

Palauan Language Report

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1 Introduction

Palauan is a member of the Austronesian language family spoken in Palau. It has no close relatives within the Austronesian family. Palauan has about 17,000 speakers of whom about 80% live in the Republic of Palau. There is little dialectal variation (Georgopoulos 1991:21). This report draws heavily on Josephs' (1975, 1997a, 1997b) Palauan grammar books. We are very grateful to him for his help and specialist advice.

2 Grammatical categories

2.1 The Palauan words *er*, *el*, and *a*

2.1.1 The analysis of *er*

Palauan has two words *er* (which are homonyms). *Er* can be a specifying word (indicated by SPEC in the glosses) or a relational word (indicated by REL in the glosses). The major function of the specifying word *er* is to distinguish specific objects from non-specific (general) ones. It marks a specific object noun phrase, but only when the verb is in the imperfective. For instance,

- (1a) *A ngelek -ek a medakt a derumk*
 PM child-1SG.POSS PM be.afraid PM thunder
 'My child is afraid of thunder.'

- (1b) *A ngelek -ek a medakt er a derumk*
 PM child-1SG.POSS PM be.afraid SPEC PM thunder
 'My child is afraid of the thunder.'

(Josephs 1997a:74)

As such, the presence of the specifying word *er* usually indicates a specific statement (as opposed to a general statement). In addition, *er* is sometimes used to distinguish between singular and plural with nonhuman object nouns, the presence of *er* marking the singular object as in the following example (Josephs 1997a:77):

- (2a) *Ak ousbech er a ml-im el mo*
 1SG need SPEC PM car-2SG.POSS LINK go
er a ocheraol
 SPEC PM money-raising.party
 'I need your car to go to the money-raising party.'

- (2b) *Ak ousbech a ml-im el mo*
 1.SG need PM car-2SG.POSS LINK go
er a ocheraol
 SPEC PM money-raising.party
 'I need your cars to go to the money-raising party.'

The relational word *er*, on the other hand, expresses certain types of relational phrases. Depending on the situation, a relation phrase may indicate the location of a state or action (source phrase), the direction in which some movement proceeds, the place from which something moves (directional phrase), the time of a state or action (temporal phrase), and even the cause of a particular state or action (cause phrase). (Josephs 1997a:64)

For instance,

- (3) *A John a mo er a stoang*
 PM John PM go REL PM store
 ‘John is going to the store.’

- (4) *Te merael er a klukuk*
 3PL leave REL PM tomorrow
 ‘They are leaving tomorrow.’
 (Josephs 1997a:64)

2.1.2 The analysis of *a*

The morpheme *a* is omnipresent in Palauan. It has no meaning, but its function is to ‘introduce’ phrases. (Josephs 1997a:74) It is glossed as PM – Phrase Marker.

- (5) *a re-secheli-m a mla mé-i*
 PM PL-friend-2SG.POSS PM Aux come
 ‘Your friends came.’
- (6) *a Droteo a me-ng-úiu er a hóng*
 PM Droteo PM VM-IM-read SPEC PM book
 ‘Droteo is reading the book’

*Note there is also a morpheme *a* which is used to introduce subordinate clauses in the irrealis.*

2.1.3 The analysis of *el*

The Palauan conjunction *el* (glossed as LINK in the examples) is used in a variety of constructions to join words or phrases to each other:

- a. *el* links a modifying word or phrase to a (modified) noun, e.g.

- (7) *tia el klalo*
 this.3SG LINK thing
 ‘This thing.’

- b. *el* occurs in various appositional constructions, e.g.

- (8) *cherm-ek el bilis*
 pet-1SG.POSS LINK dog
 ‘my pet dog.’

- (9) *John el sensei*
 John LINK teacher
 ‘John the teacher.’

c. *el* occurs in various complex constructions, e.g.

- (10) *A Satso a dirrek el sensei*
 PM Satso PM also LINK teacher
 ‘Satso is also a teacher.’

(Josephs 1997b:49)

2.2 Pronouns and Pronominal Affixes

The following table gives the forms of the emphatic and non-emphatic subject and object pronouns. The data is taken from Josephs (1975, 1997) and Lemaréchal (1993).

Person		Non-emphatic Subject Pronouns ¹	Non-emphatic Object Pronouns	Emphatic Pronouns
Sing	1 st	<i>ak</i>	<i>-ak</i>	<i>ngak</i>
	2 nd	<i>ke</i>	<i>-au</i>	<i>kau</i>
	3 rd human	<i>ng</i>	<i>-ii</i>	<i>ngii</i>
	non-human def	<i>ng</i>	<i>-ii</i>	<i>ngii</i>
	non-human indef	-	-	-
Plur	1 st incl	<i>kede</i>	<i>-id</i>	<i>k id</i>
	1 st excl	<i>aki</i>	<i>-emam</i>	<i>kemam</i>
	2 nd	<i>kom</i>	<i>-emiu</i>	<i>kemiu</i>
	3 rd human	<i>te</i>	<i>-terir</i>	<i>tir</i>
	non-human def	<i>ng</i>	<i>-ø</i>	<i>ngii</i>
	non-human indef	-	-	-

Palauan distinguishes emphatic and non-emphatic pronouns in subject and object position. Emphatic pronouns are generally used for contrast in subject position. They are used to introduce new information, i.e. to represent the main focus of attention in the sentence (Josephs 1997a:141). The emphatic pronouns behave similarly to independent nouns. They occur as object of the relational word *er*, as a conjunct, as the theme of a predicate NP and in topic position. (Georgopoulos 1991:54). In object position, emphatic pronouns do not seem to have the implication of contrastive emphasis as they do in subject position.

Non-emphatic pronouns are used in subject position in order to refer to old information, i.e. information that does not represent the main focus of interest or attention in the sentence. Note the similarity between the non-emphatic object forms and the emphatic pronouns. Note also that in the third person there is a distinction between human and non-human and definite and non-definite.

There is another set of pronouns in Palauan, which are called irrealis pronouns (Georgopoulos 1991, Josephs 1975) or prefix pronouns (Josephs 1997a). The forms are given in the table below:

¹ Some linguists have argued that emphatic pronouns are truly independent words, whereas non-emphatic subject pronouns are actually prefixes. In Palauan orthography non-emphatic subject pronouns are spelled separately. (Josephs 1975)

Person		Irrealis Pronouns
Sing	1 st	<i>ku-, ke-, k-</i>
	2 nd	<i>chomo, mo -, chomu, mu -, cho -, chome, -, m-</i>
	3 rd	<i>lo-, lu -, le-, l-</i>
Plur	1 st incl	<i>do-, du-, de,-</i>
	1 st excl	<i>kimo-, kimu-, ki-</i>
	2 nd	<i>chomo, mo -, chomu, mu -, cho -, chome, -, m-</i>
	3 rd	<i>lo-, lu -, le-, l-</i>

Note that these pronouns do not distinguish number for 2nd and 3rd person, and only non-emphatic forms occur. They are used in the irrealis mood (see Section 2.3). They can be attached to verb forms, nouns, emphatic pronouns and in complex verb phrases, they occur on each element.

2.3 Verbs

Tense, aspect, and mood are reflected by means of contrastive inflectional morphology in Palauan. The order of morphemes in the verbal complex is AGR-TNS-ASP-STEM. (Campana 2000:7).

- **Tense: Present, Past, Future** (Josephs 1975:123-131)

Palauan verbs distinguish three tenses: present, past, and future.

The **present** tense does not have a verbal marker². It is the unmarked form.

The **past** tense is formed by prefixing the verb or by using an auxiliary word depending on whether the verb is an action verb or a state verb.

Action verbs which begin with the verbal marker prefix *me-* or *m-*, have the past tense derived by infixing the past tense marker *il* or *l* after the *m* of the verb marker.

Action verbs with the verbal prefix marker *o-* derive the past tense by replacing the initial *o-* with *ul-* or *ule*. By contrast the past tense of state verbs is derived with the auxiliary word *mle* ‘was, were’, which is placed before the state verb.

The **future** tense is formed by *mo* + verb

- **Aspect: Perfective and Imperfective** (Georgopoulos 1991:24; Campana 2000:4; Josephs 1975:136-141; 1997a:158)

Palauan distinguishes **transitive** and **intransitive** verbs.

Intransitive verbs almost always seem to be interpreted as imperfective, whereas transitive verbs distinguish perfective and imperfective verb forms. The perfective verb forms designate a totally completed (or “perfected”) action, imperfective verb forms do not indicate completion but rather focus on the action as it is (or was) in progress.

Imperfective verb forms consist of:

² Most often, the verb marker (VM) appears as a consonantal prefix *m-*, but by a complex set of operations it can change to *o-*. The VM does not always appear as a prefix. In certain environments, it occurs just inside the stem, to the right of the initial consonant.

verb marker (VM) + imperfective marker *-l, ng, m-* (IM) + verb stem (initial consonant is deleted).

Perfective verb forms consist of:

verb marker (VM) + verb stem + “object pronoun”

• **Mood: Realis and Irrealis** (Georgopoulos 1991:26)

Palauan verbs distinguish two moods: **realis** and **irrealis** (‘hypothetical’ in Josephs (1975)). The distinction between realis and irrealis mood is signalled by the use of a separate set of pronouns.

Irrealis mood is characterised by the absence of the verb marker and has the following structure: irrealis pronoun + verb stem. In the imperfective, an imperfective marker occurs in between the irrealis pronoun and the verb stem (Josephs 1975:152).

The irrealis is used for negation, conditional (if-clause) statements, imperatives, and adverbials. In addition, irrealis agreement marking is required whenever a non-subject is questioned, topicalised, relativized or clefted.

Negation (Josephs, 1975:362):

Negative sentences can be formed by using some form of the negative verb *diak* ‘isn’t, doesn’t exist’. The verb or noun directly following the negative verb *diak* must be prefixed with an irrealis pronoun which **agrees in person and number** with the subject.

(11a) *A Toki a me- ng -uiu er a hong*
 PM Toki PM VM-IM-read SPEC PM book
 ‘Toki is reading the book’

(11b) *A Toki a diak lo-ng -uiu er a hong*
 PM Toki PM Neg IR.3SG-IM-read SPEC PM book
 ‘Toki isn’t reading the book’

(12a) *A Droteo a sensei*
 PM Droteo PM teacher
 ‘Droteo is a teacher’

(12b) *A Droteo a diak l-sensei*
 A Droteo PM Neg IR.3SG-teacher
 ‘Droteo isn’t a teacher’

(Josephs 1975:362)

(13) *ng-diak ku-ng -uiu er a hong*
 R.3SG-Neg IR.1SG-IM-read SPEC PM book
 ‘I am not reading the book.’

(Georgopoulos 1991:27)

In certain syntactic contexts, a realis verb carries no subject agreement (Georgopoulos 1991:28), whereas subject agreement is always marked on an irrealis verb. As a result any of four forms is possible in a transitive sentence: the perfective or imperfective realis form, possibly lacking subject agreement, or the perfective or imperfective

irrealis form, on which subject agreement is always marked. For example, for the abstract root 'uiu 'read', the following (first person) forms are derived.

- (14a) (ak) menguiu 'I'm reading' (realis)
 (ak) me- ng- 'uiu
 R.1SG VM -IM- read
- (14b) kunguiu 'I'm reading' (irrealis)
 ku- ng- 'uiu
 IR.1SG-IM -read
- (14c) (ak) 'iuii '(I) read' (realis)
 (ak) 'uiu + o -ii
 R.1SG read+VM-3.SG
- (14d) ku 'iuii 'I read' (irrealis)
 ku- 'uiu- ii
 IR.1SG -read-3.SG

2.4 Nouns

There are simple and complex nouns. Simple nouns consist of a single morpheme, whereas complex nouns are derived by adding certain types of affixes to verb stems or to other nouns. The plural of nouns with a human referent is formed by adding the prefix *re* to the noun. All other nouns (animals and things) do not have an explicit plural form.

2.5 Possession Nouns

To express possession, Palauan adds a possessor suffix to a noun stem. For instance,

- (15) *chim-ak*
 hand-1SG.POSS
 'my hand.'

Four sets of possessor suffixes are distinguished, which are given below:

Person		e set	u set	i set	a set
Sing	1 st	-úk	-ík	-ák	-ek
	2 nd	-úm	-ím	-ám	-em
	3 rd human	-úl	-íl	-ál	-el
	non-human def	-úl	-íl	-ál	-el
	non-human indef	-úl	-íl	-ál	-el
Plur	1 st incl	-úd	-íd	-ád	-ed
	1 st excl	-mám	-emám	-emám	-am
	2 nd	-míu	-emíu	-emíu	-íu
	3 rd human	-rír	-erír	-rír	-ir
	non-human def	-úl	-íl	-ál	-el
	non-human indef	-úl	-íl	-ál	-el

In third person (singular or human plural) possessed forms, a noun is used to identify the actual possessor. Two structures are possible. The head registers agreement with

its specifier (16a) or else the ‘possessor’ surfaces as the object of the preposition *er* (16b).

(16a) *a* *‘im-al* *a* *Dan*
 PM hand-3SG.POSS PM Dan
 ‘Dan’s hand’

(16b) *a* *buk* *er* *a* *‘ekabil*
 PM book REL PM girl
 ‘The girl’s book’

(Georgopoulos 1991:31)

2.6 Demonstratives (Josephs 1975:461-481)

The following tables illustrate the forms of the demonstrative. The form used depends on a) whether the referent is a person, animal, or thing, b) whether the referent is singular or plural, and c) the relative distance of the referent from the speaker and the hearer.

‘this, these’ – near speaker and hearer

referring to	singular	plural
humans	<i>ng(i)ka</i>	<i>tirka</i>
animals		<i>aika</i>
things	<i>tia</i>	

‘that, those’ – nearer speaker but far from hearer

referring to	singular	plural
humans	<i>ngilecha</i>	<i>tirilecha</i>
animals		<i>ailēcha</i>
things	<i>tilecha</i>	

‘that (over there), those (over there)’ – far from speaker and hearer

referring to	singular	plural
humans	<i>ng(i)ke</i>	<i>tirke</i>
animals		<i>aike</i>
things	<i>se</i>	

Example sentences are:

- (17) *tia* *el* *hong*
 this.SG LINK book
 ‘this book.’
- se* *el* *kerrekar*
 that.SG LINK tree
 ‘that tree.’
- aika* *el* *kahol*
 this.PL LINK box
 ‘these boxes’
- aika* *el* *charm*
 this.PL LINK animal
 ‘these animals’
- ng(i)ke* *el* *ngalek*
 that.SG LINK child.SG
 ‘that child (over there)’
- tirelecha* *el* *sensei*
 that.PL LINK teacher
 ‘those teachers’

The distinction of forms gives a picture like that of a gender system (human – animate – inanimate). However, it is very restricted in the targets involved, since it is found on the demonstratives (and numerals). We treat these as “overdifferentiated targets” (Corbett 1991:168-170) and note them here, but do not include gender as a feature for Palauan in the database.

3 Clauses

3.1 Main Clauses

A descriptive clause can have the following two structures (Lemaréchal, 1991):

- 1) PrefSubj + $\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{nominal syntagma} \\ \text{verbal syntagma} \\ \text{numeral} \end{array} \right] \left[\begin{array}{l} (+ \text{ syntagma which is coreferential with PrefSubj}) \\ \text{Demonstrative} \\ \text{a + noun/verb} \end{array} \right] + \text{Compl}$

e.g. *ng mla mei* (a Droteo)
 3SG AUX VERB
 ‘He came’

A coreferential element is generally used with 3rd person prefix subjects, which by nature are underspecified.

In sentences with postverbal subjects, the non-emphatic pronoun in preverbal position must match or agree with the full subject NP that occurs postverbally. (Josephs 1997a:148)

- 2) Subject Syntagma Predicat e Syntagma + Compl
 a+noun/verb a+noun/verb
 demonstrative demonstrative
 independent pronoun independent pronoun
- e.g. a Droteo a mla mei
 PM NP PM AUX VERB
 ‘Droteo came’

Josephs assumes that the second structure is the basic structure, whereas Lemaréchal and Georgopoulos take the first as the basic structure. The two structures can be derived from each other either by preposing or postposing the subject. Georgopoulos (1991:72) says the following about topicalisation.

If the topicalised element is a subject, an NP specifier or the complement of a perfective verb, a resumptive pronoun may not appear.

- (18) *a sensei_i [a o-m-es er a re-ngalek ____i (*ngii_i)]*
 PM teacher PM R.3SG-IM-see REL PM PL-child she
 ‘The teacher is looking at the children.’
- (19) *a Naomi_i [a le-‘ilit-ii [a ‘ole’es-el ____i*
 PM Naomi PM IR.3SG-Pf.throw-3SG PM pencil-3SG
 (*ngii_i) *a John]*
 her PM John
 ‘John threw away Naomi’s pencil.’
- (20) *a blai [a le-silseb-ii ______i (*ngii_i) a se’el-ik]*
 PM house PM IR.3SG-Pf.burn-3SG it PM friend-1SG
 ‘My friend burned down the house.’

If the topicalised element is the object of an imperfective verb (21) or an NP specifier (22), a resumptive pronoun occurs.

- (21) *a re-ngalek_i [a l-omes er tir_i a sensei]*
 PM PL-child PM IR.3SG-IM-see REL_{them} PM teacher
 'The teacher is looking at the children.'
- (22) *a 'ekabil_i [a k-'il-iu-ii [a buk er ngii_i]]*
 PM girl PM IR.1SG-Pf-read-3SG PM book REL her
 'I read the girl's book.'

Pronouns can be topicalised as well.

- (23) *ngak a le-bilsk-ak _____ i a buk a Harry*
 1SG PM IR.3SG-gave-1SG PM book PM Harry
 'Harry gave me the book.'

3.2 Relative clause

A relative clause contains no relative pronoun; it immediately follows the head and is introduced by *el*.

- (24) *A redil [el silseb-ii a blai]*
 PM woman LINK burn-3SG PM house
a mlo er a kelebus
 PM go.PAST REL PM jail
 ‘The woman who burned down the house went to jail.’
 (Josephs 1997b:271)

3.3 Object clauses (Josephs 1975:Chapter 16)

In sentences with two objects, the first object will be expressed by an object suffix if a the object is definite and a perfective form is used.

- (25) *Akngilsu-terir a re-sechelik el mengetmokl er a blai*
 1SG help-3PL PM PL-friend LINK clean SPEC PM house
 ‘I helped my friends clean the house’

- (26) *A sensei a ulderch-ak el mo er a Guam*
 PM teacher PM tell-1SG LINK go REL PM Guam
 ‘The teacher told me to go to Guam’

Double object constructions

Double object constructions occur with the verb ‘give’. In such constructions, only the goal triggers object agreement in the perfective, never the theme.

- (27) *Ak-mils-terir a buk*
 1SG-gave-3PL PM book
 ‘I gave them a/the book.’
 (Georgopoulos 1991:168)

Here the theme which does not trigger object agreement, is not restricted to the semantic features usually associated with an unmarked object. Instead it can be interpreted as definite or non-definite.

In imperfective constructions, the second object is treated just like the first object; if it is human and/or specific and singular, it is marked with a preposition.

5 Question Phrases

Chung and Georgopoulos (1988) analyse question phrases in Palauan as instances of wh-agreement, a special extraction agreement phenomenon, i.e. a constituent question agrees in grammatical function with the gap controlled by the displaced interrogative phrase. Thus a verb agrees with the grammatical relation of the wh-element that has moved (or binds a variable) across it.

Palauan grammar distinguishes extraction of subjects from extraction of non-subjects via a distinction of morphological mood. The verb is realis when the controller is Nominative and irrealis otherwise.

- (28a) *ng-te’a_i [a kileld-ii a sub -----]*
 3SG-who PM R.Pf.heat-3SG PM soup
 ‘Who heated up the soup?’

- (28b) *ng-ngera_i [a le-silseb-ii -----_i a se'el-il]*
 3SG-what PM IR.3SG-Pf.burn-3SG PM friend-3SG
 'What did his friend burn?'

"In Palauan, a left-dislocated WH-phrase is in cleft position, and is prefixed with the cleft marker *ng-*. In the (a) example, the WH-phrase is a subject, and in the (d) phrase it is a nonsubject (when the WH-phrase c-commanding the verb is a subject, the verb never lacks the subject agreement prefix).

The subject gap in the (a) example is properly governed by its antecedent, and the object gap in the VP in the (d) example is properly governed by object agreement." (Georgopoulos 1985:67)

Donohue and Maclachlan (1999:121) argue that Wh-agreement in Chamorro is not a special extraction agreement phenomenon, but that it's merely the appearance of voice morphology used to make an argument into a subject before it is extracted, which is a universal extraction strategy in Philippine-type languages. A similar analysis might be applicable to Palauan, although they do not mention this in their paper.

6 Subject and Object marking

Subject Marking

Subject marking is independent of aspect and tense, but is dependent on mood according to Georgopoulos (1991). Realis verbs can sometimes lack subject marking whereas irrealis verbs always mark the subject (as we saw in section 2.3).

- (29) *ak-mo er a katsudo*
 R.1SG-go REL PM movies
 'I'm going to the movies'
- (30) *ng-kiltekl-ii a ulaol a Peter*
 R.3SG-clean-3SG PM floor PM Peter
 'Peter cleaned the floor'
- (31) *Ngii a l-ileches-ii a babier*
 3SG PM IR.3SG-Pf.write-3SG PM letter
 'He wrote the letter.'
 (McManus 1977)

Note that the subject marker can co-occur with lexical NPs, but not with independent pronouns.

- (32) *ak-remurt (*ngak)*
 R.1SG-run 1SG
 'I am running'
- (33) *te-remurt a reme'as*
 R.3PL-run PM women
 'The women are running'

Note also that equational sentences do not have a copular verb in the present tense. (Josephs 1997a:62,63)

- (34) *ngak a sensei*
 1SG PM teacher
 ‘Me, I’m a teacher’

- (35) *ngak a mo er a stoa-ng*
 1SG PM go REL PM shop
 ‘Me, I’m going to the shop.’
 (Lemaréchal, 1991:65)

Object Marking

Object marking is independent of mood and tense, but dependent on aspect. Only perfective verbs show object marking on the verb when the object is human (singular, plural, definite, indefinite) or singular, definite, non-human.

There are some perfective verbs, like *nguu* ‘take’, *loia* ‘put’, and *muut* ‘pile up’ which have no overt object agreement forms for third person singular, but allow null objects. (Georgopoulos, 1991:46) For example,

- (36a) *te-’illebed-ii a bilis a re-ngalek*
 R.3PL-Pf.hit-3SG PM dog PM PL-child
 ‘The kids hit the dog.’
- (36b) *te-’illebed a bilis a re-ngalek*
 R.3PL-Pf.hit PM dog PM PL-child
 ‘The kids hit a dog/the dogs/some dog(s).’
 (Georgopoulos 1991:30)

Summarising:

The SM is always present in the irrealis, whereas it is sometimes, but not always present in the realis. A doubling subject NP may occur with the SM. A pronominal subject cannot cooccur with the SM. The OM works the same as the SM, full nominals can cooccur with the OM, whereas pronominal objects cannot. The OM occurs in perfective clauses when the object is human or singular, definite, non-human.

In case of **topicalisation**, objects, pronouns as well as lexical NPs, can cooccur with resumptive pronouns. See Georgopoulos (1991:72). This is never the case with subjects.

Different analyses have been proposed for the markers on the verb. Georgopoulos (1991:51-59) forwards two hypotheses with regard to the marker: an inflectional hypothesis and a clitic hypothesis.

Inflectional hypothesis

“According to this hypothesis, [...] the pronouns found on nouns and verbs in surface structure are affixes; they are part of the word at the point of lexical insertion [...]. At D-structure, the phrase structure tree contains not only these fully formed inflected words, but also NP nodes which do not contain any lexical material at all. These NPs are specified for grammatical features such as person and number, but have no phonological matrix. They are analysed as *pro*, a null pronominal argument. The person and number features of *pro* match these features of the agreeing head (N or V). Finally, any structure in which *pro* is governed by *er* will be eliminated (that is, P is not among the licensing heads for *pro*).” (Georgopoulos 1991:52)

Clitic hypothesis

“According to this hypothesis, Palauan has no null pronouns in governed positions. Pronominal subjects, direct objects, and NP specifiers are all overt, and are inserted under NP nodes in the base. They cooccur with N or V heads which are uninflected in the syntax, but are phonologically joined to those heads in the PF component. In the case of pronouns governed by ‘*er*’, this cliticisation exceptionally does not take place, perhaps because ‘*er*’ is not a suitable host for a clitic, or because ‘*er*’ selects pronoun forms that do not cliticize.” (Georgopoulos 1991:52)

Georgopoulos assumes that the markers on the verb represent agreement forms and have no independent syntactic status as NPs at any level of representation. She analyses Palauan as a pro-drop language on the basis of the following arguments.

1. The cooccurrence of the affix with a full (non-prepositional) NP suggests that the affix is a form of inflection rather than an argument. This is valid for both the SM and the OM.

(37) *‘ole’es-el a Marta*
 pencil-3SG PM Martha
 ‘Martha’s pencil’

⇒ **possessor agreement with a full NP possessor.**

(38a) *ak-mil’er-ar*³
 1SG-Pf.bought-3SG
 ‘I bought it’

(38b) *ak-mil’er-ar a mlai*
 1SG-Pf.bought-3SG PM car
 ‘I bought the car’

⇒ **direct object agreement with an overt object NP**

(39) *ng-mil’er-ar a mlai a Kasta*
 3SG-Pf.bought-3SG PM car PM Costa
 ‘Costa bought the car’

⇒ **subject agreement with an overt subject NP**

- 2 Full subject pronouns have a regular distribution, full object pronouns show some irregularities. Independent pronouns occur as object of the preposition, as a

³ The object pronoun suffix normally has the form *-ii*, but less frequently it can be vowel+r (e.g. *-ir*, *-ur*, etc.) (Josephs 1975:215).

conjunct, as the theme of a predicate NP, and in topic position. (Georgopoulos 1991:54)

1. SM can also occur on certain ‘adverbs’ which would favour the clitic analysis. However, these adverbs can also be analysed as modal verbs.
2. The SM may appear on both auxiliary and verb. This suggests that we are dealing with agreement.

(40) *a mubi el k-bo ku-mes er ngii a mubi*
 PM movie LINK IR.1SG-Fut IR.1SG-see SPEC it PM movie
er a Dois
 REL PM German
 ‘The movie that I’m going to see is a German movie.’
 (Georgopoulos 1991:56)

“This doubling of pronouns suggests that the subject pronoun is a set of features that in some cases gets written onto both the auxiliary and the verb. Although these facts are awkward from the point of view of the inflection hypothesis, they constitute an even greater difficulty for the clitic hypothesis. A morphological rule which realizes person and number features on two separate words is complicated, but a syntactically independent pronoun ought to be incapable of appearing on two separate hosts. This intimate association of subject person and number marking with mood marking, furthermore, argues quite strongly that the former is an inflectional feature, i.e. ‘real’ agreement.” (Georgopoulos 1991:56)

She backs her claims up by using Zwicky and Pullum’s (1982) test for distinguishing between affixes and clitics.

A. Selectivity

Affixes are very selective of their hosts, while clitics are relatively indifferent in this regard.

- ⇒ The SMs are relatively flexible wrt host. They can occur on verb, auxiliary, adverb, and noun. The clitic hypothesis could be maintained for the SM.
- ⇒ OMs are more selective. They appear only on a subclass of regular, perfective transitive verbs whose object is definite. This suggests they are affixal.
- ⇒ Genitive markers are selective too. They do not attach to nouns that form their possessive with the preposition *er*. This argues against the clitic theory.

B. Irregularities

Inflectional systems are known to be prone to irregularity, while clitics, being syntactically independent, are not expected to participate in such irregularities.

- ⇒ Palauan shows irregularities in the forms of the OMs and the OMs are therefore inflectional. That is, the regular object forms have morphology which is clearly related to the morphology of full pronouns, but in exceptional cases the pronoun contains a thematic vowel – a vowel which is not predictable phonologically – and ‘-r’ as the final segment.
- ⇒ Genitive morphemes are also irregular. One paradigm is given below:

	Singular	Plural	
		Ex cl	Incl
1	-ek	-am	-ed
2	-em		-iu
3	-el		-ir

C. Arbitrary Gaps

Lacking of pronoun in some verb forms. This suggests affixation rather than cliticisation.

⇒ Some perfective verb forms may have the appearance of lacking the third person singular object pronoun altogether. This suggests inflection.

Campana (2000) advances the hypothesis that Palauan is a pronominal argument language where a “clause-final subject is appositional – ‘doubling’, as it were, a pronominal (agreement) morpheme in specifier position.” (Campana 2000:2) He analyses Palauan in terms of the Minimalist Program and proposes a different analysis for lexical subjects in realis and irrealis mood. Realis has clitic pronouns, whereas irrealis has full NPs without additional case features. He claims “that the SPEC of AGR.s is to the left of AGR-bar in the realis mood, and that it is realized as a spell-out of agreement. As a consequence, the subject must be adjoined to this projection, instead of being subsumed by it. Irrealis agreement, on the other hand, is realized as an inflectional head, allowing the subject NP to appear in specifier position.” (Campana 2000:18)

With respect to object agreement occurring in the perfective aspect, Campana (2000:22) concludes that perfective aspect in Palauan is an inflectional head (rather than a clitic-pronoun), and in complementary distribution with the imperfective under AGR.o.

This analysis is backed up by Woolford (2000). Woolford (2000:220) summarises object marking in Palauan as follows:

a. **Perfective clauses**

The thematically highest object triggers object agreement if it is [+human] and/or [+specific,+singular]. Preposition insertion is not possible.

b. **Imperfective clauses**

Objects are marked with inserted prepositions if they are [+human] and/or [+specific,+singular]. Object agreement is not possible.

There are exclusion principles which prohibit NPs with certain features from object positions within the VP. In Palauan, there are two. One is based on specificity and one is based on humanness.

7 Agreement features

Person

Values = {1st incl, 1st excl, 2nd, 3rd}

Number

Values = {singular, plural}

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TEST RESULTS: What are these markers on the verb in Palauan?

Note that Palauan non-emphatic object pronouns are clearly attached to the verb, whereas this is not clear for the non-emphatic subject pronouns. The emphatic subject and object pronouns are both independent pronouns. In addition, there is a third set of pronouns (called irrealis pronouns or prefix pronouns), which are prefixed to the verb, and always present in certain conditions, i.e. negation, conditional (if-clause) statements, imperatives, and adverbials. In addition, irrealis agreement marking is required whenever a non-subject is questioned, topicalised, relativized or clefted.

I Case roles

Both subject and object can be marked on the verb in Perfective.

e.g. *ak-mil'er-ar*⁴

R.1SG-Pf.bought-3SG

'I bought it.'

ak-mil'er-ar

R.1SG-Pf.bought-3SG

'I bought the car.'

a mlai

PM car

The object is only marked in the perfective (not the imperfective) when the object is human or singular definite non-human. The subject can be absent as well.

Anderson (1982:131) states that most sentence types in Palauan lack subject agreement. Given these conflicting indicators, there is no prediction from this test.

⇒ OM/SM: No prediction.

II Referentiality

(applied to 3rd person object and subject markers)

The object marker is used for human objects and singular definite non-human objects in the perfective.

te-'illebed-ii

R.3PL-Pf.hit-3SG

'The kids hit the dog.'

a bilis a re-ngalek

PM dog PM PL-child

te-'illebed a bilis a re-ngalek

R.3PL-Pf.hit PM dog PM PL-child

'The kids hit a dog/the dogs/some dog(s).'

(Georgopoulos 1991:30)

⇒ This suggests the OM is a pronominal affix.

With regard to the subject marker, a third person non-emphatic pronoun in subject position can only be used appropriately if its referent is clear. (Josephs 1997a:135)

⁴ The object pronoun suffix normally has the form *-ii*, but less frequently it can be vowel + r (e.g. *-ir*, *-úr*, etc.) (Josephs 1975:215).

Ng oureor er a bangk
 R.3.SG work REL PM bank
 ‘He/she works at the bank.’

Note also the occurrence of non-emphatic *ng* in equational sentences, e.g. (Josephs 1997a: 139):

(Ng) ngak
 R.3SG R.1SG
 ‘(It’s) me.’

⇒ This points into the direction of the SM being a pronominal affix in the realis mood.

In the irrealis mood, the prefix pronoun is obligatory present.

A Toki a diak lo-ng -uiu er a hong
 PM Toki PM Neg IR.3SG-IM-read SPEC PM book
 ‘Toki isn’t reading the book’
 (Josephs 1975:362)

⇒ This points into the direction of the SM being an agreement marker in the irrealis mood.

III Descriptive Content

The object marker is used in perfective for human objects and singular definite non-human objects. (If only human, then this supports the pronominal affix analysis.)

⇒ OM: this very weakly supports the pronominal affix analysis.

The subject marker:

In the realis mood, third person pronouns make a distinction between definite and non-definite, and if the pronoun is definite between human and non-human in the plural. This indicates some descriptive content.

⇒ SM: No prediction in the realis.

In the irrealis mood no such distinction is made.

⇒ SM: This suggests the SM is an agreement marker in the irrealis.

IV Balance of Information

Affixes that occur on verbs mark person and number. Free pronouns mark the same features.

⇒ SM/OM: no prediction.

V Complementary distribution

Vi Multirepresentation

Subject: The SM is always present in the irrealis, whereas it is sometimes, but not always present in the realis.

A doubling subject NP may occur with the SM. A pronominal subject cannot cooccur with the SM – i.e. an emphatic pronoun cannot cooccur with a non-emphatic pronoun. However, a prefix pronoun (irrealis) can be attached to an emphatic pronoun.

⇒ For full nominals the test suggests that the marker is an agreement marker, while for pronouns the tests suggest it is a pronominal affix

Palauan is remarkably interesting in having this contrast. It is important to note that very different analyses have been proposed.

Georgopoulos (1991) analyses Palauan as a pro-drop language. her line of reasoning is that if the marker on the verb is not the argument when a full NP is present (why would it be the argument when no overt pronoun is present). For example (Georgopoulos 1991:49):

a 'ole'es-em 'your pencil'
pencil-2SG

b ak-mil'er-ar 'I bought it'
1SG-bought-3SG

c ak-mil'er-ar	a mlai	'I bought the car'
1SG-bought-3SG	PM	car

“The full NPs in such expressions are interpreted as selected arguments, implying the same status for pronominals. In the cases in (a,b,c), both full NPs and null arguments are related to agreement forms; that is, there is no complementarity between overt NPs and inflection. If there were, it would be reasonable to argue that the agreement forms are in fact the arguments in question. But since the agreement morpheme is not the argument when a full NP is present, there is no reason to expect it to be so elsewhere.” (Georgopoulos 1991:49)

Campana (2000) advances the hypothesis that Palauan is a pronominal argument language where a “clause-final subject is appositional – ‘doubling’, as it were, a pronominal (agreement) morpheme in specifier position.” (Campana 2000:2) He analyses Palauan in terms of the Minimalist Program and proposes a different analysis for lexical subjects in realis and irrealis mood. Realis has clitic pronouns, whereas irrealis has full NPs without additional case features. He claims “that the SPEC of AGR.s is to the left of AGR-bar in the realis mood, and that it is realized as a spell-out of agreement. As a consequence, the subject must be adjoined to this projection, instead of being subsumed

by it. Irrealis agreement, on the other hand, is realized as an inflectional head, allowing the subject NP to appear in specifier position.” (Campana 2000:18)

Object: Same as for the SM, full nominals can cooccur with the OM, whereas pronominal objects cannot. The OM only occurs in perfective clauses when the object is human or singular, definite, non-human. In the imperfective, human or singular, definite, non-human objects are marked by *er*, and there is no OM on the verb.

⇒ The pronoun test suggests that the OM is a pronominal affix. For full nominals the test suggests that the OM is an agreement marker.

Vii Multiple Targets

Subject: SM may appear on more than one element, e.g. on an auxiliary and a verb. (Georgopoulos 1991:56). There are only examples in irrealis. Campana (2000:20) also notes that the occurrence of the marker on multiple targets is only possible for irrealis agreement morphology and not for realis.

⇒ This suggest the SM prefix pronoun (irrealis) is an agreement marker.

No prediction for the non-emphatic pronouns.

Object: No examples were found with the OM.

⇒ OM: no prediction.

Viii Can the markers co-occur with questioned phrases?

Question phrases involve clefting in Palauan and so we cannot apply the tests. The data is as follows:

<i>ng-ngera_i</i>	<i>[a le-silseb-ii</i>	<i>-----i a se'el-il]</i>
R.3SG-what PM	IR.3SG-Pf.burn-3SG	PM friend-3SG
'What did his friend burn?'		
(Georgopoulos 1985:67)		

<i>Ng techa</i>	<i>a sensei</i>	<i>er</i>	<i>kau</i>
R.3SG what	PM teacher	SPEC	2SG
'Who is/are your teacher(s)?'			

<i>Ng</i>	<i>techa</i>	<i>a merredel-ed</i>
R.3SG	what	PM leader-1PL.INCL
'Who is our (incl) leader?'		

In these sentences we have got a double subject *ng ... sensei, ng ... merredeled*. Note these sentences are pronounced with normal intonation.

Ng *techa a* *li-leches-ii* *tia* *el* *babier*
 R.3SG what PM IR.3SG-Pf.write-3SG this.SG LINK letter
 ‘Who (sg or pl) wrote this letter?’

Lit. Who is the one who wrote this letter (the word person *chad* could be added to the added to the second part of the double subject.)
 (Josephs 1997b:214-215)

⇒ No prediction

Viv The Nature of Conditions

Subject: The presence or absence of subject marking depends on mood. Irrealis is used in conditionals, negatives, imperatives, and some temporally-dependent clauses.

Conditions: mood

⇒ SM: Morphological condition, this slightly suggests it is agreement.

Object: The OM occurs in perfective clauses when the object is human or singular, definite, non-human.

⇒ This suggests that the OM is a pronominal affix

VI Language-specific Heuristics

VI.i Intonation

Not enough information

VI.ii Idiomatic expressions

No information

VI.iii Quantifier scope

No information

CONCLUSION:

Verbal markers in Palauan are an interesting case with conflicting evidence. For the OM the case is clearer than for the SM. The majority of our tests suggest that the OM is a pronominal affix.

The status of the SM is unclear in the literature (Georgopoulos analyses the SM as agreement, Campana advances the hypothesis that Palauan is a pronominal argument language). Our tests suggest that the SM is a pronominal affix, but there are some hints of it being an agreement marker in the irrealis. On balance the pronominal affix analysis has greater justification and will be adopted in the database.