



Relativization in the Bima Language: Redefining Subject in Primitives Syntactic-Semantic Universals

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Abstract

Language typology still become an interesting subject to discuss in linguistics. With its assumption of the universality of language, it has not reached out all languages in the world and put them in groups. Many works on the area have succeeded, but some remain challenging. This paper tries to describe the relativization of grammatical functions in the Bima Language as one of syntactical tests of language typology. It is assumed that the relativization strategy applied in a language indicates its typology. If a language can relativize all arguments of a clause, the language shows the indication of accusative. However, if it only allows its subject argument, it indicates ergative. Based on the data about relativization of the Bima Language, relativization can only be done on subject grammatical, not the object, oblique, and adjunct like Balinese, Dyirbal, and the Language of Malagasy. However, most of the syntactical properties of the Bima Language, such as the word order, coreferences of grammatical relations and diathesis indicate accusative. The problem arouses that S of transitive in the Bima Language bears agentive function of accusative language rather than patient of ergative. These evidences evoke to redefine the notion of subject grammatical (S) of transitive in the primitives syntactic-semantic universal by putting semantic at the same consideration with syntax.

Keywords: *Relativization; Grammatical Relations; Syntactic-Semantic Universal*

Introduction

The studies on language typology have been numerous since Greenberg (1966) which attempted to classify languages in the world from how they arrange their words in constructing clauses or sentences which then known as word order or constituent order. Greenberg began studying the of European languages, such as Latin, English, and German in order to group them into type. His works on language typology had become trending issue in linguistics. For this, Verhaar (1989) argued that all languages can be grouped simply by looking at the combination of word order they languages operate in their clauses. Since then, the studies in language typology are developing and has expanded from word order to the other grammar and syntax matter.

Dixon (1994) has developed the studies on language typology by involving morphology and syntax aspect of the language. Similarly, Comrie (1981) has put forward the study of language typology over many languages from the other parts of the world. The purposes of language typology is to group languages in the world based on their syntactical properties. It is assumed that all languages share many characteristics in common (Dixon, 2010); Comrie, 1989). Therefore, the goal of language typology is to group languages into accusative, ergative, on others based on their grammatical and syntactical properties. A language is said to be an accusative if it treats its subject (S) in the same way with the agent (A) and differently from patient (P). Meanwhile, a language is said to be an ergative if it treats its subject (S) in the same way with patient (P) and differently from agent (A).

In order to group languages in the world, there are many syntactical tests which should be applied. The tests include (1) marking systems of the NP arguments, (2) marking system of verbs, (3) revaluation of structure, such as relativization and passivisation, and coreference of grammatical relations such as pivot system. Based on empirical studies in this area, these tests still put some theoretical issues of debate among linguists, especially towards the notion of subject in primitives syntactic-semantic universals. In fact, there are languages which is grouped into accusative but they only allow the subjects to be relativized like those of ergative. On the other hand, languages that allow all grammatical relations (subject, object, and oblique) to be relativized, are grouped into ergative. Artawa (2004) argued that the notion of subject, especially transitive should be clarified in order to make a precise syntactic typology of languages.

This paper intends to show more evidences that may cause the problems in syntactically determining the types of language found in the relativization of the Bima Language. The description of this paper begins with exploring relativization strategies across languages then followed with describing the relativization employed in the Bima Language and its indication to syntactic typology.

Research Methods

This article is extracted from preliminary study on the typology of the Bima Language. The study applied a descriptive qualitative research design which aims at describing linguistic phenomena used and occurred in a particular community (Craswell, 2014). The study was conducted in Rade, a village where the Bima Language speakers of Seresuba dialect is spoken (Mahsun, 2006). Data in this study are words and clauses in the Bima Language produced by the Bimanese gathered in a field work using elicitation guide proposed by Artawa (2004). There are three speakers involved in this study as the informant 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).

Relativization across Languages

Relative clauses are clauses which are used to give attribute to arguments of clauses. Therefore, a relative clause is referred to as a dependent clause. Every language has its own strategies in making relative clause. However, there is a grammatical standard approach that must work across language based on a hierarchical approach to grammatical relations, namely the accessibility hierarchy proposed by Keenan and Comrie (1977). Keenan and Comrie (see also Artawa, (1994, p. 83); Song, 2001: 211, 222 – 227) propose the following hierarchy which shows that the top position is more universally attainable for relativization:

Achievement Hierarchy: Subject (S) > direct object (DO) > indirect object (IO) > oblique (OBL) > genitive (GEN) > comparison object (O-COMP).

The achievement hierarchy presented above illustrates how easy it is to form a relative clause. If an NP in the attainability hierarchy can exhibit relativization, then all NPs in higher position in the hierarchy can also exhibit relativization. Furthermore, a relative clause reveals a set of hierarchical constraints related to accessible hierarchy, namely:

- (1) A language must be able to relativize the subject;
- (2) Any method of making relative clauses must apply to the continuous segment of accessible hierarchy;
- (3) Strategies applied to one accessible hierarchy item may basically not to apply to a lower item.

Based on these constraints, a language may only be able to relativize the subject, but it is impossible for a language to only have strategies for being able to relativize direct or locative objects without having strategies or ways to relativize the subject. One language can freely define adjacent positions in accessible hierarchy as the same position, but one language cannot exceed positions within the constraints of making a relative clause. The achievement hierarchy has several exceptions which are generally related to the problem of determining the subject across-language, especially in determining the meaning of the subject in syntactically ergative languages.

Comrie (1989) asserts that the subject can be clearly assigned to most intransitive constructions, especially to constructions that are clearly one-place predicate constructions. In transitive constructions, the notion of subject is defined as A (in nominative-accusative language) or as P (in ergative-absolutive language). If the notion of subject is taken as a grammatical subject or a surface subject, it can be said that the subject applies to accusative or ergative language. However, semantically, the grammatical subject of the accusative transitive clause is the agent, which controls the action shown by the verb. Meanwhile, in syntactically ergative languages, the subject of a transitive clause is influenced by an action (see Artawa, 1998:84).

In relation to morphologically ergative language, Anderson in Li (ed.) (1976) suggests that the only argument (S) of intransitive predicates and the agent argument (A) of transitive predicates behave the same in many syntactical processes. However, syntactically the meaning of the subject in ergative languages is still a matter of debate. In this regard, Keenan and Comrie (1977) assert that the absolutive (S-P) in languages like Dyirbal, which are syntactically ergative languages, is subject. Their opinion is supported by syntactic evidences. In a syntactically ergative language like Kalkatungu, only absolutes that can be relativized. The following examples of relative sentences show this (quoted from Artawa, 1998:84 – 85):

- 1 ngulurrmayi-nha nga-thu yurni [] ngartathati -nyiu
 catch -PAST I -ERG person [] NOM sit -PART
 'I caught that person [when s/he] is sitting'

- 2 ngulurrmayi-nha nga-thu yurru [] thuku -yu itya-nyin
 catch -PAST I -ERG person [] NOM dog-ERG bite-PART
 'I caught that person [when s/he] is bitten by a dog'

Sentence (1) shows that the function which is relativized in the subordinate clause is S, therefore it is not expressed explicitly and marked with []. Meanwhile, sentence (2) shows that the function of P is relativized and that P is not expressed in a real way in the subordinate clause. Regarding relativization, Artawa (1998: 85 – 88) provides examples of data in Balinese. He found out that in Balinese only the subject which can be relativized. The Balinese relativization are presented in the following.

- 3 a. Emeng-e gugut cicing
 cat -DEF bite dog
 'A dog bite the cat'
- b. Emeng-e [ane - gugut cicing] gelem.
 Cat -DEF [REL- bite dog] sick
 'The cat [that a dog bite] is sick'
- c * Cicing [ane emeng-e gugut] galak.
 Dog [REL cat -DEF bite] fierce
 'Dog [that bite the cat] is fierce'

Example (3a) is a basic verb construction. The preverbal NP is the patient and the postverbal NP is the agent. The relative clause (3b) shows that the patient is relatable, while the agent is not relatable as shown in example (3c). This relativization confirms that the preverbal NP in (3a) is the grammatical subject of a clause which semantically is not an agent. Precisely the agent occupies the position of the grammatical object. Example (3a) shows that a direct object that semantically functions as an agent *cicing* 'dog' cannot be relativized. It is clearly shown that the NP which can be relativized in this clause is the one that occupies the position of the grammatical subject (semantically patient). Based on this evidence, Artawa (1998: 85 – 86) found out that Balinese has another strategy in order to relativize zero construction agents to express information such as 'The dog that bit the cat is fierce' (see 6.3c), by indirect relativizing mechanism using the 'hereditary diathesis'. In addition to the 'derivative diathesis' for relativization, Givon (1990: 669 – 670), reveals various relativizing strategies cross languages. One of them is 'verb-coding strategies', namely the relativization strategy of involving relativization and promotion (subjecting) rules interactions. Subjects in Balinese are marked with nasal prefixes on verbs. The following is a mechanism for marking verbs in relativization in Balinese (Artawa, 1998: 86).

- 4 a. *Emeng- e gugut cicing.*
 Cat-DEF bite dog
 'Dog bite cat'
- b. *Cicing-e ngugut emeng-e [N-gugut]*
 dog -DEF ACT-bite cat -DEF
 'Dog bite cat'
- c. *Cicing-e [cine ngugut emeng-e] galak.*
 Dog-DEF [REL ACT-bite cat -DEF] fierce
 'Dog which bite the cat is fierce'

Based on the examples of Balinese sentences presented above, Artawa (1994:86) explains that in (4b) the agent complement *cicing* 'dog' is expressed as the subject. The subject can be relativized as in (4c). Based on sentences (4b), (4c), and (4c) the Balinese language presented above shows that in fact in Balinese only subjects can be relativized. To support Balinese language data revealed by Artawa which shows that only the subject can be relativized, the following is an example of a sentence in Malagasy which can only relativize NP which functions as a subject (Keenan & Comries, 1972: 171).

- 5 a. *manasa -ny lamba -ny vehivahy*
 wash -DEF clothe -DEF woman
 ‘The woman is washing the clothes’
- b. *ny vehivahy(izay) manasa -ny lamba*
 DEF woman REL wash -DEF clothe
 ‘That woman who is washing the clothes’
- c. **ny lamba (izay) manasa -ny vehivahy*
 DEF clothe REL wash -DEF woman
 ‘That clothes that the woman is washing’

Example (5a) is a common transitive clause in Malagasy. Example (5b) is an example that shows the relativization process that occurs in NP which occupies the position of a grammatical subject. Meanwhile, example (5c) shows the relativization process that occurs in NP which occupies the position of a grammatical object. The relativization result of the grammatical object in example (5c) is an ungrammatical construct in Malagasy. The Malagasy language has its own strategy to be able to relativize grammatical objects, namely by implementing a 'derivative diathesis' through a passive mechanism. The following presents the process of relativizing Malagasy language objects with the mechanism of 'derivative diathesis' through passiveness.

- 6 a. *Sasan ny- lamba vehivahy ny*
 wash PAS.DEF clothe woman DEF
 ‘The clothe was washed by that woman’
- b. *ny lamba (izay) sasan ny lamba*
 DEF clothe REL wash DEF woman
 ‘That clothe which was washed by that woman’

Example (6) illustrates that the relativization of objects in the Malagasy language must go through the mechanism of 'derivative diathesis', namely changing the function of objects to occupy the position of the subject as in the example (6a) to allow relativization as in the example (6b).

Keenan and Comrie (1989) provide an example of the Basque language which can relativize both subject, direct object and oblique only by marking the verb with the -n suffix. The relativization process by marking verbs with the suffix -n is presented in the following example.

- 7 a. *Gizon-a-k emakume-a-ri liburu-a eman dio*
 man-DEF;ERG woman-DEF-DAT book-DEF give PERF
 ‘That man has given that book to that woman’
- b. *Emakume-a-ri liburu-a eman dio -n gizon-a*
 Woman-DEF-DAT book -DEF give PERF-REL man -DEF
 ‘That man who has given that book to that woman’
- c. *Gizon-a-k emakume-a -ri eman dio -n book -a*
 Man-DEF-ERG woman -DEF-DAT give PERF-REL buku -DEF
 ‘That book which that man has given to that woman’

- d. Gizon-a-k liburu-a eman dio -n emakume-a
 man -DEF-ERG book -DEF gave PERF-REL woman -DEF
 ‘That woman to whom that man has given that book’

Example (7) clearly shows that the Basque language only allows relativization by means of verb marking mechanisms. Relatives in this language, whether relativizations of subject, direct object, or oblique are not allowed without the -n verb marker. Furthermore, Budiarta (2013) exemplifies the strategy of relativizing the Kemak language. Budiarta said that the Kemak language can relativize subjects and objects, both direct objects (DO) and indirect objects (IO). The following is an example of the relativization in question.

- 8 a. Hine koet senua mela ita
 woman pretty DEF call PL
 ‘That pretty woman called us’
- b. Hine koet ne lodi buku senua mela ita
 woman pretty REL take book DEF call us
 ‘That pretty woman who took that book called us’
- c. Ite ne hine koet senua mela mudu de kursi
 1PL REL woman pretty DEF call sit Prep chair
 ‘We that pretty woman called sat on chair’

Sentence (8a) is a monotransitive sentence in the Kemak language. Sentence (8b) shows that the grammatical subject (S) *hine koet senua* ‘that pretty woman’ in clause (8a) can be relativized. Meanwhile, (8c) shows that *ite* ‘we’ the NP which functions as a direct object (DO) can also be relativized.

Relativization in the Bima Language

After presenting several examples of relativization across-languages, the following presents relativization strategies in the Bima Language. The Bima language can only relativize the subject relation directly, but not the objects, both direct object (DO) and indirect objects (IO) with particle *ma*. The relativization if DO and IO correlations are carried out with a passivation. Further explanation about the relativization of grammatical relations in the Bima language is illustrated in the following examples.

- 9 a. Dou siwe ntika aka na- ou -ku ndai
 person female pretty DEF CLT.3SG.FUT-call -INT 1PL-Ink
 ‘The pretty woman called us’
- b. Dou siwe ntika [ma tewe buku aka] na-
 person female pretty [REL take book DEF] CLT.3SG.FUT-
 ou -ku ndai
 call -INT 1PL-Ink
 ‘The pretty woman who took the book called us’
- c. *Ndai [ma Dou siwe ntika aka ou]
 1PL-Ink [REL person woman pretty DEF call]
 wunga doho -ta di kadera.

PROG sit -CLT.1PL-Ink.PAST Prep chair
 ‘We whom that pretty woman called are sitting on chair’

d. Ndai [ma ra ou ba dou siwe ntika aka]
 1PL-Ink [REL PAS call OBL person woman pretty DEF]

wunga doho -ta di kadera.
 PROG sit -CLT.1PL-Ink.PAST Prep chair
 ‘We whom are called by that pretty woman are sitting on chair’

The above sentences are the relativizations which occur in monotransitive verbs. In the following, the relative grammatical relations found in the ditransitive sentences in the Bima language are presented.

- 10 a. Sia mbei -na dou mone aka piti
 3SG give -CLT.3SG.PAST person male DEF money
 ‘S/he gave that man some money’
- b. Sia [ma losa di uma aka] mbei -na dou mone
 3SG [REL exit Prep house DEF] give -CLT.3SG.PAST person man
 aka piti
 DEF money
 ‘S/he who came out from the house gave that man some money’
- c. *Dou mone [ma sia mbei piti] neo ade -na
 person male [REL 3SG give money] light heart-3SG
 ‘The man whom s/he gave some money is happy’
- d. Dou mone [ma ra mbei ba sia piti] neo ade -na
 person male [REL PAS give OBL 3SG money] light heart -3SG
 ‘The man who was given by her/him some mone is happy’
- e. *Piti [ma sia mbei dou mone aka] mboto poda
 money [REL 3SG give person male DEF much very
 ‘Money that s/he gave that man is very much’
- f. Piti [ma ra mbei ba sia dou mone aka] mboto poda
 money [REL PAS beri OBL 3SG person man DEF] many INT
 ‘The money which is given by that man is verry many’

Sentence (10a) is a ditransitive sentence in the Bima language. Sentence (10b) shows that the grammatical subject *sia* ‘s/he’ in clause (10a) can be relativized. However, the relativization of indirect object (IO) *dou mone aka* ‘that man’ in clause (10c) cannot be directly done. Relativizing the indirect object (IO) *dou mone aka* ‘that man’ must go through a passivation and become a passive relative marked by {*ma*} and a passive marker /*ra*-/ as in clause (10d). Likely, relativization of direct object (DO) *piti* ‘money’ in (10e) will only be relativized after it goes through passivization as in (10f).

Clauses (9b & 9d) and (10 b, 10d, & 10f) have provided a clear description of the relativization that occurs in the grammatical relations of subject, direct object, and indirect object in monotransitive and ditransitive in Bima language. These the data show that the relativization in the Bima language can only be done to the subject. Meanwhile, the relativization of direct objects (DO) and indirect objects (IO) cannot be

done directly before going through a syntactical derivation – passivization and becomes a passive relative as in (9c) for monotransitive clause and (10c) and (10e) for ditransitive clauses.

In addition to the notions of subject and object relations, oblique relations also need an explanation related to relativization. The following are examples of the Bima language sentences to describe the relativization that occurs in oblique relations.

- 11 a. Nahu_i nguda -ku_i fare ele tolo
 1SG plant -CLT.1SG.PAST rice OBL rice field
 ‘I planted rice in the rice field’
- b. *Tolo [ma nahu ngguda -kai fare]wancu-ku nae
 rice field [REL 1SG plant -LOC rice] very -INT large
 -na
 -CLT.3SG
 ‘The rice field where I planted rice is very large’
- c. Tolo_j [ma ra nguda -kai ba nahu fare]
 rice field [REL PAS plant -LOC OBL 1SG rice]
 wancu-ku nae -na_j
 very -INT large -CLT.3SG
 ‘Rice field that was planted by me with rice is large’
- 12 a. Ma_k lao -na_k aka amba
 mother go -CLT.3SG.PAST OBL market
 ‘Mother went to the market’
- b. Mada_l ku_l- Bade amba [ma ra lao kai ba
 1SG-Hon CLT.1SG- know market [REL PAS go LOC OBL
 Ma]
 Ibu]
 ‘I knew the market where mother went to’
- 13 a. Dou mone aka sepe -na piti di
 person male DEF borrow -CLT.3SG.PAST money OBL
 kepala dusun
 leader subdistrict
 ‘That man borrowed some money from the subdistrict leader’
- b. Mada doho ra- eda -mu kapala dusun
 1PI-Hon PERF-see-CLT.1PI.PAST leader subdistrict
 ma ra sepe -kai ba dou mone aka piti
 REL PERF borroe-LOC PO person man DEF money
 ‘We saw the subdistrict leader whom that man borrowed the money from’

- 14 a. Wei nahu kodu -na uta kai piso
 wife 1SG.POS cut-CLT.3SG.PAST fish OBL knife
 'My wife cut fish with a knife'
- b. Nahu weli-ku piso [ma ra- kodu -kai
 1SG buy-CLT.1SG.PAST knife [REL PAS- cut -INTSR

 ba wei - ku uta]
 OBL wife -1SG.POS fish]
 'I bought the knife which was used by my wife to cut the fish'
- 15 a. Guru Fendo nggadu-na buku ru'u La Anha
 Guru Fendo send -CLT.3SG.PAST book OBL La Anhar
 'Guru Fendo send La Anhar the book'
- b. La Anhar [ma ra- nggadu wea ba Guru Fendo buku]
 La Anhar [RELPAS-send BEN OBL Guru Fendo book]

 neo ade-na
 light hearts-3SG.POS
 'Anhar yang Guru Fendo kirimkan buku senang sekali'
- 16 a. Dou doho tu'un -na uma ru'u Guru Fendo
 person PL build -CLT.3J. rumah PO guru Fendo
 'People built a house for Guru Fendo'
- b. Nahu ra- ringa -ku Guru Fendo [ma ra- tu'u-wea
 1SG PAS-hear -INT Guru Fendo [REL PAS- build -BEN

 ba dou doho uma
 OBL person PL house
 'I heard Guru Fendo whom people built a house'

Constructions (11a) and (16a) are Bima language clauses that come with oblique relations. The oblique relation that is present in sentence (11a) is *el tolo* 'in the fields' which is an oblique relation that states the location, clause (12a) comes with the objective oblique relation, namely oblique *aka amba* 'to the market', clause (13a) presents the oblique relation which is occupied by the oblique relation of the source, i.e. *di kapala dusu* 'from the subdistrict head', sentence (14a) comes with the oblique relation of the instrument, i.e. *kai piso* 'with a knife', sentence (15a) presents the oblique relation of the receiver, i.e. *ru'u La Anha* 'for Anhar', and sentence (16a) comes with the benefactive oblique relation *ru'u Guru Fendo* 'to Guru Fendo'.

It seems like object relations, both DO and IO, all oblique relations, whether they are used to express location as in sentence (11a), purpose as in sentence (12a), source as in sentence (13a), instrument as in sentence (14a), recipient as in sentence (15a), or benefactive as in sentence (16a) cannot be directly relativized. The relativisation of the oblique relations must go through a diathesis mechanism (passivization) before they are accessible for relativization and become relative passive clause as in clauses (11b), (12b), (13b), (14b), and (15b). Thus, it can be concluded that the Bima language cannot relativize oblique relations directly but must go through a derivative diathesis mechanism, namely passiveness like Balinese (see Artawa, 1996:86) or verb marking (see Givon, 1990:669-670; Artawa, 1996:86).

The discussion of relativization above shows that only the grammatical relation of the subject can be directly relativized. Meanwhile, other grammatical relations, namely objects (direct and indirect) and oblique relations in Bima cannot be directly relativized except by means of a diathesis mechanism, namely passivity, namely 'verb marking'. If viewed based on the relativization mechanism, Bima language is the same as Balinese and Malagasy languages which can only relativize grammatical subjects. However, if examined further, the grammatical subject of the Bima language semantically behaves as an agent (S=A), while the grammatical subject of Balinese and Malagasy languages behaves semantically as a patient (P). This relativization test indicates that Bima language is a language with syntactically accusative typology (S=A).

Conclusions and suggestions

Conclusions

The relativization in the Bima Language is marked by particle *ma*. In the Bima Language, relativization can only be done to subject relation, not to the objects, oblique, and adjunct like. The relativization of objects, obliques, and adjuncts must go under diathesis mechanism (passivation). This evidence may suggest the ergative, like Balinese, Dyirbal, and the Language of Malagasy. However, most syntactical properties of the Bima Language, such as the word order, coreferences of grammatical relations and diathesis indicate accusative. The problem arouses that S of transitive in the Bima Language bears agentive function of accusative language rather than patient of ergative.

Suggestion

It is suggested that the notion of subject grammatical (S) of transitive in the primitives syntactic-semantic universal should be redefined by putting semantic at the same consideration with syntax.

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