Äiwoo *wâtu* and the typology of comparatives

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Abstract

This paper examines a comparative construction in the Oceanic language Äiwoo and argues that it differs from those known from the typological literature on comparatives on two counts. It is similar to a so-called 'EXCEED' comparative in involving a morpheme meaning 'go far'; but unlike canonical EXCEED comparatives, the construction is intransitive, and the standard of comparison is expressed as an oblique. Moreover, the standard is indicated not only by this oblique phrase but also by a directional marker on the verb, in an extension of the frequent use of directionals in Äiwoo to indicate peripheral participants. This construction thus, on the one hand, expands the established typology of comparative constructions; and on the other, shows that the use of directional morphemes to indicate peripheral participants, otherwise attested e.g. for recipients of GIVE verbs, may extend to the standard in comparative constructions, pointing to an avenue for further typological exploration.

Keywords: comparatives, typology, Oceanic, directionals

1. Introduction

In this paper, I discuss a construction in the Oceanic language Äiwoo which I call the *wâtu* comparative, illustrated in (1):

(1) Nuwopa   to   elo-wâtu-kä
     house   POSS:LOC.1MIN   be.big-WATU-DIR:3

     ngä   mi-to-mu.
     LOC   one-POSS:LOC-2MIN.

     'My house is bigger than yours.'

I argue that this construction differs from those known from the typological literature on comparatives, on two counts. Firstly, it combines a marker on the verb, which from a semantic point of view may be considered to fall into the 'EXCEED' type (Stassen 1985, Schapper and de Vries 2018) with prepositional marking of the standard of comparison, thus appearing to fall

between two established types. Schapper and de Vries (2018) show that structurally similar constructions exist in some languages in the Melanesian region; but their examples are argued to be transitional in the sense of resulting from contact between two systems. By contrast, there is no evidence that the Äiwoo construction is transitional in this sense; while EXCEED comparatives are generally formed with a transitive verb 'exceed, surpass, go past', the form *wâtu* in Äiwoo rather seems to derive from an intransitive motion verb 'go away, go far(ther)'. This represents a comparative type which has not been discussed in previous typological surveys, although there are various Oceanic languages, in particular of the Polynesian subgroup, which show constructions sharing many of the same properties. These parallels will be discussed in 4.5.1 and 4.5.3.

Secondly, the role played by directional suffixes in Äiwoo comparatives (cf. –*kä* '3rd person directional' in example (1)) seems typologically unusual. Äiwoo uses deictic directionals to indicate the standard of comparison, and this can be linked to the role of directionals in referring to peripheral participants more generally. Again, this is both a function of directionals and a property of comparative constructions for which I am not aware of clear parallels in the literature, though again there are similarities to various other Oceanic languages, which I will discuss in 4.5.3.

In what follows, I will use the following terminology: I will call a morpheme a **comparative marker** if its occurrence with a property predicate leads to a comparative reading; thus, in *Mary's book is more interesting than John's, more* functions as a comparative marker. I follow Stassen (1985) in referring to the NP denoting the entity with which something is compared (e.g. *John's [book]* in the preceding examples) as the **standard** NP. For the object compared (*Mary's book*), I will likewise follow Stassen and use the term **comparee**.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 introduces the Äiwoo language and outlines the aspects of its grammar which are relevant to the rest of the discussion: the voice system (2.2), serial verb constructions and their properties (2.3), the system of directionals (2.4), and the semantics of the prepositions that occur in comparative constructions (2.5). Section 3 presents the various functions of the form *wâtu* and argues that they are semantically related, such that the comparative function found with stative property verbs can be derived from the 'far(ther), long(er)' function found with motion verbs, via the 'do X more' function occurring with certain activity verbs. Section 4 then places the *wâtu* comparative in the context of the typology of

comparatives, as well as that of the other comparative constructions found in Äiwoo. It argues that the apparently 'mixed' type of the *wâtu* comparative, which seems to show properties both of so-called EXCEED comparatives and of adpositional comparatives, is in fact not a result of historical mixing, but represents a distinct type whereby an intransitive motion verb grammaticalises as a comparative marker, giving rise to a formally intransitive construction with an oblique standard. It notes that there are closely parallel constructions in certain other Oceanic languages, in particular those of the Polynesian subgroup, and suggests that the grammaticalisation path proposed by Hohaus (2018) for Samoan can largely also account for the construction in Äiwoo, although the two languages do differ in the more detailed properties of their respective comparative constructions. Moreover, this section discusses the interplay between adpositional marking of the standard and the use of deictic directionals in intransitive comparative constructions in Äiwoo, and argues that this is a result of the more general function of such directionals to refer to peripheral participants in an event. Section 5 sums up the discussion and its implications for the typology both of comparative constructions and of participant marking.

2. The Äiwoo language

2.1. General characteristics

Äiwoo is spoken in the Reef Islands in the southwest Pacific, in Solomon Islands' easternmost Temotu province. It is classified by Ross and Næss (2007) as belonging to the Temotu first-order subgroup of Oceanic, in turn a subgroup of the Austronesian language family; the other members of the Temotu subgroup are the languages of Santa Cruz, Vanikoro and Utupua islands, all within Temotu Province.

Äiwoo has approximately 8,000 speakers; as well as in the Reef Islands, it is spoken in settlements elsewhere in Temotu, particularly on Santa Cruz, and in the national capital Honiara. In the Reef Islands, Äiwoo has a long history of contact with the Polynesian Outlier Vaeakau-Taumako, spoken in the Outer Reef Islands, and as a result of this contact shows a large number of Polynesian borrowings (Næss and Jenny 2011).

Äiwoo is unusual for an Oceanic language in that it has retained a reduced version of the so-called symmetrical voice system found in Western Austronesian languages; it shows two transitive constructions, an actor voice and an undergoer voice, as well as a circumstantial voice

which is marked by a clitic that can be added to either an actor-voice or an undergoer-voice root. It moreover shows a complex verb structure with morphological marking of actor (and in some cases, undergoer) arguments on the verb, extensive serialisation of verb roots, and aspect, mood and tense marked both by prefixes and, in some cases, enclitics. Below, I outline the aspects of Äiwoo grammar that are of relevance for the discussion in this paper.

The paper builds primarily on data collected through fieldwork in Honiara and the Reef Islands in 2004, 2005 and 2015[1]. Most of the data comes from recorded texts, some of which (those recorded in 2015) are available from the Endangered Languages Archive (https://elar.soas.ac.uk/Collection/MPI1032004). The examples also include some sentences which were elicited from a single speaker as translations of English sentences with comparatives. One additional example is taken from the Äiwoo translation of the Gospel of Mark; this is indicated on the relevant example.

2.2. Voice and person marking

As noted in 2.1, transitive verbs in Äiwoo generally have two forms, an actor-voice and an undergoer-voice forms. Verbs fall into several inflectional classes depending on the relationship between the two forms (Roversi 2019).

Verbs in the actor voice take prefixes indicating the person and number of the actor argument; the same prefixes are found on intransitive verbs (2a-b)[2]:

(2)   a.   Toponu   mo   lâpu
             turtle   CONJ   rat

[2] Äiwoo person marking is organised according to a so-called minimal-augmented system, where 'you and I' ('1st+2nd' person) functions as a distinct person category. It patterns like the other persons in that it can be "pluralised," but since its "singular" form refers to two people, the terms 'minimal' and 'augmented' are used instead of 'singular' and 'plural' for such systems. The 'unit-augmented' number refers to minimal number plus one, that is, two people for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd persons, but three for the 1st+2nd person: 'you and I plus one'. Abbreviations used in glosses follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules where these apply. Additional abbreviations: AUG augmented number, AV actor voice, COMP complementiser, CV circumstantial voice, DIR directional, GENR general tense-aspect-mood marker, HAB habitual, MIN minimal number, MOD modal particle, RED reduplication, UA unit-augmented number, UV undergoer voice.

lâ   ki-**li**-mo-le=to=wâ.

DIST   IPFV-3AUG-stay-UA=now=DIST

'The turtle and the rat were staying together.'

b.   Pe-sime-engâ   **li**-epave=to   sii=kâ.

people-person-DEM:DIST   3AUG-cook.AV=now   fish=DIST

'The people cooked fish.'

By contrast, undergoer-voice verbs take actor suffixes:

(3)   a.   Sii   lâ   ki-epavi-**i**=to=wâ.

fish   DIST   IPFV-cook.UV-3AUG=now=DIST

'They cooked the fish.'

The actor prefixes found with intransitive verbs and actor-voice transitives are given in Table 1, and the actor suffixes found with undergoer-voice transitives in Table 2. Unit-augmented number is indicated in all cases by combining a suffix –*le* with an augmented-number person marker, regardless of whether the latter is a prefix or a suffix, as in (2a) vs. (4):

(4)   I-tu-lâ-mä-i-le.

PFV-bring.UV-go.out-3AUG-UA

'The two of them brought it here.'

Table 1: Actor prefixes

	Minimal	Augmented
1	i-	me-
1+2	ji-	de-
2	mu-/mi-	mi-
3	Ø	li-/lu-

Table 2: Actor suffixes

	Minimal	Augmented
1	-no/-nee	-ngo(pu)
1+2	-ji	-de
2	-mu	-mi
3	Ø/-gu	-i

2.3. Serial verb constructions

A single inflected verb form in Äiwoo often includes several lexical roots. Such constructions fall into two patterns. In the first, the first verb root indicates a cause and the second its effect, as in (5):

(5)   a.   Mo   dee   nye-ku-pu-to-kä=nä=nâ

            CONJ   this   way-IPFV-come-go.in-DIR:3=CV=DIST

            lâ   i-**so-bengi**=nâ.

            DEIC   PFV-stand-block=DIST

            '... because he was blocking the way she had come.'

     b.   Maa   ibe   ku-**wo-peli**-ji=ngâ …

            MOD   old.man   IPFV-go-pass-1+2MIN=DIST

            'If we leave the old man behind …'

In this construction, the transitivity and voice of the whole form is determined by the final verb. In (5a), the whole form has an O argument[3], *nyekuputokänä* 'the way she had come'; this is clearly licensed by the transitive undergoer-voice form *bengi* 'block', since the V1 *so* 'stand' is intransitive. Similarly, in (5b), the complex form *wo-peli* 'pass by, abandon' takes the O argument *ibe* 'old man', as well as showing person suffixing, indicating that this is an undergoer-voice form; here the V1 *wo* 'go' is again intransitive, while *peli* is transitive undergoer voice. In the second and more frequent type of serial verb construction, the V1 serves as a head which is modified by one or more following verbs and/or adverbs. Distinguishing between modifying

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[3] Defined as the non-agentive argument of a transitive verb, cf. Dixon (1994: 6-8).

verbs and manner adverbs in this construction is not a simple matter, as it is common for verbs in serial verb constructions to gradually become restricted in distribution until they no longer occur outside of the SVC, at which point it may be argued to function as an adverb rather than a verb (Aikhenvald 2006: 49-50). I classify roots as manner adverbs in Äiwoo if they are attested as modifiers to a verb in a complex form, but not as independent predicates; but a rigid distinction may not be possible to draw in all cases. In (6a), I consider *mana* 'very' to be an adverb because I have no evidence that it can occur as a predicate on its own; whereas *päko* 'be good' is a verb which is commonly found in an independent predicate use.

(6) a. Ki-lo~lopâ-päko-mana=to.
         IPFV-RED~speak-be.good-very=now
         '(The child) could speak very well now.'

     b. Me-wâ=naa   me-ku-wokâu-eke=kâ.
         1AUG-go=HAB   1AUG-IPFV-bathe-be.fast=DIST
         'We would go and bathe quickly.'

In this type of SVC, voice and transitivity is determined by the V1. In examples (6ab) the V1s *lopâ* 'speak' and *wokâu* 'bathe' are intransitive, as seen by the actor prefix in (6b). When the V1 is an undergoer-voice transitive, any following intransitive verbs (and most adverbs) take the suffix *–i* or *–nyi(i)*; the choice between the two seems to be lexically determined. Thus *päko* 'be good' in (7a) takes the suffix *–i* when modifying the transitive undergoer-voice V1 *lobâku* 'fold', and *eke* 'be fast' in (7b) takes the suffix *-nyi* when modifying the transitive undergoer-voice V1 *ngä* 'eat'.

(7) a. I-lo~lobâku-päko-i-kä.
         PFV-RED~fold.UV-be.good-UV-DIR:3
         'Fold it properly.'

     b. Inâ   wâle-eke=ke   sii   eângâ   i-ngä-eke-nyi=nâ.
         3MIN   hurry-be.fast=PROX fish   DEM:DIST   PFV-eat.UV-be.fast-UV=DIST
         'He hurried up and ate the fish quickly.'

2.4 Directionals

Oceanic languages generally show one or more sets of morphemes indicating the physical or metaphorical direction of the verbal event (e.g. Ross 2003, Senft 2004, François 2004). Äiwoo has two formally and semantically distinct sets of directionals. The topological directionals *ee* 'up', *woli* 'down', *to* 'in' and *lâ* 'out' pattern like verbs which may be serialised to another verb, as described in 2.3, although they differ from other non-initial verbs in SVCs in that they do not show the suffix *–i/-nyi(i)* when serialised to a transitive undergoer-voice verb.

(8)   a.   I-käi-ee-i   uu.
              PFV-drag.UV-go.up-3AUG   above
              'They dragged him up.'

        b.   Dee   ile   ki-päi-lâ-wâ-i=to=we.
              this.thing   PROX IPFV-throw.UV-go.out-DIR:2-3AUG=now=PROX
              'They have thrown this thing out now.'

By contrast, the deictic directionals *–mä* 'towards speaker', *-wâ* 'towards addressee', *-kä/-kâ* 'towards 3rd person' are suffixes which attach after all lexical roots, including the topological directionals, but precede person suffixes.

(9)   a.   Ki-ngo-epu-mä-mi=aa.
              IPFV-listen-again-DIR:1-2AUG=FUT
              'You will listen to me again.'

        b.   Ku-wâgupe-lâ-wâ-no=to=wâ.
              IPFV-explain-go.out-DIR:2-1MIN=now=DIST
              'I have explained it to you.'

        c.   Ki-lopoi-woli-kä-i=to.
              IPFV-push.UV-go.down-DIR:3-3AUG=now
              'They push it down.'

Directionals are highly frequent in Äiwoo, and play an important role in disambiguating spatial reference, since prepositions have very general reference, cf 2.5 below and Næss (2018a).

Moreover, peripheral participants not subcategorised for by the verb are often indicated by a directional, especially if they are human. Äiwoo does not have underived ditransitive verbs; *lää/la* 'give (AV/UV)' takes the object given as its undergoer argument, with the recipient, if overtly expressed, encoded in a prepositional phrase with the preposition *go*. However, the recipient is also indicated by means of a directional suffix on the verb (10a), and this is often the only encoding of the recipient in the clause (10b-c):

(10)   a.   Sii   i-la-kä   go   site.

                 fish   PFV-give.UV-DIR:3 PREP sister.of.woman.3MIN

                 'She gave the fish to her sister.'

        b.   Nââ   sime   i-la-mä-i.

                 voice.3MIN   person PFV-give.UV-DIR:1-3AUG

                 'They gave me word/news.'

        c.   Kele   de-laki   enge   ki-la-wâ-ngo-le.

                 this   thing-be.small DEM:PROX   IPFV-give.UV-DIR:2-1AUG-UA

                 'This small thing here we give to you.'

(11a-c) shows some examples of directionals indicating peripheral participants with other verbs; in (11a) the directional indicates a benefactive participant, in (11b) a spatial goal, and in (11c) a source:

(11)   a.   Pe-sibiliwââlili   ilâ=kâ   ki-li-epave-mä=kaa

                 people-young.woman DIST=DIST   IPFV-3AUG-cook.AV-DIR:1=FUT

                 de-ki-li-ngä.

                 thing-IPFV-3AUG-eat.UV

                 'The young women will cook food for us.'

        b.   Ki-miou-ee-kä   ngâ   nuwale.

                 IPFV-be.heavy-go.up-DIR:3 LOC   rope

                 'She puts her weight on the rope.'

        c.   Mu-wâ-une   kâ-mu=wä   maa   nââ-mu   nâ-luwa-wâ.

                 2MIN-CAUS-be.true say-2MIN=CV MOD voice-2MIN   IRR-take-DIR:2

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'You agree for her to record you (lit. take your voice from you).'

2.5 Prepositions

Äiwoo has a very restricted set of prepositions. The two that are relevant for the present paper are the general spatial preposition *ngä*/*ngâ*[4], and the directional/instrumental/purposive *go*. *ngä* indicates that the referent of its complement stands in some spatial relation to another entity, but does not specify this relation; accordingly, it may translate into English as e.g. *in, at, on, to, from*, etc. The precise relation involved is generally apparent from the verb and the directional(s) appearing on the verb, though in some cases context and general world knowledge is required to disambiguate (Næss 2018a).

(12) a. I-ki-tokoli   ngâ   nuwopa.
          1MIN-IPFV-sit   LOC   house
          'I am sitting in the house.'

      b. Tepekoulâ   nogo   i-tu-mä   ngâ   nuwopa.
          things   POSS:TOOL.3MIN   PFV-bring.UV-DIR:1 LOC   house
          'He took his things to the house.'

      c. I-wo-lâ   ngâ   nuwopa.
          PFV-go-go.out   LOC   house
          'She came out of the house.'

There is a set of forms with essentially the same semantics as *ngä*, but with marking for person/number of the complement; these are generally used when the complement is pronominal and are assumed here to be person-marked versions of *ngä*. Person-marked prepositions are not uncommon in Oceanic languages (Lichtenberk 1985).

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[4] In the orthography used for Äiwoo, <ä> represents a low front vowel [æ] while <â> represents a low back rounded or unrounded vowel [ɑ, ɒ]. In many (though not all) cases, *ä* undergoes assimilation and becomes *â* when the following syllable has a back vowel; thus *ngä* has the form *ngâ* in examples such as (11).

Table 3: Forms of *ngâgo*

	MIN	AUG
1	*ngâgu*	*ngâgungopu*
1+2	*ngâguji*	*ngâgude*
2	*ngâgumu*	*ngâgumi*
3	*ngâgo*	*ngâgoi*

The preposition *go* similarly has a wide range of meanings. It is used for spatial goals and sources, typically when the complement is human (13a-b); for instruments and means (13c); and for purposes and reasons (13d).

(13) a. Pu-kä   go   gisi-mu!
          go-DIR:3   PREP brother.of.man-2MIN
          'Go to your brother!

      b. I-wo-mä   go   Tumä   uu.
          PFV-go-DIR:1   PREP father.3MIN   above
          'He came to us from his Father above.'

      c. Ki-li-tei   go   nupo.
          IPFV-3AUG-fish   PREP net
          'They are fishing with a net.'

      d. Me-wä   ngâ   numanää   go   näte.
          1AUG-go   LOC   mangrove   PREP firewood
          'We went to the mangroves for firewood.'

3. The functions of *wâtu*

3.1 Formal status

The focus of this paper is on comparative constructions formed with the morpheme *wâtu*. As will be seen in the following, this form occurs as a modifier of verbs in complex constructions structurally parallel to those illustrated in (6-7) above. It is not, however, attested as an independent predicate. I therefore classify *wâtu* as an adverb, according to the criteria discussed in 2.3, although I will argue below that it likely derives historically from a verb.

3.2 Spatial and temporal uses

When used with motion verbs, *wâtu* generally means 'far(ther):

(14) a.   Ngaa näle lâ   i-wee-maa,

so   sun   DIST PFV-go.up-LOC:DIST

ilâ   numwakon   va   eângâ   lâto   lu-mâpo=kâ,

DIST field   corn   young DEM:DIST   thus   3AUG-dry=DIST

go   nyikile-i   ba   i-pu-wâtu=gu.

because   root-3AUG   NEG1 PFV-go-WATU=NEG2

'But when the sun came up, the young corn dried up, because their roots did not

go far.' (Mark 4:6)

    b.   Dä   nelebi ku-lu-poli-wâtu-eopu-kä,

some   group IPFV-3AUG-go.down-WATU-also-DIR:3

ilâ   Honiara=kâ.

DIST Honiara=DIST

'(After their exams, some children go on to further education in Santa Cruz, and)

some go even farther, to Honiara.'

    c.   Mo   lâ   mi-ki-eâ-lâ-wâtu=kâ   ngä   ny-ââ,

CONJ DIST   2MIN-IPFV-paddle-go.out-WATU=DIST LOC place-DEM:DIST

nâgulo=to=wâ.

be.dark=now=DIST

'(in shallower water the sea is transparent,) but if you paddle farther out, it's

dark.'

In (15), *wâtu* has a temporal meaning 'long (time)':

(15) Mo   ba-ngä   ki-so-wâtu-kä   eâmo

CONJ   NEG-yet   IPFV-stand-WATU-DIR:3   CONJ

tololo   wä   sime lâ   ki-mepu-woli-mä=to=wâ.

liquid.rot of.3MIN   person DIST IPFV-drip-go.down-DIR:1=now=DIST

'But he hadn't been standing there long when liquid from a dead body started dripping down on him.'

Examples (14a) and (15) show that while a comparative reading 'farther, longer' is the most frequent in my material, it is not inherent to the form as such. The basic meaning appears to be 'far, long', with the comparative reading in examples like (14b-c) induced by the presence of a standard of comparison in the context.

3.3 The 'more' reading

With some verbs, mainly transitive undergoer-voice verbs, *wâtu* is attested as meaning 'do x more':

(16) a. Maa   nä-väpelâ-wâtu-i-kâ-mu   naae   wä?
        MOD IRR-explain.UV-WATU-UV-DIR-2MIN   story   of.3MIN
        'Can you explain the story about it a bit more?'
     b. Ngaa   ki-âmole-wâtu-i-i   jii.
        so   IPFV-watch.UV-WATU-UV-3AUG 3AUG
        '(The children in kindergarten are small,) so they look after them more.'

This construction patterns like the SVC illustrated in examples (7): when *wâtu* follows a transitive undergoer-voice verb, it takes the suffix –*i*, which I gloss as 'undergoer voice'.

3.4 *wâtu* as comparative marker

With stative intransitive verbs, *wâtu* gives a comparative reading. If the standard of comparison is overtly expressed, it is introduced by the preposition *ngä* (cf 2.5 above):

(17) a. Nuwopa   to   elo-wâtu-kä
        house   POSS:LOC.1MIN   be.big-WATU-DIR:3
        ngä   mi-to-mu.
        LOC   one-POSS:LOC-2MIN.
        'My house is bigger than yours.'

b.　　　Eâmo　ilâ　　ku-wee　　　uu=kâ　　　　nulou,
　　　　　CONJ　DIST　IPFV-go.up　above=DIST　small.leafed.sago

　　　　　go　　　nulou　　　　　　ngângo-wâtu=kâ.
　　　　　because　small.leafed.sago　　be.strong-WATU=DIST

　　　　　'(They only make the walls of a house from sago leaves.) And what goes up

　　　　　above (in the roof) is small-leafed sago [Metroxylon salomonense], because the

　　　　　small-leafed sago is stronger.'

A comparative construction with *wâtu* can also be used attributively, as a modifier to a noun:

(18)　　Lamaa　i-ki-ebi　　　　　　de-ki-li-ngä　　　　　　　dâu　　wâtu-kä=nâ …
　　　　　MOD　1MIN-IPFV-bake.AV　thing-IPFV-3AUG-eat.UV　　be.many　WATU-DIR:3=DIST
　　　　　'If I were cooking more food …'

dâu wâtukä 'more' here modifies the noun *dekilingä* 'food'. Äiwoo does not have a class of
adjectives as opposed to stative verbs[5], and no clear formal line can be drawn between a stative
verb functioning to modify a noun and a relative clause, since Äiwoo does not have a formal
marker of relativisation. Whether the comparative in such cases should be analysed as a relative
clause or a morphologically complex verb functioning as a modifier of a noun is therefore a
question which may have no unambiguous answer.

The functions of *wâtu* as illustrated in (14-18) seem to be quite straightforwardly related to each
other. I proposed above that the basic meaning of *wâtu* is 'far, long', with the reading 'farther'
arising with motion verbs in instances where a standard of comparison is present in the context;
from 'x-ing farther' to 'x-ing more' seems a relatively short step, and of course 'more' is a well-
known way of expressing comparatives crosslinguistically. See 4.5.1 below for further
discussion of the grammaticalisation path from motion verb to comparative marker.

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[5] With the possible exception of two forms, *nyibengä* 'huge' and *nuwolâ* 'old', which differ from stative verbs in
that they precede the nouns they modify rather than following it; but it is possible that these should rather be
analysed as nouns (Næss 2018b: 38-39).

4. The typology of comparatives

A number of works have looked at comparative constructions from a typological perspective. In this section, I discuss three of these which I consider to be particularly relevant in the present context: Stassen (1985) as the key typological work on comparatives, on which much of the later work builds; Dixon (2008), as his classification builds on somewhat different principles than Stassen's; and Schapper and de Vries (2018), which specifically targets the geographical region in which Äiwoo is spoken. Other works are less relevant for the present purpose; for example, Beck et al. (2009) are mainly concerned with proposing a formal semantic analysis of comparatives based on a sample of 14 languages; Stolz (2013) is restricted to languages of Europe, whereas Bobaljik (2012) focuses mainly on morphological structure and the formal relationships within the degree paradigm.

4.1 Stassen (1985)

Stassen (1985) is a broad typological study of comparative constructions, based on a sample of 110 languages. Stassen posits five main types of comparative constructions found within this sample: The Separative Comparative, where the standard is oblique and marked with a morpheme denoting an '(away) from' meaning; the Allative Comparative, where the standard is likewise oblique and marked with a morpheme denoting a 'to(wards)' meaning; the Locative Comparative, where the oblique marking on the standard denotes a locative meaning ('at, on'); the Exceed Comparative, where the standard NP is the O argument of a transitive verb meaning 'exceed', 'surpass' or similar; and the Conjoined Comparative, which consists of two conjoined clauses where one refers to the comparee and one to the standard (e.g. 'X is big, Y is not big' for 'X is bigger than Y'). In addition to these five types, so-called Particle Comparatives (as in English *X is bigger than Y*, where the standard is marked with a dedicated comparative particle) are stated to be a somewhat heterogeneous class, at least from the point of view of how the construction has grammaticalised.

Stassen moreover discusses cases in his sample which seem to combine properties of distinct types. These all include languages which potentially combine properties of a Conjoined Comparative with those of another type, i.e. where there is a biclausal structure where one of the clauses also show i.e. an 'exceed' predicate or some form of adverbial marking of the standard (Stassen 1985: 48-52).

4.2. Dixon (2008)

Dixon's (2008) typology is in one sense more fine-grained than Stassen's, in that each type takes into account multiple parameters: the encoding of the comparee and the standard, the status of the expression denoting the parameter of comparison (that is, the property compared), the index of comparison (i.e.what I have called the comparative marker) and the mark of the standard. It differs from Stassen's in that it focuses on the formal properties of comparative constructions and to a lesser extent involves the kinds of semantic criteria that distinguish, for example, Stassen's separative, locative and allative types, or define the Exceed comparative as involving a verb with a particular type of meaning.

Dixon's type A involves an intransitive construction where the comparee is the S and the standard is marked as oblique, with the index of comparison as a modifier to the predicate; the main subtypes here depend on whether property words can be encoded as predicates directly (type A2) or require a copula construction (type A1).

Type B involves a transitive serial verb construction where the comparee is the A argument and the standard the O; the parameter is encoded as an open-class verb in an asymmetrical serial verb construction, while the index of comparison is encoded with a closed-class verb in an asymmetrical serial verb construction.

In type C, the index is the main verb in a transitive clause, with the comparee and the standard as its A and O arguments, while the parameter is expressed by a post-predicate constituent. Type D differs from type C in that the parameter is the head of both A and O NPs, with the comparee and the standard as possessors within these NPs, while the index of comparison is again a transitive verb; this type can be illustrated with the English example *The box's width exceeds the car's width*.

Type E is exemplified in Dixon's sample by one language only, namely the Oceanic language Pohnpeian (Ponapean). In Pohnpeian, a suffix with the meaning '(away) from' is added to the verb to form a comparative; the result is a transitive construction with the comparee and the standard as A and O arguments, respectively:

(19)   Pohnpeian (Rehg 1981 cited in Dixon 2008: 800):

    a.   I   papa-sang   wahr-o

           I   swim-FROM   canoe-THAT

           'I swam away from that canoe'

    b.   Pwihk-e   laud-sang   pwihk-o

           pig-THIS   big-FROM[6]   pig-THAT

            'This pig is bigger than that pig'

Finally, Dixon's type F consists of biclausal constructions analogous to Stassen's Conjoined Comparatives.

4.3 Schapper and de Vries (2018)

Schapper and de Vries (2018) is a typological survey of comparatives in Melanesia, i.e. the region where Äiwoo is spoken. It includes a sample of 116 languages, of which 68 are Austronesian and 48 come from various Papuan families.

Schapper and de Vries largely follow Stassen's criteria for classification and posit three main types: Conjoined comparatives, (monoclausal) EXCEED comparatives, and adpositional comparatives, with a number of subtypes within each[7]. They count conjoined EXCEED comparatives, which was one of Stassen's 'mixed' types, as a subtype of conjoined comparatives where one of the conjoined clauses shows an EXCEED predicate, and thus restrict the EXCEED type proper to monoclausal constructions. Within the adpositional type, they distinguish between locational comparatives, with static (in, at), allative (to), separative (from) and superessive (above) subtypes; comitative comparatives, where the standard of comparison is introduced by an adposition elsewhere denoting an accompanying entity; and what they label cross-categorial adpositional comparatives. The latter involves cases where the functions of an adposition cross-cut the other two domains, i.e, can have both comitative and some type of locative function. A relevant point in this context is how Schapper and de Vries defined the EXCEED type: "monoclausal comparative constructions which involve the use of a transitive verb with a lexical

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[6] Following Rehg (1981), Dixon glosses –*sang* in this construction as IN.OPPOSITION.TO; I have adjusted the gloss here to match that in a.

[7] They also list a few minor types, which are of no relevance for the present discussion: particle comparatives, topic comparatives, object comparatives, and nominalised parameter comparatives (Schapper and de Vries 474-477).

meaning which involves motion *proceeding beyond (a specified point)* to introduce the standard of comparison" (Schapper and de Vries 2018: 462).

Schapper and de Vries moreover note some examples of languages in the region which show comparative constructions which appear to combine properties of adpositional and EXCEED comparatives. They cite an example from Abun, a Papuan language of the Bird's Head, which combines an EXCEED comparative, from an original verb meaning 'pass', with separative marking on the standard; Schapper and de Vries interpret this as indicating a transition from one type to another, where " a presumably earlier EXCEED construction has been adapted to create the modern separative construction" (Schapper and de Vries 2018: 481). In a footnote on the same page, they note that a similar construction occurs in a Malay variety in Timor, where it is a result of contact between the Tetun EXCEED-type construction and the Malay adpositional construction. This 'mixed' type is thus understood not as a distinct type in its own right, but as transitional between types and resulting from contact between Austronesian languages, which overwhelmingly show particle and locative comparatives, and Papuan languages, which tend strongly toward conjoined comparatives.

4.4 Äiwoo and the typology of comparative constructions

Since Schapper and de Vries largely build their classification on Stassen (1985), it is convenient to discuss the two together when assessing how Äiwoo fits into the larger typological picture; I will therefore start with Dixon (2008) before proceeding to discuss the other two studies. Äiwoo has properties in common with several of Dixon's types, but does not fall cleanly into any one of them. It is similar to type B in that *wâtu* at least historically probably derives from a verb in an SVC, given the structural parallels to the construction illustrated in 2.3; and to type E, only attested from Pohnpeian, in that *wâtu* can be considered a bound morpheme which is similar in meaning to Pohnpeian *–sang* '(away) from'. It differs from both, however, in that the construction is not transitive; the standard is marked as oblique, as in Dixon's type A. Turning to Stassen (1985), he notes early on in his discussion the problems inherent in classifying a comparative as either separative, allative, or locative in a language which does not have distinct adpositions for these meanings: "It will be clear that, in languages with such a generalized locational encoding, difficulties of classification will arise if they happen to have an adverbial comparative construction … In my opinion, there is no generally applicable solution to

this classificatory problem" (Stassen 1985: 35). As described in 2.5 above, the Äiwoo preposition *ngä*, which marks the standard in the *wâtu* comparative construction, has a general spatial meaning which is only disambiguated by properties of the predicate and depends to some extent on context; it thus clearly presents an example of Stassen's "classificatory problem". Schapper and de Vries' classification fits Äiwoo rather better, as they operate with a general "locational comparative" with various subtypes; while the Äiwoo construction cannot be assigned to any of these subtypes based on the preposition alone, it fits the definition of "the standard being encoded as an NP with a locational function" (Schapper and de Vries 2018: 468). It is not a cross-categorial adpositional comparative, one of Schapper and de Vries' other types, because the preposition *ngä* does not have a comitative meaning.

However, the preposition is not the only morpheme with a locational meaning in the *wâtu* comparative. All attested examples involve a deictic directional on the verb; and while most of them show the 3rd-person directional *–kä*, the (elicited) examples in (20) show that when the standard is first or second person, the directionals used are *–mä* 'towards speaker' and *–wâ* 'towards addressee', respectively:

(20) a. Inâ   eobulou-wâtu-mä   ngâgu.
          3MIN be.long-WATU-DIR:1   to.1MIN
          'He is taller than me.'

      b. Inâ   eobulou-wâtu-wâ   ngâgu-mu.
          3MIN be.long-WATU-DIR:2   to-2MIN
          'He is taller than you.'

This might be taken to suggest that the construction has an allative reading, with the standard as a goal, but this reading cannot be arrived at from the preposition alone; it is only the directional that contributes the meaning 'direction towards the standard'. I will discuss the function of directionals in Äiwoo comparatives further in 4.5.3 below, and argue that the literal directional meaning is less relevant than the function of directionals to encode various peripheral participants, discussed in 2.4.

However, classifying the Äiwoo construction as a locational comparative in Schapper and de Vries' sense is only half the story, because it does not take into account the presence of *wâtu*

itself. Semantically, the *wâtu* construction is very similar to an example from Tetun Fehan cited by Schapper and de Vries, in that the comparative marker in this language originates in a verb meaning 'go further':

(21)   Tetun Fehan (van Klinken 1999 cited in Schapper and de Vries 2018: 462):
   a.   ami   ata   liu   lai
          1PL.EXCL   slave   go.further   PRIOR
          'We lowly commoners will go further now.'
   b.   ..., sa'e   liu   rô
            ascend   go.further   boat
          '…, she got up into the boat.'
   c.   nia   kbít   lui   besi
          3SG   strong   go.further   iron
          'It is stronger than iron.'

Schapper and de Vries classify this construction as belonging to the EXCEED type. Both Stassen and Schapper and de Vries link EXCEED comparatives to the presence of verb serialisation in a language; and the latter note that this is a particularly frequent construction in the Melanesian region: "The serialised EXCEED comparative is the most numerous in our sample with 20 languages. Languages of this type include both Austronesian and Papuan and are located in the circum-New Guinea area where verb serialisation is common" (Schapper and de Vries 2018: 464). As described in 2.3, serial verb constructions are highly frequent in Äiwoo, and although *wâtu* is not attested as an independent predicate in present-day Äiwoo, it is highly likely that its current distribution and function originates in a verb which has gradually become restricted to appearing as the V2 in a serial verb construction. I will make a concrete suggestion as to what that verb may have been in 4.5.1; at this point I will note that both the semantics and the distributional properties of *wâtu* makes it strikingly similar to serialised EXCEED comparatives, which are typical for the region. As with Dixon's typology, however, Äiwoo differs from the Tetun Fehan construction in (21) in that the latter is transitive and encodes the standard as an unmarked O argument, whereas the Äiwoo construction is intransitive and takes an oblique standard.

As noted above, cases that appear to be transitional between the EXCEED type and the locational type are described by Schapper and de Vries. In terms of purely structural properties of the construction, this is a valid description for Äiwoo. However, there are some interesting differences between the Äiwoo *wâtu* comparative and the 'transitional' structures noted by Schapper and de Vries; these will be explored further below.

4.5 The Äiwoo *wâtu* comparative as a distinct type

4.5.1 Origin of *wâtu*

The essence of Schapper and de Vries' account of the examples showing mixed properties is that they are transitional in the literal sense of the word: they represent a change between one type and the other, motivated by contact between languages with different comparative types. For this explanation to be valid for Äiwoo assumes one of two scenarios: either the stative verb+WATU construction was originally transitive, i.e. took an unmarked O argument, and the marking of the standard with a preposition is a later development; or the construction has its origins in a locational comparative which has later acquired an 'exceed'-type marker through contact.

The first hypothesis means assuming that *wâtu* originates in a transitive verb, since serial verb constructions with an intransitive V1 are transitive only if the V2 is transitive, as illustrated in 2.3 above. However, there is no evidence that the *wâtu* construction is originally transitive. In all attested examples where the form with *wâtu* is transitive, the V1 is a transitive undergoer-voice verb, and *wâtu* shows the pattern found with intransitive verbs modifying an undergoer-voice V1: it is followed by the undergoer-voice suffix *–i*, as outlined in 2.3 and shown for *wâtu* in examples (16ab). When *wâtu* modifies an intransitive motion verb, as in (14), the complex construction is always intransitive; this is in contrast to the Tetun Fehan example in (21b) where the goal is an unmarked O argument.

The most likely source of *wâtu* is the Proto Oceanic verb *watu 'go towards addressee' (Ross 2003); this form is reflected in several Oceanic languages with the meaning 'away from speaker' which in turn would have given rise to the 'go far(ther)' meaning found in Äiwoo[8]. Another plausible reflex of *watu in Äiwoo is the directional suffix *–wâ* 'towards addressee' described in

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[8] Of the two POc verbs reconstructed as meaning 'go away' by Ross 2003, one, *la(ko), is likely the source of Äiwoo *lâ* 'go out'; in other words, there has been a certain amount of semantic shift in the domain of verbs of direction.

2.4 above. Note, however, that Ross reconstructs two POc forms meaning 'go towards addressee', namely *ua and *watu, and that these are reconstructed both as verbs and directional adverbs (Ross 2003: 269); that is, there is enough variation in form and function within the POc reconstructions that for Äiwoo to have two distinct reflexes of *ua/*watu with distinct functions does not seem implausible.

Both the formal properties shown by *wâtu* in its present-day use, and its likely historical origin, then, suggest that it does not have its source in a transitive verb. The other option, from a "transitional" perspective, would be for the construction to have started out as a locational comparative which has then acquired *wâtu* as a comparative marker. This is unlikely, for several reasons. Firstly, the *wâtu* construction shows all the properties of originating from a serial verb construction of the type that is very common in Äiwoo. Note that *wâtu* can be added to a variety of verbs in the language, and that only with stative verbs does it have a comparative reading; with motion verbs, its meaning of 'far(ther)' suggests an origin as a motion verb. This means that, as noted in 3.4, the comparative reading has likely developed from an original serialised motion verb rather than being borrowed or innovated separately.

Secondly, the only likely source of *wâtu*, if it were to have been acquired through borrowing, is Äiwoo's Polynesian neighbour Vaeakau-Taumako, which is the only language which we know that Äiwoo has been in sustained contact with for long enough that such borrowing would be plausible. Now POc *watu is reflected as a directional *atu* in many Polynesian languages, and it is used as a comparative marker in some of them, e.g. in Tuvaluan, which moreover parallels Äiwoo in marking the standard of comparison with a preposition (Besnier 2000: 217-220). Vaeakau-Taumako, however, does not use *atu* in comparative constructions, but rather *ange* 'go along' or *ake* 'go up' (cf. Fijian *ca'e,* Dixon 2008: 795):

(22) Vaeakau-Taumako (Næss and Hovdhaugen 2011: 59)

    a.   Hiai, e   tau   atu   mui   po   e   tu~tuabe   ange.

        NEG   GENR arrive go.out place COMP GENR RED~big   go.along

        'No, let us go to a bigger place.'

    b.   Na   ne   tuabe ake   oki   na …

        DEM.2PFV   big   go.up   again DEM.2

        'When [the eel] grew bigger …'

Given that directionals in Vaeakau-Taumako pattern like verbs whose most frequent occurrence is serialised to another verb, it is entirely possible that *atu* has been borrowed into Äiwoo **as a verb meaning 'go out, go away',** a usage which is also attested in Vaeakau-Taumako (Næss 2011: 125); this would explain the apparent conservatism of the form *wâtu* in a language where POc forms have in general been greatly reduced, and is compatible with the use of *wâtu* with motion verbs. However, the comparative use must still be an internal development from the verbal use in Äiwoo, given that there is no evidence that *atu* is used as a comparative marker in Vaeakau-Taumako. Moreover, note that *wâtu* patterns formally like an intransitive verb in a serial verb construction, and unlike a directional, in that it takes the suffix *–i* when following a transitive undergoer-voice verb (16), a pattern which is not found with directionals in Äiwoo (8-9).

How might such a development have taken place? A very similar process is described by Hohaus (2018) for the Polynesian language Samoan, which has a comparative construction using the directional *atu* as a comparative marker. Hohaus shows that this construction is a fairly recent innovation in the language, and argues that the change from directional to comparative marker originates in the fact that the directional "introduces an additional requirement of directionality on the path described by a motion predicate. It requires of every non-initial location $l_1, ..., l_n$ in the movement sequence that it be further away from the sequence's initial location l_0 than the next lower ranked location in the sequence, l_{n-1}" (Hohaus 2018: 116). The extension to degree marking then arises from "a generalization from locations in a directed movement path to degrees" (Hohaus 2018: 117). In Hohaus' data, the standard of comparison is marked by a combination of a preposition and a dedicated morpheme *lo* or *lo'o* glossed as 'marker of comparison standard'.

Given the function of *wâtu* as a modifier meaning 'go far' in Äiwoo, a similar path of grammaticalisation seems plausible here; Hohaus' account could be seen as a formalisation of the path of extension I suggested in 3.4, where 'go far' is extended to 'do more = to a higher degree' and from there to a comparative. It is particularly interesting that the Samoan and Äiwoo cases appear to involve what is at least historically the same morpheme. Synchronically they also share properties in common in that both have a canonical use as modifiers to a motion verb, although their precise properties differ; Hohaus' suggestion of a possible bridging context in

23

cases where *atu* has a metaphorical rather than a literal directional reading (Hohaus 2018: 116) seems difficult to apply to Äiwoo, as there is no evidence of such a usage of *wâtu* in my data. It is also worth noting that the Samoan construction differs from the Äiwoo one in that it involves a dedicated marker of the standard of comparison, which is not found in Äiwoo. As noted above, however, the Tuvaluan comparative construction is closely parallel to that found in Äiwoo in that it combines a directional used as a comparative marker with marking of the standard by a preposition. Unlike Samoan, however, Tuvaluan allows all of its four directionals to be used as comparative markers, although *atu* is the most frequent and least semantically marked (Besnier 2000: 217)

To summarise the discussion in this section, the Äiwoo *wâtu* comparative is unlikely to have arisen from contact between two distinct comparative systems. Instead, it represents a pattern where an intransitive motion verb develops into a marker of comparison, with the standard of comparison marked as an oblique, as would be expected from an intransitive construction. This is closely parallel to the development of the directional *atu* as a comparative marker in Samoan, and similar constructions exist in other Polynesian languages, though *atu* is not attested as a comparative marker in the only Polynesian language with which Äiwoo is known to have had sustained contact.

 Despite the semantic similarities between Äiwoo *wâtu* and EXCEED constructions such as those found in Tetun Fehan, then, the Äiwoo construction is in fact both structurally and diachronically rather different. These differences can be illuminated further by contrasting the *wâtu* constructions with two other comparative constructions found in Äiwoo.

4.5.2 Other comparative constructions in Äiwoo

An alternative comparative construction with *peli* 'pass' (cf. example 4b) does in fact exist in Äiwoo, though my only attestations are from elicitations during the early stages of my fieldwork on the language, when my grasp of the language was still too basic to ask follow-up questions that might have been relevant to the current study. The following was offered as a translation of 'He is taller than me':

(23) Inâ   i-luwo-peli-e-gu.

3MIN PFV-hold-pass-go.up-3MIN.A/1MIN.O

'He is taller than me.'

The consultant offered 'reach above' as a more literal translation of *luwopelie*, and my gloss of *luwo* as meaning 'hold' (rather than the possible alternatives 'rush' or 'dive, sink, jump') is based on this; I have no information on to what extent this construction is also used with other verbs. However, this comparative construction clearly conforms to the expected EXCEED type; it is transitive, as seen by the person suffixing on the verb, and *peli* 'pass' has precisely the type of semantics which is attested from EXCEED comparatives in other languages. It is also clearly distinct from the *wâtu* comparative, which is formally intransitive and marks the standard with a preposition.

The same set of field notes also shows examples of a third comparative construction, using the adverb *mana* 'very'. *Mana* is the common way to indicate the superlative, as in (24) (elicited):

(24) Sime   mi-ebolou-mana   i-kää-no=ngâ   John.

person   one-be.long-very   PFV-know-1MIN=DIST   John

'John is the tallest man I know.'

However, *mana* can also be used to form comparatives, in a construction formally parallel to the *wâtu* construction, with the standard marked by a preposition; interestingly, however, this construction uses a different preposition, namely *go* 'with; for; from; to' (cf. 2.5).

(25) Shirt   mu-opulo=kâ ki-vävinäi-mana-kä   go   mi-momâlâ.

shirt   one-red=DIST IPFV-be.nice-very-DIR:3   PREP one-yellow

'The red shirt is nicer than the yellow one.'

Again, this construction is only attested in my notes from this elicitation session, and it is thus not possible to say anything further about what might influence the choice of one construction over another, or the relative frequency of the different comparative constructions. (25) shows,

however, that the formal properties of the *wâtu* comparative are not associated specifically with *wâtu* as a comparative marker, but carry over to the alternative construction with *mana*.

4.5.3 The role of directionals in comparative constructions

The *mana* comparative illustrated in 4.5.2 seems like a more straightforward case of Schapper and de Vries' adpositional type than the *wâtu* comparative, in that the comparison is indicated mainly by the presence of the prepositional phrase; *Shirt muopulo kivävinäi mana* simply means 'The red shirt is very nice.' By contrast, note that the examples with *wâtu* in (17b) and (18), where no standard is overtly indicated, still convey a meaning of comparison relative to some implicit standard. Note, however, the presence of the directional *-kä* in (25), which also contributes to the comparative meaning by indicating that the statement is being made with respect to (metaphorically 'in the direction of') some other entity. The only cases where directionals are found with stative verb+*mana* without a comparative reading is where another entity is somehow affected by the property attributed to the subject, as in (26), where the strength of the wind detrimentally affects the speaker and her family, who had to flee their house to be safe:

(26)   Nyengi ki-ngângo-mana-mä=to=wâ.
        wind   IPFV-be.strong-very-DIR:1=now=DIST
        'The wind was very strong for us.'

In other words, it is not simply the adpositional marking on the standard, but also the presence of a directional on the verb, which indicates that a comparative reading is intended. This holds not just for the *mana* comparative, but also for the *wâtu* comparative; I have no attestations of *wâtu* used with a comparative function without a deictic directional, and as (20) shows, the directional reflects the person value of the standard.

Note also that, although the presence of the directional contributes to the interpretation of the *mana* construction in (25) as a comparative, the directional cannot be said to function as a comparative marker, because it does not appear to be possible to use a directional on its own to form a comparative. Rather, the directional indicates the involvement of another participant, the

standard, and it is this function that contributes to the comparative reading in cases which would otherwise not be unambiguously comparative.

The apparent allative reading ('towards the standard') indicated by the directional in the Äiwoo comparatives creates something of a puzzle with respect to the semantics of the *wâtu* construction. I argued above that *wâtu* likely reflects a Proto Oceanic verb meaning 'go towards addressee; go away'. But if the comparee is construed as metaphorically 'going away' relative to the standard, should we not expect it to be cast as going **from** the standard rather than **to** it? First, it is important to note that it is actually very difficult to unambigiously encode the meaning 'from' in Äiwoo. As described above, the spatial preposition *ngä* does not specify a direction, or even a distinction between direction and location, and no other morpheme in the language specifically encodes the meaning 'from'. While the semantics of the verb and the use of directionals may disambiguate, this is not always the case, and in many cases spatial expressions are simply ambiguous and must be interpreted with reference to the discourse context and/or world knowledge. This is illustrated in (27a-b), which show the same verb with the same directional and the same preposition, but in a. *ngâ numobâ* is interpreted as meaning 'from the hole', and in b., *ngä nyepolââ* is interpreted as meaning '(in)to the world'. This interpretation hinges on the knowledge that going 'up' with respect to a hole likely means emerging from the hole rather than entering it.

(27)   a.   Pe-nyipe   mi-lu-popwee-mä   ngâ   numobâ.
                 people-scale   one-3AUG-come.up-DIR:1 LOC   hole
                 'The penyipe clan are the ones that came up from a hole.'

         b.   Lu-popwee-mä   ngä   nye-polââ.
                 3AUG-come.up-DIR:1   LOC   place-clear
                 'They came up into the world.'

(28) shows a similar example; here there is no directional, but both the verb and the preposition is the same in both clauses of this complex sentence, and it is the juxtaposition of the two clauses that give rise to the interpretation that the first clause indicates the source of the blood flow and the second the goal.

(28) Delâ   eângâ   lâ   ki-so   ngä   nyibä=nâ

      blood DEM:DIST   DIST   IPFV-stand   LOC   eye.3MIN=DIST

      lâ   ki-so   ngâ   daa   täpilo=kâ.

      DIST   IPFV-stand   LOC   bottom bowl=DIST

      'The blood flowed from his eye and into the bowl.'

The distinction between a spatial source and goal, then, simply is not very strongly grammaticalised in Äiwoo. Recall from 2.4 that directionals are the main means of indicating the involvement of a peripheral participant in the situation denoted by the clause. I propose that it is precisely this function that is filled by the directional in the *wâtu* and *mana* comparatives: it indicates that the property in question is not simply ascribed to the comparee, but that another participant, the standard, is involved. The fact that the directional is sensitive to the person value of the standard, and thus appears to encode direction towards it, is simply an effect of the way directionals function to introduce a peripheral participant in general.

Note also that the *peli* comparative discussed in 4.5.2, which is formally transitive, does not include a deictic directional; the standard is here the O argument and is encoded as such on the verb, in this case with the suffix *–gu* which, when occurring without any further person marking, indicates that a 3MIN A is acting on a 1MIN O[9].

It is worth emphasising that the function of the directional in comparative constructions is distinct from the way directionals are used to form comparatives in Polynesian languages such as Tuvaluan, Samoan, and Vaeakau-Taumako. In the latter languages, the directional functions as the comparative marker; in Äiwoo, however, the deictic directionals are added to the comparative-marked construction to indicate the standard of comparison, and the choice of directional depends on the person of the standard. Moreover, the Samoan-type construction is tied to the motion semantics of the specific directional, as Hohaus shows; the directional does not change with the person of the standard. Fijian has a separative comparative marking the standard with the preposition *mai* 'from', which is homophonous with and has the same diachronic source as the directional *mai* 'towards speaker' (Hanink 2020, Ross 2003, Schütz 1985: 348). This thus constitutes marking of the standard with a form which is at least closely related to a directional;

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[9] The circumstances under which O as well as A arguments can be marked on the verb in Äiwoo are relatively complex; see Roversi (2019: 87ff) for discussion.

but again this is limited to this specific form, rather than alternating depending on the person of the standard.

A more directly parallel construction to that found in Äiwoo exists in the Oceanic language Loniu of Manus Island, where either of the motion verbs *me* 'come' and *la* 'go' may be used as a comparative marker to form a transitive comparative construction formally parallel to that illustrated for Pohnpeian in (19). Here, the choice between the two verbs depends on whether the standard of comparison is 1st or 2nd person, in which case *me* 'come' is normally used, whereas in most other cases *la* 'go' is used (Hamel 1993: 118-119). In Tuvaluan, similarly, the 1st person directional *mai* can be used as a comparative marker "when the comparison denotes or connotes the fact that the entity beign compared is closer to the point of reference of the discourse than the entity forming the standard of comparison (Besnier 2000: 218); moreover, Tuvaluan can use the directionals *aka* 'up' or *ifo* 'down' if what is being compared is increasing or decreasing height, quantity or similar.

Again these cases differ from the Äiwoo construction, however, in that the directional here functions as the marker of comparison, rather than being added to a distinct comparative marker; Loniu and Tuvaluan might thus be said to conflate into one morphological marker the functions that Äiwoo distributes across *wâtu* + directional. Note moreover that the use of directionals to mark the standard in Äiwoo extends to the *mana* comparative, which uses a comparative marker not historically derived from a motion verb or directional. The systematic use of directional morphemes to specifically refer to the standard in a comparative construction, with the person-deictic semantics of the directionals preserved, is, to the best of my knowledge, not attested in previous literature on the typology of comparatives, although it is clear that variations on the structure found in Äiwoo occur in a number of Oceanic languages.

5. Conclusion

The Äiwoo comparative construction formed with *wâtu* is typologically unusual in two respects. Firstly, it is formed with a lexical morpheme with the meaning 'go away, go far', but it differs from the semantically similar type known as EXCEED comparatives in that this morpheme does not license the encoding of the comparative standard as an O argument in a transitive construction. Instead, the resulting construction is formally intransitive, and the standard is encoded as an oblique. This results in a construction that appears to have properties in common

both with EXCEED-type and adpositional-type comparatives; but I have argued that the Äiwoo *wâtu*-comparative is not "transitional" in the sense that Schapper and de Vries (2018) ascribe to the constructions in Abun and Atambua Malay, but simply retains the properties of *wâtu* as an original intransitive motion verb. The grammaticalisation of motion/direction forms into markers of comparison is known from other Oceanic languages, as discussed in 4.3.1, and at least one, Tuvaluan, combines this with adpositional marking of the standard. It is worth noting that the Äiwoo *wâtu* comparative takes the locative preposition *ngä*, whereas the *mana* comparative takes *go*; this suggests that the marking of the standard in the *wâtu* comparative stems from the origins of *wâtu* as a motion verb, rather than simply being a default choice for prepositional marking of the standard.

Secondly, the fact that the standard is not simply encoded in an oblique NP but also indicated by a deictic directional on the verb is a property not previously described for comparative constructions. It is linked to the first point, namely that the construction is formally intransitive, as can be seen by the fact that directionals are also used in *mana*-comparatives, which are also intransitive, but not in the transitive *peli*-comparative. In combining 1) a comparative marker derived from an original motion verb; 2) a directional, distinct from this comparative marker, indicating the standard of comparison, and 3) further encoding of the standard in a prepositional phrase, Äiwoo combines properties of comparative constructions found in other Oceanic languages, but in a way which does not seem to have exact parallels elsewhere.

The use of directionals as markers of the standard of comparison is particularly interesting in light of Stassen's observation that "most languages in [the adverbial comparative] category model the codification of their standard NPs on one of the options which they have in the formal expression of *the semantic system of spatial relations*" (Stassen 1985: 32, emphasis in original). As Næss (2018a) shows, directionals play an important role in the formal expression of spatial relations in Äiwoo; not only are they the means by which the language expresses direction of motion, but specific combinations of topological and deictic directionals are used to distinguish between the stative relations *above, below, inside*, and *next to*, which are not distinguished by the single spatial preposition *ngä*. From this perspective, one may ask whether the extension of directionals to marking standard of comparison on the basis of the link between standard encoding and formal expression of spatial relations may also occur in other languages, and if so, what principles underlie this extension.

I have argued, however, that it is less the role of directionals in the spatial system of Äiwoo than their role in indicating the presence of peripheral participants indirectly affected by the verbal situation that is the likely explanation for their use in comparative constructions. This in turn raises interesting questions regarding the typology of participant marking. Margetts and Austin (2007) note that directionals are commonly used to indicate the recipient or goal of three-participant events in Oceanic languages, as demonstrated for Äiwoo in 2.4 above, as well as in at least one Australian language, Ilgar (Iwaidjan). However, I am not aware of any crosslinguistic studies of how directional morphemes are used for participant marking more general; that is, what types of participants they can indicate, and in which kinds of construction. The use of directionals to indicate the standard of comparison in Äiwoo comparative constructions thus expands the range of known comparative types, but also points to an interesting avenue of exploration regarding the means by which peripheral participants of various types can be marked across languages.

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