The semantic range of the Tinrin verb *fwi*, with reference to some related morphemes in Neku

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Abstract: This paper discusses the syntactic and semantic properties of the Tinrin verb *fwi*. This unique form can occur both as intransitive or transitive, as well as some rather peculiar stative and active uses. When used as intransitive, *fwi* indicates that something 'exists', and when the subject is 'possessed' and the nominal possessor is topicalised to the sentence-initial position (in (1), *mwâ* is the subject which is indicated by the preceding SM 'subject marker', and *toni* is the possessor. *nrî* is a pronominal anaphora to the topicalised possessor), *i.e.* in the construction of <u>A (possessor) it exists (subject) B (possessed) of him</u>, it indicates that A 'has' B.

(1)   *toni*   *nrâ*   *fwi*   *nrâ*   *mwâ*   *nrâ*   *nrî*
       Tony   3sg   exist   SM   house   of   3sg
       'Tony has a house.' (Unmarked stative verb normally indicates present tense.)

When used as transitive, *fwi* means 'to do, to make' or, 'to amount to' referring to a duration of time, a length, an amount, etc.

(2)   *nrâ*   *fwi*   *mwâ*   *nrâ*   *toni*
       3sg   make   house   SM   Tony
       'Tony made a hut. ' (Unmarked action verb normally indicates past tense.)

(3)   *nrâ*   *fwi*   *aurru*   *fwòtra*
       3sg   amount to   two   year
       'It is now two years; two years passed.' (lit. It amounts to two years.)

Neku, a neighboring language, has the verb *âmwî,* which means both 'do' and 'make' as does the Tinrin *fwi*. However, this verb cannot be used for the existential and predicative possession. *(tò) ui* is used instead for the existential and the possession, the latter being expressed in a possessor topic construction similar to Tinrin. Neku has also another verb *tòpè,* which can be a later development, and is used only for alienable possession. In this paper I will discuss and exemplify the full semantic range of the verb *fwi,* examining the semantic and syntactic correspondences between Tinrin and Neku structures, and indicate the likely path of semantic development it has followed to reach the existential and predicative possession meanings it now has.

1. Introduction[*]

Tinrin[1], a language of New Caledonia, has a verb *fwi* which can occur both as an intransitive or a transitive, covering an interesting semantic range of stative and active functions. These include:

Intransitive

➤ Existential, possessive, causal

Transitive

➤ Do, make, amount to

In this paper I will discuss and exemplify the full semantic range of this verb, and indicate the close links among these meanings, and the likely path of semantic development it follows from 'make' to reach the existential and predicative possession[2] meanings it now has.

In §2, I first outline Tinrin structures wtih the verb *fwi* in trying to explore its interesting semantic scope. §3 examines structures in Neku, its neighboring language, which express similar meanings but in different syntactic and morphological patterns. In §4, two types of Neku possessive constructions are looked at from syntactic and semantic points of view, and with additional examples from Japanese, which exhibits several possessive types including the use of *suru* 'do'; possessive and related morphemes are also examined cross-linguistically. Following this, in §5, I re-examine the nature of predicative possession in Tinrin and Neku, and formulate a definition of prototypical possession, which makes sense of the lability of Tinrin *fwi*.

2. Syntactic and semantic range of Tinrin *fwi*

As is summarized in Table 1, Tinrin *fwi* covers a wide semantic range, from active transitive to existential and possession. We will first examine the way it is used intransitively:

(1) nrâ[3]   fwi   nrâ   traiki   (ânrâha)
      3sg   exist   SM   dog   here
      'There are dog(s) (here).'

(2) nrâ   fwi   nrâ   mwâmwâ   (âroa)
      3sg   exist   SM   big_hut   over_there
      'There is a big hut (over there).'

Note that the unmarked word order in Tinrin is VOS. The verb (V) is preceded by a subject pronoun (the small *s* in the following formula) which normally agrees in person and number with the subject NP, which optionally follows the VP. The subject NP is always preceded by *nrâ* (subject marker SM). Therefore, Tinrin intransitive clauses have the structure:

[$_{vp}$ **s** (TA) (MOD) **V** (MOD)] (*nrâ* **NP**)[4]

Sentences (1) and (2) are existential: *fwi* indicates that something exists. This construction always takes the impersonal third person singular pronoun *nrâ* (the first element of both sentences) as its subject pronoun, regardless of the number of the subject NP. With this sentence type, locational adjuncts such as *âroa* in (2) are optional.

This structure can be expressed as follows:

(3) nrâ   fwi   nrâ   X (+ LOC)
     3sg   exist   SM   S (at ~)
     'There is X (at ~).'

To express non-existence, *trarrî* 'non.exist' is used as in (4); note that in such a construction the subject marker is usually dropped.

(4) nrâ   trarrî   suka
     3sg   non.exist   sugar
     'There is no sugar.'

Tinrin distinguishes existential from locational expressions by using different verbs. Note the following 'locational' sentence, in which the verb used is *truu*, not *fwi*, and the subject pronoun is in the plural form, *rri* :

(5) rri   truu   nrî-troo   nrâ   pù
     3pl   stay   ground   SM   flying_fox
     'The flying foxes are on the ground.'

Fwi and *truu* differ in that the subject of *truu* is an entity that is already presupposed, with the focus of the sentence being the whereabouts of the subject. In the existential sentence with *fwi,* even though it also can occur with some locative expression, the main

message of the sentence is the 'existence' or sometimes 'emergence' of the subject either at a certain place, or with no reference to a place. Thus, Tinrin sentences with *truu* must contain location words (making (6) ungrammatical). Furthermore, these location words immediately follow the verb in locational sentences as in (5), whereas in existentials like (1) and (2) they occur after the nominal subjects.

(6) * rri truu   nrâ   pù
      3pl stay   SM   flying_fox
      'Flying foxes are/stay.'

The subject of existential clauses such as (1) may be marked by a possessor, which owns the possessed entity encoded by the subject. Very often, nominal possessors are fronted[5] (Osumi:239) as in (7). The topicalised possessor leaves behind the cross-referenced possessive pronoun, such as *nrî* in (7) and *rò* in (8).[6]

(7)   toni   nrâ   fwi   nrâ   traiki   nrâ   nrî
      Tony   3sg   exist   SM   dog   of   3sg
      'Tony has a dog.' (lit. Tony, there is his dog.)

(8)   nro   nrâ   fwi   nrâ   rroto   nrâ   rò
      1sg   3sg   exist   SM   car   of   1sg
      'I have a car.' (lit. Me, there is my car.)

Possession can also be indicated in a non-verbal clause[7] as in (9), but its meaning is identificational, with the focus on the possessee:

(9)   (wara-ha)   kasi   nrâ   rò
      (one-PROX)   basket   of   1sg.POSS
      '(this one) is my basket.'

The existential expression *nrâ fwi nrâ X* has another more collocational usage. It indicates cause, introducing either an NP (10), or a subordinate clause preceded by the complementizer *mwâ* (11), or *wa drae rra* 'that thing (that)'(12).

(10) ri   see   fi   pwere numea   nrâ   fwi   nrâ   wie
     1pl.inc NEG   go   to   Noumea   3sg   exist   SM   rain
     'We did not go to Noumea because of rain.'[8]

(11) nrâ   drarrî nrâ   toni nrâ   fwi   nrâ   mwâ nrâ   vajù[9] nrâ   audrê-nrî
     3sg   cry   SM   Tony 3sg   exist SM   COMP 3sg   die   3sg   mother-3sg
     'Tony cried because his mother died.'

(12) nrâ   see   dù   bee   nyôrrô   ri   nrâ   fwi   nrâ
     3sg   NEG   suffice COMP   cook   1pl.inc 3sg   exist SM

     wa   drae   rra   nrâ   trarrî   arròò
     DET   thing DIST   3sg   lack   water
     'We cannot cook because there is no water.' (lit. It does not suffice us to cook, because of the thing that it lacks water.)

In addition to the uses above, *fwi* can be used as a transitive, meaning 'make' (13), and 'do'[10] (14, 15, 16). In (14) *wa peci mwâ* 'that paper' is the object of the verb *fwi*, while in (15) the object is not explicit.

(16) and (17) are alternative parsings of the same sentence, illustrating the labile nature of the verb *fwi*. In (16) *ne* is the object of *fwi* 'to do' topicalised and fronted from its normal position after the verb. The *ne* in (17), however, is the subject, which is also fronted from its normal post VP position. When the subject is fronted, it is no longer marked by SM *nrâ*. These meanings are normally understood from the context of the discourse, though not always.

(13) nrâ   fwi   saa   droro   mwâ   nrâ   toni
     3sg   make   one   big   hut   SM   Tony
     'Tony made (built) a big hut.'

(14) nrâ   mê   nrî   fwi   wa   peci   mwâ
     3sg   come   PURP   do   DET   notebook M.DIST
     'She came to write on that notebook.' (lit. She came to do that notebook.)

(15) nrâ   fwi   fi   parrù   ru   ârijù   trùjù
      3sg   do   go (duration)   also   at   down there   sea
      'He continues to do (it) down there on the coast.'

(16) ne   nrâ   fwi   (=nrâ fwi ne?)
      what   3sg   do
      'What did he do?'

(17) ne   nrâ   fwi   (=nrâ   fwi nrâ ne?)
      what   3sg   exist
      'What is there?'

An additional transitive sense of *fwi* is 'amount to,' referring to a duration of time (18), or a quantity (19), in a usage similar to French *ça fait deux ans* 'it has been two years (since)'. *aurru fwòtra* in (18) and anròi in (19) are the objects of *fwi*, as they follow the verb without being preceded by the subject marker *nrâ*.

(18) nrâ   fwi   aurru   fwòtra
      3sg   amount_to   two   year
      'It is now two years. / two years passed.' (lit. It amounts to two years.)

(19) nrâ   fwi   wai   anròi
      3sg   amount_to   already   how_many
      'How many did it already amount to? / How many did it already make? / How many are there already?'

3. *tò, ui, âmwî,* and *tòpè* in Neku

We now turn to the expression of existential, locational and possessive meanings in Neku, as well as the relevant expressions for 'do' and 'make'.

Sentences (20) and (21) are existential. The verb *ui*, like *fwi* in Tinrin, always takes the impersonal third singular subject pronoun, even when the postposed nominal subject is marked plural as in (20).[11] *tò* 'be, stay' is optionally inserted with no apparent change of meaning:

(20) è   (tò)   ui   kaniâ   ?ò
    3sg   be   exist   many   man
    'There are many men.'

(21) è   (tò)   ui   ra   ne?ò
    3sg   be   exist   one   forest
    'There is a forest.'

To indicate non-existence, *pò* 'non.exist' is used.

(22) è   pò   jika
    3sg   non_exist   cigarette
    'There is no cigarette.'

Locational sentences make use of *tò*, which corresponds to *truu* (5) in Tinrin; in this construction the initial subject pronoun agrees in person and number with the subject NP.

(23) i   tò   mwâ   kaniâ   ?ò
    3pl   be   house   many   man
    'Many men are in the house.'

(24) è   tò   na   nanu   âwea
    3sg   be   here   Nanu   yesterday
    'Nanu was here yesterday.'

Unlike Tinrin, Neku has two constructions to express predicative possession. The first uses *(tò) ui* 'exist', with the possessor typically shifted to sentence-initial position as in Tinrin:

(25) toni   è   tò   ui   ?òamwî-è   a   wèja
    Tony   3sg   be   exist   head-3sg.POSS   ATTR   good
    'Tony is intelligent.' (lit. Tony there is his good head.)

(26) djan   è   tò   ui   pè?ari   ghi   è
     Jean   3sg   be   exist elder_brother   of   3sg.POSS
     'Jean has an elder brother.' (lit. Jean there is his elder brother.)

The second type uses *tòpè* 'have':

(27) gò   tòpè   nepârrâ
     1sg   have   yam_field
     'I have a yam field.'

(28) gè   tòpè   mwane   a   kaniâ
     2sg   have   money   ATTR   many
     'You have much money.'

However, to indicate the corresponding negative 'you have no money', the following expression has to be used:

(29) è   pò   mwane   i   nya
     3sg   non_exist   money   of   2sg.POSS
     'You have no money.'

While Tinrin *fwi* 'exist' covers the transitive meanings 'do', 'make', and 'amount to', Neku employs a different verb *âmwî* to indicate these. In (30) and (31), *âmwî* means 'do', and in (32) 'make'. It expresses the meaning 'amount to' in (33).

(30) gò   âmwî   pera
     1sg   do   prayer
     'I pray.' (lit. I do a prayer.)

(31) è   âmwî   djie
     3sg   do   what
     'What did he do?'

(32) è   âmwî   mwâ   toni
     3sg   make   house   Tony
     'Tony made (built) a house.'

(33) go   jè   ve   ve   na   japô   na   ba   jè   âmwî
     1sg   FUT   EVE   go   to   Japan   if   if   FUT   amount to

     wai   kêvè   nedoa
     already   five   year
     'I will go to Japan after five years.' (lit. ∼ when it amounts to five years.)

tò 'be, stay' can also be used to express '(it) takes (some time)', as in the following
sentence :

(34) è   tò   ra   nera
     3sg   be   a   day
     'It takes one day.'

Like Tinrin *fwi*, Neku *âmwî* can also be used to introduce a causal clause as in (35) and (36).

(35) bu   ta   ve   na   virradji   è   âmwî   me   ?ui   ghi   è
     1dl.exc   NEG   go   to   village   3sg   do   COMP   rain   of   3sg
     'We two did not go to the village because it rained.' (lit. We two did not go to the
      village, it exists that it rains.)

(36) è   âmwî   na   go   ta   maami   go   ta   âra
     3sg   do   COMP   1sg   NEG   hungry   1sg   NEG   eat
     'As I was not hungry, I did not eat.' (lit. It exists that I was not hungry, I did not eat.)

4. Predicative possession: Tinrin and Neku in cross-linguistic context

The Tinrin and Neku constructions discussed in Sections 2 and 3 are summarized in Table
1, along with an additional construction with the meaning of 'hold, take', and the Japanese
equivalents which will be briefly looked at in this section for comparison.

From this table, we see how *fwi* in Tinrin is used in different constructions, covering
a wide semantic range, including active transitive, existential and possession. The only

meaning in this domain which cannot be expressed by *fwi* is the expression of location, for which *tru* is used. We also notice that in both languages the meaning 'hold' is expressed by a distinct word. For the semantic range covered by Tinrin *fwi*, Neku uses four words, *âmwî, ui, tò,* and *tòpè* distributed as in Table 1.

As we saw with examples (7) and (8) in §2, the possessive relation in Tinrin is expressed by the predicate *fwi* 'exist' with the possessor (PR) fronted to the clause-initial position from its original position after the possessee (PE), as shown in the following formula:

(37)   s- V *nrâ* PE POSS   PR
          ='There is X (possessor)'s Y (possessee).'
              ↓
      PR s- V *nrâ* PE POSS-PRO
          ='X (possessor), there is his/her Y (possessee).'

This construction is identical with the existential clause except that the possessor is fronted, leaving its anaphor behind (7). This construction is in fact common among Austronesian languages as well as in languages of Central America (Stassen 2009:71). A structure with the possessor left in place, as in (7') is also possible, but differs from the topicalised structure in that the fronted possessor is removed from its prepositional object slot and an anaphoric possessive pronoun is substituted, so that it is a bare noun phrase, which acts like a subject of the possessive predicate.

(7)   toni   nrâ   fwi   nrâ   traiki   nrâ   nrî
      Tony   3sg   exist   SM   dog   of   3sg
      'Tony has a dog.'

(7')   nrâ   fwi   nrâ   traiki   nrâ   toni
      3sg   exist   SM   dog   of   Tony
      'There is a dog of Tony's.'

Table 1: Corresponding morphemes in Tinrin, Neku, and Japanese
in existential, possessive, and related constructions

Meaning	Formal pattern in Tinrin	Tinrin	Neku	Japanese
make, do	s- V O	*fwi*	*âmwî*	*tsukuru, suru*
amount to, since	s- V O	*fwi*	*âmwî*	*suru, naru, tatsu*
because	s- V *nrâ* NP/clause	*fwi*	*âmwî*	*kara, node*
be (exist)	s- V *nrâ* S	*f*wi	*(tò) ui*	*aru* (inanimate) / *iru* (animate)
topic (possessive)	PR s- V *nrâ* PE POSS- PRO	*fwi*	*(tò) ui* (inalienable, alienable)	*aru/ iru*[12] (inalienable)
have (possessive)	[Neku] s- V O *nrâ* S	—	*tòpè* (alienable)	*motsu* (alienable, inalienable) *suru* (inalienable)
be (at) (locational)	s- V LOC *nrâ* S	*tru*	*tò*	*aru/iru*
hold	s- V O *nrâ* S	*hôpirri*	*kâpri*	*tsukamu, motsu*

With regard to the expression of possessive relations in Neku, a construction similar to the Tinrin topic construction is found (25, 26), which is formulated in (38) under (A). Neku, however, has another means for expressing possession, namely with the verb *tòpè*, as seen in (27, 28). This has a different syntactic structure from the first type, formulated under (B), with the possessor in the subject slot, and the possessee in the object slot.

(38) (A) (*ui* type)

   PR s- V (*nâ*) PE POSS-PRO

     = 'X(possessor), there is his/her Y(possessee).'

   (B) (*tòpè* type)

   PR s- V PE

     = 'X(possessor), he/she has Y(possessee).'

That the verb *tòpè* has acquired the meaning 'have' can be shown by the fact that not only is the subject the possessor, but also the possessee is not modified by a possessive pronoun as in the (A) type. This is because *tòpè* already denotes possession. Possessive pronouns after the possessees are unnecessary in the sentence. In the (B) type, the possessor NP (=subject) is typically at the sentence-initial position, but it can stay in its original post-verbal position as in (39).

(39) è   tòpè   ra   rarra   nanu
     3sg   have   one   knife   Nanu
     'Nanu has a knife.'

Construction (B), with a 'have' verb, appears to be less common among Austronesian languages in the Oceanic region, where existential possession either with topic or with locative/genitive structures is the normal mode of expressing the possession (cf. Stassen 2009:755).

   We will now examine whether there is any difference in Neku in the selection of possessees between (A) and (B) constructions. We already have *?òamwî-è a wèja* 'his head (which is) good' in (25) and *pè?ari ghi è* 'his elder brother'[13] in (26) for construction (A), and *nepârrâ* 'yam field' in (27) and *mwane a kaniâ* 'much money' in (28) for construction (B). I have tested a range of other nouns, some of which are illustrated in the following examples. Those nouns attested are listed in Table 2 with their meanings. The nouns in (40) ~ (46) take the (A) construction with *ui*, while nouns in (47) ~ (49) take the B construction with *tòpè*.

(40) karra   è   (tò)   ui   kênî   me   rakê   djuâ-è
     spider   3sg   stay   exist   five   and   one   leg-3sg.POSS
     'The spider has six legs.'

(41) mari   è   (tò)   ui   pimè-è   a   wèji
     Marie   3sg   stay   exist   eye-3sg   ATTR   big
     'Marie has big eyes.'

(42) mwâ-na   è   (tò)   ui   krowajè   ne   è   a   wèji
     house-PROX   3sg   stay   exist   window   of   3sg   ATTR   big
     'This house has a big window.'

(43) gòju   è   tò   ui   kêurru   taaki   i   nyu
     1sg   3sg   stay   exist   two   dog   of   1sg.POSS
     'I have two dogs.'

(44) poja   è   tò   ui   ra   ôwe   ghi   è
     Poya   3sg   stay   exist one   woman   of   3sg.POSS
     'Poya has a wife.'

(45) prezidê   è   tò   ui   nerre-è
     president   3sg   stay   exist power-3sg.POSS
     'The president has (absolute) power (leadership).'

(46) poja   è   tò   ui   ra   peci   ghi   è
     Poya   3sg   stay   exist one   notebook   of   3sg.POSS
     'Poya has a notebook.'

(47) è   tòpè   nerre   patrik
     3sg   have   power   Patrick
     'Patrick has some (temporary) power.'

(48) gò   tòpè   ra   peci   (ro   pa-ju)
     1sg   have   one   notebook   LOC   thigh-1sg.POSS
     'I have a notebook (on my laps).'

(49) gèè   è   tòpè   ra   ïra
     grandma 3sg   have   one   child
     'Grandma looks after a child.'

All kinship terms and body part nouns can occur in (A). *ïra* 'child' and some other human nouns (such as *ʔòʔê* 'man, husband' and *ôwe* 'woman, wife') can occur in both, according to whether they refer to kinship or common human nouns. For example, *ïra* when occurring in construction (B) as in (49), refers to any child, i.e. not the biological child of the person referred to by subject NP, and the meaning of *tòpè* is 'to keep temporarily, babysit, look after'. (45) and (47) illustrate that *nerre* 'power' can occur also in both constructions. In (45), *nerre* refers to an absolute power which is supposed to be extended over his people, while in (47) it refers to a temporarily possessed power over something. My Neku consultant, when asked about the difference between these two sentences, answered that in (45) it is presupposed that his people would listen to what the president says.

In fact, *pè* by itself means 'take', and is a shortened form of *pèghi*. It has another use as a preposition to express instrumentality and comitative 'with', as in the following example:

(50)   *gò   ii   nemè-ju   pè   razi*
        1sg   shave   face-1sg.POSS   with   razor
        'I shave my face with a razor.'

It is thus reasonable to consider that *tòpè* is derived from *tò* 'be, stay' and *pè* 'take', taking the path of 'take' > 'stay with' > 'have'. The presence of a 'have' verb may be a recent development resulting from contact with the 'have' language, French.[14]

Table 2: Nouns which occur in constructions (A) and (B)

(A) with *(tò)ui*	meaning	(B) with *tòpè*	meaning
?òamwî-[15]	head	*?ò?ê*	man
djuâ-	leg	*ôwe*	woman
pimè-	eye	*ïra*	child (to babysit)
nerre	power (absolute)	*nerre*	power (temporary)
pè?ari	elder brother	*nepârrâ*	yam field
peruè-	elder sibling	*mwane*	money
?ò?ê	husband	*rarra*	knife
ôwe	wife	*stirro*	pencil
krowajè	window	*trakta*	tractor
wâdamwa	door	*taaki*	dog
taaki	dog	*peci*	notebook
peci	notebook	*jake*	jacket
jake	jacket	*kare*	bag

tòpè can also mean 'to hold' as in English 'John has a coin in his hand.' In (51) *tòpè* is serialized with another verb *we* 'embrace':

(51) è   tòpè   wè   ïra-ve
     3sg   hold   embrace   child-that
     'She is holding that child in arms.'

From what we have seen in these examples and Table 2, we can conclude that in

construction (A), almost any noun can occur, including inalienably possessed: the majority of body part nouns, some kinship terms, nouns referring to parts of 'inanimate wholes' such as the 'window' of a house. (B) type, in contrast, allows only nouns whose referents are cultural and other items possessed temporarily, namely those the possessor has control over. This also includes cases where the subject is holding things in their hands temporarily. The possessees which can occur in (B) can generally also occur in (A), except *mwane*, which normally appears only in (B) type, maybe because 'money' is something that keeps changing owner.

Comparing the possessive constructions in Tinrin and Neku, both languages share type (A), which is the only possessive construction in Tinrin. With Neku, which exhibits both patterns, we can nonetheless say the (A) type is the basic type, and (B) may be a later development, with the semantic restrictions (see Table 2 and 3) limited to temporary, alienable and some abstract possession.

Let us briefly look at the Japanese possessive structures for comparison. Japanese also has two types of structures, one with *aru* / *iru* 'exist'*,* and the other with *motsu* 'have'. The *aru* / *iru* type basically occurs with inalienable possessees, including kinship terms, body nouns, and parts of some entities, and while Neku (A) allows alienable possessees to occur in this construction, the Japanese *aru* / *iru* type does not. Conversely, while Neku *tòpè* is restricted to alienable possessees, Japanese *motsu* is used more extensively including inalienable possessees. Kinsui (2003:42) suggests that both types have existed since ancient Japanese, but *motsu* seems to have expanded its usage to variant objects, presumably under the influence of translation of the English 'have', including for newly coined or borrowed words based on Chinese compounds expressing abstract concepts such as value, nature, right, and responsibility, which are used as objects of 'have', *motsu*. However, it is still not natural to use *motsu* with 'inanimate' possessors. The next sentence does not sound natural: **Tokyo-wa takusan kooen-o motte-iru* (Tokyo-TOP, much, park-O, have-be (stative)) 'Tokyo has many parks.' This is better expressed with *aru*, as *Tokyo-(ni)-wa takusan kooen-ga aru* (Tokyo-(LOC)-TOP, much, park-NOM, be).

Japanese has an additional possessive structure type, using *suru*, whose primary meaning is 'to do'. The use of *suru* to express possession is very interesting as it parallels the use of Tinrin *fwi*, whose basic meaning also is 'do, make'. This possessive construction with *suru* is limited in that the possessee must be inalienable, namely, body parts or some attributes of human possessors (52, 53), and parts of an inanimate whole with some quality modifiers (54) (Tsunoda 1991, Sawada 2003). As with *motsu, suru* in this construction is in the *-te* form and is combined with *iru* to express 'stative.'

(52) hanako-wa   kireina   te-o   shite-iru

     Hanako-TOP   beautiful   hand-O   do-be (stative)

     'Hanako has beautiful hands.' (lit. Hanako is doing beautiful hands.)

(53) djon-wa   aoi   me-o   shite-iru

     John-TOP   blue   eye-O   do-be (stative)

     'John has blue eyes.' (lit. John is doing blue eyes.)

(54) ano   ie-wa   akai   jane-o   shite-iru

     that   house-TOP   red   roof-O   do-be (stative)

     'That house has a red roof.' (lit. That house is doing a red roof.)

The possessees in this construction are things that always 'exist', such as 'eyes' to humans, so it is odd to say, 'John has eyes'. Therefore, in this construction, they are always modified, and serve to indicate that they have some specificity to characterize something not ordinary, normally in physical appearance.

Body parts whose existence is presupposed can occur without modifiers in the other construction with *aru* / *iru*. In this case, possessees are something extraordinary in quantity or ability sometimes metaphorical, as in:

(55) John-wa   me-ga   aru

     John-TOP   eye-NOM   exist

     'John can see well (to judge).' (lit. John has eyes.)

(56) John-wa   ashi-ga   aru

     John-TOP   leg-NOM   exist

     'John is a good runner.' (lit. John has legs.)

The Tinrin, Neku, and Japanese verbs examined so far are listed in Table 3, arranged in such a way to show their semantic range.

Table 3: The Semantic range of Tinrin, Neku, and Japanese verbs

Meaning	Tinrin		Neku				Japanese		
	fwi	*tru*	*âmwî*	*ui*	*tò*	*tòpè*	*suru*	*aru/ iru*	*motteiru*
make, do	○	×	○	×	×	×	○[16]	×	×
amount to, since	○	×	○	×	×	×	○	×	×
because	○	×	○	×	×	×	×	×	×
exist (+genitive)	○	×	×	○	(×)	×	×	○	×
inalienable possession	○	×	×	○	(×)	×	○	○	△
abstract possession	○	×	×	○	(×)	(○)	×	○	○
alienable, temporary possession	○	×	×	○	(×)	○	×	×	○
have/ hold in hands	×	×	×	×	×	○	×	×	○
be (at) (locational)	×	○	×	×	○	×	×	○	×

△ can occur with inalienable possessees, but the expression often sounds bookish and unnatural: e.g. **watashi-wa ani-o motte-iru* (1sg-TOP, elder brother-O, have-be) 'I have an elder brother'.

(×) can occur, but *ui* is always necessary.

5. Conclusion

The data examined of the two New Caledonian languages seem to indicate that the existential possessive structure is the basic pattern, where in fact both inalienable and alienable possessees can occur (Table 3). The alienable-only structure appears to have developed later. Tinrin has not developed this 'have' pattern, while in Neku the *tòpè* construction developed from 'be, take' or 'be with'.

Stassen (2009:15) formulates the following definition as a prototypical case of possession being characterized by the presence of two entities such that a) the possessor and the possessee are in some relatively enduring locational relation, and b) the possessor exerts control over the possessee (and is therefore typically human). This was proposed as he had in mind alienable possession as the prototypical case of possession, while he admitted additional possessions: inalienable, temporary, and abstract, defined by the two parameters in the following table.

Possessive subtype	Permanent contact	Control
Alienable	+	+
Inalienable	+	-
Temporary	-	+
Abstract	-	-

(Stassen 2009:17)

With Tinrin and Neku, alienable possession does not seem prototypical as mentioned at the beginning of this section. In Table 3, we categorized 'alienable and temporary possession' in one group, and 'have/hold in hands' in another, as the latter is expressed by a completely different verb in both languages (Tinrin *hôpirri* and Neku *kâpri*). The features assigned in the above table by Stassen do not necessarily fit either of these two languages, as with abstract possession such as *nerre* 'power' which can be either temporary or permanent (45 and 47).

In the previous literature on predicative possession, the conceptual links between possessive, existential and locative have often been pointed out (Heine 1997:201-207). When we look at the Neku *tòpè,* this seems to follow the path of 'Action (*pè* 'take') > Location / Companion (*tò* 'be, stay' and *pè* 'with') > Possession (*tòpè* 'have')[17]. On the other hand, Tinrin and Neku locational expressions are indicated by a different verb as mentioned earlier, namely, Tinrin *tru* and Neku *tò* (Table 1 and 3), and these verbs are not used for expressing possession.

Payne (2008:123) claimed "existential constructions typically require a locational or temporal adjunct, e.g., *under the bed* in the clause." He further stated that "pure" existentials (with no locational adjunct expressed) are not at all common in everyday discourse. However, these existentials with no explicit location are very common in Japanese. In fact, we can recognize whether they are really 'existential' or 'locational', though the verb is identical in Japanese, from the constructions as follows.

    <Existential>
(57) Tomu-no   inu-ga   (niwa-ni)   iru
      Tom-GEN   dog-NOM   garden-LOC   exist
      'There is Tom's dog (in the garden).'

<Locational>

(58)	Tomu-no	inu-wa	niwa-ni	iru
	Tom-GEN	dog-TOP	garden-LOC	exist

'Tom's dog is in the garden.'

The locational construction differs from the existential in that it has an obligatory locational expression, while in the existential it is optional, and its subject NP is marked by *wa*, a topic marker, whose existence is presupposed, while in the existential it is marked by *ga* 'nominative,' as it is new information in the discourse.

In Tinrin and Neku, locational sentences (5, 23, 24) are expressed not only by a different verb, but in a different construction. While existential sentences always take the third person subject pronoun, locationals have a subject pronoun which agree in person and number with the postposed subject NP.[18] Locational adjuncts placed after the subject NP are optional in existentials, while in locationals, they are obligatory immediately after the verb.

Thus, in my opinion, the possessive structure is closely linked with existentiality, which has to be kept apart from locationals. When one says 'X has Y,' it means 'X's Y exists,' and the focus is on whether the Y exists or not. In contrast, in locational structures 'Y is at X,' Y's existence is already presupposed, and the focus is on the whereabouts of Y. Thus, the fact that Tinrin and Neku have separate morphemes to differentiate these concepts is reasonable, and implies that Tinrin and Neku possession comes from 'existentiality' and not from 'location.'

What is important with the possessive structure, on the other hand, is that it has a topic possessor in whatever structure it may appear in, unless the possessor is the subject where it may not necessarily be fronted as in (47), which is in the *tòpè* construction.

In sum, what seems to me the essential concept of predicative possession is a) the 'existence' (not necessarily a holding a certain locational relation to the possessor) of an entity, b) this entity (possessee) has some significant meaning[19] to the possessor which is either animate or inanimate, and c) the possessor is typically either the topic and / or subject of that utterance.

Now, we will summarize in Figure 1 how the Tinrin and Neku morphemes we have examined semantically correspond to each other.
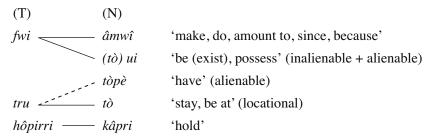
(T)   (N)

fwi ——————— *âmwî*   'make, do, amount to, since, because'

  ⟍———— *(tò) ui*   'be (exist), possess' (inalienable + alienable)

  ⟋- - - *tòpè*   'have' (alienable)

tru ◀- - - - - - *tò*   'stay, be at' (locational)

hôpirri ——— *kâpri*   'hold'

Figure 1: Semantic correspondences between Tinrin
and Neku morphemes

As shown in Figure 1, Neku *âmwî* shares a wide range of meanings with Tinrin *fwi*, including the active transitive meanings 'make' and 'do', as well as 'because' where it introduces a causal NP or clause. Tinrin examples (10, 11, 12) show that in this 'because' construction there is a form identical to the existential '*nrâ fwi nrâ* NP or clause', and it is very interesting that Neku *âmwî,* which is not used in existential predicates, functions in the same way (35, 36) as *fwi,* giving a causal meaning. This suggests that there may be a possibility that *âmwî* and *ui* might have developed from the same origin. These three forms also show some phonological similarity. The meaning of 'amount to' also suggests the contiguous concepts of 'make' and 'exist', whose similar use is seen in French using *faire* 'do, make': *ça fait deux* 'it makes two; it amounts to two'*, ça fait long temps* 'it has been a long time.'[20]

Another thing we notice is that both Tinrin and Neku words for 'hold' do not seem to be related to any possessive constructions, although in the literature 'hold' is often referred to as the source of possessive predicate 'have' (Stassen 2009:62, Heine 1997:47). As mentioned earlier, Neku *tòpè* 'have' seems to be derived from *tò* 'stay (locative)' and *pè* 'take, with', and not 'hold, grab.'

Putting these findings together, what seems to be the likely path of semantic development of *fwi* in Tinrin, is in two directions: one to 'make, do' and one to the existential, and possessive. It is not surprising that 'make' is covered by the same word, as 'make' is conceptually linked to the existential, meaning 'to create, cause, make exist.' In (13), 'hut' comes to exist, as a result of Tony's 'making.'

(13)   nrâ   fwi   saa   droro   mwâ   nrâ   toni
       3sg   make   one   big   hut   SM   Tony
       'Tony built a big hut.'

The relationship between possession and other conceptual domains has often been a topic that attracted linguists' interest. I have described, in this paper, the wide semantic range and functions of Tinrin *fwi* as well as related morphemes and constructions in Neku, and have shown some interesting semantic and morphological links among Tinrin *fwi*, Neku *âmwî* and *ui*, giving some hints on the formation of possessive constructions. The *fwi* still remains mysterious in a way, and an entire explanation of the reported data awaits further research.

Notes

1. Tinrin (also written as Tiri or Tîrî; I employ this spelling as the vowels in the word are nasal) and Neku are two Melanesian languages, each spoken by less than 300 people in the southern part of New Caledonia. The Tinrin and Neku data used in this paper were taken from my fieldwork conducted between 2003 and 2010, and from Osumi 1995.

2. Possession expressed primarily in the predicate (Heine 1997:26-27).

3. The orthographic symbols used in this paper: Vowels: è [ɛ], ò [ɔ], ù [ɯ], ï [y]; nasal vowels: î, â, ô, ê [nasalized ɛ and e]; vowel symbols are doubled to show length. Consonants: t, d, n, are dentals, tr , dr , nr, rr are retroflexes, s [ʃ], gh [ɣ], ?[ʔ]; pw [pʷ], fw[fʷ], mw [mʷ]. Voiced stops are prenasalized in Tinrin but not in Neku. Neku r is a trill, and j is a fricative; ny [ɲ], c [tʃ], dj [dʒ]. Abbreviations used are: 1, 2, 3 'first, second, third person', sg 'singular', dl 'dual', pl 'plural', inc 'inclusive', exc 'exclusive', ATTR 'attribute marker', COMP 'complementizer', DET 'determiner', DIST 'distant deixis', EVE 'eventual', FUT 'future', GEN 'genitive', LOC 'locative', M.DIST 'mid-distant deixis', MOD 'verbal modifier', NEG 'negative', NOM 'nominative', NP 'noun phrase', O 'object', PE 'possessee', POSS 'possessive', PR 'possessor', PRO 'pronoun', PROX 'proximate deixis', PURP 'purposive', s 'subject pronoun', S 'subject',

SM 'subject marker', TA 'tense-aspect', TOP 'topic', V 'verb', VP 'verb phrase', - 'morpheme boundary'.

4. Osumi 1995:223. TA is a tense-aspect marker. MOD includes all the verbal modifiers, adverbs and phrasal modifiers.

5. While a Tinrin clause normally begins with the predicate, the first slot of the clause can be filled by any NP (subject, object or oblique argument), adverb, or prepositional phrase. These fronted elements normally function as topics, highlighting what is under discussion, either previously mentioned or assumed in the discourse (Osumi: 239).

6. Stassen (2009:57, 70-71) classifies Tinrin for this feature as 'Topic Possessive', as a non-standard variant having pronominal indexing of the possessor on the possessee NP.

7. Note that in Tinrin non-verbal clauses, there is no copula, subject pronoun, nor *nrâ* 'subject marker'. Sentence (a) is equational or identificational with the nominal predicate. On the other hand, when the predicate is adjectival, it is preceded by a subject pronoun, as there is no formal distinction between verbs and adjectives (b).

   (a)   farrî-nrî   toni
          name-3sg   Tony
          'His name is Tony.'

   (b)   nrâ   vajù   wai   nrâ   gèè
          3sg   sick/die   already   SM   grandmother/old woman
          'Grandma has already died.'

8. Unmarked action verbs normally indicate past tense.

9. *vajù* means either 'sick' or 'dead' depending on the context.

10. There is also a compound verb consisting of *fwi* and a bound-form verb: *fwi-perrii* (do-imitate) 'to do the same, imitate'.

11. In Neku, the nominal subject can be preceded by *na* 'subject marker', but it is not necessary, and is often omitted.

12. Japanese *aru* normally occurs with inanimate subjects while *iru* occurs with animate subjects in existential sentences, but in the construction below, (a) and (b), both forms can occur for animate subjects (*otto* 'husband' in examples). Nishiyama describes this construction as 'possessive', and it is distinguished from locative existential, in that *ni* can be suppressed in this construction while *ni* is obligatory in locative constructions such as (c) below (Nishiyama 2009:9). (a) and (b) are different from (c) also in that the possessor topic NP in (a,b) can be marked by *ga* 'NOM' instead of (*ni*)-*wa* in an embedded clause (d), while a locative topic (c) cannot (Takezawa 2003:61-62).

(a) Hanako-(ni)-wa   otto-ga   iru
    Hanako-(at, to)-TOP   husband-NOM   exist
    'Hanako has a husband.' (lit. There is a husband at Hanako.)

(b) Hanako-(ni)-wa   otto-ga   aru
    Hanako-(at, to)-TOP   husband-NOM   exist
    'Hanako has a husband.' (lit. There is a husband at Hanako.)

(c) tsukue-no   ue-ni-wa   ringo-ga   aru
    desk-of   on-at-TOP   apple-NOM   exist
    'On the desk, there is an apple.'

(d) Hanako-ga   otto-ga   iru/aru   koto
    Hanako-NOM   husband-NOM   exist   thing
    'that Hanako has a husband.' (lit. The thing that there is a husband at Hanako.)

13. *pè?ari* also means 'grand-father, great-grand-father, cousin, grandson'. In Neku, many kinship terms are not directly possessed (inalienable possession), but occur with a possessive preposition *ghi ~i* followed by the possessor NPs.

14. French uses *avoir* 'have' for both existential and possessive constructions: *il y a un livre* (3sg, there, have, one, book) 'there is a book,' and *il a un livre* (3sg, have, one, book) 'he has a book.'

15. Those nouns marked with a hyphen are inalienably possessed nouns. They are always bound to nouns or pronominal possessive suffixes. Other nouns, alienable, are either followed by a possessive preposition and nouns or possessive pronouns, or are juxtaposed by possessive classifiers (Osumi 1995).

16. *suru* basically means 'do', and is not used to mean 'make' in sentences such as 'X makes a cake.' However, it often functions as pro-verb, which is substituted for 'make'.

17. Heine (1997:46-47) distinguishes eight event schemas that account for the majority of possessive constructions in the languages of the world: Action, Location, Companion, Genitive, Goal, Source, Topic, Equation.

18. A similar feature is reported by Comrie (1986: 201) for North African vernacular Arabic: the verb in the locative predicate construction must agree with the subject, which is the entity located, while in the possessive predicate construction, a third person singular masculine verb irrespective of the person, number, and gender of either possessor or possessum is used as a default agreement.

19. This varies from inseparable or essential part-whole relations, to something socially or culturally bound ones.

20. Similar expressions using 'make' to indicate the length of time passed, are also seen in other

Romance languages. For 'It has passed a week since we came here,' Spanish: *Hoy <u>hace</u> una semana que estamos quí*. Italian: *Oggi <u>fa</u> una settimana che stiamo qui* (Ito 2003: 84).

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L'éventail sémantique du verbe *fwi* en tinrin, avec référence à quelques morphèmes apparentés du neku

Résumé: Cet article traite des propriétés syntaxiques et sémantiques du verbe *fwi* en tinrin. Cette forme unique peut se manifester de manière intransitive ou transitive et aussi à l'occasion et quelque peu étrangement d'une façon stative ou active. Utilisé intransitivement, *fwi* indique que quelque chose 'existe'; lorsque le sujet est « possédé » et le possesseur nominal est topicalisé et mis en tête de phrase (dans (1), *mwâ* est le sujet indiqué par le SM (marqueur de sujet) qui précède et *toni* est le possésseur topicalisé. *nrî* est une anaphore pronominale du possesseur topicalisé), *c'est-à-dire* dans la construction A (possésseur) il existe (sujet) B (possédé) de lui, il indique que A 'possède' B.

(1) *toni*   *nrâ*   *fwi*   *nrâ*   *mwâ*   *nrâ*   *nrî*
     Tony   3sg   existe   SM   maison   de   3sg
     'Tony a une maison.' (Le verbe statif non marqué indique normalement le présent.)

Utilisé transitivement *fwi* signifie 'faire, créer', ou 's'élever à' en se rapportant à une durée de temps, à une longueur, à une quantité, etc.

(2) *nrâ*   *fwi*   *mwâ*   *nrâ*   *toni*
     3sg   bâtir   maison   SM   Tony
     'Tony a bâti une case.' (Le verbe d'action non marqué indique normalement le passé.)

(3) *nrâ*   *fwi*   *aurru*   *fwòtra*
     3sg   s'élève à   deux   ans
     'Ça fait deux ans.' (litt. Cela s'élève à deux ans.)

Le neku, une langue voisine, a le verbe *âmwî* qui signifie « faire » ou « créer » comme le *fwi* du tinrin. Cependant, ce verbe ne peut être employé pour indiquer l'existence ou la possession prédicative. (*tò*) *ui* est utilisé à sa place pour exprimer l'existence et la possession, cette dernière étant exprimé par une construction de possesseur topicalisé semblable à celle du tinrin. Le neku a aussi un autre verbe, *tòpè*, peut-être apparu plus récemment, qui est employé uniquement pour la possession aliénable. Dans cet article je me propose de traiter et d'illustrer le plein éventail sémantique du verbe *fwi*, en examinant les correspondances sémantiques et syntaxiques entre les structures du tinrin et du neku, et d'indiquer la trajectoire probable de l'évolution sémantique qu'il a suivie pour aboutir aux significations d'existence et de possession prédicative qu'il exprime à présent.