

Niuean has several directional particles, including three that encode direction based on person. Although it is generally assumed that 3<sup>rd</sup> person is unmarked, in Niuean, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person particle has the most restricted distribution. I propose syntactic structures for three directional constructions and an analysis explaining this unexpected alternation in person, inspired from the contrast between high and low applicatives described by Pylkänen (2008). However, unlike applicatives, it is not the merge position of the functional head that creates the contrast in interpretation, but the transitivity of the verb. This analysis also provides independent evidence for Cowper and Hall’s (2019) quadripartition person feature hierarchy.

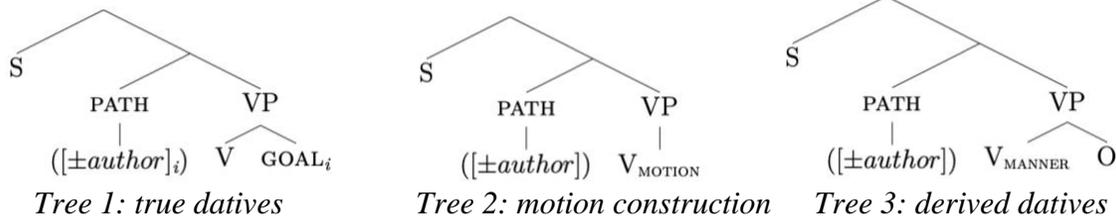
Two structures—the true dative construction (1a), i.e., transfer of possession and speech verb constructions, and the motion construction (1b), which indicates direction in combination with a verb of motion—allow all three directional particles. (I illustrate with 1<sup>st</sup> person *mai*.)

- (1) a. Kua vagahau **mai** a ia ki a au. (Sperlich 1997: 41)  
PERF speak DIR1 ABS 3SG GOAL PERS 1SG ‘He spoke to me.’
- b. Une **mai** (ki a au)! (Sperlich 1997: 200)  
move DIR1 (GOAL PERS 1SG) ‘Come here (to me)!’

First person *mai* and 2<sup>nd</sup> person *atu* have undergone extensions that 3<sup>rd</sup> person *age* has not (cf. Hooper 2002 on Tokelauan). One extended use, derived dative, occurs when the particle is combined with a manner verb. In the true datives (1a), the directional particle doubles the goal; in the motion construction (1b), the particle specifies the path of the (null) S; while in (2), the particle creates the path (Talmy 2000) with an endpoint for the object, as a derived dative.

- (2) Ahu **mai** e vai he pakete. (Sperlich 1997: 45)  
bale DIR1 ABS water LOC bucket ‘Fetch (to me) water in the bucket.’

There is evidence from Pseudo Noun Incorporation that the O is merged lower than PATH but S is merged higher (Massam 2020), as shown in the trees below.



*Mai* and *atu* are composed of PATH and [±author], while *age* is underspecified for person, as per Cowper and Hall’s (2019) quadripartition feature hierarchy. In derived datives (Tree 3), PATH merges with the VP (Travis 2010, Sybesma 2017, Leung 2021), and the verb and PATH form a complex predicate with O as complement, creating a containment relationship between O and the person feature in PATH, which entails an endpoint. Since *age* has no person feature, it cannot provide an endpoint, so *atu*, specified as [-author], is used for both 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person (3).

- (3) Ti mui **atu** ai a ia ki ai. (Seiter 1980: 19)  
then be.last DIR2 then ABS 3SG GOAL there ‘Then he followed them there.’

In true datives (Tree 1), the endpoint is provided by the goal, thus *age* is possible. When S is merged to PATH + VP (Tree 2), it indicates a relationship between S and the event of motion along a path, without encoding an endpoint. *Age* can therefore be used.

This is analogous to how Pylkänen (2008) derives high and low Appl compositionally based on merge position—although here, it is based on the merge order of arguments. This analysis accounts for both the differences in meaning across the three directional constructions, as well as the alternations in person, using independently motivated person feature structures.

## References

- Cowper, Elizabeth and Daniel Currie Hall. 2019. 'Scope variation in contrastive hierarchies of morphosyntactic features' in *Variable properties in language: Their nature and acquisition*, eds. David W. Lightfoot and Jonathan Havenhill, 27–41. Georgetown: Georgetown University Press
- Freeze, Ray and Carol Georgopoulos. 2000. 'Locus operandi' in *The Syntax of Verb Initial Languages*, eds. Andrew Carnie and Eithne Guilfoyle, 163–185. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harley, Heidi. 1995. *Subjects, events, and licensing*. PhD Thesis, MIT.
- Hooper, Robin. 'Deixis and aspect: The Tokelauan directional particles *mai* and *atu*' in *Studies in Language* 26(2): 283–313.
- Leung, Justin. 'Selected issues concerning directional motion event expression in Cantonese' Ms. University of Toronto.
- Massam, Diane. 2020. *Niuean: Predicates and arguments in an isolating language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pylkänninen, Liina. 2008. *Introducing arguments*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Seiter, William. 1980. *Issues in Niuean syntax*. New York: Garland Press.
- Sperlich, Wolfgang. 1997. *Tohi Vagahau Niue: Niue language dictionary*. Honolulu: Government of Niue and University of Hawai'i Press.
- Sybesma, Rint. 2017. 'Aspect, inner' in *Encyclopedia of Chinese language and linguistics, vol. 1*, eds. Rint Sybesma, Wolfgang Behr, Yueguo Gu, Zev Handel, C.-T. James Huang and James Myers, 186–193. Leiden: Brill.
- Talmy, 2000. *Toward a cognitive semantics, vol. 2*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Travis, Lisa deMena. 2010. *Inner Aspect*. Dordrecht: Springer.

## Glossing Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABS	absolutive case
DIR	directional particle
LOC	locative
PERF	perfective aspect
PERS	personal article
SG	singular