1 The Yalaku language: background information

Yalaku belongs to the Ndu language family. It is spoken by about 300 people in the village of Yalaku; slightly different (but mutually intelligible) dialects are spoken by c. 300 people in each of Kumajuwi and Hambukaini, in the vicinity of the Sepik river in the Ambunti district: see Map 1.

The position of Yalaku within the Ndu family is shown in Figure 1.

Yalaku has been, and continues to be, in intensive contact with the unrelated Kwoma (Kwoma-Nukuma family). Manambu (Aikhenvald 2008) is the closest relative of Yalaku.

2 Phonology

The phonological system of Yalaku is in Tables 1 and 2. There are 22 consonants and 6 vowels (no phonological length), and distinctive stress, e.g. minimal pairs such as héña 'be able to, possible' versus heñá 'day after tomorrow'; té-re (3masc.sg-ACC/ALL) 'him, to him' versus te=ré (3masc.sg=sit) 'he sits'.

Syllable structure: (C1)(C2)V(C3) (with phonotactic restrictions on each of C1, C2 and C3); CVC syllables often result from elision of the final vowel in normal to rapid register (final vowels which may undergo such apocope are in brackets in some examples).

---

1 The original name of the language and the people is Yelahambura. The language was formerly called Yelogu (Bowden 1997; Laycock 1965). It is called Kaunga by the Kwoma (hence this alternative name cited in Bowden 1997). The language has never been previously described. Invaluable information on Yalaku ethnic history and their contacts with the neighbouring Kwoma comes from Bowden (1997). An outline of Yalaku grammar by Laycock (1965: 139-43) is replete with mistakes and misinterpretations, and contains an offensive remark: it says that the material was obtained ‘in the course of a single evening and the following morning, particularly from a young and not very intelligent informant named Avaréka’. (The late Ambareka was a respectable elder and was a brother-in-law of Yafa Mark, one of the oldest story tellers among the Yalaku.) There is a brief preliminary phonological description done by the SIL (Nayau n/d) (however, a translation project never got off the ground).
Table 1 Consonantal phonemes in Yalaku

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>bilabial</th>
<th>labiodental</th>
<th>apico-</th>
<th>apico-</th>
<th>post-</th>
<th>lamino-</th>
<th>dorso-</th>
<th>glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>voiceless non-</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>t</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labialized stops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voiced non-</td>
<td>“b”</td>
<td>“d”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“g”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labialized stops</td>
<td>p”w</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“k”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voiceless labialized</td>
<td>“b”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“k”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prenasalized stops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| voiceless fricatives | p/φ      | s           |        | h      |       |         |        |        |
| voiced fricatives    |          |             |        |        |       |         |        |        |
| voiceless affricate  |          |             |        |        |       |         |        |        |
| lateral              |           |             |        |        |       |         |        | “l”    |
| trilled rhotic       |           |             |        | “r”   |       |         |        |        |
| nasals               | m        | n           |        | “n”   |       |         |        |        |
| glides               | w        |             |        | “y (j)" |       |         |        |        |

1. Voiced prenasalized stops occur only intervocally.
2. An important phonological process is voicing on
   (a) a clitic boundary, e.g. tada-te (go.down-SS) 'having gone down' versus tada=de
      (go.down=3masc.sg) 'he went down', and
   (b) in the middle of a grammatical and phonological word, e.g. tu 'man', TSipa-du (last-man)
      'personal name', kay 'house', ayko-gay, aiko-ge 'inside the house'.

Table 2 Vowel phonemes in Yalaku

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>front</th>
<th>central</th>
<th>back</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>u</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>middle</td>
<td>æ</td>
<td>o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>æ</td>
<td>ø</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A feature of normal to rapid (informal) register is the optional final vowel elision, e.g. slow/normal
wean-re (I.NON.NOM-ACC/ALL), normal/rapid wuna-r 'me, to me'.

2 Typological profile of Yalaku

In terms of the expression of grammatical relations, Yalaku is nominative-accusative (this is a
general feature of Ndu and neighbouring languages). Grammatical relations are expressed through
cross-referencing on verbs and case on nouns. The language is synthetic and predominantly
sufffixing, with just two prefixes (one is productive: me-/mV- 'second person imperative'; the other
one is not productive: he- 'causative-manipulative involving 'hand'). This feature is shared with
other related languages: Manambu, Abelam-Wosera, Iatmul and Boiken.

Open word classes in Yalaku are nouns, verbs and adjectives.

Verbs cross-reference person, gender and number of the subject (A/S). Further verbal
categories include mood (declarative, imperative, interrogative), tense (present/non-future,
completed/past, future), aspect (habitual, completive), modality (desiderative, intentional,
impossibilitive ('hard to do something'), frustrative, and apprehensive), and complex negation
marking. In addition, just like in many other languages, reduplication can be used to differentiate word classes: with nouns, it has a distributive meaning; with verbs it has a repetitive meaning, and with adjectives it has an intensifying meaning. Closed classes include demonstratives, interrogatives, quantifiers, time words, and locationals. There are no productive word-class changing derivations. A member of any word class can occupy the intransitive predicate slot (with limited possibilities for non-verbs). Verbs cannot serve as arguments (they then have to be relativised, or form a compound with -boko 'thing').

Gender and number are expressed covertly, that is, they are not marked on the noun itself (except for kinship terms which have overt plural marking). Masculine gender is the functionally unmarked choice. Specific grammatical categories of adjectives include the augmentative -sak and negation.

Grammatical categories of nouns are gender (masculine and feminine in singular only), number (singular, dual and plural) nominal negation and eight cases:
• nominative marked with -ø (also used in the Highlighted Participant Case marking system)
• accusative-allative marked with -r(e) (also used in HPC)
• dative marked with -ka (also used in HPC)
• aversive marked with -kak
• locative-instrumental marked with -bu (also used in HPC)
• specific locative marked with -buku
• future purpose marked with -ket 'desiderative'
• comitative marked with -wey has two groups of functions
  (i) a clausal comitative which markes accompaniment and copula complement (also in HPC)
  (ii) an adnominal comitative which serves a coordinating function within an NP.

Case markers attach to the root form of a noun, and to a special non-nominative form of a personal pronoun, e.g. wuni 'I', wuna-ka 'for me' (dative).

Dative, aversive, desiderative, and comitative type (i) also occur on verbs (typical for many Papuan languages including Ndu: Aikhenvald 2011). The genitive case is used just adnominally. An adnominal clase marker can occur with a clausal case marker (as in (19)).

Constituent order is predominantly verb final (AO(Oblique)V/ S(Oblique) V), but not strictly so. A constituent in contrastive focus or an afterthought can be postposed to the predicate. There is pervasive switch reference and clause chaining (marking same subject/different subject; typical of Ndu languages; cf. Aikhenvald 2008, 2015). This helps establish a robust category of subject (A/S).

Just like most Ndu languages, Yalaku has a rather straightforward differential object marking. The accusative/allative case marks the O expressed with a personal pronoun, a personal name, or a definite participant — see (1) and (2):

(1)  endate nuwaO=deA vya-k  O unmarked
    then not.own.mother=3masc.sg hit-DECL
    'Then he hit mother'
Differential Object case-marking in Yalaku interrelates with the Nominal hierarchy and pragmatic features of the noun referent. Yalaku has a further system of marking grammatical relations which I call 'Highlighted Participant Case marking', or HPC (details are in Aikhenvald 2015). If the head of a Noun phrase is definite and refers to a participant which is central for the stretch of discourse, it will be case-marked, for the appropriate function, in the following way.

(3) Noun=third person pronoun-case marker (involving one of the cases marked as HPC above)

In (4), 'mother' is the central character:

(4) menoki nuwa=le-re(O) [le=wo-k,
only+too not.own.mother=3fem.sg.fem.sg-ACC 3fem.sgA=say-DECL
'She(A) said just to the mother (O) (the central character)'

Personal pronouns do not take the HPC marking. Contrastive focus forms for first and second person pronouns are shown in (5); the corresponding forms for third person are in (6):

(5) Pronoun:nominative-de, e.g. wuni 'I', wuni-de (I-FOC) 'I (not anyone else)'
Pronoun+non-nominative form-de (-genitive case), e.g. wuna-de-na (I.NON.NOM-FOC-GEN)
'mine (not anyone's)'

(6) Reduplicated nominative form of a pronoun: le 'she', lele 'she (not anyone else)'
Reduplicated form+ ke+na 'genitive', e.g. le-le-ke-na 'hers (not anyone else)'

The structure of an NP in Yalaku is shown in Figure 2. No noun phrases have all the positions filled, for semantic reasons.

**Figure 2 The structure of a Noun Phrase in Yalaku**

1. Third person pronoun in a specifier-article function
2. Demonstrative (five degrees of distance; two genders, three numbers)
3. Interrogative
4. **Possessor (genitive-marked)**
5. Relative clause
6. Quantifier or number word (including Tok Pisin loan wanpela 'one(new referent)')
7. Adjective
8. Noun as modifier
9. **Possessor (juxtaposed)**
10. Noun as Head of NP (determines agreement in gender and number on demonstratives and third person pronouns)
11. **Possessor (genitive-marked)**
12. Quantifier or number word (except for Tok Pisin wanpela)
13. Demonstrative (five degrees of distance; two genders, three numbers)
14. Postposition (closed class)

**Important:** the 'new/important information first' principle is what accounts for variable positions of the genitive-marked possessor, demonstratives and number words (especially so if the new information is likely to be topical and has contrastive overtones). Manambu (Aikhenvald 2008: 514) has similar tendencies.
Case markers go at the end of an NP (and not on every word), just like in other Ndu languages.

3 NP-internal Possession
Yalaku does not have a straightforward distinction between inalienably and alienably possessed nouns. Body parts, some plant parts and orientation terms are unlike other nouns, as they can take part in part-whole constructions; see also §5 for some features of body parts and kinship terms.

NP-internal possession in Yalaku can be expressed in one of five ways summarised in Table 3 and discussed in §§3.1-3. They differ in the order of R and D; their meanings, the restrictions on 'R', 'permutability' (that is, the option of changing the order of components), and whether the R can be used headlessly. Special features of NPs with pronominal possessor are described in §3.4. Two further archaic and unproductive mechanisms are mentioned in §3.5.

Table 3 The expression of NP-internal possession in Yalaku

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marking</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
<th>Restrictions on the 'Possessor'</th>
<th>Permutability</th>
<th>Headless Possessor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Whole-part (D-R) — §3.1</td>
<td>whole-part, spatial relationships, orientation; fixed collocations</td>
<td>non-human noun</td>
<td>for some</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Juxtaposition (R-D) — §3.2</td>
<td>whole-part, kinship, any kind of ownership, attribution, association, type, purpose</td>
<td>any noun (not individuated)</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Genitive marker -na on the R (R-D) — §3.3</td>
<td>kinship, any kind of ownership, attribution, association, type, purpose</td>
<td>any noun (individuated)</td>
<td>yes (depends on topicaity)</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Construction with pronominal linker: §3.4</td>
<td>kinship, any kind of ownership, attribution, association, type, purpose</td>
<td>any noun (definite and topically established)</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1 Whole-part constructions
Whole-part constructions consists of a term for a body part, or a plant part, or a spatial term followed by the 'whole', or the notional 'Possessor'. They tend to form one phonological word (if they are not longer than two syllables), and one grammatical word as can be seen from the word-internal voicing and the fact than no other element can intervene between the components. The meanings covered are:
• whole-part, involving human body parts, e.g. *yari-taba* (belly-hand) 'palm of a hand', *afaka-man* (bone-foot) 'front part of foot', and parts of animals and plants, e.g. *huia lofu* (flesh-banana) 'banana flesh', *sefi lofu* (skin-banana) 'banana skin', *mi-dop* (tree top) 'top of a tree', *huia ŋaka* (flesh-chicken) 'chicken meat', *afaka bori* (bone pig) (not *pori*) 'pig’s bone'.

• spatial relationships and orientation, e.g. *hou-viri* (hole-rivulet) 'deep water; inside the water', *nebi-ge* (tooth-house: free form *kay*) 'front of house', *mou-viri* (basis-rivulet) 'downstream', *ñide-viri* (middle-rivulet) 'middle of rivulet, midstream', *hari-kou* (hole-crab) 'crab hole' and

• fixed collocations, e.g. *Kwai-bori* (thing-pig) 'a personal name'.

The D is the head of these constructions. The order of components can be reversed if the meaning is transparent. I was encouraged to eat the flesh of a banana — flesh was important (just in case I eat something else):

(7) \[huia lofu\] me-ha
flesh banana IMPV-eat
'Eat the banana **flesh**!'

And then I was encourage to throw what remained of that banana (the skin) away:

(8) \[lofu sepi\] me-yat
banana skin IMPV-throw
'Throw away the **banana skin**!'

The following example illustrates a difference between *afaka bori* (bone pig) 'pig bone' (as a type of bone) and *pori afaka* (pig bone) as a bone of a particular pig. (9) comes from a story where pig was chasing a woman; she managed to kill it and then (clause boundaries are in { }).

(9) \{[apaka bori] le=hara-ke\} \{[pori afaka] hara-tate\}

pig bone 3fem.sg-take-DECL pig bone take-SS

{ene-bu le=satS-k} {ole [apaka bori],}
there-LOC 3fem.sg=light-DECL DEM.MID.DIST.fem.sg bone pig

afaka satS-tate {ve-ve-ka tiya-le-kate}
bone light-SS see-see-DAT go.round-3fem.sg.DS

{oji pori {yagi-te} tS-iya-ya-ke}
DEM.MID.DIST.pl pig be.afraid-SS 3pl-go-RED-DECL

'Ve took a pig bone (a type of bone: R-D), having taken a bone of the pig (D-R), she lit it there, having lit the pig bone (R-D: a type of bone), after she’d walked walked around to have a look, those pigs got scared and ran away'.

Compounds may be lexicalised, e.g. *tagi-hudi* (bifurcation-talk) 'the main storyline', *tagi-mi* (bifurcation-tree) 'gateway' (see (12)). The order of their components cannot usually be reversed; if
they happen to be, the resulting meaning will be different, e.g. *mi-tagi* (tree-bifurcation) 'bifurcation/fork of a tree'.

The ability to occur in the whole-part possessive construction (A) is what distinguishes many body and plant parts, and spatial orientation terms, from other nouns. All other nouns can occur in each of the constructions B, C and D, depending on their pragmatic features (cf. Nick Piper, on Meryam).

### 3.2 Juxtaposition

The Juxtaposition construction (type B) differs from Whole-part constructions in the order of components and also in the range of its meanings. Juxtaposition covers some whole-part relations, kinship, any kind of ownership, attribution, association, type, and purpose.

The 'Possessor' is not individuated, e.g. *kaitepa tu* 'village man' (as opposed to a person from the bush), *meda ñene* 'cassowary child' (as opposed to a human child), *meda ako* 'cassowary thigh', *tu hat*$S$(man image/trace)'picture, photograph', *wama mini* (white eye) 'white of an eye', *kri-mini* (black-eye) 'iris of an eye', *so-safa* (wear mask/cover) 'dress, trousers' (lit. cover for dressing), etc. They can be created spontaneously, e.g. *tepe hot* (tape nest) 'a place for putting a tape in a recorder'. A construction R D can form a compound, e.g. *lÉpi-kabay* (butterfly-snake) 'larva of a butterfly' (cf. *habay* 'snake'), *sambri-kula* 'a special type of axe (litt. axe from Chambri area)'. The components cannot be reversed; nor can the 'possessor' be used headlessly.

### 3.3 The Genitive construction

The Genitive construction (C) involves marking the possessor with the genitive suffix *-na*, and the order Possessor-Possessee, covers possession, association and quantification. The 'possessor' is individuated. The Possessee is the head of the construction. The following pairs contrast (B) Juxtaposition and (C) a Genitive construction:

(10) *takwa yi* 'female name' versus *takwa-na yi* (woman-GEN name) 'the/a name of a woman'  
*kaitepa tu* 'village man'  
*kaitepa-na tu* (village-GEN man) 'a man of (some) village',  
*meda ñen* 'cassowary child'  
*meda-na ñen* (cassowary-GEN child) 'a child of a cassowary'.

The meanings of the genitive construction cover association, e.g. *tari-na takwa* (before-GEN woman) 'woman belonging to prior times; first wife', *hoket-na takwa* (later-GEN woman) 'woman belonging to later; non-first wife', and (11); (12) illustrates purpose; (13) illustrates quantification, and (14) illustrates origin:
(11) ñana-re [wama-sepi-du-na tultul luluwai nabaut] tŠ=hoi-k,
we.NON.NOM-ALL white-skin-man-GEN tultul luluwai 'about' 3pl=give-DECL
'They gave us white man's (ranks) of tultul luluai etc' (ranks in PNG colonial bureaucracy')

(12) [Wuna-na yi Joel Ukaia],
I.NON.NOM-GEN name Joel Ukaia
{wuni [Yelahambura hudi-na tangi-mi-wuni]}, {tangi-mi-meki wuni=te}.
I Yalaku language-GEN bifurcation-tree-1sg bifurcation-tree-like 1sg=be
'Our name is Joel Ukaia, I am a gateway for the Yalaku language, I am like a gateway'

(13) [one hudi-na epi] puri=pole-k-wuni.
DEM.DIST.masc.sg language-GEN part FUT=tell-FUT-1sg
'I will tell a part of that story'

(14) yawi-na pokoke
garden-GEN thing
'thing(s) (fruit etc) from a garden'

The components can be reversed, if the head noun ('Possesee') is focussed; there is no meaning change:

(15) [Mane meda-na] te=harą-k
leg cassowary-GEN 3masc.sg=get-DECL
'He caught cassowary's leg' (preventing her from jumping over a hole)'

The possessed noun can be omitted; the genitive can then be used on its own, as head of predicate, as in (16) (listing the groups of people who had been in the Sepik region) and (17):

(16) noke Australia-na-tŠ noke Amerika-na-tŠ
one Australia-GEN-3pl one America-GEN-3pl
noke oko wo-de-ko Germany-na-tŠ
one thus say-3masc.sg-MOMENT Germany-GEN-3pl
'One (group) are Australians, one are Americans, one is from so called Germany'

(17) {ana-na tu viti=de hara-k}, {uni hokete-na-wuni}
1du.NON.NOM-GEN man two=3masc.sg get/marry-DECL I last-GEN-1sg
'Our (dual) husband married two (women), I am the last (wife)'

A genitive form used headlessly does not have to be marked for case, as in (18):

(18) {omo-na ñene mafui de=te-k},
elder.sibling-GEN child big 3masc.sg=be-DECL
{te nubu-bu=de re-k}, {ñomose-na le=here-i-k}
he mountain-LOC=3masc.sg sit-DECL younger.sibling-GEN 3fem.sg=take-go-DECL
'Elder brother's child became big, he lived in the mountain, she took away the (child of) younger brother'

The genitive case can be followed by the object case if the O is definite (see §2).
(19) yafa-\textit{na-re} de=take….
   father-GEN-ACC 3masc.sg=sharpen
   'He sharpened father's own (knife)'

### 3.4 Construction with pronominal linker

Construction D covers possession and association (but not quantification). It has the following structure:

(20) \[ R \{\text{third person pronoun(agreeing in gender and number with possessor)-LINKER}\} \textit{ke-}\textit{GENITIVE D} \]

This construction is used if the Possessor is a definite and or topically established participant, e.g. \textit{takwa le-ke-na yi} (woman she-LINKER-GEN name) 'the woman's name', \textit{meda le-ke-na ñene} (cassowary she-LINKER-GEN child) 'a child of the cassowary'.

It is reminiscent of the Highlighted Participant Case marking — see (3).

The three possessive constructions (B-D) are contrasted in Table 4.

### Table 4 How to choose a possessive constructions in Yalaku: B-D contrasted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
<th>TRANSLATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. Juxtaposition: possessor generic</td>
<td>\textit{meda ñene}</td>
<td>cassowary child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Genitive: possessor indefinite</td>
<td>\textit{meda-na ñene}</td>
<td>a child of a cassowary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Pronominal possessor construction: possessor definite or topical</td>
<td>\textit{meda le-ke-na ñene}</td>
<td>a child of the cassowary, lit. cassowary her child</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An example from a story about a clan is at (21):

(21) {Takwa=de  \textit{hara-k}}   Takwa  \textit{hara-tat, ude-k.}
   woman=3masc.sg get-DECL woman get-SS DEM.DIST.masc.sg-DECL
   {[\textit{Takwa le-ke-na yi} ñani hebu-ve-t}  
   woman 3fem.sg-LINK-GEN name 1pl NEG-know-NEG
   'He (the ancestor got married, having got married, so it was. We don't know the name of the woman'.

(22) comes from an extract about a fight between a spirit woman and a real woman:

(22) {Vaeker-le-ka}, {[ule muy takwa \textit{le-ke-na} nawi]}
   fall-3fem.sg-DS DEM.DIST.fem.sg real woman 3fem.sg-LINK-GEN companion
   {le-re=de \textit{vya-k}}
   come.out-SS she-ACC=3masc.sg hit-DECL
   'After she (spirit) fell, a companion of that real woman came out and hit her (spirit)'.

### 3.5 Personal pronouns as possessors

If the R is a personal pronoun, four options are available. Each of these covers possession and association (that is, the same meanings as B-D). No whole-part construction is available.
When used as possessors, third person pronouns require a linker \(-kE\), as in (23) (see also (20) in §3.4). This feature is partly shared with Manambu (but in Manambu all case markers can only attach to a third person pronoun via that linker). For all non-third person pronouns, the genitive is attached to a non-nominative form, as in (24).

(23) le-ke-na  
3fem.sg-LINKER-GEN  younger.sibling  

'her younger sibling'

(24) wuna-na  
I:NON.NOM-GEN  younger.sibling  

'my younger sibling'

Table 5 summarises the four options available for pronouns as possessors. The focus marker \(-de\) indicates focus on the possessor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marking</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
<th>Permutability</th>
<th>Headless Possessor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Non-nominative form and the Genitive marker (-na) on the pronoun</td>
<td>body part, kinship, any kind of ownership, attribution, association, type, purpose</td>
<td>yes (depends on topicality of the possessee)</td>
<td>yes: (27) (second line), (30), (31) (second line)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Non-nominative form of a pronoun and focus marker (-de)</td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Non-nominative form of a pronoun and focus marker (-de) followed by the genitive (-na)</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes (depends on topicality of the possessee)</td>
<td>yes: (28)-(29)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some examples:
I. A genitive marker, no focus marker — the most frequent one (see also (12) and (17)):

(25) Wuna-na  
I:NON.NOM-GEN  ancestor  elder.sibling-3masc.sg  

'My ancestor is the elder sibling'

II. A genitive marker and a focus marker — the possessor is in contrastive focuss; a further meaning: one's own':

(26) [wuna-de-na] kolmadeka  
I:NON.NOM-FOC-GEN  ancestor  

[\text{wuna-de}] you  
I:NON.NOM-FOC  brother's.wife 3fem.sgHPC-COMIT  
\[\text{ana-de}\] 
1du.NON.NOM-FOC  ancestor  ukwa-t5  te-ke  
thus=3pl stay-DECL  

'My own (not anyone's) ancestor with my own brother's wife, our ancestors, stayed thus'
III. A focus marker, no genitive marker — possessor is in contrastive focus, possessive relationship clear from the context — see the second and third possessive construction in (26) (second line), and (27) (third line) (continuation of (25)) — this is part of Mongowur's vehement attack on what was said in a 1973 recording:

so they-LINK-GEN ancestor Waspen younger.sibling-3masc.sg

{[te-ke-na] Waspen te hembo-ya-t tari},
he-LINK-GEN Waspen he NEG-come-NEG first

[wuna-de kolmadeka] tari de=ya-k.
I.NON.NOM-FOC ancestor first 3masc.sg=come-DECL

'So their ancestor Waspen was a younger sibling, his (lot), Waspen, did not come first (to the ancestral territory), my ancestor came first'

The order can be reversed only if there is a genitive marker, and if the possessed noun is topical, as in (28) (the beginning of the story where (26)-(27) come from) and in (29):

(28) [Yafa wuna-de-na] Kafal-ed
father I.NON.NOM-FOC-GEN Kafal-3masc.sg
'My father (lit father my) is Kafal'

(29) {Hula hara-tat}, {{kini kuna-de-na] sekete-k-wuni}
axe get-SS tail you.pl.NON.NOM-FOC-GEN cut-FUT-1sg
'Having got a an axe, I will cut off your tail' (says a man to women who turned into burds)

A genitive marked pronoun (with our without a focus marker) can be used headlessly as in (27) (line 2, (30) and (31) (second line):

(30) an hupa wuna-na-d
DEM.PROX land I.NON.NOM-GEN-3masc.sg
'This land is mine' (but see §8)

In summary: the main differences between possessive NPs with pronominal possessors and those with nominal possessor are:
(a) the lack of a morphological option of focussing the possessor in NP with nominal possessor;
(b) the lack of specificity/individuation distinction for possessors NPs with pronominal possessor;
(c) no whole-part or juxtaposition available for pronominal possessors. And see Table 6.
Table 6 NPs with nominal and pronominal possessor: a comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>NPs with nominal possessor</th>
<th>NP with Pronominal possessor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus morpheme on Possessor</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes (constructions II-III, Table 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specificity distinctions for Possessor</td>
<td>yes (constructions B-D, Table 4)</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole-part construction</td>
<td>yes (construction A, Table 5)</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These differences can be accounted for by the nature of pronouns as possessors (e.g. their inherent specificity and definiteness; plus a strong tendency to have animate reference) and the nature of the whole-part constructions.

3.6 Two archaic possessive constructions

Possessor marker -ba occurs on demonstratives and a couple of nouns; its meanings cover association and origin, e.g. one kay-ba takwa (DEM.DIST.masc.sg house-ARCHAIC.GEN woman) 'woman of that house' (the meaning is said to be the same as one kay-na takwa (DEM.DIST.masc.sg house-.GEN woman), and:

\[(31) \quad \text{[wuna-de yafa] ane-ba-d,} \\
\quad \text{I.NON.NOM-FOC father DEM.PROX-ARCHAIC.GEN-3masc.sg} \\
\quad \text{ane [kaitepa-na-d].} \\
\quad \text{DEM.PROX village-GEN-3masc.sg} \\
\quad \text{'My father is from here, from this village'}\]

\[(32) \quad \text{ani nokeda nuwa-yafa-ba} \\
\quad \text{1du single mother-father-ARCHAIC.GEN} \\
\quad \text{'We two are from same parents'}\]

Another archaic construction appears at the end of a brief story by the late Krias, recorded by Ross Bowden in 1973:

\[(33) \quad \text{Wuna-ke-le hudi kara ole-k,} \\
\quad \text{I.NON.NOM-LINK-fem.sg talk ready DEM.MID-DECL} \\
\quad \text{ole-k wuna-ke-l stori.} \\
\quad \text{DEM.MID-DECL I.NON.NOM-LINK-fem.sg story} \\
\quad \text{'My talk is redy, finished, my story is finished'}\]

The marker -ke- s reminiscent of the linker -ke- in third person possessive pronouns...I was told this is very archaic and nobody talks like that any more.
3.7 A note on complex possessive constructions

One possessive construction can be embedded within another one. In (34), a whole-part construction (A) is within a juxtaposition construction (B).

(34) ane hoi-gune-de afaka-bori epi
DEM.PROX.masc.sg give-2pl-REL/FOC bone-pig part
'part of this pig's bone you gave (me)'

In (35), the possessor within a D-type construction is a construction with a pronominal possessor:

(35) [[pre-ke-na hara-nuwa] le-ke-na wuñaka]
3du-LINK-GEN get-not.own.mother 3fem.sg-LINK-GEN mind
i no mui de=te-k
NEG:TP good 3masc.sg=be-DECL
'The mind of their adopted mother was not good'

4 Special instances of possession marking

4.1 Omitting the possessor

Possessor may be omitted and often is omitted with

(a) body parts, if the possessor and the subject are coreferential, and in idiomatic expressions, e.g.

(36) le yari hangri-l
she belly angry-3fem.sg
'She is angry' (lit. she belly hurt)

(37) as nebi=de hele-k
dog tooth=3masc.sg bare-DECL
'The dog is baring (his) teeth'; 'the dog is angry'

(b) all kinship terms, such as yafa 'father', ninegaya 'sister' (as in (42)), hai 'brother', ñomos 'younger sibling', omo 'elder sibling', if the possessor is 1st person (especially singular) or second person (this is especially so when a relative is being addressed).

Omitting the possessor in compounds such as nuwa-yafa (mother-father) 'parents' (as in (32)), omo-ñomos (younger.sibling-elder.sibling) 'siblings' or towu-lan (brother-in-law-husband) and kinship terms used to describe a classificatory or blood relationship indicates lack of specific possessor.

4.2 A special case of possession marking — 'All about my mother'

Similarly to a number of languages (e.g. Nanti: Michael 2013: 157; 'Dongo Ko, Mba, Uganda etc: Aikhenvald 2013a: 10-11), one kinship term, 'mother', has semi-suppletive forms marking possession: aywa 'one's own mother' and nuwa 'someone else's mother' (see also (1), (2), (4), (32),
The term *nuwa* 'non-first person's mother' is used in a more general sense of 'female', e.g. *nuwa ŋaka* (not.own.mother chicken) 'hen', *yafa ŋaka* (father chicken) 'rooster'.

The term *aywa* 'my mother' is used when one talks about one's own mother: see (38a, e); *nuwa* is used to talk about someone else's mother as in (38b, c). *Aywa* can occur with an overt possessor — a first person pronoun. In (38e), 'my own mother' is contrasted to other people.

(38) a. Wuni an Waspene-na yanane-wun(i).
    I DEM.PROX Waspen-GEN grandchild-1sg
    Wunar *aywa* say-kupa-mbu=le hara-k, wean-re.
    I.NON.NOM+ACC own.mother mark-land-LOC=3fem.sg get-DECL I.NON.NOM-ACC
    'I am a granddaughter of this Waspen (we were talking about). *My mother* have birth to me in the ancestral place.'

b. Saykupa-bu-mene le=hara-k, le-ke-na *nuwa*.
    mark-land-LOC-ONLY/SAME 3fem.sg=get-DECL she-LINK-GEN not.own.mother
    'Her (Mongowur's) *mother* also gave birth to her in the ancestral place.'

c. Le-ke-na *nuwa* tɔmbwi-na-l, tɔmbwi-takwa-l,
    she-LINK-GEN not.own.mother Kwoma-POSS-3fem.sg Kwoma-woman-3fem.sg
    'Her mother is a Kwoma, she is a Kwoma woman.'

d. Wuna-de-na kaitepa takwa-l, Klava-takwa-l.
    I.NON.NOM-FOC-GEN village woman3fem.sg Klava-woman-3fem.sg
    'Mine (contrast) is a village woman (that is, a Yalaku woman), she is a woman of the Klava clan.'

e. Wuna-de-na *aywa*=le Klava-takwa-l.
    I.NON.NOM-FOC-GEN own.mother=3fem.sg Klava-woman-3fem.sg
    'MY *mother* is a woman of the Klava clan'.

One can recognise a speech report by the use of *aywa*; in (40) the two children are talking about their parents (using an argument elaboration/inclusory construction):

(39) Ukw=bere wo-k, nagw=bere i-ke, *aywa*=bere *yafa*.
    thus=3du say-DECL sago=3du go-DECL own.mother=3du father
    'The two (children) said, them two went to (work on) sago, our mother (and) father'

One addresses one's own mother as *aywa*, as in (40).

(40) endate, ukwa=de wo-k, *aywa*.
    then thus=3masc.sg say-DECL own.mother!
    'then he said thus, Mother!'

But she is not his mother! And:

(41) ukw=le wo-k, wuni mena-de *aywa* heket$.
    thus=3fem.sg say-DECL I 2masc.sg,NON.NOM-FOC own.mother NEG.EXIST
'I am not YOUR 'my mother', I am (your) sister'

Aywa 'my/our mother' may perhaps be used as a mark of empathy. (42) comes from a story about a cassowary who turned into a woman, and her son:

(42) [i-te] [tepanekere noke tSe=yaregwa-k]
go-SS lizard:unmarked.O one 3pl=kill-DECL

[yarengwa-ta], [te=hari-ya-te kai-r]
kill-SS 3masc.sg=carry-come-SS house-ALL

ya-te, aywa=le-re te=wo-k,
come-SS own.mother=HPC.fem.sg-ACC 3masc.sg=say-DECL

me-tu wuna-na tepaneker
IMPV-cook I.NON.NOM-GEN lizard:unmarked.O

'Having gone (home), he (child) said to that very mother: "You cook my lizard!"'

Mother cooks it, eats it up, the boy comes back and asks 'Where is my lizard?', and:

(43) Aywa=le wo-k, heketS pu ha-yatSe-wuni
own.mother=3fem.sg say-DECL NEG.EXIST COMPL eat-FULLY-1sg

'Mother said, it is not there, I have already eaten it fully'

The only neighbouring language which has a similar semi-suppletive distinction is Yessan-Mayo (not demonstrably related to Yalaku): nawa 'another's mother', nawiy 'own mother' (Foreman 1974: 29). No other Ndu language has this.

5 Does Yalaku have external possession?

Body parts and other parts appear in what looks like 'double object constructions' similar to external possession (e.g. 'she hit him on his hand'). In (44), the man's shoulder was slightly hit by a spirit:

(44) te-re tofi-mbu le=vya-k
he-ACC shoulder.blade-LOC 3fem.sg=hit-DECL

'She hit him on the shoulder blade'

In (45), a woman was bitten on the ear:

(45) nuba-takwa-re wane vaete-le-kate
young-woman-ACC ear bite-3fem.sg-DS

'After she (spirit woman) bit the young woman's ear...' (lit. bit the young woman (O) ear (O))...
This is not obligatory (see (29), where a possessive construction containing a body part occupies the O slot). Examples like (46) suggest that such 'double object constructions' can be used in other contexts of 'part-whole' relationships:

(46) une kaitepa=de-re te=yofu-teke-ke kay
DEM.DIST.masc.sg village =3masc.sg-ACC.HPC 3masc.sg=destroy-fully-DECL house
'He (the spirit woman's father) completely destroyed houses in that village' (lit. destroyed the village (with respect) to house(s)'

The 'whole' (not the part) can take differential object marking (and can be treated as the 'primary' object).

6 Predicative possession
Yalaku has no verb meaning 'have' or 'belong'. Predicative possession can be expressed using (a) a comitative strategy, and (b) a verbless clause with the meaning of identification.

6.1 Comitative strategy 'be with'
This can be used for any type of possessor or possesee and refers to any kind of possession — temporary or permanent.

(47) apatepa poko-way wuni=te
many thing-COMIT 1sg=be
'I have many things' (lit. I am with many things)

(48) ase wuñaka-way te=te
dog mind-COMIT 3masc.sg-be
'A dog has a mind' (lit. a dog is with mind; from a conversation about the meaning of 'mind')

The verb re- 'sit, stay' can be used as an alternative to te- 'be':

(49) wuni ane kukaw utSi-aw wuni=re
I DEM.PROX.masc.sg saucepan DEM.DIST.pl-DEM.PROX.pl-COMIT 1sg=sit
'Here I have all kinds of saucepans' (lit. I am with…; said ironically)

These constructions typically imply a definite possessor; the possessed can be definite or indefinite.

6.2 Verbless clause
A verbless clause is used if the possessed is the topic: (50) is about what luluai and tultul look like.

(50) Luluway-na viti-bere ŋiki obu-sop, tultul-na nokeda-d.
luluai-GEN two-3du red head-dress tultul-GEN single-3masc.sg
'A luluai (colonial title) has two red headbands, tultul has one' (lit. Luluai's are two red head dresses, tultul's is one)
A comitative strategy (a) and a verbless clause (b) are contrasted in (51): (51)a is about
the woman; and (51b) about the children:

(51)a. ole takwa=le ñenugu-wey le=te-ke,
DEM.MID.DIST woman=3fem.sgHPC child+PL-COMIT 3fem.sg=be-DECL

b. le-ke-na ñenugu viti-bere
she-LINK-GEN child+PL two-3du

'That woman had children, her children were two' (and then it is all about the two children)

6.3 Negative predicative possession
This is expressed with a negative existential heket$ (see (41) and (43)), and the possessor as an
extraposed topic:

(52) Wuni omo-ñomos heket$
I.NOM elder.sibling-younger.sibling NEG.EXIST
Wuni takwa-ñen nok heket$
I woman-child one NEG.EXIST
'I don't have any siblings, I don't have a single daughter'

If the Possessed is the topic, the alternative is a negated verb 'be', as in (55):

(53) ana-de-na pori ase hebo-te-t
1du-FOC-GEN pig dog NEG-be-NEG
'We two have no pig (nor) dog' (lit. Our (dual) pig and dog do not exist: previous stretch
described how the two got rid of their pigs and dogs)

We can recall, form (35), that Tok Pisin forms make their way into Yalaku. Kwariag, a
highly competent speaker, said in church, urging people to donate food to the flood-stricken
communities:

(54) ñani i gat ha-boko, t$ i no gat ha-boko
1pl have.TP eat-thing they have.not.TP eat-thing
'We have food, they (people who live on the river banks) do not have food'.

7 'Segmentary' person
Similarly to many Papuan languages, first person 'I' is used as a cover term for the whole clan group
(this is known as 'segmentary person'), especially in possessive forms, by men and women. See the
Picture. And (55) comes from a story by Mongowur (same as (25)-(28)), an elderly lady:

(55) Wuna-de hupa mafui-de, wuna-de-na kolmadeka-na hupa-d,
I.NON.NOM-FOC land big-3masc.sg I.NON.NOM-FOC-GEN ancestor-GEN land-3masc.sg
'My land (meaning: my clan\'s land) is big, it is my ancestor\'s land'

Segmentary possessive marking is typical for land, landmarks, and typical totemic possessions —
including spirit (warî), rivulet (viri) and attributes of the clan (t$aba).
8 Summary

I. Yalaku has a complex system of NP-internal possession, with the choice of one of four constructions depending on (A) the type of possessee/possessor, or (B-D) specificity of Possessor.

II. Within NP-internal possessive constructions, Pronominal Possessor can take the focus marker.

III. Body parts and kinship terms have special features (e.g. different forms for 'my mother' and 'not-my mother').

IV. The choice of a comitative and a verbless clause strategy for predicative possession is determined by the properties of possessor/possessee.

APPENDIX. The origin of possessive marking in Yalaku

- The genitive marker -na has cognates in the Iatmul genitive and associative marker -na, e.g. gu-na vaala (water-GEN canoe) 'water canoe' and in the Hanga Kundi variety of Wosera -na 'possessive suffix with animate possessors'.
- The genitive –ba is cognate to Manambu -ba, a genitive marker used on just two nouns, and also Gala –ba, a regular genitive; the possessive construction in (33) looks very Manambu.
- Possessive constructions with a pronominal linker are shared with Manambu and Kwoma. Possessive constructions with a linker in Kwoma appear to refer to a specific Possessee, just like in Yalaku and Manambu; they may have resulted of areal diffusion…
- Verbless clause strategy for predicative possession is shared by all known Ndu languages.
- The comitative strategy is shared with Manambu only (where its use is limited).

References

Nayau, Ken. n/d. 'Organized phonology data. Yalaku'. SIL, Ukarumpa.

Abbreviations: ACC - accusative; ALL - allative; COMIT - comitative; COMPL - completive; DAT - dative; DECL - declarative; DEM.DIST - distal demonstrative; DEM.MID.DIST - mid-distance demonstrative; DS - different subject; EXIST - existential; fem - feminine; FOC - focus marker; FUT - future; GEN - genitive; HPC - highlighted participant case; IMPV - imperative; LINK - linker, LOC - locative, masc - masculine; MOMENT - momentaneous; NEG - negation; NON.NOM - non nominative form of a pronoun; pl - plural; RED - reduplication; sg - singular; SS - same subject.
Picture 1. Segmentary person: *Wuna-na nebeke-d* (I.NON.NOM-GEN mountain-3masc.sg) 'It is my mountain'