

Special Issue: Education in humanities in Asian countries

Grammatical relation in applicative construction of Asahan Malay language



Muhammad Yusuf^a   | Mulyadi^a  | Aprilza Aswani^b  | Rumnasari K Siregar^b 

^aUniversitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia.

^bPoliteknik Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia.

Abstract This study depicts the realization of grammatical relation found in applicative construction in the Asahan Malay Language (AML). This study departs from the theory of relational grammar. The design of this study is by using a qualitative approach. In collecting the data, a documentation technique was used. The informants were three people whose sub-ethnic is Malay, and AML is their first language. They were observed speaking AML to distinguish the informants' appropriateness. The distributional method was used, and the data were presented formally and informally. Referring to the data analysis, the conclusion can be drawn that in the basic construction, FN: DO changes the relation into *chomeur* relation. Then, FN: OBL in basic construction converts into DO or occupy (R2) because it is directly placed after the verb. In the passive construction, the two FNs behind P lose their relation, thus bringing the predicate as *chomeur*.

Keywords: relational grammar, core argument, non-core argument, *chomeur*

1. Introduction

Grammatical relations (GR) play an important role in the syntactic construction of natural language, namely human language (Bresnan 2001). It is seen as part or element of a sentence/clause categorized as subject (S), direct object (DO), and indirect object (IO) (Comrie 1989). This is also a point of attention for determining the grammatical typology of language, namely the accusative system, the ergative system, and the S-split system (active language). Then, it is also viewed as the relationship between arguments (Basaria 2013, 2018) and the predicate at the level of a structure free from semantic and pragmatic influences (Payne 2002). To conclude, GR is crucial in syntactic construction and seeing the relationship between arguments.

Grammatical relations serve as a reference for describing various aspects of clause structures and universal principles that govern the syntactic structure of natural language. These are important to achieve the three goals of language theory, namely (1) formulating language universality; (2) determining the characteristics of each grammatical construction that exists in natural languages; and (3) constructing a good grammar for each language. For this purpose, a grammatical theory must examine general language data, which is utilized in all languages, and language-specific data, which uses only in certain languages (Basaria 2018; Jufrizal 2008).

Grammatical relations cannot be separated from relational grammar. In this theory, grammatical relations are considered undefined primitive. Relative alliances are recognized, including subject, direct object, indirect object, and oblique, which include benefactive, locative, and instrumental (Blake 1990). The characteristics of grammatical behavior that determine grammatical relations are case markers, participant reference markers on verbs, and constituent order (Kulikov 2010). In RG, there are several important general terms, namely subject (S), direct object (DO), indirect object (IO), ergative (ERG), absolutive (ABS), and oblique (OBL), which refer to weak nominal grammatical relation towards predicate (Jufrizal 2008).

The three relations of subjects, objects, and indirect objects are collectively called **terms**, and oblique is **not a term** or between core and non-core (Blake 1990; Farrel 2005). The term relation is given numbers, such as number 1 for the subject (S), number 2 for the direct object (OL), and number 3 for the indirect object (OTL). Meanwhile, non-tribal relations are called **chomeur** (Cho) or unemployed. The term has a grammatical function, for example, in verbal congruence and the possibility of being an object in a passive construction. What is called a **chomeur** is a constituent that loses grammatical function in syntactic relations (Suparmin 2018).

1.1. Applicative Construction

Applicative construction is a universal linguistic phenomenon. Almost all languages in the world have an applicable construction structure. In applicative construction, the verb used is transitive (Valenzuela 2010). Verbs in the applicable



construction can be classified as the verb of *giving* or belong to *action verbs*. Action verbs have three subtypes: agentive motion, speech, and displacement. The focus of applicative construction is agentive and speech verbs.

One example of this process can be seen in changes in the hierarchy of objects, such as the change in the grammatical function of the object. This change involves the transformation of the object (O) into the direct object (DO) and oblique (OBL) into the indirect object (IO), as in the following example:

(1a)	Indah	mamboli	balon	tu	buat	adiknyo
	S	ACT. buy	DO	DET	PREP	OBL-brother-POSS
	1		2			
	'Indah buys that balloon for her brother'					
(1b)	Indah	boli-kan		adiknyo		balon
	S	Buy-Appl		DO-brother-POSS		IO
	1			2		3
	Ag			Ben		
	'Indah buys her brother balloon'					

Example (1a) is the basic structure of applicative construction in the Asahan Malay Language (AML). The grammatical function in the construction is Indah 'Indah' functions as the subject (S), buys 'mamboli' in the construction functions as a predicate (P) which is classified as an action transitive verb. Balloons 'balon' functions as DO, and her brother 'adiknyo' in the above construction is not as O because it is not directly behind the verb. Her brother has functioned as oblique OBL, which is signaled by the attachment of a preposition FOR 'untuk'. But, it can get GR change, such as presented in construction (1b).

The changes that occur in construction (1b) are visible in the addition of the suffix *-kan* to verbs that affect grammatical function construction. In construction (1b), Indah as S has a role as an agent (Ag), boli-kan 'buy' as P, followed by the addition of the suffix *-kan* as the main feature of the applicative construction. Adiknyo 'her brother' has a function as DO because it is right behind the transitive verb. In that construction, adiknyo is a type of object with a benefactive role (Ben) which is expressed by the action of the verb (V) performed by the agent and can be transformed into an S in the passive voice construction. The balloon functions as an IO as it is located behind DO. That is why construction (1b) is called *benefactive applicative construction*. The changes in basic structure and structure are an applicative construction accompanied by a change in the function of the two NPs behind the verb, namely NP: DO and NP: IO. The change is caused by the verb with the suffix addition *-kan*.

The applicative process is object creation or converting non-object functions into objects. The change process of applicative construction elevates the argument structure from *non-core arguments* to *core arguments*. The structure of the applicable construction forms a new argument which occupies the object function (Haspelmath 2002). In construction (1), the term relations are described as 1, 2; meanwhile, in construction (2), there is a term change into 1, 2, 3, which is a conversion of OBL into DO. The analysis is also presented in a different way compared to transformational grammar (TG). In TG, it uses a tree diagram, but in RG theory, it uses a different diagram. Construction (1) and (2) can be figured out as the following (Figure 1):

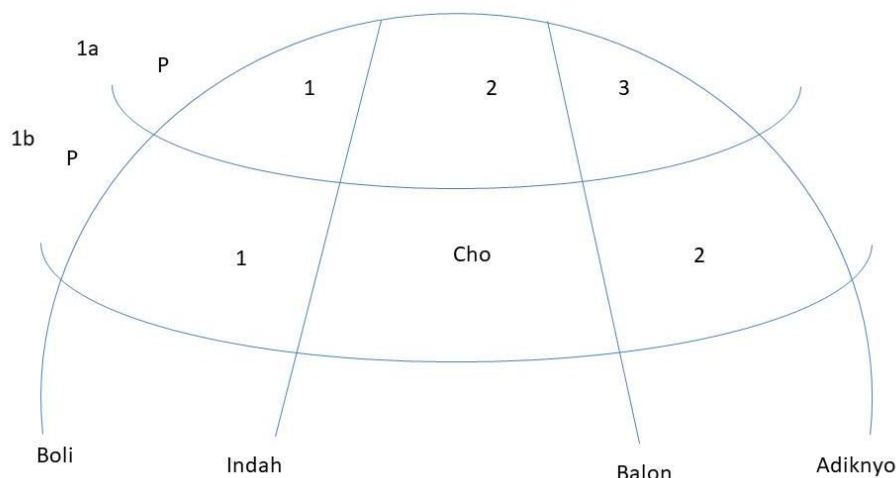


Figure 1 Diagram of construction (1a) and (1b).

Recent works have also been carried out by various experts dealing with this issue. Valenzuela (2010) explores applicative construction in Shipibo-Konibo. His study also explains that in Shipibo-Konibo, there is an interplay between transitivity and the different applicative construction types. This covers a limit on the dedicated malefactive in combining with transitive verbs only. Pacchiarotti (2017) attempts to explain applicative construction in the Bantu language. He concludes that there are four types of applicative construction. Another researcher, Guerrero (2019), summarizes several aspects of the grammatical relationship in Yaqui, namely the South Uto-Aztecan language spoken in northwestern Mexico. Yaqui is traditionally spoken by the Yoeme people living along the Rio Yaqui in Sonora, Mexico. He concludes that the main arguments are spelled out in the form of dependent marking, the agreement of supply verbs, passive voice, and another valency-change mechanism. In the ethnic language in Indonesia, Simanjuntak and Mulyadi (2019), in their research, reveal that grammatical relation and semantic role in the Batak Toba language (BTL) are $S = A / P$ and $S = P / A$. The meaning of this point is that BTL makes the same relationship with S as A and S as P. The form of the relationship between grammar and semantic role proves that BTL has case markers in the form of nominative-accusative and ergative-absolute.

1.2. *The aim of the study*

In relation to the previous studies, the study of applicative construction in AML has not yet been observed by many researchers. So, this study aims to depict the grammatical relation of the applicative construction in AML. This study departs from the theory of relational grammar. Then, this study is expected to provide benefits to the development of syntactic analysis through a relational grammar perspective and also provide references for further research, especially in analyzing the Malay language and its variations in Indonesia and the world.

2. **Materials and Methods**

This study employed a qualitative approach through the documentation technique. The instrument was the researcher themselves. The research location was Tanjungbalai city, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The informants were purposively selected into three people whose sub-ethnic is Malay and AML is their first language. Those informants were chosen because they never left Tanjungbalai. Then, they were asked for their consent to participate in this research before being interviewed. This technique eases the data analysis. In collecting the data, the documentation technique was used. This study had two data sources, namely written and spoken data. Written data were obtained from documents related to applicative construction and spoken data were obtained from the native speakers of the Asahan Malay language (AML). In analyzing the data, the distributional method was used and the data were presented formally and informally before being interpreted to draw the conclusion. The validity of the data was gained by using the triangulation technique, and for the reliability, was achieved through cross-checking codes used in the analysis.

3. **Results and discussion**

Based on the analysis, the researcher only found two types of grammatical relation of applicative construction, namely benefactive and recipient type. The researchers asked informants about the other variation of applicative construction that has been stated by Nurcholidalia (2020). In her research related to Malay Langkat Language, she found three types of applicative construction, but our study only found two types. Those two types were explained as the following

3.1 *Grammatical Relation of Applicative Construction: Benefactive type*

This type of applicative construction has a subject who acts as an advantage to that object with a benefactive role (Kiyosawa and Gerdtz 2010; Kurniasih 2009; Marten and Kula 2014; Tomioka and Kim 2017). This is indicated by the type of verb ‘giving’ (Iriantini 2019). Verbs in this applicative construction can be categorized into a benefactive verbs. The analysis of the grammatical relation of the applicative construction of AML is taken from the active construction below:

(2a)	Vira	Ngantar	lontong	ka	wak Butet
	Vira	Deliver	<i>lontong</i>	Preposition	Aunt Butet
	1	Predicate	2		Cho
	Agent				Beneficiary
	Vira delivers lontong to wak Butet				
(2b)	Vira	ngantarkan	wak Butet	lontong	
	Vira	Deliver	aunt Butet	lontong	
	1	Predicate	2	Cho	
	Agent		Benefactive		
	Vira delivers wak Butet lontong				



(2c)	Wak Butet	diantarkan	lontong	oleh	Vira
	Aunt Butet	PASS. Deliver	lontong	Preposition	Vira
	Cho	P	Cho		1
	lontong is delivered by Vira to wak Butet				

Construction (2a) shows Vira functions as S (role 1), an s a role as an agent, *ngantar* ‘deliver’ functions as a predicate (R-P), *lontong* function as O (role 2), and *wak Butet* ‘aunt Butet’ is not as object because it is not directly placed after the verb. The function of *wak Butet* in this construction is Oblique (OBL), which is indicated by the presence of a preposition *ka* ‘to’. This causes the role of *wak Butet* becomes non-term (benefactive). Dealing with relational grammar analysis, *wak Butet* is categorized as *chomeur* (cho).

Construction (2b) is an applicative construction in AML that undergoes a structural and grammatical change. The changes that occur are seen in the omission of a preposition. Vira is known as subject (role 1) and agent, *ngantarkan* ‘deliver’ is functioned as a predicate (R-P), *wak Butet* ‘aunt Butet’ functions as DO (role 2), which bears the role of the benefactive. In the passive voice form, *wak Butet* is the potential to be promoted as a subject because it is located directly behind the verb. The function of *lontong* is not as an object because it is not directly following the verb, and it is categorized as *chomeur* (cho).

It can be seen that construction (2c) is the passive form of construction (2b). Grammatical functions that occur in passive construction have changed, namely, *wak Butet* is defined as *chomeur* in the passive voice, *diantarkan* ‘is delivered’ functions as a predicate, *lontong* functions as *chomeur*, and Vira in relational grammar function as S (R-1). The grammatical relation can be seen in the following diagram (Figure 2):

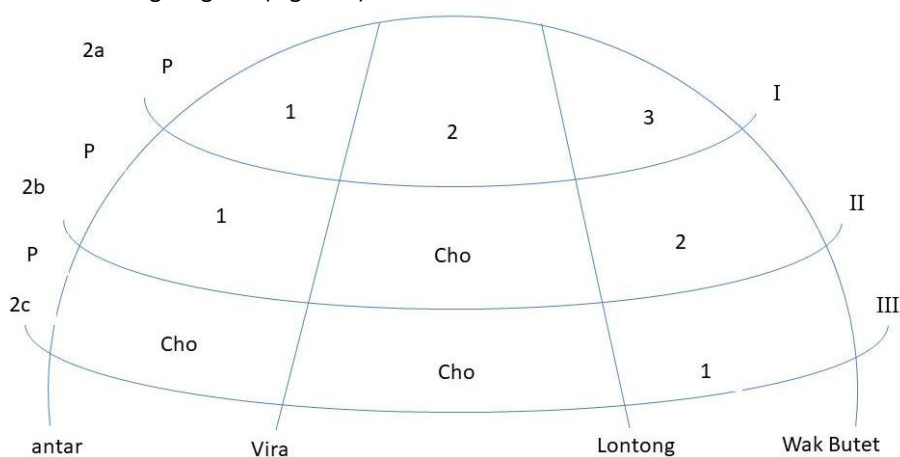


Figure 2 Grammatical relation of construction (2a), (2b), and (2c).

Grammatical relations in figure 2 show that Vira brings relation 1 to strata I and II, while level III presents the *chomeur* relationship. *Lontong* presents relations 2 at level I; on the other hand, at levels II and III, it brings *chomeur* relation. *Wak Butet* brings relation-3 at level I, bringing relations-2 at level II, and bringing relations-1 at level III. *Antar* ‘deliver’ brings the P-relation at levels I, II, and III.

3.2 Grammatical Relation of Applicative Construction: Recipient Type

This type is understood as the applicative construction whose object accepts something that is stated by the predicate. In the construction, the subject acts as giving something to the object that acts as a recipient. In this case, the actions performed by the subject provide no benefit to the recipient (Nurcholidalia 2020). The example is presented as the following:

(3a)	Sangkot	kasi	duit	ke	bandaharo sakolah
	Sangkot	give	money	Preposition	school treasurer
	1	Predicate	2		Cho
	Agent				Receptient
	Sangkot gives money to school treasurer				
(3b)	Sangkot	kasi	bandaharo sakolah	duit	
	Sangkot	give	school treasurer	money	
	1	Predicate	2	Cho	
	Agent		Receptient		
	Sangkot gives school treasurer money				



(3c)	Bandaharo sakolah	dikasi	duit	sama	Sangkot
	School treasurer	PASS. give	Money	Preposition	Sangkot
	1	P	cho		cho
	Agent				Recepient
	School treasurer is given money by Sangkot				

In construction (3a), it is observable that *Sangkot* functions as subject (role 1) and has the role of agent, *kasi* 'give' is positioned as a predicate (P), *duit* 'money' as DO (role 2). *Bandaharo Sakolah* 'school treasurer' is not as DO because it is not directly behind the verb, on the other hand, it is defined as oblique since it is signaled by the use of the preposition 'to'. Then, it also has a recipient role. There is a grammatical change from construction (3a) to construction (3b) signaled by the omission of the preposition 'to' in construction (3b). The grammatical relation of construction (3b) can be observed that *Sangkot* functions as subject (S) who occupies role 1 as well as acts as an agent. *kasi* 'give' function as predicate occupying (R-P). Then, *bandaharo sakolah* 'school treasurer' is positioned as a direct object (DO) or role 2, and also as a recipient. In this case, *duit* 'money' becomes *chomeur* (cho). In construction (3c), it is observable that *Bandaharo sakolah* is positioned as a subject (role 1), as well as an agent. *Sangkot* in construction 8 occupies the role of recipient. *Dikasi* 'is given' is functioned as a predicate (R-P), and *duit* 'money' is a *chomeur* (unemployed). The relations carried out in constructions (6), (7), and (8) are realized in the following diagram (Figure 3):

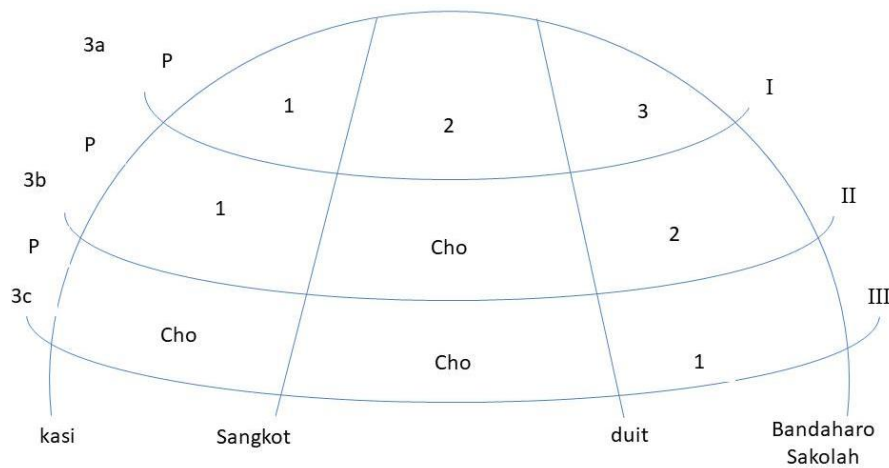


Figure 3 Grammatical relation of construction (3a), (3b), and (3c).

Figure 3 shows that *Sangkot* brings relation 1 to strata I and II. Conversely, at level III, it presents the chomeur relation. *Duit* 'money' is acknowledged as having relation 2 at the level I, while at levels II and III, it brings *chomeur* relation. *Bandaharo sakolah* 'school treasurer' 'brings relation 3 at level I, bringing relation 2 at level II, and bringing relation 1 at level III

4. Conclusions

From the data analysis, it can lead to the conclusion the omission of a preposition causes the applicative construction relation. It can be seen in the benefactive and recipient construction in AML applicative construction. In the basic construction, FN: DO changes the relation into *chomeur* relation. Then, FN: OBL in basic construction converts into DO or occupy (R2) because it is directly placed after the verb. In the passive construction, the two FNs behind P lose their relation, thus bringing the predicate as *chomeur*. Due to the limitless study in the typology of AML, further research is suggested to explore other parts of AML, such as the verb valence, passive construction, and other analysis based on syntactic or semantic typology.

Acknowledgments

The writers would like to address their gratitude to the informants for their consent to participate in this research.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Funding

This research receive no funding.

References

Basaria I (2013) Tipologi gramatikal dan sistem pivot bahasa Pakpak-Dairi. *Jurnal Penelitian Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajarannya* 12:83–96.



- Basaria I (2018) Relasi gramatikal subjek bahasa Pakpak Dairi: Kajian tipologi. *Talenta Conference Series: Local Wisdom, Social, and Arts (LWSA)* 1:49-58. DOI: 10.32734/lwsa.v1i1.140
- Blake BJ (1990) *Relational Grammar*. Routledge, London.
- Bresnan J (2001) *Lexical-functional Syntax*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Comrie B (1989) *Language Universal and Linguistic Typology*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Dixon RMW (1994) *Ergativity*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Farrel P (2005) *Grammatical Relations*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Guerrero L (2019) *Grammatical Relations in Yaqui*. John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam, pp 433-467. DOI: 10.1075/tsl.123.12gue
- Haspelmath M (2002) *Understanding Morphology*. Arnold, London.
- Iriantini S (2019) Verba bantu benefaktif tekureru dan temorau dalam kalimat bahasa Jepang. *Metahumaniora* 9:168-178.
- Jufrizal (2008) Fenomena tipologi gramatikal bahasa Minangkabau: Akusatif, ergatif, atau campur?. *Linguistika* 15:1-18.
- Kiyosawa K, Gerds DB (2010) Benefactive and malefactive uses of Salish applicatives. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp 147-184. DOI: 10.1075/tsl.92.06kiy
- Kulikov L (2010) *Voice Typology*. Oxford University Press., Oxford. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199281251.013.0019
- Kurniasih N (2009) Benefactive verbs in double object construction (DOC) in English sentence. *Jurnal Sosioteknologi* 16:575-586.
- Marten L, Kula NC (2014) Benefactive and substitutive applicatives in Bemba. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 35:1-44. DOI: 10.1515/jall-2014-0001
- Nurcholialia (2020) *Konstruksi aplikatif dalam bahasa Melayu Langkat*. Thesis, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan.
- Pacchiarotti S (2017) *Bantu applicative construction types involving *-id: Form, functions and diachrony*. Dissertation, University of Oregon.
- Payne, TE (2002) *Describing morphosyntax: A guide for field linguists*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Simanjuntak TA, Mulyadi (2019) Grammatical roles and relations of Batak Toba language: Typology study. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences* 4:856-860. DOI: 10.22161/ijels.4.3.42
- Suparmin (2018) Relasi gramatikal. *Prosiding Pertemuan Ilmiah Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia* 1:241-254.
- Tomioka S, Kim L (2017) The give-type benefactive constructions in Korean and Japanese. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 26:233-257. DOI: 10.1007/s10831-017-9158-9
- Valenzuela PM (2010) *Applicative constructions in Shipibo-Konibo (Panoan)*. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 76:101-144. DOI: 10.1086/652756