



## Transitivity in the Bima Language

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### Abstract\*

Transitivity is one of the syntactical studies that is affected by morphology. This article describes how transitivity is expressed and how transitive are the verbs in the constructions of clauses in the Bima Language. Transitivity in the Bima Language is mostly expressed using basic verbs which can be syntactically used as verbs in clauses. Apart from this, prefix *ka-* with its variant *ca-* is used to derive transitive from intransitive verbs and nonverbal categories. Meanwhile, particle *kai* and *wea* are used to derive ditransitive from transitive verbs. The transitivity of verbs in the Bima Language varies from one to another. Whether the verbs are said to have high or low transitive, it depends on how they fulfill the transitive parameter (Hooper and Thompson, 1989). Form 10 parameters of transitivity, there are four parameters which fit the Bima Language transitivity, such as participant (agents and patients), affectedness of patient, potency of agent, and volitionality. The constructions which are considered as high transitive is that if the constructions use action verbs rather than state verbs and mental verbs. It is found out that action verbs can cause the agents of the clause to take control on the activities, can affect the patients, and intensively can cause the agent to do the activities expressed by the verbs deliberately and intensively.

### 1. Introduction

The morphology of verbs in the Bima Language are still challenging. Although it is grouped in Bima – Sumba subgroups (Blust, 2010) and argued as a language with less of morphology, it is currently observed to show a complex morphology, especially related to the its verbal morphology. It was Rachman et.al. (1985) described how complex verbal morphology in the Bima Language which one verb can exhibits multilevel of morphological process consisting great numbers of morphemes. This evidence triggers to investigate what is more inside the verbs particularly those that are related to transitivity of verbs in the Bima Language.

The verbs in the Bima Language are mostly categorial. In other words, they can be used as predicates in clauses. Furthermore, the Bima Language basic verbs are mostly transitive from which intransitive verbs are derived by way of affixations (Arafiq, 2009). According to Hopper and Thompson (1982) transitivity is distinguished from structural and traditional transitivity. Structural transitivity is transitivity which refers to related structures with a predicate and two arguments, namely S and OL. Traditional transitivity is overall transitivity in clauses, referring to the process of bringing or transferring an action from the agent to the patient. Transitivity can also be seen and understood as the number of components relating to different aspects of the effectiveness or intensity associated with the actions taken. Hopper reveals that transitivity consists of syntactic and semantic transitivity. Both types of transitivity have their own parameters. Syntactic transitivity is determined by the mandatory parameter of the presence of the core argument in a clause, while semantic transitivity is determined by the combined parameters of various semantic characteristics.

The term transitivity is related to the property of cross-language transitivity which involves high transitivity and low transitivity. Hopper and Thompson (1982) revealed that there are several parameters that can be used to measure the level of transitivity of a clause. There are ten parameters proposed by Hopper and Thompson (1982) to measure the transitivity of a clause, namely (1) participant, (2) aspect, (3) kinesis, (4) affectedness of patient, (5) polarity/affirmation, (6) modality, (7) potential of agent, (8) individuation of patient, (9) volitionality, and (10)

punctuality. Hopper adds that a clause which argument consists of agents and patients has a higher level of transitivity compared to clauses that only have agents or patients. Furthermore, clauses with a telic predicate (point to point) have a higher level of transitivity than clauses with a nontelic predicate. A clause whose predicate states a certain action involving movement, both patient and agent, has a higher level of transitivity than clauses whose predicate does not state an action. Furthermore, a clause whose predicate states an intentional action has a higher level of transitivity than a clause whose predicate states an unintentional action. Affirmative clauses have a higher level of transitivity than clauses in the negative form.

From the above explanation, this article intends to describe how transitivity is expressed in the Bima Language and how transitive the verbs are in the constructions of clauses based on the transitive parameters proposed by Hopper and Thompson (1982).

## 2. Research Methods

This article is extracted from preliminary study on the typology of the Bima Language. The study is designed as a descriptive qualitative study which aims at describing linguistic phenomena used and occurred in a particular community (Craswell, 2014). The study was conducted in Rade, where the Bima Language speakers of Seresuba dialect is spoken (Mahsun, 2006). Data in this study are verbs and clauses in the Bima Language gathered by doing a field work using the elicitation guide proposed by Artawa (2004). The informant in this study involved three speakers of the Bima Language following Samarin's criteria (1988). Reflexive-introspective was applied considering that one of the authors is the speaker of the Bima Language (Sudaryanto, 1998) and (Chomsky, 1977). After that, description of the transitivity of the clauses in the Bima Language is described and analyzed based on Hopper and Thompson (1982).

## 3. Results and Discussions

### 3.1 Results

This section describes about how transitivity is expressed in the constructions of the Bima Language. It begins from the low transitive constructions to the highest transitive constructions based on the syntactical properties about the arguments that are required in its clause.

#### Intransitive constructions

Intransitive construction in the Bima Language is expressed using basic intransitives and also derived transitive. Below are the examples of intransitive in the Bima Language.

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|---|--|
| 1 | <p><i>a. Nahu lao -ku</i><br/>1SG go - CLT/1SG/PAST<br/>'I ate'</p> <p><i>b. Ari nahu liwa -na</i><br/>brother 3S/POSS swim -CLT/3SG/PAST<br/>'My mrother drank (water)'</p> <p><i>c. La Azha rai -na awina</i><br/>Art Azha run -CLT/3SG/PAST yesterday<br/>'La Azhar ran yesterday'</p>  |
| 2 | <p><i>a. La Anha mabu -na di honda</i><br/>art anha N-jatuh-CLT/3SG/PAST Prep bicycle<br/>'La Anha fell down from bicycle'</p> <p><i>b. Fuu haju aka waura mpoka</i><br/>tree wood Det PERF N-patah<br/>'The tree has been broken'</p> <p><i>c. Mpori aka waura ngga'a</i><br/>grass Det PERF N-burn<br/>'The grass has burnt out'</p> |
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The above examples are intransitive constructions. In the examples, there is only one argument expressed in each clause which accompany the verbs. *Nahu* 'I' in (1a) is the only argument in the clause, so as *ari nahu* 'my brother' in (1b), *La Azha* 'La Azahr' in (1c). Similarly, *La Anha* 'La Anhar' in (2a), *fu'u haju* 'tree' in (2b), and *mpori* 'grass' in (2c). However, the verbs in (1) are different from those in (2). In (1a), (1b), and (1c) the intransitive verbs are in the form

of basic verbs. Meanwhile in (2a), (2b), and (2c), the verbs are derived which marked with [N-]. Verbs *lao* ‘go’, *liwa* ‘swim’, and *rai* ‘run’ do not have their transitive counterparts as the nasal verbs have. Verb *mabu* ‘fall down’ is derived from *babu* ‘to drop something down’, *mpoka* ‘broken’ is derived from *foka* ‘to break something’, and *ngga’a* ‘burnt’ is derived from *ka’a* ‘to burn’.

### Transitive constructions

Basically, transitive constructions are derived constructions which syntactically causative (Shibatani, 1976). However, in the Bima Language, transitive constructions mostly make use of basic verbs and derived verbs. Basic verbs are verbs that consist of a single morpheme and they can be used in a clause but always inflected with pronoun clitics. Meanwhile, the derived verbs are the transitive which are derived from nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and numerals by way of causativisation with prefix [ka-] and its variants [ca-]. According to Shibatani (1996) ditransitive construction is a construction which consist of three core arguments. In most languages, this construction can be implied in applicative constructions. In the Bima Language, applicative ditransitive is derived by making use of particles [kai] and [wea]. Please observe the following examples.

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3	<p>a. <i>Ma weli -na baju</i>  mother buy - CLT/3SG/PAST shirt  ‘Mother bought a shirt’</p> <p>b. <i>Sia sepe -na piti</i>  3SG borrow - CLT/3SG/PAST money  ‘S/he borrowed money’</p>
4	<p>a. <i>La Tamari ka- iha -na mesin oi Dae nahu</i>  Art Tamrin CAU- broken -CLT/3SG/PAST engine water father 1SG/POS  La Tamrin made my father’s water pump broken’</p> <p>b. <i>La Haja ka- tolu -na baso sa- mangko</i>  Art Hajar CAU-three-CLT/3SG/PAST meatball one-bowl  ‘La Hajar eat meatball in three (with the other two) persons’</p>
5	<p>a. <i>Ma weli -wea -na mada Baju</i>  mother buy -APL - CLT/3SG/PAST 1SG-hon shirt  ‘Mother bought me shirt’</p> <p>b. <i>Nami ngaha-kai -mu (oha) uta puru</i>  1PI-Ex eat -APPL -CLT/1PL-Ex (rice) fish grilled  ‘We ate (rice) with grilled fish’</p> <p>c. <i>Sia mbei sepe -na Ma piti</i>  3SG give borrow - CLT/3SG/PAST mother money  ‘She lent mother money’</p>

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Transitive constructions in the Bima Language consist of clauses which require two core arguments (monotransitive) and clauses which require three arguments (ditransitive). Monotransitive constructions are expressed with basic verbs *weli* ‘buy’ in (3a) and *sepe* ‘borrow’ in (3b). Meanwhile, transitive constructions in (3a) and (3b) are expressed with derived transitive *kaiha* ‘to break something’ from adjective *iha* and *katolu* ‘to do things in three’ by using causative prefix [ka]. In (3a), the basic verb *weli* ‘buy’ requires argument *ma* ‘mother’ as a subject and *baju* ‘shirt’ in as an object. The basic verb *sepe* ‘borrow’ in (3b) requires argument *sia* ‘s/he’ as subject and argument *piti* ‘money’ as an object. Similarly, argument *La Tamri* ‘La Tamrin’ is subject and *mesin oi dae nahu* ‘my father’s water pump’ is the object in (4a) and argument *La Haja* ‘La Hajar’ is subject and *baso samangko* ‘a bowl of meatball’ as an object of clause in (4b). Constructions in (3) and (4) require two arguments, one as subjects and the other as the objects, to be called monotransitive constructions. In ditransitive constructions, like in (5a) and (5b), the transitive is expressed with complex verbs *weliwea* ‘to buy something for someone’ are derived with particles (applicative) [wea-] and *ngahakai* ‘to eat (rice) with some other food (fish)’ are derived with particles (applicative) [kai-]. However, ditransitive in construction (5c)

are constructed by using causative verb *mbei* ‘give’ with the transitive *sepe* ‘borrow’ that means to let or to give someone to borrow something. Ditransitive construction requires three core arguments in its clause, subject *ma* ‘mother’ in (5a), *nami* ‘we (ex)’ in (5b), and *sia* ‘s/he’ in (5c), indirect object (IO) *mada* ‘I (hon)’ in (5a), *oha* ‘rice’ in (5b), and *ma* ‘mother’ in (5c), and direct object (DO) *baju* ‘baju’ in (5a), *uta puru* ‘grilled fish’ in (5b), and *piti* ‘money’ in (5c).

### 3.2 Discussions

This section tries to make a deeper analysis of the transitivity of the constructions above (intransitive, monotransitive, and ditransitive) using the parameter proposed by Hopper and Thompson (1982). Based on the ten transitivity parameters proposed by Hopper and Thompson, from ten transitive parameters, the examples of constructions in the Bima Language fulfill four transitivity parameters, namely (1) participant, (2) affectedness of patient, (3) potency of agent, and (4) volitionality. The description of the parameters is presented below respectively.

#### *Participants*

Based on the number of participants which are involved in the clause, constructions (1) and (2) are the lowest transitive of all constructions, because the clauses only require one core argument that functions as subject (S), *nahu* ‘I’ in (1a), *ari nahu* ‘my brother’ in (1b), and *La Azha* ‘La Azhar’ in (1c), *La Anha* ‘La Anhar’ in (2a), *fu’u haju* ‘wood tree’ in (2b), and *mpori* ‘grass’ in (2c). Meanwhile, constructions (3) and (4) are more transitive compared to (1) and (2) for having two arguments in clauses, subject (S) and object (O). In (3a), *ma* ‘mother’ is the subject agent and *baju* ‘baju’ is the object patient. Similarly, in (3b), *sia* ‘s/he’ is the subject agent and *piti* ‘money’ is the object patient, *La Tamari*, ‘La Tamrin’ is the subject agent and *mesina oi dae nahu* ‘my father’s water engine’ in (4a), and *La Haja* ‘La Hajar’ is the subject agent and *baso samangko* ‘a bowl of meatball’ the object patient in (4b). Constructions (5) are the highest transitive compared to all constructions, because the clauses have three core arguments that function as subject (S), direct object (DO), and indirect object (IO). *Ma* ‘mother’ in (5a), *nami* ‘we (ex), and *sia* ‘s/he’ in (5c) are the subject agents of the clauses. Meanwhile, *mada* ‘I (hon)’ in (5a), *oha* ‘rice’ in (5b), and *Ma* ‘mother’ in (5c) are indirect objects of the clauses. *Baju* ‘baju’, in (5a), *uta puru* ‘grilled fish’ in (5b), and *piti* ‘money’ in (5c) are direct objects of the clauses.

#### *Affectedness of patient*

Affectedness of patient is seen whether the agent of the clauses can affect the patients. Constructions (1) are considered the lowest transitive because the argument *nahu* ‘I’ in (1a) is the subject agent of the verb *lao* ‘go’, *ari nahu* ‘my brother’ in (1b) is the agent of the verb *liwa* ‘swear’, and *La Azha* ‘La Azhar’ in (1c) is the agent of the verb *rai* ‘run’. Since there is no patient argument in the clauses, no argument to get affected. Compared to constructions (1), constructions (2) are more transitive although the constructions only have one argument. Unlike construction (1), the arguments in constructions (2) serve as the subject patients. Subject *La Anha* ‘La Anhar’ in (2a), *fu’u haju* ‘wood tree’ in (2b), and *mpori* ‘grass’ in (2c) get affected by unrepresented agents. Since the constructions are resultatives, the agents of the clauses are not important. In transitive constructions with two place verbs, as shown in (3a) and (3b), the argument patients get affected by the agents. However, the constructions are less transitive if compared to constructions (2a – c). The patients in construction (2a – c) get affected more than the patients in constructions (3). Verbs *mabu* ‘fall down’ in (2a), *mpoka* ‘broken’ in (2b), and *ngga’a* ‘get burnt’ in (2c) semantically get more controlled than verbs *weli* ‘buy’ in (3a) and *sepe* ‘borrow’ in (3b). In ditransitive constructions, patients *mesin oi dae nahu* ‘my father’s water pump’ in (4a) and *baso samangko* ‘a bowl of meatball’ in (4b) are more transitive than that of (5a – c). The verbs *kaiha* ‘to make things broken’ in (4a) and *katolu* ‘to make it in three party’ in (4b) cause the agents *La Tamari* ‘La Tamrin’ and *La Haja* ‘La Hajar’ to take deliberately control over the patients.

#### *Potency of agent*

This parameter is related to the previous parameter (affectedness of patients). The verbs in the constructions reflect how the agents control the other arguments in clauses. Action verbs tend to have more control than state verbs and mental verbs. Therefore, constructions (1a – c) are considered the most transitive of all because *lao* ‘go’ in (1a), *liwa* ‘swim’ in (1b), and *rai* ‘run’ in (1c) are action verbs and cause the agent *nahu* ‘I’ in (1a), *ari nahu* ‘my brother’ in (1b), and *La*

*Azha* ‘La Azhar’ in (1c) take deliberately control over the activities in the clauses. The same control can be seen from constructions (4a) and (4b) since the constructions make use of action (causative) verbs. Verb *kaiha* ‘to make something broken’ in (4a) and *katolu* ‘to make something in party of three’ in (4b) cause the agent *La Tamari* ‘La Tamrin’ and *La Haja* ‘La Haja’ in each clause to take control over the patient *mesin oi dae nahu* ‘my father’s water pump’ in (4a) and *baso samangko* ‘a bowl of meatball’ in (4b). However, verbs *weli* ‘buy’ in (3a), *sepe* ‘borrow’ in (3b) cause the agent *ma* ‘mother’ and *sia* ‘s/he’ not to take as much control over the patients as the action verbs do in (1a & b) and (4a & b). Similarly, the verbs in constructions (5a – c), do not cause the agents in the clauses to take much control to the activities nor over the patients and recipients. Differently, constructions (2a - c) are the lowest transitive of all due to the absence of agents in each clause. As resultative constructions, these clauses are result orientated more than the process even though, the clauses make use of action verbs.

### **Volitionality**

Volitionality is related to how intensive or deliberated the agents of clauses to do the activities expressed by the verbs. Action verbs tend to show that the agents intensively do the activities more than the mental verbs. Based on the examples, almost all constructions above make use of action verbs, except construction (2a – c) which are state verbs. Therefore, construction (1a – c), (3a – c), (4a – b), and (5a – c) are considered high transitive than construction (2a – c). Verbs *lao* ‘go’ in (1a), *liwa* ‘swim’ in (1b), and *rai* ‘run’ in (1c) cause the agents *nahu* ‘I’ in (1a), *ari nahu* ‘my brother’ in (1b), and *La Azha* ‘La Azhar’ in (1c) to intensively do the activities expressed by the verbs. Verb *weli* ‘buy’ in (3a), *sepe* ‘borrow’ in (3b) make the agent *ma* ‘mother’ in (3a) and *sia* ‘s/he’ in (3b) to intensively do the activities as mentioned in the verbs. Similarly, verb *kaiha* ‘to break’ in (4a), *katolu* ‘to make something in party of three’ in (4b), *weliwea* ‘buy for’ in (5a), *ngahakai* ‘to eat rice with particular side dishes’ in (5b), and *mbei sepe* ‘to lend someone something’ in (5c) make agent argument *La Tamri* ‘La Tamrin’ in (4a), *La Haja* ‘La Hajar’ in (4b), *ma* ‘mother’ in (5a), *nami* ‘we (ex)’, and *sia* ‘s/he’ in (5c) to intensively do the activities as mentioned in the verbs.

### **4. Novelities**

The grammar of the Bima Language recently has paid attention to numbers of linguist. However, the descriptions are still general without trying to relate any aspect from one to another to get more detail grammatical implication towards the specific grammatical description of the language. The work of Rachman et.al. (1985) about the morphological description of the Bima Language verbs could only give a structural description about the morphology of the verbs. Wouk (2010) described about diathesis and Wouk and Arafiq (2016) about the particle *kai* of the Bima Language do not imply more on the semantic transitivity of the clauses. Similarly, the work of Owen (2000) about argument structure of the Bima Language and Satyawati (2009) views the verbs based on the syntactical properties rather than exploring the relations of the structure to indicate aspect of the Bima Language grammar. Therefore, this article is considered new as it tries to describe the relation between the verbs, arguments, and the semantic to establish a different perspective of syntax in the Bima Language.

### **5. Conclusion**

Transitivity of constructions in the Bima Language based on Hopper and Thompson (1982), only fits four parameters, (i) participants; (ii) affectedness of patient; (iii) potency of agent; and volitionality. It is found out that the transitive verbs indicate the transitivity of the clauses. Transitive constructions require more participants than intransitive (participants). Furthermore, action verbs can affect the patients (affectedness of patient), can cause the agents of the clause to take control on the activities (potency of agent), and intensively can cause the agent to do the activities expressed by the verbs deliberately and intensively (volitionality). This article is expected to be advantage to all researchers in linguistics in doing the same research in the same field to other languages. It is suggested that the combination of semantic based with syntactic based analysis will help to comprehensively describe the transitivity of the Bima Language and any language of the world.

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