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Applicative Morphosyntax in Nuita Zophei

Gabriel Gilbert

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1 Introduction

This paper seeks to provide a preliminary overview of applicative morphosyntax present in the Zophei language, a Maraic language and member of the South-Central Tibeto-Burman family spoken in Chin State, Myanmar. The consultant from which all recorded data was elicited is an eighteen-year-old freshman at Indiana University, and native speaker of the Nuitah variety of Zophei (NTZP), spoken in Leitak village. All data for this paper was elicited with Professor David Peterson and the students of the Linguistics 35: Field Methods course at Dartmouth College held during the fall term of 2020.

This paper seeks to address the general functionality and related morphosyntax of applicatives present within Nuita Zophei, realized as suffixes directly appended after the verb stem. This section (Section 1) largely provides a basis for understanding the effect of applicatives on participant marking by presenting typical paradigms according to the roughly ergative-absolutive morphosyntactic alignment present in the language; extended discussion of participant marking within application constructions is held throughout this paper. Section 2 is devoted to presenting all corpus applicatives with some generalized discussion of their appropriate functions, but afterwards this paper will largely center on the applicative *-suu*. Section 3 is devoted to the use of applicatives in regards to specifying the spatial domain, Section 4 to participant marking within applicative constructions, Section 5 to the instantiation of semantic nuance via applicative constructions, Section 6 to assorted applicative-related phenomena, and Section 7 for a brief conclusion.

1.1 Participant Marking

Nuita Zophei demonstrates complex participant marking, which differs according to whether the verb is transitive or intransitive, the verb's polar context, and even according to a clause's individual structure. In order to demonstrate participant marking within applicative constructions, Figure 1 is sufficient in demonstrating some typical participant marking within non-negative, non-subordinate clausal verb paradigms (adapted from Gilbert 2020):

Figure 1: Participant Marking

		1	2	3
S-Marking <i>Pre-P, Pre-Verbal & Post-Verbal</i>	SG	kaa-	naa-	aa-
	PL	kaa-...V...-(m)pii	naa-...V...ntsii	aa-...V...hai
A-Marking <i>Pre-P, Pre-Verbal</i>	SG	ka-	na-	a-
	PL	kaa-	naa-	aa-
P-Marking <i>Post-A, Pre-Verbal & Post-Verbal</i>	SG	-pa-...V	-tsa-...V... \emptyset	\emptyset ...V... \emptyset
	PL	-ma-...V	-tsa-...V...hai	\emptyset ...V...hai

The subject of a canonically intransitive verb is realized with the paradigm given as S in Figure 1, with the notable presence of a nasal consonant in the 1PL.S and 2PL.S as part of the post-verbal participant-marking elements *-(m)pii* and *-ntsii*, respectively, that does not appear in the post-verbal 3PL.S element *-hai*. Highly notable is that the nasal consonant in the 1.S marking that in select constructions might serve as a contrast between a seemingly archaic dual distinction that has since vanished from the 2PL.S and 3PL.S markings; constructions that demonstrate the contrast between the nasal-less *-pii* (1DU.S) marker as referring to just two participants whereas *-mpii* (1PL.S) refers to more than two participants can be seen in Section 4.2.

The more-agentive pronominal subject of a canonically transitive verb is realized with the paradigm given as A in Figure 1, where a number difference is denoted by vowel

length without any post-verbal elements; all participant marking is done preceding the verb stem.

The less-agentive participant of a canonically transitive verbal construction that usually suggests a two-place predicate is given as P in Figure 1, realized both pre-verbally and post-verbally, but notably after the A-marked participant — in constructions involving a third-person singular, the participant is unmarked unless plural.

It should be noted that there are exceptions to this participant marking system, and specific irregularities related to tone seem to be especially present in verbal constructions involving the second-person (discussed further in Section 6).

2 Overview

Within this paper, “applicatives” are best defined by Peterson (2007) as “a means some languages have for structuring clauses which allow the coding of a thematically peripheral argument or adjunct as a core-object argument...signalled by overt verbal morphology.” In Nuita Zophei, these applicatives are realized as post-verbal particles that append directly to the verb stem within the verbal complex, preceding markers for aspect, tense, mood, and almost all other manner of post-verbal particles.¹

In typical applicative fashion, applicatives within Nuita Zophei function as valency-increasing constructions, allowing for intransitive verbs to take direct objects in the form of P-marked participants and allowing for a goal-like argument to be instantiated within transitive verbs via the shift of the semantic role of a P-marked participant to become a goal-like argument of the verb rather than the traditional direct object associated with transitive verbs, the latter of which is then expressed outside of the verb complex; both of these phenomena will be demonstrated continuously throughout this paper.

¹ As this paper discusses applicative constructions, no part is devoted to discussion of post-verbal caustivizer *-sah*, which occurs in roughly the same position as the post-verbal applicative particles. It should be noted that the only point of flexibility for applicative positions within the verb complex (and the only time that the applicative particle did not occur directly adjacent to the verb stem) was in constructions that involved the causative *-sah*. Forms illustrating this flexibility in particle ordering are included in Section 6.

While this section briefly discusses the semantic nuance associated with all elicited applicative constructions, the remainder of this paper will serve as a case study of *-suu*.

2.1 Applicative Inventory

Nuita Zophei's current applicatives serve a variety of functions, and will be glossed according to their specific roles within this paper. These applicatives and their glosses for the remainder of this paper are seen in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Applicative Inventory²	Gloss
(1) <i>-suu</i>	MAL
(2) <i>-hnuu</i>	MAL
(3) <i>-pui</i>	SOC
(4) <i>-seng</i>	RELINQ
(5) <i>-keng</i>	PRIOR
(6) <i>-pah</i>	BEN
(7) <i>-noo</i>	INS

2.2 *-suu*: Malefactive (Proximal/Allative)

The focus of this paper, constructions involving *-suu* following the verb stem either suggest a notion of provocation (or more generally as malefaction in nature, in accordance with current literature on applicative constructions in related Kuki-Chin language Hakha Lai — see Peterson 1998), or for many verbs provides a sense of proximity and/or allativity, where the participant marked as a direct object, or otherwise P-marked, is afterwards treated as a destination, or as the goal-like argument within the newly more valent construction. Despite the fact that the applicative seems to offer a non-malefactive

² Forms (1) through (3) in the table can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav and forms (4) through (7) in the table can be located in 11282020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav.

proximal/allative treatment in many constructions, the applicative will be glossed as MAL for the duration of this paper.

In form (1), a simultaneous malefactive and proximal/allative treatment of the P-marked participant is demonstrated:³

- (1) ka-tsa-tshoo-suu
 1SG.A-2SG.P-step-MAL
 'I step on/at you'

In the construction demonstrated by form (1), when the intransitive verb *tshoo* 'to step' is appended by *-suu*, the verb is realized with a transitive paradigm and the P-marked 2SG participant is realized on the verb stem as the goal-like target for the applicative construction *tshoo-suu* 'to step on/at' in a fairly visible malefactive context. The malefactor is the 1SG.A participant and the maleficiary, or recipient of the malefactive action instantiated by the applicative construction, is the 2SG.P participant. Further discussion of this malefactive semantic nuance can be found in Section 5.

In form (2), a non-malefactive, proximal treatment of the P-marked participant is demonstrated:⁴

- (2) tui ka-tsa-din-suu-∅
 water 1SG.A-2.P-drink-MAL-2SG.P
 'I drink water in front of you'

In the construction demonstrated by form (2), when the transitive verb *ding* 'to drink' is appended by *-suu*, the verb retains its transitive paradigm participant marking with the notable presence of a new potential P-marked participant within the verb complex that, rather than serve as the object of the verb within the new application constructions, instead serves as the semantic "destination" for the applicative construction. The effect of *-suu* on specifying the spatial domain is discussed more extensively in Section 3.

Because this paper is dedicated primarily to analyzing *-suu*, additional phenomena regarding the applicative will be discussed extensively over the course of this paper in later sections.

³ Form (1) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

⁴ Form (2) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

2.3 *-hnuu*: Malefactive (Proximal/Allative)

The applicative *-hnuu* occurs in precisely the same positions as *-suu* from the elicitations elicited thus far, without any visible disparities between the two applicatives in regards to contrasting semantic nuance and/or effect on clarifying the spatial domain in a given construction. The following form (3) demonstrates this identical functionality, and form (1) is repeated for convenience:⁵

- (1) ka-tsa-tshoo-suu-∅
1SG.A-2.P-step-MAL-2SG.P
 'I step on/at you'
- (3) ka-tsa-tshoo-hnuu-∅
1SG.A-2.P-step-MAL-2SG.P
 'I step on/at you'

The following forms (4) and (5) repeat a demonstration of this identical functionality between *-suu* and *-hnuu*:⁶

- (4) ka-tsa-hluu-suu-∅
1SG.A-2.P-jump-MAL-2SG.P
 'I jump on you'
- (5) ka-tsa-hluu-hnuu-∅
1SG.A-2.P-jump-MAL-2SG.P
 'I jump on you'

Notably, *-hnuu* appears to be related to the malefactive applicative *-hnoʔ* in Hakha Lai discussed in Peterson 1998. Whether or not *-suu* and *-hnuu* are truly identical in their functions merits further research, but as can be demonstrated from current corpus data, this does not appear to be the case.

2.4 *-pui*: Sociative (Comitative)

The applicative *-pui* provides a sociative sense to its applicative constructions. The term sociative, rather than comitative, is used here in order to account for specific semantic nuances provided by the consultant in regards to select applicative

⁵ Forms (1) and (3) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

⁶ Forms (4) and (5) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

constructions utilizing *-pui* that function very much according to a notion of sociative causation, described as constructions not only where “the causee do an action, but also participates in it, which is usually paraphrased with sentences like make someone do something by doing it with them or help someone do something” (Guillame & Rose 2010).

In a way, this *-pui* applicative creates constructions that fall into a sort of intermediate stage along the so-called “causation continuum” described by Shibatani and Pardeshi (2002), enabling the expression of different degrees of agency that discourage classification of the applicative as a basic causativizer, and instead as an applicative with sociative causative function in addition to generalized comitative usage. Indeed, “applicative/causative polysemy is widely attested cross-linguistically” (see Peterson & Zakaria 2020) and it is possible that this sociative applicative might have developed from a more generalized causativizer function historically. It appears clear now that this applicative, in addition to instantiating sociative causative applicative constructions, can also instantiate more agency to the A-marked participant in relation to the P-marked participant in regards to canonically intransitive verbs (as in form (6) below) and at other times instantiates generalized comitative function (as with form (8) below).

In form (6), the sociative applicative marker can be seen appended to the intransitive verb *sii* ‘to go’ below:⁷

- (6) tuivoo=lang ka-tsa-sii-pui- \emptyset
 river=ALL 1SG.A-2.P-go-SOC-2SG.P
 ‘I take you to the river’

In form (6), there is a clear difference between the A-marked and P-marked participants in that the action is initiated by the A-marked participant but that both participants are engaged in the activity described by the verb, prescribing dual agency in this instance in regards to the intransitive verb *sii* ‘to go’. The direct object of the verb is thus a co-participant in the action of going described within the applicative construction, but there is a clear sense of agency involved with the 1SG.A participant. This does not appear to be in a malefactive sense, according to the translations provided by the consultant.

⁷ Form (6) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

In form (7), the *-pui* applicative's instantiation of sociative causativity as opposed to generalized comitativity can be seen in a naturalistic data context:⁸

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| (7) | maa-noihee-pa-thung=tah-khee | (uh) | noihee-poo-khaa |
| | FOC-child-CL-three=ERG-DEM | | child-male-DEM |
| | bong-hai-kaa | pear-khaa | tong-tshung=lai=tah-khee |
| | help-3PL.S/P-ANT | pear-DEM | basket-inside=LOC=FOC-DEM |
| | aa-tshia-pui | | |
| | 3PL.A-put-SOC | | |
- '...those three kids helped the boy and helped him put the pears inside the basket..'

In form (7), *-pui* denotes sociative assistive action, or rather instantiates the participant(s) in whose company the action described by *tshia* 'to put' is executed, in this instance in the company of *noiheepoo-khaa* 'the boy'. This is not a typical comitative context, which is a major part of my decision to analyze this applicative as sociative as opposed to solely comitative.

This notion of assistive action using *-pui* can be seen again in form (8), which utilizes the transitive verbal construction *hloo...sah* 'to make (sing) a song' below:⁹

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| (8) | hloo | kaa-sa-pui-pii |
| | song | 1.S-make-SOC-1PL.S |
| | 'We help each other sing a song' | |

In form (8), which involves a 1PL A-marked participant, *-pui* instantiates sociative assistivity, glossed as 'help each other' by the consultant. In this form specifically, there is a sense of mutual agency between all of the persons described by the 1PL participant.

In form (9) below a clearly comitative semantic nuance is created by *-pui*, using the verb *nui* 'to laugh':¹⁰

- | | |
|-----|----------------------------|
| (9) | kaa-tsa-nui-pui-∅ |
| | 1PL.A-2.P-laugh-SOC-2SG.P |
| | 'We are laughing with you' |

In form (9), which involves an A-marked 1PL participant and a P-marked 2SG participant, both participants appear to be simply accompanying each other in a comitative context. There is no apparent sense of agency nor sense of sociative causation despite the P-marking treatment of the 2SG participant.

⁸ Form (7) can be found as part of a text in 11172020_LX35F2020_Class_zoom.wav

⁹ Form (8) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

¹⁰ Form (8) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

A closer look at this applicative would be highly beneficial, as there seems to be quite a range of semantic nuance enabled by *-pui* applicative constructions in Nuita Zophei. Future research might seek to determine which verbs are instantiated within a sociative causative context and whether or not there are limitations as to this notion of assistive action, and additional research might seek to understand when the applicative instantiates joint-action (as classified by Shibatani & Pardeshi 2002), or what I have referred to as generalized comitativity. Future research might also seek out another possible function of the applicative noted in other languages with particles associated with sociative causation, involving a dynamic of supervision, possibly where the A-marked participant actively supervises the P-marked participant (see Shibatani & Pardeshi 2002, Tatevosov 2017).

It is possible that this applicative is related to the form *pui* seen in *zoopui* ‘everybody’ and future research might seek a diachronic explanation for the applicative. The Nuita Zophei *-pui* applicative is possibly related to the comitative applicative *-pii* in Hakha Lai (see Peterson 1998).

2.5 *-seng*: Relinquitive

The applicative *-seng* provides a relinquitive sense to its applicative constructions. This can be realized as departure from a given unmarked place or as a construction involving direct agency on the part of the A-marked participant in regards to relinquishing a given P-marked participant.

Form (10), using the verb *sii* ‘to go,’ demonstrates the applicative instantiating basic departure from a given place:¹¹

- | | | |
|------|---------------------|-----------------|
| (10) | ing | ka-sii-seng |
| | house | 1SG.A-go-RELINQ |
| | ‘I leave the house’ | |

Notably, the addition of *-seng* involves the applicative construction to utilize the transitive participant marking paradigm rather than the intransitive participant marking

¹¹ Form (10) can be found in 11282020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

typically associated with *sii* ‘to go’ in non-applicative constructions. The P-participant is *ing* ‘house’ and receives no case marking in accordance with the applicative’s function.

Form (11), involving both an A-marked 1SG participant and a P-marked 2SG participant, demonstrates the ability for *-seng* to instantiate agency within its applicative constructions:¹²

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| (11) | tuivoo-kee=lai
river-near=LOC
‘I leave you near the river’ | ka-tsa-sii-seng-∅
1SG.A-2.P-go-RELINQ-2SG.P |
|------|--|--|

The P-marked participant is the relinquished direct object of the verb in form (11) and is marked within the verb complex according to the typical transitive verb paradigm participant marking, and the location — rather than be unmarked, as seen in form (10) — is locative case-marked, and the “direct object” related to *-seng* is instead the 2SG participant.

This applicative is likely related to the relinquitive *-sen* applicative in Senthang (see Ngun 2016).

2.6 *-keng*: Prioritive

The applicative *-keng* instantiates a notion of priority within a given construction. Within *-keng* applicative constructions, the P-marked participant is glossed as one performing an action after the A-marked participant. In other words, the A-marked participant of a prioritive applicative construction performs the action described by a given verb ahead of the P-marked participant in a temporal context.

The applicative *-keng* can be seen in form (12) below:¹³

- | | |
|------|--|
| (12) | ka-tsa-sii-keng-∅
1SG.A-2.P-go-PRIOR-2SG.P
‘I go ahead of you’ |
|------|--|

As with other applicative constructions involving the intransitive verb *sii* ‘to go,’ the applicatives realizes the verbal complex with transitive participant marking according to the aforementioned notion of valency increase in applicative constructions involving

¹² Form (11) can be found in 11282020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

¹³ Form (12) can be found in 11282020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

canonical one-place predicate intransitives. The P-marked participant within *-keng* applicative constructions is glossed as the entity lagging behind temporally in the construction seen in form (12), with the A-marked participant achieving the verb prior to the P-marked participant. Both A-marked and P-marked participants are co-executors of the verb separated only by this semantic notion of priority.

In form (13) below, *-keng* can be seen with canonically transitive verb *tsii* ‘to kick’:¹⁴

- (13) *boolung* *ka-tsa-tsii-keng-∅*
 ball **1SG.A-2.P-kick-PRIOR-2SG.P**
 ‘I kick the ball ahead of you’

The direct object *boolung* ‘ball’ receives no case-marking and the P-marked 2SG is associated with the applicative within the verb complex as the semantic participant ahead of which the A-marked participant achieves the verb.

This applicative is possibly related to the prioritive applicative *-kaʔn* in Hakha Lai (see Peterson 1998).

2.6 *-pah*: Benefactive

The applicative *-pah* encodes a benefactive sense to its applicative constructions, with the P-marked participant realized as the beneficiary of a given verb. The A-marked participant might be performing a verb “on behalf” of the P-marked participant, or the applicative might be directing the direct object of a given canonically transitive verb towards the P-marked participant as the beneficiary of this direct object.

In form (14) *-pah* can be seen appended to intransitive verb *sii* ‘to go’ below:¹⁵

- (14) *ka-tsa-sii-pah-∅*
 1SG.A-2.P-go-BEN-2SG.P
 ‘I go on behalf of you’

In form (15) the applicative can be seen with transitive verbal construction *hloo...sah* ‘to make (sing) a song’ below:¹⁶

- (15) *hloo ka-tsa-sa-pah-∅*

¹⁴ Form (13) can be found in 11282020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

¹⁵ Form (14) can be found in 11282020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

¹⁶ Form (15) can be found in 11282020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

song 1SG.A-2.P-make-BEN-2SG.P
 'I sing a song for you'

Notably, the applicative construction in form (15) retains *hloo* 'song' as the object of the verb but treats the P-marked 2SG participant as the beneficiary.

This applicative seems related to the benefactive applicative *-pih* in Sentshang (see Ngun 2016). Peterson (1998) describes another benefactive applicative, and future research might seek constructions that perform similarly to Hakha Lai's additional benefactive *-tseʔm*.

2.7 *-noo*: Instrumental

The applicative *-noo* provides an instrumental sense to its applicative constructions, enabling a sense of instrumental function to the associated nominals, where the unmarked objects are interpreted as instruments used by the A-marked subject of a verb within a *-noo* applicative construction.

Form (16) demonstrates *-noo* and transitive verb *ting* 'to cross' in the construction *tin-noo* 'to cross with something':¹⁷

(16a) tuilong tuivoo kaa-tin-noo
 boat river 1PL.A-cross-INST
 'We cross the river with the boat'

(16b) tuilong=aa tuivoo kaa-tin-noo
 boat=ABL river 1PL.A-cross-INST
 'We cross the river with the boat'

In form (16a), the instrument is unmarked, whereas in form (16b) the instrument demonstrates optional ablative marking. It is not currently clear as to a semantic domain where the instrument is marked nominally rather than instantiated via an applicative construction, but insofar as can be determined *-noo* is possible only with inanimate instruments. Based on current data, instrumental marking nominally via *aa* is much more common than instantiating an instrument through an applicative construction involving *-noo*, and no naturalistic data has been elicited containing a *-noo* construction thus far.

¹⁷ Form (16) can be found in 11282020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

Notably, it seems like this applicative, while still increasing the valency of its relevant construction, does not appear to allow for the instantiation of another marked participant, likely according to the semantics associated with instrumentality. Future research should seek morphosyntactic restrictions on the use of *-noo* with a variety of verbs and instruments in order to determine an inanimacy preference or lack thereof.

This applicative seems related to instrumental applicative *-naak* in Hakha Lai (see Peterson 1998) and instrumental applicative *-nawh* in Sentshang (see Ngun 2016).

3 Spatial Domain

As demonstrated in Section 2, applicatives are quite capable of further specifying the relationship between participants within an applicative construction and physical space.

3.1 Proximity

One of the most common methods by which *-suu* instantiates spatial information is by encoding a sense of proximity between a verb's participants. This differs in regards to *-suu*'s alternative function of encoding a destination, which is similar to this notion of proximality but distinctly involves a sense of allativity, discussed in the next subsection 3.2.

In form pairs (17) through (19) below, note the sense of proximity provided in the glosses for the verbs once part of an applicative construction with *-suu*:¹⁸

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| (17a) ai 'to eat something' | (17b) ai-suu 'to eat in front of someone' |
| (18a) ding 'to drink something' | (18b) din-suu 'to drink in front of someone' |
| (19a) lang 'to dance' | (19b) lan-suu 'to dance in front of someone' |

¹⁸ Forms (17) through (19) can be found in 11222020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

Forms (17a) and (18a) involve transitive verbs *ai* 'to eat (something)' and *ding* 'to drink,' with an understood direct object for both verbs,¹⁹ whereas form (19a) involves intransitive verb *lang* 'to dance'.

Forms (20) through (22) below demonstrate expanded examples of the applicative construction present in (17b):²⁰

- (20) ka-tsa-ai-suu- \emptyset
1SG.A-2.P-eat-MAL-2SG.P
 'I eat something in front of you'
- (21) na-pa-ai-suu
2SG.A-1SG.P-eat-MAL
 'You eat something in front of me'
- (22) na-ma-ai-suu
2SG.A-1PL.P-eat-MAL
 'You eat something in front of us'

Forms (23) through (25) below demonstrate a three-way comparison utilizing the applicative construction present in (18b):²¹

- (23) tui ka-ding
water 1SG.A-drink
 'I drink water'
- (24) tui ka- \emptyset -din-suu- \emptyset
water 1SG.A-3.P-drink-MAL-3SG.P
 'I drink water in front of someone/something'
- (25) tui ka-tsa-din-suu- \emptyset
water 1SG.A-2.P-drink-MAL-2SG.P
 'I drink water in front of you'

Form (23) demonstrates what the verb *ding* 'to drink' in a standard, basic context without an applicative, form (24) demonstrates the appearance of an unmarked (and thus 3SG) proximal participant once the applicative *-suu* is applied to the verb, and form (25)

¹⁹ There is an implied "food" and "drink" for forms (17b) and (18b), as there is in the forms (17a) and (18a). Better glosses might be 'to eat something in front of someone' and 'to drink something in front of someone,' respectively, but they are abbreviated here for legibility.

²⁰ Forms (20) through (22) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

²¹ Forms (23) through (25) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

demonstrates the ability for the applicative construction to contain a proximal P-marked participant.

The P-marked participant, in these forms, is treated as the goal-like argument of the new three-place predicate created through a *-suu* applicative construction. In forms (23) through (25), *tui* ‘water’ is the direct object of the verb and the P-marked participant is treated as a spatial destination or bystander to the verb’s described action.

3.2 Allativity

With many current intransitive verbs within the elicited corpus that organically describe motion, *-suu* applicative constructions instantiate a sense of allativity through the treatment of marked P-participants as more explicit destinations within a given construction. For these motion verbs, which often involve a single participant, *-suu* serves to increase the valency of its associated constructions, transitivizing the verb and allowing it to take a P-marked participant treated as the goal-like argument of the new two-place predicate.

In form pairs (26) through (28), note the instantiation of targeted motion within the applicative construction:²²

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| (26a) <i>sii</i> ‘to go’ | (26b) <i>sii-suu</i> ‘to go towards, to approach’ |
| (27a) <i>va-sii</i> ‘to come’ | (27b) <i>va-sii-suu</i> ‘to come towards’ |
| (28a) <i>seng</i> ‘to run’ | (28b) <i>sen-suu</i> ‘to run towards’ |

In these forms, *-suu* enables the treatment of P-marked participants as the destinations for the A-marked participants of the verb, whereas alternatively, without the applicative, this allativity might be expressed using the allative case-marker *lang* which would attach to the destination nominal, animate or inanimate.

The forms (29) through (31) demonstrate expanded instantiations of the applicative construction present in (27b):²³

- (29) *va-pa-sii-súú*

²² Forms (26) through (28) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

²³ Forms (29) through (31) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

VEN-1SG.P-go-MAL\2SG.A
 ‘You come towards me’

(30) na-∅-va-sii-suu-∅
 2SG.A-3.P-VEN-go-MAL-3SG.P
 ‘You come towards him/her’

(31) na-∅-va-sii-suu-hai
 2SG.A-3.P-VEN-go-MAL-3PL.P
 ‘You come towards them’

Notably, the consultant provided the alternative gloss ‘You go towards’ rather than ‘You come towards’ for both form (30) and form (31), but the glosses provided are intended to simplify the demonstrated paradigm which uses the verbal construction *va-sii* ‘to come,’ which consists of *-va-* the venitive directional (VEN) and *sii* ‘to go’. Note the use of tone to provide A-marking on the 2SG participant in form (29), a phenomena discussed later in Section 6.

Forms (32) through (34) demonstrate two instantiations of the applicative construction present in (28b), and form (34) specifically demonstrates how a different spatial relationship would be described without the applicative and instead through locative case-marking:²⁴

(32) ka-tsa-sen-suu-∅
 1SG.A-2.P-run-MAL-2SG.P
 ‘I run towards you’

(33) na-pa-sen-suu
 2SG.A-1SG.P-run-MAL
 ‘You run towards me’

(34) ka-tsun=lai naa-seng
 1SG.POSS-on=LOC 2SG.S-run
 ‘You run on me’

In form (34), a non-applicative construction instantiates a different spatial relationship between the two participants, for comparison with forms (32) and (33). The participant performing the intransitive verb *seng* ‘to run’ manifests with the intransitive verb paradigm, and the entity receiving the effects of the verb — in this case, the 1SG

²⁴ Forms (32) through (34) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

participant being “run on” — is realized using a possessive-locational construction. Note the possessive pronominal paradigm (which mirrors the A-participant marking of many transitive verbs as seen in Figure 1), with locational noun *tsung* (best glossed as ‘on’ within this form), and the locative case marker *lai*, which instantiates active location as opposed to destination (achieved nominally through aforementioned allative case marker *lang*, seen in form (6) earlier in Section 2.4).

3.3 Recipient/Maleficiary

In constructions that contain a transitive verb associated with a direct object, or rather those that describe a two-place predicate in non-applicative contexts, *-suu* instantiates P-marked participants as the recipient of this involved object, and in many instances this P-marked participant serves as the maleficiary, or one whom the A-marked malefactor seeks to target through the execution of the verb (see Section 5 for expanded discussion of the malefaction involved). In this manner, *-suu* increases the valency value of a given transitive construction by one and thus instantiates a three-place predicate.

In the following paradigm, forms (35) through (38) demonstrate this maleficiary in action using the transitive verbal construction *boolung...tsii* ‘to kick a ball’ below:²⁵

- (35) ka-tsa-tsii- \emptyset
1SG.A-2.P-kick-2SG.P
 ‘I kick you’
- (36) ka-tsa-tsii-suu- \emptyset
1SG.A-2.P-kick-MAL-2SG.P
 ‘I kick something at you’
- (37) boolung ka-tsii
ball 1SG.A-kick
 ‘I kick the ball’
- (38) boolung ka-tsa-tsii-suu- \emptyset
ball 1SG.A-2.P-kick-MAL-2SG.P
 ‘I kick the ball at you’

²⁵ Forms (35) through (38) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

Between forms (35) and (36), note the instantiation of an implied object being kicked to the P-marked participant once an applicative construction is created via *-suu*. Whereas a P-marked participant in a non-applicative construction is the direct recipient of the verb, with *-suu* this P-marked participant is instead shifted to the status of goal-like argument for the given object, in this case *boolung* ‘ball,’ and is thus instantiated as the maleficiary. For a demonstration of a paradigm involving multiple expressed animate participants, see Section 4. Additionally, it is important to reiterate that there is an active malefactive nuance in the semantics demonstrated by the applicative construction *tsii-suu* ‘to kick something at’ that will be discussed further in Section 5.

This recipient of the verb is not always a maleficiary, though, as demonstrated using the verbal construction *hloo...sah* ‘to make (sing) a song’ seen in forms (39) through (41) below:²⁶

(39) hloo ka-tsa-sa-suu-Ø
 song 1SG.A-2.P-make-MAL-2SG.P
 ‘I sing a song to you’

(40) hloo na-pa-sa-suu
 song 2SG.A-1PL.P-make-MAL
 ‘You sing a song to me’

Forms (39) and (40) demonstrate a neutral context where the P-marked participant is the recipient of *hloo* ‘song’ defined by the verb in the applicative construction.

The following forms demonstrate the use of *-suu* in a reciprocal construction that uses the same applicative construction as forms (39) and (40), and form (8) is redemonstrated here for comparative purposes:²⁷

(41) hloo kaa-sa-suu-pii
 song 1.S-make-MAL-1PL.S
 ‘We sing a song to each other’

(8) hloo kaa-sa-pui-pii
 song 1.S-make-SOC-1PL.S
 ‘We help each other sing a song’

²⁶ Forms (39) and (40) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

²⁷ Forms (41) and (8) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

For an expanded discussion of form (41) which demonstrates A-marked participant promotion to S-marking in reciprocal contexts, see Section 4.2. Form (8) is included to compare the difference between *-suu* and *-pui*, the sociative applicative discussed in Section 2.4.

For intransitive verbs, or applicative constructions using *-suu* that contain a canonically intransitive verb without an expressed object nominal, the P-marked participant retains its position as the goal-like argument of these newly-instantiated three-place predicate constructions. See the forms (42) through (44) below:²⁸

- (42) kaa-nui- \emptyset
1.S-laugh-1SG.S
 'I laugh'
- (43) ka-tsa-nui-suu- \emptyset
1SG.A-2.P-laugh-MAL-2SG.P
 'I laugh at you'
- (44) kaa-tsa-nui-suu- \emptyset
1PL.A-2.P-laugh-MAL-2SG.P
 'We laugh at you'

Once *-suu* instantiates an applicative construction with intransitive verb *nui* 'to laugh,' the participant marking shifts to the transitive paradigm despite the lack of a direct object, which almost suggests an implied direct object because of the goal-like argument treatment of the P-marked participant. In forms (43) and (44) this direct object might be the laughter itself, as the P-marked participant is still goal-like in that they are not directly receiving the verb, but rather the implied object instantiated by the applicative construction *nui-suu* 'to laugh at'. In light of the transitive paradigm participant-marking and in accordance with previous analyses of examples that demonstrated a specified direct object, the A-marked participant appears to create the implied laughter, and this laughter is then directed towards the P-marked participant.²⁹

²⁸ Forms (42) through (44) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

²⁹ For examples of this specific applicative construction using a third-person non-pronominal participant in conjunction with causative *-sah*, see Section 4.

4 Participant Marking

While much discussion of the participant marking was accomplished through the discussion of *-suu*'s effect on spatial relationships within its appropriate applicative constructions, this section is dedicated specifically to the demonstration of participant marking across different *-suu*-related constructions. Within this section, I discuss the limitations of *-suu* and the ways that *-suu* productively affects participant-marking as a valency-increasing construction.

4.1 Participant Semantic Status in Applicative Constructions

In *-suu* applicative constructions, the semantic status of a given participant can change drastically between a verb complex without *-suu* and an applicative construction instantiated by *-suu* due to *-suu*'s ability to increase the valence value of its associated verbal complex.

Note forms (45) and (46) involving transitive verb *nang* 'to push' below:³⁰

- | | | |
|------|--|--------------------------------------|
| (45) | kaa-sin=lang
1PL.POSS=position=ALL
'He/she pushes you to us' | a-tsa-nang-∅
3SG.A-2.P-push-2SG.P |
| (46) | na=maa
2SG.POSS=FOC
'He/she pushes you to us' | a-ma-nan-suu
3SG.A-1PL.P-push-MAL |

Form (45) demonstrates a typical interpretation of the P-marked 2SG participant as the less agentive argument of the two-place predicate suggested by the transitive verb *nang* 'to push,' and the destination for the verb, or third goal-like argument in the three-place predicate suggested by the construction, is marked nominally using the allative case-marker *lang*, which appends to the construction *kaa-sin* 'our position' or simply 'us'.³¹ In form (46), the applicative construction instead instantiates an alternative

³⁰ Forms (45) through (46) can be found in 12012020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

³¹ It is possible that *sin* is instead a type of case marker or otherwise a nominal stem capable of replacing or joining *maa* (interpreted as a focus nominal stem within this paper) in some allative constructions, as the construction *kaa=lang* is impossible. Further research within NTZP's case-marking system should seek to clarify its nature, but for the sake of demonstrating participant marking in applicative constructions, I

paradigm, where the formerly P-marked participant — the participant being pushed — is instead now removed from the verb complex and given no case marking save for focus stem *maa* whereas the formerly goal-like argument, the 1PL participant, receives P-marking and is coded into the verb complex. The A-marked participant marking does not change.

In the following constructions, the inability for *-suu* to be used with some plural participant constructions is demonstrated using the same transitive verb *nang* ‘to push’:³²

- | | | |
|------|---|---------------------------------------|
| (47) | na=maa=lang
2SG.POSS=FOC=ALL
‘They push us to you’ | aa-ma-nang
3PL.A-1PL.P-push |
| (48) | aa-sin=lang
3PL.POSS-position=ALL
‘You all push me to them’ | naa-pa-nang
2PL.A-1SG.P-push |
| (49) | ka-sin=lang
1SG.POSS-position=ALL
‘They push you to me’ | aa-tsa-nang-∅
3PL.A-2.P-push-2SG.P |

In forms (47) through (49), where the A-marked participant is instead plural, there seems to be a restriction on the use of *-suu* in order to recode the P-marked participant as the goal-like argument as opposed to the allative case-marked participant not located within the verb complex. More expanded paradigms that include all possible A-marked, P-marked, and goal-like participants should be elicited in order to fully recognize this potential limitation on *-suu* in regards to plural participants so as to construct some method of predictability.

In form (50), note the restriction on *-suu* when the A-marked and goal-like argument refer to the same participant:³³

- | | | |
|------|--|---------------------------------------|
| (50) | ka-sin=lang
1SG.POSS-position=ALL
‘I push you to me’ | ka-tsa-nang-∅
1SG.A-2.P-push-2SG.P |
|------|--|---------------------------------------|

decide to instead analyze *sin* as the position or absolute location of the given possessor, in form (45) being the 1PL participant.

³² Forms (47) through (49) can be found in 12012020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

³³ Form (50) can be found in 12012020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

In form (50), the consultant said that a construction involving *-suu* would be impossible, but this may also be due to a restriction on the verb itself. Originally, for the paradigm consisting of forms (47) through (50), a paradigm utilizing the verb *hrui* ‘to drag’ instead of *nang* ‘to push’ was attempted, but the consultant said that an applicative construction such as *hrui-suu* would be impossible. It is possible that this is because the verb itself already encodes a three-place predicate (the one dragging, the one being dragged, and the nominal serving as the destination or goal-like argument of this possible three-place predicate); additionally, when a paradigm of applicative constructions utilizing the verb *peh* ‘to give someone something’ was attempted involving *-suu*, the consultant said such a construction was also impossible (notable again because of this organic three-place predicate — the one giving, the one being given, and the one receiving the gift).

Further research should test this hypothesis, but based on current data and my own analysis, it seems like *-suu* is restricted to monovalent verbs, as in the case of a canonically intransitive verb like *lang* ‘to dance’ or *nui* ‘to laugh’, or divalent verbs, as in the case of many transitive verbs like the ones demonstrated, with either an implied subject as in *ai* ‘to eat (something)’ and *nang* ‘to push (something)’ or an expressed object required by the verb as in the verb constructions *hloo...sah* ‘to make (sing) a song’ or *tui...ding* ‘to drink water’.

The following forms demonstrate constructions involving the verb *tsii* ‘to kick’ that show typical treatment of this transitive verb with a two-place predicate:³⁴

- (51) *boolung* *ka-tsii*
ball **1SG.A-kick**
 ‘I kick the ball’
- (52) *ka-tsa-tsii-∅*
1SG.A-2.P-kick-2SG.P
 ‘I kick you’

Form (51) shows the inanimate treatment of *boolung* ‘ball’ and the typical transitive paradigm for participant marking with the A-marked 1SG participant.

³⁴ Forms (51) and (52) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

Forms (53) and (54) demonstrate applicative constructions with *-suu* that best illustrate the semantic interpretation of the P-marked participant as a goal-like argument with divalent transitive *tsii* ‘to kick’:³⁵

- (53) ka-tsa-tsii-suu- \emptyset
1SG.A-2.P-kick-MAL-2SG.P
 ‘I kick something at you’
- (54) boolung ka-tsa-tsii-suu- \emptyset
ball 1SG.A-2.P-kick-MAL-2SG.P
 ‘I kick the ball at you’

Form (53) shows that even without an expressed object, the P-marked participant is still treated as a goal-like argument rather than as the object of the applicative construction, with the object simply implied. Nothing changes in this regard when an object is expressed, as is seen in form (54).

The following forms demonstrate constructions where all participants are non-pronominal and are instead expressed as 3SG/3PL:³⁶

- (55) Noo-Uh=tah noihee-poo-sin=lang Mang a- \emptyset -nan-suu- \emptyset
Nawl Uk=ERG child-boy-position=ALL Mang 3SG.A-3.P-push-MAL-3SG.P
 ‘Nawl Uk pushes Mang to the boy’
- (56) Noo-Uh=tah Mang-sin=lang noihee-poo a- \emptyset -nan-suu- \emptyset
Nawl Uk=ERG Mang-position=ALL child-boy 3SG.A-3.P-push-MAL-3SG.P
 ‘Nawl Uk pushes the boy to Mang’
- (57) Noo-Uh=tah noihee-rung Mang a- \emptyset -nan-suu-hai
Nawl Uk=ERG child-PL Mang 3SG.A-3.P-push-MAL-3PL.P
 ‘Nawl Uk pushes Mang to the boys’

In forms (55) and (56) the goal-like argument is marked obliquely, and the direct object of the verb is unmarked. In form (57), however, both the direct object and the goal-like argument are unmarked. This contrast seems to stem from the fact that a P-marked 3SG participant typically receives no marking, and to reduce ambiguity the goal-like participant receives case marking despite the *-suu* applicative construction which typically eliminates the need for case-marking to allow for three-place predicates when

³⁵ Forms (53) and (54) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

³⁶ Forms (55) and (56) can be found in 11282020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav and form (57) can be found in 12022020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

marked pronominal participants are involved. In the case of form (57), the P-marked 3PL participant does receive marking within the verb complex via the post-verbal particle *hai*, thus enabling the construction demonstrated (the consultant states that ‘the boys’ may still optionally receive *sin=lang*, and such was the case for the original elicited construction for the provided gloss). Still notable is the retention of *-suu* in forms (55) and (56), demonstrating that *-suu* is still directly responsible for enabling a three-place predicate through increasing the valency of the construction from the divalent predicate typically encoded by the transitive verb *nang* ‘to push,’ even though *-suu* is not responsible for recoding the semantic status of the P-marked participant as in aforementioned examples.

A non-obliquely marked goal-like participant appears to be impossible in the case of form (58) as is instantiation of an applicative construction altogether:³⁷

- (58) Noo-Uh=tah tingkun-sin-lang Mang a-nang
 Nawl Uk=ERG tree-position=ALL Mang 3SG.A-push
 ‘Nawl Uk pushes Mang to the trees’

It is highly possible that the lack of *-suu* is linked to the role of *-suu* as a malefactive applicative, where *-suu* enables the semantic notion of malefaction on the part of the A-marked participant towards the P-marked participant (regardless of spatial relationships or the fact that the P-marked participant is treated as a goal). In form (58), since malefaction cannot be realized by the A-marked Nawl Uk’s pushing of Mang to the trees, an applicative construction involving *-suu* cannot exist.

4.2 Reflexivization and Reciprocalization

Nuita Zophei is practically ergative-absolutive in its morphosyntactic alignment, and as with other ergative-absolutive languages, reflexivization results in the promotion of an A-marked participant to an S-marked participant.

Note the following forms (59) and (60):³⁸

³⁷ Form (58) can be found in 11282020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

³⁸ Forms (59) and (60) can be found in 11032020_LX35F2020_CLASS_zoom.wav and form (61) can be found in 12022020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

- (59) kaa-oi
1SG.S-scream
 'I scream'
- (60) a-pa-oi-suu
3SG.A-1SG.P-scream-MAL
 'He/she screams at me'
- (61) aa-oi-suu-∅
3.S-scream-MAL-3SG.S
 'He/she screams at him/herself'

In form (59) the intransitive verb *oi* 'to scream' is seen with a typical S-marked 1SG participant in a non-applicative construction. In this form, the screaming is not directed towards anyone or anything, in typical intransitive fashion. In form (60) a typical *-suu* applicative construction with a monovalent, one-place predicate intransitive verb is demonstrated, with the verb directed towards the P-marked participant. The P-marked participant is now treated in many ways as the goal-like argument, with there seemingly being an implied object — the scream itself — directed towards the 1SG participant. Despite the fact that only two participants are expressed, in contrast to aforesaid forms depicting expressed objects, the P-marked participant is still not the direct object of the verb. In form (61), when semantically the A-marked and P-marked participants are the same — when there is an explicitly reflexive context — the verb within the applicative construction instead receives S-marking.

In forms (62) and (63), this A-marked participant promotion to S-marking is seen with an expressed object using the verbal construction *hloo...sah* 'to make (sing) a song' below:³⁹

- (62) hloo ka-tsa-sa-suu-∅
 song **1SG.A-2.P-make-MAL-2SG.P**
 'I sing a song to you'
- (63) hloo kaa-sa-suu-∅
 song **1.S-make-MAL-1SG.S**
 'I sing a song to myself'

³⁹ Form (62) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_CLASS_zoom.wav and form (63) can be found in 12022020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

Despite the fact there is an expressed direct object in both (62) and (63), the promotion of the A-marked participant to an S-marked participant and apparent de-transitivization of the otherwise transitive verb *sah* ‘to make, build’ still happens, and a construction utilizing S-marking with a direct object is instantiated via *-suu*.

In forms (64) and (65), a non-pronominal 3SG subject can be seen demonstrating this promotion:⁴⁰

- (64) Mang=tah hloo a-tsa-sa-suu-∅
 Mang=ERG song 3SG.A-2.P-make-MAL-2SG.P
 ‘Mang sings a song to you’
- (65) Mang=tah hloo aa-sa-suu-∅
 Mang=ERG song 3.S-make-MAL-3SG.S
 ‘Mang sings a song to himself’

In forms (64) and (65), the named 3SG participant receives ergative case-marking and the direct object of the verb is unmarked. In form (64), the P-marked participant is treated as the goal-like argument of the three-place predicate, with *hloo* ‘song’ retaining its status as direct object. The ergative case-marking thus identifies the other 3SG nominal, in this case Mang, as the A-marked participant referred to in the verb complex. When the construction is reflexivized and the 2SG.P participant is removed as is demonstrated by form (65), Mang retains ergative case-marking but instead the verb complex shifts to accommodate the S-marking for Mang despite the fact that ergative case-marking is typically restricted to the more agentive participant of a canonically transitive verb and a direct object for the verb is retained.

According to the consultant, reflexivization with plural participants appears to be impossible, and constructions that involve this same promotion are instead realized with a reciprocal gloss, as demonstrated by forms (66) through (69) using the applicative construction *oi-suu* ‘to scream at’ below:⁴¹

- (66) kaa-oi-suu-pii
 1.S-scream-MAL-1DU.S
 ‘We scream at each other’ (dual)

⁴⁰ Forms (64) and (65) can be found in 12022020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

⁴¹ Forms (66) through (69) can be found in 12022020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

- (67) kaa-oi-suu-mpii
 1.S-scream-MAL-1PL.S
 ‘We scream at each other’
- (68) naa-oi-suu-ntsii
 2.S-scream-MAL-2PL.S
 ‘You all scream at each other’
- (69) aa-oi-suu-hai
 3.S-scream-MAL-3PL.S
 ‘They scream at each other’

Forms (66) and (67) depict a distinction between the 1DU.S and 1PL.S that does not appear to exist anymore within the 2.S and 3.S paradigms.⁴² Form (68) demonstrates the 2PL.S marking; note the nasal consonant — the consultant said such a construction involving a non-nasal consonant in the post-verbal participant marking -ntsii did not exist, which leads me to believe the dual distinction has been lost within the second-person participant marking in Nuita Zophei. Form (69) demonstrates the 3PL.S marking which bears no nasal consonant at all. Each of these was translated with ‘at each other’ by the consultant instead of the reflexive ‘ourselves’ or ‘yourselves’ or ‘themselves’ for the 1PL, 2PL, 3PL, respectively.

Future research should actively seek to collect data that determines how reciprocalization might correspond to constructions involving multiple objects, and how this might affect participant marking not only with constructions involving pronominally expressed participants but independent nominals and even multiple named 3SG entities.

5 Semantic Nuance

The range of semantic nuance instantiated by *-suu* is highly variable. At times, *-suu* suggests a neutral, if not benefactive notion to its given applicative constructions, as has been demonstrated throughout this paper, likely due in part to *-suu*’s function as a

⁴² It should be noted that it is not currently predictable where a dual distinction exists within the 1PL, as other attempts to find this dual distinction during the elicitation session where the distinction was discovered bore no fruit. Future research should test current corpus data by seeking verbs with such a distinction, testing *-pii* versus *-mpii* in different verbs, and should continue seeking a dual distinction within 2PL and 3PL paradigms.

valency-increasing particle or transitivity marker and the subsequent encoding of another participant in the verb complex — this participant need not be seen in any specific semantic light. At other times, though, *-suu* does instantiate explicit semantic notions: at times it might involve a provocative context that does not seem especially malefactive in its intention so much as suggests a teasing notion in a light-hearted fashion, whereas in other instances *-suu* is especially malefactive and codes a specifically malicious intent on the part of the A-marked participant, and even still there appears to occasionally be highly specific idiosyncratic nuance instantiated by *-suu* that thus far cannot be predicted.

5.1 Provocation

Previously a construction involving the applicative *-suu* and the divalent transitive *ai* ‘to eat (something)’ was demonstrated. In form (70) below, this construction is redemonstrated with an alternative gloss provided by the consultant:⁴³

- (70) ka-tsa-ai-suu- \emptyset
 1SG.A-2.P-eat-MAL-2SG.P
 ‘I eat something in front of you to make you want to eat’

As has been demonstrated previously, *-suu* suggests a proximal treatment of the P-marked participant in that the verb is performed in the immediate proximity of whatever participant receives P-marking with select verbs. This holds for *ai* ‘to eat (something)’ upon instantiation within an applicative construction, but additionally this provocative notion of performing the verb with the intent of inspiring the P-marked participant to also perform the verb appears. This does not appear inherently malicious so much as provocative, which suggests a broader notion to *-suu*’s ability to encode semantic nuance.

This provocative notion might extend to other verbs capable of being instantiated within a *-suu* applicative construction. Note the previously demonstrated forms below, seen again here:⁴⁴

- (43) ka-tsa-nui-suu- \emptyset

⁴³ Form (70) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

⁴⁴ Forms (43) and (44) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

1SG.A-2.P-laugh-MAL-2SG.P
 'I laugh at you'

- (44) kaa-tsa-nui-suu- \emptyset
1PL.A-2.P-laugh-MAL-2SG.P
 'We laugh at you'

The consultant did not note any specific sinister or malicious intent here, but this teasing notion might be encoded within a verb such as *nui* 'to laugh' organically. This is but an example of a less specific semantic nuance that seems broadly compatible with the notion of malefaction I have associated with *-suu* for this paper.

5.2 Malefaction

In many constructions, *-suu* refers to specific targeted action with the intention of performing harm against the goal-like argument and P-marked participant. Note form (38) (demonstrated previously and redemonstrated here for comparison) and form (71) below:⁴⁵

- (38) boolung ka-tsa-tsii-suu- \emptyset
ball **1SG.A-2.P-kick-MAL-2SG.P**
 'I kick the ball at you'
- (71) boolung ka- \emptyset -peh- \emptyset
ball **1SG.A-3.P-give-3SG.P**
 'I pass the ball' (to someone)

In form (38), the consultant describes the action denoted by the applicative construction as tied to the notion of actively seeking to target the P-marked participant. If one were to instead describe passing the ball, the trivalent verb *peh* 'to give someone something' would be utilized and glossed with 'pass' based on the context.

At times, this malefaction is not explicitly encoded but could be understood with sufficient context, and *-suu* would be used both to accommodate the specific spatial relationships described by a given construction and the A-marked participant's malefactive intent, as demonstrated by forms (72) and (73) below:⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Forms (38) and (71) can be found in 11122020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

⁴⁶ Forms (72) and (73) can be found in 12022020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

- (72) *khua=lang ka-tsa-sii-suu-∅*
village=ALL 1SG.A-2.P-go-MAL-2SG.P
 'I go to the village' (against your wishes)
- (73) *hloo ka-tsa-sa-suu-∅*
song 1SG.A-2.P-make-MAL-2SG.P
 'I sing a song to you' (against you)

In form (72) containing the intransitive verb *sii* 'to go,' rather than treat the P-marked participant as a destination as has been demonstrated previously with this verb in concert with *-suu*, the applicative construction instead treats the P-marked participant as an explicit maleficiary and the verb is instead directed towards the allative case-marked location *khua* 'village'. In form (73), which utilizes the expressed object verbal construction *hloo...sah* 'to make (sing) a song' and has been glossed differently previously in this paper, the P-marked participant is treated simultaneously as the goal-like argument for the direct object of the transitive verb *sah* 'to make, build' and as the maleficiary of the given *hloo* 'song'.

Further research should not only seek to determine the extent of *-suu*'s ability to instantiate malefaction within different verb paradigms but also restrictions as to *-suu*'s ability to instantiate malefaction, where *-suu* might perhaps be incapable of realizing any semantic notion that falls beneath the encompassing umbrella of malefaction.

5.3 Other

As has been shown in previous glosses of *-suu* applicative constructions, there need not be the explicit notion of malefaction with many verbs appended by *-suu* (see glosses for forms within Sections 3.1, 3.2). Notably, however, is the idiosyncratic nuance that has developed in specific constructions with *-suu*, as seen in form (74) below:⁴⁷

- (74) *naa-men-hlen=tah ka-tsa-phae-suu-∅*
2SG.POSS-ready-before=FOC 1SG.A-2.P-arrive-MAL-2SG.P
 'I arrived before you were ready'

⁴⁷ Form (74) can be found in 11152020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

Form (74) demonstrates a highly specific construction involving *-suu* that suggests an extremely specific semantic nuance, that of performing the verb potentially with some malefactive intent in a prioritive sense enabled nominally via case-marking in conjunction with a possessed stative verb affixed by a focus-marked temporal nominal.⁴⁸ Within my analysis, another possible, if awkward, gloss for this construction might be ‘I arrived at you before your readiness,’ but the gloss provided was the consultant’s own translation, likely paraphrasing. Note the instantiation of the P-marked 2SG as a goal-like argument and destination via the applicative construction *phēe-suu* ‘to arrive at’ but with the gloss we are additionally equipped with the understanding this verb was performed potentially at the detriment of the P-marked participant to some degree, the semantics of which are elucidated via the prior nominal construction.

With a greater amount of textual, naturalistic data and further spirited research and analysis, it is likely that a greater number of constructions involving highly specific semantic nuances such as that demonstrated in form (74) involving not only *-suu* but other applicatives might be elicited, which would consequently enable much greater understanding of the horizons for *-suu*’s semantic domain.

6 Assorted Phenomena and Conclusions

Over the course of the elicitation sessions, several notable discoveries were made that demonstrate additional dimensions to the analysis of applicative constructions, discussed shortly within this section.

⁴⁸ Within this construction specifically, note *tah*, which typically serves as an ergative case marker. Over the course of the Field Methods class and among corpus data, it became posited that the ergative case marker might serve some generalized use as a focus marker in specific contexts, which explains my alternative glossing for the case marker here where there is not an ergative notion associated with its associated nominal complex; it is not certain if this *tah* is the same as the ergative case marker *tah*, but note their similarities.

6.1 Tonal Participant-Marking within Applicative Constructions

While there is no current comprehensive analysis of the tonal system in Nuita Zophei (which has been demonstrated to have phonemic tone), tonal marking on the applicative has been noted in specific constructions that warrant demonstration.⁴⁹

Nuita Zophei has previously demonstrated that in forms involving the imperative, the final particle in an imperative construction ends in a glottalized consonant. Within the field methods class during which this paper was authored, this glottalization has been analyzed as a tonal realization, and so the transcriptions present in forms (75) through (78) below demonstrate a non-phonemic glottal stop (the phonemic contrast is part of the tone rather than the phoneme) as part of the IPA transcription:⁵⁰

- (75) *va sii*
 v̄ə s̄i
 VEN go
 'to come'
- (76) *va síi*
 v̄ə sí
 VEN go
 'to go'
- (77) *va pa sii suh*
 v̄ə p̄ə s̄i s̄uʔ
 VEN 1SG.P go MAL/2SG
 'Come to me!' (singular)
- (78) *va pa sii súùh*
 v̄ə p̄ə sí s̄uʔ
 VEN 1SG.P go MAL/2PL
 'Come to me!' (plural)

In form (75), the verbal construction *va-sii* 'to come' is given, which consists of the venitive directional particle *va* in addition to the verb *sii* 'to go'. Compare form (75) to form (76) which contains the verbal construction *va-síi* 'to go,' which contrasts with form (75)

⁴⁹ For the duration of this paper, tone has not been marked to due to this lack of comprehensive understanding of the tonal system in addition to a lack of established tonal-sandhi rules for Zophei, but within this section an alternative method of glossing is provided in order to distinguish between orthographic conventions followed by the Linguistics 35 Field Methods class and the accurate IPA transcription for the given constructions, as best determined by myself through my own perception and the programs Audacity and Praat, which informed my analysis of the tone by providing a phonetic basis. I used this phonetic basis in conjunction with the consultant's own perceptions in order to construct this section's tonal presentations.

⁵⁰ Forms (75) through (78) can be found in 12022020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

because of an alternative tonal realization on *sii* ‘go’ — it is not currently certain whether or not this tonal contrast exists only with *va* or whether or not such a tonal contrast exists on the simplex form. In my understanding, *sii* remains a single verb and the tonal contrast is enabled only when the venitive is involved, and it is the verb demonstrated by form (75) that is present within forms (77) and (78).

Forms (77) and (78) differ only in tonal respects, as can be seen in the IPA transcriptions of the constructions. This difference manifests firstly on the tone of the first three elements — the venitive, the 1SG.P marker, and the verb stem — which all share the same tone between constructions. In (77), this tone is mid; in (78), this tone is high. In form (77), the applicative *-suu* is realized with a level mid-tone with glottalization; in form (78), the applicative *-suu* is realized with a high-to-mid falling tone with glottalization. It is not completely certain whether the participant-marking is encoded within the construction as a whole or on the applicative itself, but because the tonal contrast between the applicatives in the forms is the most remarkable, involving a mid-level versus a high-to-mid fall, I have chosen to analyze the participant marking as part of the applicative. Further research in the area of directional clitics like the venitive *va* and in tone generally may prove or disprove this analysis.

A non-imperative context is illustrated by forms (79) and (80) below:⁵¹

(79) *na va pa sii súù*
 nã vã pã sí sú
 2SG.A VEN 1SG.P go MAL
 ‘You come to me’

(80) *naa va pa sii súù*
 nà vè pè sì sú
 2PL.A VEN 1SG.P go MAL
 ‘You all come to me’

Within forms (79) and (80), because of the non-imperative contexts, the participant marking follows the previously demonstrated transitive verb paradigm associated with newly divalent verbal construction *va-sii-suu* ‘to come to,’ where the vowel quality on the word-initial pronominal clitic differentiates between number for the 2.A marking. Notable again is the same tone on the first three particles in both (79) and (80),

⁵¹ Forms (79) and (80) can be found in 12022020_LX35F2020_B_zoom.wav

though these tones differ between forms. In form (79), the first three particles are all realized with mid-tone, the verb stem is realized with high-tone, and the applicative is realized with high-to-mid falling tone. In form (80), the first three particles all share a level-low tone, the verb stem is also realized with a level-low tone akin to the preceding particles, and the applicative is rendered with a low-to-extra-low tone — the tone on the applicative begins at roughly the same pitch as the preceding four particles, but ends as the lowest tonal realization in the entire utterance.

Because the tonal realization on the first four particles of (80) was consistently lower than what I have chosen to analyze as a mid-tone on the first three particles in form (79), I have chosen a low-tone instead of mid-tone for the first four particles given in form (80), but emphasize the low-to-extra-low fall present in *-suu* in form (80).

Further research would greatly expand and enrich current understanding of both the tonal system at large within Nuita Zophei and the extent to which applicatives might affect tone within a given construction and vice-versa.

6.2 Particle Ordering in Causative-Applicative Constructions

Whereas most of the examples given within this paper have consistently demonstrated an applicative immediately post-verbally, adjacent to the verb stem, this ordering does not always hold.

In forms (81) and (82) below, this flexibility is illustrated in constructions that involve both *-suu* and the post-verbal causativizer *-sah*:⁵²

(81) *vui-tsuun=lai* *a-pa-nui-suu-sah*
elephant-at=LOC **3SG.A-1SG.P-laugh-MAL-CAUS**
 ‘He/she made me laugh at the elephant’

(82) *vui-tsuun=lai* *a-pa-nui-sa-suu*
elephant-at=LOC **3SG.A-1SG.P-laugh-CAUS-MAL**
 ‘He/she made me laugh at the elephant’

As demonstrated by forms (81) and (82), the causative and the applicative might trade places without affecting the gloss of the construction. Notably, the P-marked

⁵² Forms (81) and (82) can be found in 11032020_LX35F2020_CLASS_zoom.wav

participant is realized as the direct object of the causative-applicative construction *nui-suu-sah* or *nui-sa-suu* ‘to make laugh at,’ with an obliquely-marked goal-like argument whereas previously *-suu* applicative constructions have treated the P-marked participant as a goal-like argument and treated an unmarked nominal as the direct object (refer back to Section 4.1 for an extensive discussion on participant marking and the semantic status of given participants in different *-suu* constructions). In this instance, with both *-suu* and *-sah*, *-sah* seems to neutralize *-suu*’s ability to recode the semantic status of the P-marked participant while *-suu* still increases the valency of formerly monovalent intransitive *nui* ‘to laugh,’ the two working in concert to create a construction for the gloss provided.

6.3 Relativization

It is possible to relativize applicative constructions involving *-suu* if *-suu* is part of the verb complex within the relative clauses. Note forms (83) and (84) below:⁵³

- (83) a-tsa-nui-suu-∅ poo ka-hmuh
 3SG.A-2.P-laugh-MAL-2SG.P REL 1SG.A-see
 ‘I saw him/her that laughed at you’
- (84) Mang=tah boolung a-∅-tsii-suu-∅
 Mang=ERG ball 3SG.A-3.P-kick-MAL-3SG.P
 poo tsontsoo-nuu ka-hmuh
 REL person-female 1SG.A-see
 ‘I saw the girl that Mang kicked the ball at’

In form (83), *poo* occurs after the relative clause’s verbal complex and refers to the A-marked participant of the relative clause’s applicative construction. Additionally, *poo* serves as the direct object of the primary clause as the nominal seen by the 1SG.A participant executing the primary verb.

In form (84) *poo* occurs immediately after the relative clause’s verb complex. The A-marked 3SG participant within the relative clauses’s verb complex, Mang, received ergative case-marking and the verb complex itself refers to another 3SG entity through the absence of any other P-marking; as demonstrated previously, 3SG.P marking is unmarked. The direct object of the verb, *boolung* ‘ball,’ is ignored and is not treated as the P-marked

⁵³ Forms (83) and (84) can be found in 12012020_LX35F2020_CLASS_zoom.wav

entity, and in the absence of an animate 3SG.P participant, this P-marked participant is instead found in the latter primary clause which occurs after *poo* as *tsontsoo-nuu* ‘girl,’ whom is also the object of the primary’s clause’s non-applicative verb complex.

Forms (85) below demonstrates a potential limitation in regards to *-suu* within relative clauses, restating the information relayed by form (84) without a *-suu* applicative construction when the ball is interpreted as the object of the primary clause verb complex rather than the girl:⁵⁴

(85)	Mang=tah	tsontsoo-nuu	poo-sin=lang	
	Mang=ERG	child-girl	REL-position=ALL	
	a-∅-tsii-∅	poo	boolung	ka-hmuh
	3SG.A-3.P-kick-3SG.P	REL	ball	1SG.A-see
	‘I saw the ball that Mang kicked at the girl’			

In form (85), rather than utilize an applicative construction instantiate a goal-like argument and increase the valency of the verbal complex, the destination nominal is marked obliquely using the nominal construction *poo-sin=lang*, which I would gloss as ‘towards that one’s position.’ The verb retains its standard associated divalency, and the relativizer *poo* is used both to mark the direction of the ball and to link the clauses.

Whether or not form (85) can be achieved via a construction involving a *-suu* is currently uncertain. When the consultant was asked to translate the phrase ‘I saw Mang who kicked a ball to the girl,’ he said it couldn’t be done, which further suggests a limit to *-suu* applicative constructions within relative clauses. In general, much more should be done in order to fully understand limitations on applicative constructions within relative clauses and other types of multiclausal constructions.

7 Conclusion

The morphosyntax of applicatives within Nuita Zophei seems to follow a uniform pattern with much predictability in regards to particle ordering and expected functions, and an effort has been made to demonstrate all variability in addition to comprehensively displaying the semantic range of *-suu*. Applicatives appear to be one of the primary

⁵⁴ Forms (85) can be found in 12012020_LX35F2020_CLASS_zoom.wav

methods of increasing the valency of a given construction, and in many of their functions do not differ too much from prototypical applicatives.

For *-suu* specifically, seeking a diachronic explanation for the applicative would be favorable to the understanding of Maraic languages and the South-Central Tibeto-Burman family more broadly. Further understanding of *-suu* and *-hnuu* and how their functionality appears to have merged would be highly beneficial as well, and future research might locate instances where they diverge in their functions. I have sought to provide an arrangement of several applicatives, but there remains much work to be done in the way of further exploration and clarification of all of the nuances present for each applicative.

Future research's top priorities should aim to improve and expand current understanding of Zophei's applicative inventory, seek answers to the questions of phonemic and grammatical tone raised by some corpus data, and determine to what extent tone and relativization are related to stem-alternation and other underlying realizations of verbal constructions, both inside and outside of applicative constructions. Above all else, more naturalistic data should be collected so as to best identify, analyze, and comprehend current applicative use outside of elicited data — such methodology has proven valuable just over the course of the brief class during which this paper was written, and the potential for further discovery and the expansion of current knowledge horizons seems anything but unlikely.

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