A grammar of Cheke Holo

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8   Verb Phrase

8.1   Introduction

"The verb phrase is the central, often the only element in most clauses in most Oceanic languages", (Lynch *et al*, 2002:84). That observation appears to be true as well for CH. The CH verb phrase (VP) is a structure headed by a verb, as described in section 8.2. The VP does not require but can include a variety of modifiers, a single category of verbal inflection, and the presence of enclitics which mark transitivity or aspect. By itself the CH VP can form a clause. The structure of the VP includes a significant number of pre-verbal and post-verbal constituents. These are described in sub-sections starting in section 8.3. Among these are the pre-verbal elements which mark aspect, tense, negation and purpose. The post-verbal elements include an array of enclitics in various environments, such as those which mark direct objects. Also there are those features which mark completive, continuative, inceptive and non-specific aspect. The chapter concludes in section 8.5 with a brief discussion of VP coordination, which is attested through the use of coordinating conjunctions and juxtaposition.

8.2   Head of a verb phrase

The head of a verb phrase is filled only by a verb. That verb may be either transitive (750), intransitive (751), or stative (752).

(750) *Iago   filo=ni   ido=gna   Sera*
       2SG   see=3SG.OBJ   mother=3SG.POSS   Sera
       'You see his mother Sera.'

(751) *Mae Billy   neke   mei   agne*
       man Billy   PST   come   here
       'Billy came here.'

(752) *Mae mala   au   kolho   kosi*
       man PUR   be   just   outside
       '[The] man just stays outside.'

8.3   Structure of the verb phrase

There are inventories of elements which form preverbal and postverbal complexes in a somewhat predictable though not necessarily rigid template structure. Forms and structure are described in the following sections. Prepositional phrases are omitted from the following discussion as they can occur either pre- or post-head.

8.3.1   Pre-verbal elements

All pre-verbal elements optionally occur. These include the inceptive aspect marker *me*, immediate aspect marker *la*, tense markers, adverbs, verbal negation device

theome, purposive markers *mala* and *e*. The usual order of these elements is linearly represented as:

(INCP) (IMM) (adverbs) (NEG) (PUR) HEAD

Each of these elements is briefly described and illustrated in the following sub-sections.

8.3.1.1   Inceptive aspect marker *me*

Inceptive aspect signals the inception or beginning of the action that is indicated by the verb(s). Rather than simply designating that a particular action occurs, CH often indicates the beginning of that action. In CH, the pre-verbal element *me* encodes this notion of inceptive aspect. This is illustrated in the following pair of simple contrastive examples. In (753), the verb phrase, without aspect, indicates the bare notion of 'sit', indicated by the verb *gnokro*:

(753) *Mana*   gnokro
     3SG.M sit
     'He sits.'

However, with the addition of the inceptive aspect marker *me*, the meaning is that he begins to sit:

(754) *Mana*   *me*   *gnokro*
     3SG.M   INCP   sit
     'He begins to sit.'

Designation of inceptive aspect is not shown to be restricted to either transitive or intransitive verbs, but is attested as co-occurring with both types. The inception of verbal action is illusrated in the following four examples with transitive verbs in (755) and (756), and with intransitive verbs in (757) and (758).

(755) *Mare me   hari=ni   u   gnara*
     3PL   INCP tie=3SG.OBJ DEM vine
     'They begin to tie that vine.'

(756) *Eguteuna me   fa-jifla=di   mae Malaita te*
     CONJ   INCP CAUS-leave=3PL.POSS   man Malaita REL

gnafa re
all   PL
'And all the Malaitans begin leaving.'

(757) *Sunday na me tei ña ofo agno Kaevanga*
      Sunday DEM INCP go NSP wait there Kaevanga
      'This Sunday, [we] begin to go wait over there at Kaevanga.'

(758) *Eguteuna mana me keḡra ke hotei=gna faidu*
      CONJ 3SG.M INCP stand DIR middle=3SG.POSS meeting
      'And he began to stand in the middle of the meeting.'

Also, not infrequently in discourse, *me* is found in successive VPs, as in example (759).

(759) *Me tufru soru ña mare me korho hage(=di) u*
      INCP bend down NSP 3PL INCP pull up(=3PL.OBJ) DEM

khukru=gna fañna gne
corner=3SG.POSS net this
'They begin bending down and begin pulling up the corners of this net.'

It is noted that the inception of an action in CH is often accompanied by an additional aspectual notion, that of immediacy of action. This is discussed in section 8.3.1.2.

8.3.1.2   Immediate aspect marker *la*

In addition to indicating CH verbal action through the presence of the verb, the aspect of the immediacy of that verbal action or state can be indicated. Thus the verbal action can be marked as 'happening now'. CH marks immediacy of action or state in relation to the verb with the immediate aspect marker *la*. Contrastive examples demonstrate the difference between the bare notion of the verbal action and that of the verb modified by aspect. In (760), the verb phrase, without aspect, indicates the simple notion of 'sit', indicated by the verb *gnokro*:

(760) *Mana* gnokro
      3SG.M sit
      'He sits.'

However, with the addition of the immediate aspect marker *la*, the meaning is that he is now at this time sitting:

(761) *Mana la gnokro*
      3SG.M IMM sit
      'He is now sitting.'

The immediate aspect marker always occurs pre-verbally with intransitive verbs (as in example 762), but occurs only post-verbally with the stative verb *au* 'exist/be.at'

(as in example 767). Somewhat curiously and for unknown reasons, it is noted that while *la* occurs extensively in the corpus, it only does so with intransitive or stative verbs, and never with transitive verbs.

(762) *Mare   la   belo*
       3PL   IMM   bell
       'They are bell-ringing.'

(763) *Eguteuna repa   ña   la   tei fo~fodu   no=di*
       CONJ   3DU.F NSP   IMM go DUR~full ALN=3PL.POSS
       'And the two of them are going together.'

The CH immediate aspect marker *la* co-occurs with the inceptive aspect marker *me*, described in section 8.3.1.1. The co-occurrence of these aspectual notions indicates both the inception and the immediacy of the action. The contrastive examples used previously of the base notion of the verb plus the aspectual markers are employed once again:

(764) *Mana   la   me   gnokro*
       3SG.M IMM   INCP   sit
       'He is now beginning to sit.'

The word order of the co-occurrence of these two aspectual markers is considered to be fluid and arbitrary. Thus, the following is also attested as legitimate:

(765) *Mana   me   la   gnokro*
       3SG.M INCP   IMM   sit
       'He is now beginning to sit.'

Example (766) shows a successive use of the *la* plus *me* combination. This combination of 'immediate beginning of verbal action' can be in a high frequency of successive occurrences throughout a discourse.

(766) *Me   la   me   la   me   gile   la   kafe tei lamna*
       INCP   IMM INCP IMM INCP until IMM all   go inside

fañna   u   sasa   ḡre
net   DEM fish   DEM
'These fish begin going and going until they all begin to go inside the net.'

While listed in the pre-verbal aspect marker section of this book, it is noted that one exception to this syntactical occurrence is that the immediate aspect marker *la* occurs post-verbal with the CH stative verb *au* 'exist/be.at', as in example (767). Reasons for this difference in syntactic order are unknown.

(767)   *Mae pakri au la   Honiara   ñau*
        man twins be IMM Honiara   NSP
        'The twins are still in Honiara.'

8.3.1.3   Pre-head adverbs

CH adverbs in the modality class are discussed in section 5.2.2. Certain modality adverbs which denote intensification always occur pre-verb. The inventory of these elements includes: *thono/thofno* 'real, genuine', and *ra'e* 'really'. These each optionally pair with the single member of the intensification sub-class that occurs in a post-verb position, *fara* 'very', as in (768). Also, certain modality adverbs occur in the slot immediately before the verb (e.g. *fiti* 'just/only', illustrated by (769).

(768)   *Thono fa-'iho   fara ñala*
        truly   CAUS-not.knowing very just
        'It truly just confuses them a lot.'

(769)   *Mana   fiti   vavahi   tuana*
        3SG.M just   choose   DEM
        'He just chooses that one.'

8.3.1.4   Tense: Introduction

Regarding tense systems, Chung and Timberlake (1985:202) declare that "tense locates the event in time". This is distinguished from aspect which denotes the "internal temporal structure of the event." They further state (1985:204) that a two-way distinction between past/non-past or future/non-future is much more usual in the world's languages than a three way tense system of past, present, and future.

The two-way distinction of past and non-past is indeed the most useful descriptor for the CH tense system, though there are many Oceanic languages which use future/non-future (Frawley 2009:361). One of the main justifications for classifying CH as past/non-past rather than future/non-future is that past is the most prominent time action indicated by CH tense markers. This is one immediate distinction that sways the judgment of analysis for past/non-past. Further, in order to definitely indicate future action, adjuncts need to be employed. As described in section 8.3.1.6 regarding the non-past tense marker, it is difficult to prominently describe CH as future/non-future system due to ambiguity, since the same marker is used in both present time and future time constructions. Hence, the past/non-past orientation in which there is a prominent and undisputed past tense marker seems to more readily fit CH. The non-past is routinely unmarked. Coupled with the use of tense markers is a set of aspect markers which indicate and clarify the temporal structure of the past or non-past event.

8.3.1.5 Past tense marker

Past tense in CH is marked by either *ne* or *neke* (and which is sometimes shortened in spoken CH as *ke*), which are tense markers that typically precede the verb(s) in the VP in the immediately prior syntactic slot. Though the two markers do share the common feature of indicating actions or events which occurred in the past, there are some basic distinctions between the two. One is that *ne* can be considered an imperfective past, indicating that an event or action occurred in the past but the action is not indicated as having necessarily concluded at a particular point in time. Tense marker *neke*, however, is perfective, used by the speaker to indicate action which has definitely concluded. The past tense markers *ne* and *neke* are compared in the following pair of examples, (770) and (771):

(770) *Mana   ne   tei   namo rhegna suḡa*
      3SG.m   PST.IMPF   go   near   beside house
      'He was going near the house.'

(771) *Mana   neke   tei namo rhegna suḡa*
      3SG.M   PST.PRF   go   near   beside   house
      'He went (at a point in time) near the house.'

Another distinction is that *ne* is the past tense marker constituent used in conditional clauses rather than *neke* (for more on these conditional clauses, see section 9.4.2.7). This is not unexpected, as the imperfective sense indicated by the use of *ne* in the conditional is "if this situation had been happening or was happening (in the past), then the following would take place." That is contrasted in (773) with the non-attested use of *neke* as "If you ran fast (past tense) then you will (future, conditionally) fall down."

(772) *Ne   chari ña   fa-gosei   iago nu   iago na   uka egu*
      PST.IMPF   run   NSP   CAUS-fast 2SG CONJ 2SG DEM   fall like.that
      'If you run fast, you will fall down, like.that.'

(773) **Neke   chari ña   fa-gosei   iago nu   iago na   uka egu*
      PST.PRF   run   NSP   CAUS-fast 2SG CONJ 2SG DEM fall like.that
      *'If you ran fast, you will fall down, like.that.'

Aspect and modality markers can occur in syntactic slots on either side of the tense marker, as illustrated next with another equative construction. These aspect markers indicate temporal structure of the event which occurs in the past tense. Here in (774) the speaker uses an immediate aspect marker before the tense marker followed by a completive aspect marker enclitic with the predicate adjective to indicate that the girl Noela has undergone growth, and has now arrived at a 'big' state.

(774) *Noela na   la   neke   bi'o=hi   ḡognaro na*
      Noela DEM IMM PST.PRF big=COMPL now   DEM
      'Noela has grown up now.'

An adverb can intervene between the past tense marker and the verb, as illustrated in example (775) with the occurrence of the adverb *namo* 'almost'. An aspect marker occupies the same position in example (776).

(775) *Eha   fa-bi'o   fara gehati   ne   namo   pa'e suḡa   na*
     shout CAUS-big   very 1PL.EXCL PST.IMPF almost   fall house DEM
     'We shouted loudly as the house was almost collapsing.'

(776) *Uve   Noela na   ne   la   tolagi ka   mae nalha'u=gna*
     yes   Noela DEM PST.IMPF IMM   marry LOC man male=3SG.POSS

Ulawa
Ulawa
'Well, Noela married a young man from Ulawa.'

Modality adverbs which occur prehead will do so in the syntactic slot between the past tense marker and the verb.

(777) *Ulu-lahu na   Ø   neke khoḡla   sene   kolho*
     first-ORD DEM [3SG] PRF just   pick.up just
     'First, [he] just simply picked [it] up.'

The pair of examples (778) and (779) illustrate one semantic difference between the past imperfective *ne* and the past perfective *neke*. In the first one, the speaker indicates that she is glad that she has had born to her (past action) many grandchildren (and those grandchildren are still alive). If she had used *neke*, as in the second example, then she would perhaps be saying that she was glad that she had had, at a point in the past, many granchildren (but perhaps they are no longer alive?).

(778) *Keli   ta=ḡu   fara ne   kmana   ḡra=ḡu*
     good EXP=1SG.POSS   very PST.IMPF lot.of   grandchild=1SG.POSS
     'I am glad that I have had many grandchildren (and they are still alive).'

(779) *Keli   ta=ḡu   fara neke   kmana   ḡra=ḡu*
     good EXP=1SG.POSS   very PST.PRF lot.of   grandchild=1SG.POSS
     'I am glad that I had many grandchildren (and they may or may not be alive any longer).'

This same type distinction between the imperfective and perfective past is illustrated further in (780). The speaker is indicating that this particular leaf has grown in the past (and still does) in their region and hence he used *ne*. Contrastively, if the speaker had used *neke*, he would have been indicating with a punctiliar time concept that in the past the leaf had grown but no longer does and is no longer present.

(780) *Uve   ne   au kaisei khakla ḡaju te   mala   fa-le~lehe*
      yes   PST.IMPF be one   leaf   tree PRS   PUR   CAUS-DUR~die

sasa gehati   agne
fish 1PL.EXCL here
'Well, it is that there has been a particular leaf of a tree used for killing fish here [in this place].'

It is not unusual for the imperfective past tense marker *ne* to occur multiple times in a single sentence, with each one indicating the initial boundary of a verbal or non-verbal predicate, as illustrated in (781) and (782).

(781) *Mei=gna   nuri bi'o na   ne   kokhoni=gami*
      come=3SG.POSS   wind big DEM PST.IMPF mercy=1PL.EXCL.OBJ

gehati   ne   khoburu   ne   kaisei fata   na
1PL.EXCL PST.IMPF westerly.wind PST.IMPF one   time DEM
'The coming of this big wind caused us to feel sorry, as the westerly wind blew in [on us] one time.'

(782) *Jare me   fa-karha   ka   mae dokta ne   keli*
      there INCP CAUS-live LOC man doctor PST.IMPF good

ne   thau nosi ne   keli ne   egu
PST.IMPF woman nurse PST.IMPF good PST.IMPF like.that
'There the doctor delivered the baby and it was good and there were nurses and that was good and [that's how it was], like that.'

In this sense of each *ne* indicating the initial boundary of a verbal or non-verbal predicate, it serves to conjoin the information which is presented, doing so in a rather 'speedy' narrative style which rapidly moves along the storyline. This feature of *ne* again is the third contrast with *neke*, in that *neke* typically occurs once and establishes the perfective past of the event, and then is not repeated until there is a change of tense, or some reason on the part of the speaker to signal different time of action. This phenomenon is illustrated in the following three-sentence example of the use of *neke* from a travelogue. The past tense perfective marker *neke* is only found in the first sentence, and shows sharp contrast to the examples of *ne* in the previous two examples, (781) and (782).

(783) *Ka nhiḡra July finoga te   ari ia   iara neke   tei westin*
      LOC month July year   REL go DEM 1SG   PST.PRF go Western

provins.
province
'In the month of July, in the year that just passed, I went to Western Province.'

Nei   thokei Gizo   boat thoke   Vella.
CONJ   arrive Gizo   boat arrive   Vell
'And we arrived in Gizo by boat and then arrived in Vella.'

Nei   tei Vonunu au ka   suḡa=gna   mae Pike.
CONJ   go Vonunu be LOC   house=3SG.POSS   man Pike
'And we went to Vonunu to stay at Pike's house.'

The corpus is void of multiple occurrences of *neke* in the fashion of multiple occurrences of   imperfective past tense *ne* in the following two examples. A common syntactic construction of SVO order illustrated below shows the NP as subject followed by the VP, which consists of the tense marker + the verb + object.

(784) *Mana   neke   tolagi Bughotu*
      3SG.M   PST.PRF   marry Bughotu
      'He married someone from Bughotu region.'

In the next example, a single occurrence of the past tense marker is used to locate the time of activity of verbs in serial, in this case *tei* 'go' and *uḡra* 'fishing'.

(785) *Sera neke   tei uḡra   sasa*
       Sera PST.PRF go fishing   fish
       'Sera went fishing.'

Neke can be used in a equative construction with a verbless phrase. In such cases, the tense marker will immediately precede that which is being equated on the right side of the semantic equation, which in this case is son=Tasiu.missionary:

(786) *Tifa   na   mae thu=gna   neke   Tasiu*
      time.before   DEM man child=3SG.POSS   PST.PRF   k.o.church.order
      'Previously, his son was a member of the Tasiu [the Melanesian Brotherhood group].'

8.3.1.6   Non-past

A non-past action or event can be marked or unmarked. This non-past action or event is occurring either currently or in the future to the actual time frame of the current communication event or narrative. The unmarked non-past tense is illustrated in example (787), and the marked non-past in example (788).

(787) *Uve iara na   thoutonu eigna u   kokholo gna   naikno-i*
       yes 1SG DEM   story   about DEM clan   3SG.POSS people-CMPR
       'Well, I tell a story about the clans of the people group.'

(788) *Mana   ğinau na   tei Buala*
     3SG.M FUT   DEM   go Buala
     'He will go to Buala later.'

If necessary to either distinguish between current time and future time orientation of the event, time auxiliary adjuncts can be used for both. Most commonly used are *ğognaro* 'now' and *ğinau* **'**future', as in examples (789) and (790):

(789) *Gehati   ğognaro   na   ğlea   fara egu*
     1PL.EXCL now   DEM   happy very like.that
     'We are now very happy, like that.'

(790) *Mae   tuare ğinau   na   au payment sua   te   re*
     man   DEM time.future DEM   be payment child PRS PL
     'It is that these men will make payment for the children.'

The non-past tense range of meaning can include something similar to a historical present. That is, the actual event or action being described might have occurred in the past, but the speaker does not use a past tense marker or frame to indicate this. The speaker may simply use the unmarked, non-past tense frame, though the context is definitely referring to a past event within a narrative.

(791) *Uve iara   na   cheke rañhi=ni   mae Beimers*
     yes 1SG   DEM   talk   DIR=3SG.OBJ man Beimers
     'Well, I talk(ed) to Beimers.'

8.3.1.7   Auxiliary time markers *te* 'non-past', and *teke* 'past'

In addition to its common role as marking relative clause (section 7.5.6), *te* "marks actions and events as an existing state of affairs" (White 1988:xxviii). In such cases, *te* is efficiently glossed as 'there is', or 'it is', and labeled as PRS for 'present, or continuing, situation'. The following minimal pair contrasts a proposition with and without *te* marking this state of affairs:

(792) *Mana   mei   ka   suğa   na*
     3SG.M   come   LOC house DEM
     'He comes to the house.'

     Te   mana   mei   ka   suğa   na
     PRS 3SG.M   come   LOC   house DEM
     'It is that he comes to the house.'

Te marks this "state of affairs" without any attestation of marking pragmatic features such as prominence. Further research is needed to determine prominence or any other function. For example, *te* might in fact give prominence to *mana* '3SG.M' in (792) as the one who comes to the house (contrasted potentially with someone else coming, or 'he' not being able to come previously but now is able to, or some other reason). Or, it could possibly mark and emphasize the verbal idea of 'coming' as a highlighted continuing state of affairs (which in discourse context, could be the emphasis intended and contrasted with a different state).

This marker is not restricted to a particular syntactic word order, though there is no attestation of *te* occurring sentence final. Not uncommonly, it occurs in either first position in a sentence (793), or secondly, preceded by a conjunction (794).

(793) *Te   au=hila   mare   jame   naba=gna   varadaki*
       PRS be=COMP 3PL   perhaps enough=3SG.POSS twenty

finoga egu   mare Guadacanal.
year   like.that 3PL   Guadacanal
'It is that they have been living in Guadalcanal for perhaps twenty years.'

(794) *Eguteuna te   bi'o-lahu na*
      CONJ   PRS big-ORD   DEM
      'And it is this biggest [one].'

Te marking existing state of affairs co-occurs as well after an initial clause. In example (795) *te* is sequenced with *mala* to indicate a presentation of purpose, glossed as 'it is for...', and this is not an uncommon sequencing in CH. In this example it is noted as well that *te* as a REL marker is also found.

(795) *Na   baina te   keli   fara te   mala tathago   sasa tahati*
      CONJ bait   REL good   very PRS PURP fish.w.line   fish 1PL.INCL
      'And the bait that is very good, it is for our-incl going line fishing.'

There is no restriction on *te* marking multiple states of affairs in one sentence, as in (796). Here, the time marker *legu* 'after' marks the presentation of information for a past event, though in an unmarked form, *te* encodes non-past information:

(796) *Ke legu=gna   te   faidu   mare te   keli   ka   mae   bi'o*
      PRF after=3SG.POSS PRS meeting 3PL PRS good   LOC   man   big

mae   Rove
man   Rove
'It was that after the meeting it was that they were good towards the big man from Rove.'

Incorporating the perfective time feature of the polysemous morpheme *ke*, the marker *teke* also marks a state of affairs. However, while *te* usually marks a non-past event (or depending on time markers present in the sentence, as in the previous example (796), it can mark a past event), *teke* always marks information related to completion of a past event, and as such is glossed as 'there was' or 'it was happening that...' for 'past state of affairs'. This is shown in the following two examples.

(797) *Mana   magnahagei teke eni kaisei course   majagani*
     3SG.M   want   PSS do one   course   new
     'It was that he wanted to do/'take' a new course.'

(798) *E   gnafa   jare   na   teke pulo   mei   Gizo*
     CONJ finish   there DEM PSS return come Gizo
     'And it was that [when] finished there they returned to Gizo.'

It is noted that when *teke* assumes first position in a sentence, the word order is consistently VSO. This is illustrated by repeating example (797) and changing the order of elements by fronting the state of affairs marker. This yields:

(799) *Teke   magnahagei eni mana   kaisei course   majagani*
     PSS   want   do 3SG.M   one   course   new
     'It was that he wanted to do/'take' a new course.'

Both of these markers *te* and *teke* can be cliticized with the continuative aspect marker *u*. Thus, markers functioning to signal the presentation of information about the state of affairs, *teu* and *teku* indicate 'it is continuing thus' or 'it was continuing thus'.

(800) *Tanhi thiloi teke=u   mare   ia   theo kolho*
     time   three PSS=CONT 3PL   DEM   not.be just
     'It was that it continued until three o'clock, and they had just not [come yet].'

(801) *Mae prisi egu   teke=u   mei   ka   gehati   ra*
     man priest like.that PSS=CONT come LOC   1PL.EX   PL

ka   narane suḡa   ia
LOC   day   house   DEM
'Like that it was that the priests were coming to us on that house-day (i.e. church festival day).'

(802) *Ka   namono te   au ido=gna   kma=gna*
      LOC place   PRS   be mother=3S.POSS   father=3S.POSS

ḡra=gna   kheto=gna   te=u   mana   re.
grandchild=3S.POSS   wife=3S.POSS PRS=CONT   3SG   PL
'In the village, it is that his mother-father (i.e. parents), grandchild, wife, they [are] continuing [there].'

(803) *Tuana te   thoutonu ia   te=u   Solomon Islands ḡognaro gne*
      DEM PRS story   DEM PRS=CONT Solomon Islands now   DEM
      'That which is this story, it is how Solomon Islands continues to be now.'

8.3.1.8   Verbal negation *theome*

Verbal negation is discussed with modality adverbs in 5.2.2. Always occurring in a pre-head slot is the verbal negation marker *theome*, as illustrated in (804). The verbal negation marker is contrasted with the negative existential marker *theo*, as discussed in section 9.3.5.

(804) *Mare   theome legu=ni   no=di   vetula*
      3PL   NEG   follow=3SG.OBJ ALN=3PL.POSS   law
      'They don't follow their law'

8.3.2   Post-verbal elements

Similar to the pre-verbal constituents, all post-verbal constituents optionally occur. In the case of transitive verbs, the transitivity-marking/direct object-marking enclitic attaches to the verb. It occurs with or without a free NP referring to the object. For intransitive verbs the immediate slot following the verb is optionally filled by the continuative aspect marker *u* or the completive aspect enclitic *hi(la)*, adverbs, the immediate aspect marker *la*, and the indefinite aspect markers *ña* and *ñau*.

Regarding the presence of postverbal aspect markers, their presence is widely attested in Oceanic, as "it is quite common to find postverbal aspect morphemes [in Oceanic] especially for the completive" (Lynch *et al* 2002:85). Postverbal constituent order is represented linearly by the following, and then the constituents are briefly described in the following sub-sections:

HEAD (d.o.enclitic) (d.o. noun/pronoun) (adverbs) (COMPL aspect) (NSP aspect) (CONT aspect)

8.3.2.1   Direct object enclitics and objects

Transitivity-marking direct object enclitics follow the verb. They are typical, but not necessarily required, for transitive verbs, as discussed in 4.2.6.1. The enclitics are listed in Table 19. While the enclitic can express person and number of the direct

object, as in example (805), the typical construction overtly includes the noun or pronoun direct object, as illustrated in (806). Both examples use the verb *filo* 'see' and enclitic *ni* '3SG.OBJ':

(805) *Gehati   bukrei naikno teke   filo=ni   theome*
      1PL.EXCL   heap   people PSS   see=3SG.OBJ NEG

ḡlea=ni   mae   referee
happy=3SG.OBJ man   referee
 'It was that the group of us people saw it [and] were not happy with the referee.'

(806) *Gepa   theome filo=ni   mae Billy*
      1DU.EXCL   NEG   see=3SG.OBJ man Billy
      'The two of us didn't see Billy.'

The transitive verb object NP can be separated from the verb by an adverb, as in (807):

(807) *Gepa   Billy   tei filo=ni   koba   mum   Roda*
      1DU.EXCL Billy   go see=3SG.OBJ always   mother Roda
      'Billy and I always go see mom Roda.'

8.3.2.2 Post-head adverbs

Adverbs are discussed in section 5.2. As noted there, some adverbs in the modality class which denote intensification occur pre-verb, while others always occur post-verbal (e.g. *fara* 'very', illustrated by (808), and *koba* 'always', marking duration, shown in (807).

(808) *Mana   na   thono togo=ni   fara kheto=gna   na*
      3SG.M   DEM   very   help=3SG.OBJ very spouse=3SG.POSS   DEM
      'He really, truly helps this wife of his a lot.'

Example (809) shows this with a stative/existential verb. Example (810) illustrates this with an intransitive verb, doing so not just with a post-head adverbial modifier of the modality sub-class, but also with one occurring pre-head as well.

(809) *Mana   au kolho ka   namono*
      3SG.M   be just   LOC   village
      'He just stays in the village.'

(810) *Nu   khoḡla jifla kolho ka   Anglican*
      CONJ   just   leave just   LOC Anglican
      'And they just depart from the Anglican church.'

8.3.2.3   Completive aspect enclitic *hi(la)*

Completive aspect is described in section 4.2.4. As noted previously for Oceanic typology in section 8.3.2, CH demonstrates consistency with established post-verbal positioning of completive aspect marking.

Hi and *hila* are the CH aspectual enclitics found in post-verbal position, as shown in the examples (812) and (813). The difference in *hi* and *hila* is minor at best.[79] One suggested difference between the two is illustrated in the translations of the pair of examples in (811) in which the *hila* example shows more pragmatic emphasis on the act of completion beyond a simple declarative statement.

(811) *Mare jifla=hi*   *Mare jifla=hila*
     3PL   leave=COMPL   3PL   leave=COMPL
     'They left.'   'They [already] left!'

(812) *Mae Colvin pulo=hi*   *ka*   *namono*
      man Colvin   return=COMPL LOC   village
      'Colvin has returned to the village.'

(813) *Iara   theome   thuru=hila*
     1SG   NEG   sleep=COMPL
     'I didn't sleep [at all].'

It is not unusual for postverbal =*hi(la)* to co-occur with preverbal immediate aspect marker *la*, as indicated in examples (814) and (815). Semantically, one is able to describe this as an action or event which is currently (*la*) and completely (=*hila*) realized. Syntactically, this illustrates the common phenomenon in CH of aspect markers occurring in pairs on either side of the verb, and noted further with the pair *me* and *meu* in section 8.3.2.5.

(814) *Gehati   ḡognaro na   la   au=hila   mae prisi*
     1PL.EXCL   now   DEM IMM   be=COMPL man priest
     'This time now we have a priest [here].'

(815) *Mae bi'o gne   la   mei   filo=ni=hi   suḡa   na*
      man big   DEM IMM   come see=3SG.OBJ=COMPL house DEM
      'The big man has come and already seen the house.'

Example (816) illustrates the order of the completive aspect marker *hila* occurring after the direct object enclitic and before the noun phrase which is the direct object:

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[79] Perhaps one could suggest that the presence of the morpheme *la* 'immediate aspect' in the *hila* word lends semantic effect to the indication of completed action and its on-going, 'immediate' state.

(816) *Mana   snakre=ni=hila   mae   bi'o   na*
     3SG.M   allow=3SG.OBJ=COMPL   male   big   DEM
     'He permitted the big man [to do something].'

8.3.2.4   Continuative aspect enclitic *u*

The post-verbal continuative aspect enclitic *u* is also discussed in section 4.2.5. It occurs with transitive and intransitive verbs to denote action which is continuative and imperfective (following such aspectual distinctives in Comrie 1976). It may or may not refer to action continuing to the present time of the utterance. Aspectually, it stands in contrast to completive aspect markers *hi* and *hila*. It is not surprising that *u* occurs in tandem with prehead inceptive aspect marker *me*, as *me* indicates the notion of verbal activity which has begun, and *u* indicates that this activity is continuing. Basic examples include (817) and (818).

(817) *Me   bliǧi mare fara   jifla=di=u   ku~khuru*
     INCP easy 3PL   very   leave=3PL.POSS=CONT DUR~send.out

mala   maǧra ra
PUR   fight   PL
'It became very easy for them to continue sending them out to fight.'

(818) *Ihei   teke theo   mola   keǧra=u   kolho   ka   nusu*
     who   PSS   not.be canoe   stand=CONT   just   LOC   sand
     'It was that whoever didn't have a canoe just kept standing there on the beach.'

Example (819) shows two successive uses of this aspect enclitic in a verb chaining construction in successive VPs. (These are not serial verbs since they do not share the same agent or experiencer, as the people who are mentioned are the ones waiting for the man who has died to resurrect.)

(819) *Naikno   te   ǧognaro   ke   ofo=u   keǧra fa-pulo=u*
     people   PRS   now   PRF   wait=CONT   stand CAUS-back=CONT
     'It is that the people [are] now waiting for him to resurrect!'

8.3.2.5   Inceptive and continuative aspect marker *meu*

Meu is a postverbal aspect marker which indicates the inception (generated by the common CH inceptive aspect marker *me*) and continuation (generated by the CH continuative aspect marker *u*) of verbal action. It typically occurs in a frame that includes the pre-head constituent *me*, constructed as *me* + HEAD + *meu*, with or without intervening constituents. Example (820) demonstrates no intervening constituents, whereas example (821) does show other constituents, such as purposive marker and a preverbal adverb. It is noted that it is not unusual for *meu* to occur in phrase or clause-final position, as in (822).

(820) *Hatimare me   au me=u   agne Haokhogo*
       3PL.M   INCP be INCP=CONT here Haokhogo
       'They began, and continued, staying here at Haokogo.'

(821) *Me   mala kafe tolagi me=u   ñala   ka   phei kokholo*
       INCP PUR   all marry INCP=CONT just   LOC   two line
       'They all began and continued marrying just in the two clans.'

(822) *Mare   me   theome atha fa-jifla=di   me=u*
       3PL   INCP   NEG   take CAUS-leave=3PL.OBJ   INCP=CONT
       'They didn't begin taking and keeping them away.'

8.3.2.6   Non-specific aspect markers *ña* and *ñau*

Non-specific aspect indicates the general, non-specific nature of the event. The CH non-specific aspectual markers are *ña* and *ñau*, and they occur post-verbally. In the following example, the speaker is telling that coming to the island on a new regular service is a different ship than the one previously in service, but the exact time of the ship's coming is either unknown (at least to the speaker), or is not in focus. Hence, the indefinite aspect modifies the verbal notion of 'come.' The important information conveyed is that a new ship is indeed now in service and will come at some stage:

(823) *Mei   Isabel ña   Fin   ia*
       come Isabel NSP   k.o.ship DEM
       'That ship Fin will come to Isabel [at some stage].'

The previous example is contrasted in (824), absent the non-specific aspect marker. In (824) the speaker is stating the fact that a ship named Fin comes to Isabel. The timing of that coming, even if non-specific as would be indicated by the aspectual marker *ña* in (823), is not intended to be communicated in example (824).

(824) *Mei Isabel Fin   ia*
       come Isabel k.o.ship DEM
       'That ship Fin comes to Isabel.'

The distinction between *ña* and *ñau* is that *ñau* indicates a continuity of the event, and this is not unlike other aspect markers such as *meu* which combine a base aspectual notion (e.g. *me* 'inceptive') with the continuative aspect marker =*u*. So, the non-specific nature of the event indicated by *ña* when standing alone is further described by *ñau* as continuing indefinitely, or at the least not having a specified (hence, an indefinite) end point. The following triad of examples shows the contrast between the verb without aspect marked in the sentence (825), and the non-specific, general aspect encoded by *ña* (826), and the non-specifically continuing aspect marked by *ñau* (827), with extended meaning indicated in the translation lines.

(825) *Ḡrafi=gna*   *na*   *mana*   *eha*   *eha*
       afternoon=3SG.POSS DEM   3SG.M   shout shout
       'In this afternoon, he shouts (and noting the verbal action of 'shout', without
       modifiers, is the main intention of the statement).'

(826) *Ḡrafi=gna*   *na*   *mana*   *eha*   *eha*   *ña*
       afternoon=3SG.POSS DEM   3SG.M   shout   shout   NSP
       'In this afternoon, he shouts (and it is not known in what manner or for how
       long or with what content, but he shouts in a certain, non-described fashion).'

(827) *Ḡrafi=gna*   *na*   *mana*   *eha*   *eha*   *ña=u*
       afternoon=3SG.POSS DEM   3SG.M   shout   shout   NSP=CONT
       'In this afternoon, he keeps shouting (and it is a shouting that continues for
       an undefined period of time).'

While the indefinite aspect marker *ña* occurs post-head, it is not unusual for the pre-
head position to contain the inceptive aspect marker *me*. In consideration of example
(828), conceptually the non-specific aspect marker indicates that he began returning
to the village, but beyond that information, nothing specific is known.

(828) *Aonu*   *me*   *pulo* *ña*   *mana*   *ka*   *namono*
       CONJ   INCP   return NSP   3SG.M   LOC   village
       'And so, he began (at some time) returning to the village.'

The indefinite aspect marker *ña* is optional, shown in (829) as a repeat of the base
construction of the previous example, (828). A description of the differences
between the two follows the example.

(829) *Aonu*   *me*   *pulo* *mana*   *ka*   *namono*
       CONJ   INCP   return 3SG.M   LOC   village
       'And so, he began returning to the village.'

The difference between the previous two examples is that in example (828), he
began returning but it was at an unspecified or unknown time. Example (829) could
more likely occur later in the narrative, after the indefiniteness is already well-
established. This tendency is documented in one extended text on net fishing; *ña*
occurs prominently in the beginning of the long narrative, but after the introduction,
it does not occur again.

Further, in example (830), the group began singing at some unspecified time, but
there is no indication of what songs they sang, the duration of this event, or any
other specific information relevant to the event. Example (831), without the non-
specific aspect marker, indicates simply that they began singing. Even though the
information about what they sang and for how long is not stated, neither is it
intended to be of consideration, as the example focuses simply on the fact of the

inception of the singing. The extended translation line highlights the differences in meaning.

(830) *Me   koje ña   mala koje soni   haidu   gne*
      INCP   sing NSP   PUR   sing gather meeting DEM
      '[They] began singing for the meeting [without indication of what, for how long, or any other specifics related to that event].'

(831) *Me   koje mala koje soni   haidu   gne*
      INCP   sing PUR   sing gather meeting DEM
      '[They] began singing for the meeting [and that is the intended purpose of the statement, that they began to sing].'

Example (832) is a sentence composed of two clauses, the first of which is an independent clause, (whose end point is *mae Malaita ḡre*). The sentence describes the going of a group of men and the second a dependent clause further describing that activity. In the independent clause, they begin (inceptive) going out somewhere (to a non-specific destination), and in the dependent clause it is stated that their departure has remained till now (with a non-specified and continuative time frame).

(832) *Aonu me   tei ña   mare ka   mae Malaita ḡre   me*
      CONJ INCP   go NSP   3PL LOC   man Malaita DEM   INCP

jifla   ña=u   te=u   ḡognaro
leave   NSP=CONT   PRS=CONT   now
'And it is that they have begun going to these Malaitan men and are leaving now.'

8.4   Variable verbal positioning: immediate aspect marker *la*

One CH aspect marker, *la* 'immediate aspect', differs from the others in that it shows variable positioning in regards to the verbal head, and also in terms of combining with other aspectual markers. For example, it occurs pre-head by itself:

(833) *Mana   la   jifla*
      3SG.M   IMM   leave
      'He is now leaving.'

It occurs in combination with the inceptive aspective marker *me* (and does so with arbitrary order of preceding or following *me* and without change of meaning):

(834) *Mana   la   me   jifla*
      3SG.M   IMM   INCP   leave
      'He is now beginning to leave.'

(835) *Mana   me   la   jifla*
       3SG.M   INCP   IMM   leave
       'He is now beginning to leave.'

It occurs in pre-head position in combination with the post-head completive marker *=hi*:

(836) *Mana   la   jifla=hi*
       3SG.M   IMM   leave=COMPL
       'He has now left.'

It occurs post-head with the completive aspect enclitic *=hi*, doing so to strengthen pragmatic emphasis of the verbal notion:

(837) *Mana   jifla=hila*
       3SG.M   leave=COMPL
       'He has left!' or, 'He has already left!'

8.5   Verb phrase coordination

Coordination of VPs in CH is accomplished by the use of coordinating conjuctions and also by juxtaposition. Described in section 6.1.2 are the VP coordinating conjuctions, primarily *nei*, *eguteuna*, and the disjunctive conjunction *ba*. Those descriptions and examples are not repeated here but simply noted as operative in CH.

In terms of juxtaposition, the VPs not uncommonly coordinate from juxtaposed positions, as in this simple example (838) of two VPs (*fagaja* 'chat' and *thuru* 'sleep').

(838) *Na   tifa   ña   jare   ña   unha   fagaja   thuru*
       CONJ before   NSP   there   NSP   what   chat   sleep
       'And in time before there, [they would be doing] something, chatting and sleeping.'

In the longish example (839) of juxtaposition, the initial boundaries of VPs contained within the same sentence are marked three times by the inceptive aspect marker *me*. While there are obviously other VPs in the sentence, in terms of content in the entire utterance, it is interesting that each VP initiated by *me* actually encodes the main activities described by the communication event: the crowd began to gather, the crowd began to sing, the couple to be married began to come.

(839) *Gume   thoke=ni   narane mala tolagi gne   me*
      CONJ   arrive=3PL.OBJ   day   PUR   marry DEM   INCP

khapru ña=u   mavitu ia   me   koje ña   mala koje soni
gather   NSP=CONT   crowd   DEM   INCP   sing   NSP   PUR   sing   meet

haidu   gne   me   mei   ña   haiña   phei naikno te   tolagi ḡre
meeting DEM   INCP   come   NSP   ?gather   two   people REL   marry   these

balu=di   naikno te   mala keḡra balu=di   repa   re
COM=3PL.POSS   people PRS PUR   stand   COM=3PL.POSS   3DU.F   PL
'And so the day arrives for this marrying and all the people start and continue to gather and [they] begin singing, singing for the wedding, and then begin to come the two people who are getting married along with those that are standing with them.'

8.6   Summary

The head of a verb phrase in CH is always a verb, either transitive or intransitive. The verb phrase has pre-verbal and post-verbal elements. Predominant pre-head verbal markers are those marking inceptive and immediate aspect, and past and non-past tense. The pre-verbal aspect markers can co-occur with each other, but never do with the past perfective tense marker *neke*. There is evidence of occurrence with the imperfective past *ne*. There is also evidence of pre-head adverb markers, but they are less frequent than the post-head adverbs.

The CH post-verbal elements are numerous. These include direct object enclitics, post-head adverbs, and four aspectual markers: completive, continuative, inceptive and continuative, and non-specific, or general, aspect. Of the four, the completive *=hi(la)*, and the continuative *(=u)* are enclitics. The inceptive and continuative is a compound comprised of the free standing inceptual aspect marker *me* and the continuative *=u* enclitic.

One CH aspect marker, *la* 'immediate aspect', differs from the others in that it shows variable positioning in regards to the verbal head, and also in terms of combining with other aspectual markers.

VP coordination in CH is marked by the presence of coordinating conjunctions and also by juxtaposition.