Buala Hospital. I then sat with Kiko and glossed the list in English. In 1999 I recorded the list with Kiko. Zozes had passed away in the meantime. The Laghu data I obtained from Kiko and Zozes will be archived with ELDP, at SOAS, University of London and PARADISEC, University of Sydney, in the near future. According to Kiko, one of his nephews, a teacher called William Gigini, has also compiled a list of Laghu words and phrases, which may still be in the possession of William's brother Reuben Koete of Tataba.

Zabana is described in a reference grammar produced as an MA thesis (Fitzsimons 1989) and preceded by a dictionary (Ama and Fitzsimons 1985) that includes a short grammatical sketch focused on the morphology of the language.

Different materials exist for many other Northwest Solomonic languages, ranging from unpublished field notes to articles on particular aspects, grammars, and dictionaries. A complete bibliography was compiled by Palmer (2005).

In addition to Tryon & Hackman (1983), mentioned above, two major comparative studies relevant for the classification of the Isabel languages are referred to in this chapter. Analysing the relationships between the Austronesian languages of the western Solomons and those of Bougainville and its smaller neighbouring islands, Ross (1986) establishes the Northwest Solomonic grouping. In a subsequent study (Ross 1988), an investigation of phonological, lexical and morphosyntactic innovations in Northwest Solomonic and innovations shared with other linkages led to the establishment of the higher order Meso-Melanesian and Western Oceanic groupings.

1.3 The documentation

This thesis represents one of the products of the project *Documentation of Blablanga, Solomon Islands*, founded by the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP) grants IGS0048 and IGS0048-supplement and covering thirty-six months, of which twelve were shared between two fieldtrips. The first trip lasted for nine months between 6th October 2007 and 30th June 2008 and was followed by a second three-month trip that took place between 5th October and 24th December 2009.

Triggered by an early interest in Austronesian, and especially Oceanic, the choice of language took into account different factors. It was my first project of the kind and, though thoroughly trained, I was lacking firsthand experience in the field. It seemed responsible and realistic to choose a language that, although endangered, appeared to have considerable potential for a comprehensive documentation. With the minor exceptions mentioned in Section 1.2, Blanga was previously undocumented and undescribed but useful materials existed for some other Northwest Solomonic languages, including the neighbouring and closely related Kokota and Cheke Holo (1.2). Blanga itself was expected to reveal interesting typological features and I intended to focus on aspects less described in the Oceanic literature. Due to the location and distribution of N Blanga (1.1.3, 1.1.4), which is the variety described in this thesis, the language and its speakers were very accessible and my main field area, Popoheo-Kolosori, was only 40 minute by engine boat to Buala, the provincial capital, where

basic facilities, such as electricity, running water, post office with Internet access, bank agent, local shops, and a hospital were available. I also benefited from the presence of the headquarters of the Anglican Diocese of Ysabel at Jejevo, next to Buala, and enjoyed the hospitality and love of the clerics and the laic members of the Jejevo Parish when rest was needed or during periods of illness.

During my first trip, I made my base in Popoheo, while during the second one I chose to stay at Kavaberi, a less noisy area close to Kolosori. Popoheo was initially preferred due to its more linguistically compact nature. Kolosori did not seem a good choice because of the multilingual community of the Guguha School (1.1.4, 1.1.7). In both locations I had to deal with the lack of electricity, running water and proper sanitation. In Popoheo, I lived in the first row of houses by the beach, where, for some reason, mosquitoes did not venture, although they abounded a bit further inland, especially from the third row of houses towards the bush. In compensation, I was bitten by all sorts of other insects, the worst of which were the sand flies, which thrived on the beach, and the flees, carried and generously shared by my roommate, a cat-size rat. At Kavaberi, on the other hand, I was regarded as a constant supply of food by the local mosquitoes and by a species of almost invisible red ants dwelling on the house posts, which were also present on every tree and branch in the bush all the way to Tirokana and Loghahaza.

Of the difficulties encountered during this project far more serious were those of a bureaucratic and financial nature. The bureaucracy involved in obtaining research and residence permits in the Solomon Islands prevented me from starting work immediately during my first fieldtrip, when I had to wait almost two months until they were issued. I spent those two months learning Pijin and making initial contacts with the community. For the second trip, I only had to wait two weeks in Honiara, the Solomons capital, since now I had the right contacts (who were able to submit my application and documents before I arrived in the country) and the experience to deal with the authorities. Financial difficulties also occurred during my first trip and conflicted with my budget. Due to the recession, food prices had risen by about 20%, while petrol prices had risen by up to 50%. Over a longer period, the inflation rate had increased from 6.6% (2005 estimates) to 20% (2009 estimates). Other problems included equipment failure, especially that of the solar panel in February 2008, during my first trip, after which I had to take my battery to Buala approximately two times a week in order to recharge it.

During the two fieldtrips a substantial corpus was created. The recordings made in the field amount to approximately 80 hours of unedited audio and 30 hours of unedited video. The corpus includes a balanced proportion of elicited data, grammaticality judgements, dialogues, conversation, narrative, hortatory, procedural, expository, and descriptive texts, tokens for phonetic analysis as well as ethnographic, sociological and cultural information, customs, rituals, songs, and dances. In addition to recordings, the collection includes scanned copies of written agreements, digital photographs of consultants and locations, digital copies of elicitation materials created in the field, scanned copies of Blanga hand-written materials, and Toolbox and ELAN files.

The materials, together with consistent metadata, are being archived with the Endangered Language Archive (ELAR) at SOAS, University of London. Some of them are already accessible by searching 'Blablanga' on the ELAR website²⁸. In June 2008, on my way back from the first trip, I deposited an initial set of audio recordings, approximately 30 hours, with the Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures (PARADISEC) at the University of Sydney. They are accessible via the PARADISEC catalogue.²⁹

My consultants, including men and women of different age groups and a small number of children, are mentioned in the acknowledgements section of this thesis and in Appendix 1. They represent all the Blablanga inhabited areas of Santa Isabel Island. During my first trip, recordings were made in the four Blablanga villages on the northern coast of the island. The funding granted for my second trip enabled me to continue documenting Northern Blanga, but also to travel to the southern coast and collect data on the two varieties spoken there (1.1.3, 1.1.4). I also had the opportunity to visit and take GPS readings in most of the Blanga villages, settlements and landmarks as well as places no longer inhabited. On the northern coast, I visited Loghahaza, the last Blablanga settlement in the middle bush and a series of former worship places and settlements, culminating with Tirokana, their initial hidden village at about 500 m altitude in the heavily forested highlands (1.1.5). According to my guides, I am the second non-Melanesian to have visited Loghahaza (after the missionary Dr Henry Welchman) and the first to have been shown Tirokana. On the southern coast, I have updated the Blablanga map by taking GPS readings in more recently established settlements.

²⁸ <https://elar.soas.ac.uk>

²⁹ <http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/collections/RV1>

With the help of some young Popoheo consultants, a census was carried out in April-June 2008 in order to determine the number of Blanga speakers on the northern coast of Santa Isabel. This was supplemented with data about the southern coast villages provided by local chiefs (1.1.4).

My collaboration with the community members was very good and their assistance ranged from discussing orthography standardization and helping with transcription, usually following a long recording session, to technology training and manipulating equipment. Of my two young trainees, Edwin Haidu Hoboro and Wilfred Hughu, the latter proved to be very interested until the end and helped a lot with handling the equipment and different general tasks. During my second trip, Wilfred worked even harder and replaced chief Nason as my main consultant.

The project and its outcomes are expected to have an important overall impact through the linguistic, cultural and sociological data they provide. But this project has also been a means of empowering the local community. Not only did it raise speakers' awareness of the importance of their language, but the presence of the linguist in the community has brought a certain prestige upon the, otherwise small, Blanga language and its speakers. At a more official level, the fact that the language has been considered worth-studying by someone from abroad, has increased the already existent interest of the Anglican Diocese of Ysabel in publishing religious materials in Blanga and eventually the Diocese funded the publication (in my absence) of a partial translation of the Anglican Prayer Book. What is most important about this translation is that it has been done exclusively by members of the local community. The book was launched in December 2009 and, although full of inconsistencies and misuses, it represents the first publication in the language. I have been asked to take part in the revision of the translation, which will possibly lead to the publication of a second edition. Last but not least, the impact of the project on the community was of a financial nature: an important percent of the grant money has been passed to the community as consultant salaries and gifts, village tokens, rent for accommodation, boat hire from members of the community, and equipment left behind.

In addition, the outcomes of the project also include the initiation of a trilingual dictionary (Blanga-Pijin-English), while a significant amount of effort has been put in agreeing on a standardised spelling for the language (but see 1.1.5). In preparation are also literacy materials, consisting of a collection of folkloric and mythological texts, poems, songs, and riddles transcribed exactly as spoken by different Blanga men and women. When printed, the copies will be distributed free to the community. Further

work and dissemination will follow on from this project, with more literacy and language maintenance materials being produced, which may include the first Blanga Primer. After archiving, selected materials (especially those that do not regard private or disputable matters) will be converted into mp3 and DVD formats respectively and distributed to the consultants. I have also planned to create a website dedicated to Blanga (or, in collaboration, to the languages of St Isabel), which will include links to the deposited materials.

1.4 Blanga orthography

The data collected prior to this documentation were written down according to different transcription conventions. Tryon and Hackman (1983) use an IPA-based system throughout their survey of Solomons languages, while Napu's (1953) transcription of Zazao Blanga (Kilokaka) words and phrases is rather odd and confusing (1.2). The latter list was compiled by request and it is not known if Napu intended to perpetuate his transcription system as a possible orthography for his language or only thought of it as a one-off ad-hoc convention for that particular purpose. In any case, the latter supposition seems more likely, since none of the other few and almost exclusively handwritten writing samples I have seen uses Napu's system. Moreover, literate Kilokaka consultants faced with Napu's list could not read it and believed it was written in a different language until I read the words aloud for them.

It is, therefore, most probable that until the beginning of the documentation project on which this description is based, there had been no attempts to create a standardised writing system for Blanga and outsiders were not even sure if its speakers had ever used it in writing. However, writing has been known by the Blanga people for some time, despite the relatively small number of literate people³⁰, and I have seen mostly short letters, notes, or lists of items written in Blanga but also three longer copies of an attempted local translation of the Anglican Prayer Book and Hymnal, two of them

³⁰ In agreement with the authors of the report on the 2009 census, *literacy* is regarded here as “a basic skill of reading and writing, and not a more fluent literacy”, in “English, Pidgin, Local language, or Other language” (see also 1.1.4 and note 17). One would expect the literacy rate to be currently increasing among those younger Blanga speakers who attend school more or less regularly. Unfortunately, it is difficult to tell how many of those are actually doing so and the report on Isabel Island finds it “somewhat surprising that the literacy rate of the 10-14 year old school age population was relatively low”, the highest being that of the 25-39-year-old group. On the other hand, the reported rates, 89% and respectively 90%, are too high to be credible, as in a way admitted by the authors, who cautiously state that “the obtained measure refers to self-reported literacy, which is likely to be biased as some illiterate people may be embarrassed to admit that they cannot read and write”. In any case, what may be surprising is not the negligible 1% difference between the two groups but the fact itself that the difference is not much bigger. The report also states that “from the age of 40 literacy rates gradually declined with increasing age of the population”, which is expected but I am aware of quite a few exceptions, most of them above the age of 60.

being manuscripts and one typed on an old type-writer. Quite recently (December 2009), a partial translation, apparently by a different author, was launched as the first ever published document in Blanga.

If we ignore for a moment this publication, which will be mentioned again below, there are two main spellings currently used to write Blanga. One is the ‘traditional’ one, no matter how short this tradition may be, and is actually the standard Cheke Holo orthography, used in the Cheke Holo New Testament among other works. In this system,³¹ most letters have the value of their IPA counterparts, with some notable exceptions. Vowels are represented by the letters *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, as expected. The labial glide in Pijin loanwords is usually spelt as *w* but sometimes also as *u*. The vowel eligible for surface labial glide formation is always spelt *u* and not *w*.

Within the consonant class, the problematic ones are /g/, /z/, /ɣ/, /ŋ/, and the /h/ + sonorant clusters. The letter *g* is used for the voiced velar fricative, while the voiced velar plosive is symbolised by the same letter with a macron, *ḡ*. This is quite confusing for outsiders, but doesn’t seem to be a problem for the people of Isabel, who have been using the system for many decades now. The macron is also used in the spelling of the velar nasal, which is symbolised *n̄* as opposed to the symbol for the alveolar nasal, *n*.

The younger generation of Blanga speakers have the affricate /dʒ/ where the older generation have the fricative /z/. In Cheke Holo, /dʒ/ is general and written by means of the letter *j*. Cheke Holo does not have a voiced velar fricative phoneme, therefore the letter *z* is not used. The effect this had on Blanga spelling is that the letter *j* is preferred to *z* even by those older people who still pronounce it [z].

The interactions between [h] and a sonorant in Cheke Holo are not crystal clear. While Boswell (forthcoming) treats the outcome as voiceless sonorant phonemes, White, Kokhonigita and Pulomana (1988) refer to those sounds as aspirated just to point out four paragraphs later that what is actually pronounced is “a puff of air followed by a consonant [...] rather than aspiration”. This suggests an /h/ + sonorant cluster surfacing as such, which is also what happens in Blanga. Whatever the reality in Cheke Holo, the preferred spelling is *mh*, *nh*, *ŋh* *lh*, *rh*, which has been adopted in Blanga, although, at least in this language, it is clear that we are dealing with /h/ + sonorant clusters and in that order. As shown in the next chapter, Blanga has clusters of the type /hm/, /hn/, hŋ/, /hl/, and /hr/, the spelling being thus misleading.

³¹ It is not the Cheke Holo orthography that I am discussing here, but the way it used to write Blanga.

Aspirated plosives are rendered by the non-aspirated symbol followed by *h*. Thus *ph*, *th*, and *kh*. The apostrophe is used for the glottal stop. In Blanga, people sometimes write it, but other times omit it.

There is a second writing system, less frequently used,³² but favoured by researchers and by a handful of elders in the Northern Blanga area who attended an orthography seminar with Bosma in the 1970's or 1980's. The system is better known and used by young and old speakers of the southern dialects. While the former system uses both digraphs and diacritics, the latter eliminates diacritics completely, which makes it more appropriate for typing. This is useful not only to researchers but also to the people of Santa Isabel in the current technological context. Many of them now have mobile phones and send texts or use the email facility at the Buala Post Office. Some even own laptops. Thus, the letter *g* is used, as in Pijin or English, for the voiced velar plosive and the voiced velar fricative is rendered by the digraph *gh*, which is the most used transliteration for languages that have this phoneme. The alveolar nasal is, of course, still written as *n* but its velar counterpart is now spelt *ng*, as in Pijin. This latter system is also closer to the linguistic reality (at least for Blanga), by using the *hm*, *hn*, *hŋ*, *hl*, and *hr* for the *h* + sonorant clusters.

My recommendations to the Blanga speakers were to adopt the latter system as described above and standardize it. I have also addressed the problem of *z* vs. *j* and choosing one or the other seems to be the most difficult matter in Blanga orthography. On the one hand, it is predictable that /dʒ/ will become general in a generation or two, since all younger speakers use it instead of /z/. On the other, it is premature to eliminate the letter *z*, since many people still pronounce /z/ and spell it as *z* if they can write. Moreover, these remarks are true for Loghahaza (Northern) Blanga only. The situation on the southern coast, especially in Kilokaka, is that /z/ is preserved even by younger speakers. The change there, if it is taking place at all, is much slower than on the northern coast. The only solution for the moment was to allow both of them to be used as long as the literate community understand that the parallel use of letters reflects parallel pronunciations of two different generation groups.

I would like to discourage the marking of the glottal stop in writing because, although at this stage we are witnessing a slight tendency of its becoming a marginal phoneme in Blanga, as spoken by the younger generations, it cannot be predicted that this will happen in the end.

³² I am talking, of course, about relative frequency. It should not be forgotten that Blanga is still a very seldom written language.

The choice of a particular standardised spelling for their language should belong completely to the Blanga people. The linguist may assist, make observations and recommendations, but the final decision should be theirs. So far, the representatives of the Blanga literate community have not yet met to take a decision, despite the linguist's insistences.

The two systems discussed above are presented in Table 1-2, in which Ph=phoneme; Cl=cluster; TS=traditional system; RS= revised system. In this thesis, I have used the revised system.

Ph	TS	RS	Ph	TS	RS	Cl	TS	RS
/p/	p	p	/z/	z / j	z / j	/hm/	mh	hm
/p ^h /	ph	ph	/h/	h	h	/hn/	nh	hn
/b/	b	b	/y/	g	gh	/hŋ/	ñh	hng
/t/	t	t	/m/	m	m	/hl/	lh	hl
/t ^h /	th	th	/n/	n	n	/hr/	rh	hr
/d/	d	d	/ŋ/	ñ	ng			
/k/	k	k	/l/	l	l			
/k ^h /	kh	kh	/r/	r	r			
/g/	ḡ	g	/a/	a	a			
/ʔ/	ʔ		/e/	e	e			
/f/	f	f	/ɔ/	i	i			
/v/	v	v	/i/	o	o			
/s/	s	s	/u/	u / w	u / w			

Table 1-2: The traditional and revised writing systems of Blanga (Ph=phoneme; TS=traditional system; RS= revised system; Cl=cluster)

This section cannot end without mentioning the system used in the recently published Blanga Prayer Book (launched in December 2009). This does not use diacritics but neither does it replace them with digraphs or trigraphs. Thus the letter *g* is used for both /g/ and /y/ and the letter *n* for both /n/ and /ŋ/. The letters *z* and *j* alternate freely to the extent that the same word is sometimes spelt with the former and some other times with the latter. The glottal stop is sometimes marked and sometimes not.

CHAPTER TWO

Phonological Structures and Processes in Blanga

This chapter describes the major phonological patterns and processes found in Blanga and analyses in detail those aspects considered to be either typologically or theoretically relevant, or both. Its somehow disproportional length is motivated by the lack of detailed discussion of phonology in the Oceanic literature. The first sections deal with segmental phonology, paying particular attention to those phenomena that are directly or indirectly related to stress and, thus, creating a base for a thorough account of stress assignment and its consequences. Accentuation and other prosodic structures are discussed in the final sections. Many points made in this chapter are supported by acoustic evidence, which broadens the perspective without altering the primarily phonological nature of the discussion. The Blanga examples in this chapter are given in IPA transcription.

2.1 Vocalic segments and processes involving vowels

2.1.1 Vowel inventory

Like all Isabel languages, and indeed numerous Oceanic languages (Lynch 1998:75), Blanga displays a typical five-vowel pattern, with the front and back series having a contrast between a high and a mid vowel, and with a low vowel in the central series. The back vowels are rounded, and the front vowels unrounded; nasality is not contrastive for any vowel. There is no tense-lax or ATR distinction. The front mid vowel is typically produced as mid-close, while the back front one is pronounced (or rather perceived by the non-native speaker) as mid-open (2.1.3), hence the choice of symbols and the asymmetry in Figure 2-1, which shows the phonemic vowels of Blanga.

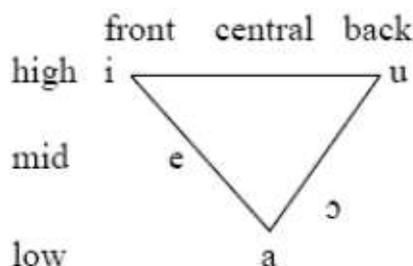


Figure 2-1: The contrastive vowels of Blanga.

Vocalic segments are not contrasted by length and the language has no underlying diphthongs, although they may appear in surface forms (2.1.7.2). In syllabification,

consecutive vowels, either identical or non-identical, are assigned to different syllables (2.4.1). The features needed to distinguish the Blanga vowels are related to the back-front dimension and height, as shown in *Table 2-1*.

	i	u	e	ɔ	a
High	+	+	-	-	-
Low	-	-	-	-	+
Back	-	+	-	+	-

Table 2-1: The distinctive features of Blanga vowels

2.1.2 Phonemic status evidence for vowels

The status of the five phonemic vowels is demonstrated by the minimal pairs in *Table 2-2*. Here, all vocalic segments are contrasted in word-medial (M) and word-final (F) position. However, it was not possible to attest all contrasts in word-initial (I) position, due to the extremely small number of words beginning with a vowel (see 2.3.1).

Contrast	I	M	F
low-high a-i	ade ‘here’ ide ‘DEM.R.PL’	tahi ‘sea’ tahi ‘wash’	hmola ‘canoe’ hmoli ‘orange’
low-high a-u	are ‘DEM.N.PL’ ure ‘be.laden’	saka ‘jaw’ suka ‘sugar’	hnapa ‘intestines’ hnapu ‘night’
low-mid a-e	au ‘exist’ eu ‘be.thus’	hmaku ‘be.solid’ hmeku ‘flying-fox’	ara ‘1SG’ are ‘DEM.N.PL’
low-mid a-ɔ		fana ‘net’ fona ‘upwind’	yohra ‘paddle (v)’ yohra ‘wreck’
high-mid e-i	ee ‘war.dance’ ii ‘HES’	bea ‘be.tasteless’ bia ‘cassava’	k ^h ave ‘descend’ k ^h avi ‘fish.sp’
high-mid ɔ-u		doli ‘life’ duli ‘hit (v.t.)’	yohra ‘wreck’ yohru ‘rub’
high-mid e-u		teyu ‘self’ tuyu ‘change (v.)’	hmeke ‘dog’ hmeku ‘flying-fox’
high-mid ɔ-i		gɔbi ‘hundred’ gibi ‘pond’	kukuta ‘penis’ kukuti ‘eel’
high-high i-u	ii ‘HES’ uu ‘HES’	glima ‘five’ gluma ‘cave’	t ^h uri ‘story’ t ^h uru ‘lie.down’
mid-mid e-ɔ		beku ‘grave’ boku ‘sated’	ide ‘these.DIST’ ido ‘mother’

Table 2-2: Vocalic minimal pairs

2.1.3 Auditory judgements and acoustic analysis of Blanga vowels

Based on auditory judgements¹, Blanga vowels (small black dots) can be plotted against the cardinal vowels (large grey dots) as shown in *Figure 2-2*.

¹ The auditory judgements belong entirely to the non-native speaker linguist. The field conditions during the documentation project on which this thesis is based did not allow for thorough perception experiments with native speaker subjects.

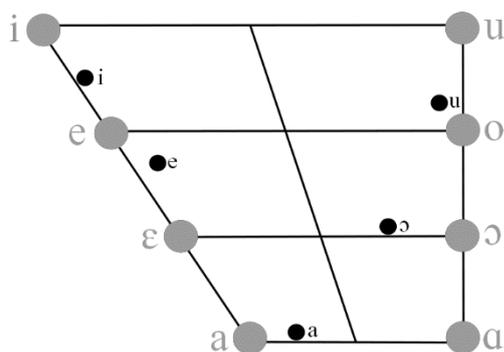


Figure 2-2: The Blanga vowels (small black dots) compared with the cardinal vowels (large grey dots).

In Blanga, the high vowels /i/ and /u/ show a tendency towards maximal differentiation. Thus, on the back-front dimension, they are extremely close to cardinal vowels (1) and (8) respectively. In terms of height, however, the front high vowel is approximately mid-way between cardinal vowels (1) and (2), while the back high vowel is even lower, quite close to cardinal vowel (7). The third quantum vowel, /a/, is slightly more centralised compared with cardinal vowel (4), but almost as low as it, and thus as distanced as possible from the high vowels. Within the space delimited by the three quantum vowels, the mid vowels are perceived as having an asymmetric distribution. On the high-low dimension, the front mid vowel is closer to cardinal vowel (2), while the back mid vowel is almost as low as cardinal vowel (6), and thus clearly distinguished from the high back vowel, considering the low position of the latter. On the front-back dimension, neither of the mid vowels extends beyond the limits defined by the quantum vowels.

For an acoustic analysis, three tokens of the first and second formants for three male speakers were measured for each vowel in stressed position in the environments t_C and b_C and in unstressed position in the environments t_# and b_#. Stress assignment will be discussed in 2.6.3.3. For now, it is sufficient to say that, with the exception of cases when surface diphthongs are formed word-finally (2.1.7.2), stress is penultimate in Blanga and underlying codas are not possible (2.4.1), hence the word-final position of the unstressed vowels in disyllabic words. For a more complete picture, formants were also measured in three-syllable reduplicated forms in unstressed position (antepenultimate syllable) in the environment b_b and stressed position (penultimate syllable) in the environment b_C. The sets used are listed below.

'tana	'fata	'bako	'glaba	ba'bayi	ba'bayi
(te)'tena	'fate	'beku	'kɔbe	be'belo	be'belo
(ti)'tihi	'fati	'biti	'gibi	bi'bilo	bi'bilo
'taka	'sɔto	'baku	'fɔbo	bo'bolo	bo'bolo
'turi	'fitu	'buta	'tubu	bu'buru	bu'buru

It was not possible to identify minimal or even near-minimal sets, although minimal pairs are present in each set. Table 2-3 shows the mean formant values in each position and environment.

Stressed	F1 (Hz)	F2 (Hz)	Unstressed	F1 (Hz)	F2 (Hz)
a			a		
t_C	750	1400	t_#	700	1325
b_C	750	1300	b_#	650	1250
b_C (red.)	650	1300	b_b (red.)	625	1200
e			e		
t_C	450	1900	t_#	450	1900
b_C	450	1850	b_#	450	1850
b_C (red.)	450	1850	b_b (red.)	450	1825
i			i		
t_C	300	2250	t_#	300	2250
b_C	300	2200	b_#	300	2200
b_C (red.)	300	2200	b_b (red.)	300	2200
ɔ			ɔ		
t_C	500	975	t_#	500	975
b_C	475	875	b_#	450	825
b_C (red.)	475	900	b_b (red.)	450	875
u			u		
t_C	375	975	t_#	325	1025
b_C	375	950	b_#	350	850
b_C (red.)	375	900	b_b (red.)	350	825

Table 2-3: F1 and F2 means of the five Blanga vowels for three male speakers.

The values were plotted on two vowel charts, one for the stressed vowels (Chart A) and one for the unstressed vowels (Chart B), shown in Figure 2-3. The vowels in t__ environment are represented by dots and those in b__ environment by squares. The reduplicated forms are not represented in the graphs, their formant values being very similar, and in some cases even identical, with those of the vowels preceded by the bilabial stop in non-reduplicated forms. The formant plots give a fairly similar picture to that based exclusively on auditory judgements (Figure 2-2 above). The main difference is in the alignment of the mid vowels, which show only 50 Hz between the F1 means for the analysed tokens. Moreover, both in the stressed and unstressed tokens, F2 in b__ environments is significantly lower than in t__ environments; most of the time the difference is between 50 and 100 Hz. The formant means for stressed vowels are quite similar to those for unstressed vowels, at least in t__ environments. Slight differences can be noticed for the central and back vowels, especially in the b__ environments.

These differences will be mentioned again in Section 2.6.3.1, when I discuss the acoustic correlates of stress.

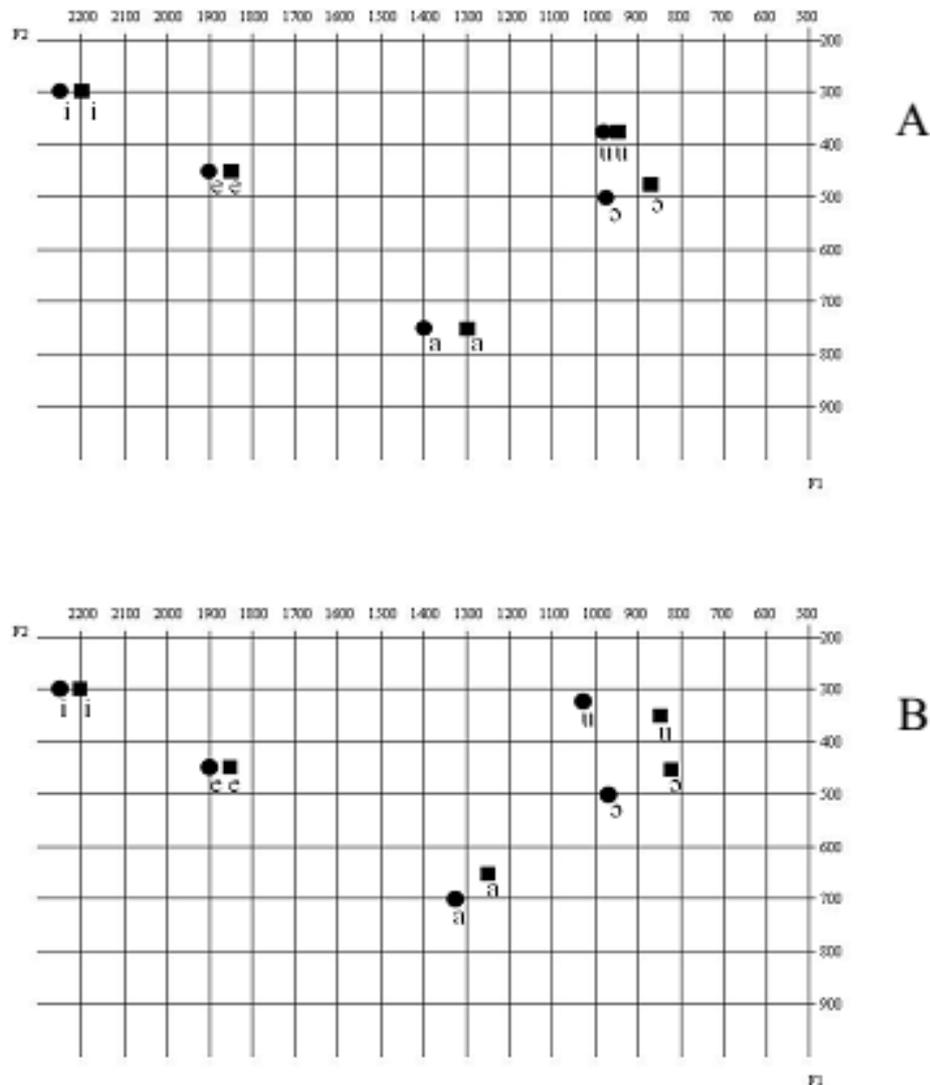


Figure 2-3: Plots of the mean F1 and F2 of three male Blanga speakers in the environments t__ (dots) and b__ (squares). The vowels are shown in stressed (graph A) and respectively unstressed position (graph B).

2.1.4 Phonetic vowel length

Segmental length is not distinctive in Blanga but, as expected, phonetic vowel length differences do occur and these are mainly correlated with stress (2.6.3.1) and/or position in the word. In non-final position, unstressed vowels are significantly shorter than stressed ones. It has already been mentioned that Blanga stress is penultimate unless word-final diphthongs are formed at the surface; therefore non-final unstressed vowels are only possible in words consisting of three or more syllables. The length differences are better illustrated in partially reduplicated forms. I shall consider again the set containing all the five Blanga vowels in the environment b__C in reduplicated syllables: *ba'bayi*, *be'belɔ*, *bi'bilɔ*, *bɔ'bɔlɔ*, *bu'buru*, the stem syllable being stressed and the echo

one unstressed. Length measurements in the analysed tokens show the non-initial unstressed vowels to be 20%-30% shorter than the stressed ones. The average values are listed in Table 2-4.

	b <u> </u> (ms)	'b <u> </u> (ms)
ba'bayi	104	142
be'belɔ	100	130
bi'bilɔ	99	120
bɔ'bɔɔ	100	128
bu'buru	93	132

Table 2-4: Average length of Blanga vowels in unstressed and stressed position in reduplicated syllables.

The difference is illustrated in Figure 2-4 below, which shows the wave form of one token of the word *bi'bilɔ* as uttered by a male speaker. The duration of the unstressed /i/ in the echo syllable is 94 ms, that is approximately 30% less than that of the stressed /i/ in the stem, which lasts for 135 ms.

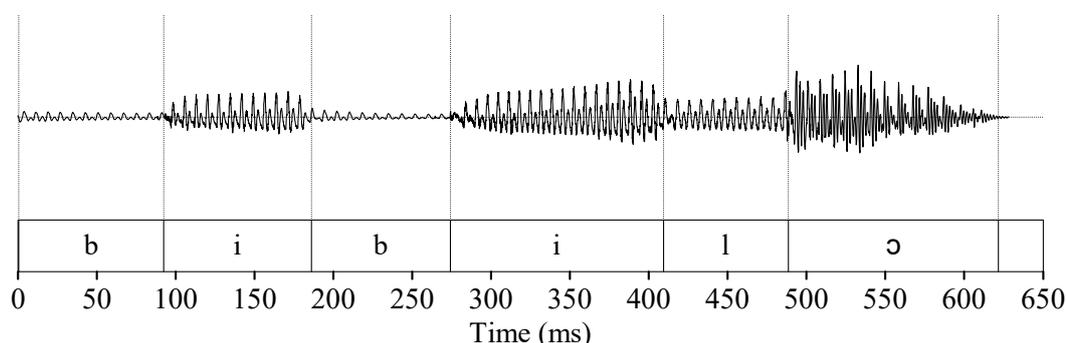


Figure 2-4: Relative length of the vowel *i* in unstressed and stressed position in the word *bi'bilɔ*.

Similar results are obtained if vowel length is compared in identical environments in two different words, in non-final stressed and unstressed position respectively. Thus, in the word *'nahma* 'love', the syllable *na* is penultimate and therefore stressed, while in the word *na'hmata* 'bush' the same syllable appears in the same environment but this time as antepenultimate and thus unstressed. As shown in Figure 2-5, the vowel /a/ in the latter case is approximately 40% shorter than in the former, the values being 90ms and 150ms respectively. In this particular example, the length difference is even greater than in the case of the reduplicated forms. Even if the end of the stressed vowel in *'nahma* is taken to be the point of lowest amplitude, indicated by the arrow, this vowel is still significantly longer than its unstressed non-final counterpart in *na'hmata*.

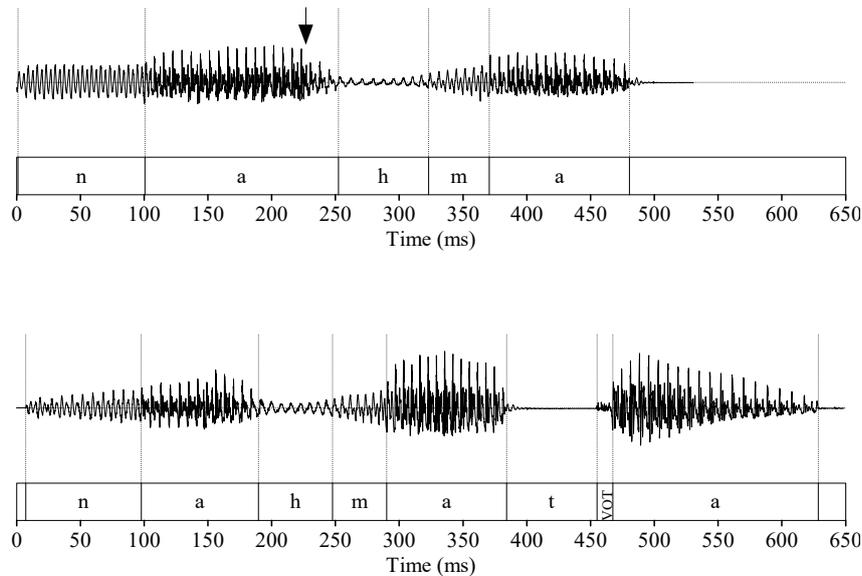


Figure 2-5: Length difference between stressed and unstressed non-final *a* in the words /'nahma/ 'love' and /na'hmata/ 'bush'.

While there is an obvious length difference between stressed and unstressed vowels in non-final position, correlations between length and stress cannot be made as far as word-final vowels are concerned. These are always unstressed, unless surface diphthongs are formed in that position (2.6.3.3), but most of the time they are longer than the unstressed non-final ones and sometimes longer than the stressed vowels due to phrase-final lengthening. In addition, when a subsequent pause (break index 4 or 3) is involved, the vowel can sometimes be followed either by breathy voice or, at the other end of the voicing continuum (Ladefoged and Maddieson 2006:49), by a glottal stop, often realised with or completely as creaky voice (Section 2.2.4). In both cases, it is very difficult, if possible at all, to designate a conventional end point of the vowel for consistent measuring.

2.1.5 Laryngealised vowels

Blanga vowels may sometimes be partially laryngealised. When they delimit an interval of creaky phonation, creaky voice will naturally be present towards the end of the vowel that precedes the interval and/or at the approximate beginning of the one following it. The word for 'paralyse', for instance, is often heard as [me.'hme.ɛ]. Figure 2-6, which illustrates the relevant section of this word, shows how modal voice on the vowel in the second syllable of the word gradually turns into creaky voice, keeps steady for about 80 ms, after which it gradually turns back into modal voice at the beginning of the following vowel. Thus, the period of creaky phonation is longer than 80 ms.

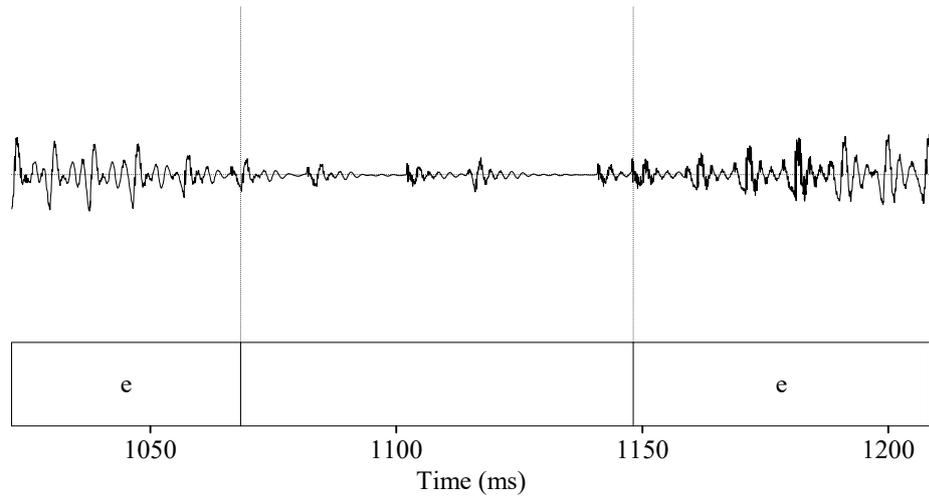


Figure 2-6: Creaky phonation between identical vowels in the word *meme* ‘paralyse’.

This phenomenon is not only present across identical vowels, but also between non-identical ones like in Figure 2-7, which shows an expanded portion of the word [‘fu.ə] ‘fruit’, or towards the end of a final vowel like in Figure 2-8, which shows an expanded portion of the word *toka* ‘chop’.

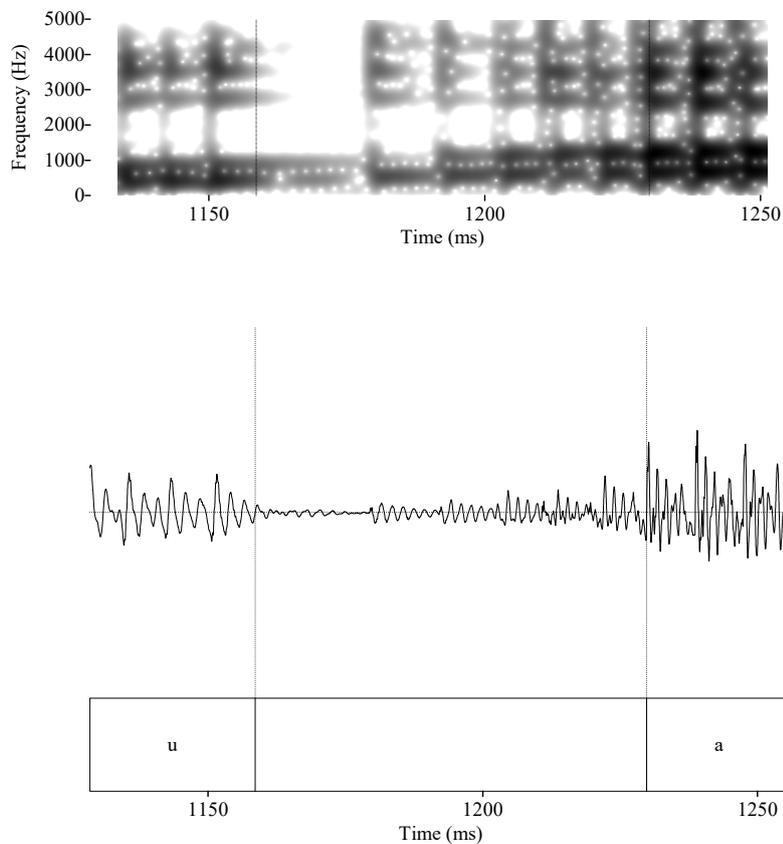


Figure 2-7: Creaky voice between non-identical vowels in the word *fua* ‘fruit’.

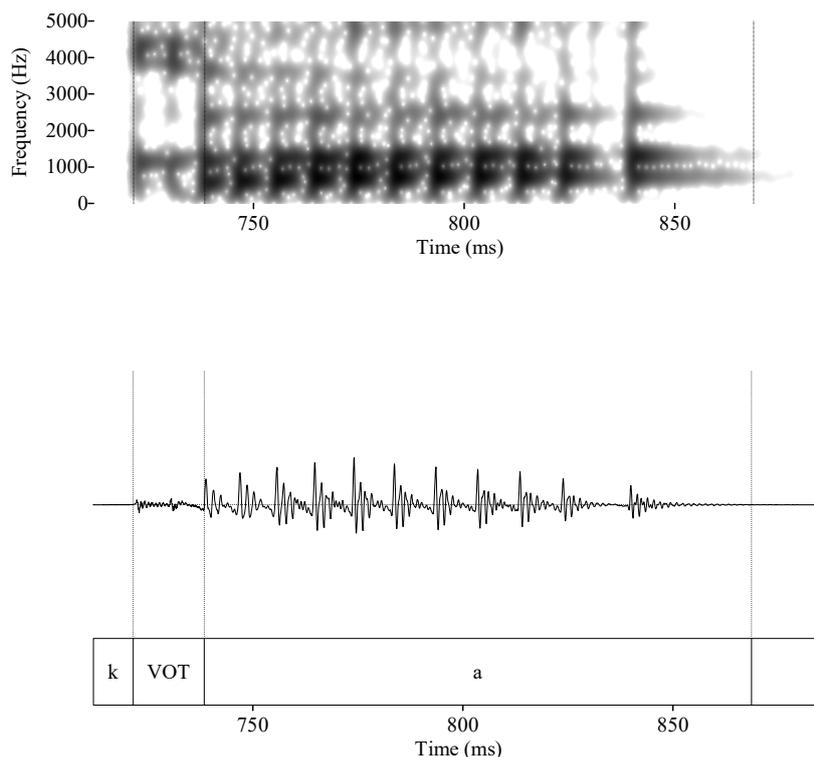


Figure 2-8: Creaky voice at the end of the word toka 'chop'.

Creaky phonation is clearly not distinctive in the language and is only seldom, if ever, present during the entire length of a vowel. As it will be shown in Section 2.2.4, creaky voice is the actual realisation of an epenthetic glottal stop, which is frequently articulated with an incomplete closure.

2.1.6 Word-final vowel deletion

In isolation or in careful speech, word-final vowels are always pronounced. In rapid speech, however, they may be deleted unless they occupy the phrase-final position. This phenomenon is widespread in the language and can take place both when the vowel in question is preceded by a consonant and when it is preceded by another vowel. In the former case, vowels cannot be deleted if preceded by a consonant cluster. They can only be deleted when part of a CV syllable pattern but not as part of a CCV pattern, since that will generate an unacceptable sequence of three consonants. Blanga allows two-member consonant clusters, subject to the constraints discussed in 2.4.2, but sequences of three consonants are not permitted either within the same syllable or across adjacent syllables.

/mane dɔu/ 'big/important man' → [mandɔu]

but

/kakafre dɔu/ 'big spider' → *[kakafrdɔu]

In the case of a final vowel preceded by another vowel, *i.e.* (C)(C)VV, the process can be illustrated with examples like the one below, in which a 3.SG agreement marker, =*ni*, is encliticised to the transitive verb *fakae* ‘see’.

/fakaeni/ → [fakani]

Such cases, however, seem to be consequences of a widespread tendency of hiatus avoidance, which is manifested both within the word and across word boundaries, as in the example above, and possibly across morpheme boundaries as well. The next section will suggest that final vowel deletion in (C)(C)VV environments may be a supplemental strategy of hiatus avoidance employed when particular vowel sequences are not capable of coalescence or diphthong formation.

The process of word-final vowel deletion has implications for syllable structure and stress assignment and will be mentioned in those contexts in 2.4.3 and 2.6.3.

2.1.7 Hiatus avoidance

Word-final vowel deletion is not the only phenomenon with implications for stress. In 2.4, we shall see that there are no underlying codas in Blanga and, thus, every syllable is open, with V being the minimal pattern. However, with the exception of quotation or syllabified forms, the language does not seem to tolerate the hiatus that may appear between adjacent syllables and the different strategies employed in order to avoid it give birth to surface processes with important consequences for stress assignment. These processes are listed below:

- a) Glide formation and glide insertion;
- b) Diphthong formation and vowel coalescence;
- c) Glottal stop insertion.

Final vowel deletion also plays a partial role in hiatus avoidance. Having discussed each of the above points, the section will end with a summary of hiatus avoidance strategies.

2.1.7.1 Glide formation, glide insertion and epenthetic glottal stops

There are no underlying glides in Blanga. Nevertheless, they can appear in surface forms as allophones of high vowels when those are followed by a central or low vowel in a syllable with no onset position filled. The syllable containing the high vowel may, in turn, consist only of the nucleus or may have an obstruent in its onset.

/i.a.ɔ/ → [ja.ɔ] ‘DEM.PV.SG’, /i.a.rɔ/ → [ja.rɔ] ‘DEM.PV.PL’;

/de.ŋi.ɔ/ → [de.ŋjɔ] ‘place.name’;

/ga.u.a/ → [ga.wa] ‘fish.sp’, /ga.u.a.i/ → [ga.wai] ‘far’;

/k^hu.a.li/ → [k^hwa.li] ‘arrow’

Glide formation takes precedence over diphthong formation (2.1.7.2), the preference being for filling the onset position of the following syllable rather than forming a branching nucleus in the previous one.

/ga.u.a./ → [ga.wa] ‘fish sp.’, not *[gau.a]

However, glide formation does not prevent further or additional branching in the nucleus of the syllable whose onset position it has filled if the conditions for diphthong formations are met. In the example below, glide and diphthong formation take place simultaneously, reducing the number of syllables from four to two.

/ga.u.a.i/ → [ga.wai] ‘far’

A constraint on consonant clusters in Blanga dictates that they can only consist of two segments, with C1 being an obstruent and C2 a sonorant (2.4.2). Surface glide formation, as illustrated above, observes the constraint since glides belong to the natural class of sonorants. However, the V in a CCV syllable cannot surface as a glide, since this would violate the constraint in that it will generate a three-consonant onset.

/na.gru.i/ → *[na.grwi]

In such cases, hiatus is avoided by the insertion of an epenthetic glottal stop.

/na.gru.i/ → [na.gru.ʔi]

We shall see throughout the next sections that epenthetic glottal stops are mainly a last resort strategy of hiatus avoidance when any other strategy fails or is blocked by higher constraints. Glottal stops will necessarily be mentioned several times below before we reach the sub-section dedicated especially to them (2.2.4).

Surface glide formation cannot be generated by disyllabic underlying forms. Such forms would result in a surface word consisting of a single light syllable. I regard this restriction as evidence that a surface Blanga word minimally consists of a heavy syllable (2.6.3.2). Surface glide formation can therefore be constrained by word minimality. In such cases, hiatus is avoided by two different strategies. If the high vowel is /i/, the strategy is glide insertion, rather than glide formation, *i.e.* the corresponding glide will be inserted as onset of the following syllable.

/bi.a/ ‘cassava’ → [bi.ja], rather than *[bjɑ]

If the high vowel is /u/ a glottal stop will be inserted as the onset of the following syllable.

/fu.a/ ‘fruit’ → [fu.ʔa], rather than *[fwa] or *[fu.wa]

/ku.e/ ‘grandparent’ → [ku.ʔe], rather than *[kwe] or *[ku.we]

An apparent exception is the dummy particle *ia* (3.1.11), which allows /i.a/ → [ja]. This can be explained by the fact that constraints on word minimality only apply to content

words, which is not uncommon cross-linguistically (2.6.3.2). Finally, it is worth mentioning that, in the examples below, glide formation is blocked both by the constraint on consonant clusters and that on word minimality.

/fni.ɔ/ ‘glans (of penis)’ → [fni. jɔ], rather than *[fnjɔ]

/hnu.a/ ‘gulf’ → [hnu.ʔa], rather than *[hnwa]

2.1.7.2 Coalescence, diphthong formation and epenthetic glottal stops

When asked to syllabify, consultants, without exception, assign each vowel in a sequence to separate syllables. Underlyingly therefore, with no coda positions being available (2.4.1), each segment in a VV sequence constitutes the nucleus of a distinct light syllable. At the surface, on the other hand, synchronic coalescence and diphthong formation can appear as the next available strategy for hiatus avoidance when no candidates for glide formation or triggers of glide insertion are present. The fusion between two adjacent vocalic segments into one single syllabic nucleus can be realised in one of the two ways, depending on speech speed. In rapid and very rapid speech, much favoured by Northern Blanga speakers, it may be realised as coalescence, thus resulting in a monophthong. In less rapid casual speech, the result of fusion is a diphthong. Coalescence is much more restricted than diphthong formation.

In order to account for all the constraints on diphthong formation and coalescence, it is useful to distinguish between four categories of possible diphthongs according to the dimension along which different VV sequences are aligned within the vowel space:

- a) identical diphthongs, formed from sequences of identical vowels;
- b) descending diphthongs, formed from sequences of high to low along the height dimension;
- c) ascending diphthongs, formed from sequences of low to high along the height dimension;
- d) level diphthongs, formed either from left to right or from right to left along the front-back dimension at the same height.

Identical diphthongs (a) are never formed in Blanga. Within a fairly normal speech rhythm, an epenthetic glottal stop appears as the onset of the second syllable in identical VV sequences. In rapid speech, the two identical vowels coalesce.

/i.i.zu/ ‘write’ → [i.ʔi.zu] (casual speech)

→ [i.zu] (rapid speech)

/ɔ.ɔ.e/ ‘talk/word’ → [ɔ.ʔɔ.e] (casual speech)

→ [ɔ.e] (rapid speech)

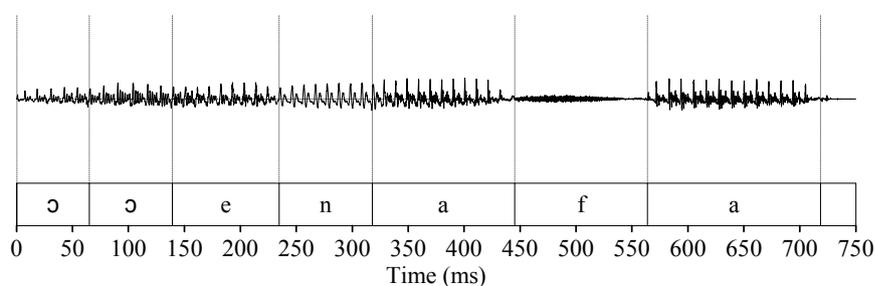
The latter example above reveals one more interesting thing, namely that the hiatus avoidance tendency is less strong in sequences of more than two vowels. In such rare cases, hiatus is normally avoided between V1 and V2 but not necessarily between V2 and V3. The segment resulting from coalesce is perceptibly shorter than the V.V sequence in quotation forms. The wave forms below show the word *ooe* ‘talk/word’ in utterance-initial position spoken by the same young male speaker in identical sentences on two different occasions. The sentence is *Ooe nafa, tana ba?* ‘What does the word *nafa* ‘breath’ mean?’ and only the initial portion of that sentence is shown in the figures.

In A, the word is pronounced carefully, thus realised with hiatus as in the quotation form as [ɔ.ɔ.e], with the total length of the two identical vowels being of about 140 ms.

In B, the sentence is pronounced rapidly and the particular word surfaces as [ɔ.e], the duration of the single [ɔ] segment being approximately 80 ms.

Figure 2-9 can be compared with Figure 2-12 and Figure 2-16, both used in 2.2.4 and showing the same word uttered with glottal epenthesis between the identical vowels.

A



B

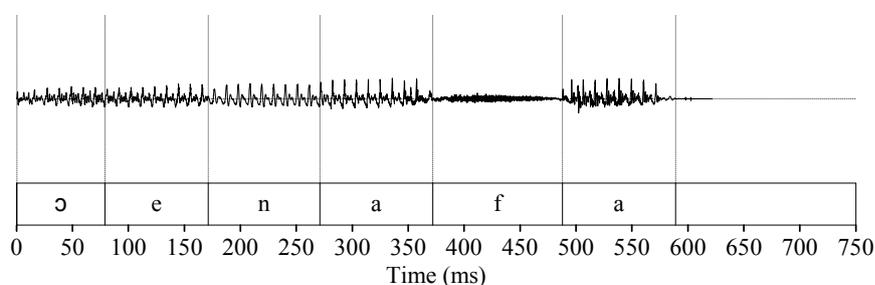


Figure 2-9: The word /ɔ.ɔe/ ‘talk/word’ surfacing as [ɔ.ɔe] (A) and as [ɔ.e] (B).

Descending diphthongs (b) are also excluded. In fact, the possibilities themselves are here much more limited. From the definition of descending diphthongs, it follows that high vowels could only occupy the V1 position in such cases but, as mentioned in 2.1.7.1, glide formation takes precedence over diphthong formation. The only candidates left, the sequences /e.a/ and /ɔ.a/, never surface as diphthongs. From an articulatory point of view, it is possible for /e/ and /ɔ/ to generate surface glides in the same way as the high back vowels, but that, again, does not happen in Blanga. Moreover, it is not only diphthong formation but also coalescence that is excluded in descending sequences. I shall show below that there are strong phonological grounds for such exclusions, not only with descending candidates but also with some ascending and level ones. For now, let us notice that the only possible hiatus avoidance strategy here is glottal stop insertion.

/ʎe.pe.a/ ‘1.dl.excl’ → [ʎe.pe.ʔa]; /gle.a/ ‘be.happy’ → [gle.ʔa]

/lo.lo.a/ ‘be.straight’ → [lo.lo.ʔa]; /k^hɔ.a/ ‘mangrove’ → [k^hɔ.ʔa]

Ascending diphthongs (c) are frequently formed at the surface. The sequences /a.i/ and /a.e/ both generate [ai], while the sequences /a.u/ and /a.ɔ/ both generate [au].

/hma.i.ri/ → [hmai.ri] ‘left’, /na.pra.i/ → [na.prai] ‘sun’

/ha.e/ → [hai] ‘where’, /fa.ka.e/ → [fa.kai] ‘see’

/na.u.t^hɔ.glu/ → [nau.t^hɔ.glu] ‘earth’, /na.na.u/ → [na.nau] ‘village’

/ni.ha.ɔ/ → [ni.hau] ‘when’, /hnɔ.ra.ɔ/ → [hnɔ.rau] ‘yesterday’

The other sequences surface as follows:

/e.u/ → [eu]

/na.k^he.u/ → [na.k^heu] ‘earthquake’

/ɔ.i/ → [ɔi]

/k^hɔ.i.lɔ/ → [k^hɔi.lɔ] ‘coconut’, /ʎɔ.i.nɔ/ → [ʎɔi.nɔ] ‘now/today’

/e.i/ → [ei]

/ma.ne.i/ → [ma.nei] ‘s/he’, /i.he.i/ → [i.hei] ‘whoever’

/ɔ.u/ → [ɔu]

/ma.ne do.u/ → [man. dɔu] ‘big man’

The last sequence is quite rare in polysyllabic words, hence the compound used in the example, which counts as a single phonological word.

With ascending sequences, glottal stop epenthesis is possible as a hiatus avoidance strategy but seldom employed because of the availability of diphthong formation. It may occur mainly in underlyingly disyllabic words when the rhythm of speech is very slow (non-characteristic to N Blanga).

/ma.e/ → [ma.ʔe] ‘laugh’

/p^ha.u/ → [p^ha.ʔu] ‘head’

/dɔ.u/ → [dɔ.ʔu] ‘be.big’

/k^he.i/ → [k^he.ʔi] ‘tooth’

Coalescence can also sometimes appear in ascending sequences but it is rare and available only for the combinations /a.i/ → [e] and /a.u/ → [ɔ].

/ʔa.i.pe.a/ ‘1.DL.EXCL’ → [ʔe.pe.a]

/ʔa.u.pe.a/ ‘2.DL.’ → [ʔɔ.pe.a]

It does not occur in word-final position.

/ʔa.i/ ‘2.SG.EXCL’ → *[ʔe], /na.pra.i/ ‘sun’ → *[na.pre]

/ʔa.u/ ‘2.SG’ → *[ʔɔ], /na.na.u/ → *[na.nɔ]

Level diphthongs (*d*) are not formed and coalescence between the two vowels of a level sequence is not possible. Hiatus is avoided by glottal stop insertion. The sequences /i.u/ and /u.i/ are not appropriate candidates because of the precedence of glide formation over diphthong formation mentioned in 2.1.7.1. More thorough constraints on diphthong formation and coalescence will be formulated in the next section. With level sequences, hiatus is avoided by glottal stop insertion.

/pe.pe.ɔ/ → [pe.pe.ʔɔ] ‘lip’

/knɔ.e/ → [knɔ.ʔe] ‘be.short’

2.1.7.3 One more word on epenthetic glottal stops

As mentioned several times in the sections above, a glottal stop may be inserted between two identical or non-identical vowels, mainly when no other hiatus avoidance strategies are available. The nature and status of the glottal stop in Blanga will be dealt with in 2.2.3. For the purposes of this section, it is its epenthetic character that is more relevant. It has been noticed above that epenthetic glottal stops may appear even when another strategy is available, the choice of one or the other depending on the rapidity of speech. The glottal stop appears in less rapid, albeit still casual, unmonitored speech, while the other available strategy is employed in more rapid speech. However, when no other strategy is available, the occurrence of a glottal stop is no longer conditioned by the rapidity of speech. Section 2.1.7.5 will revise the preference for each possible strategy. But before that it is necessary to formulate the constraints that prevent the employment of the most preferred strategies, which is the topic of the next section.

2.1.7.4 Constraints on diphthong formation and coalescence

One constraint on diphthong formation has already been mentioned in the sections above, namely the precedence of glide formation (2.1.7.1).

The glide precedence constraint

When there are candidates for glide formation and all phonotactic and word minimality constraints are observed, glide formation takes precedence over diphthong formation.

The above, however, fails to explain why some diphthongs are not formed. Nevertheless, we have also seen that only ascending diphthongs can be formed. The only apparent exception found is the word /hu.i/ ‘be.finished, ‘be.done’, which almost invariably surfaces as [hui], suggesting that two vowels of identical height can participate in diphthong formation: /u.i/ → [ui]. Nevertheless, *hui* is mainly used as an interjection at the end of song and dance performances, the corresponding verb being *nhigho*. The perception of the disyllabic /hu.i/ as monosyllabic may be due to the fact that in its performance function it is more sung than spoken. Less speculative would be to say that we are dealing with a very infrequent non-content word. We can thus formulate a new constraint.

Constraint on diphthong formation

The first element of a Blanga diphthong must be lower than the second one.

Since glides are allophones of high vowels and since every other vowel is lower than the high vowels, the glide precedence constraint is no longer needed.

As far as coalescence is concerned, we have seen that this is only permitted either in sequences of identical vowels or, more rarely, in the ascending sequences /a.i/ and /a.u/. A constraint can be thus formulated as below.

Constraint on coalescence

Two non-identical vowels can coalesce only if they are quantum vowels in an ascending sequence.

A stronger base for such a constraint can be revealed within a phonological theory of elements (Backley 2011). In the simplified version employed here, any surface manifestation is linked to an underlying expression that can consist of one element (simplex expressions), two elements (duplex expressions) or three elements (triplex expressions). Expressions consisting of more than one element can be generally referred to as ‘complex expressions’. Elements, symbolised by capital letters, are thus

‘contained’ by expressions and the conventional means of representing such ‘containers’ is to delimit them by square brackets. Since this can create confusion (square brackets being normally used in phonology to signal surface forms), I shall use bolded round brackets here to symbolise the containers, *i.e.* the underlying forms, and no brackets whatsoever for the surface forms. The contained elements will also be shown in bold.

Only the three quantum vowels, a, i and u, are linked to simplex underlying expressions. These are respectively (A), (I) and (U), and I shall call their elements ‘primary elements’. The linking can be conventionally represented as below.

a	i	u
(A)	(I)	(U)

Other vowels are linked to expressions consisting of combinations of the primary elements, somehow reflecting combinations of articulatory features. In the case of Blanga, the other vowels are /e/ and /ɔ/, linked respectively to the underlying expressions **(AI)** and **(AU)**.

e	ɔ
(AI)	(AU)

A key restriction of the theory is that complex expressions cannot contain identical elements (Backley 2011:7-11, 24-26). Expressions such as *(AAI) or *(AAU) are excluded. Now remember that coalescence results in a monophthong and appears between non-identical Blanga vowels as a consequence of hiatus avoidance in very rapid speech in sequences otherwise eligible for diphthong formation. Thus, the constraint on coalescence can be reformulated as follows:

Constraint on coalescence

Coalescence between two non-identical Blanga vowels can appear only in a sequence eligible for diphthong formation and only if the complex expression to which the resulting surface form is linked combines the elements of the original expressions involved, observing the ban on identical elements.

The constraint above explains why only quantum vowels can coalesce into a monophthong.

a.	i	→	e	but	a.	e	→	*e

(A)(I) (AI) (A) (AI) *(AAI)

a. u → ɔ but a. ɔ → *ɔ

| | → | | | → |

(A) (U) (AU) (A) (AU) *(AAU)

None of the other permitted diphthongs can be reduced by coalescence between its V1 and V2. It is noticed that the remaining possibilities would be between a simplex and a complex element. With the sequences a-(A) + e-(AI), a-(A) + ɔ-(AU), and e-(AI) + i-(I) fusion cannot take place due to the impossibility of two identical expressions to coexist in an element: *(AAI), *(AAU), or *(AII), which is universal. In the cases of e-(AI) + u-(U) and o-(AU) + i-(I), the possible fusion is blocked since the coalescence between a simplex and a complex element is not permitted in the particular case of Blanga, thus avoiding the surface creation of additional rounded vowels.

Coalescence between both identical and non-identical vowels can take place and diphthongs, perhaps as a process subsequent to the coalescence of two identical vowels, can be formed across word or morpheme boundaries.

/bla a.u/ → [bla.u] → [blau]

2.1.7.5 Summary of hiatus avoidance

Surface hiatus avoidance is manifested in almost all situations in Blanga, with the exception of quotation or very carefully uttered forms. The different strategies employed in order to avoid hiatus have been presented throughout the different subsections of 2.1.7. The choice of strategy seems to depend on the nature of the vowels involved and the rapidity of speech. Here, I summarise the strategies found and the order in which they are employed.

If high vowels in V1 position are present, then the preferred hiatus avoidance strategy is glide formation. When glide formation is prevented by constraints on consonant clusters, the hiatus avoidance strategy is glottal stop insertion, thus avoiding the surface creation of triple branching in the syllable onset, since the language only allows two-member consonant clusters. When glide formation is prevented by constraints on word minimality, hiatus is avoided in two ways, depending on which high vowel is V1. If V1 is the back high vowel, hiatus is avoided by glottal stop insertion, rather than glide formation, while if V1 is the high front vowel, glide insertion, rather than glide formation or glottal stop insertion, is the hiatus avoidance strategy. Both strategies avoid the surface creation of words consisting of a single light syllable.

When there are no candidates for glide formation, we distinguish mainly between situations when V1 and V2 are identical, on the one hand, and situations when V1 and V2 are different, on the other. When V1 and V2 are identical, the hiatus avoidance strategy is glottal stop insertion in casual speech or moderate speed, while in more rapid speech identical vowels coalesce into one single segment, without length preservation.

When V1 and V2 are different, we distinguish between ascending, descending and level sequences. In ascending sequences, the preferred hiatus avoidance strategy is diphthong formation in casual speech or moderate speed. Glottal stop epenthesis is rare and occurs mainly in disyllabic words. In more rapid speech the quantum vowels may coalesce in ascending sequences in non-word-final position, while in a combination of a quantum vowel with a secondary vowel hiatus can be avoided only by diphthong formation, regardless of the speech speed. Similarly, in descending and level sequences, the only strategy of hiatus avoidance is glottal stop insertion.

2.2 Consonant segments and processes involving consonants

2.2.1 Consonant inventory

An important feature of present-day Northern Blanga is the existence of generation-based differences in pronunciation. In segmental phonology those are manifested by the existence of different consonant phoneme inventories for older and younger speakers respectively, due to the emergence of affricate phonemes and to the glottal stop acquiring a marginal phonemic status for the latter. The consonant inventory shown in Table 2-5 is that of the older generation. I shall base the discussion on it and later point out the differences between the two systems in 2.2.8.

	Bilabial			Labiodental		Alveolar			Velar			Glottal
Plosive	p	p ^h	b			t	t ^h	d	k	k ^h	g	
Nasal			m					n			ŋ	
Fricative				f	v	s		z			ɣ	h
Trill								r				
Lateral Approximant								l				

Table 2-5: The consonant system of older Blanga speakers

In this system, only three place classes are represented: [+anterior –coronal], [+anterior +coronal], and [–anterior –coronal]. The fourth possible place class, the [–anterior +coronal] one is absent from the older speakers' variety (but see 2.2.8 for the younger speakers' variety). Obstruents consist of plosives and fricatives. Within the three place classes, plosives are represented in four places of articulation: labial (bilabial) for [+anterior –coronal], alveolar for [+anterior +coronal], and velar and glottal for [–anterior –coronal]. All non-glottal plosives show a phonemic three-way

contrast between voiceless aspirated, voiceless unaspirated, and voiced. No prenasalised stops are found (unlike in other Oceanic languages – see Lynch 1998). Fricatives contrast voiced with voiceless in the labial (labio-dental) and alveolar places, while the voiced velar fricative is contrasted with the voiceless glottal fricative. There are three nasals homorganic with the non-glottal plosives, one for each place class. The sonorant class is completed by a rhotic trill and a lateral approximant. There are no underlying glides, but they form at the surface, as mentioned in Section 2.1.7.1. Affricates are lacking from older people’s speech, but are emerging in younger people’s speech (2.2.8). The features characterizing the Blanga consonants are shown in Table 2-6.

	p	p ^h	b	t	t ^h	d	k	k ^h	g	m	n	ŋ	f	v	s	z	h	ɣ	l
Sonorant	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Aspirated	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Anterior	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	+
Coronal	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	+
Continuant	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Nasal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Strident	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
Lateral	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Voice	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	+

Table 2-6: Distinctive features of Blanga consonants

2.2.2 Phonemic status evidence for consonants

The minimal or near-minimal pairs or sets in the following tables illustrate the phonological contrasts within and between the different natural classes of Blanga consonants. These exclude the glottal stop, the nature of which deserves more consideration and will be investigated in 2.2.4, and the affricates characteristic to the younger generation’s speech (2.2.8). Only word-initial (I) and word-medial (M) positions are possible, since there are no codas (2.4) and thus no word-final consonants in the language. The empty boxes show that the contrast has not been attested yet in that particular position.

	I	M		I	M
b-m	bae ‘armpit’ mae ‘laugh’	ruba ‘weave’ ruma ‘enter’	g-ŋ-y	gau ‘2PL.AGR’ ŋau ‘eat’ yau ‘2PL’	grɪŋa ‘door’ greɣa ‘sister’
b-v	bakɔ ‘cheek’ vaka ‘boat’	hniba ‘possum’ hneva ‘nine’	g-h	gae ‘daylight’ hae ‘where’	sega ‘shell.sp’ seha ‘climb’
d-z	dɔu ‘be.big’ zɔu ‘plant’	fifido ‘finger’ fifiza ‘break’	f-l	fua ‘fruit’ lua ‘vomit’	ufu ‘blow’ ulu ‘front’

Table 2-7: Contrasts between the classes of plosives, fricatives and sonorants

	I	M		I	M
p	pure ‘taboo.sign’		p	papala ‘scissors’	papala ‘scissors’
p ^h	p ^h ure ‘grass.kilt’		t	tatalo ‘butterfly’	tatalo ‘butterfly’
b	p ^h ohe ‘clothing’ b ^h ohe ‘pers.name’	glapi ‘tongue’ glaba ‘moon’	k	tue ‘peel.off’ kue ‘grandparent’	p ^h o ^h ta ‘slap’ p ^h o ^h ka ‘make.copra’
	p ^h ea ‘two’ bea ‘be.insipid’			paka ‘windward’ kaka ‘elder.brother’	papa ‘hump (v.)’ paka ‘windward’
t	tue ‘peel.off’	kakatu ‘kidney’	p ^h	p ^h ae ‘destroy’	
t ^h	t ^h ue ‘mudshell.sp’	kakat ^h u ‘bite (v.)’	t ^h	t ^h ae ‘faeces’	
d	due ‘bag’	fata ‘occasion’ fada ‘shoot’ nat ^h a ‘eye’ nada ‘pound.down’	k ^h	t ^h uta ‘be.thick’ k ^h uta ‘shell.sp’ p ^h o ^h ko ‘clothing’ k ^h o ^h ko ‘fall’	
k	kou ‘drink (v.)’	doka ‘nod’	b	babara ‘wall.stick’	babara ‘wall.stick’
k ^h	k ^h ou ‘water’	dok ^h a ‘dig’	d	dadara ‘blood’	dadara ‘blood’
g	kuku ‘defecate’ guk ^h u ‘road’ k ^h uli ‘ear’ guli ‘skin’	ake ‘ouch!’ age ‘let’s go!’	g	duli ‘hit’ guli ‘skin’ bae ‘armpit’ gae ‘daylight’	ade ‘here’ age ‘go’ suba ‘put.in.mouth’ suga ‘house’

Table 2-8: Voicing, place and aspiration contrasts within the class of plosives

Contrast	I	M
f-v	faka ‘look’ vaka ‘boat’	
s-z	seku ‘tail’ zeku ‘banana’	
h-y-f	hae ‘where’ yai ‘1PL.EXCL’ fai ‘side’	hu ^y u ‘pers.name’ huhu ‘ask’ tufa ‘give’ tuya ‘push’ babahu ‘be.lucky’ babaf ^o ‘leaf.package’
f-s	fua ‘fruit’ sua ‘child’	lafi ‘fish.scale’ lase ‘know’
h-s	hi ‘FOC’ si ‘FOC’	gl ^o ha ‘bay’ gl ^o se ‘ground’
v-z		t ^h o ^v e ‘be.old’ k ^h o ^v e ‘song’
y-v	yiri ‘be.tight’ viri ‘tobacco’	hne ^y o ‘breadfruit’ hne ^v a ‘nine’

Table 2-9: Voicing and place contrasts within the class of fricatives

Contrast	I	M
m-n-ŋ	me ‘INCPT’	hmau ‘taro’
	ne ‘REAL’	hnau ‘good’
	na ‘3SG.P’	hŋalu ‘sniff’
	ŋa ‘IMM’	
r-l	rafi ‘get.dark’	sara ‘there.DIST’
	lafi ‘fish.scale’	sala ‘plant.sp’
m-r	marɔ ‘foot.infection’	hnuma ‘bone’
	rarɔ ‘pot’	hnura ‘attack’
m-l		mama ‘father’
		mala ‘PURP’
n-r	namɔ ‘near’	bana ‘build.house’
	ramɔ ‘pers.name’	bara ‘fence’
n-l	na ‘3SG.P’	nanau ‘village’
	la ‘CND’	hnalau ‘boy’
ŋ-r		nahŋɔ ‘mother-in-law’
		nahrɔ ‘string’
ŋ-l	ŋau ‘eat’	nahŋa ‘name’
	lau ‘SPC’	nahla ‘splinter’

Table 2-10: Place and manner contrasts within the class of sonorants

2.2.3 Plosives and aspiration

I am using the term *plosive* in order to refer to the class of pulmonic egressive stops that are realised exclusively with an oral air flow, as opposed to nasal stops, in which air flows through the nasal cavity during the oral closure. Blanga nasals will be discussed in 2.2.5. If one excludes the glottal stop, the nature of which is detailed in the next section, the phonemic plosives of Blanga are present at the labial, alveolar and velar places of articulation, as mentioned in 2.2.1. Their distinctive character is demonstrated by the pairs in 2.2.2. The most interesting aspect of Blanga plosives is the existence of a three-way distinction between voiceless unaspirated, voiceless aspirated, and voiced at each place of articulation. While a thorough compilation of VOT values based on multiple tokens from multiple speakers has not been carried out yet, it is, nevertheless, useful to illustrate the major differences between the three plosive types in the language. Figure 2-9 shows expanded portions of the wave forms of the words *due* ‘basket’, *tue* ‘peel off’, and *t^hue* ‘mudshell.sp’, as uttered by a male Blanga speaker. Each of the three words starts with a different alveolar plosive, voiced, voiceless, and aspirated respectively.

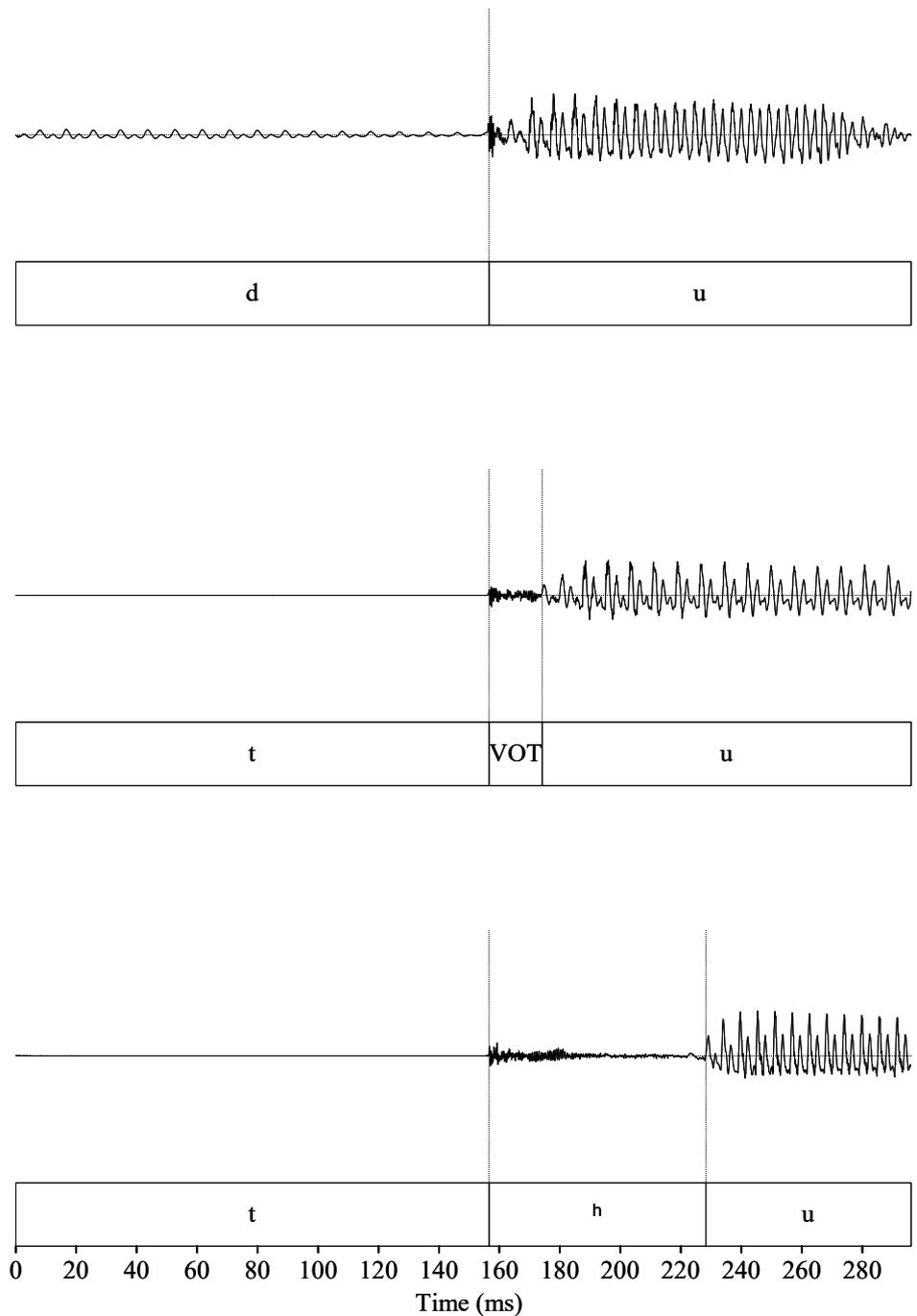


Figure 2-10: Comparative illustration of the VOT of word-initial voiced, voiceless, and aspirated alveolar plosives in the words *due* ‘basket’, *tue* ‘peel off’, and *t^hue* ‘mudshell.sp’, as uttered by a male Blanga speaker. Only the relevant sections of the words are shown in the expanded wave forms.

Figure 2-11 compares the VOT of word-medial voiced, voiceless, and aspirated alveolar plosives in the words *fada* ‘shoot’, *fata* ‘occasion’, and *natha* ‘eye’, as uttered by a male Blanga speaker.

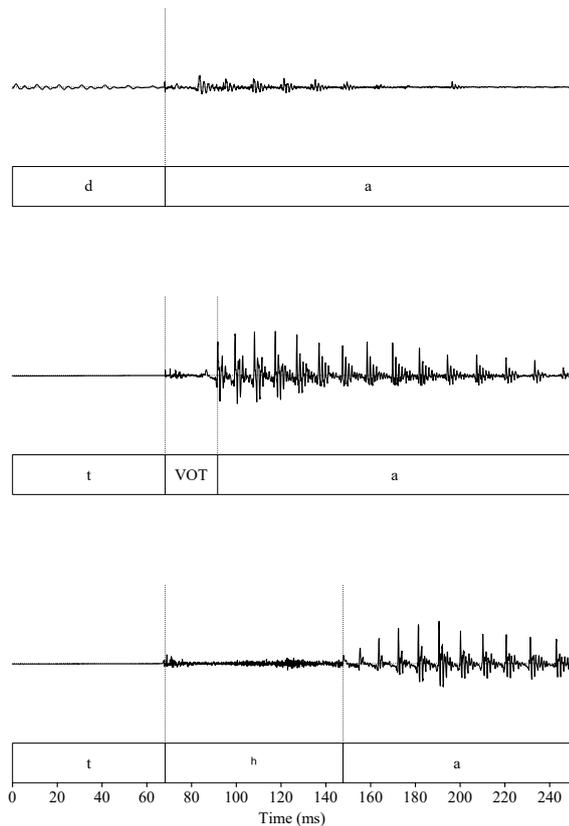


Figure 2-11: Comparative illustration of the VOT of word-medial voiced, voiceless, and aspirated alveolar plosives in the words *fada* 'shoot', *fata* 'occasion', and *nat^ha* 'eye', as uttered by a male Blanga speaker. Only the relevant sections of the words are shown in the expanded wave forms.

2.2.4 The nature of the glottal stop

In both older and younger people's speech glottal stops are present either word-internally or word-finally. The two positions appear to represent two distinct types. The former (Type 1) is purely segmental and shows some tendency of phonologisation, due to changes reflected in the younger generation's speech. The latter (Type 2) precedes a major pause and can be better described as prosodic. Phonetically, they are realised in similar ways, either with complete glottal closure (as 'real' stops) or as creaky voice (or stiff voice in some cases), the only apparent difference being that, by their nature and position, prosodic glottal stops have more chance of achieving complete closure. I shall start this section with a few remarks on the phonetic nature of the glottal stop, illustrating with examples of Type 1. I shall then analyse the distribution and phonological status of Type 1 glottal stops. Type 2 glottal stops will be mentioned in the end of this section.

Blanga Type 1 glottal stops are always word-internal and thus restricted to intervocalic position. They are rarely realised with a complete closure. Most of the time, they are identified or at least associated with a kind of creaky voice. This is not

surprising, numerous languages across the world display similar situations (Ladefoged and Maddieson 1996:75). In Blanga, even when a complete closure is achieved, the coming together of the vocal folds is gradual and includes a stage during which they are only slightly apart, allowing the airflow to create the effect of creaky voice before it is completely obstructed and also for a shorter or longer period after the release into a following vowel, if present. Creaky voice is thus physically manifested on the end of the vowel preceding the glottal stop and the beginning of the one following it, but in auditory terms part of it can also be said to be present during what is normally perceived as closure. In practice, it is difficult to set the boundaries of this glottal stop. One can choose between marking the left boundary at the beginning of the short period of complete silence, or decide to include the final vibrations of the creaky voice with the glottal stop. If, as it is the case here, the main reason of the illustration is to attest the presence of this particular glottal segment rather than to measure its length, either choice works equally fine. For segmentation's sake and in agreement with my auditory impressions², in the following examples I shall conventionally take lower amplitude creaky voice as part of the glottal stop.

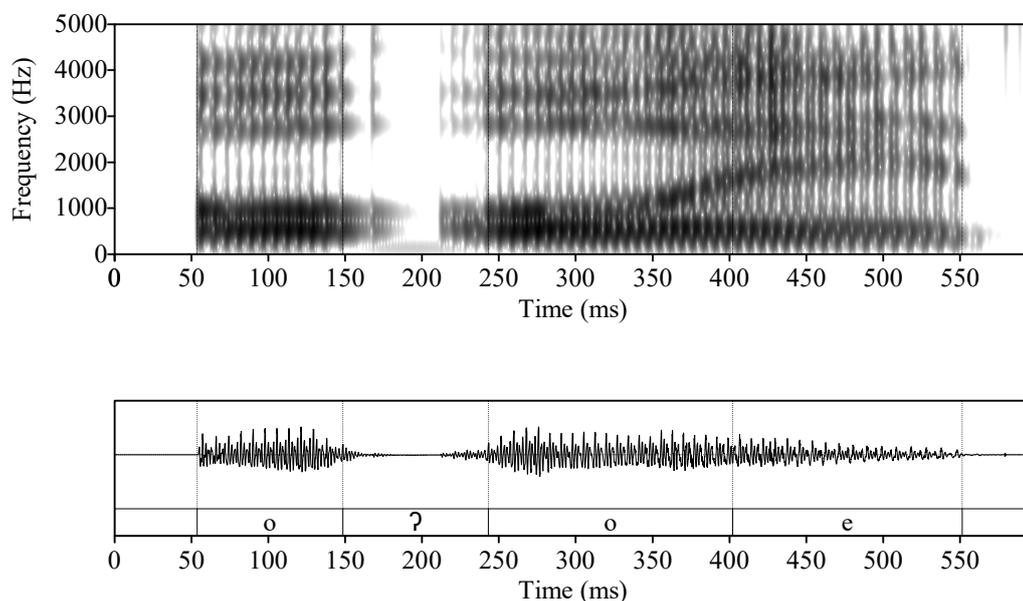


Figure 2-12: A complete closure glottal stop in the word [ɔʔə] 'talk' as uttered by a male speaker.

The spectrograms and wave forms above and below show the glottal stop with complete closure between identical (Figure 2-12) and non-identical vowels (Figure 2-13) in the words [ɔʔə] 'talk' and [maʔe] 'laugh' respectively, uttered by a male speaker.

² As mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, the auditory impressions referred to are, at this stage, exclusively mine. Like other aspects of this description, the perception of Blanga glottal stops is in need of further research.

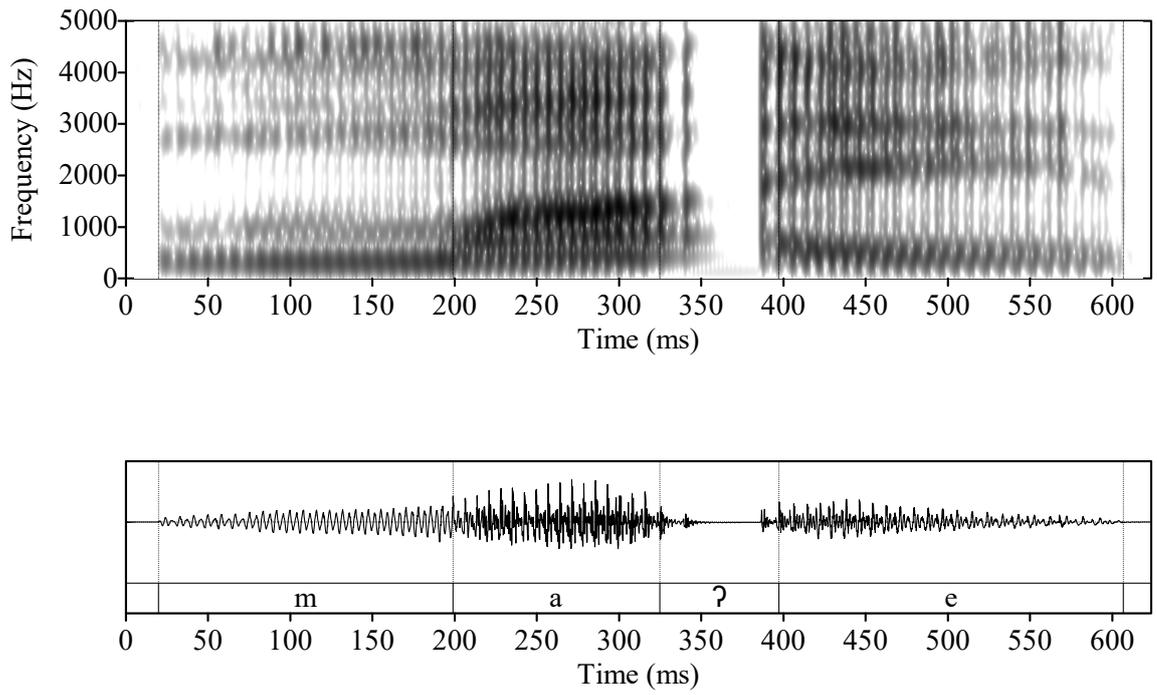


Figure 2-13: A complete closure glottal stop in the word [maʔe] 'laugh' as uttered by a male speaker.

As mentioned, complete closures are seldom present in the articulation of Blanga glottal stops. Far more often these are realised entirely as creaky voice.

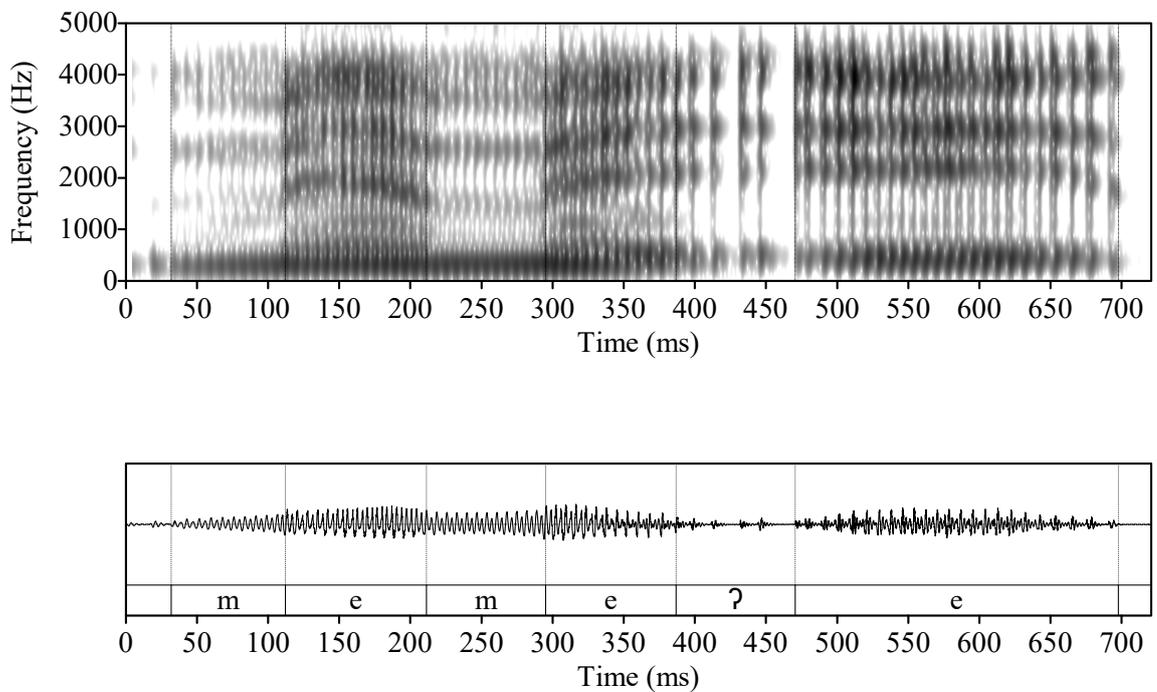


Figure 2-14: A creaky voice glottal stop in the word [memeʔe] 'paralise' uttered by a male speaker

In the cases illustrated by the words *[memeʔe]* ‘paralise’ in Figure 2-14 above and *[saʔu]* ‘apple’ in Figure 2-15 below, creaky voice starts on the vowel preceding the glottal stop. While a gradual decrease in amplitude and frequency is noticed, a complete occlusion is not physically achieved. Instead, creaky voice is maintained over a short period of minimal amplitude and frequency, followed by a gradual increase of both as the following vowel is uttered. Creaky voice is turning into modal voice as this vowel reaches its highest amplitude.

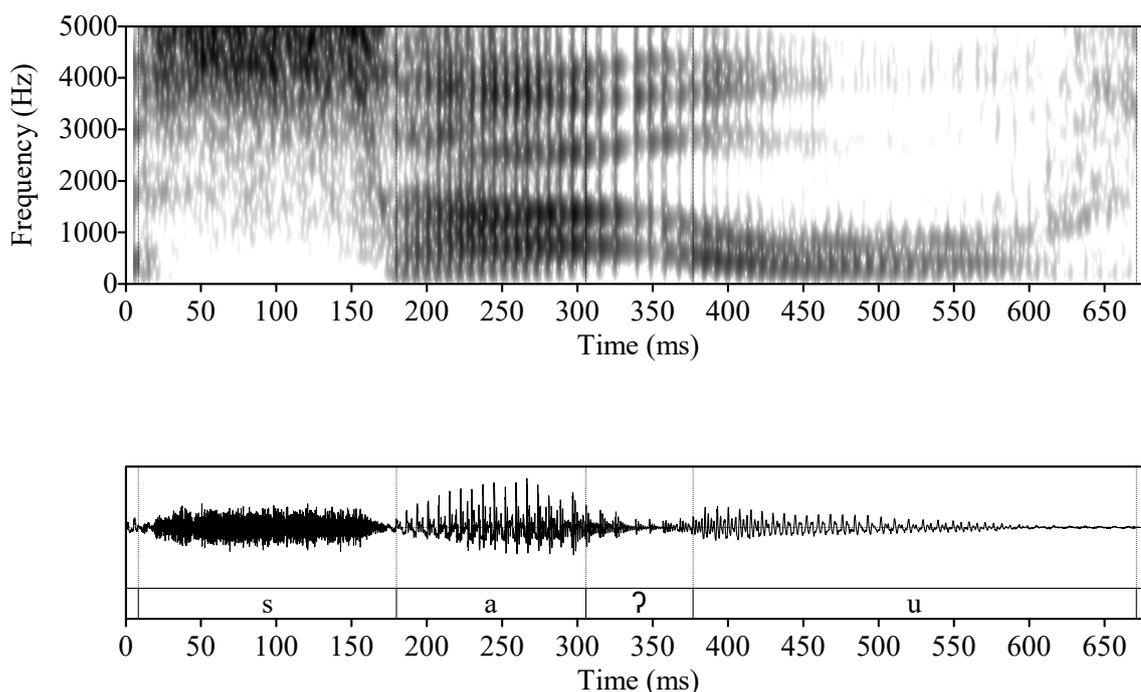


Figure 2-15: A creaky voice glottal stop in the word *[saʔu]* ‘apple’ uttered by a male speaker.

The presence or absence of a complete glottal closure in intervocalic position is not conditioned by the quality of the vowels. In Figure 2-12 above, the word *[ɔʔɔe]* ‘talk’ was used to illustrate a case of complete closure glottal stop. In Figure 2-16 below, the same word uttered by the same consultant shows only partial glottal closure, the pattern being more similar to those in Figure 2-14 and Figure 2-15. On this occasion, the word was uttered utterance-initially and noticeably faster. The occurrence of different degrees of glottal closure is most probably a matter of rapidity of speech: the faster the speech, the lesser the chance of a complete closure. In even more rapid speech, some creaky or stiff voice is still present on the vowels, thus suggesting at least some attempt of glottal closure, but there is only slight or no decrease in amplitude between them. At the extreme, no glottal closure of any degree may occur, and the two vowels can even coalesce if identical (2.1.7.2).

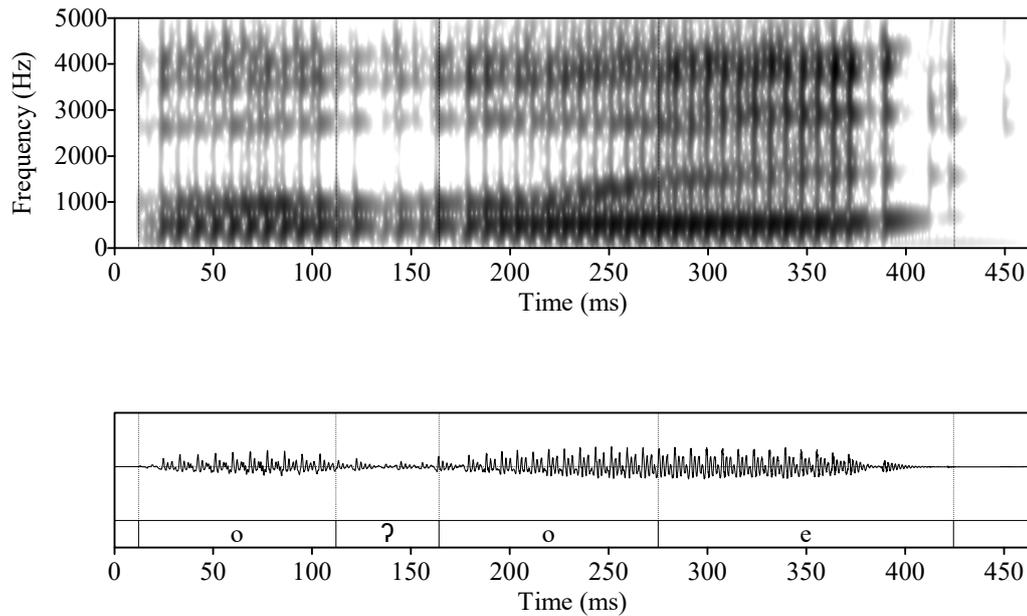


Figure 2-16: The word [oʔoe] 'talk' spoken by the same speaker as before, this time utterance-initially and faster.

Therefore, what is here referred to as a glottal stop is actually realised by a continuum of degrees of glottal closure in inverse proportion with the speed of speech. At one end of the continuum, where slow or careful speech is involved, there is complete closure of the vocal folds, preceded and followed by creaky voice. At the opposite end, that of very fast speech, there is no glottal closure of any kind and no creaky voice perceived. In between, there are different degrees of creaky or stiff voice. The different degrees of glottal closure in Blanga are not phonologically relevant. I shall, therefore, take any of those as manifestations of the same phenomenon, which I shall continue to call *glottal stop*. The question whether this glottal stop is phonemic or not will be addressed in the rest of this section.

In Section 2.1.7, I showed that glottal stop epenthesis is used as one of the strategies for hiatus avoidance. That is what I referred to at the beginning of this section as the 'Type 1' glottal stop. A look at the distribution of this glottal stop will show that it can be found either between identical or non-identical vowels. Most sequences of identical vowels appear in reduplicated forms (2.5). With some of these, the unreduplicated form is attested.

/a.au/ → [aʔau] 'remain' from /a.u/ → [au] 'exist/stay'

Others are cases of frozen reduplication and synchronic unreduplicated forms are not present in the language.

/i.izu/ → [iʔizu] 'write'/'scribble', most probably from */izu/

/ɔ.ɔe/ → [ɔʔɔe] 'language'/'talk' most probably from */ɔe/

The forms above illustrate partial reduplication of originally monosyllabic words (2.5.1) and, if one doesn't take the more general tendency of hiatus avoidance (2.1.7) into account, it may seem that the glottal stop compensates for the segment lost in the echo syllable.

Not all VV sequences are the result of reduplication. Many seem to involve the deletion or metathesis of a consonant segment. For some words, this hypothesis is supported by cognates from related language within or outside the Northwest Solomonic cluster.

suu 'breast/suck' ← **susu*; cf. Uruava *susu* 'breast' (Palmer 2007); Longgu *susu* 'breast.milk' (Hill 1992 and 2002)

froo 'squeeze' ← **foro*; cf. Cheke Holo *foro* 'coconut milk' (resulted from squeezing grated coconut) (White, Kokhonigita and Pulomana 1988)

glaa 'be.thin' ← **gala*; cf. East Futuna *hala* 'thin' (Moyse-Faurie 1993)

For other words, no cognates have been found yet.

baa 'fish.sp', *nathuu* 'tomorrow'

The phonological processes mentioned above change a V_iCV_i sequence into a V_iV_i one. This could trigger coalescence of the identical vowels into a single one, which in turn would reduce the number of syllables. An epenthetic glottal stop prevents that from happening, resulting in $[V_i?V_i]$. Therefore glottal epenthesis may be not only hiatus avoidance, but also an attempt to compensate for a lost segment and thus preserve the number of syllables in the word.

There is also synchronic evidence for this. The voiced velar fricative is often dropped in intervocalic position in connected speech (2.2.10). If this happens between two identical vowels, then a glottal stop is inserted rather than the two vowels coalescing.

$/gayase/ \rightarrow *[gase]$

but

$/gayase/ \rightarrow [ga?ase]$ 'girl'/'female'

Glottal stops may also be inserted between non-identical vowels, as illustrated by the examples on the next page. Section 2.1.7 explains both $V_i?V_i$ and $V_i?V_j$ sequences as a means of hiatus avoidance when coalescence, glide formation and diphthong formation are blocked by different constraints, or in slow or casual speech. In the former case, surface glottal epenthesis may also compensate for the historical or synchronic loss of an intervocalic segment but there is so far no evidence of phonemic status.

/fu.a/ → [fu.ʔa] ‘fruit’
 /ku.e/ → [ku.ʔe] ‘grandparent’
 /gru.i/ → [gru.ʔi] ‘plant (v.)’
 /gle.a/ → [gle.ʔa] ‘be.happy’
 /k^hɔ.a/ → [k^hɔ.ʔa] ‘mangrove’
 /pe.pe.ɔ/ → [pe.pe.ʔɔ] ‘lip’
 /knɔ.e/ → [knɔ.ʔe] ‘be.short’
 /ma.e/ → [ma.ʔe] ‘laugh’
 /p^ha.u/ → [p^ha.ʔu] ‘head’
 /dɔ.u/ → [dɔ.ʔu] ‘be.big’
 /k^he.i/ → [k^he.ʔi] ‘tooth’

Moreover, the possibility of the glottal stop being a positional allophone of a different consonant phoneme is dismissed by comparing surface realisations of phonologically non-contrastive pairs such as those below.

/su.u/ → [su.ʔu] ‘breast’/‘suck’ vs. /su.pu/ → [su.pu] ‘soup’
 /gla.a/ → [gla.ʔa] ‘be.thin’ vs. /gla.ba/ → [gla.ba] ‘moon’
 /fɔ.fɔ.ɔ/ → [fɔ.fɔ.ʔɔ] ‘Adam’s apple’ vs. /fɔ.fɔ.t^hɔ/ → [fɔ.fɔ.t^hɔ] ‘lid/cover’
 /ba.a/ → [ba.ʔa] ‘fish.sp’ vs. /ba.ra/ → [ba.ra] ‘fence’
 /hnu.a/ → [hnu.ʔa] ‘gulf’ vs. /hnu.ra/ → [hnu.ra] ‘attack’
 /lu.a/ → [lu.ʔa] ‘vomit’ vs. /lu.za/ → [lu.za] ‘loud’
 /ma.e/ → [ma.ʔe] ‘laugh’ vs. /ma.ne/ → [ma.ne] ‘man’
 /bɔ.e/ → [bɔ.ʔe] ‘be.rotten’ vs. /bɔ.se/ → [bɔ.se] ‘be.wet’

Notice that the above are not minimal pairs in the phonological sense. The glottal stop can be regarded as having phonological status only if pairs that contrast it with zero can be found. Such pairs are absent from the older generation’s inventory but a limited number of them occur in the younger generation’s speech. These are limited to the pairs below and perhaps a few others, which are not attested in my corpus.

/ba.ba.ɔ/ ‘be.tired’ vs. /ba.ba.ʔɔ/ ‘carry.on.back’
 /p^ha.e/ ‘destroy’ vs. /p^ha.ʔe/ ‘be.bright’
 /ku.e/ ‘grandparent’/‘in-law’ vs. /ku.ʔe/ ‘sound made by pig’
 /fu.a/ ‘fruit’ vs. /fu.ʔa/ ‘be loaded with fruit’
 /k^hɔ.a/ ‘mangrove’ vs. /k^hɔ.ʔa/ ‘testicle’

The pairs above suggest that the glottal stop has acquired some marginal phonemic status in the Blanga variety spoken by the younger generation. It is important to notice that all of them are also attested in Cheke Holo, where the glottal stop is described as phonemic (White, Kokhonigita and Pulomana 1988; Boswell, forthcoming). At the current stage, due to its very restricted distribution, I incline to regard this marginal phonologisation of the glottal stop as a relatively recent innovation due to Cheke Holo influence. In a very incipient stage, it is difficult to tell whether an innovation will eventually be adopted or not. Moreover, the examples are elicited and I have the impression that in naturally occurring speech the younger speakers do not always observe the contrast. The older consultants make no formal difference whatsoever between the members of the pairs. Indeed, for them the difference is only semantic, the forms being simply homonymous. At this stage, it is safer to talk about a *tendency* of marginal phonologisation of the glottal stop. The process is neither general, nor complete.

Blanga Type 2 glottal stops, mentioned at the beginning of this section, appear to mark some sort of major pause. They occur at the end of words in item enumeration, both in elicited examples and natural speech and are characterised by a delayed release. I intend to investigate their nature as part of a study of Blanga prosody and information structure, which I plan to carry out at a post-doctoral level.

2.2.5 Sonorants and voicing

If one does not count the glottal stop, all Blanga obstruents have a voicing contrast. In the context of the Isabel subgroup, it is also necessary to clarify that Blanga sonorants do not exhibit the same contrast. The members of this class are only voiced, as is usually the case across languages. Although highly marked and quite rare cross-linguistically, phonemic voiceless sonorants do appear in some languages (Ladefoged and Maddieson 2006:111-116, 198-199). The presence of voiceless sonorant phones has been signalled in Kokota, the western neighbour of Blanga, and Palmer (1999b; see also 1999a:28-31 and 2009:24) brings substantial evidence for their status as phonemes. Kokota voiced sonorants, which are the same as those of Blanga, each have a voiceless counterpart. While the possibility of the Kokota voiceless sonorants being simply devoiced positional allophones of the voiced ones is ruled out by the existence of minimal pairs, they may still be the result of the surface coalescence between /h/ and voiced sonorants. Indeed, in terms of correspondences, those voiceless Kokota segments appear in positions where Blanga cognates show a consonant cluster consisting of the

glottal fricative /h/ followed by a (voiced) sonorant. However, evidence from constraints on consonant clusters, reduplication patterns, diachronic change, and native speaker judgements all seem to contradict the surface coalescence hypothesis and Palmer (1999b:87-88) concludes that, although diachronically derived from a sequence of sonorants plus /h/ (most probably in this order), Kokota voiceless sonorants are synchronically separate phonemes.

Kokota is not the only Isabel language that has been described as having phonemic voiceless sonorants. In a more recent work, Boswell (forthcoming) makes the same claim for Cheke Holo, a language which neighbours Blanga to the east and in which most Blanga speakers are bilingual (Chapter 1, *passim*). Unfortunately, except for a few minimal or near-minimal pairs, Boswell does not bring evidence to support the fact that Cheke Holo has undergone the same diachronic process as Kokota.

The problem requiring careful investigation in Kokota was to clarify the underlying status of some sonorant phones that, to my understanding, always surface as voiceless in that particular language, or at least show devoicing on most of their duration. Are they underlyingly voiceless segments or clusters? For Blanga, on the other hand, it is enough to notice that when preceded by /h/ in consonant clusters, sonorants always surface as voiced, as in the corresponding underlying representations. There are no phonemic voiceless sonorants in Blanga. What could be interpreted as such are in fact clusters of /h/ plus voiced sonorant.

In the wave forms and spectrograms below, the glottal fricative and the sonorant clearly appear as distinct segments. Voicing builds very quickly on the sonorant and is then present for its entire duration. An analysis of words containing all the possible /h/ plus sonorant clusters in both initial and medial position and embedded in the same frame sentence shows overwhelmingly similar patterns.

Figure 2-17, Figure 2-18, Figure 2-19, Figure 2-20 on the next page show /h/ plus sonorant clusters in word-initial position in the words *hmɔgɔ* ‘snake’, *hnagae* ‘day’, *hɲagli* ‘shake’, and *hlabɔ* ‘piper betel fruit’. After a period of voicelessness, which represents the articulation of [h], voicing on the sonorant is clearly visible both on the wave forms and on the voice bar of the spectrograms. Some tendency towards allophonic devoicing may be represented by the lower frequencies and amplitudes displayed by the sonorants in these examples. However, no such thing is noticed in the examples in Figure 2-5, Section 2.1.4, which shows waveforms of the cluster /hm/ in word-medial position in the words *nahma* ‘love’ and *nahmata* ‘bush’. It would be

theoretically too far-fetched to label such phones as ‘voiceless sonorants’ as long as acoustic evidence shows that they surface as voiced.

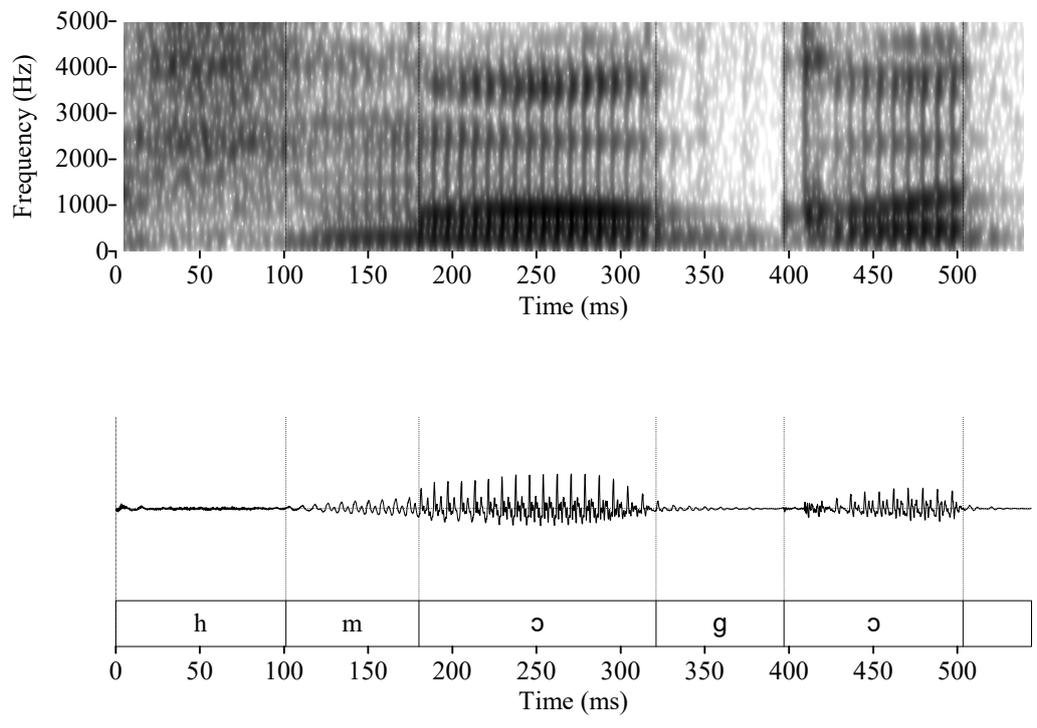


Figure 2-17: Word-initial [h] plus sonorant clusters in hməɔ ‘snake’.

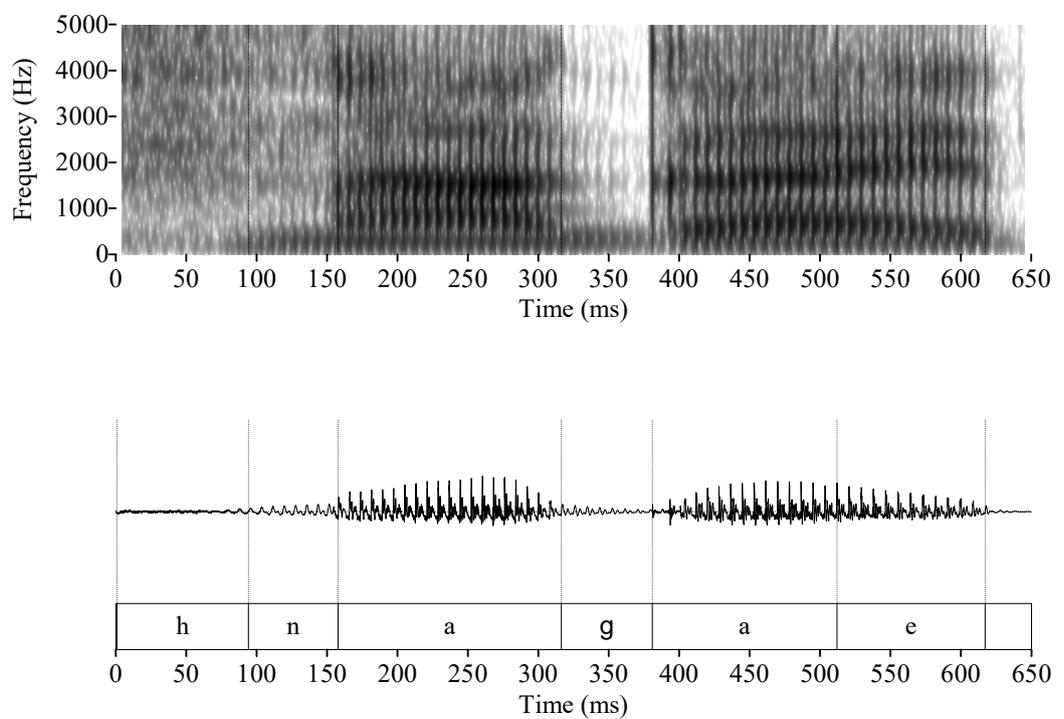


Figure 2-18: Word-initial [h] plus sonorant clusters in hnəgə ‘day’

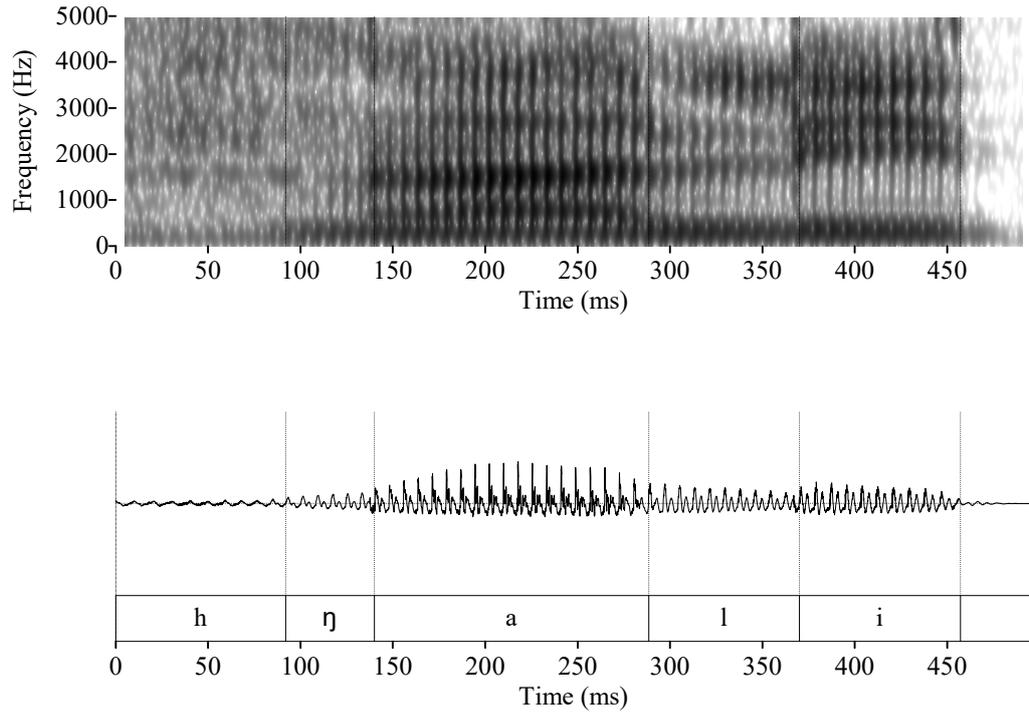


Figure 2-19: Word-initial [h] plus sonorant clusters in hŋagli ‘shake’

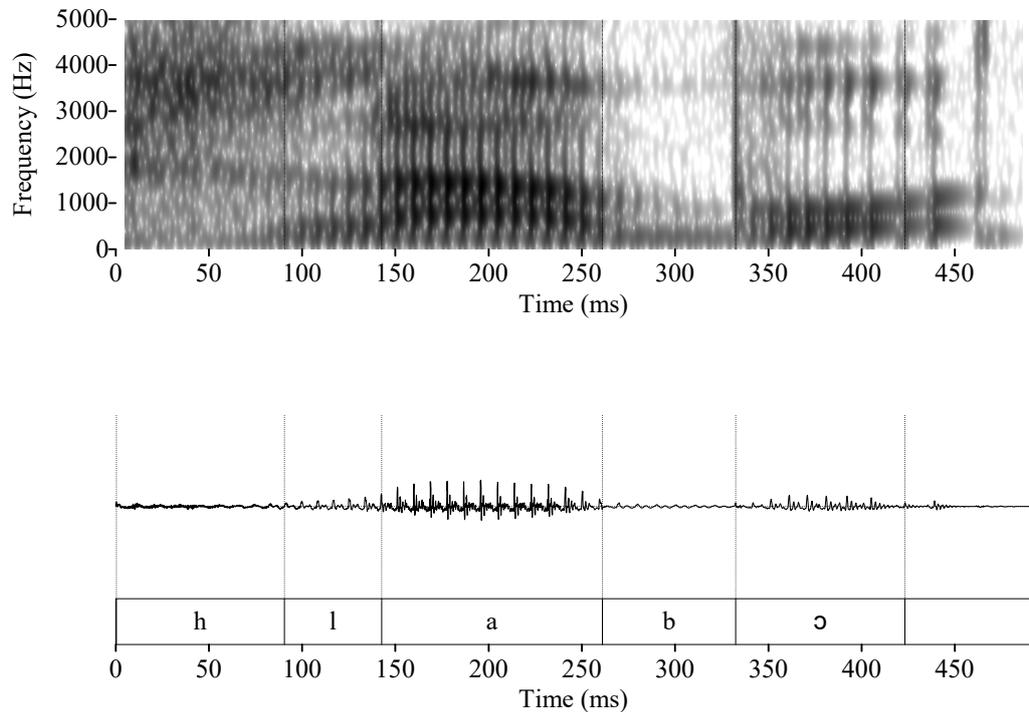


Figure 2-20: Word-initial [h] plus sonorant clusters in hlabɔ ‘piper betel fruit’.

Sonorants therefore do not assimilate to the voicelessness of a preceding [h]. On the contrary, word medially, where only a post-vocalic position is possible, it seems that the /h/ of such clusters acquires some degree of voicing due to the voiced character of the precedent vowel and the following sonorant, thus /h/ → [ɦ]. This is illustrated by

words such as /nəhmə/ → [nəhmə] ‘listen’ and /sahlu/ → [sahlu] ‘be.smooth’ in Figure 2-21 and Figure 2-22 below. Vibrations during the entire length of the glottal fricative also occur in the wave forms in Figure 2-5, Section 2.1.4 above.

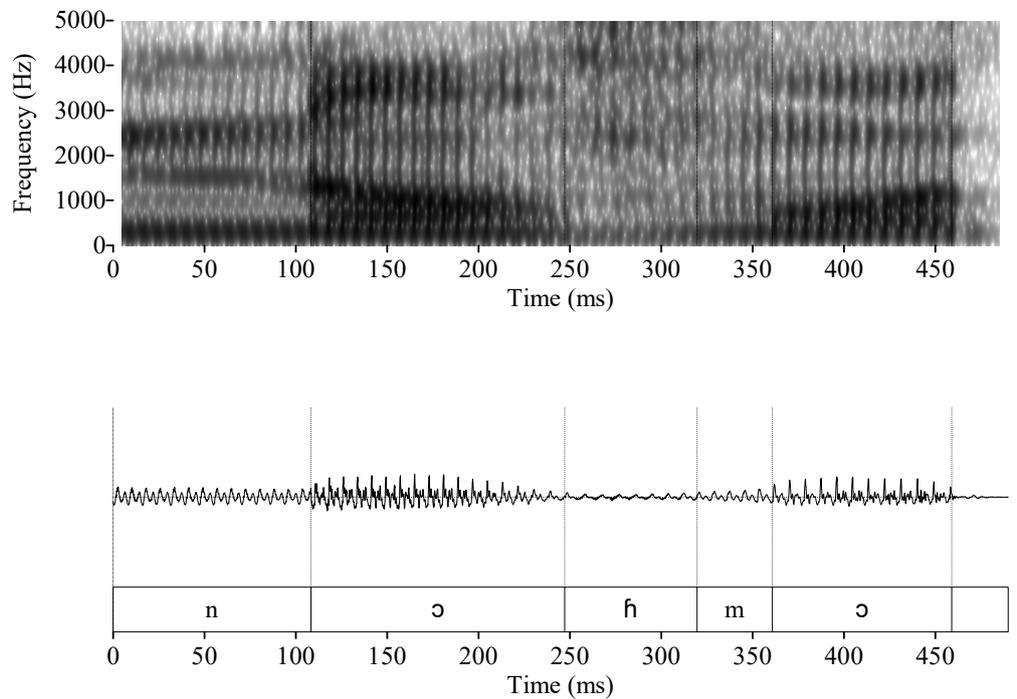


Figure 2-21: Allophonic voiced glottal fricative between a vowel and a sonorant in the word nəhmə ‘listen’.

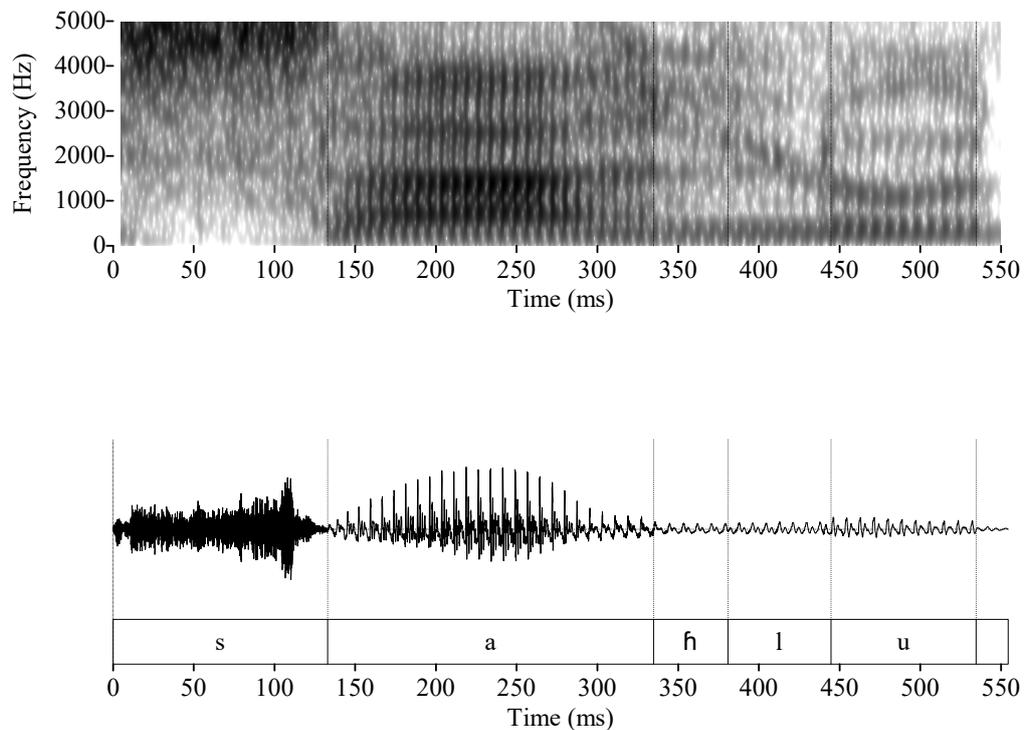


Figure 2-22: Allophonic voiced glottal fricative between a vowel and a sonorant in the word sahlū ‘be.smooth’.

The same process, /h/ → [h̥], occurs across word boundaries when there is no pausing break between a word-initial [h] plus sonorant cluster and the word that precedes it.

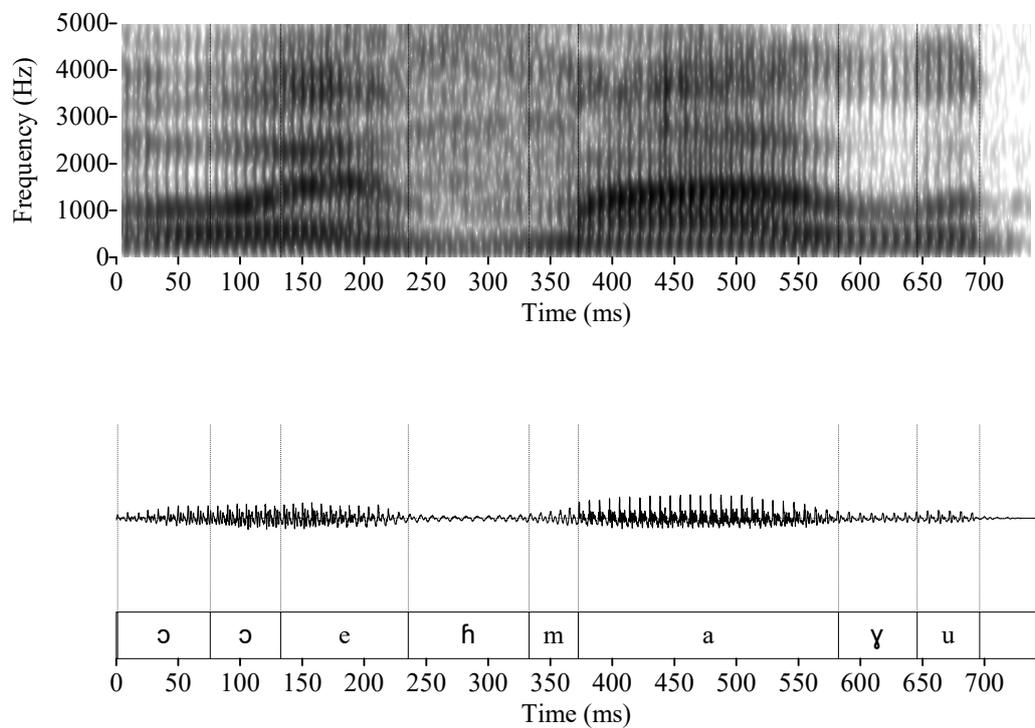


Figure 2-23: Allophonic voicing of the glottal fricative in hmayu 'fear' due to the final vowel in the preceding word.

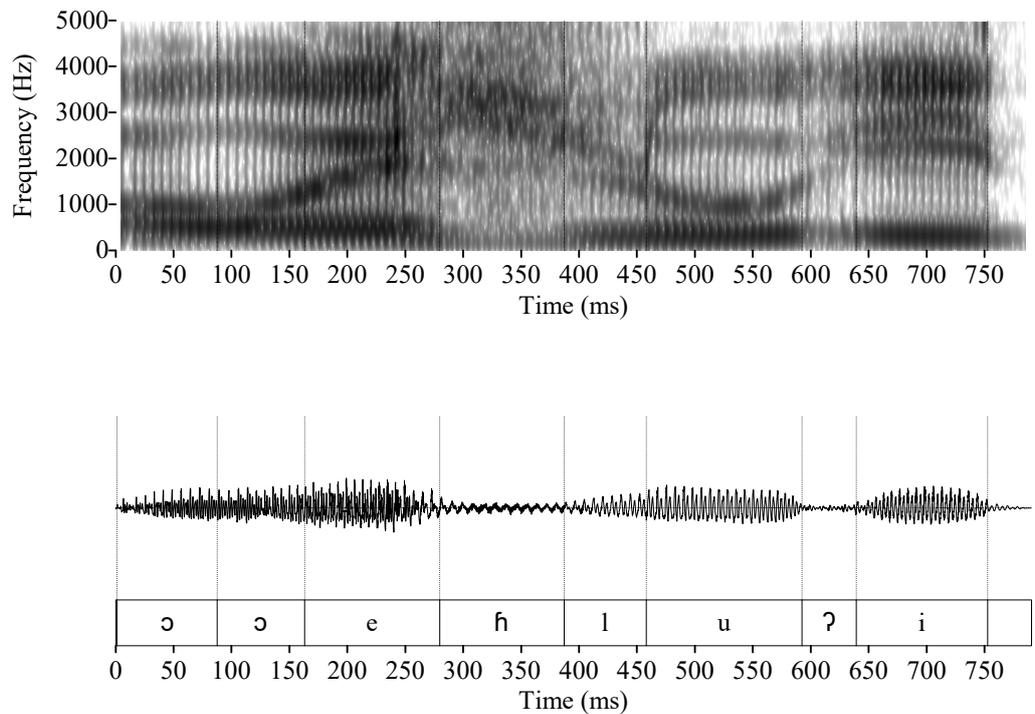


Figure 2-24: Allophonic voicing of the glottal fricative in hlui 'lamp' due to the final vowel in the preceding word.

Figure 2-23 and Figure 2-24 above show the words *hmayu* ‘fear’ and *hlui* ‘lamp’ embedded in the sentence *ɔɛ ___ tana ba* ‘what does the word ___ mean?’. Only the initial section of the sentence is shown in the figures.

2.2.6 The rhotic

At the surface, there are two main rhotic realisations in Blanga, an apico-alveolar trill and a tap. Quite often, the rhotic will surface as a trill in word-initial position or in the environment C_V, as in [ruba] ‘weave’, [hreta] ‘be.strong’, and as a tap intervocalically, as in [maneri] ‘3.PL’ and [rereyi] ‘look after’. The tap appears to be more frequent than the trill, a fact which is justified by the higher frequency of the VrV environment, while due to phonotactic constraints, the CrV environment is only possible if the rhotic is the second element of a consonant cluster (2.4). While it is clear that we are dealing with a single underlying form, further examples also show that the two surface realisations are not actually conditioned by environment, as seems to be the case at a superficial analysis. The figures below prove that intervocalic trills are not excluded and taps are possible word-initially or in clusters. Each of the words *repea* ‘2.DL’, *brahu* ‘be.long’, and *arɔ* ‘DEM.T.PL’ are represented by two tokens uttered on different occasions by the same speaker and embedded in the same frame sentence. For each word, one token contains an apico-alveolar tap and the other an apico-alveolar trill.

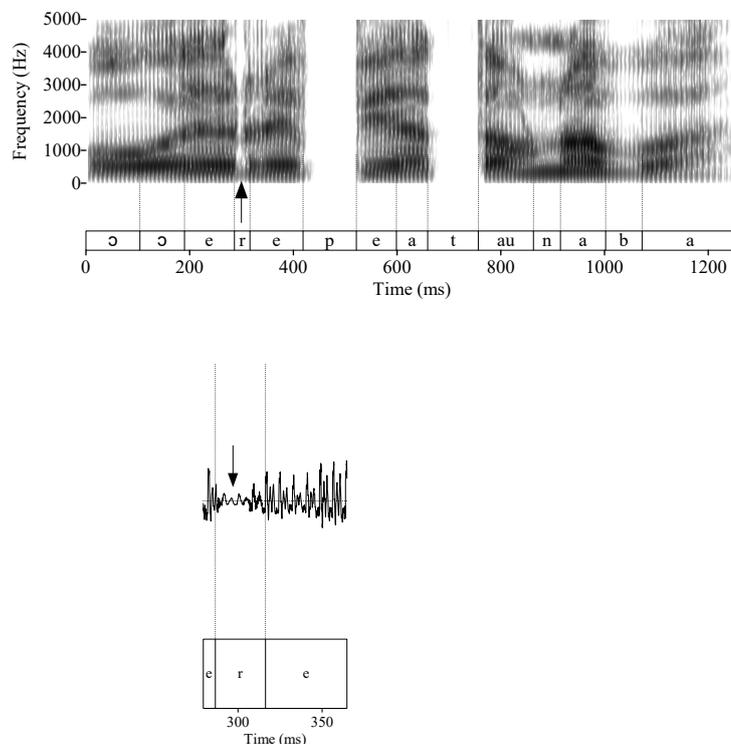


Figure 2-25: The spectrogram of the word *repea* ‘2.DL’ embedded in the sentence *ɔɛ ___ tana ba* ‘what does the word ___ mean?’ and the enlarged wave form of a detached portion of it, both showing the rhotic surfacing as a tap.

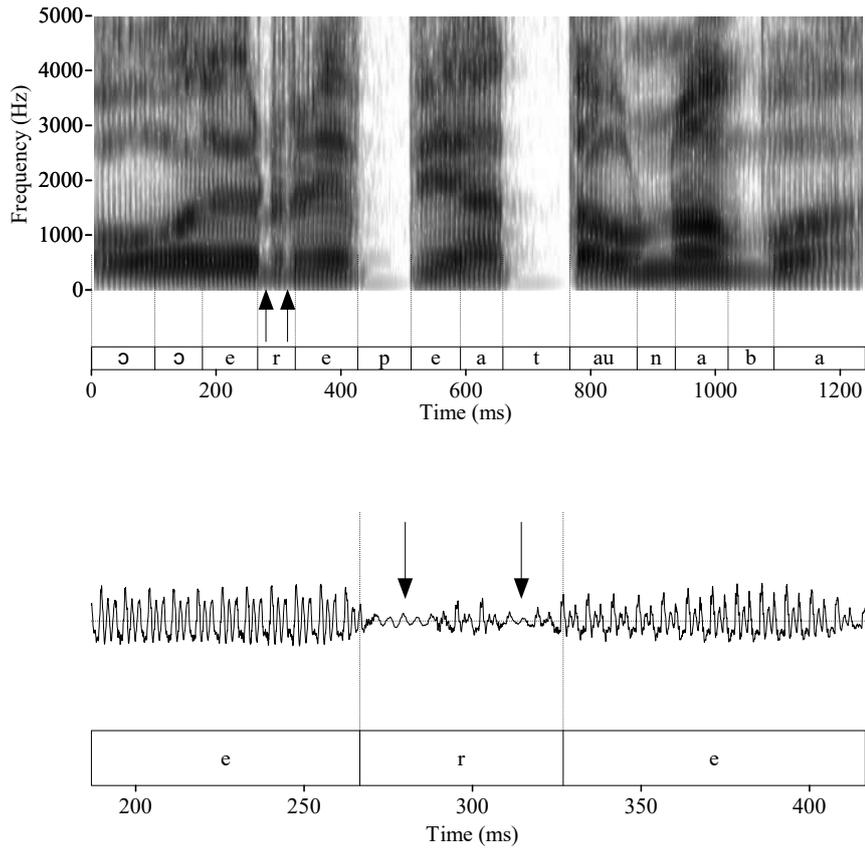


Figure 2-26: The spectrogram of the word *repa* '2.DL' embedded in the sentence *ɔɔ - tana ba* 'what does the word ___ mean?' and the enlarged wave form of a detached portion of it, both showing the rhotic surfacing as a trill.

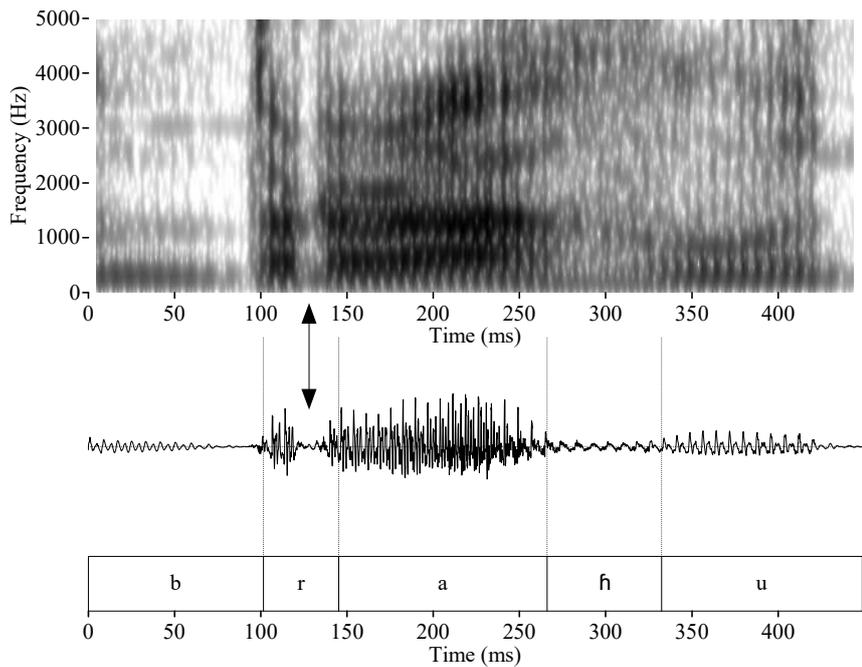


Figure 2-27: The spectrogram and waveform of the word *brahu* 'be.long' showing the rhotic surfacing as a tap.

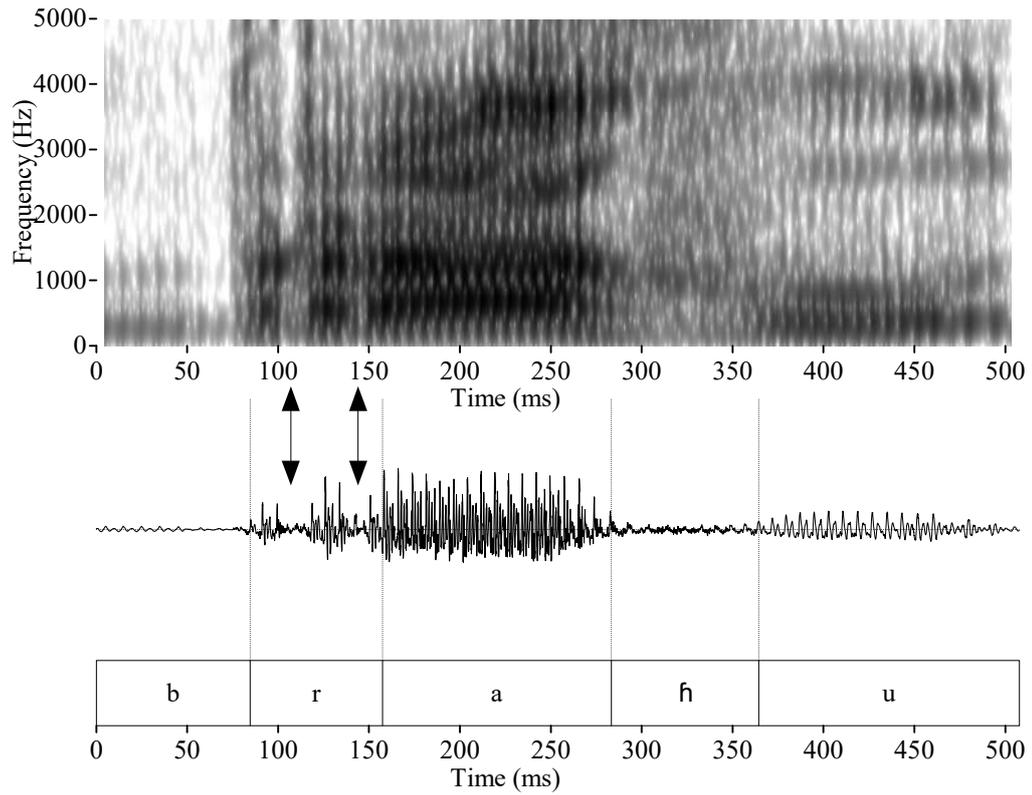


Figure 2-28: The spectrogram and waveform of the word brahu 'be.long' showing the rhotic surfacing as a trill.

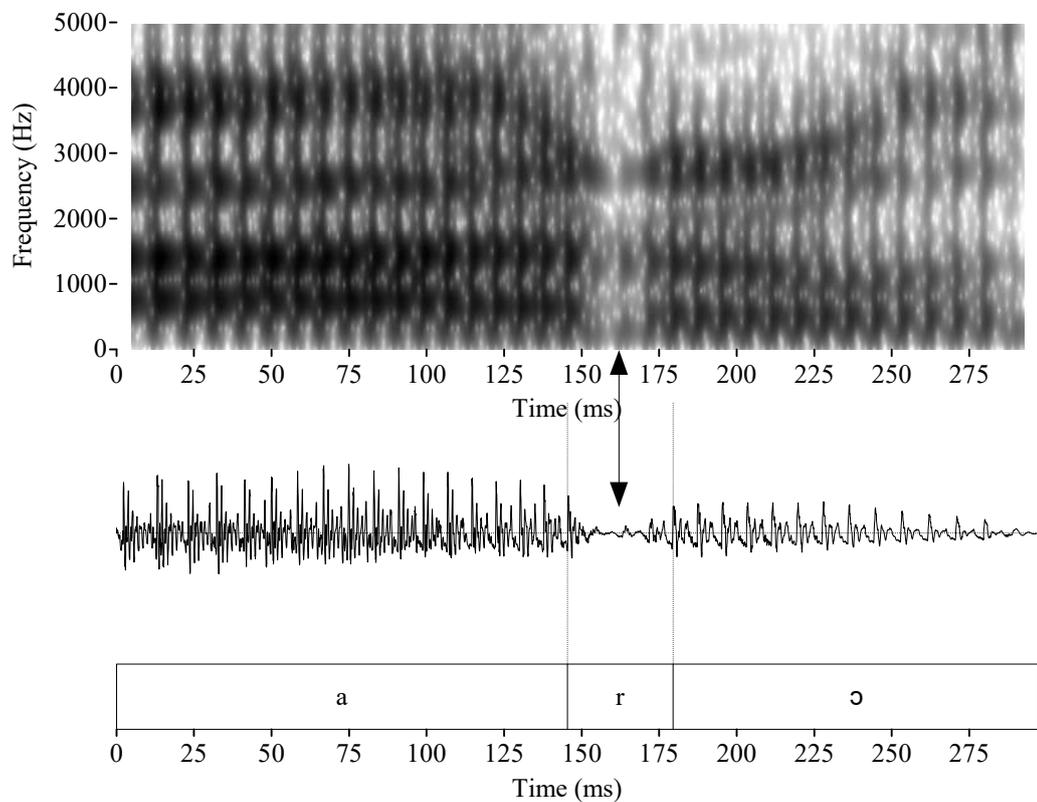


Figure 2-29: The spectrogram and waveform of the word aro 'DEM.T.PL' showing the rhotic surfacing as a tap.

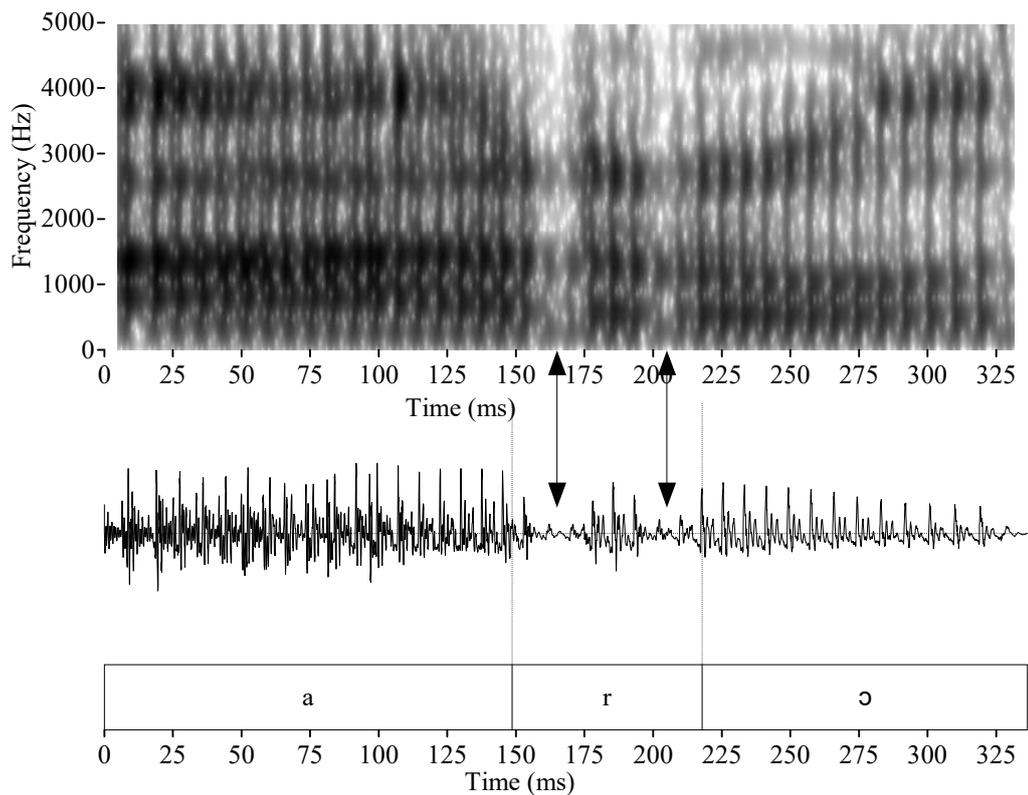


Figure 2-30: The spectrogram and waveform of the word *arə* ‘DEM.T.PL’ showing the rhotic surfacing as a trill.

A general physiological explanation of such phenomenon is offered by Ladefoged and Maddieson (1996:217-218) and particular reference can be made to the case of apical trills, where the tongue tip is expected to vibrate two or more times against the alveolar ridge, versus realisations where only one tap of the tongue against the alveolar ridge is present.

The aperture size and airflow must fall within critical limits for trilling to occur, and quite small deviations mean that it will fail. As a result, trills tend to vary with non-trilled pronunciations.

If we follow Ladefoged and Maddieson in considering “trills to be sounds made with an articulatory configuration appropriate for vibration, regardless of whether vibration actually occurs”, then we can conclude that the Blanga rhotic is a trill, while tap-like realisations are allophones in free distribution. Apparently, the ideal articulatory configurations for apico-alveolar trills in Blanga are more frequently achieved in word-initial position or C_V environment.

2.2.7 Fricatives

Fricatives are represented in all three place classes common to the older and younger Blanga speakers. In both generation groups, the [+anterior –coronal] class contrasts voiceless with voiced in the labiodental place of articulation, while in the [–anterior –coronal] class a voiceless glottal fricative is contrasted with a voiced velar fricative. The [+anterior +coronal] class is represented by both a voiceless and a voiced alveolar fricative, /s/ and /z/ respectively, only in the older Blanga generation's variety. The younger generation's variety is unbalanced in this respect due to the voiced alveolar fricative having been replaced by an affricate, as shown in the next section. I have symbolised the Blanga sibilants here as /s/ and /z/ as they are more frequently realised as apico-alveolar. However, there is no contrast between alveolar and postalveolar, and they many times surface as lamino-post-alveolar. Apico-post-alveolar articulations are also attested and most possibly reflect a phase in the process of changing /z/ into /dʒ/ in the younger generation's variety.

2.2.8 The emergence of affricates in Blanga

In younger people's speech, the voiced alveolar fricative /z/ has been replaced by an affricate. This is most frequently realized as [dʒ], but there is variation between idiolects, the affricate being produced by some speakers as [dz] or even as a kind of [dʒ]. The different surface realizations may appear in free variation in the same idiolect and the range of possible phonetic articulation places for one phonological segment may reflect different stages of the change. Based on frequency, I shall henceforth refer to this affricate as the postalveolar /dʒ/. The appearance of the postalveolar affricate introduces the place class [–anterior +coronal], which is absent from the older generation's speech (2.2.1).

The voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ is only in the process of being gradually replaced by /tʃ/. Unlike with /z/, the change of /s/ seems to be neither general, nor complete. Interestingly, young speakers use /tʃ/ in some instances where old speakers use /s/ but with significant exceptions. One illustrative example is the case of the word pronounced /'suu/ by the older generation, which can be either the word for 'breast' or for 'suck'. Younger speakers have /'tʃuu/ for the former meaning but keep /'suu/ for the latter, thus generating a contrast between /s/ and /tʃ/. Another example is the pair consisting of *sara* 'there.DIST' and the Cheke Holo loanword *tʃara* 'rubbish'. This means creating a system in which, while the voiced alveolar fricative /z/ became the affricate /dʒ/ in all positions, thus no phonemic contrast existing between the two, the

emergence of the voiceless affricate / tʃ/ did not lead to the complete disappearance of /s/, the tendency being to keep the former, at least in order to avoid homonymy. This tendency is weak at this stage but it does affect the voicing balance of the consonant system of the younger generation of Blanga speakers, which is the one in Table 2-11. The glottal stop is included but written in italics to point out its possible marginal phonemic status (2.2.4).

	Bilabial			Labiodental		Alveolar			Velar			Glottal
Plosive	p	p ^h	b			t	t ^h	d	k	k ^h	g	ʔ
Nasal			m					n			ŋ	
Fricative				f	v	s					ɣ	h
Affricate						tʃ		dʒ				
Trill								r				
Lateral Approximant								l				

Table 2-11: The consonant system of the younger generation of Blanga speakers. The symbol in italics represents a possible marginal phoneme.

2.2.9 Secondary articulations

When two articulations occur simultaneously, there are two possibilities as far as the distance between the active and passive articulators is concerned: either they involve similar degrees of stricture or one articulatory gesture can be realised with a greater degree of closure than the other. The segments resulting in the former case are considered to be doubly-articulated, while, in the latter situation, the lesser closure is regarded as secondary and one is dealing with segments with secondary articulations (Ladefoged and Maddieson 1996:328). Doubly-articulated segments are typologically rare and have not been attested in Blanga, whereas secondarily-articulated allophones appear in predictable positions.

2.2.9.1 Palatalisation

Palatalisation attempts to superimpose a dorso-palatal secondary articulation on a primary articulation. Ladefoged and Maddieson (1996:363-365) describe different palatalisation strategies for bilabial, coronal and dorsal consonants respectively. With bilabials, the secondary articulation is easily achieved without altering the primary one, for which the tongue position is irrelevant. In the case of coronals, a slight change in the location of the primary constriction may be required for the tongue body to be able to rise towards the palate. Lastly, when the targeted consonants are themselves dorsal (the case of velars) palatalisation can no longer involve a secondary articulation and is exclusively realised by a change of place of a single constriction from the velar to the

palatal area. Only this third strategy is relevant for Blanga, since only consonants bearing the features [–anterior –coronal] have palatalised allophones in the language.

In Blanga, the [–anterior –coronal] series consists of two place classes, namely velar and glottal (2.2.1). Velar consonants are often palatalised as a result of coarticulation with a following front vowel.

/kiriɔ/ → [çiriɔ] ‘porpoise’, /hmuki/ → [hmuci] ‘tree.sp’, /ikia/ → [icia] ‘be small’
 /kesu/ → [cesu] ‘mango’, /hmeke/ → [hmece] ‘dog’, /kekesu/ → [cecesu] ‘liver’
 /k^hinau/ → [ç^hinau] ‘leaf mat’, /kik^hina/ → [çik^hina] ‘hold (v.)’
 /k^hei/ → [ç^hei] ‘tooth’, /nak^heu/ → [naç^heu] ‘earthquake’
 /gibi/ → [çibi] ‘puddle/pond’, /nagihi/ → [naçihi] ‘thatch’, /raqi/ → [raçi] ‘dance’
 /geri/ → [çeri] ‘edge’, /gegehu/ → [çeçehu] ‘eyebrow’, /age/ → [açe] ‘go’
 /deŋiɔ/ → [deçiɔ] ‘place name’, /griŋi/ → [griçi] ‘wall’
 /ŋeŋɔ/ → [çeŋɔ] ‘yellow’, /frihŋe/ → [friçhŋe] ‘work (v.)’
 /çita/ → [çita] ‘1.PL.INCL’, /giçizu/ → [giçizu] ‘headland’, /manahayi/ → [manahaji] ‘want’
 /yepea/ → [jepea] ‘1.DL.EXCL’, /geyesu/ → [gejesu] ‘nail’, /aye/ → [açe] ‘and’

Based on auditory impressions, the high front vowel seems to trigger a higher degree of palatalisation on the preceding velar consonant than the mid front vowel in the case of the plosives /k/ and /g/ but not in the case of the nasal /ŋ/ or the fricative /ç/, while the aspirated stops seem to palatalise less than the other velars.

The glottal /h/ seem to palatalise to a much smaller degree and only when followed by the high front vowel.

/hili/ → [çili], /tahi/ → [taçi]

but

/heve/ → [heve] ‘what’, /pøhe/ → [pøhe] ‘calico’

When reflecting historical change or a change in progress, the term *palatalisation* can be used in a broader sense to denote a process by which a place of articulation is moved from any non-palatal area (not only velar) to an area closer or corresponding to the hard palate (Ladefoged and Maddieson 2006:229). The change of the Blanga voiced alveolar fricative /z/ into a voiced postalveolar affricate, /dʒ/, described in 2.2.7 and 2.2.8 above, can be regarded as palatalisation in this sense. A more complex analysis should distinguish palatalisation as an initial stage in this change, during which /z/ → /ç/. Surface [ç] is attested in random realisations of older and middle-aged Northern Blanga speakers and in all age groups in Zazao Blanga. The initial palatalisation phase was followed in the younger speakers’ variety of Northern Blanga by fortition, which caused

the fricative /z/ to become the affricate /dz/. In the southern dialects, on the other hand, fortition doesn't seem to have happened yet. Most younger people still alternate between [z] and [ʒ].

2.2.9.2 Labialisation and velarisation

There are no labialised consonant phonemes in Blanga but, as expected, labialisation appears as a secondary articulation when the roundness of the back vowels is anticipated on a preceding consonant, thus giving birth to labialised allophones.

/pɔhe/ → [p^wɔhe] ‘calico’, /velepui/ → [velep^wui] ‘catechist’, /hnapu/ → [hnap^wu] ‘night’
 /fɔgra/ → [f^wɔgra] ‘be.ill’, /vɔli/ → [v^wɔli] ‘steal’
 /tɔka/ → [t^wɔka] ‘cut’, /hnaitu/ → [hnait^wu], /dɔvele/ → [d^wɔvele] ‘tuber’
 /suga/ → [s^wuga] ‘house’, /kesu/ → [kes^wu] ‘mango’, /zɔra/ → [z^wɔra] ‘pig’
 /kuku/ → [k^wuk^wu] ‘defecate’, /guk^hu/ → [guk^{hw}u] ‘road’, /bakɔ/ → [bak^wɔ] ‘cheek’
 /aɣɔ/ → [aɣ^wɔ] ‘you.sg’,
 /hɔre/ → [h^wɔre] ‘canoe’, /zahɔ/ → [zah^wɔ] ‘go’

Labialisation is clearly distinct from labial glide formation (2.1.7.1) and appears both when glide formation is possible and when it is not.

/fu.a/ → [f^wu.a] ‘fruit’
 /k^hu.a.li/ → [k^hwa.li] → [k^{hw}wa.li] ‘arrow’

In addition to labialisation, the very backness of back vowels triggers velarisation on preceding non-velar consonants. With coronals, the effect is that a double secondary articulation is achieved, in addition to the primary one, lip rounding being accompanied by a certain degree of raising of the back of the tongue. With the velar fricative, which is non-coronal and non-velar, velarisation is realised by changing the place of primary articulation from the glottal to the velar region.

/hɔre/ → [x^wɔre] ‘canoe’, /zahɔ/ → [zax^wɔ] ‘go’

2.2.10 Consonant deletion

The [–anterior –coronal] fricatives (2.2.7) are often dropped in casual speech either in inter-vocalic environment (*i.e.* morpheme-medially or word-medially) or even word-initially (*i.e.* pre-vocalic position). This kind of deletion is proportional with the rapidity of speech and it is much more frequent between identical vowels or in the word-initial echo syllable of reduplicated forms. This may be a consequence of the fact that the dropping of an intervocalic consonant may be tempered by the strong hiatus avoidance

tendency of the language or at least may be in some kind of conflict with it and may thus be immediately followed by one of the processes described in (2.1.7).

/gayase/ ‘girl’ → [gaase] → [gaʔase]
→ [gase]

In the example above, γ is dropped between identical vowels and the consequent hiatus is avoided either by an epenthetic glottal stop or, in more rapid speech, by the merging of the two vowels (2.1.7.2). Even more interesting is the case below, involving the name of an extension of the Popoheo Village. Here, both an intervocalic and an echo-syllable-initial γ are dropped and the resulting hiatus is solved again by the merging of the two identical vowels. In addition, the underlying word contains a second hiatus, which can be solved by diphthong formation. The resulting surface form has thus reduced its number of syllables from four to two.

/ γ i. γ i.gra.i/ ‘place.name’ → [i.grai]

2.3 Relative frequency of segments

Calculations of segment frequencies show the distribution of segments and distributional restrictions, while at the same time reflect the structure of the Blanga syllable, discussed in § 2.4. They have been done using a version of Tryon and Hackman’s (1983) 324-item Blablanga wordlist, which is a modified and expanded Swadesh list containing items expected to belong to the core vocabulary of the languages of Melanesia (see also 1.2). All those items are also attested in my corpus. I have slightly revised the original list, having thoroughly checked it with my own consultants in the field, and added two more items to make up for the word-initial /e/ and /ŋ/, which do not occur in Tryon and Hackman’s list but are otherwise attested in my corpus, although with very low frequency. My revisions are explained in 1.1.3. The number of items in the list was further increased because of some source words being compounds or periphrastically expressed in Blanga (the equivalent of the English *leaf*, for instance, is given by Blanga consultants as *k^hala mata*, lit. ‘hair of the bush’) or because of a few homonyms (e.g. *nehu* ‘nose’ but also ‘sugar cane’). The resulting list therefore contains 341 words.

The Blanga segments are represented by 1654 tokens, of which 812 (~49%) are vowels and 842 (~51%) are consonants. The revelation of this almost equal proportion anticipates the statements made in 2.4, according to which the main structure of the syllable in the language is CV. The much less frequent occurrences of V or CCV syllables compensate one another, with consonant cluster onsets being slightly more

frequent than no onset syllables, hence the slightly larger number of consonant tokens. Yet, overall the figures are remarkably balanced.

2.3.1 Relative frequency of vocalic segments

The relative frequency of Blanga vocalic segments is illustrated in Table 2-12.

Segment	All positions	Word-initial	Word-medial	Word-final
i	114 (14.05%)	5 (4.4%)	57 (50%)	52 (45.6%)
e	118 (14.55%)	1 (0.85%)	72 (61%)	45 (38.15%)
u	150 (18.5%)	4 (2.7%)	64 (43.3%)	82 (54%)
ɔ	144 (17.76%)	2 (1.4%)	91 (63.2%)	51 (35.4%)
a	286 (35.14%)	4 (1.5%)	180 (63%)	102 (35.5%)
Total	812 (100%)	16 (2%)	464 (57%)	332 (41%)

Table 2-12: Relative frequency of Blanga vocalic segments

Vowels occur word-initially only in a very limited number of words; there are only 16 (~2%) such occurrences in the list, out of the total of 811 vocalic tokens. However, most words beginning in a vowel, both in the list and in my whole corpus, are by their nature of very high token frequency and include personal pronouns (e.g. *ara* ‘I’, *aγɔ* ‘you’), deictics (e.g. *ine* ‘this’, *ade* ‘here’), and the word *idɔ* ‘mother’. Therefore, the rate of occurrence of vowel-initial words is expected to be much higher in discourse than in a list where they are represented by only one token each.

The large majority of vocalic occurrences is represented by 464 (~57%) word medial and 331 (~41%) word-final tokens. Once more, this is in accordance with the basic CV structure of the Blanga syllable. Single V syllables are possible in any position, including word-finally, but VV sequences are underlyingly assigned to separate syllables (2.4.1), it is expected that there would be a larger number of vocalic occurrences in word-medial position. With each vowel, the proportions between the different positions in the word are preserved within reasonable limits, with the exception of /u/, which shows a higher frequency in word-final position.

If the individual segments are compared, /a/ is the most frequent vowel and occurs approximately twice as often as any other vowel. Back vowels are slightly more frequent than front vowels. What is remarkable is that within either of those classes the occurrences of the two members are almost equal.

2.3.2 Relative frequency of consonant segments

The relative frequency of Blanga consonants is shown in the table below.

Segment	All positions	Word-initial	Word-medial
p	27 (3.33%)	9 (33.3%)	18 (66.7%)
p ^h	5 (0.61%)	4 (80%)	1 (20%)
b	27 (3.33%)	9 (33.3%)	18 (66.7%)
t	42 (5.18%)	16 (38%)	26 (62%)
t ^h	26 (3.2%)	18 (69%)	8 (31%)
d	30 (3.7%)	13 (43.3%)	17 (56.7%)
k	73 (9.01%)	35 (48%)	38 (52%)
k ^h	27 (3.33%)	18 (66.7%)	9 (33.3%)
g	49 (6.04%)	28 (57%)	21 (43%)
m	53 (6.54%)	16 (30%)	37 (70%)
n	95 (11.72%)	37 (39%)	58 (61%)
ŋ	14 (1.72%)	1 (0%)	13 (100%)
l	62 (7.65%)	4 (6.45%)	58 (93.55%)
r	59 (7.28%)	2 (3.4%)	57 (96.6%)
f	37 (4.56%)	19 (51.35%)	18 (48.65%)
v	15 (1.85%)	5 (33.33%)	10 (66.7%)
s	42 (5.18%)	16 (38%)	26 (62%)
z	12 (1.48%)	4 (33.33%)	8 (66.7%)
h	83 (10.24)	37 (44.5%)	46 (55.5%)
ʏ	32 (3.95%)	10 (31%)	22 (69%)
Total	810 (100%)³	301 (37%)	509 (63%)

Table 2-13: Relative frequency of Blanga consonant segments

It has already been seen that no syllable codas can be found in Blanga (2.4); as a consequence, only word-initial and word-medial consonant positions are possible. The figures show a proportion of almost 1 to 1.7 between the former and the latter. This may be partly due to two factors. One is that, in my calculations, I have included the second element of word-initial consonant clusters with word-medial consonants; the other is represented by important distributional restrictions of consonant segments, according to which words beginning with the velar nasal phoneme are very rare. These factors affect the frequencies to some extent and are worth bearing in mind before jumping to any conclusions. However, /ŋ/ represents only 13 of the 509 word-medial consonants in the list, while word-initial consonant clusters appear 55 times (of 96 total occurrences). The

³ The actual sum of the percentages in the column above this total is exactly 99.9%. The 0.1% error is due to my rounding the figures to the first two decimals.

latter reflects an attested preference for word-initial cluster at the expense of word-medial clusters, which triggers metathesis. Consonant segments are still more frequent in the analysed list.

Plosives, including the aspirated ones, are represented by 306 tokens (37.77%) in the list, sonorants by 283 (34.93%), and fricatives by 221 (27.28%). If we exclude the aspirated plosives (58 tokens = 7.16% of the total), we are left with 248 non-glottal unaspirated plosives (30.61%), which is slightly less than the sonorant proportion.

Within the class of plosives, the 248 non-glottal unaspirated plosives represent 81.04% and the 58 aspirated ones, which can only be voiceless, 18.96%. Overall, non-glottal unaspirated voiceless plosives are more numerous than their voiced counterparts, with the exception of bilabials, which are equally represented in the sample. Unaspirated plosives are the least frequent both within the plosive class and overall. Unaspirated plosives are more frequent in word-medial position, while the reverse is true for aspirated plosives. The proportion between word-initial and word-medial positions within plosives is almost equal.

Among sonorants, which are only voiced, nasals represent 57% and liquids 53%. The proportion between word-initial and word-medial positions is one to two with nasals but 5% to 95% with liquids. What is remarkable with liquids is the almost equal number of occurrences of /l/ and /r/.

Within the fricative class the proportion between word-initial and word-medial positions is 41% to 59% and that between voiceless and voiced is 73% to 27%.

2.4 Syllable structure and phonotactics

2.4.1 Underlying syllable structure

The underlying syllable structure in Blanga is (C)(C)V. This is illustrated by the bold syllables in the words below.

V: *i.fu* ‘blow’, *hna.i.tu* ‘spirit’, *fa.ka.e* ‘see’

CV: *na.ha.ni* ‘rain’, *hnɔ.ra.ɔ* ‘yesterday’

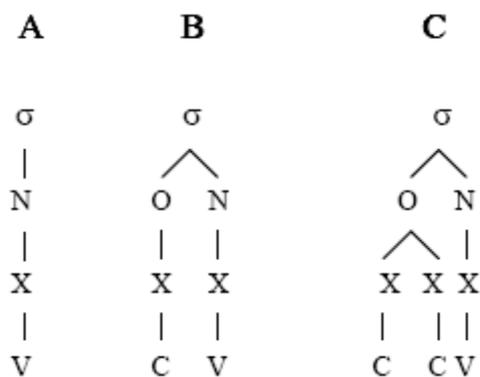
CCV: *bla.bla.hɲɔ* ‘hips’, *tɔ.tɔ.fra* ‘star’

Blanga does not allow syllable codas. This is initially suggested by the fact that no words end in a closed syllable. A more detailed investigation shows that all word-medial consonants are attracted into the onset of a following syllable according to the onset maximalisation principle. Therefore, there are no closed syllables in Blanga. Moreover, the language allows CC sequences. With the probable exception of /hɲ/, all

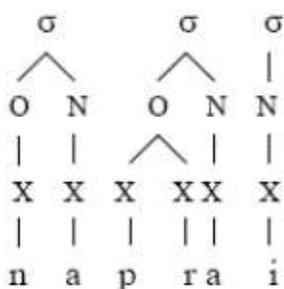
attested CC sequences (2.4.2) are possible not only word-medially but also word-initially, which suggests that they make good branching onsets and are thus syllabified as such in all possible positions, observing again the onset maximalisation principle. My consultants' syllabifications support this analysis without exception.

Underlying Blanga nuclei consist of a single segment, always a vocalic monophthong, and length is not contrastive. In terms of weight, underlying nuclei are always light (2.6.3). No underlying heavy nuclei and no underlying codas are possible, branching is only allowed at the onset of Blanga syllables. The absence of branching within the rhyme, both at the R and the N node, makes it possible in most cases to analyse Blanga syllables as sequences of onsets and nuclei⁴.

The representations of possible underlying Blanga syllables are thus restricted to the diagrams in A, B and C below:



All possible underlying syllable types are illustrated in the word *naprai* 'sun':



2.4.2 Consonant clusters

Consonant clusters are allowed as syllable onsets in Blanga. The main constraint on consonant clusters is that they can only consist of two elements in a particular order: an

⁴ For such an analysis, the term *peak* may seem more appropriate than *nucleus*, which suggests the existence of constituents on both sides. I am preserving the latter for two reasons. One is that *nucleus* is more frequently used since Khan's (1976) seminal thesis. The other is that codas exceptionally occur in Blanga, either in loanwords (2.7) or due to surface processes (2.1.6).

obstruent followed by a sonorant. Further constraints affect the first element in a Blanga consonant cluster, which cannot be a coronal plosive, an aspirated plosive, a voiced fricative or the emerging glottal stop phoneme. With the exception of the velar nasal, all sonorant consonants present in the language can be the second element of a cluster, subject to the condition that the two members of a cluster are not homorganic. The velar nasal only appears in word-medial clusters with /h/ as the first element. Possible clusters are shown in Table 2-14, continued on the next page. The first column shows the possible clusters and the second specifies if they are attested in initial (I), medial (M) or both positions. The third column lists those clusters already attested in Tryon and Hackman's (1983) original list and their item number, while the fourth column supplements with some extra examples from my corpus. Not all theoretically possible clusters are attested. Unattested clusters are indicated by the symbol (-) in the table. Violations of the consonant cluster constraints in loanwords will be discussed in 2.7.

Cluster	Position	Tryon and Hackman (1983)	Corpus
pn	I, M	napnisu 'spit' (n.) (316)	pnisu (v.) 'spit'
pl	I, M	-	plama 'lie on belly' dedeplu 'flame'
pr	I, M	naprai 'sun' (159)	prepreku 'lip' ⁵
bn		-	-
bl	I, M	hnablɔ 'six' (6), blelu 'be.smooth' (250), blau 'steal' (274), kɔblɔ 'laugh' (309)	blibliyɔ 'nod' blubluse 'be.easy'
br	I, M	brahu 'be.long' (231), hnubra 'burn' (296)	brasa 'smash', brehru 'scrotum'
km		-	-
kn	I, M	knasɔ 'be.empty' (225)	fnaknɔ 'look.high'
kl	I, M	buklɔ 'navel' (36), klahe 'be.bald' (242), k ^h ekle 'be.lazy' (245)	dɔklu 'custom.type'
kr	I, M	kredi 'egg' (23), p ^h ukri 'rope' (119), krɔfu 'dust' (147), ukru 'be.red' (212), kraŋɔ 'be.dry' (221) krabe 'be.hungry' (240), hnɔkrɔ 'sit' (313)	fakrakraŋɔ 'dry (v.)'
gm		-	-
gn		-	-
gl	I, M	glima 'five'(5), glapi 'tongue' (42), glɔgu/glɔha 'bay'(123), gluma 'cave' (124), glɔse 'earth'/'ground' (125), neneglu 'flame' (149) ⁶ , glaba 'moon' (160), glae 'be.weak' (237), glaa 'thin' (239), dɔglɔ 'be.straight' (252), pogla 'float' (297)	glakɔ 'fish.sp', gleyu 'sororal nephew' glea 'be.happy' gliha 'louse.egg' glɔge 'vulva'

⁵ Surfaces as [pepreku] (see 2.5.1)

⁶ Given as *neneglu*, which must be a mistake or misprint in Tryon and Hackman (1983). The velar nasal does not occur word-initially in content words.

gr	I, M	z agra ‘root’ (78), groi ‘DES’ (241), fɔgra ‘be.ill’ (249), magra ‘fight’ 259, figri ‘turn’ (288)	grui ‘plant (v.)’, grafi ‘evening’, greya ‘sister’
fn	I, M	fnahi ‘meat’/‘flesh’ (34), gufnu ‘dust’ (146), fnɔnu ‘be.sharp’ (224)	fniza ‘crack (n.)’, fnɔta ‘separate (v.)’
fl	I, M	naflɔ ‘mouth’ (35), kakafli ‘lightning’ (153), flalɔ ‘fly (v.)’ (299)	
fr	I, M	kakafre ‘spider’ (70), tɔɔfra ‘star’ (161), frɔɔ ‘squeeze’ (271), frihje ‘work (v.)’ (278)	efra ‘see’, fruta ‘body.hair’
sm		-	asma ‘pers.name’
sn		-	snoto ‘be.inactive’, snafra ‘wrong’
hm	I, M	hmari ‘fish’ (54), hmeke ‘flying fox’ (56) hmɔgɔ ‘snake’ (69), hmege ‘cut nut’ (87), hmau ‘taro’ (93), hmɔla ‘canoe’ (112), hmata ‘bush’ (138) hmairi ‘left’ (195), hmayu ‘fear’ (203), nahma ‘love (n.)’ (205), uhmu ‘be.fast’ (229), mahmayu ‘be.wild’ (254), nɔhmi ‘hear’ (308)	hmeke ‘dog’
hn	I, M	hnablɔ ‘six’ (6), hnana ‘eight’ (8), hneva ‘nine’ (9), hnuma ‘bone’ (19), hnapa ‘guts’ (27) ⁷ , hnaɔɔ ‘mosquito’ (62), hniba ‘possum’ (65), hnɔbɔ ‘branch’ (74), hneyɔ ‘breadfruit’ (85), hnagare ‘garden’ (127), hnagae ‘day’ (139), hnapu ‘night’ (140), hnɔraɔ ‘yesterday’ (143), hnubra ‘burn’ (296), tahni ‘cry’ (304), hnɔkrɔ ‘sit’ (313)	
hɲ	M	nahɲa ‘name’ (109), frihje ‘work (v.)’ (278)	nafrihje ‘work (n.)’
hl	I, M	nahlau ‘boy’/‘male’ (99) ⁸ , sahlu ‘be.smooth’ (250)	ahla ‘split (wood)’, bahlu ‘bird.sp’ bubuhlu ‘dew’
hr	I, M	vahra ‘vitex cofassus’ (97), gɔhra ‘paddle’ (118) mamahrana ‘be.sore’ (251), kɔhro ‘pull’ (265)	hreta ‘be.strong’/ ‘right (hand)’, brehru ‘scrotum’

Table 2-14: Consonant clusters attested in Blanga

2.4.3 Surface syllable representations

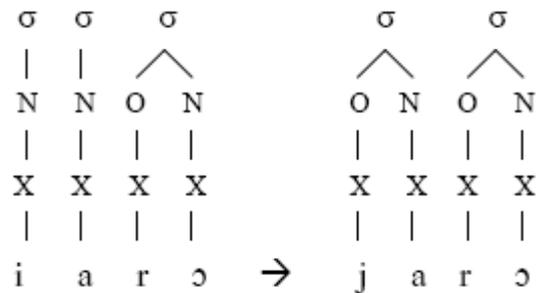
Among the surface processes that may interact with syllable structure are glide formation (2.1.7.1), diphthong formation (2.1.7.2) and final vowel deletion (2.1.6).

High vowels surface as glides when they precede a non-high vowel. Although this process naturally reduces the number of syllables and changes the distribution of segments between the syllables of the word, it does not affect overall weight and does not violate the general structural pattern of the syllable. Since a consonant cluster cannot consist of more than two consonants (2.4.2), the high vowel surfacing as a glide can be

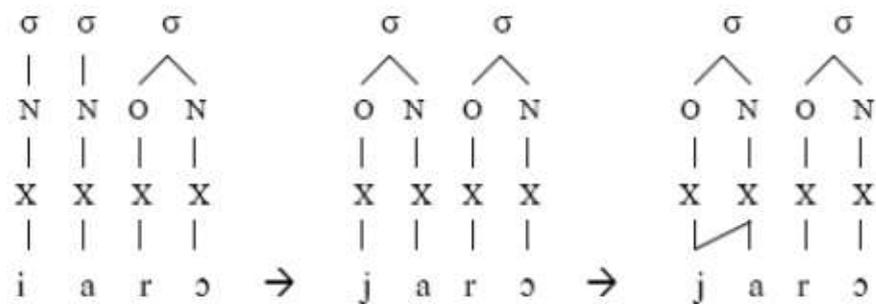
⁷ Tryon and Hackman (1983) give the form *hnapa*. However, palatal nasals do not occur as phonemes in Blanga. The form is found as such in Cheke Holo, in which most Blanga speakers are bilingual.

⁸ Currently produced with metathesis as *hnalau*.

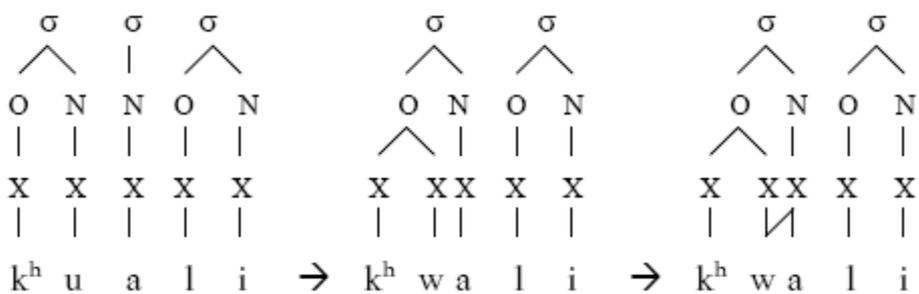
either the nucleus of an underlyingly no onset syllable, like in /i.a.rɔ/ ‘DEM.N.PL’, or of a syllable with a non-branching onset, such as the first syllable in /k^hu.a.li/ ‘arrow’. In the former case, /i.a.rɔ/ surfaces as [ja.rɔ], reducing the number of syllables from three to two by reducing two no onset syllables to one syllable consisting of an onset and a nucleus.



No constraints on syllable structure (2.4.1) are violated. The gliding of [j] into the syllable nucleus may be more accurately represented as below:



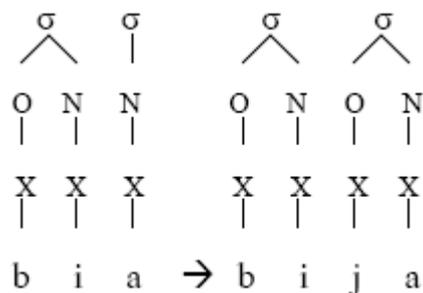
A similar process takes place when the high vowel represents the nucleus of a CV syllable. The underlying form /k^hu.a.li/ ‘arrow’ may surface as [k^hwa.li]. This does not violate constraints on branching onsets (2.4.1 and 2.4.2), since [w] is a sonorant.



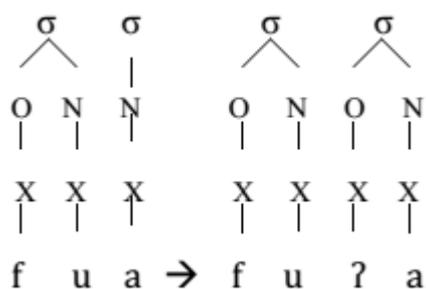
The semi-vocalic character of the glide is again represented by associating it with both the onset and the nucleus under the timing tier. The fact that the glide belongs to the onset is proved by the fact that the V in a CCV sequence cannot be realized as a glide, observing the constraint that dictates that consonant clusters can consist of a maximum of two consonants and they only occur as syllable onsets (2.4.2).

It was mentioned earlier in this section that consonant clusters must have an obstruent as their first element but that the obstruent cannot be an aspirated plosive. Indeed, by their nature, consonants cannot be aspirated before another consonant. Examples such as the surface realisation [k^hwa.li] seem to violate this constraint. However, glides are an exception due to their partially vocalic nature.

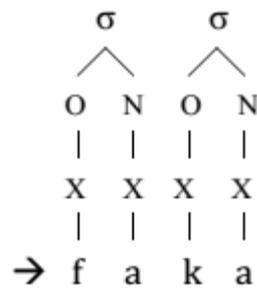
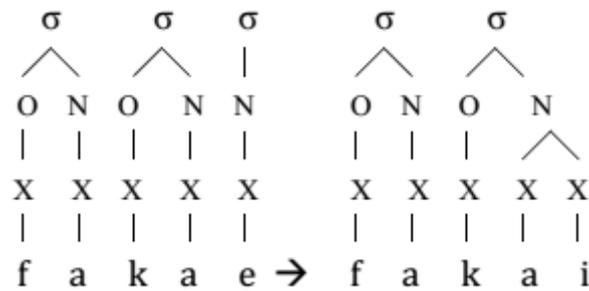
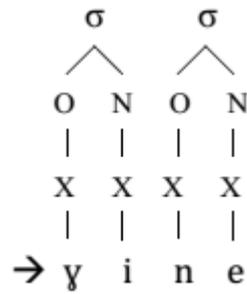
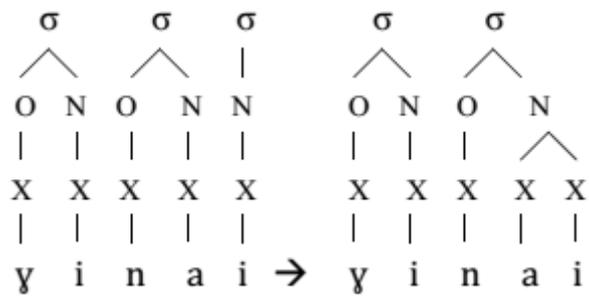
In some cases, constraints on word minimality (2.6.3.2) prevent glide formation with the reduction of the number of syllables. Forms such as /bi.a/ ‘cassava’ and /fu.a/ ‘be.loaded.with.fruit’ cannot surface as * [bjɑ] or *[fwa] (see also 2.1.7.1). What happens instead depends on the series of underlying vowels (2.1.7.1). With the front vowel, the hiatus avoidance strategy is the insertion of the corresponding glide, thus keeping the number of syllables intact and obeying the constraints. Thus /bi.a/ may surface as [bi.jɑ]. With the back vowel, the preferred strategy is glottal stop insertion, thus /fu.a/ may surface as [fu.ʔɑ]. Both strategies create an onset for the second syllable.



and



Section 2.1.7.2 discusses the surface formation of diphthongs within certain constraints as a means of hiatus avoidance. Such processes result in a (C)(C)VV structure, as in /yi.na.i/ → [yi.nai] ‘FUT’ and /fa.ka.e/ → [fa.kai] ‘see’. In rapid speech, hiatus can also be avoided either by coalescence of a V.V sequence or by V2 deletion, thus /yi.na.i/ → [yi.ne] ‘FUT’ and /fa.ka.e/ → [fa.ka] ‘see’. Syllables resulting from all three processes are illustrated below.



2.5 Reduplication patterns

Productive reduplication is very frequent in Blanga. In addition, there are many reduplicated forms for which no unreduplicated counterpart is synchronically present in the language and therefore are considered to be frozen, historical reduplications. Both productive and frozen reduplication follow the same pattern, the general preference being for partial reduplication, while total reduplication is poorly represented and not productive. Reduplication serves different purposes, all of which will be discussed in Chapter 3. In this section I present the formal phonological features of reduplication.

2.5.1 Partial reduplication

In partial reduplication, the initial syllable of a root is copied. If that syllable has the frequent CV structure, reduplication results in an identical echo syllable in word-initial position.

dɔ.li ‘be.green’ → *dɔ.dɔ.li* ‘life’
tuani ‘be.true’ → *tu.tu.a.ni* ‘worship’
la.se ‘know’ → *la.la.se* ‘knowledge’
za.hɔ ‘go’ → *za.za.ho* ‘walk’
ke.su ‘mango’ → *ke.ke.su* ‘liver’

Initial aspirated plosives lose aspiration when reduplicated.

k^hɔ.i.lɔ ‘coconut’ → *kɔ.kɔ.i.lɔ* ‘stomach’

When a consonant cluster is present at the onset of the initial syllable, the whole CCV pattern is reduplicated underlyingly, as shown by consultants’ syllabification or in very careful speech. At the surface, however, only C1 appears in the echo syllable, C2 being invariably deleted.

/bra.hu/ ‘be.long’ → */bra.bra.hu/* → [*ba.bra.hu*] ‘be.very long’
**/pre.ku/* → */pre.pre.ku/* → [*pe.pre.ku*] ‘lip’

The same pattern is displayed in those rare occasions when the reduplicated form of the name of the language is used.

/bla.bla.ŋa/ → [*ba.bla.ŋa*]

Blanga syllables normally consist of an onset and a nucleus as in the examples above but onsetless syllables are possible (2.4.1). These can only consist of a nucleus, since codas are excluded. It is not clear at this stage to what extent onsetless syllables can be reduplicated since very few examples have been found. Those forms look like synchronic or frozen partial reduplications of words with an initial onsetless syllable. They may constitute clues but are not enough to give a full picture. One example is */iizu/* ‘read’, which suggests an original V.CV root **izu*, whose initial syllable has been reduplicated (sometimes with glottal insertion to avoid hiatus as described in 2.1.7.2). For this root, a form with a different reduplication pattern is sometimes also used by the Blanga speakers. This is */i.zu.zu/*, which shows a reduplication pattern that is not usual across the languages of Isabel.

Two examples of initial onsetless syllables in a V.V root have been found and they display similar patterns. In the synchronic example below, the underlying V.V sequence is eligible for surface diphthong formation (2.1.7.2).

/a.u/ ‘exist/stay’ → */a.a.u/* ‘remain’ → [*a.au*]

Since reduplication occurs underlyingly, therefore before surface diphthong formation, the pattern is that of the initial V syllable being copied. The same pattern is attested in the second example, which shows frozen reduplication. The sequence *ɔ.e* is not eligible for diphthong formation (2.1.7.2).

**/ɔ.e/* → */ɔ.ɔ.e/* ‘talk’

The words */i.izu/* and */ɔ.ɔ.e/* can surface in rapid speech as [i.zu] and [ɔ.e], thus generating forms identical with the diachronic or historical base of the reduplication.

Some causative forms (3.1.9.4.2) show reduplication of the root to which the causative morpheme *fā* is prefixed, while a reduplicated form without *fā* is not attested.

le.he ‘die’ → *fa-le.le.he* ‘kill’ (lit.‘cause to be dead’), but **lelehe*

/kra.ŋɔ/ ‘be.dry’ → */fa-kra.kra.ŋɔ/* ‘to dry’ (lit.‘cause to become dry’) → *[fa.ka.kra.ŋɔ]*, but **/kra.kra.ŋɔ/*

In other cases, it is possible to find doublets consisting of a non-reduplicated causative form and a reduplicated one, such as the forms *fa-di.a* and *fa-di.di.a*, both meaning ‘mistake’ and corresponding to the stative verb *di.a* ‘be.bad’. In this particular case it seems safe to assume that the former is a Cheke Holo loanword borrowed directly with the causative particle, while the latter represents an internal process following the Blanga pattern.

2.5.2 Full reduplication

Full reduplication is rare and only five forms have been identified so far. One form, *abeabe* ‘church server’, also occurs in Cheke Holo and White Kokhonigita and Pulomana (1988) believe it to be a Bughotu loanword⁹. A possible Northwest Solomonic cognate is the Uruava *abeabe(na)* ‘shadow’ (Palmer 2007).

Two other full Blanga reduplications, *etieti* and *pikɔpikɔ*, denote species of coconut and fish respectively and may be identical in other languages of Isabel. Only two forms have more chance of being productive full reduplications in Blanga. They are shown below together with their unreduplicated counterparts.

glea ‘be.happy’ → *gleaglea* ‘be.very.happy’

deke ‘be.slow’ → *dekedeke* ‘to walk on tiptoe’

Interestingly, the former root also has a partial reduplicated form, *dedeke* ‘ladder’.

As expected, identical CV syllables appear in disyllabic words coming from children’s speech, such as *mama* ‘father’, *papa* ‘to carry on one’s back’ (as they do with

⁹ Only the unreduplicated Bughotu form *abe* ‘lift.up’/ ‘support’ is attested in Ivens (1998, [1940]).

babies and even toddlers), *kuku* ‘defecate’, *sɔsɔ* ‘urinate’. The last one also seems to be onomatopoeic. Identical V syllables appear in the hesitation particles *ii* and *uu* (3.1.11).

2.6 Blanga prosody

This section starts with the observation that the same acoustic or auditory reality may characterize more than one prosodic feature present in a human language, while some prosodic features may be manifested by a combination of phonetic features or their absence. Thus, for instance, pitch plays a major part in accent/stress, tone and intonation, while its relation with, say, an unfilled pause (2.6.2) can be translated as the total absence of pitch during a period of silence. On the other hand, if one takes stress for instance, this is in most cases not only a matter of pitch but also of duration, loudness and “spectral properties” (Hayes 1995:5-8). It is therefore difficult, if at all possible, to distinguish between prosodic features entirely on phonetic grounds. This is not to say that prosodic description and analysis should completely ignore any phonetic reality; on the contrary! I am just pointing out that prosodic phenomena should be distinguished from other linguistic phenomena mainly phonologically, based on the function and the domain of manifestation of the phonetic material.

The above observation allows us to reduce the inventory of prosodic phenomena that will be considered below. As expected in an Oceanic context¹⁰, no contrastive tones are found in Blanga, since no lexical or morphological distinction is made by pitch patterns alone (Fox 2002:192). Blanga is therefore an “intonation-only” language and in the following sections I shall look at the role of length and pause in Blanga prosody and propose an analysis of Blanga stress and metrical structure. Blanga intonation will be mentioned as the topic of a subsequent research project.

2.6.1 Length

Vocalic length and its interactions with stress were discussed in 2.1.4 and 2.6.3.1. Both sections suggest that length is a prosodic feature of Blanga stress, stressed vowels being longer than non-stressed ones. Length is also expected to interact with intonation (2.6.4) in various ways. One particular situation when prosodic length is relevant by itself, or at least it is the major component of the pattern, is when it is used to express or further emphasise an absolute superlative, like in the English *remaaarkable* or *veeeeery important*. In such examples, length is not limited to segments but its effect extends

¹⁰ In spite of the exceptions found in some languages of New Caledonia, and the Huon Gulf in Papua New Guinea (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002:35).

over a whole word or phrase, which proves its prosodic character, despite its being achieved by mainly lengthening one particular segment.

For this purpose, the lengthened segment may be a vowel or a consonant. When a vowel is involved, this is the vowel in the stressed syllable of the word. While in normal circumstances the accented vowel is usually almost twice as long as the unaccented vowels (2.1.4), when this type of prosodic lengthening occurs accented vowels may be three times as long as unaccented vowels or even longer, the possibilities being only limited by the intention of the speaker and the necessity of breathing. It is thus not the absolute value of the length that creates the desired meaningful implications but the fact that the word or phrase over which it extends is noticeably longer than it would be if no superlative or emphasis were meant. In addition to length, some part is played by stress (as we have seen the stressed bit is more likely to be lengthened) and intonation may also come into play as different high and low sequences are possible during the uttering of the lengthened segment as well as during the uttering of the whole lengthened word or phrase.

Let us now look at a few Blanga examples. There are three degrees of proximity deictics in the language, expressed by three different words: *ade* ‘here’, *sare* ‘there, relatively close’, and *sara* ‘there, relatively far’ (3.1.10). Among other uses, these words can be combined with terms used to specify axes within the Blanga absolute frame of reference: *paka* ‘windward’, *fona* ‘leeward’, *hruku* ‘inland’ and *raru* ‘seaward’, (3.1.2.1.3) e.g. *sare hruku* ‘over there inland’ or *sara fona* ‘over there leeward’. Since the first three directions are bound, it is only *raru* ‘seaward’ that theoretically extends as far as one likes. This is why I chose *raru* to exemplify emphatic lengthening further. Both *sare raru* and *sara raru* can be translated as ‘over there seawards’. The distinction between the two is relative, the former always being closer to the speaker than the latter.

On recording 020AV110408, my consultant Wilfred Hughu, pointing seawards, uses *sare raru* for a point on a nearby islet and *sara raru* for a reef farther away. When prompted to imagine going farther than that reef, towards an invisible and very remote island or archipelago¹¹, Wilfred made use of prosodic lengthening on *sara*, the term able to indicate the farthest location, uttering [*saaara raru*]¹² ‘very, very far seawards/at sea’. When the word *sara* is lengthened, the whole phrase is automatically lengthened. In examples such as this one, lengthening is physically manifested on (the first syllable of)

¹¹ As a point of reference known to my consultant, I suggested the Ontong Java Atoll, a remote territory belonging to the Solomon Islands state, which lies more than 250 kilometres north of Santa Isabel.

¹² Here only, I opted for an unconventional notation of vowel lengthening as it seemed to be more suggestive than the IPA symbol.

the first word in the phrase, an absolute superlative is assigned to the second word, the one that is not physically lengthened, and emphatic lengthening applies to the whole phrase rather than to an individual word. Some evidence for that is the rejection of phrases such as **saaare raru* or **saaara hruku*. The former does not work since there is a contradiction between the meaning of *sare raru* ‘relatively close seawards’ and that brought in by lengthening (‘as far as possible seawards’). With the latter, the mismatch is between the meanings of the lengthened *saaara* and *hruku*, which is a bound direction. Being in the village, it is not possible to go especially far towards *hruku* since its limit is where the bush starts.

In the example above, lengthening was used to add a superlative connotation. In other examples, a superlative may be already expressed by morphosyntactic means, in which case length, if present, is used to intensify that superlative. Not only vowels but also consonants may be lengthened. In the two examples below lengthening appears in identical environments with two different consultants during different sessions of questionnaire elicitation, in different locations and at different times. The first phrase is *suga do:ru fakeli* ‘very big house’, lit. ‘house be.big very’. The second phrase is *suga ik:ia fakeli* ‘very small house’, lit. ‘house be.small. very’. In the former, the first vowel is stressed and further lengthened for emphasis. In the latter example, the first vowel is not stressed (and onsetless) and what is lengthened is the consonant in the onset of the second, stressed syllable. Remember that in *sa:ra* it was also the stressed CV syllable that was further lengthened. Since in the examples above prosodic lengthening has the same function, it makes more sense to assume that it is physically manifested on a full syllable rather than on a single segment.

The pattern of prosodic lengthening seems to be as follows. First, prosodic lengthening occurs physically on the first word in a phrase and particularly on the accented syllable of that word. The fact that it occurs on the accented syllable is not surprising, since accented syllables are normally longer than unaccented ones and thus have potential for further lengthening. What is more difficult to explain is what happens within the syllable. Lengthening sometimes affects a vowel and some other times a consonant. So far, it looks as though in the accented syllable the vocalic nucleus is normally lengthened. However, if another syllable precedes the stressed one and has an identical nucleus, it is then the onset of the stressed syllable that is lengthened. In other words, it affects a consonant found between identical vowels.

Lengthened consonants are pronounced as geminates. The process described here, however, should not be regarded as similar with compensatory lengthening, in which a

segment extends to an adjacent empty point on the timing tier in order to keep the weight of the syllable intact. The type of prosodic length discussed here is an emphatic device in itself, although it is in a clear relation with accent and, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, a melodic contour may appear on the lengthened phrase. By ending this section, I am not abandoning length entirely. It will also be mentioned in relation to stress in 2.6.3.

2.6.2 Pause

Physiologically, a connection between taking pauses and the necessity of breathing seems obvious. What is not very clear is the nature of this relation. Is the physiological necessity of breathing the main reason for pausing, which is then used for linguistic effect, or is it rather the other way around and, as Cruttenden (1997 [1986]: 30) puts it, “we pause for other reasons and seize the opportunity to take a breath”. In the latter case, the “other reasons” mentioned by Cruttenden are linguistic suggesting that the linguistic functions of pausing may take precedence over its physiological triggers.

It would take a thorough cross-linguistic investigation to decide if the problem above is one of the ‘chicken and egg’ type or not, but looking exclusively at Blanga, the data seem to support Cruttenden’s opinion. We can broadly define a pause as a voluntary interruption in the speech flow and, if we consider what is actually going on during such interruptions, then we can distinguish between two major types of pauses: “filled” and “unfilled”, to use Cruttenden’s (1997 [1986]: 30) terminology again. An unfilled pause is one during which no linguistic sound is uttered by the speaker or perceived by the hearer but the period of silence itself is meant to fulfil a particular linguistic function. Of course, speakers (as well as hearers) may take advantage of such pauses and also use them to breathe, cough, or make a series of other non-linguistic noises, without altering its main function, which remains linguistic.

A filled pause, on the other hand, is not characterized by silence. The main function of filled pauses is also linguistic, since their filling is used by the speaker to signal the fact that the discourse is to be continued in a few moments, a time needed by the speaker in order to gather his thoughts, reformulate propositions, or remember relevant aspects of the information to be transmitted. Filled pauses can also be called *hesitation pauses* and seem to be a cross-linguistic feature of speech. Their ‘filling’ is in many languages represented by single hesitation segments, usually vocalic but also consonantal. It has been recently postulated that hesitation vowels are language-specific

(Vasilescu, Nemoto and Ada-Decker 2007 and the references therein) and I can see no reason why that would not be true for hesitation consonants as well.

To start with filled pauses, Blanga hesitation segments are vocalic and not very frequent since the preferred pause-filling strategy in the language is to make use of one of two lexical items, *ii* and *uu*, which are free morphemes and can be labelled ‘hesitation markers’. The exact nature of those and the relationships between them remain unclear at this stage. A possible difference between the two may be that the former is used mostly when proper nouns, especially personal names, are expected (‘the one that came is, err, John’) and the latter when common nouns are involved. The form *ii* may be historically derived from the Proto-Oceanic personal article **i*. It is not clear if any degree of specificity is expressed by the hesitation markers. In any case, it is clear that such pauses fulfil a linguistic function and are not simply breathing pauses, because they can be ‘filled’ with full morphemes, rather than isolated segments.

In the case of unfilled pauses, the Blanga data also suggest their mainly linguistic character. The period of silence associated with unfilled pauses seems to mark constituent boundaries. The question is what kind of constituents. Is it more about syntactic constituents, intonation units, or both? There are clear instances when Blanga syntactic constituents do not correspond to intonation units.

One example is the way prepositions cliticise. Blanga only has two simple prepositions, *ke* and *ka*, the nature and functions of which will be discussed in 3.1.13 and 3.2.2. In the sentence *zahɔ=ka | suga zemesi* ‘I am going to James’ house’, where the symbol | shows the position of pause, the preposition cliticises to the closest element to its left (in this case the verb), not to its right, being thus separated by pause from the phrase it is heading syntactically. In this case, the pause marks the boundary of a clitic group (therefore an intonational unit), rather than that of a syntactic constituent (prepositional phrase). If the reading **ara zahɔ | ka=suga zemesi* had been possible, then the intonation unit would have coincided with the syntactic constituent, but this is not the case as far as the preposition *ka* is concerned. Clitics may be regarded as an extreme example and in cases that do not involve cliticisation the mapping between syntactic constituents and intonation units may be expected to be more direct.

Pauses are not restricted to marking boundaries of syntactic constituents or intonation units. They may also play a role, most probably in conjunction with intonation and stress, in identifying particular types of foregrounded or backgrounded information (7.5).

2.6.3 Stress

I shall discuss Blanga stress within the framework of Hayes' (1995) parametric metrical theory, according to which "stress is the linguistic manifestation of rhythmic structure" and a property of the syllable Hayes' (1995:8). The foot is considered to be the smallest metrical constituent and only three bounded foot types are recognised in this particular version of the theory: the syllabic trochee, the moraic trochee, and the iamb. They will be mentioned again in 2.6.3.3. Rhythmic structure is hierarchical, allowing for multiple degrees of stress, and the syllable assigned the main stress is regarded as the strongest syllable in a domain. Stress levels within a domain (foot, word, phrase and possibly higher) are determined by the rhythmical character of the structure, rather than by differences in their physical manifestations.

2.6.3.1 Phonetic correlates of stress

If stress is equated with rhythmic structure, and rhythm itself is an abstraction, this may explain why phonetic correlates of stress are generally inconsistent and, except marginally for loudness, non-characteristic. While pitch, duration and loudness are often quoted and usually investigated as possible cues for stress (Hayes 1995:6), it is important to note that at least the first two are characteristically used for other phonological purposes. Hayes (1995:7) describes stress as "parasitic", in that it "invokes phonetic resources that serve other phonological ends", pointing out that duration characteristically functions as a cue for segmental length or as a marker of phonological phrasing, while pitch is a physical correlate of phonological tone and/or represents "the phonetic basis of intonation". Only loudness can be somehow considered to be a characteristic parameter, but the part it plays seems to be paradoxically subordinate to the non-characteristic parameter of duration. Pitch, duration and loudness are all clearly linked with stress but to different extents and on a language-specific basis, therefore none of them serve as a consistent phonetic cue of it.

The field conditions during the documentation on which this description is based did not allow for perception experiments with native Blanga speakers to be conducted and the auditory impressions of the investigator are not enough for an accurate account. Loudness has been noted to take precedence over pitch and length only when speakers try to achieve very particular paralinguistic effects, such as drawing the attention of somebody who otherwise is not likely to listen or hear. In such situations, loudness is not a real or direct correlate of stress since it only enhances other parameters. Otherwise, if a hierarchy is expected, duration seems to be more important than pitch in

distinguishing the most prominent syllable in a Blanga word. The acoustic evidence provided in 2.1.4 shows that the vowels of stressed syllables are notably longer than those of non-final unstressed syllables. However, at this stage, although supported by acoustic measurements, the predominance of length as a cue for Blanga stress is only a preliminary hypothesis based initially on the non-native speaker linguist's auditory impressions. No definite statement about the hierarchy of phonetic features of Blanga stress can be made until thorough perception tests are conducted with native speakers.

2.6.3.2 Word minimality and syllable count

Section 2.4 showed the Blanga syllable structure and possible syllable types. Monosyllabic words are rare in Blanga and restricted to *function* words. They are often clitics or can optionally cliticise in speech, forming a single phonological word with their host.

Word minima refer to the minimum size of a *content* word in a particular language. For Blanga, I shall postulate here that the minimal word consists underlyingly of two syllables ($\sigma\sigma$). This is supported by the constraint on glide formation discussed at the end of section 2.1.7.1. At the surface, due to diphthong formation (2.1.7.2), the minimal Blanga word may be said to consist of one *heavy* syllable. Word minimality is in a crucial relation with stress assignment as will be seen further below (2.6.3.3).

The great majority of underived content Blanga words are disyllabic and only a few have three syllables without being obviously loanwords (2.7) or the result of a diachronic process. Most three-syllable words and almost all of the rare cases of words with four or five syllables seem to be, if one excludes loanwords, synchronic or historical reduplications, derivations, compounds, or combinations of those.

za.za.hɔ 'walk (v.)' ← *za.hɔ* 'go' (partial reduplication)

na.fri.hɲe 'work (n.)' ← *fri.hɲe* 'work (v.)' (derivation with nominalising prefix)

ti.hi.tu.bu 'place.name' ← *tihi* 'wash'+ *tʰubu* 'sore (n.)' (compounding)

fu.fu.ɣɔ.ga.e 'morning' ← **fu.fu.ɣɔ.* + *ga.e* 'be.clear'/'dawn' (reduplication and compounding).

2.6.3.3 Blanga stress assignment

List elicitations of quotation forms of underived words and frozen derivations with different numbers of syllables show that Blanga main stress is invariably penultimate: '*i.fu* 'blow', '*su.a* 'child', '*ba.kɔ* 'cheek', '*gra.fi* 'evening', '*zi fla* 'exit', *dɔ.'ve.le* 'tuber', *ma.za.'ya.ni* 'be.young', *fu.fu.ɣɔ.'ga.e* 'morning'. However, diphthong

formation (2.1.7.2) and vowel deletion (2.1.6) can generate words with final stress at the surface.

Now, more than pointing at syllables, capturing rhythmic stress assignment rules requires identifying metrical constituents and understanding the relations between them. As stated in 2.6.3, the minimal metrical constituent is the foot. The framework proposed by Hayes (1995) allows for only three types of bounded feet. Two of these, the iamb and the moraic trochee, are quantity-sensitive meaning that they count moras for purposes of stress assignment. They are thus expected to be found mostly but not exclusively¹³ in languages that have a segmental length contrast. The remaining foot, the syllabic trochee, is not quantity-sensitive, meaning that, for stress assignment, the language might count syllables without taking their weight into account. It is important to point out that syllabic trochee systems do not appear exclusively in languages with no length distinction (if that were the case, the postulation of such a foot type would be unnecessary). Hayes (1995:101-102) shows examples of languages with quantity opposition whose stress pattern can be or has been analysed with syllabic trochees.

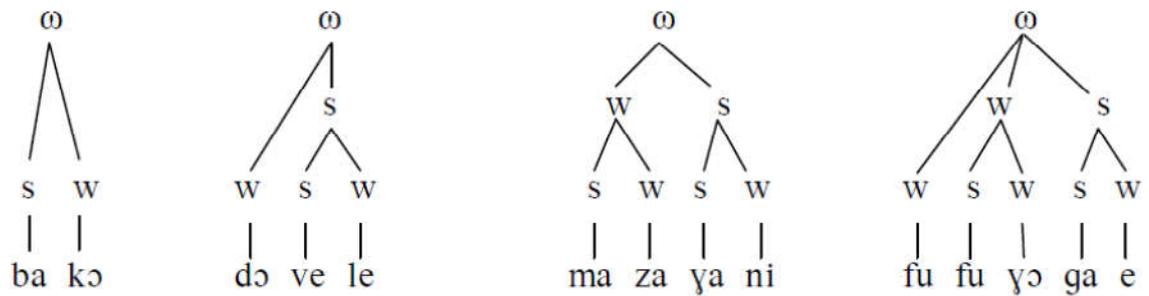
The importance of Blanga stress assignment, and the main reason why it is awarded a disproportionately longer section in this chapter, is that it confirms Hayes' (1995:103) prediction that if a language using a syllabic trochee system shows some evidence of heavy syllables, which does not necessarily mean a segmental length contrast, then a word-final heavy syllable constitutes a proper syllabic trochee. Hayes points out that his prediction is difficult to check due to the fact that, in most languages described so far, crucial cases either do not exist or have not been made available in the sources. The Blanga data seem to reveal such a case.

2.6.3.3.1 Analysis of underlying forms

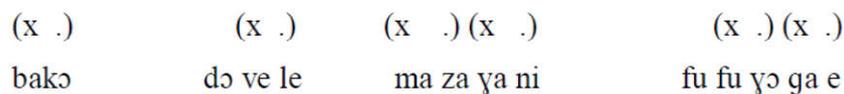
Quantity-sensitive languages that employ syllabic trochee systems are in fact unequivocal cases of languages counting syllables for stress assignment. Blanga has no contrastive segmental length (2.1.1 and 2.2.1), no underlying diphthongs and no underlying codas (2.4.1), meaning that all its syllables are light. Since all syllables are light and light syllables consist of only one mora each, the question of whether the language counts syllables or moras becomes superfluous but, following Hayes (1995:102), the convention is to consider that such languages do count syllables, rather than moras.

¹³ For instance, Steriade (1984) analyses stress in Romanian, a language with no phonological length distinction, as based on moraic trochees. What happens is that Romanian (Eastern Romance) has inherited the stress pattern of Latin virtually unchanged, which means that, although the language has lost length distinctions, its diphthongs and closed syllables count as heavy for the purposes of stress assignment.

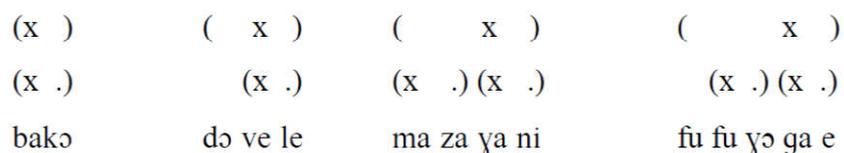
Given the penultimate stress and the lack of heavy syllables, one might assume from the start that Blanga employs syllabic trochees. However, careful analysis is still required since some later, surface phenomena add a certain degree of complexity to the matter. Let us first look at the underlying forms. For convenience on this occasion, the metrical structure of some of the illustrating words at the beginning of 2.6.3.3 is shown using a tree formalism that specifies (metrically) strong (s) and weak (w) constituents.



In what follows, however, I shall adopt the bracketed grid representation used by Hayes (1995), in which constituents are identified by bracketing, prominence within a constituent is marked by an /x/ at that level, and a dot symbol ./ is used to identify stressless syllables. This system is both simple and able to render expected complexities. The stress assignment rules first group syllables into minimal metrical constituents (feet), leaving an unfooted syllable at the left edge in words with an odd number of syllables. They mark each foot as left-prominent.



The rules then group the resulting feet into a higher constituent of maximal size, the word, and mark the rightmost foot of the word as the most prominent, which is obvious in the examples with more than three syllables.



The interpretation of both the tree diagram and the bracketed grid representation is that Blanga feet are disyllabic and left-headed (syllabic trochees) and constructed from right to left, as attested by the odd syllable examples. In the word layer, main stress is derived by what Hayes calls an “End Rule”. Blanga applies “End Rule Right”, which assigns the head of the word constituent to the rightmost available position.

2.6.3.3.2 Taking into account surface diphthongs

Blanga (phonological) words, therefore, appear to be right-headed and parsed into right-aligned syllabic trochees, at least as revealed by the underlying forms analysed so far. A more thorough account of Blanga stress, however, must take into account the different surface processes that might interact with stress assignment. Let us repeat that, so far, it has been assumed that the language counts syllables rather than moras for stress assignment.

A more complex picture emerges if one considers what happens at the surface. I have shown in 2.1.7.2 that the widespread Blanga tendency of hiatus avoidance may generate surface diphthongs under certain conditions. Only ascending V.V sequences (as defined in 2.1.7.2) are eligible for diphthong formation and their surface realisations are as follows: /a.i/→[ai], /a.e/→[ai], /a.u/→[au], /a.ɔ/→[au], /e.u/→[eu], /ɔ.i/→[ɔi], /e.i/→[ei], and /ɔ.u/→[ɔu]. Diphthong formation reduces by one the number of syllables in a word, disyllabic words becoming monosyllabic, three-syllable words becoming disyllabic etc.

/ʔŋa.u/→[ŋau] ‘eat’

/ga.'u.sa/→['gau.sa] ‘betel nut’, /da.'ta.u/→[da.'tau] ‘chief’

/na.u.'tho.glu/→[nau.'tho.glu], ‘earth’, /kɔ.kɔ.'i.lɔ/→[kɔ.'kɔi.lɔ] ‘stomach’

/hna.pu.'ga.e/→[hna.pu.'gai] ‘morning’

/hɔ.vu.kɔ.'i.lɔ/→[hɔ.vu.'kɔi.lɔ] ‘place.name’.

Three situations can be distinguished as far as the surface behaviour of the vowel in the underlyingly stressed syllable is concerned:

a) Cases such as /na.u.'tho.glu/ → [nau.'tho.glu], where the vowel of the underlyingly stressed syllable does not participate in surface diphthong formation, are not problematic for our analysis, since the stress remains penultimate. The weight of the first syllable can be ignored and the surface form can be analysed as any three-syllable word, with an unfooted syllable at the left edge.

(x) (x)
 (x .) (x .) (x .)
 na u tho glu → nau tho glu

b) Cases in which the vowel of the underlyingly stressed syllable becomes V2 of the surface diphthong, such as /ga.'u.sa/ → ['gau.sa], /kɔ.kɔ.'i.lɔ/ → [kɔ.'kɔi.lɔ] and /hɔ.vu.kɔ.'i.lɔ/ → [hɔ.vu.'kɔi.lɔ], are again not problematic, since again the stress

remains penultimate. Here, the reduction of the number of syllables either creates or eliminates an unfooted syllable but otherwise preserves the pattern. The surface forms in the examples below can be analysed just like any three-syllable or disyllabic Blanga word and it can still be claimed that the language doesn't count moras.

(x)	(x)	(x)	(x)
(x .)(x .)	(x .)	(x .)(x .)	(x .)(x .)
kə kə i lə → kə kəi lə		hə vu kə i lə → hə vu kəi lə	

c) In situations where the vowel of the underlyingly stressed syllable becomes V1 of the surface diphthong, as in /da.'ta.u/ → [da.'tau] and /hna.pu.'ga.e/ → [hna.pu.'gai] the stress seems to remain in place, instead of moving to the left to adjust to the penultimate pattern. This generates surface words with final stress. This may appear to contradict the syllabic trochee hypothesis proposed above as long as the syllabic trochee is strictly defined as a foot of the (x .) type. However, under the assumption that one word must consist of at least one foot, word minimality (2.6.3.2) can make predictions about what can constitute a foot in a particular language. Since surface words consisting of a single heavy syllable, such as /bla.u/ → [blau] 'steal', are possible in Blanga, it means that a foot of the (—) type, where the macron symbolises a heavy syllable, is a proper (Hayes 1995:86-87) foot in that language and thus the theory can easily accommodate forms such as [da.'tau] and [hna.pu.'gai]. This time, a left edge unfooted syllable will appear in forms with even (rather than odd) number of syllables.

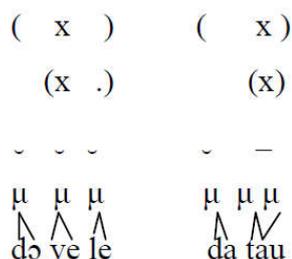
(x)	(—)
(x)	(x .)(x)
da tau	hna pu gai

The fact that final stress surface words are rhythmically well-formed within a syllabic trochee system is supported by their observing the “Continuous Column Constraint” (Hayes 1995:34), according to which a column with a grid mark on a particular layer must also contain grid marks on all lower layers. In the examples above, the grid mark on the foot containing the heavy syllable is dominated by a grid mark in the word layer. In other words, the main word stress is assigned to the single heavy syllable of that foot.

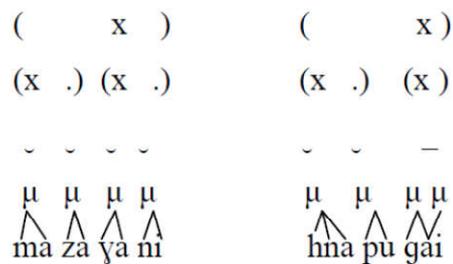
The Blanga data, therefore, constitute evidence supporting Hayes' prediction mentioned in 2.6.3.3. When formulating his prediction, Hayes first took word minimality in some available languages as a clue that (—) can constitute a proper syllabic trochee, then assumed that “prosodic structure is created maximally” (Hayes

1995:102) and concluded that such a foot type is possible provided that only one long syllable is available, *i.e.* word-finally. If not word-final, the heavy syllable would be parsed in the same foot as the preceding one due to maximality. Then why do we get forms such as [da.'tau], with an unfooted syllable at the left edge, rather than ['da.tau], where a maximal foot is created? The answer that I suggest reiterates the fact that the Blanga words with heavy syllables are exclusively surface forms. It appears that stress assignment happens in an earlier stage, prior to surface phenomena. Different surface manifestations are then allowed as long as they do not interfere with the already established rhythmic pattern. Surface glide formation (2.1.7.1), for instance, is blocked if it would generate a light monosyllab since a single light syllable cannot form a foot in Blanga.

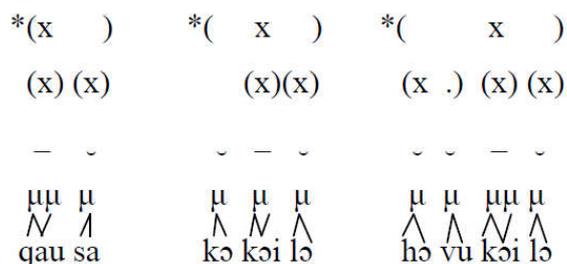
Another important consequence of this analysis of Blanga stress is that it clearly shows, as I tried to suggest at the beginning of 2.6.3.3, that statements concerning the position of the stressed syllable within the word (final, penultimate etc.) are not enough to account for the assignment of stress in a given language. Blanga stress assignment is based on the relation between word minima, feet, and higher level constraints. More evidence that the syllabic trochee analysis is the appropriate one for Blanga can be found if one assumes for a moment that Blanga actually counts moras instead of syllables and, while this is obscured by the one-mora-to-one-syllable equivalence in underlying forms, it is nevertheless revealed at the surface, where diphthong formation generates heavy syllables. Such analysis will treat the forms [dɔ.'ve.le] ‘tuber’ and [da.'tau] ‘chief’ as equivalent for the purpose of stress assignment, the proposed foot type being the moraic trochee this time. Here and in the following examples, the macron symbolises a heavy syllable and the breve a light syllable. A proper moraic trochee (Hayes 1995:69) can consist of two light syllables or one heavy syllable: (x̣ ˘) or (x̣). Rhythmically, [dɔ.'ve.le] and [da.'tau] are the same, both consisting of a moraic trochee and an unfooted light syllable at the left edge.



Similarly, the form [hna.pu.'gai] can be treated as rhythmically identical with the form [ma.za.'ya.ni], both consisting of two moraic trochees, with prominence on the rightmost one.



The forms above suggest that feet are still constructed from right to left, while prominence at word level is still assigned by End Rule Right. Under the moraic trochee hypothesis, the parsing of forms such as ['gau.sa], [kə.'kəi.lə] and [hə.vu.'kəi.lə] will require us to assume that the language allows degenerate feet, defined as “the smallest logically possible feet” in a given system (Hayes 1995:86) and thus consisting of a single light syllable. Degenerate feet are either allowed or not on a language-specific basis. In languages that allow them, they can appear “only in strong position, i.e. when dominated by another grid mark” (Hayes 1995:87) since they are tolerated as a means of avoiding the violation of the Continuous Column Constraint (Hayes 1995:34). The examples below are ill-parsed because the grid mark on the degenerate foot is not dominated by a grid mark in the word layer.



The moraic trochee hypothesis can, therefore, be easily dismissed based solely on violations of the strong position constraint. It can then be noted that Blanga minimal (content) words cannot consist of a single light syllable.

2.6.3.3.3 Surface forms with final vowel deletion

Word-final vowel deletion is widespread in Blanga and can appear either after another consonant or after a vowel (2.1.6), as in the examples below.

/'ma.ne 'dɔ.u/ 'big man' → [man.'dɔ.u]
 /hna.`ga.re 'dɔ.u/ 'big garden' → [hna.gar.'dɔ.u]
 /fa.'ka.e=ni/ 'see=3SG.AGR' → [fa.ka=ni]
 /fa.`ka.e='niɣɔ/ 'see=2SG.AGR' → [fa.ka='niɣɔ]

However, deletion is not possible in phrase/utterance-final position and the reduced form will always be part of a larger phonological word or phrase, *i.e.* followed by more metrical material to the right. Thus, if a heavy CVC syllable is generated, this will never be able to form a foot by itself. It will either remain unfooted at the left edge of the phonological word in odd-syllabled forms, or will become the stressless syllable of the weaker previous foot in even-syllabled forms.

(x)	(x)		(x)	(x)
(x .)(x .)	(x .)		(x .)(x .)	(x .)(x .)
ma ne dɔ u	→ man dɔ u		hna ga re dɔ u	→ hna gar dɔ u

If a V syllable is syncopated, the feet will be adjusted accordingly. Syllables between < > are extrametrical, *i.e.* not seen by the rules of rhythmic stress assignment

(x)	(x .)		(x)	(x)
(x .)	(x .)		(x .)(x .)	(x .)(x .)
fa ka e=<ni>	→ fa ka=<ni>		fa ka e=ni ɣɔ	→ fa ka=ni ɣɔ

2.6.3.3.4 Suffixes and stress

Only a handful of suffixes have been identified in the language and they are all monosyllabic, but they do not show a unitary pattern as far as their interaction with stress is concerned. Normally, monosyllabic suffixes add an extra syllable to the right edge of the word. This is illustrated by the forms [a.ra.'hi] 'myself' and [a.re.'lau] 'those particular ones' below. They consist of the emphatic suffix *-hi* attached to the first person singular personal pronoun *ara* and the specifying suffix *-lau* attached to the plural distal demonstrative *are* respectively. Both suffixes seem to attract stress but while the latter can be easily parsed into syllabic trochees thanks to its heavy syllable, the former is a bit problematic, since it consists of a light syllable. It would be tempting to analyse the form [a.ra.'hi] with a degenerate foot but, as shown in the sections above, there is no evidence that Blanga allows degenerate feet.

(x) (x)	(x) (x)
(x.) (x.) (x)	(x.) (x.) (x)
a ra → a ra -hi	a re → a re -lau
'I' 'myself'	'those' 'those particular ones'

Another possible solution, which I prefer, is that the extra syllable, which is light, does not provide enough metrical material for the creation of a foot and therefore cannot attract stress. In that case, its prominence would be just an auditory impression and in reality the form should be rendered as ['a.ra.hi]. The additional syllable would be extrametrical, *i.e.* invisible to the metrical stress assignment rules (for extrametricality, see Hayes (1995:56-60, 105-110).

(x) (x)
(x.) (x.)
a ra → a ra -<hi>

By contrast, the suffix *-lau*, which consists of a heavy syllable, offers enough metrical material and can easily attract stress, hence the form [a.re.'lau]. In both cases, End Rule Right has assigned word stress to the rightmost available foot. A similar situation is represented by the series of polarity, aspect and tense suffixes *-ti* 'NEG', *-ke* 'PERF' and *-ge* 'PRES'. These can only be attached to a bound base representing either the modal category realis (*ne-*) or habitual aspect (*e-*). These attach as below:

MOD/ASP + (NEG) + (PERF) + (PRES)

The minimal shape of such a form is thus disyllabic and offers just enough material for the creation of a proper trochee. When there are two suffixes in a row, the third syllable is extrametrical.

(x .)	(x .)
ne-ke	ne-ti-<ke>
'REAL-PERF'	'REAL-NEG-PERF'

Note that such forms can only appear as auxiliaries in the verb complex. Therefore, they may make up a phonological phrase with subsequent material, in which case the third syllable becomes metrically visible.

Another example is that of the transitivity suffix *-i*, which replaces the last vowel of an intransitive stem and thus does not create an extra syllable of its own. No extra material is added in this case.

(x) (x)
 (x .) (x .)
 kə hrə → kə hr-i
 ‘pull (v.i.)’ ‘pull (v.t)’

2.6.3.3.5 Pre-stem morphology and stress

Pre-stem morphology, including echo syllables of partially reduplicated forms (2.5.1), prefixes, or combinations of both, does not affect the rhythmic pattern and the main stress position. Thus, a monosyllabic prefix or an echo syllable attached to a disyllabic stem will result in a three-syllable word with an unfooted syllable at the left edge, as in *na. 'fri.hɲe* ‘work (n.)’ ← *'fri.hɲe* ‘work (v.)’ and *za. 'za.hɔ* ‘walk (v.)’ ← *'za.hɔ* ‘go’, the pattern being the same x as with underived three-syllable words.

(x) (x) (x) (x)
 (x .) (x .) (x .) (x .)
 fri hɲe → na fri hɲe za hɔ → za za hɔ

Disyllabic prefixes have not been attested but a combination of monosyllabic prefix and echo syllable will offer enough metrical material for a new foot to be parsed to the left, according to the four-syllable word pattern, as in the case of *fa.ka. 'kra.ŋɔ* ‘dry (v.)’ ← *'kra.ŋɔ* ‘be.dry’ (by means of the causative prefix *fa-* combined with partial reduplication).

(x .) (x)
 (x .) (x .)(x .)
 kra ŋɔ → fa ka kra ŋɔ

2.6.3.3.6 Compounds, full reduplication and stress

With the exception of some three-member constructions involving the purposive particle *mala*, all the compounds that have been identified so far in Blanga consist of two elements (see Chapter 3). For most of these, both elements are disyllabic, but cases in which one element has three syllables can be found. At the same time, all of the attested fully reduplicated forms copy a disyllabic base. Both compounds and fully

reduplicated forms are phonologically right strong and, naturally, from a semantic point of view, they count as a single word: /^ˈva.ka 'fla.lə/ ‘airplane’ ← /^ˈva.ka/ ‘boat’ + /'fla.lə/ ‘fly’, /^ˈka.la me'me.ha/ ‘feather’ ← /^ˈk^ha.la/ ‘hair’ + /me'me.ha/ ‘bird’, /^ˈde.ke.'de.ke/ ‘toe-walkinkg’ ← /^ˈde.ke/ ‘step’. What I intend to propose here is that, prosodically, such forms need to be analysed as a string of words (similar to a phrase), rather than as a single phonological word (such as affixed or partially reduplicated forms). In other words, the grid representation of compounds and full reduplications requires a layer higher than the word layer. This requirement is obscured by compounds consisting of an even number of syllables and all fully reduplicated forms. If considered a single phonological word, these will be analysed like the underived four-syllable words:

(x) (x) ?(x)	(x) ?(x)
(x .) (x .) (x .)(x .)	(x .) (x .)(x .)
va ka + fla lə → va ka fla lə	de ke → de ke de ke

My proposed analysis is like below:

(x)	(x)
(x) (x) (x .)(x .)	(x) (x .)(x .)
(x .) (x .) (x .)(x .)	(x .) (x .)(x .)
va ka + fla lə → va ka fla lə	de ke → de ke de ke

This is based on compounds with an odd-syllabled second element, such as /^ˈka.la me'me.ha/. Notice that the secondary stress remains on the first syllable of the first element instead of moving one step to the right to accommodate the trochaic pattern. Therefore, if seen as a single phonological word, metrical structure needs to be assigned to this newly derived word and the unfooted syllable of the second element will need to be redistributed to the foot to its left, which would create a dactyl.

(x) (x) ?(x)
(x .) (x .) (x . .)(x .)
ka la + me me ha → ka la me me ha

Instead, I consider the two elements as two adjacent phonological words. When the phrasal layer is introduced in the derivation, it is understood that metrical structure has already been assigned on the foot and word layers, that is both elements of the compound have been parsed separately with syllabic trochees. We have seen in

2.6.3.3.2 that stress is assigned before word-level surface phenomena are manifested and this definitely precedes phrasal level. The phrasal layer will assign prominence by End Rule Right and will check the stress levels to be distributed as even as possible.

(x)
 (x) (x) (x) (x)
 (x .) (x .) (x .) (x .)
 ka la + me me ha → ka la me me ha

An alternative is to analyse it as one phonological word and apply the Priority Clause (Hayes 1995:95). As stated above, Blanga does not allow degenerate feet. But even in languages that do allow them, degenerate feet are only allowed at the end of the parse. The Priority Clause states that “if at any stage in foot parsing the portion of the string being scanned would yield a degenerate foot, the parse scans further along the string to construct a proper foot where possible”. This would allow the first syllable of *memeha* to remain unfooted even if the compound is seen as one single phonological word, therefore it wouldn't be necessary to introduce a phrase layer.

(x) (x) (x)
 (x .) (x .) (x .) (x .)
 ka la + me me ha → ka la me me ha

The latter explanation is simpler and more elegant. However, I am tempted to prefer the former based on the identical stress pattern in N-N compounds and NN_{MOD} sequences (Chapter 3).

2.6.3.3.7 Summing up Blanga stress assignment

Underlying Blanga words are stressed on the penultimate syllable. At the surface, the penultimate stress is preserved if no diphthongs are formed at all, if the vowel of the underlyingly stressed syllable does not participate in surface diphthong formation, or if it becomes V2 of the surface diphthong. When the vowel of the underlyingly stressed syllable becomes V1 of the surface diphthong, words with final stress are generated. Such words do not affect the rhythmic pattern of the language. Surface CVC syllables due to word-final vowel deletion do not attract stress and do not affect the penultimate pattern. Blanga employs syllabic trochees constructed from right to left and main stress is assigned to the head of the rightmost foot. Stress is assigned at an early stage, before any surface phenomena are manifested.

2.6.4 A note on intonation

Blanga intonation is not analysed in this thesis. It will constitute the topic of a subsequent research project together with its interactions with information structure (see also Chapter 7).

2.7 Phonological treatment of loanwords and their impact on Blanga phonology

This section is mainly concerned with segments, syllable structure, phonotactic constraints and stress. There are no traceable effects on the intonational pattern.

There are two main sources of borrowings into Blanga: the autochthonous languages of Isabel Island and Melanesian Pidgin in its Solomon Islands version, which is usually referred to as Pijin¹⁴. Like many Solomon Islanders, most Blanga people, and especially the younger ones, are now multilingual¹⁵. While in the case of Blanga vs. Pijin or Blanga vs. Bughotu, which is the only language of Santa Isabel that does not belong to the Isabel subgroup (1.1.2), things are relatively straightforward, in the case of Blanga vs. other Isabel languages bi- or multilingualism can only be postulated as long as a division between languages and dialects is conventionally adopted. The Isabel languages, in their current state, represent the remnants of a dialect chain and differentiation is attributed to their isolation during the head-hunting era. That era, however, was followed by the present stage of more and more intensive contact, which makes it very difficult, and in some instances practically impossible, to assert which common features are due to retention and which to convergence. Moreover, there must have been different degrees of isolation between different lects and it is very possible that some neighbouring lects have never separated enough to break the network.

To start outside the Isabel subgroup, the influence of Bughotu on Blanga is not only linguistic, but also cultural. The latter aspect seems to be prevailing, since, strictly

¹⁴ A third source most probably consists of Solomon Islands languages spoken outside Santa Isabel (which may include a few non-Austronesian lects). However, since the nature of the linguistic contact between the different Solomonic groups during the headhunting period has not been elucidated yet, I shall refrain from making too many speculations about it. Some assertions that may sound speculative do have a base in documented facts. A good example of this is note 10.

¹⁵ There are reasons to believe that the situation was different during the head-hunting and the early Christian periods, when they lived isolated in the highlands. The few very old Northern Blanga speakers born in the bush who were still alive at the time of my fieldtrips were apparently monolingual. At least, they could not speak or understand Pijin and their proficiency in Cheke Holo or other Isabel languages seemed to be limited to mutually intelligible structures. I have also met a limited number of young people (20-30 y.o.) who had never attended any form of education and were believed by the others to be monolingual, or in the others' approximate words 'not able to speak but Blanga'. This was not entirely true, although their Pijin was poor and I did not have the opportunity to witness any conversation between one of them and a Cheke Holo speaker. The presence of such exceptions, however, does not affect the current overall image of Blanga multilingualism.

speaking, Blanga is not in immediate geographical contact with Bughotu, being separated from it by Cheke Holo and Gao. Although this does not exclude contact between speakers, as the populations in question are highly mobile, it limits the degree of contact and has prevented mass bilingualism.

The Bughotu influence on Blanga and the adoption of Bughotu words into Blanga¹⁶ is mainly due to the cultural prestige acquired by the former as the first language on the island into which the Christian Bible was translated. It was also the language used by Bughotu and European missionaries during the process of Christianisation and early schooling of some Blanga people and people belonging to other Isabel groups (1.1.5).

As far as the lexicon is concerned, the influence of Bughotu has enriched the Blanga vocabulary to a certain extent. This has sometimes created doublets, such as *t^haruŋa* vs. *hnaitu* for 'spirit'. The Bughotu loanword *t^haruŋa* is used in Blanga in Christian context (such as in *t^haruŋa ta blahi* 'The Holy Spirit', while *hnaitu* is reserved for the more traditional (and usually evil) spirits of the forest or of other dwellings. In the context of the new religion, *hnaitu* is also associated with the devil.

Bughotu loanwords, at least at this stage of the research, do not seem to have influenced Blanga phonology or to be subjected to a particular treatment in the language.

Due to population movements, intermarriages, schooling, and other contact situations, any language of Isabel is a source of borrowing for Blanga as well as for any of the other languages on the island. In most cases, those influences are either not very significant or not very easily identifiable. The notable exception to that is Cheke Holo, the major trade language, which is also the language with the largest population and the most rapidly expanding language of the island. The area where Cheke Holo is spoken encompasses the provincial capital and enjoys all the facilities that come with that. The language has thus acquired economical and administrative prestige and, more recently, has started to replace Bughotu, as the language of cultural prestige, especially since the publication of the Cheke Holo New Testament in 1993.

Cheke Holo has become the second language of the Blanga speakers and many Cheke Holo lexical forms are currently in competition with the original Blanga ones. The substantial borrowing from Cheke Holo into Blanga also creates the potential of the former influencing the phonology of the latter. However, the phonological inventories of the Isabel languages are not very different from each other and the presence vs.

¹⁶ As well as in other Isabel languages.

absence of some phonemes or phonotactic constraints in some languages can be better explained historically (as common innovations within a particular subgroup) than by synchronic contact.

However, two phonological features of Blanga may be attributed, at least in part, to the influence of Cheke Holo. Those are the phonemic glottal stop (2.2.4), and the emergence of affricates in the speech of younger people, described in (2.2.8). It is difficult to explain the two phenomena as being exclusively the result of internal change in Blanga. The data seem to suggest that, even if they may be to some extent internally motivated, the contact with Cheke Holo has at least reinforced the changes. Cheke Holo loanwords may thus be responsible, to some extent, for the addition of new phonemes to the Blanga consonant inventory.

Another main source of borrowing into Blanga is Pijin. Pijin words used frequently in Blanga seem to affect its phonology more than those borrowed from Cheke Holo. This is not due to the greater influence of Pijin. On the contrary, Pijin comes as a third language and is reserved for communication with people from outside the Isabel Island, either Melanesians or non-Melanesians. The reason is that Pijin phonology differs to a greater extent from Blanga phonology and Pijin borrowings are thus more prone to display patterns that are unusual in Blanga. Once such words have been adopted and used extensively, the patterns may become part of the Blanga phonology, at least marginally. Nevertheless, since they are relatively new and apparently have not been completely integrated into the language, it makes more sense for the sake of the present description to treat them in a different section.

One additional remark must be made here. There is no direct English influence on Blanga, as seems to be the general case with the languages of Melanesia. English loanwords penetrate via Pijin. These may include more recent terms, such as *laptop* or *MP3 player*, which first penetrate into Pijin and from there into Blanga but, so far, not directly. The phonology of Pijin is different from the English phonology and it is the former that may have an impact on Blanga phonology. This is proved by the treatment of English words containing affricates. These affricates are initially reduced to their fricative element, a process that happens in Pijin, leaving no trace of the occlusive element when they finally penetrate into Blanga. This is significant, since words like *tisa* ‘teacher’¹⁷, for instance, are never pronounced with an affricate in Blanga, not even

¹⁷ The words more frequently used in Blanga to denote ‘teacher’ are *mista* ‘mister’ and *madam* ‘madam’, depending, of course, on the gender of the person in question. An older term for teacher is the Bughotu loanword *velepuhi*, which penetrated together with the Christian practices and teachings. It initially denoted both ‘teacher’ and ‘catechist’. Not only were catechists vehicles for the transmission of Christian

by the younger speakers, who otherwise have affricates, partially due to the Cheke Holo influence, as discussed above.

One way in which Pijin loanwords may be interacting with Blanga phonology is the marginal phonologisation of the labial glide (see 2.1.7.1 for its surface realization as an allophone of the Blanga high vowel /u/), which is present in a number of frequently used words, such as *wiki* ‘week’, *wasi* ‘wash’, *waka* ‘work’¹⁸, *waku* ‘Chinese person’, or *wes(e)de/wenes(e)de* ‘Wednesday’, and in a number of English first names used by the Blanga people and other Solomon Islanders, such as *Wilfred*, *Walter*, or *Edwin*.

Otherwise, at a first glance, it looks as though Pijin segments are adjusted to Blanga phonology. In fact, Pijin is not a standardised language and there are virtually as many Pijin varieties as vernaculars in the Solomons. In different lects, the production of different segments is conditioned by the existence of particular articulations in those lects. The speakers of different Solomon Islands vernaculars tend to adjust Pijin to the phonological inventory of their first language. Therefore, it is usually the phonologies of the different Pijin varieties that are influenced by local languages. For instance, speakers of vernaculars that do not have labio-dental fricatives tend to produce them as bilabials in their variety of Pijin. Thus *f* is produced as *p* in some parts of the Solomons but not on Santa Isabel. It so happens that the Blanga inventory does not differ too much from the Pijin one.

As shown in § 2.4.2, Blanga allows consonant clusters in both word-medial and word-initial position subject to several constraints that drastically limit the possible combinations. Clusters can consist of no more than two elements, the first of which can only be a non-coronal, non-aspirated, non-glottal obstruent or a voiceless fricative, while the second can only be a sonorant non-homorganic with the obstruent. Some Pijin loanwords are adjusted to fit the Blanga pattern (*sade* ‘Sunday’, *made* ‘Monday’, *deseba* ‘December’, *noveba* ‘November’). Others violate the constraints, increasing the number of allowed combinations (*tisde* ‘Tuesday’, *wesde* ‘Wednesday’, *sosde* ‘Thursday’, *kastəm(u)* ‘custom’, *krismas* ‘Christmas’, *stoa* ‘store’, *dokta* ‘doctor’, *triki* ‘trick’, *petrol* ‘petrol’, *advent* ‘Advent’, *gavman* ‘government’). Finally, in some cases clusters are allowed but others avoided within the same word (*wenesde*¹⁹ ‘Wednesday’).

teachings, but also the first schools in the area were established by missionaries. Today, *velepuhi* is restricted to the meaning of ‘catechist’.

¹⁸ The autochthonous Blanga word for ‘work’ is *nafrihje*, a noun derived from the verb *frihje* ‘to work’. This word has a general sense. The Pijin loanword *waka* has specialized to denote ‘paid work’, an activity relatively new for the members of the Blanga community.

¹⁹ The haplological form *wesde* seems to be more frequent.

Before discussing which constraints are violated and which are not, it is worth mentioning that for some of the loanwords that violate phonological constraints, parallel forms with an epenthetic vowel, thus avoiding clusters, are attested: *tiside*, *wesede/wenesede*, *soside*, *sitɔa*. This suggests that constraint-violating consonant clusters have gained acceptance gradually, starting with a phase of possible total rejection. Currently, however, they are present in both younger and older speakers, despite the occasional persistence of epenthetic forms.

As the examples above illustrate, the constraint that a sonorant cannot be the first element in a consonant cluster is normally not violated by loanwords. Possible exceptions to that may be the word *advent* (this also violates the constraint on homorganicity) and some personal names of English origin. The former has a major significance in a Christian context but is otherwise very low frequency in the language. Of the latter category, only one example has been so far identified in the Blanga environment. This is the name spelt Gilbert and pronounced by the Blanga speakers as *gilbeti*, with a sonorant plus obstruent cluster. The young Popoheo man with this name also uses the diminutive *gili*, which suggests that the C1 of the cluster is actually there and not a simple perceptory impression influenced by the English pronunciation of the name. Although examples like this can be regarded as marginal at this stage, their existence nevertheless shows that more changes in the phonotactic patterns may be on the way.

Constraints that are definitely violated by loanwords are illustrated by examples in which clusters consist of two obstruents. These are mostly represented by clusters with /s/ as their C1 but other combinations are also possible. Even the constraint that prevents coronal plosives from filling the C1 position is violated in words such as *triki*, *petrɔlɔ*, and *advent* and so is the constraint on voiced fricatives in C1 position in the word *gavman*.

Loanwords also interact with Blanga syllable structure and syllabification and this is especially the case of those with consonant clusters such as those in the examples above. If the cluster appears word-initially, then it has no other choice than to be syllabified as a branching onset, no matter if it violates the constraints imposed on Blanga consonant clusters or not. When a loanword cluster appears word-medially, the situation is a bit more complex, unless it obeys the Blanga constraints, which is quite rare. It has been repeated on different occasions in this chapter that Blanga syllables have no codas, at least underlyingly (for possible surface codas resulting from final vowel deletion see § 2.1.6). However, loanwords with word-medial consonant clusters

such as the examples above have two potential syllabifications, one with codas and one without. Interestingly, both syllabifications are used by Blanga speakers

To conclude the present section, both Cheke Holo and Pijin loanwords are capable of increasing the Blanga consonant inventory, while Pijin loanwords also affect Blanga phonotactics and syllable structure. Loanwords from Cheke Holo and other Isabel languages (and as a matter of fact from Oceanic languages in general) do not trigger changes in the Blanga accentual pattern, nor do they require any particular adjustment since most of the time they display the same penultimate stress as Blanga.

Pijin loanwords, which normally preserve their source English accent, behave differently. The tendency is to retain the Pijin accent on the original syllable, thus altering the Blanga pattern when it does not happen to fall on the penultimate syllable, e.g. in *'sa.ra.re* 'Saturday'. In some instances, coda avoidance triggers the addition of a word-final vowel, increasing the number of syllables. This process does not affect the position of stress and may thus turn disyllabic Pijin words with penultimate stress into three-syllable Blanga words with irregular antepenultimate stress: *'le.mə.ne* 'lemon', *'petrəb* 'petrol'.

CHAPTER THREE

Elements of Blanga Morphology and Phrase-Level Syntax

Blanga is dominantly isolating, in the sense of Comrie (1989), while displaying secondary agglutinating patterns of derivational morphology. Affixation is poorly represented, while reduplication is widespread and stem modification distinguishes some verbs from their nominal counterparts.

3.1 Word classes

According to the most common cross-linguistic pattern, Blanga morphosyntactic words can be divided into two basic categories: content words and function words. The classes into which content words can be grouped, also referred to as major word classes, are on the whole open classes, in that most of their subclasses allow for a very large, theoretically unlimited number of members, and thus, naturally, most words in the language belong to them. The overall open character of content word classes, however, does not exclude the possibility of their including a, usually limited, number of closed subclasses (see, for instance, the local, associative and contextualising subclasses of nouns described in 3.1.2.1.3, 3.1.2.1.4 and 3.1.2.1.5). Only two major word classes have been identified in Blanga and they correspond to what have been traditionally labelled nouns (3.1.2) and verbs (3.1.9). Although there are cases when the distinction between the two is not straightforward, most such words can be clearly assigned to one or the other major class, as discussed in Section 3.1.1. A distinct class of adjectives does not need to be postulated for Blanga. Nouns can be modified either by other nouns, by quantifiers, or by a particular subclass of stative verbs, namely descriptive stative verbs (“adjectival verbs” in Ross’ (1988:98) terminology) or can take clausal modifiers such as relative clauses (5.3.2.1). Adverb of manner-like meaning is normally achieved by verb serialisation or by means of the particle *fa*, which is normally used to derive causatives (3.1.12, 4.3.3.4, 4.3.7.2). If words that may justify the postulation of separate classes of adjectives and/or adverbs of manner do exist, then they are most certainly of an extremely small number (and perhaps of low frequency) and have not been identified in the corpus on which this description is based.

On the other hand, function word classes, usually regarded as minor classes, are always closed, that is they consist of a limited (and therefore relatively small) number of members, which can, at least theoretically, be exhaustively listed in a synchronic description. For Blanga, I am proposing a maximum of nine function classes. They can

either be organised in paradigms, such as pronouns (3.1.3) and demonstratives (3.1.4), or in small sets, such as articles (3.1.5), quantifiers (3.1.6), locative adverbs (3.1.10), particles (3.1.12), conjunctions (3.1.14), prepositions (3.1.13), and interjections (see the next paragraph). Numerals (3.1.6.1), (3.1.6.2) are a distinct subclass of quantifiers and, at a first glance, they may appear to be problematic for the characterisation of content classes as being always closed if one fails to distinguish between numerals as words and the mathematical entities they denote. In reality, only a tiny set of numerals is listed in the lexicon. Higher numbers are denoted by derived and/or compound forms of these basic numerals.

There is one class of words that seems to stand somewhere between content and function words, without fitting exactly into either category, that of interjections. They can be clearly conceived of as a distinct class that resembles closed classes because it consists of a small number of identifiable members but, on the other hand, cannot be strictly characterised as closed. Interjections are lexicalised versions of some output of paralinguistic vocal behaviour and do not fill any syntactic slot in the structure of the language. They are clearly not content words in the sense in which nouns or verbs are. The position of interjections and their function at both sentence and discourse level are matters of further investigation, not only for Blanga but also cross-linguistically. They will not be further discussed in this thesis.

3.1.1 Distinguishing nouns from verbs in Blanga

From a broad semantic perspective, prototypical nouns denote entities, while prototypical verbs are used to predicate of situations, events, processes and actions. Accordingly, in (3.1), words such as *Zone* ‘John’, *gazu* ‘tree’ and *hirama* ‘axe’ can be assumed to be nouns and words such as *toka* ‘cut’ can be assumed to be verbs.

(3.1) *Zone=na ne toka=ni gazu=na ka hirama.*
 John=DEM.N.SG REAL cut=3SG.AGR tree=DEM.N.SG PREP axe
 ‘John is cutting the tree with an axe.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

However, the semantic criterion alone is hardly sufficient for an appropriate taxonomy due to its allowing for a considerable amount of ambiguity. In the examples below, both *frihnge* and *nafrihnge*, which are both glossed as ‘work’, seem to refer to the event or action of working.

(3.2) *Ara-hi frihnge ade Buala ka rereghi hmari.*
 1SG-INTS work here PLN PREP look.after fish
 ‘I work here in Buala looking after the fish [store].’ (084A030408; text)

(3.3) No-gu nafrihnge=na ara mala sele hmari.
 POSS-1SG.P work=DEM.N.SG 1SG PURP sell fish
 ‘My work is to sell fish.’ (084A030408; text)

(3.4) Phea phile=na suga=na t=au are
 two PART=3SG.P house=DEM.N.SG SB=exist DEM.N.SG

ta fringhe=di=re manei: kekepi, babaghi t=au are.
 SB work=3NSG.AGR=DEM.N.PL 3.SG side.roof eave SB=exist DEM.N.SG
 ‘There are two parts of the house that he builds: the side roofs and the eaves.’¹
 (013A071207; text)

(3.5) [...] ghai ghinai ke frihnge ke fa=keli eu
 1PL.EXCL FUT PERF work PERF CS=be.good be.thus.IRR

phea suga ikia ta mala zaho ke fate=na tahi=na.
 two house be.small SB PURP go PREP top=3SG.P sea= DEM.N.SG
 ‘[...] we shall work and repair the two small houses used for going above the sea.’²
 (019A101207; text)

(3.6) Uve, nafringhe dou bla fringhe mhola=ne=ia [...]
 yes work be.big LIM work canoe=DEM.R.SG=PART
 ‘Yes, building canoes was indeed hard work [...].’ (015A071207; text)

Clearly, one word, *nafringhe* appears to be derived from the other, *frihnge*. Let us notice that, although the assumed derivation already implies that the two words should be classified separately, it cannot constitute evidence that they belong to completely distinct word classes rather than to mere subdivisions of the same higher rank word class (e.g. a subclass of verbs derived from another subclass of verbs). The two major word classes postulated for Blanga, nouns and verbs, (and word classes in general in other languages) can be more thoroughly distinguished from one another based on their members’ structural properties, distribution, and combination possibilities, as discussed below with additional examples that may not involve any derivational relation.

A) Blanga nouns can be possessed and indexed for possessor, while Blanga verbs are indexed for argument agreement. In (3.3) above, *nafringhe* is alienably possessed and associated with a possessive base, which in turn is indexed by the suffix *-gu* showing the same person and number as the possessor *ara* ‘1SG’. In (3.7) below, *ghahe* ‘leg’ is inalienably possessed and directly indexed for possessor. The morphosyntax and semantics of possession will be detailed in Sections 3.2.1.7 and 3.3. What is important here is that in both cases there is an overtly marked possessor-possessed relationship.

¹ The house parts terminology is very rich in Blanga, often causing difficulties in translation. Both *kekepi* and *babaghi* are better translated as ‘side roof’. The difference between them is that the former denotes a side roof of the house proper and the latter refers to a side roof of the porch.

² Here the speaker refers to the two village toilets, which are built on pillars literally above the sea.

On the other hand, *kathu* ‘bite’ in (3.7) is indexed by an enclitic displaying person and number agreement with one of the main arguments of the predication and so is *frihnge* in (3.4). The pattern in (3.4) suggests that the agreement is with the undergoer argument or the grammatical relation that maps onto the undergoer argument. Chapter 6 will show evidence for the syntactic nature of this agreement. Until then, I shall refer to it as ‘argument agreement’.

- (3.7) Hmeke ana kathu=ni ghahe=gu=na ara.
 dog DEM.N.SG bite=3SG.AGR leg=1SG.P=DEM.N.SG 1SG
 ‘That dog bit my leg.’ (030A140118; elicitation)

B) Blanga nouns can be accompanied by certain words implying definiteness or specificity (3.1.5), such as demonstratives functioning attributively in (3.3), (3.7), (3.8) and (3.9), which also distinguish number, while Blanga verbs can be accompanied by particles or affixes showing tense, aspect or mood (TAM). In (3.5), *frihnge* is preceded by the future particle *ghinai* and by the perfective particle *ke*, while in (3.10) a realis mood bound stem, suffixed with the perfective aspect particle, precedes the verb *lehe* ‘die’.

- (3.8) Ara efro=ni mane iao.
 1SG see=3SG.AGR person DEM.PV.SG
 ‘I [can] see that person.’ (029A140118; elicitation)

- (3.9) Nagrui=na theome dou.
 garden=DEM.N.SG NEG be.big
 ‘The garden is not big.’ (033A140108; text)

- (3.10) Ne-ke lehe hmogo.
 REAL-PERF die snake
 ‘The snake died.’ (216A201109; elicitation)

C) Blanga nouns can be modified by another noun (3.11), a descriptive stative verb, (3.6), (3.12) or a relative clause (3.13).

- (3.11) fua sau
 fruit rose.apple
 ‘rose apple’ (*Syzygium samarangense*) (007A011207; elicitation)

- (3.12) suga dou
 house be.big
 ‘big house’ (043A160208; elicitation)

(3.13) Hnokro fate phea=ro.
 sit top two=DEM.N.SG

Phea fogri [ta **dou**]=ro ulu, sua=di=ro leghu bla.
 two frog [SB be.big]=DEM.NV.PL front child=3PL.P=DEM.N.SG behind LIM
 ‘Two [frogs] were sitting up there. The two big frogs in front, their children
 behind.’ (Lit. ‘The two frogs that were big...’) (022AV130408; elicitation)

Verbs cannot be modified in the same way. Expressing manner is one of the functions of serial verb constructions or of causative constructions.

D) Nouns can be quantified (3.14), (3.15), while verbs cannot.

(3.14) Hneva sua=re nanafu au ka glilihi.
 nine child=DEM.N.PL play exist PREP beach
 ‘Nine children are playing on the beach.’ (092A130408; elicitation)

(3.15) [...] lelegu mane datau lelegu nanau ta mala ooe=di [...]
 every man chief every village SB PURP speak=3NSG.AGR
 ‘...every chief of every village, who is supposed to speak...’ (008A051207; text)

E) Finally and most importantly, Blanga nouns can be heads of noun phrases (3.2.1). While the head is the only compulsory element in a Blanga NP, not all nouns are NP heads since they can also function as modifiers of other nouns as stated above (see also 3.1.7), and not all NP heads are nouns. On the other hand, verbs stand at the core of verb complexes (3.4), which, in turn, can function as predicates of verbal clauses (4.2). Although NPs can function as predicating elements without any formal modification, albeit in a restricted set of verbless clauses (4.1), verbs can never be NP heads. In other words, between the two, this particular function is reserved for nouns. Schematic representations of the NP and the verb complex can be found in 3.2.1 and 3.4.

Therefore, based on the criteria above, *frihnge* ‘work’ (3.2), (3.4), (3.5), (3.6), *kathu* ‘bite’ (3.7), *efro* ‘see’ (3.8), *lehe* ‘die’ (3.10) and *nanafu* ‘play’ (3.14) are all verbs, while *nafrihnge* ‘work’ (3.3), (3.6) *hmeke* ‘dog’ and *ghahe* ‘leg’ (3.7), *mane* ‘person/man’ (3.8), (3.15), *nagrui* ‘garden’ (3.9), *fua* ‘fruit’ (3.11), *suga* ‘house’ (3.12), *fogri* ‘frog’ (3.13), *suga* ‘house’ (3.13), (3.14) and *nanau* ‘village’ (3.15) are nouns.

In the same way, most Blanga words can be clearly assigned to either the noun or the verb class. A small number of lexical roots, however, can function as either verbs or nouns without any formal derivation.

(3.16) Ooe Blablanga ne-ke fufunu=na Zazao.
 language Blablanga REAL-PERF start=DEM.N.SG PLN
 ‘The Blablanga language started at Zazao.’ (185A151109; text)

(3.17) Ghume ke ooe=ni=na manei.
 thus PERF speak=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG 3SG
 ‘Thus he spoke.’ (186A151109; text)

(3.18) Ruma kaisa mane me ooe=di no-di ooe=re [...]
 enter one man INCPT speak=3NSG.AGR POSS-3NSG.P language=DEM.N.PL
 ‘A man came in and spoke in our language [...].’ (186A151109; text)

In (3.16), *ooe* is a noun modified by a proper noun; in (3.17), the same word is clearly a verb preceded by the perfective aspect particle and indexed for argument agreement; in (3.18), the word appears twice, first as a verb, accompanied by aspect and agreement markers, and then as an alienably possessed noun. Such roots are common in Austronesian and quite numerous in some Northwest Solomonic languages (for recent descriptions see Haraldstad Frostad 2012:49 and Chambers 2009:56) but their treatment may differ from author to author. In this context, but with obvious extended applications, Himmelmann (2005:129) emphasises the need for separating actual differences from differences due to descriptive practice. As a matter of fact, he distinguishes bound roots from multifunctional lexical bases. The former, as their name specifies, never occur without further affixation, while the latter assume different syntactic functions without further affixation. Bound roots can either be clearly subcategorized morphologically or syntactically by the affixation they occur with, or can be precategoryal in the sense that, given two possible derivations from the same root, there is no clear evidence that one is more basic than the other. The Blanga forms discussed here are always unbound, therefore belong to the category of multifunctional lexical bases.

Himmelmann (2005:130) lists three different approaches taken in the analysis of multifunctional lexical bases. One type of analysis considers these roots to be unspecified for category and involves the use of the term ‘precategoryal’ once again, extending its domain to include unbound roots. However, to avoid confusion, he recommends restricting the use of this term to bound roots, as in the previous paragraph. Another approach considers that each base is clearly subcategorised and there are productive morphosyntactic processes in the language that allow conversion between categories. Finally, a third analysis, assumes the existence of homonymous lexical bases. In the particular case of Blanga, the most appropriate analysis seems to be one that assumes a process of conversion that has led to the existence of homonymous doublets, pairs of words with identical form, one categorised as noun and one as verb according to the criteria mentioned at the beginning of this section. There are only a small number of such pairs in the language and they do not differ from each other in

morphological potential. For each doublet, the members that are assigned to the noun class are able to take full nominal morphology and those assigned to the verb class can take full verbal morphology, therefore it cannot be said that one categorisation is more basic than the other from a morphological or syntactic point of view. What can suggest a basic use is the meaning of the doublet. In the case of *ooe*, for instance, it seems that the verbal meaning ‘speak’ is more basic than the nominal meaning ‘language’ since language can be notionally conceived of as a consequence of the ability of speaking.

Finally, it is worth noting that the different varieties of Blanga differ in respect of these doublets. Multifunctional lexical bases appear to be more numerous in Zazao (Southwestern Blanga). The change in lexical meaning according to the function of the word is in need of further investigation.

3.1.2 Nouns

In addition to the general properties that distinguish nouns from verbs, different noun subclasses may display special behaviour or have some features that make them stand out from the bulk of nouns. Schematically, the Blanga noun taxonomy can be represented as below.

Nouns	Common	ordinary nouns (different semantic domains)		count (sg./pl.); mass (pluralia tantum)
		kinship terms		count
		local nouns	intrinsic	singularia tantum
			absolute	
		contextual nouns		singularia tantum
		associative noun		singularia tantum
	Proper	people		singularia tantum
		dogs		
		spirits		
		fantastic and mythological creatures		
		boats		
places and other geographical entities				

3.1.2.1 Common nouns

A distinction needs to be made between the bulk of common nouns, called here ‘ordinary nouns’, and several ‘special’ common noun subclasses. The special subclasses correspond to strictly defined semantic domains, have a relatively small number of members each, and do not include mass nouns. Most importantly, NPs headed by most of them are intrinsically possessed. Ordinary nouns have referents belonging to a theoretically unlimited range of semantic domains, include both count and mass nouns, and reflect the open class character of nouns as a whole. NPs headed by them can act

both as possessor and as possessum in a possessive construction. In Blanga, body parts, bodily matter and other participants in physical or non-physical part-whole relationships are included with and behave like ordinary common nouns.

3.1.2.1.1 Count vs. mass nouns

Most ordinary common nouns can be characterised as count nouns. Number is not marked directly on Blanga nouns, as is generally the case in Oceanic (Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002), but rather on the demonstrative forms that usually accompany them (3.1.4).

(3.19) Nakoni=**na** ke leghu mala nhokro.
 person=DEM.N.SG PREP behind PURP sit
 ‘The person is behind the seat.’ (007A011207; elicitation)

(3.20) Tifaro [...] nakoni=**re** ke magra [...]
 time.before [...] person=DEM.N.PL PREP fight
 ‘In the past [...], people used to fight [...].’ (051A240208; elicitation)

Mass nouns denote different substances (*dadara* ‘blood’) or aggregations (*hmata* ‘bush’, *tahi* ‘sea’, *vido* ‘land’) seen as a whole and they are formally marked as plural.

(3.21) [...] manei ghinai ke kulu zaho fea ka hmata=**re**.
 3.SG FUT PERF be.first go INIT PREP bush=DEM.N.PL
 ‘[...] he will, first of all, go to the bush.’ (015A071207; text)

(3.22) [...] ade ka geri tahi=**de**
 here PREP beside sea=DEM.R.PL
 ‘[...] here, by the sea.’ (012A051207; text)

(3.23) [...] vido ta au=**re**.
 land SB exist=DEM.N.PL
 [...] that land. (016A101207; text)

3.1.2.1.2 Kinship terms

The subclass of kinship terms consists of a limited number of members due to the limited socio-cultural possibilities. All its members are count nouns and intrinsically possessed. Their formal realisations and semantics are discussed in (3.3).

3.1.2.1.3 Local nouns and spatial orientation

Blanga local nouns do not need to be headed by a preposition but can appear as NP heads. However, they differ from ordinary nouns, as well as from nouns denoting kinship terms and body parts, in that, with the exception of two compounds illustrated a few paragraphs below, they or the NPs headed by them cannot function as core

arguments of a predicate, but only as obliques, as adjuncts, or as the predicate itself. Since local nouns are in direct relation with spatial orientation, I shall discuss their syntactic behaviour within this framework.

Recent works dealing with the complex relations between language and spatial cognition (especially Levinson 2003 and Levinson and Wilkins 2006) regard the spatial domain as being essentially definable in terms of location and direction. Spatial descriptions need to specify relations between an entity (*figure*) that is located or moves with respect to another entity (*ground*). In the English sentence *the apple is in the bowl*, the figure is *the apple* and the ground is *the bowl*. Here, the figure is coincident with the ground. Such cases (as well as those of close contiguity, e.g. *the ball is under the table*) do not require any angular specifications and we say that *topological relations* (see also 3.1.13) are enough to specify the position of the figure with respect to the ground. In the first example, the topological relation is that of containment; in the second, that of contiguity. In other instances, figure and ground are separated in space and some coordinates, and thus *frames of reference*, are necessary. Three types of frame of reference have been identified. To oversimplify, with faceted grounds, an angle can be specified by extending the axis on which the figure lies from a particular facet of the ground. In such cases we talk about *intrinsic* frames of reference (e.g. *the boy is in front of the house*). With unfaceted grounds, it is possible to use the viewer's own bodily coordinates to establish a *relative* frame of reference (*the boy is in front of the tree*). A third type is that of *absolute* frames of reference. In Levinson and Wilkins' (2006:4) words, using absolute frames of reference requires the employment of "fixed bearings – independent of the scene", as in *the gardens are to the north of the village*.

In Blanga, the class of local nouns is used for the encoding of topological relations and frames of reference. I shall first look at those local nouns used to express topological relations as well as intrinsic and relative frames of reference, and subsequently I shall discuss the establishment of absolute frames of reference and the four local nouns denoting the poles on which absolute spatial specifications are based.

Most local nouns encoding topological relations and intrinsic or relative frames of reference are monomorphemic and constitute heads of oblique or adjunct NPs. These include *hotai* 'middle/midway' and *geri* 'beside' as well as the antonym pairs *ulu~leghu* 'in front'~'behind', *fate~pari* 'on top/above'~'underneath/below', and *gilu~kota* 'inside'~'outside'.

- (3.24) ...ara, mane datau=na, ara e hnokro hotai.
 1SG man chief=DEM.N.SG 1SG HAB sit middle
 ‘...me, the chief, I sit in the middle.’ (010A051207; text)
- (3.25) Kapu=na au geri tevo au.
 cup=DEM.N.SG exist beside table exist
 ‘That cup is by the side (at the edge) of the table.’ (087A110408; elicitation)
- (3.26) Nonolo zaho ka glilihi ta=na ghoi fa hruku,
 walk go PREP beach SB=DEM.N.SG VOC CS landwards

 meu maneri ani, Papa ulu, Gibeti leghu.
 be.thus.INCPT 3PL then PN in.front PN behind
 ‘They are walking on the beach then, man, landwards they [go], like that. Then, Papa [walks] in front, Gilbert behind.’ (093A130408; text)
- (3.27) ...ke haghe fate, ke khave pari.
 PERF ascend on.top PERF descend below
 ‘...[she] went up and down.’ (016A101207; text)
- (3.28) “Uve”, meu=nga keha mane=re ta au=re gilil [...]
 yes be.thus.INCPT= IMM other man=DEM.N.PL SB exist=DEM.N.PL inside
 ‘“Yes”, say the other people, who are inside [...]’ (096A130408; text)
- (3.29) Koburu=na thetu au kota.
 PN=DEM.N.SG stand exist outside
 ‘Koburu is standing outside.’ (095A130408; elicitation)

In addition, there are two nouns denoting ‘left’ and ‘right’ respectively, which many times appear as modifiers of the nouns *fai* or *phile*, both meaning roughly ‘side’ or ‘domain’. The word for ‘right’ is always a compound (3.1.2.3) consisting of the noun *khame* ‘hand/arm’ and the static verb *hreta* ‘be.strong’ (3.30), (3.31), the NPs *fai khame-hreta* and *phile khame-hreta* thus meaning ‘(to the) right-hand side’. Frequently, the opposite is simply *fai hmairi* (3.30) or *phile hmairi* ‘(to the) left side’ but it can optionally contain a compound modifier, becoming, for instance, *fai khame-hmairi* ‘(to the) left-hand side’. Instances in which *khame-hreta* and *khame-hmairi* (but not *hmairi* by itself) function as heads in their own right are also possible, as illustrated in (3.32). This example also shows that, exceptionally, the two compounds with *khame-* can function as direct arguments of the predicate. Here, the transitive verb *leghu* ‘follow’ subcategorises for a path as an undergoer/object.

(3.30) [...] kasa fai hmairi [...] me zaho, me zaho
 go.across side left INCPT go INCPT go
 tana, ghoi, kasa fai khame-hreta.
 then VOC go.across side hand-be.strong
 ‘[...] I cross over to the left [...] I go and go and then, man, I cross over to the
 right-hand side.’ (040AV230408; text)

(3.31) Sega ka phile khame-hreta.
 shell.sp PREP part hand-be.strong
 ‘The *sega* shell is on the right-hand side.’ (078AV270408; elicitation)

(3.32) Ke leghu=ni=nga=gho khame-hmairi.
 PERF follow=3SG.AGR=IMM=1.SG hand-left
 ‘I follow [the path] to the right.’ (041AV230408; text)

The local noun *hotai* ‘middle’ can be preceded by a reciprocal particle *fari*, the construction having a meaning similar to ‘between’ or ‘in between’.

(3.33) Momolu=na au fari hotai tahi au.
 island=DEM.N.SG exist REC middle sea exist
 ‘That island is located in the middle of the sea/in between the waters.’
 (087A110408; elicitation)

Examples (3.25) and (3.33) also show that, like any other nouns, local nouns can be possessed. It is actually more appropriate to say that they are necessarily possessed, no matter if the possessor is overtly expressed, like in the mentioned examples, or not. According to the pattern discussed in (3.3), possessive constructions can be overtly represented by mere juxtaposition of the possessed and possessor, as in *geri tevo* ‘edge of table’ (3.25), *hotai tahi* ‘middle of the sea’ (3.33) and *gilu suga* ‘interior of house’ (3.35) or the possessor can be indexed on the possessed as in *hotai=na disi* ‘middle of plate’ (3.34) and *gilu=na sekolo* ‘inside of circle’ (3.36). In the latter case, local nouns receive inalienable possession morphology.

(3.34) (Apolo=na) hotai=na disi.
 apple=DEM.N.SG middle=3SG.P dish
 ‘That apple is in the middle of the plate.’ (082A030408; elicitation)

(3.35) Edwini=na manei hnokro the-na gilug suga au.
 PN=DEM.N.SG 3SG sit REFL-3SG.RF inside house exist
 ‘Edwin is sitting / has placed himself on a chair in the house.’
 (095A130408; elicitation)

(3.36) Erolo=na gilug=na sekolo ana.
 aerial=DEM.N.SG inside=3SG.P circle DEM.N.SG
 ‘That aerial is inside that circle.’ (082A030408; elicitation)

Although local nouns can appear as non-prepositional obliques or adjuncts, they are also used as complements within a PP. According to Palmer's (2009:132) analysis of similar constructions in Kokota, the presence or absence of a preposition may represent stylistic choices. Blanga only has two simple prepositions, *ke*, which is formally identical with the perfective marker (3.4.1.1.3) and *ka*. Their functions, which partially coincide, as well as their use in conjunction with possessive NPs headed by local nouns, will be discussed in (3.1.13). The examples below show that, in this case as well, possessor indexing is possible but not compulsory.

- (3.37) (Momolu=na) ka hotai tahi ana.
 (island=DEM.N.SG) PREP middle sea DEM.N.SG
 'That island is in the middle of the sea.' (082A030408; elicitation)
- (3.38) (Apolo=na) ka hotai=na disi ana.
 apple= DEM.N.SG PREP middle=3SG.P dish DEM.N.SG
 'That apple is in the middle of that plate.' (082A030408; elicitation)
- (3.39) Gazu=na pukuni doli bla au ka fari hotai=na thoghele.
 tree=DEM.N.SG really live LIM exist PREP REC middle=3SG.P hill
 'That tree grew right between hills.' (086A110408; elicitation)
- (3.40) Maneri ke theome au ade ka geri tahi=de.
 3PL PERF NEG exist here PREP beside sea= DEM.N.PL
 'They did not live here by these shores.' (012A051207; text)
- (3.41) (Apolo=na) ka geri=na disi=na.
 apple= DEM.N.SG PREP beside=3.SG.P dish=DEM.N.SG
 'That apple is at the edge of that plate.' (082A030408; elicitation)
- (3.42) Kaisa fogri au ka gilū kaisa glasi.
 one frog exist PREP inside one glass
 'A frog is in a jar.' (022AV130408; elicitation)
- (3.43) Kaisa hnaitu e au ka gilū=na kaisa due.
 one spirit HAB exist PREP inside=3SG.P one basket
 'A spirit dwells in a basket.' (148A020608; text)
- (3.44) Gazu=na ke kota suga.
 tree= DEM.N.SG PREP outside house
 'That tree is outside the house.' (007A011207; elicitation)
- (3.45) Sarare ghai ghinai ke fagagae ke uu
 Saturday 1PL.EXCL FUT PREP clean PREP HES
 ke kota=na suga-tarai thove=na.
 PREP outside=3SG.P house-pray be.old=DEM.N.SG
 'On Saturday, we shall clean, er, outside the old church.' (019A101207; text)

- (3.46) (Vaka=na) ka fate tahi.
 boat= DEM.N.SG PREP on.top sea
 ‘That boat is at sea.’ (082A030408; elicitation)
- (3.47) Ke fate=na Hovukoilo au khou ta au=ne.
 PREP above=3SG.P PLN exist river SB exist=DEM.R.SG
 ‘Above Hovukoilo is [the source of] that river.’ (016A101207; text)
- (3.48) Nakoni=na ke leghu mala-hnokro.
 person=DEM.N.SG PREP behind PURP-sit
 ‘That person is behind the armchair.’ (007A011207; elicitation)
- (3.49) Gaghase=na au ke ulu=na mala-hnokro.
 girl=DEM.N.SG exist PREP front=3.SG.P purp-sit
 ‘That girl is in front of the armchair.’ (007A011207; elicitation)

In addition to their spatial meaning, the nouns *gilu* and *leghu* can have a temporal reading, in which case they are better glossed as ‘within (a time frame)’ and respectively ‘after (a point in time)’.

- (3.50) Mane ihei ta lase frihnge suga=na
 man whoever SB know work house=DEM.N.SG

 ta hogrei=na manei giluna kaisa hnagae.
 sb finish=DEM.N.SG 3SG inside=3SG.P one day
 ‘That man who knows how to build a house will finish within one day.’
 (013A071207; text)
- (3.51) Ke leghu=na phea wiki ta=u=na
 PREP behind=3SG.P two week SB=exist=DEM.N.SG

 ara ke khave ka nanau... ke au=na leleghu phea wiki=re.
 1SG PERF descend PREP village PERF exist=DEM.N.SG every two week=DEM.N.PL
 ‘After those two [working] weeks, I go home..., which happens every two weeks.’ (084A030408; text)

Example (3.51) also shows that the reduplicated form *leleghu* has the meaning of ‘every/each’ (3.1.6.3). A transitive verb *leghu* ‘follow’ also exists and is illustrated in (3.32) above. Two other local nouns can also function as verbs: *kota* ‘go/come/pull ashore’ and *ulu* ‘be.in.front’. The latter has a cognate *kulu* ‘be first’, which can only be a verb.

The form *geri* ‘beside’ can be reduplicated to form *gegeri* ‘around’ but the loanword *rauni* is actually more frequently used with that meaning.

- (3.52) (Hnaro=na) rauni=na gazu=na.
 rope=DEM.N.SG around=3.SG.P tree=DEM.N.SG
 ‘The rope is around the tree.’ (080A030408; elicitation)

(3.53) Zaho bla ghai rauni bla momolu thongana Sulei
 go LIM 1PL.EXCL around LIM island whole PLN
 ‘We went round the whole island of Sulei.’ (031A140108; text)

So far, only nouns involved in the expression of topological relations and intrinsic and absolute frames of reference have been considered. In addition, Blanga has a set of four local nouns used to denote the four poles of the absolute reference axes. Languages differ with regard to what system they use for absolute frames of reference and to the scale to which that applies (Francois 2004). The best known in a European context is the system based on cardinal points projected according to the apparent movements of celestial bodies but, cross-culturally, absolute axes can also be determined by the direction of seasonal winds or main rivers, the uphill vs. downhill or inland vs. seawards distinctions, and other possible factors (Francois 2004).

The Blanga absolute coordinates indicate four poles or directions, *paka*, *fona*, *raru*, and *rhuku*, distributed relative to each other as in the scheme below. At a first glance, one might be tempted to explain those as cardinal points. Many of my native-speaker consultants themselves try to explain the system as being based on the rising and setting points of the sun, translating *fona* as ‘east’ and *paka* as ‘west’

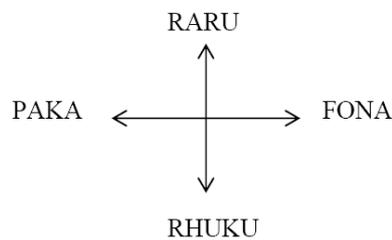


Figure 3-1: Schematic representation of the absolute spatial coordinates used in Blanga

However, a look at the map of the long and narrow Santa Isabel Island suggests that things might actually be quite different and the consultants’ current perception is most probably due to European influence. The coordinates show a noticeable deviation of about 45° from the directions indicated by our cardinal points. This is neither approximation, although approximations of cardinal directions are not uncommon even in European context, nor a system based on quadrants. Some languages may have terms that actually indicate angular deviation, rather than strict cardinal points (Levinson 1992:16), their absolute directional terms usually referring to 45° azimuthal arcs (quadrants). However, as will be shown later in this section, there is some evidence that

the Blanga terms do not refer to quadrants, but rather to vectors³. The figure below facilitates comparison between the compass rose and the coordinates used by the Blanga speakers for spatial orientation projected on the Santa Isabel Island map.

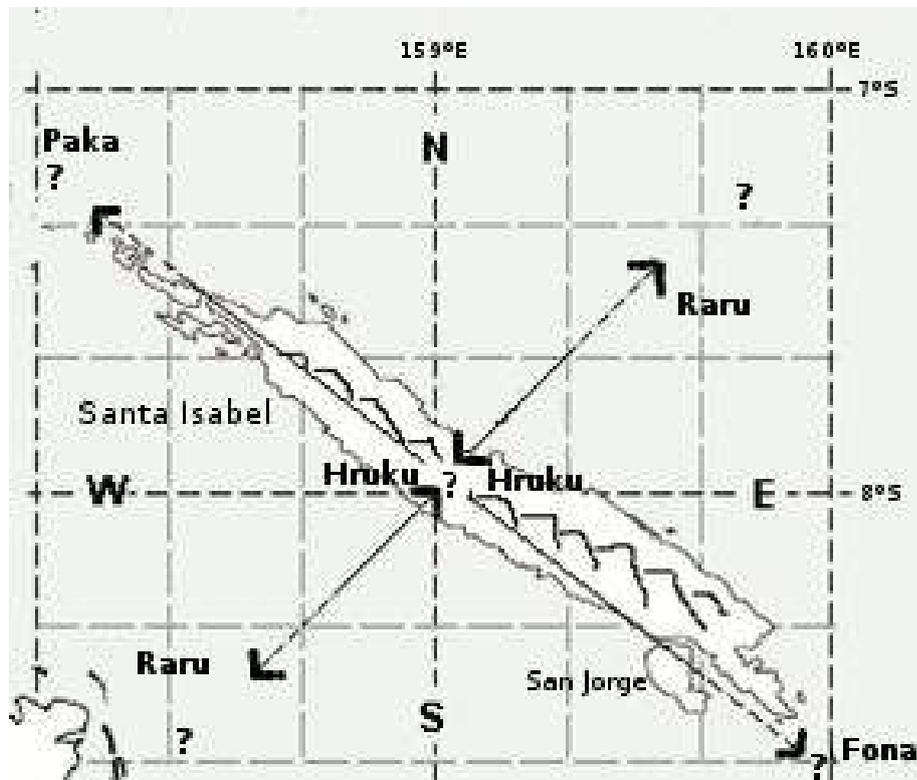


Figure 3-2: Projection of the Blanga coordinate system on the Santa Isabel map.

The main axis of the island runs along the NW-SE direction, which is also the orientation of the mountain range that divides the island, the main orientation of the Solomon Archipelago and, most importantly, the trade winds direction (François 2004:17). On this axis, *Fona* points towards the SE tip of the island and *paka* towards the NW tip. The *fona-paka* axis is perpendicular on the *hruku-raru* axis. *Hroku* designates the direction from the sea towards the shores and from the village towards the inland bush, while *raru* indicates the direction from inland or village towards the shores and the sea. For this reason, the axis is mirrored on the opposite sides of the island. The absolute frames of reference employed by Blanga speakers seem to be, at least originally, based on wind direction and the 'seawards' vs. 'inland' distinction. Since the trade winds in the region blow exactly from SE to NW, *fona* can then be glossed as

³ It is important to notice here that, even in systems with strict vector relations, approximations are frequently employed for practical purposes, sometimes to such extent that any angular deviation up to 45° can be ignored. This is many times the case with the daily use of the cardinal system employed in Europe and America. The so-called “North Face” of the Eiger, for instance, actually faces north-west, but the exact orientation does not matter as long as the message is clear: a thicker layer of snow is to be expected on that face.

‘windward’ and *paka* as ‘leeward’. For *hruku* and *raru* I shall use the glosses ‘inland’ and ‘seaward’, but see the discussion of boundness later in this section.

The behaviour of absolute local nouns does not seem to differ from that of other local nouns. They can be used with a preposition (3.56), (3.57), or without one (3.54) and (3.55); they can be possessed (3.56), (3.57), but possessor indexing is not compulsory (3.57). Like (*khame-*)*hmairi* ‘right’ and *khame-hreta* ‘left’, they can appear as modifiers of a noun denoting ‘side’, ‘area’ or ‘domain’ (3.58) and (3.59).

(3.54) Kaisa khala=na fona.
one leaf=DEM.N.SG windward
‘One leaf is on the windward side.’ (078AV270408; elicitation)

(3.55) Thuru hruku neu uu fua gazu neu.
lie hruku be.thus.REAL HES fruit tree be.thus.REAL
‘It lies inland of the tree seed, it’s like that.’ (079AV270408; elicitation)

(3.56) (Duvili) ke fona=na kokhomo=na.
shell.sp PREP windward=3SG.P shell.sp=DEM.N.SG
‘The *duvili* shell is to the *fona* side of the *kokhomo* shell.’
(079AV270408; elicitation)

(3.57) ...ani ke paka uu sega.
then PREP leeward HES shell.sp
‘...then, *paka* of the, er, *sega* shell.’ (079AV270408; elicitation)

(3.58) Botolo=na ne au phile paka.
Bottle=DEM.N.SG REAL exist side leeward
‘The bottle is on the leeward side.’ (078AV270408; elicitation)

(3.59) Kaisa khala fai fona.
one leaf side windward
‘One leaf is on the windward side.’ (078AV270408; elicitation)

In some cultures, the employment of absolute frames of reference is limited to large natural scales (*the mountains are to the west of the river*), while others, including Blanga, allow their use irrespective of scale width (*he sits ‘south’ of the table*) (Levinson 2003 and Levinson and Wilkins 2006). It seems that, even on the smallest scales, Blanga prefers to rely on absolute coordinates for positional descriptions of objects relative to each other. Examples (3.54) to (3.59) above have been elicited with the help of the Object-Object Matching Game. The game requires two players: a director and a matcher. Both receive identical sets of objects. The director’s objects have been previously arranged on a flat surface and s/he is supposed to describe their location to the matcher, who, in turn, will arrange his/her objects as similarly as possible, without being able to see the director’s setting. In this case, the flat surface, a

table, was placed in such a way that its axes matched the *paka-fona* and *raru-hruku* directions. Absolute frames of reference were predominantly employed in this context, while intrinsic frames or topological relations were only sporadically used for further specification or when containment was involved. Moreover, the game suggested that Blanga absolute coordinates do not refer to quadrants. When asked to describe the position of long and narrow objects placed diagonally on the table (and thus diagonally relative to the island's main axis), the consultants used strategies such as those in (3.60) to (3.62). These are not intrinsic frames since no particular facets are assigned to the ground but rather the whole church, house or entrance area is designated as ground. Neither are they relative frames, since rotation of the observer does not change anything; the objects will still point at those particular areas. They are in fact a different type of absolute frames of reference, a type that uses *ad-hoc* landmarks to generate coordinates. The very use of *ad-hoc* coordinates indicates that *paka*, *fona*, *raru*, and *rhuku* do not refer to quadrants. If they did, it would be no reason for employing *ad-hoc* coordinates.

(3.60) Fai leghu zaho fai suga ii Ugura=re.
 side behind go area house HES PN=DEM.N.PL
 ‘(Those are) behind and point towards Ugura’s house.’
 (079AV270408; elicitation)

(3.61) Figri zaho ka fai gringata iao.
 turn go PREP area door DEM.PV.SG
 ‘[The battery] is pointing towards that door area.’ (079AV270408; elicitation)

(3.62) fai suga-tarai
 area house-pray
 ‘(towards) the church area.’ (079AV270408; elicitation)

It should be pointed out here that the objects used in the matching game were not faceted⁴. Positional descriptions involving a faceted ground are naturally more likely to make use of intrinsic rather than absolute frames of reference (3.48), (3.49).

So far, with the exception of (3.27), (3.30) and (3.32), the examples quoted in this section have illustrated static location. When motion is involved, more complex relations are expected between the state of affairs denoted by the predicate and the participants. Usually, a theme (the moving entity) starts from a source and follows a particular path in order to reach its final destination (the goal). In the English sentence *We walked from St. Paul’s to Piccadilly Circus*, the role of THEME is borne by the entity

⁴ A possible exception is a pack of cigarettes, but even this was placed in such a way that the only possible facet (the opening) was facing up, thus not counting for the horizontal directions discussed here.

referred to as *we*. At the one end of the path of motion, *St. Paul's* is the starting point and assumes the role of SOURCE, while the ending point, *Piccadilly Circus*, is reserved the role of GOAL. In route descriptions on a natural scale, source and goal can be specified through reference to designated landmarks or to prominent landmarks that are assumed to be known by both speaker and addressee. Alternatively, they can be indicated by the subcategorisation frame of motion verbs. Verbs such as *zaho* 'go' imply the existence of a source and goal, even if one or both are not overtly expressed. In the fragment below, taken from a route description on a natural scale, the source is the place where the speaker is located at the moment of speaking. Specification of both goal and source by landmarks or the subcategorisation frame of the verb "determines a unique vector – so one can specify a direction without employing frames of reference" (Levinson and Wilkins 2006:4). Frames of reference are, of course, not excluded, especially when there is no particularly prominent landmark to be specified or there is a 90° change of direction from a particular landmark. The example below also shows the attributive use of the particle *fa* (3.1.12).

(3.63) *Zaho toke Gozoruru, zaho ka suga ta au Sogo,*
 go reach PN go PREP house SB have PN

zaho toke Garanga ta=na, ghoi, fa hruku,
 go reach PLN SB=DEM.N.SG VOC CS inland

sare fa hruku ka gukhu sare eu...
 here.PROX CS inland PREP road there be.thus.IRR

me zaho, zaho ta=na, ghoi, zaho toke ka khou ana,
 INCPT go go SB=DEM.N.SG voc go reach PREP river DEM.N.SG

kaisa khou ana fai khame-rheta [...]
 one river DEM.N.SG PART hand-be.strong

'I go and reach Gozoruru, go to the house that belongs to Sogo, go and reach Garanga then, man, inland, over there, I move landwards at that road over there, it's like that... I go and go then, man, I go and reach that river, that one river on the right hand side [...]' (040AV230408; text)

Motion along the Blanga absolute coordinates raises the additional issue of the boundness of the directions indicated by the four poles. Consultants' opinions differ in this respect. When asked, some consultants have indicated that on the *paka-fona* axis both directions are bounded, the limits being the NW and SE tips of Santa Isabel Island respectively. Yet, other consultants insist that it is possible to go *fona* towards Malaita, Vanuatu and beyond and that the *paka* direction can be followed beyond Bougainville and mainland Papua. The inland-seawards axis appears to be indefinitely open towards

the sea (*raru*), while the inland direction (*hruku*) is bounded but, again, the consultants do not agree on the practical boundaries. For instance, on the northern coast of the island, some consultants indicate the *hruku* limit as being the last inhabited house in the inland-most village, Hovukoilo. Others push the *hruku* boundary further towards the forested highlands and away from the relatively narrow strip of land currently inhabited by the Blanga people but without clearly defining it by means of particular landmarks.

The apparently contradictory opinions expressed by different Blanga consultants are the result of their employing the absolute frames of reference within different non-grammaticalised scales. Moreover, the coordinates should be regarded as applying separately on the opposite coasts. *Raru* strictly indicates the seawards direction, which is NE from the point of view of a speaker situated on the northern coast, but SW from the point of view of a speaker situated on the southern coast of Santa Isabel, where the geography is reversed. Its unbounded character may be explained by the perception of the ocean as a vast territory with virtually unlimited possibilities of navigation to the next island and the next island (although in practice the Blanga people do not sail very far beyond the lagoon). By contrast, *rhuku* is thus necessarily limited by bush and mountain ridges. Theoretically, due to the mirror effect, following *hruku* long enough, one will sooner or later end up heading *raru*, without any physical change of direction. In practice, the land relief features make it impossible to identify a particular ridge as being the point where *hruku* becomes *raru*. The horizontal coordinates employed on the shores or in the middle bush are abandoned in the highlands in favour of a vertical axis determined either by the local nouns *fate* 'on top' and *pari* 'below', mentioned in the beginning of this section, or by appropriate landmarks, such as hills and water courses.

The existence of an intermediary zone where *hruku* and *raru* do not practically apply may explain the consultants' hesitations with regard to the *hruku* limit. As far as the perpendicular axis is concerned, any known location, even beyond the island, will be in the *paka* or *fona* direction as long as the speaker is situated in the Blanga area or roughly midway between the NW and SE tips of Santa Isabel. On the other hand, at either tip of the island the *paka-fona* axis, based on the wind direction, would coincide, and thus compete, with the inland-seawards axis. As they are, the absolute coordinates employed by the Blanga speakers for horizontal motion are applicable in a restricted area, centred on the Blanga settlements on each coast of the island.

3.1.2.1.4 Associative noun

Accompaniment and association are expressed in Blanga by means of a possessive construction, in which the possessor is represented by the associated participant, while the possessed is the associative noun *balu*. The associated participant can be animate (3.64), (3.65), inanimate (3.66), or abstract (3.67). The associative noun can receive inalienable possessor indexing. The presence or absence of possessor indexing may be conditioned by the animacy of the possessor.

(3.64) Ara zaho balu=na mane hmata=re.
1SG go ASSC=3SG.P 3SG bush=DEM.N.PL
'I go with him to the bush.' (043A160208; elicitation)

(3.65) Mane mama Hugho Hebala mane ke hot-i mai=ni=na
man priest PN man PERF take-TRANS come=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG

Khiloau=ne ade Loghahaza balu=di kekeha mane velepuhi.
Christianity=DEM.R.SG here PLN ASSC=3PL.P some man catechist
'Father Hugho Hebala is the man who brought the Christian faith here at Loghahaza together with some catechists.' (12A051207; text)

(3.66) Keha mane sua=na balu duki nusu ta au iao
other man child=DEM.N.SG ASSC bag sand SB exist DEM.PV.SG

fate ka nhobo gazu=na.
on.top PREP branch tree=DEM.N.SG
'The other child, the one with the sand bag, [was sitting] up on the tree-branch.'
(150A020608; text)

(3.67) Mane kokholo Kusa=ne bla ke kulu mai au=na
man lineage barracuda=DEM.R.SG LIM PERF be.first come exist=DEM.N.SG

ka khuti-di aro balu=na ooe Blablanga.
PREP land-3PL.P DEM.T.PL ASSC-3SG.P talk Blablanga
'The people belonging to the Barracuda lineage were the first to settle on these lands of theirs along with the Blablanga language.' (185A151109; text)

Actions can be associated in the same way as entities.

(3.68) No-gu nafrihnge=na ara mala sele hmari
POSS-1SG.P work=DEM.N.SG 1.SG PURP sell fish

balu fagagae ade=hi, balu selemu karoseni.
ASSC clean here=INTS ASSC sell kerosene
'My job is selling fish along with cleaning up around here and selling kerosene.'
(084A030408; text)

3.1.2.1.5 Contextualising nouns

There are three contextualising nouns in the language and they are compulsorily possessor indexed and hence they are always bound. These nouns are *ghu-*, *naghu-* and *nafu-* and, depending on the context, they all can be glossed ‘because’, ‘for/because (of)’, ‘on behalf of’ or ‘about’. They can introduce both NPs and complement clauses.

(3.69) Eu khou ta au=na nahnga=na=na Tihitubu
be.thus.IRR river SB exist=DEM.N.SG name=3SG.P=DEM.N.SG PLN

ghu=na ne-ke titihi kaisa nakodou [...] thubu=na=na
CNTX=3SG.P REAL-PERF wash one woman wound=3SG.P=DEM.N.SG
‘Thus, that river is called Tihitubu because a woman washed her wounds (in it).
(016A101207; text)

(3.70) [...] naghu=na gogholi=na e gonu
because=3SG.P giant=DEM.N.SG HAB not.know

[ta niha [ta=u=na]]
SB how.many SB=exist=DEM.N.SG
‘[...] because the giant does not know how many we are.’ (150A020608; text)

3.1.2.2 Proper nouns

The distinction between common and proper nouns is mainly indicated by the way the two categories can be specified. While common nouns can be modified by words or morphemes implying definiteness (3.1.5), the beings or entities denoted by proper nouns are primarily assigned definiteness by means of individual names. Another way of formulating this is to say that proper nouns are intrinsically definite. That does not mean that they are also necessarily specific, since a particular name can be borne by more individuals, and thus specificity marking may be needed (3.1.5). Individual names are given to people, dogs, spirits, fantastic and mythological creatures, places and other geographical entities and modern boats (but apparently not to canoes).

Traditionally, the Blanga people do not seem to have used anything similar to a family or clan name, but the almost complete lack of sources makes it impossible, at least at this stage, to reconstruct the exact name system employed before their conversion to Christianity. Pre-Christian Isabel people are mentioned in older sources by only one name: “a chief called Figirima”, “a man called Daa” (Wilson 1935:10, 28). Similarly, a Pre-Christian Blanga chief is mentioned in my corpus simply as *datau Tobo* ‘chief Tobo’ (12A051207) by Naosn Haidu who, himself a chief, is otherwise very careful in mentioning both the Christian and ‘customary’ name of his Christian predecessors.

When converting to Christianity, people presented for baptism would choose a Christian name, without giving up their traditional one, which seems to be the origin of the modern system. Currently, people receive at least two names at baptism, of which at least one is a Christian ('English') name and at least one is indigenous. The Christian name is always placed first. The pattern is best illustrated by male names such as *Nason Haidu*, *Walter Koburu* and *Wilfred Hughu*. Some men informally replace their second ('customary') name with their father's. One of Nason Haidu's sons is called Edwin Hoboro but usually introduces himself as Edwin Haidu, while on rare occasions he gives his full name as being Edwin Hoboro Haidu. Even when the father's name is not employed, it is not unusual for men to have three names, either two 'English' names and one 'customary' name, as in *Cecil Rhodes Kusapa*, or the other way around, as in *Frederik Pado Kana*.

'English' names are most of the time inspired by names of Westerners who have played some role in the local history (especially missionaries) or have made a lasting impression on the community or on particular individuals⁵. Normally, the Westerner's first name or full name is adopted but there are enough cases when only the surname is chosen. Nason Haidu's younger son is called McDonald Sisa, while his eldest son is Rubenson Koburu. Some people who have been given two 'English' names (especially those inspired by the first name and surname of the same Westerner) tend to use them at the expense of their 'customary' name(s) to the extent that the latter is hardly ever mentioned, like in the case of Henry Wilson, another of Nason Haidu's sons.

The pattern used for female names is similar but not identical to that used for male names. The main difference is that women, married or not, almost always add their father's custom name (rather than the husband's in the case of married women). Thus, the old woman commonly known as Heleni Zalani is the mother of the current Popoheo chief Nason Haidu, the widow of the late chief Rubenson Koburu, and the daughter of the late chief Gilbert Sinaporo. Formally, her full name is Heleni Zalani Laseruru⁶ Sinaporo. Similarly, the young married woman called Rebecca Elisabeth Sagumali Kale, takes her two middle names from her grandmother and her last name from her father. There are, however, cases of women who adopt their husbands' custom name as

⁵ Recently, the sources of inspiration seem to have been enriched by much easier access to information. I am not sure how coincidental it was that in one Blanga village I shook hands with Paul Newman and the next day I went fishing with George Harrison.

⁶ The name *Laseruru* most probably comes from an unidentified ancestor. I speculate it may be a grandparent's name.

a second name. Nason Haidu's wife has been introduced to me as Mary Haidu, while the wife of an old man called Tubi is referred to in her village as Naomi Tubi.

In the absence of specific anthropological studies, it is difficult to tell how much of the current name system of the Blanga people is inherited and how much is due to European influence. Diminutives are many times the result of reducing a 'custom' or 'English' name to its first two syllables, with phonological adjustments if necessary. The name *Gibeti* (*Gilibeti* ← *Gilbert*) becomes *Gili*, while *Koburu* becomes *Kobu*. If a name consists originally of only two syllables, diminutives cannot be constructed in this manner. What happens then is that custom names consisting of two syllables have no diminutive correspondent, while 'English' names may use prefabricated English/Pijin diminutives, such as *Freddy* for *Wilfred*. Note that names that end in a closed syllable in English are only rarely pronounced as such in Blanga. A young man baptised *Selwyn*⁷ is called *Sele* by everybody and, indeed, an epenthetic *e* may be expected after the lateral due to the phonotactic constraints of the language (see Section 2.4.2). Thus *Sele* is a diminutive or shortened form of *Selewini*. In the same way, *Wilfred* may naturally acquire an epenthetic vowel to dissociate the uncharacteristic *lf* cluster, but the man who bears that name and his family insist in pronouncing it as in English.

The basic pattern of the synchronic Blanga name system consists minimally of one 'English' name followed by one 'custom' name. More often than not, the Blanga people are identified by only one name. This may be either (one of) their 'English' name(s) or (one of) theirs 'custom' name(s). There is a tendency to use the 'English' name when interacting with foreigners, mainly non-Melanesian or non-Solomon Islanders (cf. Palmer 2009:79 for a similar situation in Kokota).

Within the village community and at the immediately higher level, that of the larger region/island community, the choice of identifying name may sometimes be dictated by practicality. In the Popoheo Village, for instance, there are (at least) two men with the 'custom' name Koburu: Walter Koburu and his nephew Rubenson Koburu. Only the latter is referred to as Koburu (and hardly ever as Rubenson, unless the full name is expressed), while the former is always Walter, thus avoiding identification ambiguity without making use of the uneconomical means of mentioning their full names every time. When disambiguation is not involved, the choice of name within the local community seems, at a first glance, to be entirely a matter of personal preference. However, it may very well be the case that a certain economy principle is at

⁷ In honour of a famous missionary bishop.

work here and preference is given to the shorter (and/or more easily pronounceable) of the two main names. Thus, Matthew Tada is normally called Tada, while Timothy Podoki is simply called Tim. I have never heard anybody referring to the former as Matthew or to the latter as Podoki.

While the present description only makes claims about phenomena attested in the Blanga language and community, my own observations outside the Blanga area combined with information from available sources, such as Palmer (2009), indicate that names may be treated in a similar way throughout Santa Isabel Island. Moreover, instead of talking about Blanga personal names, it is probably more sensible to talk about Santa Isabel names. Despite the isolation of different Isabel groups during the head-hunting era, contacts (peaceful or not) did exist and it is not surprising that many ‘custom’ personal names encountered in the Blanga-speaking regions can also be found outside it, some of them, such as *Bako*, being quite common with all the language groups on the island, including Bughotu, which genealogically belongs to a different linguistic subgroup. The penetration of personal names from one language into another might have been favoured by the contact situations listed in the introductory chapter but most importantly by the practice of name-exchange, which is described briefly in an excerpt from Henry Welshman’s diary quoted in Wilson (1935:14). Exchanging names was the practice by which two Isabel people or some representatives of two Isabel groups would seal a newly formed friendship or alliance, a ritual practice that can be compared with one of the functions of the calumet smoking in some Native American communities.

Human characters of traditional tales and stories normally have a single (custom) name, such as the mischievous male character Vurulele (018AV110408) or the woman called Sorei, credited with the discovery of the magical therapeutic powers of the water in the Tihitubu Creek (016A101207)⁸.

The Blanga people do not normally keep pets. Dogs are kept as guardians, rat-chasers and hounds and are the only real life (as opposed to fantastic) animals to be given names⁹. Those names are mainly derived from Pijin (or English via Pijin) and tend to be highly suggestive of some physical characteristic, *Blacky* and *Spotty* being quite frequent. Mythological creatures and tale characters other than humans include

⁸ An alleged “custom story” in my corpus (159A040608) is given as “The Story of Tom Tela” suggesting that the main character has two names. However, this turned out to be Tom the Tailor as the story is a Blanga version of the Brothers Grimm tale *The Valiant Little Tailor* (obviously a recent influence), although the narrator seems to be genuinely convinced that Tela is Tom’s ‘custom’ name.

⁹ Except for dogs, the only domesticated animals I have seen in Blanga villages were chickens and pigs.

totemic or non-totemic animals, spirits and giants and are sometimes identified by proper names. The mythical crocodile believed to be dwelling in the Garanga River in the Northern Blanga territory (see also 1.1.6), for instance, is known as *Firikoe* (073A020308).

Personal names can be modified by the preposed specific article *mane* and/or a demonstrative or relative clause functioning as a demonstrative (3.71)-(3.75), or by an appositional NP (3.76). The structure of NPs headed by personal nouns is formalised in 3.2.1.3.

(3.71) Mane Hedere mane=si=nga ta phau hili=ne=ia.
 SPEC PN man=FOC=IMM SB head hunt=DEM.R.SG=PART
 ‘Henry was the leader of the hunting party.’ (031A140108; text)

(3.72) Pita=**na** ne forgra.
 PN=DEM.N.SG REAL be.ill
 ‘Peter is ill.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

(3.73) Mala=na Pita ta=u=na,
 PURP=3SG.P PN SB=exist=DEM.N.SG

 Jon=na ne fa age gausa ka manei.
 PN=DEM.N.SG REAL cs come betelnut PREP 3SG
 ‘As for Peter, John gave betelnut to him.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

(3.74) Mane Papa=**na** sage khoilo.
 SPEC PN=DEM.N.SG carve coconut
 ‘Papa is carving coconut.’ (094A130408; text)

(3.75) Eu mane Sisa ta=u=na.
 be.thus.IRR SPEC PN SB=exist=DEM.N.SG
 ‘That is how Sisa is like./Sisa is like that.’ (026AV130408; text)

(3.76) Jisas Kraes no-da Lord
 PN POSS.GEN-1NSG.INCL lord.god
 ‘Jesus Christ our Lord’ (FN2:36; text)

The relatively small areas inhabited by the Blanga people display a very rich toponymy, used to single out currently and formerly inhabited villages and settlements as well as places of cultural or economical importance, of former spiritual or strategic significance. In addition, there is an abundance of geographical names used to identify numerous rivers, creeks, hills, bays, promontories, capes, reefs and islands. Many place and geographical names are originally polymorphemic, reflecting compounding (3.1.2.3), reduplication (3.1.2.4), noun plus demonstrative sequences (3.1.4), or a combination of those and sometimes revealing the story behind the name. Thus *Tihitubu* ← *tihithubu* ‘wash-sore’ is the name of a creek, whose water is believed to have had

the miraculous power of healing wounds; *Kesuo* ← *kesu=o* ‘mango=DEM.NV.SG’, lit. ‘that Mango’ or ‘the Mango’, refers to a place marked by a mango tree, which used to represent an important water source for the Loghahaza people; while *Popoheo* ← *po-pohe=o* ‘REDUP-cloth=DEM.NV.SG’ is the place where the Pre-Christian Northern Blanga people first saw clothes, worn by the European traders who pulled ashore there. Not all place and geographical names are etymologically transparent. The meaning of some is only partially accessible, such as that of *Hovukoilo* ← *hovu-khoilo* ‘?-coconut’, while many are completely opaque.

Unlike in most Oceanic languages, Blanga place names do not display behaviour similar to that of local nouns. They are not compatible with prepositions. Therefore, they occur as non-prepositional obliques or adjuncts (3.77), (3.78), and cannot be possessed. On the other hand, they can also function as core arguments (3.79). In addition, they cannot be modified by demonstratives or any other modifier and they do not function as heads of phrases.

(3.77) Repea zaho Holokama.

2DL go PLN

‘They are going to Holokama.’ (092A130408; elicitation)

(3.78) Ghai ke au Loghahaza.

1PL.EXCL PERF stay PLN

‘We, who stayed at Loghahaza’. (009A051207; text)

(3.79) Kilokaka ne kaisa nanau fai Hograno.

PN REAL one village side PLN

‘Kilokaka is a village on the Hograno side.’ (050A240208; elicitation)

A smaller category of proper nouns is represented by names used to individualise objects to which their owners are sentimentally attached. Only names given to modern engine boats belong to this class as the practice obviously represents a recent Western influence. To my knowledge, traditional canoes are not named. Such proper nouns cannot be modified and only occur as modifiers of other nouns.

(3.80) Ghetilo [...] au boti Mala Buri.

1.TR.EXCL have boat boat.name

‘We own the Mala Buri boat.’ (092A130408; elicitation)

Evidently, Blanga speakers use a number of borrowed proper nouns to refer either to indigenous entities that originated outside the Blanga area and play a part in the daily life of the people, such as national and local institutions or the names of the ships that

serve the regular lines between Guadalcanal and Santa Isabel, or to foreign countries, institutions and people.

3.1.2.3 Compound nouns

Blanga compound nouns consist of two elements that otherwise function as distinct words. Compound nouns consisting of more than two elements have not been identified in the language. Nominal compounds can be endocentric or exocentric.

3.1.2.3.1 Endocentric compounds

Endocentric compound nouns are semantically and syntactically left headed. While their leftmost element must thus always be a noun, their second element can be a noun or verb. Both stative and active verbs can be employed.

N-N compounds

mane-vaka ‘non-Melanesian foreigner’ (‘man that has come by ship’), lit. ‘man-ship’

ooe-vaka ‘Solomons Pijin’/‘Melanesian Pidgin’ (‘foreign/imported talk’), lit. ‘talk-ship’

khala-memeha ‘feather’, lit. ‘hair-bird’

N-V_{stative} compounds

mane-dou ‘important man’, (cf. Pijin *bigman/bikman*), lit. ‘man-be.big’

suga-fogra ‘hospital’, (‘house for the sick’), lit. ‘house-be.ill’

N-V_{active} compounds

vaka-flalo ‘airplane’ (‘flying ship’), lit ‘ship-fly’

The N-N and N-V_{stative} compounds reflect the noun + modifier order in an NP. Nouns can be modified, among others (3.1.7), by another noun or a descriptive stative verb. In practice, it is very difficult to distinguish N-N or N-V_{stative} compounds from noun + modifier sequences in Blanga on phonological grounds. The metrical stress pattern in the language treats (semantic) compounds (as well as fully reduplicated forms) as phonological phrases, rather than as phonological words, such as in the case of affixed and partially reduplicated forms. A thorough account of the stress pattern in Blanga is given in Section 2.6.3.3 and interpretations of stress assignment in compounds are discussed in Section 2.6.3.3.6. The evidence from those sections suggests that the notion of phonological word, while justified by some structures, is irrelevant for the distinction between compounds and noun + modifier sequences in Blanga. The only criteria we are left with are semantic and cognitive.

The best illustration in this respect is the N + V_{stative} sequence *mane dou* ‘big man’ ← *mane* ‘man’ + *dou* ‘be.big’. In the example above, it was glossed as ‘important man’ and spelt with a hyphen to underline the compound character. It is necessary to point out

that in Melanesia a *bigman* is a person who has achieved a higher status in society or the community, especially through entrepreneurial skills. The notion of *bigman* is distinguished from that of *chief* in the anthropological literature regarding Melanesia (e.g. Keesing 1997, White 1991). Therefore, if this is what one means by *mane-dou*, then we are dealing with a compound, endocentric as it is, whose second element has acquired a slightly different sense than when used by itself, in this case by metaphorical extension. Note that, in parallel, the verb *dou*, meaning initially ‘be.big’, has also acquired by metaphorical extension the meaning of ‘be.old’, doubling *thove*, which refers exclusively to age. That means that the sequence *mane + dou* can also be glossed as ‘old man’ in many different contexts. Such a sequence can be interpreted as a compound (*mane-dou*) if the intended meaning focuses on the virtues that come with the age and thus glossed as ‘elder’, but can simply refer to a man who has already settled down (is married and has children) as contrasted with *mane mazaghani* ‘young man’ (normally still a bachelor), in which case it is better regarded as a noun + modifier sequence. Moreover, the sequence *mane + dou* is frequently used by wives to refer to their husbands, in which case the noun is intrinsically possessed like all other kinship terms, or can even be used by other members of the household to denote the head of the family.

<i>mane dou</i>	‘big man’ (basic sense)	noun + modifier
<i>mane dou</i>	‘old man’ (‘mature’, ‘married man’)	noun + modifier
<i>mane-dou</i>	‘big/important man’ (‘great man’)	compound
<i>mane-dou</i>	‘husband’ (kinship term)	compound
<i>mane-dou</i>	‘head of household’	compound

It may be said that in the case of N + V_{stative} sequences the status of compound depends on how much the second element has diverged from its basic sense. But this is not enough. For instance, *dou* as ‘old’ is a metaphorical extension of *dou* as ‘big’, but is still better analysed as a modifier rather than the second element of a compound. I propose a conventional demarcation line based on antonymy. The second element in an N + V_{stative} sequence is merely a modifier of a simple noun as long as it can be replaced in practice by an antonym, giving the whole phrase an opposite meaning, like in the case of *mane dou* ‘big man’ vs. *mane ikia* ‘small man’ (strictly regarding dimensions) or *mane dou* ‘old’ man vs. *mane mazaghani* ‘young man’. Since in the rest of the cases *dou* cannot be

replaced with an antonym to give senses such as ‘unimportant man’, ‘non-husband’ etc., these sequences should be considered compounds.

Another example supporting this view involves N + N sequences that have *vaka* ‘ship’ as their second element. Here, we are dealing with one single metaphorical meaning of the second element in a sequence. However, the antonymy convention seems to work very well. The noun *vaka* ‘ship’ confers to the head the sense of ‘imported item’ and in this sense it is usually contrasted with *mata*, which implies ‘local/autochthonous item’ and is cognate with *hmata* ‘bush’. They appear in pairs such as *viru vaka* ‘imported tobacco’ vs. *viru mata* ‘local tobacco’, *pohe vaka* ‘modern clothing’ vs. *pohe mata* ‘custom.clothing’, *zeku vaka* ‘banana (imported species)’ vs. *zeku mata* ‘banana (species autochthonous to St. Isabel or the Solomon Islands)’. According to the antonymy convention, those are all noun + modifier sequences. The sequences *mane-vaka* ‘foreigner’ and *ooe-vaka* ‘Pijin’ (see above) are considered to be compounds on the grounds that they are not contrasted with forms such as **mane mata* or **ooe mata*.

Another test may be based on distribution. As modifiers of an NP head, both nouns and descriptive stative verbs can occupy the immediate post-head position but not at the same time. If an N + V_{stative} or N+N sequence followed by a modifier is judged as acceptable, then the initial sequence must be a compound.

mane-dou thove ‘important man who is old’/‘important man from the past’
**mane dou thove* *‘a big (in size) man who is old’

As far as N-V_{active} sequences are concerned, they do not pose the same problem. For instance *vaka-flalo* ‘airplane’, where *vaka* is the head noun and retains its basic meaning of ‘ship’ is clearly a compound because *flalo* ‘fly’ is an active verb.

3.1.2.3.2 Exocentric compounds

Exocentric compounds can be of the form V_{active} + N, V_{active} + V_{stative} and *mala* + V_{active}.

The V_{active} + N compounds are important because they reflect the basic constituent order in a clause.

The V_{active} + V_{stative} compounds are limited to forms with the verb *blahi* ‘be.sacred’ as their second element (cf. Palmer 2009:64).

ikha-blahi ‘Baptism’, lit. ‘wash-be.sacred’
ngau-blahi ‘Holy Communion’, lit. ‘eat-be.sacred’

The *mala* + V_{active} compounds are numerous and this compounding strategy is quite productive in contemporary Blanga. The word *mala* is a purposive marker that precedes

verbs and thus such compounds reflect the structure of purposive predicates, as in Kokota, where they are also largely attested (Palmer 2009:65).

mala-ngau ‘food’ (‘PURP-eat’)

mala-ikha ‘washing utensils’, such as soap, towel, shampoo etc. (‘PURP-wash’)

mala-hnokro ‘seat’ (‘PURP-sit’)

3.1.2.3.3 Frozen compounds

Frozen compounds are no longer decomposable into their initial elements. They include many geographical names and some may be more transparent than others, such as *Tihitubu*, the name of a creek with alleged therapeutic powers close to Popoheo Village. It can be translated as ‘wash-sore’ and its elements are still identifiable as the verb *tih* ‘wash’ and the noun *thubu* ‘sore’, the latter having lost aspiration as the second element in a compound. Less transparent is the village name *Hovukoilo*. Its second element may be the noun *khoilo* ‘coconut’ with the same aspiration loss, but the meaning of the element *hovu* remains unclear. Frozen compounds can belong to other semantic domains, such as the noun *fufughogae* ‘morning’, where both reduplication and compounding are involved. The element *gae* ‘clear’/‘dawn’ also appears in the synonymous *hnapugae* (a compound with *hnapu* ‘night’) and in *hnagae* ‘day’, while the element (*fu*)*fugho*, which is not attested independently in Blanga, is nevertheless cognate with the Kokota word for ‘tomorrow’ (Palmer 2009).

3.1.2.4 Reduplication of nouns

The phonological patterns of reduplication are shown in Section 2.5. This section deals with the semantics of the forms derived by reduplication from nominal roots.

Reduplication can derive a new noun from an existing nominal root. In such cases, the exact meanings of the derived forms are unpredictable but they seem to be figurative extensions of the initial meaning based on similarities in either form or function, reflecting perhaps a type of metonymy.

kesu ‘mango’ → *kekesu* ‘liver’

khoilo ‘coconut’ → *kokoilo* ‘stomach’

due ‘basket’ → *dudue* ‘pocket’

bara ‘fence’ → *babara* ‘horizontal wall sticks’ (surrounding the room like a belt to support the wall structure)

More rarely, reduplication of nominal roots involves a change in the word class, the derived forms being generally verbs with a more or less transparent semantic relation to the root.

tagho ‘fish.hook’ → *tatagho* ‘fish (v.)’

doli ‘life’ → *dodoli* ‘be.green’

The second example may involve verb to verb derivation since *doli* may also mean ‘be.alive’ (for reduplication of verbal roots see 3.1.9.2).

Reduplication of local nouns is attested by two examples in the corpus.

geri ‘beside’ → *gegeri* ‘around’

leghu ‘behind’ → *leleghu* ‘every’

The local noun *geri* can be reduplicated to derive another local noun, while the reduplication of *leghu* implies an unpredictable change of class from noun to indefinite quantifier. The word *leghu* also functions as a verb meaning ‘follow’ and it is not clear if the reduplicated stem is actually the noun or the verb (3.1.2.1.3).

3.1.2.5 Stem modification

Another productive derivational process is stem modification as illustrated by pairs such as those below.

khou ‘water’ vs. *kou* ‘drink (v.)’

khoze ‘song’ vs. *koze* ‘sing’

tharai ‘praier’ vs. *tarai* ‘pray’

phapa ‘cloth for carrying a baby on one’s back’ vs. *papa* ‘to climb on one’s back’

gohra ‘paddle (n.)’ vs. *ghohra* ‘paddle (v.)’

It is clear that stem modification involves a shift between the two major Blanga word classes. What needs to be clarified is the direction of derivation, which at a first glance resembles the chicken and egg problem: are we dealing with verbs derived from nouns or with nouns derived from verbs? By including this section here, I am implicitly suggesting that the former must be true. Sections 3.1.2.4 and 3.1.9.2 show that one and the same process can derive both verbs from nouns and nouns from verbs in Blanga. However, the process in those cases is partial reduplication and the derived form is obviously the one receiving the echo syllable. The cases of stem modification, on the other hand, do not add extra (morpho-)phonological material, while the semantics of the forms simply reveals a relation between an object and what can be (prototypically) done with it, leaving open both possible directions.

In order to establish the direction of derivation it is necessary to consider what phonological process is involved in stem modification and in the Blanga case that may be either lenition or fortition. If verbs are derived from nouns, the process is lenition, while if nouns are derived from verbs, the process is fortition. I assume that in Blanga

the process of stem modification derives verbs from nouns based on the fact that lenition is cross-linguistically much more frequent than fortition.

While the change of occlusives into fricatives, as in *gohra* → *ghohra*, has often been quoted as an illustration of lenition and doesn't seem to raise any controversies here, considering the change of aspirated into non-aspirated as lenition may require a few clarifications. Trask (2000:190) defines lenition as “a change in which a segment becomes less consonant-like than previously”, which implies weakening of consonants on a scale of segmental strength that places vowels at its lower end. Consonants display different degrees of strength and, in this conception, the more similar to vowels, the weaker they are (see also Ashby and Maidment 2005:141). One defining characteristic of vowels is sonority and classical examples of lenition involve changes of voiceless into voiced, voiced consonants being more vowel-like because vowels are typically voiced. In the same way, one may assume that aspirated consonants must be stronger just because they seem to be less sonorous than their non-aspirated counterparts. However, the exploration of links between proposed sonority hierarchies and segmental strength scales does not always make acceptable predictions, since lenition seems to involve more than a change in sonority or, “alternatively, standard sonority hierarchies are not elaborate enough to explain all sorts of lenition” (Szigetvári 2008:94, 100 and the references therein). A more elaborated view would impose trajectories of lenition upon the conventional strength scales to reflect the route that a segment would take through possible stages from stronger to weaker “on its way to zero” (Honeybone 2008:13, Szigetvári 2008:101, both quoting from Hyman 1975:165, which in turn reports from an earlier personal communication by Theo Vennemann). But these are more appropriate in diachronic context and it is not clear how well they can be adjusted to work in the context of synchronic studies (Szigetvári 2008:101). Two- and multi-dimensional representations of possible trajectories have been proposed (Lass 1984:178) and some have resulted in complex networks (Hock 1986:82-83), many times extending the scope of assimilation at the expense of lenition, through theory-specific definitions. Szigetvári (2008:107) distinguishes between lenition and assimilation based on loss vs. spread of features. In his definition, “lenition is the delinking of a privative feature”, in this particular case, the loss of the aspirated feature (Szigetvári 2008:110). He concludes that deaspiration of stops is lenition, based on observations on feature neutralisation in languages where aspiration is phonological and also on the distribution of aspirated stop allophones in English (word-initially and pretonically).

3.1.3 Pronouns and pro forms

Blanga personal pronouns are represented by disjunctive forms. The language also has a set of bound forms indexing the person and number of the most patient-like argument on the verb. These are not pronouns but agreement markers and will be discussed in 3.4.1.4 and in Chapter 6.

3.1.3.1 Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns are always disjunctive in Blanga. The table below includes obsolete gender forms.

	1 INC	1EXC	2	3	
				m	f
SG	-	ara	agho	manei	nei
DL	ghitapea	ghepea	ghopea	phea-maneri	repea
TR	ghitatilo	ghetilo	ghotilo	thilo-maneri	retilo
PL	ghita	ghai	ghau	maneri	rei

Gender distinction in the 3rd person is residual and is mainly attested with prescriptive older consultants. The current norm is to use *manei* for singular, *maneri* for plural, *repea* for dual, and *retilo* for trial forms irrespective of gender, like in the revised table below.

	1 INC	1EXC	2	3
SG	-	ara	agho	manei
DL	ghitapea	ghepea	ghopea	repea
TR	ghitatilo	ghetilo	ghotilo	retilo
PL	ghita	ghai	ghau	maneri

Blanga distinguishes between inclusive and exclusive in the 1st person non-singular forms. The dual and trial forms come obviously from the association of plural forms with the numerals *phea* ‘two’ and *thilo* ‘three’ respectively (3.1.6.1), which have lost aspiration as the second element in a compound (3.1.2.3.3). The compound forms have then been lexicalised. Thus, the dual forms do not read as ‘the two of us/you/them’, but have a real dual meaning. Forms such as **ghita phea*, with the aspiration preserved on the second element are not possible. Moreover, as shown in 2.1.8.2, the vocalic sequences /a.i/ and /a.u/ can coalesce at the surface to [e] and [ɔ], respectively, when in non-word-final position, but that is not compulsory. Forms such as *ghepea* and *ghopea* are historically the result of such a process applied to **ghai phea* and **ghau phea* but have been lexicalised as dual pronouns. Therefore, forms such as *ghitapea*, *ghepea*, *ghopea*, and *repea* are synchronically distinct (single) morphemes indicating different persons in the dual number. A similar argumentation can be done for the trial. The

forms *ghitילו*, *ghetילו*, and *ghotילו* are derived from **ghita thilo*, **ghai thilo*, **ghau thilo* but have been fully lexicalised as trial forms. It should be mentioned here that the trial forms in nowadays Blanga function as paucals.

3.1.3.2 Indefinite adnominals

Blanga has an indefinite form *ihei*, which can be glossed as ‘whoever’/ ‘whatever’ and is obviously related to the interrogative pronoun *hei* ‘who’ (3.1.3.5).

- (3.81) Mane ihei [ne manahaghi no-na hmola],
 man whoever REAL want POSS-3SG.P canoe
- manei ghinei ke kulu zaho fea ka hmata=re.
 3SG FUT PERF be.first go INIT PREP bush=DEM.N.PL
 ‘Whoever wants a canoe of his own will, first of all, go to the bush.’
 (015A071207; text)

- (3.82) Ara ke fakae=ni mane ihei
 1.SG PERF see=3SG.AGR man whoever
- [ke poma=ni=na mheke=na].
 PERF hit=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG dog=DEM.N.SG
 ‘I saw the man who hit the dog.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

As with the distribution of identical forms in Kokota (Palmer 2009:70-71) and Cheke Holo (White, Kokhonigita and Pulomana 1988:69-70), *ihei* also occurs in pronominal position. Unlike in the mentioned languages, however, a pronominal *ihei* in Blanga seems to be more frequent in interrogative constructions and, therefore, it will be discussed in the section on interrogative pronouns (3.1.3.5). Note that in Kokota and Cheke Holo the initial vowel /i/ in *ihei* can be deleted in speech, resulting in formal identity with the interrogative pronoun *hei*. This process is not attested in Blanga.

Two other indefinite adnominals in the language are *keha* and its partially reduplicated counterpart *kekeha*. The former usually has the sense of ‘other’ or ‘another’/‘some other’ (3.83), (3.84) if the nominal to which it refers is mentioned in addition to a similar nominal that has been recently mentioned in the discourse.

- (3.83) Keha vido [ta Blanga]=re au la bla bo fai Hograno.
 other land SB PLN=DEM.N.PL exist PART LIM CNT side PLN
 ‘(Some) other Blanga territories are on the Hograno side (of the island).’
 (009A051207; text)

- (3.84) Kaisa fata=na, ara ne-ke zaho hili bosu,
 one occasion=DEM.N.SG 1SG REAL-PERF go hunt pig
 ara=hi balu keha phea hnalau.
 1SG-INTS ASSC other two boy
 ‘One day, I went pig-hunting, myself together with two other boys.’
 (083A030408; text)

Keha is not only indefinite but intrinsically non-specific. However, the noun it modifies can be assigned definiteness and specificity by a demonstrative, in which case the form should be translated as ‘the other’.

- (3.85) Keha phile=na raru [...].
 other side=DEM.N.SG seawards
 ‘The other side (is pointing) seawards [...].’ (078AV270408; elicitation)

When repeated in coordinate clauses, *keha... keha* induces the meaning of ‘(the) one... the other’. In the example below, the interpretation is supported by the different degrees of proximity expressed by the demonstratives (3.1.4) modifying the noun *sua* in each of the two clauses: *sua=ne* vs. *sua=na* ‘the child over here’ vs. ‘the child over there’. In addition, the two actors are marked as salient by means of the encliticised particle *nga* (3.1.12). The combined strategies suggest a meaning similar to ‘while’ or ‘on the one hand... on the other (hand)’.

- (3.86) Keha mane sua=**ne=nga** [...] ne hruku,
 other man child=DEM.R.SG=IMM REAL inland
 keha mane sua=**na=nga** [...] fate ka hnobo gazu=na.
 other man child=DEM.N.SG=IMM on.top PREP branch tree=DEM.N.SG
 ‘One child was inland, while the other up on the tree branch.’
 (150A020608; text)

It is clear from the examples above that *keha* achieves meanings such as ‘other’, ‘the other’, ‘another’ and ‘some other’ in particular contexts and in combination with other determiners. Its basic function, however, seems to be that of marking non-specificity.

- (3.87) Jon ke hota age keha gausa ka Pita.
 PN PERF take go some betelnut PREP PN
 ‘John brought some betel nut to Peter.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

- (3.88) Ara=hi ne turi=di keha glepo
 1SG=INTS REAL narrate=3NSG.AGR some thing
 ke nohm-i=di ka keha mane.
 PERF hear-TRANS=3NSG.AGR PREP some man
 ‘I am telling about some things I heard from somebody.’ (052A240108; text)

A particle *keha* also occurs in Kokota and functions in a similar way (Palmer 2009:81-84). The Blanga markers of (in)definiteness and (non-)specificity will be discussed in Section 3.1.5.

The reduplicated form, *kekeha*, is not mentioned in Kokota, while in Blanga it seems to be less frequent than *keha* and to be limited to the non-specific marker function. In Example (3.65), repeated below for convenience as (3.79), the phrase *kekeha mane velepuhi* can only be glossed as ‘some catechist(s)’ and it is clear that it cannot refer to ‘other’ or ‘some other catechist(s), because the associated participant, Father Hebala, is a priest, not a catechist.

- (3.89) Mane mama Hughho Hebala mane ke hot-i mai=ni=na
 man priest PN man PERF take-TRANS come=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG
- Khilou=ne ade Loghahaza balu=di kekeha mane velepuhi.
 Christianity=DEM.R.SG here PN ASSC=3PL.P some man catechist
 ‘Father Hughho Hebala is the man who brought the Christian faith here at Loghahaza together with some catechists.’ (12A051207; text)

3.1.3.3 Possessor indexing

A series of bound particles optionally indexing the possessor occur in the language. These are neither possessive adjectives nor pronouns proper since they can co-occur with a possessor NP in the same possessive construction.

- (3.90) Finogha=**gu**=na ara tuenti.
 year=1SG.P=DEM.N.SG 1SG twenty
 ‘My age is twenty.’ (079A030408; text)
- (3.91) No-**gu** nafrihnge=na ara mala sele hmari.
 POSS.GEN-1.SG.P work=DEM.N.SG 1SG PURP sell fish
 ‘My work is to sell fish.’ (084A030408; text)
- (3.92) Kusi ana ngau ghe-**gu** raisi=na ara.
 cat DEM.N.SG eat POSS.CONS-1SG.P rice=DEM.N.SG 1SG
 ‘That cat ate my rice.’ (029A140108)

The complete paradigm of the possessor indexes is given below. Like with personal pronouns, there is an inclusive-exclusive distinction in the first person but dual, trial and plural are reduced to a single non-singular form.

	1INC	1EXC	2	3
SG	-	-gu	-mu / -u	-na
NSG	-da	-mai	-mi	-di

Blanga distinguishes between alienable (3.68), (3.92), and inalienable possession (3.90). In turn, the latter category can be subdivided into two classes: alienable general (3.68), and alienable consumable (3.92). Inalienable possession is directly marked and the possessor indexes occur as postclitics on the NP core (3.2.1.1, 3.2.1.7). Alienable possession is marked indirectly and the possessive indexes occur as suffixes on a pre-head noun classifier (3.2.1.7). There are two noun classifiers and they are always bound bases: *ge-* for alienable consumable and *no-* for any other alienables. They are discussed separately in 3.1.8, where it is also considered whether they can appropriately be regarded as classifiers. Otherwise, the indexes themselves are formally identical in inalienable and alienable possession, with the exception of 2SG, where, as a rule, the form *-mu* is used with inalienably and *-u* with alienably possessed nouns. The ‘rule’ is, however, not strictly observed and the current tendency is to extend *-mu* to alienable possession in free variation with *-u*. Possession is discussed in more detail in 3.3.

3.1.3.4 Reflexive forms

A reflexive construction exists in Blanga. Reflexive clauses include an NP which consists of the base *te-* indexed for person and number by suffixes that are formally identical to the possessor indexes (3.1.3.3) but will be glossed as reflexive when in reflexive constructions. The whole combination follows the verb (3.93), (3.94).

(3.93) Ei! Ara la toka=nau the-gu.
 INTERJ 1SG go cut=1SG.AGR REFL-1SG.RF
 ‘Hey, I’m cutting myself.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

(3.94) Mane ine la fa-le-lehe=ni the-na.
 man DEM.R.SG go CS-REDUP-die=3SG.AGR REFL-3SG.RF
 ‘This man is killing himself.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

Reflexives are also used with a reciprocal meaning.

(3.95) Tifaro=na [...] maneri ke ngau=di the-di ke=u.
 time.before=DEM.N.SG 3PL PERF eat=3NSG.AGR REFL-3SG.RF PERF=be.thus
 ‘Long ago [...] they would eat each other.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

Further analysis is needed in order to see how much the functional range of the reflexive base matches that of the English *-self*. Examples such as (3.156) in 3.1.5 below suggest that the Blanga *te-* can be used with an intensifying function similar to that of, say, *myself* in a sentence such as *I did it myself*, although an intensifying suffix *-hi* also exists in the language (3.1.11). In such instances, the reflexive functions as an NP head, optionally followed and modified by another NP (3.2.1.5).

The clause-bounded character of Blanga reflexives is discussed in Section 6.4.2.

3.1.3.5 Interrogative pronouns

Inquiries about the identity of a participant in the state of affairs denoted by the predication are made by means of two forms with similar behaviour: *hei*, for human and personified participants and personal names, and *heve/uheve* for non-human participants. Below, the participants in question are a transitive actor (3.96), a transitive undergoer (3.97), (3.99), a possessor (3.98), and an intransitive undergoer (3.102) further below. In (3.100), *hei* replaces the intransitive actor of the main clause and is coreferent with the gapped intransitive undergoer in the modifying relative clause.

(3.96) Hei ne gonu=nau=na ara-hi?
 who REAL not.know=1SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG 1SG-INTS

Ara-hi=nga memeha ba ne flalo, bosu ba ne ghasa [...]?
 1SG-INTS=IMM bird ALT REAL fly pig ALT REAL jump

Ta=u are ara falelehe si=ia.
 SB=exist DEM.N.PL 1.SG CS.die=FOC=PART
 ‘Who does not know me? Do I look like a bird that flies or a pig that jumps [...]?
 I kill such as those.’ (149A020608; text)

(3.97) Hei agho ke tafo=ni=na?
 who 2SG PERF meet=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG
 ‘Whom did you meet?’ (FN3:21; elicitation)

(3.98) No-na hore hei=si=ba ke zaho=nga=au Jon [ta ana]=ia?
 POSS.GEN canoe who=FOC=ALT PERF go=IMM=exist PN [SB DEM.N.SG]=PART
 ‘Whose canoe did John board?’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(3.99) Zifla, fakae ta=na ba maneri heve?
 exit see SB=DEM.N.SG ALT 3PL what

Fakae=ni maneri phau=na gogholi=ne.
 see=3SG.AGR 3PL head=3SG.P giant=DEM.R.SG
 ‘They come out and what do they see? They see the giant’s head.’
 (149A020608; text)

(3.100) Hei [ke au ka ghau Kolosori]
 who [PERF exist PREP 2PL PLN]

ke zaho=na ka hnaga suga ta=na?
 PERF go=DEM.N.SG PREP erect house SB=DEM.N.SG
 ‘Who from Kolosori went to that house building?’ (266A251109; elicitation)

Both forms can also occur with a nominal predicate (3.101), (3.102), or in irrealis interrogatives with a relative clause as predicate (3.103).

(3.101) Hei nahgna=mu=na agho?
 who name=2SG.P=DEM.N.SG 2SG
 ‘What is your name?’ (107A230408; elicitation)

(3.102) Uheve ine?
 what DEM.R.SG
 ‘What is this?’ (007A011207; elicitation)

(3.103) Heve ta manahaghi=ni=na agho?
 what SB want=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG 2SG
 ‘What do you want?’ Lit: ‘What is it that you want?’ (FN1:9; elicitation)

They can also function attributively when used to ask for more specific information about an expressed or assumed participant (3.104), (3.105), (3.106). In addition, the non-human identity interrogative *heve* can be incorporated by the verb in the same way as nouns (3.107). Noun incorporation reduces valency. Consequently, verbs with incorporated nouns are necessarily intransitive. In Blanga, there is no argument coreference on intransitive verbs (3.4.1.1), which is also the case when the interrogative pronoun *heve* is incorporated. Compare (3.107) below with (3.103) above.

(3.104) Ooe heve ghau ta ooe=ni=na?
 language which 2PL SB speak=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG
 ‘Which language do you speak?’ (107A230408; elicitation)

(3.105) “Ara nahnga=gu=na Heleni”.
 1.SG name=1SG.P=DEM.N.SG PN

“Heleni hei”?
 PN who

“Heleni Zalani Laseruru Sinaporo”.
 PN

“My name is Heleni”.

“Heleni who?”

“Heleni Zalani Laseruru Sinaporo”. (006AV030308; elicitation)

(3.106) Agho ka hnagae heve, hnigra heve, finogha heve
 2SG PREP day what month what, year what
 ke doli=mu=na?
 PERF be.born=1SG.P=DEM.N.SG
 ‘On what day, in what month and what year were you born?’
 (107A230408; elicitation)

(3.107) Agho manahaghi heve?
 2SG want what
 ‘What do you want?’ (FN1:9; elicitation)

The form *hei* is sometimes replaced by *ihei*, mentioned in 3.1.3.2. as an indefinite adnominal. In its interrogative function illustrated here, *ihei* only occurs pronominally and often has the meaning of ‘I wonder who’, similar to some uses of the English interrogative pronoun *whoever*, without necessarily implying disbelief. The following example is taken from a dialogue about a group of Kolosori people who went to help with the construction of a building in Hovukoilo.

- (3.108) *Ihei mane-dou=di=na maneri?*
 whoever man-be.big=3NSG.P=DEM.N.SG 3.PL
 ‘Who was their team leader, I wonder?’ (266A251109; elicitation)

In other contexts, the interrogative *ihei* may have the meaning of ‘who else’. In the dialogue mentioned above, the inquirer first asks who went there. The question was quoted in (3.100). He carries on by trying to find out why and when they went there, how they travelled and how many they were. Finally, he utters the question illustrated below, which differentiates between those who went there to do the actual work and those who simply accompanied them as a matter of protocol.

- (3.109) *Ihei ke zaho balu=di=re?*
 who PERF go ASSC=3NSG.P=DEM.N.PL
 ‘Who else went with them?’ (266A251109; elicitation)

The form *heve* can also inquire about the identity of an event or state, rather than that of a participant (3.110), (3.111).

- (3.110) *Ooe=ni=nga nakodou=ne ka kheto=na=na:*
 speak=3SG.AGR=IMM woman.DEM.R.SG PREP spouse=3SG.P=DEM.N.SG

“Oi, kheto=gu!”
 hey spouse=1SG.P

“Heve”? neu=nga kheto=na=na.
 what be.thus.REAL=IMM spouse=3SG.P=DEM.N.SG
 ‘The woman said to her husband: “Hey, husband!”
 “What”? said the husband.’ (161A100608; text)

- (3.111) *Heve bo au agho?*
 what CNT exist 2SG
 ‘How are you?’ (004A011207; elicitation)

In addition to the above uses, *heve/uheve* also occurs in questions of cause (3.112) and (3.113), while *heve* preceded by the causative particle *fa* occurs in questions of manner (3.114). The alternative form *uheve* is not attested in the latter structure.

(3.112) “Heve ke zaho maneri sare?”
 why PERF go 3PL there
 “Ke invaiti=di maneri mala zaho frihnge
 PERF invite=3NSG.AGR 3PL PURP go work
 ka abeabe sare Hovukoilo.”
 PREP helper there.PROX PLN
 ‘ “Why did they go there?”
 “They invited them to work as helpers there in Hovukoilo”.’
 (266A251109; elicitation)

(3.113) Uheve ke si ba ido e-ti age
 why PERF FOC ALT mother HAB-NEG go
 ka rumu ta=u=na ara neu=ia?
 PREP room SB=exist=DEM.N.SG 1SG be.thus.REAL=PART
 ‘Why, mother, shouldn’t I get into that room?’ (073A020308; text)

(3.114) “Fa heve ke=u maneri zaho=di=re?”
 CS what PERF=be.thus 3PL go=3NSG.P=DEM.R.PL
 “Ke zaho maneri zazaho bla ke zaho.”
 PERF go 3PL walk LIM PERF go
 “How did they get there?”
 “They just went by foot.” (266A251109; elicitation)

Enquiries about quantity are made by means of the interrogative *niha* both in count and mass structures. In the first three examples below, *niha* refers to the intransitive actor argument of a predicate that is understood from the previous context (3.115), a transitive undergoer (3.116) and an adjunct (3.117), and reflects the pre-nominal position of quantifiers (3.1.6). In (3.118), it is itself the predicate.

(3.115) “Niha mane abeabe?”
 how.many man helper
 “Hnablo mane abeabe.”
 six man helper
 ‘ “How many helpers (went there)?”
 “Six helpers”.’ (266A251109; elicitation)

(3.116) Manei=na ne riso niha bo letasi?
 3SG=DEM.N.SG PERF write how.many CNT letter
 ‘How many letters is he writing?’ (090A120408; elicitation)

(3.117) “Ka tahni¹⁰ niha ke kou=na ghau?”
 PREP cry how.much PERF drink=DEM.N.SG 2PL

“Ghai ke kou=na grafi.
 1PL.EXCL PERF drink=DEM.N.SG evening

Ka tahni hnablo eu... fitu eu...
 PREP cry six be.thus.IRR seven be.thus.IRR

ke fufunu kou=na ghai.”
 PERF start drink=DEM.N.SG 1PL.EXCL

“What time did you drink?”

“We drank in the evening. We started drinking at six or seven.”
 (266A251109; elicitation)

(3.118) Niha finogha=mu=na agho?
 how.many year=1SG.P=DEM.N.SG 2SG
 ‘How old are you?’ Lit. ‘How many are your years?’ (107A230408; elicitation)

Blanga also has two locative interrogatives, *niha-* for temporal location and *hae* for spatial location. In the locative sense, *niha-* is always a bound base to which the suffixes *-na* or *-o* are attached, the full forms being *nihana* and *nihao*. The two suffixes are used to code the location as irrealis and realis respectively and are formally identical and obviously related with the clitic demonstrative forms for the nearby and non-visible categories in the singular (3.1.4).

(3.119) Niha-na ta ngau=ni=na manei kokorako=na?
 when-IRR SB eat=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG 3SG chicken=DEM.N.SG
 ‘When will he eat the chicken?’ (304A031209; elicitation)

(3.120) “Niha-o ke frihnge=na maneri suga ta=na?”
 when-REAL PERF work=DEM.N.SG 3PL house SB=DEM.N.SG

“Ke frihnge=na maneri suga ta=na ka uu ka July.”
 PERF work=DEM.N.SG 3PL house SB=DEM.N.SG PREP HES PREP July

“When did they build that house?”

“They built that house in er... July.” (266A251109; elicitation)

(3.121) “Niha-o ba=ne=ia?”
 when-REAL ALT=DEM.R.SG=PART

“Ka grafi ka Sarare=no[...].”
 PREP evening PREP Saturday=DEM.NV.SG

“When was that?”

“On Saturday evening [...].” (266A251109; elicitation)

¹⁰ Blanga does not have a general term for ‘time’ and its speakers have only recently started to measure time in the Western fashion. When asking about the time of the day in hours and minutes, they use the word *tahni* ‘cry’: *Tahni niha?* ‘What time is it?’, lit. ‘It cries/rings how much?’. To refer to a period of time, the Pijin loanword *taem* is used: *Ka taem ta au ana...* ‘During that time...’.

- (3.122) “Niha-o ba=na? Finogha niha-o?”
 when-REAL ALT=DEM.N.SG year when-REAL
 “Finogha=ne bla tu-tausan-eit.”
 year=DEM.R.SG LIM 2008
 “When was that? In what year?”
 “The year was 2008.” (266A251109; elicitation)

The locative interrogatives are naturally restricted to inquiring about adjunct constituents but, like most of the other interrogative pronouns, they can occur clause-initially, as in the examples above and (3.123), (3.124) below, clause-finally (3.125), (3.126) or even clause-medially (3.127), (3.128), thus reflecting the substantial constituent order variation in Blanga, which enables both arguments and adjuncts to occupy almost any position in the clause. Clause constituent order is discussed in 5.5.

- (3.123) Hae agho ke doli=na?
 where 2SG PERF be.alive=DEM.N.SG
 ‘Where were you born?’ (107A230408; elicitation)
- (3.124) Ghoi, hae gausa=re?
 voc where betelnut=DEM.N.PL
 ‘Man, where is the betel nut?’ (096A130408; elicitation)
- (3.125) Ghoi, agho zaho hae?
 voc 2SG go where
 ‘Man, where are you going?’ (054A260208; text)
- (3.126) Agho-hi=nga mane=mu hae?
 2SG-INTS=IMM man=2SG.P where
 ‘Where are you from?’ Lit. ‘You are man of where?’ (186A151109; text)
- (3.127) Ghoi, agho hae au?
 voc 2SG where exist
 ‘Man, where are you?’ (005A011207; elicitation)
- (3.128) Agho hae nanau=mu=na?
 2SG where village=2SG.P=DEM.N.SG
 ‘Which/where is your village?’ (107A230408; elicitation)

They can also function attributively, in post-nominal modifier position, as in the second occurrence of *nihao* in (3.122) above and in (3.129) below, as possessors (3.126) above, as adjuncts in clausal predication, (3.119) above, or as predicates (3.121), the first occurrence of *nihao* in (3.122), and in (3.124), (3.128) above and (3.130) below.

(3.129) “Ka nanau hae?”
 PREP village where/which
 “Ka nanau Hovukoilo.”
 PREP village PLN
 “In which village?”
 “In Hovukoilo Village.” (266A251109; elicitation)

(3.130) “Agho ke sikolu bo?”
 2SG PERF study CNT
 “Uve.”
 yes
 “**Hae?**”
 where
 “Guguha.”
 PLN
 “Did you go to school?”
 “Yes.”
 “Where?”
 “At Guguha.” (107A230408; elicitation)

All the forms illustrated above as interrogative pronouns, have non-interrogative counterparts.

(3.131) Ara theome lase=ni hei ke mai=na ka agho.
 1SG NEG know=3SG.AGR who PERF come PREP 2SG
 ‘I do not know who came to you.’ (304A031209; elicitation)

(3.132) Ara theome lase=ni ihei ta manahaghi suga magazani¹¹=na.
 1SG NEG know=3SG.AGR whoever SB want house be.new=DEM.N.SG
 ‘I do not know who wants a new house.’ (311A031209; elicitation)

(3.133) Fringhe uu uheve ta=u are
 work HES what SB=exist DEM.N.PL
 no-di nafringhe mane nhalau=re.
 POSS.GEN-3NSG.P work man boy=DEM.N.PL
 ‘They do er... whatever the boys’ work may be.’ (014A071207; text)

(3.134) Ara theome lase=ni heve ke=u manei ke lehe=nga.
 1SG NEG know=3SG.AGR why PERF=be.thus 3SG PERF die=IMM
 ‘I do not know why he died.’ (304A031209; elicitation)

¹¹ In this example, the verb *mazaghani* ‘want’ is pronounced [magazani] by the consultant. It is not clear if the metathesis is due to a general or generation-specific tendency in the language or it is just an occasional slip of tongue. Interestingly, the form with metathesis replaces the velar fricative with a velar plosive.

- (3.135) Ara theome lase=ni fa heve ke=u manei
 1SG NEG know=3SG.AGR cs what PERF=be.thus 3SG
 falelehe=ni=na bosu=ro.
 cause.die=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG pig=DEM.NV.PL
 ‘I do not know how he killed the pigs.’ (304A031209; elicitation)
- (3.136) Ara theome lase=ni
 1SG NEG know=3SG.AGR
 Niha bosu ke falelehe=di=re manei.
 how.many pig PERF cause.die=3NSG.AGR 3SG
 ‘I do not know how many pigs he killed.’ (304A031209; elicitation)
- (3.137) Ara theome lase=ni niha-o ke pulo mai=na manei.
 1.SG NEG know=3SG.AGR when-REAL PERF return come=DEM.N.SG 3SG
 ‘I do not know when he came back.’ (311A031209; elicitation)
- (3.138) Ara theome lase=ni hae ke zaho manei.
 1SG NEG know=3SG.AGR where PERF go 3SG
 ‘I do not know where he went.’ (304A031209; elicitation)
- (3.139) Ara theome lase=ni hae ta zaho=na manei.
 1SG NEG know=3SG.AGR where SB go=DEM.N.SG 3SG
 ‘I do not know where he will go.’ (311A031209; elicitation)

The Blanga interrogative pronouns are summarised below.

<i>hei</i>	‘who’/ ‘whom’/ ‘whose’
<i>ihei</i>	‘whoever’ ‘who else’
<i>heve/uheve</i>	‘what’/ ‘which’ ‘why’
<i>fa heve</i>	‘how’
<i>niha</i>	‘how much’/ ‘how many’
<i>nihao</i>	‘when.REAL’
<i>nihana</i>	‘when.IRR’
<i>hae</i>	‘where’

The glosses are context-specific. For instance, in particular contexts *hei* can be better glossed as ‘what?’ and *heve* as ‘how?’ (3.101), (3.111).

3.1.4 Demonstratives

The Blanga demonstrative forms seem to be, both formally and functionally, identical to those found in Kokota. To facilitate comparison, I shall adopt the glosses and abbreviations used by Palmer (2009:72-74) for Kokota. Blanga demonstratives distinguish five deictic categories, which, in turn, distinguish between singular and plural. The five degrees of proximity denoted by the demonstratives are:

1. *touching* (DEM.T), referring to objects touched by the speaker or somehow in contact with the speaker's body (e.g. clothes, footwear, cigarette in mouth etc.);
2. *within reach* (DEM.R), indicating items within reach of the speaker;
3. *out of reach but relatively nearby* (DEM.N);
4. *further away but potentially visible* (DEM.PV);
5. *non-visible* (DEM.NV) for entities considered to be out of sight.

Except for the non-visible category, the same demonstrative forms can be used both pronominally and adnominally. When used adnominally, all demonstratives are postposed (3.2.1.1). The demonstrative forms are shown below.

	DEM.T	DEM.R	DEM.N	DEM.PV	DEM.NV
SG	ao ~ =ao	ine ~ =ne	ana ~ =na	iao	=o/=no
PL	aro ~ =aro	ide ~ =de	are ~ =re	iaro	=ro

The non-visible forms always cliticise to the NP core (3.2.1.1). The rest of the forms are free morphemes, but the touching, within reach and nearby ones frequently cliticise in casual or rapid speech.

In practice, the meanings of the demonstratives are relative and depend on the scales within which the deictic centre is placed. The non-visible category applies to objects that are not visible because of spatial or temporal distance, or both. The temporal dimension may include events and entities located in either a specific or undetermined past or placed within the atemporal framework of traditional narratives. The examples below also suggest that the allophones of the non-visible singular form occur in free variation.

(3.140) Hei sini ke premer=**no** ghita?
 who FOC PERF premier=DEM.NV.SG 1PL.INCL
 'Who was our premier¹²?' (267A251109; elicitation)

¹² The Pijin loanword *premier* or *premer/primer* designates the head of a provincial government.

- (3.141) “Niha-**o** ba=ne=ia?”
 when-REAL ALT=DEM.R.SG=PART
 “Ka grafi ka Sarare=no,
 PREP evening PREP Saturday=DEM.NV.SG
 naba tweti-wan=**no**. Grafi Sarare.”
 number twent-one=DEM.NV.SG evening Saturday
 “When was that?”
 “Last Saturday evening, on the 21st. Saturday evening.”
 (266A251109; elicitation)
- (3.142) Ara ka Sarare=**o** ke kou bia bla.
 1SG PREP Saturday=DEM.NV.SG PERF drink beer LIM
 ‘On Saturday, I just drank beer.’ (266A251109; elicitation)
- (3.143) Nusu au ka natha=na mane gogholi=**o**.
 sand exist PREP eye=DEM.N.SG man giant=DEM.NV.SG
 ‘There is sand in the giant’s eyes.’ (150A020608; text)

Demonstratives occur with very high frequency in Blanga. Almost every sentence includes at least one demonstrative and often more. That may be partly because, in addition to their deictic function, they represent the only means of marking NPs as definite (3.1.5) and of specifying nominal number. For number distinction within different semantic categories of nouns see the introductory subsection in 3.1.2 and the subsequent subheadings.

Reduced relative clauses (5.3.2.1) with the existential verb *au* also function as demonstratives.

- (3.144) Mane datau mane ta=**u** ana ke zaho balu=di=re [...].
 man chief man SB=exist DEM.N.SG PERF go ASSC=3SG.P=DEM.N.PL
 ‘The chief is that man who went with them [...].’ (266A251109; elicitation)
- (3.145) Ta=**u** are ara falelehe si=ia.
 SB=exist DEM.N.PL 1SG CS.die FOC=PART
 ‘Those I kill.’

3.1.5 Articles and other markers of definiteness and specificity

The class of Blanga articles is restricted to two members: the indefinite article *kaisa*, derived from the numeral *kaisa* ‘one’, a process quite common cross-linguistically, and the specific article *mane*, which is formally identical with the noun *mane* ‘man’ and obviously derived from it through secondary meanings such as ‘individual’¹³. In

¹³ Blanga also has a gender-neutral noun, *nakoni*, meaning ‘human’ or ‘person’ in the singular and ‘people’ in the plural. Its root is cognate with that of *nakodou* ‘woman’.

addition, some words belonging to other classes (or some constructions) can be employed to mark definiteness and/or specificity (or lack of them) on Blanga NPs.

Therefore, there is a basic contrast between definite and indefinite in the language. The main indefinite marker is *kaisa* (3.146), while definiteness is assigned by demonstratives (3.147) or reduced relative clauses functioning as demonstratives (3.148). The last two examples also show that a demonstrative can even mark possessive constructions, here giving a sense similar to ‘that leg of mine’. This is not compulsory but very frequent. The demonstrative form modifying the noun *ghahe* ‘leg’ in *ghahe=gu=na ara* ‘my leg’ below is not primarily deictic. At the same time, it is redundant as a definiteness marker (cf. Eng. **the my leg*)¹⁴. Its main function here is to mark number, which is not specified directly on Blanga nouns (3.1.2.1.1).

(3.146) Daik-i=ni ara kaisa hmogo neu
 step-TRANS=3SG.AGR 1SG one snake be.thus.REAL
 ‘I stepped on a snake.’ (090A120408; elicitation)

(3.147) Hmogo=**ne** ne kathu=ni ghahe=**gu=na** ara.
 snake=DEM.R.SG REAL bite=3SG.AGR leg=3SG.P=DEM.N.SG 1SG
 ‘The snake bit my leg.’ (090A120480; elicitation)

(3.148) Hmogo ta=u=ne ne kathu=ni ghahe=**gu=na**.
 Snake SB=exist=DEM.R.SG real bite=3SG.AGR leg=3SG.P=DEM.N.SG
 ‘The snake bit my leg.’ (048A230208; elicitation)

Sometimes, a specificity distinction needs to be made both within the indefinite and the definite category. Indefinite non-specific status is assigned by means of the adnominal *keha/kekeha*, which cannot co-occur in the same NP with *kaisa*. The form and its uses were illustrated in 3.1.3.2. In (3.149), it does not matter who accompanies the actor of the main clause as long as somebody does it. Compare this with (3.150), where the context makes it clear that one particular woman washed her wound in that river.

(3.149) Ghume zaho keha mane balu=gu=na ara meu=la,
 if go some man ASSC=1SG.P=DEM.N.SG 1SG be.thus.INCPT=CND

 Ara-hi mela ke zaho no-gu la bla.
 1SG-INTS PSB PERF go POSS.GEN-1SG.P PART LIM
 ‘If somebody goes with me, I may go too.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

¹⁴ Such redundancies, however, are not uncommon across languages. For instance, in Greek (Indo-European isolate), Romanian and Aromanian (Eastern Romance) and other languages belonging to the Balkan *Sprachbund*, the cooccurrence of a definite article and a possessive adjective is compulsory with a definite possessum, although the possessive adjective itself already confers both definiteness and specificity. The compulsory character of this cooccurrence is further evidence that this is not a strategy of distinguishing between definite specific and definite non-specific in those languages.

(3.150) Eu khou ta au=na nahnga=na=na Tihitubu
 be.thus water SB exist=DEM.N.SG name=3NSG.P=DEM.N.SG PN

ghuna ne-ke titihi kaisa nakodou,
 because REAL-PERF wash one woman

Sorei, ta=na nahgna=na=na, thubu no-na.
 PN SB=DEM.N.SG name=3NSG.P=DEM.N.SG wound POSS.GEN-3SG.P
 ‘Thus, the name of that river is Tihitubu because a woman, Sorei was her name,
 washed her wound (in it).’ (016A101207; text)

When specificity is not important, the opposition indefinite specific vs. indefinite non-specific is neutralised and *kaisa* is used. In (3.151), it is the cry that had made an impression on the speaker, no matter if that child who produced it can be identified or not.

(3.151) Kaisa sua tahni age sara au.
 one child cry come there exist
 ‘A child was crying over there.’ (054A260208; text)

As mentioned above, demonstratives and demonstrative constructions function, among others, as definiteness markers. Definiteness usually implies specificity. The main exception is that of count or mass nouns used with a general meaning, which are therefore non-specific.

(3.152) Uheve ta au mai=na ka nehu=na sune.
 what SB exist come=DEM.N.SG PREP nose=DEM.N.SG nasal.mucus
 ‘The thing that comes out of the nose is mucus.’ (117A300408; elicitation)

(3.153) Tifaro [...] nakoni=re ke magra [...]
 time.before [...] person=DEM.N.PL PREP fight
 ‘In the past [...], people used to fight [...].’ (051A240208; elicitation)

In other cases, non-specificity can be marked by the adnominal *ihei*, as illustrated in Example (3.81) of Section 3.1.3.2, repeated and renumbered below for convenience.

(3.154) Mane ihei [ne manahghi no-na hmola],
 man whoever REAL want POSS-3SG.P canoe
 manei ghinai ke kulu zaho fea ka hmata=re.
 3SG FUT PERF be.first go INIT PREP bush=DEM.N.PL
 ‘Whoever wants a canoe of his own will, first of all, go to the bush.’
 (015A071207; text)

In addition, the language has developed a specific article through the grammaticalisation of the noun *mane* ‘man’. The examples below will show that associations of such an

article and a noun should and can be clearly distinguished from both endocentric compounds like *mane-dou* ‘important man’ or *mane-vaka* ‘foreigner’ (3.1.2.3.1) and noun plus modifier sequences like *mane dou* ‘old man’ or *mane prisi* ‘priest’ (3.1.2.3.1 and 3.1.7). The grammaticalisation of *mane* as a specific article may have started with personal names, which are most frequently marked by this form. Proper nouns (3.1.2.2) are definite by their very nature. As far as their behaviour is concerned, they cannot be preceded by the indefinite article *kaisa* and cannot be counted, but they are often accompanied by demonstratives in the singular. However, Blanga names of persons are not intrinsically specific, since the same name can be assigned to more than one individual. To avoid ambiguity, they can be specified by *mane*.

(3.155) Mane Maekoli=na manei=na zaho fa ghose la.
 SPEC PN=DEM.N.SG 3SG=DEM.N.SG go CS be.quick PART
 ‘Michael travels quickly.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

(3.156) Kaisa fata=na ghai ne plani,
 one occasion=DEM.N.SG 1PL.EXCL REAL plan

the-gu ara neu thamo=gu=na Hedere, Sisa, Gilbeti. [...]
 REFL-1SG.RF 1SG and sibling=1SG.P=DEM.N.SG PN PN PN

Mane Hedere mane=si=nga ta phau hili=ne=ia.
 SPEC PN man=FOC=IMM SB head hunt=DEM.R.SG=PART
 ‘One time we had a plan, myself and my brother Henry, Sisa and Gilbert. [...] Henry was the leader of the hunting party.’ (031A140108; text)

From personal names, the strategy has been extended to human nouns in general, no matter their natural gender, and to personified beings.

(3.157) Neu ana=nga mane keha manekai ikia=ne
 be.thus.REAL DEM.N.SG=IMM SPEC other brother be.small=DEM.R.SG
 ‘Thus spoke the other little brother.’ (150A020608; text)

(3.158) Mane gaghase=na ne uu hmaghu.
 SPEC girl=DEM.N.SG REAL HES be.afraid
 ‘The girl is afraid.’ (108A240408; elicitation)

(3.159) Neu ana=nga mane sua=ne.
 be.thus.REAL DEM.N.SG=IMM SPEC child=DEM.R.SG
 ‘Thus spoke the child.’ (149A020608; text)

(3.160) Neu ana=nga mane gogholi=o.
 be.thus.REAL DEM.N.SG=IMM SPEC giant=DEM.NV.SG
 ‘Thus spoke the giant.’ (149A020608; text)

(3.161) Ke khave toke manei phau khou Garanga.

PERF descend reach 3SG head river PLN

Eu bla mane nasava=ne.

be.thus.IRR LIM SPEC crocodile=DEM.R.SG

‘He travelled till he reached the source of the Garanga River. That’s what the crocodile did’ (073A020308; text)

To sum up, the Blanga markers of specificity and definiteness are listed below.

indefinite general	<i>kaisa</i>
indefinite specific	<i>kaisa</i>
indefinite non-specific	<i>keha</i>
definite general and/or implied	demonstratives
definite specific	<i>mane</i>
definite non-specific	<i>ihei</i>

3.1.6 Quantifiers

As specified in the previous section, number is not marked on Blanga nouns, but on their determiners. In addition, numerals and other quantifiers can be present.

3.1.6.1 Cardinal numerals

Although Blanga has autochthonous words for numbers up to thousands, numerals most probably represent the most heavily endangered word class in the language. Currently, only the numerals between one and ten are still frequently used in daily speech. Whatever is above ten is almost invariably replaced with English via Pijin loanwords, with the exception of very careful speech, usually in the presence of the linguist.

There is no Blanga word for zero. The Blanga word *glima* ‘five’ is clearly derived from the Proto-Oceanic **lima* ‘hand’/ ‘five’ but otherwise there are no traces of a base-5 counting system. The language employs a decimal system, as shown by the numerals from one to nine, the synchronic word for ‘ten’, and those multiples of the number ten diachronically formed with *-fulu* and *-salai*. The existence of two alternate forms with the same meaning may be explained by their different origins (i.e. Austronesian and pre-Austronesian). The language also shows some fossilised vigesimal traces in the two numerals formed with *-tutu*, the meaning of which must have been something like ‘score’. The Blanga cardinal numerals are formed as in the table below.

1. kaisa	21. varadaki-kaisa
2. phea	22. varadaki-phea
3. thilo	23. varadaki-thilo
4. fati	24. varadaki-fati
5. glima	25. varadaki-glima
6. hnablo	26. varadaki-nhablo
7. fitu	27. varadaki-fitu
8. hnana	28. varadaki-nhana
9. hneva	29. varadaki-nheva
10. nabotho/botho	30. tolu-fulu
11. nabotho-kaisa	40. phea-tutu
12. nabotho-phea	50. glima-fulu
13. nabotho-thilo	60. thilo-tutu
14. nabotho-fati	70. fitu-salai
15. nabotho-glima	80. nhana-salai
16. nabotho-hnablo	90. nheva-salai
17. nabotho-fitu	100. kaisa gobi
18. nabotho-nhana	200. phea gobi
19. nabotho-nheva	1000. kaisa thogha
20. varadaki	2000. phea thogha

Blanga numerals precede the noun.

- (3.162) Manei la riso hnigho la phea letasi=re.
 3SG go write finish PART two letter=DEM.N.PL
 ‘He has written two letters.’ (090A120408; elicitation)

Complex numbers, including years, are formed by juxtaposition of thousands, hundreds, tens and units.

- (3.163) [...] ka finogha kaisa thogha hneva gobi thilo-tutu phea.
 PREP year one thousand nine hundred sixty two
 ‘[...] in the year 1962. (052A240108; text)

The juxtaposition of *phea* ‘two’ and *thilo* ‘three’ denotes a small indeterminate quantity.

- (3.164) Aghe phea thilo au ta au khave=re Hovukoilo [...]
 and two three exist SB exist descend=DEM.N.PL PLN
 ‘And there are two or three (people) who went down to live in Hovukoilo [...]
 (009A051207; text)

With some collective nouns, a modifying numeral denoting a small number usually counts the individual members of the group, rather than the collective noun itself. This

is attested with nouns such as *talaghi* ‘couple (husband and wife)’ and *tharakna* ‘family’ but it is not clear if the strategy is employed exclusively with collective nouns denoting groups of related people. Thus, in the examples below, *phea talaghi=de* does not mean *‘two couples’ but simply ‘a couple’/‘a family of two’, while *fati tharakna=de* does not mean *‘four families’ but ‘a family of four’.

(3.165) Au=nga ne au phea talaghi=de.
 exist=IMM REAL exist two couple=DEM.R.PL
 ‘Once upon a time there was this couple.’ (121A040508; text)

(3.166) Au=nga ne au fati tharakna=de.
 exist=IMM REAL exist four family=DEM.R.PL
 ‘Once upon a time there was a family of four.’ (150A020608; text)

Cardinal numerals can be used in constructions with a distributive function.

(3.167) Ne kaisa kaisa eu.
 PERF one one be.thus.IRR
 ‘They (come) one by one.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

(3.168) Ne phea kaisa fata eu.
 PERF two one occation be.thus.IRR
 ‘They (come) two at a time.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

(3.169) [...] keha phea hnalau=re hota kaisa kaisa.
 other two boy=DEM.N.PL hold one one
 ‘[...] the other two boys are holding one (pig) each.’ (083A030408; text)

3.1.6.2 Ordinal numerals

Ordinal numerals are constructed by means of the cardinal forms and the prefix *fa-*, which is formally identical with, and apparently historically derived from, the causative marker (3.1.12).

(3.170) Fa-phea koze Ine-hi=nga koze ragi Sale Olo.
 CS-two song DEM.R.SG-INTS=IMM song dance dance.name
 ‘The second song is a song for the Sale Olo dance.’ (166A110608; text)

There is no numeral for ‘first’. Instead one of two cognate stative verbs can be used: *kulu* ‘be first’ and *ulu* ‘be.in.front’, the latter often, but not always, followed by the superlative *lahu* ‘most’.

(3.171) Manei ghinei kulu kaliti=di fea
 3SG FUT be.first prepare=3NSG.AGR INIT

uheve ta mala=na suga=na
 whatever SB PURP=3SG.P house=DEM.N.SG
 ‘He will first prepare whatever is needed for (building) a house.’
 (013A071207; text)

(3.172) Ine rahi ulu lahu ke ghu=na ghai Loghahaza.
 DEM.R.SG dance be.in.front most PERF do=3SG.AGR 1PL.EXCL PLN
 ‘This is the first dance that we, the Loghahaza people,
 performed.’(166A110608; text)

(3.173) Sisa ne mai ulu ka no-na snari=na.
 PN REAL come be.in.front PREP POSS.GEN-3SG.P race=DEM.N.SG
 ‘Sisa came first in the race.’ (23A151207; elicitation)

The meaning of ‘last’ is captured by the local noun *leghu* ‘behind’ (3.1.2.1.3).

3.1.6.3 Indefinite quantifiers

Three indefinite quantifiers have been identified: *tethei*, *leleghu* and *udu*. The form *tethei* denotes an unspecified large quantity and can be accurately glossed as ‘many’.

(3.174) Tethei nakoni ta au=na ka giluna gluma neu
 many person SB exist=DEM.N.SG PREP inside=3SG.P cave be.thus.REAL
 ‘There are many people in the cave.’ (149A020608; text)

The form *leleghu* can be glossed as ‘every’ and is a reduplicated form of the word *leghu*, which in turn can be either a local noun with both a spatial and a temporal reading, ‘behind’ and respectively ‘after (a period of time)’, or a transitive verb meaning ‘follow’ (3.1.2.1.3).

(3.175) Ara ghinai ke telu=na bla uheve
 1.SG FUT PERF tell LIM what

ta au ghu=di=re ghai leleghu nhagae.
 SB exist do=3NSG.AGR=DEM.N.PL 1PL.EXCL every day
 ‘I am going to talk about what we do every day.’ (019A101207; text)

The form *udu* has an exhaustive meaning and can be glossed as ‘all’ or better ‘every single one’/‘all up to the last one’. See also the analysis of its Kokota cognate by Palmer (2009:93-94, 106-107, 115). *Udu* appears as a post-core modifier in a noun-headed NP (3.2.1.1) or as a post-head modifier in a pronoun-headed NP, as below.

(3.176) Au suga=na ghai udu
 exist house=DEM.N.SG 3PL.excl EXHST
 ‘It is the house of us all.’ (006A011207; elicitation)

Section (3.2.1.4) will show that *udu* is not only an exhaustive marker but also a real quantifier denoting non-specified large quantity. Based on their distribution, *tethei* on the one hand and *leleghu* and *udu* on the other should be classified separately as distinct subclasses. While *tethei* is a core-internal modifier, directly modifying the NP head, *leleghu* and *udu* belong to the NP periphery and modify the whole core (3.2.1.1).

3.1.7 Other noun modifiers

A distinct class of adjectives cannot be postulated for Blanga. Meanings usually associated with adjectives are denoted by a particular subclass of stative verbs, labelled “adjectival verbs” by Ross (1998:98) and here referred to as ‘descriptive stative verbs’ or ‘qualifying stative verbs’. Like adjectives, such words can modify nouns without relative marking, but otherwise they behave syntactically like any other stative verbs

suga dou ‘big house’ (house be.big)

hmari ukru ‘red fish’ (fish be.red)

A similar situation can be found in the neighbouring and closely related Kokota, where, however, three words that can be described as “formally underived adjectives” have been identified (Palmer 2009:95-97). Two of these, *tove* ‘old’ and *mata* ‘bush/wild’, have cognates in Blanga that are identical in meaning but neither of them can be classified as an adjective. The Blanga word *thove* seems to behave like any other stative verb, while *mata* ‘bush’ is a noun. It is true that the word otherwise used for bush is *hmata* and *mata* appears only in compounds or nouns determined by noun sequences. Palmer (2009:97) also mentions a few possessor-indexed adjectival forms that can be derived from nouns or stative verbs in Kokota. Such a category is not attested in my Blanga corpus.

Nouns can also modify other nouns. Common nouns functioning adnominally as post-head modifiers inside the NP core are quite frequent. They seem to function as in Kokota, where they either specify a subclass of the “class identified by the head nominal” or “a single member of that class”, or “provide additional information about the referent”.

(3.177) [...] manekai dou=gu=na ara-hi
 brother be.big=3SG.P=DEM.N.SG 1SG-INTS

ke mane prisi=no, John Rufus Pituvaka.
 PERF man priest=DEM.NV.SG PN
 ‘[...] my elder brother John Rufus Pituvaka, who was a priest.’
 (052A240108; text)

- (3.178) Leghu gukhu hotai.
 follow road middle
 ‘Follow the middle road¹⁵!’ (042AV230408; text)

It is often difficult to tell if a N+V_{stative} or N+N sequence is a noun + modifier sequence or an endocentric compound. Possible disambiguation tests are proposed in 3.1.2.3.1.

Compound nouns, in turn, can be modified by another noun or stative verb.

- (3.179) Sarare ghai ghinai ke fagagae ke uu ke kota=na
 Saturday 1PL.EXCL FUT PERF clean PREP HES PREP outside=3SG.P
 suga-tarai thove=na, suga-tarai tethena=na
 house-pray be.old=DEM.N.SG house-pray sago.palm=DEM.N.SG
 ‘On Saturday, we are going to clean outside the old church, the palm leaf church house (019A101207; text)

Proper nouns can also function as noun modifiers.

- (3.180) Ara ghoinode=na ghinai turi=ni uu khou Tihitubu
 1.SG today=DEM.N.SG FUT narrate=3.SG.AGR HES water PLN
 ‘Today I am going to tell the story of the Tihitubu River.’ (016A101207; text)
- (3.181) Mane Blanga=de maneri ke theome au ka kaisa nanau.
 person PN=DEM.R.SG 3PL PERF NEG exist PREP one village
 ‘The Blanga people did not live in one village.’ (12A051207; text)

A prepositional phrase can modify a noun by specifying its physical location or identifying the possessor in a possessive construction, the possessum being conceived of as located at the possessor.

- (3.182) [...] ghai mane datau ke giluna momolu Bughotu=ne [...]
 1PL.EXCL man chief PREP inside=3SG.P island PLN=DEM.R.SG
 ‘[...] we, the chiefs on St. Isabel Island [...].’ (008A051207; text)
- (3.183) Ine gazu ka ara.
 DEM.R.SG wood PREP 1SG
 ‘This is my stick.’ (038A160208; elicitation)

Finally, nouns can also be modified by a relative or purposive clause.

- (3.184) Ara ke tafo=ni tabu=mi ta ikia=no ghau
 1SG PERF meet=3SG.AGR in-law-2SG.AGR SB be.small=DEM.NV.SG 2PL
 ‘I met your younger in-law.’ (030A140108; elicitation)

¹⁵ The path across the mountains to the other side of the island.

(3.185) [...] *khou mala ikha=re*.
 water PURP bathe=DEM.N.PL
 ‘[...] the bathing water.’ (108A240408 ; elicitation)

3.1.8 Noun classifiers

Alienable possession in Blanga is marked indirectly by means of possessor indexing suffixes attached to two bound bases: *ge-* for the alienable consumable class and *no-* for a class containing all the other alienably possessed nouns. The possessor indexing forms are shown in 3.1.3.3 and possession is discussed in detail in 3.3.

Morphemes of the type of Blanga *ge-* and *no-* are generally regarded as noun classifiers in the Oceanic literature. A different analysis has been proposed for Kokota, which is geographically the closest neighbour and genetically the closest relative of Blanga and which reveals an identical situation. Palmer and Brown (2007) and Palmer (2009:117-119) argue convincingly that the Kokota forms are better described as NP heads, rather than noun classifiers. Based on many structural similarities, it is very possible that the Blanga forms *ge-* and *no-* function in the same way as the indirect possessor-indexing hosts in Kokota. However, at present an analysis of how the Blanga forms satisfy different criteria for either classifier status or headhood has yet to be done and, until that is accomplished, I have chosen the option based on the descriptive tradition and considered them noun classifiers.

3.1.9 Verbs

The class of verbs is defined in 3.1.1, where it is also distinguished from the class of nouns. Since verbs represent the only compulsory element at the core of a verb complex and verb complexes function as predicates, the different semantic types of verbs are discussed as types of predicates in Chapter 4. It is, however, important to mention here the distinction between active and stative verbs, which in Blanga include descriptive/resultative stative verbs. Such stative verbs often occur as noun modifiers (3.1.7).

In addition to single-root verbal forms and to serial verbs, which are not discussed in this thesis, the class of verbs in Blanga includes forms derived by compounding, reduplication, affixation and stem modification.

3.1.9.1 Compound verbs

Verb compounding is less productive than nominal compounding (3.1.2.3). Compound verbs consist of maximum two elements and are always endocentric and left-headed.

The head must always be a verb, while the second element can be a verb or noun: *ofosua* ‘child minding’, lit. ‘wait-child’. They are very poorly represented in my corpus.

3.1.9.2 Reduplication of verbs

The phonology of reduplication is treated in Section 2.5 while reduplication of nominal roots is discussed in Section 3.1.2.4. This section shows the attested forms derived by reduplication from verbal roots.

VT → VI_{stative}

tihī ‘wash’ → *titihī* ‘be.washed’

VT → VI_{active}

nughe ‘shake’ → *nunughe* ‘shiver’/‘tremble’, more intense action VT → VT

phoma ‘hit.with.stick’ → *pophoma* ‘whip’/‘hit.repeatedly’, more intense action, verbal plurality

VI_{active} → VI_{active}

zaho ‘go’ → *zazaho* ‘walk’, more ongoing action (accomplishment → activity)

VI_{active} → VI_{stative} (A-verb)

nohmo ‘listen’ → *nonohmo* ‘be.listening’, more ongoing event (state)

VI_{stative} → VI_{stative} (U-verb)

au ‘exist/stay’ → *aaū* ‘remain’, more permanent state

doli ‘be.alive’ → *dodoli* ‘be.green’, metaphorical extension

brahu ‘be.long’ → *brabrahu* ‘be a little bit long’, diminutive

VI_{stative} (U-verb) → VI_{active}

tuani ‘be.true’ → (*fa*) *tutuani* ‘worship’

VI_{stative} (U-verb) → VT

fliti ‘be.peeled’ → *flifliti* ‘peel’

thora ‘be.open’ → *tothora* ‘open’

VT → N

haglu ‘sweep’ → *hahaglu* ‘broom’

lase ‘know’ → *lalase* ‘knowledge’

VI_{active} → N

magra ‘fight (v.i.)’ → *mamagra* ‘fight (n.)’

VI_{stative} → N

zemu ‘be.cold’ → *zezemu* ‘shade’

puhi ‘be.numerous’ → *pupuhi* ‘gathering of people’

VT → VI/N

turi ‘narrate’ → *tuturi* ‘chat’/‘story’

ghato ‘think (v.t.)’ → *gaghato* ‘think (v.i.)’/‘mind’

3.1.9.3 Derivation with affixes

Only two affixes exist that attach directly to the verb and not to the auxiliary (3.4.1.1), a nominaliser prefix *na-* and a transitivity suffix *-i*.

3.1.9.3.1 Nominaliser prefix *na-*

Nouns can be derived from verbs by means of the nominaliser prefix *na-*, which is reminiscent of the Proto-Oceanic common article **na*.

frihngē ‘work (v.)’ → *nafrihngē* ‘work (n.)’

grui ‘plant (v.)’ → *nagrui* ‘garden’

3.1.9.3.2 Transitivity suffix *-i*

A transitivity suffix *-i* exists in the language. This is discussed in 4.3.7.3 as a valency augmentation device.

3.1.10 Locative Adverbs

Locative adverbs consist of two small sets of deictic locatives, spatial and temporal.

3.1.10.1 Spatial locatives

The subclass of spatial locatives consists of three members distinguished by degree of proximity of the location:

ade ‘here’ – closer to the speaker

sare ‘there.PROX’ – within a relatively shorter distance from the speaker

sara ‘there.DIST’ – within a relatively longer distance from the speaker

(3.186) Agho au ade.
2SG stay here
‘You stay here.’ (FN1:24; elicitation)

(3.187) Khiloau=na ke theome togha Loghahaza,
Christianity=DEM.N.SG PERF NEG arrive PLN

ke togha ade Popoheo.

PERF arrive here PLN

‘The Christian missionaries did not reach Loghahaza (from the very beginning). They (first) arrived here at Popoheo.’ (0912A051207; text)

- (3.188) *Ihei=re ta=u=na ade gilū?*
 whoever=DEM.N.PL SB=exist=DEM.N.SG here inside
 ‘Who else is in here?’ (149A020608; text)
- (3.189) *Maneri ke theome au ade ka geri tahi=de.*
 3PL PERF NEG exist here PREP beside sea=DEM.N.PL
 ‘They did not live here by these shores.’ (012A051207; text)
- (3.190) *Ke khave=na ade-hi Popoheo*
 PERF descend=3SG.AGR here-INTS PLN

ka kaisa thogha nheva gobi thilo-tutu nhablo eu
 PREP one thousand nine hundred sixty six be.thus.IRR
 ‘(They) came down here at Popoheo in 1966.’ (009A051207; text)
- (3.191) *Phau gogholi bla sare ba, tughu=ro?*
 head giant LIM there.PROX ALT son=DEM.NV.PL
 ‘Is that a giant’s head over there, my sons?’ (150A020608; text)
- (3.192) *Guguha ne mhogo.*
 PN REAL snake

Me haghe=nga klisa neu Guguha sara fai Kia [...].
 INCPT ascend=IMM leave be.thus.REAL PN there.DIST side PLN
 ‘Guguha was a snake. Guguha went up and left the Kia area over there [...].’
 (1012A051207; text)
- (3.193) *Zaho sara raru ka vido mane Maringe.*
 go there.DIST seawards PREP land man PLN
 ‘[We] went over there seawards to the land of the Maringe people.’
 (031A140108; text)
- (3.194) *Sara-hi Kologhodu neu Ghonai eu.*
 here-INTS PLN and PLN be.thus.IRR
 ‘Right there at Kologhodu and Ghonai.’ (050A240208; text)

The spatial deictic locatives can take different locative modifiers, such as place names (3.187), (3.190), (3.194), intrinsic local nouns (3.188), absolute local nouns (3.193), NPs indicating a relative location (3.192) and PPs denoting a location (3.189), (3.193). In addition, they can be marked by the intensifying suffix *-hi* (3.190), (3.194). The adverbial phrase headed by such locatives is formalised in 3.2.3.

3.1.10.2 Temporal locatives

The subclass of temporal locatives consists of seven members distinguished by degrees of proximity on the temporal axis, relative to the moment and day of speaking.

<i>tifaro</i>	<i>narihao</i>	<i>hnorao</i>	<i>ghoino(de)</i>	<i>ghinai</i>	<i>nathuu</i>	<i>nariha</i>
distant	day before	yesterday	today	today	tomorrow	day after
past	yesterday		(realis)	(irrealis)		tomorrow

Note that the form *ghinai* most frequently functions as a future tense particle within the verb complex. Outside the verb complex, *ghinai* is one of the two forms used to refer to the day of speaking along with *ghoinode*, some times shortened to *ghoino*, the distinction between them corresponding to the realis-irrealis distinction. The form *ghoinode* is normally used for a period during the day of speaking that precedes and includes the moment of speaking or can focus on the moment of speaking (3.195). In addition, it can refer to a very near future (3.196). In such cases it can co-occur with the future tense marker *ghinai* (3.197). Finally, *ghoinode* can have a more general meaning, that of ‘nowadays’ as opposed to a past period of time (3.198).

(3.195) Ara pukuni krabe no-gu ghoinode.
 1SG really hungry POSS.GEN-1SG.P today.REAL
 ‘I have been very hungry today’/‘I am very hungry now.’ (149A020608; text)

(3.196) Ta=na ara ghoinode ke fa age maikrofon ka agho eu.
 SB=DEM.N.SG 1SG now PERF cs come microphone PREP 2SG be.thus.IRR
 ‘And now, I am passing the microphone to you.’ (025A130108; text)

(3.197) Ara ghoinode=na ghinai turi=ni uu khou Tihitubu
 1SG today.REAL=DEM.N.SG FUT narrate=3SG.AGR HES water PLN
 ‘Now I am going to tell the story of the Tihitubu River’. (016A101207; text)

(3.198) Ghoinode=na eu ghai la theome la ghu=di
 today.REAL=DEM.N.SG be.thus.IRR 1PL.INCL go NEG PART make=3PL.AGR
 uu thomoko, bibina, gogopi ta=u are eu.
 HES canoe.type canoe.type, canoe.type SB=exist DEM.N.PL be.thus.IRR
 ‘Nowadays, we no longer make *thomoko*, *bibina* or *gogopi*.’ (15A071207; text)

The temporal locative *ghinai*, denotes a period of time after the moment of speaking but within the day of speaking.

(3.199) Ghinai=na Pita ne hahaghe ka no-na hore=na.
 today.IRR PN REAL climb.into PREP POSS.GEN-3SG.P canoe=DEM.N.SG
 ‘Later today Peter will board his canoe.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

The forms used for periods before the day of speaking appear to be frozen derivations with the non-visible demonstrative *-o/-ro* (3.1.4), coding the temporal location as irrealis, a strategy similar to that used with the locative interrogative pronoun *nihao* ‘when.REAL’ as opposed to *nihana* ‘when.IRR’ (3.1.3.5). *Tifaro* usually refers to a period in the distant past.

(3.200) Tifaro=na ke theo khou ka vido ta=u=ne.
 time.before=DEM.N.SG PERF NEG water PREP land SB=exist=DEM.R.SG
 ‘In the past there was no water in that land.’ (016A101207; text)

As adverbs, temporal deictic locatives cannot be modified but, optionally, all the forms above can be nominalised by means of a demonstrative (3.197)-(3.200).

3.1.11 Intensifying suffix *-hi*

An intensifying suffix exists in Blanga and it marks only deictic words. It thus attaches to all three spatial locatives mentioned in 3.1.10.1, to all but the non-visible forms of the demonstratives discussed in 3.1.4 and to the first and second, but not the third, persons of the personal pronouns, which are introduced in 3.1.3.1. Its use is illustrated throughout this chapter in examples such as (3.2), (3.68) and (3.170). When used with a personal pronoun, it has a meaning similar to that of *-self* in the English *myself* or *yourself*. When suffixed to spatial locatives, it can be compared with *over* in *over here*, *over there*. Finally, when attached to a demonstrative, it is close to *one* in *this one* or *that one*.

3.1.12 Particles

The word *particle* is used here as an umbrella term for all function words that do not fit within any of the other eight function classes postulated in 3.1. Particles are ‘short’ words, mostly mono-syllabic, sometimes disyllabic and rarely trisyllabic. What they have in common is that they cannot function as heads of phrases. Not all the particles in the language are discussed in this section. For instance, most TAM particles are discussed in different sections in 3.4.

3.1.12.1 Reciprocal particle *fari*

In 3.1.3.4 we saw that reflexive forms can also express reciprocity. In addition, Blanga has a reciprocal particle *fari*, which functions at content word level and immediately precedes the marked constituent, which is most of the time a verb.

(3.201) Mane are e fari totogho ka ta fringhe ka nhagare=na.
 Man DEM.N.PL HAB REC help PREP SB work PREP garden=DEM.N.SG
 ‘This people help each other in the garden.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

Less frequently, *fari* can mark a noun, including the local noun *hotai* ‘middle’. The whole construction *fari hotai* can be glossed as ‘in between’ (3.1.2.1.3).

3.1.12.2 Initiality particle *fea*

The initiality particle *fea* follows a verb and indicates that the event or state denoted by it occurs or must occur prior to any other event, mentioned or not. In the example below, the speaker points out that he needs to pee before being able to talk.

- (3.202) Ooe=ni s=agho! Ara zaho sprei fea. Uve?
talk=3SG.AGR FOC=2SG 1SG go pee INIT yes
'You say it! I'll go and pee first of all. OK?' (054A260208; text)

The particle *fea* can occur in conjunction with the sequencing particle *ghe* or the verb *kulu* 'be.first'.

- (3.203) Ara [...] mala thuru fea la au si=ghe, me dofra haghe [...].
1SG PURP sleep INIT go stay foc=SEQ INCPT wake.up ascend
'I [...] slept first, then woke up and went [...].' (054A260208; text)

- (3.204) Mane ihei [ne manahaghi no-na hmola],
man whoever REAL want POSS-3SG.P canoe

manei ghinei ke kulu zaho fea ka hmata=re.
3SG FUT PERF be.first go INIT PREP bush=DEM.N.PL
'Whoever wants a canoe of his own will, first of all, go to the bush.'
(015A071207; text)

3.1.12.3 Immediacy/saliency particle *nga*

The particle *nga* follows the marked constituent, conferring it a sense of immediacy relative to another event or to the moment of speaking. In the first example below, *nga* is meant to suggest that the snake died on the spot, the moment it was hit by the rock. In the next example, the conditional meaning captured in the translation is due to the particle *nga* inducing a sense of 'the very moment'. The third example shows that the conditional meaning extends to situations where a translation like 'the moment somebody else stays, I'll stay' may sound too far fetched.

- (3.205) Ani, la hota la manei kaisa gahima,
then go take PART 3SG one stone

la fafada=ni=na manei hmogo=na neu.
go shoot=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG 3SG snake=DEM.N.SG be.thus.REAL

Ani lehe=nga hmogo=na neu.
then die=IMM snake=DEM.N.SG be.thus.REAL
'Then he took a stone and threw it at the snake. The snake died.'
(090A120408; elicitation)

(3.206) Ne zaho=nga keha mane balu=gu=na ara,
 REAL go=IMM some man ASSC=1SG.P=DEM.N.SG 1SG
 ara-hi ne zaho la bla eu.
 1SG-INTS REAL go PART LIM be.thus.IRR
 ‘If somebody else goes with me, I shall go too.’ Lit. ‘The moment somebody
 else goes, I’ll go.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(3.207) Ne au=nga neu keha mane thamo=gu=na ara,
 REAL stay=IMM and some man brother=1SG.P=DEM.N.SG 1SG
 ara-hi ne au la bla eu.
 1SG-INTS REAL stay PART LIM be.thus.IRR
 ‘If any of my brothers stays, I shall stay too.’ (051A240208; elicitation)
 Cf. ‘The moment I know that any of my brothers stays, I shall stay too.’

The particle *nga* is also stylistically used in formulaic openings of traditional tales, having the effect of bringing the audience closer to the time of the events in the narrative.

(3.208) Au=nga, ne au thilo tharakna=de.
 exist=IMM REAL exist three family=DEM.R.PL
 ‘Once upon a time there was this family of three.’ (149A020608; text)

With a similar effect, *nga* often occurs in quotative expressions.

(3.209) “Ara-hi ghine seha fate ka gazu ana eu [...],”
 1SG-INTS FUT climb on.top PREP tree DEM.N.SG be.thus.IRR
 neu ana=nga mane keha manekai ikia=ne.
 be.thus.IRR DEM.N.SG=IMM man other brother be.small=DEM.R.SG
 “I shall climb on top of that tree [...],” said the other young brother.
 (150A020608; text)

Frequently, the particle *nga* occurs together with the focus particle *si* in a focused construction.

(3.210) Tore, sua=si=nga ide-hi?
 INTERJ child=FOC=IMM DEM.R.PL-INTS
 ‘What on earth! Can these really be children?’ (150A020608; text)

(3.211) No-na hore bibina=na manei theome ikia=na,
 POSS.GEN-3SG.P canoe canoe.type=DEM.N.SG 3SG NEG be.small=DEM.N.SG
 dou si=nga=ne=ia.
 be.big FOC=IMM=DEM.N.SG=PART
 ‘His *bibina* canoe is not small, it’s quite big.’ (097AV040508; text)

In negative clauses, the event is marked as not happening still or anymore.

- (3.212) Theome lase=nau=nga bla la si ba maneri ia?
 NEG know=1SG.AGR=IMM LIM PART FOC ALT 3PL PART
 ‘Don’t they know me anymore?’ (150A020608; text)

When marking arguments, not the predicate, the sense induced by *nga* is more one of saliency, rather than immediacy.

- (3.213) Ara=nga ghinai zaho ikha no-gu eu=si=ia
 1SG=IMM FUT GO bathe POSS.GEN-1SG.P be.thus.IRR=FOC=PART
 ‘I am going to bathe.’ (149A020608; text)

- (3.214) Ara=nga, ghoi?
 1SG=IMM voc
 ‘What about me, man?’ (FN2:10; elicitation)

3.1.12.4 Causative particle *fa*

The particle *fa* functions at predicate level. It precedes monovalent verbs and adds a causative component to their meaning, thus increasing their valency: *age* ‘go’ → *fa age* ‘take (theme, goal)’, *elo* ‘float away’/‘drift’ → *fa elo* ‘cause to float away’, *sikolu* ‘study’ → *fa sikolu* ‘teach’.

- (3.215) Zon=na ne fa age gausa ka Pita.
 John=DEM.N.SG REAL CS go betelnut PREP PN
 ‘John gave/took betelnut to Peter.’ (043A160208; elicitation)
- (3.216) Fa elo=ni neu manei thini=na au ka khou ana.
 CS drift=3SG.AGR be.thus.REAL 3SG body=3SG.P exist PREP river DEM.N.SG
 ‘He thus let the (giant’s) body float away with the river.’ (149A020608; text)
- (3.217) Ara fa sikolu=di maneri ka Pijini neu Blanga.
 1SG CS study=3NSG.AGR 3PL PREP Pijin and Blanga
 ‘I teach them in Pijin and Blanga.’ (063A270208; elicitation)

Sometimes, the causativised verb is reduplicated. It appears that the additional reduplication distinguishes causative accomplishments from other causative *Aktionsart* types, since causative accomplishments introduce a logical operator BECOME in addition to the general causative operator CAUSE (4.3.3.4). Further research is necessary to establish that as a fact.

lehe ‘die’/‘be.dead’ → *fa lelehe* ‘kill’/‘cause to become dead’

krango ‘be.dry’ → *fakakrango* ‘dry’/‘cause to become dry’

A causative construction achieves an adverbial meaning when it follows and modifies another verb.

- (3.218) Tanhi manei, tanhi fa dou eu.
 cry 3SG cry CS be.big be.thus.IRR
 ‘S/he cries, s/he cries loudly.’ (054A260208; text)
- (3.219) Mane gaghase=na ne uu hmaghu fa hnau=ni
 SPEC girl=DEM.N.SG REAL HES be.afraid CS be.good=3SG.AGR
 ‘The girl is very afraid.’ (108A240408 ; elicitation)
- (3.220) Mane Maekoli=na manei=na zaho fa ghose la.
 SPEC PN=DEM.N.SG 3SG=DEM.N.SG go CS be.quick PART
 ‘Michael travels quickly.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

The example below shows that *fa* should indeed be considered an unbound particle that optionally (and frequently) cliticises in current speech, rather than a prefix. If the latter were true, the lexicalised hesitation marker *uu* would not be allowed to occur between the particle and the verb.

- (3.221) Nute ke fa uu grofo=ni=na khoilo=na.
 Wind PERF CS HES collapse=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG coconut=DEM.N.SG
 ‘The wind knocked down the coconut tree.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

Causativisation and the causative particle *fa* will be further discussed in 4.4.3.4 and 4.4.7.2.

3.1.12.5 Clause sequencing particle *ghe/aghe*.

The form *ghe/aghe* functions as a coordinating conjunction at phrase level. At clause level, it functions as a sequencing particle. Either *ghe* or *aghe* can occur in sentence-initial position to show that the event in the marked clause follows chronologically the event in a preceding or following clause.

- (3.222) Ke khave=na ade-hi Popoheo
 PERF descend=DEM.N.SG here-INTS PLN

 ka kaisa thogha nheva gobi thilotutu nhablo eu.
 PREP one thousand nine hundred sixty six be.thus.IRR

 Ghe me au nga ghai ade Popopoheo.
 SEQ INCPT stay IMM 1PL.EXCL here PLN
 ‘(We) came down here at Popoheo in 1966. Then we started to settled here.’
 (009A051207; text)

(3.223) Aro ghai mane pukuni Blanga=re.
 DEM.T.PL 1PL.EXCL man really PLN=DEM.N.PL

Aghe phea-thilo au ta au khave=re Hovukoilo [...].
 SEQ two-three exist SB stay descend=DEM.N.PL PLN
 ‘These are (the villages) where we, the real Blanga people, live. Then there are a few others who went down to live in Hovukoilo.’ (009A051207; text)

(3.224) Maneri, aghe me au=nga Kilokaka ta=u=na,
 3PL SEQ INCPT stay=IMM PLN SB=EXIST=DEM.N.SG

maneri ne-ke zifla mai=di Zazao.
 3PL REAL-PERF exit come=3NSG.AGR PLN
 ‘Before the settled at Kilokaka, they left Zazao.’ (009A051207; text)

The form *ghe*, but not *aghe*, can also occur clause-finally, indicating that the event in the marked clause precedes the event in the following clause.

(3.225) Ghetilo ne zaho ka phau khou=na Kolovose si=ghe,
 1.TR.EXCL REAL go PREP head river=DEM.N.SG PLN FOC=SEQ

figri fai khave.
 turn side descend
 ‘We went up to the source of the Kolovose River, then turn and went down the slope.’ (025A130108; text)

Quite often, *ghe* and *aghe* co-occur, the former in final position in a clause and the latter in initial position in the following clause.

(3.226) La hnigho ta=u ana si=ghe,
 PART finish SB=exist DEM.N.SG FOC=SEQ

aghe me famamhaku=nga manei gaho are.
 SEQ INCPT secure=IMM 3SG roof.pole DEM.N.PL
 ‘After he finishes all those, he will start to secure the roof poles.’
 (013A071207; text)

3.1.12.6 The subordinating particle *ta*

The only subordinating particle in Blanga, *ta*, introduces any kind of subordinated clause, marking the situation as irrealis. Realis subordinated clauses are realised without a subordinator. Subordination is discussed in 5.3.2.

3.1.12.7 Purposive particle *mala*

A purposive particle *mala* also exists in the language and it occurs as a precore modifier in the verb complex (3.4.2) when purposive subordinate clauses are introduced. Purposive subordinate clauses are discussed in 5.3.2.6.

(3.227) Jon=na ke mai ka nanau=na
 PN=DEM.N.SG PERF come PREP village=DEM.N.SG

mala e-ke ngau ghe-na malangau=re ke eu.
 PURP IRR-PERF eat POSS.CONVS-3SG.P food=DEM.N.PL PERF be.thus.IRR
 ‘John came home to eat his food.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(3.228) Nakhete ne bla au
 rain REAL LIM exist

ta mala faghura=di=re nhagrui=re.
 SB PURP make.grow=3NSG.AGR=DEM.N.PL garden=DEM.N.PL
 ‘The rain exists to make the gardens grow.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

The particle can also occur as a prenuclear modifier within the verb complex core.

(3.229) Ara mala sele hmari.
 1SG PUPR sell fish
 ‘I sell fish.’ (084A030408; text)

The reason why I am mentioning this particle here rather than in the section about the verb complex is that there are two situations when *mala* is clearly not part of any verb complex. One is a special possessive construction that is used when items intended or meant to be consumed are mentioned, in which *mala* precedes the consumable possessive base indexed accordingly and followed by the possessor, while the possessed is retrievable from the previous context.

(3.230) Jon ke ghu age keha gausa ka Pita
 PN PERF make go some betelnut PREP PN

mala ghe-di goro sua.
 PURP POSS.CONVS-3NSG.P all child
 ‘John is giving betelnut to Peter for the children(’s consumption).’
 (051A240208; elicitation).

Secondly, the particle can be nominalised, in which case it behaves like the associative and contextualising nouns. Below, *mala* is directly indexed for a possessor.

(3.231) Jon=na ne fa uu age gausa=re ka Pita
 John=DEM.N.SG REAL CS HES go betelnut=DEM.N.PL PREP PN

mala=di goro sua=re.
 PURP=3NSG.P all child
 ‘John gave betelnut to Peter for all the children.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

3.1.12.8 Alternative particle *ba*

The particle *ba* marks constituents at different levels as alternative possibilities. In the examples below, it resembles a conjunction. This is due to the fact that when only two alternatives are given, one is usually left unmarked.

(3.232) [...] ara, mane ta ooe ta au ao, chief ba datau Nason Haidu.
 1SG man SB talk SB exist DEM.T.SG chief ALT chief PN
 ‘[...] I, the man who talked about this, chief or *datau* Nason Haidu.’
 (008A051207; text)

(3.233) Pita=ne huhu agho-hi: “Ne mai ba theo?”
 PN=DEM.R.SG ask 2SG-INTS REAL come ALT no
 ‘Peter asked you: “Are you coming or not?” (051A240208; elicitation).

(3.234) [...] ghai, mane datau ta=u=na ke giludi
 1PL.EXCL man chief SB=exist=DEM.N.SG PREP inside=3PL.P

 no-mai momolu=ne ba ta au ka nanau=ne.
 POSS.GEN=3NSG.EXCL.P island.DEM.R.SG ALT SB exist PREP village=DEM.R.SG
 ‘[...] us, the chiefs on the island or the village chiefs.’ (008A051207; text)

However, examples where more than two alternatives are possible clearly show that we are not dealing with a conjunction since the particle can mark every single alternative, when postponed to the constituent it marks, or all but the first, when preposed.

(3.235) Ara-hi=nga memeha ba ne flalo, bosu ba ne ghasa,
 1.SG-INTS=IMM bird ALT REAL fly pig ALT REAL jump

 Hmogo ba ne sosoro?
 snake ALT REAL coil
 ‘Am I a bird that flies, or a pig that jumps, or a snake that coils up?’
 (149A020608; text)

(3.236) Fufunu=di hae? Fufunu=di fona? Ba fufunu=di paka? [...].
 start=3NSG.P where start=3NSG.P windward ALT start=3NSG.P leeward

 Ba fufunu=di ade Daevo?
 ALT start=3NSG.P here PLN
 ‘Where does it start? Does it start windward, does it start leeward, or does it start here, at Daevo?’ (148A020608; text)

Many times, only one possible alternative is overtly expressed.

(3.237) Mela Pita ke voli ba eu no-na hore=na.
 PSSB PN PERF buy ALT be.thus.IRR POSS.GEN-3SG.P canoe=DEM.N.SG
 ‘Peter may buy his canoe (or not).’ (051A240208; elicitation).

(3.238) Pita=na ba ghe ragi la bla.
 PN=DEM.N.SG ALT make dance PART LIM
 ‘Peter, in his turn, is dancing too.’ (051A240208; elicitation).

This is especially the case in questions. Example (3.239) is a yes/no question. Moreover, focused questions may offer an unlimited or unspecified number of alternatives, like in (3.240) and (3.241), while an interrogative proform can be omitted as in (3.242)

(3.239) Ke voli si=ba Pita no-na hore ana=ia?
 PERF buy FOC=ALT PN POSS.GEN-3SG.P canoe DEM.N.SG=PART
 ‘Did Peter buy his canoe?’ (051A240208; elicitation).

(3.240) No-na hore hei si=ba
 POSS.GEN-3SG.P canoe who FOC=ALT

ke zaho=no Jon ta ana ia?
 PERF go=DEM.NV.SG PN SB DEM.N.SG PART
 ‘Whose canoe did Peter board?’ (051A240208; elicitation).

(3.241) Mane hae si=ba, ghoi?
 man where FOC=ALT VOC
 ‘Where is he, man?’ (025A130108; text)

(3.242) No-u ooe=na ba?
 POSS.GEN-2SG.P talk=DEM.N.SG ALT
 ‘What is your language?’ (186A151109; elicitation)

Alternatives are also presented as corrections or rephrasing, as in (3.243), or are considered as a possibility when confirmation of a statement is requested in a tag question as in (3.244).

(3.243) “Ara ke doli ka finogha... ka Diseba ba.”
 1SG PERF be.alive PREP year PREP December ALT

“Finogha...?”
 year

“Nineteen eighty-three ba.”
 1983 ALT

“I was born in the year... I mean in December.”

“What year...?”

“I mean 1983.” (069A270208; elicitation)

(3.244) Glima bia au ka giluna karao=re, ba Trevor?
 five cassava exist PREP inside=3SG.P basket=DEM.N.PL ALT PN
 ‘There are five cassavas in these baskets, aren’t they, Trevor?’
 (061A270208; elicitation)

3.1.12.9 Contrastive particle *bo*

Constituents marked with the particle *bo* are contrasted with other constituents at the same level. Like the alternative particle, the contrastive particle can function at differed levels but, unlike the former, it can only be postposed to the marked constituent.

(3.245) Pita ke ooe=na:
PN PERF talk=DEM.N.SG

“Ghinei mai bo eu, theo eu agho ke eu?”
FUT come CNT be.thus.IRR no be.thus.IRR 2SG PERF be.thus.IRR
‘Peter said: “Are you coming or not?”’ (043A160208; elicitation)

In the example above, both contrasted situations are overtly expressed in the same sentence. However, that is not compulsory and most of the time the opposite is retrievable either from common cultural knowledge or from the larger context, or both. In (3.246) the Hograno side of Isabel Island is contrasted with the opposite Maringe side, which had been mentioned earlier in the discourse but whose existence is already known to everybody on the island. In (3.247), the suggestions in each line of the dialogue are contrasted with each other. Example (3.248) is a continuation of the previous dialogue, in which the giant has finally decided to climb up a tree, rather than wait for his human pray to come down.

(3.246) Kaha vido ta Blanga=re au la bla bo fai Hograno.
other land SB PLN=DEM.N.PL exist PART LIM CNT side PLN
‘Another Blanga area is on the Hograno side.’ (009A051207; text)

(3.247) Agho bo ta haghe=na,
2SG CNT SB ascend=DEM.N.SG

neu ana=nga mane sua=ne.
be.thus.REAL DEM.N.SG=IMM SPEC child=DEM.R.SG

Theo, agho bo ta khave=na.
no 2SG CNT SB descend=DEM.N.SG
“You come up”, said the child.
“No, you come down!” (149A020608; text)

(3.248) Haghe la bo mane gogholi=ne, ne haghe, ne haghe=na.
Ascend PART CNT SPEC giant=DEM.R.SG REAL ascend REAL ascend=DEM.N.SG
‘Up went the giant and up, and up.’ (149A020608; text)

More often than not, the scope and function of the contrastive particle *bo* almost overlaps with those of the alternative particle *ba*. Compare (3.249) below with (3.238) above, paying attention to the free translations.

- (3.249) Maikol=na manei manahaghi ke ragi=na bo.
 PN=DEM.N.SG 3SG want PERF dance=DEM.N.SG CNT
 ‘Michael, on the other hand, wants to dance.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

What clearly differentiates them is that the alternatives introduced by *ba* do not necessarily exclude each other, while *bo* strictly presents opposites. Like the immediacy/saliency particle *nga*, the contrastive particle *bo* occurs in formulaic expressions in traditional tales.

- (3.250) Au nga ne au phea talaghi=de.
 exist IMM REAL exist two couple=DEM.R.PL

Au la bo repea, grui gare, bana suga.
 exist PART CNT 3DL plant garden erect house
 ‘Once upon a time there was a couple. They planted a garden, built a house.’
 (121A040508; text)

3.1.12.10 Possibilitative particles *mela* and *baiu*

The particle *mela* precedes constituents and marks them as possible or probable. By extension, possibilitative marking is one of the means of expressing one’s opinions.

- (3.251) Pita=na mela ke hahaghe
 PN=DEM.N.SG PSSB PERF climb.up

ka no-na hmola=na ba eu.
 PREP POSS.GEN-3SG.P canoe=DEM.N.SG ALT be.thus.IRR
 ‘Peter may board his canoe.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

- (3.252) Pita=na mela pukuni theome doglo ka gaghato=na=re.
 PN=DEM.N.SG PSSB really NEG be.straight PREP mind=3SG.P=DEM.N.PL
 ‘I think Peter is completely mad.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

A particle *baiu* with a similar function also occurs in the language and follows the marked constituent. This particle seems to occur very seldom in the language and is poorly attested in my corpus. When it does occur, it is postposed to a constituent already marked by *mela*.

- (3.253) [...] keha glepo la bla mela ke eu ade-hi tuani baiu [...].
 other thing PART LIM PSSB PERF be.thus.IRR here-INTS be.true possibly
 ‘[...] (and) another thing as well that may possible be true [...].’
 (052A240108; text)

3.1.12.11 Limiter particle *bla*

The particle *bla* indicates that there can be no alternative or addition to the entity, state or event denoted by the marked constituent, which must always be overtly expressed.

Depending on the context, its function and meaning can be captured by English terms such as ‘only’, ‘just’ and ‘simply’ or by intonation alone. It is postposed and can mark different constituents at different levels. In the examples below it marks a patient-like NP that has been incorporated by the verb, a verb modifying another verb, predicates, arguments, subordinate clauses and full sentences.

- (3.254) Maneri ngau nufi mata bla.
 3PL eat taro be.wild LIM
 ‘They ate only wild taro.’ (12A051207; text)
- (3.255) La hmaghu la si maneri=ia? Ui, theo! Keli bla au.
 go be.afraid PART FOC 3PL=PART INTERJ no be.good LIM stay
 ‘Are they getting afraid? No way! They’re just fine.’ (150A020608; text)
- (3.256) No-na ido=na manei
 POSS.GEN-3SG.P mother=DEM.N.SG 3SG

 au bla au ka nanau=ro.
 stay LIM stay PREP village=DEM.NV.PL
 ‘His mother is simply staying at home.’ (043A160208; elicitation)
- (3.257) Thodo no-na bla=si mane sua=o=ia.
 be.lazy POSS.GEN-3SG.P LIM=FOC SPEC child=DEM.NV.SG=PART
 ‘The boy just can’t be bothered.’ (150A020608; text)
- (3.258) Ana bla=si gogholi ke ooe=ni=o ghopea ba?
 DEM.N.SG LIM=FOC giant PERF talk=3SG.AGR=DEM.NV.SG 2DL ALT
 ‘Is THIS the giant you told (me) about?’ (150A020608; text)
- (3.259) Mane kokholo Kusa=ne bla ke kulu mai au=na
 man lineage barracuda=DEM.R.SG LIM PERF be.first come exist=DEM.N.SG

 ka khuti=di aro.
 PREP territory DEM.NV.PL
 ‘The Baracuda people alone were the first on this land of theirs.’
 (185A151109; text)
- (3.260) Magret=na theome manahaghi=ni
 PN=DEM.N.SG NEG want=3SG.AGR
 ‘Margret does not want (to do) that particular thing, which is dancing.’
 (043A160208; elicitation)
- (3.261) Magret=na theome manahaghi ragi eu bla.
 pn=dem.n.sg neg want dance be.thus.irr lim

 ta=u=na bla ta ragi=na.
 SB=exist=DEM.N.SG LIM SB dance=DEM.N.SG
 ‘Margret doesn’t want to dance, that’s just the way it is/full stop!’
 (043A160208; elicitation)

In addition, the limiter is frequently used in conjunction with *theo* ‘no’, giving the form *theo bla*, which either means something like ‘nomore’, ‘not any more’ or strengthens the negation as in ‘definitely not’.

3.1.12.12 Appellative vocative particle *ghoi/noghoi*

The appellative vocative particle *ghoi/noghoi* is a discourse-level particle that occurs very frequently in all genres, in declarative and interrogative clauses and is meant to keep the listener’s attention focused on what the speaker is saying. It is usually, but not compulsorily, preceded by *ta=na* ‘SB=DEM.N.SG’ a recapping subordinate clause that seems to be on its way to grammaticalisation as a temporal marker. Throughout this chapter, the particle is illustrated, among others, in (3.63), (3.124), (3.298) and (3.383). Most of the time, the particle occurs at some clause boundary. However, it does not mark a clause boundary, since it can occur virtually anywhere else, as (3.274) shows.

3.1.12.13 Appellative imperative constructions

In imperatives, the second person pronouns can occur as appellative particles, usually in combination with a focus particle *si*, cliticised as *s=* in the case of the 2SG pronoun, which starts with a vowel. Neither the pronoun nor the focus particle is compulsory but the use of the pronoun without the particle is considered impolite by the consultants and the situation very seldom occurs in practice. In the dialogue below, a giant tries to persuade a child to get down from a tree so the former can eat the latter. The child refuses and challenges the giant to climb up the tree and catch him. The first line starts with an imperative clause consisting only of the predicate. Since no pronoun is present, no politeness convention is broken. The second person singular pronoun *agho* is the subject of the next clause. In the second and third lines, the politeness conventions are observed, no matter that the dialogue takes place between two enemies.

(3.262) “Khavē mai! Agho mala ghe-gu ara, mala ke fai grafi”
 descend come 2SG PURP POSS.CONNS-1SG.P 1SG PURP PREP side evening

“Ui, haghe s=agho! ara theome manahaghi=ni ta khavē=na”.
 INTRJ ascend FOC=2SG 1SG NEG want=3SG.AGR SB descend=DEM.N.SG

“Theo! Khavē mai s=agho!”

no descend come FOC=2SG

“Get down! You are my dinner.”

“Oh, you come up here! I don’t want to get down.”

“No! You come down!” (150A020608; text)

3.1.12.14 Hesitation particles

Blanga has two lexicalised hesitation particles: *uu* and *ii*. They are used to fill in a pause necessary to the speaker to gather their thoughts, thus anticipating the constituent about to follow, which is most of the time a word or phrase but can also be a larger constituent, such a subordinate clause.

(3.263) Ghai sare=na zaho fringhe uu suga.
1PL.EXCL there.PROX=DEM.N.SG go work HES house
'We go there to build er houses.' (246A241109; text)

(3.264) Zaho fai suga ii Ugura=re.
go area house HES PN=DEM.N.PL
'Going/pointing towards er Ugura's house.' (079AV270408; elicitation)

Their origin is at this stage unclear. They may have originated in hesitation vowels but synchronically they are clearly disyllabic words, /u.u/ and /i.i/, and may surface with glottal epenthesis as [u.ʔu] and [i.ʔi] (see 2.1.7.2). A more tempting hypothesis can be formulated if one notices that *ii* is used mostly when personal names are expected and *uu* when common nouns are involved. The form *ii* may be historically derived from the Proto-Oceanic personal article **i*.

3.1.12.15 Focus particle

A discourse particle *si* has been identified, which participates in encoding focus in Blanga. This is illustrated in Chapter 7.

3.1.13 Prepositions

Only two real prepositions exist in Blanga, *ka* and *ke*. Both can function as heads of PPs denoting physical location and occurring either adnominally, as noun-modifying phrases, or adverbially. However, *ke* can only function as the head of a PP with a local noun as complement, as illustrated in 3.1.2.1.3, while *ka* has a much broader locative sense. The latter has a second adnominal use, that of identifying the possessor in a possessive construction, while adverbially it can take a range of complements, including NPs headed not only by local nouns but also by ordinary common nouns, personal names and pronouns, and also including verbs with incorporated nouns and subordinate clauses. All the above constructions and their semantics will be illustrated in 3.2.2.

3.1.14 Conjunctions

Two competing coordinating conjunctions occur in the language, *aghe/ghe* and *neu*.

- (3.265) “Mama **ghe** ido”, *neu* *ana=nga* *sua=ne*, [...] .
 father and mother be.thus. REAL DEM.N.SG=IMM child=DEM.R.SG
 ‘‘Father and mother’’, said the child,[...]’ (149A020608; text)
- (3.266) Ani plan phea-maneri eu, *mane* Wati **ghe** Koti sini.
 then plan 3DL be.thus.IRR SPEC PN and PN FOC
 ‘Then they made a plan, Wati and Koti.’ (025A130108; text)
- (3.267) Pita **aghe** no-na *mheke* phea-maneri=*ne* zaho mhata=*re*.
 PN and POSS.GEN dog 3DL=DEM.R.SG go bush=DEM.N.PL
 ‘Peter and his dog went to the bush.’ (043A160208; elicitation)
- (3.268) Jon **neu** keha *thamo=na=re* *la* funu ragi.
 PN and some brother=3SG.P=DEM.N.PL go start dance
 ‘John and some of his brothers started dancing.’ (051A240208; elicitation)
- (3.269) Ara fa sikolu=*di* *maneri* ka Pijini **neu** Blanga.
 1SG CS study=3NSG.AGR 3PL PREP Pijin and Blanga
 ‘I teach them in Pijin and Blanga.’ (063A270208; elicitation)
- (3.270) Sara-hi Kolohodu **neu** Ghonai eu.
 here-INTS PLN and PLN be.thus.IRR
 ‘Right there at Kolohodu and Ghonai.’ (050A240208; text)
- (3.271) Maneri e lase fada fa keli ka paloho **neu** khuali eu.
 3PL HAB know shoot CS be.good PREP bow and arrow be.thus.IRR
 ‘They can shoot very well with a bow and arrow.’ (051A240208; text)
- (3.272) Ghai *mane datau=re* *mala rereghi=di* *sua* nakoni
 1PL.EXCL man chief=DEM.N.PL PURP look.after=3NSG.AGR child person

neu no-mai *hmata*, no-mai *glose*,
 and POSS.GEN-1NSG.EXCL bush POSS.GEN-1NSG.EXCL land

neu no-mai *tahi* [...] .
 and POSS.GEN-1NSG.EXCL sea
 ‘We, the chiefs, are supposed to look after the people and our bush, our land and
 our sea [...]’ (008A051207; text)
- (3.273) Ara ghinei turi=*ni* *uheve* no-mai *nafringhe* ghai
 1SG FUT narrate=3SG.AGR what POSS.GEN-1NSG.EXCL work 3PL.EXCL

mane datau ke *gilu=na* *momolu* Bughotu=*ne*
 man chief PREP inside=3SG.P island PLN=DEM.R.SG

neu mane datau ke *gilu=na* *nanau*.
 and man chief PREP inside=3SG.P village
 ‘I am going to talk about our work as Isabel Island chiefs and/then as village
 chiefs.’ (008A051207; text)

Both *aghe/ghe* and *neu* seem to be restricted to word and phrase level, while coordination at clause level is done mainly by juxtaposition. On the other hand, both seem to represent specialised uses of forms or structures that denote sequential and/or cooccurrence situations at clause level. Thus, the forms *aghe* and *ghe* also occur as clause sequencing particles (3.1.12.5), while *neu* seems to be a grammaticalisation of the construction *ne=u* ‘REAL=be.thus’ in the case of cooccurrence or sequences of states or events. Further investigation is necessary in order to identify the stages of grammaticalisation. In (3.273) above, *neu* can be interpreted as both conjoining and sequential. More straightforward are the examples below. Both describe the same situation (some Blanga people used to live in Patunitu and some others in Riria during the same period). In the latter can *neu* be regarded as a conjunction, while in the former coordination is achieved by juxtaposition.

(3.274) Ke au=re mane Blanga=de neu Patunitu,
 PERF stay=DEM.N.PL man PLN=DEM.R.PL be.thus.REAL PLN

keha=na, ta=na ghoi, Riria.
 other=DEM.N.SG SB=DEM.N.SG VOC PLN
 ‘Those Blanga people lived, thus, at Patunitu, others, man, at Riria.’
 (12A051207; text)

(3.275) Maneri ke au Patunitu **neu** Riria.
 3PL PERF stay PLN and PLN
 ‘They lived at Patunitu and Riria.’ (12A051207; text)

Adversative coordination at clause level is done by means of the conjunction *nga*, which should not be confused with the formally identical immediacy or saliency marker, described in 3.1.12.3

(3.276) **Nga** tifaro=na ke mhola ke au=re,
but time.before=DEM.N.SG PERF canoe PERF exist=DEM.N.PL

ke thomoko, bibina, gogopi [...].
 PERF canoe.type canoe.type canoe.type

Nga ta hore=ne bo ta ghu=ni=na ghai
instead SB canoe=DEM.R.SG CNT SB make=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG SB

ta sage gazu thongana.
 SB carve wood all.over
 ‘**But** the types of canoe that existed back in the day were *thomoko*, *bibina* and *gogopi*. **Instead**, the canoe that we make, we dig it out of a single wood trunk.’
 (15A071207; text)

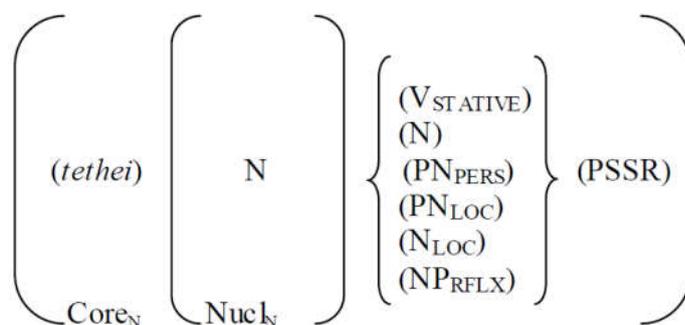
3.2 Phrase structure

3.2.1 NPs

NPs can function as arguments of a predicate, as predicates and as complements of prepositions in PPs. The head is the only compulsory constituent of a Blanga NP. Blanga noun phrases can be headed by nouns, including proper nouns, such as personal or location names, but also by personal pronouns, reflexives, demonstratives functioning pronominally, and numerals. A series of optional modifier positions are available either preceding or following the head, their nature and number depending on the word class or subclass to which the head belongs. The most important distinction that needs to be made here is that between NPs headed by ordinary common nouns, on the one hand, and all the other possible NP types on the other. NPs headed by ordinary common nouns require a layered representation, while all the other NP types are less complex and do not need postulation of layers.

3.2.1.1 NPs headed by ordinary common nouns

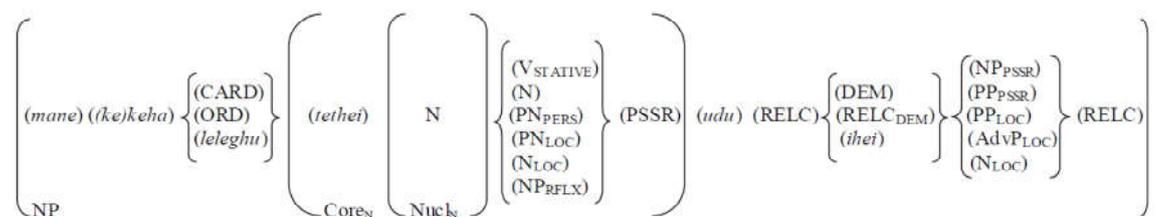
Structurally, NPs with an ordinary common noun as their head, abbreviated here simply as NP, represent the most complex type of Blanga noun phrase and it is possible to distinguish between a core layer and a periphery layer. The NP core consists of the head, which represents the nucleus, and those modifiers that modify the head directly. Its structure is schematically represented below.



One pre-head modifier position is available within the core and can only be filled in by the indefinite quantifier *tethei* ‘many’ (3.1.6.3). The immediate post-head position is filled by one of the modifiers representing quality operators (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997), which can be a descriptive stative verb (3.1.7), a noun, including local nouns and proper nouns (3.1.7), or a reflexive (3.1.3.4). A second post-head position inside the core is available to index the possessor when the NP in question is headed by the possessum of a direct possessive construction. This is the position reserved for nominal aspect operators (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997), which, among others, may facilitate

identification of noun classes. Blanga distinguishes between alienable possession, which is indirectly marked, and inalienable possession, which is directly marked. Indirect possession requires the postulation of a separate NP type, where two subclasses, alienable general and alienable consumable, are distinguished by means of noun classifiers. Direct possession, applicable to the inalienable class, is identified on the ordinary NP by means of possessor indexing.

Outside the core are a few positions available for quantity and locality operators (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997). These modify the whole core, rather than just the nucleus. Locality operators have scope over quantity operators and include definiteness and specificity markers, deictics, phrasal and clausal modifiers. Quantity operators include words usually classified as quantifiers, either specifying number (numerals) or referring to indefinite numbers or quantities (indefinite quantifiers). The structure of the full NP is given below.



Quantity operators occupy the positions adjacent to the core. To the left, there is a slot containing the cardinal numerals (3.1.6.1), the ordinal numerals (3.1.6.2) and the indefinite quantifier *leleghu* (3.1.6.3), while immediately right of the core is the slot reserved for the indefinite exhaustive marker *udu* (3.1.6.3), which also appears as a modifier in NPs with pronominal head, a position that justifies its being characterised as a quantifier denoting large non-specified quantity (3.2.1.4). There are two more pre-head modifier positions, one occupied by the indefinite adnominal *keha* ‘other’ or its reduplicated version *kekeha* ‘(some) other’ (3.1.3.2), and the other, the outermost, filled by the specific article *mane* (3.1.5), whose very specific nature excludes it from the core: only non-specific referents can participate in incorporation.

In the post-core domain, *udu* can be immediately followed by a reduced relative clause, the slot of which is, in turn, followed by a demonstrative (3.1.4), a reduced relative clause functioning as a demonstrative, or the indefinite adnominal *ihe* ‘whoever’ (3.1.3.2). The penultimate post-core position is occupied by location specifiers of mostly phrasal level, including possessors, which in Blanga are regarded as the location of the possessum. The specifiers can thus be a possessor NP (coreferenced on the core) or a possessor PP if the full NP represents a possessive construction.

Otherwise, they may refer to location proper, in which case they can be a locative PP, and adverbial phrase with a deictic locative head, or a local noun (3.1.2.1.3). Finally, the last post-core slot is filled by a full relative clause.

3.2.1.2 NPs headed by local nouns

Local nouns were discussed and illustrated in 3.1.2.1.3, which shows that they can occur both as adjuncts in their own right or as complements of the head in a PP. The examples therein suggest that an NP headed by a local noun can minimally consist of that local noun, optionally indexed by possessor agreement. An optional NP denoting the possessor can follow.

$$\left(\begin{array}{c} N_{\text{LOC}} \text{ (P) (NP}_{\text{PSSR}}) \\ \text{NP}_{\text{LOC}} \end{array} \right)$$

3.2.1.3 NPs headed by personal names

As illustrated in 3.1.2.2, personal names can be modified by the specific article *mane*, by a demonstrative or relative clause functioning as a demonstrative and by an NP. The structure of the NP_{PN} is shown below.

$$\left(\begin{array}{c} \text{(SPEC) PN} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{(DEM)} \\ \text{(RELC}_{\text{DEM}}) \end{array} \right\} \text{(NP)} \\ \text{NP}_{\text{PN}} \end{array} \right)$$

3.2.1.4 NPs headed by personal pronouns

Personal pronoun-headed NPs have the structure in the figure below. The pronoun head is followed by one single modifier position, in which one of the following can optionally occur: a cardinal numeral (3.1.6.1), the indefinite quantifier *udu* (3.1.6.3), a full NP (3.2.1.1), a proper noun name of person (3.1.2.2), or an adverbial phrase headed by a deictic spatial locative.

$$\left(\begin{array}{c} \text{PRO} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{(CARD)} \\ \text{(udu)} \\ \text{(NP)} \\ \text{(PN}_{\text{PERS}}) \\ \text{(AdvP}_{\text{DLOC}}) \end{array} \right\} \\ \text{NP}_{\text{PRO}} \end{array} \right)$$

One can notice that the post-head position of the numeral in an NP_{PRO} is opposed to its pre-head position in an NP headed by a common noun (3.282) below. In both cases, the cardinal modifier's obvious function is to specify the head numerically. As described in (3.1.3.1), personal pronouns distinguish between four number categories: singular, dual, trial (mostly functioning as paucal) and plural. Numeric specification of singular, dual and (real) trial pronominal heads would be redundant and, thus, never occurs. It also does not occur in the case of trial forms whose meaning is actually paucal. Paucals are non-specific by their nature and any numeric specification on a paucal would actually undermine this very nature. It is thus only numerals from 'four' up that appear in this position.

The 'exhaustive' function of the indefinite quantifier *udu* and its position among other modifiers can be better captured when it modifies a pronominal head than when it appears as a nominal core modifier. The gap that *udu* fills has to do with two main conceptual quantity distinctions: one between small and large quantity, and the other between specified and non-specified quantity. Combinations of these result in four categories, each of which is represented in Blanga:

1. *Small specified quantity*, including the categories that are intrinsically specified and thus do not need numeral modifiers: singular, dual and real trial;
2. *Small unspecified quantity*: trial functioning as paucal; or *phea-thilo* 'two or three';
3. *Large specified quantity*: needs numeral modifiers from 'four' up;
4. *Large unspecified quantity*: employs *udu* as a modifier.

In this perspective, *udu* is not only an 'exhaustive' marker but a real non-specific quantifier specialised in quantities regarded as relatively large. It should be noted that, like the numerals, *udu* cannot modify singular, dual and trial pronouns. The examples below come from an elicitation session, during which visual stimuli showing different numbers of people were used to prompt consultants to identify themselves as owners of a house. The NP_{PRO} thus appears embedded in a possessive construction.

(3.277) Ine suga=na ara
 DEM.R.SG house=DEM.N.SG 1SG
 'This is my house.' (006A011207; elicitation)

(3.278) Au suga=na ghepea.
 exist house=DEM.N.SG 1DL.EXCL
 'This is our house/the house of us two.' (006A011207; elicitation)

(3.279) Au suga=na ghitapea.
 exist house=DEM.N.SG 1DL.INCL
 'This is our house/the house of you and me.' (006A011207; elicitation)

- (3.280) Au suga=na ghetilo.
 exist house=DEM.N.SG 1TR.EXCL
 ‘This is our house/the house of us three/of us few.’ (006A011207; elicitation)
- (3.281) Au suga=na ghitatilo.
 exist house=DEM.N.SG 1TR.INCL
 ‘This is our house/the house of you two and me.’ (006A011207; elicitation)
- (3.282) Au suga=na ghai fati.
 exist house=DEM.N.SG 1PL.EXCL four
 ‘This is our house/the house of the four of us.’ (006A011207; elicitation)
- (3.283) Au suga=na ghai udu.
 exist house=DEM.N.SG 1PL.EXCL all
 ‘This is our house/the house of us all.’ (006A011207; elicitation)

The modifier position in an NP_{PRO} can also be filled by an ordinary NP of virtually any complexity, as the examples below show. Note that in (3.286) a trial pronoun is the head and it is modified by an NP consisting of head only, while in (3.287) a plural pronoun is modified by an NP consisting of a head modified by a numeral, the gloss being ‘family of four’. This is structurally different from (3.282), where the head is a plural pronoun modified by a numeral.

- (3.284) [...] ghai mane ke au=re tifaro.
 1.PL.EXCL man PERF exist=DEM.N.PL time.before
 ‘[...] us, the old-timers.’ (009A051207; text)
- (3.285) [...] ghai leleghu mane datau leleghu nanau [...]
 1.PL.EXCL every man chief every village
 ‘[...] us, every chief of every village [...]’ (008A051207; text)
- (3.286) Au suga=na ghetilo tharakna
 exist house=DEM.N.SG 1TR.EXCL family
 ‘It is the house of the family of us three/few.’ (006A011207; elicitation)
- (3.287) Au suga=na ghai fati tharakna
 exist house=DEM.N.SG 1PL.EXCL four family
 ‘It is the house of our family of four.’ (006A011207; elicitation)

In a similar way, a personal name can modify a pronoun but this is restricted to first and second person dual and trial pronouns. The modifier indicates that its referent is also part of the pronominal reference, while pronominal reference must include the speaker or addressee.

- (3.288) Ghepea Niha=na au meli sara Dengio.
 1.DL.EXCL PN=DEM.N.SG have copra.drier there PLN
 ‘Niha and I have a copra drier at Dengio.’ (092A130408; elicitation)

Such combinations of pronominal head and personal name modifier have been labelled “inclusory pronominals” (Lichtenberk 2000). Inclusory pronominals are common in Oceanic but it seems that the restrictions that apply to them differ from language to language. For instance, in Kubokota (also Northwest Solomonian) the construction appears to work with plural pronouns modified by numerals, in addition to dual and trial pronouns (Chambers 2009:62).

Finally, a pronoun head can be modified by a place name or an adverbial phrase with a deictic spatial locative head.

(3.289) ka ghau Kolosori

PREP 2.PL PLN

‘in your village in Kolosori’ (266A251109; elicitation)

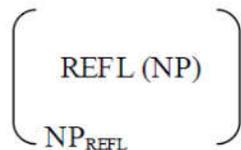
(3.290) ghau sare=na

PREP 2.PL=DEM.N.SG

‘you (in your village) over there’ (266A251109; elicitation)

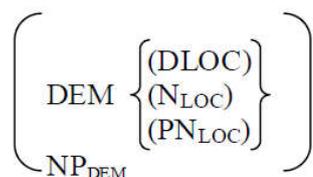
3.2.1.5 NPs headed by reflexives

Reflexives (3.1.3.4) infrequently appear as NP heads, optionally modified by an NP with either a nominal or a pronominal head. Such NPs are illustrated in (3.156) and (3.298). The structure of the NP_{REFL} is shown in the figure below.



3.2.1.6 NPs headed by demonstratives

Demonstratives used pronominally can constitute NP heads. Morphologically, such heads may consist of the demonstrative root alone or may include the intensifying suffix *-hi*. An NP_{DEM} consists of the head and an optional modifier position reserved for spatial locative forms, namely a deictic locative, a local noun (3.1.2.1.3) or a location name (3.1.2.2).



3.2.1.7 Possessive constructions and possessive NP

In section 3.2.1.1, it was shown that an ordinary NP can represent the possessum in a direct possessive construction, in which case the possessor must be co-referenced on its core, while an optional overt possessor NP can be imbedded at the periphery as a complement or specifier of the core.

In indirect possession, a noun classifier occurs in pre-core position and possessor indexing attaches to it, switching from a post-head core-internal position to a pre-core peripheral one. The complement possessor NP remains in the same position as in a direct construction.

If instead of being regarded as noun classifiers, the hosts of indirect possessor indexing are considered nominal heads (3.1.8), then a possessive NP can be postulated, consisting of a compulsory head identifying the possessum and modified by compulsory possessor indexing and an optional noun specifying the possessum. An optional position is also available for the possessor complement.

$$\left(\begin{array}{c} \text{N-PSSR (N}_{\text{PSSM}}) \text{ (N}_{\text{PSSR}}) \\ \text{NP}_{\text{POSS}} \end{array} \right)$$

3.2.2 PPs

In 3.1.13 we saw that, of the two prepositions present in Blanga, *ke* is restricted to functioning as the head of a PP with a local NP as complement, thus indicating physical location only. Such PPs can function as noun modifiers (3.291) or as locative adjuncts (3.292).

(3.291) mane datau ke giluna nanau
 man chief PREP inside=3SG.P village
 ‘the village chief’ (008A051207; text)

(3.292) Mane ine hnokro au ke giluna sugana.
 man DEM.R.SG. sit exist PREP inside=3SG.P house=DEM.N.SG
 ‘That man is sitting in the house.’ (005A011207; elicitation)

The structure of a PP headed by *ke* is restricted to the representation below. The structure of the NP_{LOC} is shown in 3.2.1.2.

$$\left(\begin{array}{c} \text{PREP NP}_{\text{LOC}} \\ \text{PP} \end{array} \right)$$

Like *ke* the preposition *ka* can take a local NP as complement (3.293) but it can also head an adnominal PP whose complement is the possessor of the modified noun (the

possessum) (3.294) as well as adverbial PPs with a broader range of complements. In addition to local nouns these complements can be headed by ordinary common nouns, personal names, personal pronouns and reflexives, and also include subordinate clauses and verbs with incorporated nouns, which appear to be nominalised as the location of the action or event.

(3.293) Tethei nakoni ta au=na ka giluna gluma neu.
 many person SB exist=DEM.N.SG PREP inside=3SG.P cave be.thus.REAL
 ‘There are many people in the cave.’ (149A020608; text)

(3.294) Ine gazu ka ara.
 DEM.R.SG stick PREP 1SG
 ‘This is my stick.’ (038A160208; elicitation)

(3.295) Maneri ke zaho ka nanau=na.
 3PL PERF go PREP village=DEM.N.SG
 ‘They went to the village.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

(3.296) [...], eu Edwini ka Ivoni.
 be.thus.IRR PN PREP PN
 ‘[...], thus spoke Edwin to Ivonne.’ (096A130408; elicitation)

(3.297) No-gu bosu=na ara ke age ka agho.
 POSS.GEN pig=DEM.N.SG 1SG PERF come PREP 2SG
 ‘My pig came to you.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(3.298) Nakodou=na eu ta=na ghoi,
 woman=DEM.N.SG be.thus.IRR SB=DEM.N.SG VOC

ghuna ke doli ana ka the-na,
 because PERF be.alive DEM.N.SG PREP REFL-3.SG.RF

ka thini=na=na, [...], theome manahaghi=ni bo manei
 PREP body=3SG.p=DEM.N.SG NEG want=3SG.AGR CNT 3SG

ta koko-i=ni ne=u=ia.
 SB throw-TRANS=3SG.AGR REAL=be.thus=PART

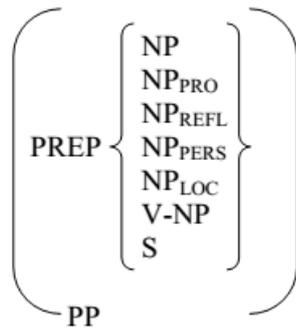
‘Now, the woman, because that (thing) was born of herself, of her (own) body, did not want to throw it away.’ (161A100608; text)

(3.299) La zaho hnokro=na la bla=u ka ta=u=na.
 go go sit=DEM.N.SG PART LIM=exist PREP SB=exist=DEM.N.SG
 ‘He got going and sat on that.’ (149A020608; text)

(3.300) Nakoni ne nunughe=re ka ta fogra=re.
 people REAL shiver=DEM.N.PL PREP SB be.ill=DEM.N.PL
 ‘The people were shivering because of being ill.’ (052A240108; text)

(3.301) Ara=hi frihnge ade Buala ka rereghi hmari.
 1.SG=INTS work here PLN PREP look.after fish
 ‘I work here in Buala at fish-keeping.’ (084A030408; text)

The structure of a PP headed by *ka* is represented below.



Most of the examples above illustrate types of physical location: static location (3.293), (3.301), goal (3.295), (3.296), (3.297), (3.299) and source (3.298). Other examples above and below illustrate location in a broader sense. Example (3.294) above shows location of the possessum at the possessor, while (3.302) below shows location of a thought on the thinker's mind. For the locative component in the semantics of possession, cognition and propositional attitude see 4.3.1.2. Languages can also be conceived of as locations (3.303). Temporal location is illustrated in (3.304).

(3.302) *ka gaghatho=gu=na ara=hi,*
 PREP mind=1SG.P= DEM.N.SG 1SG=INTS
 'in my opinion'/'I think (that)'/ 'what I have in mind is...'
 (048A230208-00; elicitation)

(3.303) *Ara fa sikolu=di maneri ka Pijini neu Blanga.*
 1SG CS study=3NSG.AGR 3PL PREP Pijin and Blanga
 'I teach them in Pijin and Blanga.' (063A270208; elicitation)

(3.304) *Agho ka sua=mu=na ke au hae?*
 2SG PREP child=2NSG.P=DEM.N.SG PERF exist where
 'Where did you live when you were a child?' (107A230408; elicitation)

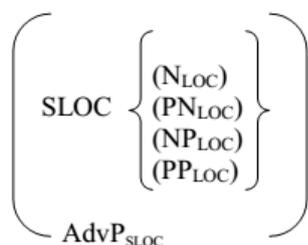
Predicate semantics in conjunction with the semantics of the referent can impose meanings other than locative on PPs headed by *ka*, such as cause (3.300) above, instrument (3.305) or benefactive (3.306) below.

(3.305) *Zone=na ne toka=ni gazu=na ka hirama.*
 PN=DEM.N.SG REAL cut=3.SG.AGR tree=DEM.N.SG PREP axe
 'John is cutting the tree with an axe.' (043A160208; elicitation)

(3.306) *Zone=na ne fa uu age gausa ka Pita ka sua=re.*
 PN=DEM.N.SG REAL CS HES come betelnut PREP PN PREP child= DEM.N.PL
 'John gave betelnut to Peter for the children.' (043A160208; elicitation)

3.2.3 Adverbial Phrases

Adverbial phrases are headed by spatial locative adverb, which can be modified by a location name, an intrinsic or absolute local noun, an NP or PP denoting location, all illustrated in 3.1.10.1. The structure of the AdvP_{SLOC} is shown below.



Temporal locative adverbs (3.1.10.2) do not take modifiers and, thus, stand alone.

3.3 Possession

Possession in Blanga, as well as in other Oceanic languages, is a fascinating topic and a whole thesis may be needed to cover all its complex and intricate aspects. This section, and the different subsections throughout this thesis in which possession has been mentioned in one form or another represent only a moderate attempt to describe its formal expression and some major elements of its semantics. While possession is not one of the main topics of this thesis, its relation to predication and argument structure cannot be neglected.

3.3.1 Formally indexed possession

In a possessive NP, possession is marked on the head and the possessum precedes the possessor. Blanga distinguishes between inalienable and alienable possession. A further distinction is made within the alienable class between possession of consumable entities and possession of other alienable entities. Inalienable possessive NPs are headed by the possessum and possessor indexing is encliticised to either the head or a post-head modifier. In alienable possessive NPs, possessor indexing is suffixed to a possessive base that precedes the possessum and serves as head of that NP, while the nominal denoting the actual possessum functions “as a specifier of the exact nature of the consumable or general alienably possessable object” like in Kokota (Palmer 2009). The possessor indexing forms and the alienable bases are introduced in 3.1.3.3 above. The possessive bases are further discussed in 3.1.8, while Possessive NPs are postulated in 3.2.1.7.

Inalienable possession includes some kin terms, body parts and other part-whole relationships. All other nouns are alienably possessed. Consumable (rather than edible)

possession applies to food, drink, tobacco, betel nut, and medicine and other possible substances administrated orally. Everything that is not consumable by mouth belongs to the larger general alienable class. All nouns that are regarded as consumables can also be seen as non-consumables in different contexts.

3.3.1.1 Inalienable possession

Inalienably possessed kinship terms are those denoting kin who belong either to a younger generation than or largely to the same generation as the possessor. The former category normally consists of one's children, nephews, nieces and grandchildren, while the latter includes one's spouse, no matter his/her real age, as well as both younger and elder siblings and cousins. It also includes the noun *khera=na*, a more general term that covers all the 'dear ones', both relatives and friends.

<i>thu=na</i> 'son'/'fraternal nephew'	<i>kheto=na</i> 'spouse'
<i>thu=na</i> 'daughter'/'fraternal niece'	<i>mane-dou=na</i> 'husband'
<i>gleghu=na</i> 'sororal nephew'	<i>nakrupe=na</i> 'wife'
<i>gleghu=na</i> 'sororal niece'	<i>nakodou=na</i> 'wife'
<i>gra=na</i> 'grandson'	<i>thamo=na</i> 'brother'/'cousin'
<i>gra=na</i> 'granddaughter'	<i>gregha=na</i> 'sister'/'cousin'
<i>sua=na</i> 'child'	<i>kaka=na</i> 'elder brother'
	<i>manekai-dou=na</i> 'elder brother'
	<i>manekai-ikia=na</i> 'younger brother'
	<i>khera=na</i> 'dear one'/'friend'

All the nouns listed above are conventionally marked with the 3SG possessor agreement to point out that they are intrinsically possessed and do not normally occur without the possessor being indexed on them.

- (3.307) Kaisa mane ke au=na ka gogholi ta au=na
 one man PERF exist=DEM.N.SG PREP giant SB exist=DEM.N.SG
 au thu=na eu, thu=na gaghase.
 have offspring=3SG.P be.thus.IRR offspring=3SG.P female
 'One of the men who had been kept by the giant had a child, a daughter.'
 (149A020608; text)

In the example above, it is stated that a man had a child then specified that the child was a female. The possessive predicate is enough and the use of a possessive construction would be redundant. However, the noun *thu-* cannot occur without a possessor index. That *=na* is indeed the clitic version of the 3SG possessor marker here and not that of the singular nearby demonstrative, which happens to have an identical form, is proved by two facts. In the first mention, a demonstrative is needed neither as deictic nor as definite marker, because the participant is introduced in the discourse for the first time, being thus clearly indefinite. Should number need to be specified, then either the indefinite specific article *kaisa* or a numeral would have been used. In the second mention, the noun *thu-* is modified by the noun *gaghase* ‘female’. Demonstratives follow and modify a whole NP, no matter if they occur as full forms or as clitics. Clitic versions of demonstratives are optional and cannot occur as second-position clitics. If *=na* were a demonstrative, it would attach to *gaghase*. Possessor markers, on the other hand, are not modifiers and are always bound. In alienable possession, they are clitics. In inalienable constructions they are second-position clitics.

It must be pointed out here that nouns with multiple meanings, such as *sua*, *manedou* and *nakodou* are intrinsically possessed only when used strictly as kinship terms. Otherwise, when used with meanings such as ‘underage person’, ‘grown-up male’ and grown-up female, they behave like any ordinary common noun.

Inalienably possessed kinship terms are also illustrated, among others, in (3.13), (3.110), (3.156) and (3.177) throughout this chapter. The members of the other special common noun classes, those of local (3.1.2.1.3), associative (3.1.2.1.4) and contextualising nouns (3.1.2.1.5), are also inalienably and compulsorily possessed (see the examples in the relevant sections).

In addition to the special common noun classes, some subclasses of ordinary common nouns are also normally inalienably possessed. These are participants in different part-whole relationships. In Blanga, they are included with ordinary common nouns because they do not appear to be intrinsically possessed but can occur without possessor indexing. They include both count and mass nouns and denote mainly physical parts, such as body parts, internal organs, bodily matter, either internal or emanating or growing from the body, and inanimate parts.

(3.308) *thini=na nakoni=na*
 body=3SG.P person=DEM.N.SG
 ‘the human body’ (117A300408; elicitation)

- (3.309) ghahe=gu=na ara.
leg=1.SG.P=DEM.N.SG 1.SG
'my leg.' (030A140118; elicitation)
- (3.310) Ine natha=gu=na ara.
DEM.R.SG eye=1.SG.P=DEM.N.SG 1.SG
'This is my eye.' (117A300408; elicitation)
- (3.311) hnapa=na nakoni=na
intestine=3SG.P person=DEM.N.SG
'the human's intestines' (117A300408; elicitation)
- (3.312) Ine mamau=gu=na ara.
DEM.R.SG brain=1.SG.P=DEM.N.SG 1.SG
'This is my brain.' (117A300408; elicitation)
- (3.313) bakru=na hnalau
liquid=3SG.P male
'sperm', lit. 'liquid of male' (117A300408; elicitation)
- (3.314) Ine khala=gu=na ara.
DEM.R.SG hair=1.SG.P=DEM.N.SG 1.SG
'This is my hair.' (117A300408; elicitation)
- (3.315) gringata=na suga=na (117A300408; elicitation)
doorway=3SG.P house=DEM.N.SG house=DEM.N.SG
'the door of the house' (117A300408; elicitation)
- (3.316) taer=di tractare
tire=3NSG.P tractor
'the tires of tractors' (117A300408; elicitation)
- (3.317) naflo=na khou
mouth=3SG.P river
'the mouth of the river' (117A300408; elicitation)

Inalienable possession is extended to impressions of parts, such as fingerprints or footprints, non-physical parts, such as one's thoughts, one's name or one's behaviour, terms denoting roles in a group or institution, such as the head of a government, the priest of a parish or the supervisor of a working team, divisions or periods of time, possession of entities by a location to which they are associated and possession of events.

- (3.318) hmala=di=re bosu=re
footprint=3NSG.P=DEM.N.PL pig=DEM.N.PL
'the footprints of the pigs' (031A140108; text)
- (3.319) gaghato=di=re
thought=3NSG.P=DEM.N.PL
'their thoughts' (051A240208; elicitation)

- (3.320) Nahnga=na=na manekai dou=mai=na ghai
 name=3SG.P=DEM.N.SG brother be.big=1PL.EXCL.P 1PL.EXCL
 John Rufus Pituvaka.
 pers.name
 ‘The name of that elder brother of ours was John Rufus Pituvaka.’
 (050A240208; text)
- (3.321) zazaho=di maneri
 walk=3NSG.P 3PL
 ‘Their (way of) walking.’ (043A160208; elicitation)
- (3.322) mane-dou=di=na maneri
 supervisor=3NSG.P=DEM.N.SG 3PL
 ‘their supervisor’ (266A251109; elicitation)
- (3.323) ka grafi=na Sarare
 PREP evening=3SG.P Saturday
 ‘on Saturday evening’ (266A251109; elicitation)
- (3.324) Ago ka sua=mu=na ke au hae?
 1SG PREP child=2SG.P=DEM.N.SG PERF stay where
 ‘Where did you live during your childhood?’ (107A230408; elicitation)
- (3.325) Ara mane=gu Blanga.
 1SG man=1SG.P PLN
 ‘I am a Blanga man.’ (110A260408; elicitation)
- (3.326) ikha-blahi=na sua
 bathe-be.holly=3SG.P child
 baptism of child

3.3.1.2 Alienable possession

Alienable possession consists of two subclasses, distinguished formally by the bound base to which possessor indexing is affixed, *ge-* for alienable consumable and *no-* for every other alienable entity (alienable general). In alienable possession, the possessor markers, listed in 3.1.3.3, are suffixes and not enclitics as with inalienable possession. The alienable consumable subclass includes the terms for all those substances that are normally consumed by mouth, such as food, drinks, tobacco, betelnut, traditional or modern medicine.

- (3.327) Ine ghe-gu zeku=na ara.
 DEM.R.SG POSS.CONS-1SG.P banana=DEM.N.SG 1SG
 ‘This is my banana.’ (042A160208; elicitation)
- (3.328) Ine ghe-u kou=na ago.
 DEM.R.SG POSS.CONS-2SG.P water=DEM.N.SG 2SG
 ‘This is your water.’ (042A160208; elicitation)

(3.332) Ine paloho ka manei
 DEM.R.SG bow PREP 3SG
 ‘This is his bow.’

(3.333) mane Maringe
 person PLN
 ‘the Maringe people’ (031A140108; text)

3.3.2.2 Possession by juxtaposition

Frequently, and especially in rapid speech, possession can be expressed by simply juxtaposing the possessum and the possessor in this order. This strategy is obviously not possible with nouns such as *thu-*, which are intrinsically possessed and, therefore, possessor indexing is compulsory.

(3.334) Ara ke tafo=ni sua repea iaro
 1.SG PERF meet=3.SG.AGR child 3DL DEM.PV.PL
 ‘I met the child of that couple.’ (030A140108; elicitation)

(3.335) Ao suga=na ghepea.
 DEM.T.SG house=DEM.N.SG 1DL.EXCL
 ‘This is our house.’ (006A011207; elicitation)

3.4 The verb complex

Due especially to its very flexible constituent order, Blanga can be clearly defined as a non-configurational language. The postulation of a VP is thus not possible. More useful is the notion of verb complex (VC), which is employed in many descriptions of Oceanic languages.

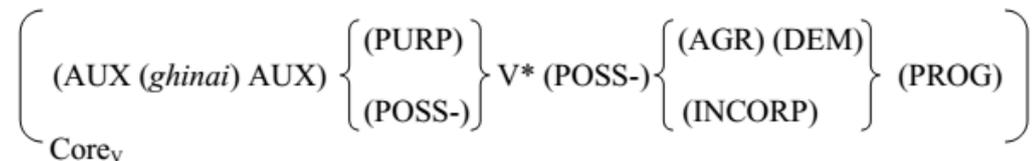
The only compulsory element of the Blanga verb complex is the nucleus, which consists of a verb or a serial verb construction. The nucleus is the central element of the verb complex core, which also includes a series of prenuclear and postnuclear modifiers. The full verb complex consists of the core, a pre-core modifier position and a post-core modifier position.

$$\left[\begin{array}{c} \text{(MODIFIER) Core}_v\text{(MODIFIER)} \\ \text{VC} \end{array} \right]$$

3.4.1 VC core

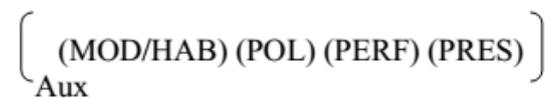
In addition to the nucleus, the verb complex includes two optional pre-nuclear positions and three optional postnuclear positions. The prenuclear modifier positions are filled by an auxiliary, which can be split by the future tense marker *ghinai* (3.4.1.1.5), followed by a mood marker, which can be the purposive *mala* or the general possessive marker

used as a desiderative modifier. The first postnuclear position is occupied again by the general possessive marker. In this position, this functions as a saliency or immediacy marker. It is immediately followed by a position that can be occupied either by an agreement marker optionally followed by a demonstrative, or by an incorporated nominal. The final postnuclear position is filled by the progressive aspect marker =*ghu*/=*u*.



3.4.1.1 Auxiliary

An auxiliary form occupies the first pre-nuclear modifier position in the verb complex core. The auxiliary consists of a base distinguishing realis from irrealis modality and marking habitual or inceptive aspect if necessary, followed by a polarity marker, a perfective aspect morpheme and a present tense marker, as shown in the scheme below. None of the the elements making up the auxiliary is compulsory and the auxiliary itself is an optional component of the verb complex core.



3.4.1.1.1 Realis vs. irrealis mood and habitual aspect

The main function of the auxiliary base is to mark modality. As expected in Oceanic context, Blanga distinguishes between realis and irrealis mood. The realis base is *ne*, while the irrealis one is *e*.

(3.336) No-gu bosu=na ara ne mai ka ara.
 POSS.GEN-1SG.P pig=DEM.N.SG 1SG REAL come PREP 1SG
 ‘My pig came to me.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(3.337) Ara, no-gu bosu=na e-ke mai thoke ka the-gu.
 1SG POSS.GEN-1SG.P pig=DEM.N.SG IRR-PERF come reach PREP REFL-1SG.RF
 ‘My pig will come to myself.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

Realis covers situations taking place during a period which includes the moment of speaking or that happened before the moment of speaking. Irrealis covers future situations and past or present counterfactuals, while also including habitual actions or states. Negation can occur with both. Neither needs to be overtly realised as long as an already established modal status remains constant throughout the discourse. The modal

status can be established by an initial overt mention of the mood morpheme, like in the first clause in (3.338), where *ne* establishes realis status, which is then preserved in the second clause without the particle being overtly expressed again. It can also be established by temporal clues, without the need of employing any modal marker. In (3.339), the temporal locative *nathuu* ‘tomorrow’ and the future tense particle *ghinai* are more than enough to establish the situation as irrealis. Similarly, in (3.340) the situation is established as realis by the use of the temporal locative *hnorao* ‘tomorrow’ in conjunction with the perfective marker *ke*. In (3.341), realis status is indicated by the use of the present tense marker *ghe*.

(3.338) Edwini=na ne hnokro ka gilū suga [...], Koburu=na au kota.
 PN=DEM.N.SG REAL sit PREP inside house PN=DEM.N.SG stay outside
 ‘Edwin is sitting inside the house [...], Koburu is outside.’
 (095A130408; elicitation)

(3.339) Nathuu=na Pita ghinei haghe ka no-na hmola=na.
 tomorrow=DEM.N.SG PN FUT ascend PREP POSS.GEN-3SG.P canoe=DEM.N.SG
 ‘Tomorrow Peter will board his canoe.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

(3.340) Hnorao Jon=na ke hahaghe ka no-na hmola=na.
 yesterday PN=DEM.N.SG PREP climb.into PREP POSS.GEN-3SG.P canoe=DEM.N.SG
 ‘Yesterday John boarded his canoe.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

(3.341) Pita=na ba ghe rāgi la bla.
 PN=DEM.N.SG ALT PRES dance PART LIM
 ‘Peter is also dancing.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

All the above show that the actual use of realis/irrealis markers is quite restricted. Moreover, in addition to the auxiliary base and to temporal clues, irrealis/realis status in subordinate clauses is assigned by the presence versus absence of the subordinator particle *ta*. Example (3.342) shows an irrealis relative clause. Due to the compulsory presence of the subordinator *ta*, which only introduces irrealis subordinates, a modal base is not required. However, such subordinates are problematic in that the scope of *ta* is broader than that of the irrealis base *e*. The subordinating particle also covers events or states occurring at the time of speaking. If the time frame of the subordinate clause coincides with that of the main clause, then the modal status established in the former is reflected on the latter, even if the subordinate follows the main clause.

(3.342) Ara la fakae=ni mane [ta poma=ni=na mheke=na].
 1SG go see=3SG.AGR man [SB hit=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG dog=DEM.N.SG]
 ‘I see the man who is hitting the dog.’ (219A201109; elicitation)

However, the occurrence of the modal base in the main clause may be needed to avoid ambiguity. In the main clause in (3.343), which follows the subordinate, the marking of irrealis status by the irrealis base *e* clearly indicates a future reading, rather than a present one. In this example, the initial 1SG pronoun is part of the sentence but outside either of the clauses.

- (3.343) Ara, [ta au la mane [ta au thamo=na]], ara e au la bla.
 1SG SB stay COND man SB exist brother=DEM.N.SG 1SG IRR stay PART LIM
 ‘If the man who is his friend stays, I will stay as well.’
 (043A160208; elicitation)

In the next example, a reduced relative clause modifies the single argument of the intransitive main clause. The person is obviously ill at the moment of speaking but, as far as their passing away is concerned, there are two equal possibilities. The use of the realis marker in the main clause suggests that the intended reading is ‘the ill person *is dying*’, rather than ‘the ill person *will die*’.

- (3.344) Ghoi, ne lehe sini nakoni [ta fogra=o]!
 VOC REAL die FOC person [SB be.ill=DEM.NV.SG]
 ‘Hey, the person who is ill is dying!’ (218A201109; elicitation)

Realis subordination covers past situations and employs a zero subordinator. Ambiguities are less likely in this case. In the example below, although the perfective aspect marker *ke* can mark both future and past situations, the absence of a subordinator in the relative clause is enough to indicate a past reading there, which is also imposed on the main clause. No modal base is employed.

- (3.345) Ara ke fakae=ni mane [ke poma=ni=na mheke=na].
 1.SG PERF see=3.SG.AGR man [PERF hit=3.SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG dog=DEM.N.SG]
 ‘I saw the man who hit the dog’ (051A240208; elicitation)

There may be more to the establishing of a modal status for a chunk of discourse. Many examples suggest that a realis reading may be considered the default when no modal marker or any other clue is present. This is especially noticeable when the perfective marker *ke* occurs as the only representative of the auxiliary. Perfective aspect can cover either past or future situations. In the absence of any clue, the past reading is imposed, as in (3.346). For a future reading to be possible, *ke* must be preceded by the future marker *ghinai*, which in such cases acts as an outer modifier of the verb complex core.

- (3.346) Pita ke hota gausa=na ka Jon.
 PN PERF take betelnut=DEM.N.PL PREP PN
 ‘Peter took betelnut from John.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

- (3.347) Ara ghinai ke telu=na bla
 1SG FUT PERF tell=DEM.N.SG LIM
 uheve ta ghu=di=re ghai leleghu nhagae.
 what SB do=3PL.AGR=DEM.N.PL 1PL.EXCL every day
 ‘I shal talk about what we do every day.’ (019A101207 ; text)

Note that *ghinai* cannot precede the auxiliary if the modal base is present. Neither **ghinai ne-ke* nor **ghinai e-ke* are possible.

I mentioned at the beginning of this section that the Blanga irrealis category has scope over habitual events or states.

- (3.348) Ghume gogholi=na e gonu no-da=ni
 because giant=DEM.N.SG HAB not.know POSS.GEN-1NSG.EXCL.P=3SG.AGR
 hae ta au=na eu.
 where SB exist=DEM.N.SG be.thus.IRR
 ‘Because the giant does not know where we are.’ (149A020608; text)

- (3.349) Manei e riso letasi.
 3SG HAB write letter
 ‘[In his new job] he writes letters.’ (048A230208; elicitation)

- (3.350) Kaisa hnaitu e au ka gilu=na kaisa due.
 one devil HAB stay PREP inside=3SG.P one basket
 ‘A devil was dwelling in a basket.’ (148A020608; text)

When habitual aspect is implied, the overt realisation of the marker *e* is much more frequent, which explains why in this thesis the form is mostly glossed as ‘habitual’, rather than ‘irrealis’. As a habitual marker, *e* is not compatible with the perfective marker *ke*, since habitual is a subtype of imperfective.

Synchronically, therefore, Blanga marks both realis and irrealis. A comparison with its closest relative, the neighbouring Kokota, shows that this was not always the case. Unlike Blanga, Kokota (Palmer 2009) has subject agreement in addition to object agreement. The Kokota realis base is *n-* and is always bound, while the irrealis morpheme is zero. Until recently, such a pattern was considered typologically unusual, since cross-linguistically the realis category is the unmarked one. Lately, however, unmarked irrealis has been shown to be relatively common amongst some languages of Melanesia, especially in the Northeast Solomonic subgroup, e.g. Bierebo (Budd 2009). Subject indexes are suffixed to the base and distinguish person and number. Now, a parallel system also exists in Kokota, in which the person and number distinctions were initially neutralised and the 3SG subject marker *-e* was generalised to all the forms. The combination realis base-subject marker, *n-e*, was subsequently reanalysed as one single

morpheme *ne*, marking realis mood, and the combination irrealis base-subject marker, *ø-e*, was reanalysed as an irrealis marker *e* with no person or number distinction.

The process must have started during a period when Blanga and Kokota were not yet completely differentiated. In Kokota, the two systems are still competing, reflecting a change in progress. In Blanga, the change is now general and complete. The combination *n-e* ‘REAL-3SG.S’ was reanalysed as *ne* ‘REAL’, while the combination *ø-e* ‘IRR-3SG.S’ was reanalysed as *e* ‘IRR/HAB’. Thus, the subject agreement markers were completely lost.

Blanga also has a third auxiliary base *me*, which may be the result of a similar reanalysis and synchronically encodes inceptive aspect.

(3.351) Me koze=ni=nga maneri khoze ine ke=u.
 INCPT sing=3.SG.AGR=IMM 3.PL song DEM.R.SG PERF=be.thus
 ‘They started to sing this song, it was like that.’ (244A241109; text)

(3.352) Ghe me au nga ghai ade Popopoheo.
 SEQ INCPT stay IMM 1PL.EXCL here PLN
 ‘Then we started to settle here at Popoheo.’ (009A051207; text)

(3.353) La hnigho ta=u ana si=ghe,
 go finish SB=exist DEM.N.SG FOC=SEQ
 aghe me famamhaku=nga manei gaho are.
 SEQ INCPT secure=IMM 3SG roof.pole DEM.N.PL
 ‘After he finishes, he will start to secure the roof poles.’ (013A071207; text)

(3.354) Kanaevo me au maneri, me mai Khiloau=ne.
 PLN INCPT stay 3PL INCPT come Christianity=DEM.R.SG

Me haghe maneri, me-ke klisa maneri Kanaevo,
 INCPT ascend 3PL INCPT-PERF leave 3PL PLN

me-ke khave maneri Tirokana.
 INCPT-PERF descend 3PL PLN

Tirokana, me-ke mai maneri Kesuo.
 PLN INCPT-PERF come 3PL PLN

Eu ta=na Kesuo, me Loghahaza.
 be.thus.IRR SB=DEM.N.SG PLN INCPT PLN

Eu ta=na Loghahaza, me Popoheo.
 be.thus.IRR SB=DEM.N.SG PLN INCPT PLN

Popoheo me fnota, me Sogholona eu.
 PLN INCPT separate INCPT PLN be.thus.IRR

‘They started to settle at Kanaevo, then Christianity started to arrive. They left Kanaevo and went up (to the summit ridges), then they went down (on the opposite slopes) to Tirokana. From Tirokana, they came to Kesuo, then from Kesuo to Loghahaza. Then from Loghahaza to Popoheo. At Popoheo they separated and (some) went to Sogholona. (185A151109; text)

The forms *neu*, *eu* and *meu* have been glossed ‘be.thus.REAL’, ‘be.thus.IRR’ and ‘be.thus.INCPT’. However, in practice *eu* can be used as a tag to a realis clause. The example below comes from a context already established as realis but the tag is the irrealis one.

- (3.361) Nakoni ide ke mai balu-gu ara eu.
 person DEM.R.PL PERF come ASSC-1SG.P 1SG be.thus.IRR
 ‘These people came with me, it’s like that’ (149A020608; text)

The semantics of *eu* are obscured by its very frequent use to the point that it has become a sort of generalised verbal tic.

3.4.1.1.2 Polarity suffix *-ti*

Employment of the suffix *-ti* is one of the two predicate negation strategies in the language, the other making use of the negative particle *theome*. The form *-ti* only occurs as a suffix, occupying the second position in the auxiliary. It can never occur as an unbound form. This strategy is less frequent and occurs especially with negative imperatives. Negation is discussed in 5.1.3.

- (3.362) E-ti age ka rumu ana!
 IRR-NEG go PREP room DEM.N.SG
 ‘Don’t go into that room!’ (073A020308; text)

3.4.1.1.3 Perfective particle *ke*

The perfective particle *ke* occupies the third position in the auxiliary and functions as a suffix when at least the modal base is overtly expressed. It can occur with either the realis, irrealis/habitual or inceptive aspect base.

- (3.363) Ooe Blablanga ne-ke fufunu=na Zazao.
 language language.name REAL-PERF start=DEM.N.SG PLN
 ‘The Blablanga language started at Zazao.’ (185A151109; text)

- (3.364) Thogele Guguha=na ne-ke theome au ka vido ine.
 hill PLN=DEM.N.SG REAL-PERF NEG exist PREP land DEM.R.SG
 ‘The Guguha Hill was not here.’ (193A171109; elicitation)

- (3.365) Jon=na ke mai ka nanau=na.
 PN=DEM.N.SG PERF come PREP village=DEM.N.SG
 ‘John came to the village.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

- (3.366) Sikolu meu ara=hi e-ke lase ooe-vaka eu.
 study be.thus.INCPT 1SG-INTS HAB-PERF know language-boat be.thus.HAB
 ‘I went to school, therefore I know Pijin.’ (062A270208; elicitation)

- (3.367) Au=si, ghe me-ke au keli, ngau keli [...].
 exist=FOC SEQ INCPT-PERF stay be.good eat be.good
 ‘So they stayed well and ate well [...] (ever after).’
 (150A020608; text; formulaic end of story)

As explained in 3.4.1.1.1, *ke* can cooccur with the future marker *ghinai*, subject to the constraint explained therein. It can also occur by itself when the base is not present.

- (3.368) Ara-hi ke faka=ni kaisa nakodou ke hure kharao.
 1SG-INTS PERF see=3SG.AGR one woman PERF carry basket
 ‘I saw a woman who was carrying a basket.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

3.4.1.1.4 Present tense particle *ghe*

The present tense particle *ghe* occupies the fourth and last position in the auxiliary. It shows that an event or state is occurring during a period of time that includes the moment of speaking. Being limited to this meaning, present is far less frequently marked as a tense, being covered by the realis marker *ne*. Like the perfect particle, the present particle can stand alone.

- (3.369) Pita=na ba ghe ragi la bla.
 PN=DEM.N.SG ALT PRES dance PART LIM
 ‘Peter is also dancing.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

3.4.1.1.5 Split auxiliary

Infrequently, the future tense marker *ghinai* can intervene between an overt base and the progressive particle *ke*, splitting the auxiliary. Apparently, this can only be done when the realis base is involved and the whole construction denotes a very close future, in which the events are starting as we speak.

- (3.370) Uve, ara ne ghinei ke tuthurini [...]
 yes 1SG REAL FUT PERF narrate
 ‘Yes, I am talking now about [...].’ (12A051207; text)

3.4.1.2 General possessive base as a VC pre-nuclear modifier

It has been noted that Kokota (Palmer 2009) and some other Northwest Solomonic languages, such as Banoni (Lincoln 1976) and several Bougainville languages, have the tendency to use possessive constructions as verb modifiers. In Blanga, such constructions can occur as either pre or postnuclear modifiers within the VC core. In prenuclear position, such constructions impose a desiderative meaning.

- (3.371) Ara no-gu soso!
 1SG POSS.GEN-1SG.P pee
 ‘I want to pee.’ (FN3:30)

3.4.1.3 General possessive base as a VC post-nuclear modifier

In postnuclear position, the general possessive base marks the event or state as highly salient or happening immediately.

(3.372) Ara=nga ghinai zaho ikha no-gu eu=si=ia.
1SG=IMM FUT go bathe POSS.GEN-1SG.P be.thus.IRR=FOC=PART
'I am going to bathe.' (149A020608; text)

(3.373) Ara pukuni krabe no-gu ghoinode.
1SG really be.hungry POSS.GEN-1SG.P now
'I am really hungry now!' (149A020608; text)

(3.374) La thodo no-na bla si=nga mane sua=o=ia.
go be.lazy POSS-1SG.P LIM FOC=IMM SPEC child=DEM.NV.SG=PART
'The child just couldn't be bothered.' (149A020608; text)

3.4.1.4 Formal argument indexing

Canonical Oceanic languages (Ross 2004:496) are described as indexing the person and number of subject and object on transitive verbs by affixes or clitics, a subject marker preceding or being part of the first element of the verb complex and an object marker following the last element. Illustrative is the following Kokota example.

(3.375) N-o falehe=ri agho kokorako are.
REAL-2.SG.S CS.die=3.PL.O 2.SG chicken DEM.N.PL
'You are killing those chickens.' (Kokota - Palmer 2009: 279)

Normally, the single argument of intransitive verbs is also indexed. Blanga, however, only has one agreement marker, which only occurs with transitive verbs. The situation is illustrated and explained in the sub-sections below.

3.4.1.4.1 Agreement marker

In Blanga, there is no argument coreference on intransitive verbs, as illustrated below with state and activity predicates.

(3.376) Gazu ana ne knusu.
tree DEM.N.SG REAL be.cut
'That piece of wood is cut.' (021AV120408; elicitation)

(3.377) Au=nga ne au fati tharakna=de.
exist=IMM REAL exist four family=DEM.R.PL
'[Once upon a time] there was this family of four.' (150A020608; text)

(3.378) Botolo=na ne au phile paka.
bottle=DEM.N.SG REAL exist side leaward
'That bottle is on the leeward side [of the table].' (078AV270408; elicitation)

(3.379) Ara ne nonolo ka hmata.
 1.SG REAL walk PREP bush
 ‘I was walking in the bush.’ (090A120408; elicitation)

(3.380) Tahni manei, tahni fa dou eu
 cry 3.SG cry CS be.big be.thus.IRR
 ‘S/he is crying, s/he is crying loudly, that’s it.’ (054A260208; text)

In a transitive predication, on the other hand, an indexing enclitic often attaches to the verb complex core. The examples below illustrate the co-referential pattern with verbs of perception, cognition, emotion and desire. Example (3.382) also demonstrates the clitic status of the agreement marker. Here the host is a possessive construction functioning as a postverbal core modifier and conferring a sense of immediacy to the event expressed by the predicate.

(3.381) Mane ana efra=nigho agho.
 man DEM.N.SG see=2.SG.AGR 2.SG
 ‘That man sees you.’ (029A140118; elicitation)

(3.382) Ara pukuni gonu no-gu=ni bla nahnga=na=na.
 1.SG really not.know POSS-1.SG.P=3.SG.AGR LIM name=3.SG.P=DEM.N.SG
 ‘I’m really mixing up his name right now.’ (186A151109; text)

(3.383) No-na ido=na ta=na ghoi,
 POSS.GEN-3SG.P mother=DEM.N.SG SB=DEM.N.SG VOC

 nahma=gai ghai fakeli eu.
 love=1.NSG.AGR 1.PL.EXC CS.be.good be.thus.IRR
 ‘Our mother, man, loves us very much.’ (092A130408; elicitation)

(3.384) Ghai manahagi=gau ghau, mane Khiloau=de,
 1.PL.EXCL want=2.NSG.AGR 2.PL man Christian=DEM.R.PL

 ta haghe ta age Loghahaza.
 SB ascend SB come PLN
 ‘We want you, missionaries, to come up here to Loghahaza.’ (12A051207; text)

The pattern is further illustrated with verbs of performance, consumption, creation, transfer, and cut-and-break verbs.

(3.385) Me koze=ni=nga maneri khoze ine ke=u.
 INCPT sing=3.SG.AGR= IMM 3.PL song DEM.R.SG PERF=be.thus
 ‘They started to sing this song, it was like that.’ (244A241109; text)

(3.386) Zone na ne-ke ngau=di kokorako=ro.
 PN DEM.N.SG REAL=PERF eat=3.NSG.AGR chicken=DEM.NV.PL
 ‘John ate those chickens.’ (193A171109; elicitation)

- (3.387) Frihnge=ni agho kikilova neu.
 Work=3.SG.AGR 1.SG thatch be.thus. REAL
 ‘I build the thatch roof, it’s like that.’ (047AV230408; text)
- (3.388) Fa age=di sau=nga sua hnalau=ne
 CS go=3.NSG.AGR apple=IMM child male=DEM.N.SG
 ka thilo sua hnalau=de.
 PREP three child male=DEM.R.PL
 ‘The boy gave the apples to those three boys.’ (005AV020308; elicitation)
- (3.389) Mane Zone=na ne toka=ni gazu=na ka hirama.
 Man PN=DEM.N.SG REAL cut=3.SG.AGR tree=DEM.N.SG PREP axe
 ‘John is cutting that tree with an axe.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

The indexing enclitic is always in the same person and number as the affected participant, in other words it is the non-agentive argument that is co-referenced on the Blanga transitive verb. This point will be elaborated in Chapter 6. The enclitics are pure agreement markers and not bound pronominals doubling the disjunctive pronouns, even though some are obviously cognates. The agreement markers distinguish between exclusive and inclusive in the first person but, unlike disjunctive pronouns, do not have separate forms for dual and trial, displaying only a two-way (singular/non-singular) number distinction. There are no traces of any gender distinction.

Agreement markers					Disjunctive pronouns				
	1INC	1EXC	2	3		1INC	1EXC	2	3
SG	-	=nau	=nigho	=ni	SG	-	ara	agho	manei
NSG	=ghita	=gai	=gau	=di	DL	ghitapea	ghepea	ghopea	repea
					TR	ghitatilo	ghetilo	ghotilo	retilo
					PL	ghita	ghai	ghau	maneri

Agreement markers and free pronouns are similar (in one case even identical) but are clearly distinct.

- (390) Mane ana efra=ghita ghita.
 man DEM.N.SG see=1PL.INC.AGR 1PL.INC
 ‘That man sees us.’ (029A140108; elicitation)

A proposal dating back to Johnson (1977:157) and Moravcsik (1978:364) and perpetuated in subsequent works (Croft 1990:106; Moravcsik 1988:102) postulates that verb agreement is assigned according to Johnson’s (1977:156) hierarchy of grammatical relations: if, in a given language, there are cases of verb agreement with some NP

bearing a particular function on the hierarchy, then there must also be cases of agreement with NPs bearing functions placed to the left.

subject > direct object > indirect object > oblique

As data from recently documented languages become available, so do descriptions of languages that index only object (e.g. Haan 2001; Davis 2003; Klamer 2010) and the findings have already started to have theoretical impact (Fedden & Brown 2010 and Fedden et al. 2011). In addition, the ‘attractively simple’ (Corbett 2006:59) formulation of the universal in terms of grammatical relations ignores the fact that in different languages agreement may be triggered by different factors. It is quite tempting, for instance, to take Siewierska’s (2011) analysis of a 378-language sample, of which 24 (6.4%) display agreement only with the non-agentive argument of a transitive verb, as further counterevidence to the claim. Notice, however, that Siewierska uses terms such as ‘agentive’ and ‘patient argument’, which are normally employed with reference to semantic roles.

In Chapter 6, we shall see that Blanga agreement is triggered by grammatical relations. Since the controller of the agreement is indeed a grammatical relation, then Blanga may be one of the typologically rare languages that have object agreement without subject agreement.

3.4.1.4.2 Omission of the agreement marker

In some cases, agreement is not present on the Blanga verb. No systematic analysis of the conditions under which the omission of undergoer markers is possible in the language has been performed to date. A few insights into the matter are, however, offered by the examples quoted throughout this chapter. Both animate and inanimate as well as topical and non-topical undergoers can be indexed; cross-referenced NPs can be both nominal and pronominal, while the presence or absence of the agreement is not conditioned by the predicate type.

A factor that does seem to play a role is specificity. In (3.391), the affected argument is non-specific. However, this is rather an example of noun incorporation, which is quite frequent in the language, and incorporated nouns are necessarily non-specific. They are distinguished in Blanga by the fact that they cannot take outer modifiers. It is impossible for *letasi* ‘letter’ in (23) to be modified by a relative clause in the same way the non-incorporated *gazu* ‘stick’ is in (24). Notice also the presence of the agreement marker in the latter example.

(3.391) manei e riso letasi.
 3.SG HAB write letter
 ‘He writes letters.’ (048A230208; elicitation)

(3.392) Ara fakae=ni gazu [ke poma=ni mane hmeke=na].
 1.SG see=3.SG.AGR stick [PERF hit=3.SG.AGR man dog=DEM.N.SG]
 ‘I saw the stick with which the man hit the dog.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

By affecting the valency, incorporation leaves no actual undergoer argument to be indexed. There are, nevertheless, cases of non-indexed undergoers in which incorporation is clearly not involved, such as (25), where the verb and noun are not in adjacent position. Such examples, in which overt undergoers appear to be non-specific but are not incorporated, are further discussed in 4.4.7.5.

(3.393) Sage bla Gibati khoilo.
 carve LIM PN coconut
 ‘Gilbert is simply carving coconut. (094A130408; text)

3.4.1.5 Progressive aspect marker *-ghu*

The last position in the VC core is occupied by the progressive aspect enclitic =*ghu*, which denotes that the situation is, was or will be going on at a particular point in time.

(3.394) Zifla=ghu maneri Zazao.
 exit=PROG 3PL PN
 ‘They were leaving Zazao.’ (185A151109; text)

(3.395) Nhigho ne=u gano=na suga=na,
 finish REAL=make core=3SG.P house=DEM.N.SG

ke fringhe=ghu manei kekepi babaghi ta=u are.
 PERF work=PROG 3SG side-roof eave SB=exist DEM.N.PL
 ‘Having finished the core of the house, he will be making the side-roofs and the eaves.’ (013A071207; text)

In casual speech, the velar fricative is dropped and the form is usually reduced to =*u* if the host ends in a vowel other than /u/.

3.4.2 Precore modifiers

The future tense marker *ghinai* normally occurs as a precore modifier inside the VC. It can only co-occur with the irrealis base or the perfective marker.

(3.396) Ara ghinei e hota fa pupuhi eu ka ghai mane Popoheo .
 1SG FUT IRR take CS gather be.thus.IRR PREP 1PL.EXCL man PLN
 ‘I shall request a meeting of the Popoheo people.’ (010A051207; text)

(3.397) Manei ghinai ke kulu zaho fea ka mhata=re.
3SG FUT PERF be.first go INIT PREP bush=DEM.N.PL
'He will first of all go to the bush.' (15A071207; text)

The other precore modifier is the purposive *mala*, discussed in 3.1.12.7.

3.4.3 Postcore modifier

One postcore modifier has been identified, namely the completive aspect marker *hnigho*.

(3.398) Maikol=na la ragi nhigho.
PN=DEM.N.SG go dance CMPL
'Michael=dem.n.sg has already danced.' (051A240208; elicitation)

CHAPTER FOUR

Predication, Predicates and Argument Structure

This chapter first discusses the types of predication present in Blanga, distinguishing between two main classes, verbless and verbal predication, and identifying their sub-classes. It then describes the logical structures of different types of Blanga predicates, attempting to define thematic roles in terms of the positions of arguments in the logical structure of those predicates and to subordinate those to the semantic macroroles of *actor* and *undergoer*. Throughout this chapter, the term *argument* is used exclusively for ‘semantic argument’. The relations between semantic and syntactic arguments in Blanga are explored in Chapter 6. The theoretical framework used for the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic analysis of Blanga structures in this chapter and the rest is that of Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) (Van Valin 2005, Van Valin and LaPolla 1997, Foley and Van Valin 1984).

4.1 Preliminaries

Within an RRG perspective, there is a fundamental distinction between relational and non-relational clause structure. Relational structure refers to the relations between a predicate and its arguments. These relations can be of syntactic, semantic or pragmatic nature and will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. Non-relational structures refer to the hierarchical organisations of constituents within phrases, discussed in Chapter 3, or within clauses and sentences, (this chapter and Chapter 5). Two further distinctions are of vital importance: first, the one between predicating and non-predicating elements and then, within that, the distinction between arguments and non-arguments.

The non-relational clause structure, usually referred to in RRG as *the layered structure of the clause*, is described as follows. The main clause constituent is the *nucleus*, which is semantically the predicate. Together with its arguments, the predicate forms the sentence *core*. The non-arguments are contained by the *periphery*. The clause may, thus, consist of a core and a periphery, which are considered universal. While constituents such as nucleus, core or periphery are syntactic units, they are nevertheless semantically motivated and defined. Therefore, they do not depend on functions such as linearity or immediate dominance. This is extremely important in the case of languages such as Blanga, which have a very flexible clause constituent order. The theory also allows for additional pre-core or post-core slots, which are language-specific and useful

4.2 Verbless predication

Verbless predication does not involve a verb and there is no copula. It is frequent in Blanga and is represented by four types: identificational, attributive (equative), locative and possessive predication. In verbless and intransitive examples in general, S stands for the sole argument of the predicate.

Verbless identificational predicates are NPs identifying the S (4.2), (4.3), while verbless attributive predicates are NPs attributing a characteristic to the S (4.4), (4.5).

(4.2) Ine lemone.
DEM.R.SG lemon
S PRED
'This is a lemon.' (007A011207; elicitation)

(4.3) Premier=na ghita finogha ke salau=ne=ia
Premier=DEM.N.SG 1PL.INCL year PERF be.past=DEM.R.SG=PART
S

ke ii Reuben Dotho.
PERF HES PN
PRED
'Our premier last year was Reuben Dotho.' (267A251109; elicitation)

(4.4) Ghai mane finogha kaisa=re.
1PL.EXCL man year one=DEM.N.PL
S PRED
'We are students in the first year.' (186A151109; text)

(4.5) Guguha ne mhogo.
PN REAL snake
S PRED
'Guguha was a snake.' (017A101207; text)

Two special sub-types of verbless attributive predication can be distinguished. In the one illustrated in (4.6) the predicate attributes a name to the S. In such 'naming attributives', the S is invariably an NP headed by the noun *nahnga* 'name'. If the order is reverse, we are dealing with an identificational clause (4.7). In the sub-type illustrated in (4.8), the subject is formally possessed by the predicate and indexed for inalienable possession. The modifier of the predicate NP head normally designates an area or group to which the subject belongs.

(4.6) Nahnga=na=na John Rufus Pituvaka.
name=3SG.P=DEM.N.SG PN
S PRED
'His name was John Rufus Pituvaka.'
(050A240208; text)

(4.7) Mafiu Tada nahnga=na=na.
 NP name=3SG.P=DEM.N.SG
 S PRED
 ‘His name was Matthew Tada.’ (148A020608; text)

(4.8) Ara mane=gu Blanga
 1SG man=1SG.P PN
 S PRED
 ‘I am a Blanga man.’ (069A270208; elicitation)

Blanga verbless locative predicates are NPs headed by a local noun (4.9), (4.11), or PPs whose head is modified by such NPs (4.10), both showing the location of the S argument. For the behaviour and distribution of local nouns see 3.1.2.1.3 and 3.2.1.1.

(4.9) Apolo=na hotai=na disi.
 apple=DEM.N.SG middle=3.SG.P plate
 S PRED
 ‘The apple is in the middle of the plate.’ (082A030408; elicitation)

(4.10) Hmeke=na ka geri suga.
 dog=DEM.N.SG PREP beside house
 S PRED
 ‘The dog is beside the house.’ (007A011207; elicitation)

(4.11) Kaisa goro tharakna ghe gilū kaisa suga eu.
 one be.whole family PRES inside one house be.thus.HAB
 S PRED
 ‘A whole family is inside a house.’ (026A130108; elicitation)

Verbless identificational, attributive and locative predicates make up the the non-verbal sub-class of two-place state predicates. The structure of two-place state predicates is described in 4.4.1.2.

In verbless possessive predication, the S is possessed by the nominal head of the predicate. Possessive constructions are discussed in 3.3.

(4.12) Zeku ao ghe=gu ara.
 banana DEM.T.SG POSS.CONS=1SG.P 1SG
 S PRED
 ‘The banana is mine.’ (006A011207; elicitation)

Verbless predication is compatible with TAM markers, as illustrated in (4.3), (4.5) and (4.11). However, only TAM markers that function as pre-nuclear modifiers can occur. Thus, for instance, the continuous marker =*ghu* is not attested with verbless predicates. If no marker is present, the states denoted by verbless predicates are usually regarded as habitual, unless the context imposes a different reading.

4.3 Verbal predication

Most predicates in the language are, naturally, verbal predicates. It is useful to distinguish between stative verbs as predicates and active (non-stative) verbs as predicates.

4.3.1 Stative verbs as predicates

Descriptive stative verbs may denote either resultative states or inherent states. All but one of the one-place state predicates in Blanga are resultative stative verbs (4.4.1.1). On the other hand, stative verbs denoting inherent states constitute a type of attributive predicate. They make up a distinct subcategory of two-place predicates since one of their arguments is the predicate itself (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:125). Inherent state stative verbs are discussed in the last paragraphs of (4.4.1.2).

4.3.2 The verbs *au* and *theo*

The verb *au* and its opposite *theo* have a special status among stative verbs, which is related to the expression of existence, presence and possession. The main function of the verb *au* is to denote existence. In this instance, it can be sensibly glossed as ‘exist’ and will be analysed as a one-place state predicate in 4.4.1.1. The existential function and meaning can be many times combined with a locative one to give a sense that is at the same time existential and locative, in order to refer to an entity that exists at a particular location, no matter whether that location is overtly expressed or not. This provided the platform for the extension of the meaning of *au* to a mainly locative one when a locative adjunct is present. In such cases, the form can be safely glossed ‘stay’, ‘live’ or ‘be.at’ and becomes a two-place state predicate, as discussed in 4.4.1.2, where it is also shown that the overt mention of the locative adjunct is not always necessary. This was subsequently semantically extended and acquired a possessive meaning. Further semantic extension was possible until the verb has acquired a possessive meaning and can be glossed as ‘have’. This is still not uncommon across languages and may be due to the existence of a locative component of possession, which is suggested by different paraphrases in different languages. This is elaborated in 4.4.1.2. The verb *theo* ‘not.be.at’ occurs as the opposite of *au* ‘be.at’, *i.e.* when the latter has a locative meaning. Curiously, however, it cannot be used as the opposite of *au* when either the pure existential or the possessive meaning is involved, as mentioned in 4.4.1.2.

4.3.3 Non-stative verbs as predicates

The majority of Blanga predicates are represented by non-stative verbs, where ‘non-stative’ is used as an umbrella term for activity, achievement and accomplishment predicates, which all have in common the [-static] feature (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:93). Both one-place and two-place predications are possible. The structure of such predicates is discussed in (4.4.2).

4.4 Predicates and their arguments

The system of lexical decomposition adopted by Van Valin and LaPolla (1997) follows Vendler’s (1957 [1967]) postulation of four basic *Aktionsart* classes (state, activity, achievement, and accomplishment), each corresponding to a type of state-of-affairs (situation, action, event, and process). The four *Aktionsart* classes are distinguished based on three binary features, namely [\pm static], [\pm punctual] and [\pm telic]. Thematic relations are then defined according to the position of arguments in the logical structures of the two predicate types regarded as basic, namely state and activity predicates, since all other types of predicates (achievement, accomplishment, active accomplishment predicates as well as the causative counterparts of all predicates) are derived from them by means of semantic operators (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:114).

4.4.1 State predicates

State predicates are defined by the *Aktionsart* type corresponding to the *situation* type of state-of-affairs. Such predicates are non-dynamic and temporally extended and unbounded, therefore, in terms of binary features they are characterised by the matrix [+static], [-telic], [-punctual] (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:92-93)

4.4.1.1 One-place state predicates

A distinct class of adjectives has not been identified in Blanga (3.1.7). One-place state predicates are represented by stative verbs denoting resultative states or conditions and by the verb *au* ‘exist’ when used with a pure existential meaning. Resultative stative verbs, such as *babao* ‘be.tired’, *boe* ‘be.rotten’, *fogra* ‘be.ill’, *hmaghu* ‘be.afraid’, *knusu* ‘be.cut’, *krabe* ‘be.hungry’, *krango* ‘be.dry’ and *glea* ‘be.happy’, have **pred’** (x) as their logical structure. The logical structures of the predicates in (4.13) and (4.14) , for instance, are **be.cut’** (gazu) and **be.happy’** (Pita) respectively.

- (4.13) Gazu ana ne knusu.
wood DEM.N.SG REAL be.cut
PATIENT PRED
‘That (piece of) wood is cut.’ (021AV120408; elicitation)

4.4.1.2 Two-place state predicates

The arguments of two-place state predicates cover a much larger range of thematic roles. Basic in this category are location predicates, the logical structure of which can be represented as **be-at'** (y, x). The predication of states of affairs involving static location is achieved in Blanga either by means of verbless constructions (4.17), (4.18) or by employing existential verbs. As a locative predicate, rather than denoting pure existence, the positive existential verb *au* expresses the presence of a participant in a particular location, as in (4.19), (4.20), (4.21). There is also a negative verb *theo* 'not.be.at' that indicates lack of presence, as in (4.22), (4.23), analysed as having the structure NOT **be-at'** (y, x). The two arguments of a location predicate, either verbal or verbless, have the semantic relations y = THEME and x = LOCATION. The semantic connection between existence and location ('y exists/can be found at location x' or 'y does not exist/cannot be found at location x') is very transparent in sentences such as (4.22).

(4.17) Kesu=na ke giluna disi.
 mango=DEM.N.SG PREP interior-3SG.P bowl
 THEME LOCATION
 'That mango is in the bowl.' (007A011207; elicitation)

(4.18) Vaka=na ka tahi.
 ship=DEM.N.SG PREP sea
 THEME LOCATION
 'That ship is at sea.' (007A011207; elicitation)

(4.19) Ghai, kaisa fata=na, ghai au
 1PL.EXCL one occasion= DEM.N.SG 1PL be.at
 THEME

ka nanau ke au.
 PREP village PERF be.at
 LOCATION

'One time we were in the village, we were.' (025A130108; text)

(4.20) Ara no-gu bosu=na au
 1SG POSS.GEN-1SG.P pig= DEM.N.SG be.at
 THEME

ke pari-na suga=na au.
 PREP underneath-3SG.P house= DEM.N.SG exist
 LOCATION

'My pig is under the house, it is.' (043A160208 ; elicitation)

(4.21) Botolo=na ne au phile paka.
 Bottle= DEM.N.SG REAL exist side leeward
 theme location
 'The bottle is on the leeward side [of the table].' (078AV270408; elicitation)

‘house’ (4.26) can be assigned either to the inalienable or the alienable class, apparently in free variation. Finally, descendent kinship terms such as *sua* ‘child’ (4.27) and body parts like *ghahe* ‘leg/foot’ (4.28) are inalienably possessed.

(4.24) Ara au kaisa zeku.
 1SG have one banana
 ‘I have a banana.’ (092A130408; elicitation)

(4.25) Ghepea Niha=na au meli sara Dengio.
 1DL.EXCL PN=DEM.N.SG have copra.dryer there PN
 ‘Niha and I have a copra dryer over there at Dengio.’
 (092A130408; elicitation)

(4.26) Pita=na au kaisa suga dou.
 PN=DEM.N.SG have one house be.big
 ‘Peter has a big house.’ (092A130408; elicitation)

(4.27) Manei=na au hnablo sua.
 3SG=DEM.N.SG have six child
 ‘He has six children.’ (092A130408; elicitation)

(4.28) Hmeke=na au fati ghahe=na
 dog=DEM.N.SG have four legs=DEM.N.SG
 ‘The dog has four legs.’ (092A130408; elicitation)

Foley and Van Valin (1984:48) argue for a ‘locative aspect’ of possession predicates, showing that for some languages evidence in that respect can be found in locative paraphrases of possessive constructions (*i.e. The key is in Mary’s possession* for ‘Mary has the key’), while other languages employ exclusively locative constructions (*i.e. An apple is at Tom* for ‘Tom has an apple’). In Blanga, the locative component to the meaning of the possessive predicate is clearly suggested by the use of the locative-existential verb *au*. Yet, what we notice in this language (at least synchronically) is actually polysemy and we can obviously talk about a possessive construction distinct from the locative one. This is proven by the different syntactic behaviour of arguments. In the first sentence in (4.29), both possessor and possessed are direct arguments of the predicate, while in the first sentence in (4.30) the possessor is an adjunct. In many languages, it is possible to paraphrase a possessive predicate by using a locative predicate. A particular case within this class is represented by languages like Blanga, with a possessive and a locative predicate being formally identical, and the former being semantically derived from the latter.

(4.29) Manei au phea gahase kaisa hnalau eu.
3SG have two girl one boy be.thus

Are thuna=re manei eu.
DEM.N.PL offspring=DEM.N.PL 3SG be.thus
'S/he has two daughters and a son. Those are her/his children.'
(092A130408; elicitation)

(4.30) Ka no=mai ido=na ghetilo au thilo sua [...].
PREP POSS.GEN=1NSG.EXCL mother=DEM.N.SG 3TR.EXCL exist three child

Ghai=na ana bla thuna=na
1PL.EXCL=DEM.N.SG DEM.N.SG LIM offspring=3SG.P

no=mai ido=na.
POSS.GEN=1NSG.EXCL mother=DEM.N.SG
'Our mother has three children [...]' (lit. 'At our mother there are three children')
'We are the children of our mother'.
(092A130408; elicitation)

The existence of the locative element of possessive meanings is also suggested by parallel possessive constructions consisting of a possessed NP and a possessor PP headed by the locative preposition *ka*. Compare (4.31) with (4.32):

(4.31) Ine goro tharakna ka ara.
DEM.R.SG be.whole family PREP 1SG
'This is my family.' (Lit. 'This, family at me') (006A011207; elicitation)

(4.32) Ine goro tharakna=gu ara.
DEM.R.SG whole family=1SG.P 1SG
'This is my family.' (006A011207; elicitation)

When postulating a locative component to the meaning of possessive predicates, Foley and Van Valin (1984:48) only make reference to alienable possession but in Blanga the same seems to be true for inalienable possession, as in the case of nouns denoting offspring and family in the examples above. Body parts belong to the same category: they are inalienably possessed (3.3.1.1), usually by a human or animate entity², e.g. **have'** (men, fingers), or by another body part, e.g. **have'** (hands, fingers). Locative constructions appear predominantly in elicitations of body parts, as in (4.33), but possessive constructions are also possible (4.34), and speakers can switch freely between the two, as in (4.35), (4.36).

² By metaphorical extension, nouns denoting body parts can be possessed by inanimate entities.

(4.33) Ka khame=na au fifido, geghesu, boboke-khame eu.
 PREP upper.limb=DEM.N.SG exist finger nail arm be.thus
 ‘The upper limb consists of: fingers, nails and the arm, it’s like that.’ (Lit. ‘At the upper limb there are [...]’) (097A130408; elicitation)

(4.34) Thini=na nakoni=na e au: phau, khala, grere, kokoloho [...].
 body=3SG.P person=DEM.N.SG HAB have head hair forehead, nape
 ‘The human body has: head, hair, forehead, nape [...].’ (215A201109; elicitation)

(4.35) Ka ghahe=na bla me au thula eu.
 PREP leg=DEM.N.SG LIM INCPT exist tibia be.thus

Thula=na manei au ka ghahe.
 tibia=DEM.N.SG 3SG have PREP leg

Ke pari-na pupuku ana ta ghe me au=nga thula.
 PREP below-3SG.P knee DEM.N.SG SB SEQ INC exist=IMM tibia
 ‘At the lower limb there is also the tibia. It is [a] tibia that s/he (the person) also has at her/his leg. It is right below the knee that the tibia starts.’
 (097A130408; elicitation)

(4.36) Ka hnalau=na, maneri au tholo=di.
 PREP male=DEM.N.SG 3PL have penis=3SG.P

Ka tholo ta=u=na maneri au uu mamaka
 PREP penis SB=exist=DEM.N.SG 3PL have HESIT glans

ba dola, ta dia=re,
 or glans SB be.bad=DEM.N.PL

ghe me au nga bore=di=ro ba klatu=di=ro. eu.
 SEQ INC have IMM ball=3PL.P= DEM.N.PV ALT testicles=3PL.P= DEM.N.PL be.thus
 ‘Males,, they (males) have their penis. At the penis they have the glans (*mamaka*), also called *dola*, which is the rude [word], and they also have their balls or testicles.’ (097A130408; elicitation)

Possession predicates can therefore be included in the larger class of location predicates since it is possible to regard the possessor participant as a type of location and the possessed one as a type of theme. The logical structure **have**’ (POSSESSOR, POSSESSED) can thus be conceived of as a subtype of the logical structure **be-at**’ (LOCATION, THEME).

In addition to possession and pure location, two-place state predicates can also express perception (*efra* ‘see’), cognition (*lase* ‘know’), emotion (*nahma* ‘love’), desire (*manahaghi* ‘want’) and propositional attitude (*ghaghatho* ‘think’). The logical structures of the predicates in (4.37), (4.38), (4.39), (4.40) and (4.41) are respectively **see**’ (mane ana, agho), **know**’ (ara, nahngana), **love**’ (no-na ido=na, ghai), **want**’ (ghai, ghau+RELC) and **consider**’ (mane sua=ne, ø). Notice that the y participant in the last

example is not overtly expressed in the same clause but the child is considering *something* that is explained by the subsequent context. The semantic relations of the arguments in these examples can be labelled as PERCEIVER-STIMULUS, COGNISER-CONTENT, EMOTER-TARGET, WANTER-DESIRE and JUDGER-JUDGEMENT.

(4.37) Mane ana efra=nigho agho.
 man DEM.N.SG see=2SG.AGR 2SG
 PERCEIVER STIMULUS
 ‘That man sees you.’ (029A140118; elicitation)

(4.38) Ara lase=ni nahnga=na.
 1SG know=3SG.AGR name=3SG.P
 COGNISER CONTENT
 ‘I know her name.’ (054A260208; text)

(4.39) No-na ido=na, tana ghoi, nahma=gai
 POSS.GEN=3SG.P mother= DEM.N.SG then VOC love=1NSG.EXCL
 EMOTER

[ghai] fa-keli eu.
 1PL.EXCL CS-be.good be.thus
 TARGET
 ‘So, man, my mother loves us very much.’ (092A130408; elicitation)

(4.40) Ghai manahaghi=gau ghau, mane Khiloau=de
 1PL.EXCL want=2NSG.AGR 2PL man Christianity= DEM.R.PL
 WANTER DESIRE

ta haghe ta age Loghahaza.
 SB ascend SB come PN
 ‘We want you, people of the church, to come up here to Loghahaza.’
 (12A051207; text)

(4.41) Ne ghaghatho ba mane sua=ne
 REAL think ALT man child= DEM.N.SG
 JUDGER

uheve ke si=ba ido e-ti age ka rumu ana
 why PERF FOC=ALT Mother HAB-NEG go PREP room DEM.N.SG
 JUDGEMENT
 ‘The child thought to himself: “Why does Mother always tell me not to go into that room?” ’ (073A020308; text)

What all these predicates have in common is the fact that, whatever the labels, their x argument is a kind of experiencer and their y argument a stimulus of some sort. As in the case of possession verbs, it has been argued that verbs of perception and cognition/propositional attitude can be assimilated to location verbs (Foley and Van Valin 1984:48-50). The participants in a perceptual event, a sense organ (and by extension the being possessing it) and an external stimulus (or its source) are considered

to be essentially in a locative relation with the predicate, the experiencer being the location and the stimulus the theme. As far as cognition and/or propositional attitude verbs are concerned, evidence for the fact that they imply locational relations comes either indirectly, from possessive paraphrases of the type *I have something in mind* for ‘I am thinking of something’, or directly from locative paraphrases such as *What’s on your mind?*. The abstract representation of a particular entity (the theme) is thus located in somebody’s mind (the location). Such paraphrases can be found in Blanga. The propositional attitude verb *ghaghatho* ‘think’ is used in (4.41), while (4.42) and (4.43) make use of the noun *gaghatho* ‘thought/mind’, achieving the same meaning through a locative paraphrase (for derivation by stem modification see 3.1.2.5).

(4.42) Ka gaghatho=mu=na agho ghuna nasava ta au=ne...
 PREP mind=2SG.P=that 2SG about crocodile SB exist=this
 ‘Do you think that the crocodile...’ (Lit. ‘In your mind about that crocodile...’
 (073A020308; text)

(4.43) Ka gaghatho=gu=na ara=hi,
 PREP mind=1SG.P= DEM.N.SG 1SG=INTS

 manekai dou=gu=na ara riso letasi au.
 brother be.big=1SG.P= DEM.N.PL 1SG write letter exist
 ‘As far as I can tell, my elder brother is writing letters.’ (Lit. ‘In my
 mind/opinion, my elder brother is writing letters’, given as an answer to the
 question *what do you think your brother is doing right now?*)
 (048A230208; elicitation)

Similar argumentation can be made for emotion and desire predicates, based on paraphrases such as *I have strong feelings for her* or *He has a death wish*. Therefore, like pure location predicates, possession, perception, cognition, propositional attitude, emotion and desire predicates can be regarded as having the logical structure **be-at** (LOCATION, THEME). There is one sub-class of two-place state predicates that has not been discussed yet, that of identificational and attributive predicates. In Blanga identificational predication constructions (4.2) are nominal and non-copular, as in (4.44), (4.45) and (4.46).

(4.44) Ine kukuku ka vilai.
 DEM.R.SG rust PREP knife
 IDENTIFIED IDENTIFICATIONAL
 ‘This is rust on [a] knife.’ (007A011207; elicitation)

(4.45) Ine nahnga=na nakodou=ne: Sorei.
 DEM.R.SG name=3SG.P woman= DEM.R.SG PN
 IDENTIFIED IDENTIFICATIONAL
 ‘This was the name of that woman: Sorei.’ (016A101207; text)

(4.46) Mane datau=ne datau Tobo
 man chief=DEM.R.SG chief PN
 IDENTIFIED IDENTIFICATIONAL
 ‘That chief was Chief Tobo.’ (12A051207; text)

The first argument in the clauses above is the identified NP and the second is an identificational NP, which itself functions as ‘a predicate, rather than a referring expression’ (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:125). According to Van Valin and LaPolla (see also pp.102-103), the inclusion of such constructions in the two-place predicates class seems justified and the representation of their logical structure can be given as **be'** (x, y), where y = **pred'**, hence **be'** (x, [**pred'**]).

Attributive constructions behave like identificational constructions and the representation **be'** (x, [**pred'**]) can be extended to them. The x argument of attributive predication is an attributant NP and the y argument is an attribute. Attributive predication is, thus, verbless and non-copular, as illustrated in (4.47), (4.48) and (4.49).

(4.47) Manei mane brahu.
 3SG man be.tall
 ATTRIBUTANT ATTRIBUTE
 ‘He is a tall man.’ (026AV130408; text)

(4.48) Manei ke kaisa mane prisi.
 3SG PERF one man priest
 ATTRIBUTANT ATTRIBUTE
 ‘He was a priest.’ (050A240208; text)

(4.49) Nahgna=gu=na ara Cecil Rhodes Kusapa.
 name=1SG.P=DEM.N.SG 1SG PN
 ATTRIBUTANT ATTRIBUTE
 ‘My name is Cecil Rhodes Kusapa.’ (050A240208; text)

Very frequently, attributive predicates are represented in Blanga by a non-resultative stative verb, such as *dou* ‘be.big’, *hreta* ‘be.strong’, *mamahe* ‘be.sweet’, *sesepa* ‘be.black’ and *snoto* ‘be.inactive/lazy’. The logical structures of the predicates in the examples below are **be'** (suka, [**sweet'**]) (x) and **be'** (hmari mamaka, [**black'**]) (x).

(4.50) [Suka] e mahmae.
 sugar HAB be.sweet
 ATTRIBUTANT ATTRIBUTE
 ‘Sugar is sweet.’ (111AV260408; elicitation)

Dialogue (4.53) is similar. Here, the predicate is realised by the verb *krodo* ‘be.short’ and must be analysed as having the logical structure **short**’ (khala), since the state of being short here is, again, clearly the result of the hair-cutting. However, in (4.54) the situation is different and being short is an inherent characteristic of the legs of that table (they have not been cut by anybody), therefore the appropriate analysis is **be**’ (ghahe, [short’]).

(4.53) “Uheve mane ana ta ghu-di=re?”
 what man DEM.N.SG SB do-3NSG.P= DEM.N.PL
 ‘What is that man doing?’

“Kukusu nga manei khala=na gaghase neu, ta brahu are”
 cut IMM he hair=3SG.P girl be.thus.REAL SB be.long DEM.N.PL
 ‘He is cutting the girl’s hair, which is long.’

“Uheve ta thoke=ni=na khala ka gaghase?”
 what SB undergo=3SG.ARG= DEM.N.SG hair PREP girl
 ‘What is happening to the girl’s hair?’

“Khala ka gaghase=na la krodo eu.”
 hair PREP girl= DEM.N.SG go be.short be.thus
 ‘The girl’s hair is getting short.’
 (021AV120408; elicitation)

(4.54) Ghahe=na tevolo ana ne krodo.
 leg=3SG.P table DEM.N.SG REAL be.short
 ‘The leg of that table is short.’ (021AV120408; elicitation)

4.4.1.3 Summing up state predicates

To summarise, some Blanga state predicates only allow one argument, while others allow two. One-place state predicates constitute a relatively restricted class represented almost entirely by resultative stative verbs, which have the prototypical patient as their sole argument. The exception is the pure existential verb, whose sole argument is simply an existing entity. Two-place state predicates are a larger category including predicates of static location, possession, perception, cognition, propositional attitude, emotion and desire. Their first and second arguments can be regarded as a type of location and a type of theme respectively. In addition, two-place state predicates include identificational and attributive predicates. These have a special status since their second argument is itself a predicate (albeit a non-verbal one). Table 4-1 shows the classification of Blanga state predicates.

	State type	1 st /sole argument	2 nd argument	Examples
One-place state predicates	resultative stative states	patient	-	<i>boe</i> ‘be.rotten’ (as the result of a putrefaction process)
	pure existence	entity	-	<i>au</i> ‘exist’
Two-place state predicates	static location	location	theme	no verb or <i>au</i> ‘exist’, <i>the’o</i> ‘not.exist’
	possession	location (possessor)	theme (possessed)	<i>au</i> ‘have’
	perception	location (perceiver)	theme (stimulus)	<i>efra</i> ‘see’
	cognition	location (cognizer)	theme (content)	<i>lase</i> ‘know’
	emotion	location (emoter)	theme (target)	<i>nahma</i> ‘love’
	desire	location (wanter)	theme (desire)	<i>manahaghi</i> ‘want’
	identificational	identified	identificational	any NP (predicate nominal)
	attributive (equative)	attributant	attribute	NP (predicate nominal) <i>hreta</i> ‘be.strong’ (inherently)

Table 4-1: *Blanga state predicates*

4.4.2 Activity predicates

Activity predicates reflect the *action* type of state-of-affairs and are characterised by the features [-static], [-telic], [-punctual] (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:92-93). The logical structure of activity predicates is more complex than that of state predicates since, within the theoretical framework adopted here, they fill the second argument position in **do’** (x, y), which, in turn, represents the structure of a ‘generalised activity predicate’ **do’**, serving as a class membership marker (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:125). If, for some reason, the activity is not specified, then the structure of the generalised activity predicate is represented as **do’** (x, \emptyset), where the zero does not imply lack of activity but rather that somebody did *something* but we do not know or do not care what. The unspecified activity convention is very useful for the representation of more complex logical structures, such as that of causative predicates (4.4.3.4).

Back to specified activities, their structure is, therefore, embedded as the y argument of the generalised activity predicate and it is useful to point out that, as in the case of state predicates, activity predicates can be classified according to the number of argument positions required in their logical structure. Thus, one-place activity

return to motion, some motion is clearly implied in (4.58) and the sole argument of its predicate can be labelled *MOVER* as in (4.55) and (4.56) because of the change of location implied, although moving from one place to another may not be the main purpose of diving in this particular case.

Van Valin and LaPolla (1997:115, 118 and *passim*), suggest the employment of an even more general label for the role of the participants involved, that of *EFFECTOR*, defined formally as the *x* argument in **do'** (*x*, *y*), which is the logical structure of activity predicates. Now, remember from the beginning of section 4.4.2 that the generalised activity predicate **do'** marks the class of activity predicates and the way this is formalised is by allowing activity predicates to fill the *y* position in its structure. Thus, one-place activity predicates, whose basic structure is **pred'** (*x*), can only be differentiated from resultative state predicates, which have an identical basic structure (see 4.4.1.1), if embedded as **do'** (*x*, [**pred'** (*x*)]). The role of the first argument of **do'** is reflected by the single argument of **pred'** in this complex structure.

4.4.2.2 Two-place activity predicates

Since **do'** marks the *whole* class of activity predicates, no matter if they allow one or two arguments in their logical structure, the role of *x* in **do'** (*x*, *y*) is also reflected by the first argument of **pred'** (*x*, *y*) when embedded as **do'** (*x*, [**pred'** (*x*, *y*)]). Therefore, the single argument of one-place activity predicates and the first argument of their two-place counterparts should bear the same (generalised) thematic role of *EFFECTOR* (Van Valin and LaPolla (1997:118). In (4.59), the effector is a consumer and the logical structure of the predicate is **do'** (*maneri*, [**eat'** (*maneri*, *nufi mata*)]), while in (4.60), the effector is a creator and the logical structure of the predicate is **do'** (*manei*, [**write'** (*manei*, *letasi*)]).

(4.59) Maneri ngau nufi mata bla.
 3PL eat taro be.wild LIM
 EFFECTOR (CONSUMER) PRED CONSUMED
 ‘They ate only wild taro.’ (12A051207; text)

(4.60) Manei e riso letasi.
 3SG HAB write letter
 EFFECTOR (CREATOR) PRED CREATION
 ‘He writes letters.’ (048A230208; elicitation)

A more accurate general representation of the logical structure of activity predicates should be **pred'** (*x*, (*y*)) embedded as **do'** (*x*, [**pred'** (*x*, (*y*))]), with *y* within brackets signalling that the second argument does not necessarily have to be overtly expressed

4.4.2.3 Summing up activity predicates

As in the case of state predicates, Blanga activity predicates may provide one direct argument position or two. All but one of the one-place activity predicates denote specified actions that either imply change of location from one place to another, or, if motion is not involved, encode a static activity. Two-place activity predicates, including, but not limited to, verbs of consumption, creation or performance, have a non-referential second argument, which either does not need to be overtly expressed, or is incorporated by the verb. The sole argument of one-place activity predicates and the first argument of two-place activity predicates bear the same generalised role of effector. Table 4-2 shows how *effector* can be generalised as a label for different types of Blanga activity predicates.

	Activity type	1 st /sole argument	2 nd argument	Examples
One-place activity predicates	unspecified action	effector	-	<i>ghu</i> ‘do’
	motion	effector (mover)	-	<i>snari</i> ‘run’
	emission	effector (emitter)	-	<i>tahni</i> ‘cry’
Two-place activity predicates	consumption	effector (consumer)	consumed	<i>ngau</i> ‘eat’
	creation	effector (creator)	creation	<i>riso</i> ‘write’
	performance	effector (performer)	performance	<i>rangi</i> ‘dance’

Table 4-2: Blanga activity predicates

4.4.3 Other predicate types

At the beginning of section 4.4, state and activity predicates were referred to as the basic types of predicates. This characterisation was justified by two facts: they are the only predicate types necessary to define thematic roles and generalised semantic relations (which will be dealt with later in this chapter), and any other types of predicates can be derived from them. In this section we shall briefly discuss those other predicate types, namely achievement, accomplishment and active accomplishment predicates, together with the causative counterparts of all predicate types.

4.4.3.1 Achievement predicates

Achievement predicates correspond to the *event* type of state-of-affairs, and encode instantaneous changes of state or activity and are inherently telic, thus bearing the features [-static], [+telic], [+punctual]. Their structure is derived from that of states or,

of motion with a definite goal constitutes an accomplishment predicate since a goal implies the feature [+telic], the terminal point being reached when the goal is reached. Verbal reduplication in Blanga (3.1.9.2) derives, among others, activity verbs from accomplishment verbs. A clear example involves the prototypical motion verb *zaho* ‘go/travel’. This verb necessarily requires a goal, which is expressed either as a PP (4.68) or as a non-prepositional oblique or adjunct (4.69).

(4.68) Maneri ke zaho ka nanau=na.
 3PL PERF go PREP village=DEM.N.SG
 ‘They are going to the village.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

(4.69) Ara zaho balu=na manei hmata=re.
 1SG go ASSC=3.SG.P 3SG bush=DEM.N.PL
 ‘I am going, together with him, to the bush.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

The form derived from *zaho* by partial reduplication, *zazaho*, has been glossed throughout this thesis as ‘walk’ but a better gloss would actually be ‘walk about’, since it never occurs with a specified goal. Note that the PP *ka hmata=re* in (4.70) is not a goal but a location specifying the area where the walking takes place: *through* the forest, not *to* the forest.

(4.70) Kaisa fata=na ara=hi ne zazaho ka hmata=re.
 one occasion 1SG=FOC REAL walk.about PREP bush=DEM.N.PL
 ‘One day, I was walking through the bush.’ (090A120408; elicitation)

Therefore, *zaho* is an accomplishment predicate and the derived *zazaho*³ is an activity predicate. Similarly, the verb *snari* in (4.56), repeated here for convenience as (4.71), does not occur with a definite goal, so it is an activity predicate here. In (4.72), it occurs as part of the serial predicate *snari age* ‘run.go’, which is an accomplishment predicate.

(4.71) Snari bla hmeke
 run LIM dog
 ‘The dog is just running.’ (022AV130408; text)

(4.72) Pita snari ne age ka no-na mama=na.
 PN run REAL go PREP POSS.GEN-3SG.P father=DEM.N.SG
 ‘Peter ran to his father.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

We can thus notice that pairs of activity-accomplishment predicates can be identified that have the same verbal base in common, morphologically or syntactically. However,

³ Currently, in the speech of both younger people and older people, *zazaho* is being gradually replaced by the Cheke Holo loanword *nonolo*, which has exactly the same meaning.

in each pair, one member is clearly an activity predicate and the other is clearly an accomplishment predicate. There are situations in which a goal is specified directly, without structurally affecting the motion verb. In (4.73), there is certainly a terminal point and that is reached when the animate mover reaches its goal, the father's arms.

(4.73) Pita=na snare=nga ke gilu-na no-na mama=na.
 PN=DEM.N.SG run=IMM PREP inside-3SG.P POSS.GEN-3.SG.P father=DEM.N.SG
 'Peter ran into his father's arms.' (043A160208; elicitation)

Van Valin and LaPolla (1997:100) refer to such situations as 'accomplishment uses of activity verbs' and label them 'active accomplishments'. Not only one-place activity predicates can have active accomplishment predicate counterparts. In section 4.4.2.2, it was briefly mentioned that two-place activity predicates with an overtly expressed y argument can only function as activities proper if that second argument is non-referential, which usually reflects cases of noun incorporation. This is the case in (4.74), where *riso* is an activity verb.

(4.74) Hnorao manei ke riso letasi.
 yesterday 3SG PERF write letter
 'Yesterday, he wrote letters.' (048A230208; elicitation)

In (4.75), the second argument is made referential by quantification and a terminal point is envisaged, which is reached when that particular letter is finished. In this example, therefore, the creation verb *riso* is an active accomplishment verb.

(4.75) Hnorao manei ke riso kaisa letasi.
 yesterday 3SG PERF write one letter
 'Yesterday, he wrote one letter.' (048A230208; elicitation)

Another example of active accomplishments is offered by the consumption verb *ngau* 'eat'. In (4.76), the second argument is not referential and *ngau* is an activity verb.

(4.76) Zone=na ke ngau kokorako.
 PN=DEM.N.SG PERF eat chicken
 'John ate chicken.' (193A171109; elicitation)

In (4.77), the second argument is definite and specific, as shown by the encliticised demonstrative (3.1.5) and the agreement indexing on the verb. In Blanga, only the affected argument of a predicate can be indexed on the verb and only when its referent is specific (3.4.1.4). Therefore, in (4.77) *ngau* is an active accomplishment verb.

(4.77) Zone=na ke ngau=ni kokorako=na.
 PN=DEM.N.SG PERF eat=3SG.AGR Chicken=DEM.N.SG
 ‘John ate the/that chicken.’ (193A171109; elicitation)

As activity verbs, *zazaho* ‘walk.about’ in (4.70), *snari* ‘run’ in (4.71), *riso* ‘write’ in (4.74) and *ngau* ‘eat’ in (4.76) have the respective logical structures **do’** (ara, [**walk’** (ara)]), **do’** (hmeke, [**run’** (hmeke)]), **do’** (manei, [**write’** (manei, letasi)]) and **do’** (Zone, [**eat’** (Zone, kokorako)]). For active accomplishments, Van Valin and LaPolla (1997:111) point out that the change or development that occurs in the state-of-affairs must be represented in logical structure. For instance, the change of location, in the case of motion verbs, must be captured by the representation **do’** (x, [**pred’** (x)]) & BECOME **be-at’** (y, x). The coming into being of an entity, in the case of creation verbs, is captured in the representation **do’** (x, [**pred’** (x, y)]) & BECOME **exist’** (y), while the consumption of an entity, in the case of consumption verbs, is represented in the second part of **do’** (x, [**pred’** (x, y)]) & BECOME **consumed’** (y). Therefore, the active accomplishment predicates in (4.73), (4.75) and (4.77) should be represented in logical structure respectively as **do’** (Pita, [**run’** (Pita)]) & BECOME **be-at’** (no-na mama=na, Pita), **do’** (manei, [**write’** (manei, letasi)]) & BECOME **exist’** (letasi) and **do’** (Zone, [**eat’** (Zone, kokorako)]) & BECOME **consumed’** (kokorako).

4.4.3.4 Causative predicates and the causative particle *fa*

Each *Aktionsart* type has a causative counterpart. Non-causative *Aktionsart* types correspond to spontaneous states-of-affairs, while causative *Aktionsart* types correspond to induced states-of-affairs (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:106-107 and *passim*). The representation of causative predicates in logical structure makes use of the operator CAUSE preceded by the logical structure of the state, activity, achievement or accomplishment representing the state-of-affairs that has caused the current state of affairs. If the cause is not known, as is often the case, then it is conventionally assumed to be an activity and the device employed is a generalised unspecified activity predicate. This is represented as **do’** (x, \emptyset) and was introduced at the beginning of 4.4.2. The full representation of causative states will thus be [**do’** (x_i, \emptyset)] CAUSE [**pred’** (x_j)]. In example (4.78) below, the logical structure of the predicate is [**do’** (nahani, \emptyset)] CAUSE [**alive’** (garden)].

(4.78) Nahani bla ke fa doli=di=re nhagare=re.
 rain LIM PERF CS be.alive=3PL.AGR=DEM.N.PL garden=DEM.N.PL
 ‘The rain made/kept the garden alive.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

Causative achievements have the logical structure [**do'** (x_i, ø)] CAUSE [INGR **pred'** (x_j)]. Accordingly, the logical structure of the predicate in (4.79) below is [**do'** (nute, ø)] CAUSE [INGR **collapsed'** (khoilo)].

(4.79) Nute ke fa uu grofo=ni=na khoilo=na.
 Wind PERF CS HES collapse=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG coconut=DEM.N.SG
 'The wind knocked down the coconut tree.' (051A240208; elicitation)

The logical structure of causative accomplishments is [**do'** (x_i, ø)] CAUSE [BECOME **pred'** (x_j)]. For example (4.80) below, this can be rendered as [**do'** (Zone, ø)] CAUSE [BECOME **dead'** (snake)].

(4.80) Ne-ke falelehe=ni=na Zone hmogo=na.
 REAL=PERF CS.die=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG PN snake=DEM.N.SG
 'John killed the snake.' (193A171109; elicitation)

Finally, causative activities have the logical structure [**do'** (x_i, ø)] CAUSE [**do'** (x_j, [**pred'** (x_j)])], which in the case of example (4.81) below becomes [**do'** (we, ø)] CAUSE [**do'** (canoe, [**move'** (canoe)])]. Example (4.82) illustrates a motion (serial) verb functioning as an active accomplishment predicate. The goal is not overtly mentioned in this particular sentence but it is very clear from the previous and subsequent context. The logical structure here is [**do'** (maneri, ø)] CAUSE [**do'** (kaisa mane datau, [**descend'** (kaisa mane datau)])] & BECOME [**be-at'** (Popoheo, kaisa mane datau)].

(4.81) Tugha-i hore=o [...].
 push-TRANS canoe=DEM.NV.SG
 '[We] pushed the canoe [...].' (031A140108; text)

(4.82) Me fa tughu khave=ni=nga maneri kaisa mane datau.
 IMM CS move descend=3SG.AGR=IMM 3PL one man chief
 'They persuaded a chief to come down [to Popoheo].' (12A051207; text)

The verbs *tugha* 'push' and *tughu* 'move' are two different words that happen to form a minimal pair. The fact that they may be historically related is irrelevant here.

As is obvious from the examples above, Blanga grammaticalises causativisation to a large extent by means of the causative particle *fa*. Causativisation is also lexicalised in some verbs that never appear with *fa* (4.81). The reasons why I consider *fa* to be, in most cases, an unbound particle rather than a prefix, are explained in (3.1.12) but it is important to point out that some verbs of high frequency, such as *falelehe* 'kill' or *fakeli* 'be.very.good' may have lexicalised causativisation by reanalysing the particle, as well as any reduplicative morphology that may accompany it, as part of their root.

Causativisation increases the valency of a predicate (4.4.7.2). Blanga verbs belonging to any *Aktionsart* type can be causativised by means of *fa* but the resulting forms cannot have more than two direct arguments, normally an effector (agent or force) and a patient or theme. In other words, only monovalent verbs can be causativised.

4.4.4 Defining thematic roles

It was stated at the beginning of this chapter that, within the theoretical framework adopted here (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997, Foley & Van Valin 1984), thematic roles are defined based on the position of arguments in the logical structure of state and activity predicates. As shown above, all other predicate types are derived from states or activities and involve embedding of the structure of those two basic types.

The prototypical PATIENT was defined in section 4.4.1.1 as the semantic relation of *x* in **pred'** (*x*). Agents and forces are types of effectors. EFFECTOR is defined as the semantic relation of the first argument in **do'** (*x*, *y*), which is the structure of the generalised activity predicate (see 4.4.2). According to Van Valin and LaPolla (1997:119), the definition of AGENT as a particular type of effector must be based on the structure of verbs that lexicalise agency. The representation of this structure, which requires the employment of the operator DO, is given as DO (*x*, [**do'** (*x*, [... and the prototypical AGENT is defined as the semantic relation of the first argument of DO in this structure. AGENTS are animate effectors capable of acting volitionally, while FORCES are inanimate and can act independently. Neither AGENTS nor FORCES are controlled by another EFFECTOR, so they can instigate states-of-affairs. INSTRUMENTS are a third type of effector but they cannot act independently and are always controlled by another EFFECTOR (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:119).

The role of LOCATION is defined as the relation of the first argument of **pred'**(*x*, *y*) (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:127) in the structure of two-place state predicates and thus it can be re-written as **be-at'** (*y*, *x*), where the THEME is the relation of the second argument of such predicates.

The roles of the second argument of **pred'**(*x*, *y*) in the structure of activity verbs, such as CONSUMED, CREATION, PERFORMANCE, are more patient-like than any other roles, except for prototypical PATIENT and ENTITY. ENTITY was defined in section 4.4.1.1 as the relation of the single argument in **exist'** (*x*). In the subcategorisation frames that follow, the label PATIENT will include not only prototypical PATIENT and ENTITY, but also roles of *y* in the structure of activity verbs. In the same way, the label AGENT will

be applied not only to the prototypical AGENT. The roles of *x* in the structure of activity verbs will be grouped under AGENT if the referent of *x* is animate and volitional or under FORCE if the referent of *x* is non-animate but still regarded as capable of acting independently, without being manipulated by any other participant.

4.4.5 Subcategorisation frames

When referring to one-place or two-place predicates in the previous sections, I was referring to the number of arguments in the logical structure of those predicates. These do not necessarily correspond to the number of direct arguments that a predicate can take, since in logical structure one of the two places can be filled by an oblique or even another predicate. Hence, the importance of distinguishing between direct and oblique arguments, as defined in 4.1.

4.4.5.1 Subcategorisation frames of state predicates

State predicates (4.4.1) can subcategorise for one or two direct arguments. Resultative stative verbs subcategorise for one direct argument, a PATIENT, while a participant known or considered to be the origin of the resultative state or condition may be expressed as an oblique argument (4.83).

(4.83) Pita=na fogra ka reka
 PN=DEM.N.SG be.ill PREP cold
 PATIENT PREDICATE ADJ
 ‘Peter is sick with a cold.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

The sole argument of the pure existential predicate is an ENTITY (4.84).

(4.84) Au suga=na ghepea.
 exist house=DEM.N.SG 1DL.EXCL
 PRED ENTITY
 ‘It is our house.’ (006A011207; elicitation)

With a locative meaning, the existential verb *au* subcategorises for a THEME and a LOCATION. The THEME is a direct argument, while the location is expressed obliquely (4.85). Locative predicates proper are predicate nominals represented by a locative NP or PP (3.1.2.1.3) and subcategorise for a THEME as their sole argument (4.86).

(4.85) Nusu au ka natha=na mane gogholio=ia
 Sand exist PREP eye=DEM.N.SG man giant=PART
 THEME PRED LOCATION
 ‘There is sand in the giant’s eyes.’ (150A020608; text)

(4.86) Apolo=na (ka) hotai=na disi.
 apple=DEM.N.SG PREP middle=DEM.N.SG bowl
 THEME PRED
 ‘The apple is in the middle of the bowl.’ (082A030408; elicitation)

Most of the other roles borne by the arguments of state predicates can be generalised as THEME and LOCATION. With a possessive meaning, the predicate *au* subcategorises for two direct arguments, a LOCATION, represented by a POSSESSOR, and a THEME, represented by a POSSESSED (4.87). Predicates of perception, cognition, emotion, desire and propositional attitude also subcategorise for two direct arguments. This is illustrated with a verb of perception in (4.88) below. For other categories see (4.38), (4.39), (4.40) and (4.42).

(4.87) Agho au kaisa kesu eu.
 2SG have one mango be.thus
 LOCATION (POSSESSOR) PRED THEME (POSSESSED)
 ‘You have a mango.’ (092A130408; elicitation)

(4.88) Ara efra=ni mane iao.
 1SG see=3SG.AGR man DEM.PV.SG
 LOCATION (PERCEIVER) PRED THEME (STIMULUS)
 ‘I see that man.’ (029A140118; elicitation)

4.4.5.2 Subcategorisation frames of activity and active accomplishment predicates

All Blanga activity predicates subcategorise for only one direct argument, no matter if they are classified as one-place predicates (4.89) or two-place predicates (4.90), (4.91) in terms of their logical structure. As explained in section 4.4.2.2, the second argument in the logical structure of two-place activity predicates is either not overtly expressed, as in (4.90), or incorporated by the verb, as in (4.91), where the predicate is *pipila viri mata* ‘do wild tobacco smoking’.

(4.89) Ido=na nonolo=na thoghai fakeli.
 mother=DEM.N.SG walk=DEM.N.SG be.slow CS.be.good
 AGENT (EFFECTOR=MOVER) PRED
 ‘Mother walks slowly.’ (089A120408; elicitation)

(4.90) Pita=na=ba ghe ragi la bla.
 PN=DEM.N.SG=PART SEQ dance PART LIM
 AGENT (EFFECTOR=PERFORMER) PRED
 ‘Peter is dancing too.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(4.91) Maneri pipila viri mata eu.
 3PL smoke tobacco wild be.thus
 AGENT (EFFECTOR=CONSUMER) PRED
 ‘They are smoking wild tobacco.’ (092A130408; elicitation)

As active accomplishments, discussed in 4.4.3.3, Blanga motion verbs of the *zaho* ‘travel/go’, *age* ‘go’, *mai* ‘come’ and *snari* ‘run’ type subcategorise for an AGENT and a GOAL but do not seem able to subcategorise for a source. As explained in (4.4.3.3), goals can be expressed either by a prepositional (4.92), (4.93), (4.94) or a non-prepositional (4.95) oblique or adjunct.

(4.92) No-gu bosu=na ara ne mai ka ara.
 POSS.GEN-1SG.P pig=DEM.N.SG 1SG REAL come PREP 1SG
 AGENT (MOVER) PRED GOAL
 ‘My pig came to me.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(4.93) No-gu bosu=na ara ke age ka agho.
 POSS.GEN-1SG.P pig.DEM.N.SG 1SG PERF go PREP 2SG
 AGENT (MOVER) PRED GOAL
 ‘My pig went to you.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(4.94) Jon ke zaho [...] ka mhata=re.
 PN PERF go PREP bush=DEM.N.PL
 AGENT (MOVER) PRED GOAL
 ‘John went to the bush.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(4.95) [...] phea maneri ne zaho hmata=re.
 3DL REAL go bush=DEM.N.PL
 AGENT (MOVER) PRED GOAL
 ‘[...] they are going to the bush.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

When a source or both source and goal together need to be specified, this is done usually by employing the verb *fufunu* ‘start’ or both *fufunu* and *thoke* /‘reach/arrive’.

(4.96) Fufunu ade Popoheo, thoke ka Garanga.
 start here PLN reach PREP PLN
 ‘Start here at Popoheo, arrive at Garanga.’ (071AV260408; text)

Active accomplishments represented by verbs of consumption, creation etc. subcategorise for two direct arguments, an AGENT and a PATIENT. Examples (4.75) and (4.77) are repeated below for convenience as (4.97) and (4.98) including a semantic role tier.

(4.97) Hnorao manei ke riso kaisa letasi.
 yesterday 3SG PERF write one letter
 AGENT PRED PATIENT
 ‘Yesterday, he wrote one letter.’ (048A230208; elicitation)

(4.98) Zone=na ke ngau=ni kokorako=na.
 PN=DEM.N.SG PREP eat=3SG.AGR chicken=DEM.N.SG
 AGENT PRED PATIENT
 ‘John ate that chicken.’ (193A171109; elicitation)

4.4.5.3 Subcategorisation frames of achievement and accomplishment predicates

Achievement and accomplishment predicates can subcategorise for one direct argument, a PATIENT, as in (4.64) and (4.66) above or for two direct arguments. With achievement predicates, the two direct arguments can be an AGENT and a PATIENT, like in (4.65) above. With accomplishment predicates, they are more likely to be a LOCATION and a THEME, like in (4.67).

4.4.6 Macroroles and the actor-undergoer hierarchy

In sections 4.4.1 to 4.4.4 we saw how the numerous thematic roles that can be postulated can be reduced by semantic decomposition to a few, more general, types that can characterise the direct arguments of a predicate, namely EFFECTOR (AGENT, FORCE OR INSTRUMENT), (static) LOCATION (including EXPERIENCER), THEME (including STIMULUS) AND PATIENT. In order to reveal how the relations established between a Blanga predicate and its arguments are treated in the grammar of the language we need to operate with generalised semantic roles (macroroles) and pay attention to their position on the actor-undergoer continuum (Foley & Van Valin 1984:59; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:139-147). The semantic macrorole ACTOR is borne by the argument whose referent performs, initiates or controls the situation, action, event or process expressed by the predicate, while the macrorole UNDERGOER characterises the argument whose referent is affected by those. The prototypical ACTOR and UNDERGOER are the AGENT and PATIENT respectively, each being situated at the top of a distinct hierarchy of thematic relations, the actorhood hierarchy and the undergoerhood hierarchy. The two hierarchies can be represented together as a continuum, in which the markedness of arguments realised as one or the other macrorole increases in opposite directions.

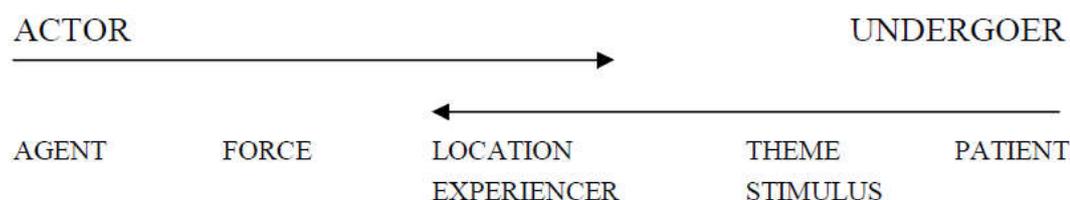


Figure 4-1: The Actor-Undergoer Continuum (after Foley and VanValin [1984:59])

For Blanga, different types of experiencer can be grouped with locations, and stimuli with themes. Thus, AGENT is higher than FORCE and LOCATION on the actorhood hierarchy and PATIENT is higher than THEME and LOCATION on the undergoerhood hierarchy. LOCATION falls at the bottom of both hierarchies. In Blanga, INSTRUMENTS are left out of this continuum. They cannot be actors, since they cannot be conceived by native Blanga speakers as performing or controlling the action but are always seen as manipulated by another participant; neither can they be undergoers because they are not affected in any way, therefore they are always expressed as obliques. In Blanga SOURCE, GOAL, and RECIPIENT are also always realised as oblique arguments or as adjuncts. In Chapter 6, we shall investigate if and how the relations between the predicate and the semantic macroroles defined here are grammatically encoded in Blanga.

4.4.7 Valency and valency alteration operations

Blanga does not have a morphosyntactic voice distinction. However, there are two valency-augmenting operations in the language, namely causative derivation with the particle *fa* (3.1.12), (4.4.3.4) and transitivity by means of the suffix *-i*, as well as one valency-decreasing operation, namely derivation of intransitive verbs from transitive verbs by partial reduplication (3.1.9.2). In addition, noun incorporation reflects a change in *aktionsart*, which has valency-decreasing consequences. These strategies will be discussed in this section but first a summary of valency in Blanga is presented in terms of the semantic macroroles introduced in the previous section.

4.4.7.1 Summary of valency in Blanga

In view of the generalisations made in the previous sections, the following statements can be made:

1. verbs representing one-place state predicates are *intransitive* and the sole direct argument that they subcategorise for is an UNDERGOER;

2. verbs representing two-place state predicates:
 - a. if verbs of location (including possession), they are *intransitive* since the argument occupying the second position in their logical structure is an oblique location; their sole direct argument, being a theme, is thus closer to the UNDERGOER edge of the continuum;
 - b. if verbs of perception, cognition, emotion, desire or propositional attitude, they are *transitive* and thus subcategorise for both an ACTOR and an UNDERGOER;
3. verbs representing activity predicates are *intransitive*, no matter if they allow one or two places in their logical structure, and their sole argument is an ACTOR; the argument occupying the second position of such predicates is inherent and thus either not overtly expressed or incorporated by the verb; we can thus only talk about an ‘inherent’ or ‘incorporated undergoer’;
4. verbs representing achievement predicates:
 - a. if they derive their structure from that of state predicates, which is usually the case, they are *intransitive* and take an UNDERGOER as their sole argument;
 - b. if, more rarely, their structure is derived from that of an active predicate (‘active achievement’, see 4.4.3.1), then they can be *transitive* and thus take an ACTOR and an UNDERGOER;
5. verbs representing accomplishment predicates:
 - a. if they have **predicate**’ (x) in their logical structure, they are *intransitive* and subcategorise for an UNDERGOER;
 - b. if they have **predicate**’ (x, y) as part of their logical structure, they are *transitive*, and therefore subcategorise for both an ACTOR and an UNDERGOER;
6. verbs representing active accomplishment predicates:
 - a. if derived from one-state activities, they inherit *intransitivity* and their sole argument is an ACTOR;
 - b. if derived from two-state activities, they become *transitive*, thus taking an ACTOR and an UNDERGOER.

4.4.7.2 Increasing valency by causativisation

Only intransitive verbs can be causativised. The causative particle *fa* (3.1.12), (4.4.3.4) increases the valency of an intransitive predicate by introducing a second direct

The transitivity suffix is in the course of being reanalysed, at least by some speakers, as the root vowel, which generates forms like *nohmi=gau* ‘hear=2NSG.AGR’ and *nohmi=ni* ‘hear=3SG.AGR’.

4.4.7.4 Decreasing valency by reduplication

Reduplication of verbs (3.1.9.2) derives, among others, intransitive verbs from transitive verbs, decreasing the valency to one. The derived forms can subcategorise for an UNDERGOER or an ACTOR.

tih ‘wash’ → *titih* ‘be.washed’

nughe ‘shake’ → *nunughe* ‘shiver’

4.4.7.5 Valency, *aktionsart* and noun incorporation

Noun incorporation is very frequent in Blanga and involves the overtly expressed affected argument of a two-place activity predicate (the undergoer) when that argument immediately follows the verb. As explained and illustrated in 4.4.2.2, it is either the non-specificity or lack of overt presence of an inherent affected argument that defines two-place activity predicates and opposes them to other types of predicates such as achievement, accomplishment and active accomplishment predicates. Activity predicates are always intransitive, even if they are two-place predicates in their logical structure. For these reasons and because taking an inherent undergoer is a characteristic of some predicates, not an operational device, noun incorporation cannot be considered, strictly-speaking, a valency alteration operation but rather a change in *aktionsart* with valency-decreasing consequences. In (4.103), a non-specific undergoer immediately follows and is incorporated by the verb, thus forming a compound with the latter. If the undergoer is specific, as indicated by the indefinite specific article (3.1.5) in (4.104) or by the presence of agreement markers (3.4.1.4.1) in (4.105), then the predicate becomes an active accomplishment predicate. The same change in *aktionsart* happens when an otherwise non-specific undergoer does not immediately follow the verb and thus cannot be incorporated (4.106), suggesting that argument non-specificity is not exclusively related to activity predicates.

(4.103) *Mane Papa=na sage khoilo.*
 SPEC PN=DEM.N.SG carve coconut
 ‘Papa is carving coconut.’ (094A130408; text)

(4.104) *Jon ke toka kaisa gazu ka hirama.*
 PN PERF chop one tree PREP axe
 ‘John cut the tree with an axe.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(4.105) Jon=na ne toka=ni gazu=na ka hirama.
PN=DEM.N.SG REAL chop=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG tree PREP axe
'John cut the tree with an axe.' (043A160208; elicitation)

(4.106) Sage bla Gibati khoilo.
carve LIM PN coconut
'Gilbert is simply carving coconut. (094A130408; text)

CHAPTER FIVE

Clauses and Complex Sentences

Chapter 4 mentioned the universality of constituents such as nucleus (predicate), core and periphery in the non-relational clause structure and explored how Blanga predicates subcategorise for arguments to form the clause core. This chapter shows how Blanga clauses combine with each other in order to form complex sentences. Clause constituent order, which is very flexible in Blanga, will be dealt with in Chapter 7. For now, note that not all the possible constituent orders are illustrated in this chapter.

5.1 Main clauses

5.1.1 Declarative main clauses

Declarative main clauses can be both verbal and verbless. Based on the types of verbless predication discussed in 4.2, Blanga verbless clauses can be identificational (5.1), attributive proper (5.2), naming attributives (5.3), possessor predicate attributives (5.4), locative (5.5), and possessive (5.6).

- (5.1) Ide khala-mata.
DEM.R.PL hair-bush
'These are leaves.' (007A011207; elicitation)
- (5.2) Pensolo=na e ukru.
pencil=DEM.N.SG HAB red
'That pencil is red.' (080AV030508; elicitation)
- (5.3) Nahgna=di=re repea Hareti ghe Kale.
name=3PL.P=DEM.N.PL 3DL PN and PN
'Their names are Hareti and Kale.' (069A270208; elicitation)
- (5.4) Uve, repea mane=di Blanga.
yes 3DL person=3PL.P PN
'Yes, they are Blanga people.' (069A270208; elicitation)
- (5.5) Hmari=na ke gilugraro.
fish=DEM.N.SG PREP inside pot
'The fish is inside the pot.' (007A011207; elicitation)
- (5.6) Zeku ao ghe-gu ara
banana DEM.T.SG POSS.CONNS-1SG.P 1SG
'The banana is mine.' (006A011207; elicitation)

Verbal predication was discussed in 4.3 and the different types of predicates were identified in 4.4. Verbal clauses can have a non-stative or a stative verb as predicate,

including the existential-locative-possessive verb *au* and its negative counterpart *theo*, which seems to be restricted to the locative sense. Verbal declarative clauses, transitive and intransitive, were illustrated extensively in 4.4, according to their type of predicate.

5.1.2 Interrogative clauses

polar (yes/no) questions as well as alternative-option questions are distinguished from declarative clauses almost exclusively by rising intonation, with the, sometimes redundant, contribution of the alternative particle *ba* (3.1.12.8) or the contrastive particle *bo* (3.1.12.9). Otherwise, their structure is identical. Both verbless (5.7), (5.8), (5.9) and verbal (5.10) – (5.13) interrogative clauses are possible. The particle *ba* is compulsory in alternative-option questions, where it can be glossed as ‘or’ (5.13). Negation (5.1.4) in interrogatives employs the same negative particle as in declarative clauses (5.14).

- (5.7) Ine suga=na agho?
 DEM.R.SG house=DEM.N.SG 2SG
 ‘Is this your house?’ (006A011207; elicitation)
- (5.8) Phau gogholi bla sare ba, tughu=ro?
 head giant LIM there ALT son=DEM.NV.PL
 ‘Is that simply a giant’s head over there, my sons?’ (150A020608; text)
- (5.9) Agho mane=mu Blanga?
 2SG man=2SG.P PN
 ‘Are you a blanga person?’ (107A230408; elicitation)
- (5.10) La hmaghu la si maneri ia?
 go be.afraid PART FOC 3PL PART
 ‘But they, have they got scared?’ (150A020608; text)
- (5.11) Agho lase=ni bo Hovukoilo=na?
 2SG know=3SG.AGR CNT PN=DEM.N.SG
 ‘Do you know Hovukoilo?’ (092A130408; elicitation)
- (5.12) Ke voli si ba Pita no-na hore ana ia?
 PERF steal PART ALT PN POSS.GEN-3.SG.P canoe DEM.N.SG PART
 ‘Did Peter steal that canoe?’ (051A240208; elicitation)
- (5.13) Ne mai ba theo?
 REAL come or no
 ‘Are you coming or not?’ (051A240208; elicitation)
- (5.14) Theome lase=nau=nga bla la si ba maneri ia?
 not know=1SG.AGR=? LIM ? PART ALT 3PL PART
 ‘Don’t they know me anymore?’ (150A020608; text)

Interrogative tags can also be both verbal and verbless.

(5.15) Ara-hi ghinai seha fate ka gazu ana
1SG-INTS FUT climb on.top PREP tree DEM.N.SG

eu ta=na ghoi, ghinai zughi, eu ba?
be.thus.IRR SB=DEM.N.SG VOC FUT hide be.thus.IRR ALT
'I shall climb on top of that tree, then hide, right?' (150A020608; text)

(5.16) Glima bia au ta au=re ka giluna karao=re,
five cassava exist SB exist=DEM.N.PL PREP inside=3SG.P basket=DEM.N.PL

ba Trevor?
ALT PN
'There are five cassavas in these baskets, aren't they, Trevor?'
(061A270208; elicitation)

Interrogative pronouns, discussed intensively in 3.1.3.5, can sometimes substitute the predicates of short clauses or the only constituent of a clause (5.17), (5.18), (5.19), (5.20). There is no morphological or syntactic clue to indicate that they can be analysed as verbs in particular positions, as is the case in other Oceanic languages. Although there is no Blanga particle exclusively specialised as a question marker, the contrastive particle *bo* or the alternative particle *ba* occur many times in interrogative contexts, sometimes just simply strengthening the question status (5.18), or at other times adding to the meaning, as in (5.19).

(5.17) Agho hae?
2SG where
'Where are you?' (FN1:3; elicitation)

(5.18) Heve (bo)?
how CNT
'How (are you)?' (004A011207; elicitation) Cf. Pijin (*Iu*) *hao?* 'How are you?'

(5.19) ba heve
ALT what
'What else?' (107A230408; elicitation)

(5.20) 'Oi, kheto=gu!
INTERJ husband=1SG.P

'Heve?'
what
'Hey, husband!'
'What?' (161A100608; text)

5.1.3 Imperative clauses

In principle, imperative clauses have the same structure as declarative clauses. What differs is their intonational pattern and the fact that there is no flexibility as far as constituent order is concerned, as we shall see in Chapter 7. The arguments are many times not expressed. Imperatives are conceived of as irrealis and available only for the second (5.21), (5.22), (5.23) and first inclusive (5.24) person. The particle *si* occurs very frequently in positive imperatives as a politeness marker, as explained and illustrated in 3.1.12.13.

(5.21) Mai!
come
'Come!' (FN1:7; elicitation)

(5.22) Mai hota!
come take
'Take (it)!' (FN1:7; elicitation)

(5.23) Mai mahai!
come eat
'Come and eat!' (FN1:7; elicitation)

(5.24) Age!
go
'Let's go! (Notebook 1:7; elicitation)

Negative imperatives have a completely different structure, involving the negative suffix *-ti* attached to the auxiliary base (3.4.1.1.2). Irrealis mood is not marked in positive interrogatives but needs to occur as the auxiliary base in negative imperatives, since *-ti* is always bound.

(5.25) Thu-gu=ro, e-ti rahi la!
offspring-1SG.P=DEM.NV.PL IRR-NEG stroll PART
'Sons, no strolling (along the river)!'¹ (150A020608; text)

The combination *e-ti* 'IRR-NEG' may be undergoing a process of grammaticalisation as a prohibitive marker *eti*, which may explain its much less frequent occurrence in negative declaratives or interrogatives. However, at this stage it is still decomposable into its two elements.

¹ The verb *rahi* has the complex meaning of 'stroll by the side of a river'. It is not clear if that can be extended to mean 'walk along the sea shore'.

5.1.4 Negation

In its basic function, the word *theo* occurs as the opposite of *uve* ‘yes!’ and can be glossed as ‘no!’ As mentioned in 4.3.1.2, *theo* also functions as a negative existential verb, glossed as ‘not.exist’ and opposed to the verb *au* ‘exist’. The negative existential meaning of *theo* is illustrated in (5.26), where its verb status is confirmed by its being preceded by the perfective aspect particle *ke*.

- (5.26) Tifaro=na ke theo khou ka vido ta=u=ne.
time.before=DEM.N.SG PERF not.be.at water PREP land SB=exist=DEM.R.SG
‘Long ago, there was no fresh water on this land.’ (016A101207; text)

The equivalent of the English *not* is the negative particle *theome*, which can negate any (positive) verb, including *au*. In terms of distribution, *theome* immediately precedes the main verb but follows the auxiliary (5.27) or any unbound aspect (5.28), (5.30), (5.32) or tense (5.31) particle, if present. Examples (5.32) and (5.33) also show distributive patterns of the possibilitative particle *mela*, which is not part of the verb complex, but functions as a clause modifier. As expected, the negation *theo* and the negative particle *theome* can co-occur in the same clause (5.34).

- (5.27) Thogele Guguha ani ne-ke theome au
hill PN then REAL-PERF NEG exist

ka fufunu=na=na ka vido ta=u=ne.
PREP beginning=3SG.P=DEM.N.SG PREP land SB=exist=DEM.R.SG
‘In the beginning, the Guguha hill was not located on this land.’
(017A101207; text)

- (5.28) Mane Blanga=de, maneri ke theome au ka kaisa nanau.
man PN=DEM.R.PL 3PL PERF NEG stay PREP one village
‘The Blanga people did not leave in a single village.’ (012A051207; text).

- (5.29) Vido ine theome au nakoni.
land DEM.R.SG NEG have people
‘This land has no people.’ (012A051207; text)

- (5.30) Magret=na e theome manahaghi bla [ta ragi]=na.
PN=DEM.N.SG HAB NEG want LIM SB dance=DEM.N.SG
‘Margaret never wants to dance.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

- (5.31) Magret=na ghine theome ragi.
PN=DEM.N.SG FUT NEG dance
‘Margaret will not dance.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

- (5.32) Mela Pita ne theome hahaghe ka no-na hore=na.
PSSB PN REAL NEG get.on PREP POSS.GEN-3SG.P canoe=DEM.N.SG
‘Peter might not board his canoe.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(5.33) Pita=na mela ke theome hahaghe bla
 PN=DEM.N.SG PSSB PERF NEG get.on LIM

ka no-na mhola=na ba eu.
 PREP POSS.GEN.3SG.P canoe=DEM.N.SG ALT be.thus
 ‘Peter might simply not board his canoe.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

(5.34) Theo, ghai theome tangomana
 no 1PL.EXCL NEG be.able

ta pulo=na ka nanau=mai=ro
 SB return=DEM.N.SG PREP village=3PL.P=DEM.NV.PL
 ‘No, we are not able to return to our villages.’ (149A020608; text)

Negatives are generally regarded as irrealis in Blanga and mood marking does not normally occur, unless the meaning is strictly habitual, as in (5.30). However, albeit very rarely, negative verbs can occur with realis marking in the language, as examples (5.27) and (5.32) clearly show. An explanation is suggested by Palmer’s (2009:313) analysis of a similar situation in the neighbouring and closely related Kokota language. Both negatives and habitual are normally treated as irrealis in Blanga as well as in Kokota. What triggers the irrealis coding of negatives is the non-occurrence of the event, while habitual events are regarded as irrealis because, although real, they are not specific and do not predicate of individual instances. Realis, on the other hand, covers the range of specific and individual events that have occurred or are occurring at the moment of speaking. Palmer (2009:313) suggests that negative constructions can be marked as realis as long as the speaker “has a particular specific non-occurrence in mind”. In the Blanga case illustrated by (5.27), the hill had a different location *in the beginning* and the whole story is about how it has come to be where it is found nowadays. The case illustrated by (5.32) represents a different situation. A possibilitative particle is used here in order to express the speaker’s opinion about the occurrence (or non-occurrence) of the event, rather than to acknowledge a fact. This is supported by the consultants’ employing the Pijin translation of the particle *ating* ‘maybe’ (← Engl. *I think*), which always reflects the opinion of the speaker. The event is clearly not real, being a future-oriented possibility. However, realis marking can be used with a future-oriented event, most of the time in combination with the future particle *ghinai* but not always, if the speaker has in mind a very near future. This appears to be a tense specification strategy, rather than a mood-marking one. A more suggestive English translation of (5.32) would have been ‘maybe Peter is not boarding his canoe (immediately).’ When the expression of the same state-of-affairs was elicited on a different occasion from a different consultant, no realis marking was present, the

speaker having in mind a relatively distant future or not being interested in the degree of proximity of the future event to the moment of speaking. This is illustrated in example (5.33), which, for comparison, can be translated as ‘maybe Peter will simply not board his canoe’. The alternative marker *ba* occurring in this example is the effect of the consultant’s trying to recreate a context from the previously elicited situations, contrasting the event with one in which the same character, Peter, did board his canoe.

As mentioned earlier, the negation strategy involving *theome* can be employed with any kind of transitive and intransitive verb. The different examples above and below illustrated some relevant types: locative verbs (5.27), (5.28), possessive verbs (5.29), resutative stative verbs (5.35), attributive abilitative verbs (5.34) and (5.36), desiderative verbs (5.30), (5.37), (5.38) and (5.39), change of location verbs (5.32), (5.33), (5.40), (5.41), verbs of creation (5.42), (5.43) and verbs of performance (5.31) (5.44).

(5.35) Nagrui=na theome dou.
 garden=DEM.N.SG NEG be.big
 ‘The garden is not big.’ (033A140108; text)

(5.36) Zon=na theome boka ta haghe=na ka thogele=na.
 PN=DEM.N.SG NEG be.able SB ascend=DEM.N.SG PREP mountain=DEM.N.SG
 ‘John is not able to climb the mountain.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(5.37) Ara theome manahaghi=ni sua kukuti ta=u ana
 1SG NEG want=3SG.AGR child eel SB=exist DEM.N.SG
 ‘I do not want that eel child.’ (161A100608; text)

(5.38) Ara theome manahaghi=ni ta khave=na.
 1SG NEG want=3SG.AGR SB descend=DEM.N.SG
 ‘I do not want to get down.’ (150A020608; text)

(5.39) Theome manahaghi=ni bo manei ta koko-i=ni=ne=ia.
 NEG want=3SG.AGR CNT 3SG SB throw-TR=3SG.AGR
 ‘She does not want to throw that away.’ (161A100608; text)

(5.40) Khiloau=na ke theome togha Loghahaza,
 Christianity=DEM.N.SG PERF NEG pull.ashore PN

ke togha ade Popoheo.
 PERF pull.ashore here PN
 ‘Christianity did not reach Loghahaza (directly), they (first) pulled ashore here at Popoheo.’ (12A051207 ; text).

(5.41) Pita=na ke theome hahaghe ka no-na hore the-na.
 pn=DEM.N.SG PERF NEG get.on PREP POSS.GEN-3SG.P canoe REFL-3SG.P
 ‘Peter did not board his own canoe.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

(5.42) Me ghoinode=na, eu tana ghoi, ghai la theome la ghu=di
 SEQ today=DEM.N.SG be.thus then VOC 1PL.EXCL go NEG PA make=3PL.AGR
 uu thomoko, bibina, gogopi ta=u are eu.
 HES canoe.type canoe.type canoe.type SB=exist DEM.R.PL be.thus
 La theome la ghu=di ghai.
 go NEG PART make=3PL.AGR 1PL.EXCL
 ‘But today, man, we do not build big canoes like those. We don’t build them.’
 (015A071207; text)

(5.43) Gruï hmau ta=u=re, maneri ke theome ghu=di.
 grow taro SB=exist=DEM.R.PL 3PL PERF NEG do=3PL.AGR
 ‘Growing taro, they did not do it.’ (12A051207; text)

(5.44) Magret=na ke theome rahi.
 PN=DEM.N.SG PERF NEG dance
 ‘Margaret did not dance.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

The negative particle *theome* does not only negate simple verbs, but also serial verbs (5.45) and verbless predicative constructions (5.46). Therefore, its scope is the actual predicate, rather than the mere verb. The second sentence in (5.47) illustrates negation of the verb *eu* ‘be.thus’.

(5.45) Ghai theome au snoto ka nanau=ne
 1PL.EXCL NEG stay be.inactive PREP village=DEM.R.SG
 ‘We do not stay inactive in the village.’ (014A07207; text)

(5.46) Theome nafringhe ikia eu fringhe=na=na uu hore=ne.
 NEG work be.small be.thus work=3SG.P=DEM.N.SG HES canoe=DEM.R.SG
 ‘It is not an easy job to build canoes.’ (015A071207; text)

(5.47) Ghai, leleghu nhagae=na, ghai theome ke liu au.
 1PL.EXCL every day=DEM.N.SG 1PL.EXCL NEG PERF go.by exist

Theome eu ka nanau Popoheo=ne
 NEG be.thus PREP village PN=DEM.R.SG
 ‘We, every week, we were not just going by.’ It is not like that in the Popoheo Village.’ (014A07207; text)

5.2 Coordination, subordination and complex sentences

5.2.1 Coordination

Predicates or clauses expressing two or more consecutive events can be simply juxtaposed, which leads to two possibilities. They can be either clauses coordinated by juxtaposition in the same sentence or different juxtaposed sentences. In such cases, there are only prosodic clues to their status, mainly provided by pause and intonation, but the

distinctions are many times blurred by the rapidity of speech and the degree of engagement of the speaker. The more predicates in a sequence, the more difficult it is to tell. In rapid speech, which is very often employed by my consultants, and/or when the speaker becomes extremely engaged in and enthusiastic about the narrative, prosodic pauses get shorter and shorter to the extent that they become irrelevant. Moreover, even in moderate velocity speech, prosodic pauses often do not coincide with breathing pauses. In rapid or very rapid speech, while one can still distinguish a sort of list intonation as the events are mentioned, a clearly distinguishable pause will occur only once the speaker is out of breath and, almost always, that does not express prosodic information.

The problems mentioned above are mainly associated with texts and conversation. Elicited examples are easier in this respect, since they cannot be very long and the consultants tend to be more careful and less casual. The pitfall is that the outcome of elicitation very seldom reflects the rhythm and intonation of natural speech.

To illustrate, examples (5.48), (5.49) and (5.50) contain only two (or three if one counts the ‘be.thus’ construction) predicates each. The first two come from elicitation and the third from a text spoken not very fast. It is quite clear that each of the three represents a single sentence.

(5.48) Pita ke hnokro ne ngau ghe-na zeku ke eu.
 PN PERF sit REAL eat POSS.CON-3SG.P banana PERF be.thus
 ‘Peter sat down and ate his banana.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(5.49) Pita ke ngau zeku=ne ke zaho ruma
 PN PERF eat banana=DEM.R.SG PERF go enter
 ka no-na suga=na ke eu.
 PREP POSS.GEN-3SG.P house=DEM.N.SG PERF be.thus
 ‘Peter ate the banana and went inside his house.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(5.50) Eu bla, nei², lelegu hnagae, ke haghe fate, ke khave pari.
 be.thus LIM 3SG every day PERF ascend up PERF descend down
 ‘So, every day she walked up and down.’ (016A101207; text)

At the other extreme is the text in example (5.51), which is an excerpt from a relatively long story, told enthusiastically and every so often theatrically by the consultant. The point with this example is that the way I use punctuation when transcribing the text may be easily contested, since there are clearly more possibilities.

² It is the obsolete 3SG feminine form (3.1.3.1) that is employed here.

(5.51) Duduki=ni=nga keha manekai ikia=ne nusu=ne
gather=3SG.AGR=IMM other brother be.small=DEM.R.SG sand=DEM.R.SG
‘The other brother, the younger one, gathers the sand

ta la haghe la ka gazu=ne fate.
SB go ascend PART PREP tree=DEM.R.SG on.top
that he will take with him up on the tree.

Haghe=nga hnokro balu nusu.
ascend=IMM sit ASSC sand
He climbs up and sits with the sand.

Haghe, haghe, ne haghe=na gogholi=na.
ascend ascend REAL ascend=DEM.N.SG giant=DEM.N.SG
The giant is coming up and up and up.

Nonolo=na ta haghe=na.
walk=DEM.N.SG SB ascend=DEM.N.SG
He comes up walking

Haghe fakae ta=ne ba manei?
ascend see SB=DEM.R.SG ALT 3SG
He comes up and what is it that he sees?

La faka=di la si manei hmala=di=ro
go see=3PL.AGR PART FOC 3SG footprint=3PL.P=DEM.NV.PL
He sees the footprints

phae sua=de=ia ka glilihi=o.
two child=DEM.R.PL=PART PREP beach=DEM.NV.SG
left by the two boys on the beach.’
(150A020608; text)

The shorter texts in (5.52) and (5.53) show a similar situation but include the form *ta=na* ‘SB=DEM.N.SG’, glossed as ‘then’ for convenience. This is a recapping device that may be undergoing a process of grammaticalisation or lexicalization. It is often used to connect successive events but not necessarily coordinating them syntactically. It is not a conjunction or a real sequencing particle since it can appear practically anywhere in the clause or sentence, as (5.54), (5.55), (5.56) and (5.57) illustrate, but it is reminiscent of a temporal adjunct with the meaning ‘soon after that’, hence the gloss. *Ta=na* most of the time precedes the vocative particle *ghoi* or *noghoi*, which, in turn, occurs almost obsessively in natural speech as a conversational filler, a role eventually extended to the whole phrase *tana ghoi/noghoi*. In fact, it can be noticed that the predicates in (5.55) do not denote successive events. The event encoded by the second predicate in the example took place at a certain moment during the, still ongoing, situation encoded by the first predicate.

- (5.52) Thoke hore=o, ghohra=ni zaho ghai Sulei.
 reach canoe=DEM.NV.SG paddle=3SG.AGR go 1PL.EXCL PLN
 ‘We reach the canoe, paddle it and go to Sulei.’

Zaho thoke Sulei, ta=na ghoi,
 go reach PN then VOC
 We go and reach Sulei, then man,

toghai hore=o, zaho la si ghai ia.
 pull.ashore canoe=DEM.NV.SG go PART FOC 1PL.EXCL PART
 pull the canoe ashore and off we go.’
 (031A140108; text)

- (5.53) Fate loloa ka thogele=o, zazaho, ta=na ghoi,
 up be.straight PREP hill=DEM.NV.SG walk then VOC

la efra la ghai mhala=di=re bosu=re.
 go see PART 1PL.EXCL footprint=3PL.P=DEM.N.PL pig=DEM.N.PL
 ‘Straight up the hill, walk, then, man, we see pig footprints.’
 (031A140108; elicitation)

- (5.54) Me no-gu mama=na ara ta=na ghoi la lehe eu.
 INCPT POSS.GEN-1SG.P father=DEM.N.SG 1SG then VOC go die be.thus
 ‘My father, man, has died.’ (069A270208; elicitation)

- (5.55) Eu me no-gu ido=na doli au,
 be.thus INCPT POSS.GEN-1SG.P mother=DEM.N.SG be.alive exist

no-gu mama, ta=na ghoi, la lehe.
 POSS.GEN-1SG.P father then VOC, go die
 ‘So, my mother is alive, my father has died.’ (071A270208; elicitation)

- (5.56) Thoke=ni=nga maneri. Thoke, ta=na noghoi, no=di ido
 reach=3SG.AGR=IMM 3PL reach then VOC POSS.GEN.3PL.P mother

no=di mama [ta au=ro]
 POSS.GEN.3PL.P father [SB exist=DEM.NV.PL]

theome thoke=ni=na bla=u.
 NEG reach=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG LIM=be.thus
 ‘They arrived. They arrived, then, man, their mother and father had not arrived yet.’ (150A020608; text)

- (5.57) Haghe ta=na manei fate zaho hnokro manei ka hnobo=na
 ascend then 3SG up go sit 1SG PREP branch=DEM.N.SG
 ‘He climbs up and sits on that branch.’ (149A020608; text)

Examples (5.54) and (5.55) above feature the particle *me*, an inceptive marker which, when repeated in coordinated clauses, stresses the fact that the events occur

immediately one after the other (3.4.1.1.1). The real clause coordinating particle, *ghe/aghe* is discussed in detail and illustrated in (3.1.12.5).

5.2.2 Subordination

As briefly touched upon in 3.4.1.1.1 with reference to relativisation, there are two subordination strategies in Blanga and the distinction between them encodes modality. Realis subordination involves no subordinator but most of the time requires the presence of an element of the auxiliary in the predicate of the subordinated clause, usually the perfective marker *ke*. Irrealis subordinators are introduced by the particle *ta* and the auxiliary is excluded. Irrealis marking by the subordinating particle has a broader scope than that of the modal auxiliary base, in that it can also cover situations that are happening at the moment of speaking. Formal irrealis/realis distinction by means of the presence versus absence of the particle *ta* applies consistently to relative and complement subordinate clauses. In the first two examples below a realis (5.58) and an irrealis (5.59) relative clause modifies an actor noun, while the referential gap in the relative represents an undergoer. The same macrorole is assumed by the relative gap in (5.60), where a realis relative clause modifies an undergoer noun.

(5.58) Zifla=nga maneri, nakoni
 exit=IMM 3PL person

[ke hota=di=re gogholi ka gluma=ne].
 [PERF take=3NSG.AGR=DEM.N.PL giant PREP cave=DEM.R.SG]
 ‘They came out, the people whom the giant kept in the cave.’
 (149A020608; text)

(5.59) Thuri ghinai [ta turi=ni=na ara] ghu=na nanau Popoheo=ne.
 story be.next SB narrate=3SG.AGR 1SG CNTX=3SG.P village PLN=DEM.R.SG
 ‘The next story that I shall tell is about the Popoheo Village.’
 (018A101207; text)

(5.60) Ara-hi ne turi=di keha glepo
 1SG-INTS REAL narrate=3NSG.AGR some thing

[ke nohm-i=di ka keha mane].
 PERF listen-TR=3NSG.AGR PREP some man
 ‘I am talking about some things that I heard from somebody.’ (052A240108; text)

The next sentence is a bit more complex. The noun *tuthuri* occurs two times. The first time it is the actor of the main clause, modified by an existential relative clause functioning as a demonstrative. With this function, relative clauses can only be coded as irrealis. The second time, *tuthuri* occurs as the head of a predicate NP and is modified

by a realis relative clause with an undergoer gap, which also contains an incidental verbless identificational and a temporal subordinate clause which, in turn, is an adjunct of the complex predicate *turi mai* ‘narrate come’ of the relative clause.

- (5.61) Tuthuri [ta=u=ne] tuthuri
 story SB=exist=DEM.R.SG story
- [ke turi mai=ni no-gu kue,
 PERF narrate come=3SG.AGR POSS.GEN-1SG.P grandparent
- /Matthew Tada nahnga=na=na/
 PN PN name=3SG.P=DEM.N.SG
- [ke au=nga ke au ara-hi balu=na manei Loghahaza]].
 PERF stay=IMM PERF stay 1SG-INTS CNTX=3SG.P 3SG PLN
 ‘This story is a story that my grandfather told – /his name was Matthew Tada/ –
 when I was/stayed with him at Loghahaza.’ (148A020608)

In (5.62), a complement clause functions as the undergoer/direct object argument of a transitive predicate and the actor of the main clause is coreferential with the actor of the subordinate. In (5.63), both the actor and undergoer of the same predicate, the verb *manahaghi* ‘want’, are overtly expressed in the main clause. The undergoer in the main clause is coreferential with the actor of a predicating relative clause.

- (5.62) Ara theome manahaghi=ni [ta khave=na].
 1SG NEG want=3SG.AGR SB descend==DEM.N.SG
 ‘I do not want to come down.’ (150A020608; text)
- (5.63) Ghai manahaghi=gau ghau, [ta haghe ta age Loghahaza].
 1PL.EXCL want=2NSG.AGR 2PL SB ascend SB come PLN
 ‘We want you to be the ones who come up here to Loghahaza.’ (12A051207; text)

Actor/subject clauses can take a verb proper (5.64) or a nominalised verb (5.65) as their predicate. In the latter case, the subordinate does not seem to need to be marked by the subordinator.

- (5.64) Neu ghe [ta ghu=di=re maneri]
 be.thus.REAL SEQ SB do=3NSG.AGR=DEM.N.PL 3PL
- e fa memehe bla eu
 HAB CS be.silly LIM be.thus.IRR
 ‘What they do is silly.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

(5.65) [Fafada maneri [ta au=re]]
 shoot 3PL SB exist=DEM.N.PL

e pukuni theo nafu=di eu.
 HAB really not.be.at CNTX=3NSG.AGR be.thus.IRR
 ‘Their shooting is meaningless.’ (151A240208; elicitation)

The predicate of conditional clauses is sometimes marked by a particle *la*, which, in those contexts, can be interpreted as a conditional mood particle.

(5.66) Ara, [ta au **la** mane [ta au thamo=na]], ara e au **la bla**.
 I SG SB stay COND man SB exist brother=3SG.P 1SG IRR stay PART LIM
 ‘If the man who is his brother stays, I will stay as well.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

However, this particle seems to be semantically more complex. When immediately preceding the particle *bla*, the whole structure *la bla* acquires a meaning similar to the English ‘as well’, ‘also’ or ‘too’, as in the main clause in (5.66). A conditional subordinate does not need to be present (5.67).

(5.67) Keha vido ta Blangare au **la bla** bo fai Hograno.
 other land SB PLN=DEM.N.PL exist PART LIM CNT side PLN
 ‘Ohter Blanga territories are on the Hograno side.’ (009A051207; text)

In many other contexts, *la* seems to have a completely different function. When in immediately preverbal position, I have analysed the form *la* as a verb meaning something like ‘go’ or ‘get’ and which can only occur as part of a complex predicate. This analysis is based on comparison with other Isabel languages.

(5.68) La dou bla ke zaho ka towni, Honiara.
 go be.big LIM PERF go PREP town PLN
 ‘When I grew up, I went to the town, to Honiara.’ Lit. ‘I grew up (and) go to Honiara.’ (065A270208; elicitation)

(5.69) Me no-gu mama=na ara, ta=na ghoi,
 INCPT POSS.GEN-1SG.P father=DEM.N.SG 1SG SB=DEM.N.SG VOC
 la lehe eu.
 go die be.thus.IRR
 ‘My father died.’ (069A270208; elicitation)

(5.70) La falelehe=ni ara gogholi=o.
 go kill=3SG.AGR 1SG giant=DEM.NV.SG
 ‘I killed the giant.’ (149A020608; text)

So far so good, but *la* can also follow the verb and its modifiers, if any. The third example below is one of the formulaic openings of traditional tales.

- (5.71) Sene **la** bo mane gogholi=ne.
 search PART CNT SPEC giant=DEM.R.SG
 ‘The giant is looking (for the boy).’ (149A020608; text)
- (5.72) Mane Mikali=na manei=na zaho fa ghose **la**.
 SPEC PN=DEM.N.SG 3SG=DEM.N.SG go CS be.quick PART
 ‘Michael walks quickly.’ (043A160208; text)
- (5.73) Au **la** bo, au **la** bo=ne phea talaghi=de
 exist PART CNT exist PART CNT=DEM.R.SG two couple=DEM.R.SG

Au **la** bo repea, grui gare, bana suga.
 exist PART CNT 3DL plant garden erect house
 ‘Once upon a time, there was this couple. They planted a garden, they built a house.’ (121A040508; text)

Moreover, it overwhelmingly occurs both preceding and following the same predicate in the same clause.

- (5.74) La hmaghu **la** si maneri=ia?
 go be.afraid PART FOC 3PL=PART
 ‘But they, have they got scared?’ (150A020608; text)
- (5.75) Manei **la** riso hnigho **la** phea letasi=re.
 3SG go write Cmpl PART FOC 3PL=PART
 ‘He has already written two letters.’ (090A120408; elicitation)

In any of the three positions mentioned above, *la* seems to work with any type of predicate. Further research is necessary in order to elucidate the full functional range of this particle.

To return to the main topic, conditional subordination is often achieved without the particle *la*, being marked only by intonation and pause.

- (5.76) Ghinai ne tafo=gau gogholi=o, me falehe=gau eu.
 FUT REAL see=2NSG.AGR giant=DEM.NV.SG INCPT kill=2NSG.AGR be.thus.IRR
 ‘If the giant sees you, he will eat you.’ (150A020608; text)

The purposive particle *mala* occurs both in main and subordinate clauses. The events coded by the predicates of purposive subordinate clauses are regarded as irrealis or habitual. Neither the subordinator nor the auxiliary is compulsory. However, as the examples in Section 3.1.12.7 show, *mala* can co-occur with either. When they occur, the subordinator precedes the purposive particle (3.228) but the auxiliary follows it (3.227). The latter example also shows that purposive subordinators deviate from the usual subordinating pattern in that the auxiliary can be marked as irrealis.

Subordinating verbless predication is also possible. In (5.77), an identificational construction has a relative clause as its predicate. In (5.78), the predicate is an existential/locative relative clause.

(5.77) Agho bo ta khave=na!

2SG CNT SB descend=DEM.N.SG

'It is you who will come down!' (149A020608; text)

(5.78) Tethei nakoni ta au=na ka giluna gluma neu.

many person SB exist=DEM.N.SG PREP inside=3SG.P cave be.thus.REAL

'There are many people who are inside the cave.' (149A020608; text)

CHAPTER SIX

Predicate-Argument Interactions and the Search for Grammatical Relations

There are *minimally* two types of relations between a predicate and its arguments: semantic relations, offering clues as to who is doing what to whom, and pragmatic relations, tracking information status at both sentence and discourse level. In addition, many structures in numerous languages cannot be properly described without the employment of a third type, that of grammatical relations (GRs). However, since there are clear arguments against their universality (see, for instance, Van Valin & LaPolla 1997: 250-263), dissociation tests (Givón 1997:2) are needed to establish if GRs are justified in any particular language. In Blanga, some major tests used to identify GRs on other languages are either inapplicable or fail to dissociate between GRs and semantic macroroles. Nevertheless, there are constructions in the language that cannot be explained without employing GRs. While the Blanga data do not directly support the language-specific character of GRs, they do support the assumption that GRs are construction-specific.

6.1 Theoretical preliminaries

Major formal linguistic theories assume the universality of grammatical relations (GRs) such as subject and object, either as primitives or as assigned by means of some process that derives them from other structures or relations. In Government and Binding (Chomsky 1981), Minimalism (Chomsky 1992) and earlier transformational approaches, GRs are derived from phrase structure configurations, while outside the Chomskian domain their treatment ranges from assignment based on primitive semantic features, as in Lexical Functional Grammar (Bresnan 1982), to their being themselves posited as theoretical primitives, as in Relational Grammar (Perlmutter 1980). Despite the significant differences between them, such theories have in common the fact that they all consider GRs to be necessary, if not crucial, notions for the analysis of virtually every language.

The universality of GRs, however, has not remained unchallenged. While it is perfectly true that different phenomena in the grammars of a vast majority of languages cannot be properly described without employing GRs, their cross-linguistic validity has been questioned by functional linguistic approaches, starting with Dik (1978) and Givón (1979) and culminating with Role and Reference Grammar (Foley & Van Valin 1984; Van Valin & LaPolla 1997). As data from previously undescribed, especially non-Indo-

European, languages are made available, evidence has accumulated that GRs are not “really necessary for describing the clause structure of *all* languages” (Bhat 1991:2, my emphasis) and, therefore, are not universal. Consequently, rather than taking GRs for granted, descriptions of individual languages should carefully assess if their employment is justified or not.

Before proceeding further, two important points need to be made. The first point is that the proportion of language descriptions that employ GRs is much higher than those that do not. Although one may wonder if GRs are actually needed in all those descriptions that employ them, it may well be the case that in most of them they are. The second important fact to point out is that, like Bhat (1991), I have been avoiding the use of terms like “exist” or “have”, or the like, when referring to GRs. Much too often we read or hear, even from theorists who do not support the universality of GRs, that a language “has” or “doesn’t have” GRs or that GRs “exist” or “do not exist” in a language or another. The very use of such expressions is in a way misleading since it seems to postulate the existence of GRs as predefined entities, instead of abstract constructs, as they are. In approaching the complex matter of clause-internal relations, both in particular languages and cross-linguistically, it is perhaps more prudent to talk about the necessity (or lack of it) of employing GRs as an abstract level of representation in the analysis of a language. In other words, many phenomena can be described with reference to semantic relations, represented by generalised semantic roles/macroroles, and pragmatic relations, such as topic and focus. GRs (or syntactic relations/functions) are often necessary but not always justified.

It must be emphasised at this point that there are also noticeable differences in scope between the three types of relations. Although, in a broader sense, they can all be referred to as predicate-argument relations, it is only with the semantic type that the relation is strictly limited to the predicate. Semantic roles are determined by the subcategorisation frame of the predicate and thus have the narrowest scope. In their turn, GRs seem to extend their scope over the whole clause, while pragmatic relations have implications beyond the clause or sentence level. The scope differences between semantic relations and GRs are revealed by the English examples below.

- (6.1) Othello strangled Desdemona.
- (6.2) Desdemona strangled herself.
- (6.3) Desdemona was strangled by Othello.

The predicate *strangle* subcategorises for two semantic arguments, an agent (ACTOR) and a patient (UNDERGOER). In (6.1), the NP *Othello* is the initiator of the action,

therefore the actor, and the NP *Desdemona* refers to the affected participant, and is therefore the undergoer. The state of affairs described by the reflexive construction in (6.2) involves a single participant. However, the same verb, *strangle*, is used and the NP *Desdemona* is the actor here, while the role of undergoer is assumed by the reflexive pronoun *herself*, since the subcategorisation requirements of the predicate have to be met. Both the actor and the undergoer in (6.2) have the same referent. Now, if one compares (6.1) and (6.3), it is obvious that *Othelo* is the actor and *Desdemona* the undergoer in both examples and both sentences mean the same thing. What makes them different is not a requirement imposed by the subcategorisation frame of the predicate but the functions of their arguments at clause level, in other words, the ability of *Othelo* to appear as the subject of the active clause and as an oblique in the passive clause, and of *Desdemona* to function as the object of the active but the subject of the passive clause.

As far as pragmatic relations are concerned, they have consequences that extend beyond clause or even sentence level, as illustrated by the topic chain below.

- (6.4) a. There once was a thief born in Skye,
 who wanted to learn how to fly.
 b. He had no cash left
 from his most recent theft
 and could only stare at the sky.

The participant introduced in the main clause of the complex sentence in (6.4), referred to by means of the NP *a thief*, becomes the (not overtly expressed) topic of the subsequent subordinate relative and non-finite complement clauses. In the next sentence, (6.4), it is further backgrounded, being referred to by a personal pronoun in the first and zero anaphora in the second of the two coordinated clauses. Not only is the same participant the topic of the non-initial clauses, but it is also the topic of the whole discourse. Therefore, GRs have a broader scope than semantic relations, while pragmatic relations have a broader scope than GRs.

Getting back to the necessity of employing GRs, let us notice Bhat's (1991:2-3) suggestion that such necessity arises mainly in languages in which semantic and pragmatic relations "have been mixed together and 'grammaticalised'" (see also Givón 1997:6-7, 25-30). In other words, an intermediary abstract level of GRs may be required for the description of languages like English, which encode both semantic and pragmatic relations by means of the same devices, whereas for some (but not all, as the Blanga data will show) languages that have "distinct sets of devices for encoding

semantic and pragmatic relations”, it may be the case that the postulation of such an intermediary level would only add unnecessary complexity to the description.

A number of tests or diagnostics have been proposed in order to identify and distinguish between GRs in individual grammatical descriptions or theoretical studies and, allowing for some variation, the origin of these tests can be traced back to Keenan’s (1976:312-325) list of more than 30 functional and formal subject properties of subjects. Among those, the formal properties have constituted a base for subjecthood tests and, consequently, for GR tests in general. Keenan (1976:324) distinguishes between two types of formal subject properties, namely *coding properties* and *behaviour-and-control properties*. These are shown below as summarised by Givón (1997:5, 8).

Overt coding properties

1. word order;
2. nominal case marking;
3. verb agreement.

Behaviour-and-control properties

4. passivisation (promotion to subject);
5. antipassive (demotion from direct object);
6. promotion to direct object;
7. reflexivisation;
8. causativisation;
9. equi-NP reference in complementation;
10. raising;
11. possessor promotion;
12. anaphoric co-reference in chained clauses;
13. co-reference in relativisation, WH-question, cleft constructions and participial clauses.

The way the different tests are then used and their results analysed depends necessarily on the theoretical framework within which the analysis is performed. In addition to differences in goals (*i.e.* attempting to define discrete categories versus trying to establish prototypes), there are also significant differences in perspective between different approaches, due to the assumptions that each framework makes about the cross-linguistic justifications for GRs. Thus, with theories that posit GRs as universal, tests are only needed to distinguish between the different categories (*e.g.* subject vs. object, object vs. oblique), whereas theories that challenge the universality of GRs will need first to establish if GRs are justified in the language in question. If yes, they can then identify which argument is the subject, which is the object etc. To show that GRs are necessary for the analysis of a given structure in a given language, “dissociation tests” (Givón 1997:2) must eliminate the possibility of that particular structure being sensitive to either (generalised) semantic roles, such as ACTOR and UNDERGOER, or

pragmatic functions, such as topic and focus (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:250-253 and subsequent). Having been “dissociated” from both, the clause-internal relation in question can be safely regarded as syntactic in nature.

It is important to point out that, as Givón (1997:8) puts it, “the relevance of particular properties to particular grammatical relations is highly selective, both within the same language and cross-linguistically” and that the different tests may fail to “consistently produce the same domain of application” (Croft 1991:8). A similar view, based on evidence from Austronesian (more precisely from the Philippine-type languages), is expressed in Schachter’s (1976) article published in the same volume as Keenan’s seminal paper mentioned above. Moreover, it is frequently noted in the literature (see for instance Givón 1997:12-14 and Kroeger 2004:257-279), that there are often conflicts between tests based on coding properties on the one hand and tests based on behaviour-and-control properties on the other: for the same construction, one type of test may suggest that a particular argument bears a particular GR, while another type of test may fail to show any evidence of that or may even indicate a different GR. Such situations seem to arise mostly when the coding property used is case marking, which suggests that the conflict is rather between tests based on morphological properties and tests based on syntactic properties. Indeed, some linguists, again mainly of formal orientation, insist that, since GRs are essentially syntactic, they should “be identified on the basis of syntactic evidence, and not on purely morphological grounds” (Kroeger 2004:257). The more reliable type of evidence would thus be provided by tests based on the bulk of behaviour-and-control properties plus those coding tests based on word (constituent) order as opposed to coding tests based on case marking or verb agreement.

On the other hand, functional analyses mostly reject the primacy of behavioural properties, considering coding properties to be at least as relevant for GRs as the behavioural ones. Properties such as case marking and verb agreement may even be expected to play a more central role than behavioural properties if the function of the latter is seen as being primarily “to identify shared arguments across clauses and only indirectly to specify grammatical relations between arguments and predicates” (Croft 1991:25). A middle path between the two opinions can probably be reached if one acknowledges the distinction made above between *dissociation tests* and *identification tests*. An analysis that posits the universality of GRs eliminates the need for dissociation tests and so tests based on behavioural properties appear to be more significant for GRs, partly because they are more numerous and partly because their domain of application is “more uniform across languages” (Croft 1991:25). However, the relevance of both

coding properties and behaviour-and-control properties is at the same time construction-specific and language-specific and it is therefore more difficult in some languages than in others to find evidence for the necessity of employing GRs, irrespective of the nature of the properties on which this evidence will eventually be based.

The rest of this chapter will attempt to find out if and to what extent the employment of GRs is justified in the analysis of Blanga. The Blanga speakers are able to identify the semantic roles of the participants in a predication based on their intuitions of verb semantics, their pragmatic and cultural knowledge, and on the discourse context. In their turn, pragmatic relations such as topic and focus are encoded by clause constituent order in conjunction with morphological markers and prosody. The language therefore uses completely different means of encoding the two primary sets of clause-internal relations and, according to Bhat's (1991) observations mentioned above, is a good candidate for the inclusion with the minority group of languages for which GRs are not a necessary level of analysis. However, although rare, some evidence for GRs comes from the pattern of verbal agreement in the language as well as from some control constructions. The scarceness of such evidence should not constitute a problem for theories that acknowledge the construction-specific character of GRs. Languages differ in terms of the degrees of grammaticalisation and relative ranking of functional properties (Givón 1997:25-30) and individual coding or control constructions differ in their choice of controller and/or pivot (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:274-285 and *passim*).

6.2 Identifying participants and assigning macroroles

In Blanga, the affected participant of a two-place predication is, with few exceptions, co-referenced on the verb complex by an enclitic specifying person and number (3.4.1.4). The correlates and relevance of verb agreement will be discussed in 6.5. For now, it is important to notice that aside from agreement assignment the language must identify and distinguish between the two direct arguments of the predicate. The process is best explained within a generalised semantic roles framework. In the one adopted here, also explained in 4.4.6, the argument whose referent performs, initiates or controls the action expressed by the predicate (prototypically an agent) bears the macrorole ACTOR, while the argument whose referent is affected by the action (prototypically a patient) bears the macrorole UNDERGOER. Thus, the semantic roles of AGENT and PATIENT occupy the extreme positions on the actor-undergoer continuum. The actorhood or undergoerhood potential of roles such as FORCE, LOCATION, or THEME and subsets of

those fall hierarchically in between (Foley & Van Valin 1984:59; Van Valin & LaPolla 1997:139-147).

Some of the examples in this and the following sections are repeated after Voica (2011). In (6.5) and (6.6) the verb *toka* ‘chop’ subcategorises for two direct arguments: an agent and a patient. The participants denoted by the NPs *manei* ‘s/he’ and *mane Zone=na* ‘John’ are human and therefore able to act volitionally. Each can be safely assigned the macrorole ACTOR as an agent. The participants *thetu are* ‘those posts’ and *gazu=na* ‘that tree’ are affected and good candidates for UNDERGOER as patients. Note that the agreement marker is not a reliable clue for identifying the roles of participants: all the participants in (6.6) are in the same person and number. The third argument in example (6.6), the inanimate *hirama* ‘axe’, an instrument, cannot be conceived as performing or controlling the action because it is manipulated by another participant and therefore cannot compete for the macrorole of ACTOR; at the same time, it is not affected in any way, so it cannot be assigned the macrorole of UNDERGOER. Blanga instruments are left out of the actor-undergoer hierarchy and always expressed as prepositional adjuncts.

(6.5) *Manei ghinai toka mai=di thetu are.*
 3SG FUT cut come=3NSG.AGR post DEM.N.PL
 ‘He shall chop down the house posts.’ (013A071207; text)

(6.6) *Mane Zone=na ne toka=ni gazu=na ka hirama.*
 SPEC PN=DEM.N.SG REAL cut=3SG.AGR tree=DEM.N.SG PREP axe
 ‘John is cutting that tree with an axe.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

In (6.7), *nute* ‘wind’ is a force and *khoilo* ‘coconut’ a theme. The role of THEME is placed immediately to the left of PATIENT on the actor-undergoer hierarchy. Being acted upon, themes have no potential for actorhood but can only be undergoers. On the other hand, the actorhood potential of forces is surpassed only by agents. It is therefore obvious here that *nute* is the actor and *khoilo* the undergoer. In (6.8), where there are three participants again, *nakodou=na* ‘that woman’ is the only argument with a human referent and is identified as the actor based on the same reasoning as in (6.5) and (6.6). However, unlike in (6.6), both inanimate arguments have undergoerhood potential, *pohe=na* ‘that cloth’ as THEME and *tevo* ‘table’ as LOCATION. Since themes are closer to the undergoer end of the actor-undergoer hierarchy than locations, *pohe=na* has more potential for undergoerhood and is assigned the macrorole UNDERGOER. The two direct arguments of the verb having thus been identified, *tevo* can only be expressed obliquely.

(6.7) Nute ke fa grofo=ni=na khoilo=na.
 wind PERF CS fall.over=3SG.AGR=DEM.N.SG coconut=DEM.N.SG
 ‘The wind knocked down the coconut.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(6.8) Nakodou=na ne thoku khave=ni pohe=na ka tevo.
 woman=DEM.N.SG PERF touch descend=3SG.AGR cloth=DEM.N.SG PREP table
 ‘The woman lays the cloth on the table.’ (118A300408; elicitation)

Often two participants may have identical potential for actorhood but, naturally, only one can be the actor and the other must be the undergoer. In such cases, additional means are necessary in order to identify their semantic roles. As will be shown in Section 6.3, the position of arguments relative to the verb and to each-other shows significant variation in Blanga and there is no direct correlation between constituent order and semantic roles. How does the language then assign macroroles when one direct argument is as agentive as the other? In (6.9), the transitive verb *daki* ‘step/press with foot’ subcategorises for an agent and a patient. Both participants are animate and able to act volitionally but the snake cannot perform the action denoted by the verb for the simple reason that it has no feet. The actor is clearly identified as the walking creature referred to as *ara* ‘I’ and the undergoer as the legless *hmogo* ‘snake’. If a verb with the same subcategorisation frame but different meaning is used with the same participants, like *kathu* ‘bite’ in (6.10), then, although both participants are physiologically capable of biting, *hmogo* ‘snake’ is the first choice for actor since the speakers regard snakes as far more likely to bite people than the other way around.

(6.9) Dak-i=ni ara kaisa hmogo neu.
 step-TRANS=3SG.AGR 1SG one snake be.thus.REAL
 ‘I stepped on a snake.’ (090A120408; elicitation)

(6.10) Hmogo [ta=u=ne] ne kathu=ni
 snake SBD=exist=DEM.R.SG REAL bite=3SG.AGR

 manekai dou=gu=na ara.
 brother be.big=1SG.P=DEM.N.SG 1SG
 ‘The snake bit my elder brother’ (048A230208; elicitation)

To make sense of the participants in example (6.9), the speaker relies on the semantics of the verb, but example (6.10) shows that, more than verb semantics, Blanga speakers use their cultural and pragmatic knowledge to identify the (macro)roles of arguments. Similarly, in (6.11), *Zon=na* ‘John’ is identified as the actor because the Blanga people have never heard of man-eating chickens, while in (6.12) the actor is *hmeke=ro* ‘those dogs’ since in the Blanga environment it is very unlikely for dogs to be chased by pigs, while the opposite happens quite frequently.

(6.11) Zon=na ne-ke ngau=ni kokorako=na.
 PN=DEM.N.SG REAL-PERF eat=3SG.AGR chicken=DEM.N.SG
 ‘John ate the chicken.’ (172A141109; elicitation)

(6.12) Hmeke=ro la togla=di bosu=ro.
 dog=DEM.NV.PL PART chase=3PL.AGR pig=DEM.NV.PL
 ‘The dogs were chasing the pigs.’ (172A141109; elicitation)

There are, nevertheless, cases in which pragmatic knowledge is of little or no use. In (6.13), unless one of the two participants is notoriously violent, the ambiguity can only be solved at discourse level.

(6.13) Mane Zone=ne ne thupi=ni Polo=ne.
 SPEC PN=DEM.N.SG REAL punch=3SG.AGR PN=DEM.R.SG
 ‘John/Paul punches Paul/John.’ (206A181109)

Both speaker and addressee have access to the discourse context in natural language, and participant roles are here identified based mainly on that.

It has become clear from the examples above that Blanga does not use any formal means of encoding semantic roles or macroroles. Actor and undergoer are specified by things such as verb semantics or shared cultural knowledge or identified by clues found beyond sentence level. The next section will show that the language does not conflate semantic roles with pragmatic functions.

6.3 Pragmatic functions coding

In all but one of the examples in the previous section the actor constituent precedes the verb and the undergoer constituent follows it. While these examples clearly illustrate the points made there, they do not reveal one crucial fact for the analysis of Blanga, namely the significant variation in the order of the constituents in a clause. The actor-verb-undergoer order abounds in the language, at least in some styles, and in the corpus on which this thesis is based, but other orders are frequently employed. Blanga is non-verb-final and the verb (V) appears to occupy a fixed position, around which the direct arguments can switch places in as many combinations as allowed by the constraint. Thus, when both direct arguments of a transitive clause are overtly expressed, there are four possible patterns, as below. For now, let us simply define A as the actor and U as the undergoer of a transitive clause. I shall refine this point in the next section.

	V	A	U
A	V	U	
U	V	A	
	V	U	A

In conjunction with morphological and prosodic means, constituent order variation can be shown to encode aspects of information structure.

A crucial matter to be addressed is which of the four possible orders can be regarded as more ‘basic’. As we shall see immediately, the answer cannot simply be based on frequency. I consider VAU to be the default constituent order in Blanga since, although somehow less frequent than AVU, it does not specifically mark participants as topic or focus.

- (6.14) Kathu=ni=la mhogo [ta=u=ne]
 bite=3SG.AGR=PART snake SB=exist=DEM.R.SG
 V A
- ghahe=na khera=gu=na ara.
 leg=3SG.P friend=1SG.P=that 1SG
 U
- ‘That snake bites my friend’s leg.’ (090A120408; elicitation)

Like other examples used throughout this thesis, (6.14) is part of a short narrative, of which different tokens have been elicited with the help of Dahl’s (1985) TMA questionnaire. Although elicited one-by-one, the sentences are connected and the addressee has access to the previous discourse.

The pre-verbal clause-initial position is the marked position for topics, *i.e.* it is favoured by topics that are not expressed by zero anaphora. Marked topics may denote, among other things, information that the addressee is inherently aware of (6.15) or participants that have been mentioned in the previous sentence as undergoers (or even obliques) and are now expressed as actors (6.15). Inherent topics are quite frequent in most genres. Although they may constitute discourse-new information, they are assumed to be hearer-old and may include, in addition to speaker and addressee themselves, the speech setting (place, time etc.), entities expected to be present in a particular environment (sun, moon, house, sea, village etc.), and participants known as a result of shared cultural knowledge (the chief, the catechist, the linguist living in the village etc.). The abundance of inherent topics and of previously affected participants turned into initiators of actions explains why AVU tokens are actually more frequent than VAU tokens, without implying that the former represent necessarily the basic order.

- (6.15) **Ara=hi** ne dak-i=ni kaisa **hmogo**.
 a. 1SG=INTS REAL step-TRANS=3SG.AGR one snake
 A V U
- b. **Hmogo** [...] ne kath-i=ni ghahe=gu=na.
 snake REAL bite-TRANS=3SG.AGR leg=1SG.P=DEM.N.SG
 A V U
 ‘I stepped on a snake. That snake bit my leg.’ (048A230208; elicitation)

Undergoers can also be topicalised without turning them into actors, thus yielding the structure UVA, as in (6.16). Note that here the focus particle *si*, cliticised to a dummy particle *ia*, indicates that the whole sentence is in focus. Clause-final position is usually associated with focus, but the position of the noun *gogholi* ‘giant’ in (6.16) is merely the indirect result of the undergoer being topicalised and the verb having to be second. In (6.17), on the other hand, *mane sua* ‘child’ is the argument that the speaker intends to foreground and thus placed in the marked focus position. Hence, the constituent order becomes VUA.

- (6.16) **Ghitatilo** ne-ke ngau koko=**ghita** gogholi= si=ia.
 1INC.TR REAL=PERF eat throw=1INC.AGR giant=FOC=PART
 U V A
 ‘The giant swallowed the three of us.’ (149A020608; text)
- (6.17) ...ngau sau ta=u ana mane sua=o.
 eat apple SB=exist DEM.N.SG SPEC child=DEM.NV.SG
 V U A
 ‘The boy was eating that apple.’ (149A020608; text)

Clause constituent order variation represents the main means of encoding pragmatic relations in Blanga. In addition, morphological particles and intonation patterns are used to fine-tune the distinctions between topic and focus or to distinguish between different sub-categories. This will be elaborated further in the next chapter. The significant variation is enough to dismiss the possibility of a direct correlation between the order of constituents in a clause and the semantic roles or GRs of arguments.

6.4 Inapplicable or failing diagnostics for GRs

The common goal of Sections 6.2 and 6.3 was to show that Blanga uses distinct devices for the assignment of semantic relations and pragmatic functions respectively. The former are not overtly encoded but identified based on verb semantics, shared cultural knowledge and discourse context, while the expression of the latter is a complex process in which syntactic, morphological and prosodic strategies interact in order to background or foreground information. Therefore, according to Bhat’s (1991)

observations quoted in the introduction, it is very possible that the analysis of Blanga may not require the employment of GRs. This section deals with the inapplicability or failure of most diagnostics to provide evidence in favour of any need for GRs. The next section, however, will reveal that some, albeit very a few, structures clearly justify the use of GRs. In both sections, I shall refer to the coding and behavioural properties listed in 6.1. The list is not meant to be exhaustive, but the properties it includes are more than sufficient to illustrate the point I am making in this chapter. The different properties and constructions will be analysed within a monostratal theoretical framework.

The possibility of using a particular property for dissociation tests in a particular language is, naturally, conditioned by the presence or absence of that property in the language. The flexibility of constituent order in Blanga (6.3 and Chapter 7) suggests that it is not likely to encode GRs, but it rather encodes pragmatic relations. In addition, there is no nominal case marking in the language, therefore we can eliminate from the very beginning two of the three coding properties. The third, verb agreement, will be discussed in Section 6.5. As far as coding and behavioural properties are concerned, we can eliminate without further concern tests based on participial or infinitival clauses due to the lack of non-finite verbal forms in the language. Moreover, no cleft constructions have been identified. Blanga also lacks voice alternations, but this requires a more detailed discussion due to the consequences it has for the present analysis.

6.4.1 Promotional and demotional constructions

GR tests based on constructions involving promotion and/or demotion of arguments are among the most reliable dissociation tests in languages that have such constructions. The English passive, for instance, cannot be properly described without employing GRs. Although, even in the European tradition, it is not very common for a pig to run after dogs, in both sentences below there is no doubt that the actor is represented by the NP *a pig* and not by that referring to the canine participants. Both sentences mean the same thing; the verb agrees with the actor in (6.18) and with the undergoer in (6.19); in (6.18), the constituent order is AVU, while in (6.19) it is UVA.

- (6.18) A pig chases my dogs.
 A V U
 SUBJ OBJ

(6.19) My dogs are chased by a pig.

U	V	A
SUBJ		OBL

It is clear that in the examples above semantic relations do not trigger agreement or control constituent order. The same can be maintained about pragmatic functions. The verb agrees with the pre-verbal argument even when that is not a topic, as shown by the answer to the *Wh*-question below, which necessarily introduces a focused argument.

“Who/what chases my dogs?”

“A pig does.”

Therefore, English verb agreement and constituent order must be sensitive to the third possible type of predicate-argument relations, the one that we have conventionally labelled GRs. Through a passive construction, a transitive undergoer is promoted to subject and a transitive actor is demoted to oblique or omitted.

Unlike English, Blanga has no voice distinction. No passive or antipassive means no promotion to subject or demotion to oblique. The lack of a voice distinction has a crucial consequence for this analysis: *transitive clauses alone will always fail to dissociate between semantic macroroles and GRs*. The actor of a transitive clause will always coincide with the virtual subject and the undergoer with the virtual object. This also affects the applicability of other possible diagnostics, such as the ones involving reflexives (6.4.2) and, to some extent, causative constructions (6.5.4).

As expected, the language does not have any applicative markers or constructions, so tests based on promotion to direct object are likewise not applicable. Blanga also lacks possessor raising, a construction often regarded as promoting the possessor of the object of a clause to be itself the object. We can thus eliminate as inapplicable for Blanga most diagnostics based on promotion or demotion. Causative constructions are a possible exception and will be discussed in 6.5.4.

6.4.2 Reflexives

While the state of affairs described by a reflexive construction involves only one participant, its predicate subcategorises for two arguments. In order to meet the subcategorisation requirements of the predicate, the unique participant is assigned two semantic roles, being at the same time the initiator of the action and the affected argument. As the affected argument, it is overtly expressed by a reflexive pronoun in English and Blanga and, since they refer to the same participant, the two arguments necessarily agree in number and gender. The form and distribution of Blanga reflexives are discussed and illustrated in 3.1.3.4.

Blanga reflexives find their respective antecedents within the same clause (they are clause-bounded). Tests based on the binding relation between a reflexive and its antecedent can be used as dissociation tests in some languages. It is widely accepted, although differently formulated, that, crosslinguistically, the antecedent must be higher than the reflexive on a hierarchy expressed either in terms of thematic roles, generalised semantic roles, or GRs.

(6.20) AGENT > LOCATION, SOURCE, GOAL > THEME (Jackendoff 1972)

(6.21) Actor > Undergoer > Other (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997)

(6.22) a. subject > object > oblique argument > non-argument

or

b. actor > all other arguments > non-argument (Kroeger 2004)

In the examples in 3.1.3.4, the antecedent is an actor (agent) and the reflexive an undergoer (patient). That alone is no evidence that the reflexive behaviour is determined by semantic relations rather than GRs but it seems that nothing here suggests the possibility of a dissociation test. A post-verbal agreement marker is present in each of the three examples but dissociation tests based on verbal agreement (6.5) are irrelevant in reflexive constructions, where there is always a two-place predication and both direct arguments are always in the same person and number. In order for a dissociation test based on reflexive binding to be possible, there must be mechanisms in the language that enable both actor and undergoer to map alternatively onto the same virtual GR, such as voice alternations or similar mechanisms. For instance, based on voice alternations, Kroeger (2004: 95-101) shows that the antecedent of the reflexive is syntactic in Malayalam but semantic in Tagalog. Malayalam allows only the actor of an active-voice clause and only the patient of a passive-voice clause to function as the antecedent of the reflexive, therefore the selection of the antecedent must be determined by its GR, and the ranking of arguments can be seen as based on the Relational Hierarchy (6.22). On the other hand, in Tagalog the reflexive outranks its antecedent if the binding relation is described in syntactic terms, but the actor is allowed to function as the antecedent of the reflexive in both equivalents of active and passive-voice clauses. It thus appears that the selection of the antecedent in Tagalog is determined by semantic roles and therefore constrained by a role hierarchy. The situation in Blanga is quite different from both examples discussed above. While it is clear from the mentioned examples that the actor argument is required as the antecedent of the reflexive, the lack of any voice alternation in the language obscures the distinction

between actor and subject in reflexive constructions, therefore diagnostics based on reflexive binding are not available for Blanga.

6.4.3 Relative patterns and co-reference in relativisation

Some relative patterns were shown in relation with subordination in 5.2.2. In the relative clauses in the sentences below a gap is co-referential with the undergoer of the main clause.

(6.23) Ara ke fakae=ni mane_i [___i ke poma=ni=na mheke=na].
 1SG PERF see=3SG.AGR man [__ PERF hit=3SG.AGR=that dog=that]
 ‘I saw the man who hit the dog’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(6.24) Ara ke fakae=ni mheke_i [___i ke poma=ni=na kaisa mane].
 1SG PERF see=3SG.AGR dog [__ PERF hit=3SG.AGR=that one man]
 ‘I saw the dog which a man hit.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(6.25) Ara ke fakae=ni gazu_i
 1SG PERF see=3SG.AGR stick

[___i ke poma=ni=na kaisa mane mheke=na].
 [__ PERF hit=3SG.AGR=that one man dog=that]
 ‘I saw the stick with which a man hit the dog.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

The same relativisation pattern is employed whether the gapped participant is the actor (6.23), the undergoer (6.24), or even an adjunct instrument (6.25). Therefore, both the possible subject and the possible object of the relative clause are treated in the same way. On the other hand, the gap can also co-reference the actor of the main clause, as example (6.26) shows.

(6.26) Zifla nga nakoni_i [___i ke hota=di=re gogholi ka gluma=ne].
 exit IMM person [__ PERF hold=3PL.AGR=those giant PREP cave=this]
 ‘The people whom the giant had kept in the cave came out.’ (149A020608; text)

In the example above, the main clause is intransitive and its single argument is an actor. In conjunction with the previous examples, this should be enough to show that nothing here constitutes evidence for the necessity of employing GRs. Remember from 5.2.2 that there are two subordination strategies in Blanga. The one presented above encodes realis subordination. The irrealis relativisation pattern behaves in the same way as the irrealis one but it can include the subordinator particle *ta*.

(6.27) Ara la fakae=ni mane_i [ta ___i poma=ni=na mheke=na].
 1SG go see=3SG.AGR man [SB hit=3SG.AGR=that dog=that]
 ‘I see the man who is hitting the dog.’ (219A201109; elicitation)

(6.28) Ara la fakae=ni mheke; [ta ___i poma=ni=na manei].
 1SG go see=3SG.AGR dog [SB hit=3SG.AGR=that 3SG]
 ‘I see the dog which the man is hitting.’ (219A201109; elicitation)

(6.29) Ara la fakae=ni gazu; [ta ___i poma=ni=na manei mheke=na].
 1SG go see=3SG.AGR stick [SB hit=3SG.AGR=that 3SG dog=that]
 ‘I see the stick with which he is hitting the dog.’ (219A201109; elicitation)

Here again, the main clause is transitive and the gap in the relative clause is co-referential with the undergoer of the main clause. The gapped participant in the relative clause is an actor in (6.27), an undergoer in (6.28) and an instrument in (6.29).

The same pattern, either realis or irrealis, is applied when the relative clause is intransitive, whether its single argument is an actor (6.30), (6.31) or an undergoer (6.32).

(6.30) Ara ke fakae=ni manei [___i ke mai ka agho].
 1SG PERF see=3SG.AGR man [PERF come PREP 2SG]
 ‘I saw the man who came to you.’ (219A201109; elicitation)

(6.31) Ara la fakae=ni manei [ta ___i mai ka agho].
 1SG go see=3SG.AGR man [SB come PREP 2SG]
 ‘I see the man who is coming to you.’ (219A201109; elicitation)

(6.32) Ghoi, ne lehe sini nakoni; [ta ___i fogra=o]!
 VOC REAL die FOC person [SB be.ill=that]
 ‘Hey, the person who is ill is dying!’ (218A201109; elicitation)

Example (6.26) shows that the relative gap can be co-referential with the single argument of an intransitive main clause when it is an actor. Example (6.32) shows that the same is valid for instances when the single argument of the main clause is an undergoer. As expected, the gap can also be co-referential with the actor of a transitive main clause, as shown by examples (6.10) and (6.14) above, where the literal translation of *hmogo [ta=u=ne]* is ‘the snake which is this’, rendered in free translation as ‘this/the snake’. In all the examples above, there is nothing to indicate the possibility of dissociating between semantic relations and GRs, therefore neither co-reference in relativisation nor the relative clause patterns are relevant for GRs in Blanga.

The inapplicability of tests involving relative clauses has consequences on the applicability of tests based on Wh-questions, since such tests would normally involve Wh-words functioning as arguments in a subordinate relative and coreferencing an argument of the main clause. In Blanga, Wh-words do not occur in relative clauses. On the other hand, they can be modified by a relative clause, as shown in 3.1.3.5 in examples such as (3.103) or (3.132), but the relativisation pattern is no different from that discussed above.

6.5 Justifications for grammatical relations

We have seen so far that some coding and behavioural tests for GRs are either not applicable or irrelevant in Blanga. In the next section, I shall examine those few diagnostics that can actually provide justifications for GRs in Blanga.

6.5.1 Verb agreement

Agreement marking and its omission were discussed in 3.4.1.4.1 and 3.4.1.4.2, where we saw that only the affected argument of a transitive predication is co-referenced on the Blanga verb. Due to the lack of further complex evidence for GRs in the language, it is very tempting to analyse this as undergoer agreement, rather than object agreement, an error that I made in an earlier paper (Voica 2011). However, the lack of argument coreference in intransitive clauses both when the single argument is an actor and when it is an undergoer clearly indicates that the agreement must be with an NP bearing a grammatical relation. We are dealing here with a restricted neutralisation of the semantic opposition actor-undergoer for syntactic purposes (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997:251-263). If the pattern seen in transitive clauses is interpreted as undergoer agreement, that will predict that an agreement marker should be present on intransitive verbs whose single argument is an undergoer. Since that is never the case, we can safely assume that the agreement is with a grammatical relation, the traditional object.

I stated in 6.4.1 that in Blanga it is not possible to dissociate between semantic macroroles and GRs if one looks at *transitive clauses* alone. That is due to the lack of a voice alternation. We see now that the language neutralises the contrast between actor and undergoer in *intransitive clauses*. This does not only identify a grammatical relation for a transitive predicate but also proves the existence of an S relation, defined as the grammatical relation borne by the single argument of an intransitive predication. In RRG terms, the affected argument of a Blanga transitive clause is the controller of the agreement, therefore the privileged syntactic argument (PSA) of the construction. The restricted neutralisation mentioned above can be formalised as $[SA_T]$, where S is the single argument of an intransitive predication and A_T the actor of a transitive predication. This reflects an accusative syntactic alignment of arguments.

Rather than a strictly morphological feature, verb agreement should be regarded as a complex morphosyntactic phenomenon and a reliable property for GR diagnostics. Therefore the employment of GRs is justified in Blanga, at least in this instance.

6.5.2 Equi NP deletion

As mentioned earlier, Blanga does not distinguish between finite and non-finite verb forms. While raising constructions are difficult to identify (if at all possible), Equi NP deletion can appear in finite complement clauses. In (6.33) and (6.34) the overt argument of *manahaghi* ‘want’ in the main clause, the actor, is co-referenced by the gap in an intransitive complement clause, where it bears the same macrorole. In (6.35), the actor of the main clause is coreferenced as undergoer in the intransitive complement clause, while in (6.36) as the actor of a transitive clause. In (6.37), the undergoer of the main clause coreferences the actor of the intransitive complement clause.

(6.33) Maikol=na, manei; manahaghi [ø ke ragi=na].
PN=that 3SG want [PERF dance=that]
‘Michael, he wanted to dance (and he did dance)’ (043A160208; elicitation)

(6.34) Magret=na theome manahaghi [ta ø ragi=na].
PN=that NEG want [SB dance=that]
‘Margaret doesn’t want to dance.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

(6.35) Ara; theome manahaghi [ta ø fogra].
1SG NEG want SB be.ill
‘I do not want to be ill.’ (FN1:9; elicitation)

(6.36) Hmeke ana manahaghi [e ngau=ni ø fogri].
dog that want HAB eat=3SG.AGR frog
‘The dog wanted to eat the frog.’ (022AV130408; elicitation)

(6.37) Ghai; manahaghi=gau ghau; [ta ø; haghe] [ta ø; age Loghahaza].
1PL.EXCL want=2NSG.AGR 2PL [SB ascend] [SB come PLN]
‘We want you to climb up and come to Loghahaza.’ (12A051207; text)

What the examples above show is that the gapped coreferenced argument in the subordinate clause can be an intransitive actor, an intransitive undergoer and a transitive actor in that clause. However, it cannot be a transitive undergoer in the subordinate. In (6.38), the first translation is not possible. Remember that constituent order is not relevant for GRs. The 3SG.AGR marker can index either argument, and either participant can be viewed equally as the eater or the eaten. It is therefore only the restriction on transitive undergoers that indicates that the second translation is the only possible one.

(6.38) Mane Zone theome manahaghi [ta ngau=ni ø seseo;].
SPEC PN NEG want eat=3SG.AGR shark
*‘John doesn’t want the shark to eat him.’
‘John doesn’t want to eat shark.’

Therefore, Equi constructions involve a restricted neutralisation of semantic roles for syntactic purposes which is again [SA_T], like in the case of verb agreement, *i.e.* the single argument of an intransitive clause and the actor of a transitive clause receive the same treatment. The PSA in the subordinate clause is the gapped argument, the *pivot* in RRG terms.

6.5.3 Anaphoric coreference in chained clauses

A similar argumentation can be employed with some instances of coreference in chained clauses. Both the actor S (6.39) and the undergoer S (6.40) of an intransitive clause can coreference the gap in the coordinated clause but, like in English, only the actor and not the undergoer can do so if the clause is transitive (6.41). A translation like ‘Peter punched Paul and Paul went home’ is not possible. Note that in such an example both participants have equal actorhood potential and in natural speech the actor is identified from the previous context. In out-of-context elicited sentences, the consultants’ judgements reflect the default order AU of the direct arguments relative to each other (6.3).

(6.39) Pita=na hnokro=na au ø ne ngau zeku.
 PN=DEM.N.SG sit=DEM.N.SG stay REAL eat banana
 ‘Peter sat and ate a banana.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

(6.40) Nakoni ne fogra neu ø nunughe=re.
 person REAL be.ill and shiver=DEM.N.PL
 ‘The people were ill and shivered.’ (FN3:30; elicitation)

(6.41) Pita=na_i ne tuthupi=ni Polo_j eu
 PN=DEM.N.SG REAL punched=3SG.AGR PN be.thus.IRR

 ta=na, ghoi, ø_{i/*j} zaho ka suga no-na.
 SB=DEM.N.SG VOC go PREP house POSS.GEN-3SG.P
 ‘Peter punched Paul and went home.’ (FN3:30; elicitation)

Here, again, the restricted neutralisation is [SA_T]. The PSA in the first clause is the controller of the whole chained construction and is always overt, while the PSA of the second clause is a pivot, represented by the gap.

6.5.4 Causatives

Some evidence for GRs seems to come from the causative constructions discussed in 4.4.3.4 and 4.4.7.2. A promotional or demotional process results in a construction in which an argument retains a previous semantic macrorole but assumes either a more privileged or respectively a less privileged syntactic function than the one it had in

CHAPTER SEVEN

Aspects of Information Structure in Blanga

It was assumed in the previous chapters that clause constituent order is primarily, if not exclusively, used in Blanga to encode pragmatic relations. Morphological markers, zero anaphora and other strategies also play an important part, while prosody is of vital importance for a thorough understanding of information structure. This chapter does not aim to provide a full or even a partial account of information structure in Blanga but is intended to show that, indeed, there is a connection between information structure and clause constituent order in the language. It lays the foundations for future more detailed investigations of Blanga information structure, which will include thorough analysis of its relations with intonation, pausing and, perhaps, other prosodic phenomena.

7.1 Approaches to topics and foci

Some theoretical and terminological clarifications are necessary before proceeding with the analysis of the Blanga data. Lambrecht (1994) underlines the interdependency of the different components of grammar (i.e. the interactions and competition between them) and regards information structure/discourse pragmatics as an important linguistic component, on a par with semantics, morphosyntax, and phonology, namely

that component of sentence grammar in which propositions as conceptual representations of states of affairs are paired with lexicogrammatical structures in accordance with the mental states of interlocutors who use and interpret these structures as units of information in given discourse contexts. (Lambrecht 1994:5)

Pragmatic structuring of propositions in the speaker's mind is formally manifested as information structure at sentence level. Thus, information structure "is not concerned with the organization of discourse, but with the organization of the sentence within a discourse" (Lambrecht 1994:7). My understanding of this statement is that, although expressed at clause and sentence level in terms of pragmatic relations between a predicate and its arguments, information structure actually goes beyond the sentence level to achieve a proper and comprehensible distribution of sentences within the discourse.

Terms such as *topic* and *focus*, or others that express similar notions, and their analysis have been discussed over an extended period of time; a concise account of the treatment of information structure or packaging in modern theories and approaches is given in the introduction to Erteschik-Shir (2007). In spite of the long tradition, there is still a lot of confusion with regard to the use of *topic* and *focus*: they are contrasted in

some traditions, while others treat them as synonymous; some authors use *topic* where others use *focus*, and vice versa. Although there is no standardized use, the most frequent approach is one in which *topic* is used to denote what is called ‘old’ information, while *focus* refers to what is called ‘new’ information, where old and new information are defined in terms of, but not necessarily equated with, an opposition between what has been previously mentioned in the discourse or is assumed to be otherwise known or accessible on the one hand, and what has not been previously mentioned and is not considered accessible, or needs to be reintroduced into the discourse. Definitions attempted in this way, however, are not fully comprehensive and may be misleading since they may induce the wrong assumption that any piece of information not previously overtly mentioned in the discourse is also new to the addressee. A more useful opposition to consider is that between **given** and **new** information.

Works discussing topics inevitably (and usually from their first pages) refer back to one or both of the following definitions:

- a) A topic is “what a statement/sentence is about” (Strawson 1964:97-98).
- b) A topic is/provides the “framework within which the main predication holds” (Chafe 1976:50).

Most quotations of Chafe’s definitions are abridged, as in b) above, and do not reveal other elements of the original context. In fact, this form of the definition follows an attempt to distinguish what he calls “real topics” from some English fronted constructions, which had been inappropriately called topics when they seemed to have actually been contrastive foci. One extremely important point made by Chafe here is that arguments placed in clause-initial position are not necessarily topics, despite the tradition of using the term ‘topicalization’ to denote placement in sentence-initial position of an argument that otherwise would be placed non-initially. Of the same importance is Chafe’s subsequent remark that the definition illustrated here in a) does not apply to topic-prominent languages, such as Mandarin, where topics appear “to limit the applicability of the main predication to a certain restricted domain”. It is in this context that he formulates his most cited definition of *topic*, the full version of which is given below:

Typically, it would seem, the topic sets a spatial, temporal, or individual framework within which the main predication holds.

Strawson's definition would apply mainly to subject-prominent languages, such as English, while Chafe's definition applies mainly to topic-prominent languages, which enables the latter to conclude:

In brief, "real" topics (in topic-prominent languages) are not so much "what the sentence is about" as "the frame within which the sentence holds".

It is not quite clear from the quotations above if "real" topics can only be identified in topic-prominent languages. If the distinction between topic-prominent and subject-prominent languages is exclusively syntactically established, then topic-prominent languages are defined as languages in which "topics must be syntactically marked" but such marking is "uncommon" in subject-prominent languages, where "the subject is in fact the unmarked topic" (Erteschik-Shir's 2007:26-27). It looks as though a purely syntactic approach to topics, as well as foci, is not enough.

The reason why somebody (a speaker) would formulate propositions and express them as sentences/statements is to fulfil a basic communicative need, that of transmitting information to an interlocutor (a hearer) with the help of a shared system of conventions (a language). For the communication to be effective and the propositions to make sense, the speaker must adjust their content to the hearer's state of mind based on assumptions about what the latter must be thinking at the moment of speaking (Chafe 1976:28). Consequently, the conventionalised choice of morphological, syntactic, or prosodic coding for giving grammatical expression to propositional content depends on abstract representations of the referents in the speaker's mind and on what information the speaker assumes to be present or persistent in the hearer's mind (Lambrecht 1994:37-43).

The speaker, therefore, assumes that some information is known, "already available to the hearer" in Erteschik-Shir's (2007:14) terms, while other information is not. In this context, Palmer (2009:218) refers to topicalisation as "a strategy used to invoke [...] known knowledge in the hearer [...] in order to background it, signalling its role as the context for the associated proposition". It may seem that information that is known or available to the hearer can easily be equated with 'old information'. This may be the case of continued topics (Erteschik-Shir's 2007:11 and *passim*), which are defined as expressing "information that has been overtly mentioned in the *immediately* preceding discourse and is assumed to be prominent in the hearer's mind" (Palmer 2009:219; my emphasis). "such information is topicalised to background it in relation to the rest of the clause". However, Palmer's definition is given in a context in which careful distinction is made between information that is old both to the discourse and the

hearer and information that is new to the discourse but still old to the hearer. Continued topics express information that is hearer-old because it is discourse-given.

In other cases, the term ‘old’ is confusing and the old-new distinction becomes awkward. Information that cannot be regarded as old to the discourse (in the sense that it has not been mentioned before) can, nevertheless, be given if the addressee is assumed to be inherently aware of it. According to Erteschik-Shir (2007:18), such information includes:

- a) potential “stage topics”, that is information about the spatio-temporal speech settings (place and time of the discourse);
- b) the participants in the discourse (speaker and addressee);
- c) information that is permanently available to the participants, such as entities expected to be present in a particular environment (sun, moon, house, church, sea, mountain etc.) or given as a result of shared cultural knowledge (the Queen, the Pope, Number 10, the chief of the village, the priest or catechist of the village, the linguist living in the community etc.);
- d) information that is temporarily available in the discourse context, consisting of “referents that exist or appear on the current scene and may be introduced deictically”.

The information treated by the speaker as inherently hearer-old corresponds to (some of) the elements of the text-external world in Lambrecht’s (1994:36-37) approach. The text-external world is contrasted with the text-internal world, comprising “linguistic expressions (words, phrases, sentences) and their meanings”. Deictic expressions (*I, you, now, tomorrow, here, there, etc.*) are mostly, although not entirely, used to refer to the elements of the text-external world, while anaphoric expressions (*he, she, it, so, then, etc.*) are often used to refer to the elements of the text-internal world. The two discourse worlds may overlap and the conventionalised choice of morphological, syntactic, or prosodic coding of expressions depends on the abstract representations of their referents in the speakers’ minds and on assumptions that speakers make about what information is present or persistent in the hearer’s mind. Those choices are made in the information structure component of the grammar (Lambrecht 1994:37-43).

The inherently hearer-old information is referred to by Palmer (2009:219) by means of the term ‘context-given’ (since it has not been previously mentioned, such information is discourse-new). Palmer contrasts ‘context-given’ with ‘discourse-given’ information, that is information that has been previously mentioned but, unlike continued topics, not in the immediately preceding discourse, not for some time.

Discourse-given information is assumed to be available but not prominent in the addressee's mind and corresponds to what Erteschik-Shir (2007:10-12 and *passim*) calls 'switch or shift(ed) topics'. In this sense, switch topics reintroduce previously mentioned information into the discourse. When distinguishing between 'discourse-given' and 'context-given' information, Palmer groups them together under 'switch-topics'. Since continued topics must also be discourse-given, I shall keep the terms 'switch/shifted topics' and 'context-given' topics at this stage (it may be the case that in Blanga they have a different behaviour, or at least differ prosodically). So my understanding of the classification so far (excluding contrastive topics) is: all topics are given; continued topics are discourse-given; switch topics are discourse-given; context-given topics are context-given. Contrastive topics background participants that have been recently mentioned as part of a group to contrast their values or qualities. While topics are always given, not all given information must be represented by topics.

As far as foci are concerned, from a semantic perspective, they are complements to presuppositions (Erteschik-Shir' 2007:28), where a presupposition represents "the information in the sentence that is assumed by the speaker to be shared by him and the hearer" (Jackendoff 1972:16, quoted in Erteschik-Shir 2007:27). Although topics are always given, and thus presupposed, they do not always coincide entirely with the presupposition. Topics may sometimes be only a portion of the presupposition or may appear without a presupposition (Erteschik-Shir 2007:28).

From a pragmatic perspective, what foci do can be summarised as in the following excerpt from Palmer (2009:220).

While topic depends on assumptions the speaker makes about the status of information in the mind of the hearer, focus depends on the intentions of the speaker regarding the status they wish to assign to information and convey to the hearer. Focused information is information to which the speaker intends to direct the hearer's attention (Erteschik-Shir's 2007:38), because it is information they intend the hearer to integrate into their store of knowledge and treat as important (see Dik 1997:326). Focusing forms and constructions function exactly to foreground information to signal that intention.

As topics do not always refer to old information (at least not discourse-old), foci do not necessarily have to express new information (at least not in the sense of discourse-new).

Foci can be contrastive or non-contrastive. Contrastive foci foreground a piece of information to contrast it with other information relative to a value or a quality. Non-contrastive foci foreground information in order to make it the most prominent part of the clause. Discourse-new information is introduced into the discourse, drawing the

hearer's attention to it, and discourse-given information is reintroduced into the discourse, drawing the hearer's attention back to it.

Van Valin and LaPolla (1997:201-202), whose RRG approach to information structure is based on Lambrecht's work, refer to 'focus structure' as "the association of a particular information structure with a particular morphosyntactic or intonational structure" or, in a more elaborated manner, "the conventional association of a focus meaning [distribution of information] with a sentence form" (Lambrecht 1994). They point out that the focused information is informative only in association with the pragmatic presupposition, the 'old' information. In other words, what is relevant or informative is the interaction between focus and topic.

Erteschik-Shir (2007) derives information structure, which she calls "f(ocus)-structure" from interactions between topic and focus. F(ocus)-structure is defined as "a structural description, annotated for topic and focus, which interfaces with syntax and both semantics and intonation" (Erteschik-Shir 2007:43).

7.2 Clause constituent order in Blanga

In this section, I illustrate the different constituent orders possible in Blanga. Before proceeding, two remarks are necessary. The first is that although we often hear or read about 'word order' in a language, when looking at such structures and at how the elements they consist of are distributed, it is crucial to consider *constituents*, rather than *words*. Constituents can, indeed, be simple words but also complex predicates and phrases or whole clauses functioning as arguments (direct or oblique) and adjuncts. Secondly, the labels I have adopted in this thesis for the two direct arguments of a transitive predicate may differ slightly from the more wide-spread conventions, which define A as "the most agent-like", and use either O or P, for "the least agent-like" (or "the most patient-like") direct argument (Dixon 1979, 1994; Payne 1997). Instead, I have used A for the *direct argument of a transitive predicate that bears the semantic macrorole of ACTOR* and U for the *direct argument of a transitive predicate that bears the semantic macrorole of UNDERGOER*. I have kept S to represent the *S(ingle) direct argument of intransitive predicates, which can bear the semantic macrorole of either ACTOR or UNDERGOER*. The language does not formally make an unaccusative-unergative distinction. The terms ACTOR and UNDERGOER were defined in Chapter 4. The letters S, A and U symbolise *arguments* and NOT *relations*. The maximum possible number of direct arguments of a predicate (PRED), rendered as V in verbal predication, is one in

intransitive clauses, and two in transitive clauses. Ditransitive verbs can take an additional oblique argument.

7.2.1 Constituent order variation in verbal transitive clauses

Like other languages belonging to the canonic Oceanic type, as defined by Ross (2004:494-497), Blanga can be described as non-verb-final, as long as one takes Ross' definition as implying transitive main clauses with both direct arguments overtly expressed. Nevertheless, the language shows significant variation with respect to the position of arguments relative to the verb as well as relative to each other. The verb can be either followed by all the arguments and adjuncts in the clause (clause-initial position of V) or it can be preceded by one (and only one) core argument and one or more oblique arguments and adjuncts (clause-medial V position). In other words, the same noun phrases, prepositional phrases or adverbial phrases can occur either in pre-verbal or post-verbal position. In terms of predicate and direct arguments alone, four order possibilities can be distinguished: VAU, AVU, UVA and VUA. Here, as well as in the next sections of this chapter, clause examples have been selected from both texts (mainly narrative but also procedural) and elicitation sessions (mainly grammaticality judgements). It will be seen below that the frequency of different constituent orders depends on which of the two types of data is considered. In what follows, I have attempted to include clauses with a range of predicate types (for *Aktionsart* types and their relation with transitivity, see Chapter 4). VAU order is illustrated below in clauses with transitive state predicates, verbs of perception in this case (7.1), (7.2), active accomplishments (7.3), (7.4), causative accomplishments (7.5) and causative activity verbs (7.6).

(7.1) Fakae=ni maneri phau=na gogholi=ne.
 see=3SG.AGR 3PL head=3SG.P giant=DEM.R.SG
 V A U
 'They see the giant's head.' (149A020608; text)

(7.2) Ne-ke fakae=ni ara kaisa gahipa.
 REAL-PERF see=3SG.AGR 1SG one stone
 V A U
 'I saw a stone.' (301A031209; elicitation)

(7.3) Hota=ni manei=na vilai=o.
 take=3SG.AGR 3SG=DEM.N.SG knife=DEM.NV.SG
 V A U
 'He takes the knife.' (149A020608; text)

- (7.4) La hota la manei kaisa gahima.
 go take PART 3SG one stone
 V A U
 ‘He takes a stone.’ (090A120408; elicitation)
- (7.5) La falelehe=ni ara gogholi=o.
 go kill=3SG.AGR 1SG giant=DEM.NV.SG
 V A U
 ‘I killed the giant.’ (149A020608; text)
- (7.6) Fa elo=ni manei thini=na [...] ka khou ana.
 CS float=3NPL.AGR 3SG body=DEM.N.SG [...] PREP river DEM.N.SG
 V A U ADJ
 ‘He lets the body flow on the river.’ (149A020608; text)

The next examples illustrate AVU order. Transitive state predicates are again represented by verbs of perception (7.7), (7.8). Example (7.9) includes a (lexicalised) causative activity predicate represented by a motion verb without a specified goal, while example (7.10) has an active accomplishment predicate, as it specifies a source. The same consumption verb is used in (7.11) as an activity predicate, as indicated by the incorporated non-specific undergoer, and in (7.12) as an active accomplishment predicate, while (7.13) uses a creation verb as an active accomplishment predicate. Finally, the predicates in (7.14), (7.15) and (7.16) are active accomplishments.

- (7.7) Ara-hi ne efra=di Papa ghe Gilbati.
 1SG-INTS REAL see=3NSG.AGR PN and PN
 A V U
 ‘I saw Papa and Gilbert.’ (093A130408; text)
- (7.8) Ara-hi ke fakae=ni kaisa nakodou ke hure kharao.
 1SG-INTS PERF see=3SG.AGR one woman PERF carry basket
 A V U
 ‘I saw a woman who was carrying a basket.’ (051A240208; elicitation)
- (7.9) Gilbat=na hure kaisa uu gazu si=ne=ia.
 PN=DEM.N.SG carry one HES stick FOC=DEM.R.SG=PART
 A V U
 ‘Gilbert carries a stick.’ (093A130408; text)
- (7.10) Pita ke hota gausa=na ka Jon.
 PN PERF take betelnut=DEM.N.SG PREP John.
 A V U ADJ
 ‘Peter took the betelnut from John.’ (043A160208; elicitation)
- (7.11) Maneri ngau nufi-mata bla.
 3PL eat wild.yam LIM
 A V U
 ‘They only ate wild yam.’ (012A051207; text)

- (7.12) Zone=na ne-ke ngau=ni kokorako=na.
 PN=DEM.N.SG REAL-PERF eat=3SG.AGR chicken=DEM.N.SG
 A V U
 ‘John ate the chicken.’ (301A031209; elicitation)
- (7.13) Uve, ara ne=nga frihnge kaisa meli mazaghani si=ne=ia.
 yes 1SG REAL=IMM work one copra.dryer be.new FOC=DEM.R.SG=PART
 A V U
 ‘Right, I am building a new copra dryer.’ (032A140108; text)
- (7.14) Uve, ara la falelehe=ni mane gogholi=ne.
 yes 1SG go kill=3SG.AGR SPEC giant=DEM.R.SG
 A V U
 ‘Yes, I killed the giant.’ (149A020608; text)
- (7.15) Zone=na ne-ke falelehe=ni hmogo=na.
 PN=DEM.N.SG REAL-PERF kill=3SG.AGR snake=DEM.N.SG
 A V U
 ‘John killed the snake.’ (301A031209; elicitation)
- (7.16) Ara, ghoinode=na, ghine turi=ni uu khou Tihitubu.
 1SG today=DEM.N.SG FUT narrate=3SG.AGR HES river PN
 A ADJ V U
 ‘Today I shall tell the story of the Tihitubu River.’ (016A101207; text)

VAU and AVU orders occur very frequently. The former is predominant in texts, regardless of the genre, although the examples above have been retrieved mostly from narrative and procedural texts. The latter order has a high frequency in elicited examples. This will be further discussed in 7.3.2.

UVA and VUA patterns are less frequent. UVA order is illustrated in (7.17), which comes from a procedural text explaining how to build a canoe, and in (7.18) and (7.19), which are elicited sentences and differ from each other in that the former has a specific undergoer, while the undergoer in the latter is non-specific, as indicated by the lack of agreement on the verb, the cliticised demonstrative being used only for number expression.

- (7.17) Kaisa gazu thongana bla me hohonga manei eu.
 one tree whole LIM INCPT dig.out 3SG be.thus.IRR
 U V A
 ‘A whole tree he digs out.’ (015A071207; text)
- (7.18) Kokorako=ro ne-ke ngau=di Zone
 chicken=DEM.NV.PL REAL-PERF eat=3PL.AGR PN
 U V A
 ‘The chickens John ate (them).’ (0301A031209; elicitation)

- (7.24) Zon=na ne toka=ni gazu=na ka hirama.
 PN=DEM.N.SG REAL cut=3SG.AGR tree=DEM.N.SG PREP axe
 A V U ADJ (INSTRUMENT)
 ‘John cut the tree with an axe.’ (043A160208; elicitation)
- (7.25) Pita ke hota gausa=na ka Zon.
 Peter PERF take betelnut=DEM.N.SG PREP John.
 A V U ADJ (LOCATION=SOURCE)
 ‘Peter took the betelnut from John.’ (043A160208; elicitation)
- (7.26) Zon=na ne fa age gausa ka Pita.
 John=DEM.N.SG REAL CS go betelnut PREP PN
 A V U OBL (LOCATION=GOAL)
 ‘John gave betelnut to Peter.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

The remarkable fact that both source and goal are indicated by the same Blanga preposition is explained by the language not having any other prepositions in addition to *ka*, except for *ke*, whose function is restricted to heading PPs with local nouns as complements (3.1.13). The next examples show an adjunct location occurring clause-initially (7.27), and in two clause-medial positions (7.28) and (7.29), and a temporal adjunct occurring in clause-initial (7.30) and clause-medial (7.31) position, again in clauses with overt direct arguments occupying different positions relative to each other.

- (7.27) Sare ne zaho falelehe=ni ghai bosu=na.
 there REAL go kill=3SG.AGR 1PL.EXCL pig=DEM.N.SG
 ADJ (LOCATION) V A U
 ‘Over there, we killed the pig.’ (031A140108; text)
- (7.28) Ghai sare=na zaho fringhe uu suga.
 1PL.EXCL there=DEM.N.SG go work HES house
 A ADJ (LOCATION) V U
 ‘It is over there that we go and build houses.’ (246A241109; text)
- (7.29) Me hure khave-i=nga manei ka tahi ana hore=ne.
 INCPT carry descend-TR=IMM 3SG PREP sea DEM.N.SG canoe=DEM.R.SG
 V A ADJ (LOCATION=GOAL) U
 ‘Then he carries the canoe down to the sea.’ (015A071207; text)
- (7.30) Hnorao manei ke riso kaisa letasi.
 yesterday 3SG PERF write one letter
 ADJ_{TEMP} A V U
 ‘Yesterday he wrote a letter.’ (048A230208; elicitation)
- (7.31) Ara, ghoinode=na, ghine turi=ni uu khou Tihitubu.
 1SG now=DEM.N.SG FUT narrate=3SG.AGR HES river PLN
 A ADJ_{TEMP} V U
 ‘Now, I am going to tell the story of the Tihitubu River.’ (016A101207; text)

When two or more adjuncts occur consecutively in the same clause, then the non-prepositional ones normally precede the prepositional ones (7.32).

- (7.32) [...]heve e ghu ghai ade ka nanau Popoheo.
 what HAB do 1PL.EXCL here PREP village PN
 U V A ADJ₁ ADJ₂
 ‘[...]what we do here in the Popoheo Village.’ (011A051207; text)

When an oblique and an adjunct occur consecutively in the same clause, the oblique normally precedes the adjunct (7.33).

- (7.33) Zon=na ne fa uu age gausa ka Pita ka sua=re.
 PN=DEM.N.SG REAL CS HES go betelnut PREP PN PREP child=DEM.N.PL
 A V U OBL ADJ
 ‘John gave betelnut to Peter for the children.’ (043A160208; elicitation)

7.2.2 Constituent order variation in verbal intransitive clauses

The sole argument of intransitive clauses may be either an actor (S_A) or an undergoer (S_U), with no formal marking. Both VS and SV orders are possible, as illustrated below with text and elicited examples.

- (7.34) Snari bla hmeke.
 run LIM dog
 V S_A
 ‘The dogs are running.’ (022AV130408 ; text)

- (7.35) Ara ghinai ooe fa dou.
 1SG FUT talk CS be.big
 S_A V
 ‘I shall speak loudly.’ (010A051207; text)

- (7.36) Lehe=nga mhogo-no neu.
 die=IMM snake-DEM.NV.SG be.thus.REAL
 V S_U
 ‘The snake died.’ (090A120408; elicitation)

- (7.37) Ago ghinai pukuni lelehe bla, ghoi.
 2SG FUT really be.dead LIM VOC
 S_U V
 ‘You are absolutely dead, man !’ (149A020608; text)

In intransitive clauses, no matter whether their single argument is an actor or an undergoer, obliques and adjuncts can also occur in any position relative to the predicate and the direct argument. In (7.38) and (7.39), a static location occupies the clause-final position, occurring after the verb, which, in turn, is preceded by the single direct

argument, an actor and respectively an undergoer. Example (7.40) shows a similar situation, the location being this time a source and the single argument an actor.

(7.38) Edwini=na ne hnokro ka gilugilu suga.
 PN REAL sit PREP inside house
 S_A V ADJ (LOCATION_{ST})
 ‘Edwin is sitting inside the house.’ (095A130408; elicitation)

(7.39) Nusu au ka natha=na mane gogholi=o=ia.
 sand exist PREP eye=DEM.N.SG SPEC giant=DEM.NV.SG=PART
 S_U V ADJ (LOCATION_{ST})
 ‘There is sand in the giant’s eyes.’ (150A020608; text)

(7.40) Ooe Blablanga=ne ke fufunu=na Zazao.
 language PN=DEM.R.SG PERF start=DEM.N.SG PLN
 S_A V ADJ (LOCATION=SOURCE)
 ‘The Blablanga language started at Zazao.’ (185A151109; text)

In (7.41) and (7.42), an adjunct location, a goal in these cases, precedes and respectively follows the predicate and its argument in this order, while (7.43) illustrates an adjunct force in clause-final position

(7.41) Ka glilihi=o ne khave maneri.
 PREP beach=DEM.NV.SG REAL descend 3PL
 ADJ (LOCATION=GOAL) V S_A
 ‘To the beach they descended.’ (150A020608; text)

(7.42) Khave=nga maneri=ne ka khalae neu ana.
 descend=IMM 3PL=DEM.R.SG PREP reef be.thus.REAL DEM.N.SG
 V S_A ADJ (LOCATION=GOAL)
 ‘They went down to the reef.’ (150A020608; text)

(7.43) No-gu suga=na ara ke grofo ka nute.
 POSS.GEN-1SG.P house=DEM.N.SG 1SG PERF PREP wind
 S_U V ADJ (FORCE)
 ‘My house collapsed because of the wind.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

The two examples below illustrate a non-prepositional locative adjunct preceding the intransitive predicate and its actor main argument (7.44) and a non-prepositional associative adjunct following the predicate and an undergoer single argument (7.45).

(7.44) Gloha [ta au=ne], ne-ke koko khave fua hnegho.
 bay SB exist=DEM.R.SG REAL-PERF drop descend fruit bread.tree
 ADJ_{LOC} V S_U
 ‘In that bay a coconut had fallen on the ground’ (016A101207; text)

(7.45) Nakoni ide ke mai balu-gu ara eu
 person DEM.R.PL PERF come ASSC-1SG.P 1SG be.thus.IRR
 S_A V ADJ_{ASSOC}
 ‘These people came with me.’ (149A020608; text)

Temporal adjuncts can also occupy different positions in the clause.

(7.46) Kaisa fata=na, ara ne-ke zaho hili bosu.
 one occasion=DEM.N.SG 1SG REAL-PERF go hunt pig
 ADJ_{TEMP} S_A V
 ‘One day, I went pig-hunting.’ (083A030408; text)

(7.47) Ara pukuni krabe no-gu ghoinode.
 1SG really be.hungry POSS.GEN-1SG.P today
 S_U V ADJ_{TEMP}
 ‘I am very hungry today.’ (149A020608; text)

7.2.3 Constituent order variation in verbless clauses

As expected, constituent order is more rigid in verbless clauses. The illustrations and discussions in 4.2 and 5.1.1 show that normally the sole argument precedes the predicate (S PRED). Exceptions can, however, be found, as in the locative clause:

(7.48) Ke hruku=ne duvili=ne.
 PERF inland=DEM.R.SG tuber=DEM.R.SG
 PRED S
 ‘The sweet potato is towards inland.’ (079AV270408; elicitation)

Apparently, inversion is less likely to happen in identificational and attributive clauses. Example (4.6) in Section 4.2 illustrates a naming attributive. *i.e.* an attributive clause whose single argument is invariably the noun *nahnga* ‘name’ (see 4.4). In (4.7) in the same section, *nahnga* heads a predicative NP. The constituent order is S PRED in both clauses. The latter is not an attributive but an identificational verbless clause.

Yes/no verbless interrogative clauses are distinguished from their declarative counterparts by intonation (5.1.2). In verbless Wh-questions, the Wh- word can be the single argument of a nominal predicate, as in (3.101) and (3.102) in Section 3.1.3.5, or of a relative clause functioning as a predicate, as in (3.103). They can also occur as predicates, with (5.17) or without (5.18), (5.19), (5.20) an overt argument. In any of these situations, the constituent order is (S) PRED.

7.2.4 Constituent order variation in subordinate clauses

The realis subordination pattern (5.2.2) requires that a preverbal argument position be excluded in subordinate clauses. This is best illustrated with relative clauses. When both direct arguments are overtly expressed in a relative clause, the constituent order is

VAU, thus reflecting the basic constituent order of main clauses, which will be discussed in 7.3.2.

(7.49) Ara ke fakae=ni gazu;
1SG PERF see=3SG.AGR stick

[ke poma=ni=na kaisa mane mheke=na ___i].
[PERF hit=3SG.AGR=that one man dog=that ___]
V A U ADJ

‘I saw the stick with which a man hit the dog.’ (051A240208; elicitation)

This leaves VA and VU as possible orders when the gap represents a direct argument of the predicate in a transitive relative clause, and VS in an intransitive clause. The relative pattern is fully illustrated in 6.4.3.

7.2.5 Zero anaphora

So far, most of the examples in this chapter have all direct arguments overtly expressed in a clause. In natural discourse, once they are established arguments do not need to be overtly expressed. Zero anaphora is quite frequent in Blanga, being in fact a common topicalisation strategy.

The following fragments are all from the same story about a hunting trip on the small island of Sulei. They are connected and only very short, irrelevant, passages are missing. Clauses a. and b. establish the context and the initial protagonists, the boys who decide to go hunting. These participants fill the ACTOR slot in each of the clauses in c. and d. They board their canoes, take the dogs, paddle and arrive on Sulei Island but they are not overtly mentioned in those clauses since they have already been established as actors and are easily identifiable by the hearer. Moreover, there is no need to overtly express the undergoer of the predicate *ghohra* ‘paddle’ in the first clause in d. since it has been mentioned as an adjunct location with the verb *haghe* ‘get.on’ in the first clause in c. and appears to be the only participant that can be paddled. Similarly, one can say in English *We got in the car and drove on*. The participants change in e. and f. and thus need to be overtly mentioned. The dogs get frantic and the boys need to release them. Finally, the ACTOR slot in the clause in g. is filled by the same participant as in f. (the boys again) and needs no overt mention.

- (5.50) a. Kaisa fata=na, ara ne-ke zaho hili bosu.
 one occasion=DEM.N.SG 1SG REAL-PERF go hunt pig
 ‘One day, I went pig-hunting.
- b. Ara=hi balu keha pheahnalau.
 1SG=INTS ASSOC other two boy
 Myself together with other two boys.
- c. Ani, haghe ka hore=re, hota hmeke [...],
 then ascend PREP canoe=DEM.N.PL take dog
 So, we got on the canoes, took the dogs,
- d. ghohra zaho thoke Sulei. [...]
 paddle go reach PLN
 paddled till we reached Sulei.
- e. Ani la magra la hmeke=re sare,
 then go fight PART dog=DEM.N.PL there
 Then the dogs became agitated over there,
- f. ani ke fa isi ghai hmeke=re,
 then PERF CS run.away 1PL.EXCL dog=DEM.N.PL
 then we released the dogs,
- g. tana la zaho la [...] la efra bosu [...].
 then go go PART go see pig
 then off we went and we saw pigs.’
 (083A030408; text)

The wide-spread use of zero anaphora means that the constituent order possibilities formulated in the sections above need to be slightly revised. In a transitive clause the possibilities are V(A)(U), (A)V(U), (U)V(A) and V(U)(A), while in intransitive clauses are V(S) or (S)V.

7.3 Analysis of constituent order in Blanga

The variety of possible constituent orders in Blanga clauses immediately raises three crucial questions:

1. Are there limitations on this variation?
2. Can a basic/default order be postulated?
3. Are there functional distinctions encoded by the different orders?

7.3.1 The extent of variation

Statements concerning the extent of variation have been made at various points in the sections above and need only be summarised here. V(A)(U) and (A)V(U) are more frequent than (U)V(A) and V(U)(A) patterns. Between the former pair, V(A)(U) is more

frequent in texts and (A)V(U) in elicited examples. Texts seem to show the same amount of variation regardless of the genre. No age, generation or gender-based differences have been noticed. Verbs are not allowed in final position in transitive clauses with both direct arguments overtly expressed. Otherwise, in main clauses, the variation is constrained only by the possible number of overt arguments. Intransitive clauses will thus be either V(S) or S(V). Verbless clauses tend to be (S) PRED but instances of PRED (S) are also attested.

7.3.2 Basic constituent order

With such variation, it is useful to identify, at least conventionally, a pattern that can be called ‘basic’ constituent order. The choice of the term ‘basic’ may not be the most fortunate, but I am trying to avoid other, more misleading terms such as ‘default’ or ‘neutral constituent order’ since I feel that each order fulfils a particular function, therefore cannot be neutral or preset.

A common practice when trying to establish the basic order of constituents in languages like Blanga is to look at frequencies. The method, at least in this case, is not the most appropriate. In texts, the prevailing order is V(A)(U), whereas in elicited data it is overwhelmingly (A)V(U). This is due to the fact that inherent topics such as those mentioned in 7.1, especially the speaker and the addressee, tend to appear predominantly in elicitation. In addition, elicited sentences or structures are generally outside any context, while naturally-occurring language is only possible in context. Because of that, the consultants’ tendency is to recreate a context from previously elicited sentences or from apparent situations created during elicitation. For instance, during a grammaticality judgements session, the consultant had to repeat in more or less the same form the fact that John had eaten chicken. I was using different orders of constituents to see which are acceptable and which are not and if they imply different meanings, but the meaning I was actually after was ‘John ate the chicken(s)’. After three or four repetitions of this clause, my consultant replied to my next prompt, which was something like ‘chicken ate John’ by suggesting that the appropriate way to say that now is ‘John has eaten a lot of chickens.’ He obviously counted the chickens in the previous sentences. My point is that it is very difficult to carry on with sentences outside any context since consultants automatically create one. Having done that, they are able to identify topics from the artificial context.

I propose to assume that the basic constituent order is that in which the sentence can be seen as having predicate focus, since predicate focus is considered to be

universally unmarked. If the other orders can be explained under this supposition, then this is the basic order. The order I assume to be the predicate focus one in transitive clauses is V(A)(U), the one that appears more frequently in texts and is also reflected in relative clauses (7.2.4). Similarly, the basic order in intransitive verbal clauses is assumed to be V(S).

7.3.3 Apparent UAV order

Some constructions appearing sporadically throughout the corpus may look at a first glance like transitive clauses in which the order of constituents is AUV. In reality, these do not contradict the non-verb-final character of the language since one overt argument is found outside the clause, separated from it by a prosodic pause and marked by a raising intonational contour. The clause is thus non-verb-final, with one or both arguments referenced by zero anaphora. An undergoer expressed outside the clause can be an NP (7.51), (7.53), a relative clause (7.52) or a complement clause (7.54).

- (7.51) Ghume, [pohe-mata=ne], maneri ke dudulu=ni \emptyset
 therefore clothing-bush=DEM.R.SG 3PL PERF pound=3SG.AGR
 [U] A V U

uu ka hmutu gazu mimiga eu.
 HES PREP bark tree tree.sp be.thus
 ADJ

‘Therefore, this traditional clothing, they used to make¹ it from the bark, of the *mimiga* tree.’ (212A201109; text)

- (7.52) [Ta au are,] ara falelehe=si=ia. \emptyset
 SB exist DEM.N.PL 1SG kill=FOC=PART
 [U] A V U
 ‘(Beings) like those, I kill them.’ (149A020608; text)

- (7.53) [Kokota=na] nohmi=ni $\emptyset \emptyset$.
 PN=DEM.N.SG hear=3SG.AGR
 [U] V A U
 ‘Kokota, I understand.’ (110A260408; elicitation)

- (7.54) [Hae ke au=re maneri,] ara theome lase thoke-di. \emptyset
 where PERF exist=DEM.N.PL 3.PL 1SG NEG know reach-3.PL.AGR
 [V S_U]
 [U] A V U
 ‘Where they used to live, I do not know how to reach it.’ (12A051207; text)

¹ The most accurate translation of the verb *dudulu* is ‘pound’, ‘hammer’. They used to produce the cloth by hammering the tree bark till it widened and got soft.

Both direct arguments of a transitive predication can occur in sentence-initial extracausal position. The difference is that, unlike the undergoer, the actor must also be overtly mentioned in the clause (7.55). As far as the single argument of an intransitive predicate is concerned, it can also be placed outside the clause but, like the actor argument of a transitive verb, it must also be overtly expressed in the clause, no matter whether it is an actor (7.56) or an undergoer (7.57).

- (7.55) [Mane ihei [ta manahaghi suga=na]] manei ghine
 man whoever SB want house=DEM.N.SG 3SG FUT
 kulu kaliti=di fea uheve ta mala=na suga=na.
 be.first prepare=3PL.AGR INIT whatever SB purp=3SG.P house.DEM.N.SG
 ‘The person who wants a house, s/he will, first of all, prepare everything that is needed for (building) a house.’ (013A071207; text)

- (7.56) Mane ihei ne manahaghi no-na mhola [...],
 man whoever REAL want POSS.GEN-3SG.P canoe
 manei ghine ke kulu zaho fea ka mhata=re
 3SG FUT PERF be.first go INIT PREP bush=DEM.N.PL
 ‘The person who wants a canoe, s/he will, first of all, go to the bush (015A051207;text).

- (7.57) Mane Blanga=de, maneri ke theome au ka kaisa nanau.
 man PN=DEM.R.PL 3PL PERF NEG exist PREP one village
 ‘The Blanga people, they did not live in one village.’ (012A051207; text).

7.3.4 Syntactic encoding of Blanga topics

The clauses below have predicate focus. They were elicited one by one but are part of the same story.

- (7.58) 1. La dadaka khera=gu=na ara kaisa mhogo eu.
 go step brother=1SG.P=DEM.N.SG 1SG one snake be.thus.IRR
 V A U
 ‘My brother stepped on a snake.’
 2. Kathu=ni la mhogho t=au=ne
 bite-3SG.AGR PART snake SB=exist=DEM.R.SG
 V A
 ghahe=na khera=gu=na ara.
 leg=3SG.P brother=1SG.P=DEM.N.SG 1SG
 U
 ‘The snake bit my brother’s leg.’

3. La hota la manei kaisa gahima la.
 go take PART 3SG one stone PART
 V A U
 ‘He took a stone.’
4. Fad-i=re manei mhogo=ne neu.
 hit-TRANS=DEM.N.PL 3SG snake=DEM.R.SG be.thus.REAL
 V A U
 ‘[He] hit the snake.’
5. Lehe nga mhogo=no neu.
 die IMM snake=DEM.NV.SG be.thus.REAL
 V U
 ‘The snake died.’ (090A120408; elicitation)

The preferred position for overt arguments marked as topics seems to be clause-initial. In the following example, the actor is the speaker. Although this is the first mention of the actor, the speaker assumes the hearer to be aware of his participant status and thus places the pronoun in pre-verbal position as an inherent topic. The first mention of *ara* ‘I’ is outside the clause.

- (7.59) Uve! Ara, ghoinode=na ara ghinai turi-ni
 yes 1SG now=DEM.N.SG 1SG FUT tell-3SG.AGR
 A V
- uheve no-mai nafringhe ghai, mane datau [...].
 what POSS.GEN-1PL.EXCL work 1PL.EXCL man chief
 U
 ‘O.K. Now I am going to tell what our job is as chiefs [...].’
 (008A051207; text)

The same happens in the next example, where one of my trainees started interviewing a consultant.

- (7.60) Uve! Ara nga huhu=nigho agho, Doni,
 yes 1SG IMM ask=2.SG.O 2.SG pers.name
 A V U
- ke fa-heve ke ghau ke zaho hili nga.
 PREP CS-what PREP 2PL PERF go hunt IMM
 OBL
 ‘O.K. I am asking you, Doni, what [happened] when you went hunting.’
 (025A130108; text)

The two examples above illustrate cases of inherent topic. Usually, arguments recently mentioned as objects (i.e. undergoers cross-referenced on the verb) are topicalised if subsequently reintroduced as subjects.

(7.61) Ara ghinai ke turi=ni thogele Guguha ta=u ine.
 1SG FUT PERF narrate-3SG.AGR hill hill.name SB-exist DEM.R.SG
 A V U
 SUBJ OBJ
 ‘I shall talk about the Guguha hill.’

Thogele Guguha=ne ne-ke theome au.
 hill PLN=DEM.R.SG REAL-PERF NEG exist
 S_U V
 SUBJ
 ‘The Guguha hill did not exist [before].’ (17A101207; text)

A similar, though more complex, situation is shown in the following excerpt, which is from an account of where and how the Blanga people used to live and how Christianity reached them.

(7.62) 1. Mai togha neu mane Khiloau-de.
 come arrive be.thus.REAL man Christian-these.DIST
 V S_A
 SUBJ
 ‘The missionaries arrived.’

2. Me fa tughu khave-ni nga maneri
 INCPT CS move descend-3SG.AGR IMM 3PL
 V A
 SUBJ

kaisa mane datau, datau ii Tobe.
 one man chief chief HES PN
 U
 OBJ
 ‘They brought down a chief, Chief Tobe.’

3. Eu=ghu=ni maneri.
 be.thus=do=3SG.AGR 3PL
 V S_A
 SUBJ
 ‘They did like that.’

4. Tobo, mane datau=ne datau Tobo.
 PN man chief=DEM.R.SG chief Tobo
 S_U PRED
 SUBJ
 ‘Tobo. The chief was Chief Tobo.’ (12A051207; text)

5. Manei ke khave= re ade Popoheo.
 1SG PERF descend=DEM.N.PL here PLN
 S_A V ADJ
 SUBJ
 ‘He came down here at Popoheo.’ (12A051207)

The text starts with information about their diet and former beliefs. Then, the arrival of Christianity is mentioned. The missionaries arrived at Popoheo and, through messengers, persuaded a chief to leave the Blanga settlement up in the hills in order to meet them on the shore. Clause (1) in (7.62) has predicate focus and includes the first mention of the missionaries as an intransitive subject. In the transitive Clause (2), the same participant retains both its status of actor and subject and its unmarked post-verbal position, but is now topical and referred to by means of a personal pronoun. A second participant, an undergoer/object is introduced. The third clause is simply recapping, while in Clause (4), which corrects the chief's name, is a verbless identificational clause and thus can only be S PRED. In Clause (5), the argument denoting the chief is topicalised through pronominal reference, for second mention (after correction), and placed in the marked topic position (clause-initially) since it was recently mentioned as an object and is now mentioned as a subject. If necessary or intended, a high pitch on *manei* followed by a falling intonational contour can further mark the argument as a contrastive topic, signaling that HE, Tobo, was the chief, not Tobe.

In the next example, the object of Clause (1) is non-specific, as indicated by the lack of agreement on the verb. The denoted participant is mentioned as subject in Clause (2) but the unmarked order is maintained.

(7.63) 1. Togla la mheke=ro bosu=ro.
 chase PART dog=DEM.NV.PL pig=DEM.NV.PL
 V A U
 SUBJ OBJ

‘The dogs were chasing pigs.’

2. Zaho bosu=ro sara raru ka vido mane Maringe.
 go pig=DEM.NV.PL there seawards prep land man PLN
 V S_A ADJ₁ ADJ₂

‘The pigs went over there seawards to the land of the Maringe people.’

If identifiable information has not been mentioned for some time, it can be topicalised to reintroduce it into the discourse, drawing the hearer's attention back to it. The next text excerpt starts with mentions about the Blanga people and their settlements but during the subsequent few clauses only settlements are mentioned. The settlements are considered to be more prominent in the hearer's mind when the next mention of the Blanga people is made, therefore the latter is placed in the marked topic position.

(7.64) 1. Ke au=re mane Blanga=de neu Patunitu
 PERF exist=DEM.N.PL man Blanga=DEM.R.PL be.thus.REAL PLN
 V SU
 SUBJ

‘The Blanga people lived, at Patunitu.’

2. Keha=na ka ta=na ghoi Riria,
 other=DEM.N.SG PREP SB=DEM.N.SG VOC PLN
 SU
 SUBJ

aghe ke keha vido nga bo.
 and PREP other land but CNT

‘Others, man, at Riria, and on some other lands.’

[.....]

6. Mane Blanga=de theome grui.
 man Blanga=DEM.R.PL NEG plant
 SA V
 SUBJ

‘The Blanga people did not plant [crops].’ (12A051207; text)

In the next excerpt, the consultant is talking about his building a new copra mill. The subject in the first clause is an inherent topic. Once established, the topic persists over the following clauses, not all of them shown here, and is realised by zero anaphora. The first clause is transitive and all the rest are intransitive. Since only zero anaphora is involved, this can be considered unmarked continued topic.

(7.65) 1. Uve! Ara ne nga fringhe
 yes 1SG REAL IMM work
 A V
 SUBJ

kaisa meli mazaghani si=ne=ia.
 one copra.dryer be.new FOC=DEM.R.SG=PART
 U
 OBJ

‘O.K. I am bulding a new copra mill.’

2. Ø Zaho=nga=re
 go=IMM=DEM.N.PL
 SA V
 SUBJ

‘[I] go,

3. Ø me toka khoa= re
 INCPT cut mangrove=DEM.N.PL
 SA V
 SUBJ

[I] cut mangrove,

4. \emptyset zaho toka tetena=re
 go cut sago.palm=DEM.N.PL
 S_A V
 SUBJ
 [I] cut sago palm,

5. ta=na, ghoi, \emptyset toka nagihi
 SB=DEM.N.SG VOC cut tatch
 S_A V
 SUBJ
 then, man, [I] cut tatch [...].’ (032A140108; text)

Prominence of just mentioned topics is maintained by pronominal forms in sentence-initial position, which may then be followed by zero anaphora in the next sentence. This may have to do with the degree of activation of the information, probably in this order:

recently mentioned full NP topic > proform mention* > zero anaphora*

The following clauses continue the text in (7.64).

(7.66) 1. Mane Blanga-de theome grui.
 man Blanga=DEM.R.PL NEG plant
 S_A V
 SUBJ
 ‘The Blanga people did not plant [crops].’

2. Maneri theome ke grui dovele,
 they NEG PERF plant tuber
 S_A V
 SUBJ
 ‘They did not plant potatoes,

3. \emptyset ngau nufi mata bla.
 eat taro bush LIM
 S_A V
 SUBJ
 they only ate wild taro.’ (12A051207; text)

So far, only V(A)(U) and (A)V(U) have been discussed. (U)V(A) occurs as a consequence of topicalising objects. In (7.67), a family of three, well established as participants, are discussing the consequences of their dwelling being revealed to a giant. In (7.68) the consultant explains that a particular type of canoe is dug out of a single tree trunk. The object topic is contrastive in this instance: a single large trunk is used instead of several planks put together.

(7.67) Ghitatilo ne-ke ngau koko=ghita gogholi=si=ia.
 1INC.TR REAL-PERF eat throw=1INC.AGR giant=FOC=PART
 U V A
 OBJ SUBJ
 ‘The giant swallowed the three of us.’ (149A020608; text)

(7.68) Kaisa gazu thongana bla me hohonga manei eu.
 one tree whole LIM INCPT dig.out 3SG be.thus.IRR
 U V A
 OBJ SUBJ
 ‘One single whole tree he digs out.’ (015A071207; text)

7.3.5 Syntactic and morphological encoding of Blanga foci

V(U)(A) order can be explained by looking at how focus is encoded in the language. While preverbal (clause-initial) position is the marked position for topics, clause-final position, in combination with the particle *si*, is associated with foci in Blanga. Focal A results in V U A (7.69), while focal U in V A U (7.70), identical to the unmarked order:

(7.69) Ne-ke ngau=di kokorako=ro si mane Zone=ne=ia.
 REAL-PERF eat=3PL.AGR chicken=DEM.NV.PL FOC SPEC PN=DEM.R.SG=PART
 V U A
 ‘It is John that ate the chickens.’ (0301A031209; elicitation)

(7.70) La efra=ni ghai si mhala=na bosu ia.
 go see=3SG.AGR 1PL.EXCL FOC trace=3SG.P pig PART
 V A U
 ‘We saw the pig’s footprint.’ (031A140108; text)

Apparent VUA order also occurs when a non-specific undergoer is incorporated into the verb. However, since there is no agreement on the verb here we are dealing with an intransitive clause, as in (7.71). Of course, the single argument of an intransitive clause can be focussed, regardless of whether there is an incorporated undergoer in the clause (7.72) or not (7.73).

(7.71) [...] ngau sau ta=u ana mane sua=o.
 eat apple SB=exist DEM.N.SG SPEC child=DEM.NV.SG
 V S_A
 ‘The boy was eating apple.’ (149A020608; text)

(7.72) Brasa bla me hnigho hnuhra si manei=ia.
 Smash LIM INCPT finish bone FOC 3SG=PART
 V S_A
 ‘He smashes up bones.’ (149A020608; text)

(7.73) Zaho la si mheke=re
 go PART FOC dog=DEM.N.PL
 V S_A
 ‘Off went the dogs’. (031A140108; text)

7.4 Summing up

The mechanisms for encoding topics and foci will be investigated as part of a future research project on Blanga information structure, including interactions with prosody, especially intonation and pauses. This chapter has shown that there is an obvious connection between clause constituent order and some topicalisation and focalisation strategies in the language. V(A)(U), (A)V(U) and (U)V(S) order in transitive clauses can be related with topic marking strategies, while V(U)(S) can be explained in relation with focus marking strategies.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Concluding Remarks

This thesis has analysed primary data collected by the author during fieldwork on Blanga, a previously undocumented and undescribed Oceanic language of the Solomon Islands. Following a sociolinguistic and ethnographic introduction, Chapters 2 to 5 present various aspects of the phonology, morphology and syntax of Blanga, especially those regarded as typologically interesting or considered relevant to the relations established between predicates and their arguments. These relations are discussed in some detail in Chapters 6 and 7. While this is not intended as a comprehensive reference grammar, the main structural features of Blanga are described in the various chapters of the thesis.

In terms of sociolinguistic, demographic and genetic information about the language I have calculated very accurately the number of speakers (as of 2009 when the second fieldtrip was carried out), and revised the dialect map of the language based on both linguistic and sociolinguistic arguments. I have presented several structures that can be used in work on the subgrouping of the Isabel languages, both in the introductory chapter and later throughout the thesis. I also discuss Blanga totems and lineages, previous settlements in the highlands and the middle bush, and attempt a reconstruction of movements and migrations that resulted in the current geographical distribution of the Blanga dialects.

I have dedicated a longer and more thorough analysis than is customary in the Oceanic literature to phonology, and have tried to back up phonological statements with acoustic evidence. Some remarkable phonological features of Northern Blanga, are:

1. obvious differences between older people's speech and younger people's speech, which reflects major influence from the neighbouring and prestigious Cheke Holo. These influences include the emergence of affricate phonemes, rare in Oceanic but present in Cheke Holo, and marginal phonologisation of the glottal stop in the variety used by younger speakers. These are changes in progress, thus representing diachronic valuable data;
2. the strong tendency of hiatus avoidance by both younger and older speakers, which forms the base of numerous surface phenomena and has consequences for the pattern of stress assignment in the language;
3. the existence, under certain constraints, of consonant clusters, another rarity in Oceanic;

4. stress assignment, which is fascinating and has been covered in some detail;
5. the treatment of loanwords and their effects on the language's structure, including the incipient introduction of a labial glide phoneme, the generation of syllabic codas, and the acceptance of consonant clusters that do not obey traditional constraints.

In morphology, morphophonology and syntax, some interesting aspects can be summarised as:

1. the existence of only two major word classes;
2. lack of adjectives but the presence of descriptive stative verbs;
3. grammatical encoding of space and spatial orientation;
4. reduplication and stem modification patterns;
5. multiple functions of demonstratives;
6. the noun *mane* 'man' becoming a marker of specificity;
7. Possession;
8. existence of object agreement without subject agreement, which is extremely rare cross-linguistically;
9. incorporation of non-specific nouns into verbs.

Important theoretical implications are revealed by the analysis of some of the main topics of this thesis. The analysis of Blanga stress patterns supports Hayes' (1995) use of only three foot types for metrical stress assignment. Moreover, Hayes (1995:103) predicts that if a language using a syllabic trochee system shows evidence of heavy syllables, which can be other than a segmental length contrast, then a word-final heavy syllable may be a proper syllabic trochee. He complains about the difficulty of checking this prediction since crucial cases either do not exist or have not been made available in the sources available to him at the time. The Blanga data reveal such a crucial case due to the formation of surface glides as a consequence of the language's tendency to avoid hiatus. The Blanga data, therefore, constitute evidence supporting Hayes' prediction, as well as the fact that word minimality may be a clue to it. Such a foot type is only possible if one assumes that prosodic structure is created maximally.

Another important consequence of the analysis of Blanga stress is that it confirms the viability of the Continuous Column Constraint (Hayes 1995:34). The analysis presented here also brings further evidence for the fact that stress assignment cannot be based exclusively on statements concerning the position of the stressed syllable within

the word. In Blanga, it is the relation between word minima, feet, and higher level constraints that contribute to stress assignment.

The question of whether grammatical relations are universal or language specific is discussed in some detail in this thesis. While Blanga does not add to the evidence against universality, it does show that the necessity for grammatical relations as analytical concepts depends on particular constructions, i.e. they are construction-specific. Tests based on both behaviour and control properties and on overt coding properties show that most, but not all, constructions in the language can be analysed without employing abstract concepts such as subject and object. In addition, the situation in Blanga seems to support a functionalist view that coding properties, in this case verb agreement, may be at least as relevant for grammatical relations as the behavioural ones. Coding properties may even be expected to play a more central role in specifying grammatical relations in a theoretical framework that does not consider them to be universal. On the other hand, a framework that considers grammatical relations to be universal would eliminate the need for dissociation tests, leaving only identification tests which, in turn, means that behavioural properties appear to be more significant.

Another important theoretical implication of the Blanga data is that they show that semantic macroroles do not need to be encoded grammatically but can be identified by speakers and hearers based on the semantics of the predicate, pragmatic and cultural knowledge, and the larger discourse context. This is shown in detail in Chapter 6.

Blanga displays considerable variation in terms of the positions of clause constituents relative to each other. We show that this does not mean that the language has 'free word or constituent order', because Blanga uses constituent order, in conjunction with morphological markers and intonation, to encode aspects of information structure. Chapter 7 discusses and exemplifies in detail the interaction between constituent order and notions such as topic and focus.

At various places throughout this thesis reference is made to further research being necessary in order to clarify particular aspects of the analysis. While this thesis is not intended as a reference grammar, I plan to prepare one in the future and therefore wish to gradually fill in gaps in the description of the language and expand the analysis. This is a long-term project, of course. A second long-term project is a Blanga-English-Pijin dictionary, on which I have been sporadically working over the past few years. A further project planned for the immediate and near future is a thorough description of information structure in Blanga, including an analysis of the prosodic system, especially pausing and intonation.

Appendix 1

Alphabetic List of Blanga Consultants

Abigail Tanhiara	Joseph Hogata
Anita Gasemai	Joses Figri
Annette Tanhiara	Josper Wati
Antusa Liuau	Kale David
Barnabas Tangobuka	Maika Asma
Belinda Malatugu	Mark Legata
Bill Trevor	Matthew Tada
Cecil Rhodes Kusapa	Michael Malatugu
Christin Tinoni	Naika Zalani
Clement Legata	Naomi Tubi
Clinton Tavakila	Nason Haidu
Davidson Ledi	Nason Kongaghita
Deborah Koli	Nathanael Bako
Edwin Hoboro Haidu	Nelson Buga
Ellison Sero	Nesta Ririana
Ellison Talan Quity	Newton
Ezele Zaka	Pamela Sam
Frederik Kana	Patricia Eda
George Harrison	Ramo Stephen
Gilbert Haidu	Rebecca Sagumali
Gladis Ura	Reginald Kapru
Hedis Abira	Reginald Watkinson
Helen Sabela	Reubenson Havitena
Heleni Zalani	Reubenson Koburu
Henry Wilson	Sabela Sasani
Henry Tango	Selwin Maneghena
Jacob Tarasa	Toni Samson Ura
Jim Nolan	Tim Podoki
John Getu	Tubi Bartholomew
John Nede	Walter Koburu
John Probert	Wilfred Hughu
John Rocky	Wilton
Johnson Bana	

For access to full metadata and the Blanga corpus, see the Bla(bla)nga deposit in the ELAR archive, available at <https://elar.soas.ac.uk/Collection/MPI1029725>

Appendix 2

Blanga-Kilokaka Cognate Percentage Revision Wordlist

ID	GLOSS	TRYON & HACKMAN 1983		FIELDWORK 2007-2009	
	English	Blablanga	Kilokaka	Blablanga	Kilokaka
4	four	fati	fno?to	fati	fno?to
5	five	qlima	qaha	qlima	qaha
8	back		tata?aru-na	tataru	tata?aru
21	leg	yahe-na	nene?e-na	yahe	ne?ene
24	mouth	naflo-na	mana-na	naflo	mana
34	louse egg		qliha	qliha	qliha
43	snake	hmogo	k ^h olu	hmogo	k ^h olu
46	rat	kukude?eke	k ^h ubiliki	kukudeke	k ^h ubiliki
49	porpoise	kirio		kirio	Poposi (Eng/Pij)
57	seed	k ^h atu	hmi?tu	k ^h atu	hmi?tu
60	banana	zeku	k ^h aku	zeku	k ^h aku
66	sugar cane	nehu	pihu	nehu	piyu
69	man	nahla?u	hmane	mane	hmane
80	earth	qlose	k ^h ava	naut ^h oqlu	naut ^h oqlu
81	earthquake	nak ^h eu	nana?e	nak ^h eu	nana?e
85	sand	nahiya	rarat ^h a	nahiya	rarat ^h a
94	dust	qufnu		qufu	
96	fire	pipito	va?ita	pipito	va?ita
98	cloud	k ^h oveo	qromo	qromo	qromo
99	fog	paparafu	lavo	paparafu/gogorofu	lavo/k ^h ove?o
106	moon	qlaba	tot ^h ori	qlaba	qlaba
108	water	k ^h o?u	k ^h uma?i	k ^h o?u	k ^h uma?i
114	you (pl)	yotilo	yau	yau	yau
129	green		dodoli	dodoli	dodoli
132	yellow	riza	ne?o	ne?o	ne?o
137	cold	reka	kapo/zemu	zemu	zemu
140	wet	bose	bubru?i	bose	bo?ose
142	sharp	fnonu	t ^h ere	fnonu	t ^h ere
145	new	mazayani	valu	mazayani	valu
151	straight	dqlo	lolo?a	dqlo	lolo?a
153	dig	dok ^h a	zoho	dok ^h a	zoho
154	give	tufa	fa?agei	tufa	tufa
159	play	nanafu	zizi/ifi	nanafu	zi?ifi
160	rub	yiha	qlazi	yiha	qlazi/yu?una
164	stab	toyu	zora?i	toyu	zora?i
165	throw			fafada (vi)/koko (vt)	fafada (vi)/koko (vt)
166	tie	dodoyo	nanahro	dodoyo/nanahro	nanahro
167	wash	titih	sisik ^h a	titih	sisika
169	fall	k ^h oko	uka	k ^h oko	uka
172	turn	figri	fik ^h a	figri	fik ^h a
174	count	kakaha	a?ahe	kakaha	kakaha
183	swell	huge		huge	qafe
186	cry	tahni	hrue	tahni	hru?e
188	drink	ko?u	k ^h uma?i	ko?u	k ^h uma?i
190	hear	nohmi	fano?mo	nohmi	nonohmo
194	sit	hnokro	nohe	hnokro	nohe
195	sleep	туру	bihro	t ^h uru/bihro	bihro
196	smell	n'ann'ahno	nahno	nahni	nahno
199	suck	su?u	sop ^h o	su?u	sop ^h o

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