
UP AND DOWN IN AULUA¹

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Abstract

This paper investigates the ways in which direction and location are encoded in the Aulua language spoken on the southeast coast of the island of Malakula, Vanuatu. The topography of the locale explains the importance of verbs and modifiers that contrast 'upward/landward' movements to 'downward/seaward' directions. There are competing conceptualisations and lexicalisations of the axis that bisects this inclined plane. Either, a single term is used to indicate 'across' in both directions, or the terms, 'up' and 'down', are recycled. The domain of the system employing the undifferentiated traverse is found to equate to an intimate geographic sphere of interaction slightly larger than the Aulua speaking locale. Locations or movements to places outside this local zone are located via the system with the two lexically differentiated axes.

1. Introduction

There has been plenty of recent research on the marking of location and direction in the Oceanic language family (Senft 1997; Bennardo 2002) and not just from a diachronic perspective (Ross 2003). Palmer (2002, 2003, and 2007) particularly has used data from Pacific languages to contribute to debates regarding location, cognition and language. Some research has included analyses of Vanuatu languages - Northeast Ambae (Hyslop 1999,

2002) and Mwotlap (François 2003). There is, however, little in the way of published information focussing on this aspect of language from Malakula, the second largest island of the Vanuatu archipelago, and home to around thirty languages. This paper aims to add to our understanding of the Oceanic conceptualisation of space by reporting on the direction marking strategies available to speakers of Aulua, a language from the southeastern coast of that island. We shall see that the key spatial orientations in Aulua use terms that we might gloss as 'up' and 'down' but they have a wider range of meanings that these translations would suggest. Moreover the terms that encode these directions or positions in space can act as main verbs, secondary verbs in serial constructions, demonstratives and adverbials.

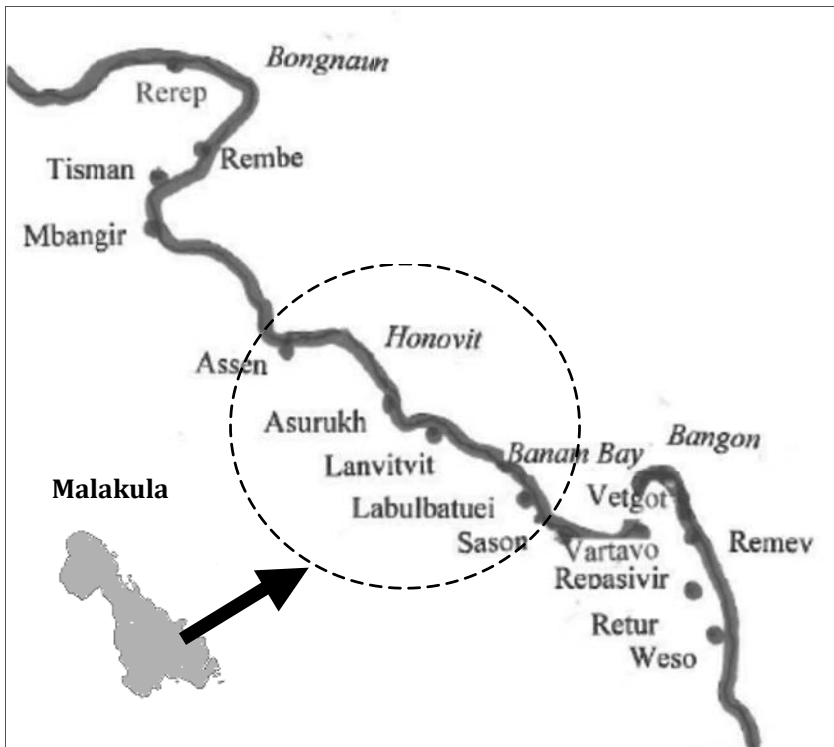
After a reconnaissance of the Aulua locale, this paper examines the grammar of direction/location with respect to verbs and verbal constructions. Then we examine modifier elements, demonstratives and adverbs. We shall propose that there are in fact two separate systems of marking these concepts which have scope over two different geographical zones. The local system covers an area slightly larger than the Aulua region, and contrasts the up-down axis with a traverse. The larger system used outside of that domain actually reduces the system to a two way distinction between 'up' and 'down'.

2. A journey to Lanvitvit

Central and southern Malakula is far more mountainous than the northern end of the island (cf Cheesman 1933). In most places the mountains tumble down to the coast abruptly leaving only a narrow and intermittent coastal strip. The stretch of road through the Aulua locale passes through the three major villages, settlements that date largely from the beginnings of the missionary period when the people left their clan-based upland villages and settled on the coast (de Lannoy 2005). Following the potholed and often muddy road from the north, the first village in the Aulua region is the tiny hamlet of Assen perched down by the water's edge. Beyond Assen, the road clings to the beach. Facing south, on the right side are bush and gardens, flat for a short while before rising up into the hills.

Before long the road itself begins to incline, and we are climbing the hill Honovit, the left side a cliff-face above the sea. Past the summit, the descent is perilously steep and has been the site of serious truck accidents over the past few years. As the road bottoms out we are again on a very narrow coastal

strip with steep cliffs of upraised coral only metres from the road. As the road begins to rise again we reach the first of the main Aulua speaking villages. Facing southeast, with views beyond the ‘Aulua coast’ towards Bangon, 16°20’00”S, 167°45’00”E at the end of the point in Banam Bay, Asurukh sits on a bluff. The main part of this village stretches up the inland hills. Asurukh is connected to its satellite settlement, Matlak, on the beach below by a very steep path. Descending again, the road levels out briefly as it passes the store and immediately ascends another hill before plunging down into Aulua Bay. Here, the small floodplain and the silt from the unnamed stream that runs into the sea have made this the largest flat area of in the locale. Skirting this level ground, the road climbs over another hill to arrive at the largest village, Lanvitvit.



Map 1: Southeastern Malakula and the Aulua locale. Plain text denotes village names, italics, geographic features. The dashed circle represents the Aulua language locale.

After this journey to the heart of the Aulua region, you might have noted the prevalence of the terms *up, down, left, right, north and south* in the description of our progress through the site. We cannot conclude, though, that all the equivalent devices would be employed by the Aulua speakers who might accompany us on this journey.

3. Understanding space

Human languages encode space as direction or location in a number of different ways. One common system for encoding direction or location is to use predetermined reference points or directions which plot or map the relationship between the referent and the relatum or as Palmer (2002: 110) puts it “an absolute system involves a culture and a language-specific set of such bearings which are superimposed onto the referent and relatum (or perhaps within which the referent and relatum are placed.)” Languages of this type may rely on a set of directions that can encode positioning on a geographic grid. English speakers think of the compass points, ‘north’, ‘south’, ‘east’ and ‘west’ when thinking of this so-called ‘geocentric system’, but these bearings need not rely on the path of the sun and a transverse of that axis. Rather, absolute reference may rely on salient local features of the landscape or even wind directions. One language where ‘cardinal direction’ points are frequently encoded to help interlocutors pick out nouns, or follow or paths is the Australian language Karyadild (Evans 1995) where compass point morphemes are used to create all manner of wordforms:

Karyadild

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------|------------|---------------------|
| 1. niwan-ji | jirrkara-nangan-da | nyingka | barnkaldi-j |
| 3sg-loc | north-side-nom | you.sg.nom | sit.crosslegged-imp |

‘Sit down cross legged on the north side of him.’ (Evans 1995: 213)

From the Karyadild dictionary (Evans 1995):

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 2. rilungka | ‘the eastern horizon’ |
| rilubanda | ‘man from the east’ |
| riluganda | ‘the east wind’ |
| rilurayaanda | ‘previous night’s camp to the east of here’. |
| rilujulutha | ‘put x on the east side’ |

We also must acknowledge there are two systems of interpreting these absolute spatial references. We can see these named directions as either points in space or as spaces between points. That is, we can assume there is a vector that connects a spot on the horizon to the deictic centre. A vector slightly to the east or west of the point picks out a new point on the horizon - north-northeast, or north-northwest. Alternatively we could name an area created by the section of the horizon, i.e., between two points as creating a quadrant, in point wherein is considered to lie to the north. The Australian language, Guugu Yimithirr (Haviland 1998) employs the quadrant strategy as the diagram below demonstrates. Note that the axes do not align exactly with the western compass points.

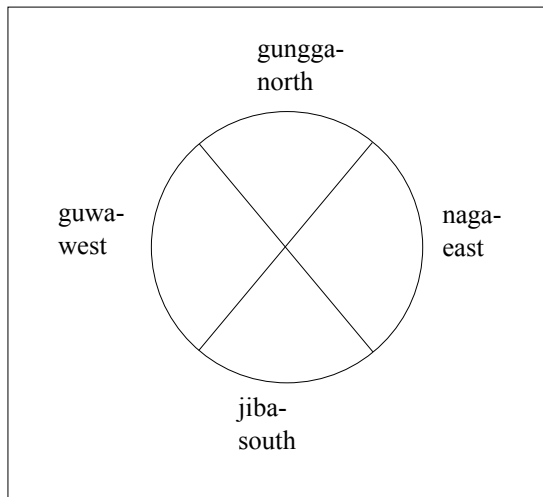


Figure1: Guugu Yimithirr Direction Roots (Haviland, 1998: 29, cf Palmer 2002: 124)

An alternative to these absolute systems of referring to space is to use the self and the self's body as the centre of the referring system. English uses this 'egocentric' when locating the directions, left and right. Unless otherwise stated, these terms are interpreted as making reference to the left and right hand side of the *speaker's* body in space.

Aulua, however, has no terms for cardinal direction equivalent to north, south, east or west. Nor do the names of winds, such as *hanrua* 'wind from the

northeast' have direction naming functions. That is, it would be nonsensical for an Aulua speaker to note that a person had walked in a *hanrua* direction. Aulua speakers do not use the terms *mer* and *tubu* which modify the noun *var-* 'hand' to distinguish a left or right spatial field projected from the speaker's body. Given the absence of these cross-linguistically typical resources for marking direction and location in language from Aulua, we might be tempted to think that Aulua speakers rarely mark direction or location in speech. This would, however, be far from the truth. Aulua speakers quite frequently make reference to spatial arrangements when marking location and frequently explicitly encode direction with verbs of movement. The explanation of exactly how Aulua speakers encode directional reference is drawn from an analysis of spoken narratives recorded by the author between 2002 and 2008. The texts cover a range of genres, from folktales and clan origin histories to the retelling of contemporary events such as the devastation of the Aulua region by Cyclone Ivy in 2004. In all texts there are frequent references to directions of movement and location.

4. Movement verbs and direction marking

The most frequent verbs in the corpus of narratives include those that mark movement. These include those that encode a movement towards a deictic centre, *-bene* 'come' as well as *-ben*, which signifies movement away from a deictic centre, as well as those that mark some kind of direction or elevation.

4.1 Moving here and there

The verbs *-bene* 'come' and *-ben* 'go' are very high frequency in Aulua not only because of their basic semantics but also because of other functions they have beyond their primary role as verbs of movement towards or away from a deictic reference point. Below are some examples of usage as main verbs:

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|-------------|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------|--------------|
| 3. | ara-bene ² | morkon-ahan | nema | tah-n | tabal.tarab | | |
| | 3pl-REAL.come | near-APPL | house | POSS.GEN-3sg.CN | woman.old | | |
| | 'They came close to the old woman's house.' [WM: Old Woman and Fowl] ³ | | | | | | |
| 4. | tabaltarab | ho | i-ben | qole | ana-sahe | balabal | tah-en |
| | woman.old | TOP | 3sg.REAL ⁴ .go | again | ss ⁵ feed | pig | POSS.GEN-3sg |
| | 'The old woman went again and fed her pigs.' [ET:Twins] | | | | | | |

In common with many other Oceanic languages (Lichtenberk 1991: 481), these verbs have developed another function. That is they are used to mark the direction of movements encoded by other verbs. This development is unsurprising given claims that this development occurred with the Proto Oceanic verbs **mai*, ‘come’ and **uatu*, ‘go’ (cf Lynch, Ross and Crowley 2002: 85). The Aulua forms can combine with verb *-lev-* ‘give’ to signal the direction of the movement towards the beneficiary. The following utterance is a frequently heard imperative directed towards children.

5. u-lev-a-bene
 2sg-give-3sg-REAL.come
 ‘Give it to me’

However, the inclusion of come in the example below shows a little more complexity. In this narrative the eggs are taken by an old woman and not given to the speaker or narrator of the story. Instead, the narrator is signalling that we must consider the old woman as not only the beneficiary but also the deictic centre of the event.

6. i-lev-a-bene ana-dobo-qan-a
 3sg-REAL.give-3sg-come SS-INCH-REAL.eat-3sg
 ‘She took the eggs for herself and began to eat them.’
 [WM: Old Woman and Fowl]

In the example below we see this verbal direction strategy competing with the preposition *sah-* which has a beneficiary complement:

7. i-binohe nevet ho i-lahas-ni lobon lahas ana-lev-a
 3sg-REAL.steal money TOP 3sg-like-DEM big like ss-give-3sg
 bene ana-lev sah-eqo
 REAL.come ss-give for-2sg
 ‘It (the creature called a *lisevsev*) steals the money like that a lot (of money) and gives it you.’ [BS: Lisevsev]

Here the deictic centre is not the speaker but is the entity encoded by the second person singular. This is a generic use of ‘you’ and is intended to mean anyone who has caught a *lisevsev* can order it to steal money which it will bring back to the ‘owner? master?’ of the creature. Even though the speaker

has not constructed himself as the deictic centre, the use of *bene* here indicates that whoever is standing in as ‘you’ is the target of the movement implied by the verb, ‘give’.

Another frequent construction using ‘come’ and ‘go’ combines them with other verbs of movement which encode manner, as exemplified with *nrov*, ‘run’, below. In these examples *ben* follow the motion verb and encode the direction:

8. be ni-qurah-an-a ana-metah ni-nrov ni-nrov
 DIS 1sg-fear-APPL-3sg SS-afraid 1sg-REAL.run 1sg-REAL.run
 ben vere
 REAL.go village
 ‘But I was scared of it, and I was afraid and ran to the village.’ [BS: Daeman]
9. tamari ho qole lel-ih-buqo oro-man lahas-ni ho oro-nrov
 youth TOP again in-PW-fence 3dl-make like-DEM TOP 3dl-REAL.run
 oro-ben lahas-ni ho ana-nrov ben ho
 3dl-REAL.go like-DEM TOP SS-REAL.run REAL.go TOP
 ana-dobo-qan-a vagan
 SS-INCH-REAL.eat-3sg food
 ‘But the youths again were inside the fence, they did this – the two youths ran like this and ran and began to eat the food.’ [ET: Twins]

Another function of these two motion verbs is to mark persistence or duration of events. In this role, *ben* is the most common. In storytelling the repetition of the motion verb often with an increase of pitch and pace signifies the duration of an event:

10. ara-doh ana-doh ben ben ben netah
 3pl-REAL.stay SS-REAL.stay REAL.go REAL.go REAL.go child
 tamari ho i-darab
 youth TOP 3sg-mature
 ‘So their life went on and this child grew up.’ [JG: Lelahvus]
11. ana-qahe lahas-ni ben ben ben ben ben
 SS-REAL.sing like-DEM REAL.go REAL.go REAL.go REAL.go REAL.go
 ana-sua ana-bene bene bene ana-bitahē auta.
 SS-paddle SS-REAL.come REAL.come REAL.come SS-REAL.reach land

‘And they sang and sang like this on and on and on and they paddle and paddled until they reached the beach.’ [EJN: Turtle lore]

In (10) the repetition of *ben* signals that there was a period in which the verb *-doh* ‘stay/live’ persisted uneventfully. Example (9) presents an interesting case as it demonstrates the different effects of the repetition of ‘go’ and ‘come’. With the non-motion verbs, ‘live/stay’ in (10) and in (11) ‘sing’, it is *ben* that is used to show the duration of the event. Here only this persistence is marked. However the verb ‘paddle’ *-sua* in (11) implies movement in a particular direction and in this case the speaker has selected *bene* to mark not only the direction of movement but the duration of the action.

An alternative strategy, which appears to have a very similar meaning, is to use a same-subject-marker on the direction marking verb which then can be repeated:

- 12a. i-div val t-i-toh-bav-eqo re ne-mur-ien
 3sg-grow here FUT-3sg-IRR.stay-with-2sg in NOM1-live-NOM2
 tahoq t-i-mka
 POSS.GEN.1sg FUT-3sg-finish
- 12b. i-ben ana-ben ana-ben ana-ben
 3sg-REAL.go SS-REAL.go SS-REAL.go SS-REAL.go
- 12c. u-lis-a avahal nahula
 2sg-see-3sg today coconut
 ‘It grew here and it will help you in your life. It grew and grew and grew and now you see (it is) a coconut tree.’ [LS: Snake Mother]

As a main verb, ‘go’ can also be made transitive with the applicative suffix *-ahan* which allows verbs to take a remote object. In the case of *-ben* this produces the form, *-benihin*,⁶ with the meaning ‘to go for X’ or ‘to fetch X’:

13. ara-dobo-ben-ihin-a bate ara-mahavs-a
 3pl-HAB-REAL.go-APPL-3sg because 3pl-like-3sg
 ‘They would come for her because they liked her.’ [EK: Napohvevrabog]

The verb, *-qlo-*, ‘to look/watch’, only appears in compounds with other elements as in *-qlopag* ‘stare’. It frequently combines with verbs that mark

direction. The complex form created by compounding with *-ben* means to ‘look across or face towards X’:

14. a Saniana i-ien ana-qlo-ben buh babitev
 PM Saniana 3sg-sleep ss.look- REAL.go toward door
 ‘Saniana slept facing the door.’ [EK: Kinkin 2]
15. nabog ho ni-qlo-ben ni-lis-a ni-qel-sur-a nesah
 day COMP 1sg-look-REAL.go 1sg-see-3sg 1sg-shout-follow-3sg thing
 ho i-marah-btavov ana-marah sarih nabul-meti rien nabl-oh-ve
 COMP 3sg-jump-exit ss-jump descend hole-? in hole-PW-water
 bohoh
 REAL.one
 ‘When I looked across I saw it and I shouted at the thing that jumped outside
 and jumped down into water hole’. [EK:Kinkin 2]

The use of *ben* here to describe a path of perception demonstrates that these verbs need not indicate movement itself.

4.2 Moving up and down

While *ben* and *bene* signal movement towards and away from a particular deictic reference point, they do not encode anything about the path of movement, either its orientation or the geography of the path. Aulua speakers frequently employ verbs that do. The verbs *-sarih* and *-garah* encode two related but contrasting meanings. The first opposition is with respect to elevation of the path. *-Sarih* implies a path downwards, while *-garah* implies movement upwards on an inclined or vertical plane.

16. mel-garah mel-ien mor tabe rien sikarav
 1pl.excl.ascend 1pl.excl-sleep up.there bush in garden
 tah-midil
 POSS.GEN-1pl.excl
 ‘We went up and slept up in the bush at our garden.’ [EK: Kinkin 2]
17. ale ba-vohoh anu ni-garah ni-vten-a tuhunuq haro
 DIS MULT-IRR.one 1sg 1sg-ascend 1sg-IRR.say-3sg POSS.GEN.1sg DL
 ‘Okay, I will go up at once and tell my two (mothers).’ [JG: Lelahvus]

In these two examples, it is not overtly stated why there is an implied slope and a path ascending that inclined plane. However, every Aulua person knows that the gardens are made in the bush in the hills and mountains behind the villages. Also, in these post-missionary times, most people live in coastal villages where there is no bush and consequently no gardens between the villages and the sea. Example (17), though, presents a contrasting view. The narrator is presenting the founding events of his clan, and the story takes place at a time when Aulua speakers lived up in the hills. The listeners would construe that the village belonging to the speaker is higher up in the bush than the location of the speaker in the story

If movement upwards is associated with an inland direction, then movement downwards implies movement towards the sea. The examples below demonstrate the inherent link between a downward path and movements towards the coast.

18. nabog nahani tabaloh ta marsarab navel i-sarih
 day now tabaloh POSS.GEN old.man DEM 3sg-descend
 t-i-lev netis sare man-a vagan na-haro ri-en
 FUT-3sg-take seawater for make-3sg food POSS.ED-3dl in-3sg
 ‘One day this man’s wife went down to fetch seawater in order to make their
 food in it.’ [PA: Levahtavo]

19. i-qlo-sarih i-lis netis
 3sg-look-descend 3sg-see sea
 ‘She looked down and saw the sea.’ [JK: Old Woman and the sea]

The duration of the journey in one of those directions is encoded in exactly the same way as with *-ben* and *-bene*. That is, a strategy of reiteration is used to indicate length or duration of the movement.

20. bahe ho i-beve ana-luhuluh ana-sarih sarih sarih
 shark DEM 3-sg-carry ss-swim ss-descend descend descend
 ana-bitahe netis i-bra sarih sarih vit ren hashasen.
 SS-REAL.reach sea 3sg.deep descend descend down in deep.water
 ‘Shark carried (Monkey) on his back and swam down down down until he
 reached the deep water, all the way down to the depths.’
 [EK: Monkey and Shark]

21. oro-sur sele oro-garah. oro-garah oro-garah oro-bitahe
 3dl-follow creek 3dl-ascend 3dl-ascend 3dl- ascend 3dl-REAL.reach
 nibaq i-mka oro-garah honhota.
 banyan 3sg-finish 3dl-ascend mountain
 ‘The two of them followed the creek climbing up and up until they reached
 the Banyan tree. After that they continued to go up the mountains.’
 [BS: Lisevsev]

The use and indeed repetition of one of the directional verbs, though, does not preclude using *ben* for marking duration. In the example below, we see the narrator marking the duration of the trek up into the bush by first repeating the ‘ascend’ verb (complete with agreement marking) followed by the repetition of ‘go’ strategy. The setting of this narration of the clan history was a village, at the bottom of a river valley not too far from where it meets the sea. The choice of *ben* over *bene* tells the audience that the movement is away from, not towards the location of the narration.

22. oro-garah oro-garah orogarah ben ben ben ho
 3dl-ascend 3dl-ascend 3dl-ascend REAL.go REAL.go REAL.go TOP
 oro-lis nave miel i-lahas nenre
 3dl-see ater red 3sg-like blood.CNST
 ‘The two of them went up and up and they saw a stream that was red like
 lood.’ [JG: Lelahvus]

As with the *ben*, the verbs which encode up and down, can also be attached to *-qlo* to indicate the path of perception:

23. niel i-bte ka balaqo u-qlo-garah buhu mor
 owl 3sg-REAL.say VOC blackbird 2sg-look-ascend towards up.there
 rien nema tah-dara ho ana-lis nema i-ior
 to house POSS.GEN-1dl.incl TOP SS-see house 3sg-burn
 ‘Owl said “Hey Blackbird, look back up there and see our house is burning”.’
 [DK: Owl and Blackbird]

24. i-doh mor tabe lahas-ni be i-qlo-sarih
 3sg-REAL.live up.there bush like-DEM but 3sg-look-descend
 She lived up there, you know, but she looked down.’
 [JK: Old Woman and the Sea]

25. nabog ho tabal.tarab ara-nroge masarab ara-nroge ara-sarih
 day COMP woman.old 3pl-real.hear old.men 3pl.real.hear 3pl-descend
 ara-du tabawan subahani ana-dobo-qlo-sarih naho her
 3pl-REAL.stand beach now SS-INCH-look-descend COMP 3pl
 lahas-abe ara-bohota tabav nevia i-bsa ho
 like-where 3pl-REAL.emerge with turtle 3sg-how.many COMP
 ara-sar-a
 3pl-spear-3sg
 ‘When the old women and the old men heard, they went down and stood on
 the beach and began to look out to sea, where they would emerge from with
 however many turtles they had speared.’ [EJN: Turtle lore]

As with *ben* in example (11), these two motion verbs also accept the applicative suffix, *-ahan*, allowing a remote object, usually some goal, to be included in the sentence. In the examples below the purpose of reaching the goal is to kill them.

26. i-mka ho ara-bene lahas nota i-nren ana-sarih
 3sg-finish COMP 3pl-REAL.come like place 3sg-dawn SS-descend
 ana-sarih-ahan tabal.tarab
 SS-descend-APPL woman.old
 ‘So they all came like that at dawn and went down to get the old woman.’
 [WM Old Woman and Fowl]

27. i-bete ho t-i-vte ho mar-garah-ahan temis hal
 3sg-REAL.say TOP FUT-3sg-IRR.say TOP 1dl.excl.ascend-APPL devil DEM
 ‘He said that if they go up to get the devil ...’ [ET: Twins]

5. Directional modifiers

The forms *-garah* and *-sarih* are clearly verbal when appearing as main verbs, but it is not clear whether they have become adverbial direction markers or partake in serial verb constructions when appearing without prefixes after another inflected verb. However, there are forms in Aulua which participate in direction marking and deixis that are non-verbal.

5.1 *Up and down*

There are two deictic elements which encode the same directions as the verbs discussed above. *Mor* and its collection of related forms, *namor*, *namoria* and *moro* describe a position up from or above a reference point. *Vit* meaning ‘down/downwards’ has a similar collection of related forms signals a position lower than the deictic centre.

28. i-ligdu-ahan nota vit Santo Sanma ana-bles nota Penama
 3sg-let.go-APPL place down Santo Sanma ss-hit place Penama
 ‘It (Cyclone Ivy) left down there Santo (Island), Sanma (province) and hit Penama Province.’ [JS: Ivy⁷]
29. ana-qil nabul sarih sarih sarih sarih vit
 SS-REAL.dig hole descend descend descend descend down
 ana-doh-sisuah ri-en
 SS -REAL.stay-hide in-3sg
 ‘... and dug a hole, down down down and hid in it. [EJN: Rat and Crab]
30. bimo nave i-sha mel-dobo-ut nave Aulua vit be
 before water 3sg-not.exist 1.plexcl-inch-fetch water Aulua down but
 melkologos
 hard.work
 ‘Before there was no water and we fetched water from down at Aulua, but it was hard work.’ [VR: Lavedied]
31. i-doh mor auta
 3sg-REAL.live up inland
 ‘S/he lives up in the hinterland’ [JK: Old woman and the sea]
32. nabog qari ara-garah ara-daqar namor Abuas
 when flyingfox 3pl-ascend 3pl-hang up Abuas
 ‘When the flying foxes go up and hang (in the trees) up there at Ambuas...’
 [EJN: Flying fox song]
33. ale asmaq ara-doh gabu mor-ia nota-vere bohoh
 DIS person 3pl-REAL.live only up-? place-place REAL.one
 mor-ia Assag
 up-? Assag
 ‘They all lived up there in one place, up there at Assang.’ [JG: Lelahvus]

The variants of *mor* and *vit* here seem to map onto the directions encoded by *garah* and *sarih*. The syllable *na-* optionally attaching to the basic forms without provoking a change in meaning is the reflex of a Proto Oceanic article that has accreted onto many common nouns (Crowley 1985, 2006), a process noted in most Malakula languages (Pearce 2007). The form *-ia* is also found attached to these forms and again does not seem to transform meaning in anyway.

5.2 Encoding ‘across’

There is a third adverbial which marks a direction orthogonal to the vertical axis. *Miq* and its variants *miqia* and *namiqia* indicate movement or position on a level plain. Though frequently appearing with ‘come’ and ‘go’, the *miq* forms have no specific equivalent verbal partner as in the pairs *-sarih/mor* and *-garah/vit*.

34. u-ven u-sur tabawan ben miq.
 2sg-IRR.go 2sg-follow beach REAL.go along.there
 ‘Go and follow the beach along there’ [LS: Crab and Fish]

35. ale i-ben ho namiq i-doh-sisuah
 DIS 3sg-REAL.go TOP DEM 3sg-REAL.stay-hide
 ‘So he went over there and hid.’ [SL: Tavo]

36. Lavlav su eni atav ta Ikat i-ben miqia
 morning DEM in-law POSS.GEN Ikat 3sg-REAL.go along-DEM
 ana-bene i-bte nana ta Jeredang i-mes.
 SS-REAL.come SS-REAL.say mother POSS.GEN Jeredang 3sg-die
 ‘That morning, Ikat’s husband⁸ went over there and came here and said that
 Jeredang’s mother was dead.’ [JK: Ivy]

Because of the geography of Aulua the upward-downward axis usually correlates to a landward-seaward axis, and *miq* and the collocations *ben* (*buh*) *miq* traverse a level plane. Similarly, *miq* describes both a traverse of the landward-seaward axis and describes directions along the coast. Unlike the landward/up-seaward/down axis, the *miq* axis is undifferentiated. That is, a single term describes movement in either direction along the coast. This means that *mor*, *vit*, and *miq* also interact with a system of deictic markers that work along the lines of the speaker/listener-centred proximal markers. To explain, in certain circumstances, the *vit*, *mor*, and *miq* groups could be understood

as functioning along the lines of *vel*, *hal*, (including forms *nahal* and *navel*) and (*e*)*ni*, terms that appear to provide deictic indications. The difficulty with these terms, however, is their interchangeability. A first analysis presumed that *hal* and *vel* could be distinguished as ‘here’ and ‘there’ respectively. On closer inspection they seem able to mark the same distance from speaker, as demonstrated by the examples below:

37. i-bene midmid gabu vel tevse-midil
 3sg-REAL.come straight only here place-IAP.1pl.excl
 ‘It just came straight here, to us.’ [DJ: Ivy]
38. *ale* *i-aot* vit ana-ben midmid gabu vel Malakula Aulua
 DIS 3sg-out down SS-REAL.go straight only there Malakula Aulua
 nota hal tah-adil
 place here POSS.GEN-1pl.incl
 ‘So it left down there and went straight here to Malakula, to Aulua, to our
 place.’ [JMS: Ivy]

These clauses are adjacent in the narrative about Cyclone Ivy. In both sentences, a deictic marker of some kind is used, either as a location on its own, or modifying noun referring to a location which either equals or includes Aulua. In (37) *vel* marks the goal of the cyclone’s movement, which is followed parenthetically by the locational possessed noun, *tevsemidil*. Apart from the use of *vit* after the first verb, in the dependent clauses of (38) there are two deictic references. We get a repeat of *vel* which is followed by a series of locations and deictic positions including *hal*. The expression, *nota hal tahadil*, in the context of the narrative picks out the same reference as *tevesemidil* in (37) which is equated with *vel*. In the example below, a young narrator stacks the sentence with demonstratives:

39. be ni-se-nrog-bose asi i-do-man nesah hal
 but 1sg-NEG-REAL.hear.know who 3sg. REAL-HAB.make thing this
 vel lel-hema nahal
 here in-house this
 ‘But I don’t know who has done this thing here in this house.’ [SL: Tavo]

Here the demonstratives *hal* and *vel* do not seem to be contrastive. Other researchers have noted similar difficulties in interpreting the different functions

of deictic markers in Malakula languages (Crowley 2006: 62). Nevertheless it is clear that the *vel*, *hal* and *ni* series give no information about elevation or direction. They contrast with those that signal some kind of relative elevation or direction. Because of the lack of explicit direction or location marking, the deictics *vel*, *hal* and *ni* can co-occur with the direction marking elements.

40. Ibte ‘O marien be namat tu iben vel garah.

i-bte o mar-ien be namat tu i-ben vel
 3sg-REAL.say oh 1dl.incl-sleep DIS snake too 3sg-REAL.go DEM
 garah
 ascend

‘He said “Oh we were asleep but a snake came and moved about up there.”

[ET: A devil story]

6. Two zones for marking direction and location?

Having noted the use of the terms marking direction in everyday conversation in the village and their parallel usage in the narratives as above, I then presented informants with sketched maps of Malakula and Vanuatu based on those in a travel guide (O’Byrne and Harcombe 1999). I asked consultants to name the direction of travel from Aulua to points and places both in Malakula and northern and central Vanuatu. The provincial centre, Lakatoro, to the north of Aulua was labelled *vit* ‘downward’ from the Aulua speaking villages, and the capital of Vanuatu, Port Vila, to the English speaker’s south, is up, or *mor*. An example we have already seen from the narratives also demonstrates this use of ‘down’ for the ‘western’ compass north:

41. i-ligdu-ahan nota vit Santo Sanma ana-bles nota Penama
 3sg-let.go-APPL place down Santo Sanma ss-hit place Penama
 ‘It (Cyclone Ivy) left down there Santo (Island) ... Sanma (province) and hit Penama Province.’ [JMS: Ivy]

42. i-aot vit nota Ambae
 3sg-exit down place Ambae
 ‘It left Ambae, down there.’ [JMS: Ivy]

Santo lies directly north of Malakula, and in (41) the narrator tells us that

Cyclone Ivy left Santo, in Sanma province, ‘down there’. Likewise, Ambae, an island to the northeast of Aulua, and only intervisible on very clear days, is located in the *vit* quadrant of the compass. Contrary to the four cardinal point of the ‘western’ compass Ambrym, usually visible, lying to the east of Malakula, is also ‘down’ from Aulua which means travelling from Ambrym to Malakula is movement upwards:

43. Ambrym i-lev bohol ana-bis-ahan-a garah Malakula
 Ambrym 3sg-take REAL.one SS-REAL.enter-APPL-3sg ascend Malakula
 ‘Ambrym (men) came and gave one (pig) and came up into Malakula.’
 [BS: Slitgongs]

In fact, informants only used the terms *sarih*, *garah*, *vit* and *mor* when the destination/location was beyond a particular local region of southeast Malakula. We can construe from the absence of *miq* in the direction naming task that Aulua entertains two separate systems to refer to direction and location, an intimate system and an extralocal system. The first contrasts three directions upward/inland downward/seaward and across/along the coast. The second seems to only employ verbs and direction markers that locate up and down. The *miq* family of terms, then, is geographically bound, restricted to the local area. So let us first examine the boundaries of this intimate system.

6.1 The intimate location

Looking at places in the narratives which are located via *miq* we find the following examples.

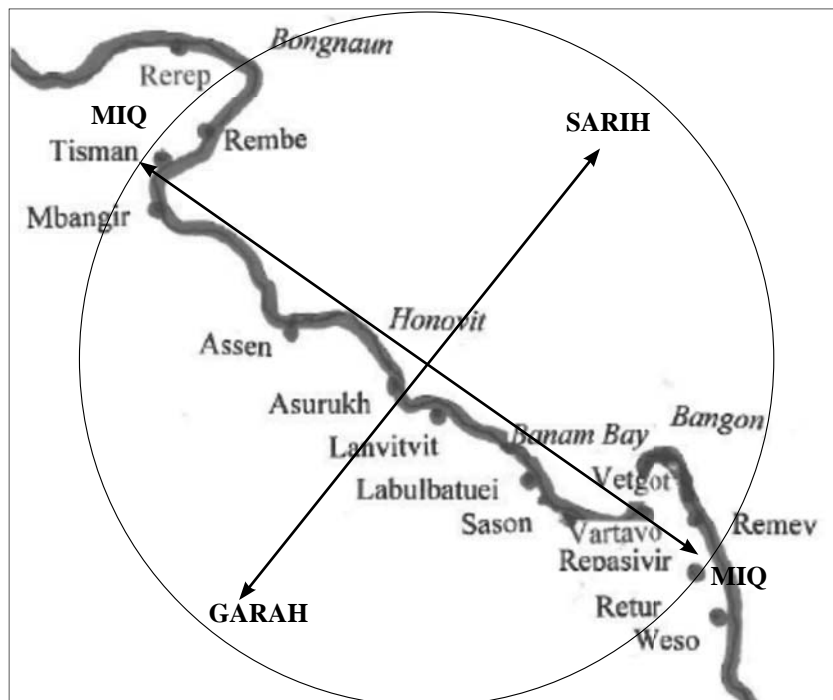
44. mel-ben ben ben miq Autov mel-me-lis
 pl.excl-REAL.go REAL.go REAL.go along Autov 1pl.excl-IMM.see
 tabaloh i-mes.
 woman 3sg-die
 ‘We went over to Autov, and we saw the woman who died.’ [AS: Ivy]
45. mel-doh Tevsenahe u-lis nema bohol miq-ia
 1pl.excl-REAL.live Tevsenahe 2sg-see house REAL.one DEM
 ta Mark mel-doh eni
 POSS.GEN Mark 1pl.excl-REAL.live DEM
 ‘We lived at Tevsenahe – you have seen a house belonging to Mark over there? We lived there.’ [RA: Lavedied Spring]

46. ana-lis habat bohoh i-doh Banam Bay i-doh
 ss-see European REAL.one 3sg-REAL.live Banam Bay 3sg-REAL.live
 miqia Bagon Batihfaiv
 along Bangon, Batihfaiv
 ‘And saw a Whiteman who lives in Banam Bay along towards Bangon, at
 Batihfaiv.’ [RA: Lavedied Spring]

Autov is a one-family hamlet between Lanvitvit and Labulbatuei. Batihfaiv is a village on the southern end of Banam Bay, past Fartavo and further towards Point Bangon. The first two locations in the examples are within the Aulua speaking locale. In example (46) above the speaker explicitly notes a location in the northern Burmbar region. In fact to make sure I knew where she was talking about, she uses three reference points to help me – Banam Bay, Bangon and Batihfaiv. I think it is fair to construe from this that these place names all along this coastline can be located using *miq*. To the north, it seems that it is possible to use *miq* to indicate coastal positions as far as the Tisman area, traditionally the Pangkumu dialect part of the Unua speaking district. In fact it seems that the promontory Bongnaun is the northern boundary of the coastline which can be described as *miq*.

The three term system of marking adverbial location - *mor*, *vit* and *miq* - is restricted to a specific if fuzzily-bound area that stretches beyond the Aulua locale into the neighbouring areas. The reasons that this system localises to this extent are twofold. Firstly, from positions along the coast it is usually the case that either Bongnaun Point in the Tisman area or Bangon in the Burmbar region are visible. Along the path between Tevsenahe and Lambulbateui they both can be seen. Not only then are these points frequently visible despite being located in the immediately adjacent language groups' areas. Importantly Aulua speakers frequently interact with people from these neighbouring areas. The northern Burmbar villages are sources of wives for Aulua men and husbands for Aulua women, while there is a strong tradition of *marid long Tisman* - women marrying to Tisman. Aulua speakers are in frequent contact, make visits to or see on the road people from these non-Aulua areas. In fact people from northern Burmbar have been educated in the Aulua school and are subsumed under the Aulua Presbyterian Session or district. Because of this many Burmbar speakers are fluent in Aulua. At the same time, the frequency of contact with the villages to the south means that Burmbar and Aulua interlocutors stick to their own language when they converse. Thus the *mor-vit-miq* system operates

over a local sphere of interaction, an intimate geography as illustrated by the map below.



Map 2: The intimate zone and its direction system.

6.2 The large scale zone

In contrast to this intimate zone, the second system has scope over a wider geography. This distant zone includes places in Malakula with which Aulua speakers have infrequent contact or seldom travel to and extends over other islands in the Vanuatu group. In this non-local zone, direction marking is not obligatory, though it seems that speakers are able to use the direction marking verbs, *-garah* and *-sarih*, or other motion verbs followed by the modifiers *mor* and *vit*. What is different is the undifferentiated traverse, *miq*. This apparent lack of the *miq* axis suggests that this axis is bounded by the two visible points, Bongnaun and Bangon. Instead, the 360° of the western compass are divided into two quadrants denoting *garah/sarih* and *mor/vit* directions.

Competing systems of locating elements in space within one language are not unknown in the Oceanic language family. Ozanne-Riviere (1997) reports their existence in Iaaï of The Loyalty Islands and Nemi on mainland New Caledonia. The small-scale system used in Nemi has the same orientations to land and sea as Aulua. That is, a landward-seaward axis is contrasted with an undifferentiated traverse. Interestingly, the same axes appear in the Nemi large-scale reference system in which both axes have different lexical designations at either end. Crucially, for our understanding of Aulua, the terms for the landward-seaward axis, as found in both the small-scale and the large-scale axis are re-used for the traverse for the large-scale reference system. Below is Palmer's (2002) representation of the small and large scale systems of Nemi, based on Ozanne-Riviere (1997):

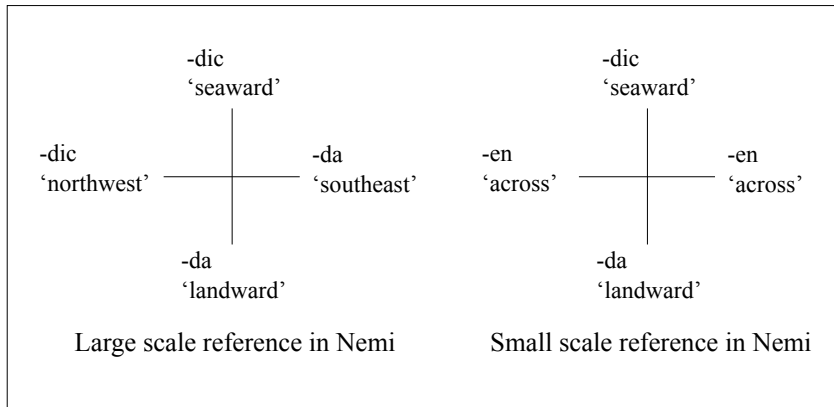
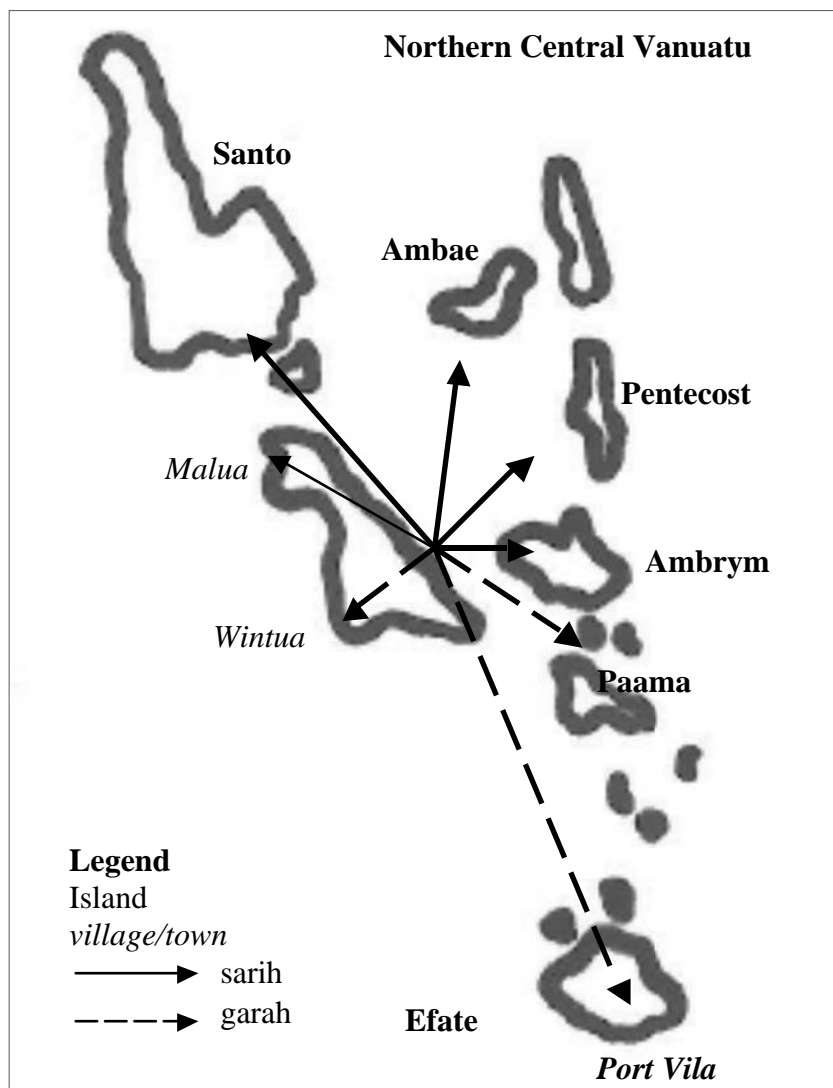


Figure 2: Two scales of direction marking in Nemi, based on Palmer (2002: 128-129).

We might be able to use the Nemi system described here to understand what happens to the *miq* axis in the wider scale system of Aulua. If in the long-range system the Aulua traverse is differentiated, we might be able to say that like Nemi, the terms used are identical to that used in the landward/seaward axis in the small scale system. A traverse of this axis then will be roughly parallel to the coast as in Nemi. The *miq* traverse still equates to 'along the coast' but in the large scale system distinguishes a *sarih/vit* from a *garah/mor* direction. If the system in Aulua is a quadrant system rather than vector, then there would be equal portions of the 'compass circle' given to each direction. The map

below reproduces the direction terms given for some destinations on Malakula as well as inter-island endpoints. As we can see, none of these journeys are encoded using *miq*.



Map 3: Directions to various locations in the large scale zone.

For Aulua, the labelling of the landward-seaward axis is unchanged from the small-scale model. The axis that parallels the coast however no longer uses the undifferentiated *miq*. Rather, *sarih* and *garah* are recycled. This means that the two axes have matching lexical items – *sarih* indicates both down the coast, and out to sea. While *garah* means upward/landward in the small and *upwards along the coast* in the large scale. This has the effect of describing the same direction for movement toward Wintua, Southwest Bay, a place informants suggest could be reached by journeying inland or by circumnavigating the southern end of the island by canoe, and Paama, an island to the southeast of Malakula. It is important to note that Paama and the island of Ambrym are said to lie in different directions. This is particularly important given the evidence from tradition that Ambrym could be travelled to directly from Aulua, or via Port Sandwich at the lower tip of Malakula first. These days the latter route is chosen as there are speed boats from that area. If travellers choose this route, even though they are first moving *garah*, Ambrym, the final destination is *sarih*.

7. Conclusion

Aulua speakers provide information regarding location and direction through the selection of verbs and modifiers. The choice of verb can encode up, down but not across. The verbs can also appear in a form equivalent to an uninflected verb postposed to another verb to indicate the path of the verb. Alternatively, the modifiers *mor*, *vit*, and *miq* locate directions and positions on a three dimensional plane. However, the encoding of across via *miq* is restricted. Aulua uses two different quadrant systems for defining location and direction. An intimate zone covering the Aulua speaking area and the adjacent regions with which there is significant interaction contrasts with a wide-range system which locates positions beyond the intimate domain on Malakula and beyond. The intimate system uses a differentiated axis which contrasts up and down, landward and seaward. This is bisected by an undifferentiated traverse indicating ‘across/along the coast’. By contrast, the large scale system differentiates this traverse by recycling the terms for (movement) up and down.

Abbreviations

APPL	applicative suffix
CN	inalienable possession marker when the following possessor is a common noun, the possession classifiers note features of the possessed noun.
CNST	construct state
COMP	complementiser
DEM	demonstrative
DIS	discourse marker, connector
dl	dual, of pronouns and agreement morphemes
DL	dual marker inside NP
excl	exclusive
FUT	future
INCH	inchoative
incl	inclusive
INT	intentional mood
IRR	irrealis mood
HAB	habitual
MULT	multiplying prefix
NOM	nominalizer
pl	plural, of pronouns and agreement morphemes
PL	plural marker inside NP
PM	determiner for personal names
POSS.ED	alienable possession classifier, edible category
POSS.GEN	alienable possession classifier, general category
PUNCT	punctual aspect
PW	part-whole relationship
REAL	realis mood
SS	same subject marker
TOP	topic
VOC	vocative

Notes

1. The research reported here was funded by the Marsden Grant “Vanishing Languages of Malakula: Lessons for Linguistic theory”. I am very grateful to the members of all the Aulua speaking community for the opportunity to do this research, and particularly to those whose data contributions are cited in this paper. The article is based on a presentation given at Massey University and I would like to thank those who contributed comments as well as comments from two anonymous reviewers.
2. The graphemes <d> and <q> are prenasalised stops in bilabial, alveolar and velar places respectively. The velar nasal is represented by <g> and a velar fricative by <h>.

3. Except where noted, the Aulua examples all texts in manuscript form. The code after the translation represents the initials of the narrator and title of the text.
4. Only some verbs are marked for the mood distinction realis versus irrealis because only one class of verbs displays the initial consonant mutation. For this mutating class prenasalised consonants indicate a realis stem, contrasting with either a plain stop or fricative for irrealis. This feature of the grammar of Aulua is noted is not found in the languages of Malakula but is a regular feature of other languages of central Vanuatu. See Paviour-Smith (2005)
5. The same subject prefix indicates that the subject of a verb has the same reference as a previous verb. Long chains of clauses of *ana-* prefixed verbs are typical in Aulua discourse.
6. The applicative suffix takes a rather unusual form here, as usually it is –ahan. For stems that have a final /u/ we often see a harmonised suffix –uhun-, but ‘go’ is the only one discovered so far with the high front vowel.
7. There are a number of texts called ‘Ivy’ attributed to different narrators. Together these form an oral history of this event
8. A literal translation reads ‘Ikat’s in-law’, but the narrator is making a circumlocution which is understood to mean our brother in law via Ikat. There are taboos prohibiting the names of various kin including all in-laws and spouses being used in conversation with them or about them.

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