

# Ditransitives in Mian

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## 0. Overview

- argument marking and alignment patterns
- behavioral properties
- polysemy patterns in the applicative

**Mian:** Papuan language, Ok family, TNG (Pawley, 2005; Wurm, 1982), spoken in Telefomin district, Sandaun province, Papua New Guinea; Eastern dialect (Fedden, 2007) has about 1,500 speakers

All data presented in this talk were obtained by me during a total of nine months in the field.

## 1. Argument marking

### 1.1 Intransitive and transitives

Argument marking follows an accusative pattern: A=S P

- (1) *on-s-io = be*  
go.PFV-RPST-2/3PL.AN.SBJ=DECL  
V            -S  
'They went.' [Asuneng A., Pig story]
- (2) *yole éil = e            a-na-s-ib = e?*  
well pig = SG.M    3SG.M.O-kill.PFV-RPST-2/3PL.AN.SBJ = CQ  
P                    P-            V            -S  
'Well, did they kill the pig?' [Ibalim, Mianmin and Telefomin history]

- Mian is mildly polysynthetic, head-marking at clause level
- Subjects are obligatorily indexed on the verb by a pronominal suffix
- Objects are marked by pronominal or classificatory prefixes for some verbs and not at all for other verbs
- No morphological case or adpositional marking
- Cross-referencing markers on the verb are pronominal in nature (cf. Corbett, 2006; Evans, 2002)
- But show agreement in the service of construal (Baker, 2002).

Morphological classes of transitive verbs:

- (i) Transitives with a verbal classificatory prefix
- (ii) Transitives with a pronominal prefix
- (iii) Transitives without object indexing

(i) Transitives with a verbal classificatory prefix

- (3) *nē memàlo fūt=e*                      *tob-ò-n-i=a*  
 I now tobacco = SG.N1    **SG.LONG.O**-pick\_up.PFV-SS.SEQ-**1SG.SBJ** = MED  
 S                      T                      T-                      V                      -S  
 'Now I pick up the tobacco leaf, and then I ...' [Kasening M., Rolling smokes]

- Roughly 50 items
- mainly verbs of handling, object manipulation or object movement, such as 'give', 'send', 'take', 'put', 'lift', 'throw'.
- Function of the classificatory prefix: indexing the object, signalling number and classification according to certain salient characteristics of referent, viz. sex, shape, and function.
- Classificatory prefixes function on an absolute basis (Keenan, 1984), also for 'fall'

(ii) Transitives with a pronominal prefix

- (4) *a-fu-n-ib=ta*  
**3SG.M.O**-grab.PFV-SS.SEQ-**2/3PL.AN.SBJ** = MED  
 P-                      V                      -S  
 'They grabbed him, and then ...' [Asuneng A., Sobining story]

- Five items: *-tem/-teme* 'see sb/sth', *-tama/—* 'bite sb/sth', *-na/—* 'hit, kill', *-lo/—* 'hit, kill', and *-fu/—* 'grab'
- High in transitivity (Hopper and Thompson, 1980).
- Function of pronominal prefixes: indexing the (primary) object, indicate its person and number and in the third person its gender

(iii) Transitives without object indexing

- Roughly 50 items):

- (5) *tíl=i*                      *no=i*                      *bu-bi-n-ib=a*  
 dog = PL.AN marsupial = PL.AN hunt-AUX.IPFV-SS.SEQ-**2/3PL.AN.SBJ** = MED  
 S                      P                      V                      -S  
 'The dogs were hunting rodents, and then ...' [Asuneng A., The flood]

- (6) *fofolam gaala del-êb tl-omâb-io = be*  
 fofol\_house.N2 tear\_down AN.PL.O-take.PFV come.PFV-FUT.AN.PL.SBJ-2/3PL.AN.SBJ = DECL  
 P V -S  
 'They will tear down the Fofol house and bring them (i.e. the boys to be initiated).'  
 [Beitab F., Initiation ritual]

- (7) *āns = o ngaan-biaan-ib = ta*  
 song = N2 sing.IPFV-AUV.IPFV.SS.SIM-2/3PL.AN.SBJ = MED  
 T V -S  
 'While they were singing a song, they ...' [Asuneng A., Sobining story]

## 1.2 Flagging and indexing in ditransitives

- Ditransitive verbs always formed with applicative
- Applicative also used productively with intransitive verbs
- Has a wide range of roles (e.g. recipient, benefactive, possessor)

Zero-morph 'give' (cf. also Newman, 1996):

- (8) *nē naka = e éil = o om-Ø-u-b-â-n-i = be*  
 I man = SG.M pig = SG.F SG.FEM.O-give-EP-APPL.PFV-3SG.M.O.PFV-PST-1SG.SBJ = DECL  
 S R T T- V -R -S  
 'I have given the sow to the man.' [Kasening M., elicited]

- Neutral alignment wrt. flagging: T=P=R, NPs are not marked
- Indirective alignment wrt. indexing: T=P R

NP elision possible and common:

- (9) *om-Ø-u-b-â-n-i = be*  
 SG.FEM.O-give-EP-APPL.PFV-3SG.M.O.PFV-PST-1SG.SBJ = DECL  
 T- V -R -S  
 'I have given it (of the FEM class) to him.' [Kasening M., elicited]

Same marking pattern for 'send':

- (10) *ē baa-n-e = a*  
 he say.PFV-SS.SEQ-3SG.M.SBJ = MED
- futâan = o om-fu-b-kê-n-amab-i = bo*  
 letter = N2 SG.FEM.O-send.PFV-APPL.PFV-2SG.O.PFV-AUX.PFV-FUT.NANPL.SBJ-1SG.SBJ = QUOT  
 T T- V -R -S

*ge-n-e = be*

DO.PFV-PST-3SG.M.SBJ = DECL

'He's told me he would send a letter to me.' (Lit. 'He's told me: "I will send a letter to you"')

[Kasening M., elicited]

To summarize:

Role	Encoding (flagging)
P, T, R	No marking

Figure 1: Neutral alignment in flagging

Role	Encoding (indexing)
P and T	Marked with prefix or not marked (depending on verb)
R	Marked with applicative + suffix

Figure 2: Indirective alignment in indexing

### 1.3 Aspect dependence of the applicative

Form of applicative dependent on aspect:

PFV     **-b** (or in some phonological environments *-t*)

IPFV    zero morph

- (11) *moni = o*            **dl-Ø-u-b-ê-n-e = be**  
 money = N2    **PL.FEM.O-give-APPL.PFV-PL.AN.O.PFV-PST-3SG.M.SBJ = DECL**  
 T            T-        V                    -R                    -S  
 'He has given them (some) money' [Kasening M., elicited]

- (12) *ī blatik = o*            **dol-Ø-ka-Ø-ye-bina-b-io = be**  
 they plastic(\_bag) = N2 **PL.FEM.O-give-IPFV-APPL.IPFV-PL.AN.O.IPFV-AUX.HAB-IPFV-2/3PL.AN.SBJ = DECL**  
 S    T                    T-        V                    -R                    -S  
 'They (habitually) give vomit bags to us (on the missionary plane).'  
 [Kasening M., conversation]

Imperfective marker *-ka* and the zero applicative are not in the same slot:

- (13) *biém = o imen = o*            **fu-b-ê-n-o = be**  
 mum = SG.F taro = PL.N1 **cook-APPL.PFV-PL.AN.O.PFV-PST-3SG.F.SBJ = DECL**  
 S            T                    V                    -BEN                    -S  
 'Mum cooked taro for us.' [Raymond D., elicited]

- (14) *biém = o imen = o fu-Ø-ye-b-o = be*  
 mum = SG.F taro = PL.N1 cook-APPL.IPFV-PL.AN.O.IPFV-IPFV-3SG.F.SBJ = DECL  
 S T V -BEN -S  
 'Mum is cooking/habitually cooks taro for us.' [Raymond D., elicited]

#### 1.4 The ditransitives 'show' and 'tell'

- Two ditransitive verbs of mental transfer 'show' and 'say to, tell' do not index T
- R marked by the applicative:

- (15) *kasak = e ale-b-ê-Ø-ib-bio = ta*  
 kasak\_ritual = SG.N1 show-APPL.PFV-PL.AN.PFV-DS.SEQ-2/3PL.AN.SBJ-GPST = MED  
 T V- -R -S  
 'they had shown us (the) Kasak (ritual), and then someone else...'  
 [Beitab F., Kasak ritual]

'say to, tell' possible with an object NP:

- (16) *awém = o yē baa-b-ê-n-ib = a*  
 taboo = N2 there say.PFV-APPL.PFV-PL.AN.PFV-SS.SEQ-2/3PL.AN.SBJ = MED  
 T V -R -S  
 'they told them the taboos, and then ...' [Beitab F., Kasak ritual]

Difference in derivation status: *ale-b* 'show to' undrived in contemporary Mian (no verb root \**ale* without applicative), *baa-b* 'say to sb., tell sb.' derived from *baa* 'say':

- (17) *wengsâng ōlo baa-n-amab-i = be*  
 story this.N2 say.PFV-AUX.PFV-FUT.NANPL.SBJ-1SG.SBJ = DECL  
 T V -S  
 'I want to tell this story.' [Asuneng A., elicited]

#### 1.5 Constituent order

General:

- Unmarked/preferred constituent order: SOV
- Verb always has to occur in a fixed position, i.e. has to be clause-final
- NP-ordering more variable
- Ordering within phrases, e.g. NPs, much more restricted.

For ditransitives:

- Unmarked/preferred constituent order: S O<sub>R</sub> O<sub>T</sub> V
- Both R and T occur on the same side of the verb and always next to each other
- R precedes T

- (18) *né kóbó moni = o*  
 I you money = N2  
 S R T

*om-Ø-u-b-kê-n-amab-i = be*

**SG.FEM.O-give-EP-APPL.PFV-2SG.O.PFV-PFV-AUX.PFV-FUT.NANPL.SBJ-3SG.M.SBJ = DECL**  
 T- V -R -S

'I will give you the coin/bill (of money).' [Kasening M., elicited]

Generalization that R tends to precede T if there is no flagging, seems to hold in Mian

- Bound R and T forms: T-V-R (against the tendencies V-T-R or R-T-V (cf. Siewierska and Bakker, 2007))
- Different pathways of grammaticalization into person markers:  
 T-prefix: free form immediately in front of the verb which became incorporated into the verb  
 R-suffix: presumably formerly part of a serialization with 'give'

Subject NP can either precede the two objects or follow them: S O<sub>R</sub> O<sub>T</sub> V or O<sub>R</sub> O<sub>T</sub> S V:

- (19) *nakamín = e imen = o éil = e wen-Ø-ha-b-e = a*  
 man = SG.M taro = PL.N1 pig = SG.M eat.IPFV-APPL.IPFV-3SG.M.O.IPFV-DS.SIM-3SG.M.SBJ = MED  
 POSS/MAL T S V -POSS/MAL -S  
 'While a pig was eating a man's taro/eating taro from a man (, the man ...)'  
 [Asuneng A., Pig story]

## 2. Behavioral properties

- Passivization, antipassivization, and incorporation are not applicable to Mian
- Further systematic field work on constituent questions, reflexivization, nominalization and quantifier float needed and will be done early next year

### 2.1 Relativization

- Two relativizing constructions: (a) a prenominal relative clause and (b) a head-internal relative clause both possible for relativization of the object (T/P) of a transitive verb
- Prenominal relative clauses: unmarked finite clauses in a prenominal modifier position within the NP
- In trivalent verbs: S and the non-P/T argument can be relativized, whereas relativization of T is so far unattested

Relativization of the applicativized argument with a prenominal relative clause:

- (20) *[éil = o      imen = o      wen-Ø-ha-b-o]<sub>RelCl</sub>*  
 pig = SG.F      taro = PL.N1      eat.IPFV-APPL.IPFV-3SG.M.O.IPFV-IPFV-3SG.F.SBJ  
 S                      T                      V                      -POSS/MAL      -S

*naka = e*  
 man = SG.M  
 POSS/MAL

'the man whose taro (tubers) a sow is eating' [Kasening M., elicited]

- Head-internal relative clauses: nominalized finite clauses which function as referring expressions
- Like NPs followed by an article or a determiner
- Common for relative clauses in Papuan languages to behave morphologically like definite NPs (see Foley, 1986).

Relativization of the applicativized argument with a head-internal relative clause:

- (21) *[nakamín = e      imen = o      éil = o*  
 man = SG.M      taro = PL.N1      pig = SG.F  
 POSS/MAL      T                      S

*wen-Ø-ha-b-o]<sub>RelCl</sub> = e*  
 eat.IPFV-APPL.IPFV-3SG.M.O.IPFV-IPFV-3SG.F.SBJ = SG.M  
 V                      -POSS/MAL      -S                      = POSS/MAL

'the man whose taro (tubers) a sow is eating' [Kasening M., elicited]

Relativization of T/P for a trivalent verb is unattested. Both strategies possible for T/P's of transitive verbs:

- (22) *nē a-tem-Ø-i                      naka = e*  
 I    **SG.M.O-see.PFV-PST-1SG.SBJ**      man = SG.M  
 S T-      V                      -S                      T

'the man I have seen' [Kasening M., elicited]

- (23) *futâan = o      ki-b-eb                      yōta*  
 letter=N2      read-IPFV-2SG.SBJ      only\_that.N2  
 T                      V                      -S                      T

'only that letter you're reading' [Kasening M., elicited]

Role	Encoding
P and R	Relativizable with both relative constructions
T	Not relativizable

Figure 3: Secundative alignment for relativization

## 2.2 Reciprocalization

- Typical secundative alignment pattern, i.e. R stands in a reciprocal relationship with the subject and not T
- S and T reciprocants unattested
- No reciprocal pronoun/anaphor
- Dedicated reciprocal marker *-sese*.

The reciprocal construction with *-sese* probably originated in a clause chaining construction of the template (Fedden, in prep.):

(24) he-sees-her-DS || she-sees-him-DS || they are (there) => 'they see each other'

- Unified "zigzag" reciprocal (Evans, 2004)
- cf. also Amele (Roberts, 1987) and Hua (Haiman, 1980)

(25) *ī inaminamin = o*  
 they all\_sorts\_of\_things=PL.N1

*ol-Ø-u-b-ê-sese-bl-Ø-io = be*

PL.RESID.O-give-EP-APPL.PFV-PL.AN.O.PFV-RECIP-AUX.IPFV-IPFV-2/3PL.AN.SBJ = DECL

'They give all sorts of things to each other'

[Kasening M., elicited]

Role	Encoding
P and R	Reciprocal relation between S and P/R
T	No reciprocal relation to S

Figure 4: Secundative alignment for reciprocalization

## 3. Polysemy patterns in the applicative

- Recipients
- Benefactives/malefactives
- Malefactive source
- Possessors
- Goals
- Experiencers



### 3.1 Benefactive/malefactive

Applicative can be used productively to derive trivalent verbs from bivalent ones and divalent verbs from monovalent ones:

- (26) *éil = e mak = e*  
 pig = SG.M other = SG.M

*a-na-u-b-e-Ø-ib = a*

**3SG.M.O-kill.PFV-EP-APPL.PFV-PL.AN.O.PFV-DS.SEQ-2/3PL.AN.SBJ = MED**

'they<sub>1</sub> killed another pig for them<sub>k</sub>, and then they<sub>k</sub> ...'

[Ibalim, Mianmin and Telefomin history]

- (27) *naka = i gwi-Ø-ye-biaana-b-io = be*  
 man = PL.AN use\_magic-**APPL.IPFV-PL.AN.O.IPFV-AUX.PST.HAB-IPFV-2/3PL.AN.SBJ = DECL**  
 'they used to use magic against people.' [Asuneng A., Origin of the Dafinau vine]

- (28) *nē banimo un-u-b-kê-n-amab-i = be*  
 I PN go.PFV-EP-**APPL.PFV-2SG.O.PFV-AUX.PFV-FUT.NANPL.SBJ-1SG.SBJ = DECL**  
 'I will go to Vanimo for you' [Raymond D., elicited]

### 3.2 Malefactive source

- (29) *ī ayók ol-êi-t-ne un-Ø-io = be*  
 they secretly **PL.RESID.O-take.PFV-APPL.PFV-1SG.O.PFV go.PFV-PFV-2/3PL.AN.SBJ = DECL**  
 'they have stolen things from me' (Lit. 'they have secretly taken things from me and gone'  
 [Kasening M., elicited]

### 3.3 Possessor

Possessor and benefactive/malefactive roles are often mixed:

- (30) *ulêta kwéit*  
 who.SG.M sugarcane

*hal(o)-u-t-nê-n-e-bio = e?* [halutnenebue]

break\_off.SG.O.PFV-EP-**APPL.PFV-1SG.O.PFV-PST-3SG.M.SBJ-GPST = CQ**

'Who broke off (some of) my sugarcane?' [Asuneng A., Unangkliten story]

Possession can be indicated with an applicative, a possessive pronoun, or both:

- (31) *(nē) wéng = o went-u-t-nê-n-al = e!*  
 (my) talk = N2 hear.PFV-EP-**APPL.PFV-1SG.O.PFV-AUX.PFV-2SG.SBJ.HORT = HORT**  
 '(You should) mark my words!' [Asuneng A., elicited]

Recipient and benefactives obligatorily marked on the verb, possessor is indicated optionally:

- (32) *nē wéng=o wente-n-al=e!*  
 my talk=N2 hear.PFV-AUX.PFV-**2SG.SBJ.HORT**=HORT  
 '(You should) mark my words!' [Asuneng A., elicited]

### 3.4 Goal

Goal attested for the verb of ballistic motion 'throw':

- (33) *memâlo naka=e afûl=e ob-ò-n-e=a*  
 now man=SG.M ball=SG.N1 **SG.RESID.O**-pick\_up.PFV-SS.SEQ-**3SG.M.SBJ**=MED  
  
*unáng=o ob-biâ-b-o-n-e=a*  
 woman=SG.F **SG.RESID.O**-throw.PFV-**APPL.PFV-3SG.F.O.PFV**-SS.SEQ-**3SG.M.SBJ**=MED  
 'Now the man picks up the ball and throws it to the woman, and then...'  
 [Liden M., Dahl's T/A questionnaire, B8]

But not for goals of general motion verbs:

- (34) *un-u-b-kê-n-amab-i=be*  
 go.PFV-EP-**APPL.PFV-2SG.O.PFV**-PFV + AUX.PFV-FUT.NANPL.SBJ-**1SG.SBJ**=DECL  
 'I will go for you' [Raymond D., elicited]  
 BUT \*'I'll go to you'

### 3.5 Experiencer

- Experiencers mostly encoded with an applicative
- Few exceptions, e.g. 'rejoice, be happy' and 'grieve, be sad' are intransitive, monovalent verbs.

- (35) *al=o yē tli + a-u-b-ê-n-o=ta*  
 intestines=N2 there chew + ?<sup>1</sup>-EP-**APPL.PFV-PL.AN.O.PFV**-SS.SEQ-**N2.SBJ**=MED  
 'they were angry (there)' (Lit. 'intestines were chewing on them')  
 [Ibalim, Mianmin and Telefomin history]
- (36) *gabaamōn=e en-Ø-ke-b-e=a?*  
 head=SG.N1 hurt.IPFV-**APPL.IPFV-2SG.O.IPFV**-IPFV-**SG.N1.SBJ**=PQ  
 'Is your head hurting?' (Lit. 'Does the head hurt on you?') [Kasening M., elicited]

<sup>1</sup> So far unidentified verb root *a* compounded with *tli* 'chew'.

### 3.6 A semantic map for the applicative

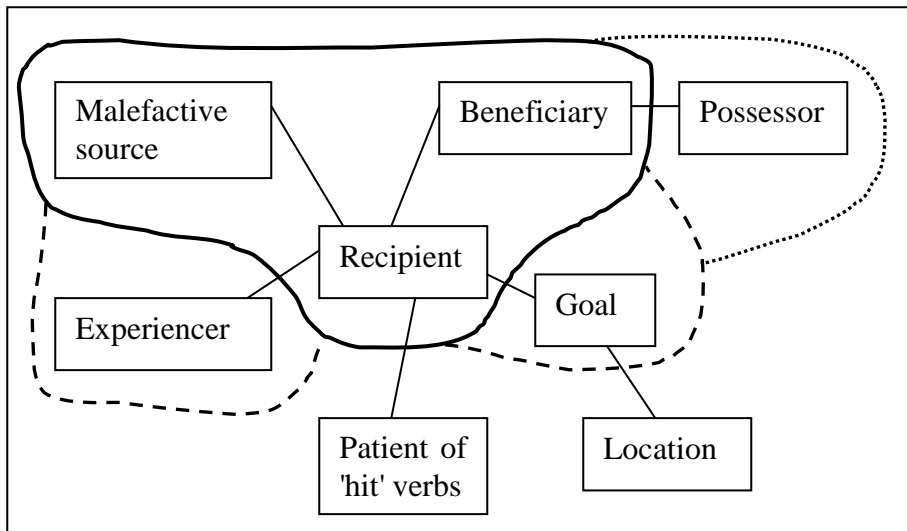


Figure 5: Semantic map for the applicative construction (adapted for Mian from Malchukov, Haspelmath and Comrie (2007))

Solid line — Obligatory encoding of role with applicative

Dashed line — Encoding of role with applicative obligatory for some verbs,  
impossible for others

Dotted line — Encoding of Possessors with applicative is optional

## 4. Summary

- Ditransitives are always formed with the applicative
- All ditransitive show indirective alignment wrt. indexing and neutral alignment wrt. flagging
- Syntactic behavior tests show secundative alignment for relativization and reciprocalization
- Applicative has a wide semantic range and is used for recipients, benefactives/malefactives, experiencers, possessors, and (marginally) for goals of ballistic motion

### Glosses and word tone notation

1 - 1<sup>st</sup> person, 2 - 2<sup>nd</sup> person, 3 - 3<sup>rd</sup> person, AN - Animate, APPL - Applicative, AUX - Auxiliary, BEN - Benefactive, CQ - Content question, DECL - Declarative, DS - Different subject, EP - Epenthetic vowel, F - Female, FEM - Feminine, FUT - Future, GPST - General past, HORT - Hortative, IPFV - Imperfective, PL - Plural, LONG - Long class, M - Male, MAL - Malefactive, MED - Medial, N1 - Neuter 1, N2 - Neuter 2, NANPL - Non-animate plural, O - Object, PFV - Perfective, POSS - Possessor, PQ - Polar question, PST - Past, RESID - Residue class, RPST - Remote past - SBJ - Subject, SEQ - Sequential, SIM - Simultaneous, SS - Same subject

L - Unmarked, H - ā, LH - á, HL - à, LHL - â

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