

Comparison in Ayeri

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English

- English uses particles and morphologic markers for comparison:

My house is as big as yours.

My house is bigger/smaller than yours.

My house is *more/?less big than yours.

My house is the biggest/smallest.

German

- German uses particles and morphologic markers for comparison:

Mein Haus ist so groß wie deines.

lit. 'My house is so big like yours.'

Mein Haus ist größer/kleiner als deines.

lit. 'My house is bigger/smaller than yours.'

?Mein Haus ist weniger groß als deines.

lit. 'My house is less big than yours.'

Mein Haus ist das größte/kleinste.

lit. 'My house is the biggest/smallest.'

French

- French uses particles for comparison:

Ma maison est aussi grande que la tienne.

lit. 'My house is equally big that the yours.'

Ma maison est plus/moins grande que la tienne.

lit. 'My house is more/less big that the yours.'

Ma maison est plus petite que la tienne.

lit. 'My house is more small that the yours.'

Ma maison est la plus/moins grande.

lit. 'My house is the most/least big.'

Indonesian

- Even an ‘exotic’ language like Indonesian uses particles and affixes:*

Rumah saya sebesar rumahmu.

lit. ‘House I as-big house-you.’

Rumah saya sama besarnya rumahmu.

lit. ‘House I same big-CPL house-you.’

Rumah saya lebih/kurang besar/kecil rumahmu.

lit. ‘House I more/less big/small house-you.’

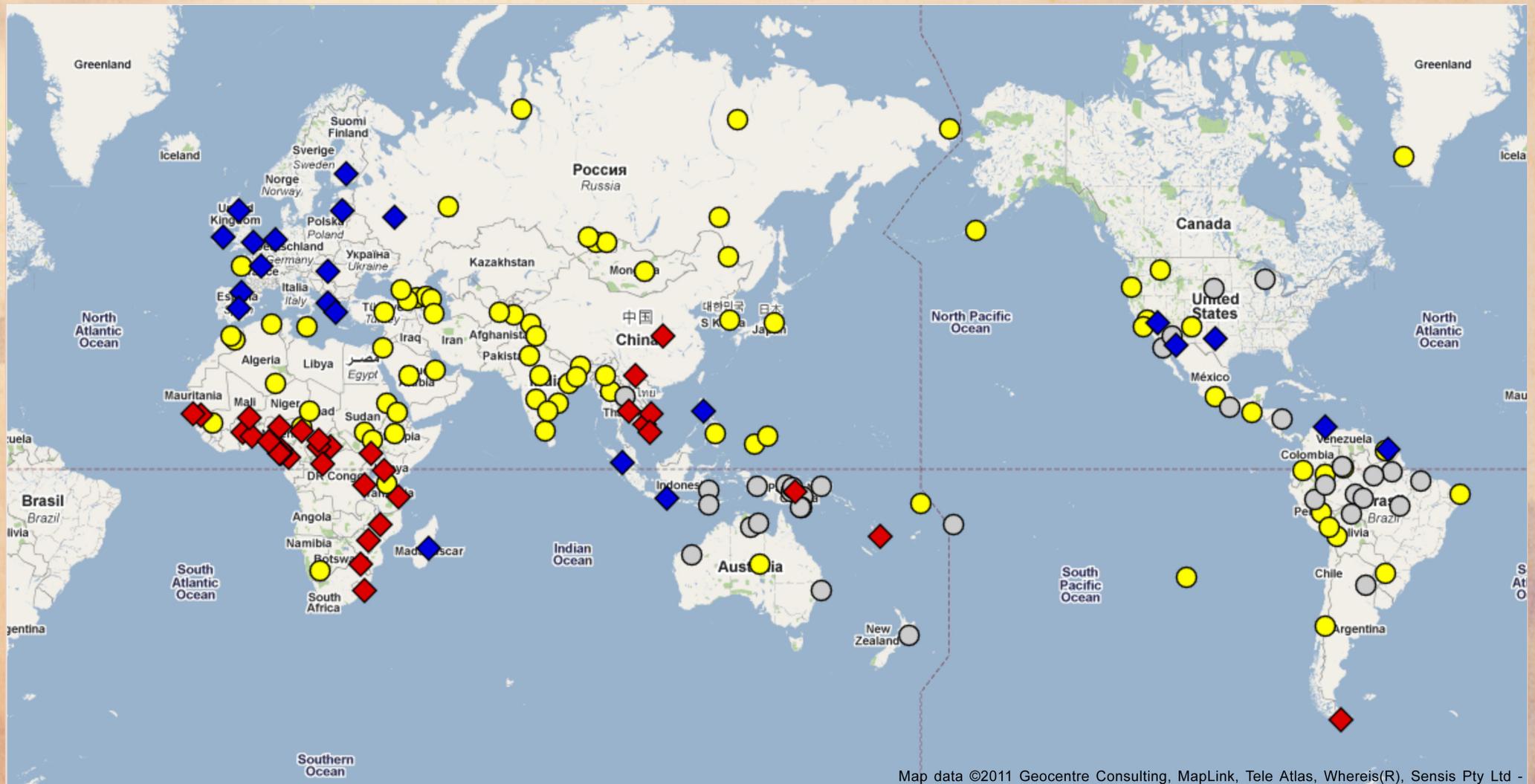
Rumah saya ter-/paling besar/kecil.

lit. ‘House I most big/small.’

*) cf. Sneddon 178–82.

**This can't be universal,
though, right?!**

WALS



Strategies of forming comparative constructions (cf. Stassen):

● Locational (76.7%) ◆ Exceed (19.8%) ○ Conjoined (20.4%) ◆ Particle (13.2%)

Some Terminology

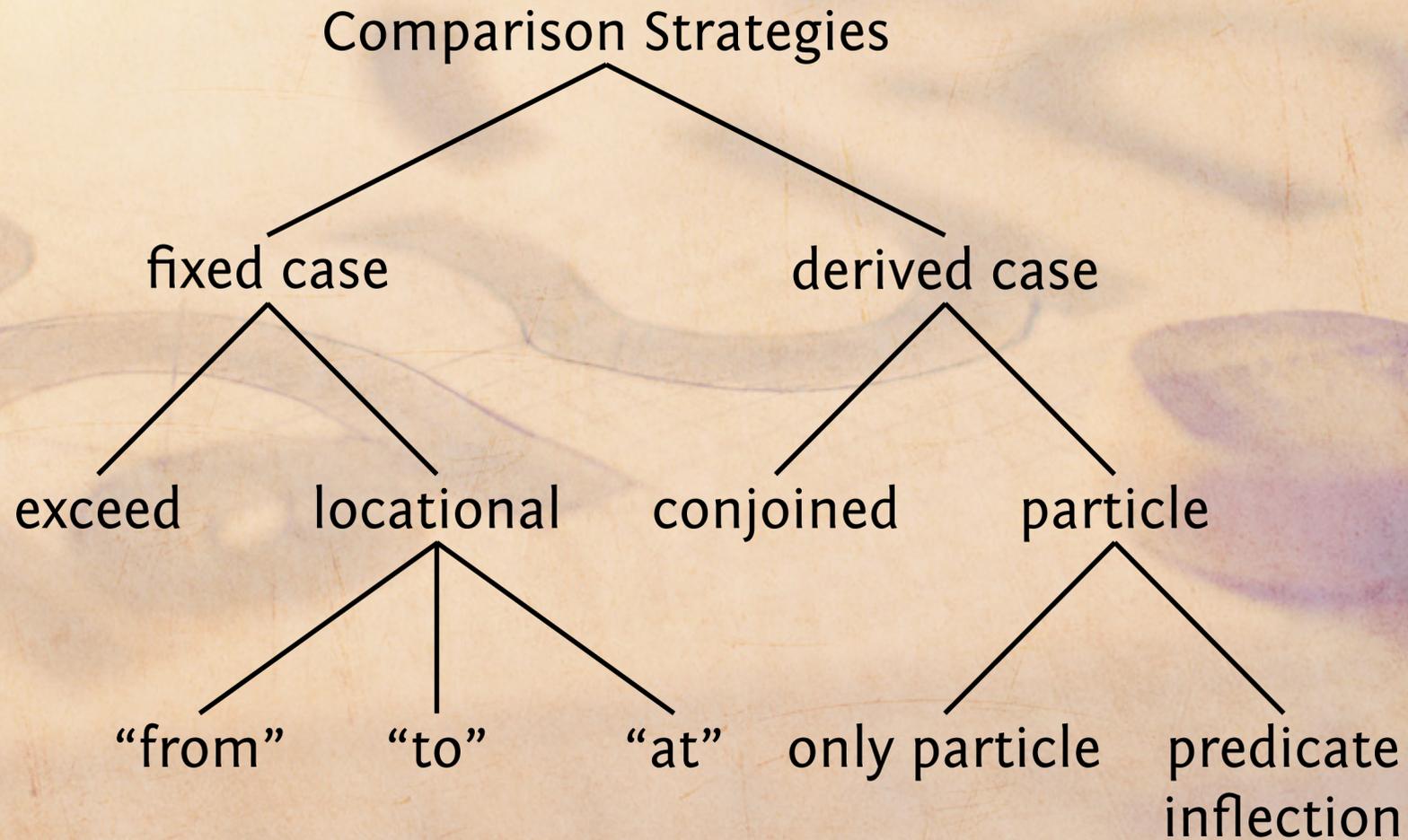
- An example:*

The dog is **bigger** than **the cat**
COMPAREE *QUALITY+MARKER* *STANDARD*

- › **Comparee**: the thing subject to comparison
- › **Quality**: the property that is compared
- › **Marker**: indicates the level of comparison
- › **Standard**: the standard that is compared to

*) cf. Payne 89 and Stassen 1.

Stassen's Typology



Stassen's Typology 2

- Fixed-case comparatives
 - › Standard NP always in the same case.
- Derived-case comparatives
 - › Standard NP takes case from comparee NP.

Brutum **ego** non minus amo quam **tu**.

Brutus.ACC **1SG.NOM** not less love.1SG.PRES than **2SG.NOM**

'I love Brutus no less than you (love Brutus).'

Brutum ego non minus amo quam **te**.

Brutus ACC 1SG.NOM not less love.1SG.PRES than **2SG.ACC**

'I love Brutus no less than (I love) you.'

Stassen's Typology 3

- Exceed comparatives (type: 'fixed case')
 - › Standard NP is the Direct Object of a verb that means 'to exceed' or 'to surpass'.
 - › Comparee NP is the Subject of this verb.

(This is what Ayeri does, so more later!)

Stassen's Typology 3

- Locational comparatives (type: 'fixed case')
 - › Use place adverbials or cases that have positional functions:
 - Standard NP as *source* of movement = "from" comparative
 - Standard NP as *goal* or *recipient* of movement = "to" comparative
 - Standard NP as fixed location = "at" comparative

Stassen's Typology 3 – Examples

- Estonian (Oinas 1966: 140)

kevad on sügis-**est** ilusam

spring is fall-**from** more.beautiful

‘The spring is more beautiful than the fall.’

- Siuslaw (Frachtenberg 1922a: 555)

sea his na-**tc**

he good me-**to**

‘He is better than me.’

- Tubu (Lukas 1953: 45)

sa-umma gere **do** mado

eye-his blood **on** red

‘His eye is redder than blood.’

Stassen's Typology 4

- Conjoined comparative (type: 'derived case')
 - › two structurally parallel, but independent clauses
 - › one contains comparee, other standard
 - › predicates may be antonyms (good : bad) or polar (good : not good)

Stassen's Typology 4 – Examples

- Amele (Roberts 1987: 135)

jo i ben jo eu nag

house this big house that small

‘This house is bigger than that house.’

- Malay (Lewis 1968: 157)

kayu batu berat batu

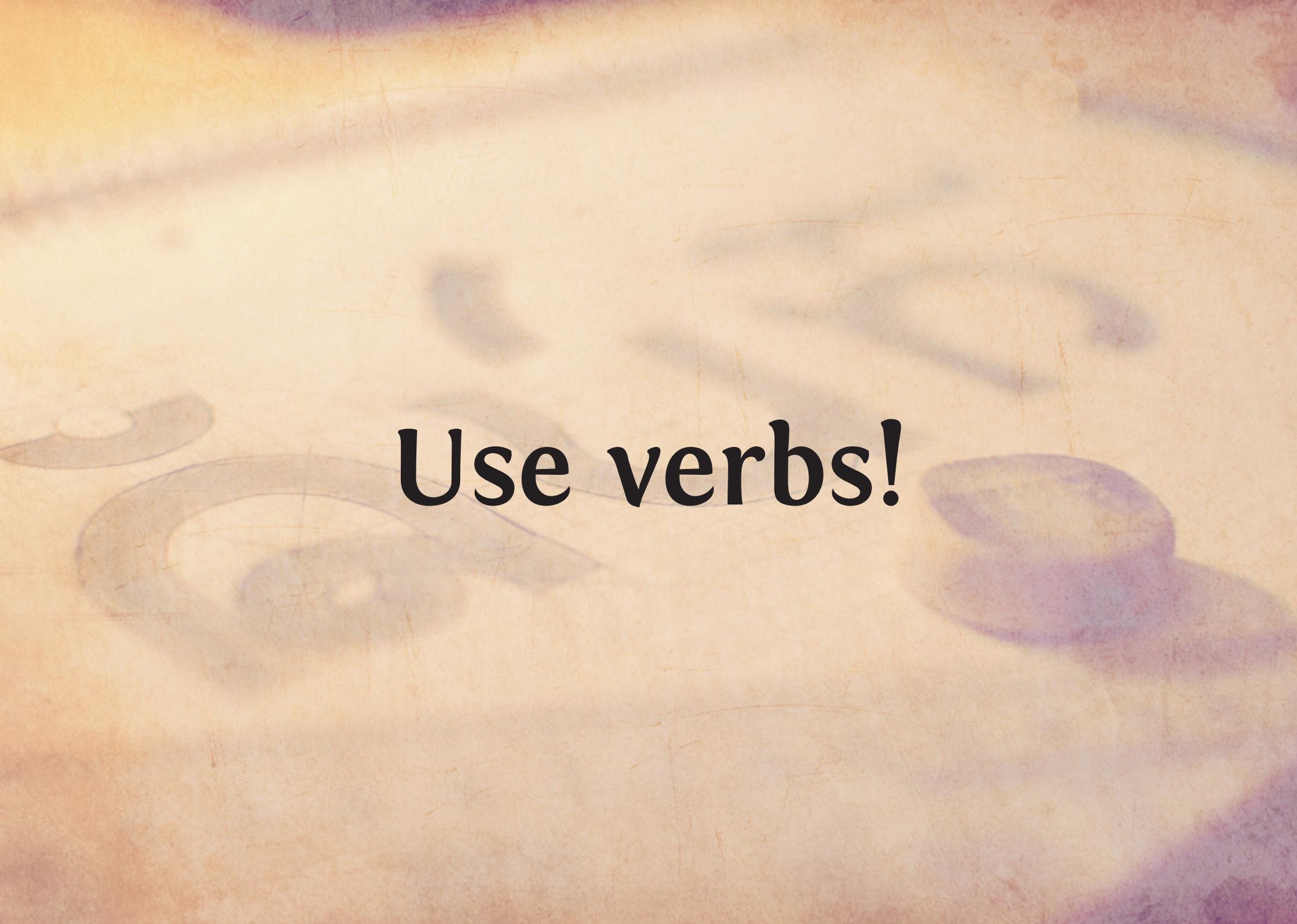
wood stone heavy stone

‘Stone is heavier than wood.’

Stassen's Typology 5

- Comparative particle (type: 'derived case')
 - › Standard NP accompanied by a particle that indicates level of comparison.
 - › Typical examples: English ('than'), French ('que'), German ('als'), ...
 - › In some languages the comparatives keep their unmarked, positive form – English, and more strongly so German, inflect this adjective, though.

**What should my
conlang do?!**



Use verbs!

Ayeri – Equality

- Equality is expressed with *kama-*:

Ang kamayo káryo nanga ná nangás vana.

Ang	kama-yo	káryo	nanga-∅	ná	nangás	vana.
AF	equal-3SN	large	house-FOC	1SG.GEN	house-P	2SG.GEN
	MARKER	QUALITY	COMPAREE		STANDARD	

‘My house is as large as your house.’

Ayeri – Observations

- The adjective actually functions as an adverb in comparisons, it is a modifier of the verb (it exceeds it so^{*}).
- The comparee is expressed as the agent of the comparison verb.
- The standard is expressed as the patient/direct object of the comparison verb.

^{*}) cf. Carnie 113.

Ayeri – Comparative

- ‘positive’ inequality is expressed with *eng-*:

Ang engyo káryo nanga ná ada-vana.

lit. ‘Exceeds largely house my yours.’

- ‘negative’ inequality *may* be expressed with *il-* (or simply with the opposite quality):

Ang ilyo káryo nanga ná ada-vana.

lit. ‘Gives largely house my yours.’

Ang engyo kivo nanga ná ada-vana.

lit. ‘Exceeds smally house my yours.’

Ayeri – Superlative

- ‘positive’ superlatives are expressed with *va-*:

Ang vayo káryo nanga ná.

lit. ‘Be-most largely house my.’

- ‘negative’ superlatives *may* be expressed with *várya-*:

Ang váryayo káryo nanga ná.

lit. ‘Be-least largely house my.’

Ayeri – More Complex Stuff

- Quality NP involving action:

Ang kamayo vehisa ban nanga ná ada-vana.

ang kama-yo veh-isa ban nanga-∅ ná ada=vana.

AF equal-3SN build-CAU good house-FOC 1S.GEN that=2S.GEN

My house is built as good as yours.

- Stative participle ‘built’ is expressed here by derivation to a modifier with the causative ending.

Ayeri – More Complex Stuff 2

- Comparison including non-core* constituent:

Eng ilara kahu nangana ná ada-vana.

eng il-ara-∅ kahu nangana-na ná ada=vana.

AF.INAN give-3S.INAN-FOC far house-GEN 1S.GEN that=2S.GEN

It's less far from my house than from yours.

- Business as usual, except the comparee is not in the patient case.

*) i.e. neither Agent, Patient, nor Recipient.

Ayeri – More Complex Stuff 3

- Problem – ‘He is the taller of them both’:

Adareng yás si ang engya nake danyás palung.

∅ ada-reng yás si ang eng-ya-∅ nake danya-as palung.
COP that-A.INAN 3SM.P REL AF exceed-3SM-FOC tall one-P other.

It is him that is taller than the other one.

Tan sano yáng si nake-eng.

∅ tan sano yáng si ∅ nake=eng
COP 3PM.GEN both 3SM.A REL COP tall=COMP

Of them both, it's him who is taller.

(SUPER) FORMAL

COLLOQUIAL

Ayeri – Adverbial Comparison

- Comparison of an action:

Ang ticalay engyam ban vás.

ang tical-ay-Ø eng-yam ban vás.
AF swim-1S-FOC exceed-PTCP good 2s.P

I swim better than you.

Ang ticalay ban-eng vás.

I swim better than you.

Ayeri – Adverbial Comparison 2

- Comparison of an action with a modal:

Ang ming nimpay engyam para vás.

ang ming nimp-ay- \emptyset eng-yam para vás.

AF can run-1S-FOC exceed-PTCP fast 2S.P

I can run faster than you.

Ang ming nimpay para-eng vás.

I can run faster than you.

Ayeri – Adverbial Comparison 3

- Comparison of two actions:

Ang layáy engyam ban tahanyang.

ang laya-ay-∅ eng-yam ban tahan-yang.

AF read-1S-FOC exceed-PTCP good write-1S.A

I read better than I write.

Layayang ban-eng tahanyang.

I read better than I write.

Sources

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ခုံလဲပကု လဲၤၤကုၤ ဂံး

Kutayang tandangyam vana.

Thanks for your attention.

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