1. **Introduction**

- Dulong and Rawang are closely related Tibeto-Burman languages spoken just south and east of Tibet.
- The people who speak Dulong for the most part live in Gongshan county of Yunnan province in China, and belong to either what is known as the ‘Dulong’ (törünc or ‘Taron’, or ‘Trung’) nationality (pop. 5816 according to the 1990 census), a name they were given because they mostly live in the valley of the Dulong (Taron/Trung) River, or to one part (roughly 6,000 people) of the Nu nationality (those who live along the upper reaches of the Nu River—the part of the Salween within China).
- The people who speak Rawang (population unknown, although Ethnologue gives 100,000) live in northern Kachin State in Myanmar (Burma), particularly along the Mae Hka (‘Nmai Hka) and Maeli Hka (Mali Hka) river valleys. In the past they had been called ‘Hkanung’ or ‘Nung’, and have often been considered to be a sub-group of the Kachin.
- Until government policies put a stop to the clearing of new land in 1994, they still practiced slash and burn farming on the mountainsides (they still do a bit, but only on already claimed land), in conjunction with planting paddy rice near the river.
- In this paper, I will be using data of the Mvtwang (Mvt River) dialect of Rawang, which is considered the most central of those dialects in Myanmar and so has become something of a standard for writing and inter-group communication.

2. **Typological overview**

- Verb-final, agglutinative, with both head marking and dependent marking. Large number of formative affixes, including the diminutive -cê and the augmentative -mê. Generally predication involves the use of verbs.
- No pivots in Rawang for cross-clause coreference (or other constructions).
- Three classes of verb and the copula (the citation form for verbs is the third person non-past affirmative/declarative form):
  - Intransitives take the non-past affirmative/declarative particle (ê) alone in the non past (e.g. ngêê ‘to cry’) and the intransitive past tense marker (-i) in past forms (with

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1 In the Rawang writing system (Morse 1962, 1963), which is used in this paper, most letters represent the standard pronunciations of English, except that $i = [i], v = [a], a = [a], o = [u], q = [?]$, and $c = [s]$ or [ts] (free variation; historically [ts]). Tones are marked as follows (using the letter $a$ as a base): high falling tone: $\grave{a}$, mid tone: $\breve{a}$, low falling tone: $\acute{a}$. All syllables that end in a stop consonant ([-p, -t, -?, -k]) are in the high tone. Open syllables without a tone mark are unstressed. A colon marks a non-basic long vowel.
third person argument); they can be used transitively only when they take valency-
increasing morphological marking (causative, benefactive).2
• Adjectives are a subclass of intransitive verbs, and so can be predicative without
the copula. In citation they take the nominalizer wē (e.g. tēwē 'big'), but when
used as predicates function the same as other intransitive verbs.
• Transitives take the non-past third person object marker (ō) plus the non-past
affirmative/declarative particle (ē) in non-past forms (e.g. rīōē 'to carry (something)')
and the transitive past tense marker (ā) in past forms (with third person O
arguments); they can be used intransitively only when they take valency-reducing
morphological marking (intratisitivizing prefix, reflexive/middle marking suffix). In
transitive clauses the agentive marker generally appears on the NP representing the A
argument.
• Ambitransitives can be used as transitives or intransitives without
morphological derivation (ēmōē / ēmē 'to eat'). There are both S=O types and S=A types. With the
S=O type, as in (1), below, adding an A argument creates a causative, without the
need to use the causative prefix. With the S=A type, as in (2), use of the intransitive
vs. the transitive form marks a difference between a general or habitual situation and
a particular situation respectively. The difference is due partly to the nature of the
object, and partly to the nature of general vs. specific action. I.e. if the O is specific,
then the transitive form must be used, but if the O is non-specific, it is not necessary
to use the intransitive form. If no O is mentioned, then usually the intransitive form is
used.

(1) S=O type
a. gvyaqē 'be broken, destroyed' gvyaqōē 'break, destroy'
b. gvyōpmē 'be crumpled' gvyōpmōē 'crumple'
c. dvtnē 'be broken, snapped (thread)' da:tnē 'break, snap' (vt.)
d. bvlōpmē 'be folded' bvlōpmōē 'fold' (vt.)

(2) S=A type
a. Âng ēmē. 'He's eating.' or 'He eats.'
êng ēm-ē
3sg eat-N.PAST

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2 Some stative intransitive verbs can take an oblique argument marked by the locative/dative
marker svng, e.g. svrē 'to be afraid', where the stimulus is marked as an oblique argument:

(i) ngā vgīsvng svrēngē 'I'm afraid of dogs.'
ngā vgī-svng svrē-ng-ē
1sg dog-LOC afraid-1sg-N.PAST

3 The verb morphology can also be added to some nouns to make cognate noun-verb
combinations, e.g. (âng)chēr chērōē 'make wings', pvlū pvlūōē 'lay out a mat', shōm shōmē
'The shōm (Melocanna baccifera (?), a type of bamboo that only blooms once in 50 years)
are blooming.' (Neither the causative or applicative markers are used to make verbs from
nouns.)
a’ Áːngí yālōng ỳmpā àːmōē.  'He is eating this rice.'  
āng-í [yā-lōng ỳmpā] ỳm-ò-ē  
3sg-AGT this-CL rice eat-3.TR.N.PAST-N.PAST

b. Áng pé zvtnē.  'He weaves baskets.' (general or habitual sense)  
āng pé zvtn-ē  
3sg basket weave-N.PAST

b’ Áːngí pé tiqch̲ng zaːtnē.  'He is weaving a basket.'  
āng-í [pé tiq-ch̲ng] zvtn-ē  
3sg-AGT basket one-CL weave-3.TR.N.PAST-N.PAST

• There is one copula verb in Rawang, íē, which has the form ángæ in the 1sg person singular, as in line 7 of (4) below. It takes a special form of the negation particle: normally the negation particle is pronounced [mø-] or [mɑ-], but pronounced [mù-] (written mø-) with the copula, as in line 3 of (4) below. It cannot be used in a normal causative sense, though it can take the preclusive marker (løq-), which is a sub-type of imperative (e.g. cīlcè laq-(mø)-í ‘(Don’t) let him be a soldier’). It is an intransitive verb, and except for the special characteristics just mentioned, it is otherwise like other intransitive verbs in terms of person marking, TAM marking, interrogative marking, and applicative marking.

• The copula is used for identity ((3) & (4)), and equation ((5)), though can be omitted in certain contexts, as in lines 4 and 9 in (4) below.

• The copula subject and copula complement do not take any case marking, though the CS can take the topic marker, n–ø, as in (3) and line 1 of (4). The CS can be omitted in certain contexts, as in lines 3, 4 and 7 of (4). It can also be quite complex, as in (5).

(3) Wē vshōmgō nō întngcè íē.  'Those three people are students.'  
[wē vshōm-gō nō]cs [întngcè]cc í-ē  
that three-CL TOP student COP-N.PAST

1 (4) Rwàng mvshōl yālōng nō  
[Rwàng mvshōl yā-lōng nō]cs  
Rawang story this-CL TOP  
This Rawang story (LaPolla & Poa 2001:1-5)

2 dvmshǎrìí rǐmaːtnā wē mvshōl íē, . . .  
[dvmshà-ɾí-í rǐm-at-à wē] mvshōl[cc] í-ē  
shaman-pl-AGT keep-DIR-TR.PAST-NOM story COP-N.PAST  
is a story being kept by the shamans, . . .

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4 It would be possible to omit wē here; relative clauses such as this one may or may not involve the nominalizer (which derives from one of the distal demonstratives, wē).
The words of the shaman chiefs are reliable. 

I can recall only this much. 

(1) This does not come from me (is not something that originated with me),

long ago old-very.old-PL-AGT shaman-PL-AGT tell DIR-TR.PAST NOM (it) was told by damshas and very old men of long ago,

what I will tell you is what I heard (from them).

Be that as it may, as for being complete and in detail,

since I am not a shaman, I cannot recall all.

I can recall only this much.

The words of the shaman chiefs are reliable. 

Following the story taught by Apang Pung, 

the damsha rites were handed down continually. (Lit.: That which follows the story taught by Apang Pung and has been handed down continually is the damsha rites.)
3. Comparative clauses

3.1 A2 comparative clauses

• All of the Rvwang comparative structures and the elements in them are native.

• The main comparative structure used in Rvwang is the A2 type, but with a slight difference (common in Tibeto-Burman languages): the mark and the index are often the same element. That is, a form is used that marks the role of the standard, but at the same time is the only index to the fact that it is a comparative construction. In some Tibeto-Burman languages the form used for this construction is a unique unanalyzable form (e.g. Qiang -sa), but in many other cases it is a postposition with a locative sense, or locational noun, as in the case of Rvwang, which uses mvdvm 'above', as in (6)-(8).

• It is possible in Rvwang to have an adverb of extent, té (derived from tēwē 'big'), often reduplicated in some contexts, before the parameter, and then it might be understood as 'more'. (Another common adverb of extent, gvzà, is not usually used in comparatives.) In clauses without the Standard and Mark (see §3.2), this may be the only overt marking of comparison.

• The predicate in these comparative clauses is intransitive, with the Comparee being the single direct argument and the Standard being an adjunct.

(6)  

\[ Vdō nō Vpūng mvdvm(té(té)) yīngē. \]

[\[Vdō nō\]] Comparee [\[Vpūng mvdvm\]] Standard+Mark [\[té-té\] yīng-ē\] Index+Parameter

PN TOP PN above more-more tall-N.PAST

'Adeu is taller than Apung.'

• The Parameter can also take a quantifier or secondary extent adverbial, as in (7a-b), sometimes in addition to té. In this case, e.g. (7b), only one iteration of té can be used.

(7)  

a.  

\[ Vdō nō Vpūng mvdvm vní lémaq yīngē. \]

[\[Vdō nō\]] | | [\[Vpūng mvdvm\]] | \[\[vní lémaq\]ADV yīng-ē\]

PN TOP PN above two inch(<B) tall-N.PAST

'Adeu is two inches taller than Apung.'

b.  

\[ Vdō nō Vpūng mvdvm tíqhyncē té yīngē. \]

[\[Vdō nō\]] | | [\[Vpūng mvdvm\]] | \[\[tíq-hvncē té\]ADV yīng-ē\]

PN TOP PN above one-bit-DIM more tall-N.PAST

'Adeu is a little bit taller than Apung.'

• The Parameter can also be an adverb within the predicate:

(8)  

\[ Vpūng-í nō Vdō mvdvm té shōshōwā wā dárà. \]

[\[Vpūng-í nō\]] | | [\[Vdō mvdvm\]] | \[\[té shōshō-wā\]ADV wā dárà-à\]

PN-AGT TOP PN above more happily-ADV do TMhrs-TR.PAST

'Apung did (it) more happily than Adeu.'
• The word *mvd⁺m* is not only used in these constructions; it still has its basic use as a locational noun ('top' or 'above') or adverbial, as in (9) and (10), or with the sense of 'aside from ...', as in (11) and (12).

(9) *Svbôy mvd⁺mmt⁺o vchungë.*

\[
\text{[svbôy mvd⁺m-ô]} \quad \text{v-chung-ô}
\]

\text{table above-LOC \ PREF-hang-N.PAST}

'It (is) (permanently) hanging above the table.'

(10) *Nvmbungchóm tnection shìgung mvd⁺md⁺m vla:ngë.*

\[
\text{[nvmbung-chóm tİq-chţng]} \quad \text{[shìgung mvd⁺m-dVm] vla:ng-ô}
\]

\text{air/wind-house one-CL \ mountain above-REDUP \ fly-N.PAST}

'An airplane is flying over the mountain.'

(11) *Sìng zër âl mvd⁺m rımshi nţngshi daq i rvt,*

\[
\text{[sìng zër âl mvd⁺m]} \quad \text{[rim-shì nţng-shì daq-i]} \quad \text{rvt}
\]

\text{human-series exist above \ add-R/M \ accompany-R/M \ DIR-I.PAST \ because}

'Because she was added to the other humans, (she was called *Vnëng*):'

(12) *Yâ mvd⁺m luq-ô.*

\[
\text{[yâ mvd⁺m]} \quad \text{luq-ô}
\]

\text{this above \ enough/plenty-N.PAST}

'(After listing twenty places where the Rvwang had lived before, the storyteller then said:) 'There are more than these places.' (or 'Aside from these there are plenty (of others).')'

• There is no direct negative form which uses *mvd⁺m*, and there is no form equivalent to 'less' in comparatives; if the intention is to express something like 'John is not taller than Bill' or 'John is less tall than Bill', then either the 'as much as' form is used, as in (13a) (cf. (6) and see §3.5 below), or a Parameter with the opposite meaning is used, as in (13b).

(13) a. *Vdô nô Vpûng dîngtë mû-yûng.*

\[
\text{[Vdô \ nô]} \quad \text{[Vpûng dîngtë]} \quad \text{mû-yûng}
\]

\text{PN \ TOP \ PN \ much \ NEG-tall}

'Adeu is not as tall as Apung.'

b. *Vdô nô Vpûng mvd⁺m (tê) dvgûngë.*

\[
\text{[Vdô \ nô]} \quad \text{[Vpûng mvd⁺m]} \quad \text{[tê dvgûng-ô]}
\]

\text{PN \ TOP \ PN \ above \ more \ short-N.PAST}

'Adeu is shorter than Apung.'

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5 Different locative postpositions can be used in this construction, with different effects: if the translative form (reduplication of last syllable) were used instead of ᶦ, i.e. *mvd⁺mvd⁺m vchung-ô*, the meaning would be that the object is only temporarily hanging there; with the locative postposition *taq* instead of ᶦ, i.e. *svbôy mvd⁺m taq* the meaning would be 'on top of the table'; contrast this also with *svbôy taq* 'on the table'.
It seems that for comparatives of the type 'John came earlier than Bill' a comparative is not used; instead an adverb meaning 'early' or 'late', which cannot be made comparative, is used, as in (14) and (15).

(14) Vdó nô Vpûng mēpⁿg wā di-ráî.
    [Vdó nô] [Vpûng mēpⁿg-wā] di-ráî
    PN TOP PN behind-ADV go-DIR-PAST
    'Adeu came after Apun.' (= 'Adeu came later than Apung')

(15) Vdó ó Vpûng, Vpûng zîngzîng tuq ráî.
    [Vdó ó Vpûng] Vpûng [zîngzîng tuq ráî]
    PN COM PN PN ahead arrive DIR-PAST
    'Apung arrived ahead of Adeu.' (= 'Apung arrived earlier than Adeu')

The same basic A2 structure is used for comparing two patient arguments, but the Comparee is then not the topic of the clause, instead occurring in the usual focus position of the clause, as in the examples in (16). Animate patients can take the same marking as in normal transitives, as in (17) and (18) (it would be possible in (16c) as well).

(16) a. Ngâ nô shâ mvdîm vyîng (tê-tê) shôngê.
    [ngâ nô] [shâ mvdîm] vyîng [tê-tê shông-ê]
    1sg TOP meat above vegetables more-more like-N.PAST
    'I like vegetables more than meat.'

b. Ngâi nô înglikkâ mvdîm Rvwângkâ tê-tê (shôn) shângôê.
    [ngâ-î nô] [înglik-kâ mvdîm] Rvwâng-kâ
    1sg-AGT TOP English-language above Rawang-language
    [tê-tê shôn shâ-ng-ô-ê]
    big-big speak know-1sg-3.TR.N.PAST-N.PAST
    'I can speak Rawang better than (I can speak) English.'

c. (Ngâi) Vdó mvdîm Vpûng tê-tê shôngôê.
    ngâ-î [Vdó mvdîm] Vpûng [tê-tê shông-ô-ê]
    1sg-AGT PN above PN more-more like-3.TR.N.PAST-N.PAST
    'I like Adeu more than (I like) Apung.'

6 With the adverb marker wâ it shows the time of the two arrivals is a little bit apart; if the translative were used, i.e. mēpⁿg wâ di-ráî, then one came right after the other.
7 Tone change of shôn to shângôê due to it being in construction with shângôê.
8 Notice the difference in transitivity between example (16a) and (16c): the former is a statement about vegetables in general, and so is morphologically intransitive (no agentive marker on the topic and no third person patient marker on the verb), while the latter is a statement about a particular individual, and so is transitive. With this verb there is also a third possibility as well, shôngôê, with the benefactive applicative suffix, when the specific object liked belongs to someone else.
• There is no ambiguity of the *I love you more than John* type in Rawang; compare (17) with (16c) and (18):

(17) *Vnāŋi nā sīŋ ēshōng mvōm, ngā́i téte shōngē.*

[Vnāŋ-í [nā sīŋ]̄ ē-shōng mvōm] [ngā́-í [té-té shōng-ē]]

PN-AGT 2sg.LOC N.1-like above 1sg-AGT more-more like-N.PAST

'I love you more than Anang loves you.' (Lit: 'Anang loves you than, I love you more'; cf. *Vnāŋi nā sīŋ ēshōngē* 'Anang loves you."

(18) *Vāo sīŋ shōngō mvōm, Vpūŋ sīŋ lē téte shōngō.*

[Vāo sīŋ]̄ shōng-ō mvōm]
PN  LOC like-TR.N.PAST above

[Vpūŋ sīŋ lē]̄ té-té shōng-ō-ē]
PN  LOC CONTR more-more like-3.TR.N.PAST-N.PAST

'I like Apung more than I like Adeu.' (I like them both, but I prefer Apung.)

• In (17) and (18) *mvōm* appears after the first verb of a two clause structure, but it doesn’t seem to be a true bi-clausal comparative, in the sense that the two clauses in a bi-clausal comparative are in a paratactic relationship; instead it seems one clause is embedded as an adjunct in the other, maintaining the basic structure of the A2 comparative (see §3.4 below for true biclausal comparatives). This is most clear in (19):

(19) *Ang nō bīnli wā mvōm, kā téte shōnē.*

[āŋgnō]̄ [[bīnli wā] mvōm] [kā té-té shōn-ē]
3sg TOP work(n.) do above words more-more talk-N.PAST

'S/he talks more than s/he works (does some work, but mostly talks).'

• Two properties related to one participant (see also (19)):

(20) *John nō mvrshvōm vnv p mvōm téte mvdaq.*

[John nō]̄ [mvrshvōm vnv p mvōm] [té-té mvdaq]
PN  TOP face beautiful above more-more intelligent

'John is more intelligent than beautiful.'

(21) *Angmaq nō mvkūn mvkūn shāō mvōm, lvm téte jā:ngē.*

[āŋ-gmaq nō]̄ [mvkūn mvkūn shā-ō mvōm]
3sg-pl TOP song sing know-3.TR.N.PAST above

[lvm té-té jā:ng-ē]
dance more-more good.at(<Jinghpaw>)-N.PAST

'They dance better than they sing.'

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9 *nā sīŋ* could appear where it is here or after *ngā́* or in sentence-initial position.

10 With *gvāz* 'very' and/or *gā* 'also' instead of *tē-tē*, this example would mean 'In addition to being beautiful, he is intelligent.'
• Two clauses compared:

(22) Ngàí rǒngɔ mvdvɔmmɔ nà lège vrū tētê lēwvnē.
    [ŋà-í rǒ-ng-ɔ mvdvüm-ɔ] [nà lège vrū] [tētê lēwvn-ē]
1sg-AGT read-1sg-3.TR.N.PAST above-LOC 2sg writing write more quick(<B)-N.PAST
'You write faster than I read.'

3.2 A2si comparative clauses
• The Standard can be and often is omitted. In some cases where no standard is mentioned or understood from context, the interpretation can be the superlative, 'more than any other' = 'most'.

(23) Ngà nō vyúng tētê shōngē.
    [ŋà nō] vyúng [tē-tē shōng-ē]
1sg TOP vegetables more-more like- N.PAST
'I like vegetables better.' or 'I like vegetables best.'

(24) Ngà tētê yēngē.
    ngà [tē-tē yēng-ē]
1sg big-big tall- N.PAST
'I'm taller.' or 'I am tallest.'

(25) ... wēdɔ jō a:mɔ nǐgɔ, tē shvlāe, ... (LaPolla & Poa 2001:177)
    wē-dɔ [jē-ɔ jām-ɔ] nǐ-gɔ [tē shvlā-ē]
this-ADV N.1.fry(<B) BEN-3.TR.N.PAST if also more good- N.PAST
(Talking about Lamzu, a kind of bamboo) '... they (taste) better if you fry them.'

(26) Vmān nō vnĩ mvzã rām kēnǐ nō
    [vmān nō] [vnĩ mvzã rām kēnĩ nō]
the.truth(<B) TOP two handspan about from TOP
wēdɔ tē jām byōē, tēwā shvlāē, wē rvtō taq nō. (LaPolla & Poa 2001:181)
    wē-dɔ [tē jām byō-ē] [tē-wā shvlā-ē] [wē rvtō taq nō]
that-ADV more eat good-<B)-N.PAST more-ADV good- N.PAST that time LOC TOP
'The truth is it's more delicious if it is about 2 handspans tall, at that time.'

(27) Angkēcē gō tēwā gvnɔdqē. Wēdɔ mvlõmē. (LaPolla & Poa 2001:196)
    ang-kē-cē gō [tē-wā gvn-daq-ē] wē-dɔ mvlõm-ē
PREF-boil.off-DIM also big-ADV tasty-DIR-NP that-ADV tasty-N.PAST
'Without liquid(gravy or water) is more delicious. That way is tasty.'

11 wēdɔ jām tētê byōē would also be possible here with the same meaning.
12 In these examples, the forms tēwā gvn-ē, tētê gvn-ē, and tē gvn-ē could be used interchangeably.
3.3 A1 comparative clauses

- Aside from the A2 type of comparative, there are times when a form of the A1 comparative structure is used, where the Parameter appears in the complement of a copula clause, as in (29) and (30). This is used when the Parameter is a noun, e.g. *tvp 'close' in (29a-b), or when a verb is nominalized (this is very common), as in (30).

(29)  
a. *Ang maq chôm nô ngàmaq chôm mvđêm kênî Melbourne tvptvpŷng iê.  
[àng-maq chôm nô] [ngà-maq chôm mvđêm kênî]  
3sg-pl house TOP 1sg-pl house above from  
[Melbourne tvp-tvp-yûng]cc iê  
PN close-close-LOC COP-N.PAST  
'His house is closer to Melbourne than my house.' (Lit.: 'His house is a place close to Melbourne, more so than mine."

b. *Wêdăng nô yàdâng mvđêm tvp iê má?  
[wê-dăng nô] [yà-dâng mvđêm] [tvp]cc iê má  
that-CL(roads) TOP this-CL(roads) above close COP-N.PAST Q  
'Is that road closer than this road?'

(30)  
a. *Ang nô têtêtêpê iê.  
[àng nô] [tê-tê-tê-pê]cc iê  
3sg TOP more-more-big-MALE COP-N.PAST  
'He is taller.' (Lit.: 'He is the taller male.')

b. *Tvrrà yàdâng (tê(wâ)) yûnggûng iê.  
[tvrrà yà-dâng] [tê-wâ yûnggûng]cc iê  
3sg this-CL(roads) more-ADV long COP-N.PAST  
'This road is longer.'
• In some cases, such as in (31), the copula used is not the usual copula, it is the verb *vlē* 'to exist, to live (at a place)'.

(31) Ang nā ngà mvdvm kēnî Melbourne tvptpyvng vlē.

3sg TOP 1sg above from PN close-close-LOC exist-N.PAST

'He lives closer to Melbourne than I do' (Lit.: 'He lives in a place close to Melbourne, more so than me.')(also possible would be Melbourne sîng tvp îyvng [Melbourne LOC close COP-LOC])

3.4 Bi-clausal comparative clauses

• There is also a bi-clausal strategy which sometimes involves having the contrastive noun marker *mving* (or sometimes *lē*) after the Comparee (this has the sense of 'instead of NP'). (In (32) it would be possible to have just *sîng* and/or *nā*, but *mving* makes the contrast stronger.)

(32) Vpûng sîng (nā) mv-shònggô, Vdô (sîng) mving (nā) shònggô


PN LOC TOP NEG-like-3.TR.N.PAST PN LOC CONTR TOP like-3.TR.N.PAST-N.PAST

'I like Adeu more than I like Apung (Lit: 'I don't like Apung, I like Adeu instead.')

(33) Vpûng nô têwê, Vdô nô cîmê.

[[Vpûng nô] tê-ē]  [[Vdô nô] cîm-ē]

PN TOP big-NOM PN TOP small-N.PAST

'Apung is bigger than Adeu.' (Lit.: 'Apung is big, but Adeu is small.')

• In (33), one person is big and the other is small. Another situation is where both are big, but one is bigger, as in (34):

(34) Vpûng nô gîvzà têwê, Vdô nô têté têê.


PN TOP very big-NOM PN TOP more-more big-N.PAST

'Apung is very big, but Adeu is bigger.'

3.5 Equative comparative clauses

• Comparatives of the 'as much as' type are generally formed using the adverb *dvîngtê* 'much', if it is a measurable Parameter, as in (35)-(37), or the adverb marker *dô*, in other cases, such as in (38).

• Both positive and negative forms of the predicate are possible, but the constraint on the Parameter being a measurable concept is more strict for *dvîngtê* in the positive (e.g. *dvîngtê* can be used in (37), but not in (38)). The word *nî* 'just, exactly' is also not used in the negative.

• In some cases either *dvîngtê* or *dô* could be used, but the meaning would be slightly different; for example if (36) had *dô*, the meaning would be 'He is not tall the way you are.'
(35) Vdō nō Vpūng dvingtē (nī) yēngē.
    [Vdō nō] [Vpūng dvingtē (nī)] yēng-ē
    Adeu TOP Apung much just tall-N.PAST
    'Adeu is (just/exactly) as tall as Apung.'

(36) Ang nō nà dvingtē mv-yēng.
    [ång nō] [nà dvingtē] mv-yēng
    3sg TOP 2sg much NEG-tall
    'He's not as tall as you.'

(37) Ang nō nà dvingtē mà-dvbū.
    [ångnō] [nà dvingtē] mà-dvbū
    3sg TOP 2sg much NEG-happy
    'He is not as happy as you.' (He is happy, but less happy than you.)

(38) Ang nō nà dō (nī) dvbūē.
    [ång nō] [nà dō nī] dvbū-ē
    3sg TOP 2sg ADV just happy-N.PAST
    'He is (just) as happy as you.'

• If the two items being compared exhibit the characteristic represented by the Parameter to the same extent, the adverb dvingchā 'same level' can be used, as in (39a) (the predicate can be positive or negative). In this case the two items compared are joined by the comitative marker into one NP. There are two comitative markers in Rvwang, ń and n vēng, and either one can be used in this construction. It is also possible for the two items being compared to be represented by a single noun phrase, as in (39b).

(39) a. Nà ń àng nāng chā yēngshē.
    [nà ń àngnā] [dvchā yēng-shē-ē]
    2sg COM 1sg TOP same.level tall-dl-N.PAST
    'You and I are the same height.'

b. ngàní mvzē nō dvchāchá yēngshē.
    [ngà-nī mvzē nō] [dvchā chā yēng-shē-ē]
    1sg-dl girl TOP same.level tall-dl-N.PAST
    'We two girls are the same height.'

3.6 Superlative
• The superlative can be an inference from the context, when no Standard is mentioned or understood (see §3.2), or it can be explicitly marked using the morpheme (v)tēng, derived from vēng 'edge, end' (e.g. tvēng 'end of the road'; svbōy vēng 'edge of the table'; vrūm vēng 'farthest place (heaven)', vēngpē 'God'). In this case the Parameter is nominalized by (v)tēng and appears as the complement of the copula, similar to an A1 type comparative structure:
(40) \[\text{Ngà nò yêng(v)têng ôngàè} \]
\[\text{[ngà nò] [yêng-vtêng]cc i-ng-à è} \]
\[1\text{sg TOP tall-edge COP-1sg-N.NOM-N.PAST} \]
'I am the tallest (one).'

(41) \[\text{Ang nò vdâ(v)têng iè.} \]
\[\text{[âng nò] [vdâ-(v)têng]cc i è} \]
\[3\text{sg TOP have-edge COP-N.PAST} \]
'He is the richest (one among us).'

(42) \[\text{Computer'ri nò shêngbê shvlâwê, Apple computer lòng mìng shvlâvtêng iè.} \]
\[\text{[computer-ri nò] [shêngbê shvlâ-wê]} \]
\[\text{computer-pl TOP all good-NOM} \]
\[\text{[Apple computer lòng mìng] [shvlâ-vtêng]cc i-è]}^{3} \]
\[\text{PN computer CL CONTR good-edge COP-N.PAST} \]
'All the computers are good, but the Apple computer is the best.'

3.7 Inherently comparative lexemes

- The adjectives (stative verbs) are in fact inherently comparative, but generally not used that way; in an explicitly comparative context, a simple statement such as \[\text{âng yêngè} \] [3sg tall-N.NOM] could mean 'S/he is taller.'
- There is a verb \[\text{nêshè'} \] 'to like, prefer', which seems to be a deponent verb, as it takes the reflexive/middle marker but there is no transitive (non-middle) counterpart. It is only used following another verb, that is 'prefer to V'; for 'prefer NP', see (46)-(47) below.

(43) a. \[\text{Môdô zùnshi mvdźm tvrâ dí nêng shôngè.} \]
\[\text{[môdô zùn-shì mvdźm] [tvrâ dí nê-ng shì-è]} \]
\[\text{car ride-R/M above road go prefer-1sg R/M-N.PAST} \]
'I prefer to walk than ride in the car.' (use of \[\text{mvdźm} \] makes it 'prefer' instead of 'like')

b. \[\text{Yābok lègā rô nêng shôngè.} \]
\[\text{[yā-bok lègā] [rô nê-ng shì-ng-è]} \]
\[\text{this-CL book read like-1sg R/M-1sg-N.PAST} \]
'I like/prefer to read this book.'

c. \[\text{Australia rvgaqô té ūl nêng shôngè.} \]
\[\text{[Australia rvgaq-ô] [tê ūl nê-ng shì-ng-è]} \]
\[\text{PN place-LOC more live like-1sg R/M-1sg-N.PAST} \]
'I prefer to live in Australia.'

- The meaning in (43a) could also be expressed as in (44):

\[\text{\underline{13} There is a change of tone from shvlâ to shvlá here because the word is in construction with vtêng.}\]
(44) Mōdō zūnshi mvāvām tvārā dī lōng té shōngē.

[modō zūn-shi mvāvām] [[tvārā dī lōng] té shōng-ē]
car ride-R/M above road go CL more like-N.PAST
'I prefer to walk than ride in the car.' (Lit.: 'I prefer the walking one.')

- The verb mvẑ̤n 'surpass, be more than' (a loan from Jinghpaw) is also inherently comparative. In (45) the Parameter is 'two inches', but it could be other measurements, e.g. vnīcē mvī 'twenty marks (on a test)'.

(45) Vdō nō Vpūng mvāvām vnī lēmaq mvẑ̤nē.

[Vdō nō] [Vpūng mvāvām] [[vnī lēmaq]ADV mvẑ̤n-ē]
Adeu TOP Apung above two inch(<B) surpass-N.PAST
'Adeu is two inches taller/more than Apung.'

- The comparative noun marker we saw in §3.4 above can also appear in a clause with the verb shōng(ō)ē 'like/love', giving the verb the sense of 'prefer', as (46) and (47):

(46) Ngā nō vyūng lē nō shōngē. (mv̤ng also possible instead of lē)

[ngā nō] [vyūng lē nō] shōng-ē
1sg TOP vegetable(s) CONTR TOP like-N.PAST
'I prefer vegetables.'

(47) Ngā nō chōngmō mvāvām, nvmci lē (té) shōngē. (mv̤ng also possible instead of lē)

[ngā nō] [chōngmō mvāvām] [nvmci lē] té shōng-ē
1sg TOP banana(s) above juice.fruit CONTR more like-N.PAST
'I prefer fruits with juice to bananas.'

3.8 The verb 'compare'

- The verb 'compare' is shv̤bōngōē. The clause with shv̤bōngōē generally appears in a two clause construction with a comparative clause, as in (48), and the two items compared appear as two conjoined nouns. As with the dvchāchā construction mentioned above (§3.5), the two conjoined nouns could be replaced by a single NP, e.g. in (48), wē-lōng nv̤ng yā-lōng 'that one and this one' could be replaced by wē-lōng-nī [that-CL-dl] 'those two'.

(48) Wēlōng nv̤ng yālōng shv̤bōngō nōng nō, yālōng tētē shv̤lāē.

[[wē-lōng nv̤ng yā-lōng] shv̤bōng-ō nī-ng nō]
this-CL COM that-CL compare-3.TR.N.PAST if-1sg TOP
[yā-lōng [tē-tē shv̤lā-ē]]
this-CL big-big good-N.PAST
'When I compare this one with that one, this one is better.'

---

14 mvẑ̤n has also come to be used as an adverb of extent in comparatives instead of té by some people.
3.9 Co-relative comparatives

- Co-relative comparatives generally involve the adverb dvshá dvshá, often shortened to dvsháshá, 'keep on ...'.\(^{15}\) This form can appear in the first clause of the two-clause structure, as in (49a), or it can appear in the second clause, as in (49b).

\[(49)\]

a. Tí-gwit té èaq dvsháshá, (té) ti bál-ràë.

\[[ti-gwit [té è-aq dvsháshá]] [té ti bál-rà-è]

water-cold more N.1-drink keep.on more water thirsty-must-N.PAST

'The more you drink cold water, the thirstier you are.'

b. Té tigwit èaq, dvsháshá ti bálrâ. (té can appear before or after tigwit)

\[[té ti-gwit è-aq] [dvsháshá ti bál-rà-è]

more water-cold N.1-drink keep.on water thirsty-must-N.PAST

'The more you drink cold water, the thirstier you are.'

- The form dvsháshá can also appear in both clauses, as in (50):

\[(50)\]

Nót byöng dvsháshá, dvsháshá (lè) dóbó m̀vnsh̀ngë.

\[[nót byö-ng dvsháshá] [dvsháshá lè dóbó m̀vn-shi-ng-è]

mind good-1sg keep.on keep.on CONTR fat continue-R/M-1sg-N.PAST

'The happier I am the fatter I become.' ('The more I keep on being happy, the more I keep on getting fat. ')

- Another possibility is to have mv̀d̀m at the end of the first clause, as in (51) and (52). When mv̀d̀m is used, dvsháshá can't be used in the same clause. Either té or dvsháshá can appear in the second clause, but not both.

\[(51)\]

Té tigwit èaq mv̀d̀m(dv̀m), (té) ti bálrâë.

\[[Ité ti-gwit è-aq mv̀d̀m-dv̀m] [té ti bál-rà-è]

more water-cold N.1-drink above-REDUP more water thirsty-must-N.PAST

'The more you drink cold water, the thirstier you are.'

\[(52)\]

Mè-wà ní vlò mv̀d̀mdv̀m, dvsháshá wàòë.

\[[mv-è-wà ní] vl-ò mv̀d̀m-dv̀m] [dvsháshá wà-ò-è]

NEG-N.1-do NEG.IMP say-3.TR.N.PAST above-REDUP keep.on do-3.TR.N.PAST-N.PAST

'The more I tell (him) not to do it, the more he does it.'

---

\(^{15}\) dvsháshá is not just used in 'the more ... the more' constructions; it can be used in a single clause with the meaning of 'keep on ...'. Example (i) would be used in a situation where the person was told already once not to be so stubborn or uncooperative, but has continued to be so:

\[(i)\]

Dvsháshá mè-shèngárshi ní!

dvsháshá mv-è-è-shvngár-shì ní

keep.on NEG-N.1-N.1-be.stubborn-R/M NEG.IMP

'Don't keep being so stubborn (or uncooperative)!'
A third possibility is to use the auxiliary verb *mër̄nē* 'continue' instead of or together with *dvshāsā*, as in (50) and (53). (Auxiliary verbs generally participate in transitivity harmony, and so *mër̄nē* takes the reflexive/middle marker to make it intransitive to match the intransitive main verb.)

(53) Nōt byōng mër̄nhōng mvēdmēvēm, té dēbō mër̄nhōngē.

\[
[\text{nōt } \text{byōng } \text{mër̄nhōng } \text{mvēdmēvēm} ] [\text{tē } \text{dēbō } \text{mër̄nhōngē}]
\]

mind good-1sg continue-R/M-1sg above-REDUP more fat continue-R/M-1sg-N.PAST

'The happier I am the fatter I become.' ('The more I continue being happy, the more I continue getting fat.')

Still another possibility is to use *nēngnēng* (< *nēngō* 'to add (something)') to be used after the verb in the first clause instead of *mvd* or *dvsh* as, as in (54):

(54) Nōt byōng nēngnēng, dēbō mër̄nhōngē.

\[
[\text{nōt } \text{byōng } \text{nēngnēng} ] [\text{tē } \text{dēbō } \text{mër̄nhōngē}]
\]

mind good-1sg add-add more fat continue-R/M-1sg-N.PAST

'The happier I am the fatter I become.'

3.10 Interrogative comparatives

• We saw a yes-no question type of comparative in example (29b), formed simply by adding a question particle to the end of the clause. To form a question word interrogative of a comparative, an interrogative pronoun simply replaces the Standard or Comparee:

(55) Kāgō tētē (kvēng) yōē?

\[
\text{kā-gō } [\text{tē-tē } \text{kvēng } \text{yō-ē}]\]

WH-CL more-more run flow-N.PAST

'Which (person) (runs) faster?'

(56) (ān) kāgō mvēm (kēnī) tē (kvēng) yōē lē?

\[
\text{ān } [\text{kā-gō } \text{mvēm } \text{kēnī} ] [\text{tē } \text{kvēng } \text{yō-ē } ] \text{lē}
\]

3sg WH-CL above from more run flow-N.PAST Q

'He's faster than whom?' (In a context such as Āng tētē yōē lā? Kāgō mvēm (kēnī) lē? 'He's faster? Faster than whom?)

Abbreviations

<p>| 1/2.I.PAST | 1st and 2nd person intransitive past marker |
| 3.TR.N.PAST | 3rd person transitive non-past marker |
| AGT | agentive marker |
| BEN | benefactive suffix |
| CAUS | causative prefix |
| CL | classifier |
| N.1 | non-1st person actor (in a clause with a speech act participant) |
| N.PAST | non-past marker |
| PFV | perfective marker |
| pl | plural |
| PN | proper name |
| PREF | intransitivizing prefix |</p>
<table>
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**References**