

Valency Questionnaire
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Valence or valency is a semantic and a syntactic notion. As a semantic notion it refers to the number of participants ‘on stage’ in the scene expressed by the verb. Valence as grammatical notion concerns the number of arguments present in any given clause, and canonically they are expressed by a noun (phrase) or a pronominal element. The semantic and syntactic notions of valency need not coincide: for example, in *He is eating* the Patient/Theme is semantically present but not grammatically expressed.

The study of verbal valency, the processes that alter it, and the expression of arguments, gives us information about what exactly constitutes the interface between the lexicon and the syntax of a language. For this reason it has been central to much recent linguistic debate.

Questions that are often addressed include the following: Where exactly does a ‘word’ end and becomes a ‘phrase’? What are the principles behind the derivation of certain types of verbs? What are the principles that govern the expression of verbal arguments: when can they be covert, and when are they obligatorily overt? What is it that triggers the difference?

The study of verbal valency also helps us to discover more about the structure of the lexicon. For example: Which semantic notions are expressed by root words, and how do these differ (if at all) from the notions expressed in morphologically derived forms? Can we make crosslinguistic generalisations here, or does every language exhibit its own idiosyncratic lexical patterns? Note that the latter is assumed in theories that consider a language’s lexicon to be the inventory of arbitrary signs – how valid is this assumption?

In the workshop, we will compare the languages with respect to the semantic valency of their verbs, the manipulation of verbal arguments by derivational morphology, and the expression of verbal arguments in syntax. We hope that this will provide us with an interesting typology of valence and valency in Eastern Nusantara, which can be used to contrast the characteristics of those languages with Austronesian languages of other areas. It may even be used to compare traits of Austronesian languages with those of IndoEuropean languages, in order to evaluate some of the claims in linguistic theories on their crosslinguistic validity.

A. Valency and morpho-syntax: the expression of verbal arguments

1. What are the grammatical relations of this language?

- S (Sa, So)
- A
- O (first/direct, second/indirect)

2. What is the evidence for the grammatical relations, e.g.:

- Person+number marking on verb (agreement or crossreference?)
- Constituent order
- Morphological case on NPs

3. Is the system of grammatical relations in basic (affirmative/declarative) clauses organised according to a nominative/accusative, ergative/absolutive, tripartite, or some other system?

4. Is there some split in the marking of the grammatical relations, e.g:

- Split intransitivity: S=A vs. S=O?
- Is there a split within the argument marking system: does the pronominal system (or the system of verb agreement) operate on the same basis as that of full NPs?
- Is there a split within the pronominal system: e.g. the ‘definiteness effect’: a definite argument is marked on the verb while an indefinite argument is expressed as NP (and not marked on the verb)
- If there is a definiteness effect, does this apply to subjects and objects alike?
- Is there another type of split?
- Exemplify some simple intransitive, transitive (and ditransitive) clauses, illustrating the expression of S, A and O (direct, indirect).

B. Overview of verbal classes according to valency

1. Provide an overview of the basic verbal classes, according to their valency

- Are there only root forms in each verb class, or only derived verbs?
- Are there semantic classes of verbs with special morpho-syntactic properties?
- Are there semantically transitive verbs that always have an overt object? (pronoun, pronominal clitic, inflectional affix)
- Are there semantically transitive verbs that never have an overt object?
- Does the language have ditransitive verbal roots (morphologically underived verbs with three arguments), or are ditransitive verbs always derived?
- Are there structurally motivated subclasses of intransitive verbs, e.g. the distinction between ‘unaccusative’ (*fall, melt*) and ‘unergative’ verbs (*run, dance*) ?
- Indicate the type of structural distinction: argument marking, derivational morphology, other...?
- Are there also verbs of which it is not clear whether they are transitive or intransitive because they appear just as frequently with an overt object as without one?
- Are predicates of possession and location transitive or intransitive?
- Is there a verbal form used in the expression of ((in)alienable) possession: *I have a garden/a child* (NOT: *That is my garden/my child*)? If so, is the verb transitive or intransitive? If not, provide the translational equivalent of the examples, with glosses.
- Is there a verbal form used in locational predicates: *He is at home/There are fish in the sea*? If so, is the verb transitive or intransitive? Provide the translational equivalent of the examples, with glosses.
- Is there a verbal form used as existential predicate: *I am a woman/She’s a teacher*.

If so, is the verb transitive or intransitive? If not, provide the translational equivalent of the examples, with glosses.

C. Valency and derivational morphology: Valency-increasing devices

In what follows a checklist is given for derivational processes that result in valency increase or decrease. For each of the processes it is important to distinguish between morphological derivations (die > die-CAU), and analytic/periphrastic derivations (die > cause to die). In the latter case, there may be an overlap with serial verb constructions and/or clause combining strategies such as complementation. It will probably lead us too far afield to discuss the non-morphological constructions in detail, especially because it would require quite detailed background knowledge about the syntax of the language. However, if your language employs periphrastic constructions for the valency changing operations discussed below, it would be good to note this and to provide some illustrations, plus an indication of how frequently that type of construction is used (seldom/sometimes/always). The same applies if your language is largely isolating and employs lexical substitution to express e.g. causatives (die > kill).

Causative

Comment: A causative construction can be symbolised as CAUSE(*x*, P) = ‘*x* causes P’, where *x* is the argument introduced by the causative derivation, and P the caused predicate.

Causative predicates standardly involve one more argument than the caused predicate.

Therefore, if the caused event is intransitive, the causative is transitive (*Wayan made [John laugh]*). If the caused event is transitive, the causative is ditransitive, etc. (*Wayan made [John eat nanga]*)

1. Form: Describe the word class and the morphological type of the possible bases for a causative derivation. Provide illustrative examples.

- Is there a distinction between productively and unproductively derived forms?

2. Function: Describe the semantic and grammatical function of the causative derivation.

- Semantic: Does the causative *always* add an argument to the event structure of the verb? Provide illustrative examples where appropriate.

- Describe the semantics of the causer (the ‘added’ argument): is it always agentive/controlling, or is it variable depending on the word class or morphological type of the base? Provide examples where appropriate.

- Grammatical: Does it add a syntactic argument to the clause?

Describe the grammatical function of that argument: subject or otherwise?

How is the grammatical status of the original arguments altered: base S > derived O, etc.?

Check this for distinct types of morphological bases. Note in particular the distinct argument alternations in: (i) causative derivations of verbal versus nominal bases and (ii) causative derivations of transitive versus intransitive bases. Provide examples where appropriate.

3. Does the causative derivation have other functions, e.g.:

- permissive, applicative, instrumental, benefactive?
- to express intensity
- to express aspectual notions, e.g. iteration
- to express notions that would be translated as reciprocals or reflexives

If so: how does a speaker distinguish between these notions from a causative?

Provide examples where appropriate.

4. Describe how the arguments of a causative verb are expressed in the clause:

- full NPs
- pronominal marking/crossreference on verb
- both

• Is there a difference between the expression of arguments of causative verbs and those of 'common' transitive verbs? Provide examples where appropriate.

Applicative

Comment: An applicative derivation is a valency increasing operation. It adds an object argument that is (in the canonical case) semantically a Goal (Beneficiary, Recipient, Location): *arrive* > *arrive-APP my mum* 'arrive at my mum's' *dance* > *dance-APP the teacher* 'dance for the teacher'. It may also bring a peripheral participant onto 'center stage' by making it into an object of the verb: *give food [to Suharto]* > *give-APP food Suharto*; *climb [on the hill]* > *climb-APP hill*.

1. Form:

• Give the applicative morpheme(s). If there is more than one, indicate the distinction, e.g. in terms of the semantics of the type of argument that is added.

• Describe the word class and morphological type of the possible bases for the applicative derivation(s)

2. Function: Describe the semantic and grammatical function of the applicative

• Semantic: Does the derivation 'upgrade' a participant in the event structure of the verb, does it 'add' a participant, or can it do both? Describe the semantics of the upgraded/added participant. Note the possible variations depending on the word class or morphological type of the base.

• Grammatical: Does it add a syntactic argument to the clause? Describe the grammatical function of that argument: O (indirect?) or otherwise? How is the grammatical status of the original arguments altered? Check this for the various types of morphological bases. Note in particular the distinct argument alternations of the applicative argument in: derivations of verbal vs. nominal base and of transitive vs. intransitive base.

3. Does the applicative object argument entail other semantic roles besides the standard ones of Beneficiary, Recipient, Location?

Comment: in many languages, the applicative derivation treats all non-Patient object arguments alike, but there are also languages where the introduction of an Instrument or a Companion/Comitative argument involves (a) separate morphological derivation(s).

4. Does the applicative derivation have other functions where it does not change the valency of the base verb? For example, when it has (secondary) functions as a:

- general verbalising morpheme (N *place* 'place' > V *place-APP* 'be located'), or
- morpheme indicating aspectual notions such as 'continuous' or 'iterative' action
- morpheme indicating 'intensive' activity
- morpheme to derive 'process oriented' verbs
- morpheme marking animate/inanimate contrast

4. How are the arguments of an applicative verb expressed:

- full NP
- pronominal marking/crossreference on verb
- both

Possessor raising or external possession

1. Does the language have a derivation where a nominal possessor is raised to grammatical object position, e.g.: I ate the white man's beans > I bean-ate the white man

2. Does the language have a derivation where a possessor is raised to grammatical subject, e.g. : My heart is bleeding > I heart-bleed

3. Give an overview of the type of predicates/clauses in which PR can occur

4. Does PR always cooccur with noun incorporation? If so, are there (semantic/syntactic) restrictions on the types of nouns that may be incorporated? Are there restrictions on the incorporating verbs?

Mutual interaction of valency-increasing derivations and their functions

1. Does one and the same base allow various derivations?

2. Do the functions of the various affixes show overlap, e.g. when an applicative also has a causative function (*I go-APP Wayan* 'I go with Wayan: I make Wayan go (with me)'?)

3. Can PR constructions be the base for causative/applicative derivations, or vice versa?

4. Is there evidence for an intrinsic ordering of any of the processes?

D. Valency and derivational morphology: Valency decreasing processes

Passive

1. Does the language have a passive construction? (A clause containing a verb with special morphology to mark the promotion of a 'deep' Patient/Theme to grammatical subject, and the demotion of the original Agent into an oblique/adpositional phrase)
2. If so, do all verbs, including the applicative/causative/etc., always allow passivisation? Or is passivisation restricted to certain classes of verbs?
3. Do verbs with passive morphology also appear in other contexts, with different functions? E.g. as modifiers of nouns (*the lecture was given by him* > *the given lecture*).

De-transitive

1. Does the language have a detransitivising derivation with a prefix *tV(C)*- ?
 - Is it productive or unproductive?
 - Describe its formal properties: which types of bases does it take?
 - Describe its semantic function
 - Describe its grammatical function in terms of argument alternation
 - Is the sole argument of the derived verb expressed as S, as O or as neither?
2. Does the language have another detransitivising morphological process?
 - Describe its functional and grammatical properties along the lines of 1
 - How does this process relate to the *tV(C)*-derivation (in this language, or in other Austronesian languages, cf. Malay/Indonesian *ter-*)

Reflexive

1. Does the language employ a specific construction to express reflexive notions such as *to dress herself*? Is there more than one construction expressing reflexiveness?
2. Is the object of the reflexive expressed as a special pronoun (as in English), or as a noun (*liver, body, self*)?
 - If there is a special noun involved, what is the evidence to consider this a noun: which nominal properties does it share with 'canonical' nouns such as *house*
 - Is this noun also found in other contexts? (e.g. PR constructions or in phrasal verbs for emotional/physical states)?
2. Is there an extra morpheme on verbs in reflexive constructions?
 - If so, is this morpheme also used with a different function in other contexts?
 - How can its functions be distinguished?

Reciprocal

1. How is the concept of reciprocity expressed, in particular: does it involve derivational morphology changing verbal valency? Is there more than one construction expressing reciprocity?
2. If so, is this morpheme used in other contexts too, or is it homophonous with a morpheme with a different function?

Object incorporation

1. Does the language employ object incorporation as a productive device to alter a verbs argument structure?
2. If so, what is the effect of object incorporation on the morpho-syntactic expression of argument(s)?

Other detransitivising processes

Describe other detransitivising processes that are important in the language, e.g.

- Middle
- Antipassive
- Inverse
- ...

E. Sources & suggested background reading

Thomas A. Payne, *Describing morphosyntax: A guide for field linguists*, esp. chapter 7 and 8. Cambridge University Press, 1997

Comrie, Bernard. 'Causative verb formation and other verb-deriving morphology. In: T. Shopen (ed). *Language typology and syntactic description*, vol. 3. CUP, 1985.

R.L. Humphreys, 'Valency Changing Alternations', in: K. Brown and J. Miller, *Concise encyclopedia of grammatical categories*. Elsevier, 1999