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The prefix (v)ö- in Nalögo and Natügu and its origin from POc *paRi-

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Abstract

Two Oceanic languages in the Santa Cruz (SC) branch of Reefs-Santa Cruz (RSC)—Nalögo and Natügu—both exhibit the verbal prefix *(v)ö-*. In this paper, we examine the functions and origin of the prefix, identifying *(v)ö-* as a middle marker with a valency-reducing function, occurring in contexts showing a lower degree of transitivity. We demonstrate that *(v)ö-* is functionally and diachronically related to Proto-Oceanic (POc) *paRi-, reconstructed as a polyfunctional prefix encoding various meanings, including, among others, collective, associative, iterative and reciprocal (Pawley 1973: 150–153). In Oceanic languages with reflexes of POc *paRi-, the polyfunctionality of the prefix is retained to different degrees. In Nalögo and Natügu, we show that the prefix is still productive only as a valency-reducing device. Our analysis of *(v)ö-*, reconstructed as Proto-Santa Cruz (PSC) *(v)ö-, is a first step towards a more detailed description of valency-changing morphemes in SC languages.

1. Introduction

In this paper[1], we analyse the functions and origin of the prefix *(v)ö-* in Nalögo [nlz] and Natügu [ntu][2], two Oceanic Reefs-Santa Cruz (RSC) languages spoken on Santa Cruz (SC) Island in Temotu, the easternmost province of Solomon Islands. In recent years, our knowledge of RSC

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[1] The authors warmly thank Isabelle Bril and two anonymous reviewers for comments which helped us clarify our discussion and refine our analyses. As always, any errors or misinterpretations remain our responsibility.

[2] Alfarano's fieldwork on Nalögo encompassed three months in 2015 and four months in 2017–2018. The second field trip was funded by the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme, grant no. SG0453. Boerger's fieldwork on Natügu was conducted over a period of twenty years of residence in the language community, supplemented by two 12-month Documenting Endangered Languages Fellowships in 2010–2011 to work on the grammar (#FN-50063-10) and in 2015–2016 (#FN-230212-15) to work on the lexicon. We also would like to thank the Nalögo and Natügu speakers who have helped us over the years as we studied their languages by tirelessly answering our questions, offering suggestions, and correcting our errors. Abbreviations used in the Nalögo and Natügu glosses follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules where these apply. Additional abbreviations: ANIM, animate; ASS, associative; AT, attributor; AUG, augmented number; COM, comitative CONT, continuous; COS, change of state; EXIST, existential; GDIR, geocentric directional; LNK, linker; MIN, minimal number; MRK, marker; PCLF, possessive classifier; PDIR, person directional; SEQ, sequential. The indices I and II on person markers refer to distinct paradigms with different distributional restrictions.

languages, including Nalögo, Natügu, Noipä [npx][3], and Engdewu [ngr], spoken on SC Island, and Äiwoo [nfl], spoken in the Reef Islands, has increased considerably, thanks to the ongoing documentation and description of some aspects of RSC grammars.

However, many topics still remain to be addressed, especially the functions and origins of the valency-changing morphemes in SC languages, as opposed to Äiwoo (Reefs). This topic is particularly relevant for Oceanic linguistics, because RSC languages, despite being classified as Oceanic (Ross & Næss 2007), display some unexpected linguistic features, including more complex verb units and unusual patterns of clausal structure. For instance, Äiwoo shows a symmetrical voice system, a type of clausal structure which is highly unusual for an Oceanic language, but attested elsewhere in the Austronesian family (e.g. Philippine languages). By contrast, SC languages, including Nalögo and Natügu, display more canonical transitivity-based systems with a vast array of valency-changing devices, like those attested in most Oceanic languages. Historically speaking, the presence of a voice system in Äiwoo is of interest for the history of the Oceanic subgroup, since voice systems are generally thought to have been lost in the transition from Proto-Malayo-Polynesian (PMP) to Proto-Oceanic (POc) (Lynch et al. 2002: 30–32). While the functions, distribution and origins of the main voice affixes in Äiwoo have been the focus of Næss's (2021) paper, a detailed analysis of the valency-changing morphemes in SC languages still needs to be undertaken. Næss (2015: 304) also pointed this out, by claiming that the properties of valency-changing devices in Natügu and Engdewu "differ between the languages and are in need of further study".

In light of this, our goal is to begin to fill this gap, by analysing the functions of *(v)ö-* in Nalögo and Natügu, as well as suggesting a potential POc origin for this form. The prefix, which functions as a valency-reducing device, is attested in three SC languages —Nalögo, Natügu and Engdewu, with Noipä as yet undocumented. We focus on the Nalögo and Natügu data, because these two varieties are the most closely related, while Engdewu has had considerable influence from Äiwoo through intermarriage, making it less representative of SC in general. However, it should be noted that there are no significant differences between the behaviour of *(v)ö-* in Nalögo and in Engdewu (Vaa 2013).

In this study, we show that the Nalögo and Natügu *(v)ö-* is used to reduce the valency of transitive roots. These forms occur mainly in two contexts displaying lower transitivity, i.e. semitransitive and depatientive constructions. These constructions exhibit a similar function, i.e. expressing a focus on the initiator and the verbal action. Semitransitives are semantically transitive, in that, they involve two participants, but structurally, they show both intransitive and transitive properties, such as the presence of an intransitive person marking cooccurring with an overtly expressed object noun. Depatientives are also semantically transitive, but morphosyntactically intransitive, as they involve object omission. Along with semitransitives and depatientives, there are a few examples in the available data where the Nalögo prefix *(v)ö-* occurs in intransitive constructions expressing naturally reciprocal events, but this function appears to be marginal.

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[3] The Noipä variety was identified for the first time in 2015 (Boerger 2017) based on a collection of 200 words. Further original data encompassing various genres are needed to provide more accurate analyses on the linguistic features of the variety.

In Oceanic languages, reflexes of POc *paRi- can express various functions, depending on the language. POc *paRi- (Pawley 1973: 150–151) was used to refer to "mutual interaction between the entities denoted by the subject of the verb", as well as to "unified or conjoined action by a plural subject, or repeated action by a singular subject, or unification of objects" (Bril 2005: 26). In some languages, reflexes of *paRi- are still productive and polysemous, while in others, they are "decaying morphemes gradually replaced by other types of constructions." (ibid.: 67). Along with collective, associative, iterative and reciprocal, reflexes of *paRi- also occur in contexts showing a lower degree of transitivity, including depatientive. For instance, the Fijian *vei-* can have, among many, a depatientive function (ibid.: 56). Given that in terms of functions, the SC prefix *(v)ö-* parallel the reflexes of POc *paRi- attested in other Oceanic languages, we argue that *(v)ö-*, reconstructed as Proto-Santa Cruz (PSC) form *vö-, is also a reflex of *paRi- with high productivity exclusively in contexts of lower transitivity.

This paper is organized as follows. In section 2, we describe the position of RSC languages within the Oceanic subgroup (2.1) and present some notes on Nalögo and Natügu grammar (2.2) with a focus on the properties of the pronominal system (2.2.1) and clausal structure (2.2.2). In section 3, we give an overview of the functions of POc *paRi- and its reflexes in present-day Oceanic languages (3.1). In section 3.2, we narrow our focus to the valency-reducing functions of reflexes of *paRi- and of other functionally related prefixes in Oceanic languages, which most likely replaced the prefix. As shown in section 4, such functions closely parallel those of the SC prefix *(v)ö-* in Nalögo and Natügu. We provide an analysis of *(v)ö-* by focusing on *(v)ö-*-derived verbs forms in semitransitive clauses (4.1) and depatientive constructions (4.2). Section 4.3 shows one example of a marginal use of *(v)ö-*, which occurs in constructions expressing naturally reciprocal events in Nalögo. In section 5, we review our reconstruction of the prefix *(v)ö-* as a reflex of POc *paRi- and in section 6, we provide a summary of our analysis with the conclusions.
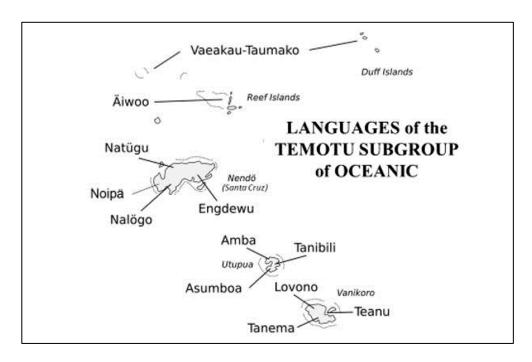

2. The Reefs-Santa Cruz languages

2.1 Position of RSC languages in the Oceanic family

Nalögo and Natügu are two Austronesian Oceanic languages spoken in the north and in the southwest of SC Island in Temotu province (Solomon Islands). They belong to the RSC group, together with Noipä, spoken in the southwest of the island and Engdewu, spoken in the southeast, as well as Äiwoo, spoken in the Reef Islands, about 70 km north of Santa Cruz. These five languages belong to the Temotu group, a previously unrecognized first-order subgroup within the Oceanic family which also includes the Utupua and Vanikoro languages, spoken in the homonymous islands to the south of Santa Cruz (Ross & Næss 2007). Temotu province is also home to three Polynesian Outliers: Vaeakau-Taumako, mainly spoken in the Duff Islands, to the north of the Reefs, and Tikopia and Anuta, spoken in two homonymous

islands on the easternmost border of the region. Map 1[4] at the end of the section shows where the languages belonging to the Temotu group[5] are spoken.

In terms of genealogical classification, the origins of RSC languages were debated for over thirty years. In past studies, Wurm (1970, 1978) argued that RSC were non-Austronesian languages which had undergone extensive contact-induced change. However, relatively recent studies (Næss 2006, Ross & Næss 2007, Næss & Boerger 2008) disproved Wurm's hypothesis. In particular, Ross and Næss (2007) established regular sound correspondences and classified RSC languages as Oceanic belonging to a Temotu first-order subgroup. This Oceanic pedigree was obscured by the complexity of the phonological processes taking place from POc to RSC (Vaa 2013: 55; Lackey & Boerger 2021). In addition, these languages display some untypical linguistic features for Oceanic languages, as mentioned in section 1. Given that they belong to a first-order Oceanic subgroup which was poorly documented until recently, the description of their linguistic systems is of interest for the history of all Oceanic languages.

Map 1. Languages of the Temotu subgroup

2.2 Grammatical notes on Nalögo and Natügu

Before analyzing the functions and origins of *(v)ö-*, it is important to address the pronominal system and clausal structures, which play a role in our later argumentation.

2.2.1 Pronominal system

Like all RSC languages, Nalögo and Natügu display a minimal-augmented pronominal system, in which there are four basic person categories: 1st person, 2nd person, 1st + 2nd person and 3rd person[6]. The 1st + 2nd person 'you and I' functions as a distinct category, which can be "pluralized". The terms 'minimal' and 'augmented' replace the more familiar 'singular' and 'plural', which is necessary because the 1st + 2nd person minimal encompasses two referents, the speaker and the addressee; thus, technically, it is not a singular. The augmented number of the 1st + 2nd person includes at least three referents – the speaker, the addressee and one further person[7]. Table 1 and Table 2 below show the minimal-augmented systems of independent pronouns in Nalögo and Natügu.

PERSON	MINIMAL	AUGMENTED
1	ni 'I'	nigom 'we = I and others'
1+2	nigi 'you and I'	nigo 'we = you and I and others'
2	nim 'you (sg.)'	nimwi 'you (pl.)'
3	nide 's/he'	nigö 'they'

Table 1. Independent pronouns in Nalögo

PERSON	MINIMAL	AUGMENTED
1	ninge 'I'	nigö 'we = I and others'
1+2	nigi 'you and I'	nigu 'we = you and I and others'
2	nim(ü) 'you (sg.)'	nimu 'you (pl)'
3	nide 's/he'	nidö 'they'

Table 2. Independent pronouns in Natügu

Among various functions, independent pronouns can express core syntactic functions in verbless and verbal clauses. In verbal clauses, they can encode subject and object functions. In Nalögo, independent subject pronouns are typically used for emphatic or contrastive purposes and occur preverbally, the most pragmatically salient position in the language. This is not uncommon in Oceanic languages where "[a] disjunctive [free] pronoun is often used […] as the subject of a clause with a non-verbal predicate, or for topicalisation, focus, or emphasis" (Ross 2004: 500). An example from Nalögo is shown in sentence (1).

(1) Nalögo (Alfarano 2021: 384)

   Tonlü,   **nide**   tü-kipu   pwöla.
    no   3MIN   IPFV.N3AUG-wash   sea
   'No, **she** is going to wash in the sea (not you).'

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[6] In Äiwoo, the RSC language spoken in the Reef Islands, the pronominal system follows a unit-augmented pattern, which is similar, yet not identical, to the one attested in SC languages. The term 'unit-augmented number' refers to minimal number plus exactly one (Næss & Boerger 2008).

[7] For details on the minimal-augmented paradigm see Thomas (1955) and McKay (1978).

Sentence (1) is the reply to the following question "Are you going to wash in the sea?". The independent 3MIN pronoun expresses a contrast. The third participant, which constitutes the new information, is focused in preverbal position. The use of *nide* adds emphasis to the fact that it is the third participant, and not the hearer, who is going to perform the action.

Along with a set of independent pronouns, Nalögo has additional sets of possessive enclitic pronouns, subject and object enclitic pronouns (Alfarano 2021: 35). Subject enclitic pronouns are divided in two sets, Set I and Set II, which show great allomorphic and dialectal variation (for details see Alfarano 2021: 93–95). Natügu also displays two parallel sets of subject enclitics, also labelled Set I and Set II. In both languages, Set I is viewed as the basic[8] because it includes the default forms, whose selection is not conditioned by any specific morphological or phonological context (Alfarano 2021: 99, van den Berg & Boerger 2011: 230). The examples in this paper primarily use the Set I enclitics, since they are most relevant to our argumentation here. Table 3 includes the forms of Set I enclitic pronouns of Nalögo and Natügu.

Set I enclitic pronouns for Nalögo and Natügu		
PERSON	Nalögo	Natügu
MINIMAL		
1	=nga (A, S)	=ä
1+2	=ki (A, S)	=ki
2	=ng (A, S)	=ü
3	=le (A) =Ø (S)	=le (A, O) =Ø (S)
AUGMENTED		
1	=kom (A, S)	=kö (A, S)
1+2	=ko (A, S)	=ku (A, S)
2	=ngam (A, S)	=amu (A, S)
3	lë- (PFV), të- (IPFV), në- (IRR)…=kö (A); =Ø (S)	në- (3AUG), të- (RL), na- (IRR)…=lö (A); =ng(ü) (S)

Table 3. Set I enclitic pronouns in Nalögo and Natügu[9]

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[8] In Natügu, Set I is regarded as basic for three main reasons (van den Berg & Boerger 2011). First of all, it is considered the unmarked set, used in basic transitive and intransitive clauses. Secondly, it is the only set displaying a split system for the third minimal and augmented transitive subject. Finally, the enclitics function mainly as subjects, except for the third person minimal. By contrast, Set II forms can function as subjects and objects (if Set I subject-indexing forms are present). Furthermore, they are conditioned by the phonological and morphological context.

[9] Table 3 shows Set I enclitic pronouns in both languages. 1, 1+2, 2, 3MIN person categories are marked by enclitic pronouns, whereas 3AUG persons are marked either by prefixes or by a combination of prefixes and enclitics. In most cases, prefixes are portmanteau forms expressing aspect and mood. Examples with Set I enclitic pronouns are found in section 2.2.2.

Example (2) shows a sentence from Nalögo with the first augmented subject enclitic pronoun =*kom*.

(2) Nalögo (Alfarano 2021: 99)
    Tü-ya-kö-pä=pe=**kom**   be=je.
    IPFV.N3AUG-peel-take.soft.bit.off-out=COS=1AUG.SBJ   skin=3MIN.POSS
    'We are peeling off its skin.'

In Nalögo, objects are typically expressed by independent pronouns, thus, there is no dedicated set of object enclitic pronouns occurring on verbs. Only one object enclitic form =*le* is found marking 3MIN objects in a few specific contexts (Alfarano 2021: 35). However, a set of object enclitics, which are homophonous with possessive forms, can occur on the preposition *ba*, which expresses several semantic roles (ibid.: 114–115). In Natügu, Set II enclitic pronouns can express subjects, as well as objects of transitive verbs, albeit less frequently. Typically, objects are expressed by independent pronouns as in (3).

(3) Natügu (van den Berg & Boerger 2011: 232)
    Të=le   **nide**.
    hit=3MINI   3MIN
    'He hit him/it.'

2.2.2 Clausal structure

Nalögo and Natügu show a transitivity-based system with a wide range of valency-changing morphemes. In this regard, the clausal structure of these two languages patterns like canonical Oceanic languages. In Nalögo and Natügu, there are three main clause types: intransitive, transitive and semitransitive. Examples of Nalögo and Natügu intransitive and transitive clauses are shown in (4) and (5).

(4) Nalögo (Alfarano, Fieldwork notes on Nalögo)

    a. Lëplë   tü-gwa.
       person   IPFV.N3AUG-run
       'A person is running.' (intransitive)

    b. Jâ   tü-wo-ti=pe=bwe   Meläke   nümü
       SEQ   IPFV.N3AUG-take-TR=COS=PDIR.thither   Meläke   hand
       olë   kâ.
       girl   DEM1.DIST
       'Then, Meläke took the girl's hand.' (transitive)

(5) Natügu (Næss & Boerger 2008: 191; van den Berg & Boerger 2011: 232)

    a. Nöpö   ngö   nöanâ sa   tü-eso-pe-m.
       season   GEN1   fruit   IPFV   RL-approach-COS-hither
       'The season of fruit is already approaching.' (intransitive)

    b. Mâ   nâblo lâ   mölä=nge.
       see   man   DEM1.DIST   son=1MINII
       'That man saw my son.' (transitive)

Intransitive clauses like (4a) and (5a) display one single argument called S. The basic word orders of intransitive clauses are SV and VS, but Nalögo has a preference for SV and Natügu VS. In Natügu, S is often fronted due to discourse factors as in (5a).

Transitive clauses have two core arguments, A and O[10]. In both languages, the basic word order is VAO as in (4b) and (5b). The A argument can be expressed postverbally either by an overt NP as in (4b) and (5b), or by an enclitic pronoun as in (6) and (7), where the 3MIN person is marked by =*le*.

(6) Nalögo (Alfarano, Fieldwork notes on Nalögo)

    I-vi-ki-ti=**le** carrot kâ.
    PFV.N3AUG-chop-rigid.obj-PL=3MIN.SBJ carrot DEM₁.DIST
    'He cut the carrot.' (transitive)

(7) Natügu (van den Berg & Boerger 2011: 232)

    Älö-ngö-bë=**le**   në-yâmne-kö=dö   më
    hear-APPL-PDIR.thither =3MIN.I   NMLZ-speak-NMLZ.POSS=3AUG.II   PREP
    natü=gö.
    word=1AUG.II
    'He heard them speaking in our language.' (transitive)

In (7), the O argument is the nominalization following the verb. For discourse purposes, A and O are frequently fronted. In both languages, when the A argument is an overtly expressed NP in preverbal position, an enclitic pronoun occurs obligatorily on the verb as in the Nalögo example (8a). O arguments can also be fronted as in (8b) and (9).

(8) Nalögo (Alfarano, Fieldwork notes on Nalögo)
   a. Ilaule   obwe a-molo-ti=**le**   obwe
       mother   child CAUS-hug-TR=3MIN.SBJ   child
       ne=de.
       ANIM.POSS=3MIN.POSS
       'As for the mother, she hugged her child.' (transitive; fronted A);

   b. Lëkö   ka=ng   tü-mwa=kom.
       taro   DEM₁.PROX=PL   IPFV.N3AUG-eat=1AUG.SBJ
       'As for these taros, we are eating (them).' (transitive; fronted O)

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[10] The labels S, A and O refer to "[t]he single core argument of an intransitive clause", the role "which is most likely to be relevant to the success of the activity" and the one which is "the most saliently affected by the activity", respectively (Dixon 1994: 7–8).

(9) Natügu (van den Berg & Boerger 2011: 237)

Lomö=de	lu-blâ-tö	kë-dü	nâtü	töpapa
chest=3MIN.II	spear-jump-GDIR.in	AT-INDF.SG	nose	timber

kâ	ä	bë-tä-pnë=Ø.
DEM2.DIST	CONJ	die-INTS-COMPL=3MINI.S

'His chest, a piece of that board pierced [it] and he died instantly.' (transitive; fronted O)

Along with transitive and intransitive clauses, Nalögo and Natügu show a third type of clause labelled 'semitransitive'. Semitransitive constructions, which are relevant for our discussion on the prefix *(v)ö-*, show a mismatch between morphology and syntax. They are described in detail in section 4.2.

In terms of subject marking, all the person categories, except for the third one, show an accusative pattern, based on which S and A are expressed in the same way. Examples of Nalögo and Natügu sentences with 1AUG subject enclitics are shown in (10) and (11).

(10)   Nalögo (Alfarano, Fieldwork notes on Nalögo)

    a.   Tü-vë=**kom**.
        IPFV.N3AUG-go=1AUG.SBJ
        'We are going.' (1AUG; intransitive)

    b.   Tü-mwa=**kom**   lëkö   kâ=ng.
        IPFV.N3AUG-eat-out=1AUG.SBJ   taro   DEM1.DIST=PL
        'We are eating those taros.' (1AUG; transitive)

(11)   Natügu (van den Berg & Boerger 2011: 231)

    a.   Tu=**kö**.
        stand=1AUGI
        'We are standing.' (1AUG; intransitive)

    b.   Të=**kö**   ni=de.
        hit=1AUGI   be=3MIN.II
        We hit him.' (1AUG; transitive)

In sentences (10) and (11), the 1AUG enclitic pronouns *=kom* and *=kö* in Nalögo and Natügu, respectively, express both S and A arguments. Examples (12) and (13) show sentences where 3MIN/AUG subjects mark S and A differently.

(12)   Nalögo (Alfarano, Fieldwork notes on Nalögo)

    a.   I-vë=pmo=**Ø**.
        PFV.N3AUG-go=again=3MIN.SBJ
        'He went again.' (3MIN; intransitive)

    b.   Kopyo   nünge   tü-tu   i-mwale=**le**
        EXIST   man   IPFV.N3AUG-stand   PFV.N3AUG-hold=3MIN.SBJ
        tuku   ö=de.
        stick   ASS.MRK=3MIN.POSS
        'There is a man standing. He is holding his stick.' (3MIN; transitive)

     c.   Lë-ë-pä=pme   mö   mwetelya.
          PFV.3AUG-go-out=COS   PREP   village
          'They went out from the village.' (3AUG; intransitive)

     d.   Ta-a-glü-lë=**kö**   nide.
          IPFV.3AUG-CAUS-carry-up=3AUG.SBJ   3MIN
          'They were praising him.' (3AUG; transitive)

(13)   Natügu (van den Berg & Boerger 2011: 232-234)

     a.   Tu=**Ø**   mö-kâ.
          stand=3MINI.S   place-DEM₂.DIST
          'He stands there.' (3MIN; intransitive)

     b.   Të=**le**   ni=de.
          hit=3MINI.A   be=3MINII
          'He hit him/her/it.' (3AUG; transitive)

     c.   Në-vë=**ngü**   Honiara.
          3AUG-go=3AUGII   Honiara
          'They are going/went Honiara.' (3AUG; intransitive)

     d.   Në-oti-bë=**lö**   sop   sâ   tü-kipo=pe=Ø.
          3AUG-get-PDIR=3AUGI.A   soap PFV   RL-bathe=COS=3MINI.S
          'They got (him) soap, then he bathed. (3AUG; transitive)

In Nalögo and Natügu, 3MIN subjects are unmarked in intransitives (12a; 13a) and marked by enclitic pronouns in transitives (12b; 13b). Instead, 3AUG subjects display overt enclitic marking in transitives (12d), but not in intransitives (12c) in Nalögo, and two distinct enclitic pronouns (13c, 13d) in Natügu.

3. POc *paRi- and its reflexes in Oceanic languages

POc *paRi- was first reconstructed by Pawley (1973: 150–153) as a polysemous prefix encoding collective, associative, iterative, and reciprocal (Bril 2005: 26). In particular, the prefix expressed a "combined or repeated action by a plurality of actors, or affecting a plurality of entities, normally but not invariably those denoted by the subject of the verb" (Pawley 1973: 152). Historically, Pawley excluded an original reciprocal function for POc *paRi-, since "[t]he strictly reciprocal meaning was restricted to a subclass of verbs whose properties remain to be defined" (ibid.).

Pawley's (1973) claim was supported by Lichtenberk (2000: 32), who argued that no primary reciprocal meaning can be posited for *paRi-. Rather, he identified two notions accounting for the main functions of the prefix: plurality of relations and low degree of elaboration of situations (ibid.: 55). The former accounts for almost all the functions of reflexes of POc *paRi- (e.g. reciprocal, collective, converse and chained actions), except for the middle ones (e.g. self-directed actions, spontaneous events, events with less volitional initiators). The latter, especially the notion of low distinguishability of participants, accounts for a number of other functions, including reciprocal, converse, depatientive, middle and kinship. In Lichtenberk' s (ibid.: 56) analysis of *paRi-, the notion of plurality of relations is regarded as primary. The notion of plurality of relations is present "if what can be considered to be basically one and the same relation holds more than once either between one or more participants and the event/state

they are involved in, or between the relevant entities" (ibid.: 34). For instance, in reciprocal situations, the plurality of relations accounts for the existence of the same relation between A and B, where "participant A stands in a certain relation to participant B, and B stands in the same relation to A." The notion of low elaboration of situations builds on Kemmer's (1993: 121) notion of relative elaboration of events defined as "the degree to which the participants and component subevents in a particular verbal event are distinguished". The relative elaboration of events subsumes two components, namely, the relative distinguishability of participants and the relative distinguishability of the subevents. According to Kemmer (1993), this notion is the linking factor among middle, reflexive and reciprocal domains (Lichtenberk 2000: 34).

In her survey of the functions of reciprocal and middle prefixes in New Caledonian and Austronesian languages, Bril (2005: 31) showed that reflexes of *paRi- expressing middle functions are more widespread than what had been previously thought (cf. Lichtenberk 2000: 55–56), not only in New Caledonian languages, but also in other Oceanic subgroups. Through a comparison with the functions of the reflexes of Proto-Austronesian (PAN) and Proto-Malayo-Polynesian (PMP) *paR- in Western Austronesian languages, Bril (2005: 31) hypothesized that the middle and reciprocal functions "were originally primary" and that "[the] plurality of relations is inherent to reciprocal and symmetrical relations and might naturally stem from them".

More recently, Janic (2016) refocused the attention on Lichtenberk's (2000) plurality of relations, by pointing out that all the functions potentially associated with reflexes of *paRi- can be accounted for by this notion, including depatientives. She argued that depatientives typically express habitual, iterative, generic and/or repetitive events. In these aspectual contexts, the notion of plurality of relations is captured by the "repetition of the action performed over time". Although Lichtenberk (2000) did not link depatientives and plurality of relations, by relating the former to the notion of low elaboration of the situations, he still recognized that the main function of depatientives is to convey specific aspectual properties.

3.1 Functions of reflexes of *paRi- in Oceanic languages

In Oceanic languages, reflexes of *paRi- are typically found expressing symmetrical and plural relations, as well as being involved in contexts of lower transitivity (Bril 2005: 30). The polyfunctionality and productivity of the prefix was retained to various degrees, as shown, for instance, by New Caledonian languages. Bril (ibid.: 34) claims that while in the northern languages, "the prefix is very productive, polysemous and polyfunctional"; in the southern languages, it is considerably less productive, being restricted to a few verbs in Xârâcùù or even decayed as in Tîrî. In Nêlêmwa, a northern New Caledonian language, the prefix *pe-* (< POc *paRi-) has a vast array of meanings, excluding reflexive/self-directed ones (ibid.: 41–43). Examples showing the polyfunctionality of *pe-* are given in (14).

(14)   Nêlêmwa (Bril 2005: 46, 47, 47, 48, 51, 52, 53)

    a.   Hla   **pe**-khuwo
        3PL   pe-eat
        'They eat together.' (collective)

    b.   Hlax   **pe**-kuut   shi-hlax.
        3PL   pe-stand   side-POSS.3PL
        'They visit one another.' (reciprocal)

c.   Hla   **pe**-oxo-i   agu   mahleeli.
     3PL   pe-follow-R   people   those.ANAPH
     'These people walk in line.' (chaining)

d.   **Pe**-faxer-i   hâ.
     pe-taboo-CONN   1DU.INCL
     '(It's) our mutual taboo relationship.' (symmetrical relationship)

e.   **Pe**-â   hwminy   wi.
     pe-go   here   water
     'The water flows here.'   (action with unintentional initiator)

f.   Bu   na   xe   na   gaa   **pe**-haga   du   hmwiny.
     EXPL 1SG top 1SG PROG pe-fish   down   here
     'As for me, I'm going to go on fishing around here (with no specific intention
     of catching any specific type of fish in any precise place).'(dispersive)

g.   I **pe**-thalic [3SG pe-stumble] 'She stumbles over and over again' (iterated action)

In Nêlêmwa, *pe-* is highly productive, marking collective (14a), reciprocal (14b), chaining actions (14c), symmetrical relationships (14d), spontaneous events/actions performed by non-volitional/unintentional initiators (14e), dispersive (14f) and iterated actions (14g). Functions of reflexes of *paRi- similar to those found in Nêlêmwa are also attested in other languages belonging to different Oceanic subgroups. For instance, Mekeo, a Western Oceanic language, has a prefix *BI-*[11] (Jones 1998), a reflex of *paRi-, expressing a wide range of functions, such as cooperative and collective actions, reciprocal, symmetrical relationship, iterativity, intensity, habituality (Bril 2005: 55). When *BI-* combines with the suffix *-AI* (POc *-aki), the prefix has dispersive and distributive meanings (ibid., Lichtenberk 2000: 40, 51, 55). As shown by the prefix *BI-* in Mekeo, reflexes of *paRi- can combine with reflexes of POc *-i and *-aki to express semantically related functions, such as intensive, iterative, distributive and dispersive (Bril 2005: 28).

Reflexes of the combination of *paRi-…*-i have collective and reciprocal functions, as well as encoding multiple, iterative and intensive actions (ibid.). For instance, in Tongan, a Central Pacific language, the combination of the prefix *fe-* with *-i* (Churchward 1953: 257) has a collective and simultaneous function (Bril 2005: 28, Lichtenberk 2000: 36), whereas the combinations *fe-…-i* in Samoan (Milner 1966) and *vei-…-i* in Fijian (Milner 1972), two other Central Pacific languages, encode reciprocity (Bril 2005: 28). Reflexes of *paRi-…*-aki can have reciprocal and dispersive meanings. This is the case of the Tongan prefix *fe-* (Churchward 1953: 257), which has a reciprocal and dispersive function when it combines with *-aki* (Bril 2005: 28, Lichtenberk 2000: 51), or the case of the combination *vei-…-yak(i)* in Fijian (Milner

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[11] The prefix *BI-* in Mekeo (Jones 1998: 374–380) represents various dialectal allomorphs *βi-*, *bi-*, and *pi-* (Bril 2005: 55).

1972: 111–113) expressing various distributive meanings (Bril 2005: 28, Lichtenberk 2000: 39, 41).

Besides combining with reflexes of the POc suffixes *-i and *-aki, reflexes of *paRi- can cooccur with reduplication to express several meanings, including collective, dispersive/distributive, multiple, iterative and intensive actions (Bril 2005: 28). In Fijian, the prefix *vei-* combines with reduplication (Bril 2005: 61) to express reciprocal meanings and/or plurality of relations as in the following sentence, *Erau vei-taqataqa-i* 'they are lying on top of each other' (Milner 1972: 112–113), where the combination *vei-...-i* occurs with the reduplicated verbal root *taqataqa*.

Along with reciprocity and other functions characterized by a plurality of relations, reflexes of POc *paRi- can also have middle meanings, in particular in some Kanak languages spoken in New Caledonia and Polynesian languages (Bril 2005, Moyse-Faurie 2008). Middle meanings include self-directed actions, spontaneous events and events characterized by low volition/intention of the subject (Lichtenberk 2000: 46–48; Moyse-Faurie 2008). In the Nêlêmwa sentence in (14e) above, the initiator of the action is unintentional; while in (15) below, the initiator is absent and the verb encodes a spontaneous process.

(15)   Nêlêmwa (Bril 2005: 51)

     Pe-nuk   du   bwa   doo   pwâ-mago.
     pe-fall   DIR   on   earth   fruit-mango
     'Mangoes are falling [because they are ripe].' (spontaneous event)

In Xârâcùù, a New Caledonian language spoken in the south, the prefix *ù-*, a reflex of *paRi-, can express self-directed grooming actions as in (16).

(16)   Xârâcùù (Moyse-Faurie 1995: 97, cited in Moyse-Faurie 2008: 116)

     È   **ù**-cù
     3SG   PREF-comb
     'She is combing her hair.'

In addition to deagentive events (spontaneous processes and actions lacking an (volitional) initiator), reflexes of *paRi- can occur in other contexts displaying a lower degree of syntactic transitivity, where they function as valency-reducing morphemes. For instance, reflexes of *paRi- can have a depatientive intransitivizing function (Bril 2005: 37; Moyse-Faurie 2008: 117). The depatientive function is described in more detail in the following section.

Finally, reflexes of *paRi- encode middle, reciprocal and reflexive meanings. These cases are extremely rare in Oceanic languages and attested only in a few Kanak languages spoken in the North and the Centre of the Mainland of New Caledonia. Moyse-Faurie (2017: 110) explains this scenario as due "to the extension of the middle/reciprocal markers (reflexes of the POc prefix *paRi-) into the prototypical reflexive domain".

3.2 Valency-reducing functions of reflexes of POc *paRi-

In 3.1, we noted that reflexes of *paRi- can occur in contexts of lower transitivity, where they function as valency-reducing devices. One of these contexts involves reflexes of POc *paRi- with a depatientive function. A definition of depatientive constructions as attested in Oceanic languages is given by Lichtenberk (2000: 42):

> "In the depatientive function, transitive verbs are made syntactically intransitive
> by means of the PR [plurality of relations] construction: there is no direct object.
> The Endpoint participant encoded as the direct object of the source verb is

backgrounded, not expressed. However, even though no Endpoint participant is expressed, there is one implied. Typically, the implied Endpoint participant is general, nonspecific, and the situation is a habitual or general one."

Bril (2005: 51) and Moyse-Faurie (2008: 117) regard the depatientive function as a type of middle situation. Kemmer (1993: 243) defines the middle as "a semantic area comprising events in which the Initiator is also an Endpoint or affected entity". Along with the affectedness of the Initiator, Kemmer (ibid.: 238) identifies the notion of low elaboration of events as crucial for delimiting the middle domain. This notion refers to the degree to which events are elaborated in terms of distinguishability of participants and subevents. Since "[…] the two semantic roles of Initiator and Endpoint refer to a single holistic entity" (Kemmer ibid.: 66), typical middle situations like self-directed actions show a lower elaboration of events in terms of distinguishability of participants, by contrast with canonical transitive clauses where initiator and endpoint are highly distinguished. Like typical middles, depatientives are "[…] primarily about the Initiator" (Lichtenberk 2000: 42). Since the endpoint is pragmatically irrelevant and syntactically backgrounded, the focus of attention is shifted onto the subject and the verbal action. Therefore, depatientives can be seen as connected to the middle domain via the notion of low elaboration of events.

Sentence (17) shows an example of depatientive construction in Fijian.

(17)   Fijian (Schütz 1985: 209, cited in Bril 2005: 57)

E   dau   **vei**-vuke.
3SG   HAB   vei-help
'He often helps.' (general property of the subject)

In (17), the verb *vuke* 'help' takes the prefix *vei-*, which allows the omission of the original transitive object, leading to the interpretation of the action as a general property of the initiator. Reflexes of *paRi- with similar functions are attested elsewhere in Oceanic. Examples from three languages of the Loyalty Islands, namely, Drehu, Iaai and Nengone, are shown below (Bril 2005: 37–38).

(18)   Drehu (Loyalty Islands; Sam 1995: 90)

xumuth 'pinch sb.' → **i**-xumuth 'be a pincher'
drei 'obey sb.' → **i**-drei 'be obedient'
hej 'bite sb.'→ **i**-heji 'be a biter'

(19)   Nengone (Bril 2005: 38)

Jaik   nidi   ci   **i**-ule.
Jacques   too.much   DUR   i-see
'Jacques stares too much [at people] (that's a characteristic of his).'

(20)   Iaai (Ozanne-Rivierre 1976: 218)

A-me   **ü**-hülü   kuli.
3SG (process) ü-bite   dog
'This dog bites i.e. this is a biting dog / this dog is a biter.'

Example (18) from Drehu shows that the prefix *i-* is used to derive "intransitive or stative predicates referring either to a generic action or to a (resulting) property of the subject" (Bril 2005: 37). In Nengone and Iaai, the prefixes *i-* and *ü-*, respectively, share similar functions with the Drehu *i-*. In (19), the prefix *i-* derives an intransitive construction where the object is

omitted. The action of staring is viewed as an inherent characteristic of the subject. Likewise, the Iaai prefix *ü-* in (20) is applied to the transitive verb to derive an intransitive construction expressing a property of the subject/initiator.

So far, we have discussed examples of depatientive constructions involving reflexes of POc *paRi-*. However, prefixes with different origins expressing similar functions are also attested in Oceanic languages. The development of these new prefixes is most likely due to the loss of the original prefix, which was gradually replaced by other types of constructions (Bril 2005: 67). The prefix *kwai-* in Toqabaqita, whose origins are unclear[12], constitutes a good example of this evolution (Lichtenberk 1991: 180–181). Typically, the prefix *kwai-* exhibits collective, reciprocal and depatientive functions. Two examples of *kwai-* with depatientive function are shown in (21).

(21)   Toqabaqita (Southern Oceanic; Lichtenberk 2000: 42)

a.   Roo   wane   kero   **kwai**-laba-**ta'i**
        two   man   3DU:N-FUT   PR-affect.negatively-TR
        'The two men harm (people), spoil, damage (things), etc.'

b.   Wane   ni   **kwai**-'olo-fi
        man   PTL   PR-give.false.promise.to-TR
        'Man of false promises' or 'Man who often, habitually makes false promises'

In (21a), the verb takes the prefix *kwai-*, glossed as PR 'plurality of relations'. The function of the construction, characterized by object omission, is to express a focus on the action performed by the initiator. Given that there is no overtly expressed endpoint, the action is carried out within the domain of the initiator. In Toqabaqita, *kwai-*constructions can also express a property of the subject/initiator like the reflexes of *paRi- shown in (18), (19) and (20). In terms of aspectual properties, the prefix *kwai-* can mark "temporally non-distinct, simultaneous actions constituting one undifferentiated whole, to generic or habitual situations […]" (Lichtenberk 1991: 182). This is the case of (21b), where *kwai-* combines with the transitive form *-ta'i* to encode a recurrent characteristic of the subject/initiator. The combination *kwai-…-ta'i* behaves like reflexes of *paRi-…*-i or *paRi-…*-aki in those Oceanic languages which retained the POc prefix. Finally, the prefix *kwai-* can also have other meanings, including reciprocity as in the example *kwai-kumi-i* 'fight, exchange blows' < *kumu* 'punch'. Historically, it can be hypothesized based on its functions that the Toqabaqita prefix *kwai-* replaced an early reflex of *paRi-.

In the typological literature, the term 'depatientive' is often used to designate constructions which are functionally equivalent to antipassives, together with other constructions labelled 'deobjective', 'unspecified object construction' and so on (Sansò 2019). In Oceanic linguistics, the term 'depatientive' is typically used to "refer to one of the meanings of a construction built with reflexes of the Proto Oceanic (POc) prefix *paRi-." (Moyse-Faurie 2021: 169). However,

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[12] Bril (2005: 64) reports that *kwai-* is not a reflex of *paRi-. By contrast, Janic (2016:160) cites *kwai-* as a reflex of the prefix, but Lichtenberk himself (1991) points out that the origins of this form are not clear.

the functional similarities between depatientives in Oceanic languages and typical antipassives have been pointed out by some authors (Moyse-Faurie 2008: 117, Janic 2016: 163–167). More recently, Moyse-Faurie (2021) has questioned the validity of the label 'antipassive' for a range of constructions, including depatientives, in Oceanic languages. The author claims that despite sharing some semantic and syntactic characteristics generally associated with the antipassive domain, depatientives in Oceanic can deviate considerably from typical antipassives.

Along with depatientives, reflexes of POc *paRi- can also mark other types of constructions which diverge from canonical transitive clauses, where the original object is not omitted, but undergoes syntactic and often semantic backgrounding. Here, we illustrate two interesting cases of reflexes of *paRi- attested in Saliba and Hoava, two Western Oceanic languages. Saliba shows a detransitivizing prefix *kai-*, which is said to derive intransitive stems from both transitive and intransitive ones (Margetts 1999: 181). When the prefix *kai-* is attached to a transitive stem, the verb is detransitivized. The patient is no longer cross-referenced on the verb, but it can still appear in the clause as an object argument. Thus, while the verb of these constructions is morphologically intransitive, "the clause may still be transitive and show discord in transitivity status". An example of *kai*-construction in Saliba is shown in (22).

(22)   Saliba (Margetts 1999: 181)
        Ka-dui   na   hinage yama   ka-**kai**-gwali
        1EX-dive   CON   also   fish   1EX-KAI-spear
        'We dive and spear fish.'

In (22), the object 'fish' is bare and generic. In Saliba, objects of *kai*-constructions are "typically non-specific and in general non-individuated" (Margetts 1999: 182). In addition, they are "phonologically and morphosyntactically independent words" (ibid.: 181) which can form phrasal constituents and take a number of modifiers, including determiners, relative clauses, lexical modifiers and, more commonly, possessive markers (Margetts 2008: 38–39). In terms of verb types, *kai*-verbs in Saliba are not very frequent. The majority of them are attested in textual materials and describe habitual activities (Margetts 1999: 183). At a discourse level, "emphasis in clauses with kai-verbs lies in the activity expressed by the verb rather than in the object of the action" (ibid.: 196). Finally, Margetts (2008: 37) describes the prefix *kai-* as functionally similar to an antipassive marker in ergative languages "in that it backgrounds an object argument" (Moyse-Faurie 2021: 159). However, she argues against the use of antipassive for such constructions (Margetts 1999: 192). Margetts (2008) defines other constructions in Oceanic languages which are formally and functionally similar to the *kai*-construction in Saliba as 'transitivity discord' clauses. Such clauses involve intransitive verbs which "cooccur with what looks like an object argument" (ibid.: 30). Thus, they are morphologically intransitive, but semantically transitive, because like transitive clauses, they involve two core participants.

Along with transitivity discord clauses, reflexes of *paRi- can occur in other types of constructions involving a detransitivizing process. For instance, in Hoava, the prefix *vari-* (< POc *paRi-) has various functions, such as reciprocal, collective and depatientive (Davis 2003: 135). An example of *vari-* with a depatientive function is shown in (23).

(23)   Hoava (Davis 2003: 137)

    a.   **Vari**-viraki   sa   sasaeri   heni.
       DEP-itch.TR:3PL   ART:SG   leaf   this
       'This leaf can make [someone] itch.'

    b.   Kae   **vari**-poni   sa   nikana.
       NEG   DEP-give   ART:SG   man
       'The man is selfish.' lit. 'The man does not give [anything] to [anyone].'

In (23a), the prefix *vari-* combined with the third plural transitive suffix[13] occurs in a construction where an indefinite, non-specific patient is omitted. The construction in (23b) is used to express a characteristic of the subject referent resulting from his habit of not giving anything to anyone.

In (23), the patients are omitted from the clauses. However, the Hoava prefix *vari-* can also occur in constructions with incorporated objects. Davis (2003: 138) shows one example of this type of construction when discussing the depatientive function of *vari-*. She claims that in clauses like those in (23), "[t]he potentially affected participant is usually not specified […], as the effects are applicable to anyone, but if a particular part of a person can be affected, it may be stated as an incorporated object". An example of *vari-*construction with an incorporated object expressing a person's body part is given in (24).

(24)   Hoava (Davis 2003: 138)

    a.   A   huke,   ninami   **vari**-nahu   tia.
       ART   taro.leaf   food   DEP-hurt   stomach
       'Taro leaves, food (which) can hurt stomachs.'

Transitivity discord clauses in Saliba and the *vari-*clauses in Hoava involving incorporated objects show us that in Oceanic languages, reflexes of *paRi- can mark contexts of lower transitivity, in which the patient is semantically present, but syntactically backgrounded. In depatientives, like the Fijian sentence in (17) above, the patient is syntactically omitted from the clause. In discord transitivity clauses like the *kai-*construction in Saliba of (22), patients are overtly expressed, but do not display the full range of properties of direct objects, only some of them. For instance, the discord objects in Saliba "cannot choose their modifiers as freely [as objects of transitive verbs]" (Margetts 1999: 186). Finally, in examples like (24) in Hoava, the patient loses its direct object status due to incorporation.

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[13] The presence of a transitive suffix combined with *vari-* can be explained by the presence of the same suffix on reciprocal events, also marked by *vari-*. Davis (2003: 137) claims: "[t]he use of the transitive suffix with depatientive is probably influenced by its use with reciprocals rather than any intended transitive function". However, the combination *paRi-…-i to express the depatientive function is attested in Oceanic languages (Bril 2005: 28).

4.   Functions of the SC prefix *(v)ö-* in Nalögo and Natügu

Nalögo and Natügu display a prefix *(v)ö-*, whose functions are similar to those attributed to reflexes of POc *paRi- in Oceanic languages as described above. The first analysis of the prefix was carried out by Wurm (1992: 532), who defined the Natügu[14] *ö-* as a "marker of indefinite object". More recent studies on Natügu and Engdewu (Næss & Boerger 2008, Vaa 2013: 299–300) argued that the prefixes *ö-* and *(v)ö-* in the respective languages have a detransitivizing function. Similarly, Alfarano (2021: 374–375) analyzes *(v)ö-* in Nalögo as a middle prefix with a detransitivizing function. The Nalögo and Natügu *(v)ö-* occurs mainly in two contexts of lower transitivity, namely, depatientive and semitransitive clauses, analyzed in sections 4.1 and 4.2, respectively.

Depatientives are formally and functionally similar to those attested in other Oceanic languages, whether or not those languages involve reflexes of *paRi-. Semitransitive clauses share some properties with transitivity discord clauses like the Saliba *kai*-constructions described in 3.1. In semitransitive clauses, morphologically intransitive verbs and person marking cooccur with an object argument. Functionally, depatientive and semitransitive clauses are similar, in that, they are generally used to focus on the initiator and the verbal action, they can thus be viewed as related to the middle domain (Kemmer 1993). In particular, they are characterized by a low distinguishability of participants, especially when they express a characteristic of the subject referent. Along with occurring in depatientive and semitransitive clauses, the prefix *(v)ö-* in Nalögo has also a marginal function of marking naturally reciprocal events. This function is described in 4.3.

To date, no systematic attempts have been made to establish the history of the prefix *(v)ö-* in SC languages. Næss (2015) hypothesized that the SC detransitivizing prefixes *(v)ö-* and *ö-* in Engdewu and Natügu, respectively, might be related to the *<ow>/<âw>* infix characterizing some Äiwoo A-verbs (Actor-oriented verbs), a potential reflex of the PMP actor-voice infix *<um> (Næss 2013). However, she herself suggested caution (Næss 2015: 304), stating that "the precise characteristics of these affixes differ between the languages and are in need of further study". Nass's suggestion regarding the source of SC *(v)ö* is contradicted by our data and the analyses in this paper, in that we posit POc *paRi- as its source.

4.1   The SC prefix *(v)ö-* in depatientive constructions

In Nalögo and Natügu, *(v)ö-*[15] and *ö-* respectively are analyzed as detransitivizing middle prefixes which derive semitransitive forms from transitive verbs. They are typically applied to transitive roots belonging to various semantic domains. For instance, in Nalögo, examples of transitive verbs taking *(v)ö-* are *mnu* 'drink' (body process; ingestion), *kâ* 'scrape' (affect verb), *la* 'cut, hack' (affect verb), and *glü* 'carry' (verb of caused movement) (Alfarano 2021: 375). Some additional examples in Natügu are *nibü* 'kill', *glü* 'carry', *wë* 'construct', *bi* 'bake', *veâ* 'pull', and *kü* 'dig'. Semitransitive verbs are so defined since they are derived to occur in semitransitive clauses, as well as depatientive constructions. This section focuses on the latter.

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[14] Wurm (1992) refers to Natügu as the 'Northern Santa Cruzean' language.
[15] This prefix has two variants, *vö-* and *ö-*, which appear to be in free variation. However, there are some contexts in which the consonant /v/ tend to drop (for further explanations, see Alfarano 2021: 85–87).

The Nalögo and Natügu depatientives are semantically transitive, but morphosyntactically intransitive, since they are characterized by the omission of the object, which is typically low in individuation (e.g. generic, non-specific, plural), pragmatically irrelevant, or unknown by the speaker. The subject-marking pattern is intransitive. The omission of the patient correlates with the main function of the construction, which is shifting the focus from the endpoint to the initiator and the action expressed by the verb. Semitransitive verbs marked by *(v)ö-* can occur in depatientives as shown in (25b) and (26b), respectively.

(25)   Nalögo (Alfarano, Fieldwork notes on Nalögo)

    a.   I-pwä-ki-pä=nga   nou=de
            PFV.N3AUG-cut-rigid.obj-out=1MIN.SBJ   bottom=3MIN.POSS
            'I cut off its bottom.'

    b.   Tü-**ö**-pwä-ki=nga
            IPFV.N3AUG-MID-cut-rigid.obj=1MIN.SBJ
            'I am cutting.'

(26)   Natügu (Boerger, Fieldwork notes on Natügu)

    a.   Katä-pä=le   nüvi   kâ-ng
            remove-GDIR.out=3MINI.A   rope   DEM$_2$.DIST-PL
            të-pe=lö   ni=gu
            3AUG.RL-tie=3AUGI.A   be=1+2AUG.II
            'He removed the ropes which bound us.'

    b.   Töpnëngö kä   na-**ö**-katä-pä-bë=Ø
            none   SUBR   IRR-MID-remove-GDIR.out-PDIR.thither=3MINI.S
            ba=mu.
            DAT=2AUG.II
            'There is no one who can remove (it) from you.'

In (25a), the whole construction is transitive. The verb *pwä* 'cut' is transitive and there are two core arguments, A and O, expressed by the enclitic pronoun *=nga* and the overt NP *nou=de* 'its bottom', respectively. The object, which is directly possessed, is highly definite. In (25b), the object is omitted and the focus is shifted to the initiator and the verbal action. The verb *pwä* is detransitivized by the prefix *(v)ö-*. Given that the first person in Nalögo shows an accusative pattern, the difference in terms of subject marking between the transitive and depatientive constructions in (25a) and (25b) is not evident. In the Natügu example of (26a), the verb *katä* 'remove' is transitive, taking two arguments, A and O, expressed by the enclitic pronoun *=le* and the overt NP *nüvi kâng* 'the ropes'. As in the Nalögo transitive clause of (25a), the object in (26a) is highly definite and modified by a demonstrative. In the depatientive construction of (26b), the same verb is detransitivized by the prefix *ö-* and the object is omitted. In (26), the difference between transitive and depatientive construction in terms of subject marking is clear, since the 3MIN intransitive subject is unmarked. Again, in (26b), the focus is shifted from the object to the verbal action.

Depatientive constructions can correlate with certain aspectual meanings, such as habituality, gnomic truth and 'event-internal' plurality. The notion of 'habituality' here is based on the definition of Bybee et al. (1994: 127), according to which "habitual situations are customarily repeated on different occasions". Similarly, Comrie (1976: 27–28) writes that "[habituals] describe a situation which is characteristic of an extended period of time, so extended in fact that the situation referred to is viewed not as an incidental property of the moment but,

precisely, as a characteristic feature of a whole period". An example of a depatientive associated with a habitual meaning is shown in (27).

(27)   Nalögo (Alfarano 2021: 484)
    ö-velâ   obu   kaptengime   kä   atwö.
    MID-read   day   sixth   LNK   every
    'She reads every Saturday (lit. every sixth day).'

In the example, the action of reading occurs habitually on different occasions. The fact that the action takes place regularly is strengthened by the presence of the temporal expression 'every Sunday', which identifies a specific period of time. When the specific time frame is extended to all the occasions in which an action takes place, the repeated action can turn into a characteristic of the subject. Two Nalögo examples with the verbs *klë* 'know' and *ka* 'give' are shown in (28) and (29), respectively.

(28)   Nalögo (Alfarano 2021 : 484)

    Blaite=nu   olë   kä   **vö**-kla
    grandmother=1MIN.POSS   woman   LNK   MID-know
    'My grandmother is a knowledgeable woman (lit. my grandmother is a woman that knows.)'

(29)   Nalögo (Alfarano, Fieldwork notes on Nalögo)

    leplë   kä   **vö**-ka
    person   LNK   MID-give
    'A giver', 'person that gives (habitually)'

Example (28) shows how "a recurrent habitual situation, e.g. a grandmother being knowledgeable on many occasions on different topics, can turn a habitual property into a characteristic of the subject" (Alfarano 2021: 484). In (28), the prefix *vö-* derives *(v)ö-kla* from the transitive verb form *klë*. The object, which is semantically less individuated as it could refer to generic patients, is syntactically omitted. In (29), the concept of 'giver' refers to a person that habitually performs the action of giving (something to others)'. The ditransitive verb *ka* 'give' is detransitivized by *vö-* and the generic object and recipient are omitted. The derived verb form *vö-ka* 'be a giver' expresses a characteristic of the subject, which is the result of a succession of the same *give*-type events without a specific time frame. In both (28) and (29), the verb is part of the relative clause introduced by the linker *kä*, which is the most common way to modify the head noun in Nalögo and the other SC languages. A similar habitual function of depatientive constructions is found in Natügu as shown in (30), where the word *kä-ö-mailë* refers to 'one who habitually leads (others).'

(30)   Natügu (Boerger, Fieldwork notes on Natügu)

    Në-yölü-tö-pë=lö   kâ   më
    3AUG-put-GDIR.in-PDIR.thither=3AUGI.S   DEM$_2$.DIST   PREP
    mü=de   dapunâ   sâ   kä-**ö**-mailë.
    hand=2MIN.II   stick   PCLF   SUBR-MID-lead
    'They put into his hand the stick of a leader.'

In (30), the verb *mailë* 'lead' takes the prefix *ö-* and occurs without an object. The habitual function expressed by depatientives in (28), (29) and (30), where the repetitions of an action take place without the presence of a specific time frame, is referred to in the literature with

various labels, including "generic imperfectivity" (Mattiola 2017) or "gnomic imperfectivity" (Bertinetto & Lenci 2010). Mattiola (2017: 11) describes "generic imperfectivity" as including "situations that are extremely extended in time. In other words, it represents situations that are always present, such as a property, a quality, or a gnomic truth". In our analysis, we refer to this function as "gnomic aspect", since in Nalögo and Natügu, 'situations that always occur' are not expressed by imperfective markers. Along with encoding the properties or qualities of a referent, depatientives can express gnomic truths. Gnomic generalizations are based on the speakers' experience of the environment. Examples of gnomic truths are given in (31).

(31)   Nalögo (Alfarano 2021: 484)

    a.   Mokilëla   **vö**-mwa-kä
        mosquito   MID-bite-soft.obj
        'Mosquitoes bite.'

    b.   Natügu (Boerger, Natügu scriptures, John 8:44)
        Setën lâ   nide   kä   ö-nibü
        Satan DEM_1.DIST   3MIN   SUBR   MID-kill
        'This Satan, he is who kills.' Or '…he is a killer.'

In the Nalögo example (31a), a habitual recurrent situation becomes a gnomic truth based on the speakers' knowledge of the world, where it is common for mosquitos to bite (people). Similarly, regarding the Natügu example (31b), the verse states a known Biblical truth that Satan is a killer. The transitive verbs *mwa* and *nibü* in (31a) and (31b), respectively, are detransitivized by *(v)ö-*.

The final sentences in this section relate to the compatibility of depatientive constructions with the functions of 'event-internal' plurality. By using the term 'event-internal' plurality, Cusic (1981: 67) refers to one single event consisting of internal phases which occur as part of an event at a point in time. An example from Nalögo is in (32).

(32)   Nalögo (Alfarano 2021: 485)

    Bwale   kâ   **vö**-kâ.
    old.woman DEM_1.DIST   MID-scrape
    'The old woman scraped out (coconut).'

In example (32), the verb *kâ* 'scrape' involves internal phases formed by repetitive actions, thus, the event-internal plurality is expressed lexically. In this regard, Mattiola (2017: 20) argues that "[…] in several languages, event-internal plural situations are lexically expressed (e.g., the verbs *whistle* or *knock* in English)". In (32), the internally-plural action of scraping takes place in a single occasion. Moreover, the action is perceived as complete, since a perfective reading of the sentence is implied. In Nalögo, the notion of perfectivity is expressed by the prefix *-i* glossed as 'PFV.N3AUG', which also encodes non-third augmented persons[16]. When transitive verbs are derived by *(v)ö-* like *kâ* in (32)[17], the occurrence of the prefix *i-* before the verb is optional. The notion of 'perfectivity' is based on Comrie's (1976: 21)

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[16] See Alfarano (2021: 33–37) for the difference between perfectivity and imperfectivity in Nalögo.
[17] The same rule applies when verbs are derived by the causative prefix *(v)a-*.

analysis: "[…] perfectivity involves lack of explicit reference to the internal temporal constituency of a situation, rather than explicitly implying the lack of such internal temporal constituency. Thus, it is quite possible for perfective forms to be used for situations that are internally complex, such as those that last for a considerable period of time, or include a number of distinct internal phases, provided only that the whole of the situation is subsumed as a single whole." Following Comrie's definition, the event of scraping in (32), which is internally complex because it involves repetitive subevents, is viewed as a single whole.

Example (33) from Natügu shows a case of depatientive construction expressing event-internal plurality.

(33)   Natügu (Boerger, Text 29, Ep 47.31)

Mëli	kâ-pwë	älö-bë=kö			masingan	kä
time	DEM2.DIST-just	hear-PDIR.thither=1AUG.I			machinegun	SUBR
külu	**ö**-pnë'=pe	më	nabë	nâ	nëlu	kâ
many	MID-shoot=COS	PREP	area	tree	coconut	DEM2.DIST

'At the same time we heard many machine guns shooting into the coconut trees.'

In (33), the action of shooting is internally-plural, in that, it does not involve only one shot or burst by the machineguns, rather, the prefix *(v)ö-* signals that the subevents of shooting for each machinegun are repetitive.

4.2 The SC prefix *(v)ö-* in semitransitive constructions

The Nalögo and Natügu semitransitive constructions are used to convey a focus on the action. The term 'semitransitive' that we adopt in our analysis, was first introduced by Sugita (1973) to define a class of formally intransitive verbs occurring with object nouns in four Micronesian languages. As mentioned in section 4, the Nalögo and Natügu semitransitive clauses share many properties with transitivity discord clauses (Margetts 2008), where an intransitive verb cooccurs with an overt object argument, indicating a transitivity mismatch between the levels of morphology and syntax. As shown by the *kai*-constructions in Saliba (3.2), discord objects in Oceanic languages are syntactically independent and can constitute phrasal constituents, as well as being modified by a number of modifiers (Margetts 2008: 42), with a preference for those that do not encode definiteness or specificity, such as possessive markers and plural lexical modifiers.

Like discord clauses, Nalögo and Natügu semitransitives are morphologically intransitive, in that, (i) the verb is detransitivized by *(v)ö-*, and (ii) the person marking of third persons is intransitive (for details see 2.1.2). However, at a clausal level, the constructions occur with an object argument. Example (34b) shows an example of a semitransitive with its transitive counterpart in (34a).

(34)   Nalögo (Alfarano, Fieldwork notes on Nalögo)

a.   Tü-kâ=**le**   nölu   ka=ng.
      IPFV.N3AUG-scrape=3MIN.SBJ   coconut   DEM1.PROX=PL
      'She is scraping these coconuts.'

b.   Tü-**vö**-kâ=Ø   nölu.
      IPFV.N3AUG-MID-scrape=3MIN.SBJ   coconut
      'She is scraping coconut.'

In (34a), the transitive clause has an A argument expressed by the 3MIN enclitic pronoun =*le* and an overt direct object modified by a proximal demonstrative form. In (34b), the 3MIN

subject is unmarked (=Ø) and the transitive verb is detransitivized. However, an independent bare object noun is still overtly expressed. An example of semitransitive in Natügu is in (35).

(35)   Natügu (Boerger 2019: 14)

Sâ   tü-**ö**-kü=Ø   nesökö.
PFV   RL-MID-dig=3MINI.S   pana
'She was digging pana.'

In (35), the transitive verb *kü* 'dig' is detransitivized by *ö-* and a bare object follows the verb. As in (34b), the 3MIN is unmarked, since the person marking is intransitive. The two sentences in (34b) and (35) express a focus on the verbal action. The objects are semantically generic, i.e. less individuated than, for instance, the transitive object in (34a). Along with being bare and generic, they are pragmatically irrelevant. In most occurrences of semitransitive constructions, objects are less individuated. However, they can be modified, albeit by fewer modifiers, including relative clauses and possessive classifiers. An example of a plural semitransitive object modified by a relative clause is given in the Nalögo example in (36).

(36)   Nalögo (Alfarano 2021: 391)

Tü-**ö**-bi   po   kä   i-pwö.
IPFV.N3AUG-MID-bake   pig   LNK   PFV.N3AUG-be.big
'She is baking big pigs.'

Along with being phonologically independent and taking modifiers, semitransitive objects form independent phrasal constituents. Evidence of this property is given by the fact that lexical material, including adverbs, prepositional phrases and even temporal expressions, can occur between the verb and its object. An example of this from Nalögo is shown in (37).

(37)   Nalögo (Alfarano 2021: 390)
Tü-**ö**-nibü=nga   mweli ka   po.
IPFV.N3AUG-MID-kill=1MIN.SBJ   time   DEM$_1$.PROX   pig
'I am killing pigs now.'

In (37), the temporal expression *mweli ka* 'this time, now' occurs between the verb and the object argument *po* 'pig'. Further details about the properties of Nalögo semitransitive objects as opposed to direct objects are found in Alfarano (2021: 391–393).

In terms of functions, semitransitives tend to show some specific aspectual properties, such as marking habituality. Examples of habitual events in Nalögo and Natügu are shown in (38) and (39).

(38)   Nalögo (Alfarano 2021: 393–394)
Da   kä   lë-wâ-ti=bwe   ibu=gom
thing   LNK   PFV.3AUG-do-TR=DIR.thither   father=1AUG.POSS

lë-**ö**-la   motopo…
PFV.3AUG-MID-cut   post
'The thing our fathers do, they cut posts…'

(39)   Natügu (Boerger, Text 029, Ep 18.03)

Më	në-wë-kö	dâkta	tü-**ö**-läplë=Ø
PREP	NMLZ₁-make-NMLZ.POSS	doctor	RL-MID-make.hole=3MINI.S

leplë	tü-**ö**-pnuti=Ø	käsüki	ä
people	RL-MID-treat=3MINI.S	sore	and

tü-**ö**-ka-bë=Ø	medesin	badö
RL-MID-give-PDIR.thither=3MINI.S	medicine	COM

kä-në-yagoä=ngü
SUBR-3AUG.I-sick=3AUGI.S

'In the doctor's work, he gave shots to people, treated sores, and gave medicines to the sick.'

In (38), the verb is marked by *(v)ö-* and the person marking is intransitive, in that, the 3AUG prefix occurs without an enclitic pronoun (for details see 2.2.2). The generic and bare object is overtly expressed. Sentence (38) is extracted from a procedural text where the speaker explains how men of previous generations used to build traditional houses. The action of post-cutting in (38) is conceived as a past habit of the subject referents. In (38), the Natügu sentence shows a series of semitransitive verbs, each of which is detransitivized by *ö-*, as well as having the zero-marked 3MIN intransitive pattern. All three verbs bear patient nouns with a low degree of individuation. Like (38), sentence (39) expresses customary actions of doctors performing their job.

In both languages, habitual actions with no time frame can turn into a characteristic/property of the subject referent as in (40) and (41).

(40)   Nalögo (Alfarano, Fieldwork notes on Nalögo)

Mö-kä-i-**vö**-nibü	da	dongo
male-LNK-PFV.N3AUG-MID-kill	thing	a.lot

'Hunter' or 'man that (habitually) kills things a lot.'

(41)   Natügu (Boerger, Fieldwork notes on Natügu)

Kä-në-**ö**-tekütö=ng	töau
SUBR-3AUG-MID-change=3AUGI.S	money

'Those who change money (currencies).'

In (40) and (41), the prefix *(v)ö-* attaches to the transitive verbs 'kill' and 'change' which are followed by generic bare objects. The expressions refer to human referents who habitually hunt and convert currencies, respectively. Note too, that in (41), the Natügu form of the verb is intransitive.

The last pair of examples shows two semitransitive clauses expressing gnomic truths. In (42) and (43), the Nalögo and Natügu speakers based their generalizations on their experience of the world.

(42)   Nalögo (Alfarano, Fieldwork notes on Nalögo)

Mö-kä-i-vë	**vö**-nibü	leplë
male-LNK-N3AUG.PFV-go	MID-kill	people

'The wild man kills people.'

(43)   Natügu (Natügu scriptures, Luke 20: 11)

Ëyagoä   **ö**-nibü=Ø   leplë
sickness   MID-kill=3MINI.S   people
'Sickness kills people.'

4.3 The SC prefix *(v)ö-* in naturally reciprocal events

In sections 4.1 and 4.2, we showed that *(v)ö-* detransitivizes transitive roots, allowing them to enter depatientive and semitransitive constructions. In Nalögo, *(v)ö-*-derived semitransitive verbs can also express naturally reciprocal events, although in the available data, this function appears to be very marginal. An example is shown in (44) below.

(44)   Nalögo (Alfarano 2021: 485)

Nünge kâ=ng   lë-li   jâ
boy   DEM1.DIST=PL   PFV.N3AUG-be.two   CONT
të-ö-të.
IPFV.3AUG-MID-hit
'The two boys are fighting (each other).'

In (44), the transitive verb *të* 'hit' is detransitivized by *ö-*, which turns the action of hitting into a naturally reciprocal event of fighting. The construction is intransitive, in that, there is only one intransitive subject, and the person marking patterns with the one of intransitive clauses. About naturally reciprocal events, Kemmer (1993: 17) writes that "[they] are actions or states in which the relationship among two participants is usually or necessarily mutual or reciprocal. This class includes verbs of fighting, embracing, meeting, greeting, conversing, and so forth." In addition, they constitute the meeting point between prototypical reciprocals and middle situations, in that they "share with other middle situation types a semantic property termed low degree of elaboration of events" (ibid.: 97) In (44), the action of fighting shows a low distinguishability of the subevent components, which are undifferentiated from one another and occur simultaneously. This function of *(v)ö-* is not attested in Natügu.

5. Phonological changes from POc *paRi- to PSC *vö-

In section 4, we showed that the functions of *(v)ö-* are consistent with the attested functions of POc *paRi- identified in other Oceanic languages, as delineated in section 3. In this section, we propose the reconstruction of a Proto-Santa-Cruz prefix *vö- as the source of the SC prefix *(v)ö-*, since the prefix alternates between *vö-* and *ö-* in both Nalögo and Engdewu, while it is realized exclusively as *ö-* in Natügu.

Given this, even though PSC has not been reconstructed in full and systematic RSC vowel reconstruction has not yet been attempted (Ross & Næss 2007: 463; Lackey & Boerger 2021, especially Appendix B), we claim that the SC prefix *vö- is also phonologically consistent as a reflex of POc *paRi-, in addition to being functionally consistent. Our argumentation is as follows. Regarding the first syllable of the POc etymon, we take Äiwoo *wâ-* 'causative' as our starting point. One of the possible reconstructions from POc *pa- 'causative' suggested by Ross

and Næss (2007) is the PSC form *va- 'causative'[18]. This reconstruction is supported by the SC data, since we find (v)a- in Nalögo and Engdewu and a- in Natügu (Næss & Boerger 2008). Therefore, calling on that same regular sound change, for PSC we can derive an intermediate first syllable /va/ from POc *paRi-. The lenited POc *p might have been lost later in Natügu, in both the causative and the *paRi examples.

Then based on the second syllable *Ri* of the POc *paRi- source, we assume that *R has colored the quality of preceding /a/, causing it to become /ö/. This is consistent with changes in POc *a described for RSC languages by Lackey and Boerger (2021). Then, ultimately, the triggering environment is lost when the final syllable of the source is deleted. This sequence of derivations makes a *paRi- origin for PSC *vö- phonologically reasonable.

6. Summary and conclusions

In this paper, we discussed the functions of the SC *(v)ö-* in Nalögo and Natügu. The morpheme functions as a detransitivizing middle prefix, turning a class of semantically varied transitive verbs into semitransitive ones. We argued that derived semitransitive verbs occur in contexts of lower transitivity, namely, depatientive and semitransitive clauses. Such constructions are associated with the middle domain via the notion of low elaboration of the events (Kemmer 1993), and more precisely, low distinguishability of participants. Since they are characterized by a shift of focus away from the object, which is backgrounded in the two constructions in different ways, the action is realized within the domain of the initiator. In addition, such constructions are often used to express inherent characteristics of the subject referent. Along with depatientives and semitransitives, the Nalögo prefix *(v)ö-* is also attested in a few examples marking naturally reciprocal events, but this function is very marginal in the data. Naturally reciprocal events are associated with other middle situations via the notion of low distinguishability of the subevent components (Kemmer 1993).

We also showed that the functions of SC *(v)ö-* parallel the functions of reflexes of POc *paRi- in present-day Oceanic languages. That is, along with various functions, including collective, iterative, distributive, reciprocal, and so forth, reflexes of *paRi- are found in contexts of lower transitivity, including depatientive constructions (Fijian *vei-*), discord transitivity clauses (Saliba *kai-*), and phenomena of object incorporation (Hoava *vari-*).

The functional similarity of SC *(v)ö-* and POc *paRi- suggesting a diachronic link between the two is supported by regular sound correspondences in Nalögo and Natügu. This led us to the reconstruction of the PSC middle prefix *vö-. With this study then, we offer our first collaboration with the goal of contributing to a better understanding of Santa Cruz valency-changing devices.

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[18] The regular reflex of POc *pa- 'causative' would be *va- for all Temotu languages. However, Asuboa and Tanibili, spoken in Utupua, together with the three SC languages, Natügu, Nalögo, Engdewu, show a reflex *(v)a- . For Äiwoo, Nebao (Utupua), Buma and Vano (Vanikoro), it is possible to reconstruct a form *wa-. Ross and Næss (2007: 492) write: "it is possible that its form in PTM was (idiosyncratically) * wa-, but further work on the synchronic phonology of the languages is needed before we can be certain".

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