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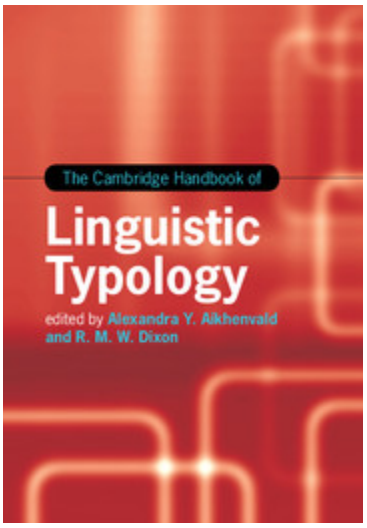

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Greater Awyu languages of West Papua in typological perspective

Lourens de Vries

1. Introduction

The Papuan languages of the Greater Awyu family are spoken by around 35,000 people who live on the southern plains of Indonesian West Papua (see Map I).[1] These lowlands, covered with

[1] This article is based on research funded by the Netherlands Science Foundation (NWO, grant 360-89-020, The Awyu-Dumut family of Papuan languages in their linguistic and cultural context, carried out by Ruth Wester, Wilco van den Heuvel and Lourens de Vries) and by the Australian Research Council (DP 130101361, How Languages

tropical rainforests and swamps, were slowly formed in the course of the last 2,000 - 3,000 years after sea levels fell and rivers originating in the mountains brought sediments (Chappell 2005: 531). Since Greater Awyu languages borrowed terms for coconut, sago, canoe, peddle, mosquito and other key elements of lowland ecology from their southern neighbors, Greater Awyu groups probably descended from the mountains as part of a broader migration fuelled by increasing populations after the development of agriculture in the central highlands of New Guinea around 8000 years B.C. that was followed by intensification of agriculture in the Waghi and Baliem Valley around 4000 B.C. (Pawley 2005: 5).

Small patriclans (often no more than 20 people) form the highest social, political and territorial units in these highly fragmented communities, dispersed over a vast, sparsely populated area. Most speakers of Greater Awyu languages live in two locations, and they go back and forth between these locations: the ancestral clan lands and the settlements (Indonesian: *kampung, desa*). The *kampung* were built under the influence of missions and local governments when Greater Awyu communities were integrated in nation-state contexts, in a gradual process of *kampung* formation that started in the 1920s in the coastal zone during the Dutch period and slowly moved upriver toward the northern foothills that were only very recently reached by this process, in the 1990s (de Vries 2012a). Local Papuan Malay is widely used as an interethnic lingua franca and it followed the process of *kampung* formation (Stasch 2007; de Vries 2012a).

Women bring their dialect or language to the clan lands of their husbands. Since the avunculate, the institutionalized kinship dyad of mother's brother and sister's son, plays a key role in these societies, children grow up with the speech variety of father's people and mother's people. Marriage across language (family) boundaries is frequent. Since language does not

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Differ, and Why). I thank Ruth Wester, Wilco van den Heuvel, Sacha Aikhenvald and Robert Dixon for critical comments, discussion and encouragement.

correlate with clans and clans lands, language is not a marker of group identity. But at the individual level language plays a key role in identity construction: in a world where the person is viewed as a cluster of relations, people express their identity by adopting features of the speech, or even complete languages, of their key relations: of mother's clan, father's clan, of friends and of trade and exchange partners (Foley 2005). In this cultural and social environment linguistic ideologies emerged that favor code switching, multilingualism, and that disfavor purism or maintaining sharp language boundaries (de Vries 2012a). Stasch (2001, 2009) wrote a very insightful ethnography of Korowai clan communities that also covers key aspects of their ethnography of speaking (see also Stasch 2008). Boelaars (1970) wrote a detailed ethnography of the Mandobo.

Building on Healy (1970) and Voorhoeve (2001), Wester (2014) provides a reconstruction of the phonology of the Awyu-Dumut branch, the best known branch of the Greater Awyu family. Her main focus is the synchronic typology and diachronic reconstruction of the morphology of the major Awyu-Dumut word classes, nouns, adjectives, pronouns, verbs and demonstratives. Her typological descriptions of major Awyu-Dumut word classes formed a key source for this article. She does not discuss minor categories such as adverbs, secondary demonstratives, quantifiers and numerals. My analysis of Awyu-Dumut syntax (especially clause linkage) and information structure differs significantly from Wester (2014) and this also affects the analysis of morphology in this article, especially the interpretation of switch reference morphology, postpositions, conjunctions and connectives. Another key source is van den Heuvel (2015), a grammar and text edition of Aghu based on the description of Drabbe (1957), not just because Aghu is the only well-documented language of the Awyu subgroup, but also because his description highlights typologically relevant aspects of Greater Awyu languages, for example the

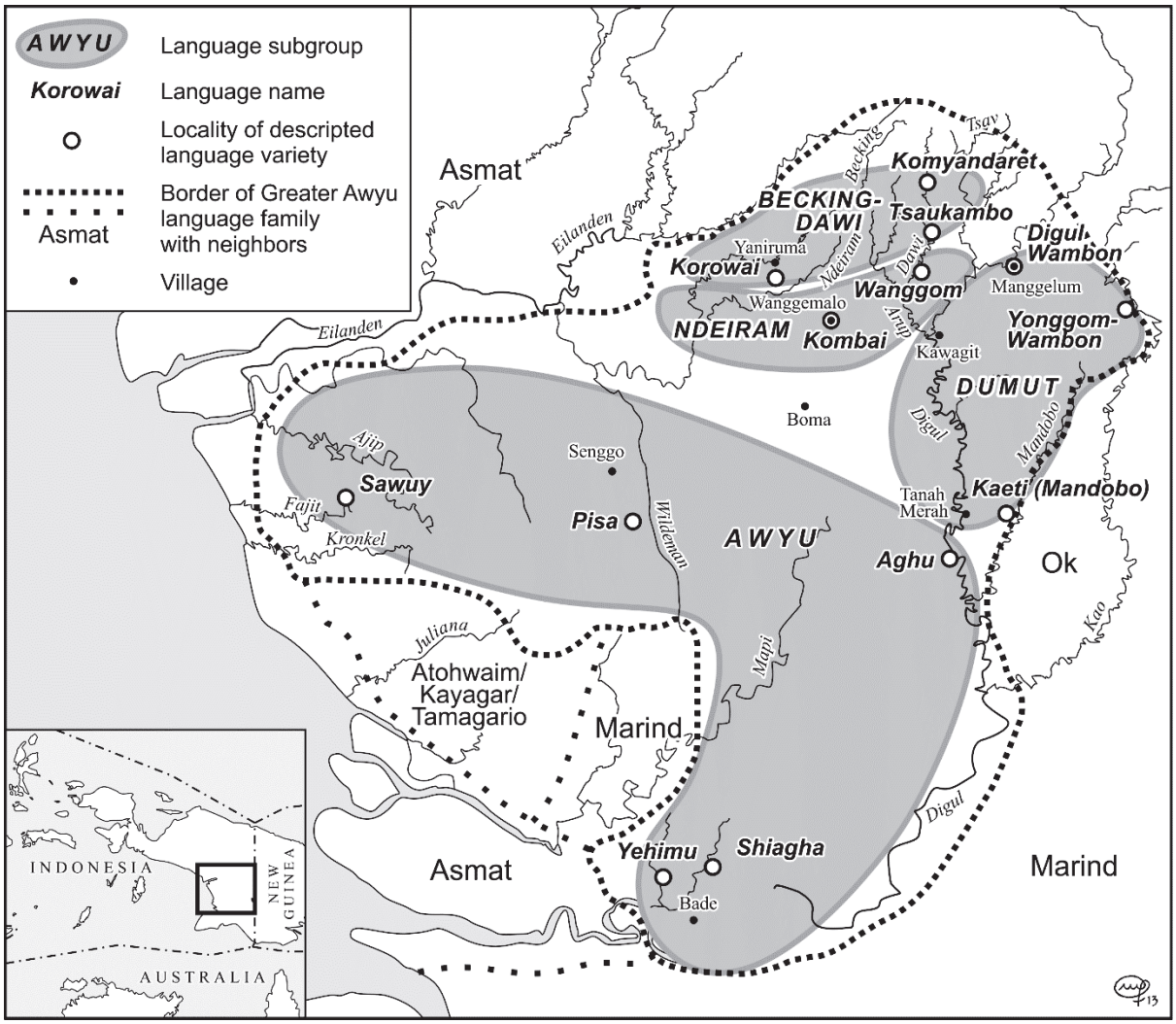
grammatical roles of verbal nouns, and the importance of secondary deictics in spatial orientation.

Building on the work of Drabbe (1950, 1957, 1959), Healy (1970) proposed the Awyu-Dumut family, with two subgroups, Awyu and Dumut. Voorhoeve (2001) revised and expanded the proto phonology of Healy (1970) on the basis of new data from Digul Wambon (de Vries and Wiersma 1992) and Kombai (de Vries 1993). De Vries, Wester and Van den Heuvel (2012) proposed to integrate the Awyu-Dumut family in the Greater Awyu family. The Greater Awyu family has two branches, the Awyu-Dumut branch and the Becking-Dawi branch. The Awyu-Dumut branch has two well-established subgroups, Awyu and Dumut, with proto phonologies and morphologies (reconstructed by Wester (2014)), and one subgroup, the Ndeiram subgroup that needs much more research, both in terms of its internal composition and its position within the Awyu-Dumut branch. Kombai is the only well-documented language of the Ndeiram subgroup (de Vries 1993). Using her findings on Awyu-Dumut proto morphology, Wester (2014) confirmed the hypothesis of Voorhoeve (2005) that Kombai is a member of the Awyu-Dumut branch. Bottom-up reconstructive efforts to place the Greater Awyu family in wider genetic (sub)groupings with one or more of their direct neighbors (Asmat-Kamoro, Marind, Greater Ok) have failed so far (Voorhoeve 2005, van den Heuvel and Fedden 2013).

The Becking-Dawi branch consists of Korowai (Van Enk and de Vries 1997), North Korowai (Hughes 2009), Tsaukambo (Baas 1981; de Vries 2012b) and Komyandaret (Baas 1981). Becking-Dawi languages have all the distinctive features of Awyu-Dumut verb patterns (see below: conflation of second and third person, three basic verb types, Realis and Irrealis as fundamental distinction) but realize these patterns with different sets of affixes (de Vries, Wester and van den Heuvel 2012: 299). Becking-Dawi languages do share two subject person-number

suffixes, negation affixes, pronouns and interrogative marking with the Awyu-Dumut branch (de Vries, Wester and van den Heuvel 2012: 300).

The Awyu subgroup of the Awyu-Dumut branch consists of Sjiagha, Pisa and Yenimu (Drabbe 1950), Sawuy (Voorhoeve 1971) and Aghu (Drabbe 1957; Van den Heuvel 2015). The Dumut subgroup of the Awyu-Dumut branch consist of Mandobo (Drabbe 1959), Yonggom Wambon (Drabbe 1959) and Digul Wambon (de Vries and Wiersma 1992; Jang 2008). The Ndeiram subgroup of the Awyu-Dumut branch consists of Tayan, Kombai and Wanggom.



Map I. Greater Awyu languages.

[[[note: **Map I** was taken from**:** de Vries, L. de. 2014. 'Numerals in Papuan languages of the Greater Awyu family'. In Anne Storch and Gerrit J. Dimmendaal (eds.), *Number- Constructions and Semantics.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 329-355. NB: permission must be asked to use that map in this publication]]] corrective: Yheimu>Yenimu in nieuwe map van CUP

2. Phonology

The morphologies of Greater Awyu languages are much better documented than their phonologies. This typological sketch of Greater Awyu phonologies is mostly based on the four languages that are relatively well-documented, one of each branch and subgroup of the family: Korowai (Becking-Dawi), Kombai (Ndeiram), Digul Wambon (Dumut) and Aghu (Awyu). Greater Awyu languages have simple and cross-linguistically very common (C)V(C) syllables (Dixon 2010: 9). The Awyu subgroup and Kombai have (C)V syllables. Word stress is a pitch-accent on the last syllable (e.g. Aghu) or penultimate syllable (e.g. Wambon). In Korowai and Kombai the pitch-accent is contrastive. All Greater Awyu languages share five vowel phonemes (/i/,/e/, /a/, /u/, /o/) but some of them add one or two close vowels to this basic five. Kombai adds the close, front, rounded vowel /y/ and the close, back, unrounded /ɯ/. Aghu and Korowai add /y/. The close rounded front vowel /y/ in Korowai, Kombai and Aghu is a reflex of proto Awyu-Dumut *y (Wester 2014: 38). In the Awyu subgroup, Aghu is the only language that retained the /y/. In the other Awyu languages *y became /u/ (Wester 2014: 40). In the Dumut subgroup only Mandobo retained the /y/ while in Digul Wambon and Yonggom Wambon /y/

changed into /i/ (Wester 2014: 39). The vowel /y/ is a distinctive element of the Greater Awyu family since the /y/ is rather rare, both cross-linguistically and in Papuan phonologies.

Final consonant deletion, one of the innovations that set the Awyu subgroup apart from other Awyu-Dumut languages (Wester 2014: 35), caused considerable addition to the vowel inventory in that subgroup. For example, Aghu has contrastive nasal and oral vowels, e.g. the Aghu vowel contrasts: *kiã* 'pointed bamboo' vs. *kia* 'story'; *ẽ* 'eat' vs. *e* 'stand' (Van den Heuvel 2015: 16). According to Wester (2014:35), Aghu nasalized vowels are reflexes of proto Awyu-Dumut vowel plus final *m or final *n. The cognates of the words with nasal vowels in other Awyu-Dumut languages have retained the nasals, e.g. Wambon *en* 'to eat' versus Aghu *ẽ* 'to eat'. In line with final consonant deletion, final nasals were absorbed into the preceding vowel in the Awyu subgroup. The absorption of non-nasal final consonants caused lengthening of the preceding vowel, and this explains that Aghu also has contrastive vowel length: /aː/ 'women's house' can be contrasted to /a/ 'rain', while /iː/ 'bird' can be contrasted to /i/ 'lie' (Van den Heuvel 2015: 16).

Greater Awyu languages have relatively simple consonantal systems, with two nasals (/m/, /n), two or three fricatives phonemes (bilabial /φ/, alveolar /s/ and velar /x/), two semi-vowels /j/ and /w/, an /l/ or /r/ and two or three rows of stops. Most variation in the consonant systems resides in the stops. Greater Awyu languages have a contrast between voiceless stop phonemes and voiced prenasalised stops, as many other Papuan languages (Foley 2000: 368). The Awyu subgroup lost prenasalization of voiced stops (Wester 2014: 35) and Korowai, of the Becking-Dawi branch, has a three way contrast of oral voiced stops, prenasalised voiced stops and voiceless stops. Three rows of stops are not so common in New Guinea, according to Foley

(2000: 369). Marind, the southern neighbor of the Greater Awyu family, also has this three way stop contrast.

The relative simplicity of vowel and consonant systems of Greater Awyu languages is deceptive because Greater Awyu phonemes interact at morpheme- and word boundaries in complex ways that contribute to the unique sound profile of these languages. Wester (2014: 23) summarizes the most common morphophonemic changes in the Awyu-Dumut branch. Two such processes that occur in all Greater Awyu languages are nasal epenthesis and vowel harmony. Vowel harmony occurs in unpredictable ways as an optional and speaker-dependent form of assimilation, across morpheme- and word boundaries. But in certain affixes vowel harmony has become obligatory, for example van Enk and de Vries (1997: 67) report obligatory vowel harmony in Korowai possessive prefixes and Drabbe (1957: 2) in the Aghu medial verb suffix *–dV* 'Same Subject', for example *gho-do* 'go-SS', *fimi-di* 'think-SS', *musu-du* 'come up-SS'.

In addition to these major processes found in all Greater Awyu languages, we find numerous types of phoneme interactions at the level of subgroups, individual languages and individual morphemes. For example, intervocalic change of all voiceless stops into voiced approximants or fricatives systematically occurs in Dumut languages, in Korowai and Kombai in conditions of morpheme sequencing (/p/>/w/ or /ß /, /t/>/l/ or /r/, /k/ >/x/).

3. Morphology

Greater Awyu languages have nouns, verbs and adjectives as open, lexical categories and a number of closed sets of grammatical elements: pronouns, demonstratives, quantifiers, copulas, adverbs, postpositions, conjunctions, case clitics and connective clitics.

3. 1 Verbs

Verbs rule both morphology and syntax in Greater Awyu languages, as in so many other Papuan languages. Greater Awyu languages have a very productive way to verbalize members of other categories: by compounding all manner of roots with the verb root *mo/ma* 'to do' and *ke/xe* 'to be/become'. The resulting verbs are then used in mini clauses that perform all sorts of grammatical tasks of other word categories. For example, rather than using an adverb, speakers verbalize an adjective and use the verbalized adjective as the head of a mini clause to modify the meaning of other verbs. Mini clauses result from the preference of speakers to use clauses that consist of just a verb or a verb with a single (and simple) argument:

(1) *Jaxov-e* *matet-mo* *ka-l-e-mbo*
2PL-CONN good-do[SS] go-RLS-non1PL-PAST
'Did they travel well?' (Digul Wambon, de Vries and Wiersma 1992: 19)

The deictic root *–e(p)* 'that (where you, addressee, are)' is turned into a demonstrative verb *emo* 'do that, do thus' and then used in a mini clause that functions as a conjunction to connect sentences in discourse. (2a-c) is part of a Yonggom Wambon text and it shows the two most important ways to connect sentences in narrative texts, tail-head linkage (see below) that connects (2a) and (2b) and the demonstrative verb that connects (2b) and (2c):

(2a) *Kamenwon* *i-no* *ra-ku-r-an.*
bullroarer swing.round-SS.SIM hold-go-RLS[non1SG]-PAST
'He was swinging around the bullroarer.'

(2b) *Ra-ku-r=a* *te* *segepotop*

hold-go-RLS[non1SG]=CONN CONN species.of.sagopalm

ko *ndarama-r-an.*

go[SS] stick.in-RLS[non1SG]-PAST

'He held (it) and stuck (it) in a *segepotop* sago palm.'

(2c) *E-mo-ro* *te* *rira-r=a*

that-do-SS CONN go.down-RLS[non1SG]=CONN

kem *ku-r-an.*

downstream go-RLS[non1SG]-PAST

'He did that and went away downstream.'(Yonggom Wambon, Drabbe 1959: 145)

Verb paradigms of Greater Awyu languages conflate second and third person (de Vries, Wester and van den Heuvel 2012: 296; Wester 2014: 78-85). Subject person-number suffixes express two oppositions, speaker versus non-speaker and singular versus plural. Verb forms such as *ra-ku-r-an* in (2a) may be used on their own as independent utterances and may mean 'you(SG), he, she, it held' (Wester 2014: 74). The Greater Awyu 2/3 homophony is very systematic, in singular and plural, and, crucially, in all verb paradigms (Awyu-Dumut branch) or in all except one (the Intentional paradigm in Korowai, Becking-Dawi branch, de Vries, Wester and van den Heuvel 2012: 296), and this is typologically uncommon (Wester 2014: 74, Cysouw 2003: 131-132). Personal pronouns distinguish first, second and third person in both singular en plural. But

since Greater Awyu speakers use personal pronouns sparingly, mostly in conditions of emphasis, we often find verb forms where context and situation must disambiguate between 2nd or 3rd person readings.

There are three basic verb types in Greater Awyu languages (de Vries, Wester and van den Heuvel 2012: 277), one dependent type of verbs, Same Subject verbs, and two independent verb types, modal verbs and tensed verbs. Same subject verbs consist of just a verb stem, or a verb stem plus a switch-reference suffix or a temporality suffix (sequence versus simultaneity), e.g. *i-no* in (2a) and *emo-ro* in (2c). Modal verbs consist of the verb stem, modality slot (Realis or Irrealis) and a person-number slot, e.g. *rakur* in (2b). Tensed verbs have three slots: modality, person-number and tense, e.g. *rakuran* in (2a).

Same Subject verbs are the only coordinate-dependent or medial verbs of Greater Awyu languages: they cannot function on their own and they are coordinated to the next clause. They probably owe their existence to coordination reduction of person-number and modality suffixes that was followed in some cases by the integration of coordinating conjunctions into the medial verb as SS or temporality suffixes (de Vries 2010).

Greater Awyu languages do not seem to have developed medial Different Subject verbs or final verbs. To indicate (dis)continuity of subject reference, Greater Awyu languages either (optionally) employ switch reference conjunctions that cliticize to independent verb types (modal verbs or tensed verbs) as in Korowai and Aghu, or the use of independent verbs in coordinate clause sequences implies switch of subject reference in the next clause (e.g. Kombai, Mandobo). However, it is not always clear to what extent this switch reference use of independent verbs is fully grammaticalized, since independent verbs still occur in same subject

transitions in some Greater Awyu languages in a number of contexts (e.g. in Yonggom Wambon, Wester (2014:186-187).

The second type of verbs, untensed independent verbs that express Realis or Irrealis opposition, form the heart of the verb system of both the Awyu-Dumut branch (Wester 2014: 87) and the Becking-Dawi branch. They are the most frequent, have the widest distribution and express the most fundamental distinction of the verb system, Realis and Irrealis, a distinction that is also expressed in Realis and Irrealis stems in the Awyu subgroup (Wester 2014: 88). Tense is secondary in Greater Awyu languages (Wester 2014: 105). Tense as subsidiary to a basic Realis-Irrealis opposition ties Greater Awyu languages to many other Papuan languages (Foley 2000: 381).

Tensed verbs are marked: speakers tend to use them less often than untensed independent verbs, often just at the end of a text (e.g. Aghu texts, Wester 2014: 105-106) or in the final clause of sentences, as in Yonggom Wambon, (2a-c). But nowhere this association between tensed verbs and final clauses seems to have led to final verbs, that is to a grammatical restriction of tensed verbs to final clauses, with the possible exception of Yonggom Wambon where tensed verbs seem to be restricted to final clauses (de Vries 2010). The Greater Awyu preference for conjoining of independent verb clauses links them to their Asmat-Kamoro and Marind neighbors. The (emergent) form of clause chaining with medial verbs links them to their neighbors in the mountains where canonical clause chaining with medial and final verbs dominate.

The tense systems of Greater Awyu languages vary widely, both in pattern and matter (see Wester 2014: 105-116 for tense in the Awyu-Dumut branch). For example, the Awyu subgroup has four Past tenses (Today's Past; Yesterday's Past; Distant Past; Historical Past;

Wester 2014: 114)). Kombai does not have a Past tense (de Vries, Wester and van den Heuvel 283). The Dumut subgroup has one general Past tense. Drabbe (1959) and de Vries and Wiersma (1993) also distinguished a Present tense in Dumut languages but Wester (2014: 93-100) convincingly argued that the Present tense paradigms of Dumut languages (and the Non-Future tense of Kombai) are in fact Realis paradigms. Future tenses occur in the Dumut subgroup, in Kombai and in Aghu, of the Awyu subgroup (Wester 2014: 113). In addition to inflectional tenses, some languages use periphrastic constructions with the verb *mo/ma* 'to do' to create specific tenses, e.g. immediate and remote future tenses of Kombai and Wambon (Wester 2014: 116-117).

Korowai, of the Becking-Dawi branch, has a completely different tense system than Awyu-Dumut languages (van Enk and de Vries 1997: 96-101): the suffixes *-méma* and *-(fe)lu/-lulo* are (optionally) added to both Realis and Irrealis verb forms. When *-méma* is added to Realis forms, the result is an Immediate Past, and when suffixed to Irrealis forms the result is an Immediate Future form. Likewise, adding *-(fe)lu/-lulo* to Realis verbs creates Yesterday's Past and to Irrealis verbs creates a Tomorrow's Future paradigm. In addition, Korowai has a tense suffix *–bakha* that only occurs with Realis forms and this creates a Today's Past form. Tense systems of Greater Awyu languages are not only diverse in tense distinctions but also in the surface realizations of tense, for example the tense slot has different positions in the verb within subgroups and within languages (Wester 2014: 114-115).

Aspectual distinctions include durative, completive, iterative- habitual, and a number of phasal aspects, and these are typically expressed by a combination of derived stems, periphrastic constructions involving posture verbs, auxiliary verbs of doing and being and verbal nouns (Wester 2014: 117-126). Korowai, of the Becking-Dawi branch, and Kombai,of the Ndeiram

subgroup, use the same strategies but also have aspect slots in the verb, Kombai a prefix and Korowai a suffix, both expressing the durative and completive contrast (de Vries 1993: 28-29; van Enk and de Vries 1997: 92-94).

3.2 Pronouns

There is a set of basic six personal pronouns in Greater Awyu languages, distinguishing singular from plural in three persons (de Vries, Wester and van den Heuvel 2012: 298; Wester 2014: 65-75). Dumut languages have an additional set of emphatic personal pronouns (Wester 2014: 74). Some languages have are separate paradigms of pronouns with subject function (=S&A), e.g. Mandobo (Drabbe 1959: 10) or O function (Korowai, van Enk and de Vries 1997: 69). Although Greater Awyu languages have rich inventories of personal pronouns, switch reference markings and agreement markings on verbs do most of the work of participant tracking, as in examples (2a-c), a result of the preference of speakers to have no, or at most one overt argument in their clauses (see below, Discourse patterns). The use of personal pronouns therefore implies a degree of emphasis and this explains why we often find Focus clitics on personal pronouns (Wester 2014: 74).

3.3 Nouns and adjectives

Apart from possessive pronominal prefixes, and plural suffixes with a very small set of nouns (kinship nouns, and a few other) there is no noun-related inflectional morphology in the Awyu-Dumut (Wester 2014: 49) or Becking-Dawi branch, and this nominal simplicity ties Greater Awyu languages to many other Papuan languages that tend to have little noun morphology, with important exceptions such as Torricelli and Sepik-Ramu languages (Foley 2000: 371). Nouns

combine to form compound nouns, both endocentric and exocentric compounds (Wester 2014: 50-52; van Enk and de Vries 1997: 65-67). Greater Awyu adjectives lack morphological comparative or superlative forms, like most Papuan languages. In some Greater Awyu languages (especially Yonggom Wambon), some or most adjectives have plural forms, take adjectival suffixes and have augmentative and diminutive morphology (Drabbe 1959: 118-119; Wester 2014: 49-50).

3. 4 Demonstratives

Greater Awyu languags have three basic deictic roots with meanings related to the location of speaker and addressee. In addition to the basic deictics, Greater Awyu languages have extensive secondary deictics.

Wester (2014: 141-153) describes the basic deictics and demonstratives in the Awyu-Dumut branch and reconstructs three deictic roots for proto Awyu-Dumut (Wester 2014: 53) **me* or **ne* for the speaker-related deictic ('here'), **ep* for the addressee-related deictic ('there where you are') and **kop* for the distant deictic ('there, away from both of us'). Becking-Dawi (represented by Korowai) has the same three-way deictic system but has partly different deictic roots: *ip* for the near deictic, *wap* for the far deictic and *xop* for the distant one. The last one is cognate with the Awyu-Dumut distant deictic (with the Korowai velar fricative /x/ corresponding to proto Awyu-Dumut velar stop /k/).

These deictic roots combine with case clitics and connectives to form spatio-temporal adverbs, demonstrative modifiers in noun phrases and independent demonstratives. They are verbalized by forming compounds with the verb *mo* 'to do' and these demonstrative verbs are often used as (discourse) conjunction, e.g. *emoro* in (2c). One language, Yonggom Wambon

uses the adjectival suffix *-op* to derive deictic adjectives from the basic deictic roots, with the meaning 'like that', 'like this' and as questioning adjective 'what kind of' (Drabbe 1959: 121), for example from *ep* 'that' the adjective *ew-op* 'like that' is formed and the demonstrative *mene* is turned into the demonstrative adjective *menewop,* e.g. *jet menewop* 'a bird like this'.

Independent demonstratives in Greater Awyu languages are also used as topic markers, as in various other Papuan languages (de Vries 1995). The grammaticalization bridge between the demonstrative function and the topicality function is constructions with extra-clausal themes that Greater Awyu speaker very often use (see below, Discourse patterns). The independent demonstratives have anaphoric functions in such constructions, for example the Digul Wambon deictic root *ep* 'there, with you' forms an independent anaphoric demonstrative with the syntactic connective clitic *=e* (*ep=e>eve*, with the /p/ turning into a voiced approximant in morpheme sequencing, see Phonology). In clauses preceded by an extra-clausal theme speakers use *eve* as anaphoric demonstrative, as in (3):

(3) *Ev=o* *kap,* *ev=e* *na-mbap=nde*
That=CONN man that=CONN 1SG-father=COP
'That man, that is my father.' (Digul Wambon, de Vries 1995: 526)

The next step is that the former anaphoric demonstrative attaches itself as a clitic to the theme phrase (4), and becomes a topic marker, and this necessitates a new anaphoric demonstrative in the main clause:

(4) *Ev=o* *kav=eve,* *ev=e* *na-mbap=nde*

That=CONN man=TOP that=CONN 1SG-father=COP

'That man, that is my father.' (Digul Wambon, de Vries 1995: 526)

Once established as topic marker in contexts such as (4), its use as topic marker spreads to other context, such as (5), with theme clauses, and to intraclausal topics.

(5) *Ep=ka* *mba-l-eva-mbo-n=eve,* *sanov=e*

There=CIRC sit-RLS-1PL-PAST-TR=TOP little.finger=CONN

ilo *ka-l-eva-mbo*

go.down[SS] go-RLS-1PL-PAST

'After we had stayed there, we went downriver on Monday.'

(Digul Wambon, de Vries and Wiersma 1992: 87)

(Lit. 'given that we stayed there,…')

Wester (2014: 151-152) suggests that the reconstructed proto Awyu-Dumut distant deictic **kop* has its origin in the Proto Awyu-Dumut verb *ko* 'to go (away from deictic center)' and the proximate deictic root **me* to the verb of coming (towards deictic center) **me*. This derivational relation with deictic motion verbs is transparent in the sets of secondary demonstratives that are derived from motion verbs in Greater Awyu languages. Notice that in deriving secondary demonstratives from motion verbs, a *–p* is added in Yonggom Wambon, the same *–p* that we find in many reflexes of primary deictics in Greater Awyu languages. For example, Drabbe (1959: 122) mentions four Yonggom Wambon verbs, *tut-/turu-* 'to go up' (river, hill); *ri-* /*riro-*'to go

down' (river, hill), *un-/ondo-* 'to cross; go to the other side (of river)' and *ut-*'to go in or out of a space', all oriented away from the deictic center. (Yonggom Wambon has primary and secondary verb stems, Drabbe 1959: 126). By compounding these four verbs with the verb stem of coming (*ma-*) four additional motion verbs are formed, with motion toward deictic center: *ma-tut-* 'to come up', *ma-ri-* 'to come down', *m-un-* 'to come across' and *m-ut-* 'to come in or out of a space'. By adding *–p* or *–re* to these compound verb roots with *ma-* a set of secondary, complex proximate demonstratives and adverbs are formed, e.g. *ma-ri-re* 'this down here'. To form distant demonstratives and deictic adverbs , the verb root *ko* 'to go away' combines with *tut-/turu-*, *ri-* and *un-* and *–p* or *–re*, e.g. *ko-turu-p* '(that) up there' (Yonggom Wambon, Drabbe 1959: 122).

3. 5 Numerals

Greater Awyu languages have a small, closed class of quantifiers that occurs after adjectives in the noun phrase. Numerals do not belong to this word category as they are nouns. Counting starts on the little finger of the left hand until the thumb is reached and then goes up the arm to a highest point on the head and then goes down again via the other arm until the little finger of the right hand is reached, the highest number in these closed numerals systems, e.g. 23 in Kombai. The nouns that denote the body-parts function also as numerals, (6). The extended body-part systems in the Greater Awyu family function together with an elementary numeral system that is not body-part based and has just the numbers one and two (as in Korowai), one, two and three (as in Mandobo) or one and two as base numbers, with three (two-one) and four (two-two) as derived numbers in a binary system (Kombai). The languages of the Awyu subgroup lack extended body-part tally systems based on hands, arms and head but use hands-and-feet systems (e.g. Aghu numerals with bases 5 (hand), and 20 (person), van den Heuvel 2015: 120), just as their neighbours of the Marind language family (de Vries 2014).

(6) *gol* *wayafül-anop*
pig index.finger-amount
'four pigs' (Korowai, de Vries 2014: 345)

Days of the week are also named after body parts, e.g. *sanop* 'little finger' denotes Monday in (5), the first day, because counting starts on the little finger.

4. Syntax

4. 1 Noun phrases

In texts of Greater Awyu languages it is very hard to find many examples of noun phrases that consist of a noun modified by two or three modifiers. The preference is to have just a (bare) noun, with maximally one modifying element, just as the texts show a strong preference for clauses to consist of just a verb, or a verb with one overt argument. The unmarked order is head noun followed by one or more modifiers. Greater Awyu languages allow modifiers in prenominal position, as a marked choice: in some languages (e.g. Digul Wambon) there seems to be a restriction to only one prenominal modifier at a time and in some languages prenominal modifiers are obligatorily marked by a modifier-head connective that is absent when the same modifier occurs after the noun (e.g. Kombai, Digul Wambon).

4.1.1 Possessive Noun Phrases

When the prenominal modifier slot is filled by a noun, the noun phrase has a possessive reading. Possessor nouns can only occur before the head noun. Possessor and possessed are simply juxtaposed in Kombai, in Korowai, (7) and Aghu (van den Heuvel 2015: 11-12; Wester 2014: 55). In other languages such as Digul Wambon simple juxtaposition is exceptional and as a rule a possessive clitic, (8), or a general modifier-head connective links the possessor noun to its head, (9):

(7) *y-afé* *dulekhül*
his-older.brother garden
'the garden of his older brother' (Korowai, van Enk and de Vries 1997: 174)

(8) *Ahitup=ko* *n-ap*
Ahitup=POSS TR-house

‘Ahitup’s house’ (Digul Wambon, de Vries and Wiersma 1992: 57)

(9) *Ahituv=o* *n-ap*

Ahitup=CONN TR-house

‘Ahitup’s house’ (Digul Wambon, de Vries and Wiersma 1992: 57)

4.1.2. Relative Clauses

Greater Awyu languages have a wide range of different constructions that allow clauses to function as a modifier of a noun. The first type fills the prenominal modifier slot that is linked to the head noun by a general modifier-head connective, *=o* in Digul Wambon and *=xa* in Korowai. The modifier can be a demonstrative, (10), a numeral or a possessor noun, (9), but it can also be a clause, (11), and the presence of the modifier-head connective marks the clause as the modifier of the following noun:

(10) *[[If-e]=xa MOD* *[abül]HN]NP*

this-TR-CONN man

'this man' (Korowai, van Enk and de Vries 1997: 73)

(11) *[[mül-khuf=efè* *af=efè* *lamol*

former-time-TOP then-TOP universe

fu-bo]=xa MOD *[abül=fefè]HN]NP*

put-[RLS.non1SG]COM=CONN man=TOP

'the man who then, in former times, created the universe…'

(Korowai, van Enk and de Vries 1997: 163)

The common argument of main clause and relative clause, *abül* 'the man', is only overtly expressed by a noun in the main clause, not in the relative clause. Korowai also has a second type of relative clause that uses the same structure with the modifier-head connective *=xa* but in this type the head noun slot is left unfilled and the common argument is expressed in the relative clause:

(12) [[*Wa gol ülme-téle=xa*]*=fè*

that pig kill-[RLS]non1PL=CONN=TOP

'the pig which they killed…'

(Korowai, van Enk and de Vries 1997: 114)

Kombai is exceptional in the context of Greater Awyu languages, and in more general typological contexts (Dryer 2013), because it expresses the common argument both in the relative clause and in the main clause (de Vries 1993: 77-78). Occasionally this double expression is done with the same noun, (13), but normally a closed set of head noun fillers is used that classify the referent of the noun phrase as male, female or non-human (animals, things), (14). The nouns recruited to refer to human referents in these relative constructions are kinship terms that loose their specific kinship meaning (see de Vries 1987) and acquire a more abstract classifying meaning as head noun of relative clauses, for example the kinship term *rumu* 'son, male parallel child' is used to refer to all male persons as head noun in relative clauses:

(13) [[*Doü adi-ano-n*]=*o* [*doü*]], *deyalu-xe*

sago give-[RLS]non1PL-TR=CONN sago finished-be[non1.RLS]

'The sago they gave, is finished.'

(Kombai, de Vries 1993: 78)

(14) *Yare gamo xereja b-o-g-i-n=o rumu*

old.man join[SS] work DUR-do-RLS-[non1SG]-TR=CONN person

na-momof-a.

my-uncle-COP

'The old man who is joining the work, is my uncle.'

(Kombai, de Vries 1993: 77)

Kombai relative clauses with *ro* ‘thing’ as head noun are often used as fillers of the extra-clausal Theme slot. Demonstrative based topic markers *mene* or *mofene* (optionally) mark the thematic clause and the thematic relative clause may receive all sorts of adverbial interpretations:

(15) *Xe bo-xu-g-i-n=o ro mofene,*

he DUR-ill-RLS-non1SG-TR=CONN thing TOP

xwaimigi wa-luwa-no wa-luwa-no:

demon COM-say-[RLS]non1PL COM-say-[RLS]non1PL

.

foro *moja-ma-none.*

carry[SS] descend-come-IMP.PL

‘When he was ill, the foreigners already said: bring him down.'

(Kombai, de Vries 1993: 106)

(Lit. Given that thing that he was ill, the demons (foreigners) said: bring him down.’)

Greater Awyu thematic relative clause constructions with functions that adverbial clauses have in English, as in (15), are not uncommon in Papuan languages (Foley 1986: 201; de Vries 2006: 815).

4.1.3 Coordinate noun phrases

All Greater Awyu languages use comitative clitics as coordinators of nouns (Awyu-Dumut: Wester 2014: 58-60; Korowai: van Enk and de Vries 1997: 80-82), typologically a very common grammaticalisation path (Wester 2014: 59; Stassen 2000: 31-32). The two or maximally three members of the coordinate phrase are all marked with the comitative clitic:

(16) *nu=fekho* *gu=fekho*

I-with you-with

'you and me' (Korowai, van Enk and de Vries 1997: 81)

In addition to comitative suffixes, some Greater Awyu languages use general syntactic connectives (e.g. Digul Wambon, de Vries and Wiersma 1992: 72) and Focus markers as coordinators (Dumut languages, de Vries 1986).

4. 2 Clauses

Greater Awyu languages have transitive, intransitive and copula clauses, all of them with the predicate in final position. In transitive clauses the A argument precedes the O argument. A closed set of mutually exclusive semantic, pragmatic and syntactic postpositions and clitics express relations of arguments to the verb. Core and peripheral arguments may take syntactic connectives and pragmatic markers but core arguments cannot take the case clitics and relational nouns that express semantic relations of peripheral arguments (see below) and only core arguments may occur without any marking at all. S and A are treated in the same way by processes such as subject person-number agreement and switch reference, in contrast to O that is not cross-referenced on the verb. Some languages have subject (=S and A) pronouns and O pronouns. This basic nominative alignment has one exception. Occasional ergative marking occurs in some Greater Awyu languages (Kenon Wambon, Jang 2008: 75, (17); Yonggom Wambon, Wester 2014: 164)) to enhance the agentivity of the A argument or to disambiguate A and O, a phenomenon not uncommon in Papuan languages with a basic nominative system (Dixon 1994: 58). Greater Awyu language recruit their occasional ergative markers from cause, reason and instrument markers that occur with peripheral arguments (Jang 2008:75; Wester 2014: 164).

(17) *Anggai=ghot* *oy=e* *inen-ghe.*
dog-ERG pig=CONN bite-RLS[non1SG]
'The dog has bitten the pig.'
(Kenon Wambon, Jang 2008: 75)

Both transitive and intransitive clauses have an experiential subtype. The human experiencer is expressed as a clause initial topic follow by either an inanimate S and an intransitive verb, or an inanimate A and a transitive verb. The verb agrees in subject person-number with the inanimate A or S, not with the human experiencer:

(18) *nu* *enow* *i-r-an*
1SG (Experiencer Topic) fever (inanimate A) hit-RLS[non1SG]-PAST
'I had fever'
(Yonggom Wambon, Drabbe 1959: 143)

Intransitive posture verbs of sitting, standing and lying play a special role in Greater Awyu languages (as in many other Papuan languages) because of their role in durative, possessive and existential-locative constructions of Greater Awyu languages, and because of the covert noun classification that they impose, based default postures, e.g. birds sit, snakes lie and trees stand. Copula clauses contain a copula subject (CS) followed by a copula complement (CC). The copula complement is a noun phrase, adjective phrase or a numeral phrase. The copula is zero, (20), an invariant copula from a closed set of positive and negative copula elements, or a fully inflected copula verb. Greater Awyu languages have multiple copula elements. For example, Yonggom Wambon has an affirmative copula, a negative copula, a interrogative copula, a causal copula and two existential-locative copula's (Drabbe 1959: 124-125).

4. 3 Syntactic Connectives

Dumut languages, Kombai and Korowai use a small closed set of syntactic connectives in both phrases and clauses. In phrases, they link nominal modifiers to their heads (e.g. (9), (10), (11) and (13)), and signal that the constituent that they cliticize to is a modifier within a noun phrase. In clauses, syntactic connectives link arguments to the verb, and they signal that constituents are arguments of that verb. Syntactic connectives also function as coordinators with phrases and clauses. The connectives are very short clitics (often just a vowel), and play a key role in expressing syntactic contrasts, for example Digul Wambon *=e* marks the demonstrative *ev=e* in (20) as an independent demonstrative argument in the clause domain in contrast to the dependent demonstrative *ev=o* marked by *=o* in (19) as a modifier in a noun phrase domain:

(19) *ev=o* *lan*
that woman
'that woman' (Digul Wambon, de Vries and Wiersma 1992: 43)

(20) *ev=e* *lan*
that=CONN woman
'that is a woman'(Digul Wambon, de Vries and Wiersma 1992: 43)

When the modifier-head noun connective *=o* cliticizes to a clause, it marks that clause as a modifier in the noun phrase, that is a relative clause, but when *=e* cliticizes to a clause, it marks that clause (*ndavelepo* in (21b)) as an (peripheral) argument in another clause:

(21a) *ko* *mba-xe-n=o* *kav=eve*

there sit-RLS[non1SG]-TR=CONN man=TOP

ev=e *na-mbap=nde*

that=CONN my-father=COP

'The man who sits there, that is my father.'

(de Vries 1986: 28)

(21b) *ndave-lepo-n=e* *ev=o* *sal=e* *noxop* *Mboma*

Come-1SG.PAST-TR=CONN that=CONN day=CONN we Boma

nda-kndeva-n=o

come-1PL.RLS-TR=CONN

'when I returned that day we returned from Boma and…'(Digul Wambon, de Vries 1986: 47)

4.4 Case clitics and postpositions

Greater Awyu languages have a small set of postpositions and clitics that express the semantic relations of peripheral arguments in clauses. Each of these covers a wide range of different relations. For example, Digul Wambon has a circumstantial case clitic *=ka* that marks inanimate peripheral arguments: instruments, times, locations, source, (22). When used with clauses, it marks the clause as a peripheral argument with time function, (23):

(22) *Alip=ka* *koma-t-mbo*

yesterday-CIRC die-RLS-[non1SG]PAST

'He died yesterday.'

(Digul Wambon, de Vries 1986: 23)

(23) *nukh=e* *ande-l-ep-o=ngga* *ev=o* *kav=e*

I=CONN eat.II-RLS-1SG-PAST=CIRC that=CONN man=CONN

nde-t-mbo

come-RLS-[non1SG]PAST

'When I ate, that man came.'

(Digul Wambon, de Vries 1986: 41)

Nouns play a key role in the expression of the semantic relations of peripheral arguments in Greater Awyu languages, both synchronically as relator nouns, (24) and diachronically as input of grammaticalization processes that turned these nouns into case clitics, (25), with dialects of dialect chains showing various stages of the diachronic process. For example in the Yonggom dialect of Wambon the noun *tigin* 'cause, reason' is the head of the phrase, as shown by the modifier-head connective *=e* of the Yonggom dialect but in the neighboring Digul Wambon dialect its cognate *=sixi* has become a case clitic: in (24) *ran* is the modifier but is cognate *lan* in (25) is the head noun, as shown by the preceding modifier-head noun connective *=o*; if *sixi* was the head noun, the connective would have occurred preceding *sixi*. Also *sixi* has cliticized and has a shorter form *=si*, all signs of advanced grammaticalization into a case clitic:

(24) *ran=e* *tigin=de* *Katit* *pitip* *unda-r-in=de*

woman=CONN reason=FOC Katit house burn-RLS-non1.PL=COORD

'Because of a woman they burned down Katit's house and…' (Yonggom Wambon, Drabbe 1959: 148)

(25) *ev=o* *lan=sixi* *ka-l-e-mbo*

That=CONN woman=Reason go-RLS-non1PL-PAST

'Because of that woman they went away.'

(Digul Wambon, de Vries 1986: 53)

The Korowai cognate of Yonggom Wambon *tigin* and DigulWambon *=sixin* is *=tekhé(n).* It reflects the intermediate stage between (relational) noun and case clitic because the modifier-head connective *=xa* has been dropped in several but not all contexts (van Enk and de Vries 1997: 83). In Korowai, the Reason marker, whether case clitic or noun, also marks cause, purpose, recipient, beneficiary and addressee. In other words, it has acquired an abstract grammatical meaning that allows it to mark peripheral arguments that in some way are the goals of an action. The Kombai the relational noun *ri* 'cause, reason' still functions as a noun (as shown by presence the modifier-head connective *=o*) but it use as relator with cuase, reason,purpose, destination, recipient and addressee phrases shows that it has acquired a general grammatical meaning of marking the goal of an action (de Vries 1993).

4. 5 Topic and Focus clitics and postpositions

Greater Awyu languages have two pragmatic markers that adjust utterances to their informational contexts, topic markers and focus markers. Greater Awyu topic markers tend to derive from demonstratives, a process that always involves loss of deictic meaning and sometimes cliticization. These topic markers occur very often and this may have been the basis for their bleaching and phonological reduction from topic marker to syntactic connective in some Dumut languages, a further grammaticalization after the first development from demonstrative to non-deictic topic marker. Wester (2014: 155) notices that the Yonggom Wambon deictic *ep* 'that' has a shorter form *=e*. Digul Wambon also has an omnipresent connective clitic *=e*. This *=e* clitic in the Wambon dialects has been analysed by Wester (2014) and Jang (2008) as a topic marker. De Vries and Wiersma (1992: 69) analyse *=e* as a syntactic connective, primarily because *=e* can be shown to have become part of a small closed set of syntactic connectives that signal syntactic contrasts, see (19)-(21). In some contexts a residual topic meaning may linger but the extreme high frequency (often multiple occurrences in a single clause), bleached meaning and shortened form point to a contrast between the syntactic connective *=e* and the topic marker *=eve.*

Greater Awyu languages have sets of copula elements that consist of one more general affirmative copula and a number of specific copulas that occur only with certain types of predicates. The general copula, for example Korowai *=to/tu* , (26), is recruited in many Greater Awyu languages as a focus marker, (27):

(26) *noxu-yanop=tu*
our-people=COP
'it is our people'

(Korowai, van Enk and de Vries 1997: 128)

(27) *n-ate-lo* *nu* *umo*
my-father-FOC 1SG tell.non1SG.RLS
'it was my father who told me'
(Korowai, van Enk and de Vries 1997: 128)

Focus markers also function as coordinators in Yonggom Wambon and Digul Wambon (de Vries 1986). The informational salience of copula complements formed the bridge for the copula to add Focus marking function. In copula clauses the copula is still a copula, and not a Focus marker because it can only occur on the copula complement, not on the subject. Typical for Focus markers is that may occur on any constituent, including subjects as in (27), that is informationally salient in a given context. Informational salience also may have played a role in the further grammaticalization of Focus markers into coordinator of nouns. Coordination of nouns being marked, the coordinated nouns tend to be focal, a phenomenon also observed for other Papuan languages (Reesink 1987: 177).

4. 6 Clause combinations

Clauses have five syntactic functions in Greater Awyu languages. They can function as relative clauses modifying a noun ((11)-(15)), as peripheral arguments of other clauses, (21) as extra-clausal themes, (5), they can function as medial clauses in clause chaining, (2c), and they can function as (conjoined) independent clauses, (2b). But a clause cannot function with a core function in (in)transitive clauses (S, A or O function). Only verbal nouns with maximally one

argument may be S, A or O, (28). The other role of verbal nouns in Greater Awyu languages is in periphrastic constructions of modality and aspect, often with the auxiliary verbs of doing and being, for example phasal aspects, related to the beginning or end of an event, (29):

(28) *Oi* *hetko-mop=sikhi* *ndave-l-ep-o*
pig see-VN=for come-RLS-1SG-PAST
'I came to see the pig' (Digul Wambon, de Vries and Wiersma 1992: 41)

(29) *nu* *dépo-n=ga* *lefaf*
I smoke-VN=CONN finished
'I have stopped smoking.' (Korowai, van Enk and de Vries 1997: 93)

5. Discourse patterns

Greater Awyu texts exhibit a number of patterns that reflect preferences of Greater Awyu speakers when they use their languages. They are not grammatical patterns but because of their high frequency they conditioned the rise of certain grammatical constructions and patterns. The discourse preferences are: tail-head linkage, quotative framing, 'serialization' of arguments and the use of extra-clausal themes for both phrases and clauses (de Vries 2006). The preferences are a heterogeneous set of patterns, with different functions in various domains.

Tail-head linkage is the default way to connect sentences or clause chains in Greater Awyu texts, as in many other Papuan languages (de Vries 2005). Speakers (partially or wholly) repeat the final clause of the chain or sentence, the tail-clause, as the first clause of the next, the head, (2a)-(2b).

Greater Awyu speakers also have a preference to use reported speech constructions as a frame for a wide of range of meanings in the areas of intention, cognition, emotion, perception, indirect causation. This use of quotative templates links Greater Awyu languages to the wider areal context of Papuan languages (Healy 1964; Reesink 1993). The Kombai examples (30) and (31) show the use of quotative framing to express intention:

(30) *Yarimo kho fera-f-e=ne*
garden go[SS] see-lSG.IRR-CONN-QUOTE.SG
'He wants to see his garden.' (Lit. He goes saying "I want to see my garden")
(Kombai, de Vries 1993: 97)

(31)

Nu	*me-la-ra*	*ai*	*galemo-f-o=ne-ra*	*wa-me-de*
I	come-stand-SS	pig	buy-1-PL[IRR]=say-SS	COM-come-1SG.RLS

'I have come to buy the pig.'
(Kombai, de Vries 1993: 97)

In certain contexts (motion verbs with purposes) Kombai must use quotative framing, as in (31), and this shows how such patterns of language use may conventionalize into obligatory grammatical patterns. To disambiguate between reported speech and reported thought (or inner speech used to frame thoughts, emotions, intentions) speakers may add references to the seat of emotion and cognition, e.g. the Korowai references to intestines and gall when quotative framing is used to denote emotion, cognition or intention, e.g. *fi-melon* 'guts' (de Vries 2013: 129).

The strong preference for the use of extra-clausal themes, in itself cross-linguistically very common, led to a number of constructions in Greater Awyu languages of a type that we find all over New Guinea. Speakers fill the extra-clausal theme slot with both phrases, (4), and clauses ((5), (15)) and these thematic clauses, often marked with demonstrative-based topic markers, formed the basis for the development of topical conditional constructions, (32), and of conflated adverbial/relative constructions (e.g. (15)) in Greater Awyu languages (Wester 2014: 159), and in many other Papuan languages (Haiman 1978; Foley 1986):

(32) *Kikhuv=e* *nde-t* *ke-khe-l=eve*
Digul=CONN come-RLS[non1SG] be-be-RLS[non1SG]=TOP

eve *Manggelum* *ko-nok-si-va*
then Manggelum go-NEG-INTENT-1PL[IRR]
'If the Digul rises, then we won't go to Manggelum' (Digul Wambon, de Vries and Wiersma 1992: 31)
(Lit. Given that the Digul comes, given that that is the case, then/in that case we will not go to Manggelum.)

Digul Wambon and Yonggom speakers use a form of the verb *ke* 'to be'/'to become, in thematic conditional constructions (Drabbe 1959: 142; Wester 2014: 163) to express the conditional meaning of the theme clause. Thematization preferences also explain the form of the experiential transitive and intransitive constructions, (18), with a clause initial topic, a theme phrase that became integrated with the following clause.

'Serialization' of arguments is the (strong) tendency in Greater Awyu languages (and in many other Papuan languages, Heeschen 1998) to distribute the arguments of a verb over a series of mini-clauses, each conforming to the preferred pattern for clauses, to consist of just a verb or a verb with one overt argument (whether peripheral or core). Verbs of giving are three-place predicates, with a giver, a gift and a recipient. Greater Awyu speakers routinely use bi-clausal constructions that allow the speaker to serialize these arguments over a clause sequence, with a 'take' verb in the second clause that expresses the recipient as the A of that 'take' verb:

(33) *fiko* *edoxo* *afi-n-e*
thing giveII.1SG.DS.SEQ takeII-NON1SG-FUT
'I will give him things.'(Aghu, Drabbe 1957: 39)
(Lit. I will give things and he will take.)

Verbs of killing are two-place predicates but Greater Awyu speakers express it in a conventionalized bi-clausal construction that allow speakers to express the patient of the killing as the single S argument of the next clause, (34). Since a conjunction may intervene between the two verbs (Drabbe 1959: 134), there are indeed two clauses rather than one clause with two serialized verbs as head:

(34) *i-r-ip* *kima-r-an*
hit-RLS-1SG die-RLS[non1SG]-PAST
'I killed him' (lit. I hit and he died)
Yonggom Wambon (Drabbe 1959: 133)

The single overt argument preference of Greater Awyu speakers shaped their grammars in many ways, both in the absence of certain construction types (e.g. applicatives and other valency-increasing operations) and their presence (e.g. obligatory argument 'serialization' in certain conditions, e.g. with perception verbs when O is an event, de Vries 2013: 123).

6. Concluding remarks

Greater Awyu languages have relatively simple phoneme inventories similar to many other Papuan languages. Greater Awyu languages each create their own distinctive sounds by differences in allophony rules and in different sound realization at morpheme- and wordbreaks, setting them apart from other Greater Awyu languages. For example, only Korowai has implosive realizations of oral voiced stops and only Kombai has lateralized allophones of voiceless fricatives. Mandobo pronounce their voiceless stop word finally completely unreleased (Drabbe 1959: 5).

Greater Awyu languages are synthetic languages, with agglutinating morphology, and some fusion. Verbs dominate texts, morphology and syntax. Verb morphology is suffixing, with a few exceptions, for example the Kombai durative prefix *bo-* and completive prefix *wa-* (de Vries 1993: 28-29). Verbal suffixes express person and number of the subject (=S & A), mood, modality, negation, switch reference, temporality (sequence and simultaneity), tense and aspect.. Medial verbs are weakly developed and emergent clause chaining is smoothly combined with conjoining of clauses with independent verbs. The opposition Realis and Irrealis is central to the verb system, and tense is dependent on the Realis and Irrealis distinction. In the Awyu-Dumut branch the Irrealis is the formally unmarked modality (zero-marked), cross-linguistically rare, whereas in the Becking-Dawi branch Realis is the unmarked modality.

The tense system is incredibly diverse, also within subgroups, both in the distinctions made and in the surface forms that realize these distinctions. It looks as if at every other bend of the river people created their own tense system in this small family of around 35,000 speakers.

Nominal morphology is very simple compared to verbal morphology. Only kinship nouns have plural suffixes, and this reflects the immense cultural significance of the Omaha type kinship systems in these small Greater Awyu clan communities (de Vries 1987; van Enk and de Vries 1997). Greater Awyu languages use body part nouns as numerals in the context of extended body part tally systems that only occur in central New Guinea, with some extensions into adjacent lowlands and into Australia (Lean 1992; de Vries 2014).

Preferences of language use that Greater Awyu speakers share with many other Papuan speakers gave rise to numerous grammatical similarities with other Papuan languages, from 'serialized' argument constructions to tail-head linkage. This does not mean that Greater Awyu languages did not develop syntactic patterns that set them apart from their neighbors. A good example is the Kombai relative clause constructions with double expression of the common argument in both the relative clause and main clause. As so often in New Guinea, it is the bound morphology that divides and defines language families such as the Greater Awyu family, and it is in patterns of syntax and discourse that we see links between families in this area.

Abbreviations

1	first person
NON1	second and third person
CIRC	circumstantial
COM	completive

CONN	connective
COP	copula
ERG	ergative
HN	head noun
INTENT	intentional
IRR	irrealis
MOD	modifier
NEG	negative
NP	noun phrase
POSS	possessive
RLS	realis
SIM	simultaneity
TOP	topic
TR	transitional sound
VN	verbal noun

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