

2

PALAUAN NOUNS

INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. In Lesson 1 we described the **sound system** of Palauan in terms of the different units (the consonant and vowel sounds) and how they combine with each other to form words. In discussing the way Palauan sounds combine with each other, we looked at the many types of consonant clusters, double consonants, vowel clusters (diphthongs), double vowels, and so on. All of these details gave us a fairly clear picture of the sound structure of Palauan words.

Grammatical System

In addition to a sound system, all languages have what is called a **grammatical system**. The grammatical system consists of all the words (or more properly, meaning-bearing units) of a language and the rules that allow them to be combined in various ways. For example, the rules of the English grammatical system allow us to determine that (1) is a perfect English sentence while (2) is totally unacceptable “word salad”:

- (1) The cat ran after the dog.
- (2) After cat the dog the ran.

Parts of Speech: Noun, Verb Distributional Features

To get the clearest picture of a language’s grammatical system, we must first divide or classify the words into various groups called **parts of speech**. The parts of speech of a language are groups of words whose members share certain common characteristics. All of the members of a particular part of speech—for example, nouns—have the same **distributional features**. By distributional features, we mean the positions in a sentence (or phrase) in which the word in question can occur. Thus, all members of the part of speech **noun**—e.g., *buiik* ‘boy’, *sensei* ‘teacher’, *bilis* ‘dog’, *ius* ‘crocodile’, etc.—

share the distributional feature of being able to occur as **subject** of a Palauan sentence. Because of this common distributional feature, all of these words will fit into the blank below:

- (3) A _____ a killii a ngikel. 'The _____ ate the fish.'

In addition to the noun, the second major part of speech in Palauan is the **verb**. In (3) above, the verb is *killii* 'ate it'. If we now focus on the position of the verb and rewrite sentence (3) as follows,

- (4) A buik a _____ a ngikel. 'The boy _____ the fish.'

we see that there are many words—e.g., *kirrelii* 'caught it', *ultirii* 'chased it', *silikii* 'looked for (and found) it', etc.—that could substitute for *killii* in the blank of sentence (4). Because *kirrelii*, *ultirii*, *silikii*, etc., can replace *killii* and therefore have the same distributional feature as *killii*, they are also members of the part of speech **verb**.

Internal Structure

The simple examples of (3) and (4) which use a substitution or "fill-in-the-blank" method show clearly that all members of a particular part of speech have common distributional features. In addition, a group of words like *killii*, *kirrelii*, *ultirii*, and *silikii* (all verbs) illustrates another important point about the members of a given part of speech: they often have a common **internal structure**. The internal structure of a word consists of the meaning-bearing units or parts of which it is composed. Many Palauan words have a complex internal structure, and quite a few lessons in this textbook will be devoted entirely to studying these structures.

In the present case, it is enough to see that a word like *silikii* 'looked for (and found) it' has an internal structure of *three* parts: the *-ii* ending refers to a (direct) *object* (looked for and found *it*—referring to the fish); the *-il-* refers to *past* tense (i.e., the event occurred *before* the present time); and the remaining parts *s-* + *-ik-* correspond to the idea of "look for" (cf. the verb *osiik* 'to look for'). Now, when we look at the other words *killii*, *kirrelii*, and *ultirii* (all members of the same part of speech **verb**), we see that they also have an internal structure that parallels *silikii* (although, of course, some of the details are different). Thus, *kirrelii* 'caught it' can also be broken down into three parts: the *-ii* ending for direct object (just as in *silikii*); the *-ir-* for past tense (equivalent to the *-il-* of *silikii*); and the remaining parts *k-* + *-rel-* representing the idea of "catch (fish) with a line" (cf. the verb *mengereel*). Now, look carefully at the other two verb forms *killii* and *ultirii*, and see if you can analyze their internal structure in the same way.

PALAUAN NOUNS

- 2.2.** **Nouns** are one of the most important parts of speech in Palauan. We can generally define a noun as a word that *names* or *makes reference* to many different types of things or living beings. Nouns are like identification labels pointing to the various persons and things that we deal with and talk about in everyday communication. Nouns can be divided into several subgroups, depending on what the noun refers to.

Concrete Nouns: Human vs. Nonhuman Five Senses

- 2.2.1.** Perhaps the easiest nouns to identify are those that refer to anything (or anyone) that we can perceive or come in contact with through one or more of our five natural **senses**. The five senses are *sight*, *hearing*, *touch*, *taste*, and *smell*, and any noun identifying something (or someone) that can be seen, heard, touched, tasted, or smelled is called a **concrete noun**. Palauan concrete nouns can further be divided into two subcategories—**human** and **nonhuman**. Why this distinction is helpful in understanding Palauan grammar will become clear in 2.4.2 below.

As you might expect, human nouns make reference to human beings, as the words below indicate:

(5) **Human Nouns (Concrete)**

chad	‘person’	sensei	‘teacher’
sechelei	‘friend’	ngalek	‘child’
buch	‘spouse’	buik	‘boy’
chedil	‘mother’	rubak	‘old man’
demak	‘my father’	Cisco	‘Cisco’

By contrast, nonhuman nouns refer to anything that is not human, such as *animals* and *living or nonliving things*. Some typical examples are given below:

(6) **Nonhuman Nouns (Concrete)**

ANIMALS

bilis	‘dog’	malk	‘chicken’
ius	‘crocodile’	ngikel	‘fish’
katuu	‘cat’	babii	‘pig’

LIVING THINGS

kerrekar	'tree'	bung	'flower'
chudel	'grass'	llei	'leaf'

NONLIVING THINGS

blai	'house'	babier	'paper, letter'
daob	'ocean'	omochel	'river'
kall	'food'	mlik	'my car, my canoe'

Abstract Nouns

- 2.2.2. As opposed to concrete nouns, **abstract nouns** refer to things that cannot be perceived by any of the five senses. This is because abstract nouns refer to a wide range of *concepts, ideas, or emotions* that can exist only in our minds or thoughts but do not take the form of objects in the everyday world that we can see, hear, touch, etc. Some examples of abstract nouns are listed below:

(7) Abstract Nouns

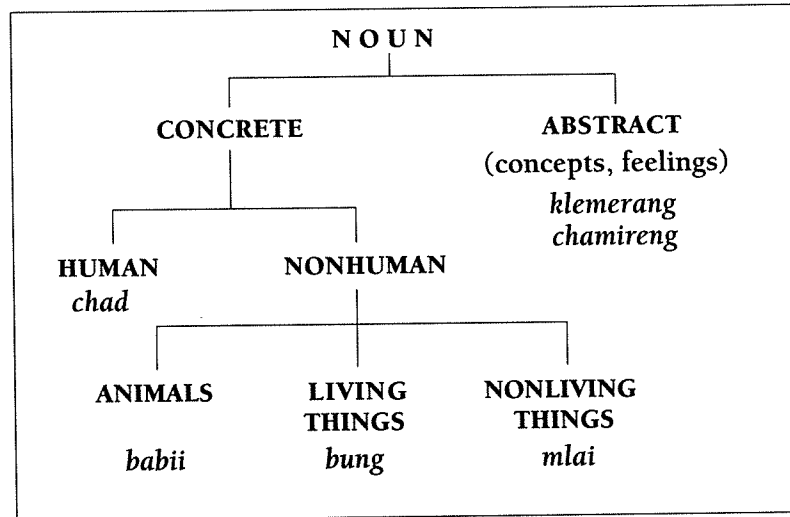
sebecek	'my ability'	reng	'heart, spirit'
soam	'your desire'	klemerang	'truth'
kirel	'his obligation'	klechad	'human life'
klengeasek	'youth'	blekeu	'bravery'
dakt	'fear'	klausechelei	'friendship'

A quick look at the examples above will reveal that there are some subgroups of abstract nouns that have a distinctive *internal structure*. For example, the words *klemerang* 'truth', *klengeasek* 'youth', and *klechad* 'human life' all have a common structure consisting of two parts: a (word-initial) prefix *kle-*, which in fact indicates that the noun is abstract; and a stem (or root) that can otherwise occur as a totally independent word (*merang* 'true', *ngeasek* 'young', and *chad* 'person').

The distinction between concrete vs. abstract nouns is not always as sharp and clear as we have implied above. It is sometimes quite difficult to decide how to classify a particular noun in terms of this distinction. For example, the word *char* 'price' at first seems rather abstract, especially if we define it as "the monetary value assigned to something for sale within a particular economic system". But doesn't *char* seem more concrete in a specific situation where we are looking at an actual price label and we say *A cheral a hong a kmal ungil* ("The price of the book is very good")? Similar problems exist with such words as *tekoi* 'language, word', *chais* 'news', *ker* 'question', *ngakl* 'name', and so on.

SUMMARY OF PALAUAN NOUN TYPES

2.2.3. The types of Palauan nouns discussed in the sections above can be summarized in this chart:



DISTRIBUTION OF PALAUAN NOUNS

2.3. Now that we have identified the major groups of Palauan nouns (concrete vs. abstract, human vs. nonhuman), we will examine the *distributional features* of nouns. We will first discuss the two major functions of nouns in Palauan sentences. Observe the examples below:

- (8) A ngalek a menga er a ngikel. 'The child is eating the fish.'
 (9) A buik a chillebedii a bilis. 'The boy hit the dog.'

What these sentences have in common is that they both describe the occurrence of an *action* or *event*. In (8), the action of eating, represented by the word *menga* 'eat', is taking place at the *present* time (that is, at the very moment when someone is observing the event and reporting it by this sentence). In (9), however, the event of hitting, represented by *chillebedii* 'hit', occurred at some time in the *past* (that is, before the moment when someone is actually speaking this sentence).

Regardless of the difference in tense (present vs. past), the action words *menga* and *chillebedii* in (8) and (9) each serve to relate two **nouns**—one which tells who is *doing* or *performing* the action and one which tells what is *affected* by the action. In (8), for instance, the (human) noun *ngalek* 'child' tells us who is doing the eating, while the noun *ngikel* 'fish' identifies what is being affected by the action of eating. Look now at sentence (9) and make sure that you can analyze it in a parallel way.

Sentence Subject, Sentence Object Subject Noun, Object Noun

- 2.3.1.** When a noun is used in a sentence to refer to the person (or animal or thing) that performs, carries out, or causes the action or event of the sentence, that noun is functioning as the **sentence subject**. Nouns used as sentence subjects—*ngalek* and *buik* in (8) and (9)—are often referred to as **subject nouns**. By contrast, when a noun is used to tell us what is affected by the action of the sentence, that noun is functioning as the **sentence object**. Nouns used as sentence objects—*ngikel* and *bilis* in (8) and (9)—are often called **object nouns**. It is important to remember that one and the same noun could be either a subject noun or an object noun depending on its function in a particular sentence. Thus, *ngalek* is a subject noun in (8), but we use it as an object noun in (10) below to identify the person affected by the action:

(10) A babii a ultirii a ngalek. ‘The pig chased the child.’

While the subject nouns of most action sentences are human beings (8–9) or animals (10), occasionally we find a subject noun from another category (e.g., *derumk* ‘thunder’, a natural event, but nonliving):

(11) A derumk a ulekerngii a ‘The thunder woke up the child.’
ngalek.

Furthermore, almost any kind of noun (human, animal, abstract, etc.) can function as *sentence object*. For example, in (12) below the object noun is an *abstract concept* (*klengit* ‘sin’):

(12) A sechelim a rirelii a ‘Your friend committed a sin.’
klengit.

Action Sentences:

SUBJECT NOUN + ACTION WORD + OBJECT NOUN

In all the Palauan action sentences studied so far (8–12 above), the distribution of nouns can be described by the pattern **subject noun + action word (verb) + object noun**. In other words, Palauan subject nouns (preceded by *a*) normally occur at the beginning of a sentence directly before the action word (the verbs *menga*, *chillebedii*, *ultirii*, etc.), while Palauan object nouns (preceded by *a* or *er a*—see 2.6 and 2.7.2 below) always follow the action word immediately. In such sentences, the position of the noun (preceding or following the action word) allows us to interpret it as a sentence subject or sentence object.

**Action Sentences:
SUBJECT NOUN + ACTION WORD ONLY**

2.3.2. Unlike the examples already given, many Palauan action sentences only have a subject noun preceding the verb, but no object noun at all. Two typical examples are given below:

- (13) A buik a mililil. ‘The boy was playing.’
 (14) A ngelekek a remurt. ‘My child is running.’

The words *mililil* ‘was playing’ and *remurt* ‘is running’ certainly refer to actions, but these actions are rather different from the actions of eating, hitting, chasing, etc. seen in sentences (8–12). While eating, hitting, chasing, and so on are types of actions that naturally have an effect on something else (that is, we eat *something*, hit *someone* or *something*, chase *someone* or *something*, etc.), playing and running are not actions directed at another person or thing. Instead, these are “self-contained” actions in which the doer involves only himself or herself. For this reason, the sentences (13–14) do not contain any *object nouns*.

Transitive Verb vs. Intransitive Verb

Note 1: You may have noticed that the two patterns found in Palauan action sentences represent the contrast between **transitive** vs. **intransitive verb**, which is significant in both English and Palauan grammar. Thus, in the pattern **subject noun + action word + object noun**, the action word will be a *transitive verb* like ‘eat, hit, chase’, etc., that involves the “transferral” of an action from a doer to a receiver. However, in the simpler pattern **subject noun + action word**, the action word will be an *intransitive verb* like ‘play, run, fall’, etc., that involves only a doer and does not “transfer” any action to a receiver. As we will see later in Lesson 5, the distinction between transitive vs. intransitive verb will be very useful in classifying the many verb types of Palauan.

**State or Condition
Temporary vs. Permanent
State Verbs vs. Action Verbs**

2.3.3. There are several further types of Palauan sentences that have a subject noun but no object noun. Rather than designating an action or event, however, such sentences *describe* the subject noun in some way. This description most commonly occurs in the following major forms:

- a. The description involves a **state** or **condition** which the subject noun is in, as the following examples show:

- (15) A bechik a smecher. 'My wife is sick.'
 (16) A ralm a mekelekolt. 'The water is cold.'
 (17) A mubi a ungil. 'The movie is good.'
 (18) A chad er a Merikel a metongakl. 'The American is tall.'

In (15–16), the states involved are **temporary** and will eventually change, while in (17–18) the states are relatively **permanent** (unchanging). As we will see later in Lesson 5, words like *smecher*, *mekelekolt*, etc., are in fact called **state verbs** because they indicate a (temporary or permanent) state or condition that describes or identifies the sentence subject in some way. By contrast, **action verbs** like *menga* 'eat', *remurt* 'run', etc., indicate actions or activities that at least involve a doer and often involve a receiver as well (see *Note 1* above).

Profession or Nationality

- b. The description identifies the subject noun in terms of some **profession**, **nationality**, or other classifying feature:

- (19) A sechelik a sensei. 'My friend is a teacher.'
 (20) A Nobuo a chad er a Siabal. 'Nobuo is Japanese.'
 (21) A Cisco a rubak. 'Cisco is an old man.'

In sentence (19), we do not find any action or event, but simply a description of a state of affairs—namely, that my friend can be identified or characterized as a teacher. In (20–21) as well, there is no action, but just description; and such factors as nationality (e.g., being Japanese) or group membership (being a *rubak* 'old man') are used to identify the sentence subject.

Equational Sentence

The sentences (19–21) are also very interesting from the viewpoint of the distribution of Palauan nouns, since in fact they seem to have the simple structure **Noun #1 + Noun #2**. In this structure, the first noun is the *subject noun*, and the second noun is a

noun indicating profession, nationality, etc. Note further that (19–21) are perfect Palauan sentences in the *present tense* (e.g., my friend **is** a teacher), even though there is no verb whatsoever! If we change such sentences to the *past tense*, however, we see that a verb-like element *mle* ‘was, were’ appears:

- (22) A sechelik a mle sensei. ‘My friend was a teacher
(but he isn’t any longer).’

Because of the special nature of sentences with the pattern **Noun #1 + Noun #2**, they are assigned a separate term in Palauan grammar—namely, **equational sentence**. This term is used because in such sentences the subject noun is **equated with** (or *included in*) the particular profession, nationality, group, etc. More details will be given later in this textbook.

Locational Phrase

- c. Still another Palauan sentence type involves describing the subject noun by telling its location, as seen in these examples:

- (23) a. A ngalek a ngar er a sers. ‘The child is in the garden.’
b. A beches el oluches a mla er a chsel a skidas. ‘The new pencil was inside the drawer.’

In the two sentences given, the word *ngar* ‘be (located)’ or its past tense form *mle* ‘was/were located’ introduces word sequences (phrases) like *er a sers* ‘in the garden’ or *er a chsel a skidas* ‘inside the drawer’. Such word sequences are called **locational phrases** because they indicate where something is located (or, as we will see below, where some action takes place).

Relational Phrase Relational Word *Er*

- 2.3.4. In studying the distribution of Palauan nouns in 2.3.1–3 above, we focused our attention on the use of nouns as *sentence subject* and *sentence object*. We also noted at the end of 2.3.3.b that nouns can occur in *equational sentences* in the position of Noun #2. We will now examine one more position that is essential to fully describing the distribution of nouns in Palauan. In fact, we have already seen examples of this position in sentences (23a–b) above, where we introduced the idea of **locational phrase**. The *locational phrase* in (23a), for instance, is *er a sers* ‘in the garden’, which designates the place or location where the child is to be found.

The locational phrases found in (23a–b) are just one subtype of a large group of phrases in Palauan that we will call **relational phrases**. Every Palauan relational phrase has the structure **relational word ER + noun** (with *a* preceding the noun in most cases). Depending on the situation, a relational phrase may indicate the *location* of a state or action, the *direction* in which some movement proceeds, the *place from which* something moves, the *time* of a state or action, and even the *cause* of a particular state or action. For this reason, the relational word *er* itself can be translated into English in many ways: ‘in, at, on, to, towards, from, out of, because of’, and so on.

Directional Phrase, Source Phrase Temporal Phrase, Cause Phrase

Whatever the function of the relational phrase (i.e., to indicate location, direction, etc.), the most important point to remember now is that Palauan nouns can also occur *within* such relational phrases, after the relational word *er* (and preceded by *a*). The chart below illustrates the additional subtypes of Palauan relational phrases described in the preceding paragraph. In each example given, the relational phrase has been italicized.

(24) **Subtypes of Palauan Relational Phrases**

- a. **Directional Phrase**—indicates the place to or towards which some movement is made:

A John a mo *er a stoang*. ‘John is going to the store.’

- b. **Source Phrase**—indicates the place from which or out of which some movement is made:

A beab a tilobed *er a blsibs*. ‘The mouse came out of the hole.’

- c. **Temporal Phrase**—indicates the time of an action, event, or state:

Te merael *er a klukuk*. ‘They are leaving tomorrow.’

- d. **Cause Phrase**—indicates the cause of, or reason for, an action, event, or state:

Ak smecher *er a tereter*. ‘I’m sick with a cold.’

Summary of Palauan Noun Distribution

- 2.3.5. The distribution of Palauan nouns studied in the sections above can be summarized in terms of the sentence patterns given below. For each pattern, one or more sample sentences are also provided, with all the nouns italicized for ease of reference.

(25) Distribution of Palauan Nouns	
a. Subject Noun + Action Verb + Object Noun	
<i>A deleb</i> a milekdektii <i>a mechas.</i>	'The ghost frightened the old woman.'
b. Subject Noun + Action Verb	
<i>A tolechoi</i> a lilangel.	'The baby was crying.'
c. Subject Noun + State Verb	
<i>A redil</i> a kmal klebokel.	'The woman is very pretty.'
d. Subject Noun + (MLE +) Noun #2 (Equational Sentence)	
<i>A Satsko</i> a bengngos.	'Satsko is a lawyer.'
<i>A Toki</i> a mle sensei.	'Toki was a teacher.'
e. Subject Noun + Action or State Verb + Relational Phrase	
1. <i>A chudelek</i> a mechiuaiu er a sers.	'My older sister is sleeping in the garden.'
2. <i>A ekebil</i> a mlad er a <i>chesebreng.</i>	'The girl died from a broken heart.'
3. <i>A sechelik</i> a mla er a <i>chei.</i>	'My friend was at the ocean (= fishing).'

Note 2: To keep our discussion of Palauan noun distribution as simple as possible, we have not yet mentioned a second common type of sentence in which the subject noun appears in a position *following* the verb (rather than preceding it). Compare sentences (a) and (b) below:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| a. <i>A Droteo</i> a mla mei. | 'Droteo has come.' |
| b. <i>Ng mla me</i> a Droteo. | 'Droteo has come.' |

Note 2 continued next page

Note 2 continued

While (a) and (b) refer to the same event (Droteo's arrival) and in this sense have the same meaning, many Palauan speakers would in fact choose the one or the other depending on various situational factors too complicated to discuss here. It is clear, however, that the grammatical structure of (b) is quite different from that of (a): first, the subject noun *Droteo* is found to the right of the verb *m̄la mei*; and second, a third person singular (non-emphatic) pronoun (*ng* 'he') now occurs in sentence-initial position in addition to the sentence-final full subject *Droteo*. It is also interesting to note that (b), spoken with a rising intonation at the end, becomes a question:

- c. Ng m̄la mei a Droteo? 'Has Droteo come?'

Here is another pair of similar sentences:

- d. A rengalek a mililil. 'The children were playing.'
 e. Te mililil a rengalek. 'The children were playing.'

In (e), we find the full (*plural*) subject noun *rengalek* 'children' in a position after the verb *mililil*, and it is matched by the third person *plural* (non-emphatic) pronoun *te* 'they' in sentence-initial position. In later lessons, more attention will be given to such sentences in which the subject occurs in a position following the verb and a matching non-emphatic pronoun ("agreeing" as to singular vs. plural) accompanies it in sentence-initial position.

PRONOUNS

- 2.4. In all of the examples given in 2.3 above, it is possible to replace the subject nouns with shorter words that refer to the same person or thing. For example, compare the following two sentences:

- (26) a. A ngalek a menga er a ngikel. 'The child is eating the fish.'
 b. Ng menga er a ngikel. 'He/she is eating the fish.'

In (26b) the word *ng* has substituted for *ngalek* 'child' of (26a) as the sentence subject. Such substitute words are called **pronouns**. A sentence with a pronoun subject such as (26b) can only be used if it is clear whom the pronoun refers to. In other words, (26b) would not make much sense as the very first sentence in a conversation, but it is perfectly acceptable in the following dialog:

- (27) A: A ngalek ng menga a ‘What is the child eating?’
 ngarang?
 B: Ng menga er a ngikel. ‘He/she is eating the fish.’

In the dialog of (27), B’s response does not need more than the pronoun *ng* as sentence subject because it is clear from A’s question that *ng* must refer to *ngalek* ‘child’.

Singular vs. Plural

Now take a look at another pair of sentences:

- (28) A rengalek a ngar er a sers. ‘The children are in the garden.’
 Te ngar er a sers. ‘They are in the garden.’

As you can see, the pronoun that substitutes for *rengalek* ‘children’ is *te* ‘they’ rather than *ng* ‘he, she’. Which pronoun is chosen depends on whether the replaced word is **singular** (referring to one person) or **plural** (referring to two or more persons). In 2.5 below, we will discuss the formation of Palauan plural words in greater detail.

First, Second, and Third Person Pronouns

- 2.4.1. When two or more people are having a conversation, each speaker needs a convenient way of referring to himself or herself and to the persons addressed. In English, for example, the person speaking will use the pronoun ‘I’ (singular) when referring to himself or herself only and the pronoun ‘we’ (plural) when talking about some group to which he or she belongs.

Pronouns such as ‘I’ and ‘we’ that refer to the speaker have been traditionally called **first person pronouns** in the grammar of English and other Western European languages. As you might expect, the term **second person pronoun** refers to the person(s) spoken to—in English, ‘you’ (singular or plural). Finally, **third person pronouns** always refer to someone (or something) *other than* the speaker or person spoken to. Thus, in English the third person pronouns ‘he, she, it’ (singular) and ‘they’ (plural) are available so that the speaker may refer to some third party that he or she is interested in talking about.

Though the system of Palauan pronouns is somewhat more complicated than that of English, it is still very helpful to use the same grammatical terminology. Thus, there are three *first person pronouns* in Palauan, one singular and two plural: *ak* ‘I’, *kede* ‘we

(including you in our group)', and *aki* 'we (excluding you from our group)'. In addition, Palauan has two *second person pronouns*: *ke* 'you (singular)' and *kom* 'you (plural)'. Finally, as seen in (26b) and (29) above, Palauan has two *third person pronouns*: *ng* 'he, she, it, they (nonhuman)' and *te* 'they (human only)'.

Palauan Pronouns *Ng* vs. *Te* Importance of Human vs. Nonhuman Distinction

2.4.2. As the English translations for *ng* and *te* imply, the Palauan third person pronouns are somewhat unusual. This is because the pronoun *te* is very specialized and can refer only to **human plural** subjects. Thus, a sentence like (29) above implies that we are talking about some human beings (but not dogs, trees, stones, etc.) that are in the garden. By contrast, *ng* has a much wider range of use, since it covers everything that *te* does not. In other words, *ng* can refer not only to *anything* singular (a human being, an animal, a living or nonliving thing) but also to plural things, *as long as they are not human*. Therefore, *ng* can even be translated as 'they' (**non-human!**), depending on the circumstances. Note, for example, the conversation below:

- | | |
|---|---|
| (30) A: Ke mla mechar a hong
me a oluches? | 'Have you bought a book
and a pencil?' |
| B: Chochoi. Ng ngar er a
chelsel a skidas. | 'Yes. They are inside the
drawer.' |

Since A's question mentions two (nonliving) things (*hong* 'book' and *oluches* 'pencil'), it is clear that *ng* in B's answer refers to both of them and must therefore be plural. Here is another similar example, in which the pronoun *ng* in B's answer (and A's question) refers to two animals:

- | | |
|---|---|
| (31) A: A bilis me a katuu
ng ngar er ker? | 'Where are the dog and
the cat?' |
| B: Ng mechiuaiu er a
chemrungel. | 'They are sleeping under
the floor.' |

Because of the unusual nature of the contrast between *ng* and *te*, it is obvious that the distinction between **human vs. nonhuman** discussed in 2.2.1 is very important in presenting a true picture of Palauan pronouns. Without this distinction, we would have no way of describing the unique function of *te*—namely, to refer specifically to a sentence subject that is both **human** and **plural**.

Note 3: When referring to certain common household animals such as dogs, pigs, etc., some Palauan speakers in fact use *te*, perhaps because animals living with or near people are somehow thought to be more “human”. Some Palauans think this “humanizing” tendency is due to the influence of Western cultures, where pets are often given special treatment. In any case, these speakers would accept a dialog like the following, where *te* refers to dogs:

- A: A bilis *te* mekerang? ‘What are the dogs doing?’
 B: *Te* kaiuetoir er a sers. ‘They’re chasing each other in the garden.’

Non-Emphatic vs. Emphatic Pronouns

- 2.4.3.** Some of the discussions of pronouns given above probably seem rather familiar to you because we have already taken a quick look at Palauan pronouns in Lesson 1. In 1.3.9.d we examined several groups of Palauan pronouns from the viewpoint of how to spell them, and we saw that some pronouns are spelled as *independent* words while others are attached as *prefixes* or *suffixes* to verb forms. For example, we noted in 1.3.9.d.1 that the Palauan *non-emphatic pronouns* occur as independent words and function as sentence subjects. These non-emphatic pronouns are precisely the ones we have so far focused on in this lesson—namely, *ak* ‘I’, *ke* ‘you (sg.)’, *ng* ‘he, she, it, they (nonhuman)’, etc.

As we saw in 1.3.9.d, however, there are many other types of pronouns in Palauan. For purposes of illustration, we will now take the *emphatic pronouns* (see 1.3.9.d.2) that also occur as independent words—*ngak* ‘I’, *kau* ‘you’, *ngii* ‘he, she, it, they (non-human)’, etc. One distributional feature of Palauan emphatic pronouns is that they must be used after the relational word *er* (see 2.3.4 above). In this position, they substitute for full nouns just as non-emphatic pronouns replace full nouns in subject position. This point is clear from the following short dialog:

- (32) A: Tia *ng hong er a sensei*? ‘Is this the teacher’s book?’
 B: Chochoi. *Ng hong er ngii*. ‘Yes. It’s his book.’

Note that in A’s question, we have the phrase *hong er a sensei* ‘teacher’s book’, where the noun *sensei* occurs after the relational word *er* (which, as this case shows, can also indicate a relationship of *possession*). In B’s answer, however, it is not necessary to repeat the full noun *sensei* because it is already clear from A’s question whose book is under discussion. Therefore, B simply uses the emphatic pronoun *ngii* (in this case, ‘he’) as a substitute for *sensei*. Emphatic *ngii* is required here instead of non-emphatic *ng* because the pronoun is occurring after the relational word *er* (and *not* in subject position).

We have introduced pronouns in this lesson on Palauan nouns because pronouns are really a *subtype* of noun. This is true because pronouns can occur in all of the positions (or “environments”) in which nouns are observed to occur. Since pronouns can substitute for nouns in sentence subject position, after the relational word *er*, and in other situations, they share the same distributional features as nouns.

PLURAL NOUNS, PLURAL PREFIX RE-

- 2.5. As we have already seen in 1.3.9.b, we form a **plural noun** in Palauan by simply attaching *re-* to the beginning of the noun (e.g., *ngalek* ‘child’—*rengalek* ‘children’, *sensei* ‘teacher’—*resensei* ‘teachers’, etc.). If the noun begins with a vowel, then *re-* is shortened to *r-* (*ekebil* ‘girl’—*rekebil* ‘girls’, etc.). Because *re-* precedes the noun stem to which it is attached, it is called a **prefix** (and the hyphen in our notation *re-* indicates that something must always follow the prefix to form a whole word).

We have also noted that *re-* can only be added to **human** nouns. This is another way in which the distinction **human vs. nonhuman** is important in Palauan grammar, since it is only for human nouns that Palauan speakers distinguish between a single individual (**singular**) and two or more individuals (**plural**). While any human noun can be pluralized with *re-* (or *r-*), nonhuman nouns cannot. Therefore, *bilis*, for example, could mean either ‘dog’ or ‘dogs’ (and there is no form *rebilis!*). Similarly, *babier* means ‘letter’ or ‘letters’ (and *rebabier* does not exist).

Here are a few sentences containing plural human nouns (all italicized):

- (33) a. Ak milsterir a *resechelim* ‘I saw your friends at the
er a party. party.’
b. A *rechad* er a Merikel ‘Americans are tall.’
a metongakl.
c. Ng delmerab er a *resensei*. ‘It’s the teachers’ room.’
d. Te di *rengalek* er a skuul. ‘They’re just students.’

You will notice that if the human noun is really a *phrase* (i.e., a group of words), the prefix *re-* attaches to the first word in that phrase (*chad er a Merikel* ‘American’—*rechad er a Merikel* ‘Americans’, *ngalek er a skuul* ‘student’—*rengalek er a skuul* ‘students’).

Plural Prefix With Number Words

- 2.5.1. In a similar way, the plural prefix *re-* can also attach to **number words** that refer to human beings and occur as the first word of a phrase. In such cases, however, attaching *re-* is *optional*—that is, it may either be attached or omitted, with no difference in

the meaning. To indicate the optionality of *re-* before number words, we enclose *re-* in parentheses, as shown in these examples:

- (34) a. A (*re*)*telolem* el chad ‘Six people came to the
a mle er a party. party.’
- b. A (*re*)*teruich* el ngalek ‘Ten children went fishing.’
a mlo er a chei.
- c. A (*re*)*dart* el rubak a ‘One hundred old men voted.’
mle sengkio.
- d. Ak milsterir a (*re*)*tede* ‘I saw three teachers.’
el sensei.
- e. Te milkodeterir a (*re*)*lluich* ‘They killed twenty-four
me a teua el soldau. soldiers.’

The optional nature of *re-* in the examples of (34) may be due to the fact that the prefix does not add anything essential to the meaning. This is because in each case the presence of a number word (*telolem* ‘six’, *dart* ‘one hundred’, etc.) makes it clear that two or more persons are being talked about.

Plural Prefix With *Ua* and *Bek*

- 2.5.2. It is interesting to note that the plural prefix *re-* (or *r-*) can also attach to certain other words such as *ua* ‘like, as’ and *bek* ‘each, every’ when these are associated with human nouns. Some examples are shown below:

- (35) a. Tirke el teru el chad ‘Who are those two people
te *rua* techang? (i.e., what are their names?)’
- b. Ak milsterir a *rua* Satsko ‘I saw Satsko and her friends
er a stoang. at the store.’
- c. A *rebek* el ngalek a kirel ‘Every child must attend school.’
el mo er a skuul.
- d. Ak milsterir a *rebek* el chad ‘I gave each person a present.’
a bresengt.

In (35a), the plural form *rua* (with *r-* before the vowel) appears before *techang* ‘who?’, a question word referring to human beings, while in (35b) *rua* precedes the name of a person (*Satsko*). In both (35c) and (35d), *bek* ‘each, every’ is linked to the following human noun by the conjunction *el* (see 1.3.9.c). Therefore, in all of the examples above, *re-* is associated with human nouns.

Plural Prefix With State Verbs Derived Plural Nouns

2.5.3. The plural prefix can also attach to certain words that indicate states or conditions (or, less frequently, actions) to form (or derive) a noun referring to the *group of people* characterized by the particular state or condition. For example, from the *state verb* (see 2.3.3 above) *meteet* ‘rich’, we can derive the human plural noun *remeteet* ‘those who are rich, rich people’. Another example of such **derived plural nouns** is *remesaik* ‘those who are lazy, lazy people’, which comes from the state verb *mesaik* ‘lazy’. As the sentences below illustrate, the distribution of derived plural nouns is the same as that of any other noun:

- | | |
|--|---|
| (36) a. A irechar, e a <i>remeteet</i> a
ulengeseu er a <i>remechebuul</i> . | ‘In earlier times, the rich helped
the poor.’ |
| b. A <i>redengerenger</i> a mo er a
beluu er a ngau, e a <i>remekedung</i>
a mo er a babeluades. | ‘Those who are poorly-behaved
will go to hell, while those who
are well-behaved will go to heaven.’ |
| c. A <i>remesaik</i> a blechoel el diak
a kelir. | ‘Those who are lazy (and don’t
work) are always without food.’ |
| d. A <i>remekekede</i> b a mo er a uchei,
e a <i>remetongakl</i> a mo er a uriul. | ‘(Let’s have) the short ones go to the
front and the tall ones go to the back.’ |
| e. A <i>remeruul</i> a kall a chedal
a redil, me a <i>remengoit</i> a
udoud a chedal a sechal. | ‘Those who prepare food (at an <i>ocheraol</i>
—money-raising party) are the relatives
of the woman, and those who contrib-
ute money are the relatives of the man.’ |

In (36a-d), the words to which *re-* attaches are all *state verbs*, while in (36e) the plural prefix attaches to *action verbs*.

DISTRIBUTION AND FUNCTION OF PALAUAN A

2.6. In almost all of the example sentences given so far, we have seen instances of the Palauan word *a*. Although we can describe the *distributional features* of this word and make a general statement about its function, we will have trouble assigning it a specific meaning (as there is no equivalent in English or most other languages).

The major function of Palauan *a* is simply to “introduce” certain *parts of speech* when they occur in a sentence. Most of the sentences already given show that every Palauan *noun* (unless it is a *pronoun*) must be introduced (i.e., directly preceded) by *a*, regardless of whether the noun functions as sentence subject or sentence object, or follows

the relational word *er*. Furthermore, *a* always introduces the *verb* of the sentence (except when there is a pronoun preceding), regardless of whether that verb is an action verb (e.g., *menga* ‘to eat’, *meruul* ‘to make’) or a state verb (e.g., *smecher* ‘sick’, *mekelekolt* ‘cold’).

In the sentences below, we see the Palauan word *a* functioning to introduce a noun or a verb:

- (37) a. A daiksang a meruul a tabel. ‘The carpenter makes tables.’
 b. A ngalek a smecher er a tereter. ‘The child is sick with a cold.’

In (37a-b), the nouns introduced by *a* function as sentence subject or sentence object, or follow the relational word *er*. Can you identify which function goes with which noun? In addition, the verbs of (37a-b) are also introduced by *a*. Which verb is an action verb and which verb is a state verb?

Absence of A With Pronouns

2.6.1. Contrasting with sentences (37a–b) are the following examples, in which the sentence subject is *pronoun*:

- (38) a. Te mo er a skuul. ‘They are going to school.’
 b. Ak meluches a babier. ‘I’m writing a letter.’

These sentences confirm that when the sentence subject is a pronoun, neither the pronoun itself nor the following verb is introduced by *a*. In addition, when we use a pronoun in object position or following the relational word *er*, we cannot use *a* to introduce that pronoun either:

- (39) a. A mengkar a ulemes er ngak. ‘The guard was watching me.’
 b. A beab a tilobed er ngii. ‘The mouse came out of it (e.g., the hole).’

Demonstratives

2.6.2. There is one further type of Palauan noun that is not introduced by *a*. This type of noun includes words such as *tia* ‘this thing, this place, here’, *se* ‘that thing, that place, there’, *ng(i)ka* ‘this person’, *ng(i)ke* ‘that person’, etc. Such nouns are called **demonstratives** because they are used to *point out* persons or things or specify where someone or something is located. Some typical sentences containing demonstratives are given below:

- (40) a. Tia a oluches. ‘This is a pencil.’
 b. A ngalek a milil er sei. ‘The child is playing there.’
 c. Ngka el chad a sensei. ‘This person is a teacher.’
 d. Ngke el chad ng mekerang? ‘What is that person doing?’

Summary of Palauan A, Phrase

- 2.6.3. In the sections above, we have seen that Palauan *a* has no meaning but simply functions as an “introducer” of nouns (except for pronouns and demonstratives) and verbs in Palauan sentences. Although this explanation of *a* is quite oversimplified, it should be enough to give you a general idea about what is perhaps the most frequently occurring word in Palauan. As you study Palauan grammar in greater depth, you will realize (see, for example, 5.4.3.b) that *a* does not actually introduce single nouns or verbs, but rather certain *groups* of associated words called **phrases** (*noun phrases* and *verb phrases*). You will also see that there are a few additional Palauan words that are never introduced by *a* and that there are certain conditions under which *a* does not appear when it would otherwise be expected.

GENERAL STATEMENT VS. SPECIFIC STATEMENT

- 2.7. In this section we will study an interesting contrast found only when Palauan nouns are used as *sentence objects*. We will first illustrate this contrast in the pair of sentences below, which contain a nonhuman noun (*derumk* ‘thunder’) as sentence object:

- (41) a. A ngelekek a medakt ‘My child is afraid of
 a derumk. thunder.’
 b. A ngelekek a medakt ‘My child is afraid of
 er a derumk. the thunder.’

The only difference in *form* between (41a) and (41b) is that the second sentence contains the word *er* before the object noun *derumk*. As the English translations indicate, however, the two sentences are quite different in *meaning*. This difference, which we will explain below, must be due to the presence or absence of *er*.

Meaning Difference

- 2.7.1. How can we characterize the difference in meaning between sentences (41a) and (41b)? In (41a), the speaker is making a **general statement** about her child’s behavior—in other words, she is saying that in general, or on many different occasions, her child

shows fear of thunder. In (41b), however, she is making a **specific statement** about the current situation—it is thundering right now, and her child is afraid of it. The general statement (41a) can be spoken at any time at all (even on the sunniest day!), but the specific statement (41b) would sound very out of place unless there was actually thunder being heard.

The difference between a general statement and a specific statement will become clearer to you from the following dialogs:

- (42) A: Ng ua ngara a blekerdelel a ngelekem? 'What's your child's behavior like?'
 B: Ng kmal ungil e ng di ng ko er a medakt a derumk. 'It's very good, but she's somewhat afraid of thunder.'
- (43) A: Ngara me a ngelekem a lmangel? 'Why is your child crying?'
 B: Ng ko er a medakt er a derumk. 'She's somewhat afraid of the thunder.'

In Dialog (42), A is asking a general, “open” question about the behavior of B's child, and in fact B responds with a *general statement*. In dialog (43), however, A's question is closely tied to the current situation, since A wants to know why B's child is crying right now. In this case, B answers with a *specific statement* and says that the child is afraid of the thunder that can be heard right at the present moment.

Er* for Specific Objects Specifying Word *Er

- 2.7.2. Based on our discussion above, we can conclude that in a sentence like (41b) the word *er* must function as a marker or indicator that the object noun is *specific*—i.e., *derumk* in (41b) and in B's response in Dialog (43) refers to the actual thunder that can be heard right now. If *er* is absent, as in (41a), the object noun is interpreted in a *general, nonspecific* way, and *derumk* refers to thunder in general or any thunder at all. Because *er* marks or identifies a sentence object as *specific* (and not general), we will call it the **specifying word *er***.

Here is another example of the contrast between *specific* and *nonspecific* objects:

- (44) a. Ng soak el menga a ngikel. 'I like to eat fish.'
 b. Ng soak el menga er a ngikel. 'I want/would like to eat the fish.'

Obviously, (44a) is a *general statement* about the speaker's food preferences, while (44b) is a *specific statement* about what the speaker would like to eat on a particular occasion. Sentence (44a) could be spoken at any time, even when there is no food around. Sentence (44b), however, would always be uttered on a single occasion when food is being offered (and when some particular fish is one of the choices).

The specific statement (44b) might occur naturally in a dialog such as the following:

- (45) A: Ngara a soam el menga er ngii? 'What would you like to eat?'
 Ng ngar er ngii a babii me a There's pork, fish, and crab.
 ngikel me a chemang.
- B: Ng soak el menga er a ngikel. 'I'd like to eat the fish.'

In B's response, *er a ngikel* 'the fish' is a *specific* object noun that refers to the particular fish that A has prepared on that occasion and which A is offering as part of a choice of foods.

It is again clear that the very important difference in meaning between (44a) and (44b) must be related to the presence or absence of the *specifying word er*. The presence of *er* in (44b) also explains why that sentence is perfect as B's response in Dialog (45). While *er* is the only difference in form between the Palauan sentences of (44), the English equivalents show two formal differences: (1) *the* is used for a specific object (44b), while the absence of *the* indicates a nonspecific object (44a); (2) the verb 'like' is used for general statements (44a), while 'want' or 'would like' is more appropriate for specific occasions (44b).

Here is one more contrasting pair that you should be able to analyze on your own:

- (46) a. Ak ousbech a biskang 'I use a spear to go
 el mo er a chei. fishing with.'
- b. Ak ousbech er a biskang 'I'm using the spear
 el mo er a chei. to go fishing with.'

Which Palauan sentence is the general statement and which is the specific statement? How is the meaning difference reflected in the English equivalents?

Singular and Plural Human Nouns as Specific Sentence Objects

- 2.7.3. In 2.5 above we saw that human nouns are the only nouns in Palauan that show a difference between singular and plural. Thus, by attaching the plural prefix *re-* (or *r-*), we can distinguish between *ngalek* 'child' and *rengalek* 'children'. Because of this *formal* difference, we can always determine whether a human noun is singular or plural,

regardless of where it occurs in a sentence. In the examples below, a human noun is used as sentence object after the specifying word *er*, and there is no difficulty in interpreting between singular and plural:

- (47) a. Ak mo mengemedaol er a sensei. 'I'm going to invite the teacher.'
- b. Ak mo mengemedaol er a resensei. 'I'm going to invite the teachers.'

Nonhuman Nouns as Sentence Subjects

Since *re-* is restricted to *human* nouns, how is the difference between singular and plural indicated for *nonhuman* nouns? First of all, as we noted in our discussion at the beginning of 2.5, a nonhuman noun functioning as *sentence subject* can be interpreted as singular or plural, depending on the actual situation. Thus, the sentences below have at least two possible interpretations:

- (48) A bilis a mechiuaiu er a sers.
- a. 'The dog is sleeping in the garden.'
- b. 'The dogs are sleeping in the garden.'
- (49) A oluches a ngar er a bebul a tabel.
- a. 'The pencil is on the table.'
- b. 'The pencils are on the table.'

Nonhuman Nouns as Sentence Objects

Second, when a nonhuman noun is used as *sentence object*, the presence or absence of the specifying word *er* may create a distinction between singular and plural. Note the example below:

- (50) a. Ak ousbech er a mlim el mo er a ocheraol. 'I need your car to go to the money-raising party.'
- b. Ak ousbech a mlim el mo er a ocheraol. 'I need your cars to go to the money-raising party.'

In (50a), using *er* seems to focus on one single car, while in (50b) the absence of *er* is associated with the idea of two or more cars. This distinction seems to occur especially when the object noun is already quite specific or focused—e.g., *mlim* 'your car', as opposed to (unpossessed) *mlai* 'car'.

Note 4: The interpretation of singular vs. plural with *nonhuman* sentence objects is quite a difficult area of Palauan grammar, and not all speakers will agree with our analysis of the sentences (50a-b). How about you?

Perfective Verb vs. Imperfective Verb

- 2.7.4. All that we have said in 2.7.2 and 2.7.3 above about using the specifying word *er* before an object noun is valid *only when the verb of the sentence is of a particular type*—namely, **imperfective**. Palauan verbs normally can appear in two forms—**perfective**, which indicates that the action of the verb is completed (“perfected”), and **imperfective**, which indicates that the action of the verb is not yet completed but still in progress. In terms of form, the two types of verb are also very different: perfective verb forms always have a special *pronoun suffix* that identifies the object (these are the *object pronouns* discussed in 1.3.9.d.3 and in 4.9 below), while imperfective verb forms do not. Let us examine some imperfective and perfective forms for a few Palauan verbs:

(51)	Imperfective	Perfective
	mengelebed ‘to hit’	cholebedak ‘hit me’
	menga ‘to eat’	kolii ‘eat it (up)’
	omes ‘to see’	mesa ‘see him’
	meruul ‘to make, do’	rullii ‘make it (and finish it)’

In the list above, you will notice that the perfective forms have *suffixes* (endings) such as *-ak* ‘me’, *-ii* or *-a* ‘him, her, it’, and so on. These object pronouns (in suffix form) always indicate *specific* individuals, and therefore it is probably redundant (i.e., unnecessary from the viewpoint of meaning) to use the specifying word *er* after them. In other words, in the sentences below, it would be ungrammatical to insert the specifying word *er* between the perfective verb form and the following object noun:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (52) a. Ak mla kolii a ngikel. | ‘I’ve eaten up the fish.’ |
| b. A Toki a mla rullii a kall. | ‘Toki has prepared the food.’ |
| c. Ke mla mesa a buik? | ‘Have you seen the boy?’ |

Specifying Word *Er* and Relational Word *Er* As Homonyms

- 2.7.5. As we have seen above, the specifying word *er* is responsible for some very important meaning distinctions among nouns that are used as sentence objects. The major function of *er* is to distinguish *specific* objects from *nonspecific* (general) ones, and therefore the presence of *er* usually indicates a *specific statement* (as opposed to a *general statement*). In addition, *er* sometimes functions to bring out a distinction between *singular* and *plural* with *nonhuman* object nouns, as in (50a-b), where the presence of *er* marks a singular object.

The **specifying word *er*** studied in this lesson is best considered a different word from the **relational word *er*** seen briefly in 1.3.9.a and 2.3.4. Although the two words are **homonyms** (pronounced the same and spelled the same), their functions are very different. The specifying word *er* serves to mark sentence objects as specific (or, in some cases, as singular), while the relational word *er* expresses various types of relationships between nouns and other parts of the sentence that correspond to English ‘to, at, on, in, out of, because of’, and so on.

List of Terms

- 2.7.6. Many of the important terms introduced in this lesson are best learned in contrasting pairs or groups. Be sure that you are familiar with all of them:

- Noun vs. Verb
- Concrete Noun vs. Abstract Noun
- Human Noun vs. Nonhuman Noun
- Sentence Subject vs. Sentence Object
- Subject Noun vs. Object Noun
- Transitive Verb vs. Intransitive Verb
- Action Verb vs. State Verb
- Singular vs. Plural
- First Person vs. Second Person vs. Third Person
- Non-Emphatic Pronoun vs. Emphatic Pronoun
- Specific Statement vs. General Statement
- Specific Object vs. Nonspecific Object
- Specifying Word *Er* vs. Relational Word *Er*
- Perfective Verb vs. Imperfective Verb

In addition to the above, there are many other important terms to study in this lesson:

- Grammatical System
- Parts of Speech
- Distributional Features
- Internal Structure
- Five Senses
- Action Sentence
- Equational Sentence
- Phrase
- Relational Phrase
- Locational Phrase
- Directional Phrase
- Source Phrase
- Cause Phrase
- Temporal Phrase
- Pronoun
- Plural Noun
- Derived Plural Noun
- Plural Prefix
- Number Word
- Demonstrative
- Homonym

2.7.7. PALAUAN NOUNS: STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Be sure that you can write clear and accurate definitions for all of the terms in 2.7.6. Pay special attention to explaining the *contrasting* pairs of terms in the first group. Then give examples or illustrations of the terms you are defining. Try to follow the format below:

Sample Definition: Human Noun vs. Nonhuman Noun

A **human noun** is one that refers to a human being (e.g., *ngalek* ‘child’, *sensei* ‘teacher’, etc.). By contrast, a **nonhuman noun** refers to anything that is not human, such as animals (e.g., *uel* ‘turtle’), living things (e.g., *bung* ‘flower’), or nonliving things (e.g., *mlai* ‘canoe’). In addition, abstract nouns (e.g., *blekeradel* ‘personality’) are also nonhuman.

2. We have already had some exposure to the *sound system*, the *spelling system*, and the *grammatical system* of Palauan. How do we define the idea of **system** in general? What elements do the three systems so far studied have in common?
3. Why is the idea of *parts of speech* useful—or even essential—in studying the grammatical system of a language? How do we determine which words are members of a particular part of speech—in other words, how do we know that some words are *nouns*, others are *verbs*, and so on?
4. Why is the distinction between human vs. nonhuman nouns of such importance in Palauan grammar?
5. Describe in as much detail as you can the *distribution* of nouns in Palauan. For each of the positions where nouns can occur in Palauan sentences, give a clear example and underline the noun in question.

Sample Answer: *Position:* Palauan nouns can occur as sentence subject

Example: *A tolechoi a lilangel.* ‘The baby was crying.’

6. What are the main characteristics of Palauan sentences that describe a person’s profession, nationality, or membership in a group?
7. What is the function of the *relational word* *er* in the sentences of Palauan? What is a *relational phrase*, and how many different types are there?

8. What are pronouns and how are they used in sentences? Why is it reasonable to say that pronouns are a *subtype* of noun?
9. Explain carefully the difference between the pronouns in the following pairs:
 - a. *ak* vs. *ke*
 - b. *aki* vs. *kede*
 - c. *ke* vs. *kom*
 - d. *ng* vs. *te*
10. Why is the pronoun *te* very special within the system of Palauan pronouns? Can *te* substitute for *any* plural noun? Explain.
11. What are some of the differences between Palauan non-emphatic and emphatic pronouns? You may refer to 2.4.3 in this lesson and to 1.3.9.d.1–2 in Lesson One.
12. What are the main characterizing features of the Palauan plural prefix *re-* (*r-*)? Do we attach *re-* just to nouns? Explain with examples.
13. What is the distribution of the Palauan word *a*? Why is it very difficult to assign a specific meaning to this word?
14. What kinds of distinctions can we make in Palauan sentences by using the specifying word *er*?
15. Many Palauan speakers think there is an important difference in meaning between the following two sentences:
 - (a) Ak ousbech er a bilas er a klukuk.
 - (b) Ak ousbech a bilas er a klukuk.

Discuss and explain this meaning difference in as much detail as possible.
16. What do we mean by the *perfective* forms of Palauan verbs? Give five examples. Does the specifying word *er* ever occur directly after a perfective verb? Why?
17. Why is it convenient to make a distinction in terms between the *relational word er* and the *specifying word er*? In your answer, be sure to explain clearly how each of these items functions in Palauan grammar.

2.7.8. PALAUAN NOUNS: EXERCISES

1. At the end of Section 2.1, we saw that one way of determining whether or not a particular word belongs to a certain part of speech is to see if its *internal structure* is the same as other members of that part of speech. Thus, a word like *kolii* ‘eats it up’ is a (perfective) verb because it shares the internal structure of other (perfective) verbs such as *ngomedii* ‘washes it off’, *toietii* ‘hammers it’, and *ngilmii* ‘drinks it up’, etc.
 - a. Many nouns can have a *possessed form*—for example, *chermek* ‘my animal’ is formed from *charm* ‘animal’. Find ten other words that match the pattern *charm/chermek* (in which the internal structure of *chermek* could be described as “simple noun stem” + “suffix for possessor”) and would therefore also belong to the part of speech **noun**.
 - b. Many Palauan (action) verbs are formed from a “simple noun stem” by adding a prefix *ou-*. For example, from *chais* ‘news’, we get the verb *ouchais* ‘to inform, announce.’ Find ten other words with the internal structure “prefix *ou-*” + “simple noun stem” that are therefore members of the part of speech **verb**. For each example, write down the original noun stem and its meaning.
 - c. There is a group of Palauan nouns starting with *klau-* that convey the idea of some kind of mutual relationship. These are usually formed by prefixing *klau-* to another noun—e.g., from *buch* ‘spouse’, we get *klaubuch*, an abstract noun meaning ‘(relationship of) marriage.’ See how many words you can find whose internal structure parallels *klaubuch* and which are therefore members of the part of speech **noun**. Then, for each example, write down the original noun stem and its meaning.
2. Give five examples for each of the noun types listed below. Use examples different from those already given in this lesson (and different from those in Exercise No. 3 below!).
 - a. Human Noun
 - b. Nonhuman Noun—animals
 - c. Nonhuman Noun—living things
 - d. Nonhuman Noun—nonliving things
 - e. Abstract Noun
3. Below is a list of many different Palauan nouns. After reviewing the summary chart in 2.2.3, classify each noun as in Exercise No.2 above: (a) human, (b) nonhuman—animal, (c) nonhuman—living thing, (d) nonhuman—non-living thing, or (e) abstract.

btuch	redil	kirek
kerebou	sers	Cisco
tbak	iis	budech
tuu	tolechoi	belochel
ngduul	subelek	chelakngikl
sebechek	soam	bulis
klukuk	bisebusech	seizi
blekeu	bkau	omenged
biskang	uades	kldols
sukal	kldidaierreng	cheldech duch

4. In 2.3.1 we looked at Palauan action sentences of the form

subject noun + action word (verb) + object noun

and we gave an example like the following:

A babii a ultirii a ngalek. ‘The pig chased the child.’

In *Note 1* at the end of 2.3.2, we mentioned that the action verb of such sentences can be called *transitive* because the action is “transferred” from a doer (the sentence subject) to a receiver (the sentence object). Find five *transitive verbs* in Palauan and write a sentence for each, following the pattern above. Be sure that each sentence contains an object noun. Translate each of these “transitive sentences” into English.

5. In 2.3.2 we studied Palauan action sentences of the form

subject noun + action word (verb)

and provided an example like the following:

A buik a mililil. ‘The boy was playing.’

The distinguishing feature of these sentences is that although they describe an action, *there is no object noun*. In other words, the doer performs an action but it is *not* “transferred” to a receiver. For this reason, the action verb in sentences of this type is called *intransitive* (see *Note 1* again at the end of 2.3.2). Now, find five Palauan *intransitive verbs* and write a sentence for each. Make sure it is a verb that does *not* take an object noun. Translate these “intransitive sentences” into English.

6. Here are some simple Palauan sentences containing nouns. Locate each noun and underline it. Then identify its function from the following possibilities:
- Sentence Subject (see 2.3)
 - Sentence Object (see 2.3)
 - Noun #2 in an Equational Sentence (see 2.3.3)
 - Noun following Relational Word *Er* (see 2.3.4)
- A babii a rirurt er a sers.
 - A daiksang a rirelii a blai.
 - A chad er a Siabal a bengngos.
 - A rrellem a kmal ungil.
 - A sensei a diledesii a chaibebelau.
 - Ng kmal ungil a subelem.
7. Review the difference between *action verbs* and *state verbs* that was explained in 2.3.3. Then, for each of the verbs below,
- Identify it as an action verb or state verb.
 - Write a correct Palauan sentence using the verb. Make sure you choose an appropriate *subject noun*, and do not forget to include an *object noun* if the action verb is *transitive*. Translate your sentences into English.

Sample answers:

- smecher*—state verb.
Sentence: A ngelekek a smecher er a elechang.
 ‘My child is sick today.’
- mengedechuul*—(transitive) action verb.
Sentence: A toktang a mo mengedechuul er a rubak.
 ‘The doctor will save the old man.’

Exercise:

- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| (1) meloik | (6) melibek |
| (2) mellomes | (7) mengerekor |
| (3) orriik | (8) lmuut |
| (4) oureor | (9) mellemau |
| (5) smiich | (10) songerenger |

8. In 2.3.4 we saw that the structure of Palauan *relational phrases* is **relational word *er* + noun** (with the noun usually preceded by *a*). While there are many types of relational phrase, we looked at examples of five types in this lesson:
- a. Locational Phrase (see end of 2.3.3)
 - b. Directional Phrase (see 2.3.4)
 - c. Source Phrase (see 2.3.4)
 - d. Temporal Phrase (see 2.3.4)
 - e. Cause Phrase (see 2.3.4)

In the sentences below, there are various kinds of relational phrases. Underline the *entire* relational phrase (*er + a + noun*), and then identify it as one of the five types given above. Give a correct English translation for each sentence.

- (1) A rua Toki a mo merael er a klukuk.
- (2) A rekung a tilobed er a blsibs.
- (3) Ak kmal mesaul er a kledoraib.
- (4) Ak milsuub er a delmerab.
- (5) Ak milsa a sensei er a ideliseb.
- (6) Ak eko er a blim.
- (7) A katuu a miltengel er a kerrekar.
- (8) A rengalek a mililil er a kederang.
- (9) A bilek a mlo cheisech er a chemachel.
- (10) .Ng kirek el mo er a stoang.

9. Find all the pronouns in the sentences below. For each pronoun:
- a. Identify it as non-emphatic or emphatic (see 2.4.3).
 - b. Identify it as first, second, or third person.
 - c. Identify it as singular or plural.

Note: In addition to being *third person* and *plural*, the pronouns *te* (non-emphatic) and *tir* (emphatic) are also marked as *human*.

- (1) Kom mla menguiu er a hong er ngii?
- (2) Ke techang? —Ak sensei er kemiu.
- (3) Kede ulemes er tir er a kederang.
- (4) Kemiu, kom mekerang? —Aki di mechiuaiu er tiang.
- (5) Kau me ngak a mo er a chei.

10. In 2.7 we saw that the *specifying word er* will often designate a *specific object* within a *specific statement*, as in (a):

- | | |
|---|--|
| (a) A ngelekek a medakt
er a derumk. | ‘My child is afraid of the thunder
(that is rumbling right now).’ |
|---|--|

By contrast, the absence of *er* usually indicates a *nonspecific object* in a *general statement*, as in (b):

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (b) A ngelekek a medakt
a derumk. | ‘My child is afraid of thunder.’ |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|

Now, think of five possible situations and write down a pair of sentences for each that follows the model of (a–b) above. The first sentence should be a specific statement (with *er* used to introduce a specific object), while the second should be the corresponding general statement. For each sentence that you have written, give an accurate English translation.

11. In the sentences below, we have various occurrences of Palauan *er*. Study each sentence carefully and then decide whether we are dealing with the *specifying word er* or the *relational word er*:

- (1) Ng kirek el mo mesilek er a bilek.
- (2) A sensei er kid a chad er a ngebard.
- (3) Ak milengiil er tir er a medal a stoang.
- (4) A bechik a mle smecher er a tereter.
- (5) Tia a delmerab er a resensei.

3

NOUN POSSESSION IN PALAUAN

INTRODUCTION

Internal Structure

- 3.1.** In Lesson 2 we learned how to identify Palauan nouns in terms of their *meaning* (i.e., what they refer to) as well as their *distribution* in sentences (i.e., whether they occur as sentence subject, sentence object, etc.). We also noted that the members of a particular part of speech often have a characteristic **internal structure** which allows us to identify them readily. Although the examples we gave in 2.1 involved the internal structure of *verbs*, in Exercise 1a of Lesson 2 we took a preliminary look at the internal structure of *nouns*. We saw there that many Palauan words must be nouns because they follow the pattern *charm* ‘animal’—*chermek* ‘my animal’, *blai* ‘house’—*blik* ‘my house’, etc.

Possession, Possessor Suffixes Noun Stem, Suffix, Possessed Forms

The pattern we are looking at is used in Palauan to express **possession**—i.e., the idea that someone owns or possesses something. In this pattern, we start with the basic noun, called the **noun stem**, and add a **suffix** (or ending) that indicates the person who owns or possesses the noun in question. For example, if we take the noun stem *chim* ‘hand’, we can add **possessor suffixes** like *-ak* (‘my’—first person singular possessor), *-am* (‘your’—second person singular possessor), etc., to get the **possessed forms** *chimak* ‘my hand’, *chimam* ‘your hand’, etc.

Meaning-Bearing Unit (Morpheme) Suffix vs. Prefix

Nouns like *chimak*, *chimam*, etc., are interesting because they have an internal structure consisting of two (or more) **meaning-bearing units** (or **morphemes**). For example, the noun *chimak* ‘my arm’ can be broken down into (1) the morpheme *chim* ‘arm’ (a noun stem referring to something concrete—in this case, a part of the body) and (2) the morpheme *-ak* ‘my’ (a suffix indicating that the possessor is first person singular). Note that the Palauan noun stem *chim* (and thousands of others) can occur (1) as an *independent word* (in which case it is a single morpheme) or (2) in combination with a

possessor suffix (as in *chimak*, which contains two morphemes). From these examples we can see that a *suffix* is any meaning-bearing unit (morpheme) that is attached *following* a stem. Palauan is extremely rich in suffixes (as well as **prefixes**, which are attached *preceding* a stem). English, too has many suffixes that are added to noun stems—e.g., -s for plural (*cat—cats*), -ful to form adjectives (*hope—hopeful*), and so on.

You will recall that in 2.5 we showed how the *plural prefix re-* (or *r-*) can be attached to noun stems referring to human beings. Thus, from *ngalek* ‘child’ we get the plural noun form *rengalek* ‘children’. It is now easy to see that Palauan plural nouns consist of two morphemes—first, the prefix *re-* (or *r-*) meaning “plural” and second, the noun stem itself. Thus, the internal structure of such words can be expressed by the pattern **plural prefix + noun stem**.

Function of Possessor Suffixes Possessor and Thing Possessed

- 3.1.1.** Before listing the Palauan possessor suffixes with all of their forms, we should get a clear idea of their function and meaning. Possessor suffixes such as *-ak*, *-am*, etc., basically serve to express a relationship of possession between the noun stem (the thing *possessed*) and the person (or thing) indicated by the suffix (the *possessor*). This relationship of possession can be of several different types. Most often it involves actual *ownership* or *physical possession* of something—e.g., *mlik* ‘my car’, *bilsengem* ‘your boat’. In other cases, it may express a *part-whole* relationship—that is, the noun stem is an actual physical part of the possessor, as in *chimak* ‘my hand’, *ngerem* ‘your mouth’, *chelsel* ‘its inside’, *thul* ‘its edge’, etc.

In addition, “possession” may involve certain *social relationships* such as kinship, marriage, or friendship—e.g., *demak* ‘my father’, *bechim* ‘your spouse’, *sechelil* ‘his/her friend’—or even more abstract kinds of association such as *beluak* ‘my country’, *decham* ‘your ability’, *kirel* ‘his/her obligation’, etc. Besides this primary, though varied, function of expressing possession, the Palauan possessor suffixes also have a secondary function of *describing* or *characterizing*, which will be discussed at length in 3.5.3 below.

PERSON: FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD NUMBER: SINGULAR VS. PLURAL

- 3.2.** The possessor suffixes of Palauan are similar to Palauan *pronouns* because they make the same distinctions of **person** and **number**. We have already seen in 2.4.1 that there are **first**, **second**, and **third person** pronouns. *First person* (‘I, we’) refers to the speaker(s), *second person* (‘you’) refers to the person(s) spoken to, and *third person* (‘he, she, it, they’) refers to the person(s) or thing(s) spoken about. A possessor suffix

such as *-ak* in *chimak* ‘my hand’ is first person because *chimak* always refers to the *speaker’s* hand. Similarly, the possessor suffix *-am* of *chimam* ‘your hand’ is second person, and *-al* of *chimal* ‘his/her hand’ is third person.

We also saw in 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 that Palauan pronouns make a distinction of number—i.e., **singular** vs. **plural**. If we look at the second person pronouns, for example, we find a contrast between *singular ke* ‘you’, used when addressing only one person, and *plural kom* ‘you’, used when speaking to two or more persons. In the same way, the possessor suffix *-em* of *ududem* ‘your money’ indicates that the money is possessed by only one person, while the possessor suffix *-iu* of *ududiu* ‘your money’ means that the money is possessed by two or more people.

Possessor Suffixes: E-Set

- 3.2.1. The possessor suffixes of Palauan fall into four main groups (or *sets*) depending on the *vowel* of certain suffixes. The most commonly occurring group—the **E-Set**—is given below. Note that there are seven possessor suffixes in Palauan, which we classify according to differences of *person* and *number*:

	Possessor Suffixes: E-Set	
	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
1st pers.	<i>-ek</i> ‘my’	<i>-ed</i> ‘our— inclusive ’ <i>-am</i> ‘our— exclusive ’
2nd pers.	<i>-em</i> ‘your’	<i>-iu</i> ‘your’
3rd pers.	<i>-el</i> ‘his, her, its, their (nonhuman)’	<i>-ir</i> ‘their— human only ’

Possessed Forms of a Noun

When the possessor suffixes above are attached to a *noun stem* such as *charm* ‘animal’, we get the *possessed forms* indicated below:

(2) Possessed Forms of <i>Charm</i> ‘animal, pet’	
chermek ‘my animal’	chermed ‘our (incl.) animal’ chermam ‘our (excl.) animal’
chermem ‘your (sg.) animal’	chermiu ‘your (pl.) animal’
chermel ‘his/her animal’	chermir ‘their (hum.) animal’

Note 1: You will notice that while the noun stem *charm* has the *full* vowel A in its independent (i.e., unpossessed) form, all of the possessed forms show *cherm-*, in which the original A has been *weakened* (or “reduced”) to a *weak* E (see 1.3.2). This process of vowel weakening (full A → weak E) will be discussed in greater detail in 3.3 below.

Now that we have listed the *E-Set* of possessor suffixes with a sampling of actual forms (*chermek*, *chermem*, etc.), we need to make a few important points:

- a. The group of possessor suffixes in (1) is called the *E-Set* because all the singular suffixes (*-ek*, *-em*, *-el*) and the suffix for first person plural inclusive (*-ed*) have the (full) vowel E.

Inclusive vs. Exclusive

- b. As seen briefly in 2.4.1, Palauan has two first person plural pronouns (corresponding to English ‘we’). The pronoun *kede* is called **inclusive** because it is used when the speaker intends to include the person(s) addressed within his group (‘you and I’ or ‘we including you’). By contrast, the pronoun *aki* is called **exclusive** because it is used when the speaker does not wish to include the person(s) addressed within his group (‘we excluding you’). In the same way, Palauan has two corresponding *possessor suffixes*:

-ed ‘our—**inclusive**’ (i.e., possessed by us, including you within our group)

-am ‘our—**exclusive**’ (i.e., possessed by us, but excluding you from our group)

Because of this distinction, the possessed noun *ududed* means ‘our money—belonging to me (or us) and you’, while *ududam* means ‘our money—belonging only to us, but not you’.

- c. As noted above, there are two second person possessor suffixes:

-em ‘your—**singular**’ (i.e., there is only one person being spoken to)

-iu ‘your—**plural**’ (i.e., there are two or more persons being spoken to)

Human vs. Nonhuman

- d. As seen in 2.4.2, Palauan third person pronouns are unusual in that the plural pronoun *te* specifically refers to *human beings*. For this reason, the corresponding singular pronoun *ng* (usually, 'he, she, it') can even refer to *nonhuman plural* nouns ('they'—**nonhuman**) under certain circumstances. The very same distinction is found in the third person *possessor suffixes*:

-ir 'their—**human**' (i.e., always implies a human possessor)

-el 'his, her, its, their (**nonhuman**)' (i.e., refers to any singular possessor or to a group of nonhuman possessors)

Thus, the possessed form *ngerir* (from *ngor* 'mouth, voice, sound') can only refer to the sound made by a group of human beings (e.g., *ngerir a rengalek* 'the sound of the children'), while the possessed form *ngere* indicates either a singular possessor ('his, her, its voice') or a nonhuman plural possessor (e.g., *ngere a charm* 'the sound of the animals').

Common Features of Possessor Suffixes And Pronouns

- e. There is a one-to-one correspondence between the categories of Palauan pronouns and the categories of possessor suffixes. This correspondence is shown in the chart below, where the E-Set is compared with the already-familiar Palauan *non-emphatic pronouns*:

(3) Possessor Suffixes (E-Set) and Non-Emphatic Pronouns

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
1st pers.	ak 'I'/'-ek 'my'	kede 'we'/'-ed 'our' (inclusive) aki 'we'/'-am 'our' (exclusive)
2nd pers.	ke 'you'/'-em 'your'	kom 'you'/'-iu 'your'
3rd pers.	ng 'he, etc.'/ -el 'his, etc.'	te 'they'/'-ir 'their' (human)

If you study Charts 1 to 3 carefully and review all of the points in (a–e) above, you will get a good feeling for the way possessor suffixes work in Palauan. You will also understand that many of the same ideas (*first vs. second vs. third person, singular vs. plural, inclusive vs. exclusive, human vs. nonhuman*) apply both to *possessor suffixes* and to Palauan *pronouns* in general. For this reason, some linguists consider the possessor suffixes to be a subtype of *pronoun*, and in fact we introduced the possessor suffixes in this way in 1.3.9.d.4, where we first called them **possessor pronouns**.

Gender

Note 2: While Palauan pronouns and possessor suffixes make a few distinctions that English does not make, the opposite is also true. For example, there is a contrast among English third person *singular* pronouns involving **gender** (i.e., the sex of the individual being referred to). Thus, English *he* (masculine) refers to male human beings (or sometimes animals), while *she* (feminine) refers to female human beings (or animals). In addition, the third person singular pronoun *it* refers to anything nonhuman (e.g., house, flower, tiger, love) and even to human beings when the gender is not considered important or is not known (as when referring to a baby as “it”).

Needless to say, the Palauan pronoun *ng* and the possessor suffix *-el* corresponding to it do not make any gender distinctions. Thus, *chimal* can mean either ‘his hand’, ‘her hand’, or ‘its hand’. When translating such forms into English we often use “he” for convenience, but of course “she” (and sometimes “it”) will also be appropriate.

Additional Sets of Possessor Suffixes: U-Set, I-Set, A-Set

3.2.2. As noted in 3.2.1 above, the possessor suffixes of Palauan can be grouped into four major sets, depending on the vowel that appears in all the singular suffixes and in the first person plural inclusive suffix. In lists (1) and (2) above, we have already illustrated the *E-Set*, which occurs most commonly. In addition to the *E-Set*, we also have the *U-Set*, the *I-Set*, and the *A-Set*. These are now illustrated below.

(4) **Possessor Suffixes: U-Set**

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
1st Pers.	-uk ‘my’	-ud ‘our— inclusive -(e)mam ‘our— exclusive ’
2nd Pers.	-um ‘your’	-(e)miu ‘your’
3rd Pers.	-ul ‘his, her, its, their (nonhuman)’	-(e)rir ‘their— human only ’

(5) **Possessed Forms of Reng ‘heart, spirit’**

renguk ‘my spirit’	rengud ‘our (incl.) spirits’ rengmam ‘our (excl.) spirits’
rengum ‘your (sg.) spirit’	rengmiu ‘your (pl.) spirits’
rengul ‘his/her/its spirit’	rengrir ‘their (hum.) spirits’

(6) **Possessor Suffixes: I-Set**

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
1st Pers.	-ik 'my'	-id 'our— inclusive -(e)mam 'our— exclusive '
2nd Pers.	-im 'your'	-(e)miu 'your'
3rd Pers.	-il 'his, her, its, their (nonhuman)'	-(e)rir 'their— human only '

(7) **Possessed Forms of *Buch* 'spouse'**

bechik 'my spouse'	rebechid 'our (incl.) spouses' rebechemam 'our (excl.) spouses'
bechim 'your (sg.) spouse'	rebechemiu 'your (pl.) spouses'
bechil 'his/her spouse'	rebecherir 'their (hum.) spouses'

(8) **Possessor Suffixes: A-Set**

	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
1st Pers.	-ak 'my'	-ad 'our— inclusive -(e)mam 'our— exclusive '
2nd Pers.	-am 'your'	-(e)miu 'your'
3rd Pers.	-al 'his, her, its, their (nonhuman)'	-(e)rir 'their— human only '

(9) **Possessed Forms of *Duch* 'ability'**

dechak 'my ability'	dechad 'our (incl.) ability' dechamam 'our (excl.) ability'
decham 'your (sg.) ability'	dechemiui 'your (pl.) ability'
dechal 'his/her/its ability'	decherir 'their (hum.) ability'

Now that we have seen examples of all four sets of possessor suffixes, we can make the two important points below.

Unpredictability of Possessor Suffixes, Homonyms

- a. When we see a Palauan noun stem (e.g., *charm*, *reng*, *buch*, *duch*, etc.), how do we know which particular set of possessor suffixes (E-Set, U-Set, I-Set, or A-Set) it will take? In fact, it is *impossible to predict* from the form of the noun stem what the set of possessor suffixes will be. The *vowel* of the noun stem, for example, will not allow us to predict anything, since we can have noun stems that are *homonyms* (see 2.7.5) but which take different possessor suffixes. The most striking case is *chur*, which can be three separate words:

chur ‘laughter’ — *cherIL* ‘his laughter’
chur ‘tongue’ — *churAL* ‘his tongue’
chur ‘coconut frond rib’ — *churUL* ‘its coconut frond rib’

This unpredictability of possessor suffixes will not bother you as a native speaker of Palauan because over the years you have unconsciously learned all the correct forms. But imagine what a problem this is for a foreigner learning Palauan as a second language—he or she must make a conscious effort to memorize the correct possessor suffix for every single noun in the language!

Consonant-Initial Suffix vs. Vowel-Initial Suffix

- b. In addition to the obvious difference in the vowel of the suffix (U, I, or A vs. E), the U-Set, I-Set, and A-Set of possessor suffixes are distinguished from the E-Set in a very important way. As the charts in (4), (6), and (8) show, these three sets have *consonant-initial* suffixes for certain plural forms (first person plural exclusive, second person plural, and third person human plural), while the E-Set has *vowel-initial* suffixes. These differences are shown in the chart below:

(10) Possessor Suffix	E-Set	U-Set, I-Set, A-Set
(plural)	(vowel-initial)	(consonant-initial)
1st Pers. Excl.	-am	-(e)mam
2nd Pers.	-iu	-(e)miu
3rd Pers. Human	-ir	-(e)rir

The optional (weak) E given in parentheses before the consonant-initial suffixes of the U-Set, I-Set, and A-Set appears when it is necessary to have a transition between certain consonants at the end of the preceding syllable and the initial M or R of the possessor

suffix. This weak E is required, for example, between *CH* and a following consonant in such forms as *rebechemam* ‘our (excl.) spouses’ and *decherir* ‘their (hum.) ability’, but it is not needed when the first consonant is *NG*, as in *rengmam* ‘our (excl.) spirits’ and *rengrir* ‘their (hum.) spirits’. In a few exceptional cases, a *full vowel* rather than weak E is inserted before the consonant-initial suffixes of the U-Set, I-Set, or A-Set. The most obvious examples are for *chim* ‘hand’ (*chimomam*, *chimomiu*, *chimorir*) and for (obligatorily possessed) *chetil* ‘his, her disliking’ (*chetimam*, *chetimiu*, *chetirir*).

OCCURRENCE OF WEAK E IN POSSESSED FORMS

- 3.3. You may have already noticed that both the spelling and pronunciation of a noun stem can change when it is followed by a possessor suffix. Thus, in *Note 1* after Chart (2), we mentioned that the full vowel A of the noun stem *charm* ‘animal, pet’ becomes a *weak E* in the possessed forms *chermek*, *chermem*, *chermel*, etc. We observed the same thing happening in *buch* ‘spouse’ (*bechik*, *bechim*, *bechil*, etc.) and in *duch* ‘ability’ (*dechak*, *decham*, *dechal*, etc.), where the full vowel U of the noun stem also becomes weak E. If we pay careful attention to the pronunciation of *reng* ‘heart, spirit’ vs. *renguk*, *rengum*, *rengul*, etc., we will also find that an original *full E* (pronounced like the “e” in English *red*) has become a *weak E* (like the “uh” sound in English *the*) in all of the possessed forms.

Principles of Vowel Weakening

- 3.3.1. The vowel changes seen here are all examples of an important pattern of Palauan pronunciation called **vowel weakening** (or **vowel reduction**). Before going into further details, let us present the **principles of vowel weakening**:

PRINCIPLES OF VOWEL WEAKENING

- (11) All Palauan possessor suffixes are *stressed*.
- (12) When a (stressed) possessor suffix is added to a Palauan noun stem, any originally stressed vowel in that noun stem becomes *unstressed*.
- (13) When the *stressed* vowels A, (full) E, I, O, and U of a noun stem become *unstressed*, they are often *weakened* (reduced) to a *weak E*.

Stressed vs. Unstressed Syllable

In order to understand how the Principles of Vowel Weakening work, we must first review the difference between **stressed** and **unstressed** syllables. As we saw earlier in 1.3.2.b, in any Palauan *multisyllabic* word, only one syllable will be stressed, while all the others will be unstressed (e.g., *me-nge-LE-bed*, *de-CHU-dech*, *chel-de-che-DUCH*, etc.). The stressed syllable of a word can be quickly identified because it is pronounced more *loudly* and *strongly* than the nearby syllables. *One-syllable* words of Palauan (except for pronouns and other short words like *er*, *el*, etc.) are automatically *stressed* (e.g., *MAD*, *BUCH*, *KALL*, etc.).

Distribution of Full E vs. Weak E

It will also be helpful to review the *distribution* of Palauan full E vs. weak E described at the beginning of 1.3.2. For our purposes here, the most important thing to remember is that while Palauan full E usually occurs in *stressed* syllables (and sometimes in unstressed syllables—see 1.3.2.f),

(14) **Palauan weak E always occurs in unstressed syllables.**

Thus, in examples like *me-nge-LE-bed*, *de-CHU-dech*, etc., all of the occurrences of weak E are in the unstressed syllables.

Process of Vowel Weakening

3.3.2. Having reviewed the concepts of *stressed vs. unstressed* and *full E vs. weak E*, we can now see how the Principles of Vowel Weakening operate. Let us take the already familiar example of *charm* ‘animal, pet’. When *charm* occurs as an independent word, it is just one syllable and therefore automatically stressed. This means that the A of *charm* is pronounced as the full vowel A. If we add a possessor suffix, however, this suffix will be stressed (Principle 11), and the stress on the original full vowel A will be lost (Principle 12). When this A becomes unstressed, it changes to a weak E (Principle 13). This **process of vowel weakening** can be summarized in the following set of steps (where capital letters indicate stressed syllables):

- (15) Step 1: CHARM (independent noun stem: one-syllable word is stressed, and vowel A is full)
- Step 2: CHARM + EK (add possessor suffix, which is always stressed—Principle 11)
- Step 3: charm + EK (*charm*, as well as the vowel A within it, becomes unstressed—Principle 12)
- Step 4: cherm + EK (unstressed vowel A weakens to weak E—Principle 13)

Note 3: There are at least two further ways in which we might try to “explain” what is happening in the four-step process presented above:

- a. Rather than saying that Palauan possessor suffixes are automatically stressed (Principle 11), we might say instead that all possessor suffixes have the feature of *attracting* the stress and “pulling it away” from the originally stressed syllable of the noun stem. In this analysis, Principles 11 and 12 would be modified and combined, while Principle 13 would remain the same.
- b. In addition to claiming that Palauan possessor suffixes are stressed, we might explore the idea that their feature of stress is more “powerful” than the feature of stress found in noun stems. Thus, in Step 2, where we have two “competing” stressed syllables, the possessor suffix “wins out” because it is stronger to begin with. This analysis would also require modifying Principles 11 and 12 while leaving 13 unchanged.

Vowel Weakening

- 3.3.3. In Principle 13, we stated that *any* full vowel of a noun stem can weaken to a weak E when unstressed. Thus, each of the five main vowels of Palauan—A, (full) E, I, O, and U—can be reduced to a weak E in the possessed forms of a noun. In the lists below, we give examples of weakening for each full vowel. For purposes of illustration, only the third person singular possessed form is provided, since you can easily predict the other possessed forms from it.

(16) **Vowel Weakening: A → Weak E**

<i>Noun Stem</i>	<i>Possessed Form: ‘his, her, its’</i>
kar ‘medicine’	kerul
bad ‘stone’	bedul
bar ‘blanket’	berul
ngalek ‘child’	ngelekel
malk ‘chicken’	melkel
kall ‘food’	kelel

Note 4: In *kall—kelel*, the double L of the stem is shortened in the possessed forms.

(17) **Vowel Weakening: Full E → Weak E**

ker	'question'	keril
sers	'garden'	sersel
reng	'heart, spirit'	rengul
secher	'sickness'	secherel

Pronounce these words carefully out loud to verify the change from full E to weak E.

(18) **Vowel Weakening: I → Weak E**

bsibs	'drill'	bsebsel
kadikm	'right hand'	kadekmel
chedil	'mother'	delal

Note 5: In the possessed form *delal*, the first syllable *che* of the noun stem is totally lost. The same thing occurs with *chedam* 'father'—*demal* 'his/her father'.

(19) **Vowel Weakening: O → Weak E**

ngor	'mouth'	ngerel
kbokb	'wall'	kbekbel
sengsongd	'stick'	sengsengdel
belochel	'pigeon'	belechelel
bodk	'operation'	bedkel

(20) **Vowel Weakening: U → Weak E**

chur	'laughter'	cheril
duch	'ability'	dechal
chutem	'earth'	chetemel

No Vowel Weakening

- 3.3.4. There are a few Palauan noun stems in which a full vowel remains intact and does not reduce to weak E when a possessor suffix is added. These rather exceptional (or irregular) stems usually contain the vowel I and/or refer to parts of the body:

(21)	chim	'hand, arm'	chimal
	chikl	'neck'	chiklel
	ding	'ear'	dingal
	chilt	'oil'	chitel
	chur	'tongue'	chural

Note 6: In an example like *biskang* 'spear'—*biskelengel*, the *i* of *biskang* seems particularly "resistant" to weakening. Not only is it a full I in the independent form (bis-KANG), where it is already in the unstressed syllable, but it also remains unaffected in the possessed form, where a stressed suffix has been added. See 3.3.9 below for further details on the internal structure of *biskelengel*.

Vowel Deletion, Syllabic Consonants

3.3.5. When we observe the possessed forms of certain Palauan nouns, we see that a rather extreme form of vowel weakening has taken place. In quite a few cases, a stressed full vowel of the noun stem is *deleted* (or omitted) entirely in the possessed form. This **vowel deletion** is often (though not exclusively) found in cases where the lost vowel is preceded by such consonants as NG, L, and R. You will recall from our discussion in 1.2.11 that these are precisely the consonants of Palauan that can be *syllabic* (i.e., can occur as separate syllables). In the examples below, these consonants in fact become syllabic in word-initial position once the vowel has been deleted:

(22)

Vowel Deletion

<i>Noun Stem</i>	<i>Possessed Form: 'his, her, its'</i>
ngakl 'name'	ngklel (ng-KLEL)
ngikel 'fish'	ngkelel (ng-ke-LEL)
rasech 'blood'	rsechel (r-se-CHEL)
lusech 'luck'	lsechel (l-se-CHEL)

Pronounce the possessed forms of (22) above to verify (a) that the possessor suffix is stressed (as indicated in capital letters) and (b) that word-initial NG, L, and R are indeed syllabic (as shown by the hyphen separating them from the other syllables).

Word-Initial Consonant Clusters

In some nouns, the full vowel U (or sometimes A) of the stem is deleted in the possessed forms, regardless of what consonant precedes. As in the first six examples below, many possessed forms then turn out to have typical word-initial consonant clusters (see *Note 2* at the end of 1.2.1):

(23)	kud	'louse'	kdul
	bung	'flower'	bngal
	busech	'feather'	bsechel
	tub	'saliva'	tbal
	dub	'dynamite'	dbal
	subed	'announcement'	sbedel
	chorus	'horn'	chorsul
	bilas	'boat'	bilsengel
	cheraro	'enemy'	cherroël

Note 7: In *Note 6* at the end of 1.2.3 (Lesson 1) we first made reference to the possessed forms of *tub* 'saliva' and *dub* 'dynamite'. Since the original full vowel U is deleted in the possessed forms of both of these nouns, we end up with *tbal* 'his saliva' and *dbal* 'his dynamite'. While both of these possessed forms are almost identical in pronunciation, the difference in spelling (T vs. D) makes their origin completely clear.

Irregular Forms

Note 8: There are a few Palauan words that basically undergo a process of vowel deletion but involve further unusual deletions as well. The list below indicates some of the typical *irregularities* you may encounter:

a. *ralm* 'water' — *lmel*

After the deletion of A, we would get "rlmel", which has a cluster of three consonants that must be simplified. To simplify this cluster, word-initial R is deleted, resulting in *lmel*, where the first L becomes syllabic (l-MEL).

b. *klengt* 'sin' — *kngtil*

Note 8 continued next page

Note 8 continued

In addition to the deletion of I, the sequence *-le-* of the original noun stem has been lost completely. Then, the NG of the possessed forms becomes syllabic, even though it is preceded by another consonant (kng-TIL).

- c. *tet* 'handbag' — *til*
tut 'breast' — *tul*
bub 'fishtrap' — *bngel*

When the noun stem consists of two identical consonants with a vowel in between, the vowel and the second consonant are usually dropped in the possessed forms. Notice the insertion of NG in the possessed forms of *bub* (see 3.3.9 below). One big exception to this pattern is *bab* 'space above'—*bebul*, where A of the noun stem is not weakened or deleted at all but changed to full E.

Shortening of Double Vowels

- 3.3.6. We have seen in 3.3.3 and 3.3.5 above that most *single* full vowels of Palauan noun stems are affected by weakening—i.e., are reduced to weak E or deleted altogether—when possessor suffixes are added. This process of weakening is even more widespread, since it also applies to *double vowels* (as well as vowel clusters, as we will show in 3.3.7 below). Look at 1.3.6 to refresh your memory on the double vowels of Palauan—EE, II, OO, and UU. Now observe the following examples, in which original stressed *double vowels* in the noun stem shorten to *single vowels* in the possessed forms. This shortening can be viewed as a type of weakening:

(24) **Shortening of Double Vowels**

Noun Stem	Possessed Form: 'his, her, its'
deel 'nail'	delel
kekeed 'long time'	kekedel
biich 'sieve'	bichel
oriik 'broom'	orikel
dekool 'cigarette'	dekolel
klekool 'game'	klekolel
buuch 'betel nut'	buchel
tuu 'banana'	tual
beluu 'country'	belual
luuk 'nest'	lukel

As we noted in 1.3.2.f.1, the double vowel EE shortens in the possessed forms to a single **full** E. Thus, when we derive *delel* ‘his nail’ from *deel*, the first E is pronounced as a full E, even though it is now *unstressed* (de-LEL).

Irregular Forms

Note 9: There are a few noun stems with double vowels which show some irregularities in their possessed forms:

- a. *diil* ‘abdomen’ — *delel*

In this word, the original double vowel II reduces to a **weak** E. Thus, there is a contrast between the pronunciation of *de-LEL* (from *diil*, with **weak** E in the first syllable) and *de-LEL* (from *deel*, with **full** E in the first syllable), even though the spelling is identical.

- b. *luut* ‘return’ — *ltel*

Here, the original double vowel UU is deleted entirely, and the remaining word-initial L becomes *syllabic* (l-TEL).

- c. *rruul* ‘something made’ — *rrellel*

In this word, the original UU becomes **weak** E. Note also that the possessed form shows a double L.

Shortening of Vowel Clusters

3.3.7. In 1.3.7 we made a list of all the types of *vowel clusters* (*diphthongs*) that can be found in Palauan words. If a particular noun stem has a vowel cluster, then this cluster always undergoes some kind of weakening in the possessed forms. We will now discuss several patterns of vowel cluster weakening in Palauan.

- a. When we introduced the idea of *gliding* in 1.3.7.b-c, we implied that within a given syllable, one of the two vowels of a vowel cluster will be stronger or more prominent than the other. For example, in *iungs* ‘island’ the U is stronger, while the I is weaker. The stronger vowel U remains unchanged, but the weaker vowel I becomes the glide Y, so that *iungs* sounds like “yuns”. In the same way, in *uingel* ‘tooth’, the I is stronger, while the U is weaker. In this case, I does not change but U becomes the glide W, resulting in “wingel”. We can now present a very common pattern of vowel cluster weakening in Palauan in terms of the following rules:

- (25) a. In the original noun stem, determine which of the two vowels in a vowel cluster is the stronger (identify it with a *capital letter* or a *stress mark* ').
- b. To derive the possessed forms, **delete** the stronger vowel entirely (and leave the weaker vowel unchanged).

The rules of (25) result in the **shortening of vowel clusters** through *deletion* of the originally stronger vowel. This process is illustrated in the examples below. We have chosen to indicate the originally stronger vowel of each noun stem with a capital letter. Moving from the lefthand column to the righthand column, you can easily focus on the total deletion (loss) of this vowel in the possessed forms:

(26) **Shortening of Vowel Clusters (Deletion of Stronger Vowel)**

<i>Noun Stem</i>	<i>Possessed Form: 'his, her, its'</i>
a. chAis 'news'	chisel
udOud 'money'	ududel
tAem 'time'	temel
ulAol 'floor'	ulolel
ngAu 'fire'	nguil
tAut 'aim'	tutel
bUil 'month'	bilel
tekOi 'word'	tekingel
chUi 'hair'	chiul
b. oAk 'anchor'	okul
oAch 'leg'	ochil
eOlt 'wind'	eltel
iUngs 'island'	ingsel
uIngel 'tooth'	ungelel
diAll 'ship'	dillel
suObel 'homework'	subelel

It is interesting to note that the rules of (25) apply regardless of which vowel of the original vowel cluster is stronger—the first vowel as in (26a), or the second vowel as in (26b).

A few noun stems that end in vowel clusters take only the *consonant* of the possessor suffix in the first, second, and third person singular forms (-*k*, -*m*, -*l*) and in the first person plural inclusive form (-*d*). Otherwise, the rules of (25) apply regularly:

(27)	mlAi 'canoe, car'	mlil
	blAi 'house'	blil
	bAu 'smell'	bul
	sechelEi 'friend'	sechelil
	techEi 'substitute'	techil

- b. There is a rather exceptional pattern of vowel cluster shortening that is exactly the *opposite* of what we saw in the rules of (25) above. In other words, the stronger vowel is *kept* rather than deleted, and it is the weaker vowel that is lost instead. This should be clear from the examples below (where the stronger vowel has been written in capital letters for easy reference):

(28) **Shortening of Vowel Clusters (Deletion of Weaker Vowel)**

lIus 'coconut'	lisel
bOes 'gun'	bosel
klEu 'young coconut'	klengel
tEu 'width'	tengel
bulk 'boy'	bikel

- c. What the two patterns of vowel cluster shortening shown in (a) and (b) above have in common is that at least one of the original vowels survives unchanged in the possessed forms. In a small number of interesting cases, however, neither of the original vowels in the cluster remains as such. As the examples below show, the entire cluster is either reduced to a **weak** E, or an entirely new vowel appears:

(29) **Shortening of Vowel Clusters (Both Vowels Affected)**

laok 'fat'	lekel
daob 'ocean'	debel
deledaes 'free time'	deledesel
okdemaol 'maternal uncle'	okdemelel
rael 'road, way'	rolel

Pronounce all of the words above carefully to verify the phonetic changes that have taken place in the possessed forms.

Summary of Vowel & Vowel Cluster Weakening

3.3.8. In 3.3.1 to 3.3.7 above, we have seen many ways in which Palauan vowels and vowel clusters are weakened when they lose their stress in the possessed forms of nouns. In the chart below, we summarize all of the patterns observed, with an example for each:

(30) **Vowel and Vowel Cluster Weakening in Palauan**

Single Vowels:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Reduce to weak E | kar — kerul |
| 2. Delete | ngakl — ngklel |

Double Vowels:

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 1. Reduce to corresponding single vowel | oriik — orikel |
| 2. Reduce to weak E or delete (uncommon) | diil — delel |

Vowel Clusters:

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 1. Stronger vowel deletes | oAk — okul |
| 2. Weaker vowel deletes | bOes — bosel |
| 3. Both vowels change to single weak E or to another vowel (uncommon) | rael — rolel |

Predictability of Vowel and Vowel Cluster Weakening

You may recall that near the end of our discussion in 3.2.2 above we concluded that it is impossible to predict from the form of a noun stem whether its possessor suffixes will come from the E-Set, U-Set, I-Set, or A-Set. Now, what if we apply the issue of predictability to the processes of vowel and vowel cluster weakening summarized in the chart above? By simply looking at the original noun stem, can we predict what changes will occur in the possessed forms? Though there are obviously some exceptions and difficulties, we can basically say there is a fair amount of predictability:

- (31) a. **Single Vowels** usually become weak E and sometimes delete (especially if the preceding consonant NG, L, or R would become syllabic). In a small number of exceptional cases, the vowel remains unaffected (*chim* —*chimal*).
- b. **Double Vowels** usually become single vowels and in a few rare cases reduce to weak E or even delete.
- c. **Vowel Clusters** are usually affected by the deletion of one of the vowels (more commonly, the originally stronger one). In a few unusual cases, both vowels are simultaneously affected (changing to a single weak E or even a totally different vowel).

The “rules” of predictability given in (31) above are helpful to foreigners learning Palauan because they allow for an “educated guess” about what happens to a particular stem when the possessed forms are derived. Although as native speakers of Palauan you already know all of the possessed forms of Palauan nouns, (31) should be helpful in making you consciously realize the complexity of their internal structure.

-NG- in Possessed Forms

- 3.3.9.** Now that we have summarized the patterns of vowel and vowel cluster weakening in Palauan possessed nouns, we will take a look at one final change that occurs when possessor suffixes are added to noun stems. Certain Palauan nouns (and it is totally impossible to predict which ones) require -NG- as a kind of link or “buffer” between the noun stem and the possessor suffix. This -NG-, which has no meaning, is always followed by the E-Set of possessor suffixes. Often a weak E appears between the -NG- and the preceding consonant. Observe the following examples:

(32) **Possessed Forms of Nouns with -NG-**

<i>Noun Stem</i>	<i>Possessed Form: 'his, her, its'</i>
bas 'charcoal'	besengel
kerreker 'earnings of money'	kerrekerngel
billum 'wrapped tapioca'	billemengel
bechos 'thumb'	bechesengel
btuch 'star'	btechengel
bilas 'boat'	bilsengel
deleb 'ghost'	delbengel
bduu 'boil'	bdungel

katuu 'cat'	katungel 'sweetheart'
uum 'kitchen'	umengel
teu 'width'	tengel
bub 'fishtrap'	bngel
biskang 'spear'	biskelengel
diokang 'tapioca'	diokelengel

As a kind of review exercise, take each of the nouns in the list above and try to identify what kind of vowel or vowel cluster weakening has taken place in the possessed forms with -NG-. The last three examples are slightly more complicated—can you describe the unusual changes that have occurred in these?

IDENTIFYING THE POSSESSOR

- 3.4. When added to a noun stem, the possessor suffixes of Palauan allow us to make clear and specific reference to the *owner* or *possessor* of something. Thus, *ududek* is 'my money', *ududem* is 'your (sg.) money', *ududel* is 'his/her money', etc. While third person possessed forms such as *ududel* tell us that the money belongs to some third party, they do not identify the possessor any more specifically. They do not tell us, for example, whether the money belongs to Droteo, Toki, the teacher, the next-door neighbor, and so on. In order to specify or identify the actual possessor with third person possessed forms, we need to use expressions such as *ududel a Droteo* 'Droteo's money', *ududel a Toki* 'Toki's money', *ududel a sensei* 'the teacher's money', etc. With plural possessors (human only), we will have expressions like *ududir a resechelik* 'my friends' money', *ududir a resensei* 'the teachers' money', and so on.

Noun Phrase of Possession

- 3.4.1. Any expression which has the structure

Noun #1 (in possessed form) + A + Noun #2

where the possessed form has a *third person singular* or *third person human plural* possessor suffix, is called a **noun phrase of possession**. A noun phrase of possession is a group of related words in which **Noun #2** specifically identifies who (or what) possesses **Noun #1**. Here are some additional noun phrases of possession using noun stems already introduced in this lesson:

(33) a. *With third person singular possessor:*

ngelekel a Maria	‘Maria’s child’
bechil a sechelim	‘your friend’s spouse’
subelex a Toki	‘Toki’s homework’
ngerel a bilis	‘the dog’s mouth’
keril a ngalek	‘the child’s question’

b. *With third person human plural possessor:*

cherrir a rengalek	‘the children’s laughter’
kelir a remechas	‘the old women’s food’
lsechir a remeteet	‘the luck of the royalty’

Distribution of Palauan Nouns: Noun #2 in a Noun Phrase of Possession

3.4.2. When we look at *noun phrases of possession* of the general structure *Noun #1 (in possessed form) + a + Noun #2*, we see that there is yet another position in which Palauan nouns can occur within sentences. Thus, if we go back to our discussion of the *distribution of Palauan nouns* in 2.3 and to the summary in 2.3.5, we must add the following information:

Palauan nouns not only occur in the positions of *sentence subject*, *sentence object*, second noun in an *equational sentence*, and following the *relational word er*, **but they also occur as the second noun in noun phrases of possession**. As such, they specify or identify the possessor.

Be sure to locate 2.3 and 2.3.5 in the previous lesson and make a notation in the margin to remind you of this new fact about the distribution of Palauan nouns.

OBLIGATORILY VS. OPTIONALLY POSSESSED NOUNS

3.5. All of the nouns we have studied in the sections above have two forms—first, a *noun stem* (e.g., *ngalek*) which can occur as a separate, *independent* word; and second, a group of *possessed forms* containing *possessor suffixes* (e.g., *ngelekek*, *ngelekem*, *ngelekel*, etc.). In addition to nouns of this type, Palauan has many nouns which have possessed forms but no independently occurring noun stem. In other words, we have forms like *budek* ‘my skin’, *budem* ‘your skin’, *budel* ‘his/her skin’, etc., but no word “*bud*” that ever occurs separately.

Nouns like *budek*, *budem*, *budel*, etc. are called **obligatorily possessed nouns** because they *must* occur in a possessed form with a possessor suffix. By contrast, nouns with both independently occurring noun stems as well as possessed forms (e.g., *ngalek*—*ngelekek*, *bilas*—*bilsengek*, etc.) will be called **optionally possessed nouns** because we have an *option* or *choice* of using either a noun stem alone or a possessed form.

Categories of Obligatorily Possessed Nouns

3.5.1. The *obligatorily possessed nouns* of Palauan generally fall into several categories according to meaning. Since these nouns have no independently occurring noun stems, we list them below with a third person singular suffix:

(34) a. Parts of the body:

budel	'his/her/its skin'
ulul	'his/her chest'
kekul	'his/her nail, its claw'
omellel	'his/her chin'

b. Kinship (family) terms:

obekul	'his older brother'
chudelel	'her older sister'
ngusel	'her sister-in-law'

c. Part-whole relationship:

rsel	'its end/top'
tkul	'its edge'
bkul	'its corner'
chelsel	'its inside'
uchul	'(tree's) trunk, its reason'
llel	'its leaf'

d. Other relationships (often abstract):

belkul	'his/her/its function, its meaning'
ultutelel	'his/her/its function, its meaning'
bedengel	'his/her/its body, its type/color'
ullel	'in back of him/her/it'
util	'its imprint/track'

Although we have labeled the obligatorily possessed nouns of (34) according to certain broad areas of meaning such as “parts of the body”, “kinship terms”, etc., we cannot simply conclude that all nouns referring to parts of the body, for example, will belong to the obligatorily possessed type. This is clearly not true, because many nouns referring to parts of the body are in fact *optionally possessed*—i.e., have both an independent noun stem and possessed forms (*chim* ‘hand, arm’ —*chimak*, *ding* ‘ear’—*dingak*, etc.). While obligatorily possessed nouns seem to fall into the meaning groups given in (34a–d) above, it is actually impossible to predict whether any given noun will be optionally or obligatorily possessed.

Noun Phrases of Possession Containing Obligatorily Possessed Nouns

- 3.5.2. The nouns listed in (34a–b) can take possessor suffixes for all three persons—e.g., *budek* (first person), *budem* (second person), and *budel* (third person). Of course, when we wish to indicate a more specific third person possessor, we can make use of a *noun phrase of possession* (see 3.4 above) such as *budel a chimak* ‘the skin of my arm’, *budel a ngais* ‘eggshell’, or even *budel a daob* ‘surface of the ocean’. In the last two cases, you can see that the meaning of Noun #2 affects the meaning of the entire noun phrase of possession (i.e., with *ngais* ‘egg’, *budel* refers to the shell, and with *daob* ‘ocean’, *budel* refers to the water surface).

The nouns listed in (34c–d) usually take a *third person singular* possessor suffix and occur most often within a *noun phrase of possession*. Thus, the meaning of *rse*l ‘top, end’ differs depending on the specific meaning of Noun #2:

(35)	<i>rse</i> l a <i>kerrekar</i>	‘end of (cut) tree trunk’
	<i>rse</i> l a <i>chimak</i>	‘end of my arm’
	<i>rse</i> l a <i>ureor</i>	‘end of the work’
	<i>rse</i> l a <i>cheldecheduch</i>	‘end of the conversation/meeting’

With *kerrekar* ‘tree’ and *chimak* ‘my arm’, the meaning of *rse*l is *concrete* because it refers to a part of an actual physical object. With *ureor* ‘work’ and *cheldecheduch* ‘conversation, meeting’, however, the meaning of *rse*l is rather *abstract* since it refers to the final moments of some event.

Some typical *noun phrases of possession* containing *obligatorily possessed nouns* from (34c–d) are given below:

(36)	<i>tkul</i> a <i>tebel</i>	‘edge of the table’
	<i>tkul</i> a <i>cheldukl</i>	‘edge of the dock’
	<i>bkul</i> a <i>chim</i>	‘elbow’ (“corner of the arm”)
	<i>bkul</i> a <i>oach</i>	‘knee’ (“corner of the leg”)

uchul a kerrekar	'trunk/base of the tree'
uchul a cheldecheduch	'reason for the meeting'
uchul a eanged	'horizon' ("source of the sky")
llei a kerrekar	'leaf of the tree'
llei a babier	'sheet of paper'
ultil a oach	'footprint'
belkul a tekoi	'meaning of the word'
belkul a sensei	'a teacher's function'

Meaning of Noun Phrases of Possession

3.5.3. You will notice that many of the noun phrases of possession given above take on rather special meanings. For example, while *bkul* generally means "corner", it specifically refers to "elbow" when combined with *chim* 'arm' and to "knee" when combined with *oach* 'leg'. Furthermore, while *uchul* really means something like "source" or "origin", it refers to a physical part of a tree (i.e., the trunk) when combined with *kerrekar*, to an abstract idea (the reason) with *cheldecheduch*, and to an old belief or impression (that the sky actually begins at the horizon) with *eanged*. Finally, if you think carefully about the noun phrases of possession containing *llei* 'leaf' or *belkul* 'significance', you will see how these words also assume special meanings depending on the meaning of Noun #2.

In thinking about the meanings of the noun phrases of possession already given (see 33a–b, 35, and 36), you may have realized that Noun #2 is actually a *true possessor* or *owner* of Noun #1 only under certain circumstances. The idea of "pure" possession will always be present when Noun #2 is a human being and Noun #1 refers to something that can actually be owned (as in *mlil a Droteo* 'Droteo's car', *ududir a resechelik* 'my friends' money'). In most other cases, however, the relationship between Noun #1 and Noun #2 involves a different kind of connection, as seen in the summary given below:

(37)	Noun #1 + Noun #2	Example
a.	part of the body + person	<i>chimal a Toki</i> 'Toki's hand/arm'
b.	relative + person related	<i>demal a sensei</i> 'the teacher's father'
c.	physical part of an object + whole object	<i>llei a kerrekar</i> 'leaf of the tree'
d.	abstract idea + related idea	<i>belkul a tekoi</i> 'meaning of a word'
e.	object or place + purpose or function	<i>blil a blengur</i> 'house for eating in'
f.	type of communication + content	<i>chisel a Toki</i> 'news about Toki'
g.	object + characterizing description	<i>urerir a resechal/redil</i> 'work meant for men/women'

The types of connection shown between Noun #1 and Noun #2 in (37a–g) represent only some of the many possibilities in this very complicated area of meaning. Even though the examples of (37) do not involve true possession but various situations in which Noun #2 really *describes* or *characterizes* Noun #1 in some way, we will still use the convenient term *noun phrase of possession* to refer to all expressions of this type.

DISTRIBUTION OF POSSESSED FORMS AND NOUN PHRASES OF POSSESSION

- 3.6. The distribution of Palauan *possessed forms* as well as entire *noun phrases of possession* is exactly the same as that of independent noun stems. In other words, all of these items can occur as sentence subject, sentence object, following the relational word *er*, and so on. These common features of distribution are illustrated below for the positions of sentence subject and sentence object (italicized):

(38) **Sentence Subject**

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. A <i>blai</i> a milseseb. | ‘The house burned down.’ |
| b. A <i>blid</i> a milseseb. | ‘Our (incl.) house burned down.’ |
| c. A <i>blil a sensei</i> a milseseb. | ‘The teacher’s house burned down.’ |

(39) **Sentence Object**

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| a. A John a chilitii a <i>oluchés</i> . | ‘John threw away the pencil.’ |
| b. A John a chilitii a <i>olechesek</i> . | ‘John threw away my pencil.’ |
| c. A John a chilitii
a <i>olechesel a Satsko</i> . | ‘John threw away Satsko’s
pencil.’ |

Noun Phrase Subject Noun Phrase, Object Noun Phrase

If we wish to describe the grammar of Palauan adequately, we must take into account the fact that certain *words* and *groups of words* have the same *distribution*—i.e., can substitute for each other in various positions (sentence subject, sentence object, etc.). For example, in (38) above, *blai* (a *noun stem* with no possessor suffix attached), *blid* (a *possessed form* of *blai*), and *blil a sensei* (a *noun phrase of possession*) can all occur as the subject of the sentence. Though these three items are different from each other in their internal structure, they nevertheless share identical features of distribution.

In order to highlight this fact in our presentation of Palauan grammar, we can use the general term **noun phrase** to refer to any single word or group of words that can substitute for each other in the positions of sentence subject, sentence object, and so on. Therefore, a *simple noun stem* with no possessor suffix (e.g., *blai*) is a type of *noun phrase*, a *possessed form* of a noun (e.g., *blid*) is also a type of *noun phrase*, and a *noun phrase of possession* (e.g., *blil a sensei*) is of course a *noun phrase*. Furthermore, though we talked earlier about *subject nouns* and *object nouns* (see 2.3.1), we now realize that it is more proper to use terms such as *subject noun phrase* and *object noun phrase*.

Note 10: The three types of noun phrases just mentioned above (simple noun stem, possessed form of the noun, and noun phrase of possession) are not the only kinds of noun phrases found in Palauan. In the sentences below, the italicized noun phrases are types that will be discussed either later in this lesson (a–b) or elsewhere in this textbook (c–f):

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. A <i>sidosia er a John</i> a klou. | 'John's car is big.' |
| b. A <i>chermek el bilis</i> a mechiuaiu
er a sers. | 'My dog is sleeping in the
garden.' |
| c. A <i>relluich el chad</i> a mlei. | 'Twenty people came.' |
| d. Ng soam a <i>beches el blik?</i> | 'Do you like my new house?' |
| e. A <i>sechelik a kie er se el blai.</i> | 'My friend lives in that house.' |
| f. A <i>buik el mengitakl</i> a Tony. | 'The boy who is singing is Tony.' |

UNPOSSESSIBLE NOUNS

- 3.7. So far we have classified Palauan nouns into two contrasting types—*obligatorily possessed nouns* vs. *optionally possessed nouns* (see 3.5 above). While both of these types have *possessed forms*, the difference is that with obligatorily possessed nouns there is no independently occurring *noun stem*. We now look at a third and final possibility among Palauan nouns—namely, **unpossessible nouns**. As the term implies, *unpossessible nouns* only occur in the *noun stem* form and do not have any possessed forms (with possessor suffixes) at all. Most unpossessible nouns of Palauan fall into three major categories, as indicated below:

(40) **Palauan Unpossessible Nouns**

- a. Nouns borrowed into Palauan from foreign languages such as Japanese and English: *sidosia* (Jp.) ‘car’, *hong* (Jp.) ‘book’, *sensei* (Jp.) ‘teacher’, *stoa(ng)* (Eng.) ‘store’, *bresengt* (Eng.) ‘present’, *rrat* (German) ‘bicycle’, *biblia* (Spanish) ‘Bible’
- b. Native Palauan nouns designating animals, plants, or parts of the natural environment: *ius* ‘crocodile’, *lbolb* ‘wolf’, *bang* ‘goatfish’, *ngas* ‘ironwood tree’, *bngaol* ‘mangrove tree’, *kederang* ‘beach’, *keburs* ‘mangrove swamp’
- c. Proper names of people and places: *Toki*, *Satsko*, *Polycarp*, *Belau*, *Babeldaob*, *Oreor*, *Siabal*, *Merikel*, *Ruk*

Although unpossessible nouns tend to fall into the categories above, it is impossible to predict whether any given noun stem of Palauan will actually be unpossessible. Even some borrowed words, for example, have broken the “unpossessible” barrier and become optionally possessed nouns—e.g., *taem* (Eng.) ‘time’ — *temek*, *tebel* (Eng.) ‘table’ — *tebelék*, *skuul* (Eng.) ‘school’ — *skulek*, *babier* (Ger.) ‘paper, letter’ — *babilngek*, etc.

Noun Phrases of Possession With Unpossessible Nouns

- 3.7.1. What do we do in Palauan if we wish to indicate the idea of possession but the item to be possessed is in fact an *unpossessible noun*? In other words, how do we show possession with nouns like *hong* ‘book’ and *rrat* ‘bicycle’? The simple answer is this: we use a special type of *noun phrase of possession* which contains the *relational word er*. Here are a few examples:

(41) **Noun Phrases of Possession Containing Relational Word *Er***

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. | <i>delmerab er a sechelik</i> | ‘my friend’s room’ |
| | <i>sidosia er a Yosko</i> | ‘Yosko’s car’ |
| | <i>kombalii er a Satsko</i> | ‘Satsko’s company’ |
| | <i>restorangd er a George</i> | ‘George’s restaurant’ |
| b. | <i>hong er tir</i> | ‘their book(s)’ |
| | <i>mondai er kau</i> | ‘your (sg.) problem(s)’ |
| | <i>sensei er kid</i> | ‘our (incl.) teacher’ |
| | <i>rrat er ngak</i> | ‘my bicycle’ |

Relational Phrase, Possessor Phrase

All of the noun phrases of possession in (41a) have the structure:

Noun #1 (Unpossessible) + Relational Word *er* + A + Noun #2

If we compare this to the “formula” for noun phrases of possession given at the beginning of 3.4.1, we can summarize the main difference in the following principle:

(42) In a Noun Phrase of Possession, if Noun #1 is **unpossessible**, then it must be followed by a **relational phrase** of the form

***er* + A + Noun #2.**

In other words, in the examples of (41a) we show possession by using a *relational phrase* (see 2.3.4) in which the *relational word er* relates or connects the *possessor* (Noun #2) with the *thing possessed* (Noun #1). Such relational phrases, in which *er* is close in meaning to English “of”, will be called **possessor phrases**. Do you recall the other types of relational phrases that we have already studied in this textbook?

You will also notice that within the possessor phrases of (41), the word following *er* can either be a full noun, as in (41a), or a *pronoun*, as in (41b). If we do use a pronoun after *er*, it must come from the set of *emphatic pronouns* (*ngak, kau, ngii*, etc.—see 2.4.3). To account for the possessor phrases of (41b), we must of course modify our formula and the principle in (42) accordingly.

Characterization and Description

3.7.2. Here are some additional *noun phrases of possession* in which Noun #1 is *unpossessible*:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (43) <i>sidosia er a Siabal</i> | ‘Japanese car’ |
| <i>sensei er a ochur</i> | ‘teacher of mathematics’ |
| <i>hong er a iakiu</i> | ‘book about baseball’ |
| <i>delmerab er a omesuub</i> | ‘room for studying’ |

Like many of the examples in (35–37) above, the noun phrases of possession in (43) do not really involve actual ownership (“true possession”) of Noun #1 by Noun #2. Instead, Noun #2 *characterizes* or *describes* Noun #1 in some way. For example, while the noun phrase of possession *sidosia er a Yosko* ‘Yosko’s car’ clearly involves true possession (i.e., Yosko is the owner of the car), in *sidosia er a Siabal* ‘Japanese car’, *Siabal* ‘Japan’ *describes* the car as being a Japanese product. In the same way, in *sensei er a ochur* ‘teacher of mathematics’, it would be absurd to say that a nonliving, abstract thing like mathematics in any way “possesses” the teacher. Instead, *ochur* in fact *characterizes* the teacher by indicating the subject he or she teaches. Finally, in *hong*

er a iakiu 'book about baseball', *iakiu* 'baseball' indicates the *content* of the book, while in *delmerab er a omesuub* 'room for studying', *omesuub* 'studying' specifies the *purpose* or *function* of the room.

MORE NOUN PHRASES OF POSSESSION

- 3.8. It is also possible to have noun phrases of possession in Palauan in which the first noun is an *optionally possessed noun* occurring in its *independent* form (i.e., without a possessor suffix). Thus, with *sidosia er a Siabal* 'Japanese car', compare the phrase *mlai er a Siabal* 'Japanese car'. The meaning of the second phrase is identical, and the only difference is that for the unpossessible noun *sidosia* we have substituted the optionally possessed noun *mlai*. You will notice that in *mlai er a Siabal*, *Siabal* 'Japan' is not the possessor or owner of the car, but rather its characterizing or defining feature. Additional noun phrases of possession similar to *mlai er a Siabal* are given below:

(44)	<i>kall er a Sina</i>	'Chinese food'
	<i>tekoi er Belau</i>	'Palauan language'
	<i>tekoi er a blai</i>	'private matters'
	<i>tekoi er a rael</i>	'public knowledge'
	<i>techall er a ureor</i>	'opportunity for work'
	<i>chad er a omenged</i>	'fisherman'
	<i>chad er a Merikel</i>	'American (person)'
	<i>ilumel er a party</i>	'party drinks'
	<i>ngalek er a skuul</i>	'student, pupil'
	<i>beluu er a eanged</i>	'heaven'
	<i>beluu er a ngau</i>	'hell'

The examples of (44) above allow us to make many interesting observations:

- First of all, as you can easily verify, every Noun #1 in the phrases above is an *optionally possessed noun* (*kall*—*helel*, *tekoi*—*tekingel*, etc.), although it in fact occurs here in the independent (noun stem) form with no possessor suffix.
- The general structure of the noun phrases of possession in (44) is similar to the structure found in the examples of (41) and (43):

Noun #1 + Er + A + Noun #2

The *er + a + Noun #2* part of this structure is a *possessor phrase* (see 3.7.1 above).

- c. Just like the examples of (43), the possessor phrases in (44) actually *describe* or *characterize* Noun #1 rather than indicate real ownership by an actual possessor. A few more detailed explanations are given here:

(45) *kall er a Sina* ‘Chinese food’: *Sina* describes the type of food or its origin.

tekoi er Belau ‘Palauan language’: *Belau* identifies the particular language.

techall er a ureor ‘opportunity for work’: *ureor* ‘work’ describes the type of opportunity.

chad er a omenged ‘fisherman’: *omenged* ‘fishing’ identifies the person by his profession.

ilumel er a party ‘party drinks’: *party* identifies what the function of the drinks will be—i.e., that they will be used at the party.

- d. Some of the noun phrases of possession in (44) have very special meanings depending on the meaning of Noun #2. For example, *tekoi er a blai* means, word-for-word, “matters of the home” and therefore comes to mean “private matters”. Its opposite is *tekoi er a rael*, (“matters of the road”), which is used in the sense of “public knowledge”. Two other interesting examples are *beluu er a eanged* and *beluu er a ngau* for “heaven” and “hell”. Can you see how these ideas come from the word-for-word interpretation of these phrases?

Complex Noun Phrases of Possession

- 3.8.1. As we have seen at the beginning of 3.8 above, a noun phrase of possession like *bail er a skuul* ‘school clothes’ involves a *characterization* or *description* of *bail* ‘clothes’ by *skuul* ‘school’ rather than real possession or ownership. Since *bail*, however, is an optionally possessed noun, we can certainly have the phrase *bilel a John* ‘John’s clothes’, where Noun #2 (*John*) is indeed the *true possessor* of Noun #1 (*bilel*). What happens, then, if we want to combine the two ideas of *bilel a John* and *bail er a skuul*? In other words, how can we express in Palauan the idea that clothes for school are also owned by John? To express this idea, we combine the two phrases into a “super” phrase called a **complex noun phrase of possession**—namely,

bilel a John er a skuul ‘John’s school clothes’

This *complex noun phrase of possession* has the general structure:

(46) **Noun #1 (in possessed form) + A + Noun #2 + Er + A + Noun #3**

Although the formula of (46) seems complicated, it is nothing more than a combination of elements we have already seen:

Noun #1 is the *possessed form* of a noun—e.g., *bilel*.

Noun #2 is the actual *owner* or *possessor* of Noun #1—e.g., *John*.

Noun #3 is part of a *relational phrase* of the form *er + a + noun*, and Noun #3 (e.g., *skuul*) *characterizes* or *describes* Noun #1.

Now that you are familiar with the structure of complex noun phrases of possession, here are some additional examples:

- (47) a. *bilsengel a rubak er a omenged* 'the old man's fishing boat'
 b. *kelir a resoldau er a mekemas* 'the soldiers' C-rations (army food)'
 c. *dillir a rechad er a Siabal er a mekemas* 'warships of the Japanese'

In the examples above, you can easily see that the complex noun phrases of possession come from combining two phrases—i.e.,

- (48) a. *bilas er a omenged* + *bilsengel a rubak*
 'fishing boat' 'the old man's boat'
 b. *kall er a mekemas* + *kelir a resoldau*
 'C-rations' 'the soldiers' food'
 c. *diall er a mekemas* + *dillir a rechad er a Siabal*
 'warship' 'the boats of the Japanese'

Example (47c) is especially interesting because the actual owner (Noun #2) is itself a noun phrase of possession (*rechad er a Siabal* 'Japanese people') where the noun following *er* (*Siabal*) describes the preceding noun (*rechad*).

Additional Complex Noun Phrases of Possession

- 3.8.2. To give you some idea of how rich and complicated the noun phrase system of Palauan is, we still have not finished with all the possible structures! Before ending this discussion, we will mention two more types of examples:

- a. In the complex noun phrases of possession given in (47) above, it is of course not necessary that the possessor be third person. In other words, in addition to *bilel a John er a skuul* 'John's school clothes', we can also have phrases like these:

(49) bilek er a skuul	'my school clothes'
bilem er a skuul	'your (sg.) school clothes'
biled er a skuul	'our (incl.) school clothes'

If the real possessor or owner of Noun #1 is first person or second person, then we do not need a specific noun in the position of Noun #2 in the formula of (46). In the same way, you should have no trouble interpreting phrases such as *bilsengek er a omenged*, *bilsengem er a omenged*, *bilsenged er a omenged*, etc.

- b. If Noun #1 in a complex noun phrase of possession happens to be an *unpossessible noun*, then we will get phrases like these:

(50) hong er a ngelekek	'my child's math book'
er a ochur	
sensei er kid er a tekoi	'our (incl.) English teacher'
er a Merikel	

By now, you should have no difficulty analyzing the internal structure of these complex noun phrases of possession. Try to break them down into simpler phrases as was done in (48) above.

CONJUNCTION *el*, CATEGORY NOUN

- 3.9. In order to specify the *category* or general group of objects to which something belongs, Palauan makes use of special noun phrases which have the following form:

Noun #1 (in possessed form) + Conjunction *el* + Noun #2

The linking word in this structure is the **conjunction *el*** (see 1.3.9.c for a brief introduction). In a typical example such as *imelek el biang* 'my (drink of) beer', Noun #1 (*imelek*, from *ilumel* 'drink') specifies the *function* that Noun #2 has on a given occasion. In other words, it is beer (Noun #2: *biang*) that serves or functions as my drink (Noun #1: *imelek*). Since other substances can also function as drinks, we naturally have expressions such as *imelek el ralm* 'my (drink of) water', *imelek el kohi* 'my coffee', and so on. In expressions of this type, Noun #1 is a *category noun* (most often indicating categories of food or drink), while Noun #2 names a *specific member* of that category.

Appositional Phrase

A noun phrase of the form *imelek el biang*, in which two nouns are next to each other and linked (or equated) by the conjunction *el*, is called an **appositional phrase** (where “appositional” means “positioned next to each other”). As we will see later in this textbook, the conjunction *el* also has a similar use in appositional phrases such as *John el sensei* ‘John the teacher’, where a specific person is associated with a general category (in this case, a profession). Some additional appositional phrases indicating that “Noun #2 functions as Noun #1” are given below:

(51) <i>Category Noun</i> (independent form)	<i>Appositional Phrase</i> (with 1st pers. sg. possessor)
ilumel ‘drink’	imelek el rrom ‘my (drink of) liquor’
kall ‘food’	kelek el udong ‘my noodles’
cheled ‘animal or fish (caught but not yet cooked)’	cheldik el ngikel ‘my fish’
odoim ‘meat or fish (ready to eat)’	odimek el babii ‘my pork’
ongraol ‘starchy food’	ongulek el kukau ‘my taro’
kliou ‘dessert’	kliungek el tuu ‘my banana (for dessert) (formal)’
charm ‘animal, pet’	chermek el babii ‘my pig (pet or farm animal)’
chemachel ‘something to chew’	chemelek el buuch ‘my betel nut (for chewing)’
udoud ‘money’	ududek el lluich el kluk ‘my twenty dollars’
dellomel ‘something planted’	dellemelek el diokang ‘my tapioca plant’
ngalek ‘child’	ngelekek el sechal ‘my boy, my son’ ngelekek el redil ‘my girl, my daughter’

As some of the above examples show, it is possible for one and the same thing (Noun #2) to be associated with different categories (Noun #1) depending on how it functions in a given situation. Thus, while *chermek el babii* indicates the living pig I am raising, in *odimek el babii* ‘my pork’, the poor pig is no longer in the same condition! To take one more example, *dellemek el tuu* would refer to the living banana plants I am cultivating, while *helek el tuu* categorizes the bananas as ready-to-eat food.

Needless to say, if we wish to express a specific third person possessor in examples such as (51), we wind up with more complex appositional phrases like these:

- (52) *imelel a Droteo el kohi* ‘Droteo’s drink of coffee’
 chermel a sechelik el bilis ‘my friend’s pet dog’

OBLIGATORILY POSSESSED NOUNS: LIKING, DISLIKING, ABILITY, AND OBLIGATION

- 3.10. A small group of obligatorily possessed nouns occur very commonly in Palauan to express ideas such as liking, disliking, ability, and obligation. These nouns are illustrated in the sentences below:

- (53) a. *Liking:* *Ng soak a biang.* ‘I like beer.’
 b. *Disliking:* *Ng chetil a rrom.* ‘He dislikes liquor.’
 c. *Ability:* *Ng sebechir el mong.* ‘They can go.’
 d. *Obligation:* *Ng kirem el kie er tiang.* ‘You must live/stay here.’

Though the English equivalents of these sentences contain verbs such as *like*, *dislike*, *can*, and *must*, it is clear that such ideas are expressed in Palauan by using the appropriate *obligatorily possessed noun*. Thus, the first example in (53) really means, word-for-word, “My liking is beer”. Sentences like these will be analyzed further in the next lesson (see 4.6.2).

SUMMARY OF PALAUAN NOUN PHRASES

- 3.11. In this lesson we have looked at the structure of quite a few Palauan *noun phrases*. The various types are summarized below, with examples for each:

(54)

Palauan Noun Phrases

- a. Simple (or Independent) Noun Stem (with no possessor suffix): *blai*, *tebel*, *hong*, *sechelei*
- b. Possessed Form of Noun (with possessor suffix): *blik*, *tebelem*, *sechelid*
- c. Noun Phrase of Possession:
 - (1) True possession indicated: *blil a Droteo* 'Droteo's house', *sechelir a remechas* 'the old women's friends'
 - (2) Description or Characterization indicated: *chisel a Toki* 'news about Toki', *mlai er a Merikel* 'American car', *sidosia er a Siabal* 'Japanese car'
- d. Complex Noun Phrase of Possession: *sidosia er a Siabal er tir* 'their Japanese car', *bilel a Toki er a skuul* 'Toki's school clothes'
- e. Appositional Phrase: *imelek el kohi* 'my coffee', *chermem el katuu* 'your (sg.) cat'

LIST OF TERMS

- 3.12. Be sure you are familiar with all the pairs or groups of contrasting terms found in this lesson. If these terms have already been introduced in earlier lessons, they are marked with an asterisk (*). Be sure you know why these terms are now important in Lesson 3:

* **Suffix vs. Prefix**

• **Possessor vs. Thing Possessed**

* **First vs. Second vs. Third Person**

* **Singular vs. Plural**

• **E-Set vs. U-Set vs. I-Set vs. A-Set (Possessor Suffixes)**

* **Inclusive vs. Exclusive**

* **Human vs. Nonhuman**

* **Stressed vs. Unstressed Syllable**

- * **Full E vs. Weak E**
- **Obligatorily Possessed vs. Optionally Possessed vs. Unpossessible (Nouns)**
- **Subject Noun Phrase vs. Object Noun Phrase**
- **“True” Possession vs. Characterization (or Description)**

The following individual terms are also important in our understanding of how Palauan noun possession works. Terms that have been introduced earlier are marked with an asterisk (*). Be sure you know how they apply to our discussion of noun possession in Lesson 3:

- * **Internal Structure**
- **Possession (in general)**
- **Noun Stem**
- **Possessor Suffix**
- * **Meaning-Bearing Unit (Morpheme)**
- **Possessed Forms of a Noun**
- **Gender**
- * **Homonym**
- **Vowel and Vowel Cluster Weakening**
- **Vowel Deletion**
- * **Syllabic Consonant**
- * **Consonant Cluster**
- **Noun Phrase (in general)**
- **Noun Phrase of Possession**
- **Complex Noun Phrase of Possession**
- * **Relational Phrase**
- **Possessor Phrase**
- * **Conjunction *El***
- **Category Noun**
- **Appositional Phrase**

3.13. NOUN POSSESSION: STUDY QUESTIONS

1. For each pair or group of contrasting terms given in the first list of 3.12, write a pair or group of contrasting definitions that clearly and accurately highlights how the particular terms differ from each other. Then, provide some clear examples that will illustrate the contrasting terms.

Note: If the terms have already been introduced in Lesson 1 or Lesson 2 (i.e., those marked with an asterisk [*]), make sure that your definitions and examples apply to the topic of *noun possession* studied here in Lesson 3.

Model Answer: *Suffix vs. Prefix

Definition: A *prefix* is a meaning-bearing unit (morpheme) attached to the beginning of a word (before a noun stem or a verb stem), while a *suffix* is a morpheme attached at the end of a word (after a noun stem or a verb stem). The Palauan system of *noun possession* uses a set of seven *possessor suffixes* that are attached to noun stems and indicate the possessor.

Examples: To the noun stem *chim* ‘hand’ we add the various *possessor suffixes* *-ak*, *-am*, *-al*, etc., to derive the *possessed forms* *chimak* ‘my hand’, *chimam* ‘your hand’, *chimal* ‘his hand’, etc. An example of a Palauan prefix would be the *plural prefix* *re-* attached to human nouns (*ngalek* ‘child’—*rengalek* ‘children’), etc.

2. For each of the individual terms given in the second list of 3.12, write a correct and full definition. Illustrate with an example where appropriate. For terms marked with an asterisk (*), be sure that you explain why the term is relevant to the topic of *noun possession* presented in this lesson. Separate your *Definition* and *Example* as in the model answer to Study Question 1 above.
3. What is the internal structure of the possessed forms of Palauan nouns? How many morphemes do such forms usually contain?
4. What different kinds of relationships can be expressed between the “possessor” and the “possessed” in Palauan? For example, in the possessed noun *bilek* ‘my clothes’, a person (the speaker = “I”) is the actual (“true”) possessor of a real object (the clothes). Now, for each of the examples below, describe the relationship between the “possessor” and the “possessed” in as much detail as possible:

ochik ‘my foot’

chisek ‘news about me’

soak ‘what I like’

kirek ‘my obligation’

tekingek ‘my voice’

mlik ‘my canoe’

demak ‘my father’

belkuk ‘my function’

ullek ‘behind me’

sechelik ‘my friend’

5. What are the various distinctions made among the seven possessor suffixes (and their corresponding pronouns) in Palauan? What are the similarities and differences between the English and Palauan pronoun systems?
6. Why is the distinction between *human* and *nonhuman* essential in giving a proper description of Palauan possessor suffixes?
7. Is it possible to predict whether a given noun stem will take a possessor suffix from the E-Set, U-Set, I-Set, or A-Set? Explain and illustrate your answer clearly.
8. How do the *principles of vowel weakening* operate to explain the change in a noun-stem vowel from *ngor* ‘mouth’ to *ngere*l or from *bar* ‘blanket’ to *beru*l?
9. In what situations does *vowel deletion* tend to occur? Give some examples. How can we explain vowel deletion as a type of vowel weakening?
10. What kinds of weakening or reduction processes do Palauan *double vowels* or *vowel clusters* undergo? For each type, present several clear examples.
11. What do we mean by “irregular” forms of something? Give some good examples.
12. What would you say to a foreigner learning Palauan who asks you if he or she could predict what will happen to vowels (whether single, double, or clusters) in the possessed forms of a noun?
13. What possible forms can the internal structure of a *noun phrase of possession* take? Give specific examples.
14. Given the new information added in this lesson, describe the distribution of Palauan *noun (phrases)* as fully as possible. Write a list containing all the positions where noun (phrases) can occur, with an example for each.
15. Why is it useful to classify nouns into the three contrasting categories of *unpossessible* vs. *optionally possessed* vs. *obligatorily possessed*?
16. Do Palauan noun phrases of possession always indicate the idea of “pure” possession—i.e., actual possession or ownership of something by somebody (e.g., *mlil a Droteo* ‘Droteo’s car’)? What kinds of relationship or connection can be found between Noun #2 (the “possessor”) and Noun #1 (the “possessed”) in such phrases?
17. Why is the term *noun phrase* now introduced into our study of Palauan grammar? What are the possible forms that Palauan noun phrases can take?

18. What are the three main groups that Palauan unpossessible nouns fall into? Give examples of each.
19. What kind of a grammatical structure do we use in Palauan to express possession if in fact Noun #1 is an unpossessible noun?
20. What are the similarities and differences between *possessor phrases* and the other types of Palauan *relational phrases*?
21. What kinds of ideas are simultaneously expressed when we use a Palauan **complex noun phrase of possession**? Take two examples and explain each one fully (useful approaches are given in 46 to 48 of 3.8.1).
22. What are the structural and meaning characteristics of Palauan *appositional phrases*? Take two examples and explain each one clearly and fully.

3.14. NOUN POSSESSION: EXERCISES

1. Determine the possessed forms (if any) for each of the noun stems below. Then identify each noun stem according to the five classifications given:

- (1) unpossessible
- (2) E-Set of possessor suffixes
- (3) U-Set of possessor suffixes
- (4) I-Set of possessor suffixes
- (5) A-Set of possessor suffixes

bung	ched	Beliliou	chedeng
dolech	bosech	stoang	iis
mubi	chusem	bad	kangkodang
Babeldaob	benzio	deroech	ker
katur	bukitang	chut	deromukang
dongu	ding	chedil	kuoku
ngul	malk	ngimes	rechorech

2. All of the following words (some are nouns, and some are verbs) contain two or more meaning-bearing units (morphemes). Break down each word into its morphemes (using hyphens between the parts) and explain as much as you can about each form.

Example: *rengelekek* → re-ngelek-ek

- (1) *re-* plural prefix
- (2) *-ngelek-* noun stem (from *ngalek*)
- (3) *-ek* possessor suffix (1st pers. sg.)

klechelid	kausechelei
resechelim	oudengua
remeteet	klemengetel
chillebedak	klaumekemad
rengud	omerael

3. Here is a list of nouns given in their third person singular possessed forms. Decide whether the corresponding noun stem is optionally possessed or obligatorily possessed. If it is of the optionally possessed type, provide the independently occurring noun stem.

chelechedal	berngel	kedngel
berdel	bdelul	bekellel
belechel	kekul	bekesel
chelmengel	kloklel	kelebsengel
bedengel	belengel	bul
duchel	desechel	dekedekel
rongel	sesengel	rekel

4. Here are some Palauan noun stems paired with their third person singular possessed forms. Examine each pair carefully and indicate what kind of weakening has taken place:

- (1) no vowel weakening
- (2) single full vowel reduced to **weak e**
- (3) single full vowel deleted entirely
- (4) double vowel shortened
- (5) vowel cluster reduced by loss of one vowel

uulk—ulkel	chubs—chebsel
taut—tutel	kadikm—kadekmel
chur—chural	kabs—kebsel
tuich—tichel	rasech—rsechel
Ichades—chedesel	kob—kebengel
ngakl—ngklel	tinget—tngetel
chikl—chiklel	llach—llechul
llomes—llemesel	iikr—ikrel
miich—michel	ieleb—elebel
tech—techel	reng—rengul
kaeb—kebel	sikt—sektel
dui—diul	dauch—duchel

5. Quite a few Palauan noun stems are irregular in the sense that they show some unusual patterns of vowel or vowel cluster weakening. In some cases we even observe the loss or replacement of *consonants*, or the deletion of entire *syllables*. For each of the irregular noun stems below, give the third person singular possessed form and explain as accurately as you can how the original noun stem has been affected in deriving the possessed form.

Example: *klengit* 'sin'—possessed form *knngtil*
(see *Note 8* in 3.3.5 for an explanation)

klalo 'thing'	bobai 'papaya'
chelid 'god'	lild 'thin bamboo'
iaes 'fly'	ilumel 'drink'
chedil 'mother'	ongraol 'starchy food'
dereeder 'power, authority'	chemachel 'betel nut for chewing'
soaes 'main struts of canoe'	siik 'search (for something lost)'

6. Write out the seven possessed forms, singular and plural, for the following noun stems:

tet 'handbag'	mad 'eye, face'	ker 'question'
oluches 'pencil'	char 'price'	

7. For each of the following third person singular possessed forms, make up a noun phrase of possession of the form:

Noun #1 (in possessed form) + **a** + **Noun #2**

Be sure to translate each noun phrase into good English.

Examples: *berdel:* berdel a ngor 'lip'
kekul: kekul a chim 'fingernail'

tkul	bedengel	rongel	chelsel
belkul	medal	rsel	debel
uchelel	berngel	ultutelel	ikrel
chisel	rengul	ngerel	dechil

8. In the sentences below you will find various kinds of relational phrases. Identify each relational phrase by underlining, and then indicate what type of relational phrase it is:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| (1) locational phrase | (4) temporal phrase |
| (2) directional phrase | (5) cause phrase |
| (3) source phrase | (6) possessor phrase |

- a. A sensei er kid a mlo er a Guam.
- b. Ak milsa a hong er a Siabal er a chesl a skidas.
- c. A chad er a Merikel a mle merur er a ngelekel.
- d. A resecholid el chad er a Huribing a mo merael er a klukuk.
- e. A ngelekek a tilobed er a skuul er tia el mlo merek el rak.

9. For each of the pairs of expressions given below, combine into a single complex noun phrase of possession. Give an accurate English translation for each complex noun phrase of possession.

Example: bail er a skuul + bilel a Maria =
bilel a Maria er a skuul 'Maria's school clothes'

- a. techall er a ureor + techellel a sensei
- b. mlai er a omilil + mlil a Yosko
- c. bail er a ureor + bilel a daiksang
- d. hong er a reksi + hong er a rengelekir
- e. dictionary er a tekoi er a Merikel + dictionary er a Droteo